

# HISTORICAL FACTS

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## **HOW GOOD HAS LAGOS BEEN TO THE INDIGENES?**

Being a lecture presented by Habeeb Abiodun Sanni at the One any conference on political situation in Lagos State, organized by the committee of the Indigenous Association of Lagos State held at sycamore hotel, Ajara Badagry on Saturday 11, 2007.

The Chairman of the organizing Committee, Hon, Justice S.O. Hunponu-Wasiu, Member of the committee, Your Royal Highness, leaders of the various indigenous Association of Lagos State here present, Indigenes of Lagos State, Members of the press, Ladies and gentlemen, all protocols duly observed. I am very delighted to be the guest speaker called upon by this body on the occasion of most competent person among the multitude of scholars devoted to teaching and researching on the whatever I discuss here today will not only be beneficial to all sundry, but could also serve as catalyst toward achieving the aims of the organizers' dream of Lagos for the indigenes was akin to the basis upon which the United Muslim Party, separation of Lagos from the Western Region during the last decade of decolonization from Britain. The organizations such as F.R.A Williams, S.L. Akintola, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, all of the Action Group, which preferred the retention of Lagos as part of the west. Supporting the position of the U.M.P, However, were Chief H.O Davies and Chief Odofoin Akinyele. The latter founded the Lagos Regional Party, ostensibly to contest all local and general elections and use every means at their disposal to ensure that the separation of Lagos from the west was permanent and irrevocable.

The activities of these prominent indigenes and organizations such as the Ilu Committee Union of Lagos, Princess and princesses, Lagos Aborigine Society and pressure from other quarters culminated in creation of Lagos State in 1967. I have been asked to discuss: How good has Lagos been to the Indigenes? The topic is a simple as it seems, is however ambiguous as it encompasses several Issues such as Lagos, indigenes and goodness which may be in terms of politics, economics, geography and success of individual Indigenes in their chosen careers and professional calling. Nonetheless, I intend to examine the topic under the following sub themes: A brief origin of Lagos and Five Divisions, who is an Indigenes, Lagos. Indigenes and our future in politics: and concluding remarks.

## **A BRIEF ORIGIN OF LAGOS AND ITS FIVE DIVISIONS**

Extract studies on the origin of Lagos had focused largely on the position of Lagos in the pre-1967 era: a time when Lagos was a colony, which later transformed into the Federal Capital Territory Until It's creation as a state on may 27, 1967. To these writers, a discussion on the history of Lagos State is better approached from the pre-eminent position of the Lagos Division of the state, which is not only central and more developed than many of the other settlements but eventually became Lagos State. However, Lagos State is not in anyway exclusively Lagos;

While the former consists of the five divisions that came into being as a result of the merger of the colony of Lagos and colonial province of Ikeja, Badagry, and Epe Division in 1967, the latter refers to Eko which the Portuguese sailor Launcelot De Freitas who visited Lagos in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century had notice and thereby nostalgically scratched the world Lagos in his log book. The beginning of the settlement of Lagos had been traced to the activities of an Awori Leader, Olofin Ogunfunminire, who established a homestead at Isheri, some twenty kilometers north of Lagos Island. This was the nucleus of other Awori settlements such as Iro, Ogudu, Agboyi, Ojo Ado-Ode, Ota etc. The establishment of Lagos Island, Eko by Aromire would seem to have encouraged members of his immediate family and other Awori groups to settle in other parts of Lagos Island such as Itolo, Ikoyi, Iru. Ajiran, and other parts of Lagos by the Lagoon. While the Awori were consolidating their hold on the Island and its immediate vicinity, the Edo speaking people of Benin Kingdom founded a settlement at Enu Owa, near their Awori brethren and with time, their presence had profound effect on the evolution of traditional institution in Lagos. By the close of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lagos had attracted people from the interior of modern Nigeria such as the Ilaje, the Ijebu and the war refugees from Oyo, Abeokuta etc. There were also immigrants from Sierra Leone, Brazil and Cuba who were either rescued slaves or returnees. During the same period, Lagos a colony of the British following its annexation in 1861 and the establishment of Pax-Britanica. In 1906, it was the capital of the colonial administration following its merger with the protectorate of southern Nigeria. It retained the position in 1914, when the southern and Northern protectorates were amalgamated and it remained the seat of the federal government until December 1991. Until the creation of Lagos State, the colony area referred mainly to all of Lagos Island, the Mainland and ( Ebutte Metta and Surulere) up to Igbobi Sabe, and was distinct from other areas which were then under the Old Western region. In spite of their separateness, this does not indicate that the other divisions that were merged to form Lagos State in 1967 had no connection with the colony prior to that time. A brief history of these other divisions and their relations with the Lagos Colony is therefore expendent.

### **IKEJA DIVISION**

The area known as Ikeja Division comprised such area as Ikeja, Agege, Oshodi, Mushin, Isolo, Shomolu, Ogudu, the three Isheri and several other Awori communities too numerous to mention. The foundation of Ikeja itself which is part of metropolitan Lagos is named after Akeja-Onigorun a principal deity worshipped at Otta. Although the exact period of the foundation could not be ascertained. Oral information indicates that the autochthonous founders of the place were the Awori Of Ogbo while Olofin was credited to be the founder of the dynasty and was initially styled Baale, but this was elevated to Obaship status during the reign of Oba Momodu 110 (1957-1998). The foundation of the various Awori settlements in Ikeja predates the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the communities served as links between Lagos and their communities through the intricate rivers and creeks that poured into the Lagos Lagoon, Veritable examples in this case are the Ogudu and Agboyi Creeks through which people from Isheri, Iro and some Egba traders established commercial links with Lagos in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.

### **BADAGRY DIVISION**

The history of the Badagry Division populated by the Ogu/Gunu people and the Awori has been variously dated to 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was linked to the dahomean invasion of Ketu (Now in Benin Republic) by King Agadja, Leading two waves of migrations. A brand of these Ogu people led by Akran Gbafoe moved eastward along with the Port Novo and Yewa Creeks. Settings along the Kweme coastline and Ologe Lagoon. These migrants formed the nucleus of Ogu settlement with Badagry at the epicenter. Other areas founded by these migrants includes, but are not limited to Weshere, Ikoga Iworo, Ajido, Ganyinbo, Topo, Kankan, Akararumo, and a group of Ajara villages. Apart from the Ogun people, the division comprise of several Awori homeland such as Ilogbo-Eremi, Oko-Afo, Araromi, Oto-Ijanikin, Ojo, Irewe, Amuwo, Imore, Irede and Ideluwo-Ile. In terms of relation with Lagos division, Badagry had a long standing political, economic and socio-cultural links with Lagos and some of its Awori neighbours. A veritable reference point was the sojourn of the four prominent Lagos Kings: Akinsemoyin, Adele Ajosu, Kosoko and Akintoye in Badagry due to succession dispute in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the consequences of the mutual interaction was the introduction of the stately white cap of Lagos chiefs into Badagry while some Ogu warriors were also incorporated into the Abagbon Chieftancy of Lagos.

### **WHO IS INDIGENE?**

An indigene is someone that originally belongs to a particular place. Kunle Lawal described an indigene as somebody whose parents and grandparents belongs culturally and consanguinally to any of the indigenous communities in the five administrative divisions of Lagos State. While this opinion may seem acceptable, there is the danger that such a postulation may be abused by mischief makers and people who may want to hide under indigeneship. Viewed from the fact that Nigeria Operates mainly a patriarchal system of succession, an indigene of Lagos/Lagosian should be such a person whose father and grand father belong culturally and consanguinally to any of five divisions. The right of being referred to as an indigene should also be considered from the perspective of progenitors. Can we say that those whose parents were born in 1950 for example qualify? The obvious answer to this is no. An indigene should be such a person whose progenitor can be said to have been in any of the five divisions sixty years before independence. This takes us back to 1899, by this time the Lagos Health Board had been created by the colonial administration, to cater for the people's health interest. All the Various components of the modern Lagos state had been under British protected. Lagos was annexed in 1861, Ikorodu agreed to be protected in 1862, and by 1894, it was annexed with Lagos, Badagry was ceded to the British in 1863, while Kosoko after his return to Lagos in 1862, ceded Eko, Epe and his territories at Lekki in 1863. Since the year 2003, 1899 has been adopted as the basis of admission of Lagos State indigenes into Lagos State which reserves 70% of total admission exclusively to the indigenes of Lagos State. During the 2003/2004 admission exercise, members of the indeneship Verification Committee of the University were dragged before the Lagos State House of Assembly to defend the sixty years before independence criterion which they successfully did. The same policy has since been adopted in the recruitment of staff at the lower cadre and junior officer's levels. If this policy can be introduced at the macro level of the state. Lagos will soon be for indigenes.

### **THE GOOD OF LAGOS TO THE INDIGENES**

From the mundane perspective, Lagos has been good to the indigenes and settlers alike if the history of its transformation from a nucleus of traditional community to urban center is anything to go by. This rapid transformation led to its development in terms of infrastructural facilities such as roads, drainages, hospitals and all the other appurtenances of urban community. In the area of politics, it blazed the trail as the first centre of political agitation against colonial rule. The dates back to the 1908 Water Rate agitation, furthermore, it was the first place in modern Nigeria where political party formation began. In this case, the Peoples Union readily comes to mind. It was also the first place in modern Nigeria where elections were held into a Municipal Council such as the Lagos Town council, when Governor Hugu Clifford allowed the citizens to contest the legislative election of 1923 held in Lagos and Calabar on ratio 3:1 political agitation led to the emergence of Nationalists such as Herbert Macaulay, Dr. J.K randle Akinwande Savage, Orishadipe Obasa, and many other members of the modern elite class, who championed the course of defending the interest of the people. On the economic front, urban and metropolitan Lagos had benefited more than any other parts modern Nigeria. Dele Olowu indicated that by the 1973 survey of the Federal office of Statistics, Lagos had 2.8. Of all the country's Industrial large scale establishments, 47.6% of its industrial employments, 59.5% of the value added by industry in the whole country. These had been responsible for the movement of people seeking employment to the Lagos metropolitan area. The advantage derived by Lagosians in this could be seen in terms of revenue accruable to the individual land owning group in the course of dispensing the land. Viewed from career and professional achievements, many Lagos indigenes got to the apex of their professions. Herbert Macaulay was a successful Surveyor and father of Nigeria's Nationalism. Other prominent successful politicians of Lagos extraction T.O.S Benson, Oba CD Akran of Badagry, Late Jubril Martins, S.O Gbadamosi among others. Lagos had produced two Chief Justices of the federation who from all indication got the post purely on merit i.e Teslim Olawale Elias and Fatai Atanda Williams a feat that only Ogun State may have equaled in Nigeria. The State had also produced a Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria in the person of Mr.Ola Vincent. There are several successful Lagos indigenes in the Academic, Medical, Judicial, and Top Civil Service Positions. As indicated earlier, these are from mundane perspectives. What is however germane to many Lagosians is the level of participation in running their own affairs? It must be clearly stated that Lagos has not been so good to the Indigenes in this respect. Rather, Lagos had been good to Nigerians who have capitalized on the cosmopolitan nature of the state and the tolerance of the Indigenes to feather their own nest. The main beneficiaries of these Nigerians are the Yoruba's of the South West who seem to have hijacked the politics of the state by subtle means since the decolonizing years. This brings us our present predicament.

## **LAGOS, INDIGENES AND OUR POLITICAL FUTURE**

When political agitation began in Nigeria about one hundred years ago, the agitations were led mainly by a set of Lagosians who belonged to the educated elite. They were mainly returnees, who however had the support and followership of some prominent Lagos personalities such Eshugbayi Eleko, Ahmodu Tijani Oluwa, Abibu Oki etc. Lagos served as the leading centre for political agitation against colonialism to the extent that the political landscape was divided into two main group: pro and anti colonial governments. This was the situation until the period of

transfer of power to Nigeria Politicians between 1950-1960. From this period until the creation of Lagos State in 1967, one major issue that generated so much argument was the question of the status of Lagos. This saw all the contending political parties Vis: the A.G, NPC and NCNC maintaining different positions on the issue. While the agitation for the separation of Lagos was on, concerned about their investment and Socio-economic contribution to Lagos and therefore believed that they should not be treated as passive co-operators but stakeholders in issues relating to the administration of Lagos. This was the genesis of our present political predicament. To add insult upon injury, the Willinks Commission of 1958 that was to look into issues of separate regions for Lagos felt that Lagos still had to be part of the Federal Capital. Thus the first republic saw Lagos being under Federal Government with a minister for Lagos Affairs who himself was a Northerner in the person of Alhaji Musa Yar' Adua and who was empowered to dispense Lagos lands without recourse to the aut owner. The military coup detat of 1996 provided the opportunity for the first indigenous Lagosian at the helm of the ministry of Lagos Affaira. The then Major ( later Brigadier) Mobolaji Johnson championed the demands of the Lagosians for a separate Lagos State which was created by the Gowen administrative in 1967. As the first Governor of the then nascent Lagos State, Mobalaji Johnson ensured that the seven ministries created were manned by people who were all indigenes of Lagos; these were: chief Safi Lawai Edu, Alhaji Ishawu Sanni Adewale, Alhaji Ganiyu Olawale Dawodu, Mr Bolaji Senu Hundeyin, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanyan, Dr. Babatunde Williams and Rev. Akin Adesola who represented the five administrative divisions created with the new state: Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos and epe(Ibile). Subsequent administration in Lagos State since 1975 to date failed to reached the feat set by Mobalaji Jonson. Some of not only failed to stop the exodus of some prominent Lagosians to the federal Civil Service, others direct their state affairs. This remains the only way through which the theme of today's conference, Lagos for the in indigenes can be realized..

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

From the foregoing analysis, it could be seen that the creation of Lagos State in 1967 through decree 14 promulgated by the federal military government of Yakubu Gowon from the five component part was not an accident of history. Rather, the creation should be seen from existing.

1. AFRICAN Bethel Church was opened in 1916
2. AEROPLANE flew over Ikorodu for the first time in 1931.
3. ALAGBE Adenaike (Oba) Adegororushen IV, born in Ikorodu in 1854 to the Lasuwon Ruling house, was installed Oloja of Ikorodu on Monday April 10, 1950 and became the first Oba with the title of Ayangbunren of Ikorodu, He died on wednesday November 14, 1951 at the age of 97.
4. AJAGBEMOKEFERI MUSTAPHA Osoala (Alhaji), an ardent pagan, return renowned Islam in Ikorodu, direct descendant of Ogborin Shehuoye, died in Ikorodu on Febuary 2, 1987 at presumed age of 135.

5. AWOJOB I Ayodele ( professor), a renowned educationist and Mechanical Engineer and first Head of Department of Engineering, University of Lagos ( where he lectured for 18 years) was born in 1937 to Pa Daniel Awojobi, was awarded Doctor of Science Degree by Imperial College in U.K. in 1974 at age 37. He died in September 1984 at the age of 47.
6. ABIRU Mudashiru Akanbi (Hon. Justice) who became a judge of Lagos High Court in 1983 was the first Ikorodu son to be elected into the Federal Senate in August 1979 As Senator, he spearheaded the reduction of Oriya Hill (Ikorodu) gradient. He was born in Ikorodu on September 23, 1932.
7. ASSOCIATION of Ikorodu Clubs & Societies was launched on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1991 At the Ikorodu Town Hall. Our watch-word then was “ Ikorodu Day in the Making”. After launching, it “fused ” up with the then “Organizing Committee” led by Chief B.O Benson which staged the 1<sup>st</sup> Ikorodu Day on November 21, 1992.
8. BENSON Theophilus Owolabi Shobowale, SAN (Otunba), Born in 1917 in Ikorodu and first Ikorodu Lawyer (1947) was elected member of Western House of Assembly in 1951. Elected into into Fedral House of Representatives in 1954. He became the first Ikorodu Federal Government Minister of Information in 1960.
9. ELECTRICITY was commissioned in Ikorodu in 1958.
10. ETI-OSA Local Government was separated from Ikorodu District Council
11. GBADAMOSI Rasheed (Chief), Playwright/Economist was appointed Lagos State Commissioner for Establishment Economic Development in 1973
12. GOWON Yakubu (Rtd. General) Head of State visited Ikorodu in 1973
13. IKORODU Central Mosque, situated at Itun-Nla Street had it foundation laid on January 12, 1933. The ceremony was performed by Lemonu Buraimoh of Ikorodu.
14. IKORODU became separated from Ikeja Division in 1968.
15. IKORODU Post office was opened in February 23, 1953. The ceremony was performed by Chief Artliur Priest, Minister of Communication through Radio Communication from Lagos.
16. IKORODU Maternity Center was opened in December 1950. The ceremony was presided by Major J.E. Allen, Then the British Deputy Commissioner for the colony.
17. IKORODU Water Works Located at Ota Ona was commissioned on July 21, 1983 by the then Governor Of Lagos State.
18. IKORODU General Hospital on beach road was commissioned on July 21, 1983.
19. IKORODU News (formerly Ikorodu Provident News) the first newspaper published in Ikorodu Division and the first Community Newspaper in Nigeria was launched at the Exclusive Club House, Ikorodu in August 1983, with Prince Ganny Awobajo as Editor
20. IKORODU Oga Day celebration was first held on November 20 and 21, 1992.
21. IKORODU Star was established in Ikorodu in 1983 with Alhaji Musiliu Lawai Animashaun as Publisher.
22. IKORODU High Court, Olubi Street, Ikorodu in 1993 with Alhaji Musiliu Lawal Animasaun as Publisher.
23. IKORODU Community Bank began operation on June 6, 1993.
24. LAGOS Ikorodu road was opened in 1953.
25. MAJIDUN bridge was completed in n1951.

26. MUDASHIRU Gbolahan (Rtd. Air Comdr) became the first Ikorodu indigene to become Governor of Lagos State.
27. NATIONAL Bank of Nigeria opened branch in Ikorodu in 1972, becoming the first bank.
28. ORIWU College, the first secondary school was opened in Ikorodu in n1949.
29. ODUSANYA Michael Adeyinka ( Hon. Justice) became the first Ikorodu indigene to be appointed Judge of Lagos High Court in 1967.
30. OGA Statue (the Royal Prince from Sagamu) believed to founder of Ikorodu in mind 17<sup>th</sup> Century was unveiled on February 2, 1992.
31. OSHINOWO Oladosu, (Chief), became the first Ikorodu indigene to be speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly (1979-1983).
32. ROTARY Club of Ikorodu was inaugurated in October 1983. It receives its Charter president.
33. TRANSMITTING Station of the Voice of Nigeria was installed in Ipakodo, via Ikorodu in 1962.
34. First ever Ikorodu-Oga Carnival Logo was unveiled on October 15<sup>th</sup> , 2009 under the leadership of Otunba (Dr.) Fatai Olukoga as IKODASS Chairman.