

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 1
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**Historic Name: **ADAMS ACADEMY**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 8 Adams Street

Not for publication:___

City/Town: Quincy

Vicinity:___

State: MA

County: Norfolk

Code: 021

Zip Code: 02169

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:___

Public-Local: X

Public-State:___

Public-Federal:___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District:___

Site:___

Structure:___

Object:___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

1 buildings1 sites4 structures4 objects5 TotalNumber of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the National Register _____
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 3

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Education

Sub: School
LibraryCurrent: Education
Recreation & CultureSub: Library
Museum**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone (granite)

Walls: Stone (granite)

Roof: Slate

Other: Trim: Brick

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Adams Academy, built in 1871 by Ware and Van Brunt, is a High Victorian Gothic Revival building of rough faced granite ashlar with brick trim. Located near Quincy Center, it faces east on Adams Street, set back from the street behind a lawn with shrubs and a curved sidewalk. To the south is Dimmock Street, named for the first Master of Adams Academy, Dr. William R. Dimmock; to the north is a commercial area; and to the west is the right-of-way of the Old Colony Railroad and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) tracks.

The structure is visually composed of three, steep pitched, Gothic-gabled units. The two larger flanking gables have angular shoulders breaking the eave line on the top third of the gable where they are connected by a row of geometric brick indentations of the Panel Brick Style mode. The central gable is slightly recessed from the facade. A short flight of granite steps leads up to the wide segmental entrance arch, located in the central pavilion. The central keystone brick arch is topped with a horizontal granite molded band carved with "ADAMS ACADEMY," and then a steep gable composed of a stepped granite center edged with brick infill abutting the eaves. The two larger side gables exhibit this same polychromatic composition. Above the double brick-linteled, arched gable windows is a band of recessed symmetrical brick crosses. A wide brick stringcourse extends across both end pavilions at the level of the central, carved granite band. Each end gable is topped by a gilded finial.

To the left of the entrance, the slightly projecting, Gothic-gabled pavilion contains a recessed Gothic arch with alternating voussoirs; the gable is pierced by an oculus, trimmed with brick headers. Parallel brick dentil bands relieve the plain brick gable. Below this gable are three 4/4 segmental arched windows, reiterating the large entrance arch with its granite keystone and brick detailing.

To the right of the entrance, the Gothic-gable pavilion is composed of a brick hip-roofed angular bay window with four rectangular 4/4 windows, a cornice of brick dentils, and two bands of granite at lintel and sill levels. At the base of each window is a recessed brick rectangle. The bay window is directly topped by a small double rectangular window with a plain granite lintel.

Further rich wall articulation includes the stepped pattern of brick between the ashlar granite area of the gable and the eave line. This motif is repeated in the front three gables and the rear three gables. The door and the windows in the recessed entrance area are decorated with segmental brick arches (the door with a granite keystone) filled with wood decorated with simple carved Neo-Grec indented elements.

The north and south elevations are identical. Four Gothic arch bays, similar to the entrance arch with their brick voussoirs and granite keystone, contain double segmental-arched 4/4 windows and are connected by a brick stringcourse at their tops and bottoms. Four small basement windows are located beneath the projecting granite watertable which encircles the entire building.

The west (rear) elevation is very similar to the facade. The gabled end pavilions are identical to the southern pavilion of the facade. The central pavilion, however, contains four segmental-arched windows and a plain door with a wood Stick Style hood supported with diagonal brackets; a concrete stoop leads to the entrance. The hood is topped by a wide brick stringcourse which extends across the entire west elevation. The central gable contains three rectangular 4/4 windows with plain granite lintels and the same band across as in the other gables. A finial, identical to those on the facade end pavilions, tops each of the rear end pavilions.

The interior of the building is made up of two end rooms, 24 feet x 48 feet, with a corridor and auxiliary space in between. The room to the south was a schoolroom. For a short time, the north room originally housed the town library; later it also became a schoolroom. Each of the end

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
Page 5

rooms has a high-vaulted hammerbeam ceiling with exposed decorated timbers expressing the exterior wall articulation.

The Adams Academy is in excellent condition. It has retained its architectural integrity and has not been substantially altered. The only changes which have been made to the exterior are the removal in 1951 of a tall attenuated central wooden tower and the replacement of a polychrome slate roof with a monochrome slate roof. It presents to the Quincy streetscape the same polychromatic, dramatic granite and brick Gothic Revival facade as it did in 1873, when the Adams Academy catalog of that year described it as "one of the most elegant and perfect school edifices in the country."

The Quincy Historical Society, keenly aware of the building's architectural and historical importance, has overseen its maintenance since 1972.

OTHER FEATURES

Several objects, which do not contribute to the national significance of this property, are on the Adams Academy grounds.

A granite monument crowned by a heroic-size bronze bust of John Hancock (who was born at this site in 1737) also stands on the Academy grounds. Presented to the City of Quincy by the John Hancock Mutual Insurance Company in 1951, it was removed from the old John Hancock Building in Boston. The inscription on the rear of the monument documents John Hancock's illustrious life and across the front in large bronze lettering is the famous Hancock signature.

The rough hewn granite Ten Mile Stone is sited close by the corner of Adams and Dimmock Street. It was placed about 1730 on the Boston-Plymouth Highway, one of the oldest roads in New England, which after 1639 ran from Boston to Plymouth by way of Quincy and Milton. The road passed in front of Reverend Hancock's house, which stood at this site. In 1911, the Ten Mile Stone was restored by the Quincy Historical Society and placed in its present location.

The site of the well of the Rev. John Hancock House is marked by a circle of fieldstones, taken from the well, on the Dimmock Street side of the Academy grounds.

Two World War I memorials are also positioned on the Academy property. A fully uniformed soldier and sailor flank each side of a bronze memorial plaque mounted on a rough hewn granite boulder. The plaque was executed by sculptor F.F. Ziegler in 1928. Complementing this memorial is the powerful bronze "Doughboy" statue, designed by the well-known Quincy sculptor Bruce Wilder Saville in 1924.

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 6

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___Applicable National
Register Criteria:A___ B___ CX D___Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):

A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria:

4

NHL Theme(s):

XVI. Architecture
E. Gothic Revival (1830-1915)
3. Late Gothic Revival

Areas of Significance:

Architecture

Period(s) of Significance:

1869-1871

Significant Dates:

1869

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Henry Van Brunt and William Robert Ware

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY**

The Adams Academy is significant as a superb example of the work of William Robert Ware and Henry Van Brunt at the height of their impact in the history of American architecture. The style of the Academy represents an innovative approach, combining English polychromy and medievalism with the structural expression of Viollet-le-Duc, the French scholar, archeologist, architect, theorist, and architectural educator; it is the first fully developed building in America that reflects his theories.

The Adams Academy was established in accordance with the educational plans of John Adams, second President of the United States (1735-1826). It was built under the supervision of John Quincy Adams's son, Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886), Ambassador to England (1861-1869) and father of Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1835-1915), Henry Adams (1838-1918) and Brooks Adams (1848-1927). The home in which all four generations lived in part of the Adams National Historic Site (established 1946), less than one-half mile away.

Margaret Henderson Floyd, whose architectural analysis of the building has been abridged to form the first section of this study, has noted that,

Although the Adams Academy did not establish an immediate "style," because the vogue for Richardson intervened, it anticipates the structural expression of Louis Sullivan and is important for its innovation because its architects Ware and Van Brunt created in 1869, specifically at Quincy, a unique system of design. With their inventive use of building materials, where brick and stone combine to express structure as in the rational design theories of Viollet-le-Duc, they incorporated as well a polychromatic medievalism that links their design directly to the models of contemporaneous school buildings that were erected in England as public education became mandatory and just before Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886) arrived as America's Ambassador in London.

The Academy is thus of great architectural significance. It was also the stylistic model for the buildings that Charles Francis Adams had erected at the adjacent Adams Mansion (today Adams National Historic Site), where the library and carriage house utilize the innovative structural polychromy of brick and stone that were employed at the Academy by Ware and Van Brunt.

HISTORY

Ware and Van Brunt formed the leading architectural firm in Boston during the first post-Civil War decade. Their practice centered on ecclesiastical and institutional work. William Robert Ware (1832-1915), an 1852 Harvard graduate, studied civil engineering at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School and then entered the architectural office of Edward C. Cabot. In 1859, he joined the atelier of Richard Morris Hunt where he met Henry Van Brunt. After their partnership was established in 1863, they organized an atelier in Boston which not only attracted future fine Boston architects such as Robert S. Peabody (later of Peabody and Stearns) but also the notice of the officials of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who asked Ware to establish the first university-based school of architecture in the United States.¹ Ware and Van Brunt remained partners until 1881 when Ware was called to New York to found a department of architecture at Columbia University. In addition to envisioning and implementing the program which

¹ *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Adolf K. Placzek, ed. Volume 4, (London: The Free Press, 1982), p. 374; Margaret Henderson Floyd, *Architectural Education and Boston* (Boston: Boston Architectural Center, 1989).

established the direction of American architectural professional instruction, Ware was very active in the affairs of the American Institute of Architects.

Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) "was among the best known and most respected members of the American architectural community during the last third of the nineteenth century."² He was born in Boston. After graduating from Harvard in 1854, he worked in the Boston office of the English architect George Snell for three years after which he left for New York to join the atelier (10th Street Studio Building) formed by Beaux-Arts-trained Richard Morris Hunt. The atmosphere there was far more pleasing to Van Brunt than at Snell's office, for he had Hunt's "impressive library" at his disposal as well as "spoils of foreign travel" to copy. In 1863, following two years service during the Civil War, he formed the partnership with William Robert Ware discussed above. When Ware left in 1866 for one year in Europe to research European architectural education for MIT, Van Brunt was in sole charge of the Boston practice. "It was during this period that he emerged as the dominant creative force in the partnership."³

Van Brunt's career was divided equally between Boston, an established eastern center, and Kansas City, an emerging frontier city. He relocated his office there in 1885 when Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1835-1915), president of the Union Pacific Railroad (1884-1890), commissioned him to design a large number of railroad stations in the West. Van Brunt practiced in Kansas City with Frank Howe until his death in 1903 and enjoyed a large and successful practice. Although widely known and respected, Van Brunt never reached in the West the zenith of national design leadership that he and Ware had held in Boston between 1865 and the opening of H.H. Richardson's Trinity Church in Copley Square in 1877.

Van Brunt's most innovative and important works in the Boston area (Memorial Hall, Cambridge, a National Historic Landmark, whose "construction stands as a milestone for Harvard and American Architecture;"⁴ Union Railway Station [1873-75], Worcester;⁵ Burnham Hall, Episcopal Theological Seminary [ETS] [1879], Cambridge, in the "Adams Academy Style," constructed of stone with brick trim and stepped gables; and Saint Stephen's Church [1881-1882], Lynn) all pre-dated the full impact of Richardson. Weld Hall at Harvard College (1870) was drawn also from structural principles as had been the polychromy of Memorial Hall.

The Adams Academy is the first fully developed building in America the design of which was based on the rational theories of Viollet-le-Duc. The design date, 1869, of the Adams Academy is critical for it postdates important Ruskinian works of Ware and Van Brunt in Massachusetts, namely Memorial Hall, Cambridge (design competition won in 1865, though the design underwent numerous changes before its completion in 1878); the First Unitarian Church, Boston (1866); and St. John's Chapel, Episcopal Theological School (ETS), Cambridge (1866). Its design also anticipates the 1879 Burnham Hall (ETS) where this personal structural interpretation was further developed. In terms of American architectural history, Ware and Van Brunt's structural design system was employed but a short time. This new innovation appeared quietly in 1864 at 117 Beacon Street, Boston, and at the Greeley Curtis House, Manchester, Massachusetts, in 1866. By 1869, this rational design system was fully expressed at the Adams Academy; later it influenced the design of Weld Hall, Harvard College, Cambridge (1870) and the Philadelphia

² William J. Hennessey, "The Architectural Works of Henry Van Brunt," Unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1979, Abstract.

³ Hennessey, "Van Brunt," p. 20.

⁴ Bainbridge Bunting, Completed and edited by Margaret Henderson Floyd. *Harvard: An Architectural History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press, 1985), p. 87.

⁵ Carroll L. V. Meeks, *The Railroad Station: An Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 19.

architecture of Frank Furness (1839-1912), a fellow student with Van Brunt in 1859 at the atelier of Richard Morris Hunt in New York.

Van Brunt's interest in Viollet-le-Duc began as early as 1863 when he began the translation of his *Entretiens sur l'architecture* (*The Discourses on Architecture*). The first volume did not appear until 1875 (although finished in 1872) and the second volume in 1881.

Though Van Brunt considered Ruskin the most prominent among those who have created the present tendency among English architects to design and build more according to "reason" and follow "truth of expression" he recognized in the Frenchman Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc a more important influence upon the architectural profession because he was "solid, practical and concrete... and hoped to impose logic and order on the morass of prejudice which was modern architectural thought."⁶

Viollet-le-Duc saw architecture as structure, and wrote of expressing structure in the design. "Any form whose raison d'être cannot be explained, cannot be beautiful; and in architecture any form that is not suggested by the structure should be cast aside."⁷ Ware and Van Brunt devised their own expression of this philosophy in the structural use of brick and granite demonstrated at Adams Academy, and they would develop this same technique during the 1870s in buildings that can arguably be termed their most innovative designs. The Adams Academy facade is composed of a triple gable, the wall of which expresses a structural analysis of the building. Van Brunt uses brick and granite as a means of expressing the thrust of the construction through the distribution of the stone. This illustrates Viollet-le-Duc's expression of structure as compared to Ruskinian theory of symbolism and ornament in decoration. Adams Academy is one of the earliest, if not the first, building in the United States to apply this structural expression of Viollet-le-Duc whose work was not generally accessible to American architects until the publication of Van Brunt's translation in 1875.

Why granite with brick trim, and not brick with stone trim as at the famed Ware and Van Brunt Memorial Hall in Cambridge? In 1822, John Adams (1735-1826), second president of the United States, personally established the Adams Temple and School Fund Board so that "A stone schoolhouse should be erected."⁸ It was only in 1868 that the size of the fund allowed for the construction of the school.⁹ On October 26 of that year, the supervisors of the fund authorized Josiah Phillips Quincy (1829-1910) and John Quincy Adams (1833-1894) to "develop plans for an academy and library building."¹⁰ Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886), the third supervisor, and senior by 22 years to his colleagues J.P. Quincy and J.Q. Adams, was obviously in charge and had been introduced to Henry Van Brunt by his son, Charles Francis Adams (1835-1915), who was a Harvard friend of Van Brunt.¹¹

⁶ William A. Coles, ed., *Architecture and Society: Selected Essays of Henry Van Brunt* (Boston: The Belknap Press, 1969), p. 50.

⁷ Coles, *Architecture and Society*, p. 51, quoting from Viollet-le-Duc, *Discourses on Architecture*, trans. B. Bucknell, 1959, Vol. I, p. 304.

⁸ William Churchill Edwards, *Historic Quincy, Massachusetts* (Quincy: City of Quincy, 1954) p. 144, quoting from the July 25, 1822 deed.

⁹ Hobart H. Holly, in *Quincy Historical Society Newsletters*, Volume 9 (Winter 1984), p. 2.

¹⁰ Holly, *Quincy Newsletters*, p. 2.

¹¹ William J. Hennessey, "Van Brunt," p. 141.

It was Charles Francis Adams, then resident at the Adams Mansion adjacent to the Academy, who invited Van Brunt to submit a design for a *stone* (in Quincy this meant granite) schoolhouse. The carriage house as well as the Library at the Adams home exhibit a similar use of materials.

The Adams Temple and School Fund Board approved the architect's plans, which were received in July 1869 (the initial drawings have not survived), but found the estimate of \$36,000 too high. The architects were asked to make changes to bring the cost below \$30,000.¹² It seems likely that the architects, pressed by budgetary limits, decided to use brick (in the voussoirs, the infill of the large pointed arch in the gables, in the stepped patterning between the eaves and granite wall, and in the recessed entrance) instead of costly stone carvings in order to lower the cost and yet achieve a medieval style.

This design solution, in which stone was used with brick trim, instead of the more normal brick with stone trim as at Memorial Hall, Cambridge, which was the traditional way of expressing Victorian polychromy, achieved an innovative shift in style of which the Adams Academy was the first example. This new rational wall articulation distinguishes the best of Ware and Van Brunt's work that followed in the 1870s during which decade they led the architectural profession in Boston, while Boston led the nation. Supporting this hypothesis regarding the impetus for their innovative breakthrough at the Adams Academy are the details of the implementation of the project, in which the requirement for stone walls and the lower budget were both met.

On January 17, 1870, the Board met at the office of Ware and Van Brunt, approved the plans (published in *American Architects and Buildings News*, December 20, 1876), and ordered that building contracts be consummated. Notes from the minutes of the meeting of the Adams Temple and School Fund on January 1, 1871, reported that the contract was completed on that date at a cost of \$28,867.99, including the architects' fee, heating and gas.

It was recorded that the condition of John Adams's gift were met including: 1. That the building be made of stone; 2. That the building be on the land given by John Adams and on the site of the house of the Rev. John Hancock, "the traces of which are clearly perceptible down to this day." (1871)¹³

The firm of Ware and Van Brunt created at the Adams Academy, with the requirement for a stone building within a budget limit and considering the needs of their client, a rational design. The tripartite composition of the plan clearly and unequivocally expresses the design program of the building which was to encompass both a school and a library. The right front gable with a bay window houses the library section of the structure. The center is recessed and entered through a wide segmental arch that leads to a hall opening onto the library, and the "Librarian's Room," while to the left is the school room. Both large rooms are roofed with simple hammerbeam trusses (revealed for the first time in forty years in 1974 when the false ceiling was removed by the Quincy Historical Society), which Ware and Van Brunt used more elaborately in their Dining Hall of Memorial Hall in Cambridge. The rational manner of the exterior wall articulation is reiterated in the interior.

There are no surprises; the building can be clearly "read" and understood. The segmental modified arch of the recessed entrance is repeated not only in the triple window of the left front gable of stone and brick, but also in the four windows on the side elevations. The alternating color of stone and brick voussoirs above the large window in the left gable is repeated in the polychromy of the stepped patterning at the parapet expressing points of load and structural stress. Similar architectural detailing is found in the recessed crosses sited at the top of the gable wall, and in the rows of recessed brick decorations. These introduce elements of the Panel Brick Style which Ware and Van Brunt had recently used in Boston in a town house at 117 Beacon

¹² Holly, *Quincy Newsletters*, p. 2.

¹³ Holly, *Quincy Newsletters*, p. 3.

Street in 1864¹⁴ and at 41 Brimmer Street in 1869. Another new and elegant architectural element of the Adams Academy is the Neo-Grec detailing above the door and windows in the recessed brick at the entrance. Such French-inspired details were rare in Boston appearing later, most notably in 1872 at W.G. Preston's Neo-Grec *Hôtel Vendôme*.

The Adams Academy *flèche* (slender wooden spire), removed in 1951,¹⁵ seems on the other hand to have been an afterthought relative to the rest of the design. While Henry Van Brunt was at Hunt's New York atelier in the late 1850s, he drew many sketches and among his studio drawings¹⁶ are English churches taken from plates in the *Builder*. One of these shows an attenuated *flèche* which could well have been the model for the Adams Academy. The plan of the library as a concept is the same as the later Crane Memorial Public Library in Quincy by H.H. Richardson (1880-1883) (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987) where Charles Francis Adams was Chairman of the Building Committee.¹⁷ There, as at the earlier Academy, books are all placed in the reading room on shelves rather than in stacks. Later, Ware and Van Brunt were to become specialists in library design, particularly after their 1874 addition at Harvard's Gore Hall in which they introduced freestanding book stacks for the first time in the United States, adapted from prototypes of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.¹⁸

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY OF THE ADAMS ACADEMY BUILDING

The Adams Academy was designed in 1869, opened in 1872, and operated as a boys school until 1907. The first class had 23 pupils, 6 of whom were from Quincy. The Academy reached its peak of 140 students in 1876-1877. Although small, it fulfilled for several decades its intentions as a sound preparatory school for Harvard College. Among its early students were sons of the Adams family.

In the peak years of the Academy there were many out-of-town students. Some were housed in a 3-story wooden building erected just north of the Academy; this building was subsequently moved. Others boarded at the Hancock House, a famous hostelry and stagecoach stop, then located just north of the present Quincy City Hall.

The Adams Academy had three well-respected headmasters. Dr. William Reynolds Dimmock (1835-1878) was the Academy's first master, serving from 1872 until his death in 1878. Dimmock Street, which borders the southern boundary of the Academy, is named for this talented and hard-working headmaster. Dr. William Everett (1839-1910), son of the well-known orator and statesman Edward Everett (1794-1865), was the master of Adams Academy from 1878 to 1893 when he resigned to take a seat in Congress. William Royall Tyler, A.B. (1852-1897), a master already teaching at the Academy, was selected to fill Dr. Everett's place in 1893 but he died in 1897. At this point, Dr. Everett was reappointed and led the school until its closure in 1907.

¹⁴ Bainbridge Bunting, *Houses of Boston's Back Bay* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1967), p. 125.

¹⁵ Hennessey, "Van Brunt," p. 80.

¹⁶ Hennessey, "Van Brunt," Fig. 18 and Fig. 19.

¹⁷ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *H. H. Richardson: Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982; augmented ed., 1984), p. 226.

¹⁸ William H. Jordy, *American Buildings and Their Architects Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, Volume 3, Chapter VII (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1976), pp. 314-375; Hennessey, "Van Brunt," p. 135.

The central reason for the slipping enrollment at the Adams Academy in the 1890s was due to the fact that the classical education emphasized at the school was going out of style, thus no longer attracting students the way it had in the 1870s and 1880s. Other contributing factors were the opening of other nearby academies, the advancing quality and popularity of the free public schools, and the deaths of two of the three Academy headmasters. Although quality was maintained until the end, the lack of tuition paying non-Quincy students made its continuance a financial impossibility. Historian William Churchill Edwards notes that the tuition for academically talented Quincy boys was often paid either by the Adams Temple and School Fund or by a member of the Board of Supervisors.¹⁹ This was in concert with John Adams' intention to make a classical education available to Quincy boys. By 1907, only local boys were attending the Academy, putting a difficult drain on the Academy's resources.

LIBRARIES AT THE ADAMS ACADEMY

The Adams Academy was also significant in the educational history of Quincy as it housed two important libraries: President John Adams' valuable classical and historical library, from 1871 to 1883, and the first public library of the City, from 1871 to 1873.

John Adams deeded to the Town of Quincy on August 10, 1822: "fragments of my library" which included more than 3,000 volumes, intending those books to be installed in the future Academy building. He placed the books under the supervision of the Adams Temple and School Fund, leaving the final disposition of the library with them. As the Academy was not even begun by 1846, at that time the library was placed in a designated space in the new Quincy town hall.

Upon the completion of the Adams Academy, John Adams' library was moved from the town hall and deposited in the Academy's upper room in 1871. Although John Adams fully intended his library for the use of the Quincy townspeople, his rare and valuable volumes were more appropriate for scholars and of limited use to the general public. In 1883, the John Adams Library was moved to the Thomas Crane Public Library. Eleven years later, in 1894, the library was deposited in the rare book department of the Boston Public Library, where it remains, although still under the control of the Adams Temple and School Fund.

Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1835-1915) related that "In 1871 the sum of \$2500 was at the annual town-meeting voted towards the establishment of a free public library, provided an equal sum could be raised by subscription."²⁰ At that time he was Chairman of the Joint Board of Supervisors of the Adams Temple and School Fund, which recommended that "a library for the free use of all the inhabitants of the town, to be known as the Quincy Public Library be established."²¹ The additional money was soon raised and Quincy's First Public Library, located in the north room of the Academy building, opened with 4,607 volumes on December 4, 1871. The library was immediately thronged with young people and Charles Francis Adams, Jr. wrote that nearly 45,000 volumes were borrowed the first year.²² It was obvious the space was too circumscribed for this unexpected demand and the library moved in August 1873. In 1882, it moved again to its final location at the then new Thomas Crane Memorial Library.

¹⁹ Edwards, *Historic Quincy, Massachusetts*, p. 147.

²⁰ Charles Francis Adams, *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History* (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1891), p. 940-941.

²¹ Edwards, *Historic Quincy, Massachusetts*, p. 145.

²² Adams, *Three Episodes*, p. 942.

LATER USES

Following the closing of the Academy in 1907, the Adams Temple and School Fund preserved and maintained the building until 1972. It was used for various civic purposes. In 1915, the Quincy Young Women's Club was granted use of the building and the Academy reopened its doors as a "Recreation House." By 1933, the building was also housing the Paul Revere Post of the G.A.R. and the Quincy Council, Boy Scouts of America. Additional occupants were the American Legion, the Quincy Red Cross, and the Quincy Department of Youth Services.

For at least forty years, the Adams Academy building had been suggested as a suitable home for the Quincy Historical Society. An article in the *Patriot Ledger* of May 7, 1934, stated:

The Adams Academy is enough of a community landmark to merit preservation, and few surer ways of preserving it could be proposed than to make it the permanent exhibition hall for the treasures and mementos of local history that are now widely scattered amongst old Quincy families or organizations where few know about them and almost none can see.

This idea finally came to fruition in 1972. Since then, the Adams Temple and School Fund has leased the property to the Quincy Historical Society. The Society's use of the Academy as a museum and library is compatible with John Adams's original intent.

JOHN ADAMS' PLAN FOR THE ACADEMY

The Adams Academy has been associated, since its inception, with President John Adams. He conceived the idea, provided the site, and furnished the funds with which it was eventually erected. It is in his honor that the school is named.

In 1801, he retired from the Presidency and came back to live in Quincy at the "Old House" (Vassal-Adams House, c. 1731) at 135 Adams Street, which he had bought from Leonard Vassal Borlund in 1787. In the eighth decade of his life, in 1822, he conveyed certain of his properties to the Town of Quincy in a series of three "Deeds of Gift." One of these deeds (the third), concerning the deposition of his cherished library, has been previously discussed.

In the first Deed of June 25, 1822, John Adams addressed the building of the United First Parish Church (Unitarian), but also stated his desire to build a school. The building of the Church was to be followed by the Academy.

Know All Men by these present, That I, John Adams of Quincy in the County of Norfolk, Esquire, in consideration of the veneration I feel for the residence of my ancestors and the place of my nativity, and of the habitual affection I bear the Inhabitants with whom I have so happily lived for more than 86 years, and of my sincere desire to promote their happiness, and the instruction of their posterity in religion, morality, and other useful arts and sciences, by contributing all in my power for these purposes do hereby give, grant, convey.... And next after the completion of said Temple, that all future rents, profits and emoluments arising from said land be supplied to the support of a School for the teaching of the Greek and Latin languages.

In the second Deed of July 25, 1822, John Adams addressed both the site and buildings of the future Adams Academy conveying: "eight acres of land in the Town of Quincy near the Meeting House in Quincy Center" in order that "A stone schoolhouse should be erected over the cellar which was under the House anciently built in 1733 by the Reverend John Hancock."²³

²³ The deeds are quoted from Edwards, *Historic Quincy*, p. 129-133, 144-145.

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 14

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Beyond the physical details, Adams spelled out precisely to future school masters, if they "will not think me too presumptuous" his ideas on the curriculum and administration of his academy. One clause of his deed of July 25, 1822 even prescribed the method of instruction, advocating repetitious copying of the Greek and Hebrew alphabets.

John Adams further specified that the school should be built of stone (like the First Church) by which he meant Quincy granite. In providing for the Temple, he explicitly stated that the stone should be taken from the land he had donated, and it is reasonably certain that the granite for both buildings was quarried on former Adams land."²⁴

John Adams established a Board of Supervisors of the Adams Temple and School Fund to carry out the purposes of his three "Deeds of Gift," and thus the legacy of the Adams family involvement with the Adams Academy did not end with his death in 1826. John Adams' son, Thomas Boylston Adams (1772-1832), was an original member of the Board of Supervisors of the Adams Temple and School Fund. The erection of the Academy was largely due to the efforts of his grandson, Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886), and his great grandson, John Quincy Adams (1833-1894). The Adams and Quincy families were not only related but close friends as well. Josiah Phillips Quincy (1829-1910), great grandson of Josiah Quincy (1744-1775), the "Patriot," was highly instrumental in the building of the Academy and with Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886) supervised its construction. Among the Chairmen of the Joint Board of Supervisors of the Adams Temple and School Fund were: Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886) from 1864 to 1886, John Quincy Adams (1833-1894) from 1886 to 1894, and Charles Francis Adams (1866-1954) from 1894 to 1954. Charles Francis Adams, the fourth in the Adams family to bear this name, is presently the Chairman.

²⁴ Larry Lowenthal, "Adams Academy."

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ Previously Listed in the National Register.
- ☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other (Specify Repository):

ADAMS ACADEMY

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 18

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 1¼ acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 19 335500 4679680

Verbal Boundary Description:

Plot 4, City of Quincy Assessor's Map #1152.

Boundary Justification:

The nomination property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Adams Academy.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Dr. Margaret Henderson Floyd, and
Ms. Minxie Fannin/Monique B. Lehner
Fannin/Lehner
Concord, Massachusetts

Carolyn Pitts and James Charleton
National Park Service/History Division (418)
P.O. Box 37127, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Telephone: (202) 343-8166

Date: October 14, 1993