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The Wangara gold trade was conducted through silent trade. The trading partners conducted their business without seeing or speaking to each other! Caravans laden with goods and salt would enter Ghana. There they met Ghanaians who guided the caravans to specific trading spots on the banks of the rivers in the gold country.

On arriving at the trade site the merchants would beat large drums to signal the opening of the market. The traders piled the goods and salt in rows, each merchant identifying his own piles with special marks. Then the caravan would pull back a half day's journey from the trading site.

While the caravan was gone, the gold miners of Wangara arrived in boats, and brought their gold. They would heap a quantity of gold beside each pile of goods and salt. Then they too retired from the scene.

Once more the merchants came back to the site of the trading. If they found that the miners had left a satisfactory quantity of gold for their goods, they picked up the gold and went their way, beating on their drums to show that their business was concluded.

Each group returned to the trading site separately to collect the goods they had obtained in the exchange, going their separate ways once again, satisfied and happy.

By Elliott Skinner