

J. Allan Lewis Collection

Repository:	Rockingham Co. Historical Collections Gerald B. James Library Rockingham Community College P. O. Box 38 Wentworth, NC 27375
Title:	J. Allan Lewis Collection
Accession No.:	06-063
Extent:	2 boxes
Provenance:	
Inclusive Dates:	c.1930-1950
Subject Headings:	Lewis, J. Allan, 1908-2004 Schools – Rockingham County (N. C.)
Preferred Citation:	<i>J. Allan Lewis Collection. 06-063. Rockingham Co. Historical Collections, Gerald B. James Library, Rockingham Community College.</i>
Biographical Sketch:	<p>James Allan Lewis was born on 19 Jan 1908 in Danville, Va. To Bernard Graves Lewis, Sr. and Bessie Hooper Lewis. He was educated in the Danville Public Schools and attended Virginia Military Institute and Lynchburg College. He did graduate work at Columbia University and the University of NC at Chapel Hill and at Greensboro.</p> <p>In 1934, he became principal at Sadler Elementary in Rockingham County and later served as principal at Happy Home Elementary and Wentworth Consolidated Schools. In 1946, J. Allan Lewis became the superintendent of the Rockingham County School System and served in that position until his retirement in 1970. During his tenure, he replaced the old frame African-American schools with modern brick school buildings during the period of 1950-51.</p>

Lewis was active in the Boy Scouts of America for over 62 years and received one of their highest awards, the Order of the Arrow. "Doc" as he was known, also served on the executive board of the Boy Scouts for over 40 years. He was past president of Rotary International of Reidsville and served for 30 years on the Rockingham County Library Board and for 24 years on the Board of Health for Rockingham County.

Lewis was among the founders of the Rockingham County Historical Society and was an early president of that organization. He was active in several education associations and was at one time president of the District Superintendent of the NC Education Association.

During his years as principal at Sadler, Happy Home and Wentworth, he used his New York theatrical experience to produce school plays each year.

For nearly 75 years, Lewis was a member of Mount Vernon United Methodist Church in Danville, Va. He died on 8 December 2004 at the age of 96. He had resided in Reidsville for many years. He never married. He was survived by one sister, Virginia L. Farley, and one brother, Bernard G. Lewis, Jr., both of Danville. He is buried at Mountain View Cemetery in Danville.

Written by Bob Carter

Sources:

The Reidsville Review, 10 Dec 2004.

The Leaksville News, 29 Apr 1943

Additional information from school research by Bob Carter

Descriptive Note:

This collection of photographs was taken by J. Allan Lewis during the time he served as principal at Sadler, Happy Home and Wentworth Schools in the 1930s and 1940s. One group of photographs date from the early 1960s when he was Superintendent of Education for Rockingham County. At that time, Lewis' office was located in the former County Home building. These photos were made inside and outside of the building and one shot shows the field where Rockingham Community College would later be built. The majority of the photos are of students, teachers and school buildings at Happy Home. A few were taken at Sadler and some at Wentworth.

Contents:

Folder 1

Happy Home School – Scenes of classrooms, plays and views of the school building

Folder 2

Scenes of school plays, including students in blackface at Happy Home School. Copy of program from Mayfield Public School play dated May, 1936

Folder 3

Camp Saurakee, former Camp Cherokee (Boy Scouts)

Folder 4

Rockingham County Center building (former County Home) which housed the school superintendent's office in the 1960s

Folder 5

Sadler School – images of a school play (1940s?)

Folder 6

Miscellaneous photos, unidentified images of scenes from school plays, possibly Happy Home, Sadler or Wentworth schools

Folder 7

Miscellaneous photos, unidentified images of scenes from plays, buildings and a house raising

Folder 8

Wentworth School scenes – classes, plays, students, basketball, baseball, displays, principal's office dated 1940-1943

A Family in Turmoil, An Autobiography by Avery W. Hunter, 1986 (principal at Sadler 1942-1944, principal at Williamsburg 1944-1946, principal at Wentworth 1946-1973)

