

The Papers of James Madison, Volume IV—1 January 1782–31 July 1782. Edited by WILLIAM T. HUTCHINSON and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965. xxviii, 486 pp. \$12.50.

THIS volume covers the period January 1–July 31, 1782. It was a difficult time for both Congress and the country: Yorktown had been won, but the British still held key ports and there was no way to dislodge them; Lord North had been succeeded by Rockingham, but no one in America yet knew whether he would make peace or prosecute the war; there was danger of trouble with France because its loan to the new government was being used in part to buy goods from the enemy; de Grasse, who had made Yorktown possible, had been beaten so badly by Rodney at the Battle of the Saints that the ocean now was safe for British frigates, which swept the seas and virtually destroyed American commerce—both in war supplies and in West Indian

trade—resulting in inflation and violent fluctuations in the currency, and consequent discontent in the states; General Sir Guy Carleton was using all his wiles to win the fledgling states back into the empire and Washington was more fearful of his blandishments than his bullets; money had ceased coming to Congress and often the requisite nine states were not represented, so that no business could be done. Indeed, the lack of money was so acute that Madison wrote that “private credit can avail us nothing, and prices are immoderate and ruinous.” Joseph Jones, one of the Virginia delegates, refused to go to Philadelphia until he had cash in hand; but Madison was already stuck there without means. When he drew upon his father for twenty pounds, it availed him little because his friend, Edmund Randolph (at home in Richmond and flat broke), was drawing upon the hapless Madison for a like amount. Pendleton reported that the people in Caroline had no money to pay taxes, a condition so general in Virginia that its officials had not been paid for ten months. During these trials Madison was often a lonesome man, because at times he had only one colleague in Philadelphia and, because Theodorich Bland, Jr. and Dr. Arthur Lee so frequently opposed him, he needed at least two friendly delegates to assure Virginia’s vote for what he conceived to be sound measures. He was being undercut by the Lees in the General Assembly of Virginia, and felt deserted by Jefferson, who was still angry and sulking because of his fellow-citizens’ acid criticism of his performance as war governor. Jefferson’s seeming determination to revenge himself upon his former constituents seemed to Madison not “dictated by philosophy or patriotism.” He was sometimes cut off from his friends because of robberies of the mails and often he could not write at all because the letters needed to be in cypher, and sometimes he or his correspondent did not have it. The Governor was querulous because the delegates did not supply him with enough news, and he threatened to confine his letters only to matters of business.

But Madison stuck to his post in spite of desertions and discouragements. Instructions had to be drafted for the peace negotiators, and they appeared in Madison’s own hand; there were vexatious problems such as the “thorny” matter of Vermont; the claims by different states to the territory to the north and west of the Ohio; the question of a bank; and the endless demands for the Army, demands that no Congress could meet. Through it all he labored on, gathering facts, studying each current problem, drafting reports, doing the necessary work of Congress. We are not dealing anymore with the inexperienced young student who had gone to Williamsburg six years before: under the stress of trials and adversity Madison had grown up.

The thoroughness of the work of the editors is reflected, not only in their elaborate annotations, but in the diligent search made by them for material, and this volume contains 211 papers, only 35 of which had appeared before, even in part, in earlier editions of Madison papers. This was accomplished by ransacking sources outside Virginia, for most of Madison’s papers have long gone elsewhere. The number of Madison’s correspondents continues to be surprisingly limited, the great bulk of his letters being with the governor and lieutenant governor of Virginia (57 items), with Edmund Randolph (34) and Edmund Pendleton (24). It might almost be said that Randolph and Pendleton “carried” the volume, as Pendleton almost alone had done before. The other letters were scattered among other men in public life, along with only five family letters and three from private persons. At least he was not troubled

by endless requests from constituents; instead of being their errand boy, he could devote all his time to public affairs.

Yes, Madison has now matured; from now on we will see him as a learned, self-contained, devoted and diligent statesman. He was one of those rare public men who would never think first of self, never shirk his duty. The volumes that are to come are certain to be sure sources of information and delight.

Richmond, Virginia

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