

## FFWPU USA: Celebrating Indigenous People's Day and Columbus Day

Demian Dunkley  
October 9, 2023



*Photo courtesy of Andrew James*

This Indigenous People's Day, formerly known as Columbus Day, commemorates the 1492 landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas, while also symbolizing how the nation has progressed and evolved historically. Celebrated on October 9, this national holiday is an opportunity to get better acquainted with American history, as well as acknowledge the history of the Native people who were present before the settlers arrived.

To date, America has become a great synthesis of cultures, languages, beliefs, and backgrounds. True Parents, who first came to America in the 1960s, shared how this blessed land has been instrumental to God's providence and hope for humanity.

Below is an excerpt from True Father's 1973 speech, "America in God's Providence," where he imparts God's plan for America.

*God purposed the United States to fulfill the mission of the sacrificial nation. Therefore, God sent to this land the Pilgrims, who risked everything and made such a great country in such a short period of time. When the Pilgrims came to this country, they built first churches, then schools, and finally they built their own houses. The backbone of America's prosperity, the root of the development of the United States into a great nation, is the spirit which puts greater stress on the public purpose rather than the private purpose.*

*The most important thing for any nation is that she sacrifices all things for the world and all mankind. From such a nation will come out a system developed from Jesus himself. The future ideal world will begin from there. That nation will sacrifice her sovereignty for the benefit of the whole world.*

*The United States is far away from this position. Individualism is good in balance, but if too much stress is put upon that way of thinking, everything collective and virtuous is lost: the love of the nation, the brotherhood of the people, the family integrity, the relationship between parents and children, and finally, even the value of individuals themselves. If all things are leveled, you become like hawks and blow where the wind blows. That is the reason there is no peace.*

*For America to stand in accordance with the providence of God there must be a new movement in America. Americans as individuals and America as a nation must follow the spirit of God and the truth of Jesus Christ and make this nation a foundation for the expression of God's ideal...*

*God chose America as a nation playing the role of John the Baptist, and also the churches in America to play the role of preparing the way for the Lord to come. But America and her churches are thinking of their own benefits more than God's purpose...*

*America must go to the underdeveloped countries and the underdeveloped countries must follow America. In that way the whole world can survive and be united, even eternally. In the center of that unity, God dwells. Then one peaceful, ideal world can exist.*

You can learn more about Columbus Day [here](#) from the Library of Congress.

# Today in History - October 12

< October 12 >

Select date

Go

Today's Stories: [Columbus Day](#)

Listen to this page

## Columbus Day

Early in the morning of October 12, 1492, a sailor on board the *Pinta* sighted land, beginning a new era of European exploration and expansion. The next day, the ninety crew members of Columbus' three-ship fleet ventured onto the Bahamian island that he named [San Salvador](#) (now Watling Island, and then called Guanahaní by the natives), ending a voyage begun nearly ten weeks earlier in Palos, Spain.



[Promontory of Florida](#). Photoreproduction from Theodor de Bry and Charles de la Roncière, *La Floride Française: Scènes de la vie Indiennes, peintes en 1564* [facsimile of the 1564 original (Paris, 1928)]. [1492: An Ongoing Voyage](#). Rare Book & Special Collections Division

As a reward for his valuable discovery, the Spanish crown granted Columbus the right to bear arms. His new [coat of arms](#) added the royal charges of Castile and Leon and an image of islands to his traditional family crest. Columbus further modified the design to include a continent beside the pictured islands.

Before his final voyage, the Spanish monarchs prepared a [Book of Privileges](#), a collection of agreements showing how Columbus was remunerated for his explorations. In 1502, four copies of the book were known to exist. The Library of Congress's copy of this work is one of the [Top Treasures](#) included in the online exhibition [American Treasures of the Library of Congress](#).

The first recorded celebration of Columbus Day in the United States took place on October 12, 1792. Organized by the Society of St. Tammany, also known as the Columbian Order, it commemorated the 300th anniversary of Columbus' landing.







[Christopher Columbus]. Photograph of a painting, c1908. [Detroit Publishing Company](#). Prints & Photographs Division

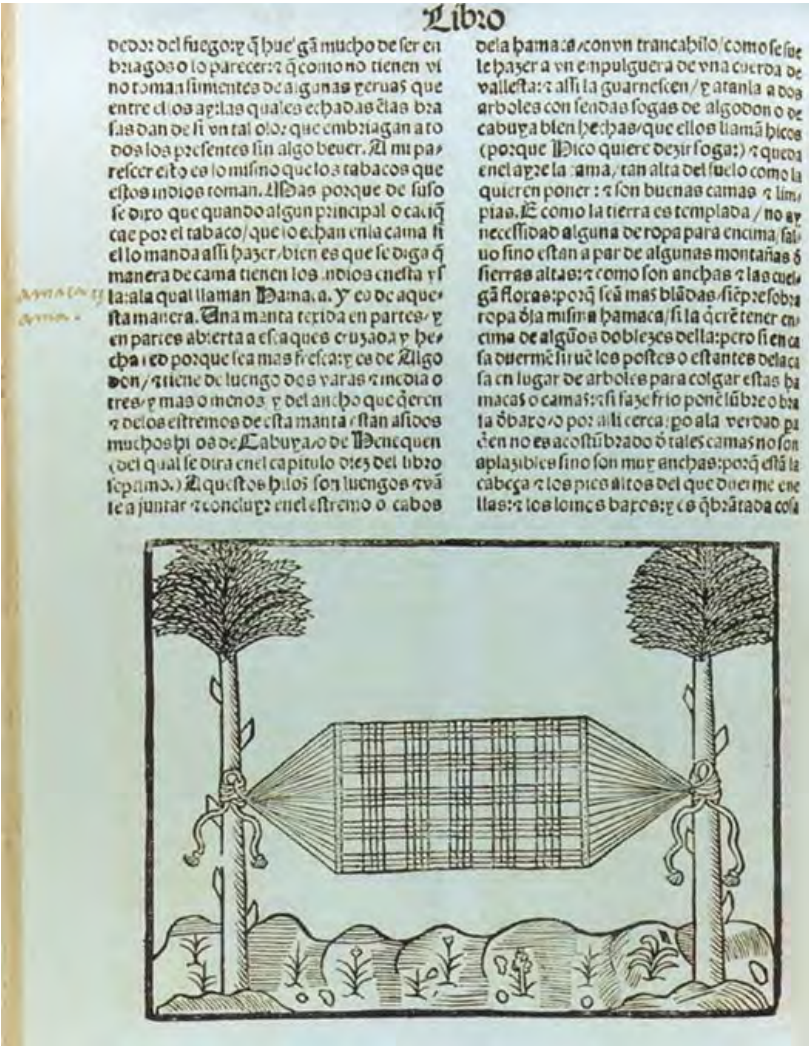
The 400th anniversary of the event inspired the first official Columbus Day holiday in the United States. [President Benjamin Harrison](#) issued a proclamation in 1892, “recommending to the people the observance in all their localities of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America...” and describing Columbus as “the pioneer of progress and enlightenment.” Since then, school programs, plays, and community festivities have been organized across the country in celebration of Columbus Day. [Columbus and the Discovery of America](#), Imre Kiralfy’s “grand dramatic, operatic, and ballet spectacle,” is among the more elaborate tributes created for this commemoration. The [World’s Columbian Exposition](#) or Chicago’s World’s Fair, which opened in the summer of 1893, was designed to commemorate Columbus’ discovery of the New World 400 years earlier.



[K\[nights\] of Columbus](#). McGranahan & McIntyre, c1914. [Panoramic Photographs](#). Prints & Photographs Division

In the decades that followed, the [Knights of Columbus](#), an international Roman Catholic fraternal benefit society, lobbied state legislatures to declare October 12 a legal holiday. Colorado was the first state to do so on April 1, 1907. New York declared Columbus Day a holiday in 1909 and on **October 12**, 1909, New York Governor [Charles Evans Hughes](#) led a parade that included the crews of two Italian ships, several Italian-American societies, and legions of the Knights of Columbus. President [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) designated Columbus Day (then celebrated October 12) a national holiday in 1934.

Since 1971, when Columbus Day was designated the second Monday in October, it has been celebrated as a federal holiday. In many locations across the country Americans hold [parades](#) to commemorate the day.



[Hammock](#). In Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia general y natural de las Indias*. (Seville, 1535). 1492: [An Ongoing Voyage](#). Rare Book & Special Collections Division  
Oviedo came to America in 1514 and for over thirty years compiled detailed ethnographic descriptions of the goods, products, peoples, and customs of the Caribbean and Central America. The hammock was first introduced to Europeans during Columbus’ first voyage of 1492.

## Learn More

- Learn more about the explorer’s historical legacy by visiting the exhibition [1492: An Ongoing Voyage](#).
- Search the Library of Congress [pictorial collections](#) on *Columbus* to find photos of monuments, paintings and drawings of the explorer and his landings in the New World, and numerous places named for him. See, for example, one of the largest monuments to the explorer, the [Columbus Monument](#) at Columbus Circle in New York City.
- Search on the phrase Columbus Day in [Chronicling America](#), a collection of historic American newspapers, to find newspaper articles from across the country describing celebrations, as well as advertisements for traditional Columbus Day sales.
- Read about the [Exploration and Early Settlement](#) of what today is the United States. This essay was first written as part of [Parallel Histories: Spain, the United States, and the American Frontier](#), a collaborative digital library project between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Spain. Look for maps, prints and photographs, and other documents.
- Explore the following collections which testify to the importance of Spain and the Spanish language in the exploration and European settlement of North America and the Caribbean:
  - [Hispano Music & Culture from the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection](#)
  - [Puerto Rico at the Dawn of the Modern Age: Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Perspectives](#)
  - [The Spanish-American War in Motion Pictures](#)
- Examine an award-winning [quilt](#) commemorating the Sesquicentennial of Christopher Columbus’ arrival in the New World (1492-1992). This quilt is featured in the collection [Quilts and Quilting in America, 1978 to 1996](#).

< **October 12** >

Select date



**Go**

Follow Us



[Take our survey](#)