



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 3, 2010

University of Virginia Digitizes Papers of James Madison

The Rotunda at the University of Virginia announced last week that the university's collection of the papers of James Madison are being digitized and added to the larger online library of the documents of our Founding Fathers. According to a press release posted on the Rotunda's website:



The Papers of James Madison documents the life and work of one of the most important political and constitutional thinkers in our nation's history. As chief author of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, secretary of state during the Louisiana Purchase, and the fourth president of the United States, Madison played a central role in the American founding and the growth of the early Republic. This online resource contains all of the content of the print edition and adds to this a powerful XML-based search functionality, linked cross-references, and the ability to navigate chronologically or by series volume.

There are currently digital copies of 17 print volumes of Madison's letters, commonplace books he kept since childhood, diaries, journals, study notes, etc. The University is working on publishing twice as many volumes in both formats.

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The Rotunda, the University of Virginia's most recognizable structure, was designed by Thomas Jefferson to represent the "authority of nature and power of reason" and was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. Construction was completed in 1826 after Jefferson's death.

During the Marquis de Lafayette's grand tour of the United States in 1824 and 1825, Lafayette dined with two former presidents, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, in the Dome Room of the Rotunda (then still under construction) at the university's inaugural banquet.

Ordinarily, unless one is part of the University of Virginia community, the papers are only accessible via a paid subscription. However, the manager of the Rotunda's collection, Mark Saunders, announced the offer of a free two-day trial.

The Papers of James Madison are available here: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/JSMN.html>

Photo: The University of Virginia



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