

# President James Madison, Jr.

Compiled by D. A. Sharpe



James Madison, Jr., born March 16, 1751, died June 28, 1836, is the fourth President of the United States. He served as President of the United States from 1809 to 1817. He was born on a plantation in Virginia, the oldest of eight children.

Madison was the smallest or the shortest President we have had. His height was only five feet, four inches.

Madison is the [3rd cousin, seven times removed to my son-in-law](#), Steve Westmoreland. He is the 13th cousin, five times removed to President George Washington. He is the 15th cousin, three times removed to President Thomas Jefferson. James Madison is the third cousin, once removed, to President Zachary Taylor. James Madison's relationship to President Zachary Taylor is extended in that President Taylor is the father-in-law of President Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States of America, the uncle of the wife of the brother-in-law of my great grandmother.

As for a question of James Madison's faith, a quote from a September 25, 1773 letter written to a Mr. William Bradford (not the Plymouth Colony Bradford), he made this statement:

*I have sometimes thought there could not be a stronger testimony in favor of religion or against temporal enjoyments, even the most rational and manly, than*

*for men who occupy the most honorable and gainful departments and are rising in reputation and wealth, publicly to declare their unsatisfactoriness by becoming fervent advocates in the cause of Christ; & I wish you may give in your evidence in this way.*

He and his wife, bore no children.

Madison graduated from the College of New Jersey in only two years. Later changing its name, is known as Princeton University.

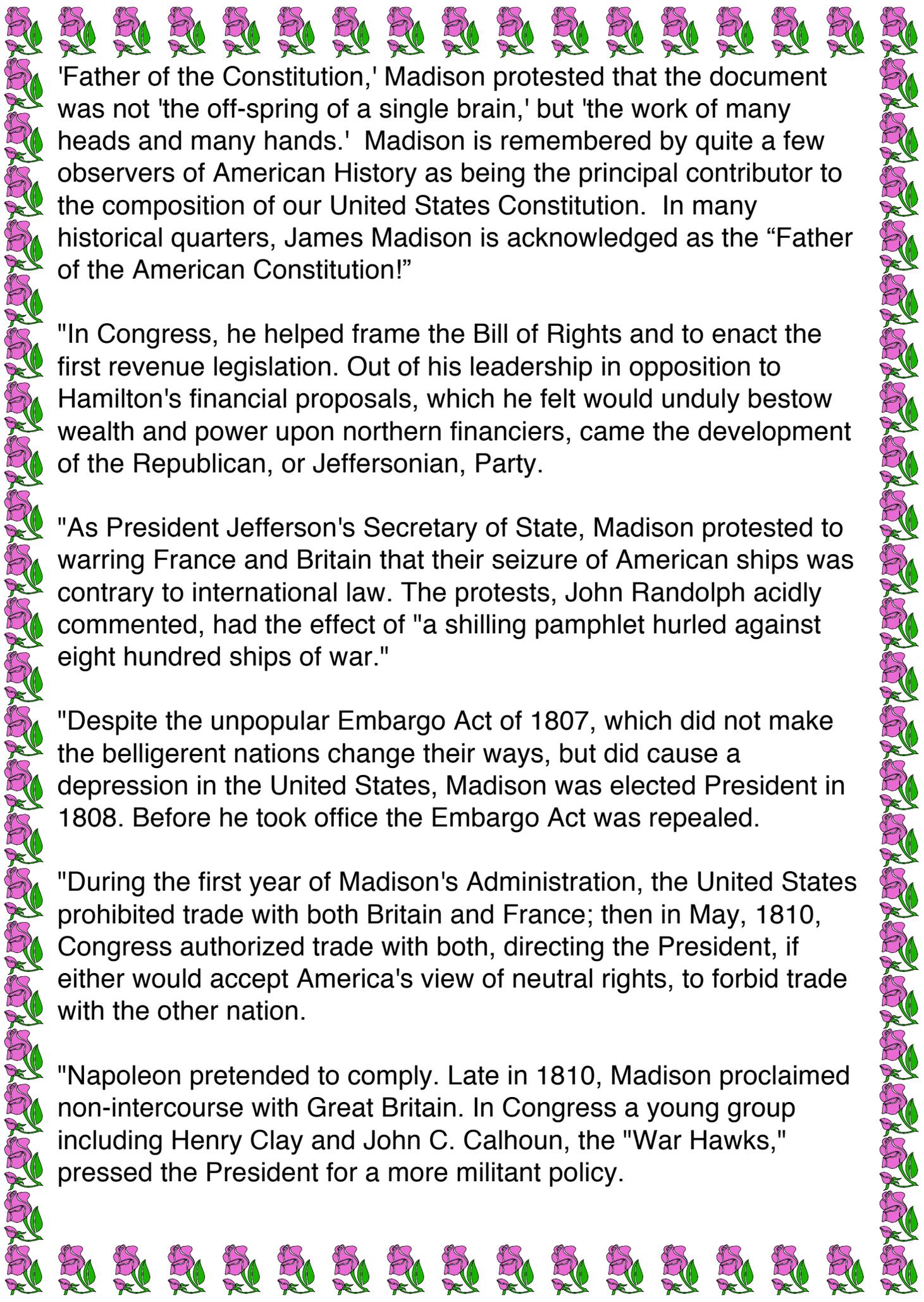
"At his inauguration, James Madison, a small, wizened man, appeared old and worn; Washington Irving described him as 'but a withered little apple-John.' But whatever his deficiencies in charm, Madison's buxom wife Dolley compensated for them with her warmth and gaiety. She was the toast of Washington.

"Born in 1751, Madison was brought up in Orange County, Virginia, and attended Princeton (then called the College of New Jersey). A student of history and government, well-read in law, he participated in the framing of the Virginia Constitution in 1776, served in the Continental Congress, and was a leader in the Virginia Assembly.



"When delegates to the Constitutional Convention assembled at Philadelphia, the 36-year-old Madison took frequent and emphatic part in the debates.

"Madison made a major contribution to the ratification of the Constitution by writing, with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, the Federalist essays. In later years, when he was referred to as the



'Father of the Constitution,' Madison protested that the document was not 'the off-spring of a single brain,' but 'the work of many heads and many hands.' Madison is remembered by quite a few observers of American History as being the principal contributor to the composition of our United States Constitution. In many historical quarters, James Madison is acknowledged as the "Father of the American Constitution!"

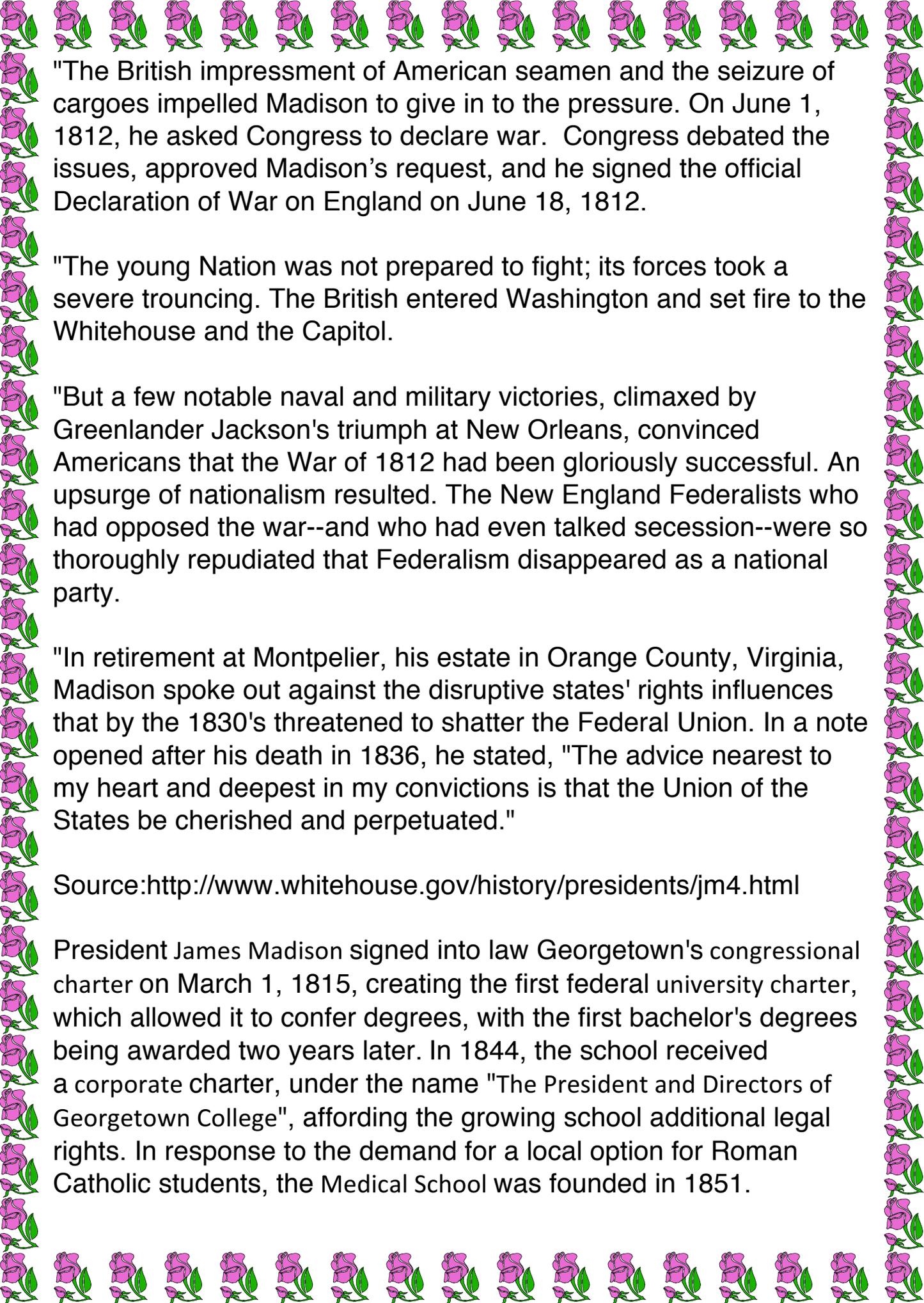
"In Congress, he helped frame the Bill of Rights and to enact the first revenue legislation. Out of his leadership in opposition to Hamilton's financial proposals, which he felt would unduly bestow wealth and power upon northern financiers, came the development of the Republican, or Jeffersonian, Party.

"As President Jefferson's Secretary of State, Madison protested to warring France and Britain that their seizure of American ships was contrary to international law. The protests, John Randolph acidly commented, had the effect of "a shilling pamphlet hurled against eight hundred ships of war."

"Despite the unpopular Embargo Act of 1807, which did not make the belligerent nations change their ways, but did cause a depression in the United States, Madison was elected President in 1808. Before he took office the Embargo Act was repealed.

"During the first year of Madison's Administration, the United States prohibited trade with both Britain and France; then in May, 1810, Congress authorized trade with both, directing the President, if either would accept America's view of neutral rights, to forbid trade with the other nation.

"Napoleon pretended to comply. Late in 1810, Madison proclaimed non-intercourse with Great Britain. In Congress a young group including Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, the "War Hawks," pressed the President for a more militant policy.



"The British impressment of American seamen and the seizure of cargoes impelled Madison to give in to the pressure. On June 1, 1812, he asked Congress to declare war. Congress debated the issues, approved Madison's request, and he signed the official Declaration of War on England on June 18, 1812.

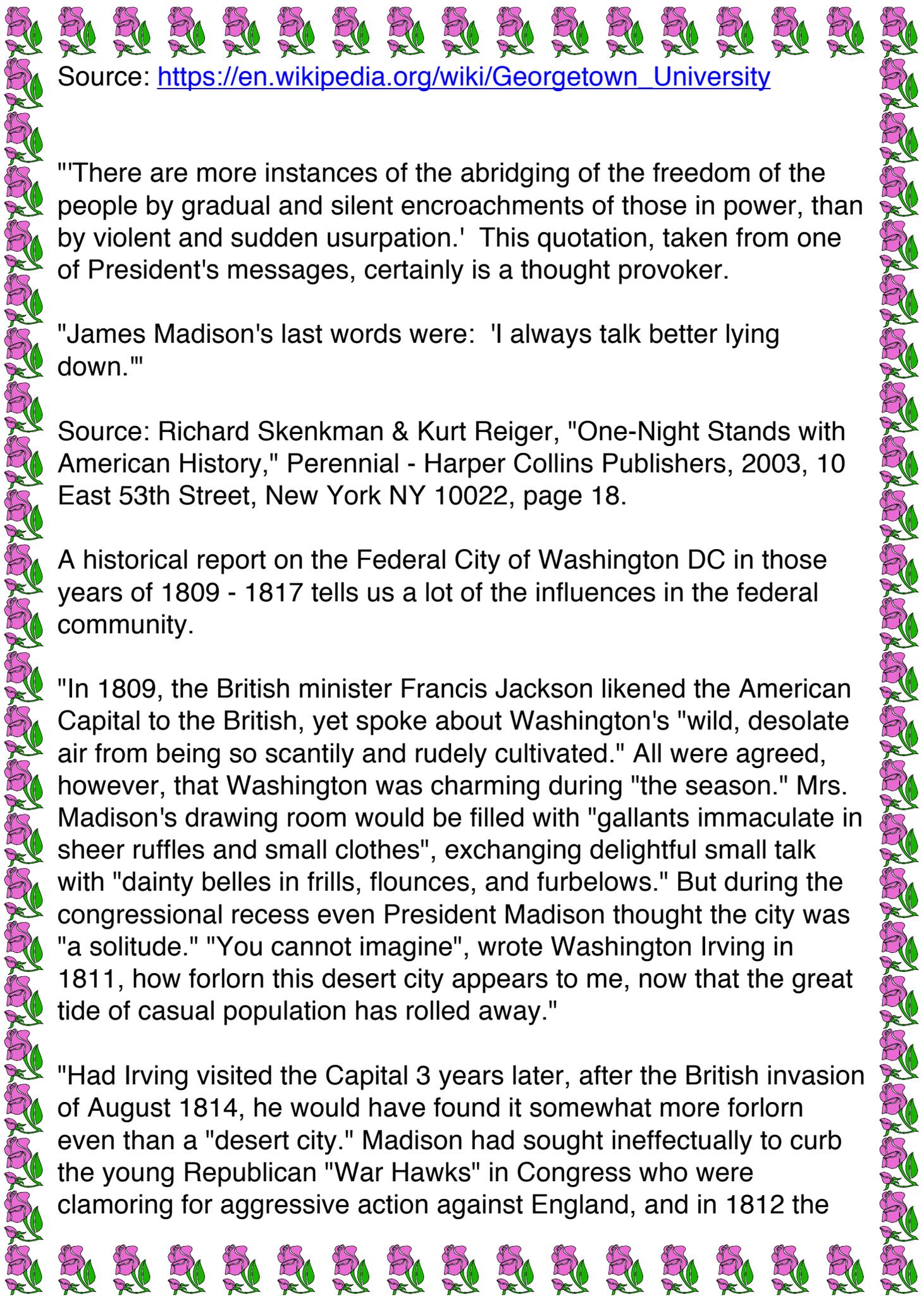
"The young Nation was not prepared to fight; its forces took a severe trouncing. The British entered Washington and set fire to the Whitehouse and the Capitol.

"But a few notable naval and military victories, climaxed by Greenlander Jackson's triumph at New Orleans, convinced Americans that the War of 1812 had been gloriously successful. An upsurge of nationalism resulted. The New England Federalists who had opposed the war--and who had even talked secession--were so thoroughly repudiated that Federalism disappeared as a national party.

"In retirement at Montpelier, his estate in Orange County, Virginia, Madison spoke out against the disruptive states' rights influences that by the 1830's threatened to shatter the Federal Union. In a note opened after his death in 1836, he stated, "The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated."

Source:<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/jm4.html>

President James Madison signed into law Georgetown's congressional charter on March 1, 1815, creating the first federal university charter, which allowed it to confer degrees, with the first bachelor's degrees being awarded two years later. In 1844, the school received a corporate charter, under the name "The President and Directors of Georgetown College", affording the growing school additional legal rights. In response to the demand for a local option for Roman Catholic students, the Medical School was founded in 1851.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgetown\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgetown_University)

"There are more instances of the abridging of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpation.' This quotation, taken from one of President's messages, certainly is a thought provoker.

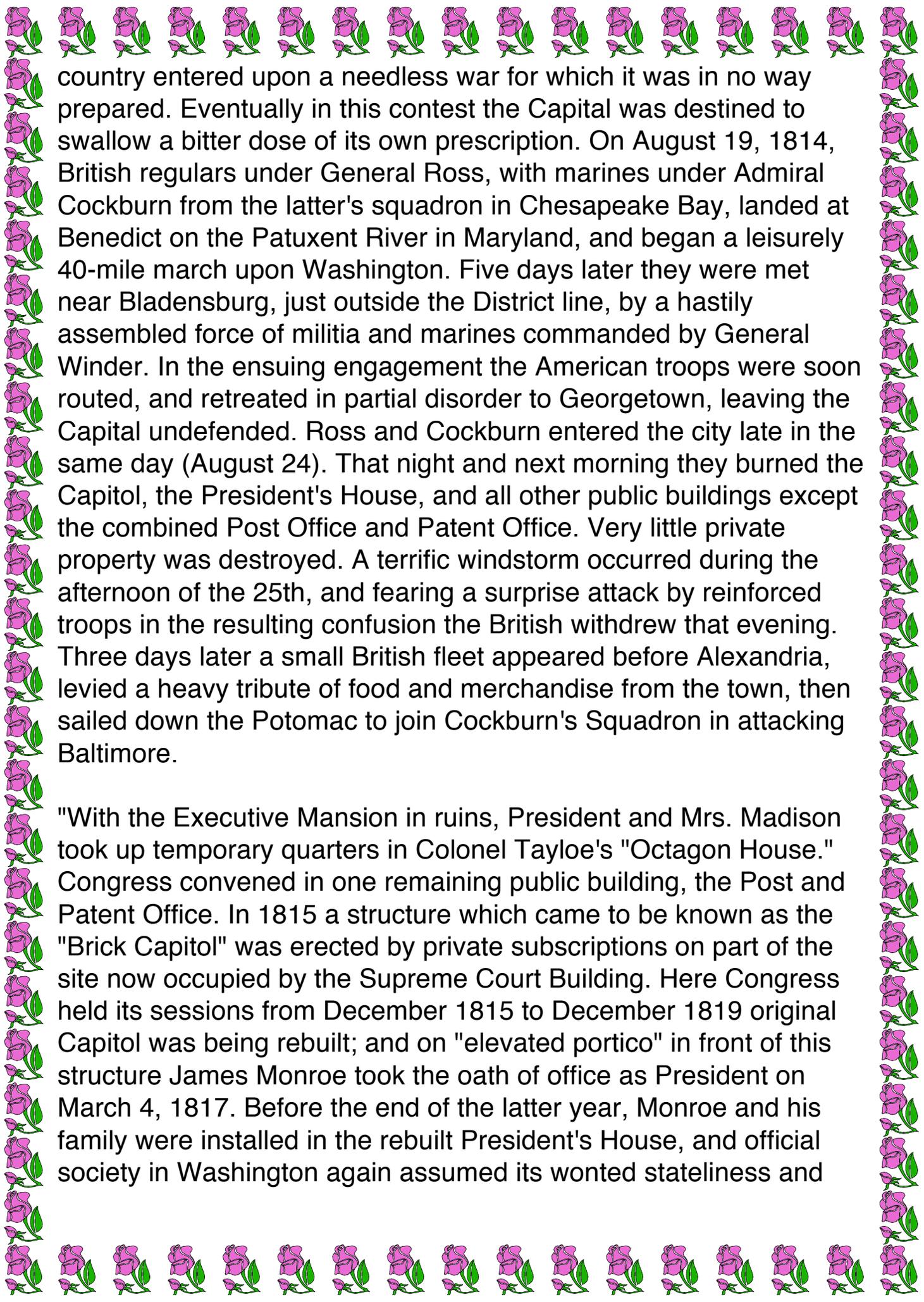
"James Madison's last words were: 'I always talk better lying down.'"

Source: Richard Skenkman & Kurt Reiger, "One-Night Stands with American History," Perennial - Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, 10 East 53th Street, New York NY 10022, page 18.

A historical report on the Federal City of Washington DC in those years of 1809 - 1817 tells us a lot of the influences in the federal community.

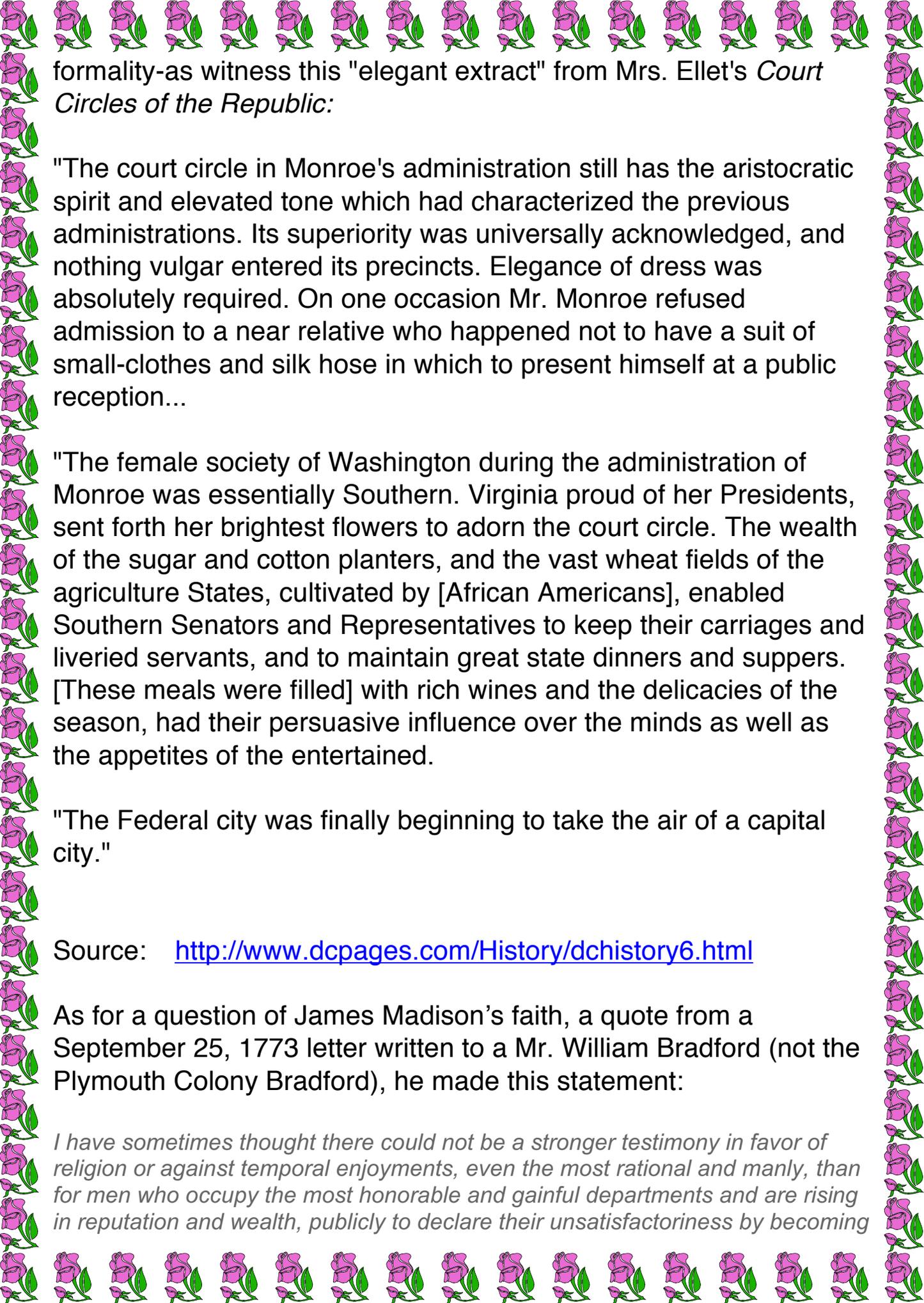
"In 1809, the British minister Francis Jackson likened the American Capital to the British, yet spoke about Washington's "wild, desolate air from being so scantily and rudely cultivated." All were agreed, however, that Washington was charming during "the season." Mrs. Madison's drawing room would be filled with "gallants immaculate in sheer ruffles and small clothes", exchanging delightful small talk with "dainty belles in frills, flounces, and furbelows." But during the congressional recess even President Madison thought the city was "a solitude." "You cannot imagine", wrote Washington Irving in 1811, how forlorn this desert city appears to me, now that the great tide of casual population has rolled away."

"Had Irving visited the Capital 3 years later, after the British invasion of August 1814, he would have found it somewhat more forlorn even than a "desert city." Madison had sought ineffectually to curb the young Republican "War Hawks" in Congress who were clamoring for aggressive action against England, and in 1812 the

A decorative border of pink roses with green leaves runs vertically along the left and right sides of the page. The roses are arranged in a repeating pattern, with some buds and some fully bloomed flowers.

country entered upon a needless war for which it was in no way prepared. Eventually in this contest the Capital was destined to swallow a bitter dose of its own prescription. On August 19, 1814, British regulars under General Ross, with marines under Admiral Cockburn from the latter's squadron in Chesapeake Bay, landed at Benedict on the Patuxent River in Maryland, and began a leisurely 40-mile march upon Washington. Five days later they were met near Bladensburg, just outside the District line, by a hastily assembled force of militia and marines commanded by General Winder. In the ensuing engagement the American troops were soon routed, and retreated in partial disorder to Georgetown, leaving the Capital undefended. Ross and Cockburn entered the city late in the same day (August 24). That night and next morning they burned the Capitol, the President's House, and all other public buildings except the combined Post Office and Patent Office. Very little private property was destroyed. A terrific windstorm occurred during the afternoon of the 25th, and fearing a surprise attack by reinforced troops in the resulting confusion the British withdrew that evening. Three days later a small British fleet appeared before Alexandria, levied a heavy tribute of food and merchandise from the town, then sailed down the Potomac to join Cockburn's Squadron in attacking Baltimore.

"With the Executive Mansion in ruins, President and Mrs. Madison took up temporary quarters in Colonel Tayloe's "Octagon House." Congress convened in one remaining public building, the Post and Patent Office. In 1815 a structure which came to be known as the "Brick Capitol" was erected by private subscriptions on part of the site now occupied by the Supreme Court Building. Here Congress held its sessions from December 1815 to December 1819 original Capitol was being rebuilt; and on "elevated portico" in front of this structure James Monroe took the oath of office as President on March 4, 1817. Before the end of the latter year, Monroe and his family were installed in the rebuilt President's House, and official society in Washington again assumed its wonted stateliness and



formality-as witness this "elegant extract" from Mrs. Ellet's *Court Circles of the Republic*:

"The court circle in Monroe's administration still has the aristocratic spirit and elevated tone which had characterized the previous administrations. Its superiority was universally acknowledged, and nothing vulgar entered its precincts. Elegance of dress was absolutely required. On one occasion Mr. Monroe refused admission to a near relative who happened not to have a suit of small-clothes and silk hose in which to present himself at a public reception...

"The female society of Washington during the administration of Monroe was essentially Southern. Virginia proud of her Presidents, sent forth her brightest flowers to adorn the court circle. The wealth of the sugar and cotton planters, and the vast wheat fields of the agriculture States, cultivated by [African Americans], enabled Southern Senators and Representatives to keep their carriages and liveried servants, and to maintain great state dinners and suppers. [These meals were filled] with rich wines and the delicacies of the season, had their persuasive influence over the minds as well as the appetites of the entertained.

"The Federal city was finally beginning to take the air of a capital city."

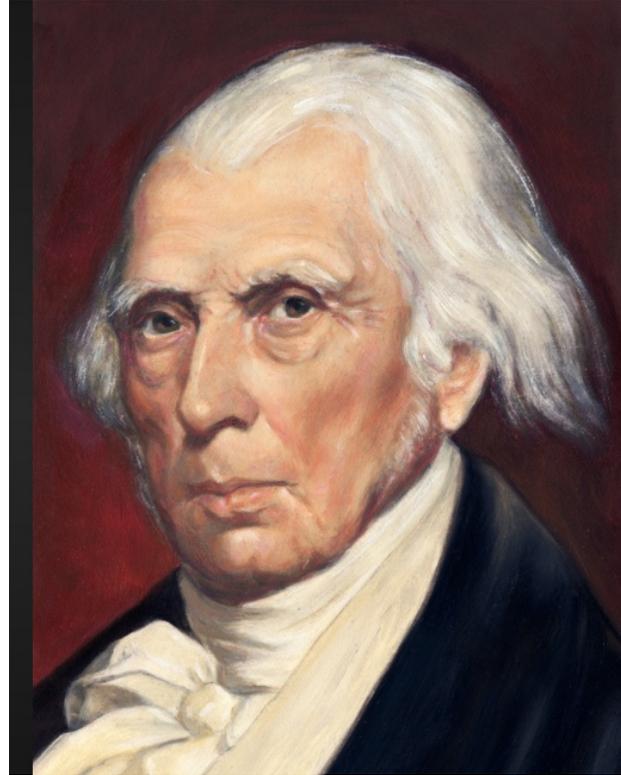
Source: <http://www.dcpages.com/History/dchistory6.html>

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President James Madison died in 1836, the year that significant things were happening in his nation. It was the year that inventor Samuel Colt patented his revolver (February 25, 1836). It also was the year when the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, fell to Mexican forces after a 13-day siege on March 6, 1836. My cousin, [Johnny Kellogg](#) (of the cereal family line) died in that battle. That was followed by the April 21st victory in that famous 18-minute battle where Texas' General Sam Houston's Army of rag-tail volunteers defeated the honed military army of Mexico's General Santa Anna to seal the beginning of the Republic of Texas!



Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Colt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Colt)  
<http://www.nationalcenter.org/Alamo.html>  
<http://www.tamu.edu/ccbn/dewitt/batsanjacinto.htm>

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