**THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS: A TEXTBOOK’S TALE**

**Born in Genoa, of humble parents, Christopher Columbus grew up to become an experienced seafarer, venturing as far as Iceland and West Africa. His adventures convinced him that the world must be round and that the fabled riches of the East—spices and gold—could be had by sailing west, superseding the overland routes, which the Turks had closed off to commerce. To get funding for his enterprise, he beseeched monarch after monarch in Western Europe. After at first being dismissed by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Columbus finally got his chance when Isabella decided to underwrite a modest expedition. Columbus outfitted three pitiful ships, the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria, and set forth from Spain. After an arduous journey of more than two months, during which his mutinous crew almost threw him overboard, Columbus discovered the West Indies on October 12, 1492. Unfortunately, although he made three more voyages to America, he never knew he had discovered a New World. Columbus died in obscurity, unappreciated and penniless. Yet without his daring, American history would have been very different, for in a sense he made it possible.**