

Anne Rosenberg, Bobbie Kalman. *Nigeria the People*. The Lands, Peoples and Cultures Series. New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2001. x + 32 pp. Ages 9-12. \$7.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-86505-328-1.



Reviewed by Elizabeth Akingbola

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Nigeria the People

This book focuses on the people of Nigeria. It is one of three books on Nigeria in the Lands, Peoples and Culture Series. The text begins by reiterating that Nigeria is home to more than 470 different ethnic groups. The text takes readers on a historical journey of Nigeria, identifying the ancient kingdoms of the Yoruba, the Hausa and Fulani. The text then turns its attention to the arrival of Europeans, the slave trade and the colonization of Nigeria. Multiple perspectives are lacking and the text could benefit from a more critical examination of the events. The text briefly discusses how European countries were establishing colonies in North, South and Central America, but fails to connect and explore the cultural influences that exist in the Diaspora as a result of the slave trade.

Coverage of Nigeria's political instability begins with a description of the Biafran War and culminates with the democratic elections of 1999. Chronologically, students do not learn about the political upheavals that took place in Nigeria from 1970 through the 1990s. Students only read that the military governed most of the time since Nige-

ria's independence in 1960. Given the publication date of the text (2001) the current leadership of Nigeria is not even mentioned.

As for the people of Nigeria, the text only covers the dominant ethnic groups: Igbos, Yoruba, Hausa and the Fulani. The text ignores the fact that there are many minority ethnic groups in Nigeria and fails to document their struggle for equality and justice. This omission is significant because contemporary political and economic processes in Nigeria are in part due to the resolution of the contradictions inherent in the relationship between the ethnic minorities and the main ethnic groups.

The book provides readers with a plethora of colorful photographs describing and contrasting homes in the village and the city, the market place, sports and leisure and Nigerian foods. The text also briefly discusses education in Nigeria. The reader learns that Nigeria has Quranic elementary schools, and conventional Western schools. The text accurately comments that there exists a shortage of schools and that competition is keen for students who want to attend school be-

yond the elementary grades. The book concludes with a story about a Nigerian schoolgirl. The story describes Aina's day from morning to night, highlighting what she had for breakfast, her subjects in school and her eagerness to hear tales about the ancient kings and heroes. I recommend this text for use with upper elementary students.

Reviewer's Overall Impression of Series

I would recommend this series primarily as a supplemental resource. Good for a country study of Nigeria. I suggest using other supplemental resources for the purpose of enhancing what is covered in the books, especially as it relates to Nigeria's ethnic diversity and the current/past.

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