



THE MONUMENTS CONNECTED WITH SECOND ANGLO MYSORE WAR AND TIPU'S FAMILY IN VELLORE DISTRICT

D. Sivagurunathan
PhD Scholar, Department of History,
Governments Arts College (Autonomous),
Kumbakonam.



ABSTRACT:

This paper attempts to analyse history of Second Anglo Mysore war in Vellore District to what extent the narrative is limited in its chronicles, especially through the establishment of monuments for Anglo Mysore war Monuments connected with Tipu Sultan's family in the Vellore District. Further, this paper strives to revisit some of these narratives to bring out the part of history. This paper is divided into three parts: the first section contextualizes the historical background and chain of events and its importance in the history, especially Vellore district; section two analyses the various monuments established and records created by the British colonial authorities about Second Anglo Mysore war and Places connected with Tipu sultan's family in Vellore and the third section deals with the counter or neglected narratives of Second Anglo Mysore war in the Vellore District and the conclusion in the end of the same section.

KEYWORDS: Anglo Mysore wars, Tippu Sultan, Vellore, Sholinghur, Monuments, Battle Honours.

INTRODUCTION :

Prior to the establishment of British rule in South India they were vehemently opposed by many rulers who ruled the South India, one among them is rulers of Mysore father son duo of Hyder Ali and Tipu sultan, both opposed the expansion of East India Company and try to conquer the territories already conquered by the East India Company which lead to Anglo Mysore Wars consist of four wars spanning over thirty two years from 1767 to 1799 which ended in fourth Anglo Mysore war at Srirangapatnam where Tipu Sultan died in the battle. The Anglo Mysore wars was first instance of large-scale opposition by native rulers of South India against the East India Company or the British rule predating the struggle for Independence by a century. The Second Anglo Mysore war was fought between 1780 to 1784 The war was ended on 11 March 1784 with the signing of the Treaty of Mangalore, at which both sides agreed to restore the lands to each other. The treaty is an important document in the history of India, because it was the last occasion when an Indian power dictated terms to the East India Company. In the Second Anglo Mysore War number of battles were fought in the Vellore District and one of the important one is Battle of Sholinghur, the battle took place in Sholinghur was a brief one, although it was a short encounter between the natives and the British, it marked an important epoch in modern Indian history as the first sign of defying the colonial rulers and efforts to bring back the native rulers. After the defeat of Tipu Sultan in Fourth Anglo Mysore War at Srirangapatnam in 1799, his family members were brought and detained in the Vellore fort in Tipu and Hyder Mahals. The family members consist of Tipu Sultan's sons and daughters, wives of Tipu Sultan

and wives of Hyder Ali. After the 1806 Vellore Sepoy Mutiny, the East India Company believed the family members of Tipu Sultan were one of the causes for the mutiny and the East India

Company transferred Tipu's sons and daughters to Calcutta. While in Vellore fort the wife of Hyder Ali Bakshi Begum died in 1806 and Padshah Begum, Tipu's wife, who died in 1834 were buried with a kilometre to the Eastern side of the Fort.

Sholinghur Monument Connected with Second Anglo Mysore war:

This Monument is located near a prominent road, opposite to Sholinghur bus stand of Walajah Taluk, Vellore District, Tamilnadu. This monument with a width of 15 feet and length of 35 feet is called as Kanja Sahib cemetery. This cemetery is being preserved as one of the monuments by the Archaeological department. This is constructed with stucco and bricks. A battle was held in 1781 against the Britishers by the warriors of Hyder Ali in which number of warriors died in the field of Sholinghur. It is believed that a big pit was dug, and the dead bodies of the soldiers were buried in the pit. To verify this incident, it is engraved at the top of the yard.

The inscription goes as follows: -

This tomb which is believed to mark the spot where the bodies of the Slain of the Mysore Army were interceded conserved by the Government of India to commemorate the Battle of Sholinghur 1781.

The Battle of Sholinghur was fought on 27 September 1781 at Sholinghur, 80 kilometres (50 miles) West of Chennai (Madras), between forces of the kingdom of Mysore led by Hyder Ali and East India Company forces led by General Eyre Coote. Haider Ali's forces were surprised by the company forces and they were expelled from the Carnatic with heavy casualties.

The British force with 11,500 soldiers under Sir Eyre Coote attacked Hyder Ali's army of 1,50,000 soldiers and 70 guns. Mysoreans admitted that it was a severe defeat in which their loss probably exceeded 5,000 men. In this war the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 19th and 20th battalions of Madras Infantry had participated. The battle honour Sholinghur was at first bestowed only on the 20th Madras Infantry (Present 6 MADRAS), but later all corps engaged in this action received it. In his dispatches, Sir Eyre Coote wrote that, "The 21st Battalion (20th Madras Infantry) of sepoys received my thanks in general orders on account of taking one of the enemy's standards. I have ordered that a jemadar be added to the establishment of that corps for the purpose of carrying it." The battalion mentioned later became the 80th Carnatic Infantry and carried this Third Honorary Colour up to the time of its disbandment in 1921. The Colour now rests in the Madras Regimental Centre Museum.

When British Army began bestowing battle honours, the first such award in India went to the Madras Army for the battle of Carnatic and Sholinghur in 1781-'82.

"Sholinghur", was awarded vide Gazette of India No 378 of 1889, which was awarded to fifteen units, seven of which are still in existence today. The battle honour is considered repugnant.

Tipu Sultan's family in Tipu and Hyder Mahals in Vellore Fort:

Hyder and Tipu Mahal at Vellore fort is of significant in the history of South India, after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in the Fourth Anglo Mysore War at Srirangapattinam in 1799, East India Company decided to lodge the family members of Tipu Sultan in the Vellore Fort, for that all old residential buildings were demolished except some houses and mahals of the Killedar and Nawab of Arcot, the buildings were expanded and modified in line with the Islamic architecture and cultural requirements of Tipu Sultan's family members. This was made of two adjoining rectangular buildings with central court yards. It was encircled by a high wall. These were called Tipu and Hyder mahal. Tipu mahal consist of 180 rooms and Hyder mahal consists of 220 rooms. The family members consist of Tipu Sultan's sons and daughters, Wives and wives of Hyder Ali. After the 1806 Vellore Sepoy Mutiny, the East India Company believed the family members of Tipu Sultan were one of the causes for the mutiny and the East India Company transferred Tipu's sons and daughters to Calcutta. While in Vellore fort the wives of Hyder Ali, Bakshi Begum, Fathma Begum and Tipu's wives, Patcha Begum Ahmedunissa Begum and Rahamatunnisa Begum were buried in the cemetery which is within a kilometre to the

Eastern side of the Vellore Fort, the land for the cemetery was allotted by the East India Company in 1805 at the request of Tipu's sons. Later the Tipu and Hyder mahals were used as Police Training college from 1896 and later as police recruiting centre and presently police training school. In 1990's it was used to house LTTE insurgents and refugees.

CONCLUSION

Although the Anglo Mysore wars shared similarities with the Anglo Maratha wars in terms of intent, modus operandi, and outcome, it had many distinctive characteristics. Unlike Anglo Maratha wars, which was led by native rulers and their lieutenants who were affected by East India Company rule, the Anglo Mysore wars were largely led by native rulers (Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan) and supported by the soldiers of European Powers like French and Portuguese. Further, multiple accounts of East India Company soldiers who were involved in Anglo Mysore wars are available, apart from various symbols to mark their contribution but many from the native soldiers were systematically destroyed during and after the Anglo Mysore wars, attesting the hegemonic intent of the East India Company rule. Yet, the available fragmentary evidences and inferences that can be drawn from other sources help us only to construct a limited or partial picture of the native narratives of the events of battles that took place in Vellore District during the Second Anglo Mysore War.

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