

“ BENCH AND BAR OF MORRISON COUNTY ” *

in

HISTORY

OF

Morrison and Todd Counties
Minnesota

THEIR PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

BY

CLARA K. FULLER

**With Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and
Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families**

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*** MLHP editor: This chapter appeared on pages 125-128 of this two volume history of Morrison and Todd Counties. Unfortunately there is no chapter on the Todd County bar. Though reformatted, the chapter is complete.**

MORRISON AND TODD COUNTIES, MINNESOTA.

CHAPTER XIII.

BENCH AND BAR OF MORRISON COUNTY.

From members of the present bar and from notes left in scrap-book form, as the result of Hon. Nathan Richardson's thoughtfulness in 1876, the author has been able to collect the following concerning the bar of Morrison county:

The pioneer attorney was James Hall, who came to Little Falls in 1856. He practiced until 1863, when he caught the Pike's Peak fever and went to that famous spot in the Rocky mountains, where it is related he became quite wealthy from his gold mining and other operations. He returned to St. Cloud, Minnesota, and again entered the practice of his chosen profession. Again in 1871, having property interests in the vicinity of Pike's Peak, he went there and on his return trip died at Cheyenne. At the first state election he was elected as district judge, but soon thereafter resigned in favor of Hon. E. O. Hamlin.

In 1857 came William Moore, who remained at Little Falls two years, but, finding legal business "poor picking," removed to St. Cloud, where he built up a lucrative legal practice and after three or four years removed to St. Paul, where he was in practice many years. Up to 1871 there was little legal business in Little Falls or Morrison county. During that year came E. S. Smith, a young and promising attorney, full of vigor and young manhood's energy and ambition. He remained four years. He went away, but returned later and engaged in practice until his death, in about 1902. Next came W. G. Woodruff, a young attorney from Crookston. He was appointed county attorney and then became a candidate for that office, but was defeated at the polls. In 1875 he returned to his former home in Crookston and there took up his practice as a lawyer.

In 1876 there was only one lawyer in Morrison county, A. J. Clark, of Little

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Falls. In 1879, during the month of July, came Alfred F. Storey. In a short time he was appointed county attorney and in 1880 was a candidate for the office of probate judge and was elected. He left Little Falls sometime previous to 1887. In the eighties came D. T. Calhoun, one of the best lawyers [126] that ever graced the Morrison county bar. He moved to St. Cloud and died that city about 1907 or 1908.

Hon. C. A. Lindbergh, present congressman, came to Little Falls to practice law about 1884. His record is well known and is mentioned at length elsewhere in this work. He purchased the business built up by Mr. Lamb, which left only two lawyers in the county, Lindbergh and E. S. Smith.

In March, 1887, came A. P. Blanchard. He had been admitted to the bar in Illinois, and practiced here until his death in 1910. He was a good attorney. He was in partnership in law with C. A. Lindbergh from 1904 to 1907, when Lindbergh was elected to his seat in Congress. He served twice as county attorney of Morrison county. Crawford Sheldon came here about the same date of Mr. Blanchard's coming. After two years he was elected justice of the peace; for several terms he held this office, then abandoned law and was elected county superintendent of schools, after which he retired to his excellent farm home in Belle Prairie township, where he still follows the less harassing occupation of agriculture. In the summer of 1887 came Frank Lyon, who is still engaged in legal practice at Little Falls. He has served as county attorney for a number of terms. His former home was Illinois.

It was about this date when J. H. Rhodes came to Little Falls and engaged in the drug trade in company with John Wetzel for a number of years. He possessed a large farm near Little Falls. He went to St. Cloud, read law a few months, was admitted to the Morrison county bar, in about 1889, and then was made county attorney here in place of "Roll" Worthington. He served as county attorney by election for two terms and died in 1900. He had a large rice plantation in one of the Southern states.

Hon. Nathan Richardson was admitted to the bar of this county long after he had held county office and been counted an "old settler" many years; he was not a well-read attorney, as the term now implies, but managed to transact much legal business. His admission was in 1885. Donald Trettel,

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born in Poland, but reared in this county, read law with Hon. C. A. Lindbergh. He was educated at the Catholic schools, had a fine education and practiced law in Little Falls until his death a few years since. At one time he was judge of probate court here. A. Grethen was in practice at Little Falls two years about 1900. As the partner of Judge Baxter, of Fergus Falls, he had received a good understanding of the law. He finally removed to Dakota and there formed a partnership with his son in the law business and was, at last accounts, still living.

E.A. Kling came from Wadena, Minnesota, in 1899 and is still in practice. He has held a term in the Minnesota Legislature and was clerk of the courts in Morrison county by appointment a few years ago. About 1900 came Don N. Cameron and Nels N. Bergheim, both graduates of the Iowa University law school. Cameron was county attorney three terms here, and he and Mr. Bergheim are still actively engaged in their chosen profession at Little Falls.

C. Rosenmeier came from some one of the southern counties of Minnesota to Royalton about 1906, and was elected county attorney of Morrison County in 1913, being the present incumbent of that office. E. F. Shaw came here about 1891, from Baltimore, Maryland, and practiced for a time being now judge of probate court.

Louis W. Vasaly and brother, Stephen C. Vasaly, were admitted to the Morrison county bar about 1896. They were born in this county. Louis W. served two terms in the state Legislature and been county attorney of Morrison county. The latest addition to the Morrison county bar is A. H. Vernon, from St. Paul, who arrived here in 1910. He has been city attorney several terms.

Last, but not least, in the honorable role of attorneys in Little Falls, is E. P. Adams, to whom we are indebted for many points in this list of lawyers in Morrison county. He came here in the month of April, 1887, from Illinois, in which state he was reared. He was educated at the University and Law School, graduating from the former in 1875 and from the latter in 1878. He practiced alone, except from 1889 to 1892, when he was the partner of Hon. C. A. Lindbergh. He has held the office of city attorney for Little Falls. He is a well trained, able counselor and has won the esteem of the county of his

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adoption and has a paying clientage.

J. N. True practiced in Little Falls from about 1900 to 1905, then moved to Oregon, but is now again practicing in the courts of this state. He was an excellent lawyer and a good citizen. Clarence Yetter practiced here about 1907-8 for a short period. E. B. Prebble came here in 1887 and practiced until 1890. He was county attorney three months, but resigned his office and located in St. Paul, where for a time he practiced. He then removed to Washington state, where he amassed a handsome fortune and has been judge of the superior court for about a dozen years.

There have doubtless been a few more who sought to practice law in this county, from time to time, but not for any considerable time, and these names have slipped from the memory with the flight of years. Those named above, however, are the principal attorneys who have made a record worth remembering at the Morrison county bar—past and present. [128]

ATTORNEYS OF 1915.

At present the members of the bar practicing in Morrison county are as follows: E. P. Adams, Nels N. Bergheim, E. A. Kling, Don M. Cameron, Louis W. Vasaly, S. C. Vasaly, F. W. Lyon, E. F. Shaw, A. H. Vernon, C. Rosenmeir.

BAR ASSOCIATION.

In the spring of 1915 there was formed a Bar Association for Morrison county to which all attorneys subscribed their names. Its officers are: President, E. P. Adams; vice-president, F. W. Lyons; treasurer, Stephen Vasaly; secretary, Nels N. Bergheim. If well attended and fostered, this association will be of great mutual good to members of the Morrison county bar. Its history, however, is yet to be made and written by some future county historian. ■