

The largest wave of Irish immigration occurred 150 years ago, when more than 1 million people left Ireland for America as potato blight and famine devastated their homeland. These sons and daughters of Erin transformed our cities, stimulating industry and commerce from New York to Boston to Chicago. In pursuing the American Dream, they set an example of courage, hard work, and determination that was to be followed again and again by hopeful newcomers.

Today, Irish Americans celebrate this history and the contributions that their brethren have made to all aspects of American life—providing leadership in Government, the law, business, finance, literature, and the arts. Renewed interest in Gaelic culture has led to university courses in Irish studies, and hundreds of Saint Patrick's Day parades across the country attest to the vigor of Irish American communities. This month and throughout the year, let us recognize the gifts brought to America by children of Ireland and honor the strengths they have added to our national character.

In tribute to all Irish Americans, the Congress, by Public Law 103-379, has designated March 1996 as "Irish-American Heritage Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

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 1996 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6869 of March 1, 1996

Save Your Vision Week, 1996

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Vision is a remarkable gift. Our eyes allow us to read, to see the faces of our loved ones, and to experience many of life's greatest pleasures. Too often, we take our sight for granted and must be reminded that our eyes require regular care and attention. The more we learn about preventing eye disease and vision loss, the better equipped we will be to take care of these vital organs.

Many young people suffer from vision-related learning disabilities that jeopardize their academic success. However, with early intervention, such sight problems are often easily correctable. Senior citizens, too, are particularly vulnerable to eye difficulties, but we are fortunate that advances in

medical research are improving our understanding of the diseases that often rob older Americans of their sight.

As a result of these new technologies and discoveries in the field of eye care, many diseases that would have caused permanent sight loss just decades ago can now be treated with excellent prospects for full recovery. For example, people with diabetes can reduce their risk of blindness with timely laser surgery, the effects of glaucoma can often be prevented, and studies are exploring the role of vitamins and minerals in slowing the progression of age-related macular degeneration and cataract.

To educate people about these strides and to encourage all Americans to protect their precious eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 3 through March 9, 1996, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all the people of the United States to participate in this observance by making eye care and eye safety a priority and to recognize the important contributions that vision research makes to our lives. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations committed to the goal of sight preservation to join in activities that educate our citizens about the simple steps they can take to save their vision.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6870 of March 8, 1996

National Park Week, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For millions of visitors every year, America's 369 national parks serve as living examples of the diversity, history, and natural wonders that have always defined this country. We owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women of the National Park Service, whose outstanding work to preserve and protect these treasures ensures that they will be available to educate and enrich generations of Americans to come.

The National Park Service also reaches beyond the boundaries of our parks to share knowledge and expertise with other nations, State and local governments, American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives, agencies, and thousands of organizations and individuals. National Park Service programs are helping community leaders to create green spaces in urban areas from Seattle to Philadelphia; to rehabilitate the historic canal in Augusta, Georgia; and to return grey wolves to Yellowstone, red wolves to the Great Smoky