

# Visit Albemarle County and Ash Lawn-Highland

Thank you for your interest in Ash Lawn-Highland, the home of James Monroe, fifth President of the United States. President Monroe and his wife, Elizabeth Kortright Monroe, owned the property from 1793 to 1826 and made it their official residence from 1799 to 1823. Under a later owner, the name of the Monroe plantation was changed from “Highland” to “Ash Lawn”; today both names are used.

Ash Lawn-Highland was opened for public visitation in 1931 by philanthropist Jay Winston Johns and his wife Helen Lambert Johns. Upon his death in late 1974, Mr. Johns bequeathed Ash Lawn-Highland to the College of William and Mary, where James Monroe studied from 1774 to 1776. Since 1974, the College has fulfilled Mr. Johns’s request to “operate this property as a historic shrine for the education of the general public.” It continues to own and operate the site today.

Ash Lawn-Highland is both an historic site and an events venue, continuing Monroe’s tradition of welcoming friends, neighbors, dignitaries, and visitors from around the globe. The house tour offers a compelling glimpse into a period of growth in U.S. history, in a setting full of abundant charm. Nestled against a ridge, Monroe’s Highland is a landscape of rolling hills, pastures, and woodland, providing an unequalled backdrop of beauty and history for meetings, weddings, parties of all kinds, picnics, and living history interpretations in the restored plantation core.

Ash Lawn-Highland offers house tours year-round. In the restored house, the rich collection of period and Monroe-family furnishings perfectly exemplifies James and Elizabeth Monroe’s international style, while also demonstrating their strong American connections. Our house tour emphasizes Monroe’s many and varied contributions to our nation’s early history. Known for his two-term presidency, James Monroe held many political offices, including roles in the Continental Congress and the U.S. Senate, and multiple terms as Governor of Virginia. The story of James Monroe’s life features the American Revolution, southern and western expansion, international diplomacy and our earliest foreign policy, critical issues surrounding slavery—including a major slave rebellion, the international slave trade, and the anti-slavery movement—Congressional compromise, and of course his eight years as President of the United States.

Ash Lawn-Highland also presents numerous special programs. Our workshops engage young learners, and visitors of all ages delight in viewing animals in a rural landscape that would be familiar to the Founding Fathers. Throughout the year our activities—including history talks and symposia, living history programs, and period craft demonstrations—present a glimpse into early nineteenth-century life. If this is your first visit to Ash Lawn-Highland, we welcome you and hope you will return often to participate in our special events and to note the evolution of our Monroe-family interpretation. If you have visited before, we are grateful for your continuing interest. All of us hope that each of you has an enjoyable and rewarding visit.

**SOURCE:** Ash Lawn-Highland | The Home of President James Monroe | [ashlawnhighland.org](http://ashlawnhighland.org) | Photo Credit—Neal Piper

