

Christian copeland

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Christian Copeland English 101 April 29, 2013 Christopher Columbus, A Hero

Christopher Columbus, the man who discovered this great land that we live on, was a man of great adventures as well as many trials. He traveled the seas looking for hope to which he could find land unfound and claim it as his own. His assertiveness made him a very noble man and the year 1492 marked the greatest of his accomplishment that made him the man he is well-known for today. His dream came true that year and marked the day America was born. I believe his eagerness to find a new land was very worthwhile for him and humanity, as well as the skillsets needed to find it and shape it into somewhere worth living. To begin with, Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa in 1451. As a kid he spent a lot of time helping his dad at the loom because most of his family weaved wool for a living. When he grew older he left the family tradition and went to sea in search for greatness. He became a sailor and moved to Portugal because he had a new journey in mind. His only downfall was that he needed money to fund the journey so he asked many kings and queens of Europe if they could help. Eventually King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the king and queen of Spain, agreed to fund his journey. Little did they know that this journey would mark one of the greatest findings in history. Columbus's journey proved worthy of him to be called a hero because he pushed through any obstacle that was in his way. His mission in the 15th and 16th centuries was to find sea routes to the East. Columbus wanted to find a new route to the Far East, China and the Spice Islands. If reached he'd be able to bring back rich cargoes of silks and spices. Columbus unlike most voyageurs knew the world was round and came to the conclusion that if he sailed west then he would go around the

world and reach the far east and get the precious cargoes he's been longing for. Columbus's hypothesis was if he sailed west he would get to the east quicker and easier. He thought that the earth was smaller than it was, and like most Europeans, he did not know about the existence of America. After sailing across the Atlantic for 10 weeks, land was sighted by a sailor called Rodrigo Bernajo. Columbus himself took the credit for this sighting. He landed on a small island in the Bahamas which Columbus named San Salvador. He claimed the island for the king and queen of Spain. The people living on the islands that Columbus went to were called the Arawaks and the Caribs. Although the Arawaks were peaceful people, the Caribs were more war-like. Columbus called all the people he met in the islands Indians because he was sure that he had reached the Indies. When Columbus reached Cuba, he thought it was the mainland of Japan. It took four voyages to find what he was looking for and his discoveries of certain water routes eventually lead to the colonization of America. Columbus made three more journeys across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean. He was sure that he had found Cipangu (Japan) but he was still looking for India and the wealthy cities that he believed were nearby. The king and queen of Spain were anxious to spread Christianity to the lands that Columbus had visited. In fact, according to William Least Heat-Moons book *Columbus in the Americas* it says " Christopher Columbus, the Captain General of the fleet, took communion in a chapel nearby before boarding his flagship and, " in the name of Jesus, " giving the command to weigh anchors of the wooden vessel. Columbus used three ships on his journeys. Two, the Nina and the Pinta were caravels, small ships with triangular sails. The third, the Santa Maria, was a

larger square-rigged ship. The ships were small, between 15 and 36 meters long. Between them they carried about 90 men. Columbus used the ships to find and to begin the colonization of America. America was introduced to many goods brought over by the Europeans including: chickens, goats, horses, oxen, cattle, donkeys, sheep, coffee, rice, bananas, sugarcane, wheat and barley. Through the centuries America has rose to be one of the most powerful nations in the world thanks to a man named Columbus. His great want for adventure and to take the path less traveled led him to be one of our greatest founders. He died at the age of 55 years old in 1506, a lonely and disappointed man. He died still believing that he had found a new route to the East Indies. Although on his fourth voyage he landed on the South American mainland, he never did set foot on the mainland of North America. Christopher Columbus, A Villain Christopher Columbus is inevitably a big deal when you're on the topic of who discovered America. But through the past decade or so his role as being a "hero" has subsided a bit. People have studied Christopher Columbus and although his actions were deemed great, people think otherwise. He was a man of great adventure yes but at the same time no one says anything about what really happened. America was once unknown to all Europeans until a man by the name of Christopher Columbus founded it and began to colonize. He along with his crew member's stepped onto this land thinking it was empty but to their avail it was not. The people of this land were called Indians by the Europeans because the Europeans believed that had reached the Indies but in reality they didn't. Thinking they were superior to the Indians the Europeans did whatever they could to make the land theirs. Through several sails back and

forth between Europe and America, several diseases were brought over which killed many Indians. Also the Europeans treated the Indians as slaves and eventually made them that. They also fought the Indians and pushed them out of anywhere that they wanted to inhabit. This act was one of the few that happened during the beginning of America but it was very crucial to the Indians. The Indians had lived in America for their entire lives and everything was going their way until the Europeans came. The Europeans eventually took over most of the Indians and became supreme leaders of the new land. Although the fact that we do live in America today and have freedom, The way it was founded and how it got to where it is now, was utterly disappointing. The topic of Christopher Columbus being a hero has come up more and more during the past decades simply because he invaded a land that wasn't his. Plain and simple as most will tell you. He and his men took this land from the Indians and forced whatever punishment they could have in order to fully make the land there's. If anything Christopher Columbus should be considered a murderer for the countless lives he and his men have destroyed in order to make this land the way it is today. And to think he found this land by accident while trying to sail to the Far East, just to come back and invade it. The Indians weren't planning an invasion on their land ever by someone they have never seen and I believe it was a disturbing sight to have seen what went on during the colonizing of America. The second Monday in October is known as Columbus Day and it is celebrated by many Americans as they day he discovered America. Children are taught in schools that Columbus is a national hero but they aren't taught the fact that he erased the natives inhabiting the land. He and his men

destroyed what the natives had and brought over things the natives have never seen. Countless lives were destroyed by this man and yet everyone will consider him a hero because of his bravery to sail west instead of east across the Atlantic to reach his destination. Only to find a place he has never seen and wreaks havoc on the islanders so that he can live there.

Christopher Columbus had changed the world for both good and bad. Good because he made America what it is today and bad because he killed innocent lives to do so. He was a Christian man yet killed the natives which doesn't make sense to many people but all in all he did what he thought was best. I believe that he could have tried to reason with the natives before threatening them and killing them. If he did, maybe just a little more would have worked. He will go down in history as the man who discovered America for the rest of our lives but there will always be a story behind it. To the thousands of innocent lives lost, many of us grieve over you. It shouldn't have gone that way and especially we as Americans shouldn't leave it out of our schools text books. Christopher Columbus, the man, the murder, will always be titled as a hero, but at the same time a villain. Works Cited
<http://www.rmg.co.uk/columbus> Columbus in the Americas (Turning Points in History) William Least Heat-Moon