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Book Review: The Treason Trials of Aaron Burr, by Peter C. Hoffer

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Hoffer, Peter Charles. **The treason trials of Aaron Burr**. University Press of Kansas, 2008. 212p ISBN 9780700615919, \$35.00.

This examination of the strange case of the trials of Aaron Burr is a valuable addition to the excellent series on landmark law cases by the University of Kansas Press. Burr, one of the most fascinating and mysterious figures in US history, was charged with treason (he was charged with the intent to levy war against the US) in cases that may have been politically motivated. The story brings together some of the most influential figures of the time: Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, Burr himself, and the "ghost" of Alexander Hamilton. Hoffer (history, Univ. of Georgia) is fair and balanced in his presentation. He concludes that this was not a political trial, but it was also not about levying war against the US. Hoffer believes that Burr was engaged in "a sweeping entrepreneurial shell game, a confidence scam." It was all about the money the ever-strapped Burr coveted. This book is well written and deals very effectively with the confused and confusing charges and evidence against Burr.

--M. A. Genovese, *Loyola Marymount University*

Summing Up: Recommended. All readership levels.