

Worthington, Samuel Wheeler ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1996

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Samuel Wheeler Worthington, businessman and bibliophile, was born in [Bertie County](#) ^[2], the son of Colonel Dennison and Julia Wheeler Worthington, a niece of the historian [John H. Wheeler](#) ^[3]. He attended [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[4] (1893–95), and during his lifetime he was involved in various occupations and pastimes. His primary means of earning a livelihood, however, seems to have been in the mercantile field. The Wilson city directory for 1912–13 lists him as a general salesman. Then in 1924, as owner of the Dixie Land Company, he was regarded as a pioneer promoter of [Dare County](#) ^[5] coastal property. In 1947–48 the Wilson directory identified him as a manufacturer's agent.

A knowledgeable book collector, Worthington frequently advertised for titles that he wanted to acquire. He once reported that [Bruce Cotten](#) ^[6], a noted collector of North Caroliniana, had inspired his interest in "the colorful history and hallowed traditions" of the state. In 1939 he prepared the manuscript for a book that he proposed to publish in a limited edition. The manuscript, now in the North Carolina Collection at the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) ^[4], is entitled "Historic Glimpses of North Carolina: A Pictorial Review of the History, Memorials, Shrines, Public Buildings, Mansions, and Personages of North Carolina during the [Colonial](#) ^[7] and [Antebellum Periods](#) ^[8]." Some of the photographic illustrations, he noted, had been made by himself; others were acquired from libraries and archives. Some of the text appears to have been researched, and some was based on his own knowledge.

Worthington published an undated illustrated pamphlet entitled *Ancient and Rare North Caroliniana: A Brief Resume of Some of the Early and Rare Publications on North Carolina from 1424 to 1929*. It contains no indication of its purpose—whether he was seeking to buy or to sell the publications it describes. The pamphlet was attractively designed and printed and undoubtedly has become a rarity itself.

On 7 Dec. 1899 Worthington married Lucy Roscoe Outlaw, and they had a son, Samuel Wheeler, Jr. His funeral was conducted at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Wilson, and he was buried in Maplewood Cemetery.

References:

Daniel L. Grant, *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* (1924).

Raleigh News and Observer, 16 Jan. 1956.

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