SIUE field school
excavations
at the D. Hitchins Site
(Summer 2006)

The site

The red dot shows the location of the D. Hitchins site (11MS1124). The site was located in the uplands north of the American Bottom, on a bank above Sherry Creek. The canoe ride to Cahokia via Cahokia Creek would have been about 20 miles. Note that Holiday Lake to the west is a modern construction.
Site inhabitants had access to floodplain, upland, forest, and prairie resources.

Surface Survey

We surface collected approximately 35 acres in the vicinity of the D. Hitchins site. Artifacts were plotted with a GPS.
11MS1125 is located on a finger ridge just south of 11MS1124. We recovered a few flakes in our shovel tests, but no diagnostic artifacts.
In April of 2006, Dr. Mike Hargrave of Engineer Research and Development Center/Construction Engineering Research Laboratory conducted a magnetic gradient survey and an electrical resistance survey at the site. This is the map he made, with locations of excavation approximated:
Excavating at 11MS1124
North Block

This shot is facing west. That's a Holiday Shores water tower in the background.
Feature 1

Feature 1 produced no diagnostic artifacts, but appears to be an early Late Woodland pit feature. A Steuben point was found on the surface nearby.

Feature 2

Feature 2 is a pit feature containing early Late Woodland ceramics. It was located approximately one meter from Feature 1 (see the next picture below).
The central block contained a large concentration of FCR which created a strong anomaly in the magnetometer survey. Most of the FCR was in the plowzone; shown above at left is the undisturbed portion of the feature at the base of the plowzone. Disturbance south of the feature was ultimately determined to be the result of a tree fall.
Opening the south block

The south block began as a 2x2 meter unit to expose an anomaly that was detected in the magnetometer survey. Feature 3 was detected in the northeast corner of the 2x2, so the unit was expanded.

Feature 3

Feature 3 is now at the center of this 4x4 m unit. Several more features were partially uncovered, so the unit was expanded again.
Feature 3 etc.

Feature 3 is a storage pit at center. Feature 9 is a post structure north of Feature 3. Features 8 and 10 are pits located west of the post structure.

Mapping the south block
Excavating the south block

Feature 3

Feature 3 was a storage pit with Mississippian red-slipped shell-tempered sherds at its base.
Features 8 and 10
Processing pits

Feature 10 contained shell-tempered and grog-tempered sherds.

South block
looking southwest
All posts were bisected and shown to be vertical in profile.

Feature 18 was detected in the northeast corner of the south block on the final day of the excavation, so it was not excavated. It was located northeast of post structure Feature 9, and its fill looked similar to the fill in pit Features 8 and 10.
Lab work

Mississippian hunting and farming

Cahokia points

Hoe flakes
Erin Marks won a URA grant to support her 2007 senior project on the D. Hitchins site. Her grant paid for Marge Schroeder of the ISM to identify the plant remains. Erin made the cool graph above. They were definitely growing maize at the site, but were they shipping it downstream to Cahokia???