

John Quincy Adams

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Professor Peterson

Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams,
When in Slavery, and Now as a Freeman

This slave narrative isn't like most being that John Quincy Adams' main focus is his family. He never mentions gruesome moments or times where he thought he couldn't survive from being mistreated. Instead, he showed how his family and their unity were most important to him. In my research I want to bring emphasis on the bond he and his family had, especially him and his twin brother Aaron. I would like to answer questions like "Why does he include more information about his family more than mistreatment?" and "How does his family impact his life?" I will explore these questions by finding resources that will dig deeper into his life to help me understand their relationship.

Annotated Bibliography

Adams, John Quincy. *Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams: When in Slavery and now as A Freeman*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004. Web.

This source is the slave narrative itself which tells about John Quincy Adams and his life. In this narrative he doesn't speak on the gruesome parts of slavery but about his family and their relationship. You could tell that he had a love for his family that was undeniable.

"Though I had fourteen or fifteen brothers and sisters playing around none was like brother Aaron."

Douglass, F. (1986) [1845] *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, London: Penguin.

Frederick Douglass' slave narrative was similar to Adams' because it was all about empowering himself and trying to get to a better point in life. I don't plan to compare the two but I would like to see how other slave narratives relate and correspond with one another.

"I shall never forget his first speech at the convention--the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind--the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory, completely taken by surprise--the applause which followed from the beginning to the end of his felicitous remarks."

Dubois, W.E.B. *The Philadelphia Negro*. New York: Lippincott, 1899. Print

This source by WEB Dubois tells of the challenges African Americans faced. It explains that the only reason for life being so hard for them was the color of their skin. Throughout my research paper I will elaborate on family and how important sticking by one another's side is. This source will help by showing me the struggles the families faced together and individually.

"In the Negro's mind, color prejudice in Philadelphia is that widespread feeling of dislike for his blood, which keeps him and his children out of decent employment, from certain public conveniences and amusements, from hiring houses in many sections, and in general, from being recognized as a man."

Lee, Robert E. *Stratford Hall: Slavery on the Plantation*. Virginia, 1970. Web. 14

Feb 2012. <http://www.stratfordhall.org/learn/teacher/slavery.pp>.

In this source the focus is the skills that slaves had. Their work had to be finished quickly but yet effectively in order to be seen as acceptable in their master's eyes. Everyone in the family had a certain task to complete by the end of the day.

"Occasionally, slaves learned their skills and trade through an apprenticeship to a white man"

Polsky, Milton. *The American Slave Narrative: Dramatic Resource Material for the Classroom*. 2nd ed. Vol. 45. D.C.: Journal of Negro Education, 1932. Web. 15 Feb. 2012.

This sources explains the reasons behind most slave narratives. In my research I will show the difference between well-known slave narratives and John Quincy Adams'. He didn't do so much of describing suffering from forced labor or mistreatment but suffering from the loss of his family. This source will help compare the two factors.

"the narratives served as important weapons in the warfare against slavery"

Roberts, Kevin D.. "Adams, John Quincy." *African American National Biography*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Oxford African American Studies Center. Sun Feb 12 17:08:23 EST 2012.
<<http://www.oxfordaasc.com/article/opr/t0001/e1857>>.

This article sums up Adams' narrative. It shows how his family impacted his life and was the cause of his happiness and also sadness. This source will be useful because it helps me understand the emotions behind Adams' writing.

"The most poignant events in Adams's early life involve the sale of family members and friends. In 1857 the sale of his twin brother Aaron and his sister Sallie left Adams "very sad and heart-broken"

Schneider, J. Carl and Dorothy. "*Slavery in America: Eyewitness History*." New York, NY:2007, 2000 InfoBase Publishing. Print.

This book is about the slavery in North America. It goes all the way to the beginning of the colonization until the Civil War. This source could be helpful because it'll help me dig deeper into the slave life and what they went through as a whole.

"The history of the enslavement of African Americans in North America stretches from the beginning of European colonization and lasted until the end of the Civil War."

Simkin, John. "Slave Families." Spartacus Educational. Web. 15 Feb. 2012.

< <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASseparation.htm>>.

In this source it gives reasons why slaves were separated from their families. It varies from economic reasons to bad behavior. This source could be useful by giving me a better understanding of why Adams' family was separated.

"Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off."

"Slavery in Western Virginia." West Virginia Division of Culture and History. West Virginia Archives and History. Web. 15 Feb. 2012. <http://www.wvculture.org/history/slavery.html>

This website gives details on slavery in Virginia during the 1800s. Part of the reason why Adams probably didn't mention any real hardship in his narrative is because slavery at this time wasn't so harsh. He was born in 1845 and slaves around this time really weren't needed in Virginia. He probably didn't experience anything as cruel as most because slaves weren't as profitable as those in southern states.

"slavery was no longer as profitable in the east and slaves were frequently hired out or sold"

Williams, Heather Andrea. "How Slavery Affected African American Families." Freedom's Story, TeacherServe©. National Humanities Center. February 15,2012. <<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1609-1865/essays/aafamilies.htm>>

This essay explains the role of the slave family on the plantation. Every family member, even the youngest had a specific job within the plantation. I could possibly use this essay as a way to describe why Adams' family was so close to one another. This source tells how the families worked together and also fought to stick together.

"Enslaved people lived with the perpetual possibility of separation through the sale of one or more family members"

