

I would like to nominate Albert Kracht to continue as a member of our Board.

I would like to mention in making this nomination a few of the reasons I think we should consider him.

First of all - I know of no other member of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical who has given more time and effort on its behalf. He has become so closely identified with the Aztalan-Museum and grounds it is hard to think of one without the other. He has spread the Aztalan story to uncounted thousands of eager school children who have visited the museum.

He has been the most ardent booster of the Aztalan Museum for ~~the~~ years. How could we carry on without him?

I get impatient with people who say "he's too old for the job - let's replace him;" What is too old? Is one to be penalized for the mere process of aging? It happens to all of us.

A rare french wine becomes just that through aging. I hope Albert won't mind being compared to a rare wine when I say "he, too, improves with age."

Election of officers
November, 1973

Effie Loomer

LAKE MILLS
HUMANITARIAN
SOCIETY
NEWS

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ADER

Editor

15¢ PER COPY

12 PAGES THIS WEEK

Lake Mills - Aztalan Hist. Museum Opens Sunday

Sunday, April 29, marks the official opening of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Museum located on County Trunk Q in the village of Aztalan. Hours will be observed between 1:30 and 5:30 p.m. Curator Albert Kracht and museum caretakers Mr. and Mrs. Elias Stroede will be on hand to answer any questions visitors may ask.

This marks the 31st year of the museum's history as well as the 121st birthday for the building which houses it. The former Baptist church was built in 1852 in the then flourishing community of Aztalan, which had sprung up at the junction of the Milwaukee-Mineral Point road and the stage coach road from Janesville to Fond du Lac.

But Aztalan was not destined for future greatness. Fate in the shape of the railroad passed the little city by and as more and more travelers turned to rail travel, the highways were abandoned, and the once-thriving community perished. By 1900, Aztalan, once considered as a site for the state capital, was a ghost town at a country crossroad.

Along with the rest of the town the little Baptist church started to crumble and decay. Vandals added their mark to that of time and the only visitors were the

pigeons that nested in the belfrey.

One of the first official acts of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society, which was formed in 1941, was to gain possession of the church and refurbish it and turn it into a repository for artifacts from the surrounding area.

Records show that the first summer the museum was in operation 850 persons visited it. Last summer 15,488 travelers passed through its door, including 4,774 students from 64 different schools in Wisconsin and Illinois.

The first group of students to visit the museum and state park near it this year was a group of 35 from the school at New Berlin on Monday of this week. Included with them were 14 foreign exchange students from Germany, who are spending three weeks in Wisconsin as guests of families in that area.

Water Will Be Turned Off April 26

MEMORIAL

In June of this year, our society lost a most cherished member, Anna Kracht, the devoted wife and constant help mate of our President Emeritus, Albert Kracht.

Mrs Kracht was a charter member, and for yearly 30 years she was a cheerful and tireless worker, always willing to do more than her share of whatever duties came her way--and they were many. Not one to seek honor or glory, she worked many, many hours at unglamorous tasks, like tidying up the museum and helping to serve at our meetings. Her ready smile and her friendly personality made friends of everyone, and her willing hands were always ~~hands were always~~ ready for good of the society and the museum.

There will always be void in our hearts and in the historical society--a special niche that belongs only to Anna Kracht. To her bereaved and loving husband and family we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

Read by Mrs William Korth at the society meeting on September 18, 1970.

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Annual Aztalan Day Is Scheduled for July 28, Museum Open All Day

AZTALAN—The Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical society is completing preparations for the second annual Aztalan Day to be held Sunday, July 28.

Picnicking will begin at 12 noon in Aztalan State park. Attendants are urged to come early with their picnic baskets and barbecue grills. Aztalan 4-H club and South Side Eagles 4-H club will be selling homemade pie, ice cream and pop at their stand for dessert.

The program starts at 1:30 p.m., when Jeff Dresen, a Lake Mills Boy Scout, will sound the call to colors. Herman Schmidt, Lake Mills city attorney, will bring greetings from his city.

Karl Magnussen will be master of ceremonies and presidents from the following historical societies will bring greetings for the occasion; Albert Kracht, Lake Mills-Aztalan; A. G. Sayre, Milton; William H. Rogers, Fort Atkinson; Robert Laatsch, Jefferson; Mrs. Mae Swallow, Whitewater; Harry H. Anderson, Milwaukee, and Clifford Townsend, Albion academy.

Eleanor Johnston, Diane Pranke, Ellen Messmer and Susan Gosdeck will present selections on the accordion. Music by the Aztalan 4-H club and a trumpet solo by Arnold Chamberlain will be followed by acknowledgments to the Sketch club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Harold Bradow, the Robert Laatsch family and Mrs. Mary Wilson by Mrs. William R. Wolff.

Mike Lange will present a resume of the work done by the archeologists who have been working at the park this summer, under the direction of Dr. Joan Freeman and J. B. Brandon. After the program, a guided tour of the diggings will take place.

The Aztalan museum will be open all day with its collection of Indian artifacts and mementos of early pioneer days. The Robert P. Laatsch family of Jef-

JEFFERSON CO. UNION
Page 2 * * * * *
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1968

erson will display its collection of antiques at the park. They will be bringing a gas engine that will grind feed, license plates, wrenches, spark plugs, corn planter, tops, keys, Rogers 1847 silver spoons and a Kennedy collection.

The Lake Mills Girl Scouts, under the leadership of Mrs. D. Etter and Mrs. E. Kracht, will have their first aid tent available again this year for any emergency.

Historical Society To Meet Friday November 19-1968

The annual business meeting of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society will be held Friday evening, November 19 in Seward Hall of the UCC-First Congregational. The hour is 7:30 p.m.

The evening's program will be provided by Karole Read, Lake Mills, who will talk on "Decorating for Christmas."

On the social committee will be Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Maasch, Vera Bohnsack, Clinton Setz, and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Marco.

Friends of the Society are always welcome at all meetings.

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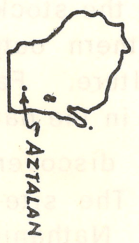
AZTALAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHURCH

RESIDENCE

BURIAL MOUNDS

AZTALAN STATE PARK
WISCONSIN CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



AZTALAN

TOWN ROAD

CRAWFISH RIVER

RIVER

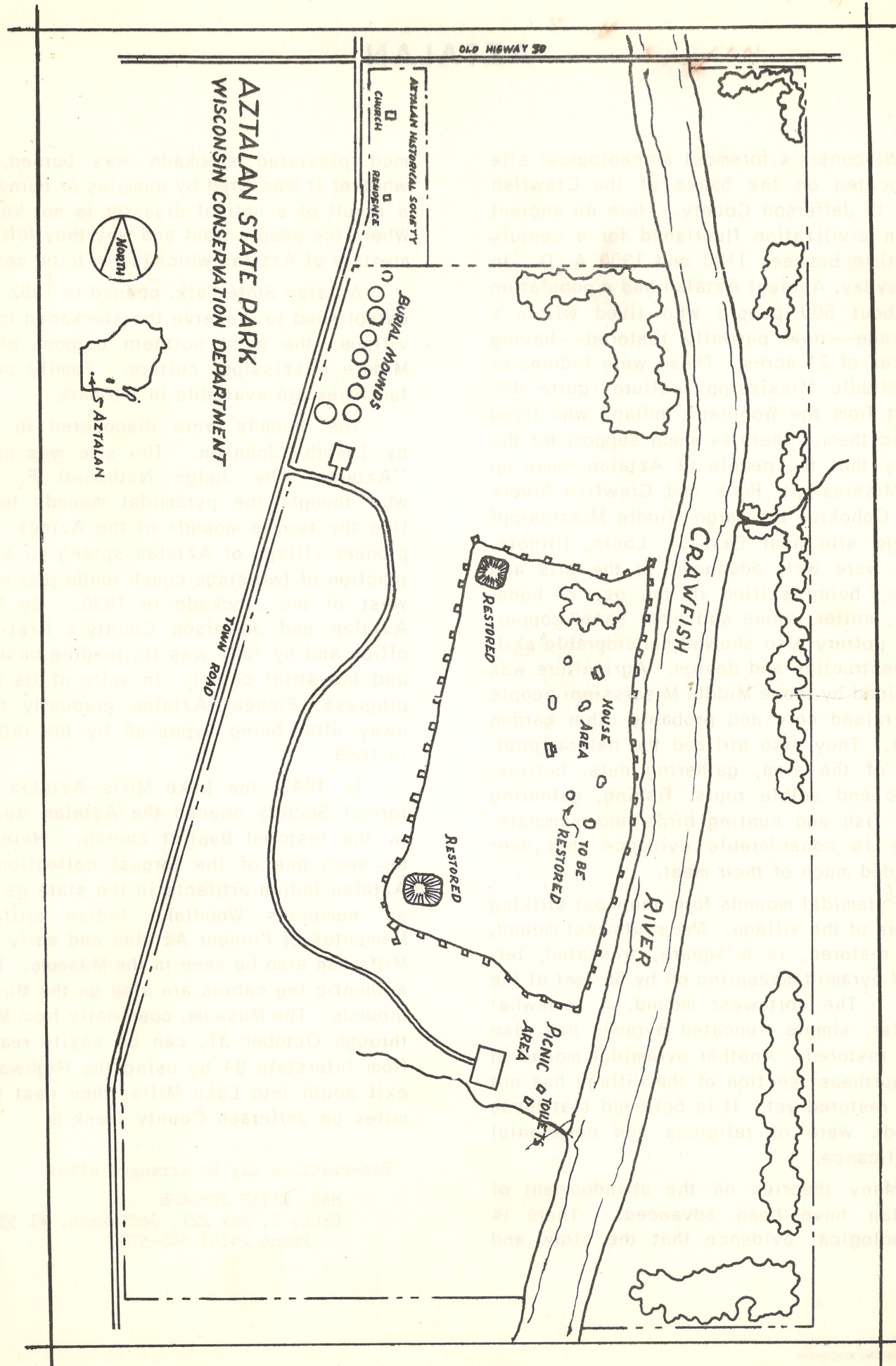
RESTORED

RESTORED

HOUSE AREA

TO BE RESTORED

PICNIC AREA
TOILETS



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AZTALAN

Wisconsin's foremost archeological site is located on the banks of the Crawfish River in Jefferson County. Here an ancient Indian civilization flourished for a century sometime between 1100 and 1300 A. D. In its heyday, Ancient Aztalan had a population of about 500 people who lived within a stockade—now partially restored—having an area of 21 acres. These were Indians of the Middle Mississippi culture, quite different from the Woodland Indians who lived around them. There is much support for the theory that the people of Aztalan came up the Mississippi, Rock and Crawfish Rivers from Cahokia, the large Middle Mississippi village site near East St. Louis, Illinois. They were well advanced in the arts and crafts, being skilled in the use of bone, shell, antler, stone and even sheet copper. Their pottery also showed considerable skill in construction and design. Agriculture was practiced by these Middle Mississippi people who raised corn and probably other garden crops. They also utilized the natural products of the area, gathering nuts, berries, seeds and edible roots, fishing, gathering shell fish and hunting birds and mammals. There is considerable evidence that deer provided much of their meat.

Pyramidal mounds form the most striking feature of the village. The southwest mound, now restored, is a square, truncated, terraced pyramid measuring 60 by 65 feet at the top. The northwest mound, a somewhat smaller, simple truncated pyramid has also been restored. Another pyramidal mound in the northeast section of the village has not been restored yet. It is believed that these mounds were of religious and ceremonial significance.

Many theories on the abandonment of Aztalan have been advanced. There is archeological evidence that the straw and

mud plastered stockade was burned, but whether it was fired by enemies or burned as a result of a natural disaster is not known. Where the people went and why they left is a mystery of Aztalan which is yet to be solved.

Aztalan State Park, opened in 1952, was established to preserve the stockaded Indian village, the most northern outpost of the Middle Mississippi culture. Family picnic facilities are available in the park.

The mounds were discovered in 1835 by Timothy Johnson. The site was named "Aztalan" by Judge Nathaniel F. Hyer who thought the pyramidal mounds looked like the temple mounds of the Aztecs. The pioneer village of Aztalan sprang up at the junction of two stage coach roads just northwest of the stockade in 1836. By 1837, Aztalan had Jefferson County's first post office and by 1842 was its leading business and industrial center. In spite of its early progress, Pioneer Aztalan gradually faded away after being bypassed by the railroad in 1859.

In 1942, the Lake Mills—Aztalan Historical Society opened the Aztalan Museum in the restored Baptist church. Here can be seen one of the largest collections of Aztalan Indian artifacts in the state as well as numerous Woodland Indian artifacts. Mementos of Pioneer Aztalan and early Lake Mills can also be seen in the Museum. Three authentic log cabins are also on the Museum grounds. The Museum, open daily from May 1 through October 31, can be easily reached from Interstate 94 by using the Highway 89 exit south into Lake Mills, then east three miles on Jefferson County Trunk B.

Reservations may be arranged with:

MRS. ELIAS STROEDE

Route 2, Box 221, Jefferson, WI 53549

Phone (414) 648-5792

Crew Restores Ancient Indian Village Near Lake Mills

Experts 'Dig' Up New Finds at Aztalan Park

By JOHN R. PRINDLE

(Assistant State Editor)

LAKE MILLS—A small crew of experts in anthropology has been busy this summer in the continuing job of restoration of the ancient Indian village site of Aztalan.

This summer's additions to the project include restoration work on the second, or northwest pyramid, and location of the entrance to the stockade which enclosed the village some 500 years ago.

Since the cannibalistic Indians who inhabited what is now called Aztalan kept no written records, everything that is known about the site and its people has been "dug out of the ground," according to Chandler W. Rowe, who is in charge of the restoration work this summer.

Rowe is an associate professor of anthropology at Lawrence college, and right now the rebuilding of the second pyramid with the use of heavy earth-moving is being done under his direction.

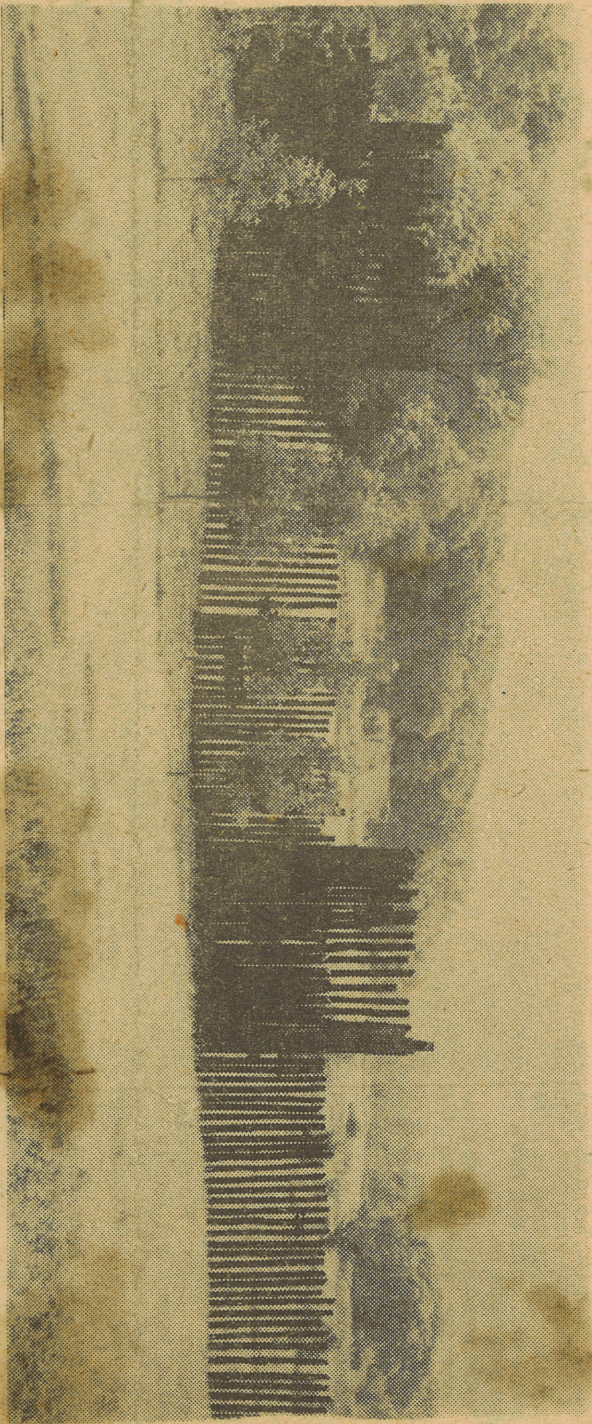
Working with him are James Sackett, a Lawrence student; Dr. Harold Schneider, Lawrence anthropology instructor, and Joan Freeman, a University of Wisconsin graduate student in anthropology. Earlier this summer Warren Wittry, Madison curator of anthropology at the State Historical Society, and Robert Nero, a Wisconsin graduate student in ornithology, helped in the work.

A person with a whimsical turn of mind might wonder if the Indians buried in the village five centuries ago don't turn over in their graves occasionally as huge track-laying tractors and massive earth-moving machines dig and scoop away at the site of their village.

Restoring the big pyramid is a major job, involving digging up tons of earth and rebuilding



Tourists Atop the Restored Southwest Pyramid at Aztalan State Park Indicate Its Size



Part of the Restored Aztalan Village Stockade, Located On the Crawfish River

said the crematorium was the first such discovery at the site. The second pyramid, when completed, will measure 80 by 100 feet at the base, 40 by 60 feet at the summit, and be 9½ feet high.

Visitors to Aztalan State park can see, besides the completed pyramid and the one being restored, part of the stockade which originally circled the vil-

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Restoring the big pyramid is a major job, involving digging up tons of earth and rebuilding the hill exactly where it originally stood. Discovering its site was itself a job, as well as deducing, from centuries-old evidence its size and shape.

This was done by digging trenches in different directions and "reading" cross-sections of the earth. In this way experts could tell where the pyramid stood, the angle of its sides, and the area of its summit.

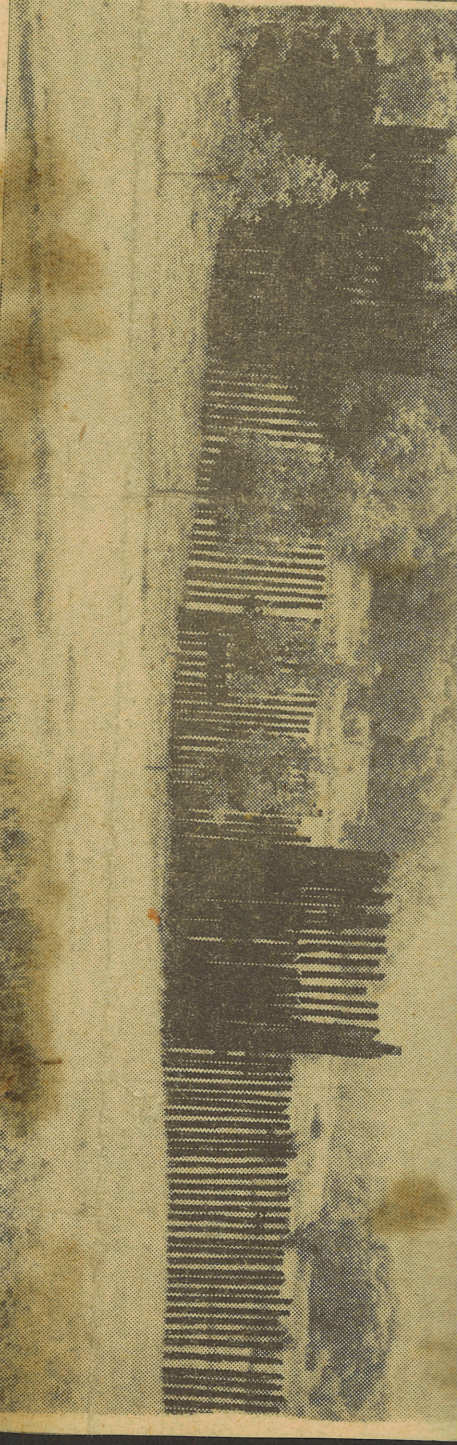
The hills, while known as pyramids, are not complete pyramids such as those in Egypt. They are rectangular at the base and they taper upward at each corner. If the four corners continued upward until they met the result would be a pyramid. The Aztalan "pyramids" rise only a few feet to a flat top.

The flat tops are believed to be the bases for temples.

According to Rowe the most interesting "find" during this summer's work in the second pyramid was discovery of a crematorium. The bodies of 11 persons were found in a 12 by 5-foot enclosure built of a willow-clay composition. Relics found with the bodies included pot fragments, arrowheads, and bags of hickory nuts and seeds.

The evidence showed that the structure was set afire, and Rowe

Part of the Restored Aztalan Village Stockade, Located On the Crawfish River



said the crematorium was the first such discovery at the site. The second pyramid, when completed, will measure 80 by 100 feet at the base, 40 by 60 feet at the summit, and be 9½ feet high.

Visitors to Aztalan State park can see, besides the completed pyramid and the one being restored, part of the stockade which originally circled the village and dozens of rounded Indian mounds outside the village area proper, and visit the small Lake Mills-Aztalan museum nearby.

Rowe said the village is unique in Wisconsin and marks the most northward extent of a culture that came here from Southeastern United States. The emigrants are believed to have come up the Mississippi and stopped in what is now East St. Louis, where a "splinter group" broke off, for reasons of its own, and came up to the Lake Mills area where a village unlike any other Wisconsin Indian settlement was established.

Years of weather, neglect, and agriculture has destroyed much of the village. Rowe winces when he says "farmers in this area will tell you they can remember how tough it was to knock off the corners of some of these mounds."

Rowe said the restoration work is being done for the state by the Wisconsin Archeological Survey, of which he is president. Member institutions in the survey include Lawrence college, Beloit college, the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Public Museum, and the State Historical Society.

C. S. Greenwood
Attorney at Law

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Lake Mills, Wis., September 15/11.

Town Clerk of Town of Aztalan,
Aztalan, Wisconsin,

Dear Sir:-

Enclosed find statements
showing that your Town is indebted to Joint School District # 1
in the sum of One hundred forty three (\$143.00) dollars for tuition
of students attending the Lake Mills High School from your Town for
the past school year.

Kindly file statements and oblige,

Yours truly,

C. S. Greenwood

Clerk of Joint School Dis. # 1.