

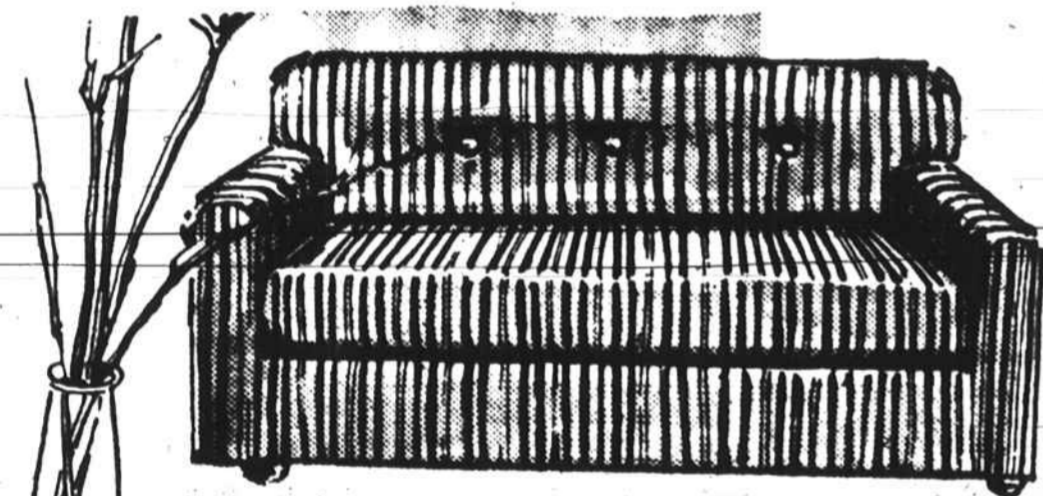
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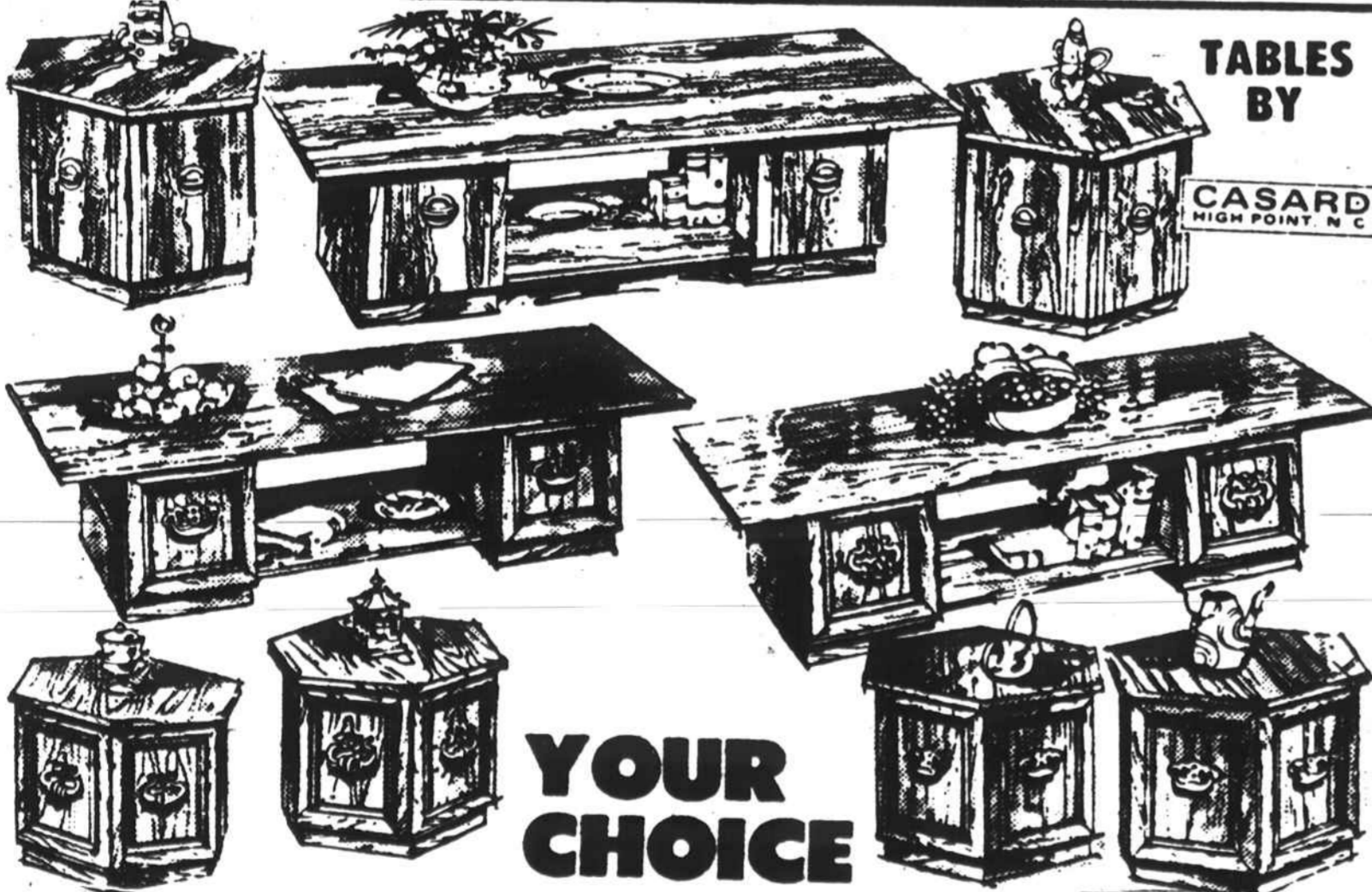
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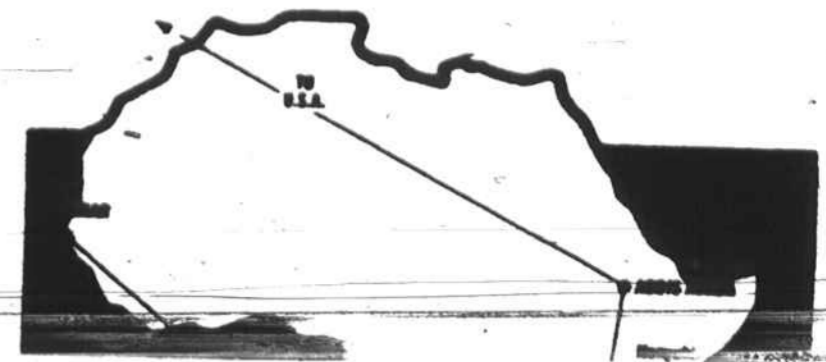
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**African Spotlight**



**Efic Saga, Part I**

**THE TRADE**

Because of a great deal of interest, I shall write more on the slave trade. In earlier articles, I wrote about the start of the African slave trade and of resettlement experiments after slavery was over in most parts of the Americas. I also dealt with a harsher truth of how black over black helped in some ways to buttress the idea of white over black.

This time, rather than writing strictly factual pieces, I am trying something different. Telling the truth through the use of fiction is still looked down upon by many historians who insist that you can not tell the facts adequately by that method. Nevertheless, I shall write about the slave trade through the use of a fictional subject, a young girl, I shall call Efic. The Efic Saga will start with her capture on African soil.

The sun stood firm as its rays beat down on the mud thatched roofs. The rainy season had just passed and everything was all sticky and muddy. Efic stumbled and then slid down in the mud. The passenger on her back yelled with fright and she quickly took her baby brother aloose from all the wrappings. Efic looked around carefully as she tried to calm him. "Shhhhh, Metro. Na ya me Te Guineaare shou keneum-be na shish. You must be quiet little one or I shall be called the clumsy one, who is too lazy to walk properly." She kissed his plump leg and then rubbed his plump cheek against hers. She stiffened with pain from crevices of the face. When her marks were healed, she would be considered a young Fularo woman rather than just an ordinary girl. She would be beautiful like her mother who also had beautiful designs on her face.

"Little one, we must go to the hut for food. You and I are hungry." She gathered herself up very carefully and then she used the soles of her feet to push the mahogany dirt from her thin black limbs. Then gracefully, she bent her long lean frame forward and with an effortless thrust placed Metro on the bend of the back just above the hips and wrapped him gently, enclosing her own flat stomach and pointed breasts. She patted Metro's little fingers as he reached out for one of the plaits on her oval head, which had been shaped from birth. She leaned back and quickly turned her mild face away from the strong light and hurried along to their family compound. For a strange reason, she wanted to see her mother, but she knew that her mother would be in the fields planting. She was the senior wife and must set an example for her husband's junior wives.

The village center was almost deserted except for a few elders who sat around fanning themselves. As she neared her mother's hut, she heard moans and shrieks coming from her grandmother's hut. She took care to step quietly. The native doctor must be allowed to do his work. The evil spirit that dwelled in her grandmother's body must be cast out.

She leaned forward and entered her mother's hut. There was fruit and some goodness wrapped in a banana leaf but there was no water. She walked outside and looked around the cooking area, but no water. "I must get water for you, for all of us." She placed a large pot on her head, sturdying it with her right hand while pushing Metro upward with her left hand. She walked quickly to the stream. She carefully walked through the grasslands which was almost surrounded by the water. Efic paused along the foot beaten path as a huge snake hurled itself across the path heading for the water. She waited patiently until it had gone far downstream. Then she carefully walked then floated across the water until she came to a place that she felt was good. Efic filled the container and then came back to the land.

She shivered as she emerged from the water as a strange coldness swept her body. "The sound of silence" cautioned her. Then relaxing, she shook her body and stooped to place the pot on her head.

At first she did not hear it or feel it. But Metro's piercing scream caused her to flinch before she felt the crack of the whip. Then the grass came alive with the sound of many feet. A tall black man pointed the others toward the north side of the village where the fields were as she lay bloody and confused. \* The Efic Saga is based upon historical facts, and yet for the most part, fictional names and places are used.

NEXT WEEK: "The March to the Gambia River"

Robena Egemonye