



Sources/Suggested Reading: Abigail Adams

Compiled by Leslie Goddard, Ph.D.

Jeanne E. Abrams. *First Ladies of the Republic: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison and the Creation of an Iconic American Role*. 2018. Explores the work of these 3 prominent women in shaping the role of First Lady in the early American republic

Abigail Adams, John Adams, et al. *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams*. 2007. A collection of their letters gives an intimate look inside their relationship and their views of the remarkable historical events through which they lived

Natalie S. Bober. *Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution*. 1995. A young adult (age 12-15) biography, well-written and accessible. Great introductory choice for adult readers too

Joseph Ellis. *First Family: Abigail and John Adams*. 2010. A dual biography by the distinguished historian. Argues that the Abigail/John partnership stands at the center of the Adams' family's public achievements. Well-researched and insightful

Woody Holton. *Abigail Adams: A Life*. 2009. A more recent interpretation of Abigail Adams's life, emphasizing her impact on the creation of the country. Well-researched and insightful, if long. A good pick for those wanting a thorough read.

Cokie Roberts. *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*. 2005. The *New York Times* best-selling author brings alive the everyday experiences and extraordinary achievements of Adams, along with Mercy Otis Warren, Deborah Read Franklin, Eliza Pinckney, Martha Washington and others. Very readable, full of anecdotes and stories

Barb Rosenstock. *Leave It to Abigail: The Revolutionary Life of Abigail Adams*, 2020. A lively and inspiring book for children aged 4 to 8 years, great for reading out loud.

John L. Smith, Jr. *The Unexpected Abigail Adams: A Woman "Not Apt to Be Intimidated."* 2024. A useable biography, nicely researched but lacking many fresh insights into a well-known historical figure

True Kelley, *Who Was Abigail Adams?* 2014. Succinct and very readable introductory biography, geared for ages 8 to 12 years.



"Remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could."

– Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776

Timeline

- 1744 Born in Weymouth, Massachusetts on November 22 to Reverend William Smith and Elizabeth (Quincy)
- 1764 Marries John Adams in Weymouth, Massachusetts.
- 1765-83 Has six children, including John Quincy Adams and Abigail Amelia Adams (Nabby)
- 1776 Writes her famous letter to John Adams, urging him to “remember the ladies”
- 1774- 84 Endures long periods apart from her husband due to his service in the Continental Congress and diplomatic missions in Europe
- 1784 Joins John Adams in Europe. Spends several years abroad.
- 1797-1801 Serves as First Lady during John Adams’ presidency
- 1801 Retires with John Adams to their home in Quincy, Massachusetts
- 1818 Dies from typhoid fever on October 28 at age 73. Buried in United First Parish Church in Quincy, where John Adams is also buried after his death in 1826



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