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White: THE FEDERALISTS

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THE FEDERALISTS. By *Leonard D. White*. New York: Macmillan. 1948.
Pp. xi, 538. \$6.

During the period from 1789 to 1801 in which the Federalists controlled the government of the United States, they set the pattern of administration which has guided the growth of public management in this country. Professor White, a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, examines every aspect of the executive branch during these years, from the early debates concerning the form which the several departments should take, to the collection of

taxes and the building of post roads. The conception and growth of each of the original departments are treated in detail; in this connection, it is surprising to learn that the attorney general was employed by the government on an annual retainer of \$1500, leaving him free to carry on his private practice. The activities and philosophies of Washington and Hamilton, who were the central figures of the Federalist era, receive the greatest attention. But many others, including Adams, Jefferson, Wolcott, and Pickering, played important roles during these twelve critical years. Hamilton appears as the outstanding theorist and practitioner of the art of administration, although his industry in promoting his plans and expanding the scope of the Treasury Department which he headed led him into a feud with the House of Representatives and Thomas Jefferson which eventually drove both men from office. Underlying this conflict was the basic difference in the political philosophies of the Federalists and the Republicans. Many of the troubles of those days will be recognized as precedents for some of our recent federal and state political history, particularly those of the place of the executive branch in proposing and advising legislation, and of the authority of the chief executive over department heads. It is apparent that Professor White engaged in prodigious research among the original documents and unpublished manuscripts of the Federalist period. Although the book contains some details which may be of interest only to students of history and specialists in public administration, it discloses a philosophy and practice of government which are significant not only as American history, but also as a basis for understanding similar contemporary problems.