



## Columbus At Sea

On this date (9-19/ 05) 513 years ago we find Columbus and his three ships near the 40 degree West Longitude. 0 degree longitude passes through Greenwich, England. He has traveled on a nearly straight line due West from the Canary Islands.

Although the Santa Maria was the largest of the three ships it was also the most unwieldy. The Nina and Pinta were small caravels, easy to steer and sail. They were perfect for exploring the many islands in the Caribbean Sea.

The monarchs had set up a prize offered to the man who first sighted land. That eagle eyed sailor was to get 10,000 maravedis a year for life. You can bet that all eyes were searching for land.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of September the men continued to be frightened by the strange reading of their compass. On the 18<sup>th</sup> birds were sighted and on the 20<sup>th</sup> boobies (birds) were seen. It was thought that they must be near land as these birds were not known to stray so far from shore.

Although the temperature of the planet 500 years ago must have been considerably cooler than our planet is now there was still great danger of encountering a fierce storm as is now occurring in that region. This year some 17 tropical storms have been produced by the extra warm waters of the Atlantic and especially the Gulf of Mexico. Columbus and his crews have been at sea for over 12 days now. He continued to keep two logs, one false for the men and the other accurate for himself.

By Richard Pastega