




A Salute to General Lyon



The Lyon Monument

Lyon Park,
Saint Louis, Missouri



Erected by:
The Camp Jackson
Union Soldiers
Monument
Association

The Strength
of Our Nation
Is the
United States



*To commemorate
the capture of
Camp Jackson,
May 10, 1861
by
Gen. Nathaniel Lyon
and the
Missouri Volunteers*

General Lyon and His 90-Day Volunteers

When Missouri's secessionist Governor Jackson refused to provide troops for President Lincoln's call-up after the surrender of Fort Sumter, unionist volunteers stepped forward to fill Missouri's quota of 4,500 ninety-day volunteers. A few days later, under the leadership of their newly elected leader, Captain Nathaniel Lyon, the volunteers surrounded Camp Jackson, where the secessionist-minded militia were gathered, and took them prisoner without firing a shot. That action delivered a death blow to the governor's secession efforts; not only had he lost most of the state's weapons, his only combat-ready units ceased to exist after the individual members signed a pledge "as gentlemen, not to take up arms or serve in any military capacity against the United States during the present civil war." Later, after the governor declared war on the United States, the volunteers, under the leadership of now General Lyon, moved up the Missouri River and defeated the governor's forces in the Battle of Boonville. Then a second element engaged the governor at the Battle of Carthage, where they were so badly outnumbered, they were forced into a fighting retreat until they could break contact after dark. Finally, as their ninety days were drawing to a close, they effectively blunted a Confederate Army invasion of Missouri at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, where they fought a vastly superior force. 1,317 soldiers were either killed, wounded, or missing, including General Lyon, making him the first Union general killed in battle during the Civil War. In 1993, a National Park Service Civil War Sites Advisory Commission evaluated some 10,500-armed conflicts "to identify the nation's historically significant Civil War sites." That committee found 384 sites historically significant, including all three of the battles in which Lyon's ninety-day volunteers fought. Concerning their last battle, where General Lyon and so many of his men were killed, the U.S. Congress wrote the following in 1897:

The battle of Wilson's Creek, fought on the 10th day of August 1861, was one of the most important among the first battles of the civil war. The brave and gallant General Lyon was killed on that battlefield while leading his brave command against overwhelming odds. So stubbornly did he and his devoted command contest the ground fought over, that the victors were unable to pursue their advantage, and it is truthfully said that the result of that battle was to save the great state of Missouri to the Union.

After the Civil War, the survivors of Missouri's ninety-day volunteer units created the Camp Jackson Union Soldiers Monument Association to arrange for a statue to honor General Lyon and memorialize their capture of Camp Jackson. They arranged to place their statue on the site of Camp Jackson to identify it as the spot where the nation's first effort was made to stop the slave powers from splitting the United States.

Makeshift Lyon Monument “Rock Pile of Remembrance”

Visitors to the battlefield stacked signed stones on the spot where Gen. Lyon fell.
(Photo Credit: *Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, WTICR#11347*)



After the Battle of Wilson's Creek, until the end of the war, troops on both sides passed the battlefield as armies flowed back and forth to Arkansas. Those who had fought there, and even the curious, made the pilgrimage up the hillside that was now an altar to freedom, consecrated by the blood of General Lyon and his men that willingly sacrificed their lives in the defense of this nation against the slave powers seeking to destroy it. Sometime after the battle, visitors started leaving stones with their names on them at the spot where Lyon fell, creating a de facto monument in his honor. As time passed, visitors started carrying those stones away as souvenirs; but as that hillside had already been consecrated by the blood of patriots, no monuments were needed.

Almost thirty years after the battle, a group of veterans from Kansas made a pilgrimage to visit the battlefield. One of those who was on that bloody hill with General Lyon wrote the following:

At the higher and upper end of the open space, there was a pile of loose stones; not a monument, but rather as if one had been piled there and then scattered about. On one stone, "Newsom," late of "Hughes's" regiment, Missouri (Confederate) troops, had carved his name. This is the spot where Gen. Nathaniel Lyon—who, had he lived, would have been the Stonewall Jackson of the Union army—sank from his horse, dead...The great figure of the battle was Gen. Lyon; his death sanctified the field. If every other event that occurred there were forgotten, it would still be remembered that Lyon died there. Kansas in her proud sorrow remembers that it was as he led the Second Kansas to one more desperate charge that he fell.¹

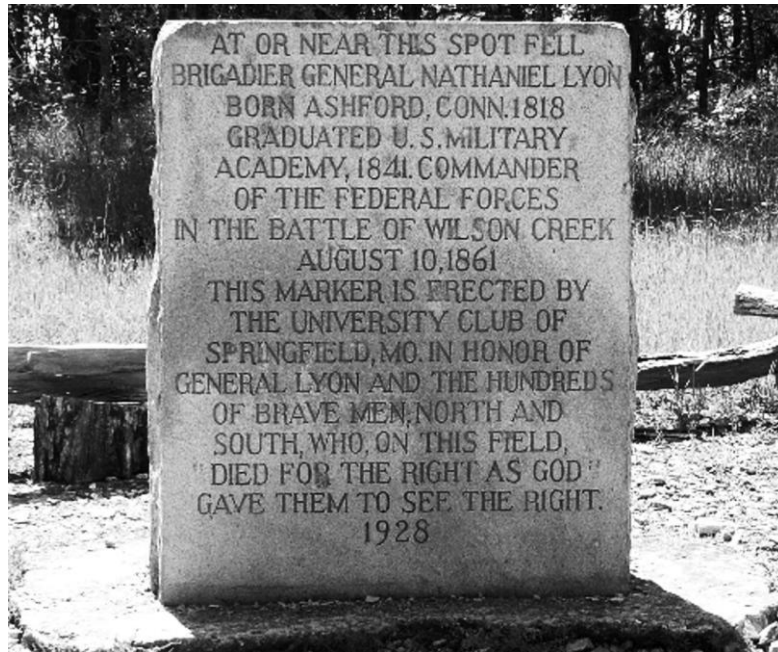
It is not surprising that a Confederate soldier would leave a tribute to Lyon, as Lyon was respected by both sides. President Jefferson Davis in his post-war book, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government Vol. 1*, wrote the following on the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

The battle was fiercely contested, but finally won by our troops. In this action, General Lyon was killed while gallantly endeavoring to rally his discomfited troops and lead them to the charge...We must accord to him the redeeming virtue of courage and recognize his ability as a soldier.

¹ Noble L. Prentis, *Kansas Miscellanies* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1889), 64, 66.

The Spot of General Lyon's Death

Located at Bloody Hill at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield (*National Park Service*)



The body of General Lyon was laid out in state at the camp, at the close of this bloody day, and not an officer or private but shed bitter tears as they gazed on their dead general, almost idolized by every man of them from the highest to the lowest. He was buried [by Mary Phelps] on the farm of Colonel John S. Phelps, a native of Windham County,² Connecticut, and for many years a member of Congress from Missouri. He is a strong Union man, and is now raising a regiment for the United States army, while the rebels have seized his property. [The Last Political Writings of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1861), 237.]



BELOW IS A SOLDIER'S DIARY ENTRY AFTER OBSERVING GEN. LYON'S SMALL ARMY ARRIVING IN ROLLA SIX DAYS AFTER THE GENERAL WAS KILLED IN THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK.

Aug 16th—The somewhat depleted army [...] arrived, and the real heroes, including our own



twenty-one men, marched across our parade ground, and now we had an opportunity for the first time of witnessing the steady march of a battle-stained army; and with us, many a heart almost stood still, and eyes were moist as the riderless war-horse of the lamented Lyon, draped in full caparison [mourning black], was led at the head of the column. [Regiment Committee; Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment of Illinois

Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War in the United States, 1861-1865, (Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, 1892), 68.]

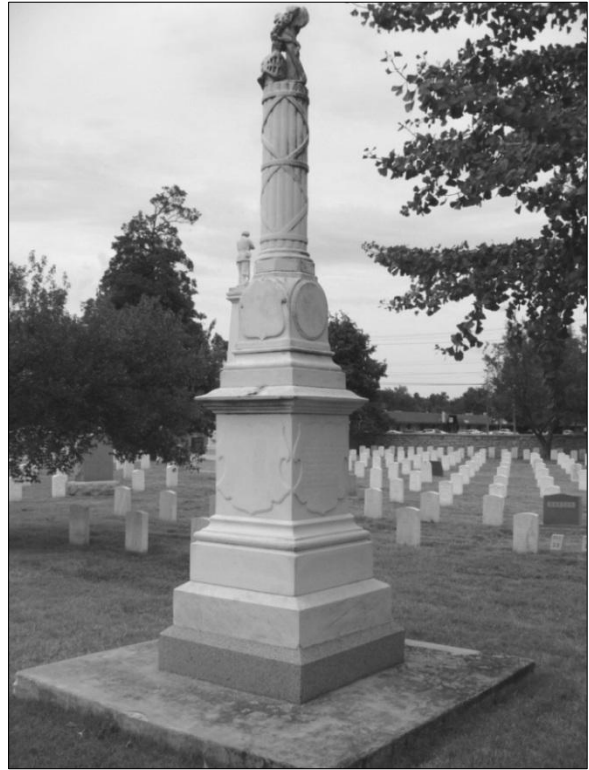
² Lyon was also a native of Windham County.



The Obelisk at Lyon Park, St. Louis, Missouri

In March 1869, ten acres at the front of the Saint Louis Arsenal grounds were given to the city of St. Louis for the erection of a monument to the late Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. The monument, dedicated on September 13, 1874, consists of a 28-foot obelisk of Missouri granite. That space, now Lyon Park, is located at the front of the St. Louis Arsenal, at the intersection of Arsenal and 2nd Street in Saint Louis.

There are monuments in Washington to many distinguished soldiers whose services were invaluable, but there is none to Lyon, among the bravest of the brave and whose deeds were such as to cause his memory to be kept forever green by his fellow countrymen. Yes, among all the statues of heroes that adorn the public places of this city there is but one in honor of a general killed in battle. This, it seems to me, is a reproach which should not rest upon us forever. [BGen. William A. Hammond, Civil War Surgeon General, Washington, D.C., 1899].

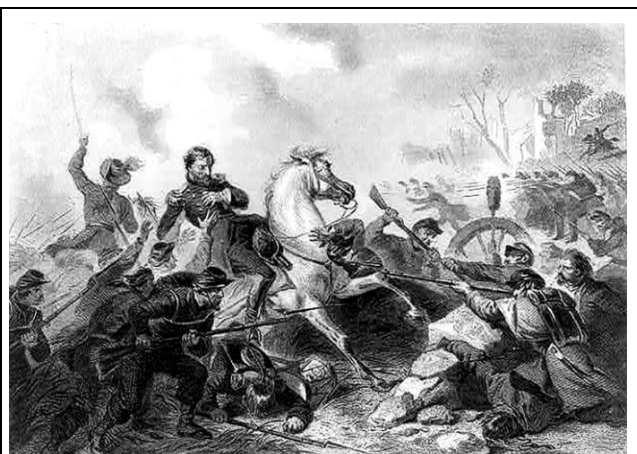


The General Lyon Monument

The City of Springfield purchased a monument to General Lyon that was dedicated during the first reunion of the veterans of the battle of Wilson's Creek in 1883. It was initially located on the square but was eventually relocated adjacent to Gen. Lyon Boulevard in the Springfield National Cemetery. The plaque carved into the western side of the monument reads:

ERECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF SPRINGFIELD TO
THE MEMORY OF GENERAL NATH^L LYON WHO
FELL AT THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK WHILE
COMMANDING THE UNION ARMY Aug. 10, 1861.

The east surface also has an inscription:
THOUGH HE DIED FOR HIS COUNTRY, YET HE
LIVES IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN;
THOUGH HE FELL IN WAR, IN PEACE HE IS NOT
FORGOTTEN. CHERISHING HIS VIRTUES,
COMMENDING HIS PATRIOTISM, WE HONOR HIS
MEMORY.



The Fall of General Lyon, August 10, 1861

Illustrator, F.O.C. Darley, c. 1863

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

HONORS IN MISSOURI



Nathaniel Lyon

ST. LOUIS HONORS GEN. LYON

Missouri Republican, August 29, 1861

Another hero has fallen. The brave, the unselfish, the great-souled, the heroic Lyon has offered his life upon the altar of his country. And though that country, or its delinquent ministers, left him to fight and die almost alone, yet none of the shame or dishonor belongs to him. Though his life went out in the midst of battle and of storm, yet he fell not in dishonor, or in the "crossways of fame," for his name shall be blazoned in letters of living light on the proudest pillar of her temple. He was neither a native nor citizen of Missouri, but he gloried in the nobler title of an American citizen. He knew but one country, and when that country was assaulted by its foes, and its liberties threatened with annihilation, he rushed to the rescue, as willing to give his life in battle on the frontier of Missouri, as to die in peace amidst the green hills of his native State. And it is but fitting that this great city should show her sorrow for the

illustrious dead. Well may you crowd the streets and balconies and windows with so many thousand tearful eyes and aching hearts, for the man you mourn, fought and fell in your defense. Little care the multitude for the inconvenience and discomfort of crowded streets, or the fiercer rays of the noon-day sun. Long and patiently they wait for the approach of the mournful pageant. And yonder, through the swaying multitude, and the gathering cloud of dust, it comes. Squadrons of horse and regiments of foot, with arms reversed, and closing up the long column with batteries of artillery.

Tramp, tramp, tramp—the moving battalions come on, marching to the time of solemn music, and every foot-fall is but the echo to the sadder music of ten thousand aching hearts. How that solemn music thrills the hearts of the soldiers, as they remember that baptism of blood that changed them in a day from raw recruits to tried veterans. Now muffle all your drums, and furl and shroud your banners. Let your brazen trumpets cease the wild clangor of war, and pour through their brazen throats the full tide of a nation's woe. Yonder, in that iron casket, sleeps a heart, once brave and true as ever beat in human breast.

Tramp, tramp, the mournful pageant moves along, but the eyes of the multitude are not looking at the prancing war steeds or the warriors that ride them. They have no thought for the living, but gaze intently where the dead hero sleeps his last sleep, shrouded in the folds of the glorious old flag under which he fought. And shall this man die in vain? Nay, his last battle cry of "I will lead you," as he rushed to glory and the grave, comes back from the tomb, and thrills through a million of hearts. The memory of his deeds, and the glory of his death will incite thousands to emulate the noble example of devotion to his country.

*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Foot prints on the sands of time.*

Tramp, tramp—the martial host have all passed by with their dead comrade, and the anxious multitude still follow on. Bear him gently and reverently across the flood, and over the plains and mountains, till you lay him down to “sleep with his fathers,” amongst the pleasant valleys of old Connecticut. He will need no monumental marble to transmit his name and fame to future generations; for the memory of the just and brave is burned forever in the hearts of their countrymen. His proudest monument will be the restored peace and happiness of the country he died to save from anarchy and despotism.

LYON’S REMAINS HEADING EAST

(FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep#24)

September 5

NATHANIEL LYON

Marks of Respect and Grief Along the Route to the East

Missouri Democrat, September 5, 1861
(From *1861 Missouri Speaks*, Series 1, Vol. 1)

[Correspondence of the *New York Tribune*]

Nearly everywhere on the route, the flags were at half-mast, and many of the bells were tolled in the villages and cities through which the remains passed.

FRESH FLOWERS FOR THE DEAD

At different stations, young girls and old women brought fresh and beautiful flowers and placed them upon the coffin, and expressed in an eloquent but simple language, their sorrow at Gen. Lyon’s untimely death.

ESTIMATION OF GEN. LYON

Not less than a dozen times, we heard men declare that we had better have lost any general

in the army than Gen. Lyon, that he was the man for the emergency, and dealt with the rebels as they deserved.

GENERAL ANDERSON

At Cresson, a place of summer resort in Pennsylvania, General Anderson, the hero of Fort Sumter when he was a major, most unexpectedly appeared on the train, and shook hands with the escort. He said he was stopping at Cresson [Pennsylvania], and could not allow the occasion to pass without taking a final farewell on earth of the remains of so brave a soldier and excellent an officer as Gen. Lyon. The general then passed on to the coffin, and bending his head above it, and with a trembling voice: “We could ill afford to spare so courageous a soldier at this time. America needs all her heroes now.”

COSHOCTON

At the town of Coshocton, in Ohio, on the Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Columbus Railroad, the train stopped for breakfast, and in less than five minutes, at least one thousand persons had assembled, and we were surprised at the general expression of affection and sorrow for the lamented hero. Again and again, we heard the opinion from rural persons, whose sources of knowledge must have been limited, that the gallant general had been sacrificed by a neglect to supply him in a proper time with sufficient reinforcements. The people believe firmly that the general was rendered desperate by this neglect, and exposed himself most recklessly; knowing that he must do so to give his disproportionate and discouraged forces strength by his daring example.

LARGE CROWD

At a station some fifty miles from Pittsburgh, an immense crowd, not less than ten

thousand persons, assembled at the depot, and were extremely anxious to take a last look at the dead hero; but they were kept back by the police, while the coffin was carried to the train, which, to the strains of a mournful tune, moved slowly away.

ALONG THE ROUTE

On the route, wherever the train stopped, it was whispered that the remains of General Lyon were on board, and a great deal of curiosity was shown to gaze into the funeral car. Persons came from all

directions at every station and crowded about the car, and many a man's eyes moistened and many women wept as they looked their last upon him who had died in defense of the Old Flag.

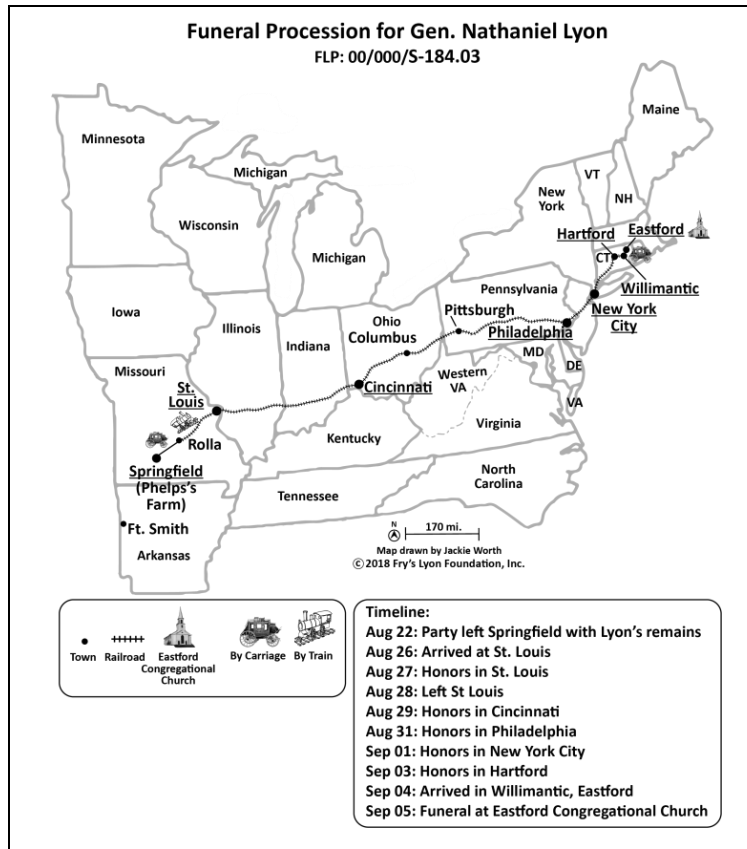
SIGNIFICANT CIRCUMSTANCE

At Columbus two companies of volunteers for Washington got on board, and being in the forward cars, they were cheered by the people on the route until they saw the funeral car, and hearing that it contained Gen. Lyon's body, the hurrahs were suddenly hushed, and every hat lifted in respect to the dead. They knew that the hero was beyond the power of cheering; that came too late; but the sympathy they felt, would, and will, furnish new hearts and stout arms to the cause he died so bravely in defending.

THE ROUTE THROUGH NEW JERSEY

The train paused but a few moments at the different stations on the Camden and Amboy Railroad, but at Trenton, Elizabethtown, Newark

and other places, the flags were at half-mast, and the bells tolled; while crowds gathered hurriedly about the cars during the few seconds they stopped. "What a pity he is dead!" "That was a nobleman!" "Lyon was the savior of Missouri!" "We had better have lost almost anyone than Lyon!" we heard in the most earnest tones wherever the train paused.



HONORS IN NEW YORK



(FLP: Ser 4NYT-Sep#7)

OBSEQUIES OF GENERAL LYON

[Crowds Pay Respects]

New York Tribune, September 3, 1861

(From 1861 Missouri Speaks, Series 4, Vol. 2)

Since Saturday afternoon, the Third Company of the gallant 7th has been guarding the body of General Lyon in the Governor's Room, City Hall. On Monday morning, the doors of the Governor's Room were opened before 9 o'clock, and the tremendous crowd which had already gathered were admitted in single file. The procession passed thus in unbroken line

past the coffin, for more than four hours, and the number of visitors amounted to several thousands. The expressions of sympathy with the bereaved family, and of regret at the irreparable loss which the nation has sustained, were very frequent, and many women were so overcome with emotion as to shed tears. At 1 o'clock the doors were shut in the face of a crowd that seemed as great as at any previous time, and the body was left in charge of the guard, in anticipation of the hour appointed for the funeral rites.

On the coffin were placed the sword, chapeau, and belt of the deceased general, and the hand of some tender-hearted woman had placed there a beautiful bouquet, accompanied with a paper on which was written the following verse:

TO THE LION-HEARTED NATHANIEL LYON
Thy name is immortal, Thy battles are o'er,
Sleep! sleep! calmly sleep!
On thy dear native shore.

The hour appointed for the funeral was 3½ p.m. At half-past 2 o'clock a regimental line was formed on Lafayette Place by the military escort, comprising the Seventh Regiment, two pieces of artillery from the Fourth Regiment, and a company of cavalry from the Third Regiment.

The officers of the whole First Division, with General Sandford, met at 3 o'clock in the Court of Common Pleas room, and punctual to the hour, the funeral procession started from the City Hall on its march up Broadway to Twenty-Seventh Street, and through this street to the New Haven depot. The guard of honor was under command of Capt. Price.

A SOLDIER GOES HOME

The body of General Lyon was removed to Hartford, prior to its internment in the family burial ground at Eastford. The ovation tendered to the inanimate body of the brave soldier, on the part of the citizens of Hartford, was

tremendous, the military and the citizens vying with each other in the demonstrations of respect towards the dead, and of hospitality to the escort. When the escort arrived at Hartford, it rained as if the gates of Heaven had broken loose; yet, notwithstanding the shower, the parade in all its details was observed, and the remains lay in state at the Capitol, guarded by the City Guard and Light Guard alternately.

A special train was provided to convey the body of General Lyon and his escort from St. Louis. The train was draped in mourning and left the depot about one o'clock, arriving at Willimantic about a quarter past three o'clock. This place being a large manufacturing town was all alive. Not only the actual residents of Willimantic were assembled at the depot, but from a circuit of thirty miles around, the country folks flocked in to the town to do honor to the remains of the brave deceased and to behold the mournful scene. American flags, large and small, draped with black borders, were suspended from houses and trees, and the weather even seeming to harmonize with the solemnity of the occasion.

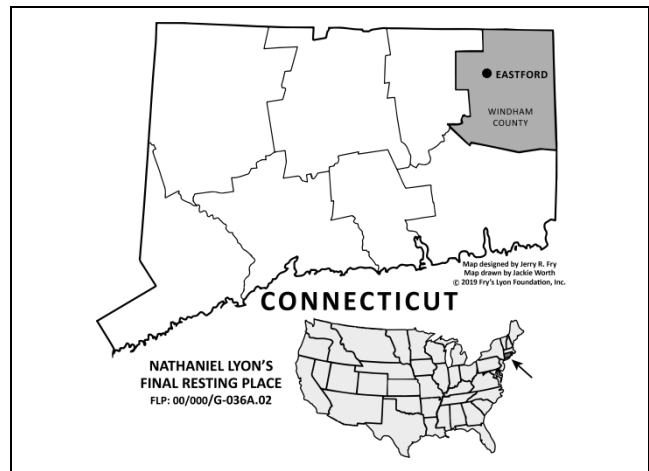
The day was beautifully serene, and not a breath of air wafted those banners hung at half-mast to signalize the grief of the multitude. This being the terminus of the railroad towards Eastford, arrangements for the conveyance of the party escorting the remains were carried into effect. First came the military, then the Missourians in charge of the remains, deposited in a hearse drawn by four jet-black horses, which were brought along from Hartford. Next came an immense number of conveyances, carrying the relatives of the deceased and citizens. The roads were lined with people, young and old, and flags at half-mast were visible at almost every house the cortege passed. The tolling of village church bells added materially to the solemnity of the occasion. To give a correct number of the vehicles in the procession would be a thing next to impossible. Certain it is, however, that they exceeded three hundred.

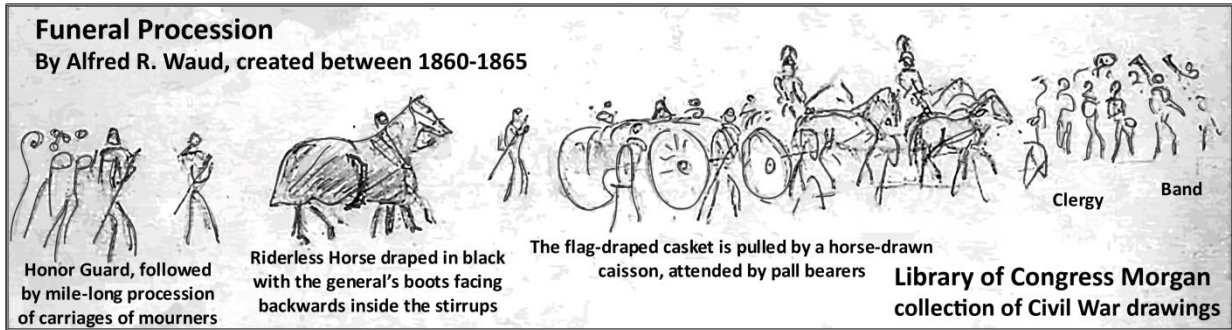
Eastford, which is sixteen miles distant from Willimantic, but having a somewhat hilly yet not impassable road leading thereto, was reached at about nine o'clock by the head of the procession. About a mile and a half from the town the Light Guard, City Guard of Hartford, with their band, Major Conant and his party, composing the pallbearers and numerous citizens, alighted from their vehicles and formed for the ceremonial procession into town. On a hill, a short distance to the right from where the cortege commenced to move, was planted the six-pounder cannon, which fired a salute, while the bells of the churches at Eastford tolled a mournful chime. When the cortege came to within a half or three-quarters of a mile from the town proper, the road, being lined on either side with fine trees, myriads of lights, candles, lanterns, rushes, and every conceivable burning material were ignited to illuminate the path. The people were arrayed on the right and left of the road, the males respectfully doffed their hats, while the females manifested signs of respect and grief otherwise. Nearly all the windows of the houses in town were filled, and especially those fronting the road on which the procession passed. The whole scene was sad and touching, the band playing the "Dead March in Saul" as the church was reached wherein the body of the illustrious dead was to be deposited until the final burial service on the next day. The remains were placed on a pedestal in the Congregational Church, which was reached by a roundabout route in order to give the townsfolk an opportunity to observe what had become a torchlight procession.

The City Guard, in command of Captain Prentice, had the honor of guarding the remains of General Lyon during the night, the watches being set every two hours, and relieved according to the rules of the service. The remainder of the escort were taken care of by the inhabitants, some of whom accommodated no less than fifteen or sixteen persons, and supplied them with comfortable beds. And here it will not be out of place to describe the genial

hospitality of the inhabitants of Eastford, who kindheartedly forced their bounty on their guests. To mention any names, and not enumerate the entire inhabitants, would do the latter great injustice.

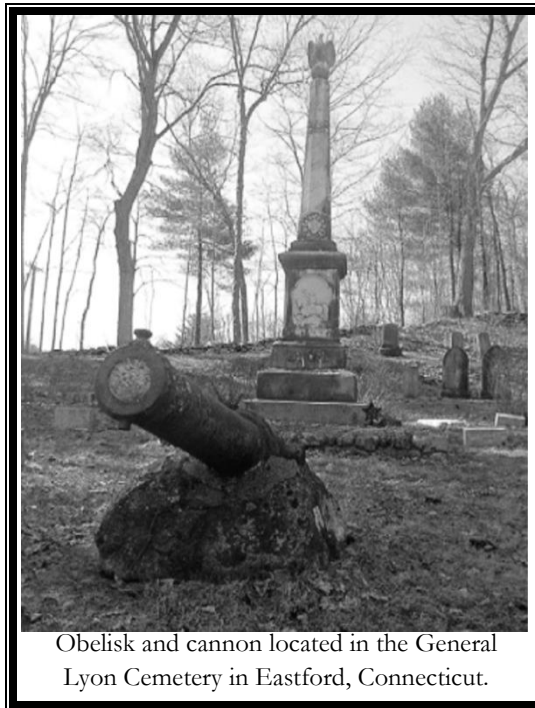
From Lyon, Nathaniel. *The Last Political Writings of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon*. (Rudd & Carleton, 1861), 81-83.





From the time the body left Hartford, to the hour when it was deposited in the Congregational Church in Eastford, all classes and conditions of people paid it, in sundry ways, some token of respect.

Gen. Lyon was literally buried with his father, in the family burial-ground in the town of Eastford, near the Ashford line. The funeral brought together more people than the town ever saw convened within its limits before, or will again for many years to come.



Buried at Eastford," *Hartford Daily Current*, Sept 6, 1861.]

The estimation in which Lyon was held by all patriotic people, amounting almost to idolization, was shown by the multitude who gathered to pay this last tribute of respect and affection to his remains. It is estimated that 15,000 were present, and when the last echoes of the musketry over Lyon's grave rattled through the ravines of Windham County, there was not one of all the throng who did not leave the sacred place with a sadder, even if not a better and more patriotic heart. ["Funeral of Gen. Lyon

No one can become familiar with the life of Nathaniel Lyon, without feeling that in his death, the Nation lost one of her noblest as well as bravest sons.
[Ashbel Woodward, *Life of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Co., 1862)]

LYON'S SACRIFICE



(FLP: Ser 4NYT-Sep#8)

September 3

GENERAL LYON

[Reflection on Lyon's Sacrifice]

New York Tribune, September 3, 1861

(From *1861 Missouri Speaks*, Series 4, Vol. 2)

The funeral honors that have attended General Lyon from the battlefield where he fell, across one half a continent, taken up from state to state, from city to city, from village to village, and carried forward for near two thousand miles amid the tearful eyes, the bowed heads, and the deepest expressions of personal sorrow of hundreds of thousands of grateful people—such honors never before, perhaps, paid to so young a general, came to their solemn conclusion yesterday in this city. *It is sweet and right to die for one's country*, said the Latin poet a great many hundred years ago; and surely, though the sentiment be old and the line as trite as household words, not less true is it now than when Rome sent out her armies to conquer the world, that it is sweet and beautiful to die for one's country. This young soldier, has laid down his life in this war, and has by his courage, his devotion, and his patriotism, done his country a service by his example, to be preserved ever fresh and green with his memory, that is not often bestowed to the wisest and the best of men in centuries of time. Not without reason are such noble lives laid upon the altar! We garner up the remembrance of them—how this one saved a state, and we crown ourselves with the names of heroes! Not in vain have these young men fallen; for other young men shall reverently lift the crown and remember that such deaths as theirs is *sweet and fitting* if their country needs more lives!

And let us not forget this price which this war has already cost us. The precious blood that has been shed let us weigh, drop by drop, as precious as our private honor and our public name. The cost is not too much for the country's salvation; priceless as it is, it is given freely to purchase the God-given

rights of a free people. But the least drop of it all should never have reddened the ground if the sword is sheathed till treason is driven howling from the land, and that peace shall come that shall bid all future generations to bless the memory of the men who died for liberty. When Lyon and others are laid with blood wounds upon the bosom of their mother land, it should be as a pledge that she shall be redeemed from the stain of treason and made free, and they therein avenged.

IN MEMORIAM

(Extract)

Missouri Republican, December 13, 1861

Only four months since the death of LYON. So much of feverish, anxious, impassioned life; such a load of grief, have been added in that period, that his name seems to belong to a former generation. Yet even at this hour the people cling with an interest amounting almost to fascination to the story of the battle near Springfield. A stray poem in the corner of a newspaper, or a passing reference are still read with undiminished interest.

There is something more in this than the charm of a brave man's death. The accounts of gallantry on the field of battle have of late become sadly familiar to the ears of the nation. The death of LYON is an era in the war. It has infused a spirit of earnestness and heroic self-devotion which the country never felt before. Up to that time the cause of the Union was admitted to be just and reasonable; the rebellion to be causeless, senseless and monstrous. Many of us felt the same indignation at the scoundrels who were trying to destroy the "best Government the world ever saw." Few of us are clear sighted enough to comprehend conclusions so remote and shadowy as the promised blessings of the Union, still fewer interested enough to lay down our lives in its behalf.

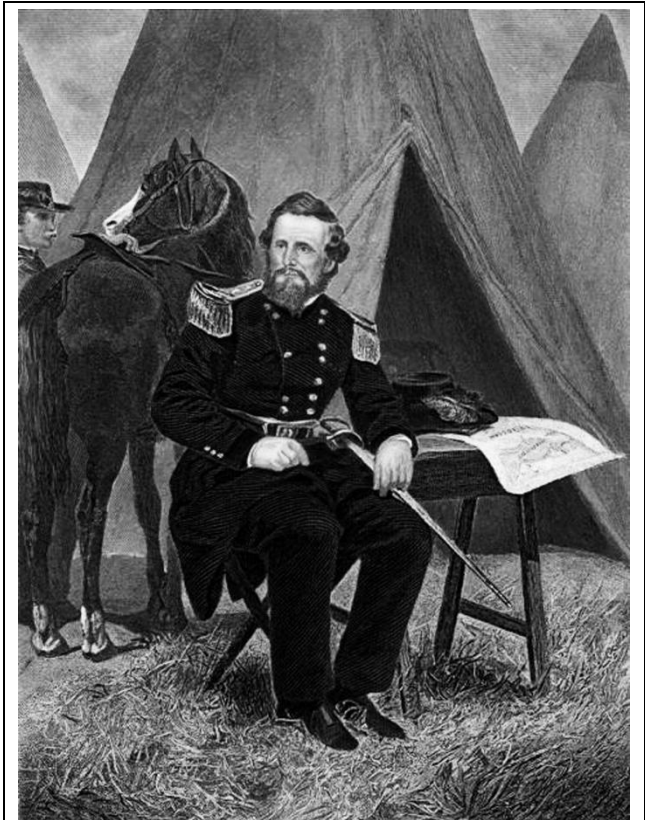
The national cause has sadly needed, what has been the great source of a strength to the rebellion, the stimulus of some mighty passion or imminent peril. But in the midst of all this shallow and faint-hearted patriotism, when we had nearly concluded to consider the Union as a play that was drawing to a close, and secession as a sorry jest which we must make the best of, comes the report of the battle of Wilson's Creek near Springfield and the death of LYON. A General, whose clear head, steadfast

purpose, and honored name, were above price to our armies, had fallen: not rashly, in the headlong charge; not by some unexpected shot; not in a contest where the odds were equal and victory seemed easy, but with a handful of soldiers against overwhelming numbers, when retreat was honorable, and the hope was fast becoming desperate, not even sustained by the cheering and animating associations of the land of the revolution and the strongholds of loyalty, but in a strange, half-peopled region, bleeding and crippled, seeing before him the wavering lines and the death storm, he fell as fell the hero, a deliberate free will offering to the cause of the nation. Not given to fulsome protestations of patriotism, or shining in those graces which lend a hue of romance to character, he knew well how to die. The cause of the nation has grown to be something sacred since it received the baptism of his blood. From that time forth, as long as the war shall last, long after the mold has gathered over his dust, and wherever the banner of the nation shall be defended, thousands of rude men, who never comprehended, or comprehended but dimly, the value of our Constitution—will see the hand of Lyon that rallied the fainting columns at Wilson Creek, through the difficult contest and thickest smoke of battle, waving them on to victory.

A great deal has been said about contending for a principle; but much as we may respect a cause, simply because it is just, yet we long for something more than dispassionate convictions. Loyalty becomes a thing infinitely dearer when it enters the strong arm and brain of one whom we may claim by the ties of human nature as our own flesh and blood; someone whose living form and face we may remember, and over whom we may weep. The present time is pregnant with vast events. Battles are imminent which will throw the story of Wilson's Creek into the shade. But whatever events shall

happen, whatever triumphs or reverses to the nation, after the sharp storm of calamity shall have spent itself, and the blinding passions of this crisis shall have cleared away, there are some names which mankind will not willingly let die; and among them, side by side with HAMPDEN AND WARREN, among the martyrs of constitutional liberty, posterity will write the name of LYON.

P.



Nathaniel Lyon (1818-1861)

The State Historical Society of Missouri, Photograph Collection
(020022)

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