

The Papers of James Madison. Secretary of State. 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. Preface, acknowledgments, editorial method, depository symbols, abbreviations, short titles, chronology, index. Pp. xxxi, 526. \$37.50.)

The Secretary of State Series of *The Papers of James Madison* presents an opportunity at last for a comprehensive documentary examination of the least-known phase of Madison's career. How did Madison the theorist, politician, and legislator act as an executive policy maker and administrator?

While "continuing a policy of sparse annotation" in their editorial method, the series editors have had to modify their selection policy. The overwhelming quantity of material and much of its routine nature necessitated a shift from complete coverage to either printing or abstracting "the relevant materials that were the main currents in the official flow of paper between 1801 and 1809. . . . The primary criterion" being "whether or not it illuminates James Madison's thought or his personal and official life."

This volume covers the first five months of President Thomas Jefferson's first administration, with Madison absent until May 2. Printed are some 637 documents (44 percent abstracted) representing dozens of subjects in categories concerning foreign affairs and domestic matters assigned to the Department of State. There are only 93 documents from Madison, of which 20 percent are abstracted.

This volume, then, presents too comprehensive an overview of the 1801 State Department. The resulting lack of balance slights Madison. For example, the May, 1801, cabinet meeting on the administration's first major foreign policy issue is treated in an editorial note, and Madison's opinion is given in one sentence with five words quoted from him. The quote is not cited from the extant manuscript as the source but rather from a printed work with inaccuracies in the cabinet entry. In one abstract Henry J. Hutchins requests acknowledgment of his letter, but neither the requested response nor any indication of its existence could be

found in this volume. The editors could save space by consistently footnoting missing letters to the reprinted documents that mention them and by calendaring letters on the same subject in footnotes. In this volume there are seventeen letters (three fourths abstracted) solely on the process of outfitting the U.S. ship *George Washington* with cargo for Algiers.

Why not prepare for future volumes a calendar appendix, listing otherwise-omitted documents chronologically within subject categories, thus providing an overview of the responsibilities and procedures of the department while freeing valuable text space for an analysis of Madison as secretary of state? Indeed, the editors could profitably employ subject classifications in the text as well as the appendix. Dividing text space by subject matter might further clarify Madison's conception of his office and his role in shaping policy.

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