



FOR DOBSON AREA—This is Surry Central located at Dobson, one of the two newest school plants in the county's consolidation program. Expected enrollment here will be 650.



NORTH SURRY HIGH—The first of the three high schools completed for Surry's County school system. Location—three miles west of Mt. Airy.

Three New High Schools Built

Consolidation Goals Are Near For Schools Of Surry County

With the opening of the 1961-62 session in September the Surry County school system was nearing the immediate goals of consolidation at the high school and elementary levels.

The county system is now organized in three high schools, all in splendid new buildings, and 12 elementary schools. In addition there are the Elkin and Mt. Airy units operating independently.

The new high schools are:

Surry Central, at Dobson, accommodating an enrollment of 650. Surry East, at Pilot Mountain, accommodating an enrollment of 550. Surry North, three miles west of Mt. Airy, accommodating an enrollment of 750.

The elementary schools in the county system are:

Dobson, Mountain Park, Copeland, Lowgap, Beulah, Franklin,

White Plains, Flat Rock, Westfield, Pilot Mountain, Shoals, Ridge-Westfield.

These high and elementary schools bring to near-conclusion the program of school improvement which was begun somewhat hesitantly over 50 years ago. In achieving the reforms that are exemplified in the three new school plants, financial obstacles and public resistance had to be overcome.

102 Schools In 1911

In 1911, a half century ago, Surry County had 90 white and 12 colored schools. There were 121 teachers in the one and two room rural schools. As an indication of the kind of school buildings then existing, the old records show that 37 schools had patent desks, 20 had home made desks, and 33 had no desks at all, but were furnished

only with home made benches for the pupils to sit on.

J. G. Hollingsworth, the county's historian, says that after 1908 a change in attitude toward local school taxes became noticeable. "More and better school facilities became the order of the day." One advancement upon which he comments was "the employment of a full time superintendent; another was the building of a new and commodious school building in Elkin, and the beginning of the school at Mountain Park. The Elkin school, he states, began to move forward under the guidance of Prof. Zeno Dixon, who took charge here in 1903.

In 1914, Mr. Hollingsworth explains, J. H. Allen became the county superintendent and held

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From One-Room Schools To Mansions Of Learning

Consolidation Helps Educational Program

In the half century since 1910 education in Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin counties has traveled the track of American democracy. The schools have moved from the primitive and simple to the complex.

In the era of the private academies and institutes which existed in these counties, instruction for college entrance was not free. There were no high schools and education depended on money.

The quality of the instruction depended on the "professors," and some were successful in professing more than others.

Fifty years ago most children walked to school in mud and snow, or rode a mule. Sometimes two or three boys rode the same mule. The boys cut the fire wood in the woods and carried water from the spring.

Schools Everywhere

After the frontier period, when there were no schools in the northwest at all, there came a period when there were schools everywhere. Each township had from five or six to a dozen school districts, and the districts were in fact largely independent. The school was fairly good or very poor, depending on local willingness to pay taxes for a teacher. Because there was never very much money the buildings were inadequate, the desks and seats were home-made, and the school term was brief. It was not unusual for a district to skip a complete term, which perhaps mattered very little because the terms lasted only a couple of months.

Good Schools

There were a few very good schools in that day. They were the academies taught by devoted and capable men, who had a love for teaching and a respect for learning. There are scholars now living who do not low-rate the old-time academies, for they were more thorough in their limited scope than the modern high schools are permitted to be.

One reason for this is the preoccupation of the American people with entertainment and a variety of other pursuits that are not essential to a command of science, English and math.

The old and honorable academies are gone, and they are missed. The one-room teacher schools are gone and our young are the better for that.

In general the improvements are good, even though they are more noticeable in plant than in scholastic achievement.

Milestones

In this section of The Tribune's "Golden Anniversary Edition" an effort has been made to survey, very briefly, the trends in education in the tri-counties. The intent has not been to trace history, but to observe and comment on some of the milestones.

Most noticeable are the improvements in the teaching profession, the great new investments in plant structures and equipment, and the steadily increasing numbers of boys and girls who remain in high school until graduation and continue further, into the universities and colleges.

Pictured on this page and pages following are scenes of student activities and of some of the fine new consolidated buildings that have been erected in the three counties, in the never ending, swiftly changing, always urgent struggle to keep the schools abreast of the times.



EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN JONESVILLE—Top, Library of the Jonesville High School. Bottom, Typing class, part of the course in preparation for business.

History Of Education In County Related

Baltimore School One Of First Established In Yadkin County

One of the first schools in what is now Yadkin County was known as the Baltimore School. It is believed to have been established about 1790, a very early period in the history of the nation and of North Carolina. The location was then in Surry County and all of this region was on the northwest frontier. Very few communities had schools of any kind, and the opening of a school in the remote interior was an event of importance.

Baltimore School was a subscription school. The man who organized it was the man who taught the pupils, and the length of the

term and the teacher's pay depended on the number of students he was able to enroll.

Dwight D. Martin, a Yadkin County teacher, looked up some facts about the Baltimore School and wrote an article about it.

"Because of poor roads," he said, "the school was open only in the summer." Two other schools in the same community followed the first effort. The third had a session lasting two or three months and the teacher was paid \$16 per month.

Prior to 1884, Mr. Martin learned, the eastern part of Yadkin County had only two school houses.

es. One was in the Enon section and was called the "Red Plains School House," the name coming from the red mud that was daubed between the pine logs of the building.

No Path To Learning

This school was literally in the backwoods. There was no public road leading to it, only trails through the woods. Mr. Martin related that the building had one window and one door and was furnished with desks made of pine slabs which stood on peg legs.

In that school the term was

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C. C. Wright Was Education Pioneer In Wilkes

Charles C. Wright devoted most of his life to education in Wilkes County. He was superintendent of schools for 34 years, and before that he had been a teacher. When he retired, in 1933, the county had acquired a school house in every neighborhood.

Mr. Wright believed it to be his duty to visit every school at least once a year. On his circuit he had 98 schools, and the simple task of traveling among them kept him on the road for weeks. His gray horse and buggy were familiar sights. He was often away from home for a week at a time, and longer, because the rough tracks and trails made it impossible to hurry, even with a swift horse.

When better roads and the adoption of the school bus brought on the trend toward school consolidation, Wilkes County was reluctant. But by the late 1930s consolidation had become an educational necessity. The task fell to C. B. Eller, who had succeeded Mr. Wright, and who is still laboring at the job.

At that time Wilkes was teaching only 11 grades.

Resistance to consolidation was active in the first years of the program, when the elementary schools only were concerned. The opposition was sometimes political, often stemming from community pride and a disposition to keep controls of the school at the grass-roots level. Resentment and opposition can still be found in some areas,

but in general public opinion is now preponderantly in favor of the consolidation program. From the 98 schools in 1933, the number has been reduced to 25.

Elementary Consolidation

"In the next few years we shall have to consider some additional consolidations of elementary schools," said Mr. Eller. "We still have some schools that are isolated and have such small enrollments that it is difficult to provide them with the quality of instruction that we want for every child in this county."

The county is still faced with the need of substantial additions to its school plant. Mr. Eller explained, because many of the present elementary schools do not have all the facilities that are essential. Consequently, probably in the near future, the county will have to consider a bond issue or a substantial increase in the levy for capital outlay.

Still needed are more class rooms, more lunch room capacity, and space for vocational classes in the high schools, and multi-purpose rooms in the elementary schools, Mr. Eller said.

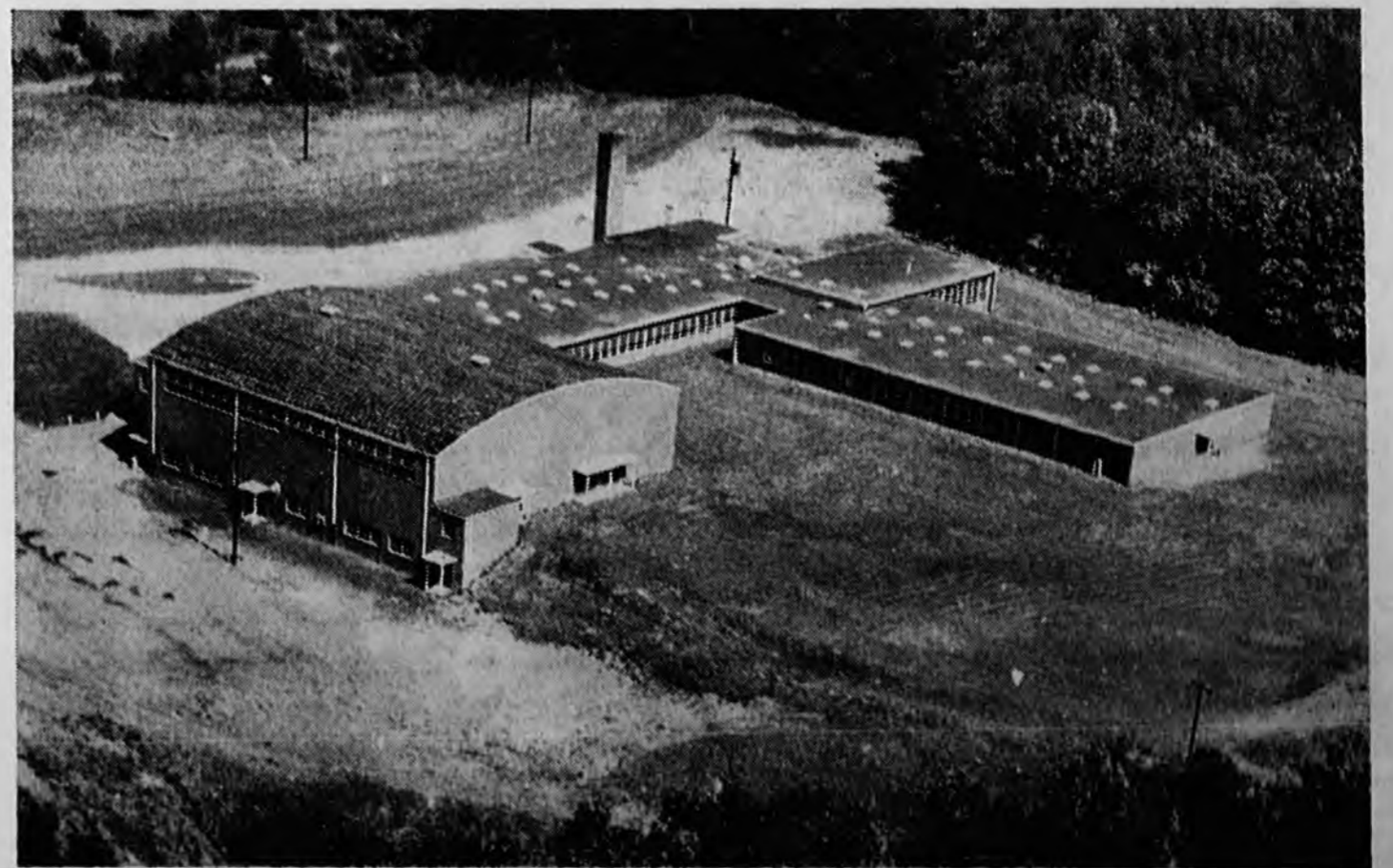
In other counties professional school men say of Mr. Eller's leadership:

"No man has worked as hard and as faithfully in behalf of school improvements, as C. B. Eller. He has had to overcome stern

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DISAPPEARING—Few schools like this remain in Wilkes County. This is Pleasant Ridge school, made in the 1930s, when there were 89 elementary schools and nine union schools in the county. In the program of consolidation, begun about 25 years ago, most buildings like this one have been eliminated. There are now 21 elementary and four high schools in the Wilkes County system.



WOODLAND SETTING—Wilkes County's newest high school, resulting from consolidation program developed over a period of 25 years. This is North High School, erected in 1957 to combine the schools of Mountain View and Traphill.