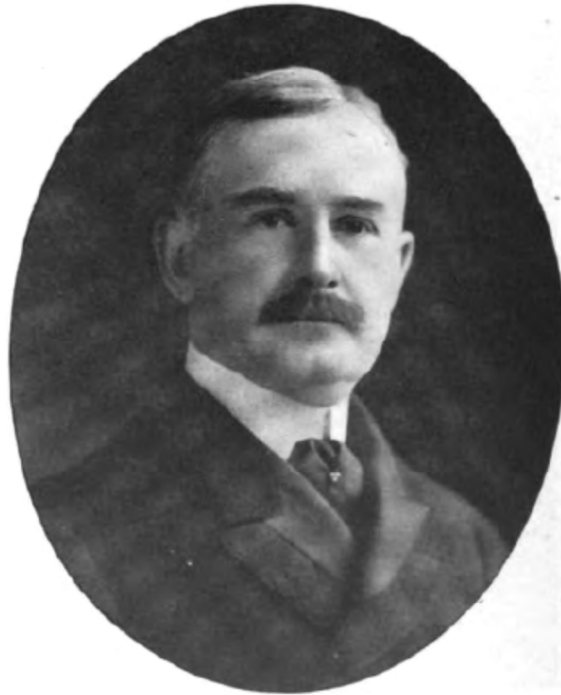


IN MEMORIAM

JOHN OLIVER PATTEN WHEELWRIGHT

April 24, 1861 • November 1, 1927



JOHN O. P. WHEELWRIGHT
COBB & WHEELWRIGHT,
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

John Oliver Patten Wheelwright was a prominent member of the corporate bar of Minneapolis for over three decades. From the 1890s to the 1920s, he and his partner, Albert C. Cobb, represented major corporations in the city. Among their clients were the Minneapolis Gas Light Company and the Great Northern Railroad. The Cobb & Wheelwright firm was so successful that neither partner felt the need to subscribe to local biographical collections or histories that would carry their biographical sketches. It seems that the only book Wheelwright subscribed to was a history of Minneapolis published in 1923, which had this short profile:

John Oliver Patten Wheelwright was born in Bethel, Maine, April 24, 1861, his parents being the Rev. John B. and Helen Augusta (Barton) Wheelwright, who were also natives of the Pine Tree state and were of English lineage, the ancestry in the paternal line being traced back to the Rev. John Wheelwright, who came from England to America in the seventeenth century, settling in New England. The Rev. John B. Wheelwright was a Congregational minister, widely known as an eminent divine, his ability bringing him into prominence as a minister of that faith. He removed with his family to Minneapolis in 1892. Both he and his wife passed away in this city, the father having retired several years prior to his death.

John O. P. Wheelwright pursued his elementary education in the public schools of Portland, Maine. He studied law in the office of the Hon. Josiah H. Drummond of Portland, Maine, and was admitted to the bar in that city in October, 1883. In December, 1886, he formed a partnership with Albert C. Cobb, a former classmate at Bowdoin College, and this association has since been maintained, covering thirty-six years.

Mr. Wheelwright was one of the founders of the Northrop Collegiate School, of which he served for four years as president. He has membership in both the Minnesota State and American Bar Associations.

In February, 1887, Mr. Wheelwright was married to Miss Grace Rickey, who passed away in February, 1892, leaving a son, Barton. In December, 1898, Mr. Wheelwright married Miss Alice Nealey of Monticello, Minnesota, who also passed away, her death occurring in May, 1919, and she left a daughter, Alice N. The son, Barton, was graduated from Harvard University in 1911 and is now in the

engineering department of the Grand Trunk Railway, located in Montreal, Canada.

Mr. Wheelwright belongs to the Minneapolis, Minikahda and Lafayette clubs.¹

He died four years later at age sixty-six. His death on November 2, 1927, was reported on the first page of the *Minneapolis Journal*.

WHEELWRIGHT, 66, DEAD; ATTORNEY HERE 35 YEARS

**Ranked High in Corporation Law –
A Founder of Northrop Collegiate School**

**AIDED IN FRAMING
CITY GAS FRANCHISE**

**Practiced Law for 44 Years –
Partner of A. C. Cobb
Since 1866.**

J. O. P. Wheelwright, one of the leaders of the Minneapolis bar, member of the law firm of Cobb, Wheelwright, Hoke & Benson, died today at Northwestern hospital, after a long illness.

Mr. Wheelwright had been a Minneapolis attorney for 35 years. He ranked high in corporation law and long had been identified in many important interests in his capacity of attorney.

Forty-four Years an Attorney

He was 66 years old. A native of Maine and a graduate of Bowdoin

¹ Rev. Marion Daniel Shutter, ed., 3 *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest* 309 (1923). The photograph on the front page is from *Notable Lawyers of the West* (1902).

College, Mr. Wheelwright came with his parents to Minneapolis in 1872. His father was Rev. John Wheelwright, a Congregational clergyman. Mr. Wheelwright had been practicing law for 44 years. He was a member of the American Bar Association as well as the associations of city and state.

One of his major interests outside the law was in Northrop Collegiate School, of which he was one of the founders. He served four years as president of the association.

Handled Important Cases

During his long career, Mr. Wheelwright handled many important cases. His firm has been counsel for the Minneapolis Gas Light Company, and Mr. Wheelwright conducted the negotiations with the city in 1910 which resulted in the present franchise. In more recent years other members of the firm have taken charge of gas company matters.

Mr. Wheelwright formed a partnership with Albert C. Cobb in 1886, and they have been associated in the practice of law ever since.

The Wheelwright family traced its ancestry to a Rev. John Wheelwright who came to America from England in the nineteenth century.

Handled G. N. Matters

A large part of Mr. Wheelwright's practice was in federal court. He and other members of his firm handled Great Northern railroad matters . . . also legal affairs for other corporations of many kinds.

Mr. Wheelwright was a close friend of Associate Justice Pierce Butler, of the United States Supreme Court, who always inquired about him when friends were in Washington. Mr. Wheelwright and Mr. Butler and the late David F. Simpson made annual trips hunting and fishing.

Mr. Wheelwright played golf with some regularity until recently. He made his home at the Minneapolis club.

Leaves Son and Daughter

In company with A. C. Paul of Minneapolis, Mr. Wheelwright toured France in 1925, and attended the meeting of the International Chamber of Commerce at Brussels. . . .

Mr. Wheelwright was married to Grace Rickey in 1887. She died five years later, leaving a son, Barton, who is a member of the engineering department of the Canadian National Railways. Later Mr. Wheelwright was married to Alice Nealey of Monticello, Minn., who died in 1919, leaving a daughter, who is Mrs. Maurice A. Dewey of Minnesota.

He was a member of the Minneapolis and Minikahda clubs.²



APPENDIX

By 1918 the Cobb and Wheelwright firm had expanded to meet the needs of its corporate clientele. It was one of the major firms of the city yet had only four members. Lawyers came and went. By 1922 it had three partners, and two associates.

² *Minneapolis Journal*, November 1, 1927 (Home Edition), at 1 (the headline has been corrected. The original had “C. C.” as Albert Cobb’s initials). It must be noted that the front page article in the *Journal* on November 1, 1927, quoted above, is from the website Find A Grave, and probably is from a late edition of the “Home Edition” of the *Journal* that day because the *Journal* article on microfilm at the Minnesota Historical Society is much shorter and is likely from an early edition of the paper that day.

No bar memorials for Wheelwright have been found. The published proceedings of the Minnesota State Bar Association for the year 1928 only list his name in a “Necrology” section. The Hennepin County Bar Association was not conducting annual memorial services for its deceased members in 1928.

The following profile of Wheelwright's firm was published in James Clark Fifield, ed., *The American Bar: Contemporary Lawyers of the United States and Canada* 334 (1918):

COBB, WHEELWRIGHT & DILLE

General practice. Firm consists of: A. C. Cobb, J. O. P. Wheelwright, John I. Dille, John C. Benson.

Albert Clifford Cobb, b. Rockford, Me., Aug. 27, 1860; a. to bar, 1884, Me.; ed. pub. schs., Portland, Me.; grad. Bowdoin College, A.B., 1881; legal ed. private study. Mem. Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

John Oliver Patten Wheelwright, b. Bethel, Maine, April 24, 1861; a. to bar, 1883, Maine; ed. pub. schs., Waterville and Brunswick, Me.; grad. Bowdoin College, A.B., A.M., 1881; legal ed. private study. Mem. Psi Upsilon fraternity; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

John Ichabod Dille, b. Huntington, Ind., Nov. 18, 1857; a. to bar, 1882, Ind.; legal ed. Ind. Univ., LL.B., Univ. of Oklahoma, LL.D. Mem. Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

John Cabot Benson, b. Heron Lake, Minn., Feb. 27, 1890; a. to bar, 1912, Minn.; ed. Hamline Univ.; legal ed. Univ. of Wis., Univ. of Minn., LL.B., 1912. Mem. Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Phi Delta Phi fraternities; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

Firm is counsel for: Minnesota Loan & Trust Co., Minneapolis Gas Light Co., Northwestern Telephone Exchange Co., Minneapolis Steel & Machinery Co., Great Northern Ry. Co.

This profile appeared in James Clark Fifield, ed., *The American Bar: Contemporary Lawyers of the United States and Canada* 503-504 (1922):

COBB, WHEELWRIGHT & BENSON

General practice. Firm consists of: Albert C. Cobb, J. O. P. Wheelwright, John C. Benson. Associates: Raymond A. Scallen, Cecil E. Warner.

Albert Clifford Cobb, b. Rockland, Me., Aug. 27, 1860; a. to bar, 1884, Me.; ed. pub. schs., Portland, Me.; grad. Bowdoin College, A.B., 1881; legal ed. priv. study. Mem. Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

John Oliver Patten Wheelwright, b. Bethel, Me., April 24, 1861; a. to bar, 1883, Me.; ed. pub. schs., Waterville and Brunswick, Me.; grad. Bowdoin College, A.B., A.M., 1881; legal ed. priv. study. Mem. Psi Upsilon fraternity; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

John Cabot Benson, b. Heron Lake, Minn., Feb. 27, 1890; a. to bar, 1912, Minn.; ed. Hamline Univ.; legal ed. Univ. of Wis., Univ. of Minn., LL.B., 1912. Mem. Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Phi Delta Phi fraternities; Minneapolis, Minn. State, and American Bar Ass'ns.

Raymond A. Scallen, b. Minneapolis, Minn., May 13, 1892; a. to bar, 1915, Minn.; ed. parochial schs., Minneapolis; grad. College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn., 1912; legal ed. special course for American Army students, Law College, Univ. of Paris, 1919, St. Paul College of Law, St. Paul, Minn., LL.B. Captain, U. S. Army, 1917-1919. Mem. Delta Theta Phi fraternity; Hennepin Co., and Minn. State Bar Ass'ns.

Cecil Elisha Warner, b. Circleville, O., Nov. 28, 1881; a. to bar, 1907, Ohio, 1911, Minn.; ed. pub. schs., Ohio; grad. Ohio State Univ., A.M., 1908; legal ed. Univ. of Minn., LL.M., 1911. Mem. Hennepin Co. Bar Ass'n.

Firm is counsel for: Minn. Loan & Trust Co.; Minneapolis Gas Light Co.; Northwestern Tel. Exchange Co.; Minneapolis Steel & Mach. Co.

Office: 812 Andrus Bldg.

Related Article

“Albert C. Cobb (1860-1935) (MLHP, 2019).

—φ—

Posted MLHP: July 1, 2019