LAFAYETTE — An archeological survey of Indian sites was conducted recently by 16 undergraduate students at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an archeology course offered through geography at USL.

Some 20 sites were located and investigated primarily in the parishes of Lafayette, Iberia, St. Martin and St. Landry. Other sites were reported from Plaquemines, Concordia, Ouachita Parishes and from Boliver County, Mississippi.

The most immediate results of the students’ work aside from nearly doubling the number of sites known in the immediate area, Jon Gibson, USL assistant professor, said, was to extend the chronological picture back to about 8,000 B.C.

“From the earliest site located, more than 400 chipped stone tools were found. This gives us the most complete inventory of tools for any late ‘Paleo-Indian’ site thus far found in the Lower Mississippi Valley,” Gibson said.

The USL professor added that other sites promise to give much information regarding the ways of life of the ancient Indians who lived in the state.

One such site, near Lafayette, has old garbage heaps over five feet thick, which are filled with broken pieces of pottery and bones of animals. Another on Bayou Portage is similar and even more extensive.

Site surveys such as those are an invaluable aid to prehistorians who are trying to unravel the unwritten history of Louisiana’s Indians before it is lost to land leveling or other construction work, Gibson said.

Among local students who participated in the survey included: Isaac Baudon, George Castille, and Edwin Patout, New Iberia.

Interested people who wish to contribute information about Indian sites in the area are asked to contact: Jon Gibson, Department of Social Studies, USL, Lafayette, La.