



Michael F. Crowley Lectures

5th and Final Program of the 2019-2020 Series ~ Our 18th Annual

Famine Memories: Terence MacSwiney's 1920 Hunger Strike

Guest Speaker: Joseph Lennon, PhD

Thursday, April 16, 2020 ~ 6:00 p.m.

The Wayfinder Hotel (formerly, the Mainstay Hotel)

151 Admiral Kalbfus Rd. Newport, R.I. 02840

One hundred years ago, in 1920, daily newspapers around the world told the story of the starvation of a man. That man, Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, eventually died in England's Brixton prison after a seventy-four day fast. The release of his corpse, his funeral, and a series of international commemorations held the attention of the world's modern press — and fired the imagination of Irish writers and Irish emigrants around the world. This presentation will explore the dynamics of the hunger strike and the impact of memory on politics.

The death of Terence MacSwiney on 25 October 1920 spurred an unprecedented level of public mourning in the Irish diaspora; as such, it remains a unique event in Irish and Irish-American history. Over a million people, in Ireland and around the world, gathered on streets, in churches, and in stadiums to mourn the famished body of this Republican mayor. The evocation of hunger and starvation at a time when Ireland was at war with the United Kingdom tapped into deep memories of Irish famine, particularly the catastrophic Famine of 1845-52 during which around one million people died and millions more emigrated. Following the outpouring of public grief, the United States and other nations began pressing London to resolve the dispute. The 1920 memorials thus signal a turning point in the Anglo-Irish War, illustrating the power of hunger on the Irish imagination.

JOSEPH LENNON, PhD, is the Emily C. Riley Director of the Center for Irish Studies, Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Professor of English at Villanova University. He writes on Irish literature and culture, his present research being on the pre-history of the hunger strike. His first book, *Irish Orientalism*, won the Donald Murphy Prize from the American Conference for Irish Studies in 2004 and he has recently published scholarship in the *Irish University Review* and *New Hibernia Review*. He also publishes poetry in journals such as *Poetry Ireland* and *Natural Bridge* and has a book of poems, *Fell Hunger*, with Salmon Poetry, based in County Clare.

A reception with light hors d'oeuvres will be held following the lecture. Cash Bar

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Email/Computer Users: Please visit www.NewportIrishHistory.org click "Lectures" page, then click on the link to Reserve, under the listing for the Apr. 16 lecture. You will receive an immediate confirmation via email.

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