

Thomas Sanders (Saunders) was the youngest son of Mathew and Susanna (Shenstone). From the only two letters so far found in our historical research on the main branch of the Sanders family associated with Lloyd Sullivan, it seems that William Shenstone was involved with Thomas joining the Navy under the control of Admiral Smith who was a very close friend of Shenstone. Thomas, in 1756, is recorded as possibly being a Mate or a Midshipman, some 3 years later (14 May 1759,) he is recorded to have been a Lieutenant on HMS Berwick, following a confrontation at Guadalupe he became acting Commander but sadly was assassinated the next day.

Letter 1

Hull 1, 236

The Leasowes Aug 24, 1756

To Mr S(aunders)

Dear S(aunders)

I am truly glad to hear of your Reception with our worthy Admiral, to whom l will take the first Occasion of conveying my Acknowledgements. It is not quite clear from your Letter, whether you are Mate or Midshipman; but whatever your Post may be, l hope, and make no Doubt, that you will endeavour to fill it as becomes you. Should you happen to be continued in the Admirals own ship, you will have the Honour to serve more immediately under the most generous Man alive; whose Penetration will not suffer any Degree of Merit to escape his Notice, and so will allow yours the more Consideration on Account of his Regard for me. As the best Means, therefore, of promoting your interest, you will need to concern yourself little further; than to deserve well; and this by an uniform Course of Diligence and Sobriety, by the strictest Attention to Honour and your Duty, and by a Conduct entirely free from all Artifice and Disguise. You have an honest, open Countenance; l do not in the least question that you will verify it in your Behaviour; neither do l drop any of these Hints, as though l mistrusted your Conduct; l do unfeignedly believe them to be every one superfluous; however, it may prove a Satisfaction for you to reflect, that the Temper, which l trust is natural to you, is what l think most likely to recommend you to the Admiral. And be assured, that you shall acquire no Reputation in the Service, which shall not be seconded by all the interest and good Offices of your affectionate Kinsmen,

W. Shenstone

Letter 2

To John Scott Hylton

Sunday, 11th March 1759.

My Compliments — l return some of Mr H's Books, & will e'er long dismiss ye remainder — Fiddian may go with Dick, if he will be here by six o'clock to—morrow morning — Otherwise, Miss Wright comes this afternoon to see what can be done by means of Mr H's threepence. At present, it lies wholly upon me to fetch both news and Letters — l mean for a certainty — nor can l, even thus, answer by return of Post; without sending twice the same Day — "Twould be prodigiously convenient to have Letters &c arrive regularly, by 12 o'clock, on Post—days — Mrs Acton has some turn

for Elegance, (unless Miss Wright be too much attach'd to her) — and would have given them a better turn both in point of happiness and figure, might she have had her own way — Mr. Hylton's review never came — bit l will give Aris a trimming, tomorrow. Mine l send ; which will occasion me to buy a Book or two— Poor Grainger has not quiet Justice done him.

I had yesturday 2 Letters from Tom Saunders at Guadaloze; which l directly sent to Admiral Smith; and now, to his sister Wilkinson—He is Lieutenant (now) in ye Berwick — Mr H. heard of our success there—I have got ye Admiral's Douglas &c with a second double entendre—Mr Dodsley (wth a short letter) has sent me a pair of Swans from London, in a Cage as big as Mr. Hylton's Shop—they come home tomorrow—The Cutts to Pamela are elegant, but not so accurate as l wish'em and must be returned by Fiddian in ye morn: bring M'acleod's. l will get Mr.H some Russia L at Birmingham; if he will; but there are two sufficient reasons why he must not trust to this John Taylor— Let ye Emrald go.

Notes:

No further mention can be traced in any of William Shenstone's letters mentioning his Cousin Thomas despite several around the time of Thomas's death in May 1759.

Miss Wright appears to be the Shenstone's neighbour.

John Taylor was a Birmingham tradesman who did japanning (the European imitation of Asian lacquerwork, originally used on furniture; the word originated in the 17th century) and lacquering in Crooked Lane Hill.

Wilkinson was the mother of James who left his fortune to Benjamin Sanders, the Button Maker.

Admiral Smith was one of the illegitimate sons of Lord Lyttleton.