

# Deane, Frances B., Jr., Letter

Frances B. Deane, Jr. Letter  
1857



## Title Statement

Deane, Frances B., Jr., Letter Francis B. Deane, Jr. Letter, 1857 Ms.1992.006

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.1992.006

### Unit Date

1857

### Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

### Abstract

Letter from Virginia legislator Francis B. Deane, Jr., written to Montgomery County lawyer William Ballard Preston in 1857, suggesting Preston enlist the assistance of "Mr. Hunter" [U. S. Senator Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter] before traveling overseas on his mission to establish a commercial trade line between Norfolk, Virginia and Europe.

### Creator

Deane, F. B., Jr. (Frances B.) (Deane & Son Foundry, Lynchburg, Va.)

**Extent**

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

**Repository**

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

## Administrative Information

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**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

The Francis B. Deane, Jr. Letter was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1992.

**Processing Information**

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**Preferred Citation**

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## Biographical / Historical

Francis Browne Deane, son of Francis B. and Nancy (or Ann) Hughes Woodson Deane, was born in Cumberland County, Virginia, on September 25, 1796. After attending Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) and Hampden-Sydney College, the younger Deane returned to Cumberland County, where he joined his father in business. In 1827, he married Ariana Bethia Cunningham. The couple had four children and in the early 1830s moved to Buckingham County, where Deane owned and operated the Bear Garden iron furnace. In 1837, Deane and others established in Richmond the Tredegar Iron Company, which became Tredegar Iron Works the following year. Deane resigned as the company's president in 1842. By early 1845, he had moved to Lynchburg, opening the Langhorne Foundry there. Deane's success with the foundry led to his involvement in several other business ventures. In 1853, he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, representing Campbell County, and was twice re-elected. By the beginning of the Civil War, Deane's foundry had become F. B. Deane Jr. & Sons, which was awarded contracts to produce ordnance for Confederate forces. Deane was again elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1863 and served a single term. Francis Browne Deane died in Lynchburg on November 26, 1868, and was buried in Deanery Cemetery, Cumberland County.

Born in Blacksburg, Virginia, on November 25, 1805, William Ballard Preston was the son of James P. and Ann Barraud Taylor Preston. After graduating from Hampden-Sydney College, Preston studied law at the University of Virginia and was admitted to the Virginia bar in 1826; he became Floyd County commonwealth's attorney in 1831. He married Lucinda Staples Redd, and the couple would have three children. Preston was elected to a single term in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1830. He was elected to the Virginia State Senate in 1840 and served until 1844, when he was elected to another single term in the House of Delegates. In 1846, he was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives, representing Virginia's 12th District. Following his service as secretary of the navy (1849-1850) under President Zachary Taylor, Preston returned to private law practice. In 1858, a Bristol, Virginia railroad convention appointed Preston commissioner to establish a commercial shipping line between Norfolk, Virginia, and Europe; he spent the latter half of 1857 negotiating with interests in France, but the venture ultimately failed with the outbreak of the American Civil War. In early 1861, Preston represented Montgomery County in the Virginia secession convention, and in 1862, he was elected Virginia senator in the Confederate Congress. William Ballard Preston died on November 16, 1862, and was buried in the Preston Cemetery at Smithfield in Montgomery County.

## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of a single letter written by Francis B. Deane, Jr., a Virginia legislator representing Campbell County. Written in Richmond on June 28, 1857, the letter is addressed to William Ballard Preston in Washington, D. C. Deane writes concerning Preston's recent appointment as a commissioner to negotiate a direct, commercial steamship line between Norfolk, Virginia and Europe. Deane advises Preston to meet with "Mr. Hunter" [U. S. Senator Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter] and enlist his assistance: "If the state is to take any part in raising the capital to establish a line of steamers, it is of the first importance to secure the cooperation of Mr[.] Hunters [sic] friends in the Legislature." Deane further advises Preston on where he can obtain reliable regional trade figures in negotiating the line's establishment.

## Keywords

Campbell County (Va.)

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Montgomery County (Va.)

Preston, William Ballard, 1805-1862

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## Description of Subordinate Components

**Letter**

**Unit Date** 1857

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