

## JSS1 HISTORY NOTE

We continue our learning in history this term with a study of the Igbo ukwu civilization so that we can bring to an end the study of the major civilizations in Nigeria which began with the Nok civilization and the Ife and Benin civilizations

Igbo Ukwu is a community that is currently located in current day Anambra state in the region of Nigeria that is called the south East. This community became very famous long before Anambra state was created because of some very important artefacts that were found there in the year 1939. These artefacts made the community so popular because they provided evidence that helped historians to finally discover the fact that there were some people living in the region many centuries ago who had an advanced civilization. The civilization has been named Igbo ukwu civilization because the discoveries that led to the rediscovery of this civilization were found there.

### DISCOVERY OF THE IGBO UKWU CIVILIZATION

The artefacts that led to the discovery of the civilization were first discovered when a man from the community by the name Isaiah Anozie discovered some sculptures of bronze and clay while he was attempting to dig up a cistern (ground water storage well). He did not appreciate the value of the objects he discovered and so he gifted some of them out and sold out others.

This was at a time when the entire territory known as Nigeria was under British colonialism. The district officer in charge of the area bought some of these objects and sent them to the colonial office of antiquities who sensed their value.

In 1965, an archaeologist by the name Thurstan Shaw was asked to study them. Using the radio carbon method, Thurstan Shaw studied the objects. He even went on to excavate (dig up) more objects around the compounds of Isaiah's brothers whose names were Jonah and Richard Anozie. At both compounds more artefacts of bronze and clay were discovered for study. The objects from Isaiah Anozie's compound were called Igbo Isaiah and those from Richards compound were called Igbo Richard while those from Jonah's compound were called Igbo Jonah.

In 1972, Thurstan Shaw published his findings which provided a lot of information that helped to point to the fact that there was an advanced civilization around the region long before many European states achieved a similar level of civilization.

### ARTEFACTS DISCOVERED IN THE SITES OF EXCAVATION

- Igbo Isaiah: ceremonial vessels, pot stands, regalia, pendants etc
- Igbo Richard: decomposed skeletons and the tomb of a priest king
- Igbo Jonah: pots and sculptures mainly used for rituals

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE IGBO UKWU CIVILIZATION

- The first significance of the discovery is that it showed that the area known as southeast Nigeria was inhabited by people who had a distinct culture as far back as the 9th century AD.
- The second significance of the Igbo Ukwu discovery is that it has shown that the belief which was popular before now that the people of Nigeria had no culture or civilization before the coming of the Europeans was false.
- They had established laws and culture.

**EVALUATION:** What do you find most interesting about the Igbo Ukwu civilization? Discuss in not less than two hundred words.