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Process Paper

My topic is how Abigail Adams influenced the development of America in the Early Republic, which is significant throughout the course of history.

As I began to research my topic I had some major successes and failures. My first research question was: What was the role of women in the household? With this question to help guide my research, I went through the Table of Contents of Revolutionary Mothers by Carol Berkin and Being Good by Martha Saxton and chose chapters that seemed most significant. I had trouble connecting Women of the Republic by Linda K. Kerber to my research question and in order to make this source useful I made another research question which was: How were women affected by laws? I used my first sources to find more books about marriage which were Good Wives by Laurel Ulrich and Women’s Letters which includes letters from thousands of different women. This book led me to have more interest in the life of Abigail Adams and her role in John Adams’s success. I then found Dearest Friend by Lynne Withey. With these three sources I used the research questions: How did a woman’s rights change when she went from being single, to a married woman, and to a widow? and How did a wife’s role differ from her husband’s? These questions led me to reconsider my big question and change it to: To what extent did Abigail Adams influence the Development of America in the Early Republic? Using this question I found two biographies called Abigail Adams: a Biography by Phyllis Lee Levin and Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution by Natalie S. Bober. These books allowed me to explore Abigail Adams’s life and feelings from her own point of view. As I started to write my essay I found that I needed more evidence and found two books called The Book of Abigail and John and Women’s Letters which both contained many letters to and from Abigail. I was able to learn more about Abigail and her huge impact on the American world in the Early Republic.

In the beginning of the Early Republic, women were not recognized for their actions and were only known as a slave or servant to the master, a man. However, throughout the Early Republic, Abigail Adams continually fought this role and transformed America into what it is today, a world of equality between a women and their friend, a man. Abigail developed America in the Early Republic through the values which she taught her children about power and the role of women in politics, her relationship with John regarding the trust and love they had, and her overall involvement in political America through John and his friends. As said in my thesis, this argument takes place mainly around the point of the Early Republic. This was significant in history because it affected the development of America.

Word Count: 494 words