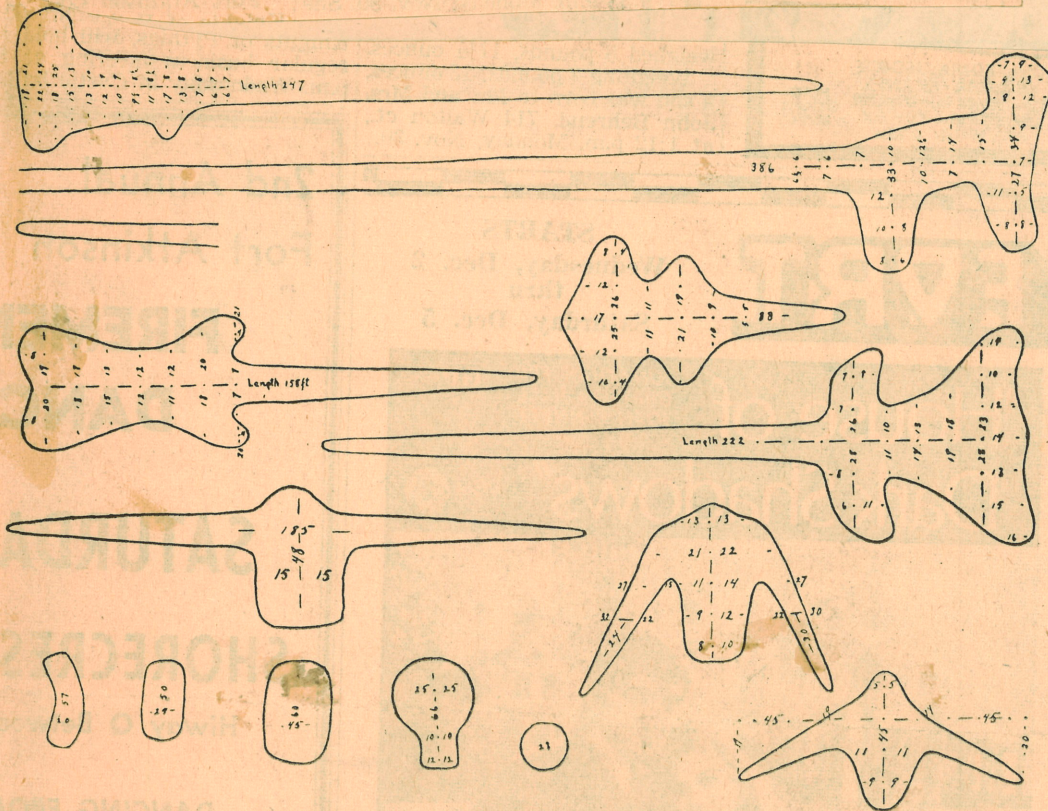


Search for Indian Mounds in Jefferson County

Is Bringing Some Interesting Results

12/1/1970



TYPES OF INDIAN EFFIGY MOUNDS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY — These drawings illustrate Indian effigy mounds of the type still to be found in Jefferson county. The two top drawings are panther, or animal, effigies. In the center are three common shapes, believed to represent turtles. At the bottom are three bird mounds and, at the left, outlines of the most common conical and linear types. Most mounds are only 1½ to 5 feet high. This information is from Stout and Skavlem's "Archeology of the Lake Koshkonong Region."

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Twelve different groups of previously unrecorded Indian effigy mounds have thus far been reported to the Fort Atkinson Historical Society's committee working to find and record all remaining mounds in the southern half of Jefferson county.

Many readers of the Daily Union have reported mounds on their property or called to supply other information.

"While we have thus far visited only a few of the reported sites, we believe we have added two turtle effigies, one large lizard, three bird likenesses and four large linear mounds to the record," Hugh Highsmith, chairman of the committee, said. "Fortunately all of these, with one exception, are in wooded areas and thus remain in good condition."

In the beginning phases of the project, committee members will work to locate mounds. Later, they expect to chart them accurately on plat and aerial maps for permanent historical record.

"We probably also will take photos, perhaps from a plane or helicopter, with the mounds outlined with white powder to obtain well defined illustrations for books or other publications," Highsmith said.

Other members of the committee include Ted Blodgett, Al Haller, Bill Seybold, Dr. Tom Tuttle and Jay Van Valin.

Persons who have information about Indian mounds are

urged to call one of the committee or the Hoard Historical museum.

Answering a request in a previous article for information about the extensive group of effigies that once lay along what is now Riverside dr., a neighbor called to report that one of the original mounds still existed under the front porch of the old Rankin farm house, located at the corner of Wilson st. and Riverside dr.

"Grandpa" Rankin refused to let the home builders destroy the mound, she reported. Remains of the mound can still be seen from the street directly in front of the house.

Four unusual dish-shaped and apparently man-made excavations also have been found on a wooded hillside on the Floyd Jung property on Highway 106, west.

"While we might speculate that they served Indians as lined gathering basins for maple sugar sap," Highsmith said, "we won't have more information until experts from the State Historical Society can examine them."

A search of publications at Hoard museum has revealed interesting information. A 1911 copy of Ohio Archaeological Quarterly contains a well-defined photo of the Intaglio mound on Riverside dr. taken by Fort Atkinson's W. D. James. In the background is a cornfield and large frame house with what appears to be large

fishing nets drying in its yard.

The unusual mounds on Fuge's hill (a mile north of Fort Atkinson on County Trunk K) are described in a 1944 issue of Wisconsin Archaeologist. A survey by the late Robert P. Ferry of Lake Mills reported:

"The principal earthwork in this group is a huge Y-shaped mound. Its two arms are 300 and 424 feet in length and the foot of the Y 150 feet long. Near the end of the 300-foot arm are three linear earthworks 38, 60 and 75 feet long. At a distance of 180 feet beyond the leg of the Y-shaped earthwork is a line of two linear mounds, 69 and 87 feet long and 20 feet wide, and a round mound 15 feet in diameter. The purpose of the large Y-shaped mound is at present unknown. Possibly some means of preserving these mounds may be found."

Little is known about the effigy mound builders of Wisconsin. No written or other records exist. Indians here when white men first came had no legends about the mounds.

It is believed the mounds were built a thousand or more years ago. Many were burial mounds, probably for chiefs or leaders. Burials were usually in sitting or flexed positions. Some were "bundle" burials with the bones assembled after first being in a tree or on a scaffold. Few grave offerings such as pots or stone or flint tools were ever included.

(Continued on page 7)

Indian Mounds . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Mounds built to resemble birds and animals probably had religious significance, as gods or totems for tribes or clans.

Since excavations are never found near mounds, authorities agree soil for the mounds was laboriously carried from a distance, probably in bark baskets. Mounds on hills are frequently constructed of black soil from nearby lowlands. A large mound probably took months to construct.

"Perhaps they wanted only to leave their record on the face of Jefferson county after living here for thousands of years," Highsmith said. "We can thank them for doing this so handsomely and modestly; in marked contrast to the way we have altered the land in our scant 140 years of occupancy."

"It certainly behooves us to preserve and protect this heritage still untouched by the plow or bulldozer," Highsmith added.



interior of cabin,
furnished a la 1840s

'Father often told us the place was quite comfortable. At least the members of the family kept close enough together to keep warm.'

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an Aztec-like
Indian mound

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Will Aztalan Vanish Second Time?



Aztalan State Park, destined for closing, and a locally run pioneer village and museum nearby attract 78,000 visitors annually.

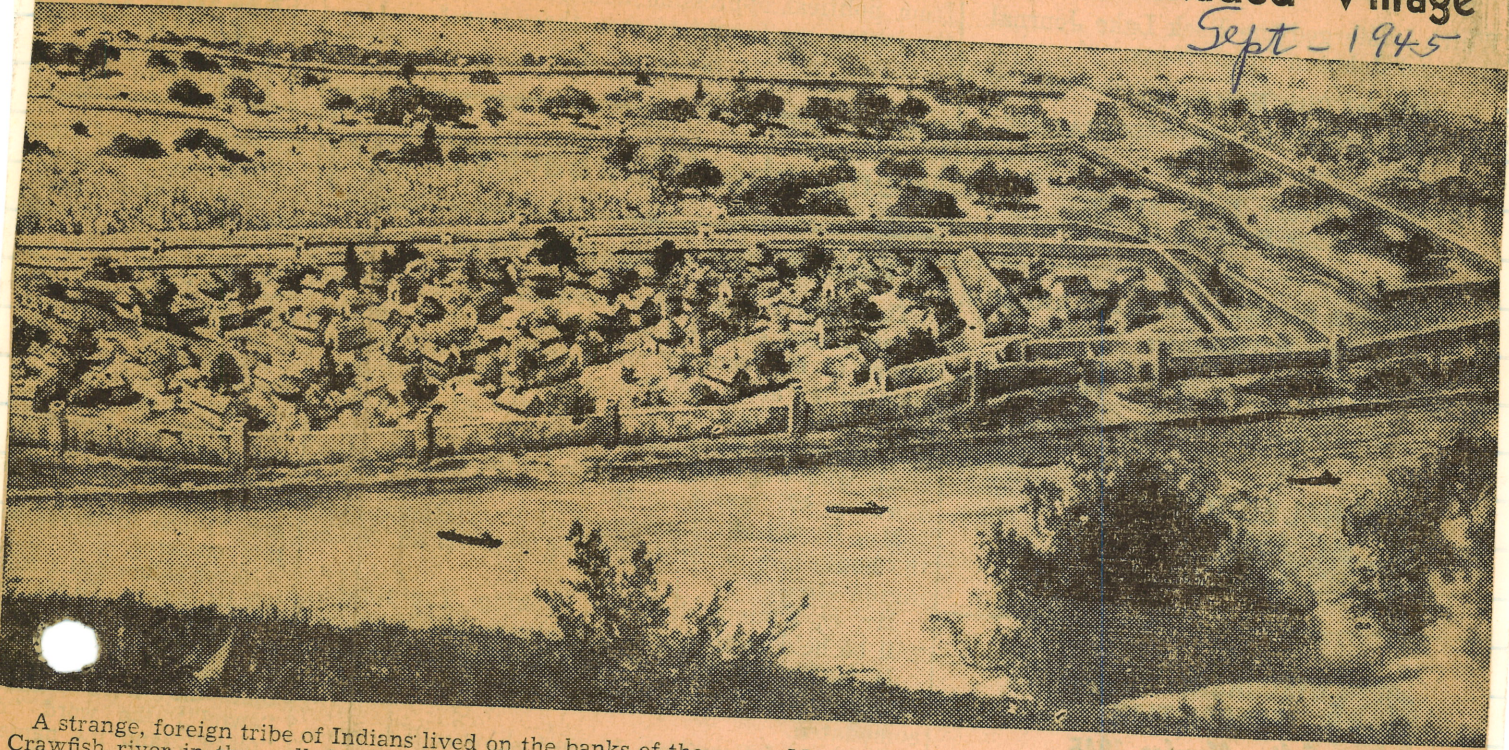
Historical Society Purchases Gardner Property at Aztalan 1945

The Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical society has purchased the land and house at the four corners near the museum, known as the Gardner property.

The Historical society will meet next Friday, March 16.

War's End Raises Hopes for Restoration of Stockaded Village

Sept - 1945



A strange, foreign tribe of Indians lived on the banks of the Crawfish river in the walled city of Aztalan about the time Columbus discovered this country, historians say, and above is an artist's conception of the city with its fields and houses in the walled enclosure.

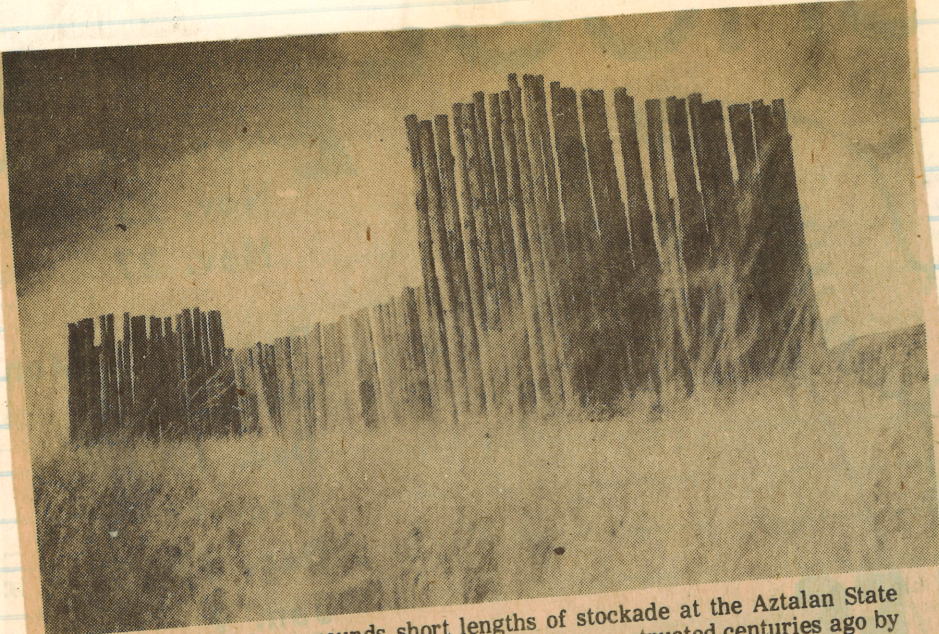
Members of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical society are working for the restoration of the city as it is shown above. Note the truncated pyramid in the upper right, thought to have been used in mystic ceremonial rites by the cannibalistic inhabitants of the old village.



Above is shown one of the largest mounds of Mound Park, at Aztalan, which once was used as a lookout for the prehistoric people who lived in the nearby walled village. A pit containing ashes was found at the base of the mound above, and it is thought that the mound figured in ceremonial rites of the little-known builders.

(Above Photos Court. Wis. State Journal)

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A lush prairie surrounds short lengths of stockade at the Aztalan State Park near Lake Mills. The "ancient city" was constructed centuries ago by an Indian civilization who migrated along the Mississippi River to the banks of the Crawfish River.

Leadler 1977

The history of the "ancient city" of Aztalan located on the banks of the Crawfish River near Lake Mills is a curious affair, containing all the ingredients of a centuries-old mystery story.

Discovered in 1835 by Timothy Johnson, the site was later named "Aztalan" after a legendary Aztec homeland described as "far to the north by flowing waters."

Early pioneers in the area called the strange cluster of truncated pyramidal mounds enclosed by wood stockade "the ancient city."

The early settlers were more concerned, however, with irking a livelihood than the historical heritage of the region, and with few regrets, they plowed the mounds under, considering the strange formations mere obstacles to be reckoned with.

Besides the loss of countless artifacts to souvenir hunters, including wagonloads of potsheds, "Aztalan brick" was also carted away from the site to repair local roads.

By 1920, regional historical societies were deeply troubled about the future of the Aztalan site and joined with other groups to save three acres of land with eight mounds west of the old stockade. Then, in 1921, the Wisconsin Archeological Society was presented the Aztalan Mound Park.

Today, whether strolling amid the tall grasses beneath the fragmentary lengths of wood stockade, or climbing the layered mounds, now surrounded by a lush prairie which descends in a gentle slope to the blue Crawfish River remains the presence of far-distant inhabitants, lingering like

ancient, withering ghosts in the morning mist.

A host of persistent, unanswered questions immediately flood the mind. Just who were those Indian builders of the "ancient city?" Where did they come from?

Why was the Aztalan civilization so superior to surrounding tribal cultures? And if the Aztalan builders had migrated northward along the Mississippi, what course of events finally conspired to bring them to this single stretch of land on the Crawfish River?

Excavations of various mounds in the "ancient city" have given up long-necked bottles, distinctively shaped jars and glossy blackware pots, all of which relate the mound-builders to several other "sites" further down the Mississippi. Origins of all these highly developed peoples appear to point to Mexico, and pyramidal platform mounds along with pottery shapes appear to confirm this theory.

But the "mystery" remains. Just who were those ancient Indian settlers from Mexico? Perhaps some mysteries will never be fully solved.

123 Acres in Aztalan

LAKE MILLS—A popular tourist attraction 3 miles east of here on the Crawfish River is Aztalan State Park and the adjoining museum maintained by the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society.

The 123-acre park, established in 1945 and designated a national landmark in 1964, has been developed on the site of archaeological explorations which have determined that an ancient Indian civilization of about 500 people lived there within a stockade from about 1100-1300 A.D.

These Aztalan Indians, considered to be of the Middle Mississippi culture, different from the Woodland Indians around them and of a more advanced culture, probably came up the Mississippi, Rock and Crawfish rivers from Cohokie, Ill.

Part of the stockade and two of the ceremonial mounds have been restored. The reconstruction of three types of Aztec Indian houses and possibly a tourist information center are also in the restoration process. There are picnic areas near beautiful big trees, parking areas, water and rest room facilities.

Although the ancient Indians provide much interest to tourists, the area is also rich in legends of more recent Indians and the early pioneer days. And old-timer, Hubert Jaycox, used to tell of the path through the park that Black Hawk took in his famous flight.

A large collection of Indian arrowheads from Jaycox is one of the major attractions at the museum adjoining the park. The historical society has put together one of the largest collections of Aztalan Indian artifacts, Woodland Indian items and mementoes of pioneer Aztalan and early Lake Mills.

The museum is a former Baptist church, designated as national landmark No. 68, because it is the only remains of a once thriving pioneer community of 250 people, two hotels, a brick yard and five factories.

On the same site and maintained by the historical society are three log houses containing pioneer furnishings. The Pettey House dates from 1843 and was moved from the town of York to its present location. It had been used for a family of eight and then a school house. The second cabin, called the "Loom House," was moved from the London area and contains a loom, yarn winders and a spinning wheel. The third came from the Zickert farm and is furnished as in the 1890s.

An attraction behind the museum is the "Aztalan Bead Princess Mound" with a new engraved stone marker this year where the remains of a young girl wrapped in wide belts of richly decorated clam shell beads was

State Park, Museum

unearthed in early explorations in the only burial mound found so far for any of the mysterious Aztalan Indians.

In tribute to Albert Kracht, former president of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society and present curator of the museum, a 30-foot observation tower has been added to the grounds which provides a sweeping overview of the park and the Crawfish River countryside.

The museum is open daily from May through Oct. 31 and may be reached from I-94 by using the highway exit south in Lake Mills, then east 3 miles on Jefferson County B. Group tours of the museum and mounds may be arranged with Albert Kracht, curator, Rt. 2, Box 215, Jefferson, Wis. 53549.

An annual Aztalan Day celebration is held at the park for members and friends of the historical society and anyone interested in pioneer days of the area. The date for the seventh anniversary this year is July 29. Plans call for picnics, music, short program, pageant about the early families that settled the area and craft and hobby displays.



Aztalan Museum, Lake Mills

Summer Fun Found in Lake Mills Area

LAKE MILLS—No matter what your age or taste, there is something for everyone in the Lake Mills area in the summertime.

The Lake Mills National Fish Hatchery on S. Main Street is open to the public from the first of May through October. Hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The aquarium and outdoor display area are stocked with fish common to the Wisconsin area. The aquarium is open daily until 6 p.m. On weekends, the aquarium opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m. Guided tours may be arranged by contacting the manager ahead of time.

The Rock Lake Yacht Club offers sailing, racing or just plain socializing throughout the summer from Memorial Day on. You don't even have to own a boat to join.

New County Historical Brochure

July - 1972

A new Jefferson County Historical Brochure is now available, according to Norm Rabl, Jefferson County Extension Resource Agent. This brochure also includes the official Jefferson County map.

Historical information included in the brochure covers the entire county, town by town, with over 100 points of interest indicated on the map. Rabl comments that this is the end product of three and one-half years of research by a citizens' committee interested in bringing past history to those of the present day.

Shown in the photo above are three of the women who devoted a good deal of time to the structure of the new brochure. They are (left to right): Mrs. George Reul, Helenville; Mrs. Robert Laatsch, Jefferson, and Mrs. Donald Schultz, Jefferson.

Other citizens responsible for this excellent piece of work include: Miss Gladys Mollart (Octagon House) - Watertown; Mrs. William Wolff (Aztalan Museum) - Route 2, Jefferson; Mrs. Raymond Radke (coordinator for Waterloo area) - Route 2, Waterloo; Mrs. George Swart (Hoard Historical Museum) - Fort Atkinson; Lisle Piper, Sr., (Jefferson County Supervisor) - Whitewater; Fisk Carlin (Coordinator for Palmyra area) - Palmyra; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rockwell (coordinator for Hebron area) - Route 1, Jefferson; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Laatsch (Jefferson Historical Society) - Jefferson; Earl Moyse (Cold Spring coordinator) - Route 4, Whitewater; Norm Rabl (Univ. Extension Resource Agent) - Jefferson.

The county historical bro-



chure will be available for distribution immediately. People may pick them up at the Historical Museums, Chamber of Commerce Offices, and various other tourist oriented businesses in Jefferson County. Rabl comments that if service stations, motels, restaurants, etc., would like a quantity, they should contact him at the Courthouse in Jefferson.

Another outlet for the brochure will be at the nine tourist centers in the state and through the Department of Natural Resource Tourism Travel Division in Madison.

The Jefferson County Citizen Historical Committee who developed this brochure is to be congratulated for their devoted time and efforts on this project. Ex-

cept for the printing, the entire inventory and research, mapping and photo work was donated by this group. Historical studies and brochure development has cost some other counties \$25,000 and more. Thanks to this group of Jefferson County citizens for their contribution!

Work Continues

BY JEAN GERSTNER

7/6/67

at Aztalan

Although the ground is still fairly wet, work is continuing at a steady pace at Aztalan State Park, where a group of archaeologists are presently engaged in a seven-week excavation project under the direction of Dr. Joan Freeman and Mr. Jay Brandon.

Several new postholes have been traced, indicating a partial house pattern, possibly in the shape resembling a "6", as well as many interesting lines which were probably part of the stockade. Another plausible explanation for the variety in lines of posts is the process of building and rebuilding on the same plot of land.

Many more refuse pits have also been excavated. One completed pit is of particular interest, since it was found to be approximately three feet deep. This pit contained a wealth of pottery, including one third of a fairly large bowl which is broken but restorable. Also uncovered was one rim sherd which also came from a large bowl. In addition, several bone tools were uncovered including an awl, probably used for making holes in leather, and double-pointed implements resembling needles which may have been used as fish gorges.

Work on the restoration of the third pyramidal mound is now well underway. Originally seven feet high, the mound will be dug

out to a depth of four feet. As a matter of precaution so that no village material will be disturbed or destroyed when that level is reached, the researchers

dig cautiously down about one foot at a time, leveling the surface of the trench as each stage of the excavation is completed. So far, the dig has revealed a large variety in soil color, indicating only that the mound was built up by the ancient Indians by heaping dirt from many areas. Village material will be found at lower levels, since the Indians built the mound on land previously inhabited.

In a previous dig under Dr. S. A. Barrett, evidence was found of a structure which once existed on top of the mound. It is thought that this 40' by 90' structure was either a ceremonial platform or a screen to keep people of the village from viewing the ceremonies.

Working hours are from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day except Thursday and Friday. The public is invited to visit the excavation site during those hours. Sally Engsborg, a recent graduate of Lake Mills high school, is acting as a guide for interested visitors.