



Quincy Students Participate

Historical Society Hosts 'Immersion Week'

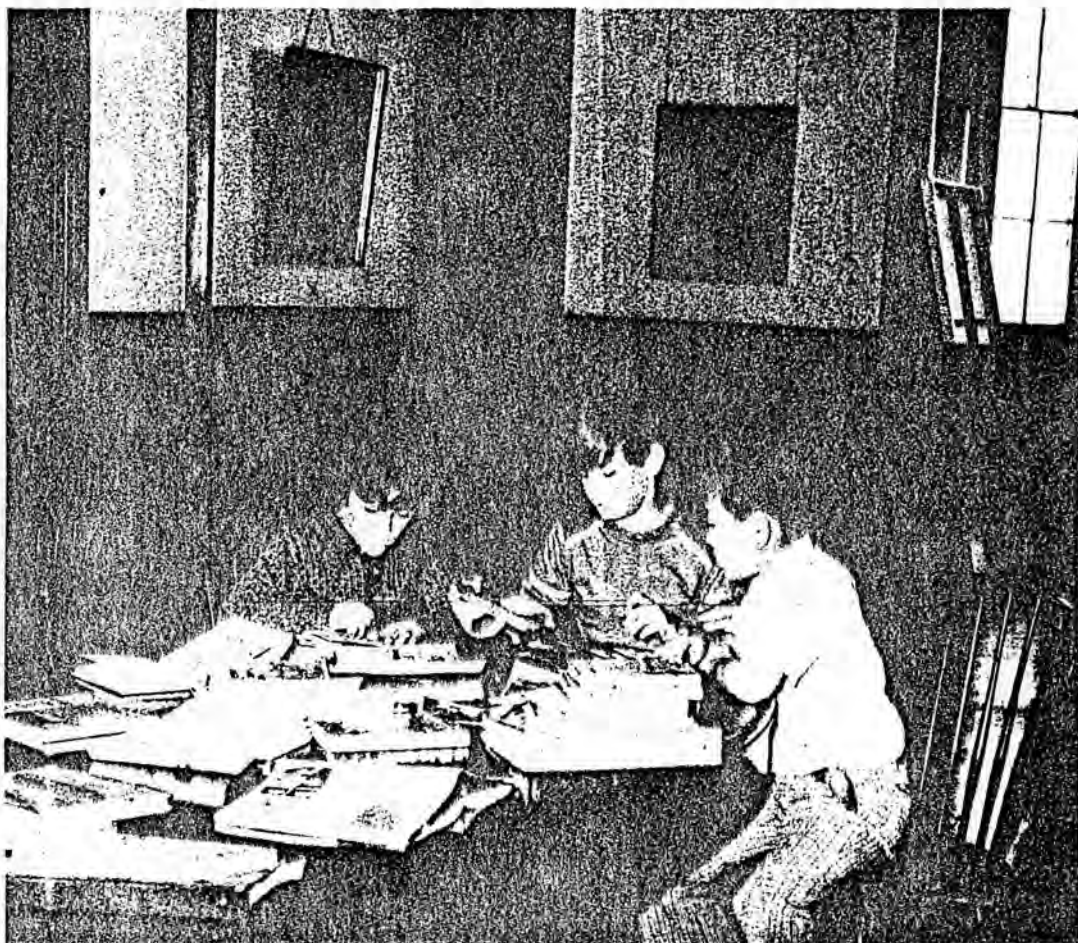
The Adams Academy came back to life, as a school house, when the Quincy Historical Society hosted the elementary lab center from the Lincoln Hancock School.

Sixty fifth graders from across the city participated in a two week "immersion" program. They researched the history of their city from the society's collection of books and historical materials. Their work culminated in an exhibit they researched and designed themselves, entitled "Quincy Now and Then".

The program was a co-operative effort by the Quincy Historical Society and the Quincy Public Schools. Lectures were given on various topics by members of the historical society, including, Doris Oberg on Quincy "Firsts", Marion Carpenter on the Quincy Family, H. Hobart Holly on shipbuilding, Helene Johnson and Helen Wiot on costumes, Gordon Carr on the granite industry and Dr. George Horner on the Germantown glass works.

Executive director Lawrence Yerdon co-ordinated the program with Lorraine Sholler, Gerald Burke and Mary O'Brien from the school department. Clare Francis assisted in the library.

An estimated 300-400 parents, teachers and principals attended the students' exhibit at the academy, which covered all the topics discussed in the lecture series.



Teamwork, Chris Walsh, Billy DiMattio and Chang Ho Kim find a quiet corner in the north room to research materials during Immersion week. The program was featured in "Young Ideas" a special pull-out section of The Quincy Sun. Additional photos, courtesy of Doris Oberg, appear on page 3.

[Doris Oberg Photo]

An Eloquent Account Of Their Times

American Independence Traced In Adams Letters

By DAVID DAY

The story of Quincy - or more properly - of Old Braintree in 1776 is, of course, the story of the American Revolution and the ways in which that unprecedented event affected the life of the town.

It is especially the story of how America's struggle for independence affected, and was affected by, the lives of John and Abigail Adams. And no more complete nor eloquent account of their times can be found than in the now famous letters and other writings of this extraordinary couple.

John Adams was away from Braintree during much of the year 1776, serving with his Boston cousin Samuel, John Hancock, Robert Treat Paine, and Elbridge Gerry, as a delegate to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia.

During these extended absences, Abigail's letters became more precious to John than we can imagine. He depended on them for an "hour-to-hour" account of "everything which passes in Boston: ...How the Tories subsist ... whether the troops are healthy or sickly," and any other bits of intelligence that would be of value to the congress.

Of course, John also depended on Abigail's letters for news of events in Braintree and, most important of all, for news of his family and his beloved farm at the foot of Penn's Hill.

John missed his "Dearest friend," his "Portia", as he often addressed Abigail in his letters, and yearned to be with her back in Braintree. "When I shall come home, I know not," he wrote. "We have so much to do, and it is so difficult to do it right, that we must learn patience." He continued, "I think if I were to come here again, I must bring you with me. I could live here pleasantly if I had



Mrs. Abigail (Smith) Adams
1744-1818

you with me."

John envied his friend, Hancock, not for his elegant coach and four, nor for his great wealth, but rather for the fact that he had his wife with him in Philadelphia. He thought he saw Abigail's look reflected in the mischievous gleam in Dorothy [Quincy] Hancock's eyes.

"Whom God has joined together ought not to be put asunder so long, with their own consent," he wrote. "We will bring master Johnny with us; ... and we will be as happy as Mr. Hancock and his lady."

As for Abigail, the correspondence helped to preserve her sanity during these painful separations from John. Through her letters she could express her great loneliness and anxiety, her concerns for the



John Adams (1735-1826)

children's education and for the proper care of their farm, and her devotion to her "Dear Mr. Adams." "My pen," she wrote, "is always freer than my tongue. I have written many things to you that I suppose I never could have talked. My heart is made tender by repeated affliction; it never was a hard heart."

Among the afflictions suffered by Abigail and the entire community was a severe smallpox epidemic accompanied by a devastating form of dysentery which had swept Braintree and the neighboring towns late in 1775. The disease took a toll far more terrible than the war; children and old people alike were carried off by the score, sometimes several members in one family.

In spite of being

"Dear Mr. Adams. My pen is always freer than my tongue. I have written many things to you that I suppose I never could have talked."

desperately ill herself, Abigail dragged herself to her young Tommy's bedside. He would be comforted only by his mother. The Reverend Wibird was ill, the Belcher and Bracket children were near death. So extreme was the crisis that Braintree went for four Sundays without any meeting, a lapse unprecedented in the town's history.

"So sickly and so mortal a time the oldest man does not remember," Abigail wrote, asking John to send her "an ounce of turkey rhubarb, a quarter-pound of nutmegs, one ounce of cloves, two of cinnamon, and one ounce of Indian root" with which to make some medicine.

Nearly a month passed before Tommy had recovered and Abigail had regained most of her strength. But now Patty, the maid, was ill and Abigail's own mother. Elizabeth Quincy Smith, was stricken, so that Abigail travelled regularly between Braintree and Weymouth, from one sickbed to another. Despite Abigail's devoted care, her mother died. It was a bitter blow to Abigail who cried out to John in a letter.

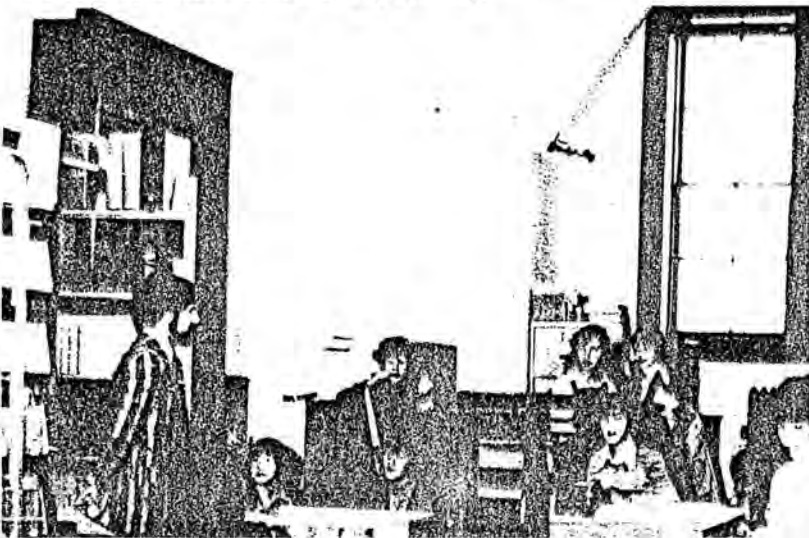
"Have pity upon me, O thou my beloved, for the hand of God presseth me sore ... At time I am almost ready to faint under this severe and heavy stroke, separated from thee, who used to be a comforter to me in affliction..."

John was prevented from returning to Braintree only by the strongest protests of Sam Adams and Hancock. Instead, feeling guilty and helpless, he offered what comfort he could from Philadelphia. "I bewail, more than I can express, the loss of your excellent mother," all the more so because the children would be deprived of the experience and wisdom and excellent example of their grandmother.

Immersion Week Photos



School's out. The Adams Academy took on the hustle and bustle of school life once again, as fifth graders from across the city invaded the building to learn about their city's history.



Standing room only. Lawrence Yerdon [left] instructs students on how to use the society's second floor library.




Doris Oberg is the center of attention with students from the elementary lab center, with her talk on Quincy "Firsts".

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American Independence Traced In Letters

[Cont'd from Page 2]

The epidemic continued to take its toll in Braintree. A few weeks after her mother's death, Abigail wrote of the grim days at home: in six weeks she had lost "five near connections, laid in the grave ... I cannot overcome my too selfish sorrow." Bereaved, lonely, anxious over possible danger from the war at home and over John's welfare, Abigail also fretted over the lack of news from Philadelphia just as John fretted over the "mere trickle" of reports from Braintree.

The winter of 1775-1776 proved to be one of the hardest of times for the town of Braintree and for John and Abigail, who, nevertheless, were determined to endure

their separation, as painful as it was, and to subordinate their personal hopes and desires to the greater struggle in which America was engaged.

During this time, the death of his mother-in-law and Abigail's own distress were never out of John's mind, providing a somber and depressing background for his daily concern with the fate of his colony and country.

"We have few hopes," he admitted, but went on guardedly, "excepting that of preserving our honor and our consciences unstained, and a free constitution to our country. Let us be sure of these, and, amidst all my weaknesses, I cannot be overcome."

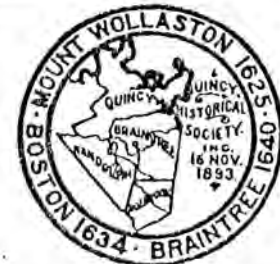


Freedom Park dedication ceremonies included the official ground-breaking with executive director Lawrence Yerdon, William O'Connell, society first vice president, Mayor Joseph LaRaia, and H. Hobart Holly, society president. [Doris Oberg Photo]

Treasurer's New Address

William P. Farrar, society treasurer, after many years at Huntly Rd, recently moved to 152 Whitwell St.

All correspondence for Mr. Farrar should be sent to the above address, Quincy, Mass. 02169.



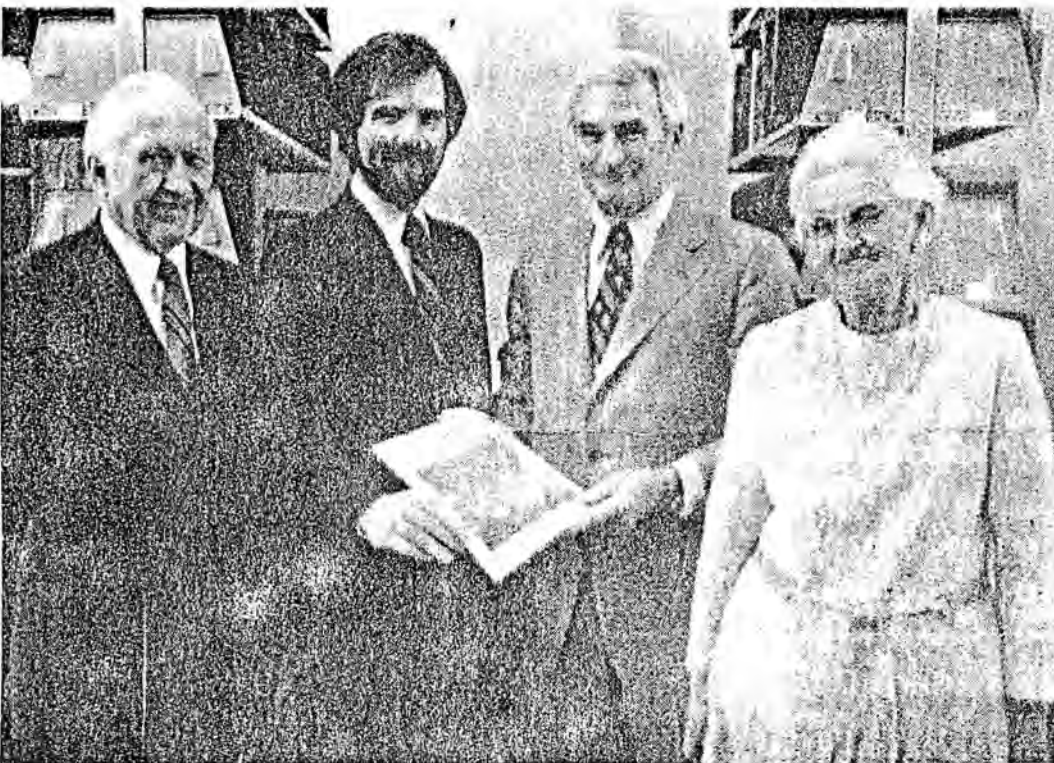
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and
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Advertising



BANKING BOOKLET -- celebrating the 200th anniversary of banking in America, [A Pictorial History of American Banking], published by the American Bankers Association is presented to Lawrence Yerdon, (second left), executive director of Quincy Historical Society, by John R. Herbert, [left], President of Quincy Cooperative Bank, and William E. Kelley, President of Hancock Bank & Trust Co. Eleanor G. Brown librarian of the historical society is at right.

[Quincy Sun Photo]