



# Ancient Times

Summer 2009



## Under The Skies of Aztalan



Dan Seurer's photo "Pyramid Mound at Sunrise" kicks off this Edition of Ancient Times.

This is a view of the temple mound on the southwest portion of the habitation area.

This shot was taken after the first snowfall of the season, as the storm clouds began to break.

If you are interested in photos of Aztalan, suitable for framing, check out the Dan Seurer website,

[http://seurer-photography.com/aztalan\\_sky.html](http://seurer-photography.com/aztalan_sky.html)

Dan is donating profits from sales of his Aztalan photography to the Friends of Aztalan.

## A Sunday Afternoon tour... Using YouTube to visit Aztalan.

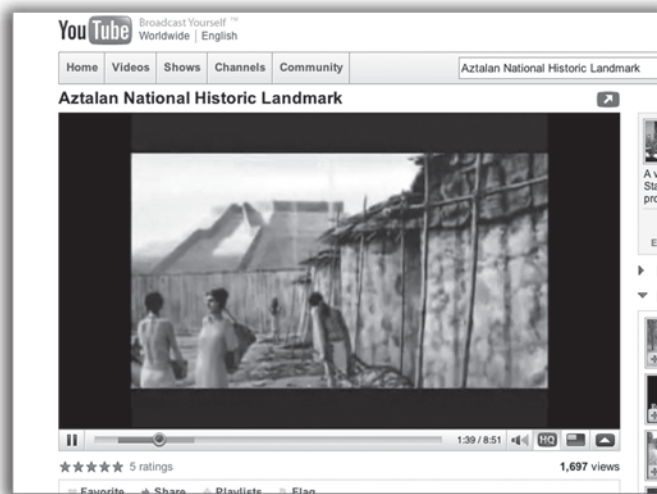
It's a rainy Sunday afternoon. On a much nicer day I'd rather be walking among the effigy mounds at High Cliff State Park, but the rain and cold wind have encouraged me to wimp out.

Still, I can spend a little time checking out the sights at the sites: Aztalan, Cahokia, Angel Mounds, Ohio's Great Serpent Mound and others. All I need is a computer, the Internet, and YouTube. I don't even have to leave my office.

If you've been reluctant to go to the YouTube website thinking it is just the domain of stupid pet tricks and adolescent video pranks you should try this.

Check into [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). At the top of the YouTube home page you'll find a search bar. Just type in what you would like to look for. In this case, I typed in Aztalan National Historic Landmark. (This can be seen also on the Friends of Aztalan State Park web site.) There I was able to click on a seven-minute video featuring Dr. Lynne Goldsmith, Dr. John Richards, Chloris Lowe of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and our own Tom Davies as he spoke to school kids at the site. It provided a good introduction to Aztalan's archaeological past.

A YouTube site called Journey to Aztalan features Friends of Aztalan executive director, Bob Birmingham, and who better to explain the significance of Aztalan than Bob? There is also a YouTube site named Aztalan Tour with Kurt which features Friends president Kurt Sampson as well as Bob Birmingham.



On the right side of the YouTube page is a list of other suggested sites you might want to visit. With each site you go to, another set of suggestions show up. It's a fun way to surf YouTube looking for more information about Aztalan. You don't have to be limited to the mysteries of Aztalan, however. If you put Cahokia into the search box you'll find another batch of interesting and informative videos. Or try Angel Mounds, or Etowah

Mounds or Ohio's Great Serpent Mound. At almost any mound site you can think of there may be video of that area.

A few words of warning: many of these videos are simply amateur vacation footage. They aren't always professionally produced and they aren't always up to television quality. Still, getting a simple vacationers' view of these sites is amusing and informative.

But a more important thing to remember is that the Internet is unregulated and wide open. Anyone who wants to can post on YouTube or anywhere on the Internet. You can run into sites insisting that Aztalan was an Aztec village, talking about the Mississippians being a lost tribe of Israel, or suggesting that Cahokia was built by aliens from outer space.

But if you're reading this newsletter I assume you are well beyond that kind of stuff!

An hour spent searching the sites can help you plan a trip or refresh your memory of nearby sites. They can also serve to introduce you family and friends to the thrill of visiting archaeological sites right here in the Midwest.

By Bill Hanley

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## THE AZTALAN GARDEN GROWS AGAIN THIS YEAR

Aztalan represented one of Wisconsin's first true farming communities. It was founded in a time when the hunter-gatherers were evolving into the agriculturally-based society we find so fascinating. Surely hunting, fishing, and foraging would remain critical to the lifestyle of the Aztalanians, but agriculture would determine how the Mississippians were organized.

Jude Hartwick of the Friends of Aztalan board of directors filed this report about how he and other volunteers have tried to recreate type of garden that might have been found at Aztalan.

"Our ancient Mississippian garden is a very small version of a garden representing what would have been planted around the year 1100 a.d.," Jude explains "The corn this year is different from last year's. Last year we planted Seneca Red Stalker, and we were able to harvest quite a bit. Notice how it was planted on the hills, though I was informed that perhaps it should have been planted more on the slopes of the mounds.

"This year we planted Mandan corn. The Mandan tribe is from the Montana/North Dakota area, thus the climate would be similar in growing season length to what we have at Aztalan. Also, we planted Dinosaur gourds. These gourds were planted based on depictions on the Mississippian pottery found at Cahokia that showed gourds which looked eerily similar to our heirloom dinosaur gourds.

"We also planted sunflower seeds which would have helped with nutrition levels, particularly in providing protein. The sunflowers were planted in group clusters surrounding the rows of corn/squash/gourd rows. Please notice that the rows are not straight, but snake through the soil owing to the ease in tilling.

"Thanks to John Broihahn who articulated the reasoning behind the varied plantings and manner of tilling."

Not to be accused of being unauthentic, Jude took the garden experience another step. "Our tools were hand made," Jude said. "I teach at an alternative school, where my students and I constructed shell hoes and antler rakes. I cut some branches from brush, then upon collecting antlers and procuring some shells from the Crawfish River, I tied them to the branches using wet rawhide. The rawhide I purchased from Nasco (Arts and Crafts store). I used it wet, because then it would tighten as it dried. Surprisingly, they work.

Jude is rightfully proud of the garden. "Please watch as our plants take off. Just imagine having to live off of what you grow. Then think about how dreaded those little chipmunks/ground squirrels

and pesky crows would be to your survival."

Jude would like to thank Gabrielle Lubach, John Broihahn, Lance



Stock, Bob Persons, Nona Christiansen, The Fosketts, and Bob Birmingham for their help in making the garden a success.



If you're interested in volunteering to help bring the Aztalan garden to life this year, contact Jude at [hartwickj@mail.fortschool.org](mailto:hartwickj@mail.fortschool.org).

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## New Exhibit at Hoard Museum

This spring the Hoard Museum of Fort Atkinson opened its fabulous exhibit area called the "Mystery of the Mounds." The professionally designed and attractive exhibit space includes a theater showing a wonderful 17 minute on the ancient mound builders of the area, exhibits on the various

prehistoric cultures with intriguing artifacts, a full scale reconstructed Woodland house, and an exhibit on Aztalan. This is a must –see for anyone with interests in Native American history and archaeology. The Hoard Museum is located only about 15 minutes from Aztalan at 401 Whitewater Avenue, Fort

Atkinson. Admission is free and it is open during the summer to labor day from Tuesday to Saturday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm and Sunday 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. From Labor day to Memorial Day it is open Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 pm

## Friends of Aztalan State Park Membership

***Don't forget to renew your membership.  
Help keep the Friends of Aztalan State Park active and growing.***

Memberships:

\_\_\_ Basic \$20; \_\_\_ Sustaining \$25; \_\_\_ Patron \$50; \_\_\_ Corporate \$100; \_\_\_ Life \$250

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Friends of Aztalan State Park • Aztalan State Park • 1213 S. Main St • Lake Mills, WI 53551

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