

*John  
and  
John Quincy  
Adams  
Birthplaces*



On May 1, 1979, the City of Quincy in cooperation with the Adams Memorial Society presented to the people of the United States two seventeenth century houses, the birthplaces of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams.

Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society



In the house at 133 Franklin Street John Adams was born on October 30, 1735. Here the nation's second President spent much of his early life and gained from his father, Deacon John Adams, strong interests in municipal affairs and farming. From neighborhood schooling, young John attended Harvard University and received a Bachelor of Arts and later a Master of Arts degree. Upon his father's death, John's brother Peter Boylston Adams inherited the original homestead.

The adjacent house (at 141 Franklin Street), which his father Deacon John had purchased in 1744, was bequeathed to John. Here he brought his bride Abigail Smith on October 25, 1764. And it was in this house where Abigail gave birth on July 11, 1767, to their second child, John Quincy Adams, the future 6th President of the United States.

Although it remained the residence of John and Abigail Adams, the house was not used continuously due to his successful law practice in Boston. In addition to the farmhouse in Braintree (now Quincy), the John Adamses at vari-



ous times lived in houses in Brattle Square and Cole Lane in Boston. In 1774, when he was elected to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, his family returned to their cottage in Braintree. After a distinguished career in Congress where he was known by his fellow

Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society



delegates to have "the clearest head and the firmest heart", he returned to his law practice in Braintree in the fall of 1777. Shortly after his homecoming he received news of his appointment to journey to Paris, France, to serve as one of the commissioners in search of peace with Great Britain. Just 18 months later he returned to Braintree to visit his family and during this time in the fall of 1779, was elected to draft the Massachusetts Constitution. Along with two fellow delegates, John Adams prepared the draft of the document at his home in the law office of the John Quincy Adams Birthplace.

After writing the Massachusetts Constitution, John Adams once again sailed for France to treat for peace. When the Definitive Treaty with Great Britain was concluded in 1783, he requested that his wife and daughter Nabby join him in France. Little did Abigail realize when she departed in June, 1784, from Braintree that this cottage would never be her home again. After serving as the first Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, John Adams with his wife Abigail came home to the Vassall-Borland house, now known as the Adams National Historic Site.



Having purchased his birthplace from his brother in 1774, in 1803, John Adams sold both houses to son John Quincy Adams who resided in his birthplace with his wife Louisa Catherine and their two older children from 1803 to 1806.

**T**he John Adams Birthplace, originally a typical New England saltbox structure of frame construction with a massive central chimney, was built about 1681. It consisted of two lower and two upper rooms. Extensive alterations were made over the years. The rear lean-to, built in the 18th century, added two downstairs rooms and two small upper ones, separated by a large attic.

Also of typical New England saltbox design is the John Quincy Adams Birthplace. The house originally comprised two upper and two lower rooms arranged around a central chimney and has also been extensively altered. John Adams added a lean-to of two rooms at the back for use as a new kitchen during the time he used the original kitchen as a law office library.

During a period of structural study and restoration, both houses will be temporarily closed. However, National Park Service personnel will be present to welcome visitors and provide free historical interpretation relating to the lifestyle of the Adams family while in residence at the Birthplaces.

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The Adams Birthplaces join Adams National Historic Site known as "The Old House" at 135 Adams Street in Quincy and are administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The John and John Quincy Adams Birthplaces are open for visitation from April 19th to October 15th daily from 9a.m. to 5p.m. All inquiries concerning the Adams Birthplaces and the Adams National Historic Site may be made to the Superintendent, Adams National Historic Site, PO Box 531, Quincy, MA 02269 Telephone: (617) 773-1177.