

June 13 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

dom all the way. Two hundred thousand Irish-Americans fought in our Civil War, the most costly part of our journey toward a more perfect Union.

While the Irish made their presence felt in America, we like to believe America's presence was felt in Ireland as well. Ideas about self-government that developed here were carried across the ocean and espoused by leaders like Wolfe Tone, Daniel O'Connell, and Charles Stewart Parnell. The devotion of Irish-Americans to the cause of Irish liberty and their support of the Irish state is renowned here at home and around the world.

Today we celebrate all these ties and others that go to the deepest part of our life and character as a nation. But we cannot imagine America without the Irish-Americans. Whether in business or politics, the arts or entertainment, or making the life of every community in this

country a little stronger, they have graced our country in immeasurable ways.

President Robinson, in 1916 Patrick Pearse, the Irish poet and patriot, described Irish-Americans as the "sea-divided Gael." It was a haunting phrase from a year of bloodshed. Tonight we see that on both sides of the sea the Irish are flourishing. The love and joy that unites us is far, far broader and stronger than the sea which divides us.

So ladies and gentlemen, let us all raise a glass to the partnership of Ireland and America, to the extraordinary community of Irish-Americans for which we are so grateful, and to the President of Ireland and her health, well-being, and the future of her beloved country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Following the Entertainment at the State Dinner Honoring President Mary Robinson of Ireland *June 13, 1996*

Weren't they wonderful tonight? They made us all so happy. [*Applause*]

I also want to say to President Robinson that she brought America a little of the luck of the Irish. I am pleased to announce to you that while we were here at dinner the long standoff with the freemen in Montana ended peacefully tonight. I want to thank the FBI and the local law enforcement officials and say I am very, very proud of them. I know I speak for all of our people, when we say we'll all say a little prayer tonight of gratitude for this peaceful resolution of a difficult situation.

Finally, you heard President Robinson say this is an Irish event and it can't end early, so after we break up, the Air Force Airmen of Note will be playing here. We urge you to stay and

dance to your heart's content or till the angry neighbors run us off. [*Laughter*] My experience is that will be quite some time. You can make it until dawn. [*Laughter*]

Again, I thank you, Mary Chapin Carpenter; thank you, Mary Black; thank you, gentlemen. It was a wonderful, wonderful evening. And most of all, thank you, President Robinson. Thank you, Nick. It's been wonderful for Hillary and me to have you here. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to singers Mary Chapin Carpenter and Mary Black; and Nick Robinson, husband of President Robinson.