A talented group of Vermilion Parish students is again cherishing the earth around Pecan Island for signs of what used to be a Cole Creek Indian culture.

This area has been the site since the summer of '79 when the first Talented and Gifted (TAG) students showed up to begin the dig. Vermilion Parish TAG students are spending their second summer digging for Indian artifacts at Pecan Island.

The idea for the project originated last year with the supervisor of Special Education, Earl Lacombe.

It was Lacombe who convinced the board for something extra for gifted students to do during the summer months, and he wrote a proposal for funds to begin an archeological study of the prehistoric Indians of Pecan Island.
The project, funded by the state and parish, began last year and generated so much interest among the students that it was extended to the summer of 1980. And chances are it may continue for several summers to come.

According to reports, the project is offered to fourth through 11th grade gifted students in Vermilion Parish who wish to participate.

And transportation is no problem, either.
A bus picks up the students around 7 a.m. each weekday and returns at 1:30 p.m.

Although part of the area around the mounds of the Pecan Island site has been turned by indiscriminate diggers, and plowed by farmers, there is still much to be discovered about the prehistoric Coles Creek Culture.

The Coles Creek Indians occupied this land 800-1,200 years ago.

Archeologist Ray Brassieur accompanies the TAG study group daily on each daily trek and instructs the students on the correct archeological procedure. So far, the gifted group has learned that archeology can be a slow, tedious process that demands precision and patience.

Brassieur, also an anthropologist, provides information about the Coles Creek cultural period.

Much of the knowledge of these prehistoric people comes down from close examination of ‘potsherds,’ fragments of pottery uncovered by the students.

Teachers of the talented and gifted students, Dianne Moss and Felice Mayard, supervise the amateur archeologists each day and plan related activities that will be carried on during the fall school session.

The knowledge and experience gained by TAG students will be cycled into a book and a play, both concerning the Indians of the Coles Creek Culture and, both, to be shared by Vermilion Parish students.

Leo Moutet, Vermilion Parish school bus driver, is a great asset to the summer TAG program. His experience from last year’s dig has been beneficial to both, students and teachers.

TAG students will be setting up a display in the Vermilion Parish Library in August, after the dig for this summer is complete.

The display will feature artifacts uncovered this summer, maps of the dig site and candid shots of TAG students at work.