

THOMAS J. BROOKS

One of the distinctive functions of this publication is to take recognition of those citizens of the commonwealth of Indiana who stand eminently representative in their chosen spheres of endeavor, and in this connection there is absolute propriety in according consideration to Thomas J. Brooks, of Bedford, who has not only attained to an enviable standing in the legal profession, but is also numbered among the leaders in the commercial life of Lawrence county, having for a number of years been at the head of one of the strongest and most influential financial institutions of the county, while in political and civic life he is a prominent figure.

Thomas J. Brooks is a native son of Indiana, having been born in Loogootee, Martin county, on the 22d of April, 1857. He is the son of Lewis and Amanda M. (Crooks) Brooks, both of whom also were natives of Martin county. Mr. Brooks is descended from a sterling old line of English ancestry, his paternal line being traced back to Thomas Brooks, who, in 1635, came from London, England, with Rev. Bulkeley, who founded the town of Concord, Massachusetts. Lewis Brooks, the subject's father, was a successful farmer and also was engaged in the mercantile business. During the Civil war he enlisted in defense of his country, becoming colonel of the Eighteenth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry, with which command he served valiantly for three years. His death occurred in 1913, his wife having passed away in 1893. They were the parents of the following children: Thomas J., the immediate subject of this review; Susan, who still resides in Martin county; Mrs. Anna Schwey, of Martin county; Mrs. Amanda Hacker, of Martin county; Lewis, of Vincennes, this state; William F., of Bedford; Emma, also of Martin county; Horace. G., of Louisville, Kentucky; Daniel. of Martin county, and May, who is deceased.

Thomas J. Brooks received his early education in the common schools, his native county, and then was student for some time in the National Normal School at Lebanon, Ohio. At the age of nineteen years he began teaching school and for four years was thus employed in Martin county. In the mean time he had formed a determination to make the practice of law his life work and, to this end, had been devoting his spare time to the study of Kent, Blackstone and other great authorities in the science of jurisprudence. In 1882 he entered upon the active practice of that profession in Shoals, Indiana, and in 1892 came to Bedford and opened a law office. He continued in the practice in Bedford alone for two years and then formed a partnership with his brother, William F. Brooks, under the firm name of Brooks & Brooks, which for many years has been recognized as one of the strongest and most successful law firms of Lawrence county. The subject is generally recognized in this part of the state as a lawyer of unusual attainments and he has been connected as counsel, on one side or the other, with most of the important litigation tried in the local courts. Mr. Brooks is local attorney for the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway Company and the Chicago, Terre Haute & Southeastern Railway Company and has served as attorney for the city of Bedford, and as attorney for Lawrence county for the past eighteen years.

Though a busy man professionally, Mr. Brooks has found time to take an active part in business affairs and, on December 19, 1905, he was elected president of the Bedford National Bank, of Bedford, of which he had been a director since its organization, in 1899. The capital stock of the bank was at first fifty thousand dollars. but

has since been increased to one hundred thousand dollars, with surplus and undivided profits of thirty-five thousand dollars, the institution having been for many years one of the important and influential factors in the prosperity and growth of Bedford and Lawrence county. In February, 1896, Mr. Brooks acquired a half interest in the Bedford Mail, one of the popular and influential newspapers of this county and which has proven a good business investment. Daily and weekly editions are published and in 1912 the plant was installed in a splendid new building, being equipped with modern and up-to-date machinery. The Mail is Republican in politics and is one of the most readable and popular sheets published 'in this section of the state.

Politically, Mr. Brooks is a Republican and for many years has been a prominent figure in the councils of his party. He has been a member of the state central committee and representative of this district in the State Senate. He took a prominent part in the organization of the Bedford Library Association and has been president of its board of trustees since its organization in 1897. In many other ways he has shown a commendable interest in the welfare of his adopted city and has been numbered among her leading and progressive citizens. Mr. Brooks' religious affiliations are with the Methodist Episcopal church, to the support of which he is a liberal contributor. On August 13, 1892, Mr. Brooks was united in marriage with Lorabel Wallace, the daughter of Armstrong and Sarah (Tomey) Wallace. Her father was a descendant of Rev. John Wallace, a native of Virginia, who fought in the Revolutionary war, and in 1808 settled in Daviess county. To Mr. and Mrs. Brooks has been born a daughter, May, who will graduate from Smith College, at Northampton, Massachusetts, in June 1914.

Personally, Mr. Brooks is a man of genial disposition and kindly impulses, characteristics which have won for him a large circle of warm, and loyal friends, and he is eminently deserving of the high standing which he enjoys in the community.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 482-484)