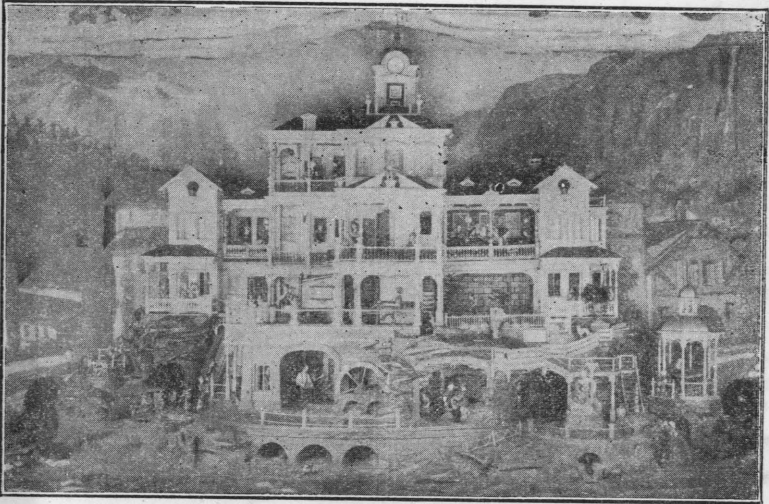


27

The Story of

BERGMANN'S SWISS VILLAGE



Now On Exhibit in the

German American Building

At

A Century of Progress

Chicago, Illinois

1933

PRICE — 25c

Legend

Lower Extreme Left—Beer garden and home brewery; lovers underneath the old apple tree; woman calling boy at window; carpenter climbing ladder, another repairing fence; scissors grinder; man and wife having an argument.

Lower Left Center—Linseed oil stamp mill with man carrying seed, another operating press and one filling barrels with oil.

Center—Man operating shaving horse (schnitzelbank).

Above—Flour and grist mill with man carrying grain; man dressing millstone.

Below—Grist hopper and man filling flour sacks; man carrying them away and elevator for hoisting grain.

Top Left—Man offering his fellow workman snuff; man operating smut mill.

Top Center—Bergmann himself seated at rest, being brought refreshments by a maid.

Right—Blacksmith shop and wheelwright.

Above—Flower garden, woman watering flowers which grow every six minutes.

Rear—Sawmill of upright jig-saw type; man operating saw and another sharpening a handspike; bookkeeper.

Upper Right—Shoemakers; lady having her measure taken by workman; one dressing a boot, another pounding sole leather, another making a waxed end thread.

Lower Extreme Right—Burgomaster in pavilion reading book, woodcutter and man breaking rock.

Figures—Cherubim with palette, Mermaid and boy fountains.

History of Swiss Village

The original Swiss Village has a long and interesting history. Completed in 1867 at Geneva, Switzerland, by Joseph Bergmann, who was born in Baden Baden, Germany, in 1799, and when a boy of ten years of age was apprenticed to the clock-learned wood carving and clock making, and where nearly all makers of the Black Forest District in Germany, where he of the work was done by hand, later he studied astronomy and migrated to Geneva, Switzerland, and was employed in making chronometers and astronomical instruments.

At the age of fifty he started to build the Swiss Village and labored long and hard until finally it was completed, in 1867, and shortly after its completion Bergmann lost his mind.

It was first shown at the Paris Exposition in 1867-8 and then it toured Europe for several years, and while being shown at the Crystal Palace Exposition in London, England, in 1871, Bergmann died at the age of seventy-two. To close his estate it was sold at public auction and bought by P. T. Barnum, the famous showman, who paid \$30,000.00 for it and who brought it to America, first exhibiting it in his New York Museum and later taking it on the road with the Barnum and Coup circus.

In 1876 Barnum sent it to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, where for six months it was shown in Machinery Hall and took in over \$100,000.00.

Then it went on tour again with the circus and made a complete tour of the world on one occasion.

Barnum entered into partnership with James A. Bailey in 1883 and disposed of his museum holdings to different showmen. The Swiss Village was sold to J. E. Warner of Lansing, Mich., who opened the first dime museum in Milwaukee in 1883, and the Swiss Village travelled extensively all over the United States at Fairs and Expositions and in the old Dime Museums. Finally it was placed in storage in Warner's barn in Lansing, Mich., and when Warner died was sold again for a very few dollars. Its new owner had placed it in a storage warehouse on North Shiawassee Street, near the Grand River, in Lansing, and while there it was completely covered by water in a flood in the spring of 1907. The owner looked at it and considering it as worthless told one of the workmen engaged in clearing out the warehouse to dispose of it in some manner and this man, Samuel Spencer, of 811 N. Kalamazoo Street, carted it to his home, where it lay neglected and forgotten for nearly a decade, until the Kempf Bros., of Capac, Mich., who now have it here and who found it through the agency of a want ad in the Lansing State Republican, which was read by Mr. Wm. Dudley of Lansing, bought it and rebuilt it throughout, and it has been shown all over the United States and Canada since 1916.

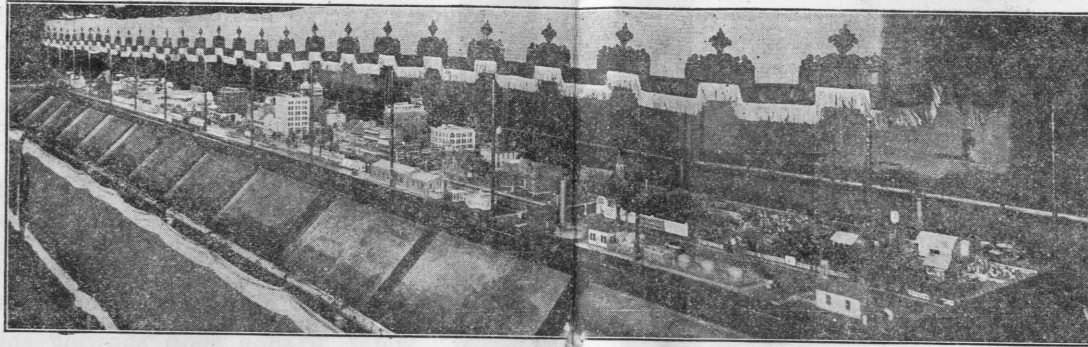
It is built to represent a mountain village high in the Alps mountains in Switzerland and is fourteen feet long and seven feet high. The base is carved of solid sprucewood to resemble rock and is quarried out to house the blacksmith shop and oil mill. The upper stories are surmounting these and house the grist and flour mill and sawmill. There are forty-three working figures, carved of wood, that go about their various tasks as natural as life. The mills are run by two old-fashioned overshot water wheels and the rest of the village originally was run by weights, but at present the power is supplied by a one-sixth horsepower electric motor, which also pumps the water to supply the mills and fountains.

There is an old-fashioned beer garden, fountains with playing water, a shoe shop showing shoemakers at their various tasks, a flower garden with growing flowers, a wood cutter and a man breaking rock. The burgomaster is seated in a pavilion reading the news to the burghers, a man and his wife are having an argument, a man seated on a schnitzelbank or shaving horse making grape sticks for holding up the vines, a boy and girl seated underneath the old apple tree engaged in earnest conversation, the old scissors grinder, carpenter repairing the building, the bookkeeper in the sawmill pouring over his books. Bergmann himself is seated on the upper balcony at rest, reading an almanac and being brought refreshments by a buxom young lady.

(Continued on Page 6)



History of Kempf Bros. Model Miniature City



The original Model City was the conception of an older brother, Fred S. Kempf, who at the age of 16 years started to build the first miniature city with street cars, automobiles, etc., in 1900. He visited the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1902 and gained a lot of ideas there that helped him in his work. It was completed in 1905 and was an instantaneous success. It toured the United States and Canada for ten years. Fred S. Kempf was the first showman to introduce motor transportation to shows and the Model City was the recognized peer of shows. With his death in 1915, when his city was destroyed, in a railroad accident near Columbus, Ga. (he and his wife lost their lives in the same accident), the two younger brothers

G. Bruce and Irving A. Kempf, took up the work, securing the Swiss Village for a small sum of money early in 1916 and adding to it their present Model City in 1920, which has since been much enlarged to its present size, as shown in the cut, of four by forty feet and a collection of other pieces from B. F. Keith's original Gaiety Mussee in Boston.

These attractions, together with the Swiss Village, have been shown in nearly every principal city in the United States and Canada, also in the larger theatres and department stores, both as paid and free attractions.

**Extracts From Sayings of Prominent Men Who Have
Visited the Swiss Village**

Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn, N. Y.—By it you learn wisdom and behold the mighty power with which God has endowed man.

Henry Ford, Detroit, Mich.—Educate the boy in mechanics and you will keep him out of mischief. (Visited the Swiss Village at Michigan State Fair at Detroit, September, 1919.)

Senator Joseph Ransdell, Lake Providence, La.—The greatest sight to be seen at the Louisiana State Fair, Shreveport, La., October 30, 1923.

All works of quality must bear a price in proportion to the skill and risk attending their invention and manufacture. Those things called dear are, when justly estimated, the cheapest.

They are attended with much less profit to the artist than those which everybody calls cheap. Beautiful forms and compositions are not made by chance.—Ruskin.
