

The Papers of James Madison. Volume 17: 31 March 1797-3 March 1801. With a Supplement 22 January 1778-9 August 1795. Edited by David B. Mattern. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991. Preface, editorial method, Madison chronology, index. Pp. xxviii, 610. \$47.50.)

With the publication of Volume 17, *The Papers of James Madison* series enters its third decade. This is the first volume prepared under the guidance of senior editor David B. Mattern, the sixth individual to hold that post. He admirably continues the tradition of solid Madison scholarship that preceded him.

The main portion of the work covers the period from Madison's retirement from the House of Representatives in 1797 until his return to the federal stage in 1801 as Thomas Jefferson's secretary of state. That was the period of Madison's retreat from his traditional advocacy of strong central government, because of what he perceived as Federalist abuses in the form of the Alien and Sedition acts.

Weekly communications with Jefferson constitute one third of the volume, while exchanges with James Monroe account for another 10 percent. Other frequent correspondents include John Dawson, Madison's replacement in Congress, and Virginia senators Henry Tazewell and Stevens Thomson Mason. Significant items include Madison's text of the Virginia Resolutions, December 21, 1798; his letter to Jefferson, December 29, 1798, concerning the resolutions; and the Report of January 7, 1800. In the Virginia Resolutions, Madison first proposed that the states might judge the constitutionality of federal laws. In the Report of 1800 to the Virginia Assembly, he expanded his thinking on the relationship between the Constitution, the states, state legislatures, and the federal legislature. His letter to Jefferson served as a prophetic warning (considering the events of 1833) of what might happen if state legislatures presumed too much of their role in the constitutional process.

The supplement to Volume 17 consists mainly of thirty-seven letters from Edmund Pendleton, Virginia judge, Revolutionary leader, and longtime Madison confidant. Believed lost since they were sold from the collection of Frederick B. McGuire in 1892,

the letters have resurfaced as part of a collection of Madison documents owned by Richard Gilder. Although 100 more await future publication, the ones included here are priceless. For the first time in a century, Pendleton's first reactions to the Constitution are revealed in detail (October 8, 1787). Likewise Pendleton's cautious response and line-by-line suggestions for the Judiciary Act of 1789 (July 3, 1789) have been recovered.

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