United States. Congress. House and Senate Documents and reports.

102d Congress — 2d Session

January 3–October 9, 1992

House Document

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No. 319

COLUMBUS IN THE CAPITOL
COMMEMORATIVE QUINCENTENARY EDITION

United States Congressional Serial Set

Serial Number 14111

United States Government Printing Office
Washington : 1993

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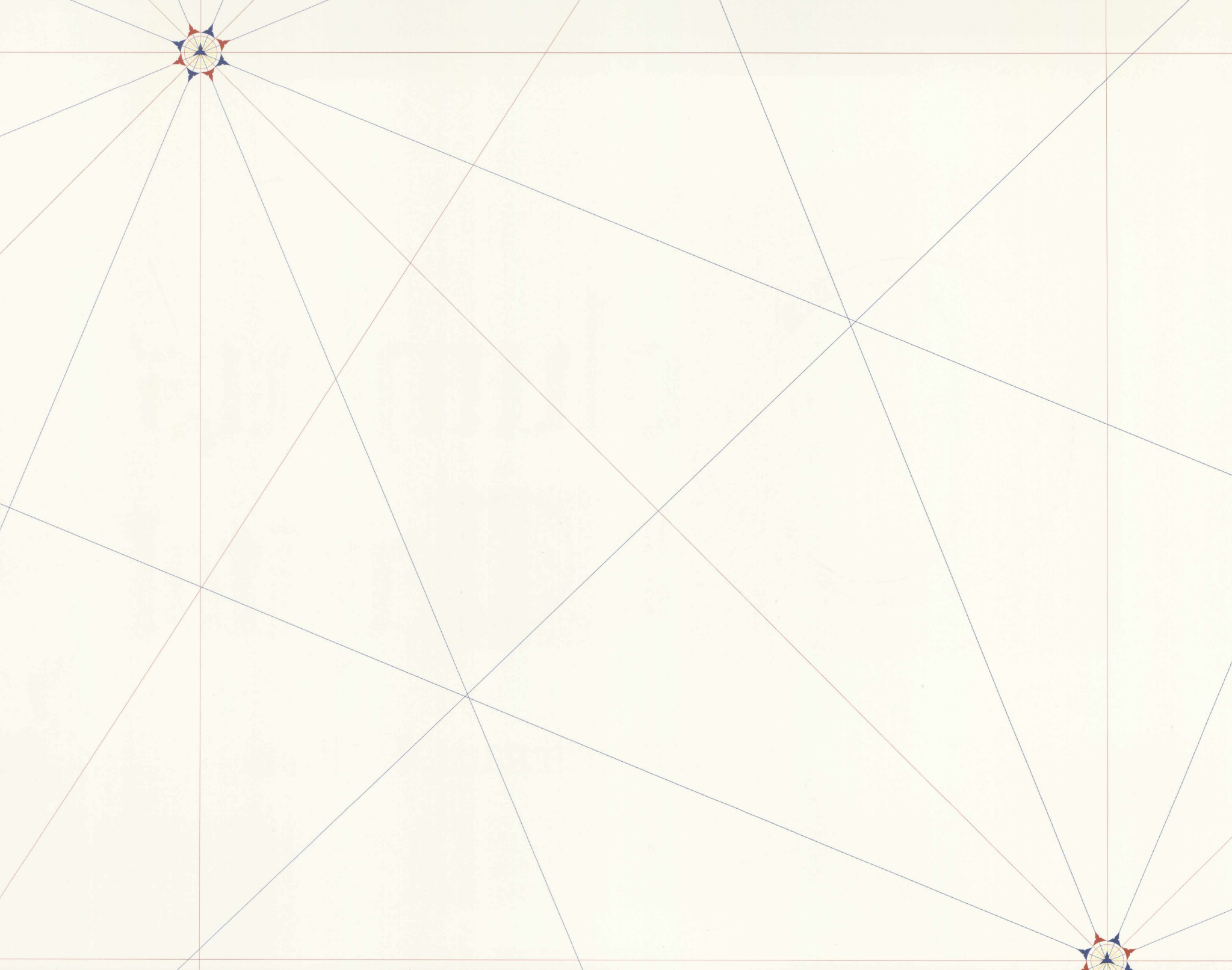



World map by Claudius Ptolemy printed in Ulm, Germany, 1482.

102d Congress, 2d Session

H. Doc. 102–319

Columbus in the Capitol

Commemorative Quincentenary Edition

Printed Pursuant to H.Con.Res. 151, 102d Congress, 1st Session

Printed Under the Direction
of the
Joint Committee on Printing

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Editor



House Concurrent Resolution 151

During the 101st Congress, Representative Frank Annunzio of Illinois introduced House Concurrent Resolution 275, authorizing the preparation of *Columbus in the Capitol* as a congressional tribute to Christopher Columbus on the Quincentenary of his first voyage to the New World. During the 102d Congress, Representative Annunzio introduced House Concurrent Resolution 151, authorizing the printing of *Columbus in the Capitol*. The House and Senate unanimously passed this resolution to have a commemorative edition printed as an official document.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1992

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Introduction

The Congress of the United States and the Joint Committee on Printing are pleased to present this publication as a tribute to Christopher Columbus and the Quincentenary of his discovery of America.

Over the years, our Nation's Capitol has collected and displayed artwork depicting Christopher Columbus by such acclaimed artists as Constantino Brumidi, John Vanderlyn, John Trumbull, Randolph Rogers, Augustus G. Heaton, Paul Wayland Bartlett, Enrico Causici, Antonio Capellano, Luigi Persico, Lorado Taft, and Daniel Burnham.

The United States Capitol is the emblem of our free Nation and we are proud to present these historic works of art for the first time in a special edition book. The Committee hopes that this book will be a reminder of the part of our heritage that was the great Age of Discovery.

Charlie Rose
Chairman

Wendell H. Ford
Vice Chairman

Christopher Columbus in the Art of the Capitol

Christopher Columbus's role in the history of America has been a significant and recurrent theme in the decoration of the United States Capitol complex. In commemoration of the Quincentenary of his landing, it is appropriate to see how the explorer's image has been created in stone, bronze, fresco, and oil; in classical, allegorical, and naturalistic poses. Some proposed images were never commissioned; others were once displayed in the Capitol but later transferred to other locations or destroyed by fire. What emerges most clearly from all of these different treatments is the appreciation of Columbus's place in the history of civilization and of America in particular. In an age of exploration, he surpassed the achievements of his contemporaries by attaining a new world, one in which new nations would later take root and flourish.

Also evident in these tributes is the persistence of congressional interest in the explorer. Over a dozen images of Columbus have been displayed in the Capitol complex in less than a century.

As early as 1822, while the center section of the building was being completed, Architect of the Capitol Charles Bulfinch proposed the depiction of Columbus in one of the reliefs in the rotunda. Enrico Causici, an Italian sculptor then at work in the Capitol, prepared a model showing the landing of Columbus, but he never received orders to carve it in stone. Another Italian sculptor, Antonio Capellano, also made sketches for a relief on the theme of Columbus, but this work, too, was never commissioned. Eventually, between 1825 and 1827, a relief profile bust of Columbus attributed to Causici and Capellano was included as one of the four great explorers honored in the rotunda.

The Library of Congress, which was housed initially in the western part of the Capitol, displayed a bust of Columbus, carved by Giuseppe Ceracchi during his trip to the United States in 1791, and two portraits of Columbus by unknown artists. All were destroyed during the fire that gutted the Library in 1851.[1]

Columbus appears on the back of the throne in Horatio Greenough's marble statue of George Washington, which was commissioned by Congress in 1832 and placed in the center of the rotunda in 1841. Although Columbus was not part of the commission, Greenough chose to include the explorer and depict him in a classical toga, holding a globe; opposite him is an Indian chief. At the request of the sculptor, who was concerned about poor lighting, the statue was moved to the eastern grounds after less than 2 years in the rotunda. In 1908 it was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, where it can be seen today in the National Museum of American History.

Luigi Persico also paired Columbus with an Indian. His sculpture *Discovery of America* was commissioned in 1836 and placed in 1844. The marble figures of Columbus, holding the globe of the world up high, and a seminude Indian woman stood near the central east front steps of the Capitol until 1958, when they were removed during the extension of the east front.

In 1837, as the decorations for the Capitol were being completed, John Vanderlyn was commissioned to paint the *Landing of Columbus* for one of the eight mural-sized niches in the rotunda. The painting was installed 10 years later. This painting has become one of the best known and most frequently reproduced images of this event.

Constantino Brumidi, who was engaged in decorating the extensions and the new dome of the Capitol from 1855 to 1880, created three fresco paintings of Columbus. The first is in the ceiling of the President's Room, which was completed in 1859. It shows Columbus seated like a scholar in his study. In the same year, Brumidi included the landing of Columbus in his sketch for the frieze of the rotunda, which was not executed in fresco until 1878. Finally, his *Columbus and the Indian Maiden* adorns one of the fresco lunettes of the Brumidi Corridor. In unveiling the Indian woman, Columbus symbolically discovers America.

The crowning tribute to Columbus in the Capitol is the set of bronze doors at the east central entrance to the building. The doors are in high relief and depict nine scenes from Columbus's life, beginning with his first appeal to Ferdinand and Isabella and ending with his death. His landing in the New World is shown in the tympanum above the doors. Commissioned in 1855, the doors were designed by Randolph Rogers, cast in Munich, and installed between the old Hall of the House (now National Statuary Hall) and the new House wing in 1863. The doors were moved to the Capitol's central entrance in 1871 and relocated in 1961 after the extension of the east front.

Another scene from the explorer's life, *The Recall of Columbus*, was painted by Augustus G. Heaton and purchased for the Capitol in 1884. It received great attention during the 1893 celebration of the Quadricentenary of Columbus's first voyage.

In the late 1880s, some Members of Congress became interested in commissioning a bronze statue of Columbus to be erected near the Capitol, on one of the sites now occupied by the Peace Monument and the Garfield Memorial. A joint resolution was introduced but never passed. In 1893, the year of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, another unsuccessful resolution was introduced to allow a sculpture of Columbus and Isabella, modeled by John Turini of New York, to be exhibited in the Capitol.[2]

Instead, in 1894 Paul Wayland Bartlett was commissioned to create a bronze statue of Columbus, as one of the great contributors to civilization, for the Main Reading Room of the new building for the Library of Congress (now the Thomas Jefferson Building). It was installed in 1897. The Jefferson Building also honors Columbus in the Hispanic Room, where a large mural on stainless steel, painted by Buell Mullen in 1940, depicts the explorer's coat of arms.

Although not strictly within the Capitol complex, the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain in front of Union Station, designed by Lorado Taft and Daniel H. Burnham, is a significant focal point in the entrance to the Capitol from the north.



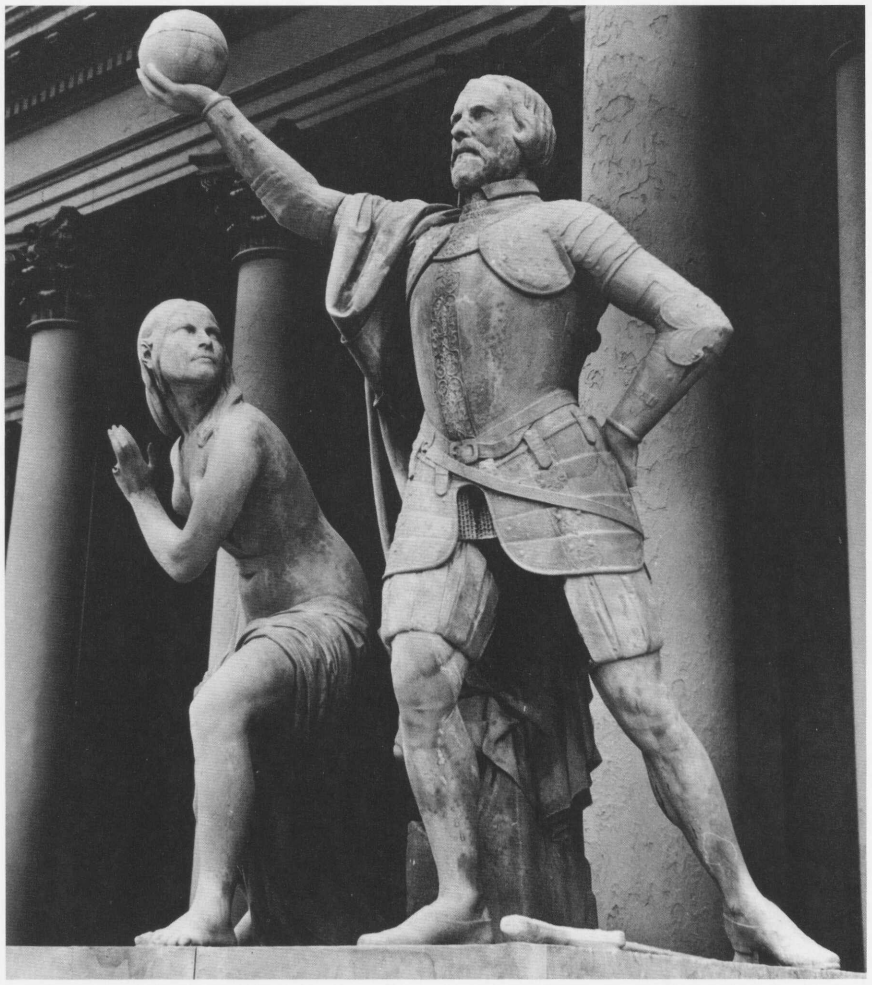


Christopher Columbus, *1825–1827*
Attributed to Antonio Capellano and Enrico Causici
Sandstone relief, approximately 6 feet high x 18 feet wide
Rotunda

The earliest of the three depictions of Columbus in the rotunda is the relief profile bust, which is seen high on the wall over John Trumbull's painting *Surrender of General Burgoyne*. The portrait shows Columbus with curly hair and a beard, wearing a ruff. The name "Columbus" is inscribed on the bottom of the bust. The circular inset with the bust, which was probably carved separately and then set into place, is surrounded by oak and palm leaves and large rinceaux of leaves and rosettes.

As the rotunda was being completed in 1822, Architect of the Capitol Charles Bulfinch planned to include Columbus in the sculptural decoration. He wrote to sculptor Enrico Causici about his plan to show the discovery of America by Columbus in one of the reliefs over the door. In 1823 Causici prepared a design for a high relief of the landing of Columbus, which he hoped to carve in marble. In early 1824 Antonio Capellano made sketches for a relief showing another scene—Columbus receiving provisions from a group of Indians who were frightened by an eclipse. Ultimately, however, other scenes were selected for the narrative reliefs, and tribute in the rotunda was paid to Columbus in this bust, one of the four depicting important explorers. To the right of Columbus is Sir Walter Raleigh, and across from them are busts of John Cabot and Sieur de La Salle carved in 1828 and 1829, respectively, by Francisco Iardella.[4] The reliefs with portraits are flanked by a plain relief of arabesques and the narrative reliefs over the doors.

Sculptors had been brought from Italy to carve decorations for the Capitol as early as 1806. Both Enrico Causici and Antonio Capellano were Italian sculptors said to be pupils of Antonio Canova, and both worked in the neoclassical style. Capellano came to America from Italy in 1814. He carved two major reliefs at the Capitol between 1825 and 1827, and later he returned to Italy. Causici came in 1817 to carve architectural decorations for the Capitol. In addition to two of the narrative reliefs in the rotunda, he created *Liberty and the Eagle* for the Hall of the House; this sculpture is still in plaster, because Causici was never authorized to carve it in marble. He also made a no-longer extant model for an ornamental clock for the Senate Chamber.[5]



Discovery of America, *1844*
Luigi Persico
Marble, 15 feet 11 ½ inches high x 8 feet 4 ½ inches wide x 6 feet ½ inch deep
Signed "Luigi Persico fecit 1844"
South cheek block, east central front, until 1958, transferred to the Smithsonian Institution for storage, 1976

In *Discovery of America*, Columbus is shown as a triumphant, armor-clad conqueror, striding ahead and lifting the globe of the world high before him. His helmet rests behind him and his sword lies at his feet, while a cloak draped over his upraised arm heightens its sweep. Next to him, an Indian woman, nude except for drapery around her hips, cowers in awe. The imagery of the statue embodies the Western attitude of the time: the "superior" European culture, in supplanting the Native American populations, was believed to be furthering the progress of civilization. However, Persico's representation provoked protest by an Indian visitor to the Capitol as early as 1855, and feeling against *Discovery* and its companion piece, *Rescue*, gathered force in the 20th century. A number of protests, bills, and petitions for their removal marked the last two decades in which they were on view.[6] Finally, during the extension of the east front in 1958, both sculptures, greatly deteriorated and weathered, were removed and placed in storage, where they both remain.

Luigi Persico (1791–1860) was an Italian sculptor who came to the United States in 1818 and to Washington in 1825, where he began work on the central pediment of the Capitol. He also sculpted the figures of *War* and *Peace* on the east front. Persico had created models for the figures of Columbus and the native woman by 1836, when a resolution was passed to have him create sculptures for the cheek blocks. Eventually, the commission was divided between Persico and the American sculptor Horatio Greenough before the contract was signed in 1837. Persico worked on the sculpture in Naples, Italy, having agreed to use the same Serravezza marble as Greenough. He based the head on a bust of Columbus in Spain and copied period armor. By 1842 Persico's figures were nearing completion. Made in two sections for ease of transportation, they were shipped to Washington and set in place in 1844. Persico was paid a total of $24,000, including shipping costs.[7]



Landing of Columbus, *1846*
John Vanderlyn
Oil on canvas, 12 feet high x 18 feet wide
Rotunda

Christopher Columbus is shown landing in the West Indies on an island called Guanahani by the natives, and which he named San Salvador, on October 12, 1492. He raises the royal banner of Castile and León, claiming the land for his Spanish patrons, as he points to the earth with his sword. Following him are the brothers Martín Alonzo and Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, the captains of the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, carrying the banner of Ferdinand and Isabella.

Landing of Columbus

At the Island of Guanahani, West Indies. October 12, 1492.



1. Columbus
2. Martín Alonzo Pinzón, Captain of the *Pinta*
3. Vincent Yáñez Pinzón, Captain of the *Niña*
4. Rodrigo de Escobedo, Secretary of the fleet
5. Rodrigo Sánchez de Segovia, Comptroller
6. Repentant Mutineer
7. Alonzo Ojeda
8. Cabin boy
9. Soldier
10. Sailor
11. Friar bearing a crucifix

Other members of his crew display a range of emotions upon finally reaching land, from wary to prayerful to joyous, and some search for gold in the sand. Columbus looks reverently upward, and he has laid his feathered hat on the ground; these actions and the cross carried by the friar give a sense of sacredness to the event. Natives watch from behind a large tree. The viewer's eye is led from left to right, from the three ships in the distance to Columbus, whose yellow flag is highlighted against the dark shadows and trees. The scene corresponds with the description given by Washington Irving in *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828).

This painting was one of four scenes of American history authorized by Congress on June 23, 1836, to fill the niches opposite the paintings of John Trumbull in the rotunda. In 1837 the theme of the discovery of America was assigned to John Vanderlyn (1775–1852), who had competed with Trumbull for the first commission 20 years earlier; he had also received a commission in 1832 for a portrait of George Washington to hang in the Hall of the House of Representatives.

Vanderlyn, a protégé of Aaron Burr, had studied with Gilbert Stuart and was the first American painter to be trained in Paris, where he later received a gold medal from Napoleon. He adopted the French neoclassical style, with clear outlines and poses derived from ancient sculpture. He painted *Landing of Columbus* in Paris. The artist, then in his sixties, took 10 years to complete the work, even with the help of assistants. Before bringing the painting to Washington, he exhibited it in New York in an unsuccessful attempt to raise money to pay his debts. The painting, for which he was paid $10,000, was insalled in the rotunda in 1847.[8]

In the 19th century this image was frequently copied in a variety of popular media. It appeared on a 15-cent postage stamp in 1869, on a $5 bill in 1875, and on a special 2-cent stamp issued for the Columbian Exposition in 1893. The painting has been cleaned and restored eight times, most recently in 1982.

Christopher Columbus—Discovery, *1859*
Constantino Brumidi
Fresco, approximately 5 feet high x 3 feet wide
The President's Room, S–216

Christopher Columbus is shown as if seated in a niche, wearing a cape. He is examining a globe that rests on a columnar pedestal; beneath the base of the globe is an unrolled chart with drawings and notations. At the foot of the pedestal are a compass, a sextant, and other navigational instruments. The fresco is surrounded by a window-like illusionistic frame.

Columbus is one of four historical figures painted in the corners of the ceiling, each figure representing an area of human endeavor. The others are *Americus Vespucius—Exploration*, *Benjamin Franklin—History*, and *William Brewster—Religion*. The female figures in the circular frescoes represent Religion, Liberty, and Executive and Legislative authority. President George Washington and the members of his first cabinet are depicted below.

The President's Room is one of the most beautifully decorated rooms in the Capitol. It was constructed as part of the new Senate wing, which was begun in 1851 and completed in 1859. Until the early 20th century, Presidents signed legislation in this room at the close of each session of Congress. President Abraham Lincoln is known to have first used the room on the day of his inauguration.

The decoration of the room was designed and painted in 1859 by Constantino Brumidi (1805–1880), who was paid $1,000. Italian born and trained, Brumidi arrived in Washington and painted his first fresco in the Capitol in 1855; he spent the remainder of his career painting in the Capitol until his death in 1880.[9] In the President's Room, the circles and rectangles holding the main figures on the ceiling are painted in true fresco, in which the color fuses with the wet plaster, and the surrounding decoration and walls are painted in oil with gold leaf on plaster.



Columbus Doors, *1860*

Randolph Rogers
Bronze doors, 16 feet 8 inches high x 9 feet 9 inches wide
Signed: "Designed and Modeled by Randolph Rogers/Rome 1858"
"Executed in Bronze by F.v. Miller/Munich 1860"
East entrance to the rotunda

The Columbus Doors, also called the Rogers Doors, stand imposingly at the main entrance to the Capitol, almost 17 feet high and weighing 20,000 pounds. The bronze doors are curved in shape, with a semicircular tympanum above two valves that are divided into four panels each. The details of each scene are finely modeled, and techniques of Renaissance perspective and different levels of relief give each scene a sense of depth. The doors were cast by one of the finest foundries in the world at the time.

At the pinnacle is a bust of Columbus, surrounded by rays and oak leaves, signifying his rise to glory. A running border is ornamented with Indian headdresses and emblems of conquest, navigation, the arts and sciences, history, agriculture, and commerce. Rogers stated that he included the four figures symbolizing the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America because "Columbus was a benefactor of the human race, and as his genious [sic] is acknowledged by the whole world. . . ."[10] Between the panels are sculpted heads of historians whose writings on Columbus's voyage span the period from the 15th century until 1855, ending with Washington Irving and William H. Prescott, whose histories were the bases for the scenes depicted.[11]

The life of Columbus begins at the bottom of the left valve and continues in a clockwise progression, consisting of the following scenes:

Columbus Before the Council of Salamanca (1487). Columbus displays a chart in an unsuccessful endeavor to convince the Council appointed by King Ferdinand to support his theory of a new route to India. On either side of the panel are the statuettes of Juan Pérez de Marchena (inscribed "Paraz"), prior of the Convent of La Rábida and friend of Columbus, and Henry VII of England, a patron of navigation, who agreed with Columbus's theory.

Columbus's Departure from the Convent of La Rábida (1492). Columbus, mounted on a mule, is prepared to depart from the gate of the convent run by friar Juan Pérez, former confessor to Queen Isabella. While sheltering Columbus and his son, Peréz was so impressed with Columbus's vision that he wrote to the Queen urging her to reconsider supporting the expedition. Statuettes of Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, and the Lady Beatrix de Bobadilla, an attendant of Isabella who befriended Columbus, flank this panel.

Audience at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella (1492). This panel depicts Queen Isabella listening attentively to Columbus's explanation of his map, with King Ferdinand at her side. On April 17, 1492, the agreement to finance the voyage was signed. Beside this panel are figures of Alonzo Ojeda, a Spanish adventurer who accompanied Columbus to the New World, and Queen Isabella.

Departure of Columbus from Palos (1492). It was from Palos that the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María* set sail on August 3, 1492. This scene depicts Columbus placing his son Diego in the monks' custody before his embarkation. The figures in the border are Columbus's friend Amerigo Vespucci and Pedro Gonzáles de Mendoza, the Archbishop of Toledo and Grand Cardinal of Spain, who had great influence at court.

Landing of Columbus in the New World (1492). The large lunette shows Columbus claiming the island now known as San Salvador for Spain. Columbus, in the center of the composition, raises his sword and the royal standard; a cross is raised behind him. The central group of Columbus and his men is balanced by another group of Columbus's men in a small boat at the left and by the natives hiding behind the tree at the right.

Columbus's First Encounter with the Indians (1492). This panel depicts the Spaniards taking possession by erecting a cross on the island of Hispaniola. One of the sailors is carrying an Indian girl he has taken prisoner on his shoulders, as Columbus shows his disapproval. The panel is flanked by statuettes of Pope Alexander VI, who supported Spain's claim to the new land, and explorer Francisco Pizarro.

Entry of Columbus into Barcelona (1493). After his first voyage, Columbus makes a triumphal return on horseback through the gates of the city where the court is sitting. After his hero's welcome, he was granted the titles of admiral and viceroy and was given a coat of arms. The figures in the border are King Ferdinand and Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the Spanish discover of the Pacific Ocean.

Columbus in Chains (1500). Columbus shows his chains to the crowd as he is about to go aboard the vessel that was to take him back to Spain after his third voyage. Don Francisco de Bobadilla, who was sent to replace Columbus and to investigate charges against him, is pointing to his instructions. After Columbus was cleared of the charges, he returned for the last time to the New World in 1502. Statuettes of King Charles VIII of France and Bartholomew Columbus, who was the explorer's brother and the Lieutenant Governor of the Indies, are seen to the sides.

Death of Columbus (1506). After Queen Isabella's death in 1504, Columbus lost his influence at the court. As he lies on his death bed, priests and friends are gathered around him, and one priest holds up a crucifix for him. Columbus died at Valladolid on May 20, 1506. The figures on either side of the panel represent King John II of Portugal and Martín Alonzo Pinzón, the commander of the *Pinta*.



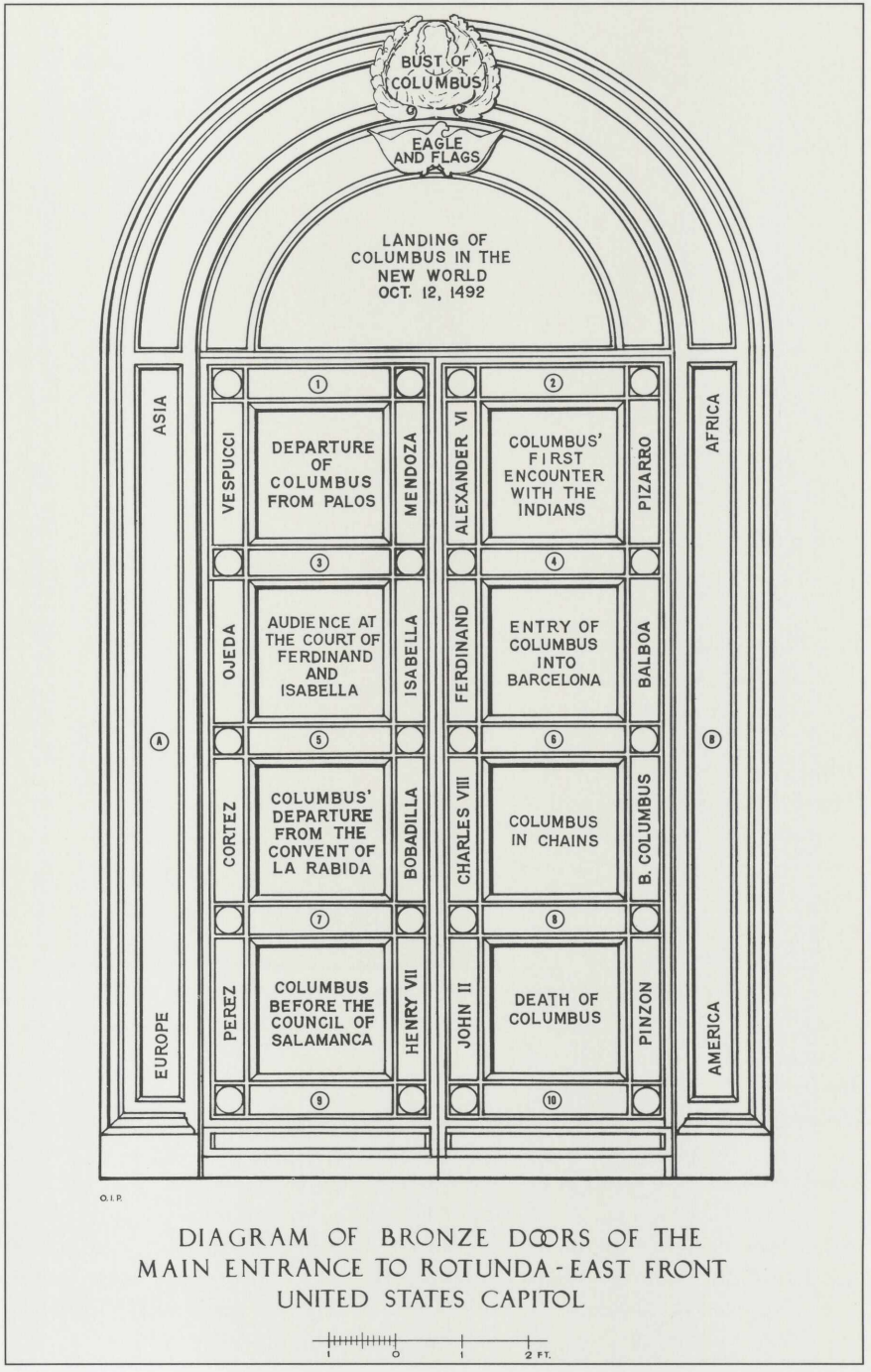


DIAGRAM OF BRONZE DOORS OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO ROTUNDA - EAST FRONT UNITED STATES CAPITOL



Bust of Christopher Columbus at the pinnacle of the Columbus Doors surrounded by rays and oak leaves.

The American sculptor Randolph Rogers (1825–1892) was asked by Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, the Supervising Engineer of the Capitol Extensions, to design a set of doors for the entrance to the new House wing from Statuary Hall. As a subject, Rogers suggested "the life of Columbus. Perhaps there is but one man [i.e., George Washington] whose name is more intimately connected with the history of this country, or who better deserves a lasting monument to his memory than Christopher Columbus."[12] The story of the explorer's life was envisioned as being illustrated in high-relief panels, "which will contain in all about 150 figures, beside 12 portrait statuettes and 12 heads of the distinguished contemporaries of Columbus together with suitable ornament work for the rails and stiles. . . ."[13] The curved tympanum reflects the vaulted passage for which the doors were made. Rogers's model for the doors with square high-relief scenes was the 15th-century "Gates of Paradise" by Lorenze Ghiberti on the Baptistry in Florence.[14]

Rogers's estimate for the project was approved on May 24, 1855, and the artist, who had earlier studied sculpture for 3 years in Italy, went to Rome to work on the models. The commission for the Capitol was only his second large public work.

The model was completed in 1857 and was cast by Ferdinand von Miller at the Royal Bavarian Foundry in Munich, Germany, in 1860. However, because of delays in transportation, the doors did not arrive in Washington to be installed until 1863. In 1871 they were moved to a more prominent location at the central east front entrance. In 1961 the doors were moved 32 ½ feet east during the extension of the Capitol.

The doors were most recently cleaned and conserved in 1988. Because of the heavy use of the entrance by visitors to the Capitol, areas of wear and damage must be repaired regularly.



Semicircular typanum above the Columbus Doors.

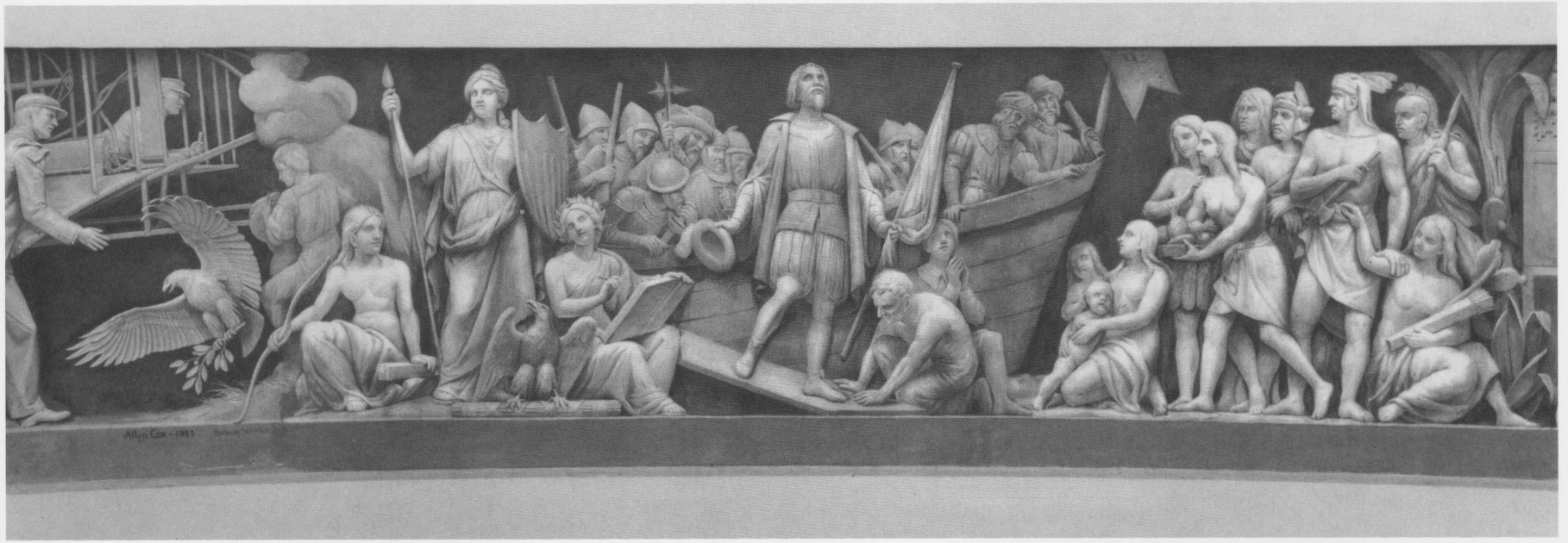
Columbus and the Indian Maiden, *c. 1875*
Constantino Brumidi
Fresco, approximately 6 feet high x 9 feet wide
Senate Wing, first floor, west corridor



The lunette depicts Columbus standing on a sandy beach with a small rowboat at his side. In the background, his ship sits at anchor with its sails lowered. Columbus holds a map in his left hand, and with his right he lifts the veil covering a native woman sitting on the rocks. The arrangement may have been derived from a classical prototype and was probably influenced by Italian monuments to Columbus as well as by Persico's sculptures on the east front of the Capitol. Brumidi gave the woman a classical profile and a sense of dignity. He clothed her in his own version of Indian attire: she wears an American Indian necklace and the sari worn by women in the country of India, which Columbus had intended to reach. The lunette is a symbolic representation of Columbus discovering the New World. The rosy sky behind him may signify the dawn of a new age.

The lunettes were part of an overall scheme to decorate the first floor corridors of the Senate wing, on which construction began in 1857. At that time, Brumidi was in charge of the decorative painters in the building. His designs were carried out under his supervision while he personally painted the fresco lunettes, which were not completed until the 1870s. The lunette next to this one depicts Bartolomé de las Casas, the missionary who accompanied Columbus.

In the 1920s the painting required restoration, but modern conservation techniques were unknown. Paintings were "restored" by retouching rather than cleaning. This lunette was almost entirely overpainted in oil and casein, after being scraped, by George B. Matthews. Matthews changed the sky from pink to blue, painted in spotty strokes, and dotted it with sea gulls. He painted out the spiky plants on the ground, added shells, changed the colors and patterns of the clothing, and repainted the faces, leaving an awkward-looking scene.[15] In 1990 the fresco was conserved using modern methods. The layers of grime and overpaint were removed. Fortunately, Brumidi's original fresco was basically intact underneath. Small damaged areas were inpainted with reversible materials to restore the beauty and glowing colors of the original composition.



Landing of Columbus, *1878*
Constantino Brumidi
Fresco, 8 feet 4 inches high, 58 feet from the floor
Rotunda frieze, over the west door

Christopher Columbus, feathered hat in his right hand and flag in his left, is shown landing by gangplank from the *Santa María*. Most of his crew is crowded behind him on the ship. The Europeans are met by wary natives who bear gifts of fruit and hold their weapons at rest. This scene may have been inspired by Vanderlyn's oil painting in the rotunda.

Preceded only by a symbolic grouping that depicts America and History, *Landing of Columbus* is the first historical scene in the frieze at the base of the dome, which contains a painted panorama of significant events in American history. Originally, Architect of the Capitol Thomas U. Walter designed the 300-foot recessed belt under the new dome for relief sculpture, but the sculpture was never commissioned. In 1877 Edward Clark, Walter's successor, reported: "The belt of the Rotunda intended to be enriched with basso relievos [carvings in low relief] is being embellished in real fresco representing in light and shadow events in our history arranged in chronological order, beginning with the Landing of Columbus. . . ." [16]

Constantino Brumidi, the Italian artist who worked at the Capitol for 25 years, created a sketch for the frieze in 1859, as the dome was being designed, but legislation to authorize the work was not passed until 1877. After enlarging the sketches to full scale, with the figures slightly greater than life size, Brumidi, then age 73, began painting the frieze in May 1878. [17]

Brumidi painted the frieze in true fresco, a difficult and exacting technique in which the pigments are applied directly onto wet plaster. As the plaster dries, the colors become part of the wall. Consequently, each section of plaster must be painted the day it is laid. The frieze is painted in grisaille, a monochrome of whites and browns, to imitate sculpture. Brumidi was well trained in the Renaissance and Baroque tradition of illusionistic mural painting. He was able to create a convincing sense of three-dimensional sculpted stone figures with deft touches of light and dark. This area of the frieze has been periodically damaged by water leaks since the late 19th century. It was first restored in 1953, when the last sections of the frieze were completed. The original details of the frieze were restored after it was thoroughly cleaned and conserved in 1987.



The Recall of Columbus, *1882*
Augustus G. Heaton
Oil on canvas, 4 feet 3 inches high x 7 feet 7 inches wide
Senate Wing, third floor, east corridor

This painting shows Christopher Columbus in February 1492, as he was leaving Spain for France after Ferdinand and Isabella's refusal to support his voyage. His friends then convinced the Queen to reconsider, and she pledged to sell her jewels, if necessary, to finance the expedition. In this scene at the bridge of Pinos, between Santa Fe and Grenada, the royal messenger has overtaken Columbus and dismounted from his horse to deliver the message. Columbus's companions listen, while a child and an old man with a crutch watch. [18]

Augustus G. Heaton (1844–1930) was known as a colorist, and in this painting, which he enlivened with details in brilliant red, our attention is drawn to Columbus by his white mule with red trappings and by his dark hat raised against the pale sky.

Heaton was born in Philadelphia and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He was one of the first Americans to be admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1878 he decided to paint this event in Columbus's life and traveled to Granada, Spain, to study its location. He also searched for likenesses of Columbus and made detailed studies of animals and period costumes to make his painting as historically accurate as possible. [19]

Heaton started the painting in Paris and finished it in Rome. In 1884, Congress purchased the painting for $3,000, and it was placed in the Capitol the same year. Later, in 1891, probably in anticipation of the Columbus Quadricentenary, the artist added his copyright above his signature. In 1893 this painting was loaned to the Columbian Historical Exposition in Madrid, Spain, and the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where Heaton won a bronze medal. The painting was reproduced on a 50-cent postage stamp as part of the special 1893 Columbian Exposition issue.

Columbus, *1897*
Paul Wayland Bartlett
Bronze, approximately 7 feet high
Main Reading Room, Jefferson Building, Library of Congress

Located on the north balustrade of the gallery above the elaborately decorated Main Reading Room constructed in 1897, *Columbus* is one of 16 over-life-size bronze portrait statues that exemplify great achievements of civilization. Columbus stands resolutely, gazing into the distance. His left hand grasps a set of maps, and his right hand is partly open as if in supplication. His left foot projects beyond the base of the sculpture, suggesting the way Columbus passed beyond the bounds of the known world. The figure's long, heavy cape imparts a sense of massiveness. He stands with Robert Fulton under the symbolic figure of Commerce, who holds a sailing ship and a locomotive.

The statue of Columbus was modeled in Paris by the American sculptor Paul Wayland Bartlett (1865–1925). Bartlett, who had established his reputation at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, was commissioned to create *Columbus* in 1894. He wrote, "My idea has been to make the learned navigator energetic and simple, putting aside all theatrical banality. . . ."[20] When completed, the model was sent to be cast in bronze by the Henry Bonnard Bronze Company in New York.

Bartlett, who was the son of a sculptor and lived in France as a child, became interested in sculpture at an early age. One of his works was accepted in the Paris Salon when he was only 14 years old. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, with an animal sculptor, and with Auguste Rodin. Although he was strongly influenced by French sculpture, he was always interested in American subject matter. Bartlett also created the figure of Law and the bronze statue of Michelangelo for the Main Reading Room. Among his most important works are a monument to Lafayette in Paris and the pediment for the House wing of the Capitol.[21]



Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain, *1912*
Lorado Taft and Daniel H. Burnham
Marble monument, 45 feet high
Union Station Plaza

The 15-foot high statue of Columbus gazes toward the Capitol from the Columbus Fountain at the entrance to Union Station. Beneath him is the prow of a ship with a figurehead representing Discovery. Above him is a globe inscribed with the configuration of the Western Hemisphere and surrounded by four eagles. He is flanked by two figures—on the east an elderly man representing the Old World and on the west an American Indian representing the New World. At the back of the shaft against which Columbus stands is a medallion depicting Ferdinand and Isabella. Lions are placed at the ends of the fountain. The three flagpoles symbolize Columbus's three ships, and each is surmounted by a globe upon which sits an American eagle.

The Columbus Fountain is the work of sculptor Lorado Taft (1860–1936), whose training at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris well prepared him to produce monumental symbolic works in architectural settings. In creating this fountain, Taft was inspired by the fountain at the center of the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. He worked with Daniel Burnham, the architect of that Exposition and of Union Station (completed in 1908), in designing the monument.[22] Funds for the project were contributed by the Knights of Columbus and supplemented by a congressional appropriation.[23]





The Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain.
Union Station Plaza.

Notes

[1] *Art in the United States Capitol*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978, p. 413.

[2] Senate Resolution 15, December 15, 1891, 51st Congress, 1st session, and Senate Resolution 5, August 3, 1893, 53d Congress, 1st session.

[3] Attribution and date based on Keim's *Illustrated Hand-Book*, 7th ed., 1875, p. 69. This appears to be based on S.D. Wyeth, "Rotunda and Dome of the U.S. Capitol," from *The Federal City*, 1869, p. 327, saying that the basso relievos with portraits were probably by the same sculptors as above, done about the same date, and cost $9,500.

[4] Information about Causici's design appears in *Niles Register*, v. 23, March 1, 1823, p. 415. Capellano's sketches are described in his January 29, 1824, letter to Joseph Elgar, which is in the Records of Commissioners of Public Buildings, National Archives. The dating and attribution of the busts by Iardella are based on the Accounts of Joseph Elgar in the National Archives (#55,024, no. 9, November 22, 1828; and #55,475, no. 13, February 7, 1829).

[5] A brief biography of each early artist who worked in the Capitol is given by Charles E. Fairman in *Works of Art in the United States Capitol Building*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913. For information on the sculptor, see also Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968.

[6] House resolutions calling for the destruction or removal of these sculptures were introduced in 1939 (House Joint Resolution 276, 76th Congress, 1st session) and in 1941 (House Resolution 176, 77th Congress, 1st session). Extensive information on the opposition to the *Discovery* and *Rescue* is on file in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. See also Vivien Green Fryd, "Two Sculptures for the Capitol: Horatio Greenough's *Rescue* and Luigi Persico's *Discovery of America*," *American Art Journal* XIX, no. 2, 1987, pp. 16ff.

[7] The contract with Persico made on April 3, 1837, is in the records of the National Archives. The cost was given in the report to Jefferson Davis on "U.S. Capitol Extension and Washington Aqueduct Office" by M.C. Meigs, July 28, 1856.

[8] The contract was authorized by Resolution 8, 24th Congress, 1st session, June 23, 1836. Also see: Kenneth C. Lindsay, *The Works of John Vanderlyn*, Binghamton, New York: University Art Gallery, 1970.

[9] Myrtle Cheney Murdock, *Constantino Brumidi*, Washington: Monumental Press, 1950.

[10] Letter from Rogers to Meigs, Paris, August 20, 1856, Records of the Architect of the Capitol.

[11] Washington Irving, *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, first published in 1828, and William H. Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic*, 1837, 1838. Rogers wrote a detailed description of the scenes in a letter to Meigs from Paris, August 20, 1856, Records of the Architect of the Capitol.

[12] Letter from Rogers to Meigs, March 17, 1855, Records of the Architect of the Capitol.

[13] Proposal from Rogers dated May 24, 1855, quoted by Charles E. Fairman in *Art and Artists of the Capitol*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927, p. 156.

[14] Report of M.C. Meigs, July 28, 1856.

[15] *Art in the United States Capitol*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978, p. 338.

[16] Edward Clark, *Annual Report of the Architect of the United States Capitol*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1877, p. 3.

[17] "American History Graven on Stone," *New York Herald*, February 11, 1891, p. 14–15.

[18] Heaton based his scene on Washington Irving's *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard for G.W. Gorton, 1841, pp. 68–71.

[19] George C. Hazleton, *The National Capitol, Its Architecture, Art and History*, New York, 1897, pp. 169–171.

[20] Letter to Edward Casey, December 12, 1894, Library of Congress Archives, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

[21] Thomas P. Somma, "Paul Wayland Bartlett and `The Apotheosis of Democracy,' 1908–1916: The Pediment for the House Wing of the United States Capitol," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1990.

[22] James M. Goode, *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974, p. 44.

[23] *The Catholic Standard*, October 12, 1956.

Columbus, The Man

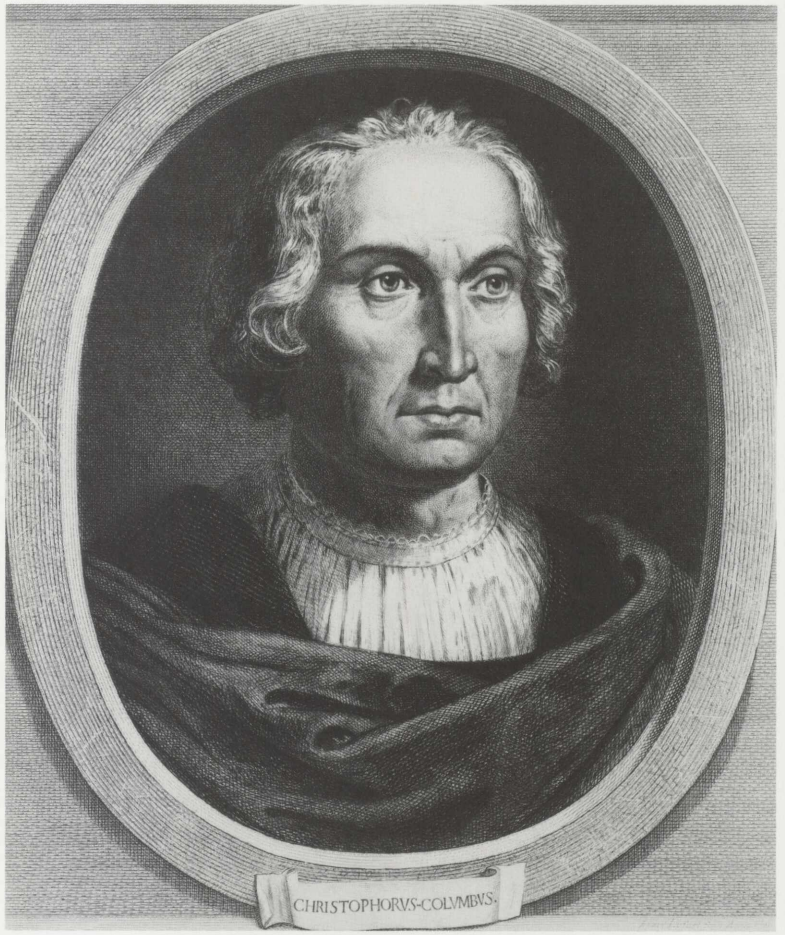
Many of those who knew Columbus took pains to study his character and appearance. In addition to Columbus's own documentation, his life and work as written by some of his contemporaries have been preserved in letters, manuscripts, and books. No portrait or drawing of Columbus during his lifetime is known to exist.

A description of Columbus's personal appearance given by El Capitan Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés in his *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, says: "According to what I have learned from men of his nation, he was of good stature and appearance, of more than medium height, and with strong limbs, his eyes bright and his other features of good proportion: his hair very red and his face somewhat burned and freckled."

Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Historian of the Indies, who as a youth knew Columbus after his return from the New World describes him as follows: "His form was tall, above the medium; his face long and his countenance imposing; his nose aquiline; his eyes clear blue; his complexion light, tending toward a decided red; his beard and hair were red when he was young, but very soon turned gray from his labors."

Ferdinand Columbus, who spent all of his time with his father between the ages of 12 and 18 describes him in his biography: "The Admiral was a well built man of more than medium stature, long visaged with cheeks somewhat high, but neither fat nor thin. He had an aquiline nose and his eyes were light in color; his complexion too was light, but kindling to a vivid red. In youth his hair was blond, but when he came to his thirtieth year it all turned white. In eating and drinking and the adornment of his person he was always continent and modest. Among strangers his conversation was affable and with members of his household very pleasant, but with a modest and pleasant dignity. In matters of religion he was so strict that for fasting and saying all the canonical offices he might have been taken for a member of a religious order. And he was so great an enemy to cursing and swearing, that I swear I never heard him utter any other oath than 'by San Fernando!' and when he was most angry with anyone, his reprimand was to say, 'May God take you' for doing or saying that. And when he had to write anything, he would not try the pen without first writing these words, *Jesus cum Maria sit nobis in via,* and in such fair letters that he might have gained his bread by them alone."

Peter Martyr was Italian-born and the earliest historian of the New World. He was intensely interested in "The Indies" and welcomed Columbus upon his return from his first voyage. He spread the information he collected from Columbus and his shipmates and in 1494 wrote a history of the discovery. The First Decade *De Orbe Novo* came out in 1511 and gives a candid account of Columbus and his work.



Ideal Portrait of Columbus.
From the Henri Lefort etching of the modern portrait in the Naval Museum of Madrid.

Handwriting of Columbus

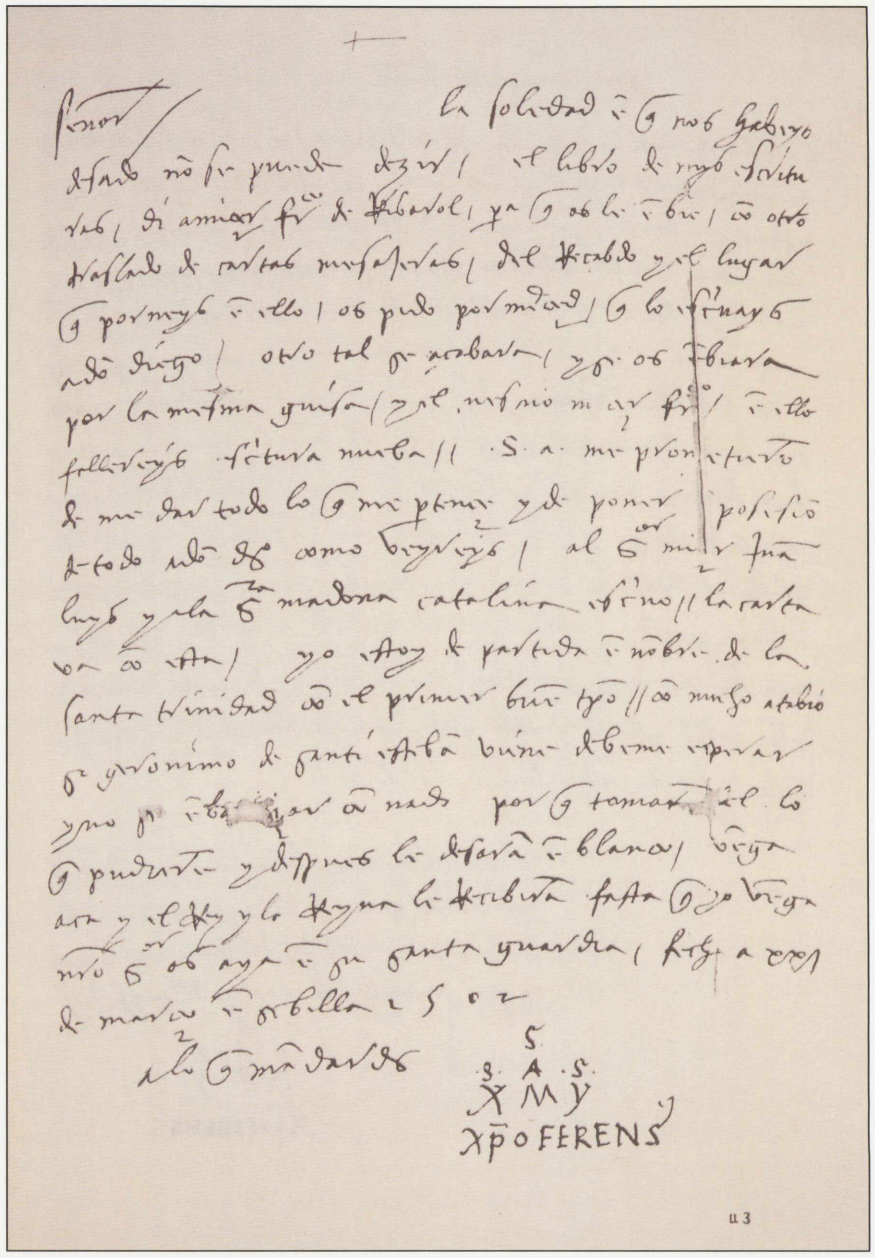
Columbus used a seven-lettered monogram in connection with his ordinary signature. The significance of these seven letters remains unclear. However, Columbus considered his monogram especially important and provided that his heirs forever employ its form.

"Don Diego, my son, or any other who shall inherit this entail, after inheriting and coming into possession of the same, shall sign with my signature which I now employ which is an X with an S over it and an M with a Roman A over it and over that an S and then a Greek Y with an S over it, preserving the relations of the lines and the punctuation." The heirs did not follow his instructions and Columbus never revealed the meaning of this cipher.

Only the bottom line varied from its usual Xp̃o FERENS, a half Greek and half Latin form of Columbus ("bearer for Christ") to the occasional, "el Almirante" meaning the "Admiral", as shown below. A number of documents and letters bearing Columbus's unique signature have been preserved.

The Admiral generally marked a cross at the head of any piece of paper on which he was to write. According to his son, Ferdinand, he began all his writings in Latin with *"Jesus cum Maria sit nobis in via"* which means "May Jesus and Mary be with us in our way." Unfortunately, these words do not aid in deciphering his monogram. Although there has been much speculation, it is unlikely that any accurate meaning will be discovered.





Columbus to Nicolo Oderigo,
Genoese Ambassador to the Spanish Court.
March 21, 1502.



The First Pictorial Version of Columbus's Discovery of America.
This woodcut, executed in the year Columbus returned to Spain after his discovery of America, shows the three boats that made up the expedition. After a woodcut in "La lettera dell' isole che ha trovato nuovamente il Re di Spagna." Florence. 1493

The Columbus Letter of 1493

Columbus's first encounter with the Indians of the Bahamas took place on Friday, October 12, 1492. While homeward bound from his voyage in mid-February 1493, he wrote a letter to the Spanish Sovereigns about the islands that he had acquired possession of and named after them. He described the islands lush flora and fauna, the natural resources, and the gentle native peoples. Columbus's report was intended to serve as a public announcement of his discoveries.

A copy of this letter was addressed to Columbus's friend, Luis de Santangel, financial secretary to Ferdinand, and was printed in Spanish in Barcelona in April of 1493. Within a month a similar letter to the royal treasurer Gabriel Sánchez was translated into Latin by Leander de Cosco and published in Rome by Stephen Plannck. It was the Latin letter that spread the news of the discovery throughout Europe. A copy of this edition is in the Library of Congress.

Letter of Christopher Columbus

I write this to you, from which you will learn how in thirty-three days I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies, with the fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave to me. There I found very many islands, filled with innumerable people, and I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses, done by proclamation and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me.

To the first island which I found I gave the name "San Salvador," in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who had marvellously bestowed all

this; the Indians call it "Guanahani." To the second, I gave the name the island of "Santa María de Concepción," to the third, "Fernandina," to the fourth, "Isabela," to the fifth island, "Juana," and so each received from me a new name.

When I came to Juana, I followed its coast to the westward, and I found it to be so extensive that I thought that it must be the mainland, the province of Cathay. And since there were neither towns nor villages on the seashore, but small hamlets only, with the people of which I could not have speech because they all fled immediately, I went forward on the same course, thinking that I could not fail to find great cities or towns. At the end of many leagues, seeing that there was no change and that the coast was bearing me northwards, which I wished to avoid, since winter was already approaching and I proposed to make from it to the south, and as, moreover, the wind was carrying me forward, I determined not to wait for a change in the weather and retraced my path as far as a remarkable harbour known to me. From that point, I sent two men inland to learn if there were a king or great cities. They travelled three days' journey, finding an infinity of small hamlets and people without number, but nothing of importance. For this reason, they returned.

I understood sufficiently from other Indians, whom I had already taken, that this land was nothing but an island, and I therefore followed its coast eastward for one hundred and seven leagues to the point where it ended. From that point, I saw another island, distant about eighteen leagues from the first, to the east, and to it I at once gave the name "Española." I went there and followed its northern coast, as I had followed that of Juana, to the eastward for one hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight line. This island and all the others are very fertile to a limitless degree, and this island is extremely so. In it there are many harbours on the coast of the sea, beyond comparison with others that I know in Christendom, and many rivers, good and large, which is marvellous. Its lands are high; there are in it many sierras and very lofty mountains, beyond comparison with that of Tenerife. All are most beautiful, of a thousand shapes; all are accessible and are filled with trees of a thousand kinds and tall, so that they seem to touch the sky. I am told that they never lose their foliage, and this I can believe, for I saw them as green and lovely as they are in Spain in May, and some of them were flowering, some bearing fruit, and some at another stage, according to their nature. The nightingale was singing and other birds of a thousand kinds, in the month of November, there where I went. There are six or eight kinds of palm, which are a wonder to behold on account of their beautiful variety, but so are the other trees and fruits and plants. In it are marvellous pine groves; there are very wide and fertile plains, and there is honey; and there are birds of many kinds and fruits in great diversity. In the interior, there are mines of metals, and the population is without number.

Española is a marvel. The sierras and the mountains, the plains, the champaigns, are so lovely and so rich for planting and sowing, for breeding cattle of every kind, for building towns and villages. The harbours of the sea here are such as cannot be believed to exist unless they have been seen, and so with the rivers, many and great, and of good water, the majority of which contain gold. In the trees, fruits and plants, there is a great difference from those of Juana. In this island, there are many spices and great mines of gold and of other metals.

The people of this island and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them, although some of the women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant or with a net of cotton which they make for the purpose. They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them. This is not because they are not well built and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvellously timorous. They have no other arms than spears made of canes, cut in seeding time, to the ends of which they fix a small sharpened stick. Of these they do not dare to make use, for many times it has happened that I have sent ashore two or three men to some town to have speech with them, and countless people have come out to them, and as soon as they have seen my men approaching, they have fled, a father not even waiting for his son. This is not because ill has been done to any one of them; on the contrary, at every place where I have been and have been able to have speech with them, I have given to them of that which I had, such as cloth and many other things, receiving nothing in exchange. But so they are, incurably timid. It is true that, after they have been reassured and have lost this fear, they are so guileless and so generous with all that they possess, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. They refuse nothing that they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite any one to share it and display as much love as if they would give their hearts. They are content with whatever trifle of whatever kind that may be given to them, whether it be of value or valueless. I forbade that they should be given things so worthless as fragments of broken crockery, scraps of broken glass and lace tips, although when they were able to get them, they fancied that they possessed the best jewel in the world. So it was found that for a thong a sailor received gold to the weight of two and a half castellanos, and others received much more for other things which were worth less. As for new blancas, for them they would give everything which they had, although it might be two or three castellanos' weight of gold or an arroba or two of spun cotton. They took even the pieces of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and, like savages, gave what they had, so that it seemed to me to be wrong and I forbade it. I gave them a thousand

handsome good things, which I had brought, in order that they might conceive affection for us and, more than that, might become Christians and be inclined to the love and service of Your Highnesses and of the whole Castilian nation, and strive to collect and give us of the things which they have in abundance and which are necessary to us.

They do not hold any creed nor are they idolaters; but they all believe that power and good are in the heavens and were very firmly convinced that I, with these ships and men, came from the heavens, and in this belief they everywhere received me after they had mastered their fear. This belief is not the result of ignorance, for they are, on the contrary, of a very acute intelligence and they are men who navigate all those seas, so that it is amazing how good an account they give of everything. It is because they have never seen people clothed or ships of such a kind.

As soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island which I found, I took some of the natives by force, in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts. And so it was that they soon understood us, and we them, either by speech or signs, and they have been very serviceable. At present, those I bring with me are still of the opinion that I come from Heaven, for all the intercourse which they have had with me. They were the first to announce this wherever I went, and the others went running from house to house, and to the neighbouring towns, with loud cries of, "Come! Come! See the men from Heaven!" So all came, men and women alike, when their minds were set at rest concerning us, not one, small or great, remaining behind, and they all brought something to eat and drink, which they gave with extraordinary affection.

In all the islands, they have very many canoes, which are like rowing fustas, some larger and some smaller; some are greater than a fusta of eighteen benches. They are not so broad, because they are made of a single log of wood, but a fusta would not keep up with them in rowing, since their speed is an incredible thing. In these they navigate among all those islands, which are innumerable, and carry their goods. I have seen one of these canoes with seventy or eighty men in it, each one with his paddle.

In all these islands, I saw no great diversity in the appearance of the people or in their manners and language. On the contrary, they all understand one another, which is a very curious thing, on account of which I hope that their Highnesses will determine upon their conversion to our holy faith, towards which they are very inclined.

I have already said how I went one hundred and seven leagues in a straight line from west to east along the seashore of the island of Juana, and as a result of this voyage I can say that this island is larger than England and Scotland together, for, beyond these one hundred and seven leagues, there remain to the westward two provinces to which I have not gone. One of these provinces they call "Avan," and there people are born with tails. These provinces cannot have a length of less than fifty or sixty leagues, as I could understand from those Indians whom I have and who know all the islands.

The other island, Española, has a circumference greater than all Spain from Collioure by the seacoast to Fuenterabia in Vizcaya, for I voyaged along one side for one hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight line from west to east. It is a land to be desired and, when seen, never to be left. I have taken possession of all for their Highnesses, and all are more richly endowed than I know how or am able to say, and I hold all for their Highnesses, so that they may dispose of them as they do of the kingdoms of Castile and as absolutely. But especially, in this Española, in the situation most convenient and in the best position for the mines of gold and for all trade as well with the mainland here as with that there, belonging to the Grand Khan, where will be great trade and profit, I have taken possession of a large town, to which I gave the name "Villa de Navidad," and in it I have made fortifications and a fort, which will now by this time be entirely completed. In it I have left enough men for such a purpose with arms and artillery and provisions for more than a year, and a fusta, and one, a master of all seacraft, to build others, and I have established great friendship with the king of that land, so much so, that he was proud to call me "brother" and to treat me as such. And even were he to change his attitude to one of hostility towards these men, he and his do not know what arms are. They go naked, as I have already said, and they are the most timorous people in the world, so that the men whom I have left there alone would suffice to destroy all that land, and the island is without danger for their persons, if they know how to govern themselves.

In all these islands, it seems to me that all men are content with one woman, and to their chief or king they give as many as twenty. It appears to me that the women work more than do the men. I have not been able to learn if they hold private property; it seemed to me to be that all took a share in whatever any one had, especially of eatable things.

In these islands I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected, but on the contrary the whole population is very well formed, nor are they negroes as in Guinea, but their hair is flowing and they are not born where there is intense force in the rays of the sun. It is true that the sun there has great power, although it is distant from the equinoctial line twenty-six degrees. In these islands, where there are high mountains, the cold was severe this winter, but they endure it, being used to it and with the help of meats which they consume with many and extremely hot spices. Thus I have found no monsters, nor had a

report of any, except in an island "Carib," which is the second at the coming into the Indies, and which is inhabited by a people who are regarded in all the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh. They have many canoes with which they range through all the islands of India and pillage and take whatever they can. They are no more malformed than are the others, except that they have the custom of wearing their hair long like women, and they use bows and arrows of the same cane stems, with a small piece of wood at the end, owing to their lack of iron which they do not possess. They are ferocious among these other people who are cowardly to an excessive degree, but I make no more account of them than of the rest. These are they who have intercourse with the women of "Matinino," which is the first island met on the way from Spain to the Indies, in which there is not a man. These women engage in no feminine occupation, but use bows and arrows of cane, like those already mentioned, and they arm and protect themselves with plates of copper, of which they have much.

In another island, which they assure me is larger than Española, the people have no hair. In it there is incalculable gold, and from it and from the other islands I bring with me Indians as evidence.

In conclusion, to speak only of what has been accomplished on this voyage, which was so hasty, their Highnesses can see that I will give them as much gold as they may need, if their Highnesses will render me very slight assistance; presently, I will give them spices and cotton, as much as their Highnesses shall command; and mastic, as much as they shall order to be shipped and which, up to now, has been found only in Greece, in the island of Chios, and the Seignory sells it for what it pleases; and aloe, as much as they shall order to be shipped; and slaves, as many as they shall order, and who will be from the idolaters. I believe also that I have found rhubarb and cinnamon, and I shall find a thousand other things of value, which the people whom I have left there will have discovered, for I have not delayed at any point, so far as the wind allowed me to sail, except in the town of Navidad, in order to leave it secured and well established, and in truth I should have done much more if the ships had served me as reason demanded.

This is enough. And thus the eternal God, Our Lord, gives to all those who walk in His way triumph over things which appear to be impossible, and this was notably one. For, although men have talked or have written of these lands, all was conjectural, without ocular evidence, but amounted only to this, that those who heard for the most part listened and judged rather by hearsay than from even a small something tangible. So that, since Our Redeemer has given the victory to our most illustrious King and Queen, and to their renowned kingdoms, in so great a matter, for this all Christendom ought to feel delight and make great feasts and give solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity, with many solemn prayers for the great exaltation which they shall have in the turning of so many peoples to our holy faith, and afterwards for the temporal benefits, because not only Spain but all Christendom will have hence refreshment and gain.

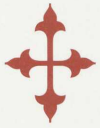
This is an account of the facts, thus abridged.

Done in the caravel, off the Canary Islands, on the fifteenth day of February, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three.

At your orders.

THE ADMIRAL—

Lisbon, the day before the Ides of March.



The Columbus Coat of Arms





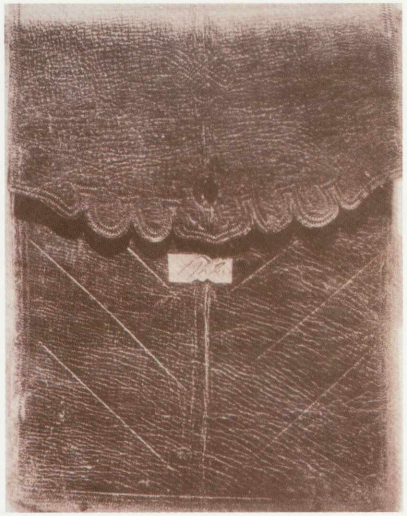
Columbus Coat of Arms
Buell Mullen
Large mural on stainless steel
Hispanic Room, Jefferson Building, Library of Congress

As a reward for his successful voyage of discovery, the Spanish sovereigns granted Columbus the right to bear arms. According to the blazon specified in letters patent May 20, 1493, Columbus was to bear in the first and second quarters, the royal charges of Castile and León (the gold castle and purple lion) but with different colors. The third quarter would have islands in a wavy sea, and in the fourth, the customary arms of his family.

By 1502, when Columbus had compiled his Book of Privileges for the benefit of his descendants, he had made significant modifications in his coat of arms. In addition to the royal charges that were authorized in the top quarters, Columbus adopted the royal colors as well, added a contingent among the islands in the third quarter, and for the fourth quarter introduced five anchors placed horizontally on a blue field from the blazon of the Admiral of Castile. It was not uncommon for people in those days to alter their original blazon. No original form of the coat of arms has survived. The arms pictured above (left) is a colored facsimile of Columbus's modified version prepared by Henry Harrisse. The mural in the Library of Congress (right) is an artist's rendition.

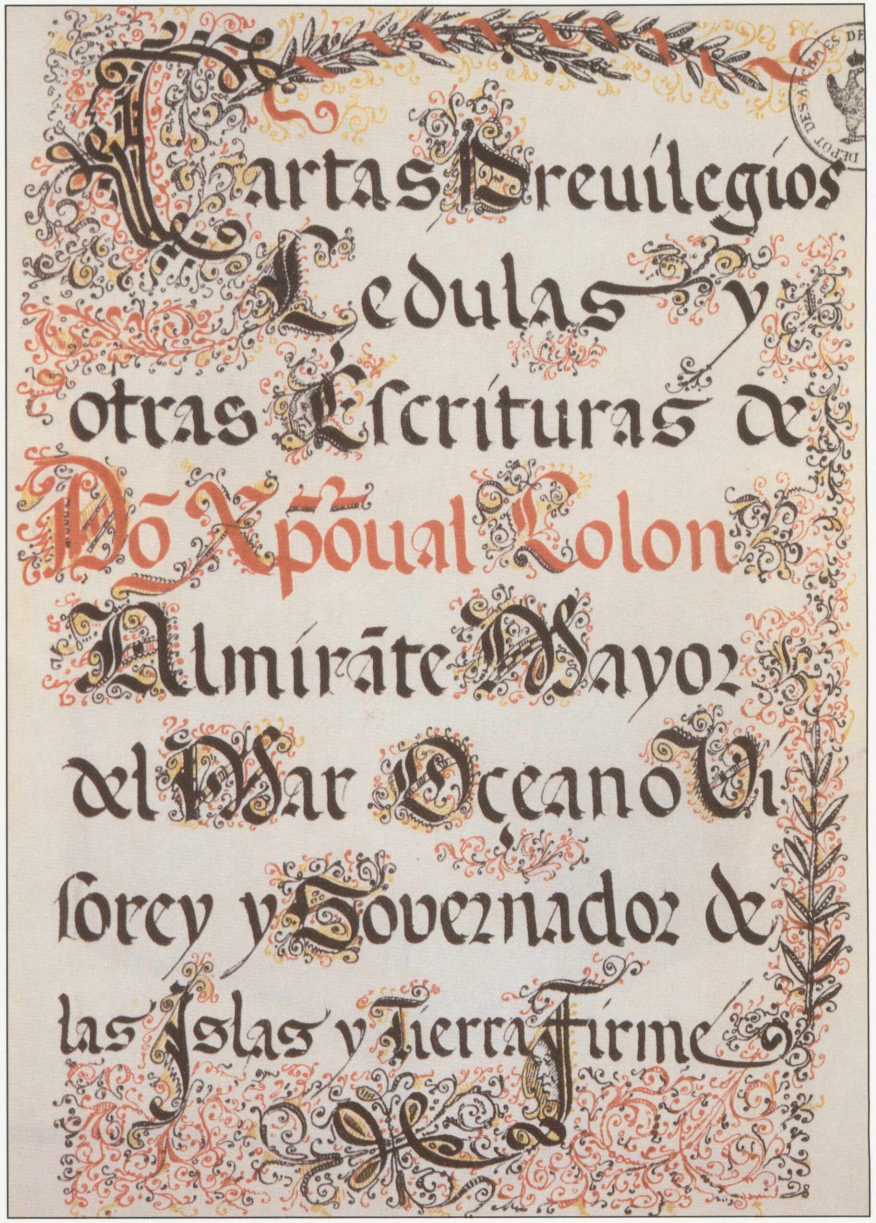
Columbus's Book of Privileges

Upon returning from his first voyage Columbus triumphed in the favor of his Sovereigns. The son of the Genoese weaver had come from nothing to achieve titles, revenues, powers, and privileges. During his third voyage, a revolt broke out against him in Espaniola. He requested the crown to send out a judge but instead they sent Francisco de Bobadilla, who sent Columbus and his brother to Spain as prisoners. The proud Columbus suffered great humiliation over these proceedings. Although he was eventually released and treated with distinction, his former position of power was never restored. The Admiral hoped to protect, for himself and his heirs, the rights granted to him for his discoveries. In January of 1502, prior to his fourth and last voyage, Columbus met with authorities to prepare authentic copies of his collection of original documents of entitlements from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Four copies of these legal documents, known as Columbus's Book of Privileges, were made and delivered to trusted locations. A paper copy was carried to Santo Domingo in 1502 by an agent of Columbus and is thought to be the Veragua Codex now in Seville. Agents delivered two vellum copies to Nicolo Oderigo, Ambassador to the Spanish Court. These remained in the Oderigo family archives until the late 17th century. Today, one is in the Genoa municipal archives and the other is in the archives of the French Foreign Office in Paris. A fourth copy, also vellum, was retained with the original documents in the Columbus family archives at the Monastery of Santa María de Las Cuevas in Seville, and is thought to be the one now preserved by the Library of Congress.



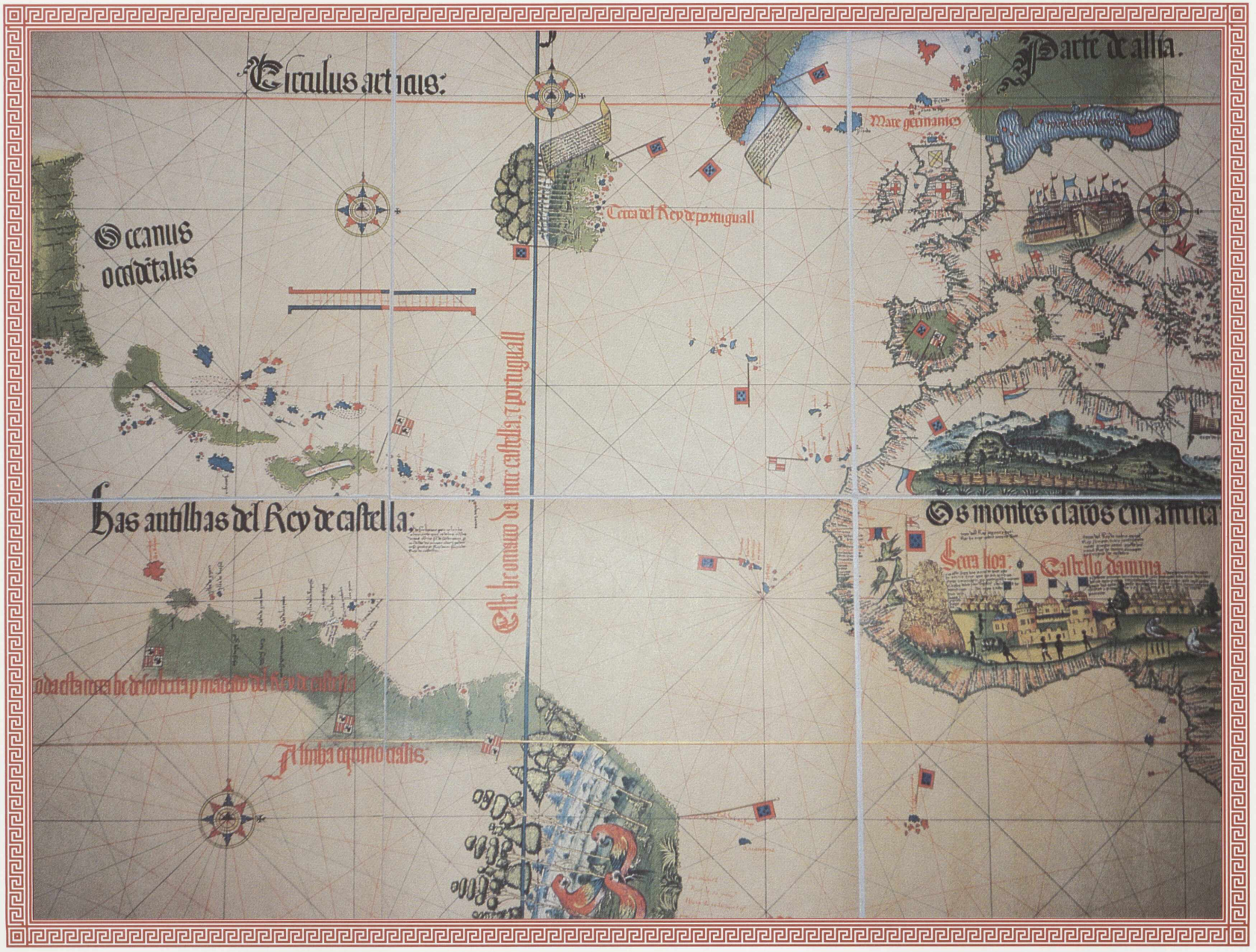
Bag in which Columbus transmitted his Book of Privileges to the Genoese Ambassador. March, 1502.

(Photographed from the original in the City Hall, Genoa)



Title Page of Columbus's Book of Privileges.

"Letters, privileged charters and other writings of Don Christopher Columbus, Highest Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of the Islands and Terra Firma."



Western portion of the Cantino World Map of 1502,
showing the lands visited by Columbus, John Cabot, and the Corte Real brothers in the western seas.

Niña, Pinta and Santa María



Five centuries after Columbus first came to the Americas, authentic replicas of the *Niña, Pinta,* and *Santa María* retraced their historic voyage to the New World. Built and owned by the Government of Spain, the replicas were constructed under the careful guidance of a team of specialists from the Spanish Institute of Naval History and Culture.

The construction of the square-rigged "nao" *Santa María* was awarded to Astilleros Viudes in Barcelona. The original cargo vessel was owned and captained by Juan de la Cosa. She was known as *La Gallega,* or the Galecian and was docked out of Palos on a routine trading mission when Columbus chartered her to be his flagship and registered her official name as *Santa María*. The ship ran aground on the Island of Hispaniola, now known as Haiti, at midnight on Christmas Day, 1492. Unable to save her, Columbus ordered that the cargo be salvaged and the ship's wood be used to build a fort called "La Navidad."

The Arsenal Militar de Cartagena and Astilleros Reunidos de Isla Cristina were selected to build the caravels *Niña* and *Pinta* respectively. The *Niña*, captained by Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, was the Admiral's favorite vessel and she participated in three of his four voyages before making a trading voyage to the Pearl Coast in 1501. The *Pinta,* captained by Martín Alonso Pinzón, disappeared from recorded history after successfully completing the first voyage.

A very high level of specialization was required in order to ensure the historical verity of the ships. Only tools contemporary to the 15th century were used by the shipbuilders. Planking nails were hand forged using nails recovered from an early 16th century shipwreck as models. Master carpenters built the ships with timbers from the forests of Galicia and the Pyrenees, the same oak and pine timberlands harvested by the builders of Columbus's own ships. In the hope of capturing the spirit of the Columbus era, much of the design work was taken directly from the surviving manuscripts of shipbuilders of the Golden Age of Exploration.

Each ship was outfitted with rigging and hardware similar to that which was used by Columbus and the Pinzón brothers. Just as in the late 15th century, hemp was used for the rigging and to caulk the hulls, deadworks, and decks. The sailcloth was made from linen, the closest natural fiber to Columbus's hemp canvas, which is now known only from history books. Anchors were made of cast steel typical of the period, and bilge pumps were fashioned from leather and oak as they were in the time of Columbus.

The ships' navigational instruments consisted of period astrolabes, quadrants, compasses, and zondalezas to measure wind speeds. The *Niña*, *Pinta,* and *Santa María* each carried light weaponry, and members of the crew were armed with lances and swords. As was the case with the original ships, the new vessels were sparingly furnished with pine tables, stools, and large trunks for the crew to store personal belongings. In tribute to their historical benefactors, the ships flew the flag and standard of Castile and León and the royal standard of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand.

The vessels were christened and launched in 1989 by members of the Spanish royal family. The caravels were manned by a combined crew of 62 Spanish Navy officers and carefully selected civilian volunteers. After completion of sea trials, the fleet's first voyage consisted of a 22-port tour of the Western Mediterranean before setting sail for their American tour.

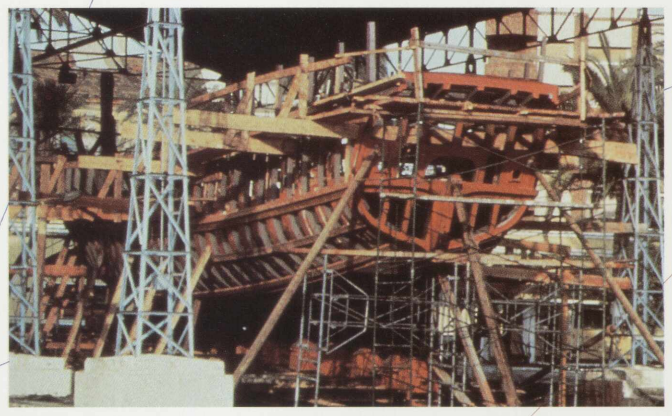
The return of the *Niña*, *Pinta,* and *Santa María* highlighted the relevance of Columbus's seminal voyage five centuries past.



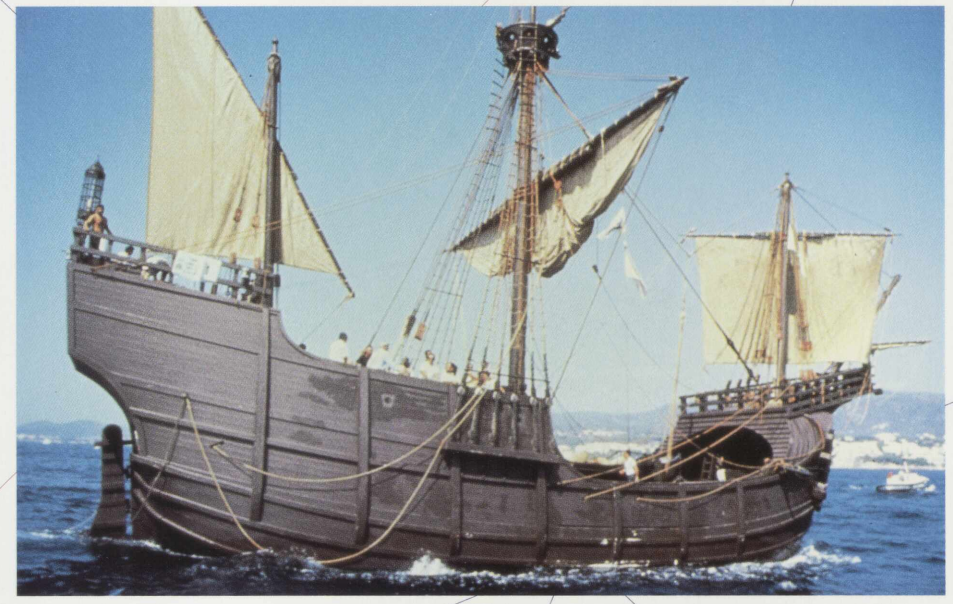
The three caravels at sea in the Mediterranean.



The *Santa María* with one of the Italian America's Cup boats in the background.



Constuction of the *Santa María* in Barcelona.



The *Santa María* during sea trials.



H.M. Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, with the crew of the *Santa María*.

(Photographs courtesy of Spain '92 Foundation)

Commemorative Stamps

In December of 1991 the Postmaster General held a national unveiling of 1992 stamp designs. In previous years stamp designs were released within weeks of their issue; however, the Postal Service wanted to call attention to the historic and aesthetic value of the variety of American stamps issued in 1992. The voyage of Christopher Columbus was an appropriate highlight among this collection.

World Columbian Stamp Expo '92
January 24, 1992



First Voyage of Columbus
Block of Four
Joint Issue with Italy
April 24, 1992



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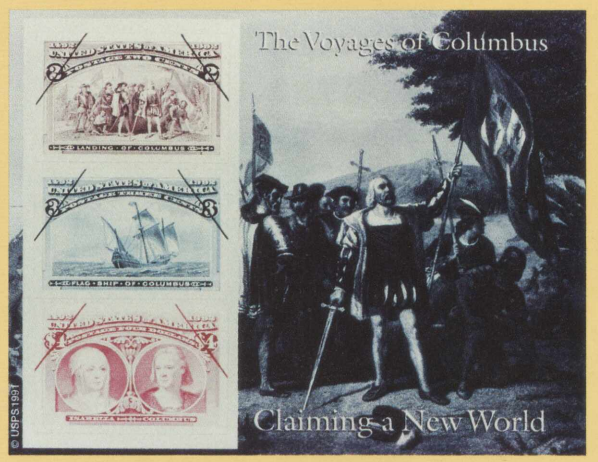





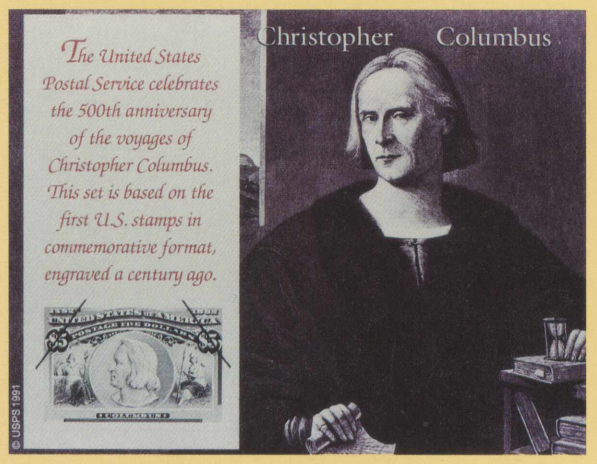

Columbians
Re-issue of the 1893 Columbian Exposition Series
Five souvenir sheets of three stamps each and
one souvenir sheet with the $5 stamp; to be sold only as a set.
Joint issue with Spain and Portugal
May 22, 1992

Note: Each stamp listed is a 29-cent commemorative unless otherwise noted.

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Commemorative Coins

On May 13, 1992, President Bush signed into law a bill introduced by Representative Frank Annunzio of Illinois, to establish the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation from the proceeds of commemorative coins created in honor of Columbus's discovery of the New World in 1492. The legislation, known as the "Frank Annunzio Act" will award fellowships to outstanding individuals to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind.

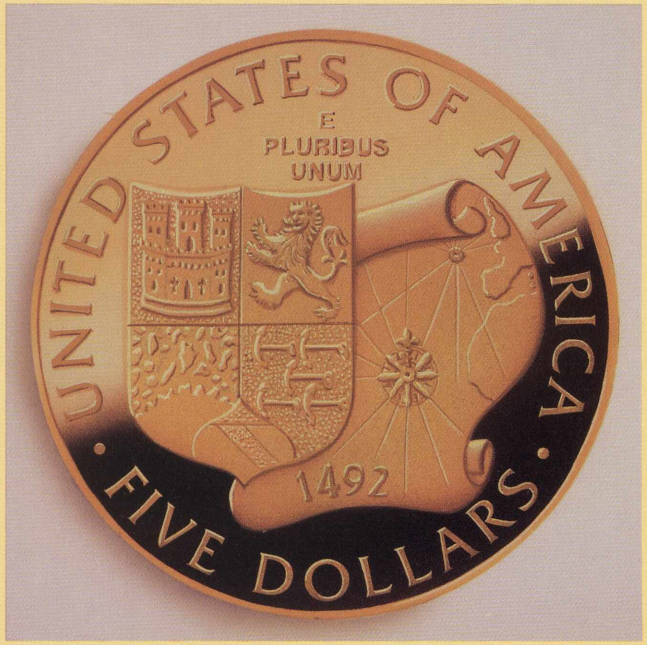
The U.S. Treasury will mint and issue for a limited time $5 gold coins, $1 silver coins, and half-dollar clad coins at no cost to the Federal Government. The Treasury first issued a commemorative coin in 1892 in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing.

The designs depicted are renderings of the Columbus coins and are subject to slight modification prior to engraving. The lettering on each side of the coins is part of the artist's design.

Five Dollar Gold Coin



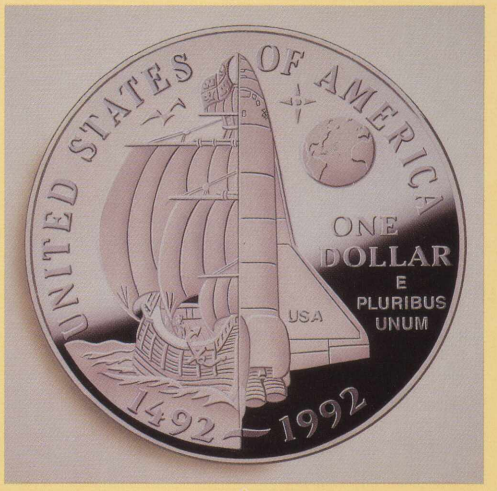
Obverse: Columbus is prominently profiled as he looks toward a map of the New World.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver T. James Ferrell.



Reverse: The Columbus Coat of Arms as bestowed upon him by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella is featured overlapping a map of the western portion of the Old World.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver Thomas O. Rogers, Sr.

Silver Dollar Coin



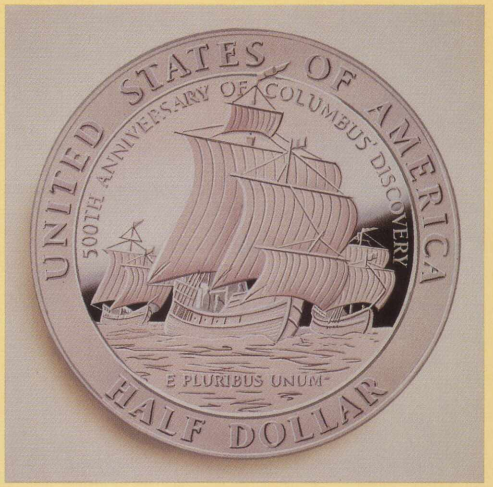


Obverse: Christopher Columbus is pictured holding a banner and scroll as he stands next to a globe of the world. A scene with three sailing vessels appears at the top of the coin behind Columbus.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver John Mercanti.

Reverse: The central design element is formed by merging half of a sailing ship from the Great Age of Discovery with half of a space shuttle representing modern times. The Earth and a star appear to the upper right of the shuttle.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver Thomas O. Rogers, Sr.

Half-Dollar Coin





Obverse: The Admiral of the Ocean Sea is portrayed at landfall with his crew disembarking from a small boat and his flagship anchored at sea.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver T. James Ferrell.

Reverse: The *Niña, Pinta* and *Santa María* at sea.
Designer: U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver T. James Ferrell.

Columbus Day



October 12, 1992, honors the great explorer, Christopher Columbus, and the Quincentenary of his first voyage to the New World from Palos, Spain. Some have called this discovery the most important event recorded in secular history. Before his death in Valladolid, Spain, on May 20, 1506, he had made three more voyages to the New World. Today, independent nations around the globe unite in homage to the Genoese navigator whose legend lives forever.

The first known observance of Columbus Day in the United States occurred in 1792. New York's Society of St. Tamany (also known as the Columbian order) sponsored an elaborate celebration for the 300th anniversary of Columbus's historic voyage. The Society erected a 14-foot high monument in its headquarters and provided an evening of entertainment that featured an elegant oration and a series of toasts. The Historical Society of Boston, honored by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and other dignitaries, sat through Rev. Doctor Jeremy Belknap's ode to Columbus. Baltimore unveiled a public monument to the memory of Columbus. The 44-foot column of brick, covered with cement and decorated with a marble slab, was a gift of Chevalier d'Anmours, the French consul in Baltimore, to commemorate the friendship of the two nations.

The 400th anniversary of his landing at San Salvador produced a massive celebration. President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation calling upon citizens to participate in commemorative services and requested schools to organize programs. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States was first published in the Youth's Companion magazine in Boston, Massachusetts, to celebrate this event, and it was first used in public schools to celebrate Columbus Day on October 12, 1892. New York led off the event of October 1892 with 5 days of parades and floats, fireworks, speeches, military marches, and naval pageants. A memorial to Columbus was unveiled at the southwest corner of Central Park, in what was then rechristened Columbus Circle. The Federal Government issued a half-dollar memorial coin, the first commemorative U.S. coin ever struck, and put it on sale for a dollar to raise money for the Columbian Exposition. The coin had a portrait of Columbus in profile on one side and the *Santa María* on the reverse. The Government also prepared its first commemorative stamp issue.

The great Columbian Exposition was so extensive that the city of Chicago was unable to raise the money to complete the buildings in time for an 1892 opening. However, the following year the gates of the great fair opened in Chicago on May 1, and it was considered the most elaborate Columbus event arranged up to that time. On opening day, President Cleveland addressed a crowd of more than 300,000 and concluded his remarks by pressing a gold telegraph key with an inlaid ivory button that activated each of the thousands of engines, gears, belts, and wheels that provided the electricity to drive the countless pieces of machinery throughout the ground.

Early in the 20th century, the Knights of Columbus (a Roman Catholic society for men founded in 1882), and numerous Italian American societies lobbied state legislatures to declare October 12 a legal holiday. Although Colorado and Illinois were among the first states to issue proclamations calling on the people to commemorate the day, it was New York that first passed legislation declaring Columbus Day a holiday in 1909. On April 30, 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt issued a proclamation designating October 12 of each year as Columbus Day; he also called upon Government officials to display the American flag on all Government buildings and asked that citizens observe the day in schools, churches, and other suitable places. Columbus Day became an official holiday in 15 states by 1910 and in 34 by 1938. As a result of legislation sponsored by Representative Robert McClory of Illinois, Columbus Day was officially established as a Federal holiday by President Lyndon B. Johnson on June 28, 1968. The law set the Columbus Day observance as the second Monday in October in accordance with the new Federal policy of scheduling 3-day weekends.

Columbus Day continues to be celebrated in cities and towns throughout the country with festive parades, ceremonies, and other educational and cultural events. These observances and the numerous others throughout the Nation are only part of the tribute paid to Columbus. Cities and towns have been named in his honor, as has a major university. Philadelphia's Italian residents financed one of the more noteworthy statues of Columbus located in Fairmont Park. Columbus, Ohio, boasts the 20-foot high, 7,000-pound bronze statue that the city of Genoa presented in 1954. Our Nation's Capitol complex is









The Knights of Columbus Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Columbus Fountain.
Union Station Plaza, 1990.

proud to display a collection of artwork honoring Columbus by prominent artists. Each year the Knights of Columbus sponsors a wreath-laying ceremony at the Columbus Fountain at Union Station. Countless other memorials exist throughout our country and the world honoring Christopher Columbus. Columbus also continues to be the hero of numerous plays, operas, novels, and poems.

The Quincentenary promises more elaborate ceremonies throughout the world than ever before, including the Columbian World's Fair in Seville, the International Specialized Exhibition in Genoa, and the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona. The centerpiece of the U.S. celebrations, AmeriFlora '92, opened in April in Columbus, Ohio. The expo featured President George Bush as the keynote speaker and First Lady Barbara Bush as honorary patron. In July the greatest assemblage of Tall Ships in modern history saluted Columbus in New York and Boston harbors. Virtually every major city in the United States will pay tribute to the Admiral of the Ocean during 1992.

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* For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

Acknowledgements

The Joint Committee on Printing extends deepest thanks and appreciation to those individuals whose efforts and talents were essential to the completion of this book.

The Committee is particularly grateful to the the Architect of the Capitol and the Library of Congress for contributing much of the historical information and photographs.

In memory of Representative Silvio O. Conte
First Congressional District, Massachusetts.
(1921–1991)



Map of the Americas.
Taken from Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), considered the first modern world atlas.