



BOOK REVIEWS

The Papers of James Madison. Edited by WILLIAM T. HUTCHINSON and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL, et al. Volume I — 16 March 1751–16 December 1779. Volume II — 20 March 1780–23 February 1781. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962. xlii, 344, xix, 344 pp. \$10.00 per volume.

THESE volumes, which cover the first thirty years of Madison's life, are the first of a series which will do for Madison what has been done for Washington, and is now being done for Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton, and other outstanding leaders of the Revolution. All of these works are revealing their subjects as they really were, freed from the curse of expurgation, censorship, and even invention, so frequent in the publications of an earlier time. These Madison volumes can take their places proudly among these current works of outstanding scholarship.

Like all great projects, the publication of Madison's letters resulted from long planning and years of preliminary work. Realizing the limitations of the Gaillard Hunt edition of the Madison letters (1900-1910), since it contained only a fraction of them, John Cook Wyllie and Francis L. Berkeley, Jr., of the University of Virginia Library, undertook more than two decades ago, an inventory of the Madison writings, and their check list grew to about fifteen thousand items. Some years after Wyllie and Berkeley began their project, Leonard D. White, of the University of Chicago, became interested in the same endeavor, and when their two institutions learned of their common interest, they pooled their editorial resources. The first fruits are now before us. They are dedicated most appropriately to the late Mr. White, who was originally one of the editors. The work has been carried on most successfully by William T. Hutchinson, of the University of Chicago, and by William M. E. Rachal, Editor of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* of the Virginia Historical Society, and on part-time loan to the University of Virginia for the Madison Papers. Robert L. Scribner, formerly of the Virginia State Library, is a full-time member of the staff of the Madison Papers. The liberality of the Ford and the Rockefeller Foundations provide funds necessary for most of the editorial expenses, and the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia has made biennial appropriations.

Faced with such a formidable number of Madison items — about eleven thousand in the Library of Congress alone — the editors' first major decision was to establish criteria for inclusion and exclusion. To use their own words, they decided to include "all extant writings of Madison which appear to have been wholly or in large degree the product of his mind" and all "letters and other papers, addressed to him and known to have received his careful attention," "careful attention" being presumed as to all such communications received by him except during the period 1801-1817, when he was successively Secretary of State and President. None of the latter documents are included unless they were known to have been read by him, or demonstrably influenced his thought or action. Legislative bills are included only where he had a major share in authorship; letters signed by him or sent to him as one of a group are usually in-

cluded; and in the first volume are included a number of documents from the Council of State of Virginia, even though his participation in authorship is uncertain, since they show the character of subjects with which he dealt at the time. Occasionally, there are second-hand accounts of contemporaries where they seem authentic and throw new light on Madison. Excluded is a mass of executive papers signed by him — routine reports prepared by subordinates, land patents, warrants, passports, circulars, civil and military commissions, etc.

Other editorial decisions may be summarized as follows: documents are presented in chronological order, and where a date is unknown, the first inclusive date is used, and the item placed at the end of that month or year; reproductions are as close to the originals as possible, consistent with practical problems of printing, with fidelity to the spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation of the originals; a good workable index (as to individual and place names and subject matter) is included in each volume, and a comprehensive general index is planned in the concluding volume. It is fortunate for the work that the editors are believers in thorough and detailed annotations. There is a modern school of thought against it, the research is heavy, and the added printing cost is high, but Madison deserves the detail, and certainly it will prove of great help to the users of these volumes.

The first of these covers the period 1751–16 December 1779. The first volume deals with the young man's earlier writings — letters to and from his family and to his schoolmates, his doggerel at Princeton, and his perceptive notes on books that he had read. The second volume covers his activities in the Virginia Convention of 1776, which set up the new government for the Commonwealth, and as a member of the Virginia Council of State. The second volume deals with the period 20 March 1780–23 February 1781, and covers his first year as a member of the Congress, where, in his contributions to decisions affecting Spain and the navigation of the Mississippi, disputes among the states over western lands, and the problems of finance, which dogged the Congress while it sought to bring the Revolution to a successful issue, demonstrated his early political maturity and promised that first order of statemanship which was to mark his long career of public service.

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