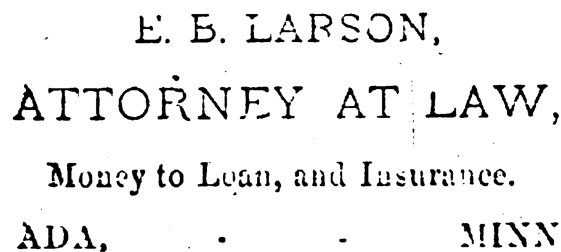


Eli B. Larson

November 1858 - July 1893

At 8:30 o'clock in the evening of Saturday, July 29, 1893, Eli B. Larson died of typhoid fever. Surviving were his wife—whom he once called “the sweetest and best little woman” in the State of Minnesota—and his three month old child. Eli B. Larson was 34 years old.

Born in 1858 he left the family farm in Fillmore County to attend high school in Rushford. After graduating he enrolled in the University of Minnesota, graduating in 1884.¹ For the next two years he was a student in the St. Louis Law School. With a law degree in hand, he set up shop in Ada, the county seat of Norman County, and remained there the rest of his short life. Because it was difficult to make a living solely from his law practice, he began selling insurance and lending money, both frequent sidelines for lawyers in small towns at this time (the population of Ada in 1890 was 622). In 1891 He placed his business card in the local newspaper:²



E. B. LARSON,
ATTORNEY AT LAW,
Money to Loan, and Insurance.
ADA, MINN

He became a fervent prohibitionist and decided to run for the office of county attorney. But the Prohibition Party did not have enough members

¹ From *The Rushford Star*, June 5, 1884, at 4:

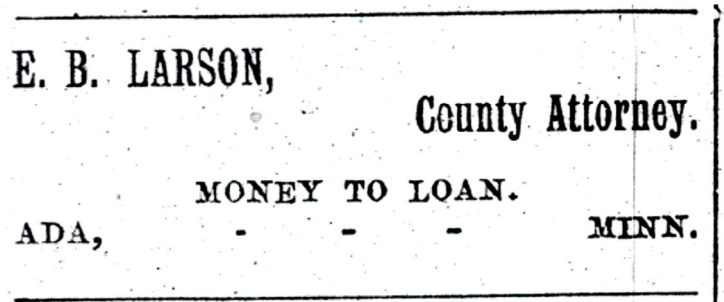
—Eli B. Larson, who recently graduated at the State University, passed through Rushford, last Tuesday, on his way home. He wears his honors with becoming modesty and is the same genial Eli of four years ago.

² The firm of Phelps & Calkins also had its card in this issue of the *Norman County Herald*, May 23, 1891, at 2.

to elect its own slate of candidates; it had to form a coalition with another to have a chance of getting a majority vote. And so the Norman County Prohibition Party joined the Alliance Party in endorsing many (but not all) of the same candidates for state and county offices in 1890.³ This was not unusual as this was an era of fusion tickets.⁴ He won the election on November 4, 1890:⁵

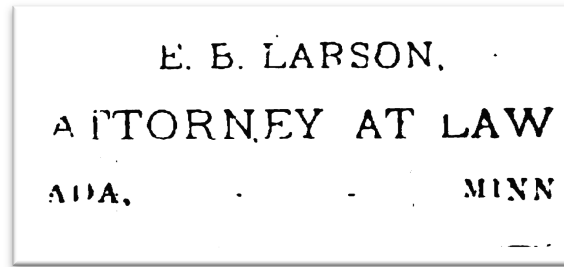
Eli B. Larson.....1,538
Emerson.....88

Endorsed by the Peoples and Republican Parties, he was reelected on November 7, 1892:⁶ The office of Norman County Attorney was a part time job, which permitted him to have a private practice. He placed a new business card in the *Norman County Index*.⁷



In early 1893 he placed a new version of his card in the *Herald*:⁸

³ The two tickets are posted in the Appendix, at 9.
⁴ The leading article is Peter H. Argersinger, "A Place on the Ballot": Fusion Politics and Antifusion Laws," 85 *American Historical Review*, 287, 288-292 (April 1980), discussed in Douglas A. Hedin, "Now on the Ballot for Candidates for the Minnesota Supreme Court: "Calvin L. Brown (Republican-Democrat) : The Story of In re Day (1904)" 9-15 (MLHP, 2017).
⁵ *Norman County Herald*, November 7, 1890, at 2.
⁶ The Republican Party ticket and the People's Party ticket for the 1892 election are posted in the Appendix at 10. The results of the election on November 8, 1892, have not been located.
⁷ *Norman County Index*, November 11, 1892, at 8.
⁸ By this time the firm of Phelps & Calkins had dissolved. W. W. Calkins remained and his card too was published in this issue of the *Norman County Herald*, February 17, 1893, at 1.



Eli B. Larson died on July 29, 1893, at age 34. The *Norman County Herald* carried the story:

OBITUARY

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the North wind's
breadth,
And stars to set, —but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own,
O, Death!

It is a sad duty we have to perform in announcing the death of Eli B. Larson. Three weeks ago he was a strong and active man and now he is no more as far as this life with its cares, its duties and its joys are concerned.

For about a week prior to July 21st he had the symptoms of approaching sickness but it was not thought serious. On Friday, the day mentioned, he had taken to bed and the doctor in attendance pronounced it a case of typhoid fever. The hot days following added to his general discomfort but with the care he was receiving he appeared to be getting along nicely until Friday the 28th when a hemorrhage of the bowels occurred and he began sinking and died Saturday evening July 29th at 8:30 o'clock.

Everything in human skill to do had been done to ease his suffering and make him comfortable besides the constant

care which a devoted wife and relatives gave; members of the Lodge of Masons to which he belonged and neighbors and friends watched over him every night. A professional nurse was summoned from Crookston and Dr. Darrow of Moorhead, was called in consultation with Dr. Norin but to no avail. Death had chosen him for his own and no earthly power could intervene.

As so aptly said in the stanza quoted above Death has all seasons for his own and is no respecter of persons. Here was a man in the prime of life. He had gone through the preparatory stages and fitted himself for usefulness in life when called away. To our limited vision it seems queer that such is the mandate of the Ruler of all things and still as said at the funeral, we may sometime see the wisdom of His course. There is one lesson near at hand and that is the uncertainty of life. We aspire to different stations in life and become absorbed in our vocations. We are seeking this and that and dividing into factions over questions of no essential consequence. We are bending all our energies to acquire wealth or fame. Then in the midst of our season, when the goal of our ambition seems probably near at hand, comes the great leveller with the same summons to all and gathers us and leaving nothing behind except the influence for good or for evil which we have expected exerted in life. That remains and upon this is our memory founded.

The funeral was rendered in Our Saviour's church Monday afternoon, Rev. Larson and Mr. Billings delivered sermons, the church being filled with mourners. The remains were taken to the depot in the evening and carried to Dodge Center where the burial took place the next day.

Eli B. Larson was born in Fillmore County, this state, in November 1858 and he was consequently nearing the 35th milestone of life's journey at the time of his death. He early

showed a desire to improve his mind and while young left the school near his parent's home to pursue his studies at the High School in Rushford from where he graduated as a teacher. His ambition did not allow him to remain in this position very long and in 1878 he entered the University of Minnesota from which he graduated in 1884. He decided upon law as his profession shortly after his graduation went to St. Louis where he completed a two-year course at the St. Louis Law School.

After looking about he decided to locate here in Ada and during the first years of his stay here he shared office with, and was in a sense associated with, Gabril Bjornson in the practice of law. On the death of Mr. Bjornson he established his own office and succeeded in building up a good practice.

He was elected County Attorney of Norman County at the election of 1890, and he was a reelected last year.

He was married to Miss Helen Phillips at Dodge Center in June 1892, and a child of about three months old is the fruit of their married life.

Besides considerable property interests he held \$5,000 of life insurance, \$4,000 of which goes to the widow and \$1,000 his aged father. The last sum will probably be settled on the child as the beneficiary is a man of means.

Mr. Larson well deserved the testimonial which Rev. Larson gave him in his funeral sermon. He was a man of honor he said and this is the common expression of all who knew him well. Among his colleagues he was held in much esteem for the honorable and upright course he pursued in his profession and not only the town but the whole county mourns his hasty departure. Mr. Larson was a man among men and the void created by his demise will be long felt.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolutions of sympathy adopted by the Young People's Christian Endeavor Society of the Ada Congregational church on the death of its President, Mr. E. B. Larson:

WHEREAS, It has pleased God in His Inscrutable wisdom to remove from our number our beloved president, Mr. E. B. Larson, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we, the members of our Society, extend to his wife our heartfelt sympathy in her bereavement.

RESOLVED, That we deeply feel the sense of loss in which his death brings to us, the loss of a Christian brother and a friend.

RESOLVED, That in this, our expression of sympathy to his wife, we voice the hope that she will lean for strength on that Arm on which he leaned, and which in the sorest time of need never fails.

RESOLVED, That a copy of these resolutions be presented to his wife and printed in the local papers.

Resolutions of the Congregational Aid Society on the death of Mr. E. B. Larson:

WHEREAS, In the providence of God death has entered the home of one of our members and left a desolate.

RESOLVED, That we assure our sister, Mrs. Helen Larson, of our sorrow and her sorrow and extend to her our heartfelt sympathy.

RESOLVED, That a copy of this be sent to the family and also published in the village newspapers.

Mrs. C. C. Allen
Mrs. F. L. Norin
Mrs. F. L. Hampson,
Committee.⁹

⁹ *Norman County Herald* (Ada), August 4, 1893, at 8.

Other newspapers noted his passing. From the *Rushford Star*, August 17, 1893, at 4:

WE learn with profound regret of the sudden death of our old friend and schoolmate Eli B. Larson who died at his home in Ada, Norman county, this State on 29th day of last month.

Mr. Larson was born in Preble township this county and after attending the common schools he entered the then graded schools of this city and prepared himself for the State University from which he graduated with honors. After taking a course in the St. Louis Law Schools he settled in Norman county this State and rapidly raising in his profession was nominated and elected county attorney as a Republican in the memorable campaign of 1890 when experienced politicians were swept into oblivion by the political cyclone. Last summer we met him at Minneapolis while attending the national Republican convention and together we recalled early struggles and talked of future of life and hope and said that in a few days he would marry the sweetest and best little woman in all the broad State of Minnesota. We afterwards saw an account of his wedding and of his triumphant re-election as county attorney.

But little over a short year has rolled away and his voice is stilled forever and his young wife and infant child are left to mourn his untimely death and face the responsibilities of life alone. He was a noble young man and his life, though short, was an example worthy of emulation.

From *The North* (Minneapolis), August 9, 1893, at 1:

Eli B. Larson.

Eli B. Larson, county attorney of Norman county, Minn., died at his home in Ada of typhoid fever. Mr. Larson was about 33 years of age and a native of Fillmore county, this state. He entered the state university in 1878, and spent six years there, graduating in 1884. After graduating he studied law and

began practicing at Ada. About two years ago he married Miss Nellie Phillips, of Dodge Center. They had one child.

Mr. Larson was not what might be called brilliant, but he had staying qualities. He was scrupulously honest in all he said and did, and to know him was to respect him. In politics he could not be anything but a radical third party prohibitionist.

In 1918, a quarter century after his death the following biographical sketch was printed in the first volume of *History of Clay and Norman Counties*:

Eli B. Larson came to Ada about 1886, and was then a practicing lawyer. He was a graduate of the University of Minnesota, in the liberal arts department, and later graduated from the law department of St. Louis University. He is remembered by the citizens of the county as a strong prohibitionist, and the Prohibition party, not being strong in the county, he was unable to get elected to office. In 1890, however, he was elected county attorney by the combined Prohibition and Farmers Alliance vote of the county. He was a very conscientious man and died in the prime of his life, his death occurring in 1893, during his first term as county attorney. His law library and business was sold to M. A. Brattland, also a graduate of the law department of the University of Minnesota.¹⁰

¹⁰ John Turner & C. K. Semling, eds., 1 *History of Clay and Norman Counties, Minnesota* 351 (1918)

APPENDIX

Norman County Herald,
October 31, 1890, at 2.

Alliance Ticket
October 24, 1890, at 3.

PROHIBITION TICKET

For Governor,
JAMES P. PINKHAM.

For Lieutenant Governor,
J. O. BARRETT.

For Secretary of State,
H. S. HILLIBOE.

For State Auditor,
OLE KRON.

For State Treasurer,
N. E. FROST.

For Attorney General,
ROBERT TAYLOR.

For Clerk of Supreme Court,
WILLIAM E. DEAN.

For Member of Congress—Fifth District,
KITTEL HALVORSON.

For State Senator,
EDWIN E. LOMMEN.

For Representatives,
B. M. CHESLEY.
ANDREW THOMPSON.
WILLIAM CARLTON.

For County Auditor,

For County Treasurer,

For Sheriff,
OLE GUNDERSON.

For Register of Deeds,
JOHN M. HETLAND.

For Judge of Probate,
A. RUNNING.

For County Attorney,
E. B. LARSON.

For County Surveyor,
EMANUEL NELSON.

For Corner,
F. L. NORIN.

For Clerk of Court,
E. T. SALVERSON.

For Superintendent of Schools,
II. H. AKKER

For County Commissioner—2d District,
G. GILBERTSON.

For County Commissioner—Fourth District,
G. L. THORPE.

A resolution was passed requesting the county papers to publish the Alliance ticket, which is as follows:

For Governor,
S. M. OWEN.

For Lieutenant Governor,
J. O. BARRETT.

For Secretary of State,
W. WESENBERG.

For State Auditor,
ADOLPH BIERMAN.

For State Treasurer,
ERIK MATTESON.

For Attorney General,
ROBERT TAYLOR.

For Clerk of Supreme Court,
FRANK W. KOHLER.

For Representative 5th Congressional District,
KITTEL HALVORSON.

For State Senator,
EDWIN E. LOMMEN.

For Representatives,
B. M. CHESLEY.
ANDREW THOMPSON.
WILLIAM CARLTON.

For County Auditor,
A. F. GEORGE.

For County Treasurer,
LEWIS JACOBSON.

For Sheriff,
OLE GUNDERSON.

For Register of Deeds,
JOHN M. HETLAND.

For Judge of Probate,
D. C. LIGHTBOURN.

For County Attorney,
E. B. LARSON.

For County Surveyor,
EMANUEL NELSON.

For Coroner,
F. T. KOYL.

For Clerk of Court,
E. T. SALVERSON.

For Court Commissioner,
H. M. HUNTING.

For Superintendent of Schools,
KNUTE SEMLING.

County Commissioners,
G. GILBERTSON.
WESLEY JENKINS.

November 4, 1892, at 1.

Norman County Herald,

J. O. NORBY,
Proprietor and Editor.

PEOPLES PARTY TICKET.

For President
James B. Weaver,
of Iowa.
For Vice President
James G. Field,
of Virginia.

STATE TICKET.

For Governor of Minnesota,
IGNATIUS DONNELLY.

Lieut. Governor,
SWAN SWANSON.

Secretary of State,
H. B. MARTIN.

Treasurer,
P. M. RINGDAL.

Attorney General
J. L. McDONALD.

For Judges Supreme Court.
THOMAS CANTY.
DANIEL BUCK.
W. N. DAVIDSON.

Congressman,
7th Dist—**H. E. BOEN.**

For Judge.
14th Dist—**FRANK IVES.**

Members of the Legislature.
HANS JUELSON.
B. M. CHESLEY.
JOHN D. KNUDSON.

COUNTY TICKET.

For Auditor..... J. C. Norby
For Reg of Deeds..... Jno M Hetland
For Treasurer..... K T Knutson
For Sheriff..... Ole Gunderson
For Probate Judge..... v W Calkins
For Co Attorney..... E B Larson
Supt of Schools..... Miss Lotta Bradley
For Coroner..... H M Hunting
For Surveyor..... E Nelson
County commissioners.
1st Dist..... M E Bjorge
3d "..... Gust Suintag
5th "..... Julius Heier

November 4, 1892, at 4

Norman County Index.

Published Every Friday

AT ADA, MINN.

D. C. LIGHTBOURN, PUBLISHER.

REPUBLICAN TICKET.

For President,
Benjamin Harrison.
For Vice President,
Whitelaw Reid.

STATE TICKET.

For Governor,
Knut Nelson.
For Lieutenant Governor,
D. M. CLOUGH.

For Secretary of State,
F. P. BROWN.

For Treasurer,
JOSEPH BOBLETER.

For Attorney General,
H. W. CHILDS.

Supreme Court Justices,
C. E. VANDERBURGH.
D. A. DICKINSON.
WILLIAM MITCHELL.

FOR CONGRESS,

HENRY FEIG,
Of Kandiyohi County.

LEGISLATIVE TICKET.

HALVOR STEENERSON,
Of Polk County.

PETER RAMSTAD and L. E. NORDBY,
Of Norman County.

COUNTY TICKET.

For Auditor..... C. H. BROWN.
For Treasurer..... P. O. HANSON.
For Register..... A. AANENSON.
For Sheriff..... K. G. LEE.
For Probate Judge..... W. W. CALKINS.
For Attorney..... E. B. LARSON.
For Supt. of Schools..... S. A. SCARVIE.
For Coroner..... H. M. HUNTING.
For Surveyor..... E. NIELSON.
For County Commissioners, { **N. O. MITTHUN.**
 { **C. K. LEE.**
 { **G. J. SAXUM.**

Posted MLHP: May 21, 2021.