

Chicago Legacy: DuSable's Choices and Changes

Grades 7 and 8

CCSSR 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable came to Chicago more than 220 years ago. Chicago was a very small place then—only about 350 people lived here at that time, which really was a time of great challenge. It must have been hard to live in Chicago then as the environment was challenging—each season brought problems. There were no stores or really any pathways you could use to move about easily, and it was difficult to get everything you needed to survive. He had come from a distant land, Haiti, and it's unclear how he learned about this place of possibilities and challenges.

DuSable chose to come here because it was a place where he could build a trading post and transform the area—there was no other trading post here at that time. He thought it was a place of great possibility, that it would grow and hold more and more people who would need a trading post. His trading post would become the catalyst for Chicago's progress, the starting point that brought about the beginning of the city in which millions live today.

DuSable built his trading post himself using his own labor and abilities, using local resources to construct it from wood. First he chose a strategic location, a place where the river and lake converged. That enabled people to reach the post more easily by water. Probably it was easier to get there by water than by land, since it was so muddy in spring and in winter there were deep snows. But in winter the river would be frozen, making it impassable. So it still was a struggle, in every season.

DuSable traded with the Potawatomi, Native Americans who had lived in this area for many years before the first settlements by pioneers from Europe and other places. He traded tools to them for furs, which they produced by hunting animals, using spears, arrows, and clubs until they were able to get guns and other metal tools. With the trading post came new technologies that would make it easier to hunt and live in the area.

DuSable traded with settlers, too, who were moving to this area and brought hopes but also many needs. They moved here without all the tools and supplies they would need to build homes and survive in the challenging environment. It's not clear how people learned about Chicago as a place of possibility, but soon more and more pioneers moved to this location to settle. DuSable's vision was being realized—Chicago was becoming a destination that would keep growing.

DuSable probably knew Chicago was going to grow. He saw more settlers moving here every year. His business was an important place to all of them.

DuSable sold the trading post and moved on in 1800. He left a legacy, however. The trading post had been a kind of anchor of the growing community.

In 1968 Chicago declared DuSable the "Father of Chicago". His legacy continues today.

Main Idea

What is the main idea of this passage?

Underline five sentences in the passage that support that idea.

Think Clearly

- What is a choice someone makes in this history? What are effects of that choice?
- Make a time line showing the events in this history. Then decide what the most important event is. Explain why you think that is important.

To see a drawing of DuSable’s cabin, go to

<http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/6408.html>

For a view of Chicago at that time, go to

<http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/410078.html>

CCSSR7: Synthesize information and ideas from different sources.

Based on what you have read and the illustrations, what challenges did people face as settlement began?

Be sure to cite evidence from the reading and the website.

CCSSW3: Narrative Writing

Write as if “you were there”—a settler moving to Chicago—or DuSable himself. Tell the story of your life at that time.

For graphic organizers to analyze nonfiction passages, go to

http://teacher.depaul.edu/html/Guide_Assess_Nonfiction.html