



TANZANIA

The Land of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and The Serengeti

**TANZANIA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
LEAKEYS' DISCOVERY OF FIRST HUMANOID SKULL
IN OLDUPAI GORGE, "THE CRADLE OF MANKIND"**

Fifty years ago this July 17, evolutionary history was rewritten in Tanzania, the largest country in East Africa. British archeologists Drs. Louis and Mary Leakey, working on bone and fossil analysis in Oldupai Gorge in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (now a UNESCO Heritage Site) discovered a skull that would change all prior scientific hypotheses. Their exciting discovery was a humanoid skull with huge teeth that they named Zinjanthropus or "Zinj." The excellent condition of the skull allowed scientists to date the beginnings of mankind to about two million years ago, and to verify that human evolution began not in Asia, as previously thought, but in Africa. In keeping with the significance of this information, Oldupai Gorge is now known as "The Cradle of Mankind."

"Zinj", whose name was later changed to Australopithecus Boise, after Charles Boise who funded the Leakeys' research, is not a direct human ancestor, but is the first specimen of this species ever found, and at the time of his discovery, the oldest hominid. Two decades later, footprints found at Laetoli, south of Oldupai, were interpreted as those of hominids even older: 3.5 to 4 million years old.

This year, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism through the Department of Antiquities and the National Museum of Tanzania will mark this historic find with the International Conference on Zinjanthropus in Arusha, Tanzania from August 16-22, 2009. The conference will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the discovery as well as explore new information on human origins, conservation and other allied studies. A special workshop on Louis and Mary Leakey has been organized by the East African Association for Paleoanthropology and Paleontology.

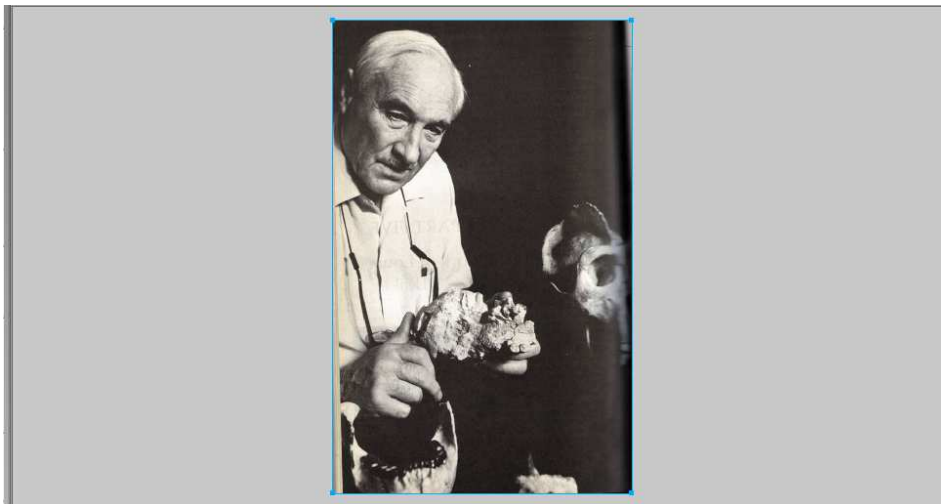
"The Leakeys' work in Tanzania changed our knowledge of the evolution of mankind and of history," said Dr. N. A. Kayombo, Director General of the National Museums of Tanzania. "We are naturally proud that Tanzania was the site of this significant discovery. We hope that conference delegates will join tourists from around the world and visit Oldupai Gorge, the actual site of the discovery, as well as enjoy the natural wonders of the entire Ngorongoro Conservation Area including the large numbers of wildlife in the Ngorongoro Crater, often referred to as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World.'" In the same area, are the Empakaai Crater and the active volcano of Oldonyo Lengai mountain – all part of the Serengeti Eco- System. "It is most inspiring to see the entire area as Louis and Mary Leakey saw it," concluded Dr Kayombo.

Bernard Murunya, Acting Chief Conservator, Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, further noted “visitors to Oldupai should not miss the fascinating exhibits and lectures at our Oldupai Gorge Museum. Among these exhibits are hominid footprints preserved in volcanic rock some 3.6 million years old, representing some of the earliest signs of the small- brained, upright-walking *Australopithecus aphaerensis*, ever to be found.” The location of the Museum itself offers wonderful views over the gorge. Walking tours of the area, which is also a birders' paradise, can be arranged upon request. Excavations at Oldupai Gorge are on-going and continue to produce splendid specimens of extinct hominids, animals and plants.

Since the Leakey discovery, examples of at least three species of hominids have been found at Oldupai, including *Australopithecus* Boise, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus*. In addition, the two earliest stone tool traditions, Oldowan and Acheulian have been found along with fossil remains. Both the fossils and the tools have been crucial to understanding human evolution.

Much is now known about the Australopithecines, members of the *Paranthropus* genus. All species of *Paranthropus* were bipedal. They had a brain about 40 per cent the size of modern man, were muscular, and stood about four feet to four and a half feet tall. They may have primarily lived in wooded areas, eating grubs and plants.

Tanzania will host the fifth International African Diaspora Heritage Trial (ADHTH) Conference, October 25- 30, in Dar es salaam and Zanzibar



ABOUT TANZANIA

Tanzania, the largest country in East Africa, is focused on wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism, with approximately 28 % of the land protected by the Government. It boasts 15 National Parks and 32 game reserves. It is the home of the tallest mountain in Africa, the legendary Mt. Kilimanjaro; The Serengeti, named in October, 2006, the New 7th Wonder of the World by *USA Today* and *Good Morning America*; the world acclaimed Ngorongoro Crater, often called the 8th Wonder of the World; Olduvai Gorge, the “Cradle of Mankind”; the Selous, the world’s largest

game reserve; Ruaha, now the second largest National Park in Africa; the spice islands of Zanzibar; and seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Most important for visitors, the Tanzanian people are warm and friendly, speak English, which together with Kiswahili, are the two official languages; and the country is an oasis of peace and stability with a democratically elected and stable government.

For more information about Tanzania visit www.tanzaniatouristboard.com

For more information on the Ngorongoro Crater visit <http://www.ngorongorocrater.org>

For more information on Tanzania National Parks visit <http://www.tanzaniaparks.com>

For how to obtain a visa visit <http://www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org>

For more information on the conference www.zinjanthropus.go.tz

UPCOMING EVENTS IN TANZANIA

Karibu Travel & Tourism Fair, Arusha June 5 - 7, 2009
www.karibufair.com

50th Anniversary: Discovery of the Early Man "Zinjanthropus boisei" at Olduvai Gorge, August 17, 2009
www.zinjanthropus.go.tz

Africa Diaspora Heritage Trail Conference, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar - October 25 - 30, 2009.
www.adht.net

Zanzibar International Film Festival June 27-July 4, 2009
www.ZIFF.org