

Fate of Indian remains remains uncertain

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Officials in Illinois are reportedly uncertain what to do with the remains of 33 American Indians unearthed before such collections became illegal.

The collection of skulls and other bones were found in a Bloomington, Ill., house that had belonged to the late dentist Dale Fitz-Henry. The home was sold last year for unpaid taxes, the Bloomington Pantagraph reported Wednesday.

"They cannot be sold, but it is up to the rightful owner of the property as to the final disposition of the remains," Dave Blanchette of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency told reporters.

The remains are said to be nearly 700 years old and are believed to have come from an Indian burial site near Illinois' Dickson Mounds.

"We believe they were excavated in the 1930s, nearly 50 years before the state burial protection law took effect," Blanchette said, adding, "This is an unusual situation in finding this number of remains, especially in a private residence and all in such good condition."

Blanchette says his agency and the Illinois State Museum would like to see the skulls donated to the state for further study and analysis, the newspaper said.

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