

**Documents Regarding the Nominations, Confirmations,  
Recess Appointments, Commissions, Oaths of Office,  
Removals, and Terms of the Ten Justices who  
Served on the Supreme Court of  
Minnesota Territory,  
1849-1858**

**PART THREE-A**

**The Oaths of Office  
of the Ten Justices who  
Served on the Supreme Court of  
Minnesota Territory,  
1849-1858**

**Compiled**

**by**

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# **PART THREE - A**

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## SOURCES

**There are two sources for the oaths of the justices of the Territorial Supreme Court. First, each justice signed a handwritten oath before a qualified person such a justice of the peace, the Secretary of the Territory, a Probate Judge, one of the other justices who had been sworn or, in Rensselaer Nelson's case, the governor. This is the original oath.**

**Later, each handwritten oath was transcribed or rewritten in longhand in a ledger called the *Executive Journal of the Territory* by the Secretary of the Territory. He rewrote them in one long paragraph. Here is Secretary Charles K. Smith's transcription of the oaths of Chief Justice Goodrich, Associate Justices Meeker and David Cooper, and U. S. Attorney, Henry L. Moss:**

[illegible]

The following are copies of the certificate of oaths of Bradley B. Meeker, Aaron Goodrich, David Cooper and Henry L. Moss, officers of Minnesota Territory, to wit: Personally appeared before me C. L. Smith, Secretary of the Territory of Minnesota, Bradley B. Meeker one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of said Territory who makes solemn oath in due form of law to support the Constitution of the United States, and faithfully to discharge the duties of Associate Justice within and for the said Secretary of Minnesota agreeably to law.

Bradley B Meeker

Sworn and subscribed before me this 9th day of May 1849 — C. K. Smith, Secretary of Minnesota, St. Croix County ss. On this twenty second day of May A.D. 1849 personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace, in and for the aforesaid county duly elected and qualified, Aaron Goodrich who having been appointed by the President of the United States, Chief Justice of the Territory of Minnesota, being duly sworn says, that he will support the Constitution of the United States and will faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of Chief Justice aforesaid. A. Goodrich

Sworn and subscribed to this 22nd day of A.D. 1849, before me, David Lambert, Justice of the Peace, Territory of Minnesota County of St. Croix. ss Personally appeared before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States for said Territory David Cooper who having been dully appointed one of the Justices of the Court aforesaid for the Territory aforesaid, being duly sworn according to law doth say, that he will support the Constitution of the United States and that to the best of his learning and ability he will faithfully discharge the duties of his office. D. Cooper

[Oath of Henry Moss omitted]

At the Minnesota Historical Society, the *Territorial Executive Records* can be found in four leather bound notebooks, each about 15” wide and about 20” tall, each weighing 15 lbs. or more. Each book has about 200 pages (they are not numbered), but only the first 30 or so pages of each have entries, the rest being blank. In one of these large books, the oaths of the justices of the territorial court (and other civil appointments such as the territorial secretary and the U. S. attorney) are written in ink in longhand (different persons made different entries over the years).

The original oaths are filed in a folder marked “Territorial Secretary: Bonds and Oaths—Territorial Offices” in the box of “Territorial Records of the Territorial Secretary” at the Minnesota Historical Society. Each has been retyped and is posted in the entry for each territorial justice in Part Two.



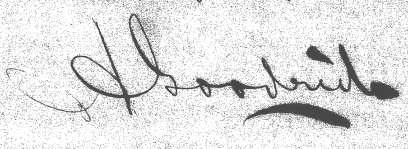
**Scanned copies of the originals are posted below. Several were written on blue-colored paper; copies of these are dark and barely legible on a computer screen.**

**For a discussion of the importance of the oaths, see “Documents Regarding the Terms of the Justices of the Territorial Supreme Court: Part One: Introduction” 34-37 (MLHP, 2009-2014). ▢**

**A. Oath of Chief Justice Aaron Goodrich before  
David Lambert, Justice of the Peace, May 22, 1849.**

Territory of Minnesota }  
St. Croix County }  
On the twenty second day of May  
A.D. 1849 personally appeared before  
me a Justice of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid duly  
elected and qualified, Aaron Goodrich who having been ap-  
pointed by the President of the United States Chief Justice of  
the Territory of Minnesota, being duly sworn says that he  
will support the Constitution of the United States and will  
faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Chief Justice  
aforesaid.

Sworn and subscribed to  
this 22<sup>d</sup> day of May, 1849 }  
Before me.

  
David Lambert  
Justice of the Peace

B. Oath of Associate Justice David Cooper taken before  
Chief Justice Goodrich, on June 9, 1849, in St. Croix County.

Territory of Minnesota  
County of St. Croix

Personally ap-  
peared before me, the subscriber, one of the justices of  
of the Supreme Court of the United States for said  
Territory David Cooper, who, having been duly ap-  
pointed one of the justices of the court aforesaid, for  
the Territory aforesaid, being duly sworn according  
to law soth day, that he will support the Constitution  
of the United States and that to the best of his learning  
and ability he will faithfully discharge the duties  
of his office.

Subscribed before  
me this ninth day of June  
A. D. 1849

D. Cooper

James Goodrich

**C. The Oath of Justice Bradley B. Meeker before  
Charles K. Smith, Secretary of the Territory, May 9, 1849.**

Personally appeared before me C. K. Smith, Sec-  
retary of the Territory of Minnesota, Bradley B.  
Meeker, one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme  
and of the Territory, who making solemn oath  
in due form of law to support the Constitution  
of the United States and faithfully to discharge  
the duties of associate Justice within and for  
the said Territory of Minnesota agreeable  
to law.

Witness my hand and seal this 9th day  
of May 1849.

Charles K. Smith

Bradley B. Meeker

**D (i). First oath of office of Chief Justice Fuller on  
October 25, 1851, in Albany County, New York.**

State of New York  
County of Albany } for Jerome  
Fuller do Solemnly swear that  
I will administer justice without  
respect to persons, and do equal right  
to the poor and to the rich, and that  
I will faithfully and impartially  
discharge and perform all the duties  
incumbent on me as Chief Justice  
of the Supreme Court of the United  
States for the Territory of Minnesota,  
according to the best of my abilities  
and understanding, agreeably to the  
constitution and laws of the United States,  
So help me God.

Subscribed & sworn } Jerome Fuller  
to this twenty fifth day of }  
October 1851 before }  
S. Wilson  
Rep. for 1st  
Sup. Ct. U.S.

D (ii.). Second oath of Chief Justice Fuller before  
Probate Judge Henry A. Lambert, on November 24, 1851,  
in Ramsey County, after he learned that the Organic Act required  
the oath to be taken in the Territory.

Territory of Minnesota  
County of Ramsey ss: I Jerome Fuller  
do solemnly swear that I will support the  
Constitution of the United States and faithfully  
discharge the duties of the office of Chief  
Justice of the Supreme Court of said Territory  
to which I have been appointed. So help me  
God. Jerome Fuller  
Subscribed & sworn to this  
24<sup>th</sup> day of November 1851  
by the said Jerome Fuller  
before me  
Henry A. Lambert  
Judge of the Probate Court  
of the County of Ramsey

E. Oath of office of Chief Justice Henry Z. Hayner  
before Orlando Simons, Justice of the Peace, October 6, 1852.

Henry Z. Hayner  
County of Ramsey  
Do hereby swear that I am the lawful and legal owner of the premises  
herein described and that I have no other claim or interest therein  
than that of the owner and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office  
of Chief Justice of the U.S. for the territory  
of Minnesota  
Orlando Simons  
Justice of the Peace



**F. Oath of office of Chief Justice William H. Welch,**  
**before Orlando Simons, Justice of the Peace,**  
**April 25, 1853, in St. Paul.**

I, William H. Welch, do solemnly swear  
that I will support the constitution of the  
United States, and that I will faithfully dis-  
charge the duties of the office of Chief Justice of the  
Territory of Minnesota.

William H. Welch

Orlando D. & Associates  
before me at St. Paul Minn  
on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April 1853  
Orlando Simons  
Justice of the Peace

A further note about Welch's oath on the same sheet of paper.

Be it remembered that on this 31<sup>st</sup> day of April  
1853 before me personally appeared William  
H. Welch to me known to be the identical  
person and who being duly sworn says  
that he will support the Constitution of the  
United States, and that he will faithfully  
discharge the duties of the office of Chief  
Justice of the Territory of Minnesota.

Orlando W. Brown  
Justice of the Peace in  
& for the County of Ramsey  
Minnesota Territory

**G. Oath of Associate Justice Andrew G. Chatfield,  
Before Chief Justice Welch, May 31, 1853.**

United States of America }  
Territory of Minnesota } I, Andrew G. Chatfield  
do solemnly swear that I will support the consti-  
tution of the United States and that I will faithfully  
discharge the duties of the office of Associate Justice  
of the Territory of Minnesota }  
Subscribed and sworn this 31st } Andrew G. Chatfield  
day of May A.D. 1853 before me }  
H. H. Welch  
Chief Justice

I, William H. Welch Chief Justice  
of the Territory of Minnesota do hereby certify  
that on this day personally appeared before  
me at the city of Saint Paul in said Terri-  
tory Andrew G. Chatfield and subscribed  
and took before me the foregoing oath of  
office as Associate Justice of the Territory of  
Minnesota.

Given under my hand at Saint  
Paul this 31st day of May A.D. 1853.  
H. H. Welch

H. Oath of Associate Justice Moses Sherburne  
before Justice Chatfield, June 6, 1853, in Ramsey County.

Territory of Minnesota }  
Ramsey County } I, Moses Sherburne do  
solemnly swear that I will support the Con-  
stitution of the United States, and that I  
will faithfully discharge the duties of the  
office of Associate Justice of the Territory of  
Minnesota. -  
Subscribed & sworn this 6<sup>th</sup> }  
day of June A.D. 1853 before me }  
Anson H. Chatfield  
Associate Justice  
of the Ter of Min. } M. Sherburne



I. Oath of Associate Justice Rensselaer R. Nelson before  
Territorial Governor Samuel Medary, May 11, 1857,  
in Ramsey County.

Territory of Minnesota  
County of Ramsey }  
J. Rensselaer R. Nelson do  
solemnly swear that I will support the  
Constitution of the United States and that  
I will faithfully discharge the duties of  
Associate Justice for the Territory of  
Minnesota to the best of my ability, So  
help me God.

Rensselaer R. Nelson

Subscribed & sworn to  
before me this 11<sup>th</sup>  
day of May A.D. 1857  
S. Medary  
Governor of M.T.

**J. Oath of Associate Justice Charles E. Flandrau before**  
**Charles L. Chase, Secretary of the Territory,**  
**August 8, 1857, in Ramsey County:**

Territory of Minnesota }  
County of Ramsey } ss.  
I Charles E. Flandrau  
having been duly appointed Associate  
Justice of the Supreme Court of the  
Territory of Minnesota do solemnly  
swear that I will support the Constitu-  
tion of the United States, and faithfully  
discharge the duties of said office.  
Given and subscribed  
before me this 8th day  
of August 1857.  
Charles L. Chase  
Sec. Terr. Treas. } Chas. E. Flandrau

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