

In Memoriam

Frederick Mason Miner

(1854 : 1940)

**Hennepin County Bar Association
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

1940

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(1854 –1940)

FREDERICK MASON MINER was born at Clinton Massachusetts, in the year 1854. When he was four years of age the family moved to Wisconsin, taking a home-stead near Reedsburg, and as a boy and young man he experienced a hardship and rigorous life of a pioneer farming during the period prior to and following the Civil War. His father lived only three years after moving to Wisconsin and two of his brothers served in the Union Army during the Civil War. There was little opportunity for schooling and his school education extended only to the Fourth Reader.

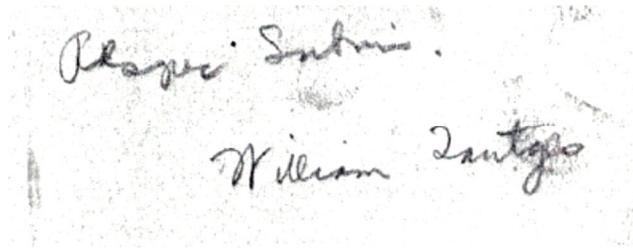
Mr. Miner was endowed with the spirit and ruggedness of New England and had a craving for knowledge and learning which he gained by diligent reading and study, taking advantage of every opportunity to do so. He left the farm at the age of 20 years and entered a law office at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where he read and studied law and was admitted to practice. At the age of 26 years he opened a law office at Eau Claire where he engaged in general practice for 20 years. He was a close and intimate friend of Bob LaFollette and from 1901 until 1909 was associated with the Department of State of Wisconsin.

In 1909 Mr. Miner came to Minneapolis as an associate attorney in the office of Judge W. A. Lancaster.* In 1913 Mr. Miner entered the legal department of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Railroad Company, at Minneapolis, and served in the capacity of Assistant General Attorney, General Attorney and General Counsel. He retired from railroad service in 1918 and thereafter, and until his death on February 1, 1940, at Minneapolis, he engaged in general practice, but confined his activities, largely, to assisting other members of the bar.

* William Atwood Lancaster (1859-1934) served as Judge of Hennepin County District Court from his appointment in 1897, to January 1900, when his term expired.

Frederick M. Miner was admitted to the Minnesota bar on October 5, 1909. Roll of Attorneys, Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970, at 106 (Minnesota Digital Library).

Mr. Miner was possessed in full measure of those ideals which lend dignity and honor to the profession; he had a profound knowledge of the law and had acquired a broad general knowledge education; he was a splendid trial lawyer, thorough and painstaking in preparation and trial, as well as in appellate work, and a vigorous, but courteous, fighter who had the respect of both Bench and Bar. In his death the bar of this state is been deprived of an unusually fine and able lawyer and a brilliant and forcible speaker.[†]

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William G. McAdoo". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured paper. The name "William" is written on the first line, and "G. McAdoo" is written on the second line, with the "G" being a small, looped letter.

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Addendum

Miner did not “retire” in 1918. He was released in reaction to an order of William G. McAdoo, the Director General of the United States Railway Administration. On December 26, 1917, President Wilson issued an executive order nationalizing the railroads, an act confirmed by Congress on March 21, 1918, when it passed the Railway Administration Act. The roads were operated by the USRA to make them more efficient during the war. McAdoo was Secretary of the Treasury at the time, and accepted the additional duty of heading the USRA. It was in that capacity that he ordered that the salaries of the roads’ general counsel be repaid by the roads when they were returned to private control after the war. The Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad Company released Frederick Miner rather than assume this future expense. The following squib appeared in the *Chicago Legal News* on April 18, 1918:[‡]

[†] The exact date of this bar memorial is not known, but it likely was in 1940.

[‡] *Chicago Legal News*, April 18, 1918, at 317 (enlarged).

COUNSEL FOR RAILROADS—ORDER OF DIRECTOR GENERAL McADOO.—An order from Director General McAdoo was received Monday in St. Paul dispensing with the services of the general counsel of the railroads beginning May 1.

The order is similar to that dealing with chairmen of boards. It does not order their dismissal, but requires that if the men are retained their salaries be paid out of corporate funds after the government has settled with the companies.

The men affected at St. Paul are E. C. Lindley of the Great Northern; C. W. Dunn, Northern Pacific; Frederick M. Miner, Minneapolis and St. Louis; Alfred E. Bright, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie; James Sheehan, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha.

The order does not interfere with the work of the legal staff dealing with routine matters, it is declared.

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