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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from Roger B. Taney and Jane Shaaff to Arthur Shaaff

**Date:** August 14, 1820

**Location:** I-SpahrB-undated-41

### Contact:

Archives & Special Collections  
Waidner-Spahr Library  
Dickinson College  
P.O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

[archives@dickinson.edu](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)

Frederick Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> 1820

I feel much indebted to you my dear Arthur for your letter to me & blame myself for having suffered it to remain so long without an answer. My only apology is that my health has been bad ever since we parted, and the effect of such continued ill health has been to make my hand so unsteady that it is painful to write. For the last few months my health has improved and I hope I shall not again suffer you to be so long without a letter from me.

The letters you receive from your other friends in this country will no doubt tell you every thing you wish to know about them. It will therefore be my business to speak to you of the situation of your estate of which it is proper that you should be advised.

The executors of your deceased father have found his estate to be indebted at the time of his death to an amount far beyond their expectations. These debts were created for the most part by your uncle, & after his death were

assumed by your father as his heir & representative. It  
was the wish of the executors to have paid these debts  
at once & to have delivered over the estate to Guardians  
to be appointed by the Court. But there were no funds  
~~known~~ to pay with, except by the sale of the lands  
or the servants. The situation of the County has made  
it impossible to sell any lands without a great sacrifice  
of interest & we are most unwilling to see the  
Servants who have all behaved faithfully and well  
- and besides, if the servants were sold the land would  
go into the hands of tenants & be thus greatly injured  
in its value. We have therefore thought that we  
should best discharge the duty your father confided  
to us, by carrying on the farms just as he left them, and  
endeavouring to pay the debts out of the profits. The  
great economy of your excellent Mother in the management  
of her family concerns, - who is willing to deny herself  
every thing, in order to promote the interest of the  
Children - gives us the hope that we shall be able  
to pay off the debts by the time you come to the age  
of twenty one years. ~~And~~ And as soon as you are of  
age it is our wish that you should be appointed the  
Guardian for your younger brothers and sisters & the estate

of your father be delivered into the hands of his  
children - to whom it belongs - Our hope is that we  
may be able to deliver it just as we found it - un-  
impaired in beauty or value & discharged from  
the debts with which it was encumbered.

For the reasons above mentioned Guardians have  
not been appointed for any of the children - and they  
still remain under the care of the executors. But if you  
my dear Arthur prefer a different arrangement  
you are entitled by law to choose your Guardian  
& we will then settle up the estate by a sale of some  
part of the property & deliver it over to the Guardians  
you may choose -

With respect to yourself my dear Arthur, we should  
be glad that you would remain where you are until  
your education is completed. All of the expense  
of sending you abroad has already been incurred -  
your annual expenses do not now exceed what would  
be required to support you at College in this country -  
- a change of place would produce a change of system  
in your education, and of course in some degree retard  
your progress - And above all it was as we believe the wish  
of your father that your education should be finished at Gapsow

I am not only desirous to execute his intentions, but we greatly  
rely on his knowledge and judgment. - I give you some  
reasons - because at your time of life we ought not to ask you  
to do any thing without being able to give you a reason  
for it - and a good one. - I would be glad my dear Mother  
to hear from you & know what you think of our  
views and arrangements -

My health has been such as to render me unable to  
visit George Town since last summer - and I have not  
seen Mrs. Throff since that time. Your relations in this  
part of the world are well - you have no doubt  
before this time heard of the death of our good friend  
Miss Dolly Munday. Your aunt Munday has borne  
this severe loss with the firmness and resignation  
of a Christian. She is well and cheerful.

Your Sister Jane is now in Fredericksburgh on a visit  
to her friends, she talks of returning to George Town  
next week. - I will say to you (what I certainly would  
not say to her) that she is very beautiful & is surrounded  
with the beauty of Fredericks - and I must add that she  
seems perfectly indifferent to their attractions -

Our friend Capt. Marlbury is now with me - we have been  
some days together at Arcadia, engaged in the concerns of  
the estate. As I was not able to go to George Town, he has been

kind enough to come to Frederick on this business  
He leaves me tomorrow and will forward this letter  
to you - Mrs Tany and my little girls join me in a  
great deal of love to you -

May God preserve you my dear Arthur and resto  
<sup>you</sup> in safety to your friends in America - who  
talk about you continually - and love you  
dearly - who love you not only for your own  
sake - but for the sake of our departed friends  
your excellent father and mother - and forgive  
me for saying that perhaps I love you even still  
more for the sake of your uncle whose name you  
bear - who was long my most intimate and  
valued friend & whose memory the scenes  
at Arcadia constantly keep alive -

Farewell my dear Arthur

Affectionately yours

Friend -

R. B. Tany

1820

George Town

Sad and painful are the tidings my dearest  
Brother which I have to write you and for which  
you will, <sup>be</sup> so little prepared - our darling little John Thomas  
is no more! he died on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> of August  
after suffering violent pain for a week, which he bore  
with the gentleness of a little lamb. how sorry I am  
that I was not at home! I did not get down  
from Frederick till Monday - Mother says he kiss'd  
both the children before he died, put his poor little  
cold arms round their necks and bid them good  
bye, was quite conscious until the last - a violent  
dysentery was the complaint of which he died - you  
can well judge of the distress of Mother and poor  
Miss Peggy - it is like a dream to me I can  
scarcely realise it yet - he was buried on Saturday  
by the side of our dear father - it was a stroke  
so unexpected that <sup>you</sup> can well judge how much keener  
it is felt, poor little darling he was always so  
hardy, so strong, look'd so much more likely to live  
long <sup>than</sup> poor Charles, that <sup>every</sup> body seem'd to think he  
<sup>not</sup> could be taken before him, but he's gone, & with  
him all the little happiness that Miss Peggy or  
Mother had left to enjoy here - but you may be  
assured my dearest brother I shall do, <sup>my</sup> utmost

to soothe and to comfort both, as much as in me  
lies - it is a hard struggle a great trial to poor  
mother you must be sensible - "the only son of his mother  
and she was widow" yet the Almighty has a that  
inflicted the blow I trust will give strength to  
support her under it - she says she will write to you  
as soon as she can - My dear brother you will see  
by Mr. Toney's letter what he thinks of your return-  
ing so, soon our dear mother begs I will tell you  
that upon reading your letter she felt pleasure  
thoughts of seeing you so soon, but upon  
Mr. T's letter she thinks all he says is so  
a proper - that she hopes you will agree  
if he has written you and if I have any  
influence let me intreat you to follow his advise, you  
will be sorry afterwards should you not follow it be assured  
what could be the possible advantage of going abroad to  
be but one single <sup>year</sup> at school - excuse me my dearest  
brother for thus writing, but indeed I love you so much  
look up to you for so much - that I cannot help urging  
you all I can - dont think that I do not wish to see you  
tis my constant prayer to heaven and the most  
fervent and just wish of my heart - Mother hopes you  
will write soon and tell her how you determine, do  
think well and decide right - and as we all wish & as  
you have been advised - write to poor mother soon  
she loves you dearly - Charles is at home now, for a week  
Mrs. M. Harvey are here also, and Mary Deogans is expected  
to - morrow - Dr. W. was as kind & attentive as any one

would be during dear little John's illness, we all owe  
 him great gratitude - Mother, Miss Peggy, Susan & Mary  
 send their love with all their hearts to you my brother  
 and receive that of your ever affectionate  
 and fondly attached sister  
 Mrs. S.

Mrs. Jane Shaaff  
 to her brother  
 Arthur

Jan 9/62

MS



Mr. Arthur Shaaff  
 Care of John Lang  
 Coopers  
 Glasgow  
 Scotland  
 New York

down  
 us to kiss  
 your letter

From Miss B. J. J. J.  
 Sister Jane  
 Date August 14, 1862.

All your friends asked particularly of you in Frederick  
 and appear to take great interest in you - this letter  
 was sent down (when I came) to see if mother approved  
 what Mrs. T. had said relative to your return

Frederick Augt. 14<sup>th</sup> 1820

I felt much indebted to you my dear Arthur for your letter to me & blame myself for having suffered it to remain so long without an answer. My only apology is that my health has been bad ever since we parted, and the effect of such continued ill health has been to make my hand so unsteady that it is painful to write - For the last few months my health has improved and I hope I shall not again suffer you to be so long without a letter from me. -

The letters you receive from your other friends in this Country will no doubt tell you every thing you wish to know about them. It will therefore be my business to speak to you of the situation of your estate of which it is proper that you should be advised. - The executors of your lamented father have found his estate to be indebted at the time of his death to an amount far beyond their expectations. These debts were created for the most part by your uncle, & after his death were assumed by your father as his heir & representative. It was the wish of the executors to have paid these debts at once & to have delivered over the estate to Guardians to be appointed by the court. But there were no funds to pay with, except by the sale of the land or the servants, The situation of the Country has made it impossible to sell any land without a great sacrifice of interest & we are most unwilling to sell the servants who have all behaved faithfully and well. - and besides, if the servants were sold the land must go into the hands of tenants & be thus greatly injured in its value. We have therefore thought that we should best discharge the duty your father confided to us, by carrying on the farms just as he left them, and endeavouring to pay the debts out of the profits. The great economy of your excellent mother in the management of her family concerns, - who is willing to deny herself every thing, in order to promote the interest of the children - gives us the hope that we shall be able to pay off the debts by the time you come to the age of twenty one years. And as soon as you are of age it is our wish that you should be

appointed the Guardian for your younger brothers and sisters & the estate of your father be delivered into the hands of his children - to whom it belongs - Our hope is that we may be able to deliver it just as we found it - unimpaired in beauty or value & discharged from the debts with which it was incumbered.

For the reasons above mentioned Guardians have not been appointed for any of the children - and they still remain under the care of the executors. But if you my dear Arthur prefer a different arrangement you are entitled by law to chuse your Guardian & we will than settle up the estate by a sale of some part of the property & deliver it over to the Guardians you may chuse -

With respect to yourself my dear Arthur, we should be glad that you would remain where you are until your education is completed. All of the extra - expence of sending you abroad has already been incurred - your annual expences do not now exceed what would be required to support you at College in this country - a change of place would produce a change of system in your education, and of course in some degree retard your progress - and above all it was as we believe the wish of your father that your education should be finished at Glassgow & we not only desire to execute his intentions - but we greatly confide in his knowledge and judgment - I give you our reasons - because at your time of life we ought not to ask you to do any thing without being able to give you a reason for it - and a good one. - I would be so glad my dear Arthur to hear from you & know what you think of our views and arrangements -

My health has been such as to render me unable to visit George Town since last summer - and I have not seen M.<sup>rs</sup> Shaaff since that time. Your relations in this part of the world are well - you have no doubt before this time heard of the death of our good friend Miss Polly Mendact. Your aunt Mendact - has borne this severe loss with the firmness and resignation of a Christian. She is well and cheerful.

Your sister Jane is now in Frederick on a visit to her friends, - She

talks of returning to George Town next week - I will say to you (what I certainly would not say to her) that she is very beautiful & is surrounded with the beaux of Frederick - and I must add that she seems perfectly indifferent to their attentions -

Our friend Capt. Marbury is now with me - we have been some days together at Arcadia, engaged in the concerns of the estate. As I was not able to go to George Town, he has been kind enough to come to Frederick on this business. He leaves me tomorrow and will forward this letter to you - M.<sup>rs</sup> Taney and my little girls join me in a great deal of love to you -

May God preserve you. My dear Arthur and restore you in safety to your friends in America - who talk about you continually - and love you dearly - who love you not only for your own sake - but for the sake of our departed friends your excellent father and mother - and forgive me for saying that perhaps I love you even still more for the sake of your uncle whose name you bear - who was long my most intimate and valued friend & whose memory the at Arcadia constantly keep alive -

Farewell my dear Arthur

Affectionately your

friend -

R. B. Taney

1820

George Town

Sad and painful are the tidings my dearest Brother which I have to write you and for which you will be so little prepared - our darling little John Thomas is no more ! he died on Friday the 11.<sup>th</sup> of August after suffering violent pain for a week, which he bore with the gentleness of a little lamb - how sorry I am that I was not at home, ! I did not get down from Frederick till Monday - Mother says he kiss'd both the children before he died, put his poor little cold arms round their necks and bid them goodbye, was quite concious until the last - a violent dysentary was the complaint of which he died - you can well judge of the distress of Mother and poor Miss Peggy - it is like a dream to me I can scarcely realise it yet - he was buried on Saturday by the side of our dear father - it was a stroke so unexpected that you can well judge how much keener it is felt, poor little darling he was always so harty, so strong, look'd so much more likely to live long than poor Charles, that every body seem'd to think he would not be taken before him, but he's gone, & with him all the little happiness that Miss Peggy or Mother had left to enjoy here - but you may be assured my dearest brother I shall do my utmost to soothe and to comfort both, as much as in me lies - it is a hard struggle a great trial to poor Mother you must be sensible - "the only son of his Mother and she was widow" yet the Almighty hand that inflicted the blow I trust will give strength to support her under it - she says she will write to you as soon as she can - My dear brother you will see by M.<sup>r</sup> Taney's letter what he thinks of your returning so, soon our dear Mother begs I will tell you that upon reading your letter she felt pleasure (torn) thoughts of seeing you so soon, but upon (torn) Mr. Taney's letter she thinks all he says is (torn) and proper - that she hopes you will approve of what he has written you and if I have any influence let me intreat you to follow his advise, you will be sorry afterwards should you not follow it be assur'd. What could be the possible advantage of going abroad to be but one

single year at school - excuse me my dearest brother for thus writing, but indeed I love you so much look up to you for so much - that I cannot help urging you all I can - dont think that I do not wish to see you 'tis my constant prayer to heaven and the most fervent and first wish of my heart - Mother hopes you will write soon and tell her how you determine, do think well and decide right and as we all wish & as you have been advised - write to poor mother soon she loves you dearly - Charles is at home now, for a week Mrs & Mr Harvey are here also, and Mary Brogden is expected to-morrow - Dr. W. was as kind & attentive as any one could be during dear little John's illness, we all owe him great gratitude - Mother, Miss Peggy, Ann & Mary send their love with all their hearts to you my brother and receive that of your ever affectionate and fondly attached sister

Miss J S

All your friends asked particularly of you in Frederick and appear to take great interest in you - this letter was sent down (when I came) to see if Mother approved what Mr. T. said relative to your return.

On verso:

Mr. Arthur Sheeff

Care of John Lang Esqr.

Glassgow

Scotland