



The Papers of James Madison: 1 November 1803-31 March 1804 (Secretary of State Series)

James Madison

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In the five-month period covered by this volume of the Secretary of State Series, Madison and Jefferson work jointly to acquire final possession of, and establish a preliminary government for, the territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase of May 1803 while simultaneously dealing with merchants' complaints arising from the associated claims convention. The loss and destruction of the frigate Philadelphia at Tripoli and the enslavement of the crew, an incident which Madison considered of far less import than did U.S. consuls in Europe and Africa and later historians, shocked Americans. From France, Robert R. Livingston reported the discovery of a royalist assassination plot against Napoleon and the retaliatory kidnapping and execution of the duc d'Enghien, scion of the Condés. At Madrid, Charles Pinckney continued his attempts to persuade the Spanish court to accept both responsibility for French depredations against U.S. commerce in Spanish ports and the American interpretation of the boundary between Louisiana and Florida.

Because of the range of State Department responsibilities, Madison's correspondence displays a broad overview of not only the diplomatic but also the social and commercial life of the early republic. The volume documents Jefferson's experiment in republican etiquette leading to the infamous controversy involving Jefferson, Madison, and British minister Anthony Merry at Washington and James Monroe at London. Also covered are the slow deterioration of the close relationship between Madison and Spanish minister Carlos Yrujo, who were linked by the friendship between their wives, and the case of a married worker at the Philadelphia Mint who absconded with another woman, leaving behind him a series of complaints against his supervisor. Consular dispatches chronicle the quarantine of U.S. vessels throughout Europe from fear of yellow fever imported from the Americas; the customs, terrain, and agriculture of Algiers as described by Consul General Tobias Lear; and the sad tale of the U.S. consul at Rotterdam whose mind was so deranged as to require him to be "subjected to the Straight Waistcoat." Access to people, places, and events discussed is facilitated by detailed annotation and a comprehensive index.

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