

Book Reviews

The Papers of James Madison. Vol. III: 3 March 1781—31 December 1781.

Edited by William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal.

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. Pp. xxv, 381. \$10.00.)

During the period covered by this volume James Madison, as a delegate from Virginia to the Congress under the recently ratified Articles of Confederation, continued to reside in Philadelphia, where he had served as a member of the Continental Congress since March 1780. The year 1781 saw him rise to a position of leadership in Congress, but it was a year in which far more important events were taking place in Virginia than in Philadelphia. Madison could write in September 1781 the exciting news of American and French troops passing through Philadelphia on the way to Virginia,

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but it was he who anxiously awaited news of the progress of the war in Virginia. The papers here published make it strikingly clear how rapidly the prospects of the war changed; they reflect the difficulties and discouragements of the war in the South in the spring of 1781—especially the British operations in Virginia—and they display the excitement, suspense, and glorious triumph of the campaign that brought Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. The problems of Virginia and of the Confederation can be seen in the communications which passed between the Virginia delegates and the Virginia governor; there is also a good series of letters from Edmund Pendleton in which he keeps Madison informed of events in Virginia.

Madison as a person does not dominate this third volume of his papers. Unfortunately, a number of letters known to have been written by Madison during these months have been lost, and many of his papers are jointly authored—notably the communications from the Virginia delegates in Congress. Of the 174 items in the volume, sixty-five papers are communications to or from the Virginia delegates. There are thirty-seven letters addressed to Madison, but only twenty-one letters written by Madison alone. The limited number of Madison letters which have survived thus points up the major contribution which the editors have made in assembling the other papers with which Madison was directly involved. Only twenty-two of the papers here published have appeared in earlier editions of Madison's writings. This carefully edited volume provides not only a basic source for the study of Madison but also for the study of the Confederation Congress, the war in Virginia, and the climactic months of the American Revolution. The series promises to become a major addition to American historical resources.

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