

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 1

I spent the morning working with Liz, and then went down on the south grounds to greet the President of Ireland, Eamon deValera, about 11:30. The occasion was one bound to be full of sentiment. Who can be more full of it than the Irish, and this 85 year old gentleman, or thereabouts, has had a very full and dramatic life, fighting for Irish independence., , And much attachment to the United States, actually, where he was born.

There was the Diplomatic Corps, the fluttering flags, the National Anthems, the Review of the troops, and Lyndon's speech; and President deValera's answer on the little platform.

His minister for external affairs, Mr. Akin, who accompanied him, was a very attractive, sophisticated sort of man, and I asked him, ^{as} politely as I could phrase it, whether the feud between England and Ireland, ^e was now a thing of the past or not. I hope I said it better than that. His answer was interesting. He said, "The farther away we draw legally, the closer we come as friends."

I was charmed by Mr. deValera. He was courtly, happy to be here, sentimental, and he kept on using the phrase, "Forty-five years ago this..., forty-five years ago..." You see he's been to this country six times, the most famous trip of which was 45 years ago, when he tried to influence this country to arise and help Ireland in its fights for independence from England. And it made me quite conscious of the fact that I frequently say "Twenty-five years ago...", and I think I better stop.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 2

We rode around with him to Blair House and on the way, there was quite a crowd of people, and frequent shouts of "Hey, Dev! Hi there, Dev! We love you, Dev!"

I was not surprised to see my own Lynda Bird, standing out among the tourists, quite unrecognized ~~among them~~ by anybody, right in front of the White House. The most direct way with her, ^{she} actually accomplishes what she wants, and that is just to walk right out with a thousand tourists, and hardly anybody ever stops her.

We said goodbye at Blair House, and I came back to have lunch in the Queen's Sitting Room with Helen Thomas and Frances Lewⁱⁿ~~son~~, and talked to them about what the first six months in this job seemed like to me. Heaven help me with the outcome.

I like them both so much and I would like to stem the tide of self-consciousness that I find dawning on me, because I think that is what could put an end to my good relations with a lot of press people, is to be on edge, self-conscious, worried.

In the afternoon I worked on the mail.

Then at night was the State Dinner for President deValera. He joined us in the Yellow Room with the Ambassador of Ireland and Mrs. Fay. His son, a very thoughtful, courteous, nice man, also named Eamon deValera, a doctor; the Balls, the Dukes; and the Brennans, I believe. And according to Daisy Clelland, the hope chests of Lynda Bird and Luci Baines are richer

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 3

by some Irish linen, lovely handkerchiefs they were, and for us, an Irish linen tablecloth, and a beautiful silver coffee pot, made in Dublin, before this country won its independence from England.

I was particularly pleased with our own gifts because they were as sentimental as the Irish. Besides the vermeil cigar box, inscribed "Poetry, faith and freedom, we have named these as Irishman's trinity," There was a ballot box described as an antique, an old framed print of New York harbor, the city where Eamon deValera was born, and also a copy of his baptismal certificate and a picture of the church, St. Agnes in New York where he was baptized.

As Daisy Clelland said, "The olde sod was well represented by Capital Hill's finest."

Heading the Congressional delegation was Speaker of the House John McCormack and his wife; and Senator Pat McNamara and Mrs. McNamara; and Senator and Mrs. Pearson.

And from the House, Representatives Gene Keogh and wife; Mike Kerwin and wife; John Rooney and wife; John Fogarty alone; William Cahill and wife; Donald Clancy and wife.

The Irish have really put their stamp on our politics!

And from the court - Justice and Mrs. Brennan - this really was the night for the Irish mafia.

The staff that we had inherited from the Kennedy Administration; the Ken O'Donnells were there; the Ralph Dungans; Larry O'Briens, Dave Powers;

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 4

Malcolm Kilduffs; Dick McGuires; and our own contribution to the Irish, George Reedy, as Irish as any of them.

This was the night that I asked Lynda and Warrie Lynn. Each of the children had been promised one state dinner during her stay here, and they had a good time, were a great help, and made the most of it.

We had asked the Attorney General and Mrs. Kennedy, and Senator Ted Kennedy and his wife, but neither of them came - both of them are off I think, on money raising campaigns for the Kennedy Library. However, ^{the} Sargent Shriver's were on hand, representing the Kennedy family; and the George Balls took the place of the Rusks, the Secretary having ~~had~~ left at dawn that morning, for the funeral of Nehru.

Nehru's death was the word that woke us up, about 6 o'clock in the morning - and great repercussions it will have on the world, no doubt.

Among old friends, there were the Dick Berlins; and Charles Engelhard; and from Texas, the Jack ^{Kullgens} ~~Gulebeons~~ of Waco; the Gene Lockes; the Jim Nashes of Austin, it was very special for them because he's quite an Irishman; and Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Nabrit, the President of Texas Southern University, and, incidentally, a brother of the President of Howard University.

The Irish entertainment world was represented by Ed O'Connor, ^{author} ~~author~~ of The Last Hurrah, one of my favorites; Opera star Eileen Farrell, now Mrs. Robert Reagan; television's Ed Sullivan; and William Shannon, who wrote The American Irish.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 5

Luci Baines was ~~one~~ very interested in the presence of the Very Reverend William F. Kelly, the President of Marquette University, and got to have a little chat with him, ^{she} and Beth Jenkins, ^{before} we sat down to dinner. They weren't invited to the dinner.

I was charmed with Lyndon's toast. He made a graceful reference to President Kennedy, ^{by} saying he was "...one of the many gifts that the Irish had given to America." And then he said, "You and I have a great deal in common, Mr. President (deValera), not the least of which is that a lot of Irishmen vote for us and occasionally against us. Furthermore, in our work we are both surrounded by Irishmen. I heard it said that there are more Irishmen in the White House than people."

And of deValera himself, he said, "Few men have had the satisfaction that you have had, ^{not} only did you play a leading role in the birth of your Nation, you have continued to exert great influence long after Ireland became a significant force in world affairs."

And so he has, and he looks like a very happy man now.

His answer was warm and pleasant, not what we had been led to expect when some newspaper man said that President deValera would be marching on Washington, at the head of 20,000 words.

After dinner, in the East Room, I introduced the entertainment. George C. Scott and Colleen Dewhurst, actors of the Broadway stage, ~~in~~ the movies,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 27, 1964

Page 6

and television, who recited The Voices of Ireland, excerpts from Irish literature spanning a thousand years, "I am of Ireland," "The County Mayo," "Riders to the Sea," (John Synge), "John Bull's Other Island" (George Bernard Shaw), and Juno and the Paycock (Shaw) ^{Sear} O'Casey). It was arty and interesting, and for somebody as oriented to the theatre as me, very good entertainment, but I doubt that it got an A with the general audience.

Our guest of honor, being well up in his 80's, left shortly after the entertainment, and Lyndon, from whose face and ^{manner} ~~manner~~ I could tell had had a hard day, ² did not linger long after him.

I stayed until after 12. There was dancing in the Blue Room but not a great deal of the people participated in it, partly because this group seems a good deal older than most of our guest lists. But Lynda Bird and Warrie Lynn lingered long and had fun, and had good tales to tell me about it the next day.