

## Patrick Lyons Collection

### Overview of the Collection

Repository: South County History Center 2636 Kingstown Road Kingston, Rhode Island 02881  
Tel: 401.783.1328, website: southcountyhistorycenter.org

Title: The Patrick Lyons Collection

Dates: bulk 1860-1890, inclusive 1840-2022

Media: Bound Volume, Digital Files, Medals/Insignias, Papers, Photographs, Weapons

Quantity: 1 archival box, 2 oversized boxes, 2.5 linear feet; 1 GB

Identification: Materials in this collection have multiple accession numbers

Language: English

---

### Biographical Note

Patrick Lyons (1837-1908) was born in Ireland in 1837, the son of James and Bridget (McNamara) Lyons. The Lyons family emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1857 in the wake of the successive crises caused by the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s. The family settled in Peace Dale (South Kingstown), and Patrick worked at the Peace Dale Mill.

In June 1861 Lyons enlisted in the Union Army to fight in the Civil War. He mustered with Company E of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry under General Isaac Peace Rodman. He was promoted to Sergeant in August 1861 and Lieutenant in May 1863. Lyon fought in several battles including Bull Run, Gettysburg, and the Wilderness (Spotsylvania County, VA), in which he was wounded.

During his service Lyons wrote and became engaged to Julia Houghney (1843-1887), also of Peace Dale. They were married upon Lyons return from service in 1865 and had seven children together.

After the war, Lyons worked as a store clerk and assistant postmaster in John C. Hazard's store in Peace Dale before establishing a grocery of his own at Fiske's Flat in Peace Dale. Lyons was actively involved in veteran's groups such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), and he was also a member of a local Temperance Association. Lyons attended St. Francis Catholic Church in Peace Dale and was actively involved in its Sunday School. He also served as a trustee on the board of the Rocky Brook School.

---

### Scope and Content

The Patrick Lyons Collection includes correspondence, a diary, photographs, objects and digital surrogates created by the South County History Center.

The correspondence from Patrick Lyons to Julia Houghney is comprised of twenty letters. Some of the letters are incomplete, and it is suspected that their pages may have been withheld or discarded by family members due to their personal nature. The letters provide insight into the courtship between Lyons and Houghney, as well as the lives of their family members. Lyons also describes the activities of his regiment and various incidents that occurred during this period. The collection also includes typed transcriptions of the letters and supplemental information written by Lyons's descendants.

Patrick Lyons's diary provides a partial history of 2nd Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, Company E, from 1861 to 1864. It is believed that Lyons wrote this account sometime after the Civil War, copying his original diary entries into this volume. The diary begins with the original roster of Company E when the regiment was mustered in 1861. Lyons summarized of the events of 1861, including the Battle of Bull Run. Beginning in 1862 there are daily entries, in which Lyons detailed the movement and actions of the regiment and described his experiences in the battles of Antietam (when Gen. Rodman was mortally wounded), Gettysburg and during the Northern Virginia Campaign. After being injured in the 1864 Battle of the Wilderness, Lyons was sent to Washington, D.C., and then to Providence. The regiment was mustered out of service shortly thereafter on July 13, 1864. At the end of the diary is a list of the Rhode Island 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment's killed and wounded. Lyons also lists the geographic locations visited by his regiment in chronological order and occasionally provided dates and notes in the margin of any incidents that occurred at these locations. Two hand drawn maps are included in this section.

This collection also includes photographs of Patrick Lyons and his family members, Lyons's commemorative service medals and a light cavalry saber carried by Lyons during the war.

The series is organized as follows:

Series I: Papers and Photographs, 1861-1992

Series II: Digital Surrogates, 2022

Series III: Objects, 1840-1900

---

### **Administrative Information**

Access: Any qualified person doing personal or scholarly research is permitted to utilize materials in the South County History Center collections.

Preferred Citation: Patrick Lyons Collection, South County History Center

Provenance: These materials were donated to the Center by descendants of Patrick Lyons.

Processed by: Caleb Goodhouse

Copyright for Digital Surrogates: South County History Center

---

### **Subject Terms**

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Battlefields--Maryland--Antietam; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Battlefields--Pennsylvania--Gettysburg; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns & battles--Virginia; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Participation, Irish American.; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Regimental histories--Rhode Island Infantry--2<sup>nd</sup>; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives; Courtship--United States--History--19th century; South Kingstown (R.I.: Town)--History--19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **People**

Lyons, Patrick, 1837-1908

Lyons, Julia Houghney, 1843-1887

Rodman, Isaac Peace, 1822-1862

---

## Related Materials

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following sources in the South County History Center holdings:

Archival Collections – Hull Civil War Collection; John Taylor Dixon Collection; Civil War Collection

Photograph Collection – Civil War

Reference Library – *History of the Rhode Island Combat Units in the Civil War* by Harold R. Barker; *Rhode Island and the Civil War: Voices from the Ocean State* by Robert Grandchamp; *Rhode Island in the Rebellion* by Edwin Winchester Stone; *The Second Rhode Island Regiment* by Augustus Woodbury; *The Second Rhode Island Regiment at the Siege of Petersburg* by Elisha Hunt Rhodes; “The Seven Sons and Daughters of Patrick and Julia Lyons of Peace Dale, Rhode Island” by Frederick F. Lyons; “Voices from the Civil War” edited by Shirley L. Barrett

---

## Contents Listing

Series I: Papers and Photographs, 1861-1992

Box	Folder	Description	Date
1	1	Letters 1992.003.0002 through 1992.003.0011	1861-1862
1	2	Letters 1992.003.0012 through 1992.003.0021	1862-1864
1	3	Letter Transcriptions and Supplemental Materials	n.d.
1	4	Lyons Family Photographs (1980.003)	1880-1890
1	5	Patrick Lyons’s Promotion Certificate (1980.003)	1863
Loose	Bound Volume	Patrick Lyons’s Diary (1958.003.0001)	1861-1864

Series II: Digital Surrogates, 2022

Location	Description	Date
SCHC Digital Collections	Patrick Lyons Correspondence	2022
SCHC Digital Collections	Patrick Lyons Diary	2022

Series III: Objects, 1840-1900

Object ID	Description	Date
1980.003.0001-10, 1980.003.0014, 1980.003.0018-22	Commemorative Civil War, Union Army, and Grand Army of the Republic pins, medals, buttons, and ribbons.	late 19 <sup>th</sup> century
1980.003.0011	Model 1840 Cavalry Saber carried by Lyons during his Civil War service	ca. 1840-1858