National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2014

Revised: 5/2025



Adams Birthplaces

Adams National Historical Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Adams Birthplaces

Resource Classification: Cultural Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 650125

Parent Landscape: 650125

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Adams National Historical Park

Alpha Code: ADAM

Park Organization Code: 1710

Park District: ADAM

Region: Northeast

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

The Adams birthplaces are located in the City of Quincy, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, approximately eight miles south of Boston. The birthplace homes of two U.S. Presidents stand on neighboring lots at the intersection of Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, a mile south of Quincy Center. One house is the birthplace of John Adams, the second U.S. President, born on October 30, 1735, and the other house is the birthplace of John Quincy Adams, his son and sixth U.S. President, born on July 11, 1767. The Adams birthplaces are part of Adams National Historical Park, which preserves and protects the landscapes, homes, and personal property of four generations of the Adams family.

The park includes other sites in Quincy. About one half mile north of Quincy Center is Peace field, a larger home and estate once owned by John and Abigail Adams and three successive generations of Adamses, and the adjacent Beale Estate that preserves the Peace field setting and houses park operations. Approximately halfway between Peace field and the Adams birthplaces in Quincy Center are the United First Parish Church, where both Presidents and the First Ladies are entombed in the Adams family crypt; Hancock Cemetery, where many other Adams family members are buried; and an off-site visitor center. Collectively, the park's historic properties include eleven historic buildings and structures and a cultural landscape totaling almost fourteen acres.

When owned and managed by the Adams family, the birthplaces were part of a large farm, known as Penn's Hill farm, which at one time extended over 200 acres. The distinctive saltbox homes are now preserved on a .72-acre parcel and set within a maintained lawn with stone walls, wooden split-rail fences, shade trees, and ornamental shrubs. The site offers a bucolic setting in a dense suburban neighborhood of mixed residential and commercial buildings. As the oldest presidential birthplaces and among the oldest homes in the country, the two saltbox buildings are designated National Historic Landmarks.

The birthplaces property is composed of three principal spaces: the John Adams birthplace parcel, John Quincy Adams birthplace parcel, and the north lawn area. The John Adams birthplace parcel in the center of the property was once part of a larger farmstead area, but is now bounded on two sides by split-rail fences. A lilac grows in the front yard, and reflects the presence of lilacs described in the writings of Abigail Adams and visible in the earliest illustrations of the property in the 1800s. The John Quincy Adams birthplace parcel was also once part of a larger

farmstead area with outbuildings, but is now surrounded by a stone wall. The Quincy Historical Society built the stone wall in 1896 as part of an initiative to protect the homes and open them for public tours the following year. When John Adams and his family owned the land in the 1700s, the north lawn area likely contained sheds and barns as well as vegetable or fruit trees. The north lawn area was subdivided in the 1820s by John Quincy Adams, and by 1887 two large homes stood on small adjacent lots. The City of Quincy purchased the lots and removed the homes in 1958 but left the trees, some of which still shade the lawn. Collectively the three landscape spaces provide an open setting for the historic homes and reflect a commemorative landscape of walls, fences, shade trees, and shrubs that date to the late 1800s and early 1900s.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Members of the Massachusetts confederation of Native Americans occupied the Quincy area prior to the arrival of European settlers in the early 1600s. The Massachusett primarily relied on farming along the local waterways and in low-lying areas. The parcel of land that would later become the farmstead of multiple generations of the Adamses was situated along the Plymouth Road between the town's North and South Commons. Homesteaders, including the Needham, Belcher, and Penniman families, established clusters of homes along the road and delineated outlying agricultural fields with fences and walls. William Needham received twenty acres in 1639, and around 1675 sold his property to Joseph Penniman, who then passed the property to his son, James Penniman, in 1705. James Penniman built a home either to replace or add to an existing building between 1710 and 1720. In 1720 Deacon John Adams, the father of future president John Adams, purchased six acres from James Penniman, which included a barn, orchard, and the house where John Adams would be born. To the south, Gregory Belcher received fifty-two acres around 1639 and passed the property to his son, Samuel Belcher in 1663. The Belchers built a home at that time, which was rebuilt in about 1716 and later became the birthplace of John Quincy Adams. After passing through several owners, Deacon John Adams purchased this dwelling and property in 1744. Although the acreage and ownership of the Penn's Hill farm changed over time, the two birthplaces would remain in the Adams family for almost 200 years.

During the eighteenth century, the population of Braintree swelled as shipbuilding and fishing industries flourished along the coastline. Further inland, small businesses relied on local streams for water power to process grains and manufacture goods. Deacon John Adams and his wife Susanna Boylston raised three sons in their first home. The eldest, John Adams (Jr.) was born in 1735 and aspired to become a farmer, but his parents preferred that he study law. Graduating from Harvard in 1755, John divided his time between his family farm and his emerging profession as a lawyer, writer, and orator. Following his father's death in 1761, his mother resided in the birthplace home and John inherited a portion of his father's landholdings, including the adjacent home and approximately forty acres. In 1764, John married Abigail Smith and they resided in the home and raised four children, including the eldest, John Quincy Adams, who was born in 1767. Throughout the mid and late 1700s, the Adamses increased their landholdings in Braintree, a portion of which became Quincy in 1792. At the same time, John's political career flourished, including two terms as George Washington's Vice President and as the country's second President from 1797 to 1801.

Like his father, John Quincy Adams maintained a life-long connection with the Penn's Hill farm and birthplace homes. He purchased the farm from his father in 1803, which at that time consisted of approximately one hundred acres, three houses, three barns, five woodlots, two pasture lots, and a salt marsh. After his childhood years, he returned to his birthplace home with his wife Louisa and children during the summers of 1805 and 1806. Thereafter, the house was leased to tenant farmers. Abigail Adams died in 1818 and John Adams died in 1826. John Adams John Quincy Adams's political career drew him to Europe and Washington, D. C. in his later years, including his term as U.S. President from 1825 to 1829, hence the property management was passed to their youngest son. When John Quincy Adams and Louisa returned for short periods to Quincy, they spent most of their time at their Mount Wollaston farm, which encompassed over 600 acres in North Quincy in the area known as Merrymount. John Quincy Adams left an enduring signature on the Quincy landscape by planting numerous shade trees on his properties, some of which are still standing.

Charles Francis Adams inherited the 200-acre Penn's Hill farm, birthplaces, and associated farm buildings and the Mount Wollaston farm upon his father's death in 1848 and retained the properties and continued farm operations. He leased the farm to several tenant families, including Charles Spear, who made major improvements to the farmland to increase hay production and raise dairy cows. Many other farms disappeared in Quincy, as the population more than doubled during the late 1800s due to the growing boot, shoe, quarry, and ship building industries and the rail line that allowed Quincy to serve as a suburb of Boston.

Following the death of Charles Francis Adams in 1886, his heirs transferred ownership of his properties to the Adams

Real Estate Trust and sold most of the Penn's Hill farm to residential developers, retaining only a 0.34-acre parcel with the birthplaces. Recognizing the significance of the Adams family as Quincy natives and nationally significant figures, the city established the Quincy Historical Society in 1893 and appointed Charles Francis Adams, Jr. as its first president. The society restored the John Quincy Adams house to an earlier appearance, raised the house about two feet to meet the new street level, rebuilt a stone wall, and reconstructed a well. The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution managed the John Adams house, and installed a post and rail fence, turnstile, and a flagpole. Both homes opened to the public in 1897. For the next forty years the sites remained relatively unchanged, while the City of Quincy grew at a fast pace due to the proliferation of jobs, housing, and automobiles.

The City of Quincy acquired the birthplaces in 1940 and funded capital improvements and maintenance for the property while local organizations managed public programs. The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution continued to manage the John Adams birthplace until 1950, when they passed their responsibilities to the Quincy Historical Society. The City purchased two adjacent house lots situated to the north of the John Adams birthplace in the 1950s and removed the two houses, which enlarged the site from a 0.34 to a 0.72-acre parcel and expanded the setting for the birthplaces. In the 1960s the birthplaces were designated National Historic Landmarks and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. By the mid-1970s, the sites received approximately 9,400 visitors a year. Due to the increasing fiscal burden of maintaining the birthplaces on the city, the Quincy Historical Society lobbied for the transfer to the National Park Service, which had been managing the nearby Peace field property since 1946.

The National Park Service received the birthplace properties in 1979 and for the next four years restored the interiors the buildings, reopening them to the public in 1984. The park carried out minor changes in the landscape based on research recommendations in the 1979 Historic American Building Survey and the 1993 draft Historic Structures Report. The City of Quincy also completed alterations to the landscape surrounding the site, installing Kwanzan cherry street trees in the early 1990s and replacing the Franklin Street sidewalk in 2012. The birthplaces site currently receives approximately 120,000 visitors a year.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams are National Historic Landmarks and derive their primary significance in the area of politics/government for their association with John Adams and John Quincy Adams. John Adams was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, principal author of the U.S. Constitution, first Vice President, and second President of the United States. His son John Quincy Adams served as the country's sixth President.

Based on the research conducted for this report, the Adams birthplaces property possesses additional significance in the areas of politics/government, conservation, and architecture. The property is significant under Criterion B at the national level in the area of politics/government for its association with First Lady Abigail Adams. The property is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of conservation for encompassing the efforts of Charles Francis Adams and members of the Adams Real Estate Trust/Adams Memorial Society, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, and Quincy Historical Society who protected and managed the birthplaces. The property is significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of architecture for its late eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings and structures, including the John Quincy Adams house (1716), John Adams house (1720), and the stone wall and wood fence (1890s). Archeological significance under Criterion D is not addressed in this report.

The overall period of significance for the Adams birthplaces property begins in 1716, the approximate date when the John Quincy Adams house was rebuilt, and ends in 1940, when the Adams family transferred the property to the City of Quincy.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

Overall, the existing character of the Adams birthplaces landscape reflects the layers of historic development for the 1716–1940 period of significance. The property retains its location, design, historic materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, although the setting is diminished due to the continued growth of residential and commercial development around the property. The birthplaces and their furnishings, reflecting multiple generations of Adamses; the lilac in the front yard of the John Adams birthplace, the well stone, 1890s stone wall, split-rail fences, and late 1800s and early 1900s shade trees all remain, and fences and some trees have been replaced in-kind. The views of the property from Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue reflects the rural character as depicted in historic drawings

and photographs. The acquisition by the City of Quincy of the Craig and McCausland house lots increased the amount of open land and has helped preserve some of the site's rural character. Except for changes to the flagstone path between the two homes, the National Park Service has made very few alterations to the property since acquiring it in 1979.

Overall, the houses and landscape features are in good condition, as the park maintains preventative and cyclic maintenance schedules. The site shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The site's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Adams National Historical Park is divided into three landscapes: Peace field, the home of four generations of the Adams family; Beale Estate, home of Captain Beale from 1792-1825; and Adams birthplaces, the birthplace homes of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams.

Landscape Type:

Historic Site

Other Names:

Other Name:	Adams National Historical Park	**Other Name Type:**	Current
Other Name:	John Adams and John Quincy Adams Birthplaces	**Other Name Type:**	Current
Other Name:	Penn's Hill Farm	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	The Adams Houses	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Adams National Historic Site	**Other Name Type:**	Current

Site Plan



Site plan for Adams Birthplaces. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP--2014)

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/17/2014

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Information for this Cultural Landscape Inventory has been extracted from the 2014 “Cultural Landscape Report for Adams Birthplaces, Adams National Historical Park.” The Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was prepared by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston and written by Historical Landscape Architect Kirsten Holder, and Conservation Associates James Bertolini and Jaime Young. Site visits were conducted for the CLI and CLR in 2013 and 2014. The CLR used primary source material gathered from the park, Massachusetts Historical Society, Historic New England, Quincy Historical Society, Boston Public Library, and other repositories in the Boston area. Information was also extracted from the National Register documentation. The CLI was further edited by Senior Project Manager Margie Coffin Brown and the graphics prepared by Kirsten Holder at the Olmsted Center in 2014.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

September 19, 2014

Maryanne Gerbauckas
Associate Regional Director
Resource Stewardship
Northeast Region
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2878

RE: Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), Adams Birthplaces, Quincy

Dear Ms. Gerbauckas:

I am writing in response to your letter seeking Massachusetts Historical Commission concurrence with National Park Service determinations of eligibility for the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Adams Birthplaces landscape, Quincy, located within the Adams National Historical Park. Pursuant to Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), we have reviewed the CLI, and I concur with your findings of Adams Birthplaces landscape resources and features as contributing and noncontributing.

The signed statement of concurrence is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Cc: Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Superintendent, Adams National Historical Park

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

SHPO concurrence letter, September 19, 2014 (5 pages).

RECEIVED NPS
AUG 1 8 2014 BF
MASSHISTCOMM

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
United States Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1.A.2. (NER-RS)

JUL 1 8 2014

Ms. Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3314

Dear Ms. Simon:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for the Adams Birthplaces landscape located within Adams National Historical Park. We seek to reconfirm our agreement on previously evaluated resources and your concurrence on the status of previously unevaluated resources and features identified in this CLI for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report has been prepared by a team of historical landscape architects with the National Park Service (NPS) Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscapes that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For example, the NPS List of Classified Structures inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Adams National Historical Park was originally established as Adams Mansion National Historic Site on December 9, 1946 to preserve and protect Peace field, the 4.05-acre grounds, buildings, and personal

property of four generations of the Adams family. The name of the park was changed Adams National Historic Site on November 26, 1952 and enlarged multiple times: on April 11, 1972 by 3.68 acres with the acquisition of the adjacent Beale Estate; on November 10, 1978 by 0.72 acres with the addition of the birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams about 1.5 miles to the south; and on October 10, 1980 by 0.65 acres with the acquisition of the United First Parish Church. On November 2, 1998, the name of the park was changed to Adams National Historical Park to recognize the park's multiple sites. Additionally, in 1975 the Quincy City Council included the park's sites as part of two local historic districts: the Quincy Center Historic District (Peace field and the United First Parish Church) and the Adams Birthplace Historic District (birthplaces).

Prior to the National Park Service's acquisition in 1978, the birthplaces of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams were designated as National Historic Landmarks on December 19, 1960, under Theme XII: Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1830. The designation's accompanying National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form stated that the two houses were not architecturally noteworthy, but were significant in the lives of both John Adams and John Quincy Adams. The Adams birthplaces were administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

On April 3, 1978, two National Historic Landmark documentation forms for the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces were accepted. For the John Adams birthplace, significance was identified in the area of politics/government as the birthplace and boyhood home of John Adams for the period 1700-1799. Specific dates were listed as 1681 (the likely construction date of the original house at the site) and 1735 (the birth of John Adams in the house). The Statement of Significance in the John Adams documentation suggests a period of significance of 1735-1940, beginning with the birth of John Adams and ending with the transfer of the birthplace from the Adams family to the City of Quincy. For the John Quincy Adams birthplace, significance was identified in the area of politics/government as the home of two American presidents and the birthplace of one for the periods 1700-1799 and 1800-1899. Specific dates were listed as 1716 (the date an older house was replaced with the main portion of the current house), 1761-83 (the period when John Adams acquired and occupied the house and John Quincy Adams was born, in 1767), and 1803-07 (the period when John Quincy Adams purchased and lived in the house). The Statement of Significance in the John Quincy Adams documentation suggests a period of significance of 1761-1940, beginning when John Adams inherited the house from his father and ending with the transfer of the birthplace from the Adams family to the City of Quincy. In both nomination forms, the boundary description of the .70-acre property included both houses and surrounding open space because they were located on the same city lot.

On November 21, 1994, your office concurred with the National Park Service on the itemization of previously evaluated and unevaluated contributing resources in the park, as part of an update to the List of Classified Structures (LCS). Both houses were identified as contributing resources. Your office also recommended extending the end date of the period of significance to 1940 (the date the Adams family deeded the property the City of Quincy) to include changes made to the property by the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution in the 1890s. Although not specifically mentioned in the correspondence between your office and the NPS, this extension would include several features built or reconstructed by the Daughters of the Revolution in 1896-97: the stone wall, wood post fence, and well. As such, they were listed as contributing resources in the LCS.

The enclosed CLI for Adams birthplaces fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly the associated landscape characteristics and features, and finds that the site's landscape retains integrity to the areas of politics/government, conservation, and architecture. As noted previously, five of the property's features compiled on the attached list have been determined as eligible for listing in the National Register. The CLI identifies seven additional features related to spatial organization, vegetation, views and vistas, and small-scale features that also contribute to the significance and historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Adams Birthplaces
Adams National Historical Park

Adams National Historical Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Adams Birthplaces including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Adams Birthplaces is hereby approved and accepted.

Marianne Peak 9/17/14

Superintendent, Adams National Historical Park Date

Park concurrence form, September 17, 2014.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description, National Register Information and the Statement of Significance, and Analysis and Evaluation Summary in the enclosed CLI.

Based on the CLI, we seek to reconfirm our agreement on previously evaluated resources and your concurrence on the status of resources and features identified in this CLI:

- The Adams birthplaces property is nationally significant under Criterion B in the area of politics/government for its association with John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Abigail Adams.
- The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of conservation for the preservation of the property and under Criterion C in the architecture for both houses.
- The overall period of significance for the Peace field landscape is 1716-1940, beginning with the approximate date when the John Quincy Adams house was rebuilt, and ending in 1940 when the Adams family transferred the property to the City of Quincy.
- Overall, the Adams birthplaces landscape retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, but the setting has diminished due to adjacent development.
- The categorization of contributing and non-contributing landscape characteristics and features (see attached list).

If you concur with these findings, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator (Address: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 15 State Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02109). We would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to this inventory. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Killion at 617-223-5053.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Gerbauckas
Associate Regional Director
Resource Stewardship

Enclosure

cc:
Superintendent, Adams National Historical Park

I concur with the National Park Service categorizations of the Adams birthplaces landscape resources and features at Adams National Historical Park, as contributing and non-contributing.

Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer

9/19/14
Date

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory – Adams Birthplaces
Adams National Historical Park
List of Contributing, Non-Contributing, and Undetermined Landscape Features
July 2014

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the property's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places. Those marked with a (*) were documented in National Historic Landmark documentation forms on April 3, 1978. Those marked with a (+) were identified as contributing resources by the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office on November 21, 1994.

Spatial Organization
- North Lawn Area
- John Adams Birthplace and Grounds
- John Quincy Adams Birthplace and Grounds

Vegetation
- Specimen Trees around Birthplaces
- Trees in North Lawn

Buildings and Structures
- *+ John Adams Birthplace
- *+ John Quincy Adams Birthplace
- + Well
- + Stone Wall
- + Split-Rail Fence

Views and Vistas
- View of the Birthplaces from Franklin Street

Small-Scale Features
- Granite Steps and Cane Stand

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Vegetation
- Street Trees along Franklin Street
- Perimeter Shrubs
- Flower Garden

Circulation
- Flagstone Path
- Sidewalks on Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue

Small-scale Features
- Flagpole
- National Park Service Signs
- Benches

bcc:
Robert Page
Christine Arato
Jim Kendrick
Sara Wolf
Eric Breitkreutz

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Update Certification Form
2025

Adams National Historic Site
Adams Birthplaces and Peace field

Adams National Historic Site concurs with the updates for the following CLIs, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good – Adams Birthplaces
Good – Peace field

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI Updates at Adams National Historic Site are hereby approved and accepted.

Marianne Peak 5/30/25
Superintendent, Adams National Historic Site Date

Park concurrence form, May 30, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	05/30/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Adams Birthplaces CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Massachusetts	Norfolk County

Size (Acres): 0.72

Land Tract Number(s)

02-101

Boundary Description:

The Adams birthplaces property is typically described as covering 0.72 acres. A portion of the boundary description that follows comes from the National Register documentation and the City of Quincy property records information. The parcel is bounded by Franklin Street to the east and south, Presidents Avenue to the south and west, and residential and commercial lots to the north. The parcel is defined as three plots by the City of Quincy. Plot 1 contains the birthplaces, which stand about 75 feet apart on a .34 acre parcel. Plot 2 contained the former Craig house lot and is described as a .21 acre buffer area for the birthplaces. Plot 20 (also described as Plot 3) contained the former McCausland house lot just to the north and covers .17 acres.

The boundary line of Plot 1 (containing 14,695 square feet or .34 acre) surrounds the John Adams birthplace at 133 Franklin Street and John Quincy Adams birthplace at 141 Franklin Street is described as follows: From the northeast corner of the lot at Franklin Street, south 157.77 feet toward the intersection with Presidents Avenue, then 20.72 feet and 29.65 feet along the south boundary; 150.43 feet along the west boundary along Presidents Avenue, and 85.43 feet along the north boundary to the north corner of the John Adams house, then east 55.72 feet to Franklin Street.

The boundaries of 9,061-square foot or 0.21-acre Plot 2—an undeveloped parcel that extends between Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, just north of the John Adams birthplace—are as follows: From the northeast corner of the lot at Franklin Street, south 61.57 feet along Franklin Street to the northeast corner of Plot 1, then west 55.72 feet west to the north corner of the John Adams house, then 85.43 further west along the Plot 1 boundary line to Presidents Avenue, north 60 feet, east 77.70 feet along the property line of 56 Presidents Avenue, and east about 90 more feet to the northeast corner of the plot at Franklin Street.

The boundaries of the approximately 7,500 square foot or 0.17 acre Plot 20 are as follows: from the northeastern corner, south about 75 feet to the northeast corner of Plot 2, west about 100 feet to the corner of the developed property at 56 Presidents Avenue, north about 75 feet along the rear property line, and east about 100 feet along the property line shared with 115 Franklin Street (Hancock Appliance).

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
	Point	42.239359	-71.003505	

Location Map:



Map of the project site, Adams Birthplaces and other properties within the Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The large scale physical forms and patterns of the Adams birthplaces landscape are characteristic of the Massachusetts coastal lowland at the southern edge of the Boston Basin. The region is covered with glacial deposits and underlain with bedrock known as Cambridge Argillite. The most notable deposits are the many rounded drumlins, including Penn's Hill to the south and Pine's Hill to the southwest. Water courses flow between these hills, and depressions contain wetlands and ponds. Shallow, slow moving rivers become tidal as they approach the bays along Quincy's eastern shoreline. The Town Brook originates at the Quincy Reservoir and flows north and east not far from the site and eventually flows into the Town River Bay. The flat topography of the birthplaces property, not far from a brook, reflects its early settlement and agricultural history as a suitable location for an early farmstead.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

The general human overlay on the physical form of the Adams birthplaces landscape is characterized as dense suburban context, with commercial development and housing. The property is located less than a mile from Quincy Center, hence the feeling of the neighborhood is more urban than rural, with the constant din of traffic, buses, and nearby train lines and highways. Though Quincy offered productive farmland, by the mid-1800s the land became more valuable for residential and commercial development due to its proximity to Boston and the construction of new roads and railroads.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The political context for the Adams birthplaces property includes its jurisdiction, population, general land use, transportation, and zoning—including historic districts. The Adams birthplaces property is located within federally owned land in the City of Quincy in Norfolk County. Quincy had a population of 93,027 in 2012 and Norfolk County a population of 681,845 in 2012. Quincy is traversed by Route 93 to the west, Route 3 to the southwest, Furnace Brook Parkway to the north, and Quincy Shore Drive to the east. The community is also bisected by the MBTA Red Line and Commuter Rail Line. Zoning within the City of Quincy includes several types of business districts, residential districts, open space districts, and more. Many individual homes and institutions are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The birthplaces are within the locally designated Adams Birthplace Historic District.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/17/2014

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Adams birthplaces property meets the management category “Must be Preserved and Maintained” because it is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria. The preservation of the site was specifically legislated when it was added to the Adams National Historic Site on November 10, 1978: “In order to preserve for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations the birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, the Secretary is authorized to accept the conveyance, without monetary consideration, of the property known as the John Adams birthplace at 133 Franklin Street, and the property known as the John Quincy Adams birthplace at 141 Franklin Street, in Quincy, Massachusetts, together with such adjacent real property as may be desirable, for administration as part of the Adams National Historic Site…” (General Management Plan, December 1996: 50)

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are those lands outside of the boundaries of the park. The Adams birthplaces occupied less than one acre of land when transferred to the City of Quincy in 1940 and the National Park Service in 1978. The lands surrounding the parcel were once part of the Adams farm, but were sold for development by the Adams family well before 1940. Therefore, the adjacent lands do not contribute.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Inadequately Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

The park was designated as Adams Mansion National Historic Site on December 9, 1946, to preserve and protect Peace field, the 4.05-acre grounds, buildings, and personal property of four generations of the Adams family. The name of the park was changed Adams National Historic Site on November 26, 1952 and enlarged multiple times: on April 11, 1972 by 3.68 acres with the acquisition of the adjacent Beale Estate; on November 10, 1978 by 0.72 acres with the addition of the birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams about 1.5 miles to the south; and on October 10, 1980 by 0.65 acres with the acquisition of the United First Parish Church. On November 2, 1998, the name of the park was changed to Adams National Historical Park to recognize the park's multiple sites. Additionally, in 1975 the Quincy City Council included the park's sites as part of two local historic districts: the Quincy Center Historic District (Peace field and the United First Parish Church) and the Adams Birthplace Historic District (birthplaces).

Prior to the National Park Service's acquisition in 1978, the birthplaces of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams were designated as National Historic Landmarks on December 19, 1960, under Theme XII: Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1830. The designation's accompanying National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form stated that the two houses were not architecturally noteworthy, but were significant in the lives of both John Adams and John Quincy Adams. The Adams birthplaces were administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

On April 3, 1978, two National Historic Landmark documentation forms for the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces were accepted. For the John Adams birthplace, significance was identified in the area of politics/government as the birthplace and boyhood home of John Adams for the period 1700-1799. Specific dates were listed as 1681 (the likely construction date of the original house at the site) and 1735 (the birth of John Adams in the house). The Statement of Significance in the John Adams documentation suggests a period of significance of 1735-1940, beginning with the birth of John Adams and ending with the transfer of the birthplace from the Adams family to the City of Quincy. For the John Quincy Adams birthplace, significance was identified in the area of politics/government as the home of two American presidents and the birthplace of one for the periods 1700-1799 and 1800-1899. Specific dates were listed as 1716 (the date an older house was replaced with the main portion of the current house), 1761-83 (the period when John Adams acquired and occupied the house and John Quincy Adams was born, in 1767), and 1803-07 (the period when John Quincy Adams purchased and lived in the house). The Statement of Significance in the John Quincy Adams documentation suggests a period of significance of 1761-1940, beginning when John Adams inherited the house from his father and ending with the transfer of the birthplace from the Adams family to the City of Quincy. In both nomination forms, the boundary description of the .70-acre property included both houses and surrounding open space because they were located on the same city lot.

On November 21, 1994, the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the National Park Service on the itemization of previously evaluated and unevaluated contributing resources in the park, as part of an update to the List of Classified Structures (LCS). Both houses were identified as contributing resources. The SHPO also recommended extending the end date of the period of significance to 1940 (the date the Adams family deeded the property the City of Quincy) to include changes made to the property by the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution in the 1890s. Although not specifically mentioned in correspondences between the SHPO and the NPS, this extension would include several features built or reconstructed by the Daughters of the Revolution in 1896-97: the stone wall, wood post fence, and well. As such, they were listed as contributing resources in the LCS.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the areas of significance for the Adams birthplaces property is adequately documented in existing National Register documentation and SHPO determinations for its association with John Adams and John Quincy Adams. However, the property's period of significance, and additional areas of significance associated with Abigail Adams, politics/government, conservation, and architecture are not adequately documented. The existing documentation adequately describes a majority of the site's historic resources that contribute to its significance, with the exception of several features related to spatial organization, vegetation, views and vistas, and small-scale features. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the Adams birthplaces property is considered "Entered-Inadequately Documented."

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 09/19/2014

Concurrence Narrative:

The Massachusetts SHPO concurred with the findings of this report on September 19, 2014. They had no additional comments on the report.

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Individual

Classification: Site

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams are National Historic Landmarks and derive their primary significance in the area of politics/government for their association with John Adams and John Quincy Adams. John Adams was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, principal author of the U.S. Constitution, first Vice President, and second President of the United States. His son John Quincy Adams served as the country's sixth President.

Based on the research conducted for this report, the Adams birthplaces property possesses additional significance in the areas of politics/government, conservation, and architecture. The property is significant under Criterion B at the national level in the area of politics/government for its association with First Lady Abigail Adams. The property is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of conservation for encompassing the efforts of Charles Francis Adams and members of the Adams Real Estate Trust/Adams Memorial Society, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, and Quincy Historical Society who protected and managed the birthplaces. The property is significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of architecture for its late eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings and structures, including the John Quincy Adams house (c.1716), John Adams house (c.1720), and the stone wall and wood fence (1890s). Archeological significance under Criterion D is not addressed in this report.

The overall period of significance for the property begins in 1716, the approximate date when the John Quincy Adams house was rebuilt, and ends in 1940, when the Adams family transferred the property to the City of Quincy.

CRITERION A

Conservation:
The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the local level in the area of conservation from 1848 to 1940 as an early example of the Historic Preservation Movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Charles Francis Adams, the son of John Quincy Adams, managed the birthplaces property and inherited it from his father in 1848. Although he did not reside at the birthplaces, he retained them as part of the family's extensive real estate holdings and continued to lease the two homes until his death in 1886. His son, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., took a leading role in establishing the Quincy Historical Society in 1893, and with his siblings and relatives formed the Adams Real Estate Trust, later named the Adams Memorial Society. Charles also leased the two homes, but then transferred management of the property to the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution (John Adams birthplace) and the Quincy Historical Society (John Quincy Adams birthplace) in 1896. The homes and grounds were restored and opened for public viewing shortly after.

The Adams family preservation efforts fit the late nineteenth and early twentieth century trends in the historic preservation movement, which emphasized cultural legacies by preserving homes and associated buildings. Family groups often formed small preservation associations. For example, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association was formed in 1853 to preserve President George Washington's estate, emphasizing the property as a symbol of American patriotism. During the early to mid-twentieth century several presidential sites were preserved, including the cabin where President Abraham Lincoln was born, and the homes of Franklin Pierce, Andrew Johnson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Preservation efforts by the Adams family were unique because the descendants, beginning with Charles Francis Adams, worked to protect their family's landholdings. Members of the Adams Real Estate Trust, which included Charles Francis Adams Jr., Henry Adams, Mary Adams Quincy, and Brooks Adams, managed the birthplaces and sold off much of the Penn's Hill farm. The trust retained the two birthplaces, removed some of the outbuildings, and leased the houses to tenants. With a limited income, the Quincy Historical Society and Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution were able to maintain the homes and opened them for public tours in 1897. By 1940, the organizations could no longer maintain the structures, and the buildings passed to the City of Quincy. The homes were transferred to the National Park Service in 1979. (CLR 2014: 158)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CRITERION 2 / NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION B

Association with John Adams:
The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the national level in the area of politics/government for its association with John Adams, a significant political and literary figure of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. John Adams served as the nation's first Vice President from 1789 to 1797 and the nation's second President from 1797 to 1801. John inherited their home, later known as the John Quincy Adams birthplace, in 1761. In 1774 he purchased the house in which he was born from his younger brother, Peter Boylston Adams. The Penn's Hill farm property included approximately ninety-five acres of associated land to the north and south of the house, most of which was under cultivation or used for grazing livestock. The site of the homes are associated with the John Adams period of ownership, and possibly the granite thresholds and well stone. Lilacs also persist at the site. (CLR 2014: 158)

While residing in the home where his children were born, John Adams used the old kitchen as his law office from 1764 to 1774 and drafted the Massachusetts Constitution, which became a model for the Federal Constitution, of which he was the principal author. While John Adams was living and working away from home, he and his wife Abigail Adams wrote journal entries and frequent letters to one another. Exchanging over one thousand letters, their correspondence included descriptions of every day events, walks around the farm, new plants, as well as questions about how to manage the farm. (CLR 2014: 157-58)

Association with Abigail Adams:
The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the national level in the area of politics/government for its association with Abigail Adams, who was the country's second First Lady and the mother the country's sixth President. She was a prolific writer, sending detailed correspondence to her husband John and other friends including Thomas Jefferson that detailed life in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century America. Abigail's primary association with the landscape was with the Penn's Hill Farm operations, particularly during the American Revolution when John Adams was away in Philadelphia and abroad, leaving Abigail to manage the family, home (John Quincy Adams birthplace), and farm. Abigail and her eldest son John Quincy Adams witnessed and wrote about the Battle of Bunker Hill as seen from the top of Penn's Hill in 1775, and described this event in a letter to John Adams. In addition, she tended a garden and fruit trees, and planted lilacs near the house. (CLR 2014: 157-59)

Association with John Quincy Adams:
The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the national level in the area of politics/government for its association with John Quincy Adams, the nation's sixth President from 1825 to 1829. John Quincy Adams also served in the Senate and the House of Representatives, where he spoke out forcefully against slavery and in favor of a strong federal government. He was born in the home at Penn's Hill Farm in 1767 and spent his formative years there. Once married, he and his wife, Louisa Catherine Adams, made Peace field their summer home from 1826 to 1848, and only resided at his birthplace home for two summers.

John Quincy was seven years old when the American Revolution began. His mother, Abigail Adams, took him to the summit of Penn's Hill to witness the burning of Charlestown during the Battle of Bunker Hill. John Quincy was an avid horticulturist and in the early 1800s began planting trees on the Penn's Hill farm and Peace field properties. He wrote frequent journal entries about the birthplaces and surrounding farmland until his death in 1848, extending the detailed documentation of the property into the mid-nineteenth century. At the birthplaces property, only the homes remain from the John Quincy and Louisa Catherine period of ownership, and possibly the granite threshold steps and well stone. (CLR 2014: 157-59)

First Lady Louisa Catherine Adams was a significant political and literary figure of the nineteenth century. However, she only spent two summers living in the John Quincy Adams birthplace and wrote several letters during her stay. She frequently traveled with John Quincy Adams for his appointments to Prussia, Russia, France, and England. (CLR 2014: 159)

CRITERION C

Architecture—Colonial Style:
The Adams birthplaces property is significant at the local level under Criterion C from 1716 to 1940 for its surviving examples of late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century architecture in Massachusetts. The original home on the site of the John Quincy Adams birthplace was built around 1660 by William Ellis, and the original home on the John Adams birthplace was built between 1660–1710 by William Needham or James Penniman. Penniman likely rebuilt the house and added a lean-to at the rear (north side) of the John Adams birthplace before he sold the house and farm to Deacon John Adams (father of John Adams) in 1720. According to recent dendrochronological analysis, the home on the John Quincy Adams birthplace site was likely rebuilt in about 1716 before Deacon John Adams acquired the property in 1744, which he leased to various tenants. In 1750 Deacon John Adams expanded the lean-to at the rear of the John Adams birthplace across the entire back of the house, thus creating a saltbox profile. John Adams inherited the future John Quincy Adams house in 1761 and lived in the house until he and Abigail Adams purchased Peace field. John Quincy Adams was born in this house in 1767 and later lived in the house with his wife and children for a couple years. John Adams also used the home as his law office and drafted the Massachusetts Constitution, which was ratified in 1780.

Following the death of Charles Francis Adams in 1886, his heirs transferred ownership of his properties to the Adams Real Estate Trust and sold most of the Penn's Hill farm to residential developers, retaining only a 0.34 acre parcel that encompassed the two birthplaces. The Quincy Historical Society was established in 1893 to preserve and promote Quincy history, and oversaw the repairs to the John Quincy Adams birthplace in 1896. This work included new board siding, a new roof, reopening of the fireplace, new paint, and raising of the house two feet to meet the new street level. After years of tenant occupancy, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution restored the John Adams birthplace in 1897, installing new windows, opening the chimney, removing interior walls, and applying new paint. Preservation and maintenance by the two groups continued until 1940, when the birthplaces property was transferred to the City of Quincy in 1940. (CLR 2014: 159-160)

National Register Significance Criteria:

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1716 - CE 1940

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Colonial (1600-1730)	

Time Period: CE 1735 - CE 1848

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs 1783-1860	Early Federal Period, 1789-1800	
Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs 1783-1860	Jeffersonian Period, 1800-1811	
Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs 1783-1860	Post-War Nationalism, 1816-1828	

Time Period: CE 1848 - CE 1940

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	Formative Years, 1796 -1858: The Destruction Of Green Springs To The Saving Of Mount Vernon And The Hasbrouck House, Patriotism And Preservation	
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	Regional Efforts: New England, 1860-1900: Regionalism And Preservation; Private Historical Societies; Society For The Preservation Of New England Antiquities	
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	The Federal Government Enters The Movement	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	66000129
Primary Certification Date:	04/03/1978
NRIS ID:	66000128
Primary Certification Date:	04/03/1978
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	QUI.M
Name:	John Adams Birthplace
Listed Date:	07/18/1972
Identification Number:	QUI.AC
Name:	John Quincy Adams Birthplace (John Adams House)
Listed Date:	06/15/1971

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? Yes

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1600 - 1634	Inhabited	Massachusetts Indians occupy the Neponset estuary, including present-day Braintree and Quincy.
CE 1634	Inhabited	The town of Boston annexes the area as “Mount Wollaston” to expand its shrinking land supply. The first settlers arrive in the Quincy area, mostly of English descent.
CE 1635	Purchased/Sold	Massachusetts Bay Colony grants tracts of land to Edmund Quincy and William Coddington.
CE 1648	Built	The road to Plymouth is completed, providing easy transport between Boston through Braintree (and Quincy) and Plymouth.
CE 1660	Built	William Ellis builds a dwelling on the site of John Quincy Adams’ (JQA) birthplace.
CE 1660	Purchased/Sold	William Ellis sells his land, including dwelling house, to Gregory Belcher.
CE 1663	Land Transfer	Gregory Belcher gives the future JQA birthplace to his son Samuel, who presumably farms the lot for crops and livestock. Samuel constructs the core of what became the JQA birthplace at this time.
CE 1675	Purchased/Sold	William Needham sells a portion of his tract to Joseph Penniman, including his house, about seven acres of land, and all structures.
CE 1679	Land Transfer	Samuel Belcher dies, passing interest in the 52-acre farm to his brother Deacon Gregory Belcher. The property includes a “Dwelling house Barn Orchard & Land adjoining.”
CE 1679 - 1727	Built	Deacon Gregory Belcher lives at the farm with his family. He is likely responsible for developing much of the JQA birthplace as it stands now. “This phase of building likely produced a two-story, two-room wide, one-room deep house with a large central chimney.”
CE 1705	Land Transfer	Joseph Penniman passes away, dividing his Braintree holdings.
CE 1710 - 1720	Built	During this time James Penniman, son of Joseph, constructs the house that is now the John Adams (JA) birthplace.
CE 1712	Built	James Penniman adds a lean-to onto the JA birthplace around this time.
CE 1716	Built	Deacon Gregory Belcher rebuilds and expands the JQA birthplace house.
CE 1720	Purchased/Sold	Deacon John Adams purchases the JA birthplace and property from James Penniman.
CE 1727	Land Transfer	Deacon Gregory Belcher dies, passing the 52-acre tract near Penn’s Hill to his three sons. Around 9.5 acres and the JQA birthplace pass to Gregory Belcher, Jr.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1728	Land Transfer	Gregory Belcher, Jr. passes away, his wife following soon after. Their daughter Abigail Belcher becomes the property owner of the JQA birthplace at the age of eight. The property includes nine acres, a house, and a barn.
CE 1728 - 1734	Altered	Tenants lease the JQA birthplace from the Belcher family. They fence in the yard and make repairs to the house and barn.
CE 1731	Land Transfer	Joseph Adams (Deacon John Adams' father) dies, leaving to his son "Twelve acres of Fresh meadow and upland at the East End of my [Joseph Adams'] Home Lot adjoining to his own Lands."
CE 1742	Purchased/Sold	Abigail Belcher marries Samuel Nightingale, and sells the JQA birthplace to Lewis Vassal.
CE 1744	Purchased/Sold	Deacon John Adams purchased the JQA birthplace dwelling and property.
CE 1750	Built	By 1750, Deacon John Adams expands the lean-to across the entire back of the house, presenting a "saltbox" profile. Sometime after this, Deacon Adams builds a shed on the north end of the site.
CE 1755	Inhabited	John Adams graduates from Harvard's law school and continues to live at the North Braintree farm until his father's death in 1761.
CE 1761	Land Transfer	Deacon John Adams dies of influenza and his holdings are distributed. The first listed house (JA birthplace) and thirty-five acres pass to his son Peter Boylston Adams. The second house (JQA birthplace) and ten acres pass to his son John Adams.
CE 1762	Farmed/Harvested	John Adams contracts with others and labors himself to clear the swamp, build stone walls and rail fences. He ploughs, plants, and prunes, digging up meadow and clearing brush. Apples, clover, English grasses, potatoes, corn, cabbage, and onions are among his crops. He mends fences, digs ditches, carts gravel, uproots stumps, and engages in every type of task to improve the land.
CE 1764	Inhabited	After marrying Abigail Smith, John Adams moves to the JQA birthplace, leaving Peter Boylston Adams at the JA birthplace. By this time the building includes a full lean-to. John Adams likely adds a small shed to the existing lean-to.
CE 1772	Inhabited	The John Adams family leaves the JQA birthplace to live in Boston, turning over occupancy to John Adams' father-in-law John Hall and wife Susannah Hall.
CE 1774	Purchased/Sold	Peter Boylston Adams sells the JA birthplace to his brother John Adams.
CE 1777	Planted	Abigail Adams notes that English grasses grow plentifully. Farm also produces milk, apples, pork, beef, garden vegetables.
CE 1777	Planted	Abigail Adams plants a flax crop.
CE 1778	Inhabited	Abigail Adams removes tenants from house, reducing occupancy to her two children and two domestic servants.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1778 - 1792	Inhabited	Matthew and James Pratt lease the John Adams farm from Abigail Adams. Their tenancy entitles Abigail to half of the brothers' produce each year.
CE 1779	Damaged	Drought and storm destroy crops.
CE 1780	Damaged	Severe drought decimates grass, corn and gardens.
CE 1784	Inhabited	Abigail leaves the home in the care of Pheby and William Abdee, including the dwelling house, furniture, outbuildings, garden and all its fruits. Mr. Pratt manages the farm.
CE 1787	Purchased/Sold	The Adams family purchases the Vassall-Borland property, now known as Peace field, splitting their time between the development of the birthplaces and Peace field.
CE 1788	Purchased/Sold	The Adams family purchases the forty-six-acre homestead of William and Sarah Vesey which extends their farm up the Plymouth Road to the north.
CE 1792	Established	Partially due to historical splits between Loyalists and Revolutionaries, the North Precinct of Braintree separates and incorporates as the town of Quincy, named for Col. John Quincy, Abigail Adams' grandfather.
CE 1793	Established	Norfolk County is established, and Quincy becomes a part of the new county.
CE 1795 - 1796	Built	John Quincy Adams lays foundation for a barn to be raised "at the East End of my Fathers barn." New barn is raised, boarded, and shingled.
CE 1796	Cultivated	Bushes are cleared, white oaks trimmed, and other trees cut in preparation for corn fields.
CE 1797	Inhabited	An inventory of John Adams' real estate this year includes the Vesey Farm purchased in 1788. It includes a house and outbuildings on the west side of the road just north of the JA birthplace.
CE 1800	Preserved	Outside of house painted stone color, garden fence repaired.
CE 1803	Purchased/Sold	John Adams sells the farm to John Quincy Adams. The holdings included the land willed to him by his father, the land he purchased from Peter Boylston Adams, and three additional lots. Total amounts to about 108 acres and includes three houses, three barns, and all other buildings, fields, pastures, orchards, woodlots, and salt marshes.
CE 1803	Built	Neponset Turnpike and Bridge opens, improving access between Boston and Quincy.
CE 1804 - 1806	Inhabited	April 1804 to November 1806, John Quincy Adams and his wife Louisa Catherine Adams and their children reside at the JQA birthplace, managing the entire Penn's Hill Farm containing about 91 acres.
CE 1804	Planted	John Quincy Adams plants an orchard of nearly 100 trees.
CE 1804	Damaged	Violent storm causes extensive damage to trees, part of barn roof blown away.
CE 1804	Inhabited	John Briesler continues to lease the Adams farm and builds a corn house.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1805 - 1810	Inhabited	Thomas Boylston Adams marries Ann Harrod. For financial reasons, the couple moves into the Old House at Peacefield. He maintains a small law firm out of the house behind the Old House but at some point moved his practice to the JA birthplace.
CE 1805	Planted	John Quincy Adams plants peach, pear, apple, and cherry trees.
CE 1810 - 1819	Inhabited	Thomas Boylston Adams leases the JA birthplace from his brother John Quincy Adams, making interior changes and altering the size and design of the front door.
CE 1820	Inhabited	Thomas Boylston Adams vacates the JA birthplace by this year, being the last of the Adams family to live at the birthplaces.
CE 1821 - 1830	Inhabited	Adam Curtis leases the JA birthplace. His brother Samuel joins them the following year and the two run a cordwaining (shoe-repair) shop out of the property. Both leave by 1830.
CE 1824 - 1827	Inhabited	John Faxon rents the JQA birthplace from John Quincy Adams. The Faxons ran sheep and a mutton butcher off of the property.
CE 1824	Preserved	John Adams and John Quincy Adams visit their birthplaces together. John Adams requests his birthplace be painted white.
CE 1825	Inhabited	A tenant of the JQA birthplace operates an apothecary out of the building.
CE 1826	Purchased/Sold	John Adams dies and declares John Quincy Adams and Josiah Quincy as the estate's executors. John Quincy Adams purchases most of the estate.
CE 1829	Damaged	A fire damages the JQA birthplace.
CE 1829	Purchased/Sold	John Quincy Adams surveys and sells a half-acre of land at the foot of Penn's Hill along the Plymouth Road to sell to Samuel Curtis. This lot is immediately south of that purchased by Nathaniel White 3 years earlier. Samuel's brother Adam builds a house a short distance from the JA birthplace.
CE 1829	Platted	John Quincy Adams surveys his land and finds errors in the 1803 deed with regards to the properties purchased by Briesler and Vesey; his acreage amounts to 91 but should be 108.
CE 1830	Developed	Dwellings start to appear along Franklin Street, signaling the beginning of a transition from a farmscape to a residential streetscape, reflecting the larger industrial development of Quincy supplanting the agricultural uses.
CE 1830	Planned	John Quincy Adams decides to advertise his two houses and considers how to split up the parcels.
CE 1831	Purchased/Sold	John Quincy Adams sells 1/3 of an acre of land to Joseph.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1833	Planted	John Quincy Adams begins gathering and planting horse chestnuts, hickory, and elm seeds at both the Penn's Hill valley and Mount Wollaston farms. He also plants some buttonwood (sycamore) and maple seeds from Philadelphia.
CE 1833	Inhabited	'Sukey' Burrell keeps a private school around this time in the John Adams house.
CE 1835	Neglected	Charles Francis Adams inspects the property owned by his father, noting "The houses are old and the barns decayed."
CE 1836	Purchased/Sold	John Quincy Adams sells roughly a quarter of an acre to Benjamin F. Curtis on a parcel just north of the John Adams birthplace.
CE 1836	Preserved	John Quincy Adams notes two surviving trees from his 1804 planting, one in the garden and one at the northwest corner of the garden adjoining the JA birthplace, which his brother transplanted from the garden to this location in 1811.
CE 1838	Developed	Charles Francis Adams pays Deacon W. Spear for clearing the land below the house.
CE 1840 - 1859	Purchased/Sold	Charles Francis Adams begins purchasing many parcels of woodland, salt marsh, and pasture in South Quincy. Mostly concentrated by 1859, these purchases result his ownership of a good portion of South Quincy and the large extent of Adams Real Estate Trust holdings by the 1880s.
CE 1841	Rehabilitated	August 28: traveled to the Penn's hill farm to "note the progress made by the carpenters. They have nearly done, and it must be confessed the houses look better for the change."
CE 1841 - 1868	Inhabited	Charles Spear and his family reside at the John Adams birthplace. They run a dairy at the farm during which time the property consists of 86 acres that extended west to Center Street.
CE 1848	Land Transfer	John Quincy Adams dies and leaves to his wife the house in which they reside, the farm, and all its accessories, including rental income. The remainder of his estate goes to son Charles Francis Adams.
CE 1850	Expanded	Charles Francis Adams expands the northern shed into a larger gabled ell around this time.
CE 1860	Farmed/Harvested	A committee of the Norfolk Agricultural Society notes many fine, and some rare species of trees on the birthplaces properties, planted by the ancestors of the proprietor. The committee also mentions Charles Spear, tenant farmer, has made great improvements to the farm, increasing the arable land, grass growth, hay production, and the main produce, dairy.
CE 1861	Developed	A horse railway is incorporated into the transportation network, running from the foot of Penn's Hill north to Field's Corner in Boston.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1865	Purchased/Sold	Charles F. Adams conveys to George L. Baxter “a parcel of land containing 11070 sq. ft. Bounded: Beginning at the [ill.] westerly part of the land of said Adams on the northerly side of Franklin Ave. East on said avenue 120 feet, thence turning at a right angle running Northerly 184.5 feet to a fence on Faxon heir line, thence Southerly 220 feet to front of beginning.
CE 1882	Land Transfer	The Adams family begins subdividing the land belonging to the two birthplaces properties. As a result, most of the farm buildings except the two birthplaces are removed.
CE 1884	Land Transfer	Charles Francis Adams deeds most of Penn’s Hill Farm to his son, Charles Francis Adams, Jr. or to the Adams Real Estate Trust. Though the deed does not describe the landscape, it does mention the splitting of many of these holdings into subdivisions.
CE 1886	Land Transfer	In an inventory of Charles Francis Adams’ estate, he holds among other properties: “2 Houses and a quarter of an acre on Franklin Street, with accompanying Barn and Buildings.”
CE 1887	Land Transfer	On January 15, following the death of Charles Francis Adams, his heirs create the Adams Real Estate Trust to manage his estate including the Adams birthplaces and the land surrounding them. They begin selling much of the land that accompanied the property. They take down or move the outbuildings and move a horse stable off the site.
CE 1892	Neglected	An article in the Boston Evening Transcript complains of the JQA birthplace being in shambles.
CE 1893	Established	Citizens establish the Quincy Historical Society, with Charles Francis Adams, Jr. as its president.
CE 1894	Built	The City of Quincy constructs President’s Avenue around this time, which today bounds the remaining land to the west.
CE 1896	Inhabited	The Quincy Historical Society moves its headquarters in to the JQA birthplace.
CE 1896	Inhabited	Charles Francis Adams Jr. agrees to the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution’s proposal to use the JA birthplace as their meeting house.
CE 1896 - 1897	Restored	Charles Francis Adams, Jr. agrees to restore the JQA birthplace. William Gardener Spear oversees the restoration of the house, which includes a split post and rail fence donated by Mrs. Titus of the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution. In her speech, she also mentions the grading of the lawn.
CE 1897	Established	On March 4, the Quincy Historical Society opens the JQA birthplace to visitors as a house museum.
CE 1897	Established	The Adams Chapter D.R. opens the JA Birthplace to visitors. They subsequently use the property for their meetings, renovating it for the purpose.
CE 1900	Developed	By 1900, there are nearly a dozen quarries established upon the hill to the north of Penn’s Valley along Quarry Street.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1904	Maintained	The Quincy Historical Society begins employing a caretaker to “clean, repair, and show the house for visitors.”
CE 1905	Developed	At this time, the Birthplaces lot covers about 15,000 square feet. A street car line is installed along Franklin Street in the early 1900s.
CE 1926	Built	The Adams Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution install a new steel flagpole to the southwest of the JA birthplace in the center of the lawn area.
CE 1936	Altered	By this time, the original well is filled in with stones. A pathway extends across the site from Franklin Street to Presidents Avenue.
CE 1937	Preserved	At this time, the birthplace homes are still painted red.
CE 1940	Land Transfer	On June 18 the Quincy Historical Society/Adams Real Estate Trust transfers the birthplaces to the City of Quincy. The Quincy Historical Society continues to manage the JQA birthplace and the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution manage the JA birthplace.
CE 1946	Established	Adams Mansion National Historic Site is established on December 9, 1946, to preserve and protect the 4.05-acre grounds, buildings, and personal property of four generations of the Adams family.
CE 1950	Land Transfer	The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution can no longer manage the John Adams birthplace and transfer management to the Quincy Historical Society.
CE 1950 - 1951	Maintained	The City of Quincy repairs dry rot damage, termite damage, and improves structural beams at the JA birthplace. They also add electricity and plumbing.
CE 1951	Built	The City of Quincy adds flagstones between the two birthplaces and plants trees, shrubs, and spring-flowering bulbs.
CE 1952	Established	The name of the park is changed Adams National Historic Site on November 26, 1952.
CE 1956 - 1957	Purchased/Sold	The City of Quincy purchases the Craig and McCausland lots, moves the homes, retains the trees, and seed the site. The acquisition increases the birthplaces property from .34 acre to .72 acre.
CE 1960	Established	Birthplaces are designated National Historic Landmarks.
CE 1970	Established	Birthplaces are listed in Quincy’s local historic district.
CE 1978	Established	Congress passes P.L. 95-625 on November 10th, allowing the National Park Service to acquire the birthplaces as part of Adams National Historic Site.
CE 1979	Land Transfer	On April 29, the birthplaces are transferred from the City of Quincy to the National Park Service.
CE 1990 - 1995	Planted	The City of Quincy plants Kwanzan cherry trees in the sidewalk along Franklin Street.
CE 1995	Removed	Around 1995, the park removes a Norway maple south of JQA birthplace near the intersection. The tree is not replaced.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1998	Established	On November 2, 1998, the name of the park is changed to Adams National Historical Park to recognize the park's multiple sites.
CE 2008	Built	The park installs new signs.
CE 2010	Removed	The park removes an unhealthy Norway maple along Presidents Avenue.
CE 2012	Built	City of Quincy replaces sidewalk in front of the JQA birthplace, removing some of the stone wall.

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Much of the information is extracted from the 2014 draft of the "Cultural Landscape Report for Adams Birthplaces, Adams National Historical Park."

EARLY HISTORY TO 1720

The first period includes the geological processes that formed the hills and valleys, the use of the area by Native Americans, and the arrival of European settlers. This period extends into the colonial period, when the Town of Boston issued land grants along the South Shore, and through the earliest landowners, Needham and Ellis. The period ends in 1720 with the two colonists, Penniman and Belcher, who owned the future birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams.

Pre-Contact History:
Quincy lays at the southern edge of the geologic and physiographic area known as the Boston Basin. The receding North American Laurentide ice sheet formed ground moraines, terminal moraines, and drumlins about 12,000 years ago. Spruce (Picea sp.) forests covered most of the Boston Basin 11,000 years ago, and by 9,000 years ago the land was dominated by pine (Pinus sp.) forests. By 8,000 years ago the forests contained oak (Quercus sp.) and other hardwoods. A warming climate and melting ice increased the sea level, flooding the basin and isolating high points in Boston Harbor. As the glaciers retreated north, the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset Rivers formed within the Boston Basin. In the Quincy area, drumlins punctuated the sandy outwash plains and ground moraines, while low points retained tidal marshes and inland swamps and ponds. (CLR 2014: 14)

Prior to Euro-American settlement, the Massachusett tribe of Native Americans inhabited the coastal area within the Boston Basin. The Massachusett relied on agriculture for the majority of their food, complimenting this with hunting, fishing, and gathering of nuts and berries from the surrounding region. Along the tributaries of what became Quincy's Town River, the Massachusett cleared fertile lowlands for crops, planted corn mounds with bean and squash varieties, and moved their farming settlements every few years as the soils depleted. (CLR 2014: 14)

The forests were dominated by oak but also included chestnut (Castanea sp.), maple (Acer sp.), and hickory (Carya sp.). The Massachusett frequently burned upland areas and created patches of meadow to attract game. They also removed underbrush for easy travel and hunting, which led to the dominance of fire-resistant trees like the oak and chestnut. In wet bottom lands such as the areas along Fresh Brook and the Town River, fires were less frequent, resulting in a forest with dense thickets and stands of red maple (Acer rubrum), American beech (Fagus grandifolia), ash (Fraxinus sp.), and alder (Alnus sp.). An early New England writer described their land management practices: "for it being the custome of the Indians to burne the wood in November, when the grasse is withered, and leaves dryed, it consumes all the underwood, and rubbish, which otherwise would over grow the Country, making it unpassable, and spoile their much affected hunting." Wet areas, protected from the fires, were a tangle of underbrush. This fluctuating mosaic of forest, meadow, and cropland persisted until the arrival of Europeans in the late sixteenth century. (CLR 2014: 14-15)

Most of the accounts of early European exploration along the New England coast describe encounters with local tribes. In 1602, Captain Bartholomew Gosnold made the first recorded English voyage to New England, where his recorder John Brereton noted "five Indians, in a barke-shallop with mast and saile, an iron grapple, and a kettle of copper, came boldly aboard us..." and several additional encounters, though none hostile. Over the next several years, several European voyages recorded contact with the local tribes, including Martin Pring in 1603, George Weymouth and Samuel Champlain in 1605, and John Smith and Thomas Hunt in 1614. The earliest accounts refer to large numbers of Indians inhabiting the coast of New England, especially around Massachusetts Bay. John Smith counted forty considerable settlements from the Penobscot River to Cape Cod, and often mentioned cleared corn fields. (CLR 2014: 15)

Between 1616 and 1618, Native Americans were devastated by an epidemic of European disease that swept through the coastal region. The disease, introduced by the early European expeditions, killed an estimated one to two thirds of the native population in New England, with local death rates of the Massachusett tribe as high as ninety percent. When the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in 1620, they described deserted villages, empty houses, and abandoned agricultural fields lying fallow. (CLR 2014:15)

Colonial Settlement and Land Grants:
The landscape of the future Penn's Hill farm of John Adams transitioned quickly after the founding of the Plymouth Colony in 1620 to the southeast and the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1628 in the present-day city of Boston to the north. Early explorers such as Captain Wollaston established trading posts among the surviving Massachusett Indians, including one at Passonagessit in 1625, near what is now called 'Merry Mount.' In 1635, the Boston General Court made efforts to purchase the land from the Massachusett tribe but "had some trouble in buying up the rights…of the Indians." Puritan colonists began actively converting the greatly diminished population of Native Americans at praying towns along the coast. The colonization of New England effectively removed the Native Americans of present-day Quincy into nearby, small communities by 1700. (CLR 2014: 15)

During the 1630s the town of Boston received a large influx of English immigrants, requiring the colony to expand. In 1634 the General Court noted that Boston was "too small to contain many" and that those living there were "constrained to take farms in the country" and could find "convenient enlargement at Mount Wollaston." A survey by Governor John Winthrop carried out in the previous year depicts the waterways to the south of Boston and an early overland route to the Plymouth Colony. In 1634, Mount Wollaston incorporated as part of the town of Boston and a ferry was established across the Neponset River. In this year, William Wood wrote about his travels in the Massachusetts Bay area and shared his own views of the newly-established settlement. Mount Wollaston was "a very fertile soil, and a place very convenient for farmers' houses, there being great store of plain ground without trees. Near this place is Massachusetts Fields, where the greatest sagamore in the country lived before the plague, who caused it to be cleared himself. The greatest inconvenience is that there are not very many springs, as in other places of the country, yet water may be had for digging. A second inconvenience is that boats cannot come in at a low water, nor ships ride near the shore." (CLR 2014: 15-16)

An "enlargement" of 365 acres of land in Mount Wollaston was initially granted to Reverend John Wilson. Further land grants followed in 1636 and 1637, and most of the Mount Wollaston bay-front passed to Atherton Hough, William Coddington, and Edmund Quincy. Later that year, Reverend John Wheelwright received 250 acres adjacent to Wilson and established the first meeting house for the settlement. Following these large land grants or "Great Lotts" the General Court issued many smaller lots to "the common people" as they continued to arrive from England. Generally allotments consisted of four acres per an individual. By the time Braintree was incorporated in 1640, 105 allotments had been parceled out to 565 people, though not all were residing in the community. (CLR 2014: 16)

During the initial colonization of Mount Wollaston and later Braintree, Fresh Brook and the Town River influenced settlement patterns, with the marshes of Fresh Brook carving between Pine and Penn's Hill to the east and west and the area known as 'the Rock' to the north. The marshes surrounding the brook were "rich ground" that brought "plenty of hay, of which the cattle feed and like as if they were fed with the best upland hay in New England." Such rich grasslands grew "commonly between the marshes and the woods," joined in the valley west of Penn's Hill by an expansive open area named Captain's Plain by its first settlers. Plains such as this were dry sandy lowlands above the marshes with grass growing "as high as a man's middle, some as high as the shoulders," which provided "coarse fodder" for cattle. To the southwest was a prominent knob known as Pine Hill, dominated by red cedar. To the east, Penn's Hill (alternately called Payne's Hill) received its name from William Penn, a local landowner who established part of his homestead on its slopes. As water from Fresh Brook collected behind Richard Wright's dam, it created the Mill Pond, a swampy loop of meadow at the north end of Captain's Plain that surrounded the Island, a rise that split Fresh Brook into two forks before it rejoined at the Mill Dam. From here, water in the brook flowed north and east until emptying into the Town River by present-day Quincy Center. It is likely that the marshes along Fresh Brook extended from the salt marshes along the sea inland past what became the Adams birthplaces. Swamps were extensive, being "ten, some twenty, some thirty miles long, being preserved by the wetness of the soil wherein they grow." Above the plain and meadows, the landscape transitioned into rocky upland and forest." (CLR 2014: 16-18)

Due to the isolation of the land grants, a church or meeting house and a school house were integral to each settlement. Reverend Wheelwright is credited with erecting the first meeting house near a

small bridge and possibly near the Town River, but its exact location is unknown. The Church of Braintree formed in 1639, and was the fifteenth to be established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The following year, the community of Braintree incorporated, separating itself from Boston and establishing authority over land presently in Quincy, Braintree, Randolph, and Holbrook. By 1647, the General Court ordered the establishment of schoolhouses in every township. Braintree, however, did not establish a schoolhouse until 1697, when a one-room structure was built below Penn's Hill on what would become part of the Adams farm. (CLR 2014: 18)

In 1646 the town of Braintree established iron works along Furnace Brook near the future Adams property known as Peace field. Iron was one of the few essential building products that was not already available in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A substantial amount of timber was needed to sustain the furnace, and by 1653 the operation was too expensive and went bankrupt. Charles Francis Adams later remarked that the company failed as "every pound of iron made cost more than two pounds imported from Europe."
Initially the Mount Wollaston settlers relied on boats rather than roads to reach Boston. As the settlers pressed inwards and grew in number, roads and river crossings became a necessity. The colony's General Court ordered the construction of the "Country Highway" from Boston to Plymouth, built by the labor of those along it, to connect colonies by way of Braintree. Upon its completion in 1648, the road passed by the meeting house at a ford in the Town River. While sections of the road had to cut across wet areas with a tangle of underbrush that "swarmed with reptile life," the route generally traversed higher ground and areas cleared by homesteaders. It was common practice to plant shade trees along highways and roads in the Massachusetts Bay area, meaning that indigenous trees probably lined the Plymouth Road as it passed by the farms near Penn's Hill. Though passable, the road remained a rough route for several decades. Residents of South Braintree complained in 1695 that it was difficult to travel to the meeting house and "very irksome, especially in winter, to come so far as most of them came to meeting, and through such bad ways, whereby the Lord's day, which is a day of rest, was to them a day of labor rather." (CLR 2014: 18)

Though it is not clear precisely when Braintree established its commons, the North Commons, South Commons, and ministerial lands totaling 1,500 acres had been set aside by the end of the 1640s. Covering much of the upland from present day Adams Street south to near Fresh Brook's headwaters, the North Commons was a rocky pasture that provided timber and grazing land west of the Plymouth Road. The South Commons lay east of the road and covered most of the Penn's Hill upland with open, rocky woodland with at least two springs feeding streams that flowed off the hill's northern and western slopes. The commons provided valuable resources such as stone, timber, thatch, and pasture and in 1646 the town of Braintree passed a vote "authorizing legal inhabitants to take timber off the commons for any use in the town." (CLR 2014: 19)

Settlement of Fresh Brook and Penn's Hill Area:
Most early farmers in what later became Quincy received large parcels of land along the coast and along waterways such as Fresh Brook, which offered fertile, easily plowed, and well-watered land. Among the first grants made along the Fresh Brook was for a mill to process grains. As millers were a rarity in the colonies, towns frequently offered prime land and a monopoly on milling to attract a specialist. In February of 1640, Richard Wright received from the town of Boston "a narrow piece of land lying at Mount Wollaston between the Rocks and the Fresh brooke," at which he established a small grist mill. Wright received the land and a portion of the grain he milled in return for operating what was, in many respects, a public service. Lying adjacent to lands that would become part of the Adams' family farm, the transfer describes the land given to Wright as a meadow "situated on both sides of the Fresh Brook" that was "undoubtedly good mowing land." The low flow rate of Fresh Brook compelled Wright to construct a dam that created Mill Pond, a marsh on the west end of Wright's land. The pond allowed Wright to control the flow of the brook and store enough water power to grind when needed. (CLR 2014: 19)

The same year, other settlers joined Wright, establishing farms upstream. Gregory Baxter and Deacon Samuel Bass received grants west of the brook on land known as the Captain's Plain. William Needham received twenty acres located directly south of Wright's grant along the brook. Needham's grant would later pass to Deacon John Adams, the home of which became the John Adams birthplace. To the south of Needham, William Ellis (or Allis) received a grant of fifty-two acres

upon which he built a house, the site of which became the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The date of Ellis' grant is not known, and an "Ellis" or "Allis" does not appear on William Pattee's list of homesteaders that arrived in the 1630s and 40s. It is likely that Ellis purchased the parcel from one of the original settlers sometime around 1650. (CLR 2014: 20)

Ellis and Belcher Homestead:
Records indicate that Ellis constructed a residence at his home (the future John Quincy Adams birthplace) around 1660, possibly accompanied by several outbuildings. However, also in 1660, Ellis sold his farmstead to Gregory Belcher for reasons unknown. The deed transferred "one dwelling house situate in Braintree [illeg.] with the Barnes buildings cowhowses stables shops & outhowses orchyards gardins and seventene acres of land…the Comon Roadway leading to Waymouth running through the middle thereof." Like most early colonial farms, the farmstead included several outbuildings devoted to specialized tasks, which may have included meat-curing to cider-making, and were clustered near the farm house. Small gardens likely grew adjacent to the house that were fertilized with fish and manure and fenced in to keep livestock out. Irregularly-spaced apple tree orchards provided fodder for livestock and crop for cider. These homesteads filled the valley area known collectively as the Mill Pond and the Captain's Plain and passed frequently to newcomers or family members. In 1663, Gregory Belcher passed the former Ellis farm to his son Samuel. (CLR 2014: 20)

On the western edge of the Needham and Belcher farms, in the lowlands by Fresh Brook, lowland meadows provided grass for haying and pasturing cattle. These meadows were optimal for farming and drew settlers away from concentrated colonies near the coast, including the establishment of cattle towns at Dedham (1636) and Medfield (1649) along the Neponset and the extension of the Mount Wollaston settlement upstream along Fresh Brook toward what became Braintree. Though native marsh grasses provided nutritious fodder for livestock during the summer, feed during the winter was nearly impossible to find, requiring storage of surplus feed and the limitation of herd sizes. Initially this lay in preserving lots of meadow and salt marsh from cattle so they could be cut and cured for winter storage. However, both accidental and intentional importation of Eurasian grass varieties transformed the grasslands and meadows of New England, leading to marked changes in the pastures of Needham and Ellis. By 1650, the Massachusetts Bay Colony actively imported "Herd's grass" or timothy, a perennial bluegrass. 'English Grass," a mixture of this import with white clover, began thriving along the tidewater settlements including those in what became eastern Quincy. The arrival of these new grasses shifted the meadows of the New England colonies toward one that was more familiar and nutritious for European livestock. It also provided the new and struggling colonies with a boost to their subsistence, as English grasses remained green into December, long after American grasses had browned for the winter. The success of these grasses allowed the diffuse settlement that defined Quincy until the late 1800s. (CLR 2014: 20; Russell 1982: 24)

While initial settlers clustered together to share resources including precious native pasture, the clearing of plots and cultivation of English grass allowed Needham and Belcher, and those who followed them, to successfully farm in terrain that normally would have yielded little pasture for livestock. Despite their success, most family stock herds remained at a dozen animals or less into the eighteenth century. Though cattle were initially the predominant livestock, sheep became an important commodity by the end of the 1660s. (CLR 2014: 20-21)

In the upland fields, the first North Braintree farmers grew wheat, maize, and other grains. Marginal areas were used for woodlots, orchards, and to pasture livestock, while vegetable plots and assorted fruit trees were placed closer to the homesteads. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, common orchard practice dictated that trees be spaced "three or four rods apart so the roots of one rarely crossed those of another. After the trees matured, most farmers pastured cattle among them." Cattle frequently browsed on low-hanging branches creating a 'browse-line' of clear trunks up to six feet on the tree. Though all fruit trees with the exception of plums were European imports, by the 1650s Boston area farmers began to incorporate the American Roxbury Russet variety into their orchards. Cherry tree imports flourished in New World orchards to the point that by 1700, they were considered a weed in some communities. Quince trees also proved ubiquitous in early colonial orchards but declined in popularity by the 1800s. (CLR 2014: 21)

Homesteaders such as Needham, Ellis, and Belcher brought with them a new kind of agriculture rooted in permanent settlement. Where the Native Americans rotated through farming sites every few years as the soil's nutrients gave out, New England colonists expected homesteads to sustain a family for generations. Permanent agriculture required a change in practice from the slash-and-burn style of the natives to a fertilizer-based agriculture for the colonists. Manure, fish remains, seaweed, and potash all supplied nitrogen and other nutrients for soils that normally would have become barren after more than a few years of agricultural use. To fill land adjacent to the new homesteads, New England farmers grew maize for similar reasons as had the Native Americans before them: it grew well in poorly plowed, half-cleared fields which were plentiful in the hilly farmlands of coastal Massachusetts. Furthermore, it fertilized well with the remains of alewives, fish that migrated up streams like Fresh Brook, requiring little transport. Whereas English grains such as wheat, rye, and barley performed better in the fields of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, few areas in Massachusetts outside the Connecticut River valley had the soils and terrain to sustain large-scale English grain production. Though Braintree famers began sowing grains in the seventeenth century, by the eighteenth, they faced the introduction of blight and black-stem rust that, combined with the inability to compete economically with larger western farms, crippled their capacity to produce English grains. Consequently, north Braintree farmers adopted crops and techniques more suitable for smaller farms with smaller fields. They grew corn in mounds and continued to plant beans and squash alongside these, resembling the gardens of the Native Americans more than European crop fields. Consequently, most fields were only an acre or two, plowed by horse in the spring or autumn but tilled by hand through most of the summer. The tillage and the importation of English crops also brought English weeds such as Couch grass and Saint-John's-wort that competed with food crops and invaded pastures. Deeds reveal that North Braintree farmers fenced their small fields as early as the 1660s. An influx of immigrants following the end of the English Civil War compelled many freeholders to press for more lands farther inland, increasing the population of Braintree in areas south and west of Penn's Valley and increasing the need for clear property boundaries. (CLR 2014: 21-22)

In 1668, as the Mill property to the north of Needham's land changed hands, the deed between Jonathan Gatlin and John Holbrook mentions that the mill was "within a common fence, bounded with the said fence and pond toward the north." It is likely that the properties of Needham and Ellis were also bounded and perhaps divided by wooden fences by this time. By 1672, part of the Mill property transferred to Moses Fields who built a dwelling house on six acres north of Needham's grant. Many of the earliest fences, used mostly to keep free-range livestock out of crop fields and gardens, would have been a collection of markers, both natural landmarks and wooden stakes to mark the boundary. After the grants of 1640, Ellis and Needham would have progressively established more permanent fencing to delineate their property lines. The lack of stones and abundant timber meant that the first fences would have been wood, either closely-spaced pales or stakes combined with short lines of piled rocks. Once Needham and Ellis established their farmsteads, they probably built wooden split-rail fences. (CLR 2014: 22)

Late in the seventeenth century, Braintree developed into two concentrated communities, with farms in Penn's Valley in between. By 1696, Ship Cove along what is now the Quincy shoreline established a shipwright that contributed small vessels to the coastal trading fleets of Massachusetts. In October of 1697, the town government elected to build the school house between the two Braintree communities, "between Clement Cox his house and Gregory Belchers, hard by the white oak tree," placing it across the Plymouth Road and only a few hundred feet from what became the John Adams birthplace. Further to the north, in what is now Quincy Center, Benjamin Webb established the first tannery for the community, which later attracted boot and shoe businesses to the town. The development of North Braintree compelled the community to establish two precincts of governance, splitting off Penn's Valley and the Mount Wollaston area into the north precinct in 1708. (CLR 2014: 22)

Penniman and Belcher Homesteads:
Amid King Philip's War in 1675, the landowners of North Braintree began selling their lots in Penn's Valley to newcomers to the area. That year, William Needham sold his homestead, which included about seven acres of farm land and the house, to Joseph Penniman. The deed transferred "all

houses, outhouses, gardens, orchards, yards, fences, and trees," on the lot (the future John Adams birthplace). Needham sold the remaining thirteen acres to Theophilus Curtis, William Vesey, and Gregory Belcher. Penniman also purchased about nine or ten acres from William Savil to the north on what had been property of the Mill. Sometime after, Penniman added houses to both properties. Penniman subsequently leased the Needham property to a newcomer, physician Leonard Hoar of Boston. (CLR 2014: 23)

To the south of Penniman's lot, the Belcher family continued to develop the fifty-two acre farm formerly homesteaded by William Ellis. Upon Samuel Belcher's death in 1679, the farm, including a "Dwelling house Barn Orchard & Land adjoining," passed to his brother, Deacon Gregory Belcher. Deacon Gregory likely added a two-story, two-room wide, one-room deep house with a large central chimney. An inventory of the property the following year listed a dwelling house, barn, orchard, and land with a value of £160. The Belchers expanded their house in 1716, constructing what became the John Quincy Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 23)

In 1705, Joseph Penniman passed away and his wife, Sarah, and his sons Moses and James inherited his Braintree land holdings. Sarah received the homestead, though it appears James became the property's steward. Between 1710 to 1720, James Penniman constructed a new home at the farm, either to replace the old house or add to it, creating what is considered to be the John Adams birthplace. Two years later, Penniman added a lean-to onto the rear of the house. In 1720, James Penniman sold his property to Deacon John Adams, the father of John Adams. The deed transferred: "a certaine Peice or Parcel of Land in Braintree afores'd, containing six acres (be it more or less) being orchard & arrable Land, adjacent to the Plymouth Road, Situate in the North Precinct of Braintree afores'd. Bounded Eastwardly on the afores'd Road, Northwardly on the lands of Moses Curtiss, Southward mostly on the lands of Dec. Gregory Belchor…together with a Dwelling House, Barn and Well thereon…" (CLR 2014: 23)

The Penniman's neighbors to the north on the west side of the Plymouth Road were Moses Curtis, and further north, William and Amy Vesey. The Veseys indentured a portion of their farm to Peter Webb in 1706, the compact of which described the tract as "20 acres of land, arrable, meadow and swampy land [counted?] in the old mill field" at the back of their lot, providing access to it by way of a road over the Mill Dam. Deacon John Adams later purchased about five acres from John Vesey that lay west of his property, extending the Adams tract to Fresh Brook. The addition included "Fresh meadow" and "upland…situated in the 'Old Mill Pond' so-called." (CLR 2014: 23)

Landscape Summary, 1720:
In 1720, the Penn's Hill farm contained about fifty-two acres owned by the Belcher family and six acres owned by the Penniman family. The open landscape included agricultural fields, pastures, meadows, swamps, and woodlots with a few houses dispersed along the Plymouth Road. The rural farming area between the north and south precincts of Braintree, known as Penn's Valley, supported around a dozen families, including the Adams, Belchers, Veseys, Paynes, and Pennimans. The Penniman and Belcher properties lay between the Plymouth Road to the east and Fresh Brook to the west. To the east of the homes and across the Plymouth Road were several tracts of orchards and fields owned by the Veseys and Belchers. (CLR 2014: 24)

Circulation in South Quincy included the Plymouth Road, which ran adjacent to the birthplaces, and the Boston-Plymouth Highway, which lay east of the Plymouth Road. Other roads around the Penn's Hill farm included the road to the mill, which connected the Plymouth Road to the Mill and the 'Way to 600 acres' (Granite Street), which ran along the North Common. The John Adams birthplace, owned by the Pennimans, was a two-room wide, one-room deep, hall-and-parlor plan house with a partial lean-to at the rear (or north side) of the house. A barn likely stood southwest of the house and several outbuildings may have stood clustered near the house. The John Quincy Adams birthplace, owned by the Belcher family, was a two-story, two-room wide, one-room deep house with a chimney. A barn likely stood to the southwest of the house. The Braintree schoolhouse was across the Plymouth Road, and north from the John Adams birthplace. Vegetation around the birthplaces likely included vegetable gardens near the homes, orchards and crop fields farther west, and pastures and meadows near Fresh Brook. A white oak tree likely grew across the Plymouth Road from the John Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 24)

From the top of Penn's Hill, views likely extended toward the Braintree shoreline and north to Boston. Views from the birthplaces into the surrounding fields were open as Native Americans and settlers cleared most of the forested areas. These views extended to the neighboring homes and farms and past the surrounding hills. Small-scale features included post-and-rail fences that marked property lines, surrounded livestock, and divided pastures. A well stood to the west of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, which may have been shared by the two families. (CLR 2014:24)

DEACON JOHN ADAMS THROUGH JOHN ADAMS, 1720–1803

The second period includes the Deacon John Adams through John Adams ownership from 1720 to 1803, and begins with Deacon John Adams' inheritance and expansion of Penn's Hill farm and the birth of John Adams and his eventual marriage to Abigail Smith. The period also includes the birth of John Quincy Adams, care of the farm during the American Revolution, and the later use of the property by tenant farmers.

During the eighteenth century the population of Braintree increased as the shipbuilding and fishing industries expanded along the shoreline. Farther inland, small business such as the tanneries and the Town Mill operated along local streams. Immigrants from Germany settled in the planned community at Germantown by the bay at the outlet of the Town River, where laborers specialized in glass works and other labor-intensive trades. Granite mining increased in West Braintree, attracting laborers to extract, cut, and transport the stone. Landowners built homesteads or small country estates along the Plymouth Road, often with large agricultural fields and pastures. Residents in the North Precinct of Braintree first attempted to form a separate town in 1728. However, the Braintree Town Committee did not initially support the division. (CLR 2014: 29)

The Adamses established a strong presence in the community during this period. John Adams, Sr. was a Congregationalist deacon, a lieutenant in the Massachusetts colonial militia, a tax collector, and a selectman of the Town of Braintree. His wife, Susanna Boylston, was from a prominent family of scientists and medical doctors. At a young age John Adams, Jr. distinguished himself as a capable lawyer, writer, and orator. At the outset of the American Revolution, Adams was elected to represent Massachusetts in the first and second Continental Congresses. His diligence and political acumen would eventually lead to his election as the nation's first Vice President and second President. His wife, Abigail Smith, was the daughter of a Congregational minister and descended from the prominent Quincy family. As the nation's first Second Lady and second First Lady, Abigail took an active role in politics and policy, and through her letters communicated her emotional and intellectual respect for her husband throughout his long and often turbulent political career. The Penn's Hill farm was essential for sustenance, yet also a source of pride and devotion for generations of the Adams family. (CLR 2014: 29)

Early on in the development of Braintree, the North and South commons provided ample resources such as stones for building walls and foundations, timber for fences and houses, and land for pasture. With the increase in settlement patterns throughout Braintree, land and resources became scarce, and the town of Braintree attempted to lease the commons and use the income to fund the schools. Neither the town people, nor the lessees, were happy with the more formal arrangement, as townspeople frequently removed walls and trespassers removed resources from the commons. In 1749, Boston built the King's Chapel, which reportedly used surface stones collected from the commons. The town struggled for several decades with how to distribute resources found in the commons. By 1764, a town committee led by the younger John Adams proposed the division and sale of the commons. (CLR 2014: 29)

By 1765, the population of Quincy, Braintree, and Randolph reached 2,433 people, with about 780 residents living in what later became Quincy. It was not until 1791, that the North Precinct of Braintree, Knight's Neck, and Milton petitioned the General Court to form as an independent municipality. Quincy incorporated in 1792, named after Col. John Quincy and Norfolk County was established the following year. (CLR 2014: 29-30)

Adams Expansion of Penn's Hill Farm:
In 1720, Deacon John Adams purchased six acres from James Penniman, which included a house (the future John Adams birthplace), barn, and orchard. Adams also purchased about five acres from John Vesey, which extended his landholdings between the Plymouth Road to the east, and Fresh Brook to the west. That same year, Moses Curtis sold twenty acres of orchards and meadows, lying west of the birthplaces, to John Vesey. (CLR 2014:30)

When Joseph Adams (Deacon John Adams' father) died in 1731, Deacon John Adams inherited

"Twelve acres of Fresh meadow and upland at the East End of my [Joseph Adams'] Home Lot adjoining to his own Lands." Two years later, Deacon John Adams acquired eighteen acres to the southwest of his existing holdings from Samuel Payne and Moses Payne. While living on the small farm, Deacon John Adams and his wife Susanna Boylston had three children, John Adams in 1735, Peter Boylston Adams in 1738, and Elihu Adams in 1741. As described below, Deacon John Adams acquired the neighboring home and nine acre farm to the south in 1744, which had previously passed through the Belcher, Vassall, and Billings families, thereby uniting the two birthplace properties. (CLR 2014: 30)

In 1727, Deacon Gregory Belcher passed away and his three sons inherited the fifty-two acre parcel of farmland near Penn's Hill, which was previously settled by William Ellis. Belcher's son, Gregory Belcher Jr., received a nine-and-a-half acre parcel that included a house, which later became the John Quincy Adams birthplace. Following Gregory Belcher Jr.'s death in 1728 and the death of his wife soon after, the couple's daughter Abigail Belcher inherited the house, barn, and nine-acre farm. The Belcher family leased the house and farm to tenant farmers who fenced in the front yard and made minor home repairs. Abigail married Samuel Nightingale in 1742, and sold the nine-acre farm to Lewis Vassall, which included "all the Edifices Buildings Fences Trees Wood Underwoods Ways Passages Rights Easements Profits and appurtenances." When Vassall died in 1743, his family deeded the farm to John and Richard Billings. In 1744, Deacon John Adams purchased the nine-acre farm with "a dweling house and Barne" from the Billings brothers, thus expanding Adams' landholdings to the south. (CLR 2014: 30)

Deacon John Adams made improvements to the buildings—including the John Adams and future John Quincy Adams birthplaces and farm, in the years ahead. Deacon John Adams continued to live with his family in the John Adams birthplace and leased the future John Quincy Adams birthplace to tenants. In 1750, Deacon John Adams expanded the lean-to across the entire back of the John Adams birthplace, thus creating a "saltbox profile," and built a shed on the north end of the site. (CLR 2014: 30-31)

John Adams Inherits Penn's Hill Farm:
As a young adult, John Adams lived with his parents in Braintree and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1755. John maintained a diary in which he recorded daily life on the farm. At twenty-one, admiring the countryside, he wrote, "I take great Pleasure, in viewing and examining the magnificent Prospects of Nature, that lie before us in this Town…I perceive a wide extensive Tract before me, made up of Woods, and meadows, wandring streams, and barren Planes, covered in various places by herds of grazing Cattle, and terminated by the distant View of the Town." John Adams wrote about how he preferred a quiet life in the country over that of the city—in 1759 he wrote, "In such silent scenes, as riding or walking thro the Woods or sitting alone in my Chamber, or lying awake in my Bed, my Thoughts commonly run upon Knowledge, Virtue, Books, &c. tho I am apt to forget these, in the distracting Bustle of the Town, and ceremonious Converse with Mankind." John Adams believed that colonization had benefited the local landscape: "The whole Continent was one continued dismall Wilderness, the haunt of Wolves and Bears and more savage men. Now, the Forests are removed, the Land coverd with fields of Corn, orchards bending with fruit, and the magnificent Habitations of rational and civilized People." (CLR 2014: 31)

Adams wrote several entries in the 1750s that described events from the day or observations from the house or farm. In the fall of 1755, he recorded, "We had a severe Shock of an Earthquake. It continued near four minutes. I was then at my Fathers in Braintree, and awoke out of my sleep in the midst of it. The house seemed to rock and reel and crack as if it would fall in ruins about us. Seven Chimnies were shatter'd by it within one mile of my Fathers house." In the spring of 1756, Adams wrote short entries for each day that often included a description of the surrounding environment such as, "Charming Weather. The Fields begin to look verdant. The leaves and bloss begin to shew themselves on the apple Trees, and Blossoms on the peach Trees." By May he detailed, "The Weather and the Season are beyond expression delightful. The Fields are coverd with a bright and lively Verdure. The Trees are all in bloom, and the atmosphere is filled with a ravishing Fragrance. The Air is soft and yielding and the Setting sun Sprinkled his departing Rays over the Face of Nature, and enlivened all the Land skips around me. The Trees put forth their Leaves and the Birds fill the Spray." He also recorded his descriptions of the landscape that surrounded the birthplaces, stating,

"The Road is walled on each side with a Grove of Trees. The stillness, silence, and the uniformity of the Prospect puts the Mind into a stirring, thoughtful Mood." (CLR 2014: 31)

Following Deacon John Adams' death from influenza in 1761, his three sons, John, Peter and Elihu, inherited his extensive landholdings in Braintree, including the birthplaces and adjacent farm land. His wife, Susanna, continued to reside in the John Adams birthplace. Deacon John's probate inventory included a "House Out Houses and 35 Acres… House & Barn 10 Acres Land … House 92 Acres land … 7 Acres Salt Marsh … 8 Acres fresh Meadow … 12 Acres Upland … 22 Acres Woodland and 2 Acres Cedar Swamp" and land held jointly with Ebenezer Adams and Samuel Bass. Peter Boylston Adams inherited the family's primary residence that included the thirty five-acre Penn's Hill farm and house (John Adams birthplace). John Adams inherited forty acres of the Penn's Hill farm including ten acres near the road, eight acres of meadow, twelve acres of upland pasture and orchard, and ten acres of woodland, the future John Quincy Adams birthplace, which Doctor Elisha Savel was renting, and a barn. Elihu Adams received the third house mentioned in the probate with ninety-two acres in the South Precinct of Braintree (which later became Randolph), and saltmarsh. (CLR 2014: 32)

As the owner of the forty-acre farm, John Adams made several upgrades to increase crop production and to improve the pastures. With his assistant Tirrell, Adams made improvements along Fresh Brook, clearing away "all the Trees and Bushes, Willows, Alders, Arrow Wood, Dog Wood, Briars, Grape Vines, Elms, Ashes, Oaks, Birches, &c. that grew upon the Brook and burned them." (CLR 2014: 32)

Fences were essential to protect crops and hold livestock. The amount of labor required to build walls of stone meant that many landowners had to hire out to workers to help complete their fencing. Adams wrote, "Have contracted with Jo. T[irrell] to clear my swamp and to build me a long string of stone Wall, and with Isaac [Tirrell] to build me 16 Rods more and with Jo Field to build me 6 Rods more." The need to reduce labor costs led some farmers to begin bounding their lots and fields with split-rail fences, though this did not become common practice in New England until the mid-1800s after forests had recovered. Adams' primary crops were corn, potato, and other hardy vegetables. He maintained apple orchards for cider and pastures for cattle. In the fall of 1762, before his marriage to Abigail and the beginning of his political career, he described farm work: "Sometimes I am at the orchard Ploughing up Acre after Acre and Planting, pruning Apple Trees, mending Fences, carting Dung. Sometimes in the Pasture, digging stones, clearing Bushes, Pruning Trees, building Wall to redeem Posts and Rails, and sometimes removing Button Trees down to my House. Sometimes I am at the old swamp, burning Bushes, digging stumps and Roots, cutting Ditches, across the Meadow, and against my Uncle, and am sometimes at the other End of the Town, buying Posts and Rails, to Fence against my Uncle and against the Brook, and am sometimes Ploughing the Upland, with 6 Yoke of oxen, and planting Corn, Potatoes, &c. and digging up the Meadow and sowing onions, planting cabbages &c. &c. Sometimes I am at the Homestead running Cross Fences, and planting Potatoes by the Acre, and Corn by the two Acres, and running a Ditch along the Line between me and Field, and a Fence along the Brook [against] my Brother and another Ditch in the Middle from Fields Line to the Meadow. Sometimes am Carting Gravel from the Neighboring Hills, and sometimes Dust from the streets upon the fresh Meadow. And sometimes plowing, sometimes digging those Meadows, to introduce Clover and other English Grasses." (CLR 2014: 32-33)

John Adams became increasingly involved in town affairs. In 1763 he was appointed Surveyors of Highways. Although Adams claimed he knew very little about road construction he, "went to ploughing and ditching and blowing rocks upon Penn's Hill, and building an entire new bridge of stone." In 1763 or 1764, the town sought counsel on the ongoing dispute on whether to lease or sell the Commons. John Adams later wrote, "The south parish was zealous, and the middle parish much inclined to the sale; the north parish was against it. The lands in their common situation appeared to me of very little utility to the public or to individuals; under the care of proprietors where they should be come private property, they would probably be better managed and more productive. My opinion was in favor of the sale. The town now adopted the measure, appointed Mr. Niles, Mr. Bass, and me to survey the lands, divide them into lots, to sell them by auction, and execute deeds of them in behalf of the town." (CLR 2014: 33)

John Adams subsequently purchased a large portion of the North Common at auction, including parcels known as Mount Ararat Pasture and Rocky Pasture (or Red Cedar Pasture), which he later conveyed back to the town for the endowment of temple and an academy. Adams later described these parcels in more detail, "The North Common Pasture has a numerous Growth of Red Cedars upon it, perhaps 1000, which in 20 years if properly pruned may be worth a Shilling each. It is well walled in all round. The Prunings of those Cedars will make good Browse for my Cattle in Winter, and good fuel when the Cattle have picked off all they will eat. There is a Quantity of good Stone in it too." (CLR 2014: 33)

John and Abigail Adams:
In 1764 John Adams married Abigail Smith, Daughter of the Reverend William Smith of Weymouth, and Granddaughter of the Honorable John Quincy Esquire of Braintree. John Adams moved out of his birthplace and the newlyweds settled into the neighboring house, which later became John Quincy Adams' birthplace. John Adams' mother, Susanna, and brother, Peter, remained in the John Adams birthplace. John and Abigail Adams made several changes to the John Quincy Adams birthplace, likely adding two new sheds, one on the north face and one on the west face, and a door to John Adams' law office. These alterations are depicted in later sketches of the property. (CLR 2014: 33)

Following the move into John Quincy Adams birthplace, John Adams quickly expanded the Penn's Hill farm. In 1765, he purchased eleven acres, south of the birthplaces and on the Plymouth Road, from Peter Boylston and Joseph Fields. The deed was recorded as "a certain Tract of Land partly upland and partly Fresh Meadow." That same year, the Town of Braintree transferred two upland pastures near Pine Hill to Adams, including a twenty-three acre parcel and a fourteen-acre parcel, located southwest of the birthplaces. (CLR 2014: 35)

Adams acquired two parcels from Ann Savil in 1770, which included five acres of salt marsh near the old mill pond, north of the birthplaces, and four acres of upland pasture, south of the birthplaces. The following year, Adams purchased five parcels from Joseph Palmer. Two of these parcels, a seventeen-acre parcel and a thirteen-acre parcel, were located at the base of Penn's Hill. Later in 1771, Adams purchased about an acre of salt marsh from Tompson Baxter, located north of the birthplaces and near the Mill Pond. John Adams' law practice and political career often drew him away from Braintree. In his work, Adams found both local and regional recognition. In 1765, he drafted the Braintree Instructions for the town's position on the Stamp Act, and in 1767 he defended John Hancock against the Townshend Acts, which placed taxes on common household items. In court, Adams defended the British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre in 1770. Shortly thereafter, he won a seat in the House of Representatives. (CLR 2014: 34)

Despite his frequent travel away from Braintree, Adams wrote about the Penn's Hill farm while he was away. While on a trip to Cambridge, Adams recorded, "My Mind has been running, chiefly upon my Farm and its Inhabitants and Furniture, my Horses, Oxen, Cows, Swine, Walls, Fences &c. I have in several late Rambles very particularly traced, and pursued every Swamp and Spring upon the North Side of Penn's Hill from its Sourse to its Outlet. And I think if I owned the whole of that Side of the Hill I could make great Improvements upon it, by Means of Springs, and Descents and falls of Water." (CLR 2014: 34)

While at the farm, Adams frequently rode around his land to check in on tenants and agricultural production. In late December 1765 he wrote, "Walked in the Afternoon into the Common and quite thro my Hemlock Swamp. I find many fine Bunches of young Maples, and nothing else but Alders." In mid August in 1770 he wrote, "Arose and walked with Patten to see the neighbouring Fields of English Grass and Grain and Indian Corn, consuming before the Worms." (CLR 2014: 34)

John and Abigail moved back and forth between Braintree and Boston several times but John felt healthier and more at home in Braintree. They moved to Boston in 1768, moved back to Braintree two years later, and returned to Boston again in 1772. By this time, John and Abigail had four surviving children, Abigail "Nabby" Adams, born in 1765, John Quincy Adams, born in 1767, Charles Adams, born in 1770, and Thomas Boylston Adams, born in 1772. After their departure from Braintree in 1772, John's mother, Susanna, and her second husband, Lt. John Hall, leased the John

Quincy Adams birthplace. John Adams wrote upon returning to Boston that, “if my Health should again decline, I must return to Braintree and renounce the Town entirely. I hope however to be able to stay there many Years! To this End I must remember Temperance, Exercise and Peace of Mind. Above all Things I must avoid Politicks, Political Clubbs, Town Meetings, General Court, &c. &c. &c.” Despite the family’s move to Boston, Adams retained Penn’s Hill farm and wrote, “I must ride frequently to Braintree to inspect my Farm, and when in Boston must spend my Evenings in my Office, or with my Family, and with as little Company as possible.” (CLR 2014: 34-35)

As the American Revolution approached, and John Adams spent most of his time in Philadelphia, Adams felt that his family would be safer in Braintree. They returned to Braintree in 1774, and Adams purchased his birthplace from his brother Peter Boylston Adams. John Adams described the purchase as, “my fathers Homestead, and House where I was born. The House, Barn and thirty five acres of Land of which the Homestead consists, and Eighteen acres of Pasture in the North Common, cost me 440…The Buildings and the Water, I wanted, very much.” Adams was very fond of this property and had several ideas on how to improve its function: “That beautifull, winding, meandering Brook, which runs thro this farm, always delighted me. How shall I improve it? Shall I try to introduce fowl Meadow And Herds Grass, into the Meadows? or still better Clover and Herdsgrass? I must ramble over it, and take a View. The Meadow is a great Object—I suppose near 10 Acres of [it]—perhaps more—and may be made very good, if the Mill below, by overflowing it, dont prevent. Flowing is profitable, if not continued too late in the Spring. This Farm is well fenced with Stone Wall against the Road, against Vesey, against Betty Adams's Children, vs. Ebenezer Adams, against Moses Adams, and against me.” (CLR 2014: 35)

While away from his family, John wrote about how he longed to spend more time at the farm. In 1774, he wrote in a letter to Abigail, “I believe it is Time to think a little about my Family and Farm… It is a great Mortification to me that I could not attend every Step of their Progress in mowing, making and carting. I long to see what Burden.” Despite his great interest in farming, John Adams’s role in government would absorb most of his time in the decade ahead. (CLR 2014: 35)

American Revolution and Landlords for the Penn’s Hill Farm:
During the American Revolution, John Adams served in the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. As the revolution solidified, John Adams’s insights on government structure drew him further into the role of drafting a new constitution. His pamphlet, Thoughts on Government, Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies laid the foundation for his future contribution the Massachusetts State Constitution and the foundation for the United States Constitution. While he was away, Abigail cared for the Braintree house and farm. This was a difficult task as Abigail had four young children, limited access to supplies, and the Penn’s Hill farm required constant oversight. Abigail leased a portion of John Adams birthplace to a man named Hayden. He and his two sons worked in the dairy, which helped pay their rent. (CLR 2014: 35-36)

Abigail watched the Battle of Bunker Hill with her son, John Quincy, from the top of Penn’s Hill on June 17, 1775. On that day, mother and son climbed up the hill, which was about a half mile southeast of their home, where they had an unobstructed view over the Boston Harbor. In a letter to John the following day Abigail wrote, “The Day; perhaps the decisive Day is come on which the fate of America depends…How [many ha]ve fallen we know not—the constant roar of the cannon is so [distre]ssing that we can not Eat, Drink or Sleep.” John Quincy Adams, who was eight years old at that time, later recalled, “I saw with my own eyes those fires, and heard Britannia's thunders in the Battle of Bunker's hill and witnessed the tears of my mother and mingled with them my own, at the fall of Warren a dear friend of my father, and a beloved Physician to me.” (CLR 2014: 36)

John and Abigail maintained frequent correspondence while he lived in Philadelphia and later traveled to France. She wrote about the farm with detailed notes on the cattle and sheep and conditions for that season. She processed dairy products, of which they were never in short supply, with her staff. They had an abundance of produce, including asparagus, corn, hay, and apples, which she often shared with other families. Abigail made her own apple cider from the orchards on Penn’s Hill. In the fall of 1775, she wrote to her husband, “We have lately had a week of very cold weather, as cold as January, and a flight of snow…It has spoild many hundreds of Bushels of Apples, which were designd for cider, and which the great rains had prevented people from making up.” In

June of 1777, during a productive year, she wrote, “The season promisses plenty at present and the english grass never lookd better. You inquire after the Asparagrass. It performs very well this year and produces us a great plenty.” The next month she reiterated, “We have the finest Season here that I have known for many years… the Corn looks well, Hay will be plenty, but your Farm wants manure. I shall endeavour to have Sea weed carted every Leasure moment that can be had.” Adams often advised Abigail on how to better manage the farm. Later that month he wrote, “The true Maxim of profitable Husbandry is to contrive every Means for the Maintenance of Stock.—Increase your Cattle and inrich your Farm.—We bestow too much manure upon Corn—too little upon Grass. Make Manure, make food for Cattle, increase your stock—this is the Method.” (CLR 2014: 36)

During the war years John served in the government while Abigail managed the farm and household, leasing a portion of the farm. In July 1778 she wrote to John, “The Season has been fine for grass but for about 3 weeks past we have had a sharp and severe Drouth which has greatly injured our grain and a blast upon english grain with a scarcity for flower so that a loaf which once sold for 4 pence is 4 shillings.” From 1778 to 1792, Matthew and James Pratt lived in the John Adams birthplace and leased the farm from Abigail. The Pratt brothers also managed the dairy. Under this agreement, Abigail named the brothers as “Tenants to the halves,” which entitled them to half the farm produce. In 1779 the region suffered from droughts and storms. Abigail wrote, “Not a single Barrel of cider was made upon the Farm. I do not exaggerate when I say that 100 and hundreds of families have not a mouth full of Bread to eat.” (CLR 2014: 36-37)

As the financial burden of the war increased, farming became even more difficult in the North Precinct as high taxes and inflation forced many landowners to sell their farms. Abigail wrote to John, “Land here is so high taxed that people are for selling their Farms & retireing back.” In the fall of 1780, Abigail wrote to her friend Mercy Otis Warren that, “the Scenes arround me wore a dismal aspect—the dyeing Corn, the Barren pastures and the desolated Gardens threaten us with distress, and Hunger.” (CLR 2014: 37-38)

John Adams returned to the farm for a brief period after serving as commissioner to the French Court. In 1779, while in Braintree, he drafted the Massachusetts Constitution. Later the same year, he returned to Europe to negotiate with Great Britain and France, and then went on to Amsterdam until 1783. The Adams outlook on farming must have improved slightly by 1783 when Abigail purchased three acres of woodlands and four acres of pasture from Moses Babcock, west of Fresh Brook. Writing to Abigail in June, John Adams regretted his distance from his family and farm, “I had rather chop Wood, dig Ditches, and make fence upon my poor little farm. Alass! poor Farm and poorer Family.” (CLR 2014: 38)

In 1784, Abigail and her daughter, Nabby, joined John Adams and John Quincy in England, France, and back in England, where they lived until 1788. Prior to their departure, Abigail searched for a tenant for their house. She instructed her uncle Cotton Tufts, who managed the farm in her absence with her sister Mary Cranch, that: “The dwelling house, Garden and furniture to be left in the care of Pheby and Abdee, who are to have their Rent the privilege of occupying the kitchen, Buttery, 2 Back chambers and cellar with the yard belonging to the house…They are to be allowed to keep a pig, in the yard upon which the Barn stands and which I used to occupy for the same purpose. They are during the present year to have the use of the Garden east of the House and that part of the Great Garden next the road—all the fruit which grows in the Garden.” (CLR 2014: 38)

Cotton Tufts responded to Abigail that, “Pheebe has been exceeding attentive to the Preservation and cleanliness of Your House and Houshold Stuff, and Your Farm is well managed by Pratt at present.” Phoebe (referred to as Pheby or Pheebe in letters) was previously a slave owned by Abigail’s father, who was freed after his death in 1783. Phoebe and her husband, William Abdee, moved into the John Quincy Adams birthplace and Abdee continued to aid Abigail’s sisters. (CLR 2014: 38)

While they lived abroad, Adams purchased additional farmland around the Penn’s Hill farm. In 1785, he bought a twenty-acre pasture from James Thayer Jr. He then purchased five acres from James Apthorp, which was likely located on Penn’s Hill, south of the birthplaces. In 1786, Abigail’s niece wrote with updates about the farm, “Phoebe says the Peach trees are decaying—the others are in

good condition. The Laylocks are just opening, & have grown very much. The grass Plot before the house looks most delightfully green." While production on the farm declined during some years, the Adams continued to lease a portion of the Penn's Hill farm to the Pratt brothers who lived in the John Adams birthplace. In 1786, Cotton Tufts wrote to Abigail, "The Losses sustained in the Stock and the low Price of Produce greatly lessened your Income." (CLR 2014: 38)

Move to Peace field:
While in England in 1787, the Adamses purchased the forty-six acre Vassall-Borland property, which they subsequently named "Peace field." Their new house was larger than their house by Penn's Hill and included several buildings, a garden, and an orchard. John and Abigail returned from Europe in June of 1788, and moved into their new estate. Soon after, John Adams was elected Vice President in 1789 and President in 1796. He lived first in New York, then in Philadelphia with Abigail, and eventually in Washington D.C. The Penn's Hill farm continued to have several unproductive years and fell short of the Adams financial expectations. (CLR 2014: 39)

In the fall of 1790 Abigail wrote to her sister and stated, "In short I do not know of any persons property so unproductive as ours is. I do not belive that it yealds us one pr. Cent pr Annum… I am really however very uneasy with Pratt as a Farmer." James Faxon leased the John Adams birthplace for two years beginning in 1792, and managed the same farm land that the Pratt brothers had previously farmed. Regardless of the unproductive years at the end of the eighteenth century, John Adams continued to purchase new tracts of land, thus adding to the Penn's Hill farm. In 1793, Adams purchased several parcels from Elkanah Thayer including two parcels near Pine's Hill, southwest of the birthplaces. John and Abigail continued to own and lease the Penn's Hill farm and buildings until 1803 when they encountered financial trouble. (CLR 2014: 39)

While living in Philadelphia in 1795, John Adams hired John Briesler to construct a foundation for a new barn, east of the barn built by his father, Deacon John Adams, near John Adams birthplace. By the time construction began, Moses French leased the John Adams birthplace and likely ran a small agricultural operation. In 1796 John wrote to Abigail, "it is high time I had a Barn to Shelter my Hay that the Cattle may not complain of it so much, as they do this year, with Justice. I shall build only the shell this year-Raise the Barn & Board & Shingle, it." John Adams described the new barn's relationship to the barn his father built, "My new Barn is to be raised this Afternoon, a Rod or two from my Fathers which he built when I was two or three Years old -- about 58 years ago, or 59… This Day my new Barn was raised near the Spot where the old Barn stood which was taken down by my Father when he raised his new barn in 1737. The Frame is 50 by 30–13 foot Posts." (CLR 2014: 39)

John Adams returned to Braintree for short periods at a time where he oversaw work on the farm and buildings. He recorded several diary entries in the summer of 1796, writing, "My Corn this Year, has been injured by two Species of Worms... I have been to see my Barn, which looks very stately and strong. Rode up to Braintree and saw where Trask has been trimming Red Cedars." The next day he "Went with 3 hands, Puffer, Sullivan Lathrop and Mr. Bass, to Braintree and cutt between 40 and 50 Red Cedars and with a team of five Cattle brought home 22 of them at a Load." A couple days later, he describes another haul: "Rode to the Swamp, at the Top of Penns hill. Trask is mowing the Bushes, cutting the Trees, and leaves only the White Oaks which he trims and prunes as high as he can reach…Walked in the Afternoon over the Hills and across the fields and Meadows, up to the old Plain. The Corn there is as good as any I have seen, excepting two or three Spots…My beautiful Grove, so long preserved by my Father and my Uncle, proves to be all rotten. More than half the Trees We cutt are so defective as to be unfit for any Use but the fire. I shall save the White Oaks, and cutt the rest." During his rides around Penn's Hill farm, John Adams recorded several tree species that grew within his property. "Bass staid and cutt down and cutt up an old Walnut, murdered: by the Women and Children for their Dye Potts, cutt down and cutt up an old Appletree and a Buttonwood Tree." (CLR 2014: 39-40)

The John Quincy Adams birthplace was likely vacant for several years until 1797 when Reverend William Clark leased a portion of the house. In 1800 Reverend Peter Whitney leased the house. Meanwhile, James Shipley leased the John Adams birthplace and farm in 1801, followed by John Briesler in 1802. Briesler had traveled to Europe with the family in 1784 as a servant, managed the Mt. Wollaston farm in 1788, and helped build the barn in 1796. Briesler also managed the Penn's Hill

farm until 1807. Cotton Tufts continued to manage the Penn's Hill farm while the Adams lived in Philadelphia. In 1800 Abigail wrote instructions to Tufts, which included a description of the houses, barns, fences, and walls at the birthplaces:
"Mr. Whitney shall have the House and he requests that you would sit Mr. Beals to paint the outside stone coulour, to repair the Garden fence…The old Barn which is in the yard had better be considered as attachted to the House & the spot of ground which we used to make a Garden of, provided you have not already let it to French. I mention this to avoid all interference between families a Fence between the two places had better be run of post & rails, or if you think of part wall. This French can do immediately. The well must always be in common, but if the yards be in common, as they do now cattle will trespass and offences will come, which it is desirabel to avoid particularly between minister and people." (CLR 2014: 40)

Following a failed reelection for second term as president in 1800, John and Abigail returned to the Peace field property in 1801. John Adams encountered financial trouble in 1803 when the bank Bird, Savage & Bird failed. In an attempt to save his parents, John Quincy Adams purchased the Penn's Hill farm from John Adams in 1803. This included land willed to John Adams by Deacon John Adams, land purchased from Peter Boylston Adams, and three additional parcels. The parcels were described as "a certain Tract of Land, situated on the Plain below Penns hill, in Quincy aforesaid containing by estimation, about one hundred and Eight acres be the same more or less, with the three Houses, Three Barns and other buildings upon it, and bounded Easterly on the Country Road to Plymouth." A subsequent survey by John Quincy Adams revealed that the parcels covered ninety-one acres. (CLR 2014: 40)

Landscape Summary, 1803
In 1803, the ninety-one acre Penn's Hill farm included a cluster of buildings, crop fields, pastures, and was bisected by the Plymouth Road. Neighbors included the Field and Belcher families. The farm lay within the recently incorporated town of Quincy, which was still rural with residents regularly traveling to Boston for goods on foot, on horseback, in chairs or carts, or by water. Local roads were rough and oxen-driven carts were used to transport farm goods, cordwood, and manure. Main roads at this time included the Plymouth Road and Common Street, which ran through the center of Quincy. Many unnamed lanes ran through farm land that would later be improved for roads. Quincy offered a diverse range of jobs at the quarries, near the shoreline, and along the waterways. Farmers tended to lease their agricultural land, typically to tenants who grew corn or raised cattle. (CLR 2014: 41)

The John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces abutted the Plymouth Road and tenants occupied both homes. Deacon John Adams had expanded John Adams birthplace house with a lean-to and built a shed at the rear (or north side) of the house. A barn stood just west of the John Adams birthplace. The John Quincy Adams birthplace remained unchanged with a barn southwest of the home. Vegetation around the birthplaces likely included lilacs and lawn in front of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, vegetable gardens near the homes, and orchards, pastures, farther west and near Fresh Brook. The Adams grew a variety of produce near their home such as asparagus and corn, and maintained orchards that supplied them with apples for cider. The farmland was made up of meadow, pasture, salt marsh, woodlands, and orchards. Deciduous trees may have lined many of the roads and around the perimeter of farms. (CLR 2014: 41)

From the top of Penn's Hill, views extended north to Boston, east to the shoreline, south to farmland, and west toward the Blue Hills and quarries. Views from the birthplaces included nearby pastures and fields. Small-scale features included the stone walls and split-rail fences that lined the John Quincy Adams and John Adams birthplace. Stone fences began to take the place of post-and-rail fencing and lined most of the agriculture fields in Penn's Valley. Tenants also built a picket fence around the front yard. (CLR 2014: 41)

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, 1803–1848

The third period spans the John Quincy Adams ownership of the birthplaces and farmland from 1803 to 1848, with John Quincy Adams' purchase of additional farmland and use of the farm and buildings by tenant farmers.

The population of Quincy increased slowly as new transportation corridors improved access to the South Shore and industries grew, creating more jobs and prompting the need for more housing. The Braintree-Weymouth Turnpike and the Neponset Turnpike and bridge opened in 1803, and the Quincy-Hingham Turnpike in 1812 (Figure 1). Industrial and manufacturing growth gradually took the place of farming as the primary source of income in Quincy as land was more available elsewhere and the city's resources provided valuable opportunities for new businesses. By the 1820s, the primary source of jobs in Quincy included two shipyards by the harbor, boot and shoe businesses along the town brooks, and granite industries in West Quincy. The town remained relatively small with only one tavern, a couple of manufacturing companies, leather businesses related to shoe making, fishing operations, and a coach lace company. (CLR 2014: 47)

By the late 1820s, the Quincy Canal Corporation built a canal through the center of town to aid with the transport of granite. Crews built the First Parish Church (also known as the United First Parish Church) in Quincy Center in 1826, using local granite. The Granite Railway, the country's first commercial railway, opened in Quincy in 1826. Quarry workers transported stone on the granite railway from West Quincy, near the present day Blue Hills Reservation, to the wharfs on the Neponset River. The success of the local granite and shipbuilding industries attracted more residents, and the town population doubled from 1800 to 1830, to 2,200 inhabitants. Built in 1845, the Old Colony Railroad improved transportation between Quincy and Boston, creating an opportunity for increased housing development. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Quincy was becoming a suburb of Boston with easy access into the city and a thriving industrial center of its own.

Birthplaces and Expansion of Penn's Hill Farm:
In the same year that John Quincy Adams assumed ownership of the ninety-one acre Penn's Hill farm, he was elected to the U.S. Senate and served until 1808. In 1804, he lived part of the summer with his parents at Peace field and managed the Penn's Hill farm. Tenant farmer John Briesler lived in John Adams birthplace and various tenants leased Penn's Hill farmland. (CLR 2014: 47)

During the summer of 1804, John Quincy Adams recorded several observations from his trips to the farm, stating, "Went up to my farm this morning, and fixed upon a place for setting out an orchard…" Around this time John Adams gifted sixteen acres at the base of Penn's Hill and seventeen acres of pasture and swamp to John Quincy Adams. A couple days later he wrote continued work on his orchard stating, "Had 55 more trees set out in my new orchard." He wrote to Louisa reporting, "I have set out an Orchard of nearly an hundred trees, which will I hope one day produce fruit for our children." In May he wrote, "I observe the progress of the vegetation, and think myself growing a farmer" and a few days later he added, "My farming advances slowly… and next Spring I hope you come and take a taste of farming, too." (CLR 2014: 47-49)

By this time the couple had two children, George Washington Adams, born in 1801, and John Adams II, born in 1803. In May of 1804, young John Adams II almost drowned in the rainwater barrel, which sat outside of the John Quincy Adams house, when Eliza rescued him and brought him inside. That fall, Adams witnessed the 1804 New England Hurricane writing, "saw more than a hundred trees, of all sizes torn up by the roots, or shettered into fragments. Windows blown down, roofs blown away…and other marks of the most violent storm I ever witness'd upon the land…One of my own barns has lost part of its roof." Later that year he wrote in his diary that he paid for work on a "corn house" at the farm. (CLR 2014: 49)

John Quincy Adams and his wife, Louisa Catherine Adams, lived with their children in his birthplace during the summers of 1805 and 1806. He managed both birthplace homes as well as the Penn's Hill farm. Louisa's sister, Eliza Johnson, assisted the Adams while they lived in the John Quincy Adams birthplace. During the winter of 1805, prior to the family's visit to the farm for the summer,

Louisa wrote to Abigail requesting, “make William do up the garden a little, that is to sew some different sorts of Peas some mustard…” During the spring of 1805, John Quincy Adams was back at work on at Penn’s Hill farm recording, “…I had a number of Peach, pear and cherry trees set out this afternoon; in the spot I have allotted for a nursery…Here I propose to reside during the Summer Seasons; in the intervals from my attendance in Congress—At the expiration of my term of service, my intention is to remove again into Boston; all in my power, for the preservation of my family.” In May he recorded that he reserved part of the day to, “layout out my garden” to the west of the house and in June he wrote, “One of the cherry-stones I sowed this spring behind my Barn has also thrown up a shoot.” (CLR 2014: 49)

In the fall of 1805 Adams surveyed the boundary of his property and recorded, “There is on great part of it no fence between me and Mr. Bracket my next neighbor. A large pine tree standing in the gap between two walls, and on which Mr. French says the number of the lot was marked has been cut down by a trespasser. The stump alone now remains. From this the line northward is marked by heaps of stones at small distances—one other pine tree stands in the direct course—the line passes through the centre of that Tree, and I marked an A. on my side of it; which I carved with a penknife.” Later in 1805, the Adams returned to Washington and left their two sons, George and John with their grandparents at Peace field. (CLR 2014: 49)

After a second summer at the Penn’s Hill farm in 1806 John Quincy Adams moved his family to Boston and their third child, Charles Francis Adams, was born in 1807. In 1809, President James Madison appointed John Quincy Adams to a post in Russia, and John and Louisa moved with their youngest son, once again leaving their two older sons with their grandparents. The Adamses had a daughter, Louisa Catherine, in 1811 who died in 1812. They moved from Russia to London in 1814 where John Quincy Adams served as minister to the court. In 1817, the family moved to Washington D.C. where he served as secretary of state. In 1825 John Quincy Adams was elected President of the United States, where he served one term. (CLR 2014: 50)

Tenants at John Quincy Adams Birthplace:
John Quincy Adams managed several tenants in his birthplace after he acquired the building from his father in 1803. After the Adams family moved out in 1806, Joseph Faxon leased the house from 1807 to 1813. In 1814, Luther Spear leased the house for one year. From 1815 to 1823, Ebenezer Green leased the house with his wife and nine children. Various tenants leased the house from 1824 through 1840, including John Faxon (1824–27), who was a butcher; Noah Clark and Tom Hayden (1825–29), who shared the house, ran an apothecary, and worked as shoemaker and cordwainer; William Field and Harvey Field (1829–1833), who worked in the quarry and worked in various trades; Carr (1833); Henry Wilson (1834), who worked in the stone cutting business; Charles Spear (1841), who also leased the John Adams birthplace; and Thomas Kelley (1840), who lived with several other tenants. (CLR 2014: 50-51)

Meanwhile, tenants in John Adams birthplace remained for longer periods of time and typically leased a portion of the Penn’s Hill farm. Joseph Arnold leased the John Adams birthplace and a large portion of the Penn’s Hill farm in 1808. While living abroad, John Quincy Adams’ brother, Thomas Boylston Adams, managed the Penn’s Hill farm and lived in the John Adams birthplace from 1810 to 1820. Thomas managed a law office in the farm house but suffered from alcoholism. By the late 1820s, John Quincy Adams no longer trusted his brother with the family’s financial responsibilities. (CLR 2014: 51)

For the next decade, the two Curtis families leased the John Adams birthplace. The Curtis brothers operated a cordwaining shop from the house and lived there until they were able to build their own house. The Crane family moved into the house, either while the Curtis brothers were still living there, or shortly after, and they stayed for a couple years. After leaving John Adams birthplace, the Crane family built a house across the street from the birthplaces. George Hardwick leased the house from 1830 to 1841. Sukey Burrell likely leased the house in 1833, where he managed a private school. By 1841, Charles Spear and his family leased the John Adams birthplace and remained in the house until 1868. While leasing the house, Charles Spear operated the dairy and housed seamen, servants, and later, farm laborers. Charles had married Caroline Green, who was the daughter of Ebenezer Green, an early tenant of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 51)

In his final years, John Adams continued to divest himself of land. He sold to John Quincy Adams a seventeen-acre parcel of pasture known as the "Verchild Pasture," located south of the birthplaces and at the base of Penn's Hill in 1819. Three years later, as noted earlier, John Adams conveyed two parcels to the Town of Quincy to endow a temple and academy including the Mount Ararat parcel and a "Rocky Pasture commonly known by the name of the Red Cedar Pasture, or the Centre Rock Pasture, situated near the Grist Mill." Prior to John Adams' death in 1826, he appointed John Quincy Adams and Josiah Quincy (Abigail Adams' cousin) as his executors. (CLR 2014: 51)

John Adams died in 1826 and the following year John Quincy Adams and his son Charles Francis Adams surveyed the Penn's Hill farm, after which Charles Francis Adams' recorded, "I obtained some acquaintance with this property which I never had before and perhaps attached a little more idea of value to it than heretofore although in truth it is most unmanageable property as to any change to be made of it." Around that time, Charles began assisting his father with regular maintenance at the Penn's Hill farm. A drawing from about 1828 shows the birthplaces and associated outbuildings; a barn stands to the northwest of the John Quincy Adams birthplace and sheds stand to the north and west of the John Adams birthplace (Figure 2). (CLR 2014: 52)

Farming and Suburbanization in Quincy:
Prior to the 1830s, Quincy had a primarily agricultural based economy where large landowners farmed or leased land to tenant farmers. Beginning in the 1830s, small industries such as boot making and stonecutting provided more jobs and the economy shifted away from agriculture, spurring development of the region. With the increase in local labor and housing demand, landowners, including John Quincy Adams, subdivided their farmland for house lots. In 1829, he sold a half acre along Plymouth Road, north of the birthplaces, to Samuel Curtis, whose brother built a home. In 1831, he sold a small parcel across the Plymouth Road to Joseph Crane, who built a house, near an abandoned schoolhouse and stone wall. In 1836, Adams sold a parcel of land north of the birthplaces to Benjamin F. Curtis. (CLR 2014: 52)

During the 1830s, John Quincy Adams became increasingly interested in planting trees on his properties, some of which are recorded in a mid 1800s image (Figure 3). He planted horse chestnuts (Aesculus hippocastanum), elm (Ulmus sp.), sycamore (Platanus), maple (Acer), and hickory seeds (Carya) in the Penn's Hill area. While he tended to the Penn's Hill farm, he spent most of his time at his Mount Wollaston farm, planting rows of oaks, acorns, walnuts, and apple seeds. In 1836, John Quincy Adams described a shagbark tree (Carya ovata) in the yard at the John Adams birthplace, he wrote: "There is at the northwest corner of the garden adjoining the old house in which my father was born at the foot of Penn's Hill a Shagbark tree transplanted from my garden here by my brother, when he lived in the old house about 1811, and was from one of the nuts that I planted in 1804. The tree there is not more than half the size of height of the one in my garden, but it now bears nuts – These two trees alone have survived of my plantation of October 1804." (CLR 2014: 52-53)

In 1845, the Old Colony Railroad was built through Quincy Center and near the Adams birthplaces. As land became more valuable, John Quincy Adams continued to sell parcels of the Penn's Hill farm. In 1846, he sold 2.25 acres along Fresh Brook, southwest of the birthplaces. (CLR 2014: 55)

John Quincy Adams served in the House of Representatives until his death in 1848. Upon his death, Louisa Catherine Adams and Charles Francis Adams inherited the majority of his estate including the Penn's Hill farm, Peace field, Mount Wollaston, and several properties throughout Boston and Quincy. Charles Francis Adams received the, "Penn's Valley [Penn's Hill] Farm, with two dwelling houses, deed John Adams to J.Q. Adams, 8 August 1803." (CLR 2014: 55)

Landscape Summary, 1848:
In 1848, the Penn's Hill farm contained about two hundred acres owned by John Quincy Adams. Agricultural fields, pastures, salt marshes, and woodlots covered the landscape and the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces stood at the edge of the Plymouth Road. Though John Quincy Adams served in the U.S. Senate and spent much of his time in Washington D.C., he made frequent trips to his farm and his parent's Peace field property, slowly expanding his landholdings at the Penn's Hill farm, while also selling off houselots. Tenants of the John Adams birthplace farmed a

portion of the Penn's Hill farm and operated the dairy. (CLR 2014: 56)

A railroad line and several new roads improved transportation with new turnpikes along the coast and through central Quincy. The John Adams birthplace remained unchanged and inhabited by tenants. The John Quincy Adams birthplace had two additions, one on the north side and one on the west side of the house. Two barns likely remained standing northwest of the houses and it is likely that a new shed stood northwest of the John Adams birthplace. Vegetation around the birthplaces included small gardens and a couple trees. Surrounding orchards consisted of peach, pear, cherry, and apple trees. Pastures lined the foothills with meadows, small forests, and crops on the lower terrain. (CLR 2014: 56)

From the top of Penn's Hill, views included the surrounding farmlands, quarries, Quincy Bay, and Boston in the distance. Views from the birthplaces included the surrounding agricultural land and dispersed homes along the Plymouth Road and neighboring streets. Small-scale features included the stone walls and split-rail fences that lined the road and property boundaries. The well remained in the yard west of the John Quincy Adams birthplace and a picket fence wrapped around the small front yard of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 56)



Figure 1. Map by John Groves Hales in 1819 showing Quincy. Labeled features include Plymouth Turnpike, Hingham Turnpike, Payne's (Penn's) Hill, Pine Hill, and home of John Adams (Peacefield). (Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library)

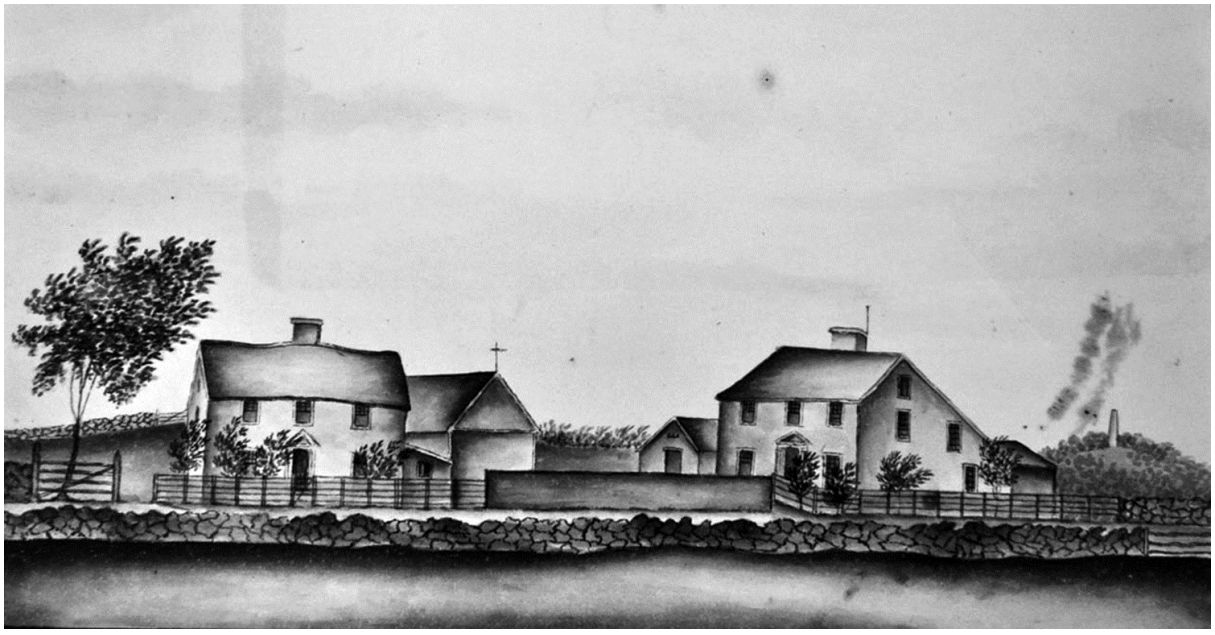


Figure 2. Drawing of the Adams birthplaces, c. 1828. The John Quincy Adams birthplace (left) has a lean to or shed and a barn near its northwest corner. The John Adams birthplace (right) has a lean to behind and a shed to the west. (Historic New England)



Figure 3. The John Adams birthplace and adjacent barn, c. 1845, view looking northwest. Note the stone wall and split-rail gate, picket fence, and a small tree or large shrub in front of the house. (HNE, ADAM 18379)

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, 1848–1886

The fourth period spans the Charles Francis Adams period of ownership from 1848 to 1886, including several tenant families, the subdivision of Penn's Hill farm, and the suburbanization of Quincy.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, housing clusters surrounded railroad stations and major streets, large farms covered low lying fertile areas, and granite quarries dotted the Blue Hills around Quincy. Growing industries attracted new residents and Quincy's population more than doubled from 5,017 people in 1850, to 12,145 in 1885. The Curtis family employed over four hundred people and produced forty-eight thousand pairs of shoes in 1856. Granite production in South and West Quincy increased in the mid-nineteenth century as new steam and compressed air technologies increased the rate of granite extraction and reduced labor. Immigrant laborers were primarily of Irish descent, with a smaller portion of English and Scottish, who found work in the quarries or stone cutting businesses. During the peak of granite production, local groups constructed several granite buildings including the Adams Academy, built in 1872, the Thomas Crane Library, built in 1882, and various churches. Granite production decreased at the end of the century as quarries farther inland could transport stone blocks by train and steel replaced stone as the primary building material. (CLR 2014: 61)

The granite railway was replaced by the Old Colony and Newport Railway in 1871. At that time, steam trains transported the granite directly to Boston. The Old Colony Railroad ran through Quincy Center and near the Adams birthplaces with multiple stations in Quincy. The railroad attracted industrial development along the line as well as early suburban development near the stations and in North Quincy. While the granite industry created jobs in South and West Quincy, the shipbuilding industry expanded along the waterfront. Deacon George Thomas operated a ship yard at Quincy Point in the mid-nineteenth century and in 1883, Thomas A. Watson founded the Fore River Shipyard, which began in Braintree and later moved downstream to Quincy. Shipbuilding would soon become Quincy's largest industry. (CLR 2014: 61)

Penn's Hill Farm:
Following the death of John Quincy Adams in 1848, Charles Francis Adams inherited the 200-acre Penn's Hill farm, which included the birthplaces and associated farm buildings (Figure 4). In

anticipation of the demand for suburban growth, Charles Francis Adams purchased woods, salt marsh, and pastureland throughout South Quincy in the 1840s through 60s, and at the same time gave up parcels for the development of roads and railroads. He continued to lease the farm and birthplaces to various tenants and never lived at Penn's Hill. Charles Spear made the most significant improvements to the farm to increase agricultural production. (CLR 2014: 62)

Charles Francis Adams had a long political career while he owned the Penn's Hill farm, though he invested most of his free time at the Mount Wollaston farm, which he received from his father in 1840. He served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1841 to 1843, the Massachusetts state senate from 1844 to 1845, and the Congress from 1859 to 1861. Meanwhile, tenant farmer Charles Spear and family leased the 200-acre Penn's Hill farm and lived in the John Adams birthplace. During that time, Charles Francis Adams leased the John Quincy Adams birthplace to tenants John Harrison and Patrick Hailey, who worked as boot makers, followed by Ebenezer Green, his wife, and the Joseph Branbury family. (CLR 2014: 62)

Since Charles Francis Adams was more engaged in politics and spent his free time at the Wollaston farm, Spear likely maintained the dairy farm and made most of the agricultural improvements at Penn's Hill during the middle of the nineteenth century. As farmers in the Midwest were able to grow grain on cheaper and larger parcels of land, farmers in New England frequently shifted away from grain and toward dairy and vegetable production. In 1860, the Norfolk Agricultural Society described the Penn's Hill Farm:
"The Committee was gratified to see many fine and some rare species of trees, which were planted by the ancestors of the present proprietor, and not less gratified at the sight of others, which under his own direction, have added beauty and interest to the place. Several acres of land lying on each side of a fine stream of water, have within a few years been converted from an unsightly waste to a beautiful meadow, producing large crops of good hay." (CLR 2014: 62-63)

The Agricultural Society commended the success of Spear's farming practices, stating: "This farm, consisting of about 200 acres, has been leased for several years to Mr. Charles A. Spear, whose management presents such an example of the profits of farming as is seldom seen in this country. He pays a rent which is considered equal to a fair interest on the value of the farm—not, of course, what some of it might be worth for house-lots—and makes for himself a satisfactory profit—thus making tenant farming profitable to both landlord and tenant. By the improvement of some portions of the farm and greatly increasing the growth of grass, he has been enabled to more than double the number of cattle kept. The improvements have been expensive, but have still been made to pay. On some boggy and wet lands, which were formerly actually worthless, so far as regards the production of a crop, he has expended $100 per acre in drainage and covering with earth—mostly gravel—yet it has for five years paid interest of more than $200 per acre. It has produced an average of more than three tons (at two cuttings) of good hay to the acre each season. The produce of the farm is converted chiefly into milk." While Spear managed Penn's Hill Farm, there were few physical changes. One minor change was an addition to the shed located to the north of the John Adams birthplace in 1850. (CLR 2014: 63)

Development Around the Birthplaces:
During the mid-nineteenth century, large farms remained in Quincy despite the increasing demand for suburban development. However, beginning in the 1870s when local industries created more jobs, many of these large landowners subdivided their farms and sold the land for house lots. Before the city installed street cars, developers built subdivisions near the railroad stations, particularly in the northern part of Quincy, as residents frequently took the train into Boston. The horse railway, constructed in 1861, provided another method of transport from the Penn's Hill area into Boston. (CLR 2014: 64)

The town constructed Independence Avenue, which connected to Franklin Street just south of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, in around 1865. The birthplaces sat at the edge of Franklin Street since their construction, however, the new intersection created by Independence Avenue cut very close to the birthplaces, reducing the frontage of both lots. In a c. 1879 sketch, sections of picket fence and scant vegetation separated the yards from the road. Walks to the front door of each house were compacted earth. In the sketch, the door to John Adams' law office at the southeast corner of

the John Quincy Adams birthplace is gone. (CLR 2014: 64-65)

Photographs depict the John Adams and the John Quincy Adams birthplaces in the late 1800s. Features documented include the earthen sidewalk along Franklin Street, low vegetation around the two birthplaces, wood picket fences, and tall trees north of the John Adams birthplace. The land west of the birthplaces was a patchwork of agricultural land with industrial development along the railroad corridor. By about 1886, Presidents Avenue cut across the western edge of the lots (Figure 5). (CLR 2014: 67)

Beginning in 1882, Charles Francis Adams started subdividing the Penn's Hill farm and several of the farm buildings associated with the Penn's Hill farm were removed. In 1883, he gave several parcels around the Quincy Adams station, to the Old Colony Railroad. With these parcels the Old Colony Railroad was able to build new public streets that led to the station. In 1884, he deeded most of Penn's Hill farm to his son, Charles Francis Adams Jr. At the time of his death in 1886, Charles Francis Adams owned the quarter-acre birthplaces property along with the homes and a barn, in addition to several parcels to the south near Penn's Hill and west of the birthplaces. Upon his death, his heirs formed the Adams Real Estate Trust to manage the remaining Adams' estate. (CLR 2014: 70)

Landscape Summary, 1886:
In 1886, the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces stood on a .34-acre parcel, between Franklin Street, Presidents Avenue, and Payne Street, which was owned by the estate of Charles Francis Adams. The Penn's Hill farm was fragmented by the encroaching suburban development as Charles Francis Adams had sold several parcels to developers. The network of roads around the birthplaces increased with the construction of Independence Avenue and Presidents Avenue, and the Old Colony and Newport Railway. The John Adams birthplace had a shed at the rear (north) side of the house. The John Quincy Adams birthplace had lean-tos on the north and west sides of the house. Three barns may have stood near the houses, one between the two birthplaces and the other two northwest of the John Adams birthplace. Vegetation included deciduous trees and lilacs in front of the John Adams birthplace. Both tenants likely grew small gardens near the houses but the vegetation was fairly barren with a lot of overgrown grasses and shrubs. Within other areas at the Penn's Hill farm, orchards consisted of peach, pear, cherry, and apple trees. Tenants of the John Adams birthplace farmed a portion of the Penn's Hill farm and operated a dairy. From the top of Penn's Hill, views consisted of more houses along Franklin Street, quarries on the hilltops, industry near the railroads, and the remaining agricultural fields. Views from the birthplaces included new homes, streets, and more industry. Small-scale features included the split rail and picket fences. The well remained west of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 70)



Figure 4. Painting by G.N. Frankenstein of the Adams birthplaces, 1850. View looking northwest from the Country Road at the birthplaces, several outbuildings, stone walls, and picket fence. The Blue Hills appear in the background. (Adams NHP 8453)



Figure 5. View from c. 1885 looking northwest at picket fences near the homes along Franklin Street. A split rail fence is to the rear of the JQA birthplace. A barn or house is behind the JA birthplace and a shrub is in front. (Historic New England)

ADAMS REAL ESTATE TRUST, 1886–1940

The fifth period spans the Adams Real Estate Trust ownership from 1886 to 1940, and includes the Quincy Historical Society and Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution management of the properties.

Quincy developed rapidly during the end of the nineteenth century as job growth triggered new transportation corridors and residential subdivisions. Manufacturing companies developed along railroad corridors, the shipbuilding industry expanded at the waterfront, and quarries operated in South and West Quincy. Quincy became an incorporated city in 1888, and in 1890 it housed 16,723 residents. (CLR 2014: 75)

Following Charles Francis Adams' death, his heirs established the Adams Real Estate Trust in 1886 and started selling large parcels of the Penn's Hill farm for the development of house lots. As the demand for development increased, local citizens recognized the importance of preserving the city's historic resources, such as the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces. In 1893, the city established the Quincy Historical Society, and appointed Charles Francis Adams Jr. as its first president. The Adams Real Estate Trust retained ownership of the birthplaces and leased the houses from 1886 to 1896. Beginning in 1896, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution managed the John Adams birthplace, and the Quincy Historical Society managed the John Quincy Adams birthplace. Both buildings were opened to the public in 1897. (CLR 2014: 75)

Suburban and industrial growth in the 1920s spurred development of more communities throughout Quincy. The availability of the automobile in the early twentieth century enabled residents to live in suburban neighborhoods and commute to Boston. Quincy's population increased by over twenty thousand people in the 1920s, with almost seventy-two thousand residents living in the city in 1930. (CLR 2014: 75)

Industrial Development:
Blocks surrounding the railway stations were already developed with housing, and communities grew around manufacturing centers such as the shipyard and the granite quarries. The Quincy & Boston Street Railway Co. opened the electric street railway on Hancock Street, Washington Street, Quincy Avenue, and Independence Avenue in 1888. This spurred the development of denser residential neighborhoods near the streetcar stops, which was particularly attractive for residents who commuted to Boston. In 1893, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company leased the Old Colony line and operated the Atlantic, Norfolk Downs, Wollaston, Quincy, and Quincy Adams stations. (CLR 2014: 75)

Quincy's population growth at the end of the nineteenth century was primarily due to the success of the local shipbuilding and granite industries. Businessmen Thomas A. Watson and Frank O. Wellington moved their shipbuilding company to Quincy in 1901 from its original location on the Fore River. The new location enabled them to work on larger government and naval contracts until Bethlehem Steel Corporation purchased the shipyard in 1913. At the outset of World War I in 1914, Quincy shipyards supplied military needs and quickly grew into the city's leading industry. Bethlehem Steel constructed the seventy-acre "Victory Plant" in 1917, where they manufactured destroyers. By 1929, the Quincy yard employed 3,500 workers. The granite industry grew until the end of the nineteenth century, when the remaining Quincy granite was used for cemeteries and monuments. Despite its decline in production, the granite industry remained the second largest employer in Quincy, by 1924 employing 1,035 workers in seven quarries. (CLR 2014: 75-76)

Development Around the Birthplaces:
During the end of the nineteenth century, developers purchased and built residential houses on the blocks surrounding the birthplaces. Open parcels near the birthplaces were desirable locations because of the nearby Quincy Adams Railway Station, streetcar lines on Water and Franklin Streets, and proximity to Quincy Center. (CLR 2014: 76)

Prior to 1886, the birthplaces property was divided into three parcels, with the two birthplaces and three associated buildings on the southern parcel, and two parcels to the north. A private developer built the Craig house, a large Queen Anne building, immediately to the north of the John Adams birthplace on Franklin Street in 1886–87. The new neighbors likely planted a beech tree north of the

John Adams birthplace around the end of the nineteenth century. (CLR 2014: 76-77)

The heirs of Charles Francis Adams, including John Quincy Adams, Charles Francis Adams Jr., Henry Adams, Mary Adams Quincy, and Brooks Adams established the Adams Real Estate Trust to manage the birthplaces and surrounding landholdings (Figure 6). The trust sold most of the Penn's Hill farm for house lots and by 1889, soon after Quincy became a city, most of the remaining farm land was sold. The trust retained the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces, leased them to tenants, and removed the outbuildings and horse stable located adjacent to the John Adams birthplace. During their ownership of the property, the Adams family considered removing the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces because they were in need of repair and brought in little rent. (CLR 2014: 77)

As suburban growth in Quincy increased, local residents recognized the significance of historic structures as well as the threat of losing them. In 1892, the Quincy Patriot published a letter in which W.A.F., a concerned local citizen, stated: "Have all our old landmarks—in this age of dollar chasing—to be destroyed in order to make room for brown stone fronts, for street railways, for 16-storied business houses? Must our children and our children's children grow up in entire ignorance of everything of an historical nature save what they learn from books? Can we not leave something in tangible shape that was closely related to great events in the history of our great country? Or must we eventually lose our identity entirely as Americans and gradually become absorbed in the mighty flood of humanity which is pouring in upon us from across the sea; and to whom a history of our once beautiful country and the grand deeds of those who took so active a part in making its history will be of no more interest, or as much, probably, as the price of monkeys in Ceylon." The editor of the Patriot also stated: "The houses [birthplaces] should be put in good repair, neatly painted and have nice lawns around them. They should be filled with all the old relics of the Adams family, that can be collected…An affable and pleasant lady or gentleman should be engaged to show the visitors about and to answer any questions curiosity seekers might wish to know." (CLR 2014: 78-79)

In 1893, the City of Quincy established the Quincy Historical Society with Charles Francis Adams Jr. as its president. The society was established to preserve and promote awareness of Quincy history and as a storage facility for local archives. In 1896, the Quincy Historical Society moved into the John Quincy Adams birthplace and Charles Francis Adams Jr. agreed to cover the cost to restore the house to an earlier appearance. The restoration, led by William Gardner Spear who was the Quincy Historical Society's first librarian, included new board siding, a new roof, reopening of the fireplace, and new paint. The house was also raised about two feet to meet the new street level. (CLR 2014: 79)

In 1896, Charles Francis Adams Jr. allowed the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution to use the John Adams birthplace as their meeting house. This chapter was led by Mrs. Nelson V. (Lillian Blanche) Titus, who recalled, "At that meeting [January 27, 1896], I [Lillian B. Titus] stated to the members [of the Adams Chapter D.R.] that I had applied to the Hon. C. F. Adams for permission to use this famous old house [John Adams birthplace] for our Chapter meetings. For years these two houses had fallen into comparative disuse, and were occupied by tenants who cared nothing for their great historic value. …On Oct. 19, 1896 the Adams Chapter took formal possession of the house Mr. Adams having dismissed the tenant so that we should have complete occupancy of the property." Titus supervised restoration of the John Adams birthplace in the fall of 1897, which included new windows, opening the chimney, new wallpaper, new paint, removal of an interior wall, and a new coat of red paint for the exterior of the house. (CLR 2014: 79-80)

At the John Quincy Adams birthplace, the Quincy Historical Society constructed a stone wall and reconstructed the well (Figures 7 and 8). At the John Adams birthplace, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution installed a split-rail fence, turnstile, and a flagpole (see Figure 8). During restoration at the John Adams birthplace, the workers found a brick inscribed with "1681," which was likely the date of the original house on the site. Later dendrochronology analysis indicates that the house was substantially rebuilt in 1716. (CLR 2014: 81)

During their restoration efforts, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution installed a cairn on the top of Penn's Hill that commemorated the location where Abigail Adams and

her young son, John Quincy Adams, watched the burning of Charlestown on June 17, 1775, during the Battle of Bunker Hill. The cairn was dedicated on June 17, 1896. A year later, on June 17, 1897, the Quincy Historical Society opened the John Quincy Adams birthplace to visitors and the site was "visited by large crowds of people from this city and surrounding towns." The society continued to use the house for meetings. Later that year, on October 19, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution opened the John Adams birthplace to visitors. Both groups employed a caretaker to maintain the house and show it to visitors. (CLR 2014: 81)

The well stood at the northwest side of the house beside an old tree stump, which supported a tree limb and container that drew water from the well. A barrel collected water from the roof. The stone wall extended around the southern portion of the property with a wood gate at the southern corner (Figure 8). By 1900 the houses were surrounded by suburban development and the lots lined with stone walls. While the land around the birthplaces was densely developed, a large tract of land in western Quincy was set aside as parkland as part of the Blue Hills Reservation. Photographs of the birthplaces in the early 1900s show an increasing effort to enhance the landscape surrounding the homes, including the planting of shade trees, ornamental shrubs, and vines (Figures 9 and 10). (CLR 2014: 82-87)

Suburban Growth:
Quincy's population growth in the 1920s, resulting from the success of local manufacturing and the shipbuilding industries, put a strain on city services. Tourists and residents gained better access to Quincy neighborhoods in the early 1900s when the Metropolitan District Commission and Metropolitan Highway Commission completed Quincy Shore Drive in 1903, Furnace Brook Parkway in 1916, and the Southern Artery in 1926. These new transportation corridors also improved the commute into Boston. (CLR 2014: 88)

Residential developments, which began in the early part of this period, continued to grow in South Quincy, North Quincy, Wollaston, and Squantum. With the increase in population and residential housing, the city was overwhelmed with the number of requests for paved streets, utilities, sewers, traffic improvements, and better control of growth. In response to these requests, the city produced a zoning study in 1921 and constructed new institutional buildings such as schools. (CLR 2014: 88)

By the early twentieth century, developers constructed more multiple family dwellings, including several along the Presidents Avenue and Franklin Street blocks. By 1920, most of the Penn's Hill farm land once owned by Charles Francis Adams was developed for housing. The birthplaces property was further diminished by the city's widening of Franklin Street to accommodate more parking. In 1921, Charles Francis Adams opposed this expansion and compared the project to "a street through the centre of Mount Vernon to save a few dollars as to cut off any of the land of the Adams homesteads." (CLR 2014: 88-89)

Protection of the Birthplaces:
Despite its diminished setting, Quincy valued the preservation of historic sites and promoted tourism, featuring the birthplaces as key attractions within the city (see Figures 9 and 10). The Quincy Historical Society published a guide book in 1921 with the intent to "create an interest and thereby to educate the citizens and younger generations in the past history of our city, which has, through its distinguished sons and daughters, contributed so much to elevate our Country to its present position among the Nations of the World." This guide detailed routes to the birthplaces, through City Square, along Quincy Bay and the Neponset River, and near the shipbuilding areas. Institutional buildings, parks, historic sites, and areas of interest were labeled on the map with a brief paragraph about each site. Furthermore, the birthplaces were accessible by train and street car. In 1929, the Boston Sunday Post published a map showing Quincy's attractions that featured the birthplaces, the old cedar groves, the first railroad, and shipbuilding plants. These maps show the town's pride in local history and resources. (CLR 2014: 89)

Another guidebook published in 1937, the "WPA Guide to Massachusetts," contains a short tour of Quincy, with stops at Peace field (then referred to as the Adams mansion), a granite quarry, the birthplaces, and Crane Public Library. The John Adams birthplace is described as "a small red clapboard salt-box farmhouse built in 1681, enclosed by an ancient pole fence and turnstile…" and

the John Quincy Adams birthplace is described as “a red clapboard salt-box farmhouse with a huge central chimney.” The booklet includes a “Quincy Tour” ¬¬¬map with the major visitor attractions labeled. (CLR 2014: 89-90)

In the 1930s the Patriot Ledger published a series of articles about historical shrines in Quincy. These articles call attention to the birthplaces and other historic sites to encourage more visitors. The article recommends, “A visit to the birthplace of the second president gives one the opportunity of stepping into the very room in which John Adams was born. Courteous attendants show visitors through the various rooms…” The articles goes on to state, “Few buildings in the country have the wealth of historical relics housed in the John Quincy Adams house.” At the end, the article states, “A visit to the Adams houses enables one to sense the very spirit of the Revolution. In them one breathes the very air that animated those moulders of the nation, John, John Quincy, and Samuel Adams, Otis, Henry, Washington, and Jefferson.” (CLR 2014: 90-91)

Newspaper articles and survey maps capture several features added to the birthplaces landscape in the 1920s and 1930s. The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution installed a new steel flagpole in 1926. Photographs from 1929 and 1930 show the split-rail fence along Franklin Street, which by that time had a paved sidewalk. Tall shrubs and trees surrounded John Adams birthplace, and tall trees grew behind John Quincy Adams birthplace with a stone wall along the sidewalk (Figures 11 and 12). (CLR 2014: 91)

In 1936, the National Park Service completed a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) that included architectural and landscape documentation for the birthplaces (Figures 13). Norway maples (Acer platanoides) and American elms (Ulmus americana) grew by the walls and fences and between the two buildings. A shed stood at the northwest corner of the John Adams birthplace with a lattice along the west façade of the shed. Common lilacs (Syringa vulgaris) and Vanhoutte spirea (Spiraea x vanhouttei) grew around the John Adams birthplace and Chinese wisteria (Wisteria sinensis) grew at the southeast corner of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. A pathway connected from the John Adams birthplace entrance at Franklin Street to Presidents Avenue. A stone wall surrounded the John Quincy Adams property and a split-rail fence surrounded the John Adams house with a turnstile at the front entrance. (CLR 2014: 91-92)

Landscape Summary, 1940:
In 1940, the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces stood on a .34-acre parcel, between Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, owned by the Adams Real Estate Trust. The Adams Real Estate Trust retained fragments of the Penn’s Hill farmland, including land along the Town Brook and at the base of Pine Hill and Penn’s Hill. Most of the city blocks in South Quincy were fully developed with residential and commercial buildings and very little agricultural land remained. The proliferation of private vehicles resulted in the construction of Quincy Shore Drive in 1903, Furnace Brook Parkway in 1916, and the Southern Artery in 1926. In the neighborhood surrounding the birthplaces new roads with paved sidewalks cut through the remaining large parcels. Streetcar tracks ran down Independence and Franklin streets. Within the birthplaces parcel, a pedestrian path led from Franklin Street, around the John Adams birthplace, and toward Presidents Avenue. The John Adams birthplace had a small shed northwest of the house and two buildings stood on Franklin Street north of the birthplace. The John Quincy Adams birthplace no longer had sheds attached to the house. Similarly, the barns no longer stood to the west of the birthplaces. Vegetation around the birthplaces included Norway maples and American elms around the perimeter of the property and between the two birthplaces, with lilacs, spirea, and wisteria near the buildings. Views from the top of Penn’s Hill looked out over dense residential and commercial development. Views from the birthplaces included commercial development and transportation infrastructure. Small-scale features included the reconstructed stone wall around the John Quincy Adams birthplace property, wooden gates, split-rail fences around John Adams birthplace, the relocated well, steel flagpole, and turnstile. (CLR 2014: 93 -94)



Figure 6. View c.1890 looking northeast at new additions on the birthplaces from an empty lot on Presidents Ave. Note the overgrown yard around the JQA birthplace and several foundation shrubs and a lilac at the JA birthplace. (Historic New England)



Figure 7. An 1897 view looking east at the JQA birthplace and decoration celebrating the centennial of John Adams' Presidential inauguration. A stone wall built in 1896 by the Quincy Historical Society surrounds the house. (Quincy Historical Society)



Figure 8. A c.1899 view north from the rear of the JQA birthplace toward the well and JA birthplace. Note the stone wall and turnstile (1896), lilac in front of the JA birthplace, and the young tree near the rear shed. (Historic New England)

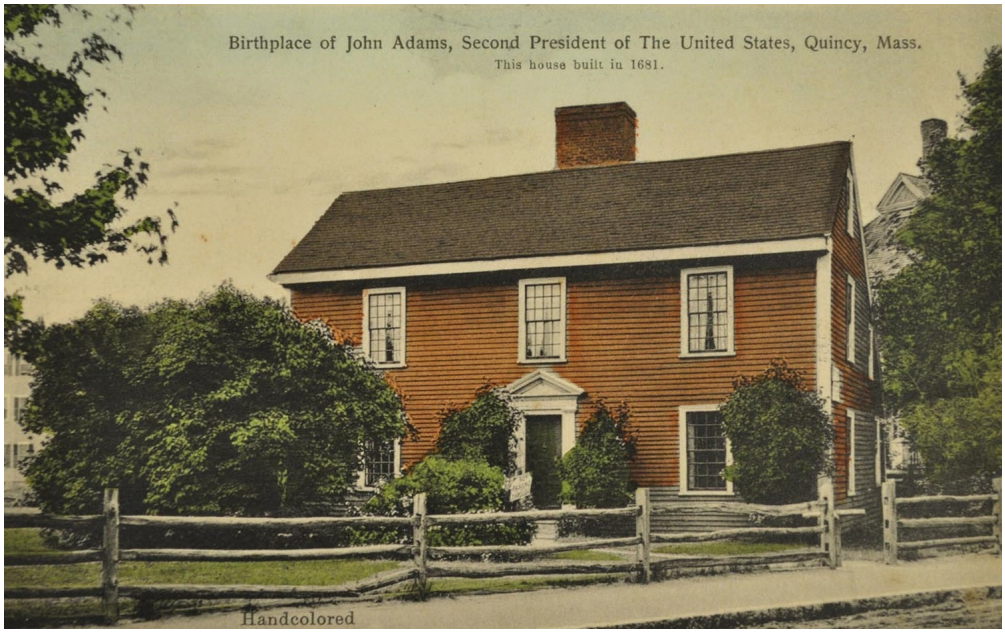


Figure 9. Hand colored postcard of the John Adams birthplace, c.1914, with lilacs, spirea, and split rail fence in the foreground. (Historic New England)



Figure 10. Postcard of the Adams birthplaces, c. 1914. A stone wall surrounds the John Quincy Adams birthplace and a split rail fence surrounds the John Adams birthplace. The Craig house is visible in the background. (Historic New England)



Figure 11. The JA birthplace, 1930, view looking northwest. The lilacs conceal the house and the spirea are blooming. The canopy of a Norway maple is visible at left and an elm at right. (Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection)



Figure 12. The JQA birthplace, 1930, view looking northwest. A Norway maple grows at far right, a Chinese wisteria climbs the south facade, and a young elm grows near the front door. (Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection)

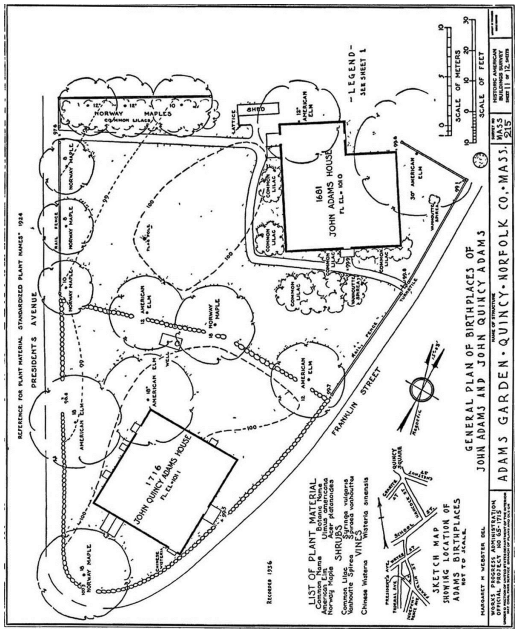


Figure 13. General Plan of the Adams Birthplaces, 1936. Labels include the shed and vegetation at JA birthplace. (Margaret M. Webster, DEL, NPS, Works Progress Administration, Official Project No 65 1715, sheet 11 of 12)

CITY OF QUINCY, 1940–1979

The sixth period spans the years that the birthplaces were owned by the City of Quincy, and includes

the continued management of the sites by the Quincy Historical Society and the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution. The period also includes the designation of the properties as a National Historic Landmarks, and their listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

During World War II the Fore River Shipyard was a major presence in Quincy, employing over 40,000 in the shipbuilding industry to build Baltimore class ships, light cruisers, the Essex class aircraft carriers, destroyers, destroyer transports, and landing ships. The war sent many local residents away from Quincy, including Mayor Thomas S. Burgin, and brought thousands to the city to train at the Squantum Naval Air Station or to work at the Shipyard. (CLR 2014: 101)

Following the end of the Korean War in 1953 the shipbuilding industry began to decline, while new services and manufacturing trades thrived in the mid-1950s. Manufacturing companies grew including the Procter & Gamble Company, which opened a plant in 1940, and the Raytheon Company, which doubled their plant size in South Quincy in 1951. Downtown Quincy was a thriving economic center with retail shopping, restaurants, office buildings, and new parking facilities. Major retail shops, such as Filene's Outlet and Woolworths, attracted people from throughout the South Shore. By 1960, the population of Quincy reached 87,409 residents. The last operating quarry in Quincy, known as Swingle's Quarry, closed in 1963. Structures associated with the quarry industry were removed and many of the abandoned quarries were used by locals as swimming holes. (CLR 2014: 101)

The city and state agencies expanded transportation corridors in the 1950s through 1970s that improved access between Quincy and the surrounding Boston metropolitan area. The Massachusetts Department of Public Works oversaw the construction of the Southeast Expressway between Boston and Braintree through western Quincy from 1954 to 1959. In Braintree the new Southeast Expressway connected with Pilgrims Highway (MA Route 3) to Cape Cod and the Yankee Circumferential Highway (Route 128) around Boston. A decade later, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) obtained a railroad right-of-way just to the west of the Old Colony Line and extended the Red Line, then called the South Shore Line. Constructed in 1970, the South Shore Line opened in 1971 with stations at North Quincy, Wollaston, and Quincy Center. The MBTA added the Braintree terminus in 1980 and Quincy Adams station in 1983. (CLR 2014: 101)

Management of the Birthplaces:
The Adams Real Estate Trust deeded the .34-acre property that contained the two birthplaces to the city of Quincy in 1940. The city funded capital improvements and maintained the two buildings and surrounding landscape while local organizations continued to manage the public programs. The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution continued to manage the John Adams birthplace until 1950, when they passed their responsibilities to the Quincy Historical Society. Meanwhile, Quincy Historical Society continued to operate the John Quincy Adams birthplace, as they had been doing since the 1890s. Both properties were opened to the public for house tours and maintained by caretakers. Tourism and public interest in Quincy's historic sites and the Adams family grew during this period with ongoing efforts to promote tourism and the presence of the National Park Service at Peace field. (CLR 2014: 101-102)

The city expanded the birthplaces parcel from .34 to .72 acres after they acquired the two residential lots to the north of the John Adams birthplace. Once in possession of the two parcels, which were originally part of John Adams' farm, the city relocated the residences, and re-graded the landscape. This additional open space provided a much needed buffer around the house. Following building repairs, new pedestrian circulation, and grounds maintenance in the 1940s and 1950s, the city was no longer able to fund the necessary maintenance and repairs for the buildings. The National Park Service acquired the Adams Mansion (Peace field) in 1946, and established the Adams Mansion National Historic Site. In 1952, they expanded the boundary to include a strip of land along the Furnace Brook Parkway and renamed the park, Adams National Historic Site. (CLR 2014: 102)

Transfer to the City of Quincy:
In the 1940 transfer, Charles Francis Adams contacted Quincy mayor, Thomas S. Burgin, to discuss the Adams family's desire to transfer the birthplaces parcel to the City of Quincy. Charles Francis

Adams reasoned, “in view of the historic value of the houses the family would like to give them to the city under certain terms and conditions.” The city accepted the property and agreed to, “preserve and maintain such premises with any additions thereto or improvements thereon as places of historic and public interest and not for profit, with the purpose of fostering civic virtue and patriotism…and in general to do all things which may be necessary or proper to preserve said premises and the buildings now built thereon and the personal property which may from time to time be placed thereon or therein.” The city council and mayor approved the transfer for the .34-acre property, including the John Adams and the John Quincy Adams birthplaces, on June 18, 1940. Under city ownership, the property would not be taxed. Shortly after assuming ownership, the city council appropriated $2000 for repairs, which funded interior and exterior building repairs at the John Adams birthplace. (CLR 2014: 102)

The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution had managed and cared for the John Adams birthplace since 1896. By 1950, the Daughters of the Revolution, which was down to one member, was no longer able to manage the building. The Board of Managers of Historical Places asked the Quincy Historical Society to manage the John Adams birthplace, in addition to the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The Quincy Historical Society received the Adams family furniture, which remained in the house. The Quincy Historical Society operated the birthplaces and opened them to the public, while city of Quincy maintained and funded improvements at the houses. The city made additional repairs to mitigate termite and dry rot damage at both buildings, introduce electricity and plumbing, and improve structural beams in 1950-51. Prior to opening in 1951, the city added new vegetation and flagstones between the two birthplaces. New plantings likely included spring-flowering bulbs along the stone walls and split-rail fences.

Expansion of the Birthplaces:
As residential and commercial development thrived during the middle of the century, the city sought to improve the setting of the birthplaces. In 1956, the city acquired the two-and-a-half story Queen Anne house and adjoining land, immediately north of the John Adams birthplace at 127 Franklin Street, from the Craig family. The Craig house, built in 1886, sat only a few yards away from Adams birthplace, and was considered a fire hazard that detracted from the historic character of the birthplaces. The city relocated the house and regraded the vacant lot in 1958. To the north of the Craig house, the McCausland house, went on the market in 1957, and the city Council voted to acquire this property. The house was moved and the lot was graded and seeded in 1958. The new open space increased the setting of the birthplaces property from a .34-acre parcel to a .72-acre parcel. (CLR 2014:103)

Local Designations:
The National Park Service designated the birthplaces of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams as National Historic Landmarks in 1960, and the properties were administratively listed in the National Register in 1966. The birthplaces received approximately 9,400 visitors in 1974. The following year, city council approved designation of two local Historic Districts, the Adams Birthplace Historic District and the Quincy Center Historic District. The Adams Birthplace Historic District included the birthplaces on Franklin Street and surrounding thirty-one properties. The Quincy Center Historic District included 115 properties and encompassed Quincy Square. National Historic Landmark documentation was prepared and accepted in 1978 for the birthplaces. (CLR 2014: 103-104)

Despite the national recognition of the birthplaces, the city of Quincy was no longer able to maintain the property after nearly three decades of ownership. In 1977, William A. O’Connell, President of the Quincy Historical Society, lobbied for the transfer of the birthplaces to the National Park System, an obvious candidate because of their presence at Peace field a mile and a half north of the birthplaces. O’Connell wrote to the mayor, city council, senators, representatives, local news media, and the historic commission expressing his concern over the condition of the birthplaces property. O’Connell was concerned about the structural integrity of the birthplaces, lack of fire and burglar alarms, and deteriorated appearance. In public letter to Mayor Joseph J. LaRaia, he stated, “The society feels it is necessary to once again reinforce that immediate steps must be taken to stop the rapid deterioration of these buildings and to properly preserve what is of great importance to the city and nation. We hope that you appreciate that the present situation is critical and that immediate action is

of utmost importance." Following a burglary in 1978 and ongoing repairs for the two buildings, it became clear that neither the City of Quincy, nor the County of Norfolk, was able to afford necessary maintenance and repairs. Members of the Quincy Historical Society voted in support that the U.S. Department of the Interior assume ownership of the .72-acre parcel in 1979 (Figures 14 and 15). (CLR 2014: 104-106)

Landscape Summary, 1979:
In 1979, the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces stood on a .72-acre parcel between Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, owned by the City of Quincy. None of the remaining Penn's Hill farm remained intact. Quincy was a dense residential and commercial city with mixed industry near the shoreline. Circulation improvements to Quincy included the construction of the MBTA Red Line and new stations. City streets had divided the remaining large parcels in South Quincy, which were transformed into residential developments. Pedestrian circulation included a flagstone path that ran from Franklin Street to the front door to the John Adams birthplace, through an opening in the stone wall, and to the front and back doors of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The paved pathway between John Adams birthplace and Presidents Ave remained. Both houses were painted red with white trim and the John Adams birthplace had a small lean-to attached to the northwest corner of the house. Vegetation around the birthplaces included Norway maples and American elms along the streets and between the buildings. Pines, red maples, a beech tree, and a dogwood tree stood to the north of the John Adams birthplace. Lilacs and Chinese wisteria grew around the foundation of the birthplaces. ¬¬Views from the birthplaces property included residential and commercial development along Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue. Additional features included the stone wall around the John Quincy Adams birthplace, a wooden gate, split-rail fence around John Adams birthplace, the well, a flagpole, and a park sign. (CLR 2014: 107)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, 1979–PRESENT

The final period includes National Park Service ownership and management of the birthplaces to present. The National Park Service already had a long-time presence in Quincy when it acquired the birthplaces property from the city in 1979. The Peace field property, acquired in 1946, received over 20,000 visitors a year by 1978. Meanwhile, the birthplaces received around 10,000 each year. Following the acquisition, park staff documented the existing conditions later that summer, renovated the interior and exterior of the birthplaces, furnished the houses, and implemented minor changes to the vegetation, grading, and small-scale features. Park staff gave tours from the exterior of the birthplaces until the interior of the buildings opened to the public in 1984. (CLR 2014: 113)

By the 1980s, the city blocks that surrounded the birthplaces were fully developed, with commercial buildings concentrated along Franklin Street, and residential development in the surrounding blocks. City staff maintained the sidewalk and streets surrounding the birthplaces and park staff maintained the buildings and landscape within the park boundary. Major reports by the National Park Service for the birthplaces included the New Area Study in 1978, a Draft Historic Structure Report in 1993, the General Management Plan in 1996, and the Historic Furnishings Report in 2001. The National Park Service designated Adams National Historic Site as a National Historical Park in 1998 to reflect the multiple properties within the park. (CLR 2014:113)

National Historic Site:
Congress passed the enabling legislation for the acquisition of the birthplaces, part of Public Law 95-625, on November 10, 1978 and allowed the National Park Service to officially acquire the .72-acre property on April 20, 1979. The National Park Service celebrated the acquisition on May 1, 1979, with an opening that included park and city representatives (Figure 14). Wilhelmina S. Harris, who served as the first superintendent for Adams National Historic Site, and her staff, managed both the Peace field and birthplaces properties. (CLR 2014: 113)

The National Park Service renovated the buildings at the birthplaces property from 1979 to 1984, while the interiors of the birthplaces remained closed to visitors. The National Park Service completed a “Archeological Overview and Assessment” in 1996 and updated the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) to document architectural details, interior measurements, exterior sketches, and elevations of the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces (Figure 15). The survey team also mapped the location of vegetation, circulation, and small-scale features on the site. In the HABS survey, Architectural Historian Carole Perrault recorded that the John Quincy Adams birthplace was “surrounded on three sides by a stone fence and in the rear by a split-rail fence” and that “historically, a farm constituting numerous acres of farm land, is now characterized by a semi-commercial and residential center. Historically, there was a stone fence and a split-rail fence. Currently, both exist; however they are later additions and their placement is not historically accurate.” During John Adams and John Quincy Adams lives, the stone wall and split-rail fences lined the property boundaries, which were much larger parcels. (CLR 2014: 113-114)

The birthplaces were two of many historic structures in Quincy. Preservation consultants, Monique Lehner and Minxie Fannin led the Quincy Multiple Resource Area study beginning in 1986, which identified 96 contributing and 28 non-contributing resources. The authors conducted a comprehensive inventory of Quincy, which they submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and included more than 600 properties from the seventeenth century through 1940. The study imposed restrictions on new development within this area of Quincy. (CLR 2014: 114)

In the 1990s, city and park staff made several changes to the birthplaces landscape to improve the visitor experience, wayfinding, and circulation. In the early 1990s, the city planted Kwanzan cherry trees (Prunus serrulata ‘Kwanzan’) in the sidewalk on Franklin Street. Around this time, the city painted a red line on the sidewalk along Franklin Street, similar to the Freedom Trail in Boston, to help visitors navigate between the historic sites in Quincy. Park staff simplified pedestrian circulation by removing the walkway between Presidents Avenue and the back door of John Adams birthplace and removing the stepping stones that led from the front door of John Adams birthplace to the back door. Park staff planted irises and daffodils along the south side of the stone wall between the

birthplaces. In the mid-1990s, park staff removed an aged, deteriorating Norway maple at the corner of Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue (see Figure 15). The tree was not replaced. They removed the split-rail fence around the John Adams birthplace in the 1990s for a brief amount of time and installed a new split-rail fence and removed a portion of the stone wall that stood near the front door of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. Park staff installed new “Adams National Historic Site” signs with park information¬. They also painted the John Quincy Adams birthplace cream with a yellow door. Prior to painting, the John Adams birthplace had dark wood siding. (CLR 2014: 116-119)

In 1996, the National Park Service drafted the Adams National Historic Site General Management Plan, which outlined the long term goals for the park. The plan emphasized youth programing and education at the birthplaces. In 2001, the National Parks Conservation Association drafted State of the Parks: Adams National Historical Park, A Resource Assessment. The report found that “the birthplaces landscape (0.72 acres), where plantings need to be replaced, is in poor condition.” The report recommended that the park, “Determine how many visitors is the optimum number (the “carrying capacity”) for the presidential birthplaces and Old House to ensure that visitation does not take a toll on these buildings and that visitors have a positive experience.” (CLR 2014: 121)

The park official changed from Adams National Historic Site to Adams National Historical Park in 1998, recognizing the 1979 acquisition of the birthplaces and addition of the off-site visitor center in Quincy Center. Working with Harpers Ferry in 2008 the park implemented a signage plan and all on-site park signs were installed according to NPS sign standards and reflected the name change.

In the early 2000s, park staff made a few changes to the birthplaces landscape. With less than an acre of land, the park concentrated their effort in tree care, lawn maintenance, and trash clean up. Park staff mowed the lawn around the birthplaces approximately one time per week and frequently picked up trash. Another large Norway maple that stood between the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces fell down in 2007 and park staff replaced the tree in-kind. In 2008, park staff installed three new park signs, one at the corner of Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue and two along Franklin Street. The park planted lilacs and forsythia along Presidents Avenue and fenced off and re-seeded the lawn in front of the entrance to John Adams birthplace. In 2010 park staff removed one of three Norway maples that stood near the fence line at Presidents Avenue. This tree was not replaced. Park staff frequently pruned and installed cables on the American beech tree and dogwood tree that stand north of the John Adams birthplace. The City of Quincy replaced the sidewalk on Franklin Street in 2012, altering the stone wall near the intersection of Franklin Street and Presidents Ave. Due to the close proximity of the house to the sidewalk, the back step for the John Quincy Adams birthplace overlaps with the sidewalk. (CLR 2014: 121-122)

Landscape Summary, 2014:
Owned by the National Park Service, the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces stand on a .72-acre parcel, bounded by Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue. Circulation improvements implemented by the National Park Service include a flagstone path between the birthplaces and the removal of a paved walkway to the John Adams birthplace. The pedestrian pathway between the John Adams birthplace and Presidents Avenue no longer remains. The recently re-paved sidewalk, which wraps around the eastern, southern, and western edges of the property, is outside of the park boundary. The John Adams birthplace no longer has a lean-to at the northwest corner. Vegetation around the birthplaces includes Norway maples, pines, dogwoods, a beech tree, and an oak tree that are all in fair to good condition. A stand of lilacs grows between the two houses and is in to good condition. Kwanzan cherry trees line the eastern edge of the property and are outside the park boundary and maintained by the City of Quincy. Views from the birthplaces property include residential and commercial development. Additional features within the parcel include the stone wall around the John Quincy Adams birthplace, a wooden gate and split-rail fences around John Adams birthplace, and the well and flagpole. (CLR 2014: 122)

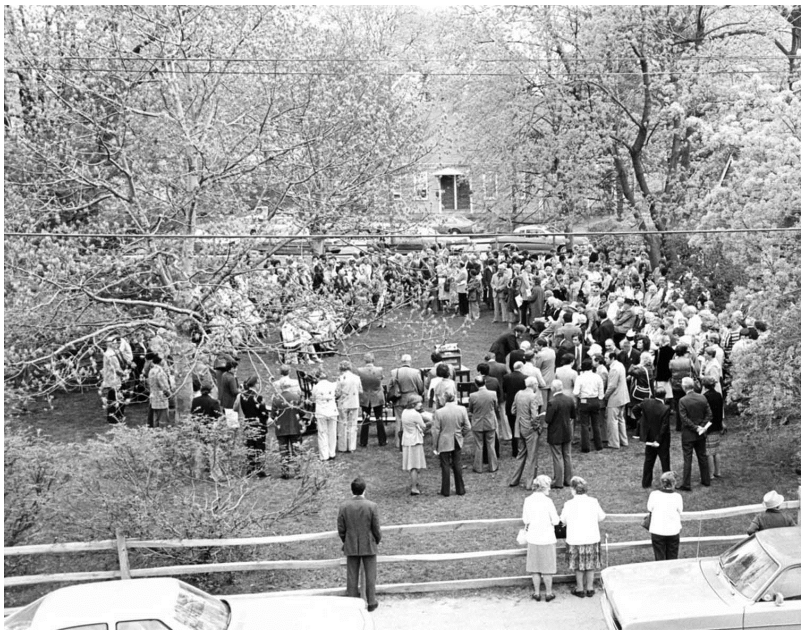


Figure 14. Photograph at the Adams birthplaces during the National Park Service ceremony, 1979. Note the abundance of trees and shrubs in the north lawn area. (Quincy Historical Society)

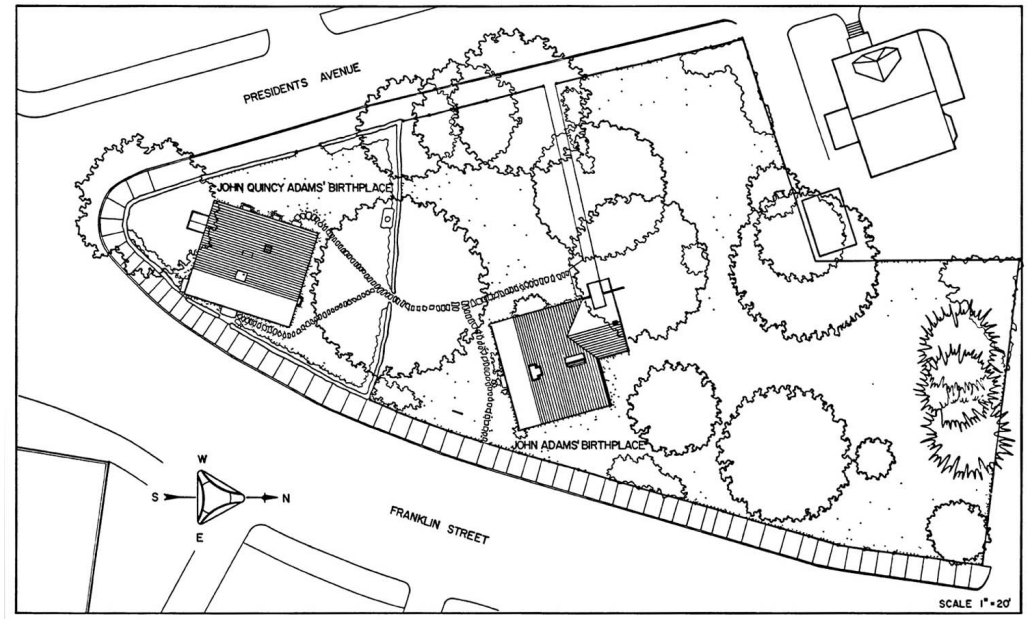


Figure 15. Landscape plan for the Adams birthplaces, 1979, documenting the flagstone path, stone wall, well, and vegetation. (Drawn by Keith S. Andreucci for Historic American Buildings Survey)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Agriculture/Subsistence	Farm (Plantation)	Farm (Plantation)	Yes	No	No
Domestic (Residential)	Single Family Dwelling	Single Family House	Yes	No	Yes
Landscape	Leisure-Passive (Park)	Leisure-Passive (Park)	No	Yes	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Historic Furnished Interior	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

The Adams birthplaces grounds are open year round and the buildings are open for public tours from mid-April to mid-November. Currently, most visitors arrive and depart by trolley for a thirty-minute stop at the property with interpreter-led tours of both birthplace interiors. Use of the surrounding landscape is limited. The park occasionally hosts special events, which are set in the landscape, including educational programs and temporary exhibits.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for the Adams birthplaces landscape include spatial organization, land use, circulation, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small-scale features. These characteristics have associated features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance. The historical integrity of the birthplaces is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance—1716 to 1940—with the existing conditions as assessed in 2014. Many of the existing features contribute to the historic character of the site's landscape.

Overall, the existing character of the birthplaces landscape reflects the layers of historic development for the period of significance. The property retains its location, design, historic materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, although the setting is diminished due to the continued growth of residential and commercial development around the property. The two birthplace homes, set in a commemorative landscape bounded by stone walls and split rail fence, remain in their historic configuration. Trees and shrubs remain from the early 1900s or have been replaced in-kind. The views between the two houses remain intact as depicted in historic drawings and photographs. The acquisition by the City of Quincy of the Craig and McCausland house lots increased the amount of open land and has helped preserve some of the site's rural character. Except for a flagstone path between the two homes, the National Park Service has made very few changes to the property since acquiring it in 1979.

INTEGRITY

Location:
Location is defined by the National Register as the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Situated on Franklin Street, in Quincy, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces remain in their original locations when constructed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The flat site not far from Town Brook, with fertile soils and a viable well, offered a desirable location for homesteads. The homes passed through multiple generations of the Adams family then passed to preservation groups including the Adams Real Estate Trust, Quincy Historical Society, Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, City of Quincy, and finally to the National Park Service. The stone wall, well, and wood fence remain in their same location from the end of the historic period. The agricultural fields and pasture that once made up the Penn's Hill Farm no longer remain.

Design:
Design is defined by the National Register as the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The Adams birthplaces landscape continues to represent its character as a vernacular landscape as it evolved through the historic period. It also represents an open park-like landscape with open lawn areas surrounded by deciduous trees and shrubs. The Colonial architectural design elements are present in the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces. Ornamental and shade tree plantings remain throughout the property, as well as buffer plantings along the property lines.

Setting:
Setting is the physical environment of a property and the general character of the place. Despite the extensive development around the Adams birthplaces, the setting of the property, including the circulation, vegetation, and outward views, has changed relatively little since the end of the historic period in 1940. During John Adams and John Quincy Adams ownership, the birthplaces property was surrounded by crop fields and pasture, a few homes, and located close to the road. The rural setting changed with the subdivision of land for housing developments during Charles Francis Adams' ownership in the mid-nineteenth century and during Adams Real Estate Trust ownership of the birthplaces and Penn's Hill farmland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, the construction of Presidents Avenue and Payne Street in the mid-nineteenth century changed the immediate context of the property. For the most part, however, the physical environment of the buildings, lawn and vegetated border is the same as the end of the period of significance except for the addition of the two homes north of the birthplaces on Franklin Street, which were later removed. However, new commercial and suburban development on Franklin Street after the period of significance detracts from the birthplace property's historic rural setting.

Materials:
Materials are the physical features that were combined or deposited during the period of significance in a particular pattern or configuration to give form to the property. Most of the historic materials used in construction or during restoration of the Adams birthplaces remain intact. These materials were brought to or gathered on site during construction of the buildings in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries or during site restoration at the end of the nineteenth century. The majority of the trees and shrubs within the birthplaces property date from the historic period, or are replacements in-kind. However, many shrubs around the John Adams birthplace no longer remain and a couple of the trees around the perimeter of the property were not replaced. The stepping stones that make up the pedestrian circulation are a new material since the end of the historic period. Enough material from the historic period remains for the property to retain integrity to the period of significance.

Workmanship:
Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts and methods of construction used during the specified historic period of significance. Within the Adams birthplaces landscape, workmanship remains evident in the buildings and structures, circulation, maintenance of vegetation, and small-scale features. Much of the vegetation remains or has been replaced in-kind. Most of the materials and construction techniques of the buildings and structures remain intact. In addition, some of the materials of the small-scale features at remain intact, including the stone well, stone wall, and wood fence. Some vegetation no longer remains such as the cluster of lilacs and spirea that grew around the south and west sides of John Adams birthplace, the Chinese wisteria that grew on the south side of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, one elm tree that grew east of the John Adams birthplace, one maple that grew at the corner of Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, and one maple that grew west of the John Adams birthplace. Enough workmanship from the historic period remains for the property to retain integrity to the period of significance.

Feeling:
Feeling is the expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a property's historic character. During the early half of the historic period, the Adams birthplaces were small rural residences located close to the road that led past crop fields and pastures and up to the top of Penn's Hill. The domestic area around the two houses contained small gardens and orchards with views into the surrounding fields used for crops or grazing. Stone walls and wood fences divided the properties, protected crops, and retained livestock. Physical remnants of the property's history are evident in the homes themselves, the well, stone walls, and aged trees. During the latter half of the historic period, the Adams birthplaces were leased to tenants and then used by the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution and Quincy Historical Society as a meeting house and house museum. Following the end of the historic period, both houses were restored and opened to the public. While the Adams birthplaces are no longer used as a private residence, the property retains many of the historic features designed to meet the family's needs such as the stone wall, wood fence, and well. The small gardens and vegetable beds no longer exist on the property, but many of the trees remain or have been replaced in-kind. The residential, commercial, and transportation development that now surrounds the Adams birthplaces detract from the historic feeling. Despite the changes to the Adams birthplaces landscape, the property retains integrity of feeling.

Association:
Association is the direct link between an important event or person and the property. While many of the properties and agricultural fields in Quincy and Braintree were subdivided and redeveloped following the historic period, the Adams site retains its physical appearance and association as the birthplace to two early U.S. Presidents. Although the birthplaces are no longer private homes or managed by members of the Adams family, evidence of its connection to the Adams family is evident.

Landscape Characteristic:

This section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1716–1940) contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. This section has been excerpted from the 2014 "Cultural Landscape Report for Adams Birthplaces."

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Spatial organization refers to the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in a landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. At the time the birthplaces were constructed, spatial organization was largely dictated by natural systems and topography. The Adams birthplaces property sits on the southern edge of the geologic and physiographic area known as the Boston Basin. The Charles, Mystic, and Neponset Rivers formed within the basin dotted with drumlins, marshes, and ponds. Drumloid hills include Penn's Hill (or Payne's Hill) to the east of the birthplaces and formerly part of the Adams's Penn's Hill farm, and several nearby hills including Pine Hill and the Blue Hills to the southwest, Forbes Hill to the northwest, Mount Wollaston to the north, and Mount Pleasant to the east (see Figure 1). The middle elevations along the sides of these hillsides were often used for grazing, while the low-lying elevations were made of rich agricultural lands or wet swampy areas. Fresh Brook ran along the western edge of the original Belcher and Needham properties, west of the future birthplaces. By the late eighteenth century, as Deacon John Adams acquired land farther west, Fresh Brook ran through various portions of the Penn's Hill Farm. Today, Fresh Brook, or Town Brook, runs from the Old Quincy Reservoir, north toward the Southeast Expressway before it disappears into culverts southwest of the birthplaces property. During the early part of the historic period, John Adams and John Quincy Adams reported that they rode through large wooded areas. Suburban and commercial development rather than hardwood forests now cover the terrain around the Adams birthplaces.

Within the boundaries of the Adams birthplaces, the historic spatial organization is relatively intact since the end of the period of significance and includes three character areas defined by circulation, historic property boundaries, and vegetation. These three areas include the north lawn area, the John Adams birthplace parcel, and the John Quincy Adams birthplace parcel. Each area is bounded by walls or fences and includes shade trees (see Figure 15).

Historic Condition:
North Lawn Area.
Once part of the John Adams birthplace property, the Adamses likely used the north lawn area to grow vegetables or for smaller structures such as sheds and barns because of its close proximity to the John Adams birthplace. The north lawn area was subdivided in the 1820s by John Quincy Adams who saw that the land along the road to the north of the John Adams birthplace was valuable for new house lots. Between 1886 and 1887 the Craig house and McCausland house were built on the lots (see Figures 8-11). The Craig property stretched from Franklin Street to Presidents Avenue and the McCausland house abutted Franklin Street and the former Payne Street. These families likely planted the beech tree, north of the Craig house, and the flowering dogwood, north of the McCausland house.

During the early twentieth century, the north lawn area included the two homes, and perhaps a barn near the Craig house, and was bounded by houses on Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue. A wood split-rail fence divided the John Adams birthplace from the Craig property and three maples and two elm trees likely grew within the John Adams birthplace property and near the fence line.

John Adams Birthplace and Grounds.
After inheriting the property from his father in 1705, James Penniman likely constructed a new home by about 1720, which later became known as the John Adams birthplace. The Penniman home stood near the road at the eastern edge of the property with farm outbuildings, including a barn and a shed to the west, and vegetable gardens nearby. Wood split-rail fences marked the property boundary and lined the edge of the road. Deacon John Adams purchased the property in 1720, plus additional acreage. He and his wife, Susanna Boylston Adams raised their three children in the home: John, Peter, and Elihu. John Adams acquired the property from his brother Peter in 1774. John Quincy Adams acquired the property from his father in 1803.

During the mid-nineteenth century, while Charles Francis Adams owned the birthplaces, the land around John Adams birthplace became more fragmented with the construction of Payne Street to the north and Presidents Avenue to the west. Tenants built new barns and sheds at the rear of the home and continued to fence the front yard (see Figure 5). Once the land to the north of the birthplace was sold and developed around 1886, the landscape around the birthplace was limited to a much smaller lot (see Figure 6). At the end of the period of significance, a pedestrian walkway ran between Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, several maple and elm trees grew along the northern, western, and southern boundary, and a shed stood to the northwest of the John Adams house (see Figure 13).

John Quincy Adams Birthplace and Grounds.
William Ellis (or Allis) acquired his homestead around 1650 and constructed a home by 1660. The home stood near the road, at the northeastern edge of the property, and was likely surrounded by a few other homes that also stood near the road. The Ellis or Belcher family likely built a barn to the south west of the house and installed a well to the west. Dendrochronological analysis indicates that the house was rebuilt in about 1716. Deacon John Adams acquired the property in 1744 and passed it to his son John in 1761. John and Abigail Adams lived in the house during the 1760s and early 1770s before they purchased the Peace field property in 1787. Correspondence by Abigail indicates that the Adamses fenced in the front yard and early drawings suggest that there were lilacs and other plantings along the east façade of the home. John Quincy Adams likely added sheds to the north and west sides of the home and built a new barn to the west of the house. The property was bounded by fence, and later a stone wall along the northern edge. A picket fence bounded the road, which was removed when the road was widened (see Figure 7). During the mid-nineteenth century, while Charles Francis Adams owned the birthplaces, the land around John Quincy Adams birthplace became more fragmented with the construction of Presidents Avenue to the west and expansion of Franklin Street. The Quincy Historical Society removed two sheds around 1895, relocated the well, and built a new stone wall around the perimeter of the property. Elm and maple trees grew along the northern and western walls. At the end of the nineteenth century the John Quincy Adams birthplace was bounded by roadways to the east, south, and west (see Figures 5-8).

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
North Lawn Area.
Following the end of the historic period, the City of Quincy acquired the Craig and McCausland homes and properties. The city removed the houses around 1958 to decrease the fire hazard that the Craig house posed on the John Adams birthplace and to enlarge the setting of the two birthplaces. When the National Park Service acquired the Adams birthplaces in 1979, the property included the parcels to the north of the John Adams birthplace (see Figure 15). The beech (Fagus sylvatica) and flowering dogwood (Cornus florida), planted adjacent to the two homes, continued to mature and remain today. A little-leaf linden (Tilia cordata), likely planted in the mid-1900s, grows between the beech and the John Adams birthplace. The National Park Service planted pine (Pinus strobus) and a row of common lilacs (Syringa vulgaris) to screen the birthplaces from the parking lot and businesses on Franklin Street. Today, the National Park Service mows the north lawn areas routinely and has stabilized or removed declining trees (Figure 16).

John Adams Birthplace and Grounds.
Following the end of the historic period, the John Adams birthplace and grounds were limited to a small residential lot bounded by the Craig house to the north, the John Quincy Adams birthplace to

the south, Presidents Avenue to the west, and Franklin Street to the east. Once the City of Quincy removed the Craig and McCausland homes in 1958, the John Adams birthplace was once again surrounded by a larger amount of open lawn and deciduous trees, similar to landscape conditions in the mid-nineteenth century. After acquiring the property in 1979, the National Park Service made a few minor alterations to the property by removing the paved walk west of the house and the shed at the northwest corner. Trees matured around the house and park staff maintained or replaced in-kind the extant trees (Figure 17). Most of the lilacs and all of the spirea (Spiraea vanhouttei) that once grew around the east, south, and west sides of the house no longer remain, but the house and grounds still define the core of the property.

John Quincy Adams Birthplace and Grounds.
Following the end of the historic period, the John Quincy Adams birthplace and grounds were limited to a small residential lot bounded by John Adams birthplace to the north and the intersection of Presidents Avenue, Franklin Street, and Independence Avenue. The Quincy Historical Society added a stone pathway, which connected to the John Adams birthplace, and later planted low shrubs and bulbs on the inside of the stone wall to the north of the John Quincy Adams birthplace (Figure 18). After acquiring the property in 1979, the National Park Service made a few minor alterations to the property by installing park signs and maintaining the lawn area. Today, most the vegetation along the stone wall no longer remains except for two boxwood shrubs at the opening between the two properties, vines that are trimmed, and a bed with bulbs and herbaceous flowers along the stonewall at the northeastern edge of the property. The house and grounds still define the core of the property.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
North Lawn Area	169631	Contributing					No
John Adams Birthplace and Grounds	169633	Contributing					No
John Quincy Adams Birthplace and Grounds	169635	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 16. View looking northeast at the north lawn area, which is ringed with mature trees. The northwest corner of the John Adams birthplace is visible at right and commercial buildings can be seen in the background. (DSC 0090, OCLP 2013)



Figure 17. View looking northeast at the JA birthplace and grounds. A flagstone path passes through the wall and near a narrow flower garden, and connects the two birthplaces. Two trimmed boxwood shrubs mark an opening in the wall. (DSC 0010, OCLP 2013)



Figure 18. View looking southeast at the JQA birthplace and grounds. Presidents Ave is at right and Franklin Street is at left behind the house. A stone wall surrounds the house and a well stone lies in yard. (DSC 0113, OCLP 2013)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Land use is defined as the principal human activities that form, shape, and organize a landscape. For the Adams birthplaces, residential and agricultural use persisted throughout most of the historic period when Deacon John Adams, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Charles Francis Adams, and members of the Adams Real Estate Trust owned the birthplaces and Penn's Hill farm. By 1896 the Adams birthplaces were no longer used as a private residence and most of Penn's Hill farm was sold for the development of house lots. Under the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution and Quincy Historical Society management, the two homes were used for meetings and opened to the public for tours beginning in 1897. Once the National Park Service acquired the property in 1979, they continued to keep the homes open to the public for tours. The existing land use of historic preservation and public education and interpretation is compatible with the historic character of the landscape.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Agriculture.
Cultivating the land was essential to life in eighteenth century New England. Every rural household maintained corn fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards to provide food, especially to store and use over the long winter months (see Figures 1-3). Early writings by the Adams family suggest the presence of a kitchen garden and orchard trees in close proximity to the homes. During the John Adams and John Quincy Adams' periods, the birthplaces served as the nucleus for the larger Penn's Hill Farm, but most of the land was sold by the early 1900s.

Little evidence of agriculture remains on or in association with the property today. A small non-historic cultivated plot near the stone wall on the John Quincy Adams property contains flowering bulbs, annuals, and perennials (see Figure 17). The garden plot was added by the National Park Service.

Historic Preservation.
The City of Quincy established the Quincy Historical Society in 1893 with Charles Francis Adams, Jr. as its first president. The society restored the John Quincy Adams birthplace and the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution managed the John Adams birthplace. Both opened for public tours in 1897 (see Figures 7-10). The City of Quincy acquired the birthplaces in 1940 and continued to preserve and maintain the properties, while local organizations managed the public programs. The city passed the properties to the National Park Service in 1979 (see Figures 14 and 15).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Historic Preservation at the Site	169637	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Vegetation includes managed individual specimens and masses of deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous material, both indigenous and introduced. Vegetation at the Adams birthplaces property includes rows of deciduous trees, shrubs, and vines around the property, between the two buildings, and north of the John Adams birthplace. More recent additions include evergreen trees and shrubs that provide screening, and street trees in the sidewalk on Franklin Street.

Prior to the construction of the Adams birthplaces, meadows, creeks, clearings, and wooded areas covered much of the future Penn's Hill farm and Adams birthplaces property. Early homesteaders grew fruit trees, planted grain crops, and raised cattle. In 1720, Deacon John Adams purchased a small farm and home from the Penniman family and later expanded his landholdings to include the surrounding orchards, meadows, and fields. Following Deacon John Adams death in 1761, his three sons, including John Adams, inherited portions of the Penn's Hill farm that included salt marshes, meadows, uplands, swamps, and wooded areas (see Figures 1 and 2). John Adams married Abigail Smith and they improved the farmland by clearing vegetation along the rivers and building new fences and continued to acquire additional farm land where they grew corn, potatoes, and planted orchards of apple trees, and planted small vegetable gardens near their home. After John Quincy Adams purchased the Penn's Hill farm from his father in 1803, he planted more fruit and nut trees, including horse chestnut and hickory as well as sycamore, maple and elm, and leased the fields and birthplaces to tenants who maintained Penn's Hill farm (see Figure 3). When the property passed to Adams Real Estate Trust in the late 1800s, the Quincy Historical Society and Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution added elms, Norway maples, flowering vines, and numerous ornamental shrubs including lilac and spirea (see Figures 7-10). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, much of the Penn's Hill farmland was subdivided and sold for housing developments.

At the end of the period of significance, the Adams birthplaces stood on a .34-acre residential parcel surrounded by city streets and suburban development. The property included a few specimen trees with lines of deciduous trees around the borders and ornamental shrubs and vines growing near the buildings (see Figure 13). None of the Penn's Hill farm remained intact. The trees growing near the birthplaces and around the perimeter of the property retain a substantial degree of integrity because the trees were maintained or replaced in-kind by park staff. The Penn's Hill farm, which once included over two-hundred acres, has lost much of its historic character since the nineteenth century, but overall the vegetation of the Adams birthplaces retains its historic character.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Specimen Trees around Birthplaces.
Several trees grew around the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces throughout much of the historic period. John Quincy Adams, or one of his tenants, likely planted the American elm tree that grew at the northeast corner of John Adams birthplace. Once the property passed to the Adams Real Estate Trust and was managed by the Quincy Historical Society and the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, several maples and elms were planted. As documented in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration: a maple grew at the corner of Presidents Avenue and Franklin Street, two American elm trees grew west and northwest of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, two elms and a Norway maple grew on the north side of the stone wall between the birthplaces, three Norway maples grew along Presidents Avenue within the John Adams birthplace lot, three more grew along the northwest property line, and two elms grew northeast and north of the John Adams birthplace (see Figures 13 and 15).

Following the historic period, some of the trees were removed and not replaced in-kind. This included the elm tree to the northeast of the John Adams birthplace, which was gone by the 1950s. The Norway maple at the corner of Presidents Avenue and Franklin Street was removed by park staff in the mid-1990s. The park removed a younger but failing Norway maple west of the John Adams birthplace, and another Norway maple along Presidents Avenue in 2010. A Norway maple that grew between the two birthplaces, just north of the stone wall and near the gap, fell down in 2006, and was replaced in-kind (Figure 19). The trees near the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplace, planted in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape. Overall there are fewer shade trees than at the end of the historic period.

Trees in North Lawn.
The Craig and McCausland families likely planted the beech tree to the north of the Craig house and the flowering dogwood tree to the north of the McCausland house during the end of the nineteenth century or beginning of the twentieth century. Around that time the families, or possibly

the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution or City of Quincy planted the linden, maples, oaks, and pine trees that grow in the north lawn portion of the birthplaces property (see Figures 13-15).

Following the historic period, the City of Quincy followed by the National Park Service has maintained the mature trees in the north lawn area. The trees in the north lawn, established at the end of the nineteenth century or by mid twentieth century, contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape. Many of the trees predate the end of the historic period, 1940, when the area was owned privately and consisted of two houselots. Mature trees remain despite the removal of the two houses that stood from 1886 to 1958, and include beech, linden, flowering dogwood, pines, and yellowwood (see Figure 16).

Street Trees along Franklin Street.
From the mid-1800s to mid-1900s an elm grew along Franklin Street to the north of the John Adams birthplace. After the tree was removed, no trees stood along the west side of the road adjacent to the birthplaces for about fifty years. In the 1990s, the City of Quincy planted five Kwanzan cherry trees (Prunus serrulata 'Kwanzan') in the sidewalk on the west side of Franklin Street. The trees grow outside of the park boundary and are maintained by the city (Figure 20). The cherry trees on Franklin Street do not contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape, as they are not representative of the species that grew along the road near the site during the historic period.

Perimeter Shrubs and Vines.
Generations of the Adams family and tenants who occupied the birthplaces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries likely planted small gardens and ornamental shrubs. The Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution and Quincy Historical Society planted shrubs around the perimeter of the Adams birthplaces property around 1896 when they restored the homes, installed the split-rail fence, constructed the stone wall, and reconstructed the well. Vines, possibly Virginia creeper and trumpet vine, grew along the stone wall, and in ensuing years covered much of the wall (see Figures 9 and 10). The 1936 WPA survey shows lilacs and spirea growing to the east, south, and west of the John Adams birthplace (see Figure 13).

Most of the shrubs that grew during the historic period no longer remain. The Virginia creeper and trumpet vine persist, but are cut back regularly. The National Park Service likely added many of the shrubs that remain today to screen surrounding properties, including common lilac (Syringa vulgaris), forsythia (Forsythia sp.), winged euonymus (Euonymus alatus) along Presidents Avenue and the northern fence line, common flowering quince (Chaenomeles sp.) at the eastern fence and near the northwestern fence line, and boxwood (Buxus sempervirens) next to the opening in the stone wall between the two properties (Figure 21, see also Figure 17). The screening shrubs that grow along Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue were added by the National Park Service to evoke the character of the Adams birthplaces residential landscape.

Foundation Plantings.
Generations of the Adams family and tenants who occupied the birthplaces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries likely planted shrubs near the two homes. In 1786, Elizabeth Cranch wrote to Abigail Adams about the John Quincy Adams birthplace reporting that, "The Laylocks are just opening, & have grown very much. The grass Plot before the house looks most delightfully green." (Elizabeth Cranch to Abigail Adams, 5-20-1786, AFP/MHS). Small trees and shrubs appear in several early paintings and photographs from the mid to late nineteenth century (see Figures 2-4). Once the birthplaces were no longer used as private homes, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution and Quincy Historical Society likely planted lilacs and spirea in front of the John Adams birthplace around 1896 when they restored the homes, and planted a Chinese wisteria vine on the south side of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. Postcards from the early twentieth century display lush shrub and vine plantings around both of the birthplaces (see Figures 9 and 10). The 1936 WPA survey shows lilacs and spirea growing on the south and west sides of the John Adams birthplace and Chinese wisteria at the south side of the John Quincy Adams birthplace (see Figure 13).

The foundation plantings, which included masses of lilacs and spirea near the John Adams birthplace, and wisteria at the south side of the John Quincy Adams birthplace, no longer remain from the end of the historic period, and were likely removed when the National Park Service restored the two homes in 1980. Historic photographs show that the foundation plantings varied during the historic period when the birthplaces were used first as a home to the Adams family, than leased to tenants, then opened to visitors.

Flower, Herb, and Vegetable Plots
Beginning in the eighteenth century and extending to the mid-nineteenth century, members of the Adams family and various tenants maintained flower and vegetable gardens to the north and west of the two birthplaces. In 1784, Abigail wrote to Cotton Tuffs about the Pratt family, who lived in the John Adams birthplace from 1778-92. She stated, “They are during the present year to have the use of the Garden east of the House and that part of the Great Garden next the road—all the fruit which grows in the Garden. Mr. Pratt and his wife may have liberty to eat currents out of the Garden but no Children to be permitted to go in to the garden.” In 1836 John Quincy Adams wrote in his diary about the garden, “There is at the northwest corner of the garden adjoining the old house in which my father was born at the foot of Penn’s Hill a Shagbark tree transplanted from my garden here by my brother, when he lived in the old house about 1811, and was from one of the nuts that I planted in 1804. The tree there is not more than half the size of height of the one in my garden, but it now bears nuts—These two trees alone have survived of my plantation of October 1804” (John Quincy Adams Diary, 8-11-1836). Following construction of Presidents Avenue and Payne Street, and the reduction of the landscape that surrounded the two birthplaces, it is unlikely that tenants maintained flower or vegetable gardens. By the time the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of Revolution and Quincy Historical Society managed the two birthplaces, no garden beds remained.

Following the historic period, a narrow garden bed appeared on the John Quincy Adams birthplace, along the northern stone wall (see Figure 17). The National Park Service continues to maintain a three-foot wide bed of bulbs and herbaceous flowers.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Specimen Trees around Birthplaces	169639	Contributing					No
Trees in North Lawn	169641	Contributing					No
Street Trees along Franklin Street	169643	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Perimeter Shrubs	169645	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Flower, Herb, and Vegetable Plots	169647	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 19. View looking northeast at the John Adams birthplace. The Norway maple on the right was planted in 2006. Benches are visible by the corner of the house and a stone wall separates the two birthplace properties. (DSC 0079, OCLP 2013)



Figure 20. View looking southwest at Kwanzan cherry trees in the Franklin Street sidewalk, with the John Adams birthplace visible at right. The trees are heavily pruned to enable vehicle parking and safe passage along the sidewalk. (DSC 0040, OCLP 2013)



Figure 21. View looking southeast at forsythia and lilac next to the split rail fence on the west side of the property, along Presidents Ave. (DSC 0137, OCLP 2013)

Landscape Characteristic: **Circulation**

Circulation is comprised of the spaces, features, and materials that make up the network of pedestrian and vehicular movement. For the Adams birthplaces, the circulation system includes the flagstone pathway that connects the two homes. Outside of the park property, the close proximity of Presidents Avenue and Franklin Street, the pedestrian sidewalks, and the trolley drop off zone on Franklin Street influences the circulation in the birthplaces landscape.

When the two homes were built in the early 1700s, the primary circulation route in this area of North Braintree was the Plymouth Road, also known as the Plymouth Turnpike, which passed by the site to the east of Penn's (or Payne's) Hill. Built in 1641, the roadway was unpaved and lined with trees, homes, and stone or wood fences (see Figure 1). Homes were typically built near the road and in small clusters so residents could share resources. A railroad line and several new roads were built in the early nineteenth century to improve transportation between Boston and the industrial development in the South Shore. The Adams birthplaces area changed dramatically with the construction of Independence Avenue in 1865 and Presidents Avenue in 1885, and the installation of a streetcar line on Franklin Street around 1890, which included tracks on the edge of Franklin Street (see Figure 7). A compacted earth sidewalk ran along the city streets during the nineteenth century and was paved by 1929 (see Figures 9-12). The expansion of regional transportation corridors continued in the early twentieth century when the Metropolitan District Commission and Metropolitan Highway Commission built Quincy Shore Drive, Furnace Brook Parkway, and the Southern Artery.

During restoration work in 1896, the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution installed a stone dust walkway from Presidents Avenue to the rear door of the John Adams birthplace (see Figure 13). This pathway was later rebuilt by the City of Quincy in 1951 and then removed by the National Park Service in 1981. Overall, the circulation of the Adams birthplaces retains its historic character, however temporary walkways such as the paved walkway near the John Adams birthplace no longer remain.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Flagstone Path.
The flagstone path within the property did not exist during the historic period. It was built by the City of Quincy around 1951, and led from a turnstile on Franklin Street to the front and rear door of the John Adams birthplace (along the alignment of a stone dust path installed in 1896 by the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution) and to the front and rear door of the John Quincy Adams birthplace (see Figures 13 and 15). The City also placed flagstone on an existing stone dust path from the back door of the John Adams birthplace to Presidents Avenue (also installed by the Daughters of the Revolution). Around 1981 during restoration of the two homes, National Park Service staff removed the 1896/1951 flagstone path from the back door of the John Adams birthplace to Presidents Avenue, and the 1951 flagstone path from the front door to the rear door of John Adams birthplace. This configuration remains today: extending from the fence opening on Franklin Street to the front door of the John Adams birthplace, and continuing through a gap in the stone wall to the John Quincy Adams birthplace where it splits to the front and back doors. The flagstone path does not contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape because they did not exist during the historic period (see Figure 17).

Sidewalks on Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue
The sidewalks along both Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue were present during the historic period, but were not as close to the birthplaces as they are now. The first documented indication of a sidewalk on Franklin Street appeared in an 1885 photograph. On Presidents Avenue, the first sidewalk was most likely constructed in conjunction with the new road, and is visible in an 1890 photograph (see Figure 6). Both sidewalks are depicted on the 1936 WPA plan (see Figure 13).

The sidewalks on Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue are concrete and asphalt, respectively, with granite curbing and four to five feet wide (Figure 22, see also Figures 20 and 21). The sidewalk on Franklin Street is closer to the homes and wider than during the historic period. The non-contributing sidewalks are maintained by the City of Quincy and intrude on the historic site.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Flagstone Path	169657	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Sidewalks on Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue	169659	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 22. View looking north at the granite block step on the south facing law office entry at the JQA birthplace. Franklin Street has been widened, and the house step is now in the sidewalk. Note the metal stand on the step. (DSC 0007, OCLP 2013)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Buildings are elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activity in the landscape, such as the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces. Structures are elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity in the landscape. The John Quincy Adams birthplace, originally built around 1660 by William Ellis, and rebuilt around 1716, and the John Adams birthplace, built around 1650 to 1660, and likely rebuilt by James Penniman around 1720, remain in their original locations. In the following years, homeowners and tenants built sheds and barns near the two birthplaces, which were built, removed, and rebuilt several times and their exact locations remain uncertain. A well was likely first built in the seventeenth century by the Ellis

or Belcher families. A well stone is visible and archeological studies have located the site of a second well. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Quincy Historical Society and the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution restored the birthplaces before they used the homes for meetings and opened the homes for public tours. In 1950, the City of Quincy stabilized and made several repairs to both buildings, and in 1980, the National Park Service restored the two birthplaces. Overall, the buildings and structures on the Adams birthplaces property, including the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplace, retain integrity. While the outbuildings no longer exist, they contributed to the historic character during the period of significance.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
John Adams Birthplace.
Sources are unclear as to who first built the two-room wide, one-room deep home, later known as the John Adams birthplace. Early settler William Needham, built a dwelling on his eight-acre parcel around 1650–60, however, the property's low sale price to James Penniman's father, Joseph Penniman, indicated that the house might have been a smaller or entirely different structure than what stands today. It is possible that James Penniman rebuilt the home in between 1710 and 1720, as is suggested by recent dendrochronological analysis. In 1712, Penniman added a partial lean-to at the rear (north side) of the house. In 1720, Penniman sold the property and house to Deacon John Adams, father of John Adams. In 1750, Deacon John Adams expanded the lean-to across the entire back of the house, thus creating a saltbox profile, and built a shed at the north east edge of the house. In 1761, Peter Boylston Adams inherited the thirty five-acre Penn's Hill farm and house from his father. John and Abigail Adams purchased John's birthplace from his brother Peter, and returned to Braintree in 1774. John Adams described the purchase as, "my fathers Homestead, and House where I was born. The House, Barn and thirty five acres of Land of which the Homestead consists, and Eighteen acres of Pasture in the North Common, cost me 440…The Buildings and the Water, I wanted, very much" (John Adams Diary 2, 2-28-1774, AFP/MHS). John Adams, and later John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams, leased the John Adams birthplace to various tenants through the end of the nineteenth century.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the land around John Adams birthplace became more fragmented with the construction of Payne Street to the north and Presidents Avenue to the west. The Adams Real Estate Trust managed the birthplaces during the end of the nineteenth century when most of the Penn's Hill farm was sold for housing developments. Following decades of tenant occupancy, Charles Francis Adams Jr. (of the Adams Real Estate Trust) allowed the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution to use the John Adams birthplace as their meeting house beginning in 1896. The Daughters of the Revolution restored the John Adams birthplace in 1897, installing new windows, opening the chimney, removing interior walls, and applying new paint. That same year, the Daughters of the Revolution began leading public tours through the home.

After the City of Quincy acquired the two birthplaces in 1940, the City Council appropriated funding to add new siding, beams, flooring, and asphalt shingles. In 1950, the home was closed to the public while the city made repairs. The city also reversed some of the alterations made by the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution including rebuilding an interior wall that was removed in 1896. They added electricity and then opened the houses to the public in 1951. After the National Park Service acquired the birthplaces they closed the homes and made interior and exterior repairs from 1979–84. They installed wooden shingles on the roof, made interior changes to door openings and walls, removed the northern ell, and furnished the home (see Figure 17). Today, the building is one of two focal points within the .72-acre parcel. Although the house is no longer used as a private residence, the structure remains in good condition with minimal changes since the historic period.

John Quincy Adams Birthplace.
William Ellis (or Allis) received a fifty-two acre land grant from the City of Boston in 1640, and built a two-story, two-room wide, one-room deep house, later known as the John Quincy Adams birthplace, in 1660 (Perrault, 1993:58). Ellis sold his property to Gregory Belcher that same year, and he passed it to Samuel Belcher in 1663. Upon Samuel Belcher's death in 1679, the farm,

including a “Dwelling house Barn Orchard & Land adjoining,” passed to his brother, Deacon Gregory Belcher (Racine 2001:153). According to recent dendrochronological analysis, Belcher likely rebuilt the house in 1716 and added a lean-to at the rear sometime between 1716 and 1727, before Gregory Belcher Jr. inherited the house. In 1728, Belcher’s wife and daughter, Abigail Bracket Belcher and Abigail Belcher inherited the home although did not make any changes other than minor repairs. In 1742 Lewis Vassal purchased the home and property, and then in 1743, John and Richard Billings purchased the land and retained the property for one year. It is unlikely that the Vassals, or the Billings brothers, lived in the home. The Billings brothers sold the home in 1744 to Deacon John Adams, who was already living next door in the future John Adams birthplace, and Deacon John rented the home to tenants.

John Adams inherited the future John Quincy Adams house in 1761 and lived there periodically until he and Abigail Adams purchased Peace field. John Adams used a room in the John Quincy Adams birthplace for his law office where he added an exterior door for clients. He also likely added two new sheds, one on the north face and one on the west face of the house in 1764. John Quincy Adams was born in this house in 1767. After John Quincy Adams acquired the home from his father in 1803, he lived there during the summers of 1805 and 1806 with his wife, Louisa Catherine Adams, and their children. John Quincy Adams made minor repairs to the house before moving in for the summer in 1805 but was unable to enlarge the house as Louisa had previously planned. In the following years tenants occupied the John Quincy Adams birthplace and often one or two families lived in the home together. Charles Francis Adams inherited the birthplaces in 1848 from his father, John Quincy Adams.

The Quincy Historical Society moved into the John Quincy Adams birthplace in 1895, and William Gardner Spear, who was the Quincy Historical Society’s first librarian, managed the restoration efforts that began in 1896. This work included new board siding, shingles, window openings, a new roof, reopening the fireplace, new paint, and raising the house two feet to meet the new street level. The shed that stood at the rear (west side) of the house was also removed. The Quincy Historical Society also made extensive repairs in the early 1920s, which included new siding, repainting, and a new roof.

After the City of Quincy acquired the two birthplaces in 1940, City Council appropriated funds to paint and repair the roof. In 1950, the home was closed to the public while the city stabilized the structure and stopped termites and dry rot from further damaging the building. The Quincy Historical Society continued to manage the building until 1979 when thieves broke into the building. After the National Park Service acquired the birthplaces, park staff closed the homes and made interior and exterior repairs from 1979–84. They removed non-historic material from the interior, removed non-historic interior walls and doors, and updated plumbing and electricity. Park staff furnished the home and opened it to the public in 1984. Today, the building is one of two focal points within the .72-acre parcel. Although the house is no longer used as a private residence, the structure remains in good condition with minimal changes since the historic period (see Figure 18).

Well.
The well was likely first built by the Ellis, Penniman, or Belcher family in the late seventeenth century when the two Adams birthplace homes were first built. The well was shared by families living at the future John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces and was located west of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The well was mentioned in the 1720 deed that transferred the John Adams birthplace property from James Penniman to Deacon John Adams. The 1720 deed stated, “together with a Dwelling House, Barn and Well thereon” (James Penniman Deed to John Adams (Deacon), Adams Office Files, Box 2, Folder 13. MHS). Even though the two properties were divided by a stone wall or fence, in 1800 Abigail Adams wrote, “the well must always be in common” (Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, 3-18-1800 in Perrault, 1993, 199-200). Between 1896 and 1897, the Quincy Historical Society reconstructed the well at the northwest side of the John Quincy Adams birthplace (see Figures 7 and 8). Another cased well was found during archeological surveys in 1980. This well was likely built and covered during the twentieth century.

Following the historic period, the well remained in the same location, northwest of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The well’s stone slab measures 84 inches by 51 inches with a 22 to 28-inch

diameter opening in the center. The well and well stone, installed in the seventeenth century contributes to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape (Figure 23).

Stone Wall.
John Adams hired Jo Tirrell in 1762 to build a stone wall along the road in front of the John Quincy Adams birthplace (John Adams Diary 1, 10-24-1762, AFP/MHS). In 1774, John Adams described stone walls along the road (east), as well as to the north, west, and south (between the two birthplaces), within the thirty-five acre John Adams birthplace property. John stated, "This Farm is well fenced with Stone Wall against the Road, against Vesey, against Betty Adams's Children, vs. Ebenezer Adams, against Moses Adams, and against me" (John Adams Diary 2, 2-28-1774, AFP/MHS). By 1800 the stone wall had likely deteriorated as Abigail Adams ordered a new wooden post and rail fence to be built using portions of the existing wall. By 1838, the stone wall along Franklin Street had been replaced with a wooden picket fence. During restoration of the birthplaces landscape, the Quincy Historical Society built a stone wall around the John Quincy Adams birthplace in 1896 (see Figures 7 and 8).

Following the historic period, the stone wall that was built in 1896 remained, surrounding the John Quincy Adams birthplace along Franklin Street, Presidents Avenue, and between the two birthplaces. The wall ranges from 2 to 3 feet in height (see Figures 17 and 23). A section is missing in front of the John Quincy Adams birthplace due to the widening of Franklin Street and the sidewalk, and several other sections are partially collapsed. The stone wall contributes to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape. However, for most of the John Adams and John Quincy Adams periods of ownership, a wood picket fence fronted the homes.

Split-Rail Fence.
The Needham and Ellis families likely built split-rail and picket wood fences around their properties to establish their farmsteads and keep animals in or out of enclosed areas. At that time, wood was readily available since large woodlots remained in the town commons and other forested areas. Homesteaders also built stone walls using the stones extracted from their farm fields. Early drawings of the birthplaces from 1822 to 1850 show a combination of stone, split-rail, and picket fencing around the birthplaces. A sketch from 1828 shows a stone wall along the east side of the road and a combination wood picket and split rail fence in front of the birthplaces. A drawing from 1840 shows only a slit-rail wood fence. Similar to the 1828 image, the 1850 painting by Frankenstein depicts a stone wall along the east side of the street and a combination of wood picket fence and stone wall along the west side, in front of the birthplaces (see Figures 2-4).

A picket fence surrounded the yard in front of the John Quincy Adams birthplace during the nineteenth century and another picket fence stood directly in front of the John Adams birthplace during the end of the nineteenth century (with a stone wall lining the east side of the road). With the expansion of Franklin Street and construction of Presidents Avenue, the land surrounding the birthplaces diminished, thus changing the boundaries of the two homes. In 1896–97 the Adams Chapter of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution built a split-rail fence around John Adams birthplace, along Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue, and installed a turnstile at the entrance on Franklin Street. The Quincy Historical Society built a stone wall around the John Quincy Adams birthplace with a split-rail gate in an opening in the wall along Presidents Avenue. The split-rail fence along Franklin Street and Presidents Avenue appears in photographs from around 1896 and remains in the same location through the end of the historic period (see Figures 7-10).

Following the historic period, the split-rail wood fence surrounded the John Adams birthplace for several years. In the early 1990s park staff removed the fence and rebuilt it a couple years later. The split-rail fence, first built in the seventeenth century, rebuilt in 1896–97, and re-built again in the early 1990s, contributes to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape. However, for most of the John Adams and John Quincy Adams periods of ownership, a wood picket fence fronted the homes.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
John Adams Birthplace	169661	Contributing	21036		Location	74069	Yes
John Quincy Adams Birthplace	169663	Contributing	21035		Location	74071	Yes
Well	169665	Contributing	40275				No
Stone Wall	169667	Contributing	40273				No
Split-Rail Fence	169669	Contributing	40274				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 23. View looking west from the lawn area north of the John Quincy Adams birthplace toward Presidents Avenue, showing the well stone. (DSC-0110, OCLP 2013)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Views are the panoramic or expansive prospect of a broad range of vision, which may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. Vistas are controlled aspects of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived. Two key views existed during the early ownership of the Adams birthplaces, including the view of the two birthplaces from road, known as Franklin Street after the mid nineteenth century, and the view from Penn's Hill toward Boston. While integral in defining the character of the property, these two views served different purposes; the first showed the close location of the two birthplaces to one another and to the road, and the second to capture the community's close vicinity to Boston during the American Revolutionary War. While the view from Penn's Hill is outside of the birthplaces property, it contributed to the historic character during the period of significance.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
View of the Birthplaces from Franklin Street.
The two birthplaces, built around the end of the seventeenth century, both stood at the far eastern edge of the two properties on a spur road that ran parallel to the Plymouth Road, also known as the Plymouth Turnpike. Starting from Deacon John Adams in 1720 and extending through Charles Francis Adams's ownership of the two properties, residents of the two homes and visitors would have viewed the two homes adjacent to one another. The view looking north toward the birthplaces, from Franklin Street, remained unchanged during much of the historic period. This view appears in several paintings, sketches, postcards, and photographs of the birthplaces throughout the historic period (see Figures 2-12). Owners built and removed sheds and barns during this time but the two homes remained in their original location. Toward the end of the historic period the view of the two homes changed dramatically with construction of Independence Avenue and Presidents Avenue in the end of the nineteenth century, the widening of Franklin Street in the 1920s, and construction of new residential and commercial development throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The view of the two homes from Franklin Street persisted after the end of the historic period, but the surrounding landscape changed dramatically. New infrastructure, including paved roads, concrete sidewalks, traffic signals, overhead utility lines, and commercial and residential buildings have changed the setting (Figure 24). The homes remain highly visible and in the same location, adjacent to a major thoroughfare. At times the lilacs in front of the John Adams birthplace have grown too tall, obscuring views of the home façade. Low, wide-spreading Kwanzan cherry trees, planted by the City of Quincy along the Franklin Street sidewalk, also obscure views of the homes.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View of the Birthplaces from Franklin Street	169671	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 24. View looking northwest from Franklin Street toward the John Quincy Adams birthplace at left and the John Adams birthplace at right in the distance. (DSC 0051, OCLP 2013)

Landscape Characteristic: **Small Scale Features**

Small-scale features include minor built elements that provide aesthetic detail and function, such as signs and benches. The City of Quincy installed a flagpole in 1929 and National Park Service later installed a new flagpole in a different location. The park also installed signs and places benches in the landscape. Today, a combination of historic and contemporary small-scale features exists on the site.

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Granite Steps and Cane Stand.
Large rectangular granite blocks were placed at the foot of the east (front), south (side), and west (rear) doors of the John Quincy Adams birthplace as well as the south (front) door and north (shed) door of the John Adams birthplace. The steps appear in drawings and photographs from the 1910–30s but were likely placed there during restoration of the homes in 1896. A boot scraper or cane holder that is mounted to the right side of the step at the front door of the John Quincy Adams birthplace appears in a 1930 photograph (see Figure 12).

Following the historic period, the steps likely remained at the foot of the east (front), south (side), and west (rear) doors of the John Quincy Adams birthplace as well as the south (front) door of the John Adams birthplace. The metal stand at the side door of the John Quincy Adams birthplace does not reappear until the 1990s (see Figure 22). The granite steps and metal stand, likely installed in 1896, contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape.

Flagpole.
The Adams Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution installed a steel flagpole southwest of the John Adams birthplace in 1926 as described in a Patriot Ledger news article titled “New Flagpole Erected John Adams Birthplace,” dated May 29, 1926 (Adams Birthplaces, Notes and Clippings, Historic Homes, Parker 974.47, Folder 1, Thomas Crane Public Library). The flagpole appears on the 1936 WPA HABS drawing for the birthplaces (see Figure 13).

Following the historic period, the steel flagpole remained in the same location, southwest of the John Adams birthplace, for several years and is visible in photographs. National Park Service staff likely removed the steel flagpole installed a new flagpole between 1979 and 1984. The current flagpole stands northeast of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. The existing flagpole does not contribute to the historic character of the Adams birthplaces landscape, but does not detract from the historic character of the landscape.

National Park Service Signs.
When acquired in 1979, the National Park Service installed informational and directional signs throughout the Adams birthplaces property, including the south corner of John Quincy Adams birthplace and two along Franklin Street. These signs were replaced in 2008. Due to their limited number, location, and size the signs do not detract from the historic character of the landscape (Figure 25).

Benches.
The site’s movable furniture, including the two wooden benches, did not exist during the historic period. The National Park Service sets out two free-standing wood benches that measure approximately six feet long. During site visits in 2013, the benches were placed southwest of the John Adams birthplace, just north of the gap in the stone wall between the birthplaces. Due to their limited number, location, and size the benches do not detract from the historic character of the landscape (see Figure 19).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Granite Steps and Cane Stand	169673	Contributing					No
Flagpole	169675	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
National Park Service Signs	169677	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Benches	169679	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

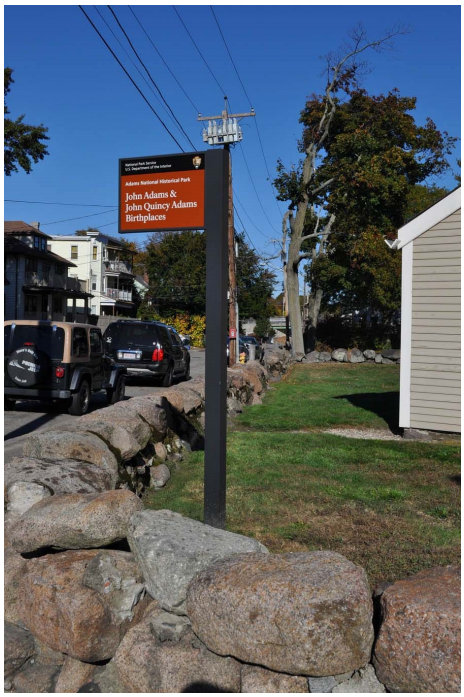


Figure 25. View looking northwest at the park sign at the southwest corner of the John Quincy Adams birthplace. (DSC 0030, OCLP 2013)

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 7

Next Assessment Due Date: 05/30/2032

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 05/30/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/05/2022

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. Consultations with park staff regarding the condition assessment occurred in August 2022. Delays due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages have prevented a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update, in coordination with the Historic Structures Inventory, is underway.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/17/2014

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Overall, the houses and landscape features are in good condition, as the park maintains preventative and cyclic maintenance schedules. The site shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The site's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Adjacent Lands

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Adjacent land uses (heavy traffic and commercial use) to the east, south, and west are incongruous with the historic bucolic setting.

Date Identified: 09/21/2014

Type of Impact: Operations On Site

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Universal access is impeded by granite step and threshold at the John Adams and John Quincy Adams birthplaces. In addition, the flagstone path is narrow and uneven.

Date Identified: 09/21/2014

Type of Impact: Soil Compaction

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: The lawn area in front of the John Adams birthplace is prone to soil compaction because the flagstone path is narrow.

Date Identified: 09/21/2014

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Some diseased and hazardous trees have been removed from the property including the Norway Maple, but euonymus remains.

Date Identified: 05/30/2025

Type of Impact: Visitation

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: The site lacks a protected space to meet, greet, and orient visitors, as well as public restrooms. Visitor time is limited by the trolley schedule. The park's General Management Plan proposes an off site location next to the birthplaces.

Date Identified: 09/21/2014

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Rehabilitation

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: General Management Plan

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

In 1996, the park approved a General Management Plan that articulated the management philosophy and direction for the Adams birthplaces property. The goals of the plan were to assist the National Park Service to continue to preserve the site as steward of its historic structures, landscape, and objects; enhance the site's role as educator; and serve as an active partner in the community. The General Management Plan recognized several needs: protect visitors from inclement weather, recapture some of the landscape lost by the expansion of adjacent streets, and enhance vegetation buffers around the perimeter of the property. A cultural landscape treatment plan, completed in 2014, articulates a treatment philosophy that calls for rehabilitating the Adams birthplaces landscape to enhance its historic character as it appeared in 1940, the year the Adams Real Estate Trust transferred the birthplaces to the City of Quincy. The plan aims to perpetuate the commemorative landscape established in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and partially obscure incongruous commercial use and heavy traffic.

Approved Treatment Costs

Estimate Level: Similar Facilities

Estimator: Park

Cost Narrative:

There is one project in the Project Management Information System (PMIS) that addresses treatment of the Adams birthplaces landscape. "Cultural Landscape Boundary Deferred Maintenance" (PMIS 154113) will protect and preserve the boundary and viewshed of the Adams National Historical Park including important built features of the boundary and cultural landscape. The project includes replacing and repairing the split-rail fence and the stone wall. Requested Funding FY: 2017

Treatment Type:	Bulk Import TBD
Treatment Completed:	No
Document Type:	Cultural Landscape Report
Document Date:	2014-01-01
Title:	Adams Birthplaces: Cultural Landscape Report, Adams National Historical Park, National Park Service
IRMA Link:	https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2219145
Narrative:	

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography:

Citation Author	Citation Title	Year of Publication	Citation Publisher	Citation Type	Citation Location	Citation Number
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Adams, Charles Francis	History of Braintree	1891	Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press			
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Crosbie, Allison, Laurie Pazzano, and Margie Coffin Brown	Cultural Landscape Report for Peace field, Adams National Historical Park		Boston: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation			
Donald, Aida Dipace and David Donald, Eds.	Diary of Charles Francis Adams, Volume 2, July 1825-September 1829	1964	Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press			
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Perrault, Carole L.	Historic Structures Report, Birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, Volume 1: Administrative Data and Historical Background (Draft)	1993	National Park Service, Historic Architecture Program			
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McCullough, David	John Adams	2001	New York, NY: Simon & Schuster			
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Lacy, Katherine	Cultural Landscape Report: Adams National Historic Site, Illustrated Site Chronology	1997	National Park Service			
Johnson, Eric S.	“Archeological Overview and Assessment of the Adams National Historic Site, Quincy, MA”	1996	National Park Service, New England Support Office			
Holder, Kirsten, James Bertolini, and Jaime Young	Cultural Landscape Report for Adams Birthplaces	2014	Boston: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation			
Hogan, Margaret A. and C. James Taylor eds.	My Dearest Friend, Letters of Abigail and John Adams	2007	Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University			
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Friedlander, Marc, and L. H. Butterfield, Eds.	Diary of Charles Francis Adams, Volumes 3-6	1974	Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press			
Edwards, William Churchill	Historic Quincy, Massachusetts	1945	Quincy, MA: Privately printed			
Duberman, Martin B.	Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1866	1961	Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company			

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Historic American Buildings Survey

Supplemental Information Narrative:

"General Plan of Birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams." Maps. Works Progress Administration Project, U.S. Department of the Interior, 65-1715, 1936, sheet 11 of 12.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Historic American Buildings Survey

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Landscape Plan for the Adams Birthplaces, 1979. Drawn by Keith S. Andreucci for Historic American Buildings Survey.

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
ADAM_Birthplaces-Peacefied_CLI Update Notes_2025.pdf		

Source