|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A Woman, and a Diplomat?  An account of the correspondence between Abigail and John Adams during the American Revolutionary War | Abstract  “What a politician have you made of me? If I cannot be a voter upon this occasion, I will be a writer of votes.”  Bram Wesselink  OS III: Internationale Betrekkingen in de Vroegmoderne Tijd |

SN: 3856798

Docent: dr. D.M.L. Onnekink

Inhoudsopgave

**Introduction2**

**H15**

Diplomacy in the Early Modern Age5

Role of Women in Diplomacy7

Abigail Adams9

**H211**

An Extraordinary Relationship11

Abigail Adams on Politics15

Convincing the Diplomat17  
Consequences of Inquiry20

John Adams about Politics in the Republic22

**Conclusion26**

**Bibliography28**

“Can a woman be a diplomat?”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Herbert Wright titled his article with this question, reflecting part of a larger issue he was engaged with, namely the particularities and properties of the female gender with regard to the occupation of diplomat.[[2]](#footnote-2) Would someone in ‘modern’ times be confronted with this question, the usual response would be a definite yes, an answer endorsed by Wright; “the answer to the question, “Can a woman be a diplomat?” is, women have been diplomats.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Even between the 13th and 17th century there have been several accounts of women practicing in this profession.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, these women proved to be the exception to the rule. The traditional view of a woman’s role was one of submission, dependence and protection by man, and this view only began changing in the 20th century.[[5]](#footnote-5) Women, with their responsibilities in child-rearing and the domestic sphere, were “conceptually confined to the home and only linked to wider social networks through relationships with men.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Despite these observations, underestimating the influence of women in the world of diplomacy would be a misconception   
 In order to generate a better understanding of a woman’s role in diplomacy one approach could be to investigate the particular cases of female diplomats. However, these women are often difficult to identify. Focusing on the counterparts of male diplomats provides an effective and accurate way of identifying women in the diplomatic sphere. With regards to her role in husband-wife political partnerships, one of the most notable women is Abigail Adams.[[7]](#footnote-7) Her partner, John Adams, worked as a diplomat during the American Revolutionary War and eventually became the second president of the United Sates of America. Abigail played an important role in the evolution of women’s involvement in politics by complementing and supplementing her husband in his career.[[8]](#footnote-8) This couple’s relevance extends further than the nature of their relationship, as they continued an extensive correspondence during the length of John’s political career. There are general accounts of their exchange of letters, which are also occasionally used in descriptions of his diplomatic ventures. However, a precise understanding concerning the importance and essence of their interaction with regards to a woman’s role in diplomacy has not been achieved. Therefore this essay will consider the position and role of Abigail Adams in the political and diplomatic sphere, by evaluating the interaction between John Adams and herself during his diplomatic mission in the Republic.  
 To begin, it is important to consider how recent works portray women’s involvement in political and diplomatic spheres. James Daybell argues that female activities are too often viewed as nebulous and “intangible, distant from definitions of power as formal and direct, qualities connoted by office.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Instead, female letter-writers should be recognized as providers of a vital channel of communication through which news and intelligence flowed, and considered to the “extent to which such activities could propel women into diplomatic activities.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Cathy J. Cohen connects to this view by stating that women’s involvement in politics has proven to be “far more complex, unusual, and unprecedented than most reports have captured.”[[11]](#footnote-11) A slightly different opinion is voiced by Vicky Randall, explaining that although women and politics used to be defined as mutually exclusive, politics should be understood by looking at structural features of political life and by “recovering from oblivion a hidden history of women’s involvement in political action.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Danielle Clark does not necessarily object to any of these views, but does contend that rather than focusing on the negative effects on patriarchy in the early modern period, attention should be switched to “the extent to which women colluded with patriarchy, but also derived their power and influence from it.”[[13]](#footnote-13) These accounts show several ways to approach the subject, but do not exclude each other. For this essay it would be interesting to see how these views measure up to the analysis of the primary sources.  
 Analyzing the correspondence between John and Abigail will be valuable as it can give a better insight into both of their thought processes. In addition, the dynamic between them was quite extraordinary. Even though it was not uncommon for diplomats to have a wife, very few of them informed and discussed as much personal and work related business as John did with Abigail. Furthermore, “no other political couple have we so deftly woven a tapestry of shared views regarding the vital issues of the day.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Not only is the content useful, also the quantity of sources is decent. Therefore, by selecting the interaction between Abigail and John Adams as a case study, it is possible to gain a better understanding of a woman’s role in early modern diplomacy.   
 As it is difficult to cover all of the material collected during John Adams’ extensive participation in diplomatic and political spheres, this essay will focus primarily on John Adam’s active years in the Republic of the United Provinces. Firstly, this period has been selected because John identified it as the happiest event and greatest action of his life.[[15]](#footnote-15) Since the source material is supposed to cover his diplomatic career, this therefore was the most logical choice. Secondly, throughout the duration of his years in the Republic, John (and therefore Abigail) produced by far the most letters, increasing the relevance of this period for this particular study. In doing this I hope to find the most relevant exchange of thoughts and information. As it was a turbulent period, there should be a better chance on valuable insights. In practice, the indicated period is specified between 1780 and 1782, but if deemed necessary I will use material outside this demarcation. The research will be based on secondary sources, used to provide the required background information or to strengthen the narrative. Moreover, primary sources will mainly be composed of the letters between Abigail and John Adams. Although this setup provides a clear method, I am certainly aware of some drawbacks. By focusing only on a short time period, it is possible that this analysis may give only a partial view of Abigail’s involvement. Furthermore, not every letter is complete and some have been lost in their voyages across the seas, thus reducing our view of the subject even further. Finally, some of John’s accounts may have been inflated or be untrue. In the end, the relationships between man and woman, no matter how strong, were very different in that time.

**H1**

**Diplomacy in the Early Modern Age**

A diplomat can be defined as a person appointed by a national government to conduct official negotiations and maintain political, economic, and social relations with another country or countries. Most dictionaries or contemporary literature would give a similar explanation, yet this description will not hold up when compared to the meaning of diplomacy in the beginning of the Early Modern age. A better view on the nature and development of diplomacy seems essential, as it will display the earlier determined hiatus in literature on the role of women in diplomacy and serve to clarify this subject.   
 Until the late fifteenth century, diplomacy was not merely an affair practiced by sovereigns but by a wide range of people and institutions.[[16]](#footnote-16) Medieval predecessors of diplomats visited foreign courts solely to participate in a specific segment of business, whether that be a negotiation, a treaty, or “to add additional lustre to a coronation or a royal marriage.”[[17]](#footnote-17) In this period there was still no precise definition of a body of diplomatic principles, an area which evolved out of a revolution in how men thought about the nature of the state.[[18]](#footnote-18) According to Garret Mattingly, this revolution came with the Italian invention of resident embassies. This new form of diplomacy developed in Italy for at least 40 years before it was transplanted to Europe and quickly became customary in several countries.[[19]](#footnote-19)   
 The emergence of the resident ambassador brought a significant change in the characteristics of diplomats as they were now a “regularly accredited envoy with full diplomatic status.”[[20]](#footnote-20) In other words, instead of short visits, many of them now had to remain at their post while transmitting information and transacting business for an extended period of time.[[21]](#footnote-21) Frequent correspondence with their own governments and letters with information on important developments at court were the minimum now expected of any resident ambassador.[[22]](#footnote-22) Moreover, as the importance of diplomacy kept growing and the diplomat was no longer viewed as a licensed spy, intercepting and reading his correspondence was increasingly alluring.[[23]](#footnote-23)  
 Many things had been altered, but one of the most essential functions remained what it had always been, namely the collecting and sending home of information. A task usually spelled out in the instructions received with the installment of the embassy.[[24]](#footnote-24) In the diplomatic organization of western countries more than just one aspect prevailed for a long time as “the beginnings of the seventeenth century continued with little essential change down to the French Revolution and indeed beyond.”[[25]](#footnote-25)  
 Now that we have identified some of the classical ideas and history on diplomacy and nature of the profession the question still remains how this issue relates to women. After all, the aforementioned classical works briefly illustrate the history of diplomacy but do not address women’s involvement. John Watkins recognizes this hiatus and therefore suggests a more ambitious approach that would include intellectual exchanges between diplomatic historians and cultural and social historians, as “the history of diplomacy is inseparable from parallel histories of education and literacy, technological innovation, economics, literature and rhetoric, gender, sexuality, and marriage.”[[26]](#footnote-26) Furthermore, he points to a recent development within the discipline of premodern diplomacy, namely that the assumption of diplomacy being a male prerogative has begun to be dismantled by other scholars.[[27]](#footnote-27) Mainly in the form of a historiographical revision of medieval and early modern queens and the role of women as negotiators and as brides.[[28]](#footnote-28)  
 These findings suggest several things. Firstly, although the classic works about diplomacy have succeeded in establishing a good overview on this particular subject, they still have not completely covered the field considering the hiatus on the role of women. In addition, other scholars have caught on to this by focusing on parallel histories and therefore also the ‘woman’ factor. There are, of course, diverse ways in which scholars can approach this subject, such as the aforementioned research on the diplomatic initiatives of queens. However, this still begs the question to what extent women have been discussed in literature..

**Role of Women in Diplomacy**

“l'influence d'un ministre devait trouver des relais sociaux pour mieux s'exercer, et le role de sa femme et de ses filles apparaissait dans des fidelites ou les liens familiaux.”[[29]](#footnote-29)\*

In this quote Lucian Bely observes that the influence of a diplomat is partly dependent on the role of women, and in this case within his own family environment. As has been determined earlier, Bely also mentions the importance of the provision of information. Diplomats were dependent on intelligence and therefore had to find multiple ways of achieving it.[[30]](#footnote-30) In contrast to Mattingly however, Bely sees the possibility of both men and women playing a significant role to accomplish this. Women could serve as secret agents, but another possibility was to place them in the proximity of important people in order to gather specific information.[[31]](#footnote-31) The living environment of the diplomat was one of the best ways to attain this. It was here where politics were adept, commitments were made, and information was exchanged. By pleasing the guests, delivering messages, organizing gatherings and paying attention to the surroundings, women could be crucial to their husband, brother or friend.[[32]](#footnote-32)  
 The phenomenon of a spouse incorporated into her husband’s profession is something that was also recognized by Jennifer Mori. She argues that although women were less well documented than men, significant amounts of material still survive. Their remarks and reflections upon diplomatic life were “invaluable for adding depth to our understanding of diplomacy as a socio-political practice.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Mori provides several accounts in which women are portrayed as either a valuable asset to their husband’s diplomatic service, or the exact opposite. For Sir William Hamilton the marriage to Emma Hart proved to be quite advantageous, as she became one of the royal favorites, thus giving her and her husband access to social and political power.[[34]](#footnote-34) On the other hand, women could also negatively influence the prospects of diplomats, as was the case with the marriage between Hugh Elliot and Charlotte von Kraut. They ended up quarreling, accusing each other and ultimately divorced, therefore destroying Hugh’s chances of advancing in the service.[[35]](#footnote-35) Another example is Harriet Harris, who was “by no means a bad diplomat, as Gilbert Harris acknowledged in his private letters,”[[36]](#footnote-36) but remained unable to put others or her husband first.[[37]](#footnote-37)  
 These descriptions show that women were not entirely absent from diplomacy, a question Helen McCarthy also contemplated. She discovered that there was practically no research on the presence of women in diplomacy, aside from a few biographies on well known figures such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark. [[38]](#footnote-38) Therefore McCarthy chose to investigate the feminine presence and influence in foreign affairs as wives patrons or confidantes, among other subjects.[[39]](#footnote-39) However, her primary purpose was to clarify women’s part in the diplomatic profession.[[40]](#footnote-40)   
 The content of these works have demonstrated a significant departure from the exclusivity of the male with regard to diplomacy. They display the rising interest in the role of women, and at the same time their very real presence in this discipline. However, although Jennifer Mori for example describes multiple occasions in which women were incorporated in their husbands profession, the information remains quite superficial. A thorough depiction of Abigail Adams and her role as wife of John Adams will serve to further elaborate on a woman’s place in the world of diplomacy. In order to determine the position of Abigail Adams and her involvement in John Adams his diplomatic career, it will be beneficial to first gain a better insight on her background and circumstances.

**Abigail Adams**

Abigail was born on November 22, 1744, at home in her father’s parsonage at Weymouth, Massachusetts.[[41]](#footnote-41) With the Reverend William Smith as father and Elizabeth Smith as her loving mother, Abigail grew up in a respectable and favorable environment. As was typical for most young women, she was educated at home, where she was introduced with popular, classical and spiritual literature and some French.[[42]](#footnote-42) Her situation was somewhat different when compared to the vast majority of girls. Aside from the serious and thorough tutoring from her father, she also had access to an excellent library and was encouraged to read anything she took interest in.[[43]](#footnote-43) Abigail loved to read and was determined to educate herself, despite the social stigma on women’s intellectual capacities. This allowed her to become one of the best read women of her time and was the foundation of her future.[[44]](#footnote-44) Although she did receive a well prepared education, the only option available to women was still the domestic role. After her marriage with John Adams in 1764 however, she demonstrated to be more than just a good mother for her children and a loving wife.   
 Indeed, she lived in an era when it was considered inappropriate to be more than that, as it was a “patriarchal world in which men’s activities determined woman’s identities.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Yet, Abigail found a way by writing letters, which was considered a respectable outlet for women’s expression since these were expected to read in private.[[46]](#footnote-46) At first these letters were ‘delightfully frank’ and ‘amorous’, representative for a young couple. Nevertheless, when John Adams decided to pledge a lifelong commitment to public service, this marked the end for normal domesticity for Abigail.[[47]](#footnote-47)  
 In order to live up to his diplomatic responsibilities John had to leave for Europe in 1774, followed by a decade in which he was mostly absent from home.[[48]](#footnote-48) With John unable to take care of the family resources, this responsibility shifted towards Abigail, in addition to her own domestic responsibilities.[[49]](#footnote-49) What followed was a situation in which she dealt with the tenants, maintained the farm and, as her confidence grew, undertook various business enterprises. John would send her luxury items so she could sell them with profit. Moreover, whenever a good opportunity presented itself, she would purchase land in John’s name.[[50]](#footnote-50) Slowly but surely, Abigail emerged as an independent entity, loyal to her husband and in a subordinate role, but still with her own personality. The war only intensified these circumstances and also gave Abigail the chance to become more involved in the diplomatic career of her husband.   
 Abigail Adams was thus, since the beginning of her youth nurtured as a knowledgeable and independent woman. Her relationship with John Adams soon proved to be quite exceptional, especially after the start of his diplomatic career. Finding herself in a very political environment, she became increasingly involved, due to her character, but also as a result of the course of John’s career. However, the extent and nature of her involvement in the diplomatic business of her husband is only determinable by analyzing their correspondence during his time abroad.

**H2**

**An Extraordinary Relationship**

The American Revolutionary war was the beginning of many changes in the then generally accepted worldview. The circumstances of the war pushed many people in a situation in which certain business had to be approached differently. One case in particular became more apparent and observable, namely the involvement of women in foreign diplomacy. Less clear however, is the extent to which communication between women and their contacts intersected with the world of diplomacy, statecraft and intelligence gathering, an area usually viewed as male.[[51]](#footnote-51) Many notable women could be mentioned, but Abigail Adams is certainly the most relevant in this period. She played a vigorous role in sustaining the rebellion, but primarily as a partner of her husband, John Adams.[[52]](#footnote-52) Her importance in the evolution of women’s role in diplomacy should not be based on her views regarding women’s liberation, but on her participation in the lifelong husband-wife political partnership.[[53]](#footnote-53)   
 Abigail Adams was very aware of her position in the world, as she also observes in a letter to her husband: “Patriotism in the female sex is the most disinterested of all virtues. Excluded from honours and from offices, we cannot attach ourselves to the State of Government from having held a place of Eminence.”[[54]](#footnote-54) Women were, even in the most liberal countries subject to the control and disposal of their partners. Partners who had been given sovereign authority by law. Abigail, among others, was obliged to submit to these laws. To a certain degree she agreed to this situation, as she embraced the traditional view of women’s role in society. She believed the primary functions of women were those of domestic beings; within the home as wife and mother. Women were, supposedly, the weaker sex, meant to be submissive, and dependent on men.[[55]](#footnote-55) However, her letters confirm that she did not completely acknowledge this. She argues that throughout history and age there have been “instances of patriotick virtue in the female sex.”[[56]](#footnote-56) Virtues, which paralleled the heroics of men. Furthermore, as she continues her plight, Abigail basically says John should acknowledge her worth; “I will take praise to myself. I feel that is my due, for having sacrificed so large a portion of my peace and happiness to promote the welfare of my country.”[[57]](#footnote-57) So although she was more or less traditional, her unique situation enabled her to take a stance somewhere in between.  
 As much as John Adams valued the intellect and political knowledge of his wife, he was not always pleased to read about her sometimes quite critical observations and remarks. One of his letters is particularly harsh of tone, as he responds to the “strain of unhappiness and complaint,” in her letters, which made him very uneasy.[[58]](#footnote-58) The effect of Abigail’s expressions was so significant that he chose to burn the first three answers in response, since they were too melancholic, angry or merry. Of course, John was confronted more than once with ‘alarming’ expressions of his wife, but sometimes he would clarify both positions. Once he illustrated a concept of the perfect lady with a description of Mrs Hancock, whom was praised for her dignity, discretion and modesty. “She avoids talking upon politics. In large and mixed companies, she is totally silent, as a lady ought to be.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Although the opposite was often the case, John was not always prepared to acknowledge the very real influence of his wife. At some point it made him contemplate: “I must not write a word to you about politics, because you are a woman. What an offense have I committed? A woman!”[[60]](#footnote-60) A sentence that should not be interpreted as the general evaluation of his wife’s position, perhaps in this context a soothing remark, because soon after it, he apologizes for his behavior. He tells her he will soon make it up and remarks that he thinks “women better than men in general, and I know you can keep a secret as well as any man whatever.”[[61]](#footnote-61) What then, made him reluctant to share everything with Abigail?  
 The answer is found in several letters, in which he explains that he would like to write her every day if he could, but cannot do so. Occasionally he is vague, telling her he has good reasons for saying nothing.[[62]](#footnote-62) There is one case in which he informs Abigail about some field of battle, after which he decides to “pretend no tales nor guess at secrets, as only the K. and the General ought to know.” On the other hand, John could be very direct. For him it was an easy thing to ruin Abigail and their children by an indiscreet letter, and even more so, throw the country in convulsions.[[63]](#footnote-63) Therefore he asked her to not blame him for not writing to her. His intention was to raise her awareness of his situation, which was according to John, very dangerous for him and his country.[[64]](#footnote-64) His behavior becomes even more apparent as he states that even if he was offered millions, he would not dare to write to her as he used to. After all, there was no certainty that every letter he sent to her would not be broken and delivered to Congress and English News Papers.[[65]](#footnote-65) Furthermore, spies were everywhere, whether they came from the English, selfish merchants or malicious politicians. John was very conscious of these circumstances: “My life has been often in danger, but I never considered my reputation and character so much in danger as now.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Regardless of the situation, John his disposition always took the above mentioned into account when exchanging information with Abigail.   
 Regardless of John’s opinion on the occupations of his wife, her importance to him was undeniable. Her correspondence with John was at first not very distinguished, especially in the early years. But just before and during his time in the Republic, this had changed quite significantly. The events of the Revolutionary War had altered her role as housewife to public servant, as she reported to John about everything. “She became one of his primary and most trusted sources of information on military and political developments in the Massachusetts Bay area.”[[67]](#footnote-67) This was a task she did not handle alone, it was shared with several colleagues of John Adams, such as James Warren.[[68]](#footnote-68)  
 In order to get this information she maintained contact with important figures, who would provide her with intelligence. During the time John spent abroad, there were infrequent instances in which Abigail encountered, or received information from certain individuals. Usually documents were brought to her by a captain, who then gave her the letters. In one correspondence with John, Abigail mentions that she has received letters from Captain Sampson, coming from Mr Gellee and Mr Lee.[[69]](#footnote-69) The first man she mentions was known as a French secretary who helped Benjamin Franklin in his correspondence with other diplomats. Nicolas-Maurice Gellée sent letters with information about the state affairs to John Adams on a regular basis, but apparently when necessary, also through Abigail Adams. The other one she refers to is Arthur Lee, an American diplomat during the American Revolutionary war. He helped John Adams negotiate the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778 and also served as an American spy, providing information in order to track the activities of France and Britain. Five months later Mr. Lovell writes her that John’s “accompts are pass’t,”[[70]](#footnote-70) which in this situation implied that there was a balance for which the treasurer would draw bills of exchange. So aside from handling political information, she also took a role as intermediary for financial business. James Lovell served in Congress and was a long time member of the committee of Foreign correspondence and secret correspondence between 1777 and 1782. Just like Gellée, he also frequently corresponded with John Adams and likewise exchanged letters and information with Abigail, or forwarded them for her.[[71]](#footnote-71)   
 Sometimes, Abigail also had personal contact, as was the case with General Lincoln, who served in the Continental army and was appointed First Secretary of War. He introduced her to the son of Henry Laurence, known as John Laurence. Finally, she met with General Green, who was responsible for the settling of the preliminaries for peace “by extirpating the British force from Caroline.”[[72]](#footnote-72) He informed her that he was making the requisition John required; John had to wait for new orders, which determined him to “stay in the Republic until further Orders.”[[73]](#footnote-73)  
 These accounts demonstrate that Abigail was not only communicating to John based on her own experiences and knowledge of current affairs, which was partially attained by reading papers. She also had a network of influential people, trusting her with important information otherwise inaccessible. Sometimes in the form of some sort of document, or simply by verbal messages. Although the correspondents were usually also exchanging letters with John Adams, Abigail proved to be an important alternative spokesperson.

**Abigail Adams on politics**

Abigail received a lot of intelligence from newspapers, correspondents and friends and processed all this in her letters to John Adams. Often she gave John just a short update, sometimes because she just did not have much to share, or due to the lack of value of the information. Still, it was no exception to find her quite observant and analytical in her letters, exemplifying her own opinion on the affairs.  
 Striking is how she now and then wrote a letter exclusively on the need of certain commodities such as black ribbon, black fans, and handkerchiefs to subsequently state that she won’t tell John anything of current affairs as “so many others will write you the state of politicks that I believe I shall not touch upon them.”[[74]](#footnote-74) Likewise, even though it did not prevent her from saying anything, sometimes she was hesitant in sharing information because it was not very agreeable.[[75]](#footnote-75) In one particular message to John, she gives a report on the present situation of war. Charlestown had been taken, but did not excite the same rage of the Road Island or Penobscot disappointments. She notices that the enemy has a superior force and as such America would be in need of “procuring their men with vigor to act in concert with the Fleet and Army.”[[76]](#footnote-76) While pointing out the importance of immediately recruiting an army, Abigail likewise observes that the demands of pay were exorbitant. Yet she was convinced: “To spare now would be the height of extravagance and to consult present ease would sacrifice it perhaps forever.”[[77]](#footnote-77) Her examination continues as she concludes that the Government could have saved thousands of lives by not enlisting their army during the war; “we now only patch and patch, find a temporary relief at an immence expence.”[[78]](#footnote-78) Aside from the state of affairs of the war, she did not hold back to advise John to stay where he was for the present, as he would have stood in the way of too many people. Abigail recognized the very political nature of her words; “what a politician have you made of me? If I cannot be a voter upon this occasion, I will be a writer of votes.”[[79]](#footnote-79)  
 Abigail kept John well up to date on the developments in the war against England, whether it was good or bad news, but rarely left the opportunity to give her own insight on the matter. As she writes about the establishment of one of the best armies since the commencement of the war, under the leadership of General Washington, she also observes that the campaign is likely to be very inactive. However, she argued, since the “enemies have done nothing since the takeing of Charlestown, we ought to have balanced accounts with them.”[[80]](#footnote-80) In some cases however, she decided against being too extensive because certain information would reach him before her letter,[[81]](#footnote-81) or simply due to not having enough intelligence from abroad.[[82]](#footnote-82)  
 While not always having relevant information, she tried to be as useful as she could. It is evident from a letter in May 1781 that she did not know what to expect from the United provinces, as she was “not fully informed about their disposition.” Yet, she contends that the blow by the capture of Eustatia was sufficient in arousing and uniting the Republic against England and that they would therefore become more disposed towards the American cause.[[83]](#footnote-83) This view was in line with earlier thoughts on the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war, in which she stated that “Britain will rue the day that in breach of the laws of Nations, she fell upon their defenseless dominions, and drew upon her, as it is thought she must, the combined forces of all the Neutral powers.”[[84]](#footnote-84) And would “cement an indissoluble bond of union between the United States of America and the United Provinces.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Furthermore, these reflections connect to John’s experiences in the Republic. Whereas he did not know what the Dutch people would do, he believed that with patience they would awake, but “for now it is only Amsterdam, Harlem and Dort that have represented the necessity of an Alliance with America.”[[86]](#footnote-86)  
 It is interesting to see how Abigail could not have known of these developments in the Republic, but was still accurate in her analysis. Giving her own view on the information she passes on to John is something she does regularly. Thus, not just behaving as an informant, but also as a politician. Both Abigail and John understood the importance of her role, and neither changed their ongoing political dynamic.

**Convincing the Diplomat**

Abigail felt free to express herself on all kinds of subjects, even on John Adams himself. He was the dominant figure of her home and family and both she and John behaved according to this agreement. Nevertheless, this did not keep her from trying to influence John’s business abroad, although only to a certain degree.[[87]](#footnote-87)  
 Most instances of Abigail trying to persuade John were health related. In the period of John’s stay in the Republic he occasionally mentioned the weather, which was “through the whole spring and most of the summer very dull, damp, cold, very disagreeable and dangerous.”[[88]](#footnote-88) This description didn’t please Abigail much, but besides the commonly known danger of the particular climate in the lower countries, she was also distressed by stories of John being sick.[[89]](#footnote-89) Especially when it took a long time before she heard from him, she became increasingly anxious. At some point she took notice of an illness John was struggling with and as she pondered on the state of his condition, she wrote: “the anxiety you have felt for disgracefull concequences which your country was about to involve itself in, have affected your health and impaired, your constitution.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Consequently she begged him to resign and withdraw his position as both his and her health suffered.   
 Nearly a month later she tried to convince him in a slightly different way. Again about the fear of the climate, which might prove to be fatal to his life. However, this time she argued that his life and usefulness, “might be many years of service to your country in a more healthy climate.”[[91]](#footnote-91) According to Abigail, it was important to the people of America and to her that the ‘essentials of the political system’, are safe. Would the impositions, injuries and dangers for these citizens be of more help in a different, less wicked place, why then stay to “covet a private station”, she argued.[[92]](#footnote-92) Her plea is focused on the danger of health issues, but also has some constructive arguments in order to change John’s plans. Yet, as she was avoiding the real issue in this case, she could occasionally be even more direct.   
 At some point, Abigail observed that the integrity within congress was questionable, as there were very few willing to sacrifice their interests for the good cause.[[93]](#footnote-93) This led her to conclude that some of John’s colleagues were unfit for business and not worthy of their jobs.[[94]](#footnote-94) Accordingly, she used this to persuade John in giving up his own position, as the people he worked for were “daily becoming more and more unworthy of your labours.”[[95]](#footnote-95) Furthermore, they were not looking out for his family; Abigail couldn’t recall one person, in his absence, who was inclined to consider her or her situation “either on account of my being destitute of your assistance or that you are devoting your time and talents to the publick service.”[[96]](#footnote-96) Even though Abigail was fully aware what the honor, dignity and independence of his country meant for his peace of mind and happiness, she did not fear to challenge this when she deemed it necessary. In this case she knew it was a language he was unwilling to hear, but the rhetorical question followed anyway; “is it not in your power to withdraw yourself from a situation in which you are certain, no honor can be obtained to yourself or country?”  
 Apart from the requests or insinuations based on health, Abigail also had other reasons for reaching out to John. She was very committed to the American cause, and even more so to her husband. In order to get the best for both of these subjects, news of peace would be the best message she could ever receive. After all, this would be good for her country and at the same time increase the chance of John returning home. It is for these reasons that she asked him at some point to “bring the olive branch, even at the expiration of an other year.”[[97]](#footnote-97) Notwithstanding that she knew this question could, from the nature of his embassy, not be determined by him.[[98]](#footnote-98) In addition to requests aimed for John to come back home, from time to time she asked for help regarding other affairs.   
 Early December 1781, Abigail learns of the unfortunate events surrounding the capture of a privateer that sailed from Essex to Salem. The captain, along with several sailors was carried to Ireland and imprisoned in the Plymouth jail. The sailors originated from Braintree, and since several people in town had relations with them, they approached Abigail to write to John on their behalf. Thus Abigail decided to inquire whether he would “render them some assistance, if not by procuring an exchange, that you would get them supplied with the necessary clothing.”[[99]](#footnote-99)   
 In the preceding paragraphs some ways of Abigail trying to influence John’s business have been identified, however, occasions where she provided exclusively moral support were also evident. Shortly after John’s arrival in the Republic, he writes her about some of his worries. Aside from fearing to lose “all opportunity of being a man of importance in the world by being away from home,”[[100]](#footnote-100) John also regretted the prospect losing the pleasures in life. Moreover, there is nothing he enjoyed more than the beauty of his hometown. In response to this outburst, Abigail remained remarkably cool and effective. Indeed, she hoped he would do his country a more extensive service abroad than he could have done in one state only. Furthermore, she demonstrates her faith in him: “Whilst you continue in the same estimation amongst your fellow citizens, which you now hold, you will not fail of being of importance to them: at home or abroad.”[[101]](#footnote-101) On another occasion, she responds in the same way, stating he has a delicate part to act, believing he “will do what you esteem to be your duty, I doubt not; fearless of consequences.”[[102]](#footnote-102) Certainly, Abigail was trying to direct John often enough, whether trying to get him home, or support him in his endeavors. However, this begs the question to what degree Abigail’s remarks influenced his decisions.

**Consequences of Inquiry**

John took his wife very seriously, meaning he would always try to respond to her requests. This was not always possible, since letters would not arrive or be delayed to the degree that they became irrelevant. In the cases he was able to respond, a direct influence on his decisions cannot be ascertained. Notwithstanding, when he decided not to comply to her requests he made sure to be transparent.  
 In one of his letters he again speaks of how much he misses the charms of his home and the presence of his wife and daughter.[[103]](#footnote-103) In spite of this, he had to turn his thoughts from such objects, since he was so wedged in with the public affairs that it was not possible “to get away at present.”[[104]](#footnote-104) If he was able to, he would transmit a resignation of all his employments, but he feared this would probably come with disagreeable consequences. Aware of his refusal to Abigail’s request to return home, he did mention an alternative, namely the possibility of both her and her daughter visiting him in Europe. Immediately this possibility is refuted however, since he did not know for how long he had to remain where he was stationed. The problem was mainly that he had not been properly informed of what had passed in Congress, resulting in him not knowing their designs.[[105]](#footnote-105) This line of reasoning is used more than once, as a letter from a few months later indicates. In this he stated that he believed it not wise to come back, as there was a high possibility of him having to tour through Europe and peace seemed to be close at hand. [[106]](#footnote-106) Thus again not being accommodating towards Abigail.   
 His occasionally resurfacing pretentious attitude might have also been one of the causes for these reactions, as he repeatedly mentioned how well and glorious his work had been in the United Provinces.[[107]](#footnote-107) Especially after he succeeded in some of his goals in the summer of 1782, comments involving himself can be identified. One in which he states that the American cause has obtained a triumph in the United Provinces, bigger than ever before in Europe. Something that was achieved by the unrelenting “dangers, the mortifications, the distresses he has undergone in accomplishing his great work.“[[108]](#footnote-108) Recognizing the importance of his business in the Republic he came to the conclusion that “if this had been the only action of my life, it would have been a life well spend.”[[109]](#footnote-109) Of course, he does deserve acknowledgement for his part in the positive outcome of American foreign policy in the Republic. Yet, what matters is his own view of his importance and his supposed indispensability in the whole affair. Ultimately, this is was what prompted him to react to Abigail as he did.  
 This portrayal of John connects to his response to a question from Abigail concerning the small amount of letters he was sending to his friends in the United States. John argued that he did not have much leisure time as an American Minister; “I am not idler than I used to be. My whole time is spent in necessary and unavoidable services.”[[110]](#footnote-110) He explains to her that the system of politics in the United Provinces is as time consuming, if not more, than it is in the United States. It extends far and wide throughout the country, into every court and country of Europe. John stood firm, he was not able to maintain the correspondences with his friends and was “obliged to sacrifice my friendships as well as my other affections to my duty.”[[111]](#footnote-111) Again, John’s emphasis is on the importance of his duty, seemingly more important than anything else, let it be his friends or the state of mind of his wife.   
 However, there are instances in which John was uncertain of what choice to make. On July 1st 1782 he told Abigail of some internal struggles. On the one hand he was thinking about resigning all his employments as soon as he could send home a treaty. On the other hand he was contemplating about his situation, and asked himself; “what is duty?”[[112]](#footnote-112) He wondered what had driven him to banish himself from his country to consequently “encounter every hardship and every danger by sea and by land, to ruin my health, and to suffer every humiliation and mortification that human nature can endure.”[[113]](#footnote-113) Indeed he sacrificed a lot for the service of his country, but the main reason for his uncertainty was not the depth of his sacrifice. He was hesitating whether him staying would be “betraying the cause of independence and integrity or at least the dignity,”[[114]](#footnote-114) or the exact opposite. A hesitation, instigated by, in his view, despicable efforts to deprive him of the honor of any merit in the negotiation of peace.[[115]](#footnote-115) He was convinced that “the most sordid arts and the grossest lies, are invented and propagated, by means that would disgrace the devil, to disguise the truth from the sight of the world.”[[116]](#footnote-116)   
 John had to take into account several aspects in his decisions, but one thing in every example is clear. Despite the fact that he preferred to be somewhere else and was confronted with enough reasons to for example go back to the United States, he still decided that his presence in the Republic was too important. Not just for the American cause, but also for his state of mind. His sense of duty overruled anything, an observation Abigail had made long before he came to the Republic. Nevertheless, it did not keep her from letting him know how she felt or what she learned that could be of help.

**John about politics in the Republic**

How John responded to Abigails requests and remarks provides a better insight on how he perceived her as a diplomatic correspondent. However, in order to get a more complete impression, the next step would be to analyze the amount and substance of the information in his letters to her. Although it is true that we have already discussed some reasons why John would not communicate everything with Abigail, his letters to her are ultimately the only way of knowing to what degree these reasons hold up.   
 The first letter during his time in the Republic is dated as September 4th 1780, in which he expresses how pleased he is in Holland. The Dutch were, in his words, ambitious, and therefore happy. Also very sociable in their own way, and have the “frugality, Industry and Cleanliness that deserve the imitation of my countrymen.”[[117]](#footnote-117) Furthermore, he considered the country to be quite curious since the Dutch language was spoken by none but themselves.[[118]](#footnote-118) Aside from a short introduction on the peculiarities of his new base, John elaborates further on what he has heard about the victories of the French and Spanish fleets, who swept more than sixty vessels of the English fleets. He saw this as a big victory, but did not expect the English to make peace, as France would then dictate the terms of peace.[[119]](#footnote-119) The subject he talks about remains quite superficial. Although he did make mention of Congress giving him much other ‘business’ to do, details are spared.[[120]](#footnote-120) John did affirm that the situation in the Republic has become much less complicated. This was confirmed by the letters he received from the “high mightiness the states General of the United Provinces of the Low countries and the “most serene highness the Prince of Orange.”[[121]](#footnote-121)  
 A returning subject of his letters is that of peace, probably because this is linked to the possibility of him coming back home. Either way, he repeatedly mentions it, pointing out to Abigail that England would never make peace while they have a ship or a regiment in America; “if anyone asks whether ther is like to be peace, ask in return, whether G. Washington has taken New York, Green Cornwallis and Charlestown.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Almost six months later in the next relevant letter, he again remarks: “I beg you would not flatter yourself with hopes of Peace. There will be no such thing for several years.”[[123]](#footnote-123) Finally, a year after his first remark on peace he says exactly the same thing, claiming that the king of England will keep up his hopes while he can hold a post in the United States.[[124]](#footnote-124) Notwithstanding his focus on talking about the peace prospects, he did talk more about politics. However, this was usually only the case when it concerned his progress in the Republic.  
 One of his letters states that he was not entirely sure what the Dutch people would do, but he believed that at some point they would start considering to change their mindset, as Amsterdam, Harlem and Dort had already “represented the necessity of an Alliance with America.”[[125]](#footnote-125) Neglecting this would make their posterity repent this decision, as stopping the trade from Holland to France and Spain would mean disaster for their economy. An early treaty with America however, led to a disappointment for the Dutch, but John was hopeful. Early 1782, John Informs Abigail again that he does not know what to expect from the Dutch: “The Republic is in a jilt. When you think you have her affections, all at once you find you have been deceived.”[[126]](#footnote-126) Yet, despite the fallback, a turning point soon presented itself as soon after he notifies her that his business in the Republic is progressing for the better; “your humble servant has lately grown much into fashion in this country.”[[127]](#footnote-127) John even declares that he is, at this point, the most important person of the country. Regardless of his arguably pretentious attitude, ultimately he showed confidence for an upcoming reception at the Hague. While paying a lot of attention to the situation in the Republic, he also shared his thoughts concerning the English. Whereas John was guessing what the English would do, he did observe that they found themselves in a strange position. Believing they could not do much against America, he states that America would have to take their remaining armies prisoners in New York and Charlestown. “We must not relax, but pursue advantages.”[[128]](#footnote-128) Apparently, supposing he is sometimes contemplating situations out loud, he was usually just sharing news. Now that we have determined some of John’s occupations during a period in which business did not go quite as planned, the following paragraph will illustrate a change in that tendency. A development that also influenced John’s attitude in his letters to Abigail.  
 As the summer of 1782 was drawing near, the amount of messages increased significantly. In March, John announces that the states of Holland and West Friesland have resolved to invite him to an audience. Soon after this, he brings the news that the states of Holland and West Friesland have followed the example of Friesland in acknowledging American Independence. “The American Minister recorded Yesterday officially, from the Grand Pensionary of Holland a Copy of their Resolution.”[[129]](#footnote-129) Yet he does not say much about his own role in the whole enterprise in a straightforward way. This remains a point of interest in later letters.  
 He tells of the change from being a patriot to courtier and his visits to the court, “among princesses and princes, lords and ladies of various nations.”[[130]](#footnote-130) Also his success in Holland keeps getting attention, as he describes it as the happiest event and greatest action of his life. He even designated it as the opportunity of the century, since it was a “stroke so critical and of so extensive importance, in the political system of America.”[[131]](#footnote-131) Whilst explaining why the treaty was not yet completed he does show some of his commitment and knowledge of the situation. John explained that the Dutch cannot depart from their forms, resulting in the long time it takes for the treaty to undergo examination of all the provinces and cities.[[132]](#footnote-132) In consideration of their way of doing things, John also states he is convinced that the Republic will bring the treaty to a successful conclusion. After all, he has a good grasp of the Dutch: “I am now happy in the intimacy of many leading characters and know their views and designs very well and we may depend upon their steady attachment to us and to the good system.”[[133]](#footnote-133)  
 The information John shared with Abigail can be viewed as considerable or quite limited, depending on the perspective taken. However, John was convinced she was special. One letter in particular shows his thoughts: “I dare say there is not a lady in America treated with a more curious dish of politicks.”[[134]](#footnote-134) Thereafter emphasizing that she can only show the content to discrete friends and has to make sure to by no means copy or lose it.[[135]](#footnote-135) In a way John manages to strike at the very heart of the issue. He involves Abigail in some of his reflections, even more so in his progress and undoubtedly trusts her with discrete information. At the same time, much of the information or subjects is either not political of nature or simply more or less superficial. Also, John never really moves into the area of discourse in which he deliberates openly with Abigail on what should be his approach or way to handle a problem, but perhaps this is taking things too far. Ultimately John still shared many things with her and held her in high regard, more than any other woman he knew.

**Conclusion**

Having evaluated and analyzed the content and nature of the correspondence between Abigail and John Adams, several things can be concluded. In John’s absence, Abigail developed her own particular manner of dealing with the matters at hand through practical matters on the home front and in her communication towards John. Although she acknowledged her matriarchal status as a wife, her letters to John prove that she was still convinced of the patriotic virtue of the female sex. This mindset enabled her to be very involved in John’s business as a diplomat, as she developed her own opinion and observed as well as analyzed information she received and sent out.  
 This view of Abigail illustrates a different story than the image sketched by current literature. The works of Mattingly and Anderson succeed in clarifying the developing practice and nature of diplomacy, but fail to address the involvement of women. However, their descriptions of the diplomatic occupation can still be extrapolated to Abigail’s proceedings. After all, they identify the collection and sending of information as one of the key functions of a diplomat, which was one of her typical traits. Besides being a worthy correspondent, she also had a system of contacts at her disposal, which provided her with important intelligence. Her connections consisted of important players in the American Revolutionary War and were part of John’s political and diplomatic world, thus exemplifying the significance of her role. Even when taking into account that John only shared a limited amount of information and was not as deliberately open as opposed to Abigail, it is still very plausible to think that he shared more with her compared to any other woman of that time.  
 The examined studies that did give some consideration to the involvement of women in diplomacy also connect to some of Abigail’s pursuits, as they demonstrate a departure from the male dominance in this field. They describe multiple occasions in which women were incorporated in their husbands professions. However, they fall short on the depth of the subject or focus primarily on the diplomatic profession itself, instead of paying attention to a woman’s role in the political and diplomatic sphere. The correspondence between John and Abigail Adams exposes how thoroughly interwoven they both were in those spheres. Abigail was, in Danielle Clark’s words, ‘colluding with patriarchy’, but found her way to use this is a power source and gain influence from it. Perhaps not necessarily when viewed from John’s perspective, but she was undeniably relevant during every diplomatic step John took while stationed in the Republic. Furthermore, as James Daybell argued, the channel of communication, (the letter exchange between her and her husband) enabled her to take part and influence diplomatic activities. Her role was complex and at the same time so obvious. She provided him with mental and emotional support as his loyal wife, took care of their children and their home while he was away, and participated in her own particular way as a patriot and a diplomat.  
 This study, however, has only mapped a small part of Abigail’s involvement. At the same time this also presents an opportunity for further research. Looking further into the period where John and Abigail have reunited, is one example of such an occasion. While John and Abigail were separated, many factors obstructed a clear and complete exchange of ideas, thoughts and information. A situation in which this is not the case, will therefore provide a unique perspective. Furthermore, as the possibility of the current research being self-governing is present, it can also serve to strengthen or weaken this particular study. Finally, women in a similar situation should not be too hard to locate and can provide new material to advance even further on the subject.

**Bibliography**

**Primary Sources:**

Butterfield, L. H. and Friedlaender, M., *Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 3 and 4: April 1778 – September 1782*.

Ryerson, R. A., *Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 5 and 6: October 1782 – December 1785.*

*Websites:*

[*http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/letter/*](http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/letter/)

**Secondary Sources:**

Anderson, M.S., *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy: 1450-1919* (New York 1993).

Daybell, J., ‘Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Network in Elizabethan England’ , in: Robyn Adams (ed.), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke 2010) 101-119.

Bely, L., *Espions et Ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Fayard 1990).

Clark, D., *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (New York 2001).

Cohen, C.J., *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader* (Toronto 1997).

Gelles, E.B., *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life* (New York 2002).

Gelles, E.B., ‘Abigail Adams: Domesticity and the American Revolution’, *The New England Quarterly* 52:4 (1979) 500-521.

Gelles, E.B., ‘Bonds of Friendship: Correspondence of Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren’, *Massachusetts Historical Society, Third Series* 108 (1996) 35-71.

Gelles, E.B., *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (Indiana 1992).

Martin, W., ‘Women and the American Revolution’, *Early American Literature* 11:3 (1976/1977) 322-335.

Mattingly, G., *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London 1955).

McCarthy, H., *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London 2014).

Mori, J., *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750 – 1830* (New York 2010).

Randall, V., *Women and Politics: An International Perspective* (Chicago 1987).

Watkins, J., ‘Toward a new diplomatic history of medieval and early modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38:1 (2008) 1-14.

Withey, L., *Dearest Friend: A Life of Abigail Adams* (New York 2002).

Wright, H., ‘Can a Woman Be a Diplomat?’, *The North American Review* 248:1 (1939) 100-108.

Young, L.M., ‘Women’s Place in American Politics: The Historical Perspective’, *The Journal of Politics* 38:3 (1976) 295-335.

1. Herbert Wright, ‘Can a Woman Be a Diplomat?’, *The North American Review* 248:1 (1939) 100-108, 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Wright, Can a Woman Be a Diplomat, 100-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 103-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Edith B. Gelles, ‘Abigail Adams: Domesticity and the American Revolution’, *The New England Quarterly* 52:4 (1979) 500-521, 518. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cathy J. Cohen, *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader* (Toronto 1997) 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Louise M. Young, ‘Women’s Place in American Politics: The Historical Perspective’, *The Journal of Politics* 38:3 (1976) 295-335, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Young, Women’s Place in American Politics, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. John Daybell, ‘Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Network in Elizabethan England’ , in: Robyn Adams (ed.), Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture (Basingstoke 2010) 101-119, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Daybell, *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cohen, *Women Transforming Politics*, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Vicky Randall, *Women and Politics: An International Perspective* (Chicago 1987) ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Danielle Clark, *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (New York 2001) 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Young, Women’s Place in American Politics, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, ca. 15 August 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. Lyman H. butterfield and Marc Friedlaender (ed.), <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Matthew S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy: 1450-1919* (New York 1993) 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London 1955) 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibidem, 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid., 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid., 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. John Watkins, ‘Toward a new diplomatic history of medieval and early modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38:1 (2008) 1-14, 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Watkins, Toward a new diplomatic history, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., 7-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. \* Vert.: The influence and business of a diplomat was dependent on his ability to find social connections, and the role of his wife and daughters showed in their loyalty towards family ties. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Lucien Bely, *Espions et Ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Fayard 1990) 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Bely, Espions et Ambassadeurs, 170-175. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., 179-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750 – 1830* (New York 2010) 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy*, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy*, 68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid., 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid., 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London 2014) xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. McCarthy, *Women of the World*, xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ibid., 1-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Edith B. Gelles, *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (Indiana 1992) 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Gelles, *Portia*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Lynne Withey, *Dearest Friend: A Life of Abigail Adams* (New York 2002) 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Withey, *Dearest Friend*, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life* (New York 2002) 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Gelles, *Abigail Adams*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Gelles, *Portia*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid., 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Gelles, *Portia*, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Daybell, *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Young, Women’s Place in American Politics, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 17 June 1782, with a List of Articles wanted from Holland [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Gelles, Domesticity and the American Revolution, 518. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 17 June 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 19 February 1779 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Wendy Martin, ‘Women and the American Revolution’, *Early American Literature* 11:3 (1976/1977) 322-335, 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 13 February 1779 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams>. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Letter From John Adams to Abigail Adams, 13 February 1779. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Letter From John Adams to Abigail Adams, 19 February 1779. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 20 February 1779, "A new Commission has arrived..." [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Letter From John Adams to Abigail Adams, 20 February 1779. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Edith B. Gelles, ‘Bonds of Friendship: Correspondence of Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren’, *Massachusetts Historical Society, Third Series* 108 (1996) 35-71, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Gelles, Bonds of Friendship, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 26 February 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 13 June 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 25 December 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 29 September 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 1 May 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 5 July 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 5 July 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 5 July 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 3 September 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 8 October 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 25 May 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Letter From Abigail Adams to John Adam, 25 May 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 23 April 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Letter From Abigail Adams to John Adams, 23 April 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 22 May 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Gelles, Domesticity and the American Revolution, 517. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 31 August 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 29 September 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 17 - 25 March 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 10 April 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Letter From Abigail Adams to John Adams, 10 April 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Letter From Abigail Adams to John Adams, 29 September 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Letter From Abigail Adams to John Adams, 17 - 25 March 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 8 October 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 8 October 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 9 December 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 28 January 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 29 September 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 16 June 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 16 June 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 16 October 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. Richard A. Ryerson (ed.) <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 16 June 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 16 June 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1 July 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 17 August 1782, "The Situation of my dear Brother . . ." [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 17 August 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1 July 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1 July 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 4 September 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 15 September 1780 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 15 September 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 28 April 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 28 April 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 22 May 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 2 December 1781 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 15 August 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 22 May 1781. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 4 January 1782, "I hope . . ." [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 22 March 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 22 March 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1 April 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1 July 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 15 August 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 17 August 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 28 December 1782 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 28 December 1782. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)