

Arthur H. Snow

(1848-1915)

The following profile of Arthur H. Snow appeared in a history of Winona County published in 1913. It lists events in his life, from his birth in 1841 right down to the year of publication. It does not mention his success in private practice, knowledge of the law, or work ethic. It is a modest piece. We can assume that Judge Snow wrote it.

Arthur H. Snow, jurist, was born in Clinton, Mich., September 20, 1841, and there attended the district schools. He graduated from the literary course at the University of Michigan in 1865, and then entered the law office of G. V. N. Lothrop, Detroit, a former ambassador to Russia. Later he studied law at the Albany Law School, Albany, N. Y., graduating in June, 1867, in the same class with William McKinley, afterward president of the United States. Mr. Snow was admitted to the bar in New York, and then returned to Michigan, where he was married August 28, 1867, to Martha A. Wescott, of Homer, in that state. November 1 of that year he left with his bride for San Francisco, making the journey by the so-called Nicaragua Route. He practiced law in San Francisco until the close of 1870. In January, 1871, he came to Winona and engaged in the practice of law with his uncle, John Keyes, who had an office at the corner of Second and Lafayette streets. Mr. Keyes died in December, 1876, and Mr. Snow became a partner of O. B. Gould, this partnership continuing for eighteen years. Then O. B. Gould was elected to the bench of the court of the Third Minnesota Judicial District to succeed Judge C. M. Start, who had been elevated to supreme bench. Then Mr. Snow continued practice alone until 1896. He was county attorney from 1875 to 1879; he was city attorney for three terms and drafted the charter

which, with amendments, is still in force in Winona; he was mayor in 1885 and 1886; he was president of the board of education for a considerable period, and a member of the state board of bar examiners for a time. In 1896 he was elected judge of the Third Minnesota Judicial District. Since then he has continued on the bench and in that period has heard over a thousand cases. His residence is at 427 West Sanborn street, where he has lived since May 1, 1877. Mr. Snow has two living children, Harold and Clinton, who are engaged in the dairying business at Scanlon, Carlton county, Minn.¹

When Judge Snow wrote this profile, he was suffering from cancer. Given the state of oncology at the time, little could be done for him. He experienced a long and painful decline, succumbing on the morning of Saturday, May 14, 1915.

An obituary in the Sunday edition of *The Winona Independent* revealed more of the man than he had permitted in his self-portrait two years earlier. He seems to have had an elevated devotion to his work as a jurist. In his chambers, in pain, he dictated a decision in a case less than four days before dying. Knowing the end was imminent, he found relief the law.

That obituary follows. It has been reformatted. A photo of Judge Snow has been eliminated. In the original article, "Judge Snow's Farewell to Friends" appeared in as an insert with heavy borders. It now appears at the end of the article.

¹ Franklyn-Curtiss Wedge & William Jay Whipple, I *The History of Winona County, Minnesota* 294-5 (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1913).

THE WINONA INDEPENDENT

Sunday, May 16, 1915

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Judge Snow Finally Overcome by Malady After Patient Suffering of Four Years

VENERABLE WINONA JURIST
SUCCUMBS SATURDAY
CLOSING REMARK-
ABLE CAREER

ON BENCH ALTHOUGH HE
HAD ARRANGED FOR
RETIREMENT ON
JUNE 1ST

A malady which he valiantly combated for four years yesterday morning finally overcame Judge Arthur A. H. Snow. The venerable jurist, unconscious for twenty hours, slept into death after an extremely painful illness. Cancer was the cause of death which occurred at 9:25 a.m. Except to members of the immediate family, the end was entirely unexpected and the announcement caused deep sorrow throughout the city, the county, the district and the state, for he was widely known.

A Lovable Character.

Judge Snow was a student of human nature. He knew his fellow men and that asset in his composite make-up drew to him his greatest number of warm friends. As a jurist he was keen and stern, yet he never overlooked

the human aspect of any case brought into his court. The dignity of his high office appealed to him in every moment of his life. Among attorneys who practiced in his court, Judge Snow was accepted as a model for emulation. He was considerate and efficient. The procedure which prevailed in his courtroom was exemplary and frequently was the subject of comment on the part of strangers.

A Patient Sufferer.

About four years ago Judge Snow's illness first made itself evident but it was nearly a year later before his closest friends knew he had been in pain. At that time he went to Rochester, there to undergo an operation. It brought him temporary relief and he returned encouraged with the promise that surgery had given him. The disease could not be stayed, however, and gradually it again crept upon him with greater violence. On the advice of friends last summer, Judge Snow went to Baltimore to have radium treatment. He was in that city for a number of weeks, but the cure he hoped there to find was not available.

He returned home and again resumed his duties on the bench. His ailment steadily and slowly became more aggravated but his determination would not permit his relinquishment the work he loved most.

Remains at His Post.

Although he knew full well that rest might mitigate his suffering, Judge Snow declined to leave the office he so long had held with marked success. Daily he came to his office and until a few weeks ago remained on the bench. Then, his condition weakened physically but his mind still keen in spite of the burden placing upon him by the disease, he found it necessary to call in assistance. Judge Albert Johnson of Red Wing took his place on the bench when court convened in the April term in Winona. But all the time, the Winona jurist was at his office pondering over the legal questions before him. A week ago yesterday he realized that it would be impossible to make the trip to open court at Wabasha and Judge Johnson was asked to assist him there, also.

A note, pathetic in its expressions to friends, was dictated and taken to Wabasha where it was read to his associates of many years.

He Made No Complaint.

Judge Snow during his long period of illness was ever considerate of those with whom he associated. Never to any of them did he complain. He accepted the affliction which developed slowly without advising those about him of its progress.

“I have had over sixty years of good health,” said Judge Snow recently, “and now in this time of sickness I should make no complaint. If all men were as fortunate as I have been, they too would feel as I do.”

It was Judge Snow’s greatest pleasure to work in his office and over legal matters. He knew the law and attorneys always accepted his rulings on points raised during the progress of trials as final for he knew the law immediately. During his eighteen years on the bench he had few vacations for he preferred to remain close to his chosen field.

Retirement June 1.

Judge Snow was to have retired on June 1. His resignation was tendered to Governor Hammond on April 20, last, and promptly accepted. He was to have taken advantage of the judicial retirement act.

Early last week the venerable jurist began to sink rapidly. But he was at his office as late as Wednesday when he gave considerable time to legal matters before him. He dictated a decision to a stenographer while he was at the office between 4 and 6 p. m.

Thursday morning one of Judge Snow’s last acts was to dictate a congratulatory letter to George W. Granger, the day before appointed as successor on the district bench here.

Within Same Week.

Within the same week, two of the judges of the Third judicial district died in Winona. On Saturday night, May 8, Judge Lloyd Barber succumbed after a stroke of paralysis. He was the second judge in the district and Judge Snow was the eighth.

Services on Tuesday.

The services will be conducted on Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at St. Paul's Episcopal church. The rector, the Rev. George S. Keller, will have charge. The family as requested that there be no flowers. Interment will be made in Woodlawn cemetery.

Information received last night was to the effect that a large number of attorneys of both Wabasha and Olmsted counties will be here for the service. Both Judge Johnson of Red Wing and George W. Granger of Rochester will probably be here.

The Winona County Bar association, it is understood, will meet tomorrow to arrange for paying a tribute to the memory of Judge Snow and also for attending the services.

Widow and Two Sons.

A widow and two sons, Clinton of Winona and H. F. Snow of Keatwood, La., survive.

Last evening messages of condolence began to reach the members of the bereaved family. From all over the state and Northwest last night were received messages of inquiry relative to the funeral arrangements.

Born in Michigan.

Judge Snow was born at Clinton, Mich., a small village in the southern part of that state, Sept. 20, 1841. He received his early training there in the grade schools. He left the home of his parents to attend the

University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, from which institution he was graduated in the literary course in 1865.

Begins Law Career.

It was in the law office of G. V. N. Lothrop, at Detroit, that he began his career as a lawyer. Mr. Lothrop was a former ambassador to Russia and it was under the tutorage of this eminent jurist that he received his first practical insight as an attorney. After one year with this office in Detroit, Mr. Snow went to Albany, N. Y., where he attended the Albany Law School and was graduated in the June class, 1867. While attending this institution, Mr. Snow was a classmate of William McKinley, who later became president of the United States. The two were graduated in the same class.

Returns to Detroit.

After completing his education, the Youngman returned to Detroit, having been admitted to the bar in New York state. He remained in Detroit only a few weeks and on Aug. 28, 1867, he was married to Miss Martha A. Westcott, of Homer, Mich.

On Nov. 1, 1867, with his bride, he left for San Francisco byway of Nicaragua. Three days were required in crossing the isthmus and fourteen miles were covered by mule team. At San Francisco, he began the practice of law, remaining there until Jan. 5, 1871.

With His Uncle Here.

The young lawyer was induced to come to Winona by his uncle, John Keyes, an attorney practicing in this city. He arrived and entered into a partnership with Mr. Keyes in an office at the corner of Second and Lafayette streets. In December, 1876, Mr. Snow's partner died and early in the year 1877 Mr. Snow became the law partner of O. B. Gould, a leading lawyer of the city. The partnership continued and was successful for eighteen years until Mr. Gould was appointed judge of the District Court, succeeding Judge Start, who was elevated to the supreme

bench. During the period of the existence of these law partnerships, Mr. Snow served as county attorney from 1875 to 1879, was city attorney for three consecutive terms and served as mayor of Winona from 1885 to 1886, at the same time being a member and president of the Board of Education. Finally before he was elected to the district judgeship, Attorney Snow was a member of the State Board of Examiners of Law.

In 1896, he was elected to the District court and presided on the bench for the first time in 1897 and since that time had held that important position. During his judgeship, he estimated that he had heard more than twelve hundred different actions.

Same House Many Years.

On May 1, 1877, he purchased the home at 427 West Sanborn street, and entered it as his home. At that time, it was considered a suburban residence—almost out of town. The city has been built up about his home while he has continued for thirty-five years to live there.

Judge Snow recently recalled that when he came here, the store of H. Choate & Co., was located on Second street and there were many other business houses which made early history for Winona. Prominent among them was the R. D. Cone, establishment. At that time, in 1870, the official census of Winona was 7,125. When he arrived here, Judge Thomas Wilson occupied offices in the same building. In 1873, Mr. Snow moved into what was then the new post office building at the corner of Center and Third streets. In 1883, the firm with which Mr. Snow was affiliated, moved into the Slade block at the corner of Third and Main streets.

Drafted City Charter.

Judge Snow, while city attorney, drafted the present city charter, which has been amended from time to time but which has served its purpose so well for many years.

On the La Crosse, Trempealeau & Prescott line, twelve days after it

began the operation of trains, Judge Snow first found his way into this city. It was the first railroad to operate in this section. The station was across the river in Wisconsin and the young man was compelled to walk into Winona across the river on the ice.

JUDGE SNOW'S FAREWELL TO FRIENDS

A WEEK AGO YESTERDAY Judge Snow, at his chamber at the court house, dictated a letter of farewell to his friends in the court at Wabasha, where the term opened on Monday. It was the first time in eighteen years that court there convened without the presence of Judge Snow. The letter indicated clearly that the venerable jurist realized the end was approaching although he revealed no signs of weakening in his fight against the malady. The letter addressed to Frank C. Goss, clerk of court, follows:

I have been thinking and hoping that I might feel well enough to go to Wabasha next Monday to attend the opening of the term and to greet all my friends there, both professional and others, but as I feel today I think it would be no pleasure to you and certainly no physical pleasure to myself to make the trip. Am in pain most of the time. Occasionally it is so severe as to be almost unbearable. Please tell the gentlemen who might be interested in hearing it what the content of this letter are, and say that I regret more deeply than I can express the circumstances which make it unavoidable for me to part company with them so far as official association is concerned and also so far as the friendly association, which have been of equal strength, are concerned.

It might happen that between now and the first of June I maybe able to make the trip which I proposed for next Monday but this is extremely doubtful.

Judge Snow planned to visit Rochester tomorrow to bid his friends goodbye.

The Winona Independent carried the following editorial about Judge Snow on Tuesday, May 18, 1915:

THE WINONA INDEPENDENT

Tuesday, May 18, 1915

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JUDGE ARTHUR H. SNOW

To its last resting place today the body of the late Judge Arthur H. Snow will be conveyed.

What was mortal of that good man, who suffered silently that his friends might not suffer with him, will be laid in the close embrace of mother earth: but the memory of his exemplary life and good works will live long, and the love of him will flourish many years in the hearts of men.

Seldom along the pathway of life does one meet a man who so appropriately occupied the station in life that his fellow men had chosen for him as did Judge Arthur H. Snow. Strong in mentality he was, keen to grasp the salient points and hold fast to that which was good. Stern he was when severity was needed, but those who knew him and those who studied him early discovered that Judge Snow's predominant trait was the love of humanity. He was courteous to and considerate of men and women in all stations of life. Wealth and surface refinements found no greater favor in the discerning eye of Judge Snow than poverty and the most rugged simplicity of character. He had the faculty of reaching fundamentals not only in legal problems but in men and women. Thus it is that he was universally loved and respected. Thus it was that his judicial opinions took high rank.

Winona citizens will today stand reverently about the body of Judge Arthur H. Snow, not only as a mark of respect to his memory, as men who are wont to show in the presence of the dead, but as a token of sincere respect and veneration

for the work of character building achieved by a great and good man.

To his immediate family and those most intimately associated with him who will lose the kindly ministrations prompted by his love and courtesy, the sympathy of this community is most feelingly extended.



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