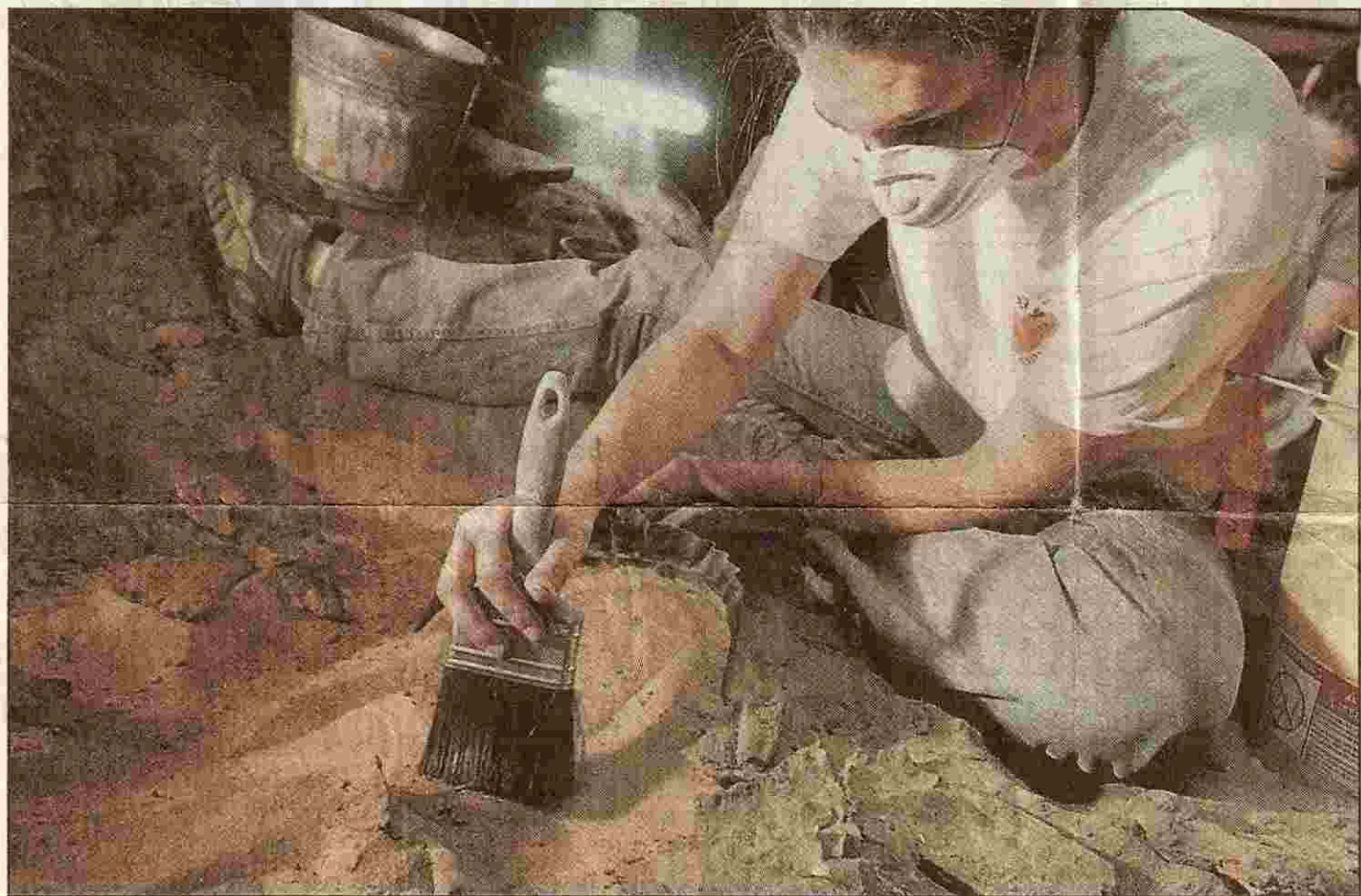


# Mystery of skeletons revealed



CARA OWSLEY/THE SUN HERALD

University of Southern Mississippi graduate student Lyne'e Burleigh sifts through dirt to excavate skeletons that were found while repairing the foundation of Moran Art Studio in Biloxi after Hurricane Camille in 1969. Burleigh, along with other anthropology students, spent Friday removing and analyzing the skeletons. The skeletons are thought to date back to the 1720s but they will be taken to Hattiesburg to determine their exact age and their diet.

## *Students dig into history at Moran Art Studio*

**By TOM WILEMON**  
THE SUN HERALD

**BILOXI** — For more than three decades, tourists have peeked through a window in the floor of Moran Art Studio at skeletons and wondered about their origin.

Are they the ancient remains

of Native Americans? Do the bones belong to European settlers?

Now, an excavation by the University of Southern Mississippi may solve the mystery of the bones that were unearthed in 1969. Preliminary findings on four of the skulls indicate they belonged to Caucasians,

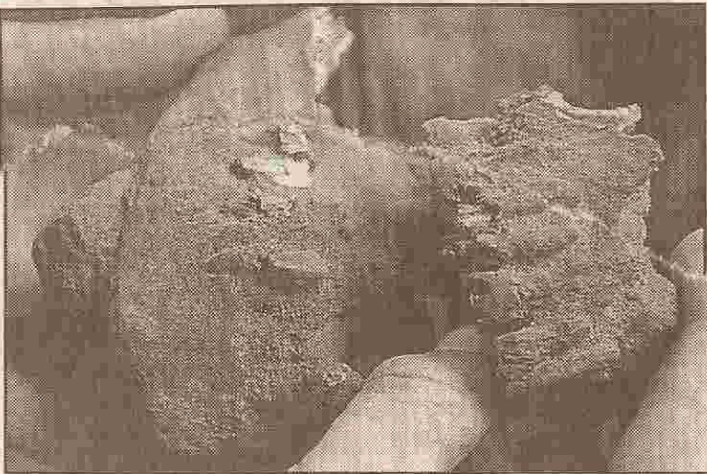
most likely French colonists, three men and one woman.

The 14 students are using flashlights and fluorescent lights as they work in the crawl space underneath the studio. The students, who have unearthed eight of the dozen grave sites, also are sifting dirt for artifacts.

“We think we are going to stick with the eight for now,” said Marie Danforth, professor of anthropology. “The other four are much more deeply buried at another place under the house. We plan to leave the other four for another date.”

The students examined the remains on Wednesday and

*Please see Dig, A-4*



CARA OWSLEY/THE SUN HERALD

Dental remains were excavated Friday from skeletons that were uncovered while repairing the foundation of the Moran Art Studio in Biloxi after Hurricane Camille in 1969. Marie Danforth, professor of anthropology at the University of Southern Mississippi, said the remains dated back to the 1720s and will be taken back to Hattiesburg for analysis. There are 12 known skeletons, three of which have been determined to be male and one female.

## Dig

*Continued from A-1*

Friday.

"The only other information we discovered was we did find some isolated leg bones that look like they belonged to a female about 5-foot-3," Danforth said. "That would have been kind of tall at that time for a woman."

Joe Moran was rebuilding the family home, which had been destroyed by Hurricane Camille, into an art studio when bricklayers discovered the bones. They brought them to Moran who called the sheriff, according to his daughter, Mary.

"They put caution tape around the building," she said. "Then they realized they were not victims of the hurricane. They were old, old skeletons."

Edmond Boudreaux, a member of the Mississippi Coast Historical and Genealogical Society and the Mississippi Archaeological Association Gulf Coast Chapter, arranged the excavation.

"Two of our students were doing some excavation work on Deer Island," Danforth said. "They spoke with Edmond Boudreaux, who mentioned the skeletons and put us in touch with the family. He's a gem down here. He's a treasure. He has been so helpful to all of our students."