

**“ The Otter Tail County Bar ” \***

in

**HISTORY**

OF

**Otter Tail County**  
**MINNESOTA**

**ITS PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

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**JOHN W. MASON**

Editor

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

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**VOLUME I**

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\* MLHP editor: This chapter appeared on pages 350-352 of Mason's two volume history of Otter Tail County. The author is not known. Though reformatted, it is complete.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE OTTER TAIL COUNTY BAR.

No one cares much for the lawyer except in time of trouble. The members of no profession or calling are subject to such severe criticism as the lawyers. No subject in any book of maxims is so lengthy in condemnatory proverbs as the "Lawyer." It is a popular custom to speak of them as a profession of rascals. People forget that "dishonest clients make dishonest lawyers." It is not hard to find a reason for this general opinion. In a measure, the profession is responsible for this popular estimate. One unscrupulous shyster in a community will characterize, in the minds of the people, the whole bar, and none know his unworthiness better than the bar itself. It is generally believed that there is a sort of "freemasonry" in the profession, obligating its members to hang together, and overlook, if not actually defend, the methods of its delinquents. There is just enough truth in, this to justify the public in such an estimate of the profession.

Knowing, as lawyers do, who are the disreputable members of the bar, they seem to be the last ones willing to complain and apply the adequate existing remedies for non-professional conduct; and their lack of action in such cases justifies many of the criticisms directed against the profession.

Within restricted limits, the competition is as sharp and strenuous among lawyers as in any other business. Every shyster has his friends and followers, and naturally they are as unscrupulous as he. A complaint against him by a brother practitioner for dishonest or unprofessional conduct, subjects the complaining one to the charge of jealousy and a desire to injure a competitor. In ninety cases out of a hundred, the dread of that charge restrains the reputable lawyer from moving in the matter of disbarment. Hence, the unworthy member is permitted to continue his career in "shysterdom," while the public looks and holds the fraternity in sympathy, if not in league, with him in his methods and practice.

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But notwithstanding all these jibes and criticisms, there is no more honorable, high-minded and conscientious body of men than those of the legal profession. Their influence for good is everywhere felt, and the moral tone of a community takes its bent from its lawyers, often to a greater extent than it does from its clergymen. This is so because the lawyer comes in closer touch with the practical affairs of a neighborhood than does the minister.

The Otter Tail county bar has been no exception to the general rule. It has contained its full quota of honest, able and, upright members, and possessed its share of shysters and “alleged lawyers,” as well. In point of moral worth, it has always ranked with that of any other bar in the state, and in point of ability it has always been considered by the courts—the best judges of the bar’s merits—as the equal of any in the state and the superior of many.

Officially, it has furnished the nation and the state with one United States senator, three district court judges, one supreme court justice, two attorney-generals of the state, two assistant attorney-generals, one United States district attorney and one railroad and warehouse commissioner.

The following is a list of the attorneys of the county, with the date of their settlement and the time of their departure therefrom, either through death or removal to other localities, in so far as the facts are obtainable:

E. E. Corliss.....	1870
Bert Melville.....	1871-1873
Newton H. Chittenden.....	1871-1876
John W. Mason.....	1871
Peter N. Smith.....	1872-1886 Killed
David P. Hatch.....	1871-1875
C. E. Chapman.....	1878
H. E. Rawson.....	1880-1891

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Moses E. Clapp.....	1881-1891	
H. F. Woodard.....	1882-1891	
James F. Cowie.....	1884-1915	Died in California
Edwin M. Wright.....	1872-1893	
Charles L. Lewis.....	1879-1889	
Clifford L. Hilton.....	1879-1909	
A. C. Brown.....	1882-1885	
John O. Barke.....	1880	
Riley J. Marden.....	1880-1904	Died
F. J. Peterson.....	1884-1886	
M. R. Tyler.....	1880-1906	
George W. Frankberg.....	Native	
Nichola F. Field *.....	Native	
John L. Townley.....	1902	
Luther L. Baxter.....	1884-1915	Died
J. O. Barke.....	1880	
Chauncey L. Baxter.....	1884-1904	
Charles C. Houpt.....	1883-1906	
Henry W. Childs.....	1884-1887	
Edward Dampier.....	1887-1904	
Charles H. Tusley **.....	1881-1886	Died
William L. Parsons.....	1883	
Michael J. Daly.....	1882	
John P. Winter.....	1898-1903	
Anton Thompson.....	1876	
John Thompson.....	1876	
Henry Thompson.....	Native	
John Strachen.....		
H. R. Day.....	1881-1889	Died
Henry Dressler.....	1882-1897	Died
Charles L. Alexander.....	1906	

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\* The copy of this book in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society has a handwritten correction that the first name of this lawyer is spelled "Nicolai."

\*\* The copy of this book at the Minnesota Historical Society has a handwritten correction that the last name of this lawyer is spelled "Tousley."

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Harry Bruce.....	1881
William P. Bailey.....	1886
George C. Olmstead.....	1889
P. O. Noben.....	1872-1889
Hans Bugge.....	1885-1900
George W. Downing.....	1890-1905
H. Lord.....	1880-1885
A. Shannon.....	1885
James A. Brown.....	1883
J. P. Shroeder.....	Native
George F. Shea.....	Native
Arthur Barke.....	Native



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