

Samuel Mundell

(- 17 Sep 1851)

Mundell. The funeral of Samuel Mundell, aged 14 years, will take place from the residence of his parents, Marine Barracks this afternoon at 4 o'clock. The friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

The National Intelligencer, Sept. 19, 1851

A melancholy occurrence took place on Wednesday evening, nearly opposite the Washington Navy Yard, by which a worthy family is involved in deep grief on the sudden and violent death of an interesting son.

It appears that a party, consisting of three men and two boys, all attached to the Marine Garrison, proceeded on a gunning excursion. There were but three guns. William Wells, a private in the Marine Corps, was extremely desirous to obtain from Samuel Mundell, the deceased, his fowling piece, which was repeatedly refused. On their arrival at the grounds of Mr. Atchinson, an altercation ensued between Wells and young Mundell, during which the latter raised his gun in a menacing position, when Wells sprung towards him, seized the piece with one hand, raised it as if he intended to knock the boy down, then fell back a short distance, cocked it, took deliberate aim and fired, lodging the contents of the gun in the left side of young Mundell's neck, breaking the collarbone, severing the arteries, and cutting the windpipe in two. The boy died instantly.

The party soon returned to the Barracks, and Wells candidly confessed the commission of the deed in terms which certainly reflected no credit upon human nature. The body of the unfortunate boy was brought in and laid out in the Garrison Hospital.

Justice Crandall was soon at the Garrison, after a brief hearing committed Wells to jail, whither he was conveyed by officers Wheat, Willett, and Adams.

This morning Mr. Woodward, the coroner, held an inquest, which resulted in the rendition of the following verdict: "That the said Samuel Mundell, aged fourteen years, came to his death by a gun-shot wound in the left shoulder, fired from a gun in the hands of William Wells, a marine, on the evening of Wednesday, September 17, 1851; the said Wells having fired at the said Mundell whilst under the influence of passion; the said gun being wrested from the hands of said Mundell by Wells previous to his firing."

We understand that Wells was formerly in the Marine corps, and that he re-enlisted on the 16th June last. The records of the Adjutant's office show him to be a native of Baltimore.

Young Mundell is a son of Orderly Sergeant Joseph Mundell, universally respected as a most excellent officer and citizen.

It is understood that the funeral will take place from the Garrison, this afternoon, at four o'clock.

The National Intelligencer, January 30, 1852

Criminal Court.

The trial of William Wells, a private of the Marine Corps, indicted for the murder of a youth named Samuel Mundell, on the 17th of September last, is now going on in this court. It will be recollected that the locale of the deed was on the south side of the Eastern Branch, opposite the Navy Yard, and, as has been alleged, the parties were out gunning, when Wells, asking to shoot at some object demanded of young Mundell his gun for the purpose, Wells having no gun of his own. On Mundell refusing and

resisting, Wells wrenched away the gun by main force, and, pointing it at Mundell, shot him instantly dead. The case will probably occupy several days.

The National Intelligencer, February 10, 1852

Sentence of Death

Yesterday having been the day on which the answer of Judge Crawford was expected to the application of the counsel of William Wells (found guilty of the willful murder of Samuel Mundell, on the 17th of September last) for a new trial, that decision was accordingly made. The exceptions taken by the prisoner's counsel to the trial were all overruled by the Judge.

The Judge then, in compliance with the prisoner's expressed wish through his counsel to know the worst, pronounced sentence of death, the execution to take place on the twenty-third day of April next. The Judge, in performing this awful duty, addressed the prisoner feelingly on the circumstances of his crime, trial, present condition, and future prospects, recommending him to seek without delay his reconciliation with an offended God. The Court was filled with an auditory deeply impressed with the solemn scene.