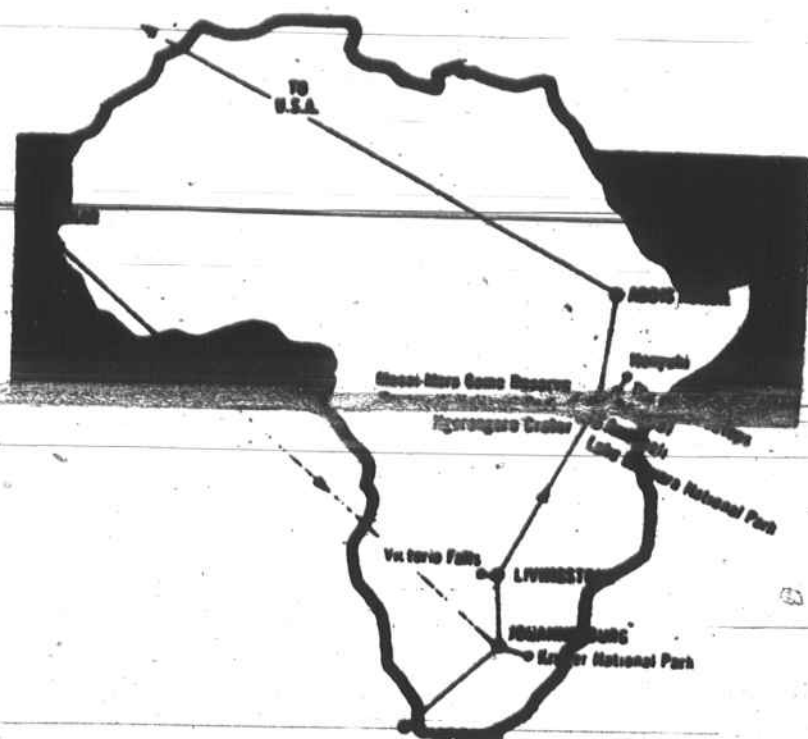


## African Spotlight



The history of West Africa has to do with that part of Africa which is bounded on the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by the Sahara Desert.

This region is made up of the following modern states of West Africa: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Dahomey, Nigeria, Sudan, Mali, Volta, Togo, Niger and Chad.

On the whole, West Africa is a land of level surface. The Cameroon mountains in the extreme south-east are the only highland with a height above 3,000 feet. The other raised lands just above 2,000 feet are the Bauchi Plateau in Nigeria and the Futa Jallon Plateau.

West Africa's three largest rivers are the Niger, the Senegal and the Gambia. All three rivers rise in the Futa Jallon Plateau. There are other minor rivers such as the Benue, which is a tributary of the Niger, and the Volta in modern Ghana. Aside from the Volta, the other rivers are navigable for long distances, especially during the rainy season. None of the rivers in West Africa is navigable all through its lengths owing to the presence of shallows and rapids.

The coast receives the largest amount of rainfall hence the thick forests belts along the coastal belts. Moving northwards, the thick forests gradually thin into grassland. Then appears the belt open savannah or grassland. Finally, the grassland gradually thins into desert.

The chief characteristic feature of the north of West Africa is the absence of natural barriers. Until the 19th Century, the Sahara desert was not a barrier but a route of communication between North Africa and Sudan. As a result trade developed across the desert from early times.

With the introduction of the camel about the 4th century A.D., trans-Saharan trade and travel became much easier. This trade became very profitable and attracted the attentions of the merchants of Europe. The desire to seize the control of this trade from its Arab middlemen was to lead to the discovery of the coasts of West Africa by the Portuguese in the 15th century.

The northern direction of West Africa was, until the 19th century, the only gateway through which foreign influence penetrated West Africa. The absence of natural barriers in the north made possible the penetration of Berber, Arab and Jewish immigrants into West Africa. They settled among the black people, traded and inter-married.

The greatest foreign influence from the northern direction was Islam and its culture. It is the religion of the savannah of West Africa.

Geographical factors played an important role in the rise of the great Sudanese empires and states - Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Bornu and the Hausa states. The grassland areas of West Africa are rich agricultural regions producing many varieties of crops and providing enough food for the large populations. This made possible the growth of the populous Sudanese cities and empires. Rich pasture for livestock was available.

The open grassland that most parts of West Africa had made communication and trade within the Sudan easy. It also facilitated the military expansion of the empire and the movement of soldiers and horsemen was equally easy.

But these advantages which the grassland provided proved a bane in the end. The Moroccans took advantage of these facilities, invaded the Sudan in the 16th century and destroyed the civilization of the Songhai empire.

What the Nile was to Egypt, the Niger was to the Sudan. It was the cradle of the great empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Its fertile banks provided agricultural wealth to the people. Its waters provided easy means of transportation and communication between cities and helped the military expansion of the empires.

Today, there is famine in many parts of West Africa because of lack of rainfall. In the past, these parts of West Africa where today there are famine provided food for many parts of the African Empires! --N.E.

## Shooting Victim Reported In Serious Condition

A Winston-Salem man was shot three times Saturday night in the vicinity of Smitty's Grill located in the 800 block of N. Patterson Ave., according to police reports. James Jackson, 39, of 445 Burton Street was found by police and taken to Forsyth Memorial Hospital for medical treatment.

The examining physician at the hospital told police officers investigating the shooting that Jackson had three bullet wounds; one in the left leg, one in the middle of the back, and one near the spinal cord. He was listed in serious condition.

A witness at the scene told police that Jackson had

stopped at the Grill to get a drink. While waiting in the car, the witness said she heard shots. She said she saw a man and a woman leaving the scene of the crime.

Another witness, however, told police officers that a man told Jackson he did not like Jackson's looks. The witness then asked the man to leave Jackson alone. The witness

said Jackson was then shot in the leg by a woman and when he fell down was shot two more times by a man.

The witness said he ran when that happened. He thought they were going to shoot him. Police have suspects in the case but no arrest had been made at the time of the report. The investigation is continuing.

## Inflation Threatens World Economy

The recession which is building up in the United States is being compounded by a similar one building up in Europe, a Princeton University political economist said at A&T recently.

"There is real trouble when you have a recession here and in Europe at the same time," said Dr. W. Arthur Lewis, in Greensboro for a lecture at A&T State University.

Some symptoms of the seriousness of the spreading recession, he said, are the somewhat worldwide shortage of things like food and cereals.

Lewis, who has served in important economics positions for the United Kingdom, Ghana and the West Indies, said some of the underdeveloped nations are experiencing economic problems because of very rapid growth in some areas, but shortages in other critical areas.

"It's a very mixed picture of

very rapid growth in such areas as schools, medical services and population, but insufficient rural and agricultural growth."

"When you throw in very rapid population growth, this catches up with you on the food situation," he added.

Lewis said other food problems, such as droughts, may be due to what many persons believe to be a change in the overall weather.

"Some authorities believe that the world is getting colder," said Lewis. "They believe that the world has cycles of getting colder."

He said this may be one cause of the droughts in Africa, the cold winds serving to repel the rains which that part of the world needs.

Lewis said some of the underdeveloped nations may be helped by recent breakthroughs in the cultivation of corn, wheat and rice.

## Gamma Sigma Delta Started At A&T

Forty faculty members, students and alumni of A&T State University were inducted Tuesday night as charter members of a new chapter of the international Gamma Sigma Delta, honor society of agriculture.

The A&T chapter became the first to be installed on a predominately black campus in the nation, and only the second in North Carolina.

Included among the inductees were Dr. Lewis C. Dowdy, chancellor of A&T; and Dr. Warmoth T. Gibbs Sr., president emeritus of the university.

The new faculty members included Dr. Rudolph Artis, Dr. W. Archie Blount, Talmage Brewer, Dr. Basil Coley, William C. Cooper, C.E. Dean, Dr. Samuel J. Dunn, Dr. Willie T. Ellis, Ms. Thelma J. Feaster, Thomas W. Flowers, Dr. Ben W. Harris, Ms. Bessie B. Jeffries, Ms. Cynthia Johnson, R.E. Jones, Dr. Harold E. Mazyck Jr., Sheila McDowell, Donald H. McAfee, David Persell, Dr. Glenn F. Rankin, Dr. William E. Reed, H. Revell Jr., Dr. Howard Robinson, Ms. Shirley Rouse, John A. Spaulding, Dr. Albert Spruill, Dr. B.C. Webb, Ms. Elynor A. Williams and R.L. Wynn.

Student members are Connie D. Baggett and Blannie Bowen and alumni members are S.J. Hodges Jr., J.W. Jeffries, W.T. Johnson Sr., J.C. McLaughlin, Felton Ray and the late J.W. Jeffries.



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