

September 25, 2009

For Release; Immediate

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Press Release



Aroostook Maine Paintings on Display at Library

Oil paintings by Harriet Libby Bitar depicting gone-by years of the Aroostook County, Maine potato crops will be on display at the Plainville Public Library during the month of October. There will be landscapes of expansive fields being harvested by basket and barrel, autumn-colored trees, potato houses and paintings of large fields full of summer potato blossoms.

During October, diggin’ in Northern Maine is in full swing. The many people who have moved to Connecticut from that area have likely given the season more than a passing thought. The potato harvest in that region, also known as “picking” or “digging”, was a large part of anyone’s life in Aroostook County, Maine because everyone worked in the fields, no one was excluded. Schools were closed so that children and adults joined in crews to get the crops in. Nowadays, the harvest takes place with large machinery, and the human element is almost extinct.

The opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 3 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The artist, Harriet Libby Bitar, grew up in Aroostook on a potato farm and picked for as far back as she can remember.

“Every fall my mind drifts back to the sound of the first basket of potatoes being poured into the wooden barrel on a frosty, cold morning,” she says. “I just had to get the scenes I remember so well onto the canvas.”

Upon moving to CT in 1988, Bitar found a groundswell of people from her native Aroostook County, who had relocated to the area when Idaho marketed its potato crop and caused the Maine industry to falter. Seeking work, thousands came with their strong work ethic and were welcomed by Pratt and Whitney, General Electric and other businesses looking for those who didn’t mind hard work.

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