

Packer, Francis Herman ^[1]

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by John Sanders, 1994

13 Feb. 1873–13 July 1957

Francis Herman Packer, sculptor, was born in Munich. In the United States, he was a student of the sculptors Philip Martiny and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. By 1914 he was a resident of Rockville Centre, Long Island, N.Y., where he remained for the rest of his life.

Packer's work is well represented in North Carolina; it includes bronze statues of Ensign Worth Bagley ^[2] (1907, Raleigh ^[3]), Confederate senator and Attorney General George Davis ^[4] (1910, Wilmington ^[5]), Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin (1914, Raleigh), and General Nathanael Greene ^[6] (1915, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park ^[7]). The last is an equestrian figure. Packer's monument to the *Soldiers of the Confederacy* (1924), featuring two bronze figures, stands in Wilmington. He was commissioned in 1914 to execute a bust of Judge William Gaston ^[8], which was copied in marble from a plaster bust (now lost) that had been modeled from life by Robert Ball Hughes in 1831–34. The marble is now exhibited in the North Carolina Supreme Court Library ^[9], Raleigh. Packer visited North Carolina in connection with his professional commissions but never resided in the state.

Other works by Packer included *Nebraska* for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis (1904), the Congressional Medal honoring the Byrd Antarctic Expedition (1930–31), and various portrait sculptures.

Packer's wife, Julia Bucher, predeceased him and he left no immediate survivors. Friends described him as a gentle, artistic man who shunned public attention and insisted upon perfection in his sculptures.

References:

New York Times, 15 July 1957.

Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* ^[10] (1930).

Who's Who in American Art, vol. 1 (1935).

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Additional Resources:

"Confederate Monument, Wilmington." Documenting the American South: Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/116/> ^[11] (accessed September 5, 2014).

"Worth Bagley Monument, Raleigh NC." Documenting the American South: Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/100/> ^[12] (accessed September 5, 2014).

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Origin - location:

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From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. ^[22]

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