

# ArkyFacts

Monthly Newsletter of the  
SOUTH SUBURBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

## FEBRUARY - 2023

Thursday,            Dr. Foreman Bandama – 7:30 PM  
February 16        “How great was Great Zimbabwe?  
Exploring the Archaeology of Southern Africa’s  
Most Successful Pre-industrial Civilization”

(This will be an in-person presentation AND also available via Zoom.)

Monday,            Officers’ Meeting – 6:00 PM  
February 27        PANERA BREAD  
820 175<sup>th</sup> St., Homewood  
Host: Warren Hastings

Deadline for material to be included in the next  
ArkyFacts is two weeks before the monthly meeting.  
Contact Susan Saric ([milansaric@aol.com](mailto:milansaric@aol.com))

For more information about South Suburban Archaeological Society, or if you have a special need  
because of a disability, contact SSAS President Will Kelley





# ArkyFacts February 2023

Thursday, February 16 – 7:30 PM

“How great was Great Zimbabwe? Exploring the Archaeology of Southern Africa’s Most Successful Pre-industrial Civilization”  
with Foreman Bandama, Ph.D.

There over twenty-five great African civilizations outside Egypt. How many of these do you know about? Not much is known about the majority of these and very few are promoted to the level of their greatness. For a continent that continues to suffer prejudice, the past should, and does offer immovable landmarks that speak the African story of achievements. For example, beyond the north African pyramids, the Great Enclosure at the medieval site of Great Zimbabwe (1000-1900CE) in Zimbabwe is the largest dry stone-built structure in pre-colonial Africa. Indeed, pre-industrial socio-political complexity reached its peak in southern Africa at Great Zimbabwe. This important place gave its name to the country Zimbabwe, but the precolonial footprint of the Zimbabwe State was much bigger and spread into over five countries. Within this vast expanse is found over five hundred other Zimbabwe capitals of varying sizes. Many of these have not yet received significant research attention.

Early evidence of the urban center at Great Zimbabwe appears in the archaeological record around the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium CE. Important features include the gradual emergence of dressed- and coursed-dry stone walling, built without the aid of binding mortar, as well as increase in population and settlement size, and intensification of craft activities and long-distance trade. The dry-stone wall purposes ranged from screening living and symbolic activities of the elites to demarcation of space, restricting movement, and demonstration of sheer power and prestige, all of which are accentuated by elaborate decorative styles on both the inner and outer walls. Differentiation of people in terms of status and access to resources is discernible both at site and regional level. By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Great Zimbabwe covered over 750 hectares in extent and was the capital of the largest state in southern Africa, centered in Zimbabwe but spreading into lands later demarcated as Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. Other signature crafts at Great Zimbabwe included the iconic and unique soapstone curved Zimbabwe birds (fish eagles with human features) that rose above 1.5 meters, and metallurgical, ceramic and glass bead activities with a broad regional and intercontinental flavor. While political power slowly slipped away to other regional competitors and successors in western, central, and northern parts of Zimbabwe, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the site survived in its reduced form until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Dr. Bandama, who is currently Assistant Curator of African Anthropology at the Field Museum and Lecturer at the University of Illinois (Chicago), will be appearing in person at the Irwin Center.** Please join us for light refreshments before the program! For those who wish to view this presentation remotely via Zoom, see our insert page.

**Search: “South Suburban Archaeological Society” or**

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

**SSAS on Tumblr: <http://southsuburbanchapter.tumblr.com>**

**South Suburban Chapter on Facebook:**

**<http://www.facebook.com/SouthSuburbanChapter2015>**



## CAHOKIA MOUNDS - Augmented Reality Experience

*The following information is excerpted from a report by retired Cahokia Mounds Assistant Site Manager William Iseminger that appeared in the IAAA's "Illinois Antiquity" magazine, Volume 57-Issue 4. It is offered here for the benefit of those SSAS members who are not also members of IAAA.*

The Interpretive Center at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site will be closed for renovations until 2024; however, Cahokia Mounds grounds will remain open year-round, from dawn to dusk. Seasonally, there are guided tours available by staff and volunteers. In addition, there are several large interpretive signs found at parking lots and along the interpretive trails.



**There is also a new augmented reality program** that visitors can download to their phones or tablets, which allows them to scan markers at strategic locations on and around Monks Mound and the Grand Plaza. By using the app, they can see those locations as they appear today, and then watch as they morph into what they looked like nearly 1,000 years ago during Cahokia's peak. You can even walk into the temple atop Monks Mound and see the interior and its furnishings, or into a commoner's home near the Grand Plaza.

Visit: <https://cahokiamounds.org/augmented-reality-project/>

## How to Remotely View our February 16 Program:

Interested in participating through Zoom?

Send a request to the email link shown below. **Please submit your request as soon as possible.** Those who are not SSAS members are also welcome to use Zoom, but should include enough information in the email to verify their identity.



1-2 days before the event, the host will respond with an invitation to attend through Zoom. For questions about remote viewing, contact Will Kelley.

[southsubarkyzoom-request@yahoo.com](mailto:southsubarkyzoom-request@yahoo.com)



## Business Notes

**Please remember to renew your SSAS membership for 2023!** An application form is included in the newsletter of any member whose renewal has not yet been received.

*SSAS programming is made possible through generous contributions from our members of time, effort and financial support.*



## Officers' Meeting

Our next business meeting will take place on **Monday, February 27 – 6:00 PM at Panera Bread (820 175<sup>th</sup> St., Homewood).** Our host will be Warren Hastings.



## IN THE NEWS - "DIGGING UP THE DEAD"

Early this year archaeologists at Saqqara made a remarkable discovery: a 52-foot (16m) papyrus scroll containing spells from the Book of the Dead. It was the first complete papyrus discovery in a full century, and will undoubtedly enhance modern understandings of the ancient Egyptian belief in magic. Currently, the lengthy papyrus is being restored at the Egyptian Museum Laboratory in Cairo, and it's hoped the epic document will eventually go on display at the all-new Grand Egyptian Museum.



The Book of the Dead is the umbrella term for a series of ancient Egyptian funerary texts believed to help the dead in the afterlife. Specific chants (or 'utterances') were typically copied onto papyrus scrolls and placed in tombs. Spells from the Book of the Dead also adorned mummy bandages and even Tutankhamun's golden death mask.

The recent Book of the Dead papyrus scroll discovery is expected to go on display at the Grand Egyptian Museum, which is currently being completed in Giza and will supersede the current Egyptian Museum in Cairo's El-Tahrir Square. The \$1 billion project will also house the entire Tutankhamun collection – including the boy king's iconic golden funeral mask – plus giant statues of the pharaohs, including one of Rameses II, which dominates the atrium. Work on the museum is almost complete, but an official opening date is not available at this time.

*Excerpted from MSN/LoveEXPLORING/AimeeWhite  
Photo: blogspot.com*

## EXHIBITIONS

### **Capturing Louis Sullivan: What Richard Nickel Saw**

The fact that we have a comprehensive overview of Louis Sullivan's Chicago architecture today is largely thanks to Polish-American architectural photographer Richard Nickel's tireless efforts to document Sullivan's design philosophy and to preserve the architect's legacy. Focusing on Chicago buildings of the 1880s and early 1890s, this exhibition explores the firm's architecture through the lens of Nickel's photography, which provides a detailed record of these buildings and, in particular, Sullivan's signature ornamentation. The exhibition highlights the integral role Nickel played in preserving Sullivan's legacy, while ultimately losing his life in an effort to salvage artifacts during a demolition. ***Driehaus Museum / Through February 19, 2023***

### ***Making Sense of Marbles: Roman Sculpture at the Oriental Institute***

On view as a group for the first time in an exhibition are a collection of Roman sculptures, each illustrating how we can make sense of marbles with divergent histories

and the fundamental importance of archaeological context in telling an object's story. The works on display were discovered during an excavation of the ancient city of Ptolemais in modern-day Libya, which revealed large quantities of marble sculpture, ranging from decorative statuettes to honorific portraiture. With their provenience remarkably well documented, these marbles showcase the diverse roles sculpture played in the lives of the city's residents. ***Oriental Institute / Through March 12, 2023***



**TRAVELMAG** /Paul Joseph **PHOTO:** OI, University of Chicago