UNH Professor Publishes First Book On Asian Americans' Contributions In New England

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Editors and Reporters: Prof. Monica Chiu can be reached at (603) 862-4728 and monica.chiu@unh.edu. Photo of her is available for download at http://www.unh.edu/news/img/monicachiu.jpg. An image of her book cover is available at http://www.unh.edu/news/img/monicachiubookcover.jpg

DURHAM, N.H. - Monica Chiu, associate professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, has published a book on the history, culture, and role of Asian Americans in New England, the first collection to address Asian and Asian American contributions to the region.


The collection highlights a broad range of Asian American communities and historical experiences. From the poignant writings of a young Chinese immigrant to the influence of hip-hop in a New Hampshire Lao American community, the collection seeks to establish a regional template for the study of Asian American lives and art far from the West Coast. The essays provide a record of particular achievements, as well as an understanding of the rich Asian American culture in New England, along with an analysis of the depiction of New England Asian Americans, one of the fastest growing minority populations in the region.

"If we look back to the region's reception of 'Orientals' at the turn into the 20th century, we find curious New England audiences intrigued and surprised by Asian visitors, many of whom had never seen Asians before. Their reception and visibility afford us a window into understanding what political, economic, and social practices influenced New Englanders' acceptance or rejection of Asian visitors and later second-generation Asian Americans and Asian refugees. What Asian Americans in New England created from that reception, as well as from their own creative integration into regional citizenship, are the artistic and cultural legacies presented in this volume," Chiu says.

Chiu's book has received critical acclaim from her colleagues.

"A sparkling collection of essays across disciplinary formations, 'Asian Americans in New England' reveals the reciprocal impress of New England and Asian America. Moreover, this foundational volume illustrates how spatial distinctions, whether regional, national, or transnational, are human creations and as such invite observance and transgression," said Gary Okihiro, professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University and author of "Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States."
"This collection deals another crushing but healthy blow to the West Coast-centric Asian American Studies paradigm, all but assuring the continuing growth of this vibrant field in race and ethnic studies. The book's contributors challenge the dominant historical images of Asians in America as manual laborers, shopkeepers, and victims of crude nativism, without minimizing the impact of racialization and orientalism on community and identity formations," said Evelyn Hu-DeHart, professor of history and director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America at Brown University.

Reporters who wish to receive a review copy of Chiu's book should contact Katy Grabill, 603-448-1533, ext. 237, or katy.grabill@dartmouth.edu, or Barbara Briggs at 603-448-1533 ext. 233, or barbara.briggs@dartmouth.edu, at the University Press of New England.

Monica Chiu is the director of the University Honors Program and an associate professor of English at the University of New Hampshire. She specializes in Asian American literature, criticism, film, popular culture, and twentieth-century American literature. She is the author of "Filthy Fictions: Asian American Literature by Women" (2004).

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, space-grant and community-engaged university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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