

Title: Serjeant William Tuft's expedition to Timbo in 1814.

Introduction: These three articles in *The Royal Gazette; and Sierra Leone Advertiser* in 1821, which concern three issues, contain parts that describe aspects of Tuft's expedition to Timbo in 1814. One was a continuing war between Amara and Senasi in Moria. A second was one or more expeditions conducted by William Tuft, a native of Sierra Leone and a serjeant in the Royal Africa Corps, who was sent by the governor of Sierra Leone to Timbo several times in the early nineteenth century. Third was a description of trade paths and commerce between Freetown and the interior. These are found in CO271 series and in a microfilm collection of Sierra Leone newspapers in Reel 8, *Microfilm of Government Publications relating to Sierra Leone, 1808-1961*, produced by E.P. Microform in 1975. In William Gray and Staff Surgeon Dochard, *Travels in Western Africa in the Years 1818, 19, 20, and 21* (London: John Murray, 1825), 12, Tuft is identified as "one of our native serjeants" from the Royal African Corps, who had been "employed by the governor of Sierra Leone on similar occasions." Tuft also is prominently mentioned by Captain Thomas Campbell in *The Forgotten Peddie/Campbell Expedition in Fuuta Jaloo, West Africa, 1815-17*, edited by Bruce L. Mouser (Madison: African Studies Publications, 2007).

Source: PRO, Colonial Office, series 271, volume 2 (various as noted below).

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Transcription: by Bruce Mouser.

[PRO, CO271/2, "Illustrations of Africa," February 3rd, 1821]

Illustrations of Africa.

As many of our readers are, perhaps, not aware of the usual route from Port Logo to Teembo, the capital of the Foulahs, we beg to insert the different stages:---

1st day's journey, from Port Logo to Cabatha		Timmannees'
2d ditto	Bankaroo	Country
3d ditto	Pa Yan's Town	Limba
4th ditto	Canty Banka (the capital)	Country
5th ditto	Masootera	
6th ditto	Cookoona, the only town of Alimamy's, of Fouricaria, on this route. It is at this town where, it is said, messengers from the king of Teembo are to meet Mr. O'Beirne.	
7th ditto	Berri Koorie	
8th ditto	Koofooria	
9th ditto	Forida	SoosSoos and
10th ditto	Samja	Mandingoes'
11th ditto	Doorinja	country.
12th ditto	Newunga	
13th ditto	Karri Monga	
14th ditto	Seduiah	
15th ditto	Yambiloora	Foulah
16th ditto	Felko	country, &c.
17th ditto	Nafeghee	
18th ditto	Teembo	

When Governor Maxwell sent Serjeant Tuft to Teembo, Almamy, of Fouricarria, as soon as he heard of his arrival at Cookoona, dispatched messengers to stop him; but Tuft made his escape in the night, and reached the next town, to which Almany's authority does not extend. It is only two short days' journey from Cookoona to Fouricaria, and as Almamy, and, indeed, all the Mandingoes, are unwilling to allow the Foulahs to carry their trade to Port Logo, it is to be hoped that the present mission will avoid Cookoona, by holding a course further to the right, else, perhaps, it may meet with difficulties and interruptions to an extent not at all contemplated nor apprehended. The

report of his advances will be spread by the people of the countries through which he has to pass; and whatever route he may take from Port Logo, there can be no fear of his not meeting with the messengers from Teembo; for African news travel fast and far, and they will not of course remain ignorant of his course and advances.

We have taken some pains to enquire into the causes which have led to a long and pettifogging warfare between Sannassee, of Malaga, and Almamy, of Fouricaria. It appears that Salin Lyah, the great Chief of the Mandingoes, was the instigator and promoter, and by his influence over Almamy could soon be prevailed on to terminate the war and restore the country to peace. Sannassee has but one town, which is well fortified, and is distant only four or five miles from Satan Lyah's, which is called Malacourry; but his chief town is Lyah a day's journey farther off. The former town is where he trades, and as it is higher up the Malaga than Sannassee, he stops all the traders from descending; and Sannassee, on the other hand, prevents the trade of this Colony from being carried higher up the river. Almamy has his camp at Kal-Laka: he has twice attempted to take the well-fortified town of Sannassee, and each time has been repulsed with considerable loss of lives. Almamy, who is merely a chief under Satin Lyah, obtains assistance from him; and Sannassee is supplied with many able fighting men from Dalamooda.

We have every reason to believe, that the only way by which this miserable and injurious warfare can be finally and amicably arranged, is to send one or two respectable gentlemen from this Colony to Satin Lyah, and endeavour to bring the Chiefs together, to hold a palaver, and reconcile one party with the other. We are aware that each has a disposition to restore, by amicable arrangements, peace and a free trade to their country and that they look to us, in this Colony for effecting every beneficial measure, and for settling their disputes and contentions.

[PRO, CO271/2, "Illustrations of the Geography of the Foulah Country," September 8th, 1821]

Illustrations of the Geography of the Foulah Country

[From a Correspondent]

With reference to the route of Setafa, the messenger from the King of Bambarana to the Governor of this colony, detailed in No. 159 of the Sierra Leone Gazette, the source and direction of a branch of the Senegal (called Ba-Fing by the Mandingoes, Ballioo or Foorah by the Foulahs) are pointed out with the accuracy which corroborative proof requires, and which the testimony of native and European travellers have fully confirmed as unvarnished truths. For nearly thirty years past, both European slave dealers and mulattoes of considerable acquirements, have been accustomed to travel to Teembo, where many have resided for long periods with the object of collecting slaves from those dealers engaged in that traffic in the interior parts of Africa. In the Rio Pongas the Foulah nation is as well known to Europeans, and those connected with them in their abominable traffic, as the *Bullom shore* is familiar to the inhabitants of this colony.

On the 23d of January, 1794, Mess. Watt and Winterbottom embarked for the river Nunez, from whence they proceeded to Teembo, and returned to this colony by the path to Fouricaria, with the pride of success, on the 3d of May following. A few years ago, a feeble attempt was made to reach Teembo by way of Port Logo; but sickness having assailed the party, they were forced to return without having passed through the Limba country, the natives of which are reported by them and by all traders to be most jealous and suspicious of every foreigner who attempts to advance within the boundary of their territories.

The late trip to Teembo, every reader of this Gazette knows to have been successfully performed by Mr. O'Beirne, of the Medical Staff; but as the proceedings and scientific observations of that gentleman are known only to the local government, we are unable to allude to any of the discoveries which have probably been made by him.

Serjeant Tuft, of the African Corps, a man of colour, executed, with success, a

mission to Teembo, during the administration of Governor Maxwell; and Mr Mollien, with indefatigable and praiseworthy zeal, visited the same place about three years ago, exploring on his return to the coast, the source of the Ba-Fing to the N.W. of this capital; and in the chart attached to his work, the course of that river is described as flowing in a circular direction round Teembo, till it takes from the line of mountainous country, a northwardly course. In this chart his route is clearly delineated, and the source and course of the Senegal are marked out according to the well sifted information which he appears to have gathered from the natives. In the Gazette above alluded to (No. 159), we stated rather inadvertently, that we had learned from Setafa, a fact *which we were before ignorant of*, viz.--that the Ba-Fing had to be crossed by a person travelling from this colony to Teembo: we say inadvertently, for having lately perused with attention the journal of Mr. Watt, which we had read some years before, it was observed, that this gentleman makes particular mention of having crossed the Baffie (which is as near the common pronunciation of Mandingoes as Ba-Fing), between Teembo and Dyndia, a small town situated about nineteen miles S.W. of that capital. At that period, however, which must be recollected was as far back as 1794, Mr. Watt could not distinctly ascertain, whether its continuation became the Gambia, the Rio Grande, or River Senegal, though its importance even then seemed to be well understood by the natives, one of whom stated to Mr. Watt, that white men might come in ships to the place where they stood, was it not for the unfriendly disposition of some tribes, inhabiting the banks of the river. The whole route of Messrs. Watt and Winterbottom appears to be laid down with so much praise-worthy attention (the distances and bearings being carefully noted), that a person of common ingenuity might, without any other assistance than the perusal of the journal, easily construct a map of such accuracy that nothing could contradict, unless perhaps a correct series of astronomical observations; and these, we are inclined to think (should they ever be made), will bear testimony to the minute attention paid by those gentlemen to the position of the places visited by them, according to the instrumental means in their possession. The distance from Teembo to Fouricaria is computed, by Mr. Watt, at 160 miles; and as Kookoona, which is about 40 miles distant from Cambia, near

the mouth of the Scarcies, appears, from the best of our information, to be situated nearly on the same meridian of longitude (the difference of latitude being hardly one-third of a degree), we may, with tolerable accuracy, pronounce the distance from Port Logo to Teembo to be within 200 miles, more especially as this computation almost exactly corresponds with the distance given by Setafa, viz.: seven days and three-quarters (vide No. 159), which, at the rate of thirty miles per diem, the average of the day's journey of an African, will amount to 230 miles*: from which a deduction must be made, as Port Logo lies a good deal farther eastward than Cambia.□

*Setafa, by his calculation in days, makes the distance 20 miles more than Mr. Watt, but the latter must, of course, be the more correct.

□Cambia is situated 10 deg. E. of Freetown, and Port Logo about 20 min. E. of Cambia.

*The Foulahs call the Mandingos "Moodas", or "Maninkas", and Soo Soos are always called Jalundas; but the difference between a Mandingo and a Soo Soo is only in the former speaking in a different language from the latter. They are both of the same nation and of the same religion, and as many Soo Soos as Mandingoes are followers of Mahomet.

[PRO, CO271/2, "Illustrations of the Geography of the Foulah Country," October 13, 1821]

Illustrations of the Geography of the Foulah Country, continued from No. 171.

[From a Correspondent]

On the 1st of January, 1814, Serjeant Tuft, then of the Royal African corps, was dispatched by his Excellency Governor Maxwell to Almamy Abdulkadar, at Teembo. He pursued nearly the same route as Mr. O'Beirne followed lately. The object of the mission was, to assure Almamy of the friendly disposition of the government of this colony

towards his subjects, and to endeavour to prevail on him to open an unrestrained communication between the Foulah country and this colony, by the path leading either by Kookoona or through the Limba country to Port Logo.

On Tuft's arrival at Teembo, he found that Almany was in camp with his army, then engaged in war with the people of Sankaro, a country inhabited by pagans, called Caffrées by the Foulahs, only five day's journey from Teembo. His course from Teembo was due east; and after passing around a mountain, and travelling at a moderate rate, for three days, he came in sight of the Joliba, the river Niger; and in this journey he crossed, in a canoe, the Ba-Fing or Baffie, which he had a few days before forded, on his way to Teembo from this place, near the village of Nafagee. He also crossed the river Herico,* which, in some respects, describes a course similar to the former, and is supposed to fall into it, after winding around Teembo and watering many fertile plains.

After Tuft had delivered the presents with which he had been entrusted by Governor Maxwell, to Almany, a desire was expressed for him to remain with them in camp, until the war was finally settled. Almany took advantage of Tuft's arrival, and circulated reports that the white people had sent a messenger to him with abundance of gunpowder, flints, and fire-arms. This report soon reached the ears of the people of Sankaro, who became terrified, and fled with the utmost precipitancy; leaving the whole of their country to the plunder of the Foulahs. Thus, the war soon terminated; they returned, with their booty, to Teembo, and soon afterwards Tuft obtained leave to depart, accompanied with fifty armed men under the command of the King's brother. On this occasion, a number of traders followed them to the colony, with a great many oxen, sheep, goats, ivory and gold.

A short time before Tuft arrived at Teembo, a white man named Johnson, who had resided there a great many years as an agent for a slave factory in the Rio Pongos, had died; but his daughter, who was about sixteen years of age, he saw and conversed with. When he was in the Rio Nunez with the late Captain Campbell, then in command of the late mission, he was twice sent from thence to Teembo, and on which occasions he made enquiries about this girl, whom he found had died soon after his leaving Teembo

the first time. He also found that a Mr. Clarke, and several other white men engaged in the slave trade in the Rio Pongos, were in the habit of visiting Teembo for the purpose of collecting slaves; and there is every reason to believe that this same traffic is there still carried on, though to less an extent than formerly, as appears from the accounts which have been recently received; and the flocking of the Foulahs to this colony, with their own produce, is a strong proof of their wants not being sufficiently supplied in English manufactures by the slave dealers, in the neighbouring rivers.

*Compares the river Donso, which flows to the northward in a direction to meet the Rio Nunez, to the Herico, in magnitude and in depth.