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Presentations on Aroostook War planned for NMCC and UMFK as part of College anniversary celebration and Acadian Congress preparations

Aroostook County – The coming year will mark the 170th anniversary of the signing of a treaty that drastically changed the geo-political landscape in northern Maine. In 1842, the Webster-Ashburton treaty defined what serves as the international boundary between the United States and Canada.

To set the stage for the anniversary year and as part of the ongoing educational and awareness efforts to prepare the region for the World Acadian Congress in 2014, Northern Maine Community College, the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Presque Isle Historical Society and the 2014 World Acadian Congress are partnering to offer two informative sessions on the Aroostook War. The upcoming presentation is part of a series of historic talks offered by the Presque Isle Historical Society on the NMCC campus this year as part of the College's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Led by Kimberly Smith, secretary/treasurer of the Presque Isle Historical Society, the Aroostook War presentations will be held on Wednesday, September 7, at 5:30 p.m. in the Edmunds Conference Center at NMCC, and on Thursday, September 15, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nadeau Hall Teleconference Center at UMFK.

“We are pleased to partner to offer this latest in a series of presentations on some of the important historical events that have shaped our region. As NMCC celebrates this milestone year, we wanted to be certain to reflect the community that is so integral to our campus. The upcoming presentation by Kim Smith is most timely because it not only speaks to a defining historical event that shaped our present, but one that is especially timely looking ahead to the coming of the World Acadian Congress, as those involved are working to reunite a region,” said Jason Parent, NMCC director of development and college relations and Maine International Committee president for the 2014 World Acadian Congress.

In her presentation on the Aroostook War – referred to by some as the “Pork and Beans War,” Smith will speak about how an unsettled boundary between what is now the United States and Canada in our region and the increasing value of timber as a commodity in the 1830’s led to the dispute. She will also elaborate on how the conflict was inflamed by two incidents in the communities of Maysville (now Presque Isle) and Madawaska.

“These presentations represent a triple play for the Historical Society. The Aroostook War is of special interest to the Presque Isle Historical Society because of the role in that conflict played by thirteen men from Maysville in the 1827 ‘Restook Riot’. Secondly, it is paramount to fulfilling our mission to share local history through presentations such as this. Thirdly, it is even more special to be able to partner with these wonderful organizations as the 2014 World Acadian Congress approaches,” said Smith.

As part of a number of partnership initiatives between NMCC and UMFK, Smith was also asked to speak about the Aroostook War on the Fort Kent campus. The Acadian Archives at the University is serving as host for the St. John Valley presentation.

“We are delighted to welcome Kim Smith. Her presentation on the Bloodless Aroostook War is one of many present and future joint ventures between the UMFK and NMCC. It is particularly timely since the geographic area separated by the treaty; northwestern New Brunswick, northern Maine, and southeastern Quebec, are reuniting to host the 2014 World Acadian Congress. Learning about our shared history is the first step in creating a strong *Acadia of the Lands and Forests* and ensuring a lasting legacy to the WAC,” said Lise Pelletier, director of the Acadian Archives and Maine International Delegate to the 2014 WAC Organizing Committee.

The final in the series of Aroostook County History presentations, on the Presque Isle Army Air Base, will be held on December 7 at NMCC. For more information on the coming presentations on the Aroostook War at NMCC and UMFK, call (207) 768-2808 or e-mail info@nmcc.edu.

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Kimberly Smith, secretary/treasurer of the Presque Isle Historical Society, presented on the Double Eagle II Trans-Atlantic crossing recently as part of an Aroostook County History Series hosted by the Presque Isle Historical Society. Smith will deliver the next presentation in the series on the Aroostook War on September 7 at Northern Maine Community College and on September 15 at the University of Maine at Fort Kent.