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Blair recalls rapport

[Editor's Note: Mr. E. P. Blair, former coach, teacher, and principal at Farm Life High School for over thirty-three years, returned to Vanceboro with his wife for a visit with some of his many friends living here. He graciously granted time for this interview.]

By Rick Cannon

As I talked with Mr. Blair, I began to get a feel for the way his students must have felt toward him and the way they still feel. "Ed" Blair cared about the students and faculty he worked with. He explained to me that when he began his career as a principal at Farm Life School, he promised himself that his door would always be open to any student or teacher who had a problem to talk about. "This was a promise I kept all through my career. I believe it is the main reason why I always enjoyed such fine rapport with my students and faculty," Blair commented.

When he began work at the Vanceboro school in the fall of 1932, Blair served as

a coach in both boys and girls sports. Later he added dramatics and a debating team. "For three or four years in a row, we had a fine debating team," Blair explained, "We went to the elimination rounds in Chapel Hill each year and one year finished third in the state." He indicated that Warren Aldridge now a doctor practicing in the area, was one of the best debaters he coached. During Blair's tenure as basketball coach, his teams often went to the state playoffs as well as many area tournaments. More often than not, Farm Life emerged victorious.

The longer Blair stayed at Farm Life School, the more his responsibilities grew. As principal, he not only dealt with administrative matters, but took seriously the job of guidance counselor. "In my early years as principal, it was my responsibility to serve as guidance counse-

lor," Blair stated. It was in this area that Blair found himself "called on the carpet" by the school superintendent who chastised Blair for taking up so much time with talking to students and teachers. Blair explained to the superintendent that that was an issue that the two differed on. He finally won his superior over by explaining that for him to be effective he must have contact with the students and teachers. According to Blair, the good rapport he enjoyed with both teachers and students was a very important part of his success as a principal.

Blair went on to say that he feels that contact and good rapport between students and teachers and the principal is sorely missing in some schools today. He feels that the principal needs more contact with the students. He added that principals should take a more active

roll in the guidance of students. "If the guidance counselor can help the student set goals and help the student see and begin to correct deficiencies in areas of their work, and keep a close tab on their progress, then the counselor is doing a good job," Blair explained, "However, guidance counselors should not go far into the behavioral patterns of the student without a close relationship with the principal." Mr. Blair added that in the latter part of his tenure as principal, he was fortunate to have Mrs. Colvin Joyner as the school's guidance counselor. He explained that there was always close communication between him and Mrs. Joyner. "Neither of us left the other 'out on a limb,'" Blair commented.

Born in Greensboro, N. C. in 1910, Blair attended Guilford College and Haverford College. He



BLAIRS VISIT— Rev. Claude Wilson welcomes Mr. and Mrs. E.P. Blair to the morning services at the Vanceboro Methodist Church. (photo by R.L. Cannon, Jr.)

earned his Masters Degree at East Carolina University. When asked if he felt that now after more than ten years if he could handle the job of high school principal, Blair replied, "Well, parents now are a lot more permissive so it might be a little more difficult, but I could still handle it." He went on to explain that a person can handle a job like that by

getting underneath and inside a student or teacher. "Only then can you discover the real problem and effectively find a solution. He added that when you try to keep on the external and do not manifest any genuine interest in the student or teacher, you get nowhere and students and teachers are pretty much left to seek their own way.

Fort Barnwell Bulletin

By Mrs. B. H. Mitchell

[Editor's Note: Mrs. B. H. Mitchell has recently taken over as the writer of the Fort Barnwell Bulletin. Mrs. Mitchell is a fourth grade teacher at Farm Life Elementary School in Vanceboro where she has worked for over twenty-four years. She was one of the first teachers to be transferred from the Vanceboro Consolidated School to the Vanceboro Elementary School in the late sixties. Mrs. Mitchell graduated from Elizabeth City State College with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education. She earned her Masters of Education at N. C. Central University in Durham, N. C.]



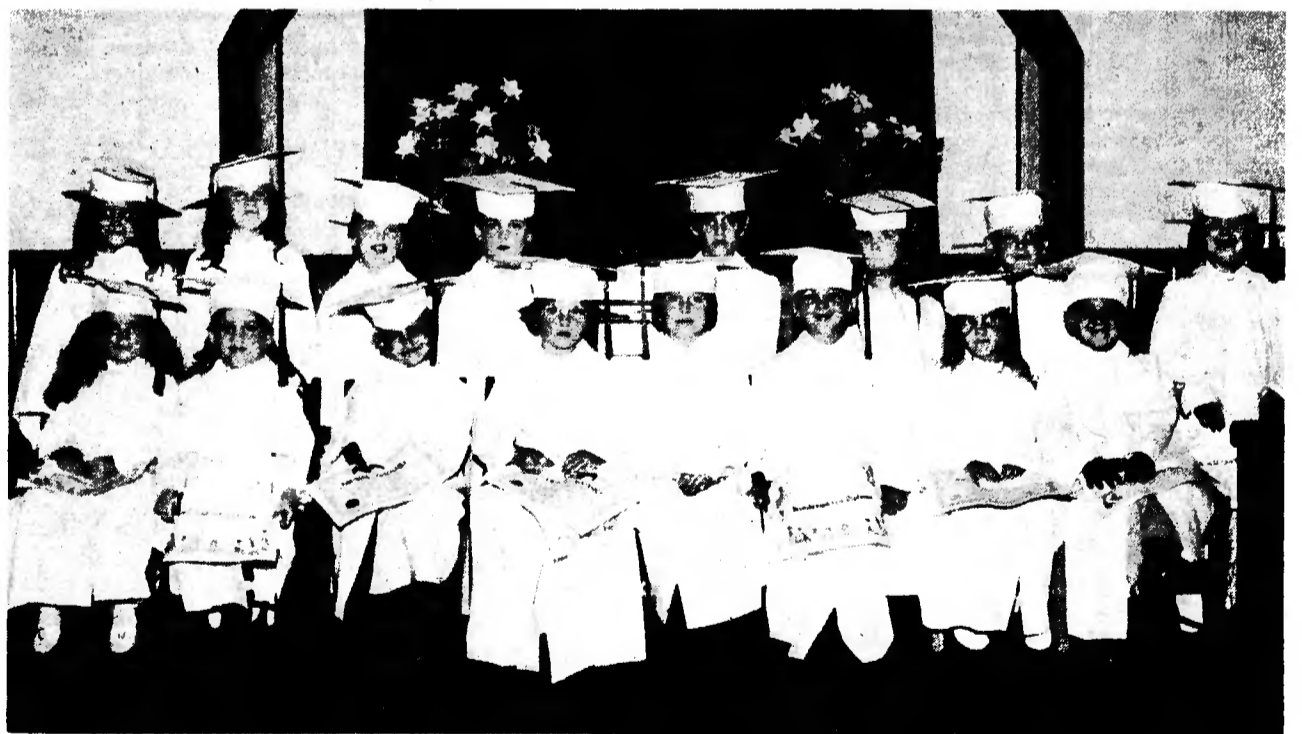
Mrs. B. H. Mitchell

A resident of the Ft. Barnwell area for most of her life, Mrs. Mitchell is married and has three children.

Anyone who would like to have news of the Ft. Barnwell area in the Highlights should call Mrs. Mitchell at 523-5968 or the Highlights office at 244-0780.]

The Girl Scout movement began in the Fort Barnwell community in March of 1976 under the leadership of Mrs. Ever-

See GIRLSGOUTS, page 5



KINDERGARTEN GRADUATES— The 1979 Kindergarten Graduating Class from the Vanceboro Private Kindergarten. The students received their diplomas during commencement exercises on May 30.

Vanceboro Private Kindergarten graduates sixteen

The Vanceboro Private Kindergarten under the direction of Mrs. Nancy Caprara held its Eleventh Annual Commencement Exercises Wednesday night, May 30 at the Vanceboro Christian Church. The children, all four and five year olds, presented a musical program for the parents

family and friends in attendance. Their theme was Memorial Day. Deborah Dunn accompanied the children on the piano.

Perfect Attendance Awards went to Tracy Russell, Mark Panichelli, Donna Hart, Robert Nobles, Jr., and Amy Wiggins. Tracy Russell

received the Most Outstanding Student Award for the girls. Tracy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Grover Russell, Jr. of Ft. Barnwell. Paul Lancaster received the Most Outstanding Student Award for boys. Paul is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Lancaster of Vanceboro. The Most Improved Student Award

went to Joel Dunn, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Dunn of LaGrange. Jenny Tallman received the Most Outstanding Four-Year-Old Award. Jenny is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Tallman of Ayden, N. C.

The Vanceboro Private Kindergarten is a locally owned and operated

private kindergarten for children four and five years old. This year students attended from as far away as LaGrange, N. C. For eleven years, the kindergarten has been operated by Mrs. Nancy Caprara of Vanceboro. It meets in the Rectory of the Holy Name Catholic Church on Main Street in

Vanceboro from 9-12 Monday through Friday. Students receive a broad preparatory background which includes Number Reading and Reading Association for Pre-Schoolers. No meals are served but children do enjoy a snack time during their stay.