

Honorable Members of the State of Colorado

May 3, 2017

Christopher Columbus

1451 – 20/May 1506

My Name is James Vecchiarelli, Past 4th Degree Grand Knight (Knights of Columbus)

Past President 2 two year terms, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church Men's Club.

College graduate of Front Range CC. \ Served four years in the United States Navy 1967-1971

Bill 17-1327

This bill's objective is to discredit Christopher Columbus for genocide against the Indigenous People of the Americas. After last year's House Bill 16-1135 failed to pass. The wording is almost the same but the added verbiage does nothing to strengthen the arguments of proponents.

When in fact there is no substantial proof that Columbus was ever involved in such atrocities. These actions were the result of the Spanish and Portuguese soldiers that followed years later. As a matter of fact, he found the natives to be, (quotes from his journal)" As I saw they were very friendly to us and perceived that they could be much more easily converted to our holy faith by gentle means than by force". There is in fact proof that Indigenous people committed years of genocide against their own before the European influence.

Aztec indigenous people captured other natives and used them for slavery. In 1450's, they created the institution of ritual war (The Flower War) to have trained warriors thus created the necessity of constant sacrifices to keep the sun moving. (*1) The Sacrifice of war captives was an important part of many of the Aztec religious festivals. (*2)

In the later years 1519 Cortes` allied himself with his long time enemy, the Aztecs and the genocide continued with more human sacrifice.

From 1520 – 1521 an outbreak of Smallpox swept the nation and between 10% - 50% of the population was lost.

More human sacrifices began in 1521 with the Aztecs and the Incas Empire wide spread in Mesoamerican and in South America. (*2)

North America – In Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, the most common forms of Slavery were those of prisoners of war and debtors. (*3) Most victims of human sacrifice were prisoners of war or slaves. From Alaska to California, slavery was hereditary. (*4)

Many Native American tribes did enslave small numbers of captives in the Southwest United States and some were sold to Hispanic residents. In at least one instance the San Louis Valley Colorado a female house hold continued (*5) in her status long after the emancipation Proclamation.

Do you think they teach this part of history in Native American Schools? Maybe they wouldn't have PTSD when Columbus Day is celebrated by the Italians of America. Christopher Columbus of Italian heritage, was noted for being an Explorer, Navigator and a Colonizer. That is what we proudly celebrate.

References:

(*1) Isaac, Barry L. (1983) "The Aztec Flower War" A Geopolitical Explanation Journal of Anthropological research 39

(*2) Hassig, Ross. "Moteuczomah Ilhuicamina" Aztec warfare: Imperial Expansion and political control. Norman: University of Oklahoma 1988. 158. Print

(*3) Wikipedia: Slavery among the Indigenous people of America

(*4) "Human Sacrifice" Britannica concise encyclopedia

(*5) Explore – Old – West Colorado.com copyright 2010 - 2017