

A Guide to the John Y. Mason Letters, 1824-1827

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John Y. Mason

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Access Restrictions

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Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

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Biographical Information

John Young Mason was born near Hicksford (now Emporia), Greensville County, Va., on 18 April 1799. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1816; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1819 and commenced practice in Hicksford, Va.; member of the Virginia House of Delegates 1823-1827; served in the State Senate 1827-1831; elected as a Jacksonian to the Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth Congresses and served from 4 March 1831, until his resignation on 11 January 1837; chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Twenty-fourth Congress); appointed United States district judge for the eastern district of Virginia in 1837; delegate to the State constitutional conventions of 1829 and 1850; appointed Secretary of the Navy in the Cabinet of President John Tyler and served from March 14, 1844, to March 10, 1845, and again in the Cabinet of President James K. Polk from September 9, 1846, to March 7, 1849; Attorney General of the United States from 11 March 1845 to 9 September 1846; resumed the practice of law in Richmond, Va., 1849-1854; appointed United States Minister Plenipotentiary to France on 22 January 1854, and served until his death, in Paris, France, on 3 October 1859. His remains were conveyed to the United States and interred in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

Scope and Content

Letters, 1824-1827, from John Y. Mason (1799-1859), Southampton County delegate to the Virginia House of Delegates to William H. Brodnax (1786-1834) of Greensville County, Virginia, concerning the proceedings of the House of Delegates. Mason comments on the bill for the creation of the University of Virginia, the state council, elections for state militia generals, court reform, legislation for Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) to settle his debts by lottery, state constitutional reform efforts, assembly opposition to tariffs, the Board of Public Works, John Tyler's (1790-1862) election to the United States Senate, remarks on William B. Giles (1762-1830), and other political and legislative matters.

Contents List

Letter, 19 January 1824, from John Y. Mason to William H. Brodnax concerning the proceedings of the House of Delegates. Mason informs Brodnax of the status of the University bill for the opening of the University of Virginia; the removal of William Robertson (1750-1829) from the Council of State; elections for generals in the Virginia militia and Brodnax's chances; the possibility of court reform; and other matters. (Accession 19972)

Letter, 3 February 1826, from John Y. Mason to William H. Brodnax regarding proceedings in the House of Delegates. Mason informs Brodnax that the House of Delegates will consider legislation to allow Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) to conduct a lottery to sell his possessions and property and pay his debts. Mason states that a bill to call a constitutional convention has been defeated and discusses western Virginia arguments for constitutional reform. He comments on court reform, including the courts of appeal, and legislation regarding Chancellor John Brown (1762-1826) and his position on the Staunton Superior Court of Chancery. (Accession 19973)

Letter, 27 February 1826, from John Y. Mason to William H. Brodnax regarding resolutions introduced into the House of Delegates by George C. Dromgoole calling tariffs unconstitutional and which are opposed by John F. May. He comments on efforts to have William R. Johnson appointed to the Board of Public Works. Mason discusses efforts for and against a constitutional convention. He remarks on the Virginia militia. (Accession 19974)

Letter, 23 February 1827, from John Y. Mason to William H. Brodnax commenting on the election of John Tyler to the United States Senate by the House of Delegates; a speech delivered by William B. Giles on U.S. politics; a court performance by Walter Jones of Washington D.C.; state court reform; and legislation to modify punishment for incestuous marriages. (Accession 19975)

Letter, 4 March 1827, from John Y. Mason to William H. Brodnax concerning events in the House of Delegates. Mason comments on John Tyler's election to the U.S. Senate and how Tyler states he will oppose the administration. Mason discusses William B. Giles' resolution before the house, and the speeches of Robert B. Taylor and Alexander Smith. He comments on efforts for both a constitutional convention and judicial reform. Mason also mentions a dinner held for John Tyler and William B. Giles. (Accession 19976)