

# Randolph, Edmund Letter regarding Finances

Edmund Randolph Letter Regarding Finances

1780 February 21

---

## Title Statement

Randolph, Edmund Letter regarding FinancesGuide to the Edmund Randolph Letter Regarding Finances SC 00974

**Author:** Finding Aid Authors: Ellen Strong.

## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** Special Collections Research Center

William & Mary Special Collections Research Center  
Earl Gregg Swem Library  
400 Landrum Dr  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
Business Number: 757-221-3090  
spcoll@wm.edu  
URL: <https://libraries.wm.edu/libraries-spaces/special-collections>

---

2007-08-03

## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-05-15 12:44:56 -0400.

**Language Usage:** The collection description/finding aid is written in English

## Descriptive Summary

**Unit ID**

SC 00974

**Unit ID**

/repositories/2/resources/5591

**Unit Date**

1780 February 21

**Language**

English

**Extent**

0.01 Linear Foot

**Extent**

1 item, 1 page

**Repository**

Special Collections Research Center

## Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Access:**

Collection is open to all researchers. Manuscript collections and archival records may contain materials with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations, such as the Virginia Public Records Act (Code of Virginia, § 42.1-76-91); and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3705.5). Confidential material may include, but is not limited to, educational, medical, and personnel records. If sensitive material is found in this collection, please contact a staff member immediately. The disclosure of personally identifiable information pertaining to a living individual may have legal consequences for which the College of William and Mary assumes no responsibility.

**Conditions Governing Use:**

Before reproducing or quoting from any materials, in whole or in part, permission must be obtained from the Special Collections Research Center, and the holder of the copyright, if not Swem Library.

**Acquisition Information:**

Purchase

**Processing Information:**

Processed by Ellen Strong in 1993.

**Preferred Citation:**

Edmund Randolph Letter, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

## Biographical Information:

On August 10, 1753, Edmund Randolph was born in Tazewell Hall, Williamsburg, VA. His parents were Ariana Jenings and John Randolph. Edmund attended the College of William and Mary and continued his education by studying the law under his father's tutelage.

When the Revolution broke out, father and son followed different paths. John Randolph, a Loyalist, followed the royal governor, Lord Dunmore, to England, in 1775. Edmund then lived with his uncle Peyton Randolph, a prominent figure in Virginia politics. During the war Edmund served as an aide-de-camp to General Washington and also attended the convention that adopted Virginia's first state constitution in 1776. He was the convention's youngest member at age 23. Randolph married Elizabeth Nicholas in 1776.

Randolph continued to advance in the political world. He became mayor of Williamsburg and Virginia's attorney-general. In 1779 he was elected to the Continental Congress, and in November 1786 Randolph became Governor of Virginia. In 1786 he was a delegate to the Annapolis Convention.

Four days after the opening of the federal convention in Philadelphia, on May 29, 1787, Edmund Randolph presented the Virginia Plan for creating a new government. This plan proposed a strong central government composed of three branches, legislative, executive, and judicial, and enabled the legislative to veto state laws and use force against states that failed to fulfill their duties. After many debates and revisions, including striking the section permitting force against a state, the Virginia Plan became in large part the basis of the Constitution.

Though Randolph introduced the highly centralized Virginia Plan, he fluctuated between the Federalist and Antifederalist points of view. He sat on the Committee of Detail that prepared a draft of the Constitution, but by the time the document was adopted, Randolph declined to sign. He felt it was not sufficiently republican, and he was especially wary of creating a one-man executive. He preferred a three-man council since he regarded "a unity in the Executive" to be the "foetus of monarchy." In a Letter . . . on the Federal Constitution, dated October 10, 1787, Randolph explained at length his objections to the Constitution. The old Articles of Confederation were inadequate, he agreed, but the proposed new plan of union contained too many flaws. Randolph was a strong advocate of the process of amendment. He feared that if the Constitution were submitted for ratification without leaving the states the opportunity to amend it, the document might be rejected and thus close off any hope of another plan of union. However, he hoped that amendments would be permitted and second convention called to incorporate the changes.

By the time of the Virginia convention for ratification, Randolph supported the Constitution and worked to win his state's approval of it. He stated his reason for his switch: "The accession of eight states reduced our deliberations to the single question of Union or no Union."

Under President Washington, Edmund Randolph became Attorney General of the United States. After Thomas Jefferson resigned as Secretary of State, Randolph assumed that post for the years 1794-95. During the Jefferson-Hamilton conflict he tried to remain unaligned. After retiring from politics in 1795, Randolph resumed his law practice and was regarded as a leading figure in the legal community. During his retirement he wrote a history of Virginia. When Aaron Burr went on trial for treason in 1807, Edmund Randolph acted as his senior counsel. In 1813, at age 60 and suffering from paralysis, Randolph died while visiting Nathaniel Burwell at Carter Hall. His body is buried in the graveyard of the nearby chapel.

# Scope and Contents

Letter, 21 Feb. 1780, of Edmund Randolph, Williamsburg, Va. to unidentified recipient. Letter concerns a suit to collect the principle and interest of a bond. Also mentions Mr. Hunter, West, Peyton, and [George] Wythe.

## Keywords

Correspondence

Williamsburg (Va.)--History--18th century

Wythe, George, 1726-1806

## Description of Subordinate Components

### **Letter**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/263151

**Unit Date** 1780 Feb. 21

**Mixed Materials** Small Collections Box 62 (Box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

**Language** English