



John Adams

By David McCullough

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The Pulitzer Prize–winning, bestselling biography of America’s founding father and second president that was the basis for the acclaimed HBO series, brilliantly told by master historian David McCullough.

In this powerful, epic biography, David McCullough unfolds the adventurous life journey of John Adams, the brilliant, fiercely independent, often irascible, always honest Yankee patriot who spared nothing in his zeal for the American Revolution; who rose to become the second president of the United States and saved the country from blundering into an unnecessary war; who was learned beyond all but a few and regarded by some as “out of his senses”; and whose marriage to the wise and valiant Abigail Adams is one of the moving love stories in American history.

This is history on a grand scale—a book about politics and war and social issues, but also about human nature, love, religious faith, virtue, ambition, friendship, and betrayal, and the far-reaching consequences of noble ideas. Above all, *John Adams* is an enthralling, often surprising story of one of the most important and fascinating Americans who ever lived.

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John Adams By David McCullough Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #10355 in eBooks
- Published on: 2001-05-22
- Released on: 2001-05-22
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Left to his own devices, John Adams might have lived out his days as a Massachusetts country lawyer, devoted to his family and friends. As it was, events swiftly overtook him, and Adams--who, David McCullough writes, was "not a man of the world" and not fond of politics--came to greatness as the second president of the United States, and one of the most distinguished of a generation of revolutionary leaders. He found reason to dislike sectarian wrangling even more in the aftermath of war, when Federalist and anti-Federalist factions vied bitterly for power, introducing scandal into an administration beset by other difficulties--including pirates on the high seas, conflict with France and England, and all the public controversy attendant in building a nation.

Overshadowed by the lustrous presidents Washington and Jefferson, who bracketed his tenure in office, Adams emerges from McCullough's brilliant biography as a truly heroic figure--not only for his significant role in the American Revolution but also for maintaining his personal integrity in its strife-filled aftermath. McCullough spends much of his narrative examining the troubled friendship between Adams and Jefferson, who had in common a love for books and ideas but differed on almost every other imaginable point. Reading his pages, it is easy to imagine the two as alter egos. (Strangely, both died on the same day, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.) But McCullough also considers Adams in his own light, and the portrait that emerges is altogether fascinating. --*Gregory McNamee*

From Publishers Weekly

Here a preeminent master of narrative history takes on the most fascinating of our founders to create a benchmark for all Adams biographers. With a keen eye for telling detail and a master storyteller's instinct for human interest, McCullough (Truman; *Mornings on Horseback*) resurrects the great Federalist (1735-1826), revealing in particular his restrained, sometimes off-putting disposition, as well as his political guile. The events McCullough recounts are well-known, but with his astute marshaling of facts, the author surpasses previous biographers in depicting Adams's years at Harvard, his early public life in Boston and his role in the first Continental Congress, where he helped shape the philosophical basis for the Revolution. McCullough also makes vivid Adams's actions in the second Congress, during which he was the first to propose George Washington to command the new Continental Army. Later on, we see Adams bickering with Tom Paine's plan for government as suggested in *Common Sense*, helping push through the draft for the Declaration of Independence penned by his longtime friend and frequent rival, Thomas Jefferson, and serving as commissioner to France and envoy to the Court of St. James's. The author is likewise brilliant in portraying Adams's complex relationship with Jefferson, who ousted him from the White House in 1800 and with whom he would share a remarkable death date 26 years later: July 4, 1826, 50 years to the day after the signing of the Declaration. (June) Forecast: Joseph Ellis has shown us the Founding Fathers can be bestsellers, and S&S knows it has a winner: first printing is 350,000 copies, and McCullough will go on a 15-city tour; both Book-of-the-Month Club and the History Book Club have taken this book as a selection.

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From Library Journal

This life of Adams is an extraordinary portrait of an extraordinary man who has not received his due in America's early political history but whose life work significantly affected his country's future. McCullough is here following his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, *Truman*, and his subjects have much in common as

leaders who struggled to establish their own presidential identities as they emerged from the shadows of their revered predecessors. The author paints a portrait of Adams, the patriot, in the fullest sense of the word. The reader is treated to engaging descriptions and accounts of Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, among others, as well as the significant figures in the Adams family: Abigail, John's love and full partner, and son John Quincy. In tracing Adams's life from childhood through his many critical, heroic, and selfless acts during the Revolution, his vice presidency under Washington, and his own term as president, the full measure of Adams a man widely regarded in his time as the equal of Jefferson, Hamilton, and all of the other Founding Fathers is revealed. This excellent biography deserves a wide audience. Thomas J. Baldino, Wilkes Univ., Wilkes-Barre, PA
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Rocha:

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