GENERAL LYON IN MISSOURI

Captain J. S. Clark Furnishes Entertaining Story of Civil War Days in the Neighboring State.

WAS GREAT SOLDIER

Brave on the Field of Battle and Could Not See Any Man be Cruel to An Animal.

The First Iowa, which meets in reunion in Keokuk on August 10, won its spurs in Missouri at the battle of Wilson's Creek fifty years ago. The following article by Captain J. S. Clark of Co. I, president of the reunion, will be of interst at this time as it deals with General Nathaniel Lyon during the campaign in Missouri:

[By Captain J. S. Clark.]

The state of Missouri at the time of Lincoln's first election was a border slave state, bounded on three sides by free commonwealths. The government of Missouri was in the hands of pronounced secessionists. Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson was an astute and powerful political leader of his party. Lieutenant Governor Thomas C. Reynolds was a zealous and able assistant. The Missouri legislature met December 31, 1860, and, dominated by these leaders, passed laws placing the police power in St. Louis in the hands of the governor, and provided for a convention which was expected to take the state out of the union.

Thus it was that in the early days of 1861, when slave states were rivaling each other in their zeal to enter the southern confederacy, Missouri was seeking to take her place with the south.

Governor Jackson was a rebel from the start. He was backed by all the official machinery of the state. Jefferson Davis and his counselors were co-operating. Confederate troops were enlisted, camps were established, artillery was shipped from New Orleans, and small arms and ammunition from the government arsenal at Baton Rouge. St. Louis, an old, rich, slaveholding community, gave its powerful influence to these early secession measures.

At this period, the military department of the west, embracing all the country between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains, north of Texas and New Mexico, except Utah, was under the command of Brigadier General W. S. Harvey, with headquarters at St. Louis. Harney was a southerner by birth, and associated by ties of blood and friendship with the southerners. While he was loyal and brave, he was deceived and lured into inactivity by the craft and fair professions of his secession friends, who were planning to capture the St. Louis arsenal and get control of the government property. The loyal people saw the peril of the situation and their helplessness, and appealed to the secretary of war, Simon Cameron, to replace Harney with a commander who would fully grasp the situation.

Forty-three years before the period referred to, on a fine day in July (July 14, 1819) was born in the village of Ashford, Connecticut, near the grave of General Putnam, a very small red-headed boy, whose mission in life was to meet these conditions in Missouri.

Nathaniel Lyon graduated from the military school at West Point in the class of 1841. In that class were Buell, Longstreet, Grant, Steele, Buckner, Hardie and Hancock, and Lyon took rank above all these in college honors. He entered the army at once and pursued the vocation of the soldier with an ardor and devotion peculiar to his nature. He took part in all the active operations of the federal arms from 1841 until his death. He won a brevetcy at Cherubusco, and was wounded in the assault on the City of Mexico.

Nathaniel Lyon came of an iron race; he was a descendant from Thomas Lyon, Eighth Lord Glamis, of Scotland, in the sixteenth century, and was grand-nephew of Thomas Knowlton, who commanded the American right wing at the battle of Bunker Hill. He was a deep thinker and a profound student of the foundation, principles and growth of our government. He published, in 1860, a series of articles masterful and clear in their analysis of the powers and duties of the United States in the face of threatening rebellion. As a soldier, he was alert, vigilant and untiring; without wife or family, he gave his affections to his country, and took her for his bride. As an evidence of this great love, it is stated that he bequeathed his fortune, $30,000, to be used by the government in putting down the rebellion.

He was a man of keen intellect, and a close observer of current events—one of the few who believed the civil war was coming, and who wanted it to come. He hated slavery, and the doctrine of disunion, and his intense nature led him to hate, personally, those who advocated these fallacies. He had abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of freedom, and free government. To him that cause was the holiest for which men ever engaged in battle. The government on whose side he was arrayed, was the work of the good men of all ages. It had grown out of the blood of martyrs, the fires of persecution and the courage and valor of nearer ancestry. To him this union was "The Ark of the Covenant." He was therefore ready for the struggle and impatient of the delay of the government in meeting the strong combinations so rapidly made in Missouri and elsewhere. It was well for Charleston that Fort Sumpter was not commanded by Nathaniel Lyon. General Sherman said "Lyon was the first man in this country that seized the whole question and took the initiative, and determined to strike a blow and not wait for the blow to be struck." Had he lived, he would have been the Stonewall Jackson of the union army, if not the highest general, next to the commander-in-chief.

When Lincoln was first inaugurated, Lyon said, "'If Mr. Lincoln does one tithe of his duty, as he promised, we must have hostilities with the south. I do not see how war is to be avoided. Under quick management, it may be long and bloody, yet I have no apprehensions about the final triumph of Almighty Truth, though at the cost of many unnecessary sacrifices. But let them come; I would rather see the country lighted up with flames from its center to its remotest borders, than that the great rights and hopes of the human race should expire before the arrogance of secessionists. Of this, however, there is no danger. They are at war with nature and the human heart."

William A. Hammond, surgeon general during the civil war, served on the western frontier with Lyon in the Second United States Infantry, one being captain and the other surgeon of that regiment, and were close and intimate friends in those exciting ante-belium days. The great surgeon general, shortly before his death, wrote a paper entitled "'Recollections of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon," which was published after his death in the July, 1900, number of the "Annals of Iowa," at Des Moines. A few sentences from that paper will give his estimate of the character of our hero:

"Though he and I differed on many points, we were more intimate than any other two officers of the large garrison of Fort Riley. In some respects it was a most remarkable friendship; we had been differently educated, and there was scarcely a subject in politics, science, religion or social matters upon which differeces existed, that we did not differ."

"The chief mental characteristic of Lyon as I knew him a few years before the civil war, in which he lost his life, were intensity and conscientiousness. Whatever he felt he felt with a force that carried everything before it. At the same time he was possessed of as tender a heart as ever beat in a man's breast.

"He was especially kind to children and animals. I have often witnessed him get intensely angry at some teamster who was maltreating a horse or mule. On one occasion he took from the hand of a man the whip with which he was belaboring a mule about the head, and laid it over the fellow's shoulder until he shrieked for mercy. Upon another occasion he made a man employed in the quartermaster's department go down on his knees to a dog he had been unmercifully beating, humbly beg the dog's pardon and promise not to do so again. In quickness of perception, indomitable energy, and the most unflinching courage no man living or dead ever surpassed him."

In April, 1861, Lyon was a captain of Company B, Second U. S. Infantry, in command of the arsenal at St. Louis, with a little handful of men. General Sherman speaks of visiting Captain Lyon at the arsenal about this time, and characterizes him as "a man of vehement purposes and determined action."

Captain Lyon thus found himself at the beginning of the great struggle in a critical situation; surrounded by powerful adverse combinations, and an onward sweep of secession sentiment and influence almost resistless.

He was entirely alone with this responsibility. It is true that Frank P. Blair, James O. Broadhead, O. D. Filley and some other Unionists, perceiving that Lyon was the man for the emergency, backed him with their political influence. Yet there was no one near to consult on his duties as a soldier and commander in that dark hour.

Without hesitation or delay he took the aggressive, and at once began a series of movements and strategic military operations, so rapid and daring as to bewilder and almost paralyze the enemy. He captured Camp Jackson so quickly that General Frost, a West Point graduate in command, hardly knew what had happened, and in his humiliation and embarassment, published a long protest against such rude treatment. Lyon did not give him an opportunity to fire his big guns just received from New Orleans.

Gen. Sherman in his Memoirs, gives the following incident of this day. He was living in St. Louis with his family at the time, not yet having entered the service. He says: "Miss Elsie Dean, who lived opposite us, called me across the street, told me her brother-in-law, Dr. Scott, was a surgeon in Frost's camp, and she was dreadfully afraid he would be killed. I reasoned with her that General Lyon was a regular officer; that if he had gone out as reported, to Camp Jackson, he would take with him such a force as would make resistance impossible; but she would not be comforted, saying that the camp was made up of the young men from the first families of St. Louis; that they were proud and would fight. I explained that young men of the best families did not like to be killed any better than ordinary people. Edging gradually up street, I was in Olive street near Twelfth, when I saw a man running from the direction of Camp Jackson at full speed, calling as he went, "'They've surrendered, they've surrendered.' So I turned back and rang the bell at Mrs. Dean's. Eliza came to the door and I explained what I had heard, but she angrily slammed the door in my face. Evidently she was disappointed to find she was mistaken in her estimate of the rash courage of the best families." This was Friday, May 10th, memorable as being the day on which the first blow was struck by federal troops in the west against the gigantic front of unjustifiable rebellion.

It is a noteworthy fact that both Grant and Sherman, unknown to each other, were in St. Louis as civilians the day Camp Jackson was taken, and both give incidents of the day in their Memoirs. Grant says: "There was a considerable force of state militia at Camp Jackson. There can be but little doubt that it was the design of Governor Jackson to have these troops ready to seize the United States arsenal in the city of St. Louis. Why they did not do so I do not know. There was but a small garrison, two companies I think, under Captain N. Lyon, at the arsenal. Camp Jackson surrendered without a fight, and the garrison was marched down to the arsenal as prisoners of war. Up to this time the enemies of the government in St. Louis had been bold and defiant, while the Union men were quiet but determined. The enemies had their headquarters in a central and public position (in the Berthold mansion) on Pine street, near Fifth, from which the rebel flag was flaunted boldly.

The union men did not dare to show their flag. As soon as the news of the capture of Camp Jackson reached the city, the condition of things changed. The secessionists became quiet, but filled with suppressed rage. The union men ordered the rebel flag taken down from the building on Pine street. The command was given in tones of authority, and it was taken down, never to be raised again in St. Louis. I witnessed the scene."

The capture of Camp Jackson caused excitement throughout the state, and Jefferson City, where the legislature was in session, was a pandemonium. The legislature adjourned without ceremony, members not taking time to draw their salaries, and the state officials dispersed never to meet again.

Having captured the organized forces in St. Louis, with all their arms and ammunition, Lyon turned his attention to the interior and remote regions of Missouri. The most urgent dispatch was necessary in view of the fact that Governor Jackson on the 12th of June, issued a proclamation calling for 50,000 men, and forces were rapidly assembling and being drilled and equipped to fill this call.

An event that occurred about this time will throw much light on the character of General Lyon. Harney had just been removed the second time, and Lyon placed in command. Jackson and Price, knowing a more vigorous policy would be pursued, sought an interview with Lyon, hoping to hoodwink him as they did Harney, (who had agreed to let them alone,) or, failing in that, at least to ascertain his plans. It is this meeting that is referred to in the following incident:

A well known man in New York is Col. Thomas L. Snead, a native of Richmond, Va., who was a member of the confederate congress, and at the same time a colonel in the field. Colonel Snead was on Price's staff at Wilson's creek, and knew the great leaders of both sides of the war. A gentleman recently said to him, "Whom do you regard as the greatest man you ever saw in all that war period?"

"Captain Nathaniel Lyon," said Snead. "He was the greatest man I ever saw in my life. I met him on three occasions, at the conference between the Missori state authorities and himself; on the battle field of Wilson's creek; and when I laid him in the grave. All these happened in the space of about three months. I buried him by instructions from General Price, and I said to myself when I put him in the ground, 'that is the greatest enthusiast I ever saw and the greatest man.'"

Mr. Snead was asked for an estimate of Lyon's character. He said: "The impression he made on me was derived from being present at the Planters' house, St. Louis, when Lyon, Frank Blair and Lyon's officer, Conant, met by appointment with Governor Jackson, Gen. Sterling Price, and myself. I am the only survivor and living witness of that scene in June, 1861. Lyon was a little red-headed captain of infantry, stiff, precise, unbending. General Price was an old and high officer of the Mexican war, had been governor of the state, and was one of the best politicians we had. "Calib" Jackson was one of the best politicians in the country. Frank Blair, though rather narrower in qualities than these, was a very expert manipulator of men. Price had been a union man in the constitutional convention, but after the capture of Camp Jackson, went the other way and joined the governor at Jefferson City. Rising in a stiff, stern way, Lyon said: 'Governor, Mr. Blair on this occasion will represent my government, whose confidence he possesses in an eminent degree, and of whose intentions he is informed.' Frank Blair then stood in to urge the union cause, but before he had gone any considerable distance, Lyon seeing that he was playing the politician and not the man, interferred. He took the conversation up, and I never in my life saw such an exhibition of pluck, honesty, coolness and statesmanship. These old politicians were turned about and confounded; he never lost his temper, and was grave and cold as death. The others wanted no invasion of Missouri by the union troops, and a sort of neutrality. At the last, rising stiffly, Lyon said, 'Before I will consent, sir, that my government shall agree not to march into your state, fight in your state, and be in every respect the government in your state, I will see you, sir,'—he put his forefinger against Jackson's breast, 'and you,'—touching old General Price—'and you,'—to Blair—'and you, and you,' turning to myself and Conant, 'or myself,' said he, without a particle of bravado, but with a measured coolness and honesty, which carried the deadliest meaning—'I will see you all under the sod. This means war, Governor Jackson.'

"He then took his watch out of his pocket, and said, 'You will be allowed time to eat your dinner, which I have ordered for you. There will be a carriage at this door of the hotel to take you to the train. You will be allowed time to eat your dinner and reach the train.' Without bowing himself out, he left the room, his spurs ringing on the floor, and if we had not hastened out of town and burned the bridges behind us, he would have caught us that night. He was right after us, raced us out of Jefferson City, kept to us till he saw he was overpowered, and then he died like a man."

Lyon sent a part of his small army, the regiments of Sigel, Salamon, and B. Gratz Brown, to the southwest to meet forces under McCulloch and Price, who were approaching in that quarter with troops from Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. He proceeded with other troops under his immediate command, to Jefferson City, where Governor Jackson was collecting an army. With Camp Jackson fresh in mind, and knowing the man who was after them, this new encampment was abandoned at Lyon's approach and its forces moved farther up the river, and joined the troops under Marmaduke in a strong position at Booneville. Leaving a small force at Jefferson City to hold the capital, Lyon pushed on with the remainder to Booneville, where, after a sharp fight, he routed Marmaduke and Jackson, and dispersed a large demoralized army of the enemy.

Insignificant as these operations seem they were the consummation of a well-conceived campaign. The capture of Camp Jackson had disarmed the state, and compelled the loyalty of St. Louis and all the adjacent counties. The advance upon Jefferson City had put the state government to flight, and taken away from it that prestige which gives force to established authority.

Lyon next moved rapidly to the south, and July 13 made a junction of his scattered forces at Springfield, Missouri. He had divulged to the safety committee in St. Louis, before he left, his plan for making Springfield the out-post of St. Louis in case of imminent peril from the rebels in the state.

He had at this time, all told, 5,868 men, brigaded as follows:

First Brigade—Major S. P. Sturgis	884
Second Brigade—Col. Frantz Sigel	1420
Third Brigade—Lieut. Col. G. L. Andrews	1264
Fourth Brigade—Col. Geo. W. Deitzler	2300
Grand total	5868

Many of these were sick and unfit for duty; and the term of enlistment of the three months' men was expiring, and some of them were leaving for home.

Lyon's impetuous, courageous soul led him to go forward unmindful of danger, relying upon the government in whose behalf he was making this heroic effort. He had kept the government at Washington, and Fremont, the new department commander at St. Louis, informed of his movements; had made urgent calls for provisions, clothing and reinforcements, and was in great need of all of these. Messenger after messenger was dispatched to St. Louis to represent in person the desperate straits of the brave band that held the key to Missouri. Gen. Wherry, of Lyon's staff, says:

(Continued on page 5.)

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No. 10 leaves ..... 8:35 pm

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—No. 7, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, leaves .. 2:35 am
—No. 13, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, arrives ... 7:35 pm
—No. 13, leaves ..... 7:35 pm
*No. 3, Burlington, Chicago and east, leaves ..... 1:55 pm
—No. 1, Burlington, leaves . 7:35 am
*No. 51, Donnellson, C., B. & K. C., and North Road leaves ..... 8:30 pm
*No. 50, from Donnellson, C., B. & K. C., & North Road, arrives ..... 11:30 am
*No. 1, K. & W. west, leaves 9.05 am
**No. 5, Centerville, leaves .. 7.35 pm
*No. 4, from Centerville and points intermediate, arrives 1:15 pm
*No. 2, from Centerville and west, arrives ..... 9:10 pm
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10:15 am	10:30 am	10:50 am
12:05 pm	12:25 pm	12:45 pm
2:30 pm	2:45 pm	3:00 pm
4:10 pm	4:25 pm	4:45 pm
*5:20 pm	5:35 pm	5:55 pm
6:05 pm	6:20 pm	6:40 pm
7:45 pm	8:00 pm	8:20 pm
9:30 pm	9:45 pm	10:00 pm
10:45 pm	11:00 pm	11:15 pm

West.

Leave Warsaw	Leave Hamilton Jr	Arrive Keokuk
	*6:40 am	6:50 am
7:45 pm	8:00 am	8:20 am
9:20 am	9:40 am	9:55 am
11:00 am	11:25 am	11:40 am
12:45 pm	1:05 pm	1:20 pm
3:10 pm	3:30 pm	3:45 pm
4:45 pm	5:05 pm	5:20 pm
*6:00 pm	6:20 pm	6:35 pm
7:00 pm	7:20 pm	7:35 pm
8:45 pm	9:05 pm	9:20 pm
10:05 pm	10:25 pm	10:40 pm
11:20 pm	11:40 pm	11:55 pm

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