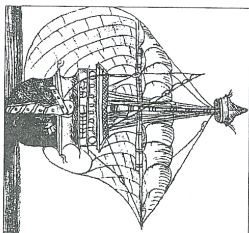


Supplementary Documents

The following supplementary document is an excerpt from Joy Hakim's *A History US: The First Americans, Prehistory-1600*.

15 A Boy Named Christopher Has a Dream



A fully rigged 15th-century ship called a *caravel*, much like Columbus's *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María*.

When Christopher Columbus was a boy he had two dreams. One was to go to sea; the other was to get to China. When he grew up, he thought he had done both.

Columbus was born in Genoa, an Italian city on the Mediterranean Sea. Genoa was prosperous because of the sea trade, and many Genoese boys wanted to be sailors. Columbus became one of the best the world has ever known.

Columbus knew about China because he had read Marco Polo's book. He had read it carefully. His copy of the book is full of notes.

Most people in the 15th century couldn't read. That meant they were ignorant of many things. Some believed the world was flat. They thought if you sailed too far you'd fall off the edge. But people who could read, like Columbus, knew that wasn't so. Scientists had proof that the world was round, and they told about it in books.

There was a problem, though. No one was quite sure how big the world was. So no one knew how far you would have to sail to go around it. One way to try and figure that out was by measuring lines of longitude and latitude.

Longitude and latitude are very useful lines. How about looking at a map—right now? That's the only way you will understand what is coming next. Do you see the thin lines going up and down and across the map? Those are lines of longitude and latitude. They are imaginary lines—you won't see them if you look down from an airplane. They are drawn on maps to help map readers divide up the globe. Latitude and longitude lines make it easy to read a map and measure the earth.

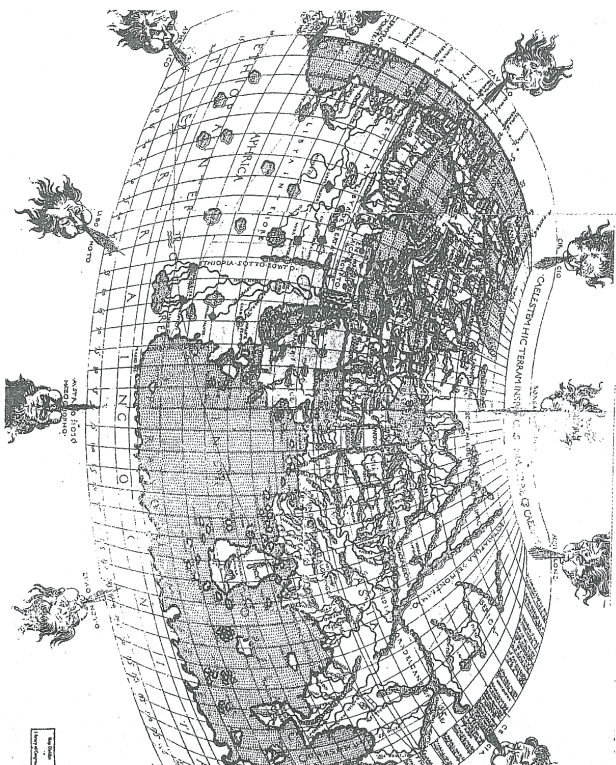
Think of the earth

as a big, fat man. Put a belt around his middle. That belt is a line of latitude. We call it the equator, or zero degree line of latitude (0°). Latitude lines are numbered north and south of the equator. Now give the fat man a round cap. The edge of the cap is the Arctic Circle, which is the 66½ degree line of latitude north (66½°N) of the equator. The center of the cap is the North Pole (90°N). Turn the fat man the other way, and the cap on the globe becomes the Antarctic Circle; now it has the South Pole as its center. (And now those numbers are 66½°S and 90°S.)

Lines of latitude circle the globe and run parallel to each other. Some people even call them *parallels*. (Parallel lines are an equal distance from each other and never touch, like the sides of a ladder.) Lines going the other way—from the North Pole to the South Pole—are lines of longitude. Longitude lines are not parallel. They all touch at the poles but spread far apart at the equator.

One more thing: those lines of longitude and latitude are actually circles. They circle the globe. If you divide the earth at the equator—that zero degree line of latitude—you get two halves. Those halves are called hemispheres. (Another word for a globe or ball is a sphere. Half a sphere is a hemisphere.) We live in the Northern Hemisphere. If you divide the world in half on a line of longitude, you will also get two hemispheres; this time they are Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

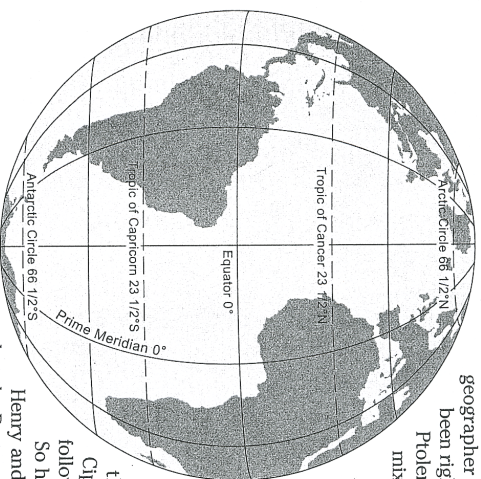
To tell longitude from latitude, remember that the first syllable of LATitude rhymes with FAT—like the belt around our fat earth.



This map formed Columbus's idea of the world and how it looked. Ptolemy, the Greek geographer and mathematician who first drew the map, lived in the second century. So his map was very old to Columbus—much, much older than Columbus is to us.

Compare this map to a modern map to see how mixed up Columbus was.

Some people call lines of longitude meridians. They help measure time.



The lines that run horizontally (across) the globe show latitude. The vertical lines (up and down) show longitude. To tell where you are on earth, you need two numbers: a latitude and a longitude. Virginia Beach, Virginia (where I live), is at about 37°N (latitude) by 76°W (longitude).

LONGitude starts with "long"—like the long distance from the North Pole to the South Pole.

Understanding latitude and longitude can help you figure out a lot of things. Columbus, by the way, was very smart. He did everything well, except one thing. When he measured the earth he goofed.

He figured the earth was much smaller than it is. He also figured that Cathay was much larger than it is. Actually, it wasn't Columbus's fault that he was mixed up. He studied the work of an ancient Greek geographer named Ptolemy (TOE-luh-me), and if Ptolemy had been right, China would be where America is. If you compare Ptolemy's map with a modern map, you will see just how mixed up Columbus was.

Now as you know, people who could read knew the world was round. They understood that if you went west from Europe you would finally get to Asia. But no one wanted to try going that way—it seemed too dangerous and too far. Most people believed there were ferocious monsters in the deep waters. Every sailor knew the dangers of storms at sea.

Because Columbus believed the earth was small and because he was a superb sailor, he thought he could make it to Cathay. Since he knew about latitude, he knew that the same line of latitude passed through Spain and Japan. And Japan (he called it Cipango) was right next to China! It would be easy to follow that line, wouldn't it?

So he went to Portugal to ask for help. Remember Prince Henry and his mathematicians? Well, Henry had died in 1460, but the Portuguese were still world leaders in exploration and navigation. When the Portuguese mathematicians figured out the size of the earth, it came out much bigger than it did for Columbus. Today we know they had it just about right. But, back then, nobody was sure because nobody had actually sailed around the globe. Anyway, the Portuguese weren't willing to take the risk. They turned Columbus down.

So did almost everyone else. Columbus took his ideas to one person after another. Each one said "sorry," except King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, who said "perhaps." Maybe they were just being polite, because they seemed to forget all about Columbus. Years passed. He asked them again: this time they said "no." One thing you can say for Columbus: he never gave up. He was on his way to see the King of France when a messenger called him back to Spain. Finally, Ferdinand and Isabella had agreed to help. They gave him three small ships and some sailors, and sent him in search of China and Japan.

16 A New Land Is "Discovered"



None of the many portraits of Columbus was made during his lifetime, so no one knows what he really looked like.

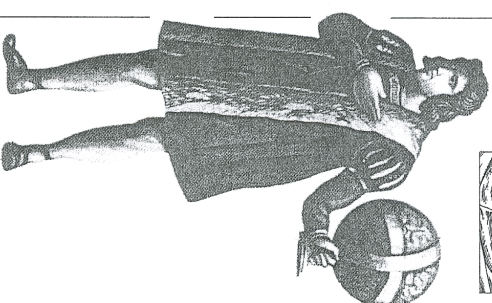
If you've ever seen a painting of Christopher Columbus, forget it. All of them were done long after he died. We can trust descriptions of him written by those who knew him best: his sons.

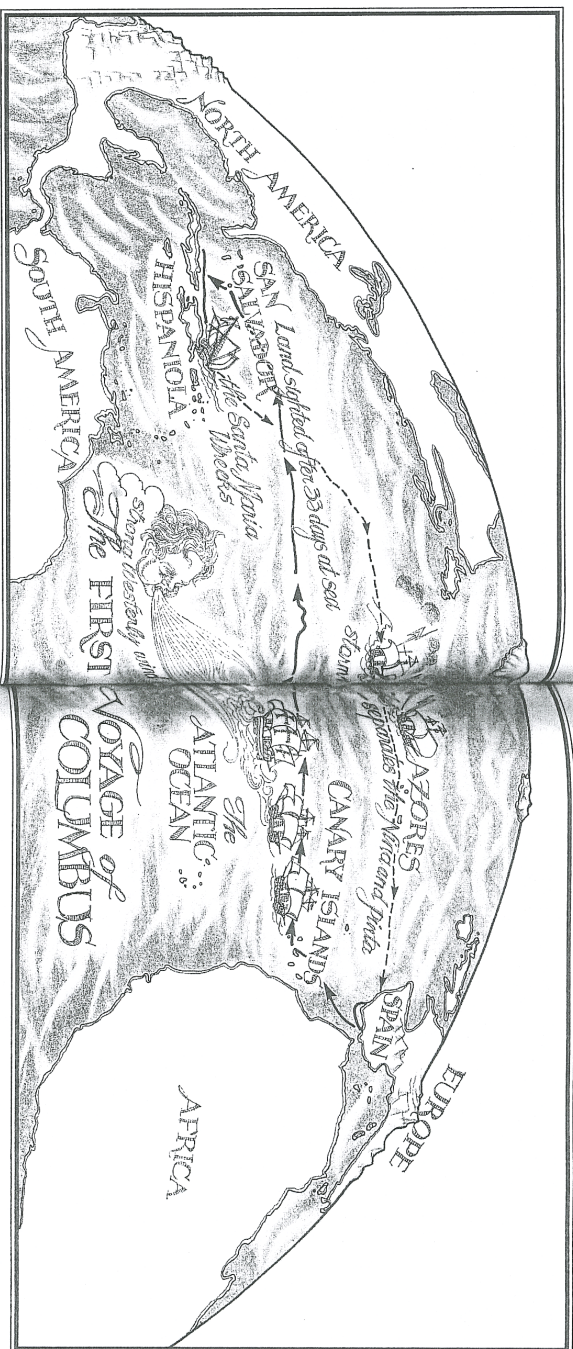
They tell of a man who is six feet tall, slim, with blond hair that turns white when he is 30. He has the manners and dignity of a nobleman, although his father was said to be a weaver of wool. Perhaps if Columbus were less of a gentleman, he could better handle the rough men who sail with him. That will always be a problem for him.

It is August 3, 1492, and three tiny ships—the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María*—set sail from Palos, Spain. Columbus, on the *Santa María*, is 41 years old and commodore of the three-ship fleet and its crew of 90 men. In his pocket is a letter from King Ferdinand to the Grand Khan, the ruler of China. On board is a learned man who speaks Arabic and Hebrew. Columbus thinks those languages will help him talk to the people of Cathay. When the sailors cast off, it is with a feeling of excitement. They know that if they make it, this will be one of the great voyages of all time. They hope to return with gold and spices. Spices make food taste good even if it is a bit spoiled. In these days before refrigerators, spices are very valuable.

The ships stop in the Canary Islands for supplies and perhaps courage; then, on September 6, they head out into the unknown ocean. Columbus has his compass and an astrolabe to guide him. The astrolabe tells him how high the North Star is above the horizon. With

He has many names, too: Cristóbal Colón to the Spaniards, Cristoforo Colombo to the Italians.





Mutiny—it means revolt or rebellion. Some sailors talked of taking over the ship and heading back to Spain. That would have been a mutiny.

Cabin Boys

Every sailing ship had boys as sailors. Boys were obedient, easy to control, and good at climbing the sails' ropes, or rigging. Every half hour a boy shouted out the time. Here is the call for five o'clock:

Five is past and six
flowereth;
More shall follow if God
willeth.
Count and pass,
Make voyage fast.

Magnetic North

Magnets always point north, don't they? Well, not quite. Columbus was the first person to discover that. As he sailed west his compass direction changed a bit. Columbus knew something was wrong, but he didn't tell his crew. They would have panicked had they thought the compass couldn't be trusted. Now we know a compass points not to the North Pole but to a magnetic pole nearby.

It, he is able to tell his latitude. If he follows a line of latitude, he can keep a straight course. That sounds easier than it is. The rolling of the ship makes the astrolabe readings uneven. Columbus is one of the best sailors the world will ever know. Being a good sailor, he keeps a record of the winds, the speed of the ship, and the compass direction. That tells him how far he has gone in the vast sea. Calculating your position, or longitude, this way is called "dead reckoning." Besides, Columbus seems to have a natural sense of the best way to go: he is famous for being able to find his way at sea. He picks a route with fair winds. Still, it is frightening to go where no one has gone before.

In mid-September they come to what seems to be a meadow of grass in the middle of the ocean. It is the Sargasso Sea—an area of thick, green seaweed. The sailors have never seen anything like this. They are afraid the ships will get tangled in the green muck. But soon they are out of it and into the open sea again. Now there is a fierce storm with waves that rise higher than the church towers in Palos. The ships are sturdy and the seamen skilled, so they survive the tempest. But the sailors are discouraged and fearful. The sea seems endless. On October 9 they say they will go no farther. Columbus pleads for three more days of sailing. Then, he says, if they don't see land they may cut off his head and sail home in peace.

Three days later, on October 12, a lookout high on the *Pinta's* mast yells, "Tierra! Tierra!" It is the Spanish word for land. The Bahama Islands are straight ahead.

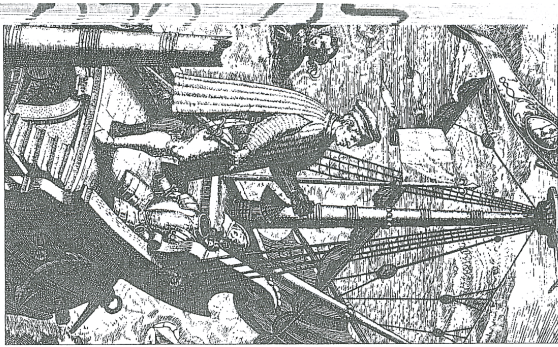
They have made it to the Indies! Columbus was right after all, or so they think. Columbus names the island where they land San Salvador; that means "Holy Saviour." He plants a cross and a Spanish flag on San Salvador. Columbus is a religious man; he believes it is God's wish that he sail and conquer in the name of a Catholic king and queen.

Soon he knows he is not in China. That doesn't bother Columbus. Marco Polo wrote that there were thousands of islands in the Indies. San Salvador must be one of those islands. Japan, China, and the rest of the Indies are sure to be nearby. The island is small but splendid, with tall trees, gorgeous birds, a beautiful beach, and friendly people.

Columbus calls the people Indians. He is puzzled when they don't understand Arabic. Actually, the language they speak is Arawak. They are members of a Taino (TY-no) tribe.

King Ferdinand of Spain watches regally from his side of the Atlantic Ocean as Columbus and his crew are greeted by Arawaks.





Why isn't Columbus looking for land through a telescope?
yah, pajunani useaq i, upaq it

Historians aren't sure about this, but many believe that the Caribs (in their language it means "valiant people") were cannibals. One thing is sure: the Tainos feared them. That may explain why the Tainos were so eager to help Columbus. Perhaps they wanted him as an ally against their enemies.

although soon others will be calling them Indians. Columbus says of them: "They remained so much our friends that it was a marvel... they came swimming to the ships' boats, and brought us parrots and cotton thread... and many other things, and in exchange we gave them little glass beads.... Finally they exchanged with us everything they had, with good will."

Columbus is lucky. If he had landed on a nearby island, he would have been greeted by the Caribs—a tribe of warriors—and might not have lived to tell the world of his discovery.

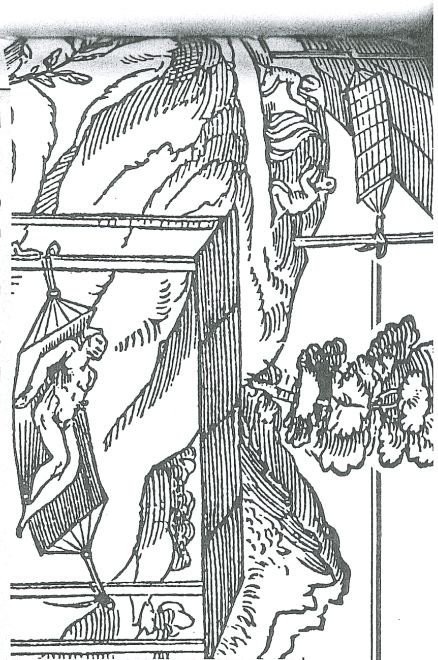
The Tainos are peaceful fishermen. They welcome the voyagers who have come in bright ships and brought shining beads that seem to capture the sunshine. But what must be in the Indians' minds when they first see these men? Do they think it strange that they wear heavy clothing in a warm land? (Columbus says they wear nothing at all.) Are they surprised that the strangers have skin the color of melons, or that one—a black man from Africa—is dark as chocolate? (Columbus says they are handsome and that their skin is brown, their hair straight.) Do the smells of the seafarers bother them? (The Europeans do not bathe.) Whatever they think, the swords that Columbus and his men carry help convince the natives to do as the strangers wish.

Besides, they want to please. The Taino are generous and intelligent people. Columbus says they learn Spanish words quickly. They also communicate through sign language.

The Tainos don't realize that they do not have long to live. Columbus will kidnap some and take them to Europe as trophies of his voyage. He will help turn many of them into slaves. Soon all the Arawak-speaking tribes will be dead—killed by European weapons, slavery, and diseases. Those diseases—like smallpox and measles—are new in this hemisphere. The natives have no immunity to them.

But that is to come. At first the Tainos help Columbus. He is determined to find gold and the Grand Khan. The Tainos take him to a huge island they call Colba. It is Cuba. Here there are many natives, and some are wearing ornaments of gold! Yet the Grand Khan is nowhere to be found. (Columbus is not discouraged: China and Japan must be nearby.) These Indians seem to be fire-eaters: they put a smoking weed in their mouths. It is the first time the Spaniards have seen tobacco.

There are pearls on Cuba, and enough gold ornaments to take samples to please King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Columbus sails home to Spain with brightly colored parrots, Indians, and gold tinkets. Can you imagine what happens when he arrives in Spain? Hardly anyone believed they would ever see him again. But he has found Cathay! At least that is what he says and believes. Now he is a great hero. The king and queen name him Lord Admiral of the Ocean Seas.



From Columbus's Pen

These are the actual words of Christopher Columbus, written in a letter in 1493 to Luis de Santangel, Treasurer of Aragon, Spain, telling of his discovery:

...I write this to tell you how in thirty-three days I sailed to the Indies with the fleet that the illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave me, where I discovered a great many islands, inhabited by numberless people; and of all I have taken possession for their Highnesses by proclamation and display of the Royal Standard....

[Hispaniola is] full of trees of endless varieties, so high that they seem to touch the sky, and I have been told that they never lose their foliage. I saw them as green and lovely as trees are in Spain in the month of May. Some of them were covered with blossoms, some with fruit.... There were palm trees of six or eight varieties.... There are wonderful pinewoods, and very extensive ranges of meadowland. There is honey, and there are many kinds of birds, and a great variety of

fruits.... [Hispaniola is a marvel.

...[The Indians] are well-made men of commanding stature, they appear extraordinarily timid. The only arms they have are sticks of cane, cut when in seed, with a sharpened stick at the end, and they are afraid to use these. Often I have sent two or three men ashore to some town to converse with them, and the natives came out in great numbers, and as soon as they saw our men arrive, fled without a moment's delay although I protected them from all injury.

...they are so unsuspicious and so generous with what they possess, that no one who had not seen it would believe it.

...in the first isle I discovered, I took by force some of

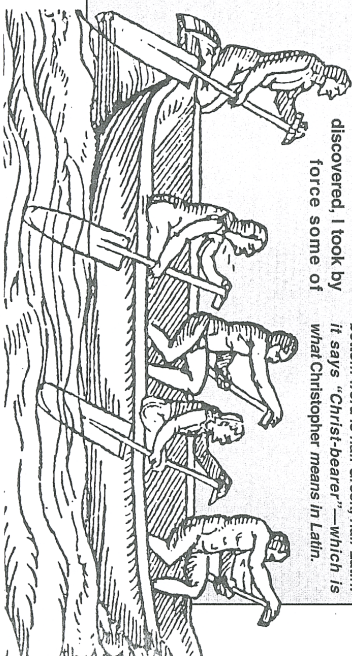
Until Columbus met Indians who slept in them, hammocks, so useful on a ship, were unknown to Europeans. the natives, that from them we might gain some information of what there was in these parts; and so it was that we immediately understood each other, either by words or signs. They... believe that I come from heaven... wherever I went ...[they ran] from house to house and to the towns around, crying out, "Come! Come! and see the men from heaven!"

As for monsters, I have found no trace of them except at the point in the second isle as one enters the Indies, which is inhabited by a people considered by all the isles as most ferocious, who eat human flesh. They possess many canoes, with which they overrun all the isles of India, stealing and seizing all they can.

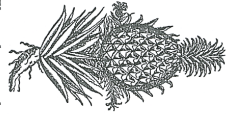
—Christopher Columbus

3. A. 5.
X M Y
X P O F F E R E N S

This is Columbus's signature. The bottom word is half Greek, half-Latin: it says "Christ-bearer"—which is what Christopher means in Latin.



17 The Next Voyage



Q: What did the ocean say to Columbus?

peawaw snl ꞑ ꞑuꞑꞑꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ

The pineapple was just one of many foods new to the Spanish.

If you're going to be an explorer, you need a base: a place you can go for supplies and help. Columbus knew that, so on his first voyage he set up a base on the island of Hispaniola (the island is now divided down the middle into two countries, which we call Haiti and the Dominican Republic). He thought the base would become an important trading post when he found the Grand Khan.

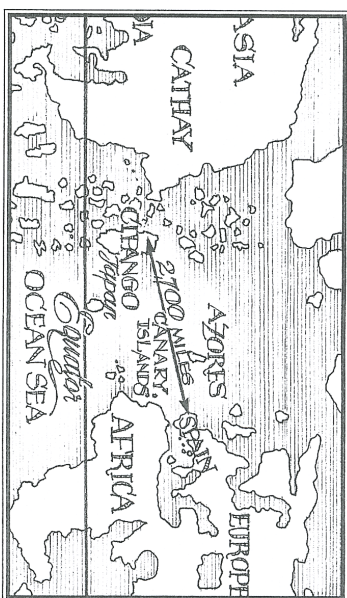
Hispaniola was the first Spanish settlement in the Americas—and it flopped. As soon as Columbus sailed back to Spain for more ships and men, the settlers he left behind started fighting over gold and Indian women. Soon they were killing each other. The Indians—who must have been angry at the way they were being pushed around—killed most of the rest of them.

While this was going on, Columbus was in Spain being a hero. Now Isabella and Ferdinand were happy to give him ships and men. After all, he had found the Indies, he was sure. "It's just a matter of getting past those outlying islands to reach Cathay," he must have said.

His second trip was to be the payoff voyage. Now that he knew the way, it wouldn't be difficult to cross the ocean. This time he had 17 ships and 1,200 men. He took horses and armor and European goods. Everyone was sure Columbus would meet the Grand Khan and come home with boats full of gold and silk and spices. So adventurers from some of the most important families in Spain went with him.

The adventurers were nothing but trouble. They expected to find China, and when they didn't find it they blamed Columbus.

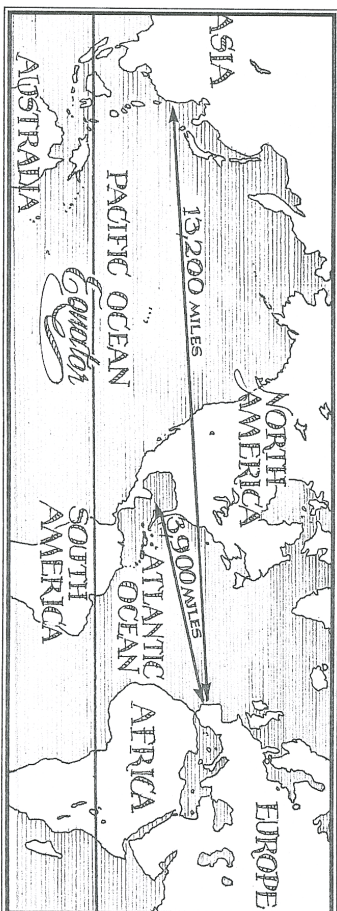
To keep the men happy, Columbus gave them land on the islands he discovered. They soon began capturing Indians and using them as slaves. Then Columbus sent a boatload of Indians back to Spain to be



sold as slaves. It was a poor way to begin in a new land—especially as the Indians never made good slaves. They just died off.

Columbus kept searching for gold mines, but he didn't find any. He never guessed that the Caribbean Islands would make some Europeans very rich—but with sugar, cotton, and tobacco, not gold. Huge plantations would produce crops for Europe's markets, creating enormous wealth.

Because workers are needed to grow crops, and because Spaniards didn't want to work in the fields—and the Indians were dying—black people would be brought from Africa to be fieldworkers. The first Africans would come in 1503; by 1574 there were 12,000 black



Top: Columbus's idea of the length of his voyage and the whereabouts of his hoped-for destination. Below: what was really there—and how far it was.

The Europeans called America a "new world"—but it was another old world with its own ancient civilizations and peoples. They were just different from those in Europe.

The Columbian Exchange

From the Old World to the New World:

Horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens, honey bees, wheat, Asian rice, barley, oats, soybeans, sugarcane, onions, lettuce, okra, peaches, pears, watermelon, citrus fruit, rye, bananas, olives, chickpeas.

From the New World to the Old World:

Corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, chocolate, vanilla, tobacco, beans, pumpkin, cassava, avocado, peanuts, cashews, pineapple, blueberries, sunflowers, squashes, quinine, wild rice, turkey, marigolds, petunias, sweet potatoes.



These Indians are preparing a corn liquor drink. The woman in the foreground isn't throwing up; she's mixing the corn with saliva to start fermentation. Corn wasn't the only new food Europeans found in America. More are listed below, at left.

Africans on Hispaniola—and that was just one island. It was the beginning of black slavery in America.

Columbus did something important that no one noticed at first: he helped start an agricultural revolution. Before long, American corn, peppers, beans, pumpkins, and tomatoes were growing in Europe. One plant—the potato—proved more valuable to the Old World than all the gold in both the Americas.

The exchange went both ways. Columbus brought oranges to the West Indies, where they were unknown. Cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs were sent to America from Europe. That transfer of plants and animals provided a way to feed bigger and bigger world populations. Corn was soon a basic food in Africa, as were potatoes in Ireland. The American sweet potato became important in China. Italians took the tomato and created a new sauce for spaghetti.

But nobody in Spain was interested in agricultural revolutions. It was gold and spices that they wanted. So Columbus was no hero when he returned from his second voyage. He had a few gold pieces,

What If Columbus

Suppose the old geographers were right. What if the world were tiny and there were no American continents? What if Columbus had got to Cathay? Would he have met the Grand Khan? Would he have returned home in ships laden with gold and spices?

We can be sure about the answer to only one of those questions. We know Columbus would *not* have met the Grand Khan. There was no Grand Khan.

Most of what Columbus knew of Cathay came from Marco Polo's book, and it was old knowledge. The Grand Khan and his family had been replaced in the 14th century by rulers of the Ming family. The word *khan* was no longer used in China. Columbus even had China and India confused.

In 1492, China was the most advanced civilization in the world. Its people were better fed, better housed, better clothed, and better educated than people anywhere else on the globe. Most Chinese

but he hadn't found a source of gold, and he hadn't found China.

Still, if Columbus had stopped then, he could have retired with wealth and honors. But he was the kind of man who never stopped. That's what made him a great explorer: he kept going. He made two more voyages—four trips in all. He discovered more islands and the mainland of South America. He never did discover North America, and he was always convinced he had found the Orient. He was sure that all those islands he found were off the coast of Cathay. South America bothered him because it did seem like a mainland. It had a great river. He knew it wasn't China; China couldn't be that far south. Columbus solved the problem of the southern land by deciding it was the

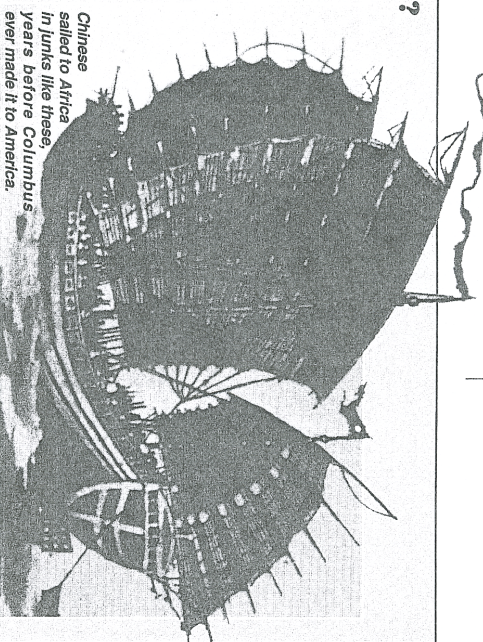
Had Reached Cathay?

lived in family-centered farming villages. They were led by a hereditary emperor, but government officials—often scholar-artists chosen by fair examinations—ruled the nation. Anyone, from any village, had a chance at success.

Chinese technology was way ahead of that of the West. The Chinese had been printing books for centuries. Chinese mathematics, astronomy, ship design, and navigation aids were more sophisticated than anything the Spanish or Portuguese had developed. The great admiral Zheng He, a Chinese Muslim, sailed from China across the Indian Ocean to Africa 60 years before Columbus's voyage. Zheng He commanded a fleet of more than 100 junks carrying about 25,000 men. His treasure ship was 400 feet long.

Compare that with Columbus's flagship, the *Santa María*, at 85 feet. "It now seems certain that occasional visits of Asian people to the Americas occurred between the 7th and the 15th centuries,

King John of Portugal said Columbus was "a big talker and boastful in his accomplishments." Can you think why bragging might sometimes be useful and not just conceited?



Chinese sailed to Africa in junks like these, years before Columbus ever made it to America.

bringing to the New World ideas, knowledge, and artifacts," writes historian Geoffrey Parker.

Why did those voyages stop? Why, after the 15th century, did Westerners, sailing puny boats, lead the world in exploration?

No one knows. Perhaps the Chinese were so self-sufficient that they didn't need tribute from abroad. And they seem to have

had no desire to rule other lands. Competition drove the European nations; the Chinese didn't feel a need to compete with anyone. If Columbus had made it to Cathay? He probably would not have been allowed to see the emperor. The Chinese would have thought him a barbarian. Columbus, with his tiny fleet and his scruffy sailors, would not have impressed them.

Garden of Eden, the place the Bible describes as the first home of Adam and Eve. Columbus believed the Garden of Eden must be somewhere on earth. When he saw brilliantly colored birds and flowers in the southern land, he was sure he had found it. South America was like an Eden. He wasn't the only explorer to be fooled.

Living at the Center of the Universe

When, in the 20th century, men reached the moon, it was an astonishing feat of technology. People actually built a spaceship and rocketed it away from the pull of earth's gravity and on through space. But even so, everyone knew the moon was there. They even knew in advance what the moon would look like when they got there. That wasn't the case in 1492. No one was prepared for Columbus's discovery.

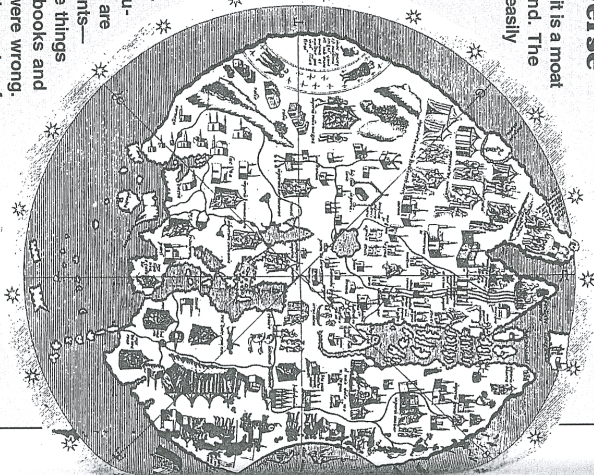
Imagine that you live in the 15th century. Put yourself in school in Egypt or Korea or Italy. Your lesson for today is about world geography. The teacher is telling you that the earth is the center of the universe. But since you're smart, you already know that. Everyone in the 15th century knows that. You also know that the earth doesn't move. The sun and stars move around the earth, the teacher says.

Today you will learn that this world was created with one great three-part mass of land (divided into Africa, Asia, and Europe) and one great ocean that laps its shores. The seas and rivers and lakes are like highways to be traveled. The great

ocean is no highway; it is a moat that protects the land. The world is orderly and easily understood.

So when news comes of the voyage of Columbus, it never occurs to you to think that he has found a new continent. Columbus himself couldn't believe what his eyes told him; why should you consider it? And when, in the early 16th century, it finally becomes clear—Europe, Asia, and Africa are not the only continents—you realize that some things school and church were wrong. The Old World is not the center of the universe and not as easy to understand as you once believed. It makes you begin to ask new questions. It makes you begin to think for yourself.

The same kind of thing happened to Indian girls and boys in America. They, too, thought they lived at the center of the universe. They knew of no other



This map was a bit out of date even in 1492, when it was made. But most people thought the world looked roughly like this. Turn the book sideways to help you find Spain and Europe.

continents or cultures—until some brightly painted ships came from the east and changed their view of the world forever.

18 Stowaways: Worms and a Dog

On Columbus's fourth voyage he was attacked. Who was the enemy?

Worms. Yes, you read that right, the enemy was worms—worms that ate holes in the ships' bottoms. Worms did so much damage that the ships were ruined and couldn't sail anymore. Columbus and his crew were marooned—stuck—on the island of Jamaica.

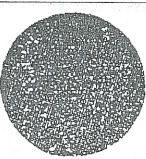
Now if you're going to get marooned, Jamaica is a pretty nice place to be. It's a beautiful island where foods grow easily. However, the Spanish explorers (and later the English explorers) weren't interested in growing their own food. Columbus and his men sat around waiting for the Indians to feed them. At first the Indians

did that, but then they said something like "Get your own food." The explorers didn't know how, and they began to starve. Then the Indians decided to attack.

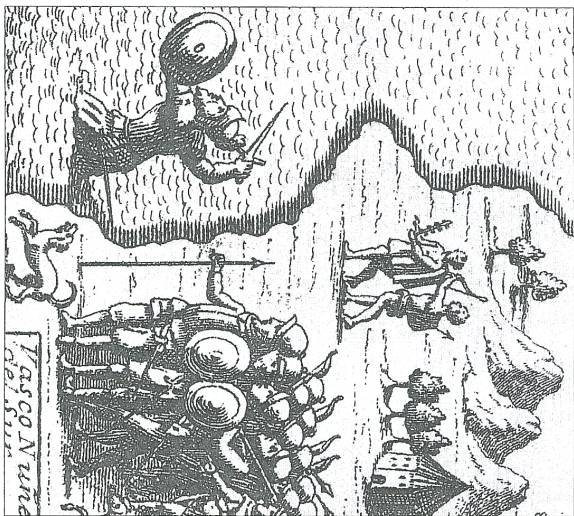
The situation was serious when Columbus got out his scientific papers and read something that gave him an idea.

Columbus had Abraham Zacuto's charts of the stars—astronomical charts. Zacuto was a leading scientist and a Portuguese royal mathematician. His charts helped sailors figure out latitude. They also told about eclipses of the moon and sun. Columbus read in Zacuto's charts that there would be an eclipse of the moon on the last day of February in 1504.

1504
Eclipse of the
27 13 30
February
Durán's diary
1 80



"They all made fun of my plan then; now even tailors wish to discover," wrote Columbus about the way people changed their ideas after he returned from his first voyage.



Balboa made it across the jungles and mountains of Panama without losing any men. His stowaway dog Leoncico made it, too; that's him frisking at the edge as his master strides into the Pacific Ocean.

Balboa and other Spanish explorers were **conquistadors** (kon-KEES-tah-dors). It is a Spanish word that means "conqueror."

So on that day Columbus called the Indian chiefs together and told them he had power over the moon. He said if they didn't give his men food, he would blot out the moon. It happened just as Columbus said it would, and the Indians cried and begged Columbus to bring back the moon. He agreed, the eclipse ended on schedule, and his men never went hungry again. (You can see Zacuto's tables, with Columbus's notes, if you go to Seville, Spain.)

Finally, after more than a year, Spanish ships rescued Columbus and his men. Columbus went home to Spain, but now no one paid any attention to him. Isabella was dead and Ferdinand wouldn't even see him. Most people thought the islands he had discovered were worthless. It was only after Columbus died that people began to realize the value of his discoveries.

The most important thing he did was to sail into the unknown. That took great courage and skill. Once he showed it could be done, others followed. Among them was Giovanni Caboto (Jo-VAH-nee kah-BOW-tow), an Italian who went to England, where he was called John Cabot and given a small ship. Cabot sailed across the Atlantic in 1497 with only 18 sailors. He had to be very brave to do that. He landed in Newfoundland, where the Vikings first landed 500 years earlier. Later the English claimed all of North America because of Cabot's voyage.

If you think exploring is just a matter of luck, consider the story of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa (VASS-ko NOON-yez day bahl-BOW-ah), one of the greatest of the Spanish explorers. He was a stowaway, which means he hid on a ship. The ship was heading for Darien (now called Panama) to search for gold.

Balboa hid in a flour barrel with his dog, Leoncico (lay-on-SEE-ko). He waited until the ship was far out at sea before popping out of the barrel. Why was he hiding? Balboa owed money to some people on the island of Hispaniola, and he couldn't pay his debts.

So if you'd asked his creditors (the people he owed money to), they would have told you that Balboa wasn't a very nice person. But if you'd asked others who knew him, they would have said something else. Balboa was a born leader. By the time the ship landed in Darien,

in 1513, he was in command. He sent the incompetent leader, Enciso (en-SEE-zo), home in chains. (That was a mistake—you'll see why.)

Then Balboa established the first permanent European settlement in the Americas. That would have been enough to get him into the history books, but it wasn't enough for Balboa. He wanted to find gold. It wasn't gold that made him famous, though. Balboa was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the American continent. He "discovered" the Pacific for the peoples of Europe. An Indian chief, Comaco, told Balboa about that ocean: "When you cross over these mountains you shall see another sea, where they sail with ships as big as yours, using both sails and oars as you do, even though the men are like us." (Before Balboa's discovery, Europeans thought there was only one ocean. They called it the Ocean Sea.)

Balboa married Comaco's daughter, so the Indian chief helped the white men even though he was disgusted by their constant fights over gold. Here are more of Comaco's words, written down by Peter Martyr, who lived in those times: "What is the matter, you Christian men, that you so greatly value so little gold more than your own peace of mind?" (What did he mean by that? Do you think peace of mind was more important to the Indians than gold? Were they wise or foolish?)

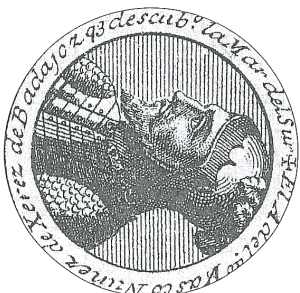
"I will show you a region flowing with gold, where you may satisfy your appetites," said Comaco. Of course Balboa was anxious to go for the gold, but he also wanted to know about the sea that Comaco described. He had an explorer's curiosity.

Balboa decided to march across Panama. Let's go with him. Getting to the Pacific will not be an easy jaunt. Imagine smothering heat, pounding rainstorms, and jungles so thick you can hardly hack your way through them. Add killer bugs, snakes, and germs—and you'll begin to get the picture. Balboa and his men are wearing padded leather jackets and, on top of that, metal armor. Can you see them in the jungle in those hot, heavy garments? They make it to the Pacific Ocean and back—and not a man dies. It is quite an accomplishment.

If you are an explorer, discovering is not enough. You also have to tell people what you find. Balboa did that, too. He sent news of the Pacific Ocean to the people in Spain. Then he started organizing his next exploration. He was planning to go south, to the region flowing with gold. It was called Peru.

But in the meantime, back in Spain, Enciso was thirsting for revenge. He accused Balboa—falsely—of treason. People in Spain believed Enciso. A new governor was sent to Darien with orders to get rid of Balboa. He did. Balboa was beheaded; his head was stuck on a pike for all to see. The officer who arrested Balboa was named Francisco Pizarro (pih-SAR-oh)—remember that name.

When Columbus arrived in San Salvador in 1492, he set off a cultural tornado. He, and those that followed, brought ideas, technology, and germs that overwhelmed the lands they invaded. In that way, they did make a New World.



Balboa was brave and adventurous, but of course he wasn't the first European to see the Pacific—he was just the first European to see the Pacific's western coast. Explorers and traders knew the eastern side quite well.