George W. Bergen, of the historical Bergen family of Long Island, an account of which has been so ably given by Teunis G. Bergen, one of its representatives, was born July 20th 1814, and become one of the most prominent business men and citizens of Long Island, having made his way unaided from early youth, when he was a farmer’s boy of all work, with the assistance of such an education only as he was able to obtain in the public schools of that day, and as the result of reading and observation later.

In 1831, at the age of 16, Mr. Bergen began a long and successful mercantile career by entering the store of Thomas Carman, of Brooklyn, as a clerk. Mr. Carman was in the wholesale and retail grocery trade and was a thoroughgoing business man. Under his tuition, Mr. Bergen received such early training as has been useful to him in his subsequent career. In 1833, he became a clerk in the retail grocery store of Daniel T. Schenck, of Brooklyn, and a few months later entered the employ of Henry E. Cornwell, another retail grocer of Brooklyn. In 1834 and 1835 he was employed in the store of Joshua Rogers, and in 1836 formed a copartnership with his brother John Bergen in the retail grocery trade, at the corner of Tillary and Pearl streets, Brooklyn.

Not long afterward the two brothers dissolved their partnership, and George W. went to Vicksburg, Miss., and was engage in trade there for about a year and a half, returning to the scenes of his former life in the spring of 1838. In the following autumn he entered the firm of Carman, Valentine &Co., wholesale grocers of Brooklyn, which
for twenty years past has been known as the firm of Valentine, Bergen & Co., the present proprietors being George W. Bergen, E. H. Willetts, George P. Willets and George P. Bergen. This firm is recognized as one of the oldest and staunchest mercantile firms in the city and enjoys a large patronage, its stores being located on Fulton street on a short distance from the ferry, and convenient to New York and to the Long Island trade.

Politically Mr. Bergen is a Republican, but does not take an active part in politics and is not the general acceptation of the term a politician. Though solicited at various times to accept important trusts at the hands of his fellow citizens he has usually declined; but he was elected treasurer of Queens county in 1872 by a majority of about 700, and served to the satisfaction of the citizens of the county generally, regardless of party affiliations. In his religious belief Mr. Bergen is orthodox and favors the usage of the Congregational church. During his residence in Brooklyn he was for twenty years officially connected with Plymouth Church. In 1869, when he removed to Freeport, Queens county, he identified himself with the Presbyterian church of that place. In 1874, Mr. and Mrs. Bergen erected at an expense of $5,000, a memorial chapel, which they presented to the church for the purposes of the Sunday-school and the weekly church meetings. It is a beautiful structure, gothic in style, about 40 by 50 feet in size, with stained glass windows, and it is to hoped it may long stand as a memorial not only to its subject, but also its builders.

July 19th 1838 Mr. Bergen married Susan, daughter of Thomas Carman, of Hempstead, who was born June 29th 1818. They have had four children – Elizabeth C. born November 23d 1839, now Mrs. Horace D. Badger; Charles M., born December 9th
1842, who married Susie Fletcher and died January 11th 1870; George P., born September 18th 1849, married to Clarissa E. Sammons; and Anna Valentine, born August 9th 1856.