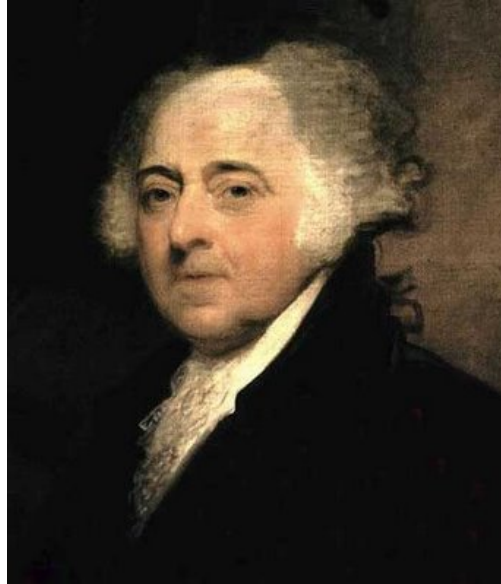


## *John Adams*



2nd American President

Born: October 30, 1735

Birthplace: Braintree, Massachusetts

Previous experience: Lawyer, delegate to Continental Congress, diplomat, vice president

Political party: Federalist

Term of office: March 4, 1797—March 3, 1801

Died: July 4, 1826

A short, plump New Englander, John Adams was responsible for many noteworthy achievements during America's struggle for freedom. But because he lived in an age of great leaders, he was frequently overshadowed in what he did.

Harvard-educated lawyer John Adams was a patriot in Massachusetts in the years before the Revolution, although his fiery cousin, Samuel Adams, made a bigger stir. Typical of John Adams's

## ***John Adams***

sense of justice, he defended in court the British soldiers who fired into a patriotic Boston mob, because he felt everyone deserved a fair trial.

In the Continental Congress, he was assigned to the committee to write the Declaration of Independence. He had led the movement for such a declaration, but he was upstaged by Thomas Jefferson, who actually penned the great document.

As a diplomat in France during the Revolutionary War, Adams was outshone by the urbane and genial Benjamin Franklin. However, Adams helped negotiate the treaty of peace and was later a minister to the Court of St. James in England.

Finally, Adams was the nation's first vice president—to the great President Washington. “The most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived,” Adams wrote of his job to his beloved wife, Abigail.

Adams became President in 1797—a very troubled time for the young nation. France attacked some of our ships. Many people, led by Alexander Hamilton, wanted Adams to declare war against France. But he resolutely held that the young nation should not fight. He sent a peace mission to France, a decision that may have cost him reelection.

Adams was the first president to live in the new capital city of Washington, DC, and the first to occupy the executive mansion. Only six rooms were ready when he and his wife moved in. Mrs. Adams hung her washing in the empty East Room.

## ***John Adams***

When Adams's single term of office ended, he retired to his farm in Quincy, Massachusetts. He lived long enough to see a son, John Quincy, become president.

Adams wrote many letters to Jefferson. The friendly rivalry of these two patriots ended in 1826, when both men died on the Fourth of July.

### ***Important Events***

- First naval vessel, United States, launched in Philadelphia (1797)
- Mississippi Territory created (1798)
- Department of the Navy created (1798)
- Marine Corps created (1798)
- Library of Congress established (1800)
- Capital moved to Washington, DC (1800)