

# A Guide to the Executive letter books of Governor James L. Kemper, 1874-1877

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## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Executive letter books of Governor James L. Kemper, 1874-1877

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## Profile Description

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**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Accession Number

35358

### Language

English

### Creator

Virginia. Governor (1874-1877 : Kemper)

### Extent

2 v. (689 p.)

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

For preservation purposes, please use microfilm (Misc. reel 6193)

### Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Acquisition Information

Acquisition information unknown

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## Alternative Form Available

Also available on microfilm (Misc. reel 6193)

## Biographical Information

James Lawson Kemper was born 11 June 1823 at "Mountain Prospect" in Madison County, Virginia, to William Kemper (1776-1853) and Maria E. Allison Kemper (1787-1873). He attended the Locust Dale Academy, then Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia, graduating in 1842. He read law under George W. Summers (1804-1868) of Kanawha County, (West) Virginia, and received a master's degree from Washington College. Admitted to the bar 2 October 1846, Kemper returned to Madison County to practice law. When the Mexican War began, Kemper was appointed captain in the First Virginia Regiment and served until the end of the war. In 1853, Kemper was elected to the House of Delegates and served until 1863. He was Speaker of the House from 1861 to 1863. Kemper also was appointed a general in the Virginia militia in 1858. When the Civil War began, Kemper was appointed colonel of the 7th Virginia Infantry. Due to his performance at the battle of Seven Pines, Kemper was promoted to brigadier general. He was wounded in Pickett's Charge on 3 July 1863, and was captured by Union troops a few days later. Exchanged in September 1863, he returned to his command. Kemper was put in command of the reserve forces of Virginia in 1864.

After the war ended, Kemper returned to his law practice in Madison County and pursued business interests. He was elected governor of Virginia in 1873 and served from 1874 to 1878. Much of his term was spent in dealing with Virginia's debt. On 12 March 1874, Kemper created controversy and angered his Conservative contemporaries by vetoing a bill to transfer control of the city government of Petersburg from elected Republican officials to a board of commissioners appointed by a city judge. Governor Kemper also played an integral part in the unveiling of John Henry Foley's statue to Stonewall Jackson on Capitol Square.

After he left the governor's office, Kemper returned to Madison County, then moved to Orange County in 1882. Kemper married Cremora Conway Cave (ca. 1837-1870) 4 July 1853 in Madison County, and they had seven children. Kemper died 7 April 1895 in Orange County and buried at the family cemetery at "Walnut Hills" in Madison County.

## Scope and Content

Executive letter book contains the outgoing correspondence of Governor James L. Kemper between 1874 and 1877, arranged chronologically. Letters were written by Governor Kemper, clerk P. F. Howard, Secretary of the Commonwealth James McDonald, and personal secretaries Meade C. Kemper, S. Bassett French, Baker P. Lee, and Charles Rutledge Whipple. Governor Kemper corresponded with a variety of individuals in federal and state government as well as important private individuals, on issues including the state war debt, prisoners and the Penitentiary, the volunteer militia, the Petersburg city government bill veto, requests for patronage, the Centennial Exhibition, the Virginia Military Institute, boundary disputes with West Virginia and Maryland, and the Foley statue of Stonewall Jackson. The letter book also includes a number of messages addressed to the Senate and House of Delegates of Virginia.

## Related Material

[Virginia Governor \(1874-1878 : Kemper\), Executive papers of Governor James L. Kemper, 1874-1877. Accession 43755, State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.](#)

## Index Terms

Arkansas. -- Politics and government -- 19th century

Maryland. -- Politics and government -- 19th century

Louisiana -- History -- 19th century.

Maryland -- Boundaries -- Virginia.

Missouri -- Politics and government -- 19th century.  
North Carolina -- Politics and government -- 19th century.  
Petersburg (Va.) -- History -- Reconstruction, 1865-1877  
Tennessee -- Politics and government -- 19th century.  
United States -- Centennial celebrations, etc.  
United States. -- History -- Reconstruction, 1865-1877  
Virginia -- Boundaries -- Maryland.  
Virginia -- Capital and capitol.  
Virginia -- History -- 19th century.  
Virginia -- Militia -- History -- 19th century.  
Virginia -- Politics and government -- 19th century.  
West Virginia. -- Politics and government -- 19th century.  
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Phelps, John S. (John Smith), 1814-1886

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Smith, Francis H. (Francis Henney), 1812-1890  
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Vincent, Thomas M. (Thomas MacCurdy), 1832-1909.  
Ward, Henry A. (Henry Augustus), 1834-1906  
Yuengling, D. G. (David Gottlieb), 1806-1877  
Van Lew, Elizabeth, 1818-1900  
Wise, Richard A. (Richard Alsop), 1843-1900.

## **Corporate Names:**

Virginia. Department of Military Affairs.  
Virginia. Governor (1874-1878 : Kemper)  
Virginia. Office of the Attorney General  
Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company  
College of William and Mary  
Eastern State Hospital (Va.)  
Eastern State Hospital (Va.) Office of the Superintendent  
Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (Va.)  
United States Centennial Commission  
University of Virginia  
Virginia Military Institute  
Virginia Military Institute -- History -- 19th century.  
Virginia Military Institute. Board of Visitors.  
Virginia Penitentiary.  
Virginia Penitentiary. Superintendent.  
United States. Adjutant-Generals Office  
United States. Department of State  
United States. Army. Quartermaster's Department  
United States. War Department  
Virginia. Department of Military Affairs  
Virginia. Office of the Attorney General

## **Subjects:**

State governments -- Virginia -- Officials and employees.  
African Americans -- History -- 19th century.  
Convict labor -- 19th century. -- Virginia  
Extradition -- 19th century -- Virginia  
Flour -- Inspection -- Virginia.  
Governors -- Virginia.  
Indians of North America -- 19th century -- Virginia  
Jackson-Hope Medal.

Mattaponi Indians  
Medals -- Virginia  
Monuments -- Virginia -- Richmond.  
National cemeteries -- Virginia.  
Oyster industry -- Chesapeake Bay (Md. and Va.)  
Pamunkey Indians  
Pardons -- Virginia.  
Prisoners -- 19th century. -- Virginia  
Statues -- Virginia -- Richmond  
Tobacco -- Inspection -- Virginia.

## **Genre and Form Terms:**

Letter books.  
State government records. -- Virginia.

## **Arrangement**

This collection is arranged into the following series: I. Executive letter books of Governor James L. Kemper, 1874-1877.

Arranged chronologically.