

**“Courthouses of St. Louis County” \***

IN

# **Duluth and St. Louis County Minnesota**

## **Their Story and People**

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**An Authentic Narrative of the Past, with Particular  
Attention to the Modern Era in the Commercial,  
Industrial, Educational, Civic and  
Social Development**

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\* MLHP: these excerpts are taken from pages 135, 145 & 304 of this county history. They are complete though reformatted.

## COURT HOUSES OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY

The First Court House.—Luce’s warehouse might almost be looked upon as having been the first courthouse of St. Louis County. In it, states Carey, “was a large room devoted to the public use, which for many years [beginning about 1857] was used as the Duluth post office, United States land office, register of deeds office, county auditor’s and county treasurer’s offices. In it were also held many of the meetings of the board of county commissioners, annual township meetings, school district meetings, and other public and sometimes private meetings.”

After residing in it for twelve years, Mr. Luce sold the warehouse, federal building, courthouse, community hall and general utility building to the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad Company.

. . . .

First Session of Court—It is believed that the first session of court held in St. Louis County was in 1859, Judge S. J. R. McMillan officiating. The “History of St. Louis County” (1910) states that:

The first court in Duluth was held in a little unfinished room. Then court was held for two or three terms in a schoolhouse; then a brick building was rented, known as the Ray Block, in the east portion of the city, the lower part being used for offices, and the upper part for a court room.

. . . .

Court House.—One of the finest buildings, probably the most magnificent, in Duluth at present is the court house and county building, erected in 1908-09, at a cost of \$1,500,000. The earlier courthouses have been described and at no time until the building of the present structure were court sessions of the Duluth district held in a place quite appropriate, or one that fitted the dignity of the function. But the present court house building is worthy of the judiciary and bar, and of the city of Duluth. It has been stated that “no other county in the state, or in the Northwest, has a court house that begins to equal that of St. Louis County, Minnesota.” When designed, it was intended to be “the central figure of an imposing group of public buildings.” The other buildings contemplated have not yet been erected; the years of war, and the long-lasting effect of that world-overturning cataclysm of blood, demanded that all normal plans be baited until the return of

normal times. Presumably, other buildings, as dignified in purpose and magnificent in structure, will rise eventually alongside the court house. The city hall seemed to be the improvement most urgently needed, the present federal building being, in reality, quite as artistic as the court house, although older and of a different type of architecture.

The court house is five stories in height, and is supposed to be quite fireproof. All exterior walls are of New Hampshire granite, and the interior is finished as one would expect to find such a place. The architects were D. H. Burnham. & Company, of Chicago, and the contractors the Lanquist and Ilisley Company, of that place. Construction work began July 28, 1908, and the building was formally dedicated and opened to public use in the fall of 1909. ■



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