

# EGBA

## Some Historical facts

- Settlement in Abeokuta

We, the Egba people started to settle in Abeokuta in 1830 or thereabout, each section settling in a separate quarter of the town. A strong system of relating with each and general governance of the kingdom was later developed. At its peak, the kingdom covered a vast expanse of land that stretched from River Oba on the North to Ebute Metta on the south and Osun River on the east to Ipokia and River Yewa on the west .The four sections that formed the Egba Nation are EGBA ALAKE (Eku, Aarin and Agbeyin) EGBA OKE-OKE ONA, EGBA AGURA, EGBA OWU.

- Separation of Powers

Governance was carried through a delicate balance of responsibilities among the following institutions:

Ogboni

Olorogun/Ologun

Parakoyi

Ode

The Ogbonis were the elite ruling class. They were in charge of making laws. They also judged cases, discussed and advised the king in all affairs of the state. The society has a chamber (Ile Ogboni) in every town where meetings were held to adjudicate on the affairs of the town.

The Oloroguns were the war chiefs. They deliberated on military matters and advised the Obas on war and disputes.

The Parakoyis were the members of the Chambers of Commerce. They were charged with furthering the commercial interests of their towns. They regulated and protected free trade and visited markets to settle disputes.

The Odes were the warriors and they performed many war duties which included scouting, spying and guarding the towns against marauders and enemies.

August 8, 1854 Okukenu, First Alake in Abeokuta elected

1855 Pawu, First Olowu in Abeokuta elected

1859 Iwe Irohin, Nigeria's first newspaper published

1870 Jamolu, the first Agura elected in Abeokuta

### **TREATY OF INDEPENDENCE**

Treaty of Independence dated 18 January, 1893 made between His Excellency Gilbert Thomas Carter, Esq. Companion of the most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor and commander-in-chief of the colony of Lagos and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, etc; Her Heirs and Successors, on the one part. WE the undersigned King and Authorities do, in the presence of Elders, Headmen and people assembled at this place hereby promises:

- That there should be complete freedom of trade between the Egba Nation and Lagos, and in view of the injury to commerce arising from arbitrary closing of roads, we the said king and authorities, hereby declare that no road shall in future be closed without the approval of the Governor of Lagos.

That we the said king and authorities pledge ourselves to use every means in our power to foster and promote trade with the countries adjoining Egba with Lagos.

That we the said the king and authorities will, as henceforth, afford complete protection and every assistance and encouragement to all ministers of the Christian religion.

It is further agreed and stipulated by the said Gilbert Thomas Carter, on behalf of the Queen of England, that so long as the provisions of this treaty are strictly kept, no annexation on any portion of Egba Nation shall be made by her Majesty's Government without the consent of the lawful authorities of the nation, no aggressive action shall be taken against the said nation and its independence shall be fully recognized.

The said king and authorities having promised that the practice of offering of human sacrifices shall be abolished in the one township where it at present exists subject have already freedom to occupy land, build houses and carry on trade and manufacture in any part of the Egba Nation, and likewise that there is no possibility of a cession of any portion by Her Majesty's Government, and it is desired that no special provisions be made in regard to these subject in a third treaty.

1897 karunwi the first oshile elected

**1<sup>st</sup> February, 1898 EGBA UNITED GOVERNMENT formed.**

**Judicial agreement signed: January 1904**

Governor MacGregor of Lagos entered into a judicial agreement with the Egba Government whereby jurisdiction was ceded to the British Government for nineteen years in all cases where one or both parties to the suit are native of the Egba Nation, and in all cases of murder and manslaughter.

**April 20, 1904 First Native Court opened**

**State visit to United Kingdom: May 25-July 8, 1904**

Alake Gbadebo accompanied by Prince Ladapo Ademola of Ake, Mr. Adegboyega Edun, Mr.R.B. Blaize a Lagos merchant of Owu extraction went to England on a state visit.

They left Lagos on May 5 and arrived England on May 25. On May 30, Alake Gbadebo was honored with an audience and dinner by King Edward VII. On June 7, he was presented to the Duke of Marlborough and Sir Montague Ommaney at the Colonial Office and on June 14 he interviewed the C.M.S. Committee. He visited many places including Aberdeen College and was presented with a Bible by King Edward VII on the eve of his return to Lagos.

### **August 26, 1904 E.U.G. Police Force established**

### **Government Hospital established 1908**

Government established a medical office and employed a British trained medical officer Dr. Ayodeji Oyejola an Egba man who studied at the University of London and returned to Nigeria in 1906. He was later appointed the Egba Government Medical Officer. A government hospital was also established.

### **EGBA UNITED GOVERNMENT OBTAINS - 30,000 pounds loan: December 31, 1910**

The Egba Government faced a lot of difficulty in providing potable water. Case of guinea-worm and other water-borne disease were reported throughout Egba nation. In 1905, the government sank wells but due to rocky nature of the town the project failed.

In 1910 the Egba United Government approached the British government for a loan of 30,000 pounds (N60, 000) to build a water treatment plant and pumping stations. The pumping machines bought consisted three locomotives of self contained boilers; two Marshall Triple expansion surfaced condensing horizontal engines and a duplicate set Ashley three-throw well pumps, Each set of pumps is capable of delivering 500,000 gallons of water in ten hours into the reservoir at a height of 301 feet above the river level.

The water scheme started immediately. This scheme greatly displeased a section of the public as some educated people agitated against the Government's action in employing foreign Engineers saying the Government ought to have waited till their children were qualified to fill the post but the Government differently as it was eager to destroy the guinea worms and other water borne diseases caused by drinking impure water. The scheme was however completed in 1914 .Sir Fredrick Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria performed the formal of Abeokuta waterworks on the invitation of Alayeluwa Oba Gbadebo I, Alake of Abeokuta.

The loan was to be repaid by installments of 4000pounds and the first payment was made before the opening of water was charged one penny for every ten pitiful (about two gallons) drawn.

## **COMMERCE**

Egba United Government played a prominent role in commerce of those days. It built custom houses and improved on existing ones. By 1901 many European Merchants' factories had been established at Ibara, Abeokuta. In 1903 the European Merchants agitated against payment of tolls to the Egba United Government. The settlement of the dispute was in favour of Egba United Government. This was a major achievement for Egba United Government for the Government would have been overthrown had the tolls been abolished. The tolls provided the necessary revenues for the Administration. In 1904 the Government passed the Customs, Ordinance (Revision. In order to raise funds the government passed an order for licensing bicycles and carriage in 1911. In 1912 it passed the Shop License Ordinance and the Auction License Ordinance. The public protested against the former on ground that it was an attempt to introduce house taxing. The Native traders petitioned the Government. Even Prince Eleko from Lagos and the white Cap Chiefs-"Idejo" pleaded with Egba United Government to cancel the Ordinance but no avail. With these and many other achievements scored by the Egba United Government there was much progress in Abeokuta. Nevertheless, the government did record naturally,

a few set backs one of which was in the sinking wells. A stream carriage scheme attempted by the Government (Framers' Association Scheme) in 1908 met with total failure as the machine could not operate properly due to the in solidity of the roads. Besides there were other issues cropping up.

These failures were minor when compared with the successes of the Egba Government They did not dispute the fact that the EGBA UNITED GOVERNMENT encourage commerce ,paid attention to Schools ,hastened economic development by improving communication, maintained law and order, provided health services and public utilities and in general gave Egbaland one of its most significant administrations.

## **INDUSTRY**

Egba United Government established the Abeokuta Industrial Institute in 1908. The establishment of the institute was made possible by R B Blaize who provided 3000 pounds (N6000) from his estate for free training of the Egba in technical work. Every apprentice was bound for 4yrs and at the expiration of the training, the participant was presented with a set of tools worth 6 pounds (N12).

## **RAILWAY**

The Railway line from Lagos to Aro was opened for traffic in 1900 extended to Ibara (Abeokuta Station) in 1901. The Railway made the journey from Lagos to Abeokuta easier. it also helped to improve and advance the country ; for it led to the opening of roads for traffic and carriages and the construction of bridges over rivers and streams. Between 1900 and 1901, the government started to widen and level the existing roads and by 1905 was constructing many good roads in the Kingdom. Mr. David A. Taylor (a surveyor and an Egbaman was appointed as the superintendent of works and roads. The first concrete bridge built by Egba United Government was opened by Governor MacGregor of Lagos in 1903. The bridge was constructed by Mr. John Israel Adenekan without the supervision of any European Civil Engineer. Lafenwa bridge over Ogun River was opened in 1911 in the year Egba United Government introduced Motor Lorries into Egbaland.

## **EDUCATION**

Egba United Government appointed realized that the destiny of Egba's future generation very much depended on Education and gave much attention to the establishment of schools and promotion of Education. In 1908, Abeokuta Grammar School was established as the only Secondary School then in Abeouta city. The School started in a rented show-room of Mr. John Macauley until when in 1910, the school moved Isale-Igbehin

In 1907, Egba United Government appointed a custom officer- Mr. Feyisara Sopein as the first inspector of schools. His appointment marked the introduction of a proper system in school management. After the government passed an ordinance relating to Education for the organization of the schools at Abeouta, yearly grants were awarded to each school.

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