



NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title “A Nation Now Extinct,” American Indian Origin Theories as of 1820: Samuel L. Mitchill, Martin Harris, and the New York Theory

Author(s) Richard E. Bennett

Reference *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20/2 (2011): 30-51.

ISSN 1948-7487 (print), 2167-7565 (online)

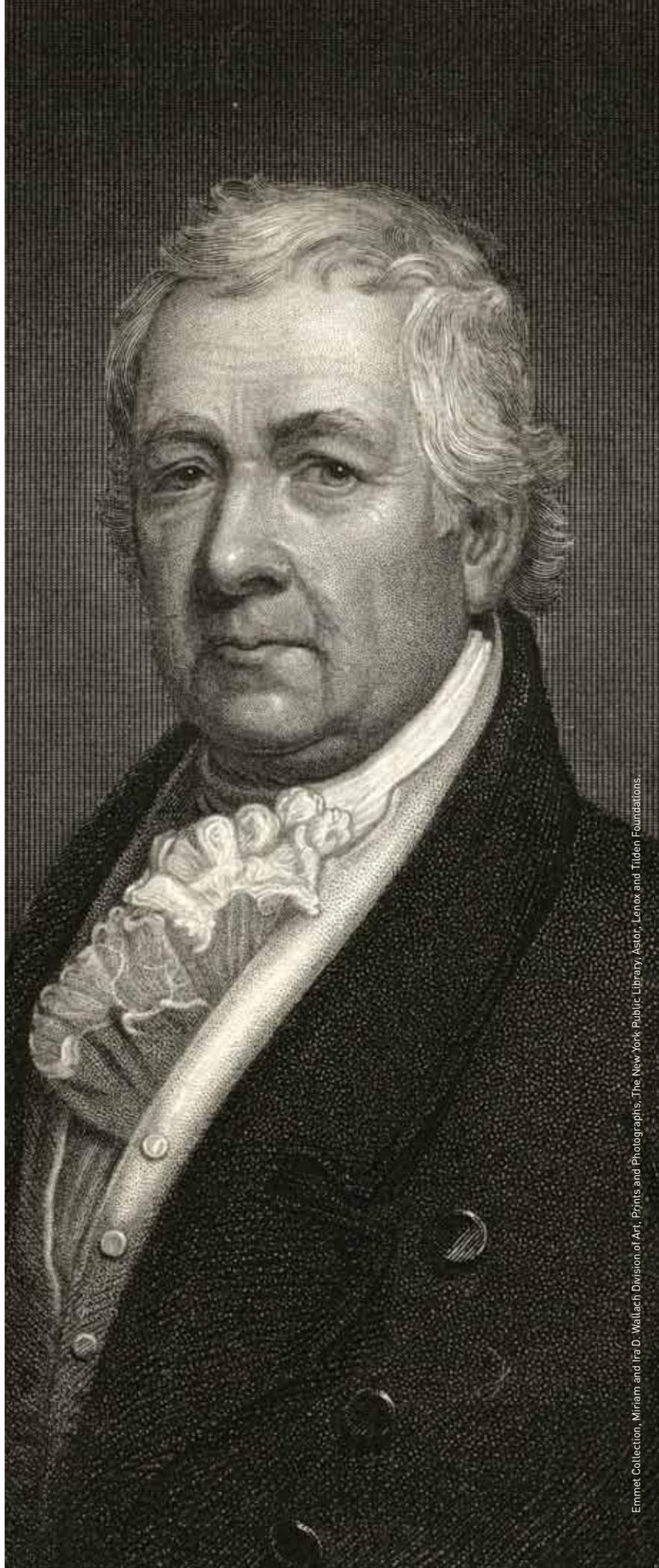
Abstract This paper probes the theories of the origin of the American Indian up to the time of the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon. It covers some three hundred years of development, looking at many different theories, including the predominant theory of the lost tribes of Israel, which was in decline among most leading scientific observers in the early nineteenth century. The paper covers new ground in showing that Professor Samuel L. Mitchill, formerly of Columbia College, had concluded that two main groups of people once dominated the Americas—the Tartars of northern Asia and the Australasians of the Polynesian islands. Furthermore, they fought one another for many years, culminating in great battles of extermination in what later became upstate New York. This New York theory has much in common with the Book of Mormon. While visiting Professor Charles Anthon in New York in 1828, Martin Harris also met with Mitchill, an encounter that lent support to Harris’s work on the Book of Mormon.

“A
NATION
NOW
EXTINCT,”
AMERICAN
INDIAN
ORIGIN
THEORIES
AS OF 1820:

SAMUEL L.
MITCHILL,
MARTIN HARRIS,
AND THE
NEW YORK
THEORY

RICHARD E. BENNETT

Samuel Mitchill (1764–1831) met with Martin Harris to review the Anthon transcript.





Photograph by Charles R. Savage, ca. 1870. Courtesy of the Church History Library.

The anthropological study of the origins of the American native peoples has for centuries proved a daunting and most controversial enterprise, and the arguments still continue. The first purpose of this paper is to trace and comment on the leading interpretations of the provenance of the aboriginal peoples of the Western Hemisphere from shortly after Christopher Columbus down to the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon, a period of over three hundred years. Secondly, it is also a careful probing of where these theories stood among leading American scientific inquirers in the early nineteenth century at the time of, or contemporary to, the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon. Finally, it will also show that the essentials of one leading school of American thought—what I will denominate the New York theory—as propounded by Professor Samuel L. Mitchill (1764-1831) of Columbia College and De Witt Clinton (1769-1828), governor of the Empire State, had much in consonance with Book of Mormon history and anthropology.

As I have demonstrated in a recently published companion article, Professor Mitchill, on meeting with Martin Harris in February 1828 and after studying carefully his so-called Anthon transcript, set it down as a genuine linguistic record of an ancient American people which was “now extinct” and “which he named.”¹ A delicate people he called “Australasians” were ultimately destroyed by a hardier, more warlike Asiatic people in a protracted series of ferocious wars culminating in one final battle of extermination, which both Mitchill and Governor Clinton traced to the Boughton Hill region near Palmyra, New York. After his meeting with the celebrated Professor Mitchill, who showed such interest in his findings, Harris returned to Palmyra confirmed and more committed than ever before to mortgage his farm, if necessary, to finance the printing of Joseph Smith’s “gold Bible.”

The Early Theories

In order to be understood and appreciated, the New York theory must be put into the long line of ever-changing interpretations of Indian origins. Like

Martin Harris (1783-1875) returned to Palmyra after his visit with Professor Mitchill committed to finance the printing of Joseph Smith’s “gold Bible.”



After the arrival of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) in the Americas, other European explorers and later colonists attempted to account for the puzzling provenance of the Native Americans.

a long, slow-moving freight train going by, one theory follows after another. From almost the moment Christopher Columbus first landed in the Americas in 1492, European explorers and later colonists have attempted to account for the puzzling provenance of the Native American aborigines of both North and South America. As Benjamin Smith Barton once wrote, “The opinions of writers concerning the origin, or parental countries, of the Americans are as numerous as the tribes and nations who inhabit this vast portion of the earth.”² This topic still has closely guarded secrets and adamantly defies casual explanation. However, as Lee Huddleston has shown in his

excellent study, Columbus himself never questioned the existence of peoples in the New World for the simple reason that “he did not know it was a New World.” A generation passed before Europeans began to realize that America was not just an eastern extension of India and Asia. The realization that the Americas were indeed a New World probably began with the explorer Amerigo Vespucci, who, after charting coastlines from Argentina to Carolina, wrote of a “Mundus Novus,” or New World, in the early 1500s, one that at least could not be Asia.³

As far as we know, neither Columbus nor Vespucci ever speculated on the origins of the peoples they discovered. Probably the first to do so was Pedro Mártir de Anglería, whose highly popular *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo* was first published in 1511. Basing his chronologies and narratives on firsthand reports from returning conquistadores, he speculated that at least some of the Native Americans were Scythians from northeast Asia who had somehow anciently come over to the Americas, thereby giving rise to one of the most enduring of all origin theories.⁴

The most popular early explanations were some variant of the so-called Atlantis theory in which ancient Middle Eastern and African peoples and animals had migrated to the west either by land via the ancient lost continent of Atlantis or by dint of their navigational prowess. The legend of Atlantis, of there having been an advanced civilization on a giant island in the Atlantic Ocean, is said to have been taught by Plato and Aristotle. This massive, now-sunken continent, extending from the Canary Islands west to the Americas, purportedly served as a land bridge for the earliest populations of the Americas. Though discredited by most careful observers as early as 1600, the lost continent theory has lived on in folklore and superstition, most recently popularized in the nineteenth-century writings of Charles Stephen Brasseur de Bourbourg and Ignatius Donnelly.⁵

FROM THE EDITOR:

If you have ever wondered why Martin Harris would return from his visit with Charles Anthon and promptly commit to support the publication of the Book of Mormon, Professor Richard E. Bennett has produced an answer. Though Anthon in the end gave an entirely negative response to Martin and, in his later recollections of the event, warned Martin that he was being duped, the other messages Martin received on that same journey must have helped him decide that Joseph Smith was not trying to swindle him.

A slightly more credible and enduring version of the Atlantis theory is the Carthaginian, or Phoenician, theory, which put sufficient stock in the navigational abilities of the ancient Carthaginians of North Africa and in the Phoenicians to have found, by crossing the Atlantic in sailing ships, the New World. Unable to explain sufficiently the navigation and settlement of vast numbers of animals, human families, and culture, this theory likewise lacked popular support.⁶

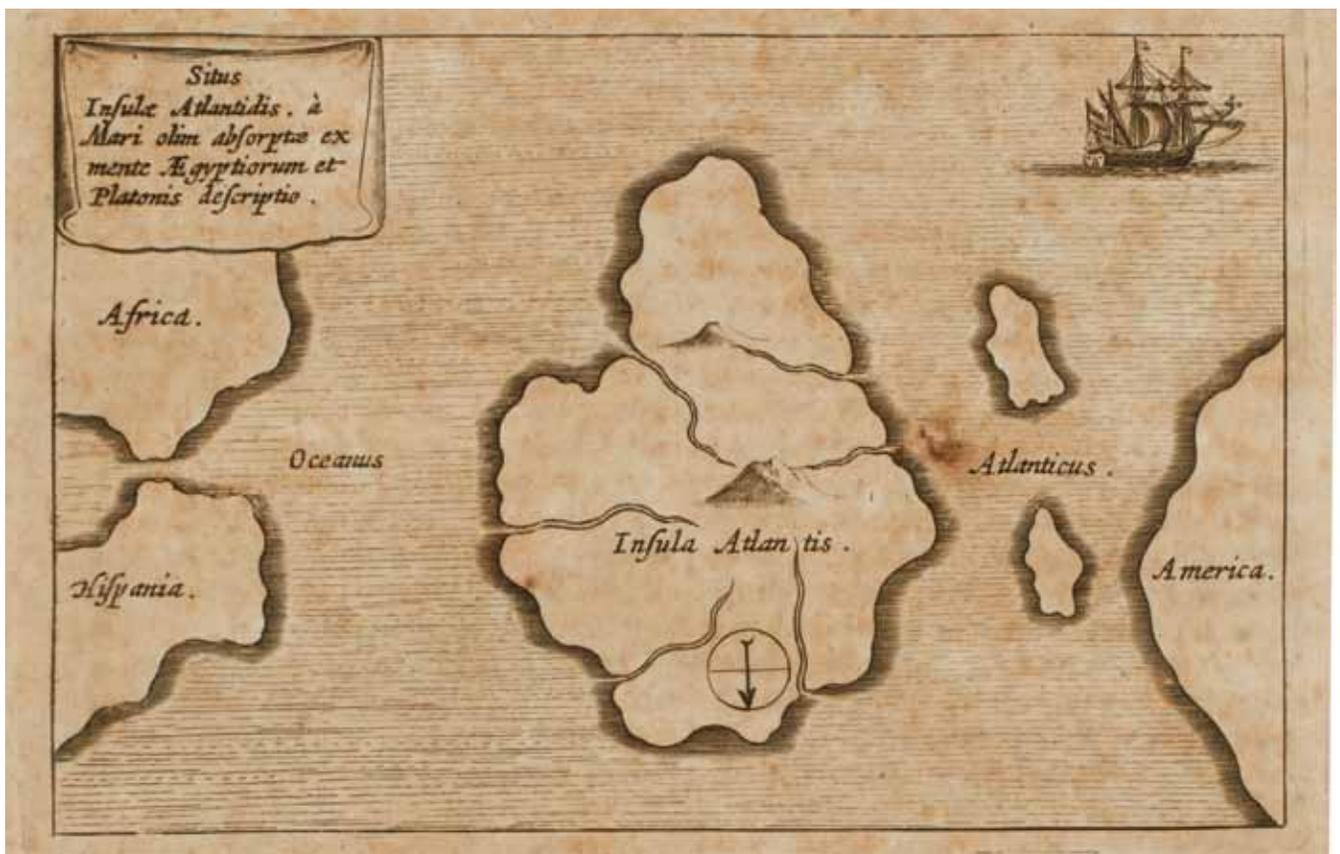
The other sideline explanations—which included the Canaanite, Ophirian, and Welsh theories—also did not gain much acceptance. The Canaanite theory, first espoused by Suárez de Peralta, claimed that the Indians had descended from Ham, son of Noah, who had been cursed of God along with all his descendants.⁷ The Canaanite theory generated little support, based as it was on an excessively narrow reading of the Old Testament and detached from careful field observations.

In 1681 Diego Andres Rocha proposed the Spanish origin theory. Convinced that God had purposely

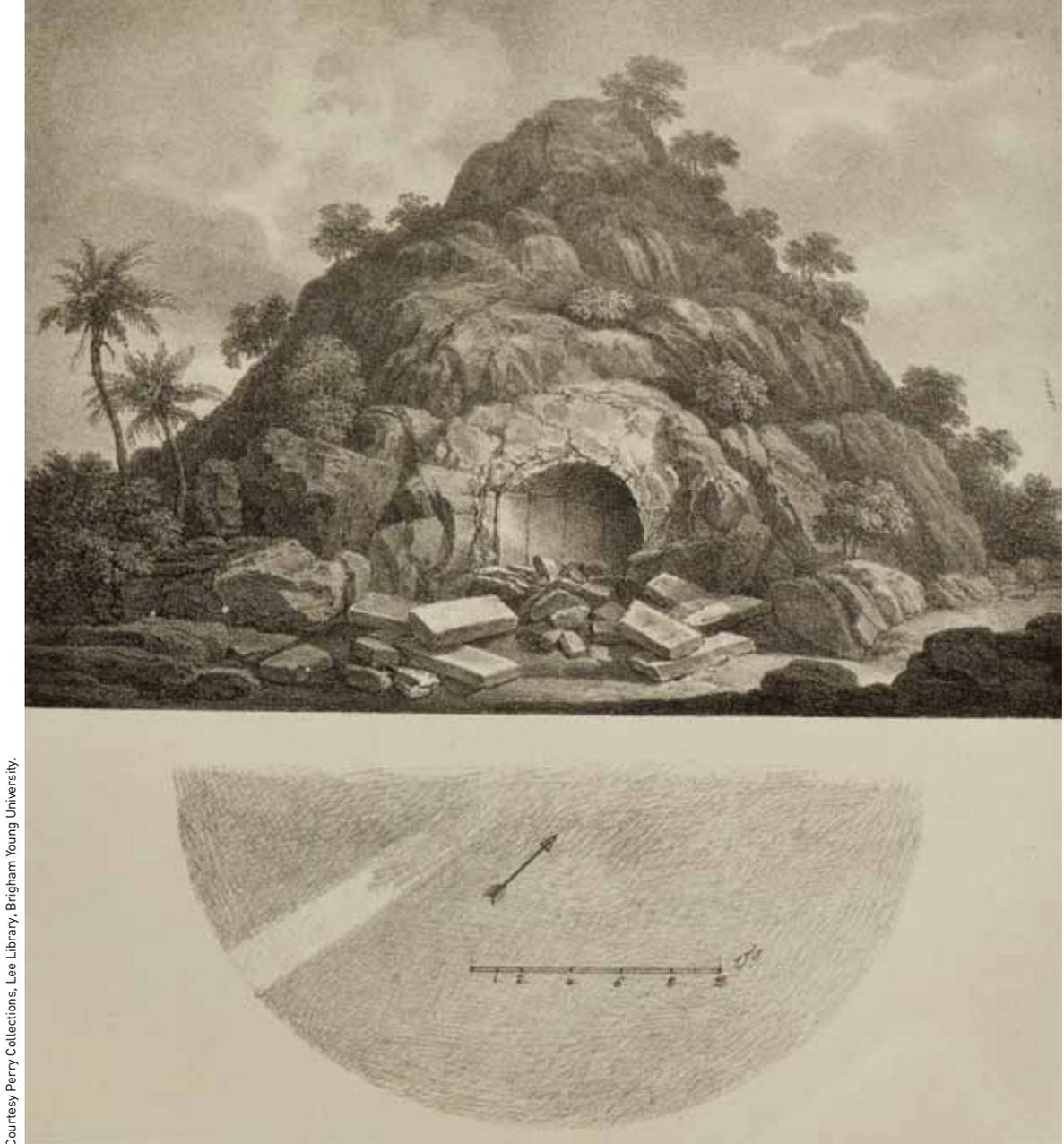
The question of origins proved so puzzling that some began to propose a pre-Adamite or polygenism theory—that is, that the New World Indian originated from a separate creation of God altogether different from the biblical account of the Garden of Eden.

allowed Spain to discover the New World and its native peoples because such were of ancient Spanish origin, Rocha maintained that the West Indies, after Noah’s flood, “began to be populated by the descendants of Japheth, son of Noah. From Japheth descended Tubal, who settled Spain . . . (with) his descendants . . . and these, as they were neighbors to the Isla Atlántida, came as settlers by way of it and arrived at Tierra Firme.”⁸ Because of his sloppy scholarship, a priori arguing, and lack of new evidence, Rocha was never taken seriously, either in Spain or anywhere else.

One of the most popular early theories of the origins of the Indians proposed the migration of peoples to the west via the ancient lost continent of Atlantis. Athanasius Kircher’s map of Atlantis (ca. 1665). Note the orientation.



Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.



Courtesy Perry Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

In his zealous support of the lost tribes theory, Englishman Lord Kingsborough published lavishly illustrated volumes, including prints of American archaeological sites. Illustration from Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*, vol. 4.

The Ophirian theory gained only slightly greater attention, despite its biblical moorings. First proposed by Benito Arias Montano in 1572 and again ten years later by Miguel Cabello Valboa, it traced native origins to a great-great-great-grandson of Noah named Ophir, who “after the confusion of tongues . . . moved to the Far East where he became the ancestor of the seafaring peoples of that area. From there the descendants of Ophir went to America where they settled in Peru.”⁹ The theory lacked credibility and generated few followers after 1600.

In 1589, at a time when Spanish writers dominated the native origins debate, Richard Hakluyt published his twelve-volume work, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*. Hakluyt revived an old theory, first

presented by David Powell, that the Welsh Prince Madoc, in order to escape civil wars, had migrated in about AD 1170 to the West, where he and his people joined up with other unknown, more ancient inhabitants in settling the Americas. Certain it was, he argued, that “Christians had been there before the coming of the Spaniards.”¹⁰ As British interest in the Americas grew in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this ancient Welsh legend took on more prominence. In 1797 George Bruder revisited Hakluyt’s work and argued anew for similarities between Indian and Welsh dialects, thereby justifying Great Britain’s expense in exploring and settling the New World.¹¹ Of only passing interest, this theory also generated few followers.

The question of origins proved so puzzling that some began to propose a pre-Adamite or polygenism

theory—that is, that the New World Indian originated from a separate creation of God altogether different from the biblical account of the Garden of Eden. Philippus Theophrastus, a German physician born just one year after Columbus’s discovery, was one of the first to make this claim. Other observers—including Sir Walter Raleigh, Thomas Harriot, and Christopher Marlowe—believed likewise and thus brought down upon them the ire of the Roman Catholic Church. Isaac de la Peyrere, a French Calvinist writing in the mid-seventeenth century, nevertheless echoed the same sentiment when he argued for a “double creation,” only one of which was destroyed by the great flood.¹²

A century later Bernard Romans, a British cartographer who traveled extensively among the Seminole tribes in Florida, wrote that God “created an original man and woman in this part of the globe, of different species from any in the other parts.”¹³ In America, perhaps the latest and most revered defender of the theory was Benjamin Smith Barton (1766–1815), who argued that certainly the animals of the New World were of a separate creation than those of the Old, that it was “highly probable” that there was a “separate creation in the old and in the new world,” and that the Old World languages descended from those in the New World.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the pre-Adamite theory never gained wide acceptance, as it never could be made to square with the dominant belief in the scriptural, or biblical, account of creation.

The Lost Tribes of Israel Tradition

By contrast, arguably the earliest and surely the most popular and doggedly persistent of all the traditions was the belief that the Native Americans had originated from the lost ten tribes of Israel. Having been forced out of Palestine into parts of the Assyrian empire by King Shalmaneser in the first half of the eighth century BC, remnants of these Israelites, or Hebrew peoples, so the theory argues, eventually made their way over land and sea to the New World. Though tied more to theological discourse, biblical exegesis, and evangelical fervor than it was to careful scientific observation, the lost tribes theory proved remarkably resilient to recurring, ever more devastating scholarly criticism. On both sides of the Atlantic its supporters promoted their viewpoint more in response to contemporary, religiously motivated, and humanitarian causes in defense of the

downtrodden and exploited Indian tribes rather than associating it with the growing body of scientific data. Still, by the early 1800s it was once more in full flower in America as it had been in England a century and a half before.

The theory was first put to paper in 1567 by Joannes Fredericus Lumnius. More given to “abstruse” theology and to biblical exegesis than to careful study of geography, Lumnius laid out the staples of this theory: that according to the book of Esdras in the Apocrypha—and supported by 1 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah in the Old Testament—the lost ten tribes somehow escaped from their Assyrian captors and

With the rise of competing economic and nationalistic interests in the New World after the early 1600s, particularly from England, Holland, and France, Spanish scholarly dominance gave place to other European interpreters of the Americas.

crossed the great waters to Arsareth, or America.¹⁵ Over the next few years, several Spanish friars working in Mexico—including Juan Suárez de Peralta, Diego Durán, and Juan de Tovar—arrived at the same conclusion, although with slightly differing interpretations. For instance, Peralta did not believe that the lost tribes were the only ancient peoples to come to the Americas, but that they followed others, likely the Carthaginians.¹⁶

Most of the great Spanish scholars, however, derided this theory. Juan de Torquemada and Antonio Calancha discredited it on the basis that Esdras was an apocryphal writing and therefore lacked biblical authority, that there was no way of knowing if Arsareth was indeed the Americas, that the Assyrians would hardly have allowed their captives to leave, and that most, if not all, would have died in the wilderness making the attempt. Without more concrete evidence, these critics argued, why should anyone believe in such a claim?¹⁷

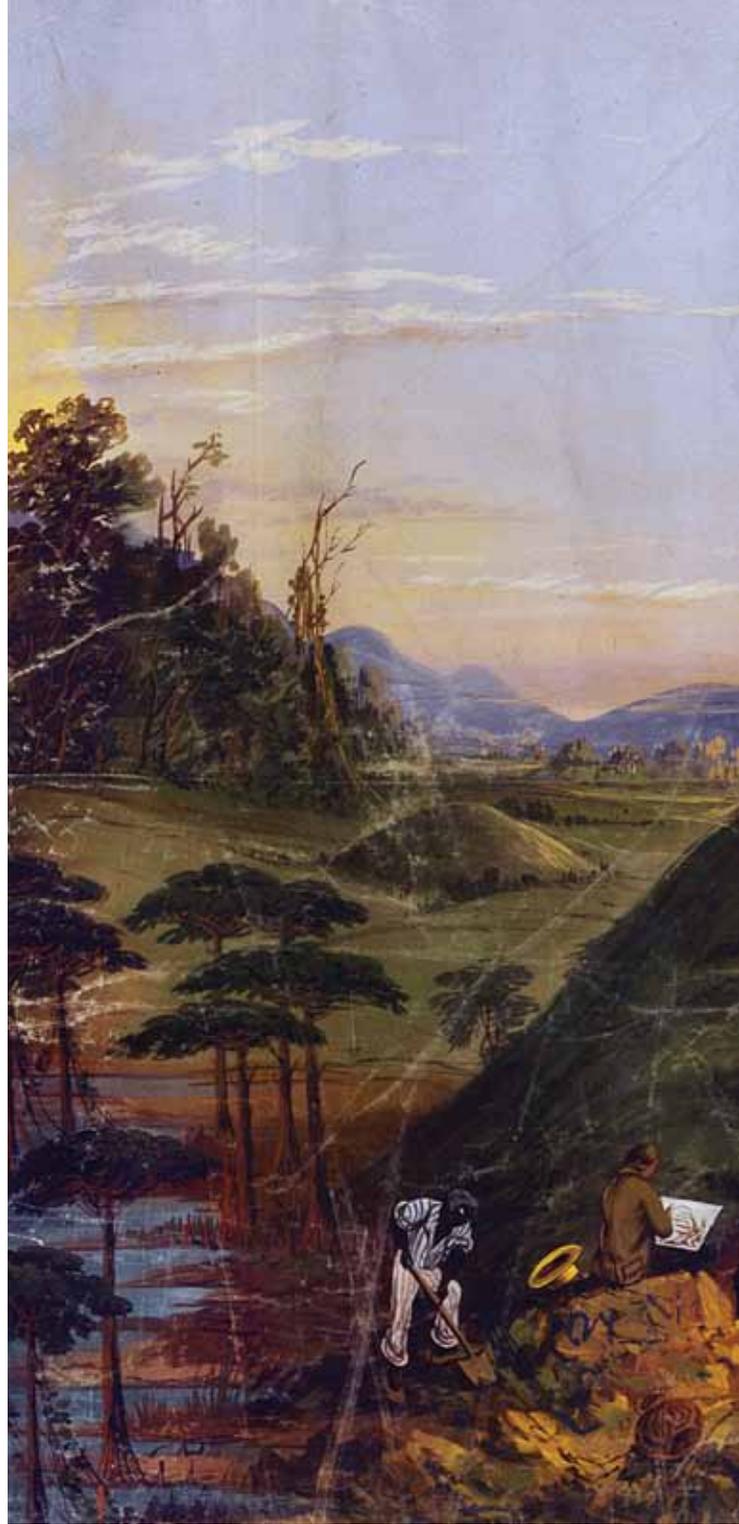
With the rise of competing economic and nationalistic interests in the New World after the early 1600s, particularly from England, Holland, and France, Spanish scholarly dominance gave place to other

European interpreters of the Americas. But like their Spanish counterparts, few of them put any stock in the lost tribes theory, including the noted Englishman Edward Brerewood and the two great Dutch controversialists, Hugo Grotius and Joannes de Laet. What did rekindle interest was a confluence of factors, including an unsubstantiated rumor of the finding of an ancient Jewish people in Peru, early attempts at Christianizing Indian tribes in the American colonies, and a campaign to readmit Jews into Great Britain.

Its popularity notwithstanding, the lost tribes theory gained little traction among serious European scholars, who viewed it as a thinly disguised religious and political argument devoid of careful consideration and reasoning.

The rumor was the marvelous tale of a Portuguese Jew, Antonio Montesinos, who claimed he had been led of God to discover a “Holy People”—a tribe of ancient Jews—in the mountains of Nueva Granada in 1641. Basing his claim on similarities of sacramental rites, customs, and language between this group and those of ancient Jews, Montesinos caused a flurry of new interest in the theory in Amsterdam and in London. Many turned to one of the few respected Jewish scholars of the day, Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel (a man who knew nine different languages), to confirm or reject Montesinos. Sensing his opportunity to advance the cause of his people, Manasseh ben Israel published in 1650 his famous *Hope of Israel* in which he strongly argued in favor of the lost tribes in America, claiming that they had mingled with Tartaric or Asian tribes in ancient Scythia before coming to America. Presenting remarkably little hard or new evidence, he nevertheless capitalized upon the renewed controversy to show that God’s ancient people, the Jews, had indeed been scattered and dispersed to the four quarters of the earth. Recognizing that only England and a few other countries continued to restrict the entry of the Jews, he suggested that if England would allow for Jewish emigration, the second coming of Christ would become imminent.¹⁸

Simultaneously, the Reverend Thomas Thorowgood published his *Jewes in America; or, Probabilities*



That the Americans Are of That Race, arguing in like manner that native myths and similarities in customs, rites, and speech all supported Montesinos’s interpretations.¹⁹ The writings of ben Israel, Thorowgood, and John Eliot, the early Massachusetts missionary and so-called apostle to the Indians,²⁰ struck a receptive chord in an England then beset with premillennialist fervor. Such discourse eventually led to a policy change under King Charles II, allowing for the reentry of Jews to the British Isles after an absence of some five hundred years.

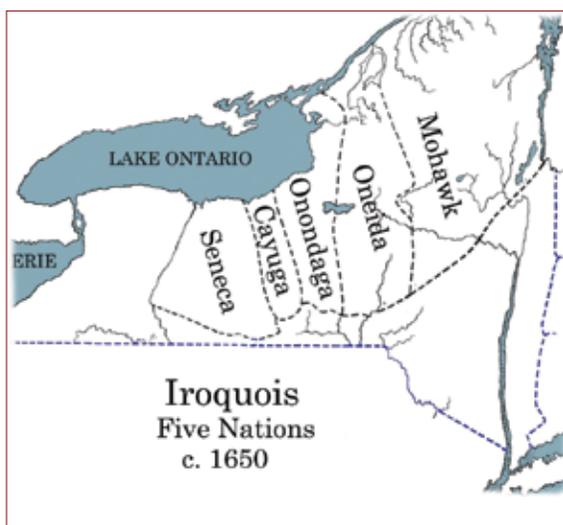


Cross section of an Indian mound from *Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley*, by John J. Egan, ca. 1850. Distemper on cotton muslin. Saint Louis Art Museum, Eliza McMillan Trust. 34:1953 (scene 20).

Its popularity notwithstanding, the lost tribes theory gained little traction among serious European scholars, who viewed it as a thinly disguised religious and political argument devoid of careful consideration and reasoning. Writing in 1651, Hamon L'Estrange saw evidence that the Indians had come to the West long before the lost tribes. And Gottlieb Spitzel wrote so “thorough a denunciation” of it in 1661 that many

thought it finally dead and buried. John Ogilby, John Josselyn, and others followed suit.²¹

Support for the tradition, however, flowered in early America, where several leading colonists subscribed to it, including Roger Williams and William Penn. This interest no doubt derived from constant American contact with the various tribes. Basing his views on similar physiologies, sacred rites, and ceremonies, Penn wrote in 1683: “I am ready to believe



Professor Samuel Mitchill, congressional chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, based part of his theories on Indian origins from his work with the Five Indian Nations. This map represents suggested territories of those tribes. R. A. Nonenmacher (2004).

them of the Jewish Race, I mean of the stock of the Ten Tribes.”²²

By far the most persuasive of all Americans to defend the lost tribes theory was the historian and anthropologist James Adair, who, following the tradition of the great French Canadian missionary Pierre-François Charlevoix,²³ spent forty years among the American Indians. In his *History of the American Indians* (1775), Adair was perhaps the first to

[*View of the Hebrews*], owing much to Boudinot’s analysis and fervor in promoting the same lost tribes traditions, was published twelve years earlier in 1825 by the Reverend Ethan Smith.

argue less on biblical grounds and more on a scientific basis that the Indians had originated from Jewish stock.²⁴ Refuting the pre-Adamite theory, he believed that the “Indians have lineally descended from Adam.”²⁵ Adair carefully observed Indian cultures: their rites, festivals, and religious ceremonies; their monotheistic belief in the one god of the Great Spirit; their reckoning of time; their traditions of sacred men and prophets; their Levirate marriages; their

anointings and purification ceremonies; and other practices and beliefs. His thorough anthropological observations, systematic research, and comparative analyses were certainly impressive, even if later scholars disagreed with him. Adair infused the lost tribes theory with a scientific foundation it had sorely lacked.

John Wesley’s Methodist evangelical movement in England in the late 1700s, the organization of the British Foreign Bible Society in 1804, the rising British Sunday School movement, the development of missionary societies (to Jews, American Indians, Polynesian Islanders, and many others), and the budding interest in New World archaeology all tended to support an interpretation of the Indians as a people waiting to be Christianized. And if further evidence could show that they were a part of God’s ancient chosen people, all the more fuel to the missionary fire!

This evangelistic influence, when added to the rising humanitarian interest in the American Indian (in contrast to the harsh and cruel expulsion and removal policies of the new nation of America), gave rise to a reconsideration of views toward the American Indians. Believing that the Indians were descendants of the lost tribes, Charles Crawford showed well this rising concern. “Sentiments more favorable to the Indians than were formerly entertained,” he wrote in 1801,

have of late years been generally adopted by the people of the United States. There were some, several years ago, who contended for the utter extirpation of the Indians. The belief that the Indians are descended from the ten tribes must have a tendency to soften the minds of mankind towards them. This belief is generally gaining ground, and even among some who once violently contended against the doctrine.²⁶

Such arguments as Crawford’s were later elucidated by Elias Boudinot, founder of the American Bible Society, in his famous *A Star in the West* (1816). Offering little by way of new evidence, Boudinot nonetheless argued evangelistically that many (though not all) of the Indians were Israelites and that just as God had brought the ancient Israelites across the Red Sea, so later he led the ten lost tribes (minus Judah and Benjamin, who were carried off to Babylon and later scattered by the Romans) across the possibly frozen “straits of Kamschatka” to the Americas where they set up “an ensign for the nations.” “They are to be converted to the faith of Christ,” Boudinot asserted,

and instructed in their glorious prerogatives, and prepared and assisted to return to their own land and their ancient city, even the city of Zion. . . . Let not our unbelief, or other irreligious conduct, with a want of a lively, active faith in our Almighty Redeemer, become a stumbling block to those outcasts of Israel. . . . Who knows but God has raised up these United States in these latter days, for the very purpose of accomplishing his will in bringing his beloved people to their own land.²⁷

Such a chosen people were to be treated more compassionately and more humanely than the policies of James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, and some other leading American politicians of the day called for.

Boudinot's best-known disciple was Mordecai M. Noah (1785–1851), an American Jew who later wrote his *Discourse on the Evidences of American Indians* in 1837.²⁸ Another American book, owing much to Boudinot's analysis and fervor in promoting the same lost tribes traditions, was published twelve years earlier in 1825 by the Reverend Ethan Smith. Entitled *View of the Hebrews*, this work quoted liberally from Old Testament scripture and prophecy but with little careful observation of any Indian tribes. Reverend Smith, like Boudinot, saw that to “christianize them, and wait the leadings of Providence” with regard to the restoration of the “remnant” of Israel, was the burden, blessing, and “first object” of modern Britain and America.²⁹

Finally, “no more masterly, no abler and more exhaustive defense” was ever made in behalf of the lost tribes theory than that of the indefatigable Englishman Lord Kingsborough, who bankrupted himself in publishing lavishly illustrated volumes of prints of American archaeological drawings in his zealous support of the lost tribes theory.³⁰ Much of Kingsborough's work depended on the prior research, findings, and drawings of two men—Antonio de León y Gama (1735–1802), an astronomer who is sometimes considered the first Mexican archaeologist,³¹ and Guillermo Dupaix. Dupaix was one of the first Europeans to observe and describe the archaeological riches of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Yucatan. Between 1805 and 1807, he led three expeditions to survey major Mexican archaeological sites, working in close concert with José Luciano Castañeda, an artist with the National Museum. Kingsborough's published work, along with the elegant illustrations of Castañeda, were years in the

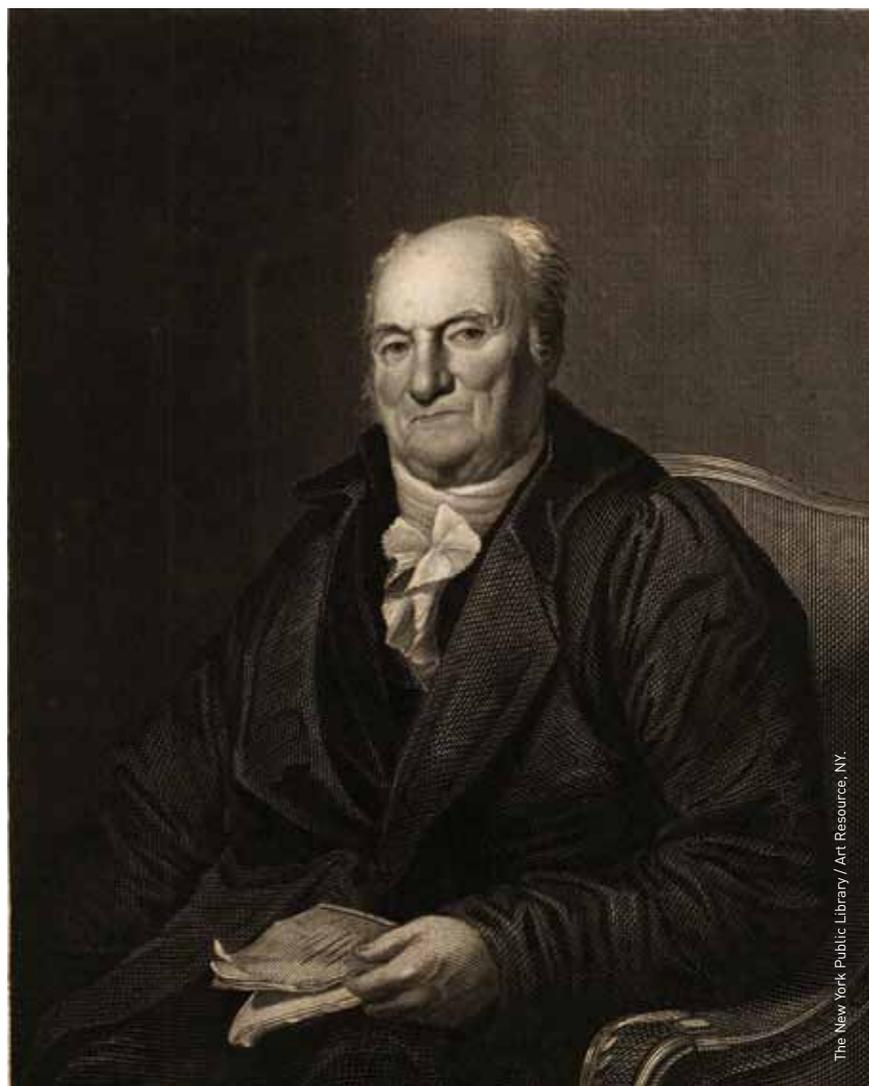
The more careful cultural, anthropological, linguistic, and eventually archaeological interpreters of the origins of Native American peoples, however, were neither prone to advance a theological reason for an evangelistic crusade nor anxious to fit their findings into a preconceived mold.

making and provided the first European accounts of Aztec Mexican archaeology.³²

The Scientific Tradition

The more careful cultural, anthropological, linguistic, and eventually archaeological interpreters of the origins of Native American peoples, however,

Elias Boudinot (1749–1821), founder of the American Bible Society, argued that many of the Indians were Israelites whom God led to the Americas.





Explorer and scientist Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) argued convincingly that the American Indians derived from northeast Asia and began crossing the Bering Strait about AD 544.

were neither prone to advance a theological reason for an evangelistic crusade nor anxious to fit their findings into a preconceived mold. They did not, however, dismiss outright the Adamic creation account, the dispersal of Babel, or Noah's deluge. With the strengthening of the scientific tradition, interpreters abandoned preexisting biblical interpretation and began to entertain differing explanations, sometimes at the peril of their lives or professional reputations.

The first and most famous advocate of this trend in thinking was the great Spanish Jesuit missionary to Peru, Joseph de Acosta (1539–1600). After living several years in the Andes, he wrote in 1590 his landmark work *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*.³³ Dismissing the Atlantis theory as frivolous and the Hebrew derivation as unsupportable since the ancient Israelites kept careful records and the Indians never did, he asserted that they came to the New World “little by little and that they came by land or across a narrow strait,” first as hunters and

later with their families. He was the first to argue for a short land bridge—either with Greenland, Alaska, or Tierra del Fuego to the Antarctic—across which large migrations of men and animals might have come. His careful analytical approach set the ground rules for future observers. Serious interpreters, he argued, must derive their arguments not from what should accord to the Bible theologically but what agrees with the geographical, anthropological, ethnological, and linguistic realities of American Indian cultures. More than any one particular finding, Acosta set the tone for a careful, more “restrained” inquiry, what Huddleston and others have since called the “Acostan tradition.”³⁴

Juan de Torquemada, Juan de Solorzano, and Antonio de la Calancha, all writing in the early seventeenth century, must likewise be placed squarely in this tradition. Of special concern to these writers was not only how peoples but, more to the point, animals made the great migrations. As Acosta had argued a century before, Torquemada and particularly Calancha made an even more persuasive case for a land connection. Calancha posited that the Indians had descended from the Tartars of eastern Asia. The great English observer Edward Brerewood likewise advanced the Acostan tradition, arguing for a Tartarian origination via Alaska since most Indians frequented the west coasts of the Americas.³⁵ One can see, albeit faintly, in these early seventeenth-century writings, the hint of later scientific explorations and nonbiblical interpretations of the nineteenth century. Georg Horne, writing a generation later, followed suit, as did Spitzel, Ogilby, and Josselyn. Ever so gradually the scientific tradition pried open the door to the possibility that the Native American peoples were of an entirely separate physical and cultural stock to those living in the Middle East. President Thomas Jefferson himself opened up a firestorm of criticism in which he was called a “howling atheist” when he wrote in 1787 that the languages of the ancient native peoples had divided a thousandfold and that such linguistic and physical divergence from a common origin required “an immense course of time; perhaps not less than many people give to the age of the earth.”³⁶

By far the greatest world-traveling observer and naturalist of the late 1700s and early 1800s was the German/French scientist and intrepid explorer Alexander von Humboldt, who visited Mexico in

1810-11. His original thirty-volume magnum opus, *Vues de cordilleres et monuments*, eventually earned him the title of father of the Bering Strait theory. Although others, as we have already seen, had advanced it as a possibility, Humboldt provided strong scientific evidence for it. Inspired by the emerging discoveries in Egypt by Napoleon's armies and by the translation of ancient hieroglyphics on the Rosetta Stone by Jean-François Champollion in 1822, Humboldt based his conclusions on his careful and systematic expeditions, his on-site observations of various native tribes, and above all on his archaeological and hieroglyphic studies of ancient temples, zodiacs, and inscriptions in Mexico and Mesoamerica and on the likelihood of communication between these ancient cultures and those in Asia.³⁷ From rigorous analysis, Humboldt laid out his convincing argument that the American Indian derived from northeast Asia, had begun crossing the Bering Strait about AD 544, and "represented a single, major prehistoric wave of migration that created a unified race throughout the Americas."³⁸ Others of the same stock may have followed, eventually assimilating one with another. Arguing less linguistically and more archaeologically that all Indian languages derived from a common source, Humboldt went on to refute the pre-Adamite view, arguing that the "common aspects found in remains of civilization around the world defeated the possibility of multiple origins."³⁹ On the strength of Humboldt's research and the power and rationality of his arguments, most later scholars referred to him as the "touchstone," or point of discussion, thus referring to the early nineteenth century as the "age of Humboldt."

Humboldt studied archaeology and anthropology, while philology, or linguistics, based on the study of Indian languages became the topic of choice in Philadelphia's famous American Philosophical Society in the period from about 1800 to 1820. Convinced that the study of syntax, idioms, grammatical structures, and dialects held the key to understanding Indian origins, such men as David Zeisberger (1721-1808), John G. Heckewelder (1743-1823), Caspar Wistar (1761-1818), Pierre du Ponceau (1760-1844), and Benjamin Smith Barton argued for the Tartaric origin of the Indians, for the Bering Strait theory, and for a common original language.⁴⁰ Others of the early nineteenth century in the scientific tradition who relied heavily on Humboldt and on Captain

James Cook's recent discovery of the eighteen-mile separation of the Bering Strait between Asia and North America were Hugh Williamson (1735-1819), Hugh Murray (1799-1846), James McCulloh (1793-1870), Benjamin H. Coates (1805-87?), and C. S. Rafinesque (1783-1840).⁴¹

Samuel L. Mitchill and the New York Theory

The famous Pacific Ocean voyages and explorations of Captain James Cook (1728-79) and later those of his British countryman Captain George Vancouver (1757-98) give rise to our point of last discussion—the Polynesian origin theory. When their observations were coupled with a rising interest in the origins of the Mound Builders civilization of the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys (so called because of the several thousand earthen mounds filled with bones and artifacts left behind)⁴² and the

Confident enough in his own thinking to begin teaching these theories to his college classes in 1816, Mitchill believed that both North and South America had been formerly populated fundamentally by two great races.

overwhelming acceptance of Humboldt's Asiatic origins of the Native Americans, the Polynesian theory clearly comes to the fore.⁴³

Cook and Vancouver, as well as other Pacific explorers, "were much struck," on coming in contact with the Indians, with the similarities between some features of their culture and those of the Maori of New Zealand. As Roland Dixon has argued: "The solidly constructed plank houses with their elaborately carved and painted decorations, the forts, the finely woven mantles, the short bone and stone clubs, recalled to their minds similar objects among the Maori, and led them to speculate as to the possibility of some relationships between the two groups of people."⁴⁴

In 1795 Professor Samuel Mitchill of Columbia College (formerly King's College under British pre-Revolutionary rule) returned to his lifelong interest in the origins of the Indians. In that year he presented a lecture on the life of Tammany, the famous

New York Indian chief.⁴⁵ Stemming from his work with the Five Indian Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca) and from his years in the United States Senate as chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, Mitchill's theories on Indian origins began to change and evolve. "My faith in the transatlantic doctrines began to be shaken in 1805," he wrote, "when my intercourse with the Osages and Cherokees led me to entertain of them very different opinions from those I had derived from the books I had read."⁴⁶ From his study of the

burial mounds of the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys, his examination of mammoths and mummies found in Kentucky and Tennessee, and a series of long field studies he personally had conducted through western portions of the state of New York, he began to formulate his threefold interpretation of American Indian origins and history:

1. that three races of Malays, Tartars, and Scandinavians contributed to make up the American population;⁴⁷
2. that the Tartars eventually overwhelmed and destroyed the other two races over a fairly long period of time; and finally
3. that the final battles of extermination were fought in upstate western New York not too far south of Lake Ontario.

Confident enough in his own thinking to begin teaching these theories to his college classes in 1816, Mitchill believed that both North and South America had been formerly populated fundamentally by two great races, not only the "hyperborean or inhabitants of the north" but also the "australasian, or inhabitants of the south," the former Tartars and the latter Malays and Polynesians. A prominent member of the American Philosophical and American Antiquarian Societies, Mitchill—though not the first to propose such a dualistic Asiatic origination of American peoples (Humboldt had given broad provision for such a view, as had de Laet)—was certainly very much in the vanguard of such a viewpoint and was clearly the first American scholar to do so in such a systematic fashion.

As to the Tartars (or eastern Asians, including the Chinese) being the ancient ancestors of the more northerly tribes of North American Indians, Mitchill based his claim on four considerations: (1) the similarity of physiognomy and features; (2) the affinity of their languages, as so well argued by his contemporary Professor Barton; (3) corresponding customs such as smoking of the pipe; and (4) the kindred nature of American Indian dogs to those found in Siberia.

In regards to the Malays, he based his conclusions on several mummies he and others had recently discovered in limestone caves in Kentucky and Tennessee. He argued that the fabrics of cloth wrapping, the shawls, and the feathered plumes



De Witt Clinton (1769–1828)—New York City mayor, later governor of New York, and one-time candidate for US president—personally studied Indian burial sites and forts and was mentored by Samuel Mitchill.

attending them were “perfectly analogous” to those found in the islands of the Pacific that had been sent to him by American sea captains and explorers over the years. In addition, he based his conclusions on the similarities of the net meshes, the bark construction of moccasins, the fortifications and other works of defense in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys compared to the “hippas or fighting stages of the Society islands,” and the shape of the skull in the mummies corresponding with those of the Malays.⁴⁸ By 1816 he was arguing that “the colonies of Malayan emigrants who people South and North America as far as Mexico, formerly possessed the fertile region east of the Mississippi and quite to the shores of Ontario. They were the constructors of the fortifications so much admired.”⁴⁹

In addition, Mitchill allowed for the settlement of northeast North America by emigrants from Lapland, Norway, Finland, and even Wales. In this view he was not alone. Hugh Williamson, a contemporary, had argued for much the same thing. “Some of the Northern Indians,” he said, “emigrated from Europe. It can hardly be questioned that the Esquimaux Indians are the diminutive sprouts of Norwegian ancestors.” Williamson also gave place for the possibility that some natives came from India via the islands of the Pacific. Mitchill, however, believed they never penetrated much further south than the St. Lawrence River valley.⁵⁰

As to the colonies of Australasians, or Malays, Mitchill maintained they “landed in North America, and penetrated across the continent in process of time to the region lying between the Great Lakes and the gulf of Mexico. There they resided, and constructed the fortifications, mounds and other ancient structures, which are the wonder of all who have seen them.”⁵¹ These “tribes of the lower latitudes seem to have [had greater proficiency] in the arts, particularly of making cloths, clearing the ground, and erecting works of defence.”⁵²

All went well with these Polynesian derivative peoples until their confrontation with the encroaching Tartars. Colliding with both the Europeans and the “more delicate race” of Australasians, the Tartars overwhelmed and destroyed both peoples in a long series of terrible conflicts centered primarily in upstate New York. “As China, Hindustan, . . . Palestine, . . . Greece, Italy and the shores of Africa, have been conquered by the swarms which

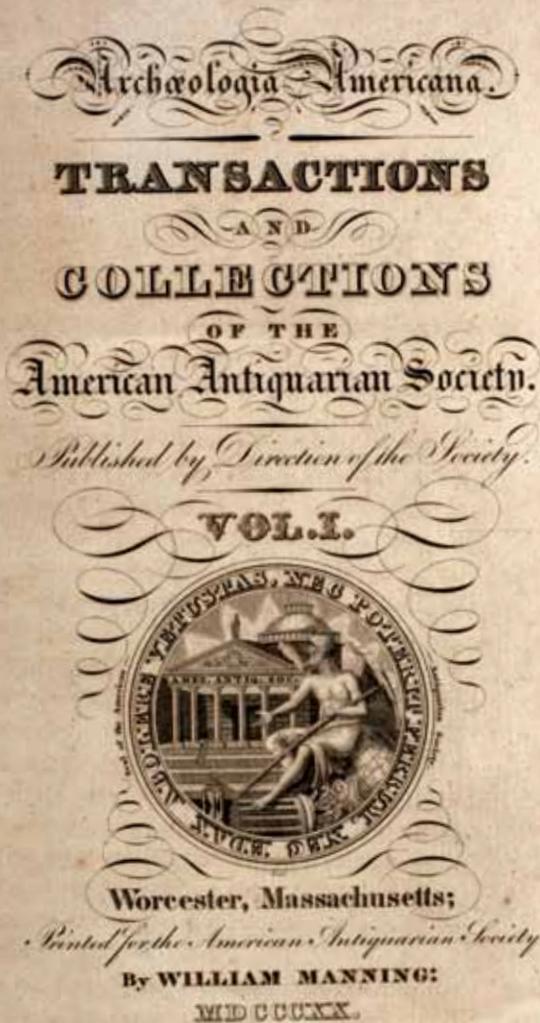
proceeded, numberless times . . . so have Canada, the regions bordering on the Missouri, the Lakes, the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the countries where New Spain and its intendencies now are, quite to Mexico, been subdued by hordes of savage adventurers from . . . beyond the Arctic Circle.”⁵³ He went on to ask: “What has become of [these Australasians]?” and answered:

They have probably been overcome by the more warlike and ferocious hordes that entered our hemisphere from the northeast of Asia. These Tartars of the higher latitudes have issued from the great hive of nations, and desolated, in the course of their migrations, the southern tribes of America, as they have done to those of Asia and Europe. The greater part of the present American natives are the Tartar stock, the descendants of the hardy warriors who destroyed the weaker Malays that preceded them.⁵⁴

De Witt Clinton—a student and admirer of Mitchill, a keen observer of the Iroquois and the other Five Nations Indian tribes, New York City mayor, later governor of New York, and one-time candidate for president of the United States—ardently subscribed to this theory. He was particularly interested in Indian burial sites and fortifications, in their monuments and relics, languages, treaties, and in

[Clinton wrote of] the existence of a vast population, settled in towns, defended by forts, cultivating agriculture, and more advanced in civilization than the nations which have inhabited the same countries since the European discovery.

the biographies of great Indian leaders. After making an extended tour of western New York in 1810 during which he gained inspiration for the Erie Canal, Clinton also “proceeded to his favorite theory . . . that the ancient forts in central New York [several of which he had personally studied] and in the Western territory, from the Ohio westward beyond the Mississippi, were the work of a civilized people, preceding the Iroquois as well as the Spanish and French explorers.”⁵⁵ Such fortifications were beyond the ability of the Iroquois to erect. Ancient fortifications



© American Antiquarian Society

Numerous documents dealing with theories of Indian origins appeared in *Archæologia Americana*, a publication initiated in 1820 by the American Antiquarian Society.

and battle sites dotted the Finger Lakes District, including Boughton's Hill in Ontario County, "where a bloody battle is said to have been fought"; Sandy Creek near Sackett's Harbour; Pompey in Onondaga County; Scipio and Ridgeway in Genesee County; and several places near Canandaigua. Leaning heavily on his mentor, Professor Mitchill, Clinton believed the Iroquois, upon migrating south of the

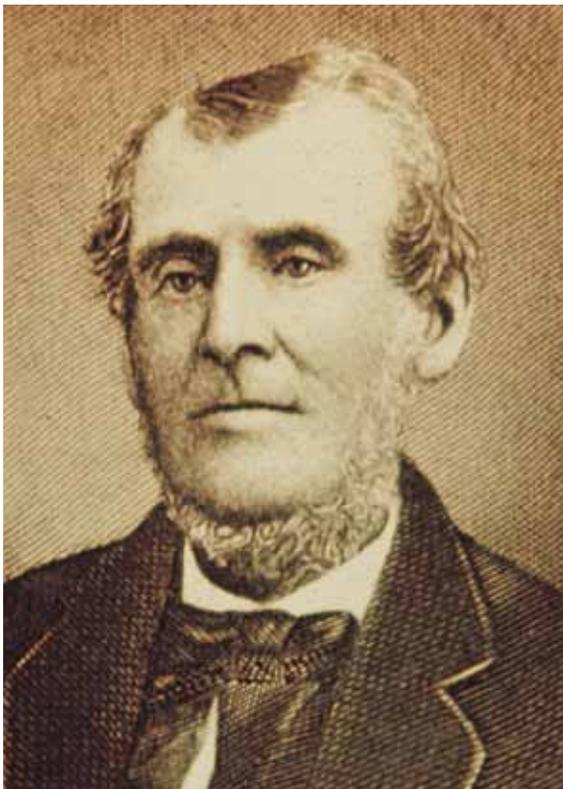
Great Lakes, "extirpated" those people who occupied the region. "I am persuaded," he wrote in 1817, "that enough has been said to demonstrate the existence of a vast population, settled in towns, defended by forts, cultivating agriculture, and more advanced in civilization than the nations which have inhabited the same countries since the European discovery."⁵⁶ The town of Camillus provided further evidence; there excavators, upon discovering an ancient well, found human bones that "pulverized on exposure to the air—evidence, Clinton believed, of an ancient settlement."⁵⁷ Building on his interest in Indian antiquities, Clinton became a strong supporter for more humanitarian concern and aid for the Indians and in safeguarding their rights.

Much of what Mitchill argued was accepted by C. S. Rafinesque, another prominent naturalist and student of Mitchill's (though not as precise an investigator),⁵⁸ and also by Josiah Priest, whose work *American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West* was first published in Albany, New York, in 1833. Deferring liberally to Mitchill, although providing for the inclusion of vestiges of the lost tribes in parts of ancient America via an ancient land bridge with Africa, Priest believed the Tartars, in Hunlike fashion, completely destroyed the more southerly people, who left behind some three thousand burial mounds and fortifications in present-day Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. "The skeletons found in our mounds never belonged to a people like our Indians," he asserted. "Their foreheads were low, cheek bones rather high. . . . We think we ascertain the inhabitants to have been white, like the Europeans."⁵⁹ Calling the more civilized peoples the "Eries," he believed they were so exterminated by the Tartars or Scythians that "but one member of that nation, a warrior, remained."⁶⁰

Elements of the New York theory have gained qualified support over time. John D. Lang, well-known British missionary to the South Seas, argued in 1834 that the South Sea Islanders derived originally from Asia, including India, and that the Malayan race was an "amphibious nation" that, driven from island to island, hopped across the Pacific, eventually peopling Mexico and Peru. Basing his arguments on similarities of tribal government, property rights, handcrafts, theologies, and architecture, he maintained that "there is abundant reason to believe that America was originally peopled from the continent of Asia; not, as is generally supposed, by way

of the Aleutian Islands at the entrance of Behring's Straits, but by way of the South Sea Islands and across the widest part of the Pacific Ocean."⁶¹ These people landed on the west coast "somewhere near the isthmus of Panama" approximately 1500 BC; rather than being exterminated, their immediate descendants, traveling northward and southward, "formed powerful and flourishing empires in both continents, far surpassing in point of civilization the more recent empires of Montezuma and of the Incas of Peru."⁶²

B. H. Coates likewise argued that same year that the South Sea Islanders were "the principal source of American population," basing his claim on similarities of dialects, habits of navigation, and facial similarities.⁶³ John Delafield, based on his study of philology, echoed Mitchill when he wrote in 1839 that there were "two distinct races" in the Americas—"one civilized, comprehending the Mexicans and Peruvians," and the other "savage and nomadic, embracing all the families of the North American Indians." The "civilized inhabitants" of the more southerly realms were "expelled thence by the subsequent immigration and successive conquests of the Indian tribes who came from the north of Asia and appear to be of Mongolian



Martin Harris (1783–1875).

origin."⁶⁴ A few years later, Marcius Willson wrote that while many came over the Bering Strait, "there is no improbability that the early Asiatics reached the western shores of America through the islands of the Pacific."⁶⁵ E. M. Ruttenber, in his 1872 *History of the Indian Tribes of Hudson's River*, quoted Mitchill at length.⁶⁶ As late as 1933 Professor Clark Wissler in his ethnological studies of the American aborigines credited Mitchill for being among the first to argue that even the Aztecs were Malayan.⁶⁷

Polyracial theories on the origin of the American Indians have been continually advanced by a host of other scientists since Mitchill, including Armand de Quatrefages, Paul Rivet, D. J. M. Tate, Ulrich Schmidt, B. H. Coates, John D. Baldwin, Erland Nordenskiöld, and Charles Correa. While theories change and "crystallize in new directions," the conviction of a Polynesian connection to America intensifies. Philology, osteology, and archaeology, they argue, all point to such. "The date when the Australians and Melanasiatics arrived in America cannot, naturally, be fixed with precision," Aleš Hrdlička wrote in 1935, "but it is at all events possible to affirm that it was very ancient."⁶⁸

Thor Heyerdahl's 1947 Kon-Tiki expedition, in which he proved that an east-west crossing of the Pacific on a raft was possible, served to intensify research on the Polynesian derivation theory. We may leave the last word to Rivet, writing in the mid-twentieth century:

Whatever one may decide . . . all the facts and testimony indicate that America was no more ignorant of Oceania than Oceania was of America, and that more or less regular relations of a commercial nature united the two worlds. It is certain that, thanks to these commercial relations, cultural elements and useful plants passed from one continent to the other.

. . . Contrary to what might be supposed a priori, and to the Europe-centric idea which influenced research for centuries, the peopling of America was effected from the West, and not from the East. The Atlantic remained almost inviolate until the great voyages of discovery [penetrated this] . . . veritable wall between the Old and New Worlds. The western shores of America were, on the other hand, open to multiple migrations along their entire length. Far from being an obstacle, the Pacific was a link between the Asiatic and Oceanic worlds and the New World.⁶⁹

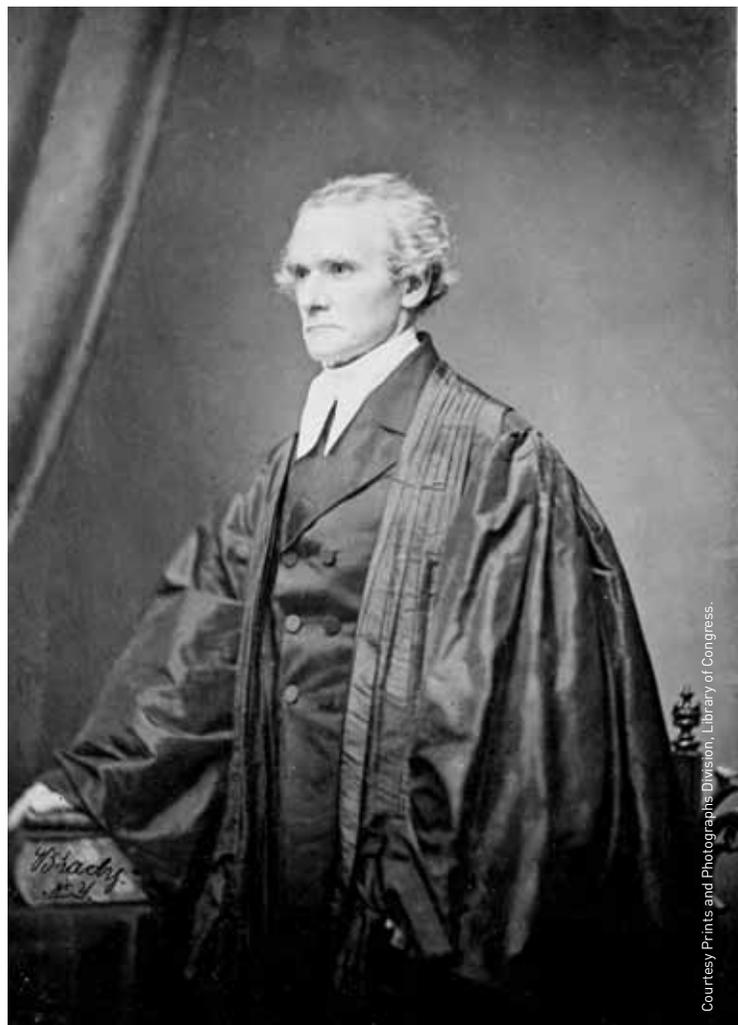
Mitchill Meets Martin Harris

We will now return to the New York theory and discuss its conjunction with early Mormon history. It was this same Professor Samuel L. Mitchill whom Martin Harris visited in February 1828. What precisely Harris showed to the famous doctor is not known. The so-called Anthon transcript of characters taken from Joseph Smith's early work on the large plates of Nephi may or may not have been what scholars assume it to have been. Nor is it clear that Joseph Smith and Harris had begun work on the 116-page manuscript of the book of Lehi. How

Nowhere does the [Book of Mormon] purport to be a history of the lost tribes leaving from ancient Assyria to the Americas. Rather, it speaks of a branch of Israel—of the coming of the seed of Joseph—to the Western Hemisphere.

much Harris knew then about the account of ancient Book of Mormon warring peoples in the Americas is not known. However, it seems plausible that Joseph Smith had told him about the coming of the angel Moroni five years before and about the record of ancient American peoples, and also that Moroni represented a stock of peoples entirely destroyed by another ancient warring people also written of extensively in the plates.

Although the Book of Mormon speaks of the seed or tribe of Joseph through Lehi and Manasseh settling somewhere in the ancient Americas, it is not synonymous with the lost tribes of Israel theory. Nowhere does the book purport to be a history of the lost tribes leaving from ancient Assyria to the Americas. Rather, it speaks of a branch of Israel—of the coming of the seed of Joseph—to the Western Hemisphere. Other parts of the Book of Mormon, particularly the book of Ether, are of pre-Israelite derivation and migration. How much Harris knew of either of these peoples and their accounts in 1828, a year before the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon as we now know it, is yet unknown. But that he did speak to Mitchill of ancient American peoples, of the extinction of one by the other, and of



Charles Anthon (1797–1867), who is reported to have confirmed the translation of the characters shown to him by Martin Harris (but later changed his mind), directed Harris to show his copied engravings to Dr. Samuel Mitchill.

the continuation of one such people down to later times seems now most plausible. Thus there was much in common between Book of Mormon history and the New York theory of one of the contemporary leading scholars in America, enough to stir comment, interest, and some validation.

In what might be the very first written record of Harris's visit east, James Gordon Bennett, then associate editor of the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, wrote in 1831 that he had interviewed Charles Butler, the lawyer-philanthropist from whom Harris had attempted to borrow money for the printing of the Book of Mormon.⁷⁰ Harris told Butler, as Bennett recorded, that he carried the engravings from the plates to New York and

showed them to Professor [Charles] Anthon who said that he did not know what language they were—told him to carry them to Dr. Mitchell—Doctor Mitchell examined them—and compared them with other hieroglyphics—thought them very curious—and [said] they were the characters of a nation now extinct which he named. Harris returned to Anthon who put some questions to him and got angry with Harris.⁷¹

This account is elaborated upon in Bennett’s published article entitled “Mormon Religion—Clerical Ambition—Western New York—The Mormonites Gone to Ohio” that appeared in the (New York) *Morning Courier and Enquirer* on 1 September 1831.

They attempted to get the Book printed, but could not raise the means till Harris stepped forward, and raised money on his farm for that purpose. Harris with several manuscripts in his pocket, went to the city of New York. And called upon one of the Professors of Columbia College for the purpose of shewing them to him. Harris says that the Professor thought them very curious, but admitted that he could not decypher them. Said he to Harris, “Mr. Harris you had better go to the celebrated Doct. Mitchell and shew them to him. He is very learned in these ancient languages, and I have no doubt will be able to give you some satisfaction.” “Where does he live,” asked Harris. He was told and off he posted with the engravings from the Golden Plates to submit to Doc. Mitchell—Harris says that the Doctor received him very “purlitely,” looked at his engravings—made a learned dissertation on them—compared them with the hieroglyphics discovered by Champollion in Egypt—and set them down as the language of a people formerly in existence in the East, but now no more.⁷²

Whether Mitchill endeavored then and there to translate what Harris brought to him is open to question. Certainly he studied the “characters” most carefully. His assertion that the characters thereon were “of a nation now extinct which he named” speaks directly to his own richly developed theories on the extinct Australasian race of ancient America, that “delicate race” destroyed by the Tartars ultimately somewhere in upstate New York not far from where Harris farmed near Palmyra. Is it any wonder that Harris returned to Palmyra confirmed and committed to assisting in the work of translating the Book of Mormon?⁷³

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has not been to portray modern twenty-first-century views on the origin

A scientific belief in warring ancient American peoples was very much in vogue at the time of the publication of the Book of Mormon.

of the American Indian; rather its thrust has been to identify the state of development of the American Indian origins theory as of 1820. In doing so, it has placed the major theories in one of three dominant traditions: the early theories that never generated much support, the lost tribes theory that persisted through centuries of criticism, and the scientific traditions stemming from Acosta and on through Humboldt and beyond. It has also focused on the pioneering research and careful interpretations of Professor Samuel L. Mitchill and those of like mind as they pertained to a growing awareness of the Polynesian derivation of many of the Americans, their extermination at the cruel hands of the Tartars, and the upstate New York location of these final battles. Thus a scientific belief in warring ancient American peoples, some from the north, others from the Polynesian islands, wherein the former exterminated the latter in a series of great battles in upstate New York, was very much in vogue among many respected observers at the time of the publication of the Book of Mormon.

It can now be proven that Professor Mitchill, one of the leading proponents of the ancient American peoples theory, and Martin Harris met together in February 1828, that Mitchill showed more than a passing interest in what Harris had to show and say, and that he went so far as to identify these people. ■



Richard E. Bennett, professor of church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University since 1997, is currently associate dean of Religious Education. He has published widely on nineteenth-century Mormon history. His particular interests include the Mormon exodus, the rise of temple consciousness among the Latter-day Saints, and the history of Joseph Smith from 1820 to 1830. He is currently working on a book-length manuscript tentatively entitled “In the Year of Our Lord, 1820.”

NOTES

I wish to thank the Office of Research and Creative Activities, as well as the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, for providing financial assistance for research assistants and for making the necessary research visits possible. Special thanks to Nathaniel Irvin, my research assistant; the librarians and curators at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts; and the New York Historical Society in New York City. I owe a special debt to my wife, Patricia, for working at my side during these research visits.

1. Richard E. Bennett, "Read This I Pray Thee": Martin Harris and the Three Wise Men of the East," *Journal of Mormon History* 36/1 (2010): 178-216.
2. Benjamin S. Barton, *New Views of the Origin of the Tribes and Nations of America* (Philadelphia: Bioren, 1797), i and ii.
3. Lee Eldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 5-6. I have found Huddleston's work very helpful. Other useful overview studies are Robert Wauchope, *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents: Myth and Method in the Study of American Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); John T. Short, *The North Americans of Antiquity: Their Origin, Migration, and Type of Civilization Considered* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1880); Samuel G. Drake, *The Aboriginal Races of North America*, 15th ed. (New York: Hurst, 1880); and Thomas W. Field, *An Essay towards an Indian Bibliography* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1873), available at the American Philosophical Society.
4. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 7.
5. See Wauchope, *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents*.
6. Nevertheless, the Carthaginian/Phoenician theory revived in the mid-nineteenth century, especially after the archaeological discoveries in the Yucatan. See Ira Hill, *Antiquities of America Explained* (Hagerstown: Bell, 1831); and Reverend George Jones, *The History of Ancient America, Anterior to the Time of Columbus* (1843). Jones argued that the Tyrians, or Phoenicians, had built the Mexican temples and pyramids. See also Johann Vater, *Untersuchungen über Amerika's Bevölkerung aus dem alten Kontinente* (Leipzig, 1810).
7. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 37-38. See also Juan Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, ed. Justo Zaragoza (Madrid, ca. 1580).
8. Diego Andrés Rocha, *Tratado único y singular del origen de las indias del Perú, Méjico, Santa Fé y Chile* (Lima, 1681), as cited in Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 90.
9. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 43.
10. Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589), 506. See also Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 57. Hakluyt spent just 2 of over 900 pages dwelling on Madoc's voyages, giving it space but little commentary.
11. George Burder, *The Welch Indians; or, A Collection of Papers, Respecting a People Whose Ancestors Emigrated from Wales to America in the Year 1170, with Prince Madoc* (London: Chapman, 1797), 35 pp. See especially 5, 14-17, 23-26.
12. Isaac de la Peyrere, *A Theological System upon the Presupposition That Men Were before Adam* (London, 1655), as cited in Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon: Religious Solutions from Columbus to Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 36.
13. Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, 2 vols. (New York: Aitken, 1776), 1:38, as cited in Vogel, *Indian Origins*, 37. Vogel argues that the pre-Adamite theory gained much consideration and attention; however, the opposite seems closer to the truth.
14. Barton, *New Views of the Origin of the Tribes*, ci-cii.
15. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 34-35; see Joannes Fredericus Lumnius, *De extremo dei iudicio et indorum vocatione* (Antwerp, 1567). Published the same year and similarly supportive of the lost tribes account was Gilbert Genebrard (a French clergyman), *Chronographia in duos libros distincta* (Paris, 1567), as cited in Richard W. Cogley, "The Ancestry of the American Indians: Thomas Thorowgood's *Iewes in America* (1650) and *Jews in America* (1660)," *English Literary Renaissance* 35/2 (2005): 307-8.
16. Diego Durán, *Historia de las indias de Nueva España e Islas de Tierra Firme*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Editoria Nacional, 1580); and Juan de Tovar, *Relación del origen de los indios que habitan esta Nueva España segun sus historias* (Mexico, 1878). See Short, *North Americans of Antiquity*, 134-36.
17. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 84-85. "I am not convinced that these Indians are those [Lost] Tribes." See Juan de Torquemada, *Primera parte de los veinte i un libros rituales i guerras de la india, con el origen y monarquia indiana, con el origen y guerras de los Indios Occidentales*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1613), 1:22; and Antonio de la Calancha, *Coronica moralizada del orden de San Augustin en el Peru con sucesos egenplares en esta monarquia* (Barcelona, 1638). In all the years between 1600 and 1730, besides Rocha (who argued for a derivative explanation that the tribes came later in history and mixed with the Spanish original races), only one other Spanish scholar—Pedro Simón—bought into the theory. See his *Primera parte de las noticias historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales* (Cuenca, 1627); and Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 85-86.
18. Manasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (London, 1650).
19. "But the question is not in what age, before, or since the Incarnation of our Lord the Jewes took their long journey, & planted there; but how the way was passable for them." Thomas Thorowgood, *Iewes in America; or, Probabilities That the Americans Are of That Race* (London, 1602), 43. Unlike Manasseh ben Israel, who allowed for the possibility that peoples other than the lost tribes may have come to the New World, Thorowgood argued that only the lost tribes settled the Americas. See Cogley, "Ancestry of the American Indians," 313.
20. Eliot lived among the Indians from the 1640s to the 1680s and not only taught them the Christian gospel out of the scriptures but also tried hard to improve their temporal and

- social conditions. An opponent of Indian slavery and a man of immense courage, Eliot was referred to as “our benevolent apostle.” Convers Francis, *Life of John Eliot: The Apostle to the Indians* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1844), 319. For a more current study, see Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians before King Philip’s War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
21. Hamon L’Estrange, *Americans not Lewes; or, Improbabilities That the Americans Are of That Race* (London, 1652); Gottlieb Spitzel, *Elevatio relationis Monteziniana de repertis in America tribus Israeliticis* (Basel, 1661); and John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England Made during the Years 1638, 1663* (Boston, 1674). See also Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, 135; and Short, *North Americans of Antiquity*, 134.
 22. William Penn, *A Letter from William Penn, Proprietary and Governour of Pennsylvania in America, to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders* (Philadelphia: Sowle, 1683), 7.
 23. See Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America* (London, 1761).
 24. Charles Hudson, “James Adair as Anthropologist,” *Ethnohistory* 24/4 (1977): 311–28.
 25. James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London: Dilly, 1775), 13.
 26. Charles Crawford, *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel; in Which There Are Numerous Facts and Arguments Adduced to Prove That Many of the Indians in America Are Descended from the Ten Tribes* (Philadelphia: Humphreys, 1801), 118–19.
 27. Elias Boudinot. *A Star in the West; or, A Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Preparatory to Their Return to Their Beloved City, Jerusalem* (Trenton, NJ: Fenton, Hutchinson, and Dunham, 1816), 297. That many missionaries and visitors to America believed likewise is evident in the writings of the English minister Reverend E. Howitt, who, while visiting Geneva and Canandaigua, New York, in 1819, put it this way: “An American writer congratulates his country, on being the only Christian country in the world which has not persecuted the Hebrews. Perhaps, however, it will appear, that it does not constitute so amiable an exception; and that America will have to unite its efforts with every other Christian realm, to wipe away the stain of injury towards the most remarkable and most abused people in the globe. . . . They have been barbarously and ungratefully treated, and that, as Christians bear the blot of that infamy, every Christian should be anxious to wipe it away. If it be proved that these interesting people are really the descendants of Jacob, it will afford an awful instance of the deep and inscrutable workings of Providence, and will awaken a strong and (for them, I trust), propitious interest in every Christian mind.” E. Howitt, *Selections from Letters Written during a Tour through the United States, in the Summer and Autumn of 1819* (Nottingham: Dunn, 1820), 184–85.
 28. “If the Indians of America are not the descendants of the missing tribes, again I ask, from whom are they descended? From the Egyptians? . . . Are they part of the fierce Scythians? . . . but where among those barbarians do we discover the belief in one Great Spirit, together with the softer virtues, the purity and talents of the Indians? . . . The Indians have distinct Jewish features, and neither in mind, manners, nor religion, bear any affinity to the Tartar race.” Mordecai M. Noah, *Discourse on the Evidences of the American Indians Being the Descendant of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel* (New York: Van Norden, 1837), 33.
 29. Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews; or, The Tribes of Israel in America* (Poultney, VT: Smith and Shute, 1825), 199; see also 209.
 30. See Edward K. Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*, 9 vols. (London: Havell, 1831–48); and Short, *North Americans of Antiquity*, 143.
 31. See Antonio de León y Gama, *An Historical and Chronological Description of Two Stones Found Under Ground, in the Great Square of the City of Mexico, in the Year 1790*, trans. William E. Hulings (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1962).
 32. Once published, Kingsborough published other selections of them; however, in the process he introduced a number of distortions into Castañeda’s drawings, making them look more Egyptian or Hebraic than New World. See Guillermo Dupaix, *Viajes de Guillermo Dupaix sobre las antigüedades mexicanas (1805–1807)*, 2 vols.; also in Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*.
 33. Fray Joseph de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias publicada en Sevilla, año de 1590*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Angles, 1894). Considered one of the most learned members of the Jesuit order by Pope Clement VIII, Acosta believed that the early Americans came not deliberately but by accident, that they probably came by land and not by sea, that they brought animals with them, and that they were illiterate. Acosta’s careful field studies, his “collection, arrangement and evaluation of widely differing types of evidence” (similar to that of modern anthropologists), and his willingness to consider daringly new possibilities were well ahead of his time. See Saul Jarcho, “Origin of the American Indian as Suggested by Fray Joseph de Acosta,” *Isis* 50/4 (1959): 435.
 34. Huddleston, *Origin of the American Indians*, 50–54.
 35. Edward Brerewood, *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages and Religions through the Chief Parts of the World* (London, 1614).
 36. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Rowle, 1787). As discussed in David J. Meltzer, *Search for the First Americans* (Montreal: St. Remy, 1993), 42.
 37. “A small number of nations, far distant from each other, the Etruscans, the Egyptians, the people of Thibet, and the Aztecks, exhibit striking analogies in their buildings, their religious institutions, their division of time, their cycles of regeneration, and their mystic notions.” Alexander von Humboldt, *Researches, Concerning the Institutions and Monuments of the Ancient Inhabitants of America*, trans. Helen M. Williams (London: Longman et al., 1814), 10–11. Humboldt knew Thomas Young, the great English Egyptologist and Champollion competitor. See Letter of Alexander von Humboldt to Thomas Young [n.d., 1816–1822?] Royal Society of London; copies in the American Philosophical Society.
 38. Michael A. Wadyko, “Alexander Von Humboldt and Nineteenth-Century Ideas on the Origin of American Indians” (PhD diss., West Virginia University, 2000), 23–26.

39. Wadyko, "Alexander Von Humboldt," 34.
40. Barton, like Thomas Jefferson in his America-centric reasoning, argued in reverse—that is, that the Old World languages had descended from the New World, that the Indian languages spawned those in Asia, and that the migrations had crossed the Bering Strait from west to east. Wadyko, "Alexander Von Humboldt," 86–89.
41. Hugh Williamson, *Observations on the Climate in Different Parts of America* (1811); Hugh Murray, *Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels of North America*, 2 vols. (London: Longman et al., 1829); James H. McCulloh, *Researches, Philosophical and Antiquarian, Concerning the Aboriginal History of America*, 2nd ed. (1817); John McIntosh, *The Origin of the North American Indians* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1853), and C. S. Rafinesque, *The American Nations; or, Outlines of a National History of the Ancient and Modern Nations of North and South America* (1836).
42. See Robert Silverberg, *Mound Builders of Ancient America: The Archaeology of a Myth* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1968).
43. Thomas Jefferson commissioned Henry Marie Brackenridge (1786–1871) to study these mounds in Louisiana and Missouri. In his *On the Population and Tumuli of the Aborigines of North America* (1813), Brackenridge favored "an advanced culture, race, and set of origins for the Mound Builders distinct from those of the American Indians." Caleb Atwater (1778–1867), in his *Descriptions of the Antiquities Discovered in the State of Ohio and Other Western States* (1820), believed the Mound Builders were from various origins but that the most advanced were Mexicans. See William Bartram (1739–1823), *Travels through North and South Carolina* (1791), who first proposed that they were a pre-Indian race; and Wadyko, "Alexander Von Humboldt," 143.
44. Roland B. Dixon, "Contacts with America across the Southern Pacific," in *The American Aborigines—Their Origin and Antiquity*, ed. Diamond Jenness (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1933), 315. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, de Laet had suggested the possibility of Polynesian or Pacific peoples populating the New World. See John de Laet, *Extracts from the New World, or a Description of the West Indies* (Leyden, 1625); reprinted in *Collections of the New York Historical Society*, 2nd series, vol. 1 (New York: Printed for the Society by Ludwig, 1841).
45. Samuel L. Mitchill, "The Life, Exploits, and Precepts of Tammany, the Famous Indian Chief: Being the Anniversary Oration pronounced before the Tammany Society . . . 12th of May, 1795" (New York: Printed by Buel, 1795).
46. Letter of Samuel L. Mitchill of New York to Samuel M. Burnside, Esquire, Correspondence Secretary of the American Archaeological Society, 13 June 1817, as published in *Archaeologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* (Worcester: William Manning, 1820), 314.
47. Discourse of Samuel L. Mitchill in the College of Physicians at New York, 2 November 1816, in *Archaeologia Americana*, 338–44.
48. Samuel L. Mitchill to De Witt Clinton, 31 March 1816, as published in section IV, "The Original Inhabitants of America shown to be of the same family and lineage with those of Asia, by a process of reasoning not hitherto advanced," in *Archaeologia Americana*, 325–32. For several years Mitchill kept these "Indian mummies" in his collection. One visitor described them thus: "This dried up human body was sent to Hickson W. Field from Kentucky by a Mr. Rogers about the year 1820. It was an Indian girl [who] was scalped, and had garments wrought of turkey feathers on a fabric, a kind of net. [The] work was exhibited in Warren St. New York but it did not take with the public. It is now in the American Museum." List of Maps, Print, etc., of Isaacher Cozzens, Cozzens Collection of 44 items, New York Historical Society.
49. Unpublished letter of Samuel L. Mitchill to John Wakefield Francis, 13 September 1816. Courtway Library of Medicine, Harvard University Library, Boston, Massachusetts, Mitchill Collection. Mitchill also compared the artwork of several Mexican paintings. "They are done upon the fabric of pounded bark, exactly like the paper-cloth manufactured at this day in the Society and Friendly Islands. . . . I speculated the like preparations of Ptaheite and Tongababoo; showing a similar state of the arts from America through the Polynesian islands to Australia." Unpublished letter of Samuel L. Mitchill to P. S. DuPonceau, 24 February 1819, American Philosophical Society.
50. Hugh Williamson, *Observations on the Climate in Different Parts of America* (New York: Swords, 1811), 103–4, and 109.
51. Josiah Priest, *American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West*, 2nd ed. (Albany: Hoffman & White, 1838), 296. See also Mitchill letter to Clinton, in *Archaeologia Americana*, 329.
52. Mitchill letter to Clinton, in *Archaeologia Americana*, 326.
53. Unpublished letter from Mitchill to Francis, 13 September 1816.
54. *Archaeologia Americana*, 324–25.
55. Vivian C. Hopkins, "De Witt Clinton and the Iroquois," *Ethnohistory* 8/2 (1961): 127.
56. De Witt Clinton, "Memoir of the Antiquities of the Western Parts of the State of New York Read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York by De Witt Clinton, Albany, 7 October 1817," in *Archaeologia Americana*, 48. For more on the mentor/student relationship between Mitchill and Clinton, see Dorothy Bobbe, *De Witt Clinton* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1933), 64–65.
57. Hopkins, "De Witt Clinton and the Iroquois," 129. For a series of articles on this subject and to confirm Clinton's interests, see those by William A. Ritchie in *Researches and Transactions of the New York State Archaeological Association* 7–12 (1930–54); also his *Indian History of New York State, Part 1, Pre-Iroquoian Cultures; Part 2, The Iroquoian Tribes* (Educational Leaflet Series, nos. 6 and 7, New York State Museum, March 1953 and July 1953).
58. Rafinesque argued for an extermination theory as well. Shortly after Noah's flood, ancestors of the American Indians settled in North Africa and later sailed to America before Peleg. Later Asiatic peoples came from the northwest and overran them. C. S. Rafinesque, "Ancient History, or Annals of Kentucky," a pamphlet (Frankfort, KY, 1824), 12–14.
59. Priest, *American Antiquities*, 222

- and 240. Rafinesque, however, put no stock whatsoever in the lost tribes theory. A derivative of the Mitchillian theory and variation of the pre-Adamite theory was Mitchill's view, similar to Thomas Jefferson's, that "America was the cradle of the human race," that the Garden of Eden was in ancient America, and that the great early migrations of man had originally traveled westward from the Americas to Asia, Europe, and Africa before eventually returning later to the Western Hemisphere; see *Archaeologia Americana*, 331. Priest likewise bought into this view in *American Antiquities* (1838 ed.), 135.
60. Priest, *American Antiquities*, 43.
 61. John D. Lang, *View of the Origin and Migrations of the Polynesian Nation: Demonstrating Their Ancient Discovery and Progressive Settlement of the Continent of America* (London: Cochrane, 1834), 85-86 and 148.
 62. Lang, *Origin and Migrations of the Polynesian Nation*, 238.
 63. B. H. Coates, "Annual Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, on the 28th day of April, 1834, on the Origin of the Indian Population of America" (Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1834), 48. Coates believed that the "Malay or Oceanic race of the South Seas . . . probably furnished the largest share to the population of the two Americas." "Annual Discourse," 50.
 64. John Delafield Jr., *An Inquiry into the Origin of the Antiquities of America* (Cincinnati: Burgess, 1839), 102.
 65. Marcius Willson, *American History: Comprising Historical Sketches of the Indian Tribes: A Description of American Antiquities* (Cincinnati: Moore, 1847), 92-93.
 66. E. M. Ruttenber, *History of the Indian Tribes of Hudson's River* (Albany: Munsell, 1872), especially 16-17.
 67. Clark Wissler, "Ethnological Diversity in America and Its Significance," in *American Aborigines*, 169.
 68. Aleš Hrdlička, "Melanesians and Australians and the Peopling of America," in *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* 94/11 (1936): 22 (18 October 1935). To be fair, many have not bought into the argument. For a very contrary opinion, see Horatio Hale, "Was America Peopled from Polynesia? A Study in Comparative Philology," *Proceedings of the International Congress of Americanists at Berlin, in October 1888* (Berlin: Herrman, 1890), 13.
 69. Paul Rivet and James H. Labadie, "Early Contacts between Polynesia and America," *Diogenes* 4/16 (1956): 87, 89. Recently, researchers have analyzed skulls from a tribe in isolation in Mexico from 2,000 to 2,700 years ago and have found that they are similar to those of ancient Australians. See the writings of Rolando Bonzalez-Jose in the journal *Nature* as referred to in "Skulls Point to New Theory on Early American Migrants," *Deseret Morning News*, 8 September 2003.
 70. Charles Butler (1802-97), a former clerk in the office of Martin Van Buren, was assistant district attorney of Genesee County, New York. See Leonard J. Arrington, "James Gordon Bennett's 1831 Report on 'The Mormonites,'" *BYU Studies* 10/3 (1970): 354. See Francis H. Stoddard, *The Life and Letters of Charles Butler* (New York, 1903), 125-28. See also Francis H. Stoddard, "An Impression of Martin Harris," *Improvement Era*, November 1940, 663.
 71. Entry for 8 August 1831 in the James Gordon Bennett Diary, as cited in Arrington, "James Gordon Bennett's 1831 Report," 355; see Stoddard, *Life and Letters of Charles Butler*, 125-28.
 72. "Mormon Religion—Clerical Ambition—Western New York—The Mormonites Gone to Ohio," *Morning Courier and Enquirer* (New York), 1 September 1831. As reprinted and explained in Arrington, "James Gordon Bennett's 1831 Report," 362. Bennett's reference to Mitchill's awareness of Champollion may indicate that Mitchill, of all American scholars, knew best the great French scholar's work.
 73. For much more on the visit of Martin Harris to Professor Mitchill, Charles Anthon, and Luther Bradish, see my article "Read This I Pray Thee," 178-216; see note 1.