

The Historian

The Papers of James Madison. Vol. I: 16 March 1751 — 16 December 1779; Vol. II: 20 March 1780 — 23 February 1781. Edited by William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. Pp. xlii, 345; xix, 345. \$10.00 a vol.)

Future historians will note the present era of historical literature as one of outstanding editorial projects. No past publishing ventures can compare with the current simultaneous publication of the papers of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton, Clay, and Calhoun, now joined by the Madison papers. Jointly sponsored by the University of Chicago, represented by Editor Hutchinson, and the University of Virginia, represented by Editor Rachal, the publication of the Madison papers has been supported by subventions from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation and by appropriations from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The editors estimate that the previous editions of Madison writings, providing some 1,020 papers by Madison and 49 addressed to him, have published only about one-sixth of the extant documents by Madison and a mere fraction of the fifteen thousand letters to him. The present edition, planned to consist of some twenty volumes, will not print all of the

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unpublished Madison material, but it will include "all extant writings of Madison which appear to have been wholly or in large degree the product of his mind." Although this criterion will exclude some papers in Madison's handwriting and masses of routine and official papers signed by Madison, it will permit the inclusion of certain items, such as his speeches in Congress, recorded by others. Of the letters and papers addressed to Madison, those "known to have received his careful attention" will be printed. This test of "careful attention" is applied only to the period 1801-1817 in order to deal with the overwhelming volume of correspondence received while Secretary of State and President. During all other periods of Madison's life, it is assumed that all writings directed to him received his personal attention.

In the first two volumes, the editors have not as yet been faced with the problem of selection which they anticipate in later volumes; here the task has been to collect all writings relating to Madison's early years. Prior to 1773, Madison materials are extremely rare. There are only five letters written from Princeton, 1769-1772; and materials do not become substantially fuller until Madison began his career on the national scene when he took his seat in the Continental Congress in March 1780. Thus Volume I contains all the papers relating to his early experiences and his initial Virginia public service, beginning with his election to the Orange County Committee of Safety in 1774 and followed by his service in the Virginia Convention and General Assembly in 1776 and in the Council of State in 1777-1779. Volume II is devoted entirely to Madison's first year in the Continental Congress.

Publication of *The Papers of James Madison* inevitably invites comparison with *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, the pace-setting editorial project which has inspired in part the present publication and afforded the counsel of its editor, Julian P. Boyd. Each corpus of historical papers presents its editors with unique problems, making comparisons of only limited applicability. Yet such have been the standards set by the Jefferson project that it seems meaningful to suggest that these volumes of the Madison papers compare favorably to the Jefferson papers. Something of the grandeur of the Jefferson volumes is lacking, perhaps partly because of the genius of Jefferson which is so overpowering in his papers and partly because of the elaborate editorial essays which have graced the Jefferson papers with such impressive erudition. Yet the Madison papers as a reference tool offer certain advantages over the Jefferson work. The Madison editors have included more extensive identifying notes of persons and subjects referred to in the writings, and they have done this painstaking task so well that the series will serve as an invaluable reference tool for the period. To facilitate the usefulness of the series, an index has been included in each volume (a practice not followed in the Jefferson project), and index references to identifying notes have been specially designated.

The volumes are handsomely bound and printed on paper watermarked with the signature of James Madison.

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