

Red Carpet for 'Dev'

Now, But in 1919 . . .

P/17/2/1 (2)

MAY 24 1964

By PETER BARNICLE

On Tuesday a giant 707 jet-liner, a shamrock emblazoned on its tail assembly, will fly into Washington to land a special passenger.

Ahead of him will be a crowded schedule, all meticulously adhering to the rigid rules of protocol: a helicopter ride to the White House, welcome by the President and Joint Chiefs of Staff, parade through Washington, a state dinner, and address to a joint session of Congress, ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the grave of President Kennedy.

One can only wonder if, at some point, in all this formality, Eamon de Valera, President of the Republic of Ireland, will find a moment to contrast this visit with the one which started for him on June 11, 1919.

ON THAT OCCASION, he left the stokehold of the old steamship Baltic on New York's waterfront late at night. A visored cap pulled down over his forehead and a black muffler held high around his neck, he made his way to a rendezvous in a doorway at 11th Avenue and 14th Street with Harry Boland.

Four months before the same Harry Boland had waited in the shadows outside England's Lincoln Prison to aid deValera's escape.

While Scotland Yard was checking out reports that deValera had been seen in Glasgow, Paris, Rome and various other places, the tall, gaunt leader of the de facto government of Ireland, was catching his breath in a room on 39th Street, four blocks south of his birthplace.

Despite many attempts to describe him as "Brooklyn-born," Dev himself places his birthplace at the site of the Chrysler Building—42nd Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. Records at St. Agnes Church on East 43rd Street show that



1919: A Clandestine Meeting

he was baptized there in December, 1882.

He was taken back to Ireland as an infant after the death of his father. From that time on he became Irish, although his American birth saved his life in 1916 following the Easter Week Uprising in Ireland.

IN THAT ABORTIVE rebellion, deValera was in charge of a detachment which took over Boland's Mills, near Ringsend. His orders were to block any British reinforcements which might come up from Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire).

Dev's Third Battalion was the last to surrender after holding out for a week. While other leaders of the Uprising were executed, deValera's life was spared, on the contention that he was an American—and England did not want to incur the possible wrath of the more than 20 million Americans of Irish antecedents.

He went to prison—the first of a series of English prisons that he came to know intimately: Dartmoor, Lewes, Pentonville and Lincoln.

Released from prison in 1917 he was asked to stand as a candidate for the Sinn Fein government in East Clare. It was here that he first learned



1964: A White House Welcome

of the fierce loyalty he could command.

IT IS DIFFICULT to determine where the living legend began. There is no doubt, however, that it gained impetus at this point. There is the story of how an old farmer in East Clare who was a staunch deValera man. His sons took his shoes away and hid them, but the old man walked four miles to Ennis barefooted, to vote for Dev.

From that time on Dev's star rose. He was arrested during a subsequent campaign and imprisoned for a year. The arrest—now we're dealing with Irish story-tellers—came during a campaign speech. He returned to the same platform more than a year later and started: "As I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted . . ."

Down through the years, he has followed his own policy. He broke with some of his long time friends on the problem of a treaty with England in 1922—a break which caused a civil war in Ireland. He adhered to his policy of one island, one nation.

He held his nation out of World War II because of the British occupation of the six counties in northeastern Ireland. At the same time he was able to

make delicate diplomatic maneuvers to stave off German overtures.

He is austere in formal conversation, but there are two subjects on which he will talk—and talk. One is the subject of the restoration of the Irish language and the other is "Partition".

On the latter, he once told Winston Churchill: "If a man steals your watch and chain and gives you back the watch—you still want the chain."

Churchill commented that dealing with deValera was like trying to pick up some mercury with a fork. Apprised of the comment, Dev reportedly said: "Did he think of using a spoon?"

Through his many years in government, he has seen Ireland move from a poverty-stricken nation to one of the most respected in the community of nations.

Irish diplomats have taken key roles in the United Nations. Irish troops took part in the Congo operation and are now in Cyprus. Ireland's Ambassador to the UN in 1960, Frederick H. Boland, was the man who gavelled down Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

It's a far cry from the days of Lincoln Prison and the stokehold of the Baltic to the White House and a national reception—but Dev. made it.

When the protocol of Washington is over he will fly to New York to be honored at the World's Fair and then he will go on to Canada for a formal reception.

But no visit to the United States would be complete without a stop in Boston. President deValera will return from Canada on June 3 and stop here for a few hours to talk with his friends. A reception for him will be held at Logan International Airport. Joseph Gannon and Gene Sheehan will be hosts.

SPECIAL DELIVERY



Mr Dan Doherty
366 Ashmont St
Dorchester
Mass

SPECIAL DELIVERY

apt 41



BURCHESTER, MASS.
JUN 7 1964
JUN 7 1964

BOSTON, MASS.
JUN 2 5:00 PM
FOSTAL ANNEX 23
1964

Danejal County Archives

Dev President
of Ireland



FORM AB-7

From: THE BOSTON HERALD-TRAVELER CORP.
300 Harrison Ave., Boston 6, Mass.

Mr. Daniel Roberts
366 Ashmont St
Dorchester, Mass.
Apt # 41

1828

75
75

150
122

28

1965
1843

122

1843-
~~July~~

Histor
265

Donegal County Archives