



1817 TOUR OF THE NORTHERN STATES

Significance of James Monroe's 1817 Tour of the Northern States

On Sunday June 1, 1817, just three months after his inauguration as fifth president, fifty-nine year old James Monroe and a small entourage embarked on a tour of the northern states with two critical goals: inspection of military defenses and national unity.

Inspection of Military Defenses

Having served as President Madison's Secretary of State during the War of 1812 - and simultaneously for several months as Secretary of War - Monroe was keenly aware of the vulnerability of the country's coastal fortifications. By reviving George Washington's precedent of national tours, Monroe showed his hands-on management style, as well as cultured public support for strengthening military defenses.

National Unity

Monroe's decision to first inspect military defenses in the northern states was intentional. New England was largely Federalist, while Monroe's political party was Democratic-Republican. The recent Hartford Convention (December 1814-January 1815) had made it plain that Federalists in the region were unhappy with the War of 1812 and even considered secession for New England. Monroe was also sensitive to the fact the northern states had not initially embraced another member of the Virginia Dynasty in the election of 1816.

American Revolution as Unifier

As a veteran of the American Revolution himself, James Monroe recognized that the revolution was a powerful shared experience he could employ to inspire national unity in the North. He wielded this influence through his dress, speeches and visits to sites associated with revolution. On June 29, 1817, the *Connecticut Herald* reported Monroe's tactic:

The dress of the President has been deservedly noticed in other papers for its neatness and Republican simplicity. He wore a plain blue coat, a buff under dress, and a hat and cockade of the revolutionary fashion ... well calculated to excite in the minds of the people, the remembrance of the day which 'tried men's souls.'

Additionally, Monroe's choice to celebrate July 4 in Boston and dine with Federalist John Adams earned his presidency the accolade "Era of Good Feelings" in Boston's *Columbian Centinel* newspaper.

Impact

Throughout the remainder of his 1817 tour, James Monroe inspired countless receptions in cities and towns across over 2,000 miles of his tour route. He was the first president to ride a steamboat (from Baltimore to Philadelphia) and the first sitting president to travel as far west as the Michigan territory. He would also make two additional tours: an 1818 tour of the Chesapeake and an 1819 tour of the Southern States. Despite the financial Panic of 1819 and impending Missouri Crisis, James Monroe was re-elected unopposed in the election of 1820 – a testament to his leadership and personal efforts to inspire national unity through his tours.

Find out more:

Ammon, Harry. *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Cunningham, Noble E. *The Presidency of James Monroe*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996.

Preston, Daniel and Marlena C. DeLong eds. *The Papers of James Monroe: A Documentary History of the Presidential Tours of 1817, 1818 and 1819*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002.



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2017 Participating Institutions (in geographic order of Monroe's 1817 tour stops)

- Fort McHenry | Baltimore, MD
- Fort Delaware State Park | Delaware City, DE
- Fort Mifflin on the Delaware | Philadelphia, PA
- Hagley Museum and Library | Wilmington, DE
- First Presbyterian Church Trenton | Trenton, NJ
- Gateway National Recreation Area (Fort Wadsworth) | Staten Island, NY
- New York Historical Society | New York, NY
- New York City Hall | New York, NY
- Department of History at West Point | West Point, NY
- New Haven Museum | New Haven, CT
- Eli Whitney Museum | Hamden, CT
- Middlesex County Historical Society | Middletown, CT
- Wethersfield Historical Society | Wethersfield, CT
- Connecticut Historical Society | Hartford, CT
- American School for the Deaf | West Hartford, CT
- New London County Historical Society | New London, CT
- Stonington Historical Society | Stonington, CT
- Newport Historical Society | Newport, RI
- Linden Place | Bristol, RI
- Boston Athenaeum | Boston, MA
- Quincy House | Salem, MA
- Adams National Historical Park | Quincy, MA
- Lynn Museum & Historical Society | Lynn, MA
- Marblehead Museum | Marblehead, MA
- Ipswich Museum | Ipswich, MA
- Portsmouth Historical Society | Portsmouth, NH
- Fort McClary | South Berwick, ME
- Biddeford History & Heritage Project | Biddeford, ME
- Saco Museum | Saco, ME
- Scarborough Historical Society | Scarborough, ME
- Maine Historical Society | Portland, ME
- New Hampshire Historical Society | Concord, NH
- New Hampshire State House Visitor Center | Concord, NH
- Lebanon Historical Society | Lebanon, NH
- Norwich Inn | Norwich, VT
- Norwich Historical Society | Norwich, VT
- Windsor Historical Society | Windsor, VT
- Woodstock History Center | Woodstock, VT
- Clinton County Historical Association and Museum | Plattsburgh, NY
- St. Lawrence County Historical Association | Canton, NY
- Sacketts Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site | Sackets Harbor, NY
- Old Fort Niagara | Niagara, NY
- Delaware County Historical Society | Delaware, OH
- PNC Bank - Delaware, OH (built over hotel where Monroe stayed) | Delaware, OH
- Worthington Historical Society | Worthington, OH
- Pickaway County Historical Society | Circleville, OH
- Adena Mansion | Chillicothe, OH
- Fayette County Historical Society | Chillicothe, OH
- Muskingum County Historical Society | Zanesville, OH
- Senator John Heinz History Center | Pittsburgh, PA
- Washington County Historical Society | Hagerstown, MD



James Monroe
HIGHLAND

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ITINERARY

May 31	Washington, DC	July 1	Providence, RI
June 1-2	Baltimore, MD		Pawtucket, RI
June 3	Frenchtown, MD		Attleborough, MA
	Newcastle, DE		Wrentham, MA
June 4	Newcastle, DE		Walpole, MA
	Brandywine Valley, DE	July 2	Dedham, MA
June 5-7	Philadelphia, PA		Boston, MA
June 7-8	Trenton, NJ	July 3	Boston, Medford, and
June 9	Trenton, NJ		Charlestown, MA
	Princeton, NJ	July 4	Boston, Brookline, Watertown,
	New Brunswick, NJ		and Waltham, MA
	Elizabeth, NJ	July 5	Boston, Charlestown, and
June 9-10	Staten Island, NY		Medford, MA
June 11-12	New York, NY	July 6	Boston, MA
June 13	New York and Brooklyn, NY	July 7	Boston, Cambridge, Milton,
June 14-17	West Point, NY		and Quincy, MA
June 18-19	New York and Staten Island, NY	July 8	Lynn, MA
June 20-22	New Haven, CT		Marblehead, MA
June 23	Durham, CT	July 9	Salem, MA
	Middletown, CT	July 10	Salem, MA
	Wethersfield, CT		Salem, Beverley, and
	Hartford, CT		Danvers, MA
June 24	Springfield, MA	July 11	Salem, MA
	Long Meadow, MA	July 12	Ipswich, MA
	East Hartford, CT		Newburyport, MA
June 25	New London, CT		Amesbury, MA
June 26	New London and Groton, CT		Greenland, NH
June 27	Gardiner's Bay, NY	July 13	Portsmouth, NH
	Stonington, CT	July 14	Portsmouth, NH
June 28-29	Newport, RI		Portsmouth and
June 30	Newport, RI	July 15	New Castle, NH
	Mt. Hope Bay RI		York, ME
	Bristol, RI		Wells, ME
	Providence, RI		Kennebunk, ME
			Biddeford, ME
			Saco, ME
			Scarborough, ME
			Stroudwater, ME
			Portland, ME



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July 16	Portland, ME	August 6-7	Lake Ontario
July 17	Biddeford, ME South Berwick, ME Dover, NH	August 8	Fort Niagara, NY Niagara Falls, NY
July 18	Durham, NH Chichester, NH Concord, NH	August 9	Buffalo, NY
July 19-20	Concord, NH	August 10-12	Lake Erie
July 21	Boscawen, NH Salisbury, NH Enfield, NH Lebanon, NH Hanover, NH	August 13-17	Detroit, Michigan Territory
July 22	Strafford, VT Norwich, VT Windsor, VT	August 18, 19 or 20	Sandusky Bay, OH
July 23	Woodstock, VT Royalton, VT	August 20-22	Northern Ohio
July 24	Montpelier, VT Burlington, VT	August 23-24	Delaware, OH
July 25	Burlington, VT Vergennes, VT Lake Champlain	August 25	Worthington, OH Columbus, OH
July 26	Rouse's Point, NY Plattsburgh, NY	August 26	Columbus, OH Pickaway County, OH
July 27	Plattsburgh, NY	August 27	Circleville, OH Chillicothe, OH
July 28	Plattsburgh, NY Altona, NY	August 28	Chillicothe, OH
July 29	Chateaugay, NY	August 29	Lancaster, OH
July 30	Malone, NY Potsdam, NY	August 30-31	Zanesville, OH
July 31	Hamilton, NY	September 1-2	Eastern Ohio
August 1	Ogdensburg, NY Morristown, NY	September 3	Wheeling, VA (possibly)
August 2	Rossie, NY Antwerp, NY LeRaysville, NY	September 4	Washington, PA
August 3	Watertown, NY Brownville, NY	September 5	Canonsburg, PA
August 4-5	Sacketts Harbor, NY	September 5-8	Pittsburgh, PA
		September 9	Brownsville, PA
		September 10	Uniontown, PA
		September 11	Southwestern Pennsylvania
		September 12-14	Western Maryland
		September 15	Hagerstown, MD
		September 16	Frederick, MD
		September 17	Georgetown, DC Washington, DC
		November 29	Fort Washington, MD Alexandria, DC