

# South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

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Cover: "The Landing of Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés at Tequesta, now Miami, in 1567," depicts the first recorded contact in the Greater Miami area



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# South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

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# Editor's Notes

by Stuart McIver

*In fourteen hundred and ninety two  
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.*

The one date most Americans remember as well as their own birthdays is the memorable year that Christopher Columbus "discovered" the "New World."

Half a millennium later we are observing the achievement that opened up the Americas to the peoples of Europe. It is an occasion for celebration, but the celebration has been muted by many misgivings, arising partly from the newcomers' destructive impact on the native population and on the vast, unspoiled wilderness about to be exploited and partly from the tragic importation of slaves from Africa.

These days the word "discover" is questioned, but to the brave souls who set sail across unknown waters in three small boats the sighting of dry land was certainly a "discovery."

"New World?" How could it be a New World? To the natives living in this hemisphere it was already an old world. In Florida alone a population estimated by some to be close to a million people was already in place. Columbus, thinking he had reached the East Indies, called the people he found Indians.

But it was a New World. To the people who arrived here from Spain, Italy, Portugal, England, France and The Netherlands it was new. And the civilization that arose when the cultures of Europe and America intermingled was new. It was not what was there before and it was not the same as the societies the Europeans had left behind.

A new world was created, imperfect of course but also inevitable. America could not have remained an underpopulated "paradise." People in crowded cities and in land-poor countries have always poured out into open country where crops could be grown, livestock could be raised, game could be killed, minerals could be mined, and waterways could be fished and explored. Two terrible human tragedies accompanied the unfolding of the new order. The Native Americans, and their cultures, were all but destroyed, partly by superior European weaponry but even more by diseases brought by the outlanders. Even less defensible was the importation of Africans, wrenched from their home lands to serve as slaves to America's expansion.

With this Columbus Quincentenary issue of *South Florida History Magazine* we are commemorating the admiral and the age of exploration. The picture we offer you is, we believe, a balanced one, addressing such issues as the landfall, diseases of the early encounters,

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the maps and charts of the age and finally the controversy generated by the Quincentenary.

The first question— Where did Columbus land? The great landfall debate, unlikely ever to be resolved, is addressed by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas T. Peck, a retired U. S. Air Force pilot, who has thrice sailed “the ocean blue” in an effort to follow Columbus’ track to the Bahamas. The Bradenton resident forcefully argues his belief that the landing was at San Salvador.

The diseases the explorers brought to the Americas constitute a tragic chapter in this story. Who better to discuss them than a physician with a sense of history? Dr. William M. Straight, of Coral Gables, who has published many papers in scholarly historical and medical journals, reviews the plagues unleashed by the early encounters.

Dr. Joseph H. Fitzgerald, like Dr. Straight a physician and like Colonel Peck a sailor, shares with us his passion for the antique maps, charts and artwork of the age of exploration. A former commodore of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club and former president of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, Dr. Fitzgerald is guest curator for *Quest for the Indies: Routes of Exploration*, the exhibition currently on display at the Historical Museum.

And, finally, our Quincentenary issue presents an interview with the distinguished Columbus scholar, Michael V. Gannon, Ph.D. Dr. Gannon is the director of the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies, University of Florida.

A particular vote of thanks to Fred Ruffner and Bob Tolf, co-founders of the Phileas Society, an adventurous and innovative organization, which commemorates the Age of Exploration. The society draws its whimsical name from one Phileas Fogg, hero of Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Thanks also to Rosemary Jones of the Omnigraphics, Inc., Ft. Lauderdale office and to Rebecca Smith, the museum’s curator of archival materials, for locating and assembling for us the remarkable pictures of the world of Columbus.

We hope you will go on from here to dig a little deeper into the age of exploration and the mingling of cultures, which have shaped the world of today. Columbus Quincentenary exhibits will continue at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and at other museums in the state on into 1993. It’s well worth commemorating. After all, the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Western Hemisphere was a rather big event.

## Letters to the Editor

# Notched Negatives

Dear Ms. Wilson,

On page seven of the Winter, 1992 (Vol. 19, No. 1) Magazine the photograph got reversed somehow. The only way to have a correct view of the aerial photograph is to hold it in front of a mirror. In the photo the Venetian Causeway lies south of the County Causeway and Trinity Episcopal Church lies north of the Miami Women’s Club when in reality it is the other way around. The only correct thing is the caption, which says that the aerial view is “eastward.”

Sincerely,  
David L. Willig

Some older photo negatives in our museum’s archives were originally produced with nitrate based materials. These materials are unstable and deteriorate with age. For conservation and safety reasons most of these negatives have been duplicated.

All sheet film negatives of this type have notches on the right side so that a processor can properly identify the correct way to print the negative while in the darkroom. Notches on duplicated negatives appear on the opposite side.

Once in awhile we receive a “flopped” print, such as this, from the processor, when he hasn’t realized that we’ve sent a duplicated negative.

Sorry, we goofed. We should have caught the mistake when it arrived from the processor.



A 1935 aerial view eastward from Miami provides a picture of the Venetian Causeway to the north and the County Causeway, later renamed the Mac Arthur Causeway, to the south.

# Gooney Bird seeks Columbus landfall site

by Douglas T. Peck

At the end of a carefully logged 34-day voyage from Gomera in the Canaries, Christopher Columbus made landfall on a small island in the Bahamas, which he described in some detail. He reported the Indians called it Guanahani. At first glance, it would seem a simple enough task to follow that log and find the island that answered the description and bore that Indian name. But such has not been the case, and now, nearly 500 years after Columbus' discovery, leading scholars from around the world are in disagreement as to just which island in the Bahamas is Guanahani, the true land fall of Columbus.

## I determined to find the true Guanahani . . .

This problem intrigued me and, as I am an experienced ocean navigator as well as an avid student of the history of early seafarers, I determined to find the true Guanahani by using my deep water sailboat *Gooney Bird* as a research test vehicle. My goal was to follow Columbus' log, and thereby exactly duplicate his voyage across the Atlantic to pinpoint the island that was his landfall.

The search for Guanahani has a long history, shrouded in mystery and complicated by historical documents and charts. The Bahamas, then called the Lucayos, were largely forgotten by history in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, because the discoverers and colonizers from western Europe quickly moved on to more profitable and exciting lands. The docile and friendly Taino Indians, who met Columbus, were soon hauled away to Spain or Hispaniola as slaves early in the sixteenth century. For nearly two centuries the islands lay largely unpopulated, except by freebooters and pirates. In that environment, it is no wonder there was a general "who cares" attitude toward the question of which of these islands was the Columbus landfall.

Finally, the problem was addressed when the Spanish historian, Juan Bautista Munoz, was commissioned by Spain's King Charles III. In the years between 1779-1793, Bau-

***Where did Columbus land? San Salvador? Grand Turk? Samana Cay? Scholars have argued the question for years, and probably will never agree. Lieutenant Colonel Douglas T. Peck, retired United States Air Force pilot, makes his case for San Salvador. In this essay he tells us why and presents his strongly-held objections to the other suggested sites.***



Douglas T. Peck, sailor

tista Munoz wrote a comprehensive and thoroughly researched history of the New World, naming Watling's Island (the present San Salvador) as the Columbus landfall. He doesn't give any geographical or navigational reason for this, which is why some scholars disregard his finding. We do know that he had made an intensive search and study of Spanish archives, which, at that time, probably contained many historical documents that since have been destroyed or lost. With this in mind, it is hard to believe that we should not give his identification of Watling's Island as the Columbus landfall some legitimacy as historical truth.

But the landfall question really came alive in 1825 when Martin Fernandez Navarrete discovered and published the Bartolome de Las Casas summary of Columbus' long-lost original log. We are indebted to Bartolome de Las Casas for much of our knowledge of the history of the early years of Spanish conquest and settlement in the New World, including Columbus' epic first voyage.

Las Casas was a friend of the Columbus family, particularly Columbus' son, Ferdinand Colon, who was a scholar like himself. Ferdinand had custody of the family archives including the *diario* or log. He was to summarize and thus save it for posterity, and for our use in tracing Columbus' track to Guanahani.

The Las Casas Columbus log, written in sixteenth-century Spanish script, was subsequently translated into Italian, German and finally English. It provoked an intensive effort by scholars from around the world to identify Guanahani, the Columbus landfall island, from interpretation of the log.

Navarrete, after discovering the log, was the first to do this, naming Grand Turk Island, just east of the Caicos Islands as the landfall. This was later supported by the historian-writer Samuel Kettel (Boston 1827) and George Gibbs (New York 1846). Currently, it is quite convincingly supported by my colleagues from the Society for the History of Discoveries, Robert Power and Si Marvel.

Grand Turk held sway for a while, but soon was replaced by Cat Island, further north in the Bahamas, and first proposed

by the well known writer, Washington Irving, with his naval adviser, Alexander Mackenzie.

## The Cat Island theory held on

Mackenzie indeed must have been an armchair sailor, because, in tracing the Columbus inter-island track, he led Columbus with his seven- and eight-foot

Then the British Navy Captain A. B. Becher published his book, *The Landfall of Columbus* (London 1856). This book was a scholarly approach by an experienced navigator and seaman. It contained a large fold-out, accurately scaled chart of the Bahamas, on which he traced the route of Columbus from Guanahani through the several islands he discovered on the way to Cuba. Becher put forward a lucid and convincing theory to name Watling's

Island again (following Munoz) as the landfall site.

But Becher was primarily a seaman and navigator, and was not readily accepted by the academic community until supported by R. H. Majors, a well-known writer of the day. Majors switched his view from Navarrete (Grand Turk Island) to Becher's view. Watling's Island (later renamed San Salvador) at a much later date, was supported by the well-known historian Samuel Eliot Morison. Becher was on the right track and was far ahead of his time on most points, but he soon was to be overshadowed by a spate of entries into the field.

The search for Guanahani warmed up. The contestants were Grand Turk Island, Cat Island, Watling's Island and then a fourth, Mayaguana, was added by a scholarly Brazilian historian, Francisco Adolpho de Varnhagen, in 1864. I find it difficult to give much weight to Varnhagen's views, since he also produced a contrived chart and thesis that was impossible

from a geographical and navigational standpoint.

Varnhagen's view held sway for a while, but soon was replaced by yet another island in a theory proposed by Gustavus V. Fox, a U. S. Navy captain who had served as assistant secretary of the Navy under Abraham Lincoln. Fox named Samana Cay as the landfall island. He put forward a convincing argument and a critical analysis of the previously proposed landfall sites to prove his point. Joseph Judge, a senior editor of the *National Geographic Society Magazine*, at a much later date (1986), was to adopt this theory nearly intact.

ffno el mar oceano en sus proprios lugares  
de bngo sudiente y mas componer un libro  
y poner todo por el seme/ate por pintura por  
latitud del equinocial y longitud del oriente  
re y fabricado un mapa mundo y yo ubide  
el sueno y tiene mundo el nabegea yoy  
asi un mapa las quales sera gra trabajo .

Viernes .3. de agosto

partimos viernes .3. dia de agosto de 1492.  
bano de la barra de Saltes das ocho oras  
anduvimos con fuerte virage hasta el poner  
del sol hacia el sur sesenta millas de son .19.  
leguas. despues al sudiente <sup>al sur</sup> y quarta del  
sudiente <sup>las</sup> y quarta del  
Comun.

El sabado .4. de agosto

y mudaron al sudiente quarta del sur  
Domingo .9. de agosto.

y mudaron su via en media y norte mas  
de quarta leguas.

Lunes .6. de agosto.

### Excerpt from Las Casas' manuscript of the *Journal*

draft across waters between Great Exuma and Long Island that you can practically walk across and hardly get your feet wet.

## Becher traced the route of Columbus . . .

But nevertheless, the Cat Island theory held on, and later was given a boost when supported by such international heavy-weight scholars of the period as Jean Barnard de la Roquette, Alexander von Humboldt and the Baron de Montlezun.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Turks Island and Cat Island were ahead in this name-the-landfall game.



Samana Cay was the fifth contender, but there were more to follow. Pieter Verhoog, a respected, professional, merchant seaman, proposed the Caicos Islands in 1947, later supported by the somewhat contrived research of Edwin and Marion Link. Robert Fuson also supported the Caicos landfall, until he switched to Samana Cay after the National Geographic Society hired him as a consultant for their landfall article.

Egg Island, north of Eleuthera, was the next new island in this list, having been proposed by Arne Molander in 1981. Molander presented a scholarly and painstakingly researched paper supporting his view to the Society for the History of Discoveries at the University of Minnesota in October 1988.

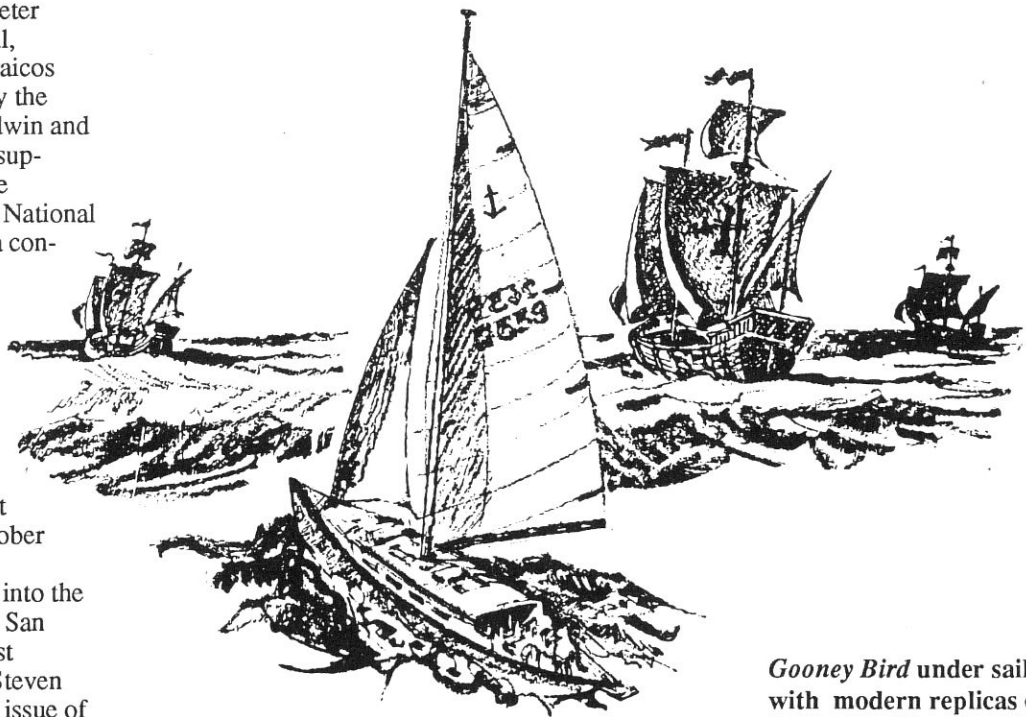
The last and most recent entry into the field is Conception Island west of San Salvador and Rum Cay. This most unlikely island was proposed by Steven W. Mitchell in the February 1992 issue of the *Naval Institute Proceedings*.

## The log clearly shows that Columbus sailed southwest

To support his theory, Mitchell resorts to some strained and tortured thinking to show that the several small islands constituting the Conception Islands archipelago is the one "fairly large" island described by Columbus and his log. Then he must have Columbus sail east, back to an island that he would have passed on his way in, when the log clearly shows that



Doug Peck pilots the *Gooney Bird*



*Gooney Bird* under sail with modern replicas of Columbus' fleet in background

Columbus sailed southwest from the landfall island. This badly flawed theory has gained some recognition because Mitchell is a well-known professor of geology at California State University and has done extensive geological research in the Bahamas.

## Morison named San Salvador as the landfall site

In all the proliferation of islands and their advocates, the strongest and most widely accepted theory was the one proposed in 1942 by the respected historian and writer Samuel Eliot Morison. Morison named San Salvador (formally Watling's Island) as the landfall site. This landfall theory was part of Morison's voluminous two-volume book, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, which has become the bible for American students of the life of Columbus and his voyages.

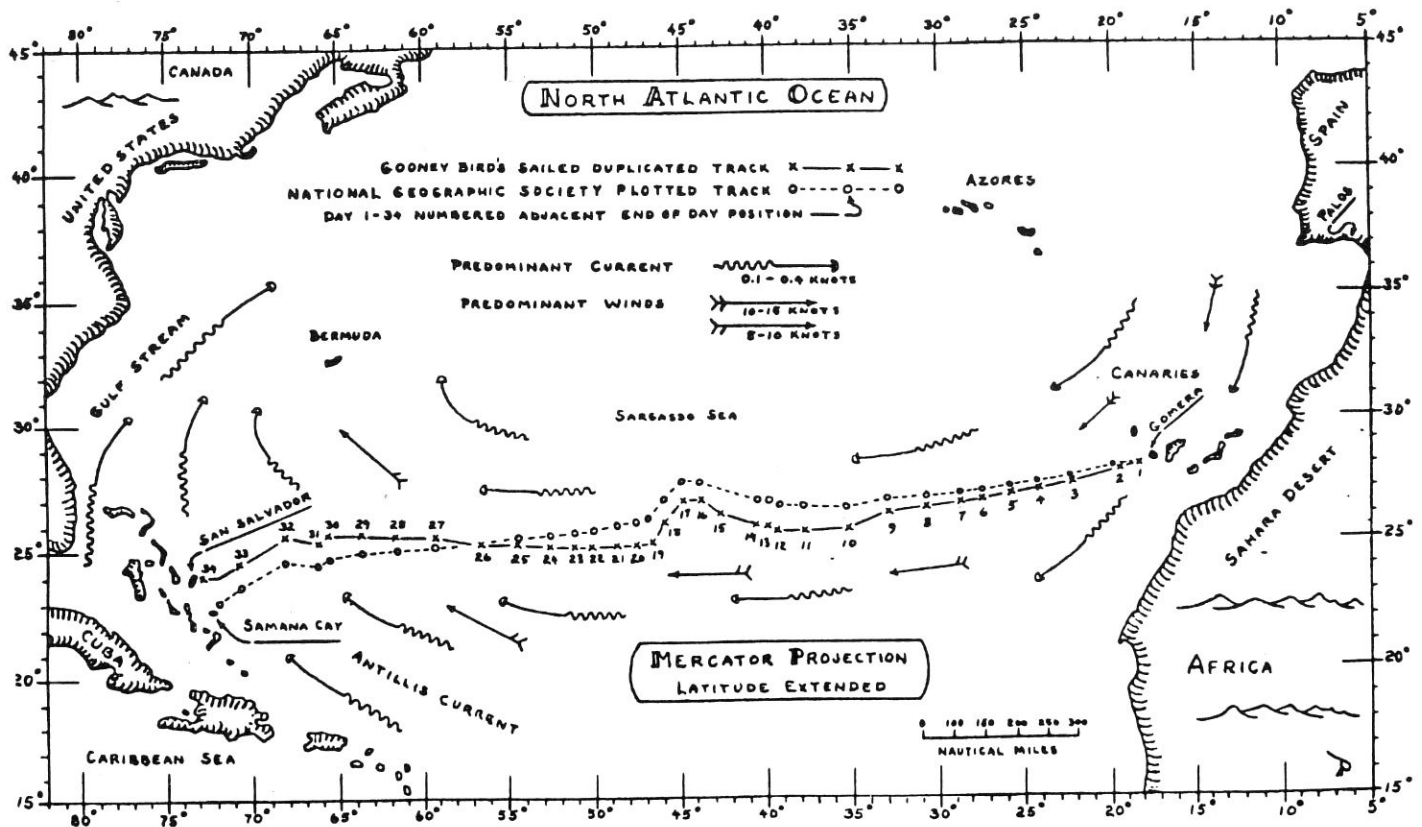
Morison was supported in his research by U. S. Navy Captain John W. McElroy (who plotted Columbus' track across the Atlantic) and by Señor Mauricio Obregon, the ambassador-at-large from Colombia and eminent Columbus historian. Currently the best and most authoritative support for Morison's theory of San Salvador as the landfall island is contained in the monumental biography of Colum-

bus by Paolo Emilio Taviani, *Christopher Columbus—The Grand Design*.

Morison was so widely acclaimed and accepted that the question of where Columbus landed seemed forever settled. Then Joseph Judge published an article in the 1986 issue of the *National Geographic Society Magazine* in which Judge wrote that Morison was wrong in naming San Salvador as the landfall. Judge wrote he had determined that Samana Cay was, in fact, the island called Guanahani, where Columbus had first landed.

So that brings me back to where I decided to enter into this controversy. I had built up an extensive library of reference books and documents on the Columbus voyage. I assembled and collated this data so that my research effort would duplicate the Columbus voyage as closely as possible. My primary source document, to determine the course to sail in attempting to duplicate the track of Columbus, was naturally the summary of his log by Bartolome de Las Casas.

Columbus' track across the Atlantic, from Gomera to his landfall at Guanahani, has been artificially plotted on a chart by many of the previously named scholars who drew navigational data from the log and used dead reckoning procedures and, lately, computers. The plotted landfalls, as we have seen, ranged from Egg Island, north of Eleuthera, to Grand Turks, east of



### The voyages of the *Gooney Bird*

the Caicos Islands—a north-south distance of some 315 nautical miles!

The most recent track plotted using modern computers with estimated input of artificial conditions affecting the track is from the National Geographic Society in their 1986 article on the landfall. The National Geographical Society's track ended at Samana Cay, a small cay about 60 miles southeast of San Salvador, which they proclaimed as the landfall of Columbus in the New World.

### ... my track ended at San Salvador island

I have sailed *Gooney Bird* on the route of Columbus across the Atlantic to his landfall on three different occasions, in 1985, 1987, and 1991. The 1987 and 1991 research voyages were conducted using scientific methods to duplicate exactly the daily compass headings and distance reported by Columbus in his log.

In both of these research voyages my track ended at San Salvador island, indicating that is the true landfall of Columbus. While this finding would rule out those islands at some distance north and south of that point, the National Geographic Society has put forward a strong argument for Samana Cay (only 60 miles southeast) by their computer projection of Columbus' track across the Atlantic.

Here we must ask which is right, my sailed reconstruction of the voyage or the computer projection of the voyage? . . . since they both used the same navigational data from Columbus' log.

The answer to this is simple, and hinges on the fact that the information put out by a computer is only as reliable as the information fed into it. My sailed path across the Atlantic was influenced by the same currents and sea conditions that influenced the vessels of Columbus. The strong ocean currents caused by the rotation of the earth, certainly have not changed in the 500 years since Columbus' time, so my track is empirically accurate, while the track of the computer is subject to errors of the artificially estimated currents and sea conditions put into it.

### Columbus described the geography . . . of Guanahani in minute detail

The Atlantic track is not sufficient by itself to clearly identify the landfall. Other sources for identification are: first and foremost, the geographical description in the log; followed to a lesser extent by the attempts to follow Columbus' meandering and poorly reported track through the islands after landfall; and last, the carto-

graphical evidence in early-sixteenth-century maps.

Columbus described the geography and the topography of Guanahani in minute detail. He stated it was fairly large, level and fertile, with many waters (ponds), a large lake or lagoon in the center, several reasonable settlements of many people.

### ... the track of the National Geographic Society is full of anomalies and errors

He infers a good anchorage on the west side, and states the coastline runs in a north-northeast direction ending in a large harbor surrounded by reefs with a peninsula on one side. San Salvador has all of these features and Samana Cay (as well as the other island contestants) has virtually none.

Morison presented a fairly reasonable hypothesis of the island track that supports San Salvador as the landfall, while the track of the National Geographic Society is full of anomalies and errors. But Las Casas deleted so much of Columbus' navigational data from the log for this period that neither track can be definitive and provide a reliable source for identifying the landfall.

Many early-sixteenth-century maps show the Lucayos (Bahamas) in a dis-

torted and confusing manner, so that identification of Guanahani is difficult. But one of the best and most accurate is the map of the New World by the English cartographer Jean Rotz published in 1542. This map clearly identifies San Salvador as Guanahani, and shows Samana Cay (Manegua) southwest of San Salvador (Guanahani).

There you have it! San Salvador is clearly the Guanahani of Columbus' landfall. It is at the end of his track across the Atlantic. It answers the geographical description precisely, and is supported by the most reasonable of the island tracks. Finally it is positively identified in the best and most accurate of early-sixteenth-century maps depicting the New World.

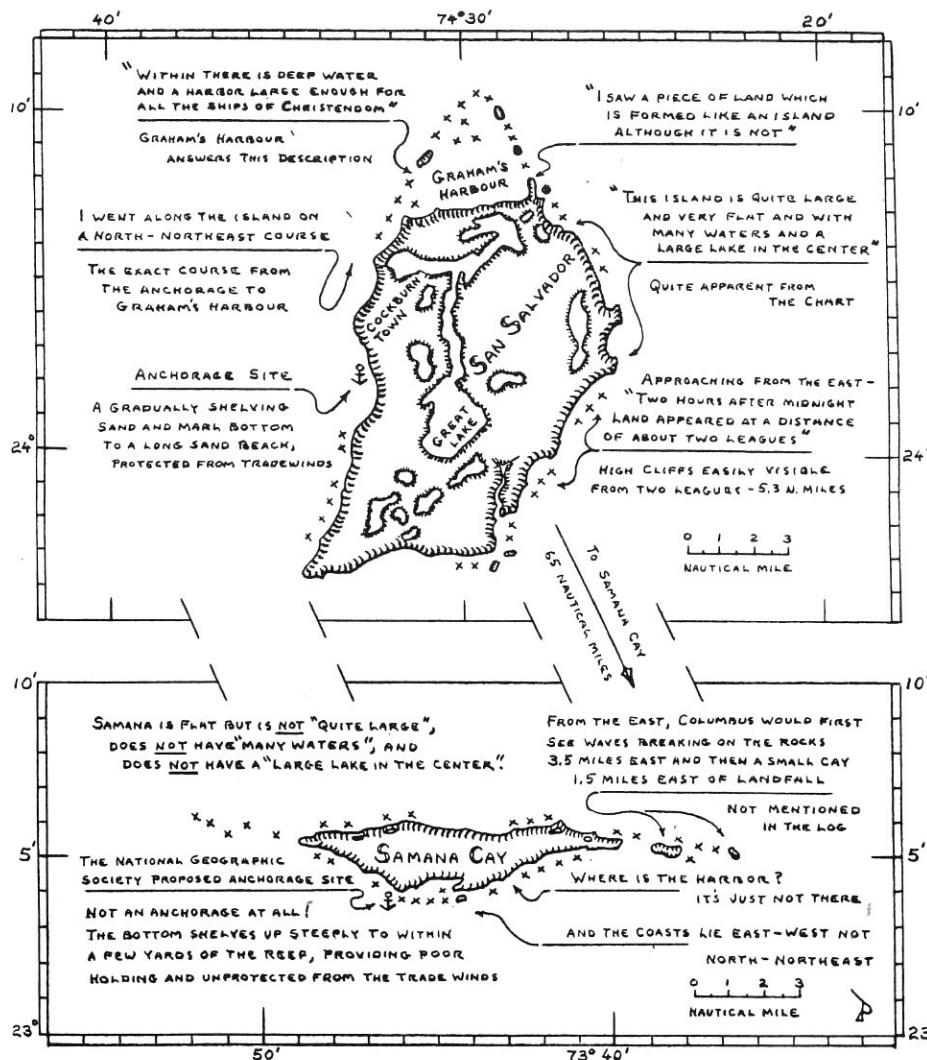
**... scholars have come up with so many different answers ...**

That stated conclusion appears so logical and lucid that we must question why so many sincere and intelligent scholars have come up with so many different answers. I suggest that the answer lies in the fact that, while these gentlemen are experts in their particular academic discipline, they do not necessarily have the expertise or the skills required to solve the technical problem they have tackled.

**... navigators in this group of scholars would be uniquely qualified for the job**

The scholars who put forward the many postulated landfalls include: historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, oceanographers, geologists, professional writers, and ocean navigators. Since the problem involves analysis and interpretation of an ocean navigator's log, I submit that the navigators in this group of scholars would be uniquely qualified for the job. In this respect it should be noted that of all those named, only Becher, Morison and I can lay claim to being an experienced and qualified ocean navigator of sailing vessels. All three of these have concluded that San Salvador is the island landfall that Columbus clearly reported in his navigator's log.

# There you have it!



Two candidates for Columbus landfall



# Age of exploration probed diseases of human body

by William M. Straight, M. D.

After centuries of intellectual slumbering there arose among the people of Europe a spirit of questioning, observation and rethinking of long-accepted tenets. Historians speak of this period (the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries) as the Renaissance. Not only was there exploration of the earth by land and sea, but also there was exploration of the human body and the effects of disease.

After centuries of blindly accepting the teachings of ancient authorities, such as the Roman physician Claudius Galen, men began to compare these teachings with their own observations. Often what they observed did not accord with the ancient teachings, and little by little the foundation of modern medical knowledge was laid.

*. . . black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm*

At the beginning of this period, man was thought of as having four humors within him: black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm. Disease was always due to an abnormality of one or more of these humors. Treatment with herbs, bleeding, puking, purging or sweating was designed to correct the humoral abnormality. Of course there were accidents and battle wounds that didn't exactly fit into the above scheme, but more about that later.

Schools of medicine sprang up all over the continent of Europe, often times with long curricula. Thus, in Spain during its Golden Age (1516-1565), physicians had to study for four years and pass examinations for a degree in general knowledge (the arts) before they could enter medical school. If they successfully completed the four years of medical school, they then had to practice as apprentices to one of their mentors for six months; this was later extended to two years.

Only then were they allowed to take the examination given by the *protomedicato*, the licensing board. If successful, they could practice medicine as *licenates*. More study and examinations were required if the candidate wanted to become a teacher.

All of this took time and money as well as a sharp mind, energy and determination. Few physicians were well rewarded in those days, and the practice of medicine was not held in high regard by society. Thus, there was always a shortage of the best trained physicians, and most of the populace had to rely on the the less well trained *licentiates*, a host of illegal healers (*curanderos*) and barber

surgeons who learned their trade as apprentices to similarly trained men. Few of the university-trained physicians were aboard the ships of exploration, and few established themselves in the early colonies.

Hospitals for the sick poor, the homeless and the orphans were founded throughout Europe and the Arab countries.

*continued on page 12*



Detail from *A Medieval Garden of Herbs* from Brunschwig, 1500

# Voyages into the unknown carried health hazards

by William M. Straight, M. D.

With the publicity surrounding the imminent Quincentenary of the European discovery of the New World, one can scarcely avoid wondering what a sailor's life was like aboard a ship of discovery. In the following pages I hope to answer questions about the various aspects of that life by quotes and information deduced from accounts of those voyages.

## The *Niña* was but 67 feet in length at the weather deck

By current standards, the ships of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries were small. For example, Columbus' favorite ship, and the only ship on his first voyage about which we have documented information, the *Niña*, was but 67 feet in length at the weather deck, 21 feet on the beam, and drew just under seven feet of water. She had one deck running the length of the ship, and a quarter-deck on which was constructed a cabin for the captain and master. Below the main deck was a hold that ran the length of the ship and was about nine feet in depth.

The complement of 24, other than the captain and master, slept wherever they could: on deck in good weather and in the hold in bad weather. On Columbus' return from his second trip (1496), the *Niña* carried more than 100 passengers in addition to her crew. Samuel Eliot Morison, the naval historian, suggests the passengers slept in shifts wherever they could find room. Hammocks, which became the customary crew bedding on sailing ships, were first observed on Hispaniola (1492) by Columbus and his men.

Because the ships of that day were leaky and because the seamen often discarded their slops into the bilge (encouraging cockroaches, rats and evil odors), sleeping in the hold was avoided.

The captain and master usually shared a cabin, and this was provided with bunks. The officers usually slept on mats or in bunks under the quarterdeck. During the day the mats were rolled up, placed in sacks and stowed against the bulkhead or in the hold.



Life was crowded aboard ship, 1500s woodcut.

Of course, in Columbus' day, there were ships of more than one deck on which accommodations were more commodious. Toward the end of the following century Sir Richard Hawkins, a famous British naval commander, advised that ships for sea voyages have at least two decks.

Sailors came aboard in whatever clothes they possessed. Their clothes might be dirty, ragged and vermin-ridden. Richard Hawkins (1562-1622) believed

clean clothes necessary for the prevention and treatment of scurvy. He insisted: "... that provision be made of apparell for the company that they may have wherewith to shift themselves; being a common calamitie amongst the ordinary sort of mariners, to spend their thrift on the shore, and to bring to sea no more cloaths then they have backes."

*continued on page 15*

*Age of Exploration . . .  
continued from page 10*

The first hospital in the New World was established at Santo Domingo in 1503. In addition to their humanitarian work, these hospitals gradually became the training grounds for physicians.

The degree of legal control over physicians varied from colony to colony, but, at best, was not very effective because the demand for physicians always far outstripped the supply. Not infrequently the early colonists had to call upon apothecaries, self-trained "granny women," or native healers, as no European-trained physician was available.

Let us look at the more terrifying and destructive diseases and injuries that these early explorers encountered and at some of the treatments then in vogue. Lest the reader be tempted to think, "How stupid," the author asks the reader to try to imagine himself in the shoes of the Renaissance man just beginning to free himself of the hidebound tradition of ancient authorities.

One must also remember that, in those days, disease was often considered the Lord's punishment for man's sins, and, therefore, to be borne without a whimper.

In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries you could go to sea as a sailor or passenger, if you looked reasonably healthy and could climb aboard. Indeed, in Britain there were press gangs that, for so much per head, snatched men from pubs, brothels, city streets, and even farms, and put them aboard ship. Often they were put aboard drunk or drugged to unconsciousness only to wake the next day on the ship at sea.

Surgeons (*chirurgions*) and/or apothecaries were required on Spanish ships of war or exploration at the time of Columbus. The surgeon became a regular institution on Royal Navy ships as early as 1512. However these surgeons, even though present, did not examine the officers, crew or passengers before embarkation. Thus some diseases came aboard on departure from the Old World.

Immediately comes to mind tubercu-

losis, phthisis or consumption as it was then called. It was endemic throughout the Old World, and recognized as a condition in which the victim coughed, often spit blood, lost weight, became weak and died. Its spread from person to person was not recognized, and the crowded quarters aboard ship encouraged this spread. Not all persons, perhaps because



Apothecary's garden

of immunity resulting from a childhood infection, came down with the disease. No useful therapy was available.

Typhus (ship fever, jail fever, army fever, hospital fever), another disease endemic in Europe during this period, often came aboard with the crew at the port of departure or at ports of call. This disease first appeared in Europe in 1490, and recurred in epidemics until the end of

*A Spanyarde that did suffer  
greate paines of the poxe . . .*

the seventeenth century. It was thought due to "putrid air," but was shown, at the beginning of this century, to be caused by a microorganism spread by the body louse.

Typhus was finally controlled by careful attention to personal hygiene and quarantine of the crew for some days before departure to make sure all were well. This disease was carried to the Spanish colonies in the mid-sixteenth century and wreaked extensive havoc.

Smallpox was another endemic disease of the Old World that accompanied the explorers to the New while wreaking havoc aboard ship in the process. Evidence of it has been found on Egyptian mummies of as early as 3000 B.C. It is said to be the most contagious disease the world has known. Whereas Europeans were relatively resistant to it, having lived with it for

centuries, to the Amerindians it was new. Huge numbers of them died of it. Of all the diseases that eased the way for the Old World invaders, smallpox was king.

Great poxe or syphilis is another proposition. It was first recognized in Europe as an epidemic in 1494, and many have claimed that those who travelled with Columbus introduced it to Europe from the New World. Other equally respected medical historians believe the disease was already present in Europe before Columbus sailed. It was known to be spread by

sexual intercourse. Mercury ointment was used as treatment; sometimes so vigorously that mercury poisoning resulted. When Columbus returned to Santo Domingo on August 31, 1498, he found many of the colonists sick with syphilis.

The New World supplied a remedy for the great poxe as Nicholas Monardes tells us: "A Spanyarde that did suffer greate paines of the Poxe, whiche he had by the companie of an Indian woman, but his servaunte beyng one of the Physitions of that countrie, gave unto hym the water of Guaiacan, wherewith not onely his grevous paines were taken awaie that he did suffer: but healed verie well of the evill . . . it is certaine that it healeth moste perfectly,

without turnyng to fall againe, except the sicke man doe returne to tumble in the same bosome, where he tooke the firste."

Dysenteries, often called the bloody flux, were another common scourge aboard ship. Included under this heading were dysenteries caused by bacteria, parasites such as amoeba and others, typhoid and cholera.

The dysenteries might come aboard at the point of departure or be acquired at

ports of call when water casks were taken ashore for filling. Dysenteries accounted for a number of deaths aboard; indeed, Sir Francis Drake, the famous Elizabethan seadog, "departed this life, having bene extremely sicke of a flux."

### *There were other diseases that came onboard . . .*

Undoubtedly the problems of preservation of food and water, the lack of sanitary disposal of human wastes in the port cities and the generally poor personal hygiene of that day had much to do with the recurrent dysentery epidemics both on land and sea.

Of course there were other diseases that came aboard such as pneumonia, influenza, streptococcal sore throat, hepatitis, plague, and scabies to name a few.

Best known of the diseases acquired during voyages is scurvy, the symptoms and signs of which might appear in as little as two weeks under way. This disease, due to a lack of vitamin C, was preordained by the usual shipboard diet of that day; the diet was almost devoid of vitamin C.

Scurvy is vividly described as it appeared in three ships that set out from Mexico to explore and conquer California in 1602:

*First of all, there is a universal pain in the whole body, and one is so sensitive and touchy that everything which touches him causes such pain that he cries out . . . and after his whole body, especially from the waist down, is filled with mulberry colored spots, larger than a coarse mustard seed . . . the gums became swollen, above, below and inside, and they increased so that the teeth and molars could not be brought together and the teeth were so bared of flesh and without protection, that in shaking the head they were shaken out: and there were persons who in spitting the saliva . . . would spit out teeth two at a time.*

The preventive and curative value of citrus juices, fresh vegetables and sauerkraut was known to the Dutch as

early as the mid-sixteenth century, but the routine use of citrus juice was 250 years away. During a circumnavigation of the globe by a British fleet (1740-1744) 72 percent of the officers and men died, most of scurvy. After 1795, when a daily tot of lemon juice became required in the British Navy, scurvy disappeared like magic.

Starvation was a frequent cause of illness and death during the explorations, and accounts of cannibalism, just for survival, are well documented. Two diseases commonly associated with the tropics are malaria and yellow fever, or yellow jack as it was called in the Caribbean.

Malaria was well known in Europe from Roman times, but is thought not to have been present in the New World before the European discovery. The mosquito necessary for its transmission was already present in the New World, and thus the early explorers transferred this disease to the Amerindians.

Subsequently European sailors often contracted malaria when they went ashore. The water casks aboard ship served as a breeding ground for the infected mosquitoes. Ventilation below decks in those days was very poor, thus the mosquitoes remained aboard ship even after weeks at sea. Malaria chiefly incapacitated, but it did result in many deaths.

By far the most dreaded disease of the tropics was yellow fever. It too is thought to have been introduced to the New World, not from Europe, but from Africa by the slave trade. Even the mosquito required for transmission, the *Aedes aegypti*,

came from Africa aboard slave ships.

This disease could take a man from blooming health to death in less than 12 hours. At the time about which I am writing, it was thought due to vitiated air and miasmas emanating from swampy land, stagnant lagoons and the pelagic zones of the ocean through which the ships passed. Today we recognize it as a virus spread by the mosquito.



Detail from *A Medieval Garden of Herbs* from Brunschwig, 1500

Accidents aboard sailing ships were common and were a source of death and disability. Falls from yards and masts, particularly in rough weather, falls down hatches, injuries when lines parted (during operations such as hoisting yards or breaking loose an anchor), and being swept overboard by high seas were ever-present hazards.

### *The patient would be laid out on the table in the officers mess*

In such accidents the surgeon, apothecary or a crewman of some experience would attempt to splint fractures, stanch the flow of blood, cover wounds, and make the patient comfortable at some sheltered spot aboard. On ships of war, when a surgeon was available and when amputation or some other surgery indicated, the patient would be laid out on a table in the officers mess (dining room).

Under the pain-relieving influence of whiskey and a morphine preparation, the surgery would be carried out rapidly. This was long before the days of anesthesia, antiseptics and sterilized



Famed explorer Sir Francis Drake was a victim of dysentery.

instruments. It was still the days of searing the amputation stump with a hot iron or boiling oil to stop bleeding, and supposedly promote healing.

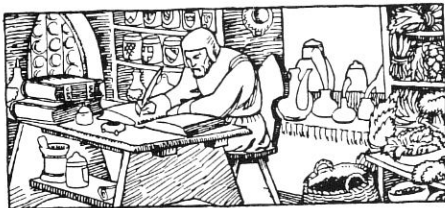
### *They decided to kill the fattest Indians . . .*

Early in this period, the hot iron or boiling olive oil were the chief therapies for wounds. At times, olive oil not being available, melted pork fat served. If neither were available, human fat might be used as Las Casas tells:

*It happens that some of those delicate Spaniards had wounds on their legs and it seems that the devil, whose will they followed, inspired them to think that human fat was good medicine and so they decided to kill the fattest Indians they had captured to melt their fat and smear it on their wounds, saying that a healthy Spaniard was worth more than any one of those devil-loving dogs.*

Similarly during de Soto's exploration of Florida (1538-1543), olive oil being unavailable, the fat of dead Indians was used to dress wounds.

Las Casas, in the same reference, tells of a Spanish leader, Hojeda, who was hit in the thigh with a poisoned arrow that "pierced it through and through . . . he sent for a surgeon and two white-hot irons." On the insistence of Hojeda, the surgeon



*. . . took both irons with pincers and held them against Hojeda's thigh so that the heat not only neutralized the effect of the poison but invaded his body to such a degree that they had to use a whole cask of vinegar to soak the sheets wrapped around his body to lower his temperature. . . Thus he was cured, the heat of the fire consuming the cold poison of the herbs.*

At the end of the sixteenth century, Vargas Machuca, author of a guide for persons wanting to mount an expedition to the New World, gives more detailed advice. The wound should first be washed with hot water. Then the flesh around the wound is to be cut away as soon as possible. For this the surgeon must have a hook and razor, "so as to lift the flesh with the hook and with the razor cut it off, which should be done taking care of not severing the nerves "



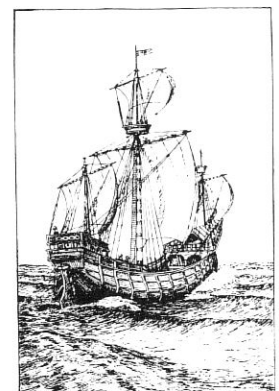
**Columbus reaches San Salvador by Theodor De Bry, 1594**  
HASF,1991-306-1

Then the wound should be seared with balsam, fat or oil and dressed with a mass of toasted corn meal, gunpowder, salt, ashes, and coal. The patient must eat nothing for 20 days thereafter, except a thin gruel of corn meal.

The age of exploration, the Renaissance, embraced not only the exploration of man's geographical world but also all aspects of man's knowledge, including that of his body and the diseases that plague it. From the vantage point of centuries later, much of what was believed and done seems foolish, useless, harmful and cruel, but intellectually man had to crawl before he could walk. Those who would bash the Renaissance man from the vantage of today's knowledge and mores take the cheap shot.

*. . . intellectually  
man had to crawl  
before he could  
walk*

*This article is extracted from the catalog for the Historical Museum's current exhibition, **Quest for the Indies: Routes of Exploration**. For a more in-depth venture into the fascinating world of antique maps we encourage the adventurous to spend some time with the exhibition and to purchase the informative catalog, prepared by Guest Curator Joseph H. Fitzgerald, M. D.*





## Voyages into unknown . . . continued from page 11

Hawkin's recommendations went unheeded. James Lind (1716-1794), the father of nautical medicine, managed to get the clothing of the seamen washed and baked before they came aboard ship, but uniforms were not introduced into the British Navy until 1851.

Seamen frequently slept in their clothes to be always ready to go on watch. Hawkins thought this unwise, especially if the clothes were wet.

Richard Hawkins advised the commander of a fleet to provide that each of his crewmen bathe once a week. To bathe, when the ship was under way, buckets of sea water were pulled aboard and poured over the sailor. Apparently, at times when the ship was heeling sufficiently, the sailor might "sit in the chains" (a wooden platform along the outside of the hull to which the mast stays were attached). Hawkins mentions a man whose leg was taken off by a shark as he sat in the chains washing himself.

At other times, when the ship was becalmed or at anchor, swimming was allowed. When the sailors could go

ashore, particularly near the mouth of a river, they might take the opportunity to wash their clothes and themselves in the fresh water.

Although barrels of soap appear on ship manifests of this period, I have found no mention of the crew using soap on themselves. Although Lind tried to get soap issued to the seamen, it was not until 40 years had passed that this became the rule in the British Navy.

## These arrangements were euphemistically called the *jardine*

Responding to the call of nature in those days was often a challenge. The toilets for the crew and passengers were seats hung over the port and starboard rails in the bow (beakhead) of the ship. Similar seats hung over the stern for the use of the captain, his guests and the principal officers. These arrangements were euphemistically called the *jardine* (garden). The *jardine* afforded little privacy from onlookers or the waves.

Perhaps for the convenience of women and children, some ships carried

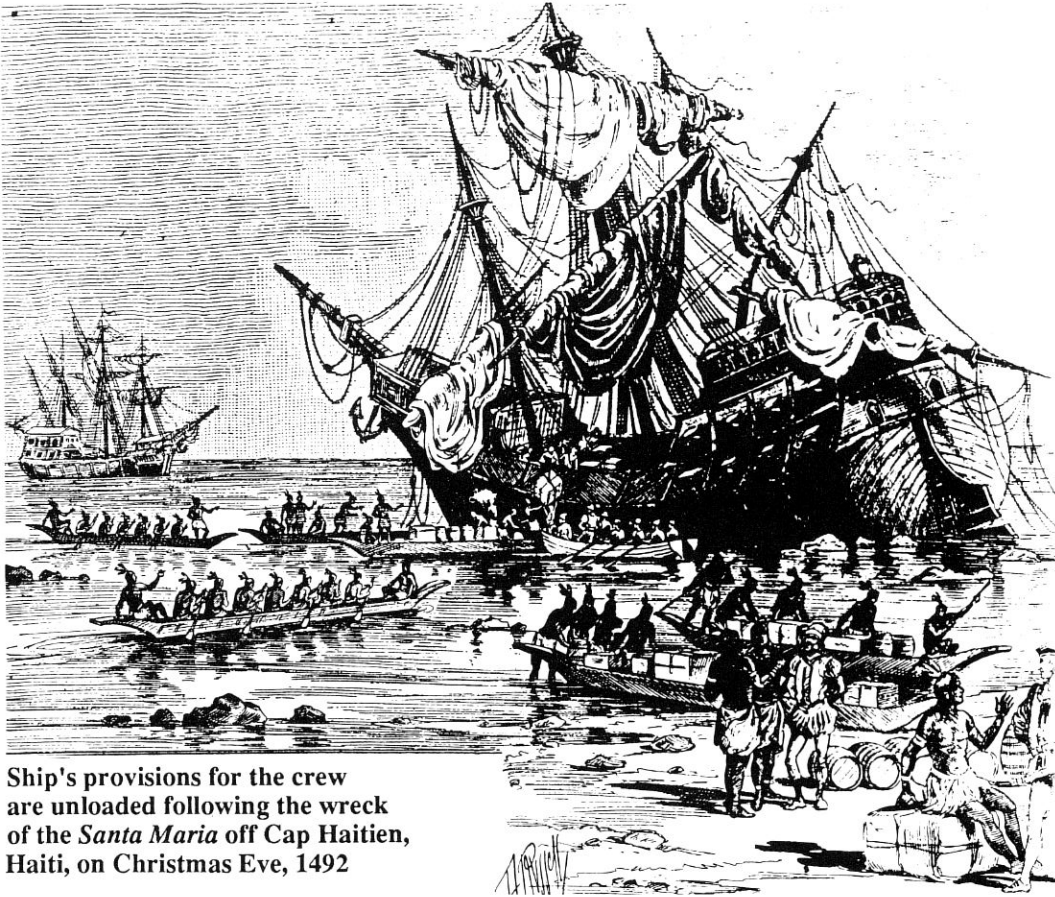
chamber pots. In particularly foul weather, and especially if the sailor was ill, he might make his deposit in the bilge. As the corn cob served the farmer, a tarred rope's end served the sailor in those days.

Despite the lack of privacy aboard ship there is a fascinating account of two women, Ann Bonny and Mary Read, who, as members of a pirate crew, managed to conceal their sexual identity from all members of the crew except one and the captain. Only when, to escape hanging, each announced, in the vice admiralty court (1720), "I plead my belly," did it become known they were female and pregnant.

"I saw many men wait until nightfall to eat their porridge (*mazzamora*, a cold porridge made by breaking biscuit into a pannikin of water) so as not to see the maggots in it; others were so [used] to it that they did not even take the trouble to throw the maggots away when they saw them, since in doing so they might have lost their supper," wrote Columbus.

**Neptune and Diana guide the  
Discoverer past the monsters and  
Reubenesque nudes of the sea , De Bry  
HASF 1986-293-1**





Ship's provisions for the crew are unloaded following the wreck of the *Santa Maria* off Cap Haitien, Haiti, on Christmas Eve, 1492

Columbus in a letter to his sovereigns (1498-1500) advised: "Victualing [the ships] should be done in this manner: the third part of (the bread stuff to be) good biscuit, well seasoned and not old, or the major portion will be wasted; a third part of salted flour, salted at the time of milling; and a third part of wheat. Further there will be wanted wine, salt meat, oil, vinegar, cheese, chickpeas, lentils, beans, salt fish, and fishing tackle, honey, rice, almonds and raisins." Others mentioned barreled salt, sardines, anchovies, and garlic among the provisions. Fish and meat put aboard were heavily salted to preserve them. Refrigeration was still two centuries away.

... only old bisquits turned to powder, all full of worms ...

As mentioned by Columbus in his letter to the monarchs, fishing tackle was carried aboard, and fresh fish supplemented the sailors' diet. When the crew could go ashore, fresh fruits and vegetables might be added, thus staving off or curing scurvy.

At times, as when Magellan was out of sight of land for three months and 20 days in the Pacific (1520-1521), the crew was reduced to eating, "only old biscuit turned to powder, all full of worms and

stinking of the urine which the rats had made on it." Indeed, they ate the rats too and finally the leather chafing gear, which they tore off the masts, dragged overboard for several days, then heated over the embers in the firebox.

Water for drinking and cooking was a great problem as navigators became bolder in their ventures asea. A Spanish traveller on a merchant ship in 1573 lamented: "And having asked for a drink, you could die of thirst in the middle of the ocean, because they give you water by the ounce, as in a pharmacy. After too much beef jerky and salted things: for Lady Sea will not tolerate or conserve meat or fish that is not dressed in her salt."

In those days water was carried aboard ships in wooden casks. After a few weeks at sea, algae grew in the casks making the water cloudy and unpleasant to the taste. In time the algae overgrew, died out and sank to the bottom, and the water became more palatable.

The removal of salt from sea water by distillation was known in the early 1600s, but rarely was practiced until more than 200 years later. Hawkins (October 1593) having used up his water supply after many days at sea, tells us: "... with an invention I had in my shippe, I easily drew out of the water of the sea, sufficient quantitie of fresh water to sustaine my people with little expence of fewell..."

Further there will be wanted wine, saltmeat, oil, vinegar, cheese, chickpeas, lentils, beans, . . .

Ferdinand Magellan



Aboard Spanish and French ships, wine was shipped in wooden casks. Aboard British ships, beer, rum and whiskey were preferred, and, in the British navy, sailors were allotted a daily ration of rum, even until the early 60s of this century.

During this period the crew could expect but one hot meal daily, most likely about 11 in the morning. The meal was cooked over an open firebox, a small space on the deck bordered with heavy timbers and filled with sand. On this a wood fire was kindled. This firebox might be under the overhang of the forecandle or some other relatively sheltered spot on the deck.

On some ships, at least in the late sixteenth century, the cook room was below deck, for Hawkins mentioned a fire below deck: The carpenter, heating pitch for caulking the deck, lost control of the fire causing damage to the ship. In bad weather the fire could not be kept and the crew had to forgo hot meals.

During the first 100 years of this period, food was issued to groups of four crewmen, one of whom cooked for the group. The captain had a steward, who looked after him and his officers and guests. Not until 1553 is mention made of



Detail of 1500s woodcut

a cook for the entire officers, crew and passengers.

### Eating was done wherever the sailor could find a suitable spot

Dining saloons were not to be found on the usual navy or merchant ships of this day. Eating was done wherever the sailor could find a suitable spot, as for example, the cover of the main hatch in the waist of the ship, or in bad weather, in the hold. The captain, his officers and guests might dine at a table in the sterncastle if the ship were of sufficient size.

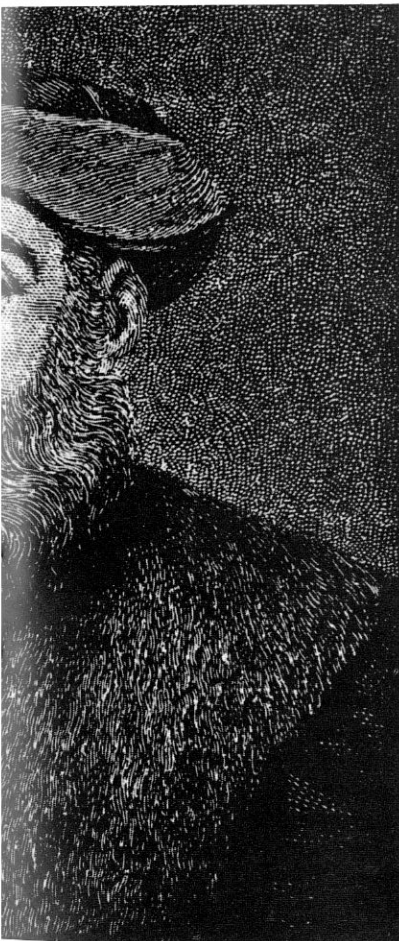
Spaniard Eugenio de Salazar described lunch: "I saw two of the pages . . . bring from below deck a certain bundle they called table cloths, arranging them in the waist of the ship, as clean and white and damask-like as pieces of filthy dark-colored fustian. Then they heaped on this table some small mountains of ruined biscuit, so that the biscuits on the tablecloths looked like heaps of cow dung . . . Then they put three or four wooden plates on the table, filled with stringy beef joints, dressed with some partially cooked tendons . . . all the mariners came, sitting on the deck . . . One sailor stuck his legs

away from the table, another had his feet forward; this one squatting; that one reclining, and they sat in many other ways as well."

At another point in his narrative he adds: "Men, women, youths and old people, the dirty and the clean, all are thrown together into a hullabaloo and a mess, . . . and thus jammed together one belches, another vomits, another breaks wind, another discharges his bowels, all while you eat breakfast."

The days of the early nautical exploration of our world were indeed the days of "iron men in wooden ships." Only men of great courage, determination and physical stamina survived long aboard ship in those days.

*This article is extracted from the catalog for the Historical Museum's current exhibition, **Quest for the Indies: Routes of Exploration**. For a more in-depth venture into the fascinating world of antique maps we encourage the adventurous to spend some time with the exhibition and to purchase the informative catalog, prepared by Guest Curator Joseph H. Fitzgerald, M. D.*



# The Visual Record

by Maggie Heyn

## Perceptions of Columbus—the confusion continues

Think for a moment. What does Christopher Columbus look like? It is unlikely that most of us can recall one single familiar image of him. Certainly, if we were to compare notes on say, George Washington, most of us would recall the somber visage found today on the one dollar bill. Recollecting a recognizable image of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea is, however, a different story. Because of the tremendous variety of images of Columbus that has been created in the almost 500 years since his death, no common perception of what he looked like exists.

**... no likeness of Columbus was ever created while he was alive ...**

Reportedly, no likeness of Columbus was ever created while he was alive, which means that most artists have either relied on descriptions of those who knew what he looked like or on their own imaginations. Trustworthy physical descriptions of Columbus exist, recorded by men who knew him. Most important are the records of Ferdinand, his illegitimate son and biographer, and Bartolome de las Casas, the man who summarized and transcribed his *Diario*. Each of them wrote that he was a tall, well-built man, with a beak-shaped nose, light eyes, and a light complexion that often turned red.



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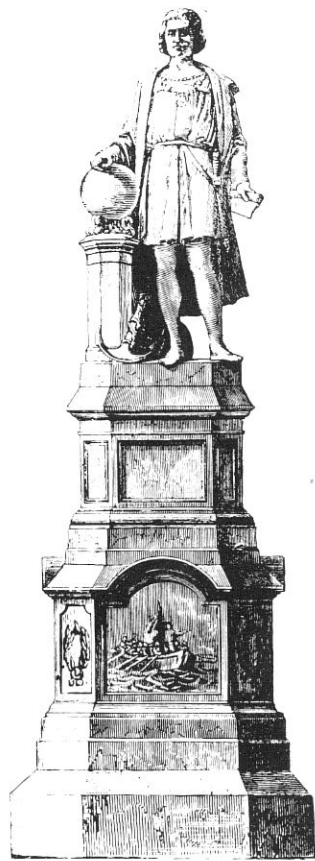


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## The Columbus Gallery

1. The Herrera Woodcut
2. The Montanus Engraving
3. The Navarrete Portrait
4. The Fleming Etching
5. The Cladera Portrait
6. The Statue at Fairmount Park, Philadelphia
7. The De Bry Medallion
8. The Thévet Woodcut
9. Relief, Havana Cathedral
10. The Juan de la Cosa Portrait



6.



7.



8.



9.

10.



They also state that his hair, fair in youth, was white by the time he turned 30. These and other similar recorded descriptions of Columbus are probably the most accurate means of finding out what he looked like. If they are true, why do so many existing images depict Columbus differently?

Like any "hero," Columbus has been molded into the kind of man people wanted or needed him to be. Artists, reflecting the moods of the times, depicted Columbus according to existing public opinion. He has been portrayed both as brave discoverer and as cruel opportunist.

Columbus' physical traits have also run the gamut. From the color, length, and style of his hair, to the shape of his face, each image interprets him differently.

Not only the face of Christopher Columbus, but other portrait features are of questionable accuracy. In the case of the Cladera portrait, Columbus is clothed

in full armor, wearing a ruffled collar and cuffs, articles not worn until 50 years after his death. The globe he points to is also anachronistic. It shows a post-seventeenth-century representation of the North American continent, which clearly was not in existence during his time.

One of the most unusual depictions of Columbus is the earliest known attempted portrayal. In 1500 Juan de la Cosa, a pilot for Columbus, painted a likeness of the admiral, which, according to descriptions by their contemporaries, looked nothing like him. Perhaps an allegorical representation, the painting suggests that Columbus brought Christianity from the Old World to the New World. The portrait depicts an older man standing in a tropical setting carrying the Christ-child on his back.

Columbus' appearance is not the only mystery of the mariner's life; other details

seem to be shrouded in uncertainty as well. Among the hotly-debated topics are: the year or place of Columbus' birth; the site of his first landing; and the physical appearance of his ships, *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*. Finally, the world is still unsure about how to interpret the actions of the famous explorer; did he discover or arrive in America? With cloudy perceptions, it is not surprising that 500 years later, we are surrounded by hundreds of different Columbus images.

The activities and personality of Christopher Columbus have made him one of history's most talked about figures. He has been transformed countless times into both hero and villain. It seems fitting that as the world continues to come to terms with the activities of the Genoese mariner, we are still struggling to assign a face to the name.

# Quest for the Indies: Routes of Exploration

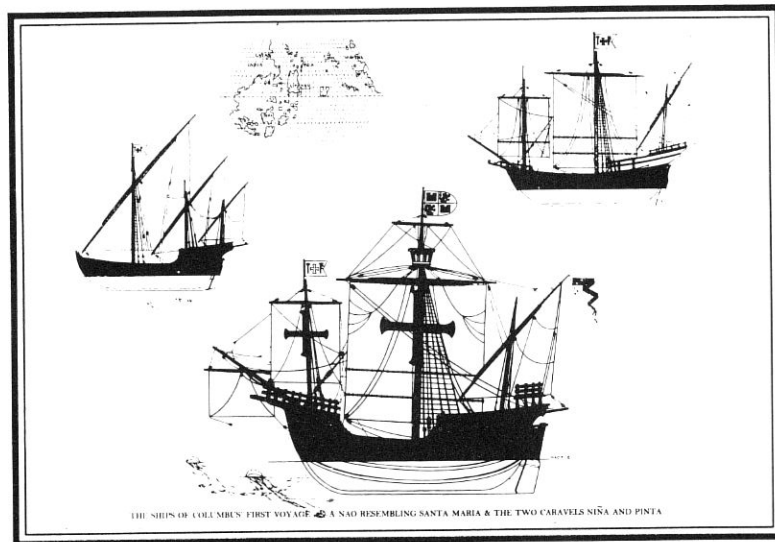
by Joseph H. Fitzgerald, M.D.

During the mid- to late-1400s several things happened that were destined to change the world and people's perception of the world. The old concepts that had prevailed since Roman times were irrefutably altered, and new endeavors called for a new vision of the earth. Traditional trade routes from the East Indies, China and India via the Silk Road, or by Arab vessels to the Near East across to the Levant and thence by boat and land to western Europe, were interrupted by the emergence of the Ottoman Empire.

The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 signaled the end of the Byzantine (Christian) Empire. The Venetians and Genoese no longer had easy access to goods from the East. Clearly the Europeans needed new trade routes.

## Clearly the Europeans needed new trade routes

Previously, the thriving trade in the Mediterranean and bordering countries led to new, accurate sailing charts based on sailing directions, compass readings and accurate observations. These charts were called "Portolans" and were made by talented mapmakers from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. They were quite detailed as to coastline features, distance and direction, and relationships of land and water. The emergence of these new and accurate charts (made for practical sailors) was a marked departure from the traditional medieval maps that showed Jerusalem as the center of the known world with all the other parts wrapped around it in a convenient circular format.



The ships of Columbus' first voyage: a nao resembling *Santa Maria* and the two caravels, *Niña* and *Pinta*. Nao is Spanish for carrack, a three-masted cargo vessel. The square rig on the *Niña* was added by Columbus in the Canary Islands.

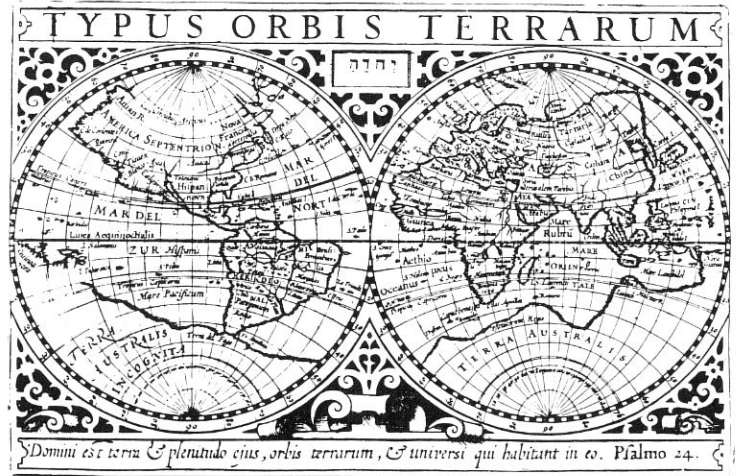


"Mappa Fluxus et Reflexus," a 1665 copperplate engraving by Athanasius Kircher, depicts ocean currents to the Americas.

DE L'AMERIQUE  
FIGURE CXXXII.

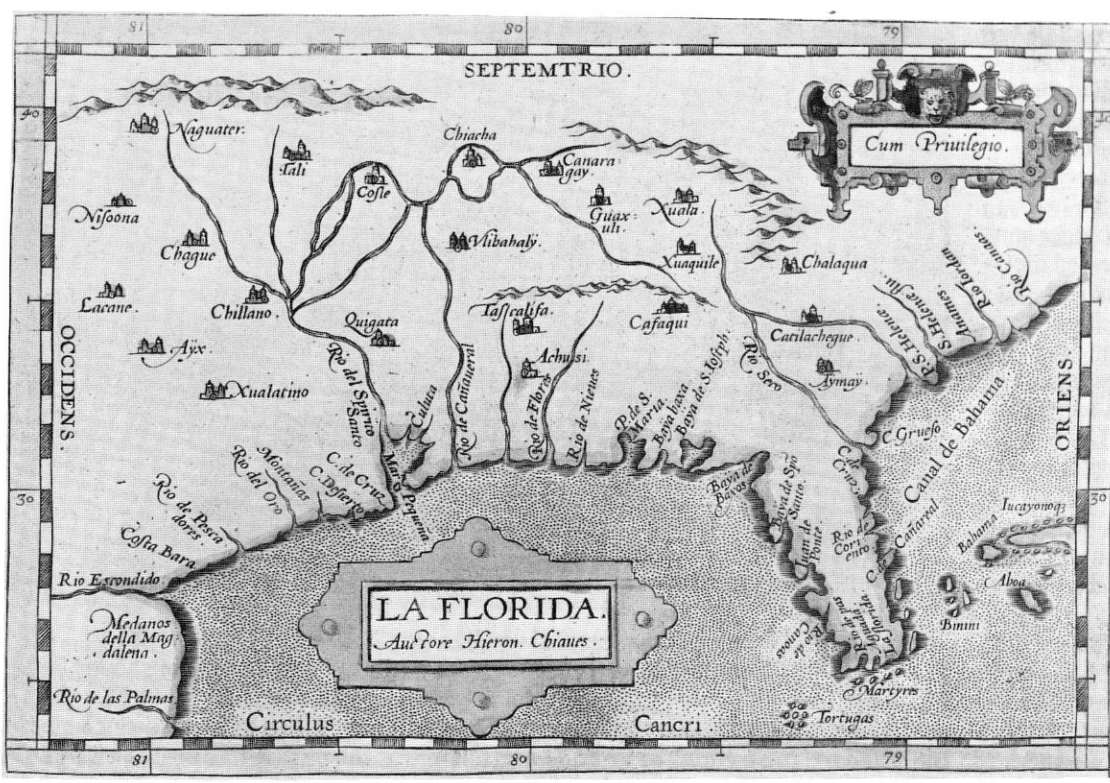


1683 map of Guanahani or San Salvador by Alain Manesson Mallet, 1603-1706. Many, including Mallet, think that this is the island where Columbus first landed in the western hemisphere.



"World", 1635 (1607) Jodocus Hondius reduced the large atlas of Mercator to a small quarto and published it with Latin text in 1607. Several editions followed in Latin, French, German, and, then, English in 1635.

This map shows the world as it was known at the time in its most accurate depiction. The greatest gaps in knowledge were in the Arctic western hemisphere, Australia and Antarctica. The great southern continent of "Terra Australi" is still shown. The true delineation of the continent of Australia would not be made for another 150 years.



"La Florida/Peruviae Auriferae Regionis Typus/Guastecan" is the first published map of Florida and the first regional map of America published in an atlas. Abraham Ortelius, 1527-1598, was the cartographer.

So far as the image of the world-as-a-whole was concerned, the mid-1400s saw the resurrection and reconstruction of the maps of Claudius Ptolemy, the Greek who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, in 150 A. D. He had drawn the best maps ever made of the known world, but they had been lost to the west. The Arabs reconstructed them, based on Ptolemy's books, *The Almagest* and *Cosmographia*. These works were translated into Latin, then Italian and German; and the maps were redrawn by Italian and German mapmakers.

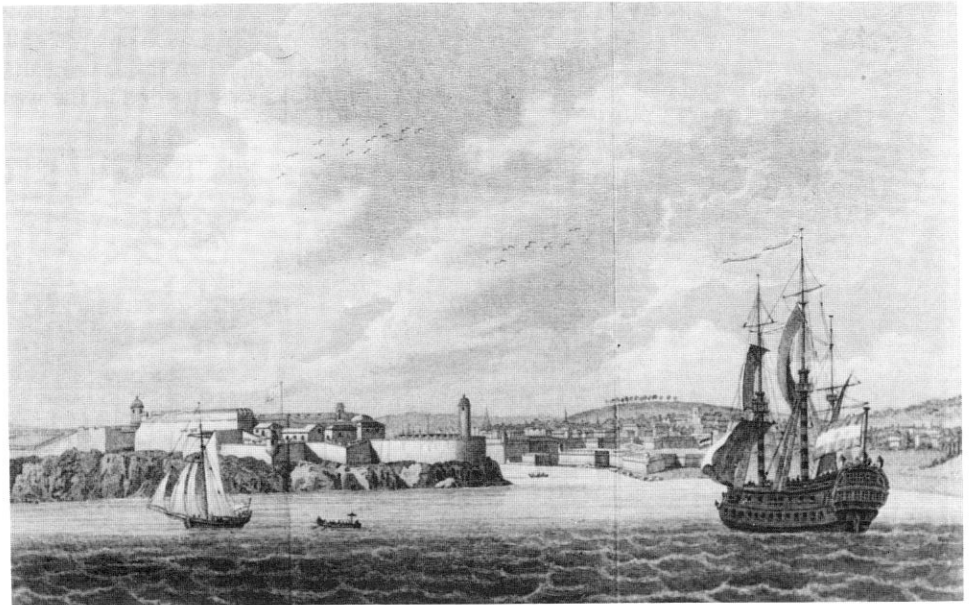
## Mass printing methods made maps reproducible

In the early- to mid-1400s paper-making began in earnest in western Europe, reaching its peak in the Netherlands, where the finest white paper was made of rags. The need for paper for printing was a response to the enlightenment of the early Renaissance, when more people wanted information. The need for better printing methods was answered by Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, who is credited with the perfection of movable type in 1455. These events and developments made new information available to more people; and new universities were founded throughout the civilized world. Mass printing methods made maps reproducible by wood block printing or copper engraving.

To meet the demands for trade goods and the need for new trade routes, ships had to be improved. The Hanseatic League in northern Europe supplied the "cog," a bulky seagoing cargo ship with a square-rigged sail and a stern rudder. From this, and from the newly emerging caravel with lateen rig, evolved the carrack, a three-masted vessel. Larger and able to carry more cargo, they helped the explorers in their quest for the Indies.

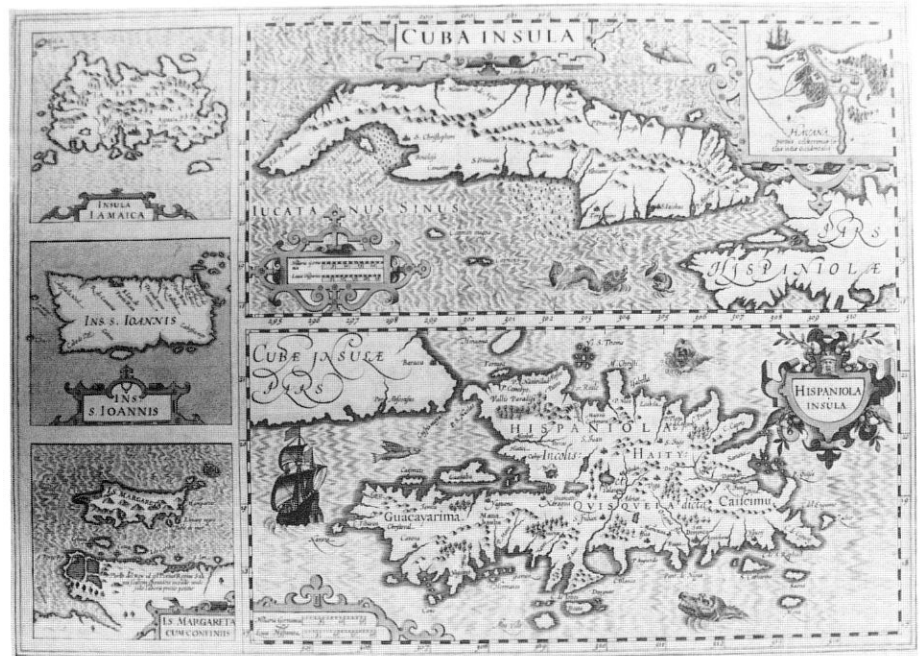
New enterprises demanded armament for protection and conquest of the new lands visited. Shipboard cannons made the new ships versatile for cargo handling and for "persuasion to trade." Thus emerged the galleon—large, seaworthy, armed, and able to sail anywhere in the world. These could carry provisions for all their crew and more cargo than 100 caravans. They dominated the seas for 200 years.

The crowning events that changed the world forever were an outcome of all this new technology and knowledge, and the desire for more trade with the East. In the quest, Columbus discovered a new world.



"Havannah," as the Cuban capital appeared in Myer's *Modern Geography*, published in London in 1822.

In 1515 Diego Velasquez founded Havana, Cuba, as San Christobal de la Habana. It was moved in 1519 to its present site. No other city in the West Indies enjoyed the prosperity or importance of Havana in the Spanish trade. The harbor, one of the best in the western hemisphere, made it an ideal place for the assemblage of the gold-bearing galleons from Cartagena and Porto Bello, and the *flota* from Veracruz. Needless to say, English, Dutch and French privateers preyed upon the treasure fleets, and often sacked the city of Havana. Morro Castle and La Punta were built to protect the harbor, as was a wall to protect the city, the latter on orders of King Philip II of Spain. All those fortifications are seen here in what is probably a realistic portrayal from the late 1700s.



"Cuba Insula; Hispaniola Insula, Insula Jamaica, Insula S. Joannis, Isla Margareta" by Gerard Mercator, 1512-1594, cartographer, was published in 1606. Mercator was one of the finest mapmakers in history and published the Wright projection, which became the "Mercator projection." It has been used since, and is the standard projection for sailing charts. He was the one who coined the name "atlas" for collection of maps.





"Urbs Comingo in Hispaniola" (Santo Domingo), John Ogilby, 1600-1676, cartographer, is a panoramic view showing the oldest European-established city still surviving in the western hemisphere. Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher, founded Santo Domingo around 1494. Located on the southeast coast of Hispaniola, it was the capital of the first Spanish colony in the New World.



"Americae Sive Novi Orbis Nova Descriptio" (America or New World Newly Described) was published in 1570 in the world's first atlas. Once again, Abraham Ortelius was the cartographer.

Vasco Da Gama found a water route to the Indies around the Arab controlled ports; and Magellan proved that the world was round and could be circumnavigated by sea.

These and other great explorers were driven by the compelling desire for "Gold, God and Glory" on the one hand and "Silk, Spices and Slaves" on the other. An important part of this story is the way the new images of the world were transposed onto paper in the form of maps.

Old maps appeal to different people for different reasons. The treasure hunter obviously has use for an old map or chart in his quest. The historian, in the same way, wants the map for the information that it conveys. Geographers, astronomers, and other scientists may view the old map or chart as a source of valuable information in the same way they would use an old text or manuscript.

## **The collector is often additionally attracted to maps for their artistic value . . .**

However, the map collector may be motivated by any of the reasons that drive the seeker of knowledge. The difference is that the collector is often additionally attracted to maps for their artistic value or sensual appeal. He may, indeed, try to rationalize his emotional choices by ascribing some scientific merit to them. He often views them as art in the truest sense and relishes them as such.

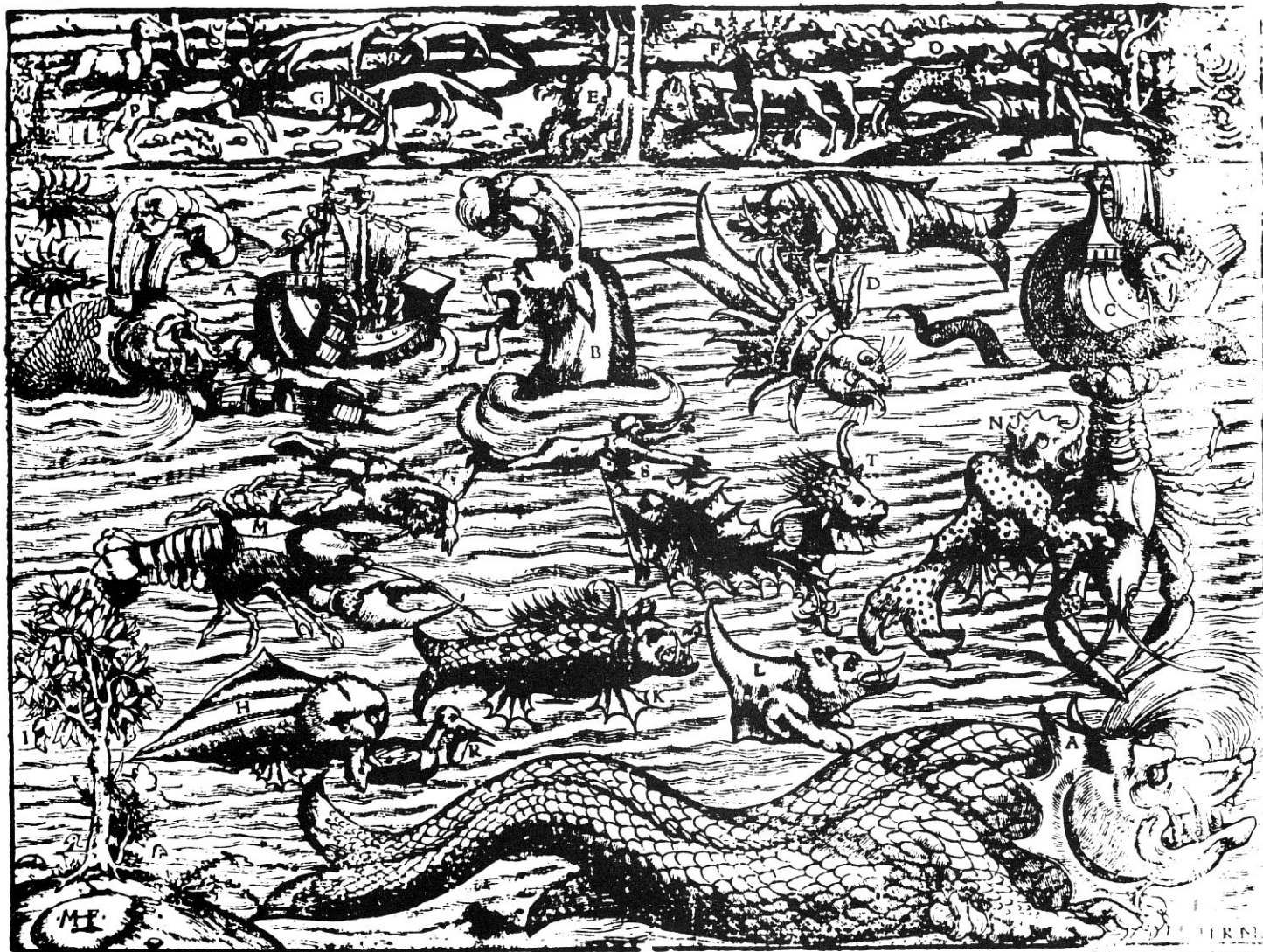
We may also assume that the decorative printed maps served no function for navigation. Certainly there were charts created for this purpose in manuscript form. These were part of the prize for capturing a Spanish ship, for instance.

The first printed atlas of charts for navigation was made by the Dutch pilot and geographer Lucas Waghenauer (1533-1606) in 1584-85. It was later translated into Latin, English, German, and French. Thereafter, marine atlases were known by the generic term "Waggoner." Later rutters (Fr. *routiers*), coast pilot books containing sailing directions, had charts appended to them to serve the ship's captain or navigator. Detailed information, such as that on the charts of the Van Kueler family in Amsterdam (1680-1885), enhanced the practical value of these charts. The charts included soundings, details of coastlines, and accurate scales and relations.

Ochff

Wunder und seltsame Thierwie die in den Nördlichen Ländern gefunden werden.

1572



811 • D. 1572

Sea monsters and rare animals found in unexplored lands were the 1580 creation of cartographer Sebastian Münster (1489-1552). Münster included this Hieronymus-Bosch-like menagerie of menacing creatures in his *Cosmographia* to document zoological hazards of northern travel and the imposing inhabitants of both ocean and land.

Those denizens of the dry earth appear to have been loosely derived from the 1532 world map of Grynæus, while many of the sea-dwelling demons were apparently abducted from the 1539 Olaus Magnus map of northern Europe. Although in their indigenous Magnus habitat they seem to have had little direct influence on subsequent cartography, the Münster print, unlike the Magnus map, was quite popular. In their Münster transcription the marine monsters became the prototypes for many of the fantastic aquatic villains of the later Dutch maps.

One of the most important trimmings of maps is color. Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) of Antwerp started his career as a colorist because he realized that colored maps sold better. He gained enough reputation and money by coloring other people's maps that he was able to begin printing and selling maps on his own. He produced his first collection or atlas in 1570.

Earlier attempts to convey a feeling about the area depicted came in the form of monsters in the sea or on the land. The earlier sea monsters were figments of the

mapmakers' or sailors' grog-soaked imaginations. The perpetrator of most of the sea monsters was Sebastian Münster (1489-1552) of Basil. His widely read and valuable books entitled *Geographia* and *Cosmographia* set the "sea monster standard" that survived for two or three centuries.

Perhaps the most legitimate decorative items used on maps were drawings of ships. They graced the maps of all the best mapmakers and exemplified the conquests and explorations of each participating nation.

*This article is extracted from the catalog for the Historical Museum's current exhibition, Quest for the Indies: Routes of Exploration. For a more in-depth venture into the fascinating world of antique maps we encourage the adventurous to spend some time with the exhibition and to purchase the informative catalog, prepared by Guest Curator Joseph H. Fitzgerald, M. D.*

# Columbus scholar defends the explorer

by Stuart McIver

When the United States observed the quadricentennial of Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage in 1892, millions toasted the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, a true hero in every sense of the word.

A century later, adoration has given way to Columbus-bashing. Warts-and-all refers to a school of biography in which a balanced, no-holds-barred approach is taken. Columbus unhappily is being buffeted by a nothing-here-but-warts reappraisal.

No one speaks more eloquently on this bizarre trend than Michael Gannon Ph. D., director of the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

... suddenly brought low from saint to sinner

Gannon was presented with the annual Phileas Society Award at the Fort Lauderdale home of Frederick G. Ruffner, president of Omnigraphics, Inc., publisher of education and library materials, headquartered in Detroit. Ruffner and Robert W. Tolf, author/critic from Highland Beach, Florida, organized the Phileas Society in 1985 to foster Columbus research and scholarships as the Quincentenary drew near.

Said Gannon, in remarks prepared for the award ceremony:

*Not only are various national, ethnic and ideological groups condemning him for his personal flaws, real and alleged, but almost every problem of the late twentieth century—be it cultural, political, economic, religious, or environmental—is being assigned to his agency. Poor Columbus, suddenly made personally accountable for the ills of five centuries, brought low from saint to sinner, without having passed through any intermediate stages.*

*Of course, this making of Columbus to be the individual lightning rod for all that has gone wrong in the European settlement of the Americas is great foolishness. As historian James Axtell said recently, 'A single person is an easier symbol than a complicated mass move-*



Title page to the first part of *Historia General*, 1601, Antonio de Herrera creates a detailed picture of Spain's New World adventures. HASF, 1989-189-1

ment involving different kinds of Europeans who had very different interactions with the Indians over a long span of time.'

One of the worst offenders, Gannon says, is Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise*, "as sanctimonious and judgemental a book as any in the conversion literature."

Gannon continues:

*It is worth our noting that the Quincentenary comes upon us at a time when our historical and archaeological understanding of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries has reached a new level of scholarly sophistication, which the media simply cannot handle, to judge from what passes across my desk and screen; and it comes at a time furthermore, when there is already widespread debate in our society over militarism, racism, multiculturalism, exploitation, and environmental despoliation, under any one of which categories Columbus (and most other historical fig-*

*ures) can be tarred and censured by uncritical minds.*

*Much that we see in print today is not*

*enlightened spirit who treated the Taino natives with unfailing Ghandi-like pacifism and marched across the Indies distributing environmental impact statements.*

*Dr. Gannon addresses the confrontation between the European "discoveries and the native Americans who were already here."*

*... the European-Native American disjunction has hardened, as historians, epidemiologists, moralists, romanticists, and native spokespersons have clashed over the benefits, if any, that European entrance onto the American stage brought the societies of both worlds,*

*particularly this one.*

*Certainly huge numbers of indigenous people died as a result of the encounter: some, it is true, from the sword, but by far the majority from the Europeans' unwitting introduction of pathogens—smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, the plague—to*



The famous sketch of La Hispaniola, ascribed to Columbus

*scholarship or even good journalism: It is someone's political agenda. The most indefensible thing we do when we condemn historical figures is to judge them by the moral standards and cultural milieu of our time rather than their own. One may wish that Columbus was a modern*



Indians who died of sickness or battle wounds are borne away to burial sites by homosexuals, designated for this unpleasant duty. Jacques Le Moynes de Morgues, 1591 HASF, 1988-941



Slaves were forced to work in the mines of the New World. Theodor De Bry pictures negro slaves mining gold in Hispaniola, 1595. HASF, 1991-306-3

which the native peoples had no immunities. Germs and viruses formed a veritable microbial invasion force. Before that force whole populations collapsed.

... half the people of Mexico dead in a single year ...

Think of it: half the people of Mexico dead in a single year; half the people of Florida dead in a seven-year span. That biological catastrophe has a claim on our conscience and on our historical memory. Recognizing the dimensions of that calamity, many wonder what there is to celebrate.

In the margins of the debate native descendents and their advocates are publicizing a long list of grievances against the Caucasians who abused their liberties, expropriated their lands, and despoiled an environmental paradise. African-Americans remind their fellow citizens that the events of 1492 and afterwards gave rise to the slave trade. And Jews appropriately notice that 1492 was the year when as a people they were forcibly expelled from their Spanish homeland.

It is this 'politically correct' dynamic that, most likely, will keep 1992 from being quite the exuberant and careless celebration that the national Bicentennial

was in 1976. Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Americans felt comfortable with the Bicentennial because it reinforced their ethnic and cultural givens (Plymouth Rock, Virginia, Washington, Jefferson, the English language, Northern European immigration, etc.).

Today, nervous about what is happening to "their" country and learning that citizens of Hispanic origins are projected soon be the largest U. S. minority, the old-line white majority may not be enthusiastic about celebrating the 500th coming of the Hispanics—especially since we detect no continuing need for Columbia as a unifying principle or symbol.

Columbus ... set in motion an unbroken stream of contacts ...

Dr. Gannon addressed the question: "How can Columbus claim credit for discovering a continent when Indians were already occupying it?"

Christopher Columbus ... may be said to have been the first true overseas discoverer of the Americas, in that he returned to them repeatedly and set in motion an unbroken stream of contacts between the Old World and the New. As used by Europeans, the term 'discovery' meant 'discovery by Europeans.' As

Wilcomb Washburn has written, 'It was not meant to suggest that the native inhabitants either did not know where they were or had not earlier discovered for themselves the lands now discovered by the Europeans.'

... in ways never anticipated or intended

To Admiral Columbus are owed the first encounters of which we have substantial record, when European and native Americans beheld each other's works and pomps, and, as historian John Fiske said in the last century, there 'mingled the two streams of human life which flowed from countless ages apart.'

The first encounters brought in their wake a sea change in the story of humanity, for the Spanish voyages inaugurated a new era in world history, setting off a vast array of changes—cartographic, cultural, demographic, economic, political, and religious. European exploration and settlement of the Americas transformed the human and natural environments of whole continents, and, as historian William McNeill has said, in ways never anticipated or intended by any of the participants.

Gannon, a native of St. Augustine, is the author of *Rebel Bishop* and *The Cross in the Sand*, which deal with the early history of Florida, and is co-author of *Spanish Influ-*

ence in the Caribbean, Florida and Louisiana, 1500-1800, and Florida Politics and Government. He feels his state is well suited to play a major role in the Columbian Quincentenary: "The state of Florida juts southward into Columbus's newfound waters, where in 1513, it was discovered by a companion of the admiral's on his second voyage, Juan Ponce de Leon," said Gannon.

Indeed, it is common among historians and archaeologists to speak of 16th-century Florida as an integral part of the

early as 1980.

Our search for Columbus period documents in the Archivo General de

## 16th-century Florida . . . an integral part of the Circum Caribbean . . .

Indias and the Biblioteca Colombina, both in Seville, led to Eugene Lyon's discovery of the 440-page Libro de Armadas. That document contains the first-ever description found of any one of Columbus's ships, the admiral's favorite, the Niña, whose

small garrison until his promised return in 1493, when, to his distress, he found the rude structure destroyed and all his men killed. Many artifacts from the site, of the twelve tons of material removed to Gainesville for analysis, suggest that the site has been correctly identified.

The institute is also excavating the second Columbus settlement in the new world, named La Isabela, established in December 1493 on the eastern bank of the Rio Bahabonico on the north coast of the present-day Dominican Republic. The excavations are being conducted under a joint arrangement with the Dominican government.

### Here we find Columbus' own house

The site is undeniably important since the town provides the first example we have of Euro-American domestic life—where Spaniards first made themselves 'at home in America'—as well as the first example of sustained social contact between Europeans and native Americans—the initial experience, if you will, of a process that changed the political, social, economic, and religious world of the sixteenth century and thereafter.

Here we find Columbus's own house; the first masonry houses of any kind; the first intentional introduction of European plants and animals; the first manufacture of European artifacts; the first urban plan combined with the first urban streets, plazas, ramparts, canals, and gardens.

Among the institute's other site studies that have relevance to the age of discovery is Puerto Real, the fourth oldest European town in the Americas. A sometime thriving cattle ranching community that lasted from 1501 to 1580, it was located two kilometers from La Navidad. Analysis of documents and of archaeologically recovered material indicates that Puerto Real's Spaniards experienced gradual acculturation with the indigenous Taino population . . . The excavations at Puerto Real . . . brought forth data about the life and role of women in that colonial settlement that were lacking in the written records.



Wives mourn their dead husbands, Le Moyne, 1617 HASF 1989-242-1

Circum Caribbean, that geographic region that comprises the greater and lesser Antilles, east Yucatan, east Central America, the north coasts of Colombia and Venezuela, the peninsula of Florida, and the chain of Bahama Islands.

### A special opportunity to investigate the remains

Accordingly, researchers at my institution, the University of Florida, realized that the Columbian Quincentenary presented a special opportunity to investigate the remains, documentary and archaeological, of the first contacts of Europeans and native Americans that took place within the Circum Caribbean theater. Some of our scholars, among them the historian Eugene Lyon and the archaeologist Kathleen Deagan, began working on projects related to the descubrimiento (discovery) and the first encounters as

rigging, landing, crewing, and arming for the 1498 voyage are given in close detail, enabling nautical architects to render accurately for the first time a caravel, the class of vessel that was to become the workhorse of the Atlantic fleets in the century that followed . . . On the archaeological side, we have spent six years investigating La Navidad, Columbus's first settlement, founded on the north coast of modern-day Haiti at Christmas time 1492.

### Columbus built a fort from the timbers of the . . . Santa Maria

Our teams have scoured the documents and searched the site, which on good evidence we conclude was a manioc plantation at En Bas Saline. There Columbus built a fort from the timbers of the ship-wrecked Santa Maria and left a

## Book Review

by Stuart McIver

# New editions add to Columbus library

*A Columbus Dictionary.* by Foster Provost. Detroit; Omnigraphics, Inc. 1991. 142 pages. Hardcover, \$52.00. ISBN 1-55888-158-1.

In 1960 Foster Provost, of Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, began the lengthy studies that led in 1991 to the publication of his Christopher Columbus dictionary. He visited libraries in Genoa, Madrid and in many American cities. The result is a compact volume with references to a wide range of persons, places and events associated with the famed explorer and his voyages.

For example, Guanahani: "The native name for the island that CC called San Salvador, site of the landfall on 12 October, 1492 . . ." *Pinta*: "One of the three ships in CC's fleet of discovery on the First Voyage from 1492 to 1493 . . . The square-rigged *Pinta*, at fifty-five tons and seventy feet in length, was the fastest of the three ships, carried a crew of twenty-six, and was commanded by Martin Alonso Pinzon, an influential sea captain of Palos and CC's chief resource in assembling fleet and crew . . ."

Provost's dictionary includes definitions and information on people, places, ships, navigation, diseases and the slave trade. Although he includes a lengthy bibliography, he states in his introduction that his principal source has been the writings of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Samuel Eliot Morison, best known for his *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*.



*Spanish Pathways in Florida/ Caminos Espanoles en La Florida.* Edited by Ann L. Henderson and Gary R. Mormino. Sarasota: Pineapple Press. 1992. 364 pages. Hardcover, \$24.95, ISBN 1-56164-003-4. Softcover, \$18.95, ISBN 1-56164-003-2.

" . . . the significance of 1492 lies not so much in what Columbus found but in the interaction that followed," write editors Ann L. Henderson and Gary R. Mormino in their introduction to *Spanish Pathways*. In their book 15 scholars and journalists survey the Spanish role in Florida from the arrival of Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513 to the 1990s administration of Xavier Suarez as mayor of Miami. Subject matter ranges from Old World diseases that devastated the native population to New World plants that benefited the Europeans. Important figures discussed include Hernando de Soto, whose 1539 winter camp in what is today's Tallahassee is the oldest known European building site on the North American mainland; Pedro Menendez de Aviles, founder in 1565 of St. Augustine, the nation's oldest city; Cuban patriot Jose Marti, and Mario Sanchez, folk artist of Key West and Tampa.

The book makes use of an unusual format, offering both English and Spanish texts on facing pages. The text was translated into Spanish by Carlos J. Cano, Warren Hampton and Jose Feliciano-Butler. *Spanish Pathways* offers detailed bibliographies following each essay as well as indexes in both English and Spanish.

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# Around the galleries . . .



**THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM**  
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Metro-Dade Cultural Center,  
101 West Flagler Street, Miami.  
(305) 375-1492.

**Tropical Dreams: A People's History of Southern Florida**, the permanent exhibition: Discover the drama of 10,000 years of life in South Florida and the Caribbean.

## Era of Columbus

*January - December, 1992*

Lobby exhibit presenting an overview of people and events surrounding Columbus' voyages and resulting consequences.

## Quest for the Indies:

### Routes of Exploration

*April 24 - September 13, 1992*

An exhibit of pre-1650 maps and charts that examines the routes taken by various explorers and reflects the changing perceptions of the world and its continents.

## First Encounters: Spanish Exploration in the Caribbean and the Southeastern United States 1482-1570

*October 1, 1992 - January 3, 1993*

Coinciding with the October 1992 Columbus Quincentenary, *First Encounters* tells the story between Spaniards and native peoples. Innovative, interactive displays and more than 500

artifacts illustrate Spanish exploration and its effects on indigenous societies. The touring exhibition was created and debuted at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

## Baseball in South Florida

*Early February - July 30, 1993*

Concurrent with the first spring training of the area's first major-league baseball team, the Florida Marlins, this exhibition will use photomurals, graphics, artifacts, and interactive displays to trace the changing nature of baseball in the sunshine state, especially in southeast Florida, will explore the influence of Caribbean, particularly Cuban, baseball upon the game. Created by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida with guest curator Howard Kleinberg.

## Fort Mose: Colonial America's Black Fortress of Freedom

*August 16 - December 2, 1993*

Fort Mose, Florida, was America's first legally sanctioned, free black community. Based on five years of historical and archaeological research, the exhibit explores the African-American colonial experience in the Spanish colonies, from 1492 to the American Revolution. Fort Mose highlights a powerful, often unheralded aspect of African-American history. Developed by the Florida Museum of Natural History.

## Photochrome Photos of Turn-of-the-Century Florida and the Caribbean

*December 17, 1993 - March 13, 1994*

This exhibit will be produced by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and will make dramatic use of a series of recently acquired scenic and historical prints.

**Columbian Journey**, a series of lectures that focus on the world of Christopher Columbus and the broad consequences of his contact with the Americas. Columbian lecture on May 10 is free with paid admission to museum. Members free. Future lectures are scheduled for October 11, November 8 and January 10, 1993.

## Readers' Choice

### "Green Corn Dance Dress: Contemporary Styles"

*June 17, 1992*

A slide lecture presented by Dot Downs continues the popular quarterly lecture and buffet series this summer. Please call Pat Helms, 375-1492, for information and reservations.

Museum membership is \$35 for individuals; \$45 for families, and includes a variety of benefits. Museum membership in the Trop-ees, the museum's young professionals group, is \$35 for individuals and \$50 for couples/families.

Admission is free to members. Adults \$4; Children (6-12) \$2. Discounted admission for guided and unguided tours (groups of 20 or more) available by appointment.

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### Exhibits

**Patterns of Power**  
*May 4 - June 30, 1992*

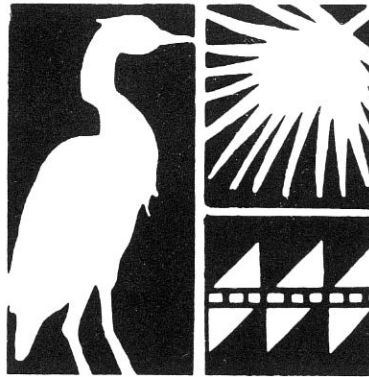
**Trains as Advertising**  
*May 1 - May 31, 1992*

**Indian Pottery**  
*May 3 - May 30, 1992*

### Field Trips:

**St. Augustine Annual Meeting**  
**Florida Historical Society**  
*May 8 - May 10*

**Quincentennial Tour to Spain and Caribbean Cruise**  
*June 16 - July 4, 1992*



### Collier County Museum

3301 Tamiami Trail East,  
Naples  
(813) 774-8476

Admission is free.  
Open Monday-Friday,  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### Events

**Seminole Indian Days:**  
**"Under the Sun"**  
*July 11 -12, 1992*

A festival, presented by the O. B. Osceola family and the Collier County Museum, that focuses on Seminole Indian culture.

### Two Cultures: Tradition and Change

*October 31 - November 1, 1992*

A two day symposium funded by the Florida Humanities Council will explore the Columbus Quincentennial and European encounters in the South-eastern United States from a multi-cultural point of view. Contact Nancy Olson, Collier County Museum, (813) 774-8476

### Exhibits

**The Submuloc Show/  
Columbus Wobs  
(Who's Columbus?)**

*April 17 - May 22, 1992*

38 Native American artists respond to the Quincentennial "celebration" with works that chronicle some of the ways the encounter has changed indigenous culture.



# *Johnathans*

A Movable Feast

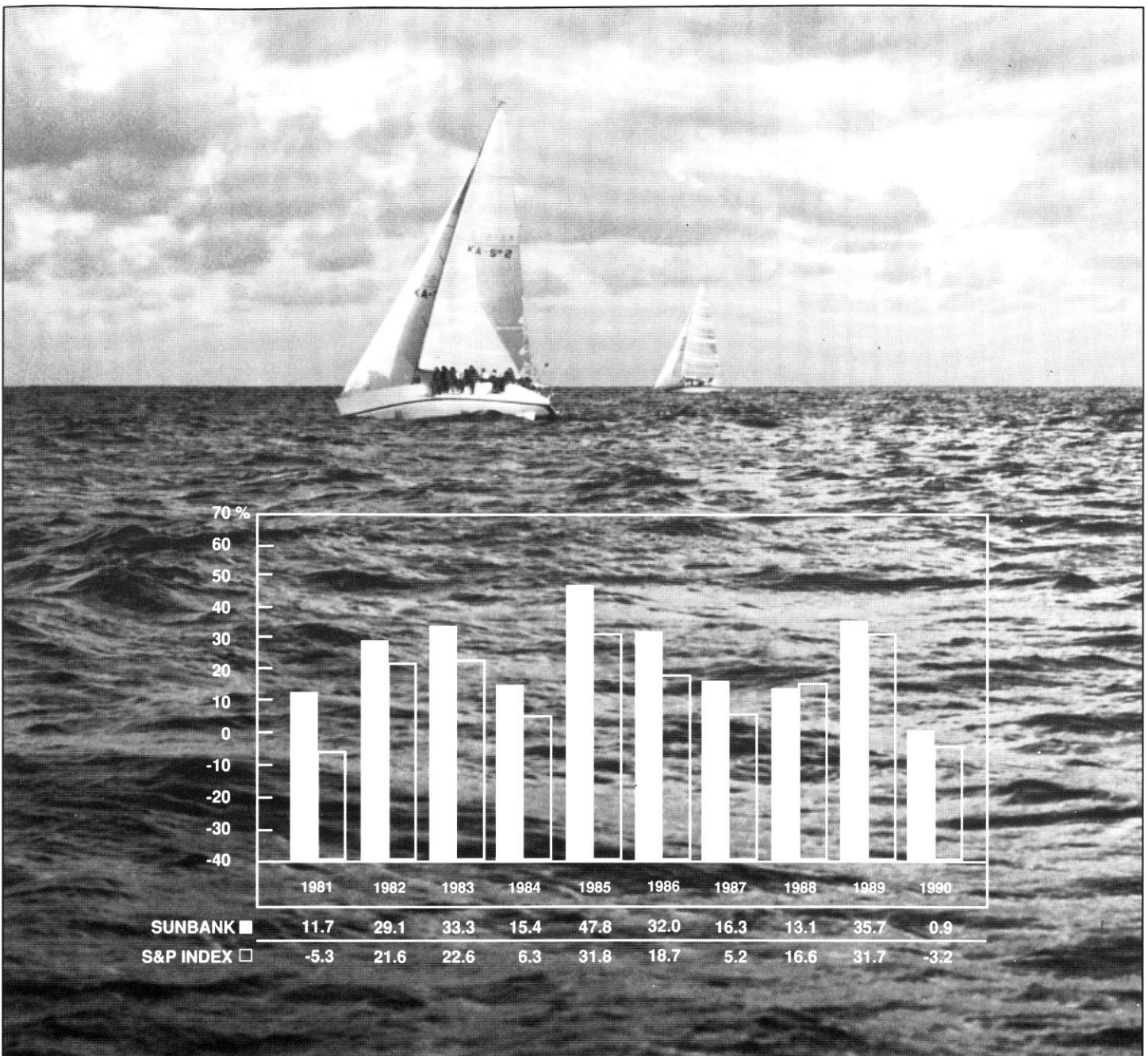
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