

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Correspondence, White House Office of:
Records, 1981-89

Folder Title: Galways Quincentennial Year

Box: Box 75(1984)

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

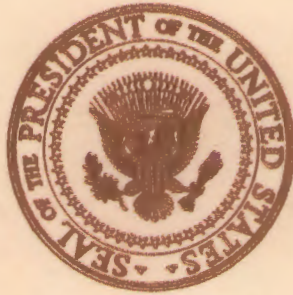
<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

Last Updated: 05/3/2023



Galway's Quincentennial Year, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Many Americans trace their heritage directly to Ireland. All Americans have benefitted greatly from the distinctive Irish cultural contribution, plus the creativity and enduring effort of Irish people from colonial days to the present.

Many Americans have a special affection for a city on Ireland's western shore, Galway, which this year celebrates its Quincentennial as a mayoral city. For many Americans, the song "Galway Bay" has a special place in their hearts. Even those not of Irish extraction are aware that this song encapsulates a bit of the history of Ireland and its proud culture, and serves as a reminder of what separation from a beloved land meant to many Irish emigrants in the United States.

The area of Galway has been inhabited since the thirteenth century. A Franciscan monastic centre was established in 1291 and served as a focus for scholarship and religious activities. The town grew in prominence, and its chief officer was granted the rank of Mayor in 1484. Historically, Galway's relative geographical isolation from the central seat of English power fostered a spirit of independence, which it has nurtured to this day. Galway's importance as an international trading center gave medieval Galway a cosmopolitan flavor, perhaps unique in Ireland. Tradition has it that Christopher Columbus and many other explorers visited Galway on one of their voyages.

Medieval Galway developed into a de facto city-state, ruled by a merchant oligarchy, the famous "tribes." Galway's history is a rich one involving trading and cultural contributions from many nations and the more direct impact of the Normans and the English. Pre-Cromwellian Galway became an important seat of learning, boasting the famous free school founded by the Lynch family. This was swept away in the havoc caused by Cromwell's forces in 1652 and marked the end of Galway's Golden Age.

The Williamite wars, brought to an end by the Treaty of Limerick in 1691, added further to the decline of the city. The greatest calamity of all to befall the city was the great famine of 1846-47, which seemed to mark the end and to relegate the city to the level of country town. The Seaport, which had once rung with the laughter of many tongues in better days, now echoed with the wails of country- and city-folk alike as they left the city for the last time on board the dreaded coffin ships headed for North America.

The darkness of the nineteenth century gave way to a century bright with prospects for the city of Galway. The new Irish state encouraged Galway's growth as a university city and industrial center, and once again the city began to expand and develop. Today, Galway is a modern and thriving city, a center of culture, learning and industry. The "city of the tribes," which has given so much to Irish culture and history, rightly enjoys the admiration of all who have a special affection for Ireland.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby recognize Galway's Quincentennial Year, 1984. I call upon the people of the United States to join in celebrating and honoring Galway's Quincentennial with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan