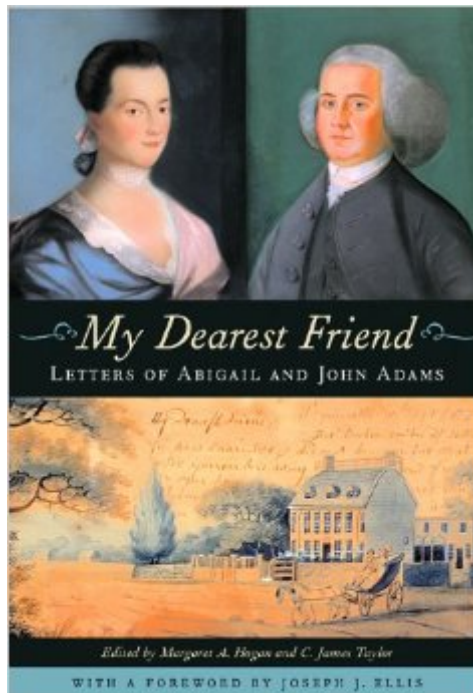


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My Dearest Friend: Letters Of Abigail And John Adams



Synopsis

Listen to a ten-minute interview with Margaret Hogan Host: Chris Gondek | Producer: Heron & Crane Read Margaret Hogan's HUP blog posting: "The Romance of John and Abigail Adams" Watch the video of The Massachusetts Historical Society's November 2007 event at which Deval and Diane Patrick, Edward and Victoria Kennedy, and Michael and Kitty Dukakis read selected letters from My Dearest Friend Visit the Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive Watch the March 2008 HBO miniseries--"John Adams"--based on David McCullough's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography In 1762, John Adams penned a flirtatious note to "Miss Adorable," the 17-year-old Abigail Smith. In 1801, Abigail wrote to wish her husband John a safe journey as he headed home to Quincy after serving as president of the nation he helped create. The letters that span these nearly forty years form the most significant correspondence--and reveal one of the most intriguing and inspiring partnerships--in American history. As a pivotal player in the American Revolution and the early republic, John had a front-row seat at critical moments in the creation of the United States, from the drafting of the Declaration of Independence to negotiating peace with Great Britain to serving as the first vice president and second president under the U.S. Constitution. Separated more often than they were together during this founding era, John and Abigail shared their lives through letters that each addressed to "My Dearest Friend," debating ideas and commenting on current events while attending to the concerns of raising their children (including a future president). Full of keen observations and articulate commentary on world events, these letters are also remarkably intimate. This new collection--including some letters never before published--invites readers to experience the founding of a nation and the partnership of two strong individuals, in their own words. This is history at its most authentic and most engaging.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This finely-produced book is the successor volume to "The Book of Abigail and John" (1975), also published by Harvard University Press (also reviewed on). However, there are importance differences between the two volumes. The 1975 collection contained 226 letters, covering the period 1752-1784. The present edition contains 289 letters, and continues until 1801, including John's service as Vice President and President. The present volume editors have largely avoided making updating corrections to capitalization and spellings, so one gets a rather interesting insight into how New Englanders of the period employed English to suit their own purposes. Unlike the 1975 collection, which contained editorial notes, diary entries and letters from other correspondents, here the letters pretty much stand alone. This has advantages (since it is pure Adams coming through) and disadvantages (annotations are missing that might have helpfully explained terms and identified individuals). A number of helpful illustrations (some in beautiful color) are collected in the center of the book. But the treasure here is the letters themselves. What a love story. I defy anyone to read these letters and not emerge with boundless admiration for Abigail. Considering that John was absent for years at a time, it fell to her to keep the homefires burning, raise the children, and deal with various challenges. What emerges is a quite literate Abigail, though she never benefitted from higher education, who seems to have an apt bit of poetry to cite for any occasion. The letters contain frank comments about folks like Hamilton, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and others. They also reveal exactly how thin skinned John was, which condition was perpetually getting him into difficulties. Helpful introductions by Joseph Ellis and the editors, as well as a comprehensive index, add to the value of the volume. It is hard to think of a book that better captures the spirit of this period for the reader.

This book is a wonderful adjunct to the HBO series and David Mc Cullough's brilliant book.."John Adams". I have never been devoted to our American history, preferring instead Ancient cultures. I see what I have missed and vow to read more about the brave and devoted men and women who, indeed ,created our country. The love affair between John and Abigail seemed to provide the great man, as well as Thomas Jefferson, with the strength and comfort that spurred them on. Bravo!!

A significant collection of correspondence from the time of the founding of our nation. This decades long string of communication between the often-separated Mr. and Mrs. Adams is informative about those times on several planes: diplomatic, political, social, agricultural, and family. Winding throughout is the strong bond between a talented but thin-skinned politician, John, and his wise, supportive, and self-reliant wife, Abigail. The book's editors did a nice job of keeping their explanatory comments to a useful, but minimal level. A clean text is thus provided, which keeps the focus on the letters as written.

I started reading this while watching the John Adams HBO mini series. I didn't finish the book until after I had seen all 7 episodes. It was interesting to read their correspondence and realize how much of an asset Abigail was to John. If you enjoy reading letters, you will enjoy this book. The author inserts commentary prior to a particular time frame of letters in order for you to understand the tenor and specifics of the letters that follow. I enjoyed it.

If you are a history buff or just a little interested in the history of our nation you will love this book. The letters exchanged between John and Abigail Adams are wonderful. Abigail was definitely John's rock. She kept him focused and steady. John was a very passionate man in his beliefs and at times would become a tyrant trying to convince people that his way of thinking was the only way to think. Thank goodness he had Abigail as he ran everything by her to see how she thought the people would react to his perception. Abigail would let him know when he needed to press an issue or just be quiet and let it happen on its own. Besides being lovers as husband and wife they were truly best friends. An inspirational read.

A collection of authentic letters between a man and his wife documenting the actual events as they occur from their first meeting, the beginning of the revolutionary war, the first meeting of Congress to negotiating a system of government through freedom of our liberties through the written and signed Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. Although early years were spent much apart, this extraordinary couple persevered a deep love, an emotional partnership and friendship while enduring personal tragedies of early Colonial life in the 1700's. These letters are Historical Documents. This was the life of Abigail and John Adams. A story that aided this reader in understanding a period of History so unassuming, so important in acknowledging the birth of our nation.

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