

October 10, 1941

[Columbus Day Statement]

FDR Speech File

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 10, 1941

The rounding out of each century and each half-century following a landmark in human progress recalls to our minds the vision and the sacrifice and the achievement of all those benefactors of the race who have striven to advance the cultural or material frontiers of civilization. The year commencing October 12, 1941 is the four hundred and fiftieth year after the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. In these four and a half centuries, the Western Hemisphere has received and enjoyed the gifts of Old World culture, religion, science, and philosophy, and has evolved and nurtured a precious contribution of its own, new marvels of science, lasting creations of literature and art, political forms of benefit to all the world.

Based on the premise that all of the children of men are equal in their natural right to the pursuit of happiness, the governments of the Western Hemisphere republics, now in their second century of existence, have advanced through periods of stress to a present-day solidarity and unity of purpose never before known on the American continents on so wide a scale and with such unanimity of consent. These American nations are firmly resolved to preserve and defend the principles and the institutions of representative government, liberty of conscience, and social responsibility.

Columbus acted according to the ideal of science. On the basis of assembled data, he arrived at a hypothesis; and he bent every effort to test his theory by actual experiment. The sighting of dim outlines of land in the distance, on the morning of that epochal twelfth of October, proved beyond contradiction his doctrine that dry land lay beyond the ocean; and he thereby opened new avenues of human history.

Neither Columbus nor any other man of science nor any statesman or colonizer could foresee the progress destined to be made by the lands discovered in the west. Nor can we of the present day foresee what further advances will be achieved in the coming years toward the goal of a world permanently at peace, permanently prosperous, permanently free. But we do know that the common striving of all of the countries of the Americas can be a powerful force in the interest of stability, peace, and freedom.



The following statement of the President is for release in papers appearing on the streets not earlier than 9:00 P.M., E.S.T., Saturday, October 11, 1941.

The same limitation applies to its use by radio broadcasters or radio commentators.

Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

A COLUMBUS DAY STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

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Miss Gully

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Stephen Early etc

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