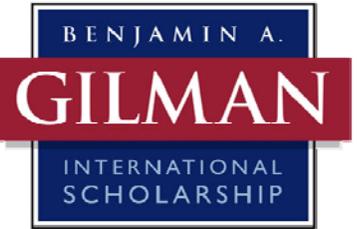


## D. ARCHIE FRINK, BRAZIL, 2011

Middle Tennessee State University  
Tennessee



highly advanced and traditional slash-and-burn technology - which is utilized to produce a wealth of food. Perhaps counterintuitive to Western visions of lush, green rainforest, due to the natural environmental composition, rainforest soil is generally very low in nutrients. Slash-and-burn technology is highly advanced for maintaining steady and consistent crops, and is resistant to unexpected environmental changes. I learned about these advanced agricultural methods and how they affect communities' political and economic engagement among a small peasant community of African slave refugee descendants. These people, *quilombos*, have shared a strong collective history of solidarity and hold a unique position within the greater municipality district. Thanks to my academic superiors and the Gilman Scholarship, I was able to begin learning about their ways of life by practicing participant observation and interviewing elders in the community.

academic field was an overwhelmingly rewarding experience, and allowed me to meet and network with superiors, which could provide crucial leverage for my future academic development.

*"The Gilman International Scholarship Program, in its tenth anniversary year, gave me the unique opportunity to pursue my original ethnographic research while living with a host family in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest."*

In my discipline of Anthropology, research attempts to understand how political and economic processes and institutions affect groups of people both locally and globally. Typically, students do not receive the academic and logistic opportunity to become ethnographers, or researchers, until graduate school. The Gilman International Scholarship Program, in its tenth anniversary year, gave me the unique opportunity to pursue my original ethnographic research while living with a host family in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest.

Due to my presenting research at the American Anthropological Association conference, I have established contacts and written two articles for international web and print publication, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning Huffington Post. Conducting this research was an overwhelmingly humbling experience, and has taught me so much personally and intuitively about the true values in our modern, global world. Because of the Gilman Scholarship, not only have I been able to begin my professional development and gain positive research experience, but more importantly I understand the world a little more intricately, in its frailty, generosity and humility.

Accessible only by series of boats big and small, over thirty-eight hours from Belém where the mouth of the Amazon River feeds into the Atlantic Ocean, the state municipality of Gurupá was where I spent my summer. Locals in the central town of Gurupá and along the tributaries in the interior have a unique economic livelihood, political development and culture to the rest of Brazil. The local economy is predominantly based on subsistence agriculture -

Conducting this research led to many academic and professional opportunities, as well as a simply incalculable leap in my personal development. I presented research at my university's undergraduate social science symposium, as well as at the American Anthropological Association conference in Montréal. Presenting my research as an undergraduate at the largest international organization within my

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

I authored a blog about my personal experiences while in the Amazon which has been read in over twenty

countries across six continents. When I returned, I began mentoring undergraduate students in successful

grant and research proposal writing, which I have continued through graduation.