

In Memoriam

Henry J. Gjertsen

(October 8, 1861 – December 2, 1911)



1902

The family of Henry J. Gjersten emigrated from Norway when he was seven years old. They settled on a farm near Minneapolis and the entire family worked in the fields. Praying that he would enter the ministry, they sent him to be educated in a theological seminary in Red Wing. After three years of study he rebelled, returned to Minneapolis and began the study of law. It was the right choice because he was admitted to the bar in 1884 at age twenty-three. He practiced by himself and occasionally with others for the next two decades. From 1904 to his death in 1911 he was the senior partner in Gjertsen & Lund.

He found success in the trial courts and satisfaction in public service. Though active in Republican party, he served in the administrations of Governor John Lind, who was elected with the fusion of the Democratic and People's Parties, and Governor Samuel Van Sant, a Republican. In 1902 he was elected to the state senate from District Forty-two. The results of the election on November 4, 1902, were:

Henry J. Gjertsen (Republican)	3,513
S. A. Stockwell (Democrat)	2,870
Chris Hellickson (Progressive)	234 ¹

He served during the early years of the Progressive Era and was considered a reformer. He was the chief sponsor of a bill passed by the 34th Legislature barring a brokerage company from engaging in unethical and illegal practices—so-called “bucket shops.”² He did not seek re-election in 1906, and returned to his law practice. He died on December 3, 1911, at age fifty. The *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* carried the story:

**Former State Senator and Prominent
Norwegian Succumbs
After Brief Illness.**

¹ 1903 Blue Book, at 525. The Forty-second District consisted of the Seventh, Eleventh and Twelfth wards in Minneapolis; the village of Edina, the towns Richfield, Bloomington, Eden Prairie; village and town of Excelsior, all in Hennepin county.

Gjersten's biography in the 1903 Blue Book:

HENRY J. GJERTSEN (Republican) is a lawyer, residing at Minneapolis. He was born in Norway. Settled in Minnesota in 1868, is forty-one years of age and married. He received his education at the Minneapolis High School and Red Wing Seminary. Was a member of the Minneapolis Charter Commission of 1898; and inspector general on the governor's staff, three years.

Id. at 682.

² Laws 1905, c. 133, at 170-172 (effective April 11, 1905).

**Daughter, Beatrice, Opera Singer
in Germany Notified
of Death.**

Henry J. Gjertsen, former state senator from the Forty-second district and a member of the state bar for the past 25 years, passed away suddenly at his home, 2526 Elliot avenue, late last night. Mr. Gjertsen had been at his office until 4:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, apparently in good health. About supper-time he lay down, complaining of ill health. Later a doctor was called, but life was extinct before he arrived.

Mr. Gjertsen was one of the leading Norwegians of the city and was a member of the firm of Gjertsen & Lund, attorneys, for the past 10 years. He was the father of Beatrice Gjertsen, the prima donna now singing in opera at Weimar, Germany. A wife also survives him, besides three brothers and two sisters, George G. Gjertsen, Bowbells, N. D., John and Eli Gjertsen of Minneapolis, and Mrs. Leroy Jones and Mrs. Emma Hage of Minneapolis. Beatrice Gjertsen has been notified of her father's death.

Mr. Gjertsen had lived in Minneapolis for 15 years. He was born in Norway. He was 50 years old. Mr. Gjertsen entered the bar in Hennepin county 25 years ago. He was one of the organizers of the Norway Packing company, with headquarters in Minneapolis and industries in Alaska, and prominent in the raising of a fund of \$1,000,000,000 among Norwegians of this country at the centennial celebration in 1914 of her freedom from Denmark.

He was a past president of the Odin Club and a member of the Masonic Order. He was a member of the staffs of Governors Van Sant and Johnson.³

³ *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, December 3, 1911, at 8 (photograph omitted).
From *The Irish Standard*:

Henry J. Gjertsen, of the firm of Gjertsen & Lund, attorneys, 1015 New York Life building, died at the family residence, 2526 Elliott avenue, last Saturday night. Heart failure was the cause of his demise. Mr. Gjertsen was one of the best known lawyers in the city, having practiced here for 27 years. He was a state senator and under the administration of Govs. Lind and Van Sant was on the governor's staff. He was born in Norway, in 1861,

The following year his death was noted at the thirty-fifth annual meeting of the American Bar Association:

HENRY J. GJERTSEN.

Henry J. Gjertsen was born on October 8, 1861, near the city of Tromsø, Norway. His parents were Captain Herman J. Gjertsen and Albertina V. Gjertsen, nee Wulf. His father removed with his family to the United States in 1868 and settled in what is now a part of the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Henry Gjertsen was six years old when his parents came to the United States. He received his early education in the public schools of Minneapolis and graduated from the high school there in 1878. Subsequently he attended the Hauge Seminary at Red Wing, Minnesota, from which institution he graduated in 1881. Immediately after his graduation, he took up the study of law with Judge Lang, of Minneapolis, and was admitted to the Bar in 1884 at the age of 23 years. For some time he engaged in the practice of his profession alone. Later he became associated with Robert Christensen, and thereafter with Mr. L. M. Rand. In 1904 he formed a partnership with Henry A. Lund under the name and style of Gjertsen & Lund, which co-partnership continued until the time of Mr. Gjertsen's death, December 2, 1911.

Mr. Gjertsen was much interested in civic affairs and served for two years with distinction as a member of the first charter commission of Minneapolis. He likewise served as inspector general on the staff of Governor Lind and was judge-advocate general under Governor Van Sant, both of Minnesota. On January 1, 1902, he became a member of the state Senate and served four years. During his senatorial term of office the statutes of the State of Minnesota were revised and as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Mr. Gjertsen rendered valuable service to his state and its Bar.

coming to Hennepin county with his parents when seven years old and locating on a farm just outside of Minneapolis. Mr. Gjertsen married Gretchen Groebel, Red Wing, and is survived by the widow and one daughter, Miss Beatrice Gjertsen, prima donna of the Royal Opera, Weimer, Germany. Two brothers and two sisters also survive him. The funeral occurred from the residence Tuesday.

The Irish Standard, Saturday December 9, 1911, at 6.

He was, for years, a member of the National and State Bar Association, the Masonic and other fraternal societies, the Commercial, Odin and other clubs, President of the Pacific Coast and Norway Packing Company, and greatly interested in many other business and civic organizations and enterprises. He was married on January 4, 1883, to Miss Gretchen Goebel, a native of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.

Mr. Gjertsen was a man of excellent physique, splendid mentality and strong personality. He had a large practice, enjoyed the confidence of the courts and bar alike, and as a trial lawyer had few equals at the Minnesota Bar. He will be remembered as a man of sterling character, unimpeachable integrity and unswerving fidelity to his client, and usefulness as a citizen.⁴

Profiles

Henry Gjersten had a penchant for subscribing to the publications of collections of biographies in consideration for which he was entitled to place a flattering portrait of himself and his family. Early portraits were cannibalized and regurgitated into later volumes. Six portraits—eerily similar—follow.

A. From *History of the Republican Party* (1896)

GJERTSEN, HENRY J.—Among the rising young attorneys of the Hennepin county bar few can lay claim to a wider or more successful practice than Henry J. Gjertsen. Descended from the hardy Norwegian race, he has inherited physical and mental endowments that could not fail to bring him success in whatever field his life work might be chosen. His father, Herman J. was a sea captain in his early days, and ran a vessel from Bergen to the northern parts, where he met and married Albertina Wulf. The family of Gjertsen at Bergen and the family of Wulf in the far North were both well known and highly respected. Among both families, we find merchants,

⁴ *Report of the Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association* 637-638 (1912)

lawyers, doctors, clergymen, and men of broad views and large affairs, who in their respective communities, were leaders and molders of public opinion.

Henry J. Gjertsen was born Oct. 8, 1861, at Tromsø, in northern Norway, but came with his parents at six years of



HENRY J. GJERTSEN.

age, and located on a farm in the town of Richfield, Hennepin county, Minnesota, where he passed his youth, attending the district school and helping about his father's farm. His parents designed him for the ministry; so, after spending three years in the Minneapolis high school, he entered the theological seminary at Red Wing, where he spent three years in study, completing in that time the six-year collegiate course, and preparing himself for

his theological studies. At this time a change came over him, and, instead of becoming a preacher, he determined to adopt the legal profession. Accordingly he returned to Minneapolis, and, after two years of hard study, was admitted to practice in all the courts of the state. While reading law, a peculiar thing occurred: A case on which he was employed by the plaintiff was taken to the supreme court by the defendant, and thus Mr. Gjertsen's name appears on the record as attorney before the supreme bench before he was ever admitted to practice.

After admission he opened offices with Robert Christensen, and continued the partnership for three years. During the years of his practice he has taken many cases to the supreme court, and has been almost uniformly successful. After the crash of 1893 he was extensively connected with litigation relative to failed banks. In 1892 he was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, and he has had

several cases there. Business has come to him freely, and a large practice has grown up.

Although of Norwegian birth, and speaking all the Scandinavian languages, as well as German, English is the language he wields most fluently. On Jan. 4, 1882, he was united by marriage with Miss Gretchen Goebel, a native of Germany, who had come to this country with her parents in her early childhood. Their only child is an interesting little girl of ten. Mr. Gjertsen attends the Gethsemane Episcopal Church in Minneapolis, is a member of the Masonic order, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Elks, the Knights of Pythias, and belongs to the Board of Trade and the Commercial Club.

His political affiliations have always been with the Republican party, in whose councils he has been active as a member of city, county, and congressional committees, as a delegate to many conventions, and as a speaker from the platform in every campaign for the last ten years. He was prominently mentioned in 1894 for district judge, but has never held nor sought political preferment. His only ambition is one common to all lawyers,—that of someday being thought worthy of a seat on the judicial bench.⁵

2. From *Progressive Men of Minnesota* (1897).

Henry J. Gjertsen is a native of Tromsøe, Norway. His father was born in Bergen, Norway, and comes from the well-known Gjertsen family of that city. At an early age he removed to the northern part of Norway, Tromsøe County, where he married Albertina, daughter of the Wulf family, and engaged in agriculture and shipping until about twenty-eight years ago, when he brought his family to this country and settled in Hennepin County. The subject of this sketch was born October 8, 1861, and was six years of age when his parents came to this country. Mr. Gjertsen's early education was obtained in the district school in the town of Richfield, Hennepin County, Minnesota, where his father was engaged in farming. He grew

⁵ Eugene Virgil Smalley, *A History of the Republican Party from Its Organization to the Present Time to Which is Added A Political History of Minnesota from a Republican Point of View and Biographical Sketches of Leading Minnesota Republicans* 303-304 (1896).

up in the farm until he was twenty years of age, working on the farm during the summer season and attending school in the winter. In this way he prepared for the Minneapolis high school which he also attended for a time. Subsequently he took a six years' term in the collegiate department of the Red Wing seminary, a theological institution. His parents had destined



him for the ministry, but after completing his collegiate course he took up the study of law in Minneapolis, and at the age of twenty-three was admitted to practice by the district court of Hennepin County. While yet a student of law he became interested in some important and fiercely contested litigation which finally landed in the supreme court and almost before he was regularly admitted to practice he was recognized as an attorney of

record in the supreme court of Minnesota. He has also been admitted to practice in the supreme court of the United States.

Mr. Gjertsen has always been a student and speaks fluently the Scandinavian and German languages. While very successful in his professional work he retains a love for agriculture and prides himself on being a practical and thorough farmer. He has made no specialty of any particular branch of law but has been engaged in general practice and enjoys a reputation of a successful practitioner, in both lower and higher courts. During the last two years he has been engaged a greater part of the time in prosecuting insolvency cases growing out of the failures of the local banks.

Mr. Gjertsen is a Republican and takes an active interest in local and national politics. He has served at different times on county and congressional committees, and takes an active part

in the work of the Republican League was a delegate to the last national convention of the Republican League; has stumped the state in every direction for the last ten years in the interest of the Republican ticket; has been a delegate to several state conventions, but has never held any political office. He is recognized as one of the leading Scandinavians of the state, and his name has been frequently mentioned for judicial honors. He is a member of the A. F. and A. M., and several other fraternal societies, local clubs and organizations. He has taken an active interest in the promotion of every enterprise inaugurated for the benefit of the city.

In his church connections he is an Episcopalian and an active member of that denomination. Mr. Gjertsen was married January 4, 1883, to Gretchen Goebel, daughter of a prominent German family from Hanau, near Frankfort-on-the-Main. He has one daughter living and is thoroughly devoted to his family. He has resided in Minneapolis ever since he was married, and is in every way loyally identified with the interests of the city.⁶

3. From *History of the Great Northwest and Its Men of Progress* (1901).

GJERTSEN, Henry J., one of the best known lawyers in Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota, was born at Kvafjord, Tromsøe county, Norway, October 8, 1861. He is one of nine children, the family consisting of six boys and three girls. His father, Herman J. Gjertsen, now retired from active business and living on his farm on the eastern shore of Lake Amelia, Hennepin county, Minn., was born in Bergen, Norway, and belonged to a well known Gjertsen family of that place. The history of Norway states that the family was founded about the sixteenth century by the King of Mandahl. They have for several centuries been known as energetic, progressive men in all the activities of life, commercial, educational, and pro-

⁶ Marion D. Shutter & J. S. McLain eds., *Progressive Men of Minnesota* 128 (Minneapolis Journal, 1897). It is subtitled "Biographical sketches and portraits of the leaders in business, politics and the professions; together with an historical and descriptive sketch of the state."

essional. In early life Herman J. Gjertsen moved to Kvafjord, in the northern part of Norway, and engaged in farming and the fishing industry, which is a very important commercial interest in that region. He succeeded in business, and married into the prominent Mulff family, his wife's name being Albertine B. Wulff. Her people were noted as teachers, lawyers and merchants. Nicolay Wulff, the distinguished attorney at Tromsoe, Norway, is her nephew. As stated, she had nine children, and has been a devoted mother, requiring all the strength and energy of her strong race to bring up such a family in the manner in which it has been accomplished.

For the benefit of the children the parents determined to break up their establishment in Norway and come to the United States. They reached Minneapolis in 1867 and settled on a farm out on Chicago avenue, near what has become Thirty-eighth street. While living on this farm. Henry J. Gjertsen attended the country school in district No. 8, in winter, and worked on the farm in summer. This school house stood on the corner of Chicago avenue and the city limits, and has but recently been removed. He also attended the Central High School of the city. His parents designed him for the ministry, as he showed great attitude for learning, and finally sent him to the Red Wing Seminary, a theological collegiate institution adapted to prepare farmers' sons for the ministry and for teaching and general business. Here he graduated at the end of a six years' course. But during the last year in college he changed his mind in regard to a profession and quietly commenced the study of law. After graduation, instead of taking up theology as his parents intended, he resumed his study of law at Minneapolis. Law cases came to him before he was admitted to the bar. One case in which he was successful was appealed to the supreme court, and he enjoys the unique distinction of being an "attorney of record" in that august tribunal, before he had been admitted to practice. At the age of twenty-three, after an examination before Judge Lochren, he was admitted to practice in the district court of Hennepin county. In 1892 he was admitted to practice in the supreme court of the United States. Since he was admitted he has had a very extensive and lucrative practice, not only in Minneapolis and the state of

Minnesota, but throughout the Northwest. He has also been remarkably successful in winning the suits he has conducted, especially in the courts of last resort, a fact which proves his profound knowledge of law and the intricacies of his profession. During the panic of 1893, and subsequently, he was retained in many heavy insolvency cases in the courts of Hennepin county, and is now in demand for cases involving corporation law.

Mr. Gjertsen has always been a Republican, and has taken a very active interest in public affairs. Speaking fluently the Scandinavian language and the German, his aid has been almost invaluable in political campaigns. For twelve years he has been one of the most effective speakers in the state. He was appointed a member of the Minneapolis charter commission by the district court of Hennepin county in 1898. Although a Republican, Governor Lind, as a personal compliment, appointed Mr. Gjertsen inspector general of the Minnesota National Guards, a position which he still holds.

He is a Mason, Knight of Pythias, an Elk, member of the Odin Club, Viking League, Hennepin Association, and several others. In religion he was brought up a Lutheran, but marrying a wife who was an Episcopalian, he has in recent years attended her church.

In 1883 he was married to Gretchel Goebel, of Red Wing, a daughter of a prominent German family from Hannan, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany. They have one daughter living, and just budding into womanhood. Alvine Beatrice. Their home has been in Minneapolis ever since they were married. No more public spirited and loyal citizen lives in the commonwealth.⁷

⁷ Hugh J. McGrath and William Stoddard, eds., *History of the Great Northwest and Its Men of Progress* 533-34 (1901).

4. From *The Book of Minnesota* (1903):

HENRY J. GJERTSEN, of Minneapolis, is one of the most successful of the Hennepin county bar. He completed the six-year collegiate course in the theological school at Red Wing in half the regular time. However, he gave up the idea of entering the ministry, and instead became a lawyer. Returning to Minneapolis, and studying for two years, he was admitted to the bar. In 1892 he was admitted to practice before the supreme court. Since admission to the bar his practice has steadily increased, and been uniformly successful. Mr. Gjertsen is active in the Republican party, and is now State Senator, from the Forty-second district.⁸

5. From *A History of the Swedish-Americans of Minnesota* (1910):

HENRY JOHN GJERTSEN, one of the most prominent attorneys of the city of Minneapolis, was born October 8, 1861, near the city of Tromsø, in the stift bearing the same name, a son of Herman J. and Albertina V. (Wulf) Gjertsen, the latter a native of the same place. Herman J. Gjertsen was a native of Bergen, son of a business man of that city, and the family is, according to "Overland's History of Norway," descended from the King of Mandal, one of the old petty kingdoms of which Norway is now composed. Like many of the inhabitants of Bergen, Herman J. Gjertsen was a sailor and navigator, and for many years commanded a brig plying between Norland and Bergen. He was also engaged to some extent in farming. In 1868 he removed with his family to this country and settled in Hennepin county, Minnesota, in what is now a part of the city of Minneapolis. He was there engaged in farming, and died April 22, 1905. The farm is still held by the family, being situated on the east side of Lake Amelia, and the wife resides in the city of Minneapolis. Mr. Gjertsen and wife were Lutherans in religion, associated with the Hauges Synod. While he was an earnest supporter of the Republican principles, he did not attempt to take any part in public affairs. This was, in

⁸ *The Book of Minnesota* 49 (1903). It is subtitled "Development, Resources, Enterprise and Beauty of the North Star State." A fragile copy is available at the Historical Society.

fact, largely precluded by his age at the time of arrival in America. Of his nine children eight are still living. The eldest, Nels H., died at the age of forty-two years, in Minneapolis, where he was engaged in the grocery trade. John C., Eli O., Henry J. and Lewis C. all reside in Minneapolis, where the last named is engaged in the practice of law. The sixth, Sarah, is the wife of Carl F. Goebel, an attorney at Milaca, Minnesota ; Emma and Sophia reside in Minneapolis, the former being the wife of Bernhard Hage and the latter of Harry Jones. George H., the youngest, is an attorney at Bow Belles, North Dakota.

Henry J. Gjertsen was six years old when the family came to this country, and he received his primary education in the public schools of Minneapolis, graduating from the high school of that city in 1878. He subsequently attended the Hauges Seminary at Red Wing, Minnesota, graduating in 1881.

He immediately took up the study of law with Judge Lang, of Minneapolis, and was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-three years, in 1884, passing an examination before Judge Lochren. For some time he engaged in the practice of his profession alone, and was subsequently associated with Robert Christensen and afterwards with L. M. Rand. In 1904 he formed a partnership with Harry A. Lund, under the style of Gjertsen & Lund, and this association has since continued with most satisfactory results to both partners, as well as to their large list of clients. They carry on a general practice before all the courts and occupy a leading position among the attorneys of the state.

Mr. Gjertsen was appointed a member of the First Charter Commission of Minneapolis, on which he served two years. He was subsequently appointed inspector general on the staff of Governor Lind, and was judge advocate general under Governor Van Sant. On January 1, 1902, he became a member of the State Senate and served in that capacity for four years. Mr. Gjertsen is an active supporter of Republican policies and his counsel is often sought by his colleagues in the management of party affairs.

He is a member of the State and National Bar Associations and with numerous York Rite Masonic bodies, being a member of the Mystic Shrine. He is a Past-Chancellor of the local lodge, Knights of Pythias, and a member of the B. P. O. E., of the Sons

of Norway, the Commercial Club, and the Odin Club, the latter being a very prominent Scandinavian club with a membership of more than three hundred, including the leading citizens of Minneapolis. He is president of the Pacific Coast & Norway Packing Company, of Petersburg, Alaska, which operates a saw mill and general store, and is very extensively engaged in the packing of salmon for the market.

Mr. Gjertsen was married January 4, 1883, to Gretchen Goebel, who was born February 22, 1862, at Frankfort-am-Main, Germany, a daughter of Kaspar and Elizabeth Goebel, both representatives of old families of Frankfort. They have one child, Beatrice, now twenty-two years of age. For the past four years she was a student of music in Germany and completed her musical education by making her debut as "Elizabeth" in Tannhauser (Wagner) with the Royal Opera in Weimar in February, 1909, with the result that she was immediately engaged as leading dramatic soprano for a period of five years at Hof Opera in Weimar. She has been singing there for the past year with splendid success.⁹

A dozen years after his death this lengthy profile was placed by his family in Rev. Shutter's *History of Minneapolis* (1923):

HENRY J. GJERTSEN Having spent the first seven years of his life in Norway, his native land, Henry John Gjertsen then came with his parents to the new world and was thereafter a resident of Minnesota to the time of his demise, which occurred December 2, 1911. In the meantime he had gained distinction as a lawyer and lawmaker, nor was he unknown along agricultural lines. In public affairs he took the deepest interest and in his relation to the public manifested a most progressive and helpful spirit that had its root in a patriotic love of the country, for while he was born on the other side of the Atlantic, he practically knew no other home than Minnesota. He first opened his eyes to the light of day in Tromsøe, Norway, on the 8th of October, 1861. His father, Herman J. Gjertsen, was born in Bergen, Norway, and

⁹ A. F. Strand, ed., *2 A History of the Swedish-Americans of Minnesota* 517 (1910).

represented an old and well known family of that city. At an early age he removed to the northern part of Norway, settling in Tromsøe county, where he married Albertina, the daughter of the Wulf family, and there he engaged in agricultural pursuits and shipping interests until about twenty-eight years of age, becoming a sea captain. He then abandoned the sea and left the Land of the Midnight Sun, coming to the new world with his family. He settled in Hennepin county, Minnesota, not far from Minneapolis, and concentrated his attention upon the improvement of his farm. His son, Henry J. Gjertsen, was accordingly reared as a farm bred boy and in the summer months worked in the fields, while in the winter seasons he attended the public schools. Later he enjoyed the added advantage of training in the Red Wing (Minn.) Seminary and still later he took up the study of law, which he pursued for two years in Minneapolis law offices and was admitted to the bar when twenty-three years of age. His course in the collegiate department of the Red Wing Seminary had covered a period of six years. This was a theological institution and it was the desire of his parents that he enter upon the work of the ministry, but after he had completed his course he felt that he preferred law practice and it was then that he began preparation for the bar. While yet a student of law he became interested in some important and fiercely contested litigation which finally reached the supreme court, and almost before he was regularly admitted to practice he was recognized as an attorney of record in the supreme court of Minnesota. He was also admitted to practice in the supreme court of the United States. He remained an earnest and discriminating student of legal principles and in the preparation of his cases seemed to lose sight of not a single point that would have bearing upon his cause. He never specialized in any particular branch of the law but continued in general practice, trying all sorts of cases and trying them well. In his last years he had charge of many insolvency cases, growing out of the failure of local banks. From the beginning he was successful in his law practice and for a considerable period he followed his profession in partnership with Harry Lund, under the firm style of Gjertsen & Lund. He was widely recognized as one of the leading

Scandinavians of Minnesota and was frequently mentioned for judicial honors.

Mr. Gjertsen always gave his political allegiance to the republican party from the time that age conferred upon him the right of franchise and he took an active interest in both local and national politics. At different times he served on the county and congressional committees and he was an active worker in the Republican League, serving as a delegate to its national conventions. He was always called upon for campaign speeches and from the platform earnestly advocated republican principles and their adoption. He held many appointive positions of public trust. Under the administration of Governor John Lind he was made a brigadier general on the governor's staff and acted in that capacity for two years. Under Governor Samuel R. Van Sant he became judge advocate general and occupied that position for four years. He served as a member of the Minneapolis charter commission and in 1902 was elected to the state senate from the forty-second district. He carefully considered all the vital questions which came up for settlement before the general assembly and was the author of the bucket shop law, passed in 1905. He was also active in the work of compiling and adopting the revised code. His activities constituted an important element in local and state progress, for his influence was ever on the side of reform and improvement.

On the 4th of January, 1883, Mr. Gjertsen was united in marriage to Miss Gretchen Goebel, a daughter of Casper and Katherine (Breideband) Goebel, who in 1873 became residents of St. Paul, Minnesota, and afterward removed to Red Wing, whence they came to Minneapolis. Here the father died in 1894, while the mother passed away in the '80s. Casper Goebel was a brother of the father of Governor Goebel of Kentucky. Mr. and Mrs. Gjertsen had a daughter, Beatrice, who studied voice culture in Germany under Madam Mallinger and also received training from the great composer, Richard Wagner. She became a prima donna in the Royal Opera at Weimar, Germany, possessing a high soprano voice of rare beauty, and she also sang in Belgium. She is now the wife of Dr. W. A. Bessesen of Minneapolis and their children are: William Aaron, Henry Adrian, John Truman and Monica Laura. Mr. Gjertsen was

a loyal follower of Masonic teachings and was also identified with several other fraternal organizations and also with local clubs and societies. He took an active interest in everything pertaining to the welfare and upbuilding of the city and in his church relations was a Lutheran, doing all in his power to promote the work of the church and extend its influence. He was one of the organizers of the Odin Club and served for one term as its president. He likewise belonged to the Sons of Norway. He remained an active factor in the world's work to the last and only a few short hours before his death was busy in his office. He passed away December 2, 1911, and deep regret at his going was felt throughout Minneapolis and wherever he was known, for he had made for himself a large place in the community as a lawyer, as a citizen, as a club and fraternity man and in other connections. Notwithstanding all this his interest and attention centered in his home and his best traits of character were reserved for his own fireside.¹⁰

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Credit

The photograph on the first page is from *Men of Minnesota* (1902).

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¹⁰ Marion Daniel Shutter, ed., *2 History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest 722-725* (1923)