

Davis' account of the whole New Market battle is not one which romanticizes combat—the VMI cadets didn't die prettily, nor did anyone else. It is, rather, an empathetic narrative which relates the action of the opposing forces with enough detail to enlighten but (generally), not so much as to confuse. This is not, then, sopoforic military history which only a lover of the genre could appreciate.

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Correspondence of James K. Polk, Volume III: 1835-1836, edited by Herbert Weaver and Kermit L. Hall. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. 1975. Map, illustrations and index, pp. xxxvi, 836. \$25.00.

With this volume Herbert Weaver and Kermit Hall continue the work of editing and publishing the correspondence of James K. Polk. Only two years, 1835-1836, are covered in this volume, reflecting the growing body of Polk's correspondence. During this period Polk began to be rewarded for his party regularity and emerged as one of the principal Jacksonian leaders. At the end of 1835, after considerable political infighting and maneuvering, Polk was elected as speaker of the House of Representatives, a post he was to hold for the next four years. 1836 was a presidential election year and Polk as speaker endeavored to maintain party unity and in particular to hold his home state of Tennessee for the Jacksonians, an effort which failed.

In producing this volume, Weaver and Hall sifted through "almost a thousand letters" in selecting the 690 that were published, 506 in full and 184 in summarized form. As was the case with the previous two volumes of Polk's correspondence, most of the letters in this volume are to Polk. Only 116 letters are written by Polk and many of these are merely acknowledgments to constituents or letters written on their behalf to government officials.

Nonetheless, there are many historically valuable letters in this volume. Letters to and from political personages like Andrew Jackson, Andrew Jackson Donelson, Felix Grundy, and Cave Johnson provide considerable insights into the workings of the

Jacksonian Party and in particular into the rivalries and workings of the politics of Tennessee. As might be expected, Polk's election to the speakership and the presidential election of 1836 receive the most attention in the letters which appear here. Of special interest is the continuing debate, discussion and analysis of the prospects for and then the fight against the candidacy of Tennessee's Hugh L. White for president. Despite the efforts of Polk and his political allies, White carried the state and split the Jacksonians in Tennessee.

Little of Polk the man emerges from these letters. This is partly due to the fact that he was with his wife and family during this period and thus there is no correspondence with them. There is a considerable number of letters to and from his five brothers-in-law which shed some light on his personal life but even these letters are as much political as personal in nature. Polk the politician does emerge from the letters in this volume. Most of the significant correspondence is political in nature and in the case of letters, like the one written to John Blair in January, 1835, which summarizes the political situation in Washington as Polk sees it, are quite valuable. Polk emerges as a person immersed in politics and as a capable politician.

For students of the Jacksonian period and in particular for those interested in local politics and its interrelationships with national politics, this volume will be highly useful. It increases our knowledge of the period and of the man. Weaver and Hall have done an excellent job of editing. Annotation is not excessive and more than enough information about people, places and events mentioned in this volume is provided to allow the reader to understand the content and the context of the letters. We can expect that future volumes will shed even more light upon Polk, the Jacksonian Party and politics of the period.

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