

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.

COLUMBUS DAY, 1992

Just as the period from May, 1486 until August, 1492 must have been an agonizing period in the life of Christopher Columbus, the same period five centuries later has been somewhat agonizing for Columbus enthusiasts. This newsletter has spanned that period and has reported on a variety of projects which were planned and then abandoned. We have also seen many aggressive projects move from idea to reality. We commend those Quincentenary Commissions which adapted to the changing winds and survived the storms during the past six years. During the past several months we have participated in Quincentenary activities in various parts of the country. Cities such as Philadelphia, Scranton, Allentown, Uniontown and Norristown in Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; Columbus, New Jersey; Columbus, Wisconsin and Columbus, Ohio have staged magnificent Columbus Quincentenary programs. We have spoken personally with chairpersons of these various commissions and admire their perseverance and persistence, against many odds, as they were determined to see the Quincentenary both commemorated and celebrated. The most successful programs have been those which anticipated the potential negative aspects of the Quincentenary and took steps to include all parties in the planning and implementation of their projects and which adopted multi-ethnic themes for their events.

This is the next-to-last issue of this Newsletter. The final issue will be published in December as a retrospective on the Quincentenary. Since this issue was planned for release as close to Columbus Day as possible, we toyed with several ideas for a "special" issue. However, being caught up in so many of the events being conducted during this peak period of the Quincentenary, and realizing that the press will be filled with Columbus stories, we have chosen to exercise our right to be an outlet for one or two unique Columbus articles which might not appear anywhere else.

Nancy Douglas of the University of California at Riverside called our attention to a rare Columbus story which was published in Russian in 1936. She translated it and gave us permission to print it. Considering that America and Russia have gone through many dramatic changes since 1936, this story is uncannily prophetic.

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS URGED TO LEARN FROM COLUMBUS

On September 24, Joseph Laufer, Editor and Publisher of *Discovery Five Hundred* addressed the assembled participants at the national conference of COMBASE in Baltimore, Maryland. In the persona and garb of Christopher Columbus, he adapted his message to the theme of the conference, "Community Partnerships". COMBASE is a national organization composed primarily of Community College presidents and administrators.

Columbus offered five qualities for "Building Community" for consideration by his luncheon audience:

1. NETWORKING - Calling himself the "master medieval networker" Columbus pointed to his marriage to Filipa Perestrello in Portugal, his connection with the Franciscans in Spain, and his alliance with the Pinzon brothers in recruiting his sailors as "networking" qualities necessary for college administrators in building community support.

2. PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE - Even his defamers credit Columbus for his patience and persistence. Considering that his idea for the Enterprise of the Indies probably crystallized while he was in Portugal at about the age of 26, and he didn't make his "Voyage of Discovery" until age 41, and only after surviving painful committee hearings and long periods of neglect, Columbus is the model for those who must wait out "the system" for approval of their creative ideas.

3. DO YOUR HOMEWORK - This is a call for research and planning, qualities necessary for the success of any adventure. Columbus' knowledge of navigation came from serious and lengthy study and observation.

4. DON'T BE LIMITED BY THE HORIZON - Perhaps the hallmark of Columbus' ultimate success, his willingness to defy the limitations of known science and scholarship and to venture beyond the horizon, led to his ultimate victory: arrival in the "New World".

5. RECOGNIZE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES - Had Columbus relinquished his desire to govern and concentrated on his navigational skills, he probably would have avoided much of the Columbus bashing of 1992. His inability to govern and control after the first voyage led to his personal disappointments and his loss of favor with the court.

COLUMBUS LANDS ON THE SHORE

By I. Ilf and E. Petrov (1936)

Translated from Russian by

Nancy E. Douglas (1992)

"Land! Land!" shouted the lookout joyously from atop the mast.

The long, frightening, arduous voyage of Christopher Columbus was at an end. Land could be seen ahead. With trembling hands, Columbus seized the spyglass.

"I see a big mountain chain," he said to his travelling companions. "But there's something strange about it. It seems to be cut through with windows. I've never seen mountains with windows before."

A cry rang out. "A canoe with natives!"

With a flourish of their ostrich-plumed hats and trailing their long cloaks, the explorers threw themselves to the lee side. Two natives in strange green clothes climbed aboard the ship and silently thrust a big sheet of paper toward Columbus.

"I wish to discover your land," said Columbus, proudly. "In the name of the Spanish Queen Isabella, I declare this land belongs to ..."

"No matter. Fill in this form," said the native tiredly. "Print your last name, first name, and nationality, then check off your marital status, whether or not you have trachoma, have conspired to overthrow the government, or are an idiot."

Columbus grabbed for his sword. However, since he was not an idiot, he quickly calmed himself.

"One should not annoy the natives," he said to his companions. "Natives are like children. Sometimes they have very strange customs. I know this from experience."

"Do you have a return ticket and five hundred dollars?" asked the native.

"What are dollars?" asked the great navigator, with bewilderment.

"How can you have said just now on this form that you are not an idiot, if you don't even know what a dollar is? Why are you here?"

"I want to discover America."

"Have you arranged for publicity?"

"Publicity? This is the first time I've heard that word."

The native fixed Columbus with a penetrating stare and finally said, "You don't know what publicity is?"

"N-n-no."

"And just how do you intend to discover America? I wouldn't want to be in your shoes, Mister Columbus."

"What do you mean? Do you think that I will not succeed in discovering this rich and fertile land?" The great genius began to worry.

"Without publicity, there is little likelihood," grumbled the native.

By this time, the small sailing vessels had entered the harbor. Autumn in these latitudes was beautiful. The sun shone, and a seagull whirled behind the stern. Greatly excited, Columbus stepped onto the new land, carrying in one hand a modest packet of beads which he planned to exchange profitably for gold and ivory, and in the other a huge Spanish flag. But nowhere about him did he see the earth, soil, grass, and trees to which he was accustomed in old, quiet Europe. He was surrounded by stone, asphalt, concrete, and steel.

A great swarm of natives rushed past him with pencils, notebooks, and cameras. They surrounded a famous boxer who had stepped from a neighboring boat, a gentleman with flattened ears and an incredibly thick neck. No one paid any attention to Columbus. Two native women with painted faces came near him.

"Who's this oddball with the flag?" said one of them.

"It's probably an advertisement for a Spanish restaurant," the other replied, then they too ran to see the famous man with the flattened ears.

Columbus did not succeed in planting his flag in American soil. He would have needed to drill first with a jackhammer. He tried pecking at the asphalt with his sword for a while, but he broke it, so he had to trudge along the streets with his heavy, gold-embroidered flag. Fortunately, it was not necessary to carry around the beads as they had been taken away at the customs house for non-payment of duty.

Hundreds of thousands of natives rushed about their affairs, diving beneath the earth, drinking, eating, trading, never even suspecting that they had been discovered.

Columbus thought bitterly, "So here I am. I struggled, raised money for the expedition, sailed across stormy seas, suffered, risked my life and no one pays any attention."

He approached a native with a pleasant face and proudly said, "I am Christopher Columbus."

"Who?"

"Christopher Columbus!"

"Spell it," said the native, impatiently. Columbus spelled it.

"I recall something," replied the native. "Trading with portable mechanical articles?"

"I discovered America," Columbus said confidently.

"You don't say! Long ago?"

"Just now. Some five minutes ago."

"That's very interesting. And just what do you want, Mister Columbus?"

"I think," the great navigator said modestly, "that I have the right to some fame."

"But surely someone met you on the shore?"

"Not a soul. Of course, the natives did not know that I intended to discover them."

"You should have sent a telegram. It works like this. Whenever you intend to discover a new land, you should send a telegram and prepare some lively jokes and a

hundred photographs to hand out to reporters. The way you did it, they won't publish anything about you. You must have publicity!"

"This is the second time I've heard this strange word publicity. What is it? Some kind of religious rite? A pagan sacrifice?"

The native looked with pity at the newcomer.

"Don't be a child," he said. "Publicity is -- publicity, Mister Columbus! Well, look, I feel sorry for you. Maybe I can do something."

He led Columbus to a hotel and took him to the thirty-fifth floor. Then he left him alone in the room, declaring again that he would try to do something for him.

After half an hour, the door opened and into the room came the kindly native in the company of two other natives. One of them was continually chewing something, and the other set up a tripod, fastened a camera on it and said, "Smile! Laugh! Hey, don't you understand? Well, do like this: ha-ha-ha!" and the photographer, glaring intensely, showed his teeth and began to neigh like a horse.

Columbus's courage failed him and he began to laugh nervously. The flash flared, the camera clicked, and the photographer said, "Thank you."

Now the other native took hold of Columbus. He stopped chewing, took out his pencil and said, "What's your name?"

"Columbus."

"Spell it out. C-O-L-U-M-B-U-S? Very good. I want to get that right. How long ago did you discover America, Mister Coleman? Today? Excellent! How do you like America?"

"You see, I still haven't been able to take a good look at this fertile land."

The reporter considered a moment, then asked, "Then tell me, Mister Coleman, which four things please you most about New York?"

"Well, I find it difficult..."

The reporter lost himself in painful musing. He was used to interviewing boxers and film stars and had trouble dealing with slow, awkward, dull types like this Columbus. Finally he gathered all his strength and burst out with a new, flashingly original question. "Then tell me, Mister Columbus, which two things you like the least."

Columbus heaved a heartfelt sigh. Nothing had ever prepared him for such an encounter. Sweat beaded his brow as he timidly asked his native friend, "Perhaps it would be possible to manage without publicity?"

"You're out of your mind," said the kindly native, turning pale. "The fact that you have discovered America means nothing. What matters is whether America discovers you."

The reporter thought deeply and finally repeated his original question.

"How do you like America?"

Then, without waiting for an answer, he began to write rapidly. Sometimes he pulled the cigarette from his mouth and put it behind his ear. He put his pencil in his mouth as he gazed at the ceiling for inspiration, then continued to write anew. Eventually he said, "O. K.," slapped the worried Columbus on his velvet, gold-embroidered back, shook his hand, and left.

"Well, now that everything is in order," said the kindly native, "let's take a stroll around the city. When you discover a country, you must look at it. Only they won't let you on Broadway with that flag. Leave it in the room."

The walk along Broadway ended with a visit to the 35 Cent Burlesque, from which the great (but shy) Christopher darted like a scalded cat. He scurried along the streets, brushing passersby with his cloak and loudly reciting a prayer. Making his way to his hotel room, he immediately threw himself on his bed and, to the clamor of the elevated train, fell into a troubled sleep.

Early in the morning, Columbus's sponsor came running in, happily waving a newspaper. On page 85, the circumnavigator saw, with horror, his grimacing face. In the article below the face, he read that he was crazy about American women and thought them to be the most elegant women in the world, that he was the best friend of Haile Selassie, and that the two of them would be lecturing on geography at Harvard University.

The noble Genoese was just opening his mouth to swear that he had never said any of this, when new visitors appeared.

They lost no time with courtesies but got to business at once. The publicity had begun to show its magical effects; they invited Columbus to Hollywood.

"You see, Mister Columbus," the new visitors explained, "we want you to play an important role in the historical film 'Amerigo Vespucci.' Get it? The real Christopher Columbus in the role of Amerigo Vespucci -- it'll be a sure-fire hit. Understand? No? O.K., we'll explain it to you in detail. We have this movie script. The scenario is based on an Alexander Dumas novel, 'The Count of Monte Cristo,' but that's not important. We'll adapt it to the discovery of America."

Columbus trembled and silently moved his lips, apparently praying to himself, as the natives from Hollywood continued.

"It's like this, Mister Columbus. You play the role of Amerigo Vespucci, who is loved madly by the Spanish Queen. He, in turn, is wildly in love with the Russian princess Grishka. But Cardinal Richelieu bribes Vasco da Gama and through the help of Lady Hamilton manages to dispatch you to America. His hellish plan is simple. At sea, you are attacked by pirates. You fight like a lion. The set is a thousand feet long. Of course, you can't act, but that's not important."

"What is important?" groaned Columbus.

"Publicity! Now, the public already knows you and will find it fascinating to see a respectable and learned person such as yourself fighting pirates. It ends when you discover America. But that's not important. What important is this fight with the pirates. We'll use halberds, pole-axes, catapults, Greek fire, sabres -- medieval props are dynamite in Hollywood. Only, you have to shave. None of these beards and moustaches! The public has already seen so many beards and moustaches in films about Russian life that they're sick of them. So, first you shave, then you sign a contract for six weeks. Agreed?"

"O. K.," said Columbus, shivering all over.

Later that evening he sat down at the table and wrote a letter to the Queen of Spain.

"I have sailed many seas, but have never before met such original natives.

They are completely unable to endure silence and, so that they may enjoy noise even more, they have built through the whole city peculiar roads of iron rails along which iron coaches rush day and night, making a clatter highly pleasing to the natives.

I have not yet determined whether or not they are cannibals, but, in any case, they do eat hot dogs. With my own eyes I have seen many small food stores where they call out to passersby to feed themselves these hot dogs, lauding their taste.

All the people here have a peculiar smell, which the native language calls "gasoline." All the streets are filled with this smell, very unpleasant to the European nose. Even the local beauties smell of gasoline.

The natives are pagan. They have many gods, the names of which are written in lights above their cabins. The greatest ones they worship are, apparently, the goddess Coca-Cola, the god Drug Store, the goddess Cafeteria, and the great, reeking god of the gasoline smell, Ford. It seems that here he is like Zeus.

The natives are very gluttonous and are chewing something all the time.

Unfortunately, civilization has not yet touched them. In comparison with the breakneck pace of modern Spanish life, the Americans are extremely sluggish. Even walking seems an excessively quick mode of conveyance to them. In order to slow down the process, they have made huge quantities of so-called 'automobiles.' These allow them to move with the speed of a tortoise, which seems to please them very much.

They have a striking rite which happens each evening in a place called Broadway. A large number of natives gather in a big cabin, called 'Burlesque.' A few native women go up on a stage in turn and, to the barbarian clash of tom-toms and saxophones, gradually remove their clothes. Those present clap their hands like children. When the woman is almost naked and the natives in the hall are heated to the final degree, the most astonishing part of this rite happens: a curtain falls and all disperse to their homes.

I plan to continue my exploration of this remarkable land, and will move on into the depths of the continent. My life is in no danger. The natives are quite kind and friendly, and treat strangers very well."

THE GREAT NORDIC HOPE!

In past issues, we have given space to the theories of W.R. Anderson and The Leif Erickson Society. One of our readers, Mike Cocciardi of Levittown, Pennsylvania, feels that we are too easy on the Vikings when we admit that they may have been here 500 years before Columbus, although that "fact" doesn't take away from Columbus' contributions to world history. Mr. Cocciardi goes further than most commentators by challenging the "generally accepted" theory that the Vikings indeed did arrive before Columbus. Here is his letter.

"One of the first rules of scholarship is to assess the biases to be expected in the opinion of writers, both ancient and modern". This quote, though only some two-dozen words in length, speaks volumes about the subject of Christopher Columbus and the "controversy" surrounding him today. When we take into account, however, the rather obvious pattern of fraud on the part of those who insist that Columbus was not the first to land in the New World, we find that there is really no bona fide controversy at all, only fraud. Take, for example, the Vineland map which was mysteriously "found" at Yale University during the earlier part of this century. Without even knowing where it came from, it was unilaterally, whimsically, arbitrarily, and capriciously declared to be "an authentic Viking map" from the 1300s, and which "proved" that "they were here first". When someone finally got around to applying at least some semblance of a scientific approach to the matter, the ink with which the map was drawn was found to contain a chemical compound which was not known until the 20th century. Although this action proved the map to be fraudulent, it continued, and still continues, to be paraded as authentic.

Then there is the Kensington rune stone fiasco in Kensington, Minnesota. The events and outcome were, and are, highly predictable: man mysteriously finds large stone under trunk of tree near the American Great Lakes, thousands of miles inland from sea; man finds that stone has mysterious markings on it; man tells local media, who are skeptical of its authenticity, that this is unmistakably a "Viking" stone; mysterious "Viking" stone mysteriously finds its way into history books; man is dying years later and on his death bed admits that he chiseled inscriptions on, then buried stone under tree near Great Lakes; man's death-bed confession mysteriously DOES NOT find its way into history books.

(Continued on page 5)

NORDIC HOPE (continued from page 4)

Then there is the "old stone" monument in the State of Rhode Island. Again, the pattern is very familiar -- the origin of a small, round, stone structure, built near the sea during colonial times in America, cannot be proved to NOT be a Viking structure; therefore it IS a Viking structure. Is this supposed to be some kind of scientific reasoning? Is this some kind of logic?

By now I'm sure you see the pattern, this pattern of historical fraud which, for some reason, never becomes exposed and, equally puzzling, actually becomes the basis for "fact" regarding history; that this fraud continues to be circulated and that, ironically, authentic information and fact become doubted and questioned; that it becomes compounded, gets lost in the shuffle, and that, once its origins are lost, there is a tendency to treat it as a foregone conclusion; that it grows exponentially, becoming as it were, a building-block of sorts; oh, and never mind questioning the intent of the people who are responsible for propagating and spreading this clap; don't dare question the intent of the National Geographic Society which in 1973, as if by magic, turned an Indian (Eskimo) village on the coast of Newfoundland, Canada (there are hundreds of them) into a "Viking village"; quite a feat, I'd say.

*Michael Cociardi
Levittown, Pennsylvania*

COLUMBUS AND THE RENAISSANCE MAN

by Richard Di Giacomo

Traditional biographers often depict Columbus as the perfect example of the Renaissance man because of his great accomplishments and desire for personal fame and fortune. Modern writers have focused on his supposed greed, racism or religious fanaticism to prove his medieval influences. What both camps have failed to accurately perceive is that Columbus' views were not that unusual in the context of his own day. Although medieval in much of his outlook and behavior, Columbus did display the characteristics of a Renaissance man. He was in fact a transitional figure between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Let us first examine his so-called fanataticism. Like many others of his time, Columbus probably looked forward to replacing the vast numbers lost by Christendom to Islam. One source of allies Europeans looked to for help was the mythical kingdom of Prester John. The origin of this myth is probably Ethiopia or the Nestorian converts of Asia. When Marco Polo mentioned the Christians in the Mongol court, Crusaders' hopes ran high that an eastern front could be opened up against the Arabs. Columbus knew that Seneca and others had said that huge lands would someday be revealed beyond the Strait of Gibraltar and he hoped that he could convert those people as well. Throughout his writings he

portrays himself as a man called by God to accomplish his quest. Columbus' careful religious observances, piety and model Christian behavior are commented upon by all his favorable biographers. Columbus even stated that he wanted all the profits from his ventures to fund the Crusades in the Holy Land. Columbus wisely included this as a part of his appeal to the Catholic monarchs of Spain because he knew that they had spent their whole lives fighting infidels in their efforts to unite the country.

What distinguishes Columbus' writings from those of most Humanist scholars of his day are any traces of the dignity of man or a new outlook towards God. Nor does Columbus apply the new techniques of textual criticism to the portions of scripture which he draws upon for evidence. Finally, he makes no mention of his efforts being part of a new and distinct era in history. He merely sees his efforts to convert the Indians as an extension of the reign of Christendom over the realms of darkness.

Columbus' use of evidence was far from the methods of modern science. For example, he attempted to find the shortest possible distance for the length of a degree of longitude, and thus the circumference of the earth, in order to make the Atlantic crossing seem more feasible. In so doing, however, he deliberately ignored contradictory and more widely accepted estimates.

Columbus' most medieval trait, by far, was insisting to his dying day that he had found Asia despite all proofs against it. When faced with evidence to the contrary, every other discoverer eventually abandoned his belief that what he had discovered was Asia, but not Columbus. A true Renaissance man would have revised his concept of the truth after having found evidence contrary to the Ancients' opinions. Columbus, however, stubbornly tried to rearrange the facts to fit his preconceived notions of what the Ancients had said he should find, regardless of how ridiculous or impossible this became. He always referred to his discoveries as the Indies and to its inhabitants the Indians. When faced with unexpected discovery of South America, he explained the new lands away as the Garden of Eden. He returned to the Indies several times to try to substantiate his claims, but he could not find Japan, China, or the passage to India which Polo had described.

In many other ways, however, Columbus' methods and ideas were like those of a Renaissance man. In preparation for the voyages to America for example, his research was as exhaustive as any Humanist scholar's. He scoured the classics, the Bible, and the works of medieval travellers for clues of what might lie to the west and how best to get there. He cited the evidence of Aristotle, Ptolemy, Marinus, Strabo, Pliny and other ancient geographers as proof of his claims. In a letter to the Spanish sovereigns Columbus said,

"I have had dealings and conversation with learned men, priests, and laymen, Latins and Greeks, Jews and

Moors, and many others of other sects. I found Our Lord very favorable to this my desire, and to further it He granted me the gift of knowledge. He made me skilled in seamanship, equipped me abundantly with the sciences of astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic, and taught my mind and hand to draw this sphere and upon it the cities, rivers, mountains, islands, and ports, each in its proper place".

All of these subjects were in the standard curriculum of Humanist scholars.

Columbus also gained practical knowledge from his contemporaries. As a mapmaker in Portugal he interviewed many sailors to find out what they knew about previously uncharted areas to the west and south of Europe. Columbus' globes made compelling visual aids when trying to convince wary sovereigns to back his voyages. He travelled by sea to the limits of the known world asking those he came in contact with what lay beyond before taking on such a daring venture as crossing the Atlantic. Columbus even listened to stories of strange plants, carvings, canoes, and dead Indians who washed up on the western shores of the Azores and Canary Islands and compared them with descriptions of Asia mentioned by Ptolemy and others.

Columbus' scholarly ability was also evidenced by the persuasive letters he wrote to the regents of Europe petitioning for their support. Columbus also corresponded with the Humanist Paolo Toscanelli who shared his vision of travelling westward to reach the East. Columbus compared notes with some of the best Humanist cartographers of his day asking for copies of any books or maps he could get his hands on.

Columbus' navigational skills also show that he was well-informed about some of the new advances in science in his day. Columbus is credited with being the first to discover magnetic declination and its variations, the wind patterns and currents of the Western Atlantic, and for developing techniques to sail successfully through the unique hazards of the Sargasso Sea and the Caribbean.

Furthermore, he was known for his quality of writing and penmanship. He waxed poetic in a style reminiscent of the Humanist poets when describing the New World. He made fascinating observations about the culture, religion, and society of its inhabitants, but was surprised to not see the large cities and urban culture that Marco Polo had described. He recorded so much detail and carefully contrasted the cultural differences of each group so well that some scholars have suggested that Columbus was the first cultural anthropologist for the Americas.

His many journeys gave him a very cosmopolitan outlook. Like the merchant-scholars of his Italian homeland, he had a keen eye for a way to turn a profit from his discoveries. Like Marco Polo, Columbus commented on the availability of natural resources, the relative friendliness or military potential of natives, and

facilities which would serve well for ports or ship building for the benefit of future traders in the region.

Like many other historical figures who lived during a time of great change Columbus' ideas are those of a man in transition. It does us no good to generalize too broadly on whether he was more medieval or renaissance in his outlook. Nor do the accusations being levelled by today's scholars make it fair to judge a historical figure's conduct by twentieth century standards of morality. A whole new world was literally opening up in Columbus' day and he struggled to understand it within the limits of his own time. This is the same way in which we should try to understand Columbus: as a man of his times.

BARTOLOME de las CASAS

By P. Robert Schreil

In 1492 Europeans sailed west from Spain and encountered the native peoples of America. Bernal Diaz, a soldier who accompanied Cortez in the conquest of Mexico, wrote "We came here to serve God and to get rich." It was greed on the part of most of the Spaniards, yet there was also an unselfish desire, particularly in Catholic priests, to convert the Indians in the New World.

Royal policy vacillated between protection and exploitation. The most famous of the Spanish priests was Bartolome de las Casas, who later became the Bishop of Chiapos in southern Mexico. Las Casas' father and uncle had sailed on Columbus' second voyage. In 1502 young Bart settled in Hispaniola, one of the first settlements. In 1512 he served as Chaplain during the conquest of Cuba. He was rewarded with a large estate in Cuba, making him rich.

In 1514, while preparing a sermon for Pentecost, he began to meditate on Ecclesiastes 34: "Tainted his gifts who offers in sacrifice ill gotten goods; mock presents from the lawless win not God's favor". He began to see treatment of the native Americans in a new light, describing it as "the day darkness was lifted from my eyes". Immediately he returned his estate to the Governor of Cuba and began to preach vigorously against oppression. In 1520, with the approval of King Carlos I, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, he attempted to organize the farmers to live in freedom along with the Spanish settlers. His experiment failed; slaving raids in the territory meant oppression would continue. Colonists pointed out that the idolatry of the natives, including human sacrifice, as well as cannibalism, proved that his cause was hopeless.

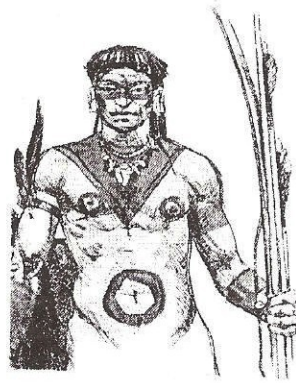
Returning to Spain in 1547, he was alarmed to hear that Sepulveda had written a learned treatise to justify the conquest of native Americans. Bishop las Casas replied with a 500-page treatise of his own, claiming all natives were human and deserved respect. The two debated before learned scholars, and later both claimed victory. Although the Bishop seemed to have failed in his efforts, there is no doubt he influenced many missionaries who followed him.

The following selection was taken from an unpublished novel entitled *1493 - The Second Voyage* written by Walter W. Fredricks of Wind Lake, Wisconsin. Diego-the-Indian was an authentic historical character who served as translator to Columbus after being taken captive from San Salvador (Guanahani), the first island discovered by the admiral. In what follows, Fredricks tries to capture how the 18-year-old Taino boy might have reacted to his first taste of Europe.

DIEGO-THE-INDIAN IN LISBON

On Friday, March 8, 1493, Columbus received an invitation to pay his respects to the thirty-eight year old monarch of Portugal and his queen. Since a great pestilence raged along the lower Tagus, the king and queen had taken up separate residences: the king, at the monastery of Santa Maria das Virtudes; the queen, at the Convento de Sao Antonio de Castanheira. Diego, because of his radiant health and his mastery of languages, was one of several Indians selected to accompany Columbus. Although there was considerable risk in traveling through Lisbon and the epidemic, Columbus felt that there was even greater risk in refusing an invitation from the Portuguese king.

As the caravan crept through the close-built hovels of Lisbon on its way to the king's sanctuary, Diego experienced a myriad of impressions and felt at a loss to come to grips with his own feelings. There was a chaotic character to this strange land that offended him; it did not in any way resemble his free but orderly existence on Guanahani. He felt a crush of people that he had never before experienced; it seemed unhealthy. A stench penetrated his nose, turning his stomach. He saw hostility and curiosity and avarice in the eyes of those who lined the way -- eyes that tore through his flesh and tried, without embarrassment or success, to peer into his soul. These people lived a type of poverty that was different from having little, although they had little enough. And he sensed an excitement -- a dangerous kind of excitement -- similar to what he felt when the Carib skirted the shores of his island in their long dugout canoes. These white men might also eat you, he thought. *Canibales*. He saw fear in those eyes -- suspicion and fear. Some fell to their knees and crossed themselves. And, believe it or not, in some he saw admiration and, perhaps, even affection. The experience was complex and altogether overpowering, but his strongest feeling was one of importance: he was *the* distinguished guest, and more eyes followed him than *Capitan* Colon himself. It filled his being with warmth. Occasionally he would reach out and grab the hand stretched out to him. The owner inevitably shrank back, and Diego felt power and confidence, and he laughed openly with his friends. The guards, however, were not impressed and quickly reemphasized his role as captive-slave, protected-proof, a thing of value, but a thing, nonetheless.



At the monastery, Diego found an unusual community of men: a community of nonwomen, a community that neither smiled nor laughed nor loved. A community of men who knelt and bobbed and bowed. Silent men with absolutely no humor. If it had not struck him as outrageously funny, he too would have been somber, but he thought of his people and how they laughed and loved and made babies and ate and shared and died. He could

almost feel the warmth of the tropical sun on his back even in these black halls, and the soft coral sand of his island-of-the-iguana seemed to press between his toes as he walked on the cold stone floors. So he smiled and joked with his friends and thought of the Creator as these men dipped and prostrated themselves before *guanin* -- it had the

bright, shiny countenance of *guanin*. This strange breed of men worshipped the metal in all sorts of shapes: figures of women and children and new-born babes, men hanging on suffering crosses, and others too numerous to recall -- but inevitably a golden image. Diego thought that if he should squat and leave a golden offering, one of these idiots would come and worship it.

He knew they were not fools. The Carib were humorless men, and they were not fools; they simply loved to kill. Diego's laughter had a hollow ring, betraying his fear of these new humorless men in black who grovelled before golden images that had neither the beauty of a seashell nor the precious quality of fresh water nor the savor of sweet fruit. (Interestingly, the Carib affected black coloration, also.) Diego felt exhilarated, frightened, bold and condescending -- confused.

King John II interrogated Diego in Columbus's presence. The Indian boy laid dried beans on a marble table giving the details of his homeland of islands. The king seemed satisfied. Columbus sighed in relief when they were released by the king to pay a courtesy call on the queen at the convent. Here Diego encountered the counterpoint of the monastery: a community of sexless females -- nonmale, black-clad metal worshippers. The place held the pungent, unpleasant odor of a clutch of aging women. Diego was cautiously viewed from a distance by the queen and was spared the insect-under-glass examination he had been submitted to at the monastery.

While the *Pinta* made south along the Portuguese coast, Columbus returned to the *Nina* with his retinue. He found her ship-shape and ready to sail, thanks to the generosity and good faith of a king he had mistrusted. Diego was content to be back on board.

Early Wednesday morning, March 13th, the *Nina* sailed out of Lisbon harbor.

SHORT TAKES

- The American Topical Association has produced a 32-page handbook, *Christopher Columbus in Philately*, edited by David E. Nye. It contains five of the winning articles from the ATA's Columbus and Philately competition. The book is available for \$5 postpaid from: ATA, Box 630, Johnstown, PA 15907.
- *The Bahamas Amateur Radio Society will operate C6A500 throughout the month of October 1992 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. For details, contact Wm. C. Wilkinson, N2H0H, 55 Littlebrook Road North, Princeton, NJ 08540. (609) 924-3278.*
- 10,000 Parade participants are expected in Philadelphia on Sunday, October 11. Led by Grand Marshal Luciano Pavarotti, the 1992 LAND HO, PHILADELPHIA! COLUMBUS DAY PARADE will pay tribute to 500 years of exploration, transportation and travel. An entire section of the parade will be devoted to "PHILADELPHIA ON WHEELS". This finale to the parade will showcase everything that keeps the city moving in everyday life. Along these lines, ICQA's Joe Laufer, a.k.a. Christopher Columbus, christened the Colum-bus, a SEPTA bus scheduled to transport visitors in the historic downtown area on weekends at discount rates.

- *The Festival of the Americas will culminate the year-long Quincentenary celebration in Corpus Christi, Texas. The festival opens in October with a visit by eminent author, statesman, and scholar, Carlos Fuentes of Mexico who will speak about the lessons of the Quincentenary. On October 10, at the Port of Corpus Christi, a nine foot bronze statue of Christopher Columbus will be unveiled. For information call (512) 883-1992.*
- On Saturday, November 14, the COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENARY EXHIBIT, "Del Encuentro al Desarrollo: Creating a New World From Many Old Ones." will open at the Arizona Historical Society, 949 E. Second St., Tucson, Arizona. It will contain a section of an ancient Aztec pyramid, a Spanish Colonial plaza and court, life-like re-creations of different peoples of the era, and an exhibit of silver mining in the Zacatecas region. For information, call (602) 628-5774.
- *The Center for Catalan Studies, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. will conduct its Third Annual Catalan Symposium on Friday and Saturday, October 23 and 24, 1992. The sessions on Saturday, October 24 will be devoted to THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, with the participation of American and Spanish scholars. Mr. Joseph Laufer, Editor and Publisher of Discovery Five Hundred will present a paper on the Italian origins of Columbus. For details, call Dr. J. M. Sola-Sole at (301) 229-4649.*

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