

The Papers of James Madison. Volume 8: 10 March 1784–28 March 1786. Edited by Robert A. Rutland, William M. E. Rachal, and others. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1973. Pp. xxviii, 560. \$20.00.)

In many ways this is a bonus volume of Madison's *Papers*: due to the small amount of official or routine business, there is an unusual number of especially interesting letters, and two full years are covered, a span not matched since Volume I and not likely to be achieved again until Madison's retirement from the federal Congress in 1797, if then. This volume, in fact, manages a topical coherence seldom possible in

a chronological series in that it records Madison's life from his departure from the Continental Congress until his attention is again largely occupied with national matters as the Annapolis Convention approaches. Thus, we find many letters about his farm and family life in Virginia, accounts of travels as far away as Fort Stanwix on the New York frontier, and concern over vocation and place of residence. Madison appears as a mature young man at a potentially important turning point in his life as he seeks ways to break from the somewhat parochial, slave-dependent family plantation in Orange County. Also evident, though, are the lack of cash and the preoccupation with public life that prevent him from accumulating the time, energy, and resources needed to effect a change in his way of living.

The detailed accounts of the Virginia legislature and the splendid letters exchanged with Jefferson, though, are the chief rewards in the volume. The careful editing of the legislative business measures up to the exacting standards set by retired editors William T. Hutchinson and Robert L. Scribner in their handling of Madison's work in the Continental Congress. Thus, we see not only exactly what Madison himself did as a legislator, but, in precise notes and in supporting documents, we have what will probably long serve as the most accurate and revealing account available of the overall business of the legislature. The difficulties, involutions, and occasional triumphs attending defeat of the plan for state support of religion, passage of much of Jefferson's revised law code, attempts to aid collection of British debts, and payment of congressional requisitions appear fully and clearly. The result is a further demonstration of the value of thorough editing.

The letters between Madison and Jefferson, though all in print elsewhere, remind us again of what an extraordinary and fruitful friendship they had developed. Furthermore, as Jefferson goes to France, their earlier intimacy and political collaboration expand into a remarkable experience in cross-cultural understanding. Jefferson enlarges Madison's horizons by sending books and scientific equipment, by reporting on European geopolitics, and by reflecting on the inequities of the *ancien régime*. They also coordinate efforts and shrewdly "guide" the support of Lafayette and others in resisting Spanish efforts to close the Mississippi River to American trade. Madison saw clearly that access to the river was not only essential economically but that the Union could not survive without it—the West would surely secede to gain access and the East and South would divide over their different responses to the secession.

Altogether one is pleased to see the new editors adhere to the painstaking standards of their predecessors. Some interpretations and emphases seem dubious—surely Madison's concern for American control over the Mississippi Valley lasted until Jackson's victory at New

Orleans and not merely until the Louisiana Purchase as stated on page 100, and the note on Madison's memorial and remonstrance against religious assessments too much emphasizes its similarity to Locke and reads too much political motivation into Madison's characteristic and conventional desire for anonymity—but on the whole the editors are judicious and helpful. We welcome this especially rewarding volume and the propitious beginning of the work of its new editors.

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