Wrenn, Manleff Jarrell [1]

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by William S. Powell, 1996

25 Aug. 1858–18 Feb. 1934

Manleff Wrenn was a stockholder in the Southern Furniture Exposition Building, High Point, N.C. Available from North Carolina Postcard Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill. [2]Manleff Jarrell Wrenn, pioneer furniture manufacturer [3] in High Point [4], was born near Liberty in Randolph County [5], the son of Merritt C. and Nancy Elizabeth Jarrell Wrenn. His father, a farmer, was a Confederate [6] soldier in the medical department who died in Raleigh [7] near the end of the war [8]. His mother, who was educated in the New Garden Boarding School, suffered many hardships rearing her two sons; her daughter died in childhood. When her sons were still young, she sold the farm and moved to the small town of High Point, where they attended school and Manleff worked in his uncle's hotel and clerked in a grocery store.

At age twenty-two Wrenn invested his meager savings in the grocery business that he continued to operate until 1888. His brother, Thomas F. [9], joined J. H. Tate [10] and E. A. Snow in organizing the High Point Furniture Company. Soon Manleff acquired Snow's interest, and by 1898 he had obtained the shares of the other partners as well. This was the first furniture factory in the town, and as the sole owner of a flourishing enterprise, Wrenn began to expand his business interests. He became a director of the Atlantic Bank and Trust Company, half owner of the Wrenn-Columbia Furniture Company, and a stockholder in the Southern Furniture Exposition Building [2]. He also was president of the North State Telephone Company from 1921 until his death. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, High Point.

Wrenn, a Democrat [11], was an alderman of High Point for seven years and mayor for four, as well as a steward in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1928 he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Houston, Tex. On 11 June 1918 he married Louise Clinard, a graduate of the North Carolina State Normal School [12]. On his death she became head of the High Point Furniture Company, and in 1937 she donated the M. J. Wrenn Memorial Library to High Point College.

References:

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North Carolina Biography, vols. 5 (1919), 3 (1928), 5 (1941).

Ray J. Shipman, *High Point: A Pictorial History* (1983 [portrait]).

Who's Who in the South (1927).

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Southern Furniture Exposition Building, High Point, N.C. Available from North Carolina Postcard Collection, UNC-Chapel

Hill. Available from http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/nc_post/id/8283 [2] (accessed July 15, 2013).

Subjects:
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