

RS#14: Letters from Abigail Adams to John Adams (Adapted)

Abigail Adams (1744 – 1818) was the intelligent wife of John Adams, a former president, and also the mother of another, John Quincy Adams. At the time these letters were written, John was in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress, and Abigail was in Quincy at the family home.

27 November, 1775

I wish I knew what mighty things were happening. If a form of government is to be created here, what one will be formed? Will it be left to our Representatives to choose one? And will not many men have many minds? And shall we not run into disagreements among ourselves? Will not ten thousand difficulties arise in the formation of it?

If we separate from Britain, what laws will be established? How shall we be governed, so as to keep our liberties? Can any government be free, which is not run by laws that apply for everyone? Who shall make these laws? Who will give them force and energy? It is true that so far, the decisions of the representatives have been followed by the people as if they were law; but will they continue to do so?

Whatever occurs, may justice and righteousness lead us to peaceful times, and order arise out of confusion. Great difficulties may be overcome by patience and perseverance.

Adieu, yours.

March 31, 1776

I long to hear that you have declared an independency -- and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.