

2018 SPA FIELD TRIP

The Middle Mississippians and Their Neighbors

MARK YOR CALENDARS FOR JUNE 12-17, 2018

We've decided to be ambitious about the 2018 field trip and make a trip to Illinois and back in order to focus on the Middle Mississippians and their neighbors. This will be a trip not to miss although we will need 5 days instead of our normal 3. We also will have to rent a bus for the sake of comfort given the distance, so please encourage friends and family to consider this trip. If we fill the bus, we can still keep the at cost members' price low. With this in mind we are opening this trip to members of other archaeological societies that are part of ESAF.



John Nass and Sarah Neusius are still at work making specific plans for our visits and our evening activities, but stops will include Sunwatch Indian Village in Dayton Ohio, Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Collinsville, Illinois, Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site in Wickliffe, Kentucky, Angel Mounds State Historic Site in Evansville, Indiana and the Ohio History Connection in Columbus, Ohio. See descriptions for each of these places below. The trip will begin on the evening of June 12 at California University in California, PA and participants will return to California by late afternoon on Sunday June 17.

SunWatch Indian Village / Archaeological Park is a reconstructed [Fort Ancient Native American](#) village next to the [Great Miami River](#) in [Dayton, Ohio](#). The dwellings and site plan of the 3-acre site are based on lengthy archeological excavations sponsored by the Dayton Society of Natural History, which owns and operates the site as an [open-air museum](#). This site has two distinct periods of use from 1150-1300 CE and from 1300-1450 CE. Fort Ancient people were contemporaneous neighbors to various Mississippian groups and Mississippian influences are particularly evident during the latter occupation at Sunwatch. This site is one of the best preserved Fort Ancient sites and archaeological studies have revealed much about the original people's dwellings, social organization, diets, burial practices and other aspects of their lives at the site. Originally called the Incinerator site, it got the name Sun Watch from the complex of posts in the plaza believed to be related to astronomical measurements. Recent studies also have examined evidence for the ritual use of dogs at this site.

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site is the site of a pre-Columbian Native American city (c. 1000 - 1400 CE) directly across the Mississippi River from modern St. Louis, Missouri. It is a World Heritage site recognized internationally by UNESCO for its cultural significance. This historic park is located in the Mississippi floodplain east of modern day St. Louis. The park covers 2,200 acres (890 ha), or about 3.5 square miles (9 km²), and contains about 80 mounds, but the ancient city was much larger. The largest mound, known as Monks Mound, is approximately 13 acres at its base and 100 meters high. This construction is larger than any Pre-Columbian structure north of Mexico. In its heyday, Cahokia covered about 6 square miles (16 km²) and included about 120 manmade earthen mounds in a wide range of sizes, shapes, and functions. It is believed that in AD 1250 Cahokia was larger than contemporary London, but by the end of the 1300s it was largely abandoned. Other important aspects of Cahokia are its woodhenges, one of which is reconstructed today, it's large man-made central plaza, it's 2 mile long wooden stockade, and Mound 72, which contained an elaborate burial complex. Cahokia was the largest and most influential urban settlement of the Mississippian tradition, which developed advanced societies across much of what is now the central and southeastern United States, beginning more than 1000 years before European contact.

Wickliffe Mounds is a prehistoric [archaeological site](#) located in [Ballard County, Kentucky](#), just outside the town of [Wickliffe](#), about 3 miles (4.8 km) from the confluence of the [Ohio](#) and [Mississippi](#) rivers. It was inhabited from about 1100-1350 CE. This site provides a good example of small Mississippian centers, of which there were many. Archaeological investigations have linked the site with others along the Ohio River in Illinois and Kentucky as part of the [Angel Phase](#) of Mississippian culture. Wickliffe Mounds also has an interesting more recent history as archaeological excavations in the 1930s led to its development as a tourist attraction under the name “Ancient Buried City” and this attraction included partially exposed human burials as well as other questionable interpretations. Today Wickliffe Mounds is controlled by the Kentucky State Parks Service, and is listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) and as a Kentucky Archeological Landmark and State Historic Site.

Angel Mounds State Historic Site is at the site of a large Mississippian town located on the Ohio River in the southwestern corner of Indiana. It was occupied from 1050-1450 CE and originally covered 103 acres and had approximately 1000 inhabitants. Just upriver of the confluence of the Green and Ohio rivers, it is located 8 miles (13 km) southeast of present-day Evansville. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Indiana State Museums and Historic Sites maintains an interpretive center, and reconstructions of Mississippian buildings associated with its 11 platform mounds as well as nature and hiking trails in the 600 acre site. This major complex of earthworks was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964 because of its significance. Exhibits at the site also cover the importance of WPA archaeology.

The **Ohio History Connection, Ohio Historical Center** in Columbus, Ohio is the home of what once was the Ohio Historical Society. Among the exhibits at this museum is “Following in Ancient Footsteps” which covers 15,000 years of Native American heritage and displays many of Ohio’s most significant archaeological objects.

Please stay tuned for more details, pricing and deadlines for registration for this once in a lifetime chance to visit Mississippian and Fort Ancient sites, learn from experts, and enjoy the company of other SPA members. Information will be distributed to chapters and at the Annual Meeting in early April. In the meantime if you have questions, please contact Sarah Neusius at sraahneusius@gmail.com, or John Nass at nass@calu.edu.