

DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED

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"PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH LIVING HISTORY" is the theme of the International Columbian Quincentenary Alliance, Ltd. Through its newsletter, information center, lecture bureau, educational materials, educational travel and public events, the ICQA contributes to the public awareness of the life and times of Christopher Columbus and the 500th anniversary of his Atlantic crossings. Through an informal alliance of the local, national and international groups organized to celebrate the Quincentenary, the ICQA promotes a unified effort in the commemoration of this major historic event.

SPECIAL COLUMBUS LANDFALL ISSUE

Another Landfall Approach

By Joseph M. Laufer

This issue of *Discovery Five Hundred* was intended to be the first "theme" issue since we began publication in 1986. The theme was to be the **Columbus Landfall Theories**, and my objective was to simply summarize all of the theories so that the average layperson might be able to make sense out of them. As I gathered material for the project, it became apparent that I had taken on more than I could handle. I decided that to do the project properly, I would need at least a full year's sabbatical, funding for extensive travel and research, and the ability to be totally objective in dealing with a number of very dedicated landfall experts.

I attended two major landfall symposia, was invited to a third (the Grand Turk Symposium), but because of primary job responsibilities had to turn it down. I reviewed all of the major publications concerning the landfall and conducted interviews with some of the key landfall proponents. Private correspondence was received from some of the experts, and before I realized it, I had enough material for a Doctoral Thesis -- yet only enough space and time to do a synopsis.

It was decided that instead of doing what I had set out to do, I would avoid re-inventing the wheel and refer my readers to the appropriate sources for the detailed papers, articles and treatises. Thus, I have put together a brief annotated bibliography of the landfall.

In deciding what unique contribution I might be able to make to the discussion and the research, I decided to reprint some of the original correspondence I've received from Arne Molander -- a scholarly proponent of the Northern Route, (Egg Island) whose views are often overlooked. I also decided to print a post-debate memorandum from Joseph Judge on the Samana Cay theory (*This will appear in the Summer issue - Ed.*)

Because of my respect for the proponents of each of the theories, I decided to write an editorial response to Arne Molander's questioning of my description of my visit to San Salvador (see *Discovery Five Hundred - Vol. IV, No. 1, Jan.-Feb., 1990*). In addition, in my research I came across a ninety-seven year old book by Frederick Ober, who was appointed by the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition as Special Commissioner to determine once and for all where Columbus actually landed as a

major contribution of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the landfall. I found it amusing how, almost one hundred years after his "definitive work", we are even more confused than they were then! I decided to reprint the chapter on the landfall for the amusement of all. Will someone do the same in 2092 for the sixth centenary?

With the inclusion of a few comparative charts on landfall theories, I had more than enough for this edition, which I feel, after all, makes a positive contribution to the field and will, hopefully, inspire someone to get that sabbatical and that research grant to take it all to the next step. Perhaps that way we won't have to anticipate someone writing in 2092 that it is amusing how after another 100 years nothing new has happened to resolve the landfall controversy.

A Landfall Bibliography

Ober, Frederick A. In the Wake of Columbus. Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1893. 515 p. plus index; illus.

Not to be confused with a 1985 publication by the same name, this book is subtitled: "Adventures of the Special Commissioner sent by the World's Columbian Exposition to the West Indies". Frederick A. Ober was an adventurer and author who had sailed through the Bahamas and the Caribbean for almost two decades. He was commissioned by the Officials of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition to complete the definitive study of the initial route of Christopher Columbus and his passage through the islands, and for the fourth centenary of the voyage of discovery to dispell once and for all the controversy over the first landfall. Starting in Palos, he paints a vivid picture of the scenes familiar to Columbus. In 24 chapters he takes us on all four voyages of Columbus and describes the places as they were 400 years later. Chapter III is entitled "*In Guanahani with Columbus*" and Chapter IV is entitled "*Where was the Admiral's Landfall?*". Ober chooses Watling's as the landfall, a theory which was first proposed in 1793 by Munoz of Spain and then again in 1856 by Beecher and had gained increasing respectability through endorsements by Major (1870), Murdock (1884), Thacher and a recently conducted *Chicago Herald* expedition in 1891. Prior to this, the prevailing theories were Cat Island (Catesby, Knox, and Irving) or Grand Turk (Navarrete, Kettell, Gibbs). In reading this work, it is interesting to note how little has changed since 1892 with regard to the

questions concerning the landfall. (*This chapter is reprinted elsewhere in this Newsletter - ed.*)

DeVorse, Jr., Louis and John Parker, Ed. In the Wake of Columbus - Islands of Controversy. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985. 232 p., illus.

The Society for the History of Discoveries took up the question of the Columbus landfall at its 1980 annual meeting when P.H.G. Verhoog's views on the South Caicos Island landfall theory were presented. This event was followed by a renewed wave of research during the 1980's. John Parker provides an excellent introductory historical overview of the landfall controversy dating back to 1731 when the seeds of controversy were sewn by Mark Catesby who casually referred to Cat Island as the Guanahani of the Indians and the San Salvador of Columbus. After we learn the early history of the controversy, we are provided with five papers on the subject by Verhoog, Dunn, Fuson, Molander and Power. Excellent maps illustrate the various theories and the book closes with a new Spanish language transcription of the Las Casas manuscript of the *Diario* (the Journal of Columbus' first voyage for the period October 10 through December 6, 1492. The material was first published as Volume XV of *Terrae Incognitae*, the official publication of the Society for the History of Discoveries.

Gerace, Donald T., compiler. Proceedings of the First San Salvador Conference: Columbus and His World. Fort Lauderdale: College of the Finger Lakes, Bahamian Field Station (San Salvador), 1987. 359 p., illus.

A compendium of thoroughly researched papers dealing with Columbus the man, the navigator, the ships he sailed and the lands and people he encountered. There are twenty papers of varying length and depth of scholarship prepared by anthropologists, archeologists, archivists, curators, geographers, historians and institute directors. At least half of the papers deal with the various landfall theories, with the preponderance of evidence favorable to the Watling's-San Salvador theory. There is a paper by Arne Molander on the Northern Route, one by Robert Fuson on the Turks and Caicos theory, and defenses of Watling's by Obregon, Taviani, Gerace and Hoffman.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. Admiral of the Ocean Sea - A Life of Christopher Columbus. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942. 680 p. illus.

Because of Morison's reputation as a scholar and a sailor, and because this book is considered the definitive biography of Columbus in the English language, his endorsement of the Watling-San Salvador theory in 1942 gave it unparalleled credibility among the landfall theories. Chapters 16 and 17 of *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* deal with this subject at length and are essential reading for anyone interested in the landfall controversy.

Fuson, Robert H. The Log of Christopher Columbus. Camden, Maine: International Marine Publishing Company, 1987. 252 p., illus.

This is a translation of Columbus' own account of his first voyage (as preserved by Bartolome de las Casas) by a Columbus scholar who experienced the need for an accurate and readable translation of the log or *diario* after struggling with earlier versions while doing research on the Columbus landfall. In an appendix, Fuson summarizes the various landfall theories. He has shifted his position on the landfall three times in his career, currently agreeing with the *National Geographic* study which concludes that Samana Cay was Columbus' San Salvador. To this end, he includes a full text of Gustavus Fox's 1880 paper on Samana Cay.

Judge, Joseph, "Our Search for the True Columbus Landfall." National Geographic, V. 170, No. 5, November, 1986: 564-605.

This is a special issue containing three separate articles and a map-insert dedicated to Columbus-related research. The material provides an update on the various theories relative to the Columbus landfall "problem", with very convincing evidence that nearby Samana Cay, and not San Salvador (Watling), was the island of discovery. Judge's article is well-illustrated and contains appropriate maps to show how, with the help of modern technology, the *National Geographic* research team came to its conclusion. An article by Luis Marden, "The First Landfall of Columbus" shows how the author, by re-running the courses of Columbus, came to the conclusion that Samana Cay was the appropriate landfall. The new element in this study is the inclusion of computer-generated information dealing with ocean current and leeway in the calculation. Just as Morison's reputation gave his Watling-San Salvador theory an extra degree of credibility, so the prestige of the *National Geographic* has given Judge's Samana Cay theory a definitiveness which may be undeserved and possibly misinterpreted by the general public.

Schanche, Don A.. "Where in the World was Christopher Columbus". Los Angeles Times Magazine, January 28, 1990: 17-23; 37. Also, Letters to the Editor, March 18, 1990: 8a-8d.

The author, Don Schanche, was present at the landfall debate sponsored by the Phileas Society in Fort Lauderdale on November 10 to 12, 1989. The article summarizes the positions of Joseph Judge (Samana Cay), Robert Power (Grand Turk) and Mauricio Obregon (Watling-San Salvador). Unfortunately, the chief proponent of the northern route, Arne Molander, was not invited to the debate, so he was only able to get a few words in by way of a letter to the editor in a subsequent issue of the magazine. The article presents a good overview for the layman concerning the history and significance of the landfall controversy and provides a good summary of three of the four prevailing theories.

De Scuza Turner, Eva. The Case for Grand Turk as the Site of the First Landfall in the New World of Christopher Columbus 1492. Pamphlet: Government House, Turks and Caicos Islands. 1986: 15 pages.

Prepared as a single document in which the background of the dispute over the exact location of Columbus' first landing point in the New World is briefly set out, together with an outline of the argument for the superiority of the Sadler/Fuson/Power route as against the Morison route. The pamphlet doesn't contain original research, but is dependent on the writings of others, in particular, that of Robert Power. It is meant to strengthen the case for recognition of Grand Turk as the landfall island.

"Evidence of a Lucayan Village Site Discovered on Grand Turk Island Strengthens Island's Claim as Columbus's Landfall." HRD News, January-February 1990: 1-4. Publication of Historical Research and Development, Inc., Indialantic, FL.

This is a summary of the Grand Turk Landfall Symposium conducted in Miami, on San Salvador and Grand Turk from December 9 through 16, 1989. Some 30 scholars participated in an ambitious symposium which consisted of papers, debates, field trips and an air tour of the Lucayan Islands from Grand Turk to San Salvador. Participants easily dismissed Samana Cay as a possible landfall, and as the symposium progressed, evidence shifted from Watling-San Salvador to Grand Turk. While by no means "conclusive", the symposium produced enough new evidence to make Grand Turk a strong contender in the landfall controversy.

Grau y Triana, Dr. Pedro. San Salvador, The Forgotten Island. Madrid: Ediciones Beramar, S.A., 1987. 160 p. illus. (Bi-lingual text: Section 1 - English; Section 2 - Spanish). Distributed in the Bahamas through the Bahamian Chamber of Commerce.

The case for the Watling-San Salvador landfall. Simply written and clearly illustrated with charts and beautiful color photographs, the author makes a strong case for the Watling-San Salvador landfall. An interesting synoptic chart which lists twelve key features of Guanahani based on the log of Columbus and compares them with each of the major island contenders (Watling, Cat, Samana, Mayaguana, Caicos and Grand Turk) makes the work especially valuable.

Peck, Douglas. "Computer Error...Singlehander's Voyage Disputes Fancy Computations." Sailing Magazine, March, 1988: 36-40.

A year after the *National Geographic* asserted that the landfall of Columbus was not San Salvador, 69 year old singlehanded sailor Doug Peck sailed off in the wake of Columbus. Peck, of Bradenton, Florida, was out to prove or disprove *Geographic*. He wanted to resolve his doubts about the *National Geographic* claim that Samana Cay was the Columbus landfall, because the finding was based on

computer simulations not tested on the water. Following Columbus' log, Peck matched Columbus' compass headings and daily runs, even using his auxiliary engine on light air days and slowing the boat when necessary on fast sailing days. This article consists of a summary of Peck's log on this voyage. His conclusion was that Watling-San Salvador was the true Columbus landfall. Peck also made a formal presentation of his theory at the annual meeting of The Society for the History of Discoveries at the University of Minnesota on October 13, 1988.

IN DEFENSE OF THE NORTHERN ROUTE

Arne Molander, unrelenting proponent of Columbus' northern route and eventual landfall on Egg Island, wrote two letters to provide information for our special landfall issue. Unfortunately, Arne's theory has not received the exposure it deserves. Following is an excerpt from a letter dated February 25, 1990 and his complete letter of March 15, 1990.

(Letter to Joseph Laufer/ICQA - 25 February, 1990):
"...One recent find by Don McGuirk should also interest you. The 1812 "Geographical and Historical Dictionary of the America and the West Indies", translated by G. A. Thompson from an earlier work by Don Antonio Alcedo, gives yet one more independent boost to the northern route. In it, Thompson wonders how Cat Island can actually be the landfall of Columbus. He goes on to suggest that "It is perhaps more likely that Abaco (or one of the other most northerly of the Bahama Islands) was the first point of discovery, particularly if it be true what is stated, that a few days after he discovered land he touched at New Providence and Andros (which it is said to be named Ferdinandina and Isabella) on his way to Cuba." Despite Thompson's confusion with the Columbus names (a deficiency also exhibited in Fernando's biography of his father), it's clear that the common perception two centuries ago was that Columbus entered the New World through North East Providence Channel, a belief supported in Alcedo's original work. I should point out that both John Herbert of the Library of Congress and John Parker of the University of Minnesota recommended Alcedo/Thompson to me as a highly-respected reference.

Now it's time to review the growing weight of independent observations supporting the northern route:

1. Ponce de Leon accurately located its latitude as 25 degrees and 40 minutes, and later confirmed his sighting abilities by specifying Cape Canaveral to within 12 minutes.

2. Chaves accurately triangulates the landfall as 2 leagues SW of Triangulo (which can only be the triangle of islets framing the fresh water source at Spanish Wells), and 8 leagues ENE of Samana (which can only be the island of New Providence).

3. The first detailed map of the landfall, by the French engineer Alain Manesson Mallet in 1685, shows no features of Watlings Island but has the same half-moon beach

as Egg Island with Little Egg Island lying the correct distance to the south with the correct length and aspect ratio.

4. Oviedo says the landfall was approached from the north, the only feasible way to reach Egg Island and opposite to the direction Morison specifies at Watlings.

5. And now Alcedo/Thompson!! Granted that there's lots of noise in this overlooked evidence so we shouldn't expect it all to fit Watlings Island. But isn't it just a little bit interesting that it all has such a precise congruence with Egg Island?.

(Letter to Joseph M. Laufer/ICQA - 15 March, 1990):

Your failure to challenge the Watlings Island landfall stigmatizes Columbus at the very time we're trying to honor his momentous voyage. The contorted rationalizations that shove his landfall 90 miles southward have the effect of converting this brave and brilliant navigator into a second-rate bozo. For, if you really believe in Watlings Island then you must also believe that Columbus:

1. was an incompetent navigator who didn't come close to the minimal performance standards defined by Andres Bernaldez and Ahmed Ibn Magid, and missed his latitude objective by more than 20 times John Cabot's miss,

2. passed up the first available anchorage at French Bay and sailed on several hours to an inferior one at Fernandez Bay,

3. completely overlooked the giant iguana on Watlings,

4. advanced the silly notion of sailing a loop around Watlings to reach Cuba,

5. mistook several lakes on Watlings for a single large lagoon,

6. stupidly rowed outside the reef rather than following the projected route to the harbor, while misstating the rowing direction by 30 degrees,

7. committed the unpardonable sin of mistaking "corrientes" for "marea" while sailing towards Rum Cay,

8. overstated the area of Rum Cay by at least an order of magnitude,

9. reported sailing only one side of Rum Cay when he actually sailed two.

10. passed up an easy anchorage at Rum Cay to barely make a treacherous one at dusk,

11. mentioned two capes at western Rum Cay where only one exists,

12. mistook the open ocean between Rum Cay and Long Island as a gulf,

13. misread the distance from Rum Cay to Long Island by 40 percent,

14. mysteriously characterized the rocky coastline of Long Island as a "beach",

(Ed. Note: Mr. Molander omits #15)

16. misread the distance to its reefs by at least an order of magnitude,

17. misread the length and direction of Long Island's coastline,

18. mistook the point at Burnt Ground as a cape,

19. foolishly described Long Island as very green, and flat, and fertile whereas it actually is one of the driest and hilliest in the Bahamas,

20. twice anchored on this rugged coast where only a madman would attempt to anchor today,

21. incorrectly reported a mastic tree where none can grow amid the xerophytic vegetation of Long Island,

22. "misunderstood" (according to Morison) that he could somehow sail through the shallows west of Long Island,

23. mislocated the "maravilloso puerto" as 6 miles from Cape St. Maria when it's actually 2 miles,

24. "stupidly" (according to Morison) assumed that little harbor was the mouth of a river,

25. greatly exaggerated the size of the little harbor,

26. quaintly described prominent Cape St. Maria as "where the coast runs east and west",

27. incorrectly located a pair of "islets" at solitary Bird Rock,

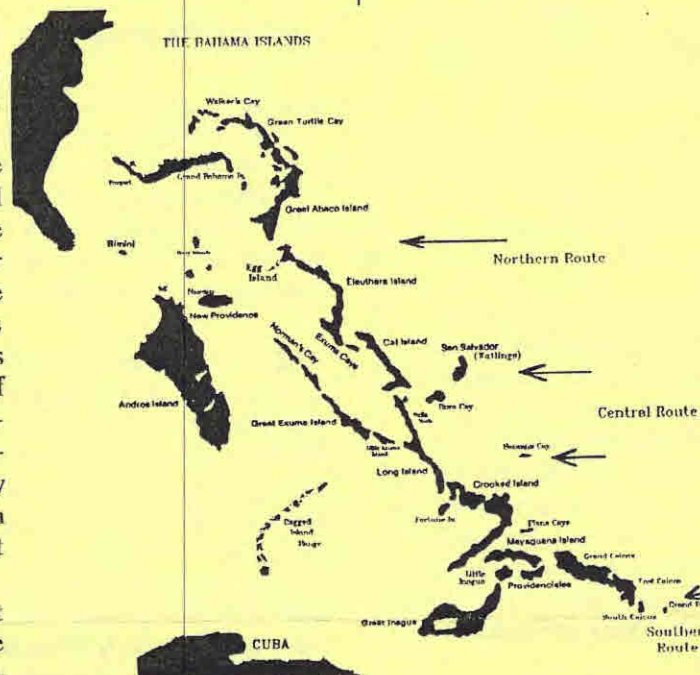
28. carelessly doubled the distance from Bird Rock to the south end of Fortune Island,

29. described the "angla" as pointing northeast whereas it actually points east southeast,

30. labeled the south end of Fortune Island as Cape Hermoso, whereas Morison freely admits that its "low cliffs of dark, weathered Aeolian limestone" are far from beautiful.

All of these "careless mistakes by Columbus" disappear if we accept the overwhelming evidence that he actually sailed a more northerly route through the Bahamas. In fact, it's easy to develop a real admiration for his reporting abilities when you realize the succinct and accurate way in which he described the unique cape and reef at north Andros. Isn't it time to rescue the Admiral's reputation from the stubborn traditionalists who have closed their minds to the impressive evidence supporting a northern landfall?

Yours truly, Arne Molander, Gaithersburg, MD



LANDFALL THEORIES: 1893

In 1893, for the four-hundredth anniversary of the Columbus' voyage to the New World, Frederick Ober was commissioned to conduct the definitive research project to determine the Columbus Landfall for the executive committee of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. What follows is a chapter from his book, *In the Wake of Columbus*. It is printed here to illustrate how even after his research and after the ensuing century, little has changed concerning popular acceptance of "definitive evidence" for the actual landfall of Columbus.

Chapter IV WHERE WAS THE ADMIRAL'S LANDFALL?

Who can tell where it lies - that first land sighted by Columbus and his crew, after their weary voyage across the Atlantic?

We will ignore the light the Admiral claimed to have seen because it has not been proved that he saw one; there are those who think it was but in keeping with his character to affirm a light that never shone, in order to defraud that poor sailor, Rodrigo de Triana, of his reward. Let us ignore the light, and land with Columbus on the coast approached that memorable Friday, the twelfth of October, 1492. He landed, that is admitted; and he landed somewhere in the Bahamas; in all probability, as has already been stated, midway the chain. This much conceded, we turn to special investigators to ascertain upon which particular island of the group. Nearly every writer on the subject has a different theory; but fortunately there are a few who have given it exhaustive study, who have been over the ground in person, and who have received their impressions from actual observations.

It happens also that those whose opinions are entitled to consideration, have received their training in the naval service, either of this country or of England, and are qualified to write of the voyage as brother mariners. The recognized authorities on the subject are Capt. A. B. Becher, of the English Navy, and Capt. G. V. Fox, of the United States Navy. I am aware that others have written, and have written well; but all we need may be found in the pages of the two writers above named.

It was not until Capt. Becher's work, *The Landfall of Columbus*, appeared, in 1856, that the question was agitated. Up to that time the conclusion of Washington Irving, that the landfall was Cat Island, had been generally accepted. The routes had been carefully worked out for Irving by an officer of the United States Navy, and had received the sanction and approval of so high an authority as Humboldt. Navarrete, from whom Irving drew much of the material for his history, assumed that Turk's Island coincided with that described by Columbus; and in the year 1846 the late George Gibbs, for many years a resident of Grand Turk, ably supported this theory, in a paper before the New York Historical Society.

Capt. Fox wrote in support of Samana, or Atwood Cay; but his work, so thorough in its investigations, and honest in its conclusions, rather re-enforces the statements of Be-

cher, who claims Watling's Island as the landfall. Capt. Becher is supported by Lieut. Murdock, who began on the coast of Cuba and traced the track of Columbus back to the island first sighted.

A summary of their conclusions, not only as to the conjectural landfall, but in regard to the islands subsequently discovered by Columbus, is herewith presented:

It will be noted that no two investigators agree as to the first landfall without disagreeing as to the second; and if they happen to coincide on the third, it is only to fall out over the fourth. And the difference between the extremes, as represented by Cat Island in the north, and Grand Turk in the south, is something like three hundred miles. But this is not material; each writer had his own opinion, and perhaps a preconceived one, and by extracting a little truth here and a little there, we may approximate a correct result. There is a consensus of opinion decidedly in favor of Watling's as the first landfall, and so eminent an authority as Judge Daly, of the American Geographical Society, holds to this theory.

Says Major: "While agreeing with Capt. Becher in the identification of Guanahani with Watling's, I find that officer entirely at issue with the diary of Columbus in making him anchor near the northeast end of the island, and then sailing around its northern point. . . The first anchorage of Columbus in the New World was off the southeast point of Watling's Island, a position which entirely tallies with all his movements as mentioned in his diary."

This is the opinion of a man who has never seen the island, but who has studied the subject so deeply that he thinks he knows all about it. His conclusions bear out the general statement, however, and are acceptable to the seeker after truth. Let us turn once more to the "Journal of Columbus," and question him again regarding his movements after he had landed.

I shall assume Watling's to be the island, having found no conclusive evidence to the contrary. We accept the courses of Columbus across the ocean (as worked out by the eminent navigators previously mentioned) which brought him, at least approximately, to the center of the Bahama group.

Hear, then, the evidence, presumably in his own words. I say presumably, because we have only an abstract from his journal, and not the original. The only evidence we have is in a manuscript copy of the "Diary of Colon," found by Senor Navarrete in Spain, in 1825; it is an abridgment of the "Journal of the First Voyage of Colon," made by the Bishop Las Casas, his famous contemporary, "the genuineness and authenticity of which copy have yet to be impeached."

According to the journal of Columbus, then; first, as his vessels approached the island, they "lay to," outside the reefs, and after the landing:

"This island is large and very level, has a very large lagoon in the middle, is without any mountain, and is all covered with verdure most pleasing to the eye;" all which is applicable to Watling's, and particularly the "lagoon in the center," which does not exist in Cat; a similar feature is found only in Crooked.

It was inhabited: "The people are remarkably gentle, have no iron, do not carry arms, and have no knowledge of them; are well-formed, of good size, and intelligent" - facts borne out by the remains discovered in modern times, such as crania, celts, agricultural implements and pottery. They had canoes, "made out of the trunks of trees, all in one piece." A canoe, or portion of one, was found in a cave near Riding-Rocks, the chief roadstead of Watling's Island. "They came to the boats, swimming, bringing us parrots, cotton" (Which grows in the island), etc.

Cotton is indigenous here; parrots have been here within the memory of man, and are now found in flocks on Acklin Island, one hundred miles to the southeast; the second growth of forest on Watling's Island is not high enough to afford them shelter. "I have seen here no beasts whatever, but parrots only." There are no indigenous quadrupeds larger than a rat, and few reptiles, the largest being the iguana, which he mentions later, as seen in another island.

After two days on the island - Sunday, October 14: "At dawn I ordered the boats of the ship and of the caravels to be got ready, and went along the island...I was afraid of a reef of rocks which entirely surrounds that island, although there is within it depth enough and ample harbor for all the vessels of Christendom; but the entrance is very narrow. It is true that the interior of that belt contains some rocks, but the sea is there as still as a well." No more accurate description could be written of the great barrier-reef that surrounds this island, nor of the aspect of its enclosed waters.

In looking for a place to fortify, he found "a piece of land like an island, only it is not one, which in two days could be cut off and converted into an island." This was near the harbor, which in every particular answers to the sheltered Graham's Harbor, at the extreme end of the island; it is secure, though shallow and ample for small vessels of the light draught of Columbus's time. As to the "piece of land like an island," this is found in "Cut Point," the eastern arm that protects Graham's Harbor from the open sea; it is a long neck of land cut in two by the erosion of wave-action; an island at high water, and part of the mainland at low tide.

Thus far, there is no discrepancy whatever, and it is only as the Spaniards leave the island that an apparent variance is noted.

"I observed all that harbor, and afterward I returned to the ship and set sail, and saw so many islands that I could not decide to which one to go first...In consequence, I looked for the largest one, and determined to make for it, and am so doing, and it is probably distant five leagues from this of San Salvador, the others some more or less."

This is the one weak link in the chain of evidence in favor of Watling's. There are no large islands visible from this one; but the objection is equally applicable to Cat, though not to Grand Turk. It is possible that the mariners may have been deceived, and mistook elevations and depressions of the same island for different cays. I myself, in approaching Watling's from Fortune, noted that the

detached portions of the island gradually coalesced, until what appeared to be several islets were merged into one. But again: one island is visible from Watling's this is Rum Cay, which, in clear weather, may be discerned from the extreme southern point. It is twenty miles distant; this agrees nearly with Columbus's estimate, for later he enters in his journal: "As the island was five leagues distant, rather seven, and tide detained me, it was about noon when I reached the said island, and I found that side which is toward San Salvador runs North and South, and is five leagues in length, and the other, which I followed, ran East and West and contains over ten leagues."

The description applies exactly to Rum Cay, both as to situation with respect to the other and as to shape; but the same allowance must be made for errors of measurement as before, since the estimates of Columbus were made from his vessel's deck, and by the eye, and can by no means be regarded as accurate. Reckoning the Spanish league at two and one half miles, we must in nearly every case deduct at least one third from the estimates of Columbus, as due to unconscious exaggeration. Imperfect as the transcription of the journal may be, there is not one single feature of its description that is not applicable to Watling's. Having landed on its northeast shore, Columbus sailed around the north end, coasted the west shore its entire length and departed from the southern point, making Rum Cay, as related. His course was southwest to Rum Cay, thence due west to another island visible in the distance.

This was Long Island, and is accurately given, with the distance from the second island, of Rum Cay, the general trend of its shores, and configuration. "And from this island of Santa Maria to the other are nine leagues, east and west, and all this portion of it runs northwest and southeast. . . . And being in the gulf midway between these two islands, I found a man in a canoe, who was going from Santa Maria to Fernandina" (the large island), "who had a small piece of his bread" (probably cassava), "a calabash of water, a small string of beads, and two blancas" (small coins), "by which I knew that he came from the island San Salvador, had passed to Santa Maria, and was now going to Fernandina." This incident illustrates the boldness of these Indians, in venturing so far from land in their frail canoes, and explains the occurrence in these islands of articles that could only have been obtained from a great distance. This Indian also had "some dry leave, highly prized, no doubt, among them, for those of San Salvador offered some to me as present." This was, presumably, tobacco, which was afterward found in use in Cuba. The Admiral took the Indian aboard and treated him kindly; not because of any liking for the poor fellow, but that his friends "may give us of all that they have."

In Fernandina, in addition to things already seen, they first saw the hammock; "their beds and coverings looked like cotton nets," which they called hamacas. No one who has seen Long Island, can doubt that it was the third one visited by Columbus, for the reasons above stated; in addition, his description of Clarence Harbor, "the very marvelous port with narrow entrance," is entirely confirmatory.

After cruising two or three days up and down the coast, detained and baffled by adverse winds, the Spaniards finally set sail for the southeast, and in three hours saw an island to the east, reaching its northern extremity before midday. Here the vessels anchored at a little islet, which, without doubt, was Bird Rock, at the northwest extremity of Crooked Island. There is a light on it now, and it is the point of departure for Walling's, Rum Cay, and Long Island, on the course from Crooked and Fortune.

As already intimated, I have been over the course, and have cruised along the shores of both Fortune and Crooked. And I can understand the enthusiasm of the Admiral, writing in his journal, with the scene before him at Crooked Island as I have had it: "If the other islands are beautiful, this is still more so: it has many trees, very green and very large, gentle hills enhance with their contrasts the beauty of the plains, . . . and this cape where I have anchored I have called Cape Beautiful, because it is so. I anchored here because I saw this cape so green and beautiful, as are all the things and lands of these islands, so that I do not know to which to go first, nor do my eyes grow tired with looking at such beautiful verdure, so different from our own. . . . Here are some large lagoons, and around them are the trees, so that it is a marvel, and the grass is as green as in Andalusia in April. And the songs of the little birds are such that it seems as if a man could never leave here."

Ah, yes! I, too, like the great Admiral, have heard those "songs of little birds," and have felt it was a joy to listen to them.

Now, even as then, the mocking-bird pours out his melody for all to hear. The great forests are gone; their human occupants have passed away, a different race dwells here; but the odorous thickets remain, from which "the odors came so good and sweet, from flowers and trees on land, that it was the sweetest thing in the world;" and the mocking-birds dwell herein, gladdening the heart of man with their music. I remember, one was my neighbor at Watling's, living in an orange-tree near the eastern window of my hut, and his notes began at dawn, even before, continuing at intervals all the day. At hottest noon, when everything else was hushed and lifeless, he would mount to the topmost twig of his tree, and pant forth a gush of liquid melody. Without them, else, these thickets are silent and without sign of life.

The fauna of a country changes little, even in the lapse of centuries, and probably the bird-collectors have nearly exterminated the song-birds of some islands, merely for the small sums they receive for the skins. Not only are they collected for the adornment of women's hats and bonnets, but here are men whose sole ambition is to possess the largest collection of birds of any given locality: these send out hordes of boys, who murder for money the choicest feathered friends of man. Were the inhabitants of the islands more enlightened, they would send these collectors to jail as soon as they began their nefarious work.

The sailors killed an iguana here, which they called a serpent; they found aloes, loading the ships with a quan-

tity; they filled the water-casks, at a spot now called "Frenchman's Wells," and in this same island of Fortune first heard of "an island which the natives called Cuba, but which I think must be Cipango." The twenty-fourth of October they sailed, leaving with regret this island that had so entranced them.

"At midnight I weighed anchor from the Island of Isabella and the cape of the Rocky Islet (Bird Rock), in order to go to the island of Cuba, which these people tell me is very large, with much trade, and yielding gold and spices; and by their signs I understand it to be the island of Cipango, of which marvelous things are related, and which, on the globes and maps I have seen, is in this region; and they told me I should sail to reach it west-southwest, as I now am sailing."

The next night, the southern cape of Fernandina bore northwest, and the next islands were sighted, called by the Admiral *las Islas de Arenas* (Sand Islands). Departing from these, leaving them on the north, at sunrise, two days later, October 28, he saw the island of Cuba.

With the discovery of Cuba, the voyage through the Bahamas terminates. After the first landing-place on the Cuban coast has been defined, the journal is less ambiguous, and we can follow the explorers step by step. Before we leave the subject, however, I desire one more word as to the latest conclusions regarding the landfall and the islands subsequently visited by Columbus. I have given a summary of opinions up to the time of my own investigation. But, since I was sent out specially commissioned by the Executives of the Columbian Exposition to ascertain the truth, if possible, and devoted much time and study to the question, it would only be fair to those gentlemen of the Exposition, as well as to myself, to present my own conclusions. They are fully borne out by the results of the expedition sent out in 1891 by the *Chicago Herald*, whose chief, Mr. Wellman, made an able and exhaustive report at the time, and erected on or near the conjectural landing place on Watling's Island, a handsome commemorative monument.

Our investigations were entirely independent, as I was in the Southern West Indies at the time of the *Herald* expedition and came up to Watling's from the island of Haiti, while Mr. Wellman went there from Nassau. Our visits were exactly a year apart, but together we have surveyed the entire field of controversy, and the following emended table is given, as approximating a correct result:

(See table on following page)

Crooked and Fortune are given as one island, for so they were regarded by Columbus, being separated only by a narrow sound, and doubtless they are the same that are figured on the earliest maps as the "Triangles," from their very obvious triangular shape, as taken together. In conclusion, to fix firmly the names bestowed by Columbus, we will quote from the letter written by him to Luis de Santangel, Chancellor of the Exchequer of Aragon, giving the first account of the first voyage:

"To the first island I found, I gave the name of San Salvador, in remembrance of His High Majesty, who hath

Columbus	Navarrete	Irving	Becher	Murdock	Fox	Gibbs
1. Guanahani S. Salvador	Grand Turk	Cat Island	Watling's	Watling's	Samana	Grand Turk
2. Sta. Maria	Caicos	Concepcion	Long	Rum Cay	Crooked	Caicos
3. Fernandina	Little Inagua	Great Exuma	Great Exuma	Long	Long	Little Inagua
4. Isabella	Great Inagua	Long	Crooked	Crooked Fortune	Fortune	Great Inagua
5. Islas Arenas Cuban Coast		Mucarras	Ragged Port Nipe	Ragged Jibarra	Ragged Port Padre	
6. S. Salvador	Port Nipe	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba

marvelously brought all these things to pass; the Indians call it Guanahani. To the second, I gave the name of Santa Maria de la Concepcion; the third I called Fernandina, the fourth Isabella, the fifth Juana, (Cuba); and so to each I gave a new name, and when I reached Juana I followed its coast, and found it so large that I thought it must be the mainland-the province of Cathay."

He was undeceived as to the existence of a West Indian Cathay, but his surmise as to its insular character was not verified until after his death, when in 1508, Cuba was first circumnavigated.

THE LANDFALL DILEMMA

An Editorial position by Joseph M. Laufer

In the last issue of *Discovery Five Hundred*, I wrote a lengthy account of my "Guanahani and Yuma" experience in the Bahamas. It was an attempt to describe deeply personal reactions to an encounter with places associated with Christopher Columbus and that significant moment in 1492 that changed the course of history. It wasn't until I received a letter from landfall theorist (the northern route), Arne Molander, that I realized that the description had an effect that was not intended. Despite the expressed feelings and emotions, and my personal reactions to places and events, my article was not intended as a "landfall statement". It then occurred to me that I had experienced the same dilemma that the 5th Ibero-American Quincentenary Conference experienced when, in May, 1987, in Puerto Rico, it decided to declare, without intending to make a definitive "landfall" decision, that San Salvador/Watlings would be considered the landfall of Columbus for purposes of the celebration of the Quincentenary.

I am deeply interested in a resolution to the landfall question, yet I am not a "principal" in the landfall debate. I have an academic interest in it, yet my involvement in the Quincentenary requires a certain detachment from the heat of the argument. And because I am a proponent of a popular appreciation of history and events through their commemoration and celebration, just as the general public, I am more receptive to literary, poetic and artistic license in the interpretation of events that are surrounded by controversy, as is the case with the landfall.

I can understand how an ardent proponent of a landfall theory other than San Salvador/Watlings could become upset by the way I described my emotions on the beach at Long Bay, San Salvador and at Stella Maris, Long Island. Yet I was doing what pilgrims to the Holy Land or to Rome do when confronted with those places "purported" to be

key in the beginnings of Christianity -- such as the "exact" location of the manger in Bethlehem or the site of Calvary, outside of Jerusalem. We are reasonably sure that these are mere "approximations" -- but we need a focal point to "experience" our brush with history -- and we accept the

locations "for purposes of our celebration of the moment".

Since receiving Arne Molander's letter, I was reminded of several incidents relative to this issue. Two years ago, Sue Hughey, an associate who is preparing a map of the Caribbean for the I.C.Q.A., asked me whether, in the light of Joe Judge's article in the *National Geographic*, she should designate Samana Cay as the landfall of Columbus. Long before the Ibero-American Committee made its decision, I indicated to Sue that she stick with San Salvador/Watlings, because it had an almost 50-year history of popular support and still hadn't been definitively "dethroned". Despite this advice, I was not making a "landfall statement", although certain landfall proponents would feel that I was perpetuating a myth.

During the recent Columbus Conference sponsored by the Phileas Society in Fort Lauderdale, I was somewhat amused during the premier showing of the Phileas videotape on Christopher Columbus. The otherwise excellent video completely evades the controversy over the landfall by indicating that Columbus landed in the Bahamas -- and the accompanying graphic illustration supports a vague, generic landing *somewhere* in the Bahamas. Perhaps this is the best and most honest approach to take. I recognized Bob Tolf's "don't rock the boat" hand in this decision, and my hat is off to him for the clever way he evades the issue. However, "for purposes of the Quincentenary" the public needs some real "locus" for Rodrigo de Triana's "*Tierra, tierra*". And just as I need 90 names for the crew of the 3 ships, even though I know some may be fictitious, and just as the designers of the replicas of the *Nina*, *Pinta* and *Santa Maria* need specific dimensions, even though they may be mere guesses, I need a place to land those three ships, even though it may be proven wrong two, three or fifty years from now. But until it is definitively proven wrong, I will go with the place that best provides me with a trigger for my emotions and my attempt to identify with the spirit of the event. For me, at this time, that place is San Salvador/Watlings -- not because of the "preponderance" of the evidence, but because the "popular lore" at this time points in that direction. For almost fifty years the Morrison route has been "popularly" accepted, and until conclusive, irrefutable evidence is presented for another landfall, I will have to have my "spirit" satisfied by San Salvador.

I had the pleasure of discussing the landfall question with Bob Fuson -- a man who has gained the respect of many people because he has changed his previous stand on the landfall based on new evidence. He indicated that

Currently held theories of the Columbus Landfall - 1492

Columbus	Northern Route			Central Routes		Southern Route
	Molander	Winslow	Morrison/ Obregon	Triana	Judge <small>(National Geographic Magazine)</small>	Power <small>(Sadler/Fuson)</small>
1. Guanahani (S. Salvador)	Egg Island (off Eleuthera)	Lignum Vitae Cay. (Berry Islands)	Watlings	Watlings	Samana Cay	Grand Turk
2. Sta. Maria	New Providence	New Providence	Rum Cay	Rum Cay	Crooked/ Acklins Is.	Providenciales
3. Fernandina (Yuma)	Andros	Andros	Long Island	Long Island	Long Island	Mayaguana Acklin Islands
4. Isabella (Saometo)	Long Island (Southern)	"Hurricane Flats" off S.W. Andros	Crooked Island	Crooked Island	Fortune Is.	Great Inagua
5. Islas Arenas Cuban Coast	Ragged Islands	Fragoso Cay	Ragged Islands	Ragged Islands	Ragged Islands	Ragged Islands
6. Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba	Cuba

This chart outlines the prevailing theories concerning the landfall of Christopher Columbus on October 12, 1492 and his subsequent travels through the Bahamas until his approach to Cuba on October 25, 1492. Other less commonly held theories include those of:

Varrhagen: 1. Mayaguana; 2. Crooked Is.; 3. Long Island; 4. Fortune Island; 5. Ragged Islands; 6. Cuba
 Verboog: 1. South Caicos; 2. Mayaguana; 3. Acklins; 4. Great Inagua; 5. Ragged Islands; 6. Cuba
 Little: 1. Caicos; 2. Samana; 3. Long Island; 4. Crooked Island; 5. Ragged Islands; 6. Cuba
 Bunge: 1. Flana Cay; 2. Acklins; 3. Long Island; 4. Fortune; 5. Ragged Islands; 6. Cuba

the key proponents of the various landfall theories approach their work almost as a religion. And just as religious differences have been at the center of so many violent wars, so the hardened opinions of certain landfall proponents make it difficult to enter into rational discussions about the landfall.

I had the good fortune of witnessing two landfall debates this past Fall. I must confess that I came away from each of them wishing that each of the proponents of the different theories were correct, mainly because of their apparent sincerity. Arne Molander, Robert Power, Mauricio Obregon, and Joseph Judge debated the issues in a scholarly fashion. I have met each personally and am impressed by the sincerity of each of their views. Doug Peck's theories and experiments are equally impressive. Perhaps the most acerbic exchange took place in Fort Lauderdale when Joseph Judge excoriated Mauricio Obregon for allowing the Ibero American Conference to "endorse" the San Salvador landfall -- if only for purposes of the Quincentenary. Yet, as I indicated initially, I can now appreciate this decision. It had to be made if the public is going to be able to "focus" on the event which changed the world in 1492.

It may well be Grand Turk, Egg Island, or Samana Cay. If I am able to visit each of these Islands, I will treat the experience similarly to that of my San Salvador encounter. Because I know that each was a possible landing site for Columbus, I will be able to approach each of them with the same awe that I experienced on San Salvador. Not having a vested interest in any particular landfall theory, I will be able to exercise the same literary license in the description. The feelings and emotions will probably be the same. Ardent single-minded landfall theorists will probably not be able to understand this.

Ironically, in 1988, I wrote about similar emotions after walking the halls of La Rabida, the Franciscan Monastery in Spain which is so closely associated with Christopher Columbus. No one challenged me on this one, although the original monastery was destroyed by an earthquake and then rebuilt. In 1855 it was described as "nothing but a heap of stones." It was rebuilt in 1900. Who knows

whether the current monastery is exactly as it was when Columbus visited it in 1486 -- or even whether it has been rebuilt on the exact spot where it was located in 1492? However, "for purposes of the Quincentenary" it can conjure up those emotions of history *aficionados* for whom direct contact with historical events and places are so important.

More than ever, I can appreciate the decision of the Ibero-American Conference which selected San Salvador for celebration purposes, without making a landfall decision. The door is still open for proof, yet the world can celebrate with a one in eleven chance that the San Salvador landfall is the correct one. Arne Molander, Joe Judge and Bob Power will quote different odds. Some day -- and perhaps soon -- we'll know for sure.

I want to conclude this "editorial" position with another example from my life. For years I have been a "student" of the famous Shroud of Turin. I have lectured on it since 1960, and was quite pleased when the Shroud was turned over to the Vatican in 1983 in the will of King Umberto of Italy. Shortly afterward, the decision was made to subject the Shroud to Carbon-14 testing to determine once and for all its approximate date of origin (*if only there were a similar test for landfall theories!*). In October, 1988, the results were announced: three independent tests concluded that the Shroud dates back only to the period of 1260 to 1390. I continue to lecture on the shroud, because it is no less a mystery now than it was before the tests. It has been called a "fraud" by the popular press, yet there is no human explanation of how the unique image found its way onto the fabric. In short, the tests have had little effect on the "sindonists" -- or people who have been students of the shroud both on the scientific and the religious levels. It still is an object of veneration, curiosity and mystery.

Might the same thing happen with the Columbus landfall? Could it be that even with definitive evidence in behalf of a particular island as the one true landfall, the proponents of each of the other theories will be unable to give up their positions? Or will the public be satisfied with the statement that Columbus landed "somewhere in the Bahamas?"

The dilemma of the landfall continues to divide us. It has been said of religion that you should select that belief that satisfies you and answers your questions and to follow it with all your heart. With regard to the Columbus landfall, I tend to believe that the mystery of the landfall is Columbus' curse on the world that let him down. We will never know for sure -- and that makes Columbus eternally happy. The Quincentenary wouldn't be the same without all the speculation.

I have discovered a literary device to help me deal with the landfall dilemma. I hope it satisfies Arne Molander and Bob Power, two individuals whose theories I deeply respect. I want them, especially, to understand how I can be so moved while standing on the beach at Long Bay, San Salvador, while still not being absolutely sure that it is the one true landfall. I have chosen to make my case by paraphrasing the immortal words of Frank P. Church to Virginia O'Hanlon in the *New York Sun* in 1897:

"Yes, Virginia, there is a San Salvador. It exists as certainly as ambition, vision and adventure exist, and you know that they abound and give to human life its highest aspirations and honor. Alas, how dreary would be the world if there were no San Salvador. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no faith, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in the Europe that existed before 1492. The sense of eternity which comes from the exploration of new worlds would be extinguished.

Not believe in San Salvador! You might as well not believe in Atlantis or the Antilles. You might get a sailor to hire men to sail out into the Ocean Sea to discover Chipango and Cathay, but even if they did not see the Great Kahn, what would that prove? Nobody sees the great Kahn, but that is no sign that there is no Great Kahn...

...No San Salvador! Thank God, it exists and it exists forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, it will continue to make glad

the heart of the adventurer who has vision and is willing to take risks to attain a dream."

Features and Requirements of Guanahani

Dr. Pedro Grañ Triana, author of San Salvador, The Forgotten Island, provides his readers with a Synoptic Chart on page 62, wherein he lists twelve criteria which should determine which of the contending islands is the true Columbus landfall. He applies the criteria to Watling, Cat, Samana, Mayaguana, Caicos and Grand Turk. For his purposes, Watling emerges with 12 "yes" and 0 "no" responses. All of the other contenders come up with 9 or more "no's"! Here are his 12 criteria:

1. The island should be on or around Lat. 24 N.
2. It should be the shape of a lima bean as Father Las Casas says.
3. It's orientation should be North-South with beaches on East and West coasts.
4. It should have a big lake in the center.
5. The island should be generally flat with small elevations.
6. The island should be surrounded by a reef.
7. To the North it should be a port that "could hold all the ships in Christendom."
8. At the S. E. corner of the port, there should be a peninsula that can be separated in two days from land.
9. Taking a S.W. course from its western coast, Sta. Maria de la Concepcion should be at 21 n. mi.
10. Sailing on a westerly course from that island, one should reach Fernandina after 27 n. mi.
11. Fernandina should have a N.N.W.-S.S.E. orientation and should be 57 n. mi. long.
12. Sailing from the southern tip of Fernandina on a westerly course one should reach Isabella after 29 n. mi.

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