

Louis Minzenheimer

(- 26 May 1854)

Minzenheimer. On the 26th instant, Sgt. Lewis Minzenheimer of the U.S. Marine Corps, aged 38 yrs.

The Evening Star, June 2, 1854

The Late Funeral at the Navy Yard

On Sunday last, at the funeral of Mr. Lewis Meinzeshammer, a late Sergeant of the Marines, and member of Union Lodge of Odd Fellows, a scene was enacted not at all creditable to the person causing it who went much out of his way, and far overstepped the bounds of modesty to interfere with his neighbors.

The funeral procession started from the Barracks in the received order –i.e. the Marines first, the Odd fellows next, after whom came the body, following which were the mourners, etc. The procession had proceeded some ways on the road to the grave yard, when an order was given to put the Odd Fellows behind the hearse, as mourners. As the order came from the commandant of the U.S.M.C., and was expected to be complied with by the funeral escort, the Odd Fellows broke from the line and returned to their lodge room. A committee of three were appointed to wait on General Henderson, and seek an explanation of this strange and unprecedented proceeding.

The General stated that the deceased was a soldier, and as such he claimed him, and claimed the right to bury him with the honors of war, and the right to command; and if his rights in that respect were interfered with, he should give an order that his men should not join the beneficial societies, or be refused a military funeral.

Now, I contend, the deceased was not a soldier to be claimed by a Brigadier General by Brevet, or any one else, even a Lieutenant of Marines acting Aid-de-Camp. Death gave him a discharge, and then his remains belonged to his family and his friends. They wished the Order to bury him, nor would they have felt any chagrin had the Marines not escorted the remains to the grave.

From the earliest recollections of our oldest citizens, funeral processions have always been formed as this was on Sunday, and all was right. The Grand Lodge of the United States says the Order shall precede the body to the grave, and throughout the world this is the first time the rule has ever been set, or attempted to be set aside. The last funeral of this kind was, I think, that of the late Captain Dove, at which the procession was formed by the Marines, and four different associations preceded the body, and no one was sufficiently wise to find the matter wrong, because they know it was right. I think General Henderson made here a great error, one which he would never have made, had he been left to himself; but he was drawn into it by the officiousness of his Aid, whose sin in this respect has passed from him to his father. The greatest wrong committed was by the Order in leaving the line, thus indirectly admitting the right of General Henderson to interfere in the arrangements.

NOT AN ODD FELLOW