

The Papers of James Madison: Retirement Series. Volume 2: 1 February 1820–26 February 1823. Edited by David B. Mattern and others. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013. Pp. [xxxvi], 727. \$85.00, ISBN 978-0-8139-3376-4.)

This entry in *The Papers of James Madison: Retirement Series* covers the period from, roughly, the adoption of the Missouri Compromise to the

selection of Nicholas Biddle to manage the Second Bank of the United States. During these years the former president, according to the Washington, D.C., *Daily National Intelligencer*, enjoyed at his Montpelier plantation "a life of repose, though not of useless idleness" (p. 83).

In fact, James Madison entertained frequently and maintained a voluminous correspondence. Because of the miscellaneous nature of his retirement letters, this volume contains fewer "editorial notes," substantial essays introducing a topic, than do many of its predecessors. One note discusses Madison's efforts to help his bankrupt brother-in-law Richard Cutts; another explains how Madison's Jonathan and Mary Bull essay, a saccharine attempt to defend the South against northern critics of slavery, came to be published. In fairness to the editors, annotations after almost every document more than compensate for the understandable paucity of editorial notes.

A few topics reappear throughout the volume. Madison disliked the Missouri Compromise—banning slavery in the northern reaches of the Louisiana Territory, allowing slavery in Missouri, and admitting Maine as a free state—but he recognized its necessity. Madison favored "dispersion" of the slave population, arguing slavery could eventually be abolished if slaves were not too concentrated in any one region (p. 17). Wary of slavery's critics, Madison suspected that leaders of the dying Federalist Party had provoked the Missouri crisis in an effort to create a new party system along sectional lines. Madison's comments on slavery are not pleasant reading for modern admirers of the Founder. In a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, Madison advocated the colonization of American blacks away from white society. When the planter Francis Corbin declared his disgust with slavery, Madison admitted it was a moral evil and then reassured Corbin that under proper management slave labor could be made efficient and warned him that other forms of property entailed their own risks.

Madison in the early 1820s had not yet acquired his sobriquet as "the Father of the Constitution," but as a former delegate to the federal Constitutional Convention, a coauthor of *The Federalist*, and the architect of the Bill of Rights, he could not avoid commenting on constitutional issues. The Virginia jurist Spencer Roane complained to him about the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion in *Cohens v. Virginia* (1821), upholding the Court's power to review state court decisions. Madison replied that to avoid chaos and maintain uniformity, federal authority had to prevail when conflict arose; he also predicted that the increasing professionalism of judges would in the future minimize differences between state and federal courts. Defensive about his earlier nationalism, Madison made clear his desire to delay publication of his notes of the Philadelphia debates until after his death and insisted the Constitution should be interpreted as it was understood when adopted. Queried about specific issues, he concluded that the protective tariff "involves no great constitutional question" and that Congress could do nothing to encourage inventions beyond issuing patents (p. 167).

Education provides another recurring theme. Madison struggled alongside his friend and fellow trustee Thomas Jefferson to complete construction of the University of Virginia amid "the distresses of the times" in the wake of the Panic of 1819 (p. 125). Fearful that faculty salaries would

devour funds needed for buildings, they resisted political pressure to open the university before construction was complete. A letter from Joseph C. Cabell reveals the depth of the opposition to Thomas Cooper's appointment as president of the university. Madison and Jefferson had hoped to lure the noted scientist and freethinker to Charlottesville, but he stayed at South Carolina College.

Meanwhile, Madison endorsed education for women, writing that "the capacity of the female mind for studies of the highest order can not be doubted," although differences among the sexes "must be as readily admitted" (p. 394). He offered another correspondent tips for the study of history: begin with general histories and then proceed to national histories, but he added, "Geography is a preliminary in all cases to a pleasing & instructive course of historical reading" (p. 236). A letter of August 1822 to William T. Barry, then the lieutenant governor of Kentucky, contains Madison's best-known defense of education: "A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will for ever govern ignorance" (p. 555).

There is, of course, much more, making this volume, like its predecessors, an indispensable resource for students of Madison's life and times and an essential acquisition for any research library.

Barton College

JEFF BROADWATER