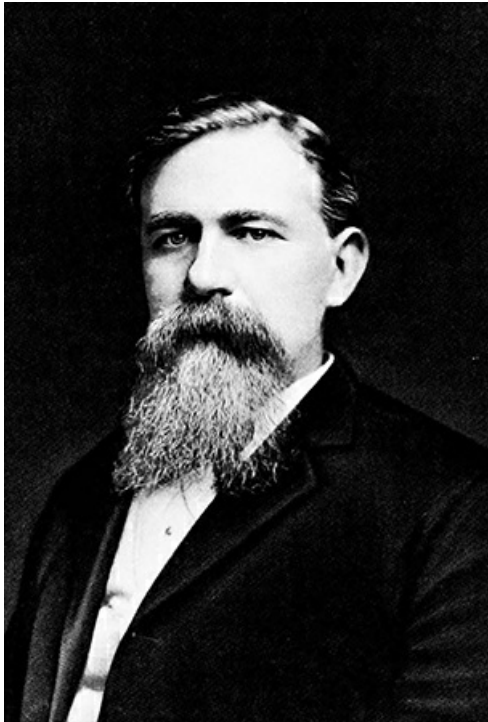


## **Holt, John Allen** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Holt, John Allen**

by Ralph Hardee Rives, 1988

**18 Dec. 1852–15 June 1915**



Engraving of J. Allen Holt published in 1908.  
Image from Internet Archive.

<sup>[2]</sup>John Allen Holt, educator, lay leader in the Methodist Protestant church, and state senator, was born near Hillsdale, [Guilford County](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, the son of John Foust and Louisa J. Williams Holt. For forty-one years he was a teacher and for thirty-nine years he was principal and senior proprietor of [Oak Ridge Institute](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, a nondenominational preparatory school that had close ties to the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant church.

Holt attended Oak Ridge Institute, [Williams College](#) <sup>[5]</sup> in Massachusetts, [Ohio Wesleyan University](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, and the [Ohio Business College](#) <sup>[7]</sup> from which he was graduated in 1875. The same year he began his association as a teacher with Oak Ridge Institute, where in 1879 he was joined by his brother, [Martin Hicks Holt](#) <sup>[8]</sup> (d. 1914). In 1884, the Holt brothers purchased the institution and operated it until their deaths. John Allen headed the institute's commercial department.

Also interested in the mercantile business and in banking, Holt was a director of the City National Bank of [Greensboro](#) <sup>[9]</sup> and of the North State Fire Insurance Company. In addition, he served for more than twenty years as a member and/or chairman of the Guilford County Board of Education. He was a member of the board of trustees of [The University of North Carolina](#) <sup>[10]</sup>, a member of the Order of United American Mechanics, a [Mason](#) <sup>[11]</sup>, and active in the [North Carolina Teachers Assembly](#) <sup>[12]</sup> which was organized in 1884. In 1898, he was elected president of the Association of Academies of North Carolina.

In 1907–8 Holt was a member of the state senate, where he served as chairman of the committee on education and a member of the committees on railroad and finance. Considered to be a debater of rare force, he championed the reduction of railroad passenger and freight rates, better educational facilities for the masses, and the control of trusts. The [Raleigh News and Observer](#) <sup>[13]</sup> once observed: "[Holt] has killed the old idea that the teacher is not practical." A frequent delegate to the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant church, he was a delegate to the General Conference of that denomination in 1884, 1900, 1904, and 1908. As a result of their strong religious convictions, the Holt brothers made a standing offer of free tuition at Oak Ridge Institute to ministerial students of their denomination and to the sons of Methodist Protestant ministers in the North Carolina Conference.

On 29 Dec. 1881, Holt married Sallie Josephine Knight (13 Sept. 1853–23 Apr. 1946), the daughter of Pinkney Knight. They were the parents of two sons and a daughter. One son, Earle, taught for some years at Oak Ridge Institute. Holt was buried in Oak Ridge.

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