



James Monroe

5th President of the United States
1817-1825

Fact Sheet

Wife: Elizabeth Kortright
Vice President: Daniel Tompkins
Sec. Of State: John Quincy Adams
College: William & Mary (didn't graduate)
Party: Democrat-Republican

Before Presidency:

- Quit College to join the American Revolution 1776-1778
- Member of Virginia House of Assembly 1782-1783
- Member of Continental Congress 1783-1786
- US Senator 1790-1794
- Minister to France 1794-1796
- Governor of Virginia 1799-1802
- Special Envoy for Louisiana Purchase 1803
- Minister to Great Britain 1803-1807
- Governor of Virginia 1811
- Secretary of State (Madison) 1811-1817
- Secretary of War 1814-1815

Presidency:

- 1st Seminole War 1817-1818
- Rush-Bagot Agreement 1818
- Convention 1818
- Adams-Onis Treaty 1819
- Panic of 1819
- Missouri Compromise 1820
- Monroe Doctrine 1823
- Florida is purchased from Spain 1817
- Gen. A Jackson is sent to Florida 1817
- Gen. A Jackson disobeyed orders and invaded Florida 1817

After Presidency:

- None

States Added:

- Mississippi
- Illinois
- Alabama
- Maine

- Missouri

Facts:

- Died July 4th 1831 (55th Anniversary of Declaration of Independence)
- Last president to serve in Revolutionary War
- Congress limits the number of stripes on the flag to 13
- An African capital is named after him (Monrovia)
- 1st President to ride on a steamboat
- 1st President to have inaugural ceremony outside in DC
- He did not have a middle name or initial
- He was the last of the Cocked-Hat Presidents
- One of his daughters became the 1st to marry in the White House
- He drove his secretary of the Treasury from the White House with a pair of fire tongs
- He broke up a fight between the British and French Ministers who had drawn swords
- Opposed ratification of US Constitution because there wasn't a bill of rights
- Monroe's daughter married his Secretary in the White House

Inventions and Miscellaneous:

- *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle* are published
- Brazil proclaims itself an empire
- Argentina declares independence from Spain
- 1st Public School opens
- Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala form their own nations

Nickname:

- Era of Good Feelings (name for his presidency)
- The Last Cocked Hat

Supreme Court Appointments:

- Smith Thompson

Amendments:

- None

Quotes:

- None

Summary of Life

James Monroe was born April 28, 1759, in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He was the second of five children, having one older sister and three younger brothers. His father died when he was 16, and James went to live with his uncle Joseph Monroe. James inherited his father's estate and the responsibility for his younger brothers.

At age 16, he entered the College of William and Mary. He dropped out of college before completing to enter the Revolutionary War. After the Revolutionary War, he studied law from 1780-1783 under Thomas Jefferson. He never earned a college degree.

He married Elizabeth Kortright on February 16, 1786. She was often in poor health and had to curtail her activities as First Lady. The couple had two daughters.

Before becoming president, James Monroe was a member of the Continental Congress and the United States Senate. He served his country as Minister to France (1794-1796) and Great Britain (1803-1807)

In 1803, he negotiated the Louisiana Purchase. He was also the governor of Virginia as well as secretary of state and secretary of war under James Madison. His long record of public service made him a favorite Democrat-Republican candidate for the presidency. He was one vote short of being elected unanimously (*the man that cast that vote did so to keep George Washington the only president elected unanimously.*) He served two terms as president.

His presidency, called the “Era of Good Feelings”, was marked with peace and prosperity for the country. Because of the movement to the west, Monroe encouraged construction of roads and canals. He preserved the balance of free and slave states with the Missouri Compromise, which established that states north of latitude lines 36° 30’ were to be free and the states south of that line, slave. His greatest legacy was the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which became the basis of American foreign policy. In his speech to Congress, Monroe warned the European governments against trying to claim additional territory in the Western Hemisphere.

Monroe stayed in the White House for three weeks after the inauguration of John Quincy Adams because his wife was too ill for travel. Later, they retired to their estate at Oak Hill, Virginia. After the death of his wife, Monroe moved to his daughter’s home in New York City. He died of heart failure on July 4, 1831 (*55th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.*)

Practice Questions

3. Because he proposed settling Negro slaves in Africa, the capital of an African Nation was named for him.
2. Thomas Jefferson was a tremendous influence on him. When Jefferson was governor, this future president studied law under him.
1. The presidents who preceded and followed him were both from his political party.

3. As president he obtained the Floridas from Spain and suppressed the Seminoles.
2. He opposed ratification of the US Constitution because it lacked a Bill of Rights.
1. As Jefferson’s Minister to France, he exceeded instructions and signed a treaty for all of the Louisiana territory.