

# President John Quincy Adams

Compiled by D. A. Sharpe

President [John Quincy Adams](#) was born July 11, 1767 in Braintree, Massachusetts, living to the ripe old age for those days of 80 years old. He died February 23, 1848.



Adams is the sixth President of the United States. He served two terms, 1825 – 1829. In his first campaign for the Presidency, in 1824, no candidate had sufficient votes to win. Adams was running against Andrew Jackson and two other men. Congress' House of Representative decided the election by voting for Adams.

He is the 30th cousin, three times removed to me. Our ancestors in common are [Ragnvald I Eysteinsson](#) (died in 890 AD) and his wife, Hild. These are Vikings who resided in what today we call Norway. Another description of our relationship is being the [10<sup>th</sup> cousin, four times removed](#) of the husband of Ellen Newton (born about 1614), the stepdaughter of the my 6<sup>th</sup> great grand uncle, Danette Abney, born about 1723.

Ragnvald Eysteinsson's father was [Eystein Glumra Ivarsson](#), who is my 32<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather. Eystein Glumra Ivarsson is the ancestor in common between my daughter, Tiffany Lenn Sharpe Westmoreland and her husband, Steven O. Westmoreland. So, my daughter and my son-in-law are related to each other as 34th

cousins, four times removed, as well as by husband and wife status. President Adams is the 17th cousin, eight times removed to my son-in-law, Steve O. Westmoreland.

A lateral genealogical trail can be displayed from John Quincy Adams back to [Godwulf](#), an early figure in Norse history from the Northern Germanic and Norwegian areas, who lived about 80 AD to about 125 AD.

At one place, President Adams is quoted as saying, "Posterity! You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it."



"The first President who was the son of a President, John Quincy Adams in many respects paralleled the career as well as the temperament and viewpoints of his illustrious father. Born in [Braintree, Massachusetts](#), in 1767, he watched the [Battle of Bunker Hill](#) from the top of Penn's Hill above the family farm. As secretary to his father in Europe, he became an accomplished linguist and assiduous diarist.

"After graduating from [Harvard College](#), he became a lawyer. At age 26, he was appointed [Minister to the Netherlands](#), then promoted to the Berlin Legation. In 1802, he was elected to the United States Senate. Six years later President Madison appointed him Minister to Russia.

"Serving under President Monroe, Adams was one of America's great Secretaries of State, arranging with England for the joint occupation of the Oregon country, obtaining from Spain the cession of the Florida's, and formulating with the President the [Monroe Doctrine](#).

"In the political tradition of the early 19th century, Adams as Secretary of State was considered the political heir to the Presidency. But the old ways of choosing a President were giving way in 1824, before the clamor for a popular choice.

"Within the one and only party--the Republican--sectionalism and factionalism were developing, and each section put up its own candidate for the Presidency. Adams, the candidate of the North, fell behind [Gen. Andrew Jackson](#) in both popular and electoral votes, but received more than [William H. Crawford](#) and [Henry Clay](#). Since no candidate had a majority of electoral votes, the election was decided among the top three by the House of Representatives. Clay, who favored a program similar to that of Adams, threw his crucial support in the House to the New Englander.

"Upon becoming President, Adams appointed Clay as Secretary of State. Jackson and his angry followers charged that a "corrupt bargain" had taken place, and immediately began their campaign to wrest the Presidency from Adams in 1828.

"Aware that he would face hostility in Congress, Adams nevertheless proclaimed in his first Annual Message a spectacular national program. He proposed that the Federal Government bring the sections together with a network of highways and canals, and that it develop and conserve the public

domain, using funds from the sale of public lands. In 1828, he broke ground for the 185-mile [C & O Canal](#).

"Adams also urged the United States to take a lead in the development of the arts and sciences through the establishment of a national university, the financing of scientific expeditions, and the erection of an observatory. His critics declared such measures transcended constitutional limitations.

"The campaign of 1828, in which his Jacksonian opponents charged him with corruption and public plunder, was an ordeal Adams did not easily bear. After his defeat he returned to Massachusetts, expecting to spend the remainder of his life enjoying his farm and his books.

"Unexpectedly, in 1830, the Plymouth district elected him to the House of Representatives, and there for the remainder of his life he served as a powerful leader. Above all, he fought against circumscription of civil liberties.

"In 1836 southern [Congressmen passed a "gag rule"](#) providing that the House automatically table petitions against slavery. Adams tirelessly fought the rule for eight years until finally he obtained its repeal.

"On February 21, 1848, John Quincy Adams collapsed on the floor of the House from a stroke and was carried to the Speaker's Room, where two days later he died. He was buried--as were his father, mother, and wife--at [First Parish Church in Quincy](#). To the end, ["Old Man Eloquent"](#) had fought for what he considered right."

There are several bits of trivia about President John Quincy Adams that are interesting to know. He is the only House of

Representatives member who served in the House AFTER serving as President of the United States. Adams was the first President to give an interview to a woman. Adams had repeatedly refused requests for an interview with [Anne Royall](#), the first female professional journalist in the U.S., so she took a different approach to accomplish her goal. She learned that Adams liked to skinny-dip in the Potomac River almost every morning around 5 AM, so she went to the river, gathered his clothes, and sat on them until he answered all of her questions.

On another occasion, while Adams was skinny-dipping in the Potomac River, a tramp stole the clothes he had left on the riverbank. Adams remained in the river for nearly an hour, until he saw a young boy walking along the river bank. He called to the boy to "Go up to the White House and ask Mrs. Adams to send down a new set of clothes for the President." Twenty minutes later, the boy returned with a servant from the White House, bearing a new set of clothes for Adams.

The "c" in Adams' middle name "Quincy" is properly pronounced with the z sound, not the s sound, just like the city of Quincy, Massachusetts, and Quincy Market in Boston (names derived from the same family).

According to a study by psychologist Keith Simonton, Adams has the highest estimated IQ of any US president.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ja6.html>

John Quincy Adams, one of John Adams sons, was the sixth president of the United States. He also served in the U.S. Senate before becoming president, and the U.S. House of Representatives after his presidency.



John and his wife, Louisa Catherine Johnson, bore four children: Louisa Catherine Adams, George Washington Adams, John Adams and Charles Francis Adams.

JQA was a devoted Christian who had a habit of reading through the Bible once a year. He also wanted very much for his children to understand the importance of the Bible. When he was serving as a diplomat overseas, he wrote

several letters to his son George Washington Adams on this subject. Those letters can now be read in a book called "[Letters of John Quincy Adams to His Son on the Bible and Its Teaching.](#)" He was a member of the Unitarian Church.

Like his father, he believed slavery was morally wrong. He had no qualms whatsoever about an imaginary "separation of church and state" and bringing his religious convictions about slavery into the public arena. He was so ardently opposed to the institution that he became known the "Hellhound of Abolition." Many of his colleagues didn't want to deal with the issue of slavery in the U.S. House, writing it off as a "moral issue" or as being too controversial. But he fought slavery year after year.

In the early days of the republic, Monday was "Petition Day" since the U.S. Constitution says the people have a right to "petition the government." People could bring issues to congress and their

congressman could introduce them as a measure to be considered.

JQA came with lots of petitions from the people to end slavery, which frustrated the pro-slavery majority. The majority had the Rules Committee make a change to the House rules which said that while Monday was still Petition Day, petitions on slavery would no longer be accepted. It was essentially the “John Quincy Adams Gag Order.”

JQA kept coming in with anti-slavery petitions, however. The House leadership tried reprimands and censures to shut him up, but none worked. He refused to compromise on his principles.

When he was asked why he kept doing this year after year, and whether he got frustrated, he uttered one of my most favorite quotes: “Duty is ours, results are God’s.” In other words, we have a duty to attempt what is right, regardless of the results.

In his 14th year, his persistence finally convinced enough of his peers that they rescinded the gag order, and came up with a three-step plan to end slavery and a constitutional amendment that could have ended slavery in 1843 and avoided hundreds of thousands of American deaths...if the Senate would have had the same moral courage.

At the end of his life, JQA was in the U.S. House of Representatives at his desk when he was struck by a cerebral hemorrhage (I have stood in the exact location of his desk). He died a couple of days later in the Speaker’s Room in the Capitol with his last words indicating no fear as he passed into the next life: “This is the last of Earth. I am composed.”

During his last year of life, JQA met a young House freshman who would only serve one term in the U.S. House, but this freshman would go on years later to become President of the United States...and finally end the horrible institution of slavery in America. This man, of course, was Abraham Lincoln, and Lincoln would use several elements of JQA's original plan to end slavery.

Throughout his life, John Quincy Adams was another shining example of the committed Christian faith of America's founders.

Source: <http://www.dakotavoice.com/2010/11/the-faith-of-john-quincy-adams/>

Here is a quotation reflecting his Christian faith, describing the worth of the Bible:

*"No book in the world deserves to be so unceasingly studied and profoundly meditated upon as the Bible. The first and almost the only book deserving such universal recommendation is the Bible."*

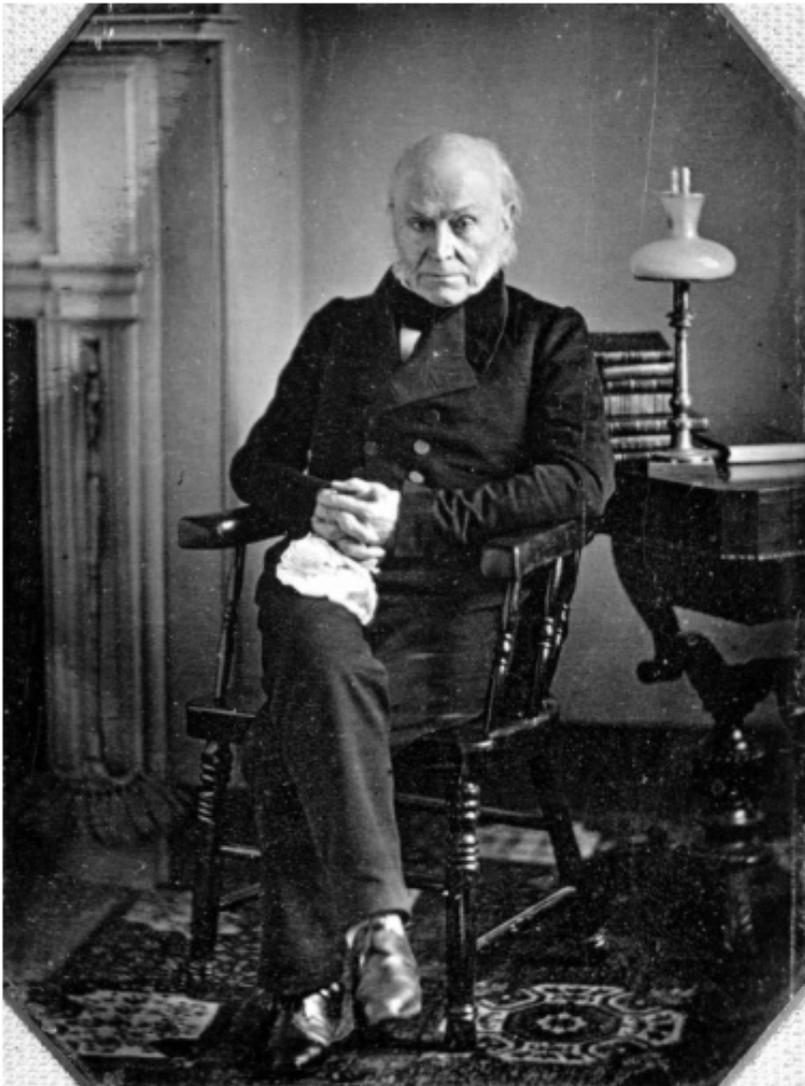
Source: John Quincy Adams, "Letters to His Son on the Bible and Its Teachings" (New York: Derby, Miller & Company, 1848), page 119, and B. B. Edwards and W. Cogswell, *The American Quarterly Register*, (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1840), Vol. XII, page 86, Letter from John Quincy Adams to members of a literary society in Baltimore on June 22, 1838.

JQA served several U.S. Presidents in a Diplomatic capacity. JQA declined an appointment to the Supreme Court. Only one other U.S. President has served on the Supreme Court, William Howard Taft. When JQA was asked for an autograph, he often would include an original poem he'd composed. JQA was the first U.S. President to be photographed.

One of the more unusual gifts given to a President was from the Marquis de Lafayette, who gave John Quincy Adams a pet alligator. The alligator lived at the White House for several months.

## **John Quincy Adams: The First Photograph Of A President**

By All That Is Interesting on June 27, 2017



Taken in 1843, this rather stern depiction of John Quincy Adams is the earliest confirmed photograph of an American President. We sure have come a long way.

My friend, [G. Wilson Gunn, Jr.](#), a Presbyterian Pastor, believes that John Quincy Adams was a member of the [New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.](#) Currently Wilson serves as General Presbyter at [National Capital Presbytery](#), offices in Rockville, Maryland. (as of 2018)



Rev. Dr. George Docherty (left) and President Eisenhower (second from left) on the morning of February 7, 1954, at the [New York Avenue Presbyterian Church](#); the morning that Eisenhower was persuaded by Docherty that the Pledge of Allegiance must be amended to include the words, "under God."

It is a church Suzanne and I have visited, and a church where quite a number of well known political figures and elected officials have worshipped, the most recent of which I am aware is [President Dwight D. Eisenhower](#). It was Eisenhower who listened to a sermon preached on February 7, 1954 at that church

by the [Rev. George McPherson Docherty](#) who included the need to include the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Eisenhower's promotion of that idea resulted in legislation passed by Congress and signed into law on June 14, 1954, the day now recognized nationally as National Flag Day!

President John Quincy Adams, truly, was one of the outstanding Presidents by whom our nation has had the privilege of being led.

Compiled by:



Dwight Albert (D. A.) Sharpe  
805 Derting Road East  
Aurora, TX 76078-3712

817-504-6508

[da@dasharpe.com](mailto:da@dasharpe.com)

[www.dasharpe.com](http://www.dasharpe.com)

