

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, July 27, 1787, from
Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence,
Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt,
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Fredericksburg. July 27. 1787.

Dear Sir

I can scarcely venture on an apology for my silence for sometime past but hope notwithstanding to be forgiven. Since I left N. Yk. I have been employ'd in the discharge of duties entirely new to me, oftentimes embarrassing & of course highly interesting, but which have sought the accomplishment of only a few objects. In Octr. Last I was admitted to the bar of the courts of appeal & chy & the April following of the genl court. In the course of the winter I mov'd my family to this town, in wh I have taken my residence with a view to my profession. These pursuits tho' confin'd have not been attended with the less difficulty. A considerable part of my property has consisted in debts, and to command it or any part of it, hath been no easy matter. Indeed in this respect I have fail'd almost together. Several considerations have induc'd me to prefer this place for the present, the principal of wh is the command of an house and other accomodations (the property of Mr. Jones) upon my own terms. My standing at the bar hath been so short that I cannot judge of it in that respect, tho' am inclin'd to believe it, not an ineligible position for one of that profession. But I consider my residence here as temporary, merely to serve the purpose of the time, and as looking forward to an establishment somewhere on this side the mountains, and as

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convenient as possible to Monticello. Mr. Jones is in ill health & begins to be satisfied his existence depends

in a great degree upon a similar position. I have earnestly advis'd him to move up & at least make the experiment. Mrs. Monroe hath added a daughter to our society who tho' noisy, contributes greatly to its amusement. She is very sensibly impress'd with your kind attention to her, & wishes an opportunity of shewing how highly she respects & esteems you. With the political world I have had little to do since I left Congress. My anxiety however for the general welfare hath not been diminished. *The affairs of the federal government are, I believe, in the utmost confusion; the convention is an expedient that will produce a decisive effect. It will either recover us from our present embarrassments or complete our ruin;* for I suspect that if what they *recommend* shod be *rejected* this wou'd be the case. But I trust that the presence of Genl. Washington will have great weight in the body itself, so as to overawe & keep under the demon of party, & that the signature of his name to whatever act shall be the result of their deliberations will secure its passage thro' the union.

The county in which I reside have plac'd me in the Legislature. I have been mortified however to accept this favor from them, at the expence of Mr. *Page*. I supposed it might be serviceable to me in the line of my profession. My services have been abroad, & the establishment others have gain'd at the bar in the mean time requires every effort in my power to repair the disadvantage it hath subjected me to. *The governor*, I have reason to believe if *unfriendly to me* & hath shewn (If I am well inform'd) *a disposition to thwart me*; *Madison*, upon whose friendship I have calculated, whose views I have favored, & with whom I have held the most confidential correspondence since you left the continent, is in strict league *with him* and hath I have reason to believe concurr'd *in arrangements unfavorable to me*; a suspicion, supported by some strong circumstances, that this is the case, hath given me great uneasiness.

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I shall I think be strongly impress'd in favor of & inclined to vote for whatever they will recommend. I have heard from *Beckley* tho' not from himself (who accompanied *the Governor* up, in *expectation of being appointed clerk*) they had agreed on *giving the United States a negative upon the laws of the several States*, if it can be done consistently with the constitutions of the several States. Indeed it might be well to revise them all, and incorporate the fedl. constitution in each. This I shod think proper. It will if the body is well organized, be the best way of introducing uniformity in their proceedings that can be devised, *of a negative kind*, or by a power to operate *indirectly*. But a few months will give us the result be it what it may.

You mentioned in yr. last the injury you had sustained in yr. wrist. How did it happen? I hope you found yr. trip to the south of advantage. Yr. Daughters I hope are well. Nothing be assur'd will give me more pleasure than to hear from you frequently. If I can be of service in yr. private affairs in any line, or with respect to Peter Carr I beg of you to command me. It will always be convenient for me to attend to any thing of that kind, either in person or my a suitable messenger. I am Dear Sir your affectionate friend & servant, Jas. Monroe

[P.S.] Where is Short? How is he. Remember me to him.

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress). Words in italics were written in cipher by Monroe.