



John Adams



Abigail Adams

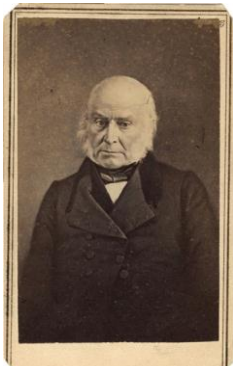


Abigail Adams
Smith

Adams Family

Foreign Policy:

Letters and Diaries from Europe



John Quincy
Adams



Charles Francis Adams



Henry Brooks Adams

Jason L. S. Raia

This project was created in partial fulfillment of a Summer 2006 Adams Teacher Fellowship at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

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❧Preface❧

Adams Family Foreign Policy was completed during the summer of 2006 as part of my Adams Teacher Fellowship at the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). Too many people deserve to be thanked, but I cannot fail to mention the following members of the MHS staff who made this project possible: Stephen T. Riley Librarian Peter Drummey, Education Coordinator Kathleen Barker, and Reference Librarian Kimberly Nusco. The editing team of the Adams Family Papers was a source of much assistance, particularly Managing Editor Margaret A. Hogan, Editor Gregg L. Lint, and Assistant Editor Hobson Woodward. Finally, my sincerest gratitude is extended to all those in the MHS reading room who make research such a joy.

The intention of this project is to provide insight into the Adams family members and their combined efforts in the realm of American foreign policy between 1781 and 1863. This collection of primary source materials, culled from the *Adams Family Papers*, is divided into four lessons covering four major periods and events of early American history: John Adams in the Netherlands during the American Revolution; Abigail Adams and her daughter Abigail Adams 2nd in London during the Confederation period; John Quincy Adams in Ghent negotiating the end of the War of 1812; and Charles Francis Adams and his son Henry in London during the American Civil War.

Intended as a primary source book for honors or Advanced Placement-level high school students, *Adams Family Foreign Policy* excerpts Adams family letters and diaries in order to examine more deeply events of American History, which often do not garner much attention. Review and critical-thinking questions are provided to encourage students to contemplate the implications of the words and decisions of the Adamases.

Students are encouraged to write an online journal in the form of a weblog. To facilitate students' online journaling, "Blog Prompts" are periodically provided within the *Adams Family Foreign Policy* lesson plans. In their blogs, students should not focus on direct analysis or exegesis of the documents; rather, they should attempt to bring the Adamases into the present. The students' emotional and intellectual responses to the letters and diaries will help make American History more concrete and fathomable. Also, if students can find contemporary analogies to the events they are reading about, these make for wonderful weblog entries.

Reading these letters and diary entries has been more than just learning the historical background to events of American history. It has been enlightening in both a personal and an intellectual way. May it also be so for you and your students.

Jason L. S. Raia
MHS Adams Teacher Fellow
Summer 2006

Introduction

While studying American History, students often learn about the Virginia dynasty: that succession of early presidents hailing from one of the new nation's most populated states. In terms of duration, the Virginia dynasty pales when compared to America's first political dynasty founded by John and Abigail Adams.

For four generations, the Adamses are at the forefront of events in America, and their decisions, actions, commentary, and influence reach from the eighteenth century down to the twentieth century. Both John and John Quincy were Presidents of the United States of America. John, John Quincy, and Charles Francis served in Congress and represented the United States as ambassadors to the Court of Saint James in London. Later, Henry Adams wrote one of the most influential works of personal and political history in the twentieth century. It is possible to follow American history through its first century and beyond through this one family.

Public service was the hallmark of the Adams dynasty, as well as commitment to democratic principles and moral values. Deeply intellectual, Harvard College was the training ground for all the Adams men (Abigail and her daughter were taught at home as was the custom), and in times of war and strife the pen was truly the mighty weapon wielded by each successive generation of Adamses.

During the American Revolution, John Adams would use his pen to continue the war effort by securing Dutch recognition of the United States and a series of loans to prop up the nascent republic. He negotiated treaties with the Dutch, the English, and Morocco. He served with distinction as one of America's first foreign ambassadors.

Abigail Adams and her daughter—Abigail Adams 2nd—would join John in Europe after the revolution was over. Their long letters home from France and England reveal both a love of home and the same democratic and moral values that permeate the entire dynasty. Their letters are an insight into the less formal but no less rigorous lives of women in the late eighteenth century.

The son of John, John Quincy Adams followed in his father's footsteps. A prolific writer, John Quincy recorded everything. He often rose with the sun to put in two hours of writing before the day began. His diary, begun as a teenager, ultimately reached over 15,000 pages. In 1814, when he was sent to negotiate peace once again with Great Britain, John Quincy recorded not only the formal discussions with British ministers but also the rough and tumble deliberations of the American legation.

Son of John Quincy, Charles Francis Adams was a Congressman and Vice-Presidential candidate for the Free-Soil party before being tapped by Abraham Lincoln to take up the post once held by his forefathers: Minister to the Court of Saint James. From London, Charles Francis struggled to keep Europe out of the war while President Abraham Lincoln and the Union army struggled to bring the Confederacy back into the fold. Charles Francis inherited diplomatic skills that allowed Lincoln and the Union to succeed without European interference.

A son of Charles Francis, Henry Adams served as his father's private secretary in London. His observations of both the British reaction to the war and his father's reaction to the British offer a perspective on the Civil War rarely witnessed. These skills of observation served him well throughout the next six decades.

No single family has influenced American history as deeply, as positively, or from such lofty heights as the Adams family did. John Adams stepped on the national stage 1770 when he defended the British soldiers accused of murder after the Boston Massacre. John and his progeny remained on that national stage—sometimes at the center and sometimes in the wings, but nevertheless on stage—until 1918. Almost 150 years of influence and action shaped and prepared the United States to become the world power it is today. Imagine how being part of that legacy must have weighed on each succeeding generation.

The Adams Family Papers, which was the ultimate source for all the letters and diary entries contained in this primary source book, is contained on 608 reels of microfilm. It is a massive collection that tells the story of the Adams Family and its achievements. Herein you will witness just four extended moments from over the course of 150 years of Adams Family influence. It is but a glimpse, but a rewarding one nonetheless.

∞ Adams Foreign Policy Timeline ∞

1777–1885

Source: Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/adams/timeline.cfm> - 1776

- 1777** *27 November.* John Adams elected by Congress a joint commissioner, with Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee, to France.
- 1778** *14 February–1 April.* John and John Quincy Adams sail on board the frigate *Boston* for France. On 8 April, they arrive at Paris and soon take up residence with Benjamin Franklin at Passy.
- 8 May.* John Adams's first audience with Louis XVI.
- 1779** *11 February.* John Adams learns that the joint commission is superseded by Benjamin Franklin's appointment as minister to France.
- 17 June–3 August.* John and John Quincy Adams sail from Lorient to Boston on board the French frigate *La Sensible*.
- 27 September.* John Adams appointed to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain.
- 15 November.* John, John Quincy, and Charles Adams sail for France on *La Sensible*.
- 8 December.* A leak forces *La Sensible* to put into El Ferrol, Spain. The Adamses travel across northern Spain to France, arriving in Paris on 9 February 1780.
- 1780** *20 June.* Congress commissions John Adams to raise a loan in the Netherlands.
- July.* John Adams writes what becomes known as "Letters from a Distinguished American"; they are published in London in 1782.
- 27 July–10 August.* John, John Quincy, and Charles Adams travel from Paris to Amsterdam.
- 4–27 October.* John Adams writes 26 letters to Hendrik Calkoen in an effort to explain the origins, progress, and nature of the American Revolution to the Dutch people.
- 29 December.* John Adams commissioned by Congress to conclude a commercial treaty with the Netherlands.
- 1781** *2 May.* John Adams presents a memorial to the States General of the United Provinces calling on it to recognize and conclude a commercial treaty with the United States and then publishes the memorial as a pamphlet in English, French, and Dutch.
- 15 June.* Congress revokes John Adams's commissions to negotiate Anglo-American peace and commercial treaties and creates a joint commission consisting of Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson to negotiate a peace treaty.

July. John Adams briefly returns to Paris to discuss the proposed Austro-Russian mediation of the war and rejects American participation unless there is prior recognition of American independence.

7 July–27 August. John Quincy Adams accompanies Francis Dana to St. Petersburg, where he serves as Dana's secretary and interpreter.

1782 19 April. The States General of the Netherlands recognizes American independence.

22 April. John Adams presents his letter of credence as minister plenipotentiary from the United States to William V, stadholder of the Netherlands.

12 May. John Adams takes up residence in the Hôtel des Etats-Unis at The Hague, the first American legation building in Europe.

11 June. John Adams signs a contract with a syndicate of Amsterdam bankers for a loan of five million guilders.

8 October. John Adams signs a treaty of amity and commerce with the Netherlands.

30 October. John Quincy Adams leaves St. Petersburg for Holland. He travels through Finland to Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Hamburg, and arrives at The Hague on 21 April 1783.

30 November. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay sign the preliminary peace treaty between the United States and Great Britain in Paris.

1783 3 September. John Adams signs the definitive peace treaty between the United States and Great Britain.

1784 9 March. John Adams concludes a second Dutch loan in Amsterdam to save American credit.

May–June. Congress elects John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson commissioners to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with European and North African nations.

20 June. Abigail Adams and her daughter, Abigail 2d, sail from Boston for England, arriving in London on 21 July.

30 July. John Quincy Adams joins his mother and sister in London. John Adams arrives a week later.

August–May 1785. The Adamses reside at Auteuil near Paris.

1785 24 February. John Adams named the first United States minister to Great Britain.

12 May. John Quincy Adams leaves Paris, returning to Boston on 25 August after spending a month in New York City.

26 May. John, Abigail, and Abigail Adams 2d arrive at London.

1 June. John Adams is presented to George III.

23 June. Abigail and Abigail Adams 2d are presented to King George and Queen Charlotte.

- 2 July.** John, Abigail, and Abigail Adams 2d move into the first American legation in London, a house on Grosvenor Square.
- 5 August.** John Adams signs a treaty of amity and commerce with Prussia.
- 1786 25 January.** John Adams signs treaty of peace and friendship with Morocco.
- 15 March.** John Quincy Adams enters Harvard College as a junior; graduates in 1787.
- March–April.** Thomas Jefferson visits John Adams in London to negotiate commercial treaties with Tripoli, Portugal, and Great Britain; tours English gardens with Adams.
- 12 June.** Abigail Adams 2d marries William Stephens Smith in London.
- August–September.** John Adams visits the Netherlands with Abigail to exchange ratifications of the treaty with Prussia; sees early triumph of Patriot party.
- 1787 May–June.** John Adams visits Holland to conclude a third Dutch loan.
- June–July.** In London, the Adamases care for Thomas Jefferson's daughter Mary and her companion Sally Hemmings, who are en route to live with Jefferson in Paris.
- October.** At John Adams's request, Congress recalls him from his diplomatic missions.
- 1788 20 February.** John Adams has farewell audience with George III.
- February–March.** John Adams makes his last visit to Holland, contracts a fourth loan.
- April–May.** Abigail Adams Smith and William Stephens Smith return to America; settle in New York.
- 1794 30 May.** President Washington appoints John Quincy Adams resident minister to the Netherlands.
- September–October.** John Quincy Adams sails to England with Thomas Boylston Adams, whom he names his secretary.
- 6 November.** John Quincy Adams presents his credentials at The Hague.
- 1796 30 May.** President Washington appoints John Quincy Adams minister plenipotentiary to Portugal, but Adams never serves under this appointment.
- December.** John Adams narrowly defeats Thomas Jefferson for the presidency.
- 1797 4 March.** John Adams inaugurated second president of the United States.
- 1 June.** President John Adams appoints John Quincy Adams minister plenipotentiary to Prussia.
- May–July.** President John Adams appoints first peace mission to France, to resolve the issue of America's rights as a neutral maritime power during the Anglo-French war.
- July.** John Quincy Adams presents his letter of recall to the Dutch government.

1798 *March–April.* President John Adams declares a state of quasi-war with France and publishes the XYZ papers showing French attempts to bribe American diplomats.

1799 *February.* President John Adams appoints a second peace mission to France.

11 July. John Quincy Adams signs a treaty of amity and commerce with Prussia.

October. President John Adams dispatches second peace mission to France.

1800 *October.* American diplomats conclude Convention of Mortefontaine with France, ending the quasi-war and the Franco-American alliance of 1778.

December. President John Adams defeated for reelection.

1807 *18 August.* Charles Francis Adams, son of John Quincy and Louisa Catherine Adams, born in Boston.

1809 *27 June.* President Madison appoints John Quincy Adams minister plenipotentiary to Russia.

1814 *January.* John Quincy Adams appointed to head commission to negotiate an Anglo-American peace treaty.

28 April–24 June. John Quincy Adams travels alone from St. Petersburg to Ghent to negotiate treaty; meetings with British commissioners begin on 8 August.

24 December. John Quincy Adams signs the Treaty of Ghent with Great Britain, ending the War of 1812.

1815 *12 February–23 March.* Louisa Catherine and Charles Francis Adams travel overland from St. Petersburg to join John Quincy Adams in Paris; her recollections of this trip published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1903.

28 February. John Quincy Adams commissioned envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain.

25 May. John Quincy Adams's entire family reunited in London.

3 July. John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and Albert Gallatin sign Commercial Convention that first establishes American diplomatic equality with Great Britain.

1817 *5 March.* President Monroe appoints John Quincy Adams secretary of state.

14 May. John Quincy Adams presents recall as minister to Great Britain; travels with family from London to Quincy, arriving in August.

September. John Quincy Adams assumes post of secretary of state.

1818 July. John Quincy Adams opposes censure of Andrew Jackson for invading the Spanish province of Florida without authorization.

20 October. American commissioners in London, under the direction of John Quincy Adams, sign the Convention of 1818 with Britain, clarifying America's northern boundary, fishing rights, and commerce.

28 October. Abigail Adams dies in Quincy.

1819 22 February. John Quincy Adams signs Transcontinental Treaty with Spain (the Adams-Onís Treaty), by which the United States extends its boundaries (in Oregon) to the Pacific Ocean and acquires the territory of Florida.

1822 John Quincy Adams publishes a defense of his diplomacy at Ghent, *The Duplicate Letters, the Fisheries and the Mississippi*, in response to the criticism of fellow negotiator Jonathan Russell.

1823 2 December. President Monroe announces his famous doctrine, largely the work of John Quincy Adams.

1824 5–17 April. John Quincy Adams concludes Convention with Russia, establishing 54° 40' as northern limit of the American sphere of influence and insuring the later incorporation of Oregon territory into the U.S.

November. John Quincy Adams runs second to Andrew Jackson in the national election for president; no candidate receives a majority vote.

1825 9 February. John Quincy Adams chosen president by the House of Representatives; inaugurated 4 March as the sixth president of the United States.

1826 4 July. John Adams dies in Quincy on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the same day Thomas Jefferson dies at Monticello.

Congress opposes President John Quincy Adams's and Secretary of State Henry Clay's energetic Latin American policy.

1828 November. John Quincy Adams defeated by Andrew Jackson for the presidency.

1830 1 November. John Quincy Adams elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts' Plymouth district; reelected until his death.

1835 27 May. Charles Francis Adams 2d, son of Charles Francis Adams, born in Boston.

- 1838** *16 February.* Henry Brooks Adams, son of Charles Francis Adams, born in Boston.
- 1840** *November.* Charles Francis Adams elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives; he serves in the state legislature until 1845, leading a small antislavery faction.
- 1841** *February–March.* John Quincy Adams successfully defends the *Amistad* African captives before the U.S. Supreme Court. Read Adams's Diary entry of 29 March 1841 against the slave trade.
- 1846** *May.* John Quincy Adams votes against declaration of war with Mexico.
- 20 November.* John Quincy Adams suffers a cerebral hemorrhage in Boston.
- 1858** *November.* Charles Francis Adams elected to Congress as a Republican; reelected in 1860.
- 1861** *20 March.* At the urging of Secretary of State William Seward, President Lincoln appoints Charles Francis Adams minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain.
- 1–13 May.* Charles Francis Adams sails to England with Abigail Brooks Adams and their children, Mary, Brooks, and Henry (who serves as his father's private secretary).
- 16 May.* Charles Francis Adams presents credentials as minister to Great Britain, just as Britain recognizes Confederate belligerency and declares its neutrality.
- 1863** *5 September.* Regarding the imminent sailing of the new British-built ironclad rams for the Confederacy, Charles Francis Adams writes to Britain's foreign minister Lord Russell that "It would be superfluous in me to point out to your lordship that this is war." Britain agrees to seize the ships and strictly observe its neutrality.
- 1868** *April–May.* Charles Francis Adams resigns his post and presents his recall as minister to Great Britain.
- 1871–72** Charles Francis Adams successfully negotiates the *Alabama* claims in Washington, London, and Geneva.
- 1885** *21 November.* Charles Francis Adams dies in Boston.

LESSON ONE

∞ *John Adams in the Netherlands* ∞ 1781–1783

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∞*The Dutch Treaty*∞

After serving in the Continental Congress from 1774–1777, John Adams was elected by his fellow Patriots to serve his country in a new capacity. He was named a joint commissioner, and sailed for France accompanied by his son, John Quincy.

Adams returned to Boston in 1779, and served in the Massachusetts Convention, single-handedly drafting the Commonwealth's constitution of 1780. This constitution is the world's oldest written constitution still in effect. Adams then returned Europe to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain.

Soon after, following the machinations of the Comte de Vergennes, France's Foreign Minister, and American Minister and rival Ben Franklin, John Adams was stripped of his commission to negotiate peace. He is sent to the Netherlands to negotiate a loan, which would help finance the ongoing war against Great Britain.

While John Quincy was off to the Court of St. Petersburg (Russia) as the secretary to Francis Dana, the American Minister, John Adams moved to Amsterdam in hopes of negotiating the much needed loan. He quickly learned that Dutch merchants and bankers would not secure a loan for the United States unless the Netherlands' *Statholder*, Prince William of Orange, and the Assembly of the States General, the Dutch parliament, formally recognized the former British colonies as a newly created country.

Thus began John Adams's pursuit to obtain foreign governments' recognitions of America's independence. He also sought a formal treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. John Adams dedicated more than sixteen months to these two projects, and achieved success on both counts. In October 1782, he forwarded to the Continental Congress the Treaty of Amity that he successfully negotiated with the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

Memorial to William V, Prince of Orange, April 19, 1781

Papers of John Adams, vol. 11, p. 282–284

Leyden April 19. 1781

A Memorial To his most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange and Nassau, Hereditary Statholder and Governor of the Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries.

The Subscriber has the Honour to inform your most Serene Highness, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, impressed with a deep Sense of your Wisdom and Magnanimity, and being desirous of cultivating the Friendship of your Highness and of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, who have ever distinguished themselves by an inviolable Attachment to Freedom and the Rights of Nations, have appointed the Subscriber, to be their Minister Plenipotentiary at your Court, that he may give You more particular Assurances of the great Respect they entertain for your Highness, and for the People over whom You preside as Statholder, beseching your Highness to give entire Credit to every thing, which their said Minister shall deliver on their Part, especially when he shall assure You of the Sincerity of their Friendship and Regard. The original Letter of Credence, under the Seal of Congress, he is desirous of the Honour of delivering whenever and in whatever manner your highness shall judge proper to receive it. He has the further Honour of informing your Highness, that the United States have honoured him with full Powers to form a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the State General, and also with Letters of Credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses. In Consequence of which he has done himself the Honour to present a Memorial, a Copy of which is here annexed.

The Subscriber in the discharge of these Trusts considers himself rather as proposing a Renovation of old Friendships that the Formation of new ones, as the Americans have ever been the good and faithfull Allies of this Nation, and have done nothing to forfeit its Esteem. On the contrary they are confident they have a better title to it, as they have adhered stedfastly through every Trial to those principles which formed and supported this Republick, while others have wantonly abandoned them.

The Subscriber thinks himself particularly fortunate to be thus accredited to a Nation, which has made such memorable Exertions in favour of the Rights of Men, and to a Prince, whose illustrious Line of Ancestors and Predecessors have so often supported in Holland and England those Liberties for which the United States of America now contend: and it will be the Completion of his Wishes if he should be so happy as to recommend the Cause of his Country to the favorable Attention of your most Serene Highness, and of this People.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. What kind of treaty does the United States wish to form with Holland?
2. In what ways does John Adams flatter the people and government of Holland?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do Holland and the United States share that made them potential allies?
2. Why would Adams choose such a public forum to present his credentials as ambassador?

John Adams's Enclosure to Edmund Jenings, April 23, 1781*Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 291–293

April 23. 1781

Sir

It is often said in this Country, “We have nothing to gain by this war.” But who is to gain? If Holland has nothing to gain, it has much to loose, and the Question now is not what is to be gained, but was it to be Saved and defended. This Republick, may loose all her Possessions in the East and West Indies: she may loose her Navigation and Commerce: she may loose her Baltick Trade: her Greenland Fishery; her African Trade; her Manufactures, her Weight in the commercial and political scales of Europe; nay she may loose her Independence, and be conquered and divided among her Neighbours. The Question is whether these Objects are worth defending?

What would be the Consequence to this nation if America should return to the Domination and Monopoly of Great Britain? What would be the Consequence, if an ungenerous Treatment of America should oblige the Congress, to purchase Peace and Independance of Great Britain by Sacrifice of the Commerce of this Republick? What would be the Consequence if the Congress should propose to the K. of G.B. “Acknowledge our Independance, and We will enter into a Treaty with you, not to trade directly or indirectly with the Dutch.” It would be better for America to do this, for the sake of a speedy Peace, than to continue to be made a Spectacle like a Match at Cock fighting or Bull or Bear baiting, as they are to People who are almost as much interested in their Independance as they are them selves.

Notwithstanding our fond Attachment to England, her Rivalry has been a source of terrible Evils for this Country. While America was in Connection with the British Empire, it was an enormous Tree, by the side of a small shrub which extracted and exhausted the Nutrition of the soil, and prevented the Circulation of the Juices in the Bush, until one Sprig and branch of it after another died away, and it was in danger of perishing even to the Root.

What was the flourishing state of Manufactures forty years ago? And into what decay are they fallen now? What is the Cause of this?

Because the English, having such a vast demand for Manufactures in America, and being able to sell them there at what Price they pleased, and to get American Productions the Materials of Manufactures and Commerce, as cheap as they pleased, their Manufactures received such an Encouragement, that they were able to Undersell Us, at the foreign Marketts. Have not our Numbers of seamen been diminished too, by Similar Means and those of England increased.

What is the Cause of the Decay of our Possessions in the West Indies, Surinam Coracoa &c. Was it not because they received no Advantage from a Commerce with the Continent of America?

Was it not because the superiority of the English Possessions in that Country, obstructed their Trade and Growth.

What was the Effect of this Rivalry or superiority in the East Indies? What the Effect in Africa? What would be the Effect upon all these Interests if, America were to return again to the Obedience and Monopoly of G. Britain? What would be the Effect of it upon the Baltic Trade, upon Manufactures, our Greenland Whale Fisheries, our African Trade, or East India and West India Possessions!

There is a current opinion here, that We should wait untill England has acknowledged American Independance, and then make a Treaty with the United States. But are We sure, that America will then make a Treaty with Us? By no Means. She will have no Motive to it. On the Contrary there is great danger, that England will sooner or later offer to acknowledge American Independance, on Condition that she will agree to Sacrifice the Dutch, and in such a Case America would be a Fool if she did not Accept it.

But We will then lend her Money. I answer then she would not Accept of Money from you. The American Debt if this war should continue 20 Years, will be part of it paid off, the very first Year of Peace. Instead of borrowing Money after Peace they will instantly set about paying off the Capital, of the Debt contracted during the War.

Suppose a Peace. England has acknowledged American Independance and made a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States, Similar to that between France and them. What motive will they have to make one with us? None. They will tell us you meanly neglected Us and despised Us in our distress, now take your own Course. We will trade with you as much as is for our Convenience, but We will bind ourselves to nothing. We can have Hemp Cordage Sail Cloth from Russia Sweden and Denmark, or we can take them of England. We don't want your Friendship now. And it is probable, that America, having by Treaty a Right to trade with France and England, that England and America would run away with all our Baltick Trade. Whereas, it is now in our Power, to turn this Trade into such a Channell, by making a Treaty with America, that We should continue in Possession of it, after a Peace. We shall continue to Supply France and Spain and America with those Articles. Whereas, if We refuse it We shall very soon see American ships supplying France and Spain with stores from the Baltick.

We are lending vast Sums of Money to England, and have lent them Ships to enable them to murder Americans. We have prohibited Supplies to Americans, with a partial Rigour. And We may depend upon it if this system is pursued, this Country is undone. We are preparing Vengeance for ourselves and Posterity, which both the English and the Americans will take in full Tale.

What will become of our Greenland Fishery, if America were again joined to England? This would be undermined by degrees, like our Manufactures.

Power and Wealth, like those of G.B. united with America, grow and multiply rapidly, at the Expence of all around them. Like an overgrown mercantile House in a particular City, they draw away the Business and Profit from all inferiour Merchants.

It is in England a recommendation to an Estate in the Country, that there is no lord with ten miles. The great Fish eat the little ones.

Review Questions

1. What does Holland risk losing in the war should Great Britain win?
2. Why does Dutch manufacturing suffer when America is a collection of British colonies?
3. What does Adams imagine will happen after the war if Holland does not sign a treaty with America?

Blog Prompt

In what ways are economics always part of war, peace, and alliances? Explain with a modern day example.

John Adams to the President of the Congress, May 7, 1781

Papers of John Adams, vol. 11, p. 305–307

Amsterdam May 7th. 1781

Sir

On the fourth of May I did myself the Honour to wait on Peter Van Bleiswick Esqr., Grand Pensionary of Holland, and presented him a Letter containing a Copy of my Memorial to the States General &c. His Excellency said that it was necessary for me to go to the President and Secretary of their High Mightinesses, and that it was not customary for foreign Ministers to communicate anything to the Pensionary of Holland. I told him that I had been advised by the French Ambassador to present Copies to him, and they were only Copies which I had the Honour to offer him. He said he could not receive them: that I must go to the President: but says he, it is proper for me to apprise You that the President will make a difficulty or rather will refuse to receive any Letter or Paper from You, because the State You say You represent is not yet acknowledged to be a Sovereign State by the Sovereign of this Nation. The President will hear what you have to say to him, make Report of it to their High Mightinesses, and they will transmit it to the several Provinces for the deliberation of the various Members of the Sovereignty. I thanked his Excellency for this Information and departed.

I then waited on the President of their high Mightinesses for the Week the Baron Linde de Hemmen, a Deputy of the Province of Guelderland, to whom I communicated, that I had lately recieved from my Sovereign, the United States of America in Congress assembled, a Commission with full Powers and Instructions to treat with the States General concerning a Treaty of Amity and Commerce: that I had also recieved a Letter of Credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and I prayed him to lay before their High Mightinesses either the Originals, or a Memorial in which I had done myself the Honour to state all these facts and to inclose Copies.

The President said that he could not undertake to recieve from me either the Originals nor any Memorial; because that America was not yet acknowledged as a Sovereign State by the Sovereign of this Country: but that he would make Report to their High Mightinesses of all that I had said to him, and that it would become the subject of deliberation in the several

Provinces: that he thought it a matter of great Importance to the Republick. I answered that I was glad to hear him say that he thought it important: that I thought it was the interest of the two Republicks to become connected.

I thanked him for his politeness and retired, after having apprized him that I thought in the present Circumstances, it would be my duty to make public in print my Application to their High Mightinesses.

I had prepared copies of my Memorial &c. for the Secretary Mr. Fagel: but as the President had refused to receive the Originals, I thought it would be inconsistent for the Secretary to receive Copies, so I omitted the Visit to his Office.

I then waited on the Baron de Ray, the Secretary of the Prince, with a Letter addressed to his most Serene Highness, containing a Memorial, informing him of my Credentials to his Court, and Copies of the Memorial to their High Mightinesses: the Secretary received me politely, received the letter and promised to deliver it to the Stadholder. He asked me where I lodged: I answered at the Parliament of England, a public House of that Name.

Returning to my Lodgings, I heard about two Hours afterwards that the Prince had been to the Assembly of the States General for about half an hour; and in about another Hour, the Servant of the House where I lodged announced to me the Baron de Ray: I went down to the Door to receive him, and invited him to my Room. He entered and said that he was charged on the part of the Prince with his Compliments to me, and to inform me, that as the Independence of my Country was not yet acknowledged by the Sovereign of his, he could not receive any Letter from me and therefore requested that I would receive it back, which I did respectfully. The Secretary then politely said he was very much obliged to me for having given him an Opportunity to see my Person, and took his Leave.

The President made Report to their High Mightinesses as soon as they assembled, and his Report was ordered to be recorded: whereupon the Deputies of each of the seven Provinces demanded Copies of the Record to be transmitted to the respective Regencies for their deliberation and decision; on in the technical Language of this Country, it was taken ad referendum on the same day.

The next morning I waited on the French Ambassador, the Duke de la Vauguion, and acquainted him with all the Steps I had taken. He said he still persisted in his Opinion that the Time was not the most favourable, but as the Measure was taken, I might depend upon it he would, as an Individual, support and promote it to the utmost of his Power.

It would take a large Space to explain all the Reasons and Motives which I had for choosing the present Time in preference to a later: but I think I can demonstrate, that every Moments delay would have been attended with danger and inconvenience. All Europe is in a Crisis, and this Ingredient thrown in at this Time will have more Effect than at any other. At a future Time I may enlarge upon this Subject.

I have the Honour to be with the greatest Respect, Sir your most obedient and most humble Servant.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why will the President of the Netherlands not receive John Adams as ambassador of the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

2. Why does the French ambassador not officially support Adams's public appeal for recognition?
3. What might be some of the reasons for Adams going forward with his plan against the advice of others?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, February 27, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 274–277

No. 3

Duplicate

Amsterdam Feby. 27th 1782

Sir

Friesland has at last taken the Provincial Resolution to acknowledge the Independence, of which United America is in full possession.

It is thought that several Cities of Holland will soon follow their Example, and some say it will be followed forthwith by the whole Republick. The first Burgomaster of this City has said within a few days past, that in six Weeks at furthest, the Independence of America would be acknowledged by all Seven of the United Provinces: but I have no Expectation of such Haste. This Government does nothing with such Celerity.

By what I hear and read of their Speculations, it seems to me that the general Sense is at present not to shackle themselves with any Treaties either with France or Spain, nor to make any Treaty of Alliance, nor to make even a Treaty of Commerce with America as yet for a considerable Time, but for the several Members of the Sovereignty one after another to acknowledge the Independence of America in the manner that Friesland has done; and for the States, the Prince and the Admiralties to exert themselves in preparing a Fleet to command the North Sea, and wash out some of the Stains in their Character, which the English have so unjustly thrown upon it, in their Blood. There is a loud Cry for Vengeance, a stern demand of a Fleet and a Battle with the English, and if the Court contrive to elude it, the Stadholder will run a great Risque of his Power.

Sensible and candid Men tell me, We wait for Spain and We wait for Russia. We wont make any treaty with You. It is of no importance to Us or to You. We see there is a tremendous Power arising in the West. We cant meddle much: but We will at all Events be your good Friends. Whoever quarrels with You, We will not.

In short I expect no Treaty. I dont expect that our Independence will be acknowledged by all the Provinces for a long Time. Nevertheless, it appears to me of indispensable Importance

that a Minister should reside constantly here vested with the same Powers from Congress, with which they have honoured me [...]

Review Questions

1. Which is the first province of the Netherlands to acknowledge the independence of the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

2. What reasons would prevent the Netherlands from forming a treaty of commerce with the United States?

Blog Prompt

What are the risks of remaining neutral in a major conflict? Cite a modern example of this difficulty.

John Adams to James Searle, April 11, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 405

Amsterdam April 11th. 1782

Dear Sir

I am long in your debt, and therefore must beg your Patience on Account of bad health and many Occupations. The rapid Revolution in the Minds of this Nation, and the unaccountable Ardor and Unanimity, which has at last seized upon them for connecting themselves with America have occasioned me so many Visits to recieve and return, and so many complimentary Letters to answer, as added to other more important Affairs have been more than I could perform. Five Provinces, Firesland, Holland, Zealand, Overysell and Utrecht, have already decided with an Unanimity that is astonishing, and the two others, Guelderland and Groningen, it is supposed will determine as soon as they meet, which will be the 16. current: so that I suppose We shall have one Ally more in a short time.

I know not of how much Importance this Acquisition may be thought by others, but I have ever considered it as a leading Step, and hope it may be followed by other Nations; at least it will be a refutation of the many frivolous Arguments with which some People have been long employed in doing mischief [...]

If the whole Body of Dutch Merchants do not understand their own Interest and the Nature and Connections of Commerce, it will not be easy to find any body who is Master of it. Their Requetes [petitions] are a compleat Refutation of all the Angloman in Europe, if sound Reason can refute it.

With great Esteem and Regard, I have the honor to be, Sir, &c

Review Questions

1. What five provinces have recognized the independence of the US?
2. What has changed in Adams's assessment of the situation in the Netherlands?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What group of individuals seems to be animating this support of the US?
2. Why might this group support the recognition of the US?

John Adams to Jacobus Nolet, April 20, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 431

The Hague 20 April 1782

Sir

I received, to day the Letter you did me the honor to write to me yesterday, and am exceedingly obliged to you for your cordial congratulations, on the great Event which was yesterday finally concluded by their High Mightinesses. The Favour of Providence, has been remarkably manifested in the progress of this Negociation , hitherto, that I very sincerely join with you in imploring its continuance, to the mutual prosperity, and the permanent establishment of the liberties of both Nations.

I have small pretensions to an accurate Knowledge of the Commerce of either Country; but such general notions of it as have fallen to my share, I shall ever esteem it a pleasure and an honour to communicate [...]

With great Respect, I have the honour to be Sir your most obedt and most humble. Servt.
John Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the “great event” to which Adams refers?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, April 22, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 441–443

No. 7

The Hague 22d April 1782

Sir

On the twenty second day of April I was introduced by the Chamberlain to his most Serene Highness the Prince of Orange.

Knowing that his Highness spoke English, I asked his Permission to speak to him in that Language, to which he answered smiling, “if You please Sir.” Altho’ French is the Language of the Court, he seemed to be pleased and to recieve as a Compliment my Request to speak to him in English.

I told him, “I was happy to have the Honor of presenting the Respects of the United States of America and a Letter of Credence from them to his most Serene Highness, and to assure him of the profound Veneration in which the House of Orange had been held in America even from its first settlement; and that I should be happier still, to be the Instrument of further cementing the new Connections between two nations professing the same Religion, animated by the same Spirit of Liberty, and having reciprocal Interests both political and commercial so extensive and important; and that in the faithful and diligent

Discharge of the Duties of my Mission, I flattered myself with Hopes of the Approbation of his most serene Highness.”

His Highness recieved the Letter of Credence which he opened and read. The Answer that he made to me was in a Voice so low and so indistinctly pronounced, that I comprehended only the Conclusion of it, which was that “he had made no Difficulty against my Reception.” He then fell into familiar Conversation with me and asked me many Questions about indifferent things, as is the Custom of Princes and Princesses upon such Occasions. “How long I had been in Europe? How long I had been in this Country? Whether I had purchased an House at the Hague? Whether I had not lived sometime at Leyden? How long I had lived at Amsterdam? How I liked this Country &ca.?” [...]

I have the Honor to be, with great Esteem and Respect, sir your most obedient and most humble servant

J Adams

Review Questions

1. In what language does Adams address the Prince of Orange? Why is this extraordinary?
2. According to Adams, what common traits connect the Netherlands and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is recognition of American independence by the Netherlands so important to the United States?

Blog Prompt

In what ways does recognition by foreign countries grant legitimacy to a newly formed government? What are the benefits for both countries? Cite a modern example.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, April 22, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 443–445

The Hague April 22. 1782

My dear Sir

Mr Peter Paulus, is seized with an enthusiasm to go to Philadelphia, with his Journeymen. I Should be much obliged to you, for any advice or Civility you may Show him.

The Batavian Spirit is at last arroused , and has uttered its Voice, with Majesty, for the Souverignty if the United States of America. The 19 of April, was the memorable day, when their High Mightinesses took, the Resolution. You will see in the Gazettes, the Petitions and Maneuvres, which ushered in this Event with Such Solemnity, as to make it the most Signal Epocha, in the History of a Century. We shall have in this Nation, if I am not infinitely mistaken a faithfull and affectionate and most usefull ally.

In order to be Steady and persevering in my known Character for Vanity which however I have acquired Since I came to Europe, by the Help of Friends I must tell you that Don

Liano, the Spanish Minister has this Moment gone out of my apartment, after having Said to me, “You have made Sir, the grandest Step that has ever yet been taken. It is you, who have filled this Nation with Enthusiasm for your Cause and turned their Heads. It is a most important, and a most decisive Measure, and it is due, to you.”

Voila! a flour of diplomattick Rhetorick, enough to turn my Head, whether I have turned those of the Dutchmen or not.

Yours affectionately,

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. On what day does the Netherlands recognize the independence of the United States?
2. According to the Spanish ambassador, how does Adams convince the people of the Netherlands to recognize the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams believe the Netherlands will be such a “usefull ally”?

John Adams to James Warren, September 6, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 439–440

The Hague Septr. 6th. 1782

Dear Sir

[...] One thing, thank God, is certain. I have planted the American Standard at the Hague. There let it wave and fly! in Triumph over Sir Joseph York and British Pride. I shall look down upon the Flagg Staff with pleasure from the other World.

Not the Declaration of American Independence—not the Massachusetts Constitution—not the Alliance with France, ever gave me more Satisfaction or more pleasing Prospects for our Country than this Event. It is a Pledge against Friends and Enemies. It is an eternal Barrier against all Dangers from the House of Bourbon, as well as a present security against England [...]

My best respects to Mrs. Warren and the Family, and believe me your Friend

John Adams

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams mention the Declaration of Independence and the Massachusetts Constitution when referring to Dutch recognition of the United States?
2. How does the Netherlands’ recognition of the United States offer “an eternal Barrier against all Dangers from the House of Bourbon, as well as a security against England?”

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, September 17, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol.13, p. 473–475

The Hague. Septemr: 17th. 1782

Sir

[...] It is now nearly five Months since I was publicly recd: and proposed a project of a Treaty. All this time it has taken the several Provinces and Cities, to examine, make their Remarks and fresh Propositions and bring the matter to a Conclusion. It would not have been so long however, if the Court had been delighted with the business. But, in a Case where Unanimity was requisite and the Court not pleased, it was necessary to proceed with all the Softness, Caution and Prudence, possible, that no ill humours might be stirred. Yet in a Case, where the Nations heart is so engaged, in which, its Commerce and Love of Money, is so interested, what wretched Policy is it, in this Court, to shew even a lukewarmness, much more an aversion. Yet such is the Policy, and such it will be. The Prince of Orange is, to all appearance, as incurable as George the third, his Cousin.

[...] Congress may hear of some further plans for a separate Peace, between Holland and England, but they will not succeed. The Republick will stand firm, tho' it will not be so active as we could wish, and the Concert of operations will be renewed.

I have the honor, to be, Sir, Your humble servt.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. For how long does Adams work on the treaty between the United States and the Netherlands?
2. How is the Prince of Orange related to the King of England?
3. What apprehension does Adams have about the new relationship between the United States and the Netherlands?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would England want to make a separate peace with Holland?
2. How might the relationship between the Prince of Orange and the King of England have complicated forming a treaty between Holland and the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, October 8, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 389–393

The Hague. October 8th. 1782

Sir

At 12. oClock today I proceeded, according to appointment, to the State-House, where I was received, with the usual formalities, at the head of the Stairs, by Mr: Van Santheuvel, a Deputy from the Province of Holland, and Mr: Van Linden, the first Noble of Zealand and a Deputy from that Province; and by them conducted into the Chamber of Business (Chambre de besogne,) an apartment adjoining to the Truce-Chamber (Chambre de Treve) where were

executed the Treaty of Commerce, and the Convention concerning Re-captures, after an Exchange of Full Powers.

The Treaty and Convention are both enclosed, or at least, an authentic Copy of each. If the Copy should arrive before the Original, which I shall reserve to be sent by the safest opportunity I can find, it will be a sufficient foundation for the Ratification of Congress.

I hope the Treaty will be satisfactory to Congress. It has taken up much time to obtain the Remarks and the Consent of all the Members of this complicated Sovereignty. Very little of this time has been taken up by me, as Congress will see by the Resolution of their High-Mightinesses containing the power to the Deputies to conclude and sign the Treaty: for, altho' all Communications were made to me in Dutch, a language in which I was not sufficiently skilled to depend upon my own knowledge, Mr. Dumas was ever at hand and ever ready to interpret to me every thing in french, by which means I was always able to give my answers without loss of time.

The Papers, in which the whole progress of this Negotiation is contained in Dutch, French and English; make a large bundle, and, after all, they contain nothing worth transmitting to Congress. To copy them would be an immense labor to, no purpose, and to send the Originals, at once, would expose them to loss.

Several Propositions were made to me, which I could not agree to, and several were made on my part, which could not be admitted by the States. The final result, contained in the Treaty, is as near the Spirit of my Instructions as I could obtain, and I think it is, in nothing, materially variant from them.

The Lords the Deputies proposed to me to make the Convention a part of the Treaty. My answer was, that I thought the Convention, which is nearly conformable with that lately made with France, would be advantageous on both sides; but as I had no special Instructions concerning it, and as Congress might have objections that I could not foresee, it would be more agreeable to have the Convention seperate, so that Congress, if they should find any difficulty, might ratify the Treaty without it—This was accordingly agreed to.

It seemed at first to be insisted on, that we should be confined to the Dutch Ports in Europe, but my friend Mr: Van Berckel and the Merchants of Amsterdam came in aid of me, in convincing all that it was their interest to treat us upon the footing *Gentis amicissima* in all parts of the world.

Friesland proposed that a Right should be stipulated, for the Subjects of their Republic to purchase lands in any of our States: But such Reasons were urged as convinced them that this was too extensive an object for me to agree to—1st. It was not even stipulated for France—2d. If it should be now introduced into this Treaty, all other nations would expect the same, and altho', at present, it might not be impolitic to admit of this, yet nobody would think it wise to bind ourselves to it forever—3d. What rendered all other Considerations unnecessary was, that Congress had not Authority to do this, it being a matter of the interior policy of the Seperate States—This was given up.

A more extensive Liberty of engaging Seamen in this Country, was a favorite Object; but it could not be obtained.

The Refraction, as they call it, upon Tobacco in the Weighhouses, is a thing that enters so deeply into their commercial Policy, that I could not obtain any thing, more particular or more explicit, than what is found in the Treaty.

Upon the whole, I think the Treaty is conformable to the Principles of perfect Reciprocity, and contains nothing that can possibly be hurtfull to America, or offensive to our Allies, or to any other Nation, except Great-Britain, to whom it is indeed, without a speedy peace, a mortal blow.

The Rights of France and Spain are sufficiently secured by the 22d. Article, altho' it is not in the very words of the Project, transmitted me by Congress: It is the same in substance and effect. The Duc de la Vauguyon was very well contented with it, and the States were so jealous of unforeseen Consequences from the words of the Article, as sent me by Congress and as first proposed by me, that I saw it would delay the Conclusion, without end. After several Conferences, and many Proposals, we finally agreed upon the Article, as it stands, to the satisfaction of all Parties.

The Clause, reserving to the Dutch their Rights in the East and West-Indies, is unnecessary, and I was averse to it, as implying a Jealousy of us. But as it implies too a Compliment to our Power and Importance; was much insisted on; and amounted to no more than we should have been bound to, without it, I withdrew my Objection.

The Proviso of conforming to the Laws of the Country, respecting the external shew of public worship, I wished to have excluded; because I am an Enemy to every appearance of restraint in a matter so delicate and sacred as the Liberty of Conscience; but the Laws here do not permit Roman Catholics to have Steeples to their Churches, and these Laws could not be altered.

I shall be impatient to receive the Ratification of Congress, which I hope may be transmitted within the time limited.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Most Obedt. humble. Servt.

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What two languages are used for the treaty negotiations?
2. What right does the province of Friesland want included in the treaty?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does the distance between the United States and the Netherlands and the speed of communications make negotiations more difficult for Adams?
2. Why is it important to reference both France and Spain in the United States-Netherlands treaty?

∞The Dutch Loan∞

The difficulty John Adams discovered was rooted in Dutch economic difficulties. The Netherlands suffered economically due to its refusal to join Great Britain and by remaining a part of the armed neutrality. Not only was the Netherlands' trade with Great Britain greatly reduced, much of the Dutch fleet was not able to pursue its money-making enterprises for fear of being drawn into the war. Dutch bankers were not willing to make loans to the United States until the States-General officially recognized the new republic.

Adams found himself caught between Congress and the French government. Congress continued to spend money as if the loan were already a reality, while the French government wished to control the Americans by holding the only purse strings. Adams sought advice from everyone, and settled on approaching private merchant bankers one after another until finding one willing to make the necessary loan.

After negotiating Dutch recognition of the United States and a Treaty of Amity with the Netherlands, John Adams moved forward with his plan to negotiate a loan from the Dutch merchant bankers. Without a Dutch loan the war against Great Britain—and with it, American Independence—would be short lived.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, April 27, 1781*Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 288–289

Amsterdam April 27. 1781

[...] From the time I received from Congress, their orders to borrow Money here, I have constantly, in my Letters, requested that no draughts might be made upon me, until there should be News from me that I had Money to discharge them. This Request I shall repeat. But the Cries of the Army for Cloaths, induce Congress to venture upon Measures, which appear hazardous to Us. However, by the Intelligence I have, they had grounds to expect, that the Draughts hitherto made would be honoured.

I sometimes think, paradoxical as it may Seem, that one set of Bills protested would immediately procure Congress, a large Loan. No Bills are in better Credit than these. There is an Appetite here, for American Trade, as ravenous as that of a shark for his Prey. And if they Saw danger of having this Trade broke up, they would do much to save it. [...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams sent to Amsterdam?
2. What is Adams's complaint about Congress?
3. What solution does Adams suggest to secure better credit?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Congress need the Dutch?

John Adams to the President of the Congress, May 16, 1781Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 317–319Amsterdam May 16th. 1781

Sir

[...] The British Ministry are exhausting all the Resources of their Subtilty, if not of their Treasures, to excite Jealousies and Divisions among the neutral as well as belligerent Powers. The same Arts precisely that they have practiced so many Years to subdue, decieve and divide America, they are now exerting among the Powers of Europe: but the Voice of God and Man are too decidedly against them to permit them much Success.

As to a Loan of Money in this Republick, after having tried every expedient and made every proposition, that I could be justified or excused for making, I am in absolute despair of obtaining any, until the States General shall have acknowledged our Independence. The Bills already accepted by me are paying off as they become due, by the Orders of His Excellency Mr. Franklin: but he desires me to represent to Congress the danger and inconvenience of drawing before Congress have information that their Bills can be honoured. I must intreat Congress not to draw upon me, until they know I have money. At present I have none, not even for my Subsistance, but what I derive from Paris.

The true Cause of the Obstruction of our Credit here is Fear, which can never be removed but by the States General acknowledging our Independence, which, perhaps in the Course of twelve months they may do, but I don't expect it sooner. [...]

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Sir, your most obedient and most humble Servant.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. How are the British trying to separate the neutral and belligerent powers?
2. How are Congress' bills being paid before Adams obtained a Dutch loan?

Blog Prompt

How does deficit spending by the United States government affect the country's credit rating?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, January 25, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 214–215

Amsterdam 25. Jan. 1782

Sir

Your letter of the 11. with the Copy of that from M. Le Comte de Vergennes of 31. of Decr. I had the Honour to receive by the last post. By, your leaving it to me to judge how far it is proper for me to accept further Draughts on Mr Laurens, with any Expectation of your enabling me to pay them, I am Somewhat embarrassed. If I accept any Bill at all it must be in full Confidence of your paying it, for there is not a Possibility, of my getting any Money here.

I lately applied to one of the first Houses, an old Dutch House, which has traded to america an hundred years, and whose Credit is as clear and Solid as any one in the Republick. I asked him, frankly if he would undertake a Loan for me. His answer was, sir I thank you for the Honour you do me. I know the Honour and the Profit that would accrue to any house, from such a Trust. I have particular Reasons of my own, of Several sorts, to be willing to undertake it, and I will tell you frankly, I will make the necessary Enquiries and give you an answer, in two days. And if I find it possible to Succeed, I will undertake it. But there are four Persons, who have the whole affair of Loans through the Republick under their Thumbs, these Persons are united, if you gain one you gain all, and the Business is easy, but without them there is not one house in this Republick can Succeed in any Loan.

After the two days, he called on me, to give me an account of his Proceedings. He Said he first waited upon one of the Regency, and asked him if it was proper for him to put in a Requete and ask leave, to open Such a Loan. He was answered he had better Say nothing to the Regency, about it, for they would either give him no answer at all, which was most probable, or say, it was improper for them to interfere, either of which answers would do more hurt than good. It was an affair of Credit, which he might undertake, without asking

Leave, for the Regency, never interfered to prevent Merchants from getting Money. With this answer he went to one of the undertakers, whose answer was, that at least until there was a Treaty, it would be impossible to get the Money. As soon as that Event should happen he was ready to undertake it.

I have been uniformly told that these four or five Persons had such a despotick Influence over the Loans, I have heretofore sounded them in various Ways, and the Result is that I firmly believe they receive ample Salaries, upon the express Condition that they resist an american Loan. There is a Phalanx, formed by the British Ministry Dutch Court, Proprietors of English stocks and great mercantile Houses in the Interest of the British Ministry, that Support these undertakers and are supported by them.

We may therefore reckon boldly that We shall get nothing here, unless in the form of the last five millions, lent to the King of France and warranted by the Republick, until there is a Treaty.

I believe however I shall venture to accept the Bills, of which I have given you notice in hopes of your Succeeding better than your fears.

Yesterday was brought me, one more Bill drawn on Mr Laurens on the 6. July 1780 for 550 Guilders, No. 145. I have asked time to write to your Excellency about this too, and shall wait your answer before I accept it.

I have the Honour to be

Review Questions

1. What British incentive prevents the approval of a loan to the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would Dutch bankers run a high risk by loaning money to the United States, particularly in the absence of a treaty?

Blog Prompt

What risks do foreign investors assume in making loans to new governments? Where are the riskiest foreign places to invest in the world today and why are they such a risk?

John Adams to Fizeaux, Grand & Co. and Others, April 30, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 471–472

April 30 1782

1. If the Houses of Fizeaux Grand & Co. John Hodshon & Son Mess. Crommelin, Mess. Van Staphorst, Mess. De la Lande & Fynje and Mr John de Neufville & Son, will all join together in an American Loan, Mr. Adams will open it without demanding any Stipulations for any certain Sum.

2d. If the first Proposition is not agreed to, Mr. Adams will open a Loan with as many of these Houses as will agree together, and enter into a Stipulation with him to furnish the sum of Five Millions by the Month of August.

3d. If no Number of Houses will join, Mr. Adams will open the Loan with any One that will first undertake and contract to furnish the Sum.

4d. Mr. Adams proposes that all those Gentlemen should meet and consult upon the Matter and propose their Thoughts.

Review Questions

1. How much time has elapsed since Adams's letter to Benjamin Franklin about the loan?
2. What changes so that Adams again pursues the loan?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. What is Adams's advantage in approaching several merchant bankers for the new loan?

Blog Prompt

What are the rewards of foreign investment? What are the emerging markets that investors seek out today?

John Adams to Wilhem & Jan Willink, Nicolaas & Jacob van Staphorst, and De la Lande & Fynje, May 13, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 22–23

The Hague May 13th. 1782

Gentlemen

I have recieved the Letter which You did me the honor to write me on the 11th, of this Month in which You agree to accept the Terms of four and one quarter per Cent for the Remedium and other Charges.

To this I answer, that I understand your meaning to be, to accept of 4 1/4 per Cent for recieving and paying the Money at first, for recieving and paying off the annual Interest, and for finally recieving and paying off the Capital, for Brokerage, for the Remedium for the Undertakers and for all other Charges of the Loan. In this Sense I agree, in my Capacity as Agent for negotiating a Loan for the United States that You shall be allowed four and a Quarter per Cent.

As to the other Point, if You will open the Loan for three Millions only at first it would be perhaps better, but whether You open it for three or five, no other Loan in behalf of the United States shall be opened by me without your Consent, or at least without the Consent of two of the three Houses, until it is full, excepting one Case, which is that the Loan in your Hands should linger a long time without filling up, and I should obtain the Warranty of the States General, or of the States of Holland, or of the Regency of Amsterdam, for opening a new Loan, in which Case I should submit the Choice of an House to their H. Mightinesses, to their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, or to the Venerable Magistrates of the City, and in either of these Cases your three Houses will stand as fair to be employed as any other. You may therefore I think confidently affirm in your Prospectus that no other Loan will be opened, until this is full, by me.

You will please to inform Mr. Van Vlooten that I have agreed with You, and that I shall be very glad if he will forthwith engage in the Business with You upon such Terms as You and He shall agree on.

I have the honor to be with great Respect, Gentlemen, your most obedient & most H. Servant.

Review Questions

1. Which three merchant bankers are considering making a loan to the United States?
2. What are the terms of the loan that Adams is negotiating?

Blog Prompt

How does the United States government obtain money today?

John Adams to Robert Livingston, May 16, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 48–52

No. 11

The Hague May 16th. 1782

Sir

The American Cause has gained a signal Triumph in this Country. It has not persuaded an ancient Rival and an avowed natural hereditary Enemy to take a Part against Great Britain; but it has torn from her Bosom an intimate affectionate Friend and a faithful Ally of an hundred Years Continuance. It has not persuaded an absolute Monarchy to follow the Dictates of its own Glory and Interest and the unanimous Wish of the People, by favouring it; but availing itself only of the still small Voice of Reason, urging general Motives and national Interests, without Money, without Intrigue, without imposing Pomp, or more imposing Fame, it has prevailed against the utmost Efforts of Intrigue and Corruption, against the almost universal Inclination of Persons in Government, against a formidable Band of Capitalists, and the most powerful mercantile Houses in the Republick, interested in English Funds and too deeply leagued in English Affairs.

Altho' these Obstacles are overcome so far, as to have obtained an Acknowledgment of our Independence, yet it is easy to see, that they are not annihilated and therefore We cannot expect to receive such cordial and zealous assistance, as We might receive if the Government and People had but one Heart.

I wish it were in my Power to give Congress upon this Occasion Assurances of a Loan of Money, but I cannot. I have taken every Measure in my Power to accomplish it, but I have met with so many Difficulties that I almost despair of obtaining any thing. I have found the Avidity of Friends as great an Obstacle as the ill Will of Enemies. I can represent my Situation in this Affair of a Loan, by no other Figure than that of a Man in the midst of the Ocean negotiating for his Life among a School of Sharks. I am sorry to use Expressions which must appear severe to You: but the Truth demands them.

The Title of American Banker, for the sake of the Distinction of it, the Profit of it, and the Introduction to American Trade, is solicited with an Eagerness past Description. In order to obtain it, a House will give out great Words and boast of what it can do: but not one will contract to furnish any considerable Sum of Money; and I certainly know, let them deceive themselves as they will, and deceive as many others as they may by their confident

Affirmations, that none of them can obtain any considerable Sum. The Factions, that are raised here about it between the French Interest, the Republican Interest, the Stadthouderian Interests and the Anglomane Interests, have been conducted with an indecent Ardor, thwarting, contradicting, caluminating each other, until it is easy to fore see the Effect will be to prevent Us from obtaining even the small Sums, that otherwise might have been found. But the true and the decisive Secret is, there is very little Money to be had: The Profits of their Trade have been annihilated by the English for several Years. There is therefore no Money but the Interest of their Capitalists, and all this is promised for Months and Years beforehand to Bookkeepers, Brokers and Undertakers, who have in Hand Loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweeden Denmark, for the States General, the States of Holland, the States of Friesland, the East and West India Companies &c. &c. &c.

[...] The Treaty of Commerce is under Consideration, and will not that I foresee meet with any Obstacle.

I have the Honor to be, with great Esteem and Respect, Sir your most obedient and most humble servant

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams feel that gaining the Dutch as an ally is an important victory for the United States?
2. What different groups are interested in a Dutch loan to the United States?
3. To which other countries have the Dutch given loans?

John Adams to Wilhem & Jan Willink, Nicolaas & Jacob van Staphorst, and De la Lande & Fynje, May 18, 1782

Papers of Adams Papers, vol. 13, p. 63

The Hague May 18 1782

Gentlemen

I have just received your Favour of the Seventeenth of May, in answer to mine of the Same day by Mr Fynje and it is with great Pleasure that I perceive, We are how agreed upon the Terms.

I hope the Loan, will, in Consequence of this Agreement by opened without Loss of Time, and I wish you all the Success and Pleasure in the Prosecution of the Business that you can possibly wish your Selves.

I have the Honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble Servant.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does Adams hope the Dutch loan will improve things for the American war effort?

“Correspondence of the Late President Adams (Continued).” April 20, 1811. Excerpted from the *Boston Patriot*.

Saturday, April 20, 1811

3. The loan! When the prospect of my public reception and a treaty of friendship began to dawn and brighten, the loan of money began to be seriously meditated. I had tried the house of De Neufville and found it wanting. I had learned enough of its real circumstances and distresses to know that if I opened a new loan with them alone, I should ruin the credit of the U. States. Though the house had money, many friends, and many instruments, among Americans as well as others, to raise a clamor, I was determined at all risques, not to commit myself entirely to them. I received offers and solicitations which I need not name. But the house of Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, and the house of De la Lande and Fynje, were most importunate, next to the De Neufvilles. Both as far as I had been then informed, were respectable, but neither was considered as a great house, neither was an ancient house, and antiquity among mercantile houses and houses of capitalists, is in Amsterdam a distinction as much regarded as it is among princes and nobles in France or England. In the midst of all these solicitations, I received a letter from Dr. Franklin, at Passy, and another from the Duke de la Vauguion, at the Hague, most earnestly recommending to me the house of Fizeau and Grand. Sir George Grand as we called him, because he was a knight of St. Louis, was a brother of Mr Ferdinand Grand of Paris, our American banker, both of them gentleman from Switzerland. Sir George had lived in Sweden, and kept a public house in Stockholm, at which the comte De Vergenes had met the leaders of the revolution in 1770, and had acquired the friendship of that minister to such degree as to obtain the cross of St. Louis, and favor as a banker. I knew very well that Dr Franklin’s letter and the duke de la Vauguion’s, originated in the same source, the comte de Vergennes’ recommendation. What should I do? Disoblige Dr Franklin? Disoblige the duke de la Vauguion? Disoblige the comte de Vergennes? Disoblige the two Grands? Disoblige the De Neufvilles, the Van Staphorsts and de la Lands & Fynje, as well as several other houses? After long deliberation, I wrote a letter to four houses, Fizeau & Grand, De Neufville, Van Staphorsts, and de la Lande & Fynje, offering to associate all of them in a joint company. Every one of them refused to unite with Mr. De Neufville.

(To be continued)

JOHN ADAMS

Quincy, September 24, 1810

Review Questions

1. What banker does Benjamin Franklin recommend to Adams?
2. With whom does this recommendation originate?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. Why might Adams be suspicious of the banker recommended by Franklin?

“Correspondence of the Late President Adams (Continued).” April 24, 1811. Excerpted from the *Boston Patriot*.

To open a loan in the French house of Fizeau & Grand, though it was very respectable, and had always behaved towards me and all Americans with unexceptionable civility; I knew would furnish Versailles and Passy with information of every guilder I might from time to time obtain; and I had seen enough of the intrigues and waste from that quarter, to be determined at all risques not to open a loan in that house singly. Moreover all my most faithful and intelligent Dutch friends had uniformly warned me against opening my loan in a French house. They said it would lessen my reputation and materially injure the credit of the United States. If I wished a solid and lasting credit for my country, in Holland, I must select a house, or houses, purely Dutch.

In the midst of all my anxiety and uncertainty an American captain of a ship by the name of Grinnel happened to dine with me, and conversing on our want of a loan, he asked me if I had consulted Mr John Hodshon? The answer was in the negative. I had not supposed that Mr Hodshon, so easy as he was, and such a millionaire, would be willing to accept it, or even advise me in it [...]. In several interviews, he [Hodshon] entered very freely and candidly into conversation; said that as our Independence was now acknowledged, a loan was an object of importance and might be of utility to both countries. He doubted not that the most substantial houses in the republic might be induced to favor it, even the house of Hope. [...] I thought Mr. Hodshon knew less than I did concerning Mr. Hope's sentiments of American affairs. However, I have reason think he did sound Mr. Hope and received from him only such observations as I had heard reported from him several times before, viz: That America was too young to expect to borrow money at any ordinary interest, or at any interest less than the Batavian republic had been obliged in her infancy to give: i.e. ten or twelve per cent. However this might be, Mr Hodshon said no more about Mr Hope's assistance or countenance. He undertook the loan himself, and after adjusting all the terms, we mutually executed a contract in form, and the plan was made public. The next day upon change, he received the customary congratulations from the principal merchants and capitalists, and I thought I was very happy in so solid a connection. [...]

[. . .] Not many days passed however, before a clamour arose upon change in the city and pretty extensively in various parts of the republic. Mr Van Berckel told me Mr Hodshon was envied. There seemed to be a conspiracy of English and French emissaries, of Stadtholderians and patriots, of the friends and connections of Mr De Neufville, Fizeau & Grand, Van Staphorts, De la Lande & Fynje and many others, to raise a cry against Mr Hodshon. He was “anglomane;” he “was a Stadtholderian;” he “was an enemy to America,” &c. &c.—not one word of which was sufficiently well founded to make any reasonable objections against his employment in this service. However, I saw that there was a settled plan to make it a party affair, if not an engine of faction. I said nothing, but determined to let the bubble burst of itself. When I was attacked, as I sometimes was, pretty severely, in company, for the choice I had made of an house for my loan. I justified every step of my conduct in it, by such facts and reasons as not one man ever attempted to contradict or confute.

Nevertheless, in a few days Mr Hodshon came to me and said, “You cannot be ignorant sir, that an uneasiness has been excited in the city and country against yourself and me, on account of the American loan.” I answered, that I had heard and felt enough of it, but that having experienced much more formidable popular clamours in my own country, and seen that they soon subsided, I had not laid this much to heart. It had not shaken my confidence in him or in his contract. Mr Hodshon said “the opposition that was made, could not prevent him from obtaining a considerable sum of money; but it might prevent so large a loan as he and I wished, and as congress expected, and that it might expose me to reflections and misrepresentations in America, as well as in Holland, and even in England as well as France;” and added, “if you have the least inclination to be disengaged, or if you have the smallest probability of doing better for your constituents, I will readily release you from your contract.” I thanked him for his generosity, and added, that I was very willing to risqué all the consequences of perseverance, and had no doubt we should succeed as well at least as I could hope to do, in any other connection I could form. But if he pleased, I would make some further enquiries. He wished I would---he was advanced in years, was infirm in his health, easy in his circumstances, perfectly clear and unembarrassed in his business and wished for repose rather than to engage in squabbles: but he would not forsake me. If I could not do better, he would proceed. We agreed to consider and enquire. In the course of my enquiries, I was informed of a new house---that is, new to me; for I had never seen either of the gentlemen nor heard their names. The house of Wilhelm & Jean Willink, two young merchants of large capital, amiable characters, much esteemed and beloved, of very rich connections, obnoxious to no party, was suggested to me as willing to engage in this business. I made every enquiry in my power and received the most ample satisfaction and assurance of their characters, circumstances and connections. They were willing to engage with the Vanstaphorsts and De la Lande & Fynjee. I informed Mr Hodshon of this, and he cheerfully resigned his contract, gave me his account, received his balance and my thanks. [...] I then completed a new contract with the three houses, Wilhelm and Jean Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Vanstaphorst, and De La Lande and Fynjee. In the two former houses, the Willinks and Vanstaphorsts, I was not disappointed. De La Lande and Fynjee, in a few years failed [...] The Willinks and Vanstaphorsts continue, for any thing I know, to this day, 1810, bankers of the United States. I found them men of honor, and they borrowed for me, before I left Europe, nine millions of guilders, which enabled me to send, through the house of Le Couteuæ in Paris, by the way of the Havana, very large sums in dollars, to Mr. Robert Morris, the financier of congress; which enabled me not only to maintain myself in Holland, France and England, but to maintain Dr Franklin and Mr Jefferson in France. Not a livre could Dr. Franklin obtain from the French court, not even for his daily bread, after it was known I had money in Holland [...]

John Adams

Quincy, September 24, 1810

Review Questions

1. Who does Adams first approach to loan money to the United States?
2. Why does this first loan not work out?
3. How much money is Adams able to borrow in the Netherlands prior to his departure?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would France cut off their loan to the United States after Adams obtained the Dutch loan?

☞ *The Peace of Paris* ☞

In 1779, the Continental Congress commissioned John Adams to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain. That commission was revoked after the Comte de Vergennes, the French Foreign Minister, recommended to Congress that Adams not be entrusted with the task. Instead, Congress appointed a five-member commission to carry out the negotiations. John Adams, who is named first in the new commission, will share the responsibilities with Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson never made the journey to France to join the commission, which left the other four to carry out the negotiations.

Much of the diplomacy happened while John Adams was still in the Netherlands, but he took the lead in the negotiations nonetheless. Adams refused to join his fellow commissioners in France until the British commissioners—and thus King George III—recognized the United States as a sovereign and independent state rather than former colonies in rebellion. Adams believed that peace would follow Britain's recognition of the United States.

Adams convinced his fellow commissioners to ignore their instructions from Congress and break with French advice. Adams believed that the French would negotiate a treaty that best served France and not the United States. Hence, he convinced Jay and Franklin to negotiate separately with Great Britain, although the plan had always been to negotiate a single treaty with all parties participating under French leadership.

Though the United States was at war with Great Britain and maintained the Treaty of Amity with France, John Adams realized that the future of the United States depended on both amity and commerce with Great Britain rather than with France. Adams negotiated with his former king; he fought for the rights of New England fishermen to have access to the Grand Banks fisheries off the coast of Canada. This right would again be contested and negotiated by John Adams's son John Quincy at the conclusion of the War of 1812.

John Adams to the Comte de Vergennes, July 13, 1781Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 413–417

Paris July 13. 1781

[...] The Idea of a Truce, is not Suggested, in these Articles; but, as it is mentioned in Some observations Shewn me, by His Excellency the Comte de Vergennes it may be necessary for me to add, that the United States, are So deeply impressed, with an Apprehension, that any Truce whatsoever, would not fail to be productive of another long and bloody War, at the Termination of it, and that a Short Truce, would be, in many Ways, highly dangerous to them, that it would be with great Reluctance that they Should enter into any discussion, at all, upon Such a Subject. Two express Conditions, would be, indispensable Preliminaries to their taking into consideration, the Subject of a Truce at all. The first is, that their Allies agree, that the Treaties now Subsisting remain in full Force, during and after the Truce, untill the final Acknowledgment of their Independance by Great Britain. The Second is, the antecedent Removal of the British Land and naval Armaments, from every Part of the United States. Upon these two express Conditions as Preliminaries, if a Truce Should be proposed, for so long a Period, or for an indeffinite Period requiring So long notice, previous to renewal of Hostilities, as to evince that it is, on the Part of Great Britain a virtual Relinquishment of the Object of the War, and an Expedient only to avoid the mortification of an express Acknowledgment of the Independence and Sovereignty of the United States, they, with the concurrence of their Allies might accede to it.

It is requisite however to add. 1. That the United States cannot consider themselves bound by this declaration, unless it Should be agreed to before, the opening of another Campaign. 2. That it is not in the Power of the Crown of Great Britain, by the constitution of that Kingdom, to establish any Truce, or even Armistice, with the United States, which would not be illusory without the Intervention of an Act of Parliament, repealing or Suspending all their Statutes, which have any Relation to the United States or any of them. Without this, every officer of the Navy, would be bound by the Laws, according to the Maxims of their Constitution, to Seize every American Vessel, that he should find, whose Papers and destination Should not be found conformable to those Statutes, and every French, Spanish, Dutch or foreign Vessel, which he Should find going to or coming from America; notwithstanding any Convention, that it is in the Power of the Crown to make.

After all: the greatest difficulty does not lie in any Thing as yet mentioned. The greatest question is, in what Character are the United States to be considered?

They know themselves to be a free, Sovereign and independent State, of right and in Fact. They are considered and acknowledged, as Such, by France. They cannot be represented in a Congress of Ministers, from the Several Powers of Europe, whether their Representative is called Ambassador, Minister or Agent, without Acknowledgment of their Independence, of which the very Admission of a Representative from them, is an Avowal. Great Britain, cannot agree with their Representative, upon a Truce, or even an Armistice, without Admitting their Freedom and Independence.

As there is upon Earth, no Judge of a Sovereign State, but the Nation that composes it, the United States can never consent, that their Independence, shall be discussed or called in question, by any Sovereign or Sovereigns, however respectable, nor can their Interests be made a question, in any Congress, in which their Character is not acknowledged, and their Minister admitted. If therefore, the two Imperial Courts, would acknowledge, and lay down as a Preliminary, the Sovereignty of the United States, and admit their Minister to a Congress: after this, a Treaty might be commenced, between the Minister of Great Britain, and the Minister of the United States, relative to a Truce, or Peace and Commerce, in the manner proposed, without any express Acknowledgment of their Sovereignty by Great Britain, until the Treaty should be concluded.

The Sovereigns of Europe have a right to negotiate, concerning their own Interests and to deliberate concerning the Question whether it is consistent with their Dignity and Interests, to acknowledge expressly the Sovereignty of the United States, and to make Treaties with them, by their Ministers in a Congress or other wise; and America could make no Objection to it. But neither the United State nor France can ever consent, that the Existence of their Sovereignty, shall be made a question in Such Congress: because, let that Congress determine as it might, their Sovereignty with Submission only to divine Providence never can, and never will be given up[...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams reject the idea of a truce with the British?
2. Under what two conditions would a truce have been acceptable?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams insist that Great Britain must recognize the sovereignty of the United States before negotiations can take place?

John Adams to the Comte de Vergennes, July 19, 1781

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 425–430

Paris July 19. 1781

The Commission, from the United States, for making Peace, which has been in Europe, almost two Years, is that of a Minister Plenipotentiary, and it authorises him to treat only with Ministers vested with equal Powers. If he were to appear in Vienna, he certainly would assume, the Title and Character of a Minister Plenipotentiary and could enter into no Treaty or Conference, with any Minister from Great Britain, until they had mutually exchanged, authentick Copies of their full Powers. This, it is true, would be an implied Acknowledgment of his Character and Title, and those of the United States too: but Such an Acknowledgment, is indispensable, because without it, there can be no Treaty at all. In Consequence, he would expect to enjoy all the Prerogatives of that Character, and the moment they should be refused him, he must quit the Congress, let the Consequences be, what they might. And I rely upon it, this is the Intention of the two Imperial Courts: because otherwise, they would have proposed the Congress, upon the Basis of the two British Preliminaries, a Rupture of the Treaty, with France, and a Return of the Americans to their Submission to

Great Britain, and because I cannot Suppose it possible, that those Courts, could believe the Americans capable of Such infinite Baseness, as to appear upon the Stage of the Universe, to acknowledge themselves guilty of Rebellion, and Supplicate for Grace. Nor can I Suppose, that they meant to fix a Brand of disgrace, upon the Americans, in the Sight of all Nations, or to pronounce Judgment against them: one, or all of which Suppositions must be made, before it can be believed that those Courts did not mean to protect the American Minister, in the Enjoyment of the Priviledges attached to the Character which he must assume. And because, otherwise, all their Propositions would be to no Effect; for no Congress at Vienna can make either one or the other of the two proposed Peace's, without the United States.

But, upon looking over again, the Words of the first Article, there Seems to be room for dispute, which a British minister, in the present State of his Country, would be capable of taking Advantage of. The Terms used, Seem to be justly exceptionable. There are no "American Colonies" at War with Great Britain. The Power at War, is The United States of America. No American Colonies, have any representative in Europe, unless Nova Scotia or Quebeck, or Some of the West India Islands may have an Agent in London. The Word Colony in its usual Acceptation, implies a Metropolis, a Mother Country, a Superiour Political Governor, Ideas, which the United States, have long Since renounced for ever.

[...]

All that I can Say, to this Case, at present, is this. The United States have assumed their equal Station among the nations: they have assumed a Sovereignty, which they acknowledge to hold only from God and their own Swords. They can be represented only as a Sovereign and therefore, although they might not be able to prevent it, they can never consent that any of these Things Shall be made questions. To give their Consent, would make the Surrender of their Sovereignty their own Act. France has acknowledged all these things, and bound her Honour and Faith to the Support of them, and therefore, although She might not be able to prevent it, She cannot consent that they should be disputed. Her Consent would make the Surrender of the American Sovereignty her Act. And what End can it answer to dispute them, unless it be, to extend the Flames of War? If Great Britain had a Colour of Reason, for pretending that France's Acknowledgment of American Independance, was an Hostility against her the United States would have a Stronger Reason to contend that a denial of their Sovereignty was a declaration of War against them. And as France is bound to Support their Sovereignty, She would have Reason to Say that a denial of it, is an Hostility against her, if any Power of Europe has an Inclination to join England, and make War against France and the United States, there is no need of a previous Congress to enable her to do it, with more Solemnity, or to furnish her with plausible Pretexs. But, on the other Hand, if the Powers of Europe are persuaded of the Justice of the American Pretensions, and think [*it the*] duty of Humanity to endeavor to bring about Peace, they may easily propose that the Character of the United States shall be acknowledged, and their minister admitted [...]

John Adams

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams object to the use of the word "colony" in describing the United States?
2. Why would acknowledgment of the United States ambassador by Great Britain change the nature of negotiations?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, April 16, 1782Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 410–412

Amsterdam April 16. 1782

Sir

Yesterday noon, Mr William Vaughan of London, came to my House, with Mr Laurens, the son of the President, and brought me a Line from the latter, and told me, that the President was at Harlem, and desired to see me. I went to Haerlem and found, my old Friend at the golden Lyon [...]

He Said that Lord shelbourne and others of the new Ministers, were anxious to know whether, there was any authority to treat of a Seperate Peace, and whether there could be an accommodation, upon any Terms short of Independance. That he had ever answrd them, that nothing short of an express or tacit Acknowledgement of our Independance, in his opinion would ever be accepted, and that no Treaty ever would or could be made Seperate from France. He asked me if his answers had been right? I told him I was fully of that opinion [...]

I desired him, between him and me to consider, without Saying any thing of it to the Ministry whether We could ever have a real Peace with Canada or Nova Scotia in the Hands of the English? And whether, We ought not to insist, at least upon a Stipulation that they should keep no standing army or regular Troops, nor erect any fortifications, upon the frontiers of either. That at present I saw no Motive that We had to be anxious for a Peace, and if this nation was not ripe for it, upon proper terms, We might wait patiently till they should be so[...]

These are all but Artifices to raise the Stocks, and if you think of any Method to put a stop to them, I will chearfully concur with you. They now know sufficiently, that our Commission is to treat of a general Peace, and with Persons vested with equal Powers. And if you agree to it, I will never to see another Messenger that is not a Plenipotentiary.

It is expected that the Seventh Province, Guelderland will this day Acknowledge American Independance. I think, We are in such a Situation now that We ought not, upon any Consideration to think of a Truce, or any Thing short of an express Acknowledgement of the Souverignty of the United States. I should be glad however to know your sentiments upon this Point.

I have the Honour to be

Review Questions

1. What two questions does the British government ask Laurens regarding a possible peace treaty?
2. What is Adams's concern about Canada and the final peace?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams refuse to communicate with any representative of Great Britain who is not a plenipotentiary?

Blog Prompt

Under what circumstances is a truce less than beneficial to a country at war? Cite a modern example of such an occurrence.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, May 2, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 2–4

Amsterdam May 2d. 1782

Sir

[...] Mr Laurens and Mr Jay will, I hope be able to meet at Paris, but when it will be in my Power to go, I know not. Your present Negotiation about Peace falls in, very well to aid a Proposition which I am instructed to make, as soon as the Court of Versaills shall judge proper of a tripple or quadruple alliance. This matter, the Treaty of Commerce which is now under deliberation, and the Loan will render it improper for me to quit this station, unless in Case of Necessity. If there is a real Dissposition to permit Canada to accede to the american association I should think there could be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and america, provided our allies are contented too. In a former Letter I hinted that I thought an express Acknowledgment of our Independence might now be insisted on: but I did not mean that we should insist upon such an Article in the Treaty. If they make a Treaty of Peace with the United States of America, this is Acknowledgment enough for me. The affair of a Loan gives me much anxiety and Fatigue. It is true I may open a Loan for five millions, but I confess I have no hopes of obtaining so much. The Money is not to be had. Cash is not infinite in this Country. Their Profits by Trade have been ruined for two or three Years: and there are Loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweeden, Denmark and Several other Powers as well as their own national, provincial and collegiate Loans. The Under takers are already loaded with Burthens greater than they can bear, and all the Brokers in the Republick are so engaged, that there is Scarcely a Ducat to be lent but what is promised.

This is the true Cause why We shall not Succeed; yet they will Seek an hundred other Pretences. It is considered Such an honour and Such an Introduction to american Trade to be the House, that the Eagerness to obtain the Title of american Banker is prodigious. Various Houses have Pretensions, which they set up very high, and let me choose which I will, I am Sure of a Cry and a Clamour. I have taken some measures to endeavour to callm the Heat and give general Satisfaction, but have as yet Small hopes of success. I would Strike with any House that would insure the Money, but none will undertake it, now it is offered although Several were very ready to affirm that they could, when it began to be talked of. Upon Enquiry they dont find, the Money easy to obtain which I could have told them before. It is to me personally perfectly indifferent which is the House, and the only Question is, which will be able to do best for the Interest of the United States. This question however Simple is not easy to answer. But I think it clear, after very painfull and laborious Enquiris for a Year and an half, that no House whatever, will be able to do much. Enthusiasm, at Some times and in Some Countries, may do a great deal: but there has as yet been no Enthusiasm in this Country, for america, Strong enough to untie many Purses. Another Year, if the War should continue, perhaps We may do better.

I have the Honour to be, Sir your most obedient and most humble sert

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams unable to travel immediately to Paris?
2. Why does Adams fear that the Dutch loan will not be as beneficial as desired?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, May 24, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 76–78

The Hague May 24. 1782

Sir

Your Favour of April 22d and that of May 8th. are recd. I will Examine, Mr Fizeaus accounts as soon as my Friend Mr Thaxter, is a little better, who is now sick of a Fever. I have attempted it alone, but I find a few little Variations from my accounts, of no great Consequence, which however perhaps Mr Thaxter may clear up.

The arrangements of Time and Place, mentioned in Lord Shelburne's Letter, cannot be a Work of any difficulty: because that People whose dispositions for Peace, are Sincere, would be willing to go at any time to almost any Place, provided the Work was not to meet obstructions there. But the Question is, whether his Lordship and his Royal Master, have lowered their Ideas of British omnipotence, and cleared their Breasts of the old Leaven of Contempt for their Ennemies Sufficiently to agree to the Terms which will probably be expected.

You know his Lordship personally, and therefore I can tell you no News of him: but, I have taken some Pains for fifteen or Sixteen Years, to inform myself of his Character and Sentiments, and from all I could ever learn, it seems to me, that his Ideas of Great Britain and her Ennemies are at this hour as wild, as those of my Lord North were Seven Years ago. The Changes in his Sentiments have not kept Pace with the alterations in Things. Mr Fox appears to have much juster Notions and Sincerer dispositions, tho God knows he is no Idol to me.

If his Lordships Sense was Spoken by Mr Oswald, viz to allow of our Independance, on Condition of Britains being put into the State, she was left in, by the Peace of 1763. This is a matter of Negotiation with France and Spain, and We have nothing to Say or do in it. But France and Spain must have more Moderation than ever Britain had, if they agree to it. But perhaps he means also that Britain shall remain in Possession of Nova Scotia, Canada and the Floridas as ceded to them by the Peace of 1763. If this is any part of his meaning it is a very Serious affair for Us, and for G. Britain too, for the foundation would be laid by it for her final Ruin. She will be forever at War with the United States must expend immense Sums, in maintaining innumerable Posts and fortifications, and garrisons, and at last can no more hold it, then her Navy can rule the Moon. We shall be in perpetual hot Water, it is true: but it will keep up a military Spirit, which it is Britains Interest if she could but see it, to lay asleep.

For my own Part, I dont feel so much anxiety, about the Part We have to Act in the Negotiations for Peace, as I commonly have done, in matters even of less Consequence because, I see that France, Spain and Holland have so many just Pretensions upon England, and the Ministry in England so divided, as well as the Nation, and the greater and more powerful Part, so extravagant in their Notions and so afraid of making Concessions, that I dont expect, the Negotiation will advance so far, as that We shall have to enter very Seriously into our Claims, for sometime yet. The new Ministers, and New Admirals must try their Hands first, to see if they can turn the Fortune of the War. At least this appears to me to be the Earl of Shelburnes design with which he flatters the King.

The King hates them all. But perhaps Shelburne the least. And the Nation dont appear, notwithstanding the Addrsses to have much Confidence in the new set. In short I dont believe that any one Man or set of Men, have so much of the Confidence of King and Nation, as to be able to make with Safty to themselves the Sacrifices, which will be found indispensible, at a Peace.

I have &c

Review Questions

1. What reason does Adams give for not using the Peace of 1763 as a framework for the current peace negotiations?
2. Who are America's allies that would participate in the peace negotiations?
3. What does Adams think the new British government would do prior to the beginning of peace negotiations?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might a change in the British government affect the course of the war with America?

Blog Prompt

What must a government do in order to make peace with an enemy? Give a prescription for a modern day war.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, June 13, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 116–118

The Hague June 13. 1782

Sir

I had Yesterday, at Amsterdam, the Honour of receiving your Excellencys Letter of June 2. The Discovery that Mr Grenvilles Power, was only to treat with France does not Surprize me, at all. The British Ministry, are too much divided among themselves, and have too formidable an opposition against them, in the King and the old Ministers, and are possessed of too little of the Confidence of the Nation, to have the Courage to make Concessions, of any Sort, especially Since the News of their Successes in the East and West Indies.

What their Pride will end in, God only knows. For my own Part, I cannot See, a Probability, that they will ever make Peace, untill their Financies are ruined and such Distresses brought upon them as will work up their Parties into a civil War.

I wish their Ennemies could by any means be perswaded to carry on the War against them in Places where they might be sure of Tryumphs, instead of insitsing upon pursuing it, where they are Sure of Defeats. But We must take Patience, and wait for Time to do, what Wisdom might easily and Soon do.

I have not as yet taken any Engagements with the Dutch not to make a Peace without them, but I will take such Engagements, in a moment if the Dutch will take them, and I believe they will chearfully. I shall not propose it however untill I have the Concurrence of the Duke de la Vauguion who will do nothing without the Instructions of his Court. I would not delay it, a moment from any Expectation that the English, will acknowledge our Independence and make Peace with Us, because I have no such Expectations. I confess, it would be with infinite Reluctance that I should see a Peace made between England and any of her Ennemies, unless it is made with all. If France, Spain and America should make Peace with England, and leave Holland alone at War, she would be at Mercy, and she would find the tenderest of it, Cruelty.

The permanent and lasting Friendship of the Dutch, may be easily obtained by the United States; that of England never. It is gone with the days before the Flood. If we ever enjoy the Smallest degree of Sincere Friendship again from England I am totally incapable of Seeing the Character of a Nation or the Connections of Things, which however may be the Case, for what I know. They have brought themselves by their Frenzy into Such a Situation. Spain has such Pretensions, Holland has Such Pretensions, America has Such Pretensions, the Armed Neutrality has Such Pretensions, that where is the English Minister, or Member of Parliament that dares to vote for the Concession to them? The Pretensions of France I believe would be so moderate that possibly, they might be acceded to. But I fear that Spain who deserves the least will demand the most. In Short the Work of Peace appears So impracticable, that I am happy in being restrained to this Country by my Duty and by this means excused from troubling my Head much about it. I have a Letter from America which informed me that Mr Jay had refused to Act in the Commission for Peace: but if he is on his Way to Paris, as you suppose I presume, my Information must be a Mistake, which I am very glad of. Mr Laurens, did me the Honour of a very short Visit, in his Way to France, but I was very Sorry to learn from him, that in a Letter to your Excellency he had declined Serving in the Commission for Peace. I had vast Pleasure in his Conversation, for I found him possessed of the most exact Judgment respecting our Ennemies, and of the Same noble Sentiments in all things, which I Saw in him in Congress.

What is the System of Russia? Does she Suppose that England has too many Ennemies upon her, and that their demands and Pretensions are too high? Does she Seek to embroil affairs and to light up a general War in Europe? Is Denmark in Concert with her, or any other Power? Her Conduct is a Phenomenon. Is there any Secret Negotiation or Intrigue on Foot, to form a Party for England among the Powers of Europe, and to make a Ballance, against the Power of the Ennemies of England?

The States of Holland and several other Provinces have taken the Resolutions, against the Mediation for a Seperate Peace, and this nation seems to be well fixed in its System and in the common Cause.

My best Respects and Affections to my old Frid Mr Jay, if you please.

Review Questions

1. With whom does the British government propose negotiating peace?
2. What is Adams's concern about making a separate peace with Great Britain?
3. What does Adams suspect is happening with Russia and other European powers?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Adams believe that a friendship with Great Britain is not possible?

A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, ca. July 5–8, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 160–164

The Hague [*ca.* 5–8] July 1782

Sir

This War has already continued so many Years, been extended to so many Nations, and been attended with so many unnatural and disagreeable Circumstances that Every Man, who is not deficient in the Sentiments of Philanthropy, must wish to see Peace, restored upon just Principles, to Mankind: I shall therefore make no other Apology, for the Liberty I take in Writing this Letter, not in a public ministerial Character, but in a private and confidential Manner So that it is not expected or desired that you should make any further Use of it, then for your private amusement, unless you should judge it proper, to take any publick steps in Consequence of it, in which Case you are at Liberty to make what Use of it you think proper. All the World professes to wish for Peace: England professes Such a Desire, France, Spain, Holland and America, profess it. The neutral Powers, profess it, and Some of them are giving themselves much Trouble, by Negotiations and offers of Mediation to accomplish it, either generally or at least partially. All the Nations at War with England seem to be very well agreed in the Sentiment, that any partial or Seperate Peace, would only retard a general Peace, and therefore do more harm than good, and this Sentiment, is past all doubt perfectly just.

What Measures than can be taken, with any plausible appearance of Probability, to bring about a General Peace? Great Britain, is in a Situation as critical as any Nation was ever known to Stand in. Ireland and all her foreign Dominions discontented, and almost ripe to follow the Example of the United states of America in throwing off, all their Connections with her. The Nation at home, nearly equally divided between the old Ministry and the New, and between the old System and the new, So that no Party, has an Influence sufficiently clear to take any decided Step. A Sentiment of Compassion for England *<and a Jealousy of the growing Commerce and naval Power of their Ennemies>*, may take Place in Some of the neutral Powers, and after sometime induce them, especially if any new Motive should turn up, to become Parties to the War, and thus involve all Nations in a flame.

America has perhaps the least to dread, perhaps the most to gain by Such an Event of any of the Nations of the World. She would wish however to avoid it. But the Question is, in what manner?

If England could be unanimous, in the only Plan of Wisdom she might easily resolve this Question, by instantly declaring the United states of America, A sovereign and independent state—and by inviting them as Such to a Congress, for a general Pacification, under the Mediation of the two Imperial Courts as was proposed last Year. But the present british Ministers are not Sufficiently Seated in the Confidence of the King or the Nation to venture upon so Striking a Measure. The King would be displeased, the Nation allarmed, and the old Ministry and their Partisans, would raise a popular Cry against them, that they had Sacraficed the Honour and Dignity of the Crown and the essential Interests of the Nation.

Something is therefore wanting, to enable the Government in England to do what is absolutely necessary for the Safety of the Nation. In order to discover what that is, it is necessary to recollect, a Resolution of Congress of the 5th. of October 1780, in these Words “Her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, attentive to the Freedom of Commerce, and the Rights of Nations, in her Declaration to the belligerent and neutral Powers, having proposed Regulations founded on Principles of Justice, Equity and Moderation, of which their most Christian and Catholic Majestys, and most of the neutral maritime Powers of Europe, have declared their Approbation, Congress willing to testify their Regard to the Rights of Commerce, and their Respect for the Sovereign, who hath proposed, and the Powers who have approved the said Regulations.

Resolve, that the Board of Admiralty prepare and Report Instructions for the Commanders of armed Vessells, commissioned by the United States, conformable to the Principles contained in the Declaration of the Empress of all the Russias, on the Rights of neutral Vessells.

That the Ministers Plenipotentiary, from the United States, if invited thereto, be, and hereby are, respectively impowerd to accede to Such Regulations, conformable to the Spirit of the Said Declaration, as may be agreed upon, by the Congress expected to assemble in pursuance of the Invitation of her imperial Majesty.”

This Resolution, I had the Honour on the 8th of March 1781 of communicating to their High Mightinesses, and to the Ministers of Russia, Sweeden and Denmark residing at the Hague, and to inform them, that I was ready and desirous of pledging the Faith of the United states, to the Observances of the Principles of the armed Neutrality, according to that Resolution of Congress.

Now I Submit it to your Consideration sir, whether the Simplest and most natural Method of bringing this War to a General Conclusion is not, for the neutral Powers to admit a Minister from Congress to accede to the Principles of the marine Treaty of Neutrality in the Same manner as France and Spain have done.

But it will be Said this is Acknowledging the Souverignty of the United States of America. Very true—and for this very Reason it is desirable, because it settles the main question of the Controversy, it immediately reconciles, all the illdisposed Part of the English Nation to the Measure, it prepares the Way to the two Imperial Courts to invite the Ministers of the United states of America to a Congress, for making Peace under their Mediation, and

enables the British Ministry to reconcile the King and the present opposition to an Act of Parliament declaring America independent, and most probably is the only Method of Saving Great Britain herself from all the Horrors of an internal civil war.

This great Point once decided, the Moderation of the belligerent Powers and the impartial Equity of the two imperial mediating Courts, would leave no room to doubt of a Speedy general Peace.

Without Some such Interposition of the Neutral Powers, the War will probably be prolonged untill a civil War breaks out in England, for which the Parties there appear to be nearly ripe. The Vanity of that Nation will always enable artfull Men to flatter it, with illusive hopes of Divisions among their Ennemies, of Reconciliation with America, and of Seperate Peace with some that they make take vengeance on others. But these are all Delusions—America will never be unfaithfull to their Allies nor to herself.

I wish therefore, Sir, for your Advice, whether it would not be prudent for the States General to take Some Steps. To propose this matter to the Considerations of the Empress of Russia, the Emperor of Germany and all the other Neutral Courts—or at least to instruct their Ambassadors at all those Courts, to promote, the Admission of the United states of America to become Parties to the late Marine Treaty.

Review Questions

1. What difficulties does Great Britain face because of the war?
2. According to the resolution passed by Congress, what does the United States desire of the powers of Europe?
3. What two imperial courts offer to mediate the peace between Great Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the former British government ministers not support the new British government with respect to the war with America?

John Adams to Edmund Jenings, July 20, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 188–190

The Hague 20. July 1782

Sir

The more I reflect upon the late Revolution in the British Ministry the more I am Struck, with the Conduct of Mr Fox. I am become, upon certain Conditions his Admirer, *<and almost wish to be his Friend!>*. The Conditions are two

1. That his Conduct has been the Result of Deliberation and Judgment, not of mere Jealousy Ambition, or Resentment.
2. That he has Patience and Fortitude enough to persevere, to the End.

His Conduct, appears to me Such, as that of a Man whose large Mind embraced, the whole Scheme of the Affairs and Relations of his Country, and capable of Seizing the only Clue which remained for extricating her out of that Entanglement in which the old Ministry

had left her, ought to have been. If he stands fast upon the Ground he has taken, he will Shew himself worthy to be the Man of the People, and must finally prevail, if his Idea had been adopted and America declared a Sovereign State by Act of Parliament, the Way would have been clear, for the King to consent, that the two Imperial Courts Should immediately acknowledge American Independence by Admitting Mr Dana to Sign the Treaty of armed Neutrality, or otherwise as they pleased and invite Dr Franklin and Mr Jay to a Congress, for a general Peace, under their Mediation. These Combinations of Objects, are easy and natural although one of the Objects is unweildy, I mean the Armed Neutrality. As it is in the Power of this body So easily to pacify the World, it is their Duty to do it, by acknowledging the United states. Peace would soon follow.

Pray has not Parliament Seperated without agreeing to the Taxes for Paying the Interest of the last Loan? Is not this unprecedented? and what will be the Consequence? Will it not wound public Credit?

Lord Shelburne, had it in his Power to have pacified the World, and has failed. Mr Fox saw how to do it, but shelburnes opposition took away from him the Power. But shelburne would not have opposed, if Franklin had not piddled. If Vergennes and Franklin had decidedly refused to see any Agent about Peace, who had not a Commission and full Powers to treat with the United states of America the British stocks and Spirits would have fallen so low that shelburne and all the rest would have been compelled to have adopted Mr Fox's present Idea. But F. must make himself a Man of Consequence by piddling with Men who had no Title. But thus it is, that Men of great Reputations may do as many Weak Things as they please, and to remark their Mistakes is to envy them. I neither envy him however, nor his confidential Agent Mr Alexander. His base Jealousy of me and his Sordid Envy of my Commission for making Peace, and especially of my Commission for making a Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain have Stimulated him to attempt to commit an assassination upon my Character at Philidelphia, of which the World has not Yet heard, and of which it cannot hear untill the Time shall come when many voluminous state Papers may be laid before the Publick, which ought not to be, untill We are all dead. But this I Swear, I will affirm when and where I please that he has been actuated and is still by a low Jealousy and a meaner Envy of me, let the C. Vergennes or F. himself complain of it again to congress if they please, it would be my Joy to answer there in Person or by Letter. The anonymous scribbler charged me with clandestinely hurting Franklin. I have done nothing clandestinely. I have complained of Franklins Behaviour, in Company with Americans so I have in Company with the French and Spanish Ambassadors, without any Injunctions or desires of Secresy. This is an odd Sort of Clandestinity. That I have no Friendship for Franklin I avow. That I am incapable of having any with a Man of his moral Sentiments, I avow. As Far as cruel Fate shall compell me to act with him in publick affairs, I shall treat him with decency and perfect Impartiality, further than that I can feel for him no other sentiments than Contempt or Abhorrence. In my Soul I believe of him all that Burke says of shelburne. Yet to undertake to lay before the public all the Reasons I have for believing so would do more hurt at present than his Neck and mine too are both worth, and therefore I have Said and shall say as little about it, as is consistent with my Honour. Will you give my affectionate Regards to Mr Laurens and tell him, that all that is said by the anonymous

scribbler is a Lye. That if he will accept of this Mission I will resign it in a Moment. That I love and esteem him, and ever did, and have ever openly publickly and privately avowed it.
 Adieu, my dear sir Adieu
 J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What were the conditions under which Adams proclaims himself an admirer of British Prime Minister Fox?
2. According to Adams, how do Benjamin Franklin and the Comte de Vergennes inadvertently help the British and extend the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams come to dislike Benjamin Franklin?

John Adams to John Jay, August 10, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 227–228

Hague. Augst. 10th. 1782

Sir

It was with very great pleasure that I recd. this morning your kind favor of the 2d. inst. I am surprized to learn that your and Mrs: Jay's health have been disordered in France where the air is so fine.

That your anxieties have been very great I doubt not—that most of them were such as you ought not to have met with, I can easily conceive. I can sincerely say, that all mine, but my Fever, were such as I ought not to have had. Thank God, they are past, and never shall return, for nothing that can happen shall ever make me so anxious again. I have assumed the *felicis animi immota Tranquillitas*.

Nothing would give me more satisfaction than a free conversation between you and me, upon the subjects you mention, and all others, directly or indirectly connected with it, or with any of our affairs, but I don't see a possibility of taking such a journey. The march of this People is so slow, that it will be sometime before the Treaty of Commerce can be finished and after that I have other orders to execute, and must be here in person to attend every step. But besides this, I think I ought not go to Paris while there is any messenger there from England, unless, he has full powers to treat with the Ministers of the United States of America. If the three American Ministers should appear at Paris, at the same time with a real or pretended Minister from London, all the world would instantly conclude a Peace certain, and would fill at once another years Loan for the English. In Lord Shelburne's sincerity, I have not the least confidence and I think that we ought to take up Fox's idea, and insist upon full powers to treat with us in character, before we have a word more to say upon the subject. They are only amusing us. I would rather invite you to come here. This Country is worth seeing and you would lay me under great obligations by taking your residence, during your stay, in the *Hotell des Etats-Unis*—many People would be glad to see you.

I should be very glad however to be informed, fm. step to step, how things proceed, which may be done with safety by Expresses to me; or by those from the Court of Versailles

to the Duke de la Vauguion, in whom I have great confidence, or it may be done even by Post, under cover to Messrs. Wilhem & Jean Willink, at Amsterdam; or Mr. Dumas, at the Hague; or to Mr. Charles Storer, chez Madame la Veuve Loder at the Hague.

As you justly observe, further accessions of power to the House of Bourbon may excite jealousies in some Powers of Europe, but who is to blame but themselves? Why are they so short sighted, or so indolent, as to neglect to acknowledge the United States and make Treaties with them! Why do they leave the House of Bourbon to contend so long, and spend so much? Why do they leave America and Holland under so many obligations. France has, and deserves and ought to have a great weight with America and Holland, but other powers might have proportionable weight, if they would have proportional merit.

If the Powers of the Neutral Maritime Confederation, would admit the United States to accede to that Treaty, and declare America Independent, they would contribute to prevent America at least, fm. being too much under the direction of France. But if any Powers should take the part of England, they will compell America and Holland too, to unite themselves ten times more firmly than ever to the House of Bourbon.

I don't know, however, that America, or Holland are too much under the direction of France, and I don't believe they will be—but they must be dead to every generous feeling as Men, and to every wise view as Statesmen, if they were not much attached to France in the circumstances of the Times.

I have received two letters from you in the Spring—one I answered, but have not the dates at present, the other kindly informed me of the arrival of my Son in America, for which I thank you.

With great regard and esteem, I am, dear Sir, Your Most obedt: humle. Servt.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is the misperception of an impending peace treaty problematic for Adams?
2. How might other European countries improve their relationship with the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is Adams's tone in this letter? What does this reveal about Adams's relationship with John Jay?

John Adams to John Jay, August 13, 1782*Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 236–238

The Hague August 13. 1782

Dear Sir

The public Papers announce Fitzherbert's Commission to be, to treat "With the four Powers at War with Great-Britain" But whether they mean Hyder Aly, or the Marattas, is uncertain.

I have obtained Intelligence of a Paper addressed lately from the Court of St. James's to the Courts of Vienna and Petersbourg, as well as that of Paris, in which are the following words, vizt.

Sa Majesté Britannique dit, "Qu'Elle ne préjuge, ni ne veut préjuger aucune question quelconque, et qu'Elle ne prétend exclure personne de la Négociation qu'on a en vue, qui pourroit s'y croire intéressé, soit qu'il soit question des Etats-Généraux, soit qu'on y veuille faire entrer les Colonies Américaines"—You perhaps may have seen the whole. If you have, I beg a Copy.

For my own part, I am not the Minister of any "fourth State" at war with Great-Britain, nor of any "American Colonies." And therefore I should think it out of Character for us to have any thing to say to Fitzherbert, or in the Congress at Vienna, untill more decently and consistently called to it. It is my duty to be explicit with you, and to tell you sincerely my sentiments. I think we ought not to treat at all, untill we see a Minister authorised to treat with "The United States of America" or with their Ministers. Our Country will feel the miserable consequence of a different conduct. If we are betrayed into Negotiations, in or out of a Congress, before this Point is settled, if Gold and Diamonds, and every insidious Intrigue and wicked Falshood, can induce any Body to embarrass us, and betray us into Truces and bad Conditions, we may depend upon having them played off against us. We are and can be no Match for them at this Game. We shall have nothing to negotiate with but Integrity, Perspicuity and Firmness.

There is but one way to Negotiate with Englishmen. That is clearly and decidedly. Their Fears only govern them. If we entertain an Idea of their Generosity, or Benevolence towards us, we are undone. They hate us, universally from the Throne to the Footstool, and would annihilate us, if in their Power, before they would treat with us in any way. We must let them Know, that we are not to be moved from our Purpose; or all is undone. The Pride and Vanity of that Nation is a Disease; it is a Delirium. It has been flattered and enflamed so long by themselves, and by others, that it perverts every Thing. The moment you depart one Iota from your Character, and the distinct Line of Sovereignty, they interpret it to spring from fear or Love of them, and to a Desire to go back.

Fox saw we were aware of this, and calculated his system accordingly. We must finally come to that Idea; and so must Great-Britain. The latter will soon come to it, if we don't flinch. If we discover the least weakness or Wavering, the Blood and Treasures of our Countrymen will suffer for it in a great Degree.

Firmness, Firmness and Patience for a few Months, will carry us triumphantly to that Point, where it is the Interest of our Allies, of Neutral Nations, nay even of our Enemies, that we should arrive: I mean a Sovereignty, universally acknowledged by all the World. Whereas the least Oscillation will in my opinion leave us to dispute with the world, and with one another, these fifty Years.

With great Respect and Regard I have the Honour to be, Sir your most obedient and most humble Servant

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the major condition that Adams requires to negotiate with the new British minister?
2. What is Adams's complaint about the instructions given Fitzherbert?
3. How is the United States to convince the British of the necessity of negotiating for peace?

John Adams to James Warren, August 19, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 255–256

The Hague August 19 1782

My dear sir

There is now an Harmony so entire between France America and Holland, that I think Affairs must come to a good Conclusion, if they do not it will I am perswaded be our Fault. But I am determind it shall not be mine, and I dont believe it will be Mr Jays.

Spain is now inclined to make a Treaty with us, as I am informed, and the Comte d'Aranda is authorised to treat with him at Paris, this however, must not be made publick tho it may be communicated in Confidence. Mr Dana Seems weary, and I dont wonder. You have no Conception of the Torments that Mr Jay and he and I have endured. However the Foundations of great Things are never laid without Patience and long suffering.

Shelburne and Fox have Split upon a nice Point and the latter has shewn himself I think a profound Statesman: the later a Selfish, and equivocal Character. He must come finally and with an ill Grace to the Idea of the other, or he will put the last hand to the ruin of that Country.

The Plan Seems to be now to agree if they can upon Some, Preliminaries at Paris and then have a Congress to settle the Treaty, after discussing every Thing.

If Gibraltar falls and the English have no signal Sucess the national Discouragement, will increase, So as to force a Peace perhaps. If they relieve Gibraltar, which will be very hazardous, if they have good News from the East Indies, and especially if they have any naval Advantages they will Struggle for another Campaign or two. Naval Victories intoxicate them to Frenzy—But these are but Drams to a Man in an Hectick.

If there Should be serious Negotiations for Peace, We shall have many Ugly Questions to debate. I dont intend to be answerable for any bad decision of them—but I cannot answer that they will not be badly decided. Canada, Nova scotia, Boundaries, Tories, Fisheries are Bones to pick. But the Pretensions of France, Spain and Holland will not be more easily adjusted, nor the Pretentions of Neutrals, in short the Field is so vast, and the objects of such Magnitude, that the first Glance of the Eye affrightens one, but I have looked at it so long that it has lost its Terror to me. Why should one be anxious—it is easy for a Man to do his Duty. He always has this in his Power and this is as much as he ought to have.

I hope Mrs Warren will give my Dutch Negotiation a Place in her History. It is one of the most extraordinary, in all the diplomatic Records, But it has succeeded to a Marvel.

Adieu

Review Questions

1. Which country is ready to secretly form a treaty with the United States?
2. How does the possibility of military success, no matter how minor, affect the possibility of a peace treaty?
3. What are the issues that need to be discussed before a peace treaty can be finalized?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Describe Adams's tone. How is it different from the letters to John Jay?

John Adams to Arthur Lee, October 10, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 523–525

Duplicate

The Hague October 10th. 1782

Dear Sir

[...] The Instruction, which You say subjects Us to the French Ministers, has never been communicated to me. I cannot believe that any such one has passed. I suspect that You have put too strong a Construction upon it. Congress must have a very modest Inconsciousness of their own Abilities to subject themselves or their Ministers to any body. There is not, in my Opinion, a Sovereign in Europe more enlightened than Congress, nor a Minister in Europe superior to three of theirs, I mean Mr. Jay, Mr. Laurens and Mr. Dana, at least, if there is such a Minister, I have not yet had the honor to find him. The Qualities of Ministers, which produce Events, do not consist in dress, Horses, Balls nor Cards.

I was never in my life clearer in any opinion, than I am in this, that it would serve our Cause, for Mr Dana to communicate his Mission to the Minister of the Empress of Russia, and to the Ministers of every one of the Neutral Courts at Petersbourg. I think he would not be refused. The Matter would be taken into Consideration, [and] might be long delayed: but if he were refused, it would be upon the Principle of Neutrality, and even this Refusal would be infinitely less hurtful to our Reputation, than to have a Minister in Europe, with such a Commission in his Pocket, prohibited to make any Use of it. It is now known, that he has

such a Commission, as much as it would be, if he communicated it, as he might, in Confidence.

Dr. Franklin, whose System has ever been [to] sweep Europe clear of every Minister but himself, that he might have a clear unrivalled Stage, was consistent when he wrote to Mr: Dana, that Congress were wrong in sending a Minister to Spain, Holland, Vienna, Berlin, Tuscany, and every where else: but it is not consistent in Congress, as I humbly apprehend, to send Ministers to Europe and then tie their Hands. Subjecting them to the French Ministry is, I say it freely, chaining them Hand and Foot. Those Chains I will never wear. They would be so galling to me that I could not bear them. I will never however be wanting in Respect or Complaisance to these Ministers knowingly[...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams reject the idea of making the American commissioners subject to the French?
2. Why does Adams believe that Francis Dana should present his credentials as American minister to the Court of Saint Petersburg?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would France want to prevent the American ministers from negotiating on their own?

Blog Prompt

What are the pitfalls of relying too heavily on an ally? Cite a modern example of allies who have caused difficulties for one another.

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, October 12, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 528–529

The Hague October 12. 1782

Sir

[...] The Cause of my being pressed, for Time is, that I am preparing to set off for Paris, and have not only all my Dispatches to make up, to send the Treaty, but have Obligations to sign respecting the Loan, that So essential a Business may not Stand still in my absence.

Mr. Jay writes me that Mr oswald has recd a Commission to treat of Peace with the Commissioners of the United States of America. I Shall set off for Paris next Week.

I have the Honour to be, &c

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams finally willing to go to Paris?

John Adams to Abigail Adams, November 8, 1782

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 28–29

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society: <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

Paris November 8. 1782

My dearest Friend

The King of Great Britain, by a Commission under the great Seal of his Kingdom, has constituted Richard Oswald Esqr. his Commissioner to treat with the Ministers Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, and has given him full Powers which have been mutually exchanged. Thus G.B. has Shifted Suddenly about, and from persecuting Us with unrelenting Bowells, has unconditionally and unequivocally acknowledged Us a Sovereign State and independent Nation. It is surprizing that she should be the third Power to make this Acknowledgment. She has been negotiated into it, for Jay and I peremptorily refused to Speak or hear, before We were put upon an equal Foot. Franklin as usual would have taken the Advice of the C[omte] de V[ergennes] and treated, without, but nobody would join him.

Review Questions

1. What change takes place in British policy toward the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What takes place to cause the British to change policy toward the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, July 31, 1783

Transcribed by Jason Raia. Excerpted from “Letterbook.” Available on microfilm: *Adams Family Papers*, reel 106, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Sir

The Hague July 31, 1783

Last evening, at Court in the House in the Grove, where all the foreign Ministers supped, the Comte Montagnini de Mirabel, the Minister Plenipotentiary from the King of Sardinia, took an opportunity to enter into largely into Conversation with me. As he and I were at a Party of Politicks while the greatest Part of the Company were at Cards, for two or three hours, We ran over all the World, but nothing occurred worth repeating, except what follows. The Comte said, that his advice to Congress would be to write a Circular Letter to every Power in Europe, as soon as the definitive Treaty should be Signed, and transmit with it, a printed Copy of the Treaty. In the Letter Congress should announce that on the 2 of July 1776 the United States, had declared themselves a Sovereign State, under the Staple and Title of the United States of America, that France on the 6 of Feb. 1778 had acknowledged them, that the States General, had done the same on the 19 of April 1782, that Great Britain, on the 30 of Nov 1782 had signed with them a Treaty of Peace, in which the[y] had fully acknowledged their Sovereignty, that Sweden had entered into a Treaty with them on the 5. Feb 1783, and that Great Britain had concluded the definitive Treaty, under the Mediations of the two Empires, if that should be the fact &c. Such a Notification to all the other Powers would be a

regular Procedure, a Piece of Politeness which would be very well received, and the Letter would be respectfully answered by every Power in the World, and their written Answers would be explicit and undeniable acknowledgement of our sovereignty: [...]

[...] The Comte, then proceeded to commence, and said that all the Cabinets of Europe had lately turned their views to Commerce, so that we should be attended to and respected by all of them.— [...]

Review Questions

1. What does the Sardinian ambassador recommend the Congress do to encourage other European countries to recognize the United States?
2. What reason does the ambassador believe will encourage the European powers to recognize the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, August 15, 1783

Transcribed by Jason Raia. Excerpted from “Letterbook.” Available on microfilm: *Adams Family Papers*, reel 106, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Paris August 15. 1783

Sir

France, England, Spain and America are all agreed, but Mr Hartley is Sanguine that the Treaty will not be Signed, because he says, the C. de Vergennes don't mean to Sign it. His Reasons for this opinion I know not. and I think he is mistaken. It is very certain however, that the French Minister is embarrassed, and would not perhaps be Sorry to find good Reasons for postponing the Signature for some time. [...]

[...] To sign without Holland, would raise a terrible Storm in Holland against the Comte, and no small one in France, and even if the States authorise him to Sign, a Shameful Peace, this would raise no less Clamour in Holland & France against the Comte. He will therefore not know what to do, and will seek to postpone, for the Parties of the Marquis de Castries and of Mr de Bruteuil, will take advantage of every clamour against the Comte, and these Parties, wish Mr Bruteuil in his place. I am persuaded therefore, that the Comte himself looks upon his own Situation as very hazardous. it has been so a long Time. It was his Instability in his Place that made him Sign the Preliminaries, for Money to carry on the War could not be obtained without Mr Necker, and Mr Necker would not come in with the Comte, as they were and are Sworn enemies against each other. [...]

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams fear that the peace treaty might not be signed?
2. What would be the result if Holland is not a party to the treaty?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Holland be left out of the treaty negotiations?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, November 6, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 14. Publication forthcoming.

No. 2

Paris November 6, 1782

Sir

[...] As to the Negotiations for Peace, we have been, night & day, employed in them, ever since my arrival on the 26th: October. Dr. Franklin, without saying any thing to me, obtained of Mr. Jay a promise of his vote for Mr. W.T. Franklin to be Secretary of the Commission for Peace, and as the Dr. & his Secretary are in the same house, & there are other Clerks enough, I suppose he will transmit to Congress details of the Negotiations. I shall be ready to lend them any assistance in my power, and I will endeavor, as Soon as I can, to transmit them myself. But, after spending forenoon and afternoon & Evening in discussions, it is impossible to transmitt all the particulars. No man's Constitution is equal to it –

[...] These Gentlemen are very profuse in their professions of national friendship; of earnest desires to obliterate the remembrance of all unkindness, & to restore Peace, Harmony, Friendship, and make them perpetual, by removing every seed of discord. All this, on the part of Mr. Oswald personally, is very sincere—on the part of the nation it may be so, in some sense at present: but I have my doubt whether it is a national disposition, upon wh: we can have much dependence, and still more, whether it is the sincere intention of the Earl of Shelbourne. He has been compelled to acknowledge American Independence, because the Rockingham Administration had resolved upon it, &, by Carlton & Digby's Letter to Gen. Washington, had made known that Resolution to the world – because the nation demanded that Negotiations shd. be opened with the American Ministers, & they refused to speak or hear, untill their Independence was acknowledged, unequivocally & without Conditions – because Messrs: Fox and Burke had resigned their Offices, pointedly on account of the refusal of the K. and My Ld. Shelburne, to make such an acknowledgement & these eloquent Senators were waiting only for the Session of Parliament to attack his Ld. ship on this point – it was therefore inevitable to acknowledge our Independence & no Minister cod. have stood his ground without it – But still I doubt whether his Ld. ship means to make a general Peace. To express myself more clearly, I fully believe he intends to try another Campaign, & that he will finally refuse to come to any definitive agreement with us upon articles to be inserted in the general Peace.

We have gone the utmost length in our power to favor the Negotiations.— We have at last agreed to Boundaries with the greatest moderation. We have offered 'em the choice of a line thro' the middle of the great lakes, or the line of 45 of N. latitude, the Mississippi, with a free navigation of it, at one end, and the River St. Croix, at the other—We have agreed that the Courts of Justice be open for the recovery of British Debts due before the war – To a general amnesty for all the Royalists, agst. Wm. there is no judgement rendered, or prosecution commenced. We have agreed that all the Royalists, wh. may remain at the evacuation of the States shall have six mo. to sell their Effects & to remove with them.

Review Questions

1. Why do Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke resign their positions in the British government?
2. What concessions do the American ministers offer the British as part of the peace treaty?

LESSON TWO

∞Abigail and Abigail 2nd in Europe ∞ 1784–1788

Sources:

Adams Family Correspondence. Volume 5. Edited by Richard Alan Ryerson, et al. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993.

Adams Family Correspondence. Volume 6. Edited by Richard Alan Ryerson, et al. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993.

Adams Family Correspondence. Volume 7. Edited by Margaret A. Hogan, C. James Taylor, et al. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.

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✧Diplomatic Families ✧

John served his country in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress. He then worked as a diplomat in France and the Netherlands. After years of separation from her husband Abigail Adams would not allow the division to continue. After the successful conclusion of a definitive treaty with Great Britain, John Adams was named the first American minister to the Court of St. James. Though dreading the month-long journey over the Atlantic Ocean, Abigail Adams packed, and she and her only daughter Abigail (known to her family as “Nabby”) boarded a ship bound for London.

For the next four years, Abigail and Nabby would live in Europe enjoying the company of expatriate Americans, European aristocracy, and even the company of and King and Queen of England. Yet both yearn for nothing more than the rocky New England soil of Braintree, Massachusetts. While John Adams negotiated treaties, received solicitors, and defended the new Constitution from across the ocean, Abigail maintained the household, and Nabby fell in love, married, and made John and Abigail grandparents for the first time.

In long letters home, Abigail and Nabby reveal the human side of foreign service. Though the now famous letters between John and Abigail are on hiatus, the letter writing continues as Abigail and Nabby carry on a correspondence that reveals much about the private side of this very public family.

Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Smith Shaw, July 28, 1784Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 402–407

My dear sister

London July 28. 1784

I think when I finished the last page I was rubbing myself up on Board Ship. But this was not the only rubbing I had to go through, for here is the stay maker, the Mantua maker, the hoop maker, the shoe maker, the miliner and hair dresser all of whom are necessary to transform me into the fashionable Lady. I could not help recollecting Molieres fine Gentleman with his danceing master his musick Master &c. nor dispiseing the tyranny of fashion which obliges a reasonable creature to submit to Such outrages. You inquire of me how I like London. For particulars I refer you to sister Cranches Letter, but I charge you as you expect to hear again from me, not to expose it, or let any body see it, except Brother Shaw, who is one and the same with yourself. My Lads may read it if they please. I assure you my dear sister I am better pleased with this city than I expected. It is a large magnificent, and Beautifull city, most of the Streets 40 feet wide built strait, the houses all uniform, no [...] small tennaments, many fine open Squares where the nobility reside, and where most of the publick Buildings are Erected. I have been only to two or 3, the foundling Hospital where I attended divine service on sunday morning and to the Magdeline in the afternoon, of which you will find an account in the Letter to which I refer you. You will also learn from that all the particulars of my voyage and journey. Mr. Adams is not yet come from the Hague. I wrote him by the first opportunity, but the wind has been contrary ever since I arrived. He had removed the family which was in the House, out more than a month ago, and sent Master John to wait for my Arrival in Calihan where he expected I had taken passage. [...] Americans from all Quarters are daily calling upon me, some of whom I know, and others whom I never saw; out of Respect I presume to Mr. Adams, or curiosity to see the wife and daughter. Amongst those of my American acquaintance who have calld upon me, is a Mr. Joy of whom *you once* had some knowledge. Nay Blush not my sister, he is still a Character that you need not blush at having an Esteem for. I was unfortunately not at home. He left his card with his Name, and direction and a polite Billet requesting me to dine with him to day if I was not engaged, and if I was, the first day I was disengaged. He married a Yorkshire Lady and is in high esteem here. So tomorrow I dine with him, being the first day I have. I have received great politeness and attention from some of my (Tory) acquaintance. Mr. and Mrs. Hollowell came to see me upon my arrival, invited me to dine with them, and then sent an invitation to me to take up my Lodgings with them whilst I resided in <town> the city, then sent and presst me to accept the offer, but I excused myself not chuseing on many accounts to encumber a private family, and having a large leavie, to Speak in Stile. I however accepted their invitation to Dinner, and was treated with a great deal of hospitality and kindness. Mrs. Atkinson [is like a sister to me?] and I have dined twice with her. Mrs. Hay I have dined with once. She lives a mile or two from the city. I was invited last Night to the play; but declined going for several reasons. Parson Walter amongst others has made me a visit. Tis Nine oclock and I have not Breakfasted, for we dine at four and I am half dead. Dr. Clark one of my fellow passengers whom I mentioned before, and Col. Trumble are to Breakfast with me, and here they are.

Two oclock.

From nine till 2 I have not had a moment. Mr. Appleton, Mr. Joy Mr. Cushing Mr. Murray Mr. Storer and Smith have all been to make their morning visits. Morning in this country signifies from Nine oclock till 3 and from that hour till four, you are left to yourself to dress for dinner. I do not conform wholly, when I dine at my Lodgings, I have dinner at 3, but an earlier hour would Subject me to company. The buisness of this city is all done before dinner. I have never Supped abroad, Suppers are little practised here, unless upon publick invitations. Mr. Smith received a Letter from Mr. Adams last evening in replie to one he wrote him informing him that I had taken passage in Captain Lyde. He tells him that it is the most agreeable News Next to that of my certain arrival, gives some directions with regard to me, expects to be obliged to set our for France as soon as I reach the Hague. Before this; he has from my own hand, received an account of my arrival. This is wednesday; on fryday, I expect either Mr. Adams, or Master John, and this day week, I shall set of for the Hague. I design to see this week, Westminster Abbey, and the British Museum, together with Mr. Wests paintings. I have been to see a very Elegant picture of Mr. Adams which belongs to Mr. Copley, and was taken by him, it is a larg full length picture. He is drawn with a Globe before him: the Map of Europe in his hand and at a distance 2 female figures representing Innocence, and Peace. It is said to be an admirable likeness. I went from Mr. Copleys to the Hay Market, to what is called Mr. Copleys exhibitions. These are open only for a certain Season: there are two or 3 most [beautifull?] paintings here, the death of Lord Chatham in the house of Lo[rds with?] likenesses of every Member, and an other picture more Strikeing [even th?]an that. This was a picture of Major Peirson and the defeat of the [French?] Troops in the Island of Jersey. Mrs. Cranch will send you the account of this which I have inclosed to her. One is ready upon viewing these pictures to apply those Lines of Popes upon Kneller.

“Copley! by heavn and not a Master taught
Whose Art was Nature, and whose pictures thought;”

Here is Mr. Storer come to Breakfast with me and then I am going out to *Cheap Side*; if to be found, but it is not this Side Boston I assure you; I am astonished to find that you can purchase no article here by retail but what comes much dearer than in Boston. I had heard these Stories; but never believed them before. I shall dine with Mr. Joy to day and when I return I will tell you all about our entertainment [...]

Review Questions

1. What city is Abigail in and what is her impression of it?
2. What is Abigail's reception like when she arrives in Europe?
3. What paintings by a Boston artist does Abigail view?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Considering whom Abigail Adams is, in what ways was this journey monumental for her?

Abigail Adams 2d to Elizabeth Cranch, July 30, 1784

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 410–412

N. 2

London July 30. 1784

This day [...] I [was?] Dining with Mamma at Mrs. Atkinsons in hourly expectation of receiving letters from America, Mr. Elworthy called and sent me up, one from my Dear Eliza. It was a pleasure that I have not known till now. You cannot form an idea of the sensations that operates in the mind of one, at receiving letters from those we esteem when situated from almost every friend. Sure I am you cannot judge of the disappointment after haveing flattered yourself with hopes, of receiving letters, not to find any. Charles Storer laughs at me and tels me that I shall find my correspondents fall off in a little time. They will be attentive at first but soon grow negligent. I answer him that I do not fear it, as indeed I do not. He says our friends in America never know of a Ships sailing unless they come from the yard or garden, or where it is impossible not to hear of it. However I do not complain. Thankfull shall I be to any friend that will take the trouble to address a few lines to me, and shall esteem myself indebted to them. Let them be who they will.

Your letter Eliza called afresh to my memory every scene that I so lately passed, a retrospect that I can never take without paying the tribute of tears. Perhaps tis a weakness, if it is, it is a weakness that I would not exchange, for every other sentiment that was ever admitted to the heart. The remembrance of our friends is indeed dear to us. I shall never entertain so unworthy an opinion of myself as to believe it possible that mine should ever forget me, let me be placed in whatever clime fortune designs for me [...]

<Thursday Morn> friday Morn

This moment a servant tells me that my Brother has arrived and has stoped at the next house to dress. Why has he done this. He knows not the impatience of his sister and Mamma. My happiness is but half compleat—but why did I think of this. Let me enjoy the present moment and anticipate future satisfaction. I cannot write now. When I have seen him I will at least tell you how he looks, if he is any thing short of a monster I shall be disappointed, from the accounts I have had of him [...]

Review Questions

1. What is Nabby's concern about people writing to her?
2. Whose arrival was much anticipated by both Nabby and her mother?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might letters from family and friends have been so important for both Nabby and her mother?
2. How would you describe Nabby's feelings about her brother John?

Blog Prompt

How does letter writing compare to phone calls and email as a means of communication?

Abigail Adams 2d to Elizabeth Cranch, September 4, 1784

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 428–430

Auteaul septem. 4th . 1784

Here my dear Eliza is your friend placed in a little village two or three miles from Paris, unknowing and unknown to every person around except our own family. Without a friend a companion, or an acquaintance of my own sex. In this may I expect to spend the next Winter, retired, within myself, and my chamber, studiously endeavoring, to gain a knowledge of the French Language which I assure you I find not a very easy matter.

There are at Present fewer American Ladies here than for some years past. Ladies of our own Country are the only ones with whom we can with pleasure or satisfaction have any society with. We have become acquainted with Mrs. Volnay, and find her an agreeable Woman. Mrs. Hay dined with us yesterday, with another American Lady. She intends to spend the Winter in France but not near us—which I regret very much. We should find so agreeable a Woman quite an acquisition.

Were I to attempt giving you my real opinion or a just description of this Country and of the City of Paris in particular I am sure you would not believe it. The people are I believe, the dirtiest creatures in the Human race. Paris has been stiled a beautifull City, perhaps it is judged by the strict rules of—architecture and proportion—but it strikes the eye as very far from beautifull. The streets are very narrow in general, and the buildings amazing high, all built of stone, and which was once white but by the smoke and dirt that have acquired, a very disagreeable appearance. The publick building[s] are I believe more elegant than in London. I was last Eve at the French Comedy which is a most beautifull building without, and within it is the most elegant perhaps in the World. But as a City I do not think that Paris in point of beauty and elegance, will bear a comparison with London.

The appearance of the lower class of people, is of a heavy leaden kind of creatures, whose greatest art and what indeed is most attended to by almost all classes is to cheat you of as much as they possibly can, in which they succeed with strangers, much to their own satisfaction.

I shall learn to prize my own Country above all others. If there is not so much elegance and beauty and so many sources of amusement and entertainment, there is what to every honest and virtuous mind will be far preferable, a sincerity, and benevolence which must be prized above every other consideration. Even those who do not possess it admire it in others. I do not see an American that does not ardently wish to return to their Country. Of this I am sure, that it is the first wish of my heart, and <only> not three months absent. At the end of twelve months I shall be quite satisfied with Europe, and impatient to return home [...]

Review Questions

1. What are Nabby's complaints about France?
2. What does Nabby learn about her own country during her sojourn in France?

Blog Prompt

What might it be like to live as an American expatriate today?

Abigail Adams to Royall Tyler, [September 5, 1784]Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 445–446

[5 September 1784]

Dear Sir

[...] Europe has no charms to attach me to it disconnected with my family, nor ever can have, curiosity gratified, and I turn my thought to my lowly cottage, to my rough hewn Garden, as objects more pleasing than the Gay and really beautifull one which now presents itself to my view. My taste is too rigedly fixed to be warped by the Gay sun shine and Splendour of Parissian attractions, it is true that like or dislike you must eat drink and dress as they do. I will not say Sleep, for to that I have not conformed. I will not pretend to judge of a people by the Manners of a few individuals. The acquaintance I have had with several Gentlemen of this nation lead me to more favourable opinion of their exteriour, than what I have seen and heard respecting the other Sex. I shall however be better able to judge as I mix more with them. It is manners more than conversation which distinguish a fine woman in my Eye, so that my being unacquainted with the Language is not so material in this particular. A woman whose manners are modest and decent cannot fail of having some merit. Emelia on this account strikes where ever she appears, the old Abbes who are Mr. Adamses particular Friends call her *une Ange* and the Lady with whom I dined at Dr. Franklings, threw her self into a chair with this exclamation, *une Belle figurer* Monsieur Adams. Parissian dress with American neatness gives an advantageous appearance, and as you are a conissure in a Ladys dress I will tell you what it was: a white Lutestring Robe and petticoat, with hair drest and a white Gauze baloon Hat with a dress hankerchif ruffles &c. The Hat worn upon one side to give a little of the parissian appearence of fashion.

I have seen or rather been in company with but few French Ladies. I am going to go dine with my correspondent Madam Grand, when I return I will tell you how I like her. I beg to understand much better than I can speak the language. I venture to talk with my coiffeur de femme, who is fluent enough as most of those kind of people are. She tells me that I shall Soon <*parley fransoize beinny*> parlaiz François fort bien, Mais Madomesel ne parler François ni Anglois.

Review Questions

1. What evidence does Abigail offer that she is homesick?
2. What is Abigail's daily life like?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that Abigail's is the life of an upper-class lady?

Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, September 5, 1784

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 446–451

Auteuil near Paris
September 5th. 1784

[...] This I may however say with truth that their Manners are totally different from those of our own Country. If you ask me what is the Business of Life here? I answer Pleasure. The Beau Monde you reply. Ay Madam from the Throne to the footstool it is the Science of every Being in Paris, and its environs. It is a matter of great Speculation to me, when these People labour. I am persuaded the greater part of these people, who crowd the Streets, the publick walks, the Theatres, the Spectacles as they term them, must subsist upon Bread and Water. In London the Streets are also full of People, but their Dress, their Gait, every appearance indicates Business, except upon Sundays, when every Person, devotes the Day, either at Church or in walking, as is most agreeable to his fancy: but here from the gayety of the Dress, and the Places they frequent I judge Pleasure is the Business of Life. We have no days with us, or rather in our Country by which I can give you an Idea of the Sabbath here; except Commencement and Election. Paris upon that Day pours forth all her Citizens into the environs for the purposes of recreation; we have a Beautiful wood, cut into walks, within a few rods of our dwelling, which upon this Day, resounds with Musick and Dancing, jollity and Mirth of every kind. In this Wood Booths are erected, where cake, fruit, and wine are sold. Here Milliners repair with their gauzes ribbons and many others articles in the pedling Stile, but for other purposes I imagine, than the mere sale of their Merchandize, but everything here is a subject of merchandize.

I believe this Nation is the only one in the world who could make Pleasure the Business of Life, and yet retain such a relish for it, as never to complain to its being tasteless or insipid; the Parisians seem to have exhausted Nature, and Art in this Science; and to be triste is a complaint of a most serious Nature.

What Idea my dear Madam can you form of the Manners of a Nation one city of which furnishes (Blush o, my sex when I name it) 52,000 unmarried females so lost to a Sense of Honour, and shame as publickly to enrolle their Names in a Notary Office for the most abandoned purposes and to commit iniquity with impunity: thousands of these miserable wretches perish, annually with Disease and Poverty, whilst the most sacred of institutions is prostituted to unite titles and Estates. In the family of Monsieur Grand, who is a Protestant I have seen a Decorum and Decency of Manners, a conjugal and family affection, which are rarely found, where seperate apartments, seperate Pleasures and amusements shew the world that Nothing but the Name is united. But whilst absolutions are held in estimation and Pleasure can be bought and sold, what restraint have mankind upon their Appetites and Passions? [...]

Review Questions

1. According to Abigail, what is the most important pursuit for the French?
2. What evidence does she offer?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might Abigail's Puritan roots account for her opinion of the French?

Blog Prompt

How do cultural differences affect the Adams family's time in Europe? Cite an example of cultural differences that affect the lives of Americans today.

Abigail Adams 2d to Mercy Otis Warren, September 5, 1784.

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 453 – 454

Auteuil, September 5th, 1784

[...] I hear you inquire, Madam, how I am pleased with this European world; whether my expectations, imagination, and taste, are gratified; and how the variety of objects which are presented to my view, impress my mind. All these questions I can answer, but in a manner, perhaps, that may surprise you, or lead you to think me a very unobserving, and possessed of an uncultivated taste, which has received very little improvement by visiting Europe.

In viewing objects at a distance, we see them through a false medium. As we approach, the disguise wears away, and we often find ourselves disappointed. I have indeed found this observation to be just. The contrast is by no means so remarkable between America and Europe, as is generally supposed. I am happy to assure you, that I give the preference to my own country, and believe I ever shall. In England the similarity is much greater to our own country, than here, and on that account I found it more agreeable. There is the appearance of greater wealth, as is very natural to imagine; but I have seen nothing that bears any proportion to my ideas of elegance, either in their houses,—especially in this country,—or in the appearance of the people.

This day we dined with Madame le Grand, the lady from whom mamma formerly received a letter. It is, I believe, an agreeable family. After dinner it was proposed to go and see the Dauphin, whose palace was but a little distance from the house. However ridiculous I might think it to pay so much obeisance to this infant, I joined the company. The Palace is by no means an elegant building. There was a garden before it, surrounded by an open fence, and guards placed all around. The Dauphin was playing in the garden, and four ladies attending him. He is a pretty, sprightly child. We had the honour of seeing him, and paying him the compliment of a bow or a courtesy. He was amusing himself with as much ease as any other child of his age would have been. There were, I believe, a thousand persons crowding to take a view of this child, and from them he received every mark of respect and reverence that it was in their power to present. The gardens are only open on Sunday, and no one has an opportunity, on any other day, to see this representative of despotism and monarchy. One cannot but regret, that any people should, either from necessity or choice, be led to pay so much obeisance to a being who may rule them with a sceptre of iron [...]

Review Questions

1. According to Nabby, how does America compare with London and Paris?
2. What is Nabby's impression of the French monarchy?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does democracy compare with monarchy as a form of government?

Abigail Adams to Mary Smith Cranch, June 24, 1785

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 6, p. 186–193

June 24, 1785

London Bath hotel Westminster

My dear sister

Captain Lyde is arrived and I have 3 Letters by him, one from Doctor Tufts one from Dr. Welch and one from Mrs. Storer. I will not accuse my dear sister because I know she must have written to me tho I have not yet received it. I know so well how many accidents may prevent for a long time the reception of Letters, that whilst I ask candour for myself, I am willing to extend it to others.

I have been here a month without writing a single line to my American Friends. About the 28th. of May we reachd London and expected to have gone into our old quiet Lodgings at the Adelphia, but we found every hotel full, the Sitting of parliament, the Birth day of the King, and the famous Celebration of the Musick of Handel at Westminster Abbey, had drawn together such a concourse of people, that we were glad to get into Lodgings at the moderate price of a Guiney per day, for two Rooms and two Chambers, at the Bath hotel Westminster Picadily, where we yet are. This being the Court end of the city, it is the resort of a vast concourse of carriages, it is too publick and noisy for pleasure, but necessity is without Law. The Ceremony of presentation, upon one week, to the King and the Next to the Queen was to take place, after which I was to prepare for mine. It is customary upon presentation to receive visits from all the Foreign ministers, so that we could not exchange our Lodgings for more private ones, as we might and should; had we been only in a private character. The Foreign ministers and several english Lords and Earls have paid their compliments here and all heitherto is civil and polite. I was a fortnight all the time I could get looking of different Houses, but could not find any one fit to inhabit under 200. besides the taxes which mount up to 50 & 60 pounds. At last my good Genius carried me to one in Grovenor Square, which was not let because the person who had the care of it, could let it only for the remaining lease which was one Year and 3 quarters. The price which is not quite 200, the Situation and all together induced us to close the Bargain and I have prevaild upon the person who lets it; to paint two rooms which will put it into decent order so that as soon as our furniture comes I shall again commence house keeping. Living at a hotel is I think more expensive than house keeping in proportion to what one has for their money. We have never had more than two dishes at a time upon our table, and have not pretended to ask any company and yet we live at a greater expence than 25 Guineys per week. The Wages of servants horse hire house meat and provision are much dearer here than in France. Servants of various sorts and for different departments are to be procured, their Characters to be inquired into, and this I take upon me even to the Coachman; you can hardly form an Idea how much I miss my son on this as well as many other accounts. But I cannot bear to trouble Mr. Adams with anything of a domestick kind, who from morning untill Evening has sufficient to occupy all his time. You can have no Idea of the petitions Letters and private applications for a pittance which crowd our doors. Every person represents his case as dismal, some may really be objects of compassion, and some we assist, but one must have an inexhaustable purse to supply them all. Besides there are so many gross impositions practised as we have found in more instances than one, that it would take the whole of a

persons time to trace all their stories. Many pretend to have been American soldiers, some to have served as officers. A most glaring instance of falshood however Col. Smith detected in a man of these pretentions, who sent to Mr. Adams from the Kings bench prison and modestly desired 5 Guineys, a qualified cheet but evidently a man of Letters and abilities. But if it is to continue in this way a Galley Slave would have an easier task.

The Tory venom has begun to spit itself forth in the publick papers as I expected, bursting with envy that an American Minister should be received here with the same marks of attention politeness and civility which is shewn to the Ministers of any other power. When a minister delivers his credentials to the king, it is always in his private closet attended only by the minister for Foreign affairs, which is called a private audience, and the Minister presented makes some little address to his Majesty, and the same ceremony to the Queen, whose replie was in these words, "Sir I thank you for your civility to me and my family, and I am glad to see you in this Country," then very politely inquired whether he had got a house yet? The answer of his Majesty was much longer, but I am not at liberty to say more respecting it; than that it was civil and polite, and that his Majesty said he was glad the Choice of his Country had fallen upon him. The News Liars know nothing of the Matter, they represent it just to answer their purpose. Last thursday Col. Smith was presented at Court, and tomorrow at the Queens circle my Ladyship and your Neice make our compliments. There is no other presentation in Europe in which I should feel so much as in this. Your own reflections will easily [suggest?] the reasons. I have received a very friendly and polite visit from the Countess of Effingham. She calld and not finding me at Home left a Card. I returned her visit, but was obliged to do it by leaving my Card too: as she was gone out of Town. But when her Ladyship returnd she sent her compliments, and word that if agreeable she would take a Dish of tea with me and named her Day. She accordingly came, and appeared a very polite sensible woman. She is about 40, a good person, tho a little masculine, elegant in her appearance, very easy and social. The Earl of Effingham is too well remembered by America to need any particular recital of his Character. His Mother is first Lady to the Queen. When Her Ladyship took leave, she desired I would let her know the day that I would favour her with a visit, as she should be loth to be absent. She resides in summer a little distance from town. The Early is a Member of Parliament which obliges him now to be in town and she usually comes with him and resides at a hotel a little distance from this. I find a good many Ladies belonging to the Southern states here, many of whom have visited me. I have exchanged visits with several, yet neither of us have met. The Custom is however here, much more agreeable than in France, for it is as with us, the Stranger is first visited. The ceremony of presentation here is considered as indispensable. There are four minister plenipotentiarys Ladies here, but one Ambassador and he has no Lady. In France the Ladys of Ambassadors only are presented there. One is obliged here to attend the circles of the Queen which are held in Summer one a fortnight, but once a week the rest of the year, and what renders it exceedingly expensive is, that you cannot go twice the Same season in the same dress, and a Court dress you cannot make use anywhere else. I directed my Mantua Maker to let my dress be elegant but plain as I could possibly appear with Decency, accordingly it is white Lutestring covered and full trimd with white Crape festooned with lilick ribbon and mock point lace, over a hoop of enormous extent. There is only a narrow train of about 3 yard length to the gown waist, which is put into a ribbon upon the left side, the Queen only having her train borne, ruffel cuffs for married Ladies thrible

lace ruffels a very dress cap with long lace lappets two white plumes and a blond lace handkerchief, this is my rigging. I should have mentioned two pearl pins in my hair earrings and necklace of the same kind.

thursday morning

My Head is drest for St. James and in my opinion looks very tasty. Whilst Emelias is undergoing the same operation, I set myself down composedly to write you a few lines. Well methinks I hear Betsy and Lucy say, what is cousins dress, white my Dear Girls like your Aunts, only differently trimd, and ornamented, her train being wholly of white crape and trimd with white ribbon, the peticoat which is the most showy part of the dress coverd and drawn up in what is called festoons, with light wreaths of Beautifull flowers. The Sleeves white crape drawn over the silk with a row of lace round the Sleeve near the shoulder an other half way down the arm and 3d. upon the top of the ruffel little flower[s] stuck between. A kind of hat Cap with 3 large feathers and a bunch of flowers a wreath of flowers upon the hair. Thus equipd we go in our own Carriage and Mr. A and Col. Smith in his. But I must quit my pen to put myself in order for the ceremony which begins at 2 oclock. When I return I will relate to you my reception, but do not let it circulate as there may be persons eager to Catch at every thing, and as much given to misrepresentation as here. I would gladly be excused the Ceremony.

fryday morning

Congratulate me my dear sister it is over. I was too much fatigued to write a line last evening. At two a clock we went to the circle which is in the drawing room of the Queen. We past through several appartments lined as usual with Spectatirs upon these occasions. Upon entering the antiChamber, the Baron de Linden the Dutch Minister who has been often here came and spoke with me. A Count Sarsfield a French nobleman with whom I was acquainted paid his compliments. As I passt into the drawing room Lord Carmathan and Sir Clement Cotterel Dormer were presented to me. Tho they had been several times here I had never seen them before. The sweedish the polish ministers made their compliments and several other Gentleman, but not a single Lady did I know, untill the Countess of Effingham came who was very civil. There were 3 young Ladies daughters of the Marquiss of Lothan who were to be presented at the same time and two Brides. We were placed in a circle round the drawing room which was very full, I believe 200 person present. Only think of the task the Royal family have, to go round to every person, and find small talk enough to speak to all of them. Tho they very prudently speak in a whisper, so that only the person who stands next you can hear what is said. The King enters the room and goes round to the right, the Queen and princesses to the left. The Lord in waiting presents you to the King and the Lady in waiting does the same to her Majesty. The King is a personable Man, but my dear sister he has a certain Countenance which you and I have often remarked, a red face and white eye brows, the Queen has a similiar countenance and the numerous Royal family confirm the observation. Persons are not placed according to their rank in the drawing room, but tranciently, and when the King comes in he takes persons as they stand. When he came to me, Lord Onslow said, Mrs. Adams, upon which I drew of my right hand Glove, and his Majesty saluted my left cheek, then asked me if I had taken a walk today. I could have told his Majesty that I had been all the morning prepareing to wait upon him, but I replied, no Sire. Why dont you love walking says he? I answered that I was rather indolent in that

respect. He then Bow'd and past on. It was more than two hours after this before it came my turn to be presented to the Queen. The circle was so large that the company were four hours standing. The Queen was evidently embarrassed when I was presented to her. I had disagreeable feelings too. She however said Mrs. Adams have you got into your house, pray how do you like the Situation of it? Whilst the princess Royal looked compassionate, and asked me if I was not much fatigued, and observed that it was a very full drawing room. Her sister who came next princess Augusta, after having asked your neice if she was ever in England before, and her answering yes, inquired of me how long ago, and supposed it was when she was very young. And all this is said with much affability, and the ease and freedom of old acquaintance. The manner in which they make their tour round the room, is first the Queen, the Lady in waiting behind her holder up her train, next to her the princess royal after her princess Augusta and their Lady in waiting behind them. They are pretty rather than Beautifull, well shaped with fair compexions and a tincture of the kings countenance. The two sisters look much alike. They were both drest in lilack and silver silk with a silver netting upon the coat, and their heads full of diamond pins. The Queen was in purple and silver. She is not well shaped or handsome. As [*to*] the Ladies of the Court, Rank and title may compensate for want of personal Charms, but they are in general very plain ill shaped and ugly, but dont you tell any body that I say so. If one wants to see Beauty they must go to Ranaleigh, there it is collected in one bright constelation. There were two Ladies very elegant at court Lady Salsbury and Lady Talbot, but the observation did not in general hold good that fine feather make fine Birds. I saw many who were vastly richer drest than your Friends, but I will venture to say that I saw none neater or more elegant, which praise I ascribe to the taste of Mrs. Temple and my Mantua Maker, for after having declared that I would not have any foil or tinsel about me, they fixd upon the dress I have described. Mrs. Temple is my near Neighbour and has been very friendly to me. Mr. Temple you know is deaf so that I cannot hold much conversation with him.

The Tories are very free with their compliments. Scarcly a paper excapes without some scurrility. We bear it with silent Contempt, having met a polite reception from the Court. It bites them Like a serpent and stings them like an adder. As to the success the negotiations may meet with time alone can disclose the result, but if this nation does not suffer itself to be again duped by the artifice of some and the malice of others, it will unite itself with America upon the most liberal principals and sentiments.

Captain Dashood came why I have not half done. I have not told your Aunt yet that whilst I was writing I received her thrice welcome Letters, and from my dear cousins too, Aunt Shaw and all, nor how some times I laught and sometimes I cry'd, yet there was nothing sorrowfull in the Letters, only they were too tender for me. What not time to say I will write to all of them as soon as possible. Why I know they will all think I ought to write, but how is it possible? Let them think what I have to do, and what I have yet to accomplish as my furniture is come and will be landed tomorrow. Eat the sweet meats divide them amongst you, and the choisest sweet meat of all I shall have in thinking that you enjoy them.

I hope you have got all my Letters by my son from whom I shall be anxious to hear.
Adieu adieu.

Esther is well, John poorly. Do not any of you think hard of me for not writing more, my pen is good for nothing. I went last Evening to Raneleigh, but I must reserve that story for the young folks. You see I am in haste, believe me most tenderly yours

A. Adams

[...]

Review Questions

1. For what major event is Abigail preparing?
2. What are Abigail's concerns about establishing her household in London?
3. How does the Tory party treat the Adamases while in London?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Describe Abigail's reaction to her reception by the King and Queen?
2. What do you think the formal reception was like for the royal family?

Blog Prompt

Imagine that you had the opportunity to meet the King and Queen of England. What would you want to talk about and why?

Abigail Adams 2d to John Quincy Adams, January 24, 1786

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, p. 12–29

Tuesday, 24th [January 1786]

[...] This day the Parliament meets and the King delivered his speach from the Throne. Sir Clement Cottril Domir [*Dormer*] Master of the ceremonies, sent your Mamma word that if she wished to see this cerimony he would secure her places. But we had engaged company to dine and feared we should be detaind too late, but we might have gone for his Majesty came out at half after three. Our Company were Mr and Mrs West Mr West Junr Mr Trumble, who has finished his battle of Bunkers Hill, and I assure you it is a most terrible thing if the expression may be allowed to express, a good performance. I went to see it the other Morning and I was frozen, it is enough to make ones hair to stand on End. The moment of the Piece is when General Warren is slain and the scene, is dreadfully beautifull, or rather dreadfully expressive. It is to be engraved, and will secure to him imortal reputation. He is now upon the Dath of Montgomery. Mr and Miss Hamilton Miss Hollowell, and a Mr Ansty an Englishman, a Lawyer and a Member of Parliament, who is appointed to go out to America to ascertain the claims of the Royalists. He was introduced to Pappa by My Lord Carmarthen and Pappa has given him letters to the Governors of all the states, and others to Members of Congress. He has called upon Pappa once before but I did not then see him and today was the first time and without Hessitation I can say that he is the handsomest, politest best bred Englishman I have yet seen. In short I doubted whether he really was an Englishman his manners were perfectly easy and polite and he was the admiration of the Company. I was sorry that I had not any letter written for you to forward by him as he intends visiting Boston soon after his arrival. Your Mamma has written by him to your Aunt Cranch. If I had have thought more of it I would have at least given him a Letter of introduction to you, for I really think him a *Phenominon*. His family live at Bath and he leaves London on sunday, for thence and goes in the Packet which will sail the first

Wednesday in Februry. Mr Humphrys and Mr Smith finished our circle. These gentlemen however we call a part of our own family for they dine with us, every day when [they are] not otherwise engaged. I often wish for you my brother to make a sixth, at Table and in every scene. I miss you and wish for you, but to no purpose. I have not had a game of romps since the 12th of *May* and doubt whether I ever shall again. We amuse ourselves with battledoors, Chess, Cards, and &c. Mr Humphries is having his last Poem published if he should present one to me I shall forward it to you. He says that he likes Engld better than he expected he has met with no incivilities of any kind, and he finds them a civiler People than he expected. He now waits for Mrs Siddons to appear and hear the debates in Parliament before he makes his exit. Pappa tills him he shall be quite in the deepts when he goes—and sometimes proposes to him in jest that they should go together to Algiers to make a Treaty. Mr Barclays movements are so slow that it does not appear that he will get there before next summer, he was appointed in October, and he had not left Paris the begining of January. Lamb and Randall, are I suppose nearly arrived, at Algiers, but from all accounts there does not seem to be much prospect of their succeeding, from the total incapacity of the former. Indeed all who are concerned in the affair, fear that this effort will be inaffectual which is very unfortunate. Pappa says, that he suspects that the Emperior of Morroco, will suppose his dignity insulted by receiving only persons deputized by those who Congress Commissioned, and he does not know but he shall have to go himself in the spring if this should be the case. I confess I am not sure that he would not go. I have offered to accompany him but you know I did to Madrid, but I suspect I shall see no more of the One than the other. This however is *entree Nous* [...]

Review Questions

1. How was Nabby affected by viewing Trumbull's Battle of Bunker Hill?
2. What is Nabby's impression of Mr. Antsy? What does it tell you about her impression of Englishmen in general?
3. With what treaty is John Adams concerned, and how does Nabby propose to help?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does this letter tell you about the relationship between Nabby and her brother John Quincy?

Abigail Adams 2d to John Quincy Adams, February 9, 1786

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, p. 33–46

N 12

Feb. 9th. [1786] Thursday

This my Brother is the day appropriated for the celebration of the Queens Birth day. It really comes in june but as the Kings is in that Month they defer its celebration to this season. Kings and Princess you know may do any thing which their power will permit with impunity. But to tell you—at 2 oclock we were dressd, Mamma in a satin of the new fashiond Colour which is Called the spanish fly, trimed with Crepe and Gold fringe. My dress was pink sattin trimmed with Crepe and silver fringe and some *Persons of taste* told me that tho they saw more expensive and more superb dresses at Court they did not see one, more elegant and neat than my Ladyships. Now who you think this was. *Why Mr Humphryes—and for all the World*

his taste is excellent. At two o'clock, Mamma and myself got into the Carriage, and proceeded, on our way to St James's. The Curiosity of People was so great having never seen anything of the kind before. That the road from, Piccadilly to the Pallace was so obstructed by Carriages full of People to look at the Ladies who might pass on their Way, that there was no such thing as getting through. So we went through St James park and found no difficulty. Mr Humphryes attended us. Every thing is upon so independent a scale here that the attendance of a Gentleman is Considered almost unpolite. The Ladies, assume all the Roughness, and Assurance necessary to support them upon every occasion, and in General I think they look like Giant apes. But tho we found no difficulty till we got to the 2d room, here commenced such a scene as I was never, Witness to before. Their Majestys had gone in before we arrived. At the door of the 2d room, I was, struck with the appearance of a figure which at first sight I took to be King Brant or Joseph Brant an Indian Chief, who has, been here sometime from America. He was engaged against us in the late War. It is a matter of speculation what can be his errand here at present. Some suppose it is to get payd for the scalps he took in the War, and to get Compensation for his services. He has been presented to the King and Queen and has appeared at the drawing Room, in the dress of his Nation with that *pretty plaything his Tommy Hawk* in his hand. The Ladies admired his figure, and saw in his Countenance something Good. He has indeed been noticed by some People of importance. There was a feast made for him by, some Persons of distinction at Which the Company all were drunk, except himself. He observed it would not do for him to Get drunk in this Country, tho it would in his own. But to adone with Joseph Brant after telling you one anecdote more which is that Colln Smith was upon an expedition against him in the Ware when Brant and Butler had like to have been taken. He is celebrated for his Cruelty at Yomen. And to return to the Personage whom I was presented with, it was no less than the Minister from Tripoli, with two pages, dressd in the Habit of his Country a turban upon his Head and his [long?] baird, and his dress otherwise as singular and such a dirty set of creatures I never saw. I was absolutely frightened. He is an addition to the singularity of the Corps diplomattick. I hear the Foreign Ministers donot intend to have any intercourse with him—but more of him by and by. At the entrance of the door of the third apartment where the drawing Room is held, I thought for all the World that I should have been squeezed to death between the post of the door, and half a dozen great Hoops. Indeed you can have no idea at all of the croud. I am sure I never was in such a one before. This you must suppose excellent for the Ladies dresses. [We?] at last got into the room, and situated ourselves, so that the King spoke to us very soon. He has askd me one question for these three Months—(*do you get out much in this weather*) instructive, improving, indeed. After this ceremony was over we attempted to put ourselves in the Way of the Queen, but the room was so croudd that was two Hours before we could find out in what part of it she was. Finally your Mamma was spoken to, and I made my escape as quick as I could. The King was very richly dressd the Queen very plain. The Prince of Waless cloaths were Covered with silver. I dare not venture to say how much I heard they Cost, but I did not think them elegant. The Princesses were not so elegant as many other Ladies, present. The dressing were very various there was no prevailing Colour or fashion, everyone seemd to have exerted their own fancy. But such was the crowd that the floor was covered with fragments of trimming and lookd as if the Ladies had been piling Caps [...]

Review Questions

1. What is Nabby's impression of Chief Joseph Brandt?

2. What does Nabby's tone in this letter imply about her feelings about the royal family particularly and monarchy in general?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would an American Indian chief seek an audience with the King of England at this time?

Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson with a Memorandum of Purchases, February 11, 1786
 Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, p. 50–52

London Grosvenor Square Febr'y 11 [1786]

Col. Humphries talks of leaving us on monday. It is with regret I assure you Sir that we part with him. His visit here has given us an opportunity of becoming more acquainted with his real worth and merit, and our friendship for him has risen in proportion to our intimacy. The two American Secretaries of Legation would do honour to their Country placed in more distinguished stations. Yet these missions abroad circumscribed as they are, in point of expences, place the ministers of the united States in the lowest point of view, of any Envoy from any other Court, and in Europe every Being is estimated, and every country valued in proportion to their shew and splendor.

In a private Station I have not a wish for expensive living, but whatever my Fair Countywomen may think, and I hear they envy my situation. I will most joyfully exchange Europe for America, and my publick for a private Life. I am really surfeited with Europe, and most Heartily long for the rural cottage, the purer and honester manners of my native Land, where domestick happiness reigns unrivalled, and virtue and honor go hand in hand. I hope one season more will give us an opportunity of making our escape. At present we are in the situation of Sterns's starling.

Congress have by the last dispatches informd this Court that they expect them to appoint a Minister. It is said (not officially), that mr Temple is coldly received, that not an Englishman has visited him, and the Americans are not very social with him. But as Col Humphries will be able to give you every intelligence, there can be no occasion for my adding any thing further, than to acquaint you that I have endeavourd to execute your commission agreeable to your directions. Enclosed you will find the memorandum. I purchased a small trunk which I think you will find usefull to you, to put the shirts in as they will not be liable to get rubd on the journey. If the balance should prove in my favour I will request you to send me 4 Ells of Cambrick at about 14 Liv. Pr Ell, or 15, a pr of black Lace Lappets, these are what the Ladies wear at Court, and 12 Ells of black lace at 6 or 7 Liv. Pr Ell. Some Gentleman coming this way will be so kind as to put them in his pocket, and Mrs Barclay I dare say will take the trouble of purchasing them for me. For troubling you with such trifling matters is a little like putting Hercules to the Distaff.

My love to Miss Jefferson compliments to Mr Short. Mrs. Siddons is acting again upon the stage and I hope col Humphries will prevail with you to cross the channel to see her. Be

assured dear sir that nothing would give more pleasure to your Friends here than a visit from you and in that number I claim the honour of subscribing myself

A. Adams

[...]

Review Questions

1. Why does Abigail feel that the American minister is the least respected at court?
2. What does Abigail miss about her home life in America?
3. What is the relationship between Abigail and Thomas Jefferson?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Compare Abigail's feelings toward Jefferson in this letter with those after the 1800 election.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, June 13, 1786

Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 7, p. 216–217

Grosvenour Square London June 13 1786

And so my Dear son your sister is really and Bona fida married, as fast as the Bishop and a Clerk could tie them, in the ceremony too of the Church of England with all its absurdities about it, and that through necessity, for you know that Such is the liberality of this enlightned Country that the dissenting Clergy are not permitted to Marry. To your Aunt Cranchs Letter I must refer you for particulars.

When I used to visit your Chamber at Autieul, and converse with you, and mutually express our anxiety with respect to future events, neither of us Dreemt of what has now taken place. You was then frequently witness to a regard and attachment, which repeated proofs of neglect, happily I presume for her, finally dissolved. Instability of conduct first produced doubt and apprehension which in silence she Sufferd. Time and reflection dispelld the mist and illusion and has united her to a Gentleman of a very different character, possessing both honour and probity, without duplicity either of mind or manners, esteemed and beloved both in his publick and private Character, and sufficiently domestick to make a worthy woman happy.

Your sister was much dissapointed that she did not receive a line from you by dr Gorden and the more so as mr Storer wrote her, that you had received hers by way of Newyork. The Letter to your Pappa gave us great pleasure. We are constantly Solicitious to hear from you, and your Brothers to whom present my Love.

We are anxious to hear whether Newyork can have been so unjust and stupid as to rise without passing the impost. Such is the rumour here. If she has, adieu to publick faith. How is the forfeit to be avoided. I should think Congress would do well to recall all their publick ministers and dissolve themselves immediately. It is too much to be so conspicuously ridiculous. As to this Nation, it regards neither its own interest or that of any other people.

This Letter will go by way of Newyork, or first to Baltimore. Lamb and Randle are upon their return! Alass! Affectionately yours.

A.A.

Review Questions

1. What major event happens in the life of the Adamses?
2. What most bothers Abigail about this event??

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that Abigail is first and foremost a political person?

Blog Prompt

Imagine that your parents were living in London while you were attending school in Boston like John Quincy. What would you want to hear from your mother?

Abigail Adams Smith to Elizabeth Cranch, July 18, 1786

Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 7, p. 261–262

Wimpole Street London July 18th 1786

In your Letter to Mamma my Dear Eliza of — May you are strangely puzzled to know in what manner to address your Cousin. Your suppositions at that time were rather premature, and the Card on which they were founded was from a family by the Name of Smith who have been vastly civil to us since our residence in this Country. But at this period, a Letter addressd to your friend under the title of M[rs] Smith would not be improper, for in truth Eliza, Poor Abby Adams is no more—her friends took Leave of her on the 11th of June—about eight oclock in the Evening, and “twas such a solemn scene of Joy”—&c. She is at this moment settled in Wimpole Street, whare could you look in upon her, you would find her perfectly Contented, and would add to her happiness, which the additional society of a friend will ever do.

If your friend has any cause for anxiety, it arrises, from being obliged to Leave her Parents to whom she finds herself every day more attached, and more and more sollicitious to promote their Happiness. The seperation has but enlarged the scene to them, for we meet every day either with them, or with us, and Harmony and affection preside over our Circle; yet I wish Mamma could call in some one of her young American friends as a Constant Companion; but it is so uncertain how long we may *all* stay in this Country or how soon *we* may return to our own, that it is not possible to make any arangements for the future—all we can do is to wait patiently till the decissions of others mark out our future destination. In the mean time let is my Dear Eliza eleviate the disagreeables arrising from this seperation, by a Continueance of this friendly epistolary intercourse. Mrs Hay Carried proofs of my not having forgotten my friends, and you my Eliza was amongst the first in my remembrance. I am fearfull as my Letters were all under Cover to Mr Charles Storer that his absence may occassion thier delay for which I shall be very sorry.

My Letters from my Brother inform me that he is Learning to Play upon the flute which has given me much anxiety, do my Dear Eliza dissuade him from the practice. It is certainly very prejudicial to Health, and tho it may amuse him for the Present, I fear the Consequences. I hope Charles willnot attempt it. It would be more dangerous for him than for my Brother John. We have seen its affects upon the Warrens and I thought your Mamma was so well Convinced of the danger arrising from it as to prevent your Brother from the use of it, and I hope She will have an equal degree of influence upon mine.

Remember me to all who inquire after me. Do write me as often as you can find it Convenient and beleive me as sincerely your friend

A. Smith

Review Questions

1. How does Nabby feel about her marriage to Colonel Smith?
2. What is Nabby's concern for her mother?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Nabby be so concerned about her brothers learning to play the flute?

Abigail Adams to Abigail Adams Smith, August 23, 1786

Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 7, p. 324–325

Amsterdam 23d. August 1786

My dear

Mr S. and Mr Blount set off tomorrow for London and have engaged to call this Evening for Letters. We have not received a line from you except what these gentlemen brought us, this is the fourth time I have written to you.

If politeness and attention could render a place agreeable, I have had more reason to be pleased with this Country, than any other, that I have visited, and when I get across the water again, I shall not regret the visit I have made here.

These people appear to think of the past, the present, and the future, whilst they do honour to their former Heroes, and patriots, by paintings, sculpture, and monuments, they are establishing wise institutions, and forming the minds and manners of their youth, that they may transmit to posterity, those rights, and liberties, which they are sensible have suffered infringments, but which they appear determined to regain, and are uniting in spirited and vigorous measures, for that purpose. The death of his Prussian Majesty of which there appears at present no doubt, will diminish the influence of the Court party in this country, already in the wane, as the politicians say. But of this enough. I was at the play the night before last, the Grand Duke and Dutchess, with their Retinue were present, the Dutchess is a fine looking woman. The house is small, but neat well lighted, and I think handsomer than any of the Theatres in England, the actors pretty good. The ladies of this country have finer complexions than the English, and have not spoilt them by cosmeticks. Rouge is confined to

the stage here. There is the greatest distinction in points of dress, between the peasantry of the Country and people of distinction, that I have seen in any Country, yet they dress rich and fine in their own way. I went yesterday with a party, to Sardam, by Water about two hours sail. It is a very neat village and famous, for being the place where Czar, Peter the great worked as a Ship Carpenter. It was their annual Fair, at which there was a great collection of people, so that I had an opportunity of seeing the various dresses of different provinces. Mr Willink, told us, that there were several peasants who belonged to Sardam, who owned, a hundred thousand pounds property.

To day we dine with the elder Mr Willink, whose lady speaks English very well, and is a very agreeable woman. And this evening we go with them to a different Theatre. They have three play houses in this place. We are undetermined as yet whether to go to Utrecht on Saturday, or set off for the Hague. We should have gone there to day, but the Grand-duke, had taken the boat, and all the publick houses, there fit to go into, so that we did not wish to fall into his corteg again, if he continues there longer than Saturday we shall return without visiting that province. We shall make no longer stay at the Hague, than to take leave, as I suppose all will be stable there, we are not prepared to go into company. We have determined to return by Helvot, I suppose in Saturday weeks packet, so that I hope to see you by Monday night, or Tuesday at furthest. I have done what you desired, but to very little more advantage than in London.

Adieu you cannot want more to see us, than we do to return again to you. Love to both of you. I hope my family in Grosvenor Square, has not increased in my absence. I was not aware of a young cook till the morning I left home. I was then thrown into an astonishment in which I should be glad to be mistaken, but am very sure I am not. Yours affectionately
A.A.

Review Questions

1. What is Abigail's impression of the Dutch?
2. To what family event is Abigail referring? What is her concern?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does Abigail's impression of the Dutch compare with her impressions of the English and the French?

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, November 22, 1786

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, p. 394–396

London November 22 1786

My dear Son

It is a long time since I received a line from you, or any other of my Friends, nor have we learnt with certainty whether your Brother Tommy was admitted Colledge. [...]

We are still left in the Dark respecting our continuance here. Few decisive measures appear to be taken by Congress upon any Subject, indeed I fear they are so much embarressed as not to know what to do. I hope according to Parson Moodys doctrine, they will not do,

they know not what, which has sometimes been the case. The Treaty between France and England is ratified between the high contracting parties, it must come before Parliament and receive a Sanction there; whether it will meet with much opposition there; time only will determine. What is termed opposition here, is a very feeble party, who have not purses and consequently not power to carry any points of importance. It is rather Novel for this Nation to Court and cringe to a Country which they have ever affected to Hate and despise, but the Edicts of the King of France totally prohibiting British Manufactories, Effected what mr Crawford could not, by three years residence, and I dare Say the united States might have accomplished the Same, if they would all have adopted the Massachusetts Navigation act, and abided by it.

It is a subject of much regret to every Friend of America, and no small mortification to those in publick Character, to see the proceedings of some Counties and Towns, uneasy and restless under a Government in which they enjoy perfect freedom, they are taking effectual methods to create themselves a Tyrant e'er long. By wishing to abolish the Senate they are destroying that balance of power by which alone their Liberties are secured to them. The Printers in this Country Eagerly Seize every paragraph of this kind and publish it, which they would not do, if they did not conceive they could injure America by it. They have given us in this days papers the proceedings of the County convention of Hampshire, which are a disgrace to our annals. I have been thinking whether it might not be of use to our Country to have some Such Societys formed as there are in this Country, call'd debating Societies, in which a preident presides. The Question is published two Days or more before hand, admission is easy, only 6 pence a person, and any person who pleases may enter and speak to the Subject. And these Societies are the resort of all the Young Gentleman who wish to form themselves for publick Speaking; whether for the Law, divinity, or the House of commons. And sometimes Questions are discussed here in a masterly manner. A perfect Stranger has an equal freedom of Speech, with the best known, order and decency must be observed, but no questions are asked, who you are, or from whence you came. I will give you from this Days paper the Question for tomorrow Evening.

“Which of the three publick Characters in the present Situation of this Country, is most qualified by his abilities and integrity to fill the office of Prime Minister, Lord North, mr Fox or mr Pitt.”

This is a question of no small importance and delicacy. I think with judicious management Societies of this kind might be establishd at least in the different universities, and many beneficial concequences result from them.

Your Father is much engaged in a work that may prove of no Small utility to our Country. It is an investigation into the different Forms of Government, both ancient and modern, Monarchical Aristocratical Democratical and Republican, pointing out their happiness or misery in proportion to their different balances. It appears to be a subject in which America is greatly interested, and upon which her future happiness depends. When compleated, he means only to publish a few for the present and those only for himself and Friends, but he is So much Swallowed up in the persuit of his Subject that you must not

wonder if you do not receive a line from him. I think he enjoys better Health this fall than I have known him to have for Several years.

Review Questions

1. About what treaty does Abigail inform John Quincy?
2. What solution does Abigail offer for the discord that we now call Shays' Rebellion?
3. According to Abigail, what has John Adams been working on while in London?

Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, January 29, 1787

Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 7, p. 455–457

London Janry 29th 1787

My dear sir

I received by Col Franks Your obliging favour and am very sorry to find your wrist Still continues lame. I have known very Salutary effects produced by the use of British oil upon a spraind joint. I have Sent a Servant to See if I can procure some. You may rest assured that if it does no good: it will not do any injury.

With regard to the Tumults in my Native state which you inquire about, I wish I could say that report had exagerated them. It is too true Sir that they have been carried to so allarming a Height as to stop the Courts of Justice in several Counties. Ignorant, wrestless desperadoes, without conscience or principals, have led a deluded multitude to follow their standard, under pretence of grievences which have no existance but in their immaginations. Some of them were crying out for a paper currency, some for an equal distribution of property, some were for annihilating all debts, others complaining that the Senate was a useless Branch of Government, that the Court of common Pleas was unnecessary, and that the Sitting of the General Court in Boston was a grievence. By this list you will see, the materials which compose this Rebellion, and the necessity there is of the wisest and most vigorous measures to quell and suppress it. Instead of that laudible Spirit which you approve, which makes a people watchfull over their Liberties and alert in the defence of them, these Mobish insurgents are for sapping the foundation, and distroying the whole fabrick at once. But as these people make only a small part of the State, when compared to the more Sensible and judicious, and altho they create a just allarm, and give much trouble and uneasiness, I cannot help flattering myself that they will prove Sallutary to the state at large, by leading to an investigation of the causes which have produced these commotions. Luxery and extravagance both in furniture and dress had pervaded all orders of our Countrymen and women, and was hastning fast to Sap their independance by involving every class of citizens in distress, and accumulating debts upon them which they were unable to discharge. Vanity was becoming a more powerfull principal than Patriotism. The lower order of the community were prest for taxes, and tho possess of landed property they were unable to answer the Demand. Whilst those who possesst Money were fearfull of lending, least the mad cry of the Mob should force the Legislature upon a measure very different from the touch of Midas.

By the papers I send you, you will see the beneficial effects already produced, an act of the Legislature laying duties of 15 pr cent upon many articles of British manufacture and

totally prohibiting others. A Number of Vollunteers Lawyers Physicians and Merchants from Boston made up a party of Light horse commanded by col Hitchbourn Leit col Jackson and Higgonson, and went out in persuit of the insurgents and were fortunate enough to take 3 of their Principal Leaders, Shattucks Parker and Page. Shattucks defended himself and was wounded in his knee with a broadsword. He is in Jail in Boston and will no doubt be made an example of.

Your request my dear sir with respect to your daughter shall be punctually attended to, and you may be assured of every attention in my power towards her.

You will be so kind as to present my Love to Miss Jefferson, compliments to the Marquiss and his Lady. I am really conscience Smitten that I have never written to that amiable Lady, whose politeness and attention to me deserved my acknowledgement.

The little balance which you Stated in a former Letter in my favour, when an opportunity offers I should like to have in Black Lace at about 8 or 9 Livres pr Ell. Tho late in the Month, I hope it will not be thought out of season to offer my best wishes for the Health Long Life and prosperity of yourself and family, or to assure you of the Sincere Esteem and Friendship with which I am yours &c &c

A. Adams

Review Questions

1. For what reasons are people rebelling in Massachusetts?
2. How does Abigail feel about those responsible for Shays' Rebellion?
3. What are the economic reasons for the uprising?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Abigail feel the way she does about those involved in Shays' rebellion?

Abigail Adams to Lucy Cranch, April 26, 1787

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 8, p. 24–27

April 26 1787

my dear Neice

I write you a few lines my dear Lucy to thank you for your kind Letter, and to inform you that I am a *Grandmamma*! my Grandson be sure is a fine boy, & I already feel as fond of him as if he was my own son, nay I can hardly persuade myself that he is not, especially as I have been sick for six weeks, I cannot however Nurse him so well as his mamma, who is already so fond of him.

He was Christened last thursday by dr Price and called William after his pappa. in this Country Children are not carried to church, so we had the Christening in the House and about a dozen of our Friends together upon the occasion. we supped & drank the young

Heroes Health & that of our Country and Friends. Mrs Smith dined below with us, the day 3 weeks from her confinement, and I have carried little master to ride 3 or four times already. he is very quiet and good, but his pappa is already obliged to leave him, and yesterday morning very reluctantly set of on a journey to Portugal, in his way to which he takes France & Spain, & will be absent we expect near four Months, but thus it must be with those who are in publick office. as soon as mrs Smith is able we shall make a little excursion into the Country, which I hope will reestablish my Health. My disorder has been long accumulating, & arises from a Billious state of my Blood. it has afflicted me spring & fall for several years, and has at last produced a slow intemitting fever. some days I am able to go out, others not, but it has wholly prevented my attendance upon Routes dinners theatres &c and Lamentable, I have not been able to go to saint James for more than two months. [...]

Review Questions

1. What happy event changes Abigail's life?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Many momentous family events happen while the Adamses are in London; what are these events like for Abigail?

Abigail Adams Smith to John Quincy Adams, February 10, 1788

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 8, p. 227–231

London Feby 10th 1788

I have now before me your Letter of the 3d of August—which I intend to answer fully and then 2dly to proceed to some points of information—and 3dly to some observations and reflection of my own - [...]

your hopes respecting our Parents returning to America are I think in a fair way to be accomplished—preparations are daily making – for this Event, they have engaged to have their furniture all on Board Calliham's Ship – in the month of Febuary—they Intend Leaving London after the 24th and to go to Falmouth there they are to be on the 20th of March—Callihan is to take them on Board at Falmouth after the Equinoxial Storm has blown over and thence they proceed in a line direct, to the Harbour of Boston

Congress *not* resolving to keep any Person in a Public Character at this Court—and as *usual* have not taken any resolutions respecting the destination of my friend—it is Concluded that they mean he should return also—at the expiration of his Commission—for which Event we are likewise prepareing and with a very Sincere desire that no impediment may intervene to frustrate our present intention of embarking for America in the April Packett which sails from Falmouth to New York – from which Place I hope my next Letter to you will be dated – and whence I Shall Hope to see you – at some Leisure period –

perhaps during the next Winter vacation – when our Brothers will accompany you but this is looking a great way forward – We will defer further particulars till the period approaches - respecting your desire that your father Should determine to Spend the remainder of his days in retirement – I cannot agree with you in this wish – it is in his Power to do His Country Essential Service – by assisting in her Councils—by His opinions, advice, & recommendations,—he has it *I believe* in his Power to do as much perhaps *the most* towards establishing her Character as a respectable Nation – of any Man in America—and Shall he retire from the World and bury himself amongst his Books – and Live only for himself! – No – I wish it not – I have no desire that he should be chosen Governor of the State – let those possess that station who are ambitiously grasping – at the Shadow—which I Consider the Honour attendant upon that office to be—but I do hope—upon the establishment of a New Constitution—to see Him in some respectable and usefull Office under it—the Americans in Europ – say he will be Elected Vice President – besides my Brother independent of other important Considerations – he would not I am well Convinced be Happy in Private Life – you will before he arrives in America – have seen two other Vollumes of His Book – and perhaps you will hear from him a system of Government which you may not expect – he is of opinion that some *new* form of Government for our Country is necessary – he does not wholly approve of the one which has been offered – but he thinks that the People had better adopt it as it is – and then appoint a new Convention to make such alterations as may prove to necessary – He wishes they Had Enlisted the Chief Magistrate to a greater degree of independence, that they had given him the sole appointment of all Offices – that they had made provision for a Privy Council – either of His own appointment or chosen by the Senate – and some others which you will hear from himself – if the system at present under Consideration is not adopted I am of opinion that he will assist at a future Convention and have a principle Hand in the framing One which may be adopted – most Americans now in Europe are in favour of it – being well Convinced that a Change is absolutely necessary to the respectable Establishment of our Country in the Eyes of Europe – and her importance as a Nation [...]

Review Questions

1. In what ways does Nabby seem ambivalent about returning home?
2. Why is Nabby in disagreement with her brother that their father should retire after his return to America?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might John Quincy think John Adams should retire upon returning home?

LESSON THREE

John Quincy Adams in the Netherlands *April–September 1814*

Sources:

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The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845 American Diplomacy, and Political, Social, and Intellectual Life from Washington to Polk. Edited by Allan Nevins. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848. Volume II. Edited by Charles Francis Adams. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1874.

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848. Volume III. Edited by Charles Francis Adams. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1874.

The Writings of John Quincy Adams. Volume V. Edited by Worthington C. Ford. New York: Macmillan Company, 1915.

œThe Treaty of Ghent œ

John Quincy Adams began his diplomatic career early, at the age of thirteen when he set off from France to Russia, accompanying Francis Dana the new American minister to Prussia, whom he served as private secretary and interpreter. He would turn fourteen during this journey eastward. Officially, John Quincy would take up his diplomatic duties in 1794 when President George Washington appointed him American minister to the Netherlands, the same position first held by his father in the decade before.

One of the United States' premier foreign diplomats, John Quincy was named successively as minister to Portugal, Prussia, and Russia. It was after his return to Russia, with his wife and a young son of his own, that John Quincy was tapped by President Madison to negotiate a peace treaty with Great Britain to end the War of 1812.

The negotiations were originally to be held in the city of Gottenburg, but before John Quincy arrived the negotiations were moved to the city of Ghent in the Netherlands. Adams joined Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin, Jonathan Russell, and James Bayard. Even though Adams was the senior diplomat of the group, he struggled with the different personalities to mold a treaty that all could sign and the Senate would ratify.

John Quincy began his diary after his first trip to Europe. The diary was with him throughout his diplomatic career, his presidency, and his many years as a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts. In the end he wrote more than 15,000 pages. The six months of travel and negotiation for Ghent are excerpted here to show the protracted peace process itself, as well as John Quincy's own personal record of the time. The final entry is not from his diary (though it is referenced there) but a letter to his mother acknowledging the peace that was just penned.

1814

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 1, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 116–117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 1.—Mr. Nathaniel H. Strong this morning brought me dispatches from the Secretary of State—one addressed to Mr. Bayard and myself, the other to me alone; letters from Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard, at Amsterdam, and one from Mr. Bourne, enclosing one from Mr. Beasley. The dispatch to Mr. Bayard and me, of which Mr. Bayard retained the original and enclosed to me a copy, directs us both to repair, immediately upon the receipt of it, to Gottenburg, there to enter upon a negotiation of peace with England, conformably to a proposal made by the British Government and accepted by that of the United States. Mr. Monroe intimates that there will be other American Commissioners; but his letter is dated 8th January, before the nominations were made. Mr. Henry Clay and Mr. Jonathan Russell were the persons ultimately appointed. Mr. Gallatin is not in the commission. Mr. Monroe directs me to leave the affairs of the United States here, in my absence, in the charge of Mr. Harris.

Review Questions

1. What new task does the Secretary of State assign to John Quincy?
2. Where is John Quincy being asked to go?
3. At this point, who is to serve on the commission with John Quincy?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Based on the date of this entry and your outside knowledge, why are the United States and England negotiating peace?

Blog Prompt

Begin making daily entries in your blog. Unless otherwise directed, you may write about anything that happens on a particular day, events, news, snippets of conversation, et cetera.

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 2, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 2.—I called upon Lord Walpole at one o'clock, the hour he had appointed, told him the order I had received to go to Gottenburg, and asked him if he could inform me whether commissioners on the part of Great Britain has been appointed. He said he could not; that he had received no dispatches from his Government of later date than 24th December. There are now twenty-two mails from England due. But, he said, by his last accounts from Stockholm, of the 23rd March, he learnt that some of the mails were landed; they might be expected every day. He had heard from private letters that George Hammond had been appointed, but there must be others; he did not know who.

Review Questions

1. Who is Lord Walpole?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does John Quincy want to know who the British commissioners are?
2. What can you glean about the speed of communications in the early 19th century? How does this compare to that of John Quincy's father, John Adams?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 11, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 11.—At twelve o'clock I went with Mr. Smith to the Winter Palace, and attended the Te Deum for Marshal Blücher's victory, and the taking of Rheims par assault; and the Cercle Diplomatique afterwards held by the Empress-mother. It had been preceded by the mass, which we did not attend....

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Where is John Quincy stationed at this time?
2. In what war was Marshal Blücher's victory?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 23, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 117–118

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 23.— [...] We soon after met Count Litta, who told us there was this morning an estafette from the King of Würtemberg, further confirming the taking of Paris. It was a good, a great, and a happy piece of news; for everything had passed quietly, and the greatest of all was the declaration by the Emperor Alexander, alone, but speaking in the name of all the allies. This was very proper, because he was the one in whom the greatest confidence was to be placed. The courier was still expected, but at Berlin they had already had their firing of cannon and their illuminations. It was Count Schwerin that had carried the news there. Mr. Bardaxi told me his news from Spain, brought by a courier to him yesterday. It was the same Count Romanzoff had told me. Mr. Bardaxi said that Bonaparte's system was too violent; it could not stand. He had committed two great faults—the war with Spain, and the war with Russia. He had ruined Spain. But Spain would be indebted to him for her liberty and her happiness. Without him Spain would never have been free; and now within ten years Spain would astonish the world by the wisdom of her institutions. I thought these opinions all sufficiently correct, excepting the last.

Review Questions

1. What city is captured according to Count Litta?
2. What two faults had Napoleon Bonaparte committed?
3. What prediction does John Quincy make about Spain?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would so much confidence be placed in Emperor Alexander of Russia by the allies fighting Napoleon?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 27, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 118

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 27.—I was employed the whole day in packing up and preparing for my departure. Mr. Smith attended the Te Deum for Paris. I did not attend it, being the rule of etiquette not to appear in the presence of the Empress after having taken leave. The notice for the last preceding Te Deum was not even sent me. I supposed this one was sent for Mr. Smith. I was likewise so busy with my preparations that I could not conveniently spare the time. I went out, however, in the evening, to see the illuminations, which were universal, and some of them splendid. The most brilliant of all were those at the fortress. It was very cold, and the wind blew so strong that all the designs of illumination were baffled in the execution; for before any one of them was completely lighted, half the lamps were blown out. In many places where expensive preparations has been made they totally failed.

Review Questions

1. What is a “Te Deum” and why is one performed for Paris?
2. Why does John Quincy Adams not attend the Te Deum?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are they celebrating in Russia?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 28, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 118–119

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 28.—I had finally fixed upon this day for my departure on the journey to Gottenburg, and was employed from the time of my rising until half-past one P.M. in finishing my preparations. I had visits during the morning from Mr. Hurd, Mr. Norman, and Mr. Montréal; the last of whom informed me that a courier had this morning arrived from the Emperor with the news that Napoleon Bonaparte, on having the decree of the French Senate notified to him, declaring that he was cashiered, had immediately abdicated the throne, and thus that the war is at an end. With this prospect of a general peace in Europe I commenced my journey to contribute, if possible, to the restoration of peace to my own country. The weight of the trust committed, though but in part, to me, the difficulties, to all human appearance insuperable, which forbid the hope of success, the universal gloom of the prospect before me, would depress a mind of more sanguine complexion than mine. On the providence of God alone is my reliance. The prayer for light and vigilance, and presence of mind and fortitude and resignation, in fine, for strength proportioned to my trial, is incessant upon my heart. The welfare of my family and country, with the interests of humanity, are staked upon the event. To Heaven alone it must be committed.

(Table is dated to April 28, 1814, and is viewable in *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*. “John Quincy Adams diary 29, 1 August 1813 – 31 May 1816, Page 93”). Excerpted.

Stages	Time of Arrival	Departure
From St. Petersburg.....	28 th April, 1:30 P.M.
To Strelna.....	3.30 P.M.	4:30 “
Kipene.....	6.45 “	7:30 “
Koskova.....	9.30 “	10:15 “
Czerkovitz.....	29th April, 1.15 A.M.	2:00 A.M.
Opolie.....	5.00 “	5:30 “
Jamburg.....	7.00 “	7:45 “
Narva.....	10.35 “	11:30 “
Waiwara.....	2:45 P.M.	3:45 P.M.
Chudleigh.....	5:30 “	6:15 “
Jeva.....	7:30 “	8:00 “
Wargle.....	10:15 “	30th April, 6:00 A.M.
Hohenkreutz.....	8:30 A.M.	9:00 “
Pedrous.....	12:30 P.M.	1:00 P.M.
Loop.....	3:45 “	4:50 “
Kahal.....	7:15 P.M.	8:00 “
Jegelicht.....	1st May, 1:00 A.M.	8:00 A.M.
Reval.....	11:00 A.M.	

Review Questions

1. What news does John Quincy learn of Napoleon?
2. How does John Quincy feel about the task that lay before him?
3. To whom does John Quincy look for success in the negotiations?
4. How long does it take John Quincy to travel the first stage of his journey?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might peace in Europe facilitate peace between Britain and the United States?
2. Why might John Quincy keep this chart?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 1, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. II, p. 638

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 1.—

[...] The English mail of 13th May arrived this day. Mr. Russell had a letter from Mr. Beasley of that date, informing him that the British Government had appointed three Commissioners to meet those of the United States—Admiral Lord Gambier, Mr. Adams, a lawyer, and Mr. Goulburn, a Secretary in the Colonial Department; that the British Government would probably propose in form the removal of the seat of negotiations from

Gottenburg to Holland, and that it was to be decided the day after he wrote. I made, however, a draft of a letter to Lord Castlereagh, notifying our appointment, and our readiness to meet the British Commissioners at Gottenburg; which Mr. Russell, after making some alteration in it, signed, and which I am to take on to Gottenburg to be forwarded, if the removal to Holland has not been finally agreed upon [...]

Review Questions

1. Who are the British commissioners?
2. To where do the British propose moving the peace negotiations (rather than holding them in Gottenburg)?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British want to move the peace negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 24, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 119

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 24.—St. John’s Day, and the day of our arrival at Ghent. We came down to the ferry about nine in the morning, and were obliged to wait there an hour and a half before we could cross it. We saw several ships of the line on the river, with the white flag, and thirteen large ships on the stocks—eight of the line, and five frigates, all of which are to be demolished and half of the materials to be delivered up to the English. At the “Tête de Flandre,” where we landed, there was a dispute between the postmaster and some collecting-officers, which of them should not receive our money for the turnpikes. The postmaster was at last obliged to receive it. We came through St. Nicholas and Lokeren to Ghent, where we arrived at four in the afternoon, and took lodgings at the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, on the Place d’Armes, the best public-house in the city. I dined in my chamber alone, Mr. Russell having been the whole day quite unwell. [...] The distance from Antwerp here is six and one-half posts—about thirty English miles; the road a perfect level, and well-paved; the country is a continual garden.

Review Questions

1. How many days does it take John Quincy Adams to reach Ghent?
2. How far is Ghent from Antwerp?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How difficult was it to travel in Europe during the nineteenth century?
2. How might travel difficulties affect the negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 30, 1814*The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 120Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 30.—At eleven o'clock this morning the American Commissioners now here had a meeting at my chamber. Mr. Bayard, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Russell attended it. The conversation was desultory, and came only to the result of determining to send the *John Adams* home as soon as may be convenient; and writing to Mr. Beasley, to obtain a passport for her from the British Admiralty. We agreed also to order two English newspapers to be sent to us, and several other articles of necessity. We proposed to have regular meetings, and to keep a journal of our proceedings, when we shall all be assembled. We received information that Mr. Gallatin had arrived in Paris.

Review Questions

1. Who are the five American peace commissioners?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would an American ship like the *John Adams* need a passport from the British Admiralty?
2. Why would the American delegation want to receive two different English newspapers regularly?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, July 9, 1814*The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 121Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

July 9.—The American Ministers had this day a meeting in my chamber, from twelve o'clock noon until four. All the members were present, and we had a general conversation upon a variety of objects relating to our own situation here, and to our present mission. We agreed to have in future daily meetings, and to meet again in my chamber at twelve o'clock on Monday. I proposed the question whether we should make an official communication to the British Government of our being here, waiting for their Commissioners. This was not agreed to; but it was determined that a letter to our own Government should be written, to inform the Secretary of State that we are here, and transmit copies of the correspondence relating to the removal of the seat of negotiation from Gottenburg to Ghent.

Review Questions

1. What two things do the American commissioners agree to do first?
2. To what can the commissioners not agree?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might it have been difficult for five Americans to reach consensus in these negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, July 18, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 121

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

July 18.—I had promised Mr. Meulemeester to call upon him about two o'clock this afternoon, to go with him and see the public library belonging to the city; but, as the mission had its ordinary meeting at noon, with which we were occupied until nearly four o'clock, I could not go. I proposed that we should deliberate upon the subjects mentioned in our instructions, and endeavor to prepare something upon the principal points referred to in them, to have it ready upon the arrival of the British Commissioners. I instanced the article concerning impressment, and mentioned the difficulty which there would be in attempting to draw it up. Some essays to that end were made by Mr. Bayard and Mr. Gallatin. It was found we had not here a set of the laws and treaties of the United States, without which we cannot proceed. Mr. Bayard has, however, a set on board the *Neptune*, at Antwerp.

Review Questions

1. What major issue is to be discussed with the British commissioners?
2. What does the commission need to complete its work?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does impressment have to do with the war between the British and the Americans?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 7, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 121–122

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 7.—The British Commissioners arrived last evening, and are lodged at the Hôtel du Lion d'Or. Mr. Baker, the Secretary to the Commission, called this morning, first upon Colonel Milligan, who lodges at the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, and where Mr. Baker supposed we were yet lodged. He afterwards came and called on Mr. Bayard, and notified to him the arrival of the British Commissioners, with a proposal from them that we should meet them to-morrow at one o'clock, afternoon, at their lodgings, an exchange our full powers, and arrange the mode of proceeding between us for the future. Mr. Bayard received the notification, which he agreed to communicate to his colleagues, and promised that we would send an answer this evening [...]

Review Questions

1. What is it that the British commissioners first propose upon arriving in Ghent?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the Americans reject the British proposal?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 8, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 122–123

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 8.—We had a meeting of the mission at noon, in which we had some deliberation concerning the manner in which it would be proper to proceed with the British Commissioners. At one o'clock we went, accompanied by Mr. Hughes, to the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, and found the British Commissioners already there. They are James, Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn, Esquire, a member of Parliament and Under-Secretary of State, and William Adams, Esquire, a Doctor of Civil Laws. The Secretary to the Commission is Anthony St. John Baker. Mr. Russell was absent, not having yet returned from Dunkirk. After the first ordinary civilities had passed, we produced, on both sides, the originals and copies of our full powers. The copies, attested by the Secretary of each Commission respectively, were exchanged. Lord Gambier then addressed us, with assurances on the part of the British Government of their sincere and earnest desire that this negotiation might terminate in a successful issue, and the ardent hope of the British Commissioners that we might all have the satisfaction of restoring the blessings of peace to our respective countries.

This I answered by making similar assurances on our part... Mr. Goulburn, the second British Commissioner, then replied. He renewed the professions of the sincere desire of the British Government for peace, and added the most explicit declaration that nothing that had occurred since the first proposal for this negotiation would have the slightest effect on the disposition of Great Britain with regard to the terms upon which the pacification might be concluded. He proceeded to say that the British Government thought it would be most conducive to this end to discard all retrospective considerations with regard to anything that had taken place, and had instructed them in relation to certain points which they supposed would naturally arise for discussion upon this negotiation. These points he was charged by his colleagues to state; with a request to be informed whether they were such as by our instructions we were authorized to discuss, and that we would also on our part state any other points upon which we also might be instructed to propose for discussion. Those which he was directed to present were—1. The forcible seizure of mariners on board American merchant vessels, and, connected with that subject, the claim of the King of Great Britain to the allegiance of all the native-born subjects of Great Britain. 2. The including of the Indian allies of Great Britain; and, for the purpose of obtaining a permanent pacification, the drawing of a boundary line for the Indians; and it was necessary to observe that on both parts of this point Great Britain considered them as a *sine qua non* to the conclusion of a treaty. 3. The partial revision of the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions in North America—upon which, on a question asked by Mr. Bayard, he explained that in such revision Great Britain did not contemplate an acquisition of territory.

Review Questions

1. What do the American and British commissions agree upon before beginning their negotiations?
2. What issues are the Americans instructed to negotiate with the British?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Both commissions are under instruction by their respective governments. With this in mind, how much freedom might the commissions have to carry out these negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 9, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 123–125

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 9.— The British Commissioners came at eleven; and, in the name of the mission, I stated that we were instructed upon the first and third points presented by them, and that on the second and fourth points we were not. I then proceeded to state the points proposed on our part. 1. A definition of blockade, and, as far as may be mutually agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights. 2. Certain claims of indemnity to individuals for captures and seizures preceding and subsequent to the war. 3. I added that we were instructed upon a variety of other points which might with propriety be subjects for discussion, either upon a negotiation for peace or upon that of a treaty of commerce, which, in the event of a propitious termination of this negotiation, we were also authorized to conclude; that in order to simplify and facilitate as much as possible the great object of peace, we had discarded every point which did not more peculiarly belong to that and was not immediately relevant to it...

Mr. Gallatin said that so far as respected the including of the Indians in the peace, the United States would have neither interest nor wish to continue the war with the Indians when that with Great Britain should be terminated; that Commissioners had already been appointed to treat of peace with the Indians, and very probably the peace might already be made. He said that the policy of the United States towards the Indians was the most liberal of that pursued by any nation; that our laws interdicted the purchase of lands from them by any individual, and that every precaution was used to prevent the frauds upon them which had heretofore been practised by others. He stated that this proposition to give them a distinct boundary, different from the boundary already existing, and by a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, was not only new, it was unexampled. No such treaty had been made by Great Britain, either before or since the American Revolution, and no such treaty had, to his knowledge, ever been made by any other European power [...]

Mr. Bayard asked what was understood by Great Britain to be the effect and operation of the boundary line proposed. Was it to restrict the United States from making treaties with them hereafter as heretofore? from purchasing their lands, for instance? Was it to restrict the Indians from selling their lands? Was it to alter the condition of the Indians, such as it has hitherto existed?

Mr. Goulburn answered that it was intended as a barrier between the British possessions and the territories of the United States; that it was not to restrict the Indians from selling their lands, although it would restrict the United States from purchasing them.

Review Questions

1. In addition to the peace treaty, what does John Quincy Adams propose to the British?
2. What role do the American Indians play in these negotiations?
3. Why is it important to the British that they establish a boundary line for the American Indians?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might this boundary be problematic for the Americans?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 19, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 126–129

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 19.—Mr. Baker had been here from the British Commissioners, requesting a conference at their house at three o'clock. We went as requested. On taking their seats at the table, Mr. Goulburn had a dispatch from their Government before him, which, he informed us, was the answer to that which they had sent by their messenger. He proceeded to state its contents. The British Government expressed some surprise that we had not been instructed on the points of an Indian pacification, and boundary, as it might naturally have been expected that Great Britain could not consent to make a peace and leave her allies at the mercy of a more powerful enemy. She might therefore justly have supposed that the American Government would have furnished us with instructions to agree to an article on this subject; but the least she can demand is, that the American Commissioners should sign a provisional article, subject to the ratification of their Government, so that if it should be ratified the treaty should take effect, and if not, that it should be null and void. And we were desired to understand that if unfortunately the conferences should be suspended by our refusal to agree to such an article, Great Britain would not consider herself bound, upon a renewal of negotiations, to abide by the terms which she now offers. As we had requested to be explicitly informed of the views and intentions of Great Britain in proposing this article, we were to know that the Indian territories were to be interposed as a barrier between the British Dominions and the United States, to prevent them from being conterminous to each other, and that neither Great Britain nor the United States should acquire by any purchase any of these Indian lands. For the line Great Britain was willing to take the treaty of Greenville for the basis, with such modifications as might be agreed upon. With respect to the other boundary line, that of the British territories, Great Britain still adhered to the principle of asking for no conquests. But as Great Britain, on the side of Canada, was the weaker of the two nations. and had no designs of conquest there, and as it had been stated that the United States had, on their part, had the design of conquering Canada, it was required by Great Britain that the United States would stipulate to have no naval force upon the Lakes, from Ontario to Superior; and neither to build any forts in future, nor to preserve those already built upon their borders. It would also be necessary for Great Britain to obtain a communication between the provinces of New Brunswick and Canada, a mere road from Halifax to Quebec, which would take off a small corner of the province of Maine. These propositions must be considered as proofs of the moderation of Great Britain, since she might have demanded a cession of all the borders of the Lakes, to herself. She would also require a continuance of the right of navigating the Mississippi, as secured to her by the former treaties.

Mr. Gallatin asked what was proposed to be done with the inhabitants, citizens of the United States, already settled beyond the line of the Treaty of Greenville—the Territories of Michigan, of Illinois, and part of the State of Ohio, amounting perhaps to one hundred thousand, many of whom had been settled there with their ancestors one hundred years.

Mr. Goulburn said that their case had not been considered by the British Government; that it might be a foundation for the United States to claim a particular modification of the line, and if that should not be agreed to they might remove.

Dr. Adams said that undoubtedly they must shift for themselves.

Mr. Bayard asked whether the proposition respecting the Indian pacification and boundary was still presented as a *sine qua non*; to which they answered that undoubtedly it was [...]

Mr. Gallatin asked whether, in requiring us to keep no naval force on the Lakes and no forts on their shores, they intended to reserve the right of keeping them there themselves. They said they certainly did [...]

In general, their tone was more peremptory and their language more overbearing than at former conferences. Their deportment this day was peculiarly offensive to Mr. Bayard. Mr. Clay has an inconceivable idea, that they will finish by receding from the ground they have taken.

Review Questions

1. Why is the British government surprised that the American commission is not instructed on Indian pacification and a boundary?
2. How does Canada specifically enter into the negotiations between Britain and the United States?
3. What role does the Mississippi River play in the negotiations?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do the British mean that Indian pacification is a *sine qua non*?
2. What does Henry Clay mean that the British will “finish by receding from the ground they have taken?”

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 1, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 130–133

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 1.— [...] Mr. Goulburn told me that after having prepared their note in reply to ours, from the great importance of the subject, they had thought best to transmit it to their Government for approbation before they sent it to us. [...] I told him I hoped his Government would reconsider some parts of their former propositions before they sent their final instructions. He did not think it probable, and I found the more I conversed with him the more the violence and bitterness of his passion against the United States disclosed itself. His great point in support of the Indian boundary was its necessity for the security of Canada. He said that the United States had manifested the intention and the determination of conquering Canada; that “expecting us,” he believed it was the astonishment of the whole world that Canada had not been conquered at the very outset of the war; that nothing had saved it but the excellent dispositions and military arrangements of the Governor who commanded there; that in order to guard against the same thing in future, it was necessary to make a barrier against our settlements, upon which neither party should encroach; that the Indians were but a secondary object, but that as being the allies of Great Britain she must include them, as she made peace with other powers, including Portugal as her ally; that the proposition that we should stipulate not to arm upon the Lakes was made with the same purpose—the security of Canada. He could not see that there was anything humiliating in it;

that the United States could never be in any danger of invasion from Canada, the disproportion of force was too great. But Canada must always be in the most imminent danger of invasion from the United States, unless she was guarded by some such stipulation as they now demanded; that it could be nothing to the United States, to agree not to arm upon the Lakes, since they never had actually done it before the present war. Why should they object to disarming there, where they had never before had a gun floating?

I answered that the conquest of Canada had never been an object of the war on the part of the United States; that Canada had been invaded by us in consequence of the war, as they themselves had invaded many parts of the United States—it was an effect, and not a cause, of the war; that the American Government never had declared the intention of conquering Canada...

He insisted that the Indians must be considered as independent nations, and that we ourselves made treaties with them and acknowledged boundaries of their territories.

I said that, wherever they would form settlements and cultivate lands, their possessions were undoubtedly to be respected, and always were respected by the United States; that some of them had become civilized in a considerable degree—the Cherokees, for example, who had permanent habitations, and a state of property like our own. But the greater part of the Indians could never be prevailed upon to adopt this mode of life; their habits and attachments and prejudices were so averse to any settlement, that they could not reconcile themselves to any other condition than that of wandering hunters. It was impossible for such people ever to be said to have possessions. Their only right upon land was a right to use it as hunting-grounds, and when those lands where they hunted became necessary or convenient for the purposes of settlement, the system adopted by the United States was, by amicable arrangement with them, to compensate them for renouncing the right of hunting upon them, and for removing to remoter regions better suited to their purposes and mode of life. This system of the United States was an improvement upon the former practice of all European nations, including the British. The original settlers of New England had set the first example of liberality towards the Indians, which was afterwards followed by the founder of Pennsylvania. Between it and taking the lands for nothing, or exterminating the Indians who had used them, there was no alternative. To condemn vast regions of territory to perpetual barrenness and solitude that a few hundred savages might find wild beasts to hunt upon it, was a species of game law that a nation descended from the Britons would never endure. It was incompatible with the moral as with the physical nature of things. If Great Britain meant to preclude forever the people of the United States from settling and cultivating those territories, she must not think of doing it by treaty. She must formally undertake, and accomplish, their utter extermination. If the Government of the United States should ever submit to such a stipulation, which I hoped they would not, all its force, and that of Great Britain combined with it, would not suffice to carry it long into execution. It was opposing a feather to a torrent. The population of the United States in 1810 passed seven millions; at this hour it undoubtedly passed eight. As it continued to increase in such proportions, was it in human experience, or in human power, to check its progress by a bond of paper purporting to exclude posterity from the natural means of subsistence which they would derive from the cultivation of the soil? Such a treaty, instead of closing the old sources of discussion, would only open new ones. A war thus finished would immediately be followed by another, and

Great Britain would ultimately find that she must substitute the project of exterminating the whole American people for that of opposing against them her barrier of savages

“What!” said Mr. Goulburn, “is it, then, in the inevitable nature of things that the United States must conquer Canada?”

“No.”

“But what security, then, can Great Britain have for her possession of it?”

“If Great Britain does not think a liberal and amicable course of policy towards America would be the best security, as it certainly would, she must rely upon her general strength, upon the superiority of her power in other parts of her relations with America, upon the power which she has upon another element, to indemnify herself, by sudden impression upon American interests, more defenceless against her superiority, and in their amount far more valuable, than Canada ever was or ever will be.”

Review Questions

1. What argument does John Quincy Adams make against the idea that the United States coveted Canada?
2. According to John Quincy Adams, in what way is American Indian policy better than that of the European powers?
3. According to John Quincy Adams, why would the peace treaty fail if it included the Indian boundary?
4. How is Britain to protect Canada if not by an Indian boundary?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British be convinced that the United States intends to conquer Canada?
2. In what way does John Quincy Adams’s interpretation of American Indian policy seem overly positive and optimistic?

Blog Prompt

How might an Indian boundary and protection in this peace treaty have changed what happened to the Indians two decades later? Cite a modern example of a state within a state? Is it successful?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 6, 1814

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, vol. III, p. 31–32

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 6.—We had our usual meeting of the mission, from two to four o’clock. We concluded to send our note to the British Commissioners, requesting a passport for the *Herald* to take out our dispatches, and passports for a number of American citizens to go as passengers in her. Mr. Hughes took my draft of the note to copy and send.

Mr. Gallatin produced his analysis of the last note from the British Commissioners, and his minutes of the points to be noticed in answering it. We discussed them, and it was agreed that Mr. Gallatin should draft an answer conformably to his minutes, to be presented at our meeting to-morrow.

Mr. Bayard manifested symptoms of inclining to concessions on the points proposed by the British Commissioners, and which we have rejected. He proposed offering to the British

Commissioners for the Indians a “statu quo ante bellum,” or a declaration that we do not consider the Treaty of Greenville as abrogated.

Mr. Clay and myself were for admitting no stipulations about the Indians in a treaty with England.

Mr. Gallatin proposed to offer at least to refer to our Government a stipulation for disarming both sides on the Lakes. I objected our positive instructions, and produced them. I proposed to take the grounds that the very employment of Indians by Great Britain was contrary to the laws of war, and that she had a sufficient pledge for the security of Canada from sudden invasion by the mass of our floating commerce, upon which, by her superiority at sea, she could always lay as suddenly her hand.

It was agreed to take this last point as I proposed, but not the other. Mr. Bayard was absent during great part of the meeting. Mr. Gallatin suggested the idea that after the rupture of the negotiation our Government might keep Ministers in Europe, always empowered to resume it whenever there might be an opportunity.

Review Questions

1. What disagreement develops between John Quincy Adams, Clay, and Bayard?
2. Why did John Quincy Adams not support the idea of disarming both sides in the Great Lakes?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that the American commissioners are becoming pessimistic about the negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 15, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 35–36

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 15.—

[...] Before dinner, Lord Gambier asked me if I should return immediately to St. Petersburg. I said, “Yes; that is, if you send us away.”... He replied with assurances how deeply he lamented it, and with a hope that we should one day be friends again—which I assured him I wished with equal ardor. [...]

Mr. Goulburn told Mr. Clay that they had dispatched our last note to England on the same day they had received it, and expected the answer next Monday or Tuesday. He had no doubt it would terminate our business, and said we must fight it out [...]

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British government terminate the negotiations at this point?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 20, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 134–135

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 20.—I was closing my copy of four pages, when the third note from the British Plenipotentiaries was brought to me, together with some late English newspapers that they had sent us. After reading the note, and the two proclamations of General Hull and General Smyth, enclosed with it, I took them immediately in to Mr. Gallatin. They were shortly after read by our other colleagues, and we had, at one o'clock, a meeting of the mission. The British note is overbearing and insulting in its tone, like the two former ones; but it abandons a great part of the *sine qua non*, adhering at the same time inflexibly to the remainder. The effect of these notes upon us when they first come is to deject us all. We so fondly cling to the vain hope of peace, that every new proof of its impossibility operates upon us as a disappointment. We had a desultory and general conversation upon this note, in which I thought both Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard showed symptoms of despondency. In discussing with them I cannot always restrain the irritability of my temper. Mr. Bayard meets it with more of accommodation than heretofore, and sometimes with more compliance than I expect. Mr. Gallatin, having more pliability of character and more playfulness of disposition, throws off my heat with a joke. Mr. Clay and Mr. Russell are perfectly firm themselves, but sometimes partake of the staggers of the two other gentlemen.

Mr. Gallatin said this day that the *sine qua non* now presented—that the Indians should be positively included in the peace, and placed in the state they were in before the war—would undoubtedly be rejected by our Government if it was now presented to them, but that it was a bad point for us to break off the negotiation upon; that the difficulty of carrying on the war might compel us to admit the principle at last, for now the British had so committed themselves with regard to the Indians that it was impossible for them further to retreat.

Mr. Bayard was of the same opinion, and recurred to the fundamental idea of breaking off upon some point which shall unite our own people in support of the war.

In this sentiment we all concur. But, as its tendency is to produce compliance with the British claims, it is necessary to guard against its leading us in that career too far. I said it was not more clear to me that the British would not finally abandon their present *sine qua non*, than it had been that they would adhere to their first; that if the point of the Indians was a bad point to break upon, I was very sure we should never find a good one. If that would not unite our people, it was a hopeless pursuit.

Mr. Gallatin repeated, with a very earnest look, that it was a bad point to break upon [...]

Review Questions

1. What new proposal do the British make regarding the American Indians?
2. What does Mr. Bayard suggest will happen if the negotiations are broken off?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that the negotiations might continue?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 25, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 136–137

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 25.—We met at one o'clock, and sat until past five, debating the new draft of our answer to the British note. I had proposed to leave out a large part of Mr. Gallatin's draft, but he insisted upon retaining most of what he had written, and it was retained. In this debate I had continued evidence of two things. One, that if any one member objects to anything I have written, all the rest support him in it, and I never can get it through. The other, that if I object to anything written by Mr. Gallatin, unless he voluntarily abandons it every other member supports him, and my objection is utterly unavailing. They supported him thus this day in a paragraph respecting Florida, directly in the face of our instructions, which I produced and read. I was reduced to the necessity of declaring that I would not sign the paper with the paragraph as he had drawn it. He objected to mine because it said that the proceedings of the American Government could be completely justified with regard to Florida. Gallatin said he did not think they could; that he had opposed for a whole year what had been done, before he could succeed in stopping the course they had taken. Mr. Bayard said that he was very much committed on the subject of Florida, too; and Mr. Clay, though he thought the Government perfectly justifiable, did not perceive any necessity for saying so. Mr. Russell was of the same opinion. I had no alternative but to say I would not sign the paper with the paragraph as Mr. Gallatin had written it; for that pointedly said that we would not discuss the subject of Florida with the British Plenipotentiaries, though our instructions had expressly authorized us to bring it before them. Mr. Gallatin finally consented himself to take my paragraph with an alteration.

On the other hand, in repelling an insolent charge of the British Plenipotentiaries against the Government of the United States, of a system of perpetual encroachment upon the Indians under the pretence of purchases, I had taken the ground of the moral and religious duty of a nation to settle, cultivate, and improve their territory—a principle perfectly recognized by the laws of nations, and, in my own opinion, the only solid and unanswerable defence against the charge in the British note. Gallatin saw and admitted the weight of the argument, but was afraid of ridicule. Bayard, too, since he has been reading Vattel, agreed in the argument, and was willing to say it was a duty. But the terms God, and Providence, and Heaven, Mr. Clay thought were canting, and Russell laughed at them. I was obliged to give them up, and with them what I thought the best argument we had. My proposal of the amnesty passed more smoothly, and almost without alteration.

Review Questions

1. In what way does John Quincy Adams feel powerless as a member of the commission?
2. How does he finally make his point?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. For nineteenth-century Americans, what did it mean to “settle, cultivate, and improve their territory”?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 12, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 138–139

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 12.—I made a draft of an answer to the last note from the British Plenipotentiaries, but had not finished it when the time of our meeting came. At the meeting, Mr. Gallatin produced his draft, and I read parts of mine. They differed much in the tone of the composition. The tone of all the British notes is arrogant, overbearing, and offensive. The tone of ours is neither so bold nor so spirited as I think it should be. It is too much on the defensive, and too excessive in the caution to say nothing irritating. I have seldom been able to prevail upon my colleagues to insert anything in the style of retort upon the harsh and reproachful matter which we receive. And they are now so resolved to make the present note short, that they appeared to reject everything I had written, and even much of Mr. Gallatin's draft. We agree to accept the article offered to us as an ultimatum. Mr. Gallatin's idea is to adopt it, as perfectly conformable to the views we ourselves had previously taken of the subject. Mine is to consider and represent it as a very great concession, made for the sake of securing the peace. But in this opinion I am alone. I also strongly urged the expediency of avowing as the sentiment of our Government that the cession of Canada would be for the interest of Great Britain as well as the United States. I had drawn up a paragraph upon the subject conformable to our instructions. My colleagues would not adopt it [...]

Review Questions

1. What is the tone of the British commissioners' notes according to John Quincy Adams?
2. What is John Quincy Adams's concern about the Americans' tone in their notes?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might tone affect the peace negotiations between Great Britain and the United States?

Blog Prompt

Write a plea for a cause you believe in using three different tones. How do these tones differ? What might be the reaction of those who read them?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 14, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794 – 1845, p. 139

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 14.—The British Ministers sent us the *Times* of the 10th and 11th, containing the official accounts of the taking of Machias and other towns in Passamaquoddy Bay, and the destruction of the frigate *Adams* by the expedition from Halifax, under Sir T. C. Sherbrooke, together with the failure of our attempt to take Michillimackinac, and the taking of Plattsburg by the British Canadian Army. At noon we met in Mr. Clay's chamber and signed our answer to the fourth note from the British Plenipotentiaries, which Mr. Hughes immediately took to them. Mr. Clay, who was determined to foresee no public misfortune in our affairs, bears them with less temper, now they have come, than any of us. He rails at commerce and the people of Massachusetts, and tells what wonders the people of Kentucky would do if they should be attacked.

Review Questions

1. What is happening in the United States while the negotiations are ongoing?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British commissioners send these particular news items to the Americans?
2. What does Henry Clay reveal about the American commission?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 18, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 139–140

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 18.—I had some conversation with Mr. Russell, who read me a letter he was writing to Mr. Crawford, and who now told me he was much dissatisfied with our last note to the British Plenipotentiaries. I reminded him that I had not only declared myself dissatisfied with it, but had offered another draft, and of a totally different character. I asked him why he had not supported me. He said he had expected Mr. Clay would have been the most stubborn of us all upon the point relative to the Indians, and, finding him give way, and being himself the youngest member of the mission, and being from a State that cared nothing about Indian affairs, he had not thought it was his business to be more stiff about it than others. I told him of the long conversation I had with Bayard, and how powerfully Bayard had operated upon me in it. I added that he had previously had a similar conversation with Clay, and I believed had worked still more forcibly upon him. Russell said that Bayard always talked about keeping a high tone, but when it came to the point he was always on the conceding side.

Review Questions

1. Why does Mr. Russell not make his views known about the Indian boundary?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways was the American peace commission a mirror of the American government?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 29, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 140–141

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 29.—At two o'clock we had a meeting of the mission. Mr. Russell was not present. We had some further desultory conversation concerning the drawing up a project of a treaty. Mr. Gallatin had made some minutes, upon which we had much loose conversation. I urged the propriety of making out at once the project in the form of a treaty, both for the sake of saving time and of being fully prepared to deliver it immediately to the British Plenipotentiaries whenever they shall consent to the exchange of projects. This was at last agreed to. Mr. Gallatin undertook to draw up the articles respecting the boundaries and Indians, and I promised to prepare those respecting impressment, blockade, and indemnities.

Review Questions

1. On what project does the commission agree?
2. Which articles does John Quincy Adams agree to write?
3. Which articles does Gallatin propose to write?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 30, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 141

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 30.—I began making a draft for the project of a treaty. Mr. Gallatin was employed in the same manner. At two o'clock we had a meeting of the mission, but Mr. Clay was not present until the meeting was over, and Mr. Russell not at all. We looked over the articles drawn by Mr. Gallatin and myself, which being unfinished, we agreed to meet every day, at two o'clock, until the whole project shall be prepared. Mr. Gallatin proposes to renew the two articles of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the stipulation for our right to fish, and dry and cure fish, within the waters of the British jurisdiction, and the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi. To this last article, however, Mr. Clay makes strong objections. He is willing to leave the matter of the fisheries as a nest-egg for another war, but to make the peace without saying anything about it; which, after the notice the British have given us, will be in fact an abandonment of our right. Mr. Clay considers this fishery as an object of trifling amount; and that a renewal of the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi would be giving them a privilege far more important than that we should secure in return. And as he finds, as yet, no member of the mission but himself taking this ground, he grows earnest in defence of it.

Review Questions

1. Why is the Treaty of Paris of 1783 important and what does Mr. Gallatin propose to use it for in the new treaty?
2. What is Mr. Clay's objection?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Mr. Clay have held the opinion that he did?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 1, 1814

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, vol. III, p. 62–63

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 1.—I copied the note yesterday received from the British Plenipotentiaries. Mr. Gallatin brought me a copy of the paper referred to in our instructions, and which I had been yesterday unable to find. At two o'clock we had the meeting of the mission, and further considered the note yesterday received. Mr. Clay and Mr. Russell were for replying that we would proceed no further unless the British Plenipotentiaries would explicitly agree to our proposed basis of a mutual restoration of territory taken during the war. It was, however, determined to give in reply a statement of all our points. A second question then arose,

whether the statement should be at large in a note, or in the formal draft of a treaty. We finally concluded upon the latter, and the articles drawn by Mr. Gallatin and myself were taken by Mr. Russell to be examined by him, and successively by the other gentlemen. There was some further conversation upon the subject of the fisheries, and navigation of the Mississippi.

Mr. Clay renewed his objections against any article allowing the latter to the British. He made it a question whether we could agree to such an article, on the principle that, since Louisiana had become a State, it was a part of her sovereignty which the United States could not grant, and that in the law of Congress authorizing Louisiana to form a Constitution, he had thought it necessary, on the same principle, to introduce a section reserving the right of the people of Kentucky to navigate the river.

Mr. Gallatin answered that the formation of Louisiana into a State was subject to this privilege of the British, which had been stipulated in the Treaties of 1783 and 1794.

Mr. Clay replied that if they had been released from it by the war, he saw no reason for renewing it upon them by treaty now. He considered it as a privilege much too important to be conceded for the mere liberty of drying fish upon a desert. We were possessed of no facts to show us the value of this—he did not know what it was worth; but the Mississippi was destined to form a most important part of the interests of the American Union. Every day was developing more and more its importance. The British could have no more right to the navigation of it than to that of any other river exclusively within our jurisdiction—not so much as we have to navigate the St. Lawrence. I have hitherto taken no part in this discussion, and wish to postpone it as long as possible.

Review Questions

1. On what point must the British commissioners agree before the Americans would continue negotiations?
2. What new arguments does Mr. Clay give for denying the British the right to navigate the Mississippi?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might John Quincy Adams wish to stay out of the argument with Mr. Clay about the Mississippi?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 10, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 142–145

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 10, VI. 30—A second day belated. On examining the drafts for the note with the amendments of Messrs. Clay, Bayard, and Russell, I found more than three-fourths of what I had written erased. There was only one paragraph to which I attached importance, but that was struck out with the rest. It was the proposal to conclude the peace on the footing of the state before the war, applied to all the subjects of dispute between the two countries, leaving all the rest for the future and pacific negotiation. I abandoned everything else that was objected to in my draft, but wrote over that paragraph again, to propose its insertion in the note. I had gone through my examination of the papers at breakfast-time, and Mr. Gallatin

took them. At eleven o'clock we had the meeting of the mission. Everything in the note, as amended, was agreed to without difficulty, excepting my proposed paragraph. Mr. Clay objected strongly against it, because we are forbidden by our instructions from renewing the article of the Treaty of 1794, allowing the British to trade with our Indians. Mr. Gallatin, who strenuously supported my proposition, thought it did not necessarily include the renewal of that article of the Treaty of 1794, because it only offers the state before the war with regard to the objects in dispute. The Indian trade never had been in dispute. He admitted, however, that if the British government should accept the principle and purpose the renewal of the treaties, we could not after this offer refuse it.

I stated in candor that I considered my proposal as going that full length; that I was aware it would be a departure from our instructions as prepared in April, 1813. But the Government, for the purpose of obtaining peace, had revoked our instructions of that date upon a point much more important in its estimation, the very object of the war; and I have no doubt would have revoked them in the other point, had it occurred to them that they would prove an obstacle to the conclusion of peace. I felt so sure that they would now gladly take the state before the war as the general basis of the peace, that I was prepared to take on me the responsibility of trespassing upon their instructions thus far. Not only so, but I would at this moment cheerfully give my life for a peace on this basis. If peace was possible, it would be on no other. I had, indeed, no hope that the proposal would be accepted. But on the rupture it would make the strongest case possible in our favor, for the world both in Europe and America. It would put the continuance of the war entirely at the door of England, and force out her objects in continuing it...

Mr. Clay finally said that he would agree to the insertion of my proposal in the note, but reserving to himself the right of refusing to sign the treaty if the offer should be accepted and the principle extended beyond his approbation. [...]

Review Questions

1. What proposal does John Quincy Adams make in the negotiations?
2. Why does Mr. Clay object?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is John Quincy Adams so willing to abandon the instruction given the commissioners by the American government?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 27, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 144

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 27.—About eleven in the morning, Mr. Gallatin came into my chamber, with a note received from the British Plenipotentiaries. They have sent us back with this note the project of a treaty which we had sent them, with marginal notes and alterations proposed by them. They have rejected all the articles we had proposed on impressments, blockade, indemnities, amnesty, and Indians. They have definitively abandoned the Indian boundary, the exclusive military possession of the Lakes, and the *uti possidetis*; but with a protestation that they will not be bound to adhere to these terms hereafter, if

the peace should not be made now. Within an hour after receiving these papers we had a meeting of the mission at my chamber, when the note and the alterations to our project proposed by the British Plenipotentiaries were read, and we had some desultory conversation upon the subject. All the difficulties to the conclusion of a peace appear to be now so nearly removed, that my colleagues all considered it as certain. I think it myself probable. But unless we take it precisely as it is now offered, to which I strongly incline, I distrust so much the intentions of the British Government, that I still consider the conclusion as doubtful and precarious.

Review Questions

1. Which articles of the peace treaty do the British reject?
2. What concessions have the British made?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why do the American commissioners think peace is certain at this time?
2. How and why did John Quincy Adams disagree with the other commissioners?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 28, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 71–75

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 28.—At eleven o'clock we met, and continued in session until past four, when we adjourned to meet again at eleven to-morrow morning. Our principal discussion was on an article proposed by the British Government as a substitute for the eighth of our project. And they have added a clause securing to them the navigation of the Mississippi, and access to it with their goods and merchandise through our territories.

To this part of the article Mr. Clay positively objected. Mr. Gallatin proposed to agree to it, proposing an article to secure our right of fishing and curing fish within the British jurisdiction. Mr. Clay lost his temper, as he generally does whenever this right of the British to navigate the Mississippi is discussed. He was utterly averse to admitting it as an equivalent for a stipulation securing the contested part of the fisheries. He said the more he heard of this the more convinced he was that it was of little or no value. He should be glad to get it if he could, but he was sure the British would not ultimately grant it. That the navigation of the Mississippi, on the other hand, was an object of immense importance, and he could see no sort of reason for granting it as an equivalent for the fisheries. Mr. Gallatin said that the fisheries were of great importance in the sentiment of the eastern section of the Union; that if we should sign a peace without securing them to the full extent in which they were enjoyed before the war, and especially if we should abandon any part of the territory, it would give a handle to the party there, now pushing for a separation from the Union and for a New England Confederacy, to say that the interests of New England were sacrificed, and to pretend that by a separate confederacy they could obtain what is refused to us.

Mr. Clay said that there was no use in attempting to conciliate people who never would be conciliated; that it was too much the practice of our Government to sacrifice the interests of its best friends for those of its bitterest enemies; that there might be a party for separation at some future day in the Western States, too.

I observed to him that he was now speaking under the impulse of passion, and that on such occasions I would wish not to answer anything; that assuredly the Government would be reproached, and the greatest advantage would be taken by the party opposed to it, if any of the rights of the Eastern States should be sacrificed by the peace; that the loss of any part of the fisheries would be subject of triumph and exultation, both to the enemy and to those among us who had been opposed to the war; that if I should consent to give up even Moose Island, where there was a town which had been for many years regularly represented in the Legislature of the State of Massachusetts, I should be ashamed to show my face among my countrymen; that as to the British right of navigating the Mississippi, I considered it as nothing, considered as a grant from us. It was secured to them by the Peace of 1783, they had enjoyed it at the commencement of the war, it had never been injurious in the slightest degree to our own people, and it appeared to me that the British claim to it was just and equitable. The boundary fixed by the Peace of 1783 was a line due west from the Lake of the Woods to the Mississippi, and the navigation of the river was stipulated for both nations. It has been since that time discovered that a line due west from the Lake of the Woods will not touch the Mississippi, but goes north of it. The boundary, therefore, is annulled by the fact. Two things were contemplated by both parties in that compact—one, that the line should run west from the Lake of the Woods; the other, that it should touch the Mississippi. In attempting now to supply the defect, we ask for the line due west, and the British ask for the shortest line to the Mississippi. Both demands stand upon the same grounds—the intention of both parties at the Peace of 1783. If we grant the British demand, they touch the river and have a clear right to its navigation. If they grant our demand, they do not touch the river; but in conceding the territory they have a fair and substantial motive for reserving the right of navigating the river. I was not aware of any solid answer to this argument. I believed the right to this navigation to be a very useless thing to the British, especially after they have abandoned all presence to any territorial possessions upon the river, but the national pride and honor were interested in it. The Government could not make a peace which would abandon it. They had the same reason for insisting upon it that we had for insisting on the fisheries and the entire restoration of territory [...]

Review Questions

1. What article do the British commissioners add to the treaty?
2. According to Mr. Gallatin, why are the fisheries so important to New England and what might happen if they are denied the right to fish and cure fish?
3. What are the arguments presented by John Quincy Adams for maintaining the rights to fish and cure fish in British territorial waters?
4. What are John Quincy Adams's arguments for granting the British the right to navigate the Mississippi?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is Mr. Clay willing to abandon New England's claims to the fisheries for the sake of denying the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 2, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 147–148

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 2.—When we received, last Sunday, the note from the British Plenipotentiaries, with their proposals and alterations of our project, it became probable that we should ultimately sign a treaty of peace. Mr. Russell then proposed that we should henceforth keep the state of the negotiation exclusively to ourselves, and communicate the papers to no person whatsoever, excepting our Secretary, Mr. Hughes. This was agreed by us all. Nevertheless, Mr. Bentzon went off the next morning for London, and Mr. Howland for Havre. Bentzon called upon me about eight o'clock of the morning of his departure, and was as inquisitive about the state of the negotiation as he could indirectly be. With Mr. Gallatin he was more direct in his enquiries. Bentzon's father-in-law, John Jacob Astor, of New York, had before the war made a settlement at the mouth of Columbia River, on the Pacific Ocean. A British ship-of-war, the *Raccoon*, has, during the war, broken it up. Bentzon stated to Mr. Gallatin that Astor had a ship at Canton, in China; that if peace should be made, the instant it is signed Astor intends to dispatch an order from England, without waiting for the ratification in America, to the ship at Canton to proceed immediately to Columbia River and renew the settlement there before the British will have time to anticipate him. Bentzon supposed that there was a public interest connected with this project, important enough to induce us to communicate to him the state of the negotiations and the prospects of peace. Mr. Gallatin observed to him that he must in that case communicate his proposals in writing, and we would deliberate upon them. Bentzon drew up a paper, and gave it to Mr. Gallatin, with liberty to show it to me, and perhaps to Messrs. Bayard and Clay, but not to Mr. Russell. Of course we could neither deliberate upon it nor give Mr. Bentzon the information he desired.

Review Questions

1. Why is John Jacob Astor interested in the peace settlement?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are the American commissioners set on keeping the treaty a secret?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 11, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 148–149

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 11.—The meeting was in my chamber, and it was near noon before we were all assembled. The questions were resumed. What should be done with the present British proposals, and in what manner; whether by another conference or by a written note?...

Mr. Gallatin said it was an extraordinary thing that the question of peace or war now depended solely upon two points, in which the people of the State of Massachusetts alone were interested—Moose Island, and the fisheries within British jurisdiction.

I said that was the very perfidious character of the British propositions. They wished to give us the appearance of having sacrificed the interests of the Eastern section of the Union to

those of the Western, to enable the disaffected in Massachusetts to say, the Government of the United States has given up *our* territory and *our* fisheries merely to deprive the British of their right to navigate the Mississippi.

Mr. Russell said it was peculiarly unfortunate that the interests thus contested were those of a disaffected part of the country.

Mr. Clay said that he would do nothing to satisfy disaffection and treason; he would not yield anything for the sake of them.

“But,” said I, “you would not give disaffection and treason the right to say to the people that their interests had been sacrificed?”

He said, No. But he was for a war three years longer. He had no doubt but three years more of war would make us a warlike people, and that then we should come out of the war with honor. Whereas at present, even upon the best terms we could possibly obtain, we shall have only a half-formed army, and half retrieve our military reputation [...].

I said the principle was the great thing which we could not concede; it was directly in the face of our instructions. We could not agree to it, and I was for saying so, positively, at once. Mr. Bayard said that there was *nothing* left in dispute but the principle. I did not think so.

“Mr. Clay,” said I, “supposing Moose Island belonged to Kentucky and had been for many years represented as a district in your Legislature, would you give it up as nothing? Mr. Bayard, if it belonged to Delaware, would you?” Bayard laughed, and said Delaware could not afford to give up territory.

Mr. Gallatin said it made no difference to what State it belonged, it was to be defended precisely in the same manner, whether to one or to another.

It was agreed positively to object to the British proposals on both points—the first, as inconsistent with the admitted basis of the status ante bellum; and the second, as unnecessary, contrary to our instructions, and a new demand, since we had been told that they had brought forward *all* their demands.

Review Questions

1. What argument ultimately prevails upon the American commissioners to defend New England’s rights?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 22, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 119–122

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 22.—After returning home, I walked round the Coupure, and, as I was coming back, met in the street Mr. Bayard, who told me that the answer from the British Plenipotentiaries to our last note had been received; that it accepted our proposal to say nothing in the treaty about the fisheries or the navigation of the Mississippi, and, indeed, placed the remaining points of controversy at our own disposal. As soon as I came into my chamber, Mr. Gallatin brought me the note. It agrees to be silent upon the navigation of the Mississippi and the

fisheries, and to strike out the whole of the eighth article, marking the boundary from the Lake of the Woods westward. They also refer again to their declaration of the 8th of August, that Great Britain would not hereafter grant the liberty of fishing, and drying and curing fish, within the exclusive British jurisdiction, without an equivalent. They accepted our proposed paragraph respecting the islands in Passamaquoddy Bay, with the exception of a clause for their restitution if the contested title to them should not be settled within a limited time. Instead of which, they gave a declaration that no unnecessary delay of the settlement should be interposed by Great Britain [...]

Gallatin and Bayard, who appeared not to know where it was that Clay's shoe pinched him, were astonished at what they heard, and Gallatin showed some impatience at what he thought mere unseasonable trifling. He said, at last, that he had no objection to Mr. Clay's amusing himself on that way as long as he thought proper, but as soon as he should choose to be serious, he (Gallatin) would propose that Mr. Hughes should be requested to call this evening upon the British Plenipotentiaries and ask a conference with them for to-morrow. Clay was still taking time, and Mr. Russell called for the vote. He put the question himself—I suppose to avoid voting himself. Mr. Bayard, Mr. Gallatin, and myself voted to ask for the conference, and Clay voted against it.

Review Questions

1. What solution do the British and the Americans find for the dispute regarding the Mississippi and the fisheries?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What guiding principle leads to the solution of the Mississippi and fisheries question?
2. What does Mr. Russell reveal about himself by calling for a vote on holding a conference with the British?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 23, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 122–126

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 23.—

[...] We met before twelve, and agreed upon the manner of opening the conference. The British Plenipotentiaries came at the appointed time, and when we were seated, I informed them that we had determined to accept the proposals contained in the note we had yesterday received from them; that we had asked for the conference to make the final arrangements for the conclusion of the treaty, and should be ready to sign it whenever it would be agreeable to them. Lord Gambier expressed his satisfaction that the negotiation had been brought to this favorable result, and we proceeded to make the definitive amendments for completing the treaty [...]

The conference was of about three hours, and terminated by an agreement that we should meet at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon, at the house of the British Plenipotentiaries, for the purpose of signing and sealing the six copies of the treaty—three copies to be made by us, to be delivered to them, and three by them, to be delivered to us [...]

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are the Americans and the British able to come to an agreement on a peace treaty?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 24, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 126–127

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 24—I wrote letters to the Secretary of State and to my mother, to be prepared for Mr. Hughes, and took my last letter to the Secretary of State to Mr. Smith, for a duplicate to be made. Engaged much of the morning in preparing the copies of papers to be transmitted by Mr. Hughes. Mr. Clay was not ready with his copy of the treaty at three o'clock, and Mr. Hughes called upon the British Plenipotentiaries to postpone the meeting until four. At that hour we went to their house, and after settling the protocol of yesterday's conference, Mr. Baker read one of the British copies of the treaty; Mr. Gallatin and myself had the two other copies before us, comparing them as he read. Lord Gambier, Mr. Goulburn, and Dr. Adams had our three copies, comparing them in like manner. There was a variation between the copies merely verbal, which arose from the writing at full length, on both sides, the dates, which in the drafts were in arithmetical figures. All our copies had the Treaty of Peace of seventeen hundred and eighty-three. All the British copies had it one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. There was the same difference in the date of the signature of this treaty. It was not thought necessary to alter either of them. A few mistakes in the copies were rectified, and then the six copies were signed and sealed by the three British and the five American Plenipotentiaries. Lord Gambier delivered to me the three British copies, and I delivered to him the three American copies, of the treaty, which he said he hoped would be permanent; and I told him I hoped it would be the last treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States. We left them at half-past six o'clock. [...]

Review Questions

1. What is the final task for the two peace commissions before signing the treaties?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is left to do before the peace becomes official?
2. In what way is John Quincy Adams's hope fulfilled?

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, December 24, 1814

The Writings of John Quincy Adams, vol. V, p. 247–248

Ghent, 24 December, 1814

MY DEAR AND HONOURED MOTHER,

A Treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain has this day been signed by the British and American plenipotentiaries at this place. It is to be dispatched tomorrow by Mr. Hughes, the Secretary of the American mission, who is to sail in the *Transit* from Bordeaux. I have not time to write a single private letter excepting this; but I request you to

inform my brother that I have received his Letter of the 2nd October brought by Mr. William Wyer to France. I was much disappointed in not receiving either by him, or by the *Ajax*, the second Dutch vessel arrived from Boston, any letter from you. I have none later than that of 1 May.

You know doubtless that heretofore the President intended in case of peace to send me to England. If the Treaty should be ratified, I am uncertain whether he will still retain the same intention or not. I have requested to be recalled at all events from the mission to Russia. I shall proceed from this place in a few days to Paris, to be there in readiness, to receive the President's orders, and I shall write immediately to my wife, requesting her to come and join me there. If we go to England I beg you to send my sons George and John there to me. After the peace there can be no want of good opportunities for them, and I wish them to embark at the most favourable season for a safe passage. If any other person should be sent to England, I intend to return soon as possible to America and shall hope before midsummer to see once more my beloved parents.

Of the peace which we have at length concluded it is for our government, our country and the world to judge, It is not such as under more propitious circumstances might have been expected, and to be fairly estimated must be compared not with our desires, but with what the situation of the parties and of the world at and during the negotiation made attainable. We have abandoned no essential right, and if we have left everything open for future controversy, we have at least secured to our own country the power at her own option to extinguish the war. I remain etc.

John Quincy Adams

Review Questions

1. Where does John Quincy Adams want to be posted next by the President?
2. What does he desire of his mother should he receive this post?
3. What does he propose should he not receive the post?
4. Why does John Quincy Adams think that this peace is a good one?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way could the post sought by John Quincy Adams also be his crowning achievement as an American ambassador?

LESSON FOUR

∞ Charles Francis and Henry Adams in England ∞ 1861–1863

Sources:

A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861–1865. Volume I. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865. Volume II. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.

Adams, Charles Francis. “Farewell Address of Mr. Adams to His Constituents upon His Acceptance of the Mission to England.” *The Union and the Southern Rebellion*. London: Henry Stevens, 1861.

✪ *Ambassador to England* ✪

Charles Francis Adams spent eight years of his childhood in Russia and England when his father John Quincy was the American minister to the Courts of Saint Petersburg and Saint James. Charles Francis returned to London as an elder and a diplomat. Immediately after taking office in 1861 President Abraham Lincoln appointed Charles Francis Adams, a fellow Republican representing Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, to the diplomatic post formerly held by his father and first held by his grandfather: American minister to the Court of Saint James.

Charles Francis had a most difficult task; his work included keeping Great Britain—and by extension France and all Europe—out of the American Civil War that began on April 12 at Fort Sumter. Charles Francis took his young son Henry to serve as his private secretary. Upon their arrival, Charles Francis learned that Great Britain had just recognized both the North and the South as belligerents in the war, a step most interpreted as a precursor to official recognition of the Confederacy. Adams had his work cut out for him.

When an American naval captain intercepted the *Trent*, a British ship carrying the Confederate ministers bound for England, Great Britain and the Union came as close to war as they had been since the end of the War of 1812. Adams counseled William Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, and soothed the British so that the incident passed without further hostility. It is Adams who later prevented the British from selling ironclad ships to the Confederacy, making it clear that the move would mean war between the United States and the British realm.

When Charles Francis Adams left England in 1868, he successfully solidified the ties between the two nations. In 1871, he returned to negotiate the Alabama claims, which concerned British-built commerce raiders used by the Confederacy during the war. The United States won their claim, but the friendship between the two nations held steady due partially to the diplomatic skill of Charles Francis Adams.

“Farewell Address of Mr. Adams to His Constituents upon His Acceptance of the Mission to England.” May 1, 1861. Excerpted from *The Union and the Southern Rebellion*.

To the People of the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts. Quincy, May 1, 1861.

[...] It ought not, then, to be overlooked by you, that the only public question immediately before you for your consideration turns upon this point. The revolted States desire to establish a reconstructed Government upon their new basis. They hope to be able to persuade some of their ancient associates among us to join them in such a Union. The only difference is to be in the expunction of the Declaration of Independence, and its grand postulate of human liberty. That such is the true state of the facts, I need only appeal to the late speech of Mr. Alexander Stephens, the Vice-President of the new system, to prove. Mr. Stephens was not himself originally an advocate of the separation which has taken place. He seems to have embraced it at last, rather from necessity than choice. His sentiments are not, then, to be regarded as those of an extreme revolutionist, but rather as coming from the moderate class. Yet, in this respect, it will be seen from the following extract, which I quote as I find it in a newspaper, that they go quite the length which I have described:---
"The prevailing ideas entertained by Jefferson and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with; but the general opinion of the men of that day was that somehow or other, in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away. *The idea, though not incorporated in the Constitution, was the prevailing idea at the time.*

"Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas. Its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that Slavery, *subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition*. This, our new Government, is the first in the history of the world based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth."

It comes to this, then. The Vice-President of the so-called Confederacy founds his new Government upon a single idea, and that is *force*. And he has the boldness to pretend that this is the first example in the history of the world of a government of the kind; when boys in the schools might tell him that history has been made up of just such instances, from the days of Pharaoh and of Xerxes, of Alaric and Attila, of Genseric and Mohammed, down to those of the present Sultan at Constantinople. It was, on the other hand, the peculiar characteristic of Mr. Jefferson and his compeers, that they boldly cut loose from this old doctrine, and advanced a new one which marked the great political advance of the last age. They assumed that man had natural rights of his own, which his stronger neighbours were bound to respect, and that where he did no wrong he ought to have no wrong done to him. The people of Europe, as well as the people of America, regarded this as the distinguishing feature of the new nation that had succeeded in establishing its own rights against the law of force. The effect of this action has been gradually to mollify the theories even of the most absolute despotisms of the world. Hence it is that at this moment, when some of the people of

the slaveholding States have made up their minds to renounce and disavow the new faith, they can only be regarded as persons who turn their backs on modern truth and return to antiquated error. They are, in fact, creating the bulwarks of a military despotism. The very rule, the application of which they now confine to a subjugated class, may be presently extended by a few of their own number, over themselves. Nay more, it ought to be remembered that those who make themselves the exclusive arbiters of the rights of their neighbours, can find no fault when-ever those neighbours succeed in any effort to turn the tables upon them.

It must be obvious that the assumption of such a theory as a rule of action in Governments, implies so much latitude in the abuse of power, however acquired, as to render any political associations with persons entertaining it, far from safe. The great mass of the American people would not tolerate the notion that any possible state of things, except downright subjugation, could reconcile them to adopt it. They still continue to believe in the doctrine of their fathers so openly repudiated. They still maintain the great principles upon which the Government is admitted by Mr. Stephens to have been founded. They yet propose to preserve the spirit in which it was originally administered. In their eyes, the change proposed, so far from being an improvement, would be discreditable to the political intelligence of the nineteenth century. If it be the pleasure of the revolted States to stand before the world as the exponents of such ideas, let them stand alone. Even the autocratic monarch of all the Russias is at this moment proving by his action how very little sympathy he has with these exploded notions. The whole world is moving forward, excepting the people ruled by King Cotton. It remains yet to be seen whether even his throne will be safe from the consequences of such an experiment.

If I am right, then, in my views, the conclusion inevitably must be that the political revolution of the last year marks a great era in American history, second only to that of our independence. It saved us from the impending domination of slaveholding absolutism. I did hope that it might have been effected without a convulsion. I did believe that it might have been followed by a policy which, while it wronged no one, would in the end save even the slaveholding States from the perils of their situation. In these expectations it would seem, from present appearances, that I was much too sanguine. The desperate agitators have precipitated the more moderate and patriotic classes of their fellow-citizens into a revolution. They have staked their all upon the maintenance of their political supremacy as a slaveholding oligarchy. We cannot refuse the issue thus tendered to us if we would. Their whole action since the sixth of November has been aggressive, insulting, treacherous and violent, a very natural corollary from the principles on which their organization is now based. We have no choice but to sacrifice our independence, if we consent to their demands. The question is between our cherished law of 1776, resting upon the rights of man, and the old notion of Alaric the Goth revived in 1860, that force may be preceded by fraud, and that might makes right. We are now the champions of law and republican liberty, retreat is impossible, even if it were to be desired. We must stand firmly by the old faith, or be disgraced for ever. Deeply as I regret the causes which have conspired to give the impending struggle unnecessary elements of bitterness, I cannot, on looking back, discover how it could have been avoided, excepting by the utter emasculation of a free people.

I must repeat that it is with great regret I leave you in this emergency for another field of duty. I do so only under the belief that I may be of more service there than here. Whether that be so or not, however, will after all depend much more upon the people of the United States than upon their agents abroad. Foreign nations will very naturally look with more attention to the actions of the principals than to that of their representatives. If they see union in council and energy in action; if they find wisdom in deliberation and heroism in the field; above all, if they discover a calm determination to carry the Government firmly through all its trials, in steady consistency with the purposes and policy of its founders, then will follow, as the day follows the night, their brightening sympathy, their admiration, their confidence, and, perhaps, even their co-operation. So it was in 1778; so it will be ever when honest men courageously uphold the right.

Permit me now most earnestly to bid each and every one of you, my fellow-citizens, an affectionate farewell.

Charles Francis Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the only reason, according to Charles Francis Adams, that the Union and the Confederacy have gone to war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. This speech was published in England upon Charles Francis Adams's arrival. With this in mind, how might the speech be considered a work of propaganda?

Blog Prompt

Where in the modern world is slavery still a problem? What is going on there? How is it similar to the American form of slavery practiced in the South? How is it different?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 7, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 7

London, June 7, 1861

For after all that may be said, there is not and cannot be any assimilation of manners and social habits between Americans and English people. All intercourse with the aristocratic class is necessarily but formal. We are invited everywhere, and dine out almost every day, but this brings us no nearer. Everybody is civil, but each one has his interests in England, so that a stranger is but an outsider at best [...]

Review Questions

1. What creates the barrier between Charles Francis Adams and the people of England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways are American citizens and British subjects different in the middle 19th century?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 14, 1861*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 11–12

London, June 14, 1861

My position here thus far has not been difficult or painful. If I had followed the course of some of my colleagues in the diplomatic line this country might have been on the high road to the confederate camp before now. It did not seem to me to be expedient so to play into the hands of our opponents. Although there has been and is more or less of sympathy with the slaveholders in certain circles, they are not so powerful as to overbear the general sentiment of the people. The ministry has been placed in rather delicate circumstances, when a small loss of power on either extreme would have thrown them out. You can judge of this by the vote on the Chancellor's budget which was *apparently* carried by fifteen, but *really* by the retirement of opponents from the division. The difficulty seems now to be removed. No farther test vote is expected at this session. I think they are at heart more friendly to the United States than the Conservatives, though the question is not raised between them. I am therefore endeavoring to establish such relations with them as may re-establish the confidence between the countries which has been somewhat shaken of late. Circumstances beyond my control will have more to do with the result for good or evil than any efforts of mine. I wait with patience—but as yet I have not gone so far as to engage a house for more than a month at a time....

Review Questions

1. What does Charles Francis Adams see as his first task as Ambassador to England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might some people in England support the South?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 21, 1861Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 14–15

London, June 21, 1861

[...] The general impression here is that there will be no war, and a little apprehension is expressed lest the reunion may be the signal for a common crusade against Great Britain. People do not quite understand Americans or their politics. They think this a hasty quarrel, the mere result of passion, which will be arranged as soon as the cause of it shall pass off. They do not comprehend the connection which slavery has with it, because we do not at once preach emancipation. Hence they go to the other extreme and argue that it is not an element of the struggle. With the commercial men the wish is farther to the thought. They look with some uneasiness to the condition of the operatives at Manchester, to the downfall of Southern State stock, to the falling off of the exports of goods and the drain of specie, to the exclusion from the seaports by the blockade, and to the bad debts of their former customers, for all which their sole panacea is *settlement*, somehow, no matter how. If it be by a recognition of two governments, that is as good a way as any other. On the other hand I now look to something of a war. We are in it and cannot get out. The slaveholding

politicians must go down or there will be no permanent peace. I confess that in this sense I look with some anxiety to the meeting of Congress. I know not who there is now to give a right tone to its proceedings. Possibly some of the new men may come in and contribute to help on the work. Judge Thomas has a reputation as a lawyer, and he has also been a little of a legislator as long ago as when I was with him, but this is a new field. I hope and trust he may do well....

Review Questions

1. How do the British interpret the dispute between the Union and the Confederacy?
2. Why do the British not see slavery as an element in the war?
3. Why do “commercial men” see settlement as the best solution to the American conflict?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are the economic issues driving British commercial opinions?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 2, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 17

London, Tuesday, July 2, 1861

[...] Seward’s tone has improved very much since that crazy despatch that frightened me so. If the Chief had obeyed it literally, he would have made a war in five minutes and annihilated our party here in no time at all. As it is we have worried through safely and are not likely to have much more trouble. There is nothing in the way of particulars to give you so far as I know, for there has been no great scene nor have I met with any very remarkable event. Our presentation was only memorable to my mind from having caused a relapse for me, which frightened me nearly to death [...]

Review Questions

1. Who is “the Chief” to whom Henry Adams refers?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does Charles Francis Adams imitate his father and grandfather according to Henry’s cryptic remarks?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 7, 1861

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 39

London, September 7, 1861

The feeling here which at one time was leaning our way as been very much changed by the disaster at Bull’s run, and by the steady operation of the press against us. Great Britain always looks to her own interest as a paramount law of her action in foreign affairs. She might deal quite summarily with us, were it not for the European complications which are growing more and more embarrassing. There are clouds in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west, which keep England and France leaning against each other in order to

stand up at all. The single event of the death of Napoleon, perhaps even that of Lord Palmerston, would set everything afloat, and make the direction of things in Europe almost impossible to foresee. Hence we may hope that these two powers will reflect well before they inaugurate a policy in regard to us which would in the end react most fatally against themselves...

Review Questions

1. How does the “disaster at Bull’s run” affect opinion in England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would the Union’s loss at Bull Run affect English opinion so?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 14, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 43–46

London, September 14, 1861

[...] The main principles which you aim at demonstrating, that the American monopoly of cotton is in fact a curse both to America and to Great Britain, and its destruction might be made the cause of infinite blessings to the whole range of countries under the torrid zone, this principle is and has always been an axiom here. It needs no proof, for the cotton-merchants themselves are the most earnest in asserting it. The real difficulty with regard to cotton does not lie there. It is never the hope of a future good, however great, that actuates people, when they have immediate evils such as this want of cotton will produce right before their eyes. Nor should I answer any real question by proving that in two years the world will be infinitely benefitted by our war, when what they alone ask is whether meanwhile England will not be ruined. My own belief is that she will be ruined. This next winter will, I fear, be a dreadful one in this country in any case, nor will it be bettered if they make war on us. It is not as if the cotton manufacture alone suffered, but the tariff and the war have between them cut off the whole American trade, export and import, and the consequence has been a very bad season, with a prospect of frightful pressure in the winter. Whole counties will have to be supported by subscription.

This is my idea of the real cotton problem in this country. I have no doubt that the suffering interests will make a violent push to solve it by urging the Government to attack our blockade. But that is merely the last struggle of a drowning man. The Government will not do it, I think, and most Englishmen speak of the idea as preposterous. If they did, it would only complicate matters still more and I doubt whether even then they got their cotton. The winter over, the new era will dawn on us; that cursed monopoly will be broken and with it the whole power of the South; the slave-trade will then be ended and slavery with it, for the negro will be of no use; and we may expect sunnier days and renewed prosperity. This is the only view that I could advocate, and this, a generally acknowledged truth, is at best but small comfort to a starving people [...]

Review Questions

1. How is the American war affecting the British?

2. Why would British entrance into the war fail to make things better?
3. Regardless of the war's outcome, why does Henry Adams see the conflict as beneficial to the abolition of slavery?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way might British dependence on Southern cotton have been avoided?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 28, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 48–50

London, September 28, 1861

Times goes precious fast and yet seems to leave little behind it. I have been very busy for the last three weeks but now am at leisure again though I have some ideas of beginning a new tack. Papa got back late last night from a visit to Lord Russell's in Scotland. I must say I think Lord Russell was rather hard in making him take all the journey, but as it could n't well be helped I am glad it has happened, and especially so as it will have an excellent effect on the relations of the two countries. When I last wrote things looked threatening if I recollect right. Since then they have wonderfully cleared away. Lately, except for the Bunch affair and the negotiation business, England has behaved very well. The Southerners were refused recognition and we are no longer uneasy about the blockade. Lord Russell has explained the Mexican business very satisfactorily and it appears that England is trying to check Spain, not to help her. Lord Russell was very open and confidential towards the Chief and showed him confidential despatches proving the truth of the matter with regard to Spain, besides treating him in every way extremely kindly and confidentially. You know that these are state secrets which no one knows out of the immediate circle here, so you must be very careful not to let it out, even to write back here that you know about it, as it might shake confidence in me [...]

Review Questions

1. What two events restore relations between Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does Lord Russell's willingness to show Charles Francis Adams confidential dispatches prove about Charles Francis Adams?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., October 15, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 56–60

London, October 15, 1861

[...] You say that Mr. Seward's hand is not evident in the course of events. I disagree entirely to any such idea. I think it is very evident and so much so that, feeling perfect confidence in him, I have come to the conclusion that our ideas are wrong and that his are right, at least on one question. I am an abolitionist and so, I think, are you, and so, I think, is Mr. Seward; but if he says the time has not yet come; that we must wait till the whole

country has time to make the same advance that we have made within the last six months, till we can all move together with but one mind and one idea; then I say, let us wait. It will come. Let us have order and discipline and firm ranks among the soldiers of the Massachusetts school.

But apart from this, when you say that you do not see the hand of the Secretary of State in the course of events, I tell you plainly that you do not know that whereof you speak. I do assure you, and I do pretend to knowledge on this point, that his direction of the foreign affairs of the nation has been one of very remarkable ability and energy, and to it we are indebted now in no small degree; in a very large degree, rather; to the freedom from external interference which allows us to give our whole strength to this rebellion. Never before for many years have we been so creditably represented in Europe or has the foreign policy of our country commanded more respect. They will tell you so in Paris and they will tell you so here, if you don't go to such authorities as the Times for your information. The high tone and absolute honor of our country have been maintained with energy and lofty dignity, but are we not on good terms still with foreign nations? Have not the threatening clouds that were hanging over our relations with this country a few months since, been cleared away by an influence that no man of common experience would imagine to be accident? And what of Spain? And Mexico? Trust me, when you come to read the history of these days at some future time, you will no longer think that the hand of the Secretary of State has been paralysed or his broad mind lost its breadth, in a time of civil war.

Review Questions

1. On what point does Henry Adams believe Secretary Seward is right? On what point does Henry Adams believe Secretary Seward is wrong?
2. How does Secretary Seward's success in foreign policy benefit the Union in the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the European opinion of the United States have been degraded before Seward's assumption of control of the State Department?

Blog Prompt

In what ways does American foreign policy affect American domestic policy? Cite a modern example.

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., November 30, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 75–77

London, November 30, 1861

If I thought the state of things bad last week you may imagine what I think of them now. In fact I consider that we are dishd, and that our position is hopeless. If the administration ordered the capture of those men, I am satisfied that our present authorities are very unsuitable persons to conduct a war like this or to remain in the direction of our affairs. It is our ruin. Do not deceive yourself about the position of England. We might have preserved our dignity in many ways without going to war with her, and our party in the Cabinet was always strong enough to maintain peace here and keep down the anti-blockaders. But now

all the fat's in the fire, and I feel like going off and taking up my old German life again as a permanency. It is devilish disagreeable to act the part of Sisyphus especially when it is our own friends who are trying to crush us under the rock.

What part it is reserved to us to play in this very tragical comedy I am utterly unable to tell. The Government has left us in the most awkward and unfair position. They have given no warning that such an act was thought of, and seem almost to have purposely encouraged us to waste our strength in trying to maintain the relations which it was itself intending to destroy. I am half mad with vexation and despair. If papa is ordered home I shall do as Fairfax did, and go into the war with "peace" on my mind and lips.

Our position here is of course very unpleasant just now. We were to have gone to Lord Hatherton's on Monday, but now our visit is put off, and I am not without expectations that a very few weeks may see us either on our way home or on the continent. I think that the New Year will see the end.

This nation means to make war. Do not doubt it. What Seward means is more than I can guess. But if he means war also, or to run as close as he can without touching, then I say that Mr. Seward is the greatest criminal we've had yet.

We have friends here still, but very few. Bright dined with us last night, and is with us, but is evidently hopeless of seeing anything good. Besides, his assistance at such a time as this is evidently a disadvantage to us, for he is now wholly out of power and influence. Our friends are all very much cast down and my friends of the Spectator sent up to me in a dreadful state and asked me to come down to see them, which I did, and they complained bitterly of the position we were now in. I had of course the pleasure of returning the complaint to any extent, but after all this is poor consolation.

Our good father is cool but evidently of the same mind as I am. He has seen Lord Russell but could give him no information, and my Lord did not volunteer any on his side. You will know very soon what you are to expect [...]

Review Questions

1. Why is Henry Adams concerned about the peace between Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Henry make reference to Sisyphus? To whom is he alluding?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 12, 1861

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 81–82

London, December 12, 1861

It has given us here an indescribably sad feeling to witness the exultation in America over an event which bids fair to be the final calamity in this contest. We wonder that there has been so little of comprehension of the nature of the struggle here in public opinion not to

jump at once to the conclusion that it would be turned against us by such an act. Putting ourselves in the place of Great Britain, where would be the end of the indignation that would be vented against the power committing it? Yet it seems everywhere to have been very coolly taken for granted that because she did outrageous things on the ocean to other powers, she would remain quiet when such things were done to her. A little observation of her past history ought to have shown that she never sees the right until half a century after she has acted wrong. She now admits her error in our revolution, and in the last war. Now she is right in principle and only wrong in point of consistency. Our mistake is that we are donning ourselves in her cast-off suit, when our own is better worth wearing. And all for what? Why to show our spite against two miserable wretches, twenty thousand of whom are not worth a single hair in the head of any of the persons on both sides of the controversy whose lives and happiness are endangered by the quarrel....

Review Questions

1. What complaint does Charles Francis Adams make against the Americans who are celebrating the Trent affair?
2. In what ways is the Union donning Britain's "cast-off suit"?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might people in the Union celebrate the Trent affair as a bloodless victory?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 20, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 87–89

London, December 20, 1861

[...] War with the United States seems imminent. It may spread itself all over Europe. Where is the master to direct this storm, if he cannot arrest it? Is it Lord Palmerston or Earl Russell? I trow not. Let any thing happen to Napoleon, and you will see. He is their buckler and their shield.

As to us I fancy you can understand the pleasantness of the position we are occupying in the mean time. The leading newspapers roll out as much fiery lava as Vesuvius is doing, daily. The clubs and the army and the navy and the people in the streets generally are raving for war. On the other side are the religious people and a large number of stock jobbers and traders, together with the radical following of Messrs. Cobden and Bright. The impression is general that Mr. Seward is resolved to insult England until she makes a war. He is the *bête noir*, that frightens them out of all their proprieties. It is of no use to deny it and appeal to facts. They quote what he said to the Duke of Newcastle about insulting England as the only sure passport to popular favor in America, and a part of a speech in which he talked of annexing Canada as an offset to the loss of the slave states. This is the evidence that Mr. Seward is an ogre fully resolved to eat all Englishmen raw. Pitiful as is all this nonsense, it is of no trifling consequence in its political effect. Even our friend Mr. Thurlow Weed with all his sagacity is baffled in every attempt to counteract it. And if war finally happens, it will trace to this source one of its most prominent causes.

Of course I feel most anxiously the position of my country, and of those who are enlisted in its cause. So far as I now see the field it is much less alarming than it looked some weeks ago. Many of the causes of apprehension are removed. The government has not authorised the act of Captain Wilkes, neither has it adopted it, as yet. So far, so good. But the British government will not rest satisfied with that position. The policy must be disavowed and the men replaced. Such is my understanding of the substance no matter how gently the sense may be conveyed. Shall we do either? For my part I think justice to our former professions demands it of us. [...] But what my opinion may be is one thing. What the delusion of my countrymen is, is another and very different one. They may regard Messrs. Mason and Slidell as more precious than all their worldly possessions. May be so. For my part I would part with them at a cent apiece.

Review Questions

1. What comments by Secretary Seward cause uproar in England?
2. What is preventing England from declaring war on the Union?
3. What needs to happen for England to remain out of the conflict?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Who do you think composes the war party in England?
2. Who in England might oppose war?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 27, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 90–92

London, December 27, 1861

[...] Apropos of this let me say a word about the notion you still seem to entertain that Mr. Seward means to bring on a war. Thus far I have always maintained that this was a mistake founded on a bad joke of his to the Duke of Newcastle at Governor Morgan's dinner to the Prince of Wales. The Duke has however succeeded in making everybody in authority here believe it. Lord Lyons and Mr. Sumner have helped on the delusion at home. Yet I have no hesitation in my opinion, neither do I find that Mr. Thurlow Weed, with whom I compare notes, entertains any other. He can have a war, is he wants one. He has but to do what the Duke says he told him he meant to do, i.e. *insult the British government* in his answer, and he will have it to his heart's content. In my opinion he will do no such thing, but if I am right, I trust that from that time no more reliance will be placed upon a poor pleasantry uttered after a hospitable entertainment, to a mischief-making guest [...]

Review Questions

1. According to Charles Francis Adams, what should Secretary Seward do in order to prevent war with Great Britain?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Under what circumstances could the Union (and Seward) want a war with Great Britain?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 10, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 99

London, January 10, 1862

Captain Wilkes has not positively shipwrecked us, but he has come as near to it without succeeding as he could. Thus far the country has been at least saved the danger of setting up military idols. This reconciles me a little to the slowness of our operations. Another consideration is the crushing nature of our expenditure which must stop this war, if something effective does not follow soon. It is idle to talk of putting down the rebellion whilst our power is resisted successfully within a dozen miles of the capital. This idea prevails so much here that it will undoubtedly become the basis of a movement for recognition before long....

The first effect of the surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell has been extraordinary. The current which ran against us with such extreme violence six weeks ago now seems to be going with equal fury in our favor. The reaction in the city was very great yesterday, and even the most violent of the presses, the Times and the Post, are for the moment a little tamed. Possibly, if nothing else should intervene to break its force, this favoring gale may carry us through the first half of the session of Parliament, in other words, until the first of May. If by that time we shall have made no decided progress towards a result, we may as well make up our minds to disbelieve in our power to do it at all. Foreign nations will come to that conclusion if we do not...

Review Questions

1. Which events in the United States are encouraging the British to offer recognition to the Confederacy?
2. According to Charles Francis Adams, what must the Union do in order to keep Europe out of the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does the Confederacy's success, or the Union's failure, affect the opinion of people in Europe?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 10, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p.100

London, January 10, 1862

The news of the surrender of the unhung arrived yesterday, and gave us much satisfaction. It was particularly grateful to me because the ground taken is that which the Chief recommended in an early despatch to the Government, in which he quoted Madison's words. The effect here is good and will help us, but I have little hope that we shall be able to maintain ourselves here much longer. I fear that the meeting of Parliament will be the signal for a grand battle, and March will see us *en route* for somewhere.

Still there is great activity among our friends here in preparing for the struggle, and Thurlow Weed is organising our forces effectively. We shall die hard I think, and England will have little to be proud of. The blockade is the place where the shoe pinches, and the blockade is now very perfect, I should judge. We shall see what they mean to do....

Financially we are dished. There is but one resort, and that is severe direct taxation. It is in this way alone that the expenses of modern wars in Europe have been borne, and we must come to it at last, or repudiate. The latter is out of the question, but the Lord knows.

The Legation is tolerably quiet just now, with little doing. Government has behaved well in the Nashville business, and that vessel is now under our guns and without increased armament. Meanwhile the Sumter has turned up and is making trouble in Spain. I wish to God the Tuscarora could catch her and sink her.

Review Questions

1. In what way is Charles Francis Adams partially responsible for ending the war fever in England?
2. What is Henry's solution to the financial problems brought about by the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is the Union's naval blockade so problematic for the British?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 22, 1862

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 105

London, January 22, 1862

[...] We are sometimes anxious still and are likely to be more so. The truth is, we are now in a corner. There is but one way out of it and that is by a decisive victory. If there's not a great success, and a success *followed up*, within six weeks, we may better give up the game than blunder any more over it. These nations, France probably first, will raise the blockade.

Such is the fact of our position. I am ready for it anyway, but I do say that McClellan must do something within six weeks or we are done. This war has lasted long enough, to my mind.

There is precious little to tell you about here. France has again renewed her proposal to raise the blockade and there has been a discussion, or a battle about it. Prince Albert was strongly for peace with us, and now that he is dead it is understood that the Queen continues to favor his policy. Besides her, the King of Belgium has come over and is pressing earnestly for peace. His great object always is to counteract French influence when it points to war. We have a majority (probably) in the Cabinet of neutrality men, nor do I know whom to call the leader of the war-party in the Ministry. You must not misunderstand Palmerston. He means disunion, but not war unless under special influences [...]

Review Questions

1. Who in Europe supports peace with the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would a Union victory keep France and the rest of Europe from raising the blockade?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., March 21, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 122–123

London, March 21, 1862

Nowhere has the condition of the western campaign been productive of better effects than in this country. The change produced in the tone towards the United States is very striking. There will be no overt acts tending to recognition whilst there is a doubt of the issue. It is nevertheless equally true that whatever ability remains to continue the contest is materially aided by the supplies constantly and industriously furnished from here. Every effort to run the blockade is made under British protection. Every manifestation of sympathy with the rebel success springs from British sources. This feeling is not the popular feeling, but it is that of the governing classes. With many honorable exceptions the aristocracy entertain it as well as the commercial interest. So did they in 1774. So did they in 1812. So will they ever, when their narrow views of British interests predominate....

Review Questions

1. What events secure peace with Europe?
2. How is England continuously and covertly supporting the Confederacy?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. According to Charles Francis Adams, why is the ruling class historically willing to impede American interests?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., April 4, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 123–124

London April 4, 1862

The late military successes have given us a season of repose. People are changing their notions of the power of the country to meet such a trial, which is attended with quite favorable consequences to us in our position. Our diplomacy is almost in a state of profound calm. Even the favorite idea of a division into two states is less put forward than it was. Yet the interest with which the struggle is witnessed grows deeper and deeper. The battle between the Merrimack and our vessels has been the main talk of the town since the news came, in Parliament, in the clubs, in the city, among the military and naval people. The impression is that it dates the commencement of a new era in warfare, and that Great Britain must consent to begin over again. I think the effect is to diminish the confidence in the result of hostilities with us. In December we were told that we should be swept from the ocean in a moment, and all our ports would be taken. They do not talk so now. So far as this may have an effect to secure peace on both sides it is good....

We are much encouraged now by the series of successes gained, and far more by the marked indications of exhaustion and discouragement in the south. They must be suffering in every way. Never did people pay such a penalty for their madness. And the worst is yet to

come. For emancipation is on its way with slow but certain pace. Well for them if it do not take them unaware.

Review Questions

1. What causes Britain to rethink the possibility of prevailing against the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the “new era in warfare,” and how does Britain need to respond?
2. With regard to the carnage caused by war, why are Southerners suffering more than Northerners?

Blog Prompt

How does war affect the civilian population, particularly when the population lives in close proximity to the armed conflict? Cite a modern example.

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., May 16, 1862

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 145–146

London, May 16, 1862

[...] Last Sunday afternoon, the day after my letter to you had gone, telling how hard it was to sustain one's own convictions against the scepticism of a nation, I returned from taking a walk on Rotten Row with my very estimable friend Baron Brinken, and on reaching home, I was considerably astounded at perceiving the Chief in an excited manner dance across the entry and ejaculate, “We've got New Orleans.” Philosopher as I am and constant in a just and tenacious virtue, I confess that even I was considerably interested for the moment. So leaving Sir Charles Lyell regarding my abrupt departure through one eye-glass with some apparent astonishment, I took a cab and drove down to Mr. Weed. Meeting him in the street near his hotel, I leaped out of the cab, and each of us simultaneously drew out a telegram which we exchanged. His was Mr. Peabody's private business telegram; mine was an official one from Seward. We then proceeded together to the telegraph office and sent a despatch to Mr. Dayton in Paris, and finally I went round to the Diplomatic Club and had the pleasure of enunciating my sentiments. Here my own agency ended, but Mr. Weed drank his cup of victory to the dregs. He spread the news in every direction, and finally sat down to dinner at the Reform Club with two sceptical old English friends of our side and had the pleasure of hearing the news-boys outside shout “Rumored capture of New Orleans” in an evening extra, while the news was posted at Brookes's, and the whole town was in immense excitement as though it were an English defeat.

Indeed the effect of the news here has been greater than anything yet. It has acted like a violent blow in the face of a drunken man. The next morning the Times came out and gave fairly in that it had been mistaken; it had believed Southern accounts and was deceived by them. This morning it has an article still more remarkable and intimates for the first time that it sees little more chance for the South. There is, we think, a preparation for withdrawing their belligerent declaration and acknowledging again the authority of the Federal Government over all the national territory, to be absolute and undisputed. One more victory will bring us up to this, I am confident. That done, I shall consider, not only that the nation has come through the struggle such as no other nation ever heard of, but in a smaller and

personal point of view I shall feel much relieved and pleased at the successful career of the Chief.

Review Questions

1. What event in the war causes the Adamses to celebrate?
2. What possible change in British policy toward the United States is on the horizon as a result of this event?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does the news from America so affect the delegation in England?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 18, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 166

London, July 18, 1862

You can have very little notion of the effect the Richmond news is having here. It has set all the elements of hostility to us in agitation, and they are working to carry the House of Commons off their feet in its debate tonight. To that end a story has been manufactured of an alleged capitulation of General McClellan on the third coming out by the Glasgow that sailed on the fifth, in the face of a later telegram dated the seventh, which reported his address to his army pledging himself to continue the war. Yet the people here are fully ready to credit anything that is not favorable. I have no doubt that the matter is bad enough, but it is not quite to that extent. Yet the consequences are likely to be as unfavorable as if it was....

Review Questions

1. What happens in Richmond that changes Britain's tone toward the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is General McClellan's address to his army so important in Europe?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 19, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 166–168

[London,] Saturday, July 19, 1862

Knowing that you would probably be anxious to hear from us what effect the bad news of June 26 – 30 might have on our position here, I take the last moment to write in order to tell you what I think we are to expect. Certainly it was a violent blow. We suffered several days of very great anxiety, knowing that the current here was rising every hour and running harder against us than at any time since the Trent affair. This reverse called out at once all the latent hostility here, and there was nothing to do but to give way. I shut myself up, went to no more parties and avoided contact with everyone except friends.... The only bright spot in the week was the reception of your letter. As we had all relied on your being safe in the hospital, or if not there, with your regiment which we knew was not engaged, your letter was quite

welcome, as it told us first both of your going in and your coming out. I congratulate you, and apropos to that, I congratulate your general Hunter on his Negro-army letter. We *all* here sustain him and I assure you that the strongest means of holding Europe back is the sight of an effective black army.

Nevertheless our trouble here was extreme. As the week passed it was not diminished. Nor is it now, I fear, permanently so. It arrived however at its culminating point last night. It so happened that last night was the occasion of an expected debate in the Commons on a motion in favor of mediation. We had been busy in preparing for it and had assurances that all was right. But lo and behold, at two o'clock yesterday afternoon in rushes a member of the Commons, and half a dozen alarmists in his rear, with an evening paper whose telegraphic column was headed in big letters, "Capitulation of McClellan's Army. Flight of McClellan in a steamer. Later from America." This astonishing news for a moment made me almost give way. But a single glance at dates showed us that it was an utter swindle, and that we had bulletins from McClellan of two days later than the day of the reported surrender. The next reflexion led us to see that it was intended for the debate of the same evening, and we, who know the seal, recognized the stamp of our old friends the Southern liars, who juggled Georgia out of the Union by telegraph. But the consternation among our friends was incredible and even when they knew it must be false, they still shook and shuddered with terror. Every Englishman believed it, or doubted in a tone that showed he wanted to believe it. As for me, I have come to consider it my whole duty here to keep up the spirits of the community and so did the best I could to laugh the lie off. Luckily its effect on the Commons was very good, for it disposed them to postpone action and tended to quiet them. Palmerston made a good speech, and the motion was not pressed to a division. This morning the Arabia's news has arrived, three days later, which relieves us again for a time of our anxiety, and induces us to believe that the enemy were as much crippled by their victory as we by our defeat.

Thus the pinch has again passed by for the moment and we breathe more freely. But I think I wrote to you some times ago that if July found us still in Virginia, we could no longer escape interference. I think now that it is inevitable. The only delay thus far has been caused by the difficulty in inducing the five great powers to unite, and Russia and Austria to act with England in any sense favorable to the South. That unity cannot much longer fail to be obtainable. England alone or with France will not move, but their idea is that if all the great powers were to unite in offering mediation, they could by their moral influence alone force some result. If the North defied them, a simple recognition of the South by them would, they think, secure her independence. And this belief is probably correct.

It must be now the effort of the North to cast upon the South the responsibility of standing against a settlement. Here will be three means of hampering European attempts: the slavery question, the boundary question, and the Mississippi; and it is the slavery question from which we can derive the greatest strength in this running battle. You see we are stripping and squaring off, to say nothing of sponging, for the next round. If our armies sustain us, we shall win. If not, we shall soon see the limit of our hopes.

Review Questions

1. What does Henry propose will prevent Europe from interfering in the conflict?

2. What course of action is proposed in the House of Commons?
3. How is it proposed that Europe should act toward the United States?
4. According to Henry, what are the three ways to hamper Europe?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does the Union's success depend entirely on the performance of their army?
2. Why is victory not necessary for the South to win?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., October 17, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 192

London, October 17, 1862

General McClellan's work during the week ending the 18th has done a good deal to restore our drooping credit here. Most of the knowing ones had already discounted the capture of Washington and the capitulation of the Free States. Some had gone so far as to presume the establishment of Jefferson Davis as the President instead of Lincoln. The last number of the *Edinburgh Review* has a wise prediction that this is to be effected by the joint labors of the "mob" and of "the merchants" of the city of New York. This is the guide of English intelligence of the nature of our struggle. Of course it follows that no sensible effect is produced excepting from hard blows. If General McClellan will only go on and plant a few more of the same kind in his opponent's eyes, I shall be his very humble servant, for it will raise us much in the estimation of all our friends. Mr. Gladstone will cease to express so much admiration of Jefferson Davis, and all other things will begin to flow smoothly again.

Review Questions

1. What rumors about the war are running rampant in England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What role does a New York City mob play in influencing Europe to become involved in the war?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 25, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 220–221

Mount Felix, Walton on Thames
December 25, 1862

Public matters remain yet in a profound state of repose, and probably will continue so for another month. The publication made by the Secretary of State of large portions of my Despatches for the past year has rather stirred a hornet's nest in the press, but I fancy it will prove only a nine days' wonder. I have said merely what everybody knows. The great body of the aristocracy and the wealthy commercial classes are anxious to see the United States go to pieces. On the other hand the middle and lower class sympathise with us, more and more as they better comprehend the true nature of the struggle. A good deal of dust was thrown into their eyes at first by the impudent pretense that the tariff was the cause of the war. All that is now over. Even the *Times* has no longer the assurance to repeat that fable. The true

division now begins to make itself perceptible here as elsewhere in Europe—the party of the old and of the new, of vested rights and of well regulated freedom. All equally see in the convulsion in America an era in the history of the world, out of which must come in the end a general recognition of the right of mankind to the produce of their labor and the pursuit of happiness. Across all these considerations come occasionally individual and national interests which pervert the judgment for a time, but the world moves onward taking little note of temporary perturbations, and whatever may betide to us of this generation, the end is sure....

Review Questions

1. How does Charles Francis Adams distinguish the English upper classes from the English lower classes, with specific regard to how these groups think about the American war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the English upper and lower classes be separated in opinion?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 23, 1863

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 235–236

London, January 23, 1863

Our customary midweek intelligence has not arrived, owing I suppose to the violence of the storms delaying the steamers, so that we are now fifteen days back. In the mean time the President's proclamation is doing much for us on this side. That is put in contrast to the paper of Jefferson Davis, much to the advantage of the former. The middle classes generally see and comprehend the existence of a moral question apart from all political disquisitions. The effect is to bring out an expression in popular meetings which is doing something to neutralise the opposite tendency of the governing people. Mr. Seward has printed so largely from my Despatches of last year, that there is now no misunderstanding here of what I think on this matter. I fear that I have forfeited the favor of my aristocratic friends by performing my duty of disclosing their tendencies, but as I have had not unsimilar experiences heretofore at home, perhaps I take it with less uneasiness. There are always great exceptions to be made. And after all, the position of a foreign minister must necessarily be one to inspire caution in making intimacies. My acquaintance is already quite as extensive as I can keep up with [...]

Review Questions

1. What presidential proclamation is “doing much for us on this side?”
2. What is the moral question that drives the Civil War?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is Charles Francis Adams not really harmed by the publishing of his opinions on the aristocracy?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 23, 1863*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 243

London, January 23, 1863

The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy. It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favor all over this country. The *London Times* furious and scolds like a drunken drab. Certain it is, however, that public opinion is very deeply stirred here and finds expression in meetings, addresses to President Lincoln, deputations to us, standing committees to agitate the subject and to affect opinion, and all the other symptoms of a great popular movement peculiarly unpleasant to the upper classes here because it rests altogether on the spontaneous action of the laboring classes and has a pestilent squint at sympathy with republicanism. But the *Times* is on its last legs and has lost its temper. They say it always does lose its temper when it finds such a feeling too strong for it, and its next step will be to come round and try to guide it. We are much encouraged and in high spirits. If only you at home don't have disasters, we will give such a checkmate to the foreign hopes of the rebels as they never yet have had....

Review Questions

1. What evidence does Charles Francis Adams give that English opinion is turning in favor of the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would the *London Times* have been furious about the Emancipation Proclamation?
2. Why would the Emancipation Proclamation be a checkmate to European support of the South?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 27, 1863Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 243–246

London, January 27, 1863

After a fortnight's violent pulling, pushing, threatening, shaking, cursing and coaxing, almost entirely done through private channels, we have at least succeeded in screwing the Government up to what promises to be a respectable position. How steady it will be, I don't know, nor how far they will declare themselves, do I know. But between our Government at home and our active and energetic allies here, we seem to have made progress. I went last night to a meeting of which I shall send you a report; a democratic and socialist meeting, most threatening and dangerous to the established state of things; and assuming a tone and proportions that are quite novel and alarming in this capital. And they met to notify Government that "they would not tolerate" interference against us. I can assure you this sort of movement is as alarming here as a slave insurrection would be in the South, and we have our hands on the springs that can raise or pacify such agitators, at least as regards our own affairs, they making common cause with us. I never quite appreciated the "moral influence" of American democracy, nor the cause that the privileged classes in Europe have to fear us, until I saw how directly it works. At this moment the American question is organizing a vast

mass of the lower orders in direct contact with the wealthy. They go our whole platform and are full of the “rights of man.” The old revolutionary leaven is working steadily in England. You can find millions of people who look up to our institutions as their model and who talk with utter contempt of their own system of Government. Within three months this movement has taken a development that has placed all our enemies on the defensive; has driven Palmerston to sue for peace and Lord Russell to proclaim a limited sympathy. I will not undertake to say where it will stop, but were I an Englishman I should feel nervous. We have strength enough already to shake the very crown on the Queen’s head if we were compelled to employ it all. You are not to suppose that we are intriguing to create trouble. I do not believe that all the intrigue in the world could create one of these great demonstrations of sympathy. But where we have friends, there we shall have support, and those who help us will do it of their own free will. There are few of the thickly populated districts of England where we have not the germs of an organisation that may easily become democratic as it is already anti-slavery. With such a curb on the upper classes, I think they will do little more harm to us.

The conduct of the affairs of that great republic which though wounded itself almost desperately, can yet threaten to tear down the rulers of the civilised world, by merely assuming her place at the head of the march of democracy, is something to look upon. I wonder whether we shall be forced to call upon the brothers of the great fraternity to come in all lands to the assistance and protection of its head. There are lively times, oh, Hannibal.

Review Questions

1. What section of the English population is supporting the Union and why?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is meant by the “moral influence” of American democracy?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 30, 1863

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 251–252

London, January 30, 1863

Politically things go on swimmingly here. The anti-slavery feeling of the country is coming out stronger than we ever expected, and all the English politicians have fairly been thrown over by their people. There was a meeting last night at Exeter Hall which is likely to create a revolution, or rather to carry on a complete revolution in public opinion which was begun by the great Manchester Meeting on the 31st December. Last night’s meeting was something tremendous, unheard of since the days of reform. The cry was “Emancipation and reunion” and the spirit was dangerously in sympathy with republicanism. The Strand was blocked up in front of Exeter Hall by those who couldn’t get in, and speeches were made in the street as well as in another hall opened to accommodate a part of the surplus. As for enthusiasm, my friend Tom Brown of Rugby school-days, who was one of the speakers, had to stop repeatedly and beg the people not to cheer so much. Every allusion to the South was followed by groaning, hisses and howls, and the enthusiasm for Lincoln and for everything connected with the North was immense. The effect of such a display will be very great, and I

think we may expect from Lancashire on the arrival of the George Griswold, a response that will make some noise.

Next week Parliament will meet. Of course it will bring hot water, but the sentiment of the country will not tolerate any interference with us. I breathe more easily about this than ever. My main anxiety is about the Alabama case, which has been the subject of the sharpest kind of notes between the Chief and Lord Russell. As these notes will probably now be published, I can say that in my opinion my Lord has been dreadfully used up, and if you don't howl with delight when you read the Chief's note to him of 30th December, you won't do what I did. But our cue is still friendship, and we don't want to irritate. The strong outside pressure that is now aroused to act on this Government will, I hope, help us to carry through all we want in time and with patience.

Review Questions

1. What causes Henry's anxiety, particularly in the midst of such popular support?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does the Emancipation Proclamation cause such a strong outcry from the people of England?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 23, 1863

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. II, p. 58–60

[London,] July 23, 1863

I positively tremble to think of receiving any more news from America since the batch that we received last Sunday. Why can't we sink the steamers till some more good news comes? It is like an easterly storm after a glorious June day, this returning to the gloomy chronicle of varying successes and disasters, after exulting in the grand excitement of such triumphs as you sent us on the 4th. For once there was *no* drawback, unless I except anxiety about you. I wanted to hug the army of the Potomac. I wanted to get the whole of the army of Vicksburg drunk at my own expense. I wanted to fight some small man and lick him. Had I had a single friend in London capable of rising to the dignity of the occasion, I don't know what mightn't have happened. But mediocrity prevailed and I passed the day in base repose.

It was on Sunday morning as I came down to breakfast that I saw a telegram from the Department announcing the fall of Vicksburg. Now, to appreciate the value of this, you must know that the one thing upon which the London press and the English people have been so positive as not to tolerate contradiction, was the impossibility of capturing Vicksburg. Nothing could induce them to believe that Grant's army was not in extreme danger of having itself to capitulate. The Times of Saturday, down to the last moment, declared that the siege of Vicksburg grew more and more hopeless every day. Even now, it refuses, after receiving all the details, to admit the fact, and only says that Northern advices report it, but it is not yet confirmed. Nothing could exceed the energy with which

everybody in England has reprobated the wicked waste of life that must be caused by the siege of this place during the sickly season, and ridiculed the idea of its capture. And now the announcement was just as though a bucket of iced-water were thrown into their faces. They couldn't and wouldn't believe it. All their settled opinions were overthrown, and they were left dangling in the air. You never heard such a cackling as was kept up here on Sunday and Monday, and you can't imagine how spiteful and vicious they all were [...].

It is now conceded at once that all idea of intervention is at an end. The war is to continue indefinitely, so far as Europe is concerned, and the only remaining chance of collision is in the case of the ironclads. We are looking after them with considerable energy, and I think we shall settle them [...]

Review Questions

1. What Union triumphs are reported on July 4, 1863?
2. Who is responsible for these triumphs, and how do these triumphs benefit the Union's ultimate victory?
3. What is the remaining issue that threatens to bring Europe and the United States into conflict?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 31, 1863

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. II, p. 65–66

London, July 31, 1863

It is intensely painful in the midst of such great prosperity here to read the shocking details of slaughter and destruction in our newspapers. Still more annoying is it to think how by the folly of these rogues we are playing into the hands of the malevolent in Europe. The privileged classes all over Europe rejoice in the thoughts of the ruin of the great experiment of popular government. I yet trust they count without their host. No thanks, however, to the madmen who try to work this mischief. The penalty we are paying for the great error of our ancestors is a most tremendous one. All I can pray for is that we do so once for all. To permit our posterity to run the risk of repeating it for the same fault on our part would be criminal indeed.

The London Times last Monday graciously allowed the people of England to believe that Vicksburg had actually fallen. The notion that General Lee was in possession of Washington and Baltimore is not quite so strong as it was, but I am not sure that it has been dissipated yet by any positive denial in that press. There was a general sense of the happening of some lamentable disaster here, the nature and extent of which had not been fully defined. The clearest evidence of this was found in the stock market, where a panic took place among the holders of the rebel loan. It fell from three per cent discount to seventeen, and has not stopped yet. I should not be surprised if some bankruptcies were to follow. People here must pay something for their pro-slavery sympathies. What a pity that the sum of their losses could not have been applied to the emancipation of the slaves! In that case England would have maintained her character for philanthropy, which has gone down, as it is, quite as far and as fast as the rebel loan....

Review Questions

1. What battle is the source of the “shocking details of slaughter and destruction?”
2. What evidence is there that the English doubt the South will ultimately win?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. Who besides Charles Francis Adams refers to the ruin of the experiment of popular government as a result of the unnamed battle?