

The Papers of James Madison. Vol. 13: 20 January 1790–31 March 1791. Ed. by Charles F. Hobson and Robert A. Rutland. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981. xxix + 423 pp. Notes and index. \$20.00.)

The Papers of James Madison. Vol. 14: 6 April 1791–16 March 1793. Ed. by Robert A. Rutland and Thomas A. Mason. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983. xxxi + 495 pp. Illustration, notes, and index. \$27.50.)

These two volumes cover twenty-six months of James Madison's service in the First and Second congresses. Most of the major documents have been published previously, though never with such consistent accuracy and citation. Those new to print are mostly letters addressed to Madison, of which there is, as far as I can tell, probably a higher proportion in volume 14 than in any previous imprint of the series. All of the principal texts have been the subject of extended analysis and reflection by students of Madison's constitutional principles, emergence as opposition leader, relations with Jefferson and Washington, and changing views about political parties. Now their appearance in close sequence gives them increased significance as part of a continuing process of thought and makes them all the more impressive than when standing alone. (This is especially true in the case of the two versions of Madison's response to Jefferson's "earth belongs to the living" letter, brought together for the first time in volume 13.)

The volumes contain fewer editorial notes than do their predecessors, principally because of the comparative decline in puzzles of authorship and variant texts (such as those in volume 10) that have required solution. The editors have continued their policy, initiated in volume 12, of basing the texts of Madison's congressional speeches on contemporary newspaper reports instead of on the increasingly unreliable *Annals of Congress*. In fact, this series and the on-going Documentary History of the First Federal Congress point up the need for an accurate, perhaps even a variorum, edition of the speeches delivered in all of the early congresses.

Three editorial lapses mar otherwise appropriate and accurate procedures. The editors' practice, in the headnotes to Madison's speeches, of referring to his fellow congressmen, even on first mention, only by last name is an approach neither in keeping with the style of the rest of the work nor conducive to clarity and utility. In addition, a review, through random selection, of the volumes' indexes is not entirely reassuring. For instance, an index entry for Lord Sheffield in volume 14 leads only to a reference, in a letter to Madison, to a "lying pamphlet," no doubt Sheffield's *Observations on the Commerce of the United States* (1784); yet that oblique mention itself gets no footnote following the letter.

A final and more troubling problem is the editors' decision neither to correct obvious misspellings in the original text nor to mark such errors with *sic*. Thus the editors force careful readers, unsure about the origin of the orthographic mistake, to compare the printed text with the original, which ought not to be necessary. But when, as in the case of documents in private hands and not available on microfilm, a misspelling is printed without correction or notation (as with "cheifly" in volume 14), no verification is possible, and one is left with the worry, as I have been in verifying this and other documents in a random review, that the editors may themselves have introduced the error. They could easily remove all doubt by a change in editorial practice.