

IN MEMORIAM

EDWARD NELSON

(February 6, 1877 — April 7, 1954)

**Hennepin County Bar Association
District Court
Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

May 4, 1954

EDWARD NELSON read law off and on for ten years. He began in Rock Island, Illinois in 1899 and finished in Hallock, Minnesota in 1909. In the interim, he served as Register of Deeds of Kittson County, winning four elections. On June 15, 1909, at the age of thirty-two, he was admitted to the bar, taking the oath of office in District Court.¹ A history of the county published that year has the following entry on him:

Edward Nelson, the present register of deeds of the county, is the latest addition to the bar. He passed the state examination in May, 1909, and took the oath of an attorney at the June term of court at Hallock the same year.

....

[He] was born in Gladstone, Ill., February 6, 1877. He received his early education in the public schools of Monmouth, Ill. Thereafter he attended Augustana College of Rock Island, Ill., and was graduated from that institution with the degree of bachelor of arts in 1897.

In September, 1897, he came to Kittson county and taught school in St. Vincent and Humboldt. In the spring of 1899 he returned to Illinois and entered the law office of J. B. Oakleaf and read law there until the fall of 1901, when he returned to Kittson county. In March, 1902, he entered the employ of Captain John A. Vanstrum, who was then the register of deeds of the county. On October 28, 1902, Captain Vanstrum resigned from his position and on that day the county commissioners appointed Mr. Nelson to succeed him. Captain Vanstrum had received the nomination on the Republican ticket, and this he also resigned with the recommendation to the county committee of that party that they appoint Mr. Nelson to fill the place on the ticket. This was done and Mr. Nelson was elected by a large majority. He was re-elected in 1904, 1906 and 1908.

On September 23, 1903, Mr. Nelson was married to Miss Annie Ferguson, of Drayton, N. D.

Mr. Nelson is a member of the Minnesota State Historical Society and was admitted to the bar in 1909.²

¹ 1 Roll of Attorneys: Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970, at 95 (State Law Library, 2011).

² Peter H. Konzen, "Bench and Bar of Kittson County" 11, 14 (MLHP, 2008), published first in 2 *History of the Red River Valley* (1909).

In 1912, he relocated with his family to Minneapolis, and resumed practice. About twenty years later, he entered into a partnership with Ben Palmer and Felix Moses. Their firm specialized in commercial and real estate transactions.

He died on April 7, 1954, at age seventy-seven. The following month Lewis Lohmann presented this memorial to him in district court on behalf of the Hennepin County Bar Association:

IN MEMORIAM

EDWARD NELSON

February 6, 1877 — April 7, 1954 — seventy-seven years, two months and one day measures the life of Edward Nelson. Years that developed in him all of the honesty, kindness, loyalty and generosity that was so characteristically a part of his nature.

“Ed,” as Mr. Nelson has been affectionately known to his friends and fellow members of the Bar, was born of Swedish parentage, in Galesburg, Illinois. He lived his childhood in that centrally located city of the Prairie State. He had his preparatory and higher formal education at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, graduating from that school with a bachelor of Arts Degree in 1897, at the age of twenty years.

In those days of small classes, it was customary for all graduates to give a commencement oration. Ed prepared and gave his in the German language — a language he had to acquire. He acquired his proficiency in that tongue as a result of diligent application. Diligence and application were characteristics which were his throughout his life and during all of his numerous and honorable activities.

After leaving Augustana College, Ed taught school for several years at Alta, Iowa. He had an abiding interest in the law and kindred subjects. He left the teaching profession to return to Rock Island, where he clerked and read law in a law office. At the suggestion of a college classmate, who was then a resident of Hallock, Minnesota, Ed decided to locate in that city. Hallock was then a typical, early western Minnesota town, with the opportunities that have always appealed to pioneer spirits, and particularly to the Scandinavians of this vicinity. Mr. Nelson moved to Hallock in 1903.

It was there that he met Ann Ferguson from neighboring Drayton, North Dakota, the girl whom he was to marry and with whom he was to enjoy until the day of his death, 51 continuous years of happy, contented and devoted marital relationship.

In Hallock he served as Register of Deeds fro Kittson County. Never, however, was Ed to lose his interest in the law. He continued his study and in 1909 he took his bar examination and was admitted to the practice of law in Minnesota.

His shingle hung in Hallock until 1912. He then moved to Minneapolis and opened a law office in the McKnight Building, where he maintained his office until his death.

In 1933 he associated with Felix Moses and Ben W. Palmer, practicing under the firm name Nelson, Palmer and Moses. This association and practice proved very successful. Among other activities, the firm represented the Reconstruction Finance Corporation as legal counsel for many years. Mr. Nelson's years as Register of Deeds familiarized him with all phases of real property and real estate law. It can be truly said that he was a real expert in this field.

Mr. Nelson was a member of the American, State and County Bar Associations, the Interlochen Golf Club, the Minneapolis Automobile Club, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Minnesota Historical Society,, and also held many Masonic degrees and orders. At various times he was active in his Blue Lodge, the Scottish Rite and the Zurah Temple of the Shrine. He was philanthropic and found an outlet for his charitable feelings in the work he did for crippled children through the progress of this latter organization. He not only served well the legal profession as a capable and ethical member, but also in many other capacities. He was a member of many bar committees and had been both president and vice-president of the old Minneapolis Bar Association.

Of all organizations, however, he probably loved best the old Odin Club, where he enjoyed so many happy social hours with his old friends and fellow members, such as Ex-Governor John Lind, Judge Andreas Ueland, John Dahl, and his particularly close friend, Einar Hoidale, all of whom are now long since gone, and with whom we can trust he meets again.

Like most of us, Edward Nelson had his hobbies. His was the love and affection he could show to this wife and family, his golf, his study of German, French and Greek, the works of Shakespeare and the Holy Bible. His many friends, his relatives and his widow mourn his passing. A real loss is felt by all, and we will miss this fine student, good lawyer, considerate husband and generous man.

5/1/54

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Lewis E. Lohmann³

³ For the Hennepin County Bar Association's memorial to Lewis E. Lohmann, see "Hennepin County Bar Memorials: 1986" 24 (MLHP, 2012). ■

