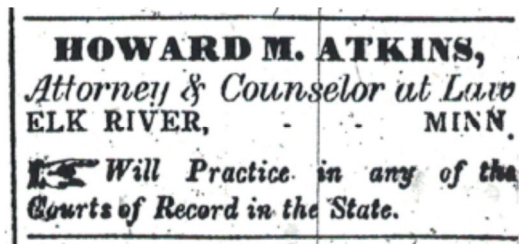


# Howard M. Atkins

( May 11, 1838 - September 5, 1893 )

Howard Atkins, age eighteen, staked a claim in Mille Lacs County, Minnesota Territory, in late 1856. The next year he went back to Maine, his home state, to teach school, and returned to work his claim in 1858. In late 1859 he moved to Illinois to study law. His legal training finished he relocated to Princeton, Minnesota, in 1862, and was admitted to practice by the district court. For the next eleven years he practiced law and dealt in real estate in Princeton. Next stop was St. Cloud where he practiced for three years. Finally, in 1876, he settled permanently in Elk River, the seat of Sherburne County. He always practiced alone. In 1878 he placed his business card in the *Princeton Union*:<sup>1</sup>



In 1880 he was elected Sherburne County Attorney. The following year he subscribed to a regional history in which he placed this sketch:

Howard M. Atkins, County Attorney of Sherburne county, was born at New Sharon, Franklin county, Maine, on the 11th of May, 1838. His boyhood was spent in his native State, until his nineteenth (sic) year, when he set out for the West, arriving at Princeton, Mille Lacs county, on the 5th of November, 1856. The young man took a claim and spent one year in its improvement, when he returned to Maine, taught school that winter, and came again to his claim in the spring of 1858. Was engaged in farming and dealing in real estate until October, 1859, when he went to Jacksonville, Illinois, studied law and taught school

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<sup>1</sup> *The Princeton Union*, June 15, 1877, at 4.

until May, 1862, when he returned again to Princeton, and was admitted to the bar in June of that year. He then practiced law and dealt in real estate until the fall of 1873, during which time, he held the several offices of township Supervisor, County Attorney, and Judge of Probate. Then opened an office at St. Cloud, where he remained three years, and while there, held the office of City Justice, and was acting County Attorney for Sherburne county during the whole time. In April, 1876, he removed to Elk River, and for the next three years, was Auditor of Sherburne county, and was elected to his present position in the fall of 1880. Mr. Atkins was married in March, 1862, to Miss Virginia Sinclair. Their children are, Sinclair E., Malcolm E., Amy, Marian, Blanche, and Howard M.<sup>2</sup>

He died on September 5, 1893, at age fifty-five. The *Sherburne County Star-News* carried the story:<sup>3</sup>

## DEATH OF CO. ATTORNEY ATKINS.

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He Expires Quite Suddenly on  
Tuesday Afternoon.

County Attorney H. M. Atkins died at his home in this village Tuesday afternoon. Mr. Atkins has been unwell ever since the early part of last winter, but attended to his business until late in the spring when he had to give up and has been confined to the house ever since. He was reported better last week and hopes were entertained that he might get out again, but a sudden turn for the worse Tuesday resulted in his death, as above-stated.

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<sup>2</sup> N. H. Winchell, Edward D. Neill, J. Fletcher Williams & Charles S. Bryant, *History of the Upper Mississippi Valley* 299 (1881).

<sup>3</sup> *Sherburne County Star News*, September 7, 1893, at 5.

**Mr. Atkins has been a prominent figure in Sherburne county affairs for the past eighteen years. He was a well read man of excellent memory, and his advice was ever sound and based on fact. He had positive views of his own on any subject, and was never afraid to express them, consequently he was not what is generally termed a popular man among those who did not understand his ways, but he was true as steel in his friendship, and will be greatly missed from among us. Peace to his ashes.**

**Howard M. Atkins, County Attorney of Sherburne County, was born at New Sharon, Franklin County, Maine, on the 11th of May, 1838. His boyhood was spent in his native state, until his nineteenth year, when he set out for the West, arriving at Princeton, Mille Lacs county, on 5th of November, 1856. He there took a claim and spent one year in its improvement, when he returned to Maine, taught school that winter, and came to his claim in the spring of 1858. Was engaged in farming and dealing a real estate until October, 1859, when he went to Jacksonville, Illinois, studied law and taught school until May, 1862, when he returned again to Princeton, and was admitted to the bar in June of that year. He practiced law and dealt in real estate until the fall of 1873, during which time he held the several offices of township Supervisor, County attorney, and Judge of Probate. Then he opened an office at St. Cloud, where he remained three years, and while there, held the office of City Justice, and was acting County Attorney for Sherburne county during the whole time. In April 1876, he removed to Elk River, and for the next three years, was Auditor of Sherburne county, and was elected to his position in the fall of 1880.**

**Mr. Atkins was married in 1862 to Miss Virginia Sinclair. Their children are, Sinclair E., Malcolm E., Amy, Marian, Blanche, and Howard M.**

**The *Princeton Union* also reported his passing: <sup>4</sup>**

**Death of H. M. Atkins.**

**After a lingering illness H. M. Atkins, county attorney of Sherburne county, died at his home in Elk River, Tuesday morning. Mr. Atkins was one of the first white settlers of Mille Lacs county. He located in Princeton in 1856, and resided for a time on the farm at present owned and occupied by S. S. Sanford; he left Princeton in 1873, and removed to St. Cloud where he remained three years and from there he went to Elk River. He was county auditor of Sherburne county for several years and was serving his third term as county attorney when he died. He was 55 years of age and leaves a wife and six children, the oldest, S. E. Atkins, is deputy auditor of Stearns county. Deceased had many friends in Princeton and vicinity who will regret to learn of his death.**

**At a banquet of the Stearns County Bar Association on December 30, 1893, District Court Judge Dolson B. Searle addressed the group. He eulogized several members, including Atkins:**

**I also ask indulgence while I speak of another friend, the late H. M. Atkins, of Elk River. It was my good fortune to know this deceased brother, probably as well at least as any one present. Not widely known, but in his restricted circles, he was known as a lawyer of ability, strictly honest, warm hearted and true to his friends. He enjoyed the respect confidence and esteem of all who knew him. His little family circle was happy, and by his death they have been deprived of the strong arm in which they leaned as the sun light of their life. <sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> *The Princeton Union*, September 7, 1893, at 5.

<sup>5</sup> *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, January 4, 1894, at 1 ("Eloquence and Edibles"). An account of the banquet in the *Saint Cloud Daily-Times* can be found in the "Stearns County" Category in the Archives of this website.