

# Robert R. Hedenberg

– November 16, 1854 – May 25, 1917 –

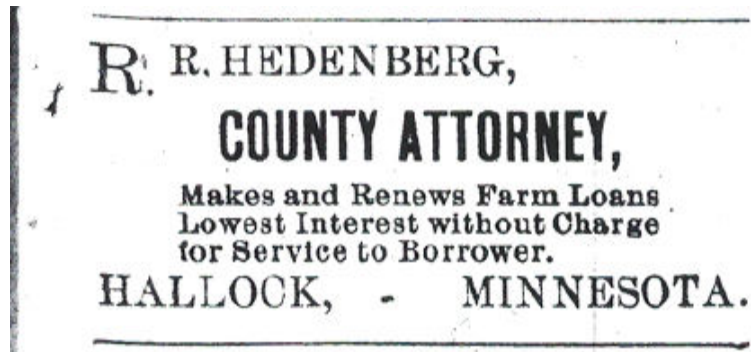
Novelists, memoirists and historians have written about the hardships Scandinavian emigrants encountered when they settled in Minnesota in the last half of the nineteenth century but probably no one had a harder time than Robert Reinhart Hedenberg. He and his family of ten arrived in Red Wing in 1867 and within the first month his father and five children died of cholera. A short while later a brother and sister died leaving only his mother and him. He was twelve years old. Within a few years his mother died and he was left an orphan in a new land. But he persevered.

He read law in the office of Colonel William J. Colville, a hero of the battle of Gettysburg who later served as attorney general of Minnesota in 1867-1869, and another local lawyer, C. N. Akers. After being admitted to the bar in 1879 he moved to the village of St. Vincent, Kittson County, where he practiced law. He was elected county attorney that year. For the next thirty-three years he was an elected county official. He was listed in the roster of Kittson County officers in 1884:<sup>1</sup>

COUNTY OFFICERS:	
Auditor—	H Eustrom.
Treasurer—	H Hanson.
Register of Deeds—	L. N Eklund.
Judge of Probate—	T H M V Appleby.
Sheriff—	John A Vanstrum.
Clerk of Dist. Court—	W F Wallace.
Court Commissioner—	Geo Thompson.
Supt. of Schools—	P H Konzen.
County Physician—	Dr. Thos. Duhig.
County Attorney—	R R Hedenberg.
County Surveyor—	Chas Clow.
Coroner—	A Murphy.
Co. Commissioners—	Robt Thompson
W G Deacon	F W Wagoner.
TOWN OFFICERS:	
Supervisors—	C J McCollom ch'm.
L B Riddell	H Harrison.
Treasurer—	L N Eklund.
Clerk—	A Nordenmalm.

<sup>1</sup> Kittson County Enterprise (Hallock), November 1, 1884, at 2.

In 1890 he relocated to Hallock, the county seat, continued his law practice and a sideline trade of loaning money to farmers. Aside from a term as probate judge from 1879-1892, he served as county attorney until 1912. His business card in the local newspaper conspicuously noted his office: <sup>2</sup>



His biographical profile was published in *A History of the Red River Valley* in 1909:

R. R. Hedenberg is a pioneer resident of Kittson county. He was born in Carlstorp parish, Sweden, November 16, 1854. In 1867 he came with his parents from Sweden to Red Wing, Minn. He was then twelve years old, the eldest of a family of eight children. Within a month after their arrival in this country, his father and five of the children died of cholera. His remaining brother and sister died while children, and after the death of his mother he was the only one left of this family.

He studied law in the law office of Colonel William Colville and Charles N. Akers, at Red Wing, and was admitted to practice as an attorney May 16, 1879. He located in St. Vincent where he remained till the spring of 1890, when he removed to Hallock, where he now resides. At the first county election held the county, being in 1879, he was elected county attorney and has held that office ever since except during the years of 1889-1892, when he was the

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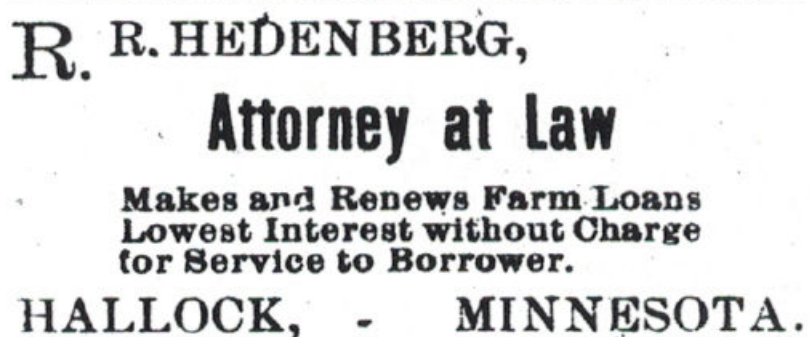
<sup>2</sup> *Kittson County Enterprise*, January 24, 1908, at 9.

judge of probate of the county. He is still the county attorney of Kittson county.

He has been a painstaking, trustworthy, energetic prosecuting attorney, and his conservatism and carefulness have been the means of much saving in a financial way to the county.

Mr. Hedenberg was married July 8, 1893, to Corinne L. Davidson. They have had six children, of which Anna Corinne, Robert Davidson, Winfred Giroux and Margaret Elizabeth are living, two having died in infancy.<sup>3</sup>

After leaving office, his card was still published in the Kittson County Enterprise:<sup>4</sup>



**R. R. HEDENBERG,**  
**Attorney at Law**  
Makes and Renews Farm Loans  
Lowest Interest without Charge  
for Service to Borrower.  
**HALLOCK, - MINNESOTA.**

He died on May 25, 1917, at age sixty-two.<sup>5</sup> The *Kittson County Enterprise* published his obituary, some of which was taken from the sketch in the 1909 county history:

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<sup>3</sup> Peter H. Konzen, "Bench and Bar of Kittson County" in *2 History of the Red River Valley* 949 (C. F. Cooper & Co., 1909). This chapter is posted separately on the MLHP.

<sup>4</sup> *Kittson County Enterprise*, February 14, 1913, at 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ten days before his death, a farmhouse he owned burned. From *The Duluth Herald*, May 21, 1917, at 18:

Hallock—The farmhouse of R. R. Hedenberg, near the temperance hall, five miles east of Hallock, and occupied by Everett Hayden, together with its contents, was completely destroyed by fire last Tuesday afternoon [May 15]. The fire is supposed to have started from an overheated stove pipe. At the time of the fire no one was home.

## **In Memoriam.**

**Pioneer Citizen and Prominent  
ex-County Official  
Passes Away**



**The Late R. R. Hedenberg**

**Died, and his home and Hallock, Minn., Friday, May 25, 1917,  
Robert R. Hedenberg, at age 62 years and six months.**

**Deceased was a pioneer resident of this county. He is born  
at Carlstrop Parish, Sweden, November 16th, 1854. In 1867,  
he emigrated to this country with his parents, locating at  
Red Wing, Minn. He was then 12 years old, the eldest in a  
family of eight children. Within a month after the arrival of  
the family in this country, the father and five children died  
of cholera. His remaining brother and sister died while  
children, and after the death of the mother, he was the only  
one left of the family. He however secured an education  
and later read law in the law office of Col. William Colville  
and C. N. Akers at Red Wing, and was admitted to the bar,  
May 16th, 1879, when he moved to this county and located  
at St. Vincent, where he established a law office and**

remained till the spring of 1890. After that he moved to Hallock where he resided up to the time of his death.

In the first election held in the county in 1879, he was elected county attorney and held that office up to the year 1912 except during the years 1889 – 1892, when he served as judge of probate. As a public official he was always painstaking, trustworthy and energetic and his conservatism and carefulness were the means of much saving in a financial way to Kittson County. As a citizen he always bore his share of the burden that brought this section of country to its present state of development and his pocketbook was even open towards any move that had for its aim the best interests of the community.<sup>6</sup>

The *Hallock Weekly News* also carried his obituary:

Robert Reinhart Hedenberg another of Kittson County's pioneers was laid to rest, after a life of work and usefulness, last Monday, May 28th, 1917. Mr. Hedenberg was born in Carlstorps Congregation, Jönköpingslön, Sweden, Nov. 16, 1854. The family of ten emigrated from Sweden to America 1863. The father and five children died of cholera within one month of their arrival and the other two children died soon afterward, leaving mother and son in poor circumstances. After some years the mother died also and left Robert an orphan. Being an industrious and saving boy, he was soon able to enter the profession of law and advanced rapidly.

He moved to St. Vincent 1879 and was the same fall elected county attorney of Kittson County and served as such until 1889, when he was chosen Judge of Probate of the county and served until 1892. He was again elected attorney and

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<sup>6</sup> *Kittson County Enterprise*, June 1, 1917 at 1 (list of surviving family and funeral arrangements omitted).

served until 1913, when feebleness and declining health demanded a rest.

Mr. Hedenberg was a faithful officer, and Kittson county has much to thank him for its prosperity. Yea, without doubt, Mr. Hedenberg did more for Kittson county during his residence here, than any other man. Honest and sincere in all his dealings, he won the confidence of his constituents, even when he had to do to individuals, who having trespassed against the rights of the county and had to oppose them, he did it in such a way, that all feeling of discontent soon wore away. Mr. Hedenberg had no enemies. His memory will live and die with this generation; but his deeds never.

Deceased was united in marriage to Miss Corrine L. Davidson, July 8, 1893. This union was blessed with six children two of which died in their infancy. The living are: Anna Corinne, Robert Davidson, Winfred Giroux and Margaret Elizabeth. These four and his wife with innumerable friends mourn, the not unexpected, death of the loving husband, kind father and useful citizen.

The funeral took place in the Swedish Lutheran Church Monday afternoon, at 2 o'clock. It was perhaps the largest funeral ever witnessed in Hallock, showing the great esteem the deceased occupied in the hearts of the grateful friends for the service of which *their friend* had rendered. The funeral was directed by Rev. L. P. Lundgren both in church and at the cemetery. Miss Konzen and the choir sang appropriate songs.<sup>7</sup> ■

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<sup>7</sup> *Hallock Weekly News*, Saturday, June 2, 1917, at 4 "R.R. Hedenberg. Ex-County Att'y Passed Away")(photograph omitted).