

Columbus Statue

Barry Levine <[REDACTED]>

Sat 7/18/2020 1:20 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

I'm asking the Philadelphia Historical Commission to NOT recommend removing the statue of Columbus from Marconi Plaza. The statue of Christopher Columbus should remain in Marconi Plaza as an integral piece of honoring our history.

Christopher Columbus's role in American history is important - both the good and the bad and that history must not be erased. We have an obligation to not let a small yet loud group control this narrative and our history. Although they are offended by Columbus and want the statue removed, we should not let ourselves be robbed of this important part of our history or even allow it to be moved to another location - it needs to remain where it is.

The South Philadelphia neighborhood where Marconi Plaza is located was and still is populated by descendants of the early Italian residents. Christopher Columbus remains an important figure to these citizens of Philadelphia, as well as the city at large and is an important symbolic recognition of the contributions made by Italian immigrants to Philadelphia, as well as a recognition of Christopher Columbus's role in the history of our nation.

Public recognition of the accomplishments of the Italian-American community does not threaten, or detract from, the accomplishments or experience of other ethnic communities. To take the statue down because of pressure from a vocal minority is not in the best interests of Philadelphia as a city, its citizens, or the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,
Barry Levine

--

Barry Levine

[REDACTED]
Philadelphia, PA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Proposed Columbus statue removal

Wayne Becker <[REDACTED]>

Mon 7/20/2020 10:44 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: wayne becker <[REDACTED]>

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Movement is based on concern for public safety.

With all due respect, it is a mixed bag of protesters who are causing danger to the public.

Law enforcement is the appropriate responder.

Acquiesce in the face of force is always ill-advised .. it encourages the bad behavior.

Let unlawful behavior cease and then deliberate any changes with representatives of all the contesting sides in a calm atmosphere.

Thank you for considering of logic of this advice.

Wayne Becker
[REDACTED]

Removal of the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Park

Sat 7/18/2020 1:46 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

I vehemently oppose the efforts of Jimmy Kenney to remove the Columbus statue located in Marconi Plaza. By his absurd logic, any historical building or statue or other site, can and should be removed if approximately 250 people protest its presence.

Is the Commission prepared to live with this logically fair conclusion. If so, there will be no Historical sites left in the city. Over my long career, I have secured \$ millions for the preservation of Philadelphia's history.

It would be OUTRAGEOUS for the Historical commission to begin to go down this road..

Thank you, VJF

Suggestion for the Marconi Plaza - Replace Columbus with a celebration of Philly music!

Perry Wolfe <[REDACTED]>

Tue 7/21/2020 4:00 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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I recommend moving the Columbus Statue to inside of the Art Museum. No reason to bury it. It's history, and it's Philly history .

For Marconi Plaza, I recommend erecting a statue of some sort that will celebrate Philly musical history. That shouldn't make anyone angry.

This should contain images of perhaps some or all of the following:

Harold Melvin

Patti LaBelle

Hall & Oates

Chubby Checker

Boyz 2 Men

Questlove

Teddy Pendergrass

The Stylistics

Stanley Clarke

Jim Croce

Stan Getz

Jill Scott

DJ Jazzy Jeff & Will Smith

That's all for now.

If there are any questions, you can contact me.

Sincerely,

Perry Wolfe



Christopher Columbus Statue

Nunzio Scarpati <[REDACTED]>

Tue 7/21/2020 8:41 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Good Morning,

As I will be unable to attend the virtual meeting on Friday the 24th, I would like to state my opinion in favor of keeping the Columbus statue right where it is currently located. I believe wholeheartedly in the rights granted to use under the constitution, especially that all men and women are created equal and the right to be able to speak freely. This in turn gives individuals the right to agree and disagree with each other as well. However, when a group of people tries to force their ideals down the throats (Force being the key word here) of hard working, law abiding citizens I believe that said citizens have the right to protect and defend themselves as well. The Columbus statue has been part of the Marconi Plaza neighborhood for years, innocuous to the many of people who travel the neighborhood, known and appreciated by the people who call that neighborhood home. I have lived in the Marconi Plaza neighborhood close to 20 years now, I have raised a family there, yes an Italian American family. So to me and my family and the many many residents of the Marconi Plaza, Columbus is not just a piece of art work donated to the city, the statue is part of our culture or history, representing the hard work, the trials and tribulations of Italian Americans work came to this country to make a better life for themselves and their families.

When I went to school we all learned in fourteen hundred ninety-two Columbus sailed the ocean blue. He had three ships and left from Spain; He sailed through sunshine, wind and rain. He sailed by night; he sailed by day; He used the stars to find his way. Etc. 1492 was a much different time in the world, right or wrong as in all of history, things were different, cruel forms of punishment were the norm, as was slavery of all different races of people. Thank goodness, we have learned from history and grown better as a society.

Let me leave you with this in closing, it is stated that William Penn owned at least 12 slaves. Therefore, if we follow the logic of the groups that want to do away with Columbus and other historical statues, then the William Penn statue atop of City Hall should come down. Why stop there, I would think that the University of Penn would then have to change its name, let's push it even further and if their logic holds true then we'd have to rename the state of Pennsylvania..... When will it be enough?

I implore you to see through this misguided logic and to keep the Columbus statues right where it is,

Thank You,

Nunzio Scarpatti

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE AT MARCONI PARK -- KEEP IT WHERE IT IS

MARY KILGARRIFF <[REDACTED]>

Tue 7/21/2020 10:16 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Due tot the fact that I could not find anywhere on the City's website to vote about the Christopher Columbus Statue, I am sending this email so I may be heard.

I VOTE AGAINST REMOVING THE STATUE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS FROM MARCONI PARK.

If you remove this statue, you are not making anything right The City's attempt and the Country's attempt in removing statues and flags is totally **WRONG**. The City wants to hide the statue but that is not going to make things right because you are hiding something. What was wrong in the past cannot be made right because people want to rewrite History. You cannot rewrite History. We must learn from history so we do not repeat it.

Every person on earth has done something wrong even people whom we hold in high regard (present and past). Historical figures should not be judge because they did something which was deemed okay when they lived. Today things are different so these people should not be judged by today's standards.

KEEP THE STATUE! WHERE IT IS!!!!!! Thank You!!!!

Christopher Columbus statue

Linda M. ROBINSON <[REDACTED]>

Tue 7/21/2020 10:05 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Truly, what is wrong with all you people. Why are you destroying these art pieces to please whoever you are trying to please. Stop this madness, leave these icons of someone's artistic talent alone....pretty soon nothing will be allowed.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Columbus Statues

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Fri 7/17/2020 4:51 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello,

I feel we should keep this statue and somehow put up teaching history, like they did with Washington's house explaining his slaves. We didn't get rid of Washington. And how about Andrew Jackson and the Trail of Tears? So many historic figures were involved in racist behavior. We should not try to erase history. Public historic monuments can help continue teaching what there was never enough time to learn in school. History must be preserved, good and bad.

Thank You

Do Not Remove Columbus Statue

Catherine Zeidler <[REDACTED]>

Fri 7/17/2020 7:18 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Violent leftists have been on all out campaign to destroy any and all symbols of our American heritage. Do not give in to the irrational demands! It will never stop with Christopher Columbus, it will continue until all knowledge of history is erased. Take a stand against the cultural revolution before it is too late!

Catherine Zeidler

Do NOT Remove the Columbus Statue from Marconi Plaza

Brandi Levine <[REDACTED]>

Sat 7/18/2020 10:53 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

This letter is to most strongly urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission to NOT recommend removing the statue of Columbus from Marconi Plaza. The statue of Christopher Columbus should remain in Marconi Plaza.

It is an indisputable fact that Christopher Columbus played an important role in American history. This history should not be erased, but instead acknowledged by a myriad of means, including statuary. There are positive and negative consequences of all historical events. That a small, highly vocal, and violent group of agitators (some percentage of which may not even be from Philadelphia or the Philadelphia area), who claim they are offended by this statue and therefore want it removed, is not a good reason to take it down or move it to another location.

The South Philadelphia neighborhood where Marconi Plaza is located was initially populated by Italian immigrants and many current residents are descendants of the earlier residents. Christopher Columbus remains an important figure to these citizens of Philadelphia, as well as the city at large. This statue of Columbus is an important symbolic recognition of the contributions made by Italian immigrants to Philadelphia, as well as a recognition of Christopher Columbus's role in the history of our nation. Public recognition of the accomplishments of the Italian-American community does not threaten, or detract from, the accomplishments or experience of other ethnic communities. To take the statue down because of pressure from a vocal minority is not in the best interests of Philadelphia as a city, its citizens, or the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,
Brandi Levine

[REDACTED]
Philadelphia, PA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In the case of Christopher Columbus –

“Justice is the constant and perpetual wish to render to everyone his just due.” – Emperor Justinian

Columbus Day commemorates the landing of Columbus in the Americas, and to celebrate Italian American heritage and the community’s contributions to this country.

Due to the lobbying of the Knights of Columbus in New York City, Columbus Day was first celebrated was in 1792, when it was met with intense opposition from nativist and anti-Catholic elements.

The 1892 celebration declared by President Benjamin Harrison was intended to appease Italian immigrants in the aftermath of the mass lynching that occurred in New Orleans the previous year (March 14, 1891). The tragic lynching of 11 Italian-Americans is well documented – the result of mob violence. Although acquitted at trial, instead of being released, all were returned to prison, only to suffer the fate of hanging and dismemberment by the violent mob.

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were always concerned with “mob rule”. It is one reason our Constitution does not create a pure democracy, but rather, a representative form of government, which among its other expressions, led the founders to create the Electoral College.

We are not talking about a parade. We are talking about statues located in cities large and small throughout the United States that were meant to symbolize the contribution of Italian immigrants to this country If the Columbus statue is to be removed, then why should that decision not be subject to “due process” of justice? And if the decision is made on baseless accusation and rhetoric ... who should set the record straight?

Among the countries that colonized the Americas, Italy is notably absent. If European countries bear responsibility for colonialism’s legacy, it is England, France, Spain, Portugal and others that do, not Italy.

Very little facts are actually known about Christopher Columbus, much of the historic record his filled with supposition, folk-lore and misinformation. He was a Genoa-born navigator who used a quadrant, maps, sandglass and astrolabes to find his way across the Atlantic, and one of the first navigators to discover what Europeans quickly dubbed “the New World”. His presence there was only intermittent, limited to the period 1493-1498. It is true that his discoveries are prominent among those that opened the door for European colonialism, but to lay the genocide of all indigenous people at his feet is historically unjust and baseless, viewed either through the lens of the 21st century or the 15th century.

Why is there a Christopher Columbus statue is in Marconi Plaza?

Christopher Columbus was claimed symbolically by Italian Americans to represent their contributions to this country, in part because his navigational skills enabled him to discover a “new world” to Europeans, many of whom like themselves came here seeking a better life.

The City of Philadelphia paid respect to its Italian community by commissioning this statue. Due process is not dictated by mob rule, at least not here since the ratification of our Constitution. This decision should be afforded the fullest due process of the law so that a just decision is rendered.

Debora Russo Haines

Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza

John Doe <[REDACTED]>

Thu 7/23/2020 1:48 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

To the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

Seeing as I was unable to submit my comments to the Art Commission, despite submitting my completed form prior to the advertised deadline, I would like to send what I had written to you instead in hopes that my words might come into consideration while this decision is made. I know this is a bit long-winded, but I hope you are able to read my comments in their entirety.

Though I know the decision to remove the Columbus statue has ultimately already been made, and likely no one will even read this input, I still feel compelled to speak on this issue and express my staunch disapproval of its removal. As a third generation Philadelphian, though not of Italian descent, I recognize that this statue in particular signifies much more than just commemorating Columbus as an individual and I would be remiss if I did not defend its existence.

Let's first start with the history of this specific statue in question. The statue of Columbus in Marconi Plaza was officially christened in Philadelphia back in 1876 as a gift from Italy to the United States during the Centennial Exposition. This was the first World's Fair hosted in the United States and should be commemorated as a most honorable time in our city's history, legitimizing our presence on the world stage and marking the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, one of history's most important documents. The monument itself was sculpted by Emanuele Caroni and its purchase was largely funded by Italian-Americans in Philadelphia, many poor and recent immigrants, who in no way, shape, or form were beneficiaries of some larger racist system or colonial legacy. In fact one could easily argue, particularly at the time of this statue's erection, this community of immigrants bore the brunt of prejudice and ethnic violence in the U.S. Over the years, the importance of this statue's symbolism within that community only grew. As the 19th century progressed, Italian immigration to the United States, particularly in places like Philadelphia, rapidly accelerated. In settling here, these immigrants faced not only tensions between them and other established ethnic groups in the city, but within their own community, as regionalist conflicts from back home in Italy were carried over here to the States. Celebrations surrounding Columbus and this monument helped to solidify this community in Philadelphia. As intended by Antonio Isolero, who when he was pastor at St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, the oldest Italian church in our country, played a pivotal role in this monument being located in Philly, such a monument served as a point of unity for all Italian Americans.

To me this statue represents a history of pride and unity, within a community that has long been core to the identity of our city, and a history that today we could all learn from. Unity and collective pride are things that we should be preaching and encouraging

now more than ever. Rather than shouting each other down and attempting to topple and erase anything we might see as imperfect, coming together to discuss things, seeing each other as equals and approaching situations with empathy and understanding will help us forward as Philadelphians and in our nation as a whole. Personally I see this statue as an opportunity to do just that.

I think that the broader significance of this statue lies more in this specific monument's history in this South Philly community than in the actual legacy of Columbus himself. In answering this question it is also important to consider the real motivation for removing such a statue.

I understand the Mayor's and the City's desires to quickly appease the masses, as it is the most convenient and least politically damaging way out that involves zero accountability for the injustices happening daily in our city. But what kind of reckoning is this? Punishing the local community and forcibly removing a monument to their culture and deep rooted history in this city, using their heritage as a scapegoat for the mismanagement and corruption this city suffers under is nothing short of abhorrent. What this does is insinuate that Columbus is somehow to blame for the black kids being shot up miles away on the north side of the city. That a statue is the reason for the educational divide in our city that falls along socioeconomic and often racial lines. That if Columbus had never sailed across the ocean, healthcare disparities in communities of color and impoverished communities today would not exist. It absolves all current public officials from blame and instead dumps it on a man who died over 500 years ago, before Philadelphia was even established, before the idea of our nation was even dreamt of. The suggestion that a community for whom this monument served as a point of pride, a community which has since overcome, but ultimately occupied an extremely low position in Philadelphian society for many years, is somehow to blame for the injustices faced by the poor and working classes and by communities of color today is shameful. Further, what I am more appalled by, is the suggestion that removal of such cultural pieces are key to "a broad reckoning about the legacy of systemic racism and oppression in this country". Systems of oppressions don't persist unless we allow them to, and no one needs to face this truth more than the very people we have elected to represent us. If you care so much about real justice and improving living conditions of the people in your city, why has no progress been made while your policies have been enacted? Why are we suddenly meant to believe that removing a statue will change the quality of life in this city while the status quo continues in all aspects of our government? To the people in charge, you and you alone are accountable. Quite frankly I find it reckless and irresponsible that in the midst of a global pandemic, in the midst of an unprecedented spike in violent crime, in the midst of destructive social unrest, our taxpayer money will instead be put towards removing and replacing this statue, and that our elected officials would prioritize divisiveness over seeking true healing in this city. This alone speaks volumes about the true motivations of the people we have put in charge and the superficial, divisive and ultimately more damaging forms of "justice" they choose to champion. The spotlight absolutely should not be on a statue right now. A slab of marble does not determine justice in our city or drive policy that has created systems that tend to deprive certain races more than others. The reckoning instead needs to be one in which we question the policies that have gripped our cities for decades and led to nothing but increased suffering.

Now was Columbus a perfect historical figure? Of course not. Who could possibly earn that title, especially an individual from 500 years ago whose actions are now being scrutinized through a 21st century lens. However, the impact of his voyages and the lasting global network they fostered cannot be understated. The truth of the matter is that the narrative we are berated with today surrounding Columbus is not entirely truthful. Not the cutesy watered down version we are spoon fed in elementary school, nor the image of the ruthless, genocidal colonizer that has for some reason become essential to “progressive” thought. It is a recently developed narrative meant to serve no other purpose than to provide political capital, to villainize the post-Columbian world we inhabit today, particularly the idea that this has been an era dominated by “Western” culture and colonial violence and that we should feel a collective guilt for this. As reasonable people we should always be concerned about the fallacy of oversimplifying and generalizing our history and the humanity of specific figures, especially when it is then applied to the present day and used as political weaponry in our current time.

So I guess in essence, the existence and preservation of this statue is the antithesis to the sentiment I just outlined. It is in a sense, a monument to Western Civilization, in the City where the greatest country on Earth had its beginnings. These values are now under attack. The motivation for getting rid of this statue and others like it does not represent a desire to improve our city, our country or unite us as one. It is a movement to undermine all that we as Americans have worked towards, continue to work towards and the great facets of our nation that we have ALL benefited from. Things in life are not simply black and white. Human history is a constant struggle between different groups, ideas, beliefs, and often what is “good” or “bad” is quite subjective and comes with a whole lot of gray areas. No one individual truly deserves to be enshrined, and these monuments aren’t meant to serve as a form of worship towards one singular person and all that they have done. So let such a statue serve a greater purpose. Let it start conversations, encourage people to engage with one another, and remind us where we have come from, what still needs to be done, and all that we as Philadelphians and fellow Americans share in. Censorship and erasure are not solutions in a robust democracy. This is the reason that I believe the presence of this statue is crucial to Philly’s and America’s past, present and future.

I would say the current monument should stand. Perhaps it can be reimagined to better represent its more significant meaning. Not in praise of Columbus but in recognition of the massive impact he had on human history whether good or bad. In recognition of Italian exploration and culture and the ties between our two countries, in particular the important role they played in the formative days of Philly. Most importantly, in celebration of the Italian community that has so long formed the heart and soul of South Philadelphia. And if this statue must be removed, then I would suggest vehemently that representing these things (the latter two in question, not recognizing Columbus himself) is prioritized in whatever replaces this statue. I think the greatest injustice would be replacing this statue with a monument that endorses a particular political movement and would serve only to alienate. Thank you.

U.S. TRIBUTES TO CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

The strong American interest in Christopher Columbus has produced the largest number of Columbus monuments of any nation in the world, according to *The Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia* (Editor: Silvio A. Bedini; Simon & Schuster, 1992).

Other countries that also pay tribute to the 15th century Italian explorer are Mexico, nations in Central and South America, Spain, Italy, and several islands in the Caribbean.

- The first mention of a Columbus monument in the United States was during the Revolutionary War. In 1782, Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger, an officer with the French forces aiding the colonists, noted in his journal that he saw a statue of Columbus in Philadelphia's Independence Hall
- In New York City, the local Tammany Society in 1792 raised a Columbus monument to celebrate the tricentennial of his first voyage to the New World. It was a 14-foot obelisk of black marble and bore scenes from Columbus's life.
- The oldest tribute to Columbus still standing is in Baltimore, Maryland. It is a stone obelisk, erected in 1792 on his estate by Chevalier Charles D'Annemour, the French Consul to the city. In the 1960s, however, the monument was moved to the Samuel Ready Institute on North Avenue and Harford Road.
- Boston has the oldest statue of Columbus. It was raised in 1849 (circa) and believed to be sponsored by Marquis Niccolo Reggio, an Italian businessman and consul in Boston for the Papal States, Spain, and the kingdoms of Sardinia and of the Two Sicilies. It stands in Louisburg Square.
- Philadelphia claims the first monument to Columbus entirely funded by public donations. The statue was erected in 1876 by Italian Americans in the city to celebrate the centennial of the Declaration of Independence.
- The oldest monument to Columbus in the western states is in California. It is a marble statue group of Columbus explaining his theory to Queen Isabella while a page looks on. It was donated in 1883 by a wealthy businessman to the Sacramento State Capitol where it still stands today.
- The largest and most imposing monument to Columbus stands in New York City's Columbus Circle at 59th Street. The 14-foot marble statue of Columbus rests on a granite column 61 feet high (total: 75 feet). It was erected in 1892 from contributions by Italian Americans across the country, led by the Italian American newspaper, Il

Progresso

Among the most singular monuments are:

- the Columbus Doors on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, which were cast in 1860 and modeled after Lorenzo Ghiberti's doors to the baptistry in Florence. Made of bronze, they show scenes from Columbus's life.
- the Columbus Chapel in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, which has many Columbus relics, including his desk and the cross he used to claim the New World for Spain.
- the Columbus statue in The Bronx, New York, which was created by Attilio Piccirilli, one of six Italian American brothers who carved the Lincoln Memorial.
- the statue of Columbus in Providence, Rhode Island, which was cast by Frederic Auguste Bertholdi, the French artist who also created the Statue of Liberty.

Most of the monuments to Columbus have been sponsored by Italian American groups and private individuals, usually with the help of Italian American newspapers. Many were erected in the late 19th century to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's first voyage. They were generally commissioned from Italian sculptors working in Italy.

Many American monuments to Columbus share stylistic traits and represent Columbus as young, with shoulder-length hair; wearing a short tabard, or sleeveless coat; holding a globe or a map and standing near an anchor.

The most unusual portrayal of Columbus is the gilt bronze larger-than-life statue of him with a beard in St. Louis, Missouri. It is the first bronze statue of Columbus in the US and was commissioned in 1886 by a wealthy businessman, who insisted on the facial hair. Objecting, the sculptor carved on the statue: "I knew he didn't have a beard."

→ Prepared by: The National Italian American Foundation

Suggested Bibliography on Italian American History

Amfitheatrof, Erik. *The Children of Columbus*. Boston: Little Brown, 1973. 360-page study, intelligently written study on what Italian immigrants found in "la Merica."

Handlin, Oscar. *The Uprooted*. Boston: Little Brown, 1951. Seminal work on immigration history in U.S.

Grand Discovery, and His Greatness of Mind and Purpose; The Testimony of Ancient Authors, the Tributes of Modern Men: Adorned with the Sculptures, Scenes, and Portraits of the Old World and the New. Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally & Company, 1892.

- **Ponce de León, Néstor.** *The Columbus Gallery: The 'Discoverer of the New World' as represented in Portraits, Monuments, Statues, Medals and Paintings: Historical Description.* New York: N. Ponce de León, 1893. [Full text of this book is on this website]

Newspaper Articles about this Website

Two columnists of American newspapers wrote, independently from each other, their column about this website. Both are on-line:

- Joe Blundo, Columbus Seems to Be a Statue Without Limitations. *The Columbus Dispatch* (Columbus, Ohio), 1 February 2001.
- Mike Argento, With Columbus steering, around world in 219 ways. *York Daily Record* (York, Pa.), 8 February 2001.

Comments on removal of the Columbus statue

Christine Flowers <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/22/2020 12:24 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Members of the Historical Commission:

Please accept and place into the record these comments concerning the removal of the Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza.

Thank you for your attention and consideration

Christine

"The statue means several things to me as an attorney, an Italian, a Catholic, a Philadelphian, and a woman who appreciates the sacred nature of history, as it happened, not as it is re-imagined from a distance of decades and centuries. It represents the single most important event in the history of western civilization, namely, the expansion of society beyond the European circle, and an understanding that the earth was, in fact, not flat. It represents the majestic history of Italian wayfarers, who courageously brought the culture and rich traditions of the Old World to the New, and permitted the blending of those cultures to create a new and unique society. It represents a system of order, the extension of legal processes and

systems to world where no order previously existed. It represents the sharing of a faith system that was monotheistic, to the reaches of a world that did not yet have its benefit. It represents the proudest of Philadelphia traditions, part of my Italian American heritage, something which instills me with pride. And as an immigration attorney who values and cherishes the immigrant traditions of all people and resists and rejects the demonization of one group by another, based on misrepresentation, the continued vitality and existence of a statue that honors Italian immigrants in this city is an imperative. In effect, to pull it down is a crime of moral and ethical magnitude. That is what the statue means to me, Christine Flowers.

The statue should not be moved to a private location, where it can be hidden from public view. To do so is a tacit admission that there is something wrong with the people and the traditions that are represented by this symbol, and a direct attempt to demean their status in a pluralistic community, and in a city to which they have contributed infinitely, and well”

“

They came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for

the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Martin Neimoller

Letter - Columbus Statue

Debora Haines <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/22/2020 11:37 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Debora Haines <[REDACTED]>

 1 attachments (142 KB)

DRHColumbus.docx;

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hello ,

I would like this letter to me included in the comments for the Columbus hearing. I am a former city attorney of more than 20 years. Also, if I could testify please let me know.

Thank you.

Debora Russo Haines

In the case of Christopher Columbus –

“Justice is the constant and perpetual wish to render to everyone his just due.” – Emperor Justinian

Columbus Day commemorates the landing of Columbus in the Americas, and to celebrate Italian American heritage and the community’s contributions to this country.

Due to the lobbying of the Knights of Columbus in New York City, Columbus Day was first celebrated was in 1792, when it was met with intense opposition from nativist and anti-Catholic elements.

The 1892 celebration declared by President Benjamin Harrison was intended to appease Italian immigrants in the aftermath of the mass lynching that occurred in New Orleans the previous year (March 14, 1891). The tragic lynching of 11 Italian-Americans is well documented – the result of mob violence. Although acquitted at trial, instead of being released, all were returned to prison, only to suffer the fate of hanging and dismemberment by the violent mob.

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were always concerned with “mob rule”. It is one reason our Constitution does not create a pure democracy, but rather, a representative form of government, which among its other expressions, led the founders to create the Electoral College.

We are not talking about a parade. We are talking about statues located in cities large and small throughout the United States that were meant to symbolize the contribution of Italian immigrants to this country If the Columbus statue is to be removed, then why should that decision not be subject to “due process” of justice? And if the decision is made on baseless accusation and rhetoric ... who should set the record straight?

Among the countries that colonized the Americas, Italy is notably absent. If European countries bear responsibility for colonialism’s legacy, it is England, France, Spain, Portugal and others that do, not Italy.

Very little facts are actually known about Christopher Columbus, much of the historic record his filled with supposition, folk-lore and misinformation. He was a Genoa-born navigator who used a quadrant, maps, sandglass and astrolabes to find his way across the Atlantic, and one of the first navigators to discover what Europeans quickly dubbed “the New World”. His presence there was only intermittent, limited to the period 1493-1498. It is true that his discoveries are prominent among those that opened the door for European colonialism, but to lay the genocide of all indigenous people at his feet is historically unjust and baseless, viewed either through the lens of the 21st century or the 15th century.

Why is there a Christopher Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza?

Christopher Columbus was claimed symbolically by Italian Americans to represent their contributions to this country, in part because his navigational skills enabled him to discover a “new world” to Europeans, many of whom like themselves came here seeking a better life.

The City of Philadelphia paid respect to its Italian community by commissioning this statue. Due process is not dictated by mob rule, at least not here since the ratification of our Constitution. This decision should be afforded the fullest due process of the law so that a just decision is rendered.

Columbus statue

donna jaconi <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/22/2020 4:41 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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I refuse to accept another piece of history removed! Vote republican

Fwd: Columbus statute, Marconi Plaza, south philly

ANN FARRELL <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/22/2020 5:36 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: ANN FARRELL <[REDACTED]>**Date:** July 22, 2020 at 4:10:14 PM EDT**To:** preservation@philly.com**Subject: Columbus statute, Marconi Plaza, south philly**

I respectfully request that the Columbus statute remain in Marconi Plaza, South Philly. That statute represents who discovered America and has been in Philadelphia over 100 years. The residents of South Philadelphia have a right to leave the statute where it currently is housed and as a resident of Phila for 67 years, I feel as if our history needs to be preserved. When I worked in South Philly for eight years, I, too, also enjoyed seeing the iconic tribute to Christopher Columbus

Thank you, Mary Farrell

Sent from my iPhone


Columbus statue.

Michael Boyle <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/22/2020 3:11 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Please don't capitulate to the mob....Columbus is a hero to Americans of all stripes and origins. Do not be swayed by violence, social media attacks. Stand as tall as he did 

Sent from my iPhone

Columbus



Wed 7/22/2020 3:12 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Please keep the statue. You are erasing history. It's bad enough schools no longer teach history, well.

Columbus day become a holiday after the mass lynching of Italian immigrants in Louisiana. You are doing those souls and the Italians who paid for the statue a great disservice.

Steve Ricci

Christopher Columbus Statue

MICHAEL P Tremoglie <[REDACTED]>

Thu 7/23/2020 4:12 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Commissioners,

I am unable to participate in the meeting tomorrow. So I am submitting my comments in the form of this email.

Regards,

Michael P. Tremoglie

Honorable Commission Members,

The great Roman lawyer, statesman, orator, and writer Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote: "The historian's first law is that he must tell the truth; its second is that he must tell the whole truth; there **must be no suggestion of partiality anywhere nor of malice in his writings.**"

Unfortunately, truth in history in America these past several months has been replaced by sheer malice.

I write to you as a Second-Generation Italian-American and as the parent of children who played in Marconi Plaza.

More importantly, I write to you as one who has witnessed the perversion of history at the hands of ideologues for the purpose of obtaining superiority. This is done in a manner reflective of past totalitarian states e.g Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Fascist Italy, and Mao's Red China.

The alleged "controversy" about Christopher Columbus has nothing to do with racism, imperialism, genocide, or any of the other fallacious allegations made by those whose political ideology guides their beliefs. What this is really about is the bowdlerization of the history of Western Civilization. An effort that has been ongoing since the chant of "Hey Hey Ho Ho Western Civ has got to go" was first heard on college campuses in the 1970s.

Racism is merely a word that is used to silence dissenting opinions. It is a fig leaf to hide the true objective.

Ironically, groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter, whose relationship with anarcho-communism cannot be denied, have reincarnated a movement from the 1920's led by the Ku Klux Klan. The following excerpt is from an article, written by Christopher W. Tremoglie, who explains: "Efforts to remove Columbus have roots in the dogma of white supremacy. Long known for attacks on African-Americans, the KKK also wreaked havoc on Italian immigrants in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Catholics were also terrorized. Many of the contemporary criticisms of Columbus **echo** the KKK's attacks upon Italians and Catholics, when the hate group sought to erase Columbus from American history. Today, objections to **celebrating** Columbus come from radical leftist groups such as Antifa — effectively carrying on the KKK's mission." (link here: <https://broadandliberty.com/2020/07/08/chris-tremoglie-leftists-attacks-on-columbus-are-bad-history/>)

Furthermore, historically speaking, the accusations of Columbus' cruelty, genocide, and enslavement of the aboriginal people he encountered are tendentious at best, outright lies at worst. I can cite historical passages refuting these claims. The atrocity stories that appear in news media are, at times, risible.

Even a cursory examination of pre-Columbian history would reveal that the New World was anything but a utopia. The practices of conquest, genocide, slavery, and torture were not the sole province of Europeans but common practices when Columbus arrived.

If the commission wants to consider genocide, then consider the cannibalism of the Caribes and the human sacrifice practices of the Aztecs. If the commission wants to dwell on slavery then note the Mayas were exporters of slaves to others in Meso America. If the commission wants to ponder conquest then note that the Tainos, who Columbus described as serene, drove out the Guanahatabeyes and they, in turn, dreaded the aforementioned Caribes, who had already conquered the Igneri.

Christopher Columbus did not invent slavery, genocide, or conquest - no matter how much the Columbus contemners would have you believe this to be true. Those practices are part of the human condition and have existed since mankind first walked upright - and maybe even before.

Honorable commissioners, you are tasked with preserving history. The statue of Columbus is historical on many levels:

- It is a legacy of America's first centennial held here in 1876.
- It honors a man, without whom, it is safe to say, no member of this commission would be here today, rightly or wrongly. This in and of itself marks one of the most significant events in human history.
- It is part of the heritage of a substantial immigrant group in Philadelphia

Honorable commissioners, 244 years ago Philadelphia led the way to rid America of a tyrannical king. Please do not, 244 years later, have Philadelphia follow the dictates of a fanatical mob and capitulate to the tyranny of those who seek to oppress us. Please heed the words of Cicero. Eschew the malice.

I am grateful for your kind consideration,

Michael P. Tremoglie