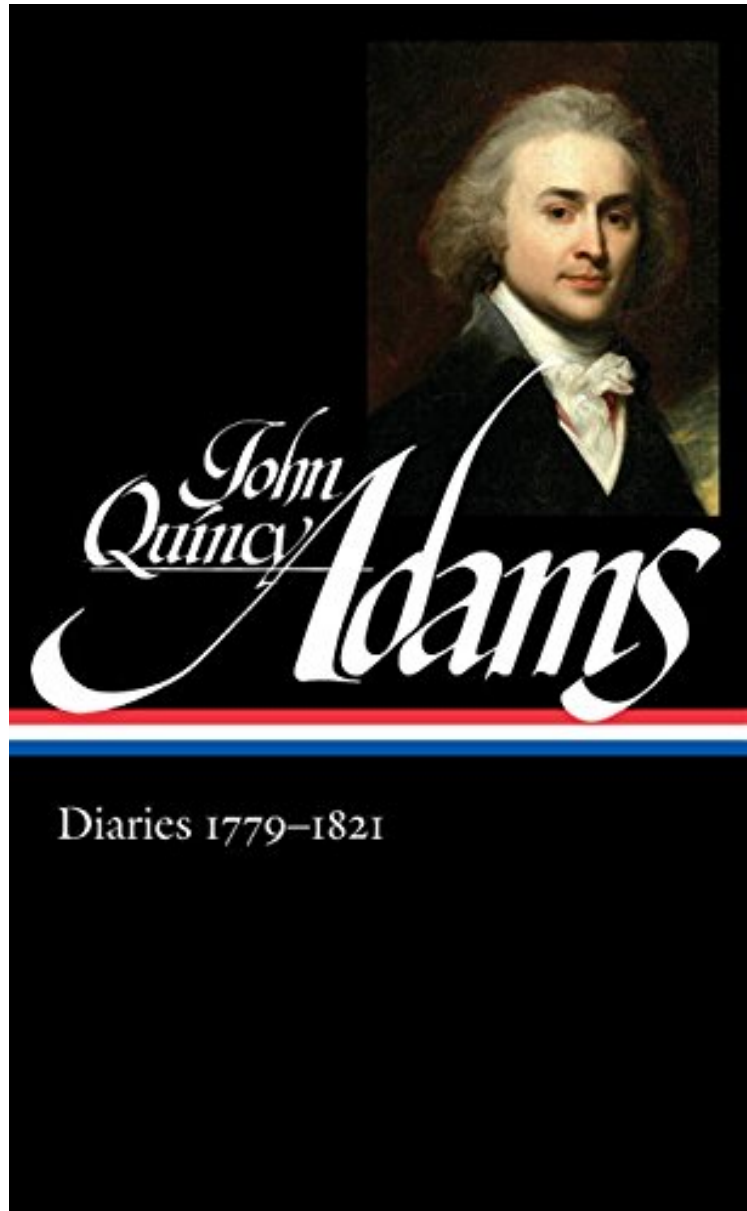


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John Quincy Adams: Diaries 1779-1821 (The Library of America)

John Quincy Adams

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John Quincy Adams : John Quincy Adams: Diaries 1779-1821 (The Library of America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Quincy Adams: Diaries 1779-1821 (The Library of America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I majored in history a long time ago and learned ...By John E. GillmorI majored in history a long time ago and learned a lot reading his diary entries. As soon as I de-compress I'll start on volume 26 of 6 people found the following review helpful. John Quincy Adams In the Library Of America: 1779 -- 1821By Robin FriedmanFor many years I have been interested in American history and have been particularly fascinated by John Quincy Adams. (1767 -- 1848) I have read biographies of Adams and histories of his era. I was gratified that the Library of America has published a two-volume set of entries from the diary that Adams kept assiduously for most of his life. The LOA published the set to coincide with the 250 anniversary of Adams' birth, and it also kindly sent me a copy of the set to review. John Quincy Adams was the son of John Adams, the second president, and Abigail Adams. Much was expected from him as the child of demanding, highly accomplished parents. He served as the sixth president but had a long, highly eventful career both before and after his presidency. At the behest of his father, Adams began keeping a diary early in his adolescence. The diary ultimately consisted of more than 15,000 pages in 51 manuscript volumes. As outlined in the "Note on the Texts" to this volume, earlier selections from the diary have been published over the years. The LOA anthology was prepared and edited by David Waldstreicher, Distinguished Professor of History at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Unlike earlier editions of the Diary, Waldstreicher presents both Adams' public life and his private life in his selections. The result in this first volume is outstanding. The book offers a portrait of Adams and his times. The volume begins in 1779 with Adams' first diary entry at the age of 12 and concludes in March, 1821, with the beginning of James Monroe's second term as president. Adams was Monroe's Secretary of State for both terms. The book allows the reader to follow Adams and his growth. Most of the earlier diary entries are short. But as an adult, Adams spent a great deal of time writing his diary. The entries are long and detailed and often include extensive quotations of discussions Adams had with others about important issues. The diaries also show a highly reflective individual deeply involved with his religion and interested in science, philosophy, literature, and music. Adams also engaged in introspection about himself and his own character and shortcomings. The entries also show Adams in his relationship to his wife, Louisa, his children, and his famous parents. Adams wrote the diaries for himself and for his family and not for public reading. Thus, throughout the extensive writings, he tries to be honest with himself. If there is a single theme running through the diaries, it would be Adams' insistence on his independence. In an entry of January, 1802, when Adams' name was first raised for a political career. Adams wrote: " I feel strong temptation and have great provocation to plunge into political controversy -- But I hope to preserve myself from it, by the considerations which have led me to the resolution of renouncing -- A politician in this Country must be the man of a party -- I would fain be the man of my whole Country." Adams' independence, integrity, and curmudgeonly character come through in the diary. This book is divided into seven sections. The first covers 1779 -- 1793 and shows the precocious over-achiever overseas in the company of his father, at Harvard, and as a young attorney in search of himself who might well have been happier in a different, more scholarly or reflective career. In the second chapter, 1794 -- 1801, Adams fills diplomatic posts under the first two presidents and courts and marries Louise Johnson. (The courtship is not fully described in the diary entries here). Chapter 3, 1802 -- 1809, focuses on Adams' career as a Senator during the Jefferson Administration. Adams showed his independence by breaking ranks with the Federalist Party and supporting Jefferson on a controversial trade embargo in the course of the dealings that lead to the War of 1812. Chapter 4, 1809 -- 1814, covers Adams' tenure as a diplomat in St. Petersburg and offers a full portrait of his personal and career struggles during this period. It also includes Adams' reflections on the War of 1812 and on Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Chapter 5 covers the years 1814 -- 1815 and includes Adams' highly detailed diary entries on his role as lead negotiator in concluding the peace ending the War of 1812. The entries offer a detailed view of diplomatic squabbling and personality differences, including Adams' difficult relationship with his fellow-negotiator, Henry Clay. The sixth chapter, 1815 -- 1817, shows Adams in London negotiating commercial treaties. In the seventh and longest chapter, 1817 -- 1821, Adams describes his life during his tenure as Secretary of State in Monroe's first term. These entries describe Adams' accomplishments in negotiating important treaties with Spain and Britain in expanding the boundaries of the United States. The diaries also show the contentious, intriguing character of American politics during the time, even though the Monroe years misleadingly are characterized as the "Era of Good Feeling." Adams often was at odds with other members of Monroe's cabinet and with members of Congress, including Henry Clay. The diaries offer detailed descriptions of Adams' service as Secretary of State which are invaluable for those interested in the period. They also continue Adams' reflections on religion, science, and literature. As the diary progresses, the issue of slavery assumes increasing prominence. Many of the latter entries in this volume involve the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Adams at first is reluctant to take a public position on the matter. As he reflects, he becomes increasingly concerned with slavery and the essential role slavery played in allowing the formation of the Constitution. Adams becomes openly hostile to slavery and expresses many fears that it will lead to the division of the Union into two or perhaps three sections. He suggests that the ideal solution would be a new Constitutional Convention to put slavery to rest, but he knows this will not happen. Adams reluctantly supports the Missouri Compromise but fears an ultimate division in the country. His concern with slavery will deepen and continue through the remainder of his life. There is a great deal in this volume about Adams, his times, and about the life of the mind. I enjoyed, for example, Adams' reflections on Plato's "Laws"

which he read in St. Petersburg in November 1811. He writes: "As my acquaintance with Plato becomes more intimate, my admiration of his genius, and my regret for his errors increases -- I lament that I had not sought this intimacy sooner, and more assiduously. ... His argument upon the nature and nature of the Gods, upon the immortality of the Soul, and upon future rewards and punishments is inferior to nothing but Christianity; and stronger [in the "Laws"] than in the Phaedo. I hope to be yet, much better acquainted with Plato." Waldstreicher has prepared a detailed chronology of Adams' life which will help the reader follow Adams' text. The book also includes helpful explanatory notes. This is an excellent volume for readers interested in the American experience who wish to deepen their acquaintance with John Quincy Adams. Robin Friedman² of 3 people found the following review helpful. Quality History Book Set By History Nut Hans Haven't finished Volume One yet, but both books have top quality sewn bindings and smooth, high rag content paper. It's a pleasure just to hold one!

For the 250th anniversary of John Quincy Adams's birth, a landmark new selected edition of an American masterpiece: the incomparable self-portrait of a man and his times from the Revolution to the coming of the Civil War. The diary of John Quincy Adams is one of the most extraordinary works in American literature. Begun in 1779 at the age of twelve and kept more or less faithfully until his death almost 70 years later, and totaling some fifteen thousand closely-written manuscript pages, it is both an unrivaled record of historical events and personalities from the nation's founding to the antebellum era and a masterpiece of American self-portraiture, tracing the spiritual, literary, and scientific interests of an exceptionally lively mind. Now, for the 250th anniversary of Adams's birth, Library of America and historian David Waldstreicher present a two-volume reader's edition of diary selections based for the first time on the original manuscripts, restoring personal and revealing passages suppressed in earlier editions. Volume I begins during the American Revolution, with Adams's first entry, as he prepares to embark on a perilous wartime voyage to Europe with his father, diplomat John Adams, and records his early impressions of Franklin and Jefferson and of Paris on the eve of revolution; it details his abbreviated but eventful years of study at Harvard and his emergence into the world of politics in his own right, as American minister to the Netherlands and to Prussia, and then as a U. S. senator from Massachusetts; and it reveals a young man at war with his passions, before finding love with the remarkable Louisa Catherine Johnson. In passages that form a kind of real-world War and Peace, the diary follows the young married couple to St. Petersburg, where as U.S. minister Adams is a witness to Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Its account of the negotiations at Ghent to end the War of 1812, where Adams leads the American delegation, is the perhaps the most detailed and dramatic picture of a diplomatic confrontation ever recorded. Volume 1 concludes with his elevation as Secretary of State under James Monroe, as he takes the fore in a fractious cabinet and emerges as the principal architect of what will become known as the Monroe Doctrine.

"JQA is a masterly diarist... [This] will be the standard readers edition of this masterpiece, which gives an account of both a fascinating life and a thrilling, disastrous period of American history." --Richard Brookhiser, *The Wall Street Journal* "The latest entry in the prestigious Library of America collection is a distinct treat, something long overdue for an attractive, accessible edition. . . . Readers don't encounter mere bare memos of events -- they're again and again immersed in well-drawn scenes and vivid personalities. Adams displays a dramatist's ear not only for dialogue but also for pacing. . . . It's an astonishing sustained performance. . . . Reading these entries for hours on end is spellbinding." --*The Christian Science Monitor* "One of the greatest of American diaries by one of America's greatest statesmen." --Gordon S. Wood, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* "There is no figure in American history like John Quincy Adams, a lawyer, scholar, poet, and statesman of boundless energy and vision. And in the annals of American history there is nothing comparable to his diaries, both as the lifetime record of a turbulent era and its people, and as a revealing portrait of an extraordinary man and his famous family. Based upon the original manuscript volumes, and including scores of passages suppressed in earlier editions, this Library of America edition restores a national treasure in all its richness and surprising passion." --Edith B. Gelles, author of *Abigail John: Portrait of a Marriage* "The candid diary of John Quincy Adams records the day-to-day insights, hopes, passions, and frustrations of one of America's wisest and most courageous patriots. Spanning almost seventy years, it addresses issues as varied as foreign policy, civil liberties, gender equality, and government aid for science, but especially the scourge of slavery, which Adams foresaw would rend the Union he worked so hard to build up. The Library of America here makes available an unparalleled resource for the study of our nation's politics, history, and enduring values." --Daniel Walker Howe, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* About the Author John Quincy Adams (1767 -1848) was one of the most experienced and well-traveled American statesmen of his era. Before becoming the sixth president of the United States in 1825, he had served as a diplomat in the Netherlands, Prussia, Russia, and England, and had led the American commission that negotiated the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812. After the last of his European posts he served as Secretary of State under James Monroe, and was the principal architect of the Monroe Doctrine. After his presidency, Adams was selected to represent southeastern Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives, serving for the remainder of his life, until his fatal collapse at his Congressional desk. David Waldstreicher is Distinguished Professor of History at

the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and the author of *Slavery's Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (2009); *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery and the American Revolution* (2004); and *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (1997). As editor, his books include *A Companion to John Adams and John Quincy Adams* (2013). From the Boxed Set edition.