

# Four Retire After 108 Years of Service

**Mrs. Nannie Sumlin**

Ever since her arrival at Duke in October, 1949, Mrs. Sumlin has been a medical assembler in Central Supply. It was her job to prepare the sterile trays that would later be used in surgery, in examining rooms, in the emergency room, and in other areas of the hospital.

"She was a very dependable, conscientious worker, said Mrs. Gretchen Cheek, her supervisor. "She had been on the job so long that she could assemble the trays without referring to the index card that lists all the items to be placed on each tray . . . and she averaged between 80 and 100 trays a day."

The fact that she knew the articles that needed to go on each tray by heart was a testimony to a mighty good memory, for Mrs. Sumlin had to assemble many different kinds of trays, each with different instruments on them. On the tracheotomy tray there are 65 items, on the phlebotomy tray there are 40 and on the emergency suture tray there are 47. In addition to knowing the kind and number of items needed on each tray, the assembler must know the order in which they come, for the doctors and nurses will look for the items in a certain order. There are almost 200 different instruments and their parts—tubes, needles, syringes, etc.—that the medical assembler must be familiar with to perform her job accurately. Because there are so many instruments to learn, the training for the job is difficult and cannot be accomplished in a short time.



Mrs. Nannie Sumlin



Lee Williamson, a member of the D.U.M.C. Amateur Radio Club, is shown in the station connecting Dr. Frank Bassett, orthopaedic surgeon, with a doctor in Nicaragua for a consultation. They are participating in Project MED-AID, a program of the Division of International Health, Department of Community Health Sciences.



## Project Med-Aid Begins Operation, Seeks Help of Doctors

Project MED-AID is on the air!

By the use of short-wave amateur radio, Project MED-AID (Medical Assistance for Isolated Doctors) provides doctors in mission hospitals and bush stations throughout the world an opportunity to consult with doctors at Duke.

Using their radio transmitters and receivers doctors in the bush can now call the MED-AID radio station at Duke every day from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (E.S.T.). Located on the top of the roof of the Gerontology Building, the station began full time operation August 1.

For convenience, the transmitter and receiver in the radio sta-

tion can be connected to the Duke telephone system, so that the consulting doctor can speak from his office, laboratory, ward, or home to the doctor who is calling for professional assistance. Tape recording equipment is also available so that messages can be recorded and re-transmitted at a later time if it is more convenient to do so.

Good radio contacts have already been made with Nicaragua, Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Colombia, Congo, and Australia.

The willingness of doctors at Duke to respond to calls for help in the area of their specialty by answering occasional radio-telephone requests is now being

sought. It is important that every specialty be represented on the list of those willing to cooperate with the project. There is no need to hesitate because a fluency in Spanish, French, or Swahili is lacking, for although a foreign language ability is helpful, it is not necessary.

Also, anyone who is a licensed radio amateur or who would like to become one is especially needed to help run the radio station on weekends.

Those who are interested in participating in the project, or visiting the radio station and/or in obtaining further information about Project MED-AID should call ext. 4317, 4048, or 2498.

Although there are 34 medical assemblers during the day, only four of them are trained to do what Mrs. Sumlin did.

"She was a valuable person to lose," said Mrs. Cheek, "But I know that she was looking forward to her retirement, and I hope she will enjoy it."

### Mr. James Thorpe

Many know Mr. James Thorpe as a man rarely seen without a smile and a pipe—both working at the same time.

"He was always smiling and always had a pleasant word for everybody," said Mr. R. N. Crenshaw, business manager of Sur-

gical P.D.C., where until his recent retirement Mr. Thorpe was head orderly.

When James first joined the Surgical P.D.C. staff in 1949 as an orderly, he carried the mail and ran errands for the doctors on the clinic staff. Gradually other duties were added, and when he retired "James" had a list of responsibilities that testify to his abilities, honesty, and dependability. It was James' responsibility to keep a running account of office supplies in the P.D.C. storeroom and let Mr. Crenshaw know when some item got low. He picked up the laun-

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Mr. James Thorpe