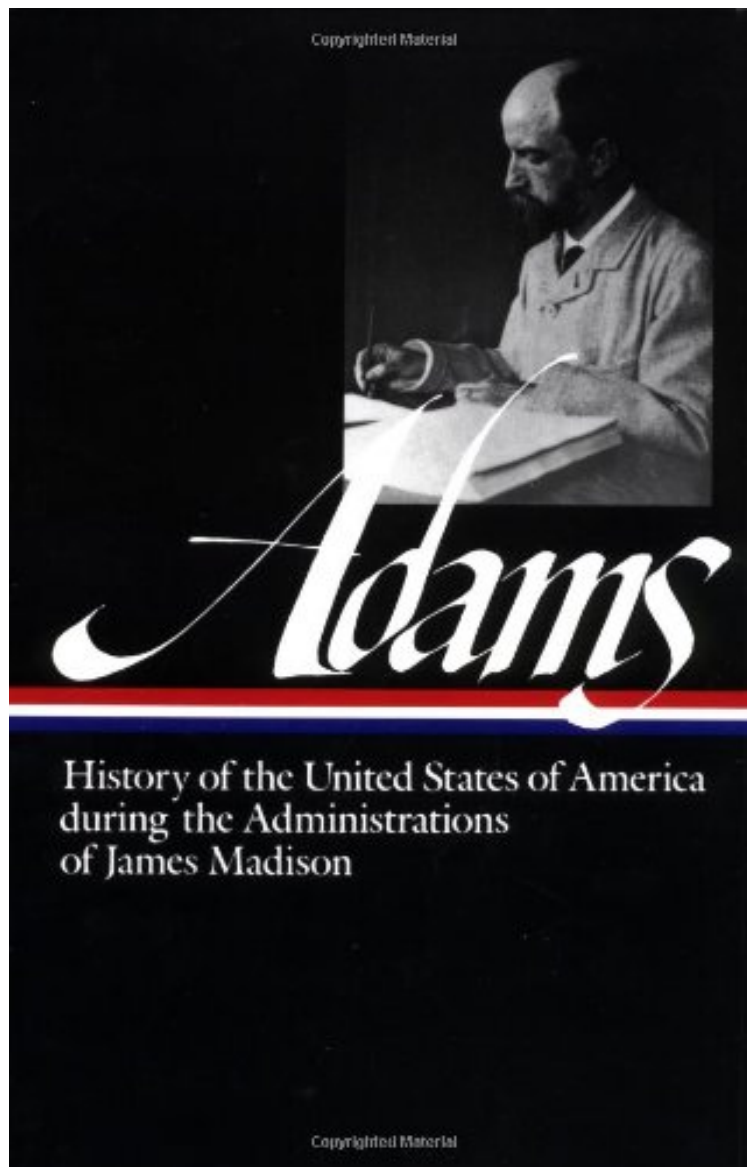


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History of the United States During the Administrations of James Madison (Library of America Series)

Henry Adams

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This monumental work, the second of two Library of America volumes, culminated Henry Adams's lifelong fascination with the American past. Writing at the height of his powers, Adams understood the true subject as the consolidation of the American nation and character, and his treatment has never been surpassed. Covering the eight years spanning the presidency of James Madison, this volume chronicles Mr. Madison's War-- the most bungled war in American history. The President and Congress delay while the United States is bullied and insulted by both England and France; then they plunge the country into the War of 1812 without providing the troops, monies, or fleets to wage it. The incompetence of the commanders leads to a series of disasters including the burning of the White House and Capitol while Madison and his cabinet, fleeing from an invading army, watch from the nearby hills of Maryland and Virginia. The war has its heroes, too: William Henry Harrison at Tippecanoe and Andrew Jackson at New Orleans, Commodores Perry and Decatur and the officers and crew of the Constitution. As Adams tells it, though, disgrace, is averted by other means: the ineptitude of the British, the skill of the American artillerymen and privateers, and the diplomatic brilliance of Albert Gallatin and John Quincy Adams, who negotiated the peace treaty at Ghent. The history, full of reversals and paradoxes, ends with the largest irony of all: the United States, the apparent loser of the war, emerges as a great new world power destined to eclipse its European rivals.