

Timberlake, Edwin Walter ^[1]

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by John R. Woodard, 1996

4 July 1854–2 Jan. 1933

Edwin Walter Timberlake, lawyer and judge, was born in [Franklin County](#) ^[2], the son of R. H. and Mary A. Harris Timberlake. His father was a country doctor, and young Edwin traveled around with him and observed firsthand the poverty and hardships of his area. When his family moved to the town of Wake Forest, Timberlake entered college. He was graduated from [Wake Forest College](#) ^[3] in 1873 and from the law school of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in 1876.

He began to practice law in Louisburg in 1877 as a [Republican](#) ^[4]. The [Democratic party](#) ^[5]'s dominance in the state from 1872 to 1894 closed the avenue of judicial advancement to Republican lawyers, but in 1894 the [Populists fused with the Republicans](#) ^[6] and became the majority party. On this occasion Timberlake was nominated by his friends as superior court judge of his district. During his eight years of service (1 Jan. 1895 to 1 Jan. 1903), he made numerous acquaintances over the state. In 1904 he moved his family back to Wake Forest, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Timberlake was a [Baptist](#) ^[7] and a member of the [Odd Fellows](#) ^[8] and [Masonic](#) ^[9] order. He served as chairman of the Wake County Draft Board in 1917 and 1918 and was a member of the Wake Forest College Board of Trustees from 1896 until his death. On 27 May 1879 he married Ada Lee Simmons, the daughter of Professor [William Gaston](#) ^[10] and Mary Foote Simmons. They had three children: Mary Lee, Mrs. Phil M. Utley, and Edward Walter.

Judge Timberlake died at his home in Wake Forest. His funeral services were conducted by Drs. [Willis Richard Cullom](#) ^[11] and J. W. Lynch at the Wake Forest Baptist Church. He was buried in the cemetery at Wake Forest.

References:

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