

Ruggles, Edward Wolfe ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1994

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Edward Wolfe Ruggles, educator, was born in Southern Pines, the son of Adolphus Stephens and Sarah Frances Young Ruggles. Educated in local public schools, he spent his final two years of high school at Buies Creek Academy. As a teenager he worked for the telephone company doing technical work in the office as well as on the lines. He was graduated from [North Carolina State College](#) ^[2] in 1922 with a degree in electrical engineering. As a student he was enrolled in the ROTC program and upon graduation was commissioned second lieutenant in the Signal Corps Reserve. Ruggles worked briefly for the General Railway Signal Company but contracted tuberculosis in 1923 and was hospitalized for many months. In 1926 he became an instructor in the Electrical Engineering Department at State College and took graduate courses.

In 1928 he became assistant director of extension, a new form of education begun just four years earlier, and in 1934 he became director of the Extension Division at the college. Initially it consisted chiefly of a few short courses and some correspondence work, but during [World War II](#) ^[3] it expanded greatly. The division offered courses at [Fort Bragg](#) ^[4] and [Pope Field](#) ^[5], near [Fayetteville](#) ^[6], and at [Cherry Point Marine](#) ^[7] Air Station, in [Craven County](#) ^[8], through which men in military service could earn college transfer credit. At the request of the government, more than 4,000 students received instruction in defense-related courses. Countless inspectors, supervisors, machinists, welders, and others were trained. After the war courses were offered in the field of agriculture, in truck driving, and in numerous technical subjects as the need for adult education grew. Technicians received training in machine work, radio, television, and electronics. Avocational training also was offered, and fishing courses conducted at Nags Head proved especially popular. Extension divisions in colleges and universities evolved into Continuing Education Centers, and Ruggles's thirty-one years in the program before his retirement in 1965 had much to do with the enlarged concept. More than 12,000 students had enrolled under his guidance, and the division had gained a national reputation.

In 1927 Ruggles married Anna Rose Latham of Plymouth, and they became the parents of two children: Edward L. and Mary Frances. He was an Episcopalian.

References:

Raleigh News and Observer, 29 Jan. 1956, 27 Aug. 1982.

Additional Resources:

MC 00053 Guide to the Edward Wolfe Ruggles Scrapbooks and Papers, 1918-1971. North Carolina State University Libraries: <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/findingaids/mc00053#CollectionSummary> ^[9]

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Origin - location:

[Southern Pines](#) ^[13]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#),^[14]

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