

## THE BEZANSON TOWNSITE IS GENERATING HISTORY AGAIN!

*From Belize to Bezanson: Peace Region Researchers Explore the Archaeology of Boom Towns.*



Dr. Shawn Morton, who is an instructor at Grande Prairie Regional College and Dr. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown who is an associate professor at Athabasca University, will be in charge of the project. (pictured rt) They both have been extensively involved with the archaeology project located in Alabama, Belize. Although Alabama was a boomtown 1,200 years ago and the Bezanson Townsite was a bustling boomtown only a little over 100 years ago, the similarities as to why they existed in the first place are remarkable.



Dr. Morton and Dr. Peuramaki-Brown held a public virtual presentation on March 26, 2021 looking for community input. Follow-up emails arranged for a tour to be held on August 9 with Wanda Zenner facilitating.



The archaeologists were especially interested in the history “tid-bits” that were provided about A.M. Bezanson as well as what is known about the buildings that had been there at one time. They were surprised to hear that Fred Parker, originally from Ontario, had a jewelry store at the Townsite. Also of interest, were the locations of the proposed saw-mill and the surveyed railroad crossing.

The archaeologists continued with their work at the Townsite and had the assistance of a student from the GPRC. On August 17, Wanda met with Dr. Morton and Dr. Peuramaki-Brown once again at the Townsite to see how the actual project is conducted.

Locations are marked at specific intervals and tracked by a hand-held GPS. Sod is removed on the small sections with the dirt side being carefully examined for remnants of artifacts. A small amount of dirt is removed from the test pit and placed in a screen. Once any items that are found are recorded, the dirt and sod are put back in place. The site being processed at this time was Hall and Leonard’s Store that was built in 1914.



This season's work has been completed at the Townsite and the archaeologists are off to Belize where they will continue their investigative work until it is time to come back to the Bezanson Townsite in the summer of 2022. At that time, community members will be invited to take part in the “test pit” process – exciting days are ahead.

Dr. Morton has a very interesting description of archaeology and reads as follows:  
*“Archaeology is the only branch of Anthropology that kills its informants.”*  
*It refers to the fact that you can only dig a site once, and you destroy it in the process.*

Written by Wanda Zenner  
Photos by Dr. Morton & Wanda Zenner  
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