

## West Africa: The Empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai\*\*

- People in early West Africa lived as an extended family in one household
  - Extended Family: Parents, Children, and close relatives
- For a long time, West African people lived as hunter-gatherers
- Eventually people began to develop new technologies and advanced cultures
- This led to a surplus, which led to trade
  - Two popular resources that were traded were gold and salt
- An early group of people in West Africa were the Soninke
  - They banded together for protection around the year 750CE– the beginning of Ghana
- Ghana learned how to work iron, making them very strong
- Ghana traded with people to both the North and South
- Ghana traders used the Silent Barter method of trading
  - Silent Barter: A process in which people exchange goods without contacting each other directly
- Silent Barter:
  - Salt traders left slabs of salt on the riverbank. Later on, gold miners left what they thought was a fair amount of gold. This was a peaceful process that also kept the locations of the gold mines a secret.
- Ghana used its iron and resources from trading to become a powerful empire
- 800CE – Ghana controls the trade routes in West Africa
  - All trade passed through Ghana
  - The Ghana army kept the routes safe
  - Every trader that passed through had to pay a tax
- The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes, and so did people Ghana conquered
- Common people were only allowed to own gold dust
- Royalty owned ALL of the gold nuggets
  - This made sure the king was richer than everyone else
- Ghana used its powerful army to conquer other small groups
  - The Ghana king Tunka Manin brought Ghana to its height in 1060CE
    - Tunka Manin was said to have been one of the richest people in the entire world
- Tunka Manin was actually the nephew of the previous king
- Kingship in Ghana went from Uncle-to-Nephew, not Father-to-Son
- Eventually the Empire of Ghana will begin to decline for three main reasons
  - Invasion: North African Muslims called Almoravids
    - Almoravids invaded in 1076CE and weakened the Empire
    - Almoravids took away many trade routes from Ghana
  - Overgrazing: Almoravids brought in a lot of cattle
    - This cattle ate all of the grass, which left nothing for Ghana
    - Ghana lost a lot of resources because of the loss of grass
  - Internal Rebellion: People of Ghana rebelled
- 1200CE – Ghana Empire collapses

- As Ghana was declining, a new power was rising: Mali
- One of the first leaders of Mali was Sundiata
  - Sundiata conquered many groups, including the remains of Ghana in the 1230sCE
- Sundiata gained control of all trade routes in West Africa
  - This made his empire very powerful
- Sundiata focused on making agriculture in his empire better
  - He introduced cotton to West Africa
- Sundiata gave himself a new title: Mansa
- Mali's most famous ruler was a Muslim named Mansa Musa
- Mansa Musa brought Mali to its greatest power in the 1320's
  - Mansa Musa spread Islam throughout his empire
  - He had many mosques and schools built in Mali
- Mansa Musa made Timbuktu an important trade city
- Mansa Musa is very famous for making a pilgrimage to Mecca during his reign
  - This introduced Mali and its riches to the rest of the world
- Mansa Musa's son Maghan took power after Musa died
  - Maghan was a weak ruler
- Invaders destroyed much of Timbuktu and weakened the empire
- More groups invaded and Mali weakened even more
- By 1500CE the empire of Mali was gone
- During the later years of the Empire of Mali, the Empire of Songhai was growing
- It grew powerful with trade, like Ghana and Mali
  - The capital city of Songhai was Gao
- Mansa Musa had conquered Songhai in the early 1300s
- By 1400, Songhai had rebelled against Mali and gained its independence and began its empire
- Songhai leaders were Muslims, so they traded with other Muslim groups in Africa
  - Trade made Songhai rich and powerful
- One of the most powerful rulers of Songhai was Sunni Ali in 1464
  - Sunni Ali organized the empire and united everyone
- Sunni Ali conquered much of the remains of Mali
- Sunni Ali died in 1492 and his son Sunni Baru took over
  - Sunni Baru was not Muslim
  - The people rebelled against Sunni Baru
- The leader of the rebellion was Muhammad Ture
  - Muhammad will change his name to Askia after the rebellion succeeds
- Askia quickly became the leader of Songhai in 1493
  - Askia made Timbuktu a great center of learning
- Askia set up provinces throughout his empire to help run things easier
- Askia set up an army to help protect his empire
- Morocco was a nation to the north of Songhai
- The Moroccan army invaded Songhai in 1591
  - The Moroccans had superior weapons
  - Including the arquebus, an early form of gun
- The Moroccans destroyed Gao and Timbuktu
- The fall of Songhai marks the end of empires in West Africa

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  - They banded together for protection around the year 750<sup>CE</sup>– the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_
- Ghana learned how to work \_\_\_\_\_ making them very strong
- Ghana traders used the \_\_\_\_\_ method of trading
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A process in which people exchange goods without contacting each other directly
- Ghana used its iron and \_\_\_\_\_ from trading to become a powerful empire
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Ghana controls the trade routes in West Africa
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- The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes, and so did people Ghana \_\_\_\_\_
- Common people were only allowed to own gold \_\_\_\_\_
- Royalty owned ALL of the gold \_\_\_\_\_
- Ghana used its powerful army to \_\_\_\_\_ other small groups
  - The Ghana king \_\_\_\_\_ brought Ghana to its height in 1060<sup>CE</sup>
- Kingship in Ghana went from \_\_\_\_\_, not Father-to-Son
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- As Ghana was declining, a new power was rising: \_\_\_\_\_
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  - \_\_\_\_\_ conquered many groups, including the remains of Ghana in the \_\_\_\_\_
- Sundiata gained control of all \_\_\_\_\_ routes in West Africa
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- Invaders destroyed much of \_\_\_\_\_ and weakened the empire
- More groups invaded and \_\_\_\_\_ weakened even more
- By \_\_\_\_\_ the empire of Mali was gone
- During the later years of the Empire of Mali, the Empire of \_\_\_\_\_ was growing
- It grew powerful with \_\_\_\_\_, like Ghana and Mali
- \_\_\_\_\_ had conquered Songhai in the early 1300s
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- One of the most powerful rulers of Songhai was \_\_\_\_\_ in 1464
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- \_\_\_\_\_ quickly became the leader of Songhai in 1493
  - Askia made \_\_\_\_\_ a great center of learning
- \_\_\_\_\_ was a nation to the north of Songhai
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