Project director Donny Bourgeois sifts through dirt, looking for artifacts Wednesday along Bayou Teche in Iberia Parish.

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LOREAUVILLE—Along the banks of Bayou Teche, researchers are carefully sifting through countless shovelfuls of dirt in search of ceramic shards, bits of old bottles or any other tiny clue that could lead to what's been called the "lost colony" of one of the earliest Acadian groups to settle in south Louisiana.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette students Paul Bedel, left, and Gabrielle Moreland search for evidence of a 'lost colony.'