



Mr. President

James Madison

Our 4th President (1809- 1817)

Our fourth president, James Madison Jr. was born in Port Conway, Virginia on March 16, 1751. He was the oldest of 12 children born to Colonel James Madison Sr. and Eleanor Rose "Nellie" Conway. They owned a tobacco plantation in Orange County, Virginia and were slave owners. He spent most of his childhood years on the plantation and was raised in the Church of England, the state religion.

Madison attended the College of New Jersey, which later became Princeton University. While he was there, he finished his four year course in two years. His area of study was history, government and was well read in law. He studied for another year with the college's president, John Witherspoon and then graduated. He was known as Princeton's first graduate student.

On September 14, 1794, he married Dolley Todd who was almost seventeen years younger than him. It was she that is credited with creating the role of "First Lady." Dolley was known for her warmth, gaiety and to be very attractive. They had no children. Dolley's first marriage had produced two children (one passed away along with her first husband). Her surviving son, John Payne Todd was raised as James Madison's son.

Madison is known for being the shortest president at 5'4" and the lightest president at around 100 pounds!

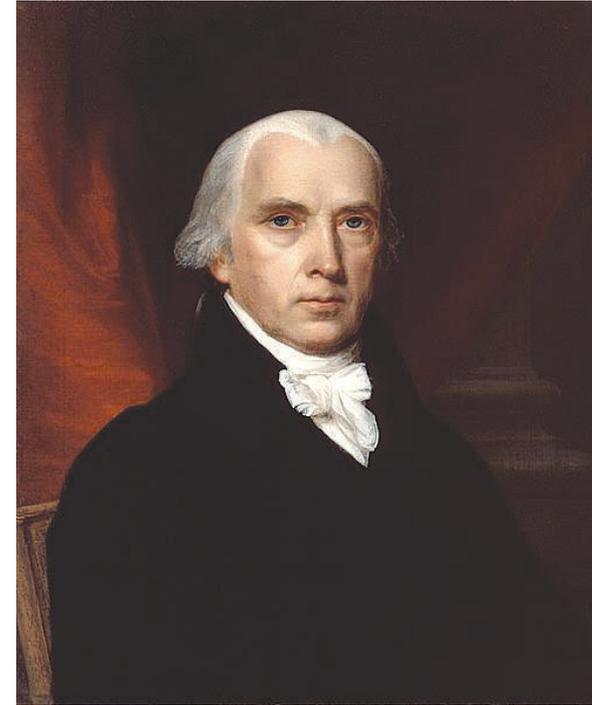
Some of his achievements:

- He was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.
- He was considered to be the "Father of the Constitution." He wrote over a third of the Federalist Papers.
- Madison was the first President to have served in the United States Congress.
- He was responsible for the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, so he is also known as the "Father of the Bill of Rights."
- He believed that the new republic needed checks and balances to limit the powers of special interests. He also believed that the new nation should fight against aristocracy/corruption and was committed to creating mechanisms that would ensure republicanism in the United States.

The war of 1812 began when Madison was president. During his first year as president, the United States banned trade with Britain and France. Then in 1810, Congress said the United States could trade with both if either would accept America's view of neutral rights to forbid trade with the other nation. Napoleon pretended to agree. Madison declared they would not trade with England as a result.

The British seizure of American cargos and impressment of American seaman made Madison ask Congress to declare war on June 1, 1812. America was not ready to fight and they took a beating. The British came to Washington and set fire to the White House and the Capital! A few naval and military victories, and with Andrew Jackson's win in New Orleans, American's felt the war had been successful. Nationalism resulted.

James Madison retired at Montpelier in Virginia.



At right: First Lady
Dolley Madison