

# Murray, John, 4th Earl of Dunmore Papers

John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore Papers

1768-1804

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## Title Statement

Murray, John, 4th Earl of Dunmore PapersGuide to the John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore Papers SC 01295

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

SC 01295

### Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/524

### Unit Date

1768-1804

### Language

English

### Creator

Dunmore, John Murray, 4th Earl of, 1732-1809

### Extent

0.18 Linear Feet

### Repository

Special Collections Research Center

## Administrative Information

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### **Acquisition Information:**

Purchase from H. P. Kraus during 10/1974; gift of John Blair during 3/1976; purchase from Joseph Rubinfine during 4/1983; and gift of Ralph H. Wark and Patrick Hayes during 4/1983.

### **Preferred Citation:**

John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

## **Biographical Information:**

John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore (1730-1809), was a British peer and colonial governor. He was the son of William Murray, 3rd Earl of Dunmore, and his wife Catherine (nee Murray).

Murray succeeded his father in the earldom in 1756 and sat as a Scottish Representative Peer in the House of Lords from 1761 to 1774 and from 1776 to 1790. He was the British governor of the Province of New York from 1770 to 1771 and the Virginia Colony, from September 25, 1771 until his departure to New York on New Years Eve, 1776. During his term as Virginia's colonial governor, he directed a series of campaigns against the Indians known as Lord Dunmore's War. The Shawnee were the main target of these attacks, and his purpose was to strengthen Virginia's claims in the west, particularly in the Ohio Country. However, some have accused him of colluding with the Shawnees and arranging the war to deplete the Virginia militia and help safeguard the Loyalist cause, should there be a colonial rebellion.

From 1774 on, Dunmore was continually clashing with the Colonial Assembly. He left Williamsburg on June 8, 1775, retreating to his hunting lodge, Porto Bello, and had to take refuge on the British warship Fowey in the York River when the American Revolutionary War began. When he realized he could not regain control in Virginia, he returned to Britain in July 1776.

He is noted for Lord Dunmore's Proclamation on November 7, 1775, whereby he offered freedom to enslaved Africans who joined his Army. This was the first mass emancipation of slaves in North America, however, after his retreat he resold these men back into slavery. He organized these Black Loyalists into the Ethiopian Regiment. However, after the Battle of Kemp's Landing, Dunmore became over-confident, which precipitated his defeat at the Battle of Great Bridge, December 9, 1775. Following this defeat, he loaded his army onto British ships and retreated to New York.

From 1787 to 1796, he served as Governor of the Bahamas. Lord Dunmore married Lady Charlotte, daughter of Alexander Stewart, 6th Earl of Galloway, in 1759. Their daughter Lady Augusta Murray was the daughter-in-law of King George III. Dunmore died in March 1809 and was succeeded in the earldom by his eldest son George. The Countess of Dunmore died in 1818.

## **Scope and Contents**

Papers concerning John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, and last royal governor of Virginia. There are three Virginia-related items: a land grant, 1773; account, 1774-1776, of Lord Dunmore concerning one of his plantations; and letter, 1775, written by Lord Dunmore while on board the Royal William. Papers also include a letter, 1768, concerning Lord Dunmore's desire to be elected one of the Scottish peers of Parliament and a letter, 1770, concerning his brother-in-law. The majority of the items concern Lord Dunmore's service as governor of the Bahama Islands. The collection was previously identified as "Dunmore Family Papers (II)," 74s D92. The title was changed in March 2018 to better reflect the contents.

## **Keywords**

Correspondence

Financial records  
Bahamas--History  
Bahamas--Politics and government  
Virginia--History--Revolution, 1775-1783  
Scotland--History--18th century  
Scotland--Politics and government--18th century  
United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

## General

The collection was previously identified as "Dunmore Family Papers (II)," 74s D92. The title was changed in March 2018 to better reflect the contents.

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Papers

**Unit ID** id212959

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/43547

**Unit Date** 1773, 1775, 1794

**Mixed Materials** Small Collections Oversize Box 3 (Box)

**Container** 1 (Oversize Folder)

### Scope and Contents

Item 1: Original land grant to John Whitner for 239 acres in Augusta County, VA, signed by Dunmore (1773 March 1)

Item 2: Original Dunmore letter to possibly Edward Snickers concerning Lord Fairfax Martin and James Welsh, Dunmore's overseer and Dunmore's plantation "Mount Charlotte" in West Virginia. Dunmore states he is a "sincere well wisher to this Colony [of Virginia]." Includes typescript (1775 Oct. 23)

Item 3: Original account of James Ferguson, master carpenter, for erecting a hospital at Fort Charlotte (Nassau, Bahamas), examined, approved, and signed by Dunmore (1794 Jan. 1-March 31)

Item 4: Original account of James Menzies, paymaster, concerning the building of a hospital at Fort Charlotte (Nassau, Bahamas), examined, approved, and signed by Dunmore (1794 Jan. 1-March 31)

### Papers

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/267355

**Unit Date** 1768-1804

**Mixed Materials** Small Collections Box 92 (Box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

**Language** English

### Scope and Contents

Item 1: Copy of Dunmore letter concerning his desire to be elected one of the Scottish peers to Parliament (original dated 1768 March 16 and in the possession of John Blair of Richard Bland College)

Item 2: Original Dunmore letter concerning a request to have Major Murray appointed an officer in the Royal Highland Regiment, also mentions John Manners (Marquis of Granby), Lord John Murray, and the Duke of Atholl (1770 January 18)

Item 3: Original account of Dunmore with Edward Snickers concerning a plantation in West Virginia. Includes cost of a plantation purchased from Joseph Combs and a slave sold to Lord Dunmore. James Welsh was Dunmore's overseer. Account sworn before Edward McGuire, Justice of the Peace for Frederick County, Virginia on April 9, 1785 (1774 Jan. 10-1776 June 20)

Item 4: Original Dunmore letter to Thomas Steele concerning the expense of the Engineers Department in the Bahama Islands (1790 April 1)

Item 5: Original fragment of an abstract concerning an account approved by the Council of the Bahama Islands and signed by Dunmore (1791 Jan. 8)

Item 6: Original account of James Tait, superintendent for erecting barracks at Fort Charlotte (Nassau, Bahamas), examined, approved, and signed by Dunmore (1791 April 1-June 30)

Item 7: Original Dunmore letter to Charles Long concerning the quarterly account of a Mr. Gamble (1795 Jan. 14)

Item 8: Original Dunmore letter to Philip Deare concerning Dunmore's accounts while serving as Governor of the Bahama Islands (1804 Oct. 27)