



# Michael F. Crowley Lectures

*Second Program of the 2018-2019 Series ~ Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual*

## *The Emmet Guards of Worcester, Mass.*

**Guest speaker: M.A. Candidate Tom Foley**

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 ~ 6:00 p.m.

International Tennis Hall of Fame ~ Special Event Room  
194 Bellevue Avenue, Newport\*

On September 20th, 1803, twenty-five-year-old Robert Emmet was executed for leading an abortive Irish rebellion; his grave was unmarked in an attempt to erase his name from history. At his sentencing, a stoic Emmet delivered one of the most memorable speeches of the 19th century, asking the world to leave his name and his tomb in obscurity until “my country takes her place among the nations of the earth. Then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written.” Rather than vanish from history, Emmet became a potent symbol of egalitarianism and the struggle for Irish liberation, especially for Irish-Americans.

A generation after Emmet’s death, 56 Irish immigrants formed an independent militia company in Worcester which would become known as the Emmet Guards. Its officers swore an oath to defend Massachusetts, but the company had other unofficial purposes: to protect the rights of the Irish in Worcester and to facilitate, if possible, the restoration of Ireland to her rightful “place among the nations of the earth.” Though few if any of these original “Emmets” would ever return to Ireland to fight for independence, the company was a source of ethnic pride and solidarity for the next 5 generations of Worcester Irish. The Emmet Guards of Worcester would serve with distinction in the American Civil War, Spanish American War, and World War One.

This presentation will cover Robert Emmet and his legacy, the origin of the Emmet Guards, and the company’s service in France (1917-18), concluding with the post-war Irish independence movement in Worcester. It will also touch on other units with the same or similar moniker, such as the Emmet Guards of Providence, RI, and the Robert Emmet Guards of Newport, RI.

**TOM FOLEY** is a native of Westerly, RI, and is the great-grandson of Major General Thomas F. Foley, Captain of the Emmet Guards from 1912 - 1918. Tom received his B.A. in History from Providence College and is now a graduate student at the University of Rhode Island (M.A., History, projected 2021). This is a presentation of research collected in preparation for Tom’s master’s thesis.

*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](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org), click “Lectures” page, then click on the link to Reserve, under the listing for the Sept. 26 lecture. You will receive an immediate confirmation via email.

**To Reserve by phone:** Please phone Ann at (401) 841-5493. Be sure to leave your name, phone, # in your party.

**Museum Members**—\$5 donation **Non-members**—\$20 donation, applicable to a 1-year Individual membership.

\* *Wheelchair accessible via elevator to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. All enter via Hall of Fame archway*