

Ole Martin Dahl
Suffolk Law School 1910

Ole Martin Dahl was born between 1869 and 1875 in Norway, coming to the United States in 1890.¹ In 1905, he answered an advertisement for a law class to be taught by Gleason Archer.² By this time, he was working as a house painter and decorator, and Gleason Archer visited him at his shop in response to his inquiry about the law class.³ Archer writes that Ole Dahl “had ruddy cheeks and a good natured face, altogether prepossessing except that his English was very faulty,” and that Ole was concerned that he was too old (at least 30 years old) to be taught about law.⁴ Despite these concerns, Ole Dahl attended Archer’s first law class in October of 1905, and enrolled at Suffolk Law School at its inception in September of 1906.⁵ He graduated in 1910 as one of ten in Suffolk Law School’s second graduating class.⁶

By 1920, Ole Dahl was still working as a house painter and was lodging at a house in East Boston, along with eight other lodgers and at least one family.⁷ By 1917, he had married a woman named Margie (b.1889 or 1890) who was born in Massachusetts but whose parents were Norwegian.⁸ Around 1918 his first son, Fulman, was born, and around 1923, his second son, Earl, was born.⁹ By 1930, at around 60 years old, he owned a home in Boston where he lived with his wife, sons, and also his widowed father-in-law, Ole Haff.¹⁰ Ole Haff had come to the United States from Norway in 1887 and was working for a contractor (despite being 73 years old).¹¹ By this time, Ole Dahl was working as an attorney.¹² By at least 1923 and until at least 1936, his law office was located at 73 Tremont Street in Boston.¹³

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¹ United States Census 1920, Massachusetts, Suffolk, East Boston, Enumeration District 50, Sheet 6B; United States Census 1930, Massachusetts, Suffolk, Boston, Enumeration District 13, Sheet 16A. Note: There are discrepancies between the ages listed for Ole M. Dahl on the 1920 and 1930 census records, but both records are believed to be those of the same person. The two census records both list the year of arrival in the United States as 1890.

² Archer, Gleason L. *Building a School*, Boston: Gleason L. Archer, 1919, p.20.

³ Archer, Gleason L., *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁴ Archer, Gleason L., *Ibid.*, p.20. Note: Archer’s note that Ole Dahl felt as though he might be too old to take a law class indicates that the 1930 census, from which it can be deduced that Dahl would have been about 35 in 1905, is probably correct, since if the 1920 census is correct, Dahl would have been about 30 in 1905, which is not an uncommon age at which to study law.

⁵ Archer, Gleason L., *Ibid.*, p.20, p.48.

⁶ Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, 30th Anniversary, 1936, p.15.

⁷ U.S. Census 1920, *Ibid.*

⁸ U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*

⁹ U.S. Census 1920, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*

¹¹ U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*

¹² U.S. Census 1930, *Ibid.*

¹³ *The Boston Register and Business Directory: 1923*, Vol. 87. Boston: Sampson & Murdock Company, 1923; Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, 30th Anniversary, 1936, p.15.