

African Empires before Colonization.

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the
Effects of slavery on the Black
Community.

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Empire of Ghana

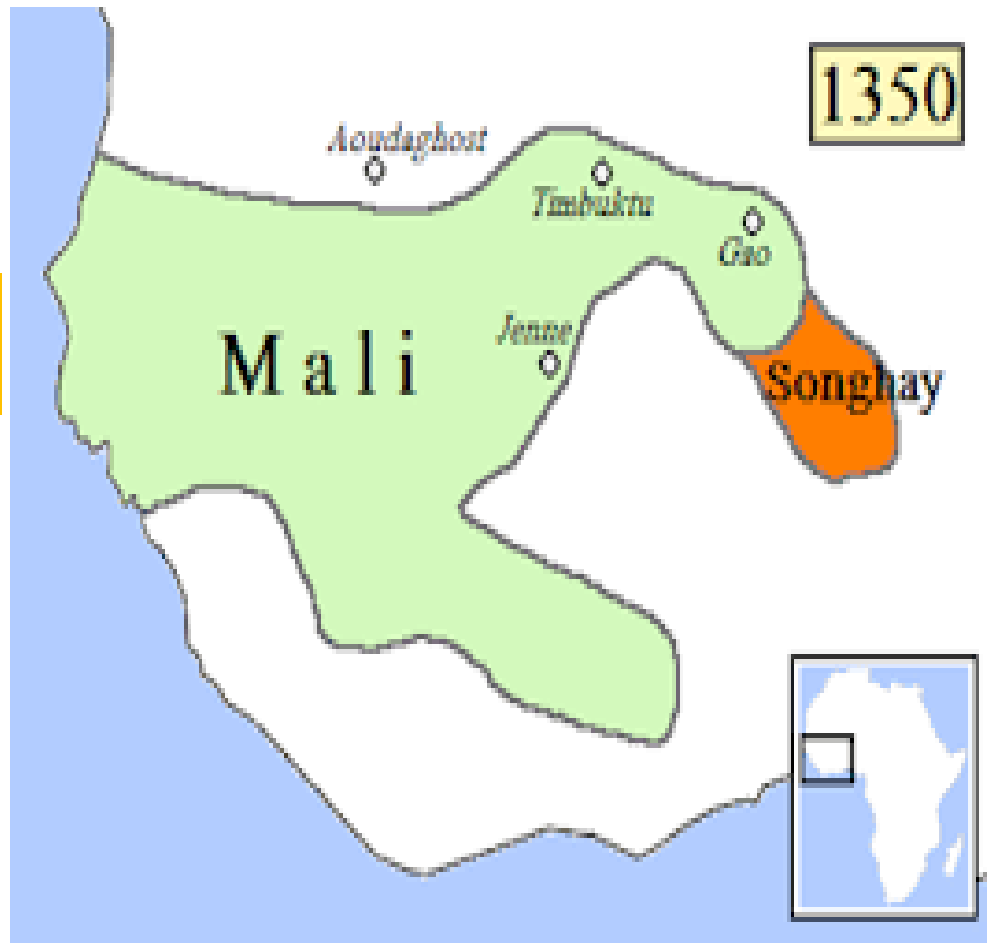
Empire of Ghana

- The Kingdom of Ghana was one of the most powerful ancient civilizations of Africa. The Ghanaian Empire flourished in West Africa from at least the 6th to 13th century CE. (Mark. 2019) Ghana was a very rich civilization and had large amounts of Gold. Ghana was so rich, that they even had dogs, and horses wearing golden collars, had soaking rope halters, and slept on plush carpets.
- Ancient Ghana became established as a nation by a tribe that is known as Soninke. The Ghanaian leader served as the commander in chief of a highly organized army. He controlled trade activities and was the head administrator of Justice. He was a very influential, and mighty leader, and served to strengthen the Wagadugu state, as well as helped to expand their territories.
- Ghana achieved most of their wealth through trading goods with the Arabs. The empire owed much of its prosperity to the trans-Saharan trade, and a strategic location near the gold and salt mines. They traded ornaments, gold, horses, swords, religious traditions, textile, slaves for salt, books, and other materials. Even though Ghana traded a lot of goods, gold and salt seemed to be the dominant sources of revenue.

Ghana's Trade System

- Islamic merchants traveled for months on end through the desert, and they were taxed for what they brought in and what they took out. This allowed Ghana to have an abundance of money. However other nations were jealous, and hateful of Ghana's power. Competition from other states took a major toll and caused the jealous neighboring kingdoms to attack Ghana.
- In the middle 11th century, the Almoravids, launched a major invasion on the capital city of Koumbi, Saleh. Territories were seized, but tribute tax was enforced, thankfully Ghana recovered. 200 years later the kingdom was unable to prevent their demise. In 1240 C.E Ghana was absorbed into the nation of Mali.

Ancient Mali



Ancient Mali

When did the Empire of Mali rule?

In 1235 CE. The Empire of Mali was formed when a ruler named Sundiata Keita united the tribes of the Malinke peoples. He then led them to overthrow the rule of the Soso.

Over time, the Mali Empire became stronger and took over surrounding kingdoms including the Empire of Ghana. The previous king decided to travel to expand his influence, and as a result of that Musa took control of Mali and allowed Mali to be one of the greatest Ancient African civilizations. Under Musa, Mali controlled the lands of middle Niger, and imposed his rule on other Saharan cities like Walata, and on the Taghaza region of salt deposits. Mali's trade networks flourished, and borders expanded.

The government of the Mali Empire was led by the emperor who was called the Mansa. The empire was then divided up into provinces that were each led by a governor called a ferba. The religion of Islam played an important part in the government and many of the government administrators were Muslim scribes.

Trading Contributions

- The Mali Empire prospered as a result of trade and its prime location. Mali is situated between the rain forests of southern West Africa and the powerful Muslim caliphates of North Africa.
- The Niger River helped to provide access to Africa's interior and Atlantic coast, while the Berber controlled camel caravans that crossed the Sahara desert ensured valuable commodities came from the north.
- The Mali rulers had a triple income: they taxed the passage of trade goods, bought goods and sold them on at much higher prices. They also had access to their own valuable natural resources. Significantly, the Mali Empire controlled the rich gold-bearing regions of Galam, Bambuk, and Bure. One of the main trade exchanges was gold dust for salt from the Sahara. Gold was demanded from European powers like Castille in Spain and Venice and Genoa in Italy.

Trading Pt 2.

- In 1100 CE Timbuktu, was founded by the nomadic Tuaregs. Timbuktu was a semi-independent trade port which had the double advantage of being on the Niger River bend and the starting point for the trans-Saharan caravans. Later on, the city was taken over by the Mali kings, who made it into one of the most important and most cosmopolitan trade centers in Africa.
- Through Timbuktu goods like ivory, textiles, horses (important for military use), glassware, weapons, sugar, kola nuts (a mild stimulant), cereals (e.g., sorghum and millet), spices, stone beads, craft products, and slaves were traded. Goods were bartered for or paid using an agreed upon commodity such as copper or gold ingots, set quantities of salt or ivory, or even cowry shells

Mali's Architecture



- The buildings of the Mali Empire are one of the most recognizable features of the region and have become international symbols of Africa's rich pre-colonial history. In ancient Mali buildings were constructed using beaten earth, reinforced with wood which often sticks out in beams from the exterior surfaces.
- Despite the limited materials, the mosques are still imposing multi-storied structures with towers, huge wooden doors, and tiered minarets. Other large buildings included warehouses which were used to store goods before they were transported elsewhere. Their architecture was one of a kind.

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Even though there are many other powerful, and successful African kingdom, I wanted to be concise which is why I listed only 2 empires.

As you can tell from the civilizations that I've listed, and described, Africa was a very resourceful, rich, lush, and smart, continent. It sadly went downhill when Europeans step foot on the continent and conducted what is known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

The slave trade transported over 10 million people across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas from the 16th to the 19th century. The most shocking factor is that Africans were sold by their own race. Some Africans became slaves because of raids that were led by predatory local strongmen. Various tribes were also captured and sold as different regional powers came to prominence. Firearms, which were often exchanged for slaves, increased the level of fighting by lending military strength to previously marginal tribes.

Slave Trade pt.3

- African leaders were so blinded by their hate for other tribes that they sold their “own” (even though they didn’t view them as their own) people. In some instances, African leaders, and wealthy citizens even preyed upon their own people by manipulating their judicial systems, condemning individuals and their families to slavery in order to reap the rewards of their sale to European traders. On the voyage to different parts of the world, hundreds of Africans were packed tightly into tiers below decks for a voyage of about 5,000 miles.
- They were typically chained together and forced to slouch because usually the low ceilings did not allow them to sit upright. It was extremely hot, and the oxygen levels became so low that candles wouldn’t even burn. Because crews feared insurrection, the Africans were allowed to go outside on the upper decks for only a few hours each day.
- It was so torturous that 15- 25% of the African slaves that were bound for the Americas died on the slave ships. While on the ship, the slaves were raped African leaders, and their treachery caused other tribes to be sold, put on a ship chained, brutalized, raped, starved, and mistreated. Many tried to fight back Africans who were sent to different corners of the earth faced gruesome treatment, which lead to many revolts to try to gain their freedom

Slave Trade Pt. 3

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After Effects of Slavery

- After slavery, and the revolts Black people were conditioned to think that they were less than. They were ridiculed and treated like 4th class citizens. In my next slide I will shed light on the negative traits that we have in the community, as a result of Slavery.



Negative traits in the
Black community as a
result of the Slave-Trade



The Black Home

The black home is in shambles. Over 500,000 African American males are in jail or have been in jail. Gang violence runs rampant. This makes it hard for them to provide for their kids because they have a record. As a result of that they repeat the cycle and commit crimes to feed their family.

On the other hand, approximately over 50% of Africans Americans are single mothers. The fathers take no responsibility for their family and leave the mother to parent their children alone. This cause the family dynamic to be ruined. African American boys turn to gangs to have a “family”, which only continues the chain of jail, and child abandonment. We need to break the cycle, and do better within our community.

Unhealthy food habits/Health Problems

- During Slavery, African Americans were reduced to eating the scraps that white people didn't want. Pig feet, Chitterlings, Chicken wings, etc.
- As a result of this they had to season their food with high amounts of salt, and other seasonings. This caused them to get a lot of health problems like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, among other things. The foods that slaves used to eat passed down to other generations (freed people), and this started a chain of bad health, and obesity within the black community.



Colorism
within the
Black
Community



Colorism

- After African Americans revolted and won, they still were ostracized, and faced harsh treatments (hung, raped, and murdered). In America there was Jim Crow, which further caused a divide in society between African Americans, and White people. Everything was segregated: schools, bathrooms, churches, restaurants, and stores. White people got better treatment, and better EVERYTHING which caused Black people to feel inferior, and outcasted. The division continued even further with Colorism. In order to fit in one had to be white passing or light skin.
- In the 1900's (still during Jim Crow) the brown paper bag test was used to determine if a black person "passed" as being white or black. (Harris. 2019) Those that had passed were still black but for their skin tone, they were able to live a life that many black people really wanted. Light-skin blacks who were able to pass as white were able to receive higher education, find decent partners, get decent paying jobs, and had preferential treatment. Darker skinned Blacks were/are still treated unfairly and were on the lower end of the totem pole. This caused a major divide between light skin black people vs dark skin black people. Light skins tried to separate themselves from dark skins and did not want to associate with them in fear that they would be judged. They were very hateful towards them, which caused dark skins to resent them.

Conclusion

- Even though our community is divided, and filled with negativity, there will come a time in which we will be redeemed. Even though Europeans still try to ruin us, (war on drugs, black wall street, planting guns in the community, rap, etc) hopefully there will come a time where we come together as a community, get rid of gang violence, have a high percentage of two parent homes, build up the continent of Africa, and learn to love ourselves for who we are.