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The Teaching of Ethiopia in the Social Studies Curriculum in the United States

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The Teaching of Ethiopia in the Social Studies Curriculum in the United States

By

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B.A., Haile Selasie I University, Ethiopia, 1966

THESIS

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DEPARTMENT HEAD
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Nature of the Study

The growing interdependence among the people and nations of our world calls for close mutual understanding. This has given impetus to the teaching of social studies about foreign lands and people. Accordingly, the study of Ethiopia, as well as that of other countries, has a place in the social studies curriculum in the United States public schools. It is generally being taught in grades four and six. Relatively, detailed study is made in the latter level. The primary objective is to acquaint the children with the most important facts about the land and its people that can eventually lead to the development of worthy concepts and generalizations concerning the relationships between the inhabitants and their natural environment. Identification of the relations between Ethiopia and the United States is also another important objective.

Ethiopia's location, relief features, climate, agriculture, natural resources, some aspects of the historical and cultural background of the people, political and economic relations with the United States and some other nations constitute the course of study about Ethiopia. Many of the social studies textbooks present Ethiopia under the big regional division known as Africa South of the Sahara. A further sub-division places Ethiopia within
the Eastern part of Africa. Physiographic and climatic factors are the major bases for the division.

Materials and activities such as the textbooks which provide explanation and thought provoking questions, interpretation of mapped geographic and human phenomena, pictures, films and filmstrips are the means for facilitating teaching and learning of the desired concepts.

B. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research paper is an attempt to identify and describe the objectives, content and its organization, materials and activities involved in the teaching of Ethiopia in social studies curriculum in the United States.

C. Method and Limitation of the Research

In writing this paper the most important method employed was the analysis of the major concepts about Ethiopia and related materials and activities provided in grades four and six social studies textbooks found in Eastern Illinois University Booth Library, Applied Arts Education Center and Laboratory School Instructional Material Centers. Studying the social studies curriculum guides and some sample units on selected areas designed for depth study have been helpful in identifying the general objectives and suggested methods of achieving them as well as the organization and nature of the content considered important. Also available general references such as Encyclopedias, Yearbook, United Nations Publications, professional texts, teacher’s manuals, and catalogs that provide some films and their descriptions have been consulted.
The research work on this paper was confined to the Eastern Illinois University source materials. Limitation in source material will certainly affect the depth of the study. The writer has been able to locate some recent books, films and filmstrips, bulletins, and magazines available elsewhere in the United States but could not get access to them because of shortage of time.
CHAPTER II

PURPOSE IN THE STUDY OF ETHIOPIA

A. Importance of Ethiopia to U. S. A.

The United States of America, as one of the top leading world powers, has assumed great responsibilities in the world affairs and is engaged in furthering common interests with other nations in the areas of cultural, economic, and political developments and sustenance of peace.

Furthermore, the United States, as an industrial and agricultural nation, needs markets in other countries for selling domestic products and for buying raw materials which it lacks or possesses too little for large scale manufacturing industries.

Politically, due to the differences in political ideologies between the communist and the democratic nations, there is a need for forming and strengthening alliances for mutual protection in case of external attack by the communist blocs. Africa, as a newly emerging continent in international affairs, is of great interest, politically and economically, to both parties. There is a scramble for gaining influence both by the United States and Russia.

At present the United States is one of the leading nations engaged in helping undeveloped emerging countries develop educationally, economically and politically. A greater number of such emerging nations are in Africa. The political and economic impacts of the independent African nations on
outside countries are gradually increasing and the United States is not an exception to this influence.

Decolonization has recently increased the number of independent African countries all of which are now members of the United Nations. There are still some more states that are in the process to get their independence in the very near future. So there is the trend in the increasing of the number of the members of African nations in the United Nations. For instance, out of the fifty-one original members of the United Nations that signed its charter in 1945 there were only four African countries namely Liberia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and South Africa. In December 1961 out of 104 total members of the United Nations 27 were African states, and on December 31, 1965, Africans were 36 out of 118 total members. At present one-third of the members of the United Nations are African countries, thus participating in the problems and decisions of important international cooperation which is of common interest and concern for all big and small members alike.

Besides being influential in the United Nations, Africa has something specific to contribute to the interest of the United States with regard to political, economic and cultural aspects. Kolevson, an author of a sixth grade social studies textbook, mentions natural resources, strategic, trade activities and cultural exchange as factors of interest for the United States for studying or teaching about Africa in general. 


Despite the colonial exploitation of some parts of the continent, Africa is still very rich in natural resources awaiting development. Africa is growing important in world trade. Today, the world's 98% of diamond and 50% of gold come from Africa. Central Africa is believed to have the world's largest deposits of copper and uranium. Africa also produces one-third of the world's cocoa and sisal fiber. The waterfalls potential for hydro-electric power production surpasses that of any other continent.

Africa is one of the most important sources of raw materials for the United States. In recent years imports from African countries to the United States have reached $500,000,000, while American exports to the African countries is valued at more than three-fourths of a billion dollars. The trend of trade is increasing with the gradual rising of the standard of living of the people.

With regard to cultural exchange, a visitor to New York's Museum of Modern Art comes away impressed with the influence of African Art on Modern Abstract painting and sculpture. Modern jazz is based on African rhythms. On the other hand, American influence is increasingly becoming much greater in many parts of Africa. Such items like clothing, language and songs are very influential. American books, teachers (Peace Corps included), soldiers, and movies are among the influential and reinforcing factors of cultural exchange. Also, students who come to the United States for higher education return home with many ideas of the American way of life.

The location of Africa is strategically significant to the United States because the former is close to the communist blocs which want to have

\[3\text{Ibid., pp. 440-441.}\]
access to the warm Mediterranean waters and seeking political and economic influences over the new African nations. The United States has some large air bases in a few independent African countries bordering the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Ethiopia is one of these countries that provides an important strategic site in the vicinity of the Middle East.

The relationship between Ethiopia and the United States began in 1906. However, the political and economic as well as education ties increased very gradually. In 1951, soon after the British advisors left, a mutual defense treaty was signed between Ethiopia and the United States. Ethiopian forces began to adapt their training methods to suit American patterns and equipment. A United States military assistant and advisory group (USMAAG) was attached to the Ministry of Defense under an agreement signed in May 1953. Greenfield documents that by mid 1963 Ethiopia had received $73,799,000 in United States military assistance, representing about half the total United States military assistance to Africa.4 Besides strategic location, the quality of Ethiopian soldiers has been highly considered by the United States government when making the agreement for mutual defense.

Another important U.S.A. organization in Ethiopia is the Point-Four Program now called Agency for International Development. The AID Program, which began in 1952, embraces projects in the fields of agriculture, education, public health and sanitation, commerce and industry, public administration and water source survey. The United States furnishes the specialists and the home the other personnel, the land and buildings. In most projects operating costs are shared equally through joint funds.

The main feature of the AID Program is training native technicians and administrative personnel capable of, gradually, assuming responsibility for the operation and management of development projects. In addition to on-the-job training, the program attempts to achieve this long-term objective by helping to expand and improve the country's existing institutions which can provide such training. If facilities for training are not available within the country, promising young native personnel may be sent abroad for study. The program is not entirely altruistic. The reward to the giver, the United States, is calculated in terms of political good will and improved trade projects. As has been indicated before the United States has built an air base in Asmara, Eritrea, a northern province of Ethiopia bordered by the Red Sea, a short distance away from the Suez Canal.

B. The Objectives

One of the general objectives of Social Studies is to help pupils be well informed about other people's ways of life and be able to recognize the growing interdependence among people and nations. Developing basic skills and abilities to live in such a world—society is an important aspect of the school task.

Among its major purposes, the school has such specific objectives to achieve when teaching social studies about other lands and people as:

1. Help children understand and appreciate that the way of life that we enjoy is the result of many people, both past and present.

2. Extend the child's knowledge and understanding beyond his immediate environment to include the state, the nation, and the world.
3. Emphasize the interaction of man with his natural and social environments. 5

C. Basic Understandings.

Today, because of the realization of the interdependence of the world's societies and its increasing trends, the scope of social studies program is becoming wider by giving considerations to lands and peoples, and their life, beyond the immediate environments. Modern science and technology have played great roles, and continue to do so, by providing facilities needed in creating a very close world-community of people with growing cultural, social, economic and political interdependence. World nations are no more isolated individual units forgetful of one another thanks to the modern easy and rapid facilities of movements and communications.

Travels by land, sea, and air have removed barriers and have enabled actual contact of people within states, continents, and across the entire world. Distances between and among different peoples of the world have been greatly reduced to a matter of a few days and hours. Consequently, knowledge about and interest in distant people and their ways of life have been increased. Firsthand information obtained through actual contact has minimized several misconceptions about other people. Exchange of ideas and things builds new knowledge and also leads to mutual understandings and respect for cultures different from one's own. Reading, corresponding, and listening to radio and viewing television also contribute to the store of knowledge about other people and their environment and ways of life.

One of the important outcomes of such contacts between and among world nations is the political interdependence. There are similarities and differences of political ideologies in our world that have lead to groupings for common protection against the opposing party in case of war. But, the understanding that wars do not solve differences has given impetus to the emphasis of international cooperation for settling disputes. Avoiding wars and maintaining peace are equally important to all nations regardless of differences of political outlook.

Today, peaceful life for any one nation depends upon the situation of the whole world at large. Any action in one part of the world directly or indirectly affects the other parts. For instance, the Israeli-Arab War incidence of June 5, 1967, when it was at its peak, had created a great fear and tension in several parts of the world. The fear was not due to a humanitarian feelings for the extermination of a handful of people of a minute state of Israel by the greater number of the people of the Arab world as such but rather the chain reactions that might have led to a Third World War. This was what primarily pre-occupied the minds of several nations at the time. This is a simple illustration of political interdependence for there can be no World War otherwise. World War indicates involvement of several nations.

Economic interdependence is another significant factor involved in keeping relationships among different countries and enhancing common interests. No country is completely self-sufficient. Some countries are rich in raw materials that others lack. Some are agriculturally productive while others are industrially productive. There is uneven distribution of natural resources,
a fact that certainly makes nations highly interdependent. Different countries, in various parts of the earth, provide market for one another for buying and selling raw and manufactured materials.

Thus to share and live cooperatively in the culturally, socially, politically and economically interlocked world-community of today, the new generation needs to be taught basic concepts, attitudes, skills, and abilities that will enable him to recognize the indispensable interdependence of people and to seek mutual understanding as a better way of living together. This is one of the significant basic understandings which should be emphasized in the teaching of social studies about any country.
CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION AND NATURE OF THE CONTENT

A. Organization of the Content

The teaching of social studies about Africa in the United States public schools in most instances begins in grade four where a very general information about the continent is introduced. It is at this level that some aspects of Ethiopia are also introduced in the social studies program. Here general concepts regarding the location of Ethiopia in Africa, the important land feature, climate and farm products are developed. It is in grade six that social studies about Ethiopia is being taught with some depth. At this level an attempt has been made to highlight the geographical factors that had and still have influence upon the historical, cultural, political, and economic development of the country at large.

In grade six social studies textbooks Africa is treated by dividing the whole continent into two major regional divisions which is based, primarily, on climatic elements, especially temperature and rain. These regions are "The Great Sahara and Its Fringing Lands, and Africa South of the Sahara."

Ethiopia is included under the unit Africa South of the Sahara, an area upto the tip of South Africa. Further sub-regions have been identified on the bases of the similarities of such factors like landform, temperature, rainfall,
natural vegetation, and cultural or historical background of the areas. Thus East Africa and Ethiopia are grouped together forming one sub-region. Here Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda are grouped as a geographical unit all of which have similar geological history of landform, and culturally and racially related people.

The content about Ethiopia mainly contains geographical, historical, and economic elements. Consideration of the people and some aspects of their cultures have also been included. An example of the major concepts of the content of social studies textbooks are organized as follows:

1. Location and Size
2. Ethiopia - An Ancient Kingdom
3. The Italian occupation of Ethiopia
4. Topography and its Influence on Life
5. Effects of Isolation
6. Climate
7. Historical information
8. The People
   a) Ethnic Groups
   b) Languages
9. Agriculture
   a) Land Use
   b) Crops and Livestocks
   c) Trade
10. Natural Resources
a) Water Power
b) Forestry
c) Minerals

II. Foreign Relations

A fairly detailed aspect but generally treated study on Ethiopia is given in the Encyclopedia Britannica. The content and its organization is similar to that followed in the Ethiopian schools. Much emphasis is given to the geographical and historical parts as indicated in the outline below.

I. Physical Geography:

A. Geology
B. Relief
C. Drainage
D. Climate
E. Natural Vegetation
F. Animal Life

II. The People:

A. Ethnology
B. Languages
C. Religions
D. Customs

III. History:

A. The Kingdom of Aksum and its Civilization
B. Zagwe and Solomonic Dynasties
C. The Portuguese Interlude
D. The Galla Tribe Invasion
E. The Roman Catholic Missions
F. The Rulers between 1855 and 1916
G. Accession of Haile Selassie I (1930 -)
H. Italian Occupation and Independence
IV. Population

V. Administration and Social Conditions

VI. The Economic Aspects

B. Nature of the Content

While the content found in textbooks is extensive, here is a synopsis of the more significant points.

1. Location and Size:

Ethiopia is located in the northwestern part of Africa. Latitudinally it lies between 3°N. and 18°N. It covers an area of about 457,000 square miles comparable to the combined area of Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.

The population of Ethiopia has never been fully counted but the estimated figures vary between twenty-two and twenty-four million. Ethiopia is surpassed in population only by Nigeria and Egypt in the whole of Africa.

The boundaries of Ethiopia are Sudan on the West and Northwest, Red Sea on the North, French Somaliland on the East, Somalia on the Southeast, and Kenya on the South.

2. Ethiopia: An Ancient Kingdom:

Ethiopia's history as an independent country goes back 3,000 years. The only time this ancient kingdom in Africa has not been free was between 1936 and 1941. During those years the country was occupied by the Italian armies.

In much of its early history, Ethiopia was known as Abyssinia. Writers in ancient Greece recognized Abyssinia as an important kingdom of the time.

6 "Ethiopia," Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. VIII.

By the early part of the fourth century the country had accepted Christian religion.

3. **Topography and Its Influence on People's Life**

Ethiopia is a land with great diversity in its terrain, in its climate, and in its people, languages, and customs. This diversity has direct relationship with the nature of the surface of the land and its geographic location.

Physiographically, Ethiopia is divided into three major regions (Map - A):

1. **The Northwestern Highlands and Bordering Lowlands**

2. **The Ethiopian Rift Valley**

3. **The Southeastern Highlands and Associated Lowlands**

The Northwestern and Southeastern Highlands are thousands of feet in height with some peaks rising to 14,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level. These massif land areas are separated by the relatively low-lying Rift Valley, which runs through the country from the Red Sea coast down to Kenya. The Ethiopian Rift Valley is part of the Great African Rift Valley, an enormous crack or fault in the surface of the land that runs north and south across Africa from the Red Sea to Mozambique.

The Ethiopian Highlands are mainly plateaus, natively called 'Ambas'. These 'ambas' have played important roles in the Ethiopian history. They used to serve as prisons, or shelter monasteries, or provide refuge for kings and their followers in time of war. Their large, level tops permitted the growing of crops and the herding of cattle, thus affording self-sufficiency to the inhabitants. The steep slopes of the 'ambas' were easily defensible.
Map A

(Adapted from "Preliminary Atlas of Ethiopia" by Mesfin W. Mariam)
Besides these table lands, there are true mountain ranges both in the Northwestern and Southeastern Highlands. Some of the peaks here reach heights of over 14,000 feet. The highest mountain in Ethiopia is called Ras Dashan about 15,160 feet high.

The Rift Valley in its lower part holds a number of lakes often referred to as the "Lake Regions" of Ethiopia. The upper regions of the Rift Valley are much lower and drier. In contrast to the highest points, the lowest part of the country lies here where there is an area of some hundred by forty miles below sea level. This sink is called Kobar Depression, a saline area, where commercial extraction of salt is in progress.

**Independence, Isolation and Progress:**

The long history of independence is primarily due to the protective nature of the terrain which the people found very helpful in fighting out external invasions. The broken up highlands, especially in the north and west, and the surrounding desert area together with the Red Sea, fringed by inhospitable coastal strip of land, acted as a protective belt against military invasions from outside.

On the other hand, the relatively lower slopes of the south and east have made the plateau more vulnerable to occasional military, political, and population pressures from these directions. Most invaders have penetrated from the south and east, which were also the historic directions of the country's expansion from within. The northern region of the northwestern highland is a plateau which was the historic core of Ethiopia, where, what was called the Axumite Kingdom, was established. This kingdom had a high
ancient civilization that declined and decayed in the 7th century A.D. partly due to external isolation, brought about by the expansion of the Arab Empire, and mostly by physical barriers and self-imposed isolation.

Ethiopia has been completely cut off from Western civilization until very recent times. A key factor in this isolation has been her immensely difficult topography which is characterized by dissected plateaus and peaks, great valleys, and deep gorges comparable to the Grand Canyon in the United States. There are also desert lowlands that lie east and north of the highlands. These deserts and the rugged terrain, which have been considered advantageous in maintaining independence, have adversely affected Ethiopia as an isolated and backward nation. Until recently few people from the outside world entered Ethiopia, and Ethiopians visited other countries.

The effect of isolation upon the life of the people was great. It made the country a kind of "island" where they have developed their own customs, style of dress, kinds of huts, and ways of behaving and living in general. It is one of the major factors in the country's backwardness, because people need to exchange ideas and things in order to make rapid progress. Isolation was not only from the outside world but also from within. This has created diversity of cultural background of the people in the areas of language, religion, economic and political outlook.

The Advent of Christianity:

Ethiopia is not only the oldest kingdom but also the oldest Christian nation in Africa. Christianity was introduced in the fourth century. It is
traditionally believed that Christianity was brought by two Phoenician boys.

It is said that the two boys, who were brothers, were shipwrecked on the coast of the Red Sea about 340 A.D. They made their way to Ethiopia, became favorites of the king and eventually converted him to Christianity. Today most of the people are Christians but many are Moslems.

4. The Climate of Ethiopia

Despite the closeness of the whole area to the equator, Ethiopia has temperate climate which is highly modified by elevation. The average annual temperature of the highlands is sixty to sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit, and there is but little variation from month to month. Frost is sometimes encountered, but never snow, and even at midday the warmth of the sun is not oppressive. For the most part the climate of the highlands is very agreeable and uniform. One has only to descend several thousand feet, however, to come upon totally different conditions. Regions of subtropical temperatures (77°F to 86°F) are to be found in a number of places, even in the heart of the highlands, where these are dissected by deep river valleys, such as in the gorges of the Blue Nile.

Mainly based on elevation and vegetation, the Ethiopians have traditionally recognized three zones namely "Kolla" (hot), "Waynā dagā" (temperate; literally, the "Wineland"), and "dagā" which corresponds to cold.

The "Kolla" covers the steppe and grassland on the lowlands where conditions are torried and full of malarial mosquitoes. There are slight daily temperature changes. The productivity of the land is very low. A pastoral economy is predominant, but such crops like corn, tobacco and sugar cane are cultivated.
The "waynā dagā," which has an annual average temperature of between 60°F and 68°F, reaches elevations of from 5,000 to 8,000 feet and it is rich in forest cover and animal life. The most densely populated and productive areas are in this temperate zone, which includes the greater of the plateau regions. In this and the next zone the temperature is so low and comfortable that proximity to the equator is hardly realized.

The "dagā" is a region over 8,000 feet in elevation. Here the mean temperature of the hottest months (March, April, May) is seldom higher than 60°F. This region is noted mainly for sheep rearing, barley and wheat cultivation, and honey production.

The year is mainly divided into two main seasons, the dry and the wet. The wet or rainy season, known as "kremt," lasts from about mid-June through September in the Central Plateau region, but may be considerably extended in the southeast, south, and southwest highlands. This rainy season or "kremt" is regarded as the winter season since cloud cover and heavy rain reduce temperature considerably. The kremt rain is monsoonal in character and derives from a moist southwesterly monsoon air stream. The high plateaus frequently experience heavy falls of hail during kremt, a phenomenon that misleads to the report of snow-covered mountains in Ethiopia. What one observes is just the accumulation of hail after heavy rain.

The kremt is followed by the dry season known as "begā," the Ethiopian "summer." This is actually the northern winter but it is a dry season and absence of cloud cover allows a stronger heating effect. The "begā" is interrupted only once by an uncertain period of "little rains" which occur
for about four weeks during March and April before the onset of the "big rains" in June. This short period of scanty rain is actually springtime.

Ethiopia's rainfall is adequate for agriculture, except in the semi-arid and desert regions where irrigation systems are needed. The west and southwest plateaus have the greatest precipitation, sixty to eighty inches of rain annually. The rain here lasts from eight to ten months. The plateau in the Southeastern Highlands and the Central Plateau north of Addis Ababa are other areas of high rainfall. They receive fifty to sixty inches of rain annually.

The Rift Valley, the Danakil Plains, and the Ogaden Semidesert are areas of scanty precipitation and support a highly nomadic and pastoral life. The southwest, with heavy rain and almost wet all year round, has very dense forest. In other subtropical regions the vegetation is chiefly thornbush. The slopes along the Sudanese border are rich in tropical vegetation.

Hail causes occasional damage to crops in the high plateau regions. Wind is responsible for some crop damage, especially during the rains. A rather strong wind prevails during much of the dry season and in the periods of little rains. This, together with the intense sunlight, causes a rapid rate of free water evaporation and loss of soil moisture.

Ethiopia has numerous rivers, but most of them are shallow and are dry for the greater part of the year. None of them is navigable for any significant distance. Waterfalls are numerous, and there are a number of attractive potential sites for the production of hydroelectric power.
Egypt, which is referred to as the "Gift of the Nile," highly depends upon the flood waters coming from the Ethiopian Highlands. The three major tributaries of the White Nile, Albara, Baro, and Blue Nile (Abai River in Ethiopia), start from the heaviest rainfall regions of Ethiopia. These rivers increase to an enormous size when the heavy rain begins in June in Ethiopia. They carry a big load of muddy soil gathered from the volcanic materials of Ethiopia's mountains. In Egypt the Nile flood continues to rise through August and September after which it gradually decreases to its low stage in December. This is the beginning of dry season in Ethiopia. Both the rich muddy soil and a supply of water are indispensable in the life of the Egyptian farmer. The interest of Egypt and Sudan in the Ethiopian rivers is so great that there is already agreement among the three countries concerning the control of the rivers along their courses.

5. Historical Information: Ancient:

Most authorities seem to agree that the Ethiopians had their origin as the result of an influx of Semetic tribes from Southern Arabia to the Ethiopian highlands about 1000 B.C. The migrants conquered, assimilated, and eventually absorbed by intermarriage the basically Hametic peoples they found there, who in turn, had much earlier displaced a predominantly Negro culture. The Semetic introduced new language, writing, new methods of agriculture, new plants, architecture and a system of government. The migrants were so few in number that they gradually lost their identity but their culture remained dominant in the history and life of the people. These mixed tribes eventually achieved political consolidation in what was known as the Kingdom of Aksum, the historical core of Ethiopia.
The Kingdom had developed its own civilization that flourished from about the first to the seventh century A.D. Its civilization appears to have been of quite a high order, judging from the numerous coins of different periods, monuments, inscriptions, and broken relics that have been found by Archaeologists in this region. The most remarkable things at Aksum were the stellae, each out of one huge granite stone, the tallest of which was about 50 meters high. Greenfield believes that the style is not found outside of Ethiopia and is clearly of local inspiration. Since these stellae were built during pre-Christian era, they might have been used to worship the sun or as funerary monuments.

Lalibella with its rock churches is one of the most important historical places in Ethiopia. These churches were excavated from blocks of rock left isolated by deep surrounding trenches, and are reached by subways, bridges and tunnels. The churches show different styles of architecture, size and color of rock.

The early civilization of Aksum declined and decayed mainly because of the rise of Islam, physical barriers, internal fighting, and self-imposed isolation for almost one thousand years. The Ethiopians were, and still are, suspicious of foreigners, an attitude that was developed out of several war experiences with outsiders.

Throughout its history, Ethiopia has been ruled by kings. Christianity which became the religion of the royal family in the fourth century is still part and parcel of the state. No separation exists between the two so far.

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8Greenfield, op. cit., p. 18.
Theoretically, the country has a constitutional monarchy, but practically it is an absolute monarchy.

6. **Ethnic Groups and Languages.**

There are many different ethnic and tribal groups of people in Ethiopia. It has often been called an ethnic "Museum." An estimated total of forty languages and over seventy-two dialects are spoken.

The first known inhabitants of the country have been called Cushites (Kushites) because Ethiopia for the ancient world was the land of Cush (the eldest son of Ham in the Bible). Later Hametic people from the north entered the country. Frequent Semetic migrations from South Arabia, about 1000 B.C., have determined the character of Ethiopia's most important languages.

Before the coming of the Semites the main language was that of the Hametics comprising over thirty tribal languages and dialects. The Semetic brought with them a South Arabian speech that, in Ethiopia, developed into Geez, often referred to as Ethiopic. This ceased to be spoken about the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. but continued to be the ecclesiastic and literary language of Ethiopia. From Geez developed three major living languages: Tigrinya and Tigré, spoken in the north, and Amaharic, now the official language, spoken by a few people south of the Tigrinya area.

The politically dominant are the Amaharas. Although they constitute a minority of the total population, they have generally been the ruling group in Ethiopia. Their language, Amaharic, remained the official language, and
their religion, Christianity, the state religion. North of the Amahara-populated regions lie the ancient province of Tigre and the Ex-Italian Colony of Eritrea (new under Ethiopia) both Tigrinya speaking areas. These people have often been at odds with the Amaharas to the south and have a long record of revolt and separatism.

The Galla groups, speaking several different dialects, inhabit an extensive area in the west, south and southeast of Ethiopia. The Gallas are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. These people, in an invasion in the 16th century A.D., swept into the Ethiopian Plateau and areas south and west of it. From that time forward, they gradually adopted agriculture and became isolated from one another. At present their loyalties are more regional and tribal than ethnic. They also adopted different religions, some became Christians and others are Moslems.

The Gurage people, mainly a pastoral class, live about one-hundred fifty miles southwest of Addis Ababa. To their south and west are found the Sidamo tribes speaking their own languages. Negro tribes live along the Sudanese-Ethiopian border on the west and southwest of Ethiopia. In the northeastern deserts live the Danakils, a hostile people who still resist recognition of the authority of the central government.

The diversity of the Ethiopians have been caused by the separation of the people from one another by the rugged nature of the terrain, already described, which discouraged communication and thus contributed to different cultural backgrounds, inbreeding, self-sufficiency and complacency, and provincialism or regionalism. On top of these was the lack of contact with
foreign civilizations for a long time. But now conditions are changing, in fact very rapidly.

Ethiopian society is still largely a society based on status, in which the church and the monarchy play a dominant role. The value judgments of the vast majority of the people are conditioned by ethical, cultural, and social patterns.

Literacy rate is extremely low, less than eight per cent. Despite the emphasis of the present government on education, the movement is too recent and slow to make significant progress. Education is still in its elementary stages. Before the Italian Occupation of the country (1935) not more than a dozen government schools existed in the whole of Ethiopia. In addition there were some privately run foreign mission schools, plus the centers of religious instruction which the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had maintained for centuries. A few number of students had been sent abroad to study at government expense. All these were disrupted by the Italian invasion. The educated few were killed and the schools and churches were burnt down. Since the restoration of independence in 1941, great attempt has been made to reorganize the schools and broaden the educational base by building as many as possible elementary and secondary schools. But this attempt is being curbed by financial problems. Though rich potentially, the country is yet undeveloped.

7. **Agriculture**

The mainstay of the country's economy is agricultural products accounting for over ninety percent of the export commodities. Nine out of ten persons are engaged in farming or herding.
Because of the regular and sufficient rainfall and naturally rich soil, much of Ethiopia's land is fertile. Ethiopia's agricultural potential is believed to be great. With proper leadership, organization, and mechanization Ethiopia could grow enough food for its population and also export its products on a large scale. The government is anxious to improve farming and herding conditions and has set up model farms for agricultural training. Some agricultural schools also have been established with the aid of experts from foreign countries, chiefly the United States.

According to a recent estimate, although about 50 percent of the land is cultivable, only about 10 percent is actually under cultivation. 9 Farming is almost entirely on subsistence level. The current low rate of land use may be attributed primarily to inadequate motivation to raise agriculture above subsistence levels. Foreign and domestic markets are not highly developed. Distribution of crops from one region to another is hindered by lack of transportation facilities. Land tenure systems and primitive tools are great drawbacks. Resistance to replace traditional methods and tools by modern agro-techniques by the farmers presents a challenge to the little attempt being made to modernized agriculture. And, the tenure system is often obscure. Large tracts are owned by the imperial family, the high nobility, and the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Extensive areas are held by kinship groups and tribes. Some of the farmers are tenants. There is a great need for land reform, the major solution to agricultural problems facing the majority of the Ethiopian farmers.

9Lipsky, op. cit., p. 238.
In the lowlands the major crops are durra, maize, sugar cane, and cotton. In the higher areas "teff," a very fine grain which is the staple food crop, barley, wheat, and vegetables of all kinds are grown. "Teff" and wheat are the main bread grains, while barley is mainly used for preparing beer and other local breweries. Coffee is grown extensively. The origin of the coffee tree is believed to be in the southwestern province of Ethiopia called Kaffa where coffee has been growing for centuries wildly in the forests.

From the standpoint of cash crops, coffee is by far the most important one. It accounts for over 60% of the total value of Ethiopia's export earnings. Ethiopian coffee beans are of high quality and excellent coffee drink can be made from it as indicated by the tests made by the FAO experts.\(^{10}\) Under this organization great effort is being made to improve methods of picking, drying and husking the coffee beans so as to maintain its natural quality.

When world coffee prices are high, the country acquires foreign exchange on a considerable scale, but dependence on a single product has made Ethiopia's trade highly vulnerable to fluctuations on the world coffee market.

The next important items of export are oilseeds, hides and skins of domestic animals, cereals and pulses, beewax, civet, and "chat"—a stimulant shrub, the leaves and twigs of which are chewed for mildly narcotic contents. Much consumed by the Moslems and the Middle East provides the best market for this product. Frozen meat is sent to Israel and other Middle Eastern

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countries. The United States is Ethiopia's best customer, followed by Italy and Aden. The United States takes annually 50 percent of Ethiopia's total export and 75% of her coffee.\footnote{Ibid., p. 95.}

Ethiopia imports textile goods, raw cotton for home industries, motor vehicles (including aircraft and locomotives), parts and rubber products, and petroleum products from the United States, Italy, Japan, West Germany and England. Oil is mainly imported from the Middle Eastern countries. An oil refinery has been built recently.

Lack of an adequate communication system has been one of the greatest obstacles to economic progress in Ethiopia. The country has a railroad of 487 miles linking the capital to the seaport of Djibuti in French Somaliland. It was built (1908-1917) mostly with the French funds. Another line, 191 miles long, connects Massawa seaport with Asmara, capital of Eritrea, a new province of Ethiopia. Since the federation of Eritrea in 1952, Ethiopia has two seaports on the Red Sea coast namely Massawa and Assab. The entire export and import commodities are handled by these two ports and Djibuti which is outside of Ethiopian territory.

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, has good connections with the provincial centers. Ethiopia has some good all-weather roads, and motor vehicles have at least partly replaced mules, packhorses, donkeys, and camels as means of transportation. The Ethiopian airlines which operate under a management contract by Trans World Airlines serve external and internal communications. This has made possible access to the isolated and most difficult parts of the country.
8. **Natural Resources**

Ethiopia has many waterfalls and rapids awaiting development for the production of hydroelectric power. At present there are only two dams generating electricity. Further projects are in progress with the financial and technical aids from foreign countries. For instance, among the development programs sponsored by the United States AID Mission in Ethiopia survey of water resources and well drilling activities are given much attention.

Concerning mineral wealth, it is believed that there are a variety of minerals but no proper surveys have been yet made to assess the potentiality. Also, no significant attempts have been made to economically exploit the known deposits. Gold, platinum and salt are mined in limited quantities. There is a great improvement in the operation of gold mines recently. Iron, bauxite, sulphur, copper, antimony, silver and cobalt have been found. The available deposits of mica, manganese, gypsum, and pumice are the most unexploited resources.

The American Sinclair Oil Company spent ten years of drilling for oil. But after spending $10,000,000 only dry wells have been produced so far. Out of the nineteen wells drilled only one showed traces of hydrocarbons.

Forests cover about four percent of the land area. Originally fifty percent of the country's area was under forests. The drastic reduction of forests had been caused mainly by the burning method of clearing forests for cultivation, and excessive exploitation for fuel and charcoal production over a long period of time. Attempts are being made by the government to preserve the existing forests and to reforest.
The most important forests are mixed coniferous and hardwood grown on the plateaus. The most useful timber is produced by juniper, cedar, acacia, and eucalyptus—Australian origin. Other trees and bushy plants yield fibrous materials for rope, baskets, sacks, carpets and other furniture production. Bamboo grows in many regions in the rainy sections of the south and southwest. Its tall stems, up to fifty feet in length, are used as construction material for houses, fences, and boats. Also, they are used for making pipes and troughs.
 CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND INSTRUCTIONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS

A. Method and Materials

There are quite a number of social studies textbooks which provide information about Ethiopia. The methods of the textbooks include explanation of facts about the geographical and human conditions in Ethiopia for providing backgrounds upon which major concepts and generalizations can be established in the course of study. Suggested activities, illustrative maps and diagrams, pictures, and films and filmstrips are important parts of the teaching aids employed.

Some leading questions that have been suggested for children to investigate the concepts needed to develop about Ethiopia center around the following points.

1. Describe the land, climate, and vegetation of East Africa.

2. What is the Great Rift Valley?

3. Why Ethiopia was isolated so long? How did isolation affect Ethiopia?

4. How did Christianity come to Ethiopia?

5. What needs to be done to make Ethiopia a great food-producing nation?

6. Name Ethiopia's two most valuable exports?
7. How is the Emperor improving his country?

8. What are other nations doing to help the country develop?

Among the most important textbooks relevant to the study of Ethiopia are:


Maps are important tools in developing concepts of relations among geographical phenomena and their influence upon population distribution and types of activities. For instance, Ahlaschwede used four colorfully shaded maps of Africa to show where people live and how climate and vegetation affect their settlement and life. Each map presents annual rainfall in inches, natural vegetation, dominant land use, and population distribution indicated by spread and concentration of dots. Here are some of the things that these maps tell about Ethiopia in detail. (Map - B)

1. The Annual Rainfall Map: The whole country is divided into three rainfall belts of:
Annual Rainfall
In Inches

- Less than 10
- 10 to 20
- 20 to 40
- 40 to 80
- More than 80

Natural Vegetation

- Tropical Rain Forest
- Grasslands with Trees
- Grasslands
- Scrub
- Little or No Vegetation

Map B

Dominant Land Use

- Farming
- Grazing
- Hunting & Some Farming
- Manufacturing
- Little-Used Land

Population Distribution
O = Largest Cities

- Casablanca 742,000
- Tunis 410,000
- Alexandria 1,370,000
- Cairo 4,850,000
- Addis Ababa 400,000
- Léopoldville 267,000
- Johannesburg 1,033,000
- Durban 634,000
- Cape Town 729,000
- Ibadan 500,000
a. Less than 10 inches
b. 10 to 20 inches
c. 40 to 80 inches

2. Natural Vegetation:
   a. Grasslands with trees—cover the Ethiopian plateaus.
   b. Grasslands dominate eastern and northern parts of Ethiopia
   c. Little or No Vegetation—covers a strip of area along the Red Sea coast of Ethiopian side.

3. Dominant Land Use:
   a. Farming—extensive area which coincides with the grasslands with trees and 40 to 80 inches of rainfall belts
   b. Little Used Land—including areas of grasslands and belts of little or no vegetation. It is sparsely settled.

4. Population Distribution Map:
   Concentration is shown with dots in the farming plateau areas.
   Addis Ababa, the capital, with 400,000 people (1960) is indicated as the tenth largest city in Africa.¹²

   Size comparison has been made by superimposing the map of Ethiopia upon that of the United States to show how many states put together compare with the area of Ethiopia. Also a cross-section of Ethiopia is drawn to indicate the different land features. The Blue Nile Valley, depth of Lake Tana (6004 ft.), Mount Ras Dashan (15,158 ft.)—the highest point in Ethiopia—the elevation of Addis Ababa (8,038 ft.), and the Great Rift Valley are labeled on the drawing. (Map - C)

Furthermore, pictures of buildings with Ethiopian flags and advertising signs in Addis Ababa, and a typical Ethiopian farmer plowing the land with a two-oxen drawn wooden plough are used to present some aspects of urban and rural life.

**Books for Children**

The following books are some that are suggested for children to read in order to get some understanding about the cultural aspects of the Ethiopians through stories and folktales.


   This is said to be a true story of a lively boy achieving his dream through planning and luck in speaking with the Emperor of Ethiopia.


   Ethiopian folktales which represent a cross-current of cultures of the Middle East, Africa, and the West. Men and animals play the parts of heroes and villains. Examples of Wisdom, Weaknesses, strengths, and varieties are developed in stories which present interesting reading and content for storytelling and dramatization. Some of the stories have the possibilities of reaction stories to motivate discussions.


   It contains forty-one stories which are considered to be representative of nine Ethiopian tribes. Includes a bit of history,
geography, anthropology and much storytelling.


Children will enjoy the story of how and where those animals live in Africa. In some parts it is summer all year round, and when the water in the stream is low, all animals crowd to the few available water wells. This story is based on the animals found there.

Films and Filmstrips

The following lists of audio-visual materials were compiled to aid teachers in guiding studies of Africa at a fourth grade level. These lists contain films and filmstrips which present information on various geographic regions, flora and fauna, and topics related to historical and cultural aspects of African life in general and that of Ethiopia in particular. Each material is followed by the descriptions given by the producers. Obtainable sources are also indicated.

1. Ethiopia: Africa's Ancient Kingdom (php)

   h - c  17 minutes  50268  color

It deals with the geographical location of Ethiopia and explanation of different racial and religious backgrounds of the people. Poor transportation and communication are responsible for the slow development of the country. It indicates that Ethiopia's history remains a mystery, but it is one of the few Christian countries in Africa and has been ruled by hereditary monarchs for centuries. Enumerates Haile Selassie's main concern as being the building of
new roads, developing adequate communication systems and educating the people.\(^{13}\)

2. Ethiopia: \#7135 black and white 23 minutes

Presents an historical review of the political events during the last fifty years. Includes a report of the activities of Mussolini, the war with Italy, and the role of Haile Selassie.

3. Ethiopia: (New not yet numbered) color 17.5 minutes

An overview of the way of life and the customs of the people in northeastern Africa, descendants from one of the oldest known civilizations in the world. The topography and flora and fauna in the natural environment are presented, also an interpretation of the desires and goals of Haile Selassie for his people.

4. Report from Africa, Part II black and white 20 minutes

#2145 Reports activities and developments in countries tied together by the Nile. Information related to Ethiopia—efforts to fight diseases and backwardness and to raise the standard of living, occupational, education, and developments related to water supply—highlights aspects of living important to the people of Africa.

5. African Cousins \#2076 color 14 minutes

A day in the lives of two boys in a primitive African village. Emphasizes that all people are similar in their work, play, and

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\(^{13}\)Catalog of Educational Films. (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1966-1969), p. 177.
physical needs. Approximately 90 percent of the people of Africa live in villages. This is very true of Ethiopia.

6. **New Faces of Africa** color 27 minutes

The narrator, an African, highlights problems and aspirations of the country. The film documents the spirit of independence and introduces several leaders with important roles in the development of the country. Emphasis is placed on the contributions of the Christian Church. Appropriate film to use in introducing studies of Africa to teacher groups.

Numbers 3 - 6 are obtainable from the:

Division of Audio-Visual Education
Office of Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools

7. **Filmstrips - Teacher Background**

**Africa: Continent in Ferment (Free)**

Time, Inc.
540 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago II, Illinois


B. Professional Materials

A list of selected reference materials is presented below that could help teachers of social studies build general background in teaching about Ethiopia. These source materials, which include books and bulletins,

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15. Ibid., p. 160.
are also helpful in organizing social studies units on Ethiopia for grades four and six where it is usually taught. The books listed here offer information from various disciplines. Some of the books contain descriptive material which may give teachers ideas as to ways of presenting concepts to children. Many of these books are available in the Eastern Illinois University Booth Library and the rest elsewhere in the United States from publishing companies, the Library of Congress and various universities. Some of these source materials deal with the treatment of Africa as a whole in which short references are made to Ethiopia. Others are specifically about Ethiopia dealing with the historical, geographical, educational, economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the country. Very brief descriptions of those within reach are given.


This book contains brief but reliable information about present-day Africa. Highlights are physical features of the continent, its economic and political divisions, occupations and culture of the people, governments, churches, and schools.


   Background for teachers and adults interested in the peoples of Africa—their natural history, geographical distribution, many diversities, societies and organizations.

7. Bruce, James. Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile. (Edinburgh, 1790).


   Provides a good historical background of the country chronologically.

   It is used in Ethiopian colleges as one of the references in history courses.


   Presents comprehensive factual information related to all parts of Africa. Description of complexities and achievements are included.


It contains fifty outline black and white simple maps which emphasize historical and current background and reflect the point of view of educated Africans today. A useful handbook for teachers in clarifying information for children.


Good reference because of the way it describes topography, natural resources and man's utilization of them. Historical facts are related to current development. Questions and suggested activities are included. Figures and graphs are unusually interesting.


Despite errors in the historical section, it is the most useful comprehensive survey available to date.


Presents comprehensive introduction to the lands and people of East Africa. Discusses climate, history, tribes, religions, cities, geography, work, education, health, clothing, recreation, government, wildlife, arts, customs, and the future of East Africa.


The information and simple line maps and clear photographs present an excellent overview of physical features, famous explorers, different tribes, historical events, and customs. A teacher's guide and a source of factual information for the more mature student.


The author presents information about African sculpture, masks, objects used in everyday life, and various forms of ornamentation. Materials and techniques are discussed in relation to different types of nomadic, hunting, and agrarian life.


Eritrea was an Italian colony in North Ethiopia. It joined Ethiopia as a federation in 1952. Now, since 1962, it is just one of the provinces of Ethiopia. Until this unity Ethiopia was a landlocked nation.


A. Summary

Ethiopia is one of the emerging African nations which are now growing influential in international politics and economic affairs. Ethiopia and the United States are politically and economically connected. The United States government is helping Ethiopia develop educationally, economically, and politically.

Ethiopia's location, relief features, climate, natural resources, and some aspects of its economic, historical and cultural background as well as foreign relations make up the subject matter of the social studies taught about Ethiopia in the United States in grades four and six. In these grades' textbooks, Ethiopia is presented under the regional division called "Africa South of the Sahara." Textbook explanations, maps, pictures, study questions and some films are the major materials and activities used in developing the desired concepts.

B. Conclusion

Ethiopia's historical significance as the very ancient kingdom and early Christian nation in the whole of Africa has been given due consideration in the social studies curriculum. The rugged nature of the terrain is one
of the key factors in the long history of the country's independence. This same geographic factor, that helped in maintaining freedom by acting as barriers to foreign penetration, had adversely affected the progress of the country by isolating it from outside contact. It had also created great diversity of social and cultural life and thus making unity difficult for a long time. This very important geographic factor and its affects on the country have been recognised and pointed out in the course of study. The significance of agriculture as the mainstay of the country's economy and its potentialities with regard to good soil and adequate rainfall, natural resources, foreign relations, and some trends of improvement plans and problems were considered.

Besides the social studies textbooks, the writer has located various source materials in general references like Encyclopedias, yearbooks, professional books, United Nations Publications, magazines, journals, maps, films and filmstrips already listed under the chapter dealing with source materials. These and the recently issued textbooks which give a relatively more detailed information than the earlier editions are indicative of the increasing trends in teaching more about Ethiopia.

The inclusion of Ethiopia in the regional division of Africa South of the Sahara is based on the general physiographic and climatic similarities of the areas included thereunder. One of the most important physiographic features in Africa is the Great Rift Valley which passes through Ethiopia, where it is wider, and continues southward through Kenya to Mozambique. This region is characterized by many lakes and some extinct and active volcanoes. Secondly, Ethiopia forms part of the Eastern Highland regions of
Africa where temperatures are highly modified by altitude and thus equatorial heat is hardly felt. Ethiopia also has regional relations with Egypt and the Sudan. Whenever the social studies of Egypt and the Sudan are taught mention of Ethiopia's climate is enviable. The former countries are desert forming part of the Sahara and the life of the people there is closely associated with the Nile water. The farmers in both Egypt and Sudan depend upon the annual flooding of the Nile River. Over 80% of the volume of this annual flood water, carrying muddy soils, comes from the Ethiopian Highlands where rainfall is seasonally heavy.

Agreement over the control of the Ethiopian rivers heading toward the two countries exists among the three nations. Information about Ethiopia can be found in geography books under the heading "The Source of the Nile or the Nile Lands."

From the study of grades four and six social studies, curriculum guides, and suggested films the writer has come to the conclusion that the subject matter about Ethiopia is mainly centered around the natural environment and its effects upon the life of the people. But very little, if at all, is said about the real life situations of the people and the types of activities they perform in response to the natural environment. People do try all sorts of possibilities to modify their environment. Furthermore the relationship between Ethiopia and the United States is hardly established.

C. Recommendations

The writer has noticed that not only the human activities and relations between Ethiopia and the United States in the textbooks have been overlooked
but also not enough and appropriate activities are provided to get across to the children the concepts introduced in such a meaningful way. Activities related to the agrarian life of the people, the methods and problems of traditional farming, the transportation difficulties created by the broken nature of the terrain and the facilities available to keep communication possible, in areas where roads are still non-existent, by using donkeys, horses, mules and camels are worth knowing.

1. To help children get a better understanding of the actual life pattern of the majority of the people books, pictures and films dealing with farm activities should be provided. Ninety percent of Ethiopia's population lives on farms practicing subsistence agriculture, mixed-farming, and commercial farming on varying scales. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) is the best material source for agricultural life and method of practices in Ethiopia. Information can also be obtained by writing to H. S. I. University (Faculty of Agricultural College) P. O. Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Activities centered around the traditional practices such as sowing seeds, weeding and harvesting by hand, ploughing with teams of oxen, homes, churches, mosques, clothing, food, and geographical setting could much better enlighten children than the mere descriptions of facts and concepts. These areas of the people's life can be treated in the form of report, discussion and drawing pictures.

2. To develop the concept of the problems of communication created by the relief features a clay or plastic model map of Ethiopia can be made in which the zigzag pattern of the roads and the numerous bridges across streams
can be shown. The trade relations between Ethiopia and the United States can be shown by the use of flow line maps indicating the route along which goods are carried from the Ethiopian sea ports to New York and vice versa. Means of transportation and types of goods could also be learnt at the same time.

3. Real objects can be obtained from and through the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, D. C. Interviews of Ethiopian students in the United States can enrich the information about Ethiopia and they can also provide some real objects from Ethiopia that can be brought to the classroom. By writing to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, H. S. I. University, P. O. Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, useful journals and bulletins on the cultural and social background are obtainable.
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