USL Students 'Dig' Prehistoric Village

(Special to The Town Talk) LAFAYETTE, La. - A prehistoric village near Grand Coteau, is being excavated by University of Southwestern Louisiana students. For the past six months USL archaeology students have been systematically excavating an old Indian village (dating around 700-300 B.C.) which is to be the site of a modern housing development.

Dr. Richard Saloom and Jim Bell, Lafayette, reported the site. During land clearing operations Dr. Saloom had found a number of pottery fragments and projectile points on the area. Dr. Gibson, on inspection, recognized that these artifacts had been made during a prehistoric era known as the Tchefuncte period, a time during which certain Louisiana Indian groups had experienced considerable de-evolution.

Dr. Jon L. Gibson, faculty archaeologist, is director of the USL archaeology research facility which is sponsoring the continuing field program in which the students are participating. Students receive three hours of academic credit at USL by enrolling in a Sociology 303 course (Archaeology) for their work at the Indian site.

The decision to excavate the site was made in the hope that the Grand Coteau site might provide some insight into the reasons for cultural deterioration during the Tchueuncte.

"A decision was made to excavate," Dr. Gibson said, "and was accentuated by the probability of imminent destruction of the old village by construction."

A contour map of the site was made and the village extent was determined by