

PHILIP KEARNEY BUSKIRK

The character of a community is determined in a large measure by the lives of a comparatively few of its members. If its moral and intellectual status be good, if in a social way it is a pleasant place in which to reside, if its reputation as to the integrity of its citizens has extended into other localities, it will be found that the standards set by the leading men have been high and the influence such as to mould the characters and shape the lives of those with whom they mingle. In placing the late Philip K. Buskirk in the front rank of such men, justice is rendered a biographical fact universally recognized throughout the locality long honored by his citizenship by those at all familiar with his history. Although a quiet and unassuming man, with no ambition for public position or leadership, he contributed much to the material civic and moral advancement of his community, while his admirable qualities of head and heart and the straightforward, upright course of his daily life won for him the esteem and confidence of the circles in which he moved, and, although he is now sleeping the "sleep of the just," his influence still lives and his memory is greatly revered.

Philip K. Buskirk was born in Bloomington, Indiana, on the 11th of September, 1860, and he was the son of George A. and Martha Buskirk, pioneer residents and honored citizens of the city of Bloomington, now deceased. He received his education in the common schools of his native city and the State University, graduating from the latter institution in 1884, having attended an Episcopalian school in Michigan early in life. He also studied law and was admitted to the bar. His first active connection with local business affairs in a commercial way was with the lumber industry, in which he engaged for a number of years, but later in life became prominently identified with the stone business, in which he held large interests. In this connection the following little story is reprinted from the *Bedford Mail* of about the date of Mr. Buskirk's death, and throws light on the character of the man whose career was so closely identified with the great stone industry: "The death of Philip Kearney Buskirk at Bloomington yesterday removes the third of four men who formed a partnership under the firm name of Perry, Matthews & Buskirk and opened at Horseshoe quarry what, as development progressed, proved to be the most valuable stone property in the Oolitic belt. The men were Captain Gilbert K. Perry, deceased, of Ellettsville; P. K. Buskirk, of Bloomington; Fred Matthews, of Bloomington, and W. N. Matthews, deceased, of Bedford. Fred Matthews is the surviving member of that old firm who, according to their own story, risked every cent of wealth they could scrape together to develop the Horseshoe property. It has often been their boast that had the stone in this quarry been of an inferior quality they would have gone broke. Fortune smiled on the undertaking and they each realized fortunes on their investments, later selling it for six hundred thousand dollars to a company that the Monon was interested in." Mr. Buskirk was interested in a number of other business enterprises, in all of which he was an influential factor, and at the time of his death he was president of the First National Bank of Bloomington, president of the Empire Stone Company, and he was a heavy stockholder in a gold dredging company at Oroville, California. Of his standing in the community in which he lived, the *Bloomington Daily Telephone* had the following to say: "It is almost an impossibility to find words to do justice to the memory of a man like P. K. Buskirk. He was easily one of the most prominent of a score of prominent men who have made Bloomington and the stone belt

what it is today. He was identified with every public movement and most of the private concerns which have built up the community, He was one of the wealthiest of Bloomington's citizens, being interested in many different business ventures"

Philip K. Buskirk died very suddenly on August 22, 1907, his death resulting from a stroke of heart trouble, from which he suffered only a few minutes. The funeral services, which were held at the family borne on North Walnut Street, were attended by a large concourse of citizens who desired to thus pay their last tribute of respect to one who had during his life endeared himself to all. Religious services were conducted by Rev. Horace A. Collins, pastor of the College Avenue Methodist Episcopal church, while the services at Rose Hill cemetery were in charge of the Masonic fraternity.

In 1892, Philip K. Buskirk was united in marriage with Tunie Hays, the daughter of James McDonald Hays and Ella (James) Hays. James Hays, who was born near Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, was a merchant tailor during the early years of his active life, but later became a successful shoe merchant. He was an early settler of Putnam county, Indiana, where he is still residing, his home being at Greencastle. To Mr. and Mrs. Buskirk was born one son, Hays, who is now a student in the State University, where he is taking a special course in economics. Mr. Buskirk and his son traveled a great deal, their trips covering the greater portion of this country. The family home on North Walnut street, which was built by Mr. Buskirk, is generally considered to be the most beautiful residence in Bloomington, being built of stone and elegantly finished and furnished.

Politically, Mr. Buskirk gave his support to the Republican party and took an active and intelligent interest in public affairs, though never an aspirant for public office. Fraternally, he was a member of the Masonic order. in which he had taken the degrees of the Scottish rite, and was also a member of the Mystic Shrine and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. He belonged to the Phi Kappa Psi college fraternity. Religiously, Mr. Buskirk held his membership in the Methodist Episcopal church, to the support of which he was a liberal contributor and in the prosperity of which he was deeply interested.

Philip K. Buskirk gave to the world the best of an essentially virile, loyal and noble nature and his standard of integrity and honor was inflexible. He was a man of high civic ideals and was a warm supporter of all measures and enterprises tending to advance the general welfare of the community. He was the architect of his own fortune and upon his entire career there rests no blemish, for he was true to the highest ideals and principles in business, civic and social life and was one of the world's noble army of workers, having lived and labored to worthy ends.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 530-532)