

F. B. VANVALZAH

It is generally considered by those in the habit of superficial thinking that the history of so-called great men only is worthy of preservation, and that little merit exists among the masses to call forth the praises of the historian or the cheers and the appreciation of mankind. A greater mistake was never made. No man is great in all things. Many by a lucky stroke achieve lasting fame who before that had no reputation beyond the limits of their immediate neighborhoods. It is not a history of the lucky stroke which benefits humanity most, but the long study and effort which made the lucky stroke possible. It is the preliminary work, the method, that serves as a guide for the success of others. Among those in Monroe county who have achieved success along steady lines of action is the subject of this sketch.

F. B. VanValzah, one of the leading merchants and enterprising citizens of Bloomington, Indiana, was born in Pennsylvania on July 22, 1852, and is the son of John A. and Sara B. (Barber) VanValzah. the former having been a farmer and miller, and died in his old home in the Keystone state. The subject of this sketch received his education in the common schools near his home and in an academy at Lewistown, Pennsylvania. Upon taking up the active duties of life on his own account, he engaged as clerk in a store for three years, and then on account of his health he went to Colorado, where he engaged in the cattle business. After remaining in the West about six and one-half years, and in a measure recovering his health, he went to Kansas, where in Sedgwick county he engaged in farming for about six and one-half years, and in 1888 came to Indiana, locating in Monroe county, where he operated a farm for nine years with a gratifying degree of success. At the end of that period he moved to Bloomington, where he made his permanent residence, and for a year was engaged as a traveling salesman for the Osborne Harvester Company. He then accepted a clerkship in the hardware store of W. J. Allen, with whom he remained a clerk for six years, at the end of which time he bought his employer's interest in the business and has been engaged in the hardware trade for the last eight years, four years of which time he had a partner, but is now alone. Splendidly qualified in every respect for a business career, Mr. VanValzah has been very successful in all that he has undertaken and is numbered today among the leading business men of his community. He is not narrow or selfish in his aims in life, for he has due regard at all times for the general interests of the community and his duties as a citizen, and every movement having for its object the advancement of the general welfare of the people receives his hearty indorsement and support. Politically, Mr. VanValzah is a stanch Progressive, while his fraternal relations are with the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the Knights of Pythias. Religiously, he is a member and regular attendant of the Presbyterian church.

In 1883 Mr. VanValzah married Emma J. Wolf, and to them have been born four children, Sara, Bessie, Samuel and Harold, all of whom are at home except Harold. Mr. VanValzah's life work has been one of unceasing industry and perseverance and the systematic and honorable methods he has ever followed have resulted not only in gaining the confidence of those with whom he has had dealings, but also in the building up of a good business. In every avenue of life's activities, he has been faithful to his duties and, because of his good character and splendid success, he has merited and retains the respect and good will of all who know him.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 549-550)