



The Edinburgh University Afro-
West Indian Society, c.1915.
Front middle is Clara Christian

Edinburgh University's African History: *Past & Future*

Tom Cunningham & Henry Dee
Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh





Scotland Yard monitor the
Edinburgh Indian Association
fearing revolutionary
discussions.

1910s

1910s – Scotland Yard monitor the Edinburgh India...

1911



Finandra Nath Bose - 1911

1915



Clara Marguerite Christian - 1915

1918



Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah - 1918

1910



1

*Key Findings:
Edinburgh's African History*



James Africanus Horton

Graduated 1859

Born 1835, Gloucester, Sierra Leone

Soldier, Doctor, Political theorist



Agnes Yewande Savage

Graduated 1929

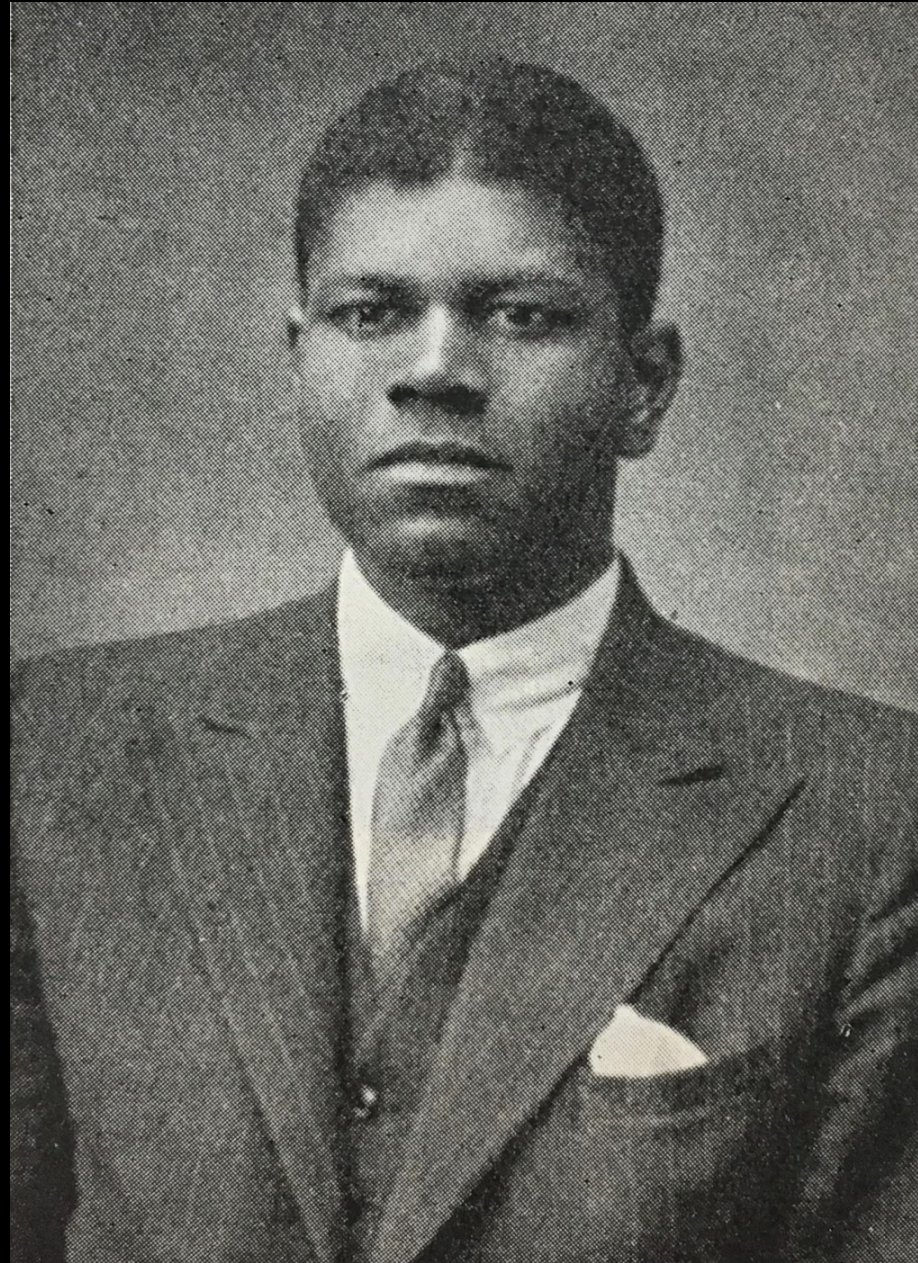
Born 1906, Edinburgh, Scotland

First West African woman to gain a
medical degree?

Medical Officer Gold Coast.

Died 1964.





David Pitt

Graduated 1938

First black candidate to stand as MP

Key Caribbean politician

Second ever black member of House
of Lords

Died 1994.



To The Sky God
(cement, 1955)



Edward Oku Ampofo

Graduated 1939

Born 1908, Mampong-
Akwapim, Ghana

First Ghanaian to get a
government medical bursary.
Renowned doctor and herbalist
Pan-African sculptor and
mentor to the Akwapim Six.
Died 1998.

2

The past as present... and political

“... if the University of Edinburgh had one characteristic which stood out, it was that it was an Imperial University drawing its students from all parts of the British Empire.”

Alfred Ewing, Principal of Edinburgh University, *The Leader*, 04/11/1920

There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion (negro), nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation...In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning, but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.

I must say a few words on some grave errors in generalization which men of science with restricted observation have arrived at respecting the capacity of progression in the African race [...David] Hume, in his Essay on *Natural Characters*, says that

There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion (negro), nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation...In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning, but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.

A witty writer, the late Dr Knox, of Edinburgh, believes that the races of men, particularly the negro, as they were several centuries ago, still continue to be now; and that despite of Christian influences and other civilizing agencies bearing on their rude and savage character, they will still continue to be. [...T]o insist on the broad dogma that no changes have taken place in the races of men, or even animals, as far back as historical evidences can be traced, is **to insist on what is opposed to nature; and none but the unreflecting can be carried away by such a sweeping doctrine [...]**

James Africanus Beale Horton, *West African Countries...a Vindication of the African Race*

Imagine a rather squat figure, with thick lips, crinkly hair, a face as black as the ace of spades, and you have Mr. Taylor from the West Coast of Africa. Africanus was rather a pathetic character; his appearance, his colour and his race were against him [...] He [ultimately] failed to take a degree, which seems a pity, as it might have been of great value in a country where the answer to the charlatanism of the witch doctor is “modern, scientific medicine.”

A.C. Alport, *House of Curious*, pp. 71-73.

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What next?

How to tell our past in our future



Kesaveloo Naidoo

Graduated 1936

Born 1906, Durban, South Africa.

Vice-President of Natal Indian Congress

Died Durban, 1999.

IN
MEMORY OF
JAMES AFRICANUS
HORTON
OF SIERRA LEONE
(1835-1883)
FIRST AFRICAN
GRADUATE OF THE
UNIVERSITY



