

## COL. ARCHIBALD C. VORIS

One of the most conspicuous figure in the recent history of Bedford was the late A. C. Voris, a man who attained high prominence in the profession of law and was actively identified with the business and industrial interests of his section of the state. Equally noted as a citizen whose career, useful and honorable, conferred credit upon the community and whose marked abilities and sterling qualities won for him much more than local repute, he held distinctive precedence as one of the most progressive and successful men that ever inaugurated and carried to successful completion large and important undertakings in this locality. Strong mental powers, invincible courage and a determined purpose that hesitated at no opposition so entered into his composition as to render him a dominant factor in the business world and a leader of men in large enterprises. He was essentially a man of affairs, sound of judgment, keen discernment and farseeing in what he undertook, and every enterprise to which he addressed himself resulted in liberal material rewards. His extensive business interests were the legitimate fruitage of consecutive effort, directed and controlled not only by good judgment, but also by correct moral principles.

Archibald C. Voris was born in Switzerland county, Indiana, on June 16, 1829. and was one of eleven children born to Cornelius R. and Mary (VanNuys) Voris. These parents were natives of Kentucky, but were early settlers of Indiana, having come to this state in 1824. The subject's early years were spent on the parental farmstead, his elementary education being received in the district schools of the neighborhood. In 1851 he became a student in Hanover College, where he was graduated in 1855, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, eventually receiving from his alma mater the Master's degree. Immediately upon the completion of his college course, Mr. Voris came to Bedford and taught school for one year. In the meantime he had given serious attention to the study of law and in 1856 he was admitted to the bar of Lawrence county. The following year he went to Harvard University and became a student in the Dane Law School, where he took the full course. He then returned to Bedford and formed a partnership with Judge Pearson in the practice of law, in which he actively engaged until July, 1862, when Mr. Voris responded to his country's call and enlisted for military service. He was commissioned a captain by President Lincoln and was as signed to duty on the staff of Gen. W. S. Hancock, where he rendered faithful service until the close of the war. At the date of his discharge in May, 1865, he held a commission as brevet lieutenant-colonel, awarded him "for gallant and faithful service on the field."

On his return to peaceful pursuits, Colonel Voris resumed the practice of law. For five years, beginning with 1867, Colonel Voris was associated with Judge Francis Wilson in professional work, and he afterwards formed a partnership with Samuel D. Lockett, which continued until the Colonel became so largely interested in outside business affairs, which demanded practically all of his time, that he made a proposition to Judge William H. Martin, who had studied law in his office, to relieve him of his law practice, which was accepted. The Colonel finally abandoned the practice of law in 1882. As a lawyer, Colonel Voris achieved an enviable reputation and while engaged in the active practice he was connected with most of the important cases tried in the local court. Natural ability, a good general education, careful technical preparation and indefatigable industry, all combined to render him able to cope with the ablest members of the bar and

he was signally successful in the practice. A man of ripe scholarship, his mind broadened by experience and habits of close observation, he was a man of rare attainments and he graced any company in which he was found. Genial and companion able, he easily made friends and was well liked among all classes.

Colonel Voris' first business venture of importance was in connection with the Dark Hollow Stone Company, with which he became connected in 1879 and of which he was president, and he was also identified with the Bedford Oolitic and the Louisville & Bedford Stone Companies. It was these companies which first developed the quarries in the district northwest of Bedford and near what is now known as the town of Oolitic. Colonel Voris was also one of the organizers of the Bedford, Springville & Switz City Railroad, now known as the Bedford & Bloomfield branch of the Monon railroad, the building of this road having been made necessary in order that the products of the quarries could be shipped to outside markets. Colonel Voris realized a fortune from his stone interests, which interests he eventually disposed of and, in 1891. he organized the Citizens National Bank of Bedford, of which he was elected president. He was also president of the Citizens Trust Company, of the Green Hill Cemetery Association, and of the Bedford Light, Heat & Power Company, in which he had acquired a controlling interest. Colonel Voris was one of the most enterprising and progressive business men in Bedford, and to him was due in a large measure the splendid progress which characterized the city of his adoption. He was in a large sense the father of the stone industry here and to him more than to any other man may be attributed the development of this gigantic enterprise which has made the name of Bedford known the world over. Although straightforward and unostentatious, and a man who delighted in keeping the even tenor of his way as far as was consistent with good citizenship, he made his influence felt among those with whom he mingled. Strong mental endowment, invincible courage and a determined will, coupled with an honesty of purpose that hesitated at no obstacle, so entered into his composition as to render him a dominant factor in the business world and a leader of men in important enterprises.

In politics Colonel Voris was an ardent supporter of the Republican party and in the national convention at Chicago in 1860 he was active in securing the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. He was at one time the candidate of his party for judge of the tenth judicial circuit, being opposed by Judge Bicknell, but, the district being largely Democratic, he was defeated. In 1876 he was his party's candidate for judge of the supreme court, but met defeat, together with the rest of the state ticket. Religiously, he had been, since early manhood, a member of the Presbyterian church, of which he was an elder for fifty-three years, and to the support of which he was a liberal contributor. The death of Colonel Voris occurred on Saturday, December 2, 1911; his widow still resides in Bedford, where she is highly esteemed by all who know her. Mrs. Voris, to whom the Colonel was married on November 16, 1858 bore the maiden name of Antoinette Rawlins. To them were born two children, Joseph R. Voris, president of the Citizens National Bank of Bedford, being the only one living.

*(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 512-514)*