

# Young Researcher

An independent magazine for budding scientists. • Vol: 11, Issue No.2, May 2011



## Hallo! Young Researchers!

Hello young Researcher! It is me, Charlie again with something quite different this time round. It is all about a very interesting exhibition I saw recently at the Nairobi National Museum. There is always something new to discover. Well, this exhibition was titled "*Historia Ya Kenya*". Everyone has a history, so does our country Kenya. How beautiful it is to learn the history of your country in the museum.

I was invited in the Nairobi National Museum by my friend Mwanaima Salim. It was real fun because I learnt so much about the history of Kenya. Mwanaima is an education officer in the Nairobi National Museum. She is an historian and one of her favorite activities in the museum is to study more about the history of Kenya. This is why she invited me to take me through the history gallery to experience and identify with our country's history.

By the way, what is history? This is where we started. I learnt from her that history is the study of the past. She told me that it is for this reason that the history gallery was set up in the museum for people like me and you to learn about the history of Kenya. Mwanaima mentioned that the history of Kenya is divided into three different sections which include; the Pre-colonial period, Colonial period and the Independent Kenya.

Realizing that I could not figure out that, she went on and explained that the first section, which is the pre-colonial period, gave us the earliest history of Kenya. She said that the earliest history of Kenya can be traced as early as when man was developing in relation to his **environment** and culture as shown by **archaeological** evidence. Mwanaima told me that Kenya has one of the longest history of man which is shown by archaeological evidences. These can be seen in archaeological sites like Olorgesailie, Kariandusi, Koobi Fora and Fort Ternan.

At this point we sat down on a bench and then she removed a map of Kenya where she showed me where these archaeological sites are located. I noticed that most of them are located in the Rift Valley. I sought to know why this is so. She told me that it is because the Rift Valley has warm climate, many rivers and an open savanna grassland which was a suitable place for people to live. She explained to me that Kenya's earliest history is seen as having people with simple ways of living and their numbers increased as they **migrated** from other parts of Africa. She did not forget to mention that before the colonial period, there were people who had come to Kenya from other places including outside Africa. These were traders, explorers, **missionaries** and adventurers from Europe and Asia.

We stretched ourselves a little bit and then moved on. Mwanaima explained that the years 1895-1920 marked early years of modern Kenya, whereby British brought in new things which Africans were not used to at the time. It is here that the Kenya-Uganda railway was constructed which led to Indians migrating to Kenya. She explained that it is here that Kenya slowly came under the British government.

Some of the reasons for the construction of the Uganda railway were:

- to establish effective control over British East Africa
- to facilitate maximum economic exploitation of the region
- to gain control of the source of the River Nile.
- to link Uganda with the coast and the outside world.

Something amazing is that all African communities just looked at this as development but this marked the beginning of the colonization of Kenya. Kenyan communities reacted differently to these new developments. Some collaborated while others resisted. The communities that resisted included the Nandi, Agirama, Bukusu and Somali. Those who **collaborated** included the Maasai, and the Wanga



Construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway between 1896 and 1901



*Lenana, was a Maasai leader who signed a peace treaty with the British*

Some of the reasons why people resisted the colonial government included:

- Forced labour-people were forced to work on European farms.
- Loss of land.
- High taxation.
- Rude colonial administrators.
- Registration of Africans(the Kipande)
- Conflict between Christianity and local African believers.

Among some of the brave leaders who **resisted** the colonial administration were; Koitalel Arap Samoei, Waiyaki wa Hinga and Mekatilili wa Menza.

Some of the reasons why others collaborated include:

- Natural calamities e.g. draught, floods etc because they needed help and protection from the colonial administration.
- Wanted protection from the European powers and enmity among the local leaders.

Next we moved to the second section which marked the beginning of the Kenya colony. This covered the period 1920-1963. The construction of the Uganda railway opened great opportunities for white settlement and establishment of new urban centers inside Kenya. The white settlers demanded greater control in the running of affairs of the British East African Protectorate. In 1920, the **protectorate** was renamed the Kenya Colony. The British control was felt

everywhere and they proceeded to rule Kenya as a colony for the next 43 years.

During this time, many political organizations came up to fight for independence. People wanted to be free and do things on their own. Some of these political organizations formed to struggle for independence are shown in the table below.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION	LEADER	YEAR
Young Kikuyu Association	Harry Thuku	7, June, 1921
Kavirondo Tax Payers Welfare Association(KTWA)	African teachers at Maseno, Jonathan Okwiri, Simeon Nyende, Reuben Omulo, Mathayo Otieno, Benjamin Owuor and Joel Owino.	1921
Ukamba Members Association(UMA)	Samuel Muindi Mbingu and others	1938
The coast African association(CAA)	Noah Mwanasele and others	1943

All these political organizations were organized to fight for or against forced labour, high taxation and land **alienation** by settlers, better education for Africans, introduction of the Kipande. She continued to explain that this led to armed struggle in which a lot of blood was shed and finally independence. Events such as the Lancaster house Conferences were held in London to chat the new constitution for an independent Kenya.

Majimbo government.

Land issues especially the former European farms.

Poor transport and communication

Poverty.

Diseases

On December 12, 1963, Kenya celebrated its independence. I breathed a sigh of relief. She explained that this marked the end of the colonial period whereby a new government took control in running the affairs of the independent state. It also marked the post colonial period where Africans and Kenyans in particular were able to rule themselves. Kenyatta became the first president of Kenya until 1978. Kenya has continued to make strides in national development. When Kenya became a republic on 1st June 1964, Kenyatta formed the first cabinet. During his presidency, he faced a lot of challenges which were:

Rivalry with KANU. Some members eg Oginga Odinga broke away to form KPU

Opposition from KADU which was for



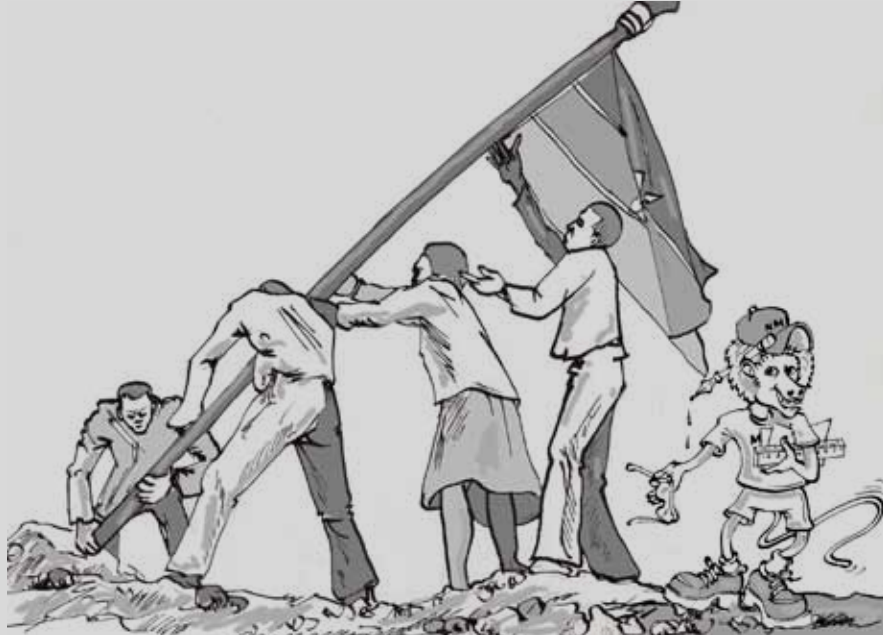
*Mekatilili was one of the Kenyan leaders who resisted the British occupation*



*A group of Mau mau fighters who actively resisted British rule*







Kenyan flag being hoisted on 12th December, 1963 at Uhuru gardens and on Mt. Kenya

## Word Buzz

Find out the meaning of the words below. You may use your dictionary or ask your teacher.

- Colonial period
- Environment
- Archaeological
- Missionaries
- Alienation
- migrated
- Collaborated
- Resisted
- Exploitation
- Protectorate

## Do it yourself

Before Kenya attained independence from Britain in 1963, streets and roads in Nairobi bore many English and a few south Asian names. After independence, many streets were named after local freedom fighters or renowned Pan-Africanists with whom president Kenyatta had interacted with during the struggle for freedom.

The table below shows the old names of the streets, find out the current names.

Old name of the street	Current name of the street
St. Austin's Road	James Gichuru Road
Duke Road	
Queensway	
Sadler Street	
Archer Road	
Queen Elizabeth way	

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**Special thanks:** YR Club alumni, current members and patrons

**Illustrations:** Erick Mokua

**Layout:** Twenty Twenty Design

A publication of the National Museums of Kenya , Interactive Public Programmes Project.

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