

Severen O. Wald

by William O. Payne, 1911¹⁰

Among the active members of the Story county bar none occupies a more honorable place than the gentleman whose name introduces this review. He has been in the thick of the fray for fifteen years and has carried off a fair share of laurels, being known as one of the brightest lawyers in this section of the state, an attorney who never acknowledges defeat as long as he feels he is in the right and who in a remarkable number of difficult cases has convinced the court or jury of the righteousness of his contention.

He was born in Polk county, Iowa, December 10, 1865, a son of Ole J. and Bertha U. (Gaard) Wald, both natives of Norway. They came to the United States before their marriage, in the early '50s, and located near Ottawa, Illinois. Mr. Wald purchased one hundred and sixty acres of prairie land in Elkhart township, Polk county, Iowa, from a man for whom he was working in Illinois, and in the spring of 1865 he and his family removed to this place. He built a log cabin and later improved his farm with modern structures, developing it into one of the valuable properties of the township. He also acquired land in Humboldt county, Iowa, taking up his residence there about 1890. Mrs. Wald passed away in 1899, her husband departing this life eight years later. They were both faithful members of the Lutheran church and active workers in behalf of every cause seeking to advance the permanent interests of the community. Mr. Wald possessed good business judgment and on account of his acknowledged reputation for integrity was a man of large influence whenever he was known.

Severen O. Wald was reared under favorable circumstances for a useful career. He acquired his education in the district schools and then took a course in the Iowa Business College of Des Moines. Subsequently he matriculated in the law department of Drake University, graduating with the degree of LL.B. in 1896. He was admitted to the bar January 22, of the same year, several months before his graduation from the university. Opening offices in Slater, he at once entered upon an active practice and has handled successfully some of the most important civil and land cases that have been tried in this

10 “History of Story County, Iowa, A record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and Achievement”, by William O. Payne, Volume II, Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1911.

section. Recently he won a land case at Clarion which involved twenty-five thousand dollars or more that had been unsuccessfully tried by some of the ablest lawyers in this part of the state. His clients are among the leading business men of the community and his opinions upon questions of law command respect as coming from one who has carefully considered the subject from all points of view.

In June, 1899, Mr. Wald was united in marriage to Miss Minnie Johnson, of Des Moines, and of this union six children were born, five of whom are now living, namely : Curtis M., Lowell M., Roscoe E., Bonnie V. and an infant daughter.

Mr. Wald gives his support to the republican party and has been frequently requested to allow his name to be proposed for the state legislature, but his extensive and growing practice has prevented his acceptance of this honor. He has served as a member of the town council and fraternally is connected with Slater Lodge, No. 384, I. O. O. F., and the local camp of the Modern Woodmen of America. He and his wife are valued members of the Methodist church. Both as a pleader and counselor he has attained high standing in his profession, and as he is a man of studious habits who thoroughly prepares for every case in which he is interested, he apparently has before him many years of increasing responsibility and usefulness.