

Book Reviews

The Papers of James Madison. Volume V, 1 August 1782-31 December 1782.
Edited by William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal. (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1967. Pp. xxx, 520. \$12.50.)

For the period covered, this volume offers an exceptionally comprehensive record of Madison's role in the Congress of the Confederation, where he served as a member of the Virginia delegation since March 1780. The fullness of the record is provided by (1) the notes on the debates taken by Charles Thomson for the period July 22 to September 20, 1782, (2) the notes on the debates which Madison himself began to record on November 4, 1782, and continued through June 1783, (3) the regular communications between the Virginia delegation and the governor of Virginia, and (4) the almost weekly exchange of private letters between Madison and Edmund Randolph and a regular though less frequent correspondence with Edmund Pendleton. Madison's notes and his private correspondence provide by far the most valuable information, and the practice of recording debates which Madison began here was to culminate in his famous notes on the debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The correspondence with Randolph is particularly important not only because of its regularity but also because Randolph himself was a delegate to Congress until his resignation on December 11, although he attended none of the session during the period. Madison reported fully to Randolph on the proceedings in Congress including matters recorded only in the secret journal. For such subjects and other confidential information he employed a cipher, as did Randolph in supplying Madison with reports on developments in Virginia. It is interesting to note that Madison relied on Randolph to direct confidential information to Jefferson with whom Madison did not share a cipher at this time. Remaining in Philadelphia throughout these last five months of 1782, Madison shared with other members of Congress the anxiety over peace negotiations. Congress did not learn until mid-December the hopeful news that Richard Oswald's commission now authorized him to negotiate with the thirteen United States of America rather than with the colonies. At the end of 1782, Congress remained unaware of the signing of the preliminary terms of peace on

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November 30. Meanwhile, with military operations halted, Congress directed increasing attention to problems at home.

The thoroughness of the editorial notes is impressive, although occasionally the effort at completeness appears excessive, as, for example, when it is noted that on the cover of a letter received, Madison "wrote a 'J,' a 'W,' '1763,' a short vertical line, and a circular doodle. He also multiplied 35 by 5, and listed '5.3' above '8.15'" (76). But if the documents appear overedited in places, it is clear that the editors have made every effort to provide a definitive edition, and in achieving this there can be no question of their success.

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