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## Look what we found!

Archeologists unearth close to 5,000 artifacts at Beaubassin

By TOM McCOAG Amherst Bureau

FORT LAWRENCE — Parks Canada archeologist Charles Burke couldn't wait Sunday to show what he had in the plastic container he was carrying.

"These are all artifacts found during last year's dig here at the historic Acadian village of Beaubassin," he said excitedly as he placed the box on a picnic table.

Slowly peeling back the lid, he revealed more than a dozen Acadian artifacts, including several pieces of colourful pottery, a large metal part of a hinge, gleaming white pipestems, a small belt buckle, an eye hook, a piece of a pulley and a mouth harp.

"We haven't catalogued them yet, but I estimate we unearthed more than 5,000 artifacts," Mr. Burke said. "Ninety per cent of them come from the Acadian period. The other 10 per cent come from the time the British had Fort Lawrence here."

More than 100 amateur archeologists paid a fee to participate in unearthing remnants of the Acadian village. It existed between 1676 and 1750, when it was burned to the ground by the French to keep it from falling into the possession of the British.

Among the more interesting artifacts were two lead bale seals, which were stamps that were crimped onto straps that were put around bales of goods shipped from Europe.

They were placed on the bale to ensure the goods were not tampered with during the lengthy sea voyage.

"Both are in excellent condition," Mr. Burke said. "One has a fleur-de-lis and the letter R on it, the other is all in French."

"Because they are in such good condition, with a little further research, we should be able to discover what manufacturer they represent and the period in which they were shipped."

Researchers believe that Beaubassin may have done more trade with areas like Quebec, New England and Quebec than other Acadian villages did. But Mr. Burke cautions that more research will have to be done before that can be determined.

Other artifacts from last year's dig, including jewelry, toys, beads and glassware, are on display at the Acadian Studies Centre at the University of Moncton until next fall.

Last year's archeological program was an award winner. It captured Parks Canada's coveted CEO Award of Excellence for providing an exceptional visitor experience while

conducting important research into Canada's past.

The program was so successful last year Parks Canada has decided to offer it again this summer. There will be four-day sessions per week for four weeks beginning July 10.

People will get the opportunity to learn the history of Beaubassin and, under the trained eye of Mr. Burke and his staff, scrape the soil in several pits and trenches in the hopes of uncovering more artifacts.

In addition, they will get the opportunity to help clean the artifacts in a lab that has been set up at nearby Fort Beausejour, something last year's workers didn't get to do.

During this year's dig, Mr. Burke will open three new trenches and several new three-metre by three-metre pits, in addition to the dozen that were opened last year, for participants to work in.

"This year, we want to give a closer examination to a pit that had black soil and a lot of artifacts. It could possibly be a garbage dump. We also want to continue examining a foundation that we uncovered last year.

"In addition, we are hoping that we can uncover the road that once went through the village. If we can find that, we will get a better idea of where the houses were."

Each new discovery, Mr. Burke said, will help researchers and historians better understand Acadian life along the border between modern-day Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

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