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The sixty-four cases documented are divided into sixteen legal categories such as Torts, Property, Domestic Relations, Town Government, Conservation, Religion, Slavery, and Admiralty. They are preceded by editorial headnotes which discuss the background, significance, and importance of each category and case. Careful and thorough footnotes explain textual and legal problems; a register of John Adams' contemporaries furnishes sketches of his colleagues on the bench and bar; and an exhaustive chronology records his growing practice. But the bulk of the material consists of Adams' own notes and minutes, supplemented by court records, letters, depositions of witnesses, and the minutes of other lawyers, as well as extracts from Adams' correspondence and diary to make the record of each case as full as possible. Many of the cases concern events, personalities, and legal struggles directly related to the American Revolution.

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These three books comprise the first segment of Series III of The Adams Papers. The William Nelson Cromwell Foundation has made possible the editing of these volumes by means of a generous grant to the Harvard Law School.

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