

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Correspondence, White House Office of:
Records, 1981-1989

Folder Title: Columbus Day

Box: 77 (1985)

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

Last Updated: 05/2023



Columbus Day, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We are privileged each year to pay honor to the great explorer whose epic voyages of discovery led to the development of the Western Hemisphere. Christopher Columbus won an imperishable place in history and in the hearts of all Americans by challenging the unknown and defying the doubters. In doing so he set in motion a chain of events which transformed the world and led to the birth of the great country in which we live.

Columbus' achievement lies not only in his daring navigational exploits but also in the practical outgrowth of his efforts. More than a great seaman, he was a man of vision who could see the opportunities that lay beyond the horizon. Indeed, the results of his quest were far grander than he could have envisioned. Those who followed in the path he had opened built a new world whose economic, political, and social development have been marvels of human energy and ingenuity. People from across the globe have come to America to find freedom, justice, and economic opportunity.

Columbus exemplified a spirit which still inspires all Americans—a spirit of reaching out, expanding the frontiers of knowledge, a spirit of undaunted hope. In the words of Joaquin Miller, "He gained a world; he gave that world its grandest lesson: 'On! Sail on!'" Like Columbus, we Americans are ready to take risks in pursuit of our goals. We understand that boundless opportunities await those who dare to strive.

Our tribute to Columbus has special meaning to Americans of Italian descent. This son of Genoa was the first of many great Italian travelers to the New World. Millions of his countrymen would later settle in the new land, adding their precious contribution to the developments that stemmed from Columbus' voyages. Columbus was the first link in a chain which today binds the United States to Italy in a special relationship.

This remembrance is also particularly important for those of Spanish descent. Columbus' achievement depended on the vision and energy of a newly united Spain. This was only the first of Spain's many cultural and economic contributions to the New World. We share with our Spanish-speaking neighbors this heritage and our debt of gratitude to Spain.

In the coming years this commemoration of the voyage of 1492 will take on heightened significance, because we are approaching the 500th anniversary of that great event. The Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission, a distinguished group of Americans assisted by representatives from Spain and Italy, will plan, encourage, and carry forward the commemoration of Columbus' great voyages of discovery. The Committee held its initial meeting on September 12, and will report within two years its recommendations for observance of the celebration.

In tribute to Columbus' achievement, the Congress of the United States, by joint resolution approved April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), as modified by the Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as Columbus Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 14, as Columbus Day. I invite the people of this Nation to observe that day in schools, churches, and other suitable places with appropriate ceremonies in honor of this great explorer. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan