



Columbus Day 2025



ChristopherColumbus.org

Cover Image:

Portrait of Christopher Columbus by Unknown european artist, oil on canvas, 1519. the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City

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THE NATION'S CAPITAL
CELEBRATES
533 Years of Discovery



HONORING THE GREAT DISCOVERER

Christopher Columbus

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2025
THE COLUMBUS MEMORIAL
COLUMBUS PLAZA - UNION STATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

10:45 a.m. - Musical Prelude | 11:00 a.m. - Ceremony Begins

SPONSORED BY THE
NATIONAL CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ASSOCIATION

CELEBRATING CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

THE SITE

In the years following the great 1892 quadricentennial (400th anniversary) celebration of the achievements and discoveries of Christopher Columbus, an effort was launched by the Knights of Columbus in the District of Columbia to establish a monument in the nation's capital to the great discoverer. At their urging, Congress passed a law mandating a memorial, appropriating \$100,000 to cover costs. A commission was established composed of the secretaries of State and War, the chairmen of the House and Senate Committees on the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus. With the new Union Station completed in 1907, plans focused on putting the memorial in the plaza in front of this great edifice.

After a series of competitions, sculptor Lorado Z. Taft of Chicago was commissioned. His plan gave us what you see today: a monument of Georgia marble, a semi-circular fountain 66 feet by 44 feet, and in the center a pylon crowned with a globe supported by four eagles connected by a garland. A 15-foot statue of Columbus, facing the U. S. Capitol and wrapped in a medieval mantle, stands in front of the pylon in the bow of a ship with its prow extending into the upper basin of the fountain and terminating with a winged figurehead representing democracy. Flanking Columbus are two seated allegorical figures. To his left, representing the Old World, is a patriarchal figure resting his arms upon a shield and grasping a crumpled map, while to his right, representing the New World, is a pre-Columbian figure (American Indian) crouching behind his crude shield and reaching for an arrow. On the rear of the large pylon is a double medallion picturing the Spanish monarchs King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Set at the extremes of the axis of the balustrade are couchant lions. Three towering flagpoles rise behind the monument representing the historic ships of 1492, the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria.

Classic-columned lampposts in front of Union Station feature replicas of ships on their cross-axis near the base mounts.

Daniel Burnham, who designed Union Station, had been the major coordinating architect of the 1892-1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. His work launched the "City Beautiful" movement, to transform major cities, especially our nation's capital, into a series of well-landscaped neo-classical places, expressing confidence in our Republic during the 1890 period. The Columbus Fountain and Taft's Columbus statue were influenced in part by Frederick MacMonnies' fountain at the World's Columbian Exhibition.

Dedication of the new memorial took place on June 8, 1912 in the presence of President Taft and was accompanied by an elaborate three-day celebration organized by the Knights of Columbus that brought a reported 47,000 Knights and their families and others to the capital—115,000 in all. The photo on our title page shows the monument in its gleaming whiteness. The unveiling ceremonies were followed by a mammoth three-mile-long parade, viewed by 300,000 people according to newspaper accounts.

TODAY'S CEREMONY

Throughout the years, fraternal, civic and cultural organizations provided leadership for an annual Columbus Day ceremony at the site. For some years now, in collaboration with the National Park Service, the ceremony has been organized each year by the National Christopher Columbus Association (NCCA), established in 1989 to plan the celebration in the Quincentenary and subsequent years. It brings in many attendees from other parts of the country each year. Over the years, appearances of military honor guards, military bands, and the Knights of Columbus Color Corps have added to the pageantry.

Reading of the annual presidential proclamation, remarks by members of the diplomatic corps, the awarding of a national essay contest prize (sponsored by NIAF and NCCA), reading of the essay by the winner, and wreath-laying by embassies and many national and local patriotic groups constitute the program, which is open to the public free of charge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Christopher Columbus Association expresses its gratitude to the following for their timely efforts, for the success of this celebration:

The Lido Club of Washington for their support of the ceremony and Civic Ceremony on Sunday, October 12, 2025.

Vice Supreme Master **Francis Leach**, of the Calvert Province, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, for his support in making the National Columbus Day Celebration a Provincial event; **Kelly Mortensen**, Master, Virginia District; **Christopher Powers**, Master, Archdiocese of Washington District; and **James Duryee**, Master of the Maryland District.

Keith Amburzey and the **Honor America Corps** for the appearance of the 27 historical official American flags.

The National Park Service for their coordination and support.

Officers and staff of the U.S. Park Police.

D.C. College Councils of the Knights of Columbus, especially The Catholic University of America Council 9542, for serving as ushers at the ceremony.

The National Italian American Foundation for its generous support to the National Christopher Columbus Essay Contest.

Duane J. Lomis for archival videography.

Joseph Scafetta, Jr. for writing this year's Featured Article and reviewing the program book.

Amanda's Arrangements for supplying many of the wreathes for today's presentation.

The Knights of Columbus Office of Communications in New Haven, CT for the printing of this book and for providing photographic services.

CIVIC CEREMONY PROGRAM

Sponsored by
NATIONAL CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ASSOCIATION
in cooperation with the
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL MALL & MEMORIAL PARKS
Monday, October 13, 2025
COLUMBUS PLAZA — UNION STATION

MUSICAL PRELUDE 10:45 a.m.

POSTING OF THE COLORS 11:00 a.m.

Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Color Corps
*The Supreme Master with the Calvert Province Districts of
Washington Archdiocese, Maryland, and Virginia
Columbus Expeditionary Banner, with Christopher Columbus*

NATIONAL ANTHEMS Spain, Italy,
United States of America

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Julius D. Jackson
Board Member, NCCA

RETIRING OF THE COLORS

INVOCATION Most Rev. Juan Antonio Cruz Serrano
*Permanent Observer of the Holy See
to the Organization of American States*

WELCOME Christopher Pierno
Vice President, NCCA

READING OF PROCLAMATION James P. McCusker
From the President of the *Immediate Past President, NCCA*
United States of America

REMARKS

Knights of Columbus
National Park Service
Diplomatic Corps

INTRODUCTION

National Youth Columbus Essay Contest Winner

Samantha Anselmo - Glendale, NY

Essay Contest Co-Sponsored By

THE NATIONAL CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ASSOCIATION &
THE NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION

RECOGNITION
AND PRESENTATIONS

National Italian American Foundation
National Christopher Columbus Association

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

"America, the Beautiful"
Samuel Augustus Ward, lyrics by Katherine Lee Bates

PRESENTATION OF MEMORIAL WREATHS

National Christopher Columbus Association
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
Embassy of Spain
Embassy of Italy
National Italian American Foundation
Supreme Council Knights of Columbus
District of Columbia State Council, Knights of Columbus
Maryland State Council, Knights of Columbus
Virginia State Council, Knights of Columbus
Washington Council #224, Knights of Columbus

Lido Civic Club of Washington, DC
Italian American Museum of Washington, DC
National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution
District of Columbia State Society, Daughters of the American
Revolution
Centro Español de Washington, DC
National Society Daughters of the American Colonists
National Society Children of the American Colonists
Roma Lodge #71, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America
Italian Heritage Lodge of Fairfax #2517, Order Sons and Daughters of
Italy in America
National Council for the Promotion of Italian Language and Culture
in America
Abruzzo & Molise Heritage Society of the Washington, DC Area
UNICO Virginia/DMV

CLOSING HYMN (AUDIENCE)

“God Bless America”

Irving Berlin

GOD BLESS AMERICA, Land that I love,
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam,
GOD BLESS AMERICA, My home sweet home.

MUSICAL POSTLUDE

“The Stars and Stripes Forever”

John Philip Sousa



Call for Entries

2025 – 2026 Essay Contest



*The National Christopher Columbus Association
along with
The National Italian-American Foundation*

are pleased to announce co-sponsorship of an essay contest featuring Christopher Columbus open to all students in grades 9 through 12.

2025-2026 TOPIC

As the United States approaches its Semiquincentennial in 2026, we reflect on the bold ideals that have shaped our nation - freedom, innovation and the pursuit of opportunity.

Long before America's founding, Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage symbolized a courageous leap into the unknown. How did Columbus's voyages and spirit of exploration reflect the values that would later define the American identity?

One essay is selected as the national winner. Second and third place winners are also selected. Judging at the national level is conducted by the National Italian American Foundation.

The **national winner** will receive \$1,200 from the NIAF in addition to paid lodging and transportation to Washington, D.C. in October 2025 for the winner and one parent or guardian. The national winner must read the prize-winning essay at the Columbus Memorial, Washington, DC on Columbus Day (October 13, 2025). The second-place winner will receive \$500, and the third-place winner will receive \$300.

FORM

Essay must be submitted in a typed format using black type in non-script 12 point font. Each essay must have a title page listing the following: Title of essay, the contestant's full name and address, telephone number (with area code), email address, school name and grade level, and the number of words in the essay. A bibliography of sources used in preparing the essay should be attached. Published, scholarly references are preferred.

This contest is administered by the National Italian American Foundation.

For further information about this contest contact:

Julia Streisfeld Kennedy
Director of Scholarships, Grants and Youth Engagement

The National Italian American Foundation
1860 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 939-3114 | Email: jkennedy@niaf.org

WINNING ESSAY



Samantha Anselmo
Glendale, NY

The Columbian Exchange: A Culinary Revolution Across Oceans

Imagine a bustling 15th-century European marketplace filled with lively chatter and fresh aromas of exotic produce. Traders and merchants displaying goods like shimmering cacao beans and vibrant tomatoes, and exotic spices like pepper and cinnamon. Christopher Columbus's voyages initiated this exchange, connecting Europe and the Americas. The Columbian Exchange refers to the transfer of plants, animals, culture, human populations, technology, and ideas between the Americas and the Old World following Columbus's travels in 1492. Old World staples like wheat, rice, barley, sugar, coffee, and bananas were introduced to the New World. In contrast, New World crops such as potatoes, tomatoes, and maize became central to European diets. The arrival of cattle and horses further changed lifestyles, enhancing transport and farming capabilities. Overall, the Columbian Exchange marked a turning point in history, connecting distinct cultures and transforming the culinary landscapes of both the New and Old Worlds. The introduction of key crops and spices paved the way for diverse culinary traditions that continue to shape our world today.

Before Columbus set foot in the New World, the culinary landscape of the Americas was vastly different from what it would become after 1492. The Indigenous people relied on native plants and animals without knowledge of European crops or livestock. They did not cultivate Old World grains like wheat but instead grew maize, beans, and squash, forming the foundation of their nutrition. In his book, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Alfred W. Crosby highlights the contrasts between Indigenous and European food systems. Crosby noted that unlike Europeans,

who relied on domesticated animals for meat and labor, Indigenous people had “no animal that he rode...no beast of burden to be compared to the horse, ass, or ox” (Crosby 74). Their protein sources primarily came from wild game, fish, and small animals like guinea pigs. European expeditions introduced livestock such as cattle, sheep, and horses, bringing dairy products like milk and cheese into diets that previously lacked these foods. Meanwhile, Indigenous peoples had relied on crops like maize and potatoes, with evidence suggesting that potatoes have been consumed for over 13,000 years in southern Chile.

Following Columbus’s arrival, the Spanish introduction of Old World crops and animals reshaped agricultural practices and food systems in the Americas. Significant commodities included wheat, which quickly adapted to various climates, ensuring food security for settlers. By the seventeenth century, wheat had become widely cultivated, ensuring a steady supply of bread throughout the colonies and helping to prevent an early starvation crisis in Hispaniola. In contrast, grape cultivation faced challenges, as the climate was unsuitable for high-quality production, though some success emerged in regions like Argentina. Bananas thrived upon introduction, rapidly becoming a key staple due to their adaptability and abundance in warm climates. Additionally, rice, brought by the Spanish, flourished in humid areas and became an important dietary and economic component. Livestock, particularly pigs and cattle, had profound impacts as they adapted quickly and became essential sources of meat, driving the development of ranching economies across regions like Mexico and Brazil. Collectively, these introductions reshaped diets, influenced colonial economies, and left a lasting legacy on agricultural practices in the Americas.

The adoption of American crops, particularly in China and Europe, illustrates the enduring legacy of the exchange of crops from the New World to the Old World and its role in global agricultural history. As Charles C. Mann notes in *1493 Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, “No previous trade networks included both of the globe’s two hemispheres; nor had they operated on a scale large enough to disrupt societies on opposite sides of the planet” (7). This observation highlights how the exchange connected previously isolated regions and altered their agricultural landscapes. Among the most significant beneficiaries of this exchange were the Chinese, “No large group of the human race in the Old World was quicker to adopt American food plants than the Chinese” (Crosby 199). This rapid adoption demonstrates the adaptability of Chinese farmers, who integrated crops like sweet potatoes, maize, peanuts,

tobacco, chili peppers, and pineapples into their agricultural systems. Crosby emphasizes the transformative power of maize, asserting that “If maize were the only gift the American Indian ever presented to the world, he would deserve undying gratitude” (171). The introduction of these crops led to significant agricultural changes in China, with sweet potatoes and maize becoming essential crops. After World War II, the prevalence of sweet potatoes increased to satisfy the country’s dietary needs. In Northern Europe, potatoes helped reduce famine, enhancing food security and contributing to an estimated 25 percent increase in population over a couple of centuries.

The Columbian Exchange transformed the culinary landscape across the world, particularly regarding spices. In Tom Standage’s *An Edible History of Humanity*, he highlights how voyages of exploration opened up global trade networks for spices like pepper, cinnamon, and cloves. Regarded as exotic treasures, these spices were held at high value in European markets. Explorer Vasco da Gama’s trip to India in 1498 demonstrated the potential of European powers to gain direct access to spices, apart from Muslim trade networks. As he sought to monopolize this lucrative trade, King Manuel of Portugal declared, “all Christendom in this part of the world shall be provided with these spices” (Standage 93). Although da Gama returned with a small quantity, his journey marked a radical shift in the flow of trade. King Manuel wanted control of the spices and to divert it away from Muslim hands. As the real sources of these spices became more widely known, they moved from rare luxuries to everyday ingredients. In the late 17th century, the Portuguese succeeded in dominating much of the trade in spices, but their efforts at monopolizing it were generally unsuccessful due to the huge size of the Indian Ocean. The Dutch East India Company soon acquired the spice islands. Consequently, spices were more abundant and affordable, and therefore devalued. Standage asserts that Vasco da Gama’s trip demonstrated that the European powers could circumvent the Muslim trade channels and have direct access to spices.

The Columbian Exchange has significantly reshaped global culinary landscapes by connecting the Americas with the Old World and introducing a diverse array of crops and livestock. This transformation is evident in the integration of ingredients such as potatoes, maize, and sweet potatoes in diets across Europe and Asia, showcasing the profound cultural connections formed through food. The introduction of spices like pepper, cinnamon, and cloves also played a crucial role, initially regarded as rare luxuries soon becoming

commonplace. In the Americas, Old World goods like wheat, rice, and bananas transformed diets, while livestock such as cattle and sheep enriched culinary practices. Today, it's easy to take these ingredients for granted. Imagine Italian cuisine without tomatoes or the countless dishes that rely on spices we now buy effortlessly at the supermarket. Each dish we prepare not only reflects individual tastes but also tells a story of adaptation and connection across cultures, reminding us that our food choices are deeply rooted in a shared global history.

Bibliography

Crosby, Alfred W. *The Columbian Exchange Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Greenwood Press, 1972.

Mann, Charles C. *1493 Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2011

Standage, Tom. *An Edible History of Humanity*. Walker Publishing Inc, 2009.

Essay Winner Biography

Samantha Anselmo is an incoming freshman at NYU's Stern School of Business, where she plans to major in Finance. In high school, she founded her own tutoring business to support younger students in math and reading. What began as a small idea grew into a self-run venture with 10 active students, teaching her valuable lessons in leadership, communication, and entrepreneurship.

Samantha is also a semi-professional salsa dancer, performing regularly with her team at national festivals and showcases. Dance has been a significant part of her life, enabling her to express herself artistically, build confidence, and remain connected to her cultural roots. Her passion for business was sparked by a financial services internship where she worked on payroll, budgeting, and spreadsheet analytics. She served as Treasurer of the National Honor Society and as a Campus Life Leader, helping organize school events and mentor younger students.

Her interests stretch far beyond finance and performance. A lover of nature and the outdoors, Samantha enjoys hiking, kayaking, and discovering new green spaces in NYC. She has a deep affection for animals and shares a close bond with her Siberian husky.

Her faith and community involvement have always been important to her. She's deeply involved in her church community as a Sunday school assistant teacher, where she uses crafts and storytelling to bring lessons to life.

The National Christopher Columbus Association



Annual Columbus Day celebrations have been held at the Columbus Memorial and Fountain at Columbus Plaza in Washington, D.C. ever since it was unveiled in 1912.

In 1989, a permanent organization, the Washington Columbus Celebration Association, was formed in order to plan the observance of the forthcoming Quincentenary anniversary in 1992, and to put the annual ceremonies on a firmer footing with permanent sponsorship.

Ten years later, the name of the organization was changed to the National Columbus Celebration Association.

In August of 2013, a proposal to change the organization's name to the **National Christopher Columbus Association** was approved and the new name became effective in 2014. The change reflects a decision to broaden the organization's focus in the areas of education and scholarship, taking its involvement beyond the annual Columbus Day activities in the nation's capital.

The Association invites individuals and organizations who identify with its purposes to become members, and an application may be found elsewhere in this booklet. The bylaws of the NCCA state that "The Association seeks to honor not only the memory of Columbus and his historic achievement in linking the Old World and the New, but also the higher values that motivated him in his efforts and trials."

Become a Member of the NCCA

The NCCA, in cooperation with the National Park Service, continues this tradition each Columbus Day by conducting the official Columbus Day celebration in our nation's capital city in front of the magnificent Columbus Statue and Fountain outside Union Station. We are supported in this endeavor by the National Italian American Foundation, Knights of Columbus, Lido Civic Club, Order Sons of Italy in America, Embassies of Italy, Spain, and many other patriotic and heraldic organizations.

In addition to conducting the annual Columbus Day ceremony, the NCCA is engaged in efforts to restore the Statue and Fountain while also supporting educational efforts and programs to further the public's knowledge of Christopher Columbus, his voyages, and his impact on the world and its relevancy today.

Our challenges are many. The Columbus Statue and Fountain are in need of renovation and we are working closely with the National Park Service to see that funding will be made available. There are efforts to remove or rename Columbus Day in various jurisdictions around the country. We strive to be active in opposing those proposals. There has been much misunderstanding of the true history of Columbus. We are working with academics and others to promote more accurate portrayals of the legacy of Columbus.

We cannot do these things without our members. We ask you to join us – not only for the needed and greatly appreciated dues and donations; but for the credibility we need to demonstrate the strength of the NCCA. All dues and donations to the NCCA are fully tax deductible as allowed by law. Thank you for your support.

You can join online at christophercolumbus.org, by scanning the QR code, or by tearing off and mailing in the slip below to our mailing address.

Annual dues (please check the appropriate box):

Individual Member **\$25.00** Organizational Member **\$75.00**
(business, professional, nonprofit, patriotic or fraternal)

Please print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on the certificate:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____ E-mail _____

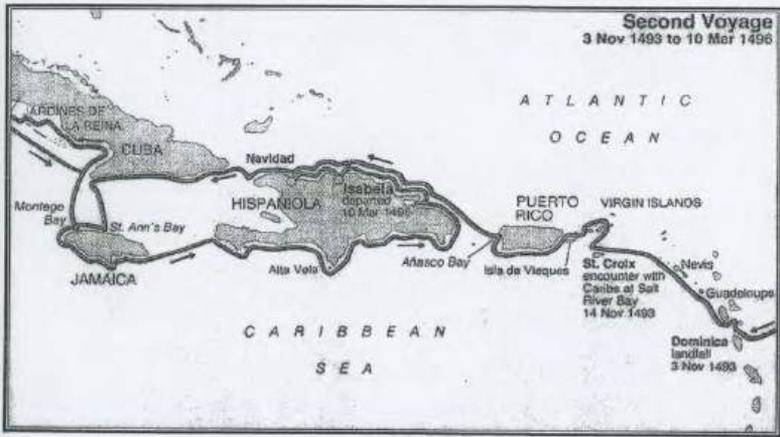
Mail your completed application with payment to:

National Christopher Columbus Association
PO Box 91187
Washington, DC 20090-1187



The NCCA is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

FEATURED ARTICLE



The Second Voyage, Part 2: Exploration By Joseph Scafetta, Jr.

In the program booklet for last year, I wrote about the first part of the second voyage of Columbus to America. The first part was about colonization. The second part was about exploration which I am writing about this year.

Columbus and three of the 17 ships in the fleet of his second voyage left his second settlement of Isabela on April 24, 1494, sailing westward along the northern coast of Hispaniola, past the ruins of his first settlement at La Navidad (The Nativity). After five days, they crossed the Windward Passage separating Hispaniola from Cuba and reached the easternmost cape of Cuba. The ships then sailed westwardly along the southern coast of Cuba.

On April 30, 1494, they landed at Guantanamo Bay where the crew shared a feast with friendly natives. From the local cacique (chief), Columbus learned about the existence of another large island to the south.

Departing two days later, the tiny fleet discovered Jamaica on May 4, 1494, anchoring in St. Ann's Bay. Finding the natives friendly but not helpful, Columbus sailed off in a westerly direction along the northern coast of Jamaica to Rio Bueno (Good River). When Columbus sent several small boats towards the shore, the natives attacked. However, crossbowmen killed several of them, and the natives retreated. Although he realized that this part of Jamaica was inhospitable, Columbus continued along the northern coast until he reached

Montego Bay. At that point, he set sail northwardly back to Cuba.

On May 15, 1494, Columbus sighted a group of smaller islands which he called El Jardín de la Reina (the Garden of the Queen). From there, he changed direction and sailed northwestwardly along the southern coast of Cuba. Although the natives encountered along the beaches were friendly, they had no gold and could not tell him how to find China.

After a month, Columbus concluded that Cuba must be a peninsula of the mainland of Asia and not an island as he originally thought in 1492 because it was so long. Before turning back, he made every man swear a written oath to that same conclusion. When he decided to reverse course on June 13, 1494, he was only 50 miles from the westernmost point of Cuba.

Since they were sailing against the wind and the current on the return trip, it took Columbus 25 days to make 200 miles and then another ten days to make the next 180 miles. Upon reaching the southernmost cape of Cuba, Columbus decided to sail south again to Jamaica because of the constant reference of the Cuban natives to gold there.

On July 21, 1494, the tiny fleet returned to Montego Bay. Sailing westwardly again, they soon rounded the most western cape of the island and began traveling eastwardly along its southern coast. Although they found some friendly natives who wore large disks of gold as jewelry, they told him that the gold came from the mainland far to the west.

However, since his ships needed repairs, Columbus decided to return to Isabela. So, the fleet continued eastwardly along the southern coast of Jamaica until they reached the easternmost cape of the island on August 17, 1494. They next crossed the Westward Passage separating Jamaica from Hispaniola and reached the southwestern cape of Hispaniola.

Continuing eastwardly along the southern shore of Hispaniola, they passed Alta Vela (High Sail) which is the southernmost cape of the island. Looking for a better site for a capital city than Isabela, Columbus picked a location which he named Santo Domingo in honor of his late father Domenico. It would become the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Americas.

There he dropped off a nine-man party which he ordered to cross the island by foot with instructions to tell the 450 men at the interior fort of Santo Tomas to relocate to Santo Domingo. The nine men did so and continued to Isabela to announce the return of the exploratory fleet.

Meanwhile, Columbus continued his sea route around the eastern end of the island and along the northern coast until he encircled the entire island. He and his fleet of three ships returned to Isabela on September 29, 1494.

However, the 43-year-old Columbus was so sick from arthritis and suffering a nervous breakdown that he had to be carried ashore. Mentally, he was a changed man because of the disappointment from this unsuccessful search for gold.

Nevertheless, upon his arrival, Columbus was overjoyed to find that his closest brother Bartolomeo had come three months earlier with three ships and supplies. His brother also brought a friendly letter from the Spanish sovereigns and news that many negative reports were made by the 600 dissatisfied colonists who had returned to Spain seven months earlier.

Bartolomeo further told Columbus that Lieutenant Margarit, the commander at Santo Tomas, and Fray Buyl, who had failed to convert any natives, had seized Bartolomeo's three ships and had returned to Spain with the gold which they had found. Unbeknownst to the Columbus brothers, Margarit and his henchmen secretly sold the gold upon their arrival in Spain without giving either a 20% share to the monarchs or a 10% share to Columbus. They also made negative reports to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela about Columbus' administration of the colony.

A month later, Captain Antonio de Torres returned from Spain to Isabela with four caravels loaded with supplies and more colonists. He also carried a letter from the monarchs instructing Columbus not to send any cannibalistic Caribs back to Spain. The king and queen also asked him to leave Hispaniola in charge of his brother or someone else and return to Spain to help in the territorial Tordesillas Treaty negotiations with Portugal.

To provide a profitable export to take back to Spain with him, Columbus began to round up and jail the Taino natives who had resisted him. Instead of man-eating Caribs, he decided to ship the hostile Tainos as prisoners of war, particularly since the amount of gold collected for the monarchs was short of the cost to outfit the second voyage.

On February 24, 1494, de Torres left with his four caravels to return to Spain. However, instead of going himself, Columbus sent his youngest brother Giacomo. The fleet also carried as slaves 500 Tainos packed 125 in each ship. Unbeknownst to Columbus, 200 of the tropical naked natives died of exposure during this winter crossing of the cold northern Atlantic Ocean.

Upon their arrival at Seville, about 150 of the 300 surviving natives were sea sick. Nevertheless, all of them were soon sold on the auction block. Andres Bernaldez, a clerical chronicler, recorded that they were “not very profitable since almost all died, for the country did not agree with them.” Unfortunately, they had no immunity against European diseases.

Meanwhile, back in Isabela, on March 27, 1495, Columbus led 200 infantry men, half of them armed with muskets, 20 cavalry men on horseback, and 20 fierce mastiff hounds against a cacique (chief) named Guatiguana who had collected a formidable army of thousands of natives in a central part of the island called Vega Real (Royal Fertile Lowland). To avoid a repeat of the massacre at La Navidad, Columbus decided to attack before the natives could organize their assault on Isabela. When Captain Alonso de Ojeda charged at the head of the cavalry and simultaneously unleashed the savage mastiffs, the infantry men began firing their muskets into the air. Alarmed by the horsemen, dogs, and gun fire, the Tainos fled in fear. De Ojeda followed up the victory by capturing Caonabo, who had destroyed La Navidad. Next, Ojeda subdued the forces of Caonabo’s brother-in-law who was the last hostile cacique on the island. His territory was Xaragua in southwestern Hispaniola.

During May 1495, Columbus built three more forts, besides Isabela in the north and Santo Tomas in the center. They were constructed in other parts of the island to be sure that the natives stayed subdued.

He also instituted a system whereby each native male over the age of 14 was required, on pain of death, to find enough gold every three months to fill a small hawk’s bell. Although this amount did not seem like very much and the time appeared to be generous, Columbus did not know that there was not enough gold on the island to meet this demand. As a result, many natives committed suicide by eating the poisonous cassava plant. Others fought a guerrilla war, adopting a scorched earth policy, to deny crops to the Spaniards. Instead, over the next eight months, many natives died of hunger caused by a famine that resulted from the lack of food. For the Tainos, the men from heaven had turned into the men from hell.

During June 1495, a hurricane hit Isabela, destroying the San Juan, the Cardera, and a third ship anchored there. Only the Nina survived. However, from the wreckage of the three ships, Columbus was able to construct a second ship which he called the India that was like the Nina.

In October 1495, four caravels arrived from Spain under the command of Juan Aguado. He was sent by the monarchs to conduct a judicial investigation of the behavior of Columbus because of the negative reports that

had been made to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela by the disaffected colonists who had returned from Hispaniola.

Before heeding the royal orders conveyed by Aguado to return to Spain, Columbus and his brother Bartolomeo completed the subjugation of the natives. Thus, he could report that a Spaniard could safely go wherever he pleased on the island. He placed his brother Bartolomeo in charge of the remaining 630 colonists. He also told his brother to abandon the fort at Isabela and relocate the capital city to Santo Domingo. Thus, Columbus could report that the malaria-plagued Isabela was no longer a problem because of the relocation of the capital.

Finally, after six more months of delay, on March 10, 1496, Columbus left for Spain in his favored Nina with the newly built India. The two caravels Nina and India were dangerously overcrowded with 225 Spaniards and 30 native slaves including the cacique Caonabo. Normally, each ship was designed to carry a maximum of 50 men.

Instead of taking a northeastern route and following the trade winds as he did when he returned to Spain at the end of his first voyage, Columbus decided this time to take a more eastwardly route. He quickly learned that he had made a big navigational mistake. It took the two ships 12 days to reach the most eastern cape of Hispaniola. It took another two weeks to reach Guadeloupe.

There he decided to obtain a supply of native provisions. His shore party was met by a band of Carib women armed with bows and arrows. The Spaniards concluded that this place must be the fabled Island of the Amazons which the Tainos had described. Although no one was killed, the Spaniards captured ten women and three young boys. Two of the women were the wife and daughter of the local cacique. When their men returned shortly from a hunting trip, Columbus traded eight of the women and the three boys for provisions which included bread. However, he kept the cacique's wife and daughter, claiming that they had volunteered to go to Spain to see the monarchs there.

On April 20, 1496, the Nina and the India departed from Guadeloupe. Since they were sailing into the wind, the ships made very slow progress. After a month of not reaching land, everyone was put on rations of six ounces of bread and one cup of fresh water per day. At this point, one group of famished Spaniards proposed to Columbus that they kill and eat the 32 natives on board. Another group suggested that the natives be killed and thrown overboard to save

rations. During the debate, Caonabo died of exposure, and his body was thrown overboard.

While Columbus was considering his limited options, the ships caught a strong breeze south of the Azore Islands and made landfall on the coast of Portugal about 35 miles north of the Saint Vincent Cape on June 8, 1496. After three more days, the last leg of the second voyage of Columbus to America ended on June 11, 1496, where it had begun in the bay of Cadiz. It had taken 52 days to return from Guadeloupe. People on the dock were surprised by the emaciated appearance of the men on board the two ships.

Two years and nine months had passed since the Admiral's largest fleet of 17 ships had departed from Cadiz on his longest voyage with high hopes and great expectations. Unfortunately, neither the hopes nor the expectations were met, as evidenced by the physical condition of Columbus, the returning Spaniards, and the native slaves on the two small caravels. Although he was discouraged, Columbus was determined as the viceroy of all lands that he had discovered to return to Hispaniola on a third voyage.

In the program booklet for next year, I will write about the third voyage of Columbus.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Scafetta Jr. has been an attorney since 1972 and a member of the National Christopher Columbus Association since 1995. He has served three three-year terms on its Executive Board. He is also a member of the Fairfax-based Italian Heritage Lodge which is a branch of the Order Sons & Daughters of Italy in America, which he joined in 1979. He served as the president of the Avanti Italiani Lodge (1981-83) in Alexandria and was the state president of the Grand Lodge of Virginia (1993-95). He served on the Grand Lodge Council for 24 continuous years from 1984 to 2007. Since 2008, he has been a member of the Abruzzo-Molise Heritage Society which he now serves as its secretary.

Beginning in 1997, he was a history columnist for the monthly *Fra Noi (Among Us)* magazine published for Italian Americans in the Chicago area. During his tenure, which lasted until 2006, he wrote eight columns about various time frames in the life of Columbus. In the Fall 2005 issue of the *Italian America Magazine*, he had published a lead article entitled "Columbus & the Indians: Friend or Foe?" His last publication was a book entitled "The True & Complete Story of Christopher Columbus" which was released by the Columbia Press Co. in 2007. It sold out. He is now semi-retired, but works part time as Senior Counsel for an intellectual property law firm in Old Town Alexandria. He has been employed there since March 2011.

He is fluent in Italian. He studied French for two years in high school and has studied Spanish for 17 years. Currently, he resides in Falls Church with his wife and son.



The Honor America Corps was established in 2003 to provide a cadre of Knights of Columbus willing to visit area parochial schools and school districts of Central Virginia as well as participate in civic and fraternal events to offer a clearer understanding of the meaning of our flag. (While its core membership comes from the Rappahannock Fourth Degree Assembly, it is open to all Knights who are willing and able to participate in its activities.)

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Additional information about the program can be found at www.honoramericacorps.org.



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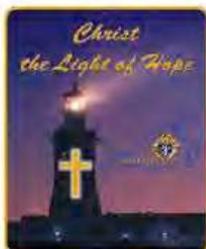
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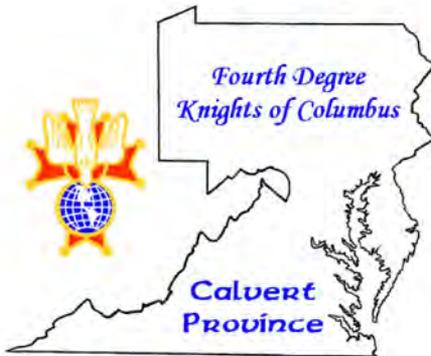
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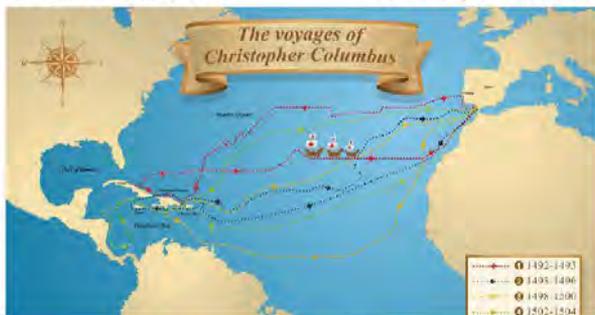
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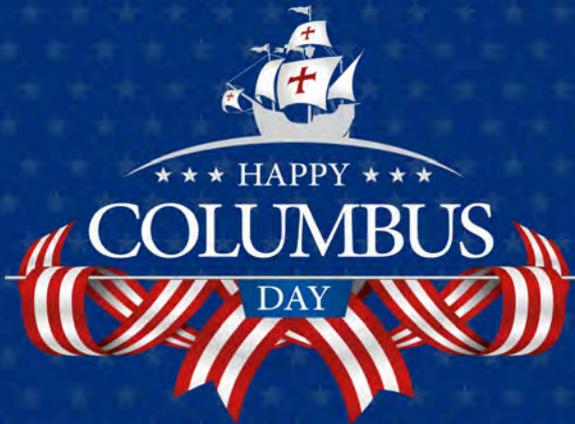
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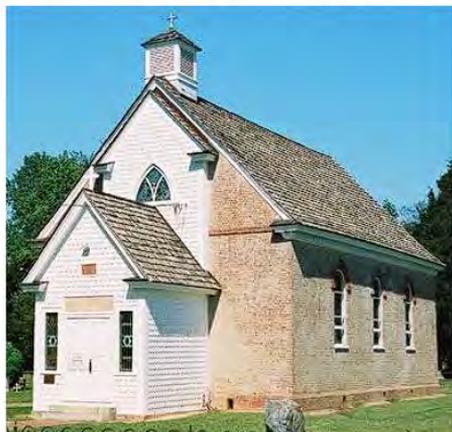
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