

Cooper, James Fenimore papers

James Fenimore Cooper papers

March 7, 1832

Title Statement

Cooper, James Fenimore papersJames Fenimore Cooper papers MSS.6245

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS.6245

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

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Unit Date

March 7, 1832

Mixed Materials

003 (box)

Container

007 (folder)

Language

English

Creator

Cooper, James Fenimore, 1789-1851

source

Gerald W. Cloud Rare Books

Extent

0.03 Cubic Feet One letter-sized file folder

Condition Description

Good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection has been minimally processed and is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Gerald W. Cloud Rare Books by the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 6 February 2026.

Processing Information

This collection was processed as an addition to MSS 6245, James Fenimore Cooper papers. Previous accretions to MSS 6245 can be accessed via Virgo search. This resource record contains only one letter sent by James Fenimore Cooper to Armand Carrel on March 7, 1832. Earlier accretions to MSS 6245 should be referenced for related James Fenimore Cooper papers resources.

Preferred Citation

MSS 6245, James Fenimore Cooper papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical Note: James Fenimore Cooper

James Fenimore Cooper was born on September 15, 1789, in Burlington, New Jersey, as the eleventh of twelve children of William Cooper and Elizabeth Fenimore Cooper. Shortly after his first birthday, the family relocated to Cooperstown, New York, a settlement his father had founded on a large tract of land at the headwaters of the Susquehanna River. William Cooper was a prominent landowner, judge, and Federalist congressman, and James grew up in privileged circumstances on the New York frontier. He attended Yale College beginning at age thirteen but was expelled in 1805. He subsequently sailed on a merchant vessel before receiving a commission as a midshipman in the U.S. Navy in 1808. He resigned his commission in 1811 upon marrying Susan De Lancey, daughter of a wealthy Westchester County family, and settled into the life of a country gentleman. Cooper did not begin writing until 1820, and it was his second novel, *The Spy* (1821), a tale of espionage during the American Revolution, that established his reputation. He went on to produce the five novels of the Leatherstocking Tales: *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841), all featuring the frontier scout Natty Bumppo, which became his most enduring literary legacy.

In 1826, Cooper moved his family to Europe, where they remained until 1833, residing primarily in France and also traveling in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany. He served informally as U.S. consul at Lyon and developed a close friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette. His years abroad deepened his republican convictions and drew him into European political affairs. He published *The Bravo* in 1831, a novel set in Venice that attacked oligarchical government, and became increasingly engaged as a political writer. In late 1831, Cooper entered the Finance Controversy, a public debate sparked in the French Chamber of Deputies when Lafayette cited the United States government as a model of fiscal economy. Sébastien Louis Saulnier, a journalist at the *Revue Britannique*, challenged Lafayette's figures, arguing that a limited monarchy was more cost-efficient than a republic. Cooper responded with a *Letter to General Lafayette on the Expenditure of the United States of America*, published in Paris in December 1831, defending the American republican model. He then contributed a series of letters to the Parisian daily *Le National* between February 24 and March 7, 1832, continuing the argument. He intended to compile these writings into a pamphlet for American audiences. After returning to the United States in 1833, Cooper published *A Letter to My Countrymen* (1834), in which he gave his own account of the controversy and criticized American press coverage of it. He spent much of the remainder of his life in Cooperstown and continued writing novels, works of social criticism, and a *History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839). He died in Cooperstown on September 14, 1851, one day before his sixty-second birthday.

References

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Fenimore-Cooper>.

Biographical Note: Armand Carrel

Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Armand Carrel was born on May 8, 1800, in Rouen, France, the son of a prosperous merchant. He received his early education at the Lycée Pierre Corneille in Rouen and subsequently attended the military school at Saint-Cyr. He entered the army as a second lieutenant but soon became involved in clandestine liberal politics, participating in the failed Belfort Conspiracy of 1821. When France went to war with Spain in 1823, Carrel, sympathetic to the Spanish liberal cause, resigned his commission and made his way to Barcelona, where he enlisted in the foreign legion fighting against French forces. He was captured near Figueres and faced a court-martial that initially sentenced him to death; the sentence was not carried out, and he was acquitted and released. His military career at an end, Carrel moved to Paris, where he worked as secretary to the historian Augustin Thierry and began writing. He produced several historical works, including *Résumé de l'histoire d'Écosse* (1825) and *Histoire de la contre-révolution en Angleterre sous Charles II et Jacques II* (1827), the latter a critique of the Bourbon Restoration. He also contributed to various periodicals and established himself as a journalist.

In January 1830, Carrel co-founded *Le National*, a Paris daily, together with Adolphe Thiers, François Mignet, and Auguste Sautet. The paper was established as a liberal opposition organ to the Restoration government of Charles X and played a role in precipitating the July Revolution of 1830. After that revolution brought Louis-Philippe to power, Thiers and Mignet took government positions, leaving Carrel as the sole director of *Le National*. Under his editorship, the paper became one of the leading political journals in Paris, increasingly critical of the Orléanist monarchy and, by 1832, explicitly republican in orientation. Carrel's tenure at *Le National* was not without legal risk; he was imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie and appeared multiple times before the Tribunal of Paris to answer for the paper's content. It was in the context of his editorship of *Le National* — by then an important venue for republican political commentary — that Cooper contributed his series of letters on the Finance Controversy in early 1832. Carrel had already fought two duels with editors of rival papers before a third dispute, with Émile de Girardin, editor of *La Presse*, culminated in a duel at Saint-Mandé on July 22, 1836. Carrel was wounded in the groin and died two days later, on July 25, 1836, at the age of thirty-six. His collected works were published posthumously in five volumes with biographical notes by Émile Littré (Paris, 1858).

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_National_\(Paris\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_National_(Paris)).

Content Description

This addition to MSS 6245, James Fenimore Cooper papers, contains a one-leaf, signed autograph letter from Cooper to Armand Carrel (1800–1836), editor of the Paris daily newspaper, *Le National*. The letter requests copies of magazine issues containing his letters to the paper regarding the then-ongoing Finance Controversy of 1831–1832 and a duplicate of the issue containing his fourth letter. The letters he requests concern Cooper's views on the Finance Controversy, a debate regarding the cost of government, during which he publicly sided with and defended the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette argued against the claims of Sébastien Louis Saulnier, a journalist at the *Revue Britannique*, that a limited monarchical government was more financially efficient than a republic.

Cooper had published a "Letter to General Lafayette" in December 1831 and subsequently contributed a series of letters to *Le National* between February 24 and March 7, 1832. These are the letters Cooper was referring to in his letter. Cooper, who was residing in Paris at the time, stated his intention to "send the whole controversy to America" and requested the magazines for the purpose of publishing a pamphlet.

Related Materials

The records/guides for this collection's original acquisition and other previous additions can be found in VIRGO, the Library's online catalog, as well as (in many cases) on the Archival Resources of the Virginias (ARVAS) website. For best results, search using the collection's Identifier/Call Number: MSS 6245.

Keywords

Correspondence

Carrel, Armand, 1800-1836

Gerald W. Cloud Rare Books

Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Du Motier, marquis de, 1757-1834