

In January 1924, the Government Teacher Training College at Accra was taken over by the Achimota staff. Others of the staff were lent to Richmond College ( Mfantshipim) in Cape Coast and the College of Akropong. Others were getting acclimatized in the country and learning some Gold Coast vernaculars.

In February 1924, a ceremony took place here on this very spot To Cut the Sod for construction work to begin. It was attended by many important people from around the country and by about a 100 pupils from all the schools in Accra and by Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, who came to the Achimota Halt by Railway, Coaches, and marched up here, singing, and blowing whistles. I was one of the scouts who came here in 1924, then aged 10 years. Work proceeded after this ceremony for the following programme to be adhered to:

In 1925, HRH Edward, Prince of Wales, on a visit to the Gold Coast formally laid the foundation stone and gave his name to the College – Prince of Wales College, Achimota.

In 1926, the first 6 Kindergarten children were recruited and that famous picture of them was taken with Dr. Aggrey and Mrs. Ballard the matron.

In 1927, the Lower and Upper Primary Departments were started. In 1928, the Teacher Training Department in Accra moved bag and baggage, paper and pencil, to Achimota.

In 1929, the Secondary and University Departments were started. The complex was in full motion. Large sums had been spent and with what result?

Guggisberg had left the Gold Cost in 1927, so it was the duty of the new Governor Sir Ransford Slater to find out. A high-powered commission was setup in 1930 to inspect the Achimota College and school. It comprised 2 senior natural rulers, 2 women, 6 members of staff and 8 senior members of the government and citizenry. The inspection took 2 weeks.

Their report was an eloquent testimony of the work of the Principal, the Rev A. G. Frazer and his staff; the commission ended up being appointed the first Achimota College Council.

At this juncture, I express a personal conviction that this was the most auspicious moment when the financial backbone which an institution like Achimota needed but never had, should have been created, especially when at the time, the Gold Coast was already on the fast ascendancy to become the WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER of Cocoa, and money was no problem at all.

ACTUARIANS and financial experts with proven acumen have delved into the matter and have come up with the finding that a capital sum of £250,000 set aside and safely invested in gilt edged and minimal risk securities would have yielded in 40 years no less than 12 – 13 million pounds sterling: although the £ 250,000 could have been easily found, this was not done. Achimota was never given the financial backing it deserved. To mention the fact now, is not to blame everyone who was involved, but to just put the facts on record, for what that is worth.

Whilst putting things on record, I would wish it to be recorded also that the first effort to set up an endowment for Achimota, was made by our beloved Akora and friend to many, John Osei Tutu Agyeman, when he was president of the OAA in the mid seventies; unfortunately nothing came of it, but he did make an effort.

In 1984, the deterioration became alarming. There were gaping holes in the floors of the halls, dormitories, and classrooms. The shuffling of many thousands of pairs of feet over decades had taken their toll; doors were deinged, windows dropped off their frames etc., etc.

A few Akoras led by K. B. Asante organized an OAA DODOKYI dinner on July 4 1984 where an appeal for funds would be made. Asante invited 2 senior Akoras, the late William Ofori Atta and myself, to do the appealing. Between us and in less than 2 hours, we were able to raise I cash and pledges one million cedis. Contracts were soon given for some repair work to be done, and the amount was soon spent.

In 1985, another dinner was held at Ambassador Hotel to raise more funds, but the law of diminishing returns began to operate, and we could only raise a third of the previous sum. During the slow inflow of donations during the appeal, the thought ran through my mind that this was not the way to solve Achimota's problem. I therefore made a pledge to the Headmaster, Akora Asiedu that the

Association would do everything to ensure that Achimota did not crumple over his head or over the heads of his successor headmasters.

Soon after this pledge, a small committee called THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE, was formed with Akoras J. K. Twintoh, George Yeboah, Erskine Graham and Sylvanus Kwetey as members, to assist me. We did not have far to go to find the way. Within 3 weeks, this old and battered book, THE REGISTER OF ADMISSIONS into Achimota, 1924 – 69, was unearthed from an old Books' dump somewhere on the Achimota compound. It was on its last legs, and contains the names of everyone of 6090 boys and girls, men and women who ever crossed the portals of this GREY CITY, to study<sup>1</sup>.

The first instinctive move was to have a new book made and the 6090 names entered therein. This was done and this new register replaces the old one, which can now be encased in glass and remain unmoved again forever.

To have done that and nothing more, would constitute a meaningless act where Achimota needs funds so badly for rehabilitation. The executive committee of the OAA agreed to the issuing of Registration number certificates, which was done and given for a token payment of ₵500.00. This idea has made a small start to a fund for the school's endowment.

In the process of initiating all of this, a legal document, called THE TRUST DEED has been established and given Government recognition to what we are doing here this afternoon, September 28, 1991, SIXTY full years after that auspicious initial date when it might have been done in 1930/31 is legally and morally right. To rise funds for saving a national asset from disintegrating.

I have finished my story. It has been a long one but every bit of it has been worth narrating, to give all those who will be donating to the fund, an inner satisfaction that they are fulfilling a worthy duty for Ghana, like Guggisberg did for the Gold Coast in establishing ACHIMOTA.

Thank you all for being patient with me.

---

<sup>1</sup> The total number of students up to December 1990 is 12000.