

## THE KANYANJOKA INCIDENT IN 1914

Told by Zadok Kamusiime

Kanyanjoka is a compound word in Rukiga. The two parts are KANYA-NJOKA. KANYA means or stands for 'a small' and NJOKA means 'Snake'. Therefore it means "of a small Snake". Kanyanjoka is a hill in Kashaasha, near the Uganda-Rwanda border and near Echuya rain forest.

My great grandfather, Katuregye, was a great warrior in the former Kigezi district. With his Batwa warriors he had plundered far and wide in the current districts of Kabale and Kisoro. They achieved dominance by using the bow which made them superior in battle to those who fought with spears. In those days the BATWA were called the "BATWAALE" meaning 'leaders'. But now the word Batwa means poor people or poverty itself.

When the British colonialists came to Kigezi, Katuregye welcomed them and they were at peace with him for sometime. In 1912, the British called a meeting in Rubanda (one of the counties then and even now) for all clan leaders. Many attended including the giant warrior Katuregye.

Geographically, Katuregye had his headquarters in Kashaasha which is 60 kilometres away from Kabale town. Kabale was the Headquarters for the British colonialists. They sat at Makanga Hill which is now the centre for administration in Kabale District. In that 1912 meeting, the British imposed a Musigy, another clan leader, to become the head of Kigezi District. Katuregye questioned such an appointment. This was because, traditionally, the most powerful could lead. But a minor warrior had been given a higher post than Katuregye who was widely feared and respected by all the Bakiga because of his military strength. Katuregye was silenced by the British and was forced to respect what had been done. Katuregye boycotted the meeting and left in disagreement.

On reaching Kashaasha, his Headquarters, he summoned all his formidable commanders, most of them Batwa for a briefing. He ordered them to kill every Muzungu (white person) found in his territory. He explained to them how they (the British) had demeaned him and promoted a minor, from another clan. All the canoes on Lake Bunyonyi which belonged to the British were destroyed. A serious hunt against the Bazungu (British) started in Katuregye's territory. This caused great tension and mistrust. Attempts were made by the British to kill Katuregye but were in vain. Katuregye deserted Muremure, his original headquarters and made Kanyanjoka his new home and headquarters as a tactical withdrawal because of the tension that was prevailing.

Finally, in 1914, having bribed some neighbouring clans to collaborate, the British invaded Kanyanjoka at night. They shot Katuregye, who later died.

After his death, our clan was widely hated by all clans in Kigezi who had suffered under his rule. We developed a serious inferiority complex and decided to disassociate ourselves with colonial policies likes education, working for money, migrations to better areas and others programmes of the British. This tendency left us behind, very much illiterate and poor. We looked at those policies as new tricks to trap and kill us. We developed a negative attitude about everything of Muzungu origin. Many people from our clan scattered all over the district. Some became houseboys to missionaries or to other clans.



My grandfather, the elder son to Katuregye, and his younger step-brother remained at our current home. The British tortured them, with the assistance from our enemy clans. Those clans were pressing the British to kill him but they didn't. Many Batwa commanders with their battalions, escaped to Rwanda plus other areas, where the British could not reach them. The royal family (our family) was the target. This reduced our members and wealth considerably. We now have the highest illiteracy percentage in the area. The former royal family is now the smallest in numbers in our clan. The majority of the members of the royal family scattered as far as Rukungiri in North Kigezi, Rwanda and other parts of Kigezi district. Zadok (myself) is the

first member of the royal family to attain a diploma (1990) and recently a degree. There are also four other diploma holders and two Grade Three teachers.



### ESSENCE OF THIS STORY.

- How our under development started.
- How we lost control on Kigezi district
- Explains why our family members are few in number.
- Explains our low-levels of education.
- Strong attachment between the Batwa and us.