

The Papers of James Madison. Volume 15: 24 March 1793–20 April 1795. Edited by Thomas A. Mason, Robert A. Rutland, and Jeanne K. Sisson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985. Pp. xxxii, 561. \$57.50.)

This volume of *The Papers of James Madison* is gratifying evidence of the immense and growing contribution that skilled and experienced editors can

make to scholars and students. The documentary record of two important years of Madison's life and career is here substantially complete, together with judicious annotation that clarifies, adds useful information, and accounts for missing materials. The editors continue to steer a proper course between the sometimes excessively labored and time-consuming annotation of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (so long immersed in the documents of the early 1790s that the Madison *Papers* have now "passed" them), and the often cryptic haste of the already completed *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*. Even here, though, the long, insightful note summarizing Madison's career in the Third Congress makes one glad that the editors lean occasionally toward the thoroughness of Julian Boyd's learned, near-book-length notes in the Jefferson *Papers*. Altogether, this is a splendidly edited volume.

Though much of the material has long been in print—the detailed political letters exchanged with Jefferson and Monroe, Madison's major speeches in Congress, and the "Helvidius" essays, for example—the sense of fullness and precision in understanding two crucial years of Madison's life is everywhere apparent. The summer of 1793 was one of intense worry and frustration as Secretary of State Jefferson worked in Philadelphia to cope with the effects of Washington's Neutrality Proclamation and the mission of Citizen Genet to nonetheless draw the United States into the enlarging war on the side of France. There is a full record of Madison's efforts to sway public opinion—as editor of John Taylor of Caroline's political pamphlets, as drafter of public resolves to maintain friendly relations with republican France, and as author of the "Helvidius" essays on executive power. Madison's battle for commercial retaliation against Great Britain (January 1794) and his disgust at the Federalist assault (abetted by President Washington, to Madison's intense disappointment) on the Democratic-Republican clubs ("Self-Created Societies") emerge with a clarity and precision not previously available. Finally, many previously unpublished letters record the progress and warmth of Madison's courtship and marriage in September 1794 to the twenty-six-year-old Quaker widow, Dolley Payne Todd.

The editors, then, have greatly illuminated two years of American history when the nation faced the threats and depredations of international conflict. Indeed, in an often overlooked 1795 pamphlet Madison offers illumination for our own time: "Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, . . . War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; . . . the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. . . . the discretionary power of the Executive is extended; its influence in dealing out offices, honors, and emoluments is multiplied; and all the means of seducing the minds, are added to those of subduing the force, of the people. The same malignant aspect in republicanism may be traced in the inequality of fortunes, and the opportunities of fraud, growing out of a state of war, and in the degeneracy of manners and of morals, engendered by both. No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare" (p. 518). Or, Madison also believed, in the midst of continual, ever-heightening preparation for war.

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