

WHO REALLY DISCOVERED AMERICA?

1400s - Portugal has been searching for new trade routes. Spain does not want to be left out! **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain** agreed to finance a voyage by **Christopher Columbus of Italy**. He planned to reach the East Indies by sailing across the Atlantic Ocean.

August 1492 – Columbus sets out with the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria. Columbus sails the Santa Maria, the largest ship. It is a long journey and the sailors get anxious and want to turn back.

October 7, 1492 – Sailors see a flock of birds flying southwest. Columbus changes course to follow the birds.

October 12, 1492 – 2:00 a.m. – The crew sees LAND

Columbus thought he had reached the East Indies of Asia. However, he had actually reached the “West Indies,” islands off of North and South America in the Caribbean Sea.

Columbus and his crew stay and explore the West Indies for three months. He feels that he has discovered Gold and leaves to report the good news to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He brings with him very extravagant gifts for the monarchs.

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella are impressed! They agree to finance future voyages and named Columbus the “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.” Columbus made three more voyages across the Atlantic and founded the first Spanish colony on the island of Hispanola in 1493 (present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

COLONY – a group of people who settle in a distant land but are still ruled by the government of their native land.

Columbus was a harsh ruler of his colony. The people complained, and Queen Isabella sent someone to investigate. Columbus returned to Spain in chains. While Columbus was pardoned, he never regained the honors he once had. He died in 1506 still believing that he had reached Asia.

As a result of Columbus’ “discovery” many other Spanish explorers arrive in the new world. We will talk about the effects of their arrival later.