

Joseph Cochrane

(- 18 Feb 1844)

The National Intelligencer, Saturday, Feb. 17, 1844.

Duel.

We understand that a duel was fought in Virginia, near the Chain Bridge, yesterday morning early, between Mr. Julian May [R31/12] and Mr. Joseph Cochrane, both of this city. The parties fought with rifles and Mr. Joseph Cochrane was, at the first fire, shot through the head. He was still living at 7 o'clock last night. Mr. May was not hurt.

The National Intelligencer, February 19, 1844

Death of Mr. Cochrane.

We are sorry to learn that Mr. Cochrane, who was wounded on Friday morning last in a duel with Mr. Julian May, expired yesterday morning, about 5 o'clock, at Mr. Nelson's farm in Fairfax county, Virginia, near the place of combat.

Yesterday morning, Sunday, at half past 5 o'clock, Joseph Cochrane, aged 18 years. His funeral will be solemnized at the place of his late residence in 6th street at 11 o'clock this morning, the 19th instant. The friends of the deceased and of his family are invited to attend.

The National Intelligencer, Feb. 24, 1844

To the Editor

Messrs. Gales & Seaton. Justice to the dead is the only object of this communication. The friends of the late Mr. Cochrane entertained the hope that there would be no necessity for them to tax the attention of the community with any statement in regard to the recent unfortunate affair which terminated in his death. At an early period after the probability of this sad result was communicated to them, they made the declaration that they had no charge to make, and wished none made, against Mr. May, and though they were impressed with the belief that Doctor Miller might have rendered essential service in aiding to remove Mr. Cochrane from the field, and also after that had been effected, they had no intention of disposition to make any representations to his prejudice. They made up their minds to bear their grief in silence, and, but for the injustice done by statements in the publication in vindication of Dr. Miller contained in the National Intelligencer of the 21st instant to the memory of the deceased, this determination would not have been departed from. By those statements Mr. Cochrane is made to appear to have been actuated by blood-thirsty purposes, and to have been determined to admit not even of an opportunity for an apology or explanation. All who have ever known him will bear testimony that such feelings and conduct were entirely foreign to his disposition, that his heart was kind and generous, and his nature tractable. He left this city under strong injunctions that, if the challenge were withdrawn, he should make a reasonable explanation or apology. His second was also strongly enjoined to the same effect. Mr. Cochrane went disposed and prepared to make a reasonable explanation or apology if the challenge were withdrawn. Before leaving he several times expressed to his friends a determination not to kill his antagonist; and, in conversation with a friend who accompanied him, he "expressed the wish strongly of settling the matter amicably, frequently using the expression, "I would not kill May for the world." and this friend also states that he knew Mr. Cochrane would not have objected to an honorable adjustment of the difficulty.

In regard to the conversations it is stated Dr. Miller had with Mr. Cochrane, it is not pretended that they took place by the authority or with the consent or knowledge of his second, and it is well known

that, under the rules that govern such affairs, Mr. C. could not listen to any proposition from any one connected with the opposite party unless he knew such authority or consent had been given. There was no witness present to hear those conversations. Dr. M. is the only person who can now give a version of them; the dead cannot speak for himself. A friend of Mr. Cochrane, who did not accompany him out, but who by request was present on the ground for the purpose of doing whatever he properly could to aid in an amicable adjustment of the difficulty, went to the second of Mr. May, at Mr. Nelson's house, and anxiously inquired whether such an adjustment could not take place. He received a brief answer that one could not, unless a written apology, signed by Mr. C. in his presence, were given, without intimation that there was an opportunity open, or that one would be given, by the withdrawal or suspension of the challenge.

It is stated that Mr. Cochrane, when an apology was first required of him, with insulting language refused to give it. What Language he used is not specified. Mr. C. was invited by Mr. May's second to his room to receive a note from Mr. M.; he found the note of a serious character; that he was in the room of the second of the adverse party without a friend, and in the presence of another person with whom he was unacquainted, and that he was required to sign an apology dictated by the other party. Under these circumstances, he naturally felt excited, and indignantly remarked, during the conversation which took place, that he would not be bullied into an apology--he was able to defend himself. He felt that the opposite party required more than they had a right to ask--that to consent to an apology dictated by them would bring infamy and degradation upon himself.