John Adams Study Guide

John Adams by David McCullough

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Plot Summary

John Adams follows the life of the first vice president and second president of the United States, friend and foe of such American luminaries as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

Late in life, Adams lamented that his rightful place in history would be forgotten, despite the yeoman's job he had done rallying the revolutionary forces at the Continental Congresses in Philadelphia, gaining France as an ally in the struggle, securing bank loans in Holland, negotiating peace with England and representing the new nation before a throne that still hoped the rebellion would fail and used its commercial strength to hasten that end. He had worked long hours, written analytically and fearlessly, traveled great distances and endured unendurable separations from his loving and beloved wife and confidant, Abigail.

Adams wished he could return to the private life of a farmer and earn his living as a lawyer, activities he had sacrificed to the revolutionary cause. He was elected vice president, an inconsequential office under the new Constitution, and served President Washington loyally and conscientiously, only to heap upon his own head calumnies at the hands of increasingly partisan politicians.

John Adams realized that he was Washington's heir apparent. Although Republicans, who opposed strong government and wanted him skipped over in favor of Thomas Jefferson, Adams' great friend who had lately distanced himself and grown aloof, Adams won the first contested election in American history. Because of a quirk in the Constitution, Adams found his opponent seated as vice president.

Adams hoped to bridge the partisan gap but was rebuffed. Opponents distorted his writings to paint him as a monarchist, bent on having his son, John Quincy Adams, succeed him in office thereby subverting the revolution and establishing hereditary rule in America. Nothing could have been further from the truth, but the charge could not be shaken. Adams signed the Alien and Sedition Acts, a clear violation of the First Amendment, aimed at suppressing Republican newspapers, and he was ill-served by a cabinet ruled behind the scenes by Alexander Hamilton, a High Federalist and would-be "Second Napoleon." Adams' greatest goal was to avert war with either France or Britain before the country was strong enough to prevail. This he did, but the peace treaty, which could well have won him reelection in 1800, became known in America too late to help.

Adams retired with Abigail to his farm in Quincy, Massachusetts, and maintained broad correspondence with old friends. One, Benjamin Rush, also a close friend of Jefferson, convinced the two ex-presidents to reconcile their differences. They undertook one of the most remarkable correspondences in American history and, arguably, in the English language.

The two patriots died within hours of one another on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. David McCullough paints an absorbing portrait of an overlooked man, his remarkable wife and their circle of friends, enemies and family.

Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Two unremarkable men rode on horseback through a bleak New England night. The smaller and older was the talkative John Adams, lawyer, farmer, Harvard graduate, husband of Abigail Smith Adams, father of four children, portly but fit, plain dressed - and a revolutionary. He loved family, farm, books and writing. He angered and forgave quickly. He cared deeply for friends, and he was kind-hearted, brilliant, independent and frugal. He was honest about his ambition to succeed in life. A Christian and an independent thinker, he was a student of human foibles, well read in the classics and modern literature. For years, Adams had shone in the court circuit and in publishing. Patriotism burned in him. A year earlier, at the First Continental Congress, he had been a "sensible and forcible figure." Abigail and John had hated being separated, but she supported his "arduous task" wholeheartedly, bearing up under the shortages brought when the British fleet occupied Boston harbor.

Adams and companion Joseph Bass were heading to General George Washington's headquarters at a time when army enlistments were running out and replacements hard to find. The force was undermanned and poorly supplied. Smallpox raged. Washington had never commanded so large a force. Facing staff opposition to an all-out attack on Boston, he sought Adams' confirmation that his authority covered all American forces because Adams had nominated him for the post in 1774. Two days later, Adams was summoned again, to hear bad news about the Battle of Quebec. A younger Adams had pictured himself a soldier, and he now lamented that duty took him instead back to Philadelphia.

John Adams was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, the fourth Adams generation since the Puritan migration. John's father Deacon John, a farmer/shoemaker, married into the socially superior Boylston family, and son John was born October 30, 1735. He recalled a "fairytale" boyhood at the humble frugal homestead. John loved his mother but rarely mentioned her, reserving his admiration for Deacon John.

John entered Harvard College at fifteen and became a voracious reader. Enduring Spartan living conditions and avoiding involvements with girls, John graduated in 1755, speaking on the question, "Is civil government absolutely necessary for me?" It was suggested that John's gift for public speaking was better suited to law than theology, and in 1756, John began reading law under James Putnam while teaching school by day. Preparing for the bar examination and miserably unsure of himself, John attended trials to study the leading lawyers. Admitted to the bar in 1759, Adams lost his first case on a technicality and vowed to bend his whole soul to the law in order to build a reputation.

Adams felt a need for ballast in his life, but he was awkward about courting. When first introduced to the Smith family, Adams was not impressed by the father or the middle

daughter, Abigail. When Deacon John died, John stepped up to become the head the family and inherited substantial property. He established a proper law office, and his practice picked up. On October 25, 1764, Adams married twenty-year-old Abigail, having discovered that the sickly home-schooled girl was an avid reader, intelligent, witty, consistently cheerful, talkative and strong-minded. She softened and warmed John's heart, becoming a beneficial, steadying influence and a hardworking force in their home. A baby Abigail ("Nabby") was born in 1765, followed in two years by a son, John Quincy. Life had become fuller for John, although he worried about caring financially for his growing family. His selection as surveyor of highways helped financially and launched his sweep into public prominence.

News of the Stamp Act reached America in May 1765, and Massachusetts was particularly enraged by Parliament's first attempt to tax the colonies directly. Adams joined his friend Gridley's Boston law firm and wrote his first political essay, "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law." He published it, unsigned, in the *Gazette.* It declared that American freedoms were not ideals to be attained but rights rooted in British law and earned over generations. Soon afterwards, Adams' "Braintree Instructions," also printed in the *Gazette,* declared no taxation without representation and were soon adopted by forty towns.

Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, and tensions eased for two years, during which Adams rode the 200-mile court circuit, earning a reputation for eloquence, stubbornness and morality. In 1766, Adams was elected selectman in Braintree, but in 1768, he moved the family to Boston and soon found himself the busiest attorney in the city. His life goals were fame, fortune, power and the service of God, country, clients and fellow men. He turned down an opportunity for advancement when his friend Jonathan Sewall, now a staunch Tory, offered him the office of advocate general. Boston was filled with British troops, and crisis was looming.

Crisis arrived on March 5, 1770, while the Adamses were still mourning the loss of a baby daughter, Susanna, soon after her first birthday. A lone British sentry guarded the Province House when fire alarm bells brought crowds pouring into the streets. Eight armed soldiers reinforced the sentry. While being pelted with street objects, the soldiers fired into the mob, killing five. The "Boston Massacre" filled the public mind. Adams accepted the task of defending the squadron, believing that everyone had the right to counsel and a fair trial, whatever hazard that might pose for his hard-earned reputation. Adams gave a virtuoso performance and won acquittal for the captain's acquittal and all but two of the enlisted men, arguing self-defense.

The *Gazette* turned on Adams, and he lost half his practice. Still, he bounced back and in 1770 was elected to the state legislature. The work exhausted Adams' health, and the family returned to Braintree in 1771. A second son, Thomas, was born there in 1772, and Adams resumed the "vagabond life" of the circuit. His journal recorded musings on political power, which he fought to avoid. Growing British pretensions, however, kept his temper lit.

The Adams family returned to Boston at the time of the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, an event that filled John with exuberance. Within six months, however, the harbor was blocked, and the economy collapsed. In 1774, Adams was chosen as a delegate to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Sewall tried to talk him out of attending, but for Adams, the die was cast. He published a series of letters in the *Gazette,* signed Novangelus, or "the New Englander," declaring that Americans had a right to determine their own destiny rather than suffer the fate of the Irish.

In Cambridge on January 24, 1776, Adams joined the Washingtons for a diplomatic dinner with a delegation of Caughnawaga Indians offering their services to the American cause. Fascinated by Native Americans since boyhood, Adams described the colorful scene to Abigail, but he dared not disclose the reason for the meeting. Washington had ordered 58 cannons transported from Fort Ticonderoga, New York, to position above the harbor and drive the British fleet out. Adams and fellow delegate Elbridge Gerry rode to Framington, Massachusetts, to inspect these guns before setting off for Congress.

The spirit of Adams' trip in 1776 was much worse than in 1774, as was the weather. As they rode, Adams and Gerry became friends for life. Abigail wrote about refusing to sign a petition for reconciliation with Britain. In New York, Adams bought two copies of a new pamphlet, *Common Sense,* and forwarded one to his wife. The party arrived in Philadelphia on February 8, 1776. Letters from home described the thunderous bombardment of Bunker Hill, which impressed the British enough to withdraw their fleet, carrying a thousand Loyalists, many of them friends of the Adamses.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Chapter 1, "The Road to Philadelphia," first sets the scene for Adams' wintry ride from his home in Braintree (later renamed Quincy) to Washington's camp in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and thence to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. It sets the mood before swiftly summarizing Adams status in his fortieth year of life. It next fills in detail on the coming of the Puritan Adams clan to Massachusetts, John's formative years, his education, early career, marriage to Abigail Smith and the bearing of their children. Readers come to appreciate his prominence in colonial law and politics and his complex personality. The final part of this chapter details what Adams saw and discussed in Cambridge and then follows him to Philadelphia - and into history. McCullough offers an enormous amount of data, without overburdening the reader. There is ample local color to bring out the mood of the time.

Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Philadelphia was America's 18th century metropolis in size, wealth and beauty, and it was the country's busiest port. Founded in 1682 by the English Quaker William Penn, it was laid out on a spacious grid with handsome, substantial public buildings. Benjamin Franklin was its preeminent citizen and the most famous American alive, most renowned for his invention of the lightning rod. Philadelphia was a city of artisans and manufacturers, filled with bookshops, taverns, coffeehouses and seven newspapers. Summer in the city was a miserable experience, though, with frequent epidemics.

Adams arrived for the First Continental Congress in 1774 eager to see everything. His time was filled every day. Sundays, he visited various churches and commented on the quality of preaching and hymnody. Philadelphia's hospitality amazed the simple New Englanders. Congress was a dazzling assembly of minds that Adams believed was unsurpassed in history. Half of the fifty-four delegates were lawyers. Some were wealthy, and others were of humble origins. He was amazed by their range and variety of talents, and he was the only delegate who kept notes on them, though his notes were fragmentary. Within a month of "acuteness and minuteness" in debating, Adams grew weary, and certain members began to irritate him. He left Philadelphia after a two-month stay, happy and wistful, wondering if he would ever return.

Returning for the Second Continental Congress in February 1776, Adams found a city transformed by revolution, building defenses, drilling an army and issuing currency. All sessions were conducted in strictest secrecy behind closed doors, to thwart British spies and to withhold information from patriots until unanimity could be achieved. A sense of urgency strained everyone. Adams was annoyed by the wasteful, exhausting debates of an unwieldy body. Adams was named to most of the important committees, showing the respect colleagues had for his integrity, intelligence and capacity for hard work. Word of sickness and death at home led Adams to warn Abigail to prepare for even greater ordeals.

Adams drew up a list of things to accomplish: 1) ally with France and Spain, 2) establish a government in every colony, 3) produce saltpeter (for gunpowder) in every colony, and 4) compose a "Declaration of Independency." Three approximately equal factions vied for power and position in Congress. The Tories were opposed to independence, and a second group was too cautious to support independence openly. The third group was "true blue" and wanted to proceed rapidly. Adams saw folly in those who hoped for reconciliation with Britain and awaited a peace commission from London. Philadelphia's mood was contentious, and Congress showed signed of strain. The British governor of Virginia called for slave rebellions and bombarded Norfolk. Writing Abigail, Adams quoted Joseph Addison's *Cato:* "We cannot insure success, but we can deserve it."

On February 27, 1776, news arrived that Parliament had prohibited trade with America and branded as traitors anyone who refused to submit unconditionally. The punishment was hanging. Franklin, at seventy, was reputed to be the Congress's wisest and most influential member, but he abstained from debates and often slept through sessions. He favored independence. Three Philadelphians had counseled the arriving New Englanders not to push too zealously for independence, but rather to yield to the proud Virginians, who believed their state's size, wealth and population gave them the right to lead. Adams' nomination of Washington to command the army shows he took this advice to heart.

The bulwark of the opposition was the tall, eloquent Pennsylvanian John Dickinson. Adams denounced his demands for an "Olive Branch Petition." Adams recorded his criticisms in a private letter that the British intercepted and published, leaving the two men no longer on speaking terms. George III dismissed Dickinson's petition without review and declared the colonies to be in a state of rebellion.

In January 1776, a pamphlet called *Common Sense* created an immediate stir throughout the colonies, offering the boldest call for war to date. In time, it was learned that the author was Thomas Paine, but many New Englander believed Adams was the writer. Adams was flattered initially, but he came to believe that Paine was better suited to tear down than to build up. Building the nation was a greater task than the long, painful struggle against Britain, and Adams alone in Congress appears to have foreseen it. Paine had a "feeble" understanding of constitutional government, which Adams vowed to counteract among the masses.

Congress dispatched secret envoys to France to feel out reactions to an American declaration of independence, and Franklin was sent to Montreal to see whether Canada might become a "14th colony." Adams engaged effectively in daily floor debates, advocating that the states institute governments. He spoke extemporaneously, believing truth and "rapid reason" alone could convince colleagues. In March, Congress voted to disarm all Tories and authorized outfitting naval privateers. Adams strongly advocated sea defenses, and he was put in charge of the new naval committee. He would ever afterwards take pride in having drafted the first set of rules and regulations for the U.S. Navy.

Asked to sketch his views on constitutional government to guide the North Carolina project, Adams complied with *Thoughts on Government*. It incorporated Adams' wide reading and discussions, including Abigail's view that while human nature can be perfected, this happens in practice so rarely that one ought to be wary of anyone eager to gain the prerogatives of government. Adams rejoiced that his generation had been chosen to decide on how they would be governed, rather than having a system imposed. The greatest happiness of the greatest number of people had to be the Americans' goal. This would best be achieved by creating two distinct legislative bodies, to check and correct arbitrariness.

The executive should be annually chosen by the two bodies and should incorporate supreme command of the military. The judicial power had to be distinct and independent

from the other branches, impartial, moral, patient and calm. Judges should serve for life. Finally, liberal education had to be instituted at any cost. Abigail's long letters described shortages and the growing struggle to survive, but they were also filled with her views on events in Philadelphia. She wondered how sincere slaveholding Virginians could be about freedom. Spring's approach and the British retreat caused her spirit to soar, and she asked her husband, only half playfully, to "remember the ladies" when designing the new government. Males are natural tyrants, and females will no longer tolerate it was her gist. Other letters from Massachusetts demanded a faster pace in Philadelphia. To them, Adams counseled patience. He told Abigail that she shone as a stateswoman as well as a choice wife.

Behind closed doors, Congress also thawed with the coming of spring. South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina authorized their delegates to support independence, and the opposition understood that unanimity and harmony were needed. Richard Henry Lee and Adams moved that the individual colonies assume the powers of government, and Adams was given the task of drafting a preamble. The radical results were debated and passed. It clearly declared, "The exercise of every kind of authority under the said crown should be totally suppressed." Popular opinion swung dramatically towards independence.

Thomas Jefferson arrived on May 14, after a leisurely ride northward from Virginia, feeling uncomfortably removed from current politics and preferring to be home, caring for his ailing wife and helping draft the state constitution. Jefferson and Adams were polar opposites in physique, background, manner and temperament. Jefferson's thought was more inventive and idealistic, taking little interest in human nature. He was remote, humorless and intentionally ambiguous. He abhorred debate and confrontation and sat passively through most of the Congress. He broke silence only to oppose a proposal for a one-day fast and appeared to be casting aspersions on Christianity. Naturally, Adams rose to oppose him. Adams admired the Virginian's "masterly pen" and legal preparation. Love of words, books, scholarship, law, endeavor, home and family provided common ground between them. The stamp of their origins was prominent, however; Massachusetts and Virginia were truly different countries. Not surprisingly, Jefferson found in Adams a certain "want of taste." Jefferson resolved his views on independence more slowly than Adams. As late as August 1775, he longed for a return to "domestic ease and tranquility," but in Philadelphia, he came to work closely with Adams, who was eight years Jefferson's senior and assumed the role of mentor to a deferential protygy.

On June 7, Richard Henry Lee made the fateful resolution, and Adams immediately seconded it. The next day was given over to hot debate, and opponents cautioned that they must wait until the voice of the people drove them to action and hinted that Virginia might secede from the union. The response was that the public was already ahead of Congress and that the European powers would not commit to alliance or trade until independence was declared. There was no time to lose. The "cool party" won a twenty-day delay in voting to allow the middle colonies to send new instructions to their delegates.

A "Commission of Five" - Adams, Jefferson, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston and an ailing and rarely present Franklin - was given until July 1 to draft a declaration. Jefferson recalled being chosen unanimously to undertake the writing, discounting Adams' late-life version, which claimed he passed up the assignment because his standing in Philadelphia was weak. In fact, Adams served on twenty-three committees, with more to be added. Jefferson worked rapidly, with a sure command of his material, giving expression to the "American mind" by borrowing from his earlier writings, contemporary writers and poets and Cicero. Jefferson was pleased with his graceful, eloquent composition and endured in pained silence the committee's minute review. Adams was sufficiently pleased to hand copy the original and send it to Abigail for review (leading her, naturally, to believe that her husband was the author). Adams knew Southerners would demand deletion of the condemnation of slavery and thought the scolding of George III excessive, but he accepted the committee's decisions.

Washington's distress in New York, near mutiny in Boston and the scourge of smallpox all lent urgency to Adams' work on the Board of War, which met every morning and evening. The rate of rebellion in the colonies was accelerating. New Jersey arrested its royal governor and authorized a vote for independence. Support was being built in Maryland. Adams watched for the proper moment to act. No one had worked harder than he for a break with Britain, and no one better understood the "bloody conflict we are destined to endure." The moment was solemn.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapter 2, "True Blue," first provides a tour of late 18th century Philadelphia and then details the early months of the Second Continental Congress. Finally, it follows the dramatic acceleration of action as the heat of summer descended over the city and the military situation in New York, Boston and Canada worsened. Adams' ambivalence towards Franklin, destined to change into outright dislike in Paris, begins to emerge, and Jefferson, with whom Adams is destined to be linked forever in history, is introduced with some detail. McCullough's description of the various sessions of the Continental Congress is a bit confusing, as are descriptions of Adams' wanderings around Philadelphia, but Chapter 2 makes clear Adams' overwhelming influence at the conclave, earned by hard work, honesty and great efforts at holding back his tongue - most of the time. This will be built upon in the next chapter, where McCullough, quoting Jefferson, deems Adams no less than the "Colossus of Independence."

Abigail's quotation from Joseph Addison's popular drama *Cato* suggests that classical history, literature and philosophy offered familiar shorthand for the well-educated American revolutionaries. The play is based on the life of Cato the Younger, the first-century BC hero who battled Julius Caesar's tyranny and then refused power thrust upon him. It was a favorite of General Washington, who relished just such a role. The play was frequently performed in colonial America onward, and Nathan Hale's famous last words from the gallows, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," is a paraphrase from *Cato*. McCullough will mention many of the thinkers whom Addison influenced, including David Hume, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Voltaire, Washington and

John Adams. The author also shows in this chapter Jefferson's admiration of the thought of Marcus Tullius Cicero, the ancient Roman orator and statesman. Cicero was also an Adams' favorite, particulary his essay "De Senectute," and Cicero's name will pop up throughout the rest of the book, primarily in admonitions to his sons.

Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

On July 1, 1776, debate over independence began while vigil was being held for New York as the British fleet neared. Adams warned freedom would demand "a great expense of blood." Dickinson made a last appeal for delaying "premature" separation, to which Adams responded with logical and positive exposition of how unborn generations depended on Congress' decision. It was the best, most moving speech of his life and the most powerful and important oration at the Continental Congress. Adams was "the Atlas" of the hour, the sustainer of debate. After a nine-hour debate, a preliminary vote resulted in a majority for independence, but not crucial unanimity, so a final vote was postponed. Deals appear to have been made overnight, and on July 2, two Pennsylvanian opponents voluntarily absented themselves from voting, and New York abstained from voting. The other twelve colonies approved a break with Britain. Adams poured out his feelings to Abigail about this "Day of Deliverance," that future generations should annually celebrate. The hand of God had assisted the birth of a new nation, and overruling providence would have to sustain the creation of a new government.

Congress had still to approve the specific language of the Declaration of Independence, and Jefferson again sat silently as a quarter of his text was cut. Reference to slavery was removed, since a fifth of the colonial population were slaves and a third of the members of Congress owned or had owned slaves. Adams found the institution "an evil of colossal magnitude," but would not jeopardize the Declaration by pushing the issue.

Contrary to later myths, July 4, 1776 was a pleasant, comfortable day in Philadelphia. The final vote went smoothly, with New York abstaining and Dickinson absent. It would take a month for the final document to be authenticated and printed for signature, but broadside editions began circulating within days. The text was read publicly with pomp on July 8, and Americans began tearing down monuments to George III. Secrecy prevailed as the giant engrossed parchment was signed on August 2, with none of the fuss or ceremony later myth built up around the event. The last signature was affixed only in January 1777. The existence of a signed document was kept secret to protect the signers against punishment for treason. The spirit of Congress, the people and the militia immediately changed. Pennsylvania dispatched 2,000 troops to New York. An ailing and exhausted Dickinson accepted a commission to head the troops, which Adams declared provided a fine example.

By July 3, 1776, the British fleet had disgorged 3,900 troops on Staten Island, New York, and within weeks, another 130 ships appeared, fielding 32,000 fully equipped and trained British and Hessian soldiers to face Washington's 9,000 ill-equipped, untested and unsupported amateur fighters. Heading the War Office, Adams was miserable, knowing what defeat in New York would mean for the cause. Adams and four colleagues were responsible for ordnance and fortifications, recruitment, pay, provisions

and armaments. It was arduous, thankless work, and all decisions were subject to congressional approval. With Jefferson, Adams served on the Committee on Spies, and Adams revised the British Articles of War to strengthen discipline - an unpopular subject. A regular army would have to replace the constantly rotating voluntary militias. Smallpox had to be eliminated.

As Congress debated the Articles of Confederation, Adams was on "tenterhooks" over news that Abigail and the children had gone to Boston to submit to dangerous and painful inoculation against smallpox, but he could not abandon his duties in Philadelphia. The separated parents cared greatly about each other's well being and never grew accustomed to being apart. Worries about his family added to overwork and inadequate sleep and exercise, until he realized he had reached the point where he could no longer function effectively. On July 25, Adams requested a leave of absence. Later, he suggested the family come to him in Philadelphia, where he was filled with brooding self-pity, feeling misjudged and unappreciated. He began writing more frequently to Abigail on a variety of unrelated subjects, including geography, preaching and the shortcomings of New Englanders (himself included). Abigail wrote "unmolested" from Boston at a "pretty desk" in a mixture of pain and pleasure, thinking about her "absent friend."

Adams disapproved of continuing strict secrecy on debate over the Articles of Confederation. Debate centered on how voting should be apportioned - equally among the colonies or based on population - and whether the dimensions of the colonies could be limited by Congress. Adams took part in the passionate three-day debate, opposing Article 17's single-vote solution. Americans had to unite as a common, interdependent mass, giving up the idea that they were individual states. Jefferson remained silent on an issue that was not resolved for a very long time.

The British invaded Long Island on August 22, and in a fierce battle on August 27, they overwhelmed the Americans. The 9,000 to 10,000 survivors fell back and managed, by a "providential" fog, to cross the East River to safety in Manhattan. One of Washington's captured lieutenants, John Sullivan, a former member of Congress, was paroled to pass to Congress Admiral Lord Howe's request for a conference. Jefferson and many other delegates left the city, but Adams could not tear himself away. He was incensed at the thought of meeting the enemy, but he agreed to join Franklin and Rutledge in the mission, convinced that his presence would minimize the potential evil. En route, Adams was forced to share a bed with Franklin in an overcrowded inn, and he fell asleep listening to a lecture about the health advantages of sleeping with an open window.

On Staten Island, the party passed through a menacing Hessians formation. Howe, whom Franklin had known in England, was well disposed toward Americans and convinced that only a tiny minority, represented by the men before him, wanted to split from Britain. He specified that he could not acknowledge them except privately, as British subjects. Adams pugnaciously objected that he was willing to be met in *any* way other than as a British subject, and Howe turned his attention to Franklin and Rutledge, knowing Adams was one of two rebels whom George III had specified would invariably be hanged.

The three-hour meeting accomplished nothing, and British forces ended the truce, bombarding Manhattan's shore defenses and forcing Washington to withdraw and wage a purely defensive war. Washington sent a bleak letter requesting a standing army, well paid and subject to stricter regulations and punishments. Congress put its hope in French assistance, and Adams fought to make the proposed "Plan of Treaties" a model for future U.S. agreements. Franklin and Jefferson were named commissioners to the Court of France, but Jefferson, who earlier requested the post, declined, citing family responsibilities. Arthur Lee was named in his stead.

Autumn saw an exodus of the staunchest members from Philadelphia, and downcast over the situation in New York, Adams left for home. He had shown unflinching devotion to the cause during his eight months in Philadelphia, speaking his mind and fighting for all he believed in, without losing his temper in public. He was responsible for the timing, wording and spirit of the Declaration of Independence, the plan of confederation, the approach to treaties and the need for a truly republican form of government after the war. Rush told him that every member of Congress held him as the first among them.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Chapter 3, "Colossus of Independence," concludes Part 1, "Revolution." The first part examines the final debates over the Declaration of Independence, while the second examines the Articles of Confederation and provisions for a standing army. The principles of self-government that Adams propounded in Philadelphia will be completely incorporated in the constitution he drafts for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as described in Chapter 4. Adams' contribution in all matters before Congress were enthusiastically hailed, contradicting his characteristic gloomy self-deprecation and doubt. They lead to his next great assignment. The brief excerpts from the many letters that passed between John and Abigail make this chapter touching reading. Fortunately, many more examples lie ahead, as the couple was destined only rarely to live together until Adams achieved the vice-presidency and presidency and retired.

Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Adams' time at home was brief before he went to Baltimore and another session of Congress. With him went a new delegate, James Lovell. Abigail resigned herself to another year's melancholy, made worse by the fact that she was again pregnant. Thomas Paine's dictum, "These are the times that try men's souls," summed up the bleak military situation. Philadelphia was lost to the British. Things looked up at Christmastime, when Washington was victorious at Trenton and Princeton. The winter of 1776-77 brought white desolation to coastal Massachusetts, and by spring, Abigail was uncomfortably large and clumsy. The remnants of Congress had returned to Philadelphia, and Adams was homesick and overworked. He began wondering if he was miscast for public life. He counseled his children by letters about their future occupations. Abigail scrimped and managed the farm expertly, but she was filled with morbid premonitions that proved true when she delivered a stillborn daughter in July. She wrote plaintively of her sacrifice for country. The times were trying women's souls as well.

British forces moved south from Canada in a bid to separate New England from the rest of the country and again menaced Philadelphia. Adams was pleased to see Washington's defending troops well-armed and tolerably clothed, proof that his work on the Board of War had been effective. The Battle of Brandywine Creek, twenty-five miles south of Philadelphia, proved a disaster, and Congress fled in disorder. Adams worried privately that Washington was "out-generalled," but at least the mangled army had survived. After the disastrous Battle of Saratoga, most delegates went home.

Determined to refuse re-election, Adams enjoyed two weeks at home before learning he had been appointed commissioner to France, to replace Silas Deane, suspected of wrongdoing. Adams felt unqualified but unable to decline. Worried about Franklin's age, Congress was counting on Adams to bring "inflexible integrity" to the embassy. Official word came while Adams was representing a client in New Hampshire in what turned out to be his final court appearance as a private attorney. Abigail opened the packet and was furious at again being robbed of happiness. She was horrified at the real chance her husband could be captured at sea. Adams grieved that his family would suffer while fellow lawyers grew rich. The couple agreed it was too dangerous and costly for Abigail to go along, but ten-year-old John Quincy ("Johnny") was eager to go. Abigail admonished Johnny to make the most of the trip.

Because British spies were everywhere and warships prowled the coast, the trip abroad was kept secret. The Adamses said their goodbyes at home, and the travelers were rowed out to the frigate Boston under cover of darkness. Adams had never before been to sea, and he was apprehensive about the 3,000-mile trip. Captain Samuel Tucker, an experienced skipper, knew well the perils of a winter crossing in wartime. Bad weather kept them at the roadstead until February 17, 1778. Tucker was charged to consult with

Adams on all occasions, and Adams saw the voyage as an opportunity to learn about the new navy. He was upset by the informality, lax discipline, profanity, insufficient practice in the use of the guns and an appalling lack of sanitation. Adams made a great nuisance of himself, but he succeeded in getting the Boston truly shipshape. They outran three British frigates, only to drive into a lightning storm that shattered the main mast. Father and son worked on their French, tutored by a French army surgeon. Tucker captured a heavily armed merchantman, the Martha, in a battle in which Adams took part.

On March 30, 1778, the Boston anchored in Bordeaux, and Adams first experienced French hospitality aboard a French warship. Learning that an alliance had been reached on February 6, before he had even set sail, he set off for Paris, nonetheless, and his diary reveals he found everything in France to his liking except the swarms of beggars. Hailed as a hero (but, lamentably, not *"le fameux Adams,"* his second cousin Samuel), Adams was introduced to the joys of opera and the "glittering clatter" of the first big city he had ever visited.

Adams called first on Franklin, who lived in splendor at an estate where he installed Adams in Deane's vacated apartment and arranged for Johnny to attend boarding school with his eight-year-old grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache. Franklin's friends were the "first people" of Paris, and Adams was amazed at their lives. He observed the intimacy with which the women treated the aged Franklin. He wrote Abigail about the opulent lifestyle and how he was growing to love these people, so essential to the success of the American cause. His views would change later in life, but during his first visit, Adams found this region of happiness appealing. He particularly admired the handsome, well-educated and accomplished French women, but he assured Abigail that there were no grounds for jealousy. He quickly grew concerned about the adulation paid the "good doctor" (Franklin), whose likeness appeared everywhere and who posed as the embodiment of "simplicity and innocence." Adams witnessed the high mark of the Age of Enlightenment, when Franklin and Voltaire embraced.

Adams walked for his health, studied French, bought books and, sadly, confirmed rumors of tensions among the American envoys. There was "coolness" between Franklin and the ill-tempered and difficult Arthur Lee, who mistrusted all human beings. Lee described Franklin as "the most corrupt of all corrupt men" and resented working in his shadow. Lee had first raised suspicions about Deane's corruption and secured his recall. Lee took a dislike to Adams, who still felt a bond with Franklin, based on love of the printed word, delight in amusing stories and turns of phrase and the bond forged during the mission to Lord Howe. He began seeing Franklin's aloofness, carelessness about details and money and increasing physical infirmities as liabilities. One of Franklin's oldest and closest friends, William Alexander, turned out to be a British spy, and Adams suspected another frequent Franklin visitor, David Heartley, of spying. However, Franklin was unconcerned.

Neither realized that Dr. Edward Bancroft, secretary of the commission, was regularly sending dispatches to London, written in invisible ink. Although grown lazy, Franklin enjoyed the confidence of the French Court and could not be replaced. Adams advised

that the remaining commissioners - himself included - were a superfluous waste of money and ought to be recalled. Adams detected a "goodness and innocence" in the young King Louis XVI and observed his wife Marie Antoinette as sublime and beautiful, "perfect clockwork."

In June 1778, Britain attacked French ships at sea, setting off an undeclared war. With no diplomatic duties to attend to, Adams worked at improving the mission's administration and writing frequent reports to Congress. He could count on his two colleagues for nothing and grew distraught and lonely. He deplored his "ugly" position between Franklin and Lee and found pleasure only in the progress Johnny was making in his studies and society. Letters between America and France were routinely lost, leaving Adams feeling abandoned by Congress and out of touch with America. He was sure that the British were painting him as a fanatic, hardheaded bigot, and he hated playing second fiddle to the self-indulgent, self-serving Franklin, who "observed much and acted little." He feared excessive timidity in dealing with the French, whom he now saw as the "rock upon which we may safely build," particularly if their naval fleet could be induced to increase its presence in American waters. A first joint expedition had been too small to defeat the British at Newport. The three commissioners' most important joint task was presenting a toned down version of Adams' naval proposal to the Comte de Vergennes in January 1779. Vergennes turned it down, looking instead to an invasion of England.

In September 1778, Congress named Franklin minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Louis XVI and transferred Lee to Madrid, but it said nothing about Adams. Mystified and insulted, he wrote Abigail that he was happy to be a private citizen again. Abigail's letters betrayed her own melancholy over neglect by a husband whose heart had become that of a "frozen Laplander." Wounded, Adams replied that security prevented him from writing as freely as he had from Philadelphia. She must not doubt his affection. Abigail had suffered during her husband's eighteen-month absence more than she had anticipated, and she wished she had sailed with him. Winter's seclusion had exhausted her patience. She corresponded with James Lovell, to gain information about her husband and the war, but she had to endure veiled advances and raw double entendres in his letters inappropriately addressed to "Portia." Abigail was always discreet in her own letters, reserving her affection for her "dearest friend," for whose return she yearned.

Adams' unannounced arrival on August 2 took Abigail by surprise. The return voyage had been repeatedly delayed, giving Adams time to brood about his ordinariness and weakness. Although Adams hated to leave the food, entertainment and civility of happy Paris and treasured a parting letter from Versailles praising his wise and zealous work in France, he was happy to be reunited with wife and the three children. They exchanged stories of their lives apart, the troublesome economic and military situation and the scarcity, inflation, taxes and profiteering that offended them both.

A week after the homecoming, Adams joined 250 delegates in Cambridge to draft a state constitution. With Samuel Adams and James Bowdoin, he was named to the drafting subcommittee, which in turn assigned the task to him alone. Adams' acute legal

mind was ideally suited, and with Abigail's steadying presence, he worked happily on the draft in his home office. The result was one of the most long-lasting achievements of Adams' life. Reviewing other state constitutions and rereading his *Thoughts on Government,* he completed work by October.

The constitution included a preamble that affirmed the ideal of the common good founded on a social compact. Next came a Declaration of Rights that borrowed phrases from other documents, talking of unalienable rights, freedom of speech and press, the "duty" of people to worship a Supreme Being without molestation and the people's right to rule itself, free from the absurd and unnatural institution of hereditary monarchy. The body of the constitution called for a separation and balance of powers among a bicameral legislature, a governor possessing veto power and an independent judiciary appointed for life. Most notably, Section II of Chapter 6 called for "The Encouragement of Literature, Etc.," calling on society to promote education at all levels to inculcate in the population the prerequisites for self-government - wisdom, knowledge and virtue. These came only through reading. His draft was adopted with few changes.

Adams did not rush off to Philadelphia but attended to his old law practice and corresponded with friends. In October, he learned that he had been appointed minister plenipotentiary to negotiate treaties of peace and trade with Britain. He had the esteem of Congress. His salary would be ?2,500, and the respected Boston lawyer, Francis Dana, was appointed as his official secretary. Henry Laurens wrote to apologize for the shoddy treatment Adams had endured from Congress. He accepted with even less discussion with Abigail than in 1777. Nine-year-old Charles would accompany him along with a reluctant Johnny. John Thaxter filled out the new staff as Adams' private secretary. The would-be peacemaker had no illusions that his task would be easy or quick. Leaving home again after three months was hard, but it was even harder on the disconsolate but resigned Abigail.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Chapter 4, "Appointment to France," deals first with the bleak days when a reduced Congress, forced to flee Philadelphia for Baltimore, appointed Adams to the mission to France that it hoped would rescue the failing revolution. Next comes the adventurous Atlantic crossing, accompanied by a useful map of the voyage. Adams later recalled it fondly as the highpoint of his life. After offering brief entries in Adams' journal describing the road to Paris, the text examines the increasing frustration of the situation for which Adams felt ill prepared. Finally, Adams arrived briefly home, where he triumphantly drafted a constitution for his native state and then packed off to France again to negotiate with Britain to restore peace and commerce. These trips set Adams on the way to becoming the most-traveled of any American leader of his day. Much space is given to the heartrending separation of John and Abigail and the sad disintegration of relations between Adams and Franklin. Readers are introduced innocuously to the latter's grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, a schoolboy in Paris, whom we will often encounter later as a journalistic gadfly tormenting the Washington and Adams administrations.

Part 2, Chapter 5

Part 2, Chapter 5 Summary

The voyage of the Sensible was fraught with danger. Storms overworked the pumps and forced her to beach on the northwestern shore of Spain. Too impatient to await repairs, Adams struck out on a quixotic 1,000-mile overland trek, hoping to reach Paris in under a month. Much of the journey passed in steep mountainous regions on foot. Adams was appalled by the squalor of Spanish village life. Illness in the party soon convinced him he had erred, but he was buoyed by the warm reception he received as an American, although Madrid refused to recognize the colonies' independence, despite diligent efforts by envoy John Jay. The party crossed the frontier into France in mid-January 1780 and reached the capital on February 9, travel-worn but in tolerable health.

Adams enrolled his sons in a boarding school at Passy, paid a call on Franklin and then was presented to the French diplomats with whom he would be dealing, most importantly the Foreign Minister, the Comte de Vergennes, who had championed support for the American war. Vergennes took a personal and professional dislike to Adams, fearing his integrity and diplomatic naivety, and preferred to deal with the obliging and worldly Franklin. Adams was offended to be told not to reveal his mission publicly until the returning ambassador could submit a report. Finding himself again at loose ends in Europe throughout the spring and summer, Adams wrote letters, reports and newspaper articles, becoming - with Vergennes' sanction - an office of information and propaganda, gathering information and publishing in both the French and British press. Adams overwhelmed Congress with multiple letters daily, but he received no response. He kept track of his sons' progress at school and walked around central Paris with them, visiting bookstores and helping them cultivate their tastes without yielding to temptations. Adams viewed his mission of studying politics and war as the means for allowing his sons to study mathematics and philosophy, in order that their children might be free to study the finer arts. Urbanity without ostentation was ideal. Adams still found it impossible to profess his love for Abigail in frequent letters home.

Peace was Adams' dearest wish, and he understood the delicacy of dealing with the French. He worked with Vergennes and Franklin until Vergennes used Congress' devaluation of the dollar as a pretext for getting rid of him. Looking for an opportunity to broaden discussions, Adams stated that sending a superior naval force to bottle up the British fleet in America was "the best policy" for France. On July 29, Vergennes announced he would deal henceforth only with Franklin. Adams' letters were turned over to Franklin, who was expected to lay the whole matter before Congress. Minister La Luzerne in Philadelphia was instructed to ask for Adams' recall. On August 9, Franklin sent home a devastating indictment of Adams, discussing his bold diplomatic mistakes towards the crown.

By the time Franklin's letter was sent, Adams had moved to Holland to seek financial aid from the Dutch Republic, working as a private citizen. Congress had debated including

such a mission in Adams' charge but instead assigned negotiating a $10 million loan to Henry Laurens, who had not yet arrived. Adams saw a natural affinity between America and the indomitable little republic, born of war and prospering through the ingenuity and industry of its people. Predominantly Protestant and religiously tolerant, Holland was nearly sacred ground to New Englanders as the place that gave the Pilgrims refuge before they embarked for America. Holland's Golden Age was over. Its maritime power had faded, but the legacy of Renaissance arts, letters and political philosophy lived on. Amsterdam prospered as the commercial center of Europe.

Teeming with foreigners, Amsterdam's open-minded, speculative atmosphere was an ideal match for Adams' temperament. He walked the city to gain his bearings and meet people. He began work optimistic about the bankers. His only concern was the late-summer pestilence, "Amsterdam fever," which struck visitors annually. On September 16, Adams learned Congress had authorized him to work officially, pending Laurens' arrival. Adams enrolled his sons in the renowned Latin School and set about cultivating friends in journalistic and financial circles. He studied Dutch ways and temperament and struggled to learn the language and to master the complexities of the Dutch system of government. Word came that Laurens had been taken prisoner, and Britain was threatening war with the Dutch over a secret treaty the envoy was carrying. At The Hague, the government lacked real executive power and stuck to the pro-British status quo. Adams was shunned.

With worsening war news, hopes for obtaining Dutch money vaporized, and Adams' mood and health matched the North Sea winter. At year's end, as Britain launched an undeclared war of terrorism on Dutch shipping, Adams was designated minister plenipotentiary and began traveling among the principal cities, looking for the right time to announce his new powers formally. He moved to the "Hftel des Ytats-Unis d'Amyrique." When Vergennes complained to Philadelphia about Adams becoming an embarrassment in the Netherlands and lobbied to have him excluded from any say in the settlement with Britain, Adams ran out of patience. He went to Leyden and on April 19, 1781, completed and signed a sixteen-page memorial to the Dutch government, appealing for a "natural alliance" between the two republics. He pointed to the Dutch legacy in America and the mutual interests in commerce. Knowing that by this act of "militia diplomacy," he was breaking convention and setting himself up for additional ridicule and enmity, Adams visited the French ambassador to The Hague to lay out his plan and refused to be dissuaded. He presented the memorial and gave newspapers the full text. It quickly appeared across Europe, and Adams began a long wait.

Abigail endured two winters without her husband, and their correspondence was sporadic. She bore up for the welfare and happiness of their country, delighting him with every letter. It is unknown how many of his letters were "lost to Neptune," but only four made it through in six months. They were all matter-of-fact. He was silent on the dogged struggle that was yielding little success. His sole joy appears to have been John Quincy, who was excelling at the university. Adams offered him guidance on what he should be reading. Clearly, Adams was preparing the boy to serve his country one day.

Vergennes continued pressing to oust Adams. Franklin's letter had ignited a sharp debate in Congress. On June 15, 1781, Congress revoked Adams' powers but did not recall him. He would be one of five commissioners, but Franklin remained the only one available to work in Paris, precisely as Vergennes desired. France was to have the final say on their work, also as Vergennes desired. Madison moved that Adams' commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Britain be revoked. Abigail learned of the "blackening" of her husband's character in Philadelphia and dispatched a furious letter to Lovell. "When he is wounded," she declared, "I bleed."

Dana was dispatched to St. Petersburg to seek Russian recognition of the United States. Speaking little French, he asked the fluent fourteen-year-old John Quincy to accompany him as secretary. A homesick eleven-year-old Charles returned to his mother. On August 24, Adams received a packet of letters from Congress and, struggling to maintain a "good front" towards the new arrangements, fell ill with a "nervous fever"(possibly malaria or typhus). It lasted six weeks, and for a while, Adams lay near death. He looked forward to Jefferson's arrival, but he heard nothing. Adams asked Congress to recall him, knowing his request would be ignored. As his strength returned (although symptoms bothered him for a year and a half), Adams yearned for Abigail.

In November "glorious news" arrived of the British surrender at Yorktown. Adams recalled predicting to Vergennes that a French fleet would prove crucial to victory, and this had been borne out. Yorktown did not mark the end of the war, but it would prove a breakthrough in negotiating trade with the Dutch, who did not want to land on the losing side. The French envoy backed Adams' "demanding" a categorical answer to his April memorial, and Adams pressed his case with the Dutch people, speaking in eighteen cities. From Philadelphia, Foreign Secretary Livingston infuriated Adams by demanding he explain his imprudent memorial. Adams provided a vigorous defense. He had done precisely what was required, and it would become the catalyst for change across Europe. On February 26, 1782, the influential Friesians moved that Holland receive Adams as minister, and he purchased a large house to serve as the U.S. embassy.

On March 20, 1782, a government turnover in London put pro-Americans in power, and they sounded out Franklin on prospects for negotiations. On March 28, Holland officially recognized U.S. independence, and the other provinces followed suit. A fully vindicated Adams was received by Prince William V at The Hague on April 22 and heard himself roundly praised by the Spanish ambassador. He became the toast of the Dutch Republic, and in May, he raised the flag over the first U.S. embassy anywhere in the world. Only in June did he achieve a loan of $2 million, nowhere near the $10 million that Laurens was instructed to secure. Although untrained in diplomacy and unsuited for it by temperament, Adams had succeeded brilliantly. He was thankful for the stubbornness God gave him.

Jay, fresh from his post in Spain, urgently summoned Adams to Paris in September. British emissary Richard Oswald had been authorized to talk peace. Adams was in no hurry, but after signing a treaty of commerce with the Dutch, the "troublesome business" could no longer be put off. By the time he arrived in Paris on October 27, much of the

work had been completed. Adams and Jay found themselves like-minded on most matters. Ten years younger than Adams, Jay was a wealthy, argumentative and somewhat haughty New York lawyer and politician. They had gotten along well while serving together in Congress, even though they generally differed on issues. With little liking for the Bourbons, Jay ignored Congress' instructions to be guided by France. This policy also infuriated Adams, who wrote to Livingston that the U.S. should be grateful to its allies but think for itself. If Congress would not relent, he would resign his commission.

Still rankling over Franklin's character assassination, Adams avoided the "old conjurer" as much as possible, but he vowed to work decently and impartially with him. Franklin gallantly agreed to join the common cause with Adams and Jay in resisting French opinion, knowing that he would have to answer to Vergennes. Formal sessions began on October 30. London dispatched Henry Strachey to stiffen Oswald's resolve. The British envoys were no match for the Americans in discussing acknowledgement of independence, setting U.S. boundaries, the right of navigation on the Mississippi, the debts and interests of American Loyalists and American fishing rights off the Grand Banks. Britain swiftly ceded authority over everything east of the Mississippi, thereby doubling the new nation's size. Franklin and Jay wanted to balance private debts to British merchants with U.S. property destroyed or confiscated during the war, while Adams saw a moral duty for legal debts to be honored in good faith. While Strachey carried the proposed articles to London for approval, Adams reluctantly visited Vergennes, who was surprisingly friendly and complementary. He kept his head, however, when Vergennes pressed for inside information on the negotiations, which his government opposed.

Adams felt that the final days of negotiations were his finest. Strachey returned with only two items unresolved: recompense for the Loyalists and the American fishing rights. The Americans stood united against special treatment for Loyalists. They would have to deal with the individual states. Laurens appeared, still showing signs of his treatment in the Tower of London. In arguments over fishing "rights" versus fishing "liberty," Adams cited precedents from earlier treaties. Article III split the difference, using both terms. Adams gave Jay the most credit for the successful negotiations, and the treaty was signed in preliminary form on November 30, 1782.

The separate peace violated the French-American alliance and the express instructions of a Congress that Adams felt had infamously "prostituted" its honor. Franklin had to break the news to Vergennes, apologetically and with suggestions that the final treaty might turn out differently. Cleverly, Franklin suggested that the British would feel victorious only if they separated the French and the Americans, and then he boldly - and successfully - requested a six million-livre loan. Adams fell into a black mood until the final Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783. He felt forgotten by Congress. Franklin continued degrading him in letters to Livingston, saying that he was honest and wise but "absolutely out of his senses." Adams signed first for the Americans. He was exhausted and determined never again to be separated from Abigail for such a length of time. That could mean either that he would return to her or that she would come to him.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter 5, "Unalterably Determined," describes Adams' second voyage to Europe, his ill-conceived trek across Spain, the ultimately successful Dutch mission and the Treaty of Paris. The unifying theme is found in the chapter's twin epigrams, which both emphasize Adams' obstinacy and stubbornness. It begins with his insistence that his party strike out overland for Paris when their ship took on water off the coast of Spain. It continues in dealing with the obstinate Franklin, who had the ear of the French court and government. Frustrated by Congress, Adams struck off as a private citizen to Holland to obtain badly needed bank loans. He defied diplomatic tradition by announcing his mission before being invited to do so and working doggedly against British pressure and Dutch inertia. The American victory at Yorktown turned Dutch opinion, and Adams' refusal to give up paid off in loans and the establishment of the first U.S. embassy in the world. He overlooked offenses by Franklin and Congress to deal with the British and generate would be called the greatest victory in the annals of American diplomacy, the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

Part 2, Chapter 6

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary

Abigail was terrified by the sea and begged John to come home. She was free to travel, however, because her esteemed father died in September, and his entreaties had kept her from going to Europe earlier. Her eldest son was serving in Europe. Charles and Thomas were boarding with the Shaws, and Nabby's life was primed to move on.

Royall Tyler, a young lawyer, was showing interest in Nabby, but there were rumors about "dissipation" in his past. Adams thought her too young for marriage and disliked Tyler's "courting" her mother. The romance was suspended, but Abigail wanted her husband home to investigate further. When she learned he was appointed ambassador to the British Court, she begged him to refuse, certain that she would be an awkward figure in London. He pressed her to sail, and when he revealed that he had suffered another serious illness, she was convinced but still greatly apprehensive. John's letter reconsidering the situation and offering to return home to her did not arrive before she sailed. An uncle, Dr. Cotton Tufts, was put in charge of the family's financial affairs, and the farm was leased to one of her father's former slaves, Phoebe Abdee. Abigail felt Phoebe would better care for it than an outsider.

Mother and daughter bade tearful farewells to neighbors on June 18, 1784, and left for Boston. There Abigail first met Jefferson, himself preparing to sail to Europe with daughter Martha and a mulatto slave, James Hemings, within the month. Jefferson was touring New England to get a feeling for that unknown region before joining Franklin and Adams in Paris. Abigail stuck by her plans rather than join him on the voyage, and on June 20, she boarded the Active and was quickly borne to sea at age thirty-nine. She found the ship filthy and cramped and the food inedible. Like her husband, she took direction of cabin and kitchen and learned the names of the masts and sails so well that the captain feared she would take over the helm as well. Sight of the sea filled her with reverence.

The ship's passengers were deposited, drenched, on the shore of England on July 20, after a rocky pilot boat ride through rough waters. A quick post chaise ride brought them through robber-infested territory to safety in London, a city Abigail found at first view monstrous but more pleasant than she had anticipated. She wrote John at The Hague of her arrival, and he sent John Quincy to her while he finished his business. John Quincy was unrecognizable to his mother and sister, taller than his father but resembling him greatly. The two siblings got reacquainted, and Nabby was touched beyond words by reuniting with her father when he arrived August 7.

The family enjoyed the French countryside as it drove swiftly to Paris, from which Adams had been absent for a year. After a few days of sightseeing, they settled into a large house at Auteuil, on the city's outskirts. Jefferson and his daughter had already arrived, and Adams rejoiced at the prospect of Jefferson succeeding Franklin as

minister to France, even while learning that there was stiff opposition in Congress to his own appointment to London.

The Auteuil house was in decay and in need of furniture and servants, but its romantic garden was delightful. Abigail delighted in the late summer weather and put the household in order, despite the shock of initial encounters with French servants, who refused to oblige outside their specific job descriptions. The $9,000 salary allotted by Congress forced them to scrimp in a society where extravagance was expected. Abigail found Paris splendid, but stinking and filthy. Licensed prostitution she found vile. A Catholic orphanage she found clean and pleasing, but the fact that 6,000 abandoned children passed through its doors a year and one in three died every winter proved the nation's debauchery. Abigail became a devotee of French theater, and as her outlook changed, she was charmed by French women's deportment, eloquence and attitude. Their exquisite fashion fascinated her, but it was beyond her means to adopt. She greatly liked the amiable, well-born but unpretentious (and English-speaking) young wife of the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette made his palatial home a center of hospitality for the Americans.

From home came comforting news that all was well with Charles and Thomas. John's aged mother was well, and the house was well kept. Letters took three months to cross the Atlantic. With her sister Mary Cranch, Abigail shared her innermost feelings, while with Elizabeth she reverted to the pious phrases of the parsonage in which they were raised. Nabby was too ashamed to describe French ladies to her aunt, and she was sometimes glad she could not understand their language.

France brought the Adamses together as they had long dreamed. Both felt fortunate to have a new friend in Jefferson. In nature and outlook, they were very different from him, but none of them would ever in the future think of Paris without remembering the sweetness of their friendship there. Jefferson dined at Auteuil often and put his rented house at John Quincy's disposal as a private refuge when in the city. Adams rejected suggestions that Jefferson was anything less than a genius and a proven friend. Abigail found him charming, mannered, well read and attentive. She knew of the family tragedies that had befallen him, and she commiserated. Adams was so pleased to be surrounded by his family and working with Jefferson that even Franklin could not provoke him.

Jefferson had lost two children and his beloved wife Martha, a blow that left him insensible with grief, withdrawn and shattered at age thirty-nine. He applied himself to establishing a sound republican government for Virginia and tending to his plantation, Monticello. In 1779, he was selected as Virginia's wartime governor, the low point in his public career. He was on the verge of retiring after two terms when the British crashed into Virginia, determined to capture him and the legislature. Warned by a brave horseman, Jefferson packed his family off and calmly gathered papers before fleeing minutes ahead of the cavalry. This realistic action cost him his reputation, as political enemies charged him with abandoning his duties.

An inquiry recommended no charges, and he was cleared of blame. Still, he was wounded by the ordeal. Adams in Europe heard rumors that Jefferson had been captured and was dismayed. While in hiding, Jefferson wrote his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. He declined Congress' first request that he join the peace commissioners, refusing to leave his family and books. Martha's death changed his life, and he accepted the second request after a six-month stint in Congress. Fellow Virginian and friend James Madison warned Jefferson about Adams' reputation in France as he set sail.

Both Adamses were concerned by Jefferson's frequent illnesses in Paris. Whenever he felt fit, Jefferson was an irrepressible shopper, although he was deeply in financial arrears. After enlarging his rented Paris house and buying extravagant furniture, he had to ask Adams to arrange a loan for him from Dutch bankers. In theory, Jefferson abhorred cities and debt, but he relocated to more expensive quarters in the heart of Paris in order to enjoy pleasures he had not known in Virginia. Bookstores were a great temptation, and he frequented them daily, eventually buying over 2,000 volumes. Jefferson never attained Adams' degree of fluency in French and was more judgmental about the influence of women on the decadent government. He enrolled daughter Pasty in a convent school to keep her safe. Learning that his infant daughter Lucy had died in Virginia, Jefferson retreated into silence, and the Adamses mourned with him.

The old revolutionary trio worked steadily but unsuccessfully to remove commercial barriers and to find markets for American surpluses. Only one treaty was reached, with Prussia. The British remained maddeningly stubborn until winter, when they suggested a resident American minister would be welcome. Adams stressed the need for such representation in London in letters to Congress, and he wanted the assignment. Abigail felt it was his "destiny." Adams was the picture of health, enjoying the routine of daily family life. John Quincy was studying again, preparing to enter Harvard. He was a mature seventeen-year-old, fluent in French, well read in English and Roman history and experienced in European matters. Father helped son with his weak subjects, Greek and mathematics. Nabby found Auteuil less sociable than desired and was still in a quandary over Tyler. The four Adamses and Jefferson attended a grand *Te Deum* offered for the birth of a royal son in 1785. Abigail found herself enjoying being at the center of things.

On April 26, 1785, Jefferson delivered the letter appointing Adams minister to the Court of St. James. He was to appear in London by June 4. The two diplomats were sad their collaboration was over. Abigail regretted losing her garden and Jefferson's company. Their life in Paris had been content, but Adams took his new assignment seriously. Establishing friendly relations with Britain would benefit both nations. He sought advice on matters of protocol from the young Lord Carmathen. Adams and Franklin were destined never to see one another again. John Quincy left for America, while John, Abigail and Nabby departed Auteuil on May 20, 1785 in a mood of melancholy. In the carriage, John read aloud from Jefferson's freshly printed book. They noted that the passages on slavery were "worth diamonds." Jefferson decried the institution as an extreme depravity that corrupts future generations and invites God's just retribution on the country. He went on, however, to muse about the physical and mental inferiority of

blacks to whites. How the Adamses reacted to this thesis is unknown. Jefferson, for his part, found himself left "in the dumps" without the Adamses.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Analysis

Chapter 6, "Abigail in Paris," pictures the eight months that Abigail and Nabby spent in France with John and John Quincy. Most notable is the satisfaction the family felt in being together. Abigail grew tremendously during the period, having never traveled more than fifty miles from her birthplace before. The author traces her emergence from her shell through letters home to her sister Mary. Readers see John Quincy on the cusp of adulthood, realizing brilliantly the hopes his parents placed in him. Much more will be seen of him in later chapters. Nabby is intriguing, getting reacquainted with her brother and finding her place in the larger world. Given the tragedies she will face in the pages ahead, this chapter is touching.

Knowing that relations with the Adamses will break down - and beyond that, be restored in old age - makes it essential to savor Jefferson's introduction in this chapter as well. Readers are introduced to him at a tragic point in Jefferson's life, as a widower with three children, unable to constrain his passion for purchasing things and judgmental of pre-Revolutionary France. Most of all, readers see him content to live closely and amiably with a family he thoroughly enjoyed. Note the role that James Madison began to play in the Adams-Jefferson relationship. Madison disliked Adams before ever meeting him. He will come to poison his fellow Virginian's mind by convincing Jefferson to become a more astute politician than he was at heart. As Chapter 6 ends, an era is ending.

Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

King George III had much in common with John Adams. Both were devotees of farming, books and talking. His Majesty was two years older than Adams, taller, obstinate, affectionate and devoted to his wife and fifteen children. He was deeply religious and sincerely patriotic. With Franklin's retirement, Adams was America's most experienced diplomat, and he looked upon the London assignment as the pinnacle of his career. In London, Adams learned he would be expected to deliver a brief, complimentary speech to the King on June 1. He rehearsed at length and arrived nervous at St. James' Palace, recalling that "The Presence" he would reverence had once intended to hang him. Adams' voice quaked as he spoke of the new epoch beginning and of his good fortune to help establish the old good nature and humor between the two nations. The monarch appeared moved and responded kindly to the U.S. and its first emissary. He had, indeed, opposed the separation, but now he extended friendship. Adams retreated, thinking all had gone splendidly, but the London press soon dissuaded him. Animosity still burned.

The Adamses settled into noisy Piccadilly, and Abigail oversaw domestic arrangements, happy to be again in an English-speaking land. She consoled herself in the local theater. She primped for her first attendance at the Queen's Circle, a wearying formal four-hour ordeal. She found the king personable, but his wife and daughter were plain and shallow. Within weeks, the family relocated to a rented house on quiet, tree lined Grosvenor Square. It was an ideal location for the legation. Nabby preferred her new situation to Auteuil, but her parents thought sooty, damp, smelly, tumultuous, crime-ridden London was a step down. The Thames bristled with ships, but none were American. Disappointingly, the great writers and artists were all dead, but theater (particularly Shakespeare), music and science survived.

The Adamses were pleased to be back in a Protestant country and made friends with several clergymen. They found the British cool towards them and prone to impolite staring, a sharp departure from Paris. Fellow Americans introduced them to society. The painter Mather Brown created portraits of all three Adamses. Congress cut Adams' salary by a fifth, to ?2,000, hardly adequate even for their "very plain" lifestyle, much less enough to allow them to offer the lavish entertainment expected of ambassadors. Adams and his country continued to be attacked in newspapers, producing in Abigail a lifelong dislike for the press. It was assumed, and often stated, that America would "of course" return some day to the British fold. American Loyalists in London spread venom, and Adams avoided them, except for his old friend Jonathan Sewall, whom he hunted down for a meeting. Their two-hour reunion was cordial, but neither had changed his mind. Sewall had withdrawn from life, bitter and resentful, and refused an invitation to the Adams' home for dinner. Sewall thought Adams lacked the social graces needed for his present role, while Adams considered Sewall a broken casualty of the war.

Adams faced seemingly insoluble problems left over from the Treaty of Paris: debts, treatment of Loyalists, confiscated property and the continuing British troop presence in America. The U.S. economy was in shambles, in desperate need of trade, and the British were loath to help. Ending the exclusion of American vessels from all British ports on both sides of the Atlantic became Adams' first priority. He was unable to get answers from either the British or U.S. foreign offices to many insistent letters. He was forced to agree with the logic of the British commercial positions and with their linkage of violations of the treaty with his countrymen's amoral failure to make good on debts. Britons found Adams napve. Jefferson too was finding progress on commercial agreements with France exasperating. Adams and Jefferson had no one but each other to write to in a spirit of trust.

Increasingly, the correspondence between Adams and Jefferson dealt with concerns over American shipping in the Mediterranean and demands for tribute payments by the Barbary States of North Africa (Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis and Morocco). Britain and France regularly accepted large payments to the "Barbary pirates" as a cost of doing business in the region. In 1776, American ships lost the protection of the British flag. In July 1785, two U.S. ships were seized, and their crews forced into slave labor. Congress was willing to put up $80,000, but it put no cash at its ambassadors' disposal. The Dutch would extend no further loans. In February 1786, Adams met, spur-of-the-moment, with the envoy of the Sultan of Tripoli in London, Abdrahaman, and over pipes and coffee they got along well. Two days later, when the envoy told Adams that time was critical to avoid a horrible war between Christians and Muslims, Adams summoned Jefferson to London. Abdrahaman named Tripoli's non-negotiable cash-on-delivery price: 30,000 guineas, plus ?3,000 for himself. The U.S. could expect the other Barbary States to cost 200,000 to 300,000 guineas. They reported this to Congress.

Jefferson thought George III "ungracious" in meeting him and Adams, an incident that later historiography inaccurately turned into an outright snub. The newspapers and Adams would have played this up, had it been true. Jefferson was sensitive to British hauteur, and perhaps the huge sums he owed English creditors colored his impressions. The two diplomats allowed themselves a "little journey into the country," a six-day spring carriage ride to the most outstanding English gardens. Both were farmers at heart, and both kept occasional notes on the journey, Jefferson emphasizing practical matters and Adams emphasizing the historical. It was the closest time they ever spent in each other's company, but sadly neither recorded a word about the other, having declared a holiday from "pen work." Back in London, April 9, Jefferson resumed his shopping spree. Adams commissioned Jefferson's first portrait, by Mather Brown, showing him a perfect European dandy. Brown made copies of this and his earlier rendition of Adams for the friends to exchange. With little diplomatic progress to report, Jefferson returned to Paris on April 26, proclaiming in a letter to Madison how he loved Adams, for all his napve faults.

The Adamses admired Col. William Stephens Smith of New York, the new secretary of the American legation, both for his military past and his honorable, promising present. Smith and Nabby were mutually attracted, but she had to work through her feelings for Tyler before the new couple could move forward. Abigail confided to her sister Mary that

she was finding life increasingly empty and pointless, with rheumatism and headaches plaguing her. She longed for home, worried about their drunken, errant brother William and what would become of her own children as they grew to adulthood. In May 1786, Adams rushed to Amsterdam to secure another loan. Upon his return in June, Nabby and Smith were married.

John Quincy had been denied admission to Harvard. Reverend Shaw helped him get his Greek up to snuff. Elizabeth Shaw advised them that their oldest son was too decisive and tenacious, and Abigail warned him about allowing arrogance to vitiate all the advantages he had enjoyed. At fifteen, the more outgoing Charles also entered Harvard. He, however, was advised to apply himself more strenuously to his books.

Adams was frustrated by his inability to get Americans to make good on their debts, which thwarted his efforts to gain the goals they wanted and could lead to another disastrous war. Jefferson's letters took up Adams' old calls for building a navy, seeing fighting the Barbary Pirates more honorable than paying tribute. Lacking a fleet, however, he favored paying the bribes. Eventually, in January 1787, the U.S. signed a pact with Morocco and paid up.

During the summer, the Adamses and Smiths visited the British village of Braintree, but they found it disappointing. In May 1786, Adams hurried to The Hague to ratify the treaty with Prussia, taking Abigail for a five-week tour of the country. She sent home colorful letters describing the flat landscape, plain but beautiful faces, orderliness and prosperity. The spirit of liberty was alive in Holland, which would surely prove Europe's first bearing of fruit of the American Revolution.

The British remained galling, but the Adamses were healthy and looked forward to becoming grandparents in April. Contact with Jefferson declined after Jefferson injured his hand in a fall. In a last letter, he asked Abigail to take his eight-year-old daughter Polly under her wing when she arrived in London from America. He said nothing about his rather open tryst with the married Mary Cosway, whom he had been trying to impress when he injured himself. He debated with Abigail over Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts. He sided hyperbolically with the rebels, and she called for vigor in suppressing the deluded multitude. She was not pleased by his lighthearted advocacy of "a little rebellion now and then," and stopped corresponding with him. Adams was not disturbed over Shay's Rebellion, being certain the government would prevail.

The Adams' first grandchild, William Steuben Smith, arrived on April 2, 1787, and on June 26, the Adamses welcomed feisty Polly Jefferson and fourteen-year-old slave Sally Hemings, who accompanied her. Polly had been deceived into boarding ship and was angry and suspicious of adults. Jefferson, too busy to come himself (a lame excuse, the Adamses both thought), sent a valet to fetch Polly, and Abigail was distraught thinking about the girl's new life in alien France with a father she did not remember. They bonded in the few days Polly spent in London and wept when parted. Polly became the one enduring bond Abigail would feel towards Jefferson.

Adams labored in late 1786 to produce a book he knew would further reduce his popularity. Since 1776, he felt compelled to build government up as thoroughly as Paine had torn it down. Shay's Rebellion had pointed out the need for a stronger central government, and Adams plunged into piles of books to expand on his earlier *Thoughts on Government.* Abigail worried that people would think he favored setting up a king. The first installment of *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* appeared in January. Adams promptly sent copies to Jefferson and home. It was thorough, high-minded and timely, calling for the checks and balances he had incorporated in the Massachusetts constitution. He emphasized a strong executive as a balance to corrupt legislation.

The English constitution had nearly achieved an ideal balance and should be imitated after purging hereditary positions. Adams had experienced pure democracy in New England town meetings and knew they were ineffectual. The balance, counterpoise and equilibrium of bicameral legislature were essential. All but two states had adopted this system, and the Confederation Congress had proved the shortcomings of a unicameral body. He consulted fifty sources of history and literature, reviewing republican forms, ancient and modern. He saw inequalities within society as inevitable. Humans were capable of both great good and evil, and America would need, like other societies, to draw upon a natural aristocracy - people of capacity for wealth and service who could either contribute to society or bring it danger. If enlisted to form a Senate, they and the executive could prevent anarchy.

Knowing there was no more to be achieved in London, Adams asked to be recalled. The *Defence* can be seen as his determination to be reintroduced to America and to enter the debate over the Constitution. Jefferson praised his book warmly. Even Madison, who seldom had anything complementary to say about Adams, admired Adams' "hazardous" and "hasty" enterprise as meritorious, a "powerful engine in forming public opinion." Others began sowing discord, claiming Adams had "secret designs" in the work for overturning American government.

In late-summer 1787, Philadelphia was completing work on a constitution, while Paris was hissing the monarchy in the streets. Jefferson was surprised and excited. In September, Adams was satisfied with the signed U.S. Constitution, although he would have favored a more powerful presidency and a bill of rights. Jefferson wrote him that there were "things" in the document that "stagger all my dispositions to subscribe to it." Adams saw where they differed: "You are afraid of the one, I, the few." On December 6, Adams wrote Jefferson to report he had been recalled.

Packing the Adamses' European acquisitions was a mighty task. The Vassal-Bordland place in Brainerd, purchased on Adams' behalf, would better serve the family's needs than the old farmhouse. Before leaving, they learned that John Quincy had graduated Harvard and was unhappily studying law. Abigail's brother William had died. An audience of leave with George III was marked by gracious appreciation of Adams' efforts. At the last moment, Adams had to rush across the wintry North Sea to take formal leave of his ambassadorial post there and seek another loan to repay earlier Dutch loans. Jefferson met him in Amsterdam, marking the last time they would ever

collaborate in a public matter. Jefferson sent affectionate adieus to Abigail, and she thanked her "much esteemed friend" for his kindness to her family.

The Adamses set off for Portsmouth on March 30, 1788. The Smiths would follow shortly, bound for New York, where Smith hoped to enter federal service. The *Whitehall Evening Post* noted the departure of a man "much respected and esteemed in this country." The Adamses looked forward to retirement, but Nabby wrote John Quincy that their father was too great a man to vanish from the public view. He would surely be elected vice president and would not, at any rate, be happy in private life. Adams was fifty-two and had lived overseas for ten years. He had traveled over 29,000 miles in the service of America, far more than anyone else of his day, and he never refused any duty. The Dutch loans truly saved his country, coming as a result of a one-man diplomatic campaign. The Paris Treaty would stand the test of time. Adams had done his best in London. No one could fault him for a false step, and no one could have done better. The Europe he had known was soon to be torn apart, while the American experiment would enter a new phase under the Constitution. Abigail speculated they were going from frying pan into the fire.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

Chapter 7, "London," brings to a conclusion Part 2 of *John Adams.* Readers see Adams in an impossible position as the first U.S. ambassador to England. Britain was convinced the American experiment would fail and had no incentive to make good on the disputed parts of the Treaty of Paris. The Adams family clearly enjoyed being together, but there was little drama. Nabby married and gave John and Abigail a grandchild. Their relations with Jefferson were stronger and more intimate than ever. McCullough notes but underplays Sally Hemings (with whom political enemies would charge Jefferson of fathering illegitimate children), Polly Jefferson (whose death would bring about Abigail's brief reconciliation with her father) and the radically different ways in which Adams and Jefferson viewed the newly ratified Constitution. Part 3 will see them torn apart by politics, largely through the efforts of James Madison, with whom readers have seen Jefferson increasingly involved. Note Madison's approval of the *Defence,* with his remark that scholars would find nothing new in it. Adams' intent was not to be novel, but to be useful. Enemies were already branding Adams a monarchist, even before he could leap into the fire.

Part 3, Chapter 8

Part 3, Chapter 8 Summary

Boston prepared a homecoming the Adamses could not have imagined. After fifty-eight days at sea, they were thrilled to see the Boston lighthouse, from whence on land word went forth of their arrival. Governor Hancock dispatched his coach and a cavalry detachment. Cannonades, church bells and several thousand well-wishers awaited. After feeling so long unappreciated and forgotten, this was hard to assimilate, and they proceeded to Braintree quietly. Adams was particularly happy to see his grown sons again. The Vassall-Borland place was in disrepair and cramped by European standards. Workmen set about making improvements, and Adams plunged back into the farmer's life. Speculation about his political future was rampant. "Providentially" unemployed, he could be anything but president, since Washington was certain to take that office. Privately, Adams confided that anything short of the vice-presidency was beneath him. Politics was in the hands of young men whom Adams knew only by reputation. Two of these, Madison and Hamilton, questioned whether someone who had such trouble with Franklin could serve Washington willingly and loyally. In the winter, Nabby delivered another grandson, John Adams Smith, and Jefferson sent best wishes.

Under the Constitution, state electors cast ballots with two names. The person receiving the most votes became president, and the runner-up became vice president. Worried that Adams might garner enough votes to embarrass Washington, Hamilton worked through the winter to convince electors to withhold votes from him. In February 1879, Washington's name appeared on all sixty-nine ballots, while Adams was on only thirty-four, which he considered humiliating, knowing nothing of Hamilton's activities. Abigail would remain in Braintree until suitable housing could be found in New York. Cavalry escorted Adams out of town as cannons saluted and crowds cheered. He was met in Manhattan by a similar scene and escorted to Jay's palatial house on Broadway.

Much of what Adams had seen since returning from Europe confirmed the optimism of his youth about America's destiny to be a great empire. Shipping was reviving, and demand for farm products was rising. Trade groups were rallying. The Paris Peace Treaty had doubled the nation's geographical size, and the population too had doubled, despite the war. On the other hand, money was scarce, and the currency was chaotic. Wages were low, and travel was arduous. There was no army to speak of, and the Continental Navy had disappeared. The vast majority of Americans were farmers, living in a narrow band along the eastern seaboard. Everywhere else remained wilderness. Some 100,000 Indians inhabited the western half of the nation.

Nevertheless, caravans were regularly flowing westward, raising concerns over how the nation would hold together. In his *Defence,* Adams had recognized that no large-scale republics had ever succeeded. Aristotle and Plato would have been shocked at the present experiment. Furthermore, Americans did not yet conceive of themselves as single united people. States and individuals both saw the new Constitution as a threat to

their rights. Anti-Federalists followed Paine's dictum that "that government is best which governs least." Already as a young schoolmaster, Adams had foreseen the danger of disunity. The presence of 700,000 slaves was the most divisive threat. Only Massachusetts had banned the institution. North and South differed on their views, because fully 500,000 of the slaves lived in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. In Europe, Adams had been disturbed to hear that devotion to the public good was being supplanted in America by rampant avarice, and since coming home, he perceived a moral shift.

As at every stage of Adams' life, entering the vice-presidency brought doubts and anxiety. The Constitution made it clear that this was a largely ceremonial office, unsuited to his passion for debate, and he was inclined to "throw a little light on the subject." He was also concerned about the cost of living in New York. No salary had yet been established, and some people, mostly the already rich like Franklin and Washington, suggested the public service be undertaken gratis. Fearing this would result in aristocratic despotism, Adams had always advocated adequate compensation for officeholders. He knew Washington was entering office worried about the country expecting too much of him.

New Yorkers had purposefully built Federal Hall as a majestic building, in hopes their city would become the nation's permanent capital. The House of Representatives met on the ground floor, surrounded by spacious galleries from which visitors could observe the proceedings. The Senate chamber, one floor above, was stately but constructed for closed-door sessions. Adams was met at the doors on April 21, 1783. No swearing-in ceremony had been prescribed for the vice president, so he was simply escorted to the head of the chamber. His prepared remarks expressed joy at being once again among defenders of liberty, congratulated Americans on forming a Constitution and acknowledged the hand of God in placing Washington at the head of the new government. He admitted concern over the passive role he was to play in the chamber and pledged to behave with consideration and decorum. "The eyes of the world are upon you." Adams then raised questions of ceremony and etiquette for when the president came before Congress.

On Inauguration Day, Washington arrived amidst pomp. Vast crowds gathered before Federal Hall. Both houses had gathered in the Senate Chamber, and members rose when the president-elect entered. Adams briefly fumbled for words before inviting him to the balcony to take the oath. After repeating the prescribed words, Washington added, "So help me God" and kissed the Bible, thereby establishing the first presidential tradition. The throngs erupted. Washington returned indoors to deliver his inaugural address before a seated Congress. His hands trembled, and he spoke quietly and monotonously. Nevertheless, congressmen were entranced and tearful. Adams' thoughts on the day are unrecorded.

Nothing went well for Adams in the following weeks. Debate over how to address the president superceded all other business. William Maclay of Pennsylvania alone kept notes on the proceedings and chose to depict Adams as "the face of folly." Adams refused to be stilled, which only made Maclay more combative. Adams became the butt

of jokes, and doggerel was composed at his expense. Worse still, Washington distanced himself, further diminishing the importance of Adams' office. Finally, Adams conceded from the chair that he had lived too long abroad to gauge the temper of the people in initiating the overblown debate.

When Adams learned of Hamilton's plot to deny him votes in the election, Adams was sickened and felt miserably alone without Abigail. By mid-May, he secured a house and begged her to come and to send him his books. He offered no details about the "difficulties" he was facing, but he claimed he was surviving largely through prayer. Old friend Benjamin Rush wrote to caution Adams to be careful of statements that could be construed as monarchical. Adams responded that he was an "irreconcilable enemy to monarchy" and hoped posterity would not misrepresent him. Madison described the recent debates to Jefferson, concluding they were "proof" of Franklin's assessment. A flood of requests for government jobs distressed Adams, who consistently deferred to the president.

The "tender-hearted fool" Charles, who had been expelled from Harvard, accompanied his mother when Abigail arrived on June 24, 1789. Her presence relieved the misery of the do-nothing job. They moved into a delightful house, Richmond Hill, but it stretched the family budget when Congress set his salary lower than he had understood. They were pleased to be near Nabby and the grandchildren. Presidential levees were as grand as those in London but enjoyable, and the president treated Abigail well at them. Nevertheless, after the European capitals, Abigail found New York dull, and she feared speaking her mind openly about politics.

Adams presided over the Senate every day of the sweltering summer, as the Judiciary Act was debated and passed. Adams cast the deciding vote to preserve the president's sole right to remove cabinet members, and Lovell suggested he did so only because he was looking himself to attain that office. Adams asked how he could not, seeing he was always but one breath from the job. John Trumbull warned that Southerners naturally hated him as a New Englander commoner. They could not bear to be eclipsed by "merit only." Adams responded with pride of descending from four generations of public servants and deacons who never went bankrupt or incurred debts from England. He warned his son Thomas that before contemplating a career in politics, he should learn an honest trade or profession to sustain him.

Adams' contacts with Washington were limited to social events. He had no influence and was never asked his opinion. Washington's cabinet was geographically balanced, with New York's Hamilton serving as Secretary of the Treasury, Virginia's Jefferson as Secretary of State, Virginia's Edmund Randolph as Attorney General and Massachusetts' Henry Knox as Secretary of War. John Jay was named Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Revolutionaries all and the best minds of their generation, they were nevertheless different in temperament and political philosophy.

The French Revolution took America by surprise, as Congress debated where to locate the nation's permanent capital. The Bastille was stormed in July 1789, and mobs carried out random acts of violence. A new constitution was promulgated on September 19, and

Americans greeted the news with enthusiasm. Adams supported the Revolution's ideals and recognized its historic importance, but he could not believe a republic of atheists would survive. He predicted chaos, horror and tyranny. Jefferson, who left France before the bloodshed began, saw the revolution as the glorious dawn of a new day. En route to New York to take up his cabinet post, Jefferson paid a last visit to the ailing Franklin, assuring him he "deplored" the changes in Adams. Franklin died on April 17, 1790, and Adams feared history would be distorted to see the whole revolution contained in Franklin and Washington.

The *Gazette of the United States* published Jefferson's declaration of faith in reason and democracy, delivered in Virginia. Doubting Jefferson's premises, Adams warned again about entrusting the lambs to the wolf in a series of article appearing in the *Gazette* and later published as *Discourses on Davila.* Drawing from diverse sources, *Davila* stressed the perils of unbridled, unbalanced democracy and that a "passion for distinction" was natural in human beings. Adams ruminated on avarice, poverty, fame and honor. Jefferson and Adams did not discuss their diverging views, but Jefferson now found his old friend an embarrassment. As Secretary of State, he never sought Adams' counsel on foreign affairs, an area in which Adams' experience could have been invaluable. Adams, like Washington and others, dreaded that political parties would ruin republican government, because honest public servants would find their hands bound and their influence marginalized.

In May 1790, influenza struck Washington, and his doctor was all but certain he would die. Adams knew Washington's loss at that point would be disastrous. The epidemic also struck the Adamses' household, sparing only John. Madison and Jefferson were laid up. When the president recovered, a French diplomat advised his government that Jefferson was the heir apparent.

That summer, Congress addressed two issues: 1) a permanent location for the national capital and 2) whether the federal government should assume $25 million in wartime debts incurred by the states. "Assumption" was proposed by Hamilton, an immigrant from the West Indies at fifteen, who distinguished himself at King's College (Columbia), served as Washington's aide and married into the wealthy and influential Schuyler family. He was brilliant, charming and hard working, a flamboyant dresser, ambitious and intriguing. Although he had become the leading proponent of a strong central government, Hamilton remained on friendly terms with Madison, his collaborator on the *Federalist Papers.* Madison, then a formidable House leader, had a penetrating mind and shrewd political sense. Washington held both in high regard. Adams thought Madison overrated. Hamilton argued that restoring sound public credit was essential for the young country. The federal government ought to pay off all debt incurred in the common cause. Opponents, mostly Southerners, saw this as a dangerous, corrupting threat. Madison led the first successful fight to defeat assumption in April, but the issue refused to die.

At the same time, the "Residency" issue raged, with New York making a bid to make permanent the status quo. New Englanders agreed, but they were open to Philadelphia as well. Virginians promoted a site on the Potomac near Washington's Mount Vernon

home. The "Compromise of 1790," began when Jefferson suggested making "common cause" with Hamilton for the good of the union. Dining with Hamilton at Jefferson's home, Madison agreed not to continue "strenuous" opposition to assumption in exchange for support for a Potomac capital. A similar deal had been worked out among senators, and Adams cast the deciding vote to defeat a last-minute attempt to keep the capital in New York. The government would move to Philadelphia until the turn of the century. Maclay launched the first public criticism of the president as New Yorkers protested the whole arrangement.

Adams went ahead to Philadelphia to find housing. Abigail was sad to leave Richmond Hill, where Nabby was again expecting. They settled on Bush Hill, and Adams was happy to be back in the memory-rich city. Son Thomas moved in with his parents, and Charles visited periodically from New York. When John Quincy visited in February 1781, Abigail was glad to have all three sons together for the first time in years. John Quincy continued to be his parents' highest hope. He had broken off an engagement on his parents' advice and mellowed. Nabby's unemployed husband had gone off to England on some speculative venture. When Hamilton's bill to establish the Bank of the United States passed Congress handily, despite opposition from Jefferson and Madison, Abigail wanted to invest in government securities, but her husband continued to put faith in real estate, agreeing in theory with the Virginians that banks were risky.

The Adamses' correspondence no longer mentioned Jefferson, because neither had anything good to say about him. In the spring of 1791, Adams and Jefferson were caught up in a public controversy that put the first severe strain on their waning friendship. Jefferson endorsed Paine's pamphlet *The Rights of Man,* a furious response to Edmund Burke's book *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* The endorsement appeared prominently in the first American edition, causing a sensation. Jefferson denied his mention of "political heresies" was aimed at Adams, and he held that the publisher had been indiscreet in printing it. Adams was furious but silent. Soon Boston's *Columbian Centinel* began printing spirited letters attacking *The Rights of Man.* Jefferson and other assumed Adams was "Publicola," when in fact it was John Quincy, defending his father. He argued against establishing a single principle of authority for political orthodoxy. Eventually Jefferson sent a stiff apology to Adams, claiming to have used the word "heresy" only to enliven the writing. Friends should be able to differ without abandoning respect for each other's motives.

It ought to have been kept private. Jefferson failed to reveal that Madison knew who wrote the letters and that he did indeed consider Adams a political heretic (as he had admitted to Washington). Adams accepted the explanation and denied any affinity for monarchy. He was a victim of "tempestuous abuse" by people who either did not read his writings or willfully misrepresented them. He reminded Jefferson that they had never seriously discussed the nature of government, denied being "Publicola," was troubled by rising enmity among public men and was unwilling to sacrifice fifteen years of friendship over this matter. Henceforth, however, the public would view Adams and Jefferson as arch-rivals, symbols of emerging divisions. The men would not correspond again for years, and it would be more than two decades before they would take up the political "explanation with each other" that Adams desired.

The Adamses moved to more modest quarters in order to live within their means. Abigail spent a miserable winter on her sick bed, brooding about the brevity of life and certain that Southerners would cause trouble for her husband (and possibly Washington) in the coming election. She feared that a north-south split would occur within a decade. Adams was distressed over Abigail's ailments and resigned to his marginal role. He rarely intruded on Senate business, but was proud of sitting in the chair every day without fail. When her health recovered in mid-April, Abigail returned home. John followed after Congress adjourned, and both were refreshed by a summer in Quincy, as Braintree had been renamed.

Disheartened by party rancor and the sobriquet "American Caesar," Washington yearned to retire. He and Hamilton were frequently attacked on the pages of Philip Freneau's *National Gazette,* and the president asked Jefferson to intercede with the editor and remove him from his State Department post. Jefferson refused, citing freedom of the press. Even more aggravating for Washington was the feud between his two most gifted cabinet members. Hamilton distrusted the French and saw the British as good for the American economy, while Jefferson admired the French Revolution and hated Britain. They agreed on one thing only, that Washington must serve a second term if the union was to hold together. Jefferson, Madison, Freneau and their allies began calling themselves "Republicans," with the inference that Federalists, led by Hamilton, were monarchists. In the coming election, Hamilton would back Adams in order to defeat his New York nemesis, Aaron Burr, who was running for vice president as a Republican. In September, Hamilton warned Adams, who refused to become a party man, that the political climate in Philadelphia had grown dangerous and urged him to return, but Adams remained in Quincy, convinced the electorate would recognize his superior sacrifices for the country.

News from Paris was increasingly lurid. The Jacobins had imprisoned the king, and riotous mobs were demanding his head. The "September Massacres" were shocking. Back in London, Nabby wrote about shiploads of penniless refugees streaming in. She wondered what Jefferson thought about events. Jefferson, in fact, felt anti-Jacobin reports were "blasphemies." He deplored the loss of life, but he saw continuity of ideals with the American revolutionaries. The "liberty of the whole world" depended on this struggle.

When Washington agreed to a second term, Adams returned to Philadelphia. Washington was again the unanimous choice for president, and Adams finished far ahead of Clinton, Jefferson and Burr. Since Congress was in session for only six months a year, the Adamses decided Abigail should cease traveling, and they resumed regular correspondence after a nine-year hiatus. Separation was as stressful as ever. Brooding without her and longing for letters, Adams was content in a small, cheap rented room. Having failed to unseat Adams, the Republican press took aim on Washington, and Adams wondered how the thinner-skinned president would hold up against the "hell hounds." Jefferson and Hamilton concentrated on neutralizing each other. Jefferson remained on speaking terms with Adams, whom he knew to be too independent to ally with Hamilton. Adams was concerned that the theoretically apolitical Jefferson was growing adept at behind-the-scenes infighting and more fanatic than any

Jacobin in France. Both Adamses deplored events there. "Dragon's teeth have been sown in France," John wrote to Abigail, "and come up monsters." Old friends and acquaintances were falling victim.

After Washington's brief second inaugural, Congress adjourned for nine months, and Adams happily returned to his farm. Neither he nor the president commented on Louis XVI's beheading. Jefferson wrote anonymously that kings are like all other men and subject to punishment. Monarchy and aristocracy had to perish for the rights of the people to be firmly established. Britain and Spain declared war on France, beginning a twenty-two-year conflict. In April, the first Jacobin envoy, "Citizen Genkt," arrived in Philadelphia and set about propagandizing and recruiting American seamen to attack British shipping. Jefferson joined in the rapturous welcome for Genkt and encouraged him to rally the people against Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality. Secret pro-French societies verged on vigilantism. During the summer, the infamous "Reign of Terror" claimed 3,000 lives in Paris and was even bloodier in the provinces, eventually claiming 14,000 victims. In Philadelphia, the worst yellow fever epidemic ever claimed so many lives (over 5,000) that Congress fled the city.

The government returned after the first frost, and Adams resumed his solitary routine, writing to Abigail and the children, particularly the cash-strapped and aimless Charles. Adams declared the vice-presidency, "the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived." At least everyone knew he could do little good or harm and left him alone. Even Jefferson cooled towards Genkt, whom Adams regarded as a fool. Jefferson's quarrel with Hamilton was as bitter as ever, and on the last day of 1793, the Secretary of State resigned. Adams still admired his abilities but found his partisanship and notions so troubling that he wrote Abigail, "good riddance of bad ware." Adams realized that Jefferson would wither if he truly retired from politics, being "as ambitious as Oliver Cromwell" and "poisoned with ambition." Jefferson could deceive himself into believing anything. Refusing to let their friendship slip away, Adams sent Jefferson a book, accompanied by the first letter in two years.

They wrote intermittently for two years about the joys of rural life and agreed they had seen enough war for a lifetime. British naval operations, however, were driving the U.S. towards conflict. Adams revealed Washington's plan to send Chief Justice Jay to London to avert this. Only once did Adams and Jefferson broach philosophical matters, debating the latter's thesis that each new generation should be free to sweep the slate clean. Adams held that the social compact had to be honored because revolutions are too costly. He pointed to events in France, where reasoning had been lost. Jefferson claimed he had never loved politics and currently hated it. Only Madison and Polly knew that retirement had broken Jefferson's health, and he was investing lavishly to double the size of Monticello and redesign it along French lines.

In Philadelphia, Adams took long walks to relieve tedium. His teeth tormented him, and his hands had begun trembling. He was bald (revealed when he abandoned the fashion of wearing a wig) and overweight, and his eyes were weakening from excessive reading. Considered an old man by many, he wondered how much longer he could

continue in public life. When Thomas passed the Philadelphia bar, Adams took pride in having three lawyer sons. He placed greater emphasis on the Golden Rule and saw equality as the heart of Christianity. Nabby's family returned from England, apparently prospering. John Quincy had denounced Genkt in newspaper essays and was practicing law in Boston, still undecided about a public career. Adams felt his son's writings were decisive in securing Genkt's recall. Knowing he would face the guillotine in France, Genkt settled down as the son-in-law of New York Governor Clinton. Abigail perceived her husband had grown to accept life. Washington nominated John Quincy as minister to the Netherlands, and Adams presided at his Senate confirmation. The handsome young diplomat took his brother Thomas along as private secretary.

The country's attention was diverted by the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania, a protest against a federal excise tax on distilleries. Washington dispatched 12,000 volunteers to crush the uprising, with Hamilton as second in command. Shortly after the victory, Hamilton left the U.S. Treasury to resume his lucrative law practice, and Republicans rejoiced. Randolph, appointed Secretary of State to succeed Jefferson, became the lone survivor of the first cabinet when Knox also retired. Ominously, no news came from Jay in London. When the Jay Treaty reached the president in the spring of 1795, Washington invited Adams to dine alone before the Senate would take up its ratification. A storm of protest broke when it was learned Jay had conceded almost everything to the British, receiving only a promise to vacate U.S. territory by year's end.

Although disappointed, Washington thought the assurance of peace was enough, and the treaty passed the Senate after thirteen days of furious debate. Bache's *Philadelphia Aurora,* the ideological successor to Freneau's *National Gazette,* went against senators' wishes and published the full text, marking the first "scoop" in American journalism. Mobs burned Jay in effigy, and Washington was assailed as never before. Jefferson criticized the treaty and assured the new French ambassador of his own continuing enthusiasm for France. Adams thought a flawed treaty preferable to war and stood by the president. The public furor continued while the House debated appropriating funds for the treaty. Randolph resigned over alleged financial improprieties involving France, leaving Washington with a decidedly mediocre cabinet. Against his parents' wishes, Charles married Sally Smith and settled in New York.

At sixty, Adams knew he was Washington's heir apparent. Abigail wanted him to leave office if he failed to obtain the top job. Adams had watched the president age rapidly and knew no successor could expect the support he enjoyed. He hated most of the routine activities expected of the chief magistrate. Still, it would be "a glorious reward" for all his hard work. The *Philadelphia Aurora* endorsed Jefferson. A constitutional crisis appeared in the offing when the House took up the Jay Treaty. Adams could foresee nothing but dissolution of government and immediate war if the Republicans had their way, but it passed and good humor returned to Philadelphia.

As Adams' second term as vice president wound down, he requested a leave of absence to return home. He could take pride in having supported the president consistently, casting thirty-one deciding votes in the Senate, still a record. Adams

relished his summer on the farm, which he christened "Peacefield" to commemorate the tranquility his work had helped created. He even revived his diary. Abigail's health remained a worry.

When Boston newspapers reprinted Washington's "Farewell Address," the race was on. Neither Adams nor Jefferson campaigned actively, but the party battle was nevertheless vicious. The Republican press shamelessly revived all the old mischaracterizations of Adams, adding that John Quincy would gain hereditary succession. Having only daughters, Jefferson was a safer choice. Fuming over the Jay Treaty, Paine unleashed unprecedented attacks on Washington in *Aurora,* calling him apostate and imposter. Federalists abused Jefferson as a Jacobin atheist and a coward in 1781. Hamilton was up to his old tricks, seeking to move the Federalists' candidate for vice president ahead of both Adams and Jefferson, since Pinckney could more easily be controlled. Adams' old friend Elbridge Gerry, a Massachusetts elector, tipped Adams to the plot, and Abigail thereafter referred to Hamilton as "Cassius." Adams despised his hypocritical intrigues.

Adams left Quincy for Philadelphia on November 23, 1796, and arrived on December 4. He feared humiliation in the election. Within a week, it was clear Adams would win and Jefferson would be his vice president. Even *Aurora* spoke shiningly of Adams' integrity, declaring he would be preferable to Washington. When Jefferson learned of the probable outcome, he hoped to have a "valuable effect" on the new president. He tried three times to begin a letter to the victor, decrying the spies and sycophants that surrounded them and denying any ambition to govern men. Adams was accepting a painful and thankless office, and Jefferson regretted that little incidents had contrived to separate them earlier. Unfortunately, Jefferson gave the draft to Madison for comment, and Madison saw the magnanimous document as a dreadful mistake. Personal friendship was one thing, and politics another. Adams' inevitable failure as president would embarrass Jefferson too, if he were on record in writing supporting him. Had the extraordinary letter been sent, it would have been one of the most important communications Adams ever received, offering praise and rededication to friendship.

Part 3, Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 8, "Heir Apparent," opens the third and final part of McCullough's *John Adams.* It deals with the eight years Adams spent as vice president under Washington. Early on it appeared that disease might carry away the general, and Adams would inherit the job prematurely, a prospect that frightened Adams no less than others. When he supported the sole presidential prerogative to remove cabinet members rather than diverting this power to Congress, Adams was mocked. Looking to some day hold the office, he was looking out for his own best interests. "Heir apparent" was pejorative. Adams realized he was always a heartbeat away from the office. He served Washington with complete loyalty, even though he was excluded from deliberations in the executive branch. Twice, however, in the sharp debate over the Jay Treaty, Washington invited Adams for confidential dinner meetings.

Adams failed to make something substantial of the vice-presidency, but in time he accepted the constitutional limitations that deprived him of a voice in government. In 1796, Washington seemed truly determined to retire, and Adams assumed again that he was heir apparent. McCullough says nothing about Washington's desire to set a two-term precedent, set forth in the Farewell Address, or of Hamilton's part in the drafting of that document. Given Adams' hatred of the great intriguer by this point and the fact that it cut the legs from under the Republican argument that Adams intended to establish a hereditary presidency, its omission is curious. Attacked in the Republican press in Washington's stead during the first term, Adams was left in peace during the second, when Bache turned his guns on the old general directly. After winning the election of 1796, Adams was surprised to see his integrity praised in *Aurora.* Adams had agonized over the burden he was accepting, but he saw it as just recompense for all he had already given to his country.

Part 3, Chapter 9

Part 3, Chapter 9 Summary

Adams was inaugurated on March 4, 1797. The overflowing House Chamber broke into applause when Washington entered. Already seated as vice president, Jefferson greeted Adams, who appeared shorter and bulkier than usual, standing between the lanky Virginians. Never again would the trio appear together on one platform. Determined to be a truly republican president, Adams wanted none of the courtly trappings of his predecessor. With none of his family present, he was miserable and slept poorly the night before. Nevertheless, he spoke forcefully about where he stood on the Constitution, partisan politics, domestic concerns, France, war and peace. He graciously thanked Washington for his leadership, lauded American agriculture and manufacturing and pledged good faith to American Indians.

Adams esteemed the French and wanted peace with all nations. The speech was a conscious appeal to posterity. Then, invoking the Supreme Being, he took the oath of office. Many wept over Washington's departure, but the ex-president was serene. Republicans openly extolled Adams' words. *Aurora* declared him a hero, dignified and incorruptible, honorable and patriotic. Adams took the praise with a grain of salt. Never had he felt so easy, and he demonstrated wit and humor few expected. The vice-presidency had taught him patience. Among his last acts before the inauguration were impetuously rushing to the site of a great fire to join the bucket brigade and presiding over the Senate as the official results of the electoral college were opened and read. He had won by three votes. Lacking any tradition to guide him and hoping to preserve Federalist harmony, he retained Washington's four young and unremarkable department heads, who looked to Hamilton as their party head and looked down on Adams. Secretary of State Pickering, stubborn, opinionated, self-righteous and humorless, was crucial in a world on the brink of war.

The question of Jefferson's role in relation to France arose. Adams had forgiven Jefferson's past trespasses but had not forgotten them. He hoped Jefferson would support him as faithfully as he had Washington. On the eve of the inauguration, the two men met for the first time in three years at the Francis Hotel, where both were living. France's Directory had chosen to interpret the Jay Treaty as an Anglo-American alliance, and Adams wanted to launch negotiations in Paris to prevent war with France. He intended it to be a bipartisan effort. Wanting Jefferson to play a major role, he accepted it might be unwise for the vice president to be unavailable to succeed him suddenly. He asked Pinckney to participate and hoped Madison would join him to provide political balance. Jefferson knew Madison would decline, but he agreed to ask. High Federalists (and Washington) opposed involving Jefferson or Madison. The situation became clear as Adams and Jefferson strolled home from a farewell dinner given by Washington. They never again consulted on government measures. Washington bade them goodbye on March 8, parting on good terms. Before leaving office, Washington had written Adams to praise John Quincy's abilities and to hope the

principled father would not withhold from his son "merited promotion." Jefferson knew the new administration faced great difficulties and quickly headed home to Monticello. "He is as he was," Adams noted cryptically.

Adams had achieved too much in life to see the presidency as a crowning life achievement. The struggle for independence had been his defining chapter. He entered office determined to show France that the U.S. was not "scared." He soon learned that the Directory refused to receive Pinckney, who withdrew to Amsterdam to await instructions. It also ordered French warships to seize American ships in the Caribbean, bringing the crisis to a head. During tedious meetings, it became clear the cabinet would cause trouble. Adams moved into the President's House and was demoralized by its condition. Rent and other costs were too high for him to make ends meet on his $25,000 salary. Work was more taxing, dry, dull, perplexing and incessant than he had expected, and he had only Abigail in Massachusetts to complain to.

When Adams called for Congress to reconvene in special session to discuss the "safety and welfare" of the country, Republicans were indignant. Behind the scenes, Hamilton preached war to advance his own ambitions. *Porcupine's Gazette,* a sarcastic rival to *Aurora,* declared that war with France was all but certain. Editor William Cobbett wanted this as well as an alliance with Britain. Adams kept silent in public, but he was dedicated to a peaceful settlement. He begged Abigail to come to his rescue. Her pen had "run riot," encouraging cooperation with Jefferson and distance from the lascivious "Cassius." She knew her husband would discharge his duties with honor, justice and impartiality. She told of managing the homestead, reported her part in resolving a race crisis in Quincy, provided a heads-up about another developing John Quincy romance and shared ongoing fears for Nabby, whose husband seemed void of judgment. Abigail was preparing to leave for Philadelphia when her eighty-nine-year-old mother-in-law began a sharp decline, and she refused to leave Susanna Boylston Adams' side until she died on April 21 and was laid to rest from her front parlor. The president lamented that the prospect of war kept him away.

Abigail felt like Noah's dove, returning to the ark, when she set out to join her husband. Stopping in East Chester, New York, to visit Nabby, she found her daughter distraught, not knowing where her hapless husband was. Adams drove twenty-five miles out of town to meet Abigail's carriage, and they spent a happy day together on the banks of the Delaware River.

The next day, Jefferson returned to Philadelphia to find the city astir over a private letter he had written a year earlier to an Italian friend, Philip Mazzei. In the course of successive translations into three languages, its tone had intensified before the final product was published in a Federalist newspaper, the *New York Minerva,* edited by Noah Webster. Discussing the Jay Treaty, Jefferson had written of "apostates" in terms that could only refer to Washington.

On May 16, 1797, Adams entered Congress Hall knowing he had the support of his cabinet and determined to fulfill his inaugural promise to maintain U.S. neutrality without suffering any indignities to the national honor. This would be difficult if not impossible,

domestically and internationally, because Adams lacked both friends in Congress and military strength. He proposed a fresh attempt at negotiations and a build-up of forces, not as an act of belligerence, but to give added weight to the diplomatic mission. Federalist newspapers hailed his patriotic fire and humane anxiety. Washington approved. Bache almost daily belittled the "President by Three Votes" as a tool of Britain and a creature of Hamilton's war hawks. Adams chose John Marshall and Francis Dana to join Pinckney in Europe.

When Dana declined, Adams nominated Elbridge Gerry. Cabinet members - and Abigail - questioned the choice, but Adams needed someone he could trust personally in Paris. Gerry's sympathies for France and admiration of Jefferson offered hope for bipartisanship. Adams had met but did not know the chief French opponent, the wily, charming former bishop Talleyrand. American vessels continued being seized, and crewmembers were wounded, captured and tortured. Abigail took over household concerns, gradually acclimatized to the President's House and grew less anxious about ceremonial duties. She read the newspapers, profiled every member of Congress, knew everything that happened in the capital and kept contact with nieces, nephews and old friends at home. Her "splendid misery" deepened in the controversy that followed John Quincy's appointment as minister to Prussia. *Aurora* called for the vain president's resignation. Abigail wrote of dangers on all sides.

Jefferson returned from seclusion at Monticello and emerged as leader of the opposition. As vice president, he had ample free time, but he carefully concealed his activities by working through such "gladiators of the quill," as James T. Callender, who specialized in attacks on Adams in *Aurora.* The Francis Hotel became headquarters for the Republican inner circle. Adams reacted mildly when news of Jefferson's disloyal views on peacemaking reached him. They both wanted peace but approached it in different ways. Jefferson approached the French chargy d'affairs in Philadelphia, Philippe-Henry Joseph de Letombe, to advise dragging out negotiations. Jefferson's characterization of a vain, stubborn, aberrant, unpopular - and thus temporary - president was passed to Paris. The long Adams-Jefferson friendship was history.

The new envoys sailed as the government prepared to leave Philadelphia for the "sick season." Party divisions left legislators irritable and exhausted, but they passed a naval armament act and funded equipping for service three Washington-era frigates. When the Adamses departed, *Aurora* challenged why he "absconded" at such a critical time. They returned to Philadelphia in October, rested and revived. Before leaving Quincy, they learned John Quincy and Louisa Catherine Johnson had married in London on July 26, 1797, and sent warm parental benedictions. Learning en route south that yellow fever still gripped the city and that Congress was scattered, they stayed with Nabby in East Chester and received daily reports. Abigail worried about her beloved daughter and four grandchildren and unsuccessfully urged them to spend the winter in Philadelphia.

At a New York dinner in his honor, Adams learned about the "Reynolds Affair," a complicated tangle of financial dealings, adultery, blackmail and alleged corruption in the Treasury Department dating back five years and centered on Hamilton. Maria

Reynold's cuckolded and imprisoned husband James told Senator Monroe and two colleagues about the scandal, and they happily investigated. The Republican clerk of the House leaked information to Callender, who played down the adultery aspect and focused on the financial dealings. Hamilton published a brochure refuting the charges, but Republicans saw Hamilton's disgrace as a windfall. Neither Adams nor Jefferson commented.

No word came from the envoys, but John Quincy reported that General Napoleon Bonaparte was leading victorious armies across Italy and Austria and intended to invade Great Britain. The first physical brawl to break out on the floor of Congress brought comic relief but portended troubles to come. Pickering received four ciphered dispatches from Europe, and a fifth uncoded document was rushed to the president's desk. France rejected the envoys, closed its ports to neutral shipping and declared anything produced in England subject to capture on the high seas. Talleyrand sent three secret agents, dubbed X, Y and Z in the dispatches, to demand $250,000 as a personal bribe and a $10 million loan to the Republic as a "sweetener" to begin negotiations. The U.S. envoys refused and were threatened. Adams had time while the dispatches were being decoded to consider the "injury, outrage, and insult." Rumors flew about the French moving to occupy Florida and Louisiana.

On March 19, the president reported the diplomatic failure and called mildly for measures to defend the country if attacked. He said not a word about war, but Republicans interpreted his message as a declaration of war. Madison called it "insane" and began lobbying to buy time for Napoleon to invade Britain. Jefferson suggested Congress adjourn so members could consult their constituents. *Aurora* demanded Adams make all documents public immediately. Seeing the "lying wretch" Bache determined to abuse and misrepresent her husband until he was forced to resign, Abigail lost all respect for his protector, Jefferson. On April 2, Republicans and a number of High Federalists formed a 65 to 27 coalition to require the dispatches' turnover. Convinced the envoys were safely out of France, Adams complied, behind closed doors. Republicans were "struck dumb" by revelations of Talleyrand's demands. Some claimed the High Federalists had contrived the X-Y-Z Affair in order to provoke war.

Off the record, Jefferson blamed Adams' past insults to the French for the crisis and was convinced that the French government was "above suspicion." The Federalist press protested the "damnable outrages," and American public opinion swiftly turned against France. *Aurora* dunned on about the "unhinged" president and his unsuitable envoys until subscriptions dropped and the paper faced financial ruin. Bache and Callender became pariahs, and how they could operate with impunity was questioned. Abigail for the first time feared for her husband's safety in this incendiary atmosphere.

The country prepared for war. Merchant ships were armed and nearly harbor fortifications and cannon foundries were funded. Warships were authorized to capture French vessels within U.S. waters. A 25,000-man provisional army was authorized but cut back to 10,000. Adams deplored the idea, preferring to concentrate on his "wooden walls." A separate Department of the Navy was established, and Benjamin Stoddert was named its first secretary. Adams found himself awash in an upwelling of patriotism, and

his popularity soared. He was exhilarated but still hoped for peace. Jefferson opposed the navy as a waste of money and mocked Adams' day of fasting and prayer. Mobs roamed the streets, attacking Bache's house and forcing Adams to accept sentries outside the presidential mansion. With Abigail beside him, Adams' personal correspondence dried up, so his inner feelings are unknown. His physical appearance was worsening, but not to the degree "Bache & Co." insisted: querulous, bald, blind, crippled and toothless. Abigail feigned pity for the Directory: "I suppose they want him to cringe, but he is made of oak instead of willow. He may be torn up by the roots, or break, but he will never bend."

Reports from The Hague that Gerry remained behind when Pinckney and Marshall left Paris shocked Adams. France wanted to deal with him alone. The president was distressed that the man he trusted most would take such a misguided step. He was sure Gerry meant well, but he could not abide peace at the cost of national disgrace and dishonor. Gerry's reputation in the U.S. was ruined. After considering asking for a declaration of war, Adams informed Congress simply that he would never again dispatch a minister to France without prior assurance that he would be accepted, respected and honored. Towns along the coast raised money to build warships to turn over to the federal government. Berating Congress for dragging its feet and Philadelphia for its Quaker pacifism, Abigail wished she could enlist. Had Adams requested a declaration of war, Congress would have obliged.

Instead, Adams consented to the passage of the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 and signed them into law. French ymigrys numbered at least 25,000. French newspapers, booksellers, schools, boardinghouses and restaurants dotted Philadelphia, and people worried what threat they might pose in the event of war. Anti-British Irish immigrants like Callender were also questionable elements. Enemy agents were known to be operating in the U.S. Part of the legislation extended the period of residence required for citizenship from five to fourteen years. The Alien Act authorized the president to expel any foreigner he considered "dangerous." Jefferson abhorred the act and joined those who imagined Adams expelling shiploads of foreigners. In fact, Adams resisted Pickering's calls to do just that.

More ominous was the Sedition Act, which called for fines and imprisonment for anyone writing anything false, scandalous or malicious against any part of the government or stirring up hatred or sedition among the people. Although a clear violation of the First Amendment, Federalists presented it as an essential war measure. The obvious intent was to stifle the Republican press. Some journalists, the oft-libeled Washington and Abigail Adams saw that it was time to regain control. Adams said nothing on the subject, but he cannot have been sad to see the tables turned on his tormentors. Jefferson slipped off to Monticello. People figured Adams' politically savvy wife had been decisive in the decision, but his independence in the naming of Gerry and reluctance to declare war show he did not always follow her advice.

To fund the military buildup, the House voted on the first direct tax on the people. Adams nominated Washington as commander-in-chief of the new provisional army and submitted a list of proposed general officers, including Hamilton, Burr and his own son-

in-law. Congress abrogated the French-American treaties of 1778, created a permanent Marine Corps and passed the Sedition Act. War fever was at a pitch. McHenry was dispatched to Mount Vernon bearing the commission and a note from Adams saying that he would appoint Washington president if he had the power. On July 16, Congress adjourned and fled Philadelphia, followed in a few days by the Adamses, just ahead of the worst yellow fever epidemic since 1793.

The year 1798 was the most difficult and consequential year of the Adams presidency. He was frustrated by the quasi-war, Hamilton's threatening ambitions, growing dissension in the cabinet and Abigail's near-fatal illness (perhaps malaria). Abigail had secretly arranged for the construction of a book room at Peacefield, but she fell ill before they arrived to see it. She was confined to bed. Gloom hung over the house and distracted the president during long hours at his desk, dealing with the paperwork that arrived daily. Organization of the army high command was the most difficult question. Hamilton wanted to be Washington's second in command. The secretaries of war and state concurred, campaigned secretly for him and provided him secret documents. In cordially accepting his commission, Washington claimed the prerogative of naming his principal officers.

No one expected Washington to take the field, so this would become Hamilton's army. Adams claimed presidential prerogative and decried the intrigue surrounding the issue. He respected Hamilton's talents but not his character. Because Washington's prestige was essential for raising an army, Adams had to back down. Fortunately, at this point Gerry returned with news that France wanted peace. Marshall and John Quincy confirmed this. Adams allowed Hamilton to be named Inspector General of the now unnecessary army. Convinced the Directory would behave properly towards new envoys, Adams designated Patrick Henry and William Vans Murray. He reminded McHenry that standing armies were expensive and unpopular in the absence of an enemy to fight, and said, "At present there is no more prospect of seeing a French army here than there is in heaven."

Abigail spent eleven weeks on what she termed her "dying bed," even as word came of epidemics in Boston, New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Bache and his journalistic arch-nemesis Fenno perished within days of each other, two of 4,000 victims in Philadelphia. The Adamses were shocked to learn that Charles had lost nearly all of the $2,000 he borrowed from John Quincy before the latter went abroad - his entire life's savings. Abigail remained behind when Adams returned in November to a disease-free capital, melancholy over the new separation.

Part 3, Chapter 9 Analysis

"Chapter 9, "Old Oak," takes its title from the epigram by Abigail Adams that Washington must be rejoicing to see an old oak take his place. Later in the chapter, the simile is expanded. Oaks can be torn out by the roots or broken, but they do not bend like willows. Jefferson, by comparison, was a willow, so bent to Madison's will that he refused to cooperate with his old friend, as he was inclined. McCullough takes literally

Abigail Adams' journal entry about "dangers" on every side. The text is an allusion to St. Paul's defense of his integrity in 2 Corinthians 11.26. McCullough uses it as a segue to Jefferson's recent activities, which were consistent covert opposition. Much of the chapter is devoted to Adams' efforts to avoid open war with France. Political scandals, disloyal and ambitious politicians, family problems and illness marked the first half of Adams' administration. His popularity rose and fell in waves. He was too trusting of Washington and the cabinet members he left behind, and of Jefferson most of all. The only break he got was the decision of the French Directorate to sue for peace. Otherwise, Adams would have faced difficulties that McCullough sketches thoroughly enough to encourage musing.

Part 3, Chapter 10

Part 3, Chapter 10 Summary

Toothaches darkened Adams' mood as his carriage rumbled through Connecticut, but he was encouraged by rumors that a British fleet had overwhelmed the French off Egypt. Adams reached Philadelphia on November 24. The news from Egypt was confirmed, and the city was busily putting itself back together after the epidemic. Washington had set up temporary headquarters. War fever was not gone, but it was moderated. Adams courteously received a local physician and self-appointed peacemaker, George Logan, recently returned from France. Pickering and Washington had refused to talk to him about his talks with Talleyrand, who was willing to receive a new American minister, provided he was a Republican. Adams declared, "I'll send whom I please," but Logan made a strong impression. Pickering and McHenry were sure war was inevitable, but they went along with the consensus view that it was still inexpedient. All agreed that the French had to take the next initiative.

Jefferson, the Republicans and the High Federalists were all infuriated. Congress should act if the president lacked the fortitude, but Congress was no longer inclined to declare war. Hamilton dreamed of riding at the head of an army to liberate Spanish Florida and Louisiana, perhaps even moving beyond into Venezuela. Adams dismissed the plan, telling the Secretary of State, "We are friends with Spain." Hamilton had interested the British and began stockpiling military supplies in Georgia. Realizing his department heads were untrustworthy, Adams began treating them on a need-to-know basis. Keeping Washington's cabinet had been a mistake. Preventing Hamilton from becoming a "second Bonaparte" required staying out of war.

Four U.S. naval squadrons were assigned to the Caribbean. The fleet cruising the Lesser Antilles had the support of Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of a slave rebellion on San Domingo, who had written Adams suggesting an alliance with the former French colony. Adams was interested in recognizing the black republic, and its representative, Joseph Bunel, was the first African to dine with an American president. With support from John Quincy and Pickering, Adams granted de facto recognition, and "Toussaint's Clause" was sent to Congress.

Washington kept busy but out of sight, organizing the new army with Hamilton. The Senate refused Adams' nominations of Aaron Burr and the bankrupt Col. Smith to the general staff. Adams felt very old, until Christmas revived his spirits. Jefferson returned to Philadelphia, ending a six-month absence. At Monticello, he had been writing letters and secretly drafting a set of resolutions to be introduced in the Kentucky legislature. Revolted by the Alien and Sedition Acts, Jefferson declared each state had a "natural right" to nullify any federal action it deemed unconstitutional. Madison undertook a version for Virginia and urged "passive firmness." Jefferson also worried about dealing with the "rebellious Negroes under Toussaint," who could be expected to flood the Southern states. President and vice president had not spoken in over a year, despite

sharing much in common. Both were in poor health, suffered extreme loneliness and disliked and feared Hamilton. Adams foresaw Hamilton leading a military coup and a return to British rule. Adams' son Thomas' return after four years abroad brought him delight, and his spirits were buoyed by news from John Quincy that the French were ready to negotiate.

Without consulting anyone (including Abigail), Adams took the bravest and most decisive action of his presidency on February 18, 1799. His brief message astonished the vice president when it arrived in the Senate chamber: Adams was nominating William Vans Murray, minister at The Hague, to be minister plenipotentiary to the French Republic to negotiate a new treaty. Republicans were astounded, and Federalists were indignant and disgusted. Pickering, enraged, wrote Washington and Hamilton to distance himself from the policy. An old Adams' ally, Senator Theodore Sedwick, furiously decried betrayal and rule "by caprice alone." Jefferson saw it as the "event of events," but could not take it at face value or give Adams credit. *Aurora* conceded that Adams deserved "fair applause" for prudence. High Federalists demanded the weak, young Murray be replaced, but Adams agreed only to an expansion into a commission of three, adding Oliver Ellsworth and William Davie.

Remaining an ardent proponent of defense and seeing true naval strength as key to attaining peace, Adams proposed building fast new ships to patrol the French coasts. Convinced that he could govern as well from Quincy as Philadelphia, Adams stretched his stay at home to seven months, ignoring vociferous complaints that he had arrogantly abdicated his responsibilities. Washington had spent long sessions at Mount Vernon, and yellow fever again kept Congress out of Philadelphia for the summer. Adams worked dutifully, reading and writing. Delays were nearly always at Philadelphia's end. Adams saw ultimate command resting in the hands of the Maker. His mood improved during the summer.

On August 5, Adams learned Talleyrand had guaranteed the American envoys would be properly received and ordered Pickering to move forward. In a rare flash of temper, Adams made it clear that he expected the heads of departments to comply. As things appeared to be falling into place, however, the Directory broke up and chaos reigned. Navy Secretary Stoddert, Adams's only consistently loyal supporter, urged the president to come to Trenton, New Jersey, where the government had set up emergency headquarters. Artful designs by Hamilton made his presence vital. Adams stopped briefly in East Chester to see Nabby and daughter-in-law Sally, and he learned that Charles was bankrupt, faithless and alcoholic. He had disappeared. Adams mourned his son as Absalom but expressed no pity. He renounced him, something Abigail could not do, perhaps seeing in him a repetition of her brother William.

Adams arrived in Trenton suffering what some feared might be yellow fever. Trenton overflowed with government refugees and military officers, including Hamilton, who broke protocol by visiting the president without invitation. Hamilton argued against the peace mission and called for alliance with Britain to restore the Bourbon throne. Adams was astonished by such ignorance of the situation in Europe, but he listened to the foolish inspector general talk steadily for hours. At the first cabinet meeting, Hamilton's

views were echoed by Pickering, Wolcott and McHenry. Stoddert supported Adams, as did the absent Attorney General by letter. Adams stood his ground, and the commission sailed for France. No "Second Bonaparte" would be needed.

Abigail returned to her husband's side and promptly sent her sister Mary a copy of a speech Adams delivered to applause and approbation. There would be grumbling, she knew, but Adams' December 3, 1799, message was moderate and peaceable, pacific and humane, calling for a national defense commensurate with resources and declaring war drums out of season. Abigail was glad to be back at the center of things. Philadelphia was determined to "shine" during its last year as the capital, but its mood changed when word came on December 14, 1799, that Washington had died. Congress adjourned. The Adamses were stunned. The president felt alone and bereaved of his last brother. Washington was interred at Mount Vernon, but Philadelphia held a day of official mourning the day after Christmas. Henry Lee's eulogy extolled Washington as "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." Encomiums continued, eventually making Abigail impatient and indignant. At no time, she wrote, had the fate of the country rested on the breath of one man, not even Washington. Truth would be his best and greatest eulogy. The president said nothing, and the vice president, perhaps still ashamed over the "Mazzei Letter," avoided the Philadelphia ceremonies, returning from a ten-month absence at Monticello only on December 28.

Adams was silent on the passing of the epochal 18th century. In February came news that Napoleon had seized power as First Consul, ending the French Revolution. Adams had predicted dictatorship but wisely kept silence seeing it realized. Electioneering had begun in the U.S. Both Adamses were convinced that John would face Jefferson and lose. Jefferson as vice president had remained silent in the Senate and often yielded the chair to others. His primary contribution was preparing a *Senate Manual,* based on the British model. Rule 17.9 forbade anyone to speak impertinently or beside the question, perhaps with Adams in mind. Both book lovers were likely pleased by an appropriation of $5,900 to establish a Library of Congress.

The 1800 contest was unlike the three preceding ones. For the first and only time, a president and vice president would oppose one another. Political parties were vengeful as never before. The Sedition Act left Adams' opponents fearful. Congressman Lyon and eleven others were convicted and fined for casting aspersions on the president's posterior. The notorious Callender reemerged, determined to put Jefferson in office. Callender assaulted Adams in a series of essays later issued as a book, *The Prospect Before Us.* He called Adams a "repulsive pedant," "gross hypocrite" and "egregious fool," ignorant, ferocious, deceitful and weak.

The choice was clear, Adams and war or Jefferson and peace. To no one's surprise, Callender was arrested, convicted of inciting the people against their president and sentenced to nine months in jail. Like Lyons, he gained a martyr's reputation. Adams' frustration exploded on May 5, when he fired McHenry for defending Hamilton. Even Jefferson, Adams declared, was better than Hamilton. Adams had never before berated a subordinate and felt badly afterwards. A few days later, Adams asked Pickering to resign by letter, but when he refused, Adams fired him and named Samuel Dexter to

head the War Department. He named Marshall to head the State Department. Adams knew Wolcott was equally duplicitous and disloyal, but he did not clean house. Determined to "unite against all charlatans," Hamilton requested Pickering search for files that explained Adams and Jefferson before losing access to them.

In June 1800, the government moved to the new Federal City. Adams left in advance, still concerned by two issues: the temporary army and the fate of three Pennsylvania farmers under sentence of death for treason. Congress disbanded the now-superfluous army, but Adams stood alone deciding the condemned men's fate. They had risen to protest a federal tax on land and the high-handed ways of the federal tax collectors. The rebellion died before the troops that an incensed president dispatched could arrive, but John Fries and two others were seized, tried and convicted. Adams insisted on reviewing the case. The cabinet recommended that he let the sentences stand, and Adams had never opposed capital punishment on principle. He had signed death warrants for military deserters. In this case, however, he saw judicial error and pardoned the men, further infuriating the Hamiltonians.

The Adamses parted on May 19, Abigail for Quincy and John for Washington. He delighted in the scenery and spoke to warm gatherings in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Frederick, Maryland. Tributes and entertainments slowed his progress, and he arrived in the District of Columbia only on June 3. It was not yet a city. It was a hot, mosquito-infested swamp and stubble land, marked by squalid shacks and a half-finished sandstone Capitol. Only the Treasury Building, set adjacent to the unfinished President's House, was complete. It would have to accommodate all departments of government for a while. Despite memories of Paris and London and a fondness for Philadelphia, Adams was pleased by the city Jefferson had spent much time designing. His two new appointments and other executive officials arrived, bringing eight packing cases' worth of files from Philadelphia. Adams inspected the President's House, which promised the "fairly grand" kind of residence he thought the president ought to inhabit. He imagined the coming winter would be hard to bear in it. Homesick, Adams left for Quincy, leaving Marshall in charge.

The summer and fall of 1800 were marked by a contest of personal vilification. To Federalists, Jefferson was a hopeless visionary and weakling, more a Frenchman than an American. In their view, he was a bad man - a spendthrift and libertine. Electing him would mean civil war and a flooding of the country with "the refuse of Europe." To the usual smear of wartime cowardice were added the specter of Christians' fate under an atheist chief executive. It was whispered that like other Southern slaveholders, Jefferson had cohabited with slave women. Adams was inevitably excoriated as a monarchist, more British than American: old, addled, toothless and looking to throw the election to Jefferson in order to serve as his vice president. The most vicious charge was that Adams was insane.

High Federalists joined Republicans in attacking him. Jefferson had so effectively separated himself from the administration that he could not be blamed for the taxes, the Alien and Sedition Acts, the standing army or any of the "menaces" proclaimed by *Aurora.* Adams expected to be attacked by the Republicans, but he was hurt by

personal attacks from Hamiltonian Federalists. Hamilton now felt free to work without secrecy, and he schemed to make Pinckney president. Adams found his peace efforts widely approved in New England, where Republicans were noticeably uncritical of him. The *Washington Federalist* deemed Adams an undervalued patriot, zealous of the country's sacred liberties, deeply versed in law, skilled in political science, learned in the language and arts of diplomacy and aloof from flattery. *Aurora* continued depicting Adams as the war candidate, while news from Paris remained thready. Neither candidate took public part in the campaigning. Adams devoted most of his time to official duties, while at Monticello Jefferson pursued rural interests.

Both Adamses were in comparatively good health and happy to be home together. They remained deeply troubled about Charles. Abigail had seen him during her trip home and was heartbroken. He appeared beyond saving. She brought four-year-old granddaughter Susanna home to Quincy. Nabby and daughter Caroline joined them for the summer. On October 13, Adams left for Washington. Realizing most Federalists supported him as a staunch patriot in the Washington tradition lightened his sagging spirits. He was a peacemaker, despite anything the Hamiltonians might say.

Republicans were expressing new regard for the president, although they might not vote for him. While Adams drove southward, Hamilton had used confidential information obtained from Pickering, McHenry and Wolcott to prepare a fifty-four-page pamphlet berating Adams in every possible way, deploring his relations with France, his cabinet purge and his pardoning of Fries. Adams was a man "out of control." Hamilton made no charges of corruption or misconduct, however, acknowledging Adams' patriotism and integrity. Instead, he called for equal Federalist support for Adams and Pinckney. Republicans were euphoric at this promise of a complete rout. Federalists were aghast, disbelieving and angry at Hamilton. Jefferson's election would be his fault entirely, an act of insanity. Speculation over motivation ranged from anger over being denied military glory to a desire to destroy the Federalist party and raise it up again as his own creation. At any rate, Hamilton had ruined his chances for power and glory.

The unfinished President's House reeked of wet plaster and paint. The rooms dwarfed the Adamses' furniture, delivered from Philadelphia. A lone painting adorned its walls - Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Washington. The grounds were strewn with rubble. Adams arrived on November 1, without pomp. An office was prepared for him. The next morning, he wrote Abigail, offering a simple benediction on the house, that "none but honest and wise men" would ever rule under its roof. He was certain that Hamilton's pamphlet had sealed his defeat, but he took the blow with equanimity. News of the Convention of Mortefontaine, signed October 3, 1800, arrived too late to affect the election, but Adams could at least take pride in having ended the quasi-war. Abigail arrived in Washington on November 16, after an extremely arduous journey. She found Charles ailing in Nabby's care and left East Chester certain she had seen her son for the last time. Susanna again accompanied her. Abigail found Washington a city only in name. The house was barely habitable, wet and damp. She hung laundry in the great, unplastered "audience room." They lived in the "great castle" without complaint, but Abigail grumbled about what she saw of Southern life, slavery in particular. It was a slow and wasteful system, not to mention morally wrong.

Congress convened in the unfinished Capitol on November 22, and Adams delivered what he knew would be his last speech as president. He congratulated the people on assembling their representatives at the permanent seat of their government and offered a benediction on the country's new capital city, hoping it would prove worthy of the name of the great personage it bore. He offered a brief, gracious summary of the state of the union, clear and unexaggerated. He praised the discharged temporary army and the still-developing navy, which he hoped would not have to be used against foes. Official word from France was still pending but looked hopeful. This was as close as Adams ever came to speaking of his own persistent efforts. He asked Congress to amend the judiciary system and called for rejoicing over a country "prosperous, free, and happy."

Two weeks later, on the day the electors convened, Adams learned Charles had died of dropsy (and cirrhosis, mostly likely) on November 30. Within days, Adams knew he had also lost the election. Crushed, disappointed and saddened, he expressed no bitterness, envy or anger. He felt relieved of a burden. He and Abigail would be happier in Quincy. Jefferson and Burr each received 73 votes to Adams' 65 and Pinckney's 63. Thus, the outcome was thrown into the House of Representatives. Adams would have been reelected in four potential instances: 1) if he had received 250 more votes in New York City; 2) if word of the peace treaty had arrived a few weeks earlier; 3) if the Constitution had not discounted slaves in apportioning the states' electoral strengths; or 4) if Adams had not refused to sink into partisanship.

Tension grew every day as Burr refused to accept the people's clear preference for Jefferson, and he was said to be secretly bargaining with the Federalists. Disliking and distrusting both men, Hamilton eventually chose Jefferson, as a lover of liberty and order, over Burr, who sought only his own aggrandizement. Adams could have applied influence behind the scenes, but he kept silent, firm in his belief in the separation of powers. Neither Adams expressed any enmity towards Jefferson in private correspondence, and they expected him to be elected. They too saw him as less dangerous than Burr, a figure "risen upon stilts." The Adamses invited Jefferson to dinner several times, and civility prevailed. Jefferson came to tea just before Abigail left for Quincy ahead of the president, and he wished her a good journey and offered any help he could give her family. Abigail had arrived in the new capital with a heavy heart, and nothing she experienced there offered relief. She departed worried about public calamities to come. Adams was more sanguine. They had no plans beyond becoming farmers again.

That evening, the president responded to a fire at the Treasury Building, joining the bucket brigade fighting the flames. His last decision in office, one of the most important of his presidency, was naming Marshall Chief Justice to succeed Ellsworth. Jay was offered the position but declined. Few men so impressed Adams as Marshall, with his good sense, ability and loyalty. Marshall was Adams' kind of Federalist, and at forty-five, he promised long service. In fact, after a quick Senate confirmation, Marshall served thirty-four years on the bench and was possibly the greatest Chief Justice in history. Adams continued pushing for confirmation of the unpopular peace treaty, achieved eight days before the House went into special session to resolve the Jefferson-Burr tie. On

February 11, Abigail hosted department heads and judges for the last time before departing Washington on February 13, accompanied by Susanna. Adams was angered by Jefferson's request that he intervene in the House deliberations. Federalists understandably wanted assurance of where Jefferson stood on policy issues he had never discussed publicly. Adams assured him that if he would state publicly that he would do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy and not disturb current office holders, he would be chosen instantly. Jefferson refused to come into office by "capitulation," and they parted mutually dissatisfied. On the 36th ballot, Jefferson was chosen on February 17. What caused Federalist James A. Bayard to change his vote is unknown. *Aurora* proclaimed the "triumph of Republican principle."

Meanwhile, the lame duck Federalist Senate expanded the judiciary as Adams requested a year earlier, and Adams filled the twenty-three new judgeships and other vacant federal posts with less scruple than he had earlier preached. Col. Smith and John Quincy's father-in-law received appointments. There was no frenzied rush to name "midnight judges," as the press claimed. Most appointments were made over a week before the inauguration. It was unsurprising that nearly all were Federalists, and their high quality brought little Republican opposition. Surprisingly, the treacherous Wolcott received a judgeship. Adams' last official dinner was given in honor of a delegation of Indians.

Adams left Washington at four o'clock in the morning on inauguration day. Many admirers were disappointed that he skipped the ceremony. There was no precedent for how a defeated president should behave at the transfer of power, and Adams was too forthright to be expected to show confidence in his successor that he did not feel. He might not have been invited to attend, or might have felt unwelcome. *Aurora* suggested this man, "cast out by God," might have wanted to deliver a valedictory to Congress on the occasion. Adams' choice was no sudden, dark-of-the-night decision. It was planned for over a week with no secrecy, and the timing was determined by the public stage schedule to Baltimore. Jefferson's inaugural address paid passing tribute to Washington but failed to mention Adams. No one can know what Adams felt, leaving Washington, but he had always loved the start of new days and being on the move. He cannot have been pleased to share the long ride to Massachusetts with Sedgwick.

Adams bequeathed to Jefferson full coffers, good prospects for peace, flourishing commerce, a glorious navy and productive, lucrative agriculture. He had held a steady course through turbulent, dangerous times. His fifty-ship navy - Adams' outstanding achievement - had been decisive in achieving peace. His undercutting of Hamilton had spared the country militarism. Adams left untouched by scandal or corruption. He too readily acquiesced to the Alien and Sedition Acts and too slowly realized his cabinet was unfaithful. However, he showed a rare level of diplomacy in keeping the U.S. out of a war that might have raised his popularity and advanced his political cause but would have been a disastrous mistake for the country. His decision was as brave and heroic as his rushing to fight fires. To his dying day, Adams would remain proud of having kept the peace, to the point of requesting that his gravestone memorialize his responsibility for peace in 1800. Adams bore many disappointments and tragedies as president, but he returned to Quincy with his marriage, sense of humor and love of life intact.

Part 3, Chapter 10 Analysis

Chapter 10, "Statesman," covers the second half of Adams' presidency and his surprisingly narrow defeat for reelection in 1800. McCullough uses the last two pages of the chapter to encapsulate Adams' presidency, flawed by the Alien and Sedition Acts and his slowness to realize that Hamilton was running his cabinet behind his back, but triumphant in keeping the nation out of a popular war for which it was ill prepared. He stood above partisan politics and paid the price. His defeat was less dramatic than the 73 to 65 electoral voting suggests. Hamilton had arrayed powerful forces against Adams, but any bit of luck might have undone Catalan's plot. Personal campaigning was still taboo in 1800, but had it been acceptable, Adams could have made a powerful case for his reelection, while Jefferson by nature would probably have not risen to the occasion. At any rate, the old revolutionary could retire to his beloved farm knowing that he had done his best and left the country in good shape, prepared for face the new century.

Part 3, Chapter 11

Part 3, Chapter 11 Summary

Adams had to decide how to adjust to an abundance of free time and figure out where money would come from. He sensed he had little time left and stated with certainty that neither he nor Abigail had any interest in politics or office holding. They had done all the good they could for their country. A wild northeaster struck as soon as Adams arrived home, forcing them into seclusion, but a stiff one-sentence note from the new president somehow made it through. In reply, Adams confessed the sufferings he had endured over Charles' death and suggested he was surprised not to have received some word of sympathy. Then, he wished the new administration success. Jefferson did not respond, and no more letters passed between them for eleven years. The Adamses were not given to complaining but smarted over being despised by some, irrelevant to others and simply no longer cared about by most. A drastic decline in the volume of mail demonstrated this. A tribute by members of the Massachusetts legislature, therefore, moved Adams to tears. Within six months, however, he was musing about shoemakers and extolling the Greek philosopher Epictetus, who said, "It is difficulties that show what men are." Spring returned both Adamses to invigorating agrarian chores. Only occasionally would Adams reflect on Bonaparte (unpredictable) or Jefferson (too imaginative and ambitious).

In mid-June, the Adamses learned of a new grandson born in Berlin. His name, George Washington Adams rather than John, rankled their feelings. John Quincy would bring his family home as soon as mother and baby were up to the voyage. He intended to resume his legal career, now that government offices were in Republican hands. Stoneyfield had expanded to 600 acres, and Adams took pleasure in working it. Its fields had to support John, Abigail, Sally, her daughters and Louisa Smith. Nabby and her three children spent summers there, and there were always visiting relatives and friends. John Quincy expressed delight at reuniting with his parents and within weeks bought a home in Boston.

European-raised Louisa Catherine found Quincy quaint and her in-laws reserved and too solicitous of her ailments. She was twenty-six, and John Quincy was thirty-four, his hair thinning and looking ever more like his father. He lacked his father's passion for life, humor and spontaneity, but he was clearly extraordinarily intelligent. In 1802, he won a seat in the Massachusetts Senate but lost a close race for Congress. Dutifully, he visited Quincy nearly every weekend and kept his father supplied with books. He encouraged Adams to write his autobiography, and with reluctance, Adams began work in October 1802. In 1803, John Quincy stepped in to rescue his parents, who lost their lives' savings of $13,000 in imprudent investments. He sold his house, and added the proceeds to his savings and additional borrowings to buy Stoneyfield and gave them title for life. He named his second son John Adams in 1803. Then, having defeated Pickering for a Senate seat, John Quincy moved to Washington.

Jefferson named Madison Secretary of State and Gallatin Secretary of the Treasury. He did away with presidential levees, something Adams had dared not do, and entertained frequently as a means of governing. He began delivering his annual messages to Congress in writing. He freed everyone jailed under the Sedition Act and did away with Adams' new circuit courts. The whiskey tax was abolished, and the navy was cut back, even as it began dealing effectively with the Barbary Pirates. Nevertheless, Jefferson's first year in office brought less commotion than expected. In September 1802, however, Callender reported a presidential liaison with a slave woman, Sally Hemings. Federalist newspapers made hay with the revelations, while *Aurora* kept silent. Jefferson made it a "rule of life" never to respond to press attacks, and most people chose not to believe the allegations. Adams appears to have believed Callender's stories, but he saw it as an inevitable consequence of slavery. Abigail did not wish to discuss the matter in her correspondence or resume contact with Jefferson. Still, there remained "a little corner" of her heart where he once sat, and she could not wholly discard him.

In 1804, news came that Polly, Mary Jefferson Eppes after her marriage, died following a difficult birth, and Abigail could not restrain her pen. After seventeen years of silence, she dispatched heartfelt condolences and declared herself Jefferson's friend. Jefferson was profoundly moved and thanked Abigail for her kindness to Polly. He wished that circumstances had not separated him from his honored and valued friends. Had Jefferson not proceeded to air grievances over the midnight appointments, they might have resumed their friendship, but Abigail took offense and lectured Jefferson on her husband's constitutional right to do as he had. She also wrote frankly of Jefferson's dealings with Callender, including his release from jail. This offended the manners and morals of the nation and delivered a personal injury to the Adamses. Her respect for him was lost. Jefferson responded disingenuously. Seven letters passed between them. In one, she charged Jefferson had removed her son from a petty federal office, which she took as reprisal; Jefferson managed to dissuade her of this. His last letter wished them health and happiness. Her final letter spoke of affection lingering after esteem had fled and wished him well in his responsibilities. Weeks after the correspondence ended, John Adams noted in Abigail's letter-book that he had read the exchanges but had no comment.

Adams was uncomfortable writing his autobiography and abandoned it after a year. He continued to read, take walks, attend church and enjoy his grandchildren. Like Abigail, he was concerned about Thomas, whose life in Philadelphia refused to take root and who suffered gloom and loneliness. Thomas returned to Quincy for a fresh start, and his presence compensated for John Quincy's absence. The new senator took his seat in time to support Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase. Had President Adams not made peace with France, Jefferson's greatest accomplishment would never have happened, and had Senator Adams not crossed party lines to support the purchase (which his father supported), it would have failed, for the Federalists maintained the president lacked authority to buy foreign territory. John Quincy was unable, however, to stop the spread of slavery into Louisiana.

In 1804, Hamilton was fatally wounded in a duel by Vice President Burr, who was viewed in Washington as no better than a murderer. Adams forgave his fallen enemy but

could not forget his "villainy" or the calumnies he had endured at Hamilton's hand. In 1804, Jefferson and Clinton won the election overwhelmingly. John Quincy and his wife dined several times at the President's House and found him engaging if overly extravagant. The son's reports about Jefferson's comments on the French Revolution and epicurean ways were unbelievable to his father. John Quincy accepted a professorial chair in rhetoric and oratory at Harvard, adding to his father's pride, but it was clear to friends that Adams was still nursing old wounds and feeling a bit sorry for himself. He brooded on death.

In early 1805, Adams wrote old friend Benjamin Rush, beginning an extended, vivid correspondence that offered Adams an outlet for his ideas, feelings and opinions. Adams delighted in writing and took up his autobiography again, beginning Part 2, "Travels and Negotiations." It was "vanity and levity," he confessed to Rush, but he wanted not to die without posterity hearing his side of the story. He wrote of the joys of friendship, obligations to country and threats to the nation. He chided the abstemious Rush on the need for drink more "comforting" than milk. He reread Shakespeare twice in 1805, continued his devotion to Cicero and the Bible and dwelt much on how unacceptable 18th-century views were on human perfectibility. He admitted to having many errors, weaknesses, follies and sins to repent of, but he accepted St. Paul's admonition to rejoice ever more.

The letters sparkled with aphorisms about power, lawyers, kings, presidents and electioneering. Adams argued with Rush about the need to replace Greek and Latin with modern languages. Adams made frequent mention of his high regard for physicians. Rush recalled how Adams had named him Treasurer of the U.S. Mint when his medical practice dwindled after press attacks for his bloodletting procedures. Rush was philosophically bound to Jefferson but more closely tied personally to Adams. Both wrote as though thinking aloud, and both were lonely. Rush was happy to report that Madison had begun describing Adams' "genius and integrity" rather than dwelling on monarchism. He had also been won over to Adams' views on banking and standing armies.

Adams felt he could write things to Rush that he dared say to no one else. He admired Washington's good qualities, but he also criticized his precious talents for playacting and shortage of education. Adams was equally candid about Jefferson, whom he knew Rush admired. Jefferson was as much an intriguer as Hamilton, but he succeeded at it. Adams refused to criticize the president publicly, feeling that every administration deserved support, but he noted that Jefferson was salarying "almost every villain he could find who had been an enemy to me." Resuming correspondence with Rush was one of the happiest events of Adams' life in retirement. Although destined never to see one another again, their friendship grew stronger.

In 1806, another old friend, Mercy Warren, published a *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution,* in which she singled out Adams as a betrayer of the Revolution. He had been "corrupted" by his time in England and had capitulated to monarchy. He was marked too much by pride and ambition and too little by sagacity and judgment. No longer restrained by public office, Adams defended

himself vigorously in a series of letters, denying her charges and demanding how she could believe them. Warren dismissed the articles as rambling, vulgar and malignant, and the two stopped writing, ending a lifelong friendship between the families. Adams discovered that the old lion could still roar and, abandoning his autobiography forever, he concentrated on delivering weekly letters to the *Boston Patriot* for nearly three years, his last passionate exercise in self-justification. He took up Hamilton's mischaracterizations in the 1800 election, difficulties with Franklin in Paris, the dismissal of Pickering and the X-Y-Z Affair. He wrote as the attorney for the accused, fiercely and vigorously, with self-admiration and occasional wonderment at his own tenacity in face of opposition. Eventually, he realized how tiresome he had become and halted.

Cousin Josiah Quincy described the elderly Adamses living in the "Big House" as genuinely kind people, with Abigail a bit more formal, conscious of age and dignity, and a bit oppressive. She was one of the last old-style New England ladies, handsomely dressed, hospitable, proud of her parentage and of all she and her husband had achieved. Sundays, Louisa Smith carved the meat at table, while the ex-president offered "good humored, easy banter." After dinner, they went a second time to church, and after services they enjoyed tea with wide-ranging conversation on religion, politics and literature. Abigail worried that she might be spoiling her grandchildren by being too lax and indulgent, but her husband seems never to have been concerned about this.

Napoleon was master of Europe by the time Jefferson's second term got under way. France and Britain were at war on the high seas, with both powers attacking and seizing American ships and impressing seamen. Fierce debate raged over how to respond. Determined to avoid war, Jefferson embargoed all American shipping. To Adams, this was an economically catastrophic decision. The ex-president wrote to Rush that this was a "cowardly measure," but he intended nevertheless to support the government. John Quincy supported embargo as a "worthy experiment" - the only Federalist to support Jefferson - and Massachusetts Federalists denounced his betrayal.

The embargo proved a colossal mistake and catastrophe for New England, and in 1808, John Quincy was forced to resign before his Senate term ended. Jefferson's successor, James Madison, rescued John Quincy from practicing law in Boston by appointing him minister to Russia. Abigail thought the appointment unsuitable and urged her son to decline. John dreaded the thought of his son being in St. Petersburg, but he advised John Quincy to accept any service proposed by his country. John Quincy and Louisa Catherine sailed midsummer 1809, taking two-year old son Charles Francis along. George and John remained with their grandparents. The separation, of indeterminate length, tore the elderly Adamses to pieces.

Knowing both men's hearts, Rush felt the time ripe to reunite the two ex-presidents. Rush had a great interest in dreams, and he and Adams had exchanged several. On October 17, 1809, Rush described one in which a future history of America would remember 1809 as the year Adams and Jefferson renewed the friendship and correspondence, with Adams taking the lead in rekindling them. Adams was delighted by the account and admitted it might be prophecy, but he did not immediately write to Monticello. Instead, he spent the severe winter reading about Russia as well as reading

modern epic poems and novels. At seventy-five, his major complaint was palsy in his hands. John Quincy's sons were making good progress in their studies, and Thomas, having married Ann Harrod and started a family, moved into the Old House on Penn's Hill. Old friend Elbridge Gerry was elected governor of Massachusetts.

As 1811 began, Adams slept well but needed glasses. His voice was weakening. It became the family's "most afflictive year." Abigail alone remained on her feet, nursing her sister Mary Cranch, who was dying of tuberculosis; Sally, who was spitting up blood; Thomas, who was crippled in a riding accident; and John, who ripped open a leg when he tripped over a stake. She wrote of her anguishes to John Quincy, but she withheld the worst news: Nabby had breast cancer and underwent a harrowing mastectomy at home, in an era before anesthesia. Richard and Mary Cranch died within days of each other in October. Just before Christmas, Rush wrote to remind Adams that he had told two visiting Virginians of his continuing love for Jefferson, and this had reached Monticello. Jefferson was ready to restore contact.

On New Year's Day 1812, Adams wrote the letter that Rush had prophesized. It was a brief, cordial note, promising some "homespun," which Jefferson took literally to mean home-produced clothing. He responded at length on domestic virtues. (The gift was, in fact, a copy of John Quincy's recently published *Lectures on Rhetoric and Orator.)* Jefferson recalled working for the common cause. He claimed to be out of touch with politics - which was hardly the case, because Madison and Monroe were keeping him abreast of events - and to prefer reading the classics that Adams enjoyed. Adams answered in high spirits and at greater length, recalling the voyage on the Boston, the story of his life. He walked and rode regularly.

Tremors made writing difficult (which was obvious). Adams thanked Rush for the wonders he had wrought, making "peace between powers that never were at war." Rush, the consummate intriguer, was exultant that the "North and South Poles of the American Revolution" were in contact again. Others might have talked, written and fought, but Adams and Jefferson had *thought* for all Americans. Rush wrote Jefferson to assure him that posterity would acclaim this reconciliation. One of the most extraordinary correspondences in American history began swiftly and built momentum, ranging over the breadth of life, society and the American Revolution. They agreed that no one would record the internal history of the revolution, so each wrote for posterity, as the leading statesmen of their time and two of the era's finest writers. Jefferson wrote as an elegant, well-organized, dispassionate stylist who refused to argue. Adams wrote as he spoke, warmly, humorously and personally, bouncing about subjects with no organization.

By the spring of 1812, the U.S. was at war with Britain over the impressment of seamen. Madison declared war on July 19, although the country was ill prepared to fight. Five days later, Napoleon invaded Russia. Adams chided Jefferson about having cut the navy drastically. By late summer, the remnant fleet had won several skirmishes, and Jefferson congratulated Adams for having early advocated "wooden walls." Despite the war, Madison won a second term in 1812. Adams wrote twice as often as Jefferson, at one point sending off twenty letters before receiving a single reply, but he counted

Jefferson's letters as more worthy. Adams tried to draw Jefferson out on a variety of matters: taxes, the judiciary, the navy, the Alien Law, checks and balances, the French Revolution, terrorism and the seditious Kentucky Resolutions (unaware that Jefferson was their author). Jefferson refused to wrangle or dispute. He conceded that Adams might have been misunderstood and that he deserved an opportunity to explicate his side. Party differences existed and would continue, but these should not affect the two men's relationship.

Adams wrote to other old friends and to the grandchildren whom he hoped to help become "worthy" in everything. He wrote to Rush about the horror of warfare. Responding to the death of Thomas' infant son Frances, he wrote John Quincy that one is not permitted to ask why fair flowers are blasted so soon. Rush sent Adams a copy of his book on mental illness, which became the standard American guide on the subject and earned Rush the title of "Father of American Psychiatry." Adams assured him it would surpass Franklin's writings. They corresponded about Adams' dream about buying a horse. In 1813, Adams described to the clinician Rush his aches and pains, low spirits, the loss of family and friends and the solitude of life. The Adamses learned that another grandchild, Louisa Catherine, had died in Russia, and John wrote the grieving father about the inscrutability and incomprehensibility of the universe and the need to submit to the general lot of humanity. John Quincy updated his father on Napoleon's retreat from Russia and the horrible conditions in the rubble of Moscow. He had mourned the fallen city, but he was filled with deeper, private woe at the loss of his child. Adams meditated on mortality, watching granddaughters blow soap bubbles with his clay pipe. When Rush died of typhus in Philadelphia, Adams mourned deeply.

Spring restored Adams' outlook, and recalling his vow to Rush to "rejoice ever more," he advised John Quincy to rejoice in all events and be thankful for everything. That, he declared, was his philosophy and religious duty. Nabby's cancer returned and was spreading, and her children John and Caroline brought her to her parents' home to die. She was carried to the room next to Sally, herself critically ill with tuberculosis. Abigail's rheumatism was bothering her, and she was exhausted. Nabby was emaciated and weak, and her intense pain required opium for relief. Her never-do-well husband, who had lately been elected to Congress, came to Quincy from Washington. Nabby died at forty-nine at dawn on August 15, 1813. Abigail was shattered. John was grateful and resigned that Nabby's death was a magnanimous release. Adams and Jefferson exchanged letters on religion, Adams declaring, "The love of God and His creation, delight, joy, triumph, exultation in my own existence ... are my religion." The Adamses managed to keep their heads up throughout the sorrowful 1813.

Part 3, Chapter 11 Analysis

The title of Chapter 11, "Rejoice Ever More," is drawn from the epigram, Adams' pledge to Benjamin Rush that he would preserve in heart, memory and mouth the biblical injunction drawn from 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22. This reads: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what

is good. Abstain from every form of evil." He used the key words of this passage to console John Quincy over the loss of his young daughter. Out of office, Adams feared ennui - weariness and dissatisfaction. The first highlight of the chapter is the restoration of relations between Adams and Jefferson, with glimpses of their rich correspondence being offered. The second is the march of mortality surrounding the Adamses. Siblings, grandchildren and old friends suffered. Worst of all, brave Nabby was ravaged by a cancer that a primitive mastectomy could not fend off. John Quincy's advancing career weaves through the chapter.

Part 3, Chapter 12

Part 3, Chapter 12 Summary

Critics of Adams' public life occasionally buzzed around Adams like insects, but he was largely insensible to them. Life in retirement was happy. To keep up with current events he read everything he could lay his hands on, and Abigail kept pace with him. They watched the course of John Quincy's career. In 1814, he was ordered to Belgium, to take part in peace negotiations to end the War of 1812, reprising his father's role in 1782. Events were moving fast, as Napoleon was defeated and exiled to Elba Island. The French monarchy was restored, and British invaders burned the U.S. Capitol and President's House. With the U.S. Navy driven from the seas and the Treasury empty, the future looked grim. New Englanders were talking of seceding from the union when word came that a peace treaty had been signed with Britain.

Napoleon escaped from Elba and led a march on Paris before being defeated at Waterloo and exiled for good. After a brief sojourn in Paris, John Quincy was transferred to London, again mirroring his father's career. Adams inquired enthusiastically whether his son had visited various places of fond memory. Adams found secession outrageous and strongly supported President Madison. He released grandsons George and John to sail to London, although the "dear boys'" departure left the grandparents desolate. Adams directed them to keep diaries.

Death continued to claim loved ones. Abigail's sister Elizabeth died in 1816. Paine, Gerry and Tufts departed life. Abigail prepared a will. Col. Smith died in June 1816. Jefferson, though younger, wrote about the ravages of age, to which Adams responded there was nothing to be done about it. The exchange of views sustained both men, proving to them there was nothing yet wrong with their minds; no one else understood their "antediluvian topics." Adams approved of Jefferson's decision to sell his private book collection to replace the destroyed Library of Congress. It would earn him "immortal honor." They were two of the greatest book lovers in a bookish generation. Adams owned 3,200 volumes and continued to be overwhelmed with book gifts from all quarters. He wished he had 100,000, particularly the forty-seven-volume *Acta Sanctorumyo* available only in Europe. Its legends, true and false, would be a "wonderful draught" for his mind. Abigail read to him when his eyes tired. Whereas Jefferson rarely marked books, Adams added copious comments in the margins, arguing with the authors.

In 1816, the Adamses added to their house portraits, long ago executed by Gilbert Stuart. Abigail declared herself but a "spectre" of what she had once been. At the Fourth of July celebration in Boston, Adams was the only "signer" present. Adams begged John Quincy to accept Monroe's rumored appointment to head the State Department. His country, and his parents, needed him home. Monroe dined with the Adamses during a tour of New England in 1817, but no news was available yet about their son. John Quincy accepted the offer and arrived in New York with his family in August, the "most

uniformly happy day" of Adams' long life. The last three presidents in a row had served at Secretary of State, and it was already being said that this was John Quincy's destiny too.

Three grandsons studied near Quincy during the severe winter of 1817-1818, and the Adamses enjoyed good health and happiness. In October, however, when seventy-four-year old Abigail contracted typhoid fever, everyone prepared for the worst. She rallied briefly, talking with her husband long enough to tell him she was ready to die and lived only for his sake. Distraught, John declared outside of her hearing that he wished he could lie down and die beside her. Abigail died on October 28 and was buried November 1. Adams bore the funeral with composure and serenity. John Quincy learned of his mother's passing only after the funeral. He recalled his mother as a blessing to everyone in her sphere, firm-minded, mild-mannered and to him more than a mother. She had been the comfort of his life. Adams consoled his eldest son, writing that the separation could not last longer than the twenty separations they had already borne. Newspapers hailed Abigail's role in her husband's career and thus her service to the nation as a whole. Jefferson, himself ailing, consoled his friend. Adams realized he had been blessed in a partnership with one of the most exceptional women of her time, and her letters would be read for generations to come. She had been the guiding planet of the Adams family, always a brave and willing supporter of his career. Years later, when complemented on his role in giving the nation its sixth president, Adams insisted: "My son had a mother!"

The family insisted that Adams accompany them to Boston to view an enormous rendering of the signing of the Declaration of Independence by painter John Trumbull. A young John Adams stood at the center of the composition, stout but erect, confident and determined. Adams recognized old colleagues, but his only comment, raptly awaited, was to point out the door through which Washington had rushed after being nominated by Adams to command the Continental Army. The all-important man was omitted from Trumbull's painting. Adams ended the year writing to Jefferson that there was nothing now to try men's souls.

At eighty-five, Adams' health and spirits held firm in 1819, and he wrote Jefferson thirteen times. Daughter-in-law Louisa Catherine filled the void left in Adams' correspondence. John Quincy negotiated a treaty that added Spanish Florida to the union, to his father's great pride. Adams kept close watch on his grandsons' academic progress and insisted that Thomas and his family move in with him to relieve their monetary plight. He loved company and a full house, but he also found inner peace in reading, thinking and simply looking out his window. He continued rereading Cicero's essay "De Senectute," on growing old gracefully, even though he knew it almost by heart. Ordinary things, even punctuation, lifted his heart and sent his mind soaring. He came to appreciate the necessity of mystery in the universe.

In late 1820, Adams was chosen to help revise his Massachusetts constitution. Lamenting his imbecility, he accepted the last public project of his life and delivered a remarkably energetic and forceful speech, advancing an amendment that would extend religious freedom to Jews. He received a standing ovation, but the motion failed.

Jefferson applauded his friend's good health and work in advancing liberalism. Adams claimed never to have believed that Jefferson hated him, but because Jefferson detested Hamilton, he had to oppose the administration and needed to pull Adams down in order himself to rise to power. Adams forgave all his enemies and hoped they would find mercy in heaven. He was happy to be again on "ancient terms of goodwill" with Jefferson. Adams grew sufficiently confident in their relationship to broach the taboo subject of slavery. Adams foresaw terrible calamities for the nation if it were extended into the west. Jefferson believed slavery was a moral and political depravity, but he refused to free his slaves or speak publicly in support of emancipation. The next generation would have to deal with it. He refused to debate with Adams. Adams considered Jefferson's work in establishing the University of Virginia at Charlottesville a "noble employment," but he would have preferred that U.S.-trained scholars be employed there rather than Europeans imports. Both dwelt on declining health and the deaths of friends as their correspondence dwindled. Neither spoke of the alcoholism that afflicted their households, of Sally Hemings or of Jefferson's financial plight.

On August 14, 1821, two hundred West Point cadets touring New England paraded past the Adams' house and were provided breakfast. Adams delivered a brief speech about Washington's legacy, shook each cadet's hand and was highly gratified by the visit. Gratitude now filled his life. He slept amidst his books in the library and thrived on a steady stream of visitors. His pride in John Quincy knew no bounds, but he refrained from writing too often in order not to waste his valuable time or divert his mind from vital business. He wrote regularly to his grandsons on a variety of subjects. In 1823, he interceded (unsuccessfully) for grandson John, when he and fifty fellow students were expelled from Harvard for rioting. He received the youth kindly into his house. When an old letter attacking Jefferson turned up in print, Adams was embarrassed, but he was gratified when Jefferson laughed it off. Adams fully enjoyed life, even as his physical condition began declining rapidly.

In 1824, John Quincy was one of four candidates to succeed President Monroe. Adams admired Andrew Jackson but forced himself to remain alive to see his son elected. Lafayette visited America to bid farewell to Adams and Jefferson. He visited Quincy on August 29. They reminisced happily, but each afterwards lamented how badly time had treated the other. John Quincy too was shocked to see his father's deterioration during a September holiday. His physical powers were gone, but his mind remained intact. He persuaded his father to sit one last time for Gilbert Stuart. Adams agreed, because he enjoyed the painter's company. Stuart captured the living spirit trapped in a decrepit body in one of his finest portraits.

Late October was always a difficult time for Adams, marking his anniversary, Abigail's death and funeral and his own birthday. When family and friends gathered for his eighty-ninth birthday, Adams was animated by prospects of John Quincy's election. The House of Representatives decided the inconclusive electoral voting in February 1825. Adams was proud of his son's accomplishment, but he observed that no former president could congratulate a friend on assuming that burden. Jefferson added warm wishes, which touched Adams greatly. The inauguration of the sixth president took place March 4, 1825. Friends in Quincy were amazed to see the second president rally as a result.

Adams expected his son's duties would preclude further visits home, but the president managed several days with his father in the early fall of 1825. Both knew it would be their last meeting.

Adams' visitors included the young poet Ralph Waldo Emerson and the writer Anne Royall. Hannah Quincy Lincoln Storer, the flirtatious "Orlinda" of his early diaries, turned up, and the old spark unexpectedly flared up. Josiah Quincy was too embarrassed to record the suggestiveness of the flirtatious and thoroughly human meeting.

In November, Adams submitted to a life mask for posterity. John Henry Browere had earlier recorded the visages of Jefferson, John Quincy and Charles Francis. It was a horrible ordeal by drying plaster and pounding mallet, and the result was a glowering old man at odds with the world. At year's end, Adams met Jefferson's granddaughter, and he wrote of the entertainment her visit afforded. She told him that her grandfather would like to repeat his life, to which Adams replied he would rather to go forward to meet whatever was to come.

As the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence neared, the two ex-presidents were invited to a variety of celebrations, but neither was up to accepting. Both, however, were determined to see one last Fourth of July. Jefferson was dependent on laudanum for pain relief, and financial woes plagued him. He dated his last letter to Adams March 25, 1826, noting that he had received a plaster bust of Adams, which sat beside his desk. He hoped his grandson would get to meet Adams, an Argonaut of the passing heroic generation. Adams' response was penned April 17. It spoke of his joy at meeting the youth and the pain he felt over the rough treatment John Quincy was receiving in Congress. American chivalry was the worst in the world. On June 24, Jefferson finished a farewell offering for the Fourth of July, an eloquent tribute to the worthies of 1776 and the hopes they had given all humankind. It was reprinted around the country. Adams was beyond undertaking anything that grand.

On June 30, he offered "Independence forever!" as his toast to the nation's birthday and "not a word" more. He could barely speak from July 1 onward, but as the cannons fired to greet the holiday, Adams rallied to say clearly, "It is a great day. It is a *good* day." Jefferson lay unconscious July second and third, but he awoke to ask if it were yet the Fourth. He slept several hours and then refused further medical treatments. He died at one o'clock in the afternoon on the Fourth. A thunderstorm struck Quincy, as Adams lay peacefully. In late afternoon, he exclaimed, "Thomas Jefferson lives." Struggling for breath, he whispered to granddaughter Susanna, "Help me, child! Help me!" and then lapsed into silence. Adams' heart stopped at 6:20 p.m. A final clap of thunder shook the house. The rain ended, and the sun broke through the clouds. By nightfall, all of Quincy knew Adams was gone.

Some 4,000 people crowded the First Congregational Church on July 7 for Adams' funeral. The family declined to let the state pay the expenses. Officials accompanied the body to the cemetery, where it was laid to rest beside Abigail. The president did not yet know of his father's passing. He left Washington on July 9 after hearing of his grave condition and received the mournful news near Baltimore. John Quincy' recorded in his

diary that it could not be coincidence that Adams and Jefferson died the same day. It showed divine favor towards the U.S. The theme was picked up in Daniel Webster's eulogy in Boston. The president reached his hometown on July 13, and entering his father's bedchamber, he felt an arrow pierce his heart. The house had lost its enchantment. Adams' estate, after possessions and some land were sold, amounted to $100,000. The John Quincy purchased the house to keep it in the family. By comparison, Jefferson died over $100,000 in debt. By his will, only five slaves were freed, and Sally Hemings gained unofficial freedom from daughter Martha Randolph. The remaining one hundred and thirty slaves were sold at auction, along with furniture and farm equipment. Monticello was sold, under priced, in 1831.

Unlike Jefferson, Adams composed for himself no epitaph. He had, however, crafted an inscription for his great great grandfather's sarcophagus, which stressed the virtues he had passed down to his posterity. John Adams saw himself as part of a continuum. Current leaders had known neither Adams nor Jefferson, and they could prepare eulogies only from secondary sources. Adams' own words to his grandchildren would prove a truer legacy: "Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. This is enough. ... So questions and so answers your affectionate grandfather." Adams' faith in God never faltered, and his creed could be readily summed up: "He who loves the Workman and his work, and does what he can to preserve and improve it, shall be accepted of Him." He held confidence in his country's future to the end, but he knew human nature could not be relied on to improve. Pain and uncertainty did not lessen his love of life. John Adams' epitaph could have been words once offered to a friend: "Griefs upon griefs! Disappointments upon disappointments. What then? This is a gay, merry world notwithstanding."

Part 3, Chapter 12 Analysis

The final chapter, "Journey's End," takes Abigail and John swiftly through their declining years and into the earth beside one another in Quincy. John Quincy Adams realized his parents' highest hope by becoming the sixth president of the United States, only to be assailed by a hostile Congress. Adams and Jefferson, despite the miles separating them, were reunited in a spirit of trust and understanding and then amazingly left the world within hours of each other. It is a moving and didactic ending to a remarkable, brilliantly narrated story.

Characters

John Adams (1735-1826)

The subject of this biography, John Adams, was the first vice president of the United States and its second president. Before reaching those pinnacles, Adams was a Harvard graduate, a schoolmaster, a renowned and ethical lawyer and a legal and constitutional scholar. Adams was the loving husband of one of the most remarkable women in history, Abigail Smith Adams. He fathered five children (four of whom reached adulthood and one of whom followed him into law, diplomacy and the presidency) and seventeen grandchildren, whose lives he sought to guide in worthiness. Portly but fit, frugal and fiercely independent, his loves were family, farm, books, writing, country and God. Long walks calmed his moods, which ranged from high spirits to crankiness. He angered - and forgave - quickly. He cherished friends and readily confessed his ambition to succeed in life, something he saw as dangerous in other men.

Patriotism burned in his heart from the first shots of the American Revolution, and he accepted the manifold hardships of every assignment his contemporaries placed on his sturdy shoulders. He was delegate to the Continental Congresses and diplomat across Europe. He spent a do-nothing eight years as vice president and four years of unfair calumny as a president determined to remain above partisanship. He built the U.S. Navy and worked to prevent its having to be deployed in combat. Most of his assignments separated him from Abigail, and he endured these painful periods because duty called. Denied a second term as president, he retired to become a simple farmer, but his tireless letter writing, particularly with Thomas Jefferson, translated old age into reflection on the half-century old nation's destiny and great creativity.

Abigail Smith Adams (1744-1818)

The wife of the second U.S. president, Abigail Smith Adams of Weymouth, Massachusetts, despite her lack of formal education, took part in a remarkable lifelong correspondence with her often-absent husband. She married John Adams in 1764, and they lived on a small farm at Braintree (later renamed Quincy). There, she bore five children, one destined to follow his father into the presidency. She was at her husband's side in Paris and London, where she learned to appreciate continental culture, and she lived with him briefly in New York, Philadelphia and Washington. She was often too sick to leave Quincy.

Whether in person or through letters, Abigail Adams was her husband's closest, most influential and politically astute advisor, calming and centering him and generally helping him make good decisions. Her advice failed him only once, when she advocated the Alien and Sedition Acts. She was absent when he made his most unpopular decision, to send a second peace delegation to France. She grudgingly oversaw the occupation of the unfinished President's House, knowing her husband would be denied a second

term. The couple retired to Quincy, where she initiated and then broke off communications with Thomas Jefferson following the death of his daughter, for whom she had cared in England. Abigail Adams died eight years before her husband, leaving him longing to be with her.

John Quincy Adams (1767-1848)

John Quincy Adams was John and Abigail Adams' second child, on whom they placed most of their hopes and who proved worthy of their trust by becoming the sixth president of the United States. His preparation for service to the nation began at age ten, when he accompanied his father on a diplomatic mission to France and a second to Holland. Still in his teens, he was taken to Russia by Francis Dana to serve as secretary/translator. Returning home, he graduated Harvard College, read law and was admitted to the Boston bar. He defended his father against Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* before being named ambassador to the Netherlands by President Washington. His nomination as minister to Prussia by his father brought strenuous Republican protests and calls for the president's resignation. He married Louisa Catherine Johnson while representing the U.S. in London, and together they bore four children. Jefferson's victory in 1800 forced Adams back to practicing law, but he was soon elected first to the Massachusetts legislature and then to the U.S. Senate. He broke with fellow Federalists to support Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, but he lost his Senate seat when he dared support Jefferson's disastrous embargo policy. In 1808, President Madison rescued John Quincy from Boston law by appointing him minister to Russia. President Monroe recalled him to serve as Secretary of State, by then a stepping-stone to the presidency. Heading the State Department, Adams negotiated the treaty adding Spanish Florida to the union and helped formulate the Monroe Doctrine. He won a narrow victory in the House of Representatives to gain the presidency, and while in office, he visited his father briefly not long before his death.

Abigail ("Nabby") Adams Smith (1765-1813)

Nabby was John and Abigail Adams' first child, who during her father's long absence in Philadelphia and Europe was her mother's constant companion. Nabby accompanied Abigail to France and thence to England, where she met and married William Stevens Smith, secretary to the American legation. She bore the Adamses' first two grandchildren and then followed them back to America, settling in New York. Two more children followed. Having taken slowly to Parisian society, Nabby found New York dull. Her husband was unable to find stable employment and was frequently missing from the home following various ventures. She and her brother John Quincy were very close after Nabby was reintroduced to him in Paris, and they remained frequent correspondents whenever apart. Nabby cared for her younger brother Charles as he slowly drank himself to death, and she often spent summers in Quincy with her children. In Quincy, she underwent a harrowing mastectomy without anesthesia in her parent's home, and it was there that she had her daughters take her to die when the cancer returned.

Thomas Jefferson

The political philosopher best remembered as the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson served as first U.S. Secretary of State under Washington. He became the second vice president under John Adams, his former friend but later fierce political rival. In 1800, he defeated his former mentor to become the third U.S. president. The Adams/Jefferson collaboration began during the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where they served together on the Committee of Five to draft the Declaration and resumed - even flowered - in France as they negotiated the end of the Revolutionary War in the Treaty of Paris. Ever a spendthrift and often a city-dweller, Jefferson was a strong advocate of an agrarian nation of yeoman farmers unencumbered by debt. This put him in conflict with Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, with whom he feuded in the Washington cabinet. Falling under the influence of James Madison, Jefferson's once cordial relations with the Adamses soured, and during his years as Adams' vice president, Jefferson not only remained aloof, but also led the virulent (and unfair) Republican opposition. He defeated Adams in the bitter 1800 election, in which he tied in the Electoral College with Aaron Burr and was selected by the House of Representatives.

Jefferson's greatest triumph as president was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which was surprisingly concluded, given Jefferson's republican views, by executive order. After Jefferson retired from office, as the physical strength of both Jefferson and Adams waned and their passions mellowed, the two ex-presidents resumed contact in a remarkably rich correspondence that covered all topics except slavery. To the end, Jefferson was unwilling to discuss the great anomaly of his life, owning slaves while believing in the freedom and equality of all men. Remarkably, Jefferson and Adams died within hours of each other on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

George Washington

Indisputably the "Father of His Country," George Washington served, on John Adams' nomination, as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and as President of the 1787 Constitutional Convention (which Adams did not attend). Washington's battlefield command experience was minimal in 1775, but his Virginia origins helped motivate the South to support the war and independence. The British commanders regularly outgeneraled him, but he kept his army intact through victory. Washington was the unanimous choice for president in 1788, and the runner up in the balloting, John Adams, became his vice president. Washington never took Adams into his confidence as president. Washington fell critically ill during his first term and accepted a second term only reluctantly. During it, his putting down of the "Whiskey Rebellion" in Western Pennsylvania made him the subject of fierce criticism in the newspaper *Aurora*. Tensions in his cabinet between Hamilton and Jefferson led to the formation of political parties, which Washington deplored in the Farewell Address that announced his categorical refusal of a third term. Washington retired to his estate at

Mount Vernon profoundly relieved, and he turned his attention to designing the new capital on the Potomac that everyone assumed would be named in his honor following his death.

President Adams brought Washington briefly out of retirement to organize and command the provisional army authorized by Congress to face rising French belligerency. Washington's insistence on having authority to name his general staff (including Hamilton as his second-in-command) drove a wedge between him and the president. Peace made the force unnecessary, and Washington returned to his estate, where he died peacefully and was buried surrounded by great adulation.

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was the oldest and perhaps wisest of the delegates to the Continental Convention, but he was hardly its most influential member, since he regularly abstained from debate. Returning from a doomed mission to Montreal to determine whether Canada might become a "14th colony," Franklin served on the Commission of Five that readied a draft the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and joined the mission to discuss peace with General Howe, an old acquaintance. Both assignments teamed him closely with John Adams. From early life, Franklin was involved in anti-slavery activities, but his fame was achieved in Philadelphia in publishing, science and philanthropy. He worked in London to seek repeal of the Stamp Act, which flamed American passions for independence, and he sought to avert a war. In 1776, he was dispatched to Paris, where he remained until his retirement in 1785, becoming a great favorite in French society. Franklin's inattention to administrative details, overspending and playing on his personal fame offended Adams when he was added to the American delegation, and their earlier friendship was destroyed. Franklin went out of his way to discredit his colleague before Congress, claiming he was out of his mind. Nevertheless, they secured the military alliance with France that probably saved the American Revolution, and with Jay and Jefferson, they negotiated the Treaty of Paris that ended the war. While in retirement, Franklin attended the Constitutional Convention. Franklin's funeral was the largest yet staged in the U.S. Adams feared that future generations would remember only the great inventor Franklin and the great general Washington.

Alexander Hamilton

Washington's first Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton was a leading New York politician who emigrated as a youth from the West Indies at age fifteen. He distinguished himself at King's College (Columbia), served as Washington's aide, led an assault on Yorktown and married into the wealthy, influential Schuyler family. He was brilliant, charming and hard working, a flamboyant dresser, ambitious and intriguing. Co-author of the *Federalist Papers* with later archenemy James Madison, Hamilton was the leading proponent of a strong central government. After Hamilton manipulated to move the Federalist vice presidential candidate ahead of him in the Electoral College in 1796,

Adams openly despised him, and Abigail referred to him thereafter as Cassius. After his retirement, Hamilton continued political maneuvering, most egregiously in the Adams cabinet. When Congress authorized a provisional army to resist growing French threats in 1798, Washington (coming out of retirement to take command) insisted that his former aide be named second-in-command. Hamilton, in league with the British, had visions of liberating Spanish Florida and Louisiana and perhaps beyond. Adams saw this as absurd and worked even harder to keep the U.S. out of war, in order to thwart this "second Bonaparte." In 1804, Hamilton's political machinations in New York politics and smart tongue got him called out on a duel by Vice President Aaron Burr, who mortally wounded him.

Abdrahaman

Abdrahaman was the envoy of the Sultan of Tripoli in London, with whom Adams and Jefferson dealt in 1786 to end the seizure of American ships by Barbary Pirates.

Charles Adams (1770-1800)

John and Abigail Adams' fourth child and long their greatest concern, Charles Adams was more outgoing and less focused than his brother John Quincy Adams. Expelled from Harvard for drinking, he went on to earn a law degree and clerked for Alexander Hamilton. He married Sarah Smith (1769-1828), and they had two children. Charles botched investments of John Quincy's life savings and refused to answer his letters. As word came that Charles had become a drunk, Adams disowned him. Abigail took his daughter Susanna under her wing. Charles died at his sister Nabby's home, bravely accepting his fate.

John Adams (1691-1761)

The elder John Adams was John Adams' father, whom he idolized as a hard working farmer, shoemaker and church deacon.

Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams (1775-1852)

Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams was the European-born and educated wife of John Quincy Adams and mother of four Adams grandchildren. After the deaths of her mother-in-law and Nabby, Louisa Catherine assumed a prominent place in the ex-president's correspondence.

Samuel Adams

John Adams' better-known second cousin, Samuel Adams headed the Massachusetts delegation to the Continental Congress.

Sarah Smith Adams (1769-1828)

Charles Adams' wife, known as Sally, was taken into his parents' household when he began drinking and carousing. She lay upstairs suffering from tuberculosis when Nabby arrived home to die of cancer.

Susanna Adams (1768-1770)

John and Abigail Adams' fourth child, Susanna Adams died shortly after her first birthday, while her father was serving in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress.

Susanna Boylston Adams (1709-1797)

Susanna Boylston Adams was John Adams' socially superior mother, born in Brookline, Massachusetts, whom he loved but about whom he said little. She got along well with her daughter-in-law, who remained at home in Quincy to care for her in her final decline before joining the vice president in Philadelphia.

Thomas Boylston Adams (1772-1832)

John and Abigail Adams' fifth child, Thomas Boylston Adams graduated Harvard, read law and was admitted to the bar. He accompanied his brother John Quincy to the Netherlands when the latter was named ambassador. He married Ann Harrod (1774-1846), and they bore six children. His Philadelphia law practice never took root, and he moved back to Quincy to start anew. In 1811, Thomas was bucked from his horse, leaving him in fear of remaining paralyzed for life. Thomas never got his feet on the ground financially, turned to alcohol and moved his family into the old homestead following his mother's death. He became the virtual caretaker of his father and the farm.

Benjamin Franklin Bache

Benjamin Franklin Bache was the grandson of Benjamin Franklin, whom Adams first met as an eight-year-old boy and companion of his own son, John Quincy, in Paris. Bache grew up to become a radical Republican publisher of the infamous newspaper *Aurora,* which calumniated Washington, Adams and Hamilton. He died during the yellow fever epidemic of 1798.

Edward Bancroft

Edward Bancroft was the learned medical doctor and inventor who served as secretary of the American commission in France, while a regularly sending off dispatches to London, written in invisible ink, as a well-paid British spy. As Franklin grew lazy, he came increasingly to depend on his friend from past overseas missions. Adams

instinctively disliked Bancroft as a gossip, mocker of Christianity and user of inside information for his own financial gain.

Joseph Bass

John Adams' neighbor Joseph Bass was hired to accompany him to Philadelphia in 1776 and bring back to Abigail hard-to-find commodities.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Military officer Napoleon Bonaparte put an end to the bloody French Revolution by declaring himself First Consul. He agreed to peace with the U.S. and sold Louisiana to Jefferson. In 1812, his armies swept into Russia. Defeated in battle in 1814, Napoleon went into exile on Elba, but he escaped briefly to lead the "100 days" effort to regain power. Defeated at Waterloo, he was exiled to St. Helena for the rest of his life. Adams considered Napoleon the great unknown factor in world politics.

Aaron Burr

Aaron Burr was a New York politician and Hamilton's great nemesis. He first ran for vice president in 1792, but he lost to Adams. In 1800, Burr tied with Jefferson in the Electoral College and was relegated to vice president after long wrangling in the House of Representatives. In 1803, while vice president, he called Hamilton out to a duel and mortally wounded him. He was replaced on the Republican ticket in 1804. Both Adamses were amazed and confounded by his ability to achieve power.

James T. Callender

The radical Republican "gladiator of the quill," James T. Callender specialized in attacks on Adams in *Aurora*. In 1800, he launched the first salvo in the election campaign, working from Richmond, Virginia, with encouragement and financial support from Jefferson, in a series of essays that later appeared as a book, *The Prospect Before Us.* To no one's surprise, Callender was arrested under the Sedition Acts, found guilty of inciting the American people against their president and sentenced to nine months in jail, where he became a martyr. In 1802, with the Sedition Act repealed, Callender published rumors of a sexual liaison between Jefferson and a slave, Sally Hemings. Callender was angered when Jefferson responded too cheaply to blackmail demands and produced proof of Jefferson's role in subsidizing his publication of the Hamilton-Reynolds scandal and defaming Adams. In 1803, by then a wandering drunkard, Callender was found mysteriously drowned in James River.

George Clinton

George Clinton was the popular governor of New York who joined the Republicans in 1792 to challenge fellow New Yorker Aaron Burr for the vice-presidency. In 1804, Clinton replaced the dishonored Burr on the Republican ticket and won the vice-presidency.

Mary Adams Cranch

Mary Adams Cranch was Abigail Adams' sister, with whom she shared her innermost feelings in letters over the years. She and husband Richard died within days of each other in 1811.

Richard Cranch

John Adams' long-time close friend, a good-natured litterateur, Richard Cranch married Mary Smith in 1762 and gradually drew his friend closer to the family and to his future wife, Abigail. Richard and Mary Cranch died within days of each other in 1811.

Francis Dana

Francis Dana was John Adams' likeminded secretary in France, whom he treated as a colleague rather than as an employee. In 1781, Dana was sent to Russia to seek recognition of U.S. independence and took along teenaged John Quincy Adams as his secretary and translator. In 1797, Dana declined President Adams' nomination to a three-member peace mission to France. In the 1800 election, Dana turned against Adams, which caused pain to his old friend.

Samuel Dexter

Samuel Dexter was the Massachusetts senator whom Adams named Secretary of War to replace the disloyal McHenry, whom he fired in 1800.

John Dickinson

The tall, eloquent, respected leader of the Pennsylvania delegation, John Dickinson was a bulwark of the faction opposing independence in 1776. Adams denounced Dickinson's "Olive Branch Petition," and two men clashed publicly, leaving Adams ostracized in Philadelphia. When final debate over the Declaration of Independence began, Dickinson spoke again against a "premature" separation, knowing this would end his political career and render him unpopular. To make the final vote unopposed, Dickinson absented himself from the hall. Although exhausted, he accepted a commission to lead

the Pennsylvania army that headed north to join the defense of New York, a gallant action that Adams praised.

Philip Freneau

Editor of the *National Gazette,* while employed by Jefferson as a State Department translator, Philip Freneau published articles attacking Washington and Hamilton while praising confidential information to the leader of the Republican opposition, Jefferson.

Albert Gallatin

The Pennsylvania legislator who succeeded Madison in the House leadership, Albert Gallatin called for President Adams to turn over the "X-Y-Z" dispatches. In 1801, Jefferson named Gallatin Secretary of the Treasury.

Horatio Gates

Washington's aid-de-camp at Cambridge, Horatio Gates was the victor in the Battle of Saratoga.

Edmund Charles Genkt

The audacious French envoy to the U.S., Edmund Charles Genkt's arrival in Philadelphia in 1793 was rapturously hailed. "Citizen Genkt" lobbied for Americans to make common cause with the increasingly bloody French Revolution, to the point of providing seamen for naval actions against British shipping. John Quincy Adams denounced his activities in newspaper articles, and Washington asked him to be recalled. Knowing he would face the guillotine in France, however, Genkt settled down as the son-in-law of New York Governor Clinton.

George III

King George III was the British monarch against whom the Americans revolted. He ascended the throne in 1760 at the age of twenty-two and was merely headstrong in his youth, but he descended into madness in his later years. He had much in common with John Adams: farming, books, talking, obstinacy, affection, religious fervor and patriotism. Adams found charges lodged by Jefferson and others against the king for the instituting slavery in the colonies as a moral plot to be ludicrous. Slave owners and traders were responsible for their own actions. Adams also found demonizing the king in the Declaration of Independence excessive. George III rejected without reading it the colonists' final "Olive Branch Petition," declared them traitors and dispatched his monumental fleet to subdue them. George III received Adams graciously as the first U.S. Minister to his court.

Elbridge Gerry

The Massachusetts delegate to the Second Continental Congress, Elbridge Gerry became Adams' life-long friend from the time of their ride to Philadelphia to attend the Continental Congress. As a presidential elector in 1796, Gerry warned Adams of Hamilton's maneuvering to throw the election to Adams' running mate, Thomas Pinckney. President Adams named Gerry to the bipartisan three-man commission to France to find a way of avoiding war. Cabinet members and Abigail thought Gerry too independent and unreliable for the mission, but Adams needed someone on the mission whom he could personally trust. Only John Quincy Adams stood above Gerry in this regard. Gerry was pro-French and openly admired Jefferson, offering hope of bipartisanship. Gerry was the only envoy not expelled from France, and his mission succeeded, but only at the cost of his reputation in the U.S. and political harm to Adams. In 1810, Gerry was elected governor of Massachusetts, and in 1812 he was chosen as Madison's vice president. He died of a heart attack en route to the Senate in 1816.

Jeremiah Gridley

Jeremiah Gridley was the leading Boston lawyer whose courtroom techniques Adams studied while preparing for the bar and with whom he first partnered. Gridley encouraged Adams to write his first extended political essay.

Sally Hemings

Jefferson's slave girl Sally Hemings accompanied his daughter Polly to London, and by 1802, she had reportedly born five children to the president. She was the daughter of a slave woman named Betty owned by Jefferson's father-in-law, who was reportedly her father. Jefferson was present every time Hemings conceived, in Paris and thereafter, and her children resembled Jefferson astonishingly. In their final correspondence, Adams and Jefferson avoided the question of Sally Hemings and of slavery in general. She was given her provisional freedom by Jefferson's daughter after his death, but she was not legally emancipated.

Lord Richard Howe

Lord Richard Howe was commander of the British armada of warships and transports sent to subdue New York at the opening of the American Revolution in 1776.

Sir William Howe

Sir William Howe was commander of British land forces in the battle for New York and brother of Admiral Richard Howe. From the time of the French and Indian Wars, the general had been partial to Americans, and he tried to effect reconciliation at the time of

the Declaration of Independence. His meeting with Adams, Franklin and Rutledge failed, and the battle was joined.

John Jay

John Jay was a wealthy, argumentative and somewhat haughty New York lawyer, congressman, diplomat and jurist, ten years younger than John Adams. Adams got along well in the Continental Congress with Jay, while generally differing on issues. After working unsuccessfully in Madrid, seeking recognition of the American independence, Jay was already working in France when Congress named Adams to the expanded peace commission. They agreed, against Franklin, that Congress ought not to have instructed the envoys to be guided by France in the negotiations. Adams gave him the lion's share of praise for the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Washington nominated him as the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and sent him to London to avert a resumption of war. The Jay Treaty was widely unpopular for conceding all the British demands and advantages. Jay was burned in effigy, and Washington was savagely attacked in the increasingly partisan press. Shortly before leaving office, Adams wanted Jay to return to the bench as Chief Justice, but when he declined, Adams named Marshall.

Henry Knox

Washington's first Secretary of War, Henry Knox was a frequent correspondent with Adams.

Toussaint L'Ouverture

The leader of a slave rebellion on San Domingo, Toussaint L'Ouverture wrote Adams suggesting an alliance with the former French colony. Adams granted the island de facto recognition, but Jefferson feared dealing with a population who could be expected to flood the Southern states.

Chevalier Anne-Cysare de La Luzerne

The French minister to America, Chevalier Anne-Cysare de La Luzerne lobbied Congress to recall Adams.

Henry Laurens

The former president of Congress named to conduct trade negotiations with Holland, Henry Laurens was taken prisoner by the British, leaving Adams in charge of the vital project. Laurens still showed signs of his treatment in the Tower of London when he arrived in Paris at the end of the peace negotiations in 1782, and he was absent from the final signing in 1783.

Arthur Lee

Adams' colleague in Paris in 1798, Arthur Lee was ill tempered and difficult, protected by his influential brothers in Congress and resentful of working in Franklin's shadow again (having been associated in London in 1775). Lee first raised suspicions about Silas Deane's corruption and obtained his recall. He advised Samuel Adams that Franklin was "the most corrupt of all corrupt men."

Charles Lee

Washington's last Attorney General, Charles Lee was retained in the cabinet by President Adams in 1797. Lee was a Princeton-educated, competent lawyer, primarily distinguished by being a Lee of Virginia.

Richard Henry Lee

The Virginia delegate to the Continental Congress, Richard Henry Lee made the fateful resolution calling for independence, which Adams immediately seconded.

Robert R. Livingston

Livingston was a member of the Commission of Five (Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston and Benjamin Franklin) established to draft the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Named the first Foreign Secretary of the U.S., the strongly pro-French Livingston infuriated Adams by demanding he explain his imprudent memorial to the Dutch government.

James Lovell

James Lovell was a philandering member of Congress from Massachusetts, elected in 1776 and assigned to the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Lovell was a shrewd, industrious patriot who loved intrigue. He was a practiced flatterer, sometimes to the point of impropriety, as in correspondence with Abigail in which he professed his love. In 1787, Lovell faulted Vice President Adams' breaking a tie vote in the Senate, sneering that he did so only because he looked to be president. They continued to correspond late in life.

William Maclay

A strong-willed senator from Pennsylvania, William Maclay led opposition to Adams during his first term as vice president. Because Maclay was the only member of Congress who kept notes about the debate over titles, his version, in which Adams appears a fool, came to be taken as the truth. Maclay led the faction preferring to give

the Senate power to remove cabinet officers, which Adams and the Federalists saw as the president's sole prerogative.

James Madison

The diminutive, sickly-looking chief author of the *Federalist Papers* and the U.S. Constitution - indeed, hailed as the "Father of the Constitution," Madison was a leading force in the House of Representatives and in alienating fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson's affections from Adams. He disliked and suspected Adams before they ever met. He convinced vice president-elect Jefferson not to send a conciliatory letter to the victor in the 1796 election and not to become identified with an administration almost certain to fail. Madison refused an appointment by President Adams to a bipartisan peace mission to Jacobin France and spent the years of Adams' presidency quietly collaborating with Jefferson to deny him a second term. Jefferson appointed Madison Secretary of State in 1801. Madison succeeded Jefferson as president in 1808 and was re-elected in 1812, despite having gone to war with Britain ill prepared for victory. Madison rescued John Quincy Adams from practicing law in Boston by appointing him minister to Russia.

John Marshall

John Marshall was a Federalist Virginia lawyer and cousin - but not admirer - of Jefferson. President Adams named him to the three-man peace delegation to France in 1797. Adams had not met Marshall before appointing him, but he instantly liked the sensible, candid, good-natured jurist who ardently supported Washington, under whom he served gallantly during the Revolutionary War. In 1800, Adams named Marshall Secretary of State to replace the fired Pickering and left the government in his hands during his absences from the capital. In the last weeks of his presidency, Adams nominated Marshall to head the Supreme Court. It was Adams' most significant appointment, for Marshall sat on the bench for thirty-four years and is considered perhaps the nation's greatest Chief Justice.

Philip Mazzei

Jefferson's wrote a private letter about the Jay Treaty to his Italian friend Philip Mazzei, elliptically criticizing Washington of apostasy. Noah Webster published it in 1797 in his *New York Minerva,* causing damage to the new vice president's reputation and deepening the rift with Adams.

James McHenry

Washington's last Secretary of War, James McHenry was retained in the cabinet by President Adams in 1797. A friendly, likeable native of Ireland and resident of Maryland, McHenry was a High Federalist, taking Hamilton as his leader. When McHenry and

Pickering dared oppose his peace plans in 1800, Adams fired them both from their cabinet positions.

William Vans Murray

William Vans Murray was the U.S. ambassador to The Hague, and Adams nominated him in 1799 as minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a new treaty with France. High Federalists objected to his youth and inexperience, and Adams was forced to add members to the team.

Richard Oswald

The chief British emissary to the Paris peace talks, Richard Oswald was favorable to American independence.

James Otis

James Otis was a gifted Boston lawyer and Jeremiah Gridley's protygy, whom Adams sought to emulate. His career ended when he began going insane.

Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine was the author of the pamphlet *Common Sense,* published anonymously in Philadelphia in 1776, which instantly caused a stir throughout the colonies. It was the boldest call for war to date. Paine was a recent immigrant sponsored by Franklin and encouraged to write by Benjamin Rush. Adams came to believe that Paine was better suited to tear down than build up, which was the larger task facing Americans after the long, painful struggle he alone among Congress members seemed to feel was inevitable. Paine had a "feeble" understanding of constitutional government, which Adams vowed to counteract among the masses. When Paine's 1791 pamphlet *The Rights of Man,* a furious response to Edmund Burke's book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* appeared with an endorsement by Jefferson, it was assumed his mention of "political heresies" was aimed at Adams. This prompted a spirited defense by "Publicola," John Quincy Adams, and caused the first break in the Adams-Jefferson friendship.

Timothy Pickering

Washington's last Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering was retained in the cabinet by President Adams in 1797. With war looming, the stubborn, severe-looking, opinionated, self-righteous, humorless Harvard graduate and Massachusetts resident was a crucial and conscientious member of the cabinet. He had served during the Revolutionary War on Washington's staff before being promoted to adjutant general. He served as the first

Postmaster General and later Secretary of War. A High Federalist, he took Hamilton as his leader and cooperated in Hamilton's grand plans for liberating Spanish territories. When Pickering and McHenry dared oppose his peace plans in 1800, Adams fired them both from their cabinet positions. In 1803, John Quincy Adams defeated Pickering for a Senate seat.

Charles Cotesworthy Pinckney

Charles Cotesworthy Pinckney was the staunch Federalist South Carolina general named by President Adams to the peace mission to France in 1796. The French Directory refused to receive him, and he retreated to Amsterdam to await instructions. Pinckney defended Gerry's unpopular decision to remain in Paris to attempt to resurrect the mission. In 1800, Hamilton schemed to elect Pinckney president. Adams reacted with humor to false rumors that he had ordered Pinckney to procure four mistresses for them to share, saying that he had been cheated out of his two.

James Putnam

James Putnam was the Worcester, Massachusetts, attorney under whom Adams read law while a schoolmaster.

Josiah Quincy

Abigail Adams' young cousin Josiah Quincy began attending Sunday dinners at the Adams' home in 1808 and later wrote about life in the "Big House" during the Adamses' retirement years. Serving as Adams' summertime secretary while attending Harvard, Quincy kept a diary that records many of the ex-president's favorite stories of times past.

Edmund Randolph

Jefferson's friend and relative, Edmund Randolph served as Washington's first Attorney General. He moved to the State Department following Jefferson's retirement and resigned that post following unproved allegations that he had accepted money from France to influence Washington against Britain.

Martha ("Patsy") Jefferson Randolph

Jefferson's daughter, Abigail Adams briefly cared for Patsy Jefferson Randolph as a young girl in London and held great affection for her, even after breaking with Jefferson. Patsy's death as a complication of childbirth broke Abigail's heart and occasioned a short correspondence with Jefferson. Her husband, Thomas Mann Randolph, ended his life as an erratic, causing Jefferson concern late in life.

Benjamin Rush, MD

Benjamin Rush was Adams' close friend in Philadelphia. At first glance, Adams felt him to be too much a talker to be a deep thinker, but Adams discovered they shared many common interests. A medical doctor who studied in Edinburgh and London, Rush wrote a pamphlet against slavery in 1774 and helped organize the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, while himself owning a slave. He was elected to the Pennsylvania delegation to the Continental Congress only in 1776 and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. As a physician, Rush gained infamy for mercurial purges and heroic bloodletting, two techniques he applied to Abigail Adams during her stay in Philadelphia. When press criticism of these techniques reduced Rush's practice to a trickle, Adams named him Treasurer of the U.S. Mint, despite his affinity for Jeffersonian politics. In 1805, the two men began a long correspondence that gave each freedom to vent as they could to no one else. When Jefferson left office in 1808, Rush saw an opportunity to reconcile his two friends and related a dream to Adams in which the latter broke the ice. Adams did not respond until 1812. In 1812, Rush sent Adams a copy of his book on mental illness, which became the standard American guide on the subject and earned Rush the title of Father of American Psychiatry. Rush died of typhus, tending patients until the end, in April 1813.

Edward Rutledge

Edward Rutledge was the youngest delegate to the Continental Convention, whom Adams disliked for over confidence and dandified manner. He participated with Adams and Franklin in the meeting with General Howe that the latter requested as a last-ditch attempt to head off outright warfare.

Jonathan Sewall

Adams' fellow Harvard alumnus and close friend in the years he struggled to set up a legal practice, Jonathan Sewall rose in the royal administration and offered Adams a plum legal position, which he rejected as counter to the revolutionary movement in which he was becoming ever more deeply involved. Sewall tried to dissuade Adams from attending the Continental Congress, arguing that the cause was impossible. He quit America before the war. Years later as U.S. ambassador, in London, Adams hunted down his old friend for a two-hour reunion. Sewall had withdrawn from life, bitter and resentful, and to Adams' mind he was a broken casualty of the war.

Elizabeth Smith Shaw

Elizabeth Smith Shaw was Abigail Adams' sister, with whom she couched her letters in the pious terms of the Weymouth parsonage in which they were raised, also motivated by the fact that the correspondence would be shared with her husband, the Reverend

John Shaw, whom Abigail had learned to respect. Elizabeth's death in 1816 was a profound shock.

Louisa Smith

William Smith's daughter Louisa Smith was taken under Aunt Abigail Adams' wing at age three. She played a major role in the Adams' household during the retirement years.

William Smith

Abigail Adams' delinquent, alcoholic brother, William Smith was rarely spoken of by name and was considered a possible genetic precursor of Charles Adams' destabilization and demise.

Colonel William Stevens Smith

A distinguished colonel in the Continental Army, Colonel William Stevens Smith was sent to join the first American legation in London in 1785. Smith, a Princeton graduate, married Nabby Adams and fathered the Adamses' first two grandsons. He followed them home to America, determined to pursue public service. To his in-laws' dismay, Smith proved a speculator, unable to find a stable career. In 1798, the Senate deemed his commission as a general officer in the new army unacceptable due to his bankruptcy. Smith was elected to Congress shortly before his wife's death in 1813, and he died in 1816.

Benjamin Stoddert

Adams' Secretary of the Navy after the creation of an independent department, Benjamin Stoddert was his long and loyal adviser.

Henry Strachey

Henry Strachey was secretary to General Howe when he met with Adams and Franklin on Staten Island in 1776. He was sent to Paris during the peace negotiations to stiffen Richard Oswald's resolve.

Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Pyrigord

The wily, charming former bishop Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Pyrigord was most influential in the French Directorate and initiated the "X-Y-Z Affair" by dispatching three assistants to demand bribes as a prerequisite to negotiations with U.S. emissaries in 1798.

Captain Samuel Tucker

The booming-voiced, veteran naval officer Captain Samuel Tucker was charged with delivering Adams safely to France in 1778 aboard the frigate Boston. Retired from the sea, Tucker visited the ex-president in Quincy in the spring of 1813, lifting his spirits as perhaps no one else could.

Cotton Tufts, Jr.

Cotton Tufts, Jr. was Abigail Adams' Weymouth uncle and land investment advisor whom she put in charge of the family's financial affairs while in Europe. Both Adamses maintained a lifelong correspondence with the doctor.

Charles Gravier, le Compte de Vergennes

The Foreign Minister of pre-Revolutionary France, Charles Gravier, le Compte de Vergennes advocated support for the American war, but from the start thwarted Adams' mission, preferring to deal with the deferential and obliging Franklin. Vergennes was a consummate man of the world, dedicated to humbling Britain and expanding French trade in America. He tempted Adams into speaking out in defense of devaluating the dollar and got Franklin to urge Adams' recall by Congress.

Mercy Otis Warren

A playwright whom Abigail Adams particularly admired, Mercy Otis Warren was the wife of retired General James Warren of Plymouth, Massachusetts. The two women frequently corresponded, the older, wiser and slightly superior Warren offering comfort and encouragement during Adams' frequent absences from home on business. In 1806, Warren published a *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution,* in which she singled out Adams as a betrayer of the Revolution. He had been "corrupted" by his time in England and capitulated to monarchy. He was marked too much by pride and ambition and too little by sagacity and judgment. Adams defended himself against her charges and demanded how she could believe them. Warren dismissed his letters as rambling, vulgar and malignant, and they stopped corresponding, ending a lifelong friendship between the two families.

Benjamin Waterhouse

A medical student at the University of Leyden, Benjamin Waterhouse helped arrange John Quincy and Charles Adams' education in Holland. He went on to become a leading figure at the Harvard Medical School and was one of Adams' favorite correspondents late in life.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. was Washington's last Secretary of the Treasury, retained in the cabinet by President Adams in 1797. A plump, Yale-educated Connecticut lawyer, believed to be trustworthy and loyal, he was the same-named son of Adams' colleague in the Continental Congress. A High Federalist, Wolcott, Jr. took Hamilton as his leader. Though deeply disloyal as his cabinet colleagues, Wolcott was not fired in 1800, and he was nominated to the Second Circuit Court by Adams in the last month of his presidency.

Objects/Places

The Alien and Sedition Acts

The most controversial legislation to which Adams gave his signature, the Alien and Sedition Acts were a High Federalist reaction to the rabid Republic press and the large number of French ymigrys whose loyalty might be suspect in the event of open war.

The Articles of Confederation

The interim constitution of The Articles of Confederation governed the rebelling colonies in 1776 through 1787. Adams took part in the passionate three-day debate over the document, opposing Article 17's single-vote solution. Americans had to unite as a common, interdependent mass, giving up the idea that they were individual states. Jefferson remained silent on an issue that was not resolved for a very long time. He did, however, rise to protest that Congress had any right to decide anything about Virginia's boundaries.

Aurora

The highly partisan Philadelphia-based Republican newspaper *Aurora* was established by Benjamin Franklin Bauche to succeed Philip Freneau's *National Gazette*. After Bache's demise, the paper was taken over by his widow Margaret and William Duane.

Auteuil, France

Auteuil, France, was the large house on the outskirts of Paris where John, Abigail and Nabby lived before his appointment to London was confirmed by Congress. They greatly enjoyed its quiet, pastoral setting.

Federalists

Proponents of a strong central government, Federalists' undisputed leader was Hamilton. Although he rejected partisanship, Adams was considered a Federalist.

The Gazette of the United States

The Gazette of the United States was the partisan Federalist newspaper to which Hamilton was a frequent contributor of articles and money.

The Kentucky Resolutions

Jefferson's reaction to the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Kentucky Resolutions (and Madison's Virginia Resolutions) declared the states as ultimate arbiters of federal authority.

The National Gazette

The National Gazette was the partisan Philadelphia-based Republican newspaper established by Philip Freneau to counter the *Gazette of the United States*. Backed by Jefferson and Madison, it was succeeded by Benjamin Franklin Bache's *Aurora*.

New York, New York

The site of the first capital of the United States, New York was where Washington was inaugurated and where Adams spent his first miserable years presiding in enforced silence over the Senate.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Colonial America's premier metropolis, busiest port and publishing center, Philadelphia was selected to host the Continental Congresses and later named the independent nation's interim capital while Washington, DC, was being constructed.

Republicans

Followers of Jefferson, Madison and the journalist Freneau, Republicans opposed strong central government.

The Stamp Act

The act of Parliament taxing everything in the American colonies printed on paper (except personal correspondence) was called the Stamp Act. It inflamed revolutionary passions, particularly in Boston, until it was repealed a year later.

Stoneyfield

Stoneyfield was Adams' name for his property beneath Penn's Hill in Braintree, Massachusetts, his birthplace (renamed Quincy in 1792). Before prospects dimmed for his re-election in 1800, Adams called it "Stoneyfield" in memory of his efforts to preserve peace with France.

Themes

Self-Government

John Adams' mind was occupied with the question of self-government from his college days at Harvard until his death. His valedictory address was entitled, "Is civil government absolutely necessary for me?" One of the goals he set for the Continental Congress was establishing governments in every state to supplant the colonial administrations. He found Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* as "feeble" in its understanding of constitutional principles and set about counteracting this in his own writings. His *Thoughts on Government* was used a guide for projects in North Carolina, New Jersey and Virginia. Adams rejoiced that his generation had been chosen to decide on how it would be governed, rather than inheriting a system imposed from without.

The goal of government, Adams held, was to provide the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. This could best be achieved by creating 1) two distinct legislative bodies, which could check and correct arbitrariness; 2) an executive annually chosen by the two bodies and holding supreme command over the military; and 3) a judiciary distinct and independent from the other branches, impartial, moral, patient and calm. In Adams' vision, judges should serve for life.

Adams was called upon by Massachusetts shortly after arriving home from his first mission to France, and he expanded his earlier treatment into a draft Constitution, which was adopted with few changes. It also addressed the prerequisite of a populace sufficiently educated to govern itself. During his second tour of duty in Europe, Adams saw first-hand the direct effects of a weak executive branch while dealing with the Dutch and the difficulty of reacting to Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts under the weak Articles of Convention. Government - meaning the executive branch - had to be able to prevail.

Before leaving London, Adams wrote *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* and sent copies to Jefferson and home. Thorough, high-minded and timely, it proposed that (once stripped of hereditary advantages), the English constitution's nearly ideal balance be imitated. Because inequalities within society would always exist, it was expedient to form the natural aristocracy into a Senate, which with the executive could prevent anarchy. Jefferson praised the book warmly, and it was admired in Philadelphia, even by Madison, the "Father of the Constitution." Adams recognized that no geographically dispersed republic had yet succeeded and that Americans lacked a perception of themselves as a single united people. States and individuals both saw the strong new Constitution as a threat to their rights. Anti-Federalists continued to follow Paine's failed precept, "That government is best which governs least."

Already as a young schoolmaster, Adams feared disunity, and in 1786, on the verge of attaining the presidency, he was of like mind with Washington over the rising political

divisiveness in America, dreading that parties would ruin republican government. Adams' chief opponent, Jefferson, professed faith in reason and democracy. To Adams's mind, this required that a majority of human beings cared benignly about those who differed with them, a thesis he saw abundantly disproved in France. Rosy-eyed Jefferson refused to accept that tyranny and dictatorship were more often the result of time-to-time rebellions than was republicanism. Late in life, Jefferson would concede that Adams had been the correct prophet.

Worried about trusting the lamb to the wolf, Adams published his views in *Discourses on Davila*. He drew upon many literary and historical sources to reveal the perils of unbridled, unbalanced democracy. The work stressed that a "passion for distinction" was natural in human beings, which could be turned to the public weal. The early debate over Hamilton's proposal for a federal assumption of the states' wartime debts set up the final establishment of antagonistic parties and broke the Adams-Jefferson friendship. The prospects for constitutional crises and the dissolution of union came when Congress debated the Jay Treaty and peaked when Adams signed the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. A violation of the First Amendment, the acts were passed as an essential war measure, but their obvious intent was to stifle the rampaging Republican press. Some journalists, the oft-libeled Washington and Abigail Adams saw that it was time to regain control. In retirement, Adams privately criticized actions like President Madison's embargo but insisted that the government always deserved the people's support.

Religion

A deacon's son who originally intended to pursue the ministry but who was deemed better suited for law, Adams was both a believer and an independent thinker. He saw no conflict in this. He took pride in the Pilgrims' legacy, and both he and Abigail displayed knowledge of the New Testament. Unitarians had not yet separated from Congregationalists during Adams' lifetime, and he is buried in the Unitarian graveyard. The two factions' common interest in social justice (including slavery) and education show up in Adams' character.

The divisive theological arguments over Trinity and salvation are never mentioned in this book. While attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Adams spent his Sundays visiting various churches and commenting in letters home to Abigail on the quality of their preaching and hymnody. He was surprised to find himself enjoying mass at the "romish" church, finding the ritual awesome and wondering how the Reformation had succeeded. Later, he belayed no qualms about living in Catholic France. Adams wrote into the Bill of Rights for the Massachusetts Constitution the "duty" of people to worship a Supreme Being without molestation. Later, after retiring from the presidency, he was called upon to amend the document, and he wanted to change the duty into a right that would be extended to Jews.

Adams' remarkably energetic and forceful speech received a standing ovation, but the motion failed. Still, he had an affinity for predominantly Protestant and religiously

tolerant Holland, which was near sacred ground to New Englanders as the place where the Pilgrims found refuge before embarking for America. He placed greater emphasis on the Golden Rule and saw equality as the heart of Christianity. Adams paraphrased Micah 6:8 to give grandfatherly advice to his grandchildren, "Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. This is enough." He summed up his positive faith thus: "He who loves the Workman and his work, and does what he can to preserve and improve it, shall be accepted of Him." Receiving Jefferson's condolences on Abigail's passing, Adams declared, "The love of God and His creation, delight, joy, triumph, exultation in my own existence ... are my religion." Elsewhere, he wrote, "Griefs upon griefs! Disappointments upon disappointments. What then? This is a gay, merry world notwithstanding." Learning that Jefferson would have liked to live his life over again, Adams replied he was looking forward to whatever came next.

Liberal Education

Extensively well read in the classics and modern literature, even by the standards of his bookish generation, Adams was thoroughly convinced that popular education at all levels was essential for self-government to succeed. He wrote this belief into Section II of Chapter 6 of the Massachusetts constitution, which called for "The Encouragement of Literature, Etc." Society - and government - had to promote the costs, for wisdom, knowledge and virtue came only through reading. The amiable outlook of French society appears to have had a decided influence on Adams during his first sojourn in Europe. He dreamed of establishing a Society of Arts and Sciences at Boston, as a counterpart to the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia, and it came to fruition in less than a year. At the end of their lives, Adams commended Jefferson's work in establishing the University of Virginia at Charlottesville as a "noble employment," but he would have preferred that U.S.-trained scholars be employed there rather than Europeans imports. Scattered throughout *John Adams* are snippets of advice from Adams (and from Abigail) to their children about the value of education. He urged his greatest hope for the future, the bookish and snobbish John Quincy, not to burn the midnight oil excessively and carefully steered him in what he ought to read, whether part of the curriculum or not. Happy-go-lucky son Charles he advised to discover what oil was. Later, he advised his grandchildren in what to study. He contended that his generation had to study politics and war as the means for allowing the next to progress to mathematics and philosophy, in order that their children might be free to study the finer arts.

Slavery

John and Abigail Adams abhorred slavery as "an evil of colossal magnitude." Adams defended slave owners in court, but he never defended a slave. Adams and friends like Benjamin Rush favored gradual emancipation, while Abigail, whose preacher father had owned slaves, was more radical. Fully a third of the members of the Continental Congress owned or had owned slaves. Washington and Jefferson owned close to two hundred each. A fifth of the colonial population (700,000) was enslaved, and over

500,000 of these were in the Southern states, where owners claimed they were vital to the economy. In Philadelphia, Adams found ludicrous charges lodged by Jefferson and others against King George III that he had instituted slavery in the colonies as a moral plot. Slave owners and traders were, of course, responsible for their own actions. All references to slavery in Jefferson's first draft were removed, and Adams was unwilling to jeopardize adoption of the Declaration of Independence by demanding the issue be pushed.

Jefferson wrote about slavery in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* as an institution of extreme depravity that corrupts future generations and invites God's just retribution on the country. He went on, however, to muse about the physical and mental inferiority of blacks to whites. Leaving Paris, Adams read aloud to his wife and children from a freshly printed copy, presented to him by the author, and declared the passages on slavery "worth diamonds," passing over the blatantly racist theses. During her brief stay in Washington, DC, Abigail grumbled about what she saw of Southern life, slavery in particular. It was a slow and wasteful system - not to mention morally wrong. True Republicanism kept the slaves half-fed and destitute of clothing, while the owners lived idly. The lower classes of whites were inferior to the slaves in every way. When Callender broke the story about Sally Hemings, a Jefferson slave, bearing the vice president's children, most people chose not to believe the allegations, but Adams appears to have, dismissing it as an inevitable consequence of slavery. Late in their process of rapprochement, Adams grew sufficiently confident to broach the taboo subject of slavery. Adams foresaw terrible calamities for the nation if slavery were extended into the west. Jefferson continued to believe that slavery was a moral and political depravity, but he refused to free his slaves or speak publicly in support of emancipation. The next generation would have to deal with it. He refused to debate.

Style

Point of View

John Adams is written in the third person as befits a work of historical biography. There are frequent inline quotations of letters to and from John and Abigail Adams and a few extended quotations from letters, speeches, writings and documents, but these are if anything underplayed.

Setting

John Adams is set in the various locales inhabited or visited by the most-traveled member of the Revolutionary generation. Much of the action takes place in Braintree, Massachusetts (later renamed Quincy), where John Adams was born and lived his married life whenever not called elsewhere by duty. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Paris, London and the chief cities of Holland saw Adams' footsteps, most often in the grandest public buildings and residences those towns and cities had to offer - in stark contrast to quaint, pastoral Quincy. The biography covers the years of Adams' earthly life, 1765-1813, with the briefest of looks back to his Pilgrim ancestors.

Language and Meaning

John Adams is written in straightforward but elevated, and frequently moving, modern English. McCullough has a flair for language more than equal to the task of portraying wordsmiths like John and Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson, who were among the most literate people in a literate and language-loving society. The meaning is always straightforward: recounting the events of a fast-moving (except for horses, ships and mail deliveries) age, with all its hopes and dreams, conflicts and debates, tragedies and victories. The work follows in great detail John Adams' earthly pilgrimage chronologically from birth to grave and offers sufficient details to understand and appreciate the giants of the exceptional age in which he lived and worked.

Structure

John Adams is divided into three parts. Part 1, entitled "Revolution," consists of three chapters: 1) "The Road to Philadelphia," 2) "True Blue," and 3) "Colossus of Independence." They take John Adams from birth to prominence in the Second Continental Congress, which declared American Independence and established of the Articles of Confederation to govern the new nation. Part 2, entitled "Distant Shores," consists of four chapters: 4) "Appointment to France," 5) "Unalterably Determined," 6) "Abigail in Paris," and 7) "London." These cover Adams' diplomatic postings in France, Holland and Great Britain and spend much time on his relations with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Part 3, "Independence Forever," consists of five chapters: 8)

"Heir Apparent," 9) "Old Oak," 10) "Statesman," 11) "Rejoice Ever More," and 12) "Journey's End." These cover Adams' years serving the United States in the Executive branch as the nation's first vice president and second president and his long retirement, marked by a restoration of relations with Jefferson, torn asunder during their years of political fighting. The book proceeds chronologically from John Adams' birth to his death. The declining years, often glossed over in biographies, are treated fully because they include the restoration of his correspondence with Benjamin Rush and - most importantly - Thomas Jefferson.

Quotes

"On the evening he invited Adams to go along with him to meet Abigail, the middle sister, it was for Adams anything but love a first sight. In contrast to his loving, tender Hannah, these Smith sisters were, he wrote, neither 'fond, nor frank, nor candid.' Nor did Adams much like the father, who seemed a 'crafty, designing man.' Adams's first impressions were almost entirely bad and, as he would come to realize, quite mistaken." Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 52.

"What John Adams said was not recorded. But as the constant battler on the floor, with all that he had written, his work on committees, his relentless energy, industry, and unyielding determination, he had emerged as a leader like no other, and when the breakthrough came at last on Wednesday, May 15, it was his victory more than anyone's in Congress." Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 109.

"They had both wanted another child and hoped it would be another daughter. 'The loss of this sweet little girl,' wrote Adams after receiving her letter, 'has most tenderly and sensibly affected me.'

"'Tis almost 14 years since we were united, but not more than half that time we had the happiness of living together,' she wrote plaintively.' The unfeeling world may consider it in what light they please, I consider it a sacrifice to my country and one of my greatest misfortunes.'

"Remembering these years long afterward, Adams would tell Benjamin Rush they were 'times that tried women's souls as well as men's." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg. 172.

"In his diary Adams compared the situation between Britain and America to that of an eagle and a cat. The eagle, soaring over a farmer's yard, sweeped and pounced on the cat, thinking it was a rabbit. 'In the air the cat seized her by the neck with her teeth and round her body with her fore and hind claws. The eagle finding herself scratched and pressed, bids the cat let go and fall down. 'No,' says the cat. 'I won't let go and fall. You shall stoop and set me down." The British, it appeared, were more ready to stoop and set America down than ever expected." Part 1, Chapter 5, pg. 279.

"For his own portrait Adams posed at his writing desk, with quill and paper in hand, and Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* prominently displayed to one side. Adams believed his strongest attributes were, as he said, 'candor, probity, and decision,' but these he failed to find in the face that looked back from the finished canvas, and he expressed disappointment. In Brown's portrait, he appeared composed, leaner than Copley had portrayed him, and reflective. It was a fine study of an eighteenth-century gentleman of consequence, but nothing about the pose or the expression gave any suggestion of his characteristic alertness and vitality, or sense of humor - let alone 'candor, probity, and decision."' Part 2, Chapter 7, pg. 344.

"'Popularity was never my mistress, nor was I ever, or shall I ever be a popular man,' Adams had written to James Warren at the start of the year, 1787, to say he had just completed a book that was almost certain to make him unpopular. 'But one think I know, a man must be sensible of the errors of the people, and upon his guard against them, and must run the risk of their displeasure sometimes, or he will never do them any good in the long run.'" Part 1, Chapter 7, pg. 373.

"At the start of every new venture of importance in his life, John Adams was invariably assailed by grave doubts. It was a life pattern as distinct as any. The boy of fifteen, riding away from home to be examined for admission to Harvard, suffered a foreboding as bleak as the rain clouds overhead. The delegate to the first Continental Congress, preparing to depart for Philadelphia, felt 'unalterable anxiety'; the envoy sailing for France wrote of 'great diffidence in myself.' That he always succeeded in conquering these doubts did not seem to matter. In advance of each large, new challenge, the painful waves rolled in upon him once again." Part 3, Chapter 8, pgs. 398-399.

"Adams's only known response to the news of Franklin's demise was in a letter to Rush in which he lamented the lies history would tell of 'our revolution.' 'The essence of the whole will be *that Dr. Franklin's electrical rod smote the earth and out spring General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod and thence forward these two conducted all the policy, negotiation, legislation, and war.'*" Part 3, Chapter 8, pg. 420.

"Adams harbored no illusions about his importance, any more than during his first term. 'My country in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived,' he told Abigail. The measure of his insignificance was that all parties could afford to treat him with some respect. 'They all know that I can do them neither much good nor much harm.'" Part 3, Chapter 8, pg. 447.

"'I dare not say how really unwell he looks,' she told Cotton Tufts. To Mary Cranch she confided, 'I think sometimes that if the [Congress] does not rise and give the President respite, they will have Jefferson sooner than they wish.'

"Yet his spirits were fine, his resolve unwavering in the face of Talleyrand and the Directory. 'Poor wretches,' she wrote, 'I suppose they want him to cringe, but he is made of oak instead of willow. He may be born up by the roots, or break, but he will never bend.'" Part 3, Chapter 9, pg. 502.

"Convinced he could run the government as well from Quincy as at Philadelphia, Adams stretched his stay at home from late March to September, fully seven months. From the views expressed by his vociferous critics, it was hard to say which annoyed them more, his presence at the capital or his absence. At worst, his absence seemed an arrogant abdication of responsibility. At best, it seemed a kind of eccentric scholarly detachment." Part 3, Chapter 10, pg. 526.

"At his desk the next morning, on a plain sheet of paper, which he headed, 'President's House, Washington City, Nov. 2, 1800,' he wrote to Abigail a letter in which he offered a simple benediction:

"I pray heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof." Part 3, Chapter 10, pg. 551.

"With Bache, Callender, and Alexander Hamilton all in their graves, Adams could only have assumed that such accusations were things of the past. Like nearly everyone who ever played a large part in public life and helped make history, Adams wondered how history would portray him, and worried not a little that he might be unfairly treated, misunderstood, or his contributions made to look insignificant compared to those of others. He had no great expectation of being celebrated. No statues or monuments would be erected in his memory, he told Rush, adding, 'I wish them not,' which was hardly so. It was an understandable desire to make his own case before the bar of history that propelled him in his labors at autobiography. But to have such a blow as this fall now in his old age, and inflicted by a friend, was infuriating." Part 3, Chapter 11, pgs. 594-595.

"For years afterward, whenever complimented about John Quincy and his role in national life, and the part he had played as father, Adams would say with enthusiasm, 'My son had a mother!'" Part 3, Chapter 12, pg. 626.

"At about six-twenty his heart stopped. John Adams was dead.

"As those present would remember ever after, there was a final clap of thunder that shook the house; the rain stopped and the last sun of the day broke through dark, low hanging clouds - 'bursting forth ... with uncommon splendor at the time of his exit ... with a sky beautiful and grand beyond description,' John Marston would write to John Quincy.

"By nightfall the whole town knew." Part 3, Chapter 12, pg. 647.

Topics for Discussion

What were Adams' true views on France, and how did partisan opponents distort them?

What were Adams' true views on the British, and how did partisan opponents distort them?

How would you characterize Adams' religious beliefs and practices?

How did Adams' relationship with Benjamin Franklin change over the years?

How did Adams' relationship with Thomas Jefferson change over the years?

Why did James Madison so strongly dislike Adams?

Why did Alexander Hamilton so strongly dislike Adams?

What was the key to John and Abigail's relationship?

What made Adams describe the vice-presidency as "the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived"?

What were John Adams' most significant accomplishments?

What were John Adams' most significant failures?

Why is John Adams not on Mount Rushmore or U.S. currency like Washington and Jefferson?