

# A Guide to the Governor James Monroe Executive Papers, 1811

Governor James Monroe Executive Papers, 1811  
1811

---

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 41252  
Library of Virginia  
2004

**Author:** Craig S. Moore

## History

**Processed by:** Craig S. Moore

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Governor James Monroe Executive Papers, 1811

**Subtitle:** Monroe, James, Executive Papers of Governor, 1811

**Collection:** 41252

**Author:** Craig S. Moore

## Publication Statement

**File size:** 2 KB

**Date:** © 2004 By the Library of Virginia. All rights reserved.

**Publisher:** Library of Virginia

[Conditions of Use](#)

## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from Microsoft Word, created by Craig S. Moore, 2004 June 16

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

**2013-11-21** Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

## Descriptive Summary

**Accession number**

41252

**Language**

English

**Physical Characteristics**

.45 cubic feet

**Repository**

Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open to research.

### **Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

### **Acquisition Information**

Acquired prior to 1905.

### **Preferred Citation**

Virginia. Governor's Office. James Monroe Executive Papers, 1811. Accession 41252, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

## **Alternative Form Available**

Also available on microfilm - Miscellaneous Reel 6018.

- Miscellaneous Reel 6018 - 1811 Jan. 17-Apr. 3.

## **Adjunct Descriptive Data**

## **Bibliography**

Flournoy, H. W., CALENDAR OF VIRGINIA STATE PAPERS, January 1, 1808-December 31, 1835, VOL. X, Richmond: James E. Goode, Printer, 1892.

## **Biographical Information**

James Monroe was born on 28 April 1758 in Westmoreland County, Virginia, to Spence Monroe and Elizabeth Jones. A graduate of William and Mary College in 1776, Monroe enlisted as a lieutenant in the Third Virginia Regiment of the Continental Army. Monroe was promoted to major following the Battle of Trenton, and served as a colonel and aid to General William Alexander from 1777 to 1778. Monroe studied law under Governor Thomas Jefferson and was elected to the House of Delegates in 1782, however, he vacated his seat when he was appointed to the Council of State. In 1783, Monroe was chosen as a delegate to represent Virginia in the Confederation Congress which he served until 1786. He returned to the House of Delegates in 1787 and represented Spotsylvania County in the Convention of 1788 to ratify the Federal Constitution. He lost an election to James Madison in the First Congress, but was later elected to the United States Senate on 9 November 1790 to replace the deceased William Grayson. He was reelected in 1791 and served in the Senate until his resignation on 27 May 1794. President George Washington appointed Monroe Minister Plenipotentiary to France on 28 May 1794.

Monroe became Governor of Virginia on 19 December 1799. During his first one-year term in office, Monroe successfully quelled Gabriel's Insurrection, the largest slave uprising in Virginia's history until that time. Monroe's governorship too saw the completion of the Virginia Penitentiary and the Manufactory of Arms. Monroe was elected to two additional one-year terms as governor. Following his governorship, in 1803, Monroe was appointed by President Thomas Jefferson as Minister Plenipotentiary to France, and later Minister Plenipotentiary to England from 1803 until 1807. Monroe returned to the House of Delegates in 1810 and was again elected governor on 19 January 1811. Monroe's second stint as governor, however, was short-lived as he resigned following his appointment by President James Madison as Secretary of State. Simultaneously, Monroe replaced John Armstrong as Secretary of War from 1814 to 1815. The culmination of Monroe's political career occurred with his election and subsequent reelection as the fifth President of the United States from 4 March 1817 to 3 March 1825. Monroe's last significant public position took place when he was elected president of the Virginia Constitutional Convention in 1829.

Monroe married Elizabeth Kortright in 1786. They had two daughters, Elizabeth and Maria Hester. He died at the home of his youngest daughter in New York City on 4 July 1831. Originally interred at the Marble Cemetery, Monroe's remains were later reinterred twenty-five years later in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery after appeals by Governor Henry A. Wise and the Virginia Legislature.

## **Scope and Content**

James Monroe's Executive papers primarily consists of incoming correspondence during Monroe's abbreviated term as governor from 17 January until 3 April 1811 when he resigned in order to accept the

position as Secretary of State. Included is correspondence addressed to George William Smith as lieutenant governor. The correspondence in this collection relates to a variety of topics including appointments & recommendations for state positions; an amendment to the U.S. Constitution; the Virginia Penitentiary & Manufactory of Arms; the Public Guard; the Bank of the United States; public improvements; resignations; state expenses & revenue; and others. In addition to correspondence, there are resolutions from the Virginia Senate & House of Delegates; accounts; oaths; muster rolls; pardons; proposals; receipts; election returns & certificates; qualifications; petitions; reports; appointments; resignations; bonds; commissions; orders; proceedings; applications; and other sundry items.

The Governor received correspondence from three main sources: the Federal government, Virginia State government, and Governors from other states. Federal government correspondents include William Eustis, Secretary of War, and Richard Brent & William B. Giles, Virginia's senators in Congress. On 16 February 1811, William Eustis writes concerning the travel expenses of Indians. According to Eustis, disbursements are not made for Indians other than for chiefs or headmen. Richard Brent writes to acknowledge receipt of the resolution of the Virginia General Assembly against the renewal of the Bank of the United State's charter (1811 Feb.1). Lastly, William B. Giles writes concerning a letter from the Secretary of War (1811 Feb. 20).

The majority of correspondence in James Monroe's Executive Papers originates from Virginia State government. Significant correspondents from Virginia State government include John Staples, Superintendent of the Virginia Manufactory of Arms; Peter Crutchfield, Commandant of the Public Guard; William W. Hening, Deputy Adjutant General; Abraham Douglas, Keeper of the Penitentiary; Philip N. Nicholas, Attorney General; James Pleasants, Jr. & William Munford, Clerks of the House of Delegates; and Samuel Shepard, Auditor of Public Accounts.

John Staples, as Superintendent of the Virginia Manufactory of Arms, corresponded frequently with the Governor regarding arms and the Manufactory in Richmond, Virginia. Staples encloses periodic monthly statements of the operations of the Manufactory (1811 Feb. & March). On 20 February 1811, Staples requests housing at the Manufactory for himself and his family. In addition, Staples writes regarding the following issues: the number of arms repaired under Robert Stewart's contract (1811 Jan. 21); the account of disbursements for the preservation of arms, etc. (1811 Jan. 24); rifle locks (1811 Jan. 20, Feb. 2 & 5); bayonets (1811 March 21); and the number of arms on hand to be distributed (1811 March 25).

Peter Crutchfield, Commandant of the Public Guard, submits a muster roll for the month of March 1811, a report of the daily duties from 1 to 31 March, and a return of arms & accoutrements belonging to the Public Guard (1811 March 31). William W. Hening, Deputy Adjutant General, requests that the records belonging to the Adjutant General's Office which were previously in the care of Col. Samuel Coleman as Deputy Adjutant General & Assistant Clerk of the Council, be transferred to him. Hening reiterates his request on 2 April 1811.

Abraham Douglas, Keeper of the Penitentiary, communicates with Governor Monroe on two occasions concerning his commission on the profits of the Penitentiary due him and his assistants for the year ending 1 Dec. 1810 (1811 Feb. 20 & 1811 April 1). In his letter dated 1 April 1811, Douglas also discusses the price of nails and the employment of prisoners in the manufacture of arms. D. J. Burr, Agent for the Penitentiary, submits his resignation on 20 February 1811, and again on 18 March 1811.

Philip Norborne Nicholas, Attorney General, writes regarding the sale of public land in Fluvanna County to A. A. Strange (1811 Feb. 1).

James Pleasants, Jr., Clerk of the House of Delegates, submits legislation to the Governor against the renewal of the charter of the Bank of the United States (1811 Jan. 22). Additionally, Pleasants transmits extracts from the House Journal regarding the elections of Francis T. Brooke and himself as judges of the Court of Appeals (1811 Jan. 30). Pleasants was replaced by William Munford as Clerk of the House of Delegates. Munford transmits extracts respecting the election of John Purnall to supply the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Brigadier General Peter Johnston and the election of Johnston as judge of the General Court occasioned by the promotion of Francis T. Brooke to the Court of Appeals (1811 Feb. 1). On 1811 Feb. 23, Pleasants encloses his commission in resignation as judge of the Court of Appeals.

Samuel Shepard, Auditor of Public Accounts, corresponds often with Governor Monroe regarding various financial matters. He writes concerning executions against Daniel Carlan, security for Thomas Mitchell, Collector of Taxes in Washington County (1811 Feb. 2), George Penn, Sheriff of Patrick County, and Henry Washington, Sheriff of Westmoreland County (1811 March 15). Lastly, Shepard writes concerning D. J. Burr's account as Agent for the Penitentiary (1811 March 1) and a warrant on the Contingent Fund for public riders (1811 March 18).

Governors from other states comprise a significant amount of correspondence received by the Governor. This correspondence mostly relates to an amendment to the U. S. Constitution against the holding of offices by citizens who accept titles of nobility from foreign powers. Included are letters from the following governors enclosing resolutions of their respective legislatures ratifying the amendment: Return J. Meigs, Ohio; Charles Scott, Kentucky; Simon Snyder, Pennsylvania; & Joseph Bloomfield, New Jersey. In addition, William C. C. Claiborne, Governor of the Territory of Orleans, writes regarding persons in confinement for the murder of Gardner Mayes (1811 March 4).

Additional significant correspondence includes the following: William Tatham re. the Kempsville Canal from Norfolk to North Carolina (1811 Jan. 30); William Rose, Keeper of the Public Jail, re. the building of a brick kitchen for the use of the public jail (1811 Feb. 1); Francis Brooke accepting his appointment as judge of the Court of Appeals (1811 Feb. 2); Alexander Quarrier, Keeper of the Capitol, re. the condition of the skylight, the pavement of the portico, & the general dirty state of the whole house (1811 Feb. 18); Charles Blagrove, Land Office, re. bounty lands for officers & soldiers of the Virginia State Line (1811 Feb. 25); Benjamin Homans, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, enclosing a resolution to forward three sets of statutes to each state (1811 March 24); William H. Cabell accepting his appointment as judge of the Court of Appeals (1811 March 24); Hugh Nelson resigning as judge of the General Court (1811 March 30); Dabney Carr accepting an appointment as judge of the General Court (1811 March 30); St. George Tucker resigning as judge of the General Court (1811 April 2); and Alexander Quarrier re. mischief done to the Capitol on account of the doors being kept open on Sundays for the clerks (1811 April 3).

Other noteworthy items include: the certificate of qualification from Nathaniel Selden, Justice of the Peace for Henrico County, for James Monroe as governor (1811 Jan. 18); the certificate of qualification from William Price, Justice of the Peace for Henrico County, for William Robertson as Clerk of the Council of State (1811 Jan. 31); proceedings of the Board of Visitors at the Penitentiary (1811 Jan. 31); the certificate of qualification from Nathaniel Selden, Justice of the Peace for Henrico County, for William Wardlaw as privy councilor (1811 Feb. 7); the bond of John Staples as Superintendent of the Virginia Manufactory of Arms (1811 Feb. 18); the memorandum of agreement between William Moncure & A. B. Venable, et al., commissioners under the act of Assembly, regarding the rent of a dwelling house & grounds owned by Moncure as a residence for the governor (1811 March 1); and the commission of James Allen as judge of the General Court to supply the vacancy caused by the resignation of Hugh Nelson (1811 March 30).

## Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by date of document with undated items arranged to the rear.

## Contents List

### James Monroe Executive Papers

#### 1811

##### January

**17-31**

**Box 1**

**Folder 1**

##### February

**1-20**

**Box 1**

**Folder 2**

**21-28**

**Box 1**

**Folder 3**

##### Filing Jackets

**Box 1**

**Folder 4**

##### March

**1-15**

**Box 1**

**Folder 5**

**17-26**

**Box 1**

**Folder 6**

**27-31**

**Box 1**

**Folder 7**

**Filing Jackets**

**Box 1**

**Folder 8**

**April**

**1-3**

**Box 1**

**Folder 9**