

# Retiring Principal Will Leave Mark On County's Schools

By-Catherine Long

When M. Q. Plumblee retired from the Caswell County school system last month after 39 years of service as teacher and principal, he left behind his mark.

To the recent graduate of Bartlett Yancey Senior High School where Mr. Plumblee has been principal for the past eight years, the mark has been one of unending interest in each individual student and of concern for each student who wishes further education after high school.

To a younger principal, the mark has been the guiding example which the older administrator set for him in a school year full of change and transition.

To a teacher serving under Mr. Plumblee's administration, it has been the supportive role he has played in helping that teacher function at his or her professional best at Bartlett Yancey.

To all citizens of Caswell County, whether they have had children in Mr. Plumblee's schools or not, his mark will be the long years of unselfish service he has given in helping improve the educational system here.

And to those who have never seen or met this man, the mark may well be the beautiful American holly trees which now grace the lawns of BYHS as a result of Mr. Plumblee's love for the school plant and its grounds.



M. Q. Plumblee ended his career of teaching and school administration last month after 39 years of service. Despite his duties of guiding the large senior high school and its fifty faculty members, he has also found time for a multitude of civic activities. He has held offices in many of the professional organizations to which he belongs. He is a past master of the Caswell Masonic Lodge, a member of the Yanceyville Rotary Club, and charter member of Phi Delta Kappa, a graduate school fraternity. He is also a member of Baynes Baptist Church and has been awarded the Outstanding Citizen Award by the Yanceyville Kiwanis Club.

## A STRIPPED-DOWN T-MODEL

Millard Quentin Plumblee arrived in the community of Anderson in the fall of 1931. Coming from Chapel Hill where he had been a student at the University, the young man's entrance into Caswell County was in a "stripped down" T-model belonging to a classmate, who had offered to bring him and his trunk to the new teaching-principal position.

Anderson was at that time,

like many rural communities in the depression years, a slow undeveloped community. There was no electricity, only one telephone in the community had a "long distance" line. The only hard surfaced road in the area was N. C. 62. And of course, milk or newspaper deliveries were unheard of.

Young Mr. Plumblee was undaunted by his new home and position. He himself was from a rural area in Greenville County, South Carolina. He had

chosen to come to this new place in the northern Piedmont of North Carolina through the Teacher Placement Service at Chapel Hill and the recommendation of Mr. Holland McSwain. He was hired by the District School Committee for Anderson School.

So Anderson became home. And has remained so for these 39 years. In 1939, Mr. Plumblee built a home in the com-

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## Retiring Principal

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munity for his bride, Miss Mary Elizabeth Chandler, a young Caswell County lady, and today the Plumbees are still living there.

### CONSOLIDATION REQUIRES PATIENCE

Beginning as principal of the Anderson Elementary school with only a small number of teachers and class of his own Mr. Plumlee soon found that expansion and consolidation was to be, over and over again, the key words in his administrative school work. A high school was begun at Anderson in 1934 with sixty high school students to be guided. The following year Cherry Grove High School moved to Anderson, bringing more students and a total of seven or eight high school teachers.

Since that first consolidation, Mr. Plumlee has overseen the consolidations of Anderson and Bartlett Yancey, Cobb Memorial and Bartlett Yancey, Prospect Hill and Bartlett Yancey, and most recently, Caswell County High and Bartlett Yancey.

Naturally consolidation has its problems. Community feeling runs high. Individuals dislike seeing their "old school" absorbed by another.

For Mr. Plumlee the answer to solving these many problems lies in being patient and being willing to sit down together and work things out. This technique has proved itself each time consolidation has been faced by him.

### CHANGES HAVE BEEN MANY

"The schools have kept in line with the changes and improvements which have been taking place over the years," said Mr. Plumlee, in looking back over the past 39 years. "Organization and consolidation have helped with this."

The complexity of educational programs has certainly grown. "We now have a program of education fitted for all levels of students," pointed out the retiring principal.

The basic curriculum at Anderson in 1934 included only English, science and mathematics. Since that time Mr. Plumlee has seen incorporated into the high school programs: home economics, agriculture, physical education,



Mr. Plumlee's plans for retiring include doing some of the things he enjoys the most. Here he and Mrs. Plumlee are shown doing one of these things and that is taking care of

his garden. Also included will be some fishing, hunting, and traveling.

business education. He takes particular pride in the vocational courses which have been made available.

There was no cafeteria at Anderson at all when Mr. Plumlee began his work there. In the late 30's, soup and crackers were made available each day at a cost of five cents per bowl. There was no milk to go with the daily soup. Well balanced meals are now served in modern cafeterias throughout the county.

Community participation has decreased according to Mr. Plumlee. The building of a vocational-gymnasium complex at Anderson in the late 1930's was a good example of how the community people once were willing to get out and work to raise money for the school. This type of effort no longer pays off, and monies must come from taxation now he said. "Activity in the PTA organization even decreases at the high school level."

The greatest pleasure for Mr. Plumlee over the years

has been in "seeing students want and seek and work for an education" -- not only high school, but continuing to higher learning institutions, colleges, technical and trade schools. "People have learned the true value of an education."

From the graduating class of 281 students at Bartlett Yancey this year, more than 180 students have plans to continue their education.

### WHY AN EDUCATOR?

M. Q. Plumlee had ample background for becoming a teacher. Not only was his mother a teacher, but also three sisters and a brother.

Holding an A. B. and a masters degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the field of education and attending professional meetings, workshops and summer schools have more than adequately prepared him for his role.

The real reason why Mr. Plumlee has given these many years of service has been simply stated in his own words, "I like young people. I enjoy working with them. It thrills me to see them grow and develop into outstanding citizens

Now Gordon Plumlee, the son of the retiring administrator, follows in his footsteps, teaching on the faculty at West-ern Alamance High School.

Because of his health, Mr.

Plumlee is retiring this year, and even though he looks forward to the slower "pace" of retired living, it is a sure fact that he will still have the interest of the schools in this county in his heart.