

NIGERIA'S RICH AND DIVERSE CULTURAL HERITAGE: OUR PRIDE

About the book:

This book is part of the efforts by National Library of Nigeria at innovating new approach in the documentation of Nigeria's cultural heritage. It contains accounts about important historical places, events and monuments; and the people connected.

Though, these accounts have been inadequately recorded or under-reported but definitely not a historical reconstruction. It is an attempt to

highlight unsung but fascinating accounts of historical places such as *DurbiTakusheyi, Ngwo Enugu, Umuaja and Ilare.*

Photographs copiously displayed in the book are to aid readers' emotional connection or reconnection to the stories.



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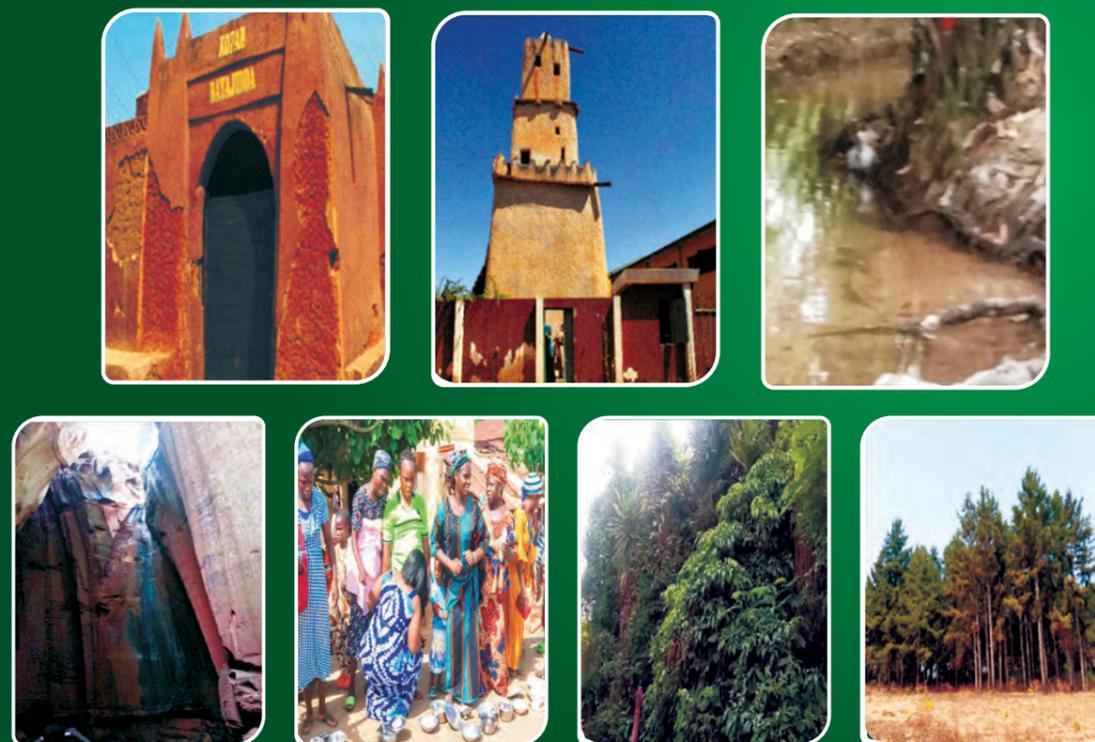
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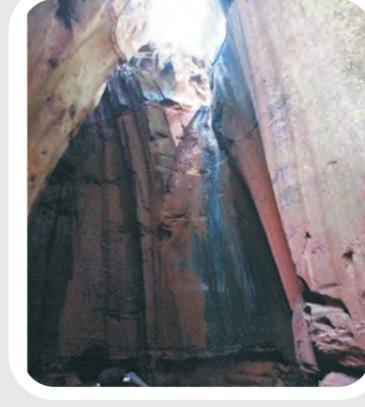
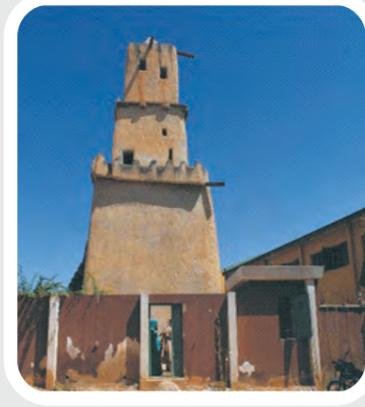
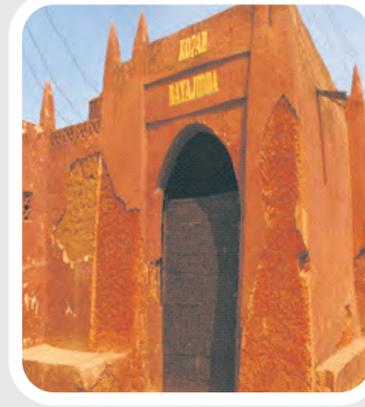
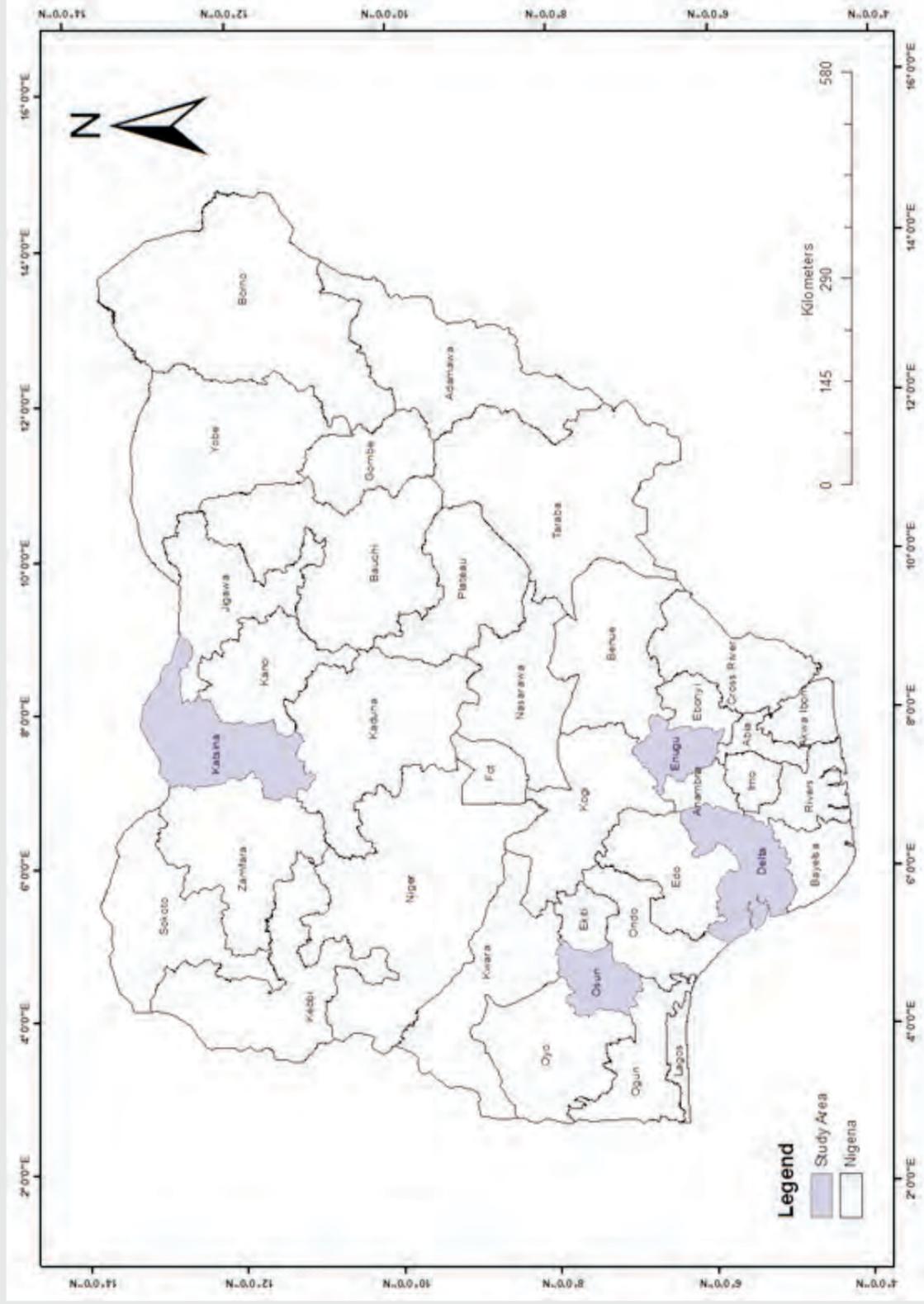
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CHINWE VERONICA ANUNOBI 
Mistura Kikelomo Abdulazeez



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A collection of newly documented historical places, monuments and events

Edited by

Chinwe Anunobi and Mistura Abdulazeez



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A collection of newly documented historical places, monuments and events

Project Team

Mistura Abdulazeez

Glory Okeagu

Folashade Adepoju

Grace Eruotor

Titilola Mafe

Aziyma Hassan

Kachi Eze-Okata

Contributors

Adedeji Segun

Babatunde Bada

Omolara Oye

Amina Sayyad

Editors

Chinwe Anunobi

Mistura Abdulazeez

Advisory Panel

Oguntoke Olusegun

Idongensit Akpabio

Dele Aworinde



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The project committee would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this work. We are most grateful in particular, to the royal fathers and the people of the communities covered; The Emir of Daura, Katsina, Galadima of Durbi Takusheyi, Owalare of Ilare, Oparuku of Umuaja and Onyeisi ala Ozalla We also thank Dr. Tope Abiola, Mrs. Nkem Agu, Pastor (Mrs.) Carolyn Ndeme, Chief C. Onyema, Abubakar Magaji Fada, Pastor Innocent E. Chikwuka and Alhaji Dennis Efebele Ahmad. Their valuable contributions, support and advice are highly valued.



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FOREWORD

This book is the outcome of effort by National Library of Nigeria to present and draw attention to tangible and intangible aspects of our undocumented cultural heritage. An attempt aimed at highlighting unique aspects of our culture which could promote unity and national integration and definitely not a repeat or reconstruction of history.

It is structured in a way its use as reference tool for scholarship, lifelong learning and tourist's guide, is facilitated for people from all walks of life. A reader is assured a fulfilling experience as coloured box on each page provides additional information on historical places, photographs, events, and people.

Everyone appreciates how sometimes we struggle to find exact words to express our thought. Drawbacks associated with translation and transcript from local language to English were minimized by ensuring that interviewers were selected based on competence in written and spoken abilities in the local language of the community. Excerpts of interviews are contained in the CD attached to this book. Photographs, which are still-life images and effective documentation tools in digitization and restoration of materials have been extensively used in this book to aid readers' emotional connection to captured images.

It is hoped this book excites the interest of the scholars, information managers, policy makers, librarians, and tourists. The book will therefore, be found worthy of their time as we continue to produce more titles documenting materials of historical importance.

However, it is available for free download in Portable Document File (PDF) on our website:



Prof. Chinwe Veronica Anunobi

National Librarian/ Chief Executive Officer

1.0

INTRODUCTION

Unarguably documenting the historical sites, monuments and events, which are of significant value in terms of religious beliefs, history and myths, could be very fulfilling experience for the people. National Library of Nigeria's decision to walk the talk by being more responsive and alert to her responsibility as custodian of documentary cultural heritage, is a clear demonstration of her commitment to promptly and constantly meet the dynamic needs of her patrons.

Documenting newly discovered historic sites, monuments and events affords the nation the opportunity to tell stories relating to her people through her own prism. This book therefore, aims to provide concise and accurate information about all aspects of our cultural heritage, which were hitherto un-sung, undocumented or inadequately exploited for national development and cohesion. Also, the book explains how promotional activities in the tourism sector can exploit local culture and nature to boost the sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through improved travel consumption by foreign and local visitors.

The importance of accurate information is evident by the recent misrepresentation or better still, misinformation about Eyo masquerade in Lagos through a movie titled, "Gangs of Lagos" which drew the ire of Lagos State government as the movie does not reflect in any way the facts about the masquerade. While the excesses of the producers of the movie can be excused, one can conveniently blame the misrepresentation on inadequacies of verifiable information about Eyo masquerade. This book fills the gap created by lack of accurate information over the years about historical sites, monuments and events associated with the culture of the people. This explains why cultural heritage, includes tangible and intangible assets, which are mainly artefacts, monuments, tools, language, customary beliefs, social norms, dress, food, music and dance-style of a religious or social group passed from one

generation to another. These are of diverse historic, symbolic, aesthetic, and archeological significance.

For long it has been a misnomer or sheer misinformation referring to Mungo Park as discoverer of *River Niger* when people have lived in the area for ages. In the same token it will be a futile attempt at reinventing history for anyone in the future to lay claim to the discovery of the source of *River Ethiopie*, which has continued to excite indigenes of Umuaja and the facts of the Onyia's discovery has remained incontrovertible.

The need to provide policy makers with verified and balanced information about the type or nature of intervention needed to preserve and conserve historic materials of tremendous benefits to the people, is imperative. It makes this book, an essential companion for anyone interested in updating his or her knowledge of Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage. How past and current information about historical places is recorded, organized, interpreted and managed, is one duty National Library of Nigeria (NLN) is determined to prioritize. The unique methodology adopted in the project ensures that both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage as experienced by the people are proudly portrayed as their own stories.

The common trajectory in the stories associated with historical places visited is the positive contribution of women in the provision of quality leadership and emancipation of the people. The exemplary leadership women have displayed over the years in all the places selected, shows clearly the capacity of women to be the last persons standing when the chips are down. They have passionately occupied the driver's seat when necessary. From Ilare, Durbi Takursheyi, and Umuaja to Enugu, women had provided leadership to save their respective society from the brinks of collapse.

It is the duty of National Libraries worldwide to ensure that historical materials collected are preserved and their useful life extended before they are lost. This makes restoration less cumbersome, where possible. Monuments, buildings and sites connected to history and way of life of the people have been lost to wars, and also, uncontrolled land use practices in the past. Numerous sites of historical values destroyed by wars abound in countries across the world. Ancient cities of Bosra and Palmyra; both in Syria, Timbuktu monument in Mali, Buddhas of Bamiyan, Afghanistan and the Jonah's tomb in Iraq are examples of places and monuments of great historical values destroyed by wars. A National Library owes the country the trust to ensure that a conducive environment is available, where diverse cultural expression is encouraged and cherished values are shared and promoted.

It is incontrovertible that irrespective of the success level recorded in the restoration of undocumented historical material, lost aesthetic, social and economic values might never be regained. It is interesting to note that a photograph could prove handy in a restoration effort, where no other records are available. It is important people are able to relate monuments, historical sites and events, which connect them to their history and define their national or ethnic identity. It is no wonder traditional and governmental institutions do create agencies to preserve and conserve such national historical sites and monuments.

Therefore, National Library of Nigeria (NLN) is committed to the creation of a *Nigeria Register of Historical Places and Events* with the view to providing access to information on historical materials, documenting unrecorded historical places and promoting events, which are of value to scholarship. The overall essence of information organization, analysis and presentation of undocumented historical materials, places and events is to facilitate access in a sustainable way.

4.0 ENUGU NGWO: A STUNNINGLY ENDOWED LAND

4.1 Miliken Hills

Anyone familiar with the Enugu's landscape will understand why it will continue to dominate discussion on historical sites of cultural and economic values in the South East region of the country (Figure 5). The Miliken Hills, Ivy valley Coal Mine, and Ngwo caves and Oyi-Ukaka waterfall are fascinating important historical sites connected to the life and history of the people. The decision of the Enugu State government in 2018 to reconstruct the 4.8 km Miliken Road with a view to addressing some safety concerns, is not only commendable but a bold attempt at kick-starting exploitation of the Hill's huge potential for tourism development in the state.

Miliken Hills is about 100 metres above sea level which makes it an ideal destination for hiking, recreation activities and competitive sport. According to the experts, on the average, some site could be about 60 metres above sea level. Hiking could be strenuous and daunting but the experience could be thrilling. Plates 33 and 34 show staff savouring the beautiful landscape and terrain. It compares in terms of distance with Segla in the Senja Northern Norway and provides panoramic views of Enugu as *Mefjord* could be viewed from Segla.

The narratives about Miliken Hills, coal mining activities and the Ngwo Caves are fascinatingly interconnected but historians are yet to exhaust them. The closure of the Udi Mine in 1936 resulted from the double whammy of dwindling revenue from coal because of the conversion to diesel-powered engines and downturn in productivity. The 1949 senseless massacre of 12 workers and 21 seriously injured people at the Ivy Valley Mine remains evergreen as one of most heart-wrenching cases of man inhumanity to man (apologies to *Leon Uris*).

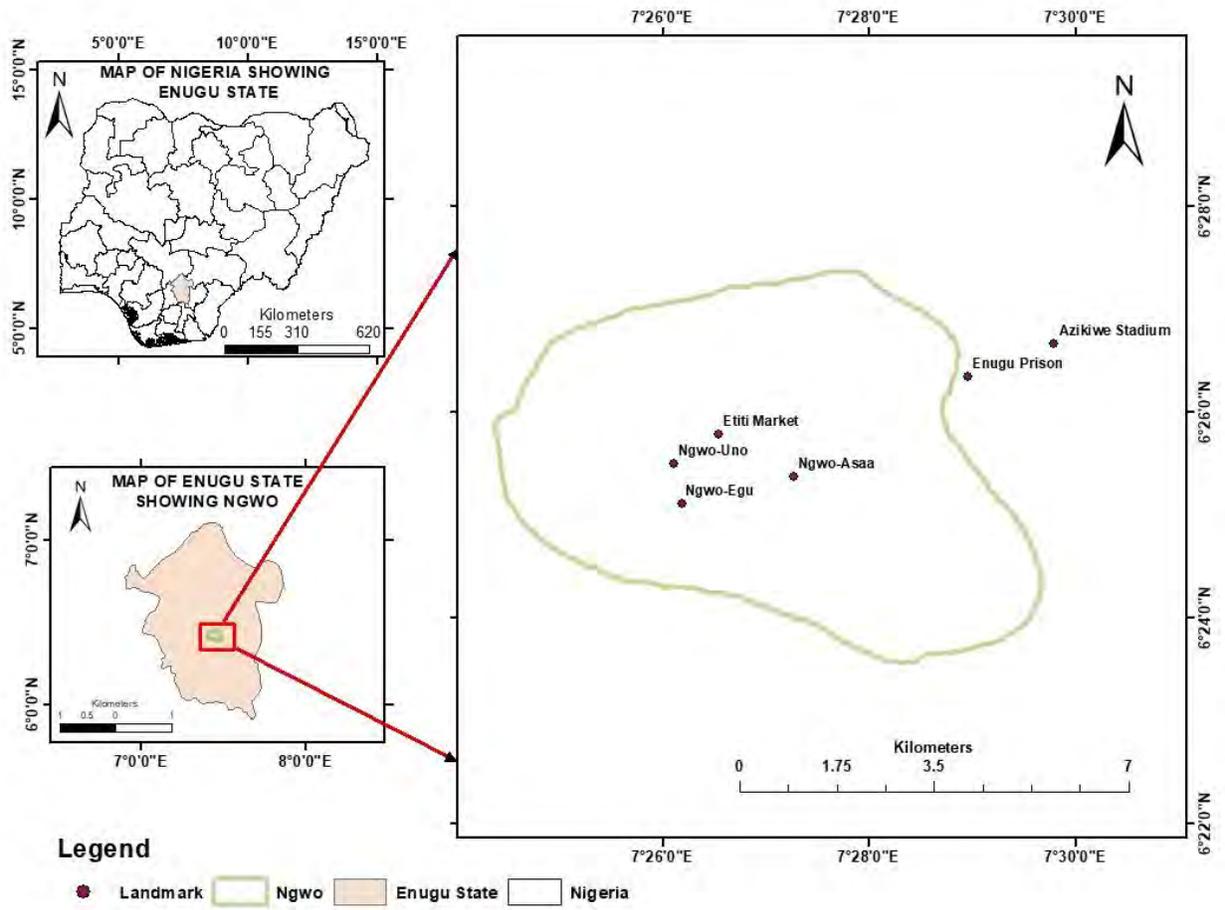


Figure 5: Ngwo Enugu, Enugu State



Plate 33



Plate 34

Plates 34: NLN staff and the tour guides on their way to Ngwo caves and Oyi-Ukaka water fall, savouring the beautiful terrain.

To date, many would conclude from the report of Fitzgerald commission that investigated the unjust and avoidable loss of life that greed, self-preservation and unalloyed racial disdain, were at play.

The controversies that followed the report sought to divert attention from the dastardly act to the mundane inference of political undertone. Agwu Apkala¹ in his work titled, “*The Background of the Enugu Colliery Shooting Incident in 1949*” suggests that the subterfuge approach employed in the acquisition of land for the Enugu Ngwo coal mine between 1915 and 1917 brewed well-hidden animosity between the parties, long before any agitation for independence started.

Two factors drove the local market for coal: use in energy generation and electricity supply. In Nigeria, according to historians the railway transport system was consuming about 60% of coal production at a time. The global advocacy for use of

cleaner renewable energy's source, coupled with the need to mitigate its negative environmental impact especially, SO₂ emission given its effects on acid rain, have all affected coal production.

The recent attempt to revert or continue the use of coal for electricity supply by some developed countries, buttresses the fact that individual's interest drives the call for sustainable energy use and not the deafening noise about climate change and global warming. The exigencies of war between Russia and Ukraine have exposed the hypocrisies about emissions cutting by developed economies, what matters is the availability of cheaper energy at all cost. For example, Germany after the Russians cut off gas supply to Europe, jettisons her decision to stop the use of coal for energy and resuscitated coal mines already put out. Therefore, the consistent call by the Enugu State Government on the Federal Government for the re-sale of dormant Coal blocks shows her commitment to the revival of the moribund Nigeria's coal industry. Having bought some assets of Nigerian Coal Corporation in 2013 through the Bureau for Public Enterprise, she wants to leverage acquisition of more Coal blocks to attract world players in the coal business.

However, account about coal production business in Nigeria will not serve its purpose without a mention of the late Chief Onyeama Uchenwaneye who played key role in the general economic development of Enugu and its environs. His role was of such significance that he had a Mine named after him and the popular Onyeama Hills in Enugu (*Ugwu Onyema*) still stands to his credit in recognition of his service to humanity. He was such a great philanthropist whose contributions to the general well-being of the people remain outstanding to date. He was an astute businessman whose foray into agriculture earned him more fame across the country. The warehouse and abattoir he privately built as a big-player in farm produce business, cattle rearing and beef selling business in the Eastern Nigeria, have been preserved

(Plates 35). Though he was a philanthropist, who established schools, built churches and mosques, constructed roads and provided shelter for the poor; his lifestyle was flamboyant and organized. He has a warehouse, where he stored spirit drinks still stands (Plate 36).



Plate 35: The slab during Chief Onyema's domination of cattle business.

Plate 36: The warehouse where he stored 'spirits' (drinks).

Prince Mike Onyeama, one of the grandsons (Plate 37), revealed recently how his grandfather, a realist, executed plan for his own burial by importing a silver casket and preparing a grave. The late Chief Onyeama Uchenwaneye died 5th day of April 1933 at Mada, in Northern Nigeria; a magnificent bust erected in his honour stands in his compound (Plate 38).



Plate 37: Prince Mike Onyeama one the grandsons of Chief Onyeama.

Plate 38: Late Chief Onyeama's bust in white and bust of one of his late sons in black

4.2 Ngwo and Uyi- Ukaka Caves and Waterfall

Ngwo Enugu people are descendants of Ngwu-Ako who had 10 children that later became Head of communities classified into Ngwo-Uno and Ngwo-Assa. The Ngwo caves and waterfall are at the foot of the Miliken Hill providing stunning scenery and people throng to the site on daily basis for recreation and spiritual fulfilment. The caves are landforms of different shapes built from limestone rock. Inside the Ngwo Cave, waterfall results from an opening at the top of the cave, which allows a gush to fall a distance of about 30 metres (Plate 39) and at the foot of the cave, forms a shallow clean pool (Plate 40).

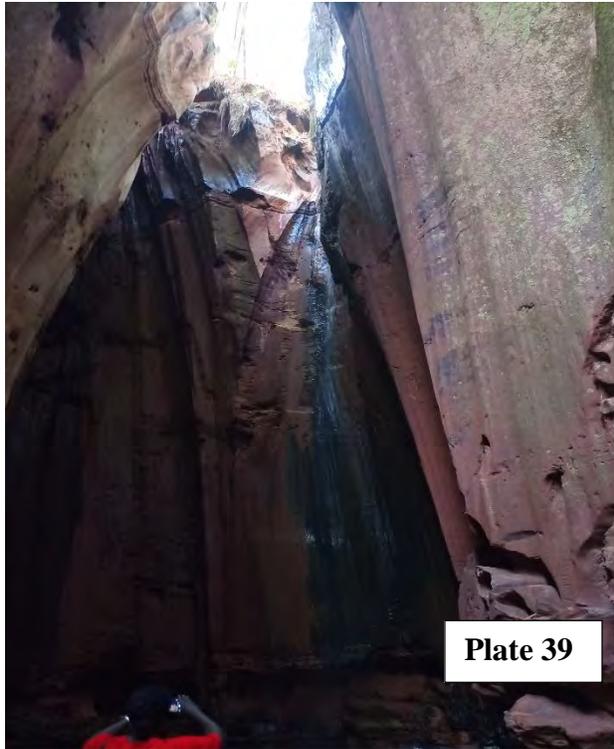


Plate 39: The Oyi Ukaka cave and waterfall

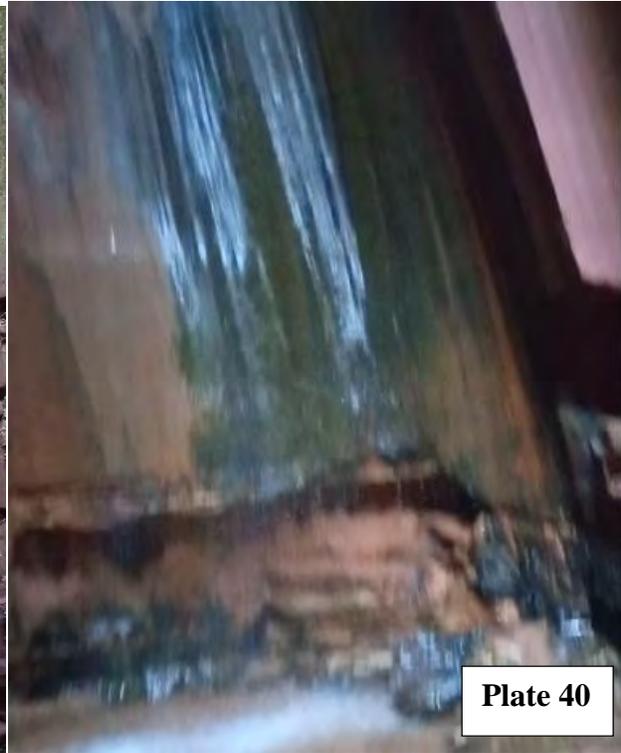


Plate 40: A pool of shallow water with high potable quality

Interestingly, Plate 41 shows one of the caves, which offered protection to the people during the war. Some caves are also difficult to access and scary (Plate 42), while some are pleasantly inviting (Plates 43 and 44).

It must be added that people visit the caves for diverse reasons: some to recreate, while other see the waterfall as a place to be for fulfilling spiritual experience. Many hold the belief that the waterfall has healing and magical power to provide solutions to myriad of problems. According to Mr. Nze Joseph Onoh, a tour guide (Plate 45), an individual who hopes to have his or her prayer answered must be freed from any diabolical tendencies towards other people. In Plate 46 the tour guide is seen demonstrating the potable quality of the water. This also explains why people come from far and near to fetch the water for drinking and healing. The National Library

of Nigeria's team shown in Plate 47, attest to the refreshing experience which awaits a visitor.

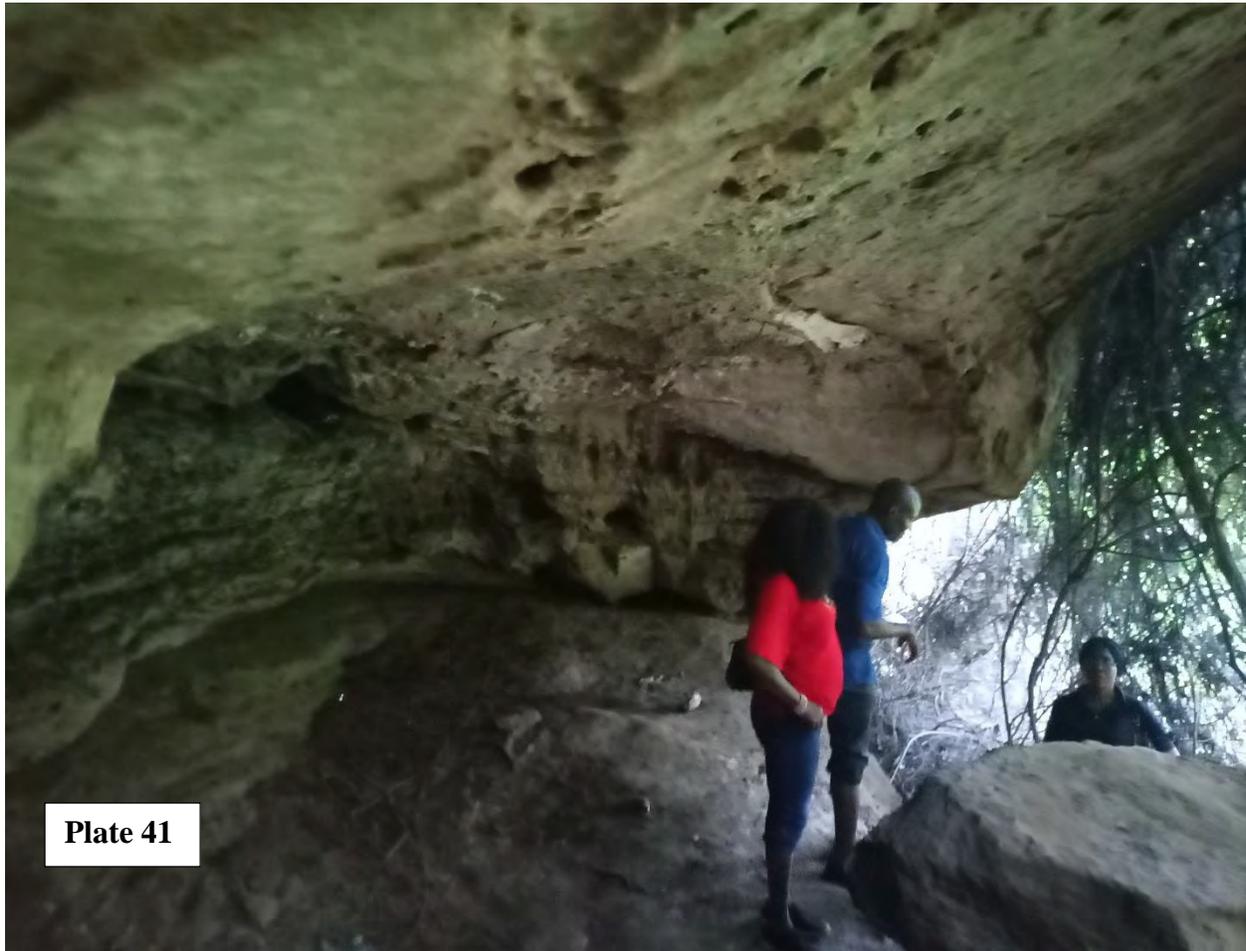


Plate 41 shows one of the caves, which offered protection to the people during ancient wars.



Plate 42: One of the caves, which is difficult to access.

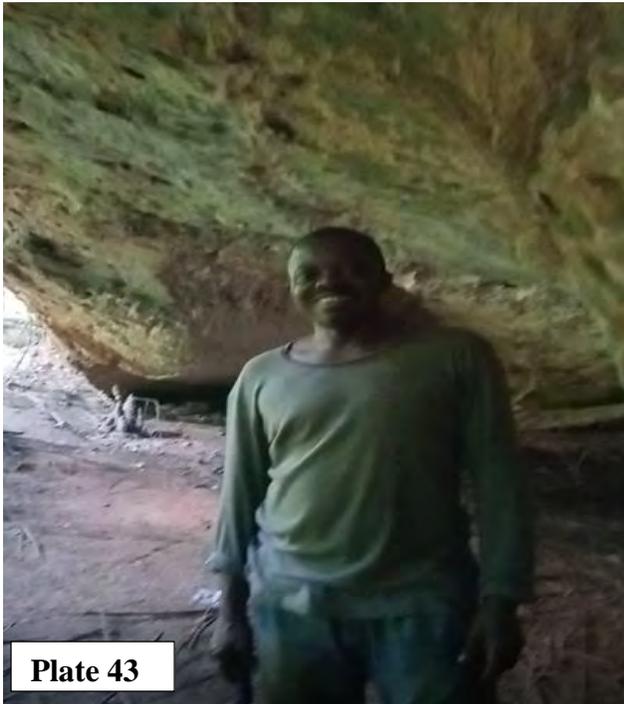


Plate 43



Plate 44

Plate 44: Some caves excitingly inviting for recreation and communing with nature.

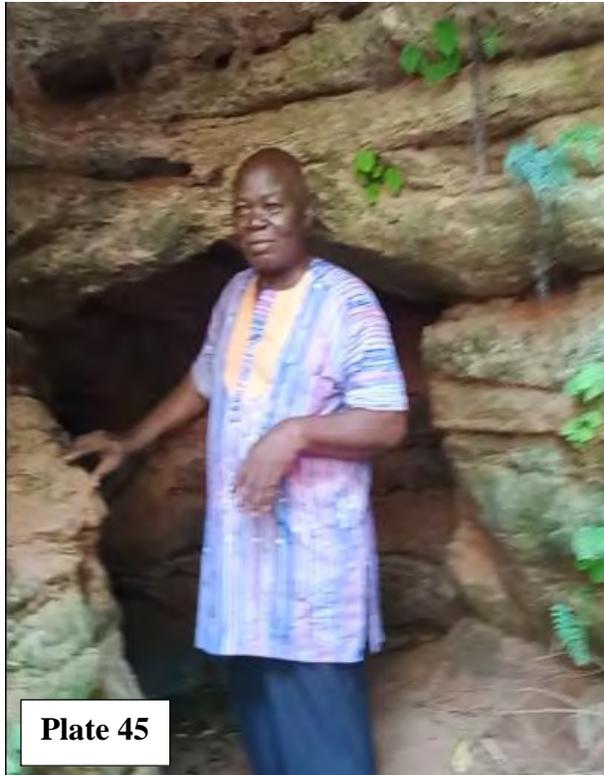


Plate 45

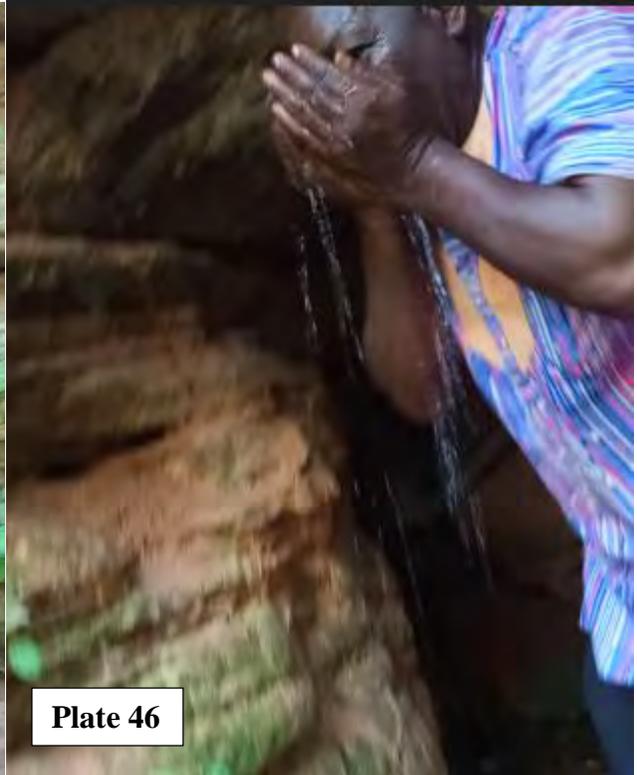


Plate 46

Plate 45: The tour guide explaining the magical power of the water from the fall

Plate 46: The tour guide drinking the water to demonstrate its potable quality.



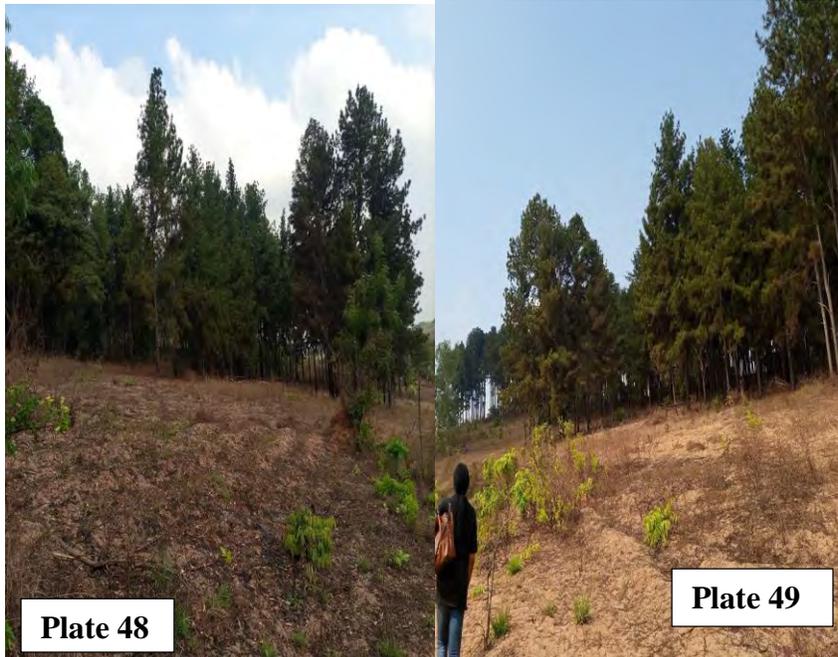
Plate 47

Plate 47: NLN's team with tour guide at Oyi-Ukaka cave and waterfall.

4.3 The Pine tree and atmospheric chemistry

The pine forest also at the valley of the Miliken Hills makes a visit to the Ngwo caves a worthwhile experience as it offers a first-hand appreciation of the role, forests play in mitigating global warming. Benefits of the pine seeds are tremendous as a kilogram nuts from pine, goes for \$117. The other commercial use of pine tree include: production of turpentine, resin, pulp and paper. The wood of pine is used in construction and furniture industry.

Recent evidence by atmospheric chemists has shown that the scented gas from pine forest form aerosol, which grows from about 1.0 nanometer in size to 100 nanometers in about a day. At this size, they are large enough to promote cooling by reflecting sunlight back into space and form particles for cloud formation. Plates 48, 49 and 50 show the pine forest at the valley of the Miliken Hills, which adds a lot of aesthetic value to the entire landscape. Therefore, scientific data are increasingly becoming available to provide a clear understanding about how scented gas from forest enhances capacity in the formation of particles with reflecting ability to limit rising temperatures.



Plates 48, 49 and 50: The pine forest at the valley of Miliken Hills

Youth groups from Ngwo and surrounding villages meet regularly to organize cultural activities and execute developmental programmes, which promote the general good of their respective communities. For example, the Udo Festival holds biannually by the youth of Oyi-Ukaka provides opportunity for them to come together to celebrate with roasting of yam in which non-indigenes are free to participate and important issues, which bother on the community's development are discussed.

4.4 The Ozalla Lake and its crocodiles

Ozalla, is a well-known town, popular for its lake and “magical” crocodiles. The town is located between Akegbe-Awkunawnaw and Obe in the Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. The British colonial government phonetically referred to Ozara as Ozalla. Oral narration holds that Ogana, a hunter from Ozara in Okptatu, Udi Local Government discovered a stream during a hunting expedition and he excitedly announced the development to his people. A river called Ufamu,

which flows from Udi Hills runs across the town and serves as the only source of water. The people of Ozalla are predominantly farmers and butchery is also a cherished vocation among them. In most communities in Igbo land people from Ozalla are usually the key players in the beef selling business because of the cultural belief and emotional attachment to the vocation as a profitable venture.

In Ozalla, worship of two deities predominates: Ani–Ozalla and Ndengwu. Ani-Ozalla has a shrine not far from a dedicated lake inhabited by crocodiles that the people believe are representatives of the gods who protect them. At the other section of the shrine are gongs placed on a wooden frame (Plate 51). No one visits the lake without making provision for a fowl to be offered as sacrifice. The Chief Priest carries out other associated rituals (Plates 52 and 53), thereafter throws a live fowl into the lake (Plates 54, 55 and 56) and within seconds the crocodiles devour it. On the other hand, Ozalla people regard Ndengwu as gods of fertility and people who share this belief from across the country and beyond visit the shrine to make supplications for fruit of the womb. Oral tradition holds that anyone who is desirous of pregnancy and sits on the “magical seat” (Plate 57) at the shrine will conceive within a record time.



Plate 51: A big carved wooden gong with image of a crocodile and a female goddess engraved on them.



Plate 52



Plate 53

Plates 52 and 53: The Chief Priest is seen preparing for the rituals



Plate 54



Plate 55



Plate 56

Plate 54, 55 and 56: The Chief Priest is seen preparing the fowl for offering as sacrifice to the crocodiles and goddess of the Ozalla river



Plate 57: The fertility magical chair- like structure

A hill previously seen and revered as sacred in Ozalla has been taken over by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria with the corporation of the community for recreational activities. According to oral tradition, the people of Ozalla performed rituals on this mountain. This could involve hanging on the *Achara* tree (Mahogany), a fowl with half-slashed throat and the Priest would return the next day to know the fate of the sacrifice with the gods. The Priest on his return from the mountain, announces the status of the sacrifice with gods, to the community.

Also, rituals performed during the Yam Festival at the foot of Ngwu tree has equally been stopped, though the tree still stands. People have attributed this to the impact of the evangelism by the Catholic Church as they see participation in the warmth and gaiety of the Festival as mere fanfare and pageantry devoid of any emotional or spiritual attachment.

4.5 Economic Potentials of Ngwo caves and Ozalla Lake

The general poor state of security in the country, particularly South-east, is of serious concern to all. Security is a crucial factor in promotion of tourism and it goes a long way to determine how the people and their culture are viewed and respected. Perception about safety of life and property determines the willingness of the people to visit historical places or participate in important events for a rewarding experience. The proactive decision of Enugu State government to reconstruct the Miliken Road where many had plunged to untimely death, would make people who hitherto, will never consider a trip to Ngwo cave have a change of mind. Armed security personnel familiar with the terrain and specially equipped with capacity to curtail the excesses of underworld men should be provided at the sites. Safe access road and competitive holiday resort close to the sites will boost confidence of the people.

The particular business model, which would be most appropriate to attract private investment should be facilitated by government at the three tiers. The joint management of Arhwun Cave and waterfall by the Catholic Church and the community provides a classical example where proprietary rights, use and management of a natural resource could work under a business model, which at least guarantees the recovery of fixed costs. Whatever the business model chosen it must ensure mutual benefits to all the stakeholders.

Initiation of lecture series, where different perspectives will be constantly offered on the need to sustain the memories of the 12 workers massacred at Ivy Valley Mine, is long overdue. This is with a view to highlighting why Nigeria after 63 years of independence should own the process and develop local capacity for exploitation of naturally endowed resources (non-oil). It is therefore, not out of place to regularly

re-examine issues associated with the wanton loss of life and the Fitzgerald's report which investigated the unfortunate incident.

The recent resignation of a former British Journalist from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on account of not having enough time to contribute to efforts aimed at canvassing reparation for the Caribbean countries for their suffering during slave trade in which her family played a key role, introduces a new perspective. However, despite the controversies surrounding the real reasons slavery was stopped almost 120 years ago, it is heart-warming that the dehumanizing treatment of man by man in the name of slave trade could still touch the conscience of the likes of Laura Trevelyan² whose family announced a £100,000 payment in return for their slave-owning past.

It is hoped that the lecture series will bring to the consciousness of the world the 1949 cruelty, which unjustly terminated lives of some Nigerians for demanding better pay and conducive work-environment. The NLN's team is presently in consultation with stakeholders on how to syndicate annual tour of historical sites in Enugu State and other states as part of the Library effort to document aspects of Nigeria's history which inspire unity and engenders national integration.

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6.0

CONCLUSION

The project demonstrates NLN's commitment to her statutory responsibility as the custodian of documentary and cultural heritage of the country. She owes the nation duty to gather data, organize, analyze, interpret, present and preserve information about undocumented historical sites, monuments and events, with a view to facilitating access for posterity. Honesty, loyalty, commitment to the communal good, and mutual respect for each other's culture, are virtues, which promote peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

From Umuaja, Durbi Takusheyi, and Ilare to Ngwo Enugu, the pre-requisite to hope for any good from the "gods" is the freedom from diabolical tendencies towards anyone. Taboos in these communities are meant to engender orderliness and promote the general well-being, so norms and traditions are well-respected by all.

Holiday resorts built through public private partnership and a functional transportation model to move people around the designated historical sites will go a long way to attract tourists from around the world. Cultural youth exchange programmes among states with similar inspiring messages, could be initiated for mutual benefits in the national integration effort. Initiation of lecture series to dwell on issues, which promote national cohesion and development, is important.

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