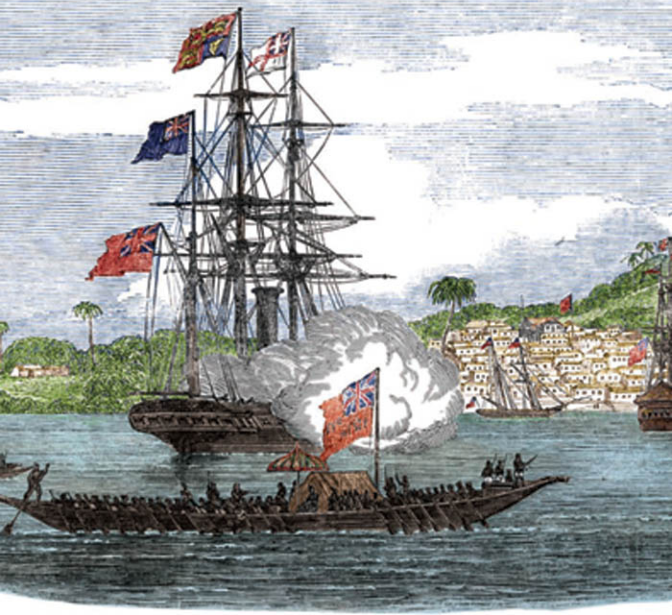
THE DIARY OF *Antera Duke*

An Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader



Stephen D. Behrendt, A. J. H. Latham & David Northrup

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Preface

Extensive extracts of the three-year diary of Efik merchant Antera Duke (1785–1788) of Duke Town, Old Calabar (Calabar, Nigeria) survive today because of the efforts of William Valentine and Arthur W. Wilkie a hundred years ago. Valentine, a clerk in the Foreign Mission Office of the Free Church of Scotland, discovered and preserved the bound diary, which he found in a pile of rubbish. Wilkie, a missionary on furlough from Duke Town in 1907, transcribed most of the words to preserve the information and perhaps use it in a future study of Calabar life and customs. After the diary was misplaced in Edinburgh during the Second World War years, Wilkie prepared a typescript of his handwritten extracts and translated Antera Duke's words into a more readable "modern English" version. In November 1951 he brought his Antera Duke material to the attention of Professor Daryll Forde, director of the International African Institute, seeking advice as to the possibility of publishing the diary. Wilkie achieved his goal of seeing his work in print in 1956, two years before his death.

Efik Traders of Old Calabar, Containing the Diary of Antera Duke, an Efik Slave-Trading Chief of the Eighteenth Century was edited by Daryll Forde and published in 1956 by Oxford University Press for the International African Institute. The 166-page book included an introduction by Forde, essays by Donald C. Simmons and G. I. Jones on Efik ethnography and the political organization of Old Calabar, respectively, Antera Duke's diary extracts, a "translation" of the diary by Wilkie and Simmons, notes to the diary by Simmons, and an addendum by Jones on the Efik lineage system. Forde,

Simmons, and Jones discussed how best to present Antera Duke's material and decided that it was important to include both the original diary extracts—as transcribed by Wilkie—and the translation. In *The Diary of Antera Duke, an Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader* we have followed their decision to publish the diary and "translation" but have offered an updated version rendered into standard English and have displayed the original diary and "translation" on facing pages with footnotes. Rather than including or updating the valuable contributions of Forde, Simmons, and Jones, we instead have written new chapters to help place the important diary in historic context.

Three coauthors collaborated on *The Diary of Antera Duke*, A. J. H. Latham taking the lead in chapter 1 and the appendices, Stephen D. Behrendt in chapters 2, 3, and 5, and David Northrup in chapter 4. The three, as editors, reworked Antera Duke's important diary into standard English and reinterpreted several key passages. The three also edited 80 of the 100 notes from the 1956 version and added 165, many concerning ships and cargoes.

Victoria University of Wellington students Emily Boyd, Peter Carter, Karen Cheer, Nicholas J. Radburn, and Craig Watterson worked on the project as research assistants; in particular we thank Carter and Cheer for helping to create a database on African produce and Radburn for helping to analyze shipping accounts and to edit the diary and appendix A. We acknowledge research support from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington. We also thank Linda R. Gray for reading and suggesting changes to successive versions of the manuscript and Nona Parry for designing figure 2.1 and maps 1.1, 4.1, and 4.2, and for her contribution to the book cover. Librarians at the New College Library, University of Edinburgh, helped to locate Wilkie's typed transcription of the diary. A. J. H. Latham would like to acknowledge the help and encouragement over many years of the late Chief (Mrs.) Ekei Esien Oku (née Eyo), January 22, 1924–October 16, 2004, formerly Chief Librarian, Calabar. Finally, we thank Elizabeth Dunstan, Murray Last, and other members of the publications committee of the International African Institute, University of London, for encouraging the project a decade ago, and the institute for allowing us to republish Antera Duke's diary.

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THE DIARY OF ANTERA DUKE, AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AFRICAN SLAVE TRADER

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Introduction

In about 1907, William Valentine, senior clerk to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, discovered a curious manuscript in the "Church offices" at 121 George Street, Edinburgh.[1] In "an old press filled with all sorts of rubbish" Valentine found a "large folio bound volume; the paper of a blueish tint" that "had the appearance of a book originally intended for use as a Ship's Log-Book."[2] Opening the volume, Valentine saw that it was a diary written in Pidgin English without punctuation, with entries dated from January 18, 1785, to January 31, 1788. The clerk, who "had a Librarian's sense of the great value of ancient books and documents, and a real love of such valuable records," realized that the manuscript might have come from Calabar in Nigeria, where Scottish missionaries had been working since 1846. Consequently, Valentine loaned the book to thirty-one-year-old Arthur W. Wilkie, then a missionary at Duke Town, Calabar, during one of Wilkie's "early furloughs" in Edinburgh.[3] As Wilkie recalled, Valentine thought the book "might interest me."[4]

When Reverend Wilkie saw "antera Duke Ephrim" written on the first page, he realized that the diarist was from "Old Calabar," as it was referred to in precolonial times. Having studied Efik, the language of Calabar, an Ibibio dialect, he understood that "Antera" and "Ephrim" were anglicized versions of the Efik names Ntiero and Efiom,[5] and he also knew that Antera Duke was the traditional name for the male head of the Ntiero family in Duke Town. Indeed, Wilkie likely would have met an "Antera Duke" or "Duke Antera" during his mission. Glancing over the entries, Wilkie grasped that the diarist

worked as a merchant and slave trader and also commented on the "daily life and the customs of the peoples in the Calabar area." Wilkie knew, as he wrote later, that the diary was a unique document from "those far-off day[s] in Calabar."[6] He certainly had seen nothing like it before either in Duke Town or in Edinburgh libraries.

Who was the man who kept this remarkable eighteenth-century diary? Antera Duke—Ntiero Edem Efiom to use his full Efik name[7]—probably was born in the 1730s. His anglicized trade name appears first in 1769 in documents concerning the Liverpool slaving ship *Dobson*. In May of that year a merchant in Liverpool purchased six 4-pound and six 3-pound brass basins with the words "Antera Duke" engraved on them.[8] Two months later at Old Calabar, "Antera Duke King of Warr"[9] sold Captain John Potter two male slaves for two basins and an assortment of textiles, iron bars, beads, powder kegs, guns, and copper rods. Over a five-month period, July 1769–January 1770, Antera sold Potter fifty slaves—the second-highest total among Efik businessmen. Clearly Potter dealt with a senior trader. Antera Duke last appears in the documentary record on January 18, 1805, when English explorer Henry Nicholls called upon "another chief and trader, Antera Duke, whose appearance and countenance did not at all please me, having a bold and daring countenance, with some appearance of malignity lurking about it: he possesses apparently great activity of mind." Because Nicholls does not say that Antera was aged in appearance, perhaps he was about seventy years old.[10] We then learn that "Duke Antera" headed the family in October 1809, confirming that his father Antera Duke had died before that date.[11]

Antera Duke, like his father and grandfather, learned to write and speak trade English to communicate with British sailors. English language learning at Old Calabar started in the second half of the seventeenth century, as the trading community, located forty-five miles north of the Atlantic–Cross River confluence, began brokering shipments of slaves and ivory for overseas markets. Trade names appear first in 1698, when Jean Barbot mentioned Cross River dealers Duke Aphrom, King Robin, Captain Thomas, Mettinon, King Ebrero, King John, King Oyo, William King Agbisherea, Robin King Agbisherea, and Old King Robin. By 1720 greater numbers of leading Calabar notables and merchants had adopted trading names that combined an English forename and an anglicized Efik family name, such as "Tom Cobham" or "Young Henshaw" or "Gentleman Honesty."[12] In the 1740s young Antera Duke began picking up English words from visiting sailors, eventually learning an English commercial vocabulary. The Efik use of English abbreviations, such as "Jno" for Jonathan, demonstrates that language learning occurred via written correspondence as well. Like other Efik traders Antera

Duke would master the names of many European and Asian goods, measurements, Arabic numbers, adjectives, and verbs.[13]

The diary of Antera Duke is the most extensive surviving African text from precolonial Old Calabar. It contains 10,510 words and reveals that Antera Duke had a working vocabulary of 400 English words. Other Efik kept diaries or account books, but they have not surfaced and may no longer exist.[14] Antera's diary ends on January 31, 1788, probably when he reached the last folio in the bound ledger. If he continued his diary in a new book, a likely possibility, it too has been lost or remains in some family's possession. We assume that Antera also penned letters, notes, or cursory debt tallies in trade English, as there are seventeen such Efik-authored documents from the period 1767–1804. In two letters to Liverpool merchants in 1773, Grandy King George (Ephraim Robin John) wrote 1,608 words, and the next-longest surviving Efik document contains 333 words. Of these sixteen documents, only six still exist in manuscript.[15] The others, like Antera Duke's diary, were fortunately transcribed and published, thus preserving some of Old Calabar's history.

As a diary, Antera Duke's journal gives historians information otherwise not found in documents written by Africans in the precolonial era. These documents include earlier writings in Arabic by inland Muslim West Africans and writings in European languages from coastal Africans going back to the early sixteenth-century letters of King Afonso of Kongo. In addition, in the late eighteenth century there was considerable writing and publication by sub-Saharan Africans residing in Europe and North America.[16] Among these important historical sources, only Antera Duke, the sole extant diarist, chronicles the day-to-day social and cultural life of an African community. Another unique feature of diary writing appears with the initial phrase of Antera Duke's diary: "I be angiry with my Dear awaw ofion" (I was angry with my dear [wife] Awaw Ofiong). The diarist reveals intimate thoughts that one finds only in an account written for oneself. Antera Duke's first dated entry, January 18, 1785, discusses a dispute between Efik traders Egbo Young Ofiong and Little Otto, one resolved by the Ekpe society of Old Calabar to which wealthy Efik men belonged. Here is local eyewitness history not found in the business correspondence between coastal African traders and ship captains, or in diplomatic discussions between African leaders and the Portuguese Crown, or in writings from Africans living in the Americas.

Antera Duke's diary, written in his own hand and for his own use, is a candid account of daily life in an African community during a period of great historical interest. Antera wrote his thoughts at a peak period of trade when Efik merchants, over a three-year period, sold Europeans 15,000 slaves,

500,000 yams, and 100 tons of ivory, palm oil, dyewood, and pepper. The 1780s ushered in a trade in palm oil, which would be the source of Efik foreign trade income for several generations after the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807–1808. Heightened competition from slaving merchants based in Bonny, located eighty-five miles to the southwest, prompted Cross River traders to diversify their export trades. Antera Duke writes in the aftermath of internecine battles between Duke Town merchants and rivals from nearby Old Town; the diary period marks the midpoint in the history of Duke Town's ascendance and in that of the family of Duke Ephraim, Antera's paternal uncle. Antera's voice is that of a major African businessman from an important commercial center in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

The History of the Diary and Its Loss during the Second World War

What is the history of the diary? After Antera Duke's death between January 1805 and October 1809, the book may have passed to his eldest son, Duke Antera, a name documented in 1813 and 1830.[17] Duke Antera died before 1842, the first year when his son Antera Duke appears in sources. Scottish missionaries arrived in 1846 and met this grandson of the diarist Antera Duke (ca. 1735–ca. 1809). Antera Duke signed five treaties with British officials from 1847 to 1857,[18] and may have given the diary to a missionary. Wilkie's wife recalled that no one working in the Free Church of Scotland in the early 1900s knew the history of the diary, and thus "it must have been there some time."[19] In the 1850s missionary Hugh Goldie began building his own private library in Duke Town, which perhaps included some Efik material written in trade English. Goldie or one of his assistants may have shipped Antera Duke's diary, perhaps before a Duke Town fire in early 1855 or the "great fire" there in April 1862.[20] In 1892 William Marwick began cataloging the Mission Library in Duke Town, formed from Goldie's collection. He found numerous books about the slave trade but did not mention Efik diaries or journals.[21] Many missionaries and their wives, such as Elizabeth Marwick, shipped home boxes containing "Calabar curiosities." Perhaps Antera Duke's diary was one such "curiosity" sent to Edinburgh in the 1850s or 1860s.[22]

Before returning to Duke Town to resume missionary work in 1908, Wilkie copied by hand extensive extracts from the diary, then returned the volume to clerk Valentine. He planned to use the information in a future study of Efik life in the Old Calabar region and perhaps even, some day after

his missionary service ended, to publish the diary. Wilkie also wanted to preserve a copy of Antera Duke's record before the original deteriorated further. Already the script was difficult to decipher, Wilkie recalled, "for frequently the paper is discoloured, and the ink has faded." Wilkie recommended to Valentine "that the original Diary should be deposited in a secure place, suggesting one of the Scottish National Libraries, or in the Library of New College, Edinburgh." The volume, however, remained in the Free Church of Scotland office building, perhaps in the Missionary Lending Library.[23]

Wilkie renewed his Old Calabar studies and interest in Antera Duke's diary after the Second World War, having settled in Edinburgh upon retiring from active service. His missionary work in Calabar and then on the Gold Coast (1918–1931) and in South Africa (1931–1941) prevented any earlier opportunities for such scholarly activity. He soon learned that the Antera Duke diary disappeared during the early 1940s. As Wilkie wrote in 1951:

> During the late war many valuable books and documents were removed from the upper storey of the Church Offices to the basement in case of any bomb attacks.
>
> Shortly before his death, Mr. Valentine informed me that he was trying to re-create order in the books and documents that had been brought into great disorder in the upper story and in the basement of the Offices during the war. Unfortunately he had not been able to find any trace of the original Diary, but he had not given up hope of ultimately re-discovering it. I am assured by Foreign Mission officials in the [Foreign Mission Committee] offices that the search will be continued, but success is uncertain for it is just "possible" that a bomb may have destroyed it.[24]

Church officials did not find Antera Duke's diary; recent efforts to locate it also have proved unsuccessful.[25] The city of Edinburgh was not targeted during World War II, however, and thus someone possibly discarded the rare volume.[26]

The First Edition of Antera Duke's Diary

During 1951 Wilkie prepared his Antera Duke materials with the aim to publish the important Efik diary. He sought advice from Church of Scotland missionaries, acquaintances in the Foreign Mission Office, and others interested in Old Calabar history. Believing that Antera Duke's trade English would prove difficult to read for those unfamiliar with the Efik idiom, Wilkie

made a "Translation (or interpretation) of the Diary." On June 26, 1951, he then completed a four-page introduction, which included an appendix on the "Number of slaves taken by the trading ships, with names of Captains." He gave a copy of his diary extracts and translation to the Foreign Mission Office, and a secretary there typed three copies. Only one of these three typed copies is extant: that which he donated to the library at New College, University of Edinburgh.[27]

When Daryll Forde, director of the International African Institute, University of London, received information about Antera Duke's diary from Wilkie, he agreed that it warranted publication.[28] Forde believed that the work needed to be published with background material on Efik history, notes to explain some of Antera Duke's passages, and a reexamination of Wilkie's translation (or interpretation). By mid-1954 Forde had contacted anthropology student Donald C. Simmons, who then revised and annotated Wilkie's translation and added a chapter based on his recent fieldwork in Creek Town and Duke Town. Forde also enlisted the expertise of anthropologist G. I. Jones, and in 1956 Oxford University Press published *Efik Traders of Old Calabar, edited by Daryll Forde, Containing the Diary of Antera Duke, an Efik Slave-Trading Chief of the Eighteenth Century together with an Ethnographic Sketch and Notes by D. Simmons and an Essay on the Political Organization of Old Calabar by G. I. Jones*.

The New Edition

Since the publication of *Efik Traders*, scholars have located new sources to document Old Calabar's precolonial history. When Simmons researched published material on Old Calabar, standard works were missionaries' and travelers' testimonies from the 1830s through 1860s.[29] The few sources that documented Old Calabar history during Antera Duke's lifetime included parliamentary evidence given by seven British mariners who traded at Old Calabar, 1740s through 1770s, and eight Calabar letters and memos, written from 1767 to 1783, published by Gomer Williams in 1897.[30] In the past fifty years the discovery of new documents has yielded information on the names of Old Calabar merchants in 1720, the goods imported by Efik businessmen, the personal linkages between Efik and British traders, the slave and produce trades, and Calabar in 1805. There are now twelve Liverpool and Bristol captains' letters written at Old Calabar during the period of Antera Duke's diary, and sailor Henry Schroeder's recollections of his slaving voyage to Old Calabar in 1786.[31] These materials, unknown or unavailable to Simmons, confirm some of Antera's diary dates and information.

Simmons and the contributors to *Efik Traders* published before databases on the slave trade enabled sources such as newspapers to be examined for information on Old Calabar's export trades. The creation of the consolidated slave trade database in 1999, now available online, allows researchers to search for voyages by names of vessels and/or captains, the standard identifiers in shipping lists or cargo advertisements.[32] Weekly gazettes such as the *Manchester Mercury* (founded in 1752), *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser* (1756), and *Liverpool General Advertiser* (1765) list slaving ships and cargoes arriving from "Africa" and their American markets. By cross-referencing the ships with the slave trade database, one can determine the African location of trade for a majority of ships and their cargoes. The consolidated slave trade database has allowed today's researchers not only to identify all slaving ship captains mentioned by Antera Duke in his diary but also to determine whether these ships carried ivory, palm oil, or other agricultural commodities in addition to slaves.

Building upon older and more recent scholarship, the editors here have made a new translation of Antera Duke's diary and have written additional chapters on Old Calabar's history. From its first publication, the diary has been a focus for scholarship. The authors in the 1956 edition drew upon the diary to outline Efik customs and political history, and a 1960 anthology cited snippets of Antera Duke's diary as an example of precolonial Nigerian history and writing.[33] In the past fifty years the diary information has supported linguistic studies on Efik written "pidgin" or "broken English," work on the slave trade in the Bight of Biafra, and historical studies on Old Calabar–European credit relations and trading conflicts. The two senior members of the authorial team wrote pioneering monographs on the history of Old Calabar and its trading region; the junior member brings special expertise on the eighteenth-century slave and produce trades.[34] Our goal is to incorporate new primary source evidence with information contained in recent scholarly works to reemphasize the importance of Antera Duke's diary and to place it in the wider context of the history of Old Calabar and the Bight of Biafra.

Chapter 1 places information in Antera Duke's diary in the context of eighteenth-century Old Calabar political, social, and religious history. We chart how Duke Town eclipsed Old Town and Creek Town through military power, lineage strength, and commercial acumen. By the mid-1780s Duke Ephraim, Egbo Young Ofiong, and Antera Duke, all from Duke Town, became three of the strongest Efik—Duke Ephraim holding the position of *obong* (chairman of the town council and principal foreign spokesman) and Egbo Young the position of *eyamba* (principal legal authority and head of Ekpe society). We discuss how rivalries among Efik families intensified after

the death of Obong Duke Ephraim on July 4, 1786; sacrifices of slaves weakened the power of some leading families, and so did witchcraft ordeals, which also reduced the number of merchants competing for shares of European trading goods. Preserving lineage strength required rising men to survive a competitive and volatile political system that rewarded wealth and sagacity. Ekpe, the society to which leading Efik men belonged, did not curb the interfamily tensions triggered by Duke Ephraim's death. Separate from these issues, Antera's diary is the only source that documents the deaths of other Efik notables, including King Calabar, the priest of the tutelary deity who retained ceremonial and religious importance.

In chapters 2 and 3 we detail the eighteenth-century Calabar slave and produce trades. Our discussion of Calabar's export slave trade, circa 1650–1838, focuses on Antera Duke's lifetime and in particular the 1760s–1780s period when Antera Duke emerged as a leading merchant who traded principally with Liverpool ship captains—including John Potter, whose *Dobson/Fox* accounts in 1769–1770 we analyze in detail. During these three decades the Old Calabar export slave trade reached its height and, as we outline in chapter 3, Efik merchants began shipping large quantities of palm oil—thus beginning their fifty-year dominance in oil exports. Though Efik traders brokered and European ship captains purchased slaves, produce, and provisions, we treat the slave and produce trades separately. In the 1780s the compatibility of the trades was clear: few Guineamen arrived at Old Calabar to load only human cargoes, and indeed slaving captains, among European traders, purchased the greatest quantities of ivory and agricultural commodities in space they otherwise would have reserved for human cargoes. In these chapters we contrast the economic histories of Old Calabar and Bonny, and we emphasize how personal relationships between British and Efik merchants formed the nexus of trade at Old Calabar.

To build a picture of Old Calabar's regional trading networks, chapter 4 draws upon information contained in Antera Duke's diary, other contemporary sources, and shipping records from the 1820s. Antera and other Efik worked as itinerant merchants, often walking or canoeing overnight on trading or diplomatic missions. Their commercial ties extended to Ibibio lands on the west bank of the Cross River, north up the Cross River to Umon, a three-day journey, east to the Cameroon grasslands located 250 miles beyond the riverine zones, 45 miles south toward Tom Shott's Point on the Atlantic coast, and southeast to "Little Cameroons," on the western slopes of Mount Cameroon. Within a 30,000-square-mile commercial hinterland, merchants such as Antera Duke bought and sold yams, slaves, ivory, palm oil, dyewood, pepper, fish, plantains, salt, alcohol, canoes, metal goods, textiles, and other manufactures. Although the diary presents evidence of conflict among Afri-

can groups, between Europeans, and between Europeans and Efik, it nonetheless reveals that systematic trading patterns prevailed.

Chapter 5, comments on the diary text, discusses the accuracy and comprehensiveness of Wilkie's early twentieth-century transcription and problems with the diary's first "translation." We explain decisions taken in revising the English version and identify problematic diary passages that resisted translation. Antera Duke's trade English suggests that he learned his second language informally in Old Calabar by speaking and corresponding with British sailors. His first language was Efik, words from which have helped our interpretation of his trade English diary.

Part II reproduces the original diary of Antera Duke, as transcribed by Reverend Wilkie circa 1907, typed in 1951, and published in 1956. A new rendering of the diary into standard English appears on facing pages, and we have advanced the annotation completed by anthropologist Donald Simmons in 1954 by editing 80 and adding 165 footnotes, retaining only 20 notes as written by Simmons. The updated reference information, 265 footnotes, incorporates new primary and secondary source material on Old Calabar and specifies where our editorial decisions differ from those made by Wilkie and Simmons.

Reflecting upon reading and transcribing Antera Duke's words, Reverend Arthur Wilkie knew that he had helped to preserve a document of lasting historical value. Antera Duke, a leader and slaving merchant from Old Calabar, wrote the 1780s diary, giving readers an insight into life in Old Calabar and the organization of the slave trade. He left us with a glimpse into eighteenth-century Efik society. "Antera Duke must have been a very able man and highly respected in his day," the retired missionary remarked, and "It is right that there should be an historical record of the actual extent of this inhuman trade." "But one is grateful also to the Diarist," Wilkie concluded, "for giving to us such a 'living picture' of the daily life and the customs of the peoples in the Calabar area."[35]

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PART I

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CHAPTER ONE

The Diary and Old Calabar's History

The history of precolonial African Atlantic societies is told through tradition, archaeology, accounts of European visitors, and writings from Africans themselves. The mix of oral, physical, and written sources differs by location and time period. To study the Old Calabar of Antera Duke's lifetime (ca. 1735–ca. 1809), and the Efik who lived there, historians rely on almost as many African as European narrators, making the documentary record of the Cross River region most unusual. Antera Duke and other Efik merchants learned trade English—the British were the most frequent visitors to Old Calabar—and some of their correspondence survives, as do extensive extracts from Antera Duke's diary. Europeans did not maintain trading posts in the Bight of Biafra, so there are no archaeological sites or corpus of written material from fort administrators, like those that exist from other African coastal regions. Fortunately, in the period 1735–1809 there are eighteen letters from ship captains at Old Calabar, recollections of nine sailors, one account book written there, and one explorer's remarks. In the years after Antera Duke's death, the British wrote much more of the surviving material from Old Calabar. In the 1820s and 1830s adventurers renewed and publicized explorations of the Cross and Calabar rivers; missionaries arrived first in 1846, and ministers Hope Masterton Waddell, William Anderson, and Hugh Goldie subsequently wrote extensively about Calabar society.

Antera's journal contains details on Efik society not documented elsewhere. Before Reverend Wilkie preserved Antera's words, the only known

Efik writings from eighteenth-century Old Calabar were eight letters and memos written to Liverpool traders from 1767 to 1783. These documents, authored by Efik merchants other than Antera Duke, concern disputes over customs payments from British captains and requests for specific trading goods. Only two letters mentioned cursorily Old Calabar's uniquely African institution Ekpe (anglicized Egbo), a society to which wealthy Calabar merchants belonged.[1] Similarly, an Efik letter to a Liverpool captain in 1803 and seven Efik notes to British captains transcribed in 1827 discussed business transactions.[2] By contrast, Antera Duke mentions Ekpe throughout his diary, as in his first entry, January 18, 1785, when men in Ekpe, including Antera, adjudicated a dispute between Egbo Young Ofiong and Little Otto, and fined each man. That same day readers learn that sixty-four men in the society put in money presumably for twenty new initiates. Antera also mentions squabbles between family members, deaths of men and women, disputes between Efik and non-Efik, and political intrigues in Old Calabar.

In this chapter we discuss Antera Duke's kinsmen and the families in Old Calabar, an "enlarged village"[3] of small Efik settlements on the Calabar River. To set his diary in historic context, we draw upon Old Calabar information before and after Antera Duke's lifetime. The Efik emerged as middlemen in the late seventeenth century, and merchants and families competed for shares of overseas trade and anchorage fees, or "comey," which we detail in subsequent chapters. Trade increased competition between families; marriage alliances helped to diffuse tensions, as did the development of Ekpe, which features in one in four diary entries. Nonetheless, internecine warfare erupted from time to time and notably during the mid-1760s. To better understand family rivalries, we examine the political structure within Old Calabar and the positions of "King Calabar," the Ndem priest and religious leader; *eyamba* (president of Ekpe); *ebunko* (vice president of Ekpe); and *obong* ("king" or mayor). Obong Duke Ephraim's death, recorded by Antera Duke in his diary on July 4, 1786, triggered a political crisis that remained unresolved eighteen months later, when Antera closed the last folio of his book.

Tradition and Early Efik History

Building a historic context for biographical information in Antera Duke's diary requires one to first examine early Efik history. Efik society was built upon extended families; Antera Duke wrote the word "family" twenty-two times, often in discussion about how different kinsmen viewed issues concerning Ekpe society or conflicts with European traders. Similarly, in their

correspondence Efik and British merchants often sent greetings to each other's families. Neither Antera nor other eighteenth-century Efik writers wrote about the early history of "Callabar," and no author used the word "history."[4] But the Efik of Antera Duke's lifetime certainly passed on their histories and traditions by word of mouth. Antera reveals such a recollected history in his diary. When men from two towns wanted to pay Ekpe fees in one day (rather than over several days), Antera wrote, "wee say never Been hear that for weer grandy grandy father."[5] Antera Duke had never heard about a town paying Ekpe in one day. Consulting elders confirmed that the practice was unknown, as far back as the time of Antera's great-grandfather.

Tradition traces Antera's lineage beyond his great-grandfather's generation to Efik settlement at Old Calabar. According to oral testimonies, transcribed by scholars and officials interviewing Efik elders in the 1950s and 1960s,[6] Ema and Efiom Ekpo were the two progenitors of the Efik families that settled "Old Calabar." These two men lived in Uruan, a village located west of the Cross River in Ibibioland. At some point in history Efiom Ekpo, Ema's son Eyo Emo, and Ema's three grandsons, Oku Atai, Ukpong Atai, and Adim Atai, migrated with their wives, children, slaves, and other retainers fifty miles southeast to Ikot Etunko. Known later as Creek Town, this settlement is located on a creek between the Cross and Calabar rivers. Ibibio claim that they gave this group of migrants the name "Efik," derived from the Ibibio verb *fik*, to oppress or suppress, and thus Efik means "the oppressors." They support this assertion by recalling that Efik warriors captured and enslaved nearby peoples whom they sacrificed, incorporated into Efik society, or sold to local dealers.[7] Antera Duke—in Efik, Ntiero Edem Efiom—is a descendant of founding father Efiom Ekpo.

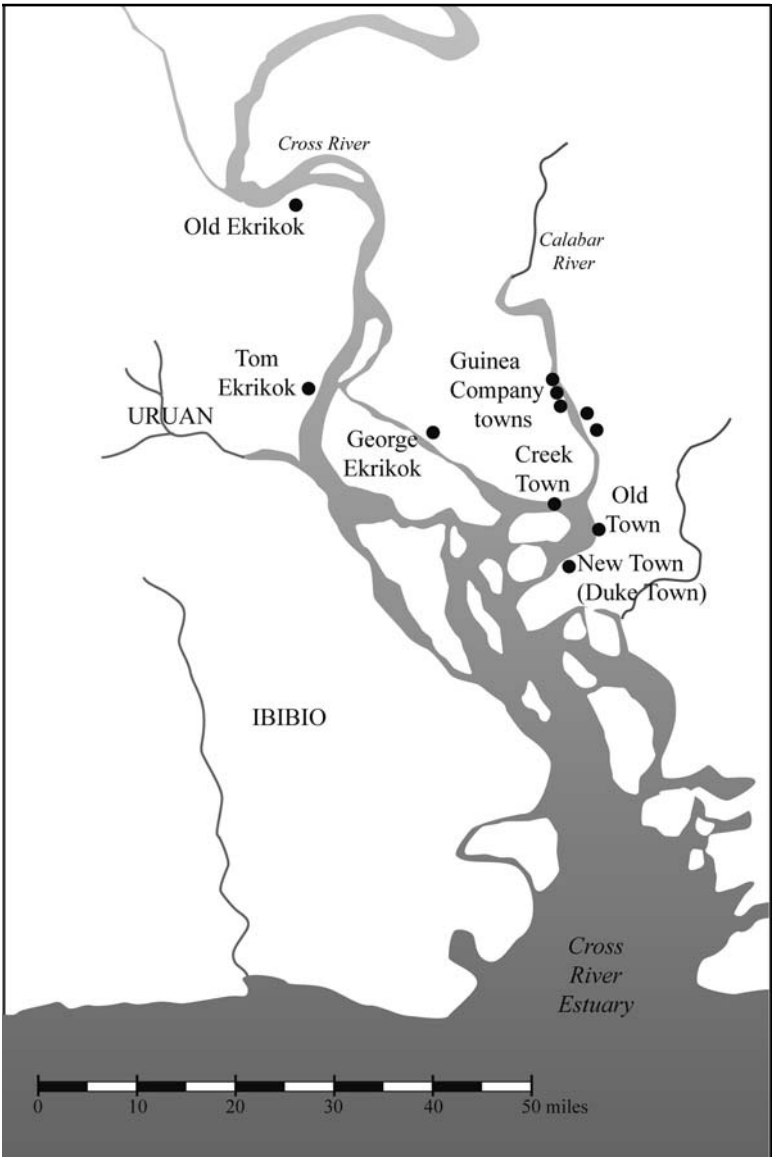
After the five extended families settled at Creek Town, it is said that disagreements arose and several families relocated nearby. The Ukpong and Adim Atai groups settled fifteen miles south, on the east bank of the Calabar River, in what became known as Obutong and later, to the British, as "Old Town." After Efiom Ekpo died, tradition holds that his daughter Okoho bore twins, whom his second son Edem Efiom secretly took away to a small island in the Cross River. This action prevented the twins from being killed, as was custom. After reaching adulthood, the twins, Ofiong Okoho and Efiom Okoho, settled lands three miles south of Obutong at Atakpa, "New Town," known to Europeans by the turn of the nineteenth century as "Duke Town." Other Efik migrated fifteen miles north up the Calabar River and lived in a group of hamlets on both banks known as Adiabo, or "Guinea Company." At some point others settled to the west in three Efik villages on the Cross River known collectively as Mbiabo, or individually as Mbiabo

Edere (Akani Obio), Mbiabo Usin Ufot (Ikot Offiong), and Mbiabo Usuk (Ikonetu). These settlements are remembered as Old Ekrikok, Tom Ekrikok, and George Ekrikok, names given to and adopted by English captains, who would define those in Creek Town, Old Town, and Duke Town as from "Old Calabar" (see map 1.1).[8]

As descendants multiplied, distinct families emerged within founding kinship groups at Creek Town, Old Town, and Duke Town. Families cleared bush and built compounds; people lived in wattle-and-daub huts, and there were residences for freemen, wives, and slaves. Different clusters of buildings enclosed yards. These extended family units, living in their own geographically defined space, are "houses" (in Efik, *ufok*) or "wards," to use a twentieth-century convention.[9] Eventually two wards emerged from the Ema lineage in Creek Town—the Ambo and Cobham (*akabom*). In Duke Town, the Efiom Ekpo lineage split into the Henshaw (*nsa*), Ntiero (Antera Duke's ward), Duke, and Eyamba sections, and in the mid-nineteenth century the Archibong (*asibong*) ward developed in Duke Town. The Eyo ward also lived in Creek Town, tradition holding that founder Eyo Nsa (Eyo Willy Honesty) was an "outsider" or "stranger,"[10] who sided with the Efik to defeat rivals in the Cross River. Bravery earned Willy Honesty his advancement and the hand in marriage of an Ambo "princess," and the Eyo ward resided in Creek Town along with the Ambos and Cobhams, each family in separate compounds.[11]

Efik naming patterns help chart generations and ward development. In Efik a father's first name becomes the son's second name, for example, Nsa Efiom and Edem Efiom were sons of Efiom Ekpo. Consequently, second-, third-, and fourth-generation descendants of Efiom Ekpo by his daughter Okoho are Efiom Okoho, Ekpo Efiom, and Edem Ekpo. This naming sequence transferred to anglicized trading names, and thus Duke Antera is Antera Duke's son, probably his eldest son with one of his principal wives. Over time compound Efik and English trading names developed as families intermarried and lineages grew. Ntiero Edem Efiom (Antera Duke) would be the three names of an individual from a generation later than that of true agnates or ward founders.

By relying on traditions and legends, one can create an Efik genealogical tree that includes major branches descending from Ema and Efiom Ekpo. "Word-of-mouth" evidence gives some indication about the development of wards; legend holds, for example, that the Ambo and Cobham wards are senior branches of the Ema lineage, and they perhaps were the two remaining groups when others left Creek Town. Similarly, it is remembered that the Henshaw, Ntiero, Duke, and Eyamba families emerged as independent wards from the founding Efiom Ekpo group. But oral histories do not assign dates to events or tell us whether our diarist Antera Duke was the first Ntiero ward



MAP 1.1. The Cross River region

leader. To place the growth of Efik families and development of wards in historic time, one must turn to written sources. Those most important to charting early Efik history include three details: African names; ages or dates of death; and payments of port fees at Old Calabar that suggest an individual's status.

Written Sources and Early Efik History

Any document on early Efik history is precious, more so if authors dated their works and recorded biographical information on Cross River peoples. Before the publication of Antera Duke's diary in 1956, scholars knew the precise date of death for only one pre-1850 obong—Efiom Edem ("Great Duke Ephraim"), who died on October 14, 1834. Missionary Hope Waddell gleaned this information in 1846 when he was shown a "journal of transactions in English," written by "Mr. Young" (perhaps Egbo Young) from Duke Town: "Old Calabar, October 14, 1834.—Ephraim Duk diad in five o'clock this evening, and we put him for Groun next morning."[12] Antera Duke also recorded an obong's death, that of Ephraim Duke's father, Duke Ephraim (Edem Ekpo), on July 4, 1786: "[A]bout 4 clock morning Duk Ephrim Dead soon after come up to Look way putt to grown" ("About 4 o'clock in the morning Duke Ephraim died. Soon after we came up to look where to put him in the ground"). Before the discovery of the diary, it was known only that Edem Ekpo died a generation earlier than his son.[13]

Though we do not know the birth years or ages at death for Edem Ekpo and son Efiom Edem, explorer Henry Nicholls establishes that some Efik dignitaries lived long lives. Nicholls noted in January 1805 that Egbo Young Eyambo "is between sixty and seventy" and that King Calabar "is a very old man, at least eighty years of age." There is no additional information on Efik ages, other than from those later missionaries who observed the elder status of men from Old Calabar.[14] There are no tombstone inscriptions of Efik until the twentieth century. If one assumes a life expectancy of seventy years for those who survived infancy and follow Efik naming patterns, we can work backward from the death dates of the two Duke ward obongs to locate Efik migration from Uruan to Creek Town in the late sixteenth century.[15] Grandsons of Ema and Efiom Ekpo then would have settled Old Town and New Town in the first half of the seventeenth century (table 1.1).[16]

Two seventeenth-century reports record names of Cross River individuals and provide further information on the Duke family. In the first written account of Old Calabar, a tract published in 1668, sailor John Watts referred to King "E-fn-me." Here an Englishman tried to spell phonetically an unusual-sounding African name, most likely Efiom, and thus we assume he had seen or heard about an Efiom family dignitary, perhaps Efiom Okoho, obong and cofounder of Duke Town, a man who then might have been about sixty years of age.[17] Thirty years later Cross River merchants had adopted anglicized trading names; Jean Barbot, working on a London-based Royal African Company vessel, traded with at least six Efik: Duke Aphrom,

TABLE 1.1. Efik settlement dates at Creek Town and the Duke ward lineage

Name	Years	Remarks
Efiom Ekpo	ca. 1540s–ca. 1610s	Cofounder of Creek Town
Okoho Efiom (daughter)	ca. 1590s–ca. 1660s	Mother of illegitimate twins
Efiom Okoho	ca. 1610s–ca. 1680s	Cofounder of Duke Town
Ekpo Efiom	ca. 1660s–ca. 1730s	Son of Efiom Okoho
Edem Ekpo[1]	ca. 1700s–July 4, 1786	Duke Ephraim in the diary
Efiom Edem[2]	ca. 1755–Oct. 14, 1834	"Great Duke Ephraim"

[1]Death date documented by Antera Duke in his diary.

[2]"Great Duke Ephraim." Death date documented in Mr. Young's journal and shown to missionary Hope Waddell in 1846.

King Oyo, King Robin, Old King Robin, King Ebrero, and King John.[18] Duke Aphrom, or "Duke Ephraim," was probably Ekpo Efiom, then about thirty years of age, too young to be a principal Calabar spokesman or "king" (see table 1.1). Legend and later written sources place King Oyo (Eyo Ema) in Creek Town and King Robin in Old Town. As "kings" they were town leaders and the men who brokered major disputes with ship captains. King John headed some of the Guinea Company villages;[19] King Ebrero perhaps spoke for a different Efik village and may have been an ancestor of the Ebros in Duke Town.[20]

We learn much more about early African families in the Cross River region from Scottish supercargo Alexander Horsburgh's accounts from 1720. Horsburgh's ledger, found in the 1990s in Edinburgh archives, is the most important source concerning early eighteenth-century Calabar history.[21] Whereas Barbot mentioned six Efik with whom he traded at Old Calabar in 1698, Horsburgh records twenty-six Cross River notables, including at least twenty Efik—and ten from the Ambo, Cobham, and Henshaw families, senior branches of the Ema and Efiom Ekpo lineages. Horsburgh writes names of men to whom he paid anchorage fees (comey), differentiates between traders and nontraders, and specifies comey per individual. His list of comey recipients includes all the important Efik, since the fees covered both trading duties and ransom for four sailors captured near the Cross River estuary. These payments, made in copper bars ("coppers"),[22] Calabar's currency unit, reveal the comparative position of Cross River elders, ward leaders, and merchants.

The tally of comey indicates that in 1720 there were between five and seven wards in Creek Town, Old Town, and Duke Town combined. Horsburgh paid the most monies to two kings—King Ambo (80 copper bars) and King John (72 coppers). King Ambo was the leader of Ambo ward in Creek Town; King John, referenced by Barbot in 1698, probably headed the Guinea