

## **Enugwu-Agidi History - Main Component Villages**

In the preceding chapter, we looked at Enugwu-Agidi as it relates to the ancient divine kingship of Nri and its position in Umu-Nri clan, this chapter turns to the town itself. How it took off on its own and developed to the position it is today. From our source, a man called OMENAKANU was the progenitor of Enugwu-Agidi. He was said to be the fourth son of Okpalanaka and that Oruora was his immediate younger brother. The name, Enugwu-Agidi, as the town is now called, is the last of the series of names, which it had borne in the past. The first it was said to be ENUGWU-OMENAKANU after the name of the founder of the town. One would think that this should have been the most appropriate name, but according to our oral source, it had to change to ENUGWU-NKPUOKU. That was a result of the legend in which a man called MOFUNANYA EMEGWO, from Iruobieli village got involved in a marital dispute, which brought the white men (District Officers) to Enugwu-Agidi for the first time.

This man Emegwo was said to have remarried one MGBOYE or Nwamgboye, formerly the wife of one Chinwuba Anago of Awka. Mr. EMEGWO who was said to be very handsome. He was advised to return the new wife's dowry to Anago the former husband. This, he failed to do before taking away the woman. Consequently the influential Chinwuba Anago had the poor Emegwo badly beaten and was to be thrown into jail but for timely intervention of his kins men. It was said that Chinwuba came to Enugwu-Agidi with two white men (District Officer / Sheriff) in search of Mofunanya Emegwo. They were received at the Eke market square where one of the white men saw the Ikolo and started beating it. Ikolo is a large wooden gong sounded only in emergency. By so doing the sound of the Ikolo attracted many people to the square. The same Whiteman (Sheriff) was said to have later pushed the Ikolo and damaged it.

Another version of the story said that one of the white men demanded and was given a mortar and a pot, which, out of sheer mischief or excitement, he raised up and allowed to fall on the ground. While the pot got shattered, the mortar remained in one piece. Following the dramatic experiment, he advised the town to take to pot making, since it was durable and therefore more economical to produce in commercial quantity than the mortar, which was very durable. They therefore suggested that the name of the town be Enugwu-Mkpuoku.

The town nicknamed the White man who did the breaking of the pot and Ikolo, OTIKPO, (destroyer) while the other was called NWANGWELE (Lizard) because of his slimness. There is no evidence that the name Enugwu-Mkpuoku lasted much long before the town's name was changed to Enugwu Osuna-Agidi. This is the name found in the earliest document about the town, and it remained until 1938 when it was formally resolved at the meeting of Enugwu-Agidi Brotherly Union (EBU) at Aba, to have the name changed to Enugwu-Agidi.

Our oral tradition has various explanations as to the origin of the name Osuna-Agidi. Prominent among them is the one which holds that the name derived from our people's outstanding capacity for prompt response to problems or attack (Osu-na-gidim): charging immediately at the first sign of provocation. For many reasons, this account sounds too simplistic. Indeed explanations given in its support were not considered plausible. A more reliable account is that Nnebo was said to be the progenitor of Umu-Agidi, a maximal lineage in the town, and that the name of his wife was Agidi. Which means that the group took its name from its mother, as is the case in many places in

Igbo culture. The first son of Omenakanu, the father of Enugwu-Agidi, is Okanubagu, the ancestor of Normu village. And the first son of Okanubagu was Osim.

It is therefore safe to infer that, the name might have been derived from the two names Osim, the first of the sons of Okanubagu (the oldest son of the town's progenitors) and Agidi the name of the mother of the largest and most established of the lineages. The name was therefore most likely called OSIM NA AGIDI, and OSU NA AGIDI being the corrupt version of it.

### **Position of the Town and Development of Villages**

The exact period of the settlement of Enugwu-Agidi at its present position is a matter of historical speculation. It cannot be dated correctly. But, judging from the recorded period of the reign of Nri Ifikuanim, the progenitor of Umu-Nri clan, the original settlement can be put to 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century AD. The original settlement of the town was at Normu from where other village lineages spread out to their present positions. Our oral account confirmed that it was at this Normu settlement that Omenakanu had seven children from three wives. The first wife begot Okanubagu the father of Normu, Nebo the father of Umu-Agidi and the father of Achalla Neli. The second wife begot Ogbadiji the father of Ifite village, Anwunya the father of Igbollo village and Ogwugwu. The last wife begot the father of Egbedani. These seven children of Omenakanu developed the lineages that constituted the original seven villages of Enugwu-Agidi (ENUGWU-MKPU N'ASAA), namely: Normu, Umu-Agidi, Achalla, Ifite, Igbollo, Ogwugwu and Egbedeana. These villages were formerly divided into two maximal lineages; Ezi and Ifite (Ezi na Ifite). Normu, Umu-Agidi (made up of Irunnebo, Etiti, Iruobieli and Iruoma), Achalla and Egbedeana are called Ezi, while Ifite, Igbollo and Ogwugwu constitute Ifite or Ogonogo Ifite.

### **Normu (Okanubagu)**

Ubagu or Okanubagu the progenitor of Normu village is the eldest son of Omenakanu the founder of Enugwu-Agidi. Hence, by the right of primogeniture the temple and ritual authority of Enugwu-Agidi went to Normu (Okanubagu). Normu had four sons to form the maximal lineage. They are Osim, Aguiyi, Enuagu and Owelle. Unfortunately, there was an internal disagreement between Osim and Aguiyi as to who should inherit the temple of Normu. Though each of the two claims to be the most senior of Okanubagu's children, oral account confirms that Osim was the first son of Okanubagu. Why then has the custody of Ofo Enugwu-Agidi and Ani Enugwu-Agidi gone to Iri-Aguiyi? We have two varying answers to this one question. The first is that Osim died before his father and therefore lost his right of primogeniture to his immediate younger brother, Aguiyi, according to Igbo tradition.

The second version is that Ofo and Ani Enugwu-Agidi actually passed to Iru-Aguiyi from a man called Okpalandu from Enu-Agu. This man was said to be the first Enugwu-Agidi man to complete the expensive ceremony of 'Ipu-Afia' title taking. When, therefore, the town drew its first constitution or code of conduct and abomination, Okpalandu, as the first Otigbuanyinya or 'Isi-Muo' in the town became the rightful custodian of such code, which was handed to him in the form of 'Ofo nze'. As such, anybody who subsequently went through the 'Ipu-Afia' title-taking ceremony had to complete it by going to Okpalandu of Enu-Agu for 'Ibe-uke'. So he was in

possession of Ofo Enugwu-Agidi so created. But unfortunately Okpalandu whose daughter was married to Aguiyi lineage had no son. So on his deathbed, he had only his 'nwadiani', the son of his daughter married to Aguiyi family, to perform his expensive burial and funeral rites. Okpalandu therefore willed the Ofo to his 'nwadiani' as a reward for performing this function and by so doing, the Ofo passed to Aguiyi lineage for good. Until the misunderstanding is finally resolved, the position now is that Iru-Osim is the custodian of Normu shrine (Ana Normu) and Ofo Okpalanaka na Ariam or Ofo nne na nna, which binds Enugwu-Agidi to the Umu-Nri root, and Iru-Aguiyi has the control of Enugwu-Agidi temple (Ana-Enugwu) and ofo Enugwu-Agidi—the town's ritual staff. Each of the two groups therefore performs the ritual ceremonies as the cultural head of the town. These include rites of absolution, ceremony pertaining to final traditional title taking of 'Ipu-Afia' and Igu-Aro (determining the New Year's traditional calendar). However, as the descendants of the oldest sons of Enugwu-Agidi, any Normu man no matter his age has the right to break kola-nut in any gathering of Enugwu-Agidi, citizens. They are referred to as 'ndi isi-ani, meaning members of the first spot of settlement.

### **Umu-Agidi**

The progenitor of Umu-Agidi lineage was the second son of Omenakanu. Among our sources of information, some hold that the name of the man was Agidi, while others believe he was Nebo. This man, Nebo, according to them, married a woman named Agidi, with whom he had four children namely, Nebo named after the father, Etiti, Obieli and Oma. Oma later merged with Etiti. In the early period when Enugwu-Agidi was grouped into seven lineages (Nkwu-n'asaa), Umu-Agidi was regarded as one village and therefore had only one of the seven shares of anything meant to be shared for the whole town. The single share was then re-shared among Irunnebo, Etiti and Iruobieli. It was in the recent period when the group became too large that it fell into three separate villages. As such the present number of villages in Enugwu-Agidi is now nine instead of seven. With the growing size of Etiti village, it is not unlikely that in near future it may not see reason to fall into two or three separate units.

### **Irunnebo**

**Nebo (junior) was the first son of the progenitor of Umu-Agidi. With such position in the lineage, Nnebo inherited not only the temple of Umu-Agidi (Obu Umu-Agidi) but also Umu-Agidi shrines such as Nkwelle, Udo and Eke.**

Nebo had two children, namely OGBUEBUNE and KALITA. Ogbuebune being the first son is in custody of Obu Umu-Agidi, Nkwelle and Udo idols, while his brother Kalite takes charge of Eke shrine. The chief priest of Eke shrine today is Chief Nwankwo Adazu, alias Eze Ekenyelu. He is from Irukalita lineage. Ogbuebune had four children: Enike, Emeke, Ugulu and Ugbo who is said to have migrated to Ukpo town. Kalita (fondly called kata) had four children: UKAEJE it had,

## **Nanuo (Etiti)**

The father of Etiti village the largest group in Enugwu-Agidi was the second son of the progenitor of Umu-Agidi. In spite of what we received in the form of oral account as to the origin of the name Etiti, it is not likely that the name of the founder of the village was Etiti. This is because it is the convention in Igbo tribe to call villages located in the center of towns Etiti. There are many villages so called in many Igbo towns. So the most plausible explanation for the name Etiti in Enugwu-Agidi is the fact that the village is not only located in the center of the town, but also takes a central position in the Umu-Agidi lineage being place between Nebo the oldest and Obieli the youngest. The version of the accounts, which we have accepted, is that the father of Etiti village was NANUO and his wife was ONYEAFIA. They had two sons: AKWU and OKPALAENYI. Each of them begot two sons. Okpalaenyi begot Akaogu and Akpu while Akwu begot Anofia and Akwuelo. The two maximal lineages of Etiti are therefore called Iru-Okpalenyi and Iru-Akwu, before they fell into the present three major groups: Iru-Okpalenyi, Umu Akwuelo and Anofia or Umu Nwona.

## **Iruobieli**

In order of seniority Obieli came after Etiti in the Umu-Agidi lineage. He had two sons: ANUGWO and OKPALO. Anugwo, alias ANAMAKULIGBO was the first son Obieli. Though he inherited the temple and ritual rights of the father as the first son, Anugwo was said to have encountered ill fortune during his development, which resulted in many of his descendants migrating to Ifite-Ukpo. Okpalo his younger brother, on his own part, had only one son Alo-OBELLE. But unfortunately, the birth of the child happened when the custom of 'IJI NWANYA WA AKPA' – starting the production of children with a female child—was in full force. With that custom, any first birth resulting in a male child was considered an abomination and the child had to be destroyed. Alo-Obelle was therefore to be destroyed. But his mother, in desperate effort to keep the child, raised an alarm, which brought her kins men to her rescue. That resulted in the baby Alo-Obelle being allowed to live in violation of the custom. Thinking that the gods would come down with their sanction, it was feared that the baby would not survive. But he grew up into a strong man who later got married and had nine children, the first of which was IFEDUMASI. Others were OBUNEME, NWUDUM, ECHI, ANADUAKA, OGBUAGWU, IFEME, EZIEMUZO and NWANSI.

## **Uruoma**

Oma, the last son of the progenitor of Umu-Agidi was the father or Uru-Oma lineage. Our enquiry reveals that this used to be a large family group occupying a large piece of land towards Ngene-Ogwuge stream. But as a result of high mortality the population got so reduced that the few remaining members of the lineage had to merge with Etiti village. With the growth in the population of Uruoma descendants in recent years, they have withdrawn from the larger Etiti group, to re-establish a separate identity. In spite of its relatively small population, it now constitutes one of twenty-five wards into which Enugwu-Agidi is divided for administrative convenience. This village is said to have kept a powerful idol called Ofufe, which later got transferred to Ebenebe town.

## **Obunagu Ofemgbede or Obunagu Ezinato**

The land west of Enugwu-Agidi beyond Otokwuma stream is said to have been formerly occupied by Mgbede people. That lineage had relationship with Umu-Agidi and lived in peace with them until they allegedly murdered an Umu-Agidi man. Following the tradition of jungle justice that prevailed at that period, the entire Mgbede people were driven away as the result, and their land confiscated. To prevent constant encroachment on the land by neighboring people of Ukpo and Aba, a few people from Etiti and Irunnebo villages were drafted to Establish permanent settlement there to form what is now known as Obunagu Ofemgbede or Obunagu Ezinato. Iru-Ogbuebune is said to have inherited the 'Opu-Eke' from Mgbede people who kept it originally.

## **Achalla (Neli)**

NELI was said to be the name of the powerful mother of Achalla village. In other words, she was the wife of the man who begot the members of Achalla lineage, which is the second largest village in Enugwu-Agidi. The progenitor of the village was the third son Omenakanu and his village occupies the northern section of the town, next to the position of the extinct Oruora. The village falls into two major section, Enu Achalla and Obunage Achalla, and the two lineages intermarry. Enu-Achalla is a section of the village situated on a hilly slope and sharing borders with Etiti, Iruobieli and Igbolo villages. Obunage-Achalla derives its name from its location close to the village's farmlands. Among the idols kept by the village are OFUFE, ARO, NGENE and ABULUGA which has for one reason or the other, been discarded.

## **IfiteOgbadiji**

Ogbadiji may or may not be the actual name of the progenitor of Ifite village. It may be an alias since he was believed to be a great farmer. Whatever it is, he is said to be the oldest of the Ifite maximal lineage or Ogonogo Ifite, comprising Ifite, Igbollo and Ogwugwu villages. The three major family branches of Ifite are Ifite-Ora, Akaezi and Mgbachalla. Like Enu Achalla and Obunagu Achalla, Ifite-Ora and Mgbachalla lineages of Ifite inter-marry.

## **Igbollo (Anwunya)**

Anwunya was the father of Igbollo village, which takes the second position in terms of seniority among the Ogonogo Ifite lineage. He was said to have four sons: AKANA, AKAAMA, DUNU and OFO. These sons begot the four clans that made up Igbollo village. But for one reason or the other Ofo lineage, called AMA-OFO, no longer exists. A version of our oral account stated that, in the jungle tradition of those days, the clan was forced to flee the town to Awka. This leaves the three major clans: IRU-AKANA, IRU-AKAAMA and IRU-DUNU that make up the present Igbollo village. Igbollo village keeps the following idols: NGENE and NWADOBU.

## **Ogwugwu**

Ogwugwu, often called Ogwugwu – Na-Aji is the youngest in the Ogonogo Ifite major lineages. The village is at the southern end of the town between Normu, Anofia and Ifite villages. The idol kept by this village also bears the name, Ogwugwu. So it might be either that the idol took its name from the village or the village from the idol. It is said that the latter is more probable.

It is also said that Ofulum and Ilom were the father and mother respectively of the village. They had three sons. CHIDUME, IBE and IBE OFULUM. Ogwugwu is said to have suffered harassment from Nawfia, the southeastern neighbor of Enugwu-Agidi. This was the result of boundary dispute.

## **Egbedeani**

Egbedeani is said to be the last son of Omenakanu, the father of Enugwu-Agidi. Our source, Ozo Nwanna Anuta, believed Omenakanu's last wife begot Egbedeani; hence the lineage was one of the original Enugwu-Agidi seven villages 'MKPU-N'ASA'

This village, which had occupied a much larger area of land before, suffered depopulation due to forced emigration. What remains now are two family units who have more relationship with Ogwugwu village than any other village in town. The village is said to have kept an idol called Udo.