

WESLEY KINNEY

(December 15, 1837 – March 17, 1926)

Wesley Kinney practiced law in Lake City from 1866, when he returned from the war, to 1920, when he retired at age eighty two. For thirty-three years, he was the city attorney.

In 1920 *History of Wabasha County, Minnesota* was published by subscription. It contained sketches of many prominent residents, who paid to have the book published. In consideration, these “subscribers” had short personal profiles included in the book; some wrote their own, while others edited them if written by the editors. Those profiles were sometimes quoted (usually without attribution) in obituaries of the subject. The following is the entry on Wesley Kinney, some of which reappeared in his obituary several years later:

Wesley Kinney , a Civil War veteran residing in Lake City, and who has been engaged in the practice of law in Wabasha County for 54 years, was born at Otselic, Chenango County, N. Y., December 15, 1837, son of Ogden and Huldah (Warner) Kinney. He comes of New England ancestry, and his great grandfather fought and fell at the battle of Bunker Hill. Mr. Kinney’s parents were farmers, and his preliminary education was obtained in the common school of his neighborhood. Subsequently he attended an academy at Charlotteville, Schoharie County, N. Y., and also one at Franklin, in Delaware County, that state. At the age of 17 he entered the law office of William Murray, Jr., at Delhi, N. Y., where he pursued his law office studies for two years, afterwards continuing them in the office of Wait & Barry of Norwich, N. Y. He was admitted to the bar at Binghamton, N. Y., May 10, 1860, and the diploma he then received is still in his possession. In May, 1861, Mr. Kinney came to Wabasha County, Minn., locating at Mazeppa, where, during the following winter, he taught the village school. The Civil War was then raging, and, inspired with patriotic enthusiasm, Mr. Kinney enlisted in July, 1862, being

commissioned first lieutenant of Company G, Eighth Minnesota Volunteers. He remained in service with that company until it was discharged August 1, 1865. During 1863 and 1864 he fought under General [Alfred] Sulley in his western Indian campaign, and then, being ordered south, took part in the battle of Nashville, went by way of Washington to North Carolina, and was in engagements and skirmishes under General [John] Schofield while in pursuit of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army through North Carolina, and was present at the surrender of that army at Greensborough, that state. After receiving an honorable discharge, Mr. Kinney returned to Wabasha County and began the practice of law at Mazeppa, where he remained for one year, in the fall of 1866 locating in Lake City. Here he has since practiced his profession continuously, with the exception of a few years at Mazeppa. For the last 33 years he has been city attorney of Lake City. While residing in Mazeppa he organized and commanded DeVillo C. Ford Post of the G. A. R., and later became a member of Major Doughty Post of Lake City, with which he was associated until it went out of existence owing to the death of nearly all its members. He is a member of Carnelion Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Lake City, and in politics has always been a Democrat. Mr. Kinney has had an interesting personal career. In his younger days he helped to make the history of this country in one of the most bitterly contested wars of modern times, and he has probably practiced law longer in this county than any other member of the bar now living with the exception of Judge Putnam of Minneiska. At all times he has proved himself a useful citizen and a good American, reflecting credit on the stock from which he sprung. Mr. Kinney was married, August 13, 1865, to Acsie A. Ford, daughter of Joseph and Olivia Ford of Mazeppa. She was born at Lebanon, Madison County, N. Y. in 1846, and is still living. Mr. and Mrs. Kinney have been the parents of three children: Maud A., Alvin Claude and Kenneth Ford. Maud A. is residing at home, and for a number of years has been clerk in the Lake City post office. Alvin Claude, who was graduated from Minnesota University, and was entering upon a promising

career, died in 1900 at the age of 27 years. Kenneth Ford graduated from the Chicago College of Osteopathy, and is now practicing his profession at Detroit, Michigan.

Kinney continued to practice law in Wabasha County until 1920 when he retired. His death on March 17, 1926, was reported on the front page of the local newspaper the next week:

LAKE CITY GRAPHIC-REPUBLICAN

LAKE CITY, MINN.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1926.

PIONEER ATTORNEY STRICKEN SUDDENLY

Wesley Kinney, Civil War Veteran and
Practicing Attorney in Wabasha
County Over Fifty Years
After Brief Illness

In the passing of Wesley Kinney the earthly career of one of Lake City's early pioneers and most prominent citizens came to a close.

Mr. Kinney suffered a stroke of apoplexy Tuesday afternoon and remained unconscious until the end came late Wednesday, March 17. He reached the ripe old age of 88 years, three months and two days.

Mr. Kinney was born at Otselic, Chenango County, N. Y., December 15, 1937. He came of

New England ancestry and his great grandfather fell at the Battle of Bunker Hill. His parents were farmers and his early education was obtained in the country school of the neighborhood. Later he attended the academy at Charlottesville and also one at Franklin, N. Y. At seventeen he entered the law office of William Murray of Delhi, N. Y., where he studied for two years. Afterwards he pursued his study of law in the office of Wait and Barry of Norwich, N. Y., and May 10, 1860, he was admitted to the bar at Binghampton, N. Y.

In May 1861, Mr. Kinney came to Wabasha County and located at Mazeppa, where during the following winter he also taught the village school. But the Civil War was now on and inspired his fervent patriotism. Mr. Kinney enlisted in July 1862 and as commissioned first lieutenant of Company G, Eighth Minnesota Volunteers, and remained in service with his company until it was discharged August 1, 1865. During 1863 and 1864 Mr. Kinney fought under General [Alfred] Sully in his campaign against the Indians in the west and later, being ordered south, took part in the battles of Nashville and Murfreesboro and several other engagements under General [John] Schofield until General Joseph E. Johnston's surrender at Greensborough, North Carolina.

After receiving an honorable discharge, Mr. Kinney returned to Wabasha County and resumed his practice of law at Mazeppa, where he remained for one year. In the fall of 1866 he located to Lake City.

While at Mezeppa Mr. Kinney organized the De Villo C. Ford Post of the G. A. R. and was its

first commander, and later became a member of the Major Doughty Post, G. A. R. of Lake City. He also became a member of the Carnelian Lodge A. F. & A. M. of Lake City and a member of the Wabasha County Bar Association.

August 13, 1865, Mr. Kinney was married to Miss Acsie A. Ford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ford of Mazeppa. Mr. and Mrs. Kinney were the parents of three children, Maud A., Alvin Claude and Kenneth Ford Kinney. Miss Maud A. Kinney has for a number of years been a clerk in the Lake City post office. Dr. Kenneth Ford is located at Detroit, Mich., and Alvin Claude, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, died in 1900 at the age of 27 years. Mrs. Kinney passed away in June 1924.

Mr. Kinney was an interesting personality. His brilliant mental faculties and wonderful memory, which remained clear to the last, made his mind a storehouse of the important facts and happenings for the last three quarters of a century. Mr. Kinney was a fine citizen and a man whose honor and integrity was never questioned. He held the position of city attorney for Lake City for thirty-three years previous to his retirement from active practice of law in 1920.

Funeral services were held at the home at nine o'clock Saturday morning, Rev. W. A. Mulder officiating. The remains were taken to the 10:26 train, escorted by members of the Carnellian Lodge No. 40 of Lake City. Funeral was conducted Saturday afternoon at Mazeppa under the auspices of Carnellian Lodge No. 40 of Lake City and Tyrian Lodge No. 86 of Mazeppa, of

the Masonic Order. M. L. Erickson, Past Master
of Carnellian Lodge, presided. □

RELATED ARTICLES

Over the years, Wesley Kinney was a member of several memorial committees of the county bar that drafted and delivered the memorials in court; curiously, however, a bar memorial to him is not available (at least not at the Historical Society)---hence this tribute.

Memorials to other members of the Wabasha Bar posted on the MLHP include: “Harold J. Alton (1903-1937)” (MLHP, 2012); “Charles E. Callaghan (1863-1926)” (MLHP, 2012); “Samuel L. Campbell (1824-1910)” (MLHP, 2012); “E. N. Card (1828-1910)” (MLHP, 2012); “James A. Carley (1869-1952)” (MLHP, 2012); Terry Walters, “Remembering Judge [Daniel F.] Foley” (MLHP, 2010); “John R. Foley (1890-1953)” (MLHP, 2012); “Allen J. Greer (1854-1905)” (MLHP, 2012); “Hugh L. Lothrop (1888-1931)” (MLHP, 2012); “Michael L. Marx (1871-1921)” (MLHP, 2012); “John F. McGovern (1860-1905)” (MLHP, 2012); “Henry W. Morgan (1850-1918)” (MLHP, 2011); “John H. Mullin (1842-1907)” (MLHP, 2012); “John N. Murdoch (1831-1898)” (MLHP, 2012); “John W. Murdoch (1869-1962)” (MLHP, 2012); and “James E. Phillips (1866-1935)” (MLHP, 2012); and “James E. Phillips (1866-1935)” (MLHP, 2012).

See also: “Bench and Bar of Wabasha County (1884), and Early Courts and Lawyers of Wabasha County (1920)” (MLHP, 2008). ■

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