

The Papers of James Madison, Volume 1, March 16, 1751-December 16, 1779, and Volume 2, March 20, 1780-February 23, 1781. William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, Editors. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. Pp. 344, 344. \$10.00 each.)

Some years ago the members of the American Historical Association were warned by Irving Brant that the gentlemen at Mount Rushmore had better move over and make room for James Madison. The excellent six-volume biography of Madison recently completed by Mr. Brant has made such a sculptural renovation increasingly admissible, and now the publication of the first two volumes of what promises to be the definitive collection of *The Papers of James Madison* bids fare to achieve it.

The large and valuable task that Professor Hutchinson and Mr. Rachal have set themselves assumes its full significance only when related to various other editorial projects now in progress. In many ways the volumes under discussion are comparable in excellence to the pioneer effort of Julian Boyd's *Jefferson Papers* and to the initial volumes of the papers of Franklin, Hamilton, and Adams. Surely there can be no doubt that Messrs. Hutchinson and Rachal have shown painstaking care in their editorial labors. They have discovered lost letters, they have faithfully followed the original appearance and form of the letter or document in its transposition to the printed page, and they have annotated all names and places in meticulous, indeed possibly overabundant, fashion. Lengthy headnotes are provided, the cross-referencing is elaborate, the repository of all documents clearly identified, and a carefully subdivided index provided for each volume.

By the criteria of editorial care and competence, then, these volumes invite comparison with the first volumes of the papers of Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton, and Adams. On the score of inherent interest, literary style, and what might be called personal flavor, this equality is less certain. It is obviously not the fault of the editors that for the years 1751-1781 there survive relatively few letters from Madison which afford the reader any sense of immediate communication. One is assured that some rather sorry anti-Tory doggerel penned by Madison at Princeton gives the lie to "the widely held opinion" that Madison was "never really young in spirit," but taken as a whole these two volumes would seem to support just such an opinion. One is impressed by Madison's early concern with matters literary and philosophical, convinced of the sincerity of his increasing interest in political events and issues after the Boston Tea Party, and pleased by his gradual release from the religious insularity of the Princeton faculty, but it is the Political Man who is seen to develop. Madison himself remains largely hidden from view. The contrast here with the self-revealing character of the early volumes of the *Franklin Papers* is especially marked.

These volumes, however, initiating as they do a major historical publication, deserve description in their own right. The editors have drawn material from a wide variety of sources. Faced with a relative paucity of personal correspondence for Madison's first thirty years, they have supplemented Madison's letters with bills, minutes, petitions, and other documentary materials that help to illustrate his labors as a member of the

Orange County Committee of Safety, the General Assembly at Williamsburg, the Virginia Council of State, and, particularly, as a delegate to the Continental Congress, 1780-1781. All letters and other papers addressed to Madison which received any appreciable attention on his part are included. There can be little doubt that when completed this edition will easily supersede and surely dwarf the nine-volume effort by Gaillard Hunt.

Though the present two volumes are but an introduction to the larger project, they can be judged not only as products of editorial craftsmanship and diligence, but for the light they shed both on young Madison and on the Revolutionary period of American history. On the latter score, they would appear to offer little that is new. One is reminded, for example, of the rather chaotic affairs of the Continental Congress' Board of Admiralty, of the confused dimensions of the Vermont tangle, and of the acute sensitivity of Maryland respecting the western lands, but relatively little is added to the information available in Burnett's *Journals*. Some insight is gained on the score of congressional indecision respecting the relative importance of an alliance with Spain and the right to free navigation of the Mississippi, and affirmation given that in 1780 it was certain of the Southern states—not those of New England—that favored a compromise with Spain. Some additional details are added to the time-worn story of the difficulties of American military supply and financing during the Revolutionary War, especially as respects the diverse views and solutions bandied about in Madison's Virginia.

But these volumes are more valuable for the light they shed on the evolving political concerns and career of Madison. The young man who in 1772 wrote that only the "Science of Morals" was of true benefit to men of sense and taste, and who in 1773 found it necessary to apologize for mentioning so mundane a subject as "Politicks," was by June of 1775 ready to cast aspersions on the patriotism of Benjamin Franklin, and by October, 1780 to suggest a plan for the raising of needed military supplies in Virginia by means of a new type of "non-negotiable, interest-bearing certificate."

It would not appear that Madison was particularly instrumental either at Williamsburg or Philadelphia in fathering any particular bill or program, but rather that the issues and problems of the Revolutionary period helped determine his permanent commitment to the world of politics. At certain points, of course, his contemporary opinions were of influence—as when his amendment to the Virginia Bill of Rights encouraged a policy of greater religious freedom in Virginia. One gains the impression, however, that Madison's efforts of these years had as their chief result their influence on the evolving political philosophy of James Madison: his developing appreciation of the national scope and significance of such concerns as military defense, financial sanity, and human liberty.

That evolution was of marked importance for the early history of the Republic. The edition of Madison's *Papers* that can describe that evolution and illustrate that importance will deserve the commendation of all students of American history. Its publication has now begun. The inability of the reader to feel particularly at home with the rather cheerless style

and analytical temperament of Mr. Madison himself will be of little consequence. One can always turn for variety to the hearty anger of John Adams or the disarming candor of Benjamin Franklin.

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