

The Role of Festivals in Awo-Omamma-Amiri Relations, since 1970

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Abstract: This paper examines the roles of the Owu, Okorosha, and new yam festivals in the post Nigerian-Biafran Civil War relations of Awo-Omamma and Amiri towns. To ensure ample comprehension of the study, the information contained in the paper were provided under different sub-headings and according to their demands. Historical methodology of data gathering was adopted in the study where a wide range of sources, to include primary and secondary sources, were utilized. Finally, the paper concludes that despite the recent Otunne political conundrum, the Owu, Okorosha, and new yam festivals have continued to provide the pedestal for friendliness between the indigenes of the aforementioned towns, through cordial social and cultural relations.

Keywords: Awo-Omamma, Amiri, Owu, Okorosha, New Yam.

I. Introduction

Nigeria, an African political entity with the colonial seal of made in Britain, was not born until 1914, following the British colonial policy of amalgamation which saw the unification of diverse ethnic nationalities into an artificial political entity. It has borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Niger and Chad Republics in the north, and the Republic of Cameroon in the east [1]. As the world's most populous black nation, the political entity has a population of 166.2 million people (as recorded in 2012 by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics) [2], and covers a geographical area of 923, 768 square kilometres [3].

The amalgamation of 1914 made Nigeria a heterogeneous geo-polity accommodating over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic nationalities, which are grouped under the majorities' and the minorities' categories. While the majorities include the Igbo, the Hausa/Fulani, and the Yoruba, some of the minorities therefore include the *Tiv* of Benue State, the *Itshekiri* of Delta State, the *Ibibio* of Akwa Ibom State, the *Efik* of Cross River State, the *Ijaw* of Rivers State, the *Akoko* of Edo State, and the *Igbirra* of Kogi State, etcetera. These ethnic nationalities have different cultural identities which do not only say lots about them but also distinguish them from others. These cultural identities are mostly found in their cultural festivals.

As one of the Nigerian ethnic nationalities, thus, the Igbo people have different cultural festivals which say much about their heritage and ancestry. The people of *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns in *Oru* East Local Government Area of Imo State, for instance, are known with the *Owu*, *Okorosha*, and the new yam festivals, which have also been playing prominent roles in their post-Nigerian/Biafran Civil War relations. These roles thus are the focus of the study.

II. A Description of Awo-Omamma, and Amiri

Awo-Omamma, and *Amiri* are neighbouring towns situated in the present day *Oru* East Local Government Area of Imo State. *Awo-Omamma* is dichotomized into *Ofekata* and *Eziawo* sections, and it covers an area of about 89.2 square kilometres [4]. The town is bounded in the north by *Mgbidi* and *Otulu* towns in *Oru* West Local Government Area, as well as *Amiri* town in *Oru* East Local Government Area; in the east by *Okwudor* town in *Njaba* Local Government Area; in the west by *Oguta* Local Government Area; and in the south by *Eziama-Obiato* town in *Mbaitolu* Local Government Area. The famous *Njaba* River which rises from *Isu-Njaba* in *Njaba* Local Government Area of Imo State washes the southern part of *Awo-Omamma*.

As a neighbouring town, on the other hand, *Amiri* is bounded in the north by *Omuma* town in *Oru* East Local Government Area; in the south by *Awo-Omamma* in *Oru* East Local Government Area; in the east by *Atta*, and *Okwudor* towns in *Njaba* Local Government Area; and in the west by *Otulu* in *Oru* West Local Government Area.

Both towns lie on the *Owerri-Onitsha* trunk 'A' road, and possess topographies of level fertile lands with low plains. The presence of the *Njaba* River provides the indigenes of both towns with access to natural water supply.

Presently, *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* consist of ten autonomous communities. Six of these autonomous communities are found in *Awo-Omamma*, while four are found in *Amiri*. Kelechi C. Ubaku provided the names

of some of these autonomous communities and their traditional rulers. According to him, the autonomous communities in *Awo-Omamma* with their traditional rulers include *Ofekata I*, HRH Eze Anthony Nnabuo (*Ezeudo III of Ofekata I*); *Ofekata II*, HRH Eze Benard Amanfo (*Ezeoha IV of Ofekata II*); *Ofekata III*, HRH Eze Polycarp Abanukam (*Okosisi I of Ofekata III*); *Ofekata IV* (also known as *Umueme-Umezeali* autonomous community), HRH Eze Titus Ngimah (*Uchekaku I*); *Eziawo I*, HRH Eze Leonard Amukamara (*Egbuador III of Eziawo I*); and *Eziawo II*, HRH Eze Theophilus Onyenekwu (Imo IV of *Eziawo II*). On the other hand, *Amiri* town possesses the following autonomous communities and their traditional rulers: *Amiri Isu*, HRH Eze B.N. Igbojekwe (*Gedegwum I of Amiri Isu*); *Amiri Oru*, HRH Eze D.D. Nnabuo (*Igwe III of Amiri Oru*); and *Umuduruigwemmadu*, HRH Eze N.N. Obilom (*Duruoha IV of Umuduruigwemmadu*) [5]. *Mbubu Amiri* autonomous community ruled by HRH Eze Cyril Uzoukwu (*Mbu I of Mbubu Amiri*) did not appear in his study as one of the autonomous communities found in *Amiri* town. This is because, the period of his research pre-dates the period when *Mbubu Amiri* was officially recognized as an autonomous community. However, “the official recognition of *Mbubu Amiri* as an autonomous community in April 2012, by the government of Imo State, brought the numbers of autonomous communities in *Amiri* town to four” [6].

Additionally, there are twenty-three villages in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*, which are components of the autonomous communities found in the aforementioned towns. While thirteen of these villages are found in *Awo-Omamma*, ten are found in *Amiri*. The villages in *Awo-Omamma* include *Ubogwu* in *Ofekata I* autonomous community; *Ubachima* in *Ofekata II* autonomous community; *Okworji*, and *Umubochi* in *Ofekata III* autonomous community; *Umuezeali*, and *Umueme* in *Ofekata IV* autonomous community; *Umuokwe*, *Obibi*, and *Ohuba* in *Eziawo I* autonomous community; and *Isieke*, *Umuezukwe*, *Ubahaeze*, and *Umuezike* in *Eziawo II* autonomous community. *Umuelibe* is not recognised as one of the villages in *Awo-Omamma*. This is because, “its recent self-acclaimed autonomy (as a village) from *Okworji* is yet to be recognized” [7]. On the other hand, *Amiri* town has the following as villages: *Ubahazu*, *Nchoko*, and *Ugbeke* in *Amiri Oru* autonomous community; *Umuocheta*, *Amuka*, *Isiorie*, and *Umudioka* in *Amiri Isu* autonomous community; *Umuduru* in *Umuduruigwemmadu* autonomous community; and *Amaokpara*, and *Mbubu* (which were formerly in *Amiri Oru* autonomous community) in *Mbubu Amiri* autonomous community. Under these villages are sixty-seven kindred-thirty-six in *Awo-Omamma*, and thirty-one in *Amiri* [8].

The indigenes of *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri* have various occupations. Consequently, there exist artisans, bicycle repairers, bricklayers, and agriculturalists, etc. In addition, there are traders who transact variety of businesses in the markets of these towns, and some of these markets include *Afor* market in *Isieke*, *Eke* market in *Okworji*, *Eke Achara* market in *Ubogwu*, and *Nkwo* market in *Umuokwe* villages (all in *Awo-Omamma*); and *Orie Amiri* market, *Afor* market in *Ubahazu*, *Nkwo* market in *Nchoko*, and *Eke* market in *Umuocheta* villages (all in *Amiri*). The market squares of some of these markets, as noted by Kelechi C. Ubaku “...serve as centres for the exhibition of masquerades and dances in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns” [9].

Religiously, there is a strong belief in the famous deity – the *Njaba* Deity- existing among the indigenes of these towns. The deity, as pointed out by Hyginus Ojinnaka “exists as male and female folks inhabiting in the famous *Njaba* River” [10]. Due to its reverence in both towns, the *Eke Njaba* (a harmless traditional snake regarded as the property of the deity) is held sacred- a traditional practice which is synonymous to that carried out in the towns of *Idemili*, Anambra State, in favour of *Eke Idemili* [11]. This belief is so strong that even the Christians have not completely renounced the sacredness of the *Eke Njaba* which can neither be killed nor harmed. Killing the sacred snake deliberately or accidentally will require a ritual cleansing by the culprit else, his or her family members will experience the wrath of the *Njaba* Deity. However, with the current inexistence of the *Ibini Ukpabi* (*Aro* long juju)- a deity which had existed in *Arochukwu* town of Abia State, *Arusi Okija*- a strong deity which had existed in *Okija* town of Anambra State, and *Ala Ogbaga*- equally a strong deity which had existed in *Mbaise* town of Imo State, it could be incontestable to assert that currently, the *Njaba* Deity is the strongest deity not just in eastern Nigeria, but in the country, Nigeria.

III. Festival as a concept

Festivals are exclusively human activities which are celebrated communally. They involve meticulously planned programs, rejoicing, outpouring of respects or high revelry, established by custom or sponsored by various organizations or groups. As a term, Festival has been defined by different sources. For instance, while D. Getz saw the term as the celebration of “...town values, ideologies, identity and continuity” [12], another source however defined it as

A day or period set aside for celebration or feasting, esp (especially) one of religious significance; any occasion for celebration, esp one which commemorates an anniversary or other significant event; an organized series of special events and performances, usually in one place...; ...time of revelry... [13].

G.T. Basden, in his words, sees festival as "...nothing more than a fete with dancing, music, feasting and general manifestations of pleasure and enjoyment, with congratulations for the year past and good wishes for the year ahead" [14]. On the significance of music, dance, and song to the town during festival, he thus maintained that they "...are instruments for creating social, emotional, and aesthetic solidarity" [15]. On the other hand, A. Falassi defined festival as "a sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances" [16], while D. Getz equally saw the term as "themed public celebration" [17]. J. Pieper in his view, however, remarked that festivals involve only religious rituals and celebrations [18].

In Igbo land, festivals possess different areas of significance. In *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns, for instance, festivals, in the post Nigerian-Biafran Civil War era, have been acting as catalysts for social and cultural cooperation among the indigenes of the aforementioned towns. Some of them thus include the *Owu* festival, the *Okorosha* festival, and the New Yam festival.

IV. Owu Festival in Awo-Omamma-Amiri Relations

The *Owu* (also called *Oghu*) festival is an annually celebrated cultural dance festival in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns. Though known as an *Oru* (a region in Imo West Senatorial District which is made up of towns believed to possess a common descent, where *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri* towns are located) festival, the *Owu* festival is equally celebrated annually by non-*Oru* towns neighbouring the aforementioned towns. Vin Okeke concurs to this when he asserted that the *Owu* festival

...is an *Oru* based festival celebrated by *Mgbidi*,...*Omuma*, *Otulu*, and in the *Oguta* clan- *Izombe*, *Awa*, *Nkweshi*, *Mgbele*, *Oboroti*; it is celebrated also in *Mbaitolu* clan- *Umunnoha*, *Ogbaku*, *Orodo*; in *Njaba* clan- *Umuaka*, *Okwudor*. In fact, it is an *Oru* endowment though some towns which are not *Oru* in origin celebrate it out of influence and borrowed as well as learnt the tenets of it by interest and copying [19].

In *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri*, however, the festival is usually celebrated in June every year within the *Owu* festive period – the period of the celebration of traditional festivals which usually stretches from mid-May to mid-August.

The origin of the festival is neither traceable to *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri* towns nor the aforementioned neighbouring towns. The origin has to an extent remained controversial among writers. For instance, while T.C. Ngimah and Kelechi C. Ubaku concurred to the fact that the *Owu* cultural festival originated from a riverine town known as *Ogwu-Akiri* [20], JohnCliff Nwadike and Joseph O. Nwoke posited that the origin of the cultural festival is traceable to "a village called *Nkwesi*... in *Oguta L.G.A*" [21], also recognized by T.C. Ngimah as a riverine area [22]. Be that as it may, the aforementioned sources in their various accounts on the origin of the festival concurred to the fact that the *Owu* festival is not originally owned by *Awo-Ommama*, and *Amiri* people. However, its origin from the riverine area (as stated above) brought about the belief that the *Owu* culture was a marine world's phenomenon which due to geographical proximity, diffused into the riverine towns. From there, it came into *Awo-Omamma* (from where it diffused into *Amiri*) through a certain slave from *Okworji* village.

The *Owu* cultural dance in *Awo-Omamma* constitutes of three types of dances. They include the *Owu Abuba*, *Owu Oma*, and *Owu-Ulo-Akwa* dances. *Owu Abuba* usually features every year during the celebration of the *Owu* festival. In this variety of dance, the ceremonial dancers and the amateur members of the *Owu* Cult participate freely without any objection. The *Owu* Cult is an institution which coordinates the cultural festival. Its functionaries hierarchically (from the highest to the lowest) include the *Osere*- an *Owu* terminology meaning *Onye Isi Owu* (the head of the *Owu* Cult); *Ugbo*- the second in hierarchy of the *Owu* Cult functionaries; *Akpu/Iche*- the third in command of the cult; and *Ada Owu*- the fourth in the hierarchical ladder of the cult [23]. These four functionaries have the responsibilities of providing the ceremonial dancers who take part in the festival. These dancers are known as *Nwaezeowu*, which is usually provided by the *Osere*; *Nwankpa*, provided by the *Ugbo*; and two *Owu Oma*, each provided by *Akpu/Iche* and *Ada Owu* [24]. However, the celebration of this dance in *Awo-Omamma* promotes cultural cooperation and interaction between her indigenes and those of *Amiri*, as villages from both towns occasionally unite to celebrate the dance. This act of cooperation is usually common between the people of *Isieke* village in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Umuocheta* village in *Amiri*. This cooperation is usually encouraged with the belief of a blood relationship existing between the indigenes of these villages [25]. Genealogically, it is believed that majority of the people of *Isieke* village migrated from *Umuocheta* village and settled in their present location.

Apart from cooperation between villages, the celebration of the dance in a particular village in *Awo-Omamma* (as the celebration of the *Owu* festival is regulated according to villages) usually attracts members of both towns to the celebrating village. In most cases, marriage contacts are made by the indigenes of both towns as a result of their visits to the celebrating village.

Unlike the *Owu Abuba*, *Owu Oma* features periodically at the volition of the heads of the *Owu* Cult. The costumes for its celebration differ from that of *Owu Abuba*. For instance, while white singlet, white shorts,

waist bands with assorted colour ribbons, and head dress adorned with fresh white feathers constitute the costumes for *Owu Abuba*, *Owu Oma* costumes include feathers, cloths, a tome designed and carried at the back embellished with multiple colours, and the head dress called *agalaga* which is an elongated structure decked with bright plumes at intervals. This variety of *Owu* dance does not encourage the participation of amateur members of the *Owu* Cult. In other words, only the ceremonial dancers provided by the functionaries of the cult participate in the dance. These ceremonial dancers thus include *Nwaezeowu*, *Owuoma*, and the scary father of masquerades known as *Agwu*, provided by the *Osere*; *Nwankpa*, and *Owu Oma*, provided by the *Ugbo*; *Anyanwu* (with a feature symbolizing the beauty of the sun), and one *Owu Oma*, provided by *Akpu/Iche*; and *Olokoloja* (also called *Ebule Nwaolokoroja*- a dancer with the feature of a masquerade who plays a comic role via his style of dance which runs counter to the beats provided by the drummers), and one *Owu Oma*, provided by the *Ada Owu*. Similar to *Owu Abuba*, the celebration of this dance equally encourages cultural cooperation between *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*, as it attracts members of both towns to the celebrating village. In most cases, *Owu* dancers (equally ceremonial members of the cult) who are employed by wealthy individuals in these towns are seen featuring (with the recommendations of the *Owu* Cult functionaries) in the *Owu Oma* celebration in a particular village. For instance, it has been a common phenomenon for *Owu* dancers owned by the indigenes of *Amiri* to feature in the *Owu Oma* celebration in *Awo-Omamma*. This thus assists in promoting cooperation culturally between both towns.

The *Owu-Ulo-Akwa* dance usually takes place during memorial activities of a deceased *Owu* head. Its celebration is usually in accordance with the decision of the kinsmen of the deceased to accord the dead the last funeral rites only reserved for late *Owu* functionaries. Thus through a unique dance, the deceased is bid farewell to the spirit world in appreciation of his unique role in the cult during his living days. With this celebration, the deceased does not return in fury haunting his in-group and his living co-heads for neglect. Hence, the dance is regarded as a sort of last ritual communion held with the deceased. However, during the celebration of *Owu-Ulo-Akwa* in *Awo-Omamma*, indigenes of *Amiri* are usually present at the celebration. This alongside the other varieties in turn encourages cultural cooperation and interaction between the members of the aforementioned towns.

There are ceremonies which are associated with the *Owu* festival in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*. These ceremonies in one way or the other encourage cultural cooperation and interaction between the indigenes of the aforementioned towns, and some of them include the *Emume* ceremony, the *Ito nri ali* ceremony, and the *Ara-na-Umu* ceremony.

The *Emume* ceremony signifies the impending *Owu* festival. It commences with the beating of the *Ekwe Emume* (a traditional cum ancestral drum)- a responsibility which lies with *Umuezeali*, and *Umuocheta* villages (the head villages of *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns respectively). In *Umuocheta* village of *Amiri*, the drum is beaten by *Umudiro* kindred. The *emume* ceremony ushers in the rituals of the season which are associated with farming and annual festivals like the *Owu* festival. None of the aforementioned activities will take place without first of all conducting the *emume* ceremony. Violating this custom is regarded as desecration of tradition which can attract the anger of the gods. When this happens, remedial measures (aimed at averting the fury of the gods) are sought for through atonement. However, when the *ekwe emume* has been beaten in either of both towns, the other town is notified through an emissary- a task which lies with the head villages. For instance, when *Umuocheta* village beats the *ekwe emume*, an emissary is sent to *Umuezeali* village to notify the people of the recent development, and vice versa. This promotes cultural cooperation.

Ito nri ali ceremony is celebrated by giving food to one's ancestors. The ceremony validates the observations of Victor Uchendu that the Igbo conceived their ancestors as the invisible segment of their lineage [26]. Similarly, the ceremony equally validates the views of F. Arinze (quoted in Patrick C. Obinabu) which holds that "...the Igbo family is not made up only of those who are still living in the flesh. The unseen ancestors are part of the family..." [27]. With this, different kinds of foods are provided and offered in sacrifice. At the end of the sacrifice, offerings are consumed communally. The ceremony usually affords the heads of every household the opportunity to communicate with his ancestor(s) via the medium of the family shrine, as well as solicit for their presence in the *Owu* festival. This practice is in connection with the traditional belief that death is only a transition to another existence, and contact with the dead brethren must be maintained by rituals.

Ito nri ali ceremony in *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri* towns usually provides the pedestal for friendly cooperation and interaction between the members of both towns. During its celebration in *Awo-Omamma*, friends and in-laws from *Amiri* town are invited. The invitation is usually reciprocated during the celebration of the ceremony in *Amiri* town. On honouring the invitation, the invitees are treated with adequate hospitality by their hosts [28].

Ara-na-umu ceremony, on the other hand, is recognised as a traditional mothers' day. In the feast, daughters of every family return home with their progenies from wherever they are married so as to identify with their family. As T.C. Ngimah noted, the ceremony "...forms a ritual link in the chain of the *Owu* festivals" [29]. It also provides the opportunity for reunion with their parents and maternal grand parents of all married

daughters and their children, respectively, at a stated time of the year. In some cases, these daughters return with their husbands to partake in the feast. Through this, the ceremony establishes bonds between sons-in-law (some of who are the indigenes of *Amiri* town since intermarriage exists between the indigenes of *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*) and their wives' families. Thus, *ara-na-umu* ceremony contributes its quota in fostering friendly cultural cooperation and interaction between the towns of *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*.

V. Okorosha festival in Awo-Omamma-Amiri Relations

The *Okorosha* is an institutionalized cult which operates within well-defined norms. The cult coordinates the *Okorosha* festival. As a masquerade festival, the *Okorosha* festival could be described as a ceremony of masked performers whose activities constitute of significant religious and social meaning in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns.

The *Okorosha* festival is usually conducted within the *Owu* festive period. According to Kelechi C. Ubaku, the festival "...indicates the coming to an end of the *Owu* festive period, and its end equally marks the end of the aforementioned festive period. In addition, the celebration of this festival equally signifies the impending new yam festival" [30]. During this period, the masquerades operate freely in both towns. For instance, the *Okorosha* masquerades from *Awo-Omamma* operate freely in *Amiri*, and vice versa, during the celebration of masquerade (*Okorosha*) festival. This to a great extent promotes cultural cooperation and interaction between both towns.

The *Okorosha* masquerades, during the festival, perform functions such as maintaining law and order, in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns. They possess great influence on children with deviant tendencies having been used by parents to compel these children (who fear these masquerades) to show some acceptable behaviours. In addition, the *Okorosha* masquerades have their form of language which is hard to understand by children, the newly initiated members of the *Okorosha* Cult, and the uninitiated- the ordinary members of the towns who are not initiated into the cult. T.C. Ngimah provided an example of the language of the *Okorosha* masquerades. In his words,

...women are generally called *aliga n'otu*, which means that women are the same everywhere; water or rain is called *ogba gere gere-oozer*; money is called *obe yoro yoro...*; the shield which they use is called *ekete ogu...*; while sucking babies are addressed as *ekulu* (also pronounced *ekuru*) *obielo*, that is gladders of the heart [31].

VI. New Yam festival in Awo-Omamma-Amiri Relations

Similar to most towns in Igbo land, the new yam festival is annually celebrated in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* towns. The festival is usually celebrated after the *Owu* festive season in mid-August. Indigenously, it is known as *emume iri nji ofuru*.

The new yam festival in the aforementioned towns, according to Kelechi C. Ubaku,

...marks the beginning of the first harvest and the eating of fresh yams to include water yam (*Dioscorea Alata*) which is indigenously known as *nji ashara/nji nkiti*, yellow yam (*Dioscorea Cayenesis*) which is called *nji ogbagada*, and white yam (*Dioscorea Rotundata*) also called *nji agah/nji okomocha*, in different homesteads [32].

The key moment in the festival, according to him, is the period of "...cooking and consumption of boiled yams with chicken pepper soup... called *nji mmiri awa*" [33].

The new yam festival in *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri* affords the indigenes of these towns the opportunity to interact with one another- a development usually encouraged by giving out invitations to in-laws, friends, well wishers, and chieftaincy title holders in the other town when one is celebrating her new yam festival. Invariably, therefore, the indigenes of *Awo-Omamma* are invited by the indigenes of *Amiri* during the latter's new yam celebration- an act which is usually reciprocated by the former during their new yam celebration. Through this means, the festival assists in fostering cultural cooperation and interaction among the aforementioned groups.

Awo-Omamma, and *Amiri* towns do not celebrate the new yam festival on the *nkwo* market day- the first market day on the Igbo cultural calendar. This is as a result of the abhorrence of this day as a day of merriments. Only the *Njaba* deity celebrates the new yam festival on this day. Consequently, items such as tubers of yams, fowls, and kola nuts, are offered to the *Njaba* deity by the pagans of these towns, at the bank of the *Njaba* River, or at the intermediary shrines of the *Njaba* deity stationed at different points in the towns. This traditional exercise known as *Iwara Njaba Nji* (in *Awo-Omamma*) or *Iwara Nkwo Amiri Nji* (in *Amiri*) must be carried out prior to the proper celebration of the new yam festival which can be conducted either on the *eke*, *orie*, or *afor market days*- other market days on the Igbo cultural calendar alongside *nkwo* market day.

VII. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that cultural festivals in Igbo land can provide the pedestal for unity and solidarity among members of different towns in relating with one another. The periods of these festivals afford the indigenes of these towns the opportunity to return home from their bases so as to imbibe and learn the lessons of kinship and cultural powwow. They make for town-oriented life, as well as affording relations and friends the opportunity to live in conscious dependence on one another. In addition, they give the celebrants a sense of unity, and provide them with a link to their past and a measure of hope for the future.

Thus, as examples of cultural festivals in Igbo land, the *Owu*, *Okorosha*, and new yam festivals have been providing the pedestal for cordial social and cultural relations between the indigenes of *Awo-Omamma* and *Amiri* towns. Despite the recent *Otunne* problem whose nucleus was captured from the breach of political agreement between the members of the aforementioned towns, cultural festivals have continued to perpetuate friendliness in the post Nigerian-Biafran Civil War relations of *Awo-Omamma*, and *Amiri*.

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Appendix One



A picture of *Okorosha* masquerade in *Awo-Omamma*

Appendix Two



A picture of *Owu* dancers in *Owu abuba* costume in *Awo-Omamma*

Appendix Three



A picture of an *Owu* dancer in *Owu Oma* costume in *Awo-Omamma*