

Each year tribute is paid to the memory of Christopher Columbus, whose epoch-making voyage 450 years ago led to development of the New World. "Columbus Day" is observed October 12, allegedly the day Columbus landed at Watling Island (christened by him San Salvador) in the Bahamas.

Columbus Day is a legal holiday in more than two thirds of the United States. Celebrations -- parades, picnics, wreath-laying ceremonies -- honor the man who sought the wealth of the Indies but found, instead, an entire new world. In Latin America October 12 is observed as "Día de la Raza" or "Day of the Race". Special attention is called to the great race and language union between America and her mother country, Spain, from whence the renowned seafarer's voyage sponsored by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, sailed in 1492.

Although Columbus twice mentioned in his will that he was a native of Genoa, Italy, a dozen places claim the honor of his birth, and several offer plausible evidence in support. His parentage is uncertain, and his age the subject of serious dispute. In the English-speaking world he is known as Christopher Columbus, an anglicized form of Cristoforo Colombo (Italian) and Cristobal Colon (Spanish).

The effigy of the "Admiral of the Indies" has been carved and painted countless times. In the United States alone there are 29 statues and monuments to his memory. There are six in Spain and seven in Italy. Under construction at Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, is the Columbus Memorial Lighthouse, which has been called the largest memorial since the Pyramids to be dedicated to one man.

Columbus did not live to realize the significance of his discovery. Prize essays on the subject were written in France as long ago as the French Revolution. It was said that the hope of mankind for the future of the western world rested in the two or three million colonists scattered along the coast of America -- colonists who had fought for and won their independence. Americans must use their liberty to help others. A new world of freedom, for all peoples, is the legacy of Columbus.



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1. A model of the Columbus Memorial Lighthouse under construction at Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic. Besides offering a navigational aid to ships and aircraft in the Caribbean area, the monument, a huge recumbent cross, will house a chapel in which the remains of Columbus will be placed. Contributions from all the American governments will pay for the structure, which is one-half mile long, 120 feet high. (Source: State, Pfeiffer)

MONUMENTS - COLUMBUS