

The Papers of James Madison. Vol. XV: 24 March 1793–20 April 1795. Ed. by Thomas A. Mason, Robert A. Rutland, and Jeanne K. Sisson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985. xxxi + 561 pp. \$57.50.)

The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series. Vol. I: 4 March–31 July 1801. Ed. by Robert J. Brugger, Robert A. Rutland, Robert Rhodes Crout, Jeanne K. Sisson, and Dru Dowdy. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987. xxxiii + 526 pp. \$37.50.)

The Papers of James Madison: Presidential Series. Vol. I: 1 March–30 September 1809. Ed. by Robert A. Rutland, Thomas A. Mason, Robert J. Brugger, Susannah H. Jones, Jeanne K. Sisson, and Fredrika J. Teute. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984. xxix + 414 pp. \$37.50.)

These are the final volumes of the *Papers of James Madison* issued under the editorial direction of Robert A. Rutland and my final review for the *Journal of American History* of volumes in this distinguished edition. Little else justifies coverage of three such disparate volumes in a

single review, except that successor volumes in these three distinct series may not appear for some time and to wait for another volume in each series to appear could mean many additional years before a consideration of any one of them is published in these pages.

In earlier evaluations of volumes 8 to 14 (*JAH*, June 1979, June 1980, and June 1984, with a related exchange of letters, Dec. 1984), I praised their overall quality and direction. Those considered here continue in many respects to be models of editorial modesty and skill. Editorial notes, few in number, remain lucid and brief. Many decisions are sound, such as those to abstract rather than to print in full the 127 lengthy letters to Madison from George Joy in the *Presidential Series* volume and to print only representative samples of documents such as pardons, letters of appointment, and instructions to ambassadors. Annotations follow standard accepted methods for historical texts—although some of these methods, in my view, remain unsatisfactory. Indexes appear in each. The scholarship is up-to-date.

Yet the series as a whole seems suddenly to have lost the editorial rudder that earlier kept it on course. For one thing, the editors have interrupted the chronological sequence of volumes in order to publish materials relating to Madison's secretaryship and presidency. They have done so without a word of justification or explanation. What editorial losses the discontinuity may entail due to the absence of intervening volumes for the years 1795–1801 and 1802–1809 are nowhere assessed. In addition, the first volume of the *Secretary of State Series* (covering five months in 1801) appeared three years *after* the first in the *Presidential Series* (covering seven in 1809), itself a sequence difficult to understand.

The selection principles in the two volumes covering Madison's years of executive branch service are also questionable, even when the general wisdom of the well-established practice of including incoming as well as outgoing correspondence is acknowledged. Only 15 percent of the printed and abstracted documents in the secretary of state volume are texts written or signed by Madison; in the president volume, only 22 percent. Even of these, aside from abstracts (which themselves make up a dismaying 45 per-

cent of the documents printed in the secretary of state volume), a number are such things as official instructions to envoys, presidential pardons and proclamations, and responses to declarations from Republican party or county meetings; some that I count as "Madison" texts are in fact letters from others (such as Benjamin Henry Latrobe) to Dolley Madison. Thus, well under one-fourth of each volume comprises documents from Madison's hand, and even some of these are not printed in full. Though we gain a sense of the diversity and substance of Madison's official responsibilities, we lose sight of the man, of this brilliant mind.

These serious reservations aside, the three volumes will, like their predecessors, be of much interest and use to historians. All bring to print many documents for the first time. Despite the official nature of much of the contents of the secretary and president volumes, all give a flavor of early American politics and foreign relations, particularly through letters sent to Madison. Much of volume 15 is taken up with Madison's service in the Third Congress and his speeches and views on excise taxes, the Jay Treaty, neutrality, naturalization, and commercial discrimination — the last of which would occupy, often preoccupy, Madison until 1815. It also contains materials relating to his responses to George Washington's strictures against "self-created societies" and to his courtship of Dolley Payne Todd.

Whereas all three volumes contain fewer major documents than earlier ones, volume 15 includes Madison's important "Helvidius" essays, his congressional speeches on trade, and his long April 1795 pamphlet on political issues, especially British commercial policies. The secretary of state volume includes much material concerning Saint Domingue, the Barbary corsairs, and the maintenance of neutrality; the president volume contains important items on the resumption of commercial relations with Great Britain in 1809. For more comprehensive documentation of foreign relations during Madison's executive branch service, however, scholars will still have to consult the complete microfilm edition of his papers.

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