

Newland, William Calhoun ^[1]

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by David H. Tyner, 1991

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William Calhoun Newland, lawyer, legislator, and lieutenant governor, was born near Marion in [McDowell County](#) ^[2]. The Newland family had immigrated to the American colonies from Wales, and William Newland's grandfather had moved to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. Newland's father, Dr. Joseph C. Newland, was born in 1816 near Lenoir and attended Louisville Medical College. He practiced medicine in [McDowell County](#) ^[2] until 1873, when he moved his family to Lenoir. William Newland's mother was Laura Conley Newland, a native of [Caldwell County](#) ^[3].

Young Newland attended Finley Academy in Lenoir, then secured an appointment to [West Point](#) ^[4] through Congressman [R. B. Vance](#) ^[5]. After three years, he resigned from the academy and returned home to study law. He apprenticed himself to Judge C. A. Cilley and was admitted to the bar at age twenty-one.

Joseph Newland, a partisan [Democrat](#) ^[6], named his son in honor of John C. Calhoun. William Newland seems to have inherited his father's interest in politics as well as his party preference. He was elected mayor of Lenoir while still in his twenties and was reelected twice. In 1890 he was elected solicitor in the Eighth District. Nine years later he won a seat in the lower house of the North Carolina General Assembly and in 1903 was reelected. In 1904 Newland was nominated for Congress but lost; four years later he was elected lieutenant governor under [William Walton Kitchin](#) ^[7]. [Avery County](#) ^[8] was created during Newland's tenure, and its county seat, Newland, was named in his honor.

During his active years Newland attended most of the national conventions of the Democratic party, and in 1920 he nominated for the presidency Senator [Furnifold M. Simmons](#) ^[9] as North Carolina's favorite son.

Newland also participated in various civic and governmental functions. By appointment of the [North Carolina legislature](#) ^[10], he was a member of the Penitentiary Commission; he served as a trustee of the Caswell Training School for the Feeble Minded; and for a time he was a trustee of [Davenport College](#) ^[11]. While in the legislature, Newland introduced the bill establishing [Appalachian State Teachers College](#) ^[12]. He successfully guided the bill past firm opposition, and at the time of his death he was chairman of the school's board of trustees.

Newland was a member of the [Masonic](#) ^[13] lodge, the Independent [Order of Odd Fellows](#) ^[14], and the Knights of Pithias. He was a Sunday school teacher and active in the Methodist church.

In 1884 he married Jessie Hendrey of [Wilmington](#) ^[15], and the couple had four children. Towards the end of his life, Newland suffered complications from kidney and heart disease. He died in Grace Hospital in Banner Elk.

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