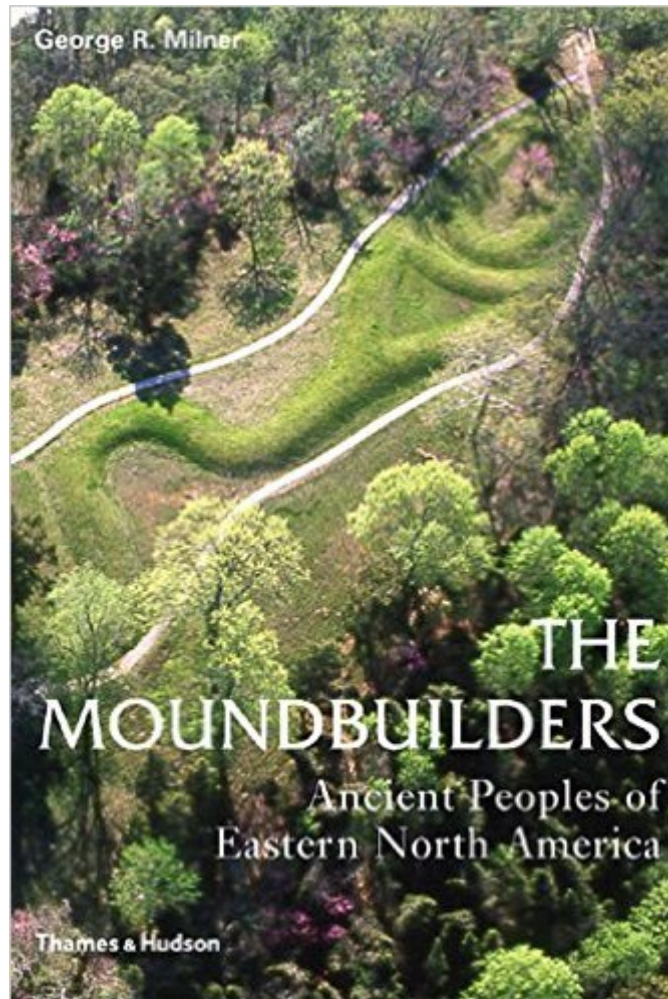


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The Moundbuilders: Ancient Peoples Of Eastern North America (Ancient Peoples And Places)



Synopsis

Nineteenth-century explorers of the American continent were amazed to find great monuments built of earth in the Eastern Woodlands. Thousands of these mounds were discovered in the plains and forests—some up to a hundred feet high, some overgrown hillocks, some conical, others flat-topped. Speculation was rife as to the identity of the moundbuilders. As George Milner shows, research over the past century demonstrates conclusively that Native Americans built these mounds. In a period ranging from 3000 BC to the sixteenth century AD, North American Indians quarried tons of earth to form the monuments, which vary widely in location, size, and purpose. Some contained thousands of burials, others served as platforms for chiefs' residences, and many were low-lying "effigy" mounds in the form of serpents, panthers, and other sacred beasts. Moundbuilding was a key element in society—how people worshiped gods, buried the dead, remembered their ancestors, and respected their leaders—and many beautiful objects have been found inside the mounds, including artifacts of shell, copper, and mica. *The Moundbuilders* covers the entire sweep of Eastern Woodlands prehistory, with an emphasis on how societies developed from hunter-gatherers to village farmers and town-dwellers. Great strides have been made in recent research, and many of the most impressive mounds, such as Poverty Point, Cahokia, and Moundville, are described and discussed in detail. This wide-ranging and copiously illustrated book, complete with information on dozens of sites to visit, is the perfect guide to the region for tourists, archaeologists, and students. 153 illustrations, 20 in color

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very good introduction to the peoples who left behind the impressive mounds in eastern North America. This book is pitched at an undergraduate level. Milner provides a chronologically arranged review of the prehistory of eastern North America. He sticks closely to the archaeology of sites and is careful to avoid speculation beyond what the often modest evidence provides. Milner is a workmanlike writer who does a solid job of describing excavations and their probable significance. The illustrations are very good and there is a nice appendix describing sites that can be visited. Deficiencies of this book are that there is relatively little discussion of why cultures changed. Were there climactic factors? Some comparisons with other evolving cultures of the Americas could have been enlightening.

A good general reference, with well placed illustrations, maps and photographs. This book gives an overview of the ancient cultures grounded in archaeology without too much extrapolation and dramatization on the part of the author about how people thought or acted.

I know George Milner and wanted to read his thoughts on the development of eastern North American prehistoric culture history. I liked the book since he expressed many of the underlying thoughts I have had on the subject and he was able to express them very eloquently.

Having visited Cahokia and Moundville in West Virginia, I was looking for books with other potential sites to visit and this book was very informative and I am looking forward to visiting other sites in Ohio, in particular.

Lots of info very well presented. Used as a reference when traveling. I also give it five stars because how much info is out there really in a comprehensive package? I noticed they were selling it at the Serpent Mound Gift Shop.

If you want to know more about the mound-builders of the Ohio valley, don't read this book. I rate this 2 stars because it is well written. Some of the details of the digs were OK. I bought this book while on tour of some of these sights. I am a retired aerospace engineer and I found the academic style of writing to be outdated and boring. Page 74, "One way to provide a taste of the rich diversity in earthwork shapes and sizes is to discuss them in terms of three categories: small circles; large circles, squares, and other shapes; and hilltop enclosures..." Not much information coming from this

statement of the three shapes: round, squares and other. The author mentions Squire and Davis but never shows their work. Why not? Is this not a survey of mounds? On page 76 the author mentioned highly irregular hilltop enclosures without photos, or anything from Squire and Davis survey. Then on the same page the author states, "...and sometimes they ringed entire hilltops, including the huge Fort Ancient earthwork in Southwestern Ohio that enclosed about 125 acres..." Page 77 has photos of flatland small mounds for some unknown reason while talking about hilltop "forts?". Page 78 continues to talk about these hilltop enclosures. These hilltop enclosures and those with burned out pushed over wooden palisades are most likely sights of great violence. If an anthropologist can stand inside a fort and not understand what may have gone on "back in the day", what else is he missing? Go visit some of these earthen sights, they are much more interesting than this book would hint at. In fact, there is much more controversy surrounding these mounds than the author has admitted and the controversies are lots of fun.

Husband very much enjoyed this book about the Mississippi moundbuilders and the location of existing mounds for some day trips

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