

The Papers of James Madison. Volume 15: 24 March 1793–20 April 1795. Edited by THOMAS A. MASON, ROBERT A. RUTLAND, and JEANNE K. SISSON. Volume 16: 27 April 1795–27 March 1797. Edited by J.C.A. STAGG, THOMAS A. MASON, and JEANNE K. SISSON. SUSAN H. PERDUE, Editorial Assistant. Volume 17: 31 March 1797–3 March 1801, with a Supplement, 22 January 1778–9 August 1795. Edited by DAVID B. MATTERN, J.C.A. STAGG, JEANNE K. CROSS, and SUSAN HOLBROOK PERDUE. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985, 1989, 1991. Pp. xxxii, 561; xxx, 527; xxx, 610. \$47.50; \$45.00; \$47.50.)

These three volumes, covering March 1793 to August 1795, conclude publication of all relevant documents from the period of James Madison's life prior to his de jure entrance into the executive branch. The documents from his executive roles as Thomas Jefferson's secretary of State and then as president comprise the next two portions of *The Papers of James Madison*. Publication of these in "The Secretary of State Series" and "The Presidential Series" has already begun.

As is the hallmark of this entire publication project, each of the three volumes under review is first rate. The editorial endnotes are informative and instructive. The more substantive editorial notes that precede some of the documents are exactly what a scholar wants: significant background information, briefly presented, with references to other relevant parts of the collection as well as to appropriate secondary literature. Moreover, the indexes to these volumes are excellent: their breadth and detail provide helpful and suggestive guidance to scholars. In short, *The Papers of James Madison* is an exquisite and invaluable research tool for students of Madison or the early republic. No scholarly library should be without the complete collection.

Given the diversity of specialization among students of Madison and his time, each reader will find letters, pamphlets, and documents of particular interest to him or herself. As one interested in the history of political theory, this reviewer found Volume 17 to be of critical import, but the other two volumes contain significant information as well. Volume 15 traces the increasing threat that Madison perceived in the Federalist policies of Alexander Hamilton, his one-time collaborator. Symptomatic of Madison's growing fear of an end to constitutional republicanism was his, and Jefferson's, practice of not signing letters to each other because of their suspicions of the Federalist-controlled mail. Madison's frustration over the lack of party discipline in the House of Representatives is evident as he became involved with creating an opposition party. Along with carefully annotated copies of Madison's five "Helvidius" essays in this

volume is his unsigned Philadelphia publication entitled "Political Observations," which is particularly interesting. It demonstrates Madison's keen appreciation of the potential power of public opinion in the United States; it also shows his firm liberal belief that, if all sides of an issue are presented to the public, the truth eventually will win out. "Political Observations" appears to have been written for an elite readership: Madison spares no words in detailing his critique of the Federalist regime, his support for commercial discrimination against England, and his diplomatic but openly critical appraisal of President George Washington and those who encircled and controlled him.

Volume 16 presents the finale to Madison's career in the House of Representatives. For readers familiar with his initial days as leader of the house, it becomes evident that before the conclusion of his fourth term, he no longer held sway at the head of the opposition. While his antagonism to the Jay Treaty was fierce, rather than write public responses to Hamilton's policies, as he had in the "Pacifcus"- "Helvidius" exchange, Madison elected to try a different tactic: to petition the General Assembly of Virginia to lead the attack on the treaty. Although this volume closes with Madison's retirement from the house and his return to Montpelier, the next volume makes clear that the move should not be confused with retirement from politics.

Volume 17, from the perspective of this reviewer, constitutes the gem of these volumes—documents pertaining to Madison's four-year hiatus from elected national office and his return to the private arena at Montpelier. These documents demonstrate that he never left politics; he merely shifted mailing addresses. As the Federalists in his view continued to threaten republican principles at an increasingly alarming rate, Madison's antipathy to John Adams could be contained, but just barely. Working closely with Jefferson, Madison helped construct the Republican "party" to "purge" (p. 342) the Federalists from power. Scholars will find much of interest in this volume, including a supplement of documents from 1778–1795 where "The Recently Rediscovered Letters of Edmund Pendleton" (see "Editorial Note," p. 481) provide the focus.

This volume contains Madison's "Virginia Resolution." In his final years, his association with this resolution caused him genuine unrest as he tried to distinguish his position from that of Jefferson and the Kentucky Resolutions, while preserving his friend's reputation. This document should be read alongside Madison's lengthy, energetic, and tedious "Report of 1800," in which he attempted to legitimize and explain Virginia's resolutions to the other states that were less than receptive. In the "Report" Madison also attempted to establish ground rules for constitutional interpretation and defended the necessity of a free press.

The latter theme Madison repeated in his two *Aurora General Advertiser* essays: "Foreign Influence" and "Political Reflections." Political scientists who tend to forget that Madison wrote significantly more than *Federalist* No. 10 should read these essays. Although Madison's original handwritten drafts of these essays, the first signed "Enemy of Foreign Influence" and

the second "A Citizen of the United States," have not been located, the editors provide abundant evidence to persuade any reasonable Madison scholar of the essays' authenticity. They reveal much about Madison in this period. The first presents him at his rhetorical best. A brief essay intended for mass public consumption, it attacks Federalist attempts to focus public attention on the French threat rather than the British and implicitly acknowledges the importance of moving public opinion to the republican cause. At moments subtly, at others grossly obviously, Madison reminds his readers that "Great Britain, above all other nations, ought to be dreaded and watched" (p. 215). He deftly informs readers that power and influence come in many forms, not the least worrisome of which is British financial influence on American banks and the American press. He observes that "British influence steals into our newspapers, and circulates under their passport. Every printer, whether an exception to this remark or not, knows the fact to be as here stated" (p. 220). "Political Reflections," perhaps even more subtle and vicious in its assault on the Adams regime, begins by equating knowledge with power. Madison then laments that most Americans do not have adequate information to make informed judgments on the French Revolution. He skillfully analyzes that revolution, turning back on the Adams administration the Federalist allegation that it would lead to tyranny by suggesting that Adams was employing the foreign threat to divert public attention from the real danger to liberty at home. In this essay Madison writes of two "momentous truths" in politics: "*First. That the fetters imposed on liberty at home have ever been forged out of the weapons provided for defence against real, pretended, or imaginary dangers from abroad. Secondly, That there never was a people whose liberties long survived a standing army*" (p. 242).

These three volumes contain rich material and invaluable editorial guidance for scholars. All students of the early republic owe an ineffable debt to those who have brought together these documents in such splendid form for us to reflect upon and analyze.

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