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Mgbakwu: *A short history of Mgbakwu People*

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE
IMAGE

Man from Mgbakwu, p.d. Anambra State. Photo by Northcote Thomas, early 1910s.

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MGBAKWU

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One Abogu, a famous hunter associated with an autochthonous tradition of origin, was said to be the founder of Mgbaukwu, Nteje (Nteleje) and Ukwulu.

Abogu, according to tradition, was longing for male children who would succeed him. Thus, when at last his first son was born, he called him Mgbaukwu (I hold fast to what I have been looking for). The second one was named Nteleje (children have started to arrive one after another) while the third son was called Ukwulu (I am now in the position to challenge the arrogance of my detractors).

The three sons lived together with their father at Mgbaukwu where they worshipped their common ancestral earth deity (Aja-ana). But when their father died, Mgbaukwu inherited his compound and had seven sons who founded the villages collectively named after him.

The other sons of Abogu migrated to different areas. Ukwulu moved to Aguata axis while Nteje settled in the Anambra basin where they founded towns bearing their names. It was during their settlement in the Anambra river that Nteje and his descendants developed mythical traditions which linked them with Nri.

Although Nri influence was generally felt in northern Igboland, there are many communities in the area which do not trace their origins to the Umunri clan. Typical examples which have been discussed are Mgbaukwu and Ukwulu.

Mgbaukwu is a town located in the Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. It is a part of the Igbo-speaking

region and has historical significance rooted in both traditional governance and modern political structures. Historically, like many Igbo communities, Mgbaukwu operated under a system of autonomous villages, each governed by elders and traditional leaders.

In the pre-colonial era, Mgbaukwu's social organization was based on the lineage system, where families and clans played vital roles in local governance and conflict resolution. The town's people were predominantly farmers and traders, participating in the regional economy that included the exchange of agricultural goods, palm oil, and crafts.

During British colonial rule, Mgbaukwu, like many other Igbo communities, was incorporated into the colonial administrative structure, which affected traditional leadership systems. Over time, Mgbaukwu has grown, adapting to modernization while retaining its cultural heritage.

Today, Mgbaukwu is known for its contributions to education and commerce, with institutions and markets playing a central role in its development. It has also embraced modern political structures, with local governance being managed under the Nigerian government system.

Traditions of Igbo Origin · A Study of Pre-Colonial Population Movements in Africa — J. N. Oriji.

Igbo History and Society: The Essays of Adiele Afigbo.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuka Odiike

I'm a dedicated civil engineer with a passion for infrastructure development and community empowerment. With a strong background in engineering, my work focuses on creating sustainable solutions for urban and rural development projects. Outside of my professional career, I'm deeply interested in Igbo history and culture. I actively explore ways to impact society by using historical lessons to inspire and educate others about the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, aiming to bridge tradition and modern development.



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