



# Old Stone Fort Archaeological Society

March 2010

The Old Stone Fort Archaeological Society will meet **Thursday, March 11th at 6:00 PM** at the Old Stone Fort Museum in Manchester, Tennessee. The purpose of this Society is to learn more about prehistoric Native American cultures and the early historic period of Tennessee. Our meetings are **Free** and open to the public. Our program this month:

**Mark Norton**

*who will present*

## **Archaeoastronomy at Pinson Mounds and Old Stone Fort**

The first day of Spring is Saturday, March 20, 2010 – and I think this year, many people will be celebrating the official end of Winter. Two thousand years ago, Native Americans throughout the eastern woodlands observed the Equinox and other Solar and celestial events by constructing earthen mounds and earthworks as markers along the landscape. Knowledge of the movements of the sun allowed them to calculate the number of days in a year. When the sun would rise across a particular mound or other earthwork, specific rituals would be performed, some of which were probably associated with the planting and harvesting of crops. This early astronomy is known as archaeoastronomy, and has been documented at Pinson Mounds, Old Stone Fort and other sites within Tennessee.

At Pinson Mounds, located near Jackson, Tennessee, you can stand on top of Saul's Mound and witness the sun rising over Mound 29 on the Spring and Fall Equinoxes – March 21 and September 21. Mound 29 is located due east of Saul's mound within the Eastern Citadel, which is about 1000 feet in diameter. Interestingly, the wall is located on a slope, not level ground, creating a water catchment or small reservoir in the western portion of the enclosure. It is probable that various rituals and ceremonies were taking place within the Eastern Citadel during the Spring and/or Fall Equinox.

At Old Stone Fort, located in Manchester, Tennessee, sunrise and sunset observations have been connected to the elaborate Entrance to the Hilltop Enclosure with the Summer Solstice – June 21<sup>st</sup>. Rituals and/or ceremonies were probably taking place within this enclosure on the Summer Solstice. Slides and photographs of these two Middle Woodland period sites will be utilized to demonstrate how their layout and design indicate a connection with Archaeoastronomy.

Thanks to Mr. Wayne Ison for his presentation on Liberty Gap at the January meeting. See you at the meeting,

*Mark*

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Old Stone Fort State Park – 931-723-5073

<http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/OldStoneFort/>

**Tennessee Archaeology Network**

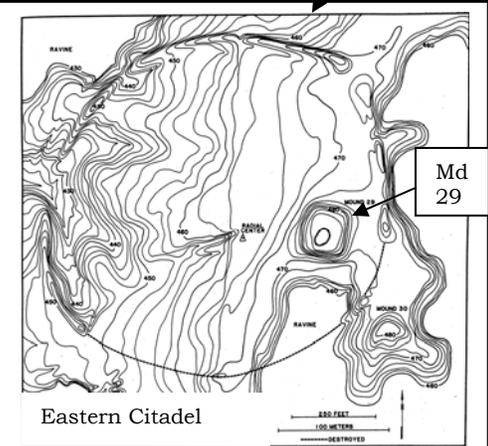
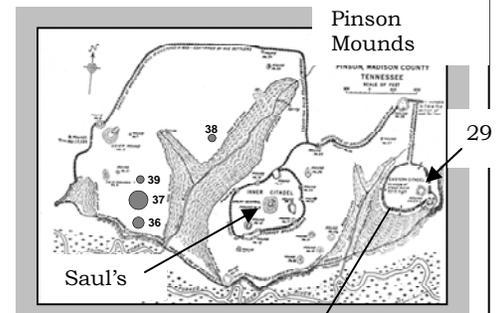
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~kesmith/TNARCH/>

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**Archaeoastronomy**

<http://archaeoastronomy.com/>



Spring Equinox sunrise over Mound 29 at Pinson Mounds