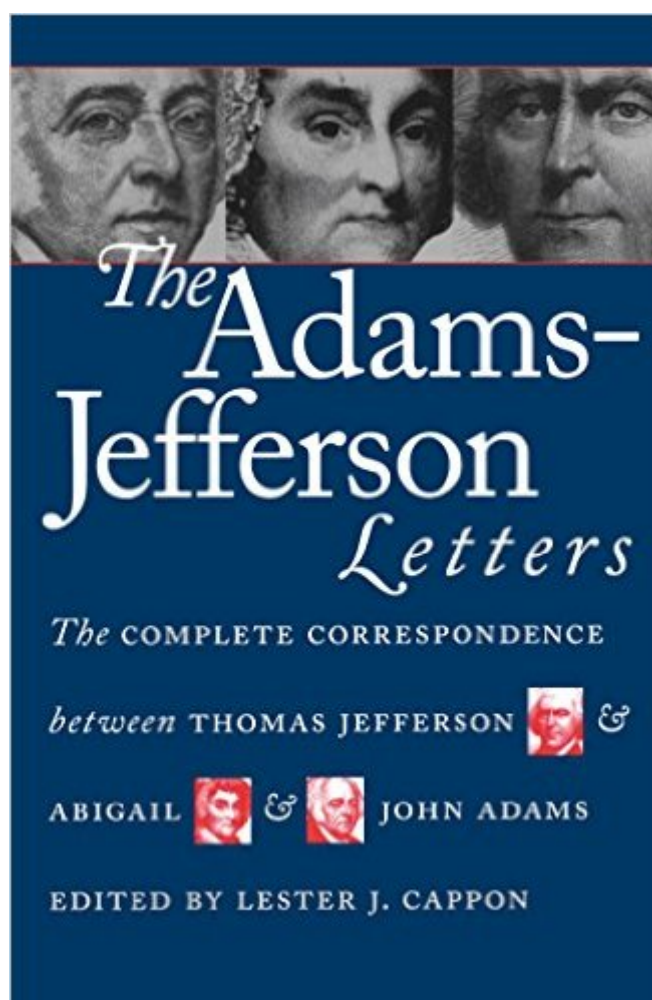


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The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson And Abigail And John Adams



Synopsis

An intellectual dialogue of the highest plane achieved in America, the correspondence between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson spanned half a century and embraced government, philosophy, religion, quotidian, and family griefs and joys. First meeting as delegates to the Continental Congress in 1775, they initiated correspondence in 1777, negotiated jointly as ministers in Europe in the 1780s, and served the early Republic--each, ultimately, in its highest office. At Jefferson's defeat of Adams for the presidency in 1800, they became estranged, and the correspondence lapses from 1801 to 1812, then is renewed until the death of both in 1826, fifty years to the day after the Declaration of Independence. Lester J. Cappon's edition, first published in 1959 in two volumes, provides the complete correspondence between these two men and includes the correspondence between Abigail Adams and Jefferson. Many of these letters have been published in no other modern edition, nor does any other edition devote itself exclusively to the exchange between Jefferson and the Adamses. Introduction, headnotes, and footnotes inform the reader without interrupting the speakers. This reissue of *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* in a one-volume unabridged edition brings to a broader audience one of the monuments of American scholarship and, to quote C. Vann Woodward, 'a major treasure of national literature.'

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Customer Reviews

Have you ever wanted to be a fly on the wall and to be able to share in the thoughts and happenings of important places and people? Well, if your desires in that regard include the office of the Presidency of the United States and the early days following the American Revolution, that is exactly what this book provides. As was typical of statesmen of that day, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams maintained a lengthy personal and professional correspondence the subjects of which were both mundane and highly intellectual. This book takes that correspondence, chronologically arranges it and then groups it according to the characteristics of the time and the themes of their correspondence. As an additional bonus, John's wife Abigail Adams is included as well. My attraction to this volume was to seek clarity and focus on several questions that are quite relevant to today. What was meant and intended by the concept of Separation of Church and State and what was the philosophic and religious thinking of these two important figures? There's no shortage of resources out there to tell you what these men thought, the context of their society and usually as an added bonus how these matters in one way or another support the agenda or perspective of the one putting the source together. At some point however, if you really want to grapple with these issues or just understand the times and importance of these two men, there is no substitute for simply reading and allowing them to speak for themselves.

This is an absolutely invaluable volume; the complete correspondence of two of our most important and able minds whose untiring efforts did much to shape our new nation and its form of government. The fact that our current government has departed so far from their vision is the fault of lesser men who followed these early men of genius, who were so devoted to the ideal of a workable constitutional republic. Indeed, for the last several generations of politicians it sometimes seems that principle has been replaced by expediency in our public servants. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were, without any doubt at all, true geniuses who mastered a large variety of disciplines, from literature to philosophy, theology, governmental design, the mastery of several languages, engineering, astronomy, navigation (see their remarks concerning Nathanael Bowditch, pp. 534, 536, 540), and especially diplomacy and political intrigue. Jefferson's remarks about the pronunciation of the ancient Greek language (pp. 536-539) shows a deep and penetrating interest in a subject that today is of interest only to advanced scholars. Indeed, most of their correspondence in their later years demonstrates an interest and, indeed, vast knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. Theirs was an age of generalists -- men who were conversant on a broad range of subjects -- as opposed to today, when we tend to specialization. Much of their early correspondence included references to Dr. Benjamin Franklin, with whom they were associated while the three of

them represented the United States in Europe and England, in creating trade treaties and diplomatic ventures, including relations with the Barbary states (pirates).

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