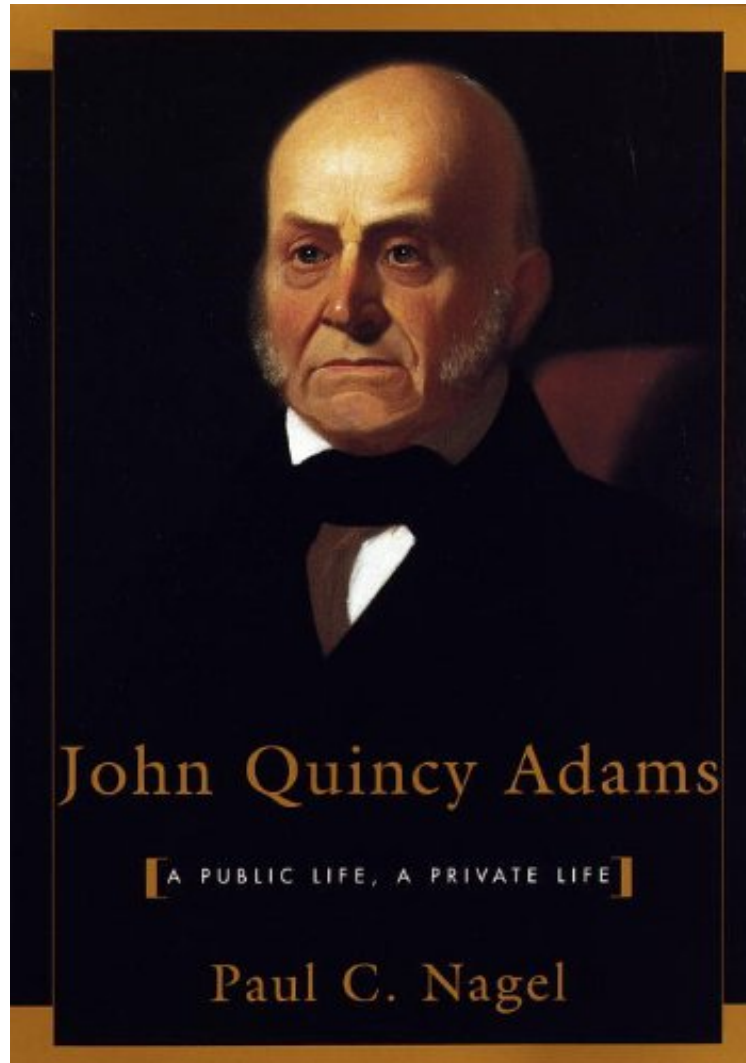


(Mobile pdf) John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life

John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life

Von Paul C. Nagel

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Produktinformation Verffentlicht am: 2012-12-05Erscheinungsdatum: 2012-12-05File Name:
B00A5MREP2 | File size: 79.Mb

Von Paul C. Nagel : John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Sensitive, thoughtful portrait of admirable politicianVon R. B. BernsteinMost Americans spurn the idea that any politician could be admirable -- but, then again, most Americans don't know as much about their political history as they should. They should read this sensitive, thoughtful portrait of John Quincy Adams. Building on extensive research in John Quincy Adams's public and private papers, including his mammoth diary (most of which remains unpublished to this day), and on his previous landmark studies in family history -- DESCENT FROM GLORY

(Oxford 1981) and *THE ADAMS WOMEN* (Oxford 1988), Nagel has written one of the best and most exciting biographies of recent years. He devotes equal attention to Adams's public career as politician, diplomat, scholar, orator, Secretary of State, President, and "Old Man Eloquent" in the House of Representatives and to his private life and personal crises. Especially memorable is Nagel's riveting, sometimes horrifying portrait of Abigail Adams as an intolerant, domineering mother. This fine study has only one real flaw: scholars will cavil -- and rightly so -- at Nagel's decision not to append endnotes or other documentation beyond a sketchy bibliographic essay. Nonetheless, Nagel's book is a worthy counterpart to the definitive two-volume study of John Quincy Adams's public career by Samuel Flagg Bemis (Knopf, 1949, 1956). -- Richard B. Bernstein, Adjunct Professor of Law, New York Law School, and Daniel M. Lyons Visiting Professor in American History, Brooklyn College/CUNY (1997-1998)0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Despite his many accomplishments, a rather sad life. Von Ein KundeI enjoyed the insight into his life. My prior knowledge of him was from school; all I really knew was that he was John Adams' son was a rather grumpy president. There is so much to the man. He had a very cosmopolitan childhood accompanying his father to Europe. He was so accomplished, but he never felt satisfied with himself. I was struck at the way his parents, he in turn with his children, expressed their love and concern for him. Their letters and conversations continually put pressure on him. I wonder if children were universally reared at that time with such a lack of joy and pressure. I also was fascinated with what screw-ups his siblings 2 oldest sons were. Poor John Abigail had 1 grownup son his family (7 kids) living with them as well as raising other grandchildren. I was a little surprised that the book didn't focus much on his presidential term. But as the author says, he didn't accomplish much as president. I enjoyed learning that he developed the Monroe Doctrine and had impact on the use of the Smithsonian legacy (became the Smithsonian Institution). I was so interested in the Adams family after reading the book, that I right away read Nagel's earlier book about the family (*Descent from Glory*); it nicely supplemented the JQA biography.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Fair Treatment Overall, But Wanting Von Craig MontezanoI am perplexed as to why Nagel glosses over such critical events in JQA's career -- such as the crafting of the Adams-Onis Treaty and the Monroe Doctrine, his arguments before the Supreme Court in the Amistad case, and his actions in Congress -- and chooses instead to focus on relatively insignificant matters taken from the sixth president's diary. However, by the author's own admission, readers initially drawn by the words "Public Life" in the book's title are advised to look elsewhere. With that caveat in mind, "A Public Life, A Private Life" is an interesting, anecdotal treatment that strives to understand the inner man. Readers may find Nagel's liberal use of Adams' self-excoriating diary entries repetitive, but the author employs this source as a means of establishing his central point about JQA's character. Adams, he opines, was motivated by an almost obsessive desire to achieve greatness for his country in particular and humanity in general. Finding himself falling short of these lofty goals left Adams constantly depressed and anxious. The scenes of Adams' travels through Europe as a young diplomat for the newly-founded United States are fascinating. It is worth noting that no less a figure than President George Washington found JQA's despatches and reports to be of great importance as the new nation established a foreign policy. Nevertheless, this book could have been made better by more complete descriptions of the major public policy events in which JQA was involved.

Kurzbeschreibung February 21, 1848, the House of Representatives, Washington D.C.: Congressman John Quincy Adams, rising to speak, suddenly collapses at his desk; two days later, he dies in the Speakers chamber. The public mourning that followed, writes Paul C. Nagel, exceeded anything previously seen in America. Forgotten was his failed presidency and his often cold demeanor. It was the memory of an extraordinary human being one who in his last years had fought heroically for the right of petition and against a war to expand slavery that drew a grateful people to salute his coffin in the Capitol and to stand by the railroad tracks as his bier was transported from Washington to Boston. Nagel probes deeply into the psyche of this cantankerous, misanthropic, erudite, hardworking son of a former president whose remarkable career spanned many offices: minister to Holland, Russia, and England, U.S. senator, secretary of state, president of the United States (1825-1829), and, finally, U.S. representative (the only ex-president to serve in the House). On the basis of a thorough study of Adams seventy-year diary, among a host of other documents, the author gives us a richer account than we have yet had of JQA's life his passionate marriage to Louisa Johnson, his personal tragedies (two sons lost to alcoholism), his brilliant diplomacy, his recurring depression, his exasperating behavior and shows us why, in the end, only Abraham Lincoln's death evoked a great out-pouring of national sorrow in nineteenth-century America. We come to see how much Adams disliked politics and hoped for more from life than high office; how he sought distinction in literacy and scientific endeavors, and drew his greatest pleasure from being a poet, critic, translator, essayist, botanist, and professor of oratory at Harvard; how tension between the public and private Adams vexed his life; and how his frustration kept him masked and aloof (and unpopular). Nagel's great achievement, in this first biography of America's sixth president in a quarter century, is finally to portray Adams in all his talent and complexity..de Who is the real John Quincy Adams? The brilliant secretary of state, prime mover behind the Monroe Doctrine, and principled opponent of slavery, defender of the Africans shanghaied aboard the Amistad? Or

the ineffectual president stymied by a hostile Congress and his own self-righteousness, the vindictive political foe famed for his cold, disagreeable character? Paul C. Nagel, author of two previous books about the Adams family, seeks to give readers a more human Adams (1767-1848) whose complex nature contained many contradictions. John Quincy Adams is a valuable revisionist biography of a misunderstood figure at the crossroads of American history. Nagel has set out to explore his hero's inner life...It is a story told largely from the vantage point of the subject. Paul C. Nagel focuses on the sources of Adams's curious mixture of duty and defiance...It is the character of the man, his personality, that dominates this biography...Nagel has given us a John Quincy Adams with a heart as well as a head. Nagel offers a rich portrait of the moody and anxiety-ridden Adams...This biography remov[es] the dust from his portrait and restor[es] the glow of historical significance to his splendid and troubled life. Nagel clearly knows his topic inside out, and his account of Adam's eventful life--from diplomat to professor to President--is eminently readable...This book is thoroughly engaging. We glimpse a side of Adams that he preferred to keep private: his eye for the ladies, his self-lacerating depressions, his contempt for what he referred to as the 'crazy' orations of Ralph Waldo Emerson...What emerges from Nagel's book is a more fully rounded character.--Paul Giles "Times Literary Supplement "