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Ethnicity, Immigration Focus Of Conference

Speakers To Present Papers On Connecticut History

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MANCHESTER -- Three dozen speakers and more than 100 attendees are expected to descend upon Manchester Community College Saturday for a daylong conference about ethnicity and immigration in Connecticut.

The conference's main sponsor is the Association for the Study of Connecticut History, which hosts two events a year: a major conference in the fall, such as the one happening Saturday, and a smaller one in the spring.

"It's aimed for people who are interested in Connecticut history. They could be academics, they could be students, they could be people associated with historical societies. All are welcome," said Bruce Stark, co-chair of the event and assistant state archivist at the Connecticut State Library.

Stark said there will be 36 papers presented and divided into four categories: African Americans, Native Americans, several immigrant communities and others who have been marginalized by society.

The conference is similar to one the association held in 2004 at MCC called "The African American Experience in Connecticut." This conference, however, is larger in scope because there will be many more speakers, Stark said.

He explained that these conferences serve several purposes.

"It allows people who are doing research to share the results of their research, even if it's of a preliminary nature. They could simply convene, share ideas and share knowledge. Very often you have people who come to a [panel] because they're interested in a subject and they'll learn new research methodology for themselves," Stark said.

Guocun Yang, an associate professor at MCC and a member of the board of directors of the Association for the Study of Connecticut History, emphasized the diversity of the many different panels. Topics include youth and identity in post-World War II New Haven, the history and cultural recognition of Native Americans in Meriden, coping with mental illness in early Connecticut, Polish immigrants and Polish-Americans and the black roots of abolitionism and the experience of race in Connecticut.

"The conference is really to look at different groups of people who live or are living in

Connecticut. ... This particular conference is all groups of people, whether they are white, or black or other ethnic minority groups, women," Yang said.

The association's goal is to promote "more awareness for history, in particular Connecticut history, he said. If we know the past better, that knowledge will help us work better as a group and make improvements in society."

Registrations are welcome, including the day of the event. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the opening session is at 9 a.m. For more information, including registration fees, visit <http://asch.ccsu.edu>, click on "Index" and then on "ASCH - Upcoming Events."

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