

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Why did I decide to write about Columbus? Well, we were on a cruise in the Caribbean last Spring and I was interested in learning more about the history of Columbus given that is where he traveled many years ago. Doing the research has been very interesting and learning his impact on our history and throughout the world was extreme. Here we go!

Early Age – Images 1 & 2

Christopher Columbus was born sometime between August 25 and October 31 in 1451. His father was Domenico Colombo, a wool worker and merchant who worked in Genoa and later Savona, in northwestern Italy. He owned a cheese stand at which young Christopher worked. His mother was Susanna Fontanarossa, and he had three brothers; Bartholomew, Giovanni Pellegrino, and Diego, as well as a sister, Bianchinetta. Columbus's native language is presumed to have been a Genoese dialect (Ligurian) as his first language. His name in 16th-century Genoese was Cristoffa Corombo, in Italian, Cristoforo Colombo, and in Spanish, Cristóbal Colón. In 1470, at 19 years old, the family moved to Savona, just west of Genoa along the coast, where his father took over a tavern.

Young Adult

In one of his writings, he indicated that he went to sea at age 14; about 1465. In 1473, Columbus began his apprenticeship as a business agent for three wealthy Genoan Families; Spinola, Centurione, and Di Negro. One of his early boat trips was to the Greek island, Chios, in the Aegean Sea west of Izmir, Turkey, ruled then by Genoa. In May of 1476, he took part in an armed convoy of ships sent by Genoa to carry valuable cargo to Northern Europe. Military conflict embroiled many of the Mediterranean states, and in response Genoa dispatched ships in convoys. This one included three galleys and a battleship, and he was aboard the galley Bechalla, with a crew from the Liguria province of Italy where Genoa is located. On August 13 the convoy was attacked off the coast of Portugal near Lagos, south of Lisbon, by a French-Portuguese war fleet. Although outnumbered, the Genoese bravely grappled with the enemy. At day's end, three Genoese and four enemy ships had been sunk in battle, with a loss of life in the hundreds. The Bechalla did not survive, and when the ship sank, he jumped into the sea and was lucky enough to grab a long oar and pushed it ahead of him as he swam to shore, climbing on top of it to rest when he was tired. Although he was wounded, he eventually completed the six mile journey to the shore. The inhabitants of Lagos treated shipwrecked sailors, such

as Columbus, humanely, and when he recovered from his ordeal, he traveled to Lisbon, where he found refuge in the city's Genoese colony.

He was based out of Lisbon for 9 years, from 1476 to 1485. While there he learned to speak Portuguese, Castilian (modern day Spanish), and Latin, as well as mathematics, cartography, and astronomy for celestial navigation. Columbus was in Lisbon with his ten years younger brother Bartholomew, and they were both employed as chart makers, although Columbus was principally a sea-going entrepreneur. In 1478, the Centurione family sent Columbus on a sugar-buying trip to Madeira Island west of Morocco. Upon that visit he met Felipa Perestrello e Moniz and they were married in 1479. She was the daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrello, a Portuguese nobleman, who had been the Portuguese colonial official of Porto Santo Island, just northeast of Madeira Island. Their son Diego was born in 1480. Between 1482 and 1485, Columbus traded along the coast of west Africa, reaching the Portuguese trading post of Elmina along the Guinea coast in present-day Ghana. In 1484 he returned to Porto Santo to find his wife had died. He returned to Portugal to settle her estate and took Diego with him. He left Portugal for Castile, modern day Spain, in 1485. In 1487 he took a mistress, a 20-year-old orphan named Beatriz Enriquez de Arana. It is likely that Beatriz met Columbus when he was in Cordoba, a gathering place for Genoese merchants and where the court of the Catholic monarchs was located periodically. Beatriz, unmarried at the time, gave birth to Columbus's second son, Ferdinand, in July of 1488, named after the monarch of Aragon.

Quest for Asia

Under the Mongol Empire's **Image 3** dominance over Asia and the ***Pax Mongolica***, Europeans had long enjoyed a safe land passage on the Silk Road to India, parts of East Asia, including China and Maritime Southeast Asia, all were sources of valuable goods. With the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire **Image 4** in 1453, the Silk Road was closed to Christian traders.

In 1474, the Florentine astronomer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli suggested to King Afonso V of Portugal that sailing west across the Atlantic would be a quicker way to reach the spice islands of Indonesia, China, Japan and India than the route around Africa, but King Afonso rejected his proposal. In the 1480's Columbus and his brother proposed a plan to reach the East Indies by sailing west. Columbus supposedly wrote to Toscanelli in 1481 and received encouragement, along with a map **Image 5** the astronomer had sent to Afonso implying that a westward route to Asia was possible.

During 1484, Columbus proposed his planned voyage to King John II of Portugal, son of King Afonso V. The king submitted Columbus's proposal to his

advisors, who rejected it on the grounds that Columbus's estimate for a voyage of 2,400 nautical miles was only a quarter of what it should have been. In 1488, Columbus again appealed to the court of Portugal, and King John II again granted him an audience. That meeting also proved unsuccessful, in part because of Bartolomeu Dia's return to Portugal after rounding the southern tip of Africa.

Columbus sought an audience with the monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, **Image 6** who had united several kingdoms within the Iberian Peninsula by marrying and now ruled together. On May 1, 1486, permission having been granted, Columbus presented his plans to Queen Isabella, who passed it on to a committee for review. The learned men of Spain, like their counterparts in Portugal, replied that Columbus had grossly underestimated the distance to Asia. They indicated that the idea was impractical and advised the Catholic Monarchs to pass on the proposed venture. To keep Columbus from taking his ideas elsewhere, and perhaps to keep their options open, the sovereigns gave him an allowance, equivalent to the annual salary of a sailor. In May of 1489, the Queen sent him more money, and furnished him with a letter ordering all Spanish cities and towns to provide him food and lodging at no cost.

Since Spain didn't want him venturing elsewhere, Columbus was ordered to stay in Spain, but he did send his brother Bartholomew to the court of Henry VII of England to inquire whether the English crown might sponsor his expedition, but he was captured by pirates on his trip there, and only arrived in early 1491. By that time, Columbus had retreated to La Rabida Friary outside the city of Huelva in southern Spain, and the Spanish crown was still sending him money along with instructions to return to the Spanish court for renewed discussions.

Columbus waited in Granada at King Ferdinand's camp, the Alhambra fortress complex located in southern Spain, until Ferdinand and Isabella conquered Granada, the last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula. On January 12, 1492, a council led by Isabella's councilor, Hernando de Talavera who became the Archbishop of Granada, found Columbus's proposal to reach the Indies implausible. Columbus had left for France when Ferdinand intervened, first sending Talavera and Bishop Diego de Deza to appeal to the queen. Isabella was finally convinced by the king's financial clerk Luis de Santangel, who argued that Columbus would take his ideas elsewhere, and offered to help arrange the funding. Isabella then sent a royal guard to bring Columbus back, who had traveled only 6 miles toward Cordoba, northwest of Granada.

On April 17, 1492 the Capitulations of Santa Fe between Christopher Columbus and the Catholic Monarchs, *Queen Isabella I of Castile* and *King Ferdinand II of Aragon*, were signed in Santa Fe, just west of Granada. The monarchs promised Columbus that if he succeeded he would be given the rank of Admiral of the Ocean Sea and appointed Viceroy and Governor of all the new lands he might claim for Spain. He had the right to nominate three persons, from whom the sovereigns would choose one, for any office in the new lands. He would be entitled to 10% of all the revenues from the new lands in perpetuity, and also have the option of buying 1/8 interest in any commercial venture in the new lands, and receive 1/8 of the profits.

First Voyage (1492-1493)

The first voyage consisted of three ships. The Flagship – *Santa Maria* **Image 7** was 85 feet long, carried about 100 tons and a crew of 40. The second ship, the *Pinta*, **Image 8** was a square-rigged caravel, 69 feet long, carried 60 tons, and a crew of 27. The third, the *Nina*, **Image 9** a caravel, 55 feet long, carried 50 tons and a crew of 21.

The *Santa Maria* was owned and captained by Juan de la Cosa, and under Columbus's direct command. The *Nina* and *Pinta* were piloted by the Pinzon brothers, Martin Alonso Pinzon and Vicente Yanez Pinzon.

Image 10 On the morning of August 3, 1492, Columbus departed from Palos de la Frontera, near Huelva, Spain into the Atlantic Ocean. Three days into the journey, on August 6, the rudder on the *Pinta* broke. The pilot, Martin Alonso Pinzon suspected the owners of the ship of sabotage, as they were afraid to go on the journey. The crew was able to secure the rudder with ropes until they could reach the Canary Islands, just west of Morocco, arriving on August 9. The *Pinta* had its rudder replaced on the island of Gran Canaria, and by September 2 the ships rendezvoused on La Gomera island at the city of San Sebastian de La Gomera, just a bit west, where the *Nina*'s triangular lateen sails were re-rigged to standard square sails that are better for open ocean sailing. Final provisions were secured, and on September 6 the ships departed for what turned out to be a 5-week long westward voyage across the Atlantic.

On October 7, the crew spotted immense flocks of birds. On October 11, Columbus changed course to due west, and sailed through the night, believing land was soon to be found. At around 2 am the following morning, a lookout on the *Pinta*, Rodrigo de Triana, spotted land. The captain of the *Pinta*, Martin Alonso Pinzon, verified the sight of land and alerted Columbus. Columbus later maintained that he had already seen a light on the land a few hours earlier, thereby claiming for himself the lifetime pension promised by Ferdinand and

Isabella to the first person to sight land. Columbus called this island San Salvador (meaning “Holy Savior”), one of the Bahamas many islands.

Columbus called the inhabitants of the lands he visited Los Indios (Spanish for “Indians”). He initially encountered the *Lucayan*, *Taino*, and *Arawak* peoples. Noting their gold ear ornaments, Columbus took some of the *Arawak*’s prisoner and insisted that they guide him to the source of the gold. Columbus did not believe he needed to create a fortified outpost, writing, “the people here are simple in war-like matters ... I could conquer the whole of them with 50 men, and govern them as I pleased.” The *Taino*’s told Columbus that another indigenous tribe, the *Caribs*, were fierce warriors and cannibals, who made frequent raids on the *Taino*’s, often capturing the women. Although this may have been a belief perpetuated by the Spaniards to justify enslaving them.

Columbus also explored the northeast coast of Cuba, where he landed on October 28, 1492. On the night of November 26, Martin Alonso Pinzon took the *Pinta* on an unauthorized expedition in search of an island called “Babeque” or “Baneque”, which the natives had told him was rich in gold. Columbus, continued to the northern coast of Hispaniola (present day Dominican Republic), where he landed on December 6, 1492. There, the *Santa Maria* ran aground on December 25, 1492 and had to be abandoned. The wreck was used as a target for cannon fire by the *Nina* to impress the native people. Columbus was received by the native chief, who gave him permission to leave some of his men behind. Columbus left 39 men, including the interpreter Luis de Torres, and founded the settlement La Navidad, in present-day Haiti. Columbus took more natives prisoner and continued his exploration. He kept sailing along the northern coast of Hispaniola with the *Nina* until he encountered the *Pinta* and captain Martin Alonso Pinzon, on January 6, 1493.

On January 13, 1493, Columbus made his last stop of this voyage in the Americas, at a small bay in northeast Hispaniola. There he encountered the *Ciguayos*, the only natives who offered violent resistance during this voyage. They refused to trade the amount of bows and arrows that Columbus desired; in the ensuing fight one *Ciquayo* was stabbed in the buttocks and another wounded with an arrow in the chest. Because of these events, Columbus called the inlet the *Bay of Arrows*; present day “*Bay of Rincon*”.

3 days later, on January 16, Columbus left with his remaining two ships for Spain. The journey back was a nightmare. The westerly winds did indeed direct him homeward, but in mid-February a terrible storm engulfed the fleet and separated him from the *Pinta*. The *Nina* found harbour on the island of Santa Maria in the Azores. Half of the crew went ashore to say prayers of thanksgiving

in a chapel for having survived the storm. But while praying, they were imprisoned as the governor of the island held the suspicion they were pirates. After a two-day standoff, the crew members were released, and Columbus again set sail for Spain.

Another storm forced the *Nina* and Columbus into the port of Lisbon, Portugal. From there he went inland to the city of Vale do Paraiso just north of Lisbon where he was allowed to meet with King John II of Portugal. His visit in Portugal put him under the suspicion of collaborating with Spain's enemies and cast a shadow on his return to Spain. After a week in Portugal, Columbus set sail on the *Nina* for Spain and returned to Palos de la Frontera on March 15, 1493. He was given a hero's welcome and soon afterward received by both Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand in Barcelona where he presented them kidnapped Tainos indians, various plants, and other items he collected.

Separate from Columbus and the *Nina*, the *Pinta* with its crew and captain Martin Alonso Pinzon made their landing in the city of Baiona just north of Portugal along the coast of Spain. Had Pinzon not died shortly after his return, Columbus's command of the second voyage might have been less assured. As it was, the Pinzon family became his rivals for power.

Second Voyage (1493-1496) Image 11

On September 24, 1493, Columbus sailed from Cadiz, just a bit south from Palos de la Frontera, with 17 ships and supplies to establish permanent colonies in the Americas. The crews consisted of nearly 1,500 men, including sailors, soldiers, priests, carpenters, stonemasons, metalworkers, and farmers. Among the expedition members were the following; Alvarez Chanca, a physician who wrote a detailed account of the second voyage; Juan Ponce de Leon, the first governor of Puerto Rico and Florida; Juan de la Cosa, a Castilian navigator and cartographer who is credited with making the first world map depicting the New World; Diego Columbus, the youngest brother of Christopher. The fleet stopped at the Canary Islands to take on more supplies, and set sail again on October 7, deliberately taking a more southerly course than on the first voyage.

On November 3, the many ships arrived in the Windward Islands, located in southeastern Caribbean Sea; the first island they encountered was named Dominica by Columbus, but unable to find a good harbor there, they anchored off a nearby smaller island, which he named Marie-Galante, now one of the Guadeloupe islands. The islands named by Columbus on this voyage were Montserrat, Antigua, Saint Martin, and the Virgin Islands. There are many other islands within this area rounding up to Puerto Rico.

On November 22, Columbus returned to Hispaniola, present-day Haiti, to visit La Navidad, where 39 Spaniards had been left during the first voyage. Columbus found the fort in ruins, destroyed by the Taínos after some of the Spaniards reportedly antagonized their hosts with their unrestrained lust for gold and women. Columbus then established a poorly located and short-lived settlement to the east, La Isabela, in the north of present-day Dominican Republic.

From April to August of 1494, Columbus explored Cuba and Jamaica, and then returned to Hispaniola. By the end of 1494, disease and famine had killed two-thirds of the Spanish settlers. Columbus implemented *encomienda*, a Spanish formal system of forced labor that rewarded conquerors with the labor of conquered non-Christian people. Columbus executed Spanish colonists for minor crimes, and used dismemberment as punishment. Columbus and the colonists enslaved the indigenous people, including children. Natives were beaten, raped, and tortured in Columbus's attempt to locate the imagined gold. Thousands of native people committed suicide rather than face the oppression.

In February of 1495, Columbus rounded up over 1,500 *Arawaks*, some of whom had rebelled earlier, in a great slave raid. About 500 of the strongest were shipped to Spain as slaves, with about two hundred of them dying en route.

In June of 1495, the Spanish crown sent ships and supplies to Hispaniola. In October, Florentine merchant Gianotto Berardi, who was one of the financiers of Columbus's first voyage along with Amerigo Vespucci, obtained the contract to provision the fleet of Columbus's second voyage and to supply the colony on Hispaniola, received numerous enslaved Indians. He renewed his effort to get supplies to Columbus, and was working to organize a fleet when he suddenly died on December 15, 1495, which left Amerigo Vespucci in charge. On March 10, 1496, having been away about 30 months, Columbus and his fleet departed from La Isabela, Hispaniola. On June 8, 1496 the crew sighted land somewhere between Lisbon and Cape St. Vincent, and disembarked in Cadiz, Spain on June 11, 1496 after nearly 3 years.

Third Voyage (1498-1500) Image 12

Columbus received funding for a 3rd voyage and departed on May 30, 1498, with 6 ships from Sanlucar de Barrameda, Spain, just a bit north of Cadiz. Three of the ships headed directly for Hispaniola with much-needed supplies, while Columbus took the other three ships to the Portuguese island of Porto Santo, his wife's native land, then south to the nearby Madeira Island, then to the Canary Islands, then to Cabo Verde Islands off the west coast of Africa, and then westward across the Atlantic. It is probable this expedition was intended to

confirm rumors of a large continent south of the Caribbean Sea, that is, South America.

On July 13, 1498, Columbus's fleet entered the doldrums of the mid-Atlantic, where they were becalmed for several days, the heat doing damage to their ships, food, and water supply. An easterly wind finally propelled them westwards, which was maintained until July 22, when birds flying from southeast to northeast were sighted, and the fleet turned north. On July 31, they sighted Trinidad, the most southerly Caribbean island. On August 2, they landed at Icacos Point on the southwest peninsula of Trinidad, narrowly avoiding a violent encounter with the natives. The morning of August 4, a tsunami nearly capsized Columbus's ship. The three ships sailed across the Gulf of Paria, and on August 5, landed on the mainland of South America at the Paria Peninsula. Columbus sent several small boats ashore in what is now Venezuela, near the mouth of the Orinoco River. This was the first recorded landing of Europeans on the mainland of South America, which Columbus realized must be a continent. The fleet then sailed west to the island of Margarita, arriving on August 14.

On August 19, 1498, Columbus returned to Hispaniola. There he found settlers in rebellion against his rule, and his unfulfilled promises of riches. Columbus had some of the Europeans tried for their disobedience; at least one rebel leader was hanged.

After spending over a year in Hispaniola, in October of 1499, Columbus sent two ships to Spain, asking the Court of Spain to appoint a royal commissioner to help him govern. By this time, accusations of tyranny and incompetence on the part of Columbus had also reached the Court. The sovereigns sent Francisco de Bobadilla, a relative of Marquesa Beatriz de Bobadilla, a patron of Columbus and a close friend of Queen Isabella, to investigate the accusations of brutality made against the Admiral. Arriving in Santo Domingo while Columbus was away, Bobadilla was immediately met with complaints about all three Columbus brothers. He moved into Columbus's house and seized his property, took depositions from the Admiral's enemies, and declared himself governor.

Bobadilla claimed Columbus regularly used torture and mutilation to govern Hispaniola. Testimony recorded in the report stated Columbus congratulated his brother Bartholomew on "defending the family" because he had ordered a woman to be paraded naked through the streets, and then had her tongue cut because she had "spoken ill of the admiral and his brothers". The document also described how Columbus put down native unrest and revolt: he first ordered a brutal suppression of the uprising where many natives were killed, and then paraded their dismembered bodies through the streets in an attempt to

discourage further rebellion. Columbus vehemently denied the charges. The truth of the accusations from Bobadilla toward Columbus and his brothers have been disputed by historians, given the anti-Italian sentiment of the Spaniards and Bobadilla's desire to take over Columbus's position.

In early October, 1500, Columbus and his brothers, Bartholomew and Diego, presented themselves to Bobadilla, and were put in chains aboard *La Gorda*, the caravel Bobadilla had arrived on at Santo Domingo, and were returned to Spain. During the return journey Columbus composed a long letter to his sovereigns that is one of his most extraordinary and informative writings. Part of its exalted, almost mystical quality, could be attributed to the humiliations Columbus endured (treatment he compounded by refusing to allow the captain to remove his chains during the voyage). In addition, he was severely suffering from sleeplessness, eyestrain, and a form of rheumatoid arthritis. Much of what he said in the letter genuinely seems to have expressed his beliefs. It shows Columbus had absolute faith in his navigational abilities and his seaman's sense of the weather. This letter, desperate though it was, convinced the sovereigns that even if he had not yet found the prize, he had been close to it after all.

The brothers arrived in Cadiz, Spain in late October of 1500, and languished in jail for six weeks before King Ferdinand ordered their release. Not long after, the King and Queen summoned the Columbus brothers to the Alhambra Palace in Granada. The sovereigns expressed annoyance provoked by the actions of Bobadilla, who was then recalled and ordered to make restitutions of the property he had confiscated from Columbus. The royal couple heard the brothers pleas, and restored their freedom and wealth and after much persuasion, agreed to fund Columbus's fourth voyage. However they did appoint Nicolas de Ovando to succeed Bobadilla on September 3, 1501, to be the acting governor of the West Indies.

Columbus, although ill, was persistent, and a better investment than the many adventurers and profiteers who had meanwhile been competing with him, and there was always the danger, as revealed in some of the letters from this period, that he would offer his services to his native Genoa. In October of 1501, Columbus went to Seville, Spain to make ready for his fourth and final expedition.

Fourth Voyage (1502-1504) Image 13

After much persuasion, the sovereigns agreed to fund Columbus's fourth voyage. It would be his final chance to prove himself and become the first man ever to circumnavigate the world. Columbus's goal was to find the Strait of Malacca, located between the islands of Malaysia and leading to the Indian

Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. Columbus started his fourth voyage with four ships, 147 men, and with strict orders from the King and Queen not to stop at Hispaniola, but only to search for a westward passage to the Indian Ocean and mainland of India.

Accompanied by his brothers Bartholomew and Diego, and his 13-year-old son Ferdinand, he left Cádiz on May 9, 1502, with his flagship, *Capitana*, as well as the *Gallega*, *Vizcaina*, and *Santiago de Palos*. They first sailed to the city of Asilah, along the Moroccan coast, to rescue the Portuguese soldiers who he heard were under siege by the Moors.

After using the trade winds to cross the Atlantic in a brisk twenty days, they landed on June 15, 1502, at the city of Le Carbet on the island of Martinique. Columbus anticipated a hurricane was brewing, and there was a ship that needed to be replaced, so he headed to Hispaniola, despite being forbidden to land there. He arrived at Santo Domingo on June 29, but was denied port, and the new Governor, Nicolas de Ovando, refused to listen to his warning of a storm. While Columbus's ships sheltered at the mouth of the Haina River, just southwest of Santa Domingo, the previous governor Francisco Bobadilla departed, accompanied by a convoy of 30 vessels, along with Francisco Roldan, the man Columbus had left as chief mayor, under his brothers. Columbus's personal gold and other belongings were put on the fragile ship *Aguya*, considered the fleet's least seaworthy vessel. The onset of a hurricane drove some ships ashore, with some sinking in the Santo Domingo harbor. Bobadilla's ship is thought to have reached the eastern end of Hispaniola before sinking. About 20 other vessels sank in the Atlantic, with a total of some 500 people drowning. Three damaged ships made it back to Santo Domingo. Only the *Aguya* made it to Spain, causing some of Columbus's enemies to accuse him of conjuring up the storm.

After the hurricane, Columbus regrouped with his men, and following brief stops at Jamaica and the coast of Cuba to replenish, he sailed to modern Central America, arriving at Guanaja Island, the most eastern of the Bay Islands, off the coast of Honduras on July 30, 1502. Here his brother, Bartholomew, found native merchants-possibly, but not conclusively, Mayans, and a large canoe, described as "long as a galley" and filled with cargo. The natives introduced Columbus and his entourage to cacao. Columbus spoke with a native elder, and thought he described having seen people with swords and horses, possibly the Spaniards. He also believed the elder said they were only a 10-day journey from the Ganges River, located in India. On August 14, Columbus landed on the mainland of Central America at Puerto Castilla, near Trujillo, Honduras. He spent two months exploring the coasts of Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica

looking for the passage, before arriving in Almirante Bay, in northwest Panama, on October 16.

In mid-November, Columbus was told by some of the natives a province called Ciguare lies just nine day's journey by land to the west, or some 200 miles from his location in Veragua, Panama. There was supposed to be "gold without limit", "people who wear coral on their heads", "people who know of pepper", "people that do business in fairs and markets", and "people accustomed to warfare". Columbus would later write to the sovereigns, "according to the natives, the sea encompasses Ciguare and...it is a journey of 10-days to the Ganges River." This information was not correct given the Ganges River is in India, and much more than 10-days away.

On December 5, 1502, Columbus and his crew found themselves in a storm unlike any they had ever experienced. In his journal Columbus writes,

"For nine days I was as one lost, without hope of life. Eyes never beheld the sea so angry, so high, so covered with foam. The wind not only prevented our progress, but offered no opportunity to run behind any headland for shelter; hence we were forced to keep out in this bloody ocean, seething like a pot on a hot fire. Never did the sky look more terrible; for one whole day and night it blazed like a furnace, and the lightning broke with such violence that each time I wondered if it had carried off my spars and sails; the flashes came with such fury and frightfulness that we all thought that the ship would be blasted. All this time the water never ceased to fall from the sky; I do not say it rained, for it was like another deluge. The men were so worn out that they longed for death to end their dreadful suffering."

In Panama, he learned from natives of Panama and Costa Rica, of gold and a strait to another ocean. After some exploration, he established a garrison at the mouth of Belen River in January of 1503. By April 6, the garrison he had established captured the local tribe leader, El Quibian, who had demanded they not go down the Belen River. El Quibian escaped, and returned with an army to attack and repel the Spanish, damaging some of the ships so that one vessel had to be abandoned. Columbus left for Hispaniola on April 16; on May 10 he sighted the present-day Cayman Islands, naming them Las Tortugas after the numerous sea turtles there. His ships sustained more damage in a storm off the coast of Cuba. Unable to travel any farther, ships were beached in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, on June 25, 1503.

For a year Columbus and his men remained stranded on Jamaica. A Spaniard, Diego Mendez, and some natives paddled a canoe to get help from Hispaniola. The island's governor, Nicolas de Ovando, detested Columbus and obstructed

all efforts to rescue him and his men. In the meantime, Columbus had to mesmerize the natives to prevent being attacked and gain their goodwill. He did so by correctly predicting a lunar eclipse on February 29, 1504, using the ancient Greek journal *Ephemeris* that gives the trajectory of astronomical objects as written by the German astronomer Regiomontanus.

Help finally arrived from the governor, Nicholas de Ovando, on June 29, 1504, when a caravel sent by Diego Mendez finally appeared on the island. At this time there were 110 members of the expedition still alive out of the 147 who sailed from Spain with Columbus. Due to the strong winds, it took the caravel 45 days to reach Hispaniola. This was a trip Diego Mendez had previously made in four days in a canoe.

38 of the 110 men who survived decided not to board again and stayed in Hispaniola instead of returning to Spain. On September 11, 1504, Christopher Columbus and his second son, Ferdinand, embarked in a caravel to travel from Hispaniola to Spain, paying for their passage. They arrived in Sanlucar de Barrameda, Spain on November 7 and from there they traveled to Seville, Spain.

Final Days

After returning from his fourth voyage, an ill Columbus settled in Seville, a city north of Cadiz, Spain in April of 1505. Queen Isabella had died, but Columbus stubbornly continued to make pleas to the Crown to defend his own and his family's privileges. He moved in early 1506 to the city of Segovia, north of Madrid, on a mule, where the Spanish court was located. On the occasion of King Ferdinand and Ursula Germaine of Foix (a French noblewoman) getting married in Valladolid, Spain, March of 1506, Columbus moved there to persist with his demands. On May 20, 1506, at 54 years old, Columbus died in Valladolid.