

The Papers of James Madison. Volume 15: 14 March 1793-20 April 1795. Edited by Thomas A. Mason, Robert A. Rutland, and Jeanne K. Sisson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985. Preface, acknowledgments, editorial method, abbreviations, short titles, chronology, index. Pp. xxix, 561. \$57.50.)

The fifteenth volume of the *Papers of James Madison* maintains the high level of scholarly editing that is expected of this distinguished series. It offers the historian a full record of Madison's difficult years as opposition leader in the House of Representatives. Those years were all the more difficult because Madison's friend and close associate, Thomas Jefferson, removed himself temporarily from the political arena at the end of 1793, leaving Madison to face the Hamiltonians without the regular guidance Jefferson had offered as secretary of state. Almost a third of the book covers the period from March, 1793, to the end of that year. It was a time of the Genet affair and the neutrality proclamation, with their attending effects on the friends of France; but the troubles of that year had been mitigated by the presence at Madison's side of the secretary of state. A majority of all Madison's communications in 1793 were letters either to or from Jefferson.

The other two thirds of the book, from December, 1793, to April 20, 1795, deal almost wholly with the affairs of the two sessions of the Third Congress. The Hamiltonians repeatedly frustrated Madison, first by preventing economic sanctions against British commerce, and then by sending John Jay to London to negotiate a treaty with Britain that would satisfy American concerns. By the spring of 1795 the treaty had been concluded, but only rumors, not details, were available. There was no reason for Madison to be optimistic about the results, and he was not.

There are questions of judgment that may be made about the editors' choices. The incisive and important essay on Madison in the Third Congress deserves a different setting. It is sandwiched between a letter from Alexander White on November 30, 1793, and a letter from John Dawson of December 6, 1793, presumably to follow a chronological order; the first session began on December 2, 1793. But since the range of this essay extends to March 3, 1795, it would have been useful to the reader to have this section in the beginning of the book, as an introduction to complement the preface.

This is essentially a minor caveat. Reading the volume brings to mind larger queries that have been made also of Julian P. Boyd's Jefferson project. Is there too much detail; are too much time and money spent on editorial exegesis; will there be an end to a project that began thirty years ago and is still a long way from reaching Madison's contributions as secretary of state and president? This reviewer would respond that the results to date suggest that the time, money, and attention will be well spent.

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