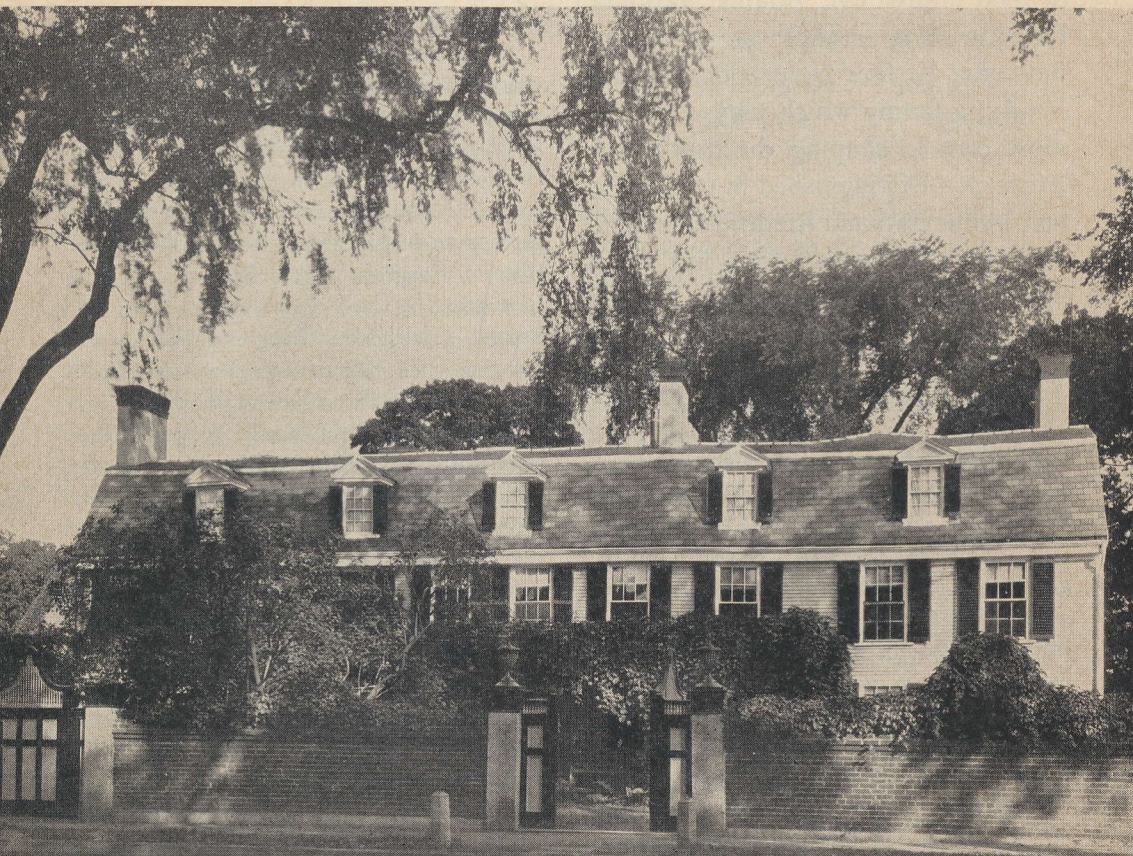


☆ ADAMS ☆

National Historic Site



M A S S A C H U S E T T S



# ADAMS

## NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

*The home of four generations of the Adams family—distinguished in public service, in literature, and in the intellectual life of the Nation.*

UNLIKE MOST HISTORIC SHRINES which memorialize a single event or a great individual, Adams National Historic Site stands as a living memorial to four generations of one family; a family which played a foremost part in shaping the destiny of America. Distinguished in public life and in our national literature, men of each of these generations left their stamp on the history of the United States.

### JOHN ADAMS

HERE, when not at the seat of government, lived John Adams, first Vice President and second President of the United States. John Adams was born on October 19, 1735, graduated from Harvard College in 1755, and admitted to the bar in 1758. He took a keen interest in town affairs and wrote on public matters for the newspapers. In 1764, he married Abigail, daughter of Rev. William and Elizabeth (Quincy) Smith of Weymouth, Mass. Mrs. Adams was a remarkable woman, who, throughout her life, proved a tower of strength to her husband. Her sprightly letters give wonderful pictures of the times and the stirring events she witnessed, ranging from her account of the Battle of Bunker Hill, vivid descriptions of residence in France and England, and her difficulties as the first mis-

tress of the White House, to her domestic concerns in Quincy. She is the only woman who has been the wife of one President and the mother of another.

Active against the Stamp Act and early concerned in the patriotic cause, John Adams was to demonstrate his moral courage by defending the British Captain, Thomas Preston, charged with murder in the Boston "Massacre." In 1774, he was chosen one of the delegates from Massachusetts to the First Continental Congress. After fighting began at Lexington he took a leading part in the Second Continental Congress, headed the movement for independence, and was largely responsible for the choice of Washington as Commander in Chief of the Army. Chosen as one of the Committee of Five to draft the Declaration of Independence he was, in Jefferson's words, "the pillar of its support on the floor of Congress." After Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga he was chosen commissioner to France and with his 10-year-old son, John Quincy, sailed for Europe in February of 1778.

Later he was commissioned Minister Plenipotentiary to Holland and succeeded in securing loans from that country. Together with Franklin and Jay, on September 3, 1783, he signed the peace treaty with Great Britain, recognizing the independence of the United States. The following summer Mrs. Adams joined him at Paris and accompanied him to London. In 1785, he was appointed Envoy to the Court of St. James, where he remained



JOHN ADAMS STUDY. *The desk was used by four generations of the family. The celestial and terrestrial globes were used by John Quincy Adams. The chair in the corner is where John Adams died.*

until 1788. Throughout these trying times there was no one who played a more important part than John Adams in fighting for independence and foreign recognition. Together with Franklin and Jefferson, he selected *E Pluribus Unum* (One Out of Many) for the motto on the obverse of the seal of the United States. In the new government under the Constitution he was elected Vice President and during both of Washington's terms presided over the Senate of the United States. Elected to the Presidency in 1796, Adams served with great ability and, fortunately for the country, despite the clamour of many of the leaders of his own party, prevented a war with France. In 1801, he retired to his home in Quincy, but never lost his keen interest in public questions as is attested by his voluminous correspondence. He lived to see his son elected to the Presidency, and passed away on July 4, 1826, the same day that saw the death of Thomas Jefferson.

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

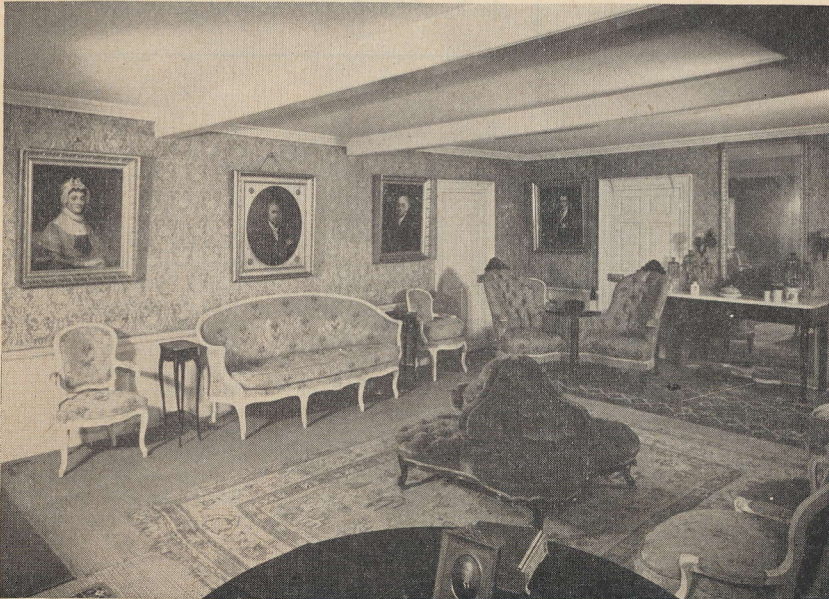
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, born July 11, 1767, was enabled from childhood to gain an extraordinary knowledge of Europe. During his father's ministry to Great Britain, he returned to America and graduated from Harvard College in 1787. In 1794, Washington commissioned him Minister to the Netherlands, and during his father's Presidency he was Minister to Prussia. In 1803, he was elected to the United States Senate, where he was to show his independence of mind by his support of Jefferson's embargo as an alternative to war. Under President Madison he became, in 1809, Minister to Russia, where, on friendly terms with Tsar Alexander I, he witnessed many stirring events. He refused a nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States, remained in Europe as one of the peace commissioners, and, on December 24, 1814, signed the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812.

## CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

He was in Paris during the momentous "Hundred Days" and next went to England as Minister to the Court of St. James. In 1817, he became President Monroe's Secretary of State, negotiating the treaty with Spain for the cession of the Floridas. He also took a prominent part in the recognition of the Latin-American Republics, and, laying down the policy that "the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments," was jointly responsible with the President for the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1825, he took the oath of office as sixth President of the United States. Retiring to Quincy in 1829, where he planned to write history, he was within 2 years elected to Congress, where he served continuously for 17 years. He was the only President to become a member of the National House of Representatives after a term in the White House. On February 21, 1848, at the age of 81 he was stricken on the floor of the House, literally dying at his post.

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, son of the sixth President, was born August 18, 1807. At the age of 2 he was taken by his father to St. Petersburg in Russia and was to remember incidents of Napoleon's return to Paris in 1815. He graduated from Harvard College in 1825 and was admitted to the practice of law in 1829, after spending some weeks in the office of Daniel Webster. That same year he married Abigail Brown, daughter of Peter Chardon Brooks of Boston. After serving in the Massachusetts Legislature, he was, in 1848, nominated for Vice President on the Free Soil ticket as running mate with Van Buren. Elected to Congress in 1858, and again in 1860, he was the following year chosen by President Lincoln as Minister to the Court of St. James, a post held by his father and grandfather before him. As Minister he served his country with distinction throughout the trying years of the Civil War. Resigning in 1868, he declined the presidency of Harvard University



THE LONG ROOM.  
*This room was the scene of three golden wedding anniversaries. The portraits shown are Abigail Adams, John Quincy Adams, John Adams, and Charles Francis Adams.*

# ADAMS FAMILY GENEALOGY

JOHN ADAMS

1735-1826

*Second President of the United States (1797-1801)*

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

1767-1848

*Sixth President of the United States (1825-1829)*

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

1807-1886

*Minister to Great Britain (1861-1868)*

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS  
1833-1894

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS  
1835-1915

HENRY ADAMS  
1838-1918

BROOKS ADAMS  
1848-1927

and retired to Quincy. He returned to Europe as one of the arbitrators who passed upon the *Alabama* Claims at Geneva. He wrote on history for the *North American Review*, published the letters of his grandmother, Abigail Adams, *The Works of John Adams* in 10 volumes, together with an admirable biography of his grandfather, and published his father's diary under the title *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*. He died November 21, 1886.

## THE FOURTH GENERATION

THE ELDEST of the four sons of Charles Francis Adams was John Quincy. Born in 1833, he served on Governor Andrew's staff in the Civil War and was a leader of his party in Massachusetts. Though considered for a post in President Cleveland's cabinet he did nothing to encourage it. He died in 1894.

Charles Francis Adams, Jr., born May 27, 1835, was graduated from Harvard College in 1856. Serving in the Union Army throughout the Civil War, he rose to the rank of

colonel, commanding a Negro regiment. Riding at its head, he was the first to enter Richmond after Lee evacuated the city. Mustered out in June 1865, he received the brevet of brigadier general. In 1884, he became the President of the Union Pacific Railroad. For years, active in the civic affairs of Quincy, he served on the State commission which planned a system of parks and public reservations in the vicinity of Boston. For 24 years he was a member of the Board of Governors of Harvard University. He was author of *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*; *The Life of Richard Henry Dana*; *Studies: Military and Diplomatic 1775-1865*; *Lee at Appomatox*; the life of his father, Charles Francis Adams, in *The American Statesman Series*; and an autobiography. He died March 20, 1915.

Henry Adams was born February 16, 1838. After graduation from Harvard College he studied civil law in Berlin and began his travels, which were to carry him about the world for many years to come. Serving as his father's secretary in Washington during the winter of 1860-61, he accompanied him

to London where he continued to assist his father throughout the latter's ministry to Great Britain. Returning in 1868, he taught history at Harvard for 7 years and edited the *North American Review*. He was the author of biographies of Albert Gallatin, John Randolph, and George Cabot Lodge; two novels, *Democracy* and *Esther*; the admirable *History of the United States 1800-1817*, in 9 volumes; *Mont-Saint-Michel & Chartres*; and an American classic, *The Education of Henry Adams*. Since his death in 1918, several volumes of his letters, as charming as they are informative, have been published.

Brooks Adams, born at Quincy, June 24, 1848, was graduated from Harvard College in 1870. He served as his father's secretary during the *Alabama* Claims Arbitration. Although a member of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1917, he never sought for or held public office. He was the last of the family to occupy the old house at Quincy. Brooks Adams was the author of *The Emancipation of Massachusetts*, *Law of Civilization and Decay*, *America's Economic Supremacy*, *The New Empire*, and *Theory of Social Revolutions*. He died in 1927.

## THE "OLD HOUSE"

THE HOUSE, first named by John Adams, "Peacefield," but to become known in the family as the "Old House," was very dear and very close to them. Shortly after his father's death, John Quincy wrote: "My attachment to it, and the whole region round, is stronger than I have ever felt before;" Charles Francis, the younger, in his autobiography, wrote of how fond he was of the "Old House" and what pleasant recollections clustered about it; and Henry, in his *Education*, has left his memories of the place.

The oldest portion of the house was built in 1731 by Maj. Leonard Vassall, wealthy West

Indian sugar planter, who had come to Massachusetts some 8 years before. The house then comprised only the following rooms: on ground floor, the Paneled Room, West Entry, and Dining Room; on the second floor, 2 bedrooms; and 3 smaller rooms in the attic. The kitchen and servants' quarters were not attached to the house.

John Adams, while still Minister to Great Britain, bought the house in September 1787 from the major's grandson, Leonard Vassall Borland, and on his return in 1788 took possession of the property. During his Presidency he built the large gabled ell containing the Long Room, East Entry, and upstairs Study. In 1836, John Quincy Adams added the passage along the north side of the house connecting the two ells. In 1869, Charles Francis Adams added 30 feet to the kitchen ell for servants' quarters, and the following year built the stone library overlooking his grandmother's garden, and, in 1873, the stone stable. The present entrance gates were added by Brooks Adams in 1906.

After his retirement from the Presidency in 1801, John Adams lived in the house the year round until his death in 1826. John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams made it their summer home, and many summers were spent there by both Henry and Brooks Adams. Much of the furniture within the house reflects the diplomatic background of John, John Quincy, and Charles Francis Adams, as each came back with prized possessions from their various European missions.

The continuity of life in the house is best shown by the furnishings, as the various objects are of successive periods—each generation contributed something of itself and each generation is remembered by what it left. The house is not a "period piece" but a house which, from 1788 to 1927, clearly shows the ever-changing style and taste of its occupants.

## THE HISTORIC SITE

Adams Mansion was designated a national historic site on December 9, 1946. This was made possible by the gift of the property to the Federal Government for that purpose by the Adams Memorial Society. In 1927, all the living descendants of Charles Francis Adams, Minister to Great Britain, organized the Adams Memorial Society, its purpose being to preserve and maintain as a memorial the "Old House" and library just as Brooks Adams had left it. The society carried out its purpose until 1946 when the title was vested in the United States.

On November 26, 1952, the name was changed to Adams National Historic Site. It contains 4.77 acres and includes the house, library, garden, and stables.

## HOW TO REACH THE SITE

Adams National Historic Site is on Adams Street, Newport Avenue, and Furnace Brook Parkway, Quincy, Mass., about 8 miles south of Boston. The house is on State Route 135 and adjacent to State Route 3. There is frequent train and bus service to and from Boston.

## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

You may visit the site from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. every day from April 19 to November 10, with free guide service provided when facilities permit. There is a nominal admission fee which is waived for children under 12 years of age and groups of school children 18 years of age or under, when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct.

## ADMINISTRATION

Adams National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 135 Adams Street, Quincy 69, Mass., is in immediate charge.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.



DINING ROOM. *The furnishings represent all four generations of the family who occupied the house. The portraits of George and Martha Washington were painted by Edward Savage in 1797. To the right is a portrait of Edward Boylston.*

