

The Papers of James Madison: Vol. III: 3 March 1781—31 December 1781; Vol. IV: 1 January 1782—31 July 1782. Edited by WILLIAM T. HUTCHINSON and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL. (University of Chicago Press, 1963, 1965. Vol. III: Pp. xxv, 381. Vol. IV: Pp. xxviii, 486. Illustrations, notes, indexes. \$12.50 each.)

These volumes cover a crucial period in the history of the United States and of Virginia. In the spring of 1781 Cornwallis and his army rolled north into Virginia. Neither the state nor Congress could provide enough arms and men to stop him. The government of the state disintegrated. Richard Henry Lee was so alarmed that he told the Virginia delegates in Congress that Congress should appoint Washington dictator of the state. Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October ended the war but not the problems of the state and the nation. Madison, who had been a member of Congress since the spring of 1780, was in the thick of both state and national affairs. He played an ambivalent role, for on some issues he supported the policies of his state while on others he supported national policies opposed by most Virginia leaders.

Thus he defended Virginia's cession of the Old Northwest against the land speculators who had staked out dubious claims in the area before the war. He fought against the new instructions allowing the peace commissioners in Europe to abandon the Mississippi River as a boundary, a boundary insisted upon by most Virginians. Yet at the same time he was an ardent backer of the financial and political program of Robert Morris, who became Superintendent of Finance in the spring of 1781. Madison insisted that Congress must have the power to coerce the states. It is significant that his letters to Jefferson supporting the idea never received a reply. Most Virginians at the time were opposed to Morris' policies

and content with the newly ratified Articles of Confederation.

Inevitably Madison acquired enemies. Eighteenth-century Virginians were more successful than the people of any other state in keeping their political battles hidden, much to the exasperation of subsequent historians. However, these volumes do throw some welcome light. Robert Morris was the pet enemy of the Lees of Virginia and they knew of Madison's support of Morris. They joined in an unusual alliance with Patrick Henry to defeat Madison's re-election to Congress. They failed as Patrick Henry did in 1788, when, as governor of the state, he persuaded the legislature to create a congressional district controlled by Madison's opponents in an attempt to prevent Madison's election to the first House of Representatives under the new Constitution. One of the most fascinating riddles of American history is how Madison managed to survive politically despite the powerful enemies he acquired in his home state. His biographers have never provided an answer, much less asked the question.

The editing of these volumes, as of the first two, is elaborate. No identifiable person, place, or event has been left without a footnote. Some reviewers complain about so much detail but it is invaluable for any scholar interested in the history of the times.

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