A World Heritage Site in Your Own Backyard!

An Invitation to Visit Archaeological Excavations
Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
Collinsville, IL

Saint Louis University students enrolled in the Archaeological Field School (SOC 3710 01) have been excavating at the Fingerhut Tract at Cahokia Mounds. This area, on the western periphery of this World Heritage site, has yielded a wealth of information since excavations have commenced in 2011.

During the previous summers, our students have exposed a possible craft specialization area, several house floors, and many interesting artifacts, including microdrills.

Craft specialization is of great interest because it appears to be coeval with the consolidation of power at this prehistoric chiefdom. Valued craft items often played a part in social transactions, enhanced personal prestige, and could be gifted to cement alliances.
In 2014, we excavated a prehistoric sweat lodge. Sweat lodges continue to be used by American Indians for personal and ritual purification. Its presence at this site indicates that the Fingerhut Tract may also have functioned as a civic-ceremonial node at a critical interval during the consolidation of the chiefdom.

Every summer, we extend an invitation to the SLU community and their families to visit the site and witness the archaeological process, and to learn about this amazing World Heritage UNESCO site.

Excavations this year will take place Monday through Friday from May 16th to June 10th, followed by two weeks of lab analysis from June 15th to June 26th. If you would like to schedule a visit to the excavations and/or the lab, please contact Dr. Mary Vermilion (mvermili@slu.edu). If scheduling after
the excavations begin, please contact Ashlee Dorsey (977-2900) and leave your name and phone number.

We hope to see you there! You may want to bring gardening gloves . . . we may offer you the chance to help screen for artifacts!

Joe Zitta and Grace screen for artifacts