

JOHN ADAMS

1735-1826

Born Braintree. Graduated from Harvard College, 1755. Taught school and studied law with James Putnam in Worcester. Admitted to Boston bar, 1758; practiced law in that town but lived in Braintree. Married Abigail Smith of Weymouth, 1764. Drafted Braintree resolutions against Stamp Act, 1765. Moved to Boston, 1768. Helped defend British soldiers after Boston massacre, 1770. Member, colonial House of Representatives, 1770. Election to Council rejected by governor, 1774. Returned to Braintree, 1774. Delegate to First Continental Congress, 1774. Represented Braintree in First Provincial Congress, 1774. Author of essays of "Novanglus," 1775. Member, state Council, 1775. Chief justice of state Superior Court, 1775-77 (never took seat on bench). Delegate to Continental Congress, 1775-77. Author of *Thoughts on Government*, April 1776. Seconded motion in Congress for independence, June 1776; appointed to committees to prepare a declaration of independence and to plan for foreign alliances, June 1776; a leading advocate for and signer of Declaration of Independence. President, Continental Board of War, 1776-77. Appointed a commissioner to France to replace Silas Deane, 1777. Returned to U.S., 1779. Member, state constitutional convention, 1779; primary author of state constitution of 1780. Appointed minister plenipotentiary to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain, 1779. Appointed commissioner to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with United Provinces (Holland), 1780. Served as a commissioner to negotiate peace treaty ending war with Great Britain, 1781-83. Minister plenipotentiary to United Provinces, 1781-88, negotiates loans with Dutch bankers. Minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain, 1785-88. Along with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson empowered to conclude commercial treaties with European and African nations, 1784. Author of three-volume *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States*, 1787-88. Returned to America, June 1788. Vice President of U.S., 1789-97. President of U.S., 1797-1801. Member, state

constitutional convention, 1820. Died July 4, 1826, fiftieth anniversary of the approval of the Declaration of Independence.