

The Papers of James Madison: Presidential Series. Volume 9: 19 February 1815–12 October 1815. Edited by Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Anne Mandeville Colony. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018. Pp. xliv, 730. \$95.00, ISBN 978-0-8139-4109-7.)

Volume 9 of James Madison's presidential papers, which begins in February 1815, deals with the immediate aftermath of the War of 1812 and the nation's "transition from war to peace" (p. xxv). While lacking the wartime fireworks of Volume 8, this collection of Madison's letters, proclamations, and other documents makes clear that the Treaty of Ghent was only the first step to securing a postwar peace with Great Britain. Furthermore, during 1815 other foreign policy crises emerged: the reappearance of Napoleon Bonaparte in France and ongoing commercial difficulties with Algiers, for instance. And although they took a backseat to the international issues, domestic problems persisted, particularly in the financial sector.

As Madison and his cabinet adjusted to the aftermath of the War of 1812, a central question concerned whether Britain would actually honor the promises it made in the Treaty of Ghent. Considering Britain's previous conduct toward the United States, Madison had good reasons to be wary. First, Britain had failed to withdraw its troops from its western forts, despite promising to do so in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Second, the Royal Navy had encroached on American merchant ships since the nation's founding. Yet, for the most part, Britain in 1815 proved to be a more trustworthy treaty partner than it had been in 1783. It evacuated its soldiers from most of its western posts and finally agreed to the commercial convention that the United States had been seeking since the 1790s.

Napoleon's return from exile and his seizure of power in France added another wrinkle to Madison's diplomatic concerns. Writing to his secretary of state, James Monroe, Madison contemplated what another war between Britain and France meant for the United States: "it is our duty to contemplate a recurrence of embarrassments to the U.S." (p. 263). Madison's concerns were dispelled when news reached the United States in August 1815 of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and his subsequent abdication.

The postwar environment also permitted Madison and his cabinet to resolve outstanding commercial issues with the Dey of Algiers. The U.S. Congress approved a declaration of war against Algiers, which resulted in the deployment of two U.S. naval squadrons to the Mediterranean Sea. This expedition led to the successful negotiation of a commercial treaty as well as the end of hostilities with Algiers. As Madison's administration slowly attained these foreign policy successes, it is possible to see the postwar environment that eventually permitted the United States to assert its hemispheric autonomy through the Monroe Doctrine in 1823.

Although they were of smaller concern than foreign affairs, some postwar domestic issues are addressed in Volume 9. At the request of Congress, Madison issued a proclamation for “a day of thanksgiving, and of devout acknowledgments to Almighty God, for His great goodness manifested in restoring to them, the blessing of peace” (p. 56). Downsizing the military and shoring up the nation’s financial system became major challenges, along with rebuilding the national government’s edifices, particularly the President’s House and the U.S. Capitol, which were badly damaged during the British invasion. Madison frequently conducted government business at his Virginia estate, Montpelier, because of the lack of adequate buildings and housing in Washington, D.C.

Volume 9, of course, is one part of *The Papers of James Madison*, edited and published by the University of Virginia Press. These papers are divided into four major series: Madison’s congressional papers (seventeen completed volumes); his secretary of state papers (eleven volumes to date); his presidential papers (ten volumes to date); and his retirement papers (three volumes to date).

Such collections of presidential papers are invaluable resources for those who study the nation’s first presidents. In addition to providing a chronological collection of the letters Madison sent and received, his proclamations, addresses, and other official documents, the series editors offer detailed footnotes and other explanatory material to guide researchers. As with Volume 8, this collection benefits from the scholarly expertise of J. C. A. Stagg, the author of *Mr. Madison’s War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783–1830* (Princeton, 1983), who serves as one of the project’s lead editors. This volume contains a preface detailing the major issues confronting Madison in the immediate aftermath of the war, plus a separate chronology of these events and a list of the significant federal officers in Madison’s cabinet, on the Supreme Court, and in Congress. As with all presidential papers, Volume 9 includes a detailed index to guide researchers working on specific issues or topics.

While presidential papers and other historical documents are widely available from excellent online sites such as the National Archives’ Founders Online and the University of Virginia Press’s Rotunda collection, this published volume of Madison’s writings reminds historians of the importance of intelligently edited and comprehensively produced collections. Given the strengths of Volumes 8 and 9, researchers can eagerly look forward to the publication of the remaining editions in the Presidential Series of *The Papers of James Madison*.

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