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09/14/1988 - History Teachers Conference

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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations
Office: (217) 581-5981 - Home: (217) 348-7553

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

HISTORY TEACHERS CONFERENCE

CHARLESTON, IL--"Getting Students Interested in History" is the theme of the Ninth Annual History Teachers Conference at Eastern Illinois University on September 30.

This year's conference is particularly geared toward teachers who want "to pick up new ideas on how to get history across to students," said Dr. Robert Hennings, chairman of Eastern's Department of History. The department began holding the conference in 1979.

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Presenters who have met the challenge of sparking students' interest will hold sessions on various subjects during the day-long conference. An update on the progress of the Bradley Commission will also be given by the conference's keynote speaker, Dr. Robert Ferrell.

The Bradley Commission is investigating the role of history in all public schools, Hennings said, and is a "blue ribbon committee" comprised of very eminent historians and teachers. The commission was created in 1987 and last spring adopted nine resolutions that include a call for the study of history during four of the six years in grades seven through twelve, and for a history-oriented social studies curriculum from kindergarten through sixth grade.

Ferrell, a Distinguished Professor of History at Indiana University, will also present highlights of President Truman's life and contributions with a slide-lecture. Ferrell has published five volumes of work on Truman and his presidency, and more than 20 other books, including "The Teaching of American History in High Schools (1964)."

All but one of the other presenters at the conference are graduates of Eastern, which "may sound home grown, but is a good way to show off what Eastern students can do," Hennings said. All of them have stayed in teaching in some way and have excellent credentials, he said.

Those presenters are David Bollman, John McCarthy, William Yocum, Mary McCarthy Meneghini, Roger Beck, John F. Graf and Timothy C. Talbott.

Bollman's presentation, "What in the World is Abu Dhabi and Why do I Care," will focus on 7th grade, non-Western social studies and ways to get students interested in other parts of the world. He is a 7th grade social studies teacher at Parkside Junior High School in Normal. He will share various strategies and techniques he has used to motivate students.

The focus of McCarthy's presentation, "Keeping the World Alive in Your U.S. History Class," will be to show how exchange programs, genealogies, scholarship programs, and other methods can be used by U.S. history instructors to encourage their students. McCarthy is currently teaching at Bradley-Bourbonnais High School.

Yocum, a U.S. history and social studies teacher at Cumberland Junior High school, will present, "Lights, Camera, Action: Recording First Person Historical Narratives on Videotape." The presentation will discuss equipment and costs, and will illustrate a step-by-step process for utilizing videotaping in the classroom.

"How a War of Words Became a War of Guns, Swords, and Cannons" will be presented by Meneghini. She will discuss how she achieves her goal of having students recognize the tensions between the North and South prior to the Civil War. How to write a historical debate position paper, how to prepare for the debate, and how to do a post debate analysis will also be

ADD 3/3/3/3

HISTORY CONFERENCE

a part of Meneghini's presentation. She teaches U.S. history and science at Saint Linus School in Oak Lawn.

Roger Beck, an assistant professor in the Department of History at Eastern, teaches Third World history, African history, and social science methods. He also supervises student teaching in the social studies. His presentation, "Student Teachers and the Social Studies: What Should They Know and How Should They Perform?," will emphasize current Eastern plans and experiences in the training of student teachers.

John F. Graf and Timothy C. Talbott will present "Spinning Wheels and Sow Belly: Hands-On History for Your Students." Graf is currently the Director of Interpretation at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historical Site and Talbott is Historical Interpretation Coordinator for the Early American Museum at Mahomet. Their presentation will utilize slides and participatory exercises in illustrating how outdoor and indoor museums can enhance a curriculum.

As another feature of the conference, participants will be invited to visit the Greenwood School Museum exhibit, "Presents of the Past: Enjoying Yesterday's Treasures Today." The exhibit highlights ten major areas of the permanent collection of the Coles County Historical Society and was designed and assembled by the Historical Administration students at Eastern.

"The museum offers an interpretation of history through artifacts and relates what goes on here with the whole country," Hennings said.

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ADD 4/4/4/4

HISTORY CONFERENCE

He said the conference has been quite successful in the past, with attendance up to 200.

The conference is co-sponsored by the History Department, the Adult and Continuing Education Office, the Coles County Historical Society, the Superintendents of Eastern Illinois Educational Service Regions, and Dr. Estelle Greenwood and Bartley Greenwood, Jr.

Anyone with an interest in history is invited to attend the conference. For more information, call Eastern's Adult and Continuing Education Office at (217) 581-5114.