



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** Retracing Ernest Hemingway's 1933 Safari      **Name:** Matthew McConn

**Other Team Members:**

**Program:** Greater Houston Area Program

**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001

**Location Visited:** Tanzania, Africa

**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 01

**Project Summary:** I retraced Ernest Hemingway's 1933 safari in northern Tanzania in search of what inspired him to write two of his greatest short stories. My goal for the trip was to get a sense of what attracted Hemingway to Africa, and why he used it as the setting to some of his greatest works. I wanted to know why "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" are both set in Africa. Since both the stories are about failure, what was Hemingway's relationship with Africa? What was he seeking there in 1933? The answers to these questions may be elusive, but they are certainly impossible to answer unless you experience the inspirational settings of these works.

The challenge, or passion, that inspired this trip comes from my search for how good writers think. As an English teacher, I feel that tapping into a writer's way of thinking can only leave me with more strategies to get my students writing, and, more importantly, to guide them to become better writers. Through my journaling, I was able to develop connections between the literature and the experiences, while looking for patterns in Hemingway's writing. I was then able to find where those patterns derived. Because of my search for the catalyst of the author's ideas, and pointing out how those ideas develop in his writing, I hope to show my students how Hemingway develops his stories as a model for my students to use for developing their own ideas predicated on the successes and challenges their surroundings present.

**Career Impact:** Much like Hemingway believes you should write what you know, I believe that you should only teach what you know well. The most effective teachers of reading and writing are those who are avid readers and writers themselves. This experience has enhanced my understanding of writing, and therefore, inspired me to write. It is within this process that I explore the many struggles that writers face, which allows me to suggest ways around the obstacles that prevent my students from writing. Not only has this trip made me a better teacher, but it certainly has also made my students better writers.

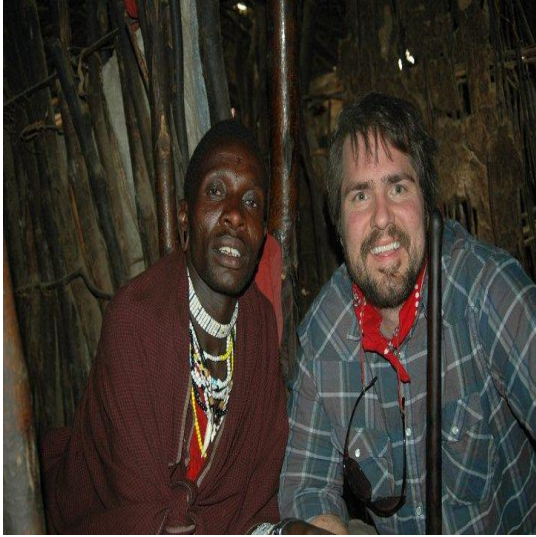
**Classroom/Community Impact:** One of the most important aspects in teaching is making the learning relevant. Students don't feel that what they read in English is tangible. They feel that the classics we teach them are out of reach for their own understanding, and that the authors are writing about far off places that they will never see. I want to show my students that these writers write about places we can go to if we have the desire. I want to show my students that even great writers get inspiration from wherever they can find it. I want my students to believe that great writers write about things we all experience, and places we can all go to.

**Open Response:** Spring Branch ISD published an article on the district website before I left, and a follow-up article when I returned. My principal asked me to talk about my experience to the entire staff at the start of the school year. The school paper did a piece on my grant and how it will work in the classroom just before I left in July, and followed-up with another one in August.

But the best recognition is when my past and current students stop by my room on their own time to ask about my trip to Africa.

**Quote:** "I loved this country and I felt at home and where a man feels at home, outside of where he's born, is where he's meant to go"  
- Ernest Hemingway

Photos:



Inside a Maasai Village Hut



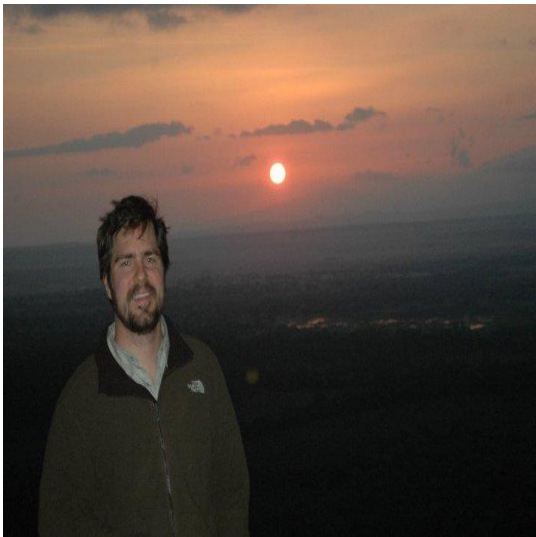
Children of N'Gresi Village



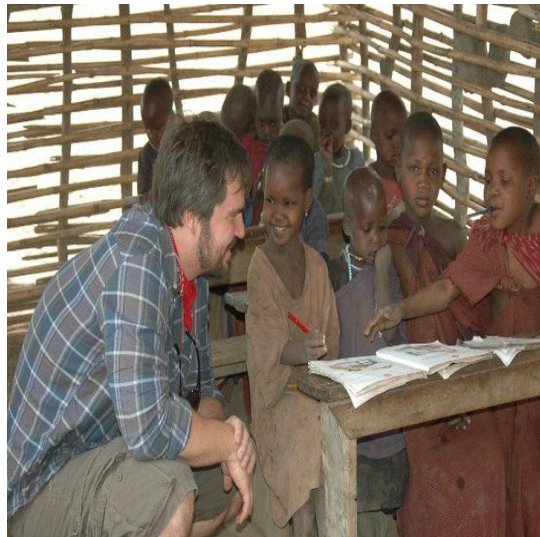
King of Serengeti



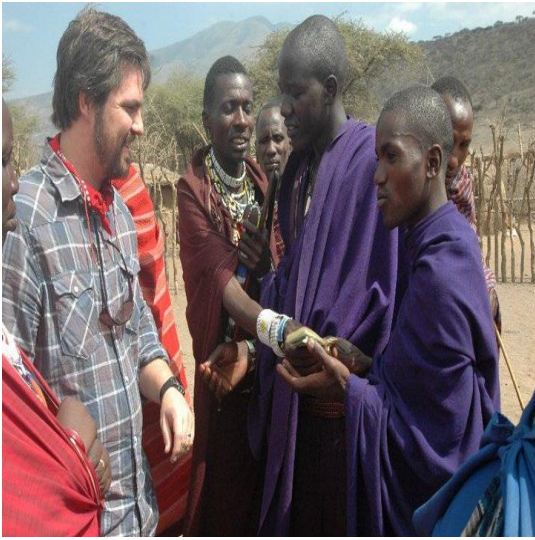
Green Hills of Africa



Sunset at Lake Maynara



Maasai Village Classroom



Maasai villagers love my watch!



Waterfall in N'Gresi Village