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**Christopher Columbus and his  
Voyages -I**

**Lead: It is almost impossible to overestimate the historical significance of Christopher Columbus and his discoveries, yet he was a man of controversy and remains so to this day.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Columbus was the son of wool weaver and grew up in the ancient Italian seaport of Genoa, but early on he became enraptured with the sea. On occasion he accompanied his father on short trading trips and**

during the passage learned the rudiments of sailing and navigation. He signed on as an apprentice and, in 1574, took ship for his first long voyage, east to the Aegean island off Chios just off the coast of Turkey.

On another journey, this time to England, his ship was attacked by French privateers and sunk off the coast of southern Portugal. He was a strong swimmer, survived and made his way to Lisbon where he worked with his brother Bartholmeo as a cartographer. In this he became very familiar with new and innovative *portulan* charts, on which the European coast, its bays, inlets, ports, capes and coves were described for sailors in great detail. By his thirties,

**Columbus was an expert navigator, with wide knowledge of the western maritime world, having commanded at least one trading expedition as far north as Iceland, and a deep love of the sea. Sometime in the late 1570s he began dreaming of sailing west.**

**While many inexperienced and uneducated people looked at the western ocean as an ominous barrier, scholars and sailors sensed that they had not reached the extreme limit of the world. The continued monopoly on eastern trade by Arab merchants and governments was a constant spur to innovation - perhaps there was a way to break the monopoly and find great riches by sailing west to Japan. Next time: Royal patronage and royal**

**cash.**

**Research assistance by Nancy Kobus-Maynes, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

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**<http://muweb.millersville.edu/-columbus/columbus.html>**