

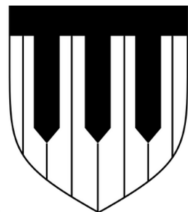
## Introduction/Abstract

On January 1, 1927 the doors of the Achimota Senior High School, previously the Prince of Wales College, were formally opened to the public. The founders of the school intended for it to provide an education that redefined what colonial education meant. In colonial officer Gordon Guggisberg's own words, Achimota would be an institution in Africa that was "second to none" but was comparable in quality to the likes of its counterpart in England and beyond. Prior to the construction of Achimota the Phelps-Stokes commission, which aimed to link the African continent to the African American community through education, was invited to investigate the right form of education for the Gold Coast. The Phelps-Stokes commission was widely endorsed as the authority in understanding the educational plights of the underserved black community in America and by extension, Africa. The commission highlighted that "character development" and religious education was of utmost importance to the curriculum.



## Thesis Statement/ Methods

- My proposal seeks to question the ways in which "character training" was operationalized in colonial education, and what values were prioritized in the curriculum in Achimota School between 1919-1957.
- In Achimota, the motto of the school, taken from the Gospel of John, was "ut omnes unum sint" (that they may all be one). This motto was popularized by Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey, a native of the Gold Coast who was later appointed alongside A.G Fraser as vice principal and head of Achimota respectively.
- Aggrey was famously known as the Booker T. Washington of Africa given his outstanding successes at home and abroad.
- My research methods will depend on my findings from archival research. I will be using materials obtained in the summer of 2025 from the Special Collections unit in Bodleian Library in Oxford as well as materials from the Cambridge University Library.
- I intend to analyse reports from the teacher's training records available from the archives



**UT OMNES UNUM SINT**

## Literature Review

Numerous academics have researched the creation of Achimota and its aftermath. The evidence has surfaced in different journal articles including the work of African Studies scholar Shoko Yamada.

- Achimota operated in two tiers:
- The first tier was a well defined leadership that modelled public education in English schools.
- The second tier was the American model of Black industrial education that was modeled against the Hampton-Tuskegee system.
- The Hampton-Tuskegee system emphasized character training through handiwork and manual labour. Character training functioned as both an educational goal and a cultural project in the Gold Coast.
- Yamada in her work discusses the gendered application of character training in the school whereby girls' character training was heavily tied to domesticity. Boys, on the other hand, were prepared for leadership roles in civil service and industry within the constraints of colonial hierarchies.
- Similarly on the matter of character training, Ghanaian academic Ernestina Wiafe in her work argues that this was a "moral agenda" embedded in boarding school life and was justified as preparing Africans for leadership within their communities.
- Consequently it fitted into the paternalistic nature of the British colonial government and their divine sense of duty to the colony. As part of the character building efforts, scripture and christian religious studies was added to the curriculum.

## Reflection

The research process this summer was not as linear as I projected it to be. When I submitted my proposal, my goals were to:

1. Get a good grasp of what the archival process in research looks like
2. Initiate the process of developing a research proposal for my honors thesis
3. Gather some data that will aid me in the research process
4. Produce a research paper that historicizes the ways by which colonial officials and educators in Ghana used discipline to shape students into model imperial subjects.

While I have largely been able to meet the first three points, the fourth goal however is where my main challenge surfaced. In my original proposal, I set out to question and understand the ways in which discipline was used in the colonial context in public second cycle institutions with my question being: "How did colonial officials and educators in Ghana use discipline to shape students into model imperial subjects?" To do this, I narrowed the scope of my research to Achimota School; the first public boarding school instituted by the British government after World War I. I quickly came to learn after weeks in the archives that I had to let the archives guide me to my question as my faculty mentor always emphasized. In the archives, I explored materials from the papers of Dennis George Ruddock Herbert, (Lord Hemingford), Alexander Garden Fraser, Reverend Charles Kingsley Williams, copy diary of Sylvia G. Ward and the reminiscences of W.E.F. Ward on the formation of and all matters relating to Achimota. On the matter of discipline, there was not adequate data that fully historicized discipline as a way of ensuring subservency in the colony, particularly in the case of Achimota. Ghanaian educational historians Botchway and Boaten-Boaten in their work have made a case for this challenging lack of documentation on matters relating to praxis in historicizing Achimota.

In the process of interpreting the documents, I observed much emphasis was placed on colonial governor Gordon Guggisberg's sixteen principles of education, specifically his seventh principle. His seventh principle which focused on character training seems to have been a popular idea at the time. My final proposal therefore seeks to question the ways in which "character training" was operationalized in colonial education, and what values were prioritized in the curriculum in Achimota School between 1919-1957.

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