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A Quiet Setting for a Big Trial

Pennsylvania Capital Awaits Start of Berrigan Case

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—“We have a wonderful group of judges. There are a lot of crooks around here but the judges are good. ‘Dix’ [Federal District Judge R. Dixon Herman] is one of my boys. And he’s intelligent. We made him County Solicitor.” Mr. Harvey Taylor,

the 95-year-old retired political boss of Dauphin County (Harrisburg, Pa.) was discussing the local political and social scene on the eve of the trial of the Harrisburg Seven, who have been charged with conspiring to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon’s adviser on national security affairs, to blow up the heating systems of Federal buildings in Washington, and to vandalize draft records in nine states.

Among the seven is the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan, a Roman Catholic priest in prison for destroying draft records. The other defendants are two other priests, a for-



The New York Times/Bill Winsell

M. Harvey Taylor at Harrisburg, Pa., home yesterday

mer priest, a nun, a former nun and a Pakistani scholar. They are scheduled to go on trial tomorrow before Judge Herman.

A guide at the Pennsylvania Capitol confides to visitors that "stretchers and helmets" are being stored in the basement against possible violence. Demonstrations outside the Federal Building are planned by antiwar groups during the long trial, which may last into summer.

No Disruptions Predicted

But M. Harvey Taylor predicts that there will be no disruptions. "This is a pretty well-settled community," Mr. Taylor said—and he should know. The venerable Republican leader has been living here nearly 96 years. He had been an elected official for 44 years before retiring in 1964. He was president of the State Senate for 15 years and Republican state chairman for 15 years. Former Gov. William Scranton once described Mr. Taylor as a "reactionary" but added quickly: "He knows I like him—I do, very much."

By describing Harrisburg as "pretty well-settled," Mr. Taylor meant that this city of 70,000 was quiet, deeply conservative and heavily Republican. "Deader than a doornail on Sunday," was John O'Hara's epithet for a thinly disguised Harrisburg in his novel, "A Rage to Live." But Mr. Taylor noted, with a sly wink, "You can have fun in this town."

Paul R. Beers, a columnist for The Harrisburg Patriot-News, finds the city cloaked with "a Germanic stillness." People here are close-mouthed, he said, especially those with a German background, and so suspicious of strangers that antiwar petitions rarely get 500 signatures.

"We've never had a winning politician who took a position on the Vietnam war," Mr. Beers said.

Class Difference

"It depends on what class of society you talk to," Mr. Taylor contends.

"People out here," he said, waving in the direction of some fine old riverfront homes a block away from his fieldstone house on Second Street, "all support the President." But he added, "The poor people in Shypoke [a district where Mr. Taylor lived before he became affluent] are against the war because they don't want their sons drafted and because they want to live on relief."

Harrisburg wasn't always Germanic and dull. The original settlers were Scotch-Irish and fiercely independent. President Washington gave a speech here in 1794 and

called the natives "zealous and efficient patriots." It was a tongue-in-cheek observation; Washington knew that the natives were in full sympathy with the Whisky Rebellion.

Washington was riding to Pittsburgh on horseback when he made that speech in Harrisburg. He wanted to put down an uprising against the Government's tax on whisky. In those days, Americans were known to resort to arms against what they considered oppressive taxation. But the Whisky Rebellion was suppressed and Washington pardoned everybody.

Smarter Than Nixon

"Washington was smarter than Nixon; he dropped the case," Mr. Beers, the columnist, said, referring to the Nixon Administration's decision to prosecute the Harrisburg Seven.

The decision to try the case in Harrisburg rests on the Government's contention that Father Berrigan masterminded the kidnapping conspiracy from a jail cell at the Federal Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pa., where he was imprisoned at the time.

Only one of seven defendants is a native of Pennsylvania. He is Anthony Scoblick, 31, a former Josephite priest. Mr. Scoblick is of Italian and Irish background—the family name was originally Scopletti. He is a son of James Scoblick, who was a freshman Representative with Richard Nixon in 1947-49 and was the host for Mr. Nixon's first Lincoln Day dinner speech in 1947.

The Scoblicks are from Archbald, a coal mining town in the Lackawanna Valley above Scranton. The family owns a 7,000-acre mountain-side that Mr. Scoblick says is covered with scrub oak and blueberries.

Not Unfriendly

Mr. Scoblick has been living in Harrisburg for eight months with his wife, the former Mary Cain, 33, a former nun and a co-defendant in this trial. Mr. Scoblick says the residents have not been unfriendly.

"I spoke at the Lions Club and they were very nice," Mr. Scoblick said. "Mayor [Harold] Swenson told me he hoped the peace of Harrisburg would be undisturbed. I assured him that this was also our hope and intention."

Mr. Scoblick's home county of Lackawanna (Scranton) is not among the 11 counties from which the jurors will be chosen. Lackawanna is predominantly Roman Catholic. The other counties are heavily Protestant.

"WASP's have always run Harrisburg," a Protestant observer said. "They aren't

anti-Catholic but I can't say they are pro-Catholic, either."

"We now have our first Catholic district attorney and one of the six county judges is a Catholic," the observer continued. "But we never had a Catholic Mayor and we never sent a Catholic to Congress."

Agree on Vietnam

Mr. Scoblick says he does not fear a conservative jury. He said that his father, the former Republican member of Congress, was conservative but agreed with his son that the Vietnam war was a "waste" and a radical departure from the traditional conservative American policy of nonintervention.

Judge Herman will be trying his first major case since being named by President Nixon to the Federal bench. He was generally respected here as a fine Juvenile Court judge. He is 61, a native of Northumberland, Pa., and a graduate of Bucknell University and Cornell Law School. After serving as a Navy lieutenant in World War II, he practiced law here. In 1950 Mr. Taylor put him up for County Solicitor. Judge Herman has served one term in the state legislature. He fishes, hunts, pilots an airplane and has a license to make grape and elderberry wine.