

Parts and Pieces

The Story of Chicago and Lake Michigan

You may draw pictures to show what each part of this history might have looked like. Draw your pictures next to the words.

You also may cut these sections into pieces and use them as labels for larger pictures you draw and put together into a book or wall display.

What Happened	How Long Ago	What It Looked Like
A salt-water sea covered the midwest, including Chicago! There was a coral reef in Chicago – under the water. No one called it Chicago, then – there were no people here then.	365,000,000 years	
The Ice Age started. Ice moved south from what today is Canada.	1 million years	
Glaciers – giant blocks of ice that move slowly –covered what today is Chicago and Lake Michigan.	60,000-28,000 years	
The glaciers moved north into the place Lake Michigan is today. The land nearby was cool.	28,000-22,000 years	
The glaciers moved back – south. They covered what is now Chicago with a giant sheet of ice, about 4,000 feet thick. The glaciers moved back and forth for thousands of years.	22,000-12,500 years	
The glaciers started to melt. Water from the melting ice flooded what is now Chicago. The place that is called Blue Island today really was an island then!	14,000-13,000 years	

<p>The lake water drops to a lower level. Much of what is now Chicago still was covered by water, though. Ancient beaches can still be seen many miles from the shore of Lake Michigan. These old beaches are sand ridges today.</p>	<p>13,000-11,000</p>	
<p>People come to this area. The first Americans, called the Pale Indians, come to the area.</p>	<p>12,000 years</p>	
<p>The lake level drops some more. More low sand ridge beaches are formed. You can still see these ridges today, miles from the lake shore.</p>	<p>11,000-9,000 years</p>	
<p>The lake level drops a lot more. The beach that people lived near then is many miles east of today's shoreline – it is underwater today! Indians of the Archaic Period live here then.</p>	<p>9,000-4,000 years</p>	
<p>The lake level rises and falls some more. Today's Lake Michigan has been at the same level for 2,000 years.</p>	<p>4,000-2,000 years</p>	
<p>The Woodland tribes live in this area. They use the sandy ridges as paths – they are higher and dryer than the land they pass through.</p>	<p>3,000-1,000</p>	
<p>The Woodland tribes use animals to make clothes and tools and for food. They use trees, too. They plant some crops and gather wild foods.</p>		
<p>The Mississippian Indians lived in this area. They got most of their food by growing crops.</p>	<p>1,100-400 years</p>	

Many groups of Indians move through this area. They are from the Northeast. They are pushed westward by European settlers.	400-150 years	
The U.S. government gets land where today Chicago's loop stands – they take this land from the Indians. They build Fort Dearborn a few years later. The soldiers cut through a sand bar at the mouth of the Chicago river to let ships go from the river into the lake.	185 years	
The city of Chicago is founded.	165 years ago	
As the city grows, pollution begins to dirty the Chicago River and the lake. Most people get drinking water from the lake. People get many diseases from the polluted water.	165 years ago and for many years after that	
Farmers dig ditches and drain wet prairies and marshes to grow crops on the land.	140 years	
Industry grows in the city. Many of the coral reefs are quarried. Today, only big holes in the ground show where they were. The railroads dig out the sand ridges to build roadbeds.	125 years and for many years after that	
Fire burns up much of the city. Most of the debris is dumped in the lake between Michigan Avenue and the railroad tracks. New land is made there – where once there was lake water.	120 years	
A big rainstorm backs up the sewage into Lake Michigan. The drinking water is polluted. Diseases break out. People begin to solve this problem by changing the direction in which Chicago River flows.	105 years	

<p>The flow of the Chicago River is turned around. Sewage no longer flows south into the middle of the state and then into the Mississippi River.</p>	<p>93 years</p>	
<p>The rest of Grant Park is filled in, adding 200 acres of man-made land where once there was lake water.</p>	<p>86 years</p>	
<p>Welland Canal opens. It joins the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean.</p>	<p>72 years ago – in 1932</p>	
<p>Lampreys swim into the lakes from the ocean.</p>	<p>73 years ago to today</p>	
<p>Alewives swim into the lakes from the ocean.</p>	<p>71 years ago to today</p>	
<p>Large fish, including trout and whitefish, are killed by lampreys.</p>	<p>Ever since the lampreys got into the lake – it's still happening today</p>	
<p>The alewives die in great numbers causing pollution on the lake and on the beaches nearby.</p>	<p>Ever since the alewives got into the lake – it's still happening today.</p>	
<p>There is so much building that the city covers much of the land. The old ridges are gone – some are now paved and used as highways. Others have been covered by homes and factories. Michigan City Road (in the south suburbs) and Ridge Road (To north) are old Indian trails that followed the sandy ridges.</p>	<p>60 years ago or so – it's still happening today</p>	

Industries have grown so large that their wastes are changing the lake – they are adding pollution.	65 years ago or so – it’s still happening today	
The alewife population is so large that millions die and wash up on Chicago beaches. The smell is terrible. The city spends thousands of dollars on picking up dead alewives and taking them away by truck.	25 years	
People add coho salmon and lake trout to Lake Michigan. These fish eat alewives. More fishermen return to the lake to catch salmon and trout.	23 years ago – it’s still happening today	
Local, state, and federal governments set up groups to control pollution in waterways in the area.	22 years ago – they’re still doing it	
The Calumet River freezes for the first time in many years. It had not frozen for a long time because it was so polluted.	18 years	
People look for ways to help Lake Michigan and Chicago stay in balance.	Today and tomorrow	
What do you think is next for Chicago and Lake Michigan?	The future	