

agents, especially in cities. The river has “shaped” and been a “stage” for St. Louis’s “triumphs, embarrassments, joys and tragedies,” Wanko writes (7). Some of Iowa’s Mississippi River towns are within the orbit of St. Louis, and this story has similarities to those of the Quad Cities or Dubuque, albeit on a smaller scale. I hope this book inspires more river-city exhibits and books.

The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a “Lost White Race,” by Jason Colavito. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. vii, 386. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mary Wise is a PhD candidate in history at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on the Iowa effigy mounds and the establishment of Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeastern Iowa.

Jason Colavito’s timely work is not the first that historicizes the origin of the Mound Builder myth, but it is one that is incredibly accessible and serves as a one-stop-shop for all those interested in understanding the development, spread, and persistence of the “Lost Race” myth. According to Colavito, the Mound Builder myth alleged that a lost white race had built the massive earthworks found throughout the American Southeast and Midwest.

The work’s first two chapters chronicle the foundation of American archaeology and the rise of the Mound Builder myth. The third and fourth chapters explore how a fascination with ancient India intersected with early speculation about the identity of the mound builders. In the fourth chapter, Colavito identifies previously marginalized literary figures who worked diligently to expand the “Lost Race” mythology. Caleb Atwater’s biography features prominently here alongside several minor literary figures, like Solomon Spalding and Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, who worked to expand the mound builder mythology beyond high circulating popular magazines.

Colavito turns his attention to Mormonism and the relationship between Joseph Smith and the mythic lost race theory in the fifth and sixth chapters. His background as a blog writer is best put to use in these two chapters. It would be easy to get lost among the notable authors, theologians, and politicians who theorized about the identity of the mound builders, suggesting that ancient Phoenicians, shipwrecked ancient Israelites, or a lost group of Nordic explorers built the massive earthworks; but Colavito’s sense of humor strikes an effective balance and keeps the reader grounded.

Colavito's seventh and eighth chapters explore the relationship between the lost race myth and federal Indian policy. He explains how Andrew Jackson appropriated the main tenets of the Mound Builder myth to justify Indian Removal. Colavito describes Jackson's belief that Native Americans, like the Creek and Cherokee, descended from the "savage" and "ruthless" people who exterminated a civilized white race. This thinking represented an evolution of the "Lost Race" theory as it entered the political arena. Chapters nine through twelve focus on twentieth-century evolutions of the Mound Builder myth and lost race theory. Again, Colavito's background as a cultural critic and writer are well utilized in these last three chapters. His conclusion which recounts the development of HP Lovecraft's fascination with American Indians is particularly compelling.

Readers eager to learn about the effigy mounds in northeastern Iowa will be disappointed; the Hawkeye state is not mentioned despite its role in dispelling the Mound Builder myth. For those interested in Iowa's archaeological history, Bill Whittaker, Lance Foster, Marshall McKusik, and Lynn Marie Alex, among others, have written excellent works that investigate the mound builder controversy in Iowa while simultaneously exploring Iowa's rich Indian history and culture.

At times, Colavito's work speculates too much, and one laments the missed opportunities to engage with a rich and nuanced characterization of early American leaders. In the second chapter, for example, Colavito says that Hector Saint John de Crèvecoeur "would have understood" that colonists' belief that the mounds were built by the lost tribes of Israel was intellectual baggage brought over from England (41–42). His work would be stronger if he had used these pages to historicize early modern conceptions of race rather than speculate about what Crèvecoeur knew or did not know.

There are also moments in his work that leave the reader longing for deeper engagement with relevant literature. First, Colavito's work does not engage with recent Native American Studies literature nor are current Indigenous voices woven into the text. Although his prologue beautifully weaves Indigenous perspectives into the text by using imperial Spanish records, the next five chapters focus almost exclusively on settler colonial ideas about earthworks. More seriously, Colavito's characterizations of the founding fathers are quite flat. No better example is provided than in Colavito's discussion of Thomas Jefferson. *The Mound Builder Myth* asserts that Jefferson truly sought a peaceful and just solution to the "Indian Problem" (118–19). Perhaps Colavito should have looked to references to the Cherokee in Jefferson's 1776 correspondence, "Nothing will reduce those wretches so soon as pushing the

war into the heart of their country. . . . I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi" (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 1950, 485–87).

Colavito's greatest contribution in this work is that he adds new historical figures who spread the "Lost Race" myth. The biographical approach used in the first half of the work introduces a rich literary and intellectual landscape that explains why the myth of a lost white race of mound builders persisted. As a general introduction, this is a particularly compelling work that should be read alongside scholarship from Indigenous Studies like Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*.

The History of Starved Rock, by Mark Walczynski. Ithaca and London: Northern Illinois University Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2020. 242 pp. Illustrations, timeline, notes, bibliography, index. \$17.95 paperback.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history emeritus at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the author of numerous books, including *Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism* (1997) and most recently, *Iowa State Parks: A Century of Stewardship, 1920–2020* (2020).

Mark Walczynski has written "the" history of Starved Rock, which became Illinois' first state park in 1911, not "a" history of this place. The distinction is worth noting because the author has produced an exhaustively researched history—hence a bibliography as well as endnotes—and because he takes care to distinguish the past as informed by the historical record from the body of lore associated with Starved Rock. As the park historian at Starved Rock State Park, Walczynski is well qualified to know the difference.

Called Le Rocher or Le Roché by the French, this prominent sandstone outcropping on the Illinois River in northwestern Illinois was a landmark for early explorers. In the larger context of European settlement and the concomitant displacement of native peoples in the Great Lakes region, the Mississippi Valley, and the Ohio Valley, it is but one notable landmark, but the author explicitly set out to "view historical events from the perspective of Starved Rock, tracing history as it unfolds on and around the famous site" (4). While one does not need to know the larger historical context in order to follow events, there are passages where more backstory on the Intercolonial Wars between the French and British would be helpful. Similarly, strategically placed