

Abigail Adams



Figure 1: The Old House was home to the Adams family from 1788 to 1927. It is located in Quincy, Massachusetts, and is now part of the Adams National Historical Park.

Abigail Adams was the wife of President John Adams and the mother of President John Quincy Adams. Her reading and her family life gave her a good understanding of politics. She strongly favored American independence and universal liberty. She was also determined to overcome the limits that were placed on women at the time.

Abigail Smith was born on November 22, 1744, in Weymouth, Massachusetts. As a girl she studied the books in her father's large library. Women could not go to college then, but Abigail received a good education at home.

In 1759 Abigail met the young lawyer John Adams. They shared interests in reading, writing, and politics. They were married in 1764 and settled on a farm in Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts. They had five children. Abigail, John Quincy, Charles, and Thomas survived to adulthood.

John Adams's law practice and political duties kept him away from home much of the time. Abigail Adams stayed in touch with her husband and other family members by letter. Her letters are full of her opinions on the important issues of the day. This was during the time when the American colonies began to fight for independence from Great Britain. She wrote in favor of American independence. Like her husband, she also believed that slavery had no place in a country dedicated to freedom.

In 1789 John Adams became the first vice president of the United States. Eight years later he became the second president. Even during those terms Abigail was often in Massachusetts running the family farm. In 1800, however, she moved with the president into the White House, which was unfinished at the time.

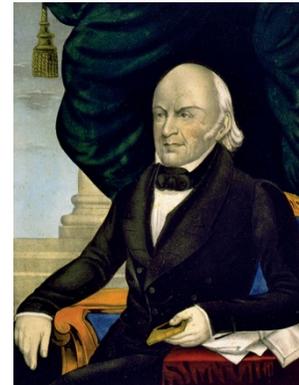


Figure 2: Abigail Adams was the mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States.



After Adams's term as president he and Abigail returned to Quincy and settled comfortably into retirement. Abigail died on October 28, 1818.

Figure 3: In 2007 the U.S. government began issuing gold coins to honor the First Ladies. The front of the Abigail Adams coin was inspired by a portrait of Adams painted by Gilbert Stuart.

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