

Norton-Tappan

Farmington CT August 9, 1841

My Dear Sir,

You may perhaps already have been informed of the melancholy death of one our African friends, by drowning. Poor Founi on Saturday went into the water to bathe with three of his companions. After swimming a short time he was suddenly, as is supposed, seized with cramp and though his companions made such efforts as they could, he sank in 10 or 12 feet [of] water. His companions were panic stricken & ran to the house a quarter of a mile distant & in fifteen minutes the whole company were present. Grabbo & Bannah commenced diving and after several un- successful efforts the latter brought up the body.

It was in the water about 30 minutes. Doctor Thomson immediately resorted to the approved remedies but all in vain. His remains were committed to the grave yesterday. Doct. Hawes who was spending the Sabbath here made a short address & the Rev. Mr. Fessenden offered a prayer. The Mendians sang a hymn at the grave.

The exercises were very solemn & appropriate. A large concourse of citizens attended the funeral & manifested a deep sympathy with our poor afflicted friends.

Founi had been a little depressed for two or three days & was observed weeping the morning of his death. When asked what was the matter he replied "he was thinking of his mother." He was a man of Herculean frame and the men who were with him were all small.

Mr. Hart, one of our most respected citizens, witnessed the drowning from the opposite side of the basin, but without the power to do anything to save him.

The Africans are very sad and their conduct is truly affecting. Mr. Booth was here when the event occurred, but felt it necessary to leave immediately after for New Haven. Bros. Deming & Williams were both absent. Rev. Mr. Fessenden, who has kindly undertaken to teach while Mr. Booth is absent is very judicious and appropriate in all his intercourse with them.

May the Lord guide in all things connected with these poor strangers.

John T. Norton

[Note: The name Founi is spelled Foone on the gravestone and in most of the literature about the Africans. AJA]