

Constitution

The backstory

Abigail Adams (1744-1818)



Abigail Smith was born on November 11, 1744 in Weymouth, Massachusetts. She was encouraged by her parents to read and study. She enjoyed Shakespearean literature, the Letters, and the Classics. In 1762, Abigail was reunited with John Adams, an old acquaintance from her childhood. He was smitten by her knowledge of poetry, philosophy, and politics. They met when she was 15 and he was 27 years old. John and Abigail Adams married on October 25, 1764. They had six children over 10 years.

John Adam's duties as a politician kept him away from home for long stretches. John and Abigail spent years apart. Even so, it never seemed to weaken their relationship. He was away helping encourage the revolution that would lead to independence. John continually reported to Abigail through their letters. The Letters of John and Abigail Adams still serve as one of the most prized artifacts in the United States history. If you read their letters you find a great deal of affection between them. They give readers not only a very personal sense of who the two of them were but also a sense of the uncertainty about the creation of the United States.

The role of John Adams in the revolution elevated his status as a politician. He served as vice-president for two terms under President Washington. In 1796, John became the second president of the United States. Abigail could not help but express her opinion. Her political activism came to be seen as meddling in the president's affairs. She was even sarcastically called 'Mrs. President' for the very overt political role she took. John Adams lost the election of 1800 to his rival Thomas Jefferson. The Adams then retired to Quincy, Massachusetts where they were finally able to spend quality time together. She did not live to see her son John Quincy Adams become president. She had great confidence that he would continue rise politically. Abigail Adams died on October 28, 1818. She was 73 years old.

What similarities and differences to John & Abigail's lifestyle do we experience in today's modern world?

What would you do to stay in communication with someone who was away from you for years at a time?

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