

US Centre Summer Research Grant

Recipient name:

Project title:

Summary of project:

Finally, in my time in Washington DC I consulted the Ancient Order of Hibernians Collection at the Catholic University of America. This provided further insights into the organisation and its role in promoting a United Ireland and preserving Irishness in both the US and NI.

If the archival research centred around Irish American diasporic groups, including governmental and grassroots, during the leading-up to the GFA, the interviews focused on current efforts to contribute to the state of affairs in NI from the US. In this sense, the meetings were invaluable to understand the present context of Irish American diaspora and the continuity of the discursive arena that the archives revealed. Unfortunately, it was extremely difficult to find participants, and when the snowballing started to kick off it was already time to leave. However, the interviews carried out during my time in Boston already proved invaluable and represent stepping stones in the context of a possible return to the field while continuing with this project.

On July 10th I met with Professor Guy Beiner, director of the Irish Studies programme at Boston College; and a day later with Christian Dupont, Head Archivist of the Burns Library. They both helped provide a comprehensive overview of the academic context of Irish American diaspora, as well as names to context for further interviews. One of those was a leading figure from an AOH branch, who I had the pleasure to interview on July 18th in Scituate, an important enclave for Irish American diaspora. This meeting was specially illuminating as it provided insights on the current political interests of the AOH, as well as other lobby groups—including the Irish American Caucus at the US Congress. Namely, these groups are mainly focusing on lobbying against the UK Legacy Act. Finally, I interviewed a historic member from the Ireland Fund; thus I learned about the history and continued activity of this organisation working to fundraise for and promote initiatives that contribute to peace and welfare in NI.

