



# NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Winter 2016/2017

Vol. 44, No.3

**LAS Annual Meeting  
February 10-12, 2017  
Paragon Casino and Resort Hotel  
Marksville, LA**

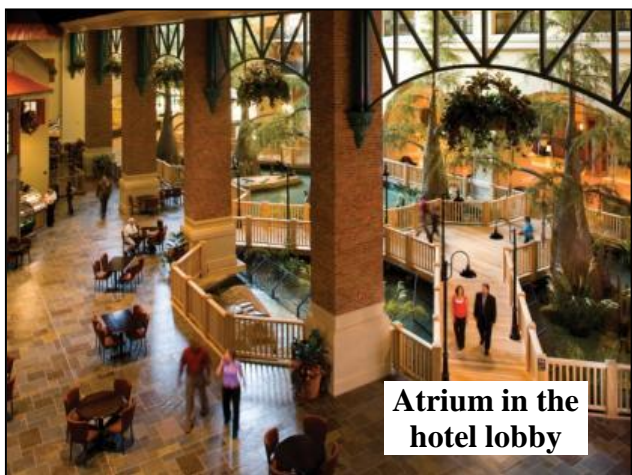


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New Orleans**

## 2017 LAS ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION



View of the hotel at the Paragon Casino and Resort



Atrium in the hotel lobby

### SILENT AUCTION

There will be another silent auction of books and other donated materials concerning archaeology, history, anthropology, etc. at the LAS annual meeting in Marksville. LAS members and friends are urged to contribute items to be auctioned. All donations to the Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS) are tax deductible. For more information, contact Chip McGimsey at [cmcgimsey@crt.la.gov](mailto:cmcgimsey@crt.la.gov).

### The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS) Paragon Casino-Marksville, LA February 10-12, 2017

Join your friends and colleagues for a weekend of conversation, education, and camaraderie. The general schedule of events is:

#### Friday, Feb. 10

LAS Executive Committee Meeting, 4pm;  
Reception at Paragon Casino/Hotel at 6-8 pm.

#### Saturday, Feb. 11

Presentations during the morning and afternoon at the Paragon Casino/Hotel Conference Center.  
Banquet and keynote address at 7pm.

Keynote address by Dr. Vin Steponaitis, Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

#### Sunday, Feb. 12

9:30am -Tour of the Tunica-Biloxi Indian Museum.  
11 am tour of the now closed Marksville State Historic Site.

**Pre-registration (before February 4, 2017): \$25.00**  
**Registration (after February 4, 2017 and at the meeting): \$30.00**

**Banquet: \$30.00 (limited to 55 persons)**  
Payable by PayPal or Credit Card on the LAS website, or by mailing meeting registration form (see page 4).  
Make check payable to the Louisiana Archaeological Society and send to:

Julie Doucet, LAS Treasurer  
7784 Castello Rd.  
Ethel, LA 70730

([http://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/store/c8/LAS\\_2017\\_Annual\\_Meeting\\_Registration.html](http://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/store/c8/LAS_2017_Annual_Meeting_Registration.html)).

### HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Paragon Casino Resort Hotel  
(<http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com/hotel>)  
711 Paragon Place, Marksville, LA 71351  
800.642.7777

**REGISTRATION CODE: LARF10G** for discounted rate of \$119/night/.

### CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

Send titles and abstracts for presentations or posters to the 2017 LAS program chair, Brian Ostahowski by **Feb. 3, 2017**. Email him at: [brian.ostahowski@gmail.com](mailto:brian.ostahowski@gmail.com). Updates and additional information will be available at the LAS website: <http://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org> or at the Facebook page: *Louisiana Archaeological Society*.



### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Vincas “Vin” Steponaitis, Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, will provide the keynote during the Saturday night banquet of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS). Vin’s presentation is entitled “Effigy Pipes from the Lower Mississippi Valley: Sources and Styles.”



**Bear effigy pipe from Marksville site**

### MARKSVILLE DISPLAY AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

As many LAS members know, the Marksville State Historic Site and Museum have been closed for some time due to state budget cuts. One of the reasons the LAS is meeting in Marksville is to bring attention to this situation. There will be a display of artifact replicas from the museum’s collection at the meeting, as well as a presentation of paintings by artist Martin Pate showing scenes from the prehistoric occupation at the Marksville site. Archaeologists have long recognized the likely cultural ties of the people who built the Marksville earthworks with the Hopewell Culture in Ohio and Illinois during the Middle Woodland times - ca. 100 B.C. to A.D. 400. This site is a cultural resource that Louisiana should treasure rather than abandon.



*Martin Pate painting of a burial ceremony at the Marksville site during its prehistoric occupation.*

### TOURS DURING THE 2017 ANNUAL MEETING - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12



There will be two tours during the 2017 Annual LAS meeting in Marksville on Sunday, Feb. 12. The first will be of the **Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resource Center** at **9:30 am**. Housing the so-called Tunica Treasure, among other items, the tour of this facility will be given by staff members Ms. Melissa Simpson-Barbin and Mr. Brent Barbry. A later tour on Sunday of the now-closed **Marksville State Historic Site** will begin after the tour of the Tunica-Biloxi Center – probably about **11am**. This tour will be led by Dr. Chip McGimsey. There are walking trails around most of the site, but conditions there have deteriorated since the site has been closed. Attendees should plan accordingly.



*Above: the Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resource Center in Marksville. Right: Current conditions at Mound 4 at the now-closed Marksville State Historic Site*

**LAS 2017 Annual Meeting Pre-Registration Form**

**February 10-12, 2017**

**Marksville, Louisiana**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliation** \_\_\_\_\_

*If registering for more than one person, please provide the following information:*

**Guest Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliation** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Meeting Pre-registration: \$25 per person</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<b>Banquet: \$30 per person</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<b>Total Meeting Pre-registration</b>		\$ _____

*Pre-registration ends **February 4, 2017**. Meeting registration at the event is \$30 per person. Banquet is limited to 55 guests, so reserve your seat(s) now.*

**Mail pre-registration form to:**

Julie Doucet  
Treasurer  
7784 Castello Rd.  
Ethel, Louisiana 70730

***Form and check must be received by February 4, 2017 to get pre-registration price***

**Check Louisiana Archaeological Society website:**

**[www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org](http://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org) or**

**Facebook page for updates and further announcements.**

## LAS CHAPTER AND MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### Nancy Hawkins Retires After 35 Years of Service to Louisiana Archaeology



*Nancy Hawkins with plaque presented to her at the dedication of Poverty Point as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in October, 2014.*

Those reading the electronic version of this issue of the LAS newsletter can “CTRL+click” the following links to view some of the publications and products that Nancy Hawkins developed while with the Louisiana Division of Archaeology,

[\*\*The Indian Mounds of Northeast Louisiana Trail Guide,\*\*](#)

[\*\*Educational programs and publications\*\*](#)

[\*\*Poverty Point site as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.\*\*](#)

After 35 years, Nancy Hawkins is retiring as the Outreach and Education Coordinator for the Louisiana Division of Archaeology. During her tenure, she was involved in many, many aspects of Louisiana archaeology, heritage tourism, and education.

Her more notable accomplishments include writing, co-writing and editing eight public booklets on Louisiana archaeology, developing and designing small traveling exhibits for museums and libraries, developing a curriculum guide for teachers, designing and developing traveling teaching kits for classroom use, holding numerous workshops for Louisiana teachers, writing and producing slide/tape shows for public presentations, and developing a teachers classroom activity guide (with Debbie Bucu) around the Poverty Point site.

She also developed the Indian Mounds of Northeast Louisiana Trail Guide. This driving trail allows those on it to visit and view 39 prehistoric mound sites that are on both public and private property. Nancy’s work on this notable example of public outreach for Louisiana archaeology inspired a similar driving trail for Mississippi.

She also oversaw the development of seven interactive exhibits highlighting Louisiana archaeological sites, six presentations on Louisiana archaeology for classroom use, and fifteen essays on Louisiana archaeology for KnowLA, the online encyclopedia of Louisiana history.

Nancy Hawkins helped develop the Regional and Station Archaeology Program for the Division of Archaeology and served as the principal administrator of that Program for 27 years, as well as initiating and developing Louisiana’s Archaeology Week/Month and coordinating that event for 23 years.

Perhaps most significantly, Nancy also served for 10 years as a team lead in developing the World Heritage nomination for the Poverty Point site, resulting as the site being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in June 2014.

Nancy was one of the first people hired when the forerunner of the Division of Archaeology was created in the 1970s. She has had an enormous impact on what the Division has become and what it has accomplished. Her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed.

–Chip McGimsey, *LA State Archaeologist*

## Update on Restoration at the Old Hunt Cemetery Site (16VN3917) in Fort Polk

By Jerrie LeDoux, Cultural Resource Liaison, Fort Polk

Over 40 volunteers came together Saturday, September 24, 2016 to reclaim the Old Hunt Cemetery from the forest landscape. Old Hunt, one of three cemeteries located in the newly acquired Cold Springs, Kurthwood, and Simpson Training Areas, was not fenced, gated or signed when purchased by the Army Corps of Engineers for expansion of Fort Polk. This project was a great example of partnerships and volunteerism.

Funds for materials to build the fence and supplies to clear the debris were awarded by the National Environmental Education Foundation through the DoD Legacy Grant. The Fort Polk Cultural Resource Office and Forestry Branch provided assistance with clearing large trees, creating a firebreak, and marking the fence location within the work area. Eagle Scout Candidate Matthew Anderson, Boy Scout Troop 124, provided the leadership and coordination of volunteers. **Louisiana Archaeological Society members** assisted with the examination of fill excavated for post holes. Heritage Family Members, prime beneficiaries, were on hand to assist. "Matthew learned of the project when the grant was first announced and was pro-active in making the day happen," bragged Brad Laffitte, Fort Polk Cultural Resource Manager. "With so many people working together, the day was a huge success and the project completed was even more extensive than was first thought possible." According to Luke Dahlen,

Fort Polk Scout Master, "Eleven Scouts volunteered an accumulated 64 conservation service hours last Saturday. Thanks to Matthew's great oversight and leadership, the Boy Scouts suffered zero injuries or hot weather related casualties."

Billy Hunt, descendant of Christopher Columbus Hunt (B: 11-8-1834 D: 3-28-1885) who is buried in the cemetery, attended the clean up as well as Rayford West, local point of contact and historian for the cemetery. Each addressed the volunteers and expressed appreciation for the project. Stanley Fletcher, of the Heritage Family Association, played a key role in helping to prepare the site for Saturday's work as well as supervising the fence installation. Gene Haymon, President of the Heritage Family Association was on hand and said "The Old Hunt was unattended and completely taken over by the woods. Graves there saw real sunlight for the first time in about 30 years." Sharna Tolfree and Aliza Sager from the Conservation Branch taught Boy Scouts about habitat enhancement through use of bird boxes which will be placed in the area at the same time with cemetery signage. This project demonstrates JRTC & Fort Polk's willingness to partner with the community to recognize and protect historic resources. Dahlen said the project also shows Troop 124's commitment to hard work and living a life of service.



*Pictured above are participants in a dedication ceremony on Nov. 8, 2016 for the Hunt Family Cemetery located within Fort Polk, La. Groups represented are: Garrison Commander and his Sgt. Major, The Heritage Family Association, Vernon Genealogical Society, Fort Polk Cultural Resources, LAS members, Boy Scouts Troop 124, and Mr. Ray West, cemetery historian. Photograph from The Guardian, newspaper for Fort Polk.*

**Ms. Emily Dale** joined the Louisiana Division of Archaeology in early December as the new Site Files Manager. She takes over from Paul French who took a position with the Kisatchie National Forest. Emily comes to us from the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and before that the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

Emily brings an extensive background in Section 106 reviews, project consultation, agreement documents, and site form and report review. She also has considerable experience with GIS, an area that is particularly helpful to the Division. Currently, she is working through the substantial backlog of site forms and projects that has accumulated since Paul left and that need to be integrated into the GIS and associated databases. Once that backlog is taken care of, she will begin reviewing all incoming site forms and assisting Chip McGimsey with report reviews. Emily's contact information is [edale@crt.la.gov](mailto:edale@crt.la.gov) and 225-342-8166.



*Above: Dr. Pete Gregory making a point during a tour of the Los Adaes site on Sept. 18, 2016.*

*Right: Tad Britt, Chief of Archaeology at the NCPTT inputting data for demonstration of digital technologies and archaeology.*



**The Northwestern Louisiana Archaeology Society** held a reorganizational meeting September 15, 2016 at the Shreveport Broadmoor Library. The purpose of the meeting was to re-establish the NWLAS chapter as a viable community resource and to educate the public about Louisiana's rich cultural heritage.

The NWLAS plans meeting every other month at a public venue. The programs consist of expert and avocational archaeologists presenting topics that span the prehistory and history of NW Louisiana. Field trips will be scheduled once a quarter to sites within a short driving distance. At the re-organization meeting, Mr. Jeff Girard presented an overview on what archaeology is and how and why it is important from the local to the national level.

On Sept. 18, 2016, NWLAS members went on a field trip to Los Adaes State Historic site for a two hour tour of the presidio and mission site. Drs. Hiram "Pete" Gregory, Northwestern State University, and George Avery, Stephen F. Austin University, led the tour and discussion. Los Adaes, the symbol of New Spain in Louisiana, was once the capital of Texas and the scene of a unique cooperation among the French, Spanish, and indigenous Native Americans. An area rich in archaeological finds, it thrives today as one of Louisiana's most intriguing state Historic Sites.

At the second meeting, November 10, 2016, Tad Britt, Chief of Archeology at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training discussed his work throughout the United States as an archeologist, focusing on cutting-edge technologies and methodologies. This meeting was held at The Bossier Parish Library.

Upcoming programs and events include a talk by Jay Gray, with the CRM firm Cultural Resource Analysts (CRA), on January 12, 2017 in Shreveport. Watch for an announcement on our NW LAS Facebook page. A field trip to the Poverty Point World Heritage Site is in the works for February 2017.

## FIELD NOTES AND CURRENT RESEARCH

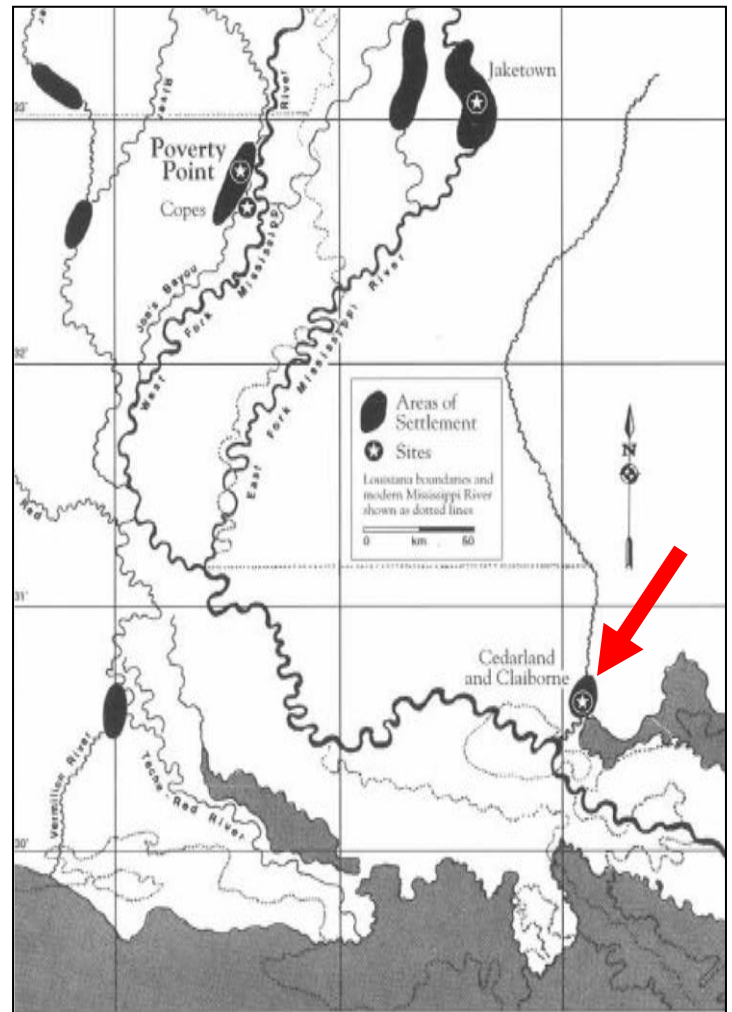
### Mississippi Treasure Returned

By Sam Brookes

In the early 1960's Mr. Norvell Roberts discovered a cache of 12 steatite or soapstone vessels at the Claiborne site on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Mr. Roberts had the vessels in his home in Ohio for over 40 years. He and his son recently donated the vessels to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson. They will be available for visiting scholars to study and will be displayed in the new Mississippi State Historical Museum currently under construction in Jackson, Mississippi.

See "Intrasite Structure at the Claiborne Site" by James E. Bruseth in *Louisiana Archaeology* No. 6, 1979 [1980] for more information about the site. This number of the bulletin is out of print, but is available as a pdf file at the LAS website.

*How the Lower Mississippi Valley might have looked in 1500 B.C., showing courses of major rivers and locations of Poverty Point territories. Drawing by Jon Gibson. From Poverty Point: A Terminal Archaic Culture of the Lower Mississippi Valley by John Gibson. Distributed by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology. [www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/Poverty-Point.pdf](http://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/Poverty-Point.pdf)*



*Photograph of the Steatite Vessels Recovered from the Claiborne Site in Hancock, County, Mississippi. Photograph provided by Sam Brookes.*



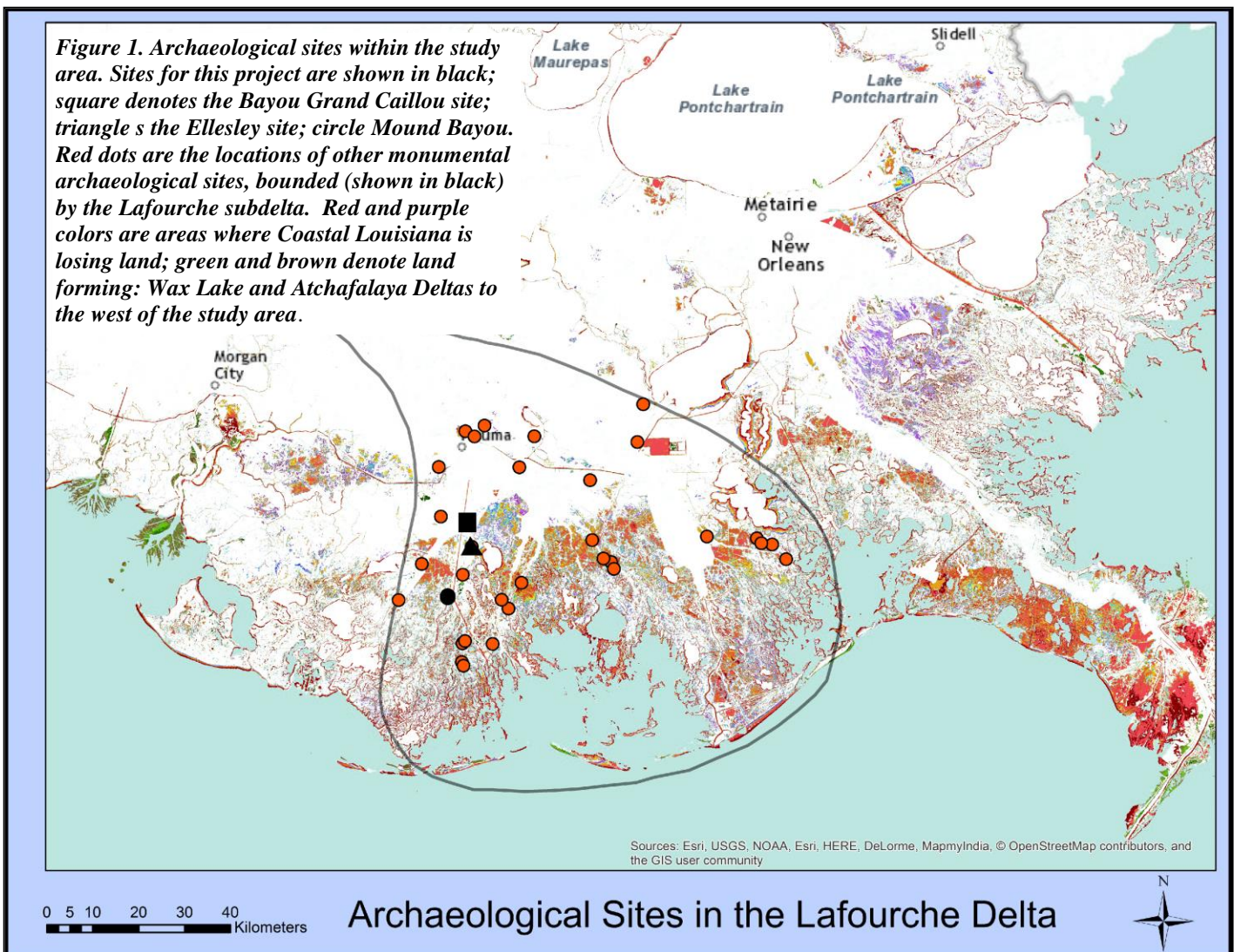
**RAGS to Archaeological Riches**

By Jayur Mehta

Jayur Mehta (Gulf Communities Research Institute; New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts) and Elizabeth Chamberlain (Tulane University Earth and Environmental Sciences) have started a new project in coastal Louisiana called Resilience in the Ancient Gulf South (RAGS). The project compares river activity to archaeological settlement patterns, site formation, and site abandonment. Their research integrates methods and knowledge from two different disciplines, earth science and archaeology, for a purposeful and applied exploration of coastal Louisiana and the Mississippi River Delta. The work offers an explanation of when resilient and sustainable life along the Mississippi River Delta became unfeasible at various points in the past.

Mehta and Chamberlain through RAGS inquire into the nature of *environmental tipping points* along the Lafourche subdelta. Their project investigates when hydrological disturbances lead to site abandonment; they do so by measuring stream activity along Bayou Grand Caillou, a distributary of Bayou Lafourche, and by identifying overbank deposits at three different archaeological sites: Bayou Grand Caillou (16TR38), Ellesley (16TR37), and Mound Bayou (16TR22) (Figure 1). The timing of overbank deposits is compared to site formation and abandonment, and channel formation and abandonment. Their working hypotheses are that; 1) distributary channel activity is a major driver of environmental tipping points in delta occupation, 2) habitation is directly tied to distributary activity and sites are abandoned when channels become inactive, and 3) indigenous communities waited until land was suitably elevated by natural processes before investing in the construction of monumental infrastructure. In this project, they propose that river activity is the principal component of an environmental tipping point. If this is disproved, future research will investigate ecological and social factors that might influence site abandonment.

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In the long run, Mehta and Chamberlain (Figures 2, 3, and 4) hope that data from this project will be used to inform studies of how humans today can continue to live in the rapidly changing landscapes of southern Louisiana. This is particularly relevant in the many rural communities around coastal Louisiana and New Orleans, where the combined impacts of subsidence, erosion, and sea-level rise are resulting in rapid land loss. The present solution to these short-term and long-term environmental disturbances has been community relocation, particularly for disenfranchised communities; Mehta and Chamberlain hope their research will help define how humans lived on the coast for thousands of years and how modern communities can continue to live along this rapidly changing ecosystem. Finally, monumental sites along the Mississippi River Delta are non-renewable resources with an uncertain future because of the combined effects of subsidence, erosion, and sea-level rise. Consequently, their work serves to document and build knowledge of past cultures while the opportunity still exists.



**Figure 2**



**Figure 4**



**Figure 3**

**Figure 2.** Jayur Mehta makes a point at Bayou Grand Caillou.

**Figure 3** Liz Chamberlain, Jaap Nienhous, and Jon Bridgeman at Bayou Grand Caillou.

**Figure 4.** Elizabeth Chamberlain, Tulane University Earth and Environmental Sciences.

## A Bird Effigy from Lake Palourde in St. Mary Parish

By Jim Delahoussaye

In October of 2016, following a public presentation given by the author, Mrs. Mary Catherine Gray introduced herself and had with her a carved bone effigy artifact she had found on a shell beach on the southern edge of Lake Palourde, St. Mary Parish. She had found it in the mid-1960s. Mrs. Gray says her family frequently visited the beach as a preferred public picnic and swimming area until industrial development made the area inaccessible. Maps of the area still refer to the location as “Morgan City Beach”. Roger Emile Stoff of the *Franklin Banner-Tribune* newspaper was able to get some images of the effigy at the time of the presentation and the author followed up with a visit to Mrs. Gray in Patterson during which he was able to record measurements of the object and conduct an interview. The interview included her family history of visits to the shell beach. She could not recall seeing any other evidence of prehistoric occupation of the site such as pottery fragments or bone.

The object is about seven cm long by 5 cm tall and represents the image of a bird, perhaps a hawk. There is considerable detail on the object even though it shows evidence of smoothing and rounding by wave action and other natural forces. Even so, wings, head, tail, breast and legs are easily identified. The artifact is hollow with a “pedestal” base where the legs of the bird are shaped. There is an opening in the center of this base. This opening contains a piece of shell considered incidental to the original object structure.

The species and elemental origin of the bone are not known at this time. The original bone would have been ca. 1 cm thick with a hollow core such as might be found in a rib or pelvis of a large mammal or alligator, both of which were found in surface collections at the site when recorded by Coastal Environments Inc. (CEI) in 1977. The effigy may have a relationship to prehistoric carvings found in other sites, notably in Florida, as suggested by Dr. Jon Gibson in email communications.

As to whether there might be a recorded prehistoric site located near the confluence of Lake Palourde and Bayou Boeuf, the location of the shell beach to which Mrs. Gray refers, is tentatively identified by Chip McGimsey as follows:

[The] site is probably 16SMY146, which in 1977, when it was recorded, was owned by Petroleum Helicopters Inc. Described as a 125 m long shell midden on banks of Bayou Boeuf where it enters/leaves Lake Palourde. Marksville through Natchezan components. But no one has visited there since 1977, although the site is apparently mentioned by James Leander Cathcart in 1819.

Cathcart, on an expedition on behalf of the U.S. Navy said that there was a family named Moreaux living at the site: “...their house is fix’d on a hill of clam shells, which bounds an Indian burial ground, from whence they frequently dig human bones, & once they found a whole skeleton...” [Editor’s Note: Check out the Wikipedia article about Cathcart. A real-life candidate for the “world’s most interesting man!”]

Petroleum Helicopters Inc., has modified the lakeshore/bayou side edge and the original 16SMY146 (designated the La Coup site) is now a shoreline levee with rock riprap at the water’s edge. Whether any of the original midden still exists underwater or beneath the riprap is unknown. The object remains in the possession of Mrs. Mary Catherine Gray.



*Two views of a carved bone bird effigy likely recovered from the La Coup site near Lake Palourde in St. Mary Parish.*

## Investigating a Recently Exposed Barge in New Roads

By Chip McGimsey, State Archaeologist

In 2011, the Louisiana Legislature created the False River Restoration Council to manage that waterbody and improve its fishing and recreational opportunities. As part of that management, the level of the False River Lake was drawn down by six feet beginning in November 2016. As the water level dropped, an old wooden barge was exposed on the shoreline at the town of New Roads, Louisiana in Pointe Coupee Parish.

Located two blocks back from the lake, in the northern end of town, are the remaining buildings of what was originally built as a cotton gin, and which became the New Roads Oil Mill and Manufacturing Co. by the late 1890s. This company processed cotton seed to obtain cotton seed oil and had at least two small steamboats that collected cotton seed from the various plantations along False River and brought it to the mill for processing. In 1902, the company received permission to build a tramway from their plant along Community Street to their wharf on False River. Elements of this tramway can still be found in several residential yards in New Roads.

On December 21, 1906, the steamer *False River* was moored at the wharf for the mill when it caught fire. Initially, the exposed shipwreck was thought to be the *False River*, but looking at contemporary newspaper articles made it clear that the steamer had been quickly repaired and put back into operation. An inspection of the wreck made it obvious that this was a barge and not a steamboat.

A historic photograph from False River shows a small steamer with a barge that appears identical to that at the site. It seems likely that the exposed wreck is one of the barges used to transport cotton seed to the mill, and that it was simply abandoned at the wharf. This wharf for the cotton seed mill is also gone. Currently, it is unknown when the barge may have been abandoned.

Chip McGimsey and Megan Kenny from the Louisiana Division of Archaeology visited the wreck along with marine archaeologist Allan Saltus. The requisite site form was filled out (16PC128) and Saltus is working on drawings of the vessel's remains. It is 76 feet long, 16 feet wide and had side boards up to 3 feet high.

Interestingly, it had a slightly V-bottomed hull, rather than the more typical flat bottom. It has suffered from repeated drawdowns over the years, and much of the wood above the mud-line is severely decomposed. The sections lying within the mud, however, remain well preserved. While not historically significant on a national or state level, the barge does represent an important look at vernacular watercraft that may have been specifically designed for use on False River.



***View to the west, along north shore of False River, of the New Roads Barge Wreck (16PC128).***

***Photo by Chip McGimsey***

After our visit, several local individuals became very interested in trying to recover and preserve the vessel. Some important funding has been obtained and numerous volunteers have already helped remove trash from the vessel. This work is proceeding quickly because the drawdown will cease on January 15, 2017, leaving only a narrow window to do anything.

Together with Allan Saltus, a recovery plan was developed and the Louisiana Archaeological Survey and Antiquities Commission approved a permit to dismantle and store the vessel's elements. As part of this plan, efforts are being made to undertake a 3-D laser scan of the vessel in order to document it before it is removed. Once the vessel timbers are removed, they will be stored in a facility provided by the City of New Roads and funding will be sought to begin restoration. Hopefully a future LAS newsletter will have an update on the vessel and perhaps a digital image showing what it may have originally looked like.

## Public Archaeology at the *Ile Copal*-LeRosen School Site (16LY153) in Lafayette, Louisiana

By Mark A. Rees, Brittney Istre, Matthew DeBlieux and Zoë Couvillion

During the fall of 2016 the Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette conducted an archaeological and historical investigation of *Ile Copal*, the antebellum plantation and residence of Alexandre Mouton (1804-1885), the first Democratic Governor of Louisiana (Tregle 1988). Also, under the leadership of Principal Paul Breaux, *Ile Copal* subsequently became the first post-Reconstruction African American public school in Lafayette Parish.

The *Ile Copal* Survey was a pilot study of the Bayou Vermilion Archaeological Project, in partnership with the Acadiana Planning Commission, Bayou Vermilion District, Lafayette Science Museum and Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS). The goals were straightforward: to identify and investigate archaeological deposits associated with the plantation and school, record the site with the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, and introduce a program of public archaeology in Lafayette Parish.

*Ile Copal* was the largest antebellum plantation in Lafayette Parish and covered more than 20,000 acres of the present-day city. The plantation was built from slave labor engaged in sugar cane cultivation and processing, with more than 120 people enslaved there in 1860. The Mouton residence, which was destroyed by fire in 1928, was an impressive example of Greek Revival architecture. The two-story brick building faced southeast, towards the bayou, had four chimneys and a belfry or *pigeonnier* on top. The back of the house had a full-length second-floor balcony that faced present-day Pinhook Road, known in the early twentieth century as “Lover’s Lane.” Slave quarters and a sugar house with a steam-powered mill were located to the south and southwest of the mansion. The plantation also had a hospital, dance hall, church and graveyard. It served as a Union Army encampment and headquarters during the Civil War (Brassieur et al. 2013: 10-11, 19; Edmonds 1979: 92, 94-95, 100; Mamalakis 1983:77-78; Vermilionville 2016).

*Ile Copal* also played a major role in the history of public education and development of the Freetown-Port Rico NRHP Historic District. Freetown developed as freedmen of color settled on part of the former plantation near Vermilionville. Mouton donated land for the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and Good Hope Baptist congregation. Good Hope Hall served as an early school for black children (Brassieur et al. 2013:8, 21-23, 28-31; Duchmann 2016). The Lafayette Parish School Board purchased the *Ile Copal* property where the Mouton residence was located in 1925 and established the first post-Reconstruction African American trade school there (LPC 1925). The noted educator Paul



*Historical marker for Ile Copal Oaks at the LeRosen School in Lafayette*

Breaux served as the principal. A new school building was constructed just north of the mansion around 1925-1926. During the catastrophic flood of 1927 the school grounds were used as a refugee center for flood relief (Conrad and Bresseaux 1994:52). The former Mouton residence was destroyed in a fire by the following year, as indicated by the seemingly still-smoldering “fire ruins” on a Sanborn map of 1928 (Sanborn Map Company 1928). The earlier Paul Breaux school building was subsequently replaced with the present-day LeRosen Elementary school buildings, which continue to be used today by LPSS for community and adult education programs.

The only visible reminder of the *Ile Copal* plantation is a historical marker beside the large live oak trees that bear the name. The portion of the site that was investigated is only a small part of the former plantation. The boundaries of the *Ile Copal*-LeRosen School site (16LY153) are defined by the present-day LPSS property south of the intersection of Pinhook Road and the Evangeline Thruway (Highway 90). The *Ile Copal* Locality refers to the larger, encompassing area where numerous buildings and activities central to the plantation were located, including the slave quarters and sugar house. While the location of the site and its importance to local and state history have been known for a long time, it has not been previously investigated.

Fieldwork was conducted by students and volunteers as part of the archaeology and cultural resource management classes and Historic Preservation

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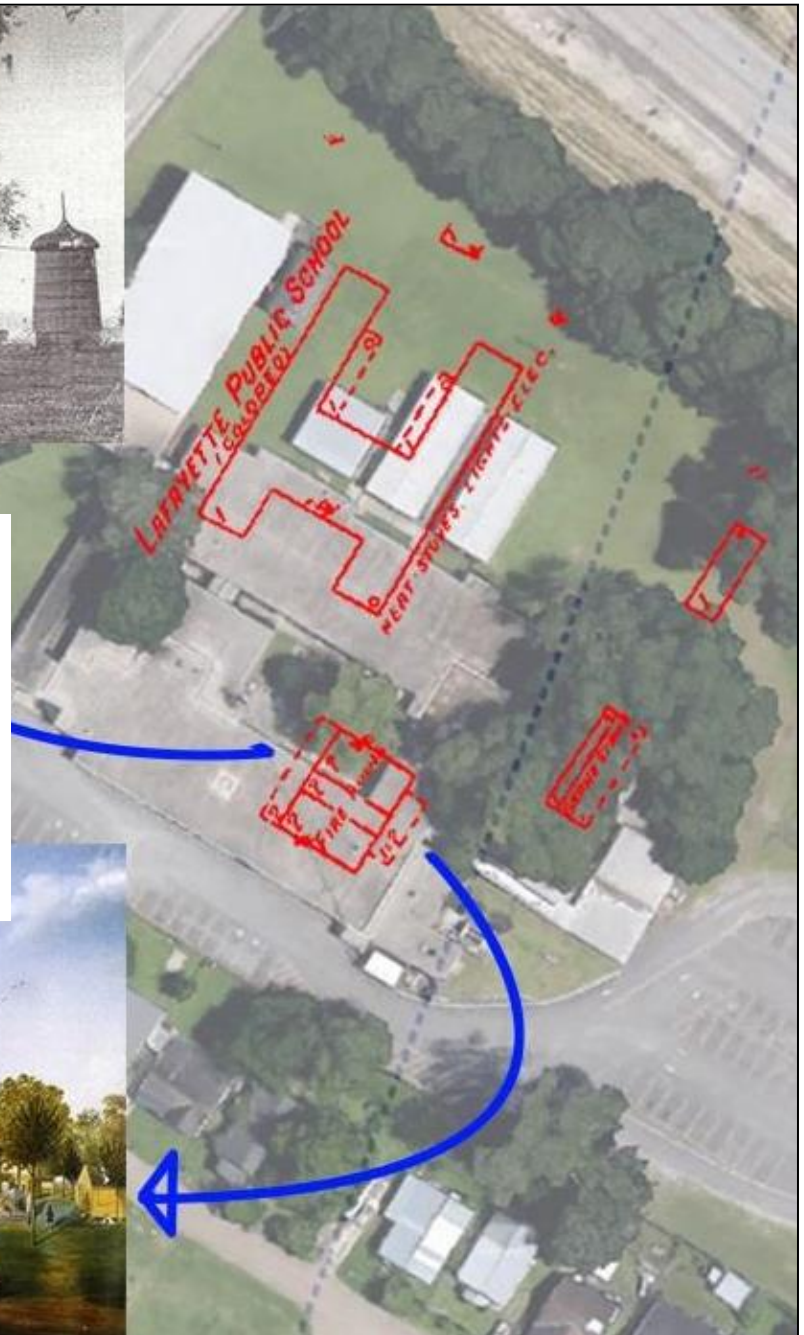
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Graduate Certificate program at ULL. Overlays of maps and aerial photographs indicate the present-day school buildings were constructed partially over the former locations of the *Ile Copal* mansion and earlier school building. A site grid was oriented with the northeastern property boundary and fence line. Three transects were laid out for systematic shovel testing to investigate artifact distributions and possible subsurface features. A total of 18 units were excavated, including 17 shovel tests (ST) measuring 30 cm in diameter and one 50-by-50 cm unit (ST 8). Two 10-by-10 meter areas were surveyed by gradiometry, but the results were inconclusive and not investigated with exploratory test excavations.

Although only 18 shovel tests were excavated during three days of fieldwork, this brief survey confirmed that artifacts and cultural features associated with *Ile Copal* remain intact at the site. Overlays of maps and aerial photographs indicate the present-day school buildings were constructed partially over the former locations of the *Ile Copal* mansion and the earlier Paul Breaux school building. Structural debris and cultural features from these earlier buildings may remain intact and archaeologically-accessible around the perimeters of the present-day school buildings. The remains of other buildings are probably located beneath the surface in the school yard, under parking lots and within the larger *Ile Copal* Locality to the south and southwest of the LeRosen School property.

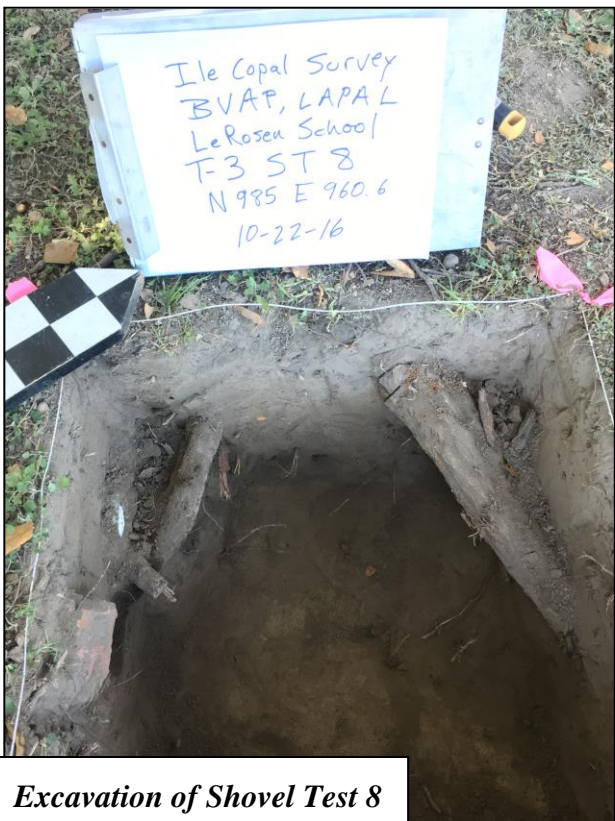


**Right:** overlay of the 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance map and Google Earth aerial photograph, showing the respective locations of the “Fire Ruins” of the *Ile Copal* residence and present-day school buildings. **Upper left:** undated photo of the *Ile Copal* residence (facing present-day Pinhook Road). **Lower left:** Painting of *Ile Copal* plantation by Marie Adrien Persac (1860), view to the west-northwest, showing the residence, slave quarters to the left (southwest of the residence), and other out buildings





*Ray Brassieur, Robyn Plowden and Chad LaComb excavating Shovel Test 8*



*Excavation of Shovel Test 8 near the Ile Copal Oaks*



*Robyn Plowden and Kelsey Fox excavating Shovel Test 9*



*Davaughn Simien and Olivia Chatman excavating Shovel Test 1*

## Acknowledgements

The *Ile Copal* Survey would not have been attempted without the partnership and generous support of numerous individuals and organizations: Mike Hollier, Planner with the Acadiana Planning Commission; Deborah Clifton, Collections Curator, and Kevin Krantz, Administrator of the Lafayette Science Museum; David Cherie, Chief Executive Officer of the Bayou Vermilion District. Approval and support for this project were provided from many individuals with the Lafayette Public School System (LPSS), including Superintendent Donald W. Aguillard, Chief Administrative Officer Joe Craig, and Kyle Bordelon, Director of Planning and Facilities. Steve Fruge, Dwight Toland and LPSS staff facilitated the fieldwork at LeRosen School.

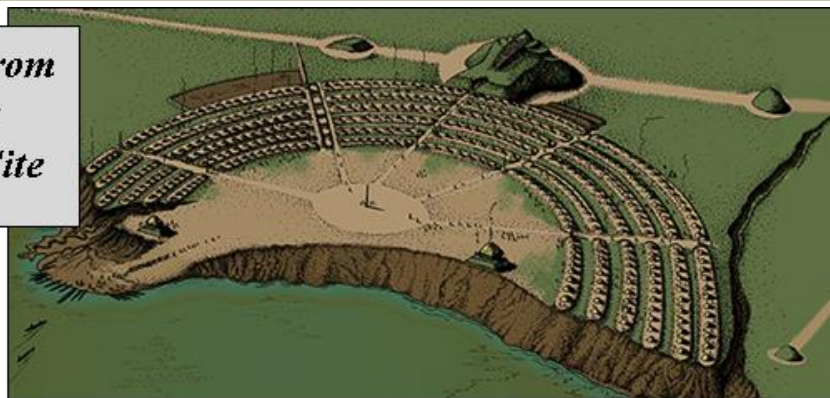
Maegan Smith with Vermilionville Living History & Folk Life Park kindly volunteered on short notice and contributed her experience in archaeological survey by assisting with the supervision of the fieldwork. C. Ray Brassieur with UL Lafayette and Chad LaComb with the Acadiana Planning Commission provided information as well as assistance on site. Many thanks to the students and volunteers who joined in the fieldwork and research on *Ile Copal*: They are: Christopher Beaubouef, Olivia Chatman, Zoë Couvillion, Matthew DeBlieux, Kelsey Fox, Raven Henry, Brittney Istre, Regina Lowe, Ryan Luquette, Gabrielle Moreland, Peyton Pellerin, Robyn Plowden, Davaughn Simien, and Emily Weber. For additional information on the *Ile Copal* Survey and Bayou Vermilion Archaeological Project, email: [rees@louisiana.edu](mailto:rees@louisiana.edu), or visit the Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab in Mouton Hall, Room 108, at UL Lafayette. LAPAL is on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/LAPublicArchaeologyLab](http://www.facebook.com/LAPublicArchaeologyLab).

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*Research News from  
the Poverty Point  
World Heritage Site*



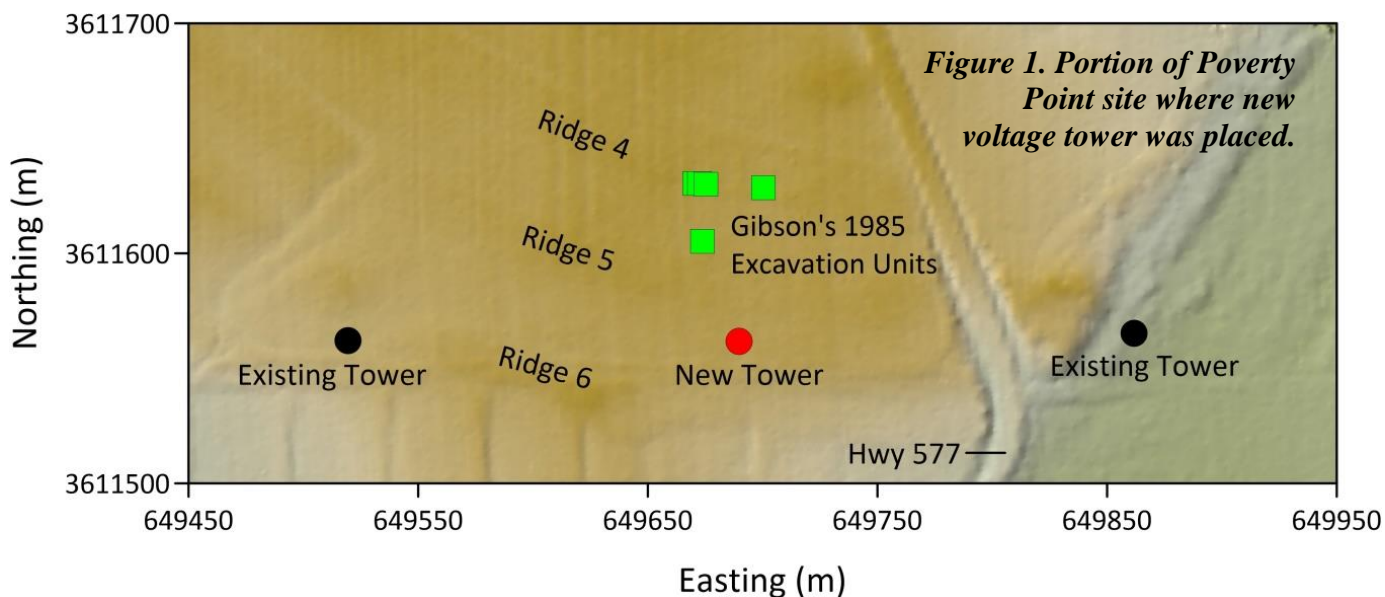
**Tower of Power Excavation**

By Diana Greenlee, Poverty Point Station  
Archaeologist

On September 16, 2015, the Station Archaeology Program was informed that Entergy planned to install a new high voltage tower in the southwest sector of the ridge system. The installation would require using a 48-in (1.22 m) diameter auger to excavate a 20-ft (6.1 m) deep hole. Figure 1 shows the location of the new tower relative to the existing towers and excavations conducted previously in the area (Gibson 1987). Given that there had been limited previous excavation in this sector of the site, a proposal was developed to pre-excavate the tower location, thereby acquiring information that would otherwise be lost. Gibson’s excavations in the adjacent swale between Ridges 4 and 5 Southwest provided some basis for expectations regarding the stratigraphy and extent of cultural deposits in this location. In order to obtain information about the deposits at this particular locale prior to excavation, soil scientist Thurman Allen collected and described a solid 2” soil core.

Shovels and trowels were used to remove soil from a nonstandard 1.25 × 1.25 m excavation unit; to accommodate the 48-inch auger (Figure 2). Excavation was conducted following the cultural and natural stratigraphy, with strata >10 cm thick subdivided into 10 cm arbitrary levels. Each level was drawn and photographed at its base. All soil, except 10-L flotation samples, was water-screened through a 1/8” punched-metal screen. Flotation samples were collected from each level below the plowzone; in the event that historic materials were identified in the screen debris from a particular level, the corresponding flotation sample was screened, not floated. All artifacts are stored at the Poverty Point Archaeological Curatorial Facility.

Following completion of the excavation, the contractors drilled down within the unit. The tower was lifted, placed into the hole, and cemented into place. The power lines were connected and the project was completed.





**Figure 2. Upper left: completed excavation. Upper right: digging a round hole in a square unit. Lower left: the augering equipment. Lower right: lifting the tower into place.**

#### EXCAVATION SUMMARY

The soil, being very dry and hard, was exceedingly difficult to excavate. Fortunately, Joe Perkins and Blaze Metzger volunteered to assist. Not only was excavation physically difficult, but colors were muted, making it a challenge to recognize subtle stratigraphic changes. No features were encountered, although as shown in Figure 3, the north profile revealed what is believed to be an old soil core hole.

The stratigraphy in this unit appears to be more-or-less consistent with other swale units. Initially, the swale was created by stripping away some of the original natural soils and presumably using them to build the adjacent ridges.

When Gibson (1987) compared the elevation of the buried A horizon beneath Ridge 4 Southwest with the elevation of the top of the subsoil in the adjacent Swale 4/5 Southwest, he estimated that 30–40 cm of soil had been removed from the swale. The process of infilling the swale probably began almost as soon as the adjacent ridges were formed. Precipitation, bioturbation (soil movement due to plant and animal activities), and gravity would have caused sediments and artifacts from the ridge tops and/or slopes to move down into the swale. The rate of ridge erosion likely increased when the area was cleared for farming and even more so when mechanized farming was introduced.

*Continued next page*

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This location in Swale 5/6 Southwest had accumulated some 84-88 cm of colluvium (sediments washed into the swale), 14-18 cm more than Gibson found in Swale 4/5 Southwest. Fragments of iron were recovered as low as Level 7 (62-71 cm), minimally 13 cm above the base of the colluvium (the top of the natural subsoil). If iron marks the initiation of Historic Era farming, those sediments lacking historic materials may represent the bulk of prehistoric erosion into the swale. Alternatively, the iron fragments may have been moved deeper into the soil by bioturbation or other processes.

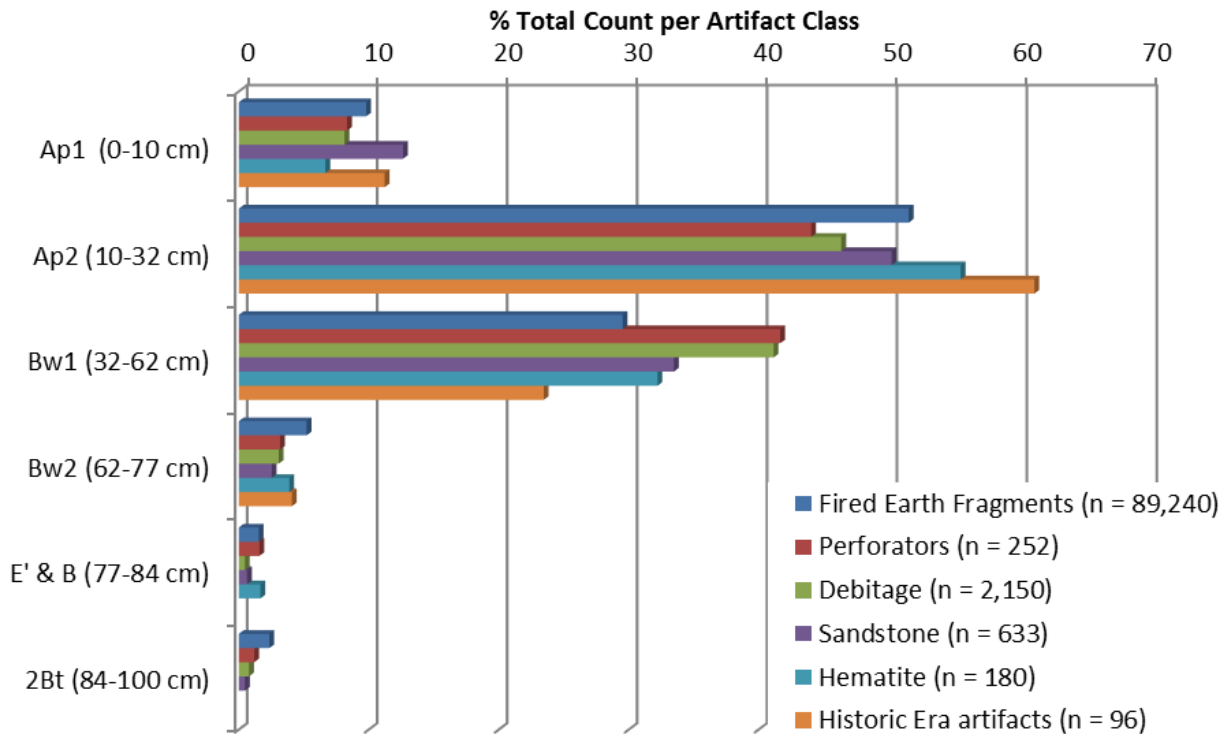
**ARTIFACT ANALYSIS**

As expected, artifacts were abundant in this swale unit. Figure 4 shows the relative frequency of the major artifact classes with respect to identified soil horizons. The vertical distribution in this swale unit is quite different from that described by Gibson (1987) for Swale 4/5 Southwest. Gibson noted that the majority of artifacts in Swale 4/5 Southwest were at the base of the colluvium, or directly on top of the natural subsoil. Here, however, most artifacts are within the lower plowzone and upper Bw horizons (10-62 cm BD), about 22 cm above the base of colluvium and the top of the natural subsoil.



**Figure 3. North Profile of excavation unit, showing old core hole.**

*Continued next page*



**Figure 4. Relative frequency of different artifact classes ( $\geq 1/8''$ ) across soil horizons.**



*Figure 5. Sample of perforators from the Swale 5/6 Southwest excavation*

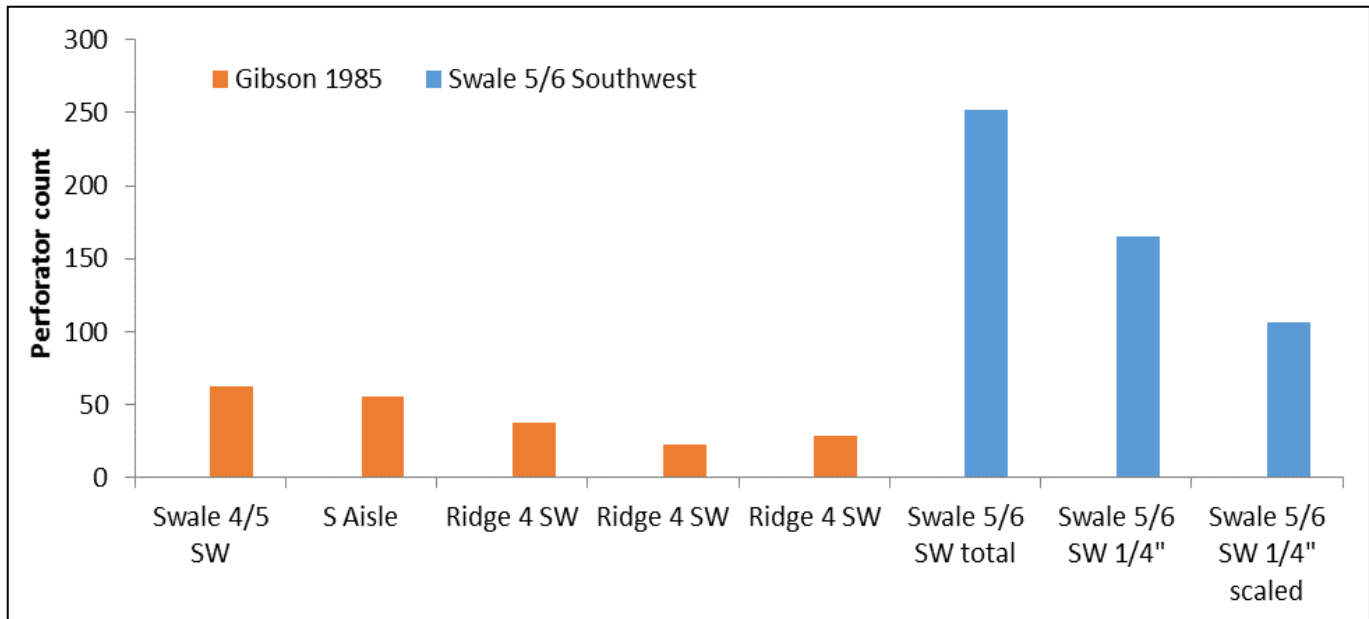
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Of particular interest are the microliths, particularly the class known as perforators, which were recovered in this unit. Perforators are little key-shaped tools (Figure 5) with distinctive flaking along the two parallel, or near parallel, edges of the blade. Ford and Webb (1956) argued that they were used as scrapers, while Gibson (2000) suggested they were drill bits. A recent microwear analysis of a sample of perforators by Adams (2005) indicated they were multifunctional tools, used to pierce, drill, and scrape a variety of materials.

In the surface-collected assemblage, the south and southwest sectors of the site have the most microliths (Gibson 2000; Webb 1970, 1982; Webb and Gibson 1981). In 2002, Connolly (2003) excavated two 1 x 1 m units into Ridge 1 Southwest, with one goal of the project being to recover microliths and thereby test the degree to which the surface assemblage might be an unbiased representation of the buried cultural deposits. Those two units produced a total of 39 microliths, of which 21 were perforators (Connolly 2003:57). Far fewer microliths than anticipated were recovered in that excavation and, accordingly, Connolly suggested that they may have been concentrated elsewhere in the southwestern sector.

In 1985, Gibson excavated three 1 x 1 m units into Ridge 4 Southwest, one into the South Aisle adjacent to Ridge 4, and one into Swale 4/5 Southwest (see Figure 1). A total of 209 perforators and “pseudo-perforators” were recovered from the five units, with the most coming from the swale and aisle units (Figure 6). That assemblage of perforators was recovered by dry-screening through ¼” mesh screens. The 252 perforators of this project were recovered by water-screening through ⅛” punched-metal screens. When only the ≥ ¼” fraction is considered for the Swale 5/6 Southwest unit, the total recovery for this project falls to 165 (about 65.5% of the total), which is about 2.5 times as many as recovered in Gibson’s Swale 4/5 Southwest unit. If the number of ¼” perforators from the Swale 5/6 Southwest unit is scaled to correct for its larger (1.25 x 1.25 m) size, the result is an estimated 106 perforators, which is still nearly 1.7 times as many as in Gibson’s Swale 4/5 Southwest unit. Clearly, there is considerable variation in the distribution of perforators within the southwestern sector of Poverty Point.

Excavating a 1.25 x 1.25 unit prior to the placement of a high voltage tower on the south end of Poverty Point allowed examination of cultural deposits that would otherwise have been destroyed. The stratigraphy supports the hypothesis that the ridge system was not as topographically distinct in the southwestern sector as in other parts of the site. The high frequency of perforators in this unit is consistent with observations about the density of that artifact type in the southwestern sector of the surface collection. In general, the artifact assemblage generated by this project shows great potential for future analyses and useful comparison with other units across the site.



**Figure 6. Perforators and perforator fragments recovered in southwest sector excavations. The left-most Swale 5/6 SW bar reflects the total**

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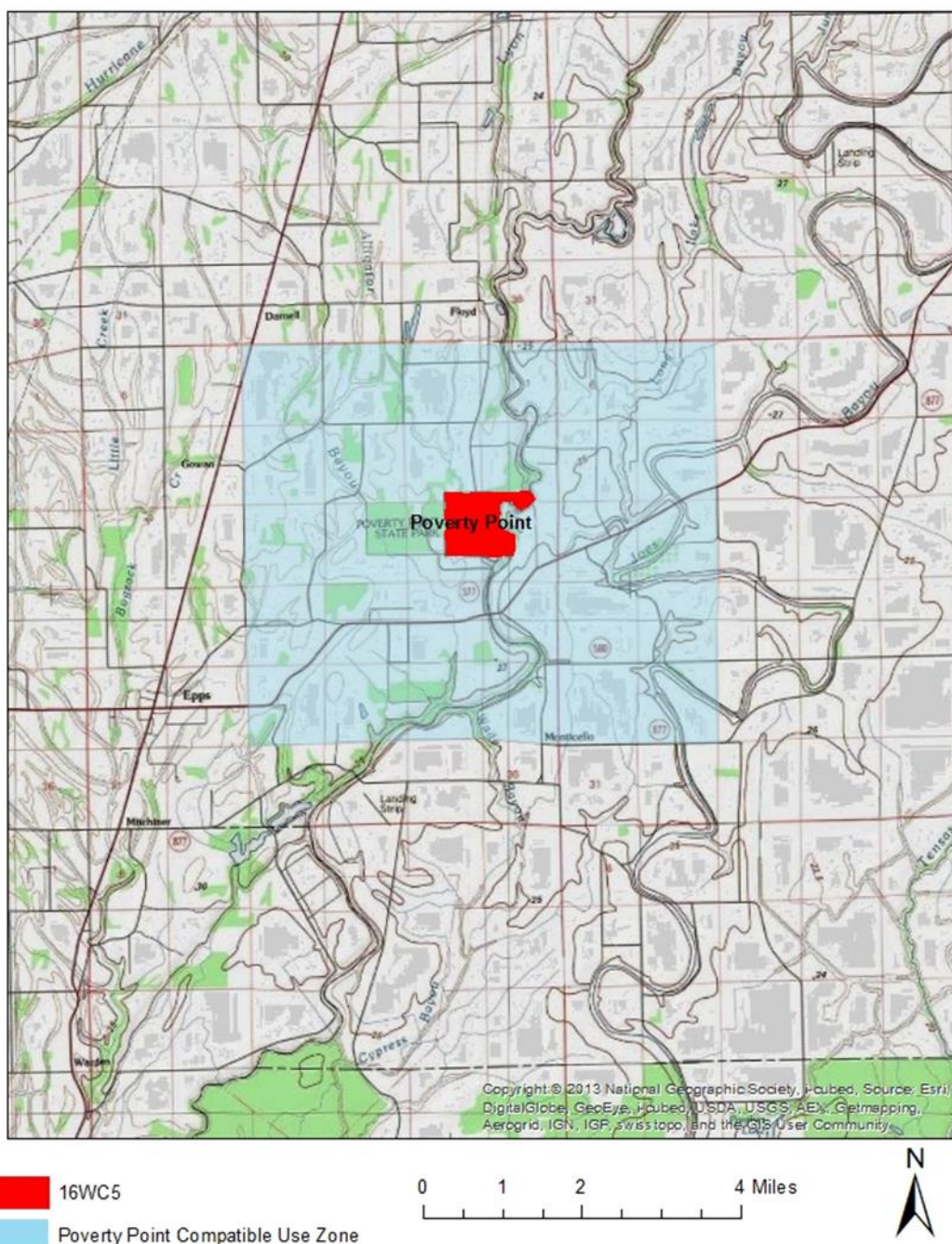
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### UPCOMING PPCUZ SURVEY

With support from the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, the Station Archaeology Program is beginning to investigate the 19,422.5 acre Poverty Point Compatible Use Zone (PPCUZ) in early January. The PPCUZ approximates a 5-km (3.1 mile) radius around Poverty Point (Figure 7), an area commonly used in site catchment studies. We seek to identify and document archaeological resources in the area around Poverty Point in order to better understand the distribution of settlements and use of the landscape. Pedestrian survey, controlled surface collection, shovel testing, geophysical investigation, remote sensing, and/or excavation will be used to examine the archaeological deposits on property of willing landowners in the PPCUZ. Field schools led by the University of Louisiana at Monroe, Mississippi State University, and Binghamton University (SUNY) will provide training and opportunities for students to assist with the research in May and June 2017. Stay tuned for updates on this cool project!



**Figure 7. Topographic map showing Poverty Point WHS and the extent of the Poverty Point Compatible Use Zone. Provided by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology.**

## LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MEDIA

### Self-styled witch faces charges over human bones collected from New Orleans cemetery

By [Jim Mustian, September 7, 2016](#)  
[JMUSTIAN@THEADVOCATE.COM](mailto:JMUSTIAN@THEADVOCATE.COM)

For months after the early morning raid, the legal fate of Ender Darling remained as murky as a moonless night. The self-styled witch fled New Orleans in the wake of a controversy over collecting human bones and, in a defiant interview, accused law enforcement of overreacting to a Facebook post that had advertised the usefulness of "leftover" human remains.

Darling, 25, was not taken into custody in January 2015, even after authorities found nearly a dozen bones and four teeth at a Mid-City residence — specimens the witch had collected from Holt Cemetery to use in creating spells.

Darling, whose given name is Devon Marie Machuca, denied wrongdoing and claimed the state Attorney General's Office had wasted its time and taxpayer dollars on a literal witch hunt.

Recent court filings, however, suggest that state investigators, before making an arrest, had been awaiting the results of a bio-archaeological analysis — a test that, according to the Attorney General's Office, confirmed the remains in question were, in fact, human.

Darling was quietly arrested in Florida earlier this summer and has been jailed in New Orleans for more than a month on counts of trafficking in human parts and burglary of a cemetery.

The witch, who does not identify as a man or woman, is scheduled to appear in court later this month to answer to the charges. A person who answered Darling's cellphone Wednesday refused to comment and hung up on a reporter.

Darling's bizarre tale brought legislative attention this year to the phenomenon of grave robbing — a crime that is hardly unique to New Orleans and its storied cemeteries.

Lawmakers, in passing the Louisiana Human Remains Protection and Control Act, declared that previous state statutes failed to "adequately protect against the illicit trade in human remains" and that "such trade needs to be stemmed in order to minimize looting and desecration of cemeteries."

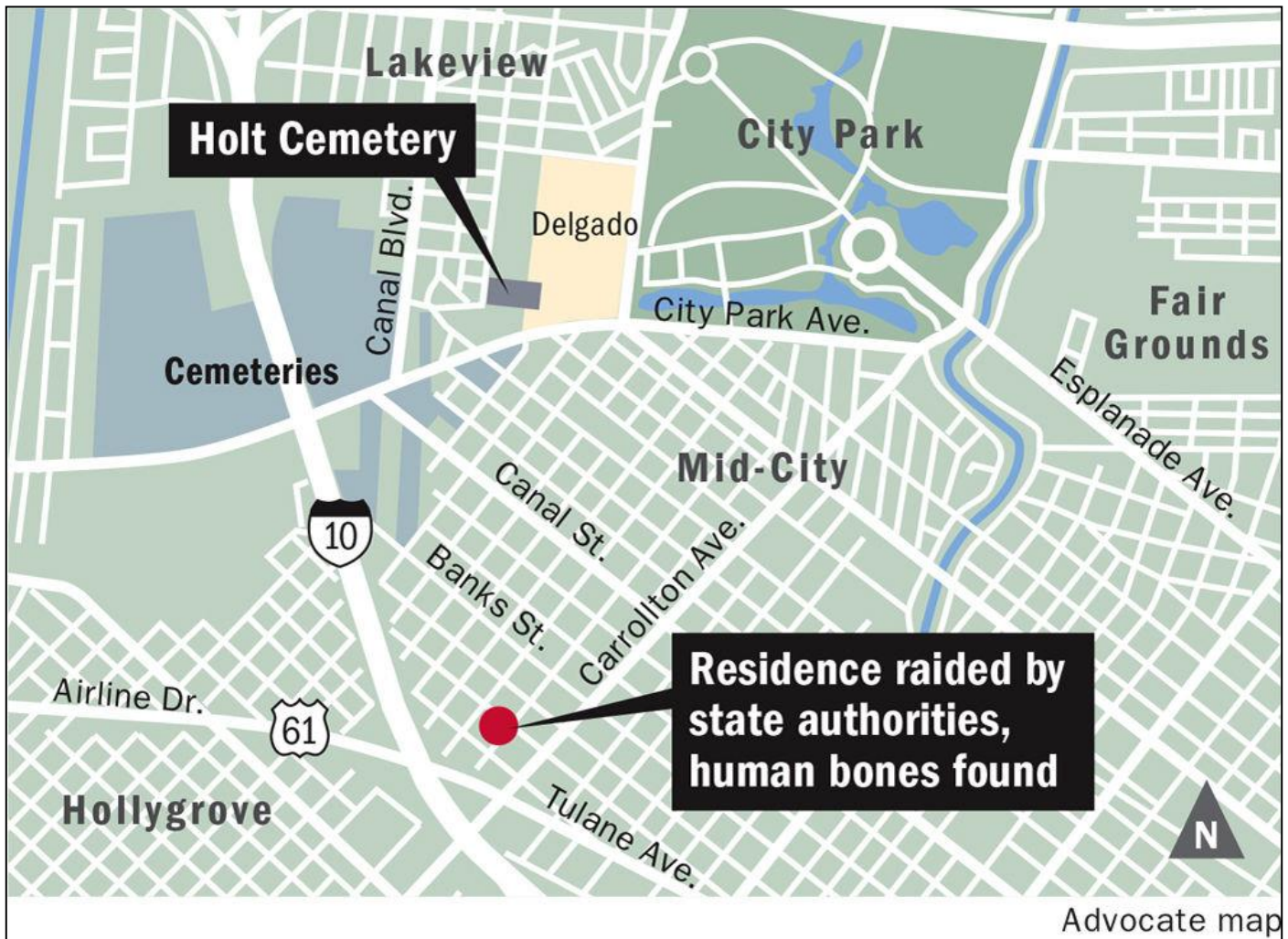


*New Orleans Police Department mugshot of Ender Darling*

Darling first drew the attention of law enforcement in December 2015 after posting on Facebook about the large number of bones visible at a "poor man's graveyard," a reference to Holt Cemetery, the historic potter's field on City Park Avenue.

"Most graveyards around here are full of above ground graves because we live in a fishbowl," Darling wrote in the Facebook post, which was later deleted. "But there happens to be a graveyard where it's all in-ground graves. For those of us who are too poor to afford above ground burial."

Darling described the cemetery as a reliable source of "femurs, teeth, jaws (and) skull caps," especially after a heavy rain. "This is where I go to find my human bones for curse work and general spells that require bone," Darling wrote in the Facebook post. "I find human bones are easier (to) work with for me rather than animal bone. I can relate and work with the energy they carry if that makes any sense."

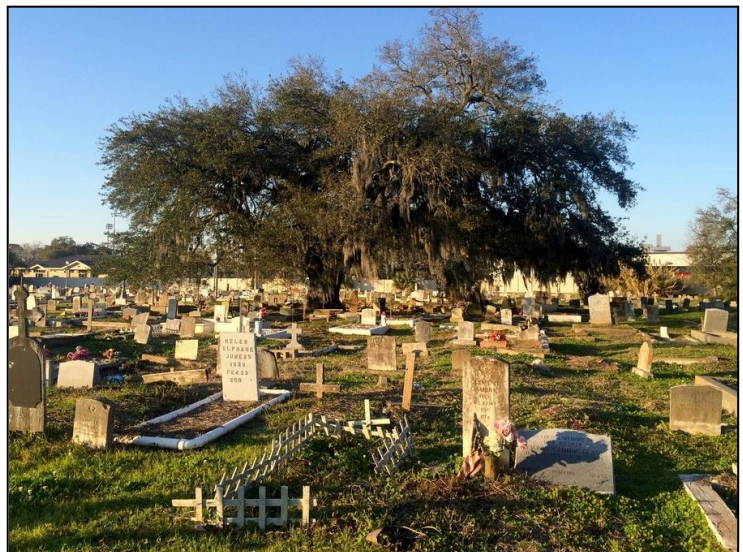


In the post, Darling asked whether anyone was interested in buying leftover remains, or "basically cover shipping (costs) to where ever you happen to be."

State investigators monitored Darling's South Solomon Street residence for several days and eventually searched the premises, finding bones and teeth in a bowl on an altar. An arrest warrant issued in July stated that Darling, in an interview with law enforcement, denied disinterring any remains, but acknowledged collecting bones that had surfaced after rainstorms. Darling also denied selling any remains, the warrant said, insisting "their inherent power is all that she needs for her spells and other occult work."

"Machuca maintained that she has not looted remains from any other cemetery in Louisiana but implied that she looted remains from one or more cemeteries in other states," the warrant said, "specifically identifying Maryland."

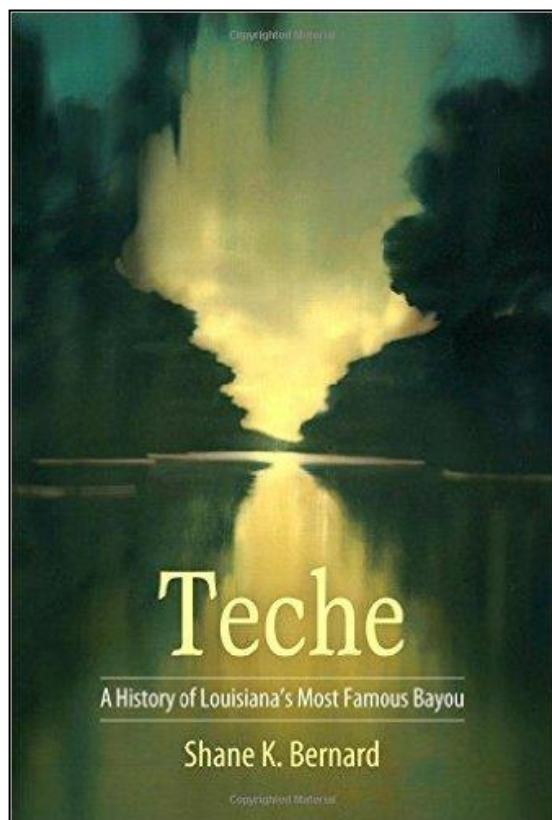
Darling was taken into custody July 15 in Tampa, Florida, and was booked into the Orleans Justice Center about two weeks later. An Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office spokesman said Darling was being held Wednesday in lieu of \$8,500 bail.



*Crowded conditions at Holt Cemetery,  
New Orleans*



## BOOKS OF INTEREST TO LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY



### **Teche: A History of Louisiana's Most Famous Bayou (America's Third Coast Series)**

By Shane K. Bernard

University Press of Mississippi

Shane K. Bernard's *Teche* examines this legendary waterway of the American Deep South. Bernard delves into the bayou's geologic formation as a vestige of the Mississippi and Red Rivers, its prehistoric Native American occupation, and its colonial settlement by French, Spanish, and, eventually, Anglo-American pioneers. He surveys the coming of indigo, cotton, and sugar; steam-powered sugar mills and riverboats; and the brutal institution of slavery. He also examines the impact of the Civil War on the Teche, depicting the running battles up and down the bayou and the sporadic gunboat duels, when ironclads clashed in the narrow confines of the dark, sluggish river.

Shane Bernard holds degrees in English and History from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and earned a Ph.D. in History from Texas A&M University. He serves as historian and curator to McIlhenny Company — maker of Tabasco brand products since 1868 — and Avery Island, Inc., on Avery Island, Louisiana.

### **Strangers in a New Land: What Archaeology Reveals About the First Americans**

By J. M. Adavasio and David Pedler

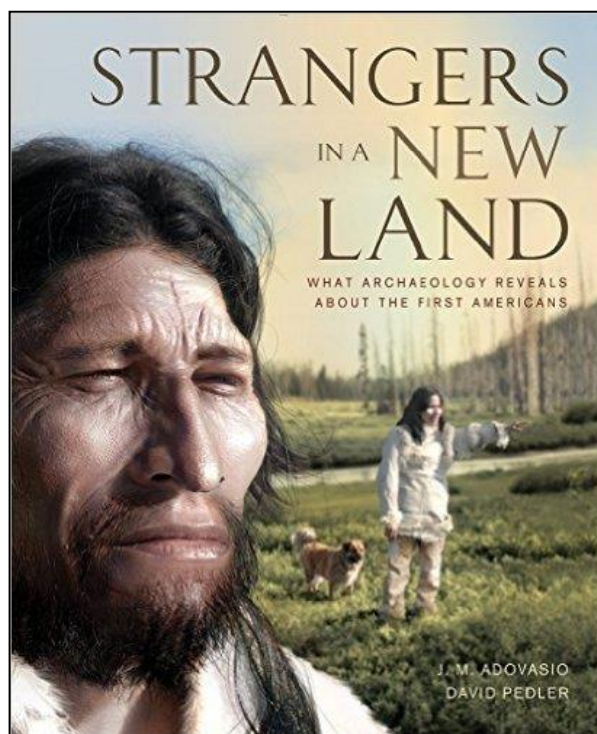
Fireflybooks.com

Where did Native Americans come from and when did they first arrive? Several lines of evidence, most recently genetic, have firmly established that all Native American populations originated in eastern Siberia.

For many years, the accepted version of New World prehistory held that people arrived in the Western Hemisphere around 13,000 years ago. This consensus, called "Clovis First," has been increasingly challenged by discoveries at numerous archaeological sites throughout North and South America and is now widely considered to be outdated.

The latest findings have convinced most archaeologists that people came to the Western Hemisphere thousands of years prior to Clovis. There is credible evidence of a human presence in the Americas dating to 19,000 years ago and perhaps as early as 38,000 years ago. The prehistory of the very earliest arrivals into the New World is the subject of *Strangers in a New Land*.

This book documents 35 Clovis and Folsom sites, disputed pre-Clovis sites, legitimate pre-Clovis sites and controversial pre-Clovis sites. This covers an area that stretches from Bluefish Cave, Canada, 70 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle to Monte Verde, Chile, 14,000 kilometers south of Bering Straits. The discovery and history of each site is accompanied by photographs, maps and diagrams that illustrate the excavations and chronicle the evidence of human activity. *Strangers in a New Land* brings these findings together for the first time in language accessible to the general reader.



## MEETINGS, FIELDWORK, EXHIBITS, WEBSITES, ETC.



The 2017 Annual Meeting of the  
Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS)  
Paragon Casino  
Marksville, LA  
February 10-12, 2017

See pages 2-4 of this newsletter. Also check the LAS website,  
[www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org](http://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org), or the LAS Facebook page for  
updates and announcements.

Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Archaeological Association  
February 17-19 2017  
Starkville, Mississippi

The 2017 annual meeting of the Mississippi Archaeological Association will take place in Starkville, Mississippi, and will be hosted by the Department of Anthropology & Middle Eastern Cultures and the Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University. A reception will be held at the Cobb Institute on the evening of Friday, February 17, 5:30–7:00pm. The labs and museum at the Cobb will be open for touring. Saturday, February 18 will be the main meeting held at The Mill Conference Center, a beautifully renovated cotton mill/fabric production facility built in 1902. The Mill is located near the Cotton District in Starkville.



The business meeting and awards ceremony to be held in the afternoon following papers. The conference banquet will be held Saturday evening at The Mill. Keynote speaker will be Jarrod Burks of Ohio Valley Archaeology, Ltd. His address will be “Revealing Ancient Earthworks through Geophysics: New Discoveries at Serpent Mound, Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, and Fort Ancient.” Weather permitting, there will be tours of a couple of local sites on Sunday morning, including the Mississippian-period Lyon’s Bluff site and the Middle Woodland-period Herman Mound site. Check MAA website: <http://www.msarchaeology.org/> for updates and more information.



## Southeastern Archaeological Conference

74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference  
November 8-11, 2017, Tulsa, OK.

Check the SEAC website: [www.southeasternarchaeology.org](http://www.southeasternarchaeology.org) for more information.

**Louisiana Archaeological Society  
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Articles should be submitted by email, preferably in Microsoft Word. Digital images are encouraged. Please send in TIF, JPG, or Word format. Contact editor via email with all questions.

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