

Allen, William Cicero ^[1]

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by Samuel M. Gainor, 1979

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William Cicero Allen, educator and historian, was born in [Halifax](#) ^[2] of Scottish ancestry. His father was James V. Allen, the leading merchant in Halifax County and a major of the local regiment of Home Guards during the [Civil War](#) ^[3]. His mother was Maria Aaron, his father's second wife and Allen was the fourth of their five children. His great-great-grandfather James Allen moved from Prince Edward County, Va., to what is now [Halifax County](#) ^[4] and established himself as the first of three generations of planters and slaveholders. His great-grandfather, also named James Allen, and his grandfather John Allen both fought in the Continental Army during the [American Revolution](#) ^[5], the former attaining the rank of colonel.

Allen attended private schools in Halifax County and was graduated from [Wake Forest College](#) ^[6] in 1885. During his long and distinguished career as an educator, he served as principal of the Pantego Male and Female Academy of [Beaufort County](#) ^[7], 1885–87; founder and superintendent of the Scotland Neck Military Academy, 1887–92; principal of the Wilson High School, 1892–97; principal of the Reidsville High School, 1897–99; superintendent of the city schools of Waynesville, 1899–1914; superintendent of the schools of Weldon, 1914–19; superintendent of the schools of Canton, 1919–22; and training director of the U.S. Veterans' Administration Vocational School in Waynesville, 1922–25. In April 1925 he was elected superintendent of public instruction of [Haywood County](#) ^[8], and continued as superintendent and as a teacher in Waynesville High School until his retirement in 1942.

As a historian and author, Allen was interested in county and state history. Among his writings were newspaper articles and five books. His first book, *[North Carolina History Stories](#)* ^[9] (Richmond: Johnson Publishing Co.), written for children, appeared in 1901. *[Centennial of Haywood County](#)* ^[10], his next work, was published on the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of [Haywood County](#) ^[8]. *[The History of Halifax](#)* ^[11] (Boston: Cornhill Co.), another county history, was published in 1918; it was followed by *[The Annals of Haywood County](#)* ^[12] in 1935. In 1942 Allen's last book, *[The Story of Our State, North Carolina](#)* ^[13], was published.

During [World War I](#) ^[14], Allen was field director of the [Red Cross](#) ^[15] in the government vocational school located at Sulphur Springs in Waynesville.

Allen was a lifelong [Democrat](#) ^[16] and an active member of the First Baptist Church in Waynesville. He was superintendent of the Sunday school for thirty years and deacon and deacon emeritus for sixty; he was also, for a number of years, treasurer of the church. He belonged to both the Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias fraternities and held professional memberships with the North Carolina Educational Association and the [National Educational Association](#) ^[17].

Allen met Cottie Wilkinson, daughter of Jordan and Mary Jane Windley Wilkinson of Beaufort County, when he was principal and she a teacher at the Pantego Male and Female Academy. They were married on 20 Dec. 1887 and had two children, William C., Jr., and Lillian May (Mrs. Humes H. W.) Hart. Allen's wife predeceased him on 22 Feb. 1948.

References:

Asheville Citizen-Times, 16 Dec. 1949, 26 Oct. 1952.

Greensboro Daily News, 24 Jan. 1943.

North Carolina: Rebuilding an Ancient Commonwealth, vol. 4 (1929).

Waynesville Mountaineer, 16 Dec. 1937, 24 Feb. 1948, 30 July 1948.

Additional Resources:

William Cicero Allen Books, Albiris: <http://www.alibris.com/search/books/author/Allen,%20William%20Cicero/aid/104208> ^[18]

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Origin - location:

Halifax County ^[24]

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