

# **“Wait... Those Aren’t Indians?”: Examining Columbus Day’s misguided origins**

Everyone was taught the famous rhyme in school of how Christopher Columbus discovered America: “In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” However, Columbus had no idea what he had actually discovered and never would know, as he died before anyone had the heart to tell him.

Columbus was just an Italian looking for some recognition and cash. Columbus had the brilliant idea of discovering an all-water route to India to trade with the western Indians. Christopher Columbus asked his own King and Queen for the ships, crew, and necessities to make this voyage. However, the Italian royalty didn’t believe that such a route existed. Columbus then decided to take his business elsewhere, and he traveled to Spain to ask the Spanish King and Queen for the things he needed.

Columbus’s voyage was long and treacherous; however, eventually he finally spotted land. He had made it to “India” (or so he thought). What do you call to first people you see in this land of “India” that you have just landed in? “Indians” of course! Columbus wrote in his journal of how he successfully discovered an all-water route to India, somehow not realizing the difference in climate, vegetation, and looks of the people and land. In reality, Columbus landed in the Bahamas. He then sailed back to Spain and told his fellow Spaniards of the riches in “India.”

Many Spanish conquistadors then traveled to the New World in search of riches. They then came across the ancient Aztec city. The Spanish destroyed the city in war and with their Spanish flu. So, in the end, we can all thank Christopher

Columbus for destroying an ancient city, building a city over it, and mistaking an entire new continent for India.