



The Museum of Newport Irish History MNIH

Michael F. Crowley Lectures

Third Program of the 2018-2019 Series ~ Our 17th Annual

How the Irish Shaped Immigration Politics in Nineteenth-Century New York

Guest speaker: Brendan P. O'Malley, Ph.D.



Monday, February 11, 2019 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Mainstay Hotel & Conference Center, 151 Admiral Kalbfus Rd. Newport

Between 1820 and 1920, about five million Irish crossed the Atlantic. Almost all faced formidable challenges, but the wave of two million arriving between 1845 and 1860 in the wake of the famine encountered especially difficult conditions. Decades of scholarship have documented the hardships of the famine migrants, including crushing poverty, hard labor for low pay, miserable tenements, rampant disease, family separation, nativist persecution, and even deportation. Less well understood is how the American Irish grew in a few decades from a marginalized group to one that wielded considerable power, taking control of urban political machines like New York City's Tammany Hall by the late 1800s.

We will examine how the American Irish in New York began to consolidate power in one key arena: immigration politics. In 1847, during the famine migration crisis, the state legislature created a government agency devoted to protecting immigrant welfare, the Board of the Commissioners of Emigration. In 1855, this agency would open its Castle Garden Emigrant Depot, which would process eight million new arrivals over the next thirty-five years and serve as the nerve center of a small welfare state for immigrants. Irish New Yorkers played a key role in establishing the Emigration Board and overseeing its operation. This talk will demonstrate how the often-divided American Irish community in New York learned to come together and exert its rising political power to improve conditions for all immigrants arriving in the nation's largest port of entry.

BRENDAN P. O'MALLEY is assistant professor of history at Newbury College in Brookline, Massachusetts. He earned a doctorate in history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 2015 and currently is at work on a book entitled "Castle Garden: America's First Immigrant Gateway." His most recent essay, "Welcome to New York: Remembering Castle Garden, A Nineteenth-Century Immigrant Welfare State," was published online by *Lapham's Quarterly* in September 2018.

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 Feb. 11 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.

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