

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Princeton, New Jersey



**Slave Heritage Exhibition Centre
Zanzibar, Tanzania**

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

My internship's responsibility was to research and manage the historical records and archives of the Anglican Diocese of Zanzibar for their East African Slave Trade Exhibit, a museum built in the memory of the Mkunazini Slave Market that once operated on the site. My specific objectives included 1) production of an audio narration for the museum's Exhibition room, 2) production of an online audio tour for the entire Site, including the Exhibition Rooms, Slave Cellars, Slave Monument and Christ Church Cathedral, 3) development of a "research room", a library centered on the UMCA, its personnel, and its history in Zanzibar, and finally 4) moving Church historical records into an online database

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

At the internship, I successfully wrote, recorded, and produced the audio narration and script for both the Exhibition Room, and the entire site. Furthermore, I began the opening salvo of research and development of the UMCA "research room", as well as the groundwork for a more conventional library to accompany it. Objective 4, the unification and digitization of Church records, we agreed, was a bit beyond our reach in terms of logistics and manpower. As the first and only intern in the Museum's history, much of my work was laying foundations: contacting authors and historians,

reaching out to archives and databases around the world, even wiring the offices with internet. My professional and technical growth cannot be understated: I've delved through mountains of research and bibliographies to create a whole new library. I've made lasting bonds and partnerships with world-famous specialists in African history. I've become a credited writer, editor, and voice actor in a growing and fascinating museum. I've interviewed Church officers, visiting historians, and local figures about the history of this island and their part in it. I've even learned a fair bit of Swahili in the process. And this has all been done with a dead laptop and a broken ankle.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

While stalled on research towards the UMCA, I came to a conclusion: we had startlingly little research on other topics as well. This "research room", hopefully to contain a library's worth of literature on the UMCA and slavery in East Africa, had only had eighteen books. I reached back out to my Sewanee professors for advice on what other books to buy. My advisor, Professor Levine, instead told me to reach out to authors and historians like Jeremy Prestholdt, Frederick Cooper, Laura Fair, and Jonathon Glassmann. All of these are famous and well-published African historians, many of whom I've read in my classes at Sewanee. I wasn't sure if I was going to get an answer (a pessimistic part of me may even have doubted it for a second), but I thought it was worth a try, and so I reached out. Not only did many of these authors decide to answer back with incredible lists of suggested books and research, but some even offered to help provide the books and other aid themselves. For someone so interested in history like myself, meeting those giants of the field and seeing them treat me as an equal was an incredibly-rewarding moment, and a great step towards putting together a true research room here in the museum. This was all thanks to the advice and education I've received at Sewanee.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

One of the difficulties of this job was actually the relative isolation in which I worked. I had no other interns to work with, or any other historians working on the same job. Fortunately, Stone Town is awash in history, and if Sewanee has taught me anything it is how to turn a simple conversation into a fascinating, ruminating exploration of every manner of academic field. A ten-minute chat with the ex-Bishop of the Diocese of Zanzibar yielded me not only a great wealth of personal information and a good friend, but also the very research I was looking for: the UMCA's official, published history, Volumes I and III.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

This summer has only cemented my conviction to go into a historical or educational field. I lost track of how many times simple small talk turned into incredible, days-long discussions, debates, and lectures on the history of the island, Africa, and the world. More often than not I was receiving the education, rather than giving it. Whether in education or museum management, Zanzibar leaves me with these convictions: A) I would like a future career where I can learn all I can about the history of Africa, and the world. B) I would like a future career where I can teach others all I can about the history of Africa, and the world C) I would especially love to do both back here in Africa itself.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

The wonderful thing about Zanzibar is that everyone has an incredibly-diverse and varied background. Being an mzungu (Swahili for white person) is never a problem in Stone Town. From

Day 1, I've worked with and become friends with our resident tour guides (all Christians in a Muslim-majority community), Church leaders and fathers of the Diocese, Naqshibandi Sufi clerics, Sunni Imams, French, Australian, and Omani NGO volunteers, American expatriate historians, aspiring Kenyan filmmakers, visiting Chinese soldiers, local dhow captains, cargo ship sailors, and Indian families still living here fifty years after a violent revolution massacred many of their neighbors. I've attended 4-hour all-Swahili Anglican services when I didn't speak a word of the language. I went exploring spice plantations with local guides and English backpackers. I've sat in multinational film festivals with aficionados and movie stars alike. I was nearly invited to a few weddings, in fact. There's no possible way I can even begin to list what I've heard and learned from these incredible people and experiences. Communication and understanding was never a problem at any time. A smile, a few words in Swahili, and an interesting conversation about any topic under the sun is always enough to make new friends here. Knowing a bit about football also helps.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

Quite honestly, don't sweat anything. Zanzibar is one of the least scary of the many places I've been to all over the world. Everyone is incredibly friendly, speaks passable English, and during the tourist season ("High Season", June-August) everyone can point you the right way or get what you need.

Housing: Location will be less of a problem than you think. Stone Town is comparatively TINY. You can walk anywhere you need to under 10 minutes. Vuga neighborhood is cheapest, but good quality.

Eating: The food is fantastic everywhere, but during Ramadan, get used to cooking for yourself. The Church will usually put you up with a Christian family, so cooking for yourself shouldn't be a problem. The eggs are a strange color (the yolk is a pale off-white), but otherwise the same. "Zanzibar apples" aren't really apples, but some strange, very-tasty mutant peach. Luukman's is good and cheap, but always crowded during tourist season. I recommend Maa Sh'Allah Cafe, just up the street from Christ Church. A whole meal can be less than 10,000Tsh(\$5USD). La Taverna down the street has Buy 1, Get 1 Free Pizza nights on Wednesdays and is decently cheap. Watch out for the drainage ditches around it though, I fell in one and broke my ankle 3 weeks in.

Water: If you're out and about, hydrate. Big 1.5liter bottles are 1,000Tsh (50 cents) in most places.

Transportation: If you're in Stone Town, use your feet. It's small enough to cross in 30 minutes, but full of enough things to keep you occupied for days. For travel outside Stone Town, ask your coordinator or friends for reputable taxis or boat services. Dala-dalas (refitted, overpacked buses and vans) are cheap and plentiful just down the street, but they're not always the safest. Airport is 10 minutes away by Taxi and the Ferry terminal is a 20-minute walk and an hour or 2 in transit. Both are respectably cheap.

Wi-Fi: Sadly, good WiFi is incredibly hard to find. Most people carry a portable router/modem the size of a wallet with them wherever they go. To get portable Wi-Fi, follow these steps: 1) buy/borrow a modem. 2) buy a SIM card from a local vendor, put it in your phone. I'm a fan of Halotel. 3) buy scratch-off vouchers from a vendor. 4) Scratch off, enter code into the phone menu where it says "Add data" or something to that effect. 5) Take SIM card, put into router. Et voila, WiFi. Unfortunately, these aren't very powerful. \$15USD or 30,000TSh for a few gigabytes, so be judicious with your usage. Free, fast, unlimited Wifi can be found at higher-end bars like 6 Degrees, Taperia, and Maru Maru. Beware, some make you pay or buy something beforehand. 6 Degrees at Happy Hour extends their WiFi to the small park across the street, so you can browse or phone home to heart's content while watching the dhows sail through the sunset over the Indian Ocean.

Hospital/Health: Healthcare is relatively cheap and easy in Zanzibar. If you're hurt, sick, or think you need a doctor, take a few deep breaths and don't panic. Vigor Health is a few blocks away from the Church and has a great staff who all speak excellent English. I broke my ankle in a fall and ended up only paying \$140USD for an X-Ray, cast, and bandages. For smaller issues like traveler's diarrhea or colds, there's a few pharmacies up and down the street, and the Church staff can help you with whatever you need.

Swahili: Most people

Speak a decent level of English. That said, learn as much Swahili as you can, especially during high season or Ramadan. It'll make people much friendlier towards you and might make you a new friend.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

This was a summer I will never forget as long as I live. Thank-you, Father Nuhu, so very much for all your support and friendship. Despite broken bones and equipment failures, I'm proud of what we've done together and I wish you all the best with the Exhibit in the years to come. If I ever come back to Zanzibar, I WILL drop by for a visit. And for Yohana, Peter, Freddie, and all the other tour guides, thanks so much for all the great times and fun nights. I'm sorry we couldn't have one one round before I had to leave. Take care, and God bless y'all.