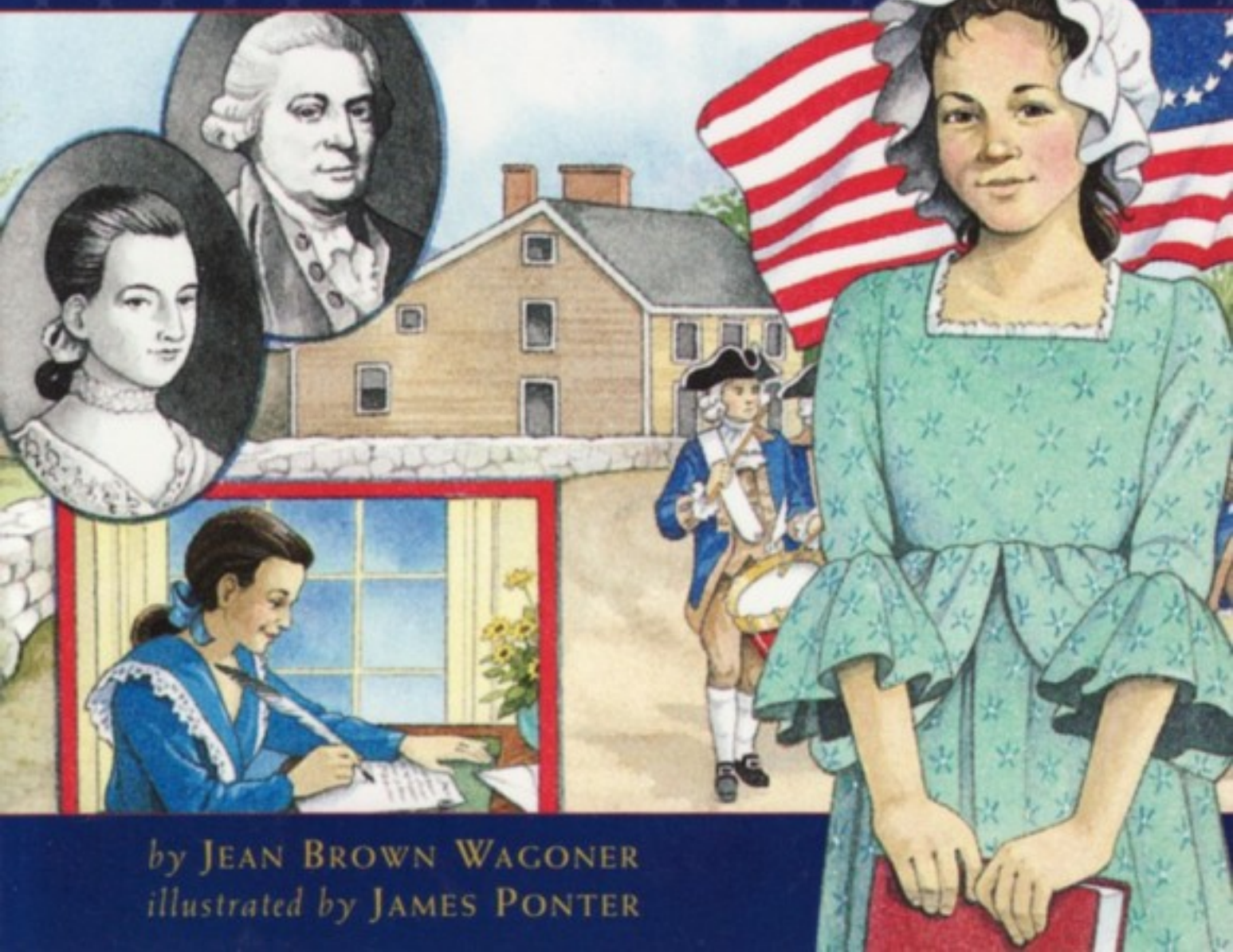


Childhood of Famous Americans



# ABIGAIL ADAMS

Girl of Colonial Days



by JEAN BROWN WAGONER  
illustrated by JAMES PONTER

# A Stormy Beginning

IT WAS a bad night. The snow fell thick and fast. A driving wind whipped it across the countryside and plastered it against anything that stood in its way.

The little town of Weymouth, Massachusetts, had more than its share of the storm. The houses were a solid white. No road or pathway showed. Even the river was covered. Only the steeple of the meetinghouse on top of the hill rose up bare and dark against the sky.

There was no sign of life anywhere in the village except at the Reverend Smith's house. Lights shone from every window there.

People were moving about. Suddenly a door was opened. An Indian darted out into the night. He flew over the snowy ground as swiftly as a deer. The runner was sure-footed and knew every inch of the way. The drifts and hidden ditches didn't stop him. In no time at all he was out of sight of the neighboring houses, the silent blacksmith shop, and the meetinghouse. Soon he was well on his way toward Boston.

At the Reverend Smith's house, the women watched the Indian when he sped away in the darkness. Then they turned back to the kitchen to prepare a feast. The smell of good things cooking filled the house.

In an upstairs room Mrs. Smith looked anxiously at the baby she held in her arms. "The baby is tiny," she said to her husband, "but don't you think she's a little better? I'm sure she seems stronger and is breathing more easily than she did at first."

The Reverend Smith thought the baby wasn't any worse, but he didn't know. The grandmother, Mrs. John Quincy, didn't like to say what she thought. She just shook her head doubtfully at the baby's Aunt Elizabeth, who took the word downstairs to the other aunts, Mary and Anna.

"The little thing is about the same, I guess," she said. "It's just as well that the Indian runner went after the baby's Grandfather Quincy. I doubt if she will live another day."

At dawn, Tom, the Reverend Smith's hired man, went out to the barn and hitched up the horse. He began to clear the road between the parsonage and the meetinghouse by dragging a heavy log over it.

As he passed the Burrells' house next to the Smiths', the maid, Dinah, came out. She called, "Why on earth are you doing that, Tom? Nobody's going to call at the preacher's today."