

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NA LOCHLANNAIGH

THE VIKINGS

Nótaí le dul leis an stiallscannán den ainm céanna.
Notes to accompany the filmstrip of the same title.

Stiallscannán agus Nótaí arna gcur amach ag

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS,
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 1.

Filmstrip and Notes issued by

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
DUBLIN 1.

NA LOCHLANNAIGH

THE VIKINGS

Cuireadh na frámaí don stiallscannán seo ar fáil ag

AN MÚSAEM NÁISIÚNTA,
AMBASÁID RÍOGA NA DANMHAIRGE,
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH,
INSTITIÚID NÁISIÚNTA NA SCANNÁN.

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An Roinn Oideachais, Baile Átha Cliath, 1974.

THE VIKINGS*

The Vikings, whose descent on these shores caused such terror and dismay, did not confine their piratical activities to the coasts of Ireland and Britain. Prior to its decimation by plague in 892 the "Great Army" of the Vikings had been, for thirteen years, the scourge of the Low Countries and of north eastern France; they sailed further south to raid the settlements on the coasts of Spain and Portugal and, passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, they plundered the Mediterranean littoral as far as Italy.

The Vikings were much more, however, than the fierce sea-raiders of popular opinion. Their sagas and stories reflect, in heightened form, a people with a formidable appetite for adventure and exploration. They were among the most skilful shipbuilders and navigators of their age as well as being its most daring sailors. They sailed westward to the Orkneys and farther west to Iceland (where there were already Irish monks) and westward still to the Greenland shore. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that they sailed southwest from Greenland to the mainland of North America thus to become, perhaps, the first Europeans to set foot on that continent. Certainly such a feat was not beyond their skill or their daring.

*Vikings - the sea-rovers from Norway, Sweden and Denmark whose activities commenced towards the end of the eighth century and ended in the latter half of the twelfth. Scholars do not agree on the derivation of the word but many accept that it derives from the Norse word "vik" which means a creek or inlet. The term "Viking" occurs in the literature of Scandinavian countries but in Ireland they were known as Gaill or Lochlannaigh, in England as Dani, in France as Normannai while in Eastern Europe and parts of Western Asia the Swedish Vikings were known as Rus. (c.f. Brnstead "The Vikings" (Pelican) - pp. 36 - 39).

