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Akpan & Edemekong

Akwa Ibom State and National Development: An Abridged Assessment of the Contributions of the People and the Land

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Abstract

Although Akwa Ibom State came into existence as a distinct geo-political entity within the Nigerian federation in 1987 after a consistent struggle, the people of the State have a long history spanning several centuries. Scholars agree that the Ibibio, the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, were the original owners of much of that tract of land lying east of the Niger, south of the Benue, while their language has been rated as being probably the most ancient of all the "Semi-Bantu languages." As a people of hoar antiquity, they have justified their considerable antiquity through the enormous contributions the people and the land have made to the evolution and sustainability of Nigeria. There is hardly any aspect of Nigeria's political history or facet of Nigeria's national life to which the people of Akwa Ibom State have not contributed in a pioneering and profound dimension. From the nationalism that climaxed in political independence, the agitation for balanced federation, the legal institutions in the country including both constitutional formulations and reforms, to the emancipation of women, educational attainment and outstanding social and cultural advancement, the people of Akwa Ibom State made significant contributions. The paper argues that without the efforts of the people of Akwa Ibom State and the resources of its land, Nigeria may likely not be enjoying its current shape and structure as well as its status of greatness.

Introduction

Two basic schools of thought postulate how Nigeria evolved. The Eurocentric writers regard Nigeria as a creation of the British government and officials who conquered and united Nigeria's diverse peoples and applied various policies and practices to develop the country up to independence in 1960. Thus, the British were the architects and builders of Nigeria; the indigenous Nigerians, mostly, "sunk" in rural barbarism and

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ignorance, played hardly any significant role in Nigeria's evolution.¹

The second school of thought is more realistic in positing that Nigeria evolved from the contributions of both the Nigerians and the British. Her roots lay in the economic, cultural and political arrangements which the Nigerians accomplished before the British imposition, and which the British partly built their colonial rule. Although the British applied various colonial policies and practices, Nigerians, including the Ibibio (Akwa Ibom), nevertheless retained a large measure of initiative in contributing to their country's development and even influencing colonial policies in their own favour.² It should be added that one of the cardinal features of the development was the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups numbering about 400 in all, as stakeholders in the Nigerian project in the 20th century.³

Akwa Ibom State, as one of the states in Nigeria was not in existence as a distinct state in the Nigerian federation until 1987. However, the people of the state had settled in the area from "the very early times". Indeed, so ancient has been the Ibibio presence where they still live that G. I. Jones and Daryll Ford, in their *Ibo and Ibibio Speaking Peoples of South Eastern Nigeria*, reported that the Ibibio have "no tradition of migration from elsewhere nor having displaced any previous inhabitants."⁴

We begin analysis of modern Akwa Ibom State contributions to national development in 1928, the year the Ibibio Union (later Ibibio State Union) was founded, since the Union became, to all intents and purposes, the embodiment of the Akwa Ibom people. The date is somewhat arbitrary since the factors of modernisation such as increase in Western education and general literacy, in means of communication and transportation, in agriculture and trade and in urbanisation caused partly by the advent of British colonial rule, European trading firms and Christian Missions had commenced in the region before that date. Nevertheless, from 1928 to 1968 (the year that followed the creation of South Eastern State for the present Akwa Ibom and Cross River peoples) constituted the Golden Age of Akwa Ibom, as well as the Age of the Ibibio State Union. It was an age, the best of Akwa Ibom people – in their spirit, industry and enterprise, unity, single purposiveness and cooperation; creativity, in the arts, the sciences and ideas, organisation, patriotism and selflessness manifested in Akwa Ibom people and

expressed themselves in feats and achievements unheard of before among comparable Nigerians, indeed African peoples.⁵

It should be noted from the onset that the Ibibio State Union was truly a Pan-Akwa Ibom organisation. It comprised the rising educated elites who provided most of the leadership as well as non-literate chiefs and elders, who nevertheless, were talented leaders, endowed with clear vision of what their people needed in order to achieve progress. Its membership was free to all persons in the six "Ibibio Districts" or the "Ibibio Division" as the Akwa Ibom area was then called in British colonial times.

Based on these reasons, it is pertinent to begin our assessment by briefly considering the path-breaking contributions of the Ibibio State Union to national development. It should however be strongly stated that this attempt is just a skeletal study of the contributions of the Ibibio State Union in particular and that of the people and the land of Akwa Ibom State in general to national development.

Institutional Contributions: The Ibibio State Union and National Development

During the colonial period, the people of Akwa Ibom State became the first set of Nigerians to form a formidable and progressive, socio-cultural welfare organisation which they effectively used for social mobilisation in Nigeria. By the late 1920's the Ibibio leaders had realised that the colonial administration had come to stay and that armed resistance for the purpose of effecting a change was largely futile. It was reasoned that if the new order could not be changed, at least it could be manipulated; the leaders reasoned that one way of achieving such objective was through acquiring Western education, because only people who understood Western ways, their language and constitution would best deal with Western presence.⁶ Put differently, education was considered as *sine qua non* for all development programmes. The Union's goal was education and education was greatly stimulated and encouraged at all levels including primary, secondary and tertiary.⁷

Because of the consistent pressure mounted by the Ibibio Union, the colonial government established the Teacher's Training College at Uyo in 1931, though the Union had actually desired a Grammar or Technical school. After the College had been opened in 1932, it was jointly funded by the government

on the one hand and the Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Abak Native Authorities on the other. This arrangement continued until 1946, when the Regional government assumed full responsibility for the maintenance of the College.⁸ It should be noted that the pioneering effort and visionary initiative of the founding fathers has handsomely paid off since that institution has metamorphosed into the University of Uyo.

The foresightedness of the Union also resulted in the establishment of a secondary school - indeed, certainly the first secondary school in Africa built and financed solely by a "tribal" union appropriately named, the Ibibio State College, established in Ikot Ekpene in 1946.⁹

As it is well known, in 1938, the Union made the phenomenal award of scholarships at one time to six selected Ibibio students each from the Six Ibibio Districts for the pursuit of professional education in Europe and America. The path-breaking achievement opened a new concept, a phenomenon within the context of the philosophy of self-help and self-development in the annals of Nigerian development.¹⁰ It also inspired editorial comments in many Nigerian newspapers, notably, the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service*. The *West African Pilot*, at that time by far the most influential nationalist newspaper in all of West Africa, in its August, 8, 1938 edition, in a long and emotional editorial titled, "A Model Union" commented glowingly on the shining achievement of the Ibibio Union and described the six beneficiaries as "merchants of light."¹¹ The beneficiaries were B. U. A. Attah (Agriculture), O. E. Antia-Obong (Medicine), A. U. Idiong (Medicine), I. U. Akpabio (Education), J. L. Nsima (Education), and E. U. Udoma (Law).

The Union's effort yielded profound dividends. Apart from the fact that those students did return to the country and contributed immensely to the development of the nation, their children and close relations currently occupy high positions in public and private services. Some of them include Arc. (Obong) Victor Attah, the former Governor of Akwa Ibom State (1999-2007); Senator Udoma Udo Udoma, a two term Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and an active player in the nation's corporate stage; and Barrister Godswill Akpabio, the current Governor of Akwa Ibom State.¹²

The Union was also a pioneer organisation in a number of fields other than education. It was the first of its kind to be appointed a License Buying Agent by the colonial authorities

and the first ethnic organisation in Nigeria to operate an account with an English bank. Economic independence which has only been recently made a national objective was one of the earliest concerns of the Union. Some of the policies that were later adopted by the Federal Government, like the "Operation Feed the Nation," the "Green Revolution" had been anticipated by the Ibibio State Union.¹³

In the field of Agriculture, the Six Districts of Ibibio land had during the colonial period established themselves as the largest producers of palm oil and kernel in the country. It may be remembered that these products, along with groundnuts, accounted for the bulk of Nigeria's export trade and constituted Nigeria's main source of foreign exchange earnings. It was therefore, in order to benefit a bit more from the trade in these commodities that the Union fought and succeeded in getting itself appointed as a Licensed Buying Agent as earlier mentioned. Not satisfied with this, the Union threw its tremendous weight behind an organisation known as the Ibibio Farmer's Association and started direct shipments of palm oil to the Union's customers in the United States of America.¹⁴

At the same time, there were plans for the establishment of a chain of Ibibio State farms and Ibibio State hospitals. Some of these plans did not advance beyond the drawing stage partly because they were becoming suspicious by the British colonial administration. But the fact that those plans had been hatched and accepted by the Ibibio as viable and worthwhile, is today a glowing commentary on the mind power of the Ibibio pioneers.¹⁵

The Union was such a force that the colonial authorities often sought its assistance in a number of ways. In 1947, for instance, when the colonial government had failed to put an end to the menace of the Man leopard, *Ekpe Ikpa Ukot*, it was the Ibibio Union which went to its rescue and saved the British authorities the embarrassment by stamping out the vicious secret society.¹⁶

Not even the colonial government of Nigeria could hide its enthusiastic admiration of the goals and achievements of the Union or the excellence of its organisation. For example, Sir Donald David Cameron, a former Governor of Nigeria said of the Union, "we are saved from disaster by the indomitable spirit of the Ibibio people. Hope for the future was found in their unflagging industry and tenacity of purpose." This commendation was contained in the Governor's address to the

Legislative Council in 1935 on matters relating to problems encountered by the colonial establishment during the pacification exercise. Furthermore, the Chief Commissioner for the Southern Province, Mr. W. E. Hunt, noted in 1937 that, during marathon anti-tax "riots" of 1929, the worst manifestations of the occurrence would have repeated themselves in Ikot Ekpene were it not for the co-operation of the Ibibio Union.¹⁷

It is perhaps necessary to add that the efforts of the Ibibio State Union bore tremendous fruit, both psychologically and practically, and succeeded far beyond the original hopes of the founding fathers. So very successful was the Union that it stimulated rash imitations across the country. By the end of the forties, the Nigerian ethnic canvas was crowded with a variety of imitation State Unions, Progressive Unions, District Unions, Egbe Omo etc. In concrete terms, the Ibibio gained in influence and prestige everywhere in the country. Their advice was sought by planners and administrators. Their representatives became automatic choices for strategic places on national delegations.¹⁸

Contributions of the People of Akwa Ibom to National Development

In 1938, the Ibibio Union secured a representation for the Mainland District of the then Calabar Province (present day Akwa Ibom) in the Nigerian Legislative Council in Lagos, and nominated Obong Nyong Essien to become the first ever representative of an ethno-cultural group in the Nigerian legislature. While in the Nigerian legislature, Obong Nyong Essien's performance became mercurial and path-breaking. He was regarded as a "dare devil" critic of the colonial structure and was acclaimed an outstanding forensic orator whose persuasive eloquence and dignified presence could not be ignored. Obong Nyong Essien, as one of the pillars of Nigerian nationalism, served on the various Pan-Nigerian delegations to London and sat with the best at the table on which Nigeria's independence was being negotiated at home and abroad. In every known sense, the flamboyant chief was one of the prime architects of Nigerian independence.¹⁹

In a tribute published in the *West African Pilot* newspaper of February 4, 1948, Chief Mbonu Ojike, stated "when the political history of this decade will be written, Chief Nyong Essien will

stand out as the father of the NCNC. His activities during and after the delegations will crown him dauntless. He will always be remembered for his staunch stance in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, in the Legislative Council sessions and his faith in Africa."²⁰

The May 1965 edition of the *Nation*, the official organ of the NCNC, described Obong Nyong Essien as the oldest legislator in Nigeria and also rated him as the protagonist of chieftaincy rights and protector in Eastern Nigeria. It noted further that "it was Obong Nyong Essien who founded the Eastern Regional House of Chiefs and also served as the founding President". It added that it was "he, who almost single handedly defended the institution and rights of chiefs in the Eastern Region."²¹ He is also reputed to have had one of the richest private libraries in Nigeria - the "Shekinnah Library"²² - which was later handed over to the University of Uyo. In appreciation, the University of Uyo authorities re-named its library after Nyong Essien.

It is worth recalling that following the adoption of the Macpherson's Constitution in 1951, Professor Eyo Ita, an indigene of Mkpanak in Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State and a resident at Calabar, contested the election at Calabar and won a seat into the Eastern Regional House of Assembly at Enugu. He was subsequently elected the first Leader of Government Business of the Eastern Region of Nigeria; the fore-runner of the post of Regional Premier. He was also the first Minister of Natural Resources in the Eastern Region. He is fondly described as one of the first intellectual giants to be in politics in Nigeria. A transparently fair minded intellectual and outstanding African nationalist and educationist,²³ he was the first political office holder in Nigeria to be impeached without having committed any wrong. He was a very upright man who could not be found guilty even by his political opponents of official corruption, either financially or materially. The panel instituted to inquire into the allegation levelled against him as the Leader of Eastern Regional Government's Business in 1953 unravelled that in the execution of his official duties, Eyo Ita and his ministerial colleagues ran a clean administration. This legacy of transparency has not been retained, by the administration of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, his successor who became the Premier of the Eastern Region (1954-1959), and subsequent administrations in Nigeria.²⁴

According to Elpheth Huxley, in his book, *Four Guineas: A Journey Through West Africa*, Professor Eyo Ita was "a bright star, and the most highly respected of any participant in Eastern public life." The *Daily Times* of October 9, 1952 reported that it was Eyo Ita, who in 1949 first advocated for the formation of an all embracing regional organisation in the West African sub-region. The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in 1975, vividly vindicated his aspiration.²⁵ This assertion could be ascertained from the fact that his private secondary school in Calabar, the *West African Peoples Institute*, bears the "regional tag" since its establishment in the 1930's.

As the first elected indigenous political Head of the then Eastern Region of Nigeria, the leader of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) party in the same Region and a Member of the House of Representatives, Professor Eyo Ita had the singular honour of leading the elected Members of Eastern Regional House of Assembly to the maiden session of the House of Representatives in Lagos in 1952, in the same way Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Alhaji Ahmadu Bello led the delegations from the Western and Northern Regions respectively.²⁶

Following the civilian *coup d'etat*, perfected by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe which led to the removal of Professor Eyo Ita from government, the reaction of the Akwa Ibom people was electric. For instance, the majority of the Akwa Ibom and Efik speaking members of the NCNC resigned en-mass from the party.²⁷ A new political party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), with Professor Eyo Ita as the President, was formed. Consequently, the campaign for the creation of Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) State Movement began with Sir Udoma, who was then the National President of the Ibibio State Union, as the arrow head of the Movement.²⁸ In this respect, it is worth stating that, Sir Udo Udoma under the auspices of the Ibibio State Union was the first Nigerian to advocate for a "state" structure for federal Nigeria, and also the originator of the idea for the creation of states in Nigeria. The historic inauguration of the COR State Movement took place on December 19, 1953, at the Roman Catholic Primary School, Afaha Oku in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.²⁹

Thereafter, the agitation for state creation across Nigeria generated serious momentum. As a result of this development, a Commission of Inquiry into the fears of the minorities was

constituted by the British Secretary for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, on September 25, 1957.

Though the Willink's Commission did not recommend the creation of states in Nigeria, mainly because of intrigues, sabotages and high wired politics by the Igbo dominated NCNC which never wanted a state created in the Eastern Region, because the NCNC saw the exercise as a grand conspiracy against the Igbo race,³⁰ the Commission however, acknowledged the fact that genuine fears existed among the minorities and recommended measures to allay these fears. The efforts initiated by Sir Udo Udoma and the Ibibio State Union, culminated in the introduction of Fundamental Human Rights, as a major provision of the Nigerian Independence Constitution of 1960. Besides, it is to the credit of the Ibibio State Union that her activities resulted in the recommendation for establishment of the Niger Delta Board by the Willink's Commission. The Board is today addressed as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).³¹

The clear case of long denial of a separate state to Akwa Ibom people did not escape the attention of General Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's former Military President, during a State banquet, organised to mark his first official visit to Uyo, on April 25, 1991. He remarked thus:

The creation of Akwa Ibom State was the realization of your long-cherished dreams. The demand was genuine, consistent and lawfully pursued with zeal, patience and commitment...the movement for the creation of this state pre-dates all states creation movements. Indeed, the entire question of new states in Nigeria began here even before the formal inauguration of the Ibibio Union in 1928. I do not exaggerate when I say that all the states of the federation owe a huge historical debt to the people of Akwa Ibom State, because...the cradle of the movement of state is here. In this sense it can be said that you are the founders of modern Nigeria.³²

In 1967, 12 states were created by the Federal Government headed by then Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon. Therefore, through the creation of states, an "Akwa Ibom legacy", Nigeria escaped disintegration, following the hot pursuit of the "Igbo cause" by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. Today, Nigeria has 36 states as a federal geo-political entity and it is obvious that no state can

threaten the central government with secession as was the case in the 1960's.³³

The contributions of Sir Udo Udoma to the political evolution of Nigeria did not lie only in his introduction of the word, "state", into the encyclopaedia of political structuring in Nigeria and his pioneering agitation for the entrenchment of federalism in Nigeria. It is also worthy to mention that Sir Udo Udoma, a legal luminary, by general agreement was one of Nigeria's greatest lawyers, an acclaimed orator, and a personality of exemplary character and national property of inestimable value,³⁴ a constitutional expert, a recipient of several international honours including a Knighthood from the Queen of England for outstanding service to the rule of law in the Commonwealth. He was the first Nigerian and also the first African to obtain a Doctorate degree in Law.³⁵ He served as the Chief Justice of Uganda and also the Acting Governor-General of the country. Evidently, Sir Udo Udoma was the first Nigerian to hold such distinguished positions.³⁶

As the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly between 1978 and 1979, he set the bench mark in constitutional making in Nigeria. Dr. Udo Udoma handed to Nigerians a historic document that in terms of scope, sheer complexity and imagination made the Macpherson and Richards constitutions look like kindergarten papers. But this time, Nigerian leaders forgot that characteristically, Nigerian constitutions had generally been named after their chief architects, hence the 1979 constitution was not called "Udo Udoma's Constitution."³⁷ Despite the invaluable contributions of Sir Udo Udoma to evolution and development of the Nigerian legal system, he was at different times unduly deprived of the position of Chief Justice of the Federation, though he was the most qualified to occupy the exalted position given his sagacity, brilliance and seniority.³⁸

The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) was an event of unprecedented trauma for our nation. It required men of integrity and unalloyed fidelity and commitment to the federal cause to pull the nation through to its goal of military victory, economic prosperity and political unity and stability. At that time, Nigeria's desperate search for men of sterling worth to mediate these goals was answered with the availability of some Akwa Ibom patriots. Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong was one of such patriots. General Ibarahim Babangida, in April 1991, publicly

informed Akwa Ibom people thus: "It was from your ranks that Nigeria acquired its war-time national field manager in the most critical years of the privations and financial shortfalls of the civil war when Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong served the nation as the Governor of the Central Bank."³⁹

Chief (Dr.) Isong who later became the first civilian Governor of the former Cross River State (1979-1983), was the second Nigerian to hold the position of the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, but the first to occupy that exalted position for two consecutive terms. He was a renowned Harvard trained Economist who distinguished himself in the service of several national and international finance establishments including the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is important stress that Chief Isong was appointed as the Governor of the Central Bank at a time when the nation's war finances were careening precariously on the economic tight rope. Few nations in modern human history have fought a civil war and emerged with their economy even stronger than pre-war level. Arguably, Nigeria achieved this rear feat because of the extraordinary management skills of Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong who also steered the apex bank during the period of transition from Nigerian Pounds to the Naira. As a national attempt to commemorate his extraordinary feat, Nigeria's One Thousand Naira currency - the highest denomination - is adorned with his face.⁴⁰

Nigeria's military history is also awash with significant roles of people of Akwa Ibom extraction. One of them was Colonel Philip Effiong. His role in maintaining the corporate existence of Nigeria cannot be obscured. When Ojukwu, Biafra's symbol of the rebellion, showed his ill-fated republic a clean pair of heels, Colonel Effiong was left with the difficult and unenviable task of negotiating the surrender of Biafra with the federal authorities. His wise decision brought the 30 months war to a logical end.⁴¹ He also wisely restrained the Biafran side against recourse to guerrilla warfare.⁴² Consequently, peace was instituted to enhance the implementation of the programme of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction and the eventual re-integration of the Igbo people into the mainstream of the Nigerian nation.

Brigadier-General Wellington Bassey, the first Commissioned Officer in the Nigerian Army set a trailblazing military pace for people of Akwa Ibom origin. He is known in military circles as "NA 1"⁴³ while General Aguiyi Ironsi, Nigeria's

first military Head of State is known as "NA 2."⁴⁴ As a distinguished soldier, Wellington Basseyy commanded the Nigerian independence parade where the Union Jack, the symbol of British colonialism, was lowered and Nigeria's flag hoisted on October 1, 1960. He served as the 1st Commandant of Boys Company, Zaria, (1954-1957); 1st Nigerian Camp Commandant, Lagos Garrison, Apapa, 1st Commander Federal Guard (Brigade of Guards) Lagos, (1959-1962); Commander, Depot, Nigerian Army, Zaria; Brigade Commander, Kaduna (1966).⁴⁵ In April 1954, while serving as Captain in the Nigerian army, he interviewed and recruited Nigeria's second military Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon into the Nigerian army.⁴⁶

Brigadier-General Wellington Basseyy was appointed Consul-General and later Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Equatorial Guinea during the civil war years. His appointment to that inconsequential Consulate was a matter of expediency because the Ibibio had for long been acknowledged as die-hard federalists who had sacrificed everything to maintain the unity of the nation. At that time, supporters of succession were smuggling arms into the country from the neighbouring countries, particularly from Sao Tome and Principe, and the allegiance of Equatorial Guinea was very essential. Only a federalist, like Brigadier Wellington Basseyy could assure the Federal Government of the kind of loyalty that the country required, hence the appointment.⁴⁷

Many other Akwa Ibom sons also made outstanding contributions to national development, for instance, Mr. Ibanga Udo Akpabio, a beneficiary of the 1938 Ibibio Union scholarship award, served as the Minister of Education and Internal Affairs respectively in the defunct Eastern Region. As a onetime Deputy Premier of the Eastern Region, Mr. Inanga Udo Akpabio regularly acted as the Premier of the Eastern Region. With such robust pedigree, it was natural to assume that he would be the one to succeed Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who was then set to move to the central government in Lagos. However, when Dr. Azikiwe moved to the centre, he, (Dr. Azikiwe), hand-picked Dr. Michael Okpara to supersede Mr. Ibanga Udo Akpabio as the Premier of the Eastern Region. By so doing, the politics of ethnicity was made to triumph over meritocracy.⁴⁸

It is also a matter of historical importance to mention that another Akwa Ibom founding father, Chief Robert Umo Inyang - the first chairman of Ikot Ekpene Local Government Council -

was also the first Nigerian, and indeed the first person in British West Africa, to be elected a Local Government Chairman. That development was by virtue of the fact that Ikot Ekpene, in Akwa Ibom State, was the first elected Local Government Council in British West Africa, having been inaugurated on April 11, 1951.⁴⁹

Obong Sampson Udo Etuk, the initiator of the first communal educational programme in Nigeria - the Ibibio Union scholarship scheme of 1938 - stunned the whole of Nigeria in 1928 by winning the first place among the only six successful candidates out of 220 Certificated Teachers in Nigeria who sat for the Second Class "A" Teachers Examination.⁵⁰ He was the first black Principal of the Teacher's Training College, Uyo, which has transformed to become the University of Uyo. He was also the first Provincial Education Officer of Warri Division (now Delta State). In 1943, Obong Sampson Udo Etuk founded the Abraka College of Education, now Delta State University. He also had a distinguished career as a teacher at Government College Ibadan and Kings College, Lagos. As a distinguished teacher, he taught and mentored many Nigerians, including Ntisonng Sebastian James Umoren, a Patriarch of Akwa Esop Ima Isong Ibibio, Chief Grey Longe, a former Secretary to the Federal Military Government and Head of Service, as well as Dr Alex Ekwueme, a former Vice President of Nigeria.⁵¹

In the early 1940's, Hon. Herbert Macaulay speaking about Obong Etuk noted that:

In his position as a Travelling Teacher, Etuk won the respect not only of the Officers of the Education Department, but also of those in the Administrative Service with whom he came in contact....Mr. Etuk was a rare combination of genius and patriotism. In spite of his success, he rejected the ivory tower approach to personal living, and elected himself the precarious role of beacon to his race, a role model that the government of the day looked upon with considerable suspicion."⁵²

Chief Basseyy Attah, another "Ibibio merchant of light" was the second Nigerian graduate of Agriculture; the first being the late Cordoso, the first Nigerian to obtain a postgraduate degree in Agriculture. Basseyy Attah was responsible for oil palm grove rehabilitation, a scheme that sought to replace the old unproductive wild palm trees and the hybridisation of oil palm

species in Nigeria. It was from the high expectations from oil palm yields that prompted the establishment of Oil Palm Research Station, later West African Institute for Oil Research (WAIFOR) and National Institute for Oil Palm Research (NAIFOR). As one of the pioneer staff of (WAIFOR), he introduced a formula for applying fertilizer known as "F.R." He also contributed immensely in the research for the enrichment of the soil and introduced many economic grass seedlings from the West Indies. These included Guatemala grass which is a rich source of protein for cattle and other herbivores. The cassava seedling, known as *Afia Okpo*, was introduced from the West Indies by Chief Attah and he also experimented on the cultivation of onion in Southern Nigeria.⁵³

It is also on record that he introduced into Nigeria a special breed of pigs, popularly known as "white land race." He also introduced into Nigeria, special species of birds known as "Rhode Island Red" (R/R), popularly called *Unen Attah*. In the area of cattle rearing, Chief Attah also introduced a breed from Cote d'Voire, to Nigeria. He is said to have produced and formulated most of the feeds used in animal production today. It was as a result of his unparalleled contributions to the development of agriculture that made him to be recognised as "the father of scientific agriculture in Nigeria."⁵⁴

Barrister Oyokunyi Ita, one of the earliest beneficiaries of the Oron Union's scholarship scheme, dominated the political process by his sheer character - penchant for truth and uncompromising detestation of corruption in all facets. He championed the rights of the minorities and was a foundation member of the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, Enugu. Barrister Ita was a brilliant columnist of the Eastern Express Newspaper, which was published by Sir Udo Udoma to defend the rights of the minorities in Nigeria. He was a commentator on contemporary events with particular reference to the struggle for Nigerian independence, and was fondly described as "the lawyer with a pungent pen." In the words of his political and professional colleague, Sir Udo Udoma, Barrister Ita "fought with his pen."⁵⁵

As a protagonist of the Calabar Ogoja Rivers (COR) State movement, Barrister Ita served the body as the Treasurer. He was one of the leaders who toured the parts of the proposed State and Western Cameroon in 1954 in furtherance of the actualisation of the dream. He co-sponsored the petition for the

creation of COR State at the Resumed Constitutional Conference held in Lagos. He was also member of the Central Executive Committee of the Movement that worked on the issue of the 1957 London Constitutional Conference.

Chief Effiong Okon Eyo, a leading Nigerian politician, passed a vote of no confidence on Professor Eyo Ita's government which eventually led to the wreckage of that government. However, besides that sad episode, Effiong Okon Eyo was an unparalleled federalist and advocate of state creation in Nigeria. He served as a onetime Chief Whip and Deputy Speaker of the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, Enugu, where he earned the appellation of "the encyclopaedia of standing rules" because of firm command of the workings of legislative rules.⁵⁶ He participated in all the Constitutional Conferences in Nigeria and London that led to Nigeria's independence.

As a social crusader and Chairman of the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC), Chief Eyo Okon exposed the unethical practices of the former Premier of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, when Azikiwe siphoned huge public funds totaling about £2,000,000.00 (two million pounds) and deposited it in the African Continental Bank (ACB), where he had substantial interest as the founder. The controversy generated by the allegation led to the setting up of a high powered Tribunal of Inquiry, headed by then Chief Justice of Nigeria, Sir Stafford William Powell Foster-Sutton. The Tribunal found Dr. Azikiwe guilty of impropriety and misconduct and therefore pronounced him "not fit to continue as the Premier of the Region."⁵⁷ Thus, the foundation for the war against the monster of corruption, which is yet to be won, had been laid by an Akwa Ibom son before Nigeria's independence.

In the ecclesiastical realm, the late Dominic Cardinal Ekandem also left a significant mark. He was the first African Catholic Bishop of West Africa, the first Apostolic Administrator of Port Harcourt, the first Cardinal in English speaking West Africa, the first President of the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa, the Superior of Abuja and the first Nigerian to qualify as a candidate to the Papacy. He also had to his credit, the formation of the Catholic Women Organisation (CWO), the Catholic Teachers Association and the Christian Association of Nigeria.⁵⁸

Contribution of Akwa Ibom Women

On the pane of the female gender, the pioneering role of some Akwa Ibom women to national development deserves to reckon. As far back as 1929 some women activists in Akwa Ibom State, such as Madam Adiaha Edem, like most women of the former Eastern Nigeria, organised and participated in the women's war. The Women's War which has been erroneously styled "the Aba Women's Riot"⁵⁹ marked a watershed in the political history of Nigeria. The event "need not be named after a particular group,"⁶⁰ since it was an event of the people's collective expression of resentment to, and abhorrence of foreign domination and autocratic impositions, arbitrary laws and tyrannical acts of illegitimate imperialist agents known as the "Warrant Chiefs." Many women lost their lives to the bullets of callous British colonial soldiers.⁶¹ However, the heroism of the women provoked far reaching colonial reforms and led to the abolition of the indirect rule system. The remarkable demonstration of economic and political awareness occurred in Akwa Ibom long before the current feminist movement and that the gallant resistance to obnoxious colonial policy via the women's war reached its apogee in Akwa Ibom territory.⁶²

Obonganwan Grace Sampson Udo Etuk was a trailblazer in many facets of life. While studying in Britain in the 1940's, she became an active member of the Labour Party. In 1955, Obongawan Grace Samson rose to the position of a Catering Supervisor in the Government Rest House, Enugu - the first African to hold such a position. In 1956, her expertise was put to test as she had to cater for the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II and her entourage during the monarch's visit to Nigeria. She passed the test and got commendation from the Governor of the Eastern Region, Clement Isong, the Premier of the Eastern Region, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the London Express Newspaper, among others.⁶³

As a trained nurse and the wife of the first Black Principal of the Teacher's Training College, Uyo (now University of Uyo), Obongawan Sampson's initiative in the early 1940's resulted in the invitation of Dr. Haigh and Matron Gardner of Methodist Hospital, Ituk Mbang, to run an antenatal clinic for pregnant mothers and training workshops for traditional midwives. The experiment provided the foundation for the University of Uyo Health Centre.⁶⁴

Another Akwa Ibom woman, whose fierce nationalistic fervor contributed immensely to the breaking of the yoke of oppression and colonialism in Nigeria and some other African countries, was Dr. (Mrs) Ema Brown. She studied journalism in London and in the 1950's associated politically with many prominent African leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Siaka Stephens of Sierra Leone, Tom Mboya of Kenya, Prince Dika Auwa, Felix Mounmin of Cameroon, Seoku Toure and Gallo Talli of Guinea.⁶⁵

In 1959, Ema Brown was one of the few Nigerians who attended the All African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana, which laid the frame work for the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, now, African Union. In 1962, she was instrumental to the formation of the Association of Nigerian Authors and in the same year represented Nigeria at the Afro-Asian Writers Conference in Cairo, Egypt, along with Professor Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Florence Nwapa and a few others. Professor Wole Soyinka has acknowledged her role in the Cairo's conference in his book, *The Penkelemes Years: A Memoir, 1946-1965*, and her struggles during the Nigerian Civil War in another of his books, *The Man Died*. In the said publication, the Nobel laureate described Dr. (Mrs) Ema Brown as "EB."⁶⁶

Ema Brown was also a venerable political associate of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and by extension, a very active member of the NCNC party. She was a keen promoter of the ideals of the COR State Movement. In the Second Republic she fraternised with the ruling National Party of Nigeria, (NPN) and served as the only female member of Alhaji Shehu Shagari Campaign Organisation. She was appointed the chairperson of the organisation in Ogun State, the home State of Chief Awolowo, the Unity Party of Nigeria's flag-bearer.

In collaboration with Sir Udo Udoma, Ema Brown influenced the movement of Mobil Producing Nigeria (now Exxon/Mobil) to Eket and even provided the first temporary accommodation for the oil firm in her father's apartment at Ikot Ebok, Eket. Also, by her personal initiative, she secured a "hand written letter" of invitation to Pope John Paul II, from his political associate and former President of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It was that letter that the late Dominic Cardinal Ekanem travelled with to Rome to facilitate the first ever Pontifical visit to Nigeria in 1982.⁶⁷ Other aspects of the role of

the late Dr. (Mrs) Brown are documented in Chief J. B. Adiakpan's book, *The Eket Speaking People*.⁶⁸

Contributions of the Land to National Development

Historically, the idea of the creation of states in Nigeria is an Akwa Ibom legacy. It is an unchallenged historical fact, that the Akwa Ibom fathers initiated the demand and sustained the drive. As it is well known, the Eastern Regional crisis of 1953 which opened the flood gate for the agitation for the creation of states in Nigeria was a product of ethnic chauvinism.

Economically, Akwa Ibom State has always been of strategic importance to the development of Nigeria and the global economy. Prior to colonial rule, the geographical area that later came to known as Akwa Ibom State extensively supported the political economy of the British Empire by virtue of the amount of slaves that were acquired from the area. After the long period of slave trade came the era of the so – called "legitimate trade" which prominently featured the trade in palm produce. Acknowledged as the regional belt with the highest density of oil palm trees in the world, Akwa Ibom contributed generously to the trade.⁶⁹

Courtesy of Akwa Ibom productive labour, Nigeria without any exaggeration constituted the sole supplier of the world requirement of palm produce. Colonial economic chroniclers have confirmed that at the beginning of the 20th century, the oil palm, being the emblem of the country's economy, accounted for about 88 per cent of the total source of Nigerian export. Akwa Ibom contributed remarkably to accord the Niger Delta area the nomenclature of "Oil Rivers" as well as its recognition as the "treasure base of the African continent."⁷⁰ It was the fruits of the economic and export crops which no other state or people surpassed Akwa Ibom in production that contributed in no small measure to the building infrastructure and the overall development of Nigeria.⁷¹

Remarkably, crude oil which has changed the socio-economic landscape and the thought pattern of Nigerians was first discovered in Ikot Akpa Ekop in Mkpat Enin Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in 1953. Oloibri in today's Bayelsa State, was rather, the first place which crude oil was found in commercial quantities and also the first site from which the product was exported from in Nigeria.⁷²

Thus, with the discovery of large quantities of oil in Oloibri, Nigeria, was ushered into the league of oil producing nations. Following the acquisition of oil blocks in the Atlantic Ocean, off-shore of South Eastern Nigeria, Mobil Oil discovered its first oil field on March 4, 1964. By 1970 when the company started crude oil production, it had drilled 160 oil wells and discovered a total of 16 oil fields all in off-shore locations and Nigeria became the largest oil producing and exporting country in Africa,⁷³ a position it has continued to hold. At present, the country is rated as the 6th largest oil producing nation in the world. Following that development, Nigerians eventually abandoned the agricultural economy which used to yield substantial revenue to the country. The introduction of the obnoxious on-shore/off-shore oil dichotomy, which was politically introduced by the nation rulers from the majority ethnic groups, to muster much resource for the development of non-oil producing areas remained a sad commentary in Nigerian history.

Nigeria's former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, also attested, during his State Visit to Akwa Ibom State in 1991 to the unique economic endowment of Akwa Ibom State thus:

Your State is certainly not without its fair share of natural resources...it occupies an enviable position in the nation's economy as a major contributor to the national crude oil reserves and productions. This must give the people of your State a sense of pride. The ecological zone in which the State is located offers good potentials for the development of agriculture, the continental shelf of the state including rivers, creeks and swamps, has the highest concentration of fishes in this country. Various mineral resources such as limestone, clay, natural gas, silver and nitrate abound in your State.⁷⁴

As pathfinders of the federalist debate, it is well known that it was Akwa Ibom fathers who championed the struggle for the practice of true federalism and the abrogation of the on-shore/off-shore oil dichotomy as well as the implementation of resource control to engender a stable democratic experience. At present, Akwa Ibom is rated as the largest oil producing state in the federation. In addition, from available records, Akwa Ibom State holds the largest reserve of petroleum in the country.⁷⁵

Therefore, whether one looks at the economic resources of the State, the profile of the citizens or the past, and the transmitted legacy, Akwa Ibom State, without any controversy has made unparalleled and consistent contributions to the Nigerian nation.

Conclusion

By documenting the pioneering and profound contributions of this galaxy of Akwa Ibom heroes and heroines as well as the role of Akwa Ibom land to national development, some awareness has been created about certain Nigerians, institutions and legacy with particular emphasis on how the landmarks were initiated, the forces behind such creative initiative, the reason they were initiated and who should earn the credit for those distinguished feats.

As rightly observed by some scholars of Akwa Ibom extraction, the naming of national institutions after "prominent Nigerians" from the so called majority ethnic groups to the exclusion of Akwa Ibom people appears discriminatory in extreme because many people from Akwa Ibom deserve similar if not greater honour. It would be recalled that part of the events that marked the golden jubilee anniversary of Nigeria's independence in 2010, was the recognition of "50 Eminent Nigerians," believed to have made significant contributions to national development. Regrettably, at the event, only the Sir Udo Udoma was honoured, while the memory of other trail blazers from Akwa Ibom was consigned to the dust bin of history. From our account, it is obvious that many Akwa Ibom people deserve to have been honoured at the event and should indeed be recognized and honoured in 2014 during centenary celebration of Nigeria's amalgamation.

Most importantly, this re-assessment becomes necessary because with the passage of time, generations of Akwa Ibom appear to have lost the vision, spirit and poise of a true Akwa Ibom person. They appear to have forgotten the landmark exploits of their forebears and what they represented. It is clear that these men and women were men of valour, vision, intelligence, ingenuity, uprightness and tenacity of purpose. At this point in our history, when intractable economic and political problems have conspired to whittle our self-confidence and hope, we need the reassurance that would kindle our optimism and dream about our future as true heirs of those

men and women who, in the most inauspicious times and circumstances, changed the cause of the history of the Nigeria nation. One way of forging ahead is to hold out glaringly our illustrious past, not for its own sake alone, but also deliberately imbibing the inspiration unfolded in each package as we navigate within the shores of Nigeria and also courageously help in the process of nation building, a legacy eloquently bequeathed to us by our forebears.

In fact, it would not be wrong to remind ourselves of the following remarks made by General Ibrahim Babangida, in 1991 about Akwa Ibom State:

The compact size of your State, your large population, your traditional ingenuity, your dynamism, resilience, honesty and forthrightness, your high sense of justice, the lessons and inspiration of your history, the endowments of nature, in men and materials...your qualities as a law abiding, peaceful, open minded, dutiful and generally self-reliant people is legendary, there is hardly any part of our vast and great nation where you have not left an indelible mark in high executive positions of our public service...all these and many others are the apparent conditions and attributes abundantly available to make Akwa Ibom State second to none.⁷⁶

Notes

¹M. B. Abasiattai, "The Ibibio in the Evolution of Modern Nigeria," in M. B. Abasiattai (ed.), *The Ibibio: An Introduction to the Land, the People and their Culture*, Calabar: Alphonsus Akpan Press, 1991, p. 467.

²*ibid.*, p. 467.

³Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals: A Chronicle of Pioneering Efforts of Akwa Ibom in National Development*, Calabar: Saesprint Publishers, 2004, p. 1.

⁴Okon E. Uya, "Studies in History and Culture: An Overview," in S. W. Peters *et al* (eds.), *Akwa Ibom State: The Land of Promise - A Compendium*, Lagos: Gabumo Press, 1994, p. 20.

⁵M. B. Abasiattai, "Prolegomenon to Akwa Ibom State: A Historical Framework," in Etop J. Usoro *et al* (eds.), *Akwa Ibom State: A Geographical Perspective*, Enugu: Immaculate Publication, 2010, pp. 7-8.

⁶M. E. Noah, *Ibibio Pioneers in Modern Nigerian History*, Uyo: Scholars Press Nigeria, 1980, p. 16.

⁷Akpan A. J. Esen, *Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-Literary Projection*. Calabar: Paico Press, 1982, p. 15.

⁸M. E. Noah, *The Proceedings of the Ibibio Union, 1928-1937*, Uyo: Modern Business Press, 1988, p. 54.

⁹Offiong T. Abia, "Epilogue: The Challenges Ahead," in M. B. Abasiattai (ed.), *The Ibibio: An Introduction...*, p. 592.

¹⁰Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1987, p. 69.

¹¹The commendation by His Excellency, Sir Bernard Bourdilon, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria, to the leadership of the Ibibio Union on the 1938 overseas scholarship scheme was graphically captured by the *West African Pilot*. See, Akpan J. A. Esen, *The Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-Literary Projection*, pp. 157-158.

¹²M. B. Abasiattai, "Prolegomenon to Akwa Ibom State: A Historical Framework", in Etop J. Usoro *et al* (eds.), *Akwa Ibom State...*, p. 10.

¹³M. E. Noah, *Ibibio Pioneers...*, p. 17.

¹⁴For more details on the Ibibio Farmers Union see, M. B. Abasiattai (ed.), *The Ibibio: An Introduction...*, pp. 482-484.

¹⁵E. A. Ikoiwak, "Building a Sustainable Akwa Ibom State and Policy Imperatives, in I. I. Ukpong *et al* (eds.), *Priorities for*

the Development of Akwa Ibom State, Calabar: Centaur Press, 1991, p. 88.

¹⁶The Man Leopard menace took place between 1943 and 1947 and manifested itself in the activities of some persons, who, under the guise of being wild bush leopards engaged in the killing of human beings. The incidents were recorded in Opobo (Ikot Abasi), Abak and parts of Uyo Districts. The Colonial government declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew in the affected areas. The then Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir Arthur Richards and Commissioner, Eastern Provinces, Sir Bernard Carr, visited the affected areas. See, Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*, pp. 116-129.

¹⁷Daniel A. Offiong, "Conclusion: The Ibibio, 1900-1983: Retrospect and Prospect," in M. B. Abasiattai (ed.), *The Ibibio: An Introduction...*, p. 522.

¹⁸The Ibibio Union was unique in many ways and indeed, was the first of its kind in Nigeria. See, Akpan J. A. Esen, *Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-Literary Projection*, p. 156. As an ethnic Union, it was established 13 years before the Ibo State Union was formed in 1944, 17 years before the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, which later became the Action Group (AG) and 23 years before the Mutena Arewa, which later became the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was established in 1951: See, Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 28. After the departure of the Ibibio Scholars, some Igbo scholars, such as Nwafor Orizu, Mr. Okongwu, K. O. Mbadiwe, and Mbonu Ojike sailed to the United States for further studies. See, Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union...*, p. 74. The Ibibio Union changed its name to "The Ibibio State Union" in 1948, thereby laying the foundation for the agitation for a separate state within the Nigerian federation. Their foresightedness was vindicated when in 1949 in Asaba, the Ibo Union, under the presidency of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, changed its name from the Ibo Union to the Ibo State Union. See, Ini A. Udoka, *Sir Udo Udoma: A Portrait of History*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁹Dominus Essien, *Nyong Essien and the Development of Modern Nigeria*, Uyo: Modern Business Press, p. 121.

²⁰Cited in *The Nation*, A Publication of the NCNC, May, 1965, see the article, "Man of the Month," p. 29.

²¹According to Sir Udo Udoma, at the 1957 London Constitutional Conference for the revision of the Nigerian constitution, the NCNC, party delegates under the leadership of

Dr. Michael Okpara vehemently objected the establishment of the House of Chiefs in the Eastern Region of Nigeria but rather sought for the establishment of an Upper House in the Region. They argued that the various Igbo communities were autonomous and ultra-republican and never had any institution in any way approximating to chieftaincy. The matter was thoroughly debated and it was the delegates representing the (UNIP/COR) State movement, sponsored, as it were, by the Ibibio State Union which won the debate by proposing the establishment of the House of Chiefs in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. See full story in Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*, pp. 419-424.

²²*Sunday Chronicle*, November 21, 1976, p. 6.

²³Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*, p. 274.

²⁴Udida Undiyanundeye, "Professor Eyo Ita, 1903-1927: The Man and His Times," PhD Dissertation, University of Calabar, 2004, pp. 484-485.

²⁵*ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

²⁶Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union...*, p. 275.

²⁷Udo Udoma, "The Quest by Nigerians for Self Determination and Stability", An Address delivered at A Symposium to Mark the First Anniversary of the creation of Akwa Ibom State, on September 26, 1988, in the University of Cross River State, Uyo.

²⁸Ini Udoka, *Sir Udo Udoma: A Portrait of History*, p. 87.

²⁹*ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁰Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 72.

³¹*ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

³²Major Speeches, A Collection of Speeches delivered during the State Visit of General Ibrahim Babangida to Akwa Ibom State, April 23-26, 1991, published by Akwa Ibom State Government, p. 30.

³³Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 4.

³⁴Major Speeches..., p. 90.

³⁵Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong, An Address of Welcome presented at the First Ibibio National Congress, Arranged by Ibibio Elders Forum, held on August 29, 1998, at Ibom Hall, Uyo.

³⁶Ema Brown, personal interview, Ikot Ebok, Eket, 11/22/08.

³⁷Akpan J. A. Esen, *Ibibio Profile: a Psycho-Literary Projection...*, p. 171. During the colonial era, Nigerian constitutions were named after their architects, e.g. Clifford, Richard, Macpherson and Lyttelton.

³⁸For the full story of the manipulations that denied Sir Udoma the exalted position of the Chief Justice of Nigeria on two occasions, see, Ini Udoka, *Sir Udo Udoma...*, pp. 125-131.

³⁹Major Speeches..., p. 32.

⁴⁰Souvenir Programme of Chief (Dr.) Clement Nyong Isong's Memorial Lecture and Fund Launch for The Clement Isong Foundation, May, 2006, at Akwa Ibom Hall, Uyo, p. 3.

⁴¹Akpan J. A. Esen, *Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-Literary Projection...*, p. 170.

⁴²Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 4.

⁴³Major Speeches..., p. 90.

⁴⁴Ada Lemo et al (eds.), *Nigeria - A Giant in the Tropics: A Compendium*, Lagos: Gabumo Press, 1997, p. 258.

⁴⁵A Special Publication of Akwa Ibom Ethical and Attitudinal Reorientation Commission (EARCOM), Uyo, 2006, p. 7.

⁴⁶J. Isawa Elaigwu, *Gowon. A Scholarly Biography of a Soldier-Statesman*, Jos: Aha publishing House, 1986, p. 46.

⁴⁷"Twenty Five years of Neglect: An Analysis of Development Indicators among the Ibibio (1960-1980)," published by Akwa Esop Imaisong Ibibio, p. 12.

⁴⁸Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union...*, p. 578.

⁴⁹Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 60.

⁵⁰Ebong Etuk, *Citation of Obong Sampson Udo Etuk*, p. 3.

⁵¹*ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵²See, Akpan J. A. Esen, *Ibibio Profile: A Psycho-Literary Projection*, p. 84. Hon Herbert Macaulay was the chairman of Obong Etuk's reception ceremony in Lagos which was hosted after acquiring his Master's degree in Education from the University of Colombia, in the United States of America and a Diploma in Education from London University.

⁵³Ime Sunday Edem, "The Life and Works of Chief Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah", BA Long Essay, Department of History, University of Uyo, 2000, p. 23.

⁵⁴*ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁵On the activities of O. O. Ita during his political days, see Okon E. Uya, *A History of Oron People of the Lower Cross River Basin*, Oron: Manson Publishing Company, 1984, pp. 154-182.

⁵⁶Effiong Eberfiak and Ememobong Essien, *Effiong Okon Eyo, A Publication of Eyo Uyo Foundation*, p. 3. When Dr. Azikiwe finally became the Leader of Government Business in Eastern Nigeria, he used his position to siphon public funds to the tune of £2,000,000.00 (Two Million Pounds) and deposited same in

the African Continental Bank which was owned by him and his family. The funds were those of the Eastern Regional Development Corporation whose Chairman was Effiong Okon Eyo. See also James Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, and...?* Onitsha: Africana-Educational Publishers Nig. Ltd., 1981, p. 24.

⁵⁷Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*, p. 416.

⁵⁸A Publication of Akwa Ibom Ethical and Attitudinal Re-Orientation Commission, (EARCOM), 2006, p. 7.

⁵⁹Ekwere Otu Akpan and Violetta I. Ekpo, *The Women's War of 1929 (Preliminary Study)*, Calabar: Government Press, 1988, p. 53.

⁶⁰M. B. Abasiattai, "The 1929 Aba Women's Riot: The Correct Perspective," in Souvenir Programme, 12th Obong Sampson Udo Etuk Annual Lecture/Reception, organized by Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio, n. d. p. 38.

⁶¹Ntienyong U. Akpan, "Contributions To Nationhood," in S. W. Peters, *et al* (eds.), *Akwa Ibom State: The Land of Promise-A Compendium*, p. 14.

⁶²Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 42.

⁶³Nkerekwem D. Edemekong, "Women and the Development of Etinan Local Government Area: 1976-1999," BA Long Essay, Department of History, University of Uyo, 2000, p. 32.

⁶⁴Funeral Programme of Late Obonganwan Grace Sampson Udo Etuk, 2005, p. 5.

⁶⁵Ema Brown, personal interview, Ikot Ebok, Eket, 11/22/08.

⁶⁶Felicia Ihuoma Abaraonye, "Gender and Politics in Ibibioland 1900-1983: The Role of Ibibio Women," PhD Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1997, p. 301.

⁶⁷Ema Brown, personal interview, Ikot Ebok, Eket, November 22, 2008.

⁶⁸See, J. B. Adiakpan, *The Eket Speaking People*. Lagos: Okjohn Nigeria, 2000, pp. 139-140.

⁶⁹Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 4.

⁷⁰Offiong T. Abia, "The Oil Palm Industry and the Economic Transformation of the Lower Cross River Region 1807-1960," PhD Dissertation, University of Calabar, 1998, p. 108.

⁷¹Ntienyong U. Akpan, "Contributions to Nationhood," in S. W. Peters, *et al* (eds.), *Akwa Ibom State: The Land of Promise-A Compendium*, p. 15.

⁷²Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals*, p. 77.

⁷³Jideofor Zeribe Udeke-Onwusiri, "Petroleum Exploration, Exploitation and Socio-Economic Changes in the Producing Communities of Nigeria, 1908-1985," PhD Dissertation, University of Calabar, 1995, p. 164.

⁷⁴Major Speeches..., p. 91.

⁷⁵Otoabasi Akpan Umana, *First Among Equals...*, p. 81.

⁷⁶Major Speeches..., p. 89.