

26 DAYS AT SEA



Columbus and his crews have come nearly 1800 miles and reached the 65th meridian. **They are in the final days of their trip west.** We know this but they do not. They know they have been at sea for nearly a month. Columbus even knows that by his own reckoning they should have arrived at land, the islands of Cipango (Japan) at least.

Columbus faced an unruly crew, rivalry from Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the Pinta, who unlike Columbus was a countryman of the crew, and was aggressive to get the royal reward. On Sept. 25th, Pinzon had hailed the Admiral saying he saw land and claiming the reward. They all kneeled and repeated the “Gloria In Excelsis”. The next day they realized that the clouds had played a trick on them.

The first few days of October they averaged 142 miles every 24 hours, one day making even 182 miles almost 8 knots. Even with this speed the crews were anxious and wanted to turn back. There is great controversy over who wanted to go forward: Columbus or the Pinzons. Once land was discovered all claimed the success.

History is written from different points of view. Some historians focus on personages, and there are biographies, others deal primarily with politics and political leaders, many deal with military actions. A People’ History of the United States by Howard Zinn places its emphasis on the common people. Zinn tells us: Spain was a newly unified country, its population was mostly poor peasants who worked for the nobility who were 2% of the population and owned 95% of the land. Spain tied itself to the Catholic Church and expelled all Moors and Jews. Spain was after gold. Gold was the necessary element in trade.

By: Richard L. Pastega