

The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series, Volume 10: *1 July 1805–31 December 1805*. Edited by Mary A. Hackett et al. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2014. Pp. xxxviii, 784. \$95.00, ISBN 978-0-8139-3571-3.)

The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series, Volume 11: *1 January 1806–31 May 1806*. Edited by Mary A. Hackett et al. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2017. Pp. xxxvi, 690. \$95.00, ISBN 978-0-8139-3971-1.)

In the early days of President Thomas Jefferson's second term, in 1805 and 1806, James Madison was capably handling the many demands that came with running the State Department. He instructed and strategized with representatives of the United States serving abroad at a time when the stakes, particularly in European diplomatic relations, were growing ever higher. He coordinated issues of territorial governance, an especially difficult and important task in the recently acquired Louisiana territory. And he managed the comings and goings, angry demands, and humble requests of international diplomats assigned to Washington, D.C., men who were always difficult, often vain, and usually dissembling in one way or another. Through it all, Madison was also a loving husband, a confidant second-to-none to the president, and a serious thinker who turned, as he had in 1787, to intensive study of history to help resolve present-day troubles. All of these things are in abundant evidence in Volumes 10 and 11 of the ongoing Secretary of State Series of *The Papers of James Madison*, both of which are filled with invaluable documents and impressive editorial insights.

In Madison's correspondence with ministers such as John Armstrong, James Monroe, and James Bowdoin, dispatched to those European nations that most immediately affected the geographic and commercial aspirations of the young United States—Napoleon's France; its enemy, Great Britain; and its subservient ally, Spain, respectively—we see a secretary of state confident in his role and fairly clear about U.S. goals, particularly regarding free trade and the acquisition of Spanish-held territory in North America. But Madison remained somewhat uncertain about the best means to pursue those ends. In the late summer and fall of 1805, for example, Jefferson and Madison discussed seriously the prospect of seeking an alliance with Great Britain against Spain and France. Before long, such an idea would seem ridiculous.

Over the course of the eleven months covered in these two volumes, the balance of power in Europe could scarcely have been more in flux, and the

United States watched closely. Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz at the end of 1805 left the Continent more in his hands than ever before. And that resounding French success, of course, came just weeks after the great British naval victory at Trafalgar, which, from an American perspective, added great consequence to existing British policies restricting (often by forcibly seizing) neutral ships trading during this time of war.

Madison had already spent months researching and writing an argument for why those British actions were a violation of long-standing international law. Invoking the so-called Rule of 1756, which held that neutral ships were not allowed in a time of war to access any trade previously denied them in peacetime, the British government and the Royal Navy clamped down on American shipping and trade. And Madison, for both practical and philosophical reasons, would have none of it. His lengthy *An Examination of the British Doctrine, Which Subjects to Capture a Neutral Trade, Not Open in Time of Peace* appeared anonymously for sale and on the desks of Congress in January 1806, and it appears in Volume 11, annotated, along with the relevant notes and sketches made during the preceding months, so that Madison's exhaustive research into treaties and legal arguments can be better understood and appreciated. Madison was a diligent historian when given a practical problem to explore. And he was no less effective in the day-to-day handling of crises as they appeared, such as the accidental April 1806 death of American sailor John Pierce when the HMS *Leander*, assigned to search every vessel arriving into New York, fired a warning shot and killed him. Madison's management of the situation, engaging with such men as British minister Anthony Merry and a rightfully furious New York City mayor DeWitt Clinton, is well recorded in these pages.

Because the secretary of state was also responsible for supervising the territorial governors out west, these volumes include a tremendous number of letters from William C. C. Claiborne, a young and somewhat insecure man who had served as the first territorial governor of Louisiana since 1803. Claiborne was far and away the person who wrote to Madison most often in this period, and there are no fewer than forty letters in each of the two volumes from Claiborne to Madison (and a much smaller number from Madison in response), providing useful accounts of politics and society as Louisiana was being incrementally incorporated into the Union.

Diplomatic relations on the home front also occupied a great deal of Madison's time and energy. In what is an exciting correction to the historical record, the published materials—and the editors' attentiveness to detail and accuracy in multiple languages—shed new light on the curious case of the Tunisian ambassador Soliman Melimeni, a man who landed at Hampton Roads, Virginia, in November 1805 and has, ever since, been at the center of one of the few truly salacious stories told about Madison. A number of scholars, following biographer Irving Brant in the 1950s, who himself followed contemporary allegations made against Madison, have claimed that the secretary actually helped supply Melimeni with paid female companionship. Instead, the editors here establish that a list of Melimeni's household staff had been, long ago, improperly translated. In fact, the alleged prostitute (“‘Georgia, a Greek taken into Service at Washington,’” in the first English version) was, according to the

Arabic text, a man named George, who served the ambassador, ironically enough, as a translator (Vol. 10, pp. xxvii–xxviii).

In sum, Madison's thoughtful approach to world affairs and his scandal-free administrative style are apparent here, and there are revealing insights along the way. Not a few come to us owing to Dolley Madison's ulcerated knee. Physical separation is a historian's best friend, of course, turning what might have been unrecorded conversations into physical letters that are ours to read. When the secretary traveled with his wife for treatment by a Philadelphia physician, Madison and Jefferson spent a good part of 1805 separated, and they wrote often, thinking through such things as how the United States might best weather the Napoleonic wars. And we can also read a still more revealing exchange that followed, between James in Washington and Dolley in Philadelphia, after he had been obliged to return to the capital while she recuperated. Their many letters reveal a strong mutual love and respect, and they show Dolley Madison's political side as well as her constantly self-effacing demeanor about it. "You know I am not much of a politician but I am extremely anxious to hear (as far as you may think proper) what is going forward in the Cabinet," wrote Dolley that November (Vol. 10, p. 491). These remarkable volumes give us a much better understanding of the sorts of things she learned, and much more.

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