

longer time than any of the others, on account of the gradual longitudinal leveling of the river-beds. 2d. The complete disappearance of all wooden structures, which must have been of great solidity. 3d. The advanced state of decomposition of human bones in a soil well calculated for their preservation. Skeletons are found in Europe well preserved at a known age of eighteen hundred years. 4th. The absence of the Mound-builders from the traditions of modern tribes. Nothing would seem more likely to be preserved in mythic or historic traditions than contact with a superior people, and the mounds would serve to keep the traditions alive. 5th. The fact that the monuments were covered in the seventeenth century with primitive forests, uniform with those which covered the other parts of the country. In this latitude the age of a forest tree may be much more accurately determined than in tropical climates; and trees from four to five hundred years old have been examined in many well-authenticated cases over mounds and embankments. Equally large trees in all stages of decomposition were found at their feet on and under the ground, so that the abandonment of the works must be dated back at least twice the actual age of the standing trees. It is a fact well known to woodsmen that when cultivated land is abandoned the first growth is very unlike the original forest, both in the species and size of the trees, and that several generations would be required to restore the primitive timber. Consequently a thousand years must have passed since some of the works were abandoned. The monuments of the Mississippi present stronger internal evidence of great antiquity than any others in America, although it by no means follows that they are older than Palenque and Copan. The height of the Mound-builders' power should not, without very positive external evidence, be placed at a later date than the fifth or sixth century of our era.

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