



This is the Aztalan Hotel that was built in 1850. It was located about where the Robert Roehl home is standing today.

Aztalan's Early Settlers

Aztalan, once the cross-roads of Indian civilization in south central Wisconsin was visited in 1835 by Nathaniel F. Hyer and William Brayton who spent some time on a federal survey in this vicinity. In October of 1836 Timothy Johnson and Thomas Brayton arrived and settled near Aztalan. Several references were made to Johnson, and it appears he opened his home to all newcomers for a night of lodging or a meal or two. Others who followed in 1837 were Rev. Jared F. Ostrander, James Payne, Alfred A. Brayton and Henry Sedgewick.

Royal Tyler, born in 1815 in Northfield, Vermont, arrived in March of 1837, and made claim for his farm. Two years later he returned to Vermont where he married Rosaline Colter. The history says: "After visiting with relatives a short time the young couple started for Wisconsin in a covered sleigh drawn by a span of horses. They carried wagon wheels along in case the snow gave out. The trip took six weeks."

Other first settlers who filed claims were E.L. and Kelly Atwood. E.L. Atwood was a member of the Territorial Convention and it was while he served as such that the question of changing the capital to Aztalan was presented and lost by only two votes.

Jacob Gause was one of the first carpenters, and he married one of the Atwood girls. Their house was one of the first built on the Faville Grove Road. Mr. Gause was one from this area who went to California in the gold rush of 1848. James Payne ran a general store in Aztalan and later Horace and Lucius Cooper set up a general trade and traveled about with their wares as "peddlers." Later they set up a general store in Aztalan.

Joel Gardner was an early Justice, who married couples and straightened out the differences between neighbors.

In 1839, Rev. Ostrander delivered the patriotic address at the first Fourth of July celebration held in Jefferson County.

The first post office in Jefferson County was established at Aztalan in 1837 and was named "Jefferson", but was later changed to "Aztalan."

The first postmaster was Nathaniel F. Hyer. Until the winter of 1838 the mail was carried

on a man's back each way from Waukesha, then Prairieville, to Madison and return, the carrier making weekly trips. The "Early History of Lake Mills" states that in 1845 Royal Tyler transported the mail in a light democrat wagon from Watertown to Madison, changing horses at Aztalan and old Deerfield.

Four years later a coach was used that was pulled by four horses. The coach left Milwaukee every morning except Sunday at 4:30, reaching Madison the same day at 11:30 p.m. changing horses at Milford and Deerfield. The following is a list of the postmasters who served during the days Aztalan was a flourishing village: Nathaniel F. Hayer, James Payne, Benjamin Baldwin, Horace B. Willard, Parkus M. Waterbury, Dennis L. White and George Knapp.

In 1839 a steamboat was built by Nelson Hawkes, under the firm name of the Aztalan Steamship Company. This steamboat launched on the Crawfish and floated down the Rock River and into the Mississippi. It was the dream of Hawkes that the Rock would some day connect with the Milwaukee Canal and a network of waterways would be the main mode of travel. But the boat never returned to Aztalan and it was felt that his venture was a pipe dream. It was the feeling of the early settlers that dams in the rivers for grist mills and saw mills would be more profitable. Mr. Hawkes left Aztalan for Delafield and became a prominent figure in the early settlement of that town.

There were many modes of travel, over a number of routes, for the early settlers. Most of

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Remember Way Back When?

50 YEARS AGO—October 19, 1893

Interest is manifested in evidence of a prehistoric race, such as skulls, bones, war implements, ornaments, etc. being found in excavations throughout Jefferson county. The latest finds near Hebron, Aztalan, and Jefferson have turned attention to the so-called mounds near North Prairie, Waukesha county, and in the northern part of Walworth county.

Early Settlers

the people came from the new England states, Vermont, New York, New Hampshire and Connecticut. Some came by water up the Great Lakes. Others came by land.

In the early history compiled by Elisha W. Keyes he describes his trip thus:

"My father came to Milwaukee and later Jefferson County to make claim for land and he then returned for his family. The family of five had started out with a few household goods for Burlington on Lake Champlain, thence by steamboat to Whitehall, New York, and from that point by canal.

Near Utica, my father, coming from the west met us and em-

barked at Buffalo upon the steamer Bunker Hill, and we landed in Detroit. From there we traveled by covered wagon through Indiana to Chicago. After dragging our wagons through the muddy street we started our winding way through forests to Milwaukee. We remained in Milwaukee, a village of a few hundred inhabitants until autumn and then proceeded toward Jefferson County, which my father pictured to us to be, "The Promised Land."

AZ

ONCE an archeologist, always one. Working away in his room at Columbia hospital, Dr. Samuel A. Barrett, director of the Milwaukee public museum, recently made a clay model of a corner of the wall that hundreds of years ago surrounded the prehistoric village that we call "Ancient Aztalan."

For nearly 15 years this ancient Aztalan has been Dr. Barrett's hobby. Two summers, 1919 and 1920, he worked on the site of this curious triple walled city that is Wisconsin's most important prehistoric relic.

Therefore, it was not surprising that when his physician ordered slight exercise for Dr. Barrett's broken arm, the Aztalan enthusiast at once began modeling a section of the wall and one of the towers of this city that before the memory of man existed in what is today Jefferson county, Wisconsin.

The model, made by Dr. Barrett in the hospital room, is to be the basis for another and more finished model, which, in turn, will be used in creating a new miniature "group" in the museum. At the same time the Aztalan exhibit in the museum is to be amplified by the addition of certain interesting specimens from Aztalan which have been held out while a museum publication on this prehistoric Wisconsin city was being prepared. This book, a comprehensive treatise on ancient Aztalan, has just been published.

THE study of Aztalan began way back in Wisconsin's territorial days. The pre-Columbian city is on the Crawfish river, a branch of the Rock river. Increase A. Lapham was one of the early scientists who wrote about it.

The book is startling in some of its disclosures. It flatly contradicts the idea that Aztalan, in times long before Columbus, was a sort of oldtime Mecca, a kind of "marabout" where some holy man lived and to which the faithful directed their steps to engage in strange ceremonies.

According to Dr. Barrett, while Aztalan was a triple walled village and had a couple of truncated pyramidal structures within its walls, there were probably no ceremonies to speak of taking place on top of the walls or of the pyramids. The walls had a purely

utilitarian function. They were erected to provide protection from their enemies to the Aztalan people. And instead of medicine men raising their hands high while sacrifices were performed, warriors with bows and arrows ran around the runway on the inside of the walls, stopping now and then to shoot through some convenient loop-hole.

The big pottery jars that stood on the tops of the numerous towers that jutted out along the wall had nothing to do with religious ceremonies. They were the Aztalan order of water tank for protection from fires and served the same purpose as the sprinkler system in a factory.

The food question is where ancient Aztalan loses its character for refinement and gentility entirely. A good many of us have suspected that the pre-Columbian of whatever part of the continent, had the bad taste to indulge now and then in an orgy of human flesh eating. But in apology for the bad manners of these early people, we have tried to make ourselves believe that this was only done in a ceremonial manner, in a sacramental way.

But the museum authorities shock the friends of Aztalan by taking the

bull by the horns and stating boldly that Aztalan inhabitants cracked human bones and ate the marrow with as little compunction as they did the bones of buffalo and bear.

AND then there are the famous "brick" walls of Aztalan. Ever since white men first saw the site of this walled city in 1836, people have been carrying away as souvenirs pieces of the famous bricks of Aztalan.

Articles have told how these prehistoric masons took clay and water, mingled sedge and grass in it and baked

it into permanency. One of the scientists long ago called attention to the fact that Dr. Schliemann had discovered that the walls of Troy had been baked "in situ" (in place). He wondered if the walls of Aztalan had not likewise had the heat applied after the clay was in place.

And now Dr. Barrett declares that that very thing took place. However, the "firing" was what you might call an "adverse and unwilling" baking.

The Aztalan people had made their great walls, using poles cut from the surrounding timber, sinking them five

feet in the ground and allowing them to stand 12 feet or more high and so close that they touched their neighbors.

Then, mingling grass with clay, they plastered the whole over, inside and out.

Aztalan was happy. Its triple walls were completed and its warriors sprang lightly around the runway; its young girls brought water to fill the jars on top of the towers. Its princess—the young woman with the twisted spine, whose bones were found swathed in beads—held her court in the village. And then came the enemy, to set fire

with diabolic cleverness, to the walls of Aztalan. The timbers inside the plastered clay burned, baking the mud into bricklike consistency, but not, of course, into bricklike shapes. In some

cases when the poles had burned, a whole section of the wall toppled over and fell with the baked clay holding its shape.

Hundreds of years later, and several feet deep in the ground, scientists from the public museum discovered these toppled over sections and from them were able to calculate the dimensions of the walls.

"WHEN we got down to bed rock," says Dr. Barrett, "we found the base of a great stockade, 12 feet high with two other stockades inside, making Aztalan a triple enclosed village. All around the breastwork were watch towers. Piercing the stockade were narrow gates. The posts of the stockade were sunk between five and seven feet in the ground and projected 12 feet above ground. The mud plaster with which they were covered was four inches thick and had grass incorporated in it exactly as a mason uses hair in his plaster.

"This plaster made the walls look like masonry and took away the appearance of a palisade. These walls, on three sides of the village, were its protection from attack.

"The fear of those who lived within the triple walled city seems to have been that its besiegers would set fire to the walls, as they actually did, since there were jars of water on top of the towers as well as large rocks to be cast down at the enemy.

"The stockade walls were finally burned in sections. The burning wood generated sufficient heat to cause the clay, with its incorporated grass, to form regular brick. These bricklike sections of the wall stood until they were gradually undermined. Then, section by section, they fell over and lay prone on the ground. Humus formed over this cracked masonry which was further split by the frost. In places where an entire section fell over, we were able to trace what must have been the height of the original walls."

N. F. HYER, a Milwaukee lawyer, afterward postmaster at Jefferson, was the first person of scientific bent to view the ancient ruins. He stopped his horse near Aztalan one day in 1836 and dismounted to examine the strange relics of the past that he had learned about from a man named Johnston of Watertown.

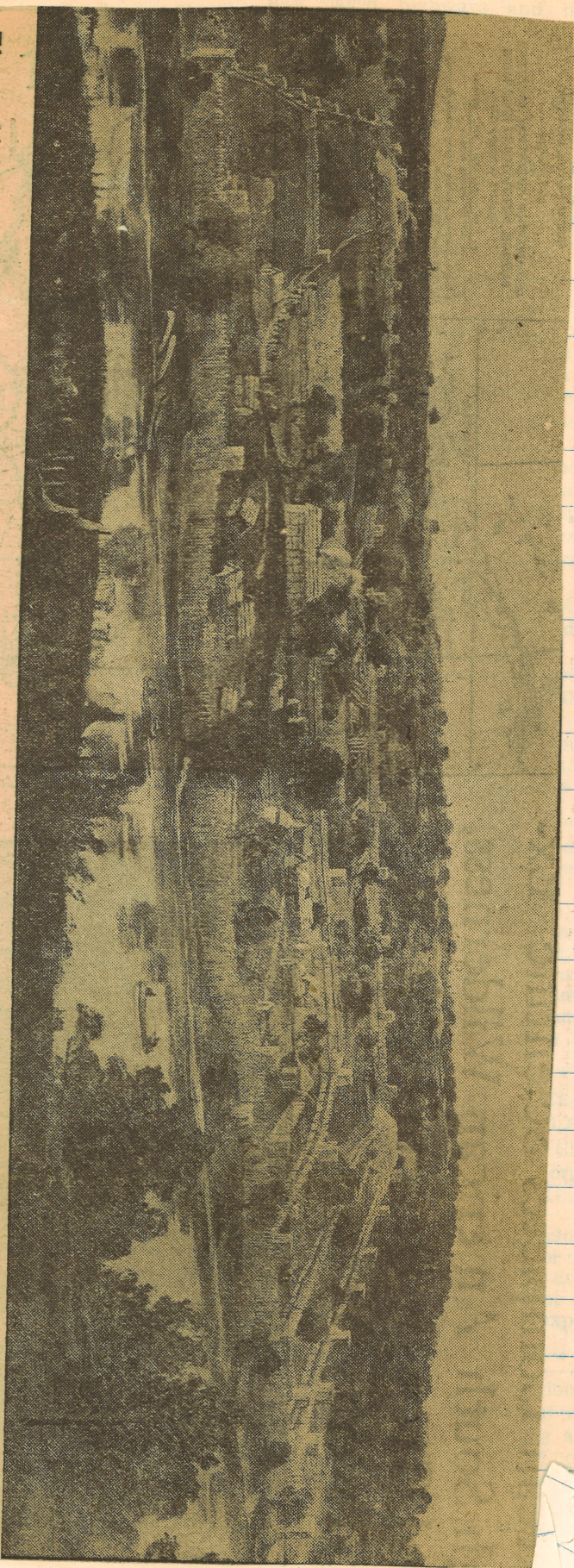
The whole thing made an impression of Mexico on Mr. Hyer. So much did it look to him like Mexican prehistoric remains, that he named it "Aztalan," taking the name from Alexander Von Humboldt's book published some 30 years earlier. In this book the great Humboldt wrote that traditions said that the Aztecs had come from a city far

4 to the north named "Aztalan." Humboldt, studying the story of this southward march of the Aztecs, himself concluded that their home of Aztalan must have been north of the forty-second parallel, and wrote that into his book.

The site of Wisconsin's Aztalan is, roughly calculating, on the forty-third parallel. To Mr. Hyer this seemed conclusive. He had found the old home of the Aztecs.

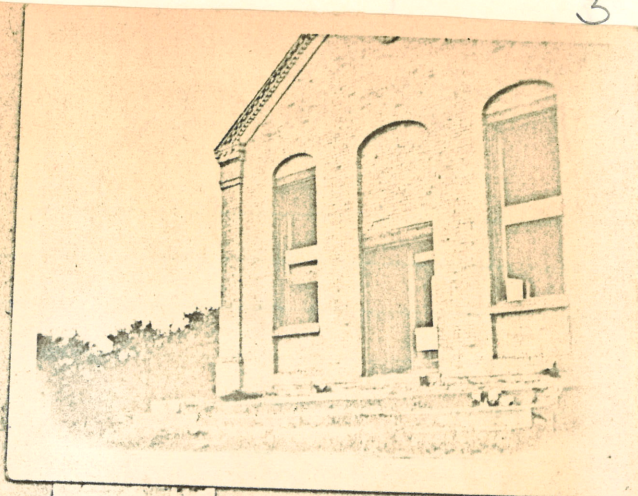
While Dr. Barrett makes no claim that Aztalan was the old home of Aztecs, he does say that its culture is distinctively that of the south, being nearest related to that of Cahokia in Illinois. "The southern connection is conclusively shown," says Dr. Barrett. "The pyramidal form of certain structures shows this. The masonry covered walls are a further evidence of the southern connection as is the form of many of the implements and the ornamentation of the pottery."

The pre-historic Wisconsin village of Aztalan, as recreated on canvas by George Peter, Milwaukee public museum artist, from discoveries made on the site by museum scientists





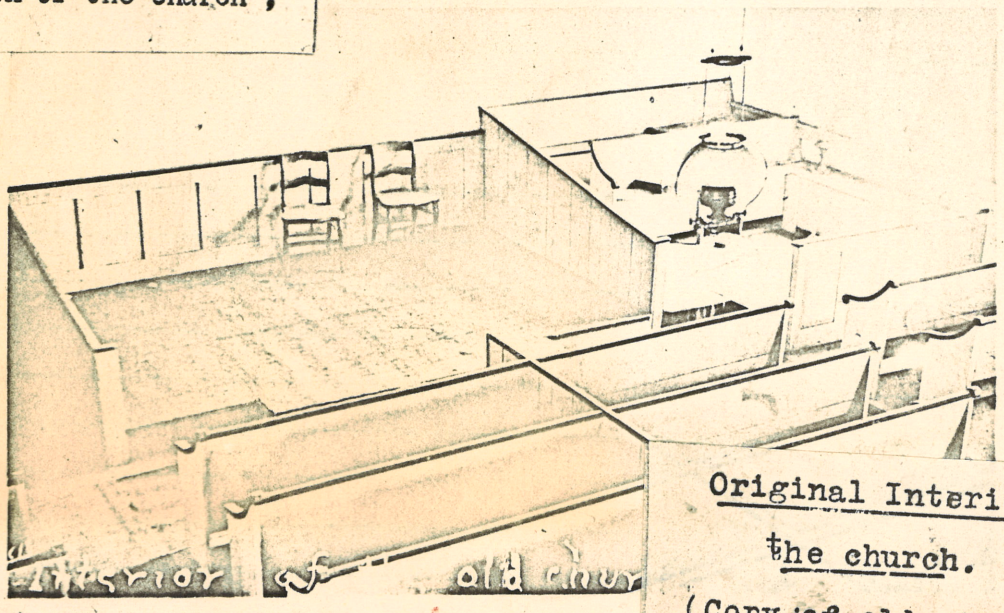
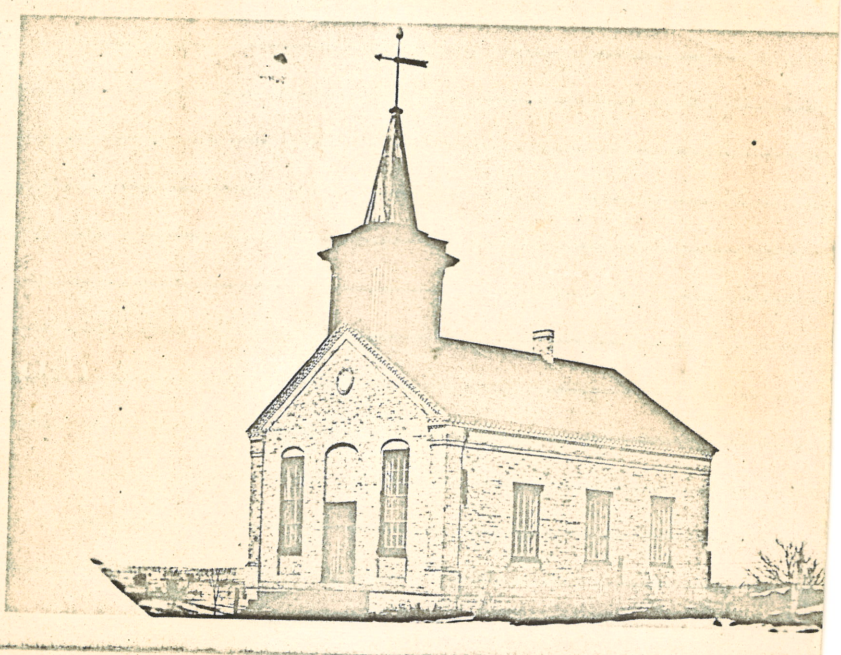
Aztalan Church in 1941 when we began.
Photo- Ruth Potter



Trees cut down in front in April-1941-
(Photo- Ruth Potter)

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Trees growing out of front door.

A copy of a picture of the old Aztalan Church, before it fell to disuse - accidentally found Ruth Potter in a book of old photographs owned by Mr. JOHN HOOPER, of Lake Mills. He had forgotten about taking it, but later remembered that he took it when he was a student in the University of Wisconsin, about 1896, probably. Ruth Potter borrowed it and had a copy of the photograph made, which the BRAUN LUMBER COMPANY, of Jefferson used when they made copies of the original doors and windows in the restoration of the church, for the Society.



Original Interior of the church.
(Copy of old picture)

Aztalan Home Coming

On last Saturday, July 7th, many of the lineal and collateral descendants of Jeremiah Brayton were to meet at Aztalan for the purpose of placing at his grave in the Aztalan cemetery a bronze marker commemorating his service in the War of 1812. Mrs. Sawin of Madison, who died a few weeks ago at the advanced age of 101, was his daughter; and her daughter, Mrs. George W. Bird of Madison, arranged for this meeting. An informal invitation was sent out to others who had lived at Aztalan and a very pleasant homecoming was the result. More than sixty of those who had lived at Aztalan in the early days, or descendants of the old settlers, were present.

In the forenoon, ^{Served} the marker was placed on the grave of Jeremiah Brayton with beautiful and appropriate exercises. A basket dinner was ~~had~~ under one of the original oak trees still surviving on the village green, which was presented to the Town of Aztalan by Thomas Brayton, a great uncle of C.D. Brayton of Lake Mills.

After the dinner, an informal program was held on the village green, with remarks by Mrs. George W. Bird, Mrs. Frank Hannahs of Chicago, Elma H. Foster-Smith of Madison, W. H. Babcock of Oshkosh, J. S. Babcock of Fall River, C. D. Brayton of Lake Mills and his wife, Lucy A. Fowle Brayton (whose grandfather was Jeremiah Brayton), C. F. Greenwood of Lake Mills, Frank B. Fargo of Lake Mills and Mrs. Effie Willard Rogers of Fort Atkinson. Mrs. Rogers was born in the postoffice building at Aztalan which still stands on the corner and lived in early childhood in the old stone house, the walls of which are still standing across the road to the west, on the hill. Mrs. R. B. Kirkland read a paper and Charles B. Rogers read the paper which he prepared for the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Bridges. Mrs. S. A. Bridges and Mrs. E. E. Sheldon, both early residents of Aztalan, were unable to be present.

After the exercises on the green, the meeting was adjourned to the old village church, which has recently been repaired by voluntary subscription. Here W. H. Babcock of Oshkosh, known in early days as Henry Babcock, an old Civil War veteran, but still strong and hardy, sang several of the old songs, well accompanied by the audience. The entire occasion was most pleasant and brought vividly to mind the early days when Aztalan was a thriving village, the largest place between Milwaukee and Madison, supporting three hotels in which gathered many of the leading residents of the State.

A full list of those present is as follows:

Mrs. Geo. W. Bird (Brayton), Madison, Wis.
Mrs. Louise Bird Warren, LaGrange, Ill.
Marjorie Bird Warren, " "
Louise Warren, " "
Mrs. Frank Hannahs, Chicago
Evalina Bresse Montgomery, Madison,
R. C. Montgomery, "
Elma H. Foster-Smith, "
Mrs. R. B. Kirkland, Jefferson, Wis. (mother a Brayton)
Janette Bird, " "
Mr. & Mrs. C. E. Copeland, " "
Mrs. Chas. Copeland, " "
Miss Addie Copeland, " "
Agnes Hibbard, " "
W. E. Tyler, " "
Stanley Tyler, " "
Royal Tyler, " "
Lois H. Tyler, " "
Mary Cornish, Sturgeon Bay,
Estelle Crandall,
W. H. Babcock & Wife, Oshkosh, Wis.

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Janette Bird, " "
Mr. & Mrs. C.E. Copeland, " "
Mrs. Chas. Copeland, " "
Miss Addie Copeland, " "
Agnes Hibbard, " "
W.E. Tyler, " "
Stanley Tyler, " "
Royal Tyler, " "
Lois H. Tyler, " "
Mary Cornish, Sturgeon Bay,
Estelle Crandall,
W.H. Babcock & Wife, Oshkosh, Wis.

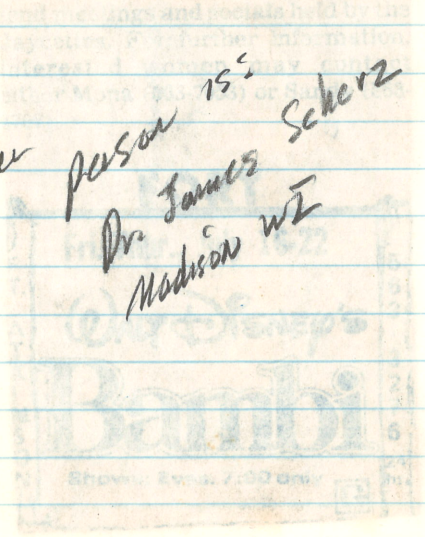


GET THE POINT? — The craft of making arrowheads was demonstrated Sunday when the Town of Aztalan and Wisconsin Archaeological Survey sponsored "Rediscover Aztalan Day." More than 400 persons visited Aztalan State Park, west of Lake Mills on County Highway Q, which was inhabited by pre-

historic Indians around 1100 A.D. Located along the Crawfish River, the 172-acre park is considered one of the most significant archaeological sites in Wisconsin. Pictured above, left, chipping a stone into an arrowhead is Neal Ostberg of Slinger. — Daily Union Staff Photo.

7/2/92

Other person 15⁵
Dr. James Scherz
Madison WI





REDISCOVER AZTALAN — Jefferson County residents visited Aztalan State Park Sunday for the first annual "Rediscover Aztalan Day," sponsored by the Town of Aztalan and the Wisconsin Archaeological Survey. Highlighting the event at the park, located west of Lake Mills, was a self-guided tour of the prehistoric Indians mounds, village and stockade, with experts explaining the lifestyle of Aztalan's 500 inhabitants about 1100 A.D. The day at the park, pictured above, also featured a demonstration on the making of arrowheads and identification of artifacts by Bill Green of the state Historical Society of Wisconsin, shown at left. Located along the Crawfish River, the 172-acre park today has become a popular fishing and picnicking spot, while remaining one of the state's most significant archaeological sites. — Daily Union Staff Photos.

New Cincinnati Coach