

The Cornelia Connelly Secondary School, Uyo — the upper part.

THE LITTLE CITY OF C.C.S.S.

The three young contributors to this article open wide the doors for us to catch an intimate glimpse of UYO.

In the southern part of Eastern Nigeria lies the little town of Uyo. Near it, as one bends to the left off the main highway, is a stretch of untarred road which winds its way through the land of Afaha Oku. Situated right in the heart of this land is a little 'city' on a hilltop — the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School.

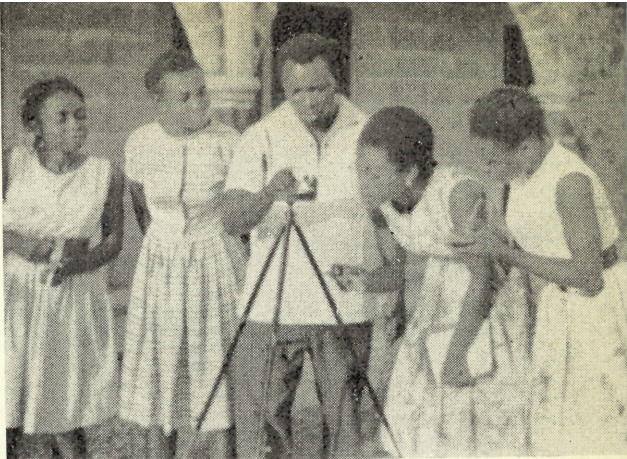
It was opened in 1946 by the Mothers of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus whose foundress was Mother Cornelia Connelly. One of the most interesting points about life in our little 'city' is that the students come from almost every part of Nigeria. They learn to live together in cottages, to study together, to play together, these girls from such different tribes as the Efik, Ibo and Ibibio. And so they develop the idea of "One Nigeria", much talked about by the leaders of the country. Another big advantage is that we come in contact with teachers from various parts of the world. For example, two of our lay teachers are from England, three are from Ireland, one from India, and another is an American

Peace Corps Volunteer. This opportunity of meeting people from such varied places on the earth and of studying their ways of life is a fine lesson in geography! What's more, learning how to live in peace with the group of people in the school prepares us for the time when we go will out to be the future "peacemakers" of Nigeria.

Usually a girl comes to C.C.S.S. when she is about twelve or thirteen. If she continues from Form I through to Form VI she is in her late 'teens' when she leaves and has had a chance to grow up in the Spirit of the Holy Child.

"You are in your little 'city' more than nine months of each year. What do you do in all that time?" a friend asked. *Time!* — that is what we are always running after for our schedule is very full and never dull. Forms I to V — which are double stream — study science as well as the arts. In Form VI, we are prepared for entrance into a university. At present we do Arts subjects only but there is hope that a science section will soon be added. That means more

The Geography Club learns the technique of surveying from Mr. Akpan, social science instructor.



building and the Mothers are always having to build and add on because the school is expanding so much! Nature has provided plenty of specimens for the Science Club right outside of our compound. All the students have to do is to plunge down into the ravine or go into the bush in order to get rare samples. I remember once thinking I had found an exotic flower — and then it hopped out of my hand and into the tall grass. I never did find out what the tiny creature really was.

Athletics play a big part in our program as they do in any modern Nigerian Secondary School. We have been lucky enough to get quite a few cups in difference games. Singing, needlework, debating, dancing, the Current Affairs and Drama Clubs — all have a

place in our day-by-day schedule. We have quite a number of inter-college debates and socials and these help us to develop the right attitude towards boys.

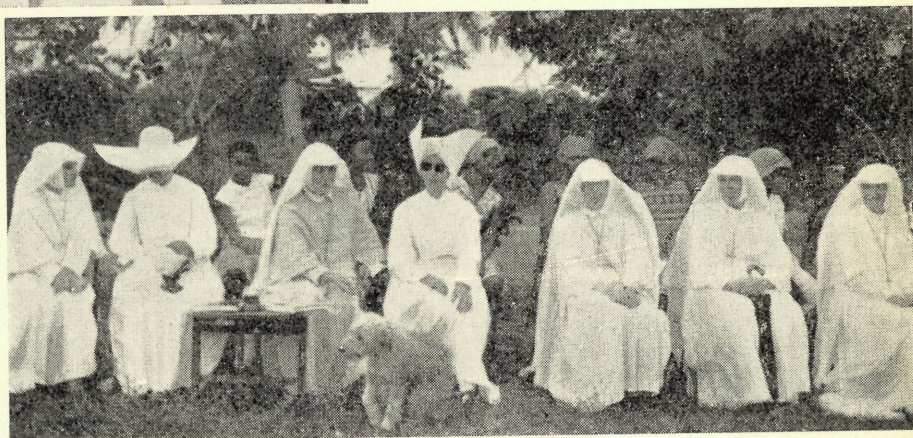
The ex-students of C.C.S.S. can be found in a surprising number of fields. Some of them are wives of prominent Nigerians participating in their husband's activities as well as managing homes. Others have advanced rapidly in educational fields and not a few are in the medical and nursing professions. Many of them have a true love of the "good earth" and have gone into agriculture, for this is the chief industry in Nigeria. Some are stenographers; some play an important role in the Women's Police Force. And to each field they have carried the Christian ideals given them by our Mothers of C.C.S.S.

Introduction to the wonders of science For Form 1.





Sports play a big part in the program. Visitors frequently attend the events with the faculty.



The school is proud of the number of girls who have joined various religious societies, especially our own Handmaids of the H.C.J.

Those who are still at school have every opportunity to become future apostles, for there are many Catholic Action Organizations. I mean organizations like the Young Christian Students, the Legion of Mary, the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association and the sodalities. In the Monday Instructions given by the school's chaplain the girls have a chance to ask questions and sort out their ideas for themselves. Then they have a chance to talk over those ideas with Our Lord in the daily Chapel visits.

Mary Colette Anuah, Form VI

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When I was at Ifuho in 1959, I sat for the entrance examinations into Form I of the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School at Uyo. More than a *thousand* girls sit for these examinations as a rule, and usually the School has places for only about *sixty*. I waited, I prayed, I hoped. There are not many secondary schools for girls in Eastern

Nigeria and I knew that my whole future depended on the results of those examinations. Besides, I wanted to be at C.C.S.S. It is different from any place I have ever known. The day I heard that I was accepted I danced for joy all over our compound.

Of course, I was quite young and as St. Paul wrote, *when I was a child I acted like a child*. Talking between classes, pinching my nearest neighbours and other childish pranks were not beyond me! But gradually the Spirit of the Holy Child, which is the life of our school, took hold of me. I began to realize the meaning of such things as temperance in speech, courtesy and punctuality.

One night during a terrible storm something happened that I shall never forget. The girl next to me in the dormitory woke up with a dreadful pain in her side. To make matter worse, the electric lights were not working. (We learned later that a vulture had got twisted up in the lines near the power house). So we lit our bush lamps. The night-watch must have told the Mothers because

soon we heard someone splashing along in the flood outside. The door opened and there was Mother Mary Anselm, our Prefect, in a southwester and boots. Just seeing her made us feel better and the sick girl caught her hand. Mother stayed with her the rest of the night, nursing her, doing everything for her comfort. It was the first time I had seen self-sacrifice like that and it made a great impression.

Each year at C.C.S.S. brings more responsibilities. In dealing with the younger girls, especially in the dormitories, I have learnt to deliver unbiased judgment and to correct with fraternal charity. That is the way I, too, have been corrected by members of the staff.

When Father Patrick Quigly addressed our Young Christian Students Society, he truly summed up our training here.

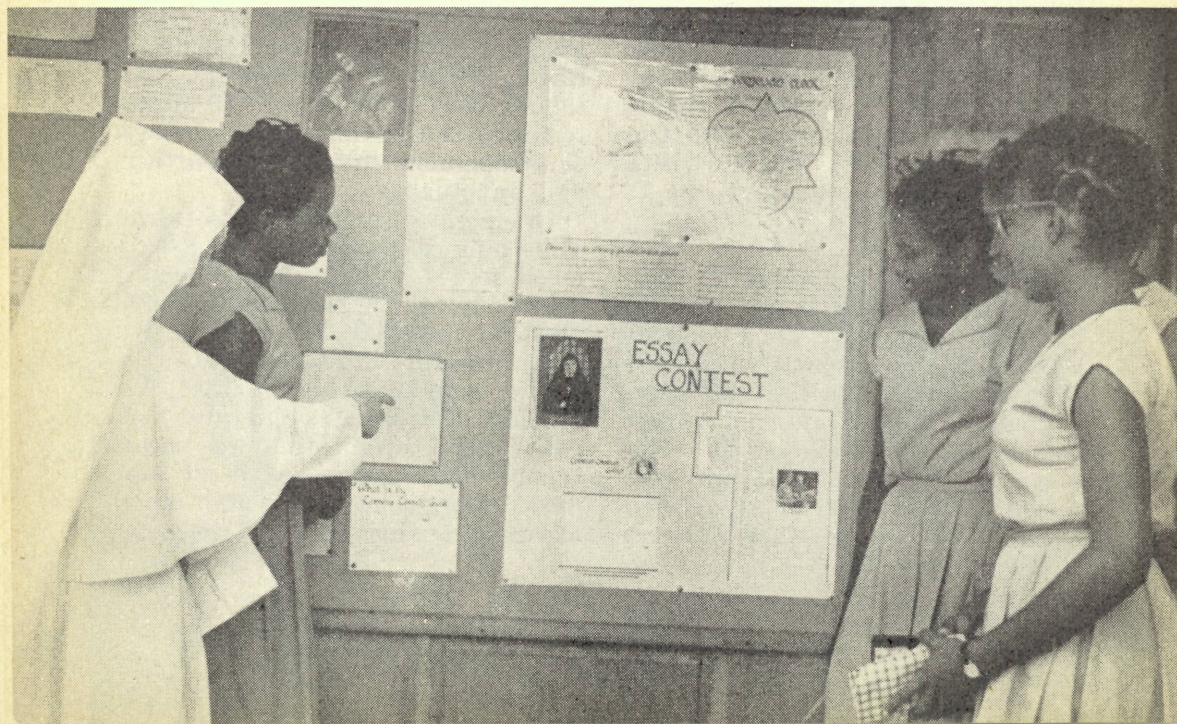
"The important thing for all students and especially for you who belong to a militant young

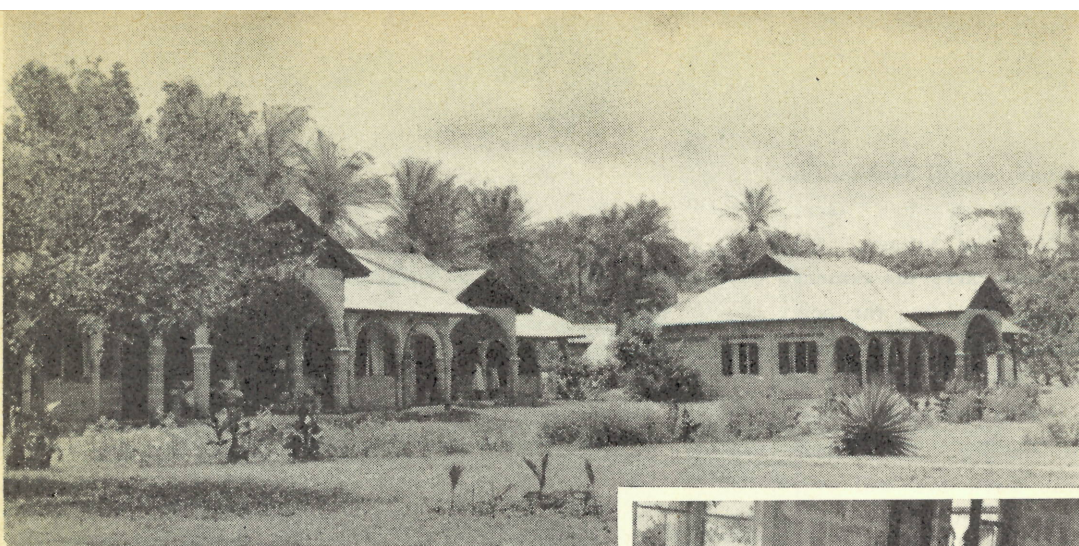


Dressed for the Arts Festival. Grace Enock takes a leading part in the dances.

group is to have a sense of personal responsibility. Don't be machines or clocks wound up by superiors to discharge certain duties. Think for yourselves, study for yourselves. Discipline your wills to obedience, to prayer, to conscious action. In

Mother M. Kieran, the principal, encourages the girls to enter the essay contest sponsored by the Cornelia Connelly Guild.





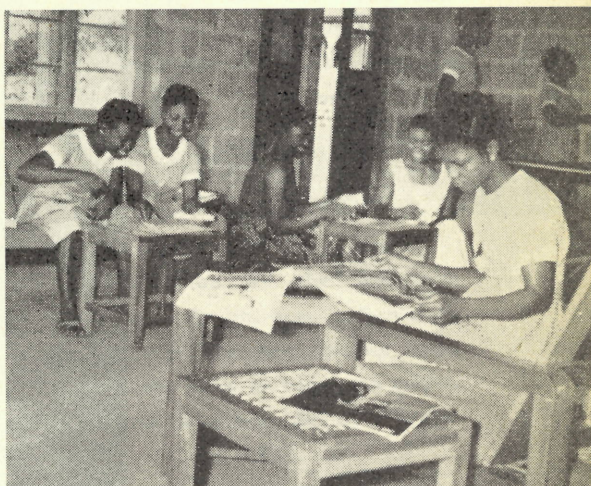
‘Our dormitory cottages spell h-o-m-e for each Form.’

all that you do make it something coming from you, a using of your own talents, a progressing of your own personality for Christ.”

Stella Emodi, Form V

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I have spent five memorable years in C.C.S.S. I do not think the compound is a paradise, for that would be heaven, but one is secure and happy here. I love the valleys, below our hilltop, where great palm trees grow and streams run softly. The school stream is shallow and clear and only ankle deep. The way down to it is very steep. The villagers also go to this stream and have divided it into two sections — one where you fetch water and the other where you do your washing. St. Clare’s stream, another stream used by our students on the other land, is so deep that it would cover a student of average height. The water is grey and big trees bend low on both banks. Right now I can still recall one Wednesday evening in my Form I year. We ran down to the stream after games. I had often heard of St. Clare’s and was longing to see it. I did not intend entering the stream

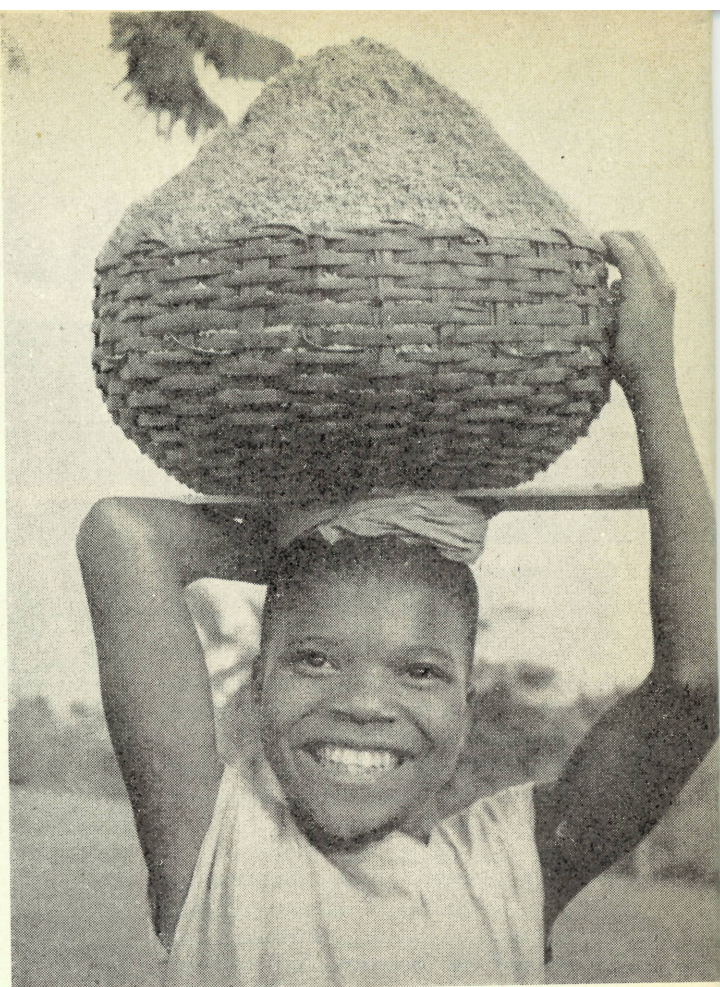


for I was very timid. Up to then, I had begged people to fetch my water for me while I stood on the bank.

There were five girls swimming. Suspecting nothing, I went closer when they told me to bring my pail so that they could fill it for me. Then — spla-ash! What a sensation! My pail and I were dragged down, down . . . The water poured into my eyes, ears and nose. That forced entry into the stream helped me to overcome my fear and now I too can swim.

There are two large dormitories and a small back room in each of our cottages. The number of girls in each one ranges from twenty-three to thirty-two and each has a school prefect, a cottage prefect

'That smile belongs to Andrew, a boy from Afaha Oku Village. He helps to carry the cement used in building the new school hall. It is called St. Anselm in memory of our late principal, Mother M. Anselm. No student who knew her will ever forget the love and attention that she gave to each one.'



and a dormitory head. All cottages have parlours and flower beds. There is an annual competition for the best-kept cottage and most attractive flower bed. The winning cottage is given a shield; the girls with the prettiest flower bed are given a party. This has encouraged

a highly competitive spirit amongst the girls and as a result all the cottages are well kept!

There have been great improvements on the compound since I came to this school. A new cottage, St. John's, has been built and a physics laboratory and a Sixth



This new Math is serious business. Mother M. Cosmas leads Form IV through some of the problems.

Form block have been added. The most fascinating of all is the new school hall for the junior girls. It is called St. Anselm in memory of our late principal, Mother Mary Anselm, who helped to open the school nearly twenty years ago, and who died in England in 1963.

Not long ago a beautiful event



Giving Holy Communion to his family during his first Mass said in the village school compound.

took place. The first young man to become a priest from the village of Afaha Oku, Father Francis Xavier Una, was ordained in Anua's newly built church. The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Pignedoli, performed the ceremony. That evening Father Una came to C.C.S.S. to give the students his blessing. Our senior prefect, Grace Okoro, presented him with a gift of money from the student body, and we sang in his honour. Father spoke so feelingly of his priestly vocation. Our "city" on a hilltop seems to reach up into the clouds on occasions like that.

Miranda Dosumo, Form V

Fr. Una blesses his people after his first Mass.



The Ordination of Fr. Francis X. Una at Anua by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Pignedoli. Fr. Una is the first young man from Afaha Oku to become a priest. His sister is a nun, Sr. M. Teresa, H.H.C.J.

