

John Q. Adams Administration 1825-1829

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

John Quincy Adams



John Quincy Adams was born on July 11, 1767, in Braintree, Massachusetts, during the American Revolution. His father, John

Adams, would become the second president of the United States. No other person in U.S. history was probably more exposed to politics throughout their lifetime than John Q. Adams.

Adams received his early education at home, being taught by his mother Abigail. He followed his father on several diplomatic missions to Europe, getting a first-hand look at the art of politics. By the time he was young man, he knew seven languages. In 1787, he graduated from Harvard College and became a lawyer in 1790.

1. John Quincy Adams: (check three)

- spent a lifetime in politics
- was the secretary of war
- spoke seven languages
- became a lawyer

Early Politics

During his father's presidency, John Quincy Adams became the minister¹ to Prussia. When President Adams lost the election to Thomas Jefferson, President Adams recalled his son in 1801 to let Jefferson pick his own minister.

John Quincy Adams returned to Massachusetts to practice law. In 1802, Adams got

elected to the Massachusetts state senate. The following year, the Massachusetts legislature elected Adams to the United States Senate as a Federalist.

When tensions between France and Britain increased, Congress passed the Embargo Act in 1807, cutting off all trade with those countries. The loss of business hurt the American economy, particularly the New England states. Against the wishes of the Federalists and New Englanders, Adams supported the Embargo Act. In response, the Massachusetts legislature replaced Adams with someone else.

Adams came to hate political parties believing they were more concerned with helping themselves than the country as a whole. Yet, Adams found himself back in the diplomatic business when President Madison appointed him minister to Russia between the years 1809-1814. Adams served on the committee that signed the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812. From 1815-17, Adams became the minister to Great Britain. In 1817, President Monroe appointed Adams secretary of state².

Adams had become an expansionist. He saw the United States spreading its borders across the continent to the Pacific Ocean while being committed to remaining an isolationist country—that is, staying out of the affairs of other countries. Adams supported Jackson's invasion of Florida in 1819 and signed the Adams-Onís Treaty. The treaty gained Florida for the United States, established the boundaries of the Louisiana

Purchase, and the U.S. agreed to give up its claim to Texas.

2. John Quincy Adams: (check two)

- wanted war with Britain
- wanted to expand American borders
- loved political parties
- was committed to isolationism

3. The Adams-Onís Treaty: (check three)

- gave Florida to the U.S.
- gave Oregon to Spain
- created boundaries for the Louisiana Purchase
- ended America's claim to Texas

The Election of 1824

In 1824, John Quincy Adams ran for president. The Federalist Party had all but disappeared, leaving only the Democratic-Republican Party. So it was a contest of personalities between four candidates. In the end, John Quincy Adams representing New England received 84 electoral votes; Henry Clay representing the West received 37 votes; William C. Crawford of the South received 41 votes; and the national war hero Andrew Jackson received 99 votes. Although Jackson had the most votes, he did not have the majority of available votes required (fifty-one percent or more). As a result, the House of Representatives had to choose the next president.

They picked from the top three candidates: Adams, Jackson, and Crawford. However, Crawford had a stroke before the vote and was therefore taken out of the

¹ minister: a person representing their country's government in another country

² secretary of state: person in charge of foreign relations for the federal government

balloting leaving only Adams and Jackson. As it turned out, Henry Clay was also the Speaker of the House. As the leader of the House of Representatives and one of the presidential candidates, Clay had a lot of influence on the voting. Clay decided to give his support to Adams resulting in Adams being elected president. In return, Adams made Henry Clay the new secretary of state.

Jackson was furious and accused Adams and Clay of making a "corrupt bargain." Although nothing illegal had been done, the "corrupt bargain" label hurt Adams' presidency from the very beginning. Those who opposed Adams claimed he stole the presidency.

4. Henry Clay's support of John Quincy Adams in the 1824 election became known as: (check one)

- "mudslinging"
- a "presidential sting"
- "dirty tricks"
- the "corrupt bargain"

5. Why would Andrew Jackson and his supporters be mad at John Quincy Adams? (check one)

- Adams made a bargain for the presidency
- the House voted for Jackson but he still lost
- Adams claimed Jackson stole the presidency
- Crawford stole votes from Jackson

The Presidency

Adams entered office with many goals. He wanted to make internal improvements such as road and canal building, opening universities

to educate the population, and build astronomical observatories to help further technological innovation. He supported protection of Native American land to avoid future conflicts and wanted to create a strong army and navy to protect American interests. He got nothing accomplished.

Adams was one of the smartest men and one of the most politically experienced men to become president. However, he was arrogant, uncompromising, humorless, and possessed a cold personality. Trying to avoid political fighting, Adams refused to remove political enemies from his administration and defend himself from political attacks, thus politicians thwarted his plans at every turn. Adams failed as president.

6. Adams failed as a president because... (check three)

- he was arrogant and uncompromising
- he refused to remove enemies from his administration
- he was smart and politically experienced
- he refused to defend himself from political attacks

After the Presidency

Adams served only one term as president like his father before him. However, John Quincy Adams found himself winning a seat in the House of Representatives in 1830, the only former president to serve in the House. In the House, Adams had some of his greatest achievements.

Between 1831 and 1844, Congress introduced the "gag rule"

that prevented any anti-slavery petitions from being discussed or voted on. John Quincy Adams fought against this and in 1844, had it removed so that the issue of slavery could be challenged in the Congress.

In 1841, Adams successfully argued before the Supreme Court that captured Africans who mutinied on the slave ship *Amistad* should be allowed to remain free in America or return to their homes in Africa. His arguments in the defense of the Africans earned him the nickname "old man eloquent."

Unable to advance technology as president, Adams as a representative in the House did succeed in getting Congress to approve the building of the Smithsonian Institution—a museum of American history.

Although an expansionist, Adams opposed the war with Mexico. He collapsed on the floor of the House while giving a speech against the Mexican War. Adams died in Washington D.C. two days later on February 23, 1848.

7. It could be said from his actions that Adams: (check one)

- supported the Mexican War
- served in the Senate
- disliked slavery
- supported slavery