

9.30.09 LINK

Talk at BCC highlights Asbury Park's musical and social past

Brookdale Community College's Jacob Needle Lecture in History Series will host author Daniel Wolff on Tuesday, October 13. He will speak on his work, "4th of July Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land" at 7:00 p.m. in the Lincroft main campus Warner Student Life Center, Navesink rooms II & III. Admission is free. The event is sponsored by Student Life & Activities and the History Department.

Wolff is a noted historian, poet and musical writer, is the author of "How Lincoln Learned to Read: Twelve Great Americans and the Educations that Made Them," which was an editor's choice at the Chicago Tribune, and "You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke," which won the Ralph J. Gleason Award for best music book of 1995.

He was nominated for a Grammy for his liner notes for a The Complete Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers CD boxed set. His journalism has appeared in Vogue, the Nation, and Doubletake, and his poetry in the Paris Review, the Partisan Review, and the Threepenny Review.

Wolff's 2005 book, "4th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land," is the story of the boardwalk town Bruce Springsteen made famous and a quintessential portrait of small-

town American democracy. When Springsteen called his first album Greetings from Asbury Park, he introduced a generation of fans to a seaside resort town that came to represent working-class American life but behind this archetypal small-town landscape lies a complicated past.

Starting with the town's founding as a religious promised land, music journalist and poet Wolff plots a course through 130 years of entwined social and musical history, touching on John Philip Sousa, Count Basie, Frank Sinatra, and Frankie Lymon on the way to the town Springsteen was born to run from.

Out of the details of local history – the boardwalk in the Gilded Age; the celebrities who passed through, from Stephen Crane to Martin Luther King; sensational murder trials; the birth of Mob control and a devastating mid-century "race riot" emerges a universal story of one small town's fortunes. Told with grace and full of fascinating detail, Wolff's tour across thirteen decades of the Fourth of July in Asbury Park captures all the allure and heartbreak of the American dream reduced to blight and decay, with gentrification as the one hope for a return to its glory days.

For more information, call the Student Life Center at 732-224-2500.