

Lapham noted the unsuitableness of the location of Aztalan for use as a purely defensive work, or as a retreat in time of danger:

"But this fort is entirely commanded from the summit of a ridge extending along the west side, nearly parallel with, and much higher than the west walls themselves, and within a fair arrow-shot, so that an enemy posted on it would have a decided advantage over those within the defences. This ridge would also constitute an excellent breastwork to protect an enemy from the arrows shot from the supposed fort. As if purposely to assist an approaching enemy, a number of mounds have been erected along the ridge, affording secure hiding places, etc. These may, however, have been erected at a more recent date.

From the summit of the ridge alluded to, the ground descends towards the river; so that the inclosure is on a declivity, and is thus commanded from the opposite side of the river. Here again, as if purposely to render aid and comfort to an enemy, a breastwork is erected, extending along the margin of the stream, from behind which arrows or other weapons could be thrown directly into the fort by persons lying in perfect security.

From the skill exhibited by the mound-builders in their works of defence in other portions of the West, we cannot imagine that they would construct such a fort as this."—Antiquities, 49, condensed.

The location is certainly not the best, yet it may be noted that the erection of a wooden palisade on the wall, and the walls of the huts and other structures on and within it, would afford some additional protection to the inhabitants. The outworks would doubtless be fully manned by warriors of the village in case of an attack.

In a closing paragraph of his chapter on Aztalan he says:

"Do not these facts warrant the suggestion that the people of Aztalan, in Wisconsin, were a different people, in many respects, from those who erected the animal-shaped mounds? This locality may possibly have been occupied by a colony of Mexicans; since we know that colonies were sometimes sent out by that singular people."—Antiquities, 50.

In grateful remembrance of what he did for Wisconsin archaeology, we may forgive this error of judgement.

Such conclusions are no longer permissible. No such colony ever penetrated to within a thousand miles of Wisconsin. The old wall is certainly not Mexican in style, nor are any of the artifacts found within the enclosure.

From the Winnebago, the last residents of this locality, he was unable to obtain any information concerning its builders.