

The Papers of James Madison: Presidential Series, Vol. 1: *1 March—30 September 1809*. Edited by Robert A. Rutland and Thomas A. Mason. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984. Pp. xxviii, 414. \$37.50.)

With this first volume of the presidential series of *The Papers of James Madison*, editors Robert A. Rutland and Thomas A. Mason begin the important task of filling a gap in the published documentary record of Madison's presidency. Such early editors of the Madison papers as Henry D. Gilpin, William C. Rives, and Gaillard Hunt, laboring under the persistent notion that Madison's presidency was a failure, slighted his official record as chief executive. The present editors propose to remedy this by providing a comprehensive documentary record of his tenure of office. The complete series, they believe, will facilitate the reinterpretation of Madison's presidency begun by Irving Brant and carried forward by Adrienne Koch and Ralph Ketcham, and may ultimately confirm John Adams' opinion that the fourth president "acquired more glory, and established more Union, than all of his three Predecessors, Washington, Adams and Jefferson, put together" (xxi).

It is unlikely that this volume will be acclaimed as one of the more important in the series. Its contents include many testi-

monials from political rallies, memorials and petitions from citizens, patronage letters, and other routine correspondence which impart a sense of the nature and variety of Madison's executive responsibilities but offer little new information about his presidency. Scholars will find nothing here that significantly alters their understanding of the subject.

Nevertheless, the volume is important for the detailed record it provides of Madison's troublesome early months in office, beginning on the eve of his inauguration and going through September 1809. The correspondence reveals that the new president inherited from his predecessor a diminished presidency, a divided political party, and a national constituency grown weary of austere Republican policies. Much of the material here concerns his diligent but largely unsuccessful efforts to resolve these problems. Foreign policy issues are introduced. Documents relating to the negotiations with David Erskine, the hopeful proclamation of April 19 restoring commercial relations with Great Britain, and the subsequent repudiation of the Erskine Agreement are included. Madison emerges as no pacifist, but rather as a hard bargainer who was willing to threaten the use of force when national interest was served by doing so.

The extensive correspondence between Madison and Jefferson contained in the volume is interesting. It shows that the collaborative relationship between the two men was not that of leader and follower, teacher and pupil. Madison was Jefferson's equal in the relationship and acted independently of his alleged secret adviser. Another interesting group of letters between Dolley Madison and Benjamin H. Latrobe, who assisted the First Lady in furnishing and decorating the executive mansion, offer intriguing glimpses of domestic life in the White House.

The editors of this volume have maintained the same high standards that characterize *The Papers of James Madison*. Their research has been meticulous, their method of organizing the material sensible and usable, and their biographical and informational notes helpful. The excellence of their editorial work inspires confidence that subsequent volumes will enrich our understanding not only of Madison's presidency but also of the early republic.

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