



Mansa Musa

The Richest Man in History



What Do You Already Know?

Which of these words have you read or heard before?

wealthy	inflation
empire	flourish
natural resources	manuscript

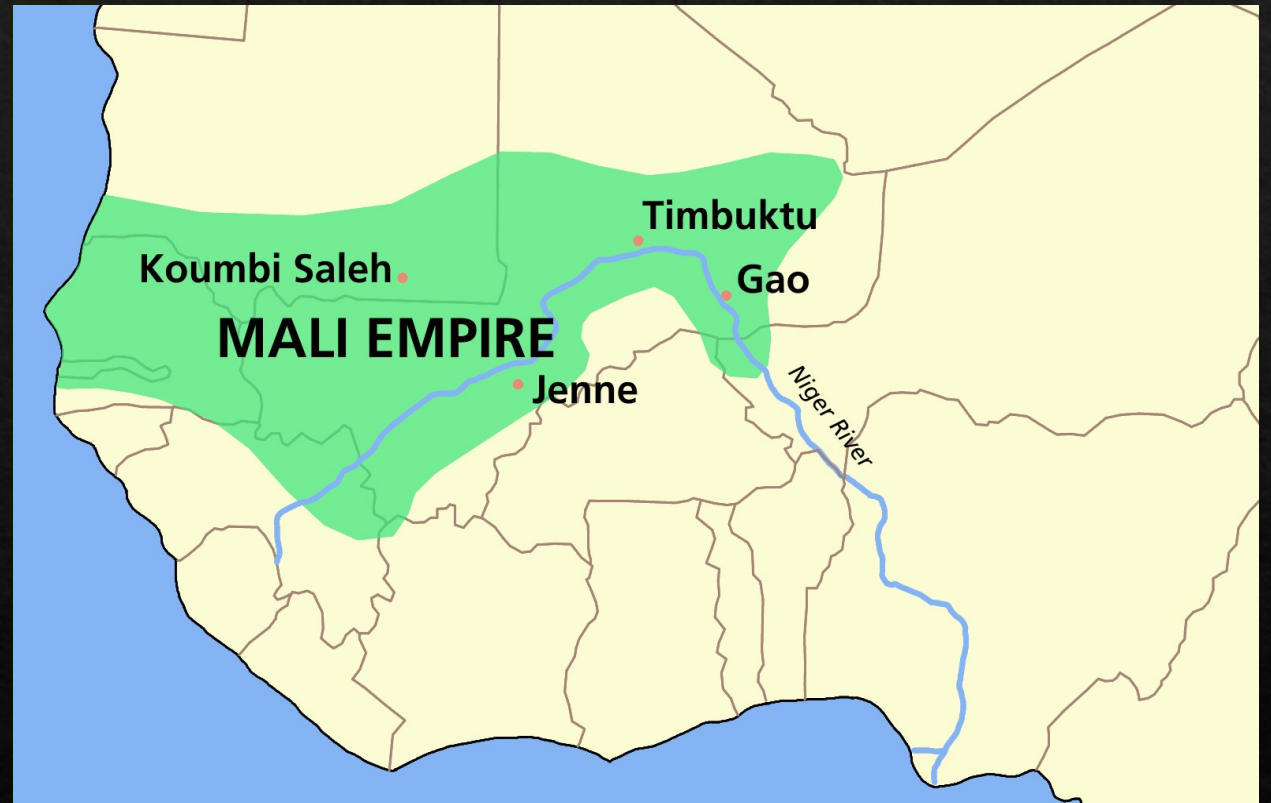
The Wealthiest Man Ever!

When someone is wealthy, it means they have an abundance of valuable possessions or money. Do you know who the wealthiest man in the history of the world was? He was an African Muslim ruler named Mansa Musa! His wealth is estimated to have been around today's equivalent of \$400 BILLION dollars!



A Vast Empire

Mansa Musa was the ruler of the Mali Empire in Africa from 1312 until his death in 1337. An empire is a large group of states or countries under a single authority. The Mali Empire grew under Mansa Musa's rule. It extended from the Atlantic coast, through Timbuktu, to parts of the Sahara Desert!



Natural Treasures

While European countries were struggling with civil wars and poor resources, the Mali Empire was thriving! It was rich in natural resources, or natural materials that can be used for economic gain. The natural resources in the Mali Empire were gold and salt. African civilizations were prospering with the abundance of many natural resources.



A Blessed Journey

In 1324, Mansa Musa set out to perform Hajj. It was a 4,000 mile journey! In the days before planes and trains, people traveled in caravans with horses and camels. Some eyewitness accounts say that as many as 60,000 people were part of Musa's Hajj caravan! People in his caravan wore fine clothing and carried golden staffs. Camels and horses carried hundreds of pounds of gold!



Generosity

On his way to Hajj, Mansa Musa and his caravan stopped in Cairo, Egypt. He was a religious man who knew the importance of giving charity, so Musa spent his wealth in the markets and donated to the poor. He gave away so much of his gold to the people of Cairo that he caused inflation- the price for goods and services increased while the value of gold decreased! He ended up buying back most of his gold for more than what it was worth.



Expanding the Empire

Musa acquired even more territory during his journey. Eventually, the Mali Empire grew to span what today is Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Mauritania, and Mali! As the empire spread, so did word of Mansa Musa and his wealth. Neighboring Muslim kingdoms and European countries wanted to connect with him for trading purposes.



Building a Civilization

Musa used his empire's wealth to build schools, mosques, universities, & libraries. Musa was a devout Muslim, and he wanted the knowledge of Islam to spread. He focused on the city of Timbuktu. Timbuktu is located at the edge of the Sahara Desert and near the Niger River. Its location made it the perfect spot to become a flourishing trading center and a hub for Islamic learning.



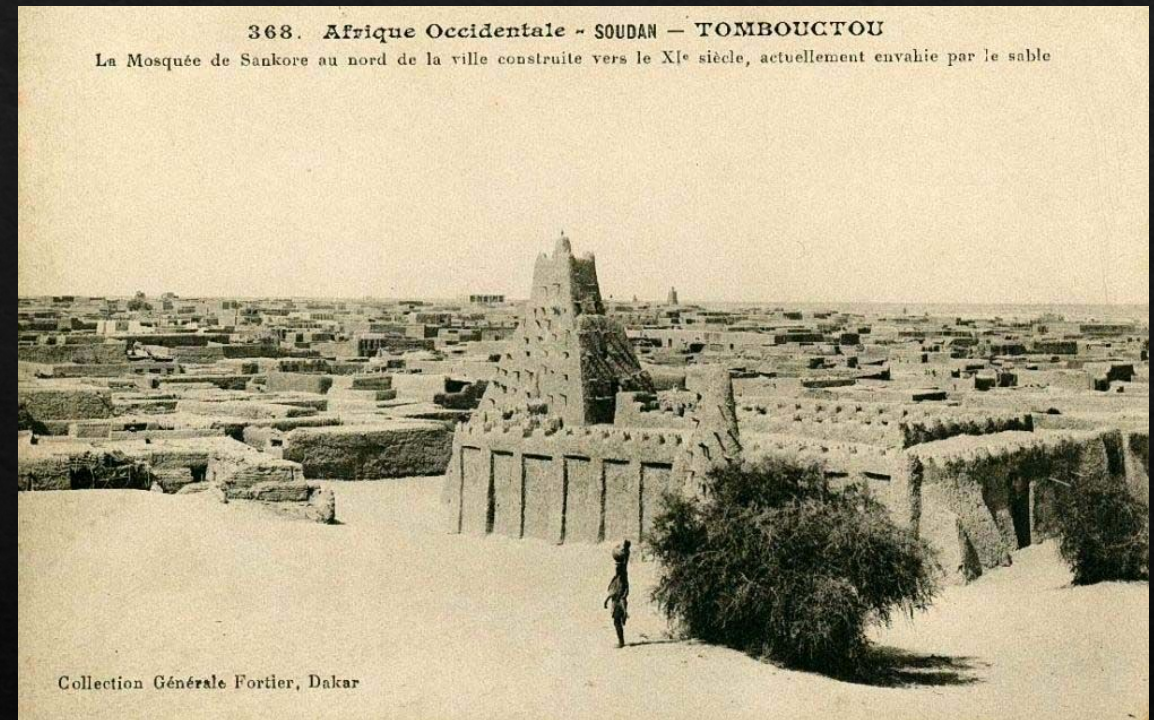
A Great Mosque

Mansa Musa had the Djinguereber (*JIN-gur-a bear*) Mosque, also known as the Great Mosque, built in Timbuktu. This mosque was actively used for more than 500 years! It is still standing today!



A Center for Islamic Learning

Mansa Musa's decisions as a ruler helped the University of Sankore in Timbuktu prosper and become an important center of learning in the Muslim world. This university was able to house 25,000 students and had one of the largest libraries in the world. Its library held between 400,000 – 700,000 manuscripts!



Mansa Musa's Lasting Legacy

Mansa Musa was a man known for his generosity. He made his empire famous not just for its wealth, but also for its knowledge. He built mosques during his travels, and built schools and universities for his people to benefit from. He opened the doors of his empire to trade with others, and invited the world to learn in it. Mansa Musa did all of this while holding on to his Islamic faith.

