Course/Grade Level: U.S. History 11th grade or adapt for U.S. Government 12th grade

Lesson Title: Samuel Adams: Forgotten Founder

Teacher: Rick Elston

1. Set Induction: Have students name important founding fathers and their most important accomplishments in the American Revolution. Samuel Adams probably won’t come up until late in the discussion, if at all. If needed, ask who was Samuel Adams and you may have students mention the beer. Use this to gauge prior knowledge.

2. Aims/Objectives and Standards: Students should be able to recognize the importance of the accomplishments of Sam Adams to the struggle for American independence. Students will also have to make value judgments on the characterization of Sam Adams as patriot or terrorist. Hopefully they will see the complexity of Adams, and make connections to the complex nature of most people and their decisions and actions.

3. Procedures, Assessments and Materials Required: After the set induction, use the powerpoint to examine the life and early career of Samuel Adams. Assessments would include patriot (hero)/terrorist (wanted) poster activity to show Adams as he would be viewed by different groups. This activity should deepen their understanding of Adams and his accomplishments and tactics.

4. Resources and Scholarship:


   Farley, Karin Clafford. **Samuel Adams: Grandfather of His Country.** Steck-Vaughn Co. Austin, TX, 1995


   Information and pictures from visits to the Old South Meeting House, the Old State House, Faneuil Hall, and other Freedom Trail historic sites in Boston, MA.

5. Conclusion/Lesson Wrap-up: To wrap up the lesson, I would have students share their posters and the different views on Adams. I would then poll the class as to their decision on viewing Samuel Adams as a patriot, terrorist, or something else. Another interesting wrap up discussion or journal entry could be why Samuel Adams is not as well known as other founding fathers.
FORGOTTEN FOUNDER:

SAMUEL ADAMS

Brewer?  
Patriot?  
Terrorist?
Brewer?

Today most Americans think beer when they hear the name Sam Adams. His father, also named Samuel, made malt for beer and also made rum from sugar or molasses. However, young Sam ruined the family business after his father’s death.
• The Samuel Adams beer of today has no connection to the original Adams family
• In fact, they considered Sam (as the younger Samuel Adams was called) too ugly for their logo
• They substituted another famous Boston patriot and silversmith, Paul Revere, known for his famous Midnight Ride
A Complex Character

- Born and raised in wealth and luxury
- Highly educated and very religious
- Served in colonial government jobs
- Believed in the rule of law and private property rights
- Lived most of his life near poverty, often supported by friends
- Socialized with all classes, often in taverns
- Organized resistance and rebellion
- Led groups to use violence, robbery, and intimidation
Guiding Principles

• Throughout his life, three principles brought together and molded his attitudes and actions
  • First, strictly following Puritan religious beliefs
  • Second, a firm belief in political and property rights of individuals
  • Third, the willingness to use any means, political or illegal, to achieve his aim of resisting royal abuse
Early Years

• Sam was born on September 16, 1722 in Boston
• His mother was Mary and his father was Deacon Samuel Adams, whose ancestor, Henry Adams, was a Puritan who had left England and settled in Massachusetts in 1638
• His father was a wealthy businessman who ran his brewery, owned a wharf for shipping, and ran other businesses
• Deacon Adams was also a leader in the Old South Church, made up of Puritans called “Congregationalists”
• He served at different times as a constable, tax assessor, town selectman, and eventually as a member of the House of Representatives for Massachusetts Colony where he helped make laws
Political Upbringing

• Deacon Samuel Adams most important political activity was unofficial
• He started the Caulker’s Club, a group that worked behind the scenes to elect candidates to city government and control Boston politics
• This was eventually called the Caucus Club and would decide most major issues before elections
• Although only property owning males could vote, this gave common people a say in government
• The Adams house became a political meeting place as young Sam grew up listening to the debates as the Caucus tried to protect Massachusetts rights from the English crown
“I pity Mr. Sam. Adams for he was born a Rebel.”

John Adams, 1794
Early Education

- Sam learned to read from the Bible by the time he was 2 and the family attended church twice every Sunday.
- From age 7-14, Sam attended Boston Latin School, the first public school in the colonies.
- Six days a week, he studied subjects such as religion, mathematics, and religion.
Harvard Years

- At 14, Sam left his nice home to go to school at Harvard College, across the Charles River
- Harvard was a Puritan school with strict rules
- Sam and the boys sometimes got in trouble for drinking rum
- He studied the classic Greek and Roman writers where he learned about the power of democracy, the cut-throat politics of the Roman Republic, and the tyranny of the Roman Empire
Two Great College Influences

• Sam studied modern British political thinkers like John Locke, who wrote of individual liberties and the role of government protecting those rights
• He also heard the religious revival preaching of George Whitefield, who urged a return to simple Puritan religious values
Family Crisis

- Sam earned his bachelor’s degree and returned to Harvard in 1740
- He disappointed his family by deciding against the ministry and decided to study law
- In the spring of 1741, his comfortable life came to an end as his father faced total financial ruin and the hands of the British government
Land Bank

• In the colonies, there was little gold or silver money because the British would not allow gold or silver money to be made in the colonies or sent to the colonies
• Many colonists had to use credit to trade, enriching the British bankers and traders
• Deacon Adams and others formed a land bank in 1740 that issued paper money backed by the investors land instead of gold or silver
Land Bank Opponents

• Thomas Hutchinson, the wealthiest merchant in Boston, feared he would lose money to the land bank

• He urged the Royal Governor of the colony, Jonathan Belcher, to ask the British Parliament to stop the Land Bank
Land Bank Declared Illegal

• In 1741 Parliament dissolved the land bank
• Deacon Adams and the other bank investors had to pay back all the people with gold or silver for their paper money
• Deacon Adams faced total financial ruin and the sheriff tried to auction off the Adams holdings, but the sale was tied up in court
• An angry crowd protested outside Thomas Hutchinson’s home, breaking windows and shouting
• Governor Belcher was recalled and replaced by Governor William Shirley, who reduced the fines and penalties against Deacon Adams
Effect on Sam Adams

- Sam Adams wanted to quit school to help the family, but his father would not allow it.
- Sam started working in the dining room at Harvard and gave up his comfortable off-campus housing to save money.
- When he earned his master’s degree in 1743, he wrote a paper titled “Whether it be lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved.”
- Sam Adams had learned that royal authority could be used to abuse the colonists and that mob action could bring about change in politics.
- He also started a life-long campaign to destroy Thomas Hutchinson, who he saw as a personal enemy.
- The family lost much of its wealth and Sam Adams spent many of the next years fighting off legal actions related to the failed land bank of his father.
Failed Businessman

• Deacon Adams set his son up as a clerk in his friend’s counting house, a colonial accounting firm  
• Within a few months, he was let go from the counting house, as he spent too many late nights in the tavern  
• His father gave him about $4500 to start his own business, which quickly failed  
• Sam went to work in his father’s brewery, but again failed miserably  
• He spent most of his time hanging around the taverns and wharves of Boston talking to laborers and servants
Political Start

• He did become a political ally of his father and a member of the Caucus Club
• Sam was elected to his first public office in 1746, an unpaid position as market clerk, where he settled disputes and made sure the market opened on time
• The same year, Deacon Adams suffered his greatest political defeat when he was nominated to the governor’s Court, a great honor
• He was vetoed by Governor Shirley, who now became the Adams’ enemy
• Sam began political action to attack Shirley
Political Newspaper

• Sam and his friends formed a secret political group
• Its main activity was printing a small newspaper, the *Public Advertizer*, to make fun of Governor Shirley
• The paper failed within a year, but gave Sam experience at political writing
• Over the next 20 years, he would use newspapers to constantly urge people to guard their liberties from the British
Words as Weapons

• Adams, throughout his political career, used newspapers as ways to spread his ideas and propaganda
• Boston had 10 newspapers at the time
• Adams not only wrote articles, he also helped put the newspapers together with friends
• He wrote open letters in his own name
• For his most vicious attacks, often criticizing royal officials with exaggerated stories, he used pen names such as: “Vindex”, “Cotton Mather”, “A Puritan”, “Candidus”, “Valerius Poplicola”, or “Alfred”
“For true patriots to be silent, is dangerous.”

Samuel Adams, 1766
Sam becomes Samuel

- Sam’s father died unexpectedly on March 8, 1748
- With his father gone, people began calling Sam by Samuel more often, although his close friends always called him Sam
- He was in charge of the family business as well as taking care of his mother
- On October 17, 1749 Sam married a distant relative Elizabeth “Betty” Checkley
- His political and business life suffered as he lost money
- He wasn’t elected to public office again until 1753 when he won the post of garbage collector, in 1756 he became a paid tax collector, giving him a desperately need salary
Dark Times

- Samuel lived off his meager earnings as tax collector as the family fortune disappeared.
- On July 25, 1757 his wife died after giving birth to their fifth child.
- Samuel now had two surviving children to raise and almost no money.
- It got worse, in 1758 the Sheriff again tried to auction off Samuel Adams’ home.
- Samuel used legal action to fight off the sale of his home.
- During this time the British were fighting against the French in the American Colonies.
- This French and Indian War was part of a larger war between France and England known as the Seven Years War.
Failure?

• By the end of the war, England had huge debts and stationed 10,000 troops in the colonies
• England began looking for ways to tax the colonies to help pay for these expenses
• Samuel Adams had become a bit of an eccentric figure
• He had lost his wealth and survived on his tax collector income
• His fine family home was falling apart and neighbors would periodically repair it
• His mother made sure his two children were fed, clothed, and schooled while Samuel spent his time talking to people of all sorts on the docks and in the taverns about the importance of protecting their rights and liberties from the threats of the English crown
New Political Allies

- Samuel had spent his time building up contacts and allies in Boston
- One was brilliant lawyer James Otis Jr., who also hated Thomas Hutchinson
- He also recruited political allies from recent Harvard grads such as John Hancock, a wealthy merchant, and John Adams, his second cousin and a respected lawyer
- As a devout Puritan, he also convinced many preachers to use their sermons to promote his ideas about liberty
Town Meeting Clash

- Boston politics were run by town meetings held at Faneuil Hall
- Local officials and delegates to the Massachusetts House of Representatives were elected here
- In 1764, Thomas Hutchinson accused Samuel of stealing tax money
- Adams was short on his accounts, mostly because he did not try to force people to pay if they could not
- He apologized at the town meeting and was re-elected tax collector
- Samuel had become very popular and had started to control the town meetings
• Parliament passed the Revenue Act of 1764, commonly called the Sugar Act

• Adams advised and edited the writings of James Otis Jr., who published a pamphlet that said, “Taxes are not to be laid on the people but by their consent in person or by deputation [representation]”

• This was the beginning of the theory “no taxation without representation”

• Adams and Otis did not get much support as people did not think the Sugar Act would have much effect on them

• Samuel married Elizabeth “Betsy” Wells on December 6, 1764
1765
Stamp Act and Sons of Liberty
Stamp Act

- Parliament passed the Stamp act, requiring a paid stamp on printed documents.
- Many colonists saw this as a different type of tax, because it was not to limit or encourage trade, such as the Sugar Act, but was meant to help pay for war and defense expenses in the colonies.
Official Protest of the Stamp Act

- The Stamp Act united people across all social groups
- It also began to unit the colonies
- Patrick Henry of Virginia was the first to declare the tax illegal in the Virginia lawmaking body, the House of Burgesses, in the Virginia Resolves
- Samuel Adams began writing to Patrick Henry and had his own list of Massachusetts Resolves passed in the House of Representatives by his friend James Otis Jr., and helped Otis draft his protest writings
- Otis also invited delegates from all of the colonies to meet in four months (October 1765) to form a united resistance to the Stamp Act
Massachusetts House Resolves Against the Stamp Act

“Resolved, that there are certain essential rights of the British Constitution of government, which are founded in the law of God and nature, and are the common rights of mankind...”

“Resolved, that no man can justly take the property of another without his consent...

the right of representation in the same body which exercises the power of making laws for levying taxes.”

Samuel Adams, October 29, 1765
Unofficial Protest

• In Boston, merchants agreed to refuse to import any British goods until the Stamp Act was repealed

• Samuel Adams formed the Sons of Liberty, a semi-secret group of laborers, craftsmen, artisans, and some wealthy gentlemen

• The Sons of Liberty was controlled by leaders of the Caucus Club, called The Loyal Nine, advised by Adams

• The Loyal Nine was controlled by the Long Room Club

• The Long Room Club was named for its meeting place above the print shop where the Boston Gazette was published

• Samuel Adams, James Otis Jr., Paul Revere, and John Hancock were all members of the Long Room Club
Sons of Liberty: Symbols of Protest

- Adams began calling a large elm near Boston Common the “Liberty Tree” and Sons of Liberty met there before Stamp Act protests
- On the morning of August 14, 1765 citizens found an effigy of stamp agent Andrew Oliver, cousin of now Lt. Governor Thomas Hutchinson, hung from the Liberty Tree
- Hutchinson ordered the sheriff to remove it, but a crowd of thousands prevented it
Protest Turns Violent

• That night, Sons of Liberty paraded the effigy past the Governors meeting, chanting “Liberty, Property, and no Stamps!”
• The crowd then headed towards the stamp office, which they destroyed
• The out of control group then headed to Oliver’s house and ransacked it, stealing everything
• Oliver saved himself and his family by promising to resign as stamp agent
• Sons of Liberty groups throughout the colonies forced stamp agents to quit by threats and attacks
Sons of Liberty at The Green Dragon

• Sons of Liberty gathered at the Liberty Tree for mob actions
• They also gathered at the Green Dragon Pub
• Here Adams and others would discuss their goals and plans
• Later Paul Revere used the tavern as headquarters for his spy network that reported British troop movements to Adams
Traditional Boston Mob Violence

- Mob violence was common in colonial Boston, such as the attack on Hutchinson’s home during the land bank crisis.
- Every year on Pope’s Day (November 5th) rival north and south end gangs would build floats.
- They would fight to capture the other’s float and take them out of town to burn the floats and celebrate.
- Citizens called this type of mob violence a “frolic”
Violence Intensifies

• On August 26, 1765, drums and whistles signaled the men of Boston to turn out for a “frolic”
• This frolic was to attack the home of Judge William Story who would handle the prosecution of Stamp Act cases
• The mob destroyed all the public records and then took the contents of the wine cellar
• They moved on to the home of Benjamin Hallowell, who collected taxes on imported goods
Lt. Governor Thomas Hutchinson Attacked

- This was a warm up for the big event, attacking the home of Hutchinson
- The family fled out the back door while the mob broke down the doors with axes
- They stole or destroyed everything and looted until just before daybreak
If the people really don’t like something, then they wreck our carriages and tear off our wigs and throw stones through the windows of our town-houses. And this is an essential thing to have if you are going to have a free country.

— Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson, 1768
Adams Controls the Mob

- Evidence points to the August 14 violence being directed and planned by Adams and the Long Room Club
- However Adams was shocked by the later attack on Hutchinson’s private property and feared the people of Boston would feel sympathy for him
- The day after the destruction of the Hutchinson home, the Town Meeting denounced the violence
- Sam Adams brought together the leaders of the South and North End gangs to form a peace and agree to not act without orders
- This peace was celebrated by a huge festival called the Union Party, with rum and food paid for by John Hancock
- On Pope’s Day, less than two weeks after, both gangs marched without any violence or fighting, Adams now controlled the mob
Protest Continue, Stamp Act Repealed

- In September of 1765, Sam Adams was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives.
- On November 1\textsuperscript{st}, the day the Stamp Act was to begin, protests continued.
- Parliament eventually repealed the Stamp Act.
Stamp Act Victory?

- Bostonians celebrated the repeal of the Stamp Act by decorating the Liberty Tree with lanterns.
- A party was held, with wine paid for by John Hancock handed out in pewter mugs by his servants.
- Parliament passed the Declaratory Act, which did not mention taxes, but set Parliament supreme over the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.”
- While many in Boston felt victorious over England, Adams knew it was only the beginning of the struggle.
1766-1767: Political Rise

• Adams had himself elected Clerk of the House, a paid position with much power
• He had John Hancock elected to the House
• When the governor vetoed James Otis Jr. as Speaker of the House, Adams had an old friend, Thomas Cushing, elected speaker
• He worked to rid the House of supporters of England such as Hutchinson
• Samuel was so powerful, the House allowed him to pay a small portion of his debt to settle his father’s debt
New Threat: The Townsend Acts

• Parliament passed new taxes on lead, glass, paint, paper, and tea in the Townsend Acts
• Adams argued this was not a trade tax, but a tax to raise revenue without colonists representation in Parliament
• Townsend Acts set up Custom Commissioners and royal courts to arrest smugglers
Adams Fights Back

• Adams had the Town Meeting “encourage” citizens to sign a pledge not to buy items taxed by the Townsend Acts to put economic pressure on Parliament to repeal the acts

• Early in 1768 Adams sends a “Circular Letter” to the other colonial assemblies urging cooperation to fight the new taxes

• Parliament feared the colonies were uniting in rebellion, led by Massachusetts, and sent a warship to Boston to enforce the collection of the taxes
Hancock’s *Liberty* Seized

- Backed by a British warship, the *Romney*, custom commissioners seized Hancock’s ship, the *Liberty*, accusing him of smuggling
- A mob gathered at the wharf and began attaching the commissioners and their homes
- The commissioners fled to the British fort on Castle Island, refusing to return unless protected by British troops
- Governor Bernard sent more letters to England, saying he could not control the mobs of Boston
Troops Arrive in Boston

- Adams tried to organize armed resistance, but other parts of Massachusetts, and other colonies, would not support revolution
- On October 1, 1768, 500 troops of the 14th and 29th regiment, with artillery, landed in Boston without opposition
- Many citizens feared the British military
• British troops patrolled the quiet streets
• Adams wrote exaggerated articles claiming abuses by the soldiers to stir up hatred against them
• James Otis Jr., the public voice of resistance, was nearly beaten to death in a fight with a royal customs official, forcing Adams into public leadership
• Governor Bernard was recalled to England, and Thomas Hutchinson, Adams old enemy, was now acting governor
“Damn that Adams, every dip of his pen stung like a horned snake.”

Governor Francis Bernard, on his removal, 1769
1770: Tensions Erupt in Boston
Conflict Brews

• Sons of Liberty and others were upset about the attack on their leader, James Otis Jr.
• Citizens, knowing the troops could not respond, began taunting the soldiers by calling them “lobsterbacks” and insulting them.
• Fights between soldiers and civilians began to break out in taverns and alleys at night.
• On the night of February 22, a mob gathered outside the home of merchant and Tory informer Ebenezer Richardson and broke his windows
• Richardson fired into the crowd with swan shot (similar to beebees) but killed 11 year old Christopher Snider
• Adams organized the largest funeral ever for the “martyr” including a parade under the Liberty Tree
Fighting Increases

• A week after the Snider killing, there was a large fight between dock workers and off-duty soldiers on March 2
• A soldier who had been insulted, returned with his friends, and lost a large brawl
• For the next two days, laborers threw snowballs and insults at the troops, who were under orders not to respond
• Many in Boston felt that Adams and the Sons of Liberty were provoking the soldiers to cause some kind of incident to force the soldiers to leave
Tensions Erupt

- On the night of March 5, 1770 a lone soldier guarded the Custom House near the Old State House
- He was taunted by a small boy, and stuck him with a musket
- A crowd gathered threatening to kill the soldier
- Church bells sounded and crowds poured into the streets yelling “Fire”, as bells were the signal that a fire had broken out in the city, which was a constant danger
- The soldier called for help and 8 soldiers, under Captain Thomas Preston arrived from barracks across the street
- Pushing and shoving broke out, Preston was knocked out of the way, and shots rang out
- Four colonists were dead and a fifth lay dying
“Boston Massacre” Propaganda

- Adams called this a “massacre” and used Paul Revere’s engraving to place all blame on the soldiers
- This stirred up the people of Massachusetts and other colonies
- A huge funeral was held, funded by Hancock, and the “martyrs” were buried in Adams own family grave site
“The Streets of our Metropolis, crimsond with the Blood of our fellow subjects.”

Samuel Adams, in a letter to Lt. Governor Hutchinson, August 3, 1770
More Realistic View of Boston Massacre
Massacre Site Today
Adams Defeats Hutchinson

• Adams demanded immediate removal of all soldiers from Boston
• When Hutchinson would only remove the regiment involved in the “massacre” Adams threatened “…It is at your peril if you refuse. A thousand men are already arrived from the neighborhood, and the whole country is in motion. Night is approaching. An immediate answer is expected. Both regiments or none!”
• Hutchinson backed down and all soldiers left Boston, Adams had won
Boston Massacre Aftermath

• Calm returned as the troops left Boston
• The Townsend Acts were repealed by the end of 1770, except for the tax on tea
• Trials for the soldiers, defended by John Adams, ended in 6 being found not guilty while two were convicted of manslaughter
• Many in Boston feared continued violence
• Many also were tired of giving up luxury items, and began buying British goods
• Support for Adams and his cause began to decline
Committees of Correspondence

• Looking to spread his message beyond Massachusetts, in 1772 Samuel formed the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence to share information with other colonies.

• Other colonies followed, and Adams published the “State of the Rights of the Colonists” that provided the foundation for the Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment.
“Rights of the Colonists”

“First. A Right to *Life*; Secondly to *Liberty*; thirdly to *Property*”

Right “in case of intollerable Oppression, Civil or Religious, to leave the Society they belong to, and enter into another.”

“every Man...has a right peaceably and quietly to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

Samuel Adams, November 20, 1772
Sam Attacks Hutchinson

• Benjamin Franklin had obtained private letters of Hutchinson and sent them to Boston with orders not to publish them
• Adams published out of context parts of the letters, including quotes about colonists' rights such as “there must be an abridgement of what are called English Liberties”
• This turned the people of Massachusetts against the new governor Hutchinson, Adams old and hated enemy
1773: Tea Act

• To save the bankrupt East India Company, Parliament passed the Tea Act on May 10, 1773
• This actually lowered the tax on tea set by the Townsend Act, but infuriated the colonists anyway
• Adams wrote protests and the Sons of Liberty tried to stop tea from landing or being sold
• In Boston, the sons of Governor Thomas Hutchinson were supposed to sell the tea
• As tea ships approached Boston in November, Sons of Liberty began threatening the Hutchinson family and the ship owners, warning them not to land the tea
Hutchinson Tries to Break Up Meetings

• Hutchinson, describing himself as “his Majesty’s Representative in this province”, sent the Sheriff to break up the Town Meeting

• Adams responded to this description of Hutchinson, “He? He? Is that Shadow of a Man, scarce able to support his withered Carcase or his hoary Head? Is He a Representation of Majesty?”

• To defend his rights, Adams said he kept a gun “in order and at his bedside, as every good citizen ought,” and “should not hesitate” to use it.
Tea Standoff

- Adams led the tense negotiations as the ship captains asked for permission to leave the harbor with the tea, but Thomas Hutchinson refused unless the tax was paid.

- On December 16, 1773 Sam led a meeting at the Old South Meeting House because of the huge crowd.

- When word that negotiations had failed and the tea would be unloaded in the morning, Adams said, “This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!”

- This was the signal for the Tea Party.
• 40-50 men from the countryside had been organized by the Sons of Liberty
• Crowds watched as these men, dressed as “Mohawks” boarded the tea ships and dumped the tea into Boston Harbor
• No one was injured and only the tea was destroyed
“We shall be respected in England exactly in proportion to the firmness and strength of our opposition.”

Samuel Adams, 1774
England Responds: Intolerable Acts

- By May of 1773, Parliament had voted to close the port of Boston until the tea was paid for and also passed a number of acts to punish and isolate Boston, called the Intolerable and Coercive Acts by the colonies.
- General Gage arrived in Boston with 5000 troops, and Thomas Hutchinson was removed from office.
- Adams used the Committees of Correspondence to get other colonies to send food and supplies to Boston and to warn them that this could happen to them, helping to unite the colonies against England.
Hutchinson Explains Samuel Adams Importance to King George III

• After his removal as Governor, Hutchinson was interviewed by the King about Massachusetts

“Mr. Adams is rather considered as the opposer of Government...” who had “A great pretended zeal for liberty, and a most inflexible natural temper. He was the first that publickly asserted the Independency of the colonies upon the Kingdom.”

Thomas Hutchinson, July 1, 1774
General Gage Tries to Bribe Adams

- New Governor, General Gage, had orders to arrest Adams any time he liked, but he feared causing riots.
- Instead, he sent an officer to warn him that he could be tried and executed, but that he could be rewarded if he stopped his activities and "make his peace with the King."
- Adams responded, "Sir, I trust I have long since made my peace with the King of kings. No personal considerations shall induce me to abandon the righteous cause of my country."
1774: First Continental Congress

- Committees of Correspondence called for a meeting of all colonies called the Continental Congress to meet in Philadelphia in September
- Adams, his cousin John, and 4 others were the delegates from Massachusetts
- Adams helped get the congress started by solving the issue of different religious views by suggesting a Church of England minister from Philadelphia, who he had heard was a patriot, read prayers
- This act of tolerance from a Puritan went a long way to getting the delegates to put aside their differences
John Adams to his wife Abagail

“Because we were so divided in religious Sentiments, some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Aanabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists, so that We could not join in the same Act of Worship.” Samuel Adams rose “and said he was no Bigot, and could hear a Prayer from Gentleman of Piety and Virtue, who was at the same Time a Friend to his Country.”
“It was this man, who by his superior application managed at once the faction in Congress at Philadelphia, and the factions in New England.”

Joseph Galloway, delegate to Congress from Pennsylvania, 1774
Beginnings of Unity

• Samuel quickly realized most delegates did not want independence as he did, but only their rights as British Citizens
• He stayed in the background because he was viewed with suspicion
• He did begin to build a relationship with George Washington and other delegates
• The 1st Congress did agree to a Continental Association to boycott trade with England throughout the colonies and agreed to meet again in May of 1775 if the colonies rights and liberties had not been restored
Spring of 1775: Open Rebellion

• By early 1775 Parliament declared a state of rebellion in Massachusetts and urged Gage to arrest rebel leaders and seize military supplies
• Adams and John Hancock went into hiding in Lexington
• Rumors spread of Gage’s plan and Paul Revere and other riders were sent to warn the countryside and the patriot leaders
Lexington and Concord

• By the morning of April 19, 1775 British soldiers had reached Lexington, but Adams and Hancock were gone

• Fighting broke out as the two leaders rode through the fields

• Hearing the gunfire Adams said to Hancock, “O! what glorious morning is this!”

• At Concord, British troops were driven back and retreated to Boston

• Adams and Hancock went on to Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress
Second Continental Congress

• The Congress met again on May 10, 1775
• The same day, Ft. Ticonderoga was captured by Ethan Allen and the New Hampshire militia without the loss of life
• John Adams nominated George Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and Samuel seconded the nomination
• This upset John Hancock who wanted the job, but Samuel knew that Washington was better qualified and the new Congress needed leadership from all the colonies to gain unity and support
Battle of Bunker Hill

• Before Washington could reach the occupied city of Boston, the Massachusetts militia fought the British at the Battle of Bunker (Breed’s) Hill outside of Boston on June 17, 1775
• The militia was pushed back, but inflicted huge casualties on the British
Independence?

• Despite the fighting, the Continental Congress sent an Olive Branch petition to England to try to restore peace.
• General Gage offered amnesty to any in Massachusetts who would stop fighting, the only exceptions were Sam Adams and John Hancock.
• Throughout 1775 and early 1776, Adams worked tirelessly behind the scenes to convince one delegate after another to support independence.
“Is not America already independent? Why then not declare it?”

Samuel Adams, 1776
Declaration of Independence

- Adams work in Congress and Thomas Paine’s pamphlet *Common Sense* convinced more and more people for the need for independence
- In early June 1776 the Continental Congress began debate on Independence
- After five days of debate, Congress agreed to draft a declaration of independence
- Adams worked to persuade delegates to approve the declaration, written by Thomas Jefferson
- On July 4, 1776 the delegates, including Samuel Adams, signed the Declaration of Independence
- Adams long dream had finally come true
Adams as Congressman

- Adams served in the Continental Congress from 1775-1779 where he helped develop the new government under the Articles of Confederation and served on many important committees.
- He served as a Massachusetts representative to the new Congress set up by the Articles from 1780-1781 when he resigned to return to Boston.
• In 1779, Samuel was selected, along with his cousin John Adams, and friend James Bowdoin, to draft a new state constitution
• John did most of the actual writing, but Samuel had great influence over the content
• It included a two-house legislature and a bill of rights
• Ratified in 1780, it is the oldest constitution still in effect today
U.S. Constitution

• The weakness of the Articles of Confederation were obvious after the farmers protests known as Shay’s Rebellion
• In 1787, the U.S. Constitution was written, in part based on the Massachusetts Constitution
• Samuel Adams feared the new national government would be too strong
• He finally agreed to support it, with the addition of a Bill of Rights, at the urging of Paul Revere and others
• The new Constitution was adopted in 1789, with the Bill of Rights following in 1791
“It is essential that the people should be united in the Federal government, to withstand the common enemy, and to preserve the valuable rights and liberties.”

Samuel Adams, 1788
Lt. Governor and Governor of Massachusetts

- Hancock was re-elected Governor in 1789 with Samuel Adams elected Lt. Governor.
- Both were re-elected every year until 1793, when Hancock died in Office.
- Adams served out the rest of the term as Governor and was elected on his own from 1794-1796.
- He resigned at the end of his term in 1797.
“We owe our unceasing gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, who safely carried us through our arduous struggle for freedom.”

Samuel Adams, address to the Massachusetts legislature, 1795
Death of Samuel Adams

- Samuel Adams died on Sunday, October 2, 1803
- He was buried in Boston’s Granary burial ground
- He lies next to the victims of the Boston Massacre, and not far from his protégé, John Hancock
HERE LIES BURIED
SAMUEL ADAMS
SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
GOVERNOR OF THIS COMMONWEALTH
A LEADER OF MEN AND AN ARDENT PATRIOT
BORN 1722    DIED 1803

Massachusetts Society
SONS OF THE REVOLUTION

1998
• Samuel Adams is well remembered in Boston
• Why has he been forgotten elsewhere?
• Some reasons may be that he never served in a national office after the Revolution, his extreme religious views, he only left a small written record as he destroyed most of his writings, but probably most of all is his association with mob violence to achieve political goals
Brewer? Patriot? Terrorist?

• The easy answer is that Samuel Adams was definitely not a brewer.
• He was a complex, driven man who held firm to his beliefs and was willing to use extreme means to achieve his goals.
• Patriot? Terrorist? It depends on your point of view and values, but the truth is probably somewhere in the middle.
• He was the main instigator and organizer of the American Revolution, and his rebellious streak has become an American tradition.
“Without the character of Samuel Adams, the true history of the American Revolution can never be written.”

John Adams

“For depth of purpose, zeal, and sagacity, no man in Congress exceeded, if any equalled, Sam. Adams.”

Thomas Jefferson