



# The Papers of James Madison: 1 February 1820-26 February 1823 (Retirement Series)

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The Papers of James Madison project, housed at the University of Virginia, was established in 1956 to publish annotated volumes of the correspondence and writings of James Madison, the Virginia statesman most often remembered for his public service as "Father of the Constitution" and as fourth president of the United States.

The published volumes provide accurate texts of Madison's incoming and outgoing correspondence, informative notes on textual and subject matters, and comprehensive indexes. They are incomparably rich sources for students of Madison's life and valuable research tools for those interested in the general history of the period in which Madison lived (1751-1836).

The project has collected more than 27,000 copies of documents related to Madison's life, including letters, essays, notes, diaries, account books, ledgers, wills, legal papers, and inventories. The project serves the public by translating into print these decaying and often nearly illegible manuscripts, thereby preserving them for future generations and making them easier to use. The published volumes also make the contents of Madison-related documents—the originals of which are housed in some 250 archives worldwide—easily accessible to libraries and interested individuals anywhere books travel.

The *Retirement Series*, encompassing Madison's retirement years 1817 through 1836, contain correspondence and other papers constituting a rich and informative commentary on both the past history and the future prospects of the nation that Madison did so much to create and preserve throughout his lifetime.

During the time covered by this volume, Madison remained at Montpelier, with visits to neighborhood friends and attendance at the Board of Visitor meetings at the University of Virginia. Madison wrote letters on a wide range of topics, corresponding with President James Monroe about domestic and international politics and discussing the building of the University of Virginia with Thomas Jefferson. The volume includes the minutes of those Board of Visitors meetings of the university attended by Madison, extensive discourse on the importance of public education, and comments on slavery. Finally, there are private letters dealing with daily life at Montpelier, including a typhus epidemic during the winter of 1820–21. The editors also provide a number of visitors' accounts published in contemporary newspapers. Access to people, places, and events of the period is facilitated by detailed annotation and a comprehensive index.

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