

Kid's KOrner

Mythical Kingdoms Fill State Department File

WASHINGTON — Believe it or not, there is a file at the State Department filled with all kinds of curious documents about the rise and fall of countries that never existed.

It is kept in official-looking legal-size folders, and a few of its pages are even stamped Classified.

"I call it the 'Mythical Kingdoms, Kooky Kings, and Pretending Princes' file," says George J. Demko, director of the Office of the Geographer, which has maintained this wonderful file for 40 years. More seriously, it has been labeled "Ephemeral States."

Represents Coralland

The newest entry is a letter dated Aug. 29, 1986, from a citizen of the United Kingdom of Coralland seeking to register as a foreign agent in the United States. Others have come from the King of the Mosquito Shore and Nation (on the east coast of Central America) and the Secretary of State of the Republic of Minerva — Land of the Rising Atoll (on coral reefs in the South Pacific).

The file is very real even if the kingdoms are not. It contains letters of credentials, declarations, affidavits, and maps from persons claiming to have started their own countries. And it includes memos from a variety of U.S. government agencies inquiring about their legitimacy: Is there such a place?

In most cases, these would-be rulers have declared dominion over land that actually exists, usually tiny, isolated islands, sometimes under several feet of water.

Like real countries, some of these kingdoms have proclaimed declarations of independence, adopted constitutions, sought diplomatic recognition, sent out special envoys, displayed coats-of-arms, minted coins, and issued

stamps, passports, and visas.

The geographer's office officially maintains a file on them because it is responsible for keeping track of the sovereignty status of all nations. "We have to know what and where everything is in the world," Demko says.

"The only problem with this file is that once you open it, you get fascinated by it," he says, opening it. "This is fun."

Inside, for instance, there's a lengthy lawsuit filed in the Court of Special Cases of the Republic of Morac-Songhrati-Meads in 1985 against an array of prominent U.S. officials, government agencies, and companies. It seeks at least \$25 billion in damages for infringement, unfair competition, harassment, and sabotage.

A Whiff of Competition

Morac-Songhrati-Meads, which formerly called itself the Kingdom of Humanity, has claimed islands — and oil rights — in the strategically situated Spratly chain in the South China Sea. But so have China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Morton F. Meads, an American businessman, has contended his claim is the legitimate one because he is a descendant of the sea captain who discovered the islands in the 1870s while sailing under the British flag. Meads established his constitutional monarchy more than 30 years ago, locating its capital on Meads Island and choosing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as its national anthem.

When Australia imposed a wheat quota that Leonard George Casley couldn't live with, he turned his 18,500-acre Western Australia farm into the Hutt River Province (later Kingdom) and proclaimed himself Prince. Hutt River formally seceded on April 21, 1970, a day that became its "national"

holiday. A stone secession monument permanently marks the event. The kingdom, population 35, published a 52-page color booklet about itself titled "The Birth of a Principality." Australia refuses to recognize its independent status.

To give Maori people, "a race that is speeding to oblivion," a place "to call their own, their rightful place in the sun," King and Absolute Ruler Mitchara Heatara signed a declaration of independence in 1985 establishing the Maori Kingdom of Tetiti Islands in the South Pacific. His special envoy offered the United States a long-term lease on one island, situated about 500 miles off the New Zealand coast.

"We regret to inform you that we cannot locate Furstentum Castellania," a 1984 State Department letter in the file states. "We can assure you that the United States government does not have diplomatic relations with this ephemeral state." The Principality of Castellania had been created by a group of disenchanted Austrians in 1974. Its location, somewhere in the South Pacific, was kept secret. According to one of its leaders, "Castellania is more a state of mind."

Claim Ocean Floor

Thinking globally, two self-styled rulers served notice on Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975 of their rights as "sole owners of all of the ocean floor and sealand." Others, such as the Admiral of Oceanus, have made similar sweeping claims.

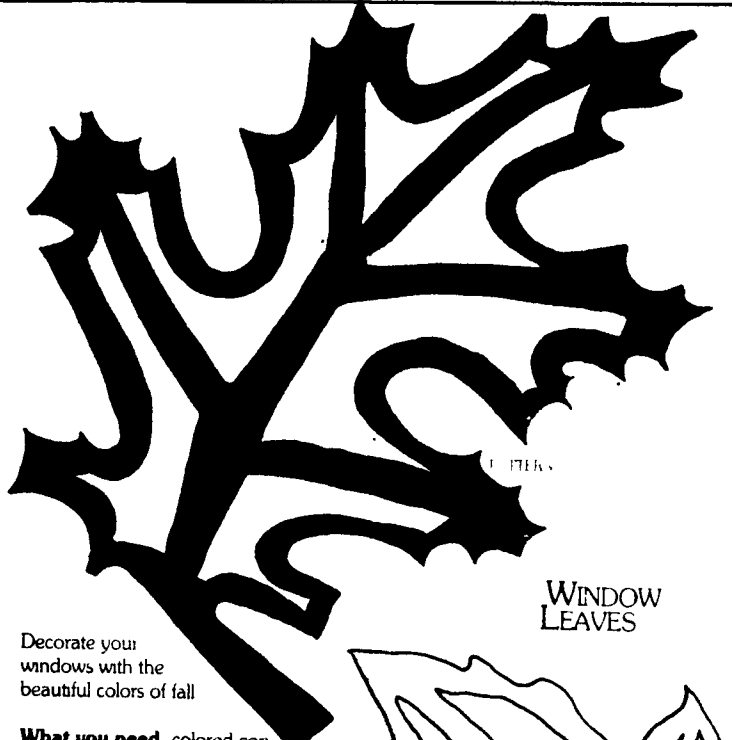
A British couple created their own half-acre "island nation" in the North Sea by taking over a World War II radar-and-gun platform in 1966. They christened it Sealand.

One or two new mythical Kingdoms pop up each year, Demko says. The one that

originally created the file was Atlantis, born on a group of islands off Ecuador in 1933. An old entry notes that one of its citizens was once stopped at El Paso, Texas, when he tried to enter the United States using an Atlantis passport.

The file still contains more documents on Atlantis than any other mythical kingdom.

One of the briefest entries just mentions a True Hug Nation. There's nothing in the file to tell where or what it is.



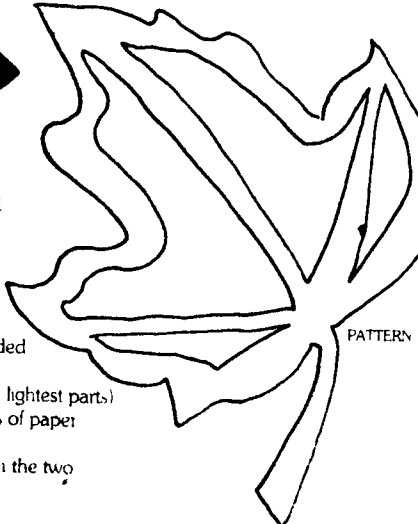
WINDOW LEAVES

Decorate your windows with the beautiful colors of fall

What you need: colored construction paper, scissors, colored tissue paper, and glue

What you do:

- For a large leaf fold an 8 1/2 x 11 piece of construction paper in half. For a small leaf fold an 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 piece of paper in half.
- Cut out a leaf pattern.
- Tape the leaf pattern onto the folded construction paper.
- Cut out the insides of the leaf (the lightest parts).
- Be sure to cut through both layers of paper.
- Cut out the outline of the leaf.
- Glue colored tissue paper between the two layers of construction paper.
- Trim the edges of the tissue paper.
- Tape the leaves to a window where the sun shines in.



COLOR THIS!

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. BLACK | 6. PINK |
| 2. RED | 7. GREEN |
| 3. YELLOW | 8. LT. BROWN |
| 4. BLUE | 9. LT. BLUE |
| 5. BROWN | 10. LT. GREEN |

THE WHIRLIGIG OR DIVING BEETLE IS OFTEN CALLED THE SUBMARINE BEETLE. THEY SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME SKITTERING ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE WATER, AND BASKING IN THE SUN. WHEN DANGER THREATENS THEY DIVE, CATCHING A BUBBLE OF AIR UNDER EACH WING AND DIVE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE POND.

