

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

JAMES MADISON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Edited by DOUGLASS ADAIR*

In the spring of 1831 James Kirke Paulding, then at the height of his fame as a popular American author,¹ wrote to the venerable James Madison and outlined his latest literary project: a series of biographies of Revolutionary statesmen. In this group Paulding wished to include Madison, and he urged the distinguished Virginian, therefore, to draw up for his guidance a short autobiography.

Madison had a high personal opinion of Paulding² and admired his literary ability sufficiently to feel "flattered" by the proposal. "There is no one to whose justice, [and] judgement . . . I could more willingly confide," he wrote the New York author. "Yet I feel the awkwardness of attempting 'a sketch of the principal incidents of my life,' such as the partiality of your friendship has prompted you to request. Towards a compliance with your object I may avail myself of a paper, though too meagre even for the name of a sketch, which was very reluctantly but unavoidably drawn up a few years ago for an abortive biography." Madison was well aware that this memoir which he already had on hand would not entirely answer Paulding's purpose. Nevertheless because of his age—he had already passed his eightieth birthday—and

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¹J. K. Paulding was a leading member of the able group of young writers who made New York the literary capital of the country during the early years of the republic. He was the chief co-author with Washington Irving—to whom he was related by marriage—of the *Salmagundi Papers*; and between 1807, when they were published, and 1845 when Paulding retired, his output of novels, satires, biographies, criticism, poetry, and miscellaneous essays, treating nearly every phase of American life, was nothing short of prodigious. In spite of the fact that much of his writing had genuine literary merit, it is completely forgotten today—except for the jingle, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." And no one, of course, remembers that Paulding wrote that.

²Paulding had attracted President Madison's notice in 1815 by his bitter satire against the English critics who were attacking the United States in the Tory quarterlies. When Madison met the young author he was so impressed with his ability that he appointed him secretary of the newly created Board of Naval Commissioners. This started Paulding on his political career that reached its climax when President Van Buren gave him the cabinet post of Secretary of Navy. For the chief events in Paulding's life see Amos L. Herold, "James Kirke Paulding," *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 321-323.

because of his chronic ill-health he hesitated to commit himself to any task of addition or revision. And so he warned Paulding that although the paper was unsatisfactory as it stood, "whether I shall be able to give it any amplification, is too uncertain to admit of a promise."³

As it turned out, Madison was wise in refusing to guarantee Paulding either a polished memoir or the data for an elaborate biography. For when he wrote his would-be biographer some nine months later, enclosing the promised sketch, he was forced to apologize for its still unfinished form. "It was my purpose to have enlarged some parts of it, and to have revised and probably blotted out others. But the crippled state of my health makes me shun the task, and the uncertainty of the future induces me to commit the paper, crude as it is, to your friendly discretion."⁴

Paulding never wrote his biography of Madison. His request, however, and the begging letters of other authors, seeking biographical data from the *Virginian*,⁵ served to force Madison himself to review his own life and produce his own autobiographical summary. This memoir, its form modelled on the Paulding sketch, is preserved among Madison's manuscripts. It is catalogued today among the Madison Papers in the Library of Congress, and modern scholars—notably A. E. Smith, E. M. Burns, and Irving Brant—have utilized parts of it in their studies of Madison's career. This Autobiography, strange to say, has never yet been published in its entirety, either in Madison's collected works or as a separate document.

To be sure, there is no startling revelation of secret history contained in Madison's memoir; nor indeed, any material that will force historians to immediately revise their interpretations of the great events in which the *Virginian* participated. The form in which Madison cast his Autobiography also helps to explain why no earlier historian thought it worthy of publication. For the sketch, as Madison himself describes it, was "the merest skeleton, with references to my pigeon-holes for whatever of flesh may be found for it."⁶ As

³ Madison to J. K. Paulding, April, 1831, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison* (Philadelphia, 1865), IV, 173-174 (hereafter cited: *Madison, Letters*).

⁴ Madison to J. K. Paulding, Jan., 1832, *Madison, Letters*, IV, 214.

⁵ See the requests of Lyman C. Draper in 1833, *Calendar of the Correspondence of James Madison* (Washington, 1894), 270, and the request of James B. Longacre, August 21, 1833, *Madison, Letters*, IV, 307.

⁶ Madison to J. K. Paulding, June 27, 1831, *Madison, Letters*, IV, 183. The "pigeon-holes" refer, of course, to the files of personal correspondence which Madison had started putting in order with a view to posthumous publication in 1821. Madison to John G. Jackson, Dec 27, 1821, *ibid.*, III, 243.

Madison here recognized, his private letters would always furnish the basic data for his biographers. Finally, unanswered questions relating to the date of composition and the circumstances under which the Autobiography was produced—it is written in the third person—have led some scholars to be skeptical of its value and perhaps overly cautious in its use.⁷

If the exact date at which the memoir was first drawn up is doubtful, still it is clear from Madison's statements to Paulding and from internal evidence that it was composed during the last five years of Madison's life.⁸ At this time, Madison over eighty, had lived in retirement for more than ten years. The sketch must therefore be taken as Madison's view of his career toward the very end of his life, when fading memory or the disinclination to controversy tended to make him slur over certain significant aspects of his career.⁹

⁷ Irving Brant, for example, whose study of Madison's life until 1780 is the first volume of what promises to be the definitive biography of the Virginian for our generation, uses quotation marks when referring to the "autobiography" and describes it as "supposedly dictated to his stepson," Irving Brant, *James Madison the Virginia Revolutionist, 1751-1780* (Indianapolis, 1941), 63, 106. Brant apparently had overlooked Madison's correspondence with Paulding which establishes beyond doubt Madison's direct and personal share in the preparation of the memoir; hence his hesitation then to accept it unqualifiedly as an actual autobiography. Today Brant attaches more weight to the Autobiography "as coming from Madison" than he did when preparing his first volume. Irving Brant to Douglass Adair, May 11, 1945.

⁸ It will probably never be possible to date the Autobiography exactly. Originally I assumed that it was a copy of the sketch sent to Paulding in Jan. 1832. Irving Brant, however, has been kind enough to call my attention to the two documents which immediately follow the Autobiography in the Madison Papers, that indicate that it was put into final form at a later date. The first of these documents, written after Aug. 1833, is a two page rough-draft outline of Madison's life which Brant says "reads like a skeleton of the Autobiography." The other paper is a much longer sketch, mentioning Madison's death and thus written after 1836, which Brant feels was "unquestionably" based on the Autobiography. Both of these papers are in the handwriting of John C. Payne, Dolly Madison's brother. Brant's comparison of the three documents leads him to conclude that "the Autobiography was written between the other two, therefore after August, 1833. . . . The finished work, I think, is Payne's written from such copious dictation that most of the wording is Madison's." Irving Brant to Douglass Adair, May 11, 1945.

⁹ Certain obvious omissions are significant. Madison makes no mention of his position in regard to slavery, although it was a problem that he had studied, written on, and tried to remedy, as the most distinguished member of the Liberian colonization society. In like manner even when the Autobiography does make a statement it is not always entirely frank. Brant has shown that the reason Madison gives in the memoir for going to Princeton rather than to William and Mary was most ambiguous. For although the unhealthy climate was partially responsible for his decision to stay out of Williamsburg, of equal importance was President Horrocks' reputation as a High Church Tory. Brant, *James Madison*, 67-71.

Accordingly, though the Autobiography reveals no important new material, and even though it lacks a precise composition date, it yet has a unique value in showing the special angle from which Madison approached the main events of his own life.

No one who reads the Autobiography can fail to gain a new perspective, for example, on the part Madison played in furthering the establishment of religious liberty in America as "a *natural and absolute* right." The catalogue of incidents which testify to his deep devotion to the cause runs through the memoir like a minor theme, beginning with his defense of the Orange County Baptists in the 1770's and continuing through his earnest warning against the dangers of "mingling" religion and politics in presidential proclamations. It is no exaggeration to say that none of Madison's other writings on the subject reveals so clearly his life-long effort to bring about a complete and absolute separation of church and state in this country. Nor can any reader of the Autobiography, noting the Virginian's scruples about the salary paid the Chaplain of Congress ("a violation of principle") and his qualms as President about issuing the call for a "day of Religious Service" during the War of 1812, fail to realize that Madison was slightly pedantic in applying his abstract principle of separation to specific situations. This doctrinaire quality of the Virginian's religious liberalism, as well as his confessed distaste for the theological "enthusiasm" of the Baptists ("obnoxious to sober opinion") whom he fought to protect, merely shows, of course, that Madison always approached the problem of religious freedom as a typical "philosophic" statesman of the eighteenth century enlightenment.

In like manner the Autobiography throws into sharp focus the extent to which adherence to theory governed Madison's conduct as a practicing republican statesman. And here again the slightly doctrinaire cast of the Virginian's thought is conspicuously apparent. That Madison always attempted to regulate his politics in strict accord with "the purity of . . . republican principles" is demonstrated by his real concern over the title chosen for the President and the etiquette of the first levee, by his attempt to make Virginia voters forgo their traditional election drunk, by his desire to deny Congress the right to raise its own pay, and, finally, by his stern refusal to accept even a single sheet of free government stationery while in office.

In this connection the Autobiography illuminates the problem of Madison's own theory of the relationship between economic interests and politics. A considerable number of

students have insisted on reading into the *Tenth Federalist* the nineteenth-century dogmas of Karl Marx. Assuming that Madison himself sanctioned a rigid doctrine of economic determinism, they felt justified in applying Marxist analysis to the Constitution itself. The Constitution—so these scholars argue—was created primarily for the protection of the Founding Fathers' property; the "more perfect union" proceeded from the selfish economic appetites of American capitalists, land speculators, and holders of depreciated government bonds.¹⁰ As an antidote to this crudely materialistic view it might be advisable in all future editions of *The Federalist* to note Madison's statement in his memoir concerning the "strict rules" he himself adhered to in "pecuniary matters." For James Madison, chief architect of the Constitution, had early resolved "never to deal in public property, land, debts or money, whilst a member of a [political] body whose proceedings might influence these transactions."

The Autobiography finally suggests an approach to the Virginian's political philosophy that historians so far have ignored. Madison's memoir gives striking proof that his whole life, by deliberate choice, was lived in an atmosphere of books and study. He was always the scholar-statesman. He entered public service, figuratively speaking, with a book under each arm, and he never ceased to believe that "academic" learning furnished necessary guidance for the practicing politician.

Consider Madison's own catalogue in his Autobiography that types him conclusively as an intellectual, a theorist, a political philosopher. At the age of eighty he still remembers the subjects he studied on first entering school, and he lists them as if to mark their continuing importance in his own mind. He never forgets the pleasure and profit he derives from reading the *Spectator*. At Princeton he carries a double load of classes, and breaks his health with overwork. Back at Montpellier, after a year as a postgraduate, he combines a study of law with a course of "miscellaneous" reading. Nor does his active entrance into politics ever separate James Madison from his books; it merely causes him to use them more purposefully. As a member of the Virginia Council of State he prepares himself for the office by an intensive study of finance, and writes a semi-technical monograph on paper

¹⁰ These neo-Marxist interpreters of the Constitution have depended equally upon a distortion of Madison's writings, and upon a misreading of Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*. For Beard's anger at the misleading use to which his book has been put, see his introduction to the 1925 edition.

money. When appointed delegate to the Federal Convention he turns "his attention and researches to the sources ancient and modern of information" on confederations. The detailed and scholarly memoranda prepared at that time are used by Madison in the Convention and in writing his share of *The Federalist*. Even his strong sense of public duty is not proof against Madison's thirst for reading and study; and so in 1797 he retires mainly because of his desire to "indulge his relish for the intellectual pleasures of the closet." His hopes were premature in 1797; actually it is not until 1817 that James Madison finally withdraws from politics to devote himself "to his farm and his books."

In Madison's retrospective view of his life, the books he read thus appear as events in themselves, and all his actions are fathered by the ideas he met in his intensive reading. A just estimate of his contribution to American history, therefore, must take into account these authors he listened to during his forty years as a practicing statesman. Only by relating Madison's thought to the great western tradition of political philosophy, will it be possible to define his services as chief theorist of the American Constitution.

The untitled fifteen-page manuscript of the Autobiography is in the very legible and regular handwriting of Madison's stepson, Payne Todd. It is probably a fair copy of an earlier manuscript, either written by Madison himself or dictated by him, for the document as it stands lacks the numerous erasures, deletions, and marks of grammatical change that would be inevitable in a first draft. There are, however, a few interpolations generally of single words in the text that are not in Todd's handwriting; since all these later additions were made with an ink that has faded quite differently from that used in the body of the document, they stand out as vividly as if they had been written in red. Possibly Madison made all of these additions himself, except in one instance where the hand of Dolly Madison can be recognized. All of these interpolations are here identified by footnotes; while the original pagination of the document is indicated by the bracketed numbers in the text.

James Madison was born on the 5th of March, (O.S.) 1751. His parents James Madison & N. Conway Madison resided in the County of Orange in Virginia. At the time of his birth they were on a visit to her mother, who resided on the Rappahannoc, at Port Conway in the County of King George.

At the age of about 12 years, he was placed by his father under the tuition of Donald Robertson, from Scotland, a man of extensive learning, and a distinguished Teacher, in the County of King & Queen. With him he studied the Latin and Greek languages, was taught to read but not to speak French, and besides Arithmetic & Geography, made some progress in Algebra & Geometry. Miscellaneous literature was also embraced by the plan of the school.

Having remained 3 or 4 years with Mr Robertson, he prosecuted his studies for a year or two under the Revd Thos. Martin the Parish Minister of the Established Church, (of England as then called) who lived with his father as a private Tutor.

One of the earliest books which engaged his attention was the "Spectator", which from his own experience, he inferred to be peculiarly adapted to inculcate in youthful minds, just sentiments an appetite for knowledge, and a taste for the improvement of the mind and manners.—See letter to Richard D. Cutts¹¹

In the year 1769, by the advice of Mr Martin, and his brother Alexander, both of whom had been educated at Nassau Hall, N. J. —he was sent to that college, of which Doct. Witherspoon was then President, in preference to William & Mary, the climate of which was unhealthy for persons going from a mountainous region. He there went thro' the ordinary course of studies, and in the autumn of 1771, received a Diploma of B. of Arts. His health being at the time too infirm for a journey home, he passed the ensuing winter in Princeton, employing his time in miscellaneous studies; but not without a reference to the profession of the Law; He availed himself of this opportunity of acquiring a slight knowledge of the Hebrew, which was not among the College Studies.

His very infirm health, had been occasioned not a little by a doubled labour, in which he was joined by a fellow student Jos. Ross, in accomplishing the studies of two years within one, having obtained from the faculty a promise that in case their preparation for the usual degree, should be found unexceptionable, the honor should be conferred. The effect on his health was increased also by an indiscreet experiment of the minimum of sleep & the maximum of application, which the constitution would bear. The former was reduced for some weeks to less than five [2] hours in the twenty four. He became satisfied that no real progress was gained by such a disproportionate extension of the hours of study, nor did he consider their success in performing the task of two years in one as any extraordinary achievement. It could have been effected by others with little more than ordi-

¹¹ The reference to the Cutts letter is an interpolation; Brant identifies the handwriting as Dolly Madison's.

nary exertion. The effect on his health proceeded from the extraordinary exertion made to justify the indulgence granted by the Faculty and to insure the attainment of his object. Hence it is probable they were better qualified in one year than they would have been in two by the ordinary application.

The extreme neglect of the French language at that day in the public Seminaries will appear from an incident soon after he had entered the College, then one of the most conspicuous in the Colonies. Doct. Witherspoon who spoke the language, had invited a visit from a French Gentleman who could not speak a word of English. The Gentleman happened to arrive, when the Doct. happened to be absent, and not a single member of the family knew a word of French. In this embarrassment Mrs Witherspoon sent to the College for some one who could relieve her from it. On application to the members of the Faculty, it was found that not one of them knew any thing of French; and it was found also on successive applications to the Students that all of them were equally ignorant, with the single exception of himself, who conscious of his incapacity for a conversation, in the language endeavoured to decline the task. As nothing better, however could be done, it was insisted that he should meet the stranger. The meeting took place with a salutation & questions on his part which tho' they would have been intelligible to the eye, were perfectly otherwise to the ear, especially from the rapid utterance of the Speaker. The scene was as awkward as possible; but fortunately after abortive efforts sufficiently repeated, the Doct. arrived to the great relief of all the parties, and not a moment lost in the escape of the discomforted Interpreter.

On his return to Virginia he continued for several years in very feeble health, but without neglecting a course of reading, which mingled miscellaneous subjects with the studies intended to qualify him for the Bar, for a practice at which however he never formed any absolute determination.

On the commencement of the dispute with Great Britain, he entered with the prevailing zeal into the American Cause; being under very early and strong impressions in favour of Liberty both Civil & Religious. His devotion to the latter found a particular occasion for its exercise in the persecution instituted¹² in his County [3] as elsewhere against the preachers belonging to the sect of Baptists then beginning to spread thro' the Country. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm which contributed to render them obnoxious to sober opinion as well as to the laws then in force, against Preachers dissenting from the Established Religion, he spared no exertion to save them from imprisonment & to promote their release from it. This interposition tho' a mere duty pre-

¹² Interpolation.

scribed by his conscience, obtained for him a lasting place in the favour of that particular sect. Happily it was not long before the fruits of Independence and of the spirit & principles which led to it, included a complete establishment of the Rights of Conscience, without any distinction of sects or individuals.

In 1775. he was elected a member of the Comee for the County, living at the time with his father (who was chairman of it) and had a part in the County proceedings belonging to the period. The spirit of the epoch may be seen in the address to P. H. on his expedition having for its object the military stores in Williamsburg, rifled by Gov. Dunmore.

He was restrained from entering into the military service by the unsettled state of his health and the discouraging feebleness of his constitution of which he was fully admonished by his experience during the exercises and movements of a minute Company which he had joined.

In the spring of 1776 he was initiated into the political career by a County election to the convention, which formed the original Constitution of the State with the Declaration of Rights prefixed to it; and which on the 16th day of May unanimously instructed her deputies in Congress to propose the final separation from G. Britain, as declared by that Body on the 4th of July following. Being young & in the midst of distinguished and experienced members of the Convention he did not enter into its debates; tho' he occasionally suggested amendments; the most material of which was a change of the terms in which the freedom of Conscience was expressed in the proposed Declaration of Rights. This important and meritorious instrument was drawn by Geo. Mason, who had inadvertently adopted the word *toleration*¹³ in the article on that subject. The change suggested and accepted, substituted a phraseology which—declared the freedom of conscience to be a *natural and absolute*¹³ right.

[4] In the election of Delegates to the Legislature for the ensuing year (1777), he was an unsuccessful candidate. Previous to the Revolution the election of the County Representatives, was as in England, septennial, and it was as there the usage for the candidates to recommend themselves to the voters, not only by personal solicitation, but by the corrupting influence of spirituous liquors, and other treats, having a like tendency. Regarding these as equally inconsistent with the purity of moral and of republican principles; and anxious to promote, by his example, the proper reform, he trusted to the new views of the subject which he hoped would prevail with the people; whilst his competitors adhered to

¹³ The lines drawn under these words, presumably by Madison, are additions made with an ink that is quite different from that used by Todd in the body of the manuscript.

the old practice. The consequence was that the election went against him; his abstinence being represented as the effect of pride or parsimony.

In the course of the ensuing Session of the Legislature he was appointed by it a member of the Council of State, Patrick Henry being then Governor. Of that body he continued a member till late in the year 1779, Thos. Jefferson being then Governor, when he was appointed a Delegate to the Revolutionary Congress.

To prepare himself for this service, he employed an unavoidable detention from it, in making himself acquainted with the state of the Continental affairs, and particularly that of the finances which, owing to the depreciation of the paper currency, was truly deplorable. The view he was led to take of the evil and its causes, was put on a paper, now to be found in several periodical publications, particularly in *Freneau's National Gazette* No.

He took his seat in Congress in March 1780, and was continued a member by annual re-elections till the expiration of the allowed term of three years, computed from the definitive ratification of the Articles of Confederation in 1781. On his arrival at Phila. he found that Congress had, after prolonged discussions, just adopted the new scheme of a Currency, by which forty of the paper dollars in circulation, were to be replaced by a single one.

For the proceedings of Congress during the above period and his participation in them, see their journals, secret & public; his correspondence from the spot with Jos. Jones, Edd Randolph, Thos. Jefferson, and others on his files; and the debates which he took down commencing Nov. 1782, and continued to the end of his term in the year following; see particularly in a communication in *Niles Register* for _____ a correction of an erroneous statement of an important transaction [5] relating to the Mississippi, which first appeared in Ramsay's History of the Revolution, and has been followed in other publications; Pitkin's history among them. The right of the U. S. to the navigation of that River, was maintained by him in every situation & on every occasion, which made it proper. One proof of his solicitude and exertions in its behalf may be seen in the Instructions of Congress drawn by him to Mr Jay on the day of _____ 1780. See the secret Journals¹⁴ — See also his letter of _____ to Lafayette on his files.

On his return to private life he resumed his law studies to which the forenoon was chiefly dedicated. In the afternoon he indulged in miscellaneous reading, which embraced among other works of philosophical cast, those of Buffon whose views of nature, however fanciful and even absurd in some instances were

¹⁴ The reference to the secret Journals is an interpolation.

highly attractive in others, and especially by the fascinating eloquence which distinguishes them. Whilst engaged on the Zoological volumes, he availed himself of the means occasionally falling into his hands, of making minute comparisons of sundry of our quadrupeds, with those bearing the name, or having the resemblance of them in Europe. Among his papers are notes of the details, which might save in a small degree the labour of more scientific and systematic observers.

He was soon however called from this disposal of his time, by the wish of his country-men, that he should be one of their Representatives in the Legislature of the State; a service to which he yielded with the less reluctance, as it would give him an opportunity of pleading in a favorable position, the cause of reform in our federal system, then in the paroxysm of its infirmities, and filling every well informed patriot with the most acute anxieties.

He was accordingly elected in the spring of 1784 & re-elected for the two successive years. For the Legislative proceedings of Virginia during that interesting period, embracing the Convention at Annapolis—the proposed grant of power to Congress and its recommendation of that at Philadelphia—the project of a Religious Establishment—the separation of Kentucky from [6] Virginia—the effort for paper money—the revised code of laws prepared by the case of British debts—the offered and declined donation to Genl. Washington—the attempted one to Thos. Paine &c— see his correspondence with Genl W.— Edd R. and particularly the copious one with Mr Jefferson during that period. See also the memorial & Remonstrance against the Religious Establishment, and an explanatory letter to Geo. Mason of Green Spring—notes of the proceedings at Annapolis, and an explanatory correspondence with Noah Webster as to the origin of the Convention there. In the statement prefixed to the laws of U. S. edited by Rush and Colvin, there is an error in ascribing the Resolutions of Va— in 1785, there cited, to J. Madison. They were the Report of a Committee on his, which varied them from a longer duration to 8 years. This circumstance contributed to the abandonment of them.

The convention at Annapolis having recommended another with enlarged powers to be held at Phila. the year following, he brought forward the act of compliance on the part of the Virginia Assembly which availing itself of the early period of its acting set the first example of *deciding* on the measure, tho' it is believed that the Legislature¹⁵ of N. Jersey was the first in *taking* the measure *into consideration*.—See the act of Virginia—also his correspondence with Genl Washington & Mr Jefferson.

After his appointment as a deputy to that Convention, he

¹⁵ Interpolation.

turned his attention and researches to the sources ancient & modern of information and guidance as to its object. Of the result of these he had the use both in the Convention and afterwards in the "Federalist." For the first shoot in his thoughts of a plan of Federal Government, see his letter to Thos. Jefferson 19th March — Ed. Randolph of 8th April 1787, and to Genl Washington of

the same year. Of the proceedings of the Convention & his part in them see the Debates taken by him at great length, and with great care, and which will fill 3 vols. 8vo or more. The notes of Judge Yates are full of erro[rs]—some of them very gross— see his letter to Jonn Elliott & others, particularly N. P. Trist.

During this period and until the expiration of the Old Congress [7] he continued a member of that Body. Of its proceedings previous and subsequent to the Convention of 1787, see the debates taken by him, and his correspondence with Edd Randolph, Jos. Jones— Pendleton & Mr Jefferson. His main object in returning to a service in that body, was to bring about, if possible, the cancelling of the project of Mr Jay for shutting the Mississippi which threatened an alienation of Kentucky, then a part of Virginia, from any increase of federal power, with such an evidence in view of a disposition in those possessing it to make that sacrifice.

It was in this interval between the close of the Federal Convention and the meeting of the State Conventions that the "Federalist" was written. For his share in it see Gideon's Edition. The papers were first meant for the important and doubtful state of New York and signed a "Citizen of New York"— afterwards meant for all the States under "Publius". In the early stage the papers were shown by the writers to each other before going to the press. This was¹⁶ inconvenient four¹⁷ nos. being required for a week and committing . . . ¹⁸ that was dropped. The numbers subsequent to the last written by him were first seen by him in print after his return to Virginia which was hastened by the approaching election.

In the month of April 1788, he was elected by the County of Orange a delegate to the State convention which was to decide on the Constitution proposed by the Federal Convention apart of the Session absent from confinement with bilious fever. For his part in it—see the published Debates, which tho' impartially are defectively taken, and in his case sometimes erroneously— sometimes

¹⁶ Interpolation.

¹⁷ The rest of this sentence, commencing with the word "four," and the next sentence, ending with the word "election," are interpolations in Madison's handwriting, squeezed partly into the text and partly along the right-hand side of the page.

¹⁸ Six words are illegible here.

unintelligibly; see his correspondence during the session with Alexander Hamilton and Rufus King.

In Feby. 1789 he was elected a Representative from the District in which he lived, to the first Congress under the new Constitution, and was continued a member by re-elections till March 1797, when he declined being longer a candidate. He had become wearied with public life, and longed for a return to a state in which he could indulge his relish for the intellectual pleasures of the closet, and the pursuits of rural life, the only resource of his future support. He had also in the year 1794 entered the married state, with a partner who favoured these views, and added every happiness to his life which female merit could impart. In retiring from the public service at that juncture, he had the [8] example of Geo. Washington and his testimony of the prosperous condition of the Country.

For the preference he had felt in the outset of the New Government of a seat in the House of Representatives to one in the Senate; for the particular means used to prevent his election to the latter, and the party arrangement of the Districts with a view to prevent his election to the former— see the letters of E. Randolph, Edd Carrington, F. C. & Geo. Lee Tuberville— see also a letter of J. M. to E. Randolph March 1st—1789

For the account of Inaugural Address of Genl. W. 1789— see papers of Genl. W. in hands of Mr Sparks & correspondence of J. M. with Genl. W.

On the question of giving a *title* to the President, see journals of the two Houses, particularly the entry on that of Senate— see letters of J. M. to E. R. &c.

For the answer to the address, drawn by J. M. as chairman of the Committee, and place of delivering it— viz— in a Committee Room, see his letters to— —

James Madison was detained by sickness on the road from the commencement of the 2d Session, and found on his arrival at New York that the answers of both Houses had been delivered by the Speakers, heading the Members, at the dwelling of the President.

For the etiquette of the first levee, see the printed letter of Mr Jefferson on the subject—(J. M. was present on the occasion.)

Whilst a member of the H. of Reps. he forbore to follow the example, to which he believes he was the sole exception. of receiving at the public expense the articles of stationary [*sic*] provided for the members, to which he thought he was no more entitled, than to the supply of other wants incident to his station. To this resolution he adhered throughout, tho' without attracting any notice to it that might lead to a reflection on others. On his first entering public life, he had laid down strict rules for

himself in pecuniary matters— one invariably observed was, never to deal in public property, lands, debts or money, whilst a member of the body whose proceedings might influence these transactions. He highly disapproved of public bodies raising the wages of themselves, and declined receiving the addition made by the Legislature of Virginia to the [9] wages of members whilst he was one. In this he was not singular. He was much surprised and disappointed at the incompleting of the Ratification of the prohibitory Article proposed to the Constitution of the U. S. in 1790, which he had eluded [*sic*] in the proposed amendments in 1790, and had much at heart.

He disapproved also of Chaplains to Congress paid out of the public Treasury—as a violation of principle. He thought the only legitimate and becoming mode would be that of voluntary contribution from the members. See remarks on the subject in his manuscript papers on file.

For his course whilst a member of the House of Reps. in relation to amendments to the Constitution— to the trade with G. Britain and particularly her West India Colonies— to the tariff— to the power of Removal— to the funding system*— to the Bank†— to the carriage tax— to the Resolutions, called the Virginia Resolutions— for an alternative impost on imports from nations not in Treaty with the U. S.—to Giles's Resolutions against Secretary of Treasury— to Jay's treaty# &c see Debates in Congress. (Freneaus National Gazette)—the pamphlets, "Pol. observations" & "Helvidius" (by J. M) the correspondence with E. R—Jos. Jones—Mr Jefferson—et aliis—particularly letters of J. Madison to E. R. April 12th—May 30th & 31st—June 15 & 17-24th—July 15th—

*His opinion in favour of dividing the payment of the public debt between the original holders, and the purchasers, grew out of the enormous gain of the latter, particularly out of Soldiers Certificates, and the sacrifice of these, to whom the public faith had not been fulfilled. Whilst the case of this class of Creditors was less in view he had opposed any discrimination; as in the Congress of 1782. Prior to the final settlement with the Army in the address drawn by him recommending the plan providing for the debt, until indeed the subject came close into view & the sacrifice of the soldiers was brought home to reflection, he had not sufficiently scanned and felt the magnitude of the evil. Hence in a hasty answer to a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury which followed him after the adjournment, he did not suggest the idea of discrimination as one of the ingredients in a funding system. It grew rapidly on him on his return to Con-

gress as the subject unfolded itself; and the outrageous speculations on the floating paper pressed on the attention. Such was the spirit which was stimulated by the prospect of converting the depreciated paper into par value, that it seized members of Congress who did not shrink from the practice of purchasing thro' Brokers the certificates at little price, and contributing by these at the same moment to transmute them into the value of the precious metals.

[10] August 21st 1789—March 14th—21st—30th—May 6th—19th—1790—See also draft of objections to Bank at the request of Genl Washington (on his files) for the use of Genl W— in the event of his negativeing

For an explanation of the mystery enveloping the case that produced Giles's Resolutions—see letter of E. R. 1811 as stated in a paper on the files of J. M.

*In relation to the Valedictory Address of Genl W.—see correspondence with Genl W. and Notes of conversations with him on the subject of his retiring at the end of his first term.

In 1799, being not disinclined, as urged by his friends particularly¹⁹ Col. J. Taylor & W. C. Nicholas (see their letters) to be a candidate for the legislature which would have before it the alien & sedition laws—he was elected a delegate from the County for that year. He was the more bound to co-operate on the occasion as he had drawn the Resolutions of the preceding Session, a vindication of which was called for by the animadversions on them, by other states. See the Resolutions of 1798—and the Report of the Committee thereon in '99—Also the explanation of them in his letter to Mr Everett in the North American Review in 1830 & in papers on his files.

†—Page 9. For the ground on which he changed his opinion as to its constitutionality—see his message to Congress—his letter to Mr Haynes of Georgia—and the paper on his files in favour of precedents of a given character—see also his letter to Jos. Cabell—also to C. J. Ingersoll.

#—Page 9.—See letter of J. M. to H. Wheaton—Feby. 26th 1827.

*—Page 10. *Note*—Mr Dalton, a Senator, communicated to Mr Jones, that Genl Washington observed to him, that he would not have sanctioned the Bill putting the commerce of England on the same footing with Nations in Treaty; but that he was given to understand that the Senate had in view another mode of operating on her monopolizing policy.

¹⁹ Interpolation

[11] In 1800 he was appointed one of the Virginia Electors who voted for Thos. Jefferson & Aaron Burr to be President & Vice President of the U. S. It was with much difficulty that a unanimous vote could be obtained in the Virginia College of Electors for both, lest an equality might throw the choice into the House of Reps, or otherwise endanger the known object of the people. J. Madison had received assurances from a confidential friend of Burr that in a certain quarter votes would be thrown from B. with a view to secure a majority for Jefferson. This authority alone with the persuasive language of the other electors overcame the anxiety of Mr Wythe, whose devoted regard for Mr Jefferson made him nearly inflexible. The event proved that he did not overrate the danger; the votes in the pledged quarter, being all given to Burr as well as to Jefferson, which produced the scene at the first choice by Congress. See letter of D. G. to J. M. Virginia was at that time extremely averse to the substitution of General Tickets for District Elections, and yielded only to the necessity of being on an equal footing with other states, by following their examples, and securing a unanimity in the voice of the State.

In 1801 he was appointed Secretary of State and remained such till 1809. when he was elected to the Presidency. In 1812 he was re-elected for another term ending in 1817.

For his agency as Secretary of State see files of the Department and State Papers in print. his *private* correspondence with the President when one or the other or both were absent from Washington, and with foreign ministers.—See the pamphlet on the British Doctrine as to neutral trade with the Colonies of her Enemies—for the origin of the Embargo—misrepresented by Mr. P. & others (see a letter Henry Wheaton July 11 & 21—1824)—see his correspondence with Mr J—n particularly the letter of Mr Jefferson in his printed works. See a note among his papers of the opinion of Mr Story and Mr Bacon and the alarm from Massachusetts producing it. The Embargo, if enforced would have been effectual, and could have been enforced, if instead of relying on a fidelity to the law, violations of it had been guarded against by arming Coasting Cruisers [12] authorizing the carriage of captured smugglers into Ports where the Courts would have condemned them: see in public archives the offer of service by the seamen of Marblehead; who alone would have sufficed and at an expense greatly inferior to the object.

For his career in the Executive Magistracy—See State Papers—his correspondence with Heads of Departments, including instructions to them—his private correspondence with

our ministers abroad—see particularly with Barlow, and his account of Buonaparte's sight of my letter to Barlow—his correspondence with Mr Jefferson—Mr Pendleton & others on his files. See statement of what passed with Rob. Smith, Eustis, Hamilton & Armstrong on their separation from their respective Departments— See also a publication of Armstrong in the Literary and Scientific Repository, and an exposure on file of its deceptive representation of the appointment of Genl Jackson to a command in the regular Army. See also the ground on which he recommended, in compliance with multiplied applications, the Proclamation of a day for Religious Service; the ground being a voluntary concurrence of those who approved a general union on such an occasion, for which the mere intimation of a day would be sufficient. See the danger of mingling political & even party views with such Proclamation in the Remarks of Hamilton on the Proclamation drafted for Genl Washington by Edmund Randolph. The files of the Department of State contain the original draft with the notes referred to. A copy from the office of State is among the papers of J. Madison. For the origin of the war & its preparations and early operations, see letter to H. Wheaton Feby. 26. 1827.

After the close of his public life under the U. S. he devoted himself to his farm & his books; with much avocation however from both by an extensive and often laborious correspondence (as his files shew) which seems to be entailed on Ex-Presidents, especially when they have passed a like prolonged & diversified career in the public service. See his letters on Political and Constitutional subjects; particularly to J. Adams—S. Roane, J. G. Jackson, [13] Jefferson, Hayne, M. L. Hewlbert, Everett Haynes, Trist, Ch. J. Ingersoll, Rush, Walsh,—defence of Mr Jefferson against sons of Mr Bayard—Nicholas Biddle—S. H. Smith, J. Robertson, Jr., Hillhouse,—see also sundry letters and papers on Constitutional and other subjects never printed, on his files.

A small part of his time has also been given to the Agricultural Body of Albemarle, of which he was appointed President and of course obliged to make an address which also a paper drawn up with a view to a professorship of Agriculture.

A larger portion of his time given as first a Visitor— then the Rector of the University. See his obituary tribute on the journal to Mr Jefferson, & correspondence with Visitors and Professors.

In 1829 he was prevailed on, notwithstanding his age & very feeble health, being but convalescent from a spell of sick-

ness, to serve as a member of the Convention which revised the constitution of the State. See the letter of the Committee inviting him & his answer. The printed Debates shew the small part he had in them. His main object was to promote a compromise of ideas between parties fixed in their hot opinion by their local interests, and threatening an abortive result to an experiment closely connected with the tranquillity of the State, and the capacity of man for self-government. His personal opinion on the rule of suffrage and apportionment of Reps. on the mode of choosing the Governor & the functions to be assigned him, were either controuled by the known will and *meditated* instructions of his Constituents or by the necessity of securing an effective & tranquil result by indulging the party, whose defeat would have been most pregnant with danger to it. His preference would have been the white basis for one branch, and the mixed or federal basis for the other: and in the appointment of Govr. he would have preferred the people to the Legislature; allowing the Govr. a qualified veto on the laws, and a nominating power to the Senate, as in the Government of U. S. and some of the individual States. Tho' aware of the danger of universal suffrage in a future state of Society such as the present [14] state in Europe: he would have extended it so far as to secure in every event and change in the state of Society a majority of people on the side of power. A Government resting on a minority, is an aristocracy not a Republic, and could not be safe with a numerical & physical force against it, without a standing Army, and enslaved press, and a disarmed populace. He thought also the rates of apportionment, as well as the right of suffrage, both being fundamental principles in free Governments ought to be prescribed by the Constitution and unalterable by the Legislature; which otherwise might so narrow the latter and new-model the former, as to transform the Republic into an Aristocracy. When it had been found impossible to obtain a fixed ratio of apportioning the Representatives, and it being obvius [*sic*], that inequalities would occur that would make a re-appt necessary, he proposed that the legislature should make an abuse of such a power being guarded against by requiring for the purpose 2/3 of each House. It was found that those most likely to suffer by the omission of some remedial provision, preferred that omission to the proposed supply of it. The explanation is that they wished for an impossibility of redress without a new Convention, as the ground of a struggle for a new Convention. For his views for a form of Government for Republics at different epochs of his life & of his political experience see letters to J. Brown of Ky.—correspondence with Mr Jefferson—

(Mr. J.) would have acquiesced in a Constitution for Virginia with a freehold suffrage for one branch of the Legislature as was found in a conversation of J. M. with him in the year 1823 or 24.

It has been remarked that the biography of an author must be a history of his writings. So must that of one whose whole life has in a manner been a public life, be gathered from his official transactions, and his manuscript papers on public subjects including letters [15] to as well as from him. This last fund of materials in the case of J. Madison is so voluminous, as doubtless in many other cases, as to make it a forbidding task to consult the whole and not a little & difficult to abridge the task by select & special references, separating the relevant from the redundant or irrelative. This with the little time that could be devoted to attempt, will account for the imperfect manner, in which the references to his files has been executed. A proper execution would have required not only a review of every thing penned by himself, but a great mass of letters from his correspondents; a labour irreconcilable, at his age, with other indispensable demands on his time.