

# Emblematic Mounds in Wisconsin

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By Rev. Stephen D. Peet

The State of Wisconsin has long been distinguished for the emblematic mounds which are found within its borders. It was one of the marked features of the early settlement of the State, that nearly the same wonder and surprise were awakened here that arose over the remarkable discoveries made by the Spaniards in Mexico, Central America, and Peru. When it was made known that there was the site of an ancient city here, and the name Aztalan was applied to it, a sensation went over the country not unlike that which prevailed during that age of adventure and wonder which followed immediately after the discovery of this continent.

The name Aztalan was derived from a tradition, which was said to be common among the Indians, to the effect that a people who were partially civilized, and who possessed tools and implements of all kinds, who cultivated the soil and built houses, had, at a previous time, come from the northeast and settled in this State, and here built a city; but having become dissatisfied, after the lapse of an hundred years, burned their city, and proceeded south to Mexico, which they conquered, and have ever since retained. Thus the State became at once connected with the ancient civilized regions of Central America, and great interest was awakened in the antiquities found here on account of it. This tradition had been made known by a French traveler, who was among the natives at a very early date, but, being repeated, excited much attention.<sup>1</sup>

During the survey of the mineral lands and the early settlement of the country, the effigy mounds came also into notice; and the

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<sup>1</sup> This appeared in the Greenwich (N. Y.) *Eagle*. See Wisconsin Miscellaneous Pamphlets Vol. 8, in Wis. Hist. Soc. Library.