

The British Colonial Period

Village Life from the 1890s to 1957

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Events

1957: Ghana Independence

1938: Tolé Kofi Dwuru II enstooled as Omanhene of Banda (reigned to 1977)

1926-1931: period of British “village planning”

Early 1900s: Beginning of colonial labour migration—men traveled from home to work on cocoa farms in the south or as carriers for the colonial government. Affected farming & craft production at home.

1899: British required that taxes be paid in British currency, prompting shift from use of cowries and gold dust to colonial money.

1898: Banda people reoccupied their former villages after Samori’s defeat by French & British colonial forces.

1897: (December) British established a base at Bui from which to fight Samori’s troops. Banda people were gathered here because of the threat of war.

1897: (August) British garrisoned soldiers at “Lawra” to fight Samori.

1897: British claimed the “Northern Territories” of the Gold Coast Colony following the British defeat of Asante (in 1896).

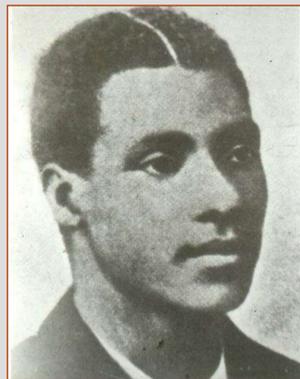
1894: “Treaty of Friendship and Freedom of Trade” signed between representatives of Banda regent Sie Yaw Dwuru and with British representative George Ekem Ferguson.

1844: British established the Gold Coast Protectorate over coastal provinces ceded by Asante in the 1831 Anglo-Asante treaty.

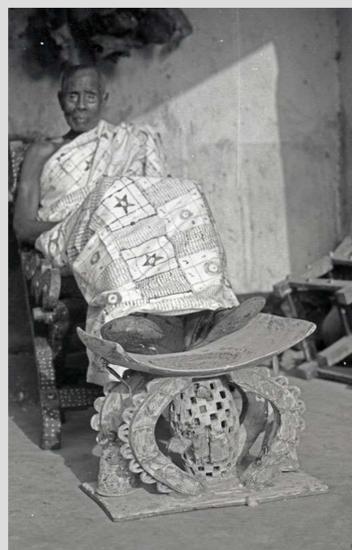


The Imam Samori (1830-1900) created a state in the Guinea highlands between 1860-1880. In the 1890s he moved his armies east under pressure from French colonial troops and occupied areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia, west and north of Banda. British troops were stationed in Banda during their campaign to push Samori and his *sofa* army from areas north of the Gold Coast Colony. Illustration Source: 1911 Explorers & Territories, *The Century Atlas of Africa*, AfricaMap Beta (<http://africamap.harvard.edu>)

Historic maps & people



George Ekem Ferguson was a Fanti man employed by the Gold Coast colonial government to travel throughout the north making treaties with Asante's former provinces in the years 1892 to 1897. He was killed in a battle with Samori's forces near Wa. Photo source: Kwame Arhin 1974. *The Papers of George Ekem Ferguson. A Fanti Official of the Government of the Gold Coast, 1890-1897*



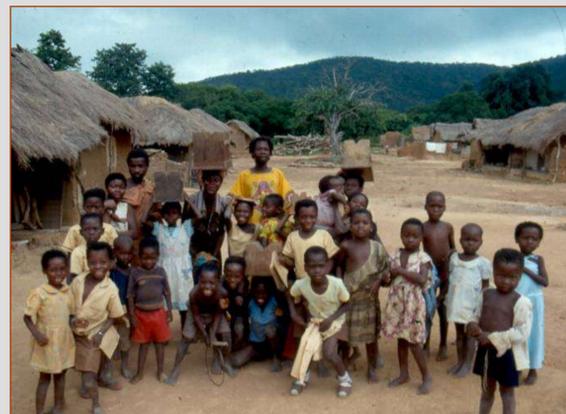
Tolé Kofi Dwuru II, Omanhene of Banda from 1936 to 1977. Photo courtesy of Professor Rene Bravmann, University of Washington



1896 British Map showing its colony and surrounding areas. Source: Wikipedia Commons (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gold_Coast_Map_1896.jpg)



British colonial officials thought that villages should be built on a grid pattern with special-purpose locations for burials (cemeteries) & garbage heaps, as in the “ideal plan” pictured above. During the 1920s Banda people built new villages next to old ones. Colonial officials reported that by 1931 all Banda villages had been “laid out.”



Main street of Makala village, 1990. British colonial officials “laid out” new villages with straight streets. The village abandoned in the 1920s (Makala Kataa) is at the end of the street (in the trees). Archaeologists from the Banda Research Project worked at Makala Kataa in 1989, 1990 and 1994.



Decaying building at Makala Kataa (“Gbaha’s Kato”), 1989

Houses at Makala Kataa



Collapsed houses at Makala Kataa formed small mounds like the one pictured here inside the dotted line. By digging a trench through the mounds, archaeologists learn about how houses were built.

Houses in this period were free-standing single room structures. Walls of some houses were made from wattle and daub—a rapid way of raising a building

Late 19th-century Makala villagers constructed houses with thick gravel floors. Here a floor was built on top of an ashy (middle) layer.



The wattle and daub walls suggest that people had built relatively temporary houses when they reoccupied their villages in the late 19th century.

Colonial Period Artifacts

People living at Makala Kataa used cowries as money, but by the 1900s had to use colonial currency to buy imported goods. Imports were not common at Makala Kataa but people did buy smoking pipes, beads and glass bottles that contained drink, medicines and ointments.



Cowrie shells imported from the Indian Ocean were used as currency across West Africa.



A 1911 colonial six-pence coin, Makala Kataa



Imported beads & a smoking pipe from Makala Kataa



Glass bottles from Makala Kataa. On right, a 1908 Vaseline jar from Chesebrough, New York.

Acknowledgements

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