

## **Crawford, William Thomas** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by K. Rodabaugh, 1979

**1 June 1856–16 Nov. 1913**



William Thomas Crawford.  
Image courtesy of The  
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Congress.

William Thomas Crawford, congressman and state legislator, was born near Waynesville in Haywood County <sup>[2]</sup>. As a boy, he spent long hours tilling the soil of his family's mountain farm, but he managed to find time to attend local public schools and Waynesville Academy. Later he clerked in a local general store and read law at night.

Crawford soon entered local politics and won a seat as a Democrat <sup>[3]</sup> in the North Carolina House of Representatives, where he sat in the sessions of 1885 and 1887. He then studied law at The University of North Carolina <sup>[4]</sup> (1889–91), before being admitted to the bar in 1891. In the preceding year he had won his first term in the U.S. Congress from North Carolina's old Ninth District; he gained reelection in 1892 but lost in the Democratic catastrophe of 1894. After his defeat, Crawford remained very active in North Carolina politics: he served as a delegate to every Democratic State Convention from 1900 to 1912; he was a presidential elector in 1904; and he received the Democratic nomination for Congress several more times. In 1906 he won another term in Congress (from the new Tenth District), but he lost again in 1908 in a very close race. After his final defeat he practiced law in Waynesville as a member of the firm of Crawford and Hannah until his death and burial there in 1913.

Crawford was a Democrat of the Grover Cleveland <sup>[5]</sup> type: he believed in the gold standard and a low tariff and was unalterably opposed to a system of state-wide primary elections and to electing U.S. senators by direct popular vote.

Crawford married Inez Coman in 1892; they had four sons and three daughters. He was a Baptist <sup>[6]</sup>.

#### **References:**

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

Julius C. Martin, "William Thomas Crawford," North Carolina State Bar, *Proceedings* 16 (1914).

*North Carolina Manual* (1911, 1913).

*Raleigh News and Observer*, 18 Nov. 1913.

#### **Additional Resources:**

Crawford, William T. (William Thomas) 1856-1913 in WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-nr00-11481> <sup>[7]</sup>

"*The House of Representatives of the Fifty Third Congress*" (detail), Crawford, William Thomas, (1856 - 1913). "*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?>

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