Areas of Louisiana Abound in Indian Burial Grounds

Many Artifacts Uncovered in Mounds

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(T-P Bayou Lafourche Bureau)

DOWN THE BAYOU

DONALDSONVILLE, La. — In the summer of 1894, a newspaper account told of the excavation of Indian remains and relics by a farmer plowing a field on Evan Hall plantation, four miles north of here.

The account stated that in 1894, Louis C. Duhan was at work on the Ascension Parish land owned by the McCall Brothers. He began to plow the field, and as he did so, he noticed several clay pipes, flintlock rifles, tomahawks, and two pairs of earrings, one silver, the other gold, and a number of small strips of white metal, which he thought could be artifacts of Native American origin.

The account continued, “The remains of three Indians were found there.” The story went on to describe the earrings as “of attractive pattern, oval-shaped, the main bars being in the form of a crescent, with a delicate chain suspended from each one, and the gold pair would prove a welcome addition to any lady’s toilet.”

The article also mentioned that the remains were discovered near the Evan Hall Sugar Cooperative, and the site was believed to be the remains of three Indians.

In the vicinity of the site, other relics were discovered in Wall’s Mounds, including a pyramid in design and the site of many Indian burials. The site was located near Marksville, a town in Louisiana known for its rich history.

The article noted that “It is known that the Indians once had a camp on the Evan Hall place, and the spot where the skeletons were discovered was evidently used as a burying ground.”

The earliest period of prehistory in Louisiana is associated with the “Marksville People,” a group of Native Americans believed to be the direct ancestors of the present-day Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes.

Across the Mississippi River from Donaldsonville is Mount Houmas Plantation, a name inspired by the presence of several Indian mounds on the property. This location is in the Geismar vicinity of Ascension Parish.

These are reputed to be burial mounds of a period in prehistory known as the Coles Creek.

On the same side of the river, in St. James Parish below Convent, an Indian mound rising 50 feet and covering what would be half of a city block. Because it is of red clay construction, it is thought that it was constructed from soil carried to the site from elsewhere.

Indian remains have been found here, and legends abound of gold buried in the mound’s depths not only by early Indian tribes, but also by Louisiana planters in the days of the Civil War.

There are many more such memorials to a race of mankind that brought their culture to this land long before Europeans discovered and bred on these inhabitants that was strange to them.

Across the Mississippi River is the Indian Village near West Pearl River, where pottery fragments, weapons and implements have been uncovered in a low Indian mound.

Near Brusly St. Martin in Ascension Parish is the Grand Bayou mound, a pyramid in design and the site of many Indian burials.

Pecan Island has 22 large Indian mounds, from which have been drawn pottery vessels of a form and design that surpass most tribes of Indians north of Mexico.

Near Marksville is Avoyel Indian Wayside Park, a 38-acre site located on the west bank of Old River which boasts six Indian mounds. An expedition from the Smithsonian Institution discovered numerous relics in these mounds in the National Museum in Washington, D.C.

Archaeologists have assigned the Indians, known as the “Marksville People,” to the earliest period of prehistory in Louisiana. These Indians were said to be small and slender, tillers of the soil who lived in houses built partly into the earth in villages located on bluffs that overlooked small bodies of water.

The Marksville Indians used copper and the decor on their pottery was artistic and included geometric figures.

The Pargoud Indian mound on the site of an Indian tribe that lived in the Ouachita Valley is said to have been built for the burial of a lovely Indian princess. The story goes that she had saved the life of Juan Ortego, one of the men in de Viroavea’s early expedition, and because of her heroic action, Ortego married her. He is said to have deserted her and her heart broken, she died.

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