

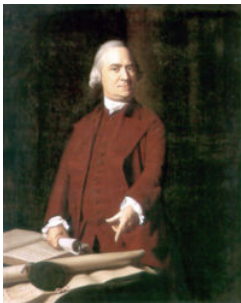
Samuel Adams

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Samuel Adams



4th Governor of Massachusetts

In office

October 8, 1793 – June 2, 1797

Lieutenant(s) Moses Gill

Preceded by John Hancock

Succeeded by Increase Sumner

3rd Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts

	In office 1789 – 1793
Governor	John Hancock
Preceded by	Benjamin Lincoln
Succeeded by	Moses Gill
<hr/>	
Born	September 27 [O.S. September 16] 1722 Boston, Massachusetts
Died	October 2, 1803 Boston, Massachusetts
Political party	None
Spouse	Elizabeth Checkley, Elizabeth Wells
Religion	Congregationalist ^[1]
Signature	<i>Sam Adams</i>

Samuel Adams (September 27 [O.S. September 16] 1722^[2] – October 2, 1803) was an American statesman, politician, writer and political philosopher, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.^[3] Adams was instrumental in garnering the support of the colonies for rebellion against Great Britain, eventually resulting in the American Revolution, and was also one of the key architects of the principles of American republicanism that shaped American political culture.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Adams was brought up in a religious and politically active family. After being educated at Boston Latin School and Harvard College, Adams became a mercantile businessman, but this proved not to be his vocation and he soon turned to politics, and became an influential political writer and theorist. Adams established himself as one of the voices of opposition to British control in the colonies; he argued that the colonies should withdraw from Great Britain and form a new government.^[4] Adams called for the colonists to defend their rights and liberties, and led town meetings in which he drafted written protests against Parliament's colonial tax measures such as the Stamp Act of 1765. Adams played a prominent role during protests against the Stamp Act, and in the events of the Boston Tea Party in 1773. He participated in the Continental Congress.^[5] He also advocated the adoption of the Declaration of Independence at the Second Continental Congress.

After the United States declared its independence in 1776, Adams helped write the Massachusetts Constitution with John Adams, his cousin, and James Bowdoin.^[6] Afterwards, Adams helped draft the Articles of Confederation.^[7] Following

the end of the American Revolutionary War, he ran for the House of Representatives in the 1st United States Congressional election, but was unsuccessful in his bid. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1789,^[8] and after John Hancock's death in 1793, Adams served as the acting governor until he was elected governor in January of the following year.^[9] He served in that position until June 1797 when he retired from politics. He died six years later on October 2, 1803.

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Biography

Early life



Statue of Samuel Adams in front
of Faneuil Hall in Boston,
Massachusetts

Adams was born on Sunday, September 16, 1722^[10] to Samuel Adams and Mary Fifield Adams, as the married couple's tenth child, but he would be only the second to live past his third birthday. ^[11] Mary, the only daughter of businessman Richard

Fifield, and Samuel Sr., a church deacon, had been married nine years earlier and had settled in their recently-built home on Purchase Street in Boston, Massachusetts. Adams's parents were devout

Puritans, who were tied very closely to the Old South Congregation Church, which they helped build in 1715.^[12] In his early years, Adams was heavily influenced by his mother and sister, Mary, who were both extremely religious individuals. His father perhaps exercised the greatest influence on the young boy. His father was a very influential man in Boston, and he played an important role in many of the town's affairs. He was on the board of selectmen, a member of the colonial legislature and an active member of many political organizations and clubs.^[13] Deacon Adams was active in many political discussions, and took an active stance against the control exerted by British royalty over the colonies. Adams attended Boston Latin School, an institution known for its prestige, tradition and close ties to Harvard College. Adams was especially studious, showing a profound interest in Greek and Latin literature, to which he would frequently allude in his future writing.^[14] As a result of his religious upbringing, Adams felt a special appreciation for church services and the effect they had on parishioners. He too wanted to influence others with his words, and he began to consider his future as a minister.

In 1736, at age fourteen, he entered Harvard College to begin studies in theology. While at

Harvard, Adams gradually shifted his interest to politics and political theory.^[15] He went on to pursue graduate studies at Harvard after receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1740. Adams began to develop his political beliefs about the rights of colonists and British control over America. During this time, he was greatly influenced by the writings of John Locke, especially his *Two Treatises of Government*, in which he justified England's 1688 Glorious Revolution removal of James II and installation of William of Orange into power. According to Locke's writing, all men were born with natural rights like "life, health, liberty, or possessions."^[16] The government was to protect these rights for the people. So enthralled by the political theory of Locke and others, Adams wrote his master's thesis on "whether it be lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved."^[17]

After Adams graduated with a Master of Arts degree from Harvard, his mother wanted him to be part of the church, and his father wanted him to study law. Adams began to court Elizabeth Checkley, the daughter of Reverend Checkley at the church. His mother approved of his romantic relationship with a clergyman's daughter.^[18] Adams was unsure about his future career. Upon a

suggestion by his father, Adams went into the mercantile business; instead of employing his own son, Deacon Adams arranged for his son to work at Thomas Cushing's counting house. Adams was not particularly interested by the business, and did not show the same conviction for commerce as conveyed by his co-workers. Foreseeing that business was not Adams's intended path, Cushing fired Adams, saying that, "he thought he was training a businessman, not a politician."^[19] After that, Adams's father gave him £1,000 to go into business for himself. Adams promptly loaned half the money to a friend in financial trouble, but he was never repaid. Adams squandered the other half of the money. His father then employed him in the family's malt business on Purchase Street. Adams was sometimes called "Sam the malster" as he was seen lugging malt through the streets of Boston.^[20] During this time, Sam ran for his first political office, and was elected in 1746 as one of the clerks of the Boston market, where he worked for two future members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.^[21]

Start as a political writer

In January 1748, to his father's approval, Adams

and some friends launched a weekly public opinion publication, *The Public Advertiser*.^[22] The newspaper contained mostly editorials and commentary, with a predominantly Whig stance. The cover of the publication featured a woodcut illustration of Britannia liberating a bird tied by a cord to the arms of France.^[23] The publication stated it was "open to whatever may be adapted to state and defend the rights and liberties of mankind".^[24]

With this publication, Adams began to express his general disapproval of Parliament and his belief that it had overstepped its bounds by restricting the rights of American colonists. In his writings for the publication, Adams stated that sedition resulted from the unstable emotions of men: "It is a weak, feverish, sickly thing, a boisterous and unnatural vigor, which cannot support itself long, and oftentimes destroys the unhappy patient."^[25] Adams stated that citizens should not get too caught up in the respect given to people in high positions, or the praise given to leaders. "This has led millions into such a degree of dependence and submission".^[26] He went on to say that the people should believe in the constitution, not the leaders who dictate it. "Whoever, therefore, insinuates notions of government contrary to the constitution,

or in any degree winks at any measures to suppress or even to weaken it, is not a loyal man."^[25]

Adams showed strong conviction in his belief that the 1691 Massachusetts Charter had provided American society with far more freedoms to enjoy than the British Constitution had English society. Adams stated, "Our invaluable charter secures to us all the English liberties, besides which we have some additional privileges which the common people there have not."^[27] Using the Charter as a guide, Adams and others demanded that royal governor William Shirley be removed from power. They argued that the royal governor should not be able to hold as much power in Massachusetts as he then did, since even the King in England was not given the same powers. Adams stated that since "the King At Home cannot *negative* or *suspend* any Member of the upper House called the House of Lords",^[28] then the royal governor should not have that influence over the colony.^[29] Adams wrote that the new freedoms were a result of the Puritan pilgrimage to America. He declared that the people should be "happy beyond expression! — in the form of our government, in the liberty we enjoy — if we know our own happiness and how to improve it."^[30]

In his political writings, Adams relied on his knowledge of ancient Rome and Greece, citing the decline of the Roman Empire as an example of what could happen to New England if it were to abandon its Puritan values. He closely associated the peak of the Roman Empire with the early days of the Puritan New England settlements.^[31]

During this time of political enlightenment, Adams was struck by personal tragedy. In March 1748, his father died of an unknown cause. The *Boston Independence Advertiser* noted in his obituary:

“ He was one who well understood and rightly pursued the civil and religious interests of this people; a true New England man, an honest patriot.”^[32]

Adams inherited not only the family brewery but a third of his father's estate as well, which he shared with his newly married sister and his brother Joseph, a clerk in the town market. His father also forgave the £1,000 loan he had made to him a few years earlier, saying "it being my will that he be discharged from said debt at my decease."^[33] As the eldest son, Adams also was given the

responsibility of managing his father's affairs, including the malt house on Purchase Street.^[34]

After engaging in a few years of courtship, Adams proposed to Elizabeth Checkley, and the couple were married at Reverend Checkley's house on October 17, 1749.^[35] In September of the following year, Elizabeth gave birth to a son named Samuel, but the infant died only eighteen days after birth. On October 16, 1751, Elizabeth again gave birth to a son they also named Samuel. Fortunately, there were no health issues with the child. Another son named Joseph was born just two years later, but he died the following day. Exactly a year after Joseph's birth, Elizabeth gave birth to the couple's first daughter, Mary.^[36] Mary lived for only three months and nine days. Another daughter, Hannah, was born eighteen months later, and stayed healthy. In July 1757, Elizabeth became ill after giving birth to a stillborn son.^[36] She died on July 25, 1757 at the age of thirty-two.^[37]

At around this time, Adams had spent and mismanaged most of his inheritance to the point where creditors even attempted to seize his home.^[38] By 1760, Adams was bankrupt and attempting to earn a living as a local tax collector; less than a year afterwards, his accounts were £8,000 in

arrears. Adams "gloried in his poverty and compared himself to one of the 'Old Romans' who despised money and devoted themselves to their country's welfare."^[39] In 1761, four years after his first wife's death, Adams met Elizabeth Wells. Wells, a daughter of a family friend, was eighteen years younger than Adams, but nonetheless began a courtship with him.^[40]

Pre-Independence political activities

By 1761, Adams was an active member of Boston town meetings. Adams soon joined the "Whipping Post Club," as well as Boston's South End Caucus, which was a powerful force in the selection of candidates for elective office. Adams first became a major figure in the movement against colonial taxation. To pay off debts incurred by the sudden expansion of British territories such as India and the costs of the French and Indian War, Britain looked to the colonies as a potential source of income. On April 5, 1764, George Grenville, Britain's First Lord of the Treasury, led Parliament to pass the Sugar Act.^[41] At first, there was no real protest from Bostonians, or other colonists. The tax was already included in the price of the products, leading to a significant lack of concern over the tax

measure. Adams, however, was appalled, both by the Sugar Act itself and by the lack of public outcry against what he perceived as England's unauthorized actions. Adams contacted James Otis and Oxenbridge Thacher, two of Boston's delegates in the Massachusetts general assembly. He tried to convince them that the Sugar Act was a violation of the colonies' rights, and that such actions could not be issued without colonial involvement. Adams believed that the lack of defiance would lead to more taxes and more royal officials, and render the colonial government useless.^[42] Adams continued to garner support for his cause at town meetings. Eventually, he gained the support of many Boston residents, and he was subsequently appointed to prepare instructions for Boston's four delegates to protest the tax in Massachusetts' general assembly.^[43] In his instructions to the delegates, he stated that the general assembly should find sufficient reasons as to why the acts "prove detrimental to Great Britain itself."^{[42][44]} Adams suggested the taxes were a direct assault on the freedoms and liberties of the American colonists.

For if our trade is taxed, why not

“ our lands? Why not the produce of our lands and everything we possess or make use of? This we apprehend annihilates our charter right to govern and tax ourselves. It strikes at our British privileges, which as we have never forfeited them.”^[42]

Adams' written set of instructions was the first public document to question Parliament's authority to tax the colonies. The document also served as the first call to unite the American colonies in opposition to England. With James Otis on his side, Adams' instructions were published in newspapers and pamphlets. Otis brought Adams' work to the general assembly and received legislature approval on June 14, 1764.^[45] The assembly had also proposed for an official congress to discuss Britain's actions, but the assembly was shut down by the royal governor of Massachusetts, Francis Bernard. Bernard used the authority granted in the Massachusetts Charter to shut down the legislature in hopes of preventing any protest against the Sugar Act. Despite Bernard's actions, the instructions had spread to other Americans across the colonies, setting the

foundation for the fight against colonial taxation. In Boston, Adams convinced local merchants to boycott imported British goods.^[46] On December 6, after three years of courtship, Adams married Elizabeth Wells.^[47]

A year later, a new tax was proposed—the Stamp Act. The act would require government seals on all legal documents and other printed documents, excluding books. When news of the Stamp Act reached the colonies, an uproar resulted. Adams went to work drafting protests against British efforts to tax the colonists and called for a spirited defense of Americans' "invaluable Rights & Liberties." Adams again went to James Otis; together they, along with delegates from other colonies, formed the Stamp Act Congress to discuss the act. After Francis Bernard reopened the legislature in May 1765, Otis launched a call to unite the colonies against Britain by means of the Stamp Act Congress. The Massachusetts House approved the measure, and invitations to the Stamp Act Congress were sent to speakers of each colonial legislature.^[48] At first, the invitations were declined by other colonies such as New Jersey and New Hampshire.^[49] However, after South Carolina accepted the invitation to join Massachusetts in discussion of the act, nine other

colonies soon followed by accepting their invitations. The congress would later meet in October 1765; it passed a number of resolutions and drew up a petition of grievances against King George III and Parliament.^[50] Meanwhile, many colonial protests were taking place in anticipation of the Stamp Act, which was to take in effect on November 1, 1765. Demonstrations, centered primarily in Boston, caught the attention of royal governor Bernard. In view of the heavy protesting, Bernard stated the tax could not be carried out in Massachusetts. After Oxenbridge Thacher died, Adams ran in an election to replace his seat. The first ballot was too close to call, so a second ballot was conducted. Adams won the election with a vote of 265 to 18.^[51]

Adams became a highly regarded leader in Boston town meetings and the Massachusetts legislature. In his resolutions, Adams openly opposed Parliament's authority of the colonies.

“ All acts made by any power
whatever, other than the general
assembly of this province,
imposing taxes on the inhabitants,
are infringements of our inherent
and unalienable rights as men and

British subjects, and render void
the most valuable declarations of ”
our charter.”^[25]

Adams went to the assembly to get approval for his resolutions. The assembly passed Adams' statements, and his resolutions became known as the Massachusetts Resolves. As a result of many recent political actions, England-aligned leaders like Thomas Hutchinson felt Adams had taken complete control of the Massachusetts assembly.
[25] The response from Britain regarding the Massachusetts Resolves was far from positive, as they dismissed the resolutions as "ravings of a parcel of wild enthusiasts."^[52]^[53] As expected, the Stamp Act was put into effect on November 1, 1765. Not surprisingly, a number of protests resulted in Boston, and as Adams had anticipated, British merchants now called for the repeal of the act. Afterwards, Adams expressed support for some of these protests, but was appalled by the most violent protests due to their "truly mobbish nature."^[54]^[55] Adams tried to get more people in England to support his cause. He stated that the tax would do harm to the colonial economy and multiple boycotts in the future could be damage trade relations. Eventually, British merchants were

able to convince King George III and Parliament to repeal the tax.^[56] By May 16, 1766, news of the repeal had reached Boston. There was celebration throughout the city, and Adams made a public statement of thanks to British merchants for helping their cause.^[57] That same month, Adams, Otis and Thomas Cushing were re-elected, and John Hancock was also elected, to seats in the Massachusetts Assembly.^[58]

Two years later, Adams wrote an essay intended to serve as the official statement from the Massachusetts assembly. In the essay, he discussed colonial power, liberties, freedoms, self-government and the suspension of the legislature, among other things.^[59] The assembly carefully examined and revised the essay. After much deliberation, the statement was approved on January 12, 1768 to be sent to the king and his ministry. Adams then decided to write a circular letter expressing the American policy that he would send to each colony for approval. On January 21, Adams tried to rally support in the assembly for the motion, but growing concerns from other representatives ultimately doomed the plan in a House vote. Again, Adams went to his fellow delegates to gain their support for the circular letter. This time, it passed with a large

majority on the February 4 vote. Colonial response to the circular letter was positive, and it was subsequently published alongside a Massachusetts petition in London by Thomas Hollis. Hollis, a British publisher in support of the American cause, published the combined work under the title "*The True Sentiments of America*".^{[60][61][62]} The publication had a profound impact on both American and British readers. Britain felt this was an act of defiance, and cries to "send over an army and a fleet"^[63] were soon heard. By May 1768, Britain had responded by sending soldiers into Boston.

Adams' repeated proclamations for the "inherent and unalienable rights" of the people^[64] would become a core element of republicanism. Adams continued to serve as clerk of the house until 1774, in which capacity he was responsible for drafting written protests of various British governmental acts. The British troop presence in Boston, aggravated by protest activities such as Adams' formation of the Non-Importation Association, led to the Boston Massacre (a term coined by Adams) in 1770. After the incident Adams chaired a town meeting which drafted a petition, presented to acting governor Thomas Hutchinson, demanding the removal of two British regiments from Boston

proper.^[65] Hutchinson at first claimed no responsibility for the matter, owing to his temporary status as governor, but stated he would be willing to move one regiment; the meeting was reconvened and Adams successfully urged the crowd of over 5,000 present to stand firm on the terms: "Both regiments or none!"^[66] Fearing open warfare, Hutchinson had both regiments removed to Castle Island, an old fort on an island in Boston Harbor. These regiments would thereafter be known in the British Parliament as "The Sam Adams Regiments".^[67]

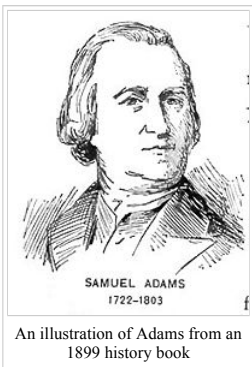
In 1772, after a British declaration that judges should be paid by the Crown rather than by the colonial legislatures, a demand from the people of Boston for a special session of the legislature to reconsider this matter was refused by Hutchinson. It was at this point that Adams devised a system of committees of correspondence; the towns of Massachusetts would consult with each other concerning political matters via messages sent through a network of committees that recorded British activities.^[68] Such a scheme was still technically legal under British law, but led to a *de facto* colonial legislative body. This system was adopted by each of the thirteen colonies, creating the Continental Congress.

Boston Tea Party

Adams took a leading role in the events that led up to the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773. The Tea Party was an act of protest in response to the Tea Act, a tax law passed in London that allowed the British East India

Company to

land tea free from the tax that had been imposed on it earlier.^[69] In the months prior to the Boston Tea Party, Adams penned a circular letter warning other colonies about the tea tax and how it would "serve both to destroy the trade of the colonies & increase the revenue".^[70] Unlike in years past, the colonial response against the tea tax was united.



The committees of correspondence had a profound effect on uniting the colonies in fighting for a common cause. Members of the Sons of Liberty became quite involved in the process of finding a solution to the situation. The group comprised many prominent leaders like Adams, John Hancock, James Otis, John Adams, Patrick Henry, Paul Revere and Joseph Warren. They had resisted British rule, and were responsible for many protests and acts of mob violence in the early 1770s. Adams held conferences in homes and meeting halls with members of the Sons of Liberty to resolve the situation. In one such meeting on October 5, 1773, Adams asked for a vote to see if people were in favor of Philadelphia's decision to force tea agents to resign. Boston citizens responded with support of the measure. Adams went to other towns and asked if they supported Boston's opposition to the tea tax. Adams received a unanimous answer of yes.^{[71][72]} By November 28, a cargo ship named *Dartmouth* was in the Boston Harbor, carrying 114 chests of East India tea. British law stated the ship was required to unload and pay the duties for the cargo within twenty days. In response, Adams introduced a resolution the next day in a town meeting in Faneuil Hall. The measure stated that the tea

should be sent back to England without paying for the import duties. The resolution was passed unanimously.^[73]

Twenty-five men were appointed to guard the ship to prevent any unloading of the tea. The tea agents in charge, which included two of Thomas Hutchinson's sons, stated they did not have the power to authorize sending the tea back. They said the tea could be stored in a warehouse in order to prevent any sales. Another vote was taken at the town meeting, and it was unanimously passed that the tea be sent back to England rather than store it in Boston.^[73] Two more tea ships, the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*, arrived at Boston Harbor in the coming days. Hutchinson sent a command to load guns at Castle Island in case anyone tried to remove tea from the three ships anchored in the harbor. By December 16, warships lined Boston Harbor, aimed at the three cargo tea ships. Adams called for another meeting that day to discuss the options the Boston citizens had left. The citizens' options were to either destroy the tea illegally, or submit to England's colonial rule. Adams, in control of the meeting, did not want to give up the fight. A cry "Boston Harbor a tea-pot tonight"^[74] went up. Some who heard it knew it as the secret command for a covert operation.^[75] A group of eighty men

dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the three vessels and over the course of three hours dumped all 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor.

The colonies' reaction from the Boston Tea Party was to expedite the opening of a Continental Congress. When the Massachusetts legislature met in Salem on June 17, 1774, Adams locked the doors and made a motion for the formation of a colonial delegation to attend the Congress. A loyalist member, faking illness, was excused from the assembly and immediately went to the governor, who issued a writ for the legislature's dissolution; however, when the legislator returned to find a locked door, he could do nothing.^[76] Adams was one of the major proponents of the Suffolk Resolves, drafted in response to the Intolerable Acts, and adopted in September 1774.
[77]

Continental Congress

In September 1774, Adams was selected as one of the colony's delegates to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.^[79] In the Congress, Adams was one of the first and loudest voices for



Adams is depicted in John Trumbull's iconic work, seated on the left side, next to Richard Henry Lee, whose legs are crossed in the front row (Adams is just to the [viewer's] right of Lee).^[78]

independence. (Notably, only he and John Hancock were exempted from the general amnesty offered by Thomas Gage to Massachusetts rebels in 1775.) Adams was also a Massachusetts delegate to the Second Continental Congress, serving as a workhorse member of the Congress and of several committees, notably the Board of War,^[80] from May 1775 until 1781.

The high point of Adams' career came when he signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776.^[81] After that, Adams, wary of a strong central

government, was instrumental in the development and adoption of the decentralized government embodied in the Articles of Confederation, to which he was also a signatory in 1777.^[82] Like others who shared his views, Adams was suspicious of and disliked both General George Washington, declaring the army had "too many idle, cowardly ... drunken generals",^[83] and the American army itself, often saying, "[t]he sins of America will be punished by a standing army."^[83] He continued serving in the Congress until 1781, when he was elected to the State Senate of Massachusetts.^[84] He served in that body, including as president for one year, until 1788.^[85]

State politics

At the time the United States Constitution was drafted, Adams was considered an anti-federalist, a member of the party which was opposed to a strong national government. He believed that the national government was better under the Articles of Confederation, which Federalists believed made the government too weak. Adams was a bit more moderate than others of that political stripe. His contemporaries nicknamed him "the last Puritan" for his views.^[86]

After the start of Shays' Rebellion in August 1786, Adams offered his support for Governor James Bowdoin's decision to send four thousand militiamen to quash the rebellion by Shays' men. The rebels led by Daniel Shays included a number of small farmers who were angered by high taxes and debt issues. The armed uprising shut down debtor courts all across Massachusetts and was closely watched by many of the nation's leaders who believed the rebellion was an effort to fix the problems the new nation was experiencing in the aftermath of the American Revolution. Adams, the president of the Massachusetts Senate, drafted a declaration against the farmer's rebellion.^[87]

In the coming months, Congress endorsed an idea to revise the Articles of Confederation, of which Adams had been a major proponent. From May 25 to September 17, 1787, the Philadelphia Convention drafted the Constitution, a framework based on the idea of "federalism".^{[88][89]} When the Constitution was sent to the states for ratification, Adams expressed profound opposition for the document, commenting that "the idea of sovereignty in these states must be lost."^[90] After months of arguments and debates amongst the 330 delegates set to decide on ratification, Adams

finally agreed to give his support for the Constitution, with the proviso that a bill of rights be added.^[91] Massachusetts later ratified the Constitution by a narrow eighteen-vote margin. Afterwards, Adams' health worsened, and he decided to play a much more minor role in local politics instead of at the national level.^[92] A year later, Adams was a member of a convention that drafted the first Massachusetts state constitution.

In January 1788, his son, Samuel Adams, Jr., died. He had studied medicine under Doctor Joseph Warren, a fellow patriot and friend to both Adams and his second cousin John Adams. Samuel Adams, Jr. also held an appointment as surgeon in General George Washington's army. The death was a stunning blow to the elder Adams.^[93]

Adams stood unsuccessfully for election to the House of Representatives for the first Congress, losing to the Federalist Fisher Ames.^{[94][95]} However, he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, serving from 1789 until John Hancock's death on October 8, 1793.^[9] One conflict that garnered the attention of Adams was whether public theater should be allowed in Boston. In 1790, the legislature had issued a prohibitory act for theaters in Boston. In the

following few years, the townspeople of Boston advocated for the act to be repealed. Adams, along with a number of other "old-fashioned citizens", [96] opposed the repeal and fought in Faneuil Hall against the measure, but the repeal was carried out anyway. After the theater was opened, Governor Hancock had the whole company of actors arrested on stage. Eventually, the matter was settled formally in the legislature and theaters were approved in Boston.

After Hancock's death, Adams served as acting governor. In 1794, Adams was elected as governor by a nearly two-thirds margin in a race against William Cushing.^[97] In his inaugural address, Adams stated that he would take a passive role in government, leaving the decision to the legislatures in the state assembly. The following year, Adams drew criticism for opposing the Jay Treaty, which had been approved by over two-thirds of the U.S. Senate on June 24.^[98] The Jay Treaty had solved many of the lingering issues from the American Revolution, such as the withdrawal of British troops from forts in U.S. territory and the compensation for American ships the British had seized during the war. In addition, the treaty gave most favoured nation trading status to Great Britain, which did not sit well with many like

Adams and Thomas Jefferson who were in support of France. His staunch position on the issue did not sit well with Federalists, but gained the respect of Republicans like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.^[99] That year, he again won his re-election bid by another large majority, despite Federalist efforts to defeat him.^[100] In 1796, Adams finished fifth in the United States presidential election, finishing with fifteen electoral votes.^[101]

Adams served as governor of Massachusetts until 1797, afterwards retiring to his home in Boston.^[102] In old age, Samuel suffered from symptoms akin to those of Parkinson's disease, so Samuel's daughter Hannah had to sign his name for him.^[103] Adams died at the age of eighty-one on October 2, 1803 and was interred at the Granary Burying Ground in Boston.^[104]

Legacy

Adams has been regarded as a controversial figure in American history. In his 2006 biography *Samuel Adams: Father of the American Revolution*, historian Mark Puls

describes
Adams as a
pre-
Revolutionary
political
visionary and
leader, who
was described
as the
"Patriarch of
Liberty" by
Thomas
Jefferson and



Samuel Adams grave marker in
the Granary Burying Ground

as the "Father of the American Revolution" by
others of his time.^[105] After Samuel Adams's
death, his cousin John stated:

“ Without the character of Samuel
Adams, the true history of the
American Revolution can never be
written. For fifty years his pen, his
tongue, his activity, were
constantly exerted for his country ”
without fee or reward.^[106]

Samuel Adams had introduced his second cousin
John Adams to the political scene in Boston by
encouraging him to write for Boston newspapers.

In his diaries, John Adams described his cousin as being "always for softness and prudence, where they will do; but is staunch, and stiff, and strict, and rigid, and inflexible in the cause."^[107] Adams is associated with laying down the groundwork needed towards solidifying the thirteen colonies. In the pre-Revolutionary days, the patriotic Adams emerged as a leader and a strategic and influential political writer.^[108] From 1764, Adams struggled to persuade his fellow colonists to move away from their allegiance to King George III and rise against British control. He was the first leader to proclaim that the British Parliament had no legal authority over America. Adams pioneered strategies of using the media to spread his revolutionary goals and ideas. In his monumental work, *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent*, historian and politician George Bancroft said, "[n]o one had equal influence over the popular mind"^[109] in the movement leading up to the war. American philosopher and historian John Fiske ranked Adams second only to George Washington in terms of importance to the founding of the nation.^[110]

Still, Adams has been overlooked by many biographers and historians because he did not have

a major role in national politics during the time after the United States became an independent nation. More thorough examinations of his record as a leader have produced works depicting Adams in a negative light. In his 1923 biographical work *Samuel Adams—Promoter of the American Revolution: A Study of Psychology and Politics*, author Ralph V. Harlow portrays Adams as a zealot and a propagandist for the American independence movement.^[111] A similar view is also presented in John C. Miller's 1936 biography, *Samuel Adams: A Pioneer in Propaganda*.^[112] More recent works have depicted Adams as a propagandist who used the independence movement to further his own political ambitions, as stated in Russell Kirk's 1974 book *The Roots of American Order*, in which Kirk labels Adams as a "well-born demagogue".^[112]

In her 1980 biographical work *The Old Revolutionaries: Political Lives in the Age of Samuel Adams*, historian Pauline Maier argues that Adams was not the "grand incendiary" or firebrand of Revolution and was not a mob leader. She says that he took a moderate position based firmly on the English revolutionary tradition that imposed strict constraints on resistance to authority. That belief justified force only against threats to the

constitutional rights so grave that the "body of the people" recognized the danger and after all the peaceful means of redress had failed. Within that revolutionary tradition, resistance was essentially conservative, intended to preserve what Adams described in 1748 as "the true object" of patriotic loyalty, "a good legal constitution, which ... condemns every instance of oppression and lawless power." It had nothing in common with sedition or rebellion, which Adams, like earlier English writers, charged to officials who sought "illegal power".^[113]

Samuel Adams' name has been appropriated for various commercial and non-profit ventures since his death. The most familiar usage stems from his roots as a brewer, and is applied as the brand name for "Samuel Adams: America's World Class Beer", a product of the Boston Beer Company.^[114] Adams' name is also used by a pair of non-profit organizations, the Sam Adams Alliance and the Sam Adams Foundation. These groups take their names from Adams in homage of his ability to organize citizens at the local level in order to achieve a national goal.^[115]

Further reading

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6. ^ Puls (2006), p204–206.
7. ^ Puls (2006), p213–214.
8. ^ Hosmer (1888), p402.
9. ^ ^a ^b Puls (2006), p225.
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- Samuel Adams quotes at Liberty-Tree.ca
- Works by Samuel Adams at Project Gutenberg
- Official Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor Biography
- Biography by Rev. Charles A. Goodrich, 1856
- Find-A-Grave profile for Samuel Adams

Political offices		
Preceded by Benjamin Lincoln	Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts 1789–1794	Succeeded by Moses Gill
Preceded by John Hancock (died)	Governor of Massachusetts October 8, 1793 – June 2, 1797 (acting, 1793–1794)	Succeeded by Increase Sumner

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