

**Lobby Group: Profile One****CHENG HO**

The Ming dynasty had restored law and order, and a stable government ruled China. The Ming emperors had a strong policy towards other countries and wanted to extend Chinese power far beyond their own borders to the lands that had once been threatened by the angry and cruel Mongols. It would be a good time for the Ming dynasty to show the kingdoms of Southeast Asia the power and glory of China. China wanted to make its power known in those parts of the world that may have forgotten it. A series of journeys was carefully planned and paid for by the funds of the imperial treasury.

**BY THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, CHINA WAS AGAIN AT PEACE, AND THE TERRIBLE WARS WITH THE MONGOLS WERE OVER.**

Cheng Ho, a member of the court system, led the journeys. He would be the admiral in charge of the entire trip. Cheng Ho was a genius, and he was a good choice to be the leader of this great adventure.

The voyages were planned to be large, but they were not about conquering and making war. There would be attempts at setting up trade, but that was not the most important goal. Cheng Ho was allowed to lead his ships wherever he chose to go. There were no limits placed on the voyages, and Cheng Ho seems to have loved discovering and exploring new lands. Cheng Ho and the Chinese government were curious about the world beyond their kingdom, and the females of the court liked the rare items that were found in other lands.

In all, there were seven great expeditions from 1405 through 1433. As many as 70,000 men in great ships sailed under the command of Cheng Ho on one voyage. Sometimes, small groups of ships separated from the rest of the fleet to explore unknown islands and ports, and even single ships were sent out for this reason.

## Lobby Group: Profile One

# CHENG HO

It was difficult to give these ships all they needed to survive the journey. Cheng Ho sailed southward out of Nanking and Hangchow, down toward Foochow, Canton, and the island of Hainan. The fleet came close to the coast of Southeast Asia and Vijaya (Indochina) and continued down to Sumatra and Java (Indonesia), then eastward to Timor and the Philippines. Traveling through the Strait of Malacca and sailing westward, the Chinese voyagers moved north along the coast of Burma into the Bay of Bengal, going up to the mouth of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers.

The fleet of Cheng Ho was alone in the Indian Ocean and sailed on to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), putting in at Colombo and Calle. They rounded the tip of India and turned north, visiting the Malabar Coast on the west, stopping at Calicut, Cochin, and Quilon. Cheng Ho's fleet continued its westward journey into the Persian Gulf and made a victorious stop at Ormuz, a major trading center of the Arab world. The Chinese skipped along the coast of the Arabian Peninsula, touched Dofar and Aden, and went on into the Red Sea as far north as Jidda. Coming back into the Indian Ocean, Cheng Ho sailed around the tip of Africa.

Cheng Ho took back to China many gifts from the smaller, less powerful kingdoms of Southeast Asia and also shiploads of exotic goods and products from as far away as Java, Ceylon, and East Africa. He established Chinese power in Malaya, Java, Sumatra, and Ceylon. Malacca, which controlled the strait, became a main Chinese base. Cheng Ho died in 1434, and with him died China's hope for a port or station in the Indian Ocean. By then, the Mings were being threatened again by the Mongols, and the Japanese pirates were attacking China's coasts. A united Japan under a powerful shogun government was threatening to invade Korea. Exploration was forgotten, and China prepared to defend her kingdom.

## Lobby Group: Profile Two

**THE VIKINGS**

**THE VIKINGS WERE THE GREATEST SEA TRAVELERS OF THEIR TIME.**

They were also well-known for attacking, stealing, destroying, and spreading death and destruction wherever they went. For close to 400 years, from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, they spread terror throughout Europe and any other place they could reach with their long ships. The stories of England and France from this time are filled with tales of roads filled with dead

men, women, children, priests, monks, and nuns who were killed trying to run away from the Vikings attacking their shores.

The Vikings came from Scandinavia, the cold lands of northern Europe that include Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. In old Norse, *Vik* means “fjord” (which means a body of water), and *ing* means “son of,” making a Viking the son of the fjords. It was a harsh environment, a land of cold and ice. Very little of the land could grow crops, so the Vikings turned to the sea to make their living. It was probably a period of overpopulation that suddenly made the Vikings sail out of the icy waters of their countries to conquer and win riches from the lands and kingdoms that were beyond their world.

The cold northern climates created men and women who were used to living a hard life. They were a strong race of warriors. Living where they did, they were tough and rugged people. They built their ships for speed and strength to battle the roughest waters. The Vikings sailed the seas and oceans without instruments or tools for guiding them; instead, they depended on the stars to guide them. They knew the waters that they sailed, where they were shallow and where there were reefs, rocks, or any danger that could destroy them. They had no fear, and they preferred to kill themselves rather than be captured by their enemies. They were pagans who worshipped many warrior gods and goddesses.

## Lobby Group: Profile Two

# THE VIKINGS

The Vikings made their way east into the rivers and streams of the area where Europe and Asia bordered each other. They married people of other Slavic tribes, and they established Kievan Rus as the first Russian kingdom in the East. They sailed down the Volga and Don Rivers into the Caspian Sea and down the Dneiper River into the Black Sea. They sailed as far as Constantinople, where the Byzantine emperor was so pleased by the Vikings that he created the Varangian Guard made up of these ferocious Norsemen who became his personal bodyguards.

The Vikings sailed into the Mediterranean, attacking every shore they touched, and conquered Sicily. Every year, they came and attacked England until, finally, they were given a piece of land, the Danelaw, to settle. The Vikings invaded Ireland, and they settled Dublin. The French were raided every year until the French king gave in and allowed the Vikings to settle in Normandy. Sailing northward into the Arctic Ocean, they discovered Spitzbergen. Vikings set their ships north and to the west, settling the Orkney, Faeroe, and Shetland Islands, making their way to Iceland, Greenland, and all the way to the North American continent and Vinland. Bjarni Herjulfson may have been the first to see the North American shore. Leif Ericson made a repeat voyage, reported a land that was wild and rocky, and made a landing at a place where he found wild grapes.

The Vikings were amazing voyagers. They were unafraid to sail in the darkness, and they had no fear of sailing beyond the sight of land. They voyaged where no other Europeans had gone before. They let the rivers, seas, and oceans take them to the far reaches of the earth, but many people didn't know about their important journeys.

## Lobby Group: Profile Three

**THE NATIVE AMERICANS**

These events are mysterious, for they happened when ancient human beings were still hunters and food gatherers, Stone Age creatures.

This journey onto and across the land bridge may have taken place during the Neolithic period (the New Stone Age) more than 25,000 years ago. This is considered a good guess at when it happened since no one has found fossils of humans in North or South America that are older than this. The Native Americans were able to make their way onto the land bridge because glaciers (large sheets of ice) covered most of the earth.

The glaciers were giant walls of ice a mile high, and the levels of the oceans were 300 feet lower than they are now.

The Native Americans that traveled out of Asia did not cross over the land bridge right away. There is enough proof that many generations of people lived and died on the land bridge. They found shelter. They hunted and learned to find enough food to survive. It took Native Americans hundreds of years or even thousands to travel to North America because some groups stayed in areas for a long time.

We also know that there were many different waves of migration happening over thousands of years. Some of the wanderers got used to the frozen grasslands, or tundras, and that is where they chose to stay. The high latitudes of the Arctic were no longer a danger to them. They learned to hunt whales, seals, walruses, polar bears, ducks, and seabirds. These Native Americans made their homes in northern Canada, Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. Others turned to the southward, finding openings in the glaciers or natural paths that led to warmer areas.

**THE NATIVE AMERICANS WANDERED OUT OF THE VASTNESS OF ASIA ONTO A LAND BRIDGE THAT WAS ATTACHED TO LAND FARTHER TO THE EAST.**

## Lobby Group: Profile Four

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**

He was the greatest and bravest sailor. His was the greatest exploration, and his voyages were the greatest adventures, the greatest voyages of discovery. This was Samuel Eliot Morison's, this nation's most important naval historian, opinion of Christopher Columbus. Morison was a professor at Harvard, won Pulitzer Prizes for his biographies of Christopher Columbus and John Paul Jones, wrote many books about exploration, and was asked by the United States government to write the official history of the United States Navy in the Second World War.

**THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD DISAGREE WITH SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON ABOUT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.**

For Christopher Columbus, the sea and sailing ships were his life. He was 14 years of age when he went to sea. Later, he lived in Lisbon, Portugal, where he worked as a chartmaker. Portugal, at that time, was the center of trade and exploration. The Portuguese were pushing their ships south along the coast of Africa, hoping to find the all-water route to the Indies and the Far East. It was here that Columbus decided he could reach India and China by sailing to the west.

The African coast seemed like it went on forever, and Columbus made many trips south along the coast of Africa in the 1470s and 1480s to find out for himself what would work best and to improve his sailing skills. On these voyages, he found out that in the southern latitudes, as far north as the Canary Islands, the winds blow from the east. He decided that with these easterly winds at his back, he would be able to take his ships to India. In 1484, he told the Portuguese court and John II about his idea, but everyone thought he was wrong. The Portuguese thought the best idea was to go around Africa to India. It wasn't until 12 years later, in 1492, that he got the approval and money from the Spanish court and Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to follow through with his plan.

## Lobby Group: Profile Four

# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Columbus set sail with his fleet of three ships in August of 1492. Columbus always knew the exact position of his ships. During the course of the voyage, as the men sailed onward into the ocean, his crew began to panic and fear that they would be destroyed. Columbus convinced the men to travel onward, even as many thought about rebelling and returning to Spain. After 33 days of staying on the westerly course, land was sighted. Columbus and his men made their first landing on San Salvador, one of the easternmost islands of the Bahamas. Columbus was convinced that he had reached an island off the coast of Asia.

Columbus would be convinced of this until the day he died. He always believed that the rich cities of India, China, and the Far East were just a few days' voyage away. In all, he made four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean, searching for the riches of the East that he was convinced were just out of reach. He discovered the West Indies in 1492, South America in 1498, and Central America in 1502, but he believed that he was in the Far East. That is why he called the Native Americans "Indians."

He discovered and named Cuba and Hispaniola (Haiti). Columbus also claimed many islands for Spain, including Domenica, the Lesser Antilles, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. He discovered Jamaica, the Cape Verde Islands, Trinidad, and the coast of South America. On his last voyage, he explored the coast of Central America and the Isthmus of Panama.

Columbus always believed the great cities and riches of the Orient were only a short sail away, and he never realized that he had discovered a New World. The year 1492 is a milestone in the history of the world. The voyages of Columbus would begin an amazing age of discovery and exploration.

**Lobby Group: Profile Five****VASCO DA GAMA**

All of Europe knew that only an ocean route to the East would be safe and moneymaking for carrying on trade with the Orient. Five years after Christopher Columbus discovered a New World, Vasco da Gama rounded the coast of Africa and made his way east into the Indian Ocean and on to the riches of India and the Far East.

**VASCO DA GAMA  
WON THE PRIZE.**

It was a plan that began early in the fifteenth century. Much of the credit for da Gama's success must go to Prince Henry the Navigator and the many ship captains and conquerors sent out into the ocean to find the way to India. The court of Prince Henry was very active and tried to improve the sailing and directional skills of sailors, made better charts and maps, and improved the important sailing instruments like the compass, sextant, and astrolabe. It was most likely Prince Henry's shipbuilders who designed the caravel, a ship made especially for sailing the wide oceans, one with enough length, enough masts, and strong enough sails to reach distant shores.

The Portuguese moved carefully, but Prince Henry always tried to get them to go further. First, the Madeira Islands were reached, and then the Azores were found. Ships were sent to explore the coast of western Africa, and bases were established, but Prince Henry always told his men to go further south. Cape Bojador was the biggest barrier. On a map, it looks like a tiny point of the Sahara jutting into the sea, but the superstitious sailors feared what might be beyond it. However, Prince Henry would always find the right man and leader to get the job done. Once Cape Bojador was rounded, the Portuguese caravels kept sailing south.

## Lobby Group: Profile Five

# VASCO DA GAMA

Prince Henry died in 1460, but the voyages continued. Bartholomeu Dias was successful in 1487, rounding the southern tip of Africa into the Indian Ocean. If not for a rebellious crew, he might have sailed all the way to India. His voyage set the stage for the final act.

Vasco da Gama set sail for India in 1497 with a fleet of four ships. As his ships rounded the huge bulge of West Africa, he planned a course to the southwest, not staying close to the African coast but instead sailing right out into the ocean. It is likely that other voyagers had told him that sailing out to the southwest was a better way to go than sailing against the winds along Africa's west coast. He quickly picked up the southeast trade winds which set a swift pace for the fleet. The skies were clear and a brilliant blue, and the sails puffed out and pushed the caravels steadily southward. For a few days after turning eastward, hoping to round the southern tip of Africa, the fleet couldn't raise a good wind to blow the sails. They were caught in the "horse latitudes," calm waters and no wind. After three months of eating bad food and drinking spoiled water, suffering sickness and disease, the sailors rounded the tip of Africa and made their way into the Indian Ocean. Vasco da Gama's first landing was Mozambique, an important Arab center for trade. He had sailed 4,500 miles, but now, finally, India and the Far East were in sight. Continuing his voyage, on May 20, 1498, he sailed into Calicut on the Malabar Coast of India.

He reached his goal, and though he was greeted by angry Arabs and natives, Vasco da Gama loaded his ship with spices and got ready to journey back home. He was given a well-deserved hero's welcome upon his return in 1499, and King Manuel greeted him personally and gave him many rewards. Within a few years of his return, the Portuguese would sweep into the Indian Ocean, build bases and fortresses, take Malacca and the Spice Islands, and make their way to China and Japan. The riches of the Far East were theirs for the taking.

## Should or Shouldn't We Celebrate Columbus Day?

### Evaluation Form

Profile	Important Points (Research)	Convincing Speech	Presentation Skills	Ability to Put Things in Order
Cheng Ho				
Vikings				
Native Americans				
Christopher Columbus				
Vasco da Gama				

## Should or Shouldn't We Celebrate Columbus Day?

### Reflections on the Simulation

Read and respond to the following statements or questions.

1. Describe in detail what you liked or disliked about the simulation.
2. In what ways do you believe this is similar to or different from a real Congressional hearing?
3. For what reasons would you like or not like to take part in a simulation again?
4. Reply to the statements in the box after reading the personal profiles below and discussing them with your parents or guardians at home.

**YESTERDAY'S VILLAINS CAN BECOME TODAY'S HEROES.  
YESTERDAY'S HEROES CAN BECOME TODAY'S VILLAINS.**

**Menachem Begin:** As the leader of the Irgun, the British called him a terrorist and offered money for someone to kill him. If caught, he would have been hanged. He survived the period and became prime minister of Israel.

**Yassir Arafat:** When he became the leader of the PLO (the Palestinian Liberation Organization) in the late 1960s, Israel called him a murderer and terrorist for over 25 years. Today, Yassir Arafat is accepted as the head of the newly emerging Palestinian state.

**Richard Nixon:** He was elected president of the United States in 1968 and re-elected in 1972 by as many votes. It was discovered that a few Republicans were involved in the Watergate scandal. Nixon covered up the crime, and he eventually had to resign his position as president.

**Joe McCarthy:** As a senator from Wisconsin, McCarthy made a reputation by hunting for Communists who worked for our government. He was very popular until it was discovered that he had lied to the American people. He took part in a witch hunt that destroyed many reputations and even some lives.

From these examples, we note that history can be changed. Nothing is set in stone. Please answer the following question:

5. Now that you have heard many different points of view, for what reasons does Columbus deserve or not deserve a high place in history? Write your answer on the back of the paper.