

James Monroe Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78033217>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009142>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2014
Revised 2023 June

Collection Summary

Title: James Monroe Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1758-1839

ID No.: MSS33217

Creator: Monroe, James, 1758-1831

Extent: 5,200 items

Extent: 50 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 16 linear feet

Extent: 13 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78033217>

Summary: United States president, secretary of state, secretary of war, and diplomat; delegate to the Continental Congress from and governor of Virginia. Correspondence relating primarily to negotiations for the Louisiana Purchase, the Monroe-Pinkney treaty with Great Britain, the War of 1812, the purchase of Florida, South American independence, and Virginia politics and a diary, an account book of memoranda and official and personal accounts, and other papers.

Online Content: The papers of James Monroe are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000029>. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition as available.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848--Correspondence.
Adams, John, 1735-1826--Correspondence.
Armstrong, John, 1758-1843--Correspondence.
Barlow, Joel, 1754-1812--Correspondence.
Benton, William, 1788-1881--Correspondence.
Bowdoin, James, 1752-1811--Correspondence.
Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850--Correspondence.
Crawford, William Harris, 1772-1834--Correspondence.
Dearborn, Henry, 1751-1829--Correspondence.
Erskine, Thomas Erskine, Baron, 1750-1823--Correspondence.
Erving, George William, 1769-1850--Correspondence.
Gallatin, Albert, 1761-1849--Correspondence.
Graham, John, 1774-1820--Correspondence.
Henderson, Richard H., active 1822--Correspondence.
Humphreys, David, 1752-1818--Correspondence.
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845--Correspondence.
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Correspondence.
Jones, Joseph, 1727-1805--Correspondence.
King, Rufus, 1755-1827--Correspondence.
Law, Thomas, 1756-1834--Correspondence.
Livingston, Robert R., 1746-1813--Correspondence.
Madison, James, 1751-1836--Correspondence.
McLean, John, 1785-1861--Correspondence.
Mercer, John Francis, 1759-1821--Correspondence.
Monroe, James, 1758-1831.
Pinkney, William, 1764-1822--Correspondence.
Randolph, Edmund, 1753-1813--Correspondence.

Randolph, John, 1773-1833--Correspondence.
Roane, Spencer, 1762-1822--Correspondence.
Rodney, C. A. (Caesar Augustus), 1772-1824--Correspondence.
Rush, Richard, 1780-1859--Correspondence.
Taylor, John, 1753-1824--Correspondence.
Tazewell, Littleton Waller, 1774-1860--Correspondence.
Tucker, St. George, 1752-1827--Correspondence.
Washington, George, 1732-1799--Correspondence.
Wirt, William, 1772-1834--Correspondence.

Subjects

Louisiana Purchase.

Places

Florida--History--Spanish colony, 1784-1821.
France--Foreign relations--United States.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--Treaties.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
South America--History--Wars of Independence, 1806-1830.
Spain--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Foreign relations--1783-1865.
United States--Foreign relations--France.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
United States--Foreign relations--Spain.
United States--Foreign relations--Treaties.
United States--History--1783-1865.
United States--History--War of 1812.
United States--Politics and government--1817-1825.
Virginia--Politics and government.

Titles

James Monroe Papers at the Library of Congress

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Delegates, U.S. Continental Congress--Virginia.
Diplomats.
Presidents--United States.

Acquisition Information

The papers of James Monroe, United States president, secretary of state, secretary of war, and diplomat, delegate to the Continental Congress from and governor of Virginia, consist of material received through gift, transfer from the United States State Department, and purchase by the Library of Congress during the years 1901-2001.

Processing History

The James Monroe Papers were arranged, indexed, and microfilmed in 1958-1960. Subsequent additions were arranged and described in 1979, and a finding aid to the additions was revised and expanded in 1985 and 1996. In 2009 the finding aid was expanded by including description of the main collection from the published index. The 2014 addition incorporated microfilm made in 1952 and an accession from 2001. The finding aid was also revised and expanded in 2014. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Additional Guides

The microfilm edition of these papers (not including additions) is indexed in the *Index to the James Monroe Papers* (Washington, D.C.: 1963), prepared as part of the President's Papers Index Series. The index is available online at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/gdclccn.62060006>.

Other Repositories

Microfilm of James Monroe papers in the New York Public Library, New York, N.Y., and a microfilm produced by the University of Virginia Library of records in the Virginia State Archives and other Virginia repositories are available for consultation in the Manuscript Division reading room.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James Monroe is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of James Monroe are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on thirteen reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Online Content

The papers of James Monroe are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000029>. *To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition as available.*

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, James Monroe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1758, April 28	Born, Westmoreland County, Va.
1774	Moved to King George County under the guardianship of his uncle, Joseph Jones Entered College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.
1775	Commissioned second lieutenant, Third Virginia Regiment
1775-1779	Fought with George Washington and William Alexander in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel
1779	Studied law with Thomas Jefferson in Williamsburg, Va.

1782	Representative, King George County, Virginia House of Delegates
1783-1786	Delegate from Virginia, Fourth Congress of the Confederation
1786	Married Elizabeth Kortright (died 1830) Practiced law, Fredericksburg, Va.
1788	Delegate to the Virginia state convention to ratify the Federal constitution
1790-1794	Senator from Virginia, First Congress of the United States
1794-1796	Minister Plenipotentiary to France
1799-1803	Governor of Virginia
1803	Minister Plenipotentiary to France; signed Louisiana Purchase
1803-1807	Minister to England
1811	Governor of Virginia
1811-1817	Secretary of state
1813	Secretary of war, <i>ad interim</i>
1814	Joined Maryland militia at Bladensburg
1814-1815	Secretary of war and secretary of state, acting in dual appointments
1817-1825	President of the United States
1830	Moved to New York, N.Y., to make his home with daughter Maria and son-in-law Samuel Gouverneur
1831, July 4	Died, New York, N.Y.

History of the Collection

[From *Index to the James Monroe Papers* (Washington, D.C.: 1963), pp. v-xi]

When James Monroe retired from the Presidency on March 4, 1825, he returned to Oak Hill, his estate in Loudoun County, Va. [1] In the years that followed, his attempts to pay his debts and to better his financial condition must have required the steady use of a great many of the papers he had accumulated during his long years of public service, particularly those which could further the investigation of his accounts that he had asked Congress to make. Annotations on many of the papers give evidence that Monroe made some attempt to organize them; this was doubtless done during the years of his retirement.

To stimulate action by Congress he wrote a long paper on his "unsettled claims" in the summer of 1826 and sent it to Gales and Seaton in Washington for publication. [2] The following year he undertook the preparation of two additional papers which he hoped would raise money through sales. The first of these was a comparison of the Government of the United States with other, older, republics; [3] the second was his autobiography. [4]

Another means of raising money was suggested to him in correspondence with Nicholas P. Trist, who wrote him on January 27, 1828, from Monticello:

I suppose you have kept copies of all yr. letters to Mr. J[efferson].—There are among them numerous evid[en]ces of the pure disinterestedness of yr. course, & of the fact that in taking those steps wh. launched you irrevocably on the sea of public life, you were actuated solely by devotion to yr. country, to the well understood disparagemt. of yr. individual interests. That you may reap a reward somewhat commensurate with these sacrifices is with me more a wish than a hope. Will you permit me to ask however whether you cd. not at once avail yourself of the value of yr. papers, by pledging the proceeds of their future public[atio]n, in consid[eratio]n of a loan? If I mistake not, such a measure would be far from unexampled; wd. it be impracticable?

In Monroe's reply, on February 8, he wrote: "I have examined my papers, and find that I have, as I believe, all the letters, that were ever written to me by Mr. Jefferson. The first bears date in 1780, while I was reading the law under him. . . . I have copies, but I am satisfied, that I have not, of a fifth, of them I wrote him." He offered to send Jefferson's letters to Thomas Jefferson Randolph if he would be gratified to possess them, an offer that was apparently not accepted, and he added: "Your suggestion as to the sale of my papers, or pledge of them, merits attention." [5]

Monroe's study of republics and his autobiography were incomplete, and his claims before Congress were still unresolved, when Mrs. Monroe died in September 1830. Two months later financial difficulties and ill health forced him to leave Oak Hill and to make his home with his younger daughter, Maria, and her husband, Samuel L. Gouverneur, in New York City. The latter was acting as Monroe's agent in dealing with the several committees of Congress investigating his claims, and for this purpose Monroe had supplied his son-in-law with selections from his papers from time to time, as shown in letters exchanged by the two men. In addition to papers that might already have been in New York, it is reasonable to suppose that Monroe took with him when he left Virginia such papers as he would need to continue work on his autobiography. Nevertheless, an undetermined number of his papers were at Oak Hill when Monroe died in New York City on July 4, 1831. [6]

In his will, Samuel L. Gouverneur was named "sole and exclusive executor" and was asked to care for Monroe's older daughter Elizabeth, whose husband, Judge George Hay, had died the previous autumn. The Monroe papers were mentioned somewhat obliquely in the following provision: ". . . with respect to the works in which I am engaged and leave behind, I commit the care and publication of them to my son in law Samuel L. Gouverneur [*sic*], giving to him one third of the profits arising therefrom for his trouble in preparing them for publication, one third to my daughter Maria and one third to my daughter Elizabeth." [7]

In the first month of Gouverneur's proprietorship of the papers, he lent a small number to John Quincy Adams, who was to deliver a eulogy to Monroe in Boston at the invitation of the city government. On July 19, Gouverneur wrote: "As a means of affording you all the interesting details of Mr. Monroe's early life, in the most ample form, and with the greatest precision, I have taken the liberty to enclose you the first 60 or 70 sheets of a sketch prepared by himself, & which together with all his other interesting papers, he entrusted to my special charge. . . . With the history of his life for the later years, you are well acquainted. He has left copious notes & a most extensive correspondence but he was prevented by death, from completing that portion of his career, even in the shape, which the present has assumed." Apparently he sent additional papers a week later, because Adams, in a letter of August 30, wrote that he was returning "the papers transmitted to me with your letter of the 26th. ulto." and added that "The manuscript of Mr. Monroe shall be returned in the course of a few days—By a private hand if an opportunity should present itself. Before the end of the week I hope to forward a printed Copy of the Eulogy."

Early the following year Richard Rush, writing from York, Pa., asked Gouverneur to return the personal letters he had written to Monroe while he was minister to England: "I wrote often to him, and with a freedom that would not have been justifiable in my public despatches. . . . It is on this account that I should be glad to have them in my possession, lest by any chances hereafter any portion of them should come to be mixed up with his manuscripts . . . and in that way run the risk of publicity." The nature of Gouverneur's reply is suggested by the next letter he received from Rush: "Its obliging sentiments . . . leave me no anxiety on the score of the private and confidential letters alluded to. . . . if any parts of them can, in the judgement of others, be made subsidiary to the better understanding of any of Mr. Monroe's services, there is no scruple even that I would not forego on my part; so much did I honor him as a statesman, revere him as a patriot, and love him as a man. At the same time the promise you are so good as to give that no use will be made of any paper from me without my approbation . . . is a relief."

Gouverneur was again reminded of his responsibilities as custodian of the Monroe papers three years later, when he received an anonymous letter written by "A Virginian" in "Alexandria, District of Columbia," on June 11, 1835: ". . . the character of your illustrious kinsman is already marked a victim for the sacrifice.

Let me implore you as you revere his name and reverence his memory—let me intreat you as patriot and an honorable man—let me caution you as you value your own reputation hold on to every scrap of writing that may be in your possession in any manner connected with his private or public life—preserve every paper that concerns him, for as you life [*sic*], if you respect his memory you will have use for them.

Apparently Gouverneur did some work toward preparing the papers for publication during the 1830's and a manuscript relating to Monroe, which he started to write, is said to have survived. [8] He was busy with other pursuits, however—he was Postmaster of New York City from 1828 to 1836 and part owner of the Bowery Theatre there—and he seems not to have found work on the Monroe papers a congenial occupation. Nevertheless there is no evidence that he was ready to accept the offer of help he received from Barnabus Bates of New York City, who, in a letter of February 13, 1839, agreed to prepare and publish a memoir on Monroe "upon terms which shall be mutually advantageous and satisfactory." Bates had heard through Commodore Charles Goodwin Ridgely, then in charge of the Navy Yard at New York, that Gouverneur

possessed "a very interesting correspondence between Presdts. Jefferson and Monroe in relation to the Gun Boat system recommended by the former," and he suggested that Gouverneur "procure while in Virginia any papers necessary to accomplish the object."

In contrast Gouverneur took positive action in regard to the papers during the following decade.

Elizabeth Kortright Hay, Monroe's older daughter, died in 1840 and in the same year Samuel and Maria Gouverneur moved from New York City to Washington, where they lived in the De Menou buildings on H Street. [9] They also spent periods of each year at Oak Hill. Gouverneur worked in the Consular Bureau of the Department of State from 1844 to 1849, when he resigned because of the "afflicted state" of his family and because a promised advancement had not materialized. [10]

It must have been about the time he entered Government service that Gouverneur became acquainted with Henry O'Reilly (or O'Rielly, as he later spelled his name), a vigorous young man who had been editor of the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* in Rochester, N.Y., and who was active in many causes. According to a long, rather rambling memorandum O'Reilly wrote many years later, Gouverneur first tried to persuade him to occupy the farm at Oak Hill and to assist in disposing of the property, and later Gouverneur sought his help in connection with the Monroe papers: "In the course of our acquaintance Mr. Gouverneur suggested to me, *without any solicitation on my part*, that he & others wished me to take charge & control of the Ex-President's records & other Papers with a view to the Publication of *A Selection from those papers along with a memoir of Mr. Monroe &c* in case it should be found that a sale of the whole mass could not be made to the Government. . . . [11]

Gouverneur did indeed turn over to O'Reilly what appears to have been in the major part of the Monroe papers, probably in 1844 or 1845. In the latter year O'Reilly also entered into a contract with Samuel F. B. Morse and Amos Kendall to raise capital for telegraph lines from Eastern Pennsylvania to St. Louis and the Great Lakes, and his work in this connection must have left him little time to give to the Monroe papers. Even their exact location during the mid-1840's is uncertain although glancing references in some of his letters make it likely that O'Reilly deposited them somewhere in New York City while his work of erecting telegraph lines took him from place to place. Samuel L. Gouverneur himself seems not to have known where they were being stored. His concern is evident in a letter he wrote to O'Reilly on May 17, 1847, in which he also outlined terms for the treatment of the papers: "I should have written you before—but from the uncertainty where a letter would find you—I see by the papers (notices of arrivals, etc.) that you are in New York [actually this letter was forwarded to Philadelphia].

I propose in reply to yours that we should divide the proceeds—first deducting 1/8 to be allowed to the Estate of Mr. Monroe. This is on the supposition that the Heirs at law might expect something, & I should agree to fix the sum at that. I also wish it stipulated that the entire control of published matter in reference to Mr. Monroe should be vested in me—I mean that no papers should be published without my assent first had. This I consider just & right, especially as some matter might refer to questions of a personal or delicate nature. Let me have your reply to the above.

I hope you have the papers all in a place of perfect security as I value them very highly, & would be unwilling to run the risk of loss or accident to them—when will you be this way—I should be glad to have a talk with you. . . ."

Not having heard from O'Reilly, Gouverneur wrote again nearly five months later, on October 14, asking him to drop a line and "*assure me* respecting which, I feel some anxiety, that all my papers, are safely deposited, where no accident can befall them." This letter apparently reached O'Reilly in Cincinnati, Ohio. [12]

The first and apparently only substantial use that was made of the Monroe Papers while they were in Gouverneur's custody occurred the following year. Gouverneur requested O'Reilly to make transcripts of a number of papers for Senator James D. Westcott, Jr., of Florida, and he himself lent the Senator a parcel of original manuscripts he had retained. The texts or references to these were incorporated in Westcott's speech of July 25, 1848, on the territorial government of Oregon. [13]

The stalemate on making effective arrangements to publish or sell the Monroe papers seems finally to have been broken in 1848. Doubtless an important factor in this matter was the purchase made by the Government that year of papers of James Madison (a second segment), of Alexander Hamilton, and of Thomas Jefferson. On December 14, Richard Smith, the executor of Elizabeth K. Hay's estate, agreed to accept one-eighth of the proceeds of any publication or sale (rather than the one-third share specified in James Monroe's will) provided the estate was exonerated from any costs connected with the transactions. [14] This was followed on December 28 by a formal agreement between Samuel L. Gouverneur and

Henry O'Reilly, by which any profits resulting from publication of the papers would be divided so as to give three-eighths to O'Reilly, one-eighth to the estate of President Monroe, and four-eighths to Gouverneur. If, however, the papers were sold for not less than \$20,000, O'Reilly was to get thirty percent of the proceeds and to pay one-third of this amount to Eliab Kingman and others assisting in the sale, while Gouverneur was to get the other seventy percent and to pay from this sum one-eighth of the entire proceeds to the estate of James Monroe. [15]

Upon completion of these arrangements Gouverneur addressed a petition to Congress on January 1, 1849, asking aid from the Government in publishing the manuscript papers of James Monroe. [16] Presented by Senator John A. Dix of New York on January 3, the petition was ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee on the Library. [17] Gouverneur apparently learned later that month that the Congress preferred to purchase the manuscripts rather than subscribe to their publication, and at this point O'Reilly, through an agent, formally relinquished his rights under the contract with Gouverneur so that the purchase could proceed without complication. [18] On February 28 the Senate, by a vote of 28 to 20, approved the purchase of the Monroe papers for \$20,000. On March 2 the House concurred in an amendment proposed by the Committee of Ways and Means that the purchase be limited to papers not of a private character; [19] and on the following day it was enacted, as part of the act making appropriations for the civil and diplomatic expenses of Government for the year ending June 30, 1850, that "the manuscript books and papers of the late James Monroe" be purchased for the above amount and be deposited in the Department of State. [20] On March 13 Gouverneur signed an indenture of bargain and sale of "all the said Manuscript Books & Papers of the said *James Monroe*, together with all copyright, title, interest, property, claim & demand whatsoever of, in, and to the same," and on the same day the transaction was completed when Secretary of State John M. Clayton signed a receipt for the material and First Auditor William Collins signed a certificate that the sum of \$20,000 was payable to Samuel L. Gouverneur as executor of the estate of James Monroe." [21]

Historian James Schouler was perhaps the first person to use the Monroe papers for historical research while they were in the Department of State. In 1882 he described them as "a huge mass of interesting matter relative to our earlier national history, which lies unassorted in the Department of State and for whose editorial supervision and publication it is to be fervently hoped that Congress will some day make suitable provision." [22]

This situation was rectified when Congress, by acts approved March 2, 1889, and August 30, 1890, appropriated money for the repair, mounting, and binding of the papers. [23] They were arranged in two chronological series (one comprising manuscripts by Monroe, the other manuscripts addressed or referred to him) and were bound in 22 volumes. A calendar of the papers, which reflected the two series but with entries arranged alphabetically by writer of each manuscript, was prepared and published by the Department of State in preliminary form in 1889 and in a corrected edition in 1893. [24] Seven years later the Librarian of the Department of State prepared a seven-volume unofficial edition of the writings of Monroe. [25]

As a result of an Executive Order of March 9, 1903, the Monroe Papers were transferred to the Library of Congress. The 22 volumes were received in the Manuscript Division on November 5, 1903, and were associated with two letterbooks (now designated as Series 3 of the papers), which had been acquired by the Library from an undetermined source some time before 1898. [26] Less than a year after their receipt, the Library published a chronological list of the papers which had been received by transfer (slightly more than 2,650 manuscripts), the items included in the letterbooks, and a few Monroe manuscripts located in other collections in the Library. [27]

At this point in the story it is necessary to consider the papers which were deemed to be of a "private character," and which were therefore retained by Samuel L. Gouverneur.

Maria Monroe Gouverneur died on June 20, 1850, at Oak Hill. She was survived by her husband and three children, a daughter Elizabeth and two sons, Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr., and James Monroe Gouverneur. In 1852 Oak Hill, the former Monroe estate, was sold [28] and at some time during the following year Samuel L. Gouverneur married Mary Digges Lee, a granddaughter of Governor Thomas Sim Lee. The couple made their home at the Lee estate of Needwood, near Petersville, Md., and Gouverneur, who was presumably custodian of the remaining Monroe papers, died there on September 29, 1865. [29] His will, filed among records of the Orphan's Court of Frederick County, Md., shows that he bequeathed his entire estate to the second Mrs. Gouverneur.

Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr., brought an action of replevin against Mrs. Mary Digges Lee Gouverneur in the Circuit Court of Frederick County in 1866 to recover his mothers' patrimony. The record of this case, which was decided in his favor in October 1868, shows that he sought the return of furniture, paintings, and other household ornaments. The Monroe papers were not mentioned. [30] One may assume, moreover, from the preface to his edition of Monroe's *The People the*

Sovereigns (1867) that he had only this one manuscript from his grandfather's papers and that it had been in his possession for some years. Nevertheless, three years after his death in 1880, there appeared a published reference to an important segment of Monroe papers which were then in the possession of his widow, Mrs. Marian Campbell Gouverneur. [31] This lends credence to the family tradition that several hundred Monroe papers were found in secret compartments of the desk on which the address that incorporated the Monroe Doctrine was signed. [32]

Some time before 1889 these papers were deposited in the Department of State, where a calendar of them was prepared. [33] They had evidently been returned to Mrs. Gouverneur by 1892; Acting Secretary of State William F. Wharton referred to the "Gouverneur collection" as having been in her possession when he complied with a Senate request of February 3, 1892, for information about unpublished Monroe papers. [34]

Former President Rutherford B. Hayes called the attention of the Librarian of Congress to Mrs. Gouverneur's manuscripts in 1888 [35] and on two occasions (in 1902 and from 1922 to 1927) the entire group was deposited in the Library with a view to purchase and for safekeeping. [36] Purchase was not effected.

Prior to the death of Mrs. Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr., the "Gouverneur collection" of Monroe papers was given to her three daughters, Maud Campbell Gouverneur, Mrs. Rose Gouverneur Hoes, and Mrs. Ruth Monroe Johnson. It was kept as a unit until the death of Mrs. Hoes, after which a division was made. Mrs. Hoes' share was divided between her two sons, Gouverneur and Laurence Gouverneur Hoes, and the latter also was given the share inherited by his aunt, Maud C. Gouverneur. Mrs. Johnson gave her share to her son, Monroe Johnson. [37]

That portion of the "Gouverneur collection" which came into the possession of Laurence G. Hoes is now in the James Monroe Memorial Library in Fredericksburg, Va. He has generously allowed the Library to make photocopies of this group and these now comprise Series 2 of the Library's Monroe papers. The portion which had belonged to Major Gouverneur Hoes (205 manuscripts) was purchased by the Library from his widow, Mrs. Gourley Edwards Hoes, in 1950; these papers have been interfiled in the chronologically arranged Series 1, where they can be identified by the legend "Ac. 9405" on the lower left corner of the first page of each document. Of the one-third share of the original "Gouverneur collection" given to Monroe Johnson the Library purchased a total of 184 pieces from him in 1931 ("Ac. 4167A" appears on the first page of each of these manuscripts, filed in Series 1); and in 1932 Mr. Johnson deposited what was presumably the remainder of his holding of Monroe papers—95 manuscripts—in the Library of the College of William and Mary.

The Monroe papers that remained at Needwood when Samuel L. Gouverneur, Sr., died in 1865 became the property of his widow, Mrs. Mary Digges Lee Gouverneur. It has not been possible to determine the exact number of manuscripts that composed this segment, although there is evidence that it was considerably larger than the segment that formed the "Gouverneur collection."

Three months after Mrs. Gouverneur died at Needwood on October 4, 1898, [38] a part of the Monroe papers she owned was mentioned in correspondence between her nephew, John Lambert Cadwalader of New York, and the executor of her estate, Charles O'Donnell Lee of Baltimore, [39] Mrs. Gouverneur's nephew. On January 11, 1899, the former wrote:

. . . When the papers to which I referred in a previous letter, were received by me, now two or three years ago, I intended to have them examined by an expert, and there was some sort of an understanding that something should be done with them in so far as they were of a public character. One or two documents were given away with Mrs. Gouverneur's consent, not of any particular value, and I had it in mind to suggest to her some distribution of the papers in one or two public places, leaving, as she expressed it to me, some considerable part for yourself.

However nothing was done, nor were the papers during her lifetime ever entirely examined by any experts. I have since had the papers examined, through Dr. Billings, the Director of the New York Public Library, and I enclose his memorandum [in which the papers were valued at \$750]. . . .

Of course, these papers, although a part of the papers of my uncle, Mr. Gouverneur, and which he received from Mr. Monroe, are, nevertheless, a part of Mrs. Gouverneur's estate, and I do not know what disposition you propose to make of them. Should you desire on behalf of Mrs. Gouverneur's estate to sell all of the papers, I would be glad to take them, so that Mr. Monroe's papers would find a proper resting place. . . .

Lee decided that as executor he should first examine the papers "in their relation to many more I have here," and they were returned to him for that purpose. After going over them, however, he decided to accept Cadwalader's offer and wrote on January 24 that he was returning the package "contents exactly as rec'd!" The latter presented them that year to the New York Public Library, of which he was a trustee. The manuscripts in the gift were estimated to number about 1,200. [40]

The "many more" papers Charles O'Donnell Lee retained are reported to have been divided into five portions, one going to each of the five Lee children who survived their parents. Two of the portions have since been acquired by Laurence Gouverneur Hoes, and the originals, like the other Monroe papers that he received, are now in the James Monroe Memorial Library and reproductions are in Series 2 of the Monroe Papers in the Library of Congress.

A number of important manuscripts that once were part of the Monroe Papers have at some time or times been separated from the segment retained by the family. Among these are Monroe's diary notes dating from March 1804 to May 1805 and his letterbook for the period from November 1804 to May 1805, which are now in the New York Public Library. [41] In addition to the two letterbooks mentioned above, the Library of Congress has acquired from various sources during this century, by purchase and gift, a volume containing Monroe's diary notes dating from June 1794 to July 1796 (with additional notes for 1801-2) and an account of his expenses from 1794 to 1802, as well as the recipients' copies of eighteen letters to Monroe and four brief memoranda in his hand.

The Library modified the arrangement of the Monroe Papers made by the Department of State by combining the two chronological series into one chronology (which included the segment acquired from Monroe Johnson in 1931) and the correspondence was rebound, in 37 volumes, in 1941.

As part of the Library's program to ensure safety of its most valuable manuscript holdings during World War II, the entire body of Monroe Papers was removed from Washington in December 1941 and stored in the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia until 1944, when the group was returned to Washington under the direction of Alvin W. Kremer, then Keeper of the Collections. [42]

During 1958-60 the arrangement of the manuscripts—which now number 3,821—was studied and perfected and a microfilm of the Monroe Papers in this arrangement was released in November 1960, so that greater accessibility of the material would be ensured.

Note: This essay was written by Mrs. Dorothy S. Eaton, Specialist in Early American History, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

1. Grateful acknowledgement is made to Laurence Gouverneur Hoes, great-great-grandson of James Monroe, for information on family relationships and for clues to the location of Monroe papers; to James A. Servies, Librarian of the College of William and Mary, and to Paul Rugen, Assistant Chief of the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library, for information on the Monroe papers in those institutions; and to Wilmer R. Leech, of the New-York Historical Society, and Miss Emma Swift, of the Rochester Public Library, for aid in examining the Henry O'Reilly papers in those repositories. Thanks are also due to Handy B. Fant of the National Historical Publications Commission and to Mrs. Julia Bland Carroll and Buford Rowland of the National Archives for their suggestions and assistance.
2. The "Memoir of James Monroe, Esq., relating to his Unsettled Claims upon the People and Government of the United States" was published in three parts in the *National Intelligencer*, beginning in the issue for November 15, 1826.
3. *The People the Sovereigns, being a comparison of the Government of the United States with those of the Republics which have existed before, with the causes of their decadence and fall, by James Monroe, Ex-President of the United States, and dedicated by the author to his countrymen*, edited by Samuel L. Gouverneur, [Jr.] his grandson and administrator (Philadelphia, 1867).
4. *The Autobiography of James Monroe*, edited by Stuart Gerry Brown (Syracuse, 1959). This was based on two long fragments of an unfinished manuscript in the Monroe Papers, New York Public Library.
5. A draft of Trist's letter and Monroe's reply are in a portfolio containing "Trist's recollections of conversations with Thomas Jefferson," in the Nicholas P. Trist Papers, Library of Congress.
6. See the statement Monroe signed on June 19, 1831, in regard to the John Rhea letter, in the James Monroe Papers, Library of Congress. Manuscripts quoted hereafter are in these papers, unless otherwise noted.

7. Will of James Monroe dated May 16, 1831, with a codicil dated June 17, 1831. The original documents are filed in records of the Orphan's Court, District of Columbia.
8. Statement made by Laurence Gouverneur Hoes.
9. Gouverneur, Marian, *As I Remember: Recollections of American Society During the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London, 1911), p. 257.
10. Gouverneur to Daniel Webster, March 21, 1851: Record Group 59 (box 34), National Archives. Also Gouverneur to John M. Clayton, May 17, 1849: RG 59 (Appointment Papers: Resignations and Declinations File), National Archives.
11. Memorandum written by an amanuensis and signed by O'Reilly in 1882. Henry O'Reilly Papers, New-York Historical Society.
12. The two Gouverneur letters are in the Henry O'Reilly Papers, New-York Historical Society. No reply has been located.
13. *The Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix, pp. 45-68. Correspondence relating to the transcription and loan of the manuscripts is in the O'Reilly Papers, New-York Historical Society.
14. Instrument filed with Miscellaneous Treasury Account No. 100,498, in Record Group 217, National Archives.
15. O'Reilly's duplicate, signed copy is in the O'Reilly Papers, New-York Historical Society.
16. 30th Cong., 2d Sess., Senate Misc. Doc. No. 10.
17. *The Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 143.
18. Document signed by R. H. Gillet, agent, on [January] 31, 1849, in the Henry O'Reilly Papers, New-York Historical Society.
19. *The Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 613 and 669.
20. *Statutes at Large*, IX, 370.
21. Department of State, Miscellaneous Letters, Mar.-Apr. 1849, National Archives; and Miscellaneous Treasury Account No. 100,498, Record Group 217, National Archives. It is unnecessary to report here on the protracted suit brought in the courts of the District of Columbia by Richard Smith to recover one-third instead of one-eighth of the proceeds for the estate of Mrs. Elizabeth K. Hay. Several documents relating to this are in the Henry Mason Morfit Papers, Library of Congress.
22. Schouler, James, *History of the United States Under the Constitution*, II (New York, 1882), p. iii.
23. *Statutes at Large*, XXV, 957; and XXVI, 388.
24. *Bulletin of the Bureau of Rolls and Library of the Department of State*, No. 2, November, 1893 (Washington, 1893).
25. *The Writings of James Monroe, including a collection of his public and private papers and correspondence now for the first time printed*, edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (New York and London, 1898-1903).
26. Friedenwald, Herbert, "Historical Manuscripts in the Library of Congress" in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1898* (Washington, 1899).
27. *Papers of James Monroe listed in chronological order from the original manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, by Worthington Chauncey Ford, comp. (Washington, 1904).
28. Williams, Harrison, *Legends of Loudoun: An account of the history and homes of a border county of Virginia's Northern Neck*, (Richmond, 1938), p. 178.
29. *The Sun* (Baltimore) October 9, 1865.
30. Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr., vs. Mary D. Gouverneur, in files of the Circuit Court of Frederick County, Md., October 1868.
31. Gilman, Daniel C., *James Monroe in His Relations to the Public Service During the Half Century, 1776 to 1826* (Boston and New York, 1883), p. vi.

32. This desk is now in the James Monroe Law Office Museum and Memorial Library in Fredericksburg, Va.
33. *Narrative and Critical History of America*, edited by Justin Winsor, (Boston and New York, 1889), VIII, 421. A 17-page printing of the Monroe writings in this group (in which the owner is incorrectly identified as Mrs. S. M. Gouverneur), and sheets on which are mounted calendar entries, on cards, of the papers addressed to Monroe, were transferred to the Library and are shelved with the Monroe Collection in the Manuscript Division. The "Gouverneur Collection" is shown by these to have numbered 837 manuscripts.
34. *Senate Journal*, 52d Cong., 1st Sess., p. 91; William F. Wharton to Benjamin Harrison, March 17, 1892, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 52d Cong., 1st Sess., Executive Doc. No. 62.
35. Rutherford B. Hayes to Ainsworth R. Spofford, June 4, 1888, Spofford Papers (Ac. 10,705), Library of Congress.
36. Library of Congress archives: memorandum, Worthington C. Ford to the Librarian, October 13, 1902; and F. W. Ashley to Chiefs of Divisions of Accessions and Manuscripts, December 16, 1927.
37. Statement made by Laurence Gouverneur Hoes.
38. *The Sun* (Baltimore), October 5, 1898.
39. Box 1, James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library.
40. This gift was described in issues of the *Bulletin* of the New York Public Library for October 1899, February 1900, and July 1901.
41. *Bulletin* of the New York Public Library, February 1915.
42. A statement concerning the evacuation appears in *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress*, 1945, p. 59.

Scope and Content Note for Additions to the Collection

Additions to the papers of James Monroe (1758-1831) are organized as [Series 4, Addenda](#). They include correspondence, photocopies and typescripts of correspondence, property and financial records, and miscellaneous documents dated from 1778 to 1831 and arranged in subseries by the year the addition was processed.

The 1979-1985 addition is arranged in four parts. Part A includes original letters from Monroe to William Benton, James Bowdoin, Henry Dearborn, Lord Thomas Erskine, Richard H. Henderson, David Humphreys, Thomas Law, John Francis Mercer, Edmund Randolph, Spencer Roane, and others. A letter from William Wirt is the only letter written to Monroe in this portion. Part B contains photocopies of correspondence, a diary, and miscellaneous documents. The bulk of the photocopied correspondence consists of negative copies of manuscripts owned by the United States Military Academy at West Point. Part D, Miscellany, includes index cards that, in conjunction with a State Department pamphlet, form a calendar to the Monroe papers in the collection of Mary Digges Lee Gouverneur.

The 1996 addition includes a letter to Andrew Jackson and property and financial notes arranged by type of material.

The 2014 addition consists of a pardon for Nancy Swann, an African American woman, who had been convicted of petty larceny and fined and imprisoned in the District of Columbia. She had been in the Washington jail over twelve months because she was unable to pay the fine. The pardon is signed by President James Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Two microfilms of original manuscripts owned by Laurence Gouverneur Hoes have also been placed in the 2014 addition.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [Series 1, General Correspondence, 1758-1839](#)
- [Series 2, Additional Correspondence, 1776-1838](#)
- [Series 3, Letterbooks and Account Book, 1794-1806](#)
- [Series 4, Addenda, 1778-1831](#)

- Oversize, 1802-1819

Description of Series

Container	Series
REEL 1-9	<p><u>Series 1, General Correspondence, 1758-1839</u></p> <p>Letters of Monroe and retained copies and drafts of letters written by Monroe. Arranged chronologically.</p>
REEL 9-10	<p><u>Series 2, Additional Correspondence, 1776-1838</u></p> <p>Correspondence and related manuscripts owned by Laurence G. Hoes and reproduced with his permission. Arranged chronologically.</p>
REEL 10-11	<p><u>Series 3, Letterbooks and Account Book, 1794-1806</u></p> <p>Letterbooks, 1803-1806, containing copies of diplomatic correspondence during the years Monroe served as minister to England, and an account book containing memoranda and accounts during his mission to France, 1794-1796. The center portion of the account book was used for personal accounts, Oct. 1801-Nov. 1802.</p>
BOX 4:1-4:5	<p><u>Series 4, Addenda, 1778-1831</u></p> <p>Correspondence, photocopies and typescripts of correspondence, presidential pardon, property and financial records, and miscellaneous documents. Arranged by the year the addition was processed, and alphabetically thereunder by type of material or topic.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize, 1802-1819</u></p> <p>Land deed and presidential pardon Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the item was removed.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
REEL 1-9	Series 1, General Correspondence, 1758-1839 Letters of Monroe and retained copies and drafts of letters written by Monroe. Arranged chronologically.
REEL 1	1758-1796 Mar. 21 Digital content available
REEL 2	1796 Mar. 22-1803 Oct. 8 Digital content available
REEL 3	1803 Oct. 9-1807 Jan. 16 Digital content available
REEL 4	1807 Jan. 24-1812 Mar. 12 Digital content available
REEL 5	1812 Mar. 15-1815 Mar. 16 Digital content available
REEL 6	1815 Mar. 17-1818 June 3 Digital content available
REEL 7	1818 June 5-1821 July 19 Digital content available
REEL 8	1821 July 20-1825 Mar. 10 Digital content available
REEL 9	1825 Mar. 18-1839 Feb. 13, undated Digital content available
REEL 9-10	Series 2, Additional Correspondence, 1776-1838 Correspondence and related manuscripts owned by Laurence G. Hoes and reproduced with his permission. Arranged chronologically.
REEL 9	1776 July 10-1792 Sept. 30 Digital content available
REEL 10	1792 Oct. 20-1838 Nov. 14, undated Digital content available
REEL 10-11	Series 3, Letterbooks and Account Book, 1794-1806 Letterbooks, 1803-1806, containing copies of diplomatic correspondence during the years Monroe served as minister to England, and an account book containing memoranda and accounts during his mission to France, 1794-1796. The center portion of the account book was used for personal accounts, Oct. 1801-Nov. 1802.
REEL 10	Vol. 1 1803 Apr. 9-1804 June 25 Digital content available
REEL 11	1804 Aug. 7-1805 Nov. 29 Digital content available

Series 3, Letterbooks and Account Book, 1794-1806

Container	Contents
REEL 11	Vol. 2, 1805 Dec. 11-1806 Oct. 27 Digital content available
REEL 11	Vol. 3, Journal-Account Book, 1794-1796, 1801-1802 Digital content available
BOX 4:1-4:5	Series 4, Addenda, 1778-1831 Correspondence, photocopies and typescripts of correspondence, presidential pardon, property and financial records, and miscellaneous documents. Arranged by the year the addition was processed, and alphabetically thereunder by type of material or topic.
BOX 4:1	1979-1985 additions Part A, originals Correspondence and miscellany 1783 Mar. 8-1797 Nov. 28 Digital content available 1800 Mar. 4-1807 Nov. 1 <i>See also Oversize</i> Digital content available 1811 Sept. 19-1815 Oct. 15 Digital content available 1815 Nov. 16-1818 Sept. 1 Digital content available 1821 Jan. 8-1829 Mar. 4 Digital content available 1830 May 28-1831 Apr. 3 Digital content available Undated Digital content available Part B, photocopies Correspondence 1796-1822 Digital content available 1822-1828, undated Digital content available Diary, Feb. 1825 Digital content available Documents on loan to exhibit at the National Archives (1958) Digital content available Miscellany, 1778 Digital content available Monroe Doctrine (partial) Digital content available Part C, typescripts Correspondence, 1795-1830, undated Digital content available Miscellany Digital content available
BOX 4:2	Part D, miscellany

Series 4, Addenda, 1778-1831

Container

Contents

	<p><i>A Calendar of the Papers of James Monroe, Forming the Collection in the Possession of Mrs. S. M. Gouverneur</i>, undated, card index to the Gouverneur collection</p> <p>Part 1</p> <p>Digital content available</p>
BOX 4:3	<p>Part 2</p> <p>Digital content available</p>
BOX 4:4	<p>Holograph notes listing correspondence, 1780-1814</p> <p>Digital content available</p>
BOX 4:5	<p>1996 addition</p> <p>Correspondence, 1811, 1818-1829</p> <p>Digital content available</p> <p>Covenant, promissory note and other financial records, and a genealogical note fragment, 1813-1814, 1819, 1825, undated</p> <p>Digital content available</p> <p>2014 addition</p> <p>Hoes, Laurence Gouverneur, private collection of Monroe manuscripts, 1780-1836 (2 reels)</p> <p><i>Available only on microfilm. Shelf nos. 9,872 and 9,877</i></p> <p>Presidential pardon for Nancy Swann, African American resident of the District of Columbia, 1819 <i>See Oversize</i></p>
BOX OV 1	<p>Oversize, 1802-1819</p> <p>Land deed and presidential pardon</p> <p>Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the item was removed.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p>Series 4: Addenda, 1778-1831</p> <p>1979-1985 additions</p> <p>Part A, originals</p> <p>Correspondence and miscellany</p> <p>Land deed for James Welch of Berkeley County, Virginia, signed by James Monroe, governor of Virginia, 18 Oct. 1802 (Container 4:1)</p> <p>Digital content available</p> <p>2014 addition</p> <p>Presidential pardon for Nancy Swann, African American resident of the District of Columbia, 1819 (Container 4:5)</p> <p>Digital content available</p>

Selected Bibliography

[From *Index to the James Monroe Papers* (Washington, D.C.: 1963), p. xi]

Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1905, 48; 1921, 31; 1931, 58; 1953, 20.

Garrison, Curtis W., *List of Manuscript Collections in the Library of Congress to July 1931* (Washington, 1931), pp. 152, 169, 190.

Powell, C. Percy, *List of Manuscript Collections Received in the Library of Congress July 1931 to July 1938* (Washington, 1939), p. 10.

"The Present Status of Presidential Papers," *Manuscripts*, VIII (Fall 1955), 10.

Rowland, Buford, "The Papers of the Presidents," *The American Archivist*, XIII (July 1950), 199; reprinted in *Autograph Collectors' Journal*, III (April 1951), 36.

Styron, Arthur, *The Last of the Cocked Hats, James Monroe & the Virginia Dynasty* (Norman, 1945), pp. 456-457.

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Rolls and Library, *Calendar of the Correspondence of James Monroe* (Washington, 1904).

U.S. Library of Congress, *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress* (Washington, 1918), p. 274.