



News Release

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Presque Isle potato farmer's photography exhibit on display at NMCC; opening planned for September 10

Aroostook County - A collection of photographs that capture both Presque Isle history and the life a well-known Aroostook County family will be on exhibit at the Edmunds Library at Northern Maine Community College through the month of September.

The official opening reception of "Through the Lens of a Farmer," a collection of photographs by Laurence A. Park of Presque Isle, will take place on Friday, September 10, between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. in the College library. The exhibit opening is one of a host of activities planned for NMCC's Community Open House, which is being held between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

The collection of 39 photographs is a mixture of both local and family history and captures scenes from throughout the greater Presque Isle area, predominantly those featuring the region's proud agricultural traditions.

Park's collection includes photos he himself took over the years, as well as photos that have been passed down from earlier generations. Aside from serving as a photo exhibit, the display is also a showcase of Laurence Park's craftsmanship as most of the frames that hold the pictures were made by him out of brown ash.

The collection includes photographs of Presque Isle from the 1940's and 50's, as well as a few images of Presque Isle in the 1860's and 1880's. In addition, the collection shows a glimpse of life within the State of Maine in the 1920's, and what life was like on the farm during the heyday of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad.

The Park family has been a fixture in Aroostook County and its agricultural community since the late 1800's. A number of photographs depict the life of potato farmer Finch Park, father of the photographer. The Park family farm was once located on the grounds of what now serves as the residential area of the University of Maine at Presque Isle campus. The farmhouse and barn structure actually sat where the present day Park Residence Hall is located.

Photography has served as a hobby of sorts for Park, who began taking photos for fun in high school. “I found the more pictures I took, the more I learned. For instance I learned that early evening when the lights come on—that’s when to get your camera out,” said Park.

One piece that stood out as a favorite for Park shows two of his grandchildren who were caught by the camera playing with a rolling pin in a flour pile. “I remember that day, those two took to playing while no one was looking—it was one of those moments I just knew I had to run and get my camera,” said Park. “I suppose the collection is my family’s footprint on Presque Isle, a culmination of snapshots of my family history.”

Aside from Park’s exhibit, in honor of NMCC’s Homecoming and the Maine State Firefighters Convention, the library will also be displaying exhibits featuring a number of historical items representative of NMCC college history, as well as memorabilia loaned by the Presque Isle Historical Society that helps tell the storied history of the Presque Isle Fire Department.

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The Park Family Farm, as photographed in 1903, is among the photos in the exhibit by Laurence A. Park of Presque Isle on display this month in the Edmunds Library at Northern Maine Community College. The residence sat on what is the current site of Park Hall at the University of Maine at Presque Isle.