When the Addison crew is looking for entertainment, they just snatch up pails and shovels, jump into their homemade "dune buggy," and head for Addison site.

For 3,700 years the ghosts of a prehistoric Indian tribe from the Poverty Point period lay silent and hidden, keeping their secrets, beside an intermittent creek nestled close to the Amite River. It took the Addison tribe from O'Neal Lane in Baton Rouge to ferret out those secrets and add to the archaeological knowledge of Louisiana. For doing so, Bill and Marie Addison, their six sons and two daughters were rewarded with having their name bestowed upon this prehistoric village site.

The Addisons live close by Interstate 12 where it crosses the Amite going to Denham Springs. Across the road from their home are 1,500 acres of woods, perfect territory for six lively boys. Through these woods flow two creeks, which when filled empty into the Amite River. They often spent nights and whole weekends in the woods, and now began actually digging for relics.

The Addisons Uncover LOUISIANA ROOM

Grudging Ghosts of Area's Past

By NADINE NEUBIG

The Addisons have permission to camp and hunt in those woods. In 1968, while taking respite from their home are 1,500 acres of woods, probably dating back to 1700 B.C. There were even bits of archaeological evidence that indicated an earlier date.

However, by this time the Interstate construction machinery had been at work a long time and had destroyed much top soil. It was too late to close off the area and dig trenches for an archaeological survey. The only feasible way of salvaging what was left of the village, was for the Addisons to continue their weekend foraging.

That Christmas brought sleeping bags for the children. The Ghosts of our village site dictated what we had indeed been working a large Indian village site. We were doing, but they wouldn't ask and we wouldn't tell. We didn't have time to fool with them, we were having a race.

"But we must have been the most disruptive looking group of people they had ever seen. There we were in the middle of a cold winter, stocking-capped, covered with mud and sand, squatting in small groups poking holes in dirt. One of our boys said we looked like a family of gorillas searching for grubs."

For three years the Addisons worked their site, accumulating thousands of specimens, and still there is one shell left to be examined. "We kept hoping to discover evidence of the village burial site," says the enthusiastic mother of this clan, "but we were told because the location is so close to the river, erosion has probably destroyed it."

The experiences and the specimens have provided the Addison children with much material for conversation and for school reports. However, last summer the family voted to donate its collection to the LSU Anthropology Department.

The Addisons Uncover LOUISIANA ROOM

Over the years there have been other such donations to the university from all over the state, and such gifts are greatly welcomed. Louisiana now has 1,450 known Indian sites, and in Room 227 of the LSU Geology Building is a museum providing much data and fascinating displays concerning the history of the Indian in Louisiana.

The ghosts of the past grudgingly yield up the secrets of a country's history. Therefore, contributions of time and discovery, such as the Addisons made, are especially important and useful. Because the past shapes all people, the more knowledgeable they are about it, the more fully they will understand themselves.