

The four voyages by christopher columbus essay



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"The four voyages" is a book by Christopher Columbus that presents a narrative that describes the author's four voyages. The voyages were made in the Caribbean and Central America between 1492 and 1504 following the consent granted to him by the monarch. His voyages were made so that he could locate the westward way to Asia. Even though he never reached Asia, he still believed that he did.

This trip of discovery was made by 90 men from Palos, Spain. The ships used by the traveler were quite tiny as compared to the modern day vessels.

Columbus led the voyage with three ships, Nina with 24 men on board, Santa Maria had 40 men, and Pinta had 26 men (Columbus, 35).

They set out for their trip on 3rd August, 1492. In October 11, 1492, the travelers had a glimpse of the Caribbean islands. The inhabitants of this island were the Tiano Indians. Columbus' men captured most of these inhabitants and sold them into slavery (Columbus, 20-34).

Martin Alonzo who captained Nina was not ready to accept that Columbus was in charge of this voyage. He hoped that he would be the first to see the famous Golden Island of Osabeque hence he decided to explore alone.

Nevertheless, he discovered Hispaniola the present day Haiti. While still there, he captured four men and two girls who he intended to sell as slaves. Columbus however, persuaded him to release them and he agreed. He rejoined Columbus' crew at the coast of Haiti on 6th January, 1493 (Cohen, 56).

The ships used for this trip travelled approximately 150 miles each day. On their way back, the Santa Maria was wrecked, the captain of the Pinta left

the Island alone with the aim of ensuring that Columbus and his men could not find their way back. Columbus and the rest of the crew returned to Spain courtesy of Nina and arrived on 15th March, 1493.

Christopher and his team set out for the second larger expedition on 25th September, 1493. Here, they sailed with 17 vessels and an estimate of 1200 to 1500 men. Finding gold and establishing a permanent Spanish Colony was the chief purpose for this voyage (Columbus, 96). In his previous voyage in La Navidad, the wreckage of Santa Maria made 39 of his men to be left in a fortress constructed soon afterwards. On arrival, Columbus found that the fortress was no more since it had been reduced to ashes and all his men had died.

He figured that the men had been killed by the brutal Carib Indians who had earlier raided the coastal lands. During this voyage, Columbus was informed by that Black people had arrived in the Island long before his arrival. He familiarized himself better with Hispaniola and thereafter established a base there. He sailed in the region of Hispaniola and some sections of Southern Cuba. In the course of his expedition, he discovered and named the Island of Dominica, this was in the year 1493.

During the third voyage, Columbus' destination was Trinidad and Venezuela, together with his crew he set off from the port of Sanlucar on 30th May, 1498 with six ships. The ship split into two squadrons after leaving the Canary Island on June of the same year. The first squadron went directly to Hispaniola while the second sailed further south. The latter changed its course to north due to weak winds, soon afterwards, members of one of the

fleets saw an island in the west, Columbus named it Trinidad because it had three hills.

Columbus was the first European to see South America. A section of this crew went ashore and learnt the way of life of the natives. One of the things that they discovered was that married women were fond of wearing cotton panties which were locally called bragas. Additionally, Columbus changed his idea on the subject of the shape of the earth after his navigational readings showed a bulge at the equator (Columbus, 132).

The fourth and last expedition saw Columbus sailing to Panama, Honduras, Mexico, and Santiago in 1502. By then he was a good navigator hence he arrived at his destination earlier than expected, however he was not happy after arriving at Santa Domingo on 29th June. He appealed to the governor to consent him to put his five ships in the harbor, he also warned of a terrible storm advising him to detain a 30 ship fleet that was ready to sail.

Not only was he denied permission to put his five ships but also mocked because of acting like a fortune-teller. Columbus was angry with the governor that he used his strongest curse “ may God curse you” (Columbus, 254). The 30-ship fleet barely made it halfway the journey since strong winds hammered them. The winds drove some of the ships ashore where they were destroyed. Only one of the ships survived. During this voyage, Columbus neither lost any of his ships nor his men (Columbus, 231).

Cohen, John Michael. The four voyages of Christopher Columbus: being his own log-book, letters and dispatches with connecting narrative drawn from

the Life of the Admiral by his son Hernando Colon and other contemporary historians. New York: Penguin, 1998. pp. 1-320.

Columbus, Christopher. The Four Voyages: Easyread Edition. New Jersey: Booksurge Llc, 2007. pp. 1-369.