

Ideas-Ideals! by Arthur Hood

Wallpaper Works Wonders

Wall paper works wonders. Today we employ wallpaper for a number of purposes. For an illusion of space or depth, scenic wall panel is often used. Papers of architectural subjects can lend a sense of perspective to a large room. As a rule, these dramatic effects are only suitable in large rooms since small spaces do not easily accommodate extensive wall "activity." Certain wall paper sections can be used to suggest separate activity areas in a room.

Wallpaper is often used to help camouflage troublesome structural portions of a room. A small pattern can aid in hiding irregularities and unevenness in the ceiling. Architectural defects which detract greatly from one end of the room can be blocked out with a false wall of plywood covered with an attractive wallpaper. Poorly spaced windows can also be camouflaged by papering the room with wallpaper that match the

curtains or even the upholstery.

Always choose a wallpaper that complements rather than competes with the furnishings. Draperies, upholstery fabrics and carpeting should

all be keyed to the wallpaper.

Also remember once wallpaper has been applied and you feel you need a change the following year, you can always paint the wood work and trim to accent a different color in the wallpaper pattern.

Ridgetop

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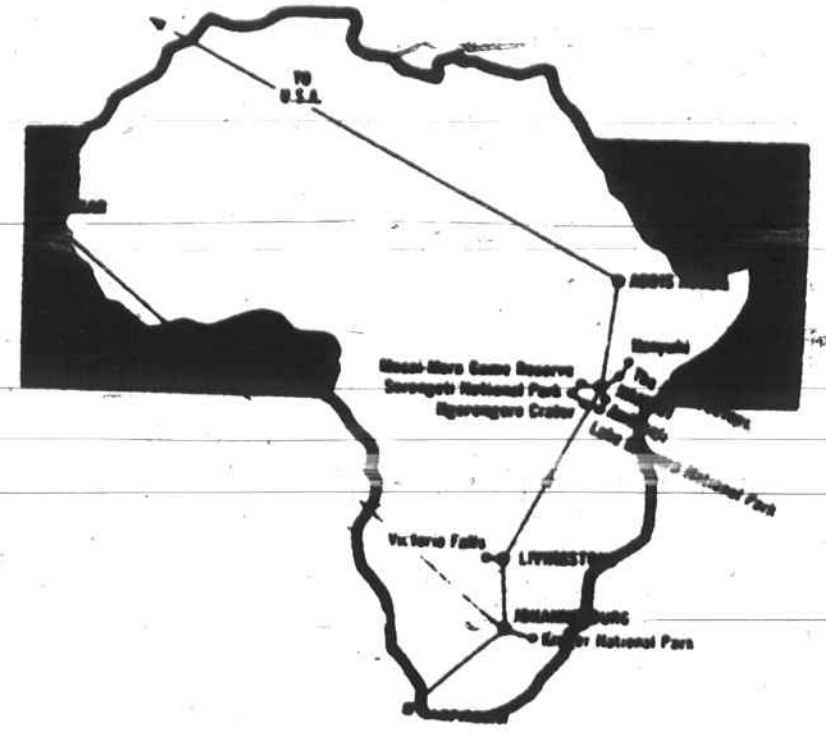
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African Spotlight



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.

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