

## Buchanan Withers Written by Festus Poquie Thursday, 07 October 2010 20:27



### ***Remnants of Atlantic Street, Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County***

#### ***As Sea & Bush Conquer***

In his earlier 70s, Mr. Gbelle Gbaa sat on an old boat, angrily watching the invading Atlantic Ocean, in total disbelief.

“ How could this be?” The city he knew as a young man was now being slowly swallowed, and there is nothing he can do against the intruding ocean.

Within seconds, his home submerged into the deep blue sea along with several houses.

It was so abrupt. There was no time to prepare for it, thought the sea might have gradually warned of its onslaught, warnings ignored. The signals were shelved and in the end his beloved home, in which he and his family had lived since the 1930s, was swept away, its parts carried away like an angry lion grabbing and devouring its prey.

Buchanan is a sinking city battling against the Atlantic Ocean encroachment. But its fight for survival seems a fruitless venture, a lost battle against the might and fury of nature uncontrolled.

In 2008, the ocean swallowed vast portions of this town, leaving many homeless and destitute.

Mr. Gbaa, who walks along the sea coast every day to take a frustratingly look at the sea he blames for homelessness, recounted the erosion episode.

“Look! The whole town is gone,” he said despair and helplessness written on his wrinkled face. For few

seconds, he paused and then continued with his tale of sorry, a personal tragedy by all counts.  
“More than ten thousand houses have been destroyed.

“The whole town (is) finished. Go. Here, Mr. Sheku’s (neighbor) two story house was here, but You can’t see it. It’s gone.”

Though the sea had impoverished him and his family but Mr. Gbaa still believes that the sea can perform miracles to enable him feed his dependents, perhaps by receding and retreating.

“I came here this morning (on the beach) to think about how I can feed my children. Since this morning, no way for them to eat,” he said with frustration.

Despite the huge publicity regarding the devastating effect of Buchanan’s sea erosion, many of its victims claimed they have yet to benefit from government assistance.

“No interest from government. We have seen nothing since this problem started. They said company (is) coming take care of this sea erosion but they can’t reach,” one resident said.

The plight of those sea erosion victims might be ignored or it could be the results of competing priorities for a government with many needs. But the real fact and danger is this: the sea will take over the port city of Buchanan, period!

Dixon Senh, 52, is a resident of Fanti Community. He explained why the sea is attacking and the possible death of this big town.

“Our houses are being damaged on a daily basis as a result of sea erosion.

“The current from the sea is very high and there is no way to block it. The sea is eating the sand and hauling the houses in the Atlantic Ocean.”

Beside the sea’s invasion, Buchanan residents are faced with another battle, which is the ocean roll into the City center the tall Savannah grass are moving in from the north east and West.

This place, from its outlook is one of well-designed cities in the country but the grass is competing with the ocean to place it under its authority.

While the sea is coming gradually, the grass is moving speedily. For instance a four lane street which is highly visible in Monrovia, unlike Broad Street and Tubman Boulevard are under the bush’s firm control.

“We have good houses all buried in bushes. No war (was) fought here but the city is just dirty and old,” Dixon Senh said.

Whatever the situation, there sits Buchanan, struggling for survival against the ocean and the tall savannah grass with its dwellers being the conspirators.

**--Festus Poquie**