

Charles G. Wilcox

(- 30 Oct 1852)

The National Intelligencer,

Distressing Accident

Another of those painful occurrences arising from the incautious handling of firearms, of which nevertheless numbers of unheeded warnings are continually happening, took place on Friday evening last, on the ferry-boat plying at the Long Bridge. As Mr. Charles G. Wilcox, a clerk in the Bureau of Subsistence, was returning from a shooting excursion, and in the act of paying his ferriage, his fowling piece exploded, the load taking effect on the upper part of his head, blowing off a portion of the cranium, and producing instant death. It is not known whether the hammer of the barrel which exploded was down upon the cap; it is thought not; but, under any circumstances, another lesson is added to the mournful series which teach the peril of allowing for a single instant the muzzle of a loaded gun to point in the direction of the person. A loaded gun to point in the direction of the person. A loaded gun carries death within itself, and that death is as ready for its owner as for any one else if ceaseless care be pretermitted. A weakness is apt to take possession of the mind long habituated to a favorite gun, as if it were some domestic pet, and a feeling is induced which begets a too-familiar and hence dangerous use of it. It should always be considered and handled with the utmost reasonable care, as if it were a thing of the most treacherous character.

Mr. Wilcox was educated at West Point, and was much esteemed by his friends and acquaintances for his modest and gentle deportment. He leaves a sorrowing widow and several small children.