

Abigail Adams  
*By Nancy Mann*

In '75, the town crier announced:  
"The British want us trounced!  
Your households'll have  
No sugar, coffee, pepper, or shoes!"  
To Abigail Adams,  
This wasn't new "news" ...

Revolutionary War – the 1777 "score"  
Would mean inflation...  
No bread, sugar, salt, meat, cotton or wool...  
Abigail was no fool.

Having foresight, I believe –  
She taught herself how to weave –  
Cooked over an open hearth.  
Fed ducks, baked, churned butter –  
Conscientious in all –  
No wood-chopping, wood-stacking feat too small –  
Feelings of self-worth ne'er abated –  
Ego ne'er inflated  
Abigail was temperate –  
A New Englander – not known to be agitated.

John Adams rode out  
Over many dangerous post roads –  
Made ferry crossings (in storms) – fifty miles one way  
To various legislatures – in the January cold –  
(1774-1776) – rides exhausting one horse, two days –  
Endured much for her words bold –  
He fed off her bravery – it's been told.

Duty was foremost to her, for example –  
For her husband's (John Adams) career  
Parties she would host –  
Of the 18 hour days to prepare for dinners –  
She never would boast;

Though she struggled with one son, Charles –  
And dreaded his "failures"

Abigail practiced “tough love”...  
“Hold not your breath for rescue,” she said –  
The hour I appear...will be... late.”

She wasn’t an “Anti-vaxxer!”  
She underwent smallpox treatment in Boston-once –  
The city was quarantined –  
She nursed there a household of... seventeen!

Bearing a child alone –  
A break in the routine of laboring  
On her farm and in her home  
A daughter arrived – stillborn.  
She wrote John after the burial  
“English grain promising –  
Well is the corn...”

Later, she wrote “Great minds are called to severe trials.”  
But, surely, her tears filled many a vial.

These were the times of Sir William Howe  
And Howe’s personal vow –  
With 267 ships, 18,000 men  
For destruction of the colonies, then.  
(Wreck the new nation! O, come!  
Humiliating conflagration!)  
Abigail had witnessed Bunker Hill – urged all  
To patriotic duty – it was such a bitter pill;  
“King George III, mad, with temper,  
Has objects and our maps hurled –  
He shall not dominate us,” she said,  
“Though he controls the seas of the world!”

She challenged John to fight  
(They actually had Tory friends who “left town” that night)  
Vowed to foster his ambitions;  
Ended up molding his life.

She preached, “Merit, not titles,  
Give men pre-eminence in America.”  
She exuded concern for John’s striving  
For the “greater good”...  
Wrote of many ideals of citizens and womanhood.

She served as an ambassador to England, later,  
Helped to prevent second war, historians bet –  
(In France, she befriended, influenced, critically,  
The wife, who in turn, urged, “our” Lafayette) ...

Writing the First Congress:

“We are robbing and plundering from those who have  
As good a right to freedom...as...we...”  
Regarding...slavery.

It’s believed, secretly, also advised Jefferson  
And the elite to free their slaves;  
She was a forerunner of the economic theory –  
Wrote...that slavery “brings man’s industry to defeat...”

As for eulogies, at the death of George Washington,  
Only once wrote – to criticize over-dressed attendees  
In near-homespun...“Warning!”  
“Wise and judicious observations  
Are those which will outlive badges of mourning!”

Praising, scolding, character-molding –  
Her simple truths  
Were some of the best –  
An American Life  
With Abigail Adams – we were blessed.