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desertion informing one's youth, or other "Sins of Our Fathers" (enumerated in said poem) which incur a legacy of guilt and perpetuate a "cycle of nightmares" (p. 70). Thematically related is "Fathers," in which—in the wake of family deaths and incestuous terror—the remaining son and father try to communicate through silence across the gulf and the injury that divide them. Significantly, the healing of personal suffering evolves only from a purging vision of collective strife embodied in Chief Red Cloud, whose therapeutic mirroring in "Poem of Pain" enables a literal and figurative rainbow. Here Chief Red Cloud's soothing presence facilitates, through chanting and cosmic encapsulation, an exodus of agony which, in the third part of Silex's longest and most complex, comprehensive poem "Home—the Four-Cornered Round House," is otherwise inescapable. Each vignette of this poem contains a sense of foreboding; the potentially destructive forces it portrays are possessive and demanding. This tense dynamic results in the precarious imbalance and oxymoronic incongruity the title bespeaks.

In reading the closing, untitled poem, the reader is immensely relieved at the possibility that the speaker, a "hieroglyph undeciphered/lost even to [him]self" (p. 78), will be able to forgive himself for the survivor culpability that his loyalty to siblings inaccurately, but understandably, constructs as his. His at-one-ment/atonement proffers the restorative segue for him to remember his shattered life, to read the downward-spiraling consequences of his father's abandonment for both what they are and what they are not, to hear and heed at last the voiced silence of his own heart from whence he can retrieve the absolution that will mend and assuage the wound and ease the residual psychic grief that permeates this poetry.

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Town Creek Indian Mound: A Native American Legacy. By Joffre Lanning Coe. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. 338 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

Town Creek, a small (roughly five acres) palisaded village containing a single flat-topped pyramidal mound dating to the Mississippian period (circa A.D. 1350), was the ceremonial center for

the Pee Dee Focus of southern North Carolina. The site is unusual in a number of ways. It is the only Mississippian site east of the Appalachians in North Carolina. Apparently it was a strictly ceremonial site, with few permanent residents. Most importantly, however, it has been the focus of more than fifty years of continual research under a single archaeologist: Joffre Lanning Coe. This volume was written as both a celebration of fifty years of research and as an accessible synoptic picture of what that research has produced. *Town Creek Indian Mound* contains fifteen chapters and two appendices covering all aspects of the archaeological research program and the artifacts recovered through it. A good bibliography and index are also included. The text is quite readable and includes definitions of jargon and explanations of technical details that make the volume easily accessible to nonarchaeologists. The volume is richly illustrated with black-and-white photographs and line drawings, and was elegantly produced with glossy pages and solid binding.

The first two chapters outline the history of the site from its discovery through its excavation by the WPA, to its adoption as a North Carolina state historic site. The next three chapters detail the research methods used to investigate the site. One of the most remarkable things about the Town Creek excavations were the methods employed: Topsoil was cleared from a 10' by 10' (CHANGE MARKS IN PAGEMAKER) square, features were identified, the square was photographed from a platform twelve feet above it, and, in about half the cases, the square was covered over (features were excavated in the other half of the cases), and the same process begun on the next square. By 1984 (when excavations ceased) more than 95 percent of the site had been uncovered and photographed in this way. The result is a "photo mosaic" of the site—a virtually unparalleled picture of the archaeological remains at a Mississippian center. However, those hoping to see the complete photo mosaic and site maps will be disappointed, since only small snippets are included.

The next three chapters discuss the stone, plant, and animal resources, respectively, used by the Town Creek peoples. Few data and almost no comparative analyses are presented, but together these chapters form a helpful overview of the Town Creek environment. The next three chapters deal, respectively, with pottery, chipped and ground stone tools, and pipes, ornaments, and implements. These, like the chapters on resources, are basically descriptive, but do a nice job of outlining the material

culture of the Town Creek peoples. Two chapters dealing with the physical anthropology and burial practices of the Town Creek residents follow. Again, these are largely descriptive and offer no information on the important question of the cultural affinities of the Town Creek peoples (only five skeletons are analyzed in the physical anthropology chapter). Some will object to the rather insensitive statements made in these chapters that human remains are better off in the hands of scholars who can preserve and study them (a rather odd argument, since virtually no research has been done on the remains of the 226 individuals excavated at Town Creek) rather than in the ground. The book's most interesting chapter describes the reconstruction of the house on top of the mound by Stanley South in 1957. It discusses research done to determine construction materials and techniques, and explains how the reconstruction itself was accomplished. A final chapter describes the ongoing interpretive program at the Town Creek Indian Mound.

Despite the wealth of information presented in *Town Creek Indian Mound*, the volume is not a scholarly synoptic site report. Indeed Coe himself says, "This publication is not the final report on our work at Town Creek. It is the first effort to summarize what we have done there. . ." (p. xix). One immediately wonders why it took fifty years to produce this "first effort," and Coe has an answer: "That is just the way it happened" (p. xix). Perhaps, but I find such delay inexcusable. Coe is clearly defensive on this point, and he attempts to make the case that any earlier interpretation "would probably be wrong today" (p. xix). His approach seems to dismiss the likelihood that interpretations in *Town Creek Indian Mound* will be considered wrong fifty years from now, too. And it seems to dismiss the fact that works written fifty years ago—such as Moorehead's *Etowah Papers* (1932) and Lewis and Kneberg's *Hiwassee Island* (1946)—despite their misinterpretations, became focal points for Southeastern research; they generated questions and provided first glimpses of the Southeast's rich prehistoric record. One can only wonder what valuable questions and insights this volume would have led to had it been published in 1945 rather than 1995.

Publication of this "first effort" to summarize research at Town Creek was prompted by a 1987 symposium, and most of the chapters retain ten-year-old bibliographies. Indeed, I could find only fifteen references in the bibliography dating after 1987 (and twenty-four dating before 1900), and some of the analyses are

already outdated. For example, the discussion of textiles on pages 175 and 176 contains no references to the recent work of Penelope Drooker (for example, *Mississippian Village Textiles at Wickliffe*, University of Alabama Press, 1992)—a significant oversight, since both her knowledge of weaving and her work on Mississippian textiles themselves have fundamentally transformed our understanding of the manufacture and social contexts of these items. Similarly, the discussion of what has been interpreted as an earth lodge at the site contains no mention of Lewis Larson's recent critique ("The Case for Earth Lodges in the Southeast," in *Ocmulgee Archaeology*, ed. D. Hally, University of Georgia Press, 1994) of the idea that earth lodges existed in the Southeast at all. This is a particularly unfortunate oversight, since the Town Creek earth lodge was not included in Larson's analyses and may provide an example to counter Larson's argument.

The question of earth lodges in the prehistoric Southeast is just one of many questions that could be informed by data from the Town Creek site. Unfortunately, because this is not a scholarly report, few data are presented. Indeed, many of the findings in *Town Creek Indian Mound* are presented with too little supporting evidence even to evaluate them adequately. In the case of the earth lodge, for example, photos and sections of the earth lodge remains are presented, but no details are given of differential artifact content, of soil types and changes, or of any other information that would allow the critical reader to assess the likelihood that a pre-mound earth lodge in fact existed. One hopes those of us interested in answering questions like this do not have to wait another fifty years for the comprehensive scholarly publication on Town Creek to be produced.

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The Way of the Earth: Native America and the Environment. By John Bierhorst. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1994. 329 pages. \$15.00 cloth; \$14.00 paper.

This is one of those books that can be classified as necessary reading for all who wish to study Native Americans. Comprehension of how traditional native people related to their environment is essential in understanding what is termed Indian thought. The