

hoped to conduct a scientific study. Pooling donations from various institutions and individuals, he purchased the land where Craig Mound stood for \$600. Between June 1936 and October 1941, with labor supplied by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and a team of graduate students, he supervised the excavation of Spiro Mounds. When the United States entered World War II, Clements closed up shop, literally. He wrote only one article on Spiro. Kenneth Orr, one of the graduate students who participated in the excavation, published the first substantial studies of Spiro artifacts in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Both contemporaries and later archaeologists criticized Clements for his destructive excavation methods, his failure to keep the Spiro collection together, and his meager publication record. Some even blamed him for the ruin of Craig Mound because, supposedly, he could have found a way to collaborate equitably with the Pocola men.

In *Looting Spiro Mounds*, David La Vere recounts both the history of Spiro Mounds, from 800 to 1450 CE, and the rediscovery of the site in the 1930s. Both are engaging stories. Unfortunately for the reader, however, La Vere tells the stories in alternating chapters. He would have done better to present the history of Spiro as a continuation of the site's rediscovery. By showing how professional archaeologists of the late twentieth century worked out the development and decline of Mississippian culture at the site, La Vere could have further emphasized the tragedy of the looting and reinforced his message about the value of professional techniques and laws to safeguard sites.

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Dean J. Saitta 2007. *The Archaeology of Collective Action*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida. xx, 140p. ills; maps. ISBN 9780813030708.

Reviewed by Tim Murray

The University Press of Florida lists this as the first in a new series “American Experience in Archaeological Perspective” which will be under the editorship of Michael Nassaney. Part of the goal of this new series is to make archaeology accessible to the public and to show how archaeological interventions can be meaningful (and potentially valuable) in the lives of others. For Nassaney (and indeed Saitta) the strength of engagement has the capacity to transform (reform?) archaeology from a discipline of middle class concerns that needs to be dragged back from the brink of irrelevancy (Saitta's words). Indeed Saitta wholeheartedly embraces engagement as a means of getting the discipline onto a new footing:

As emphasized throughout this book, the battle today is first and foremost for the hearts and minds of citizens having pressing existential concerns and relatively short memories. A better understanding of collective action in history – one focused on meaningful differences, deepened and enriched by archaeological knowledge, and better translated as a piece of public memory – promises interventions that can benefit society and help perpetuate our craft a distinctive contributor to public discourse and debate (p. 112).

Weighty aspirations indeed.

Saitta uses an exercise in community archaeology to define and describe what he calls the ‘archaeology of collective action’. This comprises ‘collective action’ amongst a group of archaeologists associated with the Colorado Coalfield War Archaeological Project (that also engaged with people outside professional archaeology), and an archaeological exploration of ‘collective action’ at the industrial level – particularly Colorado Coalfield Strike of 1913–1914. The book is roughly divided into two – chapters devoted towards developing the theory of the archaeology of collective action that overlie a foundational discussion of the socio-political context Saitta wants to traverse, and chapters that discuss the history and archaeology of the Ludlow tent colony, which was the focus of a violent clash between the strikers and the state militia. The outcome of this short, but at times fascinating, book is pretty predictable. The theoretical sections are much less powerful and interesting than the

community archaeology of Ludlow and the history of conflict that the archaeological research brings back to life. Of particular importance were the honest and on the whole successful attempts made by the archaeologists to listen to the community (many of whom had direct connections to the place and its people), and to give something concrete back to the people of Colorado. Stripped of all the theoretical and pretty self-conscious huffing and puffing that bookends this work, *The Archaeology of Collective Action* contains much that is both brave and true.

Jeremy A. Sabloff and William L. Fash (eds) 2007. *Gordon R. Willey and American Archaeology*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. xii, 252p. ill. Hardcover. ISBN 9780806138053.

Reviewed by Tim Murray

Although Kent Flannery no longer writes fables populated by Great Synthesizers, Real Mesoamerican Archaeologists or indeed Skeptical Graduate Students, and today's graduate students may well regard *The Early Mesoamerican Village* (1976) as being hopelessly out of date, reading about Gordon Willey makes you wonder whether they still make them like that anymore. Almost everything about Willey was exceptional – his range of archaeological field areas, his theoretical and methodological influences, the scale of his intellect and the level of his productivity.

The idea behind this excellent book is a simple, yet very effective one. Sabloff, Fash and their contributors want to celebrate Willey's memory and of the (obviously positive) influence he had on their lives as archaeologists. Nothing particularly novel in this, given the large number of *festschriften* that populate the stacks of our libraries. Much more novel was the idea of taking ten of Willey's most famous and influential papers and having contemporary archaeologists, expert in the relevant areas, provide reactions to them. It is fascinating stuff as we witness a re-exploration of core issues of method and theory using materials from sites right across the Americas. Fash's introduction and Sabloff's conclusion top and tail the uniformly interesting and mostly excellent contributions.

There is another excellent reason to buy this book. The editors close their acknowledgements with: "The royalties for this volume will go to the endowment for the Gordon R. Willey Award of the Archaeology Division of the American Anthropological Association. We believe this to be a fitting destination because Willey served as the association's president and because the award is given to archaeologists whose writing and research enhance our profession".

Brian M. Fagan 2007. *Return to Babylon. Travellers, Archaeologists, and Monuments in Mesopotamia* (revised edn). Boulder, Co.: University Press of Colorado. xx, 386p. ill.; maps. ISBN 9780870818677.

Reviewed by Tim Murray

Like many students of the history of archaeology I read the first (1979) edition of *Return to Babylon* as much for pleasure as for instruction. Fagan's relaxed style suited the material, which was a potent cocktail of romance, mystery, skullduggery, and at times (especially when it came to the inimitable Henry Creswick Rawlinson) sheer genius. It was, and remains still, epic stuff that provided many of the high points of archaeological achievement from decipherment to an understanding of the history of civilization. All the pre- World War II highlights were there: Ur, Babylon, Nineveh, and the strong sense that these foundations in the dust (to paraphrase Seton Lloyd) were the foundations of civilization in the sense that Gordon Childe meant it. These were the years when Mesopotamia was part of the Turkish Empire and later to be briefly an adjunct to an already failing British Empire.

This second edition retains all these great stories and updates the narrative with some new information