

The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series, Vol. 1: 4 March-31 July 1801. Edited by Robert J. Brugger *et al.* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986. Pp. xxxi, 526. \$37.50.)

This volume marks an important milestone in the history of the Madison Papers project as well as in the career of James Madison. It is the first volume in the project's Secretary of State series and it signals the beginning of a new role for Madison as a responsible executive officer of government, one

in which he was destined to enjoy far less success than in his previous capacities as a state and national legislator, constitution maker, and Republican opposition leader.

The documents printed in this volume illustrate the wide range of issues confronting Madison at the outset of his tenure as secretary of state. In domestic affairs the leading theme is the conflicting attitudes among Republicans generated by their quest for political patronage in the wake of Jefferson's election, with Madison attempting to steer a middle course between those who advocated a sweeping purge of appointed Federalist officeholders and those who argued that a strictly limited removal policy was more consistent with Republican political principles. Of almost equal interest are the indications of growing dissatisfaction among Republicans with Aaron Burr and his supporters because of the New Yorker's equivocal behavior during the voting in the House of Representatives to name a successor to John Adams. In foreign affairs, on the other hand, we observe Madison coming to grips with a variety of familiar diplomatic issues that had also vexed most of his predecessors in office. These include disputes over neutral rights with Great Britain and France, negotiations with the British over the execution of the disputed provisions of the Treaty of Paris, relations with the black republic of Saint-Domingue, the protection of American commerce against the depredations of Barbary pirates, and—hovering like a cloud over all the rest—the first intimations of the retrocession of Louisiana to France.

The editors have produced a rich harvest of documents for scholars. In all, the volume contains 656 documents, of which 372 are printed in full and 284 abstracted. These documents consist of 96 letters written by Madison and 560 written to him. In order to appreciate the tremendous expansion in the documentary record these figures represent, it is worth noting that Gaillard Hunt's once standard edition of Madison's writings contains only five letters by Madison for the period covered by this volume. In accordance with the Madison project's stated goal of making the Virginia statesman's papers available in print with all due speed, the documents are printed with a minimum of annotation. On the whole the annotation is adequate, though there are a few points, most notably the controversy over Maryland's stock in the Bank of England, that should have received editorial clarification but did not.

The only aspect of this volume open to serious question is its selection policy. Instead of abstracting almost half the incoming correspondence, it might have been preferable to have listed truly routine documents in an appendix, with each item accompanied by a very brief summary and location information. If much of the ordinary consular correspondence that had very little impact on Madison had been handled in this way, it would have permitted the editors to print in full a larger proportion of the far more significant incoming letters from American ministers in Europe. It is also difficult to fathom the editors' rationale for abstracting Madison's letters to Louis-André Pichon, the French chargé d'affaires in Washington. Admittedly the original English texts of these letters have disappeared, but the fact that the

only extant copies are French translations seems to be an inadequate reason for not printing them in full, especially since they often deal with issues of vital interest in Franco-American relations. Finally, the editors should consider the possibility of printing in full accounts by foreign diplomats of their often revealing conversations with Madison. But these criticisms are not intended to detract in any way from the editors' substantial achievement in presenting scholars with an enormous number of accurately transcribed and generally well-annotated documents bearing upon the opening months of Madison's tenure as secretary of state.

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