

STEARNS COUNTY BENCH & BAR

(1907)

Table of Contents

| Subject | Pages |
|---|-------|
| Foreword..... | 2-3 |
| David T. Calhoun..... | 4 |
| George W. Stewart..... | 5 |
| Theodore Bruener..... | 5-6 |
| James R. Bennett..... | 6 |
| John A. Roeser..... | 6-7 |
| James E. Jenks..... | 7 |
| Judge Loren W. Collins..... | 7-8 |
| Judge Collins Recalls the Early Bar | 8-12 |
| George H. Reynolds..... | 12-13 |
| John D. Sullivan..... | 13 |
| James A. Martin..... | 14 |
| John E. C. Robinson..... | 14-15 |
| Ripley B. Brower..... | 15 |
| Hubert Hansen..... | 15-16 |
| John B. Pattison..... | 16 |
| Congressman C. A. Lindberg..... | 16 |
| Judge Dolson B. Searle..... | 17-18 |
| Harry S. Locke..... | 18-19 |
| Judge Albert H. Klasen..... | 19 |
| Joseph Benedict Himsl..... | 20 |

Foreword

By

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Editor, MLHP

On September 19, 1907, the *St. Cloud Journal-Press* published a long “Jubilee Edition” made up of sections on the history of Stearns County and its current industries and professions. “St. Cloud’s Legal Representatives, Past and Present” was the title of the section devoted to the legal profession. It contained profiles of sixteen lawyers (one, Calhoun, deceased) and three judges, an article by former Supreme Court Justice Loren W. Collins on early lawyers in the county and a curious sidebar on recently retired Judge Dolson Searle’s farm and herd of Shorthorn steers. Photographs accompanied most profiles.

Many of the profiles have a nagging similarity: each lawyer carefully prepares his cases for trial, protects his clients’ interests and has developed a large and lucrative practice. For sure these lawyers paid to have their flattering sketches run in this special edition of the local newspaper. If he did not write his own profile, he surely approved it before it went to print (except John Pattison whose name was misspelled as Patterson).

As always the question asked about these collections of profiles is, what do they tell us about how law was practiced at that time? ¹ And the answer is, again, not much.

Stearns had an agriculture-based economy but only three lawyers list real estate as their specialty (Stewart, Roeser & Hansen); three also name probate law (Roeser, Bruener & Hansen); and one cites commercial law

¹ For other special editions of newspapers with sections on the local bench and bar, see “The Bench and Bar of Ramsey County” (MLHP, 2015)(published first in the Souvenir Edition of the *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 1892); “Bench and Bar of St. Paul” (MLHP, 2013)(published first in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 9, 1899); “Courts and Counsel During Twenty-Five Years” (MLHP, 2015) (published first in the Silver Anniversary Edition of the *Minneapolis Journal*, November 26, 1903); and “The Bar of Bemidji” (MLHP, 2014) (published first in the Souvenir Edition of the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 27, 1909).

(Jenks). Not one names a bank, railroad or other corporation as a client of his firm. Collections, the bread and butter of many small town lawyers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is not mentioned. Two emphasize their appeal to the local German community (Bruener & Hansen).

Many lawyers in the nineteenth century taught school for a few terms before undertaking a serious study of law and eventual admission to practice, but only Harry S. Locke and Joseph Himsl acknowledge holding such a pre-law job. Three attended St. John's College (Robinson, Judge Klasen & Himsl). John Roeser and Joseph Himsl claim to be a completely "self-made man" while George Reynolds, the son of a judge, admits he "inherited" his intellect.

An emphasis on a lawyer's oratory is a striking refrain in these profiles: Bennett ("very ready talker"); Reynolds ("eloquent and logical"); Sullivan ("steady, eloquent and forcible speaker"); Brower ("fine voice, thinks readily on his feet, is a forceful and logical speaker"). This reveals that trial work, where verbal skills were prized, still dominated the practices of most lawyers. Many decades later a lawyer would take pride in his ability to write a "forceful, eloquent and logical" brief.

The special section on the Stearns County bench and bar in the Jubilee Edition of the *St. Cloud Journal-Press* follows. It has been reformatted and several typos corrected. The photographs are from *Men of Minnesota* (1902) and are inserted by the MLHP as original photographs in the newspaper were too dark to be copied.

St. Cloud's Legal Representatives, Past and Present

THE HON. DAVID T. CALHOUN

Without any desire to disparage the ability or standing on any of the present or past members of the bar of Stearns County, we are constrained to say that David T. Calhoun was the profoundest lawyer that does now or ever has practiced at the St. Cloud bar. His character was so many-sided, and his literary and legal attainments so diversified and numerous, it is almost impossible give any idea of the man in a few, no matter how well-chosen they may be.

Mr. Calhoun, or "Cal," as his fellow members of the bar were want to call



him, was in every field of thought explored by him, broad-gaged and liberal-mined. He was a voracious reader, not only of the books generally pertaining to his profession, but also an ardent student of the sciences, philosophy, religion and politics. Mr. Calhoun's studious habits along all lines of ancient and modern thought, and his profound knowledge of the principles of the common law, plus his technical knowledge of the law of evidence, gave him an equipment which specially fitted him for the field of advocacy, where his success was marked, and almost phenomenal.

When it is said that Mr. Calhoun was a great lawyer, a ripe scholar, a curious gentleman, a patriotic citizen, a kind, tender and loving husband and father, there would seem to be little left to say, unless one went more into detail, which our limited space will not at this time permit.

GEORGE W. STEWART.

The bar of Stearns County has for more than a third of a century been one of the very best in the State of Minnesota, and Mr. Stewart, now among the older practitioners in the county, has for many years been one of the acknowledged leaders of the St. Cloud bar. Mr. Stewart is a man of exceptional industrious and studious habits, and a great zealot where the protection of the interests of his clients is involved. Mr. Stewart has few, if any, superiors in this part of the State as a real estate lawyer. The natural bend of his mind, coupled with a technical knowledge of the principles of real estate law, make him a formidable opponent in any lawsuit where a question of title is involved. In the trial of court cases where close questions of law are involved is perhaps the place where his abilities are best seen and felt. Mr. Stewart has been connected with most of the important litigation in Stearns and adjoining counties for a number of years, and his success can be readily ascertained by an examination of the final outcome of this litigation. He has a large and lucrative practice, is an estimable gentleman and commands the respect and esteem of the community.

THEO. BRUENER

Mr. Bruener, a German by birth, has for many years enjoyed a large business, especially among his own nationality. He is a highly educated gentleman, a careful, painstaking lawyer, and a man of excellent abilities. There are few, if any, lawyers practicing at the St. Cloud bar today who will make a more careful preparation of the facts, or go into court better equipped to protect the interests of his clients and secure favorable results than Mr. Bruener. Long years of experience as Judge of Probate of Stearns County have especially fitted Mr. Bruener for such litigation as grows out of the settlement of the estates of decedents. Mr. Bruener is a man of high professional ideals, of the strictest integrity, whose word given to a fellow lawyer, is as sacred as the most solemnly executed written stipulation. Mr.

Bruener's strict integrity, ripe scholarship and systematic work have given him a standing at the St. Cloud bar worthy the emulation of other lawyers.

JAMES R. BENNETT

James R. Bennett is the surviving partner of the late law firm of Calhoun & Bennett, which firm has existed for the last ten years. He has a very large acquaintance and is intensely popular in Stearns County and Central Minnesota, which contributed no small degree to the building up and retention of the large lucrative business of the firm of which he was a member. He is a man of good abilities, very ready talker, and is an expert in amassing and systematizing the facts to be used in the trial of causes. Mr. Bennett is careful and painstaking of all business entrusted to his care, alert and zealous in the protection of his clients' business, and is a good all-around lawyer.

JOHN A. ROESER.

John A. Roeser, as his name would indicate, is of German nationality, and is among the younger members of the Stearns County bar. Mr. Roeser is perhaps the best example of a self-made man a lawyer of any one now engaged in practice in this part of the state. He has by his own energy and industry, without the help of any of the institutions of learning, obtained a literary and legal education equal, if not superior, to any man whose name appears enrolled among the attorneys of this county.

Mr. Roeser's habits of industry, and careful and scrupulous attention to business, have drawn to the firm of Reynolds & Roeser a German and American clientage of which the firm should be justly proud. One of them are characteristics of Mr. Roeser is his lack of anything like superficiality. Any subject which he attempts to investigate is thoroughly mastered, and he has plowed deeply in the entire field of jurisprudence. He has paid especial

attention to every phase of the probate and real estate law, and it is a very common thing to hear a lawyer say he would as soon have Mr. Roeser's opinion on a question of title as any lawyer practicing in Stearns County. Mr. Roeser's standing is due entirely to his own efforts, which have been directed in proper channels to make him a careful, safe and conscientious attorney-at-law.

JAMES E. JENKS.

Mr. Jenks was a member of the firm of Taylor & Jenks until the Hon. Myron D. Taylor, about a year ago, retired from the firm to become the successor of the Hon. D. B. Searle. Mr. Jenks is a man with a very liberal education, excellent habits, and high standing in the community, not only as a lawyer, but as a citizen. He is a member of the State Board of Examiners, which position he fills with credit to himself and satisfaction to the state. His native ability, education and training, and careful attention to business have secured for him his share of the business in this section of Minnesota. He has devoted considerable attention to the kind of business generally known as a commercial one, although his business is not confined by any means to that branch of the law.

St. Cloud's Most Noted Jurist.

L. W. COLLINS.

St. Cloud for many years has been noted for the strength, ability and success of its attorneys. Several of its attorneys have risen to high places in that profession, some eight or ten having been judges of this and other districts. Only one, however, has occupied the high place of judge of the Supreme Court – L. W. Collins.

He has been a real resident of Minnesota since 1853, when the family settled in Eden Prairie, Hennepin County. He taught school near Cannon Falls in the winter of 1859 in 1860, taking up the study of law about the same time.



In 1862 he enlisted in the Seventh Minnesota infantry, was mustered out in 1865 as first lieutenant, making a brilliant record as soldier. He came to St. Cloud in 1876 and has been one of the leading citizens since that time. He has been county attorney, member of the legislature, judge of the district court and associate judge of the Supreme Court.

Few men enjoy a large acquaintance or possess more friends throughout the commonwealth than does Judge Collins.

He has always been a leader in public affairs, and it was mainly through his efforts while in the legislature that the normal school was established in St. Cloud.

He has been a maker of Minnesota history, in a large way, and his achievements are credible in the highest degree.

Judge Collins Recalls the Early Bar.

At the request of the editor and on extremely short notice I write a short article relative to the members of the bar of Stearns and adjoining counties in the early days.

I located at St. Cloud in May, 1866, forming a partnership with Seagrave Smith, who had, a few weeks before, opened an office here. He remained less than a year, returning to Hastings, and later moved to Minneapolis where he became one of the ablest district judges ever holding that position in this state.

Prior to 1866 more than half of the State, territorially, was one of judicial is one judicial district, the 4th, the base thereof being Hennepin County, in the tier of counties easterly and westerly of the same. Judge Vanderburgh, of Minneapolis presiding. The first judge of this district was James Hall, whose term of office commenced in May 1858. He resided at Little Falls and resigned after a few months' service. He located in St. Cloud to practice law in 1860, but soon afterwards moved west where he died many years ago. When Hall resigned Gov. Sibley appointed Edwin O. Hamlin, also of Little Falls, to fill the vacancy that he became the Democratic nominee for the office in 1858, but was beaten at the polls by Judge Vanderburgh, who later served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court for 12 years.

At the legislative session of 1866 the 7th Judicial District was created by cutting the 4th in two, making Stearns County and the counties lying east and west thereof the base of the new district. It ran to the British possessions on the north and to the state lines east and west. That part of the state then comprising the new district had a population of not to exceed 14,000 of which Stearns County had more than half. The same territory now has a population of over 700,000, a most remarkable growth in 41 years.

August 1st, 1866, Gov. Marshall appointed James M. McKelvey of St. Cloud the first judge of this great domain and he was elected and re-elected, serving until he resigned in 1883, and then resuming the practice of law. He lived but a short time thereafter. He was a native of Pennsylvania, served in the Seventh Minnesota Regiment as an officer until after the battle of Nashville (where he was wounded) and made a very popular, efficient and upright magistrate. He was succeeded as District Judge by the writer, who in 1887 was followed by D. B. Searle. The latter was succeeded by M. D. Taylor in December 1906.

The pioneer lawyers of St. Cloud may be named as Gen. C. C. Andrews, now living in St. Paul; James C. Shepley and William

Caruthers. Shepley was from Maine and Carruthers from Tennessee. They left St. Cloud as early as 1860, and both passed away long ago.

In 1866 the more active members of the bar of Stearns County, residing in St. Cloud, were Capt. Oscar Taylor, William S. Moore, William J. Parsons, Edwin M. Wright and Col. Charles D Kerr. W. H. Minor had located at Sauk Center a short time previous. William H. Wood and George W. Sweet had offices at Sauk Rapids. I do not think that either Morrison, Douglas, Todd Sherburne or Pope Counties were encumbered then by a single practicing attorney, although several had previously, about 1859, practiced at Little Falls. E. S. Smith and Y. A. Clark, a very unique character, were among the first of the second crop to hang out shingles in that place. Senator Nelson, Ruben Reynolds, who subsequently became one of the judges of the 11th District, farther of Geo. H. Reynolds of St. Cloud, W. T. Bull, now at Fargo, F. B. Van Hopesan, and John S. Mower were the pioneers at Alexandria, Chas. S. Wheaton at Elk River, and H. M. Atkins at Princeton.

All the men mentioned by name lived and practiced law at St. Cloud in 1866, removed therefrom before the end of their lives, Captain Taylor dying in Kansas, Moore and Parsons in St. Paul, Wright at Fergus Falls, and Kerr in Texas, where he had gone temporarily on account of ill health.

Taylor came to Minnesota about 1857 as a civil engineer and then took up the study of law. Moore graduated at Yale in the class of which President Northrup of the U. of M. was a member. Wright was a brother-in-law of Taylor's and held the office of County Attorney for number of years. Parsons was a cultural gentleman, dressing was great care and always dignified. Kerr had been Lieutenant Colonel of the 16th Illinois Infantry, a capable officer and in every sense a gentleman. He came to St. Cloud in the fall of 1865 and removed to St. Paul a few years later where he served as district judge for many years, holding that office when he died in January 1897.

H. L. Gordon moved to St. Cloud from Monticello in 1868, and practiced law here for a few years, then removed to Minneapolis. He now resides in Los Angeles, California.

About 1867, Geo. S. Hayes, brother-in-law of Col. Kerr's, came from Missouri and formed a partnership with him. He remained here a little over a year and then returned to the south. Judge Searle came later and practiced until he became district judge. Judge Hamlin had practiced here prior to 1865, but at the close of the war removed to Memphis, Tennessee, where he was state agent for a large fire insurance company. He returned to St. Cloud in 1868, I think, and remained until his removal to Bethany, Pa., about 1874, where he died at least twenty years ago.

The late David T. Calhoun and the present district judge M. D. Taylor came much later, became law students and were admitted to practice in St. Cloud.

H. M. Atkins moved from Princeton to St. Cloud about 1872 and practiced a few years, removing Elk River. His death occurred at least fifteen years since.

As might be expected, with the few people living in the 7th District in 1866 there were very little law business and the terms of the court were few in number. Not to exceed two terms and then held in each of Stearns, Benton, Morrison, Crow Wing and St. Louis Counties and, I believe, one in Otter Tail.

There was one term held in Stearns County in the year 1866, but one case for the jury that grew out of a dispute about a barrel of whiskey sold by a Milwaukee firm to a prominent St. Cloud merchant, who, as was not unusual in those days, kept whiskey in a store on tap for his customers.²

² H. L. Gordon represented the plaintiff (the merchant) in this case. His vivid description of the trial before Judge Vanderburgh can be found in "H. L. Gordon Recalls Trials of the 1860s and 1870s" (MLHP, 2018 (published first, 1911)).

This article would be very incomplete without mentioning four gentlemen living at St. Cloud who when I located here, had been admitted to practice law, but who were then engaged in other business, and, with one exception, to be noted hereafter, have passed away. I refer to Thomas C. McClure, Louis A. Evans, S. B. Penney, and Henry C Waite. McClure died nearly twenty-six years ago in the prime of life. He was, in my judgment, one of the ablest man ever residing in the city, and his death came as a result of overwork. Evans, genial and popular, held the office of Probate Judge for several terms. Mr. Penney removed to Fargo. Both are dead. Mr. Waite, the exception referred to, is still a resident in St. Cloud, a highly esteemed citizen and the writer hopes that he may remain with us for many years to come.

As a whole the practicing attorneys before mentioned were able and up right men, but some had very serious faults. Their infirmities should be forgotten by all and especially by the younger lawyers, now on the stage of life, who in the first days of their practice may have been vanquished, and, as they perhaps thought, very unfairly treated by the veterans. Let us unite in the highest praise for the pioneer lawyers of this locality who, in the early days, engaged without fear or favor, and frequently without compensation, in the rough and tumble of the litigation prevailing in the new country then in wilderness.

— L. W. Collins.

GEORGE H. REYNOLDS.

Nature has been very kind to George H. Reynolds. It gave him a father [Reuben Reynolds] eminent in the legal profession, and who was one of the pioneer judges of Minnesota, and whose memory is highly cherished by his

contemporaries and all those who have knowledge of the early settlers of this commonwealth, who did so much for posterity.

Mr. Reynolds not only inherited a brilliant intellect, sterling honesty and independence, but he has a love for his work and has made himself one of the ablest members of an exceptionally strong bar. He is a good lawyer — and something more. He is a man of keen literary ability, and possesses a splendid private library, covering a wide range of knowledge, and he makes of these many volumes intimate friends. He is also a poet, and a lover of nature. Had he devoted himself to literature he would have made himself the name of wide renown. These are his diversions, as he is a close student of the law, giving his clients an unstinted devotion to their interest. As a speaker he is eloquent and logical, and as a cross questioner of unwilling witnesses he has few equals. He is in short a man of broad culture, who has faith in humanity, confidence in himself, and the courage of his convictions. Naturally he has entrusted to his keeping many important cases and enjoys a large and profitable business.

J. D. SULLIVAN.

Mr. John D. Sullivan is essentially a fighter. Mr. Sullivan's large clientage in Stearns County and central Minnesota is due largely to the fact that the people know when a case is place in Sullivan's hands every inch of the ground will be fought, from the time of the issuance of the summons until, the Supreme Court have said he is either right or wrong in his contentions. He is a steady, eloquent and forcible speaker, careful and painstaking in the preparation of his cases, gentlemanly and considerate with opposing counsel, and is in all-around, first-class jury lawyer. Mr. Sullivan has a very large and lucrative business, and perhaps tries more cases in Stearns County than any other lawyer practicing at the bar at the present time.

JAMES A. MARTIN.

Mr. Martin opened an office in this city about a year and a half ago as a partner of the Hon. L. W. Collins. When Mr. Martin opened an office and started to practice his profession in the city, there seemed to be no opening for new firm in this part of the state, but he has demonstrated by his studious habits and close attention to business the fact that there is always an opening for a good man.

Mr. Martin has a very large and close friendship throughout the entire state, made while he was filling the position of governor's executive clerk, member of the board of control, manager Judge Collins' campaign for the Republican nomination for governor, and finally as manager of Bob Dunn's campaign against Governor Johnson.

Mr. Martin is a courteous gentlemen, a loyal friend, a logical and eloquent speaker, which, with his studious and methodical habits, make him a rising man in the legal profession in this community. No man with less ability than Jim Martin would ever had the nerve to attempt to divert the law business from its accustomed channels, but he has demonstrated to the community and the bar that the right kind of abilities careful attention to business will succeed in the practice of law is in the profession practice of any other profession.

J. E. C. ROBINSON.

J[ohn] E. C. Robinson was born in Clonmel, Ireland and with his mother moved to the city when but a mere child. He received his early school education in the city and later graduated from St. Thomas College and St. John's University of the state. He was admitted to the practice of law in this city and for number of years was connected with the well-known law firm of Taylor, Calhoun & Rhodes. He stayed with this firm for a number of years and later engaged in the practice for himself, in which he has been very successful.

Mr. Robinson has taken a very prominent part in Democratic politics of the state and county. He was a member of the Democratic state central committee for number of years and four times mayor of the city of St. Cloud. At the fall election last year he was elected as state senator of this district and has made himself decidedly popular with his constituents.

RIPLEY B. BROWER.

Hon. Ripley B. Brower, a member the firm of Stewart & Brower, occupies a very high position among the younger members of the bar of Stearns County. He is a man with a liberal legal education, good attainments and has paid special attention to the cultivating of such talents as go to make up the proper equipment for an advocate and orator. He has a fine voice, thinks readily on his feet, is a forceful and logical speaker, and his studious industrious in his habits. Mr. Brower's large acquaintance and personal popularity, coupled with his careful preparation of causes placed in his hands, make him a formidable opponent in any case handled by him, especially with the issue is to be submitted to a jury for their determination.

Much could be said about Senator Brower as a statesman and politician, but as this sketch is concerning his qualifications as a member of the bar, we can only add, that if any one doubts the statement that he is an adroit, clever and able lawyer, their doubts can be readily solved by sitting on the other side of the table in any forum where disputed questions of fact are being disposed of.

HUBERT HANSEN.

Hubert Hansen, better known in Stearns County as Judge Hansen, since his retirement from the office of probate judge, which he held for eight years, is a conspicuous figure among the German lawyers of the county. Mr. Hansen is a methodical, painstaking and careful man in the transaction of all

business placed his hands. His long service in the probate office of this county has given him a knowledge of the probate law equal, perhaps, to any lawyer in the county. Mr. Hansen is now making especially of probate and real estate law, and is reaping, as he should, the fruits of his ripe experience obtained during his official career. The judge realizes that the “besetting sin” of the average lawyer is procrastination, and is one of the kind of men that do things, and for that reason, together with the fact that he has the ability to do them, is furnishing his office with business enough to keep constantly engaged.

J. B. PATTISON.

Mr. [John] B. Pattison is one of the younger lawyers of the city. He is the son of the late William Pattison, who was one of the pioneers of this city, a man universally esteemed. Mr. Pattison served his country in the war with Spain, doing good service in the Philippines. He commands a profitable practice, gives it his personal attention, and is one of the popular men of the city, and who protects the interests of his clients.

CONGRESSMAN C. A. LINDBERG.

Started right in life by becoming a resident of Stearns County, in his early youth. He was a Millrose boy, and as a young man he studied law in St. Cloud. This equipped he went to Little Falls, and is the head of one of the most successful law firms in the state. When a man was wanted who could lift the scalp of Congressman Buckman, he yielded to the demands of Republicans all over the district, and turned the trick so effectively that it was a surprise to the whole state. His election followed, and at the present writing it looks as though he could stay in Congress until he gets ready to be governor or United States senator.

JUDGE DOLSON B. SEARLE.

An Excellent Judge of Law and Good Stock

Dolson B. Searle was a farmer's son down in New York state a half-century ago. He was, however, an ambitious youth, and after securing a good education, enlisted to help put down the rebellion. After that task had been accomplished, he followed the advice of Horace Greeley, and came west to grow up with the country. He entered the law and made a brilliant success in the profession. He has at one time and another held almost all the offices that require legal qualifications in the gift of his own people — and some others. He has been city and county attorney, United States attorney for Minnesota, and judge of the Seventh Judicial District for many years, being elected and re-elected two or three times without opposition.

Years ago he had another ambition, which grew out of his home training. He had an inborn love for the country, and he went out to Pleasant Lake and started a farm. It is one of the beauty spots of Minnesota, and here he



has erected the finest collection of farm buildings to be found in this section of the country — a handsome double farm house, half of which he uses for a summer residence and five large barns. He has added to his holdings and now has some two thousand acres around the lake, 1,300 acres of which is in his big farm. Several years ago he became interested in Shorthorns, and now has a magnificent herd of 100 animals at Fairview — his Pleasant Lake farm. This herd has been represented many times at state and international exhibits, and many have been the prizes captured.

One incident will do with as well as many that might be told, showing the high standard of the Searle Shorthorns. One of the wealthy breeders of Spokane was making up an exhibit for the big Clark & Lewis exposition. He wanted to capture first honors west of the Rockies. He sent his buyer to all the big breeders for the best heifer that money could command. His

representative visited all the herds of any prominence as far east as Ohio, and then returned to the Searle farm for one bred at Pleasant Lake, which he considered the best in the country. He left a big roll in place of the animal, and his judgment was confirmed by the judges at Portland.

Judge Searle has been one of the most prominent of Minnesota men for many years — among other honors is the one that he highly prizes, that of Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic of Minnesota. But his chief pleasure in these latter days is big Pleasant Lake farm and his beautiful Shorthorns — a herd that has contributed to many herds and farms and is doing its part in giving the country a better and more profitable type of cattle.

Lovers of a beautiful country and fine stock, can spend a day with pleasure and profit at Pleasant Lake.

H. S. LOCKE.

H[arry] S. Locke, the attorney, who by reason of his successes in the management and trial of court and jury cases, ranks as one of the leaders of the Stearns County Bar comes of an ancestry composed of the Stanwood, Locke and Smith families of New England, many members of whom are noted for high scholastic and literary abilities and attainments.

He was born in Hollowell, Maine, but grew up on a Stearns County farm. Here, aided by inherited abilities, coached and tutored by capable relatives and the common and graded schools of his vicinity, he mastered a course of academic studies so thoroughly that upon examination and after attendance of eleven months at the St. Cloud Normal School he was graduated from the high highest course of that institution by President D. L. Kiehle.

After receiving this diploma, Mr. Locke taught for several years in the graded schools of the state and took up the study of law. Coming to the law was to him like a home coming, for as a Prodigal Son relished the meat of

the fatted calf so did this young man relish, digest and assimilate the principles, practice and technique of the law.

Mr. Locke was admitted to practice after examination before Judge L. W. Collins in 1883, when he immediately entered upon the practice of the profession to which he has ever since devoted himself with untiring energy. That he is succeeded in abundant measure, an examination of the records of his numerous cases will show. He is a fighter and generally gets what he goes after even if he has to appeal to the higher courts; therefore his clients feel that fees paid to him is money well spent.

As a thinker, writer, orator and lawyer Mr. Locke has more than a local reputation and his studious habits, his knowledge of human nature, his keen insight and understanding of legal principles, his familiarity with the practice of the courts, his facility as a writer, the eloquence of his speech, and the powers of persuasion give him rank among the leading lawyers of the state.

JUDGE A. H. KLASSEN.

Judge A[ibert] H. Klasen, recently elected Judge of Probate, is a man well fitted for his position. Mr. Klasen is a graduate of the law school of the University of Michigan where he received a thorough training in law especially in probate matter.

This is his first term, being elected at the last general election. A. H. Klasen is another Stearns County boy. He was born in Freeport. He attended St. John's college before entering the law school. After his graduation he entered into partnership with Theodore Bruener. He remained with Mr. Bruener until about a year ago.

JOSEPH BENEDICT HIMSL.

Joseph Benedict Himsl, the present county attorney of the great county of Stearns, was born in the Austrian Alps, upper Austria, February 6, 1872. At the age of eleven years he emigrated with his parents to America, and came directly to Stearns County, where his father settled on a farm. He was educated in the public schools in Austria, at St. John's university and the University of Minnesota, from which he graduated in 1903.

For twelve years Mr. Himsl was engaged in pedagogical lines in the county and in the city of Minneapolis. In 1900 he entered the law department of the University of Minnesota, from which he graduated in June 1903. He then located at Albany, where he successfully practiced law for one and one half years.

During the autumn of 1905 he was a candidate for the office of county attorney and was elected by a large majority. He was again re-elected to the office by a large majority during the fall of 1906. He entered politics while teaching school, having served in the office of justice of the peace and town clerk during the summer of 1901 and 1902. He was appointed assistant superintendent of schools of Stearns County, from which office he resigned in the fall of the same year to again resume his law studies.

Mr. Himsl is a self made man, who, with no other resources but his own determined will to succeed and get ahead in life, has battled his way through school, and has a bright future before him. Mr. Himsl has given excellent satisfaction as county attorney and can undoubtedly have another term for the asking.

Related Articles

**James E. Jenks, “Bench and Bar of Stearns County” (MLHP, 2013)
(published first, 1915).**

**Loren W. Collins, “The Story of a Minnesotan” (MLHP, 2016)
(published first, 1919).**

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