The

Cahokia Pilgrimage

BOY SCOUT TROOP 22
East St Louis, Illinois

This Book Compiled By
CHARLIE ORR AND JOHN EICHELBERGER
START OF TRAIL

The picture above shows the first hikers at the beginning of their twenty mile trek on March 16, 1938. From left to right: Pete Joergensen, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster; John Eichelberger, Scoutmaster; Charlie Orr, Assistant Scoutmaster and Noel Oliver, Senior Patrol Leader, leaders of Boy Scout Troop 22.

The Cahokia Mounds

The total number of mounds in the group is placed at about 85, with the large Monks Mound being the most important. It is possible and probable there was originally a much greater number.

The large mound is commonly referred to as "Monks Mound" because between the years 1809 and 1813 a group of French Trapp-
pist Monks lived a short distance to the west of the largest terrace.

Monks Mound is a flat-topped, truncated pyramid about 700 feet wide at the center, slightly over 100 feet high, and approximately 1880 feet long. The ground area covered is about 16 acres. It is the greatest work of ancient man in North America.

The mounds assume various shapes and sizes. Some are of large proportions, their importance being dwarfed only by the massive Monks Mound. The shapes of many are not clearly discernible, due to the action of erosion and the plow. Many are merely small rises in the field and not many more years of cultivation will pass before they are reduced to a point where they will be no longer visible. Yet many rise to a height of thirty feet and still retain their original shapes.

One of the first questions asked is "How were the mounds built?" The shallow lakes near the mounds give evidence that the earth was scooped up from the village site and carried a short distance to the mounds. Mound exploration has likewise proved this fact, through the abundance of village site material scattered throughout. The lakes have gradually become filled until today many of them are completely lost and others are merely swamps.

The great mound represents a stupendous outlay of labor, even when considered spread over several generations. The soil was broken up with wooden, shell or stone digging tools and transported in hark or woven baskets, or in skin bags to the mound area. The construction gang probably included most of the inhabitants of the village—men, women and children. It has been estimated that this great tumulus would have required a thousand men five years to build with the primitive facilities at hand. Many of the depressions from which the earth was taken are still readily discernable.

The time of the beginning or the time required in the building of the Cahokia Mounds is still disputed among many historians. They are believed to have been here many years before the early French explorers.

The purpose of the mounds is not completely understood. It is believed that Monks Mound was erected for dwelling purposes. Excavation of many of the smaller mounds has showed that some were most likely used for religious and other public purposes. The lack of burials or other evidence in some mounds leads one to be puzzled as to the purpose of these. Some few have contained an abundance of pottery, others, ceremonial altars in the form of burned clay platforms and pits.
From the summit of Monks Mound there unfolds a splendid panorama of the broad Mississippi with its fertile flood plain, flanked by the strong array of industrial plants on the west and on the east by the Collinsville Bluffs. Surrounding it are mounds of more moderate size and pits left by excavations of the builders. The remains of the ancient Indian village, which may have contained more than a hundred mounds, took in most of the site of what is now East St. Louis, and extended from the mouth of Cahokia Creek to the Bluffs, a distance of more than six miles.

History of Cahokia

CAHOKIA is named for the tribe of Indians that was affiliated with the Illinois Indian Confederation. The Cahokias lived in a wooded strip of land between the Mississippi River and Cahokia Creek. Here they gathered in the summer for their councils and in the winter ranged the prairies on their great hunts. The word “Cahokia” signifies “wild geese.”

The founding of Cahokia has something of a unique character about it. When Bishop Laval came to Canada, he determined to establish among the clergy of his diocese a community which would follow the lines of the Priests of the Seminary of Paris, an organization which Bishop Laval had helped to establish in France. The Priests of the Seminary of Quebec were established in 1663.

For many years the organization grew slowly. But, finally, in 1698, the Society was able to appoint a few of its members to begin mission work in distant places.

At that time the most attractive goal by way of a primitive people was the Illini Confederacy, composed of the Kaskaskia Cahokia, Tamaroa, Michigamea, Peoria and Moingwena tribes, about which Father Jacques Marquette, Jesuit explorer of the Mississippi, had written so glowingly.

These Indians had come to be pictured as outstanding examples of the “noble savages,” whose conversion was only a matter of the presence of the missionaries. Thus, when the priests of the Seminary of Quebec planned to begin their great missionary effort after thirty-five years of preparation, they were anxious to begin among the Illini Confederacy. It was their intention to establish some centrally located village, out of which they could work among the Illini and southward.

After seeking advice from those who knew the country, the priests from the Seminary of Quebec decided to locate their mission among the Tamaroa-Cahokia clan of the Illini Nation.

These Indians occupied a plot of ground between two little streams emptying immediately into the Mississippi River. The location, just opposite the present city of St. Louis, had the distinct geographical advantage of being not far from the confluence of the Missouri with the Mississippi.

Three missionaries—Father Montigny, St. Cosme, and Davion—left Quebec on July 16, 1698, with a group of hired laborers who came to assist in erecting the mission buildings. The party reached Cahokia on December 8, 1698, where the Indians were briefly visited. During the rest of the winter and early spring the missionaries examined the country below Cahokia and returned in March, satisfied that Cahokia was the most advantageous location for their headquarters. By May 22, 1699, a log chapel had been erected and
a crude dwelling for the priests. They erected a great mission cross and on that day began their apostolic work.

For the first quarter of a century the little village had only the most tenuous hold on life. Father Bergier, the first priest to reside at Cahokia for any length of time, had no knowledge of the native language, and hence found it most difficult to instruct the Indians. On one occasion the Indians nearly left Cahokia to ally themselves with the Kaskaskias, who were settling across the river. About 1735, Father Jean Mercier, who spent most of his life at Cahokia, sent home a plan of the mission which shows it to have been, even then, a typical French village, with the homes of the inhabitants grouped about a church square, and the fields divided into long narrow strips. The town could then boast about seven resident families and a small Indian village at some distance from the dwellings of the French. The two groups, however, mingled in trade and worship and sometimes intermarried. Relations were close and friendly. The missionaries had erected a couple of mills and a blacksmith shop. The rectory was surrounded by orchards and livestock was common.

By 1740 Cahokia was no longer a mission center, but it had become a French town whose interests were those of the French. Of the half dozen settlements in this section, Cahokia was the commercial center; Kaskaskia was known for its agriculture, and Fort de Chartres was the governmental headquarters.

As a result of the Seven Years War of 1756-1763, Canada and the Illinois country were ceded to Great Britain. In 1764, St. Louis was founded four miles north and across the Mississippi River, and many Cahokians moved to the new community. They wished to escape the river floods that plagued Cahokia and to live on French soil. They soon regretfully learned that the west side of the river had been secretly ceded to Spain by France.

Cahokia became a part of the United States of America on July 5, 1788. On the preceding day, Kaskaskia had surrendered to George Rogers Clark and his "Long Knives." Part of Clark's forces, under Captain Bowman, accompanied by a number of Kaskaskia men, took over Cahokia without resistance. The head of the Cahokia militia and others were commissioned by Clark as American officers following the surrender of the town and the small fort.

In August 1788, Clark held council with the Cahokia Indians and after clever maneuvering persuaded the Indians to remain neutral.

In 1790 Cahokia became the St. Clair County seat. The county extended northward to Canada. But in 1814, because of the constant threat of floods, the county seat was moved to Belleville.

In 1800, less than a quarter of a century after Cahokia had become a part of the United States, the village ceased to be French, and looked to the United States for its future. Its importance died with the enlarging of St. Louis, and it became just a regular and pleasant place to live. But the history that has been enacted on its soil has had far-reaching effects upon the history as well as the boundaries of our United States of America.

THE END OF THE TRAIL

Father Joseph Mueller, present pastor of Holy Family Church, discusses the Cahokia Trail with hikers and leaders of Troop 32, in front of the historic Church at the end of the trail. From left to right are: Neal Oliver, Senior Patrol Leader; Charlie Orr, Assistant Scoutmaster; Fr. Mueller; John Eisenberger, Scoutmaster, and Pete Joergensen, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster.
Cahokia Court House

The Cahokia Court House, near end of trail, just off Route 3, is the oldest house in Illinois, possibly the oldest private dwelling in the Midwest, and most certainly the oldest of all court houses west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Thought to have been built shortly after 1737, it is an excellent example of the French pioneer log house, with logs perpendicular, and interior walls filled with stone and mortar. The walls rest on a foundation of stone nearly two feet thick. The floors are of sassafras puncheons on walnut beams. The roof, of cantilever type, extends down over the porches.

The building runs 35 feet north to south, and 43 feet, eight inches, east to west. The court house faces north and its grounds cover four city blocks.

The court house has four rooms. On the northeast corner was the courtroom, another room was a jail, while the other rooms probably were offices.

The first United States court sessions in Illinois, and the first elections were held in this building. Here lands were conveyed, criminals were indicted and tried, and administrative orders were promulgated for an area that included Peoria, Prairie du Chien, Chicago and Green Bay.

It was dismantled and moved in 1904 to the grounds of the

Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis as a fair display. At the close of the fair the building was sold to the Chicago Historical Society. Moved again, a fourth of the original building was set up on the Wooded Island of Jackson Park in Chicago. In 1938 the complete restoration of the Court House to its present site was begun, and today it stands as it was in its early history.

The Jarrot Mansion

The Jarrot mansion, seated next to the rectory of the Holy Family Church at end of trail, is perhaps the oldest brick house in the upper Mississippi Valley. In 1799, when the building was started, workmen made all the bricks by hand on the spot. By 1806, the house was completed and in it Nicholas Jarrot reigned as a sort of feudal lord.
Here, in the second floor ball room, the first school in Cahokia was held in 1809. Now the old mansion is one of the few landmarks left in old Cahokia.

The earthquake of 1811 only shook down two of the chimneys and produced two small seams in the rear wall. In the flood of 1844, water stood ten feet in depth around the house; entrance to the building could only be effected through the upper portion of the high doors by means of canoes. It has withstood four other floods, but none were so disastrous to the country and village as the flood of 1844.

Chief Pontiac

This great Indian Chief was assassinated here at Cahokia, Illinois in 1766. He was killed by a Peoria Indian "Kinnebou" who was noted for his sly and savage ways. He was hired by a British trader, who had hoped to put the blame on some one else.

Pontiac, for years, the absolute master of the Ottawa and Potawatomi, organized a great confederacy to revolt against British rule. The French, though Pontiac's good friends, would not give him the necessary guns and ammunition due to the treaty of 1763, between the French and Great Britain. Bows and arrows offered no defense to muskets and cannon, and thus the fragments of his confederacy laid down their rude implements of war, and drifted into the region bordering on the east bank of the Mississippi River, and Cahokia and the Village of St. Louis became the place of refuge for the once great and powerful Pontiac.

He became a frequent and welcome guest to Cahokia, where the French made him stately welcome. Thus it was on one of these visits, that the great chieftain met his death, the victim of a foul plot and a cowardly assassin who, under the guise of friendship, plunged his dagger into the heart of a noble Indian. He was buried within the village limits. Pontiac was later removed and buried in St. Louis.

Falling Springs

This is one of the romantic spots of Illinois. It is situated at the bluff, one mile southeast of Prairie du Pont village. It derives its name from a spring that gushes out of a perpendicular rock of the bluff, with a fall of sixty or seventy feet. This bluff at this point is about one hundred and thirty feet in height. The spring flows from an orifice situated midway between the top of the bluff and the rocky bottom beneath. Many years ago a grist mill was constructed at this point, and the water utilized for power; but no trace of it remains to be seen at this time.
The Cahokia Pilgrimage

(This trail must be taken in compliance with all the rules and regulations of the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, your Local Council, and the Troop 22 Trail Committee.)

Organized trail hiking has come to be one of the most outstanding phases of the Scouting program. Every year, more Scouting units plan for more hiking trails and trips as significant parts of their annual program. Scouts like to be on the trail. Boys enjoy the recreational features of a hike. By hiking, they further realize the history associated with the particular trail, and will be impressed by the hardships the early pioneers endured so we may have what is ours today.

Boy Scout Troop 22 has, as a major component of its program, organized trail hiking which has taken us to many sections of our country. We owe our deep appreciation to all who have been responsible for the trails scattered throughout the United States. We thank them for this opportunity to put into practice the principles of the Scout Oath and Law—the rules of all trails.

Thus, as our contribution to this end, we present THE CAHOKIA PILGRIMAGE.

WHO MAY QUALIFY?

The hike is primarily intended for Scouts, Explorers, and their leaders. The minimum age for the hikers is eleven years. The trail is also open for Senior Girl Scouts. By special request, other groups may make the pilgrimage and receive the award.

HOW TO MAKE APPLICATION

Application to take the hike should be made as a unit by the authorized adult leader of the unit. The trail application, plus the fees for the hikers must be received from the unit leader at least two weeks in advance of the intended date of the hike. This will allow you plenty of time to receive your credentials. It is also important that you bring these credentials when taking the trail.

The cost of the trail is two and one-half dollars for each hiker. This fee includes the costs of the Cahokia Pilgrimage Medal and Patch. However, when one is taking the trail again, only a one dollar fee is charged. This fee includes the cost of a miniature arrowhead to be attached to the ribbon of the medal. A bronze arrowhead will be awarded for the second time, a gold arrowhead for the third, and a silver arrowhead for the fourth. All hikers may purchase additional Pilgrimage patches for fifty cents each. The patch is not included in the trail fee for repeat hikers.

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PREPARATION FOR THE TRAIL

1. Read the history of Cahokia and the Cahokia Mounds in this booklet.
2. Be sure that reservations have been made so that you have individual credentials before starting the Pilgrimage.
3. Arrange for your own camping facilities. Refer to camping grounds lists.
4. It is highly recommended that there be one adult leader for every eight or ten boys making the trail.
5. Make your own arrangements for transportation when hike is finished. (Important)
6. Unit Leader should see that thorough instruction is given in highway safety, personal first aid, and hiking preparations and technique before taking the hike.
7. Bring small roll of adhesive tape, gauze, and antiseptic.

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ON THE TRAIL

1. The Scout uniform must be worn.
2. Check out at Cahokia Monks Mound.
3. Each group or unit must stay together on the trail with its Trail Leader in charge.
4. Use safety underpass near beginning of trail to cross U. S. highway No. 40.
5. The hike must be continuous.
6. Personally sign credential at end of trail.
7. Sign register book at old Holy Family Church.
8. Upon completion of the trail, completed credentials must be mailed to Cahokia Pilgrimage, 631 North 83rd Street, East St. Louis, Illinois.
Camping Grounds

Write in advance to:

CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE PARK, 7850 Collinsville Road, East St. Louis, Illinois.

CAMP VANDEVENTER—Mississippi Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America—510a Missouri Avenue, East St. Louis, Illinois.

GRAND MARAIS STATE PARK, Office 4500 Pocket Road, East St. Louis, Illinois.

We Salute

We are deeply grateful to each and every one who has aided in any way to make this historical Cahokia Pilgrimage possible. We are especially thankful to:

Father Joseph Mueller, Pastor of Holy Family Church.

State of Illinois—
Highway Division,
   Department of Parks and Memorials,
   Department of Conservation.

East Side Levee District.

Prairie du Pont Levee District.

Falling Springs Conservation League.

Robert Grimm, of the Greater St. Louis Archaeological Society.

Byron W. Knoblock, of the Illinois State Archaeological Society.

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Mississippi Valley Council, B. S. A.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 22.

All the Scout Hikers.

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The plans for the Cahokia Pilgrimage were worked out through the efforts of Charlie Orr, A. S. M., and John Eichelberger, S. M., both leaders of Troop 22.
REPEAT ARROWHEAD

Arrowheads are available for repeat hikers. They are in Bronze, Gold or Silver and are to be worn, centered on the Medal Ribbon.

A "Hundred Mile Certificate" is presented to all hikers who make the Pilgrimage for the fifth time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, WRITE TO—

Cahokia Pilgrimage
John Eichelberger
631 North 83rd Street
East St. Louis, Illinois

When in East St. Louis you may contact the above at Drexel 3-1451. Trail Committee men can be reached by calling—

BRidge 1-2582—Marion Lindsey, ASM
EXpress 7-0796—Harlan Elling, ASM
Drexel 3-3764—Dale Besse, ASM
Drexel 3-4050—Ray O’Neill, T.C.
EXpress 7-0419—Robert Davinroy, T.C.

THE PATCH (Actual Size)

The Cahokia Pilgrimage Patch is a four inch swiss embroidered emblem of three colors on a white background. The lettering and arrow are red, the church is brown and the borders and the mound are green.