

In Memoriam

Samuel N. Nichols

September 13, 1862 • January 8, 1938

**Hennepin County Bar Association
District Court
Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 5, 1938**

Samuel N. Nichols was admitted to the bar and entered upon his 22-year career as a lawyer at the age of 53 (sic) – a point in life when the spark of ambition does not fire so often and incite men to major undertakings.

The experimental background of every man is more or less profound and sociologically interesting. In the case of Mr. Nichols there is a negligible content of academic training. Instead of the usual preconditioning course of Grade, High and University schooling, there was a half-century of ceaseless effort, growing responsibilities, and productive activity in many fields of diversified endeavor, from which to draw and strain the elements of qualification for professional work.

Samuel, the eldest of nine children, was born in Oslo, Norway, September 13, 1862. His father, Niles Nickolausen, was a sculptural stone and monument cutter. The stone lions of the Storthing building at Oslo evidence his father's skill. In 1867 the family, then comprising the parents and three children, emigrated and came to Red Wing, remained there about three years and then, in 1870, moved by steamboat up the river to St. Paul, where they permanently settled. Here the six younger children are born.

A few years after their arrival at St. Paul, the father suffered a paralytic stroke which utterly disabled him for a long time and imposed upon Sam and his five-year-old brother Jack the joint responsibility of devising ways and means to support the growing family. Sam had been attending grade school but was now forced to quit. He and his brother tackled the problem in typical American-style, by running errands, mowing lawns, cleaning sidewalks, carrying papers, and otherwise embracing every chance to turn energy and will to compensable account. A neighborhood teacher, for whom Sam did odd jobs during this period, volunteered to give him some instruction in various grade

subjects. He also managed to pursue night school studies for a while. In short, through the avid seizure and exploitation of every possible occasion and opportunity to work and make money, to study and add to the store of hard-won knowledge, Sam, at this early stage, began to acquire a very practical and forthright comprehension of the problems of life and circumstance.

His newsboy activities paved the way for more substantial newspaper connections. Following mastery of the printer's trade, he was for many years, continuously until 1900, employed on the business and reporter staffs of Twin City dailies, including the St. Paul Globe, St. Paul Pioneer Press, the Minneapolis Tribune, and the Minneapolis Journal.

In 1890, while still residing in St. Paul, he married Hulda L. Rosenquist, the daughter of a Minneapolis pioneer. In 1891 he settled here, where he lived the remainder of his life. In 1900 he was appointed United States Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue, in charge of the Minneapolis Division, which office he filled for the ensuing fourteen years. During the latter part of this period, he pursued a night course study of law and in the summer of 1915 graduated from the Minnesota College of Law, was admitted to the bar [on June 10, 1915] and began practice.

Mr. Nichols devoted himself almost exclusively to probate and title work. Litigation never appealed to him. In the choice of this practical field, he found substantial satisfaction and rewards. There was existent, solid subject matter to work upon. However, he was not actuated by these considerations alone. During the early part of his government service, an abdominal operation had entailed the necessity of caution and restraint in his program of life. These various factors and conditions combined to plot his course. About five years ago, he gave up his downtown office but continued to practice to the time of his death. He died at his

home, 2726 15th Avenue South, from a stroke, January 8, 1938, at the age of 75, survived by his wife, brother, sister, and several nieces and a nephew.

Politically Mr. Nichols was Republican. He was a member of The Covenant Tabernacle, in which church and its several departments he held many offices. He also had served on the Advisory Board of Volunteers of America and had devoted time to Hope Chapel and other settlement work. During the World War he was on the local Draft Board.

Mention might be made of his constructive development of large tracts of North Arm, Minnetonka, which he bought and subdivided.

Socially, he was ever a stimulating companion. He was a great reader, had done considerable traveling, and had a large circle of widely scattered friends. In matters of art, his taste ran to etchings and engravings; books, to biography, essays, and poetry. His home was his quiet haven.

When I think of my friend Sam, his early vicissitudes, struggles, successes, and his ever-enlarging interest in life, I think of Goethe's remark: "What character develops in the streams of life; talent, in the solitude."

February 5, 1938.

Alth Rudquist

APPENDIX

From *Who's Who in the Central States 721* (1929):

NICHOLS, Samuel Norman. Lawyer. at Oslo, Norway, Sept. 13, 1862. Son of Nils and Louise (Anderson) Nichols. *Ed:* St. Paul, Minn., High Sch; Minn. Coll. of Law (LL.B., 1915). Employed as printer, 1878-90, Journalist, St. Paul Pioneer Press-Dispatch-Globe, 1890-1900; Pub., Minneapolis Telegram, Daily News, 1901-05; Collector of Internal Revenue, 5th Dist. of Minn., 1901-14; engaged in law practice, 1915—; admitted to practice before U. S. Supreme Ct., 1925. Atty. for Minneapolis. Draft Bd., during World War. *Mem:* Hennepin Co. Bar Assn; Pres., Potowatomie Mission Soc., Inc; Field Soc. of No. Minn, Wis. and Mich; Dir., Minneapolis City Union Mission; Atty., Twin City Linnea Soc. Republican. *Church:* Presbyterian, Trustee, Chmn., Deacon. Married Hulda Louisa Rosenquist, Oct. 14, 1890. *Office:* Suite 1034 Security Bldg. *Home:* 2726 15th Ave., So., Minneapolis, Minn.