

**The Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations is committed to preserving the legacy of Christopher Columbus. To this end, we have put together the following facts about why Columbus should be remembered and celebrated, not just by Italian Americans, but by all Americans.**

#### **COLUMBUS CONDEMNED SLAVERY**

- Columbus was against slavery
- He never bought, sold, or owned slaves
- He never brought any slaves from Africa to the Caribbean

#### **COLUMBUS CHAMPIONED INDIGENOUS RIGHTS**

- He protected Tainos from the Caribs and Canibs that practiced slavery, torture, human sacrifice and cannibalism
- He was blood brother to Taino Chief Guacanagari
- He adopted Guacanagari's orphaned son
- He ordered his men to trade fairly with indigenous tribes

#### **COLUMBUS ADMIRERED THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

- In his logs, he describes them as "well-made, with fine shapes and faces...their eyes were large and very beautiful."
- He praises their intelligence
- He hoped to convert them to Christianity

## **Learn More**

To discover more ways to help preserve the legacy of Christopher Columbus, visit the following websites:

#### **The National Columbus Education Foundation**

[www.knowcolumbus.org](http://www.knowcolumbus.org)

#### **Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America Commission for Social Justice**

[www.osia.org/  
commission-for-social-justice](http://www.osia.org/commission-for-social-justice)

#### **Italian American One Voice Coalition**

[www.iaovc.org](http://www.iaovc.org)

#### **To join us as we unite Italian Americans across the United States, visit**

[www.italianamericaonline.com](http://www.italianamericaonline.com)



# **Why Columbus Matters**

**CONFERENCE**  
**of PRESIDENTS**  
of Major Italian American Organizations

[www.copomiao.org](http://www.copomiao.org)

## COLUMBUS NEVER TORTURED THE NATIVE POPULATIONS

- This lie is in ***A People's History of the United States*** by Howard Zinn
- Zinn gives no evidence for this falsehood, which is now wide-spread
- Zinn's book also attacks Washington, Jefferson, and other American leaders
- This book has been used in U.S. schools for more than 40 years

## THE RECORDED HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS

- No written history about these vast continents and their peoples existed before Columbus
- After him came European missionaries who created grammars and dictionaries of native languages which saved them from being lost forever
- The missionaries wrote down native customs, beliefs, and traditions
- They preserved Indigenous art, and established schools for the children

## CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA

- After Columbus came millions of Europeans who brought their science, medicine, inventions, technology, art, music and manpower to America
- They brought Greek democracy, Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics, and the tenet that "all men are created equal."

## COLUMBUS DAY IS A LEGAL U.S. HOLIDAY

- Columbus Day was first celebrated in 1792 on the 300th anniversary of his first voyage
- The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 on the 400th anniversary
- That year, President Benjamin Harris declared Columbus Day a legal holiday
- In 1971, the U.S. Congress made it a legal federal holiday
- Columbus was once admired as much as Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln
- Our nation's capital and more than 50 cities, towns and counties are named for him
- The United States has more monuments and other tributes to Columbus than any other nation in the world

## FROM ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS TO ITALIAN AMERICANS

- Columbus Day celebrates the heritage and contributions of the nation's estimated 20 million Italian Americans
- It also recognizes their ancestors' early struggle to overcome poverty, discrimination, and exploitation
- Italian immigrants were lynched in the South; paid less than White and Black workers in the North; and declared "Enemy Aliens" in WWII
- In WWII, Italian immigrants were interned, had their property confiscated, were forced to move, and subjected to curfews and travel restrictions
- The holiday marks their journey from denigrated immigrants to successful citizens of our nation
- On Columbus Day every year, Italian Americans say "thank you" to the land of opportunity



## COLUMBUS UNDER ATTACK

- For 200 years, Columbus was revered in America for permanently opening relations between the Americas and the rest of the world
- In 1992, however, on the 500th anniversary of his first crossing, special interest groups destroyed Columbus' reputation to further their own political and social agendas
- As a result, so far, 14 states and more than 130 cities observe "Indigenous People's Day" instead of or in addition to Columbus Day
- The U.S. has an estimated five million people of Native American descent and 20 million Americans of Italian descent

**TURN OVER TO DISCOVER  
HOW YOU CAN HELP!**