

# Columbus and the Age of Discovery

In 1989 as its contribution to the forthcoming Columbian Quincentenary, Millersville University created and installed an innovative, online dial-in text retrieval system known as The Computerized Information Retrieval System (CIRS) on Columbus and the Age of Discovery. Ahead of its time even as commemorations began for the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1992, CIRS became one of the first academic projects of the newly created Internet. Recognized as an official project of the U.S. Christopher Columbus Jubilee Commission, Spain92, as well as several other countries, CIRS received national and international recognition including the accolade of being "a model for all future historical databases" by the AHA. Also, it became an integral part of the "Kids Safe" EdSITEment learning program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more than twenty years the Columbus Database served the academic community with access to over 1100 text original articles, speeches, letters and other written, visual and audio materials. Clearly, for the historians and other social studies teachers the database contained a wealth of information about "who we were" and "what we thought about" in 1992.

Unfortunately, Millersville University can no longer maintain the current project as a viable online database of information. This is due in large part to the expiration of many of the original letters of permission which had granted copyright privileges to the university. Furthermore, the steady decline in the use of the database over the years has made it difficult to justify its continued existence as an open system. Accordingly, we have made available an index containing the major works along with bibliographical information for those want to continue research on their own.

Finally, the Project Director, Thomas C. Tirado, Ph.D., has granted the university permission to make available his scholarly work including the main biographical entry on Columbus from Microsoft's *ENCARTA Encyclopedia* as well as several keynote addresses in English and Spanish which he presented at international conferences. Also available are the English and Italian articles of the Italian-born Columbus scholar Maurizio Tagliattini.

To reach Dr. Tirado on matters related to this work, visit his web site at: <http://tctirado.com>