

AYE DESCENDANTS UNION

(AN ARM OF ITESI HOUSE)

Some people have been asking for the meaning of “AYE” and who the members of the union are. Here is the finding of our team.

Chief (Mrs) Bernice Ogunkemi Coker (Iya Oniyo) daughter of Papa Ayegbami, a native of Aye town in Ekiti, was married to Chief Isaac Olufusibi Coker (Aderupoko). History has it that many of Aderupoko’s wives were from Ekiti through Iya Oniyo. She was a very loving, caring, tolerant and peace keeping woman.

When she got to Abeokuta from Ekiti, despite the fact that she met some other wives with Aderupoko, she was very helpful to her husband and because of that, she became the “apple of the eyes” of her husband becoming a force to be reckoned with in the compound.

When Aderupoko wanted to expand his compound and got resistance from the then Alake, it was Iya Oniyo that stood firm behind her husband. That made the Alake to erect a fence behind Aderupoko’s compound. It was due to this fact that Aderupoko built what is now called “Ile Tuntun” for Iya Oniyo.

After the death of Chief Gabriel Ogunmuyiwa Coker’s mother and that of Chief James Coker, Iya Oniyo was the one that took care of them together with her own children such as Bro. William Sowande Coker, Bro. Albert Soyemi Coker and others. When they grew up, whenever they came to Abeokuta for Ajoyo, they used to come with their wives and children and they would stay at Iya Oniyo’s residence.

Chief (Mrs.) Bernice Ogunkemi Coker (Iya Oniyo), the Iyalaje of Trinity Methodist Church, Itesi, Abeokuta who died on 6th September, 1942 was very accommodating. She brought many people from Aye and Efon Alaye, Ekiti to Abeokuta and most of them settled in Saje, Abeokuta.

After Chief Olufusibi Coker’s death in 1910, she got married to Oluwo of Keesi, Abeokuta, the father of Chief (Mrs.) Rebecca Gbemisola Akiyode (Moriwafu of Keesi).

Mama Martha Oniwe, the mother of Madam Joana Ayokanla Coker and Madam Marian Efunyombo Beckley was a junior sister to Mama Oniyo.

In 1961, Chief (Mrs.) Rebecca Gbemisola Akiyode born 1910 and who died at the age of 71 years on 24th March, 1981 founded what is now known and called AYE DESCENDANTS UNION and the motto is “LOVE AND UNITY”. She was popularly called Iya Alawo as her main business was selling of different types of plates in Abeokuta and Ibadan. Although she did not stop at selling of plates, she also sold clothes and “Jogi”.

The first President of Aye Descendants Union was Chief Magistrate Emmanuel Oladipupo Coker while Sis. Ololade Adeyemi took over after his death. The first Secretary was Bro. Festus Mobolaji Coker who died at the age of 79 and late Bro. Benjamin Babatunde Ola took over from him.

The President of the Union from 15th October 2005 was Sis. Frances Omonajo Cole till her death in 2011. The current President from 2011 is Sister (Mrs) Olufunmilayo Norman-Williams, mother of Sis(Mrs) Adeyanju Dabiri and popularly known as Mama Ibeji, she is the senior sister of Late Brother Benjamin Babatunde Ola. Amongst other things the union has done are the building of a bath room in Ile-Tuntun and fencing of Ile-Tuntun.