

Resource 2: Excerpts - The Log of Christopher Columbus

Introduction [exact date unknown]

"I left... in 1492 and went to the town of Palos, Spain which is a seaport. There I put supplies on three ships...I left Palos with a lot of supplies and with many sailors on the third day of August. It was a Friday. We left a half an hour before sunrise. I headed for the Canary Islands...which are in the Ocean just off the coast of Africa. I will then leave from there on a voyage that will last until I arrive in the Indies... I decided to write everything down."

Saturday, 25 August 1492

"I reached Grand Canary Island this morning at 9:00."

Wednesday, 5 September 1492

"The ships have been loaded for the next part of our trip, and all is ready for the voyage. At sunrise I will lift anchors to begin the journey westward."

Sunday, 9 September 1492

"This day we completely lost sight of land, and many men sighed and cried for fear they would not see land again for a long time. I comforted them with great promises of lands and riches. In order to make them less afraid, I decided to tell them that we traveled fewer miles each day of our trip. I did this so that that they would not think that we were far away from Spain as they really were. I will keep an accurate record of how far we really traveled."

Monday, 10 September 1492

"Today I made 180 miles at a speed of 7½ knots. I wrote down and told the crew that we only traveled 144 miles so that the sailors would not get scared if the voyage is long."

The sailor saw many weeds in the water. This also comforted the men because they believe that that the weeds must have come from some nearby land..."

Monday, 24 September 1492

"I am having serious trouble with the crew despite the signs of land. They never stop talking complaining to each other that they will never be able to return home because they are so far away and won't have enough supplies for the trip back to Spain. They are saying that this voyage is insanity and suicidal - to risk their lives following the madness of a someone who is not Spanish. They have said that...I have lied to them to because I want to be famous.... Some of the crew feel that they have already arrived where

men have never dared to sail and that they should not have to go to the end of the world. I am also told by a few trusted men that if I keep sailing west, the best course of action will be to throw me into the sea some night."

Tuesday, 25 September 1492

"All told, we had gone about 65 miles, but I told the people we had only made 39 miles. The sea is very smooth, and some of the men went swimming."

Monday, 1 October 1492

"I did the math and it shows that we have traveled 2,121 miles. I did not reveal this to the men because they would become frightened, being so far from home."

Thursday, 4 October 1492

"A frigate bird came to the ship and a white bird that looked like a gull. So many birds are a sure sign that we are near land."

Sunday, 7 October 1492

This morning we saw what appeared to be land to the west, but it was not very clear...no one wished to make a false claim of discovery, for I had ordered that if anyone make such a claim and, after sailing three days, the claim proved to be false, they would not get the prize of 10,000 maravedis (Spanish money valued between \$500-600) promised by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Once they were warned of this, no one aboard the Santa Maria, Pinta, or Nina dared to call out 'Land, land!'"

Thursday, 11 October 1492

"About 10 o'clock at night...I thought I saw a light to the west. It looks like a little wax candle bobbing up and down...I am the first to admit that I was so eager to find land that I did not trust my own senses, so I called for Pedro Gutierrez, the representative of the king. After a few moments, he saw it too...It was such an uncertain thing that I did not feel it was enough proof of land."

*...at two hours after midnight, the Pinta fired a cannon, my prearranged signal for the sighting of land...
...I now believe that the light I saw earlier was a sign from God and that it truly was the first positive sign of land...I learned that the first man to sight land was Rodrigo de Triana."*