Clifton Indians Declare War On Poverty

ALEXANDRIA — Residents in the Clifton community near here have declared war on poverty in their small rural area.

Their principal weapon is 200 years of Choctaw Indian heritage.

Clifton is located between La. Hwys. 8 and 28 West in Rapides Parish, Ward 7.

The residents are about 75 per cent Choctaw.

Because of their Indian heritage, the Clifton Indians are eligible for funds under the Federal Native American Programs to alleviate poverty plaguing the area.

They are surveying the community to document its Indian heritage and have located about 500 persons with Choctaw blood.

Documentation of their heritage will give the Indians permission to apply for federal funds.

Norris Tyler, president of the Clifton Choctaw Council, said the community is one of the poorest rural areas in Rapides Parish.

"But it ain't no disgrace to be poor," added Amos Tyler, vice president of the council.

"If you're poor, you're poor. We want better water and sewer systems — just the bare necessities," Tyler added.

"Right now we've just got a bunch of shallow wells. Sometimes you turn on the water and sand comes out with it," he said.

Poverty in Clifton Community is exemplified by uninsulated houses, shallow wells and field-line sewerage and dirt roads.