

THE EXPLORERS CLUB FLAG EXPEDITION # 89 REPORT

'Journey To Katanga – An Expedition Into The Past' The 2010 Congo Expedition To Katanga



Submitted by
Julian Monroe Fisher FI'00 FRGS
Expedition Leader

Dates of Expedition: **June 13 - August 8, 2010**

Flag # 89 Report Submission Date
November 1, 2010

Introduction:

I had the honour of carrying the Explorer's Club Flag # 89 on my 'Journey To Katanga – An Expedition Into The Past - The 2010 Congo Expedition To Katanga'. It was the fourth time that I have carried Flag # 89 to the African continent.

'Journey To Katanga – An Expedition Into The Past' The 2010 Congo Expedition To Katanga' was the fourth phase of a research project that I began in early 2007. The six phases of the research project are as follows:

Phase One – November 2007 - January 2009:

Planning sessions to finalize all issues of logistics, finance and timeline for the project (Online video conferences).

Phase Two - November 2008 - end of February 2011:

Worldwide research in available books, papers, articles, original diaries as well as on site in secondary geographic regions, e.g., DRC-Congo, Zambia, Mozambique, Belgium, Ireland, France, Switzerland and The United Kingdom.

Phase Three - June 23 - August 8, 2009:

Onsite research in the Katanga kingdom. The team assembled in Lubumbashi, DRC Congo, in late June 2009. Upon arrival into Lubumbashi, I was met by a host delegation sent by the King of Katanga, his highness King Mwami. We then travel overland to the village of Bunkeya, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Katanga. The arrival there occurred in conjunction with the twelfth anniversary of the rule of King Mwami, a very festive time for the indigenous Garanganze people. From the base in the remote village of Bunyeka, we explored all historically significant locations that the Stairs Expedition to Katanga camped in 1891. We visited the exact location where Omer Bodson, a member of the Stairs Expedition, shot and killed Katangan King Msiri on December 20, 1891.

Phase Four – June 13 – August 8, 2010:

Return to Katanga to conduct initial reconnaissance for future excavation of two key Archaeological sites from 'The 1891-92 Stairs Expedition To Katanga' and to gather Ethnographical audio and visual content of the indigenous Garanganze people and their culture.

Phase Five – June/July/August 2011

Carry out excavation of two key Archaeological sites from 'The 1891-92 Stairs Expedition To Katanga', begin construction of 'The Julian Monroe Fisher Bunkeya Anthropological & Ethnographical Research Station', begin construction of 'The Royal Museum of the Garanganze' in the village of Bunkeya and to begin cataloguing the vast artefacts of the Garanganze culture in preparation for their eventual display in 'The Royal Museum of the Garanganze', the first such royal museum in The Democratic Republic of Congo.

Phase Six - before the end of 2011:

Complete the global search for the location of the skull of former Katangan King Msiri and to determine the status of the skull. If the skull is located, DNA testing will be carried out and compared to samples taken from King Mwami and/or Prince Patrick Kalenga Munongo, direct blood descendants of King Msiri.

As our research pertains to the status of the skull of King Msiri, to date said research has required close work with museums and institutions around the globe. Museums that the team have formally visited and/or contacted during our research include but were not limited to:

- The Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium
- The War Museum of Canada
- Queen's University of Belfast (Medicine, Biomedical & Health Sciences and Dentistry)
- McCord Museum of Canadian History
- The Natural History Museum of London
- The Natural History Museum of Belgium
- The Pitt Rivers Museum - UK
- The Royal Anthropological Institute - UK
- The Royal Museum of the Army & Military of Belgium
- The Royal College of Surgeons of England
- The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- Trinity College Dublin
- The Natural History Museum of Austria
- The Royal Military Museum of Canada
- Roy MacLaren – author of 'African Exploits'

FIELD RESEARCH SUMMER 2010

In June 2010 the expeditionary team travelled from our home countries to the Congolese city of Lubumbashi. Once in-country, we organized our logistics(transport & security) and supplies(food/beverage/research & excavation equipment/base camp gear) in the city of Lubumbashi. Transport and security were the biggest challenges. Up-country excursions requires travel over roads that have not been properly maintained in the last fifty years. The 1,500+ kilometres overland journey required to reach the research areas with our extensive gear to establish our base camps could only be approached by two means:

- a) charter flight
- b) transport cargo truck

Because the aircraft available for charter in the region are in ill-repair or hired out long term by NGO's, we opted for our only real choice, to hire a cargo transport truck. The mode of transport allowed us to cover a distance of between 10 to 15 kilometres per hour making for long days. While travelling we established our daily camp two hours before nightfall and as a rule of thumb it would be located near or within the boundaries of an indigenous settlement. We rose daily at one hour before first light. We broke camp daily following breakfast, stopped for two hours during the heat of the day to avoid overheating the cargo truck and to take on water for drinking and cooking purposes.

THE EXPEDITION TEAM WAS COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WITH ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD BY CONGOLESE PERSONNEL AS NOTED:

- Julian Monroe Fisher FI'00 FRGS - Initiator & Expedition Leader
- Prince Patrick Kalenga Munongo – Co-Expedition Leader & Research Assistance
- Mwami Mwenda-Bantu Munongo Godefroid Mwami, the King of Katanga – DRC-Congo Local Host
- Prince Eric Munongo - Katanga Logistics
- Prince Kalasa-Mukanda-Bantu-Jean-Claude – Bunkeya Logistics Officer
- John Mukachung-Yav-Kand-Bal, aka, John Daddy - Translator & In-country Communications Officer
- Regina Fisher - Expedition Logistics & Communications Officer – Europe
- Richard De Cauwer – Transport, Security & Up-Country Base Camp - Congo
- Chris Oberholzer – Transport, Security & Up-Country Base Camp - Congo
- Taby Kaba – Lubumbashi Airport Transport, Customs and Security -Congo

FIGURES**Figure 1.**

The expedition gathered audio and visual Ethnographical content by interviewing local elders in the village of Bunkeya as to the historical events of December 1891 when King Msiri was murdered during the colonial period historically referred to as 'the scramble for Africa' and the impact of those events upon the modern day indigenous Garanganze society.



Figure 2a

The expedition researched the historical sites for the establishment of The Bunkeya Cultural Village (BCV). The sites included but were not limited to the location where Omer Bodson (a captain during The 1891-92 Stairs Expedition to Katanga) met his demise after he murdered King Msiri.



Figure 2b. The location of the former house of Katangan King Msiri located on the sacred Mount Nkulu.



Figure 2c. The former village of Munema on the outskirts of modern day Bunkeya where Omer Bodson murdered Katangan King Msiri on December 21, 1891.

**Figure 3.**

The expedition was granted a large tract of land near the village of Bunkeya by Sa Majeste ´ Mwenda-Bantu Munongo Godefroid Mwami des Bayeke et du Garanganze, the King of Katanga, to establish 'The Julian Monroe Fisher Bunkeya Anthropological & Ethnographical Research Station'. Construction of the permanent research station is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2011. The lower picture shows Expedition leader Julian Monroe Fisher FRGS FI'00 shaking hands with King Mwenda-Bantu surrounded by Garanganze elders, on the future site.



Figure 4.

The expedition conducted initial reconnaissance for future excavation of two key Archaeological sites from 'The 1891-92 Stairs Expedition To Katanga' - the expeditions encampment and Fort Bunkeya.



Figure 5.

The expedition unearthed artifacts at the location Fort Bunkeya that are currently being carbon dated by Mag. Martin Obenaus at The University of Vienna, Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte.



Figure 6.

The expedition conducted initial reconnaissance for the establishment of a research station near the Lofoi Waterfalls in the Kundelungu National Parc.



Figure 7.

The expedition conducted initial reconnaissance for the establishment of a research station near the Kiubo Waterfalls located on the Lufira River near the Upemba National Park.



Figure 8.

The Lufira River is a headwater of the mighty Congo River.

**Figure 9.**

Located above the Kiubo Waterfalls near the the Lufira River, the expedition located a site the establish a permanent research station to conduct Ethnographical research along the Lufira River and to study the wildlife and the ecosystem of the Upemba National Park.



Figure 10.

The expedition was extended a formal request and mandate by Sa Majeste ´ Mwenda-Bantu Munongo Godefroid Mwami des Bayeke et du Garanganze, the King of Katanga, to build the first royal museum in the DR Congo. This will require cataloguing thousands of artifacts from the Garanganze Kingdom of Katanga. We have established the site for royal museum and cataloguing of the artifacts and construction of the museum will be begin in the Summer of 2011.



Figure 11.

The expedition assisted in establishing the first radio station in the village of Bunkeya, with a broadcast radius of up to 50 kms.



Figure 12.

The expedition attended the annual coronation ceremonies of Sa Majeste ´ Mwenda-Bantu Munongo Godefroid Mwami des Bayeke et du Garanganze, the King of Katanga.



Figure 13.

Indigenous Garanganze villagers sing for the King of Katanga at the annual coronation events that take place in the village of Bunkeya each year during the month of July.

THE GOALS & OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN OUR FLAG EXPEDITION:

- a) To continue researching the impact of the events of 'The 1891-92 Stairs Expedition To Katanga' upon the local indigenous people of Bunkeya
 - Gather oral content by interviewing local elders, local families, local business leaders, local medical health providers, local NGO's
 - Gathering audio & visual ethnographical content

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- b) To conduct initial reconnaissance for creating The Bunkeya Cultural Village (BCV);
 - Research historical sites for The Bunkeya Cultural Village (BCV)

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- c) To establish a permanent research station in the village of Bunkeya and to determine a site for 'The Julian Monroe Fisher Bunkeya Anthropological & Ethnographical Research Station'

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- d) To conduct initial reconnaissance for future excavation of two key Archaeological sites from 'The 189192 Stairs Expedition To Katanga' - the expeditions encampment and Fort Bunkeya;

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- e) To continue gathering audio and visual ethnographical content;

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- f) To conduct research of the ecosystem and wildlife within the Kundelungu National Parc;

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

- g) To conduct initial reconnaissance for the establishment of a research station near Lofoi Waterfalls in the Kundelungu National Parc;

STATUS: ACCOMPLISHED

ATTACHMENT - EXPEDITION PHOTOS



Picture 1: Cargo truck used for up-country transportation.



Picture 2: The secondary roads throughout Katanga have not been properly maintained for the last fifty years.



Picture 3: Travel along the roads is at a snails pace, achieving 10 to 15 kilometers per hour.



Picture 4: While travelling we established our daily camps near or within an indigenous settlement.



Picture 5: Local women gather around a water well in an indigenous settlement some five hundred kilometers north of the Congolese city of Lubumbashi.



Picture 6: Expedition leader Julian Monroe Fisher FRGS FI'00 proudly displaying The Explorers Club Flag # 89 at the base of the Kiubo Waterfalls on the Lufira River in the Katanga Province of The Democratic Republic of the Congo.