

during his years as governor of Indiana Territory, that would have shocked the Liberty party pious.

Forlorn Hope of Freedom derives its major strength from its author's careful statistical compilation and analysis of the votes of the elections from 1840 to 1848. Dwight L. Dumond and Gilbert H. Barnes have earlier preempted this territory, but Volpe has conclusively proved their generalizations. Still, despite a note of superciliousness and a tedious and infelicitous style of writing, this volume does contribute further to the literature of antebellum social, religious, and political history, one with which future scholars will have to contend.

Damned Yankee: The Life of General Nathaniel Lyon, by Christopher Phillips. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990. xvi, 287 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$26.00 cloth.

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Clad in their grey coats, the First Iowa Regiment marched with the Army of the West into the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The fate of that regiment, army, and possibly Missouri lay in the hands of Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, an oft-forgotten Union officer of the Civil War. This first major battle in the West produced a martyr to the northern cause, the first among many.

Christopher Phillips's purpose is to revive the significance and explore the motivations of Nathaniel Lyon. This is not an example of a biographer becoming overly sympathetic with his subject. Lyon is portrayed as a driven, headstrong, opinionated individual who developed "his own twisted sense of duty" (xiv). This personality, Phillips contends, explains Lyon's actions as the Civil War opened, and it influenced Missouri's bitter wartime experience.

Lyon's father was a stern disciplinarian who taught Nathaniel little about interpersonal relationships, but impressed him about the uses of power. An ambiguous religious education ultimately left Lyon to convince himself that God worked through "rare individuals . . . who also wielded enough power among men to mete out his justice" (71). Lyon believed himself to be among those select few. That special mission, supported by his firm opinions, led to a personality to be reckoned with.

Attracted by military discipline and a family history of martial accomplishments, Lyon entered West Point in 1837. Although near the top of his graduating class, Lyon chose an infantry assignment, believing advancement would come more rapidly. He subsequently

displayed a pattern of harshness toward his soldiers, superiors, and foes. For example, the young officer punished enlisted men in such unusual and cruel ways that Phillips concludes Lyon had "a nearly psychopathic appetite for inflicting pain" (90). Lyon was unmoved by the dead during the Mexican War since they had merely done their duty. A campaign against Indians in California led to the killing of Indian warriors and the uncontrolled slaughter of women and children. When he and his superior in Kansas clashed over the control of his troops, Lyon began a devious and well-conceived plan to have his opponent cashiered from the army. He deliberately disobeyed another commanding officer in order to aid the Free Soil ruffians in Kansas. Lyon's New England background and his sympathy for the free labor philosophy of Kansas settlers led to an increasing hatred of the "Southern slaveocracy." As God's agent he could only punish, not compromise with such evil men.

Phillips meshes these patterns of behavior with Lyon's well-established Civil War record. Aided by politician Frank Blair, Jr., Lyon effectively protected the federal arsenal in St. Louis and captured a threatening band of Missouri militia outside the city. His very successful campaign to seize control of the Missouri River humiliated the opposition. After chasing the various secessionist forces to southwest Missouri, Lyon decided to attack at Wilson's Creek. Phillips offers a compelling assessment of that decision.

Solid research supports this well-written, fast-paced narrative. Phillips's thesis is provocative if not convincing. His psychological conclusions need more evidence than has probably survived. More troublesome is the argument that Lyon's aggressive actions in St. Louis, especially the failed negotiations with secessionist governor Claiborne Jackson, were a "blunder" and forced internecine war upon Missouri (198). Phillips concedes that the governor was duplicitous during these and previous talks and was trying to provoke violent secession anyway. It is difficult, then, to place so much blame on the tempestuous Union general. Finally, there is a desperate need for maps to clarify the description of military movements.

These quibbles aside, *Damned Yankee* will interest casual readers and Civil War experts. Phillips provides vivid background to the first months of the Civil War west of the Mississippi. As many Iowa regiments could later testify, the Union's attempt to control Missouri began with Nathaniel Lyon, but certainly did not end with his death.

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