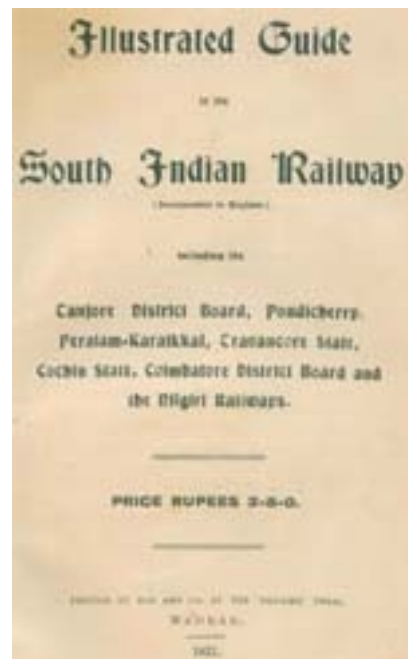


Trichinopoly in 1921

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Trichinopoly (population 123,512) is a large Municipal town situated in the taluq of the same name, in the Trichinopoly district, 251 ½ miles from Madras (Egmore), on the right bank of the river Cauvery.

The town is divided into two parts, one called the Cantonment, which contains the residences of The European and Anglo-Indian community, and the barracks of the Indian troops, and the other, the fort, a densely populated locality occupied by Indians. The Cantonment was formerly garrisoned by European and Indian regiments, but in 1878, when the fourth Afghan war broke out, the whole of the European troops were withdrawn, and the garrison is now composed of one Indian regiment.

The Fort was rectangular in trace, measuring about a mile by half-a-mile, and was originally surrounded by ramparts and a ditch filled in. The streets in this part of the town are narrow, but have been, on the whole, regularly laid out. Inside the fort is the Trichinopoly Rock, which rises abruptly out of the plain to a height of 273 feet above the level of the street at its foot.

History of Trichinopoly

Woriur, now a suburb of Trichinopoly, was an early capital of the old Chola dynasty, whose authority in the city seems to have been terminated by the Muhammadan incursion under Malik Kafur in A.D. 1310. The Mussalmans governed the district until about 1372, when a Vijayanagar General, named Kampana Udaiyar, obtained possession of both Trichinopoly and Madura.

In 1559, Visvanatha Nayakka established the Nayakka dynasty in Madura and obtained Trichinopoly from the King of Tanjore in exchange for the fort of Vallam near Tanjore. Visvanatha is supposed to have fortified the town, constructed the large teppakulam, and built the walls and gopurams of Srirangam temple. The eighth king of the dynasty, Muthu Krishnappa, made Trichinopoly the capital of his empire, but his successor, the great Tirumala Nayakka, re-transferred the seat of Government to Madura.

During the reign of the next monarch, Muttu Veerappa, the country was constantly devastated by Muhammadan incursions necessitating the strengthening of the Trichinopoly fortifications. The succeeding king again removed his capital to Trichinopoly, and erected in the city the building known as the Nawab's palace, obtaining the necessary materials by demolishing portions of Tirumala Nayakka's palace in Madura. On the death of the last Nayakka, Vijaya Ranga Choka in 1731, his widow, Minakshi, attempted to gain possession of the kingdom. In this she was opposed by Vangaru Tirumala, the son of a prominent minister of the late king, and the rival claims were submitted to arbitration, which decided in favour of Vangaru.

In 1736, Chanda Sahib gained possession of Trichinopoly, apparently by treachery, deprived Vangaru of Madura, and confined the queen as a prisoner in her own palace. Vangaru Tirumala then invoked the assistance of the Mahrattas, and this appeal resulted in the invasion of the Carnatic by a large force under Raghuji Bhonsle, who after defeating Nawab Dost Ali on the 20th May 1740, marched at once on Trichinopoly and defeated Chanda Sahib, and Morai Rao, a Mahratta General, was appointed Governor of Trichinopoly with a force of 14,000 men to assure" his position.

Two years later, the Nizam of Hyderabad, Asaf Jah, entered the Carnatic with a large army and laid siege to the place which soon surrendered, and in 1743 Morari Rao with his Mahrattas retired from the Carnatic. In 1748 the Nizam Asaf Jah died, when a contest for succession arose between his son Nazir Jung and a favourite grandson Muzaffir Jung. At this time Chanda Sahib, who had been released by the good offices of the French, and was a claimant to the

Nawabship of the Carnatic, then held by Anwar-ud-din, associated himself with the cause of Muzaffir Jung. These allies defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at the battle of Ambur in July 1749, when his son, Muhammad Ali, fled to Trichinopoly and solicited the assistance of the British.

The French and British, who had been at war since 1744, took opposite sides, the latter espousing the cause of Nazir Jung and Muhammad Ali. A small detachment under Captain Cope was accordingly sent to Trichinopoly, but no battle was fought as, owing to dissatisfaction on the part of the French officers, who resigned their commissions, Muzaffir Jung surrendered and Chanda Sahib and the French retired to Pondicherry.

In December 1750, Nazir Jung was assassinated, when the greater portion of his army went over to Muzaffir Jung. Muhammed Ali thereupon fled to Trichinopoly, where he was reinforced in February 1751 by 280 Europeans and 300 sepoys under the command of Captain Cope. On receiving intelligence that Chanda Sahib was about to besiege Trichinopoly, Muhammad Ali applied to the British for further assistance, and in April 1751, 500 Europeans and 1,000 sepoys with eight field-pieces under Captain Gingen were sent from Cuddalore.

Near the village of Valikandapuram, on the high road between Trichinopoly and Madras, this force, which had been joined by a detachment from Trichinopoly, came in sight of Chanda Sahib's army, then encamped along the bed of the Vellar river. The French advanced the following morning, when the British troops, after a smart skirmish, retreated in great confusion on Trichinopoly by forced marches. A company of Grenadiers under Captain Dalton fought an unsuccessful rear-guard action with the allied troops of Chanda Sahib and the French near the village of Uttattur in the Perumbalur taluq, and the retreat was continued as far as the north bank of the Coleroon.

The British forces after first occupying the pagoda at Pichandarkovil on the Salem road, crossed the Coleroon and located themselves in the Srirangam temple. This building, though well adapted for resistance, was found to be too large for defense by so small a body of men, and the British force, therefore, crossed the Cauvery and took shelter under the walls of Trichinopoly on the west side of the city. On Srirangam being vacated by the British, the French and Chanda Sahib's force immediately occupied the island; but, elated by their success in capturing the small mud fort at Koviladi, Chanda Sahib's army was shortly afterwards moved across the Cauvery and encamped to the east of Trichinopoly, a garrison being left in Srirangam.

At this juncture, Lieutenant Clive was despatched with a small force from Fort St. David to the assistance of the city, but even with this reinforcement the disparity between the opposing armies was so great that, on his return in August to Fort St. David, Clive was permitted to create a diversion by undertaking his now famous expedition against Arcot. The siege operations against Trichinopoly devolved on the French, who erected their principal battery of three 8 pounders and three mortars about 1,200 yards to the south of the north-east angle of the town. On a little eminence, now known as the French Rocks, situated near the spot where the Tanjore road crosses the Wyacondan chammel, two 18-pounders were mounted and another 2-gun battery was constructed on Srirangam Island.

Muhammad Ali, who was now reduced to great distress for want of funds, entered into a secret treaty with Mysore under which, as the price of his surrender of the country from Trichinopoly to Cape Cornorin to that State, an army under the Dewan Nandiraz and 4,000 Mahratta horse under Morari Rao were sent to his aid. In preventing the French from intercepting the arrival of these reinforcements Captain Cope was killed. Shortly afterwards, the Rajah of Tanjore sent to Muhammad Ali's aid 3,000 horse and 2,000 foot under Monakji, and the Tondiman of Pudukottai supplemented the force with 400 horse and 3,000 men.

In March 1752, 400 Europeans and 1,100 sepoy under Major Lawrence, after successfully opposing an attempt by the French to prevent their progress beyond Tiruverumbur, arrived at Trichinopoly. The garrison being now superior in numbers to the besieging force, offensive operations against the French and their allies were prosecuted with vigor. Lawrence determined to first attack Chanda Sahib's camp, but Captain Dalton, the officer entrusted with the duty, was misled during a night march by his guides, and at daybreak, on April 2nd, found himself in the centre of the French outposts between Erumbisvaram Rock near Tiruverumbur and the French Rocks. This mistake, which should have resulted in the annihilation of Dalton's, force, so far from being availed of by Law, the French commander, actually determined this incompetent officer to fall back on Srirangam and thus allow Erumbisvaram to be easily captured by the British.

Clive, who was now serving under Lawrence, persuaded the latter to divide his army into two divisions, and to allow him to lead one to the north of the city so as to intercept any possible reinforcement from Pondicherry. Clive fought a series of minor actions at the village of Samayapuram, 8 miles north of

Trichinopoly on the Madras road, and on one occasion, being surprised at night by a body of French reinforcements, his force narrowly escaped disaster, and he himself nearly lost his life in the Mariyamman temple at the hands of an Irish deserter, who treacherously fired at him during a parley.

M. D'Auteuil, who commanded the French troops, was, however, prevented from reaching Srirangam, and, after halting some days at Uttattur, was driven back on Valikandapuram by Dalton. In the meantime Clive proceeded to the attack of Srirangam, but on the fall of Pichandarkovil and the consequent closing of communication with Pondicherry, Chanda Sahib's army dispersed, the majority going to their homes, but some joining the British. M. D'Auteuil, hearing of this disaffection, marched out of Valikandapuram, was promptly defeated by Clive and compelled to surrender. Chanda Sahib shortly after gave himself up to the Tanjore General Monakji on the promise of a money reward and of his life being spared. This promise was immediately broken, and Chanda Sahib brutally murdered.

Lawrence then called upon the French remaining in Srirangam to surrender, which, after some delay, they did. Prior to the murder of Chanda Sahib the British were in ignorance of the treaty between Muhamamad Ali and Nandiraz, and it became necessary for a British detachment to remain in Trichinopoly to prevent rupture between the two, as the Nawab plainly evinced his reluctance to give up the town to the Mysore Dewan. Dupleix, who had received large reinforcements from Europe, after having appointed Raja Sahib, the son of Chanda Sahib, to be Nawab, entered into an alliance with the Mysore and the Mahratta troops. This led to an early recommencement of hostilities by the French, but, after gaining a few trifling successes, they sustained a crashing defeat from Lawrence at Bahoor near Pondicherry.

This British victory at first inclined Nandiraz to give up any intention of keeping faith with Dupleix, but subsequent inaction on the part of Muhammad Ali, to whom the next campaign was entrusted, resulted in the Mysore and the Mahratta troops siding definitely with the French. The Madras Government, therefore, declared war against Nandiraz, whereupon Dalton, who had been left in Trichinopoly, proceeded to attack the Mysore army in Srirangam. This engagement, which took place on the 23rd December, 1753, was, on the whole, unfavorable to the British, so that Nandiraz was able to make arrangements for the starving out of the garrison by intercepting the supplies which were derived from the Pudukottai State. He stationed a strong detachment in the Fakir's Tope, and the blockade thus established compelled

Lawrence to march to the relief of the city.

The news of his approach, however, caused the Mysoreans to retreat to Srirangam, so that he was able to reach Trichinopoly without molestation. The first move of Lawrence was to attack Srirangam, but without result, and, as the enemy declined to be drawn into a general engagement in the open, he temporarily devoted himself to provisioning the city. Dupleix contrived to send large reinforcements to the Mysoreans, and in a short time Lawrence found himself with 500 Europeans and 2,000 sepoy, opposed to 450 Europeans, 1,500 trained sepoy, 2 companies of topasses, 8,000 Mysore horse, 3,500 Mahrattas, and 15,000 irregular infantry. The Mysore General, on being reinforced again, left Srirangam and encamped on the plains 3 miles to the north of Fakir's Tope. Failure on the part of a British officer to maintain, as usual, a detachment on Fakir's Rock, led to its occupation by the enemy and the consequent cutting off of the Pudukottai supplies.

On 20th June, 1753, M. Astruc, the French commander, proceeded to attack a guard of 260 sepoy, who held a small eminence half-a-mile to the south-west of Lawrence's camp, the possession of which would have enabled him to drive the British inside the city walls. This attack developed into the action properly known as the battle of Fakir's Rock, in which Lawrence gained a brilliant victory. After the battle Lawrence left for Tanjore in order to procure some cavalry from the Rajah; and on his departure, Trichinopoly was again blockaded. After a month's absence he returned with reinforcements. The enemy opposed his advance near the Golden Rock, but were completely defeated, and Trichinopoly was reached without further trouble.

Lawrence soon fought a minor successful action at Wyacondantirumalai, after which both sides remained passive awaiting reinforcements. At the end of September Lawrence provoked a general engagement and gained a signal victory, capturing 11 guns and the whole of the French tents, baggage and equipment. This action should properly be called after the Golden Rock near which it was fought, but occasionally it is incorrectly referred to as the battle of the Sugarloaf Rock.

Trichinopoly was now virtually out of danger, but in November the French made one more desperate effort to capture the city. The attack was delivered against that portion of the fortifications known as Dalton's Battery and resulted in some 360 Frenchmen being taken prisoners.

In February, 1754, a convoy of provisions, military stores and cash en route to

Trichinopoly was captured and the guard cut to pieces at Killiyur, 10 miles from the city, by an overwhelming force of French and Mahrattas, and the disaster was the severest blow experienced by the British during the war. Hostilities between the French and the British were suspended in September, and a provisional treaty concluded on 31st December, 1754.

As the Mysore Dewan refused to be bound by this treaty, he continued to direct futile attacks from Srirangam, until the news of an invasion of Mysore by the Nizam recalled him hurriedly to his own country. The provisional treaty was ratified and the French remained peacefully in Srirangam until war was again declared between France and England in 1756.

Operations in the Trichinopoly district were commenced by the French sending a detachment of 200 Europeans and 2,000 sepoy under M. D'Auteuil to collect tribute from the Poligars of Ariyalur and Udaiyarpalaiyam. After a reinforcement of 800 Europeans and 1,000 sepoy, D'Auteuil advanced to Srirangam and joined the garrison of that island; Captain Joseph Smith, who then commanded the small force of 150 Europeans and 700 sepoy forming the Company's garrison in: Trichinopoly, obtained 600 men from Tanjore and Pudukottai, and sent for assistance to Captain Calliaud, at the time in Madura with 150 Europeans and 1,200 sepoy. Calliaud skilfully eluded D'Auteuil's troops, and after he joined the garrison the French Commander withdrew to Pondicherry.

In May 1758, with a view to strengthening the army besieging Fort St. David, the French Governor Eally recalled all the French troops in Srirangam, which was handed over to a detachment of Mysoreans from Dindigul. Fort St. David fell in June, but the Trichinopoly garrison was not immediately reduced, and soon after assisted in repulsing a French attack on Tanjore. However, when the French had captured a number of outlying British posts and were threatening Chingleput, Calliaud, with all the European troops, was recalled from Trichinopoly; and in November, when Madras invested, the garrison was further reduced by 2,000 sepoy.

In July 1759, the French captured Thiagar, an important fortress commanding the road through Valikandapuram to Trichinopoly, and proceeded to ravage the country as far as Uttattur. They re-occupied the Srirangam pagoda in the following October, but the disastrous defeat inflicted on them at Wandiwash by Colonel Coote soon necessitated the recall at first of a portion, and, finally, the whole of their troops in the island.

In 1766, Trichinopoly was threatened by Hyder Ali, who occupied Thiagar in

June; beyond the capture, however, of Karur by Captain Smith, nothing further of importance occurred in the district during this war. In 1768-69, Hyder Ali again devastated the country round Trichinopoly, but made no move against the city itself. Once more, in 1781, he appeared on the scene, and on this occasion proceeded to invest the town, but was compelled to raise the siege after his defeat at Porto Novo.

In the later Mysore war of 1790, Tippu Sultan marched through Karur on Trichinopoly, laid waste the island of Srirangam, and retired after making a few feints against the city. Since this time Trichinopoly has been free from hostile demonstrations, and it passed quietly into the possession of the British by treaty with the Nawab in 1801.