

John Quincy Adams III (1767-1848)

SEE ADAMS OF MA GENEALOGY



- 1767 July 11; born Braintree, Mass, eldest son of John Adams II, the future president, and Abigail Smith
- 1775 watches the Battle of Bunker Hill from Penn's hill across the Back Bay
- 1778-80 goes to Europe with his father, and again in 1780; studies at a private school in Paris, then the University of Leiden (Netherlands), so he speaks French and some Dutch
- 1780 begins keeping diary
- 1781-82 age 14, travels to Russia as private secretary of US envoy Francis Dana; interprets French
- 1782 travels to Paris as an additional secretary for his father and goes with him briefly to London
- 1784?-87 returns to the US to attend Harvard
- 1788 reads law at Newburyport under Theophilus Parsons
- 1790 is admitted to the bar in Boston; writes some newspaper articles to object to Thomas Paine's Rights of Man, back Washington's neutrality policy
- 1794 May; is appointed U.S. Minister to the Netherlands
- 1796 is appointed U.S. Minister to Portugal
- 1797 his father as President makes him U.S. Minister to Prussia
- 1797 marries in London Louisa Catherine Johnson (1775-1852), daughter of US consul Joshua Johnson and his English wife Katherine Nuth, then goes to Berlin
- 1799 negotiates a treaty of commerce and amity with the Prussians in Berlin
- 1800 is recalled by his father after Jefferson wins the presidency
- 1802 is elected to the Massachusetts senate
- 1803 is chosen by the Massachusetts senate to sit in the US Senate; a Federalist at first, he is yet ostracized by Hamilton's followers because Hamilton was a rival of his father; thus, he changes tack to vote for appropriations for Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, but votes with the Federalists against a bill permitting Jefferson to appoint officials of his own choosing to control Louisiana (but the bill passes anyway)
- 1806-09 becomes Boylston professor of rhetoric and oratory at Harvard
- 1807 supports Jefferson's embargo, angering Federalist supporters at home
- 1808 June 3; loses a re-election vote in the Massachusetts senate and resigns 5 days later
- 1808 goes to a Republican caucus to help nominate Madison for President
- 1809-14 is sent by Madison as US minister to Russia just as the Czar decides to break with Napoleon; watches from St. Petersburg Napoleon's invasion of Russia
- 1815 goes to Paris and is there when Napoleon comes back from Elba
- 1815-17 goes to London to negotiate with Clay and Gallatin a "Convention to Regulate Commerce and Navigation"; remains as US Minister
- 1817 becomes Secretary of State for Monroe both for his experience and to provide sectional balance for the cabinet
- 1819 succeeds in purchasing Florida from Spain and getting Spain to drop a claim to all land east of the Mississippi, but gives up a claim to Texas and draws a line (36 degrees 30 minutes latitude) to the Pacific to divide Louisiana from the Spanish territory
- 1823 Feb 15; is nominated by a Boston meeting for President; backs Clay's American System of protective tariffs and internal improvements to win Clay's backing
- 1823 drafts the Monroe Doctrine for the President which warns European powers not to intervene in the Western Hemisphere to threaten the independence of emerging Central and South American republics; the doctrine also pledges U.S. non-interference in European affairs
- 1824 December 1; becomes 6th US President; although Andrew Jackson obtains more electoral votes, he does not claim a majority; Adams makes a so-called "corrupt bargain" with Clay to obtain Clay's support in exchange for the Secretary of State position; the Kentucky delegation in the House votes for Adams; he wins the Presidency, to the outrage of Jackson, who starts running for President in the next election almost immediately
- 1825 the Republican Party splits into an Adams-Clay wing called National Republicans and a Jackson faction called Democratic Republicans

- 1825 Adams does not replace federal appointees who oppose him unless official misconduct or incompetence; this is a political mistake because both William Crawford and Jackson-Calhoun supporters block implementation of his policies; also Calhoun uses his VP power to appoint half of Senate committees seats with senators opposing Adams
- 1825 December 6; Adams' first annual message to Congress talks up roads and canals, a national university, standardization of weights and measures, exploration of US interior to Pacific NW, laws promoting agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, arts, sciences, literature; but Southerners fear encroachment on states rights
- 1826 July 4; both his father and Jefferson die this date, 50 years after the Declaration of Independence
- 1828 December; this time around, Jackson wins the presidency easily; Adams' Coffin Handbill of 18 murders allegedly committed by Jackson and accusations that Jackson's wife was a bigamist and adulterer is countered by Jackson supporters accusing Adams of being a fornicator, alcoholic, sabbath-breaker, and supplying American virgins to the Tsar when he was ambassador to Russia
- 1829 returning to private life in Quincy, Massachusetts, he still aspires to return to the White House; over the years, he campaigns under banner of Anti-Masons, then National Republicans, then Whigs as "man of the whole nation" but no luck
- 1831-48 serves 8 consecutive terms in the U.S. House; main preoccupation is opposition to slavery but does not believe Congress has authority to interfere with states slaveholding right unless civil war erupts, in which case the war powers of Congress would permit interference with the institution of slavery
- 1839 introduces a constitutional amendment that every child born in the US after July 4, 1842 be free, that no new state but Florida be permitted to be a slave state, and that the slave trade in Washington DC be end after July 4, 1845; but the gag rule blocks discussion of the amendment; Adams keeps fighting to end the gag rule as a direct violation of the 1st Amendment
- 1841 Armistad slave ship case; arguing before the Supreme Court, he wins freedom for slaves who mutinied against Spanish owners of the ship off the coast of Cuba
- 1844 December; in a vote of 108-80, the House ends the gag rule; a victory for Adams and anti-slavery movement
- 1846 fearing an expansion of slave territory and states, opposes "most unrighteous war" with Mexico
- 1848 Feb 23; dies in Washington DC, two days after suffering a stroke