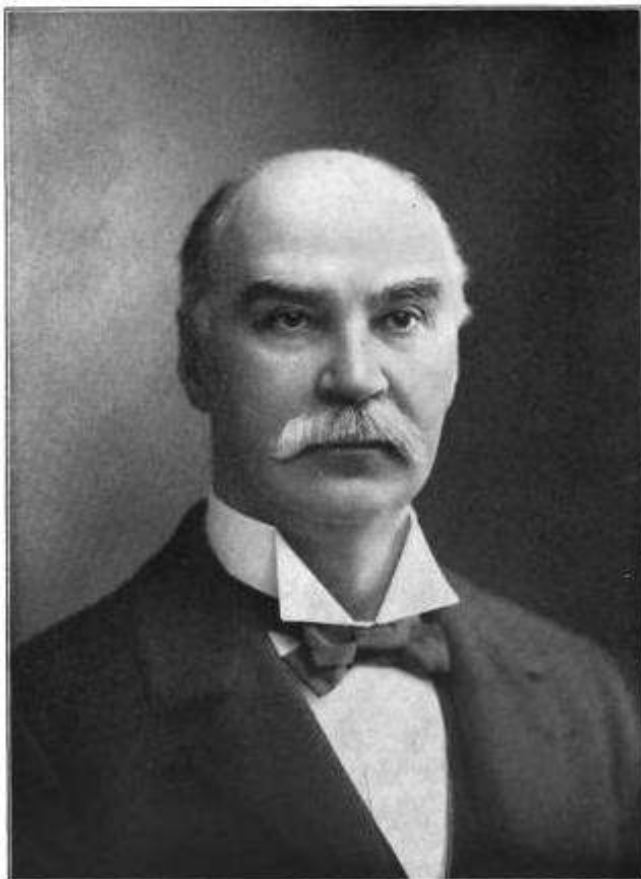


# ALEXANDER T. ANKENY

( December 27, 1837 - October 12, 1917 )

\*\*\*\*\*

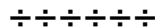


*A. T. Ankeny*

(ca. 1904)

## Table of Contents

| Article  | Pages |
|--|-------|
| 1. Introduction.....   | 2-6   |
| 2. Profiles.....   | 6-18  |
| a. <i>Progressive Men of Minnesota</i> (1897).....   | 6-9   |
| b. <i>History of the Great Northwest</i> (1901).....   | 10-13 |
| c. <i>History of the Bench and Bar<br/>of Minnesota</i> (1904).....                                | 13-16 |
| d. <i>Compendium of History and Biographies of<br/>Minneapolis and Hennepin County</i> (1914)..... | 16-18 |
| 3. Obituary (1917).....  | 18-19 |
| 4. Memorial (1918).....  | 19-22 |



### 1. Introduction

Admitted to the bar in Pennsylvania in 1861, Alexander Thompson Ankeny tried and won his first case in court on April 12, 1861, the day Fort Sumter came under fire. He was an aide to Secretary of the War Edwin M. Stanton from February 1862 to April 1865. Afterwards he did not join the Republican Party, which dominated the post-bellum period, but remained a Democrat.

He arrived in Minneapolis in 1872, and practiced law and politics there for the next forty years. He reportedly “exert[ed] a large influence in the councils of his party.” In 1886, he led the party to support a major reform of the election laws of the state—the secret ballot.

In 1889, the 26th legislature required the “Australian ballot” or secret ballot for elections in Duluth, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Winona and Stillwater, which had more than 10,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> A popular history summarized the law:

---

<sup>1</sup> 1889 Laws, c. 3, at pp. 12-40. It was passed April 24, 1889. In 1891, the legislature extended the law throughout the state. See 1891 Laws, c. 4, at pp. 23-66. It was passed

The Legislature adjourned April 23, 1889. The most important act of the session was the establishment in cities of 10,000 inhabitants or over, a secret system of voting, similar to the Australian system. The State Auditor was required to furnish to such cities, at the State's expense, printed white ballots containing the names of all the candidates to be voted for throughout the State, and all constitutional amendments; the county auditors, at the county's expense were to furnish blue ballots containing the names of the candidates to be voted for throughout the county, and city clerks were to furnish red ballots containing the names to be voted for throughout the city. Each candidate on the white ticket was to pay a fee of \$50; candidates on the blue ballots \$10 and those on the red \$5. The voter's choice was to be indicated by a cross opposite the name of the candidate, or, if he wished to vote the whole ticket, by a cross at a place designated at the top of the ticket. Booths were to be provided at the polling places, and the ballots were to be blocked and each signed on the back by the initials of the ballot clerk distributing them. The voter was to retire to the booth alone, indicate his choice on the ticket and fold the ballot so that the initials of the clerk would appear on the outside, and hand it to the election judge, who was to deposit it, if properly signed, in the white, red, or blue ballot boxes respectively.

A board of registration was established in the cities, every ward to constitute an election district, with the proviso that no district should contain more than four hundred voters. Polls were open from 6 A. M. to 5 P. M.; the hour of closing was afterwards changed to 7 P. M. A penalty was imposed upon the voter for disclosing his choice, or any one interfering with him while preparing his ballot, and for other violations of the law. The bill was introduced by

---

April 20, 1891. For a description of the political skirmishing behind the 1891 law, see Carl H. Chrislock, "The Alliance Party and the Minnesota Legislature of 1891," 35 *Minnesota History* 297, 309-10 (1957).

John A. Keyes, of Winona, and was modeled after the election laws of Michigan.<sup>2</sup>

Credit for a reform law such as this is claimed usually by individual legislators who sponsored and shepherded it through committees to final passage. Occasionally, however, the seeds of reform can be traced to political forces outside the capitol, and the adoption of the Australian ballot in Minnesota may be one of those instances. Three years before the legislature acted, Ankeny persuaded the state Democratic Central Committee to include a plank in the party's platform endorsing the use of the Australian ballot in Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

Not content with serving behind the scenes, albeit in the upper echelons of the party, Ankeny ran for office, with occasional success. He was elected to the school board, serving in 1877-1878 and 1886-1895. But he was defeated in elections for municipal court in 1885, district court in 1890 and mayor in 1896. The district court race warrants particular attention.

On November 4, 1890, Ankeny came in fifth in a top-four election for a seat on the Fourth Judicial District, which encompassed Hennepin, Anoka, Isanti and Wright Counties. With seven candidates, the ballot was crowded. Four incumbents were running: Frederick Hooker, who had been appointed in 1888; Seagrave Smith, appointed in 1889; Charles M. Pond, appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Judge John P. Rea in July 1890; and Austin Young, who had served since 1872, first on the court of common pleas for five years and, later, on the district court. In most years, the incumbents would have won, but in this election Young came in sixth.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Frank R. Holmes, ed., 4 *Minnesota in Three Centuries* 105 (1908); see also William Watts Folwell, 3 *A History of Minnesota* 189-90 (Minn. Hist. Soc., 1956) (published first, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> Marion D. Shutter & J. S. McLain eds., *Progressive men of Minnesota* 116 (Minneapolis Journal, 1897) ("In 1886 he incorporated in the state Democratic platform a recommendation for the adoption of the Australian system of voting, being the first public recognition of the system in this country and which is now used in nearly all the states."). The complete profile is posted below at 6-9.

<sup>4</sup> 1891 Blue Book, at 572-73.

Results of Election for  
District Court Judges, Fourth Judicial District  
November 4, 1890<sup>5</sup>

| <u>Candidate</u>     | <u>Anoka</u> | <u>Hennepin</u> | <u>Isanti</u> | <u>Wright</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Seagrave Smith....   | 1,884        | 28,309          | 1,175         | 4,842         | 36,300       |
| Thomas Canty.....    | 1,003        | 17,277          | 787           | 2,301         | 21,368       |
| Charles M. Pond..... | 803          | 16,579          | 207           | 2,422         | 20,101       |
| Frederick Hooker...  | 1,181        | 14,037          | 1,132         | 2,725         | 19,075       |
| A. T. Ankeny.....    | 706          | 15,888          | 54            | 2,137         | 18,785       |
| Austin H. Young..... | 911          | 13,812          | 201           | 2,684         | 17,608       |
| Robert D. Russell... | 1,103        | 12,160          | 1,056         | 2,320         | 16,639       |

While this was a Democratic-leaning year, an endorsement from that party is only a partial explanation of these results. Smith, Canty, Pond and Ankeny were Democrats, but Smith won the endorsement of all parties, which is why he received far more votes than the others. Of the three Republicans, Hooker, an incumbent, was elected, but Young, inactive in the party for years,<sup>6</sup> and Russell, the city attorney, were not (but he would be appointed to district court in 1893). Canty was an ambitious, energetic young lawyer, while Young may have lost favor with the trial bar.<sup>7</sup> While it is difficult to identify the causal

<sup>5</sup> 1891 Blue Book, at 572. The top four candidates won: Seagrave Smith, Thomas Canty, Charles M. Pond and Frederick Hooker.

<sup>6</sup> Young's biographical sketch in the 1899 Blue book concluded, "In politics is a Republican, but since going upon the bench has taken no part in politics." *Id.* at 608.

<sup>7</sup> One clue to why Young was beaten so badly can be found in the following excerpt from a portrait of him in a city history published three years after this election:

It has been said that [Young] sometimes reached a decision on a point before the same had been fully discussed. In an experience of over twelve years before him as a practitioner, I think the criticism is not well founded. It is true that when an attorney appeared before him in a case, entirely unprepared, as unfortunately was too frequently the case, he did not propose to waste the valuable time of the court on interminable discussions, on self evident propositions. He did not think courts were established to instruct attorneys in the science or practice of law. And in this, unquestionably, he was right.

Isaac Atwater, I *History of the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota* 433 (1893) (The complete sketch can be found in "Arthur H. Young (1830-1905)" (MLHP, 2008-2010)). It seems that some members of the bar thought that over his many years on the bench, Young had lost one of a jurist's most important qualities—patience.

factors in an election for four seats and seven candidates, the general disposition of the electorate in that year was critical; just as, several years hence, when the mood or temper of the public had changed, Republican candidates would prevail in judicial elections. It is important to recall that in this period, unlike the present day, the political affiliations of sitting judges and their challengers were common knowledge and published in newspapers at election time.

Although Ankeny practiced law, not much is known about the type of law he practiced, whether he was a member of a firm and other professional details. He is recalled by his political and civic activities, and foremost among those was his passionate advocacy for public education.

÷÷÷÷÷

## 2. Profiles

Four profiles or biographical sketches of Ankeny were written in his life time. He either wrote or edited each of them and, not surprisingly, the later sketches repeat or borrow sections from earliest. They may be read as slim autobiographies. The first appeared in 1897, the second in 1901, the next in 1904, and the final one in 1914, three years before his death.

### a. *Progressive Men of Minnesota* (1897).

Alexander Thompson Ankeny is of German and French extraction on his father's side, while his maternal ancestry was English and Scotch. The traditions of the family run back to the days of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The ancestors on his father's side were Huguenots, and some of them are said to have suffered the loss of life and property. The name, Ankeny, is supposed to have been derived from the word Enghien, the name of what was originally a strip of high-land in Flanders, the inhabitants of which were known as sword-bearers to the reigning Duke. The earliest record of the family in this county begins with the name of Dewalt Ankeny, who, about 1740, tired of the religious wars of the old world, sought refuge

in the new settlement in Maryland, near Clear Springs, Washington County. He became the owner there of some eight hundred acres of land, portions of which are still occupied by members of the family. Among his seven sons, Peter Ankeny, the second, was married in 1773 to Rosina Bonnet, daughter of John Bonnet, who settled in Maryland about the same time. This young couple set out with pack horses to explore the new country to the West, crossed the Allegheny Mountains and located at what afterwards came to be known as the "Glades of Somerset," Pennsylvania, December 27, 1837. His early educa- [words missing from original text] -mostly upon their land, some of which is still owned by their descendants. Isaac Ankeny, the fourth son of Peter, was married in 1820 to Eleanor Parker, daughter of John Parker. He lived continuously at Somerset, with the exception of a few years in Ohio, until his death in 1853. He was a man of influence and an active spirit in the early development of western Pennsylvania. His wife died in 1879. They had four boys and six girls, six of whom are still living. The subject of this sketch is the youngest son in that family. He was born at Somerset, Pennsylvania, December 27, 1837. His early education was obtained at his wife town, and on the death of his father, in 1853, he was sent to the Disciples' College at Hiram, Ohio, where President Garfield was then a tutor. In 1856 he attended the Monongalia Academy at Morgantown, West Virginia, then under the direction of Rev. J. R. Moore. Judge William Mitchell, of Minnesota, was then one of the instructors. From 1857 to 1858 he attended Jefferson College, Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania, when he was offered a position in the department of justice at Washington by Hon. Jeremiah S. Black, the attorney general of the United States. He remained until the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration having in the meantime prepared himself for the practice of law. In April, 1861, he was admitted to the bar in his native town and on the day Fort Sumter was fired upon tried and won his first case. On July 4th, 1861, Mr. Ankeny delivered an address at Somerset which attracted no little attention, fore-

shadowing the severity of the struggle and its ultimate outcome. When in the department of justice, Edwin M. Stanton was connected with that department, and in February, 1862, Mr. Stanton invited him to a position in the war department which he filled with honor until the close of the war. He sustained a confidential relation to "the great war secretary," and had knowledge of most of the important movements in advance of their execution. In April, 1865, he returned to the practice of law at Somerset, where he was also connected with a private bank. He was one of the promoters and treasurer of the first railroad to Somerset. In 1872 he became ambitious to enjoy the greater opportunities afforded in the West and removed with his family to Minneapolis, where, in partnership with his brother, William P. Ankeny, he engaged in the lumber business. This firm built the Galaxy flouring mill in 1874. On the death of his brother in 1877 he closed up the business of his firm and returned to his law practice. Mr. Ankeny has been an active and public-spirited citizen of Minneapolis, interested in every undertaking for the moral, intellectual and material betterment of the city. In 1877 he was a member of the board of education for the western division of the city, and in the following year was one of the committee of ten who formulated the plan for the complete union of the two divisions. He served from 1878 to 1882 on the state board of equalization of taxes. In 1886 he was again elected member of the Minneapolis board of education, re-elected on both tickets in 1889 and in 1899 was made president of the board and ex-officio member of the library board, which positions he held until January 1, 1895. Mr. Ankeny is a Democrat and exerts a large influence in the councils of his party. In 1886 and 1887 he was president of the Algonquin Democratic Club, of Minneapolis, and in 1886 to 1888 was a member of the state Democratic central committee. In 1888 he was appointed on the executive committee of the National Association of Democratic Clubs, and still retains that position. In 1886 he incorporated in the state Democratic platform a recommendation for the adoption of the Australian system of voting, being the first public



recognition of the system in this country, and which is now used in nearly all the states. Probably in no part of his public services, however, has he taken more satisfaction than in his work on the school board, where he has proved a faithful and invaluable officer. He was active in the passage of the free text book law of Minnesota, and in placing the system in successful operation in Minneapolis. Some of Mr. Ankeny's addresses on public education are among the best contributions to the literature of that subject. He was one of the incorporators of the Masonic Temple Association, and a member of the building committee which erected the Masonic Temple. For several years he was vice-president of its board of directors, and on the death of R. B. Langdon was elected president of the board. This temple, the South Side High School building, the Van Cleve and Douglass school building, as well as the North Side Public Library building, will long remain to testify to his high conception of what such public structures should be, whilst the economy practiced in construction will be a witness to his integrity and fidelity. He is a lawyer of high standing, and was made the Democratic candidate for municipal judge in 1885 and for district judge in 1890, but was not elected. In 1896 he received the fusion nomination for mayor on the Democratic-Populist ticket. His family are active supporters of the Portland Avenue Church of Christ of Minneapolis. On May 1, 1861, he was married to Miss Martha V. Moore, daughter of John Moore, of Wheeling, West Virginia. They have a family of five children, all now grown, three daughters being married.<sup>8</sup>

÷÷÷÷÷

---

<sup>8</sup> Marion D. Shutter & J. S. McLain eds., *Progressive men of Minnesota* 115-16 (Minneapolis Journal, 1897). It is subtitled "Biographical sketches and portraits of the leaders in business, politics and the professions; together with an historical and descriptive sketch of the state."

b. *History of the Great Northwest* (1901)

ANKENY, Alexander Thompson, of Minneapolis, is of German and French descent on his father's side and of English and Scotch on his mother's. His paternal ancestors were Huguenots, in the border land of Germany and France. The founder of the family in America was De Walt Ankeny, the great grandfather of the subject of this sketch. He was born in Wurtemberg, Germany, in 1728, came to Philadelphia in 1745 and the following year made a settlement on lands in Washington county, Md., naming his farm "Well Pleased." He was twice married, first to Mary Jane Domer and at her death to Margaret Frederick. Peter Ankeny, the grandfather, was the second son of the first marriage and was born in 1751. He was married in 1773 to Rosina Bonnet, who was a daughter of John Bonnet and Mary Bickley, also from the same part of the old country. The new couple at once set out with pack horses and crossed the Alleghenies, settling at what afterwards came to be Somerset, Pa. He also served as a captain in the Revolutionary War. Isaac Ankeny, the fourth son, and the father, was born in 1792 and in 1820 was married to Eleanor Parker. She was daughter of John Parker and Agnes Graham. John Parker was a son of Thomas Parker and Eleanor Ferguson, born in the north of Ireland in 1720 and 1727, respectively. Agnes Graham was a daughter of Judge John Graham, of Bedford county, and was born in 1770 and died in 1852. The family of Grahams traces its connection back to the Grahams of Scotland.

Isaac Ankeny was a man of prominence, holding several important public positions honor and trust. He died at Somerset in 1853, his wife surviving until 1879. They had a family of four boys and six girls, four the family still living. William P. Ankeny, of Minneapolis, was the oldest, and was an early settler and an honored citizen. He died in 1877. John J. Ankeny, an older brother, was post-master of Minneapolis under President Cleveland.

Alexander Thompson Ankeny, named after a distinguished judge of Pennsylvania, was born at Somerset, Pa., December 27, 1837. His early education was in the home schools. At the age of fifteen he was sent to the Disciples' college at Hiram, Ohio, at which time President Garfield was an instructor. Two years, later he attended an academy at Morgantown, W. Va., then under J. B. Moore, and at which time Judge William Mitchell of Minnesota was an instructor. The acquaintance thus formed with these men, who afterwards became so distinguished, ended only with their death, was in several instances helpful to all concerned. In 1857 Mr. Ankeny entered Jefferson college at Canonsburg, Pa., where he remained until the spring of 1859, when he received an appointment at Washington, D.C., in the office of Hon. Jeremiah S. Black, attorney general. At this time Hon. Edwin M. Stanton was also connected with office. Here he read law, and at the close of the administration returned to Somerset and entered upon the practice of profession. He tried and won his first case on the day Fort Sumter was fired upon. Upon the appointment, by President Lincoln, of Mr. Stanton as secretary of war, in 1862, Mr. Ankeny accepted a position in the war department, where he remained to the close of the war. He returned to Somerset, engaging in the practice of law, and was also connected with a private bank.

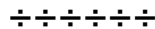
In 1872 Mr. Ankeny removed to Minneapolis and engaged in the lumber business with his brother, William P. Ankeny. On the death of the latter he devoted himself to closing up the affairs of the large estate, and in 1879 resumed the practice of law, in which he has ever since engaged, maintaining a high position at the bar. During his life in Minneapolis few citizens have rendered more or more valuable services to the public, and almost uniformly without compensation. In 1877 he served as a member of the board of education of the west division of the city. He was then one of a committee of ten which formulated the plan for the complete union of the east and west divisions of the city. In 1886 he was elected a member of the board of education, reelected in 1889, and up to January, 1895,

served as president of the board, being also ex-officio a member of the library board. He had much to do with securing the passage by the legislature of our present free text book law, and aided materially in placing the system in successful operation in Minneapolis. In 1899 he was appointed by Governor Lind a member of the board of directors of the State Normal schools, and was at once elected as its president. On the subject of public education Mr. Ankeny has justly been regarded as an authority, as his many public addresses on that subject amply testify.

By birth and conviction Mr. Ankeny has always been a Democrat. He believed that its principles were such only as could bring to the people the fullest development and the greatest happiness. He therefore clung to it in good as well as evil report. If it erred he did not forsake it, but simply waited until it should resume its rightful position on public questions. He frequently stood as the candidate of his party although, as a rule, living in a minority district. In 1885 he was the candidate for municipal judge, in 1890 one of the four (sic) candidates for district judge, and in 1896 mayor of Minneapolis. From 1888 to 1894 he was a member of the executive committee of the National Association of Democratic clubs. From 1886 to 1888 he was a member of the Democratic state central committee. In the state campaign of 1886 he was chairman of the committee on platform, and for the first time in this country a recommendation was made for the adoption of the Australian system of voting, now in almost general use. In the state campaign of 1898 he practically outlined the policy of the party in its platform, and largely through that policy a Democratic governor was elected. In the campaign of 1900 Mr. Ankeny did not actively participate though honorably supporting the party candidates. He then firmly believed in maintaining control of all the territory acquired through the treaty with Spain, and foresee nothing but defeat in any attempt to thwart what he believed was our manifest destiny.

In his profession as well as in other as enterprises Mr. Ankeny has always been regarded a man of cool and deliberate judgment. He was one of the incorporators of the Masonic Temple association, of Minneapolis, and has ever since been first the vice-president, then president of its board of directors. In January, 1900, he was appointed by the judges of the district court one of the fifteen charter commissioners, and in the revision of that year rendered valuable and conspicuous services.

Mr. Ankeny was married at Wheeling, W. Va., in 1861 to Miss Martha V. Moore, daughter of John Moore. They had one son and four daughters, all residing in Minneapolis, except the oldest, Mrs. Florence McKusick, who died at Duluth, Minn., in February, 1900. The family are connected with the Portland Avenue Church of Christ of this city.<sup>9</sup>



c. *History of the Bench and Bar of Minnesota* (1904)

Alexander Thompson Ankeny, of the Minneapolis bar, is of German and French extraction on his father's side, while his maternal ancestry was English and Scotch. His parents were Isaac and Eleanor (Parker) Ankeny.

Alexander T. Ankeny was born at Somerset, Pennsylvania, December 27, 1837. His early education was obtained in his native town and on the death of his father, in 1853, he was sent to the Disciples college, at Hiram, Ohio, where President Garfield was then a student and instructor. In 1856 he attended the Monongalia Academy at Morgantown, W. Va., then under the direction of Rev. J. R. Moore. The late Judge William Mitchell of Minnesota was then one of the instructors. From 1857 to 1858 he attended Jefferson College,

---

<sup>9</sup> Hugh J. McGrath and William Stoddard, eds., *History of the Great Northwest and Its Men of Progress* 238-40 (1901).

Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania, when he was offered a position in the department of justice at Washington, by Hon. Jeremiah S. Black, the attorney general of the United States. He remained until the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration, having in the meantime prepared himself for the practice of law. In April, 1861, he was admitted to the bar in his native town, and on the day Fort Sumter was fired upon, tried and won his first case. On July 4, 1861, Mr. Ankeny delivered an address at Somerset which attracted no little attention, foreshadowing the severity of the struggle and its ultimate outcome. When in the department of justice, Edwin M. Stanton was connected with that department, and in February, 1862, Mr. Stanton invited him to a position in the war department which he filled with honor until the close of the war. He sustained a confidential relation to "the great war secretary" and had a knowledge of most of the important movements in advance of their execution. In April, 1865, he returned to the practice of law at Somerset, where he was also connected with a private bank. He was one of the promoters and treasurer of the first railroad to Somerset.

In 1872, he removed with his family to Minneapolis, where, in partnership with his brother, William P. Ankeny, he engaged in the lumber business. This firm built the Galaxy Flouring mill in 1874. On the death of his brother in 1877, he closed up the business of his firm and resumed the practice of law. Mr. Ankeny has been an active and public spirited citizen of Minneapolis, interested in every undertaking for the moral, intellectual and material betterment of the city. In 1877 he was a member of the board of education for the western division of the city, and in the following year was one of the committee of ten who formulated the plan for the complete union of the two divisions. He served from 1878 to 1882 on the State Board of Equalization of Taxes. In 1882 he was again elected a member of the Minneapolis board of education, re-elected on both tickets in 1889, and in 1890 was made president of the board and

ex-officio member of the library board, which position he held until January 1, 1895.

Mr. Ankeny is a democrat and has always exerted a large influence in the councils of his party. In 1886-7 he was president of the Algonquin Democratic club, of Minneapolis, and from 1886 to 1888 was a member of the state democratic central committee. In 1888 he was appointed to the executive committee of the National association of democratic clubs, and held that position until 1894. In 1886 he incorporated in the state democratic platform a recommendation for the adoption of the Australian system of voting, being the first public recognition of the system in this country and which is now used in nearly all the states.

Probably in no part of his public services, however, has he taken more satisfaction than in his work on the school board, where he proved a faithful and invaluable officer. He was active in the passage of the free text book law of Minnesota, and in placing the system in successful operation in Minneapolis. Some of Mr. Ankeny's addresses on public education are among the best contributions to the literature of that subject. He was one of the incorporators of the Masonic Temple association and a member of the building committee which erected the Masonic Temple. For several years he was vice president of its board of directors, and on the death of R. B. Langon was elected president of the board. This temple, the south side high school building, the Van Cleve and Douglas school buildings, as well as the north side public library building, testify to his high conception of what such public structures should be, whilst the economy practiced in construction is a witness to his integrity and fidelity.

Mr. Ankeny is a lawyer of high standing and was made the democratic candidate for municipal judge in 1885 and for district judge in 1890, but was not elected. In 1896 he received the fusion nomination for mayor on the

democratic-populist ticket, but owing to the city being overwhelmingly republican he was defeated.

In the gubernatorial campaign of 1898, which resulted in the election of a democratic governor, Mr. Ankeny was credited with having practically directed the campaign. He prepared the platform which fixed the issues and brought success. In February, 1899, he was appointed one of the directors of the state normal board and has ever since been its president. He was a member of the charter commission which prepared for the city of Minneapolis the charter submitted to vote in 1900, but not adopted.

His family are active supporters of the Portland Avenue Church of Christ of Minneapolis. On May 1, 1861, he was married to Miss Martha V. Moore, daughter of John Moore of Wheeling, W. Va. They have a family of five children, all of whom are grown, the oldest daughter, Mrs. McKusick, having died at Duluth in February, 1900.<sup>10</sup>

÷÷÷÷÷

d. *Compendium of History and Biography of Minneapolis and Hennepin County (1914)*

One of the most enthusiastic and efficient participants in public enterprises, and one of the most highly honored members of the Minneapolis Bar, is Alexander Thompson Ankeny. He is of Dutch colonial ancestry, his father being Isaac Ankeny and his mother Eleanor (Parker) Ankeny, of Somerset, Pennsylvania, where he was born December 27, 1837, and there received a common school education. Later he attended the Disciples College, at Hiram, Ohio, where James A. Garfield was then a professor; also an

---

<sup>10</sup> Hiram F. Stevens, *2 History of the Bench and Bar of Minnesota* 25-28 (Minneapolis & St. Paul: Legal Publishing and Engraving Co., 1904) (photograph reproduced on page 1, above).



Academy at Morgantown, West Virginia, completing his education in Jefferson College at Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. He read law in the office of Hon. Jeremiah S. Black, Attorney-General of the United States at Washington. In April, 1861, he was admitted to the bar at Somerset, Pennsylvania, and there began his practice. Edwin M. Stanton, upon becoming Secretary of War, gave young Mr. Ankeny a position in the Quartermaster General's Department in Washington, in which he continued until near the close of the war, when he resumed practice at his old home.

Mr. Ankeny came to Minneapolis in 1872, and engaged in lumber manufacture with his brother Wm. P. Ankeny, the firm being Wm. P. Ankeny and Brother, and so continued for six years. He has since enjoyed a general practice, his definite knowledge of the law combined with marked forensic talents, having made him conspicuous as a leader of his profession. In 1890 he was defeated for District Judge by a small majority, and in 1896 was the choice of the Democrats for Mayor.

Mr. Ankeny has ever been deeply interested in educational matters and for more than a decade served on the Board of Education, being for a number of years its President, thus also being a member, ex-officio, of the library board. He was President of the State Normal Board from 1899 to 1903, during which period, the fifth Normal School was established at Duluth. When the Masonic Temple Association was formed in 1885, he was one of the incorporators, succeeding R. B. Langdon as its president in 1894. In everything pertaining to the progress and development of the city, Mr. Ankeny has not only been interested, but has displayed a liberal and progressive spirit.

He is a member of the Portland Avenue Church of Christ, of which he is one of three trustees.

He is of quiet and studious habits finding chief pleasures in the companionship of books and in that of old friends. Not fully in accord with modern tendencies of thought or

the spirit of commercialism, his reading has embraced the old classical authors, including such celebrated works as Montaigne's Essays and Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. A student of Shakespeare, he finds, with Donnelly, abundant proof of the Baconian authorship. Socially he is genial and democratic and much endeared to many friends who are liberal in testifying to his many sterling qualities.

Mr. Ankeny was married in 1861, to Miss Martha V. Moore, of Wheeling, West Virginia, and whose death occurred May 27th, 1904. Four of his children are residents of Minneapolis. One daughter, Mrs. Chester McKusick, died in Duluth in 1900.<sup>11</sup>

÷÷÷÷÷

### 3. Obituary

Ankeny died on October 12, 1917, several months shy of his eightieth year. The *Minneapolis Journal* reported the story the next day:

#### A. T. ANKENY DIES; RESIDENT 45 YEARS

WELL KNOWN ATTORNEY WAS ACTIVE MEMBER OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

A. T. Ankeny, 80 years old, for 45 years resident of Minneapolis and a widely known attorney, active in democratic politics, is dead at his home, 2 Clinton avenue. He had been ill about a year. Funeral services will take place at 2:30 p.m. Monday from the Scottish Rite Masonic cathedral, Dupont and Franklin avenues. Interment will be Lakewood cemetery.

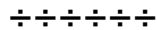
---

<sup>11</sup> Return I. Holcome & William B. Bingham, *Compendium of History and Biography of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, Minnesota* 196-97 (1914).

Mr. Ankeny was democratic nominee for mayor in 1896. He also was a candidate for the district bench. He president of the Minneapolis Board of education, a member of the state normal board, president of the Masonic board of trustees and was active in party politics until a year ago, when illness caused him to retire.

He was born at Somerset, Pa., Dec. 27, 1837, and came to Minneapolis in 1872, joining his brother, W. P. Ankeny, in the lumber business. In 1880 he began the practice of law.

He leaves a brother, John J. Ankeny, Minneapolis; a sister, Miss Valeria E. Ankeny, Somerset, Pa.; a son, Robert M., and three daughters, Mrs. Eleanor A. Mathews, Mrs. Norton M. Cross and Miss Sara T. Ankeny, all of Minneapolis.<sup>12</sup>



#### 4. Memorial

The following year, a memorial to Ankeny was presented by the Committee on Legal Biography of the state bar association at its annual convention:

Alexander Thompson Ankeny, a member of the Minneapolis bar, died at his home on October 12th, 1917. He was born in Somerset, Pa., December 27th, 1837. He was the son of Isaac and Eleanor Ankeny. He attended school at Somerset in his boyhood. Later he entered the Disciples College at Hiram, Ohio, where James A. Garfield was then an instructor. Afterwards, he attended the Monongahela Academy at Morgantown, West Virginia, in which the late Judge William Mitchell, of Minnesota, was a teacher. While pursuing his studies at Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, he was offered and accepted a position in the Department of Justice at Washington under the Hon. Jeremiah S. Black,

---

<sup>12</sup> *Minneapolis Journal*, Saturday, October 13, 1917, at 7.

then Attorney General. Here he remained until the end of President Buchanan's administration. During this period, he had prepared himself for the practice of law and he was admitted to the bar at Somerset in 1861. In 1862 he accepted a position in the Department of War under Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War. This position was one of confidence and brought him into close relations with Mr. Stanton and he filled it with honor until the end of the war.

In the spring of 1865, he resumed the practice of law and remained there until his removal to Minneapolis, in 1872. Here, with his brother William P. Ankeny, he engaged in the lumber business.

On the death of his brother in 1877, he retired from the lumber business, again took up the practice of law and continued in active practice until failing health compelled him to retire a few years before his death.

Mr. Ankeny was a Democrat in politics. He was for many years one of the leaders of that party in his county and state. He was the party's candidate for Judge of the District Court of Hennepin County in 1890 and for Mayor of Minneapolis, in 1896. He served from 1878 to 1882 as a member of the State Board of Equalization of Taxes. In 1886 he was elected a member of the Board of Education of the city of Minneapolis; was re-elected on both party tickets in 1889 and was President of that Board from 1890 until 1895. Always greatly interested in any work he undertook, he devoted his time and ability unreservedly to the duties of the Board and by wise counsel and intelligent study, contributed much toward establishing the Minneapolis school system.

For four years he was President of the State Normal Board, serving with fidelity and ability.

As a lawyer, he was conscientious, careful and diligent. His practice was largely an office practice. He was

untiring in the interest of his clients, sound and practical in his advice, preferring a peaceable and fair settlement to litigation. He was a well-read lawyer, with a broad and accurate knowledge of the law. His preparation of his cases was thorough and exhaustive, his arguments commanded attention and respect.

He was a prominent member of the Masons and for many years a member of the Board of Trustees of the Masonic Temple Association of Minneapolis. He was one of the founders of the Portland Avenue Church of Christ and for many years one of its trustees serving it faithfully until his death

In 1861 he married Martha V. Moore of Morgantown West Virginia. His wife died in 1904. He had five children four of whom are still living, twelve grandchildren and five great grandchildren

He was a man of quiet and studious habits, finding his chief pleasure in books and the companionship of friends. His reading was broad and general and his knowledge of men and times was exact intimate and comprehensive. He was especially fond of history, poetry and fiction. With Shakespeare he was unusually familiar. He had so studied the characters portrayed by that author that they were very real to him and his mind was stored with quotations useful and illuminating from nearly all of his works.

In everything relating to the growth and development of our city and state he was actively interested and progressive.

He lived long and well served his city and state with fidelity was an honor to his profession and an exemplary citizen.

He has come to his “grave in a full age—like as a shock of grain cometh in its season.”<sup>13</sup> ■

\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Posted MLHP: February 19, 2013;  
Expanded March 7, 2013..

---

<sup>13</sup> *Proceedings, Minnesota State Bar Association* 149-50 (1918).