

Declaration of Independence - Signers Series

Samuel Adams - Massachusetts

Samuel Adams, born September 27, 1722, descended from Pilgrim stock and taught the principles of freedom from an early age. He came from a family of wealth and influence. Adams graduated from Harvard College at age 18. Though his father intended him for a legal career and apprenticed him to merchant Thomas Cushing, Adams was far more interested in politics than business. Even though given capital to start as a merchant, his dislike for commerce led to near bankruptcy. At age 25, he inherited his father's estate, which gave him some financial independence.

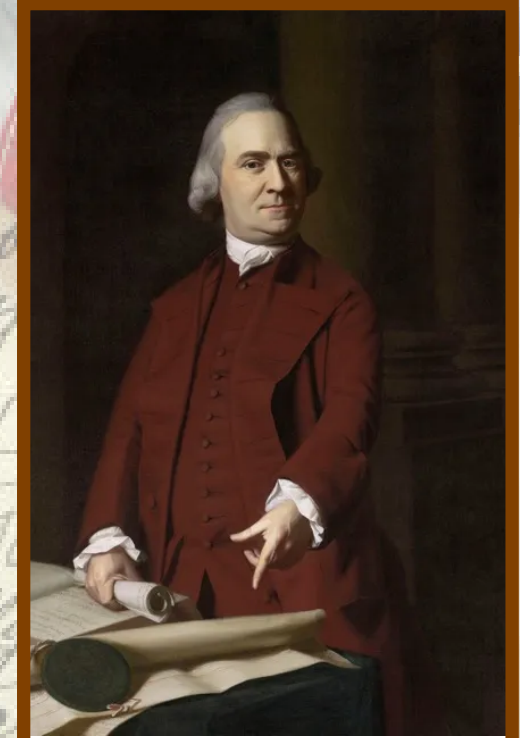
Adams devoted much of his life to speaking and writing against British oppression, especially after the Stamp Act of 1763. He denied Parliament's right to tax the Colonies without their consent and called for colonial unity to resist British aggressions - perhaps the first American to articulate this vision.

In 1765, he was elected to the Massachusetts General Assembly and became Clerk of the House the following year. He proposed a Colonial Congress in New York to seek repeal of the Stamp Act. After the Boston Massacre in 1770, Adams was credited as instrumental in getting British troops removed from the city. Around the same time, along with Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, he proposed forming Committees of Correspondence to improve communication among the Colonies.

Though not a participant in the Boston Tea Party of 1773, he was a key planner. After the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775, Governor Gage excluded Adams and John Hancock from a general pardon offered to rebel leaders. Adams was appointed to the First Continental Congress in 1774, then the Second in 1775, where he became a strong advocate for independence and served until 1781.

He later became Lieutenant Governor and then Governor of Massachusetts in the 1790s. After retiring from public service, he died on October 3, 1803.

Truly, a father of our Republic.



Sam Adams