Vivienne Gibson

Mr. Johnson

American History

04 November 2024

John Hancock

John Hancock was born on January 23, 1737, destined to be a great leader of the American revolution. His parents where John Hancock Jr. and Mary Hawk Thaxter. He had 2 siblings, an older sister (Mary) and a younger brother (Ebenezer). At age seven John’s father passed and he was given to his uncle, Thomas Hancock. Thomas Hancock was a wealthy Merchant who owned the House of Hancock and imported manufactured goods. He raised John in his mansion in Boston with his fiancée.

Soon, Thomas died. Since Thomas Hancock was unable to have children, John, who started working for him after graduating from Harvard in 1754, inherited his shipping business. This inherited business brought John a fortune. Although he used much of his money for public projects, he was criticized for his “Conspicuously lavish lifestyle” (History 2024).

After several years in business, he met Dorothy Quincy, who he married in 1775. Together they had Lydia Henchman Hancock and John George Washington Hancock. Lydia was named after John’s Aunt. Sadly, neither lived to be adults.

In 1766, John Hancock was elected as the Massachusetts colonial legislator. Around this time, parliament passed several tax laws. These laws solidified his distian to the British and fueled him to continue to push against British rule. By the time of 1768, he came into conflict with the British. British custom officials claimed he had unloaded cargo without paying the required fee. His ship was taken in the Boston harbor.

In 1770, after the Boston massacre occurred, he was elected president of the continental congress, which led up to the beginning of the revolutionary war.

John’s many actions made home one of the several targets for the British. In 1775 Paul Revere warned him and the others to leave Lexington for the British soldiers were coming. Although he wanted to stay and fight, Samuel Adams convinced him he wasn’t needed as a soldier. They thankfully avoided being arrested.For the next eight years of war, John assisted in any way he could, especially using his fortune and influence to assist and fund the revolutionary army.

Finally, on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was drafted, finally saying the colonies were free from the rule of the British. John Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence, and also had the largest signature. It was stated that he “Wanted King George III to be able to read it without spectacles”.

In conclusion, John Hancock was a huge influence on the American revolution, and truly made a difference. He worked hard until the very end. In October 8, 1793, John sadly passed away, leaving behind a great legacy.

Works Cited

History, History.com Editors. “John Hancock”. HISTORY, November 9, 2009, https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/john-hancock. Accessed November 4, 2024.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "John Hancock". Encyclopedia Britannica, 4 Oct. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Hancock. Accessed 4 November 2024.