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AN INDIAN VILLAGE AND A DEER PARK

Bebe Nardini's idea of an Indian village for the riverbank makes a lot of sense and deserves more than just serious study. One aspect of it that we hope will not be tampered with when it is brought out of the dream department and put into the operational stage is his expectation that it will be built by volunteer labor. For those who get to take part in the building, it will mean not only a closer understanding of the original inhabitants of our area and how they lived and worked, but also a heightened sense of participation in and ownership of their own 20th century community that all of us should somehow attain.

One of the most damaging phenomena in our modern society is the attitude of "Get Uncle Sam (or Uncle Jimmie, or even Uncle Ray) to do it." Let's not get Uncle Sam, or Uncle Jimmie, or Uncle Ray, to do it. Let US do it, and it really will be ours and we will be the better for it.

As we were listening to the Wildlife and Fisheries representatives talk to the Police Jury about deer last Wednesday, (see article elsewhere on this page) we had another idea which only Uncle Sam and Uncle Jimmie can carry out: an idea which would give Natchitoches Parish another outstanding attraction not only for tourists, but also for all of us who love our native woods.

South Africa has famous attractions in its tremendous national parks where travelers can drive through the jungles and see wildlife in their native habitat; this is also true in our own country's Yellowstone National Park, where bears are the principal game to be seen.

Why not a drive-through game reservation right in Natchitoches Parish, where anyone at almost any time could see deer beside the road?

A complicating factor in setting deer seasons in accordance with good wildlife management practices is that our area actually has an ambivalent attitude toward deer. Some of us look upon deer as primarily an adjunct to a favorite sport, a target, a trophy and a fine meat animal as well. Others love deer for their grace and beauty, are thrilled to see them in the forest and are disappointed when the wild creatures once protected and nearly tame (as they were for a time in Red Dirt) hide themselves after learning (as they so quickly do) that man is their enemy. Often both these attitudes are to be found in the same individual.

With a drive-through deer park in Natchitoches Parish, we can have it both ways: plenty of deer for the sportsman in unprotected parts of the woods, and also plenty of deer for the man who never shoots anything more lethal than a Leica. The area could be stocked not only with deer, but also with wild turkeys; other animals native to our forest, learning that they would be unmolested in this little bit of woods, would soon show themselves: rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, possums, many others. If a bit of wetland were included, marsh animals would also manifest themselves; a pond would attract ducks. Feeding would have to be managed, and would be an expense; the area would have to be supervised; the rewards would be far greater than the outlay.

We are going to discuss this further with Ray Brandt and others in the Forest Service as well as with both state and federal Fish and Wildlife representatives. You might talk it over

Mr. Louis Nardini presented a plat and description of an Indian Village that he desires erected at the North end of the Front Street River Bank area.

It was Mr. Nardini's idea that the Boy Scouts would sponsor this project.

The City Commission took this matter under advisement pending arrangement of all details.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned.

by RAY SCOTT, Mayor

ATTEST: W. M. WOODYARD, Secretary