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Scott Kloeck-Jenson Fellowship report
Summer Travel Award (2013) – Uganda

I spent last summer (from June 5th to August 30th 2013) in Uganda, conducting preliminary research for my dissertation. My current research interests focus on pre-colonial Intellectuals, especially how they shaped colonial rule in northern Uganda. Specifically, I will be exploring the Acholi intellectual history from 1850 to 1960, studying, among other things, the Acholi justice system prior to the onset of British colonialism. Thus, the Scott Kloeck-Jenson fellowship enabled me to travel to Uganda, and I was able to establish crucial contacts, as well as locate significant local primary sources at the Makerere University and the Uganda National Archives, not available in the United States.

Upon my arrival in Uganda, I proceeded to the northern town of Gulu, about 400 miles north of Kampala, the capital city. While in Gulu, I immediately made contacts with the Acholi Cultural Institution, a body that unites all the traditional chiefs in Acholiland. As a result, I was able to interview five chiefs and fifteen random people, making a total of twenty people, about the Acholi local Justice system. Among the things that we discussed were: the Acholi notion of justice, ways of handling a breach of laws, and, specifically, the *mato opwut*, a local justice system, after one has committed murder. The most interesting things that came out of these interviews were perspectives of the chiefs on the local justice system. Most of them prefer the use of local justice system, claiming that they lack understanding of how western court system functions. Furthermore, through interviews, I was able to catch glimpses into what the *mato opwut* justice system was like prior to the onset of colonialism and, finally, some changes that the *mato opwut* underwent as a result of colonialism. Overall, I was able to establish important contacts that I will rely on when I return to do interviews for my dissertation, and I was able to gain valuable insights into the local justice system.

After interviews in Gulu, I returned to Kampala and worked at the Makerere University, Uganda's oldest institution. My intentions were to locate key documentary sources that will help me in

my research. Here I found important primary sources. Specifically, I came across colonial law books and reports from colonial officers. Though they were not related directly to the justice system, they offer a better understanding of context in northern Uganda during the early period of colonial rule. Furthermore, I found several important theses and dissertations on the Acholi justice system. Additionally, and unexpectedly, I was able to locate the Church Missionary Society's Archives at Makerere University. Notable among the collection is the correspondence and letters of CMS missionaries. Finally, I found two unpublished manuscripts of two local historians. Both works describe the traditional Acholi justice system, offering fresh perspectives of the Acholi, who lived through colonialism. In the end, my visit to Makerere University was also very successful. I was able to locate important documentary sources at the Makerere University Main Library.

My last stop was at the Uganda National Archives in Entebbe town, about one hour drive from Kampala. The National Archives houses all reports, correspondences, and other documents of the colonial regime in Uganda. Here, I was able to acquaint myself with Acholi history from the perspective of the colonial regime. The most interesting thing that I found at the Archives were monthly reports from 1901 to 1924. These reports highlight the establishment and consolidation of the colonial regime, including notes on conflicts between British agents and natives in settling different cases, including murders, all of which are relevant to my work in demonstrating the changes in the Acholi justice system as a result of colonialism.

In summary, I am grateful for the generous support of the Scott Kloeck-Jenson Fellowship. My trip to Uganda was very successful. I have got several interesting ideas, perceptions, and documents, which have, up to this point, prepared me to write a good dissertation grant proposal. Above all, I have been able to establish significant contacts that I will rely on when I begin my dissertation research in Acholiland.