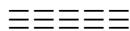


# NET J. ROBINSON

( March 8, 1872 – May 27, 1927 )



Net James Robinson was twenty-five years old when he graduated from the Tracy High School and twenty-eight when he graduated from the University of Minnesota Law Department. He was admitted to the bar on June 8, 1900,<sup>1</sup> and promptly opened his own shop in his hometown.

In 1906 he was elected Lyon County attorney and re-elected two years later. In mid-1907, he accepted Arch English, eighteen years old and newly graduated from the local high school, as an apprentice. English read law for three years, passed the bar examination, was admitted to practice in March 1910, and became Robinson's partner. In 1912, the lawyers placed profiles in a history of Lyon county. In his sketch Robinson did not forget his parents:

**N. J. ROBINSON (1872), attorney-at-law of Tracy and ex-county attorney, is a native of the county and a son of two of the very early settlers. He is a successful practitioner and is interested in many business enterprises of his city.**

**Our subject was born on his father's homestead on the southeast quarter of section 1, Custer township, March 8, 1872, and on that farm he made his home until moving to Tracy in 1900. He was graduated from the Tracy High School in 1897 and from the Law Department of the University of Minnesota in 1900 with the degree of L. L. B.**

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<sup>1</sup> **1 Roll of Attorneys: Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970 53 (State Law Library, 2011). He was admitted automatically because law school graduates were not required to take the admission test at this time. The University Alumni Directory has the following entry in the class of 1900:**

**Net James Robinson,  
Lawyer. (Tracy, Cal.) (sic)**

**Alumni of the College of Law, 1889-1915 265 (1916).**

He at once engaged in the practice of his profession at Tracy and has been so engaged ever since.

In local politics Mr. Robinson has taken an active part. He served two terms as mayor of his city, has been city attorney for the past six years, and for the same length of time has served as a member of the Water and Light Board. He was elected county attorney on the Republican ticket in 1906, was re-elected in 1908, and served four years.

In business matters Mr. Robinson has also been active. In 1910 he organized the Tracy Garage Company and has since been president of the company. It is one of the big institutions of Tracy, the building which houses it being one of the largest in the county. He is also one of the organizers of the Tracy Building and Loan Association, which was founded in 1910, and is its attorney and a director.



Mr. Robinson is a member of the Knights of Pythias and Maccabee lodges. For six years prior to 1910 he was chancellor commander of the local lodge of the Knights of Pythias.

Our subject was married in Tracy February 26, 1911, to Leah M. Mongeau. She was born in Manteno, Illinois, and came to Lyon county when a child with her parents, Adler and Agnes (Smith) Mongeau.

N. J. Robinson descends from one of the old New England families whose coming to America dates back to the

earliest known settlements in the Colonies. On his father's side he is Scottish-German origin; his mother was of New

York parentage and of Scottish descent. His father, George S. Robinson, was born April 7, 1836, at Springwater, Livingston county, New York, being the son of Joseph and Cathreen (Spangler) Robinson, the former a Methodist minister. His mother, Nellie (Gould) Robinson, was born December 15, 1846, in North Adams, Massachusetts. The parents came to Lyon county in 1868 and took as a homestead claim the southeast quarter of section 1, Custer township. On it the father built a log cabin, in which was held the first meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Lyon county.

George Robinson was identified with the early history of the county and held many offices of trust in his township. He died August 24, 1906. Mrs. Robinson still lives and makes her home in Tracy. There are seven children in the family. Evan D., the eldest, resides in Montana. The others reside in Lyon county and are as follows: George M., Ella (Mrs. J. E. Morgan), Fred R., Frank D., Earl H. and N. J. <sup>2</sup>

Later he served two terms as mayor and six years as city attorney. He was a member of several city boards, and local fraternal societies. He practiced law and pursued various business projects in Tracy until 1920 when ill health forced him to retire. Robinson & English was dissolved that year. Around 1925, he reopened his office and became Municipal Court Judge, a post he held when he died on May 27, 1927, at age fifty-five. His obituary appeared on the front page of the weekly *Tracy Headlight-Herald*:

**N. J. ROBINSON IS  
CALLED BY DEATH**

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**Attorney and Business Man Loses in  
Fight of Years Against Disease. Death  
Came Last Friday after Eight Months  
Serious Illness.**

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**Prominent in Business**

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur J. Rose, *An Illustrated History of Lyon County, Minnesota* 548 (1912).

**Practice Profession Here for  
Twenty-seven Years. Was Active  
in Business and Civic Affairs.**

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**Judge Nat James Robinson was called by death before the Great Bar, May 27, at 1:30 p.m. following a lingering illness of several months. Mr. Robinson has had poor health for several years and for the past eight months has been seriously ill and those close to the family knew that the end was not far off.**

**Mr. Robinson was known by his many friends as "Nat" was born in Custer township this county, Mar. 8, 1872, his parents being George S. and Nellie (Gould) Robinson, who settled on a homestead in Custer in 1868 and built a log cabin for their home which has the distinction of being the place where the first meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held. He graduated from the Tracy high school in 1897, and entered the law school of the State University from which he was graduated in 1900. He at once engaged in the practice of his profession in Tracy and for twenty-seven years practiced law in this community.**

**Mr. Robinson was united in marriage to Miss. Leah L. Mongeau, on Feb. 26, 1911 in Tracy. He is survived by his devoted wife, little son, Warren, aged mother, five brothers and one sister: George, Fred, Earle, Ella (Mrs. J. E. Morgan), all of Custer; Ella of Trout Creek. All the brothers and sister attended the funeral with the exception of Evan, of Montana.**

**Mr. Robinson disposed of his law business here about seven years ago because of poor health and for some years spent the winters in the South and summers at the lake seeking to recover his health. He reentered his profession here about two years ago, opening a law office in the Cole building. The confinement seemed to overtax his energies and for the past year his health has been failing and for the past eight months his condition has been serious.**

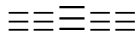
**Mr. Robinson has during his twenty-seven years residence in Tracy taken an active part in community affairs, serving the city on numerous posts of responsibility, besides being active in business affairs. He was county attorney of Lyon county for four years, mayor of Tracy for two terms, and at the time of his death was judge of the Tracy municipal court. He was known among his fellow townsmen as a man of sound judgment in both legal and business affairs, honest and industrious, and stood high in the regards of his fellowmen. He has for years been an active member of the Maccabees and Knights of Pythias lodges, of Tracy.**

**Funeral services were held from the St. Mary's church Monday at 9:00 a.m., Rev. Fr. Cahill officiating. Members of the local Knights of Pythias Lodge and Tracy business men attended the funeral. All business places in town closed out of respect for the dead 9 a.m. and remained closed during the funeral.<sup>3</sup> ■**



#### **RELATED ARTICLE**

**“Arch R. English (1888-1963)” (MLHP, 2014).**



**Posted MLHP: August 19, 2014.**

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<sup>3</sup> *Tracy Headlight-Herald*, June 3, 1927, at 1 (list of out of town relatives and friends who attended funeral omitted). A memorial by the county or district bar association has not been located.