

Liberia Education Update

March 2021



Students outside the annex of Jasper Grant UMS, March 8, 2021.



12th grade students in Jasper Grant UMS annex for afterschool study class to prepare for the September 2021 West African Senior School Certificate Examination.



Flanagan United Methodist School in Fish Town, River Gee County, March 7, 2021



J. S. Pratt UMS, Harper, Maryland County, March 9, 2021. The school was renovated by the Liberia United Methodist Development Services.

Road Trip from Monrovia to Grand Cess

On Friday, March 5, 2021, I set out by bus from Monrovia in Montserrado County to Harper in Maryland County. As we drove through Montserrado, Margibi, Bong and into Nimba County, the passengers talked together and we became, as often happens when traveling in commercial vehicles, like a team. One of my unexpected travel companions was the brother of Rev. Wellity S. D. Tarlesson, the Gee River district superintendent. It was my first time meeting him. The paved road ended in Nimba, and on Saturday, we continued at a slow pace into Grand Gedeh County. Still in Grand Gedeh on Sunday, the bus had difficulty climbing hills and going through mud and finally broke down. I thank God for His Plan B. When the bus broke down, a pick-up truck showed up with a former Gee River district superintendent, Rev. Daniel Young. It was my first time meeting him. Rev. Tarlesson's brother and I rode with Rev. Young to River Gee County. This gave me the unexpected opportunity to visit the Flanagan United Methodist School in Fish Town, River Gee which is still under construction (but almost finished thanks to support from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference). From Fish Town, I went to Pleebo in Maryland County- almost to Harper. I stayed at the guest house next to Jasper Grant UMS where I got to be the substitute teacher for the kindergarten class on Monday morning. The Jasper Grant UMS annex is in use even though all the classrooms are not finished. Work continues as funds are raised. The road between Pleebo and Harper is now paved, and it takes less than 30 minutes to go from one city to the other. On Tuesday morning, I was at the J. S. Pratt UMS in Harper. The second Wednesday of March is Decoration Day in Liberia. This is a national holiday set aside for cleaning and decorating graves. Schools were closed, and I had a day of travel. I left Maryland and crossed into Grand Kru County- no paved roads or public transport cars. I went by motorbike. My first stop in Grand Kru was the Thomas Brewer Elementary UMS in Behwan. The school was not open, not because of the holiday, but because the building is in serious need of repair and students did not return when schools opened in January.



Children lined up for morning devotion at Anna E. Hall UMS, Garraway Beach, Grand Kru County, March 11, 2021.



High school students in class at J. J. Dickson UMS, Barclayville, Grand Kru County, March 11, 2021.

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Rev. J. Flahn Nyema walking from his house to Anna E. Hall UMS March 11, 2021.

I continued to Garraway Beach where I spent Wednesday night at the home of the Anna E. Hall Elementary and Junior High UMS principal, Rev. J. Flahn Nyema. On Thursday morning, I was at the school for morning devotion and visited each classroom. Rev. Nyema was a student at this school when he was a child and had classes in the annex which was never renovated after the war. The annex is now beyond repair and there are two grades in one classroom due to the lack of space. Besides needing another building for classrooms, the school needs a well and handpump. There is no water source on the campus.

I arrived in Barclayville in the afternoon and again had the pleasure of being a substitute teacher. This time in a high school biology class at J. J. Dickson UMS. Luckily the internet worked on my tablet, and I was able to look up the answers to students' questions.

On Friday morning, I was off to Grand Cess where my road trip ended. It was my first time visiting this town on the Atlantic Ocean. I met with the students, staff, and local school board of the David Tweh Toe UMS which using the J. B. Robertson United Methodist Church building. Like the annex for Anna E. Hall UMS, the school building in Grand Cess was never renovated after the war.

The Missionary Aviation Fellowship's Cessna plane landed just for me, and I flew back over the unpaved roads to Monrovia.



Students of David Tweh Toe UMS in front of old school building, Grand Cess, Grand Kru County, March 12, 2021.