

Lapham explored by trenching, an imperfect method, one of the long row of burial mounds lying a short distance northwest of the Aztalan wall and in it found ashes mingled with charcoal and occasional fragments of human bones.

"The bones of some burrowing animals and the remains of a fish were taken out. Fragments of rotten wood, apparently oak were found at all depths. They were not charred, nor did they appear to have had any definite arrangement, but were confusedly placed, as if carelessly thrown upon the mound during the progress of its construction."

"From the oft-repeated indications of fire at various depths, we could draw no other conclusion than that this was a 'mound of sacrifice,' and that at each repetition of the ceremony an addition was made to the height of the mound."—Antiquities, 48.

He here fell into a common error of early investigators. The data presented goes to prove that the mound itself was nothing more than an ordinary burial mound, like others about it. The bones of burrowing animals and fish, ashes and charcoal and fragments of decayed wood indicate that, as was frequently the case, they were included in the earth used in the construction of this mound, which had been collected from a nearby dwelling site, where culinary and other domestic operations had been carried on. The fragments of human bones exhibited no evidence of the action of fire. They also may have been scraped up with the soil covering some shallow grave or graves.

That cremation, as a means of disposing of the dead was occasionally practiced by some of the mound building Indians of Wisconsin, is possible. The presence of partly burned human bones in sepulchral mounds is however more readily accounted for as the result of a burial ceremony in which fire played an important part.

Thomas says of a number of mounds explored by Col. Norris and Mr. Middleton in south-western Wisconsin and the adjoining sections of Iowa and Illinois:

"There were abundant evidences that after the body or bodies had been buried, a layer, usually of a mortar like substance, spread over them, a fire was kindled on this layer. Sometimes this was so fierce and the layer so thin and defective that the bones beneath were more or less charred."—Thomas, B. E., 12, 678.

Similar observations have been made by leading archaeologists in our own and other states, in fact this mode of burial was not uncommon.

In gathering up soil for the erection of a mound the remains