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Title: Letter from Roger B. Taney to Nahum Capen

Date: November 30, 1863

Location: I-SpahrB-1960-4

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Private

Washington Nov. 30. 1863

Dear Sir

I have received your letter of the 24 inst. - but did not find inclosed the letter you mention.

There is no foundation for the rumor that I have resigned or am about to resign the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court - It is true that I am far advanced in life & my health has never been very firm - and age has not improved it. But I hope & believe I have yet strength enough to perform the duties of my office and shall endeavor to do so.

I thank you for the very kind terms in which you have made the inquiry as to the truth

of this rumor - & take pleasure
in removing any doubts you
may have entertained on the
subject. But I have marked
this letter private, to indicate
that I am not willing that it should
find its way to the newspapers.
I have never deemed it necessary
or becoming, to contradict in
the public papers any of the
many unfounded reports that
have from time to time been
circulated about me - and
there is certainly nothing in
this rumor that requires or would
justify a public contradiction
from me.

with great respect

Yours truly

R. B. Taney

Mr. Nathaniel Cooper

Boston

Private

Washington November 30, 1863

Dear Sir

I have received your letter of the 24th, but did not find inclosed the letter you mention.

There is no foundation for the rumor that I have resigned or am about to resign the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It is true that I am far advanced in life and my health has never been very firm and age has not improved it. But I hope and believe I have yet strength enough to perform the duties of my office and shall endeavor to do so.

I thank you for the very kind terms in which you have made the inquiry as to the Truth [page 2] of this rumor and take pleasure in removing any doubts you may have entertained on the subject. But I have marked this letter private, to indicate that I am not willing that it should find its way to the news-papers. I have never deemed it necessary or becoming, to contradict in the public papers any of the many unfounded reports that have from time to time been circulated about me ---and there is certainly nothing in this rumor that requires or would justify a public contradiction from me.

With great respect

Yours truly

[endorsed] R. B. Taney

Mr. Nahum Capen

Boston

TANEY TO NAHUM ~~CASPER~~ ON RETIREMENT

C.S.

Always a weak man physically, Taney became even more so in the last few years before his death in October 12, 1864. However, the great physical pain he endured never caused him to consider retirement. Fortunately, he retained his clarity of thought and was thus able to dispatch his responsibilities with excellence.

During the time of the writing of this letter, Taney's differences with the President had caused him to be bitterly attacked by the Republicans. Through this experience and his own sense of judicial ethics, he maintained that it was neither helpful nor proper for the Chief Justice to reply to public rumors.