

ENDNOTE 1

Early Misassumptions & Continuing Mistakes

Columbus' mistake in 1492 of calling Native Americans *Indians* was made because Columbus wrongly assumed that he had voyaged to islands off the coast of *Asia*, called *The Indies*-, and he died in 1506 supposedly *still* believing just that.

Afterward, it wasn't until 1513, when Balboa *discovered* the Pacific Ocean (& *claimed* it for Spain) - to the westward of the Isthmus of Panama - that the *New World* became obvious. Then the **West Indies** islands (e.g., Cuba) had to be distinguished from the antipodal **East Indies** (e.g., Java) – literally a whole world apart.

As for Native American peoples, because the Old Testament in the *Bible* did not mention them specifically, debate raged among Europeans until 1537 as to whether or not *Indians* were really human beings - which at that time meant being actual descendants of the first human parents, Adam & Eve. European ignorance of Indians led to arrogance about them. Finally, after 45 years of Encounter (1492-1537), a Papal proclamation announced that *Indians are truly human* - but they still got stuck with the wrong label of *Red Indians*.

And apparently it was European fishermen on the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland [New-Found Land] who started the idea of Native Americans being *The Red Race*. The reason? – The Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland smeared their skin with red ocher (iron oxide / hematite), perhaps for a cosmetic, perhaps as an insect-repellent, perhaps both. The subsequent European misassumption that Native Americans had **genetically** red skin then spread as widely as Columbus' wrong label of *Indians*.

So, starting with these two early faux pas, and adding five-centuries'-worth of additional misunderstandings since then, is it any wonder at all that today's Native Americans still are skeptical of Euramericans' endeavors at making group-identifications of Natives, for whatever purpose?