

# The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay

## Theme 4, Selection 3- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

### The Trade Caravans

Gold and salt weren't the only items traded in Ghana. Local donkey caravans arrived daily from all points in the empire, bringing slaves, honey, jewelry, tools, metal and leather goods, rare birds, livestock, horses, special cloth called chigguyiya, and of course, news. Caravans also left Koumbi Saleh and other large trading cities in the kingdom going to points north.

The arrival of trans-Saharan camel caravan was a special event. Traders brought rare and wonderful treasures like jewels, silk, and furs from everywhere in the Islamic world, including Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and even from as far away as central Asia.

During the period of old Ghana, caravans departed from Koumbi Saleh and usually took the western route through Awdoghost. Caravans from North Africa came through Sijilmasa in Morocco and down to the market towns of routes along the Senegal and Niger rivers.

The makeup of a long-distance caravan was as complex as it was colorful. Everything centered around the camels, which made trans-Saharan travel possible.

The camel was to the Berbers what the bison was to the Native American. The animal provided transportation, milk, wool, hides, and meat.

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