



Michael F. Crowley Lectures

Our 2nd Program of the 2014-2015 Series

Edward T. O'Donnell, Ph.D.

Monday, October 6, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.

International Tennis Hall of Fame ~ Special Event Room

194 Bellevue Avenue, Newport *

Streets of Fire:

The Irish and the Civil War Draft Riots of July 1863

The Draft Riots of July 1863 in New York City constitute the largest civil uprising in American history. At least 118 people were killed, including a dozen free blacks who were lynched. Although people of many backgrounds participated in the violence, the Irish played the most prominent role. The riots occurred at an especially critical stage in the war (Gettysburg had concluded just days prior) and they exposed deep divisions within the Union over Lincoln's leadership, the direction of the war, the ability of the wealthy to avoid military service, and most importantly, emancipation. This presentation, augmented with more than 75 visuals, will examine key questions such as, why did Lincoln decide to impose a draft? Why did the Irish oppose the draft, especially when so many thousands of Irish had joined the Union Army? What key social and political factors led the Irish to riot? How did the riots unfold over four days and how were they ultimately suppressed? Why were the rioters especially brutal towards African Americans? And finally, what was the significance of the riots in terms of this history of the Civil War?

EDWARD T. O'DONNELL was born in Gloucester, MA to Irish American parents. He earned his doctorate in American History from Columbia University and currently is Assoc. Professor of History at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. He is the author of several books, including *Ship Ablaze: The Tragedy of the Steamboat General Slocum* (Random House, 2003), *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About Irish American History* (Random House/Broadway Books, 2002), *Visions of America: A History of the United States* (co-author, Pearson, 2009), and the forthcoming *Henry George and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (June 2015, Columbia University Press). His scholarly articles have appeared in the *Public Historian*, *Journal of Urban History*, and the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. He has also worked on several major museum exhibits on Irish American history, including serving as curatorial consultant to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in NYC for their Irish Family Apartment (opened, June 2008). This is his second lecture for the Museum of Newport Irish History.

Following the lecture, a reception with light hors d'oeuvres will be held.

Reservations are required. Please call or e-mail Ann Arnold at 401-841-5493 or tpm1@earthlink.net
Members – \$3 donation ~ Non-members - \$15 donation, which can be applied to 1-year Membership.

* *Wheelchair Accessible via elevator to 2nd floor. All enter via Hall of Fame archway*