The Papers of James Madison. Edited by William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal. Volume 7: *3 May 1783–20 February 1784.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971. Pp. xlii, 479. $16.00.)

In this volume Madison emerges, as the editors point out, more clearly than ever as the leader of the "Moderate Nationalists" (as distinguished from the "arch-nationalists" led by Hamilton) in the Continental Congress, anxious to strengthen the powers of Congress under the Articles of Confederation, establish honorable American trade and diplomatic relations with the nations of Europe, carry out the terms of the peace treaty with Great Britain, settle the peacetime character of the armed forces, and manage the huge Northwest Territory to the advantage of the Union as a whole. Madison's stand on these questions has long been known in a general way, but this volume and five earlier ones entirely on Madison's career in Congress give us a precise view of his position. One sees clearly in the documents Madison's persisting view that national power had to be sufficient to ward off state encroachments or anarchy but should itself have carefully defined limits. The documents and editorial work make these volumes indispensable source books for any study of the Continental Congress and of the Virginia legislature during Madison's service in them.

This volume, closing as it does both Madison's service in the old Congress and fifteen years of editorial work by Mr. Hutchinson and Miss Jean Schneider, raises questions about the value of the amazingly thorough, detailed, painstaking standards they have maintained, probably the most extreme in this regard of any of the huge editorial enterprises now underway. A long editorial note on the authorship

of the "North American" essays, published anonymously in a Philadelphia newspaper in the fall of 1783, is a good case in point. In a twenty-three-page note complete with ninety footnotes, they summarize the two essays, review the case for Madison's authorship, and then, in massive arguments of their own, show not only that Madison was almost certainly *not* the author but that a reasonably strong case can be made that Richard Peters of Pennsylvania was. The labor of the note exceeds that lavished on most Ph.D. dissertations and is reminiscent of such other editorial masterpieces as Leonard Labaree's note on the Albany Plan of Union and Julian Boyd's on Hamilton's secret "Number Seven" dispatches to George Beckwith. The editors examine exhaustively the context and inflections of the critical "hint" to Jefferson, trace Madison's movements and activities during the summer of 1783, and then, in a prodigious labor, compare his known words and phrases with those appearing frequently in the "North American" essays. They repeat the labor for Peters, concluding that on stylistic grounds Peters is the more likely author. Most important, the editors show that the views of "North American" are in important ways different from Madison's—and the difference is less marked if the comparison is shifted to Peters. Peters's relation to the newspaper publisher is even shown to be closer than Madison's. Not content with their own resources, the editors wrote Nicholas Wainwright, Whitfield Bell, and other learned Philadelphians for their assistance. The result is overwhelming, staggering, conclusive.

Is it worth it? On a cost-accounting basis (running into thousands of dollars for this one note, probably), perhaps not, but the enlargement of insight and the standard set for scholarly investigation are beyond price. We learn from master teachers *how* to search for the truth. We learn as well *exactly* what issues separated moderates like Madison from an ultra like Peters. We see, too, in literally thousands of examples, how *completeness* in document inclusion and in annotations yields unexpected insights and permits a breadth of use impossible in publications resting on an inevitably capricious editorial selectivity. In a world where few enough things are "done right," where the tendency to merely "get by" is well nigh irresistible, we can only applaud and admire the industry, patience, and skill lavished on these documents by an editorial team that in fifteen years has learned its job exceedingly well. We can learn, too, from Madison. He wrote his father in 1783 why he would not bring his slave Billey home: ". . . his mind is too thoroughly tainted [by association with free servants] to be a fit companion for fellow slaves in Virg[ini]a. . . . I . . . cannot think of punishing him by transportation [to the West Indies] merely for coveting that liberty for which we have paid the price of so much blood, and have proclaimed so often to be the right, & worthy the pursuit, of every human being."

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