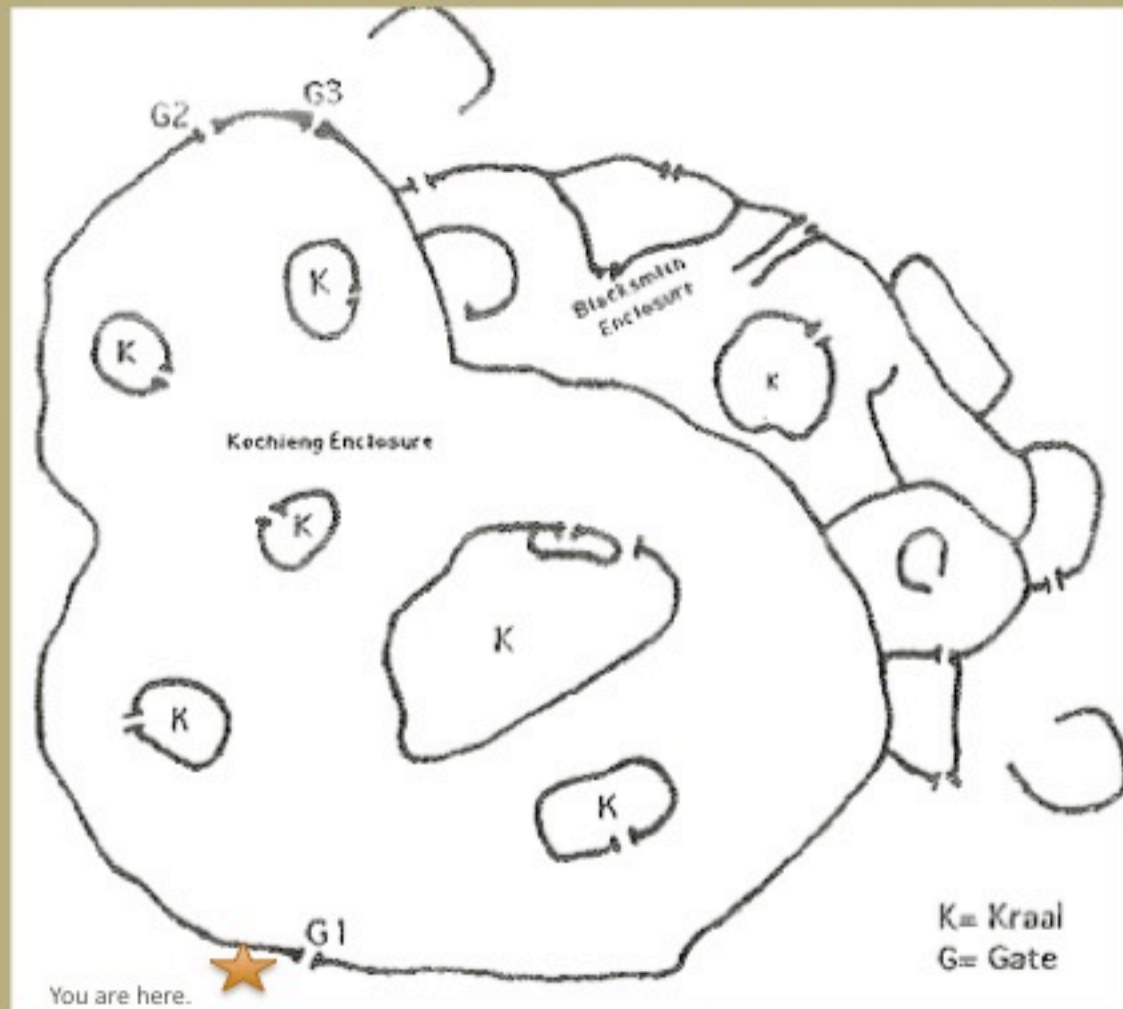


Thimlich Ohinga: Preserve Locally, Share Globally

Welcome to Thimlich Ohinga! Thimlich Ohinga, which means “scary dense forest” in Bantu, is a pre-colonial stone wall enclosure that spans 52 acres of dense Kenyan forest. In the midst of the tall trees and thick forest, the walls of Thimlich Ohinga have stood as shelter from the scary forest for over 500 years. Communities of people have been protected and sheltered by these immense walls. Now, the community is giving back to share the astounding walls with local and global communities! The daily lives, activities, conservation, and uses of past, present, and future communities can be found inside. Come in and explore the breathtaking walls of Thimlich Ohinga!



Kachieng Enclosure Loop



Thimlich Ohinga is called the “scary dense forest” for a reason! Please take the following safety precautions:

-Stay on trails! Wild animals like snakes inhabit the tall grass.

-Do not touch plants, animals, or wall.

-Be aware of heat exhaustion! If you feel faint or nauseous please exit the loop or notify museum staff immediately.

Can you spot these cultural artifacts on your walk?

It is hard to miss the towering walls around you, but can you spot these cultural artifacts around the Kachiang Loop? The walls alone cannot tell archaeologists what purpose Thimlich Ohinga served. Artifacts, oral history, and current cultural traditions have helped archaeologists interpret the use of the great walls. Be an archaeologist! Lift the lids below to discover what artifacts you have found and make your own interpretation of Thimlich Ohinga!

[Image of
board game]

[Image of
ohinga]

[Image of cow
or cow horns]

[Image of
medicinal
plants]

[Image of
local resident]

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You have found a board game! How do you think it was played? What does it tell you about Thimlich Ohinga?

This is the foundation of a hut! Can you imagine where people would sleep? Where would the cook?

Cattle are the subject of much conversation in Thimlich Ohinga. They have been valued creature for centuries! It is not uncommon for the animals to live very close to humans.

Medicinal plants! Plants like the [insert name of plant] have medicinal qualities and grow wildly around the site. People still gather these plants.

Meet [Name of local]. He/she lived in Thimlich Ohinga for [insert # of years]. He/she you tells you : "[Insert quote/story from oral history]" Does his/her story change your interpretation?

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Can you see the difference between these walls?



The builders of Thimlich Ohinga used a unique dry stone construction to create the great walls around you. Stones were gathered and placed together individually like puzzle pieces. Unlike the stonewall to the left, which uses mortar as an adhesive to keep the rocks bound together, each stone must fit together and provide stability for the stones around it. If one or two rocks from the wall are removed the whole wall could collapse. For this reason conservators and community members are removing trees and plants that push stones out of the wall.

Community Conservation

For over 500 years the walls of Thimlich Ohinga have protected its community. Now, the community is protecting its walls! But, it is no easy task. It took a community build the wall and will take a community to conserve it! Archaeologists, conservators, museum professionals, and local community members clear trees and plants that cause the wall to crumble and replace the fallen stones. Oral histories from local community members, scientific analysis, and hard labor have been vital to the restoration of the wall.



Where did these stones come from?



Take a look at the environment around you. What do you see and feel? Can you feel the warmth of the sun? Do you see rolling hills nearby or a vast plain of deep, tall grass?

Now, touch the stone to the right. Can you feel the heat radiating off the stone? Is its texture smooth or rough?

Imagine carrying the several stones like this one for miles through the dense forest surrounding Thimlich Ohinga. This is exactly what the Thimlich Ohinga's builders had to do! Through heat and difficult terrain, builders gathered both large and small basalt stones from the hills and carried them to this site! The stones vary in size and weight, but each stone can weigh anywhere from [insert weight of small stone] to [insert weight of large stone]. That would be like carrying a [insert some common objects of similar size]!

[Inlay a real stone from
Thimlich Ohinga]

Thimlich Ohinga, now!

A place for local and global exploration.

The great walls of Thimlich Ohinga were created by community, used by a community, maintained by a community, and are now being conserved by a community to be shared locally and globally. Look at the progress being made:

[This space should be made like a bulletin board so that it can be updated and changed]

- 2010: Thimlich Ohinga nominated for incorporation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site!



Local community members meet to discuss concerns and conservation of Thimlich Ohinga.

- Educational Programs are now being developed and proposed to local schools! Ask our museum staff about opportunities!



Dr. Edward Luby from San Francisco State University meets with museum professionals to discuss the conservation and interpretation of the site!