

The Adena - The Mysterious Mound-Builder

The Adena Mound Builder culture, which rose and fell in the United States long before the first Europeans arrived in North America, has left behind a legacy of earthworks and ancient mound structures from as far East as West Virginia, all the way to the edge of Oklahoma. They are thought to be responsible for the construction of the Great Serpent Mound and Chester's more modest Triskelion of Serpents.

Little is known of these people, and it remains a matter of archaeological debate whether or not a single culture was responsible for the various earthwork structures found in random portions of the eastern half of the U.S.

The surviving local Native American population of Shawnee Indians have their own theories about the Mound Builders – they tell stories of a time when the Shawnee encountered “strange white-faced people” who lived “in” the mounds.

These people, who feared the sun, worshipped Maneto (“The Snake”) and after the hunting in the area soured, the Shawnee made war on them and forced them from the mounds. The beings fled west or died defending their mounds.

More specifically, there is a legend about the Chester Mound itself. It is said that when the Shawnee made war on the strange people, their last shaman “drew down a star” and smashed the earth with it in revenge, killing himself, a Shawnee chief and his wives. At the point of impact, the Shawnee built the three-Maneto mound; snakes turned in upon themselves, to prevent their spirit from escaping and haunting the Shawnee.

Despite a recent craze in recording Indian verbal Native American traditions, few put credence in such legends; although a local geographic survey of the Chester Mound placed it on cryptoexplosion structure – a place that it is highly likely was subjected to a meteor impact sometime in the past.

The Adena mound builder culture is a mystery, and it's unclear if they were a single tribe or a mixture of tribes with similar rites and rituals. Archaeologists cannot seem to agree on anything about the Adena except the following:

What is known is that the earthworks they constructed pepper the United States from the edge of Oklahoma to West Virginia and date between 2,000 BC to about 100 BC.

These earthworks are some of the largest in the world, and some (such as the Chester Mounds and the Great Serpent Mound) are intricate and detailed.

They are thought to be the predecessors to the modern Indian tribes that populated the area when Europeans began populating the continent. Many Indian tribes claim to be unbroken descendants of the culture; but no one has definitive proof.