

# ArkyFacts

Monthly Newsletter of the  
SOUTH SUBURBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Lecture meetings are at 7:30 p.m. at  
The Irwin Center  
18120 S. Highland Avenue, Homewood

## JUNE - 2019

Thursday, June 20	SSAS Annual Summer Social ~ 7:00 PM Flossmoor Station ~ Flossmoor, IL
Monday, July 1	Officers' Meeting ~ 7:30 PM Mama & Me Pizzeria, Homewood
Saturday, July 20	SSAS Members' Tour of Cahokia Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site

Deadline for material to be included in the next  
ArkyFacts is two weeks before the monthly meeting.

**nitel** Sponsorship, making it possible...





Thursday, June 20 ~ 7:00 PM

## SSAS ANNUAL SUMMER SOCIAL EVENT

Flossmoor Station, 1035 Sterling Avenue, Downtown Flossmoor

Everyone Welcome!! Join us as we usher in summer at our annual gathering. We'll have food, fun and games! See the insert/attachment in this newsletter for more information and reservation details.

**All reservations must be received by Friday, June 14** (after which refunds will not be available), and must be accompanied by payment in full (\$30 per person). Contact Will Kelley with questions. NOTE: If you don't think that your mail-in reservation form/payment will reach us by the June 14 deadline, contact Will.

---

**REMINDER!!** In June, July and August we will be hosting our Annual Summer Social and our 2019 Summer Excursions. Our regularly scheduled programming at the Marie Irwin Community Center will resume on September 19. Have a wonderful summer!

**SSAS Members' Tour of Cahokia (Saturday, July 20)....**Please join us on this special tour for SSAS members and their guests! Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site is located directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, between East St. Louis and Collinsville, Illinois. Meet by 10:00 AM at the Main Entrance of the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center. Depending upon the number of participants, we will either take a private tour of Cahokia with a docent, or join the 1-hour 10:30 public tour. After our group tour, you may choose to further explore the museum or take up to three additional self-guided tours.

If you decide to stay overnight in Collinsville on Friday, July 19 and/or Saturday, July 20, please note that Collinsville hotels are booking up quickly for the summer. As of this writing, the following hotels still have availability for that weekend: Drury Inn, Fairfield Inn, Comfort Inn, La Quinta Inn, and Days Inn. Hotel reservations should be made "on your own." Please contact Will Kelley with your booking information (so that we know where everyone is staying) and if you need to car pool.

**Our Next Business Meeting.....** will be on Monday, July 1 - 7:30 PM at Mama & Me Pizzeria, 18219 Dixie Hwy., Homewood.

**Bookmarks! Find us online.....**

**Search: "South Suburban Archaeological Society on Weebly"**

**OR: <http://southsuburbanarchsociety.weebly.com/>**

**OR: <http://southsuburbanchapter.tumblr.com>**



**South Suburban Chapter Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SouthSuburbanChapter2015>**



SSAS programming is made possible through generous contributions from our members of time, effort, and financial support, and through the valued sponsorship of our friends at NITEL .

In anticipation of our July weekend at Cahokia, a great new book.....

## Feeding Cahokia

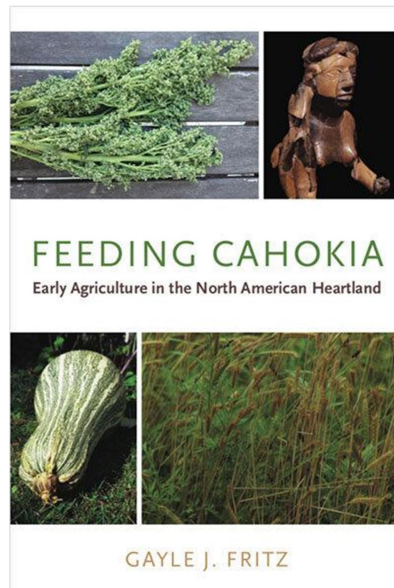
### Early Agriculture in the North American Heartland

By Gayle J. Fritz

University of Alabama Press, 2019

Cahokia was one of the largest cities in the world by 1100 AD, with some 40,000 residents. It dominated a huge region and spread its influence for hundreds of miles in every direction. The economic engine that fueled this metropolis was agriculture, and the dominant crop was corn. Or so we thought!

Gayle Fritz, professor emerita at Washington University in St. Louis, argues that corn was just one of many domesticated crops grown by the Cahokians. She details the rise of an Eastern Agricultural Complex over some 5,000 years that included squash, gourd, sunflower, marshelder, chenopod, maygrass, knotweed and little barley. These local cultigens fed Cahokia's residents during its early days, with corn arriving around 900 AD. Even though corn became a major crop, the other crops did not shrink but rather increased in abundance.



Food production at Cahokia was diversified and stable, and the land was in the Mississippi bottomland, the most fertile in America. Farmers were held in high esteem because of their ability to support such a large population. The workforce of mainly women and their daughters was the backbone of the economy.

These female farmers also harvested hickory and acorns by introducing crop protection methods and creating nut orchards. Ruling elites gave these women considerable influence and decision-making authority, and they garnered much respect and power.

In her book, Fritz also questions the interpretation of Cahokian ceramic figurines depicting women as “corn goddesses.” She points out that the plants on the figurines more accurately represent sunflower seed heads and squashes.

In addition, she questions the idea of a male-dominated priesthood as the basis of Cahokia's religion, given the importance of women.

This very readable volume brings together years of research and paints a new and enlightened picture of the United States' greatest ancient city.

*Thanks to Mike Ruggeri and American Archaeology (a quarterly publication of The Archaeological Conservancy), both contributors to this article.*

