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Filson Club

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The Fall From Grace of That "Base Wretch" Rafinesque

Charles Boewe

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (1783-1840) is known in Kentucky because of his short and stormy professorship at Transylvania University, 1819-1826, during its period of greatness under the presidency of the Rev. Horace Holley. Better remembered for his eccentricities than for his lasting accomplishments—largely because of a colorful account by his friend Audubon—he continues to elicit popular interest as a square peg in a round hole. The events of his life are known almost entirely from A Life of Travels, the short autobiography he published in Philadelphia, at his own expense, in 1836. Like other autobiographies, this slim volume must be treated with a degree of skepticism wherever its events are not corroborated by the accounts of others. As few parallels by contemporaries have appeared, the story of Rafinesque, over the years, has taken on several mythical dimensions.

Two views of Rafinesque's life are antithetically opposed, which leads to the conclusion that both spring from information that is subject to different interpretations. The only American naturalist "who might clearly be called a titan," Rafinesque was the "greatest field botanist of his time," who "had outlined the rudiments of a hypothesis of Evolution by the year 1835"; but, scorned by his dull-witted contemporaries, he "died in a lonely, miserable garret," and only now is truly appreciated—by whatever writer has most recently rediscovered him. The other view is that he was an irascible and egotistical rascal—quite possibly insane—whose ill-digested knowledge and slipshod work methods produced a body of writings hard to lay hands on and best forgotten.

Today Rafinesque occupies a small but secure place in the history of science, not because of his theoretical contributions to biology, which were minimal, but because of his many pioneering forays through most branches of natural history which resulted in validly published scientific names for plants and animals that cannot be ignored according to the accepted rules for identification.

As recently as 1950, however, an attempt was made at the Seventh International Botanical Congress in Stockholm to effectually declare Rafinesque a nonperson whose published botanical discoveries should be expunged from the record. This unusual international intrigue began when the British botanist C. A. Weatherby wrote, in 1935, that the plant genera established in all of Rafinesque’s later books represented “a kind of pseudo-scientific work, the nomenclatural results of which may well be legislated out of existence”7 by other botanists. As indeed it lay within their power to do. Over the years since Rafinesque flourished, the world’s botanists had legislated for themselves an elaborate International Code of Botanical Nomenclature which requires that the first-used Latin name for a plant, if validly published as defined by the Code (as most of Rafinesque’s were), stand forever. The only exception occurs if the plant itself is reclassified.

The “Rafinesque problem” in the history of science hinges on the issue of priority. Any of us can appreciate the natural human desire to receive credit for one’s own discoveries, but by the middle of the twentieth century the principle of priority had come to have an additional function in the life sciences, especially in botanical nomenclature. Knowledge in the physical sciences is said to cumulate, but knowledge in the life sciences—especially the naming of new plants—tends to accumulate, with the result that chaos would ensue if the same plant were known by two or more scientific names. Priority of valid publication seemed to be an objective, impersonal, automatic device to purge the record of needless redundancy.8

The definition of such a principle had developed over time. It began with Linnaeus, whose rationalist eighteenth-century vision gave us the binomial system itself, where every entity is assigned first to a genus to express its affiliation with similar beings, then defined within the genus by a specific epithet to express its unique difference, both terms being written in Latin. While various individual naturalists published their opinions on priority from
time to time, accepted order finally was attained through
democratic means in a series of international congresses, both for
botanists and zoologists. Those for botany began with one in Paris
in 1867, followed by one in Vienna in 1905, then Cambridge in
1930, and so on—each resulting in a published Code bearing its
name.

But when Rafinesque was publishing his discoveries, priority
was much more a personal matter of what one could persuade—or
even coerce—his colleagues to accept. He demanded—virtually
challenged9—other botanists to search out his own published plant
names, however obscure the source, and taunted them when they
failed to succeed. It took eleven packed pages for him to review
Frederick Pursh’s *Flora Americae Septentrionalis* (1814), where he
cited chapter and verse of all the publications by Rafinesque that
Pursh had overlooked, including *Florula Missourica*, which nobody
then, or since, has ever seen.10 At the same time it must be
admitted that Rafinesque was a formidable bibliographer himself,
for with primitive resources at his disposal he cited and used
publications which hardly can be identified today.11 Neither his
erudition nor his edgy temperament have endeared him to others.

The attempt to follow up on Weatherby’s stern suggestion that
Rafinesque’s writings deserved to be outlawed was spearheaded by
the Latin American botanist Leon Croizat, who published in Italy
an exposé titled “Rafinesque: A Concrete Case”12 and circulated the
article internationally, though Croizat weaseled a bit by publishing
under the pseudonym “Henricus Quatre.” One supposes he had in
mind, not the first Bourbon but rather, Henry IV of England, who
solved the problem of heretics by calmly burning them—for
Croizat’s intemperate conclusion (p. 18) was that Rafinesque’s
plant names had been a “flood of polluted nomenclature
contributed by a lunatic, who wrote botany because he was of
unsound mind.”

Although it had not occurred to the botanical legislators to
include sanity of the author as a condition for valid publication,
the question of madness has dogged Rafinesque from his lifetime
onward. He acknowledged that he suffered himself to be “laughed
at as a mad Botanist” in his rambles around Kentucky, in order
“to be a pioneer of science.”13 By the middle of the twentieth
century it was enough of an issue in botany that one of his
staunchest defenders requested a posthumous psychoanalysis of the
naturalist by the Boston psychiatrist J. M. Woodall. Doctor
Woodall, after examining the published writing of his long-dead patient, pleased some people by his conclusion that Rafinesque was indeed sane, and went on to declare him clearly a genius; but he typed Rafinesque’s personality as paranoid, and diagnosed his ego as “enlarged and hypertrophied to an abnormal degree.”¹⁴

Perhaps because paranoid egotists occur as frequently among botanists as in other professions, the question of whether a crazy scientist can produce sane science was never settled at Stockholm. Calmer heads prevailed, and Rafinesque’s writings were not outlawed. One of his principal distinctions therefore survived: that he published more Latin plant names than anyone else who ever lived—not excluding Linnaeus, the Father of Botany—though only a fraction of these had entered the records accepted by all botanists. The name Rafinesque remains a thorn in the side for many taxonomists today.

Yet the brouhaha at Stockholm was a practical though clumsy response to a very real problem. Many of Rafinesque’s discoveries had been self-published in such limited editions that the books were available only in a few rare book libraries,¹⁵ and others had been published in such obscure media, including rare Kentucky imprints,¹⁶ that they simply were no longer available to those who needed to see them, especially in Europe. A few, it now seems likely, have disappeared from the face of the earth without leaving a trace. The converse of the problem plagued Rafinesque during his lifetime. Publishing where and when he could in Kentucky (earlier in New York; later in Philadelphia), he also shipped many of his best articles down the Ohio, through the port of New Orleans and across the Atlantic, to find publication, in the French language, in Brussels and Paris. Some of these, in turn, were reprinted in German. Both distance and language barriers sealed them off from most of his American colleagues.

At the time of Rafinesque’s death, other American naturalists, unable to deal with the information overload provided by his facile pen, tried to dismiss his publications they had never read by declaring them unworthy of being read. In botany, this coup de grâce was performed by Harvard professor Asa Gray¹⁷; in zoology, by S. S. Haldeman of the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁸ Their essays were commissioned by a journal which had denied publication to Rafinesque two decades earlier. Gray and Haldeman also had the weight of earlier opinion behind them. On the appearance of Rafinesque’s Atlantic Journal, Lewis David von
Schweinitz wrote to John Torrey that Rafinesque “is doubtless a man of immense knowledge—as badly digested as may be & crack-brained I am sure.” When two of Rafinesque's manuscripts were rejected by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1819, another botanist, William Baldwin, exulted that the academicians “have sufficient independence to reject the wild effusions of a literary madman.” And Charles Wilkins Short, briefly Rafinesque's colleague at Transylvania and long his correspondent, declared to Gray after the publication of the latter's obituary article, that “every body knows that poor Raffy was a most bare-faced liar, not to say rogue; and the only way of apologizing for his gross frauds and deceptions is by [Elias] Durand's charitable supposition that he was deranged.”

The bulk of contemporaneous lay opinion that Rafinesque was deranged is hardly outweighed by a single posthumous professional opinion to the contrary. Whether Rafinesque was legally insane, or crazy in the colloquial sense, seems less important now than it is to see how this disparagement of his character came about. Whatever the validity of psychoanalyzing the dead, Doctor Woodall surely hit on Rafinesque's salient flaw—his swollen ego—which caused others to regard him as crazy. Then, too, the psychiatrist was acute enough to detect his patient's persistent paranoia, probably because Rafinesque complained bitterly about the “foes of science” at Transylvania, among whom he numbered president Holley as the chief offender.

Yale-educated Horace Holley, formerly a Unitarian minister, was in fact too liberal-minded for the Lexington of his time, and he was hounded from office by ultraconservative religious and political power brokers less than a year after Rafinesque's own departure. He took justified pride in having raised the university's standards to the point that students were writing both Latin and Greek by their junior year, by which time they also had read Cicero, Ovid, Horace, and Juvenal. His curriculum included natural philosophy—roughly what we mean by physics today—which fitted into the classical curriculum by tradition, as well as mathematics, which included such practical specialties as trigonometry and surveying. He even had a professor of chemistry on his staff, albeit the professor seldom gave a lecture. Though we can see now that the explosion of knowledge which took place in natural history in the early decades of the nineteenth century put botany and zoology on the cutting edge of science—much as
particle physics is for our own time—such a revolution had little impact on an institution struggling to plant the Greek and Latin classics firmly on the frontier. The proper role for natural science must have seemed to be that adopted without a murmur by Charles Wilkins Short, who pursued botany as an adjunct to his yeoman service teaching materia medica to the medical students.

Moreover, poor Holley had to try to orchestrate a whole chorus of prima donnas; only because of historical accident does Rafinesque's shrill tenor ring out above the others. Among them were the conceited Charles Caldwell, who never quite reconciled himself to the raw society of Lexington after having known that of Philadelphia; Daniel Drake, Benjamin Dudley, and William Richardson, who did reconcile their own differences in a three-way shoot-out; John Roche, who so imbibed the wisdom of in vino veritas while teaching Latin that he lay drunk much of the time; and many other individualists who came and went during Holley's tenure. He even had to entertain the Newport cosmographer John Cleves Symmes, who lectured in Lexington on his theory that the earth is hollow and then tried to recruit "100 brave lads" from Holley's student body to help him explore its interior. Tolerating Rafinesque, who had been thrust upon him by trustee John D. Clifford, he also tried to recruit Benjamin Silliman for Transylvania—which shows that, far from being a foe of science, Holley wished to strengthen his faculty with the best scientific talent to be had.

But Silliman preferred to remain at Yale, where he taught chemistry and geology, eventually secured the establishment of the Sheffield Scientific School, and founded The American Journal of Science and Arts, which became the most prestigious scientific journal in America. Silliman published eleven short papers by Rafinesque in the first volume (1818-19) of his journal, when something happened which has been seen as a turning point in Rafinesque's career and, in wider context, the symbol of a watershed in the development of science in America: the replacement of the broad-gauge field naturalists by laboratory-based narrow specialists.23

When he published Asa Gray's obituary notice on Rafinesque's botanical work, Silliman saw fit to append his own footnote to the article where he explained that in 1819 "I became alarmed by a flood of communications, announcing new discoveries by C. S. Rafinesque, and being warned, both at home and abroad, against
his claims, I returned him a large bundle of memoirs. . . . This will account for the early disappearance of his communications from this Journal. The step was painful, but necessary; for, if there had been no other difficulty, he alone would have filled the Journal, had he been permitted to proceed.”

Silliman’s comment, often cited since, deserves an explication it has never received. Taking its points from last to first, it may well be that Rafinesque could have filled the journal singlehandedly, for the flood of communications in 1819 resulted from discoveries he made during the previous year in his trip from Pittsburgh down the Ohio River as far as Shawneetown. The Kentucky years gave him a rich harvest in new flora and fauna, and when he left Kentucky in the spring of 1826 he shipped to Philadelphia forty crates of collections and continued to exploit these materials the rest of his life. However, Silliman failed to mention that he published a final Rafinesque contribution as late as 1821—the description of a fossil jellyfish, a lusus naturae that surely ranks with Rafinesque’s Devil-Jack Diamond-Fish in the annals of pseudoscience. And his journal continued to carry notes on Rafinesque’s activities, though these have never been listed by Rafinesque’s bibliographers. In 1836 the journal devoted the best part of two pages to announcements of Rafinesque’s current book publications and to his offer to buy or exchange plant specimens. So he was not entirely ignored by the American Journal of Science, as has been thought.

Far more significant in Silliman’s decision must have been the warnings he received. As we have seen already, many contemporary botanists were ready to bad-mouth Rafinesque, and zoologists such as Richard Harlan could also be added to their number. What has not been known is that the person who gave the first shove of Rafinesque’s reputation down slippery slopes was not a naturalist at all. His poison-pen letters began to have their effect while Rafinesque was a member of the Transylvania faculty, but this enemy was far removed from the university itself. He can be identified now by bringing together widely separated documentation from both published and unpublished sources.

In Lexington, Rafinesque turned to various publication media, including newspapers, pamphlets published at his own expense, and Lexington’s Western Review and Miscellaneous Magazine, a monthly which struggled to survive during the period 1819-21, under the editorship of William Gibbes Hunt. Most of its
contributors were associated with Transylvania and included faculty, trustees, the president, and his wife Mary Holley. In Lexington, too, Rafinesque developed a new enthusiasm so far removed from the conventional concerns of natural history that his earliest bibliographers passed over his contributions in this field as hastily as possible, missing several as a consequence. His new interest was one he shared with his patron, trustee John D. Clifford, on "circumvallations"—Indian "forts," as several near Lexington still are called—or, as Rafinesque persuaded himself, the Ancient Monuments of America. One of his earliest publications in this field appeared in Hunt's magazine, and was respectfully addressed to Postmaster "Caleb Atwater, of Circleville," Ohio.

Speculation on the peopling of the New World had had a long history prior to the nineteenth century and had generated a vast literature, some of which Rafinesque had available in the well-stocked Transylvania Library; he indulged in speculation too. But Atwater is generally credited with being the first to produce a book-length survey of prehistoric mounds based on careful examination of the artifacts themselves, though his study was not free from speculation. Others, including Rafinesque, had also mapped prehistoric sites.

Despite his irascibility and proneness to take offense, there is no question about Rafinesque's willingness to share his knowledge with others—whether plant specimens, fossils, vocabularies of Indian languages, or, in the case of Atwater, maps and descriptions of prehistoric sites. Rafinesque only expected equal measure in return and acknowledgment of his contributions. Yet, when his book appeared as part of *Archaeologia Americana* Atwater thanked everyone imaginable, including John D. Clifford, but remained obdurately silent about Rafinesque.

Rafinesque's anonymous review of the book, in Hunt's magazine, also was unknown until the 1982 revision of Fitzpatrick's bibliography of writings by and about Rafinesque. For the work of an author scorned it was remarkably objective, which gives some credence to Atwater's own belief that it was the joint production of Hunt and Rafinesque. According to Atwater, Hunt left the manuscript for Rafinesque to see through the press, and "this base wretch" then "inserted in every part of the review, the basest insinuations against me and inserted more than one hundred as base falsehoods as were ever uttered by man!" At any rate, it was Rafinesque who roused Atwater's ire, not Hunt.
copy of the magazine now preserved at the Cincinnati Historical Society, Atwater scrawled such angry comments as, “Only R’s say so who has not seen them,” beside a list of sixteen sites the review said Atwater overlooked. About all one can find today likely to give offense in the review is a supercilious comment (p. 104) about Atwater’s style, which “though animated, is diffuse, and not always correct. He is not even exempt from grammatical errors, nor is he uniformly accurate in his orthography.” If, as Buffon asserted, the style is the man himself, perhaps this affront to his amour-propre was enough to throw Atwater into a sputtering rage.

Rafinesque soon became aware that Atwater blamed him for the review and, taking full responsibility for it, he wrote with great sang-froid four years later that having “corrected some inaccuracies of his in a Review of his labours . . . I have incurred his displeasure”—and Rafinesque may have become aware of the consequences, for he went on to remark that the displeasure “has shown itself in a manner rather singular and unwarrantable.” As indeed it had.

Rafinesque’s review appeared in September, and the following January Atwater wrote to Samuel Latham Mitchill, a fellow contributor to Archaeologia Americana, asking whether he had received the volume in New York and snarling that “as to Prof. Raf. as he now calls himself, or Smaltdz as he was called, until the sea washed away his actual name,” he “injures us considerably in Kentucky. But he cannot last long anywhere. I shall take care, that his true name, real character and private history shall be well understood there, very soon.”

Using his postmaster’s franking privilege, he fired off letters in all directions. He asked Parker Cleveland in Maine to return an essay which included information on conchology, courtesy of Rafinesque, “to correct it by striking out every word depending on the veracity of a person, who ought to be ranked among the worst of impostors, in literature and science, now living in the world.”

No letter of his has been found among the Silliman papers at Yale, but language so similar to Silliman’s—“being warned, both at home and abroad”—turns up in Atwater’s correspondence elsewhere that surely he was the one who put the bee in Silliman’s bonnet. To the American Antiquarian Society in Massachusetts Atwater wrote that “Prof. Raf. is writing a great deal for the 2nd Vol. [of Archaeologia Americana] but before you publish any
thing of his, where facts are wanted, I would advise you to ask the opinion of Professor Silliman and Pres. Holley"—both of whom he must have tried to set up—"and to consult any periodical work, published in London or Paris. In the meantime, I can inform you, that in Europe, his statements are not believed in any case whatever. These things I knew not, until since his review, when letters from all quarters poured in upon me."38

Certainly he tried to prejudice Holley, as he probably had Silliman; but to his credit, Holley asked for proof. We do not know what evidence, if any, was sent him, but Holley remarked to his brother, "I have received a letter from Caleb Atwater with many severe remarks upon Rafinesque, in consequence of one that I wrote to him not long ago, asking the names of the Journals in Europe, in which the public were cautioned against believing our Professor. Atwater is petulant, and evidently a little nettled by a review of his work in Hunt's magazine, written by Rafinesque."39

Finally Atwater's wrath was spent, for when Rafinesque asked later that year for the return of essays and maps he had tried to transmit through Atwater to the American Antiquarian Society, its president, Isaiah Thomas, replied that he would attempt to oblige; but he added that he had received "a very strange and unhandsome letter from C. Atwater," saying "that he shall withdraw himself from all Societies—that he has quitted all Antiquarian and Geological researches—and intends to drop all correspondence on those subjects."40 Later Atwater relented and proposed a second volume, which never appeared.

The bad blood between Atwater and Rafinesque must have been common knowledge at one time in southern Ohio; in its review of Rafinesque's Ancient History or Annals of Kentucky (1824), the Cincinnati Literary Gazette expressed mock surprise that he had located the Garden of Eden in Asia, whereas his friend, Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill, had more patriotically surmised it probably was in North America. "We can only account for his dissent . . . from the fact that the doctor's theory . . . is published in Archaeologia Americana, a work that must for ever be of doubtful authority, while its pages contain the name of Caleb Atwater."41

Though long since forgotten, the petulance of a provincial postmaster had done its work, starting Rafinesque's reputation down a long decline from which it has never wholly recovered. His exclusion from the pages of the American Journal of Science

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may have coincided with a watershed in the history of American science, but Rafinesque owed his troubles to an immediate cause no greater than an ill-received book review. And whatever else the episode may show, it reminds us that even paranoids do have enemies.

NOTES


2 Most recently by Peggy Robbins, "The Oddest of Characters," *American Heritage* 36 (June-July 1985): 58-63, an article which conveniently assembles most of the clichés about Rafinesque. My own maiden effort on this subject (*Audubon Magazine* 59 [1957]: 166-69) was equally full of "tears and flapdoodle," as Mark Twain would say, because also based on *A Life of Travels* and conventional wisdom. The present essay is one of several subsequent attempts to atone for that youthful indiscretion.


7 [Kew] Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information, Nos. 6-9 (1935), 409. Among the international fraternity of botanists, however, there has been disagreement on this as on most other issues. The Czechoslovakian J. Paclt declared (Taxon, 9 [1960]: 47-49) that "both the first and most ingenious system of descriptive biology is undoubtedly that of C. S. Rafinesque," which "corresponds, in fact, to that of the more recent plant and animal taxonomy."


9 This occurred on the cover of a magazine he published, 1832-33, the *Atlantic Journal*, where Rafinesque offered a prize worth $25—"in pamphlets of his own manufacture & specimens of plants from the same laboratory" dryly remarked L. D. von Schweinitz—for the best synopsis of American flowering plants, provided not a single one already published in Europe or America be omitted.

10 *American Monthly Magazine and Critical Review* 2 (January 1818): 170-76; (February 1818): 265-69. Unable to find a publisher in this country for *Florula Missourica*, Rafinesque sent the manuscript (which he expected would make a pamphlet of forty pages) to William Swainson in England.
When it was not published there, he translated it and sent it to another friend, Baron Bory de Saint-Vincent, who was unable to publish it either in Brussels or Paris. The booklet described and named plants discovered by the English botanical traveler John Bradbury, who had settled near Louisville. Since Rafinesque alleged that Pursh had stolen Bradbury’s discoveries from a duplicate set of specimens in England, perhaps he concluded that Pursh should have stolen his own descriptions and names as well. Neither manuscript has ever been found.

A good example is Rafinesque’s recovery of an obscure Danish work on cottons of the West Indies, Anmerkungen über den Cattunbau (1791-93), by J. P. B. von Rohr, which Rafinesque probably knew through an equally obscure anonymous French translation (1807). Several species of the genus Gossypium which Rafinesque named from this literary source, without having seen the plants themselves, are generally accepted today.


In Elmer D. Merrill, who commissioned the examination, Index Rafinesquanus (Jamaica Plain: Arnold Arboretum, 1949), 54-56.

Many of Rafinesque’s technical books were reprinted by photo-offset by Merrill in the 1940s, and since then these as well as numerous journal articles have been made available on microfiche. Because of their rarity, original Rafinesque titles continue to command record prices in the rare book market.

For example, in a series of papers under the general title “The Cosmonist,” Rafinesque published discoveries of fossils, birds, lizards, insects, and plants in the Kentucky Gazette, a Lexington newspaper. One of these contained his first notice of the Kentucky Yellowwood (Cladrastis lutea), which he discovered on the banks of the Kentucky River. This ornamental tree has since been widely distributed, and Rafinesque’s generic name for it is universally accepted. However, this earliest description of the plant was unknown to botanists until 1984, when Cosmonist XV (published 7 November 1822) was discovered by Ronald L. Stuckey. Three other Cosmonist articles—which might concern any of Rafinesque’s varied interests in natural science—are unknown, because all files of the Kentucky Gazette are lacking the numbers which, by the serial order of the articles, should contain them.

Notice of the Botanical Writings of the Late C. S. Rafinesque,” American Journal of Science and Arts 40 (1841): 221-41.

Notice of the Zoological Writings of the Late C. S. Rafinesque,” idem 42 (1842): 280-91.


William Darlington, ed., Reliquiae Baldwinianae (Philadelphia: 50 THE KENTUCKY REVIEW
Kimber & Sharpless, 1843), 301.

C. W. Short to Asa Gray, 3 October 1859; Asa Gray Collection, Herbarium Libraries, Harvard University. These views along with many others (some of which are favorable) are collected in Ronald L. Stuckey's "Opinions of Rafinesque Expressed by His American Botanical Contemporaries," *Bartonia*, No. 52 (1986), 26-41.

Several resolutions preserved in the manuscript Trustee Records in the Transylvania University Archives urge James Blythe to give a course of lectures in chemistry. Blythe, for fourteen years Transylvania's acting president before the arrival of Holley, may have been sulking in his tent; he may also have preferred not to exhibit his ignorance, since his only academic distinction was the honorary doctorate of divinity. At least he was not lazy; while serving as acting president he personally dug the pit for the university's privy.


[Silliman], *American Journal of Science and Arts* 40 (1841): 237 (fn.).

"Idem" 29 (1836), 393-94.

After early laudatory treatment of his work in G. W. Featherstonhaugh's *Monthly American Journal of Geology and Natural Science*, Rafinesque was chagrined to find that journal turned against him under the prodding of Richard Harlan—quite likely because Rafinesque declared that a specimen prized by paleontologist Harlan was by no means the jaw bone of an extinct animal but a mere rock. Featherstonhaugh editorialized that the first number of Rafinesque's *Atlantic Journal* demonstrated its author's insanity, to which Rafinesque replied (Atlantic Journal! [Autumn 1832]: 113) that, having "lived to see my youthful rashness become science," "I may live yet to see my mature insanity . . . become wisdom . . . ."

Under the initial "C.,” Clifford published eight long letters on "Indian Antiquities" in the *Western Review and Miscellaneous Magazine* which would amount to a small book if collected.

Rafinesque, "On the Upper Alleghawian Monuments of North Elkhorn Creek," *Western Review and Miscellaneous Magazine* 3 (August 1820): 53-57. Rafinesque's first publication in this field had been "On a Remarkable Ancient Monument Near Lexington," *idem* 1 (December 1819): 313-14. These contributions appeared too late for Atwater to make use of them in his book, had he wanted to. However, Rafinesque had been in correspondence with him for some time. The original sketch of the
"Triune Idol" in Atwater's book (p. 238) is correctly attributed to John D. Clifford's sister, Sarah; extant at the American Antiquarian Society, the drawing is labeled in Rafinesque's hand.

Rafinesque, Ancient History, or Annals of Kentucky (Frankfort: Printed for the Author, 1824), a repaged separate struck off from Rafinesque's introduction to the second edition of Humphrey Marshall's History of Kentucky (Frankfort: G. S. Robinson, 1824). Marshall's book is often considered the first formal history of the commonwealth, for John Filson's earlier work was something of an advertising brochure intended to attract settlers. Marshall allotted Rafinesque less than forty pages to cover Kentucky from the dawn of Creation to the first appearance of the Caucasians, for he needed space in the remainder of the two volumes to trounce his political enemies.

Some of Rafinesque's maps were redrawn from manuscript and printed in Ephraim G. Squier and E. H. Davis, Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1848). Only those of one site were published during his lifetime, and they were missed until the 1982 revision of the Rafinesque bibliography; they appear in his "Description d'une ville ancienne du Kentucky occidental sur la rivière Cumberland," Bulletin de la Société de Géographie 20 (1833): 236-41, 264-65. Others remain in manuscript, unpublished, at the American Antiquarian Society and at the University of Pennsylvania.

Archaeologia Americana was the general title for early volumes of the Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society. Atwater's contribution titled 'Description of the Antiquities Discovered in the State of Ohio and Other Western States' appeared, pp. 105-267, in volume 1 (1820), which also contained a number of related articles of lesser length.

Reasons for attribution of the unsigned review to Rafinesque are given in Charles Boewe, Fitzpatrick's Rafinesque: A Sketch of His Life with Bibliography (Weston: M & S Press, 1982), 241, where it was first listed. The review appeared under the title of the book itself in the Western Review and Miscellaneous Magazine 3 (September 1820): 89-112.

Caleb Atwater to Isaiah Thomas, 12 October 1820; American Antiquarian Society. Horace Holley may have been the source of Atwater's belief that Hunt originally wrote the review; Holley said so in a letter to his brother Orville, 14 October 1820; University of Louisville.

John C. Greene, op. cit., 369-72, 455-56, cites the copy of the review annotated in Atwater's hand and discusses correspondence among Atwater, the American Antiquarian Society, Rafinesque, and others, without however showing that Atwater's animosity led to his attempt to destroy Rafinesque's reputation.

Rafinesque, "Clio No. II: Ancient History of North America—Monuments of the State of Ohio," Cincinnati Literary Gazette 1 (3 April 1824): 107. Rafinesque also says here that he was "once in active Correspondence" with Atwater.

Caleb Atwater to Samuel Latham Mitchill, 7 January 1821; Cincinnati Historical Society. "Smaltz" is Atwater's error for Schmaltz, the matronym Rafinesque hyphenated to his surname in Sicily to avoid being
considered a Frenchman when it looked as though the island, then controlled by the English, might be invaded by the French. The reference to the sea shows that Atwater knew Rafinesque was shipwrecked when he returned to the United States in 1815. In “A Brief Sketch of the History of Ichthyology in America to the Year 1850” (Copeia, No. 1 [1964], 40), George S. Myers mistakenly concluded that Rafinesque added his mother’s maiden name “solely because he found that Germans were well thought of in America.” However, Rafinesque-Schmaltz appears only on publications issued in Sicily. Even those papers Rafinesque sent to Europe for publication after his return to the United States in 1815 were published under his patronym alone.

37 Caleb Atwater to Parker Cleveland, 4 November 1820; Cincinnati Historical Society.

38 Caleb Atwater to Isaiah Thomas, 22 November 1820; American Antiquarian Society. Atwater’s letter must have had some effect on Thomas, for in truth the American Antiquarian Society, of which Rafinesque was a member, never published any of the several articles he sent there.

39 Horace Holley to Orville L. Holley, 22 February 1821; University of Louisville. Though European journals were critical of Rafinesque later in his career, none have been found this early by his bibliographers. In fact, Kurt Sprengel listed all of Rafinesque’s botanical discoveries appearing in Silliman’s journal in his Neue Entdeckungen im Ganzen Umfang der Pflanzenkunde 1 (1820): 142-46; 2 (1821): 206-08—which was more European recognition than most American botanists got. Holley went on in the same letter to say that Rafinesque’s “correspondents in Europe compliment him, and increase. He has shown me letters from Cuvier, and from some of the distinguished naturalists in Germany and England.”

40 Isaiah Thomas to C. S. Rafinesque (letterbook copy), 3 September 1821; American Antiquarian Society.

41 Cincinnati Literary Gazette 2 (25 December 1824): 202-204. Other Cincinnati wits also were amused by the antiquarians’ dispute over the location of the Garden of Eden. In an erudite bilingual pun on Mitchill’s middle name, Thomas Peirce, The Odes of Horace in Cincinnati (1822), attributed the discovery of its site on the banks of the Ohio to “Professor Brickibus, M.D.”