

ILLINOIS

HISTORY

Illinois has been home to mound builders, Native nations, French traders and settlers from around the world. They turned a prairie into farms and built one of the biggest cities in the country.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Illinois for at least 12,000 years. About 900 years ago, the Mississippians built the city of Cahokia. By the 1600s, the Illinois, or Illiniwek, lived here. They were a group of allied nations that included the Kaskaskia, Peoria and Cahokia. They grew corn and hunted bison. Later the Potawatomi, Sauk, Meskwaki and Kickapoo moved in. They fought the Illinois and won much of the land.

The French Arrive

In 1673, Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet paddled down the Mississippi and back up the Illinois River. French priests and traders founded Cahokia in 1699 and Kaskaskia in 1703. The French traded for furs and grew wheat. They also brought enslaved Africans to work on their farms. Britain won the land from France in 1763. In 1778, during the American Revolution, George Rogers Clark's soldiers captured Kaskaskia without a fight.

Territory and War

Congress made Illinois a **territory** in 1809. In the War of 1812, many Native nations sided with Britain. That August, soldiers and settlers left Fort Dearborn, in today's Chicago. Potawatomi warriors attacked them, killed more than 50 and burned the fort. That fall, Illinois **militia** burned Native villages near Peoria. Illinois became the 21st state on December 3, 1818.

The Black Hawk War

In an 1804 **treaty**, Sauk and Meskwaki leaders sold their Illinois land to the United States. The Sauk leader Black Hawk said they had no right to sell it. In 1832 he led about 1,000 people back across the Mississippi to plant corn. His warriors beat the militia at Stillman's Run. Soldiers chased his band into Wisconsin and defeated it. In 1833 the Potawatomi sold their last Illinois land and moved west of the Mississippi. Native people of many nations live in Illinois today.

Canals, Rails and Lincoln

Settlers plowed the prairie and built towns and schools. Springfield became the capital in 1839. In 1848, the Illinois and Michigan **canal** linked Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. Chicago's first railroad opened the same year. In 1848, a new state constitution ended slavery in Illinois. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president. More than 250,000 Illinois men fought for the Union in the Civil War.



A Modern State

Chicago grew from about 4,000 people in 1837 to more than a million by 1890. Workers came from Europe, the South and Mexico for jobs in its stockyards, steel mills and factories. In 1893 the city held a world's fair. In 1942, scientists in Chicago built the first nuclear reactor, a machine that makes energy by splitting atoms.

ILLINOIS THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Black Hawk	Sauk war leader, born near today's Rock Island.
Jean Baptiste Point du Sable	Trader. The first lasting non-Native settler at Chicago.
Abraham Lincoln	Springfield lawyer. The 16th president.
Ulysses S. Grant	Lived in Galena. Union general and 18th president.
Jane Addams	Opened Hull House in Chicago in 1889 to help newcomers.

WORDS TO KNOW

territory	land run by the United States that is not yet a state
militia	citizens who serve as part-time soldiers
treaty	a written agreement between nations
canal	a waterway dug by people for boats