

Kelly Duke
Scott Kloeck-Jenson International Pre-dissertation Travel Grant report
September 16, 2003

From May 19 to June 26 I traveled to Dakar, Senegal, to conduct research in Senegal's National Archive. I am grateful for the Scott Kloeck-Jenson fellowship which made the travel and hence, the research, possible. I returned with an abundance of material and a feel for the archive that will greatly enrich my master's thesis and dissertation proposal, and will inform my dissertation as well.

After some initial frustration with the bureaucracy involved in accessing and using the archive, I figured out how best to accomplish my goals. From a Senegalese PhD student engaged in research there, I learned that the reading room employee was grumpy with everyone (not just foreigners). I learned how to time my requests for materials so that I would maximize the number of files accessed in a day. And I eventually befriended the grumpy employee who turned out to be quite helpful.

I found the archive incredibly rich and well-organized. I was able to read and browse through over 35 files filled with primary materials. In addition, I accessed a rare nineteenth-century periodical published by the French colonial administration, the *Moniteur du Sénégal et Dépendances*, as well as a number of books. Most immediately helpful to me were the files dealing with education in Senegal—Catholic schools, lay schools, schools for sons of chiefs, night school for adults, scholarships to attend secondary school in France, etc. I have decided to use this material as the basis for my master's thesis which will deal with the development of education in Senegal in the nineteenth century, focusing especially on the scholarship recipients who traveled to France to complete their studies. Some of the questions my archival work will help me

address are: Who were these scholarship recipients and what did they experience in France? When did indigenous Senegalese begin to travel to France for study? Did these natives of Senegal meet students from the French Antilles or other French colonies during their stays in France? If so, did any lasting relationships form? When the students returned to Senegal (as it seems that most of them did), what jobs did they have and how did they affect the economic and political development of the colony?

In working on this project as my master's thesis, I envision it as part of a larger study which will address the Atlantic context of Senegal's nineteenth-century intellectual and political history. I intend to investigate ways that travel—of people, ideas, goods, and information—between various points in the French colonial world ultimately impacted identity formation and nascent national consciousness in Senegal. Happily, I discovered some information in the archive that assured me that the dissertation project I have in mind is feasible.

On my weekend trip to Saint-Louis, I discovered that all archival materials formerly housed in a local colonial archive had been moved to the central archive in Dakar. However, I was unable to ascertain whether or not these items have been incorporated into the classification of the archive. The trip to Saint-Louis was productive nonetheless because in walking around the city I remarked that many of the schools founded in the nineteenth century still exist. When I return to Senegal to conduct dissertation research, I will visit these schools, talk to employees and hopefully view old records.

Perhaps most importantly, this trip allowed me to understand what materials are available in Dakar. Additionally, I learned that many records I will eventually need to

use are stored in the French colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence. This knowledge will help me write balanced, informed and accurate dissertation and grant proposals. Thus I expect to continue benefiting from my summer research trip for years to come.