

**“The Bench and Bar of Cottonwood County”\***  
in  
**HISTORY**  
of  
**Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties**  
Minnesota

**THEIR PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

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Editor-in-Chief

**With Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and  
Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families**

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\* MLHP editor: This chapter appeared on pages 241-243 of this two volume history of Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties. Though reformatted, the chapter is complete. The author’s spelling and punctuation have not been changed

## CHAPTER XII.

### BENCH AND BAR OF COTTONWOOD COUNTY.

While Cottonwood county may not have had many illustrious legal lights, there have been several lawyers of more than ordinary ability, who have practiced at the Windom bar since the county was organized. It is to be regretted that no bar association has been kept up, with data from which to write a more creditable chapter on this profession, but from citizens and the few attorneys who are in practice today, of the older class, the following facts have been gleaned.

The pioneer lawyer of the county was doubtless Emory Clark, who came to Windom soon after the county was organized. It may be said of him that he was an excellent man and a good attorney. He died at Worthington, Minnesota, April 2, 1884.

Attorney A. D. Perkins was a native of Erie county, New York, where he was born on March 24, 1847. He took a three-year course in the Griffith Business College, at Springfield, New York. He studied law at home and in law offices and finally opened an office in Alma, Buffalo county, Wisconsin. His next location was at Madelia. He was not successful there and, in March, 1872, came to Windom. The first office to which he was elected was county attorney in 1872, at the same time being elected to the office of probate judge. In 1897 he was elected a member of the upper house of the state Legislature, serving in that capacity for four years. He was appointed district judge of the thirteenth judicial district of Minnesota in 1885, and was elected to that office in 1886. After he retired from the bench he entered church and Sunday school work, in which he was highly successful.

A. W. Annes, attorney, graduated from Michigan University in 1885. He returned to Windom and became principal of the schools. Later he became the law partner of J. S. Ingalls. He is now the present judge of the probate court of Cottonwood county. Mr. Ingalls removed to other parts a number of years ago. It may be added that Mr. Annes taught

school at Madelia, Watonwan county, three years; at Morrystown, one year, and Windom two years. He graduated in law at Michigan University; he was county attorney of Cottonwood county three terms; mayor of the city and member of the school board. He is a Mason, an Odd Fellow and a Republican.

George N. Laing was born in Ontario, Canada, November 16, 1850. He studied law in the office of Professor Carpenter at Madison, Wisconsin; graduated from the law school at that place in 1881 and shortly afterward came to Minnesota and located in Windom. He was elected judge of probate in 1882, 1884, 1886 and 1888. In 1887 he was appointed as one of three to revise the probate laws of Minnesota, the revision of which was adopted by the Legislature at the session of 1889.

Judge J. G. Redding, who, until his death, was one of the leading lawyers of Windom, was born at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, in 1849. At seventeen years of age he became a student of Hamline University, where he pursued his studies for three years. He then engaged in teaching school and later studied law for two years, being admitted to the bar in 1871. He came to the village of Windom in 1872. He was elected clerk of the court in 1882 and, on completion of that term, became judge of probate. He was also county attorney and otherwise prominently assisted in the affairs of local government. He died on May 10, 1916.

M. C. Benbow, attorney at law, Windom, was born in Indiana in 1863. He taught school six terms. Graduating at Ann Arbor Law School in 1890, he at once identified himself with this people and was elected county attorney, serving two years. He was editor of the *Citizen* for two years and engaged in the brick and tile business here.

Wilson Borst, attorney at Windom, was born in New York. He was admitted to the bar in New York in 1880 and in 1881 he located in law practice at Fulda, Minnesota. He was soon afterward appointed attorney for the Chicago, St. Paul & Milwaukee Railroad Company, establishing a large practice. He came to Windom in 1894 and served as city attorney. Politically, he has ever been influential. He has long been known as one of the keenest, best posted lawyers in southern Minnesota and had for many years one side of almost every case tried in the courts of the county. In the supreme court he has also been signally successful. He has one of the finest libraries found in a private home or law office in the state.

**MEMBERS OF THE BAR IN 1916.**

The following are the practicing attorneys of Cottonwood county:

O. J. Finstad, county attorney, Windom; Wilson Borst, Windom; Paul S. Redding, Windom; N. L. Glover, Windom; A. W. Annes, Windom; J. L. Sammons, Westbrook.

**COURT OFFICERS, 1916.**

Hon. L. S. Nelson, presiding judge; P. G. Neufeld, clerk; O. J. Finstad, county attorney; O. G. Peterson, sheriff; J. J. Harper, reporter.



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