

Name _____

Date _____

Illinois

Illinois is strategically located for commerce in the upper Midwest of the United States. Illinois borders on Lake Michigan, one of the Great Lakes, giving it port access for shipping to the north and east. Illinois also borders on the Mississippi River which provides water access to southern markets. When water was the main route for shipping in the 1800s, Illinois was able to grow and prosper.

Early History

The lands in Illinois have a significant Native American history. At around 500 CE, the original natives of the area, called the Hopewell, disappeared. They were replaced a couple of hundred years later by the Mississippian culture, the greatest Native American culture in North America. The Mississippians in Illinois are also called Mound Builders because they constructed large hills from nearby soil on the relatively flat terrain. In a city called Cahokia, the Mound Builders built over 120 mounds. Around 1150 CE, Cahokia had a population of about 20,000 inhabitants but it was abandoned around 1400 CE. It wasn't until 1800, when Philadelphia's population reached 20,000, that another city in North America rivaled Cahokia in size.

After the decline of the Mississippian culture, the area of Illinois was occupied by Native Americans who spoke an Algonquian language. Individual tribes banded together and collectively were known as Illiniwek. While the Mississippian culture was centered in southern Illinois, the Illiniwek occupied central Illinois as well.

The Illiniwek tribes were the people who first encountered the French explorers who came to Illinois and by 1671 France claimed the land. In 1673, fur trapper Louis Joliet and missionary priest Jacques Marquette embarked on an exploration from Canada. They crossed Lake Michigan, traversed rivers in Illinois until they reached the Mississippi River, and traveled south on the Mississippi, eventually reaching present-day Arkansas before returning to Canada.

The French established forts in Illinois but for the most part French trappers and traders blended into the native culture. Trappers and traders were not interested in farming so they did not usurp the Indian lands. However, European diseases were introduced into Illinois that devastated the local population which did not have any immunity for these new diseases. By 1750, most of the native

Name _____

Date _____

population had died or moved westward; there were merely 1,000 Native Americans left in Illinois at that time.

At the same time there were just 2,000 French settlers in Illinois and the land was still claimed by France. However, Britain went to war with France and with the Native Americans who were loyal to the French. The French and Indian War occurred between 1754 and 1763. Britain was triumphant in the conflict and gained control of almost all of the French territory east of the Mississippi River, including Illinois. Most of the French settlers moved further west rather than live under British rule. In 1774, Illinois became part of the province of Quebec in Canada which was also under British rule.

Becoming a State

Illinois was far removed from the beginnings of the Revolutionary War which started in the colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. However, the war reached Illinois in the winter of 1778-1779 as revolutionary troops under the command of George Rogers Clark took over the British forts at Kaskaskia and Vincennes. When Illinois came under American forces, it became part of the Virginia colony.

After the Revolutionary War, the former colonies formed the thirteen original states but the land known today as Illinois was still wilderness and frontier. Illinois became part of the Northwest Territory which extended from the Ohio River to the Mississippi River. This Northwest Territory of the late 1700s was not at all related to the northwest portion of today's United States that includes the states of Washington and Oregon.

Illinois remained wilderness until the early 1800s. In 1800 there were less than 3,000 settlers in Illinois but by 1820 the number of settlers dramatically increased to 55,000. By 1809 the area had sufficient population to become its own territory, the Illinois Territory. After the War of 1812, the federal government reserved land in western Illinois for veterans of that war, which further stimulated growth in the territory.

Illinois became a state in 1819 and the state capital was moved from Kaskaskia to Vandalia. It was moved again in 1837 to the present capital city of Springfield. Illinois grew rapidly during the mid-1800s, reaching a population of 850,000 in 1850, 1.7 million in 1860, and 3 million in 1880.

Name _____

Date _____

Circle True or False after analyzing each of the following statements.

1. True False Illinois borders on two major North American bodies of water, Lake Erie and the Missouri River.
2. True False The first known inhabitants of Illinois, Native Americans called the Hopewell, were also known as Mound Builders.
3. True False In a city called Cahokia the Mound Builders built over 120 mounds.
4. True False The Illiniwek tribes were the people who first encountered the French explorers who came to Illinois.
5. True False Fur trapper Jacques Marquette and missionary priest Louis Joliet embarked on an exploration from Canada and explored much of Illinois.
6. True False The French established forts in Illinois but for the most part French trappers and traders blended into the native culture.
7. True False After the French and Indian War, which the French lost, most of the French settlers in Illinois moved westward to avoid further conflicts with the Indians.
8. True False The Revolutionary War reached Illinois in the winter of 1778-1779 as American troops under the command of George Rogers Clark took over the French forts at Kaskaskia and Vincennes.
9. True False Before becoming a state, Illinois once was part of Quebec, Virginia and the Northwest Territory.
10. True False After the Illinois Territory achieved statehood, the population of the area increased rapidly.

Name _____

Date _____

Answers

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True