

Columbus - II



513 years ago today (9-6-2005) Columbus set sail with three small sailing ships containing 87 men from Tenerife in the Canary Islands off the West Coast of Africa (30 degrees North latitude) (The Oregon-California border is 42 degrees North Lat. Previous information from the Encyclopedia Britannica. From Chambers Biographical Dictionary Revised Edition, 1984, we learn the three spellings of Columbus's name: English: Christopher Columbus; Italian Cristoforo Colombo, and Spanish Cristobal Colon. Born 1451-died 1506. He went to sea at 14 years of age and was shipwrecked off Cape St Vincent. He reached the shores of Portugal. In Lisbon he married Filippa Moniz. As early as 1474 he had conceived the notion of reaching India by sailing west. He was encouraged by a Florentine astronomer Toscanelli and by 1477 he sailed to or beyond Iceland. He had also sailed to the Cape Verde Islands and Sierra Leone. At this time he began looking for a patron (rich person to sponsor him). He first asked King John II of Portugal, sent letters to Henry VII, King of England and sent his brother to France to look there for support.

Finally, he was referred to Isabella, the Catholic Queen of Castile. A board of advisers (mainly ecclesiastics) rejected his proposal. Later it was reconsidered and finally after seven (7) years of encouraging him, then repulsing him, He signed the contract with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain.

Probably the most popular book in English concerning Columbus, (Christopher Columbus, Mariner, 1954), was written by Samuel Eliot Morrison, the Harvard historian who was himself a sailor and retraced Columbus's route across the Atlantic. Morrison was also the official naval historian for the United States government in World War II.

And so the adventure begins: In the coming days we can follow Columbus and his crews as they sail west into the unknown.

One other account of this adventure is covered in the first chapter of A People's History of the United States, 1492 to Present, by Howard Zinn. This first chapter is titled: Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress.

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