THE SOUTH BANK OF THE GAMBIA:

PLACES, PEOPLE, AND POPULATION.

(C) THE FONYI DISTRICTS.

By David P. Gamble

In this series of Gambian Studies an attempt has been made to create a set of district maps of the Gambia, from the literature in my collection, official publications, and books. This arose primarily from an attempt to determine the ethnic pattern of the various communities, and to identify the villages and places mentioned by early travellers, or occurring in later reports.

Shortly after I began work in the Gambia, (1946), the Senior Commissioner had the various district officers who were engaged in the Annual Assessment for tax purposes, make a serious effort to record more accurately the ethnic affiliation of the various compound owners. This resulted in much more reliable data for the period 1946-1948.

When new maps were made following the first all surveys (1948), the attribution of place names was not always accurate, but at least the location of the communities on the map provided a better basis for work on the ground.

In a number of areas in subsequent years I personally visited all the places I could by motor hike, e.g., the Kiang and Upper Boma Districts, Kantora and Fulasu East, Upper Saa.yum, Fonyi, Borgen, and Fonyi Dinka; Karamo, most of the Komo area (though this has greatly changed in recent years). In these visits I tried to check both the ethnic affiliations given in the assessment data, and the current names for the communities involved. Some villages are constant, others move a short distance as the soil becomes exhausted, while the hamlets of the Fulbe are constantly changing. When new roads are constructed, often portions of old villages break away, so as to be nearer the main lines of communication. New villages are established by immigrants.

Information about the various districts was sorted out in 1955. The district committee meetings were an important source of information, and the heads given on the following page. In most cases the information has been extracted and given in full, though in some instances references are given to more recent material.

Brisbane, California.

May 1997
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General Headings

Name of District
Maps consulted
Area of District
Legends of origin/Early History
Boundaries
Main geographical features
Early travellers' accounts
Early village lists
Population (Assessment and Census data)
Village names and location
Ethnic groups
Descriptions of specific places
Pre-Islamic beliefs
Archaeological features. Ancient monuments.
Photographs available, or seen in publications
Articles appearing in recent years

Material on certain major warriors or rulers

The material available to me varies greatly from district to district.
It is hoped, however, that the result will provide a basis for further
research by people in The Gambia itself.
For some references/the author and date are given. For the full title
of the work reference should be made to my General Bibliography of The Gambia
(1972).
The Fonyi Districts lie on the south bank of The Gambia river, east of the Kombo, and are also bounded on the north by the Bintang Creek (Bintam Bolong) which separates them from Western Kiang.

In old texts the spelling is variable:

Map of Leach (1732)  Fonia.  Francis Moore: Fonia (1730)
In French texts  Fogny  (Cultru: 1685)
In English texts  Fogni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area (Square miles)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fonyi Jarrol</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fonyi Bondali</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fonyi Kansala</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fonyi Bintang-Karenai</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fonyi Brefet</td>
<td>58</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Boundaries

The Fonyi Districts are bounded by a section of The Gambia River and the Bintang Creek on the North, the international boundary on the East and South, and the Bulok and Brefet Creeks to the West.

The boundaries between the Districts are imaginary lines devised by the early Commissioners.

1. Between Jarra and Bondali. From a point 1 mile E. from Bondali Tenda, a line is drawn due South to the Gambia-Senegal boundary.

2. Between Bondali and Kansala. From a point on the Bintang Creek, half way between Tintiba and Bondali, 1 3/4 miles north of Kalang, South-South-West to the main road (1/2 mile west of Niantempo), then due south to the Gambia-Senegal boundary.

3. Between Kansala and Fonyi Bintang Karenai. From a point two miles North-West of Kansala on the Bintang Creek, a line goes south to the Bulanjari Creek (Jurunku Kumani Creek) at Bajagar, then goes due south to the Gambia-Senegal boundary (near a boundary pillar at Baipoun). 

4. Between Fonyi Bintang Karenai and Fonyi Brefet. Runs along the Pima-Kajjara Creek, then goes in a line South-East (2 1/2 miles) - South-East (2 miles), and South West (1 3/4 miles) to the Gambia-Senegal boundary.
Geography

G. H. Sangster (1907)

"The land...is flat and swamp along the border of the creeks, and is especially so in the western corner as there are many small creeks intersecting the country; at the eastern end there are fewer creeks and in this part of the country there is a great deal of iron stone (= laterite).

Away from the creeks the country is fairly open, having been a good deal cleared for cultivation; the thick forest is only to be found in belts running on either side of dried-up water courses which, during the rains have water in them and, where close to towns, are used as rice fields. These belts are seldom of more than a quarter of a mile in width but extend in length for many miles.

Throughout, the country is well timbered and has some very fine trees, mostly cotton trees, but there are a good many mahogany trees also. The soil is rich and the people farm large quantities of corn or millet which is of a very good quality."
BINTANG B-paying BINTAM BOLON (Sometimes called the PONY BOLON)


(1) "In 1810 Mr. Joiner... manned a large canoe with fourteen hands, well armed and having provisioned them for seven days, sent them up to Vintang Creek, to prosecute the exploration of the Badjecoonda, which branches off from it, and is, in fact, a continuation of the same stream under a different name. The canoe, however... returned unsuccessful (in discovering a link between The Gambia and the Casamance).

"From Jereja the Badjecoonda winds up to a town bearing its name, opposite to Tenderbar, and almost four hours' walk from it. Thus high it is navigable, but beyond is of no service, for although canoes can proceed further up to Soongahdoo, and beyond that to Pahcow, yet the stream is so inconsiderable and winding that the natives prefer travelling by land. It is also, in this distance, fordable in many parts; and even not much above Badjecoonda it is so narrow that the natives pass over it on a plank."

(2) Governor Rendall's Visit to the Bintam Bolong. (1831)

visited Vintain = Bintang
went up Jataban branch = Jataba (Kiang)
reached Gifarang (about 40 miles), where the pilots refused to take the large vessels any farther.
= Jifarong (Kiyang)
went on in small boats
water enough for small craft up to Badiacoonda, 20 miles above Gifarang.
channel of two fathoms for more than five miles, then stream narrows, so that rowing was impossible.

(3) In 1891 the creek was explored by H.M.S. "Alecto". See "Navigation of Vintang Creek - Extract from Captain's Remark Book 1891." Gambia Government Gazette, 8(7) 31 July 1891, p. 93.
G.H. Sangster (1907)

(4) "The Vinntang Creek affords a navigable waterway the whole length of the country, for craft up to nine feet draught. H.M.S. "Dwarf" has been up as far as the town of Sandang which is our last town upon the creek.

The Urumbang Creek which joins the Vinntang some two miles west of the town of Vinntang, is also navigable for small craft to the town of Karrenai, and after that for boats and canoes as far as Urambang, a village about a mile and a quarter south south-west of Kansalla.

Small trading cutters also go up the creek to Kandong which opens into the river near the Brefett Creek, but at low water it is dry after the first few miles, and has only about two and a half feet of water at low water at Kandong; it is very narrow.

The same may be said of the Korga Creek, which joins the Vinntang at Vinntang town and goes up to Sibanor where it is about thirty yards wide and has a depth of about eight feet at low water, but from thence on to the town of Kassang, although small cutters go up it, it is very narrow and shallow, being totally dry at low tide, and the channel is very hard to find."
This creek opens into the River Gambia, about 25 miles from Bathurst, and after a short but very tortuous course runs practically parallel with the river. Its length in British territory is, roughly, 50 miles, and it is navigable all the year round for launches, drawing 6 ft. of water. At its mouth it is nearly a mile in width, but it gradually narrows until at Sandeng it is only about 50 yards wide. The tidal influence is marked throughout the whole course, and, as in the case of the main river where this occurs, the banks are clothed with a dense growth of mangroves from end to end, except perhaps where villages are situated, and there sporadic trees of various kinds have sprung up.

The country is very flat in this region, except at Bintang, where the town of that name is situated, and where there is a slight elevation of the bank. The only other town of any size is Kansala; Fig. 11 shows the wharf and landing stage of that town. This view is typical of all the landing stages on the creek; it shows how these are constructed and to what extent clearing has been done. Only sufficient mangroves have been cut down to clear a space on which to build the wharf and leave a small open part on each side for canoes. ... *Glossina palpalis* occurs, one may almost say with certainty, along the whole creek.

At Sandeng there is a small jetty similar to that at Kansala, but at Jarrol the steamer is simply tied up alongside the bank.
Early this century travelling was difficult across Ponyi. Bisset Archer (1906) describes the route thus: "On leaving Baijana the road to Bulellai goes through a portion of French territory. A creek has to be crossed fordable at low water. There is also a fresh-water stream.

Rice fields (swamp during rains) exist between Bulellai and Kusamai; on leaving this latter town a creek, which is fordable, has to be crossed before reaching Kansalla. Thence to Sangajor there is another fresh-water stream and more rice fields.

Between Sangajor and Bondali there is a swamp with plenty of water in the rains, and bad going. On leaving Bondali another swamp, with rice fields, has to be crossed before reaching Jarrol."

Traders used the Bintam Bolong as a means of communication.
Vegetation

The vegetation of the district of the district is of mixed character. For the most part it consists of open woodland with patches round the settlements cleared for cultivation. Along the edge of the Bintang creek is a fringe of mangroves, while round the swamps and scattered more sparsely inland are rhun palms and oil palms. In damp hollows one comes across vegetation reminiscent of the tropical rain forest, a few tall trees and palms with a thick entanglement of shrubs and creepers, though in fact few species characteristic of the rain forest are to be found. On the uplands one finds trees typical of savanna country, neto - locust bean (Parkia biglobosa), soto (Ficus sp.), wolo (Terminalia albida), sunkungo (Anona senegalensis), baransango (Acacia capylacantha) etc., while sito - baobabs (Adansonia digitata), and cotton trees (Ceiba pentandra) are to be found near the older villages.

As among the Serer the combination of acacia trees and the presence of cattle help maintain soil fertility. The trees are leafless in the rainy season, and are left on the farms, they have abundant leaves in the dry season, and so the cattle find fodder there (leaves and pods), and desposit their manure in the area. Seeds are thus spread around, from which new trees may grow. The tree itself increases the nitrogen in the soil.

The Jola make abundant use of bush products. They use shellfish from the creeks. They collect wild fruits of various kinds, leaves and roots for medicinal purposes, twigs to be used as chewing sticks (to clean teeth), leaves to be used as food (kucha, baobab leaves etc.). The leaves of fafa-jambo are collected and sold to traders in Banjul who use them to pack kola nuts. (For research in the Kombo area see Clare Madge: "Collected food and domestic knowledge in The Gambia, West Africa, Geographical Journal, 160(3), 1994, 230-294.)

The rhun palm leaf provides material for making winnowing baskets, well buckets, children's hats and bracelets, mats, beehives, fans, handbags, etc.

** Mandinka terms have been used rather than Jola.
A complete leaf can be used as an umbrella, if one is caught in a storm. Leaves are often used for thatching, along with grass. The midrib is used for fencing, making a protective cage for a small tree, for the construction of platforms and seats.

The root of **bolongkojibo** is used in the dyeing process.
POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The early accounts of the Jola indicate that they were a people without the political structure of the type found among the Mandinka or Wolof. There was no class or caste structure. There were no dominant warrior chiefs or ruling families (Kings). There was no formal judicial system backed by an organisation of courts. In pre-colonial times it seems to have been Bainunka ('Banyoon') who, for a time, established control over certain areas, but their power was eventually lost, largely as a result of external wars and the slave trade. Within the Jola community political and legal relations were on the level of self-help, and the feud. Morality was enforced by supernatural sanctions. Relations with outside groups were generally in terms of raiding and warfare. Yet marriage and kinship ties provided linkages over wide areas, and though each small community valued its independence, the informal structure provided long resistance to invading forces such as those of Pode Kaba Dumbuya, and, at present, to the Dakar government in the Casamance.
The Establishment of the Protectorate

In 1887 the French/their flags in a number of towns on the north bank, some of which were on the actual banks of the Gambia...Various chiefs in French territory were also authorised to collect "customs" and tribute in Baddibu. (J.M.Gray: A History of The Gambia, p. 463.)

Gray writes: "In the circumstances Sir Samuel Rowe decided to take steps to prevent similar events occurring on the opposite bank of the river. In September 1887 he proceeded to Foni. He found that the Jolas were thoroughly weary of the constant depredations of Podi Kabba and were only too anxious to place their country under British protection. On 15 September he met at Kansala the "kings" of sixteen Jola towns, who begged him to accept the sovereignty of their country and to place it under British protection. They entered into a treaty whereby they engaged not to cede their country to any other power except Great Britain or to enter into any treaty or arrangement with any other country except through and with the consent of the British Government. Before he left Kansala, Sir Samuel Rowe was urgently requested to hoist the British flag. Two days later he entered into a like treaty with the chief and almami of Bintang. On 19 September he met a number of chiefs of Central Kiang at Kwinella. They also made a similar treaty, and begged him to hoist the British flag in their principal towns ..... " (pp. 463-464).
In 1891 when the Anglo-French boundary was being delineated, British gunboats had to patrol the Bintang Creek to ensure protection from attacks by Fode Kaba Duimbuva. It was thought that Fode Kaba was about to attack them near Kankuran, and an armed force was made ready to resist him. However, nothing happened until the gunboats had left and returned to Banjul, and the boundary delimitation was completed. Fode Kaba began again to attack the Jolas, and returned to Sangaior. The British administration stated that he had no authority in the British sphere of influence, and asked him to return to the French side of the boundary. He refused to go, and in January 1892 his stronghold at Marigo (Marike) was attacked by forces brought from Sierra Leone and the naval brigade already present in the colony. Fode Kaba suffered heavy losses, but managed to escape into French territory. Subsequently fighting took place at Toniataba in Western Jaara, where support for Fode Kaba was strong, and it was not until May that the situation was brought under control, Fode Kaba having been driven back to Madina.
Mr. Sitwell was appointed the first Commissioner in 1893, and from that date Fonyi was administered under the Protectorate system. The boundary was described in July 1895 (Gambia Government Gazette, 31 July 1895, p. 99). Fonyi was divided into two 'Fogni West' and 'Fogni East', but each of these was divided into subdivisions.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fogni (West) No.1</th>
<th>(headman)</th>
<th>(place)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 2</td>
<td>Lammin Sanniang</td>
<td>Brefet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 3</td>
<td>Massire Sise</td>
<td>Vintang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fogni (East) No.1</td>
<td>Symaj Njaai</td>
<td>Kanenai (= Karenai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 2</td>
<td>Tamba Bahaba</td>
<td>Kansala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yannki Baji</td>
<td>Kannjurammmba (i.e. Bondali District)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interior was inhabited purely by Jolas, with the exception of the eastern corner where there were a few Bainunka villages. Otherwise non Jolas - the Mandinka, Wolof etc. were concentrated in the various wharf towns along the main river or the Bintang Creek, namely Brefet, Bintang, Sibanor, Karenai, Kansala, Bondali, Brumen....

A Travelling Commissioner's report for 1900-1901 states "...... for the collection of the tax next year, I am arranging Fogni into five small districts each to pay its tax to me through the head man of the wharf towns...I am...stationing a policeman in each of the five wharf towns -Bonndali, Kannsala, Karrenai, Vinntang, and Brefet. It will be this man's duty to go round the district allotted to him with the headman, and register the stockades and number of houses in each (and) in this way a reliable register can be easily obtained."
Early administration

G. H. Sangster (1907) writes:

"Fogni is, and always has been, a very difficult country to handle owing to the fact that the people have never had any paramount chief over them; even headmen of towns, or groups of stockades, are rarely to be found. The owner or "big man" of each stockade* is his own king and recognises no one as being in authority over him; the people living in his stockade obey him only as their superior. Thus it will be seen why it is such a troublesome place to administer, there being some 700 stockades in the country. Occasionally, so-called headmen of groups of stockades are to be found but they have absolutely no power. Now and again, however, one came across a man to whose authority the people will submit, but they are few and far between......"

A Mandinka at Bintang commented in 1891 that "the Jolas were a savage and ignorant people, having no chief or cohesion among themselves; that there was little communication between the different groups of villages; that a boy capable of carrying a gun had as much authority in a village as an old man; and that they were most fickle and suspicious, changing suddenly, apparently without reason, at the bidding of anyone who talked loudest."

* "These compounds are, as a rule, surrounded by fences or "stockades" of stout branches of trees about seven feet high..."
At first the Jola paid their tax in millet. Gradually they were encouraged to increase the cultivation of the cash crop - groundnuts, so as to pay tax in cash.

(Travelling Commissioner's Report 1898-99): "I have this year... sent my interpreter to visit every stockade in Fogni West, and directed the owner of each to plant a small patch of groundnuts for the purpose of paying tax. I have talked the question over with many Jolahs, and it has met with their approval, as the system of collecting tax in corn was taking their food away from them...."

By about 1901 the idea of paying a tax had become generally accepted though "No.1 Fogni the Western end nearest to Bathurst, has never been conquered by us, and so they often use that as an excuse for not paying tax. However this year.... all paid something towards their tax; few towns paying in full, but most paying half. The Eastern end also only pay 2/- for each "stockade" and some of these stockades contain over 15 houses..... From what I can see a small sum was charged at first with the intention of increasing it to the proper amount when the place was more civilized and under control."
The situation in 1912 is described as follows: "Agriculture was practically confined to the production of food (i.e. little groundnut production for cash DPG); there were few native traders and these seemed to make a practice of swindling the Jolas who were ignorant of and refused to have anything to do with any other coin but the five franc piece.

Changes had to be effected very gradually, reliable men had to be found as chiefs and for the courts, some control had to be placed on the traffic in guns (every man possessed either a cap or a flint-lock gun), and the people had to learn to gain a little more confidence and not vanish at the approach of a white man," By 1923 "Progress has been made in many directions, more trading stations have been opened and trade has increased, bridges and causeways have been made over some of the worst swamps, bush has been cleared for groundnut farms, and strangers can pass through the country with live stock and goods without fear of being molested and robbed. The younger Jolas are also taking some interest in their appearance and instead of being contented to wear old rags, now spend money at the shops on cloth and clothes. There are occasional outbreaks of lawlessness on a small scale but these are more often than not caused by Jolas from across the frontier who come over to indulge in cattle lifting or join in some funeral ceremony at which they often contrive to create a disturbance."

By the late 1920s Islam was gaining ground among the younger people, and Mandinka influence was becoming stronger.
TYPES OF SETTLEMENT

In Jola country one can distinguish three main types of settlement. The traditional type of Jola "village" consisted of a series of hamlets, generally from four to eight in number, and each having from a dozen to fifty people, scattered over a distance of several miles, but considering themselves a unit bound by ties of patrilineal kinship or tradition of common settlement. The total population of this type of settlement rarely exceeds 250 people. Examples are Kabokor, Bulelayi, and Kanuma in Ponyi Bintang District.

Secondly there are small hamlets unconnected with their neighbours by ties of descent or common origin. Here the population ranges from a dozen to fifty or sixty people. Examples are Kanau and Katakor in Ponyi Bintang District.

Thirdly there are compact villages which follow the Mandinka pattern of closely built compounds. These are often of recent origin or else deserted villages which have been revived. They are generally situated on the main road, and often house people of ethnic groups other than Jola. Examples are Besse (pop. c.300), Ndemban (pop. c.400*) in Ponyi Brefet, Kasany in Ponyi Bintang, etc. In recent years since a new main road has been made through Ponyi, there is a pattern of 'ribbon development', compounds being made along both sides of the main road. Somita has been transformed from a traditional pattern of scattered compounds to one stretching along the main road.

* 1956 figures.
buntungo (storage platform)

store?
place for goats
place for goats
storeroom
pawpaw tree
wood stack
new hut under construction
washing place
back yard

pigsty
large tree
stacks of grass for thatching
stack of firewood
to well (about 20 yards)

--- Reed matting
----- Palm posts
------ Wooden posts

--- Reed wall
----- Mud wall

|-- Verandah
-- Bed

K A N A U
FONYI  BINTANG  KARANAI  DISTRICT
NOMENCLATURE

At the present time the major people in Fonvi are called Jola in English, (Dyola), Diola in French. This is to be distinguished from Jula (Diula) in French texts, who are a sub-group of the Mandinka.

The term Jola is used by both the Mandinka and Wolof. In speaking Jola, the people call themselves Kuiamat.

In early writings they were termed Peluns, Plups. For example, in Fernandes (1506-10) - Palupes, Paluoos; De la Courbe (1685) Peloupes, Francis Moore (1730-35) F emotionally P moons; Mungo Park (1795) Peloons; Golberry (1785-7) Pelouns. Francis Moore described Fonvi as inhabited by Foons, and Banyoons (whom he calls a sort of Foons). The Banyoon were the Baimunka (a Mandinka term), Bannon (old French), or Banhun (Portuguese). Currently they are often called Baynunk.

The Baynunk are to be found at present only in the south-east corner of Fonvi Jarrol, but formerly were much more widespread, controlling a number of long distance trade routes. Warfare and slave raiding led to many being sold as slaves, the end result being that they seemed to have been absorbed into the Mandinka and Jola populations.

About the early 1850s the term Jola began to be used in writings in place of Peluns. Gambian Annual Report 1856, - Iolas, Huntley (1850) Jolur, Fox (1851) Jollars, Macquard (1856) Yolas, Gambian Annual Report (1861) Jowlah, Mitchinson (1881) Diolas. This term would seem to have come from the Mandinka term jo-la, mayer, perhaps from the fact that the Peluns were reputed never to forget an injury, and continued to seek revenge.

In time the term was accepted by the people of Fonvi themselves.
According to data from the 1947 Assessment, the composition is as follows:

(Based on figures for adults)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Jarrol</th>
<th>Bondali</th>
<th>Kansala</th>
<th>Bintang-Karenai</th>
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A high proportion of the small minority groups - Wolof, Serer, Manjago, Bambara, Aku, Fula, Sarahuli, Mauritanian are to be found in the major trade centers of Sibanor, Buyam, Bondali Tenda, and Sintet.

The only European in the area was a Catholic missionary at Buyam.

Bainunka villages are Kamamudu, Kamanka, Kansambu etc. in the south-eastern corner of Gambian Ponyi, though in former days the Bainunka were clearly spread over a wider area.

Buyam = Bwiam
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fonyi Brefet</th>
<th>Fonyi-Bintang Karenai</th>
<th>Fonyi Kansala</th>
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Source: CENSUS
# 1948 Map | 1980 Map | Notes
--- | --- | ---
- x | Arankolikunda | shown on 1980 map where 1946 map gives Kambalayba. On new main road.
- x | Brumen (Brumang) | 1950 AA
- x | Busongai | South of Sintet
- x | Chabai | South of Arankolikunda
- x | Duonki = Geonkili = Jiwonker (1936) = Jiwonkeh (1902)
- x | Jarrol Wharf | 1930 AA
- x | Joren Bonda | On old main road
- x | Joren Bunda Kunda | 
- x | Joren Sane-kunda | North of old main road
- x | Kalaji (Kanlaji) | On old main road 1950 AA
- x | Kambomb | On 1948 map
- x | Kamamadu | SE area
- x | Kamanka (Karmanka) | On old main road
- , | Kambalayba (Kambaliba (Kambaleba | 1948 AA 1950 AA
- x | Kamemero | near Sintet
- x | Kamesing | South
- x | Kampasa | South east area
- x | Kanjeramba (Kannjurammba (Kangiramba | 1902 1931
- | Kansambu | 1931 map. south east corner
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>map</td>
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Nemakunku (1950 AA)  
Nemakunda (1930 AA)  
Sane-kunda - see Joren  
Santang-koto 1950 AA; 1973 Ce  
Sanyang-kunda 1931 map. South of Jarrol near frontier  
Sintet  
Tabayel (Tabayeh) 1946 AA, 1950 AA  
Tamanto 1930 AA = Temanto?  
Tambakunda 1950 AA  
Wasadu/ng (Wassadong Wassadu) 1931 map  
1946 AA
### Fonyi Jarrol - Population

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Village</th>
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<th>1950 Census Data</th>
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<td>Wasadung</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>515</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

villages under 100

| Total                  | 3028                 | 2650             | 4238             |
Racial Distribution

No detailed study was made of the villages, but the district, based on data from the 1947 tax assessment, contains a greater degree of mixture than the other Ponyi districts. The east-west road crosses the Bintang Bolong at Brumen, the main road leading up to Kwinella and Tendabaa in Kiyang, a traditional trade center on the river Gambia. There are paths southward from Jarrol and Sintet to Kampassa and Kamamudu, and onwards to the Casamance, and from Sintet to a Senegalese customs post at Sankanding.

The southern section has traditional Bainunka villages such as Kamanka, Kamamudu, Kansambu, etc. There are a number of Fula villages in the eastern par Santangkoto, Tabavel, Duonki (Jiwonki), and a substantial number of Fulbe in Sintet. Mandinka are to be found in villages near the main road, and trade centers - Sintet, Kalaji, Jarrol, Jorem. Jola form the highest proportion in Sintet, Kampasa, Wassa dong, Kambaliba, Kalaji, Jarrol, and Arankonikunda.

An estimate of the groups from the 1947 tax assessment is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Jola</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandinka</td>
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<td>Serer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bambara</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Serahuli</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<td>Mauretanian</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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100.1
SPECIFIC PLACES

Brunen Ferry
Kampasa
Sintet

"I had first seen Brumen Ferry in the smoke-like rising mists of dawn and it struck me then as the most stygian spot I would see on this earth. Now in the heat of early afternoon, it gave the same impression. The mangroves were shimmering in the baking heat, the water looked oily blue-green with its reflections of sky and mangrove, the stagnant mud pooped with crab holes, and amphibious mud fish clambered up the black mud banks."

A bridge was built to replace the ferry in 1962. (Brumen Bridge)

"Brumen bridge carries the Bathurst-Mansa Konko trunk road across the Bintang River."
KAMPASA

Article by Jaro Sowe: The Crescent (School Magazine) - July 1984.

"My village is called Kambasa. It is found in the eastern part of Western Division, and is about two hundred years old. The first person to settle there was called Njongailly Sambou, a Bainunko by tribe and a hunter. He cleared a small area of land and built a house, where he lived with his wife Kumbanding Kombo.

These two people lived there alone for many years until one day Njongailly's [wife] fell ill and died. He was about to go and settle in another place, when a man arrived with his wife and a small boy. They were on their way to another village, but Njongailly suggested that they should stay with him and settle there.

In those days the bush was very thick, and the new arrival told Njongailly:

"I am a palm-wine tapper, but the bush is so thick that I can't get to the palm trees." Njongailly replied: "I'll help you to clear the bush and make a footpath, so that you can easily do your job." So the man agreed, and he and his family settled there. When people living in the nearby villages heard about him, they started coming to buy palm wine from him, and this led to some of them migrating from their village to Njongailly's settlement. The settlement became very popular and acquired the name Kampasa, a Bainunko word meaning "a place of good fortune."

During those years there were no other tribes living there apart from Bainunkos, who are now very small in number. Later came the Jolas, who were also very much interested in palm-wine tapping. In the morning all the men would go to the swamp where a large area had been cleared under a mighty tree. They sat down and waited for the tappers to bring the fresh palm-wine. After each man had bought as much as he could afford, the rest of the day was spent drinking and chatting until sunset.
Kampasa became larger as different tribes came to settle there. When Niongaily died the village moved half a kilometre northwards. When it became too large some people left to settle in nearby villages, and even now these villages still pay homage to the head of Kampasa, Bakary Sambou, in recognition of Kampasa as their origin. The descendants of Niongaily are still in the village, but they now occupy one compound, Sambu Kunda.
A brief history of Sintet was provided by Ensa Tamba, and published in

Freudenberger, Mark Schoonmaker
Institutions and Natural Resource Management in The Gambia: A Case
study of Foni Jarrol District.

"Amalanga Badjie was the first of the Jola settlers to arrive in Sintet, which
was then used as a prime palm wine tapping area by the Bainunka living in the
area. Amalanga cleared land given to him by the Bainunkas and established his
home in the section of Sintet known as Bako...Descendants of Amalanga are still
present in Bako and remain today the most powerful family in this subsection
of Sintet....

A year or so after the Badjie settlement in Bako, another Jola settler
arrived across the stream and densely forested palm grove which is currently
used for rice cultivation, and settled in the area of what is now Busongai.
Yankuba Tamba came from Kanbenseng, near Chaboi, after a few Bainunka friends
told him of the land available there....He eventually succeeded in bringing
his brother, Akambi Tamba.

A short time after the Tambas had settled in the Busongai area, they were
greeted by Amalanga Badjie, who discovered the settlement while on a hunting
expedition. The two families were only 1 or 2 kilometers apart, yet neither
knew of the other's settlement....Amalanga was concerned that the Tambas
would eventually take control of the area, which was valued for its palm wine.
Badjie continued on to the village of Jwenkell to alert the Colley family of
the potential threat that the Tambas posed to palm wine tapping and to rally
their support for the expulsion of the Tambas from the village.

Representatives of the Colley family then traveled to Busongai to confirm
Amalanga Badjie's account of the new settlement. The Colleys met with the
Yankuba and Akambi Tamba and asked who had given them permission to settle
there. The Colleys claimed that the palm tapping area was theirs and ordered
the Tambas to leave....The Tambas were forced to remove their belongings and
the Colleys set fire to their settlement.

(Word of this reached the British Commissioner, who summoned troops to
Bremen to punish the Colleys. They reached Jwenkell and captured the Colleys
whom they took to Kansala, who were executed.)

Yankuba Tamba returned to Busongai and once again persuaded Akambi Tamba to
join him. Akambi later moved to Kabumb, as Mandinka settlers from Kiang
began to migrate to the area.

The first alkofo of Sintet was Jansa Badjie of Bako, who was removed for
his abuse of palm wine. He was succeeded by a Mandinka Dahaba from Kabumb,
but only for a brief period before Musa Badjie gained the post. After his
death Chief Kandion Sanyang appointed Malang Tamba from the Casamance to the
post. Malang Tamba served for forty years, and was succeeded by his son, Ebrima
Tamba, present alkofo of Sintet.
A description of the tabo tree in the centre of Sintet, the traditional residence of a spirit called Nyamo, where rites are performed at times of crisis - fire, famine, disease, etc. and of another shrine Bantangkato, a dark grove overshadowed by two silk cotton trees is given in an article by Karamo N.M. Sonko "Everything remains a mystery," in Sunu Kibaro (Jubilee Edition 1929-1979), Banjul, 1979

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Recent articles & reports: (Fonvi Jarol)

"Abobo's bees, his duty to mankind,"
The Gambia News Bulletin, #95, 14 August 1980, p.2

(Deals with crocodile pool at Busonghai, and bees at Kabombu, affected by lack of rain.)

Freudenberger, Mark Schoonmaker (Ed.)
### PONYI BONDAKI

#### Village List

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1948 Map</th>
<th>1980 Map</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
1948  1980
Map     Map

Kamessen  near frontier with Casamance.
          (Kamessan, Kamesing)

x  Kanjibat

x  Kangwali/ Kawai
          (Kanwali, Kawali)

Kanilai  nr. western boundary with Kansala
          (Kalilinai ?)
south of Bondali Jola.

x  Kanjeramba
          (Kanjirambi)  =  Kantate ?

Kanjinbat
Kaniibat

x  Kankuran
Kangkurang

Kanlaf
Kantati

x  x  Kayabor  North of main road.
      (Kiabor (1930), Kayabor (1936) Kaiabawr (1944)

x  Marige  South of main road, eastern area.

x  x  Mayor  (Mayork (1973), Maaawr (1944), Myorr (1930). Mayok
          Nyafuyi  South of Bondali Jola).
          (Nyaful, Niafoi (1902), Nefwi (1930, 1944)

Nyamtempo  (1931 - on old main road, near
          western boundary with Kansala.

x  Sanyangkunda  Near frontier. eastern side.

x  Wesedung  south of main road.
The Commissioner, South Bank Province, wrote the following in 1944.

"The District consists of the following villages:-

1. Bondali Jola
2. Bondali Tenda (Trade centre, on Bondali Jola land)
3. Kaibawr
4. Kalim (on Kaibawr land)
5. Jifoín
6. Nefwi
7. Kalang
8. Dasiame (on Kalang land)
9. Bajiran (on Kalang land)
10. Maiaawr
11. Ka-wali
12. Kanjibat (on Ka-wali land)
13. Kangkurang
14. Kafengken
15. Alakunda
16. Jandin
17. Bulengat
18. Bisari
19. Kantate (Kanjirambi)
20. Sanyangkunda

A group of related villages known as Jibob.

So far as is at present known, like other Jola areas, there was never any central authority controlling the individual villages, in contrast to the Mandinka "Kings".... But some of the villages were related and formed themselves into groups, though it is not known what common organisation, if any, these groups had, nor how much survives to this day. Two such groups are found in the Ponyi Bondali District, Jibob, and Manike. In addition to the villages shown as such in the list above, the Jibob group also includes the villages of Nianitempo and Kanjendi, which are now deserted; and the Manike group also includes the village of Jiwongker in the Ponyi Jarrol District, and the village of Kemesing, which is now deserted. Apart from these two groups, the other villages do not seem to have any cohesion except that provided by an artificial and government imposed District organisation with arbitrary boundaries."
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<th>Village</th>
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Other villages

Less than 100 people: 418

Total: 2713 | 2556 | 3500
Ethnic Distribution.

No detailed study was made of the villages of this area.

It is essentially a Jola district, a high proportion of the non-Jolas being found in Bondali Tenda (Mandinka, 61%, Wolof 18%, Fulbe 14%, Bambara 6%, Aku 1%).

Fulbe are to be found at Bisari, with some in the Jola villages of Bulengat, and Sanyangkunda, all in the eastern side of the district.
Touray, Kawsu S.
"Bondali Chief Speaks Out On Local Issues,"
SPECIFIC PLACES

Marige
MARIGE

This stockaded village was once occupied by Fode Kaba. In 1892 British forces attacked it, and it was destroyed, Fode Kaba seeking refuge in French territory.
VILLAGE NAMES - PONVI KANSALA

Maps 1948 1980

Angalabata named this way in 1920s & 1930s.

See Kangalabata

Baipal an old settlement.

Bajiran near Bintam Bolong on eastern side.

Bajonkoto on main road west of Bwiam.

Ballen near frontier (1948 map).

Bassen Kansana near frontier with Casamance.

Bujeling in the southeast near the frontier.
(Bajelling (1931), Bujiling (1950), Bujellin (1930)

Bunjinga listed in the 1930s.
listed as Bunciga on 1948 map. South of Bwiam.

Buluntu

Bunubor South of Kamfenda (1948 map).
(1902 - Banubaw)

Bunyai south of main road.
(Buniai map.

Burok on 1948/ North of main road. eastern side.
Corrected on 1956 map to Sangajor Jiramba.

Buyam.
Standard spelling Bwiam

Bwiam Jola near southern boundary.

Dandon(i) near Bintam Bolong. eastern side.

Dasilami north-east of Bwiam.

Dobong (1936 Dawbong) Shown on 1948 map. near Bintam Bolong.
Corrected to Tintiba on 1956 map.

Dubong

Dumbutu/Dumbuto near southern boundary. an old settlement.

Funtang appears on 1931 map. north of main road.

Giramba

Giniaha near Bwiam. SW of town.

Jinier?
Jalenva (1936 Jalenga)  
appears on 1931 map. south of main road.

Janaki  
north of the main road.

Jatiko  

Jibangari (Gibagnari, Jibanari, Gebangar (1973). Kambong  
1980 map shows it on the main road south of

Jikis (Gikis Gikis Dandoni  
on 1948 map. Near southern boundary.  
1973 Census

Jilimfarı  
western side of the district, near southern frontier.

Jomakunda (Jumukunda)  
north of main road. eastern side.  
1956 map places it where 1948 map has Tintiba.

Jonger  
near Bintam Bolong. north-east side.

Kaleng (Kaling (1948), Kanling (1950)  
south of Kamfenda.

Kamfenda (Bajikunda)  

Kamfenda Mangakunda  
listed in 1973 census.

A Kangfenda on the 1948 map is corrected to Dumbutto on the 1956 map.

Kambagali  
south of Bwiam.

Kambok  
shown on 1931 map, south-west of Kansala.

Kambong  
near main road west of Bwiam.

Kambure  
shown on 1931 map, north of the main road.

Kamburga  
listed in the 1930s.

Kampart (= Kampanta ?) (Kampante ?)  
near Bwiam.

Kangalabata on frontier. SW of Rumbor  
appears earlier as Angalabata.

Kanilai (Kaninlai)  

Kankuntu  
north of Bwiam.

Kansala  

near Bintam Bolong, west of Kankuntu.
Maps
1948-1980

Kansana
appears on 1931 map, south of Bwiam.

Kantali
Kantelli
on 1931 map, near main road, eastern side.

Kantimba
near southern boundary, SE corner.

Karawan
appears on 1927 list.

Kapa
( Kappa, Koppa )
(On 1931 map)
an old settlement.

Karan
on map as Kayrang, south of Kamfenda.

Karunor
near southern boundary.

Karol
( Karrol )

near southern boundary, eastern side.

Kujenjen
(Kunjengjeng, Kanjenjen)

Kurinulain
just south of Bwiam.

Luluchor
near southern boundary. (On 1905 map)

Mandina

Manunyfa
on 1931 map, north of main road, eastern side.

Meris
north of Sangajor (1948 map).

Monong
south south west of Kamfenda.
( Manong, Monom, Mornom )

Nyafui
south east of Sangajor.

Salikeni
on 1931 map, east of Bunday.

Sangajor(i)
(on main road.
(Sanajor Jiramba)
1973 census) near creek

Santamba
north of main road towards Bintam Bolong.

Saringa
south west of Bwiam.

Simangara
on 1931 map.
(Semangara (1948) (Simongara))

west of Bwiam.

Sindifula
near Bintam Bolong. The place shown on
( Shindifula on 1948 map ) the 1948 map has been corrected to Jumakunda.

Tintiba
Tintiba was then placed where Dubong is shown.

Wurumbang/Wurumbang
an old settlement, on creek SW of Kambong.
Fonyi Kansala District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1948 map</th>
<th>corrected to</th>
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* Figures for immigrant settlers (total 214, about half of whom were in Bwiam) have been added to the general population figures.
Ethnic Distribution

No detailed study was made of the villages of this area, though Bwiam, Kankuntu, and Kansala were visited from time to time.

Bwiam is a trading town with a mixed population, as well as being the residence of the district chief. A Catholic Mission with a large school is also located there. Based on data from 1947 the composition of the town was as follows - Jola 39%, Wolof 20%, Mandinka 13%, Serahuli 13%, Fulbe 8%, Serer 3%, Bambara 3%, Aku 1%, Mauretanians 0.5%.

Predominantly Mandinka villages were close to the Bintang Bolong - namely Tintiba and Darselami, and other concentrations of Mandinka are to be found in Jola villages near the creek, such as Dobong, Kankuntu. Occasionally a compound of Mandinka - often religious teachers - may be found in Jola villages in the south of the district.

A few Fulbe were also to be found in Jola villages, but there were no Fula villages.
SPECIFIC PLACES
Along the Bintang Creek is a place described in many texts. In Francis Moore (1730), Gueregue Sieur de la Courbe (1685), etc. which was formerly an important trading station. Also Guiresque (1685).

Sir John Gray considered that the name was derived from the Portuguese word for church (igregia). At present there is a tract of farmland between the present Roman Catholic Mission compound and the Bintang Creek still called "Gereje". The land is slightly elevated above the surrounding swampland.

Francisco de Lemos Coelho in his Description of the Coast of Guinea (1684), translated by P.E.H. Hair, refers to Aldea dos Herejes (Town of Heretics) which would seem to be the same place. The region had both Banyuns (Bagnons) and Peloups (Jola), and many foreigners traded there. The English had a trading station in De la Courbe's time, and he also went to see a Spaniard who had married the local king's daughter. This Spaniard told him that the Portuguese living there were for the most part of Jewish origin, and when he proposed bringing a priest to administer the sacraments, they were completely indifferent.

Stephan Buhnen in a recent article (History in Africa, 19, 1992, p.63, derives the name from the Bainunka word for crocodile. ji (locative prefix) + re:gire (crocodile). The old 17th century vocabulary gives crocodile - quareique.

With so many nationalities (African and European) using the name it is easy to see how confusion remains. I still feel there is merit in Gray's interpretation.

* Prof. William R. Stanley in his Tourist Map of The Gambia (1979?) makes an error labelling Bintang as 'Gereje'. 
If you wish to go further up Rio de Bintam, which is a branch of Rio de Gambia, six leagues from this port of Bintam is another kingdom of Banhus called the kingdom of Sangedequ, and in sight of the port is a village called the Village of the Heretics (Aldea dos Herejes). This used to be the village with most trade on Rio de Gambia; and even today the English have a commercial establishment there. Many hides, much wax and a number of blacks can be obtained, and some locally-born whites live there. The heathen are savages, and the country is usually split between the warring factions, each wanting to have its own king; in consequence the roads across the country are not very safe. The kingdom contains, apart from the Banhus who would like to turn the land into two kingdoms, many Falupos who are (their) subjects. These Falupos are very wicked here, being highwaymen on the roads and great thieves, so that no-one is safe from them along the whole route. In spite of this people travel over-land, and one can go from this village of the Heretics by land to Cacheo. I went this way three time because it is short. I made these journeys with correntes de negros (files of blacks ?) and plenty of merchandise, and nothing ever happened to me, except that one night, coming from Cacheo, these Falupos tried to rob me in the house in which I was lodging in the village of Boaguer, and actually stole from me 25 fine cloths (panos altos)......

After leaving the port of the (village of the) Heretics to go to Cacheo overland, you will (first) sleep in a pretty village called Jamai, having made a journey of about six leagues. The village is a very prosperous one, and it possesses excellent hens. There is much trade throughout this
country, and whites used to live in this village, which is stockaded around, because of wars.

(The next evening one reaches Boaguer - situated at the edge of a river, with a good landing place. Take a canoe which goes to Bujeto (Bajeto, Bajato). Stop at O Porto dos Lagartos (Port of the Crocodiles), then with the tide to the main channel of the Casamance River. From Bujeto travel by land to Ouinquin (a little more than a league). Resume journey by water heading for Cacheo.)

Jamai - There is a Diamaye Inor, SE of Bwiam (17 miles away), which would seem to match Jamai.
"Guereque, village éloignée de deux marées du lieu ou nous estions mouilles (Albreda)

. . . le roy du pays...qui demeure a un quart de lieue du village.

Les Anglois entretiennent ordinairement une case dans ce pays ou l'on fait un grand commerce de cire, de cuirs, d'ivoire, de captifs et d'un peu d'or; mais particulièrement de cire. Il y a des Portuquis qui envoyent dans les villages des negres qui sont a leurs gages, pour acheter ce qu'ils en peuvent trouver, et lorsqu'ils en ont beaucoup, ils la fondent et la mettent en pain et la vont vendre aux Anglois ou aux Françoys, quand il y en a; mais ces derniers n'y avoient point eu de case jusqu'alors et ils y venoient seulement negocier dans des barques...

...l'alquier nous estant venu prendre, nous mena voir le roy de Guereque; nous le trouvusmes a l'entrée de sa case; c'estoit un petit homme trapu, il avoit un bonet a la portugaise et un habit de negre, et tenoit une épée a l'espagnole a la main, sur laquelle il s'appuyoit...

(Made arrangements for travelling south...)

J'allay voir un Espagnol qui avoit épouse la fille du roy; il se nommoit Signor Jean Philippe... (his wife had become a Christian).

Bagnons et les Peloupes. Les Bagnons sont civilisés, mais les Peloupes sont la pluspart sauvages, et par ce qu'ils ne le reconnoisssent pour roy qu'avec contrainte, il leur fait souvent la guerre et en tire les esclaves qu'il vend; il est toujours bien numy d'armes et de poudre, et a plusieurs gens qui scavent fort bien tirer.

(Defeated English who sent an armed vessel against him.)
Cet Espagnol me contoit que tous les Portugais qui demeuroient dans le pays estoient la pluspart juifs, et que, leur ayant proposé d'entretenir un padre ou prestre, pour leur administrer les sacremens, ils n'en avoient tenus aucun compte; il me temoigna que, si quelque religieux vouloit s'établir là, qu'il ne manqueroit de rien et que peut être il y feroit beaucoup de conversions...

le pays me parut parfaitement beau, et, comme il avoit deja commencé à pleuvoir, toute la terre sembloit des prairies; je vis des lougans de ris qui sont tout le long du bord de la riviere, ils sont traverses de petites chaussées, d'espace en espace pour empescher que l'eau ne s'ecoule; d'abord qu'il a pluit, on seme le ris qui croit dans l'eau. Il y a dans ce pays des arbres d'une prodigieuse grandeur, qu'on appelle polons....

(As he went south)...nous passasmes d'abord par un pays boisé ou les chemins n'estoient que des sentiers...

The vocabularies made for the Ancienne Compagnie Royale du Sénégal published in the Mémoires de la Société Ethnologique in 1845, were compiled in the late 1670s and possibly 1680s. Those for Bagno and Floupe may well have been compiled in the Gereje region. The Mandinka vocabulary corresponds closely to Gambian Mandinka, and may have been compiled at Albreda.
"...The Governor went up in the Dispatch Sloop to Geregia, a Place up Vintain River about fourteen Leagues from the Fort, where the Company have a Factory for dry Goods chiefly, under the Direction of Mr. William Roberts. The Factory-House being very bad, and ready to fall, and the King of the Country not willing that a new one should be built nearer the River-Side than the old one is the Reason of the Governor's going up, in order to have it built in a Place more commodious for the Company's landing Goods, and on occasion to withdraw them. At the same time went up the Adventure Sloop to the same place, with our Ensign, a Corporal, Drummer, and sixteen or twenty soldiers.

Geregia is a small Town lying on the South-Side of Vintain River, and about eleven Leagues from the Mouth of it, which enters the Gambia about three Leagues above James Fort. It is inhabited by Portuguese and Banyoons the former are, as in other Parts of the Country, very civil, but the latter are scarcely civilized. The Factor here buys a great deal of Bees-Wax. Towards the Water-Side the Land is pretty well clear'd, and affords excellent Shooting.

On the 29th, the Dispatch and Adventure came down from Geregia with the Governor and Soldiers, having made the King of Geregia condescend to let the Factory-House be built in whatever Place the Governor pleases.... "

p. 72. (1731) "The 4th of June, the Sea-Nymph Sloop came down from Geregia, with Mr William Roberts, the Company's Factor there, and a good quantity of Cotton and Bees-Wax..."
Originally there were two districts - Ponyi Bintang and Ponyi Karenai, Kekoto Daramé living at Kasany in charge of Ponyi Bintang, and Bakari Jasi being in charge of the Karenai district. Kekoto Daramé was succeeded by Bakari Koli, who came from Bintang to Kasany. The two districts were amalgamated under the next sefoo, Bakari Jobatae, who came from Bintang, and then lived at Sibanor. He was succeeded by Seni Bwiaji, originally from Kabokor, who took up residence at Kasany. After Seni Bwiaji, the sefoship was transferred to Sibanor, which was an important trade center, and buying station for groundnuts.

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Research in Ponyi Bintang-Karenai District

I lived at Kasany at intervals: 5 April- 19 May 1947
23 Sept- 11 Oct. 1948
25-31 Jan. 1949


The place was later visited for short stays - 24 Sept- 4 Oct. 1953
3-5 July 1954
6 Sept. 1956

During 1956 (August 18-19), and 1957 (October 24-26), an attempt was made to visit as many of the villages as was possible by motor bike, to check names and locations.

In my initial stay in 1947 I had no transport available, but nevertheless (Initiation ceremonies), (Girls' initiation), visited on foot - Kanau, Katakor, Somita /Kili, Jakoi, Kabokor /Bulanjor, Sibanor, Bullelai, and Bintang, and Batending (Funeral ceremony).

Later, when travelling up and down river, I might make a brief stop at Kasang, (1951, 1953 etc.), sometimes spending a night there.