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Curator's Corner

Among James Monroe's multifarious collection of clothing is an attractive pair of tan doeskin gloves. Although the leather is thin and finely crafted, the simple construction of the gloves makes it difficult to determine a date of fabrication. Currently on display in our new exhibit, "Era of Good

Fashions: Clothing and Accessories of the Monroe Family," the pair is relatively similar in color to a suit of clothing worn by Monroe in 1786 while living in Fredericksburg (also on display). It is possible that he purchased the gloves as an accessory for the suit, and the simple style suggests that he likely wore them in America rather than overseas.

Although the tanning industry in early America was slow to embrace industrialization, the abundance of hides and ready labor made leather goods widely available to consumers. In a 1791 letter, Norfolk, Virginia lawyer Thomas Newton Jr. wrote: *In the town of Norfolk there is a very extensive tannery, which supplies most of the lower counties with leather . . . In Portsmouth there is a small Tannery, but is not carried on with Spirits, Shoemakers &c Sufficient to make for their Consumption.*

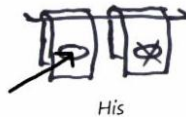
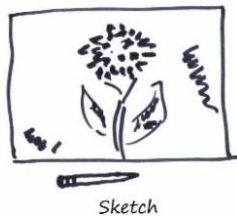
It seems clear James Monroe could have obtained a locally-made pair of gloves while living in Fredericksburg without relying on European imports. Given that the leather is doeskin, an abundant source of material in 18th-Century America, it is likely the gloves were made domestically.

Come by the Museum to see these and other Monroe clothing items!

[Visit the Museum!](#)

Upcoming Events

Sketchy History



May 5, 6:00-8:00 PM, First Friday "Sketchy History," at JMM

Join us for The James Monroe Museum's version of Win, Lose or Draw™ on the First Friday of May! Practice your drawing skills and review your history books for an evening of fun team play.

Categories to be used in the

game are Historic People, Historic Objects or Documents, Historic Events, and Historic Places. Bring along a team or join one at the event. Family-friendly & free. Snacks provided, cash bar.



June 9, 6:00-8:00 PM, History Trivia Night, at JMM (Please note: this event is on the second Friday.)

Trivia Night featuring returning Celebrity Quizmaster Ted Schubel, radio personality and host of Town Talk on NewsTalk 1230 WFVA. Admission, participation, and snacks are free. There will be a cash bar and a 50/50 raffle.

June 24, 1:00-4:00 PM, Elizabeth Monroe Birthday Celebration - The Era of Good Fashions, at JMM

Join us for "A Revolution in Fashion: Clothing during Elizabeth Monroe's Lifetime," by textile historian Colleen Callahan, followed by a living history portrayal of Elizabeth Monroe by Heidi Stello, JMM guide and editorial assistant for The Papers of James Monroe. Tea and light

refreshments. Free.



[Calendar of Events](#)

Monroe Tomb Returned to its Original Appearance in Time for Birthday Observance



James Monroe was the third US president to die on the 4th of July. His 1831 demise at the home of his daughter, Maria Hester Monroe Gouverneur, came five years to the day after the deaths of John Adams and Monroe's friend and mentor Thomas Jefferson. Monroe's remains were relocated from the New York City Marble Cemetery to Richmond, Virginia's Hollywood Cemetery in 1858. The following year a cast-iron Gothic canopy designed by German-born architect Albert Lybrock was erected over the tomb. The graves of former First Lady Elizabeth Kortright Monroe and Maria Monroe Gouverneur were added later.

Over the ensuing 156 years, the iron canopy, popularly known as the "Birdcage," endured the ravages of weather, war, and repeated minor repairs and repainting. By 2015, multiple paint layers, the most recent of which were black, not only obscured much of the fine details of the canopy—they also masked serious deterioration to the metal structure that threatened to bring this distinctive landmark crashing down.

A comprehensive, \$1 million restoration was begun in September, 2015 by the Virginia Department of General Services, which worked with conservators Abigail Mack of New York and Andrew Baxter of Richmond; general contractor W.E. Bowman; and fabricators Chase Architectural Metal and OK Foundry. Early in the process, a fragment of the cast iron canopy in the collection of The James Monroe Museum, was analyzed to determine the number and time scale of paint layers. The restoration team took apart 618 individual cast iron pieces comprising the canopy, 40% of which had to



be recast. All of the 2,500 fasteners that had held the structure together since 1859 had to be replaced.



All of this hard work and expense have not only given the Monroe tomb a new lease on life—they have restored the color and detail that made this symbol of mourning an elegant and inspiring celebration of life. JMM director Scott Harris got to see the newly-restored tomb on Friday, April 28 at the James Monroe Birthday Celebration

Ceremony held by the James Monroe Memorial Foundation. Harris laid a wreath from the Museum at the tomb, joining James Monroe's Highland and many other heritage and preservation organizations in commemorating the fifth president's birth and the rejuvenated memorial to his life.

Read more about the restoration process, and Hollywood Cemetery generally, [here](#).



What's In Store?



The Monroe Doctrine Puzzle

The Monroe Doctrine, a U.S. policy of opposing European colonialism in the Americas, is quite possibly James Monroe's most significant accomplishment. It has been a blueprint for American foreign policy since he presented it to Congress in 1823. The Doctrine is one of the most enduring presidential legacies in our nation's history. The Museum Store is

pleased to introduce The Monroe Doctrine Puzzle (\$16.00). The puzzle image is of Allyn Cox's mural located in the Great Experiment Hall in the U.S. Capitol Building. The mural depicts President James Monroe discussing the Doctrine with his cabinet.

We hope you stop by the Store to look at this and the rest of the great selection of unique and educational merchandise. Remember, Museum admission is not required to browse in the Store!

Visit our [website](#) to view other items available in our store.

Recent Events



James Monroe: Theme and Variations

The James Monroe Museum was honored to provide the evening's entertainment for the annual James Monroe Dinner at the Arts Club of Washington, which is headquartered in the I Street home used by Monroe and his family when he was secretary of state and war, 1811-1817. Heidi Stello and Scott Harris presented "James Monroe: Theme and Variations," combining vignettes from Monroe's life with music of the period. We appreciated the enthusiastic reception and hospitality of the Arts Club, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Coincidentally, the dinner was held on April 8, 2017, which also happened to

be the day in 1803 when Monroe's daughter Maria was born. The musical selections for the evening were drawn from Maria's music book.

[Watch](#) a short selection from the program on our YouTube channel.

April First Friday Curator Talk

Our April 7 Curator Talk with Jarod Kearney was a fascinating evening spent delving into items from The James Monroe Museum's costume collection! The talk focused upon artifacts from our new exhibit "The Era of Good Fashions: Clothing and Accessories of the Monroe Family." **Visit** the Museum to see this beautiful exhibit!



University of Mary Washington Mary Talks - Revolutionary Idealist: The Life and Legacy of James Monroe On the eve of James Monroe's birthday, Scott Harris, Director of The James Monroe Museum closed out this year's Mary Talks series. The presentation focused on James Monroe's public service career that began with his combat in the Revolutionary War, saw his inauguration as the fifth president of the United States in 1817, and ended five decades after it began with his term as chairman of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-30.



Celebrating James Monroe's 259th Birthday This year's birthday celebration featured a book talk on the newly reissued *The Autobiography of James Monroe* by historian William Ferraro, a presentation by historical interpreter James "Jay" Harrison III, and of course birthday cake! For more photos of the event please visit our [Facebook page](#).



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