

The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition

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Date: Apr. 2011

From: CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries(Vol. 48, Issue 8)

Publisher: American Library Association CHOICE

Document Type: Website overview

Length: 456 words

The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition. Virginia. One-time purchase price ranges from \$455.00 to \$4552.00, depending on institutional type; annual maintenance fee applies, URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/>

Rotunda, the University of Virginia (UVa) Press's online imprint, has published various "American Founding Era Collection" Digital Editions, including The Papers of George Washington (CH, Aug'07, 44-6604), The Adams Papers (CH, Oct'09, 47-0629), The Dolley Madison Digital Edition (CH, Jan'06, 43-2542), and The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (CH, Nov'09, 47-1215). These databases all are based on "papers projects" (letterpress or printed editions), often spanning decades and many carefully edited volumes, in various stages of completion. Although not all of the projects originated with UVa, Rotunda, with major foundation grant funding and university support, has done a magnificent job with the electronic component. Many of the original documents, e.g., The James Madison Papers <http://lcweb2.1oc.gov/ammem/collections/madison_papers/>, reside in the Library of Congress's Manuscript Division. Through LC's American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/>> (CH, Dec'05, 43-2404), researchers may discover a wealth of digital images of these documents.

The Papers of James Madison has a long provenance. Historians early on recognized the significance of Madison's contribution to the Continental Congress and his pivotal role at the convention to draft the Constitution and its eventual ratification. Madison served as secretary of state under Thomas Jefferson and experienced eight tumultuous years as president (1809-17). The modern scholarly edition of Madison's documentary legacy began in 1956 with the establishment of the James Madison Papers project at the University of Chicago, which took great strides toward a comprehensive, if not complete, annotated edition of the entire corpus. In 1973, the project relocated to the University of Virginia. At that time, the organizational structure of the papers evolved into four main parts: the Congressional Series (1751-1801), the Secretary of State Series (1801-09), the Presidential Series (1809-17), and the Retirement Series (1817-36). The project is still a work in progress, with an estimated 18 additional volumes expected in letterpress and digital formats. The publishing plan is a staggered one with the digital version added about 18 months after the printed volume appears.

The Digital Edition offers the same content as the print, plus a powerful search capability, with hundreds of linked cross-references, a subject index, and explanatory notes. Using the Compass search tool, researchers may toggle among the letters, documents, and other writings, and make use of a hierarchical and chronological layout. With a Rotunda subscription package, researchers may interact with companion-founders and their papers on a common platform. The functionality of this database is commendable. This superb primary research collection will only increase in usefulness as the papers projects slowly come to completion. Summing Up: Highly recommended. *** Lower-level undergraduates through researchers/faculty; general readers.--K. Potts, California State University--Stanislaus

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Source Citation

Potts, K. "The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition." CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries, vol. 48, no. 8, Apr.2011, p. 1461. Gale Literature Resource Center, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A253387030/LitRC?u=viva_uva&sid=bookmark-LitRC. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.