

**Independence for Eritrea - I**

**Lead: At last, independence for the tiny nation of Eritrea was a reality.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The so-called Horn of Africa protrudes out into the Indian Ocean, its northern coast paralleling the Arabian peninsula. It is the home to a dazzling array of ethnic diversity. Somalians, Ethiopians, the Affars and Issas of Djibouti, and Eritreans, whose tiny nation running along the Red Sea coastline, after a century of dispute, achieved its independence in 1993.**

**Liberty for Eritrea followed a bitterly contested struggle that had its genesis in the 1880s. In the hundred years before that decade, the continent of Africa had been systematically carved up by the great European Imperial powers especially France and Great Britain. Late in the century Italy and then Germany were unified, but when these newly fashioned national states sought to join the colonial club, when they looked around to acquire their own colonies, there was not much left. In Africa only small pockets of territory remained, in the northeast and southwest quadrants, and if these areas had riches such as oil or diamonds, they had yet to be discovered.**

**The Italian government cast its colonial net in the direction of Ethiopia and the horn of Africa. The Italian Rubattino Navigation Company was already operating in the region. Italy secured the Company's trading concessions from Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II (may nuh lik) who agreed to Italian absorption in exchange for modern weapons. The Italian colony of Eritrea was established in 1890.**

**Italy interpreted this Treaty as indicating Ethiopian submission, but in a subsequent invasion of Ethiopia itself, the Italians were humiliated by Menelik's forces at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. Despite this setback Italy continued its rule of Eritrea until**

**World War II. Held by Britain for a short time under United Nations' mandate, Eritrea was eventually federated with and then annexed by Ethiopia. In 1962 the Eritreans rose in revolt. Next time: 30 years of war.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

**De Waal, Alexander. *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1991.**

**Iyob, Ruth. *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995.**

**Keller, Edmond J. "Drought, War and the Politics of Famine," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (4, 1992): 609-624.**

**Pankhurst, Richard. "Ethiopian History and the Eritrean War," *Middle Eastern Studies* [Great Britain] 21 (1, 1985): 93-97.**

**Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.**