

Message 1. Arrival and Africa Quaker Archives Workshop. Oct 22-29, 2024

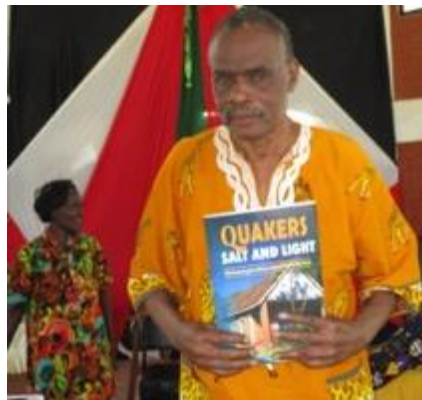
Travelling to Kenya went well to Boston Airport after my neighbor, Janet Byron took me to Concord, NH bus station and I arrived in good time at Logan airport. Then the plane got delayed for an hour that threatened to cause problems in making my connection in Amsterdam. When we arrived in Amsterdam, there was such thick fog that it was hard to see the wing of the plane a few feet away! We parked at the runway and buses came to fetch us. Then upon arrival in the airport, we were told that the flight to Nairobi would be delayed one hour. However, after boarding, it sat on the runway close to three hours, but finally took off. Instead of arriving in Nairobi at 9PM, we landed around 1:30 am! I then took a taxi to the city to a small hotel near the Easy Coach bus, as it is easier and quicker to travel from the airport to center city in the middle of the night, than early in the morning with horrendously crowded traffic jams.

I arrived at the hotel, took a shower, set my alarm clock and woke up by 6:30am after three solid hours of sleep, in order to catch the bus. The bus ride to Kaimosi took until 3PM. Along the road, where there used to be zebras between Naivasha and Nakuru, I saw a herd of camels! I suspect that some clever Kenyan decided that raising a herd of camels instead of donkeys made more sense in these days of global climate change. In Nairobi and in the Rift Valley, everything was extremely dry.

In Nakuru, I was able to get some yogurt for my breakfast/lunch. Slept along the way but also had a great conversation with a seat mate who was fascinated with my sharing how things have changed in Kenya over the last 50 years.

I was met by Nancy Wafula, who had recently been travelling in ministry in Britain along with her husband, Robert Wafula, (the head of Friends Theological College (FTC). She was able to help me find a cup of tea. I couldn't get my camera out of my bags quickly enough to take a photo of the beautiful sunset seen with the African acacia tree in the foreground.

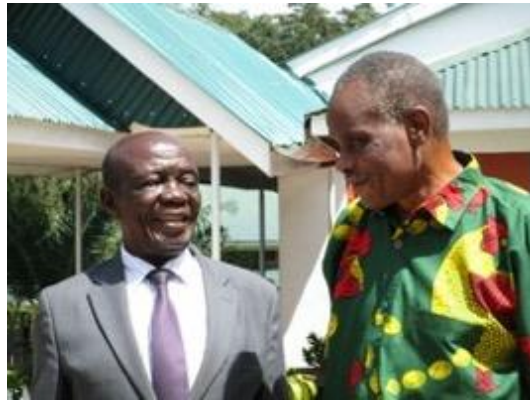
By supertime, eleven of the Archives workshop attendees arrived. They were welcomed by Robert and Nancy. We had a brief time of introductions and prayers of thanksgiving for safe arrival, and prayers for the gathering and for those who were still on the way, and slept early after our travels.



Some of the happy gathering Agneta conferring with younger Friends. Moses sharing his book

The workshop was a gathering for those who were either Friends who were collecting oral interviews about the early Friends of Kenya, plus those who have been writing books on the African viewpoint of Quaker history. What a lot of enthusiasm as we all shared with each other.

It was a joy to see an equal number of men and women and both young adults and elderly adults from many different yearly meetings working together to help preserve the history of East African Friends, and to learn more of their own rich heritage as Quakers. One younger man excitedly shared he had found the drum and its drummer that was used to call Friends to meeting years ago in Kaimosi. Naturally, the family did not want to part with it, but photos of it were collected.



Jane Matasio advises Elders Zablon Malenge & Moses Musonga. Custard apple and red bananas

Oscar Lugusa who recently finished his doctorate from Woodbrooke and the two other elders who have written books were excited to see young people eagerly joining in to preserve their heritage. I have attached a report of the Archives workshop that has more details and photos of the enthusiasm it generated.

I had a day of rest at Agneta and James Injairu's home in Malava . Was greeted by the grandchildren and some fresh papaya and avocado directly from their trees.

I came to Kakamega in order to get my Kenyan smartphone running properly and to get these reports sent to you. I was welcomed by Elizabeth Malenje who shared red bananas and custard apples from her garden along with traditional tea. Thanks so much for all of you for holding me in prayers during this journey. Today I will meet with my Kenyan support group to make more detailed plans for my time here.

With much gratitude,
Marian



Those who are actively conducting oral interviews or are writing books on the history of African Friends gathered at Friends Theological College.

It was a time for sharing about what kind of research each person was doing. First we listened to Robert Wafula's recent travel in ministry in Britain, where he built up relationships with British Friends and also shared about the development of the African Quaker Archive work.

Then each one doing oral interviews shared the challenges and joyful discoveries they had made out in the field and asked for advice how to deal with issues. They interviewed mostly people in their 80's but also found one very alert 102 year old elder. They learned a lot about how Friends lived and supported each other when Friends first started in Kenya. One eagerly shared that he'd found the drum that was used to call Friends together and took photos of it since the family of the drummer were reluctant to let it go to the archives.

Oscar Lugusa, who had done many interviews as part of his doctoral thesis, helped advise and answer questions the interviewer had.

Moses Musonga brought copies of his newly published book- Quaker Salt and Light, a Tiriki version of Hill of Vision and several people recorded his sharing about it. Zablon Malenge shared some of the discoveries he had made when working as FWCC Africa Section staff, including evidence that Kaimosi Friends Hospital used to have an airport and do flying doctor visits to Friends in Mugumu, Tanzania, and Kigumba, Uganda!

Linnet Mbone and Jane Matasio, as archivists, gave encouragement as well as advising the younger, new interviewers how to produce tapes and transcripts that are of archival quality.



Listening to Robert Wafula



Linet Mmbone.



Zablon Malenge, Moses Musonga, Jane Matasio posing with Ednah Bandi our youngest attendee

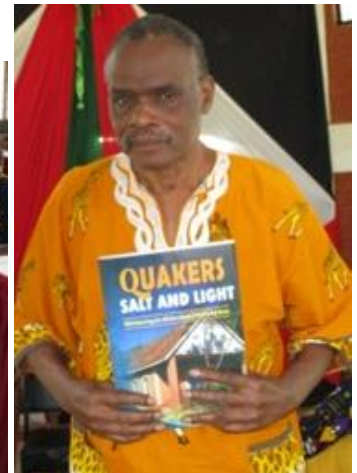
Emmanuel Wasike will gather a group to conduct interviews in the Kitale, Eldoret, and other northern yearly meeting areas, and Edna Bandi will do the same in Nairobi, as many elders end up staying with children in Nairobi.



Eager workers-even at night sharing



Emmanuel records as Zablon shares



Moses with his new book

Agneta Injairu had coordinated the groups of interviewers and organized the gathering. She also got various young and old attendees to lead singing, prayers, and evening epilogues each day.

One group was given special assistance, and we made sure that each group had a working smartphone, microphone, and tripod. they all departed after agreeing to create a website to let others become better aware of their research, and to hold a zoom gathering quarterly to check on each other's progress.

Progress is being made!

mkb 10/27/24