

A Guide to the Auditor of Public Accounts, Capitol Square Data, Washington Equestrian Statue Records, 1817-1868

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Descriptive Summary

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Language

English

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Auditor of Public Accounts

Physical Characteristics

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Physical Location

State Records Collection, Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts (1776-1928) (Record Group 48)

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These materials came in several accessions and were combined into one body of records under Acc. 40979. Included are the following accessions: Acc. 13169 & 23658.

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Historical Information

On 16 February 1816 the General Assembly passed a resolution authorizing the governor to inquire of Bushrod Washington whether he and his family would permit the remains of George and Martha Washington to be removed from the vault at Mount Vernon and placed in a monument to be built in Richmond by public subscription. Although the Washington family refused to grant permission to transfer the remains, popular support for a proposed Washington monument in Richmond resulted in the collection of a large sum of money. On 22 February 1828 the General Assembly authorized the governor to invest the money in state stock as the Washington Monument Fund. Several plans for the monument were considered before that of Thomas Crawford, of Philadelphia, was accepted. Robert Mills, a prominent Richmond architect whose own design for the monument was rejected, was named architect for its construction. Oliver H. Rand and Lt. Edward S. Gay of the Public Guard served as Superintendent and Paymaster, respectively. Rand was later replaced by Henry W. Herbert in 1852.

Crawford's equestrian monument to George Washington was unveiled in Capitol Square on 22 February 1858. When the monument was unveiled, however, only the statues of Washington, Jefferson, & Henry were complete. Crawford's death and the outbreak of the Civil War delayed the completion of the statue until 1868. Governor Francis H. Pierpont contracted Randolph Rogers to finish the pedestrian statues of Mason, Marshall, Lewis, and Nelson, as well as allegorical figure for the lower pedestals.

Scope and Content Information

The Washington Equestrian Statue Records consist of an artificial collection of documents compiled from the Auditor of Public Accounts, Governor's Office, and General Assembly. Even though the collection was gathered from various state records, it is considered part of the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA# 668) since most of the records originate from this agency. Note that not all documents relevant to the Washington Equestrian Statue are located in this collection. Researchers should consult the records of other state agencies, especially the Governor's Office, for additional resources related to the Washington Monument.

In 1959, Marvin D. Evans prepared a partial inventory of sources in the Archives Division pertaining to Capitol Square. Evans' inventory includes a bibliography of archival sources from the Calendar of Transcripts (1905) and manuscripts deposited by the State Auditor in 1914 (Auditor Items 137, 203, & 287). His inventory consists of 20 boxes of archival material which were divided into General Sources (Boxes 1-11), Governor's Mansion (Boxes 12-15), Washington Monument (Boxes 16-19), Capitol Building (Plans, 1858 & 1904-1905), State Office Building (Plans, 1923), Finance Building (Acc.# 24811a), and Houdon Statue of Washington (Box 20). The Washington Equestrian Statue Records represent Boxes 16-19 in Evans' inventory. Items related to the Washington Equestrian Statue have been arranged as a separate collection since they are considered part of the Washington Monument Fund and given a distinct entry in the Auditor of Public Accounts Inventory

(APA# 668).

Included in the Washington Equestrian Statue Records are correspondence, deeds of trust, architectural drawings, reports, subscriptions, contracts, proposals, bonds, accounts, estimates, vouchers, and other sundry items.

Vouchers constitute the largest portion of the collection. There are vouchers for loans, interest on loans, James River & Kanawha bonds, slaves, newspaper advertisements, tools, horses, excavation & laying the foundation stone, lime, superintendent & architect's salary, monthly pay rolls, and numerous other expenses. Significant vouchers include the following: a model from Thomas Crawford (1850 March 6), an engraving & copper box for the cornerstone (1859 March 18), coins and a bible to be deposited in the cornerstone (1850 Feb. 21 & March 12), an advance to Thomas Crawford (1850 July 3), transportation for bronze statuary of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, & the bay relief (1855 Aug. 14), casting the statue of George Mason by Randolph Rogers (1858 Jan. 11), the contract for the statue of John Marshall from Thomas Crawford's estate (1858 June 14), a plaster cast of the statue of Mason (1858 March 12), and expenses for the inauguration ceremony (1858 Feb. & March).

Also noteworthy are the proposed designs submitted by architects for the Washington Monument between 1849 and 1850. Included are correspondence, architectural drawings, estimates of expenses, and descriptions & specifications from the architects. The correspondence also includes letters of recommendation for the architects. Most of the correspondence is addressed to Governor John B. Floyd or William F. Ritchie, Commissioner of the Washington Monument. Prominent correspondents include architects Thomas Crawford and Robert Mills. Note that the original architectural drawings have been separated to the Library of Virginia's General Architectural Files.

The report by the Select Committee on the Washington Monument in 1852 provides numerous significant documents related to the construction of the monument. This report was printed as "Document 56" in the Journal of the House of Delegates. The purpose of the Select Committee was to examine & report the cost of the Washington Monument, so far as its construction has progressed, and into the abuses, if any, by those engaged in its construction. Included in this report are correspondence, contracts, proposals, and other items. There is correspondence from Lt. Edward S. Gay, Paymaster; Governor John B. Floyd; Governor Joseph Johnson; Robert Mills, Architect; Oliver H. Rand, Superintendent; and others regarding payments, the progress of the Monument, stone and the state quarry, and charges against Oliver H. Rand by Lt. E. S. Gay. Also noteworthy are the following documents: an executive order regarding the appointment of Lt. E. S. Gay of the Public Guard as paymaster ("H"), the contract of Thomas Crawford to model & complete his design for the Washington Monument ("I"), letters from Robert Mills on the progress of the Monument ("J-L" & "N"), a proposal by John A. Temple & Company for the delivery of stone ("M"), the contract of John A. Temple & Co. ("O"), and the contract of Samuel Laird to quarry & furnish from the State Quarry all the stone for completing Lock No. 1 ("BB").

Additional correspondence within the Washington Equestrian Statue Records includes letters from Oliver H. Rand, Henry W. Herbert, Robert Mills, and others. There are also recommendations for Henry W. Herbert as Superintendent of the Washington Monument to replace Oliver H. Rand in 1852. On 24 July 1852, Mills writes G. A. Myers, Commissioner of the Washington Monument, advising him to enclose the monument with a suitable fence. Mills also writes Governor Joseph Johnson regarding a letter from the Commissioners notifying him that his professional services will be dispensed with after October 31 (1852 Oct. 20). On 27 November 1852, Henry W. Herbert reports to Governor Johnson on the number of people employed on the monument & quarry. In the same letter, he reports on the completion of the six eagle pedestals and recommends the reduction of the work force. His letter of 7 December 1852 relates to the hiring of someone for the safekeeping of the state property at the quarry. Finally, Herbert writes to G. A. Myers, G. H. Munford, & William F. Ritchie, Commissioners of the Washington Monument, regarding additional workers to complete the stonework on the monument and to remove the remainder of the stone from the quarry to Capitol Square (1853 April 11). A letter from the Commissioners to Governor Johnson encloses a resolution replacing the statues of Daniel Morgan & Henry Lee with Andrew Lewis & James Monroe, and the allegorical figure of Virginia with James Madison (1855 Oct. 16). James Clinton Hooker writes to William F. Ritchie on behalf of Thomas Crawford enclosing a letter in French with instructions for the engineers charged with the unpacking & erection of the equestrian statue. In addition, Hooker comments on the progress of the statues of Mason & Marshall (1857 Aug. 22). On 11 November 1857, Joseph R. Anderson writes Governor Henry A. Wise recommending Alexander Galt to construct the remaining statues for the monument. There are several letters from dignitaries to Governor Wise regarding his invitation to attend the inauguration of the monument including A. Ardisson, Vice Consul of the U.S. at Rome; William Cabell Rives; Robert Francis W. Allston, Governor of South Carolina; Ralph P. Lowe, Governor of Iowa; and Thomas Bragg, Governor of North Carolina. Finally, there is a letter from Henry Exall to the Commissioners regarding his expenses in putting up the statue of Marshall (1867 March).

The early records of the Washington Equestrian Statue relate to loans, investments, etc., and subscriptions by individuals in order to raise money for the Washington Monument Fund. Within the loans & investments are deeds of trust and bonds between individuals and the Governor for investments in the Washington Monument Fund between 1828 and 1858. The subscriptions consist of correspondence from Linah Mims,

Lieutenant Governor, appointing commissioners to receive donations to defray the expense of the Washington Monument in 1817. Included is a list of subscribers between 1817 & 1818 with an amount and place of residence. There is also correspondence to Governor James P. Preston & the Executive Council regarding both successful and unsuccessful subscriptions. Included is a letter from Henry Lee regarding his appointment as one of the commissioners to collect subscriptions.

Miscellaneous documents include the following: a booklet containing a description of the Washington Monument designed by Robert Mills in Baltimore, Maryland; the duties of the Superintendent & Paymaster; a petition asking for compensation for Charles Dimmock for his services in elevating and placing the Equestrian Statue in its position; a memorial of stone-cutters complaining of their 11-hour work day; and a report of the Special Committee on the Application of Washington Irving, Benjamin F. Butler, and others for the erection of a statue of Washington by the Board of Alderman of New York City in 1842.

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Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

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