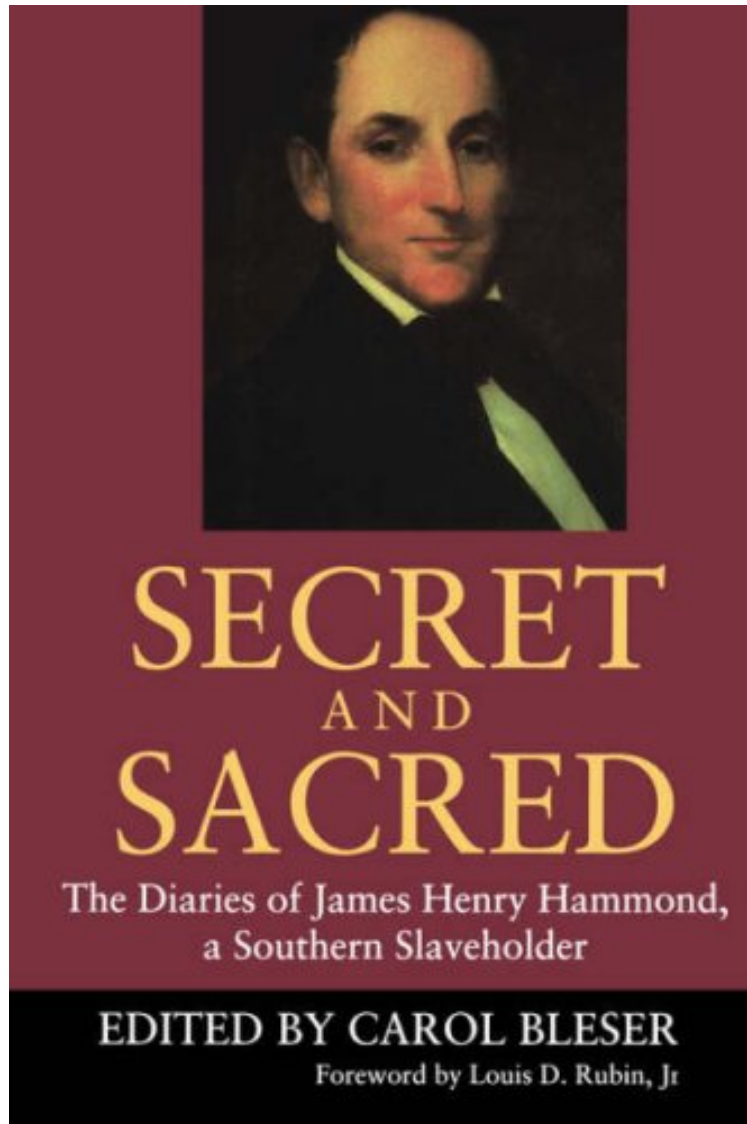


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## Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder

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**James Henry Hammond : Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Look Away Dixie! By G. Dexter Secret and Sacred gives an eye-

opening glimpse into mid-nineteenth century South Carolina power and politics. And who better to lead the bizarre journey than wealthy planter-class James Henry Hammond? The one-time US Senator and SC Governor lets us look into his skewed view of morality, slavery, nullification and the all important states rights issues which plunged this country into its darkest hours of Civil War. Hammond's thought process is driven by greed, revenge and an exceedingly over-developed sex drive. After having been caught in an ongoing sexual tryste with famous Gen. Wade Hampton's 3 under aged daughters, he incredulously manages to justify his actions and demonize the young girls! His own wife leaves Hammond after he refuses to give up his slave mistress. He eventually dumps his slave mistress to take up with her 12 year-old daughter as his new mistress! Complaining incessantly in the pages of his diary, he sees his own death and demise as often as the sun rises. It is quite amazing that this diary had not been seriously edited down by subsequent generations of Hammonds in an effort to restore some inkling of reputation. It is what it is, an incredibly candid and private look inside the life and logic of a southern statesman. At times, Hammond loses me in all of his explanations on his nullification stance, but just as quickly, lures me back in by his next rant or rave. Today, he could not hide behind his class and would be vilified in spite of his power and money. In today's world, this type of personality and resulting actions go hand in hand with serious drug abuse. With a son who died as a "morphine eater" and a daughter who also consumed morphine, I'm left wondering if much of what is written and thought by an obviously brilliant mind wasn't driven by a life-long addiction. The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree. This is a great read for anyone, period. Hollywood has yet to discover the sordid world of James Henry Hammond, for if they did, it would make for a spellbinding cinematic treat. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Reeves Good read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Richard L. Sellers Interesting book

This set of diaries (1841-1864) brings to light the journal notations of James Henry Hammond, a prominent South Carolina planter and slaveholder. They reveal a man whose fortune and intellect combined to make him an important leader, but whose flaws kept him from true greatness.

From Publishers Weekly These previously unpublished diaries of Hammond, an antebellum parvenu South Carolina politician, planter and staunch advocate of an independent South who served as U.S. senator and governor of South Carolina, provide a startlingly candid insight into a brilliant but ruthlessly ambitious, tyrannical man who was also a keen observer and critic of the Old South and its plantation aristocracy. Hammond's uncontrolled sensuality, which he indulged with his slaves and his own nieces, caused not only estrangement from his wife but proved politically self-destructive. In his journals, skillfully edited by Bleser ( *The Hammonds of Redcliffe* ), this admittedly frustrated novelist gave vent to his anger, dreams and self-pity, comparing himself to Sisyphus and blaming everyone including God for his failures. Also vividly portrayed are the suffering and disruption of plantation life during the Civil War and Hammond's growing despair at his own decadence and the defeat of his beloved South. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal These remarkable diaries, covering the years 1841-62, rank among the most intriguing, revealing, and infuriating personal accounts to come out of the South. Hammond, whom Louis Rubin has likened to Faulkner's Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*, emerges more as William Byrd II, of Westover, perhaps the greatest Southern diarist, in that Hammond and Byrd hardly disguised their narcissism and self-indulgence. Hammond is aggressively acquisitive, sexually overactive, and rabidly pro-slavery and secessionist. No short review can suggest the richness of these diaries. Essential reading for anyone who hopes to plumb the mind and soul (or soullessness) of the planter class. Randall M. Miller, St. Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author About the Editor: Carol Bleser is the Kathryn and Calhoun Lemon Distinguished Professor of History at Clemson University. She is the author of *Promised Land: The History of the South Carolina Land Commission, 1869-1890* and editor of *The Hammonds of Redcliffe*, an annotated collection of the Hammond family correspondence over four generations.