

“ INCIDENTS IN KNUTE NELSON’S LIFE ”

BY

ELMER E. ADAMS

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FOREWORD

BY

DOUGLAS A. HEDIN
EDITOR, MLHP

Senator Knute Nelson died on April 28, 1923, at age eighty-one. He had served three terms in the House of Representatives, representing the Fifth Congressional District, 1883–1889, one full term as governor, 1893-1895, and about three weeks of a second term in January 1885. The Minnesota Legislature elected him U. S. Senator in 1895 and again in 1901 and 1907. He won re-election to his fourth term in 1912 and fifth term in 1918 by popular vote.

His death was reported on the front page of in the *Fergus Falls Daily Journal* on Monday, April 30. It also published a collection of anecdotes about Nelson by Elmer Ellsworth Adams, a local businessman, political supporter, confidant and close observer of the Senator for decades. Adams admired Nelson but also saw that he was stubborn, sometimes petty and a grudge-holder, among other “shortcomings.”

Before he began his remarkably successful career in politics — he never lost an election — Nelson practiced law in Alexandria in Douglas County. Because of this background, he chaired the Judiciary Committee during the Harding years. When a district court seat opened in Minnesota in 1922, he had one candidate in mind — sixty-one year old John F. McGee, a Hennepin County District Court Judge. A stalemate was created because Harding had policy of not nominating men over sixty for federal judgeships. Finally, a reluctant Harding nominated McGee, and he was confirmed on March 2, 1923.

It was a political victory for Nelson, but came at great cost to McGee. The workload of a federal judge proved too much for him, and he committed suicide in his chambers on February 15, 1925.

In 1923, he also prevailed upon the President to appoint William A. Cant to the federal bench, thus satisfying a political debt that had lingered since 1895, when he was elected U. S. Senator with Cant's support. Harding made a recess appointment of Cant on May 21, 1923, followed by a nomination in December, and a Senate confirmation on January 15, 1924. Cant served until death on January 12, 1933.

"Incidents in Nelson's Life," as it was originally titled, appeared on page ten of the *Journal* on April 30, 1923. It has been reformatted. The names of newspapers have been italicized, and the spellings of a few words corrected.

Adams also wrote two studies of Nelson's early political battles: "The Washburn-Nelson Senatorial Campaign, 1894-1895." (MLHP, 2016) (published first, 1924), and "The Nelson-Kindred Campaign of 1882," 5 *Minnesota History* 88-107 (May 1923).

<http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/5/v05i02p087-107.pdf>

In the Appendix are photographs of Nelson from 1861-3 to 1923. Additional photographs will be posted when located.

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INCIDENTS IN NELSON'S LIFE

Interesting Bits of History About
Senator Nelson During the
Early Days.

He Came to Locate in Fergus Falls
And Regarded Otter Tail
Almost as His Home.

It is not the purpose of this article to review the public career and public acts of Senator Nelson so much as it is to give a picture of him as we knew him in whose midst he had lived for more than half a century. It was in August, 1871, over fifty-one years ago, that he moved to Alexandria which at that time was the Metropolis of Northwestern Minnesota, although, it perhaps had less than one thousand people.

He was born in Norway on the 2nd day of February, 1843 and when six years of age came to the United States with his mother. He lived in Chicago until the fall of 1850 when with his mother, he moved to the State of Wisconsin and settled in Dane County. He struggled and worked as the sons of pioneer families did. In the meantime, he got such education as he could. He was fortunate enough to attend school at Albion Academy from which he graduated. He entered the War of the Rebellion when 19, serving as a private and non-commissioned officer in Company B of the Fourth Wisconsin from May, 1861 until the end of July, 1864. He was wounded and taken prisoner in June 1863 in the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana. On

returning from the war, he studied law and for a time was in the office of Wm. F. Vilas, one of the strong, vigorous men of Wisconsin at that time and afterwards a United State Senator from that state. Senator Nelson was admitted to the Bar in Dane County in 1867 and was elected to the Assembly in the Wisconsin Legislature in 1868 and 1869 and thus began his public career which has extended long and more continuously than that of any other man in the Northwest.

Practiced Law in Otter Tail County

He came to Douglas county, Minnesota, when twenty-eight years of age and was elected Attorney for the County, a year later and was re-elected in 1873 and 74. He was elected State Senator in 1875 (sic) and served four years. At that time his district covered a large portion of Northern Minnesota. In the meantime, he practiced law and built up a large practice in the territory tributary to Alexandria. He attended every term of Court in Otter Tail County and some of his practicing was done when the county seat was at Otter Tail City. In those days, he had begun to develop that sturdy, vigorous character which made him an outstanding personality here in the northwest. He took an active part in politics and was on the stump in every campaign. He was not a great orator. His speeches on the platform and in the Congress were never oratorical in any sense but were the plain, unvarnished statements which always carried weight.

The Nelson-Kindred Campaign

It was in 1882 that the turning point came in his public career. That was the year of the famous Nelson-Kindred campaign in which he was elected to congress. This was one of the most vigorous campaigns ever waged in this state. At that time, the Fifth Congressional District, of which he was the first representative, covered practically all of the state north of a line running through St. Cloud. It will be remembered that, at the request of Senator Nelson, I recently prepared and published an account of that campaign for the records of the State Historical Society and this was published in the *Fergus*

Falls Journal so that it is not necessary to re-tell it here. Senator Nelson was very anxious to have a record of this campaign put into the records of the State Historical Society and, so at his solicitation, I visited Alexandria and spent much time with him going over the incidents related thereto. During our review of this campaign, there were recalled to his mind many incidents to which I made notes and which will be published at a later day. He had treasured in his safe a number of documents relating to this campaign and from these a large amount of material was secured and the documents were placed in the State Historical Society. At that time Senator Nelson and I discussed the publication of his memoirs which would be properly entitled "Fifty Years in Public Service," a record which very few men have achieved. He held practically every public office the gift of the people, serving as County Attorney, State Senator, Congressman, Governor, United States Senator. He was never defeated and it is well known that he has waged some very hard battles.

After serving six years in the Congress, he retired voluntarily in 1888 and remained in private life until 1892 when the political conditions of the State on account of the development of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party which very much resembled the present League movement, made it necessary for a strong man of his type to become the candidate of the party in order that it might not be defeated. He defeated Daniel W. Lawler and Ignatius Donnelly in that campaign and in the campaign of 1894 he defeated George L. Becker, the Democratic nominee and Sidney M. Owen, the candidate of the People's Party. These were most vigorous and intensive contests and the feeling ran fully as high as it did in the recent campaign of 1922. Old-timers will remember that in this county, the Town of Folden gave Nelson two and Owen one hundred ten. Henning gave Nelson nine and Owen one hundred seven, Nidaros gave Nelson twenty and Owen one hundred twenty-five while such conservative townships as Oscar, Trondhejm and Norwegian Grove gave Nelson hardly one-third of the votes. This feeling, however,

passed away, after three campaigns, for what the Senator told them in those campaigns proved true. For some years, they were unitedly behind him. The Non-Partisan League Movement finally struck this section of the country in 1918 and 1920 when the same conditions were renewed and the Senator was powerless to hold their support. In his own county of Douglas, he lost every township for United States Senator and the worst of it was that it went to a man who had already been convicted of trying to obstruct the progress of the war.

His Election to the Senate

In the campaign of 1894, Nelson was the candidate for Governor and Senator W. D. Washburn was a candidate for re-election to the United States Senate. It was the general understanding that both were the nominees of the party for their respective offices, although, at that time, the Senator was elected by the Legislature. As soon as the general election was over and Nelson had been re-elected Governor, it became apparent that he would become a candidate for United States Senator against Senator Washburn. When the Legislature convened, although Washburn was understood to be the candidate of the party and many of the members of the Legislature were pledged to his support, a movement was started to undermine him and bring Nelson to the front. The story of this contest is too long to be told here and will be given at a later date. However, the result of the contest was that Washburn was defeated and Nelson was elected to the United States Senate and Lieutenant Governor D. M. Clough became Governor. It left many scars and many broken friendships even among those who had been Nelson's supporters hitherto.

Early Work in the Senate

Senator Nelson has served twenty-eight years in the United States Senate during which time he has left his impression upon the legislation and history of the country. He has always been an indefatigable worker and in session and out of session has been in Washington

attending to his duties. In the early stages of his senatorial career, he was active on the committees on Indian Affairs and Public Lands as they were the outstanding questions in this state at that time. He became an authority on these questions and one of the finest tributes ever paid to a public servant was paid to Senator Nelson by Senator Paris Gibson, then a Senator from Montana, when in discussing Senator Nelson with me, he said, "Whenever Senator Nelson made a statement to the United [States] Senate affecting Indian affairs or Public Lands or any of those matters which were in his charge, the Senate always accept it as the fact while in very many cases, the Senate always felt like checking up so to speak to be sure that it was all right." It was during Senator Nelson's handling of the Indian affairs and public lands that he rendered such excellent service to the settlers of the northwest. There were many controversies over their homesteads and preemptions and contests over railroads lands. He had been a homesteader himself having purchased a relinquishment on the farm on which he has spent his entire life in Alexandria and part of which he still owns. He recently told me that this farm was his savings bank and he took great pleasure when home on vacations in assisting in doing the work on the farm.

For a good many years, he as the only Scandinavian in the Senate and he was called upon to do all of the Norwegian business from Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico. He said that whenever a Scandinavian was in trouble, he wrote him at Washington for assistance.

Opposed to High Tariff

In the later part of Senator Nelson's senatorial career, he was somewhat at variance with a large part of his party on the tariff. He was a low tariff man and representing a district which, perhaps, profited less by the tariff than a great many others he was very frequently outspoken in his opposition to the schedules as adopted. This was particularly true in the last session when he made a vigorous fight against certain schedules and notably the wool

schedule. He was a very strong believer in the development of an American Merchant Marine and to the very day of his illness when he had to leave his seat in [the] Senate, he did everything possible to uphold desire of President Harding in attempting to pass the Merchant Marine Bill commonly known as the Ship Subsidy Bill. He maintained that its defeat was a great error and that it was necessary to have an American Fleet in order to carry our products to foreign ports and to open up lines of trade necessary to restore prosperity to our country. He was courageous and fearless in all of his acts and it can be truly said that he followed the dictates of his own judgment against public clamor as much as any Senator ever did.

In one of the last visits which I had with him at Washington, he maintained that. If the public men would go out and explain to the people what the Ship Subsidy Bill was so that they could see it in its true light and not be influenced by prejudice, it would become a popular public policy.

Headed the Great Judiciary Committee

During the last years of his service in the Senate, he was the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee which is one of the most responsible in the Senate. There were only a few Senators who had a better grasp of the country's business than he, but his great influence with his fellow members was due to his hard, common sense, which guided him in all his actions. His relations with his fellow senators were not particularly intimate. He did not participate in the social life of the Capitol. When his duties were over for the day, it was his custom to retire to his modest home and spend his time reading.

The Senator was a hard worker almost to the closing days of the last session. It was the 24th of February within ten days of the close of the session that he was taken sick with influenza which was prevailing in Washington at the time. He had just passed his eightieth

birthday and on account of the happening of the past two years, he was in no shape to stand a hard siege of sickness. While everyone thought he would be confined to his home for a few days only, he did not return for the balance of the session. It was decided to have him remain in Washington until the weather got warm in Minnesota. He was slow in picking up and in regaining his former strength and he started home against the advice of his family.

During the campaign last fall, he wrote me from Alexandria, as follows:

“Alexandria, Minnesota, October 23, 1922.

Friend Adams: I am not very well and shall have to keep quiet for sometime. I was in Detroit last night but was half sick and after an hour’s talk, I was exhausted and could hardly continue. Vitality at eighty is not like that at seventy and it has to be nursed.”

His Last Campaign Speech

The last campaign speech that he made was made in Detroit, the place where forty years before he had achieved his most notable triumph in securing the nomination for Congress which opened up his political career. That speech lacked none of his early vigor for he scored the democratic waste in the war as severely as any man could do and no man knew it better than he did.

The Fight for a Judgeship

There were few men more determined and vigorous than Senator Nelson. When he had once set his heart on anything, he got it, and it was from his sickbed in Washington that he won his last and one of his most notable personal triumphs. Even before the law creating the new United States Judgeships was passed, he had his heart set on the appointment of John F. McGee as the Judge when the Judgeship was created. President Harding has laid down the rule which was backed up by the Department of Justice that no man over sixty

years of age should be appointed to a United States Judgeship for they are pensioned at the age of seventy. Judge McGee, at that time, was sixty-one years of age. President Harding had turned down other Senators who had urged candidates who were over sixty. Senator Nelson was particularly interested in Judge McGee because he had been made to suffer on account of it and he was determined to have him appointed Judge. One day, I was discussing this matter with him and the possibility of other candidates came up in view of the President's position and with all his determination he said, "I am for McGee." The President tried on several occasions to have the Senator yield and suggest someone else for the place but he absolutely refused. There was urgent need of a judge to handle the business and after a delay of six or eight months with only three days left of the session the President again sent word to Nelson and asked if he would no yield. But he was determined, and as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee he was in a position to prevent the confirmation of anyone else and the President yielded and nominated Judge McGee. The radicals under the lead of LaFollette at once sought to defeat McGee's confirmation but from his sickroom, the Senator summoned the aid of his friends in the Senate and succeeded in having Judge McGee confirmed, although at one time, there was but one vote to spare on a motion not postpone the confirmation.

In the Roosevelt days, the Senator wanted his friend William E. Hale appointed district judge by Roosevelt refused to do this and gave a recess appointment to Judge Purdy. When the time for the confirmation of Judge Purdy came, Nelson had Purdy's nomination rejected and it gave President Wilson a chance to appoint a Democrat.

The Senator's Generosity

Senator Nelson was very kind-hearted and generous. One time, we were coming up from St. Paul on the Great Northern and were riding in the coach as was the Senator's practice. When the conductor came around to take the tickets, he took the tickets of an immigrant

woman and her children and found some of them irregular. The husband and father had gone out to Dakota and was opening up a claim and had sent for the family to follow. As was the practice in those days, the immigration agent had sold the woman tickets which were not right and the conductor proposed to put a part of the family off at the next station. Senator Nelson heard them talking in Norwegian and this aroused his interest. He went across to see what the difficulty was about and when the conductor came around again, he said that he would have to put a part of the family off to comply with the rules. The Senator pulled out his pocket book and paid the difference, some \$20 and then, in his vigorous manner, denounced the railroad's policy of treating in such a manner the people who were developing the railroad's territory. It was a generous act but he ended the incident by cautioning me not to ever say anything about it.

Aided Cyclone Suffers Here

When the cyclone visited our city he sent a generous check to be delivered to the poorest and most needy persons and later when some children wrote to him and told him that they were worshipping in a basement and asked him for some aid to build a church, he sent me his expense check issued by the Senate with instructions to turn it over if I found the solicitation regular. He did these things out of a meagre income for he had always confined his earnings to his salary and had not been able to accumulate very much in view of the constant drain upon him from all over the state.

He always led a very simple life in Washington. He had bought a modest home near the capital where he and Mrs. Nelson resided until her death last fall. After Mrs. Nelson's death, her niece, Mrs. Truscott kept house for him. I spent the last Sunday before his illness with him. I found him upstairs in a little room which he called his office, very meagerly furnished but well filled with books. I found him reading a history of the Civil war which he said was the best history of the war which had been written. As I was about to leave he

said, "Let me show you how I have my light fixed so that I can read after I go to bed." We stepped into an alcove where there was a very cheap iron bed and he had arranged his electric light so that by pulling a string he could turn the light on or off. He said that he found real comfort in his old age in lying in bed and reading and it seemed like a real luxury to have this light so handy. He had always been an omnivorous reader, particularly of history and as a result he was well informed.

Closing Years Were Full of Trouble

The last few years of his life had been full of trouble. Just at the time when he wanted to lay aside his work, it became necessary for him to serve another term and the strain of the campaign and the treatment he received in his own county hurt him severely. He lost three children when they were small. His last son, Henry Knute Nelson, died a few years ago. Mrs. Nelson was ill for a long time and passed away last summer and in the midst of her illness, came the unfortunate affair when his son-in-law killed a man upon the Senator's farm and brought great trouble and sorrow to him. In the meantime, his contemporaneous friends at Alexandria had all passed away, Lars K. Aaker, F. Von Baumbach, L. J. Brown, G. B. Ward and others. In fact as he told me one time that the men whom he naturally expected to be some of his pallbearers had all preceded him.

An incident occurred at the Senator's home not long ago which almost paralleled his own death. Prof. Maria Sanford, of the State University, went to Washington to deliver an "Apostrophe to the Flag," before a national meeting of women. She was around eighty years of age and with her finely chiseled features and white hair, she made a most impressive scene as she paid this wonderful tribute to the flag. She was a guest at the Senator's home. After the evening's program she returned to the house, retired and was found dead in her bed in the morning. This affected the Senator and Mrs. Nelson very much and the suddenness of his own death recalls this incident.

Senator Nelson was a very temperate person in his habits. He was a careful eater and very seldom drank. His one weakness was chewing tobacco and at times this affected his health so much that he gave up the tobacco and used to chew any kind of bark which he could find. This chewing of everything and anything which he could find, unquestionably, resulted in the formation of his habit which was nationally known.

During the Senator's campaigns, he had a great many strenuous times. If there was a hard place to handle and, particularly, if the opposition was Norwegian, they always sent him. His favorite word in describing these bad opponents was "Cantankerous," and he found many specimens of this kind.

In 1894, Grant County was a very turbulent place. It was one of the counties where he had practiced law and so he was sent to that county to spend a few days. While speaking at Elbow Lake, there was more or less disturbance in the audience and an apparent attempt being made on the part of the opposition to break up the meeting. This nettled the Senator very much and everyone knows that when he came nettled, he did not hesitate to act. He had a little difficulty in locating the chief disturber but he decided that it was one Tobias Sauby and stepping down from the platform, he seized him by the chops and chucked him down in his seat and said, "Now, you be quiet or I will throw you out of the meeting." It had the right effect. The Democrats were very active in Grant County at that time as a sideshow to the Populist Party and a telegram was sent to the *St. Paul Globe* that Nelson had assaulted one of the "embattled farmers," and that a warrant would be sworn out for his arrest. The State Central Committee was much concerned and wired me to get Governor Nelson's version of the affair. The Senator was due to speak at Dalton the next evening. The Elbow Lake part came to Fergus Falls and secure a warrant for his arrest and while they were tanking up getting in shape to go to Dalton to serve it, I got a pair of ponies and drove to Dalton to warn the Senator of what was going to

happen. I found him at Brandveld's store visiting with a lot of the old timers whom he had known in the days when he used to drive back and forth from Alexandria practicing law. Tams Bixby of the Republican State Central Committee kept the wires hot asking for an explanation. I told the Senator what I had come for and he told me not to say anything about the incident and suggested we drive down to St. Olaf and stay there until about the time for the meeting to open when there would be enough Republicans on hand to prevent the meeting being broken by his arrest. He scolded most of the time during the drive and his final injunction to me was not to say anything about this incident at Elbow Lake. I left him and drove back to Fergus Falls in the cold wondering what to do. At the close of the meeting at Dalton, they arrested him but friends gave bail. I finally decided to wire St. Paul my own version of the affair, the kernel of which was that when the obstreperous farmers tried to break up the Senator's meeting, he used the same courage that he had on the field of battle in the Civil War and maintained order in his meeting.

When the Senator reached Fergus Falls on the following day he had read the account of the affair in the St. Paul papers and pronounced the job which I had done as high grade and thanked me for it most heartily.

This incident shows a certain phase of the Senator's character which was when anything unpleasant happened, to always tell the newspaper men not to make any mention of the incident and try to put it in its right light. They often ignored his injunctions and went ahead and he always commended them afterwards.

The Senator had shortcomings as all men have who have so many good traits and who possess such a strong personality. He was often times very prejudiced without cause. He was also unreasonably suspicious and in his early days he was often times a great deal of a bully when the occasion was right. This is the universal opinion of those who used to practice law with him. His best personal

friends recognized these characteristics. If he met the same aggressiveness on their part, everything went along finely.

The Senator was fond of his son, Henry Knute Nelson, but he was a source of great worry to him. He possessed a great many of his father's characteristics. He as very bright, active, energetic and along with these was wilder than the Senator liked and often, on account of the pugnacious disposition of both, it resulted in serious differences. He started Henry in business several times only to have him seriously neglect it. At one time, he started him in the hardware business, in Alexandria in a store which was directly beneath the Senator's office. One day, the Senator went to the store and found it absolutely abandoned. He went to a poolhall two or three doors away and found Henry engaged in a game with some of his companions and, just as nay good father should do, he took Henry by the ear and led him back to the store and told him to attend business or he would close up the store. That night Henry flew to the Pacific Coast. Like all fathers who have had to spank a son, the Senator was sorry the minute it was over and it took a trip to the coast to get Henry to return.

Otter Tail County was the Senator's backyard so to speak. He was here in the early days almost as much as he was in Douglas County. In fact, he came to Fergus Falls with a view of locating but on account of the Land Offices being at Alexandria he located there. For years and years, he used to drive up through Evansville, St. Olaf and Tordenskjold to Fergus Falls holding court and giving advice so that he was as well known here as he was in his own county. He always had the political support of Otter Tail County save in the Washburn-Nelson campaign when it was divided. There was always a feeling that he did appreciate the assistance which Otter Tail County gave him and, in discussing this with me not very long ago, he said that he had made a mistake in 1883 in not appointing John G. Nelson of Parkers Prairie Register to the Land Office. He said he

wanted to do this but friends persuaded him to appoint B. N. Johnson but he felt this was a serious mistake.

For many years, Hon. E. E. Corliss was one of Nelson's most ardent and faithful supporters. In 1894, Washburn asked Mr. Corliss to support him for re-election as Senator. Mr. Corliss asked Governor Nelson if he was a candidate for Senator and on receiving his reply that he was not, Mr. Corliss assured Washburn that he would help him. When Nelson finally entered the field as a candidate for Senator, Washburn appealed to Mr. Corliss to come to St. Paul and Mr. Corliss went, saying, "I hate to do this but a man must me a man or a mouse and no one ever accused me of being a mouse." He went to St. Paul to assist Washburn. He met Governor Nelson in the hotel lobby and attempted to speak to him but the Governor absolutely refused to shake hands with him thus breaking a friendship of long standing which was partially healed just before Mr. Corliss' death.

In 1886, the Senator came very nearly drowning in the lake near his home. It was the year that Governor McGill secured the Republican nomination over Hon. C. A. Gilman who had the active support of Senator Nelson. Mayor Ames was the opposing Democratic candidate and Nelson was not very enthusiastic for McGill. On the 11th of October, 1886, in the very heat of the campaign the Senator nearly lost his life. He had a habit of going down to the lake, and jumping into his boat and sit fishing and probably thinking, as he frequently went on the trips alone. On this occasion a farmer living near the lake, just at dusk, heard a terrible moaning out on the lake and it continued for so long that he finally took a boat and rowed out and he discovered the Senator floating on the lake with his face out of the water and practically unconscious. It is most unusual for a drowning person to float in this way instead of sinking. He got the Senator in his boat and he was taken to a doctor's office thoroughly chilled and still unconscious and it took a lot of work to bring him to and it not until the next day that he fully recovered consciousness. There were a good many partisans who thought that this incident never really

occurred and it was an excuse for staying out of the campaign but there are in good many in Alexandria who saw him before he regained consciousness. The Senator's relations with Otter Tail County were so intimate for nearly a half century that those who have supported him or opposed him, who have befriended him or fought him felt his death as a personal loss. If an epitaph is to be placed on his stone, nothing could be more fitting than this:

“He had finished his work and started home.”

ELMER E. DAVIS.

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Appendix
An album of photographs of Knute Nelson



ca. 1861-1863
Photograph of Nelson during Civil War
Source: Wikipedia.



Nelson as the tousled, Lincolnesque lawyer of the Upper Country's frontier circuit courts. Photo by N.J. Trenham, Alexandria, ca. 1876.

ca. 1876

State Senator Knute Nelson.

Source: Millard L. Gieske & Steven J. Keillor, *Norwegian Yankee: Knute Nelson and the Failure of American Politics, 1860-1923* (The Norwegian-American Historical Society, 1995).

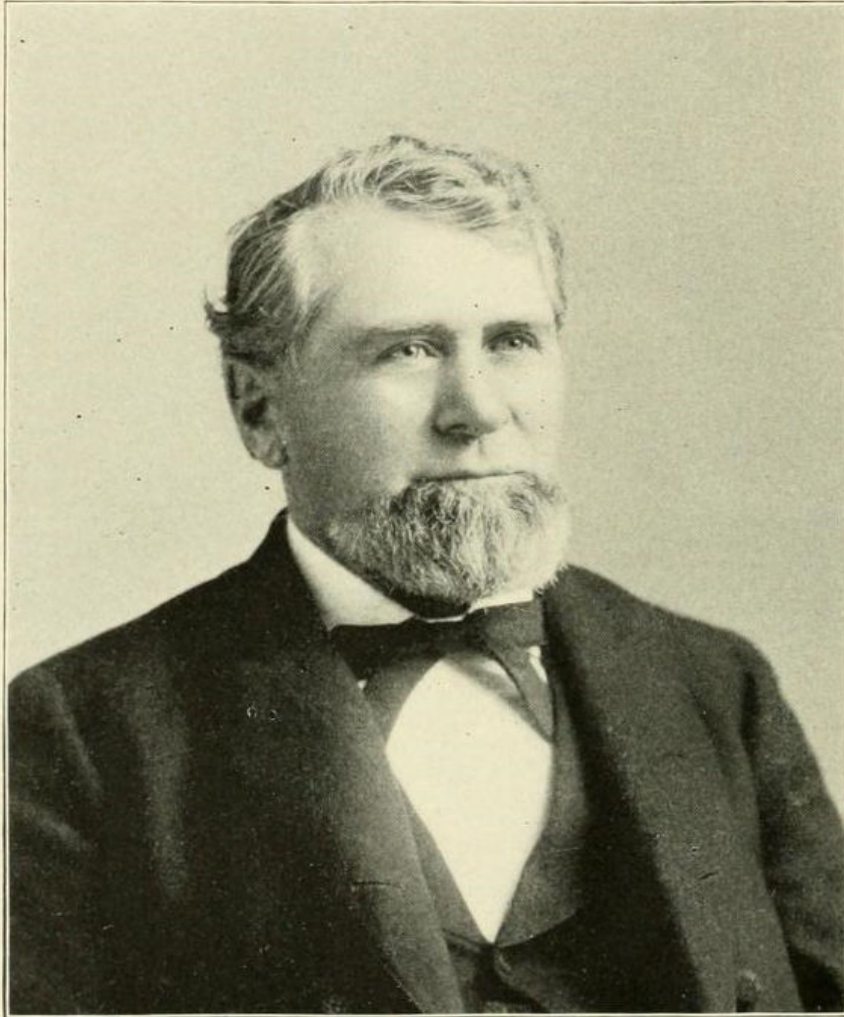


**Oil portrait (1895)
Artist: Carl Guthertz (1844-1907).
Source: Wikimedia Commons.**



ca. 1897

Source: Marion D. Shutter & J. S. McLain editors,
Progressive Men of Minnesota (1897).



KNUTE NELSON

Source: Autobiographies and Portraits of the President, Cabinet, Supreme Court and Fifty-fifth Congress (1898).



KNUTE NELSON
ALEXANDRIA.
LAWYER, U. S. SENATOR (1895—).

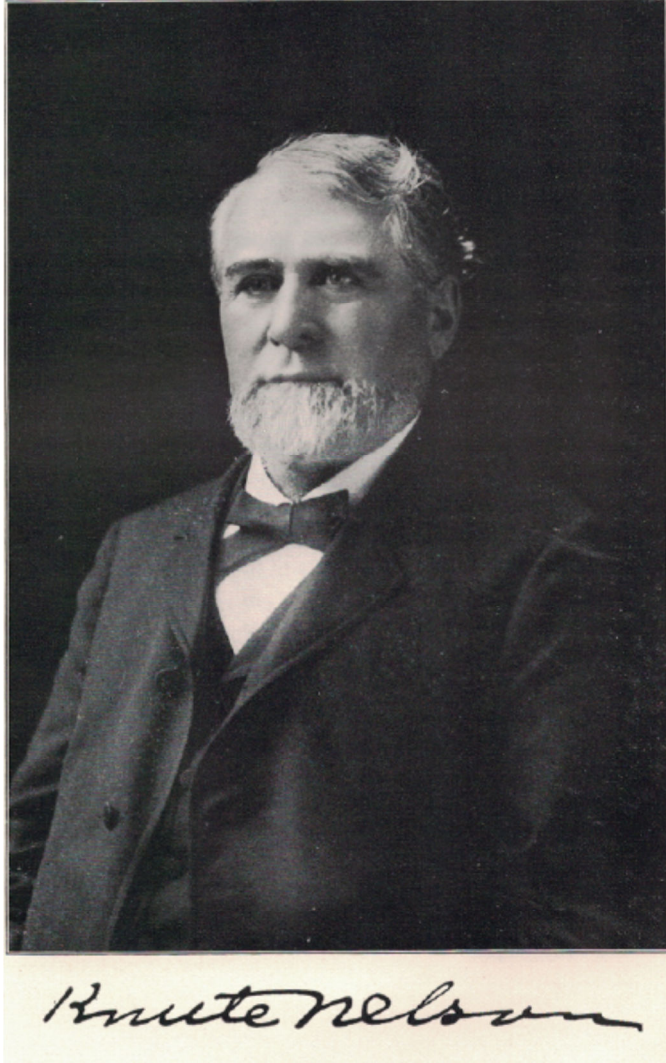
Source: *Men of Minnesota* (1902)

(This photograph is the frontpiece of Millard L. Gieske & Steven J. Keillor, *Norwegian Yankee: Knute Nelson and the Failure of American Politics, 1860-1923* (The Norwegian-American Historical Society, 1995), where it is dated “in the early 1890’s, around the time he served as governor of Minnesota.”)



ca. 1902

Source: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com).
(same photograph as in *Men of Minnesota* (1902)).



ca. 1904

Source: *Harlan P. Hall's Observations:
Being More or Less a History of Political Contests in Minnesota
From 1849 to 1904* (1904).



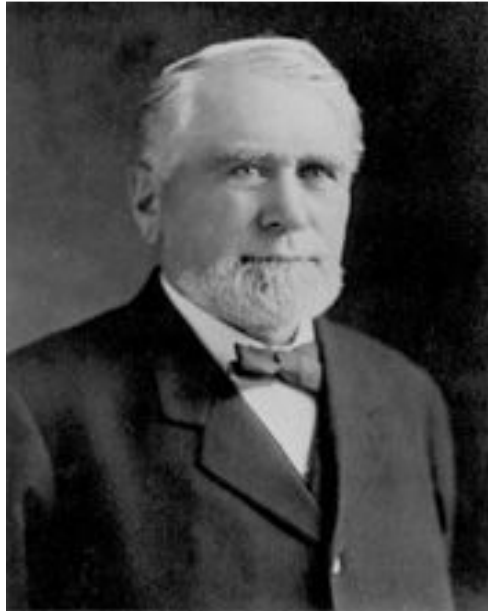
1911

Source: Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress.

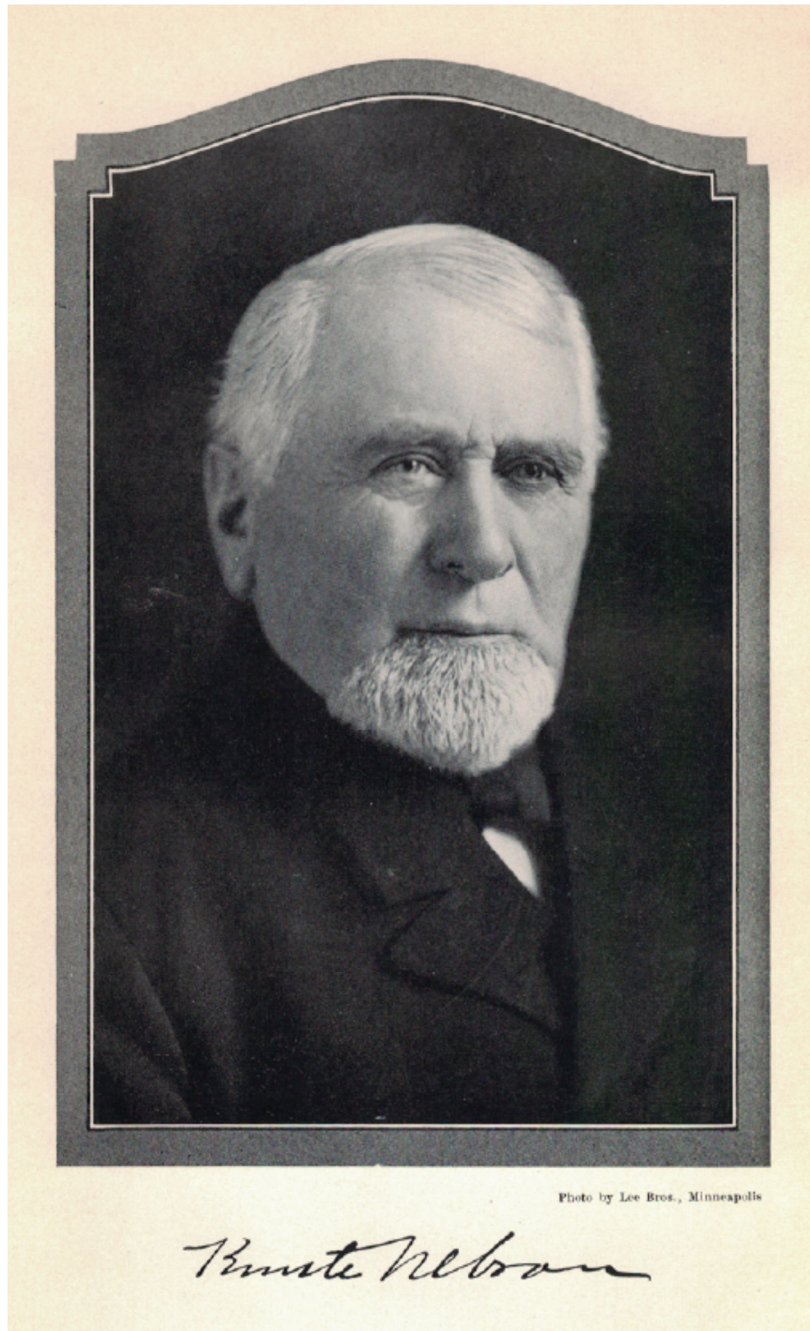


1912

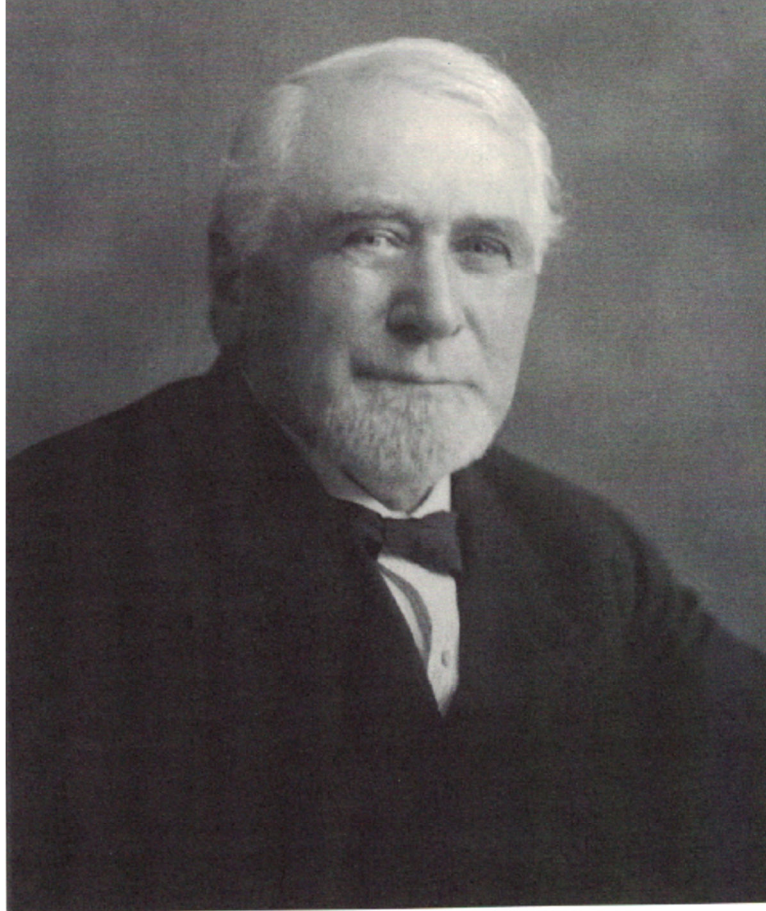
Source: Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress.



Date unknown but probably around 1912
Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress.



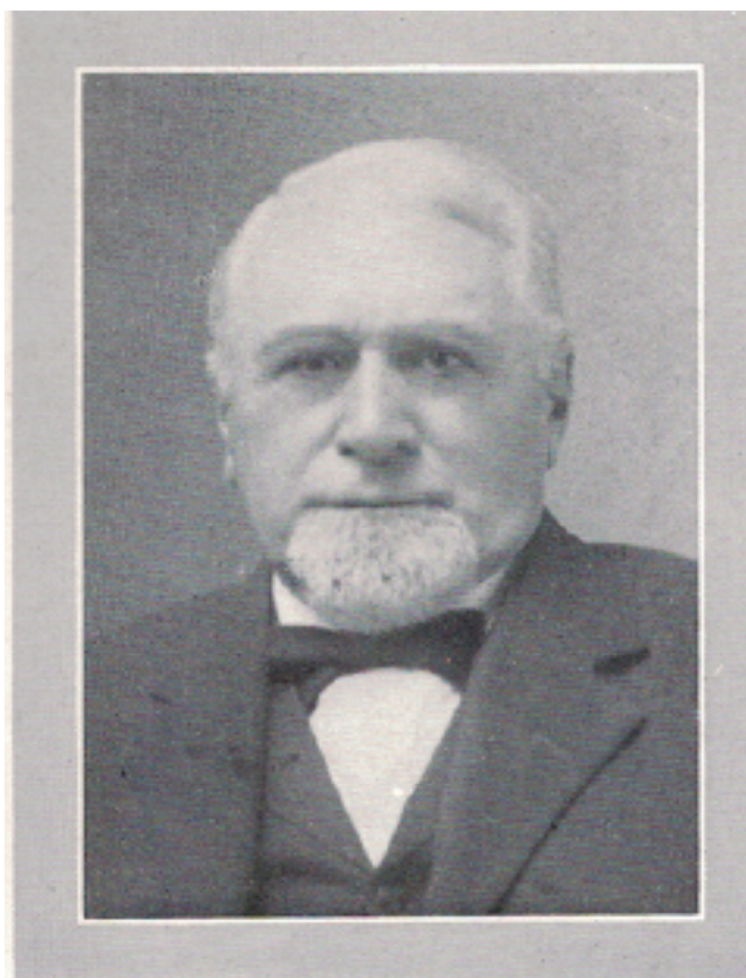
Undated, probably in 1912 period.
Source: Martin W. Odland, *The Life of Knute Nelson* (1926).



Nelson around the time of his reelection to the Senate in 1912.

ca. 1912

Source: Millard L. Gieske & Steven J. Keillor,
Norwegian Yankee: Knute Nelson and the Failure of American Politics, 1860-1923
(The Norwegian-American Historical Society, 1995).



KNUTE NELSON

ALEXANDRIA.

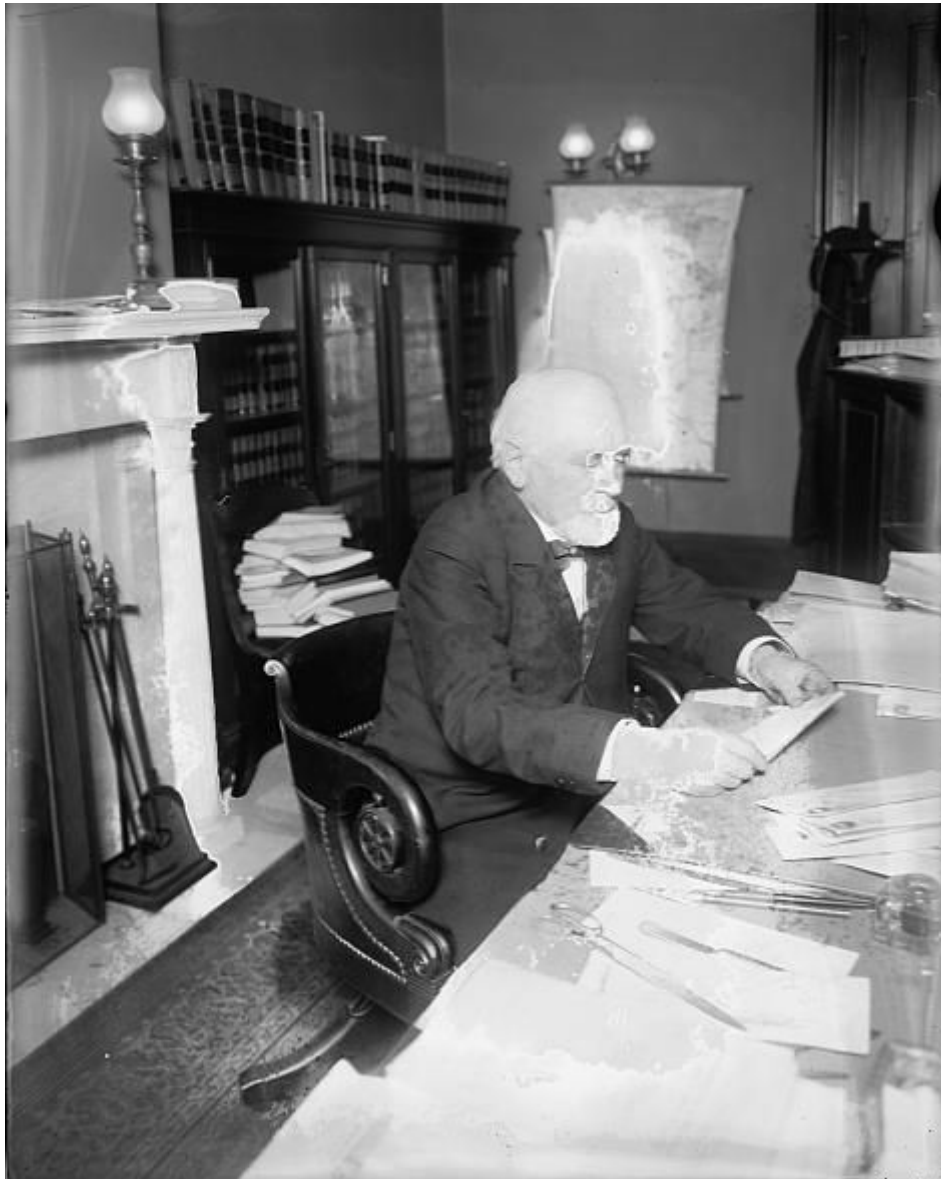
LAWYER. UNITED STATES SENATOR (1895—).

Source: *Men of Minnesota* (1915).

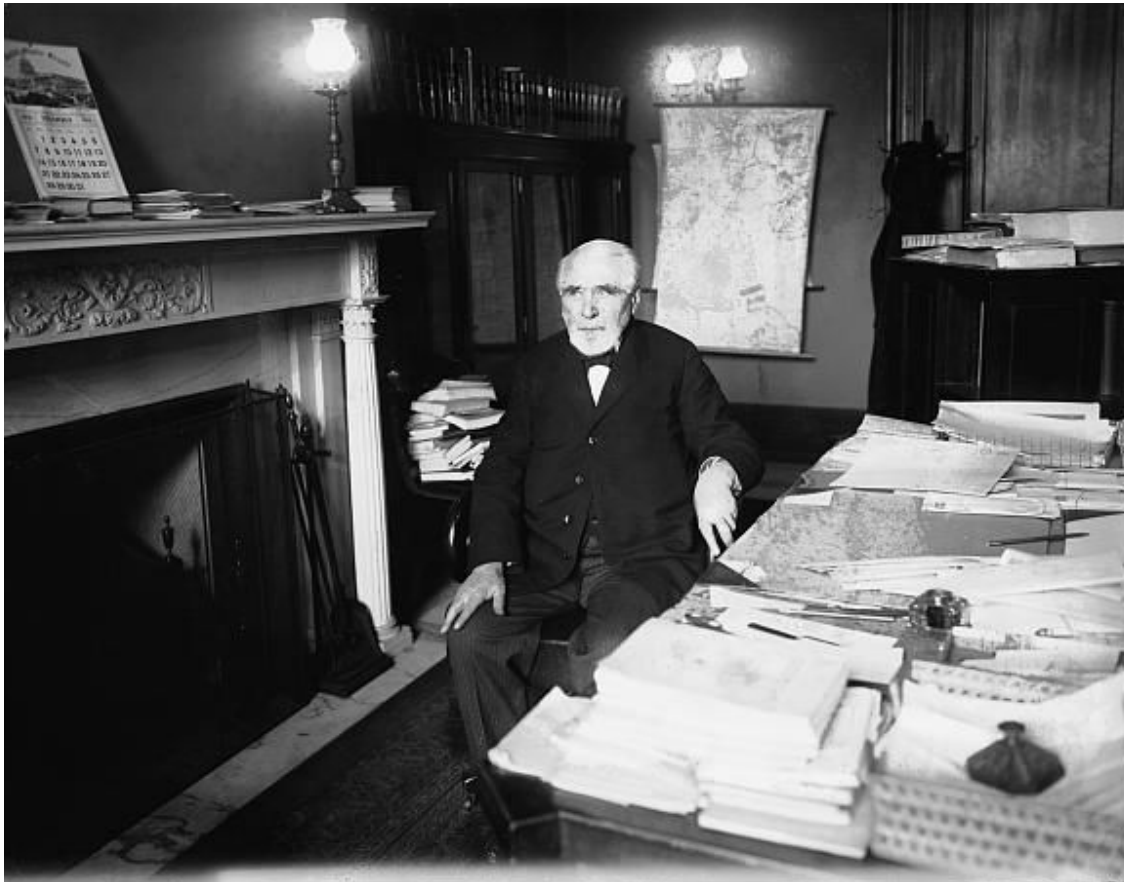


1917

Draft parade, from left to right: Senators George E. Chamberlain, John H. Bankhead, Knute Nelson, Thomas W. Hardwick, Francis E. Warren, Henry Cabot Lodge (hidden by flag), Willard Saulsbury, Jr., and an unidentified man.
Source: Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress.



ca. 1919-1920
Source: National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress.



ca. 1919-1920

Source: National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress.



February 6, 1923
Source: National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress.



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