

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910785451803321
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Titolo	Abigail and John Adams [[electronic resource] ] : the Americanization of sensibility / / G. J. Barker-Benfield
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Chicago ; ; London, : University of Chicago Press, 2010
ISBN	1-282-90176-1 9786612901768 0-226-03744-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (514 p.)
Disciplina	973.4/4092 B
Soggetti	Sentimentalism United States Social life and customs To 1775 United States Social life and customs 1775-1783 United States Social life and customs 1783-1865
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- Part I. Origins, Definitions, and Social Circumstances -- Part II. Particular Applications -- Part III. Private Perpetuation -- Part IV. Conclusion -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	During the many years that they were separated by the perils of the American Revolution, John and Abigail Adams exchanged hundreds of letters. Writing to each other of public events and private feelings, loyalty and love, revolution and parenting, they wove a tapestry of correspondence that has become a cherished part of American history and literature. With Abigail and John Adams, historian G. J. Barker-Benfield mines those familiar letters to a new purpose: teasing out the ways in which they reflected-and helped transform-a language of sensibility, inherited from Britain but, amid the revolutionary fervor, becoming Americanized. Sensibility-a heightened moral consciousness of feeling, rooted in the theories of such thinkers as Descartes, Locke, and Adam Smith and including a "moral sense" akin to the physical senses-threads throughout these letters. As Barker-Benfield makes

clear, sensibility was the fertile, humanizing ground on which the Adamses not only founded their marriage, but also the "abhorrence of injustice and inhumanity" they and their contemporaries hoped to plant at the heart of the new nation. Bringing together their correspondence with a wealth of fascinating detail about life and thought, courtship and sex, gender and parenting, and class and politics in the revolutionary generation and beyond, Abigail and John Adams draws a lively, convincing portrait of a marriage endangered by separation, yet surviving by the same ideas and idealism that drove the revolution itself. A feast of ideas that never neglects the real lives of the man and woman at its center, Abigail and John Adams takes readers into the heart of an unforgettable union in order to illuminate the first days of our nation-and explore our earliest understandings of what it might mean to be an American.

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