

The Long Journey



Sudanese Refugees in Mississippi Tell Their Stories



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Cover, clockwise from top: Jana Branch, John Yaak, Carly Deweese.

Section I: Introductory Material

Introduction

This pamphlet is a collection of narratives by Sudanese refugees living in Jackson, Mississippi. Over the course of eight weeks, my students in Introduction to Liberal Studies, an interdisciplinary freshman seminar, collaborated with refugees in writing and editing these narratives. This pamphlet includes appendices: the syllabus description of this collaboration, which the Sudanese participants read and discussed with me before agreeing to the project, as well as group narratives of the composition process. The Millsaps College Faith & Work Initiative sponsored the collaboration.

The Sudanese first became a part of my life three years ago. A few dozen tall young Africans began attending services at Saint Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral, where I worship as a chorister and congregant. We learned that these young people, many of whom are orphans, had been reared as Episcopalians and had been brought to Jackson by Catholic Charities of Mississippi.

During the first year of their lives in the United States, several of the refugees came to Millsaps College for tutoring in English, math, and other subjects. The second year, the Human Rights Committee of the Campus Ministry Team sponsored tutoring sessions, occasionally meeting students off campus at group homes. The refugees have become more acclimated to Jackson, and many of them participate in after-school activities like track and soccer. Others have jobs. Tutoring now takes place on an *ad hoc* basis without group oversight.

Many of the refugees who came to Jackson as unaccompanied minors are now adults eager to tell their stories. This pamphlet is the result of the happy collaboration

between the 15 students of my freshman seminar and nine refugees, two of whom, Simon Deng and Deng Mabil, are themselves students at Millsaps College.

In addition to meeting with the Sudanese, my students and I read and discussed news reports and scholarly articles on Sudan. To become better listeners, we also listened together to tapes of Sudanese refugees speaking about their experiences. In my directions, I repeatedly emphasized the importance of letting the refugees make decisions about the shape of their narratives. Several of the refugees wrote drafts of their stories, revising them after conversations with my students. Some chose to dictate their stories to my students, taking home with them copies of these dictations to consider and revise. Copies of recorded conversations between my students and the refugees are available in the Millsaps College archives.

Elizabeth Ayen Dau wished to be included in the pamphlet but left Jackson before the beginning of my course. Though Elizabeth has not had the chance to revise or clarify her story, I have nevertheless included a condensed transcript of our conversation.

In the refugee camps, girls are offered few educational opportunities and are vulnerable to violence, including rape. Surprisingly, of the 3,700 Sudanese refugees settled in the United States, only 89 were female.¹ I met five young women in the first group of refugees in Jackson, one of whom arrived with three young daughters and another of whom came with an orphaned niece. Three of the young women, including Elizabeth, left Jackson for what they felt to be better educational opportunities in Salt Lake City; a fourth left for New England.

¹ Tara McKelvey, "Where Are the 'Lost Girls'?" Slate posted Friday, Oct. 3, 2003, at 8:56 AM PT. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2089225/>; Ishbel Matheson, "The 'Lost Girls' of Sudan." BBC News World Edition posted Friday, June 7, 2002, 15:57 GMT 16:57 UK. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2031286.stm>.

I must mention the names of some of those most actively involved in working with the Sudanese. Kenneth Townsend directed the Campus Ministries tutoring program, and frequent participants included Paige Henderson, Akram Al-Turk, Veronica Viner, Deondra Jefferson, Yolanda Magee, Jessica Knight, Lauren Bardwell, Jermaine Conley, and Sonya Brown. Kathryn Gray, who once taught the Sudanese as an instructor of ESL (English as a Second Language) in the Jackson Public Schools, offered advice and encouragement through the Faith & Work Initiative. Three parishioners at Saint Andrew's Cathedral have been intimately involved with the Sudanese during their day-to-day lives, and several refugees refer to them in their essays by name. Barry Duke helped begin the tutoring program at Millsaps three years ago, driving the Sudanese to Millsaps and then home afterwards; she has taken three young people into her home as foster children and recently visited Uganda. Teresa Robison coordinates much of the parish's ministry to the Sudanese, tirelessly driving refugees to the doctor and helping them oversee their finances. The Sudanese have found in Julie Hines an important friend and advocate; several have described to me how Julie first taught them to cook using American foods. Father Bill Richter and Mrs. Emma Connolly have supported the community as clergy and staff.

None of the children could have come to Jackson without the bold leadership of Catholic Charities of Mississippi, directed by Linda Raff and Bishop Houck.

We have assembled these stories to familiarize you with the lives of the Sudanese in our midst. These young people struggle with the memory of those who have died and the anxiety of not knowing what will happen to those living in Sudan or in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. Deng Mabil, for example, recently suffered major losses. An aunt was murdered in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, and a sister died in Sudan. My

students and I have been instructed by the refugees' indomitable spirit, their will to survive and to bring good to the world.

In our studies and conversations we have also learned that the conflict in Sudan has not been solely between Christians and Muslims. In reading Alex De Waal's discussion of the war in Sudan, we learned that only 10 percent of the population of the Muslim North, for example, voted for the radical government that took power by force and now rules in Khartoum. The rich oil and agricultural resources of the South have been important political and economic factors in the war. The Nuba mountains, most of whose population the government has killed or exiled, once included black African Muslims, Christians, and followers of traditional religions living together in tranquility.²

Recent peace initiatives, supported by the U. S. Sudan Peace Act of October 21, 2002, offer reason for hope. Accords call for ending hostilities, allowing the delivery of relief supplies, ending Sharia law in the South, integrating the Sudanese People's Liberation Army into the Sudanese National Army, and allowing much of the South to vote on independence within six years.³ Let us hope and pray for the success of the recent accords and the return of peace to Sudan.

Greg Miller

January 8, 2004

²"Creating Devastation and Calling it Islam: The War for the Nuba, Sudan," SAIS Review 21.2 (2001) 117-132.

³ Tim Callahan, "Sudan Peace Act 'has teeth,'" Christianity Today 46.13 (12/9/2002): 17 ; "Sudan peace in our time?" New African January 2004: 10-14; "Peace in our time," The Economist 369.8347 (10/25/2003): 43.

**We must get beyond textbooks, go out into the bypaths...
and tell the world the glories of our journey.**

- John Hope Franklin

So very often in our lives events occurring in the larger world go unnoticed and unseen. They quickly fade from our consciousness (if, indeed, we were ever aware of them at all) because of their distance from our personal experiences. Yet that makes them no less important to other members of humanity.

The current conflict in Sudan, Africa, is one of those marginalized events. For the past five decades people have fought and died in Sudan with nominal awareness by the rest of the globe. Yet some survivors of those battles have come to live right here in the United States—including Georgia, Connecticut, Texas, Arizona, and Mississippi—and want to share their encounters with the public.

At Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, a group of nervous young freshmen undergraduates met some of these “Lost Boys of Sudan” for the first time this year in an effort to begin work on a collection of essays by the Sudanese—the very collection you are holding in your hands right now. Each Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon for several weeks the students and the refugees met, talked, discussed, shared, and wrote down everything that they thought the world should know about the war in Sudan. Eventually, through the collaboration of both students and refugees, essays were written and gathered into a booklet.

That was our purpose, and these were our methods.

Chris Spear

Brief History

The history of the war in Sudan is a long, complicated one full of tragedy and death. Since Sudan gained its independence nearly five decades ago in 1956, war has raged within its borders all but eleven of those years. The most recent fighting began in 1983 and has not let up since then. There have been over two million deaths during this war since 1983 alone. Also more than four million Sudanese have been displaced from their homes and their country, causing many Sudanese to flee to neighboring countries in Africa. Many perceive the war in Sudan to be one solely about religious freedom, when in fact there are many more issues at hand. Other reasons for the war are rebellion against the government and the fight for oil, which has been in abundance in Sudan since 1998. With a history this long and tragic, we as Americans must do something to aid the Sudanese in their quest for peace.

Maggie Briscoe

Chelala, Cesar. "Sudan: a war against the people," Lancet 359.9301 (2002): 161-2.

"Fingers crossed, *Sudan's* terrible war is inching closer to an end," The Economist 369:8347 (10/25/2003): 43.

Martin, Randolph. "Sudan's Perfect War," Foreign Affairs 81.2 (2002): 111-28.

Section II: Sudanese Refugees in Mississippi Tell Their Stories

My Bitter Journey

On May 22, 1987, I started my bitter journey. It happened like a dream, but it was real. Truly, that was the last time I saw my parents. There were hundreds of thousands of reasons for that journey, one of which was war. Apart from other calamities, war was the only one that uprooted me from my own soil, and let me meander between the borders of African countries.

About four thirty in the evening, I brought my cattle back from where I took them for grazing. My father was waiting for me at the front yard ready to help me arrange the cattle in the order in which they sleep. My elder brother was settling the young ones because they mess up their place when they jump up in joy seeing their mothers coming.

After my father arranged the big cows in their order, he sat down under the hut where we always had our dinner, leaving me to arrange the little calves and to clean the place after that. Shortly after everything was put in its place, everybody came together. That was me, my brother, two sisters, mother, and father. We always ate dinner and then told stories, but that evening my father said we should not waste our time outside, but go to bed straight away. Everybody was curious about what was going on. We began to ask a lot of questions. My younger sister asked, "Is this the day of Aleer, Father?" Aleer was our ancestor who died a long time ago, and people believed him to be the founder of our tribe, so the day he died was to be remembered every year. Everybody was expected to observe silence on that day. "This is not the day of Aleer," my father replied with a smile on his face. "If I tell you what is going on, you will not go to sleep." He put his hand on top of

his smoking pipe to add more fire in there. Everybody was looking at him with surprise, but no one knew what to ask. He forced himself to say, "These are the days of war." Everybody was caught in silence because that was the first time for some of us to hear the term "war." My elder brother broke the silence when he asked, "War with who?" "War with Arabs," my father replied, and everybody under the hut asked, "Why?" "The story is so complicated you will not understand it," my father replied, trying to avoid our question. He had already heard about the enemy attacking the neighboring villages, but he did not want to tell us the truth, because he thought we might be badly scared by the news. "Go to sleep, but Mabior, don't leave your brother behind in case anything happens tonight," he said, pointing at me while I walked toward our house.

That day I began my first journey in my mind, only thinking about walking or running, because I had never walked for a long distance before. I tried to force myself to go to sleep, but my mind could not allow me; my mind was disturbed by the misfortune I was going to encounter. Lastly I told myself that death is with God, and life is with God, and whatever comes cannot be escaped, so I went to sleep. I did not know what my brother was thinking. Since he was a grown-up person, he did not worry so much like I did. My brother was four years older than me.

Suddenly, about three o'clock in the morning, I awoke to the sound of people screaming, followed by a terrible sound of gunshots. I heard my mother's voice for the last time. She was calling my two sisters to follow her and telling my brother to come with me. I was still lying on the bed not knowing what to do. My brother grasped my hand, and we jumped out. Our neighbors' houses were already on fire. As I ran across the yard, I heard the bullets in the air, breaking the tree branches with a very loud noise similar to a

thunderstorm. Since it was dark, it was not easy for us to see our way, and we could not find where our parents went. The shooting was too much, and we could not hear anybody talking, so we decided to hide under the bushes in front of our garden. We thought that the shooting would come to an end so we could go back home.

The shooting was nonstop. We moved a little bit further to avoid some bullets that terrified us. As we moved, we encountered a group of people hiding under the big trees. They were not from our village, but they were from our tribe. Many of them were older than my brother. They told us to stick with them. One man asked, “Where are you from?” “From Pobot,” my brother gave a brief reply without looking at him. He began to comfort us by saying, “Follow us and you will eat what we shall eat, and drink what we shall drink.” No doubt, that was the beginning of my first real journey, apart from that one in my mind. I did not know where I was going. I was just following the rest. We met other people about seven o’clock in the morning. The sun appeared like a ball above the tree, red and hot. The sky was clear with a few scattered clouds to the north.

Before we moved, one of the elders said, “We cannot move during the daytime like this. There will be no water for us to drink. Let’s wait until the dark when it will be cool and safe to walk.” Instead of walking during the day, we walked at night to avoid the sun’s heat and to protect ourselves from enemies. But the night was not safe either; it is the time when wild animals go out to look for their prey. We waited for the evening to come, hiding under the big trees with very tall grasses.

While we were waiting, we were attacked by another enemy group that we could not see because of the tall grass. When I heard the gunshots, I ran to hide behind a huge anthill, but my cousin Monykuch remained under the tree, not knowing what to do but cry.

The first person to be shot was a man who told us to wait in line. I thought the gunshots came from behind us, so I turned around to look, but then I realized the attackers were in front of us. Then we all ran back to cross the river the second time in order to escape. After the attack was over, I realized the shirt I had been wearing was gone. One of my friends gave me another of his shirts to wear. Although it was a short attack, several people were killed.

About eight o'clock that night, one elder walked in front of everybody and said, "Are you ready for the walk?" I did not see him because it was dark; I only heard the sound and people replying, "Yes." Like me, a lot of people were not sure of where they were going, but a few elders had been to Ethiopia before the war. We walked the whole night without rest. I found myself drowsing as I walked down a very narrow road with dust covering my feet. I could not hear anything except the sound of bare feet loudly touching the ground.

The following day, we met another group, which was the group of my friends, Chol and Manykuch. I began to feel relief when I saw them; they talked to me about our beautiful village we left as we spent our second day at the river bank under the thick bushes and the scattered tall trees. Worst of all, I felt sick when the next part of the journey was about to begin. I was not thinking of what to eat or what to drink, but about going to hell or to heaven. People began to move, and I sat under the trees watching them with begging eyes. I had seen many of my friends eaten by wild animals, and I was thinking that my turn should be next. My brother was determined to ensure my safety. He asked me, "Simon, what is wrong with you?" I tried to speak, but I could not say it clearly. My leg hurt, and with tears streaming down my face, I explained that I could not walk anymore. When I

remember those days I give thanks to God, but I will never forget my brother who carried me on his back for two days before we reached Ethiopia.

We reached Ethiopia on July 30, 1987, but that was not a safe journey because we lost a lot of our friends. We have nothing more to do than to ask God to let them rest at his right hand in the kingdom of heaven, and to guide us in this world to do good things so that we can see them again.

We lived in Ethiopia for almost four years, but we left it in the middle of the fourth year. On our way back to Sudan, we faced thousands of bad situations; more danger from wild animals like lions, hyenas, and snakes, was on a high scale. Hundreds of thousands of people died of hunger, thirst, and diseases. Despite those hard conditions, we managed to reach a place called Gilo. The river is the border between Sudan and Ethiopia. That hour will go to the grave with me.

We felt like we were far away from the enemy when we reached Gilo, because it is just a footstep across the border from Sudan. We relaxed, took our time looking for something to eat, and chatted, reminding ourselves of the unbelievable situations we had just been through, hoping to cross the river peacefully on the boat.

It do not take long before I heard the sound of gunshots, and my friends said, “These are Oromos [Oromos were Ethiopian rebels].” People who did not know how to swim drowned in that river, and some people were shot. That was the time that I realized that God teaches people sometimes in hidden ways, and people do not realize it before they face a certain situation that could take life away. I came to realize that God wanted me to learn how to swim in the Ethiopian camp, but I only enjoyed it for the pleasure. At the camp, we usually went to the river and taught ourselves how to swim, but some of my friends who did

not pay any attention to what we were doing refused to learn. They did not hear the voice of God when we asked them to go swimming. To assure you, the survivors of that attack in the Gilo River were the only people who agreed to go and teach themselves how to swim. The majority of those who died were the people who refused to go for swimming, but the exceptional few who lived were helped by other people who knew how to swim.

It is always possible in human life to remember what bad things or good things happened in one's life. In my case I could not remember any good things in my life because I was born in war. The only good thing I remember is the way God protected me in those conditions and gave me his word as my shield. In such a bad situation, I always remember Psalm 23, which says, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Simon Deng



Peter Madol

Simon Deng

A Slave in Your Own Country

Acknowledgement

In preparing this pamphlet, I would like to give my special gratitude to a special friend, mentor, and academic advisor, Dr. Greg Miller, for his hard work in trying to enhance the awareness of the plight of the Sudanese refugees, currently known as “The Lost Boys of Sudan,” to the American public. The horror and tribulations that we have faced in our life due to the civil war in Sudan need public attention in order to increase the awareness of the war’s greatest human degradation.

I am also grateful to him for allowing me to participate in this project to contribute my own experiences about the impact and the reality of this civil war in Sudan. In addition, I am thankful to the American churches for assisting my brothers and sisters from Sudan in adjusting to another daily life in America. My special thanks go to my church, Saint Andrews Episcopal Cathedral in Jackson, Mississippi.

Finally, my appreciation and gratitude go to a group of Millsaps College students for their tireless and diligent work in coordinating with us to produce this pamphlet. I am also grateful to those who have worked and are working still for the peace in Sudan. May God continues to bless you bountifully and continue placing strength in your heart to bring an end to the war in Sudan, a nation whose land is divided by rivers and whose people are tall and smooth, as stated by the prophet Isaiah.

It is clear that being treated liked a slave in your own country is one of the most inhumane things a human being can experience. In this project, we will look at the impacts of the war in Sudan with the emphasis on the plight of the Sudanese Lost Boys.

About Myself

My name is Deng Garang Mabil, but back at home in Sudan, many people called me with my nickname “Bul,” which generally means “drum” in the Dinka dialect. However, this name does not actually mean “drum.” According to our clan’s belief, it means “lion.” Our clan respects the lion a lot because we associate it with protective roles in our mythology. I am originally from Southern Sudan. I was born in 1983 in Jongulei province in the Upper Nile region in a small village around Poktap town called Ajueny.

I have three sisters and four brothers. I am my mother’s second son and number four of those born in my father’s family. Both of my parents came from rich and prominent families. My grandfather was a chief of the village and had six wives. Each wife had her own sons and daughters, so the family was divided into three sections, headed by the top three wives, and the other wives were lined up under their control. My father’s mother has four sons and one daughter. She was number two in the family and was among the top wives to receive a share in the family. On the other hand, my mother’s father was also a chief of the village and had two wives. My grandmother was the first wife in the family, and she had eight sons and three daughters; the second wife in that family had only three daughters. The two families of my parents used to own a large number of cattle which made them proud and prominent in their villages, but because of the outbreak of the civil war, the cattle and the wealth that they used to own have been devastated and are now gone.

My Journey

Writing this story of my life is a new experience for me, not only because I have never done so before, but because it seems to me that no one will be interested in my

experiences. Though I have this perception, I am not writing to excite sympathy for my own sufferings, but I want to write to arouse awareness of the conditions of the people of Southern Sudan, who are still in bondage, suffering what I have suffered--and most of them far worse. It is only by experience that anyone can really understand the impact of war on people or how horrible it really is.

I left my beloved country, Sudan, in 1989, due to the outbreak of the civil war. My companions and I, currently known as the Lost Boys of Sudan, were forced to take refuge in Ethiopia as enemies from Northern Sudan continued wiping out homes, schools, hospitals, livestock and many other means of supporting the lives of the people of the South.

We walked hundreds of miles to Ethiopia, seeking safety. On our way to Ethiopia, we encountered many of the harshest situations--beyond human imagination. We became prey for the lions and many other wild animals. There was no food and water. Lack of water was one of the major problems that we faced on our way. Many people drank their own urine or even sucked moist mud in order to cool their dry throats. Thousands of my companions never reached Ethiopia. They fell as victims of starvation and diseases.

After we reached Ethiopia, we ended up not staying long because of the change in government in Ethiopia in 1991. So we had to flee back again to Sudan. This time was the rainy season, and many rivers had started overflowing. Many people were drowned while crossing the rivers. Soon after our arrival in Sudan, we automatically began facing the threat of increased fighting between the Southern rebels and the government troops from the north. The government began bombarding the places we had settled, so we were forced to set out again, this time to Kenya.

We came to Kenya in 1992. I lived there for almost eight years in the refugee camp called Kakuma. I finished my primary education in the camp in Kenya and went on to secondary school. There, I was in my senior year before I came to the U.S. Meanwhile, I didn't have a chance to sit for the national exam in order to receive my secondary school certificate because I had to leave for America. In the year 2000, the United Nations began our process of coming to the U.S., and I was among the people designated for permanent resettlement. Besides, I grudgingly agreed to go to the U.S. because I was not sure of the life I was going to have. I opted to go because of the conviction that neither the refugee camp nor Sudan would offer me much of the future I was anticipating.

I came to the United States on December 4, 2000 through a refugee resettlement program, and I was placed with Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program in Jackson, Mississippi. I have been in the state of Mississippi since then. It has been nothing but a positive experience for me in this state, despite the negative stereotypes and unfavorable past the state has been known for. I attended Bailey Magnet High School, one of the public schools in Jackson, and I graduated from high school in 2002. Since I came to high school in Jackson, it has been necessary for me to work diligently for my education and for the support of my family. This has not left me much leisure to participate in various school activities, but I did manage to participate in a few activities in high school, including soccer and choir.

In April 2002, I was nominated to attend the Congressional Student Leadership Conference (CSLC) in Washington D.C. This is a kind of a summer program that brings high school students and even college undergraduates across the nation to the U.S. capitol to witness leadership in action and get to see democracy in action and learn about defense

and intelligence in Washington D.C. Being nominated to this conference was a great honor for me. Regardless of financial constraint and the high cost of attending the conference, I was able to attend the conference through the work and generosity of my sponsor, Catholic Charities of Jackson, Mississippi. From this conference, I have learned what leadership is all about and how being an effective leader will help me achieve my goals and dreams.

Moreover, I got an acceptance letter with an academic scholarship from Millsaps College shortly before I received my high school diploma. Having received admission to Millsaps College with an academic scholarship was also a great honor and a sort of encouragement to let me continue working on my dreams at the college level. So I made a decision to work hard in school and get a job to support my family and other extended family members and avoid many other leisure activities on school campus because I consider these less important than duties to my family. I want to do whatever is necessary to provide relief for those left behind. I know education is the first priority in order to provide adequate help and, ultimately, to save people in Sudan in the future fully. But what if one ends up losing one's whole family from starvation or sickness while pursuing one's education? This is why I sometimes see education as the person's future comfort. Since I have come to the U.S., it has been my dream to combine school and work in order to bring change to the situation of our people in the refugee camps.

Deng Mabil



Gabriel Panchol Jessica Knight Deng Mabil Kenneth Townsend

My Life Journey: A Different and Better World

The British ruled Sudan as a colony. From 1932 to 1955, a war finally began between Sudan and Britain. Sudan defeated Britain in 1955. In 1956, Sudan became independent. Once Sudan became independent, a problem broke out between the north and the south. The tribes in the north were Muslim, and therefore they wanted the tribes in the south to be Muslim as well. However, the south was made up of many different religions, and these people did not want to give up their beliefs. On account of this, the north started a war with the south in 1983.

While I was looking after my father's cattle one afternoon in 1987, Islamic fundamentalists ruthlessly attacked my village, killing my parents, relatives and friends. Immediately I ran away to save my own life, leaving everything else behind at the age of three. I wandered in the forest surrounded by thorns and wild animals, such as lions and hyenas. Many people in our group died from attacks of these animals. Luckily, I survived these attacks because I had learned how to dodge the animals as a cattle keeper. On my way, I met several thousand children whose parents and relatives were also killed by the Islamic fundamentalists. All we had to eat in the forests was wild fruit, leaves and the roots of different trees. Since most parts of Sudan are desert, I witnessed some people drink urine to quench their thirst. Therefore many of my friends died due to thirst and starvation. 7,000, out of the 20,000 people we started with, survived the trip. Given that I was so young, I thought the whole world was facing the same suffering. Later I saw some people sleeping on the mattresses and eating regular food. I then began to wonder if there was a different and better world out there.

I spent three months wandering in uninhabited forest before reaching Ethiopia. Fortunately, in Ethiopia, I met some people who knew how to see the world normally. They taught me how not to live through one tragic event after another. In 1988, things started to get better. Our group was now eating donated corn. I began going to school under trees and in mud-grass houses. With the grief still in my mind, I saw the image of my parents every minute. Nevertheless, I tried to focus on my education. Our school was mainly a refugee school. We even had to write notes on the floor. The teachers were given corn, or maize, as their salaries. I remember when I had reached third grade; it was something that I never thought I would accomplish. My life was starting to look up. Things were finally going my way.

By July 1991, fighting erupted between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This fighting forced over 20,000 Sudanese minors, sheltered in Ethiopia, back to Sudan. Crossing the Nile was very difficult because many of us did not know how to swim. Thousands of Sudanese people died. In August 1991, we were camped on the Sudan-Ethiopian border in Pochalla. Here, many people continued to die of starvation. During this time a letter was sent to Geneva requesting humanitarian assistance. While we waited for the response, half of the population died. People kept looking up at the sky to see if a plane was going to rescue us. Finally, one day a plane did fly across the sky. People who were half dead ran towards this plane hoping to be rescued. Instead, it was a plane that dropped a bomb, ordered by the Khartoum government, and it killed many people. By the grace of God, I ran to the forest with a few other survivors. By the next week, Red Cross workers made some emergency landings and collected us from under the trees. They nicknamed us “The Sudanese Lost Boys.” Also during that emergency landing, I saw healthy people coming out of the plane

carrying pens in their pockets. I said to myself, I wish I could be like them. I hoped I would get my chance.

In 1993, sixteen thousand minors arrived in the refugee camp in Kenya, including myself. Upon arriving there, I did not know if I was alive or dead, but I did feel myself breathing in and out. I began to get stronger from the food I had been given while in Kenya. I also started school again, with the belief that education would be my tools, just like the tools I used in my father's garden. Most of the students who attended school with me developed mental disorders, due to their minds being full of war memories. They looked up at the roof, counting poles and timbers, instead of looking at the blackboard.

The memories of my father and mother have helped me survive throughout this entire ordeal. I dedicated my existence to them, and I continued school. I am proud of myself for maintaining at least an average grade in every country that I have lived in. My journey continued and brought me to America in December 2000. I came through the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services, under the auspices of the United Nation's High Commissioner for the Refugees. This was the end of my long suffering.

I have adjusted well to the United States. I attended Bailey Magnet High School in Jackson. I am very grateful to all of my teachers for their continuous help and support. I especially remember my math teacher during my senior year, who told me, "I have never taught pupils who gave me such a genuine satisfaction as you did. You were a good student. You mastered your work." I was even chosen as a member of the *Who's Who Among American High School Students*. The changes that I have accomplished during my years here have been remarkable.

From my own life experiences, which I have shared with you, I have learned that “life is neither a silver dish nor a straight line.” The length of life cannot be measured like an angle. My experiences have made me grow up fast. I learned how to reason and survive at a very early age. This experience has taught me how to work through the difficult times. There are always better times ahead. Sometimes you have to do what you need to do to survive.

John Yaak



Gabriel Malual

John Yaak

John Auiik

Interview with Elizabeth Ayen Dau⁴

My name is Elizabeth Ayen Dau. When I ran away from the war, I was six years old. And in 1991, I was seven, my father dead a long time. I don't know my father. And my mom died in 1991. I have a lot of people died in Africa. My brother died. My sister died. I now have two sisters: one in Kenya and one in Uganda. And I came here in 2000-- December 4. The government sent me because I am an orphan. I don't have a mom and daddy. That's why I came here. I was seventeen years old and turned 18, 19, 20. Right now, today—now, I'm 20 years old.

So what I want to do is continue my education. That is the first thing I want to do here in America. Education is the key of life.

When we think about the people we left over there--because our country is really bad because of war--we'd like to let them come here. We need them to come here, but--no way! We pray to God all the time: how do we let the people come here?

The American people helped us. They helped us coming here, going to school, making everything good for us, but they really make us happy. So we feel good now in America, and we worry about our people, and it makes us sad sometimes when we think about them.

But everything's good here. We're going to school. We have many things, wear clothes, eat good food. We were wearing clothes over there, but when the war came, it messed everything up. We had hard, hard bombing—whatever—guns, so we were worried

⁴This interview is a transcription of a conversation between Elizabeth Ayen Dau and Professor Greg Miller in July of 2003. The original recording is available in the Millsaps College archives. Passages and sentences have been deleted for brevity and clarity.

all the time. So now, that's why we worry about the people we left. They have bad conditions, bad situations over there. So when we have an education, we will help those people who remain in Africa. That is the best, I think--what we need to do.

I came here and am going to school. I was going to school when I was there, but it was British English. But my English, it was not much when I was over there. When I came here, I still not learn much English, but I try. I try the best I can. And I hope I will be better later on.

In Africa, they don't let the woman go to school really good, so they let the boy go and the boy will read hard and whatever like that and learn to write, to read. Now here in America it's hard.

I have two and a half years in America. I stay in Jackson, Mississippi. That is my place, I think, now. And I like my people. I go to the Episcopal Church. I like my people I got over there.

Now everything is fine here. I go to school. I am in the eleventh grade here. But I cannot finish the twelfth grade here. When you turn twenty, it is really hard to go back to school. You have to go for the G.E.D [General Educational Development High School Equivalency Diploma Test]. The G. E. D. is hard. And I'd like to finish a high school diploma. I want to go to Utah because in Utah they have adult high school, regular high school.

I would like to go to college to continue my education. What I would like to do is be a nurse (here in America, about four years). When I get a college degree, it will be nice. I will help some people. That is what I have in my mind. I hope so. The people we left over there! I hope so.

We will send some young people here to go to school, too, when we get the power. We hope--when we get the power--we will try our best to let them come: young people, young girls. We will help them come and follow their educations, too.

We didn't have anything. We didn't have a good place. We thank America. America, they did a good thing. God helped American people to think about it and let us come here.

Greg Miller: At one point you said, before war in the Sudan, life was good.

Elizabeth Dau: Oh, yes!

Greg Miller: What was it like?

Elizabeth Dau: Is good question! In Sudan, when the war not yet come—before—Sudan is really, really good. We have the land, we make the seeds, with our hand, we have many cows, and we have a lot of stuff to eat. Our land is really good. So, we are like, really good. When you see the people, they get really fat! They get fat! Everything we do, we are feeling good, because we do not have war, but when the war came, it was really bad. It made our country bad.

But we don't think about it. We don't know America. At that time, I don't know many things. When you are young, you learn many, many things. See. I ran away when I was six. Seven years on the way—like that! When we came to Kenya, we were nine years in Kenya.

Greg Miller: How did you get to Kenya?

Elizabeth Dau: To get to Kenya, we run, we walk, about--many, many miles—on our feet, see. But my one sister was taking care for me. Many people go to Ethiopia, but I didn't go to Ethiopia. I stayed in Sudan. War come and come and come. That's why I run

away in 1990. So my sisters, they are two, they are taking care for me. That's why I walked like that. They walked about a few miles, and then go and sit down. And we spend day. And we go another mile. And we spend day. We do it like that. We spend, like, years on the way! Kenya is another country! But it is a pretty country.

Even now in Kenya, they get war again. In Kenya, now, they have war. They have war. In camp, they attack the community. They attack the people! It is really bad.

The car come get us near to Kenya in Sudan. And we go. And we come to Kenya—in 1992. People are still coming now.

When my daddy and my mom and my one brother and my one sister, they die, I really feel bad about that. When I say, my life, it will be?--I don't know. I used to pray to God. I say, "Father God! Why you leave me? You need to tell me. I want to die, too, like my parents." Now, when my two sisters took care for me—and my cousin, I have my cousin—they taking care for me until the time the American people bring me here. I forgot about the people who died, I forgot--except when I'd dream. I dreamed they'd come. I used to dream they'd come—when I dreamed, that is the day I'd think about them. I'd say, why are they coming in my mind again? And I'd see them. So that is my thinking when I dream. But if I did dream, I can't think about them. I think about the people who are alive in Kenya and the region. How do I help them? I would like to achieve my goal and help my sisters and my cousin. That is the reason I lived.

Thank you, Dr. Miller. Thank you so much for your welcoming. And I will say when I leave and go to Utah, bye-bye and have a good time, and I will see you soon. I will come and visit. I have six months more in the program. I will finish in June and turn 21. Soon, I will be emancipated. I think a lot, a lot, a lot.

Bye-bye. And I thank Mississippi. Thank Miss Barry. I have one year and a half in Miss Barry's house. Miss Barry is a good lady. Very good.

We enjoy Mississippi very well.

Thank you for your welcoming. God bless you.

Elizabeth Ayen Dau



Elizabeth Dau

Many Changes in My Life

My name is Kueth Wal, and I was born in 1981. I am twenty-two years old. I was born in Bor, a town in southern Sudan. Since the year 2000, I have been living in the United States of America. Between that time and now, I have experienced many changes in my life. I have discovered the differences between living in Sudan and living in the United States. I want to let people know about the peaceful, unified life I have led here in the United States, and how my past life in Sudan contrasts with my current experiences.

Before I was born, war began in Sudan in 1954. This initial conflict lasted until 1972, yet broke out again in 1983, when I was two years old. I don't remember much about my childhood; my earliest memories begin with my departure from Sudan in 1987. I spent three years in Ethiopia, where I attended school and life was fine. However, war in Ethiopia forced us to flee back to Sudan temporarily.

I had left the country with a large group of fellow refugees, and we stayed together throughout our travels among the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya. It was not until reaching the United States that we became separated. Since the countries of Africa are much bigger than the state of Mississippi, it was easier for us to stay together while in Africa, but much harder when we reached the vast United States.

In 1992, I traveled to Kenya and continued my schooling. There I had to get used to living as part of a group, and a different lifestyle. I received clothes and food from the United Nations and had to become used to attacks from the local Kenyans. They would raid the refugee camp and take our invaluable livestock, like cows and goats.

When we traveled to Kenya we had nothing to eat. So the United Nations gave us food and clothing. Then we began to attend school. All these benefits were things that the Kenyans had never gained; so we were met with jealous anger while living in Kenya.

In 2000 the government allowed us to leave Kenya and travel to the United States. On the plane ride (my first time flying) I was not at all scared. I didn't have much luggage on my arrival in Jackson, Mississippi and did not know very many people here. But eventually someone from a social agency came to show me and several others around the city. Those were my first experiences of the USA.

After getting settled into Jackson, I had to learn a lot of new things. In Africa men were almost never allowed to cook, for example, but here it was fairly common. Looking for a job, finding an apartment house and learning how to drive a car were all new experiences, as well. In all, there were many adjustments to living in a new country, but I did get used to it.

Life in the United States has been very different from life in Sudan. Here I have found money to be much more important in society. Getting an education, as well, has been a large part of my new life. I consider the education I am receiving to be incredibly important to me. It is the key to life. Without it, you cannot earn money in the United States or get a good job.

One of the major disadvantages has been my difficulty in speaking a different language. I can speak English but many times people here do not understand me very well. It can be a major drawback.

Living here has made me realize how important it is to get a good education. I now realize that it is the United States who must make peace between the warring people in

Sudan. Living peacefully while gaining an education and having no problems in the place that I live is very different from living in Sudan. I would not want to change anything about my life here in the United States, but that peace makes knowing about the war in Sudan that much harder. Hopefully I can let people know about the terrible conditions in Sudan and bring a change to my homeland in Africa.

Kueth Wal



Kueth Wal Elizabeth Dau

My Journey in Africa

I was born in 1981 in Bor, a town in southern Sudan. My family worked as farmers and cattle-keepers. I had eleven brothers and sisters, some who are not living now. The war started in 1983. I left Sudan in 1987 with a group of people from surrounding towns. One of my cousins was a part of the group, but I did not know everyone in the group. The government controlled the northern part of Sudan, but because they wanted the oil in southern Sudan, they began attacking us. The soldiers in southern Sudan protected us as we tried to make it to Ethiopia. We had to walk to make it to Ethiopia. The walk was very hard because there was no water or good food. We took food to eat on the way to Ethiopia, but we ate all of it before we got there. We only ate in the morning and at night. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) put food on the way, and we ate some of it then. Sometimes, I ate leaves, but I had to be very careful because some leaves were poisonous. The older people in my group warned me which leaves were poisonous. I had to make sure to stay close to my group. I was warned not to stray far because it was very dangerous. Although there were many dangers, my group and I made it to Ethiopia in about a month.

In order to get to Ethiopia, we had to cross a river. The river was on the border of Sudan and Ethiopia. When we were crossing it, some people were not able to make it because they did not know how to swim. There was also a lot of fighting on the border, and it was very dangerous because some people would try to jump in the water for safety. The river was even more dangerous because it had crocodiles that would eat people. I was scared of the crocodiles, but more worried about the people shooting on both sides of the

river. The river was very wide and very deep. For people that did not know how to swim, it was very hard. Many lives were lost. However, there were small boats that that took people across the river, but they could only fit three people. In total, there were over eighteen thousand people that tried to cross the river. The boats were dangerous, too, because of the people that were shooting. There was no safe way to get across. There was no time to worry once I got to the river. It was a natural instinct of survival that took over, and made me choose to jump in the river as quickly as possible to get across to safety.

We stayed in Ethiopia for four years. At that time, the United Nations was in Ethiopia. Things were good then because they gave us food and tried to set up schools. We went to third grade in Ethiopia. Then, the war broke out in 1991. We had to leave because the new government that took over Ethiopia did not want the Sudanese refugees to stay.

From there, we went back to Sudan. On the way back to Sudan, the river served as an obstacle again. The Sudanese and the Ethiopians were still fighting. They were shooting at each other, and often, they shot our group. When we went back to Sudan, the same soldiers tried to protect us that had tried to help us when we were crossing it to go to Ethiopia. They also tried to protect us from being attacked at night by wild animals, like lions. We spent about a month in Sudan on the way to Kenya. We tried to stay in Sudan, but people were attacked, and we had to leave for Kenya. We walked about a month to get from Sudan to Kenya, and tried to pack enough food for the walk. In Kenya, I knew that there was food available all the time, but in Ethiopia, the availability of food was uncertain. The main reason that Kenya had food was that the UNHCR was there to distribute food and do other humanitarian aid, like setting up schools. I was in eighth grade when I was in Kenya. I stayed in Kenya for eight years, but I did not go to school all eight years. I was

sick for almost seven months. The UNHCR set up a hospital, so I was able to go there without paying money. It helped me get much better. The only other things I remember about Kenya are that I went to school until about 2:00. Until about 4:00 or 5:00, we played soccer there. The UNHCR distributed corn and wheat flour two times a month. We all had cards that we had to show every time we wanted food. If someone did not have a card, he could not eat. I usually ate twice a day in Kenya, but sometimes, I could only eat at night.

There was a tribe in Kenya that would beg us for food during the day, but at night, they were so desperate that they attacked us and stole our food, money, and clothes. They had no way to grow food because their land was not good. They were not allowed to stay in the camp because Kenya was not in war, so they killed many people. One of my group friends was killed by the tribe. The attacks usually occurred every night, but they were in different parts of the camp. I never had any way to know when they were going to attack my part of the camp. When the UNHCR said that I could come to the United States, I was very happy because I did not have to worry about the attacks at night. I was safe in the United States.

My life in the United States is better. It is not like before. I am working now, but when I was in Africa, there were no jobs. I had no way to go to school. Now, I am working on my G.E.D. I might pass it and go to college. English and mathematics are very hard for me. I learned some when I was in Africa, but I forgot it. Now, I know multiplication, division, and subtraction. Fractions and percentages are still very hard.

I want to go back to Sudan after the war ends to help the people. I want to help them after I have an education, by helping them get educations. The education system in Sudan is not good. When I spoke to my brother in May 2003, he told me that schools are

still not stable. Some people go to school for a little while. The government attacks the villages and people run away. People are too afraid to stay in one place for very long. It makes it very hard to establish schools. If there is education in Sudan, people might learn a better life than keeping-cattle and farming.

Nathaniel Deng



Nathaniel Deng

Going Away from the Fighting

I was born in Sudan in 1983. I grew up with my parents, six sisters and three brothers in a town along the Nile River. My parents worked as farmers, fishermen, and also cattle-keepers. Livestock was our main source of income. My mother took care of the house and prepared the food. My father worked on the farm. My job was looking after animals in the forest. I left every morning to take the cows, goats and sheep to the grazing areas, so they could have enough water and grass. I walked with my dog, a club and spears for protection from wild animals like wolves and hyenas.

My life was that of a normal child in my area. I enjoyed hunting and wrestling with the other children in my community. There were many people in my tribe, and there were also other tribes. The tribes came together during special ceremonies like initiation, circumcision and funeral. The children from the other tribes played different games and spoke a different dialect than we did.

We left the village in 1987 because of the war in our country. When the fighting came to our village, we did not know what was happening. There was no time to prepare and everything changed. I was separated from my family trying to escape the conflict. I meet a group of people on the road. My uncle was among them. I did not know where we were going. All I knew is that we were going away from the fighting.

When we left, we had nothing because we left in an emergency. The trip was horrible because we had no food or water. We didn't even have weapons to kill small animals for food. After about two months, we encountered a river, and some of us did not know how to swim. There were some canoes, but there were not enough for all 10,000 people. The canoes belonged to the natives there. Some people overloaded the boats.

They flipped over and the people drowned. Some tried to swim across and drowned. Others just stayed behind. I swam across. There were a lot of crocodiles and hippos, and there was no way to kill or threaten them. Many people died crossing the river.

After everyone had crossed the river, which took about two weeks, we went to a refugee camp in the neighboring country of Ethiopia. Living in that camp was terrifying. There were so many of us and so little food. They could not distribute it fairly. Some people were not used to the food and became sick.

At the camp, we were divided into about twelve groups. Each group had about 3,000 people. We picked leaders that helped control the group and get them to govern themselves. Some people were not used to it. Schools were then set up within the camp. Each group got a school. Everyone went to first grade and learned the ABC's in English and other languages like Arabic.

After three or four years, the government of Ethiopia was overthrown. We were there under the supervision of the old president. The new president, however, could not protect us, so we decided to go back to Sudan to live by the border where the U.N. was still providing food. It was winter then and the water was high. The mosquitoes were also very bad. It took about a month for us to return to Sudan.

Once we arrived in Sudan, it took the U.N. over a month to set up a camp because there were no cars. I stayed there for about a year until we were about to be attacked by the Sudanese government. We were then forced to flee Sudan again, this time heading to Kenya.

The U.N. was able to bring in some vehicles to help transport the sick. Vehicles also brought in much needed food. In Kenya, we were taken to a refugee camp there. A

school was set up and we went to the second grade. We were still living in large groups containing people of many nationalities. They were all brought in by the U.N. There were many more people in the Kenyan camps than the ones in Ethiopia. We were given food and housing by the U.N. The houses were made of foil, mud and anything else we could get.

Despite living under the assistance of the U.N., some people were still being attacked and killed at night. No one was sure who was attacking us. It was suspected that they were rebels. We don't know why they killed us. They would come at night and steal cows or anything that was valuable, and you would be killed. We talked with the Kenyan government through the U.N. about getting security, but it was not enough and the attacks continued.

In the meantime, while living in the Kenyan refugee camps, we started the process of getting to the U.S. We were called to interviews where we filled out applications. We were told the U.S. had a treaty that allowed people in horrible conditions to come and get a better education in the U.S. The U.S. sent in agencies and lawyers to set up the process. Within about a month the first people were transferred to the U.S. On Nov. 26, 2000, I came to America. I was taken to foster care and Catholic Charities. We went to school and started learning English. I just finished my high school this year in May. I'm in college now. I'm taking general courses. I think I want to be an engineer, but I'm not sure yet.



Dor Amol

Monvkuch Gach

Because My Country Was At War

My name is Jacob Buol. I was born in the Bor district in 1982 in the upper Nile Region. I was the third of six children. I am from a family with eight members. I have four sisters and one brother. My brother's name is Deng Buol and my sisters' names are Aman Buol, Diyu Buol, Nyibol Buol, and Ayan Buol. All of my family still lives in Bor except my sister Diyu Buol and her husband, who moved to Uganda recently. My father Buol Deng and mother Abuk Ithuc still live in Sudan.

During the early eighties, tension was rising between the Muslims and the Christians in Sudan. The civil war in Sudan between the mainly Christian rebels in the South and Islamic government of the North has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Sudanese. I did not know the cause of war before. Also, the war in Sudan was fought between brown skin people from north Sudan and black skin people from south Sudan. The first agreement was made in Ethiopia, but it was later cancelled by the North, and Muslims were treated badly. The South was a rich area with resources like oil, diamonds, gold, and mining. The North was a desert area with no rain so they fled from the South. They knew that when Sudan would be divided into two parts they could get no benefits from resources.

The North was in power some years ago until now. The government wanted the South to be poor. Children from the South are not allowed to pass the sixth grade. According to politics the South does not have a good building and no school. The South wants to rule itself. The people of the South do not have good job opportunities. Even if you have a Ph.D., they will still put you in a low position like an illiterate person. So there

is no difference between an educated person and an uneducated person. Now the North gets approval from Middle Eastern countries because if they have dominated southern Sudan, Africa will be Islamic.

In 1987 the war broke out in my village. I was seven years old. The enemy attacked my village at 7:00 while I was looking after cattle with my cousin Pigot. I left my family, and we moved immediately to Ethiopia with my cousin and other people on the way. During my journey to Ethiopia we had many difficulties like no food or water. We used mud as water. I saw lions, buffalo, elephants, and zebra. The wild animals were attacking people as well as crossing a fast moving river. I stayed away from my parents and family for thirteen years.

When we arrived in Ethiopia, we were surprised and we praised God. We had no food, water, or medicine in Ethiopia; therefore, many people died of diseases and hunger. We buried dead bodies, but we had no muscles and could not dig deeply into the ground. We started going to school in Ethiopia. In 1991 the war broke out again in Ethiopia when the Ethiopian president, Mengistu, was overthrown. We went back to the Sudan border on the way to the Kenya border. Many people drowned in the river Gila between Sudan and Ethiopia. People just jumped into the river, even though they did not know how to swim.

We stayed eight months in a town on the Sudan border during our journey to Kenya. We walked some miles until the Red Cross picked us up. We spent two days in Magou. On the last night there, the enemy attacked us, shooting seven people to death and wounding fourteen people. When we left the Sudan border to go to Kenya, we walked two days. In 1992 we arrived in Kenya, where we stayed about eight years. While I was in Kenya, I attended primary and secondary school. I enjoyed this very much, but it was very

hard. When it was windy, there would be dust in the air and it made it hard for me to study. I studied the English, Swahili, and Denka languages.

In Denka culture, the boys learned how to do the men's jobs at eight years old. We stayed away from the house all day because it made it harder for the women to do their jobs. Men did the outdoor jobs, and women did the household jobs. Men watched the cattle and farmed. Women look after the children, cook, clean, and wash clothes. All the tribes have different marriage cultures. Marriages aren't arranged, so they can marry whoever they want, but the parents have to approve. The parents have to agree before they can get married. Men are allowed to marry many different women. Cattle were given to the family of the bride as a payment before the marriage.

I came to the US because my country was at war. I arrived in America on May 17, 2001, and now I live in Jackson, Mississippi. I felt very happy here, but I was also scared at first. I like it here now, because I go to school and have many new friends. The people at St. Andrew's are like my parents, especially Teresa and Julie.



Mary Kuir

Jacob Buol

Sometimes When I Sleep

My name is Dut Kuol. I was born in Bor in 1981 in Sudan. I was the first born of five children, including my brothers Kuol Mabiei Kuol and Nhial Mabiei Kuol, and my sisters Alual Mabiei Kuol, Amuor Mabiei Kuol, and Achol Mabiei Kuol. All of my family still lives in Bor except my brother Nhial, who moved to Uganda. My father, Mabiei Kuol, died before we fled Sudan. My mother, Akon, also still lives in Sudan.

During the early eighties, tension was rising between the Muslims and the Christians in Sudan. Both the Muslims, who lived in the North, and the Christians, who lived in the South, were trying to impose their beliefs on each other. They lived under a “peace agreement” until 1983, when one party decided that it wouldn’t work anymore. When this happened, war broke out in Sudan. Villages were being attacked, and people were getting hurt, even killed. In 1987, my family and I decided to leave Sudan and start walking to Ethiopia. We, along with many other people, faced hardships and difficulties such as a lack of food and water, and wild animals attacking people, as well as crossing a fast-moving river. I saw zebras, gazelles, buffalo. They were just as scared of us as we were of them.

When we arrived in Ethiopia, to our surprise, we met war yet again. This time a civil war, which was somewhat bearable until 1991, when the President was overthrown. Because of the unstable conditions in Ethiopia, we traveled by foot back to Sudan, once again crossing the River Gila, whose strong currents made it difficult to cross and swept some people away. As before, we faced a lot of the same hardships, including the scarcity of food. So when we eat no other foods, we are eating fruit.

My family and I spent two months in a town in Sudan, where basic necessities were lacking. Fortunately, the Red Cross came and aided the town by bringing needed supplies such as food, medicine, and blankets. Everyone got the things that they needed. Although this helped the town get back on track for a while, it was soon thrown off again by an attack on the town. After this, my family and I, and a large group of people started walking to Kenya. We traveled for one month, until the United Nations came with trucks and gave people rides over to Kenya. This took a large amount of time since the truck could only take small groups of people at a time, would drop them off and come back for more people.

While I was in Kenya, I attended U.N. funded primary and secondary schools. I enjoyed this very much. It was very hard. When it was windy, there would be dust in the air, and it was hard for me to write. I was taking math, science, culture, English, Swahili – the language of Kenya, music, and arts and crafts. Each subject would take about 30 minutes. After school, I was flown to Amsterdam by the U.N. on September 11, 2001. Because of the events of September 11, I had to remain there for four days. Then I flew to New York, and stayed there for two days. I then left New York for Jackson, Mississippi. The Catholic Charities helped me by providing a place to live for three months, with rent and food paid for. After the three months, I started working for a landscaping company while attending night classes to obtain my G.E.D. I did this for eight months, and now I am currently attending Hinds Community College and working for Broad Street Bakery.

I have a girlfriend. Her name is Ayen. She lives in Kenya, in Kakuma Refugee Camp. In my culture, sometimes it will take a while for the girl to agree to engagement. It took two years for her to agree. She was a nice girl in speaking and the way she looked and the way she talked. Sometimes it seems like no other girl in the world could ever compare

to her. Sometimes when I sleep I think about her and the way I'm going to get her to be my wife. I get so worried at night because there are other men who are interested in her. When I left, she was upset because she didn't know when I'd return. In 2001, she came to Nairobi and she called me. She started crying when we talked on the phone. She said, "I miss you, Dut." I started crying when I heard her crying on the phone because I missed her, too. I told her to be patient and that I was going to look for a way to get her to come here. In 2002, she wrote me a letter. She put candy in the envelope and she wrote, "I love you, and you are still my sweetheart – like the candy." The first time she wrote, "Kiss the letter before you open it." So when I opened it, I found just the candy. And I asked the boys, "What can I do with this candy?" So, they told me, "You can eat it – no problem." And I sent her back a letter. I wrote to her, "I received your letter in good condition," and, "I will never forget about you. You are the only woman I love. And do the same thing to my letter – kiss it before you open it."



Agot Agot Dut Kuol Jacob Buol

Section III: Appendices

Appendix 1

Fall 2003
Introduction to Liberal Studies (LS 1000)
Professor Greg Miller

Service Learning Component

Purpose

- *to deepen students' global awareness
- *to develop students' skills as listeners and speakers
- *to develop students' skills in presenting a powerful, well-organized essay
- *to aid refugees in achieving their educational objectives
- *to educate society about the plight of refugees from Sudan
- *to educate society about the reality of war in Sudan

Objectives

- *to publish a pamphlet of essays by adult Sudanese refugees in Jackson
- *to meet regularly with refugees both to help them develop their essays and further their educational objectives

Schedule

A. In-class Work

We will spend two class sessions devoted to discussing issues directly relevant to our service.

- (F) Aug. 30: Introduction to Service Learning component;
refugee narrative: listening exercise
- (W) Sept. 10 Discussion of perspective in refugee stories:
Read: Patty Stow Bolea, "Trauma of the Children of the Sudan: A Constructivist Approach, Child Welfare; Mar/Apr 2003, vol. 82, issue 2, p. 219 (15 pp).
- (F) Oct. 3 DISCUSSION OF FIRST DRAFTS OF SUDANESE ESSAYS:
- (W) Nov. 12 Ethnicity, Religion, and War in Sudan

B. Out-of-class Collaboration and Tutoring

Each student will spend four sessions of approximately two hours each working with refugees. These meetings should take place once every two weeks.

Session I: Each group of two Millsaps students will meet with one refugee, talking about objectives and getting to know one another. Refugees will bring an assignment with which they would like help, letting Professor Miller know in advance the subject of the material with which they need help so that he might assign student groups most effectively.

Session II: Refugees and students will meet and make a tape recording of their conversation. One student will focus on taking notes of the conversation, and the other two will ask questions when asking a question seems appropriate. The Sudanese will be asked to develop what they most want Americans to know about their experiences. We will remind the Sudanese that their stories will be shared in pamphlet form with an audience of clergy, educators, students, legislators, and members of the press. In final form, each essay will be roughly five to six pages, double-spaced and typed. The tape will serve as a resource for the Sudanese as they develop their essays. Professor Miller will make copies of the tapes so that both the Sudanese and the project will each have a copy. Professor Miller will collect the tapes and make copies to be distributed to the writers.

Session III: The Sudanese will bring a draft of their essay to discuss with the student group. Groups will make use of the techniques practiced in the development of their own autobiographical essays, listening first to the essay aloud, telling the writer what they have heard, pointing to passages or ideas that seemed particularly important or effective, and finally making suggestions about what might be deleted, added, developed, or improved. Groups might also consider the organization or placement of ideas. When the language of the essay does not seem colloquial, students will make suggestions for clarification.

Millsaps students will write a one-paragraph response to the writer, offering constructive feedback to the essay. Professor Miller will read these responses before forwarding them to the writers.

The writers and the student group will keep copies of each draft.

Session IV: The Sudanese will bring a revision for discussion. Millsaps students will repeat the process of active listening practiced on the first draft.

The writers and the student group will keep copies of each draft.

After working on the revision, groups will work with the Sudanese on the educational project with which they need help.

C. Editing

The class will meet as a whole on November 26 after having read all of the essays to discuss the best possible order and an appropriate introduction.

D. Letter to Home-Town Paper

What have you learned about the world in working with the Sudanese? Write a letter of one to two pages, addressed to your home-town paper, discussing your experiences.

Appendix 2: Student Descriptions of Composition Process

In my first meeting with Simon, I got to learn about his life in America and as a student at Millsaps. We talked about classes and how difficult college courses can be, about music and movies, and about driving in Jackson: a much larger city than either of us had lived in. Once we were acquainted, Simon told me about his journey from Sudan, which began when he was only seven years old. We added to and re-wrote a paper he had written in Liberal Studies [LS 1000] his freshman year, the very same class that is working this year with these Sudanese refugees.

Maggie Briscoe

Over the course of five meetings, we recorded Deng's story on a cassette and reviewed several essays he wrote on the subject. Using those essays and the recording, Deng compiled this essay. We suggested revisions for grammar and clarity.

Milan Winnard and Erin Shaw

The second time we met with John, he brought in an essay that he had written. During this second meeting, he told us in more detail his story. The third time we met, we each brought in suggestions for the essay John had written. We also made him go into much more depth on certain issues and took notes. The fourth time we went to the library and started typing our final draft. Then, finally, during our fifth meeting John brought in background material to add to the essay, and we completed writing our essay. Throughout every meeting, we helped John study for the Functional Literacy Exam (FLE). Currently, students have to pass the FLE in Mississippi to graduate from high school. Once we completed our meetings, John felt very confident that he was going to pass.

Jana Brady and Carly Deweese

In our first two meeting with Kueth, we spoke on a social basis and practiced our reading skills with a newspaper. For the following meetings we took notes, made an outline of our essay on a blackboard, and used a computer to write. During one session, we recorded our conversations for possible future reference.

Kim McGowan, Chris Spears, and Demetrus Caldwell

We transcribed what Nathaniel told us during our interviews. Through the transcriptions, we were able to compose an essay. During the writing of the essay, we discussed each sentence with Nathaniel to make sure that the essay was what he intended to say. A copy of the interview tape can be found in the archives of the Millsaps College Library.

Katie James and Joanna Miller

The writing process of Dor's essay consisted of three meetings. During the first meeting, we had an information discussion in order to create an outline of the topics to be covered in the essay. Dor's words were transcribed onto paper and arranged into a rough draft. The final meeting was used to clarify and refine the essay into its current form. The first session was used as a math tutoring session. However, ideas about the essay were discussed to prepare for the following meeting.

Will Hippler

During the first meeting, we talked with Jacob and helped him with his homework so we could get to know each other. During the second meeting, we took notes as he recorded his story on a tape recorder. During the third and fourth meetings, we worked to revise his essay.

Kirk Jackson and Codi McLellan

After we spent some time getting to know Dut, he started to tell us his story while we took notes. Every now and then we would take a break to talk or clarify information. Sometimes we would have to stop for a few minutes because some things were hard to talk about. Once we all figured out the order of his story, we used our notes, typing while he spoke. After many revisions, this is the result.

Reade Alpaugh and Jolie Anna Cross



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