For decades, Columbus Day has been observed as a federal holiday in the United States. This day marks Columbus’ role in discovering North America. However, Columbus Day is not without its controversies. While some people believe that Columbus should be honored for his discoveries, others believe that he did nothing worth honoring. Given the history behind the holiday, Columbus Day should not be celebrated.

To begin with, Columbus did not actually discover America. The main reason to celebrate this holiday is because of Columbus’ discovery, but this is based on a myth. In fact, the Vikings founded a colony in North America hundreds of years before Columbus and his crew arrived in the Caribbean (Source 1). This shows that Columbus was not the first to reach North America, and he certainly did not discover it. Imagine if a person just showed up to a house unannounced and claimed it as his own? That person would be taken away in handcuffs, right? Well, this is no different than what Columbus did. According to “Let’s Celebrate Indigenous People’s Day” North America was already inhabited by indigenous people when Columbus arrived. Source one states that indigenous civilizations existed, including Mayan hieroglyphics. Just because Columbus came from a distant country and spoke a different language did not make him the owner of North America.

Furthermore, Columbus’ discovery led to the abuse and death of indigenous people on the continent. When Columbus reached land, he found native people already living there, but disregarded the fact that they were humans and treated them poorly. In fact, “Let’s Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day” explains, “the problem is, not everyone wants to celebrate the man who opened the Americas to European colonization. Just think about all the misery that followed: land grabbing, enslavement, disease, death, and the near extinction of native peoples.” Of course, some might argue that Columbus should be honored for his contributions to the world. According to source one, “they say Columbus was the founder of the first permanent European settlement in the New World and that his arrival marked the start of recorded history in America.” However, history in America was already being recorded before Columbus by the indigenous people living there.

It is evident that Americans are making a mistake by celebrating Columbus Day. Columbus was not the first to discover North America. In addition, his voyage opened the prelude to the destruction of Native Americans. His ‘discovery’ led to theft, enslavement and misery for indigenous people. Columbus should not be rewarded with a holiday for everything he has truly done.