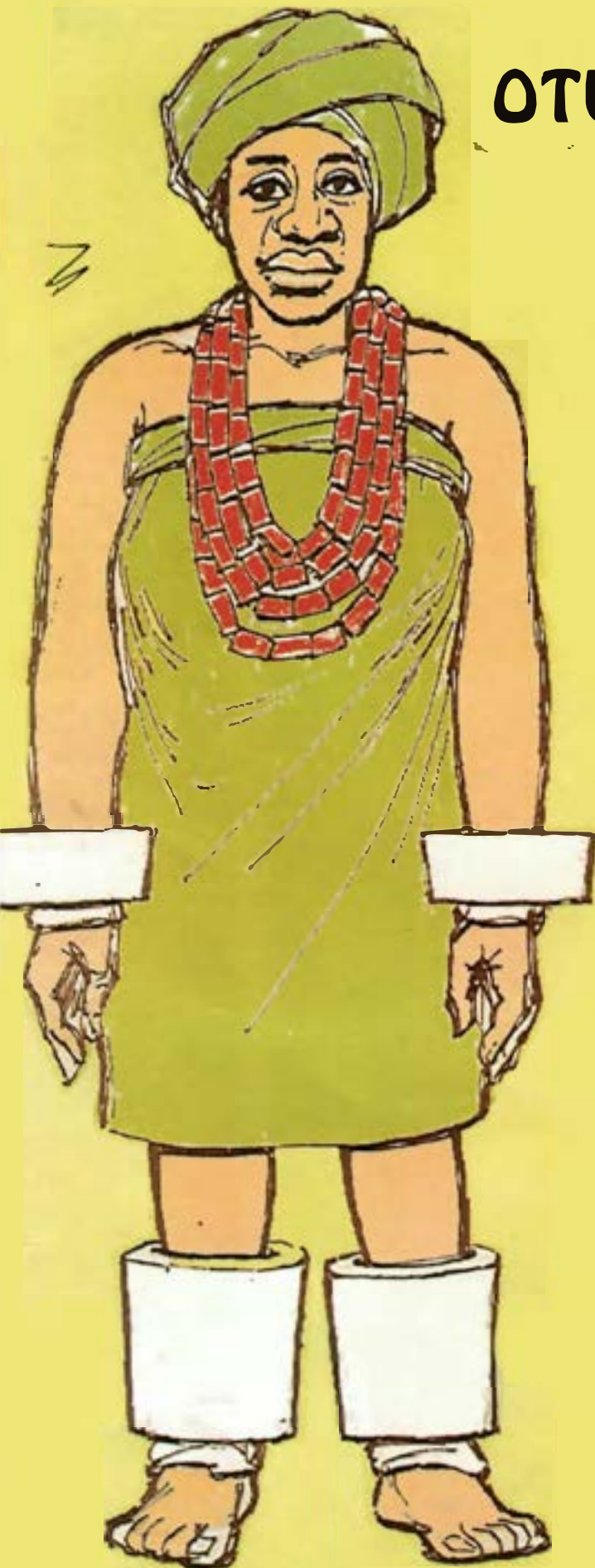


OTU ODU ONITSHA

ADO N' IDU

(IVORY SOCIETY)



**EXISTENCE AND
SIGNIFICANCE**



***A COMPENDIUM OF
OTU ODU ONITSHA***

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SIGNIFICANCE



A COMPENDIUM OF
OTU ODU ONITSHA



**His Majesty Ofala Okagbue
The Obi of Onitsha
LL.D, CFR Agbogidi**

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Enyi Azumdialo J. O. Analo
President Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu
Initiated 18-3-74



Enyi Chinyelugo Nancy Chineze Morah
Vice President Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu
Initiated 1993



Enyi Chinyelugo V. O. Areh
Vice President Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu
Initiated 4-12-76

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to our President, Enyi Azumdialo Joan Ozoemena Analo, who has distinguished herself as a peace lover, very understanding and tolerant.

We appreciate the quality of your leadership by example in the upliftment of our highly cherished and esteemed Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My first gratitude goes to God Almighty, giver of life, strength and wisdom. Who made it possible for me to be what I am. I thank Him for His protection and guidance on my several trips to Lagos, Awka, Enugu etc.

I shall place it on record that the success of this occasion which is being witnessed today was made possible by the excellent public relations of Onwa Ikenna Ndaguba. I remain ever grateful, Onwanetilira.

I wish to express my appreciation to Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu for the opportunity given me to serve as the Public Relations Officer of the association in which capacity I was mandated to produce and publish the document which we are all launching today. I wish to particularly thank the President, Enyi Azumdialo J.O. Analo for the faith she has in me and all the assistance she gave me. I actually derived a lot of strength from her urgings.

People are remembered for how they lived. (IFE ONYE ME NA ENU BU ATUYA) I gratefully miss our Late Vice President Enyi Chinyelugo Nancy Morah whose presence would have added some glamour to this project. Mama Lady, rest in peace.

I remain grateful to Enyi Nwanyikabie Regi Anionwu and Enyi Dibueze Rita Kwentoh for their very useful contributions. They indeed played positive roles to the success of this occasion.

My gratitude goes to Enyi Omenanwata Maria Onyejekwe, who brought her wealth of experience to bear on this project. Enyi Ogolikaliaibe Efurū Mbanefo, the Legal Adviser of the association co-operated wonderfully with me. I am grateful.

My husband Ogbuefi Chinyelugo Anyibuofu Megafu will also be remembered for his encouragement.

Enyi Dibugwu Dora Onochie, Omenanwanta Oby Ononye, Olimadi Mkpuluma, Dibueze Omenazu Igbo, Ojinnaka Beatrice Bosah and all the kindred group leaders were also very useful in collecting materials for this publication.

I will not fail to mention Ezeozo Chike Akosa, whose initiative brought about the idea of this project and Mr. Achike Okafo who ably edited the publication. My gratitude also goes to the celebrated Daily Times Art Editor, Josy Ajiboye who provided the cover design concept.

Mr. Tony Ginigeme and members of staff of Generation Press Limited Lagos did the Yoeman's job in printing this document that today delights the eye.

Thank God again for everything.

Enyi Nwachi Carol Megafu
P.R.O/Chairman Book and Launching Committee
Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu

FOREWORD

I consider it an honour to be called to write a foreword to this book by the Otu Odu Onitsha Aḍo N'Idu.

Without doubt, let me say it is a worthwhile endeavour by this Cultural Association of distinguished Onitsha wives and mothers, for the first time in our ancient kingdom, to capture in print something of the dim voices of the women folk, often taken for granted, if neglect is not really the word. It is indeed a monumental enterprise, in the wake of the clarion call on women everywhere to stand up at this stage of world civilisation to be counted, ready for the challenges of the next millennium.

It would have been better, if the task were undertaken by any of the traditional custodians of our society, who understand the intricacies and convolutions of Onitsha customs and traditions curiously well and are practised in their arts and jugglery, to speak about them with considerable finality.

Be that as it may, I am encouraged to commend this highly concise publication on the sheer merit of its content and evaluation of its worth, as a good beginning of a more studied exploration and profound research into the relevance of women and the complementarity of their roles, side by side, with the men folk from the earliest beginnings of that ancient city.

Although I am aware that a foreword to a book such as this, need not necessarily be a preview of its contents nor strictly an introduction to them, I would therefore only dilate inferentially on the essence of the publication for the benefit of the readers,.

For this purpose, I would subscribe to some of the citations containing facts and research information in the works by Helen J. K. Henderson, Dr. Nina Mba and Chike Akosa.

Since the pre-colonial, times before the advent of Christian missionaries and even as the early colonial periods, women played important socio-economic as well as political roles in Onitsha.

However, from the period of the first world war, women in Onitsha, like their counterparts elsewhere in Nigeria would appear to have suffered some loss in status, power and authority.

Nonetheless, women associations in Onitsha made their impart felt by their arduous contribution to substantial commercial activity fostered by the strategic location of the city by the shores of the River Niger.

One of the most significant women's associations was the elite Otu Odu Society who wore ivory bracelets and anklets as a distinct feature of their traditional regalia. In comparison, it was the closest equivalent to the prestigious Agbalanze Society, which is exclusive to men.

Only members of the Otu Odu were eligible to be appointed as an Omu (Queen) who exercised control over the markets in Onitsha Kingdom and the lucrative trade with the Igala people and the Europeans. Perhaps, owing to the dwindling authority of traditional political institutions and the blistering touches of urbanisation, the Omu institution which existed also in Asaba, Illah and Osommari lapsed in Onitsha before the turn of the nineteenth century and became moribund after the death of the last incumbent, Omu Nwagboka in 1890.

However, the Otu Odu Society which also withered away in the Western Igbo areas has survived up till this day and age in Anambra, Ogbaru and Oyi Local Government Areas of Anambra State. It is speculated that the existence of elephants in those areas in the past may

have played a role in sustaining the prevalence of Otu Odu Societies among the communities.

The Otu Odu in Onitsha like the Omu and Otu Ogene would equally perhaps have gone into extinction were it not for a timely intervention of a benign salvage measure when it appeared to have lost form, due impact and social relevance. But the initiative of Chief J. U., Etukokwu, the Oduah Ngu of Onitsha, for the love of his mother and sheer benevolence in 1959, the traditional Otu Odu was reorganised, modernised and its functions amended.

Since that serving grace, the Otu Odu has come back into serious societal reckoning as one of the most important institutions and pressure groups in Onitsha.

Its membership has included influential women who have made their mark, not just within the immediate paragraph of Onitsha but even beyond the circumscribed limits of the state and shores of the country.

The Otu Odu has been proved to demonstrate foresight and adaptability to co-operate with government - sponsored agencies for women such as - Better Life and Family Support Programme to secure the welfare and interests of its members and women generally in Onitsha.

Beyond its achievements so far, the Otu Odu has keen awareness of the past glory of the society and the consciousness of the challenges of the future as laid out and demonstrated in its programme of activities under the commendable leadership of the association's President, Azumdialo J. O. Analo and her executive.

It should be expected however that the vision of Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu in the face of social and economic dynamics of society should not limit its concern to contemplating the rainbow colours of its achievements. It should also recognise the challenges of the browner shadows in the society its members live in, as part of its total heritage and legacy.

The high points of our societal history should therefore urge its membership as a people to rekindle the fire of communal faith and confidence in the ability to change the stumbling blocks of today into stepping stones of tomorrow. Also, as an elite group with its eyes to a future to be made, the concern of Otu Odu Onitsha Ado N'Idu, should certainly include whipping up the spirit of the young people under care and training, by inspiring them with fresh hopes and new dreams in the confident assurance that when they are done with their own parts, they would have left able successors to bear the flag and fly it aloft.

I commend the effort invested in providing such a rich compendium of contemporary social relevance. I also commend to the reader a typical African experience rendered in simple English prose style. You may wonder whether the vehicle of English language could serve to bear such an experience and adequately express a uniquely African thought. Well, that is part of the thrill the book promises. Now, sit back and enjoy the reading, drawing your own conclusions.

ACHIKE CHUKS OKAFOR

1998

CHAPTER ONE

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN ONITSHA SOCIETY

In the Onitsha indigenous society, women like their male counterparts have distinct roles allocated them which over time have assumed both traditional and historical importance.

Like unto a pair of scissors, women as a vital arm in the orderly functioning of the society, as a whole, fulfil these cut out roles with a sense of duty complementary to the expectations not only of their men folk but of the entire community. There is even a sense in which women in Onitsha, right from the ancient times, tended to have stood toe to toe with their men in the allocation of social positions and relevant traditional institutions carved out for them.

Although in the Onitsha monarchical system, no woman has ever been known to rule or sit in council of the king, nevertheless until recent times, women have held the complementary position of *OMU* which is the female equivalent of a monarch, not necessarily in the same as a queen, being the wife of the reigning king. The last known incumbent, *OMU NWAGBOKA* was enthroned in 1884 and held the position until her death in 1890.

Rather than being described by any means as a neglected strata of people in an inferior social status, as women appear to be in many African communities and elsewhere in the world, where they still struggle for emancipation or left in the lurch in the scheme of things, on the basis of sexual discrimination. The Onitsha social calculus reckons very much with the women as dignified persons in their own right, who deserve every citizenship right.

Women who have successfully distinguished themselves, have equally enjoyed distinctive positions of honour, not only in the limited circles of women but indeed throughout the realm of the Onitsha kingdom.

The liberal attitude to women in Onitsha has encouraged them to climb to high pedestals of social, economic and even political relevance. For them, as the saying goes, there are no holds barred. Many of them have enjoyed fulfilment in their successful careers as lawyers, magistrates, doctors, academics, journalists, accountants etc. etc. Some have in fact distinguished themselves and shot into pre-eminence as enviable leaders in several professions.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDU

Otu Odu (Ivory Society) is well established in Onitsha. It also exists and is popular in some parts of Igboland. While the society is not popular among towns in Western Igbo, it is known to exist and is popular in towns of Ogbaru Local Government Area, in Anam, Aguleri, Umuleri in Anambra Local Government Area. It should be noted that the presence of elephants in parts of Anambra Local Government Area, makes the prevalence of *OtuOdu* in these areas understandable. Even up to date, Onitsha women wishing to take *Odu* title go to places like Aguleri and Anam to buy ivory. Onitsha titled men also buy their *okike* or elephant tusks from the same area.

Otu Odu, which is the main subject of this work is a prestigious society of women who as a token of their accomplishment in life have taken ivory anklets and bracelets. The origin of taking ivory bracelets is as old as the founding of Onitsha circa 1505. According to Meletu K. Handerson, an American anthropologist who with her husband Richard, did an extensive research work in the evolutionary trends in Onitsha Igbo society and culture in the sixties; "the wearing of ivories by wealthy women who have assumed titled names was described in nineteenth century travellers' accounts. The honour like that of *me mmanwu*, might be sponsored by the **Woman's** son, thus indicating a strong bond between the woman and her affinal lineage. In these cases, both daughters of the initiate's own and her affinal lineages would be present at the ceremonies.

"Ivory taking however was often financed by wealthy traders themselves, if married (after assisting their husbands in *ozo* title taking). Ivory-owning mothers also financed the purchase of ivories and related ceremonies for their daughters.

"Unlike initiation into the masquerade association, a woman could take ivories in her own natal or affinal village. The ceremony in itself did not indicate incorporation into the husband's lineage. Therefore, putting on of ivories may be seen as more of an independent achievement, less closely associated with the lineage context, than the invitation into the masquerade society.

"Although there is some similarity to the male *ozo* title society, women who have put on ivories are not eligible to sacrifice at ancestral shrines, eligibility for which is a major reason why men take *ozo* title. Members of *Otu Odu* are viewed as having lifted themselves up and are highly prized. They also take honorific names like Nnabuenyi and Dibugo etc. The funerals of ivory wearers resemble those of *ozo* titled men in many significant respects (Henderson 1969). Cows are slaughtered and 7 gun shots fired as a prerequisite in final funeral obsequy for a woman who took complete *Odu* title (Hand and ankles) same as an *ozo* man.

"Like *ozo* title taking for men, *igbu odu* or wearing ivory by women was an individual affair until it became a societal affair in recent times. The earliest mention of the *Odu* title taking was in 1857 in the writings of early missionaries. Both the missionaries and early European traders associated *Omu* Nwagboka herself an ivory wearer with the *Otu Odu*. Her councillors known as *Otu Ogene* which had been discussed earlier were chosen from women who had taken ivory."

For a long time after the death of *Omu* Nwagboka in 1880, the *Otu Odu* was not as organised as it is today. The credit for this historical innovation goes to Chief J.U. Etukokwu MFR, the *Oduah Ngu* of Onitsha. In his own words, Chief Etukokwu, in 1996 and still hale and hearty spoke from his ETUKOKWU CASTLE at 7 Ojedi Road, Onitsha: "The *Otu Odu* or the society of women of distinction became organised as it is today in 1958/59, when I brought *Odu* women together in the modern form of the society.

"After my mother Enyi Nwabunie Etukokwu took her *Odu* titles in 1955, she and her predecessor in *Odu* title, Enyi Omenyi Nwalie Okaka, became friends. The manner in which they enjoyed their title together delighted me so much that I decided to organise these titled women into a society now known as *Otu Odu*.

"On Sunday evening of 15th December 1957, I invited Enyi Omenyi Nwalie, my mother and two of my friends now late Akunwafor Epundu and Akunwata Ikeogu to a meeting in my house. After they were entertained, I told them that I wanted to establish the *Otu Odu*. In reply, Ogbuefi Epundu welcomed my proposal and said that all of them would welcome my proposal and promised to come back to the next scheduled meeting with their elephant tusks (*okike*).

"My invitation was repeated for another Sunday evening July 25th 1958. Enyi Omenyi Nwalie Okaka, Enyi Nwabunie Etukokwu, Ogbuefi Epundu, Akunwata Ikeogu, Madam Akulefi Boasah and Nnabuenyi Anyakwo attended the meeting. While refreshment were served, Ogbuefi Epundu and Akunwata Ikeogu blew their elephant tusks (*okike*) as a token of joy.

"During our discussion, I was disappointed to hear from Akunwafor Epundu that my plan to establish the *Otu Odu* would not be accepted by Onitsha people as I was not then a titled man. I was depressed in spirit to hear this.

"On March 15th 1959, I was initiated into the *Agbalanze* society of Onitsha. On that same day, I also initiated my two sisters Madam Nwabiankie Onuora and Madam Eboziam Okosi into *Odu aka* title. I invited those who had the ivory anklets and those with the ivory bracelets to the ceremony. This was unlike what was obtainable in earlier days when women celebrants, only entertained their close family groups.

"Ogbuefi Epundu and Ogbuefi Ikeogu led the *Otu Odu* with their elephant tusks. Sumptuous dishes were presented and they ate and drank to their satisfaction. I had the opportunity to invite them to my residence at 7 Ojedi Road on March 18th 1959 for a talk. There was a large response with the following in attendance:-

1. Enyi Omenyi Nwalie Okaka
2. Enyi Nwabunie Etukokwu
3. Enyi Nwaonaku Anyakwo
4. Enyi Nwaonaku Aniweta Obiesie
5. Enyi Nwaezeakaibie Azuka Anatogu
6. Enyi Oliaku Anumonye
7. Enyi Uyakwesili Omesu Bosah
8. Enyi Ilom Nweze Enweonwu
9. Enyi Akulefi Bosah
10. Akunwafor Epundu
11. Akunwata Ikeogu

12. Akunne Areh
13. Enyi Onyechukwubulueze Nwabiankie Onuora
14. Enyi Azumdialo Eboziam Okosi

Later the following joined the society:-

1. Enyi Okwune
2. Enyi Kemdilim Obigbo
3. Enyi Nwaonaku Mgbogo Ifeajuna
4. Enyi Udezue Okosi
5. Enyi Odoziaku Achebe
6. Enyi Odoziaku Ukpojo Nnezianya
7. Enyi Amala Igweike
8. Enyi Nwawulu Okunwa
9. Enyi Oliaku Ndiwe
10. Enyi Umeadi Okonkwo
11. Enyi Omeorafu Janet Nwokedi
12. Enyi Iwegbuna Omama Ojinnaka Okolo
13. Enyi Nwazulu Njaka
14. Enyi N. Nwora
15. Enyi Nwawulu Uwechia
16. Enyi Akukalia Cecilia Egbuna
17. Enyi Nwannebuleze Ogbogu
18. Enyi Oliaku Ejiamatu

“*Odu* title taking like its counterpart, *ozo* title taking until 1963 when late Justice Alex Mbanefo and Akunne Ediboss Okolonji took their *ozo* title on the same day in different villages of Odoje and Ogboza was more of a private and individual affair.

“Those present agreed with me in organising the society. I donated twenty-five pounds (equivalent of three thousand naira at today’s rate of currency exchange) as a sinking fund for the new society. At the instance of Enyi Omenyi Okaka every person present donated one shilling each to the society’s fund. In the same year of inauguration (1959), the membership rose to fifty. Today (in 1997), I understand that the membership has risen to 300, which, with due deference to modesty, is a tribute to my pioneering effort in establishing the society.

“To my surprise, I was summoned to Ime Obi by H.R.H. Obi James C. Kosi II to show cause why the *Otu Odu* should not be dissolved. At the Ime Obi, I explained that the *Otu Odu* was a social group of accomplished women whom the Almighty had permitted to reap the fruits of their honest labour. I said that I formed the society in order to provide a forum for the members to know and enjoy themselves and help in preserving the custom of Onitsha as their men counterpart in *ozo* or Agbalanze society. I said I did not know what wrong I had done and what laws of Onitsha custom I had violated. It was only Chief P.O. Anatogu, the Onowu Iyasele of Onitsha who spoke at length in my defence and that of the new society. He convinced the Obi-in-council and we were allowed to continue to exist and operate till this day”.

CHAPTER THREE

INVESTIGATION PANEL INTO IGBU ODU INSTITUTION IN ONITSHA

The Immanuel Church District CULTURAL ISSUES COMMITTEE held on Monday 23rd May 1983, set up an investigation panel to make a thorough research into IGBU-ODU INSTITUTION of Onitsha with the following points of reference: (i) The ceremonial performances (ii) Application of fetish rituals (iii) Difference between the old and new ways of initiation (iv) Report findings and make recommendations.

- (1) Members of the panel were:- Mr. Joseph O. Onyejekwe (Leader) Mr. Stephen O. Ogo (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Alexander J. Bosa, Madam Sophia O. Ugolo and Mrs. Elfreda N. Osemenam.
- (2) The panel decided and interviewed the following personalities in their respective residential homes namely: Chief Joseph U. Etukokwu, the Odua of Onitsha (former Leader), Ogbuefi Orimili Patrick Mkpuluma (present leader), Enyi Chinwe Izuora (Hon. Secretary) Enyi Lady Flora Azikiwe, Enyi Azuka Anatogu, (oldest member) and Enyi Maneme Morah (*Nne Ndi Odu*).
- (3) The panel in executing their assignments first visited Chief J. U. Etukokwu, the Odua and the original organiser/Leader of *Otu Odu* Society. He narrated briefly what prompted him to organise the Society. According to him, it was because of the joy in the role played by the entire Anglican Community in Onitsha at the initiation ceremony of his mother into *Igbu Odu* which was performed during the Church Service in St. Stephen's Church, Onitsha, by the then (Rev) the Venerable Archdeacon Hezekiah O. Nweje of blessed memory. He further said with glee that his mother participated in Holy Communion among the saints, and when she died was accorded full Christian burial.

With this view in mind, he organised the *Otu Odu* Society in such a way that he blotted out any fetish rituals that may prejudice or impose discriminating act against christians and non-christians. To substantiate his points, he referred us to the *Otu Odu* Society's constitution. he said that initiation ceremony and the entertainment's before and after the occasion are devoid of any idolatrous involvement.

- (4) The second man visited was Ogbuefi Orimili, Patrick Mkpuluma, the present leader. He carefully explained congenit points.
 - (a) The giving of a piece of cloth to the husband or next of kin is nothing but a token.
 - (b) One fowl killed and one bottle of wine are for the entertainment of the two body-guard women who keep overnight vigil with the candidate. This is optional as five naira could be given in lieu of a fowl, according to one's choice.
 - (c) The stipulated amount paid by the candidate is treated as dividend to be shared among the entire members of the society

- (d) Other things including drinks presented to the members during the initiation ceremony are purely for refreshment.
- (e) The kolanuts presented are laid on the table and prayer (not necessarily libation) offered for the health and prosperity of the incumbent's family.
- (f) **Uniform** - The white uniforms depict purity and help to boost the ego of the society.

He said without equivocation that no idolatrous acts feature in any of the ceremonial performances.

To show his courage and resourcefulness, he promised to enter into any genuine agreement with the Anglican authorities to assure them that any christian woman member will not be subjected or forced to do anything contrary to the doctrine of the church. So also said Enyi Morah (*Nne Ndi Odu*).

On the death of a christian member, the *Otu Odu* Society will not intervene unless by invitation. If invited, their presence will not at all disturb the peace of the occasion and that the society does not attend second burial ceremonies.

- (5) The general views and opinions of the six interviewed personalities hinged on the same facts. The impact of their individual and collective voices, answers to questions raised no doubt concerning the points made.

Generally, it was noted that there was no specific difference between the system of the old and new leadership.

The women added that incumbent candidates were obliged to observe certain rules to avoid any act likely to tarnish the image of the society e.g:-

- (1) Fighting in public and market places.
- (2) Getting involved in immorality
- (3) Indulging in stealing
- (4) Engineering any other scandalous act.

- (6) **RECOMMENDATION** - The panel, after considering the evidence explicitly adduced before them, were satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that there was nothing from the investigation carried out to negatively impact on the church or cripple its progress, which would amount to slamming the door of truth. Therefore with this view in mind, we of the panel, unanimously recommend that nothing stands against christian women joining the society and enjoying full christian benefits.

SIGNED:

Mr. J. O. Onyejekwe Chairman.	Mr. S. O. Ogo Secretary	Mr. A. J. N. Bosa Member.	Mrs. S.O. Ugolo Member.	Mrs. E .Oseme nam Member.
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CHAPTER FOUR

CONSTITUTION OF OTU ODU OF ONITSHA ADO

In order to show that the society was a law abiding one, here are excerpts from its constitution which highlights its aims and objectives:-

- (i) To promote love and unity among the members.
- (ii) To observe the ancient tradition of *Odu* title and to foster ideas of improvement.
- (iii) To help alleviate the personal problems and suffering of fellow members.
- (iv) To embark on enterprises which could promote the financial progress of the society.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership is open to all female indigene of Onitsha.
- (b) Membership is open to any woman married to Onitsha indigene.
- (c) No female is eligible if she is not Onitsha ADO by birth or by marriage.
- (d) A widow who has not performed the burial ceremonies of her late husband is not eligible.
- (e) *Odu Aka* (hand) title can be taken by a woman of 35 years of age; *Ukwu na Aka* (hand and foot) by a woman of 40 years of age and above.

For the administration of *Otu Odu*, the following officers are to be elected:-

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 1. President | 2. Financial Secretary |
| Secretary | 4. Treasurer |

3. MODE OF CEREMONIAL ATTIRE

Complete ceremonial dressing for all members comprise white wrapper, white headtie, white shoes/slippers, white handbag, *Odu aka/odu ukwu*, earrings and *aka* beads or coral beads. Dispensation for certain items may be granted in special cases purely on merit.

4. WELFARE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS OF OTU ODU OF ONITSHA

The welfare programme of *Otu Odu* of Onitsha is informed by the need to supplement the failing support of the traditional extended family system which in the past had

made it possible for non-privileged members of the society to be accommodated and cared for in their family homes. In the absence of Geriatric Homes which could have helped out, *Otu Odu* of Onitsha has tackled this problem by setting up a fund for disbursement annually to all the aged and disabled members. This appears to be a token gesture rather than a general practice.

The society plans to expand this programme in order to extend its benefits to all sections of Onitsha community including deserving non members of the society. A variety of welfare schemes is envisaged, with the proposed Woman Development Centre, serving as the operational base.

In view of the significant number of elderly and disabled women who are impoverished and living alone and completely or partially housebound due to physical or mental disability, the *Otu Odu* has come to the conclusion that the former Better-Life Programme, and Family Support Programmes instituted by Mrs. Maryam Babangida and Mrs. Mariam Abacha respectively are needed in the urban as in the rural areas of the Country. In Onitsha urban community, there are a large number of unemployed adult women, low income earners and widows, many of whom are without skills to eke out a living. With the present economic depression in the country the situation has become very serious and requires urgent attention.

Accordingly, the society proposes to identify very closely with the Family Support Programme, with a view to organising such projects that will provide training in various skills for women who need them and enhance their earning capabilities thus improving their well being.

The proposed Women Development Centre will therefore serve as a domestic service centre for training women in the production of soap locally, and women's cloth such as the famous Akwete cloth, needle-work and other indigenous arts and crafts. The Centre will also serve as a Home Management Institute and provide practical training for students studying Home Economics. In addition to their academic pursuit, they will participate in the geriatric programmes of the society such as the organisation and provision of various welfare services for the aged and disabled.

It is hoped that the centre will also provide an outlet for the sale of its products, thus helping to generate funds for the maintenance of the institution. This centre is estimated to cost approximately N20,000,000.00 (Twenty Million Naira) inclusive of the building and the provision of the basic facilities.

Lastly, one of the projects for the *Otu Odu* of Onitsha is her contribution to the contemporary history of Onitsha by commissioning this publication. Through it, the *Otu Odu* Society will enlighten the general public about the society and Onitsha history and culture. An individual member of *Otu Odu* like Mrs. Chimere Asika has established a home at Awka for disabled children.

OTU ODU AND ONITSHA SOCIETIES

While individual members of *Otu Odu* are free to belong to any political party, the society is non political. However, in matters of interest to Onitsha, the *Otu Odu* never

lags behind. Often times, it co-operates with Agbalanze Society of Onitsha, the and the ruling Age Grade Society of Onitsha to discuss and take actions on issues relating to the good of Onitsha indigenous community. In recent times, the *Otu Odu* has representation in the society of Onitsha indigenous Community which meets weekly to discuss the welfare of Onitsha. Every new initiate to the Otu Odu contributes N500 to the development of the town.

CHAPTER FIVE

ONITSHA WOMEN IN HISTORY

A Roman historian once wrote that “lucky is a woman whose name is mentioned in history”. This handicapped position of women in history has not changed much until recently, when the role and contribution of women have come to be tolerated and now accepted, even if grudgingly by the male dominated world. Despite this prejudice to women, history has nevertheless recorded the role of women who have carved a curious niche for themselves in the history of modern civilisation.

Women have swerved between the cultivation of their traditional seductive femininity in order to achieve their ends and the adoption of mannish characteristics.

From Cleopatra and Boadecia in the ancient world to Margaret Thatcher in the modern era, from Mary Queen of Scots to Mrs. Indira Ghandi and in our own country Nigeria, from Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti to Enyi Chinyelugo Flo Emodi women have held their own even if they have to struggle against patriarchal assumptions and prejudices.

In Onitsha we have our own share of women who have distinguished themselves in history. The following are names of some Onitsha women who have made their mark in history: Atagbusi, Omu Nwagboka, Dr. Mrs. Veronica Ofili, Enyi Chinyelugo Flo Emodi, Enyi Omenakaya Okafor, Mrs. Justina Anazonwu Bello, Mrs Janet Okala, Rev. Mothers Anyogu and Oranu, Enyi Nweze Ilom Enweonwu, Emengini Mbanefo, Enyi Nwonaku Onyeachonam and Enyi Chio Emodi, to mention but a few.

(1) ATAGBUSI:

According to Chief M.O. Ibeziako, Atagbusi of the family of Okposieke of Ogboli Eke Village, Onitsha played a material and pioneering role. She was reputed for her starting performances. It was claimed that traditionally, she transformed herself in multiple instances into wild animals, especially the buffalo, which is today the totem of her lineage of Okposi Eke.

During the regime of the erstwhile Royal Niger Company, she acted more or less as a go-between for the interest of Onitsha people and the company. It was said that her activities gave more practical expression to her influence by the ability to subject any foreign elements to her will. She would influence them to stay or leave the country. In the time of epidemic like small pox, she was looked upon for succour and the stories of her prowess in this respect are told and retold with the pointing of hands to her place of abode known as *IGA* or *ODA ATAGBUSI*. It can be found behind the State Education Commission Office on Oguta Road near Chinyelugo Ben Ekwerekwu's residence.

Atagbusi was much adored by the women folk and as late as 1913, the towns folk of Onitsha resented the opening of the present OTU NKWO (now Main Market) and instead they established one themselves at the old threshold of Atagbusi's residence. Her passing away in the early twenties was a link between the old and the new.

(2) **OMU NWAGBOKA**

Omu Nwagboka was a true heroine of Onitsha. She was the last queen of Onitsha, having reigned from 1884 to 1890. She was the daughter of Isagba Okwuona the son of Bachi of Ogbendida Village of Onitsha. Her mother Amasinwa Okigbo came from Ojoto of Idemili Local Government Area in Anambra State. Queen Nwagboka married Oba Uzoka of Ogbotu Village an immigrant son of Afoka Ogbodogwu of Igala. Omu Nwagboka's only son Egwuatum was the ancestor of the well known Egwuatu Family of present day Ogbotu Village and grand mother of late Mr. Joseph Egwuatu.

It was Omu Nwagboka an ivory wearer who introduced *ozo* title taking to Ogbotu by initiating her only son Egwuatu with the Nze of Ogbendida in Umuezeoroli.

Omu Nwagboka contributed much to the general and social welfare of the women folk. Her exalted office of *Omu* was a position analogous to that of a "Queen". In her hands rested the minor administration of petty women disputes and control of the market through her courtiers the Otu Ogene. She had a royal regalia (okpu ododo) and performed annual ceremonies like *Ite Omato*, *Ite Igwuota* and *Igba Ofala*.

When Queen Victoria's representative E. H. Hewett Esq. then consul of the bights of Benin and Biafra concluded a treaty of friendship with king Anazonwu I, Omu Nwagboka was present with the king's red cap chiefs known as Ndichie.

The title of Omuship has become moribund and the reason for its decadence may be due to want of a suitable candidate or fear of sharing power by the reigning monarch. In her memory, a school at the end of Ridge Road Onitsha is named after Omu Nwagboka.

(3) **DR. (MRS) VERONICA O. OFILI**

In a country that can today boast of over 35 Universities which produce medical doctors in their hundreds annually, it may not be easy for present day youths to appreciate that it was a rare feat for a woman to read medicine in the fifties in Igbo land. It is against this background that one will view the success of Dr. Veronica Obiamaka Ofili (nee Egbuna) in becoming not only the first lady medical practitioner from Onitsha but the first in Igboland and in the former Eastern Region.

Dr. Veronica Ofili qualified in 1953 in Dublin Ireland. She served in Lagos General Hospital, the Aba General Hospital, Park Lane Hospital Enugu. Before her death she was senior consultant and Acting Chief Consultant of Park Lane Hospital Enugu.

(4) **ENYI CHINYELUGO FLO EMODI**

Since the days of Madam Janet Okaka (nee Odukwe) who took active part in the Women's riot at Aba in 1929, Onitsha has not had many prominent women politicians until Madam Florence Emodi appeared in 1979 to be the only lady parliamentarian in the old Anambra State House of Assembly.

Born in 1919 to the family of Mr. Joseph and Adiba Emodi of Ogboli Eke she was the only

girl. She attended St. Mary's Catholic School Lagos and Government School Bamenda Cameroun. She later went to the Holy Rosary Teachers Training College Ihiala, now in Enugu, as a pioneer student.

After teaching for years, she became Inspector of Education in old Owerri Province, Enugu and Onitsha Divisions and retired after 37 years of meritorious service. Madam Flo Emodi was a legislator life member of the National Council of Women Societies, President General of Holy Rosary College Old Girls Association and President, Otu Odu of Onitsha.

(5) ENYI MENAKAYA OKAFOR

In every age and community, a leader springs up either by acclamation, election or sheer force of circumstance and if the leadership is seen to be effective, its acceptance becomes a fait accompli. Such was the leadership role which Enyi Menakaya Obiamaka Okafor (nee Ibeziako) of Ogbendida played among Ikporo Onitsha.

Besides her personal achievements Enyi Menakaya Okafor took the ivory and initiated 4 of her 6 sons and brothers into the Agbalanze society as well as some female relations into the prestigious *Otu Odu*.

(6) MRS JUSTINA ANAZONWU-BELLO

As a scion of King Anazonwu I of Onitsha, Mrs Justina Anazonwu-Bello's historic background notwithstanding, she was determined not only to carve a niche for herself in her chosen vocation of teaching and nutritional service, but prepared herself early in life for the vocation ahead of her. After her elementary education at Lagos and Kaduna, she went through St. Agnes' Teachers' Training College, Yaba and Saint Theresa's Girls' High School, Lagos before going to Bristol University College of Education in 1951 and doing her post graduate course at Ohio, University, Athens, U.S.A.

Her working experience includes holding offices as Education Officer, Women Training College, Uyo in 1954-57 and Principal, Women Occupational Training Centre, Aba (now Government Trade Centre Aba) Senior Inspector of Education Enugu 1963 - 66, Head Department of Home Economics, Advanced Teachers' Training College (ATTC) Owerri now Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri, Principal Inspector of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources Enugu 197-79. From 1982 - 86, she was Consultant, Indigenous Food Development of Federal Ministry of Science & Technology (PRODA) Enugu.

Besides being Chief Examiner in Home Economics and organiser of seminars/workshops and conferences on Home Economics, Food Science/Technology, Arts & Culture at state and national levels, she represented Nigeria at a world conference on cereals at Winnipeg, Minnesota, Canada. No wonder she received an award from the National Academy of Sciences from Washington D.C. U.S.A.

Her membership of professional and scientific societies are varied and extensive. She is an executive member of Nigeria Education Research Council, one time counsellor of Nutrition Society of Nigeria, ex-president of Home Economics Teachers' Association of Nigeria,

International Associate of the American Home Economics Association and member National Academy of Sciences Washington DC, USA.

Justina, now 75 was born by Mr. Joseph Agulefo Anazonwu, son of Obi of Onitsha and Madam Anna Ukechi Ezinobi of Okpanam in Delta State. Mrs. Anazonwu-Bello is a life member of National Council of women's Societies, member Girls Guide Association and executive member of Centre for Applied Religion and Education (CARE).

Her publications include:-

- (i) Nutritive value of Local Food Stuffs**
- (ii) The Home Scientist (Text Books)**
- (iii) Food & Nutrition in Practice (Mac 1976)**
- (iv) Home Economics for Nigeria Secondary Schools - Co-author**
- (v) Cassava Products and Recipes**
- (vi) Nigerian Corn Recipes 1983**

She also carried out research studies into:-

- (i) Lleaf Protein Concentrate in Human Nutrition.**
- (ii) Soya bean in national Diet**
- (iii) Food Investigation Project, and**
- (iv) Local Flours in Bakery.**

(7) CHIEF MATRON GRACE IFEKA

It is not often nowadays that one sees or hears of people who have devoted nearly half a century of their working lives to the service of mankind in any capacity. It was rather curious therefore, to find the retired Chief Matron Grace Ifeka who had invested as long as 48 years of her life to dedicated service in the nursing profession. She is now duly retired.

After obtaining her First School Leaving Certificate in 1936, Miss. Ifeka read for and obtained the Grade II Midwifery certificate in January 1938, the Nigerian Registered Nurse Certificate in January 1943 and State Certified Midwife Certificate in London in September 1957.

Her early training and zest for the profession equipped her for the challenges she was destined to face in her pioneering role as the first Nigerian Staff Nurse/Midwife, the first Nursing Sister and the first Nigerian Matron and subsequently Chief Matron at Iyi-Enu Hospital, Ogidi.

As a staff nurse and midwife, Grace Ifeka served at the Igbodu Maternity Centre Warri, the Iyi-Enu General Hospital and Egbu Owerri maternity Home. On the return from England after her one year post-qualification service in London, Miss Ifeka was first appointed as the assistant nursing sister at Iyi-Enu Hospital and then as the Nursing Sister in charge of Nnewi (Akwaudo) Maternity Training Centre at Otolo Nnewi.

With her vast training and background, Miss Ifeka came in readily to help out with the training of nurses which was so necessary then. She took up the training of mid-wives the first set of which obtained impressive results.

All through the Nigerian Civil War, Miss Ifeka worked at Iyi-Enu hospital later at Oraukwu and Okija, both of which she ran simultaneously with a kwashiokor clinic. But it was after the war that her faith in both her profession and Iyi Enu as a hospital was greatly tested. The entire hospital premises had been overgrown by weeds, its buildings dilapidated and badly damaged by the ravages of war. Although the return to Iyi-Enu was strongly advised against, yet Miss Ifeka's indomitable spirit knew no peace until her cradle in the profession was returned to its old glory. Then it was, she earned the title of 'Tower of strength' of Iyi-Enu Hospital. She was promoted Matron Grade I in 1970, Senior matron in 1978 and Chief Matron in 1982, a post from which she retired in December 1984 having seen active service for 47 years 8 months and 3 weeks.

In May 1960, the Board of Governors of Iyi-Enu hospital gave her a prize and certificate of appreciation for her 25 years of meritorious service. In June 1960, she was decorated with a bronze medal by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II under the colonial administration. Eighteen years after, Miss Ifeka again attracted the attention of the board of governors, who this time, gave her a certificate of Merit in appreciation of her 41 years of faithful service in 1978. In 1981 she was invested with a National Honours Award by the President of the Federal Republic as member of the Order of the Niger (MON).

**(8) REV MOTHERS MARIA BERNADETTE ANYOGU AND MARY
MAGDALENE ORANU**

At a point in time in the history of Onitsha these two women were in the early thirties, the most educated of their sex. They led an exemplary religious life and became with time consecrated the first reverend sisters and reverend mothers from Onitsha and Igboland. Although Rev. Mother Bernadette Anyogu died some years ago, Rev. Mother Oranu lived long enough to celebrate her Golden Jubilee as a nun in 1996.

Whenever the full history of pioneer educationists in Igboland is written, the names of these earliest educated Onitsha nuns will be given a prominent position because many eminent educated women passed through their hands.

(9) ENYI NWONAKU ONYEACHONAM

An ivory wearer begot Dr. Joseph Onyeachonam, one of the pioneer medical practitioners in Igboland. It is to her credit that Enyi Nwonaku, a successful trader, was able to see her son through his training programme in those days as a medical doctor.

(10) ENYI EMENGINI UGHAKWESI MBANEFO

Daughter of Adiebo of Umudei Onira Village Onitsha she was a "very shrewd trader who on more than one occasion influenced developments in the palm produce trade and in the composition and duties of Ikporo Onitsha". She was married to Chief Mbanefo, the Odu I of Onitsha, both of whom gave Onitsha their three illustrious sons, Chief Isaac A. Mbanefo, the

Odua II of Onitsha, Akunne Tom Mbanefo, a pioneer administrator in the civil and public service of Nigeria and Sir Louis Nwachukwu Mbanefo, first Igbo Lawyer, first Igbo high court judge, first indigenous Chief Justice of former Eastern Region of Nigeria and member of the International Court at The Hague, Holland.

(11) ENYI NWEZE ENWEONWU

Daughter of Odogwu of Odoje, a new trader and married to Odigwe Enweonwu of Umuaroli, a renowned carver. She was the mother of late Ben Enweonwu an international sculptor and artist who was privileged to sculpture Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and British Commonwealth who poses for him for the purpose on several occasions. Mother of the first reordered set of triplets in Igboland, when twins were being killed, one survived and died of natural causes at the age of 65.

(12) ADA JANET OKALA

She was a great Nigerian woman activist. She took an active part in the Women's Riot at Aba in 1929. In 1953 she with Mrs. Margaret Ekpo was in the vanguard of Nigeria Women's Union under the national leadership of Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti.

In 1953 Mrs. Kuti as president of the Nigerian Women Union invited all woman organisations in Nigeria to a two-day Conference in Abeokuta (5 - 7 August 1953). The conference was attended by 400 delegates from 15 provinces. In the election which took place, Mrs. Kuti was elected President General, Vice-Presidents were Mrs. Janet Okala (Onitsha), Mrs Elizabeth Adekogbe (Ibadan), Mrs. Alice Obanor (Benin), Mrs. G.I. Okoye (Enugu) - Assistant Secretaries were Mrs. Felicia E. Emodi (Onitsha) and Mrs. Keziah Fashina (Lagos).

Mrs. Okala was active in social and political activities of her time. She was an important member of the NCNC under the leadership of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Mrs. Janet Okala was the daughter of Adazie Odukwe of Ogboza Village, with brothers in late Nnanyelugo (Ogolo) Odukwe, Nwakibie Odukwe Prof. J.B.C. Okala a Cambridge scholar and lecturer in the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Was her only son.

13. ENYI MRS. FELICIA CHIO EMODI

If you were planning to constitute a committee for anything progressive, whether social, religious or political, the name CHIO EMODI comes readily to mind as an acceptable choice. Such is the integrity and charismatic personality of this Onitsha Woman whose fair countenance no less than her elegance and dignified comportment distinguished her as an epitome of feminine excellence. She earned the subriquet of NNE NMANWU (mother of the gods) by which is popularly known- a title for women in Onitsha who have been initiated into the masquerade society.

Chio Emodi's distinction lies in the fact that whatever she did, she did very well and with finesse. Besides being the first Onitsha woman to pass the Cambridge School Certificate in 1942 she was a pioneer female tutor in Metropolitan College Onitsha. In 1970 - 72 she served

in the East Central State Rehabilitation Commission as Social Welfare officer in charge of pilot projects like:- Relief centre and kitchen for the onitsha community after the civil war, home economics workshop for girls, setting up of the kindred (women) co-operatives in Onitsha town, establishment of a Motherless Babies Home in September 1972, building staff housing complex from 1977 to 1983.

CHAPTER SIX

MONARCHICAL SUCCESSION IN ONITSHA KINGDOM

Since the founding of Onitsha around 1505, the town had been ruled by kings and a known queen who have influenced the lives of the people. Eze Chima or king Chima was the first of the litany of twenty monarchs that have ruled Onitsha. Chima had a thirst for invasion plunder and greed of conquest running in his veins so that when the famous Benin war was waging fiercely along the territorial borders he seized the opportunity. Like Moses of old, the sacred call came to him to lead his people to the land that flowed with milk and honey. He retreated with his army and emigrated. He had visualised the type of kingdom to be established in the promised land, a city of commerce, education and religion where the people of the east, north, south and west would clamour to converge on its benevolent shores. The lordly Niger assured the same service and usefulness to the people as the Nile, not necessarily by process of irrigation - as with the latter because any scratch on the fertile alluvial land yielded abundant harvest return.

As a hallmark on the emigration route to perpetuate the memory of the historic penetration into various regions, the towns of Obio, Isele Ukwu, Onicha Olona, Onicha Ugbo, Ezi etc, etc were founded.

Again like Moses, Chima could not reach the promised land. It was left for Oreze to be the first ruler in Onitsha in the 16th and early 17th century. Other kings that followed were Chimaevi, Chimukwu, Chimaizei, Nafia, Tasia and Aroli, all in the 17th and early 18th centuries and Okosi I, Okozi II, Onyejekwe and Okagbue in the 20th century.

Many a king had come and gone since the beginning of the present dynasty but Eze Aroli's reign was full of interesting events. His boyhood days were spent at the Igala royal court of his grandfather the Attah of Idah where he underwent a training which was to prepare him for his reign. When his father Chima Ogbuefi vacated the throne, the heirs apparent then and princes senior to Eze Aroli were disqualified from succession as a result of a divination which foretold that if Eze Aroli was not allowed to reign, it would mean catastrophe to any other who might be chosen. There, the call came to Eze Aroli and it was predicted that his rule was to bring prosperity to his subjects. In this way Eze Aroli was hastily called home from Idah. Before his ascension, he was subjected to an ordeal or holy injunction namely to carry a small pot, symbol of good luck and fortune and wherever it dropped that spot was supposed to have been approved from above to be the abode of his majesty and his subjects. Thus the completion of that ceremony resulted in the founding of the present site of Umuezeoroli Village. The present site is well situated being over 100 feet above the sea level of the Niger. In the end, the prediction came true and Eze Aroli became the favourite of his subjects. His kingdom was peaceful and the ruler and the ruled enjoyed a happy and prosperous reign. Eze Aroli was succeeded by Chimedie and later Omozele in the 18th century.

Obi Omozele coming to the throne was quite unique among his predecessors. He was precipitately judged the victim of senile decay as he looked incapacitated. The people called him in derision "Obi Agadigemegini" (what can an old man do?) His daughter, Use was married to the Attah of Idah where his commander-in-Chief, Onoja Oboli a giant

characterised by his extra ordinary personality with six fingers and six toes and conspicuous intimidating build, terrorised the northern borders of the Niger. Omozele's rusher in a link of communication and friendship between Idah and Onitsha. So great the friendship that Idoko, the Attah's son and grandson of Omozele during the Ofala fest went to procure the regalia of the occasion for his grand father. Unfortunately, he did not return until after the festival. At the ceremonial ritual, the royal gong (ufie) played following touching tune:- "*Idoko Jelu Olu Ma Idoko Anataro*", meaning that Idoko went to the land beyond the river (Igala) and never returned. Henceforth, in remembrance of disappointment experienced at that time, the royal gong played to the present day this among others to herald the dawn of each day - (Ikpo-ufie).

Early in the 19th century, Ijelekepe ruled, followed by Udogwu in mid 19th century. Akz (1840 - 1873) reigned at the time Christian missionaries came to Onitsha and were received.

He was followed by Diali. 1873 - 1874, Anazonwu 1874 -1899 ruled with Omu (Queen Nwagboka - In the presence of the queen, Anazonwu concluded treaties of friendship on October, 1884 in Onitsha with Her Majesty the Queen of Britain and Empress of India Queen Victoria. Representing the Queen was E. H. Hewett Esq., Consul for Biafra and Biafra.

Igwe Samuel Okolo Okosi ruled in (1901 - 1931), followed by his son James Chukwue Okosi (1935 - 1961). From Chimedie dynasty came Joseph Onyejekwe, who retired Assistant Commissioner of Police to ascend the throne (1962 - 1970). The present Onitsha Alphonsus Ofala Okechukwu Okagbue came from Nafia dynasty and succeeded Onyejekwe in 1970.

Starting from Chima, the early kings of Onitsha were born adventurers. The invasion and manoeuvre of a Chima, the diplomacy of an Awuma who challenged Oreze, the kinship and personality of an Omozele, the urbanity of an Eze Aroli have inspired and influenced the lives of many illustrious sons of Onitsha Aho N'Idu, past and present. Out of their ashes, it may be inferred, have arisen the late Ephraim Agha Omelukokwulu, the first Onitsha graduate of Fourah Bay College Sierra Leone, the late G. N. Anyaegbunam, first Igbo Reverend Gentleman and T. D. Anyaegbunam chief translator C. M. S. Union Igbo Bible, late Isaac O. Mba, first Igbo member of Legislative Council, a famous politician and Eze Otu, Rt. Rev. A. C. Onyeabo, first Igbo Bishop, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, first Nigerian president, Sir, Louis N. Mbanefo, first Igbo Lawyer and judge, Mr. Earnest Egbuna, first speaker of Eastern House of Assembly, Emeritus Professor Chike Obi, a legendary mathematician, whose achievements and character of the above personalities and many others really lend romance to the crystallisation of our advancement in the realm of politics, commerce, education and religion. Evidently, the stars in their courses fight the cause of the pains taking and the triumph. Such adventures, even in the academic realm, are still being vigorously sustained.

It was therefore not out of character that Dr. Philip Emeagwali of Onitsha extraction, with highly interdisciplinary training in computer science and engineering combined with mathematical genius to dazzle the world in 1989. There in America, he used his massive parallel Hyperball computer, working with 65,536 processors to perform 3.1 billion calculations per second. By this breakthrough, Dr. Philip helped grant the world access to new frontiers of knowledge, whose implication and applications are many and varied.

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Omekachie Chinwe Izuora
Hon. Secretary
Initiated 9-5-76



Enyi Dibueze Rita Kwentoh
Financial Secretary/Member Book/Launching
Committee *Initiated 21-4-84*



Enyi Hon. Nwanyikabie Regi Anionwu
Treasurer and Member Book/Launching
Committee *Initiated 23-12-81*



Enyi Nwachinemelu Carol Megafu
1st Public Relations Officer and Chairman
Book/Launching Committee *Initiated 3-3-9*

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADC



Enyi, Hon. Nwakaibie Chio Emodi
Executive Committee Member
Initiated 1-1-89



Enyi Hon. Ifechukwulu Eunice Ndul
Executive Committee Member
Initiated 27-3-89



Enyi, Ogolikaliaibe Efuru T, Mbanefo
Legal Adviser of the Association, Member
Book/Launching Committee *Initiated 17-12-82*



Enyi, Onyechubueze Dorothy Eji
Legal Adviser of the Association
Initiated 10-2-95

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDC



Enyi Uduezue Anafogu
First Woman President of the Association



Enyi Omenanuata Maria Onyejekwe,
Lagos Area Co-ordinator Book/Launching Cor
Initiated 2-1-75



Enyi Dibugu Dora Onochie
Kindred Group Leader (Ogbeolu)
Initiated 27-8-88



Enyi Odoziaku Nwando Emejulu
Executive Member
Initiated 6-6-76

LIST OF ONITSHA KINGS

1.	Obi (Eze) Chima	Mid 16th century
2.	Obi Oreze	16th - 17th century
3.	Obi Chimaevi	17th century
4.	Obi Chimukwu	17th “
5.	Obi Chimaezei	17th “
6.	Obi Nafia	17th “
7.	Obi Tasia	17th “
8.	Obi Eze Aroli	17th - 18th century
9.	Obi Chimedia	18th century
10.	Obi Omozele	18th “
11.	Obi Ezeolisa	18th “
12.	Obi Ijelekpe	18th - 19th century
13.	Obi Udogwu	About 1820
14.	Obi Akazue	1840 - 1973
15.	Obi Diali	1873 - 1874
16.	Obi Anazonwu	1874 - 1899
17.	Obi Samuel Okosi	1901 - 1931
18.	Obi James Okosi	1935 - 1961
19.	Obi Joseph Onyejekwe	1962 - 1970
20.	Obi Ofala Okechukwu Okagbue	1970

LIST OF ONITSHA RED CAP CHIEFS (NDICHIE)

NDICHIE CHIEFTAINCY GRADE

A. NDICHIE UME (CABINET RANK)

1. Onowu Iyasele
2. Ajie Ukadiugwu - Isagba
3. Odu (Osodi, Nkataukwu)
4. Onya (Ozoma, Ukanagba Oji, Asakalakprobi, Nyaka-Nyaka)
5. Ogene (Onira, Ukpaka)
6. Owelle (Osowa, Anya)

B. NDICHIE OKWA (SECOND CLASS)

1. Osuma (Akankposi, Afa)
2. Adazie (Ogulani, Alibo)
3. Omodi (Daiké, Alumaga)
4. Ozi (Adamagwe, Ogwuya)
5. Odua (Ngu, Alamuzo)
6. Akpe (Ogu)
7. Ede (Ogbogbogaga)
8. Ojiudo (Enema)
9. Ike (Nkpume, Akatakwuani)
10. Gbosa (Obi)
11. Oziziani Obi
12. Ogbuoba (Anyalagbom)
13. Ojiba (Inwagwe)
14. Omodi Obale

15. Ojiede
16. Unwoju
17. Oboli
18. Oboli
19. Obioba
20. Ojogwu
21. Odogwu
22. Okwuagwe Alun
23. Okwugba

NDICHIE OKWA - ARAEZE (3RD CLASS)

1. Onoli Oguda
2. Akwue (sama)
3. Ijagwo (Obi)
4. Eseagba (Igbala, Udobi)
5. Igwoba (Akalam)
6. Agba (Oriogu, Dike)
7. Asagba Osuji
8. Asagwali (Omeikpo)
9. Isama Osuji
10. Osuma (Ogwa)
11. Ozizani
12. Ojiba
13. Ozah
14. Igedu
15. Onuka
16. Ogbaiko

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Omenanwata Oby ononye
Initiated 12-1-74



Enyi Dibueze Joyce Nneka Uzoechina
Vocalist
Initiated 13-1-90



Enyi Ojinnaka Beatrice Bosah
Initiated 24-12-94



Enyi Dibueze Omenazu Igbo
Initiated 9-4-76

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Dibugo G. A. Offia
Initiated 11-12-93



Enyi Ugonwanne Beatrice Anionwu
Initiated 30-3-91



Enyi Dibueze Chinyerè Asika (Ajie)
Initiated 1-4 - 92



Enyi Odoziaku Ononenyi A. E. Molokwu
Initiated November, 92

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Odera Augusta Ozobia
Initiated 30-3-91



Enyi Nwamulamma Joyce Ngozi Egbuniwe
Initiated 14 -12-96



Enyi Ifechukwulu Lucy Egbuniwe
Initiated 25-5-94



Enyi Odoziaku Comfort Obiesie
Initiated 9-1-93

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDC



Enyi Chinyelugo Az Obiozor
Initiated 17-4-95



Enyi Onokanyi Thelma Azike
Initiated 2-5-87



Enyi Chinyelugo M. E Chukwudebe
Initiated 26-12-87



Enyi Ezenwanyi Vero Megafu
Initiated 1-4-91

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Omenanwata Felly Umunna
Initiated 1993



Enyi Omeorafu Remy Ekwegwu
Initiated 1989



Enyi Omeorafu Anyanwu Ononye
Initiated 1972



Enyi Nwachi Emeagwali & Nwachi Megafu, represented Otu Odu on Onitsha
- Ado Day in Lagos in 1992

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'IDO



Enyi Omenanwata Felly Umunna
Initiated 1993



Enyi Omeorafu Remy Ekweagu
Initiated 1989



Enyi Omeorafu Anyanwu Ononye
Initiated 1972



Enyi Nwachi Emeagwali & Nwachi Megafu, represented Otu Odu on Onitsha
Ado Day in Lagos in 1992

PICTURES AND NAMES OF SOME MEMBERS OF OTU ODU ONITSHA ADO N'I



Enyi Chinyelugo Emodi
Executive Member
Initiated 17-8-74



Enyi Chinyelugo Florence Emodi
Former President
Initiated 1982



Enyi Nweze Ilom Enweonwu



Enyi Akukalia Lilly C. E. Arinze Modeb
Initiated 1973

ONITSHA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SOCIETY

The Onitsha Indigenous Community came into existence as a child of circumstance in 1995. It was constituted as a pressure group made up of some select members of Ndi-Ichie, Agbalanze, Otu Odu, all the family heads (diokpa), Ikporo Onitsha, Ogbo nachi Ani (ruling age grade), and the youths (Agbala na Iregwu).

It played a landmark role at the time a severe rift existed between the Igwe and his subjects. In the face of wide spread disenchantment and grievances complained about, this hastily constituted body was organised to intervene in order to quell the crisis.

It is to the credit of this body that normalcy, peace and confidence was once more restored to the polity, thus averting the deepening of the crisis and rancour. Given its complimentary role at this hour of great need, the body was not dissolved but still exists in an advisory capacity to the Obi in council and the Ogbonnachi Ani.



Enyi Dibeze Obiageli Chukwura
Initiated 6-7-76



Enyi Omenyi Vicky Kwentoh
Initiated 6-2-82



Enyi Nwabunie Nneka Egbu
Initiated 19-5-95



Enyi Nwabunie Rosa Atuanya
Initiated 16-5-92



Enyi Nwabunie Rosa Chudie
Initiated 29-12-90



Enyi Omenyi Bridget Modibo



Enyi Dibeze Dorothy Mbanefo
Initiated 18-12-82



Enyi Ifechukwulu Chineze Omeni



Enyi Enyikwesili Anie Ojekw
Initiated 10-7-93

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Dibuğu Nnonyem Adibua
Initiated 5-8-94



Enyi Odera Onyi Bazuaye Asika



Enyi Omenyi Mary Obunse



Enyi Okulalukwe Janet Onuorah



Enyi Nwawuluaru Ogbogu



Enyi Chinyelugo Egwuatu
Initiated 13-8-77
Vocalist



Enyi Nwawuuru J. Akpe Modebe



Enyi Akukalia Cecelia Egbuna



Enyi Omerafu Okadigbo

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Chinyelugo Agegbu Obröta,
Initiated July 91



Enyi Onyechukwubulueze Okonkwo
Initiated 12-12-96



Enyi Anuenyi Blacky Abc meli
Initiated 30-12-87



Enyi Nwaezeakaibiz Shilla Egbuniwe
Initiated 1992



Enyi Nwalie Anikamadu



Enyi Omenanwata Ojekwe
Initiated 10-7-93



Enyi Dibueze Josephine Odiari
Initiated 27-1-95



Enyi Nwanulnamma Vero Duru
Initiated 1995



Enyi Nwonaku Chude Ofiaju

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Chinyelugo Kate Obi
Initiated 8-4-96



Enyi Nwezebuona Nkeiru Emodi
Initiated 28-12-97



Enyi Nwabunie Afulemu Iwobi
Initiated 1996



Enyi Olinarwanne Okosi
Initiated 1-12-94



Enyi Nwabunie Susan O. Onochie



Enyi Menakia Oblamaka Okafor



Enyi Enyidinaobi Asika
Initiated 16-4-94



Enyi Omeorafu Josephine Onwualu
Initiated 28-12-90



Enyi Nwawularu Lucy Emodi
Initiated 27-12-90

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Nwachinemelu Anna Melie
Initiated 31-10-92



Enyi Olimanwanne V. Arinze Modebe
Initiated 11-1-92



Enyi Melinwa Nini Obodochina
Initiated 21-8-95



Enyi Azumdialo Lilly Maduegbnam



Enyi Nwachinemeu Vicky Anierobi
Initiated 22-3-97



Enyi Orumili Okonkwo & Nwonoaku Chukwurah
Initiated 11-10-77 / 25-12-76



Enyi Dinyelugo Paulina Asika
Initiated 1-4-95



Enyi Dibunie Ester Ogbuli
Initiated 4-3-86



Enyi Chinyelugo Azike
Initiated 8-12-74

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Omenawata Onyechi
Initiated 6-7-91



Enyi Hon. Omekaenyi T. O. Mutoro
Initiated 25-10-90



Enyi Nwawulu Chiebonam Ifejika
Initiated 1982



Enyi Azumdiako Iwegbu
Initiated 26-12-86



Enyi Chidera M. V. O. Onochie
Initiated 30-12-95



Enyi Nwabunie Becca Asika
Initiated 18-3-74



Enyi Amalunweze Nely Onyejekwe



Enyi Nwabunie C. O. Chukwurah
Initiated 19-6-93



Enyi Odiziaku Chukwuma
Initiated 1985

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Ogbaluluanyi A. O. Ebozie
Initiated 1976



Enyi Omenyi Ogbenyema Onuma
Initiated 12-8-94



Enyi Nwabunie Amodo Megafu
Initiated 1972



Enyi Olumarwanne Azokwu
Initiated 29-3-86



Enyi Onyemadiuko H. Onochie
Initiated 28-12-91



Enyi Dibueze Catherine Modebe



Enyi Odoziaku Cecelia Bosah
Initiated 29-5-77



Enyi Nweackabie Onwualu
Initiated 22-11-82



Enyi Ifechukwulu Obiora

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Nwachinemelu Obodochina
Initiated 27-12-87



Enyi Nwamulunamma Oby Chikezie
Initiate 15-12-89



Enyi Nwachinemelu Kate Chukwurah
Initiated 10-4-93



Enyi Onyenwabuueze Anyaegbunam
Initiated 31-12-94



Enyi Nwanelieli F. O. Anierobi
Initiated 1989



Enyi Odoziaku A. A. Adibua
Initiated 1962



Enyi Onyenwabuueze Nneka Achukwu
Initiated 13-8-94



Enyi Nwawuluaru Modukpe Ikwueme
Initiated 22-5-93



Enyi Amalunweze Rose B. Tagbo
Initiated 30-10-74

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Chinyelugo Comfort Osemeka
Initiated 18-2-92



Enyi Chinyelugo Eunice Ojogwu
Initiated 21-10-95



Enyi Nwabunie Christy Ifejika
Initiated 1980



Enyi Nwonoak Batokwu Oranye
Initiated 6-7-74



Enyi Obidie Edna Adibua
Initiated 1994



Enyi Ochilli Nnonyem Egbuna



Enyi Nwabunie Onwudinjo
Initiated 27-3-78



Enyi Oimanwa Josephine Menyua
Initiated 1977



Enyi Nwezebuoa Joyce Anyaegbuna
Initiated 1976

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Nwanyelugo Obiozor Abutu
Initiated 14-3-79



Enyi Azungini Egwuatu



Enyi Amahmweze Christy Emodi



Enyi Enyikwesili C. O. Mbanefo



Enyi Dimbueze Lisk Carew
Initiated 14-12-89



Enyo Dr. Ojinaka Ngozi Ibeziako



Enyi Nwoganyatijie Odu Enweonwu
Initiated 1972



Enyi Azimdialo Ezim Egbunike
Initiated 1991



Enyi Enyileanyi Iheboromadu Asika
Initiated 1-4-95

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Nwanyelugo Obiozor Abutu
Initiated 14-3-79



Enyi Azungini Egwuatu



Enyi Amalunweze Christy Emodi



Enyi Enyikwesili C. O. Mbanefo



Enyi Dimbueze Lisk Carew
Initiated 14-12-89



Enyo Dr. Ojinaka Ngozi Ibeziako



Enyi Nwoganyatijie Odu Enweonwu
Initiated 1972



Enyi Azimdialo Ezim Egbunike
Initiated 1991



Enyi Enyikaenyi Ihekoromadu Asil
Initiated 1-4-95

PICTURES OF OTU ODU MEMBERS



Enyi Okpuzoenweilo Phina Asika
Initiated 1-4-95



Enyi Amalunweze A. N. Orakposim
Initiated 5-2-94



Enyi Azumfiato O. Chumzie
Initiated 14-12-89



Enyi Nwalie Ifedigbo Odiani



Enyi Dibueze Iwobi



Enyi Ugochukwu Sylvia
Initiated 1-4-95



Enyi Nwamulunamma Regi Ogwudebe
Initiated 24-1-77



Enyi Nwabunie Erokwu
Initiated 2-4-94

CHAPTER SEVEN

HISTORICAL EVENTS IN ONITSHA

1505 - 1857	Immigration from Ado n' Idu
1600 - 1630	Inter-tribal wars against Oze, Obosi, Odekpe, Osomari, Ogbunike, Nkpor, Ogidi, Ada, Awkuzu etc.
1857 (25th July)	The two ships, "The Dayspring" and "The George", brought the first European traders, viz. Macgregor Laird, Dr. W. B. Baikie, Captain Grant, etc., and the first C.M.S Missionaries, namely: Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Reverend J.C. Taylor.
1857 (27th July)	Reverend S.A. Crowther began the first C.M.S. Mission.
1863	Treaties with the Chiefs of Onitsha for trade, slave traffic and human sacrifices were concluded.
1873 - 1882	The Modozie Odum and Ezeoba Obi civil war.
1885 (December)	Roman Catholic Mission was established by Fathers Luts, Lecayer, Hornet and Brother John - all French.
1890	Omu Nwagboka Egwuatu dies.
1898 (14th May)	Arrest of Ezeoba on Nkwo day by the Royal Niger Company at Asaba.
1898 (2nd June)	Ezeoba died at Asaba on Nkwo day and was removed to Onitsha for interment.
1899	Obi Anazonwu died.
1904	Arrival of J.M. Stuart Young Odoziaku in Onitsha.
1905	Transfer of headquarters and troops from Asaba to Onitsha.
1906	The first Government School was opened.
1913	John Anyogu and Luke Anyogu first Onitsha men to study in Ireland.

- 1920 First Newspaper -THE DAWN in Onitsha by Coulson Labour.
- 1923 I.O. Mba elected Honourable member of the legislative Council.
- 1923 Water-Pipes laid but rejected by the citizens.
- 1924 The Legislative Council moved to introduce water supply.
- 1925 (26th August) Miss Elems was decorated at Onitsha with the Order of St. John of Jerusalem by his Excellency the Governor in connection with her 23 years missionary work at Iyieniu Hospital.
- 1925 Dennis Memorial Grammer School founded.
- 1931 (28th April) Obi Samuel Okosi I, died.
- 1931 (31st December) The first Onitsha clergyman, Rev. Egbuche of C.M.S. died.
- 1932 (23rd July) Mr. L. N. Mbanefo Proceeds to England to study Law.
- 1933 Christ the king College founded.
- 1934 Nnamdi Azikiwe, M.A., M.Sc., etc., etc., returned from America.
- 1935 (18th November) Mr. Louis Nwachukwu Mbanefo - the first Lawyer called to Bar.
- 1937 (11th June) Consecration of the Venerable Archdeacon A.C. Onyeabo as the first Igbo bishop at the St Paul's Cathedral
- 1953 (January 12) Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became Premier of Eastern Region.
- 1960 October 1 Rt. the Honourable Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first Governor-General of Nigeria.
- 1963 October 1 Rt. Honourable Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe First President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

- 1967 Anthony Ukpabi Asika appointed Administrator East Central State of Nigeria.
- 1970 Mr. John Ibeziako appointed (1970 - 75).
- 1970 (10th August) Igwe Joseph Okwudili Onyejekwe died.
- 1970 Akunne Patrick O. Chude - first East Central State Commissioner of Police, Enugu.
- 1970 (26th December) Coronation of Obi Okechukwu Ofala Okagbue.
- 1982 Visit of Archbishop of Canterbury the Rt. Hon. Dr. Runcie to Onitsha where he planted a commemorative tree in Ime Obi Ogbeoza where the Gospel was first preached in Onitsha in 1857 during the reign of Obi Akazue.
- 1987 Innocent Egbunike won Nigeria's Sportsman of the year for his prowess in track events.
- 1994 Chief P.O. Anatogu, the Onowu of Onitsha and Chief I. A. Mbanefo, the Odu II of Onitsha at the ripe age of 96 years respectively.
- 1995 Chief Olisa Moture was installed the Onowu of Onitsha.
- 1995 Chief Arthur Mbanefo appointed Chairman Committee State Creation and Local Government Boundry Adjustment
- 1996 Dr. Henry Emeagwali in U.S.A., developed the world's fastest computer capable of 3.1 billion calculations in one second.
- 1996 Death of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe Owelle of Onitsha on 11th May 1996 and burial on 16th November 1996.

SOME RECOGNISED TITLED WOMEN FROM DELTA, ANAMBRA AND IMO STATES



**Chief Mrs. Regi O. Nwankwu
Iyom Nwanyi**



**Chief Mrs. Uzo Obi Okoli
Lolo-Ahiara Ugodie na Nike (Enugu Stat
Adadioramma Na Nibo**



**Chief Mrs B. N. Onuorah
Iyom Ugochukwu of Adozi-Ani**



**Chief Mrs. Vero Onyia
Ezenwanyi Udi
Title 4 - 4 - 88**

SOME RECOGNISED TITLED WOMEN FROM DELTA, ANAMBRA AND IMO STATES



**Chief Mrs. Ifeoma S. Ilodibe
Obidie, nwanyi di ya tubelugo
Iyom Nwanyi**



**Adadioramma -Ahaba
Theodora Anwuli Giwa-Amu and
her friend Nwachi from Onitsha**



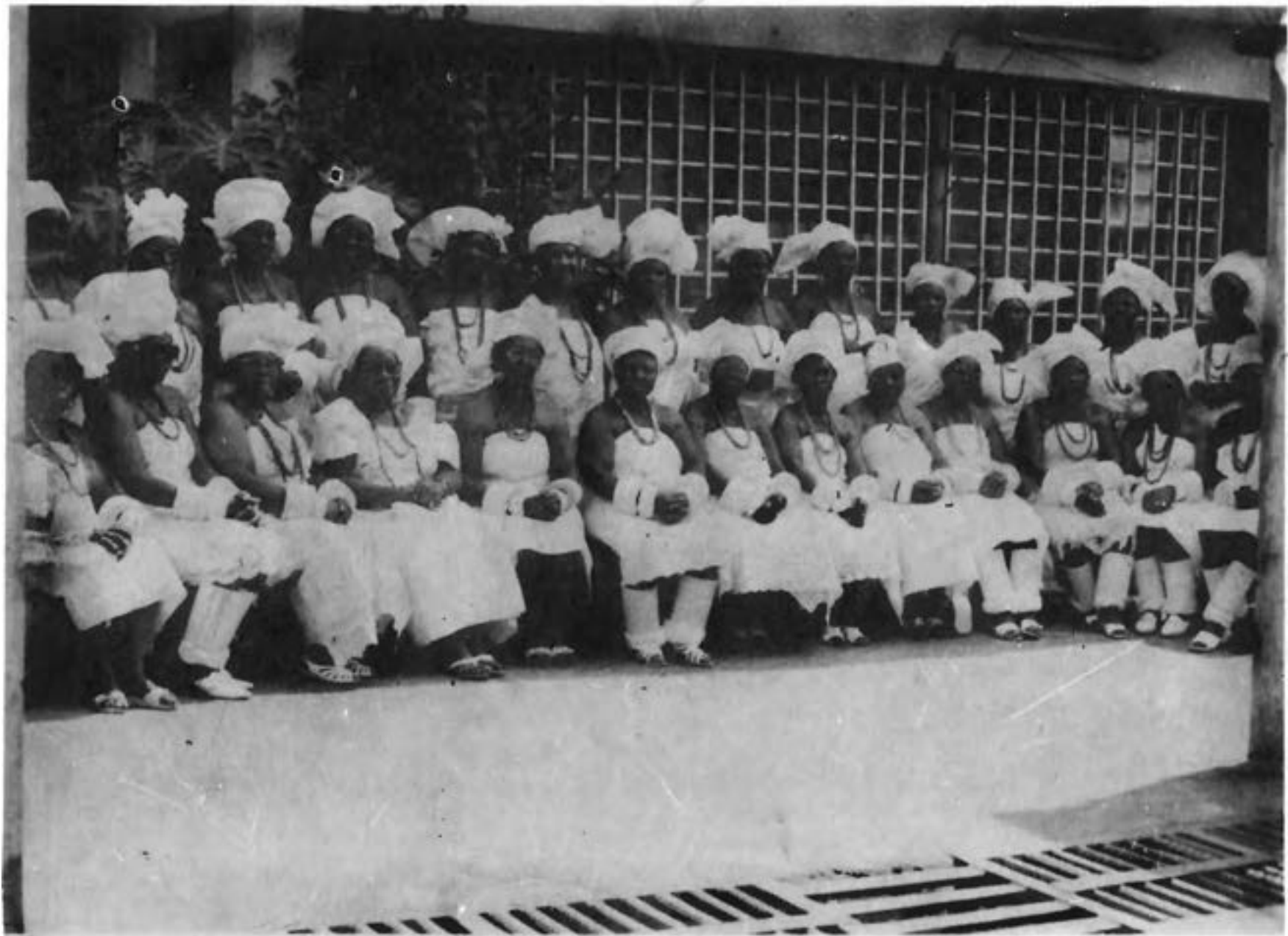
**Chief Mrs. Uchenna Beatrice Obi
Anasi-Onowu of Ubahu Okija**



**Chief Mrs. Chebonam Obiaku
Iyom Ezenwanyi of Umuoji**

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Picture of the Executive Members showing Kindred Group Leaders, Provosts and Stewards



ONU NWAGBOKA
ENTHRONED 1884. DIED 1890