

*The Papers of James Madison. Volume 7, 3
May 1783–20 February 1784, edited by WIL-*

LIAM T. HUTCHINSON and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL; volume 8, 10 March 1784-28 March 1786, edited by ROBERT A. RUTLAND and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL. (Sponsored by the University of Virginia and the University of Chicago.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1971; 1973. Pp. xli, 478; xxviii, 560. \$16.00; \$20.00.

The Papers of James Madison, volumes 7 and 8, cover the period from May 3, 1783 to March 28, 1786. Beginning with the close of Madison's services in the Congress of the Confederation they trace the course of his life during the ensuing two and one-half years. He studied law from time to time, dabbled in land speculation, traveled, and lived for months on end at Montpelier. He also attended four sessions of the Virginia Assembly in Richmond. There he devoted some of his efforts to strengthening the Union of the states under the Articles of Confederation and to reforming the laws of Virginia. He also took a leading part in promoting internal improvements and in the negotiations between Maryland and Virginia over navigation of the Potomac that led to interstate conferences and thus eventually to the Federal Convention of 1787. Throughout this period his strong nationalist bent was evident.

These volumes are produced in the form adopted for their predecessors. Each has an introduction giving the historical background for the documents. Each has a chronology of Madison's life for the period involved, extensive footnotes explaining and often elaborating on the information in the documents, a comprehensive index, and a number of illustrations.

Volume 7 contains Madison's notes on debates in the Congress, reports of committees, and reports from and instructions to Virginia delegates in Congress. There are over 100 letters, some 44 by Madison and 70 to him. Of the latter 7 are from Jefferson, 13 from Edmund Randolph, and 20 from Edmund Pendleton.

The documents in this volume show Madison primarily concerned with such items as the final stages of peacemaking between America and Great Britain, policies to be adopted toward the European nations, freedom of trade with the West Indies, and the powers and prestige of the Congress of the Confederation.

The documents in volume 8 are in general character similar to those in volume 7, but volume 8 is considerably richer in correspondence. There are some 200 letters. Of these 19 are from Madison to Jefferson, 24 to James Monroe, 8 to Washington, and 3 to Edmund Randolph, with an approximately equal number of replies. The Madison-Jefferson correspondence is particularly interesting. Most of it was carried on across the ocean, Jefferson being in Paris from 1784 to 1789. Their letters during this period of separation show the depth of their friendship. They shared an abiding interest in natural science and were both suspicious of Great Britain's designs in America. They also show the interest taken by both men in promoting the welfare of Virginia and a more perfect union in the American Confederation.

As in the first six volumes of these Papers the editors have made a considerable effort to avoid the inconsequential. Documents routinely signed by Madison have been omitted, as have petitions addressed to committees of which he was a member, unless they involved one of his special interests. Occasionally an apparently trivial item finds a place. For example, the inclusion of an "Instruction to Virginia Delegates in re Guards for Public Buildings" (vol. 7, p. 175), with an explanatory footnote longer than the Instruction itself, scarcely seems of vital historical significance. But such items may have usefulness beyond the ken of historians dealing with the broader and more significant movements and policies of a given period. Certainly the devotion of the editors to their task is beyond reproach, and the product compares favorably with the published papers of other distinguished Americans.

GLYNDON G. VAN DEUSEN
University of Rochester