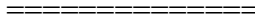


LEGAL HUMOR AND WIT

PART II

A COLLECTION OF HUMOROUS ANECDOTES AND STORIES TOLD BY AND ABOUT MINNESOTA LAWYERS AND JUDGES



The following is an excerpt from pages 291-92 of *History of Fillmore County* published by Minnesota Historical Company of Minneapolis in 1882:

SHARP PRACTICE.—A story is told of a man who was under arrest for violating the game laws of the state of Minnesota, this was after it became a state, and there was ample evidence of the guilt of the accused. But the defendant's attorney was equal to the emergency. It so happened that the laws of Wisconsin were unlike those of Minnesota, and if the alleged act had been committed in Wisconsin at that time, it would have been no crime, so our sharp lawyer borrows, under one pretense and another, the few copies of the statutes in the place, and taking his own copy cuts out a leaf and substitutes the Wisconsin law, and boldly going into court demands a preemptory dismissal of the case, which, on reading the law in such cases made and provided, was at once granted ! ■



One of the most divisive issues of the late 1870s was over the "silver" question, as can be seen from this item in *The News Ledger* on July 20, 1876, quoted on page 86 of Patrick J. Casey's *The First Hundred Years: A History of Meeker County*, published in 1968:

N. C. Martin, Attorney at Law, came to town and his card appeared in the *News Ledger* for the first time. There was a comment in another column

on Mr. Martin which read as follows: “Martin is a good fellow but just a trifle lunny on the currency question.”



From page 116 of *Nobles County History*, edited by Al Goff and published by the Nobles County Historical Society in 1858:

One of our former sheriffs, a distinguished appearing gentleman who made quite a record as a law enforcement officer, apparently had his bad days just like the rest of us.

This sheriff went out to a farm near the Iowa line to attach the farmer’s car. This was not an unusual occurrence. The farmer frequently failed to pay his bills and his property was regularly attached.

On this day the sheriff drove into the yard and noticed the man near the barn. He called a greeting to him. The farmer called back that he would be with the sheriff shortly, as soon as he drove his hogs into the barn. By the way, would the sheriff please hold the gate open and close it after the hogs?

The sheriff obligingly held the gate. The farmer went around the barn, started his car and drove off to park it safely over the Iowa line. ■



From page 118 of *Nobles County History*, edited by Al Goff and published by the Nobles County Historical Society in 1858:

A local attorney had a nice home next door to a vacant lot owned by an old character who made a regular junk yard out of his lot.

The attorney tried to buy the property and, getting nowhere, had other people try to buy it but everything he tried was unsuccessful. He finally had the old man taken before the probate court trying to prove him insane.

The doctor called by the court asked the old man a lot of questions.

Finally, the doctor pointed a finger at the attorney and asked the old man if he knew who he was.

The old man said, "Sure I know him! He is the biggest crook in town!"

The doctor turned to the judge and said, "Turn him loose, he's not crazy!" ■

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This item appeared on page 299 of Volume 4 of *The Green Bag* (1892):

"Your honor," said the defendant's attorney in a larceny case in South Dakota, where an Alliance attorney was elected public prosecutor last fall, "I move to dismiss this case on the ground of lack of jurisdiction; the defendant is a citizen of Minnesota, and this court cannot have jurisdiction of it."

"I guess that's so," admitted the public prosecutor; "the defendant belongs in Minnesota, and will have to be tried there."

The case was duly dismissed. ■

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This item appeared on page 546 of Volume 4 of *The Green Bag* (1892):

A Humorous thing occurred a short time since at the trial of a case in a justice court in Minnesota. The assistant prosecuting attorney of the county was called upon to prosecute parties arrested for stealing from a peddler. The case was being tried in a small country town, the justice occupying all the positions of honor and trust in the community, together with that of postmaster. Considerable interest was manifested, and a large number were present during the trial. The justice was put to his wit's end by the numerous objections interposed by the defendant's attorney, and ruled uniformly for the State. The case, however, enlisted much more interest than he anticipated, and the second day of the trial the justice thought he was becoming altogether one-sided, and upon objection being interposed on the part of the State, he ruled in favor of the defendants. Whereupon the prosecuting attorney arose to his feet, and exclaimed excitedly, "What! you do not propose to rule against me on that question?" to which the justice honestly replied, that inasmuch as he had ruled in his favor on all questions the preceding day, he thought it not more than right to give the defendants some show, and he therefore, in the interest of peace and harmony between

the attorneys, would rule in favor of the defendants that day, which he thought would even it up and be about fair. ■

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