

MAJOR RICHARD M. BIRKMAN. No braver officer or nobler soldier served in the armies of the Union during the late war than Major Richard M. Birkman, the founder of the present *Indiana Progress*, and editor of it for the first decade of its existence. He was a son of Peter and Hannah (Swoyer) Birkman, and was born in St. Louis, Missouri, April 8, 1837. his paternal grandfather Birkman was a strict Lutheran and resided in Sweden where his son, Peter Birkman (father), was born on the banks of the Wetter lake. Peter Birkman was a subaltern in the Swedish army at sixteen years of age, then was six years at Brest, France, after which he came to the United States and about 1820 became a teacher at Harrisburg, Pa., where he married Hannah Swoyer. He soon left there and finally accepted a situation as a book-keeper in St. Louis, Mo., where he died July 20, 1837. He was a man of high moral courage and noble principles.

Major Richard M. Birkman was reared and received his education in Harrisburg, Pa. he visited a cousin at Blairsville in 1858, spent the next year in Memphis, Tenn., and then was in Philadelphia until Ft. Sumter was fired upon by Beauregard, when he returned to Blairsville, where he enlisted, on June 10, 1861, in Co. E, 11th regiment, Penna. Reserves. He was promoted on May 13, 1862, to second lieutenant, to first lieutenant September 22, 1862, and when his three years had expired, on June 6, 1864, was made captain of Co. A, 190th reg., Pa. Vols. With his regiment he remained till the close of the war, and in April, 1865, received from President Andrew Johnston the rank of brevet-major for meritorious duty and gallantry in the service. The splendid record of his regiments, on a score of bloody battle-fields, needs no repetition here, and Capt. Birkman was always found at the head of his company. After the war he returned to Blairsville, where, in January, 1867, he bought the *New Era* and published it until January, 1870, when he consolidated it with the *Indiana Register* and *American*, under the name of the *Indiana Progress*, which he edited until March 1, 880, when he sold the paper to Wm. R. Black. From 1876 he had been slowly going down with consumption and died in less than two months after disposing of the *Progress*. "His heart was in the *Progress*. It was his life-work; and when he yielded up his paper, it was like the final separation of dear friends. He had a right to be proud of the *Progress*, for under him it had been the friend of temperance, morality and the oppressed."

On June 8, 1865, he united in marriage with Mary L. Black, of Blairsville, and their union was blessed with two children: Sarah and Agnes.

Major Birkman was a member of the Presbyterian church and an earnest Christian. He died, April 24, 1880, when in the forty-third year of his age, but left a record upon which his widow and children can always look with pleasure. His remains were interred in the Blairsville cemetery under the auspices of the Grand Army of the Republic. Comrades around his bier, who had been with him on the march, in the camp and on the battle-field, declared that no truer, braver soldier ever wore the blue than Major Richard M. Birkman