

LEVELED BOOK • N

Abigail Adams

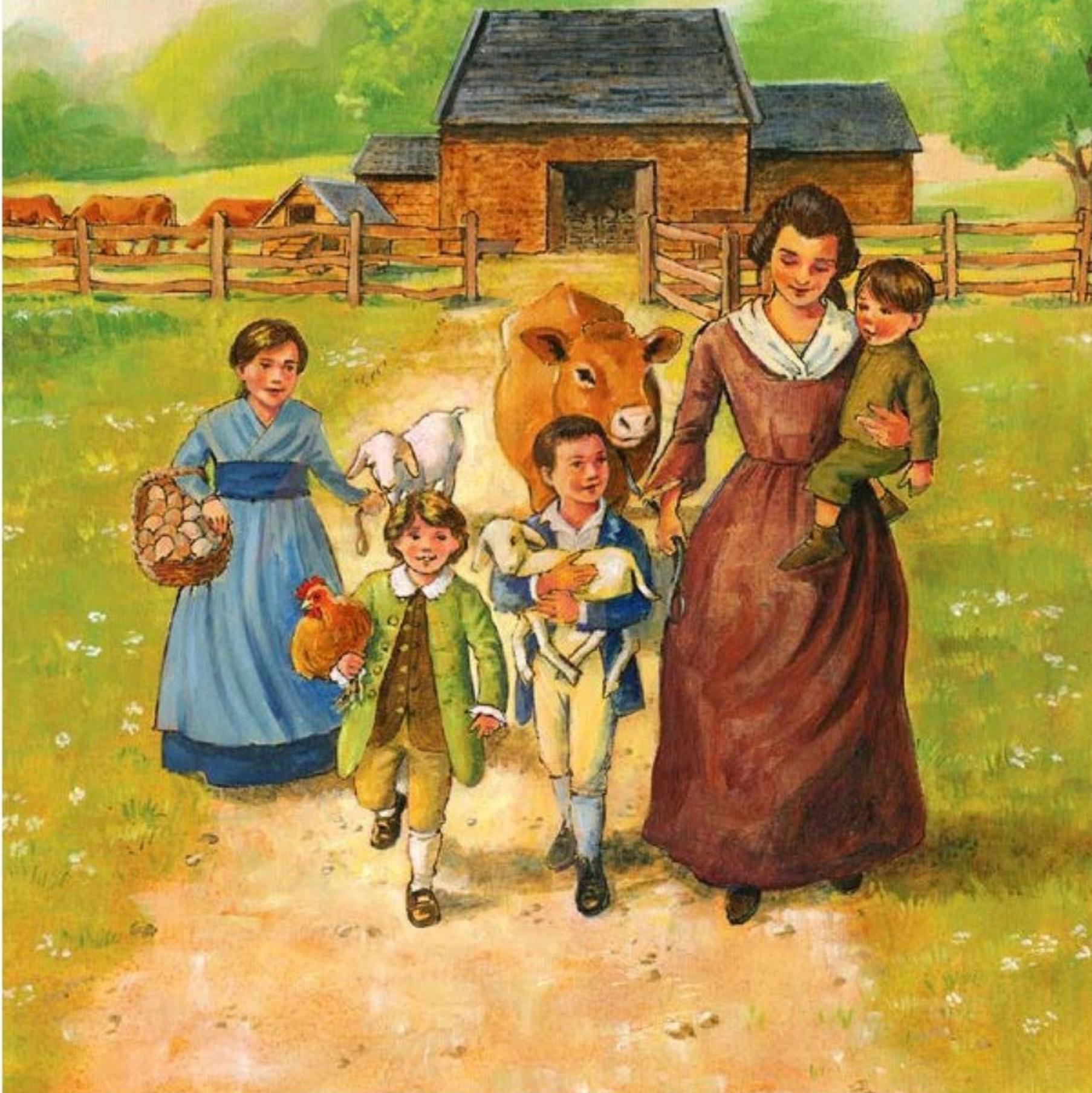


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Abigail Adams



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Focus Question

Who was Abigail Adams, and
why was she important?

Words to Know

advice
capital
colonies
elected
equal rights

First Lady
Great Britain
independent
politics

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This oil painting of Abigail Adams was made in 1795.

Who Was Abigail Adams?

In the mid-1700s, most women in North America spent their lives caring for their husbands, children, and home. Abigail Adams lived a different sort of life. She ran a farm and raised her children mostly by herself. She also helped shape the United States' first years as a new country.



Abigail Adams's childhood home is in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Early Years

Abigail was born on November 11, 1744, in Massachusetts.

At the time, Massachusetts was one of the thirteen American **colonies**, which belonged to Great Britain.

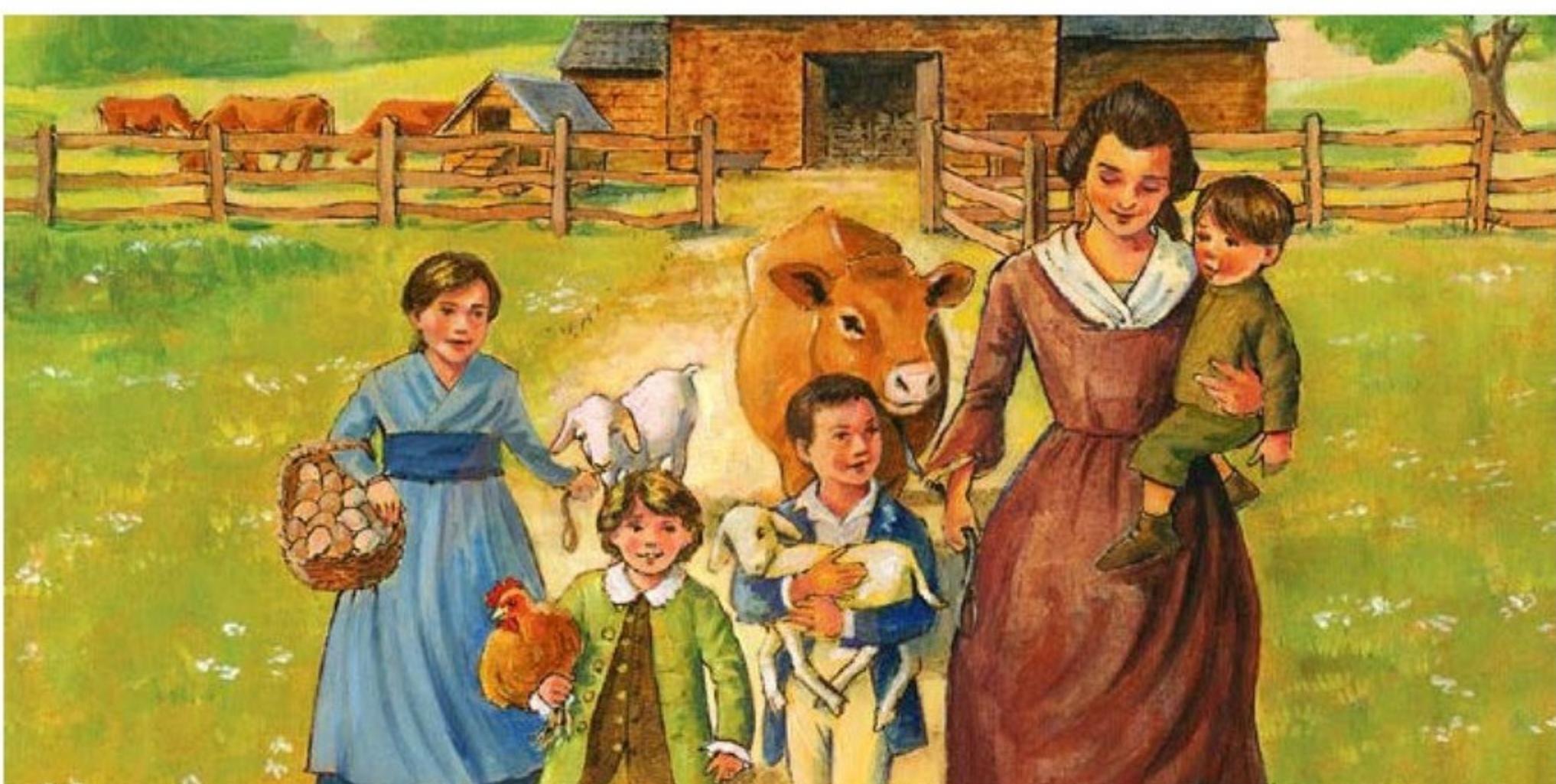




Abigail did not go to school. Most girls were not allowed to at the time. Instead, Abigail's mother, Elizabeth, taught her to read and write at home. Abigail was a smart girl who loved to read. She learned about the world by reading her father's many books.

Abigail married John Adams on October 25, 1764. They lived on a small farm that had been in John's family for many years. John worked as a lawyer, and Abigail managed the farm and the money.

In 1768, they moved to Boston so John's law business could do better. John was often away from home because of his work.



The Adams Family

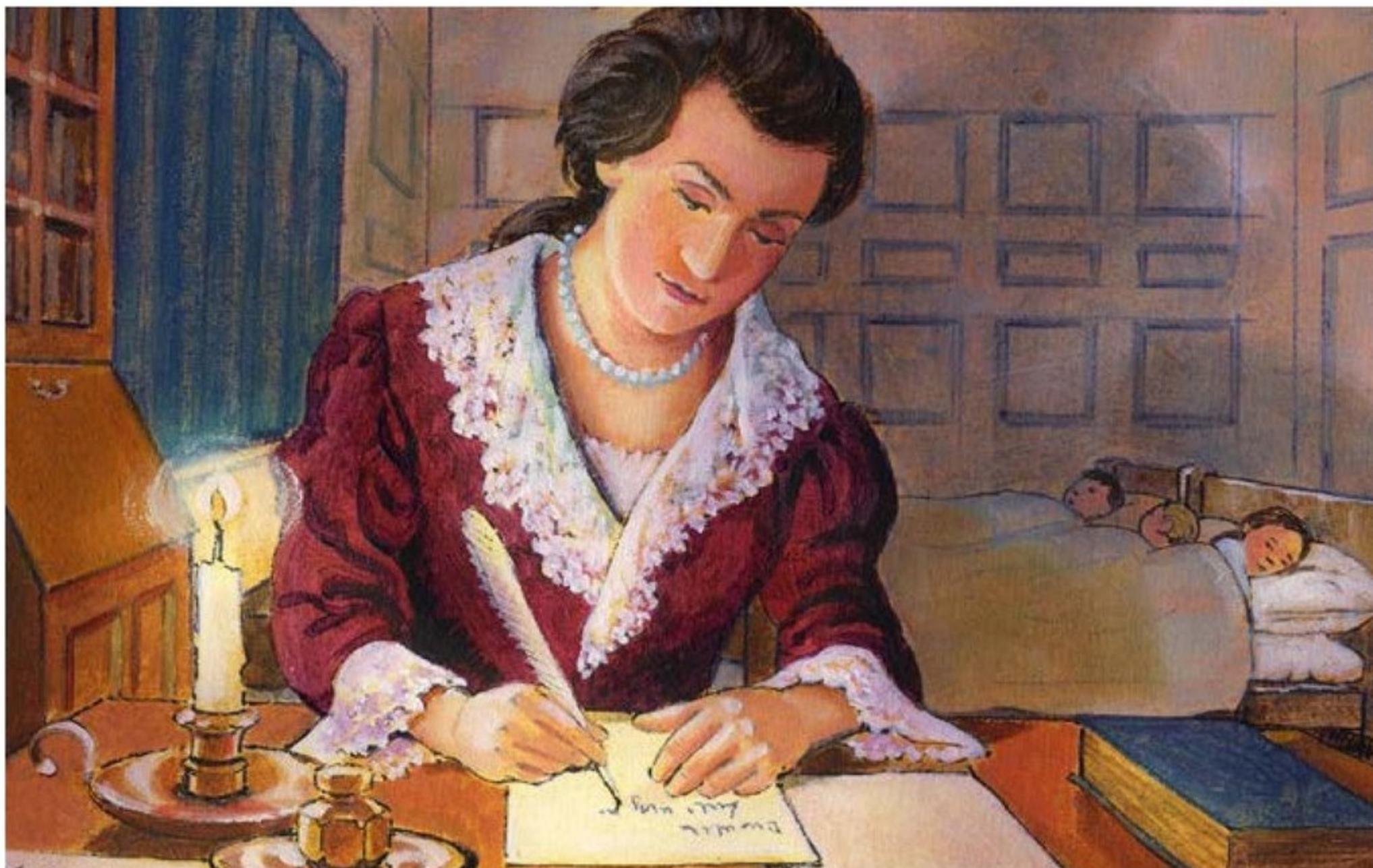
Abigail and John's children helped with chores on the family farm. Their oldest son, John Quincy Adams, became the sixth president of the United States.



This stamp (left) showed that a tax had been paid to Great Britain.
This painting (right) of John Adams was made in 1783.

War with Great Britain

Soon after Abigail and John were married, Great Britain began to treat the colonies unfairly. People had to pay many high taxes. Many people in the colonies, including Abigail and John, wanted to break away from Great Britain. They wanted the colonies to become their own country.



In 1774, John was **elected** to represent Massachusetts at the First Continental Congress. The Congress talked about how the colonies could become an **independent** country.

Abigail stayed home while John was away. She ran the farm and taught the children. A woman running a business was not common in those days. She hired people and bought land in John's name. Women could not buy land on their own.

While John was away, he and Abigail wrote many letters to each other. He often asked for her **advice** on **politics** as well as other subjects.

In 1775, the colonies began to fight a war to become independent from Great Britain. During the war, Abigail made meals for soldiers and cared for soldiers who had been hurt.



I long to hear that you have declared our independence - 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**, & be more generous & favourable 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.

Long-Distance Letters

Abigail and John wrote more than one thousand letters to each other during their marriage. In one letter, Abigail asked John to "remember the ladies" when working for American independence. Her letter was one of the first writings on the subject of equal rights for women in the United States.

John was elected to represent Massachusetts at the Second Continental Congress. John and Abigail continued to write letters to each other. Abigail gave John advice. Her letters helped tell the Congress how people in the country thought and felt. The leaders listened to what she had to say.

In 1775, the Congress declared the colonies' independence from Britain, but the war would not end until 1781.



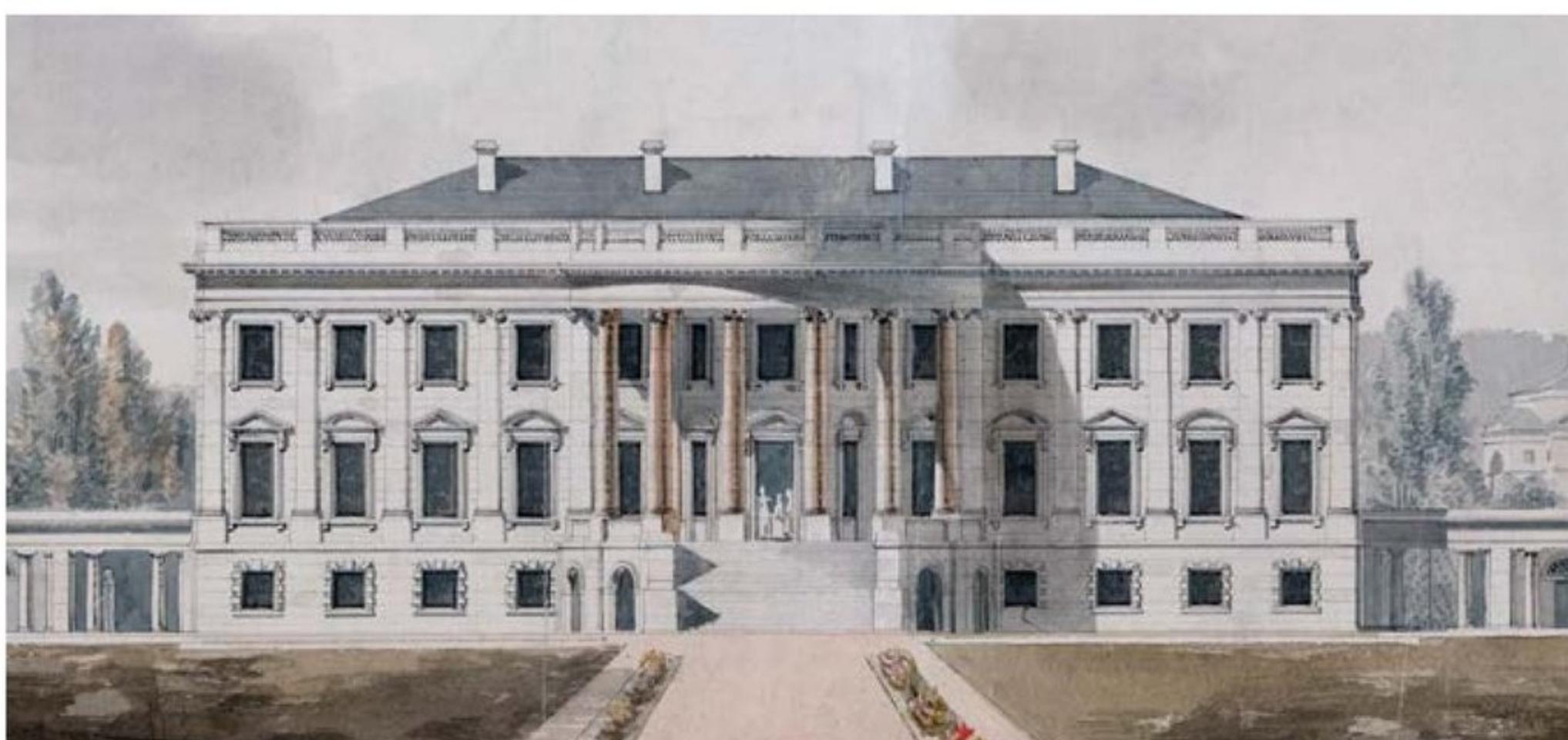
Abigail and John Adams's farmhouse in Massachusetts is part of the Adams National Historical Park.

After the War

The colonies won the war and finally became an independent country. George Washington was elected the first president of the United States in 1789, and John became the first vice president. John and Abigail moved to Philadelphia, which was the **capital** at the time. Abigail did not like the capital and soon moved back to the farm. Abigail and John continued to send letters.

John became president in 1797. As **First Lady**, Abigail gave her husband advice on many things. She spoke out against slavery. She also argued for **equal rights** for women.

Some people in the government did not like that John listened so much to Abigail's advice. They sometimes called her Mrs. President. Abigail never stopped talking about what she believed.



Do You Know?

John and Abigail were the first president and First Lady to live in the White House. It was called the President's House at the time.



This portrait of Abigail Adams was painted in her later years.

Later Years

Abigail was happy when John's four years as president were over. She wanted to go back to their farm and live a quiet life.

Abigail was sick during many of her later years. She died at home on October 28, 1818.



This statue of Abigail Adams is in Boston, Massachusetts.

Abigail Adams was a smart, strong woman whose ideas were important to the birth of the United States. She showed the world that the First Lady can speak up and work for important causes. Her amazing life and work are still remembered today.

Glossary

advice (<i>n.</i>)	suggestions or guidance (p. 10)
capital (<i>n.</i>)	the city where a government's main offices are located (p. 12)
colonies (<i>n.</i>)	areas or countries that are ruled by or belong to another country (p. 5)
elected (<i>v.</i>)	chosen as a member of government by a vote (p. 9)
equal rights (<i>n.</i>)	freedoms and powers that are as good as those of other groups of people (p. 13)
First Lady (<i>n.</i>)	the wife of a president or other head of state (p. 13)
Great Britain (<i>n.</i>)	an island on which the countries of England, Scotland, and Wales are located (p. 5)
independent (<i>adj.</i>)	not controlled or ruled by others (p. 9)
politics (<i>n.</i>)	activities having to do with government (p. 10)

Abigail Adams

A Reading A-Z Level N Leveled Book

Word Count: 625

Connections

Writing and Art

Write a letter to a friend discussing the future of the United States and ideas for making it a better place.

Social Studies

Make a timeline of Abigail Adams's life. Include three dates and at least five important events. Share your timeline with a partner.

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