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Historical Exhibits
at the
IRISH VILLAGE



A Century of Progress
Exposition

Chicago, Illinois

IRELAND'S place in the history of civilization is becoming more and more recognized by the world in general, as well as by the scholars. Therefore when the subject of an Irish Village at A Century of Progress Exposition was considered it seemed only fitting that this village should be designed to give to the world an accurate sketch of the Irish people, for that would include the history of the beginning of much, and the preservation of all our civilization. This may seem like an amazing claim but you will be amazed by many things in the Irish Village.

In the first place there has been no history so neglected and mis-handled as that of Ireland. It has been suppressed as has been the story of no other people in the history of the world. And yet here is what Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago had to say a few years ago in a public address.

After asserting that Ireland not only had saved culture and Christianity for the Western world, but also civilization itself, Dr. Hutchins said, "The early scholars of Europe, imbued with the learning of ancient Greece and Rome, were driven out by barbarian hordes as they overran the continent. Many learned men sought shelter and safety in the peace and quiet of the Irish Isle. They established schools and monasteries and attracted other scholars from the old empire. The birth of English literature is traced directly to the influence of the old Irish Monks. They entered England and taught the Saxons how to write. The earliest English manuscripts were written in the script of these ancient Irish scholars."

It is, then, the aim of the Irish Village to carry the visitor back to the beginning of history and give concrete evidence of how the Celt has carried the torch of civilization up from the dawn of time.

You will see a replica of St. Patrick's chair, ages old when he first used it. Nearby is the Leafail at which the ancient kings were crowned. Then there is an Ogham stone on which the Irish, or Scots as they were called then, inscribed an alphabet that is, as far as is known, the first alphabet invented by man. For the ancient Druids before the time of Christ were very learned men. How learned we can never know, for unfortunately, the great store of their knowledge about astronomy, agriculture, literature, history, government, and other sciences and arts has been lost through the oppression to which the Irish race was subjected for more than seven hundred years.

That the sages of ancient Ireland had recorded history much farther back than the times of which Herodotus told (484-425 B.C.) is fairly well proven by the Ogham stone. If this stone you see in the Irish Village could give its message as plainly to you as it could to the ancients who knew how to read the marks on it, undoubtedly you would be lifting the veil on a past so remote that the fall of Babylon would seem like yesterday's news.

Tara's Hall, the Capitol of Erin and home of the Ard Rhi, or high king of Ireland, was more than seven hundred and fifty feet long. It was forty-six feet wide and forty-five feet high. The replica you see in the Irish Village is not nearly so long but it is absolutely authentic in every other detail and gives a perfect picture of what many claim was the first real European wooden structure design which may be dignified by the name architecture.

The engineers and scholars who left Ireland from 500 A.D. on up into the Middle Ages for the purpose of recivilizing Western Europe carried with them this style of building and the old Roman architecture was ultimately developed into the Gothic design. This so-called Gothic design covered the remains of the empire laid waste by barbarians with those poems in stony lace which are the delight of the world.

See the shrine at the well of St. Bride and get the story. Her name is printed oftener than that of any other woman for it is now used as a common noun in a language that is spoken throughout the world. The word for a newly married woman traces directly back to this daughter of Erin.

Who discovered America? Some say Christopher Columbus; others say Leif Ericson. But there is no controversy over who put the idea in their heads. On Brendan Quay, which is the limit of the Irish Village to the East, is the replica of the bow of the ancient craft in which St. Brendan and a large company sailed the waters of the Atlantic for a voyage lasting many years. He set sail in 530 A.D. and seven years later came back with as strange a story as Columbus told on his return from the West Indies—and about the same fauna and flora. It is the Scandinavians, however, who give the strongest evidence supporting St. Brendan's discovery of the New World. The old Norse sagas called the land found by Ericson "Ireland mikla" or Greater Ireland. There were many books written about St. Brendan's

voyage long before Ericson and Columbus. They had a great vogue in the eighth, ninth, tenth and later centuries. In fact it would be impossible to prove that Brendan did not reach America.

The Irish Village shows replicas of many of the famous ruins of the abbeys which were the headquarters of the learning of Western Europe at a time when there were no schools of higher learning operating on the continent. Ancient castles and towers, reminiscent of the times when the Irish were struggling against the Normans, are depicted. Then the locales of more modern history, the homes of Emmet, Burke, O'Connell and others whose names have become forever famous in the battle for liberty and justice, also are to be seen.

There is more of the history of the human race packed in this Irish Village than in any one spot the same size in the world. And with all that there is plenty of the lighter side for which the Celt is famous—viz.: wit and song and dance. The Celts are given credit by the scholars for having actually invented poetry. A thousand years and more ago their bards performed the impossible in rhyme and music. It is not done so well by the best of our poets now, which explains why the ancient Irish airs are as fresh and meaningful today as they were when first they were strummed by the Celtic minstrels. They are all heard in the Irish Village. And seen are the dance steps that are the source of more merriment and gaiety than any modern innovation.

You will enjoy the show on the village green, filled as it is with the joy and comedy for which the Irish have ever been famous. No expense has been spared to make this spectacle a most memorable event of the World's Fair. The very best Irish talent has been engaged for the entertainment of the public.