Chirstopher Columbus Essay, Research Paper

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

It is thought by many that Christopher Columbus was a skilled sailor on a mission of greed. Many think that he in fact did it all for the money, honor and the status that comes with an explorer, but this is not the case entirely. Columbus was an adventurer and was enthused by the thrill of the quest of the unknown. Columbus had a firm religious faith and a scientific curiosity, a zest for life, the felling for beauty and the striving for novelty that we associate with the advancement of learning . He had heard of the legendary Atlantic voyages and sailors reports of land to the west of Madeira and the Azores. He believed that Japan was about 4,800 km to the west of Portugal. In 1484, Columbus wanted support for an exploratory voyage from King John II of Portugal, but he was refused. In 1485, Columbus took his son Diego and went to Spain to get some help.

Christopher waited on the queen for a meeting for over nine month with no funds due to her rigorous schedule; on his journey to meet the queen he walked in to a physicians shop and began a relationship with his daughter. Columbus eventually had a child with his mistress, but was unable to marry her do the fact that she was a peasant and that he already had a wife with must higher social status. Columbus would have given his social placement up for this women but could not, it is said that she was constantly on his conscience.

By the time Christopher reached early thirties he was a master mariner in the Portuguese merchant service, which was the finest merchant marine of that time. He had sailed from above the artic circle to almost the equator and from the eastern Aegean to the outer Azores. He had learned as much as he possible could about the sea in his time. Although he was an regular reader on books of geography and cosmography his knowledge was limited because of their lack of technology.

On May in 1486 almost a year after Columbus had enter Spain, he was finally allowed to meet with the queen who is said to be known for her great judgment in choosing the right man for the right job. The queen turned down Christopher s proposals several times before giving it any true thought. The queen sent out her confessor to examine the great project to see if it was feasible. For the next six months Columbus lived the worst days of his life. Christopher was subjected to continuous prejudice even though he knew his great project would open new pathways to maritime achievement and opportunity, but still the public viewed his revolutionary planes as a crackpot idea. Very few of the queen s staff were in favor of the great quest except for one, Diego de Deza who granted Columbus 12,000 maravedis a year, which was about $83 in gold. It was enough to support a man like Columbus. Columbus had simple tastes.

On Aug. 3, 1492, Columbus sailed from Palos, Spain, with three small ships, the Santa Mar a, commanded by Columbus himself, the Pinta under Mart n Pinzon, and the Nina under Vicente Yanez Pinzon. After stopping at the Canary Islands, he sailed due west from Sept. 6 until Oct. 7, when he changed his course to the southwest. On Oct. 10 a small rebellion was quelled, and on Oct. 12 he landed on a small island in the Bahamas. He took possessions for Spain and brought natives aboard, discovered other islands in the neighborhood. On Oct. 27 he sighted Cuba and on Dec. 5 reached Hispaniola.

On Christmas Eve the Santa Mar a was wrecked on the north coast of Hispaniola, and Columbus, leaving men there to found a colony, hurried back to Spain on the Nina. His greeting was all he could wish; according to his contract with the Spanish sovereigns he was made admiral of the ocean sea and governor general of all new lands he had discovered or should discover. The later voyages became much more elaborate, with seventeen ships and 15,000 men aboard. In total there were four voyages that set sail to the new world.

(Further readings not in book)

As the fourth voyage Columbus ended. It was his last. Columbus had a long sickness that almost made him crazy, you might say he, lost his mind. But he knew one thing that the king and queen of Spain had not kept the promises they had made him, and he was determined, if he lived, to have justice, and to make them do as they said they would.

They had told him that only he or one of his family could be Admiral of the Ocean Seas of the New Lands; they had sent across the ocean others, who were not of his family, to govern what he had been promised for his own. They had told him that he should have a certain share of the profits that came from trading and gold hunting in the Indies; they had not kept this promise either, and he was poor when he was convinced he should to be rich. So, when he was on land once more, he tried hard to get to court and see the king and queen. But he was too sick. He had got as far as Seville, the fair Spanish city by the Guadalquivir. But when he arrived, he again became disappointment. He lost his best friend at the court. It had been barely two weeks in Spain and the Queen Isabella died.

After Queen Isabella’s death, which did nothing to help Columbus. He would not agree to give the Admiral what he called his rights, and though Columbus kept writing letters from his sick room asking for justice, the king would do nothing for him. So Columbus had no friends at the king’s court. Diego, his eldest son, was still one of the royal pages, but he could do nothing. Without friends, without influence, without opportunity, Columbus began to feel that he should never get his rights unless he could see the king himself. Even sick he was he determined to try it. It must have been sad to see this sick old man drag himself to the court to ask for justice from the king whom he had made rich. You would think that when King Ferdinand really saw Columbus he would have remembered all that this man had done for him and for Spain, and how brave and persistent and full of determination to do great things the Admiral once had been, he would at least have given the old man what was justly due him. But he would not

Did Columbus discover America? Yes, in every important value. This does not mean that no human eye had been cast on America before Columbus arrived. It does mean that Columbus brought America to the attention of the civilized world, to the growing, scientific civilizations of Western Europe. The result, ultimately, was the United States of America. It was Columbus discovery for Western Europe that led to the arrival of ideas and people on which this nation was founded on. The voyages of Christopher Columbus contain one of the great adventure stories of all time. His first journey across thousands of miles of unknown ocean, in the middle of the rebellious grievances and tensions of his crew, was not only one of the most significant achievements of recorded human history, but was also a demonstration of Columbus’s dominance as mariner and navigator. For a while he had faults and defects, which brought turmoil to his personal life, but there was no flaw, no dark side to the most significant of all his qualities, of course his seamanship.