

= Samuel Adams =

Samuel Adams (September 27 [O.S. September 16] 1722 ? October 2 , 1803) was an American statesman , political philosopher , and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States . As a politician in colonial Massachusetts , Adams was a leader of the movement that became the American Revolution , and was one of the architects of the principles of American republicanism that shaped the political culture of the United States . He was a second cousin to President John Adams .

Born in Boston , Adams was brought up in a religious and politically active family . A graduate of Harvard College , he was an unsuccessful businessman and tax collector before concentrating on politics . As an influential official of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the Boston Town Meeting in the 1760s , Adams was a part of a movement opposed to the British Parliament 's efforts to tax the British American colonies without their consent . His 1768 Massachusetts Circular Letter calling for colonial non @-@ cooperation prompted the occupation of Boston by British soldiers , eventually resulting in the Boston Massacre of 1770 . To help coordinate resistance to what he saw as the British government 's attempts to violate the British Constitution at the expense of the colonies , in 1772 Adams and his colleagues devised a committee of correspondence system , which linked like @-@ minded Patriots throughout the Thirteen Colonies . Continued resistance to British policy resulted in the 1773 Boston Tea Party and the coming of the American Revolution .

After Parliament passed the Coercive Acts in 1774 , Adams attended the Continental Congress in Philadelphia , which was convened to coordinate a colonial response . He helped guide Congress towards issuing the Continental Association in 1774 , the Declaration of Independence in 1776 , and helped draft the Articles of Confederation and the Massachusetts Constitution . Adams returned to Massachusetts after the American Revolution , where he served in the state senate and was eventually elected governor .

Samuel Adams later became a controversial figure in American history . Accounts written in the 19th century praised him as someone who had been steering his fellow colonists towards independence long before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War . This view gave way to negative assessments of Adams in the first half of the 20th century , in which he was portrayed as a master of propaganda who provoked mob violence to achieve his goals . Both of these interpretations have been challenged by some modern scholars , who argue that these traditional depictions of Adams are myths contradicted by the historical record .

= = Early life = =

Samuel Adams was born in Boston in the British colony of Massachusetts on September 16 , 1722 , an Old Style date that is sometimes converted to the New Style date of September 27 . Adams was one of twelve children born to Samuel Adams , Sr. , and Mary (Fifield) Adams ; in an age of high infant mortality , only three of these children would live past their third birthday . Adams 's parents were devout Puritans and members of the Old South Congregational Church . The family lived on Purchase Street in Boston . Adams was proud of his Puritan heritage , and emphasized Puritan values , especially virtue , in his political career .

Samuel Adams , Sr. (1689 ? 1748) was a prosperous merchant and church deacon . Deacon Adams became a leading figure in Boston politics through an organization that became known as the Boston Caucus , which promoted candidates who supported popular causes . The Boston Caucus helped shape the agenda of the Boston Town Meeting . A New England town meeting is a form of local government with elected officials , and not just a gathering of citizens ; it was , according to historian William Fowler , " the most democratic institution in the British empire " . Deacon Adams rose through the political ranks , becoming a justice of the peace , a selectman , and a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives . He worked closely with Elisha Cooke , Jr . (1678 ? 1737) , the leader of the " popular party " , a faction that resisted any encroachment by royal officials on the colonial rights embodied in the Massachusetts Charter of 1691 . In the coming years , members of the " popular party " would become known as Whigs or Patriots .

The younger Samuel Adams attended Boston Latin School and then entered Harvard College in 1736 . His parents hoped that his schooling would prepare him for the ministry , but Adams gradually shifted his interest to politics . After graduating in 1740 , Adams continued his studies , earning a master 's degree in 1743 . His thesis , in which he argued that it was " lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate , if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved " , indicated that his political views , like his father 's , were oriented towards colonial rights .

Adams 's life was greatly affected by his father 's involvement in a banking controversy . In 1739 , with Massachusetts facing a serious currency shortage , Deacon Adams and the Boston Caucus created a " land bank " , which issued paper money to borrowers who mortgaged their land as security . The land bank was generally supported by the citizenry and the popular party , which dominated the House of Representatives , the lower branch of the General Court . Opposition to the land bank came from the more aristocratic " court party " , who were supporters of the royal governor and controlled the Governor 's Council , the upper chamber of the General Court . The court party used its influence to have the British Parliament dissolve the land bank in 1741 . Directors of the land bank , including Deacon Adams , became personally liable for the currency still in circulation , payable in silver and gold . Lawsuits over the bank persisted for years , even after Deacon Adams 's death , and the younger Samuel Adams would often have to defend the family estate from seizure by the government . For Adams , these lawsuits " served as a constant personal reminder that Britain 's power over the colonies could be exercised in arbitrary and destructive ways " .

= = Early career = =

After leaving Harvard in 1743 , Adams was unsure about his future . He considered becoming a lawyer , but instead decided to go into business . He worked at Thomas Cushing 's counting house , but the job only lasted a few months because Cushing felt that Adams was too preoccupied with politics to become a good merchant . Adams 's father then loaned him £ 1 @, @ 000 to go into business for himself , a substantial amount for that time . Adams 's lack of business instincts were confirmed : he loaned half of this money to a friend , which was never repaid , and frittered away the other half . Adams would always remain , in the words of historian Pauline Maier , " a man utterly uninterested in either making or possessing money " .

After Adams had lost his money , his father made him a partner in the family 's malthouse , which was next to the family home on Purchase Street . Several generations of Adamses were maltsters , who produced the malt necessary for brewing beer . Years later , a poet would poke fun at Adams by calling him " Sam the maltster " . Adams has often been described as a brewer , but the extant evidence suggests that Adams worked as a maltster and not a brewer .

In January 1748 , Adams and some friends , inflamed by British impressment , launched The Independent Advertiser , a weekly newspaper that printed many political essays written by Adams . Drawing heavily upon English political theorist John Locke 's Second Treatise of Government , Adams 's essays emphasized many of the themes that would characterize his subsequent career . He argued that the people must resist any encroachment on their constitutional rights . He cited the decline of the Roman Empire as an example of what could happen to New England if it were to abandon its Puritan values .

When Deacon Adams died in 1748 , Adams was given the responsibility of managing the family 's affairs . In October 1749 , he married Elizabeth Checkley , his pastor 's daughter . Elizabeth gave birth to six children over the next seven years , but only two ? Samuel (born 1751) and Hannah (born 1756) ? would live to adulthood . In July 1757 , Elizabeth died soon after giving birth to a stillborn son . Adams would remarry in 1764 , to Elizabeth Wells , but would have no other children .

Like his father , Adams embarked on a political career with the support of the Boston Caucus . He was elected to his first political office in 1747 , serving as one of the clerks of the Boston market . In 1756 the Boston Town Meeting elected him to the post of tax collector , which provided a small income . Adams often failed to collect taxes from his fellow citizens , which increased his popularity among those who did not pay , but left him liable for the shortage . By 1765 , Adams 's account was

more than £ 8 @, @ 000 in arrears . Because the town meeting was on the verge of bankruptcy , Adams was compelled to file suit against delinquent taxpayers , but many taxes went uncollected . In 1768 , Adams 's political opponents would use the situation to their advantage , obtaining a court judgment of £ 1 @, @ 463 against him . Adams 's friends paid off some of the deficit , and the town meeting wrote off the remainder . By then , Adams had emerged as a leader of the popular party , and the embarrassing situation did not lessen his influence .

= = Struggle with Great Britain = =

Samuel Adams emerged as an important public figure in Boston soon after the British Empire 's victory in the Seven Years ' War (1756 ? 1763) . Finding itself deep in debt and looking for new sources of revenue , the British Parliament sought , for the first time , to directly tax the colonies of British America . This tax dispute was part of a larger divergence between British and American interpretations of the British Constitution and the extent of Parliament 's authority in the colonies .

= = = Sugar Act = = =

The first step in the new program was the Sugar Act of 1764 . Adams saw the act as an infringement of longstanding colonial rights . Because colonists were not represented in Parliament , he argued , they could not be taxed by that body ; only the colonial assemblies , where the colonists were represented , could levy taxes upon the colonies . Adams expressed these views in May 1764 , when the Boston Town Meeting elected its representatives to the Massachusetts House . As was customary , the town meeting provided the representatives with a set of written instructions , which Adams was selected to write . Adams highlighted what he perceived to be the dangers of taxation without representation :

For if our Trade may be taxed , why not our Lands ? Why not the Produce of our Lands & everything we possess or make use of ? This we apprehend annihilates our Charter Right to govern & tax ourselves . It strikes at our British privileges , which as we have never forfeited them , we hold in common with our Fellow Subjects who are Natives of Britain . If Taxes are laid upon us in any shape without our having a legal Representation where they are laid , are we not reduced from the Character of free Subjects to the miserable State of tributary Slaves ?

" When the Boston Town Meeting approved the Adams instructions on May 24 , 1764 , " wrote historian John K. Alexander , " it became the first political body in America to go on record stating Parliament could not constitutionally tax the colonists . The directives also contained the first official recommendation that the colonies present a unified defense of their rights . " Adams 's instructions were published in newspapers and pamphlets . Adams soon became closely associated with James Otis , Jr . , a member of the Massachusetts House famous for his defense of colonial rights . Although Otis boldly challenged the constitutionality of certain acts of Parliament , he would not go as far as Adams , who was moving towards the conclusion that Parliament did not have sovereignty over the colonies .

= = = Stamp Act = = =

In 1765 , Parliament passed the Stamp Act , which required colonists to pay a new tax on most printed materials . News of the passage of the Stamp Act produced an uproar in the colonies . The colonial response echoed Adams 's 1764 instructions . In June 1765 , Otis called for a Stamp Act Congress to coordinate colonial resistance . The Virginia House of Burgesses passed a widely reprinted set of resolves against the Stamp Act that resembled Adams 's arguments against the Sugar Act . Not only did Adams argue that the Stamp Act was unconstitutional ; he also believed that it would hurt the economy of the British Empire . He supported calls for a boycott of British goods to put pressure on Parliament to repeal the tax .

In Boston , a group called the Loyal Nine , a precursor to the Sons of Liberty , organized protests of the Stamp Act . Adams was friendly with the Loyal Nine , but was not a member . On August 14 ,

stamp distributor Andrew Oliver was hanged in effigy from Boston 's Liberty Tree ; that night , his home was ransacked and his office demolished . On August 26 , lieutenant governor Thomas Hutchinson 's home was destroyed by an angry crowd .

Officials such as Governor Francis Bernard , believing that common people acted only under the direction of agitators , blamed the violence on Adams . This interpretation was revived by scholars in the early 20th century , who viewed Adams as a master of propaganda who manipulated mobs into doing his bidding . For example , in what became the standard biography of Adams , historian John C. Miller wrote in 1936 that Adams " controlled " Boston with his " trained mob " . Some modern scholars have argued that this interpretation is a myth , and that there 's no evidence that Adams had anything to do with the Stamp Act riots . After the fact , Adams did approve of the August 14 action because he saw no other legal options to resist what he viewed as an unconstitutional act by Parliament , but he condemned attacks on officials ' homes as " mobbish " . According to the modern scholarly interpretation of Adams , he supported legal methods of resisting parliamentary taxation ? petitions , boycotts , and nonviolent demonstrations ? but he opposed mob violence , which he saw as illegal , dangerous , and counterproductive .

In September 1765 , Adams was once again appointed by the Boston Town Meeting to write the instructions for Boston 's delegation to the Massachusetts House of Representatives . As it turned out , he wrote his own instructions : on September 27 , the town meeting selected him to replace the recently deceased Oxenbridge Thacher as one of Boston 's four representatives in the assembly . With James Otis attending the Stamp Act Congress in New York City , Adams was the primary author of a series of House resolutions against the Stamp Act , which were more radical than those passed by the Stamp Act Congress . Adams was one of the first colonial leaders to argue that mankind possessed certain natural rights that governments could not violate .

Although the Stamp Act was scheduled to go into effect on November 1 , 1765 , it was not enforced because protestors throughout the colonies had compelled stamp distributors to resign . Eventually , British merchants were able to convince Parliament to repeal the tax . 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 .

The Massachusetts popular party gained ground in the May 1766 elections . Adams was reelected to the House and selected as its clerk . In the coming years , Adams would use his position as clerk , in which he was responsible for official House papers , to promote his political message with great effect . Joining Adams in the House was John Hancock , a new representative from Boston . Hancock was a wealthy merchant ? perhaps the richest man in Massachusetts ? but a relative newcomer to politics . Initially a protégé of Adams , Hancock used his wealth to promote the Whig cause .

= = = Townshend Acts = = =

After the repeal of the Stamp Act , Parliament took a different approach to raising revenue , passing the Townshend Acts in 1767 , which established new duties on various goods imported into the colonies . These duties were relatively low , because the British ministry wanted to establish the precedent that Parliament had the right to impose tariffs on the colonies before raising them . Revenues from these duties were to be used to pay for governors and judges who would be independent of colonial control . To enforce compliance with the new laws , the Townshend Acts created a customs agency known as the American Board of Custom Commissioners , which was headquartered in Boston .

Resistance to the Townshend Acts grew slowly . When news of the acts reached Boston in October 1767 , the General Court was not in session . Adams therefore used the Boston Town Meeting to organize an economic boycott , and called for other towns to do the same . By February 1768 , towns in Massachusetts , Rhode Island , and Connecticut had joined the boycott . Opposition to the Townshend Acts was also encouraged by Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania , a series of popular essays by John Dickinson , which started appearing in December 1767 . Dickinson 's argument that the new taxes were unconstitutional had been made before by Adams , but never to

such a wide audience .

In January 1768 , the Massachusetts House sent a petition to King George asking for his help . Adams and Otis requested that the House send the petition to the other colonies , along with what became known as the Massachusetts Circular Letter , which became " a significant milestone on the road to revolution " . The letter , written by Adams , called on the colonies to join with Massachusetts in resisting the Townshend Acts . The House initially voted against sending the letter and petition to the other colonies , but after some politicking by Adams and Otis , it was approved on February 11 .

Hoping to prevent a repeat of the Stamp Act Congress , Lord Hillsborough , the British colonial secretary , instructed the colonial governors in America to dissolve the assemblies if they responded to the Massachusetts Circular Letter . He also directed Massachusetts Governor Francis Bernard to have the Massachusetts House rescind the letter . On June 30 , the House refused to rescind the letter by a vote of 92 to 17 , with Adams citing their right to petition as justification . Far from complying with the governor 's order , Adams instead presented a new petition to the king asking that Governor Bernard be removed from office . Bernard responded by dissolving the legislature .

When the commissioners of the Customs Board found that they were unable to enforce trade regulations in Boston , they requested military assistance . Help came in the form of the HMS Romney , a fifty @-@ gun warship , which arrived in Boston Harbor in May 1768 . Tensions escalated after the captain of the Romney began to impress local sailors . The situation exploded on June 10 , when customs officials seized the Liberty , a sloop owned by John Hancock ? a leading critic of the Customs Board ? for alleged customs violations . When sailors and marines from the Romney came ashore to tow away the Liberty , a riot broke out . Things calmed down in the following days , but fearful customs officials packed up their families and fled to the Romney and eventually to Castle William , an island fort in the harbor , for protection .

In response to the Liberty incident and the struggle over the Circular Letter , Governor Bernard wrote to London , informing his superiors that troops were needed in Boston to restore order . Lord Hillsborough ordered four regiments of the British Army to Boston .

= = = Boston under occupation = = =

Learning that British troops were on the way , the Boston Town Meeting met on September 12 , 1768 , and requested that Governor Bernard convene the General Court . Bernard refused , and so the town meeting called on the other Massachusetts towns to send representatives to meet at Faneuil Hall beginning on September 22 . About 100 towns sent delegates to the convention , which was effectively an unofficial session of the Massachusetts House . Using language more moderate than what Adams desired , the convention issued a letter that insisted that Boston was not a lawless town , and that the impending military occupation violated Bostonians ' natural , constitutional , and charter rights . By the time the convention adjourned , British troop transports had arrived in Boston Harbor . Two regiments disembarked in October 1768 , followed by two more in November .

According to some accounts , the occupation of Boston was a turning point for Adams , after which he gave up hope of reconciliation and secretly began to work towards American independence . However , in 1928 historian Carl Becker wrote that " there is no clear evidence in his contemporary writings that such was the case . " Nevertheless , the notion that Adams desired independence before most of his contemporaries , and steadily worked towards this goal for years , became part of the standard view of Adams . Historian Pauline Maier challenged that idea in 1980 , arguing instead that Adams , like most of his peers , did not embrace independence until after the American Revolutionary War had begun in 1775 . According to Maier , Adams was at this time a reformer rather than a revolutionary ; he sought to have the British ministry change its policies , and warned Britain that independence would be the inevitable result of a failure to do so .

Adams wrote numerous letters and essays in opposition to the occupation , which he considered a violation of the 1689 Bill of Rights . The occupation was publicized throughout the colonies in the Journal of Occurrences , an unsigned series of newspaper articles that may have been written by Adams in collaboration with others . In an innovative approach for an era without professional newspaper reporters , the Journal presented what it claimed to be a factual daily account of events

in Boston during the military occupation . Drawing upon the traditional Anglo @-@ American distrust of standing armies garrisoned among civilians , the Journal depicted a Boston besieged by unruly British soldiers , who assaulted men and raped women with regularity and impunity . The Journal ceased publication on August 1 , 1769 , which was a day of celebration in Boston : Governor Bernard had left Massachusetts , never to return .

Adams continued to work on getting the troops withdrawn , and keeping the boycott going until the Townshend duties were repealed . Two regiments were removed from Boston in 1769 , but the other two remained . Tensions between soldiers and civilians eventually resulted in the killing of five civilians in the so @-@ called Boston Massacre of March 1770 . According to the " propagandist interpretation " of Adams popularized by historian John Miller , Adams deliberately provoked the incident to promote his secret agenda of American independence . According to Pauline Maier , however , " There is no evidence that he prompted the Boston Massacre riot " .

After the Boston Massacre , Adams and other town leaders met with Bernard 's successor , Governor Thomas Hutchinson , and Colonel William Dalrymple , the army commander , to demand the withdrawal of the troops . The situation remained explosive , and so Dalrymple agreed to remove both regiments to Castle William . Adams wanted the soldiers to have a fair trial , because this would show that Boston was not controlled by a lawless mob , but was instead the victim of an unjust occupation . He convinced his cousins John Adams and Josiah Quincy to defend the soldiers , knowing that those Whigs would not slander Boston to gain an acquittal . However , Adams wrote essays condemning the outcome of the trials ; he thought the soldiers should have been convicted of murder .

= = = " Quiet period " = = =

After the Boston Massacre , politics in Massachusetts entered what is sometimes known as the " quiet period " . In April 1770 , Parliament repealed the Townshend duties , except for the tax on tea . Adams urged colonists to keep up the boycott of British goods , arguing that paying even one small tax allowed Parliament to establish the precedent of taxing the colonies , but the boycott faltered . As economic conditions improved , support for Adams 's causes waned . In 1770 first New York City then Philadelphia abandoned the non @-@ importation boycott of British goods . Faced with the risk of being economically ruined , Boston merchants agreed to generally end the non @-@ importation and effectively defeated Samuel Adams ' cause in Massachusetts . John Adams withdrew from politics , while John Hancock and James Otis appeared to become more moderate . Adams was reelected to the Massachusetts House in April 1772 , but he received far fewer votes than ever before .

A struggle over the power of the purse brought Adams back into the political limelight . Traditionally , the Massachusetts House of Representatives paid the salaries of the governor , lieutenant governor , and superior court judges . From the Whig perspective , this arrangement , by keeping royally appointed officials accountable to democratically elected representatives , was an important check on executive power . In 1772 , Massachusetts learned that the those officials would henceforth be paid by the British government rather than by the province . To protest this development , in November 1772 Adams and his colleagues 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 and protested imperial policies . Committees of correspondence soon formed in other colonies as well .

Governor Hutchinson , concerned that the committees of correspondence were growing into an independence movement , convened the General Court in January 1773 . Addressing the legislature , Hutchinson argued that to deny the supremacy of Parliament , which some committees had done , came dangerously close to rebellion . " I know of no line that can be drawn " , he said , " between the supreme authority of Parliament and the total independence of the colonies . " Adams and the House responded that the Massachusetts Charter did not establish Parliament 's supremacy over the province , and so Parliament could not claim that authority now . Hutchinson soon realized that he had made a major blunder by initiating a public debate about independence and the extent of

Parliament 's authority in the colonies . The Boston Committee of Correspondence published its statement of colonial rights , along with Hutchinson 's exchange with the Massachusetts House , in the widely distributed " Boston Pamphlet " .

The quiet period in Massachusetts was over . Adams was easily reelected to the Massachusetts House in May 1773 , and was also elected as moderator of the Boston Town Meeting . In June 1773 , Adams introduced in the Massachusetts House a set of private letters written by Hutchinson several years earlier . In one letter , Hutchinson appeared to recommend to London that there should be " an abridgement of what are called English liberties " in Massachusetts . Although Hutchinson denied that this is what he meant , his career in Massachusetts was effectively over . The House sent a petition to the king asking for his recall .

= = = Tea Party = = =

Adams took a leading role in the events that led up to the famous Boston Tea Party of December 16 , 1773 , although the precise nature of his involvement has been disputed .

In May 1773 , the British Parliament passed the Tea Act , a tax law to help the struggling East India Company , one of Great Britain 's most important commercial institutions . Because of the heavy taxes imposed on tea imported into Great Britain , Britons could buy smuggled Dutch tea more cheaply than the East India Company 's tea , and so the company amassed a huge surplus of tea that it could not sell . The British government 's solution to the problem was to sell the surplus in the colonies . The Tea Act permitted the East India Company , for the first time , to export tea directly to the colonies , bypassing most of the merchants who had previously acted as middlemen . This measure was a threat to the American colonial economy because it granted the Tea Company a significant cost advantage over local tea merchants and even local tea smugglers , driving them out of business . The act also reduced the taxes on tea paid by the company in Britain , but kept the controversial Townshend duty on tea imported in the colonies . A few merchants in New York , Philadelphia , Boston , and Charlestown were selected to receive the company 's tea for resale . In late 1773 , seven ships carrying East India Company tea were sent to the colonies , including four bound for Boston .

News of the Tea Act set off a firestorm of protest in the colonies . This was not a dispute about high taxes : the price of legally imported tea was actually reduced by the Tea Act . Protesters were instead concerned with a variety of other issues . The familiar " no taxation without representation " argument , along with the question of the extent of Parliament 's authority in the colonies , remained prominent . Some colonists worried that by buying the cheaper tea , they would be conceding that Parliament had the right to tax them . The " power of the purse " conflict was still at issue : The tea tax revenues were to be used to pay the salaries of certain royal officials , making them independent of the people . Colonial smugglers played a significant role in the protests , since the Tea Act made legally imported tea cheaper , which threatened to put smugglers of Dutch tea out of business . Legitimate tea importers who had not been named as consignees by the East India Company were also threatened with financial ruin by the Tea Act , and other merchants worried about the precedent of a government @-@ created monopoly .

Adams and the correspondence committees promoted opposition to the Tea Act . In every colony except Massachusetts , protesters were able to force the tea consignees to resign or to return the tea to England . In Boston , however , Governor Hutchinson was determined to hold his ground . He convinced the tea consignees , two of whom were his sons , not to back down . The Boston Caucus and then the Town Meeting attempted to compel the consignees to resign , but they refused . With the tea ships about to arrive , Adams and the Boston Committee of Correspondence contacted nearby committees to rally support .

When the tea ship Dartmouth arrived in the Boston Harbor in late November , Adams wrote a circular letter calling for a mass meeting to be held at Faneuil Hall on November 29 . Thousands of people arrived , so many that the meeting was moved to the larger Old South Meeting House . British law required the Dartmouth to unload and pay the duties within twenty days or customs officials could confiscate the cargo . The mass meeting passed a resolution , introduced by Adams ,

urging the captain of the Dartmouth to send the ship back without paying the import duty . Meanwhile , the meeting assigned twenty @-@ five men to watch the ship and prevent the tea from being unloaded .

Governor Hutchinson refused to grant permission for the Dartmouth to leave without paying the duty . Two more tea ships , the Eleanor and the Beaver , arrived in Boston Harbor . The fourth ship , the William was stranded near Cape Cod and never arrived to Boston . On December 16 ? the last day of the Dartmouth 's deadline ? about 7 @,@ 000 people had gathered around the Old South Meeting House . After receiving a report that Governor Hutchinson had again refused to let the ships leave , Adams announced that " This meeting can do nothing further to save the country . " According to a popular story , Adams 's statement was a prearranged signal for the " tea party " to begin . However , this claim did not appear in print until nearly a century after the event , in a biography of Adams written by his great @-@ grandson , who apparently misinterpreted the evidence . According to eyewitness accounts , people did not leave the meeting until ten or fifteen minutes after Adams 's alleged " signal " , and Adams in fact tried to stop people from leaving because the meeting was not yet over .

While Adams tried to reassert control of the meeting , people poured out of the Old South Meeting House and headed to Boston Harbor . That evening , a group of 30 to 130 men , some of them thinly disguised as Mohawk Indians , boarded the three vessels and , over the course of three hours , dumped all 342 chests of tea into the water . Adams never revealed if he went to the wharf to witness the destruction of the tea . Whether or not he helped plan the event is unknown , but Adams immediately worked to publicize and defend it . He argued that the Tea Party was not the act of a lawless mob , but was instead a principled protest and the only remaining option the people had to defend their constitutional rights .

= = Revolution = =

Great Britain responded to the Boston Tea Party in 1774 with the Coercive Acts . The first of these acts , the Boston Port Act , closed Boston 's commerce until the East India Company had been repaid for the destroyed tea . The Massachusetts Government Act rewrote the Massachusetts Charter , making many officials royally appointed rather than elected , and severely restricting the activities of town meetings . The Administration of Justice Act allowed colonists charged with crimes to be transported to another colony or to Great Britain for trial . A new royal governor was appointed to enforce the acts : General Thomas Gage , who was also commander of British military forces in North America .

Adams worked to coordinate resistance to the Coercive Acts . In May 1774 , with Adams serving as moderator , the Boston Town Meeting organized an economic boycott of British goods . In June , Adams headed a committee in the Massachusetts House which proposed that an inter @-@ colonial congress meet in Philadelphia in September . With the doors locked to prevent Gage from dissolving the legislature , Adams was one of five delegates chosen to attend the First Continental Congress . Because Adams was never fashionably dressed and had little money , friends bought him new clothes and paid his expenses for the journey to Philadelphia , his first trip outside of Massachusetts .

= = = First Continental Congress = = =

In Philadelphia , Adams promoted colonial unity while using his political skills to lobby other delegates . On September 16 , messenger Paul Revere brought Congress the Suffolk Resolves , one of many resolutions passed in Massachusetts that promised strident resistance to the Coercive Acts . Congress endorsed the Suffolk Resolves , issued a Declaration of Rights that denied Parliament 's right to legislate for the colonies , and organized a colonial boycott known as the Continental Association .

Adams returned to Massachusetts in November 1774 , where he served in the Massachusetts Provincial Congress , an extralegal legislative body independent of British control . The Provincial

Congress created the first minutemen companies , consisting of militiamen who were to be ready for action on a moment 's notice . Adams also served as moderator of the Boston Town Meeting , which convened despite the Massachusetts Government Act , and was appointed to the Committee of Inspection to enforce the Continental Association . He was also selected to attend the Second Continental Congress , scheduled to meet in Philadelphia in May 1775 .

Before his journey to the second Congress , Adams and John Hancock , who had been added to the delegation , attended the Provincial Congress in Concord , Massachusetts . Deciding that it was not safe to return to Boston before leaving for Philadelphia , the two men stayed at Hancock 's childhood home in Lexington . On April 14 , 1775 , General Gage received a letter from Lord Dartmouth advising him " to arrest the principal actors and abettors in the Provincial Congress whose proceedings appear in every light to be acts of treason and rebellion " . On the night of April 18 , Gage sent out a detachment of soldiers on the fateful mission that would spark the American Revolutionary War . The purpose of the British expedition was to seize and destroy military supplies that the colonists had stored in Concord . According to many historical accounts , Gage also instructed his men to arrest Hancock and Adams , but the written orders issued by Gage made no mention of arresting the Patriot leaders .

Although Gage had evidently decided against seizing Adams and Hancock , Patriots initially believed otherwise , perhaps influenced by London newspapers that reached Boston with the news that the patriot leader would be hanged if he were caught . From Boston , Joseph Warren dispatched Paul Revere to warn the two that British troops were on the move and might attempt to arrest them . As Hancock and Adams made their escape , the first shots of the war began at Lexington and Concord . Soon after the battle , Gage issued a proclamation granting a general pardon to all who would " lay down their arms , and return to the duties of peaceable subjects " ? with the exceptions of Hancock and Samuel Adams . Singling out Hancock and Adams in this manner only added to their renown among Patriots , and , according to Patriot historian Mercy Otis Warren , perhaps exaggerated the importance of the two men .

= = = Second Continental Congress = = =

Because the Continental Congress worked under a secrecy rule , Adams 's precise role in congressional deliberations is not fully documented . He appears to have had a major influence , working behind the scenes as a sort of " parliamentary whip " and Thomas Jefferson credits the lesser @-@ remembered Adams with steering the Congress toward independence , saying " If there was any Palinurus to the Revolution , Samuel Adams was the man . " He served on numerous committees , often dealing with military matters .

Adams was a cautious advocate for a declaration of independence , urging eager correspondents back in Massachusetts to wait for more moderate colonists to come around to supporting separation from Great Britain . He was pleased when , in 1775 , the colonies began to replace their old governments with independent republican governments . In early 1776 , writing as " Candidus " , he praised Thomas Paine 's popular pamphlet Common Sense and supported the call for American independence . On June 7 , Adams 's political ally Richard Henry Lee introduced a three @-@ part resolution calling for Congress to declare independence , create a colonial confederation , and seek foreign aid . After a delay to rally support , Congress approved the language of the United States Declaration of Independence on July 4 , 1776 , which Adams signed .

After the Declaration of Independence , Congress continued to manage the war effort . Adams served on military committees , including an appointment to the Board of War in 1777 . He advocated paying bonuses to Continental Army soldiers to encourage them to reenlist for the duration of the war . He called for harsh state legislation to punish Loyalists ? Americans who continued to support the British crown ? who Adams believed were as dangerous to American liberty as British soldiers . In Massachusetts , more than 300 Loyalists were banished and their property confiscated . After the war , Adams opposed allowing Loyalists to return to Massachusetts , fearing that they would work to undermine republican government .

Adams was the Massachusetts delegate appointed to the committee to draft the Articles of

Confederation , the plan for the colonial confederation . With its emphasis on state sovereignty , the Articles reflected Congress 's wariness of a strong central government , a concern shared by Adams . Like others at the time , Adams considered himself a citizen of the United States while continuing to refer to Massachusetts as his " country " . After much debate , the Articles were sent to the states for ratification in November 1777 . From Philadelphia , Adams urged Massachusetts to ratify , which it did . Adams signed the Articles of Confederation with the other Massachusetts delegates in 1778 , but they were not ratified by all the states until 1781 .

Adams returned to Boston in 1779 to attend a state constitutional convention . The Massachusetts General Court had proposed a new constitution the previous year , but voters rejected it , and so a convention was held to try again . Adams was appointed to a three @-@ man drafting committee with his cousin John Adams and James Bowdoin . They drafted the Massachusetts Constitution , which was amended by the convention and approved by voters in 1780 . The new constitution established a republican form of government , with annual elections and a separation of powers . It reflected Adams 's belief that " a state is never free except when each citizen is bound by no law whatever that he has not approved of , either directly , or through his representatives " . By modern standards , the new constitution was not " democratic " ; Adams , like most of his peers , believed that only free males who owned property should be allowed to vote , and that the senate and the governor served to balance any excesses that might result from majority rule .

In 1781 , Adams retired from the Continental Congress . His health was one reason : he was approaching his sixtieth birthday , and suffered from tremors that made writing difficult . But he also wanted to return to Massachusetts to influence politics in the Commonwealth . He returned to Boston in 1781 , and was never to leave Massachusetts again .

= = Return to Massachusetts = =

Adams remained active in politics upon his return to Massachusetts . He frequently served as moderator of the Boston Town Meeting , and was elected to the state senate , where he often served as that body 's president .

Adams focused his political agenda on promoting virtue , which he considered essential in a republican government . If republican leaders lacked virtue , he believed , liberty was endangered . His major opponent in this campaign was his former protégé , John Hancock . The two men had had a falling out in the Continental Congress . Adams disapproved of what he viewed as Hancock 's vanity and extravagance , which Adams believed were inappropriate in a republican leader . When Hancock left Congress in 1777 , Adams and the other Massachusetts delegates voted against thanking Hancock for his service as president of Congress . The struggle continued in Massachusetts . Adams thought that Hancock , by acting like an aristocrat and courting popularity , was not acting the part of a virtuous republican leader . Adams favored James Bowdoin for governor , and was distressed when Hancock won annual landslide victories .

Adams 's promotion of public virtue took several forms . He played a major role in getting Boston to provide a free public education for children , even for girls , which was controversial . Adams was one of the charter members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1780 . After the Revolutionary War , Adams joined others , including Thomas Jefferson , in denouncing the Society of the Cincinnati , an organization of former army officers . Adams worried that the Society was " a stride towards an hereditary military nobility " , and thus a threat to republicanism . Adams also believed that public theaters undermined civic virtue , and he joined an ultimately unsuccessful effort to keep theaters banned in Boston . Decades after Adams 's death , orator Edward Everett would call him " the last of the Puritans " .

Postwar economic troubles in western Massachusetts led to an uprising known as Shays 's Rebellion , which began in 1786 . Small farmers , angered by high taxes and debts , armed themselves and shut down debtor courts in two counties . Governor James Bowdoin sent four thousand militiamen to put down the uprising , an action supported by Adams . Although his old political ally James Warren thought that Adams had forsaken his principles , Adams saw no contradiction . He approved of rebellion against an unrepresentative government , as had happened

during the American Revolution , but he opposed taking up arms against a republican government , where problems should be remedied through elections . He thought the leaders of Shays 's Rebellion should be hanged , reportedly saying that " the man who dares to rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death " .

Shays 's Rebellion contributed to the belief that the Articles of Confederation needed to be revised . In 1787 , delegates to the Philadelphia Convention , instead of revising the Articles , created a new United States Constitution with a much stronger national government . When the Constitution was sent to the states for ratification , Adams expressed his displeasure . " I confess , " he wrote to Richard Henry Lee in 1787 , " as I enter the Building I stumble at the Threshold . I meet with a National Government , instead of a Federal Union of States . " Adams was one of those derisively labeled " Anti @-@ Federalists " by proponents of the new Constitution , who called themselves " Federalists " . Adams was elected to the Massachusetts ratifying convention , which met in January 1788 . Despite his reservations , Adams rarely spoke at the convention , and listened carefully to the arguments rather than raising objections . Adams and John Hancock , who had reconciled , finally agreed to give their support for the Constitution , with the proviso that some amendments be added later . Even with the support of Hancock and Adams , the Massachusetts convention narrowly ratified the Constitution by a vote of 187 to 168 .

While Adams was attending the ratifying convention , his only son , Samuel Adams , Jr . , died at just thirty @-@ seven years of age . The younger Adams had served as surgeon in the Revolutionary War , but had fallen ill and never fully recovered . The death was a stunning blow to the elder Adams . The younger Adams left his father the certificates he had earned as a soldier , giving Adams and his wife unexpected financial security in their final years . Investments in land would make them relatively wealthy by the mid @-@ 1790s , but this did not alter their frugal lifestyle .

Concerned about the new Constitution , Adams made an attempt to reenter national politics . He allowed his name to be put forth as a candidate for the United States House of Representatives in the December 1788 election , but lost to Fisher Ames , apparently because Ames was a stronger supporter of the Constitution , a more popular position . Despite his defeat , Adams continued to work for amendments to the Constitution , a movement that ultimately resulted in the addition of a Bill of Rights in 1791 . With these amendments , and the possibility of more , Adams subsequently became a firm supporter of the Constitution .

In 1789 , Adams was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts , and served in that office until Governor Hancock 's death in 1793 , when he became acting governor . The next year Adams was elected as governor in his own right , the first of four annual terms . He was generally regarded as the leader of his state 's Jeffersonian Republicans , who were opposed to the Federalist Party . Unlike some other Republicans , Adams supported the suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 for the same reasons that he had opposed Shays 's Rebellion . Like his fellow Republicans , he spoke out against the Jay Treaty in 1796 , a position that drew criticism in a state that was increasingly Federalist . In that year 's U. S. presidential election , Republicans in Virginia cast 15 electoral votes for Adams in an effort to make him Jefferson 's vice @-@ president , but Federalist John Adams won the election , with Jefferson becoming vice @-@ president . The Adams cousins remained friends , but Samuel was pleased when Jefferson defeated John Adams in the 1800 presidential election .

Taking a cue from President Washington , who declined to run for reelection in 1796 , Adams retired from politics at the end of his term as governor in 1797 . Adams suffered from what is now believed to have been essential tremor , a movement disorder that , in the final decade of his life , rendered him unable to write . He died at the age of 81 on October 2 , 1803 , and was interred at the Granary Burying Ground in Boston . Boston 's Republican newspaper , the Independent Chronicle , eulogized him as the " Father of the American Revolution " .

= = Legacy = =

Samuel Adams is a controversial figure in American history . Disagreement about his significance

and reputation began before his death and continues to the present .

Adams 's contemporaries , both friends and foes , regarded him as one of the foremost leaders of the American Revolution . Thomas Jefferson , for example , characterized Adams as " truly the Man of the Revolution . " Leaders in other colonies were compared to him : Cornelius Harnett was called the " Samuel Adams of North Carolina " , Charles Thomson the " Samuel Adams of Philadelphia " , and Christopher Gadsden the " Sam Adams of the South " . When John Adams traveled to France during the Revolution , he had to explain that he was not Samuel , " the famous Adams " .

Although supporters of the Revolution praised Adams , Loyalists viewed him as a sinister figure . Peter Oliver , the exiled chief justice of Massachusetts , characterized Adams as devious Machiavellian with a " cloven Foot " . Thomas Hutchinson , Adams 's political foe , took his revenge in his History of Massachusetts Bay , in which he denounced Adams as a dishonest character assassin , emphasizing Adams 's failures as a businessman and tax collector . This hostile " Tory interpretation " of Adams was revived in the 20th century by historian Clifford K. Shipton in the Sibley 's Harvard Graduates reference series . Shipton wrote positive portraits of Hutchinson and Oliver and scathing sketches of Adams and Hancock ; his entry on Adams was characterized by historian Pauline Maier as " forty @-@ five pages of contempt " .

Whig historians challenged the " Tory interpretation " of Adams . William Gordon and Mercy Otis Warren , two historians who knew Adams , wrote of him as a man selflessly dedicated to the American Revolution . But in the early 19th century , Adams was often viewed as an old @-@ fashioned Puritan , and was consequently neglected by historians . Interest in Adams was revived in the mid @-@ 19th century . Historian George Bancroft portrayed Adams favorably in his monumental History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent (1852) . The first full biography of Adams appeared in 1865 , a three @-@ volume work written by William Wells , Adams 's great @-@ grandson . Although the Wells biography is still valuable for its wealth of information , Whig portrayals of Adams were uncritically pro @-@ American and had elements of hagiography , a view that influenced some later biographies written for general audiences .

In the late 19th century , many American historians , uncomfortable with contemporary revolutions , found it problematic to write approvingly about Adams . Relations between the United States and the United Kingdom had improved , and Adams 's role in dividing Americans from Britons was increasingly viewed with regret . In 1885 , James Hosmer wrote a biography that praised Adams , but also found some of his actions , such as the 1773 publication of Hutchinson 's private letters , to be troubling . Subsequent biographers became increasingly hostile towards Adams and the common people he represented . In 1923 , Ralph V. Harlow used a " Freudian " approach to characterize Adams as a " neurotic crank " driven by an " inferiority complex " . Harlow argued that because the masses were easily misled , Adams " manufactured public opinion " to produce the Revolution , a view that became the thesis of John C. Miller 's 1936 biography , Sam Adams : Pioneer in Propaganda . Consistently calling his subject " Sam " , despite the fact that Adams was almost always known as " Samuel " in his lifetime , Miller portrayed Adams more as an incendiary revolutionary than an adroit political operative , attributing all acts of Boston 's " body of the people " to this one man .

Miller 's influential book became , in the words of historian Charles Akers , the " scholarly enshrinement " of " the myth of Sam Adams as the Boston dictator who almost single @-@ handedly led his colony into rebellion " . According to Akers , Miller and others historians used " Sam did it " to explain crowd actions and other developments without citing any evidence that Adams directed those events . In 1974 , Akers called on historians to critically reexamine the sources rather than simply repeating the myth . By then , scholars were increasingly rejecting the notion that Adams and others used " propaganda " to incite " ignorant mobs " , and were instead portraying a revolutionary Massachusetts too complex to have been controlled by one man . Historian Pauline Maier argued that Adams , far from being a radical mob leader , took a moderate position based 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 only after all peaceful means of redress had failed . Within that revolutionary tradition , resistance was essentially conservative . In 2004 , Ray Raphael 's Founding

Myths continued Maier 's line by deconstructing several of the " Sam " Adams myths that are still repeated in many textbooks and popular histories .

= = In popular culture = =

In the 2015 miniseries Sons of Liberty , Adams , the main protagonist , is portrayed by Ben Barnes .

Samuel Adams 's name has been appropriated by commercial and non @-@ profit ventures since his death . Drawing upon the tradition that Adams had been a brewer , the Boston Beer Company created Samuel Adams Boston Lager in 1985 , which became a popular award @-@ winning brand . Adams 's 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 .