

Morocco, Sunny Land, Called the California of Africa

By GEORGE A. HALABY
 United Press International
 Rabat, Morocco—(UPI)—Morocco has often been called the California of Africa for the many similarities it bears to the golden state in the new world.

Its Arabic name is Al Maghreb El Aksa—the extreme West—due to its position in northwest Africa.

It is a warm, sunny land of striking physical beauty. Morocco is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the West and the Mediterranean Sea on the north. On the east and southeast it borders Algeria and in the south on Spanish Sahara.

Mountains

The total area is about 183,000 square miles and its shape resembles California. Morocco is extremely mountainous. In the North, parallel to the coast, are the Rif mountains; the central part is traversed by the Atlas ranges. Rich plains stretch to the Atlantic coast while semi-desert extends from the southern and eastern Atlas slopes.

Morocco's population totals 12,350,000 of whom 11,850,000 are Moslems, 160,000 French, 125,000 Jews, 95,000 Algerians and 96,600 Spanish.

Population Increase

Its population is increasing at the rate of 3.25 per

cent annually—one of the highest in the world.

Until last year Morocco was ruled by an absolute monarch.

But the late King Mohamed V had promised the people a constitution and his son, King Hassan II, fulfilled the promise and submitted the constitution to a public referendum which was approved by more than 95 per cent of the voters.

The nation's first parliament will be elected this December. It will tone down the king's authority but he will still exercise supreme religious power and great influence in civil affairs. The

36-year-old monarch himself appoints cabinet members and dismisses them.

The earliest settlers of Morocco were the Berbers whose origin is unknown. The Phoenicians in the 12th Century B.C. and later the Carthaginians set up trading posts along the Mediterranean. By the 8th Century, the ports of Melilla, Tangier, Rabat and Casablanca were operating. The Romans, in the 1st Century B.C. penetrated further south.

Arab influence reached Morocco in the 7th Century A.D. after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. Berbers were gradually converted to Islam.

Achieve Conquest

It was the combined Arab-Berber armies—the Moors—who achieved extensive conquests in Spain and France where they were checked in 732. Islamic rule of Spain lasted some 400 years.

Relations between the United States and Morocco have always been cordial.

Morocco was the first country to recognize the infant United States of America in 1776. The sultan also entered into agreement whereby American trade was guaranteed in the western and southern Mediterranean from pirates of the Barbary Coast.

Morocco boasts the oldest university in the world—the University of Karouine in Fes—which was built early in the 9th Century. Yet, statistics show that about 85-90 per cent of the population is illiterate. Education has recently become compulsory for primary studies.

Have Special Dialect

Moroccan written Arabic is similar to the rest of the Arab world. But spoken Moroccan is a kind of special dialect of mixed Arabic-Spanish-French-Berber.

Moroccans mainly are devout (Sunni) Moslems. During four decades of French rule, Christian missionaries failed to convert them to Christianity. Thus communism has had insignificant

success and the tiny party was banned in 1960.

A typical Moroccan is Abdel-Hak Lahecn, a 54-year-old ministry of work employee, who lives with his wife, Aicha, and their four children in Spanish town in one of Rabat's poorer neighborhoods.

Mrs. Lahecn says the hard times in Morocco have turned her into an experienced economist in order to manage to live on her husband's 500 dirhams (\$110) monthly wage. She does her own shopping in the Casbah where prices are cheaper and the quality a little less fresh than in the new town. She also makes her two daughters' and most of her two sons' clothing. Entertainment is limited to a movie for the children twice a month.

Picnic In Woods

"Every Sunday we take them out on picnics to the woods around Rabat or a visit to my parents or Abdel-Hak's folks," she said.

Her daughters, Fatima, 10, and Latifa, 8, attend a girl's

elementary school, and help their mother when they return in the late afternoon with house chores and tending the garden where some fruits and vegetables grown help reduce expenses. The sons, Ali, 6, and Mohamed, 4, go to a boys' primary school where Mohamed is in kindergarten.

House, Spacious

The Lahecn's house is composed of three bedrooms, a large living room, fairly large entrance hall which is used as a dining room, a large kitchen and one bathroom. The house is fairly old, built of red bricks plastered over and whitewashed. The kitchen has an old butane gas stove Lahecn bought second hand from a French family which left Morocco after independence.

There is no central heating except in very few places in Morocco. Heat during winter comes from the kitchen and a large wood-burning stove in the hall. But all the rooms have thick Moroccan hand-woven carpets.



AFRICA'S CALIFORNIA—Morocco often has been called the California of Africa because of the many similarities it bears with the state in this country. This newsmap of Morocco shows its location. (UPI)

The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*
 Emeritus Consultant in Medicine
 Emeritus Professor of Medicine
 Mayo Clinic
 (Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

AVOIDING HAY FEVER AND ASTHMA

Whenever a beam of sunlight comes through my darkened room and I see the millions of dust particles in the air, I am much impressed. Ever since my boyhood, when I worked in a public library, my nose has been highly sensitive to sneezing. I have to do to get to sneezing, violently is to pick up a book, or some typewritten material that has much dust on it. A high percentage of people, when skintested, are found to be sensitive to house dust. Even a house that has been well cleaned and dusted and vacuumed contains much dust.

A person who is highly sensitive to house dust can get much relief by installing in his home a central air conditioning unit with a precipitator attachment. These precipitators interest me particularly because, long ago, the basic idea for such apparatus came to my dear friend, Professor Cottrell, of the University of California. By running high tension electricity through an air conduit, he showed that one can cause the tiny particles of dust to run together into bigger particles that are heavy enough to fall out.

Another good friend of mine, Dr. van Leeuwen of Holland, many years ago discovered that if he sent his patients with asthma into a hospital, half of them immediately got relief. Also, if he sent them up into the mountains of Switzerland, half of them got relief. Studies soon showed that this relief came because, in a hospital room, where there are no rugs and few draperies, there is much less dust than there is in a home. Also, in the mountains the air is clean, and free from pollen.

An asthmatic person ought to get out of his home while it is being dusted. It helps to have the dusting done with a damp cloth. Some persons can get help by wearing a respirator that filters out much dust.

Very bad is the dust that gathers on the surface of a bed. A mother, on coming into her child's room some winter evening, may decide that he needs an extra blanket. When she throws this over the bed—whoosh! and so much dust flies up into the poor child's face that he or she may start wheezing in an attack of asthma. It would be so much better if, during the day, the mother were to cover the bed with a plastic, and at bed-time, very gently remove it.

Some years ago on going into a Pullman car I saw the woman across the aisle cover-

ing her pillows with plastic covers. She said she was an asthmatic who could avoid an attack by covering pillows which might be full of feathers or some other (to her) irritating material.

The asthmatic person should keep a record of her reactions to the various types of materials that she uses for sheets, spreads, and blankets. Cotton materials are usually safe, except for the stuffing of pillows. There may be some cotton-seed which can produce asthma. Rubber foam is safer. Feathers and Kapok can cause wheezing.

Neighbors who suffer from hay fever might join together and pay someone to cut down all of the ragweed that grows in vacant lots in their neighborhood. Experts say that ordinarily when the wind is not strong, the ragweed pollen does not travel very far.

Today, many people with asthma get much help from a little instrument with which they can inject a few droplets of a strong drug into the back of the throat. One of the best of these drugs is Adrenalin.

Many people try to avoid hay fever or asthma by moving to another part of the country. This sometimes helps wonderfully, but sometimes it doesn't. Often an expert allergist can tell the person where he is likely to get relief. I remember a young woman with a severe hay fever who, to get away from ragweed, fled to a western

desert. There she got worse, because she was sensitive to sage brush—which was everywhere. Later, she obtained perfect relief in places like Duluth and San Francisco. In my library I have a rare old book, published some 100 years ago, with a map of the mountains of New England, showing where a sufferer from hay fever could be free!

Often I have helped a person find the cause of his asthma by teaching him to do a little home detective work. Thus, I remember the woman who got asthma in certain houses, but not in others. It was then easy to find that the cause of her trouble was dust coming off of pressed board. Another patient of mine got all of her trouble from primroses which she grew in her house. An eminent research man I know became sensitized to the fur of the rabbits with which he worked. A man who worked in a big chicken processing plant had the misfortune to get sensitized to chicken feathers!

If you're a sensitive, allergic person, you'll want to read Dr. Alvarez' booklet "Asthma, Allergy, and Hay Fever." To obtain your copy send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines, Iowa 50304.

SMOKERS' JACKPOT

Tokyo—(UPI)—Smokers of one of Japan's cheapest brands of cigarettes were unexpectedly puffing the country's best tobacco today. Officials of the government tobacco monopoly said an undetermined number of packages of "Iko," a 14-cent brand, were stuffed with choice tobacco destined for "Peace," Japan's most expensive cigarette at 22 cents a pack.

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