ST. FRANCISVILLE, La. (AP) — A former guard at Angola has filed suit asking that he be allowed to keep some 200-year-old artifacts dug from a Tunica Indian burial ground a short distance from the state penitentiary. The state has stepped into the suit asking that the artifacts be declared public property.

The suit is scheduled for hearing here in September.

Leonard Charrier said he found the burial ground on a 150-acre tract known as the Old Trudeau Plantation. He said he excavated about 150 graves and found the remains of Tunica warriors buried with their flintlocks at their sides, chambers charged and hammers cocked.

Dr. Alan Toth, state archaeologist, said the items taken from the graves include over 200 kettles, pots, tubs and skillets; about 100 pieces of European-made ceramics; some 75 pieces of Indian pottery; over 500 lead balls; about 200 shell ear pins and beads as well as 200 brass and copper bracelets; 60 brass and copper bells; 20 muskets; 35 hoes; 25 axes, and assorted bottles, spades, scissors, pipes, spoons, mirrors, flints, knives, chests, crucifixes, rings and buttons.

A rosary pendant is believed to have come from Father Antoine Davlon, a French missionary who lived unprotected with the Indians for 20 years.

Toth said that in spite of the archeological knowledge that enabled Charrier to find a burial ground that others had been unable to find, the former prison guard had destroyed valuable records of the lost civilization. "He was apparently very careful when he removed the artifacts, but in the process of removing them without using scientific archeological procedures, he destroyed the context in which they were found, and, thus, much of the knowledge we might have gained from this collection has been irretrievably lost," Toth said.

"Would you like to see your ancestors' graves destroyed for the sake of a few burial objects?"