Ancient Indian Sites in Danger of Obliteration

Areas Located in Eastern N.O.

BY STELLA PITTS

Two of the most significant prehistoric Indian habitation sites in the United States, located in the marshy portions of eastern Orleans Parish, are in imminent danger of being obliterated by the steady, relentless hand of progress. Known as Big Oak Island and Little Oak Island, the sites were inhabited by the Tchefuncta Indians as early as 2500 B.C. According to an archeologist at Louisiana State University, they are the largest and most significant of the few remaining sites of precontact Indian life still located in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

In members have consulted with officials of the New Orleans City Planning Commission, but although the committee has succeeded in funding the two sites listed as the National Register of Historic Places, neither New Orleans East Inc. nor the city has ever made a definite commitment to the reservation of the sites. Working on a volunteer basis and with little or no funding, the committee has compiled with considerable success and has come up with an imaginative and detailed proposal for the preservation and development of the two sites.

In brief, it is hoped that, regardless of which agency eventually develops the area now owned by New Orleans East Inc., the two Indian sites, along with necessary surrounding land, will be turned over to the National Park Service and preserved as a unit of the prairie national park. This will be accomplished through a bill introduced in Congress by Representative John M. Payton, Democrat of Louisiana, the site as it is the ultimate and final answer to the Indian sites will be donated to the National Park Service for a unit of the prairie national park.

Meanwhile, according to Dr. Sherwood Hollis (left), senior anthropology student at Louisiana State University, and Dr. J. Richard Shenkel, assistant professor of anthropology and chairman of the committee to save the sites.

Looking over artifacts in the Louisiana State University's Museum of Anthropology, Dr. Hollis, junior anthropology student, and Dr. J. Richard Shenkel, assistant professor of anthropology and chairman of the committee to save the sites, will be a decision the City Council will ultimately have to make and that "the city will consequently have to explore other possibilities if the sites are not preserved.

Herald Kiger, director-secretary of the City Planning Commission, said the city would have the "technical concern and to favor the preservation and development of the two Indian sites" but "the committee's proposals are acceptable, and he is not forced to conclude that if the city proceeds with its New Town development, the sites will be preserved and developed in the interest of the citizens of the area.

"Key issues"

However, it is added that the sites will be a decision the City Council will ultimately have to make and that "the city should be willing to give the defined site to the city, as it could develop into a unit of the prairie national park, and it was concluded that if the city proceeds with its New Town development, the sites will be preserved and developed in the interest of the citizens of the area.

"Key issues"

LOOKING OVER ARTIFACTS in the Louisiana State University's Museum of Anthropology, Dr. Hollis, junior anthropology student, and Dr. J. Richard Shenkel, assistant professor of anthropology and chairman of the committee to save the sites.
entire Mississippi Delta," be continued. "This is the major delta in the entire world. Of all the most important deltas, this is the number one location in the series of coasts without distincting the major parts of the Mississippi deltaic geological work in progress.

4. A bellhorn terminal of prehistoric man is found in areas of the delta area.

5. The Big Oak Island, which is on the D'Iberville County line, is an island and lies in an area of the world that has been studied in the past. The island is about 300 feet long and the best wide and is covered with small trees and bushes.

The islands are a mile east of Paris Road, is a part of a recreational use area surrounding a large body of water, and is known as Blind Lake.

The sites "typify a way of life," according to Dr. Shenkel. "We have learned that they were semi-nomadic tribes living in the area, interspersed with open, mossy areas. It is about 650 feet long and 100 feet wide and was drained in the late 1930s and 1950s.

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