Gambian Studies No. 17

PEOPLES OF THE GAMBIA

I. THE WOLOF

By

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&

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with

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PREFACE

This account of the Wolof is intended for the general reader, for the visitor to The Gambia who wishes to learn something of its people, and for the university undergraduate student, rather than for the specialist. Dr. Gamble's book, The Wolof of Senegambia, published by the International African Institute, London, 2nd edition, 1967, has long been out of print, and there is clearly a demand for updated information.

Inevitably this account draws substantially from the same field and library research, which Dr. Gamble carried out, firstly as the holder of a Colonial Research Fellowship, and later with assistance from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds, and from The Gambia Government, during the period 1946 to 1958. However material from later visits, and from research carried out by Linda Salmon, who spent five months in The Gambia in 1974, studying Wolof concepts of beauty, dress, and hair styles, and the status of women, has been added.

Both of us owe a great deal to Alhaji Hassan Njie, of Radio Gambia, who as a young man, was first introduced to anthropological field work by Dr. David Ames in 1950-51. Whenever Linda Salmon or myself have visited The Gambia, he has been our guide, interpreter,and friend, and placed at our disposal his vast knowledge of his people, making a major contribution to our understanding of the Wolof. When Dr. Gamble visited The Gambia in June-July 1984, Alhaji Hassan Njie worked carefully and critically through the first draft of this text.

This visit also provided the opportunity for Mr. B. K. Sagnia of the Museum and Antiquities Division, and Mr. Ebrima M. Sallah of the Oral History Division to read the text, and make further suggestions, many of which have been incorporated in the final version.

It should always be remembered that among the Wolof there is considerable variation in custom from place to place, change has been rapid, and the perspectives of people in different social positions are not always identical. Urban people view things differently from those in rural areas. A 'griot' sees things differently from a person from a chiefly family.

It is hoped that this account will stimulate further research, not merely by outsiders, but by Wolof themselves. Knowing oneself and one's heritage are essential elements in one's education. Topics to be studied are easily found. Children can learn songs and history from their grandparents. Old photographs can be studied to learn about former dress styles, hair styles, and jewelry. Traditional artefacts can be seen in the National Museum.

Thanks are also due to a number of people who have never been to The Gambia: to Darcy Paige who prepared the first draft of the maps, and the diagrams of people at work ; to Elizabeth Morales who drew the final versions of the maps on pages 7 and 10 ; to Lisa Barlow, who translated various Wolof texts, and to Aleta Oryall, who translated the German version of Wolof tales collected by Walter Pichl.

San Francisco
November 1985

David P. Gamble
Linda K. Salmon

THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF WOLOF

The following system of spelling has been followed:

Consonants which correspond to English/French usage:

			Senegal	Gambia
b	as in English boy			
d	day			
f	fine			
g	go			
j	June	= di in French	Diouf	= Juuf
k	kind			
l	love			
m	mouse			
n	not			
p	poor			
r	run			
s	sit			
t	town			
w	we	= ou in French as in oui		
			Oualo	= Waalo
y	yes			

The following letters have special phonetic value:

c	church, child	= ti in French	
ny*	French agneau	Diagne =	Jaany Jaañ
x	as in German ch, (hoch = high) Spanish j Jose In old Wolof texts often written kh	or loch (Scotland) lough (Ireland)	
ŋ	the sound of ng in long		

Certain consonants can be nasalized:

mb, mp, nc, nd, nj, nk, ng.

The doubling of consonants indicates strong forms:

bakkan nose

jamma rekk peace only

* The Gambia now uses ñ instead of ny. For ease in typing I have retained ny .

Vowels

Double vowels aa, ii, oo, uu, etc. indicate long vowels.

a	as in	sat			aa	as in	father
é		day	French	été	éé		age
è		net	"	frère			
ë		the	"	le, demain			
i		sit			ii		seat
o		not			oo		note
u		soup			uu		food

[For a few late corrections ā, ē, ī, ō, ū have been used to show long vowel

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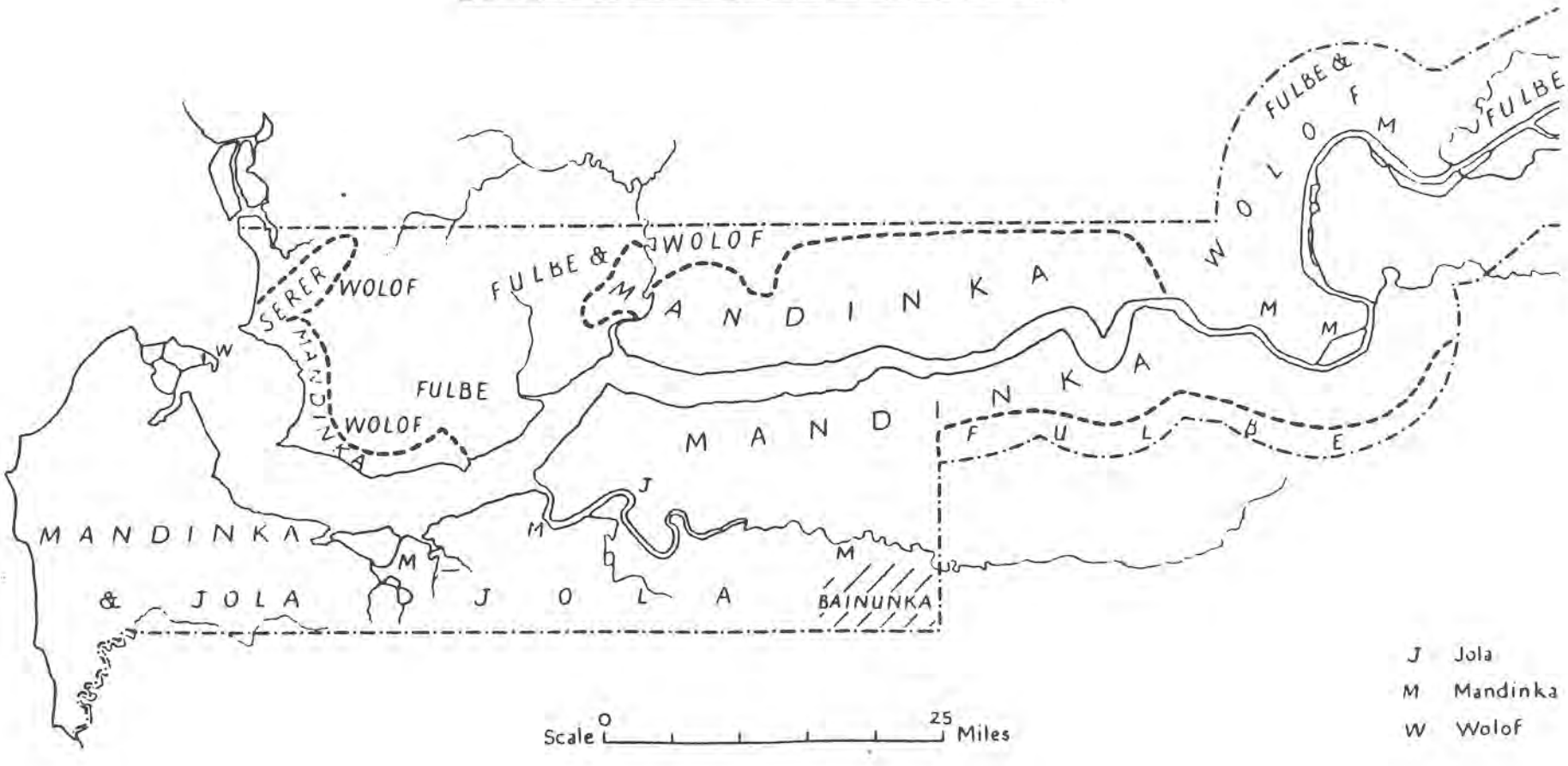
In writing personal names and place names, we have generally given both the old fashioned spellings which appear in previously written material or on maps, and the modern spelling, and often the English and French alternatives.

****

The present work, having one author of British origin, and one of American origin, raised a number of problems in spelling. In the end, as the material was produced in America, American forms were followed, so one finds labor for labour, tidbits for titbits, etc. though Gambian readers may be more familiar with the English forms.

ETHNIC GROUPS - WESTERN HALF OF THE GAMBIA



INTRODUCTION

The Wolof are a Senegambian people living in the area between the River Senegal, which separates them from the Mauretanians (Naar) in the north, and the River Gambia in the south, a zone roughly 200 kilometers from north to south and 150 from east to west. They comprise the major group in the former states of Waalo (Oualo) , Kajoor (Kayor), Jolof (Diolof), Baol, Siin (Sine), and Saalum (Saloum), and number about 1,500,000 people, forming 38% of the population of the Republic of Senegal, and 12% of the population of the Republic of The Gambia. In Banjul, the capital of The Gambia, they form about half of the population. They speak of themselves as either Wolof or Olof.[1] The Mandinka call them Suruwaalu, the Fulbe, Jolfuube. In the older literature their name appears in such forms as Jalof, Gelofes, Gyloffes, Iolofs, etc., apparently derived from the name Jolof, one of the original Wolof states.

The Wolof occupy roughly the same area now that they did in the 15th century when they were described in the writings of the explorer Cada Mosto. But there have been substantial changes in population distribution with movements both towards the coastal regions, and also towards the south. Though the Wolof originally stretched south to a line roughly running through Thiès and Diourbel to Kaolack, they now encompass Siin and Saalum, which were originally Sérèr states, but have been transformed by Wolof influence. Communities of Wolof are numerous on the south bank of The Gambia, and in the Casamance, as people have migrated, sometimes as a result of the religious warfare of the late 19th century, but generally in search of better farming land. After trade was established with the Europeans, there was also a movement from the inland areas to the coastal regions, which began to increase in wealth and gain stronger political power, a process that occurred in many other areas along the West African coast.

The area between the rivers Senegal and Gambia has always been ethnically mixed, for both river valleys served as routes along which peoples moved from the interior. The oldest inhabitants seem to have been the Sérèr, or related peoples, but later, Mauretanians from the north, Mandinka, Bambara, Jaxanke, and Serahuli from Mali in the east, and the cattle-keeping Fulbe[2] from the grassland savannah zone settled in the region. Out of this amalgamation, the Wolof political system evolved. Later, the slave trade resulted in many people being brought from the interior, not all of whom were sold overseas, many being absorbed into local society.

1. In French spelled "Ouolof."
2. Fulbe is a plural noun. The singular form is Pullo. The term Fula (derived from the Mandinka language) is used as a convenient adjectival form. In French the word Peul is used, derived from the Wolof word Pël.

Because of their mixed origins, the absorption of immigrants, the slave-trade, and intermarriage between different ethnic groups, particularly in the urban areas, one cannot claim that the Wolof are homogeneous in appearance. Yet they are easily distinguished from the slender light-skinned Mauretanians, and from the lightly built, reddish skinned Fulbe, the color of many Wolof being particularly black. Often they are of tall build with broad shoulders, narrow waists and long limbs, and so differ from the shorter, somewhat stockier peoples such as the Jōlā (Diola) in the forest country south of The Gambia.

It is primarily the Wolof language that distinguishes them from other peoples. Linguists classify it as one of the "West Atlantic Group" along with Sérèr-Siin and Fula, but much work remains to be done on the relationships between these languages. Wolof has become the language of commerce, and in the cities is the language of the school playground, so many other people speak some Wolof as a second language.

When one comes to analyse the details of Wolof culture one finds little that is not to some degree shared with other peoples. The Islamic religion and the legal system came primarily from Mauretania, though the Wolof were influenced by Fula (Tukuloor)religious scholars, and have now developed their own distinctive brotherhood, the Mouridiyya. Some of the peanut and rice farming techniques came from the Serahuli and Mandinka. In naming, circumcision, and marriage ceremonies there are close parallels to Mandinka and Fula customs. The techniques of black-smithing, leatherworking, woodworking, etc. have nothing that is specifically Wolof, while some of the techniques of basketry find close parallels as far away as Niger. From one aspect Wolof culture can be seen as an amalgam of many different elements found widely in the savannah zone of West Africa, and as such is a typical culture of the Western Sudanic area. At the same time Wolof impose their own imprint on adopted items, whether they are borrowed words, dress or hair styles, equipment, or rituals, and turn them into something distinctly "Wolof".

Nor is Wolof society a static one. Changes have continuously affected them since before early contact with Europe, and a range is found from rural communities where traditional ways remain strong to modern cities like Dakar, from illiteracy to Arabic scholarship and western university education, from the traditional chieftainship to political parties, bureaucracies, and parastatal organizations, from old type entertainment such as wrestling to football (soccer), basketball, cycle racing, and international athletics, from the story telling and music of the griots (géwèl) to record and cassette players, transistor radios, "Walkman" sets, television, and "pop" music. Wolof in Senegal have been influenced by French culture and education, those in The Gambia by British, both by various influences (Peace Corps, AID, tourists) from America. Fashions in dress and hair styles (e.g. the rasta style) easily cross the Atlantic, and second hand American clothing finds a ready sale in the markets. Jeans and denim skirts are popular among the younger generation. Cosmetics are imported from

both Europe and America.

Within Wolof society there are different sets of value systems and codes of behavior linked to the system of social stratification, those of high ranking families differing from those of peasant farmers, and both of these differing from those of the artisan groups, the blacksmiths, leatherworkers, musicians, weavers, etc. In the old days conformity to the appropriate patterns enabled the traditional social system to operate in a smooth fashion, and maintained an integrated and stable system even under conditions of rapid change, such as the colonial presence and religious warfare. A sense of security and self-confidence developed from the support of one's kin, from knowing one's role in society, and being able to predict the behavior of others. With increasing urbanization, and the spread of western type education the social system is now subject to greater strain.

HISTORY

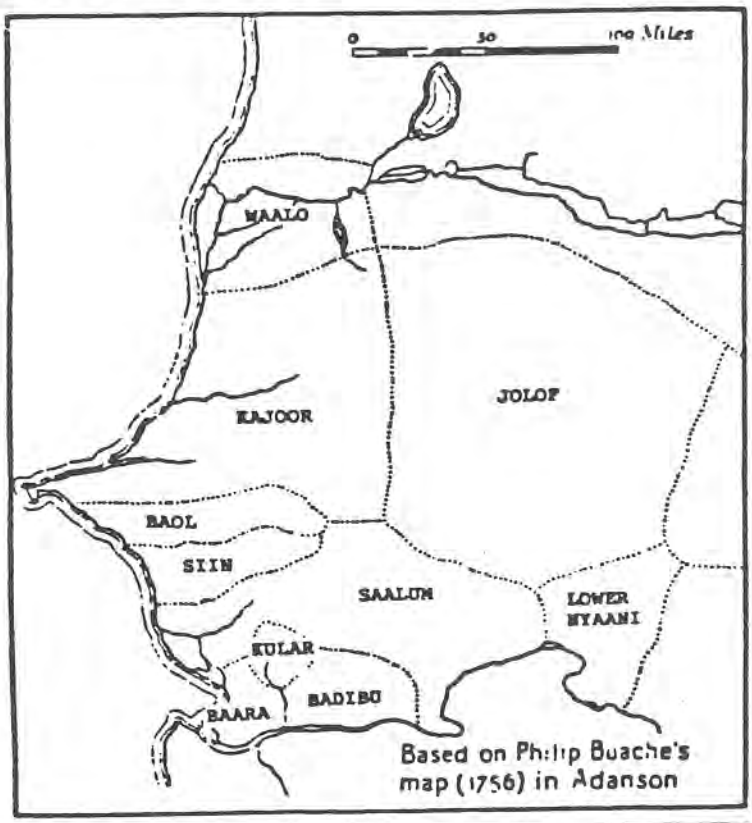
The origins of the Wolof people are still obscure, though long family histories are transmitted in story and song by the griots (gëwèl). Various prehistoric remains are to be found in the Senegambian region, beach sites in which one finds crude pottery and polished stone axes typical of the Neolithic period, shell heaps (some ancient, some of recent origin), stone circles which can be dated to the 8th century A.D., and tumuli (mbanar), burial mounds from about the 14th century. But there is no evidence to link the Wolof directly to these, and the name Wolof first appears in the writings of the Portuguese voyagers of the 15th century. It is suggested by some scholars that the establishment of the Wolof empire occurred relatively late (12th-13th century) and was associated with the upheavals and migrations which followed the defeat of the Empire of Ghana at the end of the 11th century. Family histories indicate that a number of major families now regarded as "Wolof" came from Mali in the east. Another factor influencing the traditions is that with the conversion of the people to Islam, the praise singers often sought to provide links to prominent figures in the time of the Prophet Mohammed.

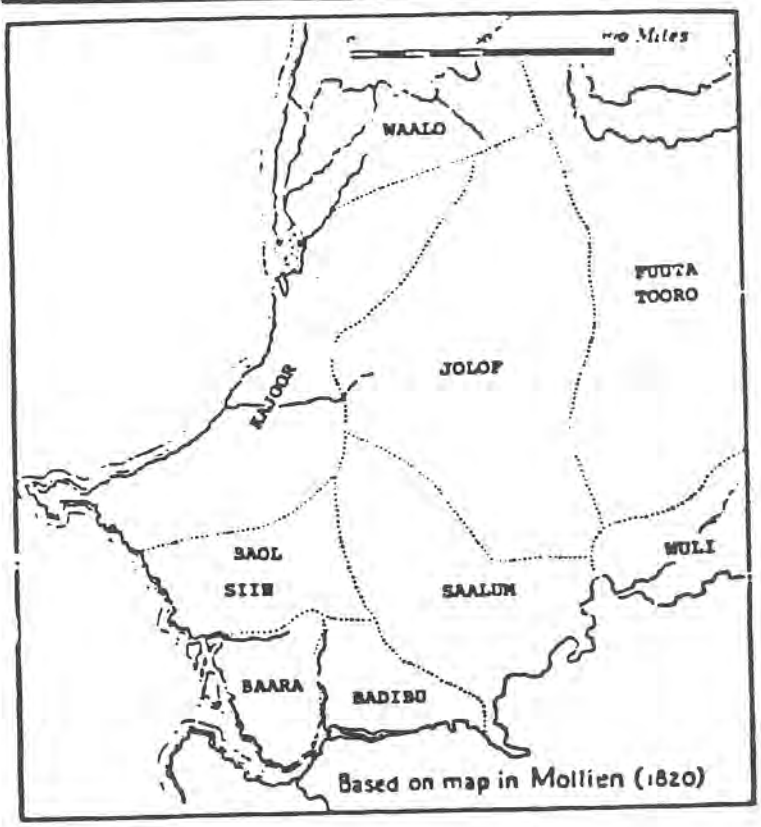
The legend that is most frequently told attributes the origin of the state of Jolof to a mysterious person, perhaps of Fula origin, who emerged from the waters of a lake to settle a dispute between two villages. Subsequently he was detained by the villagers, and though he remained silent for a long time, was made to speak by a woman who was attempting to place a cooking pot on two stones, instead of the three that form the normal Wolof cooking place. On revealing that he was human, he was persuaded to marry and settle down, becoming the first sovereign of a society hitherto without a central authority. A noted seer on being told of the events exclaimed "Ndyadyane Ndyaye", indicating that this was an extraordinary occurrence, and the new

TRADITIONAL STATES OF SENEGAMBIA

Wolof: Waalo. Jolof, Kajoor, Baol.
Serer: Siin, Saalum.
Mandinka: Badibu, Nyaani.
Mixed: Baara (Mandinka rulers).

Modern spelling.





ruler was subsequently known by this name. Present day Ndiayes (Njie) trace their origins to him, and have formed a family association. Tradition also links him to other ruling families of the time, those of Mali and Morocco. Wolof also speak of Adam Ndiaye, tracing the name back to the origin of mankind.

The legend, we believe, indicates that an immigrant group established a state system in an area of independent communities where there were already various ethnic groups - Sérèr, Fulbe, and Mandinkoo - intermingled, setting up a ruling dynasty.

From the time of contact with Europeans, Wolof history is an account of conquests, revolts, and seizures of power by rival candidates for the kingships, with a powerful ruling class dominating the ordinary peasant farmer. Wolof power spread from Jolof over five other major states, Kajoor, Baol, Waalo, and later the Sérèr areas in the south, of Siin and Saalum. On the northern side, Waalo was continuously subject to pressure from Mauretanians, and from this direction, came a strong Islamic influence. Europeans established bases on the island of Gorée, and at Saint Louis on the Senegal river. From Gorée, a hold was established on the mainland, where Dakar now stands. Kajoor and Baol gradually became richer and stronger through trade, and Wolof traders penetrated inland among other peoples. On the other hand the Senegambian region was torn by the devastation of the slave trade; liquor and arms provided by the traders stimulated local wars, the captives then being sold as slaves through such places as Gorée and Albreda (French), or James Island (British) in the River Gambia. Muslims could raid the villages of non-believers and kill or sell as slaves those who were unwilling to be converted.

As the Islamic religion began to spread southwards, Muslim warriors and teachers allied themselves to such strongly Islamic groups as the Tukuloor (Fuuta-Toro Fulbe), and strove both to overthrow pagan rulers, and to establish themselves as a bulwark against European expansion. In the end European forces and their local allies prevailed, but though the colonial officials often held anti-Islamic attitudes, and favored the spread of Christian missions, the peace and improved communications that followed enabled Islamic teachers to move more freely, and the conversion of the population at large went ahead at a rapid rate. Eroded by colonial power and Islam, the influence of the traditional rulers began to wane, though when new chiefs were appointed by French and British administrations, in many cases they actually came from branches of the old ruling families.

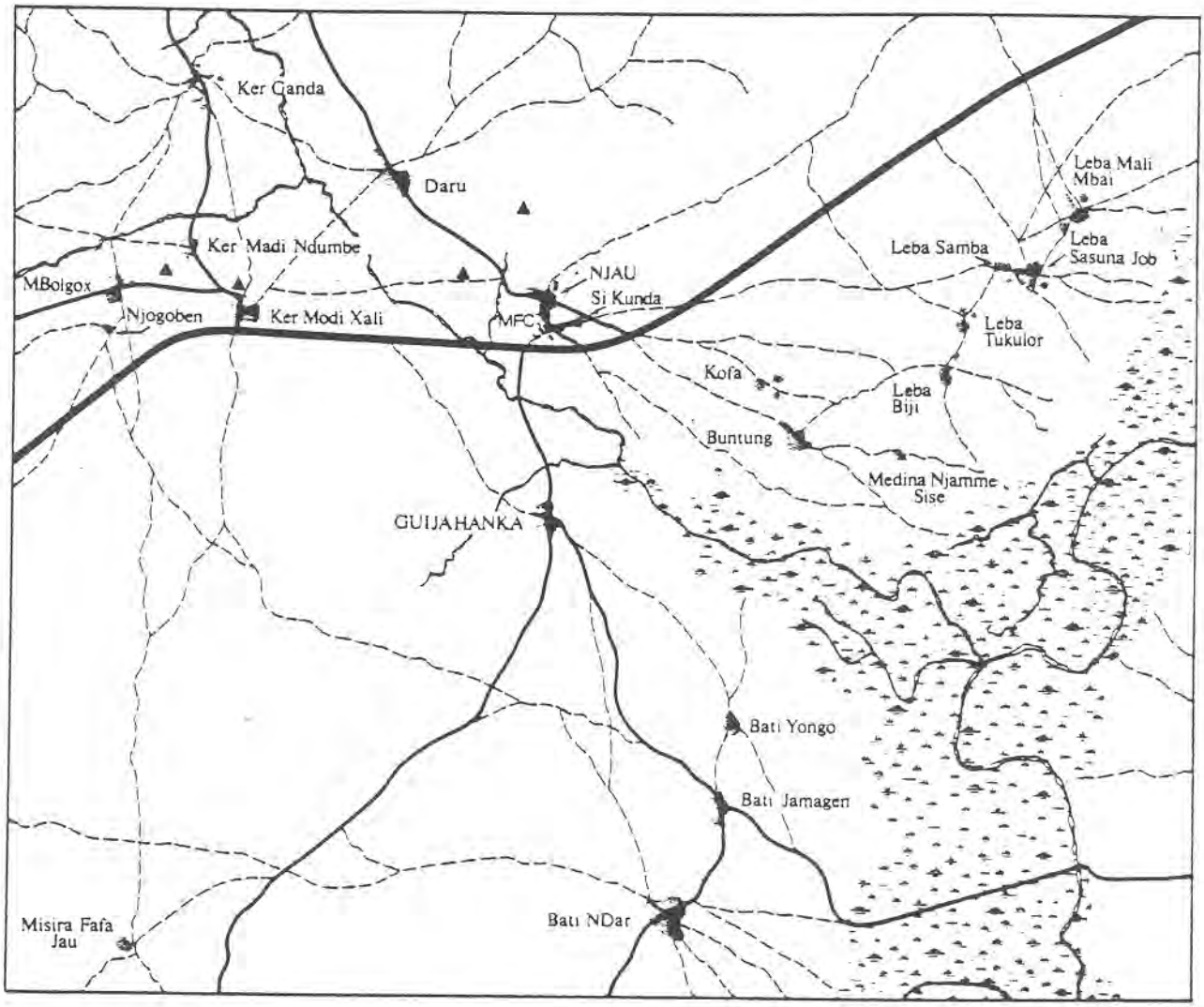
After the abolition of the external slave trade in the early 19th century, attempts were made to develop alternative forms of overseas commerce, and by the middle of the 19th century peanuts (groundnuts) had become the most important export of the Senegambian region, and have continued to dominate both the agricultural and trade systems of the area ever since. Rice was imported from other parts of the world such as south-east Asia, ostensibly to meet the needs of migrant farm workers who came from the east, and growing urban populations. During

The map opposite shows the Wolof settlement pattern in Upper Saalum, small scattered villages, linked by footpaths and secondary roads, with the main North Bank east-west motor road cutting through. As yet there is little sign of a drift to the main road such as characterizes the Fonyi and Kombo districts on the South Bank.

Njau is the village of the ruling Sise lineage, and a number of nearby villages, Buntung, Leba, Mbolgox, etc. can be regarded as dependant settlements. For example, when circumcision ceremonies were held at Buntung, some boys from Njau participated. Fula (Tukuloor) villages and hamlets are intermingled with the Wolof communities (e.g. Guijahanka and Si-kunda, close to Njau, Leba Tukuloor next to Leba Sasuna Jōb, etc.) and a symbiotic relationship is established in which the herds maintained by the Fulbe also manure the fields of the Wolof, and the Wolof who own cattle entrust them to the Fulbe to be looked after. The Bati villages contain a number of gewel families who are the official historians and praise singers of the Sise clan.

On the map a stream has been indicated flowing between Njau and Guijahanka and on down to the Nianija creek through swamplands. During the years of good rainfall in the 1950s this was an important stream, but may well have dried up during the recent years of low rainfall.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN - UPPER SALUM - 1976



LEGEND

- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Foot Path
- Stream
- Swamp
- Town or Village
- ▲ Boundary Pillar
- MFC Mixed Farming Center

Miles 0 1 2

Kilometers 0 1 2 3

World War II, these supplies were cut off, and attempts were made to increase food production locally. In the post-war period the export of peanuts expanded, but the price for imported rice rose at a more rapid rate than did the price for peanuts. The Senegambian farmer found himself in competition with other peanut growing countries, such as Northern Nigeria, as well as with other sources of edible oil. His agricultural system needed to be modernized and yields increased. Improved seed, fertilizers, and animal-drawn implements were introduced, but this happened at a time when the region was beginning to experience a greater frequency of periods of drought. Intensive clearing and over-cultivation resulted in wind erosion, and general loss of soil fertility. The hardships that the farmers suffered resulted in major shifts of population, as many young men went off to rapidly growing urban areas such as Dakar and Banjul and their surrounding communities in search of non-agricultural work, as well as a general drift southwards in search of areas with a higher rainfall and better farming land.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Wolof villages are small, averaging between 100 and 200 people in size. In former days, when there was a constant danger from warfare and slave raiding, the Wolof inhabited larger settlements. The towns of rulers were generally fortified with a ditch, a bank, and a stockade, but all of these fortifications have long since disappeared. Villages are from one to five miles apart, and over most of Senegambia the density of population is in the region of 20 persons per square kilometer (50 per square mile).

A typical settlement consists of a series of compounds round a central village square, which is shaded by tall silk-cotton and baobab trees. In the center of the square (pênca) is a platform (dat) where men gather, where travellers can pause on their journeys, and where the young people come together in the evening, to chat, to dance to drumming, or listen to visiting musicians. The old trees are considered the abode of spirits which protect the community. On the east side of the village square is the Mosque, and behind it the burial ground. Traders often have their shops facing on to the open space of the square. The compounds and workshops of blacksmiths are generally on the western side of a village. Women and girls, unless they come to the village square for a dance, meet each other at the village well, often located on the outskirts of the village. Here they draw water for home use, and wash clothes and utensils.

The residential unit is the compound (kër) which is a group of houses separated from neighboring units by a fence of millet or reed stalks. A few feet back from the entrance is a screen of reeds (mbany gacé, protection from shame), so that one cannot see directly in, and

The plan opposite shows a Wolof village in 1947. The main road, then a dirt road, ran through the village. The modern road by-passes the village.

The general layout is similar today, but a major change has taken place in the nature of the houses. Whereas in 1947 most houses were circular, by 1979 practically all were square (70%), though still thatched in traditional fashion, 26% were rectangular, often with cement walls and roofs of corrugated sheeting, and only 4% were circular. Of the square houses,about half were made from mud blocks.

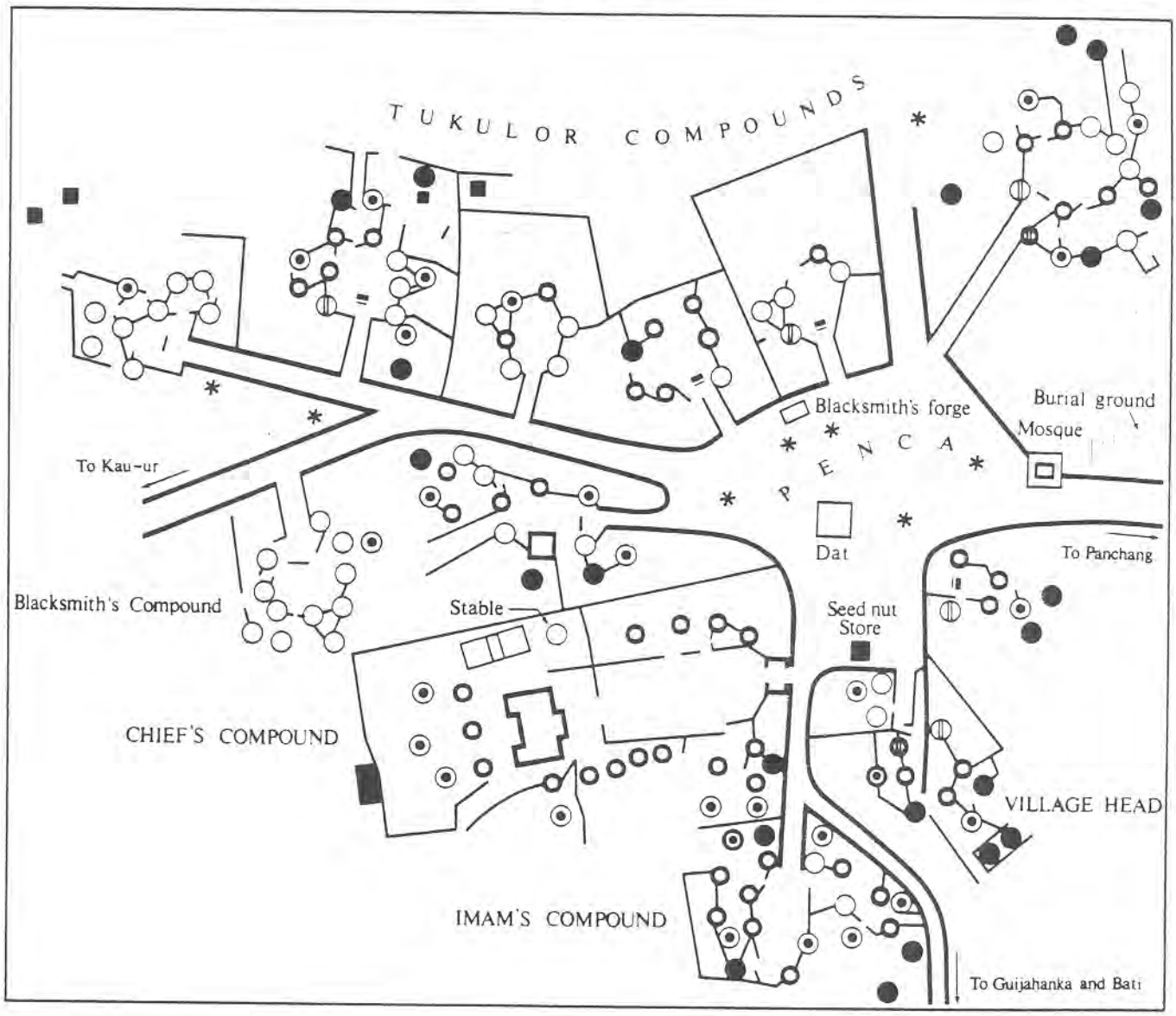
The smith's forge is now on the western side of the village, this being the usual orientation. The old seed nut store has long since fallen down. An open sided court house stood there for a while, but it too has vanished. One of the old silk cotton trees in the village square near the Mosque has fallen down.

Some expansion is now found on the north and south sides where new compounds have been established on the paths leading out of the village.

The fact that houses are frequently and easily rebuilt means that housing quickly responds to changes in the composition of the lineage, and to changes in personal fortunes.

The Chief's house faces east, towards Mecca, and the direction from which good luck is believed to come. For ordinary compound heads their own houses are generally built to face the main roads in the village.

NJAU - UPPER SALUM - 1947



LEGEND

- House of millet stalks or reed
- House of mud
- Kitchen
- Strange farmer's house
- Store
- Platform / Fence
- Large trees
- Fencing

Yards 0 50

Meters 0 45

this has both practical and magical aspects, as it is believed that it prevents harmful spirits and people with the evil eye from seeing in. The traditional style of house was a circular one with walls made either from millet or reed stalks or from mud, and thatched with long grass, sometimes covered with rhun palm leaves. Nowadays more houses are being built with mud walls, in a rectangular or square form, and roofed with imported corrugated sheeting, though such houses are hotter than the traditional forms. Richer Wolof, such as chiefs or traders, have houses made from concrete blocks, but ostentatious display in house-building is rare in rural areas.

The house of the compound head (boroom kër) is opposite the entrance. The houses of his wives are built either behind or to one side of this, each wife having her own house, and behind them are the kitchens, granaries, and sheds for sheep and goats. To the sides of the compound are located the houses of the younger married men. If a man has only one wife she will not have a separate house. Near the entrance to the compound are the houses of unmarried men and boys, and migrant farm workers, known as strange farmers in The Gambia, and navetanes in Senegalese French, from the Wolof term nawetaan, someone who spends the rainy season.

The furnishing in the village houses is simple. For beds, forked sticks are sunk in the ground to support a framework either of bamboo or raffia palm, and on this is laid a thick mattress of sacking stuffed with straw, though foam mattresses are now common. Prosperous Wolof buy iron bedsteads. Mosquito nets of a thin white cloth are in general use. Valued possessions and clothes are stored in large wooden boxes which are kept locked. In the houses are hammocks or chairs, prayer mats of sheep or goat-skin, and a kerosene lamp. Tools and small items are stuck in the thatch or placed on top of the wall, as the rafters come down on the outside of the wall.

Cooking is done in the open in the dry season, and under cover in a special kitchen in the rainy season, the fireplace consisting of three large stones (os or wos) on which the pot is placed. The Wolof woman possesses a variety of utensils, iron cooking pots, clay water jars, clay pots with holes pierced in the bottom used for steaming, winnowing baskets, mortars and pestles of different sizes, small ones being used for mashing condiments, etc., calabashes and gourds, swizzle sticks, tin basins used for serving food, large tin basins for washing clothes, well buckets, now generally made from old inner tubes, with ropes of baobab bark, a collection of bottles and tin cans, covers for calabashes made from coiled straw, boards on which peanut paste is made by rolling with a bottle, though some women now use meat grinders (mincing machines), brooms of various kinds, and a charcoal brazier and flat irons. Hanging shelves are used for storing utensils.

In towns, such as Banjul, Brikama, and Serekunda, the houses and their furnishings are more elaborate. Walls are whitewashed, floors cemented and covered with mats or linoleum. Beds are normally large

WOLOF UTENSILS

Winnowing basket

Ladle

Water pot

Small calabash

Wooden bowl with sifter on top

Pestle sticking out

Small calabash

Metal basin for carrying water, clothes washing etc.

iron bedsteads with sheets and decorated pillow slips. Numerous photographs of friends, relatives, and politicans, pictures from magazines, and calendars, are displayed on the walls. Furnishing corresponds to the European pattern with settees, armchairs, upright chairs, tables, cupboards, sideboards, mirrors, wall clocks, refrigerators, electric fans, and television sets. Many items which were produced originally for the tourist market, such as masks, paintings, and decorated calabashes, are now being used by the Wolof themselves for wall decorations.

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Wolof, like most peoples of the Western Sudanic region, had a system in which members of high-ranking lineages controlled the country and elected from certain lines a supreme ruler who then assumed power. As there were often several eligible candidates, the death of a sovereign in the old days was liable to be followed by fighting between rival factions, and secrecy was often observed about a death until a successor had been chosen. The elected ruler went through a 'rite of passage', a period of seclusion and ritual preparation, before his 'crowning', and during his reign was expected to remain fit in body and mind, any physical defect such as the onset of blindness, being cause for removal. The title of the supreme ruler differed from state to state, Brak in Waalo, Dammel in Kajoor, Teeny in Baol, Buur in Saalum, etc. He was surrounded by a number of court officials, some of whom carried out palace duties, some of whom were responsible for military operations, some of whom held judicial positions, and so on. Members of the various craft groups, the blacksmiths, goldsmiths, musicians, leatherworkers, woodworkers, etc., were to be found at court, both to provide for the needs of the royal household, and represent the interests of their people. Local chiefs (saltigé),owing allegiance to the ruler, could be appointed in charge of groups of villages, charged with maintaining order and collecting taxes. Representatives of the ruler were also placed at major trade centers to collect dues from traders.

The income of a ruler was derived from work carried out on his farm by a large number of dependants, as well as communal labor provided by dependent villages, levies on traders, fines from court cases, presents from people who wished to gain his favor or protection, the property of strangers who died in his territory, the booty from raids on neighboring communities, etc. In return he supported a large number of relatives, maintained a strong bodyguard, patronized craftsmen, and helped any of his subjects who had met with a disaster such as a fire.

The mother of the head of state, or, if she were not alive, a sister, played an important part in affairs which concerned women. Behind the scenes she might have considerable influence over the ruler. His power was also kept in check by the influence of religious teachers and of singers (géwèl) who occupied a privileged position, and could either praise or blame his actions in song. In addition, there was always the possibility that if a chief were greatly disliked, a rival could gain enough support to overthrow him. Close relatives who were in a position to succeed were regarded as a potential threat, and generally sent to remote areas on the frontiers of the chiefdom. Relatives on the mother's side, or through sisters, e.g. a nephew, were not considered threatening, and were often appointed to positions of trust.

A traditional Wolof ruler was also believed to acquire supernatural powers such as second sight, and had the responsibility of protecting his people against such dangers as witchcraft, which might be manifest in the form of owls hooting in the trees. At the same time, to ward off threats to his own person, he relied on powerful amulets, liquid charms which were used on his body, and consulted learned "marabouts" for advice on procedures to be followed.

A Wolof ruler could give the ultimate decision in court cases, and appeals could be made to him, but most disputes were in fact settled at a lower level. If a quarrel arises, for example, between a husband and wife, an effort is made to settle the matter out of court, an elder, if possible, a maternal uncle or an elder brother, acting as arbitrator. Customary law is stated and a solution proposed in the hope that the parties to the dispute will accept it. Use is made of proverbs which embody traditional wisdom in arguing a case. If the matter cannot be settled at this stage, a more formal meeting of elders may be called to discuss the case, and only if this fails would the matter come to court. Even then the efforts of the court members are generally first directed towards trying to achieve a settlement rather than to determine that one party is right, the other at fault.

A village is in the charge either of the head of the lineage which originally founded the settlement or, more rarely, of a person appointed by the chief. He is responsible for collecting taxes, and carrying out the orders of the chief and of the central government. At the same time he has to represent the villagers when they have a complaint to bring to the authorities. In the old days only men of freeborn origin were village heads (boroom deka), but now many people of slave origin are recognized as headmen.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Wolof social organization is characterized by an elaborate system of social stratification, which varies in detail from region to region. Under modern conditions changes have taken place, but in rural areas much of the old system prevails.

There are elements of rank, along with some characteristics of a caste system, associated with ideas of purity/impurity and in which a person is born into a specific category, and can never move from it. There are three major categories, within each of which there are various subdivisions, what is often termed the freeborn (jaambur or géér), a caste of craftsmen (nyēnyo), who also consider themselves "free", and could own slaves, but cannot intermarry with the géér, and those of slave origin (jaam). The freeborn are also ranked in people's minds, the royal lineages from which the rulers of states were selected being considered highest. Next came noble lineages which have important rights, the elders of which participate in the election of rulers, hold certain titles, or control distinct territories. In a number of instances such lineages were clearly old chiefly families conquered by invading Wolof rulers. Below the high ranking lineages are the commoners (baadoolo, a term derived from Fula, and meaning 'lacking power'). These are essentially the peasant farmers who contribute to the wealth of the country, but have limited political power. Also in the category of commoners were traders and religious teachers. In many instances these were strangers who had settled in a particular community. In the old days traders bought some of the booty from wars and raids, and provided the guns, ammunition, horses, and liquor that the rulers desired. In modern times the traders have been the representatives of foreign commercial firms, selling textiles, etc. and purchasing peanuts. Some trade on their own, acting as moneylenders in times of cash shortage. The religious teachers (marabouts) are Islamic teachers, literate in Arabic, who can prepare amulets and charms, and use the power of prayer on behalf of their clients. They are the instructors of Islamic students. Like traders, they can acquire wealth and influence from their occupation, build up a regular clientele, and achieve positions of great influence in the community.

Among the nyēnyo, three major groups are the smiths, including both blacksmiths and silversmiths (tëgga), the musicians and entertainers (géwèl), and the leatherworkers (uudé).

In rural communities blacksmiths are people of considerable importance. They manufacture the tools for farming, and in the days when local warfare was endemic, they made the bullets and lances, and repaired guns. Because of their technical skills and association with the elements of earth (ore), fire, air, and water (used in cooling red-hot iron), supernatural powers are attributed to them. They play an important part in rituals, and generally act as circumcisors. Many

of the women make pottery, also a creative act involving the four elements, though imported utensils have almost made this craft obsolete. In addition, many tëgga women are skilled hairdressers.

The géwèl comprise different types of musicians and praisers. The more important families are attached to various high-ranking freeborn lineages, for whom they are the historians, memorizing the family genealogies, and being called on for information when the question of succession is being decided. They also act as town criers, relaying information from the village head or chief. At all major ceremonies, namings, circumcisions, marriages, burials, they play important roles, being rewarded on such occasions with generous gifts by their patrons. A person of high rank is obliged to make gifts to those below him or her, while the géwèl has the right to claim them, and can shame publicly those who fail to show their generosity. In the old days the power of the géwèl to satirize was greater than at present, but now public opinion, particularly in the urban areas, has brought about some restraint. A géwèl, however, may now become wealthier than his patrons. Close personal friendships may grow up between géwèl and freeborn, but intermarriage is not permitted. Wolof speak of such a relationship as being like that of a horse mating with a donkey. Formerly, particularly in Siin and Saalum, the géwèl were not buried in the earth, as it was believed that this would affect the fertility of the crops, but instead the bodies were deposited in the hollows of baobab trees.

Géwèl can also be classified according to the activity they perform. A xalamkat plays the traditional guitar (xalam), a player of the underarm drum is a tama-kat. Others play the sabar, the long narrow drum, which is generally slung around the shoulder and carried at hip level, and is the lead instrument which other types of drums follow. This is the drum played for dancing.

Leatherworkers (uudé) are considered to be in the lowest category of the nyēnyo, as preparing the skins of animals was not considered a 'clean' occupation. From skins they make scabbards for knives, sandals, harness for horses, covers for charms, etc.

Each of the major social groups is endogamous, marriage taking place only between members of the same group. A caste division is not recognized in the Islamic tradition, and efforts have been made, particularly by the Mouride sect to change traditional Wolof attitudes towards the nyēnyo by appointing a number to positions of influence.

The Wolof also place the Laubé (Lawbé), a Fula-speaking group of woodworkers, who normally are equally fluent in Wolof, in the nyēnyo category. The Laubé make the mortars and pestles, wooden bowls, wooden spoons, and so on. They are, like Gypsies, a mobile people who travel around the countryside with their wares, which are carried on donkeys. Laubé women also supply many of the traditional cosmetics used by Wolof women.

In some regions weavers are also regarded as forming a separate caste. Often they appear to be of non-Wolof origin, suggested by the fact that the Tukuloor term maabo is used for a weaver. Formerly some gëwèl families were also weavers, but in Saalum it was generally people of slave origin who did the weaving, the term rabbakat (weaver) being used for a person who practiced that skill.

Each of these major social groups is endogamous, marriage taking place only between members of the same group.

Slaves in the old days were in one of two categories, those born in the household, and those acquired by capture or purchase. The former were treated like junior members of the household, and could not be sold unless they had committed a crime. Most of the heavy work was done by them, the men clearing the bush for farming, carrying back firewood, planting, guarding crops, and harvesting. The boys helped to tend the flocks of sheep and goats. The women fetched water, pounded grain, brought back some of the firewood, and prepared cotton for weaving, the weaving itself being men's work. The head of the family was under an obligation to provide a wife for a male slave in the same way that he would for a son, but the marriage payment involved was less. As a slave became older he gradually achieved more time for his own personal affairs, and a greater degree of independent action. Slaves newly obtained in raids were treated in a much harsher fashion, and could be sold at will. The slave trade ended when the British and French Protectorates were established in the eighteen nineties. The descendants of slaves were then declared free, but the social distinction between freeborn and slaves still remains strong, and the master/slave relationship has become transformed into a patron/client relationship, the "slaves" helping their "masters" when special labor is required, at the time of housebuilding, for example, or during major ceremonies, where the roles played by people of slave origin are virtually unchanged. Intermarriage between a man of slave origin and a freeborn woman is still a rarity, but a freeborn man can take a woman of slave origin as a junior wife or concubine (taara), the children of such a union taking the status of their father. Slaves themselves were ranked in people's minds, the slaves of freeborn being regarded as 'higher' than those, for example, of a blacksmith. Slave status did not necessarily mean lack of power or wealth, as slaves attached to royal families often had greater power than the freeborn, acting as confidential advisors to rulers, speaking in their name, and being empowered to see that official orders were carried out.

In addition to stratification, the lines of descent were highly important. Formerly descent was often reckoned through the female line, the rulers of Wolof states such as Kajoor being selected from

eligible males within a matrilineage. With the spread of Islam, the chieftainships have tended to be transmitted through males within a patrilineage. People take the family name (santa) of their father, and have a given name which is generally of Islamic origin. To distinguish between people with the same given name and a common surname, the name of the mother is generally added after the given name, so Aysatu Siise would generally be known as Aysatu Sira, after her mother. Where a child is named after a deceased relative or a respected individual, the name is prefixed by the term of address used towards the person concerned, Ndey Kumba, Mother Kumba; Maam Roxxi , Grandmother Roxxi, etc. In Senegal it is usual to find the family name written in front of the given name, e.g. Sembène Ousmane, whereas in the English translations of his work his name appears as Ousmane Sembène.

Among those of slave origin, the principle that whoever owned a woman owned all the descendants, male or female, still has a lasting effect, for one may find compounds consisting of people with different surnames, but all linked to a common ancestress. In rural areas marriages among those of slave origin still show a tendency towards marriage within the lines associated with a particular lineage, and only with the large scale drift towards the cities do the social distinctions become blurred. In a Wolof legend is found the rare instance of a woman of high rank marrying a slave as her second husband, the man in this case being noted for his piety. [1]

In general property, land rights, houses and livestock are transmitted through the male line, and this is the side of power and authority. Help and affection are sought on the mother's side. It is to one's mother's brother that one turns for practical help and moral support in time of trouble, and a special relationship exists between cross cousins (children of siblings of the opposite sex, a mother's brother's child, or a father's sister's children). This is a relationship which involves privileged joking and the obligation of mutual assistance. It is expressed in terms of boroom (master) and jaam (slave), the boroom presenting gifts, for example, on the occasion of major festivals, to his jaam. A man refers to the children of his mother's brother as boroom, and to the children of his father's sister as jaam. A cross-cousin marriage is felt to be a desirable one, both the husband and wife are of equal status and close kin, so that disputes, if they arise, can be settled within the family.

1. This was the youngest wife of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, whom he told just before his death, that if she remarried, she should marry only a man who did not lie, and carried out frequent ablutions. She sought for a long time, but found these qualities only in a slave, whom she married. He became a prince of Walo, and is said to be the ancestor of the Brak clan.

Other legends attribute this action to Fatumata , the mother of Ndyadyane Ndyaye.

ECONOMY

The country between the rivers Senegal and Gambia is a zone in which the rainfall varies from about 13 inches (330 mm.) in the north to about 40 inches (1,000 mm.) in the south, but has been subject to periods of severe drought in the past twenty years. The area is characterized by a single rainy season, most of the rain falling from July to October, and farm work therefore has to be concentrated in this period. The amount of rainfall shows considerable variation from year to year. Vegetation therefore ranges from almost desert conditions in the north to the fringes of tropical forest in the south. The coastal area is bordered with sand dunes, behind which are swamps with slightly salty water and a zone characterized by rhun palm trees. The typical Wolof community is associated with a savannah zone where the vegetation consists of long grasses and scattered trees such as acacias, tamarinds, rhun palms, and locust bean trees. Silk-cotton trees and baobabs are typically found in and around villages.

Rural Wolof are primarily farmers, and grow a number of varieties of sorghum and millet which form their staple food. These are prepared either as a pap or thick porridge for the early morning meal, or as a main meal in the form of a steamed dish, such as nyeleng, eaten with a sauce of peanuts, tomatoes, pepper, sorrel, locust-bean seeds, etc., or cere, steamed millet to which baobab leaf, a leaf rich in calcium and iron, has been added, with a sauce which may include such ingredients as meat, fish, or beans. The preparation of millet is a time consuming task. To be made into cere the millet has to be pounded in a mortar with a pestle, winnowed to separate the bran, then sifted to produce the flour. The remaining pieces have to be repounded, then the flour is granulated, and steamed.

Rice is eaten by urban Wolof, and by communities near the Gambia river. A basic dish is ceebu jën, rice with fish. Dried fish and shellfish (yéét) are in demand as ingredients of sauces. Various minor crops such as beans, sorrel, bitter tomato (jaxato), okra, red peppers, tomatoes, calabashes and gourds are cultivated, either interplanted with the main crop, or planted in gardens around the houses. The Wolof plant very little in the way of root crops such as cassava or sweet potatoes. Some cotton and indigo are grown, but these have become rare compared with former times.

The crop which provides the farmer with his main cash income is peanuts (groundnuts). The traditional method of clearing a farm was to cut down the trees with a locally made narrow-bladed iron ax, and to clear the undergrowth with a matchet. The debris is gathered up and burnt. Formerly the Wolof used to cut the trees about three to four feet from the ground, so that when a farm was left to regenerate the vegetation grew up quickly. Now, with the increasing use of animal-drawn farm implements such as planters and weeders, land is being completely cleared so that regrowth of the bush has become almost

FARM WORK

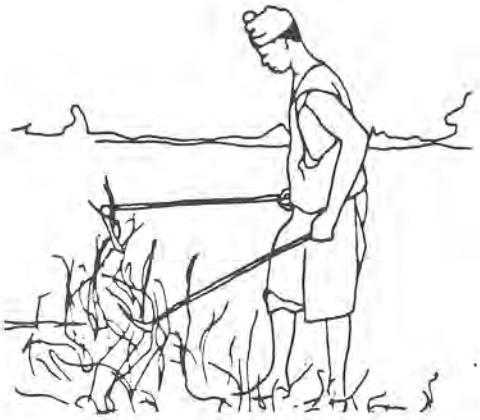
(Illustrations by Darcy Paige.)

Planting peanuts.

Planting millet.

Weeding with long-handled implement.

Harvesting millet with ngobaan.



Man threshing peanuts.

Man digging a post-hole.

Woman with winnowing basket.

Man cutting a log.

Woman with long-handled hoe.

Man ɲlaying the xalam.

impossible, and wind erosion can begin its devastation.

Wolof plant on the flat, and not on ridges like the Mandinka. To sow peanuts, the traditional way was to make holes in the ground with a short-handled adze shaped tool held in one hand, the seeds being dropped in with the other. To plant millet a blade on a six foot long handle is used to make a series of holes, a twist being given to turn the soil over to one side. The sowers follow, drop in the seeds, and turn the soil back with their feet, pressing it over the hole. Now animal-drawn planters are often used. After the first heavy rains sowing is a rapid process, and the hardest work for the Wolof consists of a struggle against weeds. One of the weeding tools consists of a half-moon shaped blade on the end of a long handle used in a standing position. Another is a heart-shaped blade on a short handle used in a squatting position. [*See diagrams on pages 20-22.*] Once the crops have been weeded they are guarded against baboons and monkeys which pull up the groundnuts, and against birds which consume the ripening millet, especially the early ripening <u>suna</u> variety. High platforms are built on which the children keep watch from dawn till dusk, shouting, throwing stones, and using slingshots to drive off the birds.

A crop rotation is followed, millet being followed by peanuts, and then by a second grain crop. When the soil shows signs of exhaustion it is left to lie fallow or revert to bush, but in areas where the population density is high, the period of fallow is insufficient. The fertility of land around a village is maintained by manuring, cattle being tethered there at night after harvest. Plots around the houses are fertilized with household garbage.

The peanuts are harvested by loosening the soil, and then pulling up the stalks by hand, the nuts remaining attached to the stalks. They are left to dry on the ground for a while, then piled up in stacks for a month or two to dry out. When the dry season winds (the harmattan) become strong, threshing takes place, the haulms being beaten with two sticks to loosen the nuts from the stems. The sticks have hooks on one end which are used to pull material from the stack and turn it over on the ground. The nuts are next winnowed by being shaken out of a basket held head high, the wind carrying away the leaves and stems. The peanuts are then put into sacks and taken to trade centers by truck or by donkey to be sold to traders representing the groundnut purchasing organizations, or to co-operative societies. The money obtained by the farmer is spent largely on new clothing, cloth for dresses and head ties for wives and children, blankets, household utensils such as tin basins, kerosene lamps, candles, kola nuts, tobacco and cigarettes, and transistor radio sets.

The more prosperous Wolof own herds of cattle which feed on peanut haulms in the dry season. The animals are looked after by Fula herdsmen, who obtain a share of the milk and calves as payment. The Wolof keep a few sheep of their own, a small breed, but generally buy the

larger Senegalese sheep (Sahel sheep) from Mauretanian traders to be fattened and killed for the main Islamic festivals, such as Tabaski. Most families have a number of goats, generally owned by women. In the farming season they take them out each day and tether them to small pegs driven into the ground, or have them herded by small boys to keep them away from the growing crops. In the dry season the animals roam about loose. Horses and donkeys at one time seemed to be disappearing, but have become popular again because the animals can be used to pull light implements and carts, the characteristic type being a two wheeled vehicle.

Hunting and fishing are now of minor importance in Wolof economy. Fish are sometimes caught in traps set in streams. Communal fish drives are held in pools which are drying up in the hot season, the fish being either stabbed with long handled barbed spears, or trapped in conical shaped baskets with an opening at the top through which the fish are pulled out. In coastal areas related people like the Leebu [1] or Nyoominkoo carry out sea fishing. Professional hunters are few,and game becomes scarcer each year.

A variety of crafts are practised by the Wolof. Most villages have a blacksmith to make farming tools. Gold and silversmiths, specially renowned for excellent filigree work, tend to concentrate in the trade centers and large towns where they cater primarily to the tourist market. Pottery such as bowls in which clothes are washed, water storage jars, steaming pots, etc. is made by women, especially of the smith caste, but imported articles of plastic such as buckets, basins, bowls, etc. are now commonly used. Weaving, done on a narrow loom, is carried out by men, either of a caste group (gëwèl or maabo) or of slave origin, the carding and spinning of cotton being women's work. Cotton cards are imported from Europe. In the towns Wolof often employ weavers either of Tukuloor origin or from Guinea (Manjago or Pepel), providing lodging and working space. Locally woven cloth is favored for working clothes, and is the appropriate material for the garments worn on most ceremonial occasions, naming, circumcision, marriage, and burial. Formerly strips of cloth were used as a form of currency, and cloths, known as pagnes, were used as pledges for loans of money from traders. Numerous styles of basketry, including wickerwork and coiled work, are to be found. Wooden articles, such as bowls and ladles, are made by the Fula-speaking Laube people, while blacksmiths generally provide the handles for the implements they make. The Laube have also turned to carving items for the tourist market.

In the cities Wolof occupy a prominent position in trade, both local and international, in transportation, in the civil service and professions, and in technical work.

1. The Leebu live on the Dakar peninsula.

THE TRADITIONAL LIFE CYCLE

Birth

A woman gives birth in a kneeling position on the floor of her house, and is assisted by her mother or a midwife, one of the elderly and experienced women in the village. The afterbirth is carefully buried in the back yard in a secret place, and the baby is given a specially prepared charm to drink before it sucks. Men are not normally present unless there is a difficult birth, when a learned man may be called in to provide help.

Infant mortality is heavy in rural areas, about thirty per cent of the children dying within twelve months, and the first week is a particularly dangerous time. Malaria, intestinal infections, and dehydration are the main causes of infant deaths. So after birth, numerous ritual precautions are taken for the safety of the new-born child. A fire which is ritually important is kept burning in the house, an iron knife to protect against evil spirits is placed under the child's pillow, rubbish associated with the child is hidden carefully lest sorcerers get hold of it and work evil magic, the child is screened off so that individuals who might have the "evil eye" cannot gaze upon it, and protective plants are placed at the house door to ward off witches. Individuals who visit the mother, who remains in seclusion during the first week, are careful to say the appropriate good wishes, and pray for the health and long life of the child. Thus forces of all kind, from the world of nature, from the Islamic religion, from human skill and craft, and from the human spirit are focused on the child for its protection.

In the cities where better medical facilities are available, the mortality rate falls, and much of the ritual is dropped, and now primary health care facilities are making an impact in rural areas.

Naming ceremony

A child is named on the seventh day after birth, the ceremony being largely based on Islamic tradition. The essential features are the shaving of the child's head, an event which marks a change of status, the appropriate prayers, the giving of the name, the sacrifice of an animal, and the distribution of "charity" (alms). Messengers are sent to inform friends and relatives who live at a distance, and the news also reaches the griots (géwèl) who are musicians and praise singers. Relatives and neighbors help in the preparations, fetching firewood and water, and pounding grain for the meals to be served to guests. Visitors make small gifts of food or money to the parents, and they in turn give to the griots and other dependants like the blacksmiths and leatherworkers.

On the morning of the naming day the mother is first ritually washed, puts on her best dress and ornaments, and emerges from her week's seclusion. The baby is formally brought out wrapped in a locally woven white cloth. An elderly woman such as a grandmother or paternal aunt, sits on a mat holding the child on her lap facing east, while its head is shaved and the call to prayer and its name are whispered into its ear. The cleansing of the head is followed by the distribution of a "charity" of kola nuts to adults and cakes of rice flour to children. Food is provided for guests who have come from a distance, and singing, drumming, and dancing begin. The ceremony thus provides the public recognition of the child as an individual, as a member of a lineage, and as a Muslim. The sacrifice of an animal, which is obligatory, combines both Islamic tradition and pre-Islamic tradition, in which life-strengthening forces are set in motion by the spilling of blood on the ground, the abode of the ancestors. These forces flow through the blood into the animal's liver, which is consumed shortly afterwards by the elders. The stomach of the animal is cooked specially for the mother.

More attention is devoted to a ceremony for a first-born child than for later children, and a ceremony held in the dry season when people have ready money available is more elaborate than one in the middle of the farming season, when cash is scarce, and people are engaged in urgent farm work. If previous children have died at an early age only the essential acts of the ceremony may be performed and few people attend, so as not to attract the attention of evil spirits. The scale of the ceremony will also reflect the status of the family and the popularity of the parents.

Child care and development

In early childhood the infant spends a good deal of time in close physical contact with the mother or with other children, being held or carried around on the back by means of a "pagne", usually of locally woven cloth. When a baby is about to be carried on the back for the first time a protective ritual is carried out. The baby is held over the back of a small girl while an iron rod, such as is used for rolling the seeds out of cotton, and a broom, are dropped four times between them to counteract any possible evil. The baby is then tied on the girl's back with a cloth for a few minutes.

A baby is suckled for about two years and fed on demand. For most children weaning produces no traumatic effect, for the child is gradually given solid food before weaning is complete. Some children are sent to their maternal grandmothers at weaning time, but they are in a familiar situation, and grandmothers are very indulgent towards small children, feeding them tidbits at every opportunity. A child that is frightened may still seek the mother's breast for comfort, but physical contact generally seems to be sufficient. If small children are fretful or have difficulty falling asleep, lullabies are sung to

quieten them. Toilet training is very gradual and not severe. Eating manners are also acquired gradually, the child learning to use only the right hand for eating, and the correct way to help itself to food when eating in company. A small boy eats with the women, and only when it has acquired the proper manners, does he join adult men.

A child's progress is evaluated largely in terms of interaction with people. When a child walks it is considered not so much the mastery of the process of walking as a desire to walk towards a certain person, generally its mother. Training emphasizes personal relationships rather than the acquiring of skills or the manipulation of things. A child learns language, and the standards of behavior by imitation and participation. Both adults and older children spend a great deal of time talking to small children, coaxing them, asking simple questions, especially about kinsfolk, for example "Where is father ? What is he doing ?" etc. and giving instructions , "Bring the calabash," repeating the same thing time and time again. Much emphasis is placed upon the ideas of sharing and reciprocity, and frequent adverse comments are made about people who are stingy. Social roles and appropriate behavior are stressed. "So and so is your friend, you shouldn't fight with him." "So and so is a guest, you should share your sweets with him." "A stranger has arrived, come and pay your respects."

The disciplining of children generally involves a quick slap, or the parent shouting at the child. Failure to respond to an adult request or to answer a call evokes the strongest reactions from parents. Occasionally the threat is made that the child will be given away, or taken by a stranger, if it is naughty. Wolof also feel that any responsible adult should order a child to cease from inappropriate behavior, telling him to stop playing on a garbage heap, or in a drain, and should intervene to stop children fighting.

From an early age a strong sanction controlling behavior is what others are going to think about it, both outsiders and one's own family who may inflict severe punishment if they feel that the family has been shamed or dishonored. Not merely the family but society as a whole helps mold a child into the role it is expected to fulfill in terms of its rank and status.

In early play a child generally imitates adult activities. Small girls carry a 'doll', generally a piece of stick, on their backs, pound food using small tin cans and pieces of wood, or build houses from sand. By the age of six a child is carrying out many real activities, looking after a smaller child, pounding leaves, sweeping, and carrying away garbage. As she grows older, she gradually undertakes tasks which are physically more demanding, fetching water from the well, bringing firewood from the outskirts of the village, pounding millet and rice, collecting leaves for sauces, and weeding, until she is able to carry out the whole range of adult activities.

A girl's first menstruation is marked by cleansing rituals, jumping over the fire-place three times, the piercing of a clay pot in three places, drinking water which is poured into the pot, and a ritual washing.

Boys at about the age of 3 or 4 lead a carefree existence. They still spend much of their time in the women's section of the compound, and always seem to be nibbling fruits or food that is being prepared. Gradually they move further afield, and spend time watching their fathers when they are engaged in tasks around the compound, making thatch, repairing fences, building houses, etc. By the age of 8 to 10 they are required to help in herding sheep and goats, or driving birds from ripening crops of grain. From then on boys learn more of the work of their fathers, the children of smiths, for example, help around the forge, the children of drummers practice on the instruments of their fathers and learn how to make small instruments of their own. In general play in the streets boys often kick balls around, or make push toys of millet stalks and condensed milk cans, or construct vehicles of raffia palm.

In the towns most children attend school, in rural areas the proportion going to primary school is lower.

Initiation

There are no initiation ceremonies for girls among the Wolof, and initiation for boys is closely associated with circumcision. There is some variation for many Muslims have their children circumcised in infancy. Initiation ceremonies usually take place when the boy is between eight and twelve years of age. The ceremonies are held in the dry season after the peanut crop has been sold, and generally take place in a year when the millet harvest has been especially abundant.

The boys are escorted out of the village in the early morning for circumcision, which is usually performed by an experienced blacksmith. They are then taken to an enclosure where they stay until their wounds have healed. The enclosure is built around a shady tree, believed to be the abode of protective spirits. Numerous protective measures are observed. An elderly man with second sight stays with the boys night and day, and charms are set around the enclosure. It is thought that evil spirits are repelled by dirt, and initiates remain unwashed during the period of seclusion. They wear traditional garments of locally woven cotton cloth and pointed caps. Outside the enclosure they carry circular covers which are held in front of the face if women are near, and thin rods. Each boy has as his constant companion an older youth, if possible a cross-cousin who looks after him and attends to his needs. The boys are taught special circumcision songs (kasak) and their significance,

learn how to communicate with each other by means of secret signs (pasin), and are given instruction about correct adult behavior and sexual matters, as well as learning from the general process of strict discipline. The initiation process is a typical "rite of passage", setting those who were carefree children on the path to adulthood and responsible behavior. Once the boys are able to move around freely, then they have the right to chase any woman or girl they encounter.

In some villages during the period of seclusion the boys used to form a society (kompiin or mbootaay)based on the government bureaucracy, in which they played various roles. One such group observed in 1950 had a Governor, a Commissioner [Administrative Officer], a Doctor, a Judge, a Policeman, and so on. By playing out these roles the boys learned how to deal with disputes and both exercise and cope with authority.

Towards the end of the period in the circumcision shed the initiates are told of a monster (maam) that will come to eat them. Roaring sounds are heard during the night, and women, girls, and children in the village have to hide indoors. A tall pole with a pot on top , a phallic symbol, but called the toothbrush of maam, soccu maam, is set up mysteriously in the night. Some villages also have a whipping dance in which initiates both give and receive blows with thin rods. This resembles the gerewol of the Fulbe of the Niger region, but is on a much less severe scale.

The final stages involve burning the enclosure where the boys have stayed. They do not look back at the blaze, and are taken off to bathe. Afterwards they put on new clothes, and return in procession to the village, where they pay a visit to the Mosque to give thanks to God, before separating and returning to their homes. A week of leisure follows, when they wear their best clothes, and visit friends and relatives in a formal manner and receive gifts.

In urban areas the pattern is changing. Circumcision itself may be carried out at a hospital, the period of seclusion is shortened, and the ceremony takes place during the "summer" [i.e. rainy season] holidays. The separation from women is not so rigidly enforced, and visits from female relatives and uncircumcised friends during this period are not uncommon.

Girls' lip tattooing

In the old days girls went through a ceremony which demonstrated their ability to bear pain in the form of lip tattooing (njam). This would be done at adolescence, the ceremony being performed in the dry season. The girl lay on her back with her head in the lap of the tattooer, who used a dye made from lamp black, and a small bundle of thorns or needles. As this was done a friend sat by her right side

patting her chest to give her courage, for any movement by the girl, such as scratching herself, would be interpreted as a sign of "running away", i.e. cowardice. Friends would gather around and sing special lip-tattooing songs (woy i njam). Drumming was normally provided by the women in the form of a "water drum", a calabash upturned in a large tin basin filled with water, though sometimes a male drummer might be invited to participate. The tattooing itself might last for several hours. Because the lips swell up, the girl would be unable to eat solid food for several days, and would be limited to liquids and very soft foods which could be easily swallowed. Tattooing of the gums was often done at an earlier age, and was not so severe.

The tattooing procedure figures in a film made in 1971 by the Senegalese film maker Ababacar Samb-Makharam. In this film a girl, Kodou, interrupts the ritual and flees, bringing disgrace to her family. Because of this and her "dreaming", visions that she has in which a horseman appears, she is treated as mad and tied up. An outsider from the city, whose vehicle has broken down, persuades the family to let her be treated in a modern hospital, but this seems to have little effect, and her relatives take her away. They then go to a traditional healer who treats her by inducing a trance state by drumming and dancing. In the end she seems to make a readjustment to village life.

Marriage

In rural areas marriages are still frequently arranged by parents of the spouses. The young man may already have made up his mind about a particular girl, and he asks his father to initiate arrangements, but often the father is the one who decides on a suitable bride for his son. A third party acts as a go-between and finds out whether the family of the girl would be agreeable to the match. Diviners are also consulted as to whether the marriage is likely to be a success. If the family of the girl likes the young man, they accept the kola nuts sent on his behalf, formally share it among themselves, and he is granted the right to court the girl. He should present gifts not merely to his fiancée, but also to her mother, and help his future father-in-law in various tasks, such as weeding or harvesting. If his behavior is considered satisfactory, a further formal presentation is made, its acceptance establishing him as the sole suitor.

The marriage is formally "tied" in a ceremony held after the regular Friday afternoon prayer at the mosque. The father of the bride, the father of the groom, or representatives of the family, and witnesses are present. A small payment of cash and kola nuts are paid over by the father of the groom, and a small payment made to the Imam. This makes the marriage legally binding, but arrangements still have to be worked out about "marriage money." This is an Islamicized form of the traditional African "bride-wealth," and may be paid over a

period of time. Along with it are presentations to the girl's mother and father, as well as to her age mates. The marriage money is often used by the bride's parents to purchase the household equipment and clothing that she will take to her husband's place.

When the payments have been completed, the bride is transferred to her spouse's compound. This is a phase with numerous traditional rites, some for protection from evil influences, others so that the marriage might be fruitful and free from trouble. The bride is first ritually bathed, her head then covered with a shawl of locally made cotton cloth, and she is hidden away for a short period. In the evening she is escorted out to be given advice about married life and the behavior expected of a bride. [See page 32]. The wedding party consisting of the bride, her age-mates, friends, and close female relatives, sets off slowly for the groom's place, the girls singing ribald songs (woy i cëyt). On the way the bridal party visits the abode of the main village spirit to pay their respects, and finally reaches the groom's compound. In the old days if the girl was a virgin, a blood stained cloth would be displayed the next morning, and people would sing her praises and congratulate her mother. Next the bride's people bring over her possessions, and the bride is escorted to the village well to acknowledge the spirits there and carry out further ritual acts, such as a symbolic washing of her husband's clothing.

In rural areas men marry in their early twenties, girls in their late teens. In the cities the age of marriage has tended to be later because of the difficulty that a young man has in making an adequate income. Educated girls often see older men as being able to provide the standard of living they expect rather than men closer to their own age. Cities also have a higher percentage of single men than the rural areas, largely because young men drift to the cities in the hope of earning money. They are unlikely to find brides there because urban girls do not wish to marry into remote villages.

Traditionally marriage with a cross-cousin (a mother's brother's daughter preferred to a father's sister's daughter) was favored, and was felt to provide a very stable form of marriage. Polygyny is desired by men, especially because it is felt that a wife should not have intercourse while pregnant or suckling a child, and having several wives is an indication of wealth, manhood, and prestige, but Wolof women tend to be jealous of co-wives. In rural areas it is easier for wives to co-operate because of the amount of work to be performed, but in the cities if a husband takes a second wife, the first feels that she is taking a share of the husband's property and depriving her and her children of things she might otherwise have enjoyed. In rural areas each wife has her own house in the compound, which is not costly to build. In urban areas, providing separate accomodation can be extremely expensive.

Wives and husbands

Some extracts from the English translation of Aminata Sow Fall's novel The Beggars' Strike (1981) show both traditional values and new trends. In the novel a woman states "I'm your wife and it's normal for me to make your happiness my main concern, for your happiness is mine too. For me, nothing else counts..." Her mother had taught her this, and all her aunts, uncles and near and distant relatives had repeated the same refrain and the same recommendations on her wedding-day and again on the night when she moved into the home she was to share with her husband; in a word, on every possible occasion. 'Obey your husband; make his happiness your main concern; on him your fate and especially that of your children, depends. If you carry out all his wishes, you will be happy here on earth and in the life hereafter, and you will have worthy and deserving children. But if you don't then you must expect curses from heaven and the shame of giving birth to children who will turn out failures.' When she complained to her parents about her husband's conduct she would be told: "A wife must not grumble. You must understand that your husband is free. He is not an object that belongs to you. You owe him respect, obedience and submission. A wife's sole lot is patience; get that into your head if you want to be a worthy wife."

However, when she discovered that her husband had taken a second wife without consulting her she was furious.

But times were changing. "She had seen that women no longer accepted being treated as simple objects. They were engaged in an energetic struggle for emancipation; everywhere, on the radio, at meetings, at family gatherings, they were claiming that, from a legal point of view, they had the same rights as men. Naturally they were not disputing the man's position as head of the family, but the man had got to realise that his wife is an independent human being, with her own rights and obligations....."

Women and their friends and associates

Besides the ties of kinship, and the relations between people of different social strata, personal friendships among women are an important part of life. Such friendships may cut across caste lines. Women gather in little groups in the heat of the day to talk about their concerns, other people, and events around them. They always seek to be with others. One is never alone, and both joys and sorrows are shared. With older people one has to maintain an attitude of respect; towards those much younger one is in a position of authority, but with those of one's own age one is free to talk, relax, and enjoy oneself.

Because of this constant association with other women, women have control of sexual situations. A woman need never be alone with a man unless she chooses and other women connive in the act.

Ties with those around are maintained in dozens of daily acts, asking for a burning stick from a neighbor's fire to light one's own, borrowing condiments, borrowing a needed utensil, and so on. In the old days clothing and jewelry were freely lent for special occasions, but this has changed. Many routine tasks, washing clothes, shelling peanuts, cooking pancakes for sale, and so on, are carried out as group activities.

Women also form more formal associations. Many are involved in political activities, organizing the women's vote and forming pressure groups. The result is that an increasing number are obtaining high positions in the civil service and in government.

Those engaged in trade form groups, known as "tontines" in French, in which each member contributes a fixed sum each week, receiving the total sum in turn. This enables a woman to acquire capital to purchase goods for sale in the market or buy an expensive item like a sewing machine. Membership in a group implies both a sense of equality and mutual trust. In many instances the amounts paid in may be small, but in the case of market and business woman considerable sums may be involved.

Some woman are known to have the ability to read fortunes in cowrie shells and divine the future, this knowledge being passed on from generation to generation, sometimes from a grandmother to her granddaughter. A group of shells is shaken in the hand, then scattered on a mat or bed. The patterns formed, and the way they have fallen, smooth side or cleft side up, are read to indicate what is to come, good or bad luck, a journey, new people about to come into one's life, and suggestions are made as to what should be done to avert impending trouble. Sometimes the fortune teller will use the shells to pass on delicate information that cannot be told in a direct way. She may state that she sees a pregnancy as a way of indicating to a mother who does not yet know, that her unmarried teenaged daughter is pregnant.

Having children is the fulfilment of one's mission in life. Those who have never borne children or whose children have died, often join the yaradal society (the kanyelangɔ of the Mandinka and Jola from whom it is derived). The leader of the cult group has been instructed in the rituals to be followed so that a woman may bear children. Special songs and dances are associated with the group. Symbols used are a calabash "hat" with strings of beads attached, and a doll also with many beads. When a child is born to a member, a special dance of thanks and rejoicing is held.

In some areas there are also special groups which deal with mental disorders such as deep depression by inducing a trance state by dancing (ndëpp). It is believed that the mental disorder is brought about by spirits linked to certain families. A priestess has to determine which spirit is involved and initiate the woman into the group. Members are mostly those who have been treated and cured, so that the new member has a strong sympathetic support group. Treatment involves ritual bathing, treatment with herbal remedies, a trance state induced by drumming and dancing, and the sacrifice of an animal. Generally the patient is able to cope with everyday life after treatment.

Women also get together for dances which are a relief from the stresses and strains of everyday life, and in which they can express their own sexuality. There are many occasions for dancing - lip tattooing ceremonies, weddings, etc. - and both public and private occasions. At public dances there are generally male drummers, at private events where only women are present, a woman will beat a rhythm on an upturned calabash placed in a large tin basin of water, accompanied by the clapping of the audience. Dances in public by young or high ranking women have to be very restrained, while performances by women from the géwél or smith castes can be extremely suggestive. In some of the public dances woman from the caste groups can satirize male dominance. Dr. Gamble recalls one instance where a very large woman did incredible things with her posterior a couple of feet from a former Governor's nose. Elders felt that the dance was scandalous, and eventually pulled her away, but others were heard to remark that she had put the Governor firmly in his place. In a rain dance also, there is inversion of normal behavior, and women can make extremely rude gestures at high ranking males in the audience.

The songs sung at dances at which women alone are present may be about one's lover or husband, they may express feelings of hostility between co-wives, or describe one's likes and dislikes. In other words, they permit open expression of feelings which have to be controlled in everyday life, and have a general catartic effect.

Further change in dancing is brought about by the presence of tourists, dance performances are staged, and geared towards the expectations of the spectators rather than being spontaneous expressions of the inner feelings of the dancers.

Divorce

A marriage will be annulled if it cannot be consummated, if the wife failed to get a legal divorce from a previous husband, or if one of the spouses is found to be suffering from a disease such as leprosy or elephantiasis. A husband can repudiate his wife by saying "I divorce you" three times in the presence of witnesses, or by using some such phrase as "I regard you as my mother." A wife has to claim a divorce in court. There are a number of grounds on which this is granted: impotence of the husband, failure to complete the marriage payments within a reasonable time, when the husband has passed himself off as of high rank, but turns out to be of a lower caste or of slave origin, where the husband has been long absent and failed to support his wife, where he has subjected her to ill-treatment and excessive beatings, or made false accusations against her. If the husband is at fault the marriage money is not repayable, but if the wife wishes for a divorce primarily on the grounds that she dislikes her husband, then she is required to refund the various payments that have been made.

When a wife feels that she is being harshly treated she returns home, ostensibly on a visit to her relatives. When she fails to go back to her husband, he sends a message asking her to return, or failing this, that the marriage money be repaid. Negociations are then opened between the families concerned to see whether the matter can be settled without going to court. After a divorce children stay with their mother, boys until they are seven or eight, when they return to their father, girls until they are of an age to marry. The father remains responsible for giving his daughters in marriage, even if they have been living with their mother in a step-father's compound.

Death and burial

Burial ceremonies follow the usual Muslim pattern. A death cry summons neighbors, and messengers are sent to inform relatives in nearby villages. Nowadays the national radio is also used to announce deaths. The body is prepared for burial, washed, sprinkled with perfume, and wrapped in a shroud of white cloth. Men prepare the bodies of males, elderly women prepare those of females.

The body is carried to the Mosque in a procession from which women are excluded, either on a stretcher, or wrapped in a mat, laid down outside the actual confines of the Mosque, and prayers begin. When these are completed the body is taken to a grave which has been prepared in the burial ground. Participants return to the Mosque without looking back. Further prayers are said, and a charity (alms) of kola nuts is distributed. In village communities the grave may be protected for a while against possible ravages by animals such as hyenas by thorny bushes or by stakes planted in the ground around it. In urban burial grounds a cement covering is usual.

In the case of Christian Wolof, the practices of their churches are followed, and women participate to a greater degree in the ceremonies. Muslim women also attend the funeral rites of Christian relatives, friends, or neighbors, and help in the preparation of food.

Mariama Ba's novel So Long A Letter (Une si longue lettre) describes in detail the emotions of a widow, and the ceremonies that are carried out. A widow observes special signs of mourning, her hair has to be unbraided by her sisters-in-law, and if she has not been friendly and generous towards them, they will be reluctant to act. Regular bathing and changes of clothing are prescribed. The period of mourning lasts for four months and ten days for freeborn women, two months and five days for those of slave origin.

On the third day a major "charity" is held, when friends, relatives, members of the nyēnyo, and the poor gather. Food and drinks are prepared for those who come, laax (millet pap), rice, iced drinks such as fruit juices and coca-cola, sour milk, and so on. Prayers are said, comforting verses from the Koran are recited. People who come to sympathize make contributions which are duly recorded, and establish reciprocal obligations. In rural areas gifts are generally made in kind, millet, rice, oil, sugar, kola nuts, etc. In urban areas cash is generally given. When a man has died it is his family rather than the widow who ends up with most of the money contributed. But money has to be paid out too, for the géwèl, the smiths, the leatherworkers, as well as the old and the poor, are given gifts before they leave.

A charity is repeated on the eighth day, giving a chance for those who were away to pay their respects, and on the fortieth day, when according to old West African belief, the spirit of the dead person was reunited with the company of the ancestors.

RELIGION

Islam

Cada Mosto and Portuguese travellers in the 15th century noted that Wolof rulers had Mauretanian teachers as part of their entourage, and from them Islamic teaching gradually spread to the common people. It would seem that early converts to Islam often established themselves in separate communities. The accounts of later writers indicate that there were many animists in the 18th and 19th centuries and the process of Islamization was still continuing in the early years of this century. One major factor in the spread was the conversion of Lat-Dior, Dammel of Kajoor, after defeat by the French in 1864. This secured him the support of other Muslim groups, and though seemingly he gave allegiance to the French, he actively promoted the spread of Islam in Kajoor.

The main rules of Islam are followed, the five daily prayers (at dawn, early afternoon, late afternoon, sunset, and late evening) are regularly performed, the fast month observed, alms given to the needy, the pilgrimage to Mecca made whenever possible. The religious festivals, such as the feast at the end of Ramadan (The Fast Month), and Tabaski, commemorating Abraham's sacrifice of an animal in place of his son, the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, and the beginning of the Muslim New Year, are major events in the yearly sequence of activities.

Children are sent to a teacher for religious instruction at about the age of six or seven. From him they learn the prayers, are taught to recite passages from the Koran, and to write Arabic characters on a wooden board with reed pens, and an ink made from soot. They provide firewood both for their teacher and for the firelight by which they study. A small proportion go on to more advanced studies. Those of slave origin were not expected to pursue religious studies as far as those who were of higher rank.

Several of the old Islamic brotherhoods such as the Quadiriyya and Tijaniyya have strong followings, but a more recent group, the Muridiyya, an offshoot of the Quadiriyya, has now become one of the most dynamic forces among the Wolof, with more than a million followers. This order was founded in the eighteen eighties by a religious scholar from a family of Torodo origin, Seriny Amadu Bamba (1850 ?- 1927), who had studied with both Quadiriyya and Tijaniyya teachers. He was twice exiled by the French, who distrusted religious leaders and feared the power of the large followings they built up, though everything indicates that Seriny Amadu Bamba was primarily concerned with a life of study, contemplation, and mysticism, and not involved in political struggle. In his teaching he indicated that all men could not follow the path of total dedication to spiritual matters, but they could place themselves in a position of

total submission to a religious teacher (sheik), putting their lives in this world and their hopes in the next world in his hands. Work for religious leaders was prayer. "He who works, prays," particularly in regard to work on the land. Students (taalibé) would join a daara (school), not merely to study the Koran, but also to work in the fields, and they began to play a major role in opening up new lands for cultivation. Submission was to create a man without needs, indifferent to material things, yet whose basic needs for food, clothes, and housing would be taken care of.

As Muridiyya developed in an area where the land was suitable for peanut farming, religious leaders stimulated its cultivation, and the result was an enormous growth in this export crop, which provided wealth for the religious organization. The daara was the place of initiation and training for the young men. A dynamic social system was created, consistent in many ways with the old Wolof hierarchical system, which had disintegrated under the combined effects of internal warfare and colonialism.

One particular group of Murids which is highly visible is the Baye Fall.[1] These are followers of Ibra Fall, who was close to Seriny Amadu Bamba. They are characterized by fanatical devotion, being ready to carry out the most unpopular and unrewarding tasks, and act as a disciplinary force to control large crowds of the faithful, but at the same time they do not observe many of the rules followed by ordinary Muslims. Their religious devotion involves loud rhythmical chanting of the qacida. Their appearance and dress are distinctive. A Baye Fall wears a long robe without sleeves, a scarf as a belt, a leather collar, is bare-headed with long-hair ("dreadlock style"), and carries a heavy club or a large pestle as a weapon.

The center of the order is at Touba in Baol, where one of the largest mosques in Africa has been built, inaugurated in 1963 after 32 years of work, which is now the scene of a great annual pilgrimage, the Magal.

For a long time the cultivation of peanuts and millet formed the core of Murid economic activity, but the periods of drought in the Sahel region have led leaders to turn to other economic ventures, investment in the cities, and in the import-export field, as well as obtaining financial aid from the Middle East for religious education and mosque building.

Since independence Islamic communities in other parts of the world have begun to take an interest in Senegambia. An example is a missionary sect from Pakistan, the Ahmadiyya, which has established schools and hospitals, and is building up a following. Libya has also tried to expand its influence.

1. Baay Faal.

Pre-Islamic Beliefs

There still survive some elements of pre-Islamic beliefs, seen perhaps more strongly in the activities of the women than of the men. The old rituals associated with rulers which were designed to ensure the fertility of crops and the prosperity of their chiefdoms are now things of the past. Dances to bring rain (baaw-naan) performed by old women dressed in men's clothing, and involving obscene gestures towards the sky, and to those in authority, [A typical 'rite of reversal'], which were serious matters until recently, have in many places become more a matter of entertainment for young people.

Beliefs in both good and bad spirits, identified with the jinn of the Koran, and in witches, are still very strong, and Wolof wear numerous protective amulets against possible evil forces. Each village is believed to have a protective spirit, often dwelling in a tall cotton tree in the center of the village. Other spirits are associated with the village wells, and new brides are expected to pay their respects to both sets of spirits when they move to a new community. Contact with evil spirits in the bush is considered responsible for mental disorders, birth defects, abnormal children, and so on. Possession dances (ndëpp) may be performed in some places for women affected by mental disorders.

Wolof, however, have no masked dancers or wooden carvings associated with their old cults. The kanyelangō cult, known in Wolof as yaradal, which has the aim of increasing fertility and preventing infant deaths, has spread among the Wolof from Jola and Mandinka communities.

Supernatural beings believed to inhabit the depths of the forest include ninkinanka, a gigantic snake associated with water, and the kondorong, bearded dwarfs with feet back to front, which protect wild animals from hunters. Herdsmen and hunters who go to remote places are expected to take special precautions against harm from supernatural forces, by wearing powerful amulets and washing themselves with magic preparations. Beliefs in ninkinanka and the kondorong are widespread in this part of West Africa, cutting across ethnic boundaries, being found also among the Mandinka and the Fulbe.

Witches are believed to be persons with the ability either to change into animal form, particularly night animals like owls or hyenas, or to send out their spirits at night to feast on other humans, causing them to waste away gradually. Witchcraft is inherited matrilineally, and individuals are powerless to prevent themselves from harming their neighbors or even their best friends by mystical means. Open accusations of witchcraft have now become rare, but feelings against a suspected witch may cause such an individual to move to another area until tempers have cooled, and a person accused of witchcraft may have difficulty in finding a spouse. As general

health measures improve and infant mortality decreases, beliefs in the activities of witches also decline. People who deliberately seek to harm a person by using magic, sorcerers, would try to obtain hair or nail parings from the intended victim, and most Wolof are very careful about the disposal of these items. A commonly expressed belief is that if birds pick up hair clippings, the person concerned will suffer from headaches.

Christianity

Christian Wolof are few, and found mainly in the urban centers of Dakar, Saint-Louis, and Banjul. Roman Catholic Missions have been an important force in Senegambia, providing excellent educational facilities and various social services. Many of the Christian families in Banjul came originally from the Island of Gorée, off Dakar, where one finds an old Catholic church.

The Methodist Church also became active shortly after the founding of Banjul, and provided opportunities for Wolof who had been freed from slavery to begin a new life, achieving positions of responsibility in the Church, a number becoming lay preachers, and assisting in the translation of parts of the New Testament into Wolof.

The Anglican Church catered primarily to the Creole and expatriate communities, and a relatively small proportion of Wolof became members.

ORAL LITERATURE

The Wolof have an extremely rich oral literature, maintained at a high level by the géwèl, who are the experts in speech and song. There are legends about the early rulers of the Wolof states, which meld into historical narratives dealing with the genealogies of particular rulers, and the major events in their reigns. A griot will recount these tales while playing a balafon (xylophone) or a xalam, a stringed musical instrument, interspersing his account with praises for the people for whom he is performing, or commenting on the narrative in the form of proverbs or exclamations, pointing out the moral for the listeners.

A series of classic legends are about a philosopher Koce Barma and his dealings with a Dammel (ruler) in the mid 17th century. There is a multitude of short stories involving animal characters, magical occurrences, and the interaction of beings from the supernatural world with humans, many of the tales having parallels in tales from the Near East.

Tales told to children often have short songs woven into them. Such stories can be told by mothers to small children, or by children to each other, but the public performance of story telling is restricted to the géwèl. They may use the occasion to convey a particular message in an indirect way to someone in the audience, or to criticize the actions of a powerful member of the community.

One tale cycle has as its main characters Hare and Hyaena. In Wolof tradition Hyaena represents all that is evil and despicable in human nature, lack of self control, greed, failure to behave according to proper standards, and so forth, with the result that he always ends by being punished. Hare represents the géwèl caste, who although they lack the power of rulers (in tales represented by Lion), try to set right inappropriate situations, set high standards for freeborn to follow, and see that retribution and punishment take their just courses. It is interesting to find that the descendant of Hare in America, Brer Rabbit, is often described in early tales as playing a musical instrument, singing beautifully, or filling the role of town crier, and like the griots, is able to talk his way out of any difficult situation. Non-griots, on the other hand, telling stories about Hare and Hyaena give Hare more of a trickster role, a reflection of the way they view the géwèl.

The Wolof have an abundance of riddles, but riddling is primarily a children's game, though sometimes a listening adult may add a contribution. Examples are: "What cotton field bursts out in the sky, but cannot be picked ?" Answer: "The stars," or "What tries to reach Grandfather God every day, but cannot reach him ?" Answer: "The pestle." (which is raised high every day in pounding grain.)

"What is the strip of black cloth that the bush fire does not burn ?" Answer: "A path." Most of the content comes from things seen in everyday life, and generally the answers are memorized rather than deduced from the riddle itself. Some riddles have a sexual significance or permit children to use words not acceptable in polite conversation. The analogies may be in terms of appearance, action, or sound.

Proverbs are numerous and considerable skill is shown in their use. They can be used in arguing a court case, can be interspersed in historical narratives as a commentary on events, or used in giving advice. A woman thinking about leaving her husband because he has taken a second wife may be told: "One doesn't cut down a tree which bears fruit." One may use the phrase "He who walks in the rain gets soaked" as an indication to a friend to be careful about the company he is keeping. A person being urged to greater activity may be told "Dust on the feet is better than dust on one's behind."

The Wolof also have a series of questions and replies which stress three items. Many of these involve a play both on the sounds and the meanings. "The three best things in this world ? - Good health, agreement with one's neighbors, and to be liked by people."
"Three things that make men happy ? - Possession (am), power (man), and knowledge (xam)."
"Three things which a man needs ? - Crops that have grown (saxle), a granary (saxa) and [teeth] to chew well (saxami)."

Songs are of many types. As mentioned previously, songs are found as parts of some stories. Lullabies are sung for small childen, such as "A yo neenee.." , a number of them having a chain rhyme form, in which the last half of one line is used as the first half of the next line. Songs are sung by individuals and groups when working on farms, though nowadays one is apt to find workers carrying transistor radios to the fields. Special songs are sung at girls' tattooing ceremonies, when boys are going for circumcision, during the training period of initiation, when a bride is going to her husband, and so on. Other types of songs are sung at trance-healing ceremonies (ndëppa) and rain-making rituals (baaw-naan) At ordinary dances drummers may improvise songs about members of the audience, sometimes complimentary, sometimes critical, so that the singer's words are important sanctions in controlling behavior. At election times songs are made up in praise of one's own party and putting down opponents. To entertain tourists and for popular dances in urban centers, Wolof songs are sung to the accompaniment of pop music, based on either Rock and Roll, High Life, Congo, or Reggae styles.

A Wolof Tale

Translated from : Walter Pichl "Wolof-Erzählungen," Afrika und Übersee, XLV, No.1-2, 1961/62, 72-73.

Pigeon said: "Cut down a post. I'll cut down a post, we'll share and build a house." Mouse said: "I won't build a house. I'm supposed to live in the ground. I'll dig a hole and live in it." The pigeon cut down a post and built herself a house. The mouse also dug a hole and lived in the ground. The clouds came and it rained a lot, and the water overflowed and went into the mouse's hole. He ran out of there and found Pigeon at the door of her own house. The pigeon's house was safe and sound, nothing damaged. He said: "Pigeon, can I come into your house ?" She said: "Go on it, but I said to you 'Cut down a post, and I'll cut down a post, and we'll build a house,' but you refused." After a while Mouse said: "Pigeon, can I go near your fire ?" "Go on now, but I said to you 'Cut down a post and I'll cut down a post, and we'll share and build a house,' and you refused." He sat for a while and said: "Pigeon, can I sit on the bed ?" She said: "Sure, sit down, but I said to you....etc. and you refused." He sat, then after a while said: "Can I lie on the bed ?" She answered: "Yes, but I said to you..etc. and you refused." And he said: "Pigeon, shall I take off your dress ?" She said: "Take it off, but I asked you..etc..and you refused." Then he said: "Pigeon, may I kiss you ?" She said: "Go ahead and kiss, but I said to you....etc. and you refused." And the mouse said: "Pigeon, is it good or is it bad ?" And she said: "Of course it's good, but you took so long getting there."

And that's how Mouse went about living with Pigeon, and became her husband.

1. Translated from the Wolof text by Lisa Barlow.

2. DPG has heard a similar story about Snake and Pigeon told at Njau, Upper Saalum.

RECREATIONS

Drumming. A variety of drum types are to be found. For general dancing the sabar, a long drum of hollowed out wood, narrowing in the center, and with the head covered with skin held in place by pegs , is used. It is held on the left side of the drummer by a strap which runs over his right shoulder. Accompanying the sabar there may be shorter drums, the lamba and the gorong, generally placed on the ground. Other musicians play the tama, an hour-glass shaped drum held under the left arm, with cords joining each end, which are controlled by the arm and the body to vary the tone. The tama can be used to accompany historical narratives. Women use a calabash upturned in a large tin basin of water, which can be played either with the hands or with two sticks. The sikko drum comes from the Mandinka, and is made from an oil drum, with a skin head. Other types of drum are used only for special occasions. The junjung accompanies important chiefs. The tabala is found only in a religious context, to mark important occasions, to indicate a death in the community, or to provide a general alarm.

Other instruments used by the Wolof are the xalam, a guitar, [See p. 22], and flutes made from millet stalks.

Wrestling. This is a favorite sport of all Senegambian peoples. The main season is from the period after harvest (October-November) to January. A description of Gambian wrestling is to be found in a booklet published by the Gambia Cultural Archives (No.3, September 1976).

Fanal [Lantern displays]. This custom is apparently derived from the former practice of having lantern bearers accompany those attending Midnight Mass Services on Christmas Eve at Goree and Saint-Louis. Later, lanterns in the form of ships and houses, made from wood and paper, and lit by candles were carried around town in a general parade. Lanterns vary in size from small items less than a foot in size to ships over six feet long. Varous groups,either work associations, neighborhood groups, or political units, co-operate to produce the larger lanterns, and patrons are chosen to sponsor the costs. Lantern parades now form part of the tourist attractions in the Christmas/New Year period.

Dancing. Traditional Wolof dancing has been mentioned in the descriptions of various ceremonies in the life cycle, but is a general form of enjoyment. A drumming and dancing session, known as a sabar, is held in the evening. The drummers begin, and women gradually form a circle around them, responding to the rhythm. Dancers may be pushed into the ring by their friends, and the drummer changes tempo to suit the dancer. Younger women and those of high social status dance sedately in public, but those of géwèl origin and other older women are free to perform lascivious actions. In a recent dance, the dancer moves her behind in imitation of the movements of an electric fan. A Wolof woman may flick open the front of her outer skirt to provide a tantalizing glimpse of what is underneath, usually an undergarment. Occasionally a géwèl youth may dance, either on his own, or opposite a girl. In the urban situation the drummers may be located on one side of a courtyard, or on a low platform.

WOLOF CONCEPTS OF BEAUTY AND THE PRESENTATION OF SELF

To outsiders the Wolof, particularly the women, have always appeared spectacular. Illustrations from mid 19th century books about Senegal to modern literature for tourists, and magazines such as Amina, have always featured beautifully dressed women. Journalists refer to women moving down the streets like Spanish galleons in full sail as their robes billow around them.

When one examines the Wolof concept of beauty one finds that there is a variety of words concerned with beauty and its effects. The word rafet- beautiful, fine, can be applied to people, things and animals. Others are used primarily for people, and more rarely for objects, just as the English word 'handsome' is used mainly in reference to people, though one can speak of a 'handsome reward.' Closely linked in concept is yem - to be fitting, to be appropriate. There are also the words mat, which refers to a striking personality, taar which indicates natural beauty and is used only about people, jongama meaning 'a naturally beautiful woman' and jɛkka which refers to created beauty - a woman beautifully made up with a perfect hair style. The terms are not mutually exclusive, but overlap in various ways.

If people are asked to give examples of things that are beautiful, one finds that items commonly mentioned in Europe and America tend to be absent, unless the person has been educated in a western type school. Landscapes, sunsets, flowers, trees, etc. are rarely mentioned. Instead it is the human aspect that predominates. Objects on their own are regarded in a somewhat neutral way ; a pair of gold ear-rings is not outstanding in itself. It is only when they are displayed on the ears of a woman for whom they are suitable that beauty is made manifest. The creation of beauty is felt to be something that distinguishes humans from animals. An animal cannot look at itself in a mirror and change its appearance, though some animals, horses, for example, may be regarded as naturally beautiful. Humans, on the other hand, are very conscious of how they are going to look to others, and this is an essential element of Wolof self-perception and self-esteem.

When one asks about ugliness, almost invariably hyaena is mentioned. Yet very few people have actually seen the creature. They know of it from stories as a mis-shapen animal, with a dirty colored skin, a creature of the night, symbolizing all that is to be despised in human nature, lacking physical and mental control, quarrelsome, and excessively greedy. In tales he often neglects his wife and children, but looks after himself, and if he undertakes a role above his station (e.g. as a village head, or as a host to strangers) he fails in his duties. Ugliness is therefore associated in people's minds with social and moral failure.

If one looks again at the concept of beauty (rafet) one finds that the term is also used in social contexts, of proper fulfilment of social roles and of behaving in an exemplary manner. The social system

in fact strongly reinforces this value system. Traditionally the artisan caste groups, the gold and silver smiths, the hairdressers, and others worked in long term relationships with specific families. They made articles that met their clients' desires, but also showed their own creative ability. Their satisfaction came from the final appearance of their clients and their reputations depended on the skill they had shown. But the relationships went further, for the hairdressers were often the confidants and close friends of high ranking women, giving advice, and urging their patrons to greater courage, generaosity and noble action. Praise singers also lauded the individual, using the history of their lineage as an example to follow. Drummers who played for a dancer not merely provided the beat, but also praised and glorified the performance of the dancer, urging her on to greater efforts.

In Wolof society we see people under strong moral and social obligations as representatives of their lineages and rank, or as holders of offices, to present themselves in public in a way appropriate to the occasion, not merely major social events like attending a naming ceremony, a wedding, or a charity after a death, but also in such mundane events as going to the market. Certain times are recognized as appropriate occasions for display. For example, visiting hours at the main Banjul hospital on a Sunday afternoon are like a major fashion parade.

Beauty for the Wolof is to be seen as the totality of the presentation of a person - the style of walking, care in sitting, elegance of speech in formal greetings and farewells. [See Appendix III] The dress and ornaments and hair styles are backed up by an elaborate series of cosmetic adornments, tattooing of the lips and gums, blue shading for the eyes, blackening and changing the shape of the eyebrows, the use of henna designs on the hands [See page 47], whitening the teeth by means of a 'chewing stick' (soccu), the presence of gold teeth (generally a sign that the person has been on pilgrimage to Mecca, where such dental work is carried out). Each woman also uses her own personal combination of scents, and her garments may be scented with incense (cuuraay). Wolof beauty cannot easily be analysed in terms of single elements, dress styles, ornaments, etc. The way in which a person combines all the elements and provides a simultaneous appeal to one's eyes, one's ears (with the subtle sound of waist beads), and one's sense of smell, is what counts.

However, public display also carries some dangers. An exceptionally beautiful person may draw the attention of someone with the powers of witchcraft, with the evil eye, with the power of harming though words, and so forth. So Wolof are often loaded with amulets to ward off evil. But there is a moral aspect to this too. If a person maintains high moral standards, the charms will be more effective. Adultery, betrayal of one's friends, lying, theft and failure to respect one's parents, are types of behavior that are

HENNA PATTERNS ON HANDS

(Diagrams by Linda Salmon, 1974)

1

Banjul

2

Serakunda

3

Dakar

4

Banjul

5

Dakar

6

Dakar

considered to weaken the power of charms. In short, strict adherence to high moral values preserves beauty, and at the same time a person's good character is an aspect of his or her beauty.

Consequently beauty is not something associated only with youth as in much of American or European thought. Middle aged and elderly women can be considered 'beautiful' in terms of the character revealed on their faces, their social skills, and the way they move.

Praise for beauty has an awkward element to it. Limited praise is appreciated, but if one praises a baby saying "What a beautiful child", the mother has to say a protective phrase such as "kaar, kaar" to ward off potential evil, and questioning people about the beauty of others can be embarrassing and impolite.

To summarize, the presentation of one's self in public, both as a representative of a lineage, and as an individual, is highly important. It reflects the pride that an individual has in himself or herself, it involves a sense of what is socially appropriate, and reflects one's lineage and past history, as well as indicating a sense of current fashion.

HAIR STYLES

One of the earliest descriptions of hairdressing is found in an account of life in Senegal by Louis Chambonneau in 1675-77.[1] The way the Wolof did their hair then was "to braid it in little plaits on both sides of the head and to pile up those which are on top in the form of a crest. Women made this crest a lot bigger [than that of the men], stuffing rags of cotton stuff under it to raise it up further." This style with a ridge on top is known as ndundu bale in Wolof, from a Mandinka word duni-baloo, 'preventing from carrying a headload', and the implication is that the woman has servants to do such tasks for her. This is a style which crosses ethnic boundaries, being found, for example, among the people of Khasso, who comprise both Mandinka and Tukuloor, and have contact with Wolof traders. Wolof men dropped the practice of braiding when Islam was adopted, heads were either shaved or the hair cut short.[2]

Another well known style came from the Bambara, Bugu Segu, named after an important trading town on the river Niger. Some styles are named after particular people, Jamano Kura (The time of Kura), Kura being a famous beauty, in some accounts a woman from Mali, in others a Sérêr dancer.[3] Such styles with a long history are known as cosaan (traditional). Modern fashions may be given more frivolous names. In 1974 young women were referring to their hairstyles as ree i Ibrayma, the smile of Ibrayma. In 1979 there was a pattern called an téle téné, television antenna. Corn rows in Wolof are known as kondorol, which seems to be a derivation of the English word.

In the old days different styles were associated with stages in the life cycle. A small girl would have her hair shaved into various patterns. One from the Jôb (Diop) clan might have a small tuft left in front, as the totemic animal associated with this clan was the crested crane. [See photograph No.1, page 50] An older girl had her hair done in baram fashion , the hair was allowed to grow long, was coated with oils and crushed baobab leaves and twisted round sticks which were removed after the hair had set, just as American women use curlers. Next came a period in adolescence when artificial plaits (paxa) were added, usually one across the forehead, one at the side. [See photograph No.2, page 54]. After marriage, more elaborate braiding, as well as large puffs on the sides [Illustration No.1, page 50] were used. Married women also covered their hair with a "head-tie" (headkerchief), fashions in tying this being endless. One style named after Lamin Gaye [Gueye], a prominent Senegalese politician, is also shown in Illustration No.1.[4] When a woman became a widow, her hair had to be unbraided, and she was dependent on her sister-in-law to perform this rite for her. She remained with hair unbraided until the mourning period was over.

Patterns of shaving hair have varied through time. In the 1940s

HAIR STYLES

(Sketches by Linda Salmon)

1. *Saint Louis. About 1943. Lett i puf. Made from black wool. Head tie worn in style known as Lamin Gaye, after the Senegalese political leader. Gold ornaments attached to the hair.*

2. *Dakar. 1974. Potiika. Partings.*

3. *Banjul. 1974. Ndundu bale. This has the crest on top of the head which gives it its name (See page 49). Cowrie shells are added to the braids. Black wire is used to make the coils. In front are flat plaits.*

4. *Banjul. 1974. Kala lett i banxa. Traditional plaits of bakak. "Squash curls."*

5.

6.

5. *Banjul. 1974. Jamano Kura. [This in] the time of Kura. (See page 51). This style is derived from the Bambara of Mali.*

6. *Banjul. 1940s. Den i bos or puf ak jimbi (puff with black wool).*

7.

8.

7. *Banjul. 1940s. Noci, also Nguka. Puff with black wool.*

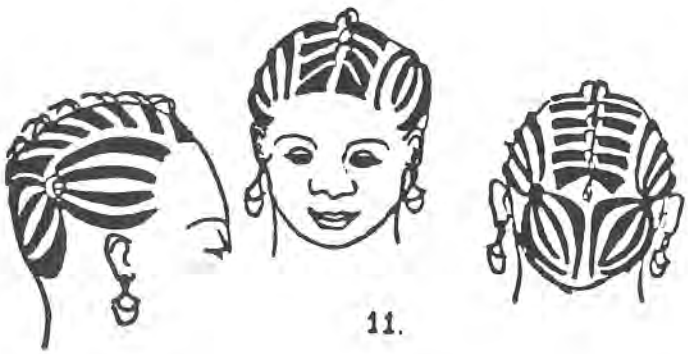
8. *Banjul. 1940s. Kala leti banxa, and nyar nyar (Squash [pumpkin] curls and Two by two.)*

9.

10.

9. *Banjul. 1974. Ndundu Bale . Large braid at crest of head.*

10. *Banjul. 1974 Ekai (Scissors). Braid is map, a flat inverted braid. This seems to be a Nigerian style.*

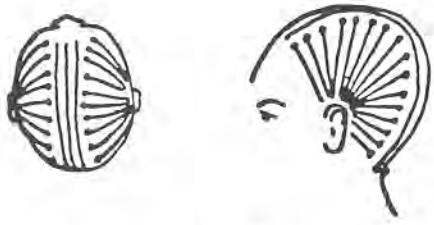


11.

12.

11. *Serekunda. 1974. Map. This is a style created by the wearer and her hairdresser.*

12. *Banjul. 1974. Braids are known as kondorol (from corn-rows), raised braids along scalp ending in wire braided as extensions of the hair, and then curled around an iron rod. A new style.*



13.

14.

13. *Serekunda. 1974. Kondorol (Corn-rows). French braids, imitation of old style*

14. *Banjul. 1974. Ndundu bale (crest on top). Kondorol . Braids with bakaak extensions as pony tail. Curled wire in front of the ear.*

TRADITIONAL HAIR STYLES

(Photographs 1-3 by David P. Gamble)

1. *Upper Saalum. 1947. Shaving plus tufts.*

2. *Upper Saalum. 1947. Young woman with paxa. Chewing stick (soccu) in her mouth.*

3. *Upper Saalum. 1953. Young married woman. Forehead shaved back. Paxa on each side.*

4. *Banjul. 1946. Elaborate hair style and ornaments of a local beauty in a formal portrait. Forhead shaved in the style then in fashion. Photographer: Maxwell.*

shaving the forehead high was the fashion. [Photograph No. 4, page 54] Diagram No. 2, page 50 shows how shaving can be used to form partings in the hair.

Traditionally fibres made from hemp, bakaak, blackened either by boiling in a mixture of iron filings, lamp black, and a certain bark, or by burying in mangrove mud, were made into wigs, or attached to the natural hair. In the 1940s regular black knitting wool, leen in Wolof (from the French laine), was purchased and used in place of the vegetable fibres. The use of patches of black velvet, uluur (from the French velours) followed. Besides plaiting a technique of wrapping with black thread was used to make the hair stand out from the head. In the 1970s wire covered with black plastic such as was used in telecommunications, was used to work elaborate designs standing out from the head. In recent years black artifical fibres manufactured in Japan are imported to meet the needs of hairdressers.

The hairstyles are often incredibly complex and require a great deal of imagination, memory and skill on the part of the hairdressers, and a lot of time to accomplish. In the old days the hair was loosened, washed with a decoction of leaves, and braided about once a month, some styles taking more than a day to complete. The client either lay with her head in the lap of the hairdresser if the latter was sitting on the ground, or against her knees, if she was seated on a chair.

The professional hairdressers are the women of the géwèl and blacksmith (tegga) castes. Formerly they had an obligation to provide these services for the families to which they were attached. The hairdressing sessions are also occasions when news is exchanged and advice given. As elsewhere, women talk about men, children, families, work, the market, fashion, events in the community, and so on. It provides a relaxed and easy atmosphere for the discussion of things that are important as well as things that are trivial.

Hairdressers also used to carry their trade up-river during the dry season. A woman would take such items as dried fish, onions, canned tomato puree, and barter these for rice or millet, as well as plying her trade as a hairdresser. In this way news, dress and hair styles spread from the capital to various "wharf-towns" along the river. At present,all weather roads and motor-transport have made contact between the capital and up-river towns a matter of hours.

In the past ten years there have been many changes. In the first place Wolof hair styles have been greatly affected by international trends. Some Wolof who have been educated abroad or become westernized patronize salons which provide foreign styles. Fashion magazines, books on hair styling, and photographs, as well as the influence of television, have led to Nigerian and American styles becoming popular. During the mini-skirt era (1970), the American Afro hair style was adopted by many of the younger generation. This has been succeeded by

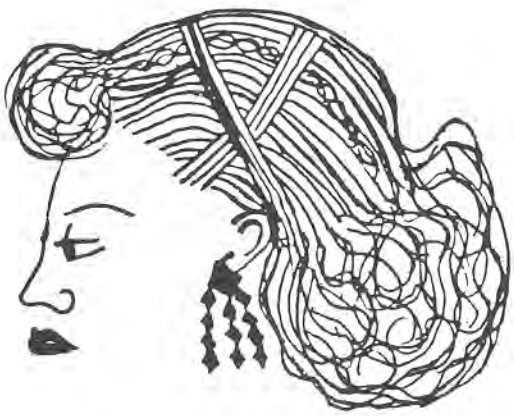
1984 HAIR STYLES

(Sketches by Linda Salmon)

15. *Banjul: "Classic" Rasta.*

16. *Banjul: "Rasta."*

17. *Banjul: "Jelly Curls."*



18. *Dakar: Gold thread plaited into hair.*

the rasta style, at first with basic braids, which might be undecorated or have beads attached, and later with more elaborate twisting and tying of the braids. Current fashion from Dakar includes gold lamé ribbons braided into the hair. [See diagram No.18, page 56].

Younger women began, with the aid of home permanent kits, to adopt styles that they could arrange either by themselves, or with the help of friends, and go to traditional hair dressers only for special occasions, such as the major Islamic festivals, or before setting off on a journey. Current fashion among the young favors what are known locally as "Jelly curls", which in American hair magazines are sometimes named "Jerri curls" or "Jheri curls". Maybe the fact that curl activating gels are used also influenced the name. The basic rasta style itself is now generally elaborated and the plaits are linked in styles referred to as "weaving" or "basketwork". A rasta style can be combined with other elements such as a "pony tail". This has meant that hairdressers could again combine elements from different styles to create something special for a particular individual, so that one can be "in fashion", have a style which marks one off as a distinct individual, and retain elements which relate to one's traditional heritage.

The modern hair styles reflect the greater sense of freedom and desire for independence on the part of younger women. An elaborate hair style is now an indication of one's leisure and financial status, and for those who deal with the general public in offices, banks, hotels, and stores, a well groomed image is considered essential.

At present there is an ebb and flow between Africa and Europe and America. West Africans operate hair salons in Paris, London, New York and Washington. At the same time West Africans invite Americans to visit Africa to learn the latest styles, an Afro-American Hair Fashion Festival now being held in Dakar every May.

1. C.I.A. Ritchie: "Impressions of Senegal in the Seventeenth Century: Extracts from Louis Chambonneau's 'Treatise on the Origin of the Negroes of Senegal, on the African Coast, about their Country, Religion, Customs, and Habits'." African Studies, 26(2), 1967, 59-93.

2. Perhaps as a result of American or Caribbean influence a number of young men have adopted rasta hair styles. The Baye-Fall of the Murid sect also wear their hair in "dreadlock" style.

3. Kura Cau (In Senegalese spelling, Koura Thiaw) is mentioned in Abdoulaye Sadji's novel Maïmouna , Paris: Presence Africaine, 1958. The story is set in Dakar just before World War II. She is mentioned as a "Star from Baol" (p.119) and her dancing is described on p. 120. At the time she was said to be 16 years old.

4. A photograph of this style from Saint-Louis was published in Beatrice Appia-Dabit: "Notes sur quelques bijoux Sénégalaises," Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., 5, 1943, opp. p.30. Numerous old photographs in Banjul show the identical style.

DRESS

The basis for a Wolof woman's dress is the pagne (malaan), a large rectangle of cloth, worn round the lower half of the body, tucked in round the waist and extending down to the ankles. Traditionally the pagne was of locally woven cloth, either white, or dyed with indigo, varying from light to dark shades. Coins, keys, and so on, might be tied in a knot at the top of the pagne. A strip of locally woven cloth is also commonly worn as a loincloth. In urban areas and on special occasions a woman may wear several overlapping pagnes of various types of cloth, the outer one matching her dress (mbubba)

In the last century a pagne was also used as an upper garment, being worn over one shoulder. However, with the importation of European textiles, dresses derived from European patterns began to be worn. One of these now traditional styles is known as the "Empire style", based on a French style after the Napoleonic wars, with puffy sleeves, a high cut waistline, and a low neckline. Another is borrowed from the Aku (Creole) women's lace applique. Wolof women consider it fashionable to wear their dresses dropping off one shoulder to show the beauty of their skin. Nowadays an infinite variety of dresses are to be seen, differing in sleeve patterns and necklines. Over the dress may be worn another garment of a sheerer fabric, proof of the woman's wealth. A sheer fabric may also be worn to display an expensive American or European brassiere.

For special occasions, and even for going to market, women put on what the Senegalese call the grand boubou, using as much as twenty yards of fabric, which stretches from fingertip to fingertip, and from the shoulders to the ground, a hole being cut out for the head, and the sleeves being only partially sewn. In earlier times these were made from fabrics which did not reveal what was worn below, now they may be of imported gauze, muslin, nylon, or lace, so as to reveal the dress beneath.

On her head the Wolof woman wears a "head-tie" (musuwaar, from the French mouchoir), tied in endless variations, which relate to the hair style worn, the type of dress, and marital status. The early "signares" - the Wolof women who were often independent traders, and had been influenced by French fashions - of Goree and Saint-Louis in the 19th century wore very tall "sugar-cone" shapes [See illustration on page 61.] In the 1950s the head tie was normally made from material that was different from the dress. At present most women have head ties which match their dress material, though some omit them, so as to show off elaborate new hair braiding styles.

In 1984 the fashionable dress was a dark indigo blue skirt with a light blue top, and matching head tie of light and dark blue. This style is known as Bay Waale. When a grand mbubba is worn it will have a gradient dye from light at the top to dark at the hem.

In contrast to the multiple layers of cloth worn by adult women, young women follow current world fashions. In the early 1960s many were wearing the scantiest of miniskirts, which gave rise to a great deal of controversy. A few years later dresses down to the ground were fashionable. Now one finds a mixture. Mini-skirts, denim dresses, pant suits, slacks and blouses can all be seen in the streets.

1

Groups of friends may form an asobi, wearing dresses made from the same material on a special occasion like a naming or a wedding. This still

holds good for older women, but younger girls nowadays are more likely to wear the same style of mini cut from different cloths.

In the old days Wolof women wore Moroccan type sandals often with golden designs (dal i doore), which helped develop a characteristic Wolof way of walking with a slow, shuffling step (which helped to show off the figure), but at present most women wear western type shoes, with high heels or platform soles, and sandals.

With the flowing Wolof costume, and the Wolof penchant for a full figure, jewelry tends to be massive so as to be well shown off against the skin and the colors of the dress. In the 1980s very heavy gold bracelets were being worn by the richer women, along with necklaces from which dangle such charms as Italian horns, Pharoah's heads, and other charms. Large gold ear-rings hang from the ears, and smaller rings are fastened round the outside of the ear.

Traditionally men dress in much the same way as other Muslims in Senegambia, with a kaftan, waramba (gown) , and baggy draw-string trousers. (See pictures on page 63). New garments will be worn, if possible, for the major Islamic festivals. Elaborate patterns are sewn round the necks of special gowns. Formerly this was all hand work, but is now generally done on imported sewing machines.

The Bay Waale also extends to men's dress, and is interpreted as a long kaftan or tailored shirt of light blue cloth (usually damask), worn with dark indigo trousers.

Men working in shops and offices often wear western business suits, or western tailored pants made be worn with warambas.

In rural areas the usual working garments consist of baggy trousers of locally woven cotton cloth, coming down to the knee, and an open sided shirt which may be either of the same material, or of imported cloth. (See photograph on page 63).

Different types of hats are worn depending on the age group and social status. Fezzes, woolen Pullman caps, or hats made from white cloth are worn.

1 From Yoruba - aso-ebi. The term is also used in Krio.

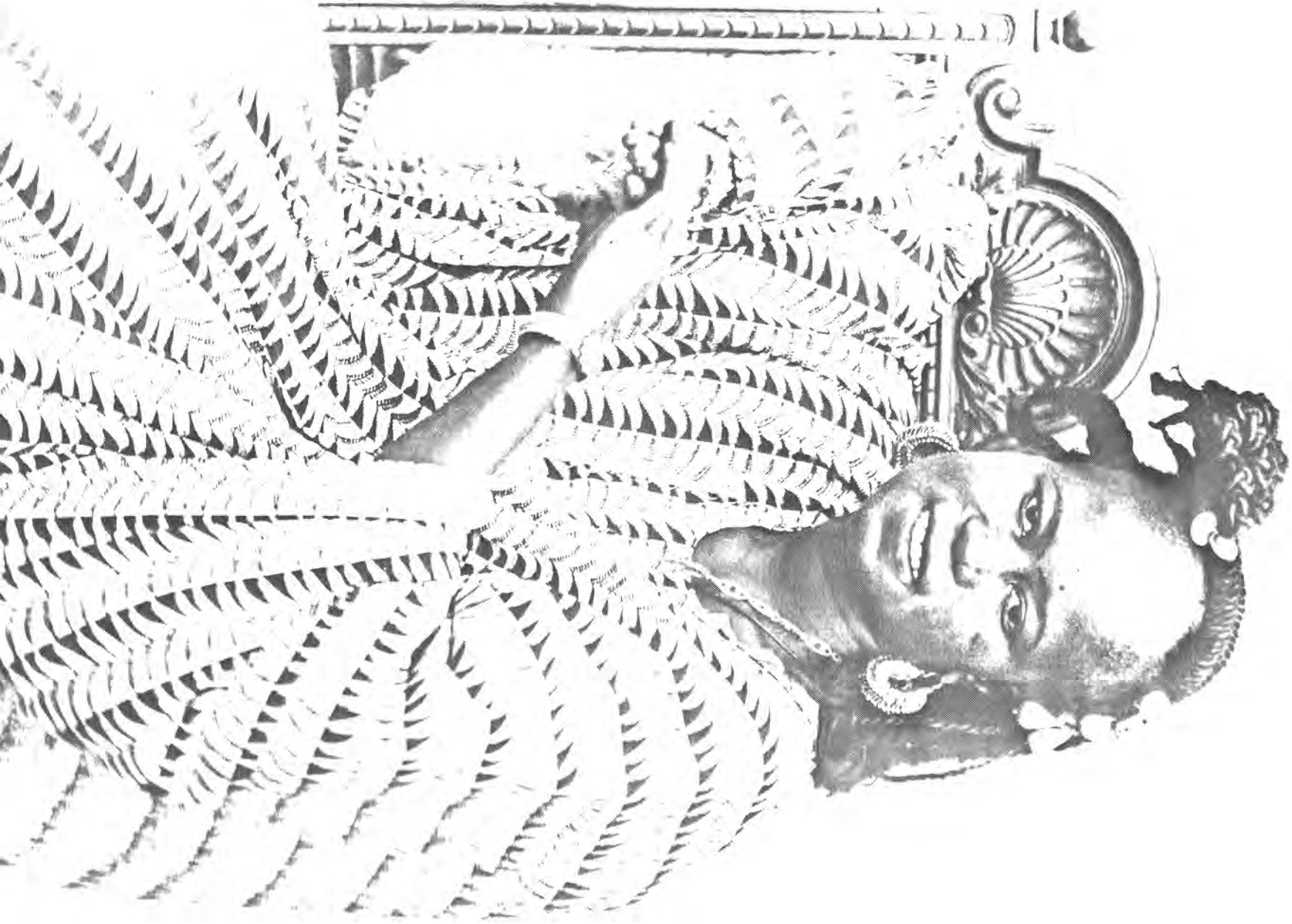
Colonel Frey
Côte Occidentale d'Afrique. 1890, p. 193.

SIGNARE DE GORÉE, D'APRÈS UNE AQUARELLE DE DARONLEAUX

TRADITIONAL DRESS

Photograph by David P. Gamble.

Wolof woman in Banjul market wearing an mbubba. 1947.



MEN'S DRESS

1. Rural Wolof.
Upper Saalum, 1950
Working clothes made from locally woven cotton cloth.

2. Urban Wolof. 1947.
Man wearing the mbubba, gown, made from imported cloth, and an imported cotton singlet.

WOLOF CODE OF BEHAVIOR

The Wolof code of behavior is one in which self-worth and self-respect, respect for those older than oneself, respect for those of higher rank, and concern for those younger or of lower rank, are important elements. One is always acutely conscious of the status of other people, and what they might think and say, so the possibility of being shamed is an important sanction in regulating one's behavior. What one does should not give rise to gossip. In the old days someone who had been dishonored would prefer to commit suicide rather than continue living in shame, and this is how a high ranking woman acts in Ousman Sembène's story "White Genesis", when it is revealed that her husband has had an incestuous relationship with his daughter. Courage, death before retreat, was expected of high ranking individuals, and the legends and histories of the Wolof are rich in examples.

Concern with oneself has to be balanced by respect for others. This is inculcated from an early age, children being continuously taught to respect those older than themselves. The behavior of young people in the presence of elders should be restrained. Good manners at meal times have to be observed, and the proper forms of greeting must be carried out.

Respect for others is also shown in politeness and sociability, acknowledging the presence of other people, and honoring them in the exchange of greetings by repeating their surnames. No business should be transacted before the appropriate greetings have been exchanged and a relationship established. Here Westerners unconsciously give offence by plunging into business before formalities have been completed.

Generosity and hospitality are given and expected as a matter of course. Anyone present is invited to join in a meal. Towards one's friends one has the obligation to advise and help, and not betray them. A person with a problem will discuss it with their close friends, and these will feel responsible for the outcome. A person of honor should also keep his word, even though it might mean personal hardship to do so.

If adversity is unavoidable, one is expected to bear suffering with calm, relying on the fact that ultimately God's will prevails, and as God is good (Yalla bax na), eventually a change in fortune may come about.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Wolof have always shown themselves to be extremely adaptable, and all through their history have taken over from those with whom they have been in contact, whether European or African, material equipment, techniques, and ideas, which have enabled them to maintain a leading part in the government, trade, and agriculture of Senegambia.

Change has greatly accelerated in the last twenty five years, with the development of political party systems, the coming of independence, the increase in educational facilities, the improvement in communications, the growth of large urban centers, and the influence of the cinema, radio, newspapers, and television.

Wolof writers, musicians, actors, film makers, and politicians, have responded to the challenge of the modern world, and are known not merely locally but internationally for their achievements.

Urban life has meant that a new range of occupations has been opened up, and women in particular have achieved a greater degree of personal freedom, though in the 18th century the sinyaaras of Goree and Saint Louis were influential traders in their own right. In the cities an increasing number of girls attend school, speak English or French as a second language, and take up careers which enable them to lead a more independent life. Family planning clinics, infant welfare centers, nursery schools, and modern hospital facilities provide new amenities for the young Wolof mother. Wolof women work as teachers, nurses, lawyers, librarians, in supermarkets as salespersons or cashiers, in banks, in airline offices, at the Post Office, in the police force, as hotel receptionists, in government offices, and as shop owners. Some engage in overseas trade, travelling to Europe and America, others trade in the local markets, or deal in textiles. Many petrol (gas) station attendants are women, and a number of women who have been able to save up the capital invest in taxis, which are driven by male employees. The number of women who drive their own cars has shown a marked increase.

Traditional attitudes about marriage and the status of women are changing. The present generation now has a greater freedowm of choice in marriage, and marriages across ethnic boundaries are on the increase.

At the same time, life in the cities is associated with a new set of problems: poor housing, high rents, expensive food, a high unemployment rate, inadequate social services, high costs of transportation, and so on, while in rural areas the farmer is faced with rising prices for imported commodities, irregular supplies, fluctuations in the prices paid for cash crops, a soil which is deteriorating in terms of fertility, and in recent years, periods of disastrous drought. Yet one hopes that the skills and adaptability of the Wolof will see them through current problems and into an era of greater prosperity.

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APPENDIX I

WOLOF MUSIC ON RECORDS

David Ames recorded a variety of types of traditional rural music in Saalum in 1951, praise songs, wedding dance music, a folk tale, a woman's calabash "drum", a humorous song, dance rhythms, music at a naming ceremony, a religious song sung by a visiting Murid group, and so on. (Ethnic Folkways FE 4462). Examples of the xalam (guitar), sabar, gorong, tabala (types of drums), and an iron percussion instrument can be heard.

Examples of the xalam, sabar, tama (underarm drum) and bala (xylophone) are to be found on Misiki Gambia (Music of The Gambia), Bussu Records, no date (1970s ?) featuring urban groups. This record is probably unobtainable now.

Records are available of a popular Senegalese female singer, Aissa M'Baye, e.g. Sonafric SAF 50 027, Soirée Sénégalaise avec Aissa M'Baye (1976 ?)

A recent record by Kéno Diatta and Sona Mané: Songs from Sénégal (Lyrichord LLST 7381) has two tracks recorded at Serekunda in The Gambia, one of wrestling, involving both Jola and Fula wrestlers, and one of Wolof drumming to which women are dancing (1982).

Cassette tapes can be bought in the markets and shops of Banjul and Serekunda, some officially made, but most privately copied. For example, there are recordings of popular groups such as Youssou Ndour et le Super Etoile, from Dakar. Youssou Ndour's type of music is called mbalax, combining the traditional underarm "talking drum", the tama, with congas and timbales, electric guitars, saxophones and trumpets.

Most popular groups such as Touré Kunda (Sénégal), and Ifang Bondi (The Gambia) sing a number of their songs in Wolof.

APPENDIX II

THE WOLOF ON FILM

A summary of the film Kodou by Ababacar Samb-Makharam is given on page 30 .

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The best known and most prolific film maker is Ousmane Sémbène, whose films are primarily intended for the education of his countrymen. They are comments on social conditions and designed to raise questions in the minds of the audience. The ones described below are obtainable in the U.S.A.

(1) Borom Sarret [The Cart Owner]. 1963. 20 mins. Black and white. French dialog.

This is a short film that contains many ideas elaborated in later films. It concerns a day in the life of a humble cart owner living in the Medina section of Dakar, and ends with him having his cart confiscated after taking it to the Plateau, a zone in which horse traffic is prohibited, at the request of an "educated" man, who hires him, and then takes off, when a policeman stops them. The cart-owner tries to think at what point the chain of misfortune started, and who is ultimately responsible.

(2) Manda bi [Le Mandat. The Money-order]. 1968. 105 mins. Color. Wolof dialog.

A tale about an unemployed middle-aged illiterate man in Dakar, and his problems trying to cash a money-order sent by a nephew in Paris. He finds he cannot cash it because he has no identity card; to get an identity card at the Police Station, he needs photographs, a stamp, and a birth certificate. When he needs to cash a check, given him by a nephew, at the bank, a tout takes 30% commission for helping him cash it. A photographer cheats him out of his money, the employees at City Hall refuse to help with the birth certificate because he does not know the exact date of his birth, until an educated relative helps. In the end a "businessman" who wishes to acquire his property has him sign a power of attorney to cash the money order, and after cashing it claims he was robbed. All the time he is hounded by friends and neighbors seeking to borrow money.

When everyone cheats (officials, relatives, the educated), who can one trust ? What can be done to change the exploitation of the illiterate by the literate ?

(3) Tauw [Eldest son]. 1970. 27 mins. Color. Wolof dialog with English subtitles.

A film sponsored by the National Council of Churches, even though Ousmane Sémbène is a professed atheist. It deals with the unemployment among young people in Dakar, the conflict between generations, and the inadequacy of government institutions in facing up to the situation. Islamic teachers are portrayed as living off the people, and contributing to the problem by teaching children to beg for alms.

(4) Ceddo [The Pagan]. 1976. 120 mins. Color. Wolof dialog with English subtitles.

(Ceddo has several meanings. The primary meaning is a follower of traditional African religion. On the other hand, the armed following of the Wolof rulers, who ruthlessly carried out their orders as an oppressive force were also called ceddo.)

This is a historical film of a symbolic nature, set in perhaps the 18th century when slave traders, Catholic missionaries, and Islamic teachers were competing for the bodies and souls of the Wolof. The ruler is first of all converted, and his people are told that if they do not follow suit, they will be sold into slavery. The slave trader is providing guns and powder to the Muslims. As a result of the oppression that follows, a spokesman for the people kidnaps a princess, who is engaged to the heir to the throne. Representatives of different classes, a warrior, then her fiancé, try to bring her back, but are killed. The King dies under mysterious circumstance, and the Muslim teacher proclaims himself the ruler. Warriors sent by him break the traditional rules of combat, kill the kidnapper, and bring back the princess, whom the Muslim ruler announces he will marry. When she returns, she asserts her royal position, seizes a gun and shoot the cleric dead.

Ceddo is a highly controversial film, which was banned in Senegal, where more than 90% of the people are Muslim. The element of women leading resistance to oppression when men fail is a theme which figured in an earlier film on the Jola of the Casamance, Emitai.

The questions raised by the film are to what extent do religious leaders have the right to control the minds and bodies of everyone else ? Has the individual any option ?

(5) Xala [The Curse of Impotence]. 1974. 135 mins. Color. French and Wolof dialog with English subtitles.

This film is a satiric allegory, in which every scene is loaded with symbolism. A businessman married to two wives, one of whom represents the traditional Islamic, the other modern French, life styles, is persuaded to take a teenager as his third wife. On his wedding night he finds himself impotent. Who has put this curse on him ? An associate, or one of his wives ? There follows a desperate search for the cause and for a cure, during which his business falls apart. Eventually it is revealed that a beggar whom he had ruined and deprived of his land is responsible, and he alone can provide a cure and purification in a humiliating ritual.

The impotence is not merely that of the central character, but is that of an independent Senegal, in which banks and the import-export business are in foreign hands, and where people are destroying their own culture, by adopting extravagant western lifestyles. The beggars who survive by the old virtues of cooperation and mutual help, are the only truly "free" people.

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In the Africa File Series of videocassettes produced by Ontario Educational Communications, Canada, 1976, there are two half-hour programs concerning the Wolof.

From Country to Town: Dakar the Beautiful, which deals with the problems of urbanization, and

The Mourides: Africa's Black Muslims, which describes the religious "revolution."

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APPENDIX III

WOLOF GREETINGS

The exchange of greetings is an art and a social skill which is difficult to demonstrate easily in written form. Greetings differ according to the time of day, the place, whether within the family, on a major social occasion, or in a passing situation, and on the relative age and rank of the participants, as well as the length of time since they have seen one another. Forms that are acceptable between young people may seem insulting to an elder.

On entering a compound one says "Salaam aleekum," , the Arabic for "Peace be on you," to which the reply is "Maleekum salaam," "On you be peace."

Going to a particular house one may say "Kong, kong," to indicate the formality of knocking on a door which is open. One will receive a reply : "Kan la ?" "Who is it ?" or "Aksil," [Approach], or "Dugal" [Come in]. One will then be offered a seat. "Doo tog ?" [Won't you sit down].

One greeting a person in the morning one says "Jamma nga am ?" [Are you at peace ?], and "Jamma nga fanaan ?"[Did you spend the in peace ?]. The plural form is "Jamma ngeen fanaan ?" The reply to these is "Jamma rekk" [Peace only], to which may be added "Alhamdulila", or"Alhamdulilayi". [Arabic for "Thanks be to God".]

The reply "Jamma rekk," is always given even if everything is not well. A person seriously ill will use the same words, and one has to judge the real situation from the tone of voice.

Surnames are often exchanged in greetings, so it is correct to ask both the name and surname of a person if one does not know them.

"Naka nga tudda ?" "What is your name ?"

"Naka nga santa ?" "What is your surname ?"

a Juuf, jamma nga am ? b "Jamma rek, Njaay."

One can also ask where a person has come from, so that one can ask about the people there too.

a "Fan nga joge ?" "Where have you come from ?"

b "Banjul laa joge. " "I have come from Banjul."

a "Naka waa Banjul ? "How are the people of Banjul ?"

b "Nyunge fa rekk. "They are there only."

One asks after the people of the compound:

a "Naka waa kër gi ?" "How are the people of the compound ?"

b " Nyunge fi/ fa." "They are here/there."

and after specific individuals or relatives:

a "Ana Faatu ? "Where is Faatu ?"
Naka Faatu ? "How is Faatu ?"

b "Munge fi." "She is here."

a "Naka sa yaay ?" "How is your mother ?"

b "Munge fa." "She is there."

After about ten in the morning the general greeting becomes "Jamma nga endu ?" "Have you spent the day in peace ?"

Among young people certain phrases may well be translations from other languages "Naka nga def ? ,shortened at times to "nanga def ?" may well come from English "How are you doing ?" The reply is generally "Mangi fi rekk." "Naka suba si ?" "How's the morning ?" is a close parallel to a Creole greeting.

On leaving one says: "Mange dem. " [I am going], which brings the response "Yange dem ?" [You are going ?] or "Doo waxtaan ?" [Won't you stay and chat ?]

Greetings are sent through you to other people:

"Nuuyul ma sa yaay." "Greet your mother for me."
" " " waa ker." "Grëet the people of your compound for me."
the reply being:

"Di na ko dégga." "She will hear it."
"Di nanyu ko degga." "They will hear it."
A final wish may be "Ci jamma", "In peace," the response being "Jamma ak jamma," or at night "Fanaanal ak jamm." "Spend the night in peace."

The exchange of greetings enables people to interact without dealing with specific matters, and one can find out a great deal about a person's mood and attitude in the process. The words are spoken in a rhythmical fashion which differs from straightforward conversational speech.

In greetings, the person who arrives initiates the greetings, the one who reaches a compound, enters a house, or joins a group. Secondly the person of lower rank greets the person of higher rank. Younger people pay their respects to elders, a woman to her husband, people of lower rank to those in superior positions, heads of households, religious teachers, village heads, chiefs, politicians, etc. A foreigner has to show that he/she speaks the language and is capable of normal social interaction.

Between people of about equal status a game may be played out as each tries to take the initiative, i.e. when the two meet walking down the street, and both may continue speaking at the same time.

When one's name is called one answers: "Naam." On hearing bad news the response is "Ndeysaan !" [What a pity, How sad]. "Thank you," used less frequently than the English or French forms, is "Jërëjëf." "Maas" is an apology for bumping into a person, or an expression of sympathy when one sees someone have an accident such as tripping, or stubbing their toe.

To call a person the last vowel of the name may be lengthened or oo is added:

	end	
Awa	a	Awaa !
Ami	i/e	Amee !
Faatu	u	Faatoo !
Asan	-	Asan-oo !

APPENDIX IV

THE WOLOF AND PHOTOGRAPHY

There is a very old tradition of portrait photography by professional studio photographers in Banjul and other towns. In the 1900s professional photographers from Freetown, such as Alphonso Lisk-Carew, a Creole who ran a studio from 1905-1920, would visit Banjul from time to time. Large portraits were framed and displayed on the walls of living rooms and bedrooms, and photographs of friends, relatives, and public figures might cover the whole walls of rooms. In modern times this has changed. Many families have albums instead, and the old portraits are stored away.

But Wolof do not like to be photographed unless they have been courteously asked and given permission. They are not keen on having photographs get into the hands of strangers, for they do not know what eventual use may be made of them. One family, for instance, was greatly offended at finding a portrait of one of their members turned into a commercially sold postcard without their permission.

Wolof also wish to choose how they shall pose and how they shall appear, usually serious and stately. Children, however, are liable to strike up strange poses, and make faces at the camera.

In general the giving and taking of photographs is an indication of a personal relationship. The person photographed expects to receive a copy. Wolof will give photographs of themselves to a friend who is going away, to show that they do not wish to be forgotten, and the taking of a photograph can be an acceptable way of repaying hospitality or an act of generosity.

Some people who work with tourists may be more used to being photographed than others. Women who trade in the Tourist Market will generally be amenable, those who work in hotels and with Gambia Airways will be more used to strangers, but permission should still be asked and received. Even when taking general shots in the streets and markets etc. this should be done slowly, so that anyone who does not wish to appear would have time to remove themselves from the line of fire.