

**James Madison to James Monroe, March 31, 1811.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO JAMES MONROE. CHIC. HIST. SOC. MSS.

March 31, 1811.

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure this moment of receiving yours of the 29th.¹ I am particularly glad to find that you will be able to set out at so early a day for Washington. To the advantage of preventing an inconvenient chasm in the public business, will be added the opportunity of a provident attention to the accommodations required by your establishment here. The House occupied by Mr. Smith is the best in the place, and I believe is not yet out of reach. He means also to dispose of certain portions of his furniture which might suit your purpose. These considerations taken together recommend strongly that you should not wait for the receipt of your commission, but consider what has passed between us, as sufficient ground for a communication to the council. The actual receipt of the commission cannot be a necessary preliminary. As well as I recollect I did not

receive mine, as Secretary of State till it was handed to me on the spot, by Mr. Jefferson. In case of appointments at a great distance, it might be extremely inconvenient for any other course to be observed. It is the more desirable that you should not wait for your commission, as I find that

¹ Madison caused Richard Brent, Senator from Virginia, to write to Monroe and ask him if he would accept the Secretaryship of State. March 18th Monroe replied favorably. (

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Writings of Monroe, v., 178.) Madison wrote to Jefferson April 1: "You will have inferred the change which is taking place in the Dept. of State. Col. Monroe agrees to succeed Mr. Smith, who declines however the mission to Russia, at first not unfavorably looked at. I was willing, notwithstanding many trying circumstances, to have smoothed the transaction as much as possible, but it will be pretty sure to end in secret hostility, if not open warfare. On account of my great esteem & regard for common friends such a result is truly painful to me. For the rest, I feel myself on firm ground, as well in the public opinion as in my own consciousness.

it will be tuesday morning before its date will be consistent with the understanding & arrangement here, & that your arrival would of consequence be thrown forward till the beginning of the next week. I might indeed, as the law authorizes, provide an interim Functionary, for the current business requiring his signature, & not admitting delay; but there are objections to this resort where it can be avoided. I hope therefore you will find no difficulty in the mode of anticipation recommended; the more especially as your communication to the council may be delayed till tuesday morning the time proposed for your setting out, and at which time your commission will have been formally consummated, & ready to be delivered.

Accept assurances of my sincere esteem & friendship