
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7169 of March 1, 1999

The President

Irish-American Heritage Month, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During the month of March each year, as millions of Americans celebrate St. Patrick's Day, we remember with special pride our Irish heritage. We remember our ancestors who stood on Ireland's western shores, yearning for the promise of America. Fleeing famine and injustice, they longed for a new world of opportunities. Millions of these courageous men and women set sail from Ireland, leaving behind all that they had ever known to seek the promise of America. They gave to their new homeland their strength and spirit, sinew and determination, eloquence and wit. In return, America offered them the opportunity for a better life, the chance to rise above poverty and discrimination, and a future where they could live out their dreams.

The Irish who came to America endured many hardships, but they prospered and helped to build our country with innumerable physical and intellectual contributions. They gave us Presidents like Woodrow Wilson, John Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan; patriots like John Barry and Stephen Moylan, who fought fiercely for American independence in the Revolutionary War; jurists like Justice William Brennan, who championed justice and equality; suffragists and social reformers like Maria McCreery; journalists, peacekeepers, artists, playwrights, labor leaders, and educators. These and so many other Irish Americans seized the opportunity of freedom America promised. From their grand literary tradition to their deep religious faith, Irish Americans and their descendants have enriched every facet of American history.

But Irish-American Heritage Month is a time to look to the future as well as to the past. Today we rejoice at the promise of peace in Northern Ireland and the resolve of her people to approach their differences not with weapons, but with words. While the path to peace is rarely easy, it is by necessity a community effort. Americans are a vital part of the process in Northern Ireland by virtue of our shared heritage and shared goal of lasting peace and a better future for all God's children. By lending our hearts, minds, and prayers to the work of peace, we can best fulfill our obligation to the generations of Irish men and women who have given so much to our Nation's life and history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1999 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William Clinton

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