Area Shell Mounds Tell of Lost Tribe

Vermilion Indians Had 2000-Year-Old Culture

By David Lyle
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One summer morning about 150 years ago, a Vermilion parish farmer named Alphege Mouton looked across the field before his house and saw an Indian coming toward him.

He took the man into his home, gave him something to eat, and listened as the man told his story. The farmer then took the man to the home of his brother, Mr. Claude Veazey, where the two learned how to communicate with each other.

The farmer learned that the Indian had come from a place to the Southwest, near what is today called Pecan Island. The Indian told him he had left the island with a friend, but that the friend had died on the way. He spoke of a terrible disease which had struck his people.

When winter came, the Indian left to return to his island. Every summer for several years he returned, but he did not return the farmer ever saw or heard of him again.

This is the story which Claude Veazey of Pecan Island told by his grandfather, the Vermilion farmer may have been one of the last of a group of little-known Indians who had lived in Louisiana for many years.

The last tribes of Indians were far older than the Atakapa people thought of as the last of their race. They lived in Louisiana for many years, and their descendants still exist.

Area Shell Mounds

The shell mounds tell the following story of the history of these Indians. Apparently the last of Man disappeared early in the last century.

When Jake Cole came to Pecan Island in 1848 with two slaves, as the first resident, he found human skeletons strewn all over the island, according to Claude Veazey of Abbeville, who studied the skeletons and bones found in the mounds during a recent excavation of the island. Gradually, the two learned how to communicate with each other.

The man who Cole brought on Pecan Island was an old friend of his whom he had seen on one of the last trips he had made to the island. He spoke of a terrible disease which had struck his people.

Veazey tells the story of how he came to the island, and how he learned to live with the Indian. He and his brother, Mr. Claude Veazey, lived in the Veazey home on Pecan Island, and through research, archaeologists have learned much of the history of these Indians. Apparently the last of Man disappeared early in the last century.

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