

The Legend of Jump Mountain: Narrative Dispossession of the Monacan in Postcolonial Virginia [Abstract]

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In north central Virginia there is a local tale – The Legend of Jump Mountain, which purports to explain the origins of the Hayes Creek Indian Burial Mound. A highly romantic legend, it immortalizes post colonial intertribal warfare during the early nineteenth century while ignoring the antiquity of the mound and the local descendants of its aboriginal creators. It is not at all uncommon to find such romantic tales in Indian country where the Native people have become invisible and there remain significant tribal artifacts common to the landscape. However, the standing claim to authenticity remains a matter of significant concern. In this essay, the author considers the tale's effectiveness assessing Indian origins, local history and tribal heritages, as well as the implicit stereotypes and the romantic illusion that it may generate in the popular imagination.

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