

NOTEBOOK

Verbatim

"People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity."

—JOHN ADAMS



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Fear is the foundation of most governments."

—JOHN ADAMS

"The man to whom the country is most indebted for the great measure of independence is Mr. John Adams of Boston. I call him the Atlas of American Independence."

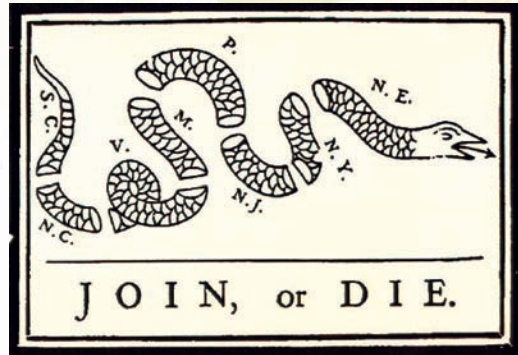
—RICHARD STOCKTON, NEW JERSEY DELEGATE TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

"Your prophecies ... proved truer than mine; and yet fell short of the fact, for instead of a million, the destruction of eight or ten millions of human beings has probably been the effect of these convulsions. I did not, in [17]89, believe they would have lasted so long, nor have cost so much blood."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, WRITING TO JOHN ADAMS ABOUT THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

"I look back to the early days of our acquaintance and friendship as to the days of love and innocence, and, with an indescribable pleasure, I have seen near a score of years roll over our heads with an affection heightened and improved by time, nor have the dreary years of absence in the smallest degree effaced from my mind the image of the dear untitled man to whom I gave my heart."

—ABIGAIL ADAMS, WRITING TO JOHN ADAMS IN 1782



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Join, or Die

THIS FAMOUS POLITICAL CARTOON—THE FIRST in American history—was drawn by Benjamin Franklin and published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1754. This woodcut shows a snake cut into eight parts, each of which represents a British colony in America. In an editorial that accompanied the cartoon, Franklin urged colonists to band together against the French and Indians, who were clashing with colonists over land rights. Shortly after this cartoon was published, the French and Indian War began, and American and British troops joined forces to fight against Native American and French soldiers. The cartoon was later widely used during the American Revolution, when it took on a different meaning. Paul Revere created a version in which the snake is seen fighting a British dragon.

Numbers

2 Number of fathers and sons who have served as U.S. President: John and John Quincy Adams, and George H.W. and George W. Bush

61 Age at which John Adams was inaugurated President, in 1797

16 Number of states in the Union when Adams left the presidency, in 1801

5,308,483 U.S. population in 1797

5 Number of members in Adams's Cabinet—one-third of what it is today

73 Electoral votes for Thomas Jefferson in the election of 1800. Adams received 65

inTIME

HE UNITED
THE STATES OF AMERICA.

JOHN ADAMS

BASED ON THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING BOOK

Brilliant and ambitious, honest and courageous, bold and outspoken, John Adams was a fervent patriot whose unwavering commitment to independence guided the nation through its birth and turbulent early decades. The public and private worlds of America's second President come to life in an epic 7-part miniseries event based on David McCullough's acclaimed biography.

PREMIERES SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2008 AT 8PM
FOLLOWING SUNDAYS AT 9PM

HBO

www.hbo.com/films/johnadams

FORGED IN THE FIRES OF ADVERSITY

“JOHN ADAMS HASN’T RECEIVED the attention he deserves,” argues historian David McCullough, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *John Adams*. According to McCullough, few leaders contributed more than Adams to the birth and early history of the United States of America.

John Adams was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1735. His father John, a farmer and deacon, hoped that Adams would become a minister. His mother, Susanna Boylston Adams, was known for her dedication to church and family.

In 1751, Adams entered Harvard College, which at that time consisted of four buildings and seven instructors. Following his graduation, Adams accepted a position as a

schoolmaster. After teaching for several years, Adams turned his attention to law. As a lawyer, he offered to represent anyone in trouble with the authorities. In 1770, to the shock of many, Adams defended a group of British soldiers who had been accused of murder during the Boston Massacre. By proving that a Boston mob had provoked the soldiers, Adams won the case. Though his law practice suffered, this case demonstrated Adams’s commitment to fight for justice at all costs.

Adams met Abigail Smith in 1761. They married in 1764 and had five children: Abigail (“Nabby”), John Quincy, Susanna, Charles and Thomas. Throughout their 54-year marriage, Abigail served as a partner, trusted confidante and adviser to John.

In 1774, the Massachusetts legislature sent Adams to Philadelphia, where he served as a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses.

While many of his fellow delegates wanted to improve relations with King George III, Adams argued passionately in favor of independence and soon concluded that war with Britain was inevitable. Recognizing George Washington’s unparalleled skills as a military leader, Adams nominated Washington to command the Continental Army. When the Revolutionary War began, Adams served as a diplomat in France and the Netherlands. He secured loans and created alliances that played a decisive role in America’s victory over Great Britain. Adams helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris, which outlined the terms for ending the war.

Upon his return to America, Adams wrote the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This landmark document—which outlines a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government—became a model for the U.S. Constitution.

Avoiding a Costly War

When George Washington was elected President in 1789, Adams became America’s first Vice President and held that office for eight years. Adams ran for President in 1796 and won the election by three electoral votes over his longtime political rival Thomas Jefferson, who became

◀ **CONTINENTAL CONGRESS** Adams (at left, as portrayed by Paul Giamatti) argued for a complete split from Britain.



Vice President. As President, Adams faced numerous challenges. The country was in an undeclared war with France, and many lawmakers were clamoring for Adams to send U.S. troops to France. Rather than declare war, Adams signed into law the Alien and Sedition Acts, which punished critics who spoke out against the government and placed limits on civil liberties. Although these laws tarnished Adams’s reputation, he defended them as temporary measures. Adams ultimately achieved a diplomatic resolution to the conflict with France. He saw this agreement, which saved America from a costly

▲ **BOSTON MASSACRE** Adams stirred controversy by defending British troops.

war, as his single greatest accomplishment.

Unfortunately for Adams, the election of 1800 took place before word of his successful diplomacy with France reached voters. Jefferson ran against Adams and won the election. Adams returned to Massachusetts, where he farmed and wrote. “Statues and monuments will never be erected to me,” he predicted. To a large degree, Adams’s fears were realized—until recently. Thanks to

A LEGACY IN LETTERS



A gifted writer and intellectual, Abigail Adams exchanged more than 1,100 letters with her husband John, who was often away from home—sometimes for several years at a time. Abigail believed that women should be educated and independent thinkers. She fought for a woman’s right to own property and file for divorce; she also spoke out against the evils of slavery. In one famous letter, written in 1776, Abigail wrote to John:

“[I]n the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors.... If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice, or representation.”

In today’s world, it’s easy to forget the value of a heartfelt, handwritten letter. We learn a great deal about our history by reading written correspondence that has been preserved. Letters are tangible artifacts, but they’re also important communication tools that we use to demonstrate sincerity, respect, emotion and intimacy. That’s why HBO and the United States Postal Service are partnering on the Power of the Letter campaign. You’ll be able to send a free greeting card featuring quotes from the letters of John and Abigail Adams—and you’ll experience the enduring, personal and powerful nature of the written word.

POWER OF THE LETTER PROMOTION ENDS 3/31/08.

David McCullough and other historians, Adams has gained new appreciation.

Adams lived to the age of 90. He saw his son, John Quincy Adams, become America’s sixth President in 1825. Adams died on July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, and the same day on which Jefferson died. ■

Key Dates



◀ **October 30, 1735** Born in Braintree, Massachusetts

Fall 1751 Begins studies at Harvard College

October 1765 Drafts a protest against the Stamp Act, declaring that taxation without representation is unconstitutional

June 1770 Elected to Massachusetts legislature



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

◀ **September 5–October 26, 1774** Attends the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia

May 10, 1775 Returns to Philadelphia as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress; nominates George Washington as commander of the newly formed Continental Army



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◀ **June 7, 1776** Encourages Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence, which Congress approves on July 4

September 3, 1783 Signs Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War

April 21, 1789 Sworn in as first U.S. Vice President

March 4, 1797 Inaugurated second U.S. President

July 14, 1798 Signs into law the Alien and Sedition Acts, which limit civil liberties

March 4, 1801 Jefferson becomes third U.S. President after defeating Adams in the election of 1800

October 28, 1818 Abigail Adams dies

July 4, 1826 Adams dies in Massachusetts, just hours after Jefferson dies

