

Summary of “James Madison, Law Student.”

Professor Mary Sarah Bilder’s upcoming book,

Madison's notes are distinguished by their brevity, inconsistencies and occasional errors. Bilder observes that Madison was clearly not a transcriber and that he was unconcerned with the rationale behind cases. What Madison was very much interested in was the linguistics of the cases and their decisions. As Bilder writes, the notes show a "personal and thoroughly idiosyncratic use of Sakeld's *Reports*." The semantics, strict use of definitions and other manipulations of the words fascinated Madison and stand out in his notes. These tendencies are evident in his notes from the Constitutional Convention.