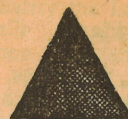


Atop
the



PYRAMID

APRIL 1947

Aztalan just won't hide its light under a bushell! And this in spite of the fact that a few nearby residents can't see the forest for the trees. On Tuesday, Dr. Rachel Salisbury, head of the department of Education at Milton College visited Aztalan with a group of teachers-in-training. "I heard so much about this famous spot when studying in Chile, South America, that I just had to visit the site," said Dr. Salisbury.

Milton College

June 13, 1969



JAUNTS WITH JAMIE

Aztalan Park An Hour Away

SOME 5,000 people visited the Aztalan museum near Lake Mills last year. The figure should have been 50,000 for Aztalan state park is Wisconsin's foremost archeological site and not much more than an hour's drive from Milwaukee.

According to Helen A. Schultz, corresponding secretary of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical society, Indians of the Middle Mississippi culture occupied a stockaded village on this site some time during 1100-1300.

The total distance from Milwaukee is about 50 miles — leave I-94 at either the highway 26 or 89 ramp. The park is located two miles east of Lake Mills on county highway BB. Take the children and you will be well rewarded. The park is lovely and there are picnic facilities on the banks of the Crawfish river.

BE SURE to visit the museum. Not the least of its countless attractions is its curator, Albert Kracht, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday. He has lived in the Aztalan area all of his life and collected many of the artifacts on display.

Aztalan was discovered in 1835 by Timothy Johnson. That same year Nathaniel F. Hyer and William Brayton inspected the ancient ruins rather carefully while on a federal survey. They camped there on Christmas eve, which is how "Christmas hill" got its name.

"Baron Alexander von Humboldt," Mrs. Schultz said, "a widely known early 19th century student of Indian antiquities, reported an

Aztec legend which said that Aztec people had come to Mexico from Aztalan, a land of flowing waters far to the north. Seeing the ruins of the stockaded village, Hyer gave the name 'Aztalan' to the site."

THE NAME CARRIED over to the pioneer settlement which was established in 1836. The small colony flourished. By 1838, Dr. L. C. Bicknell had established his medical practice there. The little village was soon teeming with freight wagons, stagecoaches and prairie schooners of settlers and prospectors.

In 1853 the Wisconsin Gazetteer noted: "Aztalan: Post village in Jefferson county and town of same name, 7 miles northwest of Jefferson and 28 miles east of Madison. It is on both sides of the Crawfish on the direct road from Madison to Milwaukee.

"It contains one Baptist church (now the museum), three denominations of Christians, two blacksmiths, one wagon maker, one shoe shop, one fanning mill shop, brickyard, one saleratus factory, three stores, two hotels, one steam sawmill, one nursery of 150,000 trees and an extensive stone quarry. Pop. 250."

Aztalan might have become another Jefferson or Watertown, but the railroads passed it by. Much more could be told about the restorations, the excavations and explorations by archeologists, but if you visit Aztalan you can get the complete story first hand. It was designated a registered historic landmark in 1964 by the United States department of interior, national park service.

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Surveys Started At Aztalan By Archeologists

The Wisconsin Archeological Survey, representing Lawrence College, the University of Wisconsin, Beloit College, and the Milwaukee Public Museum began preliminary studies to gather data needed for the restoration of the Indian village at Aztalan on Friday, July 1. The workers plan to be here for two months and will camp on the Aztalan site.

Chandler W. Rowe of Lawrence College is in charge of the project. Dr. Moeau S. Maxwell of Beloit College and Robert Ritzenthaler of the Milwaukee Public Museum, as well as several students from Lawrence and Beloit, will assist.

Before the restoration can begin, certain basic scientific data must be collected. This data will be gathered by scientific methods in examining the area. The area to be studied most extensively will be the Indian Village on the banks of the river below the site of the mounds.

Mr. Rowe stressed the fact that Aztalan is one of the most important archeological sites in the state of Wisconsin. The land along the Crawfish river was recently acquired by the State Conservation commission for public purposes, and trees were planted in the area this spring.

The Wisconsin Archeological Survey is an organization of professional archeologists interested in the preservation of Wisconsin antiquities. The survey work is being done in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department, and the State Historical society.

(Additional news about the Aztalan project in the Letter column on Page Seven)

LAKE MILLS LEADER

Thursday, October 30, 1958

Aztalan Indians Ate Their Neighbors And Traded with Them

The ancient Aztalan Indians, who lived three miles from Lake Mills, fought with their neighbors and at times were on good terms with them, trading, exchanging and learning their way of life.

Certainly, they ate them, because the refuse pits contained bones, many of them being of a larger and stockier type than the Indians of the Mississippi culture.

Their walled village must have appeared forbidding to the Algonquian natives, but nevertheless they managed to intermingle.

A study of Aztalan-type houses in other places in the United States, shows the typical home is rectangular, rather than round. However, at Aztalan there were a number of circular homes, mixed with the rectangular ones, which leads archeologists to conclude the migrants from the south adopted some of the Woodland designs.

The pottery, too, shows a mixture of Middle Mississippi and Woodland design, both of which were distinctive.

Cannibalism wasn't entirely limited to the Middle Mississippi folks, since earliest reports of other tribes by French settlers in Northern Wisconsin and the Green Bay area chronicle stories of savage tribes that practiced cannibalism.

Patronize our advertisement

Trip Into the Past

Peaceful Aztalan: Old Indian Village



By
Eleanor
Devine

● INDIAN SUMMER is the time for a trip into the past, to Aztalan, Wis., where beyond the golden haze of fields studded with corn shocks on a high plain above the Crawfish River stand Indian mounds and gaunt restorations of stockades and watch towers.

Take the Northwest Tollway [Interstate 90] for a long view of sunny fields and streams and prosperous farms. Past Beloit turn right on Wis. Hwy. 26 past Milton, thru Fort Atkinson and Jefferson to a sign marked, "Aztalan State Park," then left thru Johnson Creek under a viaduct for another four miles along County B to County Q and a crossroads marked Aztalan.

Enter a world of silence and peace.

Just past the crossroads on a hill overlooking the Crawfish River is the Mills-Aztalan Historical Society Museum. It is housed in a pioneer church and has both treasures and junk.

From the nearby mounds there are Indian relics—two- and three-notched triangular arrow heads, stone ear spoons, large chipped stone hoes, disc-shaped beads of conch shell and pottery. "Probably found near Janesville" is a mammoth's tooth. From pioneer days there are old paper dolls, a wedding petticoat, farm tools, pianos, baby carriages and hand-made overalls.

Red-nailed models wear pioneer gowns. A rectangular churn is marked, "An advertisement for this churn recommended that the lady of

the house attach it to the cradle with a rope so that she could rock the cradle with her foot and also churn while washing dishes."

Pictures and explanations of the work of the Wisconsin Archeological Survey prepare the visitor to understand the excavations and restorations at the nearby Aztalan State Park, designated since 1964 a Registered Historic Landmark.

Picnic on a sunny knoll overlooking the river beside a burial mound where once slumbered an Indian princess who now resides in a Milwaukee museum. With luck there will be only two or three people in sight.

"Pioneer Aztalan was settled in 1836 by Thomas Brayton and others at the junction of the Milwaukee-Mineral Point and Janesville-Fond du Lac territorial roads," says a marker. "By 1837 Aztalan had Jefferson County's first post office and by 1842 was its leading business and industrial center. After the railroad bypassed it in 1859, the once thriving community of 250 people, two hotels, a brickyard and five factories declined. Only the original church remains."

Asked how many people now live in Aztalan, museum curator, Albert Kracht says, "Say 30?"

After lunch explore the three pioneer cabins on the museum grounds. The larg-

est and best restored is known as the Pettey cabin. Built in 1843, it is 17 by 20 feet with headroom of about 5 feet 6 inches under the sleeping loft. It once housed

eight people: Abner, Alcinus, Clinton, Marvin, Samantha, Delia and Mr. and Mrs. John Pettey. It bears an inscription to be pondered now that everyone is urged to "think bigger" about houses.

"A grandson, Louis Pettey, once remarked, 'Father had often told us the place was quite comfortable, that at least the members of the family kept close enough together to keep warm. Of all the homeseekers who passed thru, none who desired it was ever turned away without food or lodging.'"

Just south is Aztalan State Park, a lonesome, lovely place. Aztalan is the most thoroly studied site in Wisconsin and the parking lot is often crowded, but on the village site itself only four or five tourists give dimension to the once-crowded site.

At the corners of the one-time village stand portions of the restored stockade, blackish uprights with the beginning of a covering of twined branches, mud and straw. The Aztalan Indians cut the original wood and dug trenches with spade blades chipped from chert, a local variety of flint.

Despite the picnickers nearby, there is a stillness about Aztalan that tempts you to close your eyes, feel the breeze and listen to the redwing blackbirds in the nearby marsh. The romantic can hear ceremonial drums.

Walk the stiff prairie stubble studded with clover and touch the stockade as you follow the lines, remembering that archeologists know where each upright stood be-

Duplicate

cause the originals decayed in the ground and left a round, red-brown vegetable mound.

Climb the great earthen pyramids once probably topped by temples. [Our own military strategist pointed out that the mounds command all the countryside and must certainly have served as watch towers, too.]

Between the years 1000 and 1200 a flourishing village of perhaps 500 inhabitants stood here.

Within 21 enclosed acres were warm round and square houses made of close rows of tamarack posts woven with willows and covered with mud and straw. Each had a fireplace set in the floor, stone-lined pits under roof openings to allow the smoke to escape. In several houses there was a fig-

ure eight fireplace. A smaller pit beside the larger was unstained by soot and may have been used as a warming over.

Here the Aztalans hoed their corn fields with large clam shells from the Crawfish pierced at the hinge and lashed to poles. They ground their corn with large stones. Stone drills and sewing needles and awls fashioned from deer bones have been found here, as well as hammered copper ornaments that show that the Aztalans must have traded with their neighbors. The nearest copper mines were in Northern Michigan. A skeleton swathed in belts of beads made from shells found only in the Gulf of Mexico indicates even wider commerce.

Among the houses were temples and a crematorium and special houses for the dead. From labyrinthian gateways the Indians emerged to hunt deer with triangular pointed arrows, to seek small mammals and gather nuts and berries and shellfish.

Diggings show that the Indians who lived here were more advanced culturally than their Woodland neighbors. They lived well. The strength of their stockades show they also lived in fear. Because they were cannibals.

Square towers at regular intervals probably held their provisions: corn and prisoners. The historical marker says, "Their cannibalism made them unsatisfactory neighbors."

How do we know they ate their neighbors? One of the scientists who dug here puts it this way: "The evidence at Aztalan indicates the presence of gastronomic satisfaction not ordinarily associated with endocannibalism."

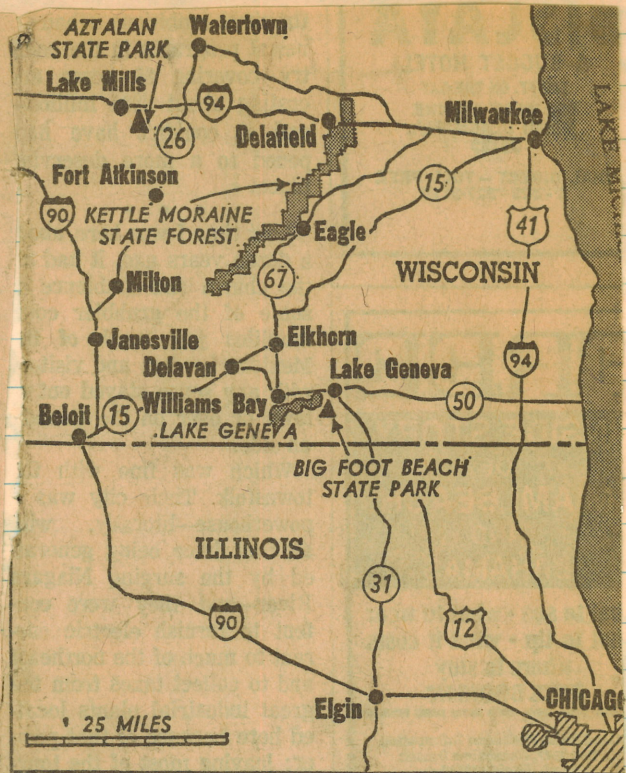
In other words, Neighbors taste better.

"The remains of one of the cannibalized humans were found still associated with a finely made triangular projectile point which had passed thru the right temple and imbedded itself in the palate," writes Robert Mahler and David A. Baerreis.

Aztalan, the diggings show, was destroyed by fire in the 1200s, as shown by carbon

dating methods, by neighboring tribes. There were no survivors. By the time of Marquette no Woodland Indians remembered their uppity neighbors.

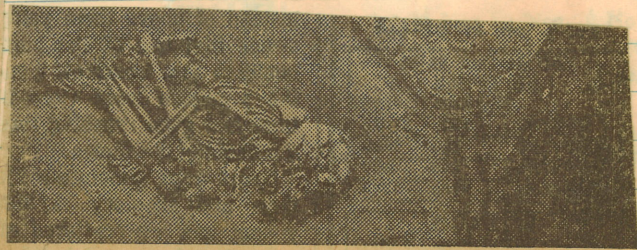
The site was first discovered and described by M. F. Hyer in 1836-37. He named it Aztalan because he believed it to be the mythical place of Aztec origin. Rather, artifacts give evidence that the Aztalan fortress was probably the final and northernmost outpost of Indians from Mexico. Driven northward by invaders, they may have moved along the Mississippi to the Rock and the Crawfish.



An excellent chart of the archeological features of the site was prepared by Increase A. Lapham in 1850. Extensive research did not begin until 1919. Since 1949 archeological crews under the direction of the Wisconsin Archeological Survey have worked at Aztalan. In 1952 the first reconstruction of the stockades began.

Some day, when there is money enough, archeologists

will complete the stockade and erect several Indian dwellings and a museum. Then, when the Indian Summer sun shines, it will be time to go again to Aztalan . . . if you have not already become a regular visitor.



This excavated Indian burial mound is at Aztalan State Park, Wis. Aztalan was a flourishing village 1,000-1,200 years ago.

one day he got sick and tired chopping corn

story / carol stevenson

photos / staff davis

BEACON-NEWS, Aurora, Ill., Saturday, Sept. 28, 1974



ancient Aztalan,
artist's concept

Relics and remnants of two civilizations stand within a quarter of a mile of each other while reminders of a third whizz by on a blacktop road.

The scene is Aztalan, Wis., 30 miles east of Madison on Crawfish Creek.

In a brick building — once a Baptist Church — is the Aztalan Museum, housing pioneer heirlooms and Indian relics.

Adjacent are three restored log cabins, taken from sites in the surrounding countryside and filled with authentic furniture of pioneer days. The buildings date to the 1840s and 1850s.

Down the road are the huge pyramidal mounds and rebuilt stockade fences of the Aztalan Indians who lived on Crawfish Creek in 1100.

From the top of a three-story watch tower recently built near

the log cabins one can see the pyramids and stockades.

There were curious similarities and shocking differences in the two cultures separated by 800 years.

People in both times grew corn.

One of the old tools in the museum, a huge oblong knife, was used by a youth during the 1860s. According to a tag attached to the knife, the youth one hot August evening said he was "sick and tired of chopping corn," stuck the knife into a tree and marched off to the Civil War. He served four years.

He probably chopped more corn when he got back.

Archaeologists digging at the site of the Aztalan Indians say the Indians grew corn inside the 21-acre area enclosed by an 18-foot stockade fence.

But the archaeologists surmise from bones found in ancient trash heaps that the Indians were cannibals.

Cannibalism admittedly is an unfriendly custom among neighbors.

The pioneers of the 1840s, however, were friendly. According to a plaque on one cabin, the family of eight that lived there never refused food and shelter to anyone who wanted it.

A son of the family recorded: "Father often told us the place was quite comfortable. At least the members of the family kept close enough together to keep warm!"

A far cry from cannibalism. Both Pioneer Aztalan and the Aztalan Indian site, now a state park, are registered national historic landmarks.

It was one of the earliest pioneers, Nathaniel Hyer, who



rebuilt cabins in the park

gave Aztalan its name. Seeing the truncated pyramids, he was reminded of similar structures built by the Aztec Indians. He named the place Aztalan.

A hundred years later, archaeologists discovered that the Indians who lived there for the relatively short time of a 100 years were products of the northernmost sphere of influence of what is called the Middle Mississippi period of prehistoric Indians.

The Middle Mississippi Indians were strongly influenced by the Indians far to the south, including the Aztecs.

So Hyer was not far from the truth.

The pioneer town of Aztalan was founded in 1836 and flourished for almost half a century. It once was under consideration as a site for the state

capital. But the railroads passed it by and nearby Lake Mills flourished instead.

By 1900 Aztalan was a ghost town. Only the Baptist Church remained.

A group of energetic citizens of Lake Mills started the Lake-Mills Aztalan Historical Society in 1941.

This group restored the church and turned it into a museum, had the cabins brought to the site and built the watch tower that overlooks Indian Aztalan.

The cars of 1974 speed by them both.

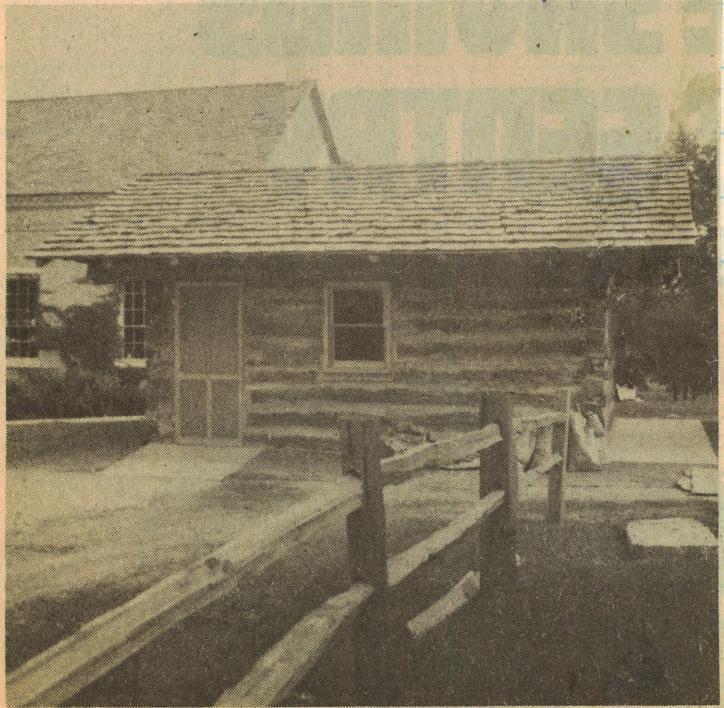
The sound of crickets and the peaceful meanderings of Crawfish Creek stay the same.

Aztalan can be reached by taking Interstate 94 to the Highway 89 exit south into Lake Mills and going east on County B Road.



Interesting log buildings at Aztalan Museum.

Admissions Cabin . . . 1975



Those attending the annual Aztalan Day picnic next Sunday at Aztalan State park will have an opportunity to see the new Admissions cabin just erected as part of the museum grounds complex directly north of the park. The new structure will hereafter serve as the reception center for the museum, the tower and the log cabins.

Aztalan Day - 1975



This scene, sketched at Aztalan State Park, is by Richard Grant, Lake Mills artist and member of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society. Many visitors who tour the park and attend the Sunday, July 27, Aztalan Day festivities will visit the reconstructed and furnished pioneer cabins and perhaps climb the Albert Kracht observation tower, all shown in this picture.

The observation tower (at right) was dedicated as the "Albert Kracht Observation Tower" on September 11, 1971. The 30-foot tower was designed by Craig Beecher. Mr. Kracht, now deceased,

was a prime motivator in urging construction of the tower, which affords those who climb to the top a splendid view of the Crawfish River valley, reconstructed stockade and pyramidal mounds of Aztalan State Park.

In addition to the Indian-lore at the Aztalan Museum, there is an interesting collection of pioneer materials. The Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society has moved onto the grounds near the museum and rebuilt log houses and furnished them. One of the buildings moved in was the first schoolhouse in the Town of Waterloo.



Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society Exhibits in Fischers Lake Mills Store Window

A group of mementos of early pioneer families from the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society Museum is now on display in the Fischers Store Window.

How many of these interesting items have you seen?

- Wedding vest worn by Goerge Allen in 1841.
- Ivory headed cane carried by Rev, J. L. Dudley, an early pastor of the Baptist Church.
- Top hat worn by Dr. David Eastman about 1850
- Flag made by the women of Aztalan
- A paisley shawl, a rug and a baby dress worn by Miss Ada Mansfield.
- Doll cradle made by George Babcock for Henrietta Waterbury Mansfield, who was born in Aztalan in 1848 and used by four generations of Mansfield.
- A flower stand made by Otto Pirwitz from the original steeple of the Baptist Church, now the Museum.
- Pieced quilt with names of Milford and Aztalan pioneers on each block.
- A plum colored velvet wedding gown worn by Anna Brown Reed in the 1880s.
- Rush seat chair dated 1820 from the Mansfield family.
- Dr. E. H. Weber's red covered plush photo album.
- Magazine stand brought from Vermont in 1855, this is hand carved.
- Patchwork coverlet made in 1892 by members of the Seward family.
- High chair first used by Olive Mosher Crump almost 100 years ago.
- Watch carried by August Kracht
- Hand painted picture of the "Ancient Aztalan" village.
- Hand made skix hair wreath.
- watch with chain braided of human hair belonging to Herman Wodke.
- Fan belonging to Mrs. Chas. Heimstreet.

Many other items of interest can be seen at the Aztalan Museum.

PLANS FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE STOCKADED VILLAGE OF AZTALAN

boys like rugged good looks!

NEW!

A truckload of posts has been delivered at Aztalan Park to accomplish the rebuilding of a small portion of the stockaded Village of Aztalan. The creosoted posts measure approximately the same as those of the ancient village which once stood along the banks of the Crawfish River and protected the Middle Mississippi tribe from the Wisconsin Indians.

Aug 19 53

Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society Exhibit in
Teachers Lake Mills Store Window

A group of remnants of early pioneer families from the Lake Mills-
Aztalan Historical Society Museum is now on display in the Teachers
Store Window.

How many of these interesting items have you seen?

Wedding vest worn by George Allen in 1841.
Ivory headed cane carried by Rev. J. I. Dudley, an early pastor
of the Methodist Church.

Toy made by Rev. J. I. Dudley in 1841.

A child's shirt, a rug and a baby dress worn by Miss Ada Mansfield.
Bibli cradle made by George Babcock for Hendrick Babcock Mansfield,
who was born in Aztalan in 1848 and used by four generations of his
family. A flower stand made by Otto Fixing from the original people of the
Methodist Church, now the Museum.

Placed quilt with names of Milford and Aztalan pioneers on each block.
A pair of silver velvet wedding gown worn by Anna Brown Reed in the
1890s.

Knob seat chair dated 1850 from the Mansfield family.

U. S. H. Weber's red covered glass photo album.

Magazine stand brought from Vermont in 1855, this is hand carved.

Bedroom covered made in 1855 by members of the Howard family.

High chair first used by Olive Mosher Gray almost 100 years ago.

Watch carried by August Krasch.

Hand painted picture of the "Ancient Aztalan" village.

Hand made knit hair wreath.

Watch with chain bracelet of human hair belonging to Herman Weber,
son belonging to Mrs. Chas. Halmstreet.

Many other items of interest can be seen at the Aztalan Museum.

Students are to visit Wisconsin Indian park

For the last several years eighth - grade students from Northwood Junior High in Woodstock have participated in an interdisciplinary social studies science unit dealing with Early American Indian cultures and glacial geography.

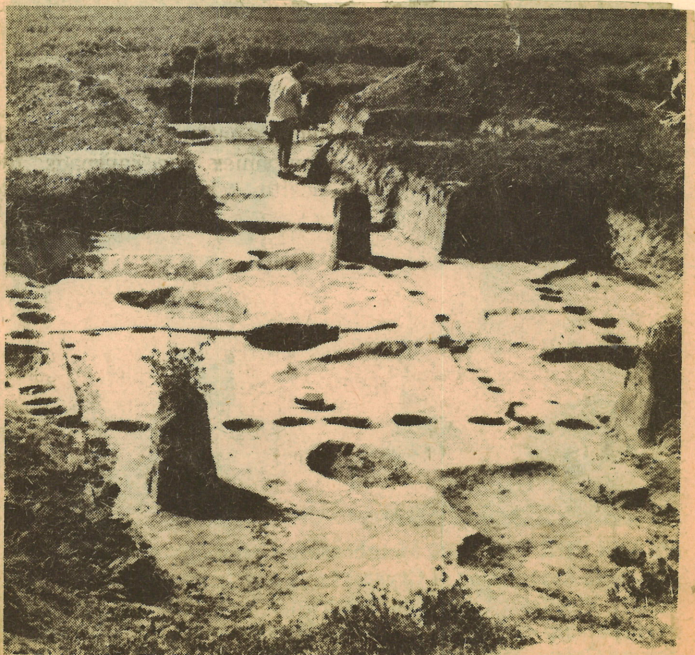
This year on Sept. 17, more than 160 students will go on their first field trip of the year to Aztalan, Wis., the site of an Indian culture that vanished about a 1000 years ago.

Each student will have a field guidebook, which will contain questions concerning the environment, the process of land change, Indian cultures and

effects that glaciers have had on the surface of the land.

The field trip follows a three-week, in-class unit during which the students are exposed to concepts and and ideas on the experiences they will have on the trip. Each student will be challenged to make judgments and conclusions about the effects that man has had on the environment. Changes in life styles will also be examined.

In addition to the archeological site, there is a restored village and museum which show the students how the pioneers lived over a 100 years ago.



SQUARE HOUSE pattern is in Aztalan State Park, which students are to visit.