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Accra was founded by the Ga people in the late 1600s. The word Accra comes from the word Nkran meaning ants. This is because of the many anthills seen in the countryside around Accra. During part of its history, Accra was a very important place for trade with the Portuguese. The Portuguese built a fort in the town. Many other countries also built forts at Accra during the 17th century. These countries included Sweden, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom and Denmark.

The location that is Accra today grew into a large town around the original Ga town. As the city grew, the British, Danish and Dutch forts and the small communities that formed around the forts were made added to the city.

In 1877, at the end of the second Anglo-Asante War, Accra replaced Cape Coast as the capital of the British Gold Coast colony. After a railroad was built between Accra and the inland locations of mines and farms, Accra became the economic center of Ghana. Large areas of the city were destroyed by earthquakes in 1862 and 1939, but the city rebuilt around a seaport and later a brewery. Each time it rebuilt, the city was made larger.

The Greater Accra Region has the smallest area of Ghana's 16 administrative regions, occupying a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres.⁹³ This is 1.4 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. It is the most populated region, with a population of 5,455,692 in 2021, accounting for 17.7 per cent of Ghana's total population.⁹⁴⁹⁵

The Greater Accra region is the most urbanized region in the country with 87.4% of its total population living in urban centres.[6] The capital city of Greater Accra Region is Accra which is at the same time the capital city of Ghana.

In 1960, Greater Accra, then referred to as Accra Capital District, was geographically part of the Eastern Region. It was, however, administered separately by the Minister responsible for local government. With effect from 23 July 1982, Greater Accra was created by the Greater Accra Region Law (PNDCL 26) as a legally separate region.

The Greater Accra Region is bordered on the north by the Eastern Region, on the east by the Volta Region, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by the Central Region. It is smallest region of Ghana in total area, and is made up of 16 administrative areas.

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