

MEMORIAL
FRANK H. EWING
(1856 - 1934)



Ramsey County Bar Association
MARCH 31, 1934

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IN DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF RAMSEY

IN THE MATTER OF THE MEMORIAL OF
FRANK H. EWING

At the request of the officers of the Bar Association of Ramsey County, Minnesota, the following Memorial of Frank W. Ewing, who died at St. Paul, on the 22nd day of January, 1934, has been prepared by the appointed committee:

Mr. Ewing was born at Ellington in Catteraugus County, New York, on July 11th, 1856, and was the son of Henry E. Ewing and Augusta L. Willis of that place.

He was educated at Ellington Academy studied for the bar in the office of a leading attorney of Dunkirk in the State of New York, and was admitted to practice in 1878. Shortly thereafter went to McPherson, Kansas.

Attracted by the prosperity in the Mississippi Valley he came from there to Minnesota and commenced the practice of his profession at Stillwater in 1881.

He married Miss Lila B. Jenkins at Stillwater in 1883. She died in 1894. They had two children, Earl D. Ewing and Gail L. Roberts, both of whom are living.

In 1885 he became a member of the law firm Searles, Ewing and Gail and the partnership continued until 1888 when he removed to St. Paul.

Both of his partners were lawyers of highstanding and the firm had a large practice. Mr. Searles subsequently became District Judge for the Stillwater District.

When Mr. Ewing settled at Stillwater he found himself in a busy city. The logging and lumbering industry in the Valley of the St. Croix River was still near its peak.

Logs were boomed and brailed into rafts there, and woodsmen were outfitted and Wannegans* loaded with supplies for the logging camps.

Steamers pushed and towed the great rafts of logs through Lake St. Croix, then down the river to the Mississippi where they were floated down still further to the great saw mills far below.

There were many saw mills at Stillwater, also, and, as well, other manufactories. The office of the Surveyor General for that logging District was there. The bark marks and the end marks were registered there. The mark on logs belonging to the State of Minnesota was "M. I. M."

All this was new to Mr. Ewing and the strange problems which confronted him required careful consideration and much study. Log liens were a novelty to him.

A New York Bank sent him a large claim for mill machinery. He succeeded in obtaining for his client some cash and a chattel mortgage on a large quantity of logs.

* MLHP: A wannegan (also spelled wannigan) was a floating shack used by lumbermen when the St. Croix was used as a logging route. It was large enough to accommodate a cook and supplies. Wannegans were built low to the water for stability, but some had two stories.

It was as good as if it had been taken on livestock. But the New York Bank wrote him and sent the mortgage back, saying they might as well have a mortgage on a pickerel.

They knew nothing, of course, about log marks, and their registered ownership.

However, Mr. Ewing succeeded in convincing the Easterners that the mortgage was good and at the end they received payment in full.

When Mr. Ewing came to St. Paul he formed a partnership with Cornelius B. Palmer under the firm name of Ewing and Palmer which continued until 1890. He was then joined by his brother, Arthur W. Ewing, and they practiced together under the name of Ewing and Ewing until 1892 when they became members of the firm Murphy, Ewing, Gilbert and Ewing. They continued under that firm name until 1896 when Mr. Ewing's brother Arthur retired, and thereafter the firm was Murphy, Ewing and Gilbert, until 1899. Then Philip Gilbert withdrew from that firm and the business was continued by Mr. Murphy and Mr. Ewing under the firm name of Murphy and Ewing until 1902, when John M. Bradford became a member. Subsequently the firm name was Murphy, Ewing, Bradford and Cummins until 1914. He then practiced alone until 1927 when he became associated with Charles E. Bowen, the firm name being Ewing and Bowen. Afterwards Bryce E. Lehmann, his son-in-law, became his partner and that partnership continued until the time of his death.

On September 1st, 1898, he married Miss Julia L. Spates. They had one daughter, Frances E. Lehmann. Both the wife and the daughter survive him.

He was a faithful and attentive member of the First Methodist Church of this city and was one of its highly regarded trustees. Mr. Ewing's family was of Revolutionary stock.

When he returned from Stillwater to St. Paul his reputation had preceded him and he at once took high rank not only with his contemporaries but also with the older members of the bar. Having been associated with old-fashioned lawyers, he resorted, at all times, to the great sources of jurisprudence where, in those days young men were taught that proficiency could be best acquired in the art of applying abstract principles of the law.

He followed no uncertain bark marks blazed by his predecessors nor was he guided merely by dim and uncertain footprints. He gathered wisdom through various experiences in the wide field of the law. He was also patient and sympathetic, cordial, courteous, kind and dignified. His arguments before the Court were apt, discriminating, enlightening and founded on wisdom. His devotion to duty was one of the great factors of his success at the bar. None of us, who knew him from the first, have forgotten how faithfully he labored. His integrity of mind and sincere love of justice are well known to the members of the bench and all the members of the bar.

His departure has caused us the sorrow of personal bereavement. A full life like his seems always too short.

/s/ Morris Richardson

/s/ Philip Gilbert

/s/ G. W. Lewis

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Posted MLHP: July 15, 2010;
Photograph from *Men of Minnesota* (1902)
added November 26, 2015.