

WILLIS MATHEWS OKECH OYUGI

Curriculum Vita

Department of History
Sam Houston State University
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., History, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), June 2014

- Dissertation: “Wildlife Conservation in Kenya’s Maasailand, 1850s-2000: Contested Histories of an African People and their Landscape.”
- Degree Emphasis: African Environmental History with a focus on the history of human-wildlife conflicts, wildlife sanctuaries/national parks & traditional ecological knowledge.
- Advisor: Edward A. Alpers; Committee Members: Christopher Ehret, Judith Carney, Vinay Lal.

M.A., History, UCLA, June 2009.

B.A., History (*Magna cum Laude*), Miami University, OH, May 2007

B.Phil., Environmental Studies (*Magna cum Laude*), Miami University, OH, May 2007.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Sam Houston State University, TX: Assistant Professor of African and Environmental History, September 2017-present
- Oberlin College, OH: Visiting Assistant Professor of History, July 2014 to June 2017
- Earlham College /Miami University East Africa Program: Guest Lecturer, October-December 2010

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses Taught (Sam Houston State University):

- HIST 2311: World History to 1500
- HIST 2312: World History since 1500
- HIST 3389: Africa Past & Present
- HIST 3395: American Environmental History: Nature and the American Civil War
- HIST 5301: Methods in History (graduate seminar)

Courses Taught (Oberlin College):

- HIST 124: Food for Thought (first-year writing seminar)
- HIST 115: African Civilizations to 1800
- HIST 180: Global Environmental History
- HIST 277: African & Environmental History, 1800s to present
- HIST 313: Kenya Maasailand Conservation
- HIST 385: Environmentalism of the Poor-Water
- HIST 485: Environmental History of the British Empire (undergraduate senior seminar)

Courses Taught (Earlham College/Miami University):

- Wildlife Conservation in Africa
- African Cultures

Courses Taught & Assisted (University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), CA, September 207-June 2014):

- Afr. Lang 2A: Intermediate Swahili
- Teaching Assistant:
 - HIST 10A: The Civilizations of Africa to 1800
 - HIST 10B: History of Africa, 1800 to Present
 - HIST 167B: History of East Africa
 - HIST 168B: History of Southern Africa since 1870
 - HIST 1C: Intro to Western Civ.: 1715 to Present
 - HIST 8C: Latin American Social History
 - COMM 10: Introduction to Interpersonal & Mass Communication

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Internal Grant, SHSU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2020-2021.
- Dissertation Year Fellowship (History Department), UCLA, 2012-2013.
- Hans Roger International Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, UCLA, 2011-2012.
- Hans Roger International Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, UCLA, 2010-2011.
- Millennium Endowed Graduate Fellowship, UCLA, 2009-2010.
- Hans Roger International Fund, UCLA, 2008-2009.
- History Department Chair Fund, UCLA, 2007-2008.
- Non-Resident Tuition Fellowship, UCLA, 2007-2008.
- Birdlife International/Earthwatch Fellowship, Ocsa, Hungary, 2-14 August 1998.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Provost's Academic Award, Miami University, 2006.
- Marguerite Smith Scholarship Award, Miami University, 2005.
- Elizabeth S. Turner Scholarship, Miami University, 2003-2007.

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph:

- *Maasailand in Kenya's Environmental History: Tradition, Livestock, and Wildlife Conservation, 1890-2000*, book manuscript working title (in progress).

Peer-reviewed Articles:

- "Forest Frontiers, Race, and Marginalization in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1960." (This article contributes to an invited special edition focusing on "Forests in the Anthropocene." The 2nd draft is currently under review projected to be published in *Environmental History* 2020-2021)
- "Historicizing Ethnicity and Slave Trade Memories in Colonial Africa: The Cases for Rwanda and Northern Cameroon," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, Vol 35, 1 (2016), 66-86.

Book Chapters:

- “Food for Thought: Food Security, Livestock Raiding, and Violence in Postcolonial Kenya,” in Jeremiah O. Asaka and Alice Oluoko-Adingo, *Human Security in Twenty-First Century Africa: Contemporary Issues and Actors* (upcoming in 2021). *Chapter Proposal submitted and accepted.*
- With Leamon Bazil, “African Governments, Neocolonialism, and Food Insecurity: The Neglect of Traditional African Ways of Thinking,” in Kenneth Kalu and Toyin Falola (eds.), *Reflections on Leadership and Institutions in Africa* (London: Rowan & Littlefield, 2020), 129-147.
- “Maasai-British Relationships and Maasailand Ecology in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1960: Complexities and Contradictions,” in Edward Alpers, Awet Weldemichael, and Anthony Lee (eds.), *Changing Horizons in African History* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2017), 173-204.
- “Ecotourism in Costa Rica,” in Anil Varma (ed.), *Emerging Trends in Tourism* (Hyderabad: The Icfai University Press, 2007), 215-222.

Book Reviews:

- Martin S. Shanguhya, *Population, Tradition, and Environmental Control in Colonial Kenya* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015), for *Environmental History*, Vol 22, 4 (2017), 766-768.

Popular Writing, Articles, and Professional Notes:

- “A Kenyan in America Looks Home in Anguish,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 15 February 2008.

PRESENTATIONS

- “Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement: A History Lesson on Grassroots Power and Possibility.” *A paper proposal submitted to the 63rd Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association to be held in Washington D.C., November 19-21, 2020.*
- “Men’s Cattle & Women’s Wildlife: Myths, Taboos, Folkways in Maasai and African Cultures.” *Abstract submitted to the 13 Annual Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) to be held in Dallas, TX, September 10-13, 2020.*
- “Forestry, Race, and Class in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1960.” Paper presented at the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA), September 13-14, 2019. Atlanta, Georgia.
- “Democratization, Exploitation, and Environmental Change in and around the Mau Forest Complex, Kenya, 1990-2015.” Paper presented as part of “The Felicity of the Forest: Reconceptualizing the Exploitation of Forest Resources from a Global Perspective,” at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference, April 10-14, 2019. Columbus, Ohio.
- “Cultural & Natural Identity: Land, Rights, and Wildlife in Kenya’s Maasailand, 1960s to 2000.” Paper accepted as part of the “Questioning Loyalties: Nation and Tradition in 19th and 20th Century Africa” Panel at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, January 3-6, 2019. Chicago.

- With Leamon Bazil, ““African Governments, Neocolonialism, and Food Insecurity: the Neglect of Traditional African Ways of Thinking.” Paper presented at the UT African Annual Conference held at the University of Texas-Austin, March 29-31, 2018.
- Presider: Teaching African History in East Texas: Rewards.” Panel at the East Texas Historical Association, October 12-14, 2017.
- “The US in African Environmental History.” Paper presented at the Fall Meeting of the East Texas Historical Association, October 12-14, 2017.
- “Power and the Title: Maasai Group Ranches, Indigenous Rights, and Wildlife Conservation, 1980-2010.” Paper accepted at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference, March 29-April 2, 2017. Chicago.
- Co-Chair: “Five Decades with Africa and African Diasporas: Edward A. Alpers and Global African History-Local and the Global Circuits in East Africa” Panel at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, December 1-3, 2016. Washington D.C.
- “The 1956 Game Policy: Ambivalence and Conservationist Contestations over Kenya’s Maasailand.” Paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, December 1-3, 2016. Washington, D.C.
- “Wangari Maathai: Women, Politics, and the Challenge of Environmentalism in Kenya.” Paper accepted at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference, March 18-22, 2015. Washington, D.C.
- “International NGOs, Indigenous Rights, Development, and Human-Wildlife Contestations in and around Kenya’s Maasai-Mara National Reserve, 1980-2000.” Paper accepted at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference, March 12-16, 2014. San Francisco.
- “Wildlife Conservation in Kenya’s Maasailand, 1850s to 2000: Contested Histories and Narratives of the African Landscape.” Paper presented at Oral History Methods Graduate Workshop, Department of History, UCLA as part of the Oral History Cluster, UCLA on May 28, 2013.
- “Human-Wildlife Conflicts, Wildlife Conservation, and Maasai Group Ranches in Kenya, 1890-2000.” Paper presented at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference, 28-31 March 2012, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

SERVICE TO SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Committees

University:

- Faculty Senate, September 2018-August 2019.
- Excellence in Service Committee, 2018-

College of Humanities and Social Sciences:

- Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2017-

Department of History:

- Graduate Affairs Committee Member, 2017-2018
- Graduate Admissions Committee Member, 2018-

- Needs Committee, September 2018-August 2019

M.A. Theses (Committee Member):

- Tamara Parsons, “Writing Horses in Civil War History” (in progress)

Other Services to the Department of History:

- Graduate Fair: October 2, 2019
- Graduate Fair: October 4, 2018
- Saturday at Sam: November 9, 2019
- Saturday at Sam: March 23, 2019
- Saturday at Sam: November 10, 2018

ON-CAMPUS PRESENTATIONS FOR SHSU

- “A Guide to History.” Address at the History Scholarship Banquet, April 16, 2019.
- “Race and Mass Incarceration: A Panel Discussion.” Moderator, Sam Houston State University, February 20, 2019 (In celebration of Black History Month).
- “Monumental: A Conversation on the Controversy of Monuments in Africa,” February 28, 2018 (In celebration of Black History Month).
- “African Environmental History,” History Graduate Colloquium, October 29, 2018.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Manuscript Refereeing:

- *Oxford University Press* (two book manuscripts)
- *Journal of West African History* (one article manuscript)
- *Environmental History* (one article manuscript)

PUBLIC HISTORY & RELATED OUTREACH (Non-SHSU)

Public History:

- Speaker: Oberlin College, “Discussing the #ALLBLACKLIVESMATTER MOVEMENT in the Context of African Postcolonial Realities & Environmental Justice,” November 2, 2015.
- Guest Speaker: “Into Africa: Kenya's Wildlife and the Impact of Human-Wildlife Conflicts.” Lecture presented at The National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, February 17, 2009.

Related Public Outreach:

- Guest Speaker: Biology Colloquium, Earlham College, IN, April 2, 2012.
- Translator (Swahili-English): HBO’s “Witness: South Sudan 2012 Series,” December 27-29, 2011.
- Curriculum Consultant: Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute (KWSTI), Naivasha, Kenya & Kenya National Examinations Council, Nairobi, Kenya; I contributed towards the development of an Environmental History Curriculum, December 4, 2010.
- Volunteer Instructor: Community Conservation/Ecotourism Project, Koiyaki Guiding School, Maasai Mara Game Reserve, Kenya, July 2006; Kampi Ya Kanzi, Kuku Group Ranch, Amboseli, Kenya, June 2006.

LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

- Luo—Native speaker competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening
- Swahili—Native speaker competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening
- English—Native speaker competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening
- Kikuyu—Advanced competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening
- French—Reading knowledge
- Maasai—Listening knowledge (fair)

ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS

- American Society for Environmental History Member, 2010-present.
- African Studies Association Member, 2012-present.
- American Historical Association Member, 2013-present.
- Kenya Scholars and Studies Association, 2017-present.