5c6. The American Presidency: James Monroe

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

*(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)*

| STATE: | |
|---|---|
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY: | |
| Loudon | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY DATE | |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 1. NAME

COMMON: Oak Hill

AND/OR HISTORIC: James Monroe Home (Oak Hill)

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: One mile north of Gilberts Corner on Route 15

| CITY OR TOWN: | | CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aldie | | Tenth (10th) | |
| STATE: Virginia | CODE: 51 | COUNTY: Loudon | CODE: 107 |

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ District ☒ Building(S) ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object | ☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both | Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered | ☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress | Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☒ Agricultural | ☐ Government | ☐ Park | ☐ Transportation | ☐ Comments |
| ☐ Commercial | ☐ Industrial | ☒ Private Residence | ☐ Other (Specify) | |
| ☐ Educational | ☐ Military | ☐ Religious | | |
| ☐ Entertainment | ☐ Museum | ☐ Scientific | | |

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Joseph Pendergast

STREET AND NUMBER: Oak Hill

| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE |
|---|---|---|
| Aldie | Virginia 22001 | 51 |

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Loudon County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE | CODE |
|---|---|---|
| Leesburg | Virginia | 51 |

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| STATE: | COUNTY: | ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Virginia | Loudon | | |

## 7. DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ☐ Excellent | ☒ Good | ☐ Fair | ☐ Deteriorated | ☐ Ruins | ☐ Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | (Check One) | | | |
| | ☒ Altered | ☐ Unaltered | ☐ Moved | ☒ Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

James Monroe inherited Oak Hill from his uncle, Judge Joseph Jones of Fredericksburg, in 1808. He lived in the wooden frame clapboard building, known today as the Monroe Cottage, until the mansion of Oak Hill was erected. This was accomplished only in 1820, after he had become the fifth President. Thomas Jefferson, his close friend, may well have drawn the plans for Oak Hill; the construction was supervised by James Hoban, designer and builder of the White House. Monroe left Oak Hill in 1830 to join his daughter in New York.

The Monroe family continued to own and farm the property after his death. In 1852, it was sold to Col. John Fairfax, in whose family it remained until 1920. In 1923 Frank Littleton enlarged the wings of the mansion, and made several other more minor changes. The Oak Hill property is now owned by Joseph Pendergast, who purchased it in 1948 and continues to operate it as a working modern farm.

The Oak Hill mansion is the most prominent of a whole complex of buildings, many of which date back to Monroe's occupancy. It is a red brick, two-story attic and basement structure. It was built between 1820 and 1823, and represents the highest development in classical Southern architecture. It stands at the head of a long avenue of trees. A main block with gabled roof is extended laterally by flat-roofed wings with gabled half-stories along their centers. The wings terminate in small porticoes, and a huge Roman Doric portico on a high foundation overlooks the garden and rolling country southward to the Bull Run Mountains. The simple interior, which the Pendergasts have made considerable effort to restore, is ornamented by two handsome marble mantels sent by LaFayette from Europe. Other buildings at Oak Hill include: Monroe Cottage, built around 1808 with wood frame and clapboard exterior. It contains a large central stone chimney with a basement on grade in the rear; a Spring Well, built at about the same time. It runs on gravitational power and is still in working order; a Meat House, built around 1820 with thick, white stone walls and graded basement; a Horse Barn, built in the 1820's, and a Blacksmith Shop, a simple shed which may go back to Monroe's occupancy.

BOUNDARIES: Oak Hill in 1808 did not have the exact same boundaries as it does today. The original lines are unavailable, so that those for the present Oak Hill must necessarily be used instead, as a close approximation: As shown by the red line on the accompanying aerial photographic print A, labelled "Map of 'Oak Hill', Aldie Virginia," from the outside curb of the junction of Routes 50 and 15, proceed north along Route 15 about 20,600 feet to the junction of Routes 15 and 612; thence west along Route 612 for about 2,700 feet; continue along Route 612 for about 14,500 feet southwest to the junction of Routes 612 and 50; proceed east about 4,300 feet to the point of beginning.

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he was elected governor of Virginia three times, serving from 1799 until 1802. In 1803 he was on hand in France to sign the Louisiana Purchase, though the deal had been all but completed before he got there. A subsequent attempt to extract a treaty from England securing the cessation of impressments resulted in an agreement so unfavorable that Jefferson, now President, never submitted it to the Senate. In 1808 Monroe, much aggrieved, ran an undeclared campaign for President. He failed to win a single electoral vote, receiving in Virginia hardly a fifth the popular total of Madison.

In January 1811, Monroe again became Governor of Virginia. In the meantime, factional politics had forced Madison to remodel his administration. Monroe had influence in Virginia which was badly needed. In March 1811, Monroe accepted the post of Secretary of State. His efforts at reconciliation with England were a failure. In June 1812, Congress declared war on Great Britain.

Throughout the war Monroe had strong presidential ambitions. He sought at various times to secure military command, and was intensely jealous of John Armstrong, who, in 1813, became Secretary of War. Monroe succeeded him following a military defeat in August, 1814. Victories at Plattsburg and New Orleans in 1815 did much to enhance his prestige. The following year, with administration support, he narrowly won the caucus vote for presidential nominee. The general election was much easier; he defeated the Federalist candidate with 183 electoral votes to 34. In 1820 he was reelected, receiving every electoral vote but one. The chief events of his calm and prosperous administration, which has been called "the era of good feeling", were the Seminole War (1817-18); the acquisition of the Floridas from Spain (1819-21); the Missouri Compromise (1820), by which the first open conflict over slavery was successfully patched over; the veto of the Cumberland Road bill (1822), which denied a federal right of jurisdiction and construction, but declared an unlimited power to raise money; recognition of the new Latin American States, former Spanish colonies, in Central and South America (1822); and--most significant to subsequent world history--the enunciation of what came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine on December 3, 1823.

The principles contained in this message were threefold; no further colonization by Europe in the new world, abstention of the United States from the political affairs of Europe, and noninterference of European nations in the governmental affairs of the western hemisphere. This doctrine has represented a major trend in American political thought ever since.

Monroe died in New York City, July 4, 1831.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1808 - 1830

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [x] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oak Hill was a residence of James Monroe for 22 years, and his only home for three, 1827-1830. The mansion here was built at the height of Monroe's prominence. The Monroe Doctrine was issued during his last term in the White House, while Monroe was maintaining his home at Oak Hill.

HISTORY: Monroe inherited the Oak Hill property from his uncle, Joseph Jones, in 1808. About 1814 financial hardship resulting from his public service caused Monroe to place both Oak Hill and his Albemarle County tract on the market, his intent being to dispose of the one for which he first found a buyer. By 1818 he had built a small house at Oak Hill and was spending a part of his time there. Increasing amounts of leisure time were spent there following construction of the Oak Hill mansion. With the final sale of his Albemarle holdings in 1827, Oak Hill became Monroe's only home. He remained there until late in 1830, when he moved to New York to live with his daughter, following the death of his wife.

BIOGRAPHY: James Monroe (1758-1831), fifth president of the United States, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. At the age of sixteen he entered the College of William and Mary, but in 1776 left to fight in the American Revolution. He fought with Washington's army in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and was wounded at the battle of Trenton. In 1780 he began to study law under Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia. Their friendship was a great aid to Monroe throughout his political career.

In 1782 he was elected to the Virginia house of delegates, and though only 24 years of age, was chosen a member of the governor's council. He served in the Congress under the Articles of Confederation for three years before retiring to a law practice in Fredericksburg. In 1788 he was again a Virginia delegate, opposing the ratification of the new constitution on the basis of his strong preference for decentralized government and his own strong sectional feelings. He accepted the result graciously however, and ran against James Madison for a seat in the First Congress. In this election he was beaten badly, but in 1790 he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the Senate.

In 1794, Monroe was appointed minister to France by President Washington. It was hoped that his well-known French sympathies would win him a favorable reception, but he used it to intrigue against the administration's French policies and was recalled in 1796. Gaining much sympathy at home,

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## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Adams, Henry, History of the United States (1889-91)
Bemis, Flagg, John Quincy Adams and the Union (1956)
Brown, Stuart Gerry, and Donald G. Baker (eds.), The Autobiography of James Monroe (1959)
Cresson, William Penn, James Monroe (1946)
Styron, Arthur, The Last of the Cocked Hats: James Monroe and the Virginia Dynasty (1945)


## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| UT | NW | 18.272670.4321220 |
| NE | NE | 18.273710.4321270 |
| NW | SE | 18.272880.4316320 |
| S | SW | 18.271220.4317150 |
| S | | |

4/14/81 gene P NERO

OR

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

| LATITUDE | | | LONGITUDE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1200 gp

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|---|---|---|---|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION
Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE
2/28/75

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L Street, NW.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE
D.C.

CODE
11

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation.*

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date _____

Landmark Designated: 12/19/ date
Boundary Certified: 5/16 date
Chief, Hist. Sites ~~Arch.~~ Survey DIV.
Boundary Affirmed: ..... ..... date
~~Director, OAHP~~

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

GPO 931-894