

# THE QUARCOOPOME FAMILY

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**John Nii Okutu Quarcoopome**  
*Patriarch and Ancestor of the Quarcoopome Family*  
**1824 · Calabar, Nigeria · 1916 Accra, Ghana**

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*His Life · His Will · His Descendants*

*This document brings together the family history, the last will and testament, and the full record of descendants of our founding ancestor. It has been prepared in clear, plain language so that every member of the Quarcoopome family — young and old — can read, understand, and carry this legacy forward.*

*First read publicly: 1st July 2013, at the All Saints Anglican Church Yard, Adabraka, Accra.*

Originally compiled by Ebenezer Essiel Odartey Quarcoopome  
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## SECTION 1: WHO WAS JOHN NII OKUTU QUARCOOPOME?

Before reading the full story, here is a quick summary of the key facts about our founding ancestor:

<b>Birth Name:</b>	Nii Okutu Ekujo
<b>Born:</b>	1824, Calabar (Cross River State), Nigeria
<b>Origin:</b>	Yoruba people of Nigeria
<b>Came to Ghana:</b>	Arrived at the Gold Coast (now Accra, Ghana) as a leader, performer, and healer
<b>Family Name:</b>	Given the name QUARCOOPOME through friendship with Nii Sackey of Ngleshie Adanse
<b>Land Given:</b>	Atukpai, Accra — granted by the Gbese Stool
<b>Faith:</b>	Baptised and confirmed, Methodist Church, near Palladium Cinema, Accra
<b>Wives:</b>	Six (6) wives
<b>Children:</b>	Twenty (20) children
<b>Died:</b>	12th October 1916, Accra

<b>Buried:</b>	Methodist Church graveyard, Palladium. Re-interred 1993 at Awudome Cemetery, Accra (East side, approx. 200 yards from entrance, right side near the fence wall)
<b>Will Made:</b>	8th March 1910
<b>Probate Granted:</b>	20th May 1921, Supreme Court of the Gold Coast Colony, Eastern Province

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## SECTION 2: THE HISTORY OF OUR FAMILY

### A. Arrival from Nigeria

Our family story begins with a remarkable man of Yoruba descent. He was born in 1824 in Calabar, in what is now Cross River State, Nigeria, with the name Nii Okutu Ekujo. He was a natural leader, talented performer, and gifted healer.

At some point in his life, he made the journey westward to the Gold Coast — what we now call Ghana — arriving in Accra. He did not come alone. He brought with him his two children: Ataa Kyei, his eldest son, who was a skilled herbalist, and his daughter Kyeikua. He also travelled with a group of drummers, singers, and dancers.

### B. The Performances That Captured Accra

When they arrived in Accra, they began performing for the people of the city. They played the Agbe drum — also known as the bata drum — which they had brought from Nigeria. They sang, danced, and performed extraordinary acts that amazed the people who gathered to watch:

- Carrying a pot of burning fire without being hurt
- Swallowing knives and broken bottles without injury
- Cutting themselves with knives without being hurt

These were traditional feats of their Yoruba culture, and the people of Accra watched in wonder and admiration.

### C. The Friendship That Gave Us Our Name

During his time in Accra, Nii Okutu Ekujo made a deeply important friendship — with a man named Nii Sackey, of Ngleshie Adanse, Accra. The two men became very close, almost like brothers, and Nii Okutu and his family stayed with Nii Sackey for many years.

The people of the neighbourhood, seeing the closeness of this friendship, began calling Nii Okutu by the name of Nii Sackey's second-born son: Quarcoopome. In this way, through friendship, acceptance, and belonging, our family name was born.

*This is how we came to be called QUARCOOPOME — a name rooted not in blood alone, but in the bond between two men and the warmth of the Accra community that welcomed our forefather.*

#### **D. His Wives and His Twenty Children**

Nii Okutu Quarcoopome — as he was now known — settled in Accra and built a large and fruitful family. He married six wives and had twenty children in all. Five of those children left no descendants after them. The remaining fifteen became the branches of the Quarcoopome family tree that we belong to today.

His second wife was Naa Ayele Ama, from Nii Obuamah We. He met her when he was 39 years old, around 1863. Together they had his third child, the late John Sackey Quarcoopome — also known as Sackey Onukpa — who became the head of the branch known as Labour House.

His third wife was Naa Okumko Tsotso, from Abola Piam (Tunma We). She came from one of the four ruling houses of the Ga royal paramount stool — a connection to Ga royalty. Through her, he had a daughter, Naa Dzadzama Quarcoopome (also known as Kwanye), who became the head of the branch known as Coaltar House.

#### **E. The Family Houses**

With the help of his dear friend Nii Sackey of Ngleshie Adanse, our forefather was granted land at Atukupai in Accra by the Gbese Stool. On this land, the first Quarcoopome family house was built. This is the foundation of the family's presence in Accra.

The second family property — known as Coaltar House — was located at the Post Office in Accra. This house was willed by our forefather to four of his children: Dzadzama, Lante, Sackeyfio, and Nteshie. The full details of his will are set out in Section 3 of this document.

#### **F. The Agbe Drum Legacy**

Among the greatest gifts our forefather brought from Nigeria was the Agbe drum (also called the bata drum). This was not merely a musical instrument — it was a symbol of Yoruba culture and identity.

One of his sons, Nii Lante Quarcoopome, grew up with such a deep love and talent for the Agbe drum that he was made its leader. His name was changed in honour of this role to Nii Agbe Lante Quarcoopome. He played the drum alongside the Tabon people, who shared a great love for this tradition. When he died, the leadership passed to his step-sister, Naa Mantenye Manaa Quarcoopome, who was a gifted singer of Yoruba songs.

When Naa Mantenye Manaa also passed away, no one else in the Quarcoopome family continued the drum tradition. The Agbe drum has since been in the care of the Tabon

people. Today, the Tabon people teach the Agbe drum at the Cultural Centre of the University of Ghana, Legon — keeping the rhythm of our ancestors alive.

### **G. The Shango Tradition — Healing and Spiritual Protection**

After the first family house was built at Atukpai, the eldest son, Ataa Kyei, travelled back to Calabar in Nigeria. When he returned to Accra, he brought with him the Shango tradition — a powerful Yoruba spiritual practice of healing and protection. He began treating people suffering from all manner of illness, and was especially known for helping women who could not bear children. His fame spread widely across Accra and beyond. (This account is recorded by Mary Odarkor Turkson of Labour House.)

When Ataa Kyei died, his son Nii Odartey Quarcoopome — also known as Odartey Tsofatse, and a professional teacher by training — took up the Shango priesthood. Every year, on the day of the Shango annual festival, people gathered to bathe with special herbs and pray for protection — particularly for the Quarcoopome and Tabon families, as well as close associates including Nii Aruna (Junior, a tailor) from Swalaba, and Nii Alasha (Senior, a goldsmith) from Nyogonaa. Nii Odartey Quarcoopome passed away in 1942.

*Shango takes its name from the fourth King of the ancient Oyo Kingdom in Yoruba land (15th century), a man of great power and spiritual authority. The Shango priesthood is hereditary, dedicated for life, and passed from father to son.*

### **H. His Christian Faith and Death**

In time, John Nii Okutu Quarcoopome became a devoted Christian. He was baptised and confirmed at the Methodist Church near Palladium Cinema, Accra. He died on 12th October 1916 and was buried at the Methodist Church graveyard near Palladium Cinema.

In 1993, the remains of all those buried at that graveyard were moved to the Awudome Cemetery. To find our ancestor's statue: enter the Awudome Cemetery, take the east side, walk about 200 yards, and you will find his statue on the right-hand side near the fence wall.

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## **SECTION 3: HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT**

What follows is a clear, plain-language account of the Last Will and Testament of John Nii Okutu Quarcoopome. The original document was written on 8th March 1910. It was read, interpreted, and explained to him in the Ga language by I. J. K. Chume, and he confirmed it by placing his mark (an 'X') before two witnesses. The will was granted Probate by the Supreme Court of the Gold Coast Colony, Eastern Province, on 20th May 1921.

## **Executors and Trustees of the Will**

Our forefather appointed two men to carry out the instructions of his will and act as trustees:

**1. James Benjamin Hammond of Usher Town, Accra.**

**2. James Tetteh Quainor of Usher Town, Accra.**

Probate was formally granted to James Tetteh Quainor, who had been duly sworn in, as one of the executors named in the will. The grant was made before Chief Registrar A. White.

## **What He Left – His Properties**

### **Property 1: The Main House at Usher Town**

Our forefather bequeathed his main house at Usher Town, Accra – consisting of eleven rooms and two shops or stores – to the following children, for their lifetime and as tenants in common (meaning they share the property together, not separately):

John Sackey (Alias Saki Onukpa)

Macdonald Sackey (Alias Saki Annan)

Emmanuel Sackey (Alias Kofi Saki)

Daniel Sackey (Alias Otublohum Saki)

Henry Sackey (Alias Mensah)

Joseph Afrah (Alias Arrah)

Nathaniel Okoe (Alias Okoe)

Amos Kwao (Alias Kwao)

Abla Yawa

Ayele

Manan

Affua

Adjua

Affuafio (Alias Agoe)

He further declared that the rents from the larger of the two shops or stores should be collected by John Sackey (Alias Saki Onukpa) and Macdonald Sackey (Alias Saki Annan) for their own use and benefit exclusively.

### **Property 2: House No. 2 at Usher Town**

He bequeathed his second house — known as House No. 2, situated at Usher Town, Accra — to four of his children:

Dajima, Lamtey, Sackeyfio, and Nteshi.

### **All Other Personal Property**

He bequeathed all his remaining personal property to his children for their lifetime, to be held and enjoyed in common among them.

### **Payment of Debts and Funeral Expenses**

He declared and directed that all his debts and other testamentary and funeral expenses should be paid by his children.

### **How the Will Was Signed**

John Nii Okutu Quarcoopome could not write his name, so he placed his mark — an 'X' — upon the will as his signature. This was witnessed and signed by:

J. Edward Mettle

I. J. Kofi Chume

The document was confirmed as his true and last will by James Tetteh Quainor before Commissioner for Oaths, Samuel Bannermer, on 14th May 1921.

*A note about the language: the will was read aloud and fully explained to John Quarcoopome in the Ga language by I. J. K. Chume, and he confirmed that he understood it perfectly before placing his mark on 8th March 1910.*

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## **SECTION 4: THE FULL LIST OF DESCENDANTS**

The following is the complete record of the twenty children of John Nii Okutu Quarcoopome, listed by the wife through whom they were born. Five children (marked with †) left no descendants after them. The remaining children are the roots of all Quarcoopome family branches today.

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### **1st Wife: Name Unknown — from Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria**

- 1.** Ataa Kyei Quarcoopome (*also known as: Herbalist; Eldest Son — brought Shango healing tradition to Accra*)
- 2.** Naa Kyeikua Quarcoopome (*also known as: Eldest Daughter*)

† *Naa Kyeikua left no descendants.*

### **2nd Wife: Naa Ayele Ama — from Nii Obuamah We**

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1. John Sackey Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Sackey Onukpa — Labour House*)

2. Unnamed Child

3. Henry Mensah Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Ataa Mensah — Agbogbloshie*)

† *The unnamed child left no descendants.*

### **3rd Wife: Naa Okumko Tsotso — from Abola Piam (Tunma We), one of the four Ga royal ruling houses**

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1. Naa Dzadzama Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Kwanye — Coaltar House*)

2. Nii Agbe Lante Quarcoopome (*also known as: Leader of the Agbe Drum (Bata Drum) — original name was Nii Lante Quarcoopome*)

3. Robert Sackey Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Sackeyfio — SCOA*)

4. Naa Ntेशie Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Teacher Addison*)

### **4th Wife: Manna Nye Okoshia — from the Tabon people, Mami Awa Family**

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1. Emmanuel Sackey Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Kofi Sackey*)

2. Naa Ayeley Quarcoopome

3. Mantenye Manna Quarcoopome (*also known as: Singer of Yoruba songs; took over leadership of the Agbe Drum after Nii Agbe Lante*)

4. Amos Kwao Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Ataa Kwao*)

### **5th Wife: Naa Lamile**

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1. Macdonald Sackey Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Sackey Annan*)

2. Female — name unknown (*also known as: daughter; married into Araba Bannerman family*)

† *The female child (name unknown) — no further descendants recorded.*

### **6th Wife: Naa Afia Mansah — from Otublohum**

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1. Daniel Sackey Quarcoopome (*also known as: Alias Sackey Otublohum*)

2. Joseph Aflah Quarcoopome

3. Nathaniel Oko Quarcoopome

4. Isaac Tawiah Quarcoopome

5. Naa Adzua Boadu (Atsaawa) Quarcoopome

† *Isaac Tawiah and Naa Adzua Boadu (Atsaawa) left no descendants.*

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In total: 6 wives, 20 children. 5 children left no descendants. The remaining 15 are the foundations of all living Quarcoopome family branches.

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## **SECTION 5: IN MEMORY – THOSE WHO KEPT THE LEGACY ALIVE**

### **In Memory Of**

#### **ATAA KYEI QUARCOOPOME**

Great-Grand-Father | Herbalist, Eldest Son | Grand-Father

#### **NII ODARTEY QUARCOOPOME (ALIAS ODARTEY TSO FATSE)**

A Professional Teacher – Keeper of the Shango Tradition

### **AND ALL THE ATAA KYEI DESCENDANTS**

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*Compiled and preserved by:*

#### **EBENEZER ESSIEL ODARTEI QUARCOOPOME**

Great-Grandson of Ataa Kyei Quarcoopome (Herbalist; Eldest Son)

Grandson of Nii Odartey Quarcoopome (Alias Odartey Tsofatse), Professional Teacher

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### **A Note to the Youth of the Family**

This document is yours. It belongs to every Quarcoopome – in Accra, across Ghana, and wherever in the world this name has been carried. Our forefather came to this land as a stranger, with talent, courage, and a kind spirit. He was welcomed, given a name, given land, and built a family that has grown for more than 200 years.

The name QUARCOOPOME was not just inherited – it was earned through friendship and trust. That is worth knowing. That is worth protecting. That is worth passing on.

*Read this. Share it. Remember it. We are Quarcoopome.*