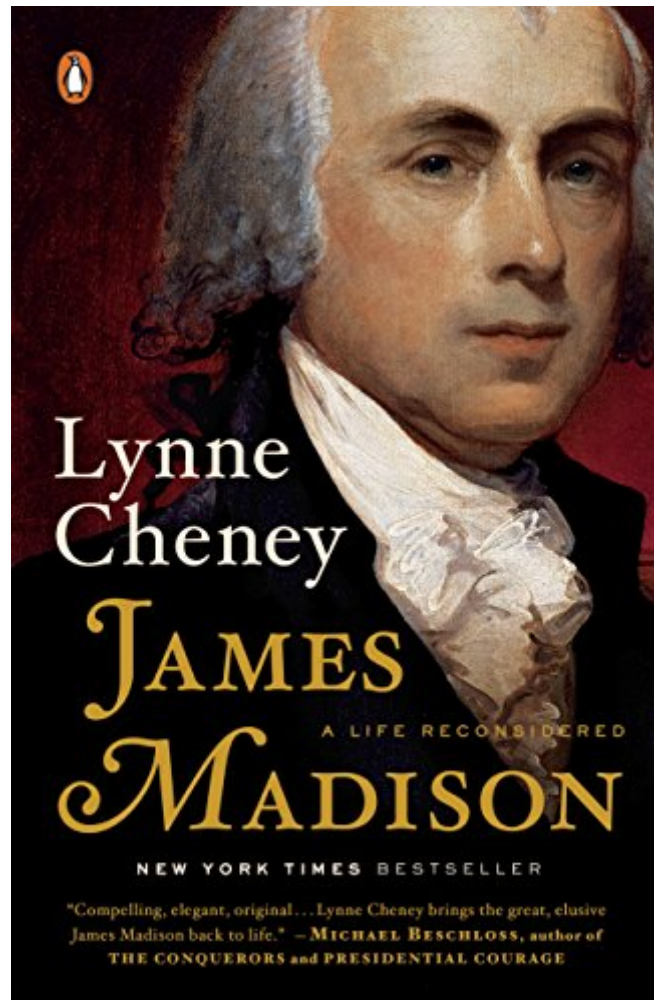


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James Madison: A Life Reconsidered



Synopsis

A major new biography of the fourth president of the United States by New York Times bestselling author Lynne Cheney. Lin-Manuel Miranda's play "Hamilton" has reignited interest in the founding fathers; it features James Madison among its vibrant cast of characters. This majestic new biography of James Madison explores the astonishing story of a man of vaunted modesty who audaciously changed the world. Among the Founding Fathers, Madison was a true genius of the early republic. Outwardly reserved, Madison was the intellectual driving force behind the Constitution and crucial to its ratification. His visionary political philosophy and rationale for the union of states "so eloquently presented in The Federalist papers" helped shape the country Americans live in today. Along with Thomas Jefferson, Madison would found the first political party in the country's history "the Democratic Republicans. As Jefferson's secretary of state, he managed the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size of the United States. As president, Madison led the country in its first war under the Constitution, the War of 1812. Without precedent to guide him, he would demonstrate that a republic could defend its honor and independence "and remain a republic still. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I am not an historian, so I will write as an avid pedestrian reader. I grew up in an age when the founding fathers were still on a pedestal and had not yet been deconstructed into mere mortals. But now comes the age of the great re-deification of the founding fathers, and I couldn't be happier. We have wonderful books galore about Washington ("The Secret Six" being one of my newer favorites), Jefferson (who survived the Sally Hemings drumming and has reclaimed his rightful position via "The Art of Power" and other tomes), and of course McCullough's "John Adams," all of which give wonderful depth and complexity to their subjects. Now we have Cheney's "James Madison" to round out this quartet. I'll admit it was a little difficult at first to take this book seriously--after all, how hard would it be for Mrs. Dick Cheney to get a book published? However, after skimming the first few pages I was hooked, and completely forgot about her famous husband. Although Cheney is not a faculty member at a prestigious college (the usual candidacy to author this type of tome), she has a sizzling intellect, a beautiful, engaging turn of phrase, elegant pacing, crystal clear organization, and just the right use of quotes to convey her arguments. I was amazed at how the book danced along, giving ample substance where needed, but never losing its momentum and readability. In this age where there are few real heroes (Bonhoeffer and Mandela come to mind), we would do well (especially as Americans, not ashamed to admit it) to clarify and and reinforce our understanding of these special men and how they came together to act as a force for great change.

I thought I read enough biographies on James Madison to know all there was regarding our forth president. I have been happily been proven wrong and am enthralled with Cheney's James Madison: A Life Reconsidered. It is aptly titled as I find myself reconsidering previous views and opinions of Madison and regard him in higher and higher esteem as I turn the page. If you thought Dolly was the interesting member of the family dive in and discover a man whose ability and understanding of the bureaucracy are still unmatched today!

His face isn't on Mount Rushmore, he didn't have a lot of flash and many folks couldn't tell you one thing about him except possibly his wife's name. Mrs. Cheney's new book finally gives America's premiere founder the attention and recognition he deserves. Mrs. Cheney fills each page with important historical detail but, it feels more like a marvelous adventure as you are on the sidelines as history unfolds. If you wish you knew more about our country and how the founding fathers

developed our nation to be the arguable success it is today - this is a MUST READ!

James Madison was the shortest of our founding fathers but his intellectual brilliance puts him in the first rank of the men who made the United States. Madison (1751-1836) was born into great wealth at Montpelier his fabled home in the Piedmont region of the Old Dominion of Virginia. His closest friend throughout life was Thomas Jefferson our third president and the principle author of the Declaration of Independence. Madison graduated from Princeton where he came under the Presbyterian and Scottish Enlightenment teaching of Dr. John Witherspoon Madison studied for the career of law quickly winning fame in the United States House of Representatives. He would later serve as President Washington's closest advisor. Madison wrote Washington's first inaugural address. Madison served as Secretary of State in the Jefferson administration. Madison was one of the three authors of the Federalist Papers (along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay) calling for approval of the US Constitution in 1789. John Quincy Adams called him "The Father of the Constitution." Madison had a happy private life. Little Jemmy was married to Dolley Todd a fetching Quaker widow. The couple were childless but her son John Todd by her first husband was a wastrel. Madison was stiff and formal in public but could be warm with close friends. He was bookish loving chess and rural pleasures. Madison served two full terms as POTUS from 1808-1816. Madison was our first wartime POTUS leading the nation through the dark days of the War of 1812 and the burning of the White House by the British. Dr. Lynn Cheney, the wife of Dick Cheney former Vice-President, has produced a well researched and written biography which is especially strong on illuminating the Constitution convention and actions political and military during the War of 1812. I devoured this book in two days. It should be a candidate for the National Book Award for Biography. Excellent and highly recommended!

I enjoy books about the Founding period, so when I saw the great New York Times review this book received I downloaded it as soon as it came out. So far it is everything the review promised. Thank you, Mrs. Cheney, for this comprehensive, well-written contribution to our understanding of such an interesting man and important Founding Father!

Mrs. Cheney used extensive primary resources to tell the story of our fourth President. So many of the lessons taught in schools about the Constitution are white washed. Mrs. Cheney properly put Madison in the political role to navigate the turmoil and back stabbing to get the Constitution written and ratified. The political battles during this time were second to none in our history. Ratification was

not a given, Madison and his allies and enemies had to be brought together through compromise and promises. Madison's leadership in Congress, as Secretary of State under Jefferson was needed to move the nation forward. As the book implies, Madison was able to morph to meet the needs in his public life. He would collaborate with Federalists like Jay and Hamilton to get the Constitution the support it needed in the Federalists Papers. He showed that the Constitution could be a living document during his time as Secretary of State. As President, Madison showed the master politician and leader as able to guide the nation. Warding off New England and Federalist secession and enemies in his own party, Madison led the nation during the War of 1812 in victory. Partly because of his political skills and perhaps largely because of pure luck, Madison finished his second term with a fast growing nation with the elements of the American republic experiment firmly established. Madison could have used force to control opposition but respected fundamental freedoms that the republic was mandated. I would highly recommend this biography as being very credible. I would recommend it to the academic and the student. A greater understanding of the birth pains of our nation is found in this book.

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