

Report of Africa Quaker Archives- Jan 3-6, 2024



A group of twenty-one Friends of various ages and from different yearly meetings gathered at Friends Theological College. Jane Matasio, Archivist of AQA Board gave a detailed power-point presentation on the values of archives, and what kind of materials to collect.

This was followed by a hands-on demonstration by Agneta Injairu and Marian Baker on how to plan, how to conduct oral interviews of key Friends (usually elders). Then Friends were divided into several groups to practice interviewing each other. One group interviewed the oldest attender(87yrs). Others just practiced to make sure they knew how to set up the simple tripod, microphone, and smartphone recorder, so that the voices were clear.

Robert Wafula shared his inspiring dream to develop an archives at Friends Theological College (FTC) and the architectural plan (done during Covid) for the extension of the present library to hold the archives that would enable researchers from around the world to study the materials gathered, including the students in the new Masters Program offered at FTC.



Jane Matasio

Agneta Injairu

Marian Baker



Oscar Lugusa

Moses Musonga

Oscar Lugusa shared about how to do transcriptions and editing of the recorded interviews.

Zablon Malenge, VSindano, and Mukangai excited all as they shared their experiences and stories as older Friends.

Then Moses Musonga shared some of the artifacts, rare photos and writings, he has collected.

We then formed groups of Friends from different geographical areas. It was a joy to see Friends from yearly meetings who had split off eagerly working together to plan who to interview, who within the group had technological skills, those with accurate writing skills, those with editing skills(fluent in English), and those who were known by many (often elders) who could help those interviewers be welcomed and trusted by elderly Friends.



Northwest Group
(Lugulu, Chwele, West, ERSF, Elgon East, Kamusinga).



Part of the Central Group
(Malava, Chebuyusi, Chevaywa).



Part of the central group
(Kakamega, Lirhanda, Musingu)



Southern Group
(Kaimosi, Tuloi, Chavakali, Vihiga, Vokoli, Highlands, Bware)

We went on a field trip to historic sites in Kaimosi. We were saddened to see the hill of vision had been destroyed, (forest removed, cell phone tower erected, and watched large bulldozers removing much of the hill and its profits went into pockets of individual leaders).



Part of group at base of cell phone tower



Bulldozer busy removing layers of sand and gravel

We found two historic monuments, one on the southern border of the thousand acres that is lost in thick bush, and one down by the water project that is not easy to reach. We were saddened that the printing press was sold to Nyangori (and later to Nairobi). Seeing the conditions of these artifacts caused all to see how urgent the need is to learn and conserve our heritage as Friends.



Monument near river



Emory Rees printing press building (now in polytechnic)

The final day, we shared an evaluation, decided to complete at least one oral interview with transcription and editing per month this year. In the future, we will help lead workshops for the Northeast and East Regions. AQA will also be sending a letter to all clerks of yearly meetings and Friends organizations in Africa to spread the news that the Archives have started.

We left Kaimosi ready to get more oral interviews done of elders before we lose the last early converts and leaders. Meanwhile we expect Linet Mmbone (a librarian at FTC) will get further training in archives in Kenya and USA, and an official proposal for a major extension to FTC library will be ready to send to potential funders soon.

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