

The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series. Volume I: 4 March–31 July 1801.

Edited by ROBERT J. BRUGGER, ROBERT A. RUTLAND, ROBERT RHODES CROUT, JEANNE K. SISSON, and DRU DOWDY. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986. xxxi, 526 pp. \$37.50.

THE amount of paper generated by the office of the secretary of state, even back in simpler times, is testified to by the fact that the first volume of this series of James Madison's papers covers only five months' time, and he actually performed his duties during only three of them. The editors performed the daunting task of evaluation and judicious selection in a manner deserving of the gratitude of students of the Jeffersonian period as well as of the federal bureaucracy. The editors explain at the beginning that their goal was not an exhaustive documentary record, but rather a collection that accurately portrays Madison's principal concerns and responsibilities as secretary of state and that reveals his own thoughts and activities. They faced three options with each available document: to print, abstract, or omit. They made effective use of abstracts to deal with lengthy or tangential documents, giving the reader sufficient information to evaluate the contents and to find the material on his own. The volume is scrupulously edited, annotated, and indexed, with all relevant information about documents, individuals, and issues readily, but not obtrusively, available.

This is a carefully prepared and selected collection, but it is the intrinsic importance and enormous variety of subjects covered by the documents themselves that give it its real value. During his first months as secretary of state, Madison dealt with a large array of problems, ranging from his father's death to war with the Barbary pirates, the struggle to maintain neutrality while Britain, France, and Spain were at war and the incessant battles over impressment and privateering that that entailed, and fear about

the consequences of the Spanish cession of the Louisiana Territory back to France, while at home he and Jefferson tried to consolidate the Revolution of 1800 by rewarding expectant Republicans without completely alienating the Federalists. The copious advice Madison received about patronage policy makes fascinating reading, particularly alongside the voluminous requests he received from individuals seeking federal appointments.

Madison's correspondents included five ministers overseas; more than fifty consuls; Noah Webster, indignant about the new Republican collector of customs in New Haven; James Callender, furious with the president because of the delay in the remission of his fine paid in consequence of his conviction for sedition; Benjamin Rush, concerned about quarantine laws; Charles Willson Peale, writing in behalf of his museum; Tench Coxe, urging a thorough economic census of the new nation; and all the Americans on Saint-Domingue, terrified about what Toussaint L'Ouverture might do next. All this, in addition to the invaluable documentation of the United States' struggles to hold its own against the Barbary pirates while avoiding the Napoleonic Wars, makes this a fascinating collection. The editors have created a valuable research tool, and subsequent scholars will benefit from the clarity of their judgment and discrimination.

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