



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

John Quincy Adams

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For the 250th anniversary of John Quincy Adams's birth, a landmark new 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, 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 based for the first time on the original manuscript diaries, 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.

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