

## FROM THE PAST

The material on important events and personalities of the History of Medical Practice in Ghana to be serialised in this journal is based on research and documentation on the history of modern medicine in Ghana by Professor Stephen Addae. A brief profile of Professor Addae follows:



**Professor Stephen Addae**  
Physician, Scientist, Historian

MBBS (Honours, London, 1962)  
MD (London, 1972)  
MSc., PhD (Physiology, Rochester, New York, USA, 1968)  
PhD (History, University of Ghana, 1995)  
FRCP (Edinburgh, 2000)  
FGCP (Ghana College of Physicians, 2007)  
Fellow of Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (1980)  
Fellow of Ghana Medical Association (1997)  
Fellow of New York Academy of Sciences (2000)  
First National Award in Medical Sciences (1998)

Professor Addae has done considerable research and published many papers and books on a wide variety of subjects. His research and publications included kidney function in man, kidney problems in sickle-cell disease, the behaviour of sickle-cell disease at high altitude and at different environmental temperatures, the endocrinological and nutritional problems in sickle-cell disease, the transport of ions in sickle-cell disease.

Professor Addae is also an institutional historian. He has researched and written the standard work on the history of modern medicine in Ghana titled *Evolution of Modern Medicine in a Developing Country Ghana 1880 – 1969*. He has written a history of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) in six volumes, one of which is a seven-hundred page Reference Volume. These volumes constitute the official historical documentation of the history of the GAF.



## THE FIRST AFRICAN DOCTORS WEST AFRICA MEDICAL SERVICE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



**Dr. James Africanus Horton**

The West Africa Medical Service of the British Army primarily served health needs of the British Army, but was also allowed to do some private practice among non-official British and African Communities.

There was high mortality and morbidity among the Europeans (including troops and doctors) in the Gold Coast and other West African settlements. The British decided to train British subjects of African descent as doctors because they would be able to stand the tropical climate and diseases better. The first two beneficiaries were Drs Africanus Horton and Broughton Davies.

In 1855 Dr. James Africanus Horton and Dr. William Broughton Davies were selected to train as doctors and were the first African medical officers to serve in the West African Medical Service of the British Army.

They were commissioned as staff assistant surgeons in 1859 for “duties only in West Africa” and were posted to the Gold Coast.

In 1866, Dr. Horton published his “Physical and Medical Climate and Meteorology of the West Coast of Africa”. He described diseases associated with the cold season (Harmattan) as “the worst form of gout and rheumatism with flying pains all over the body, swollen joints, intense local pains.” This must have been a description of sickle cell disease.