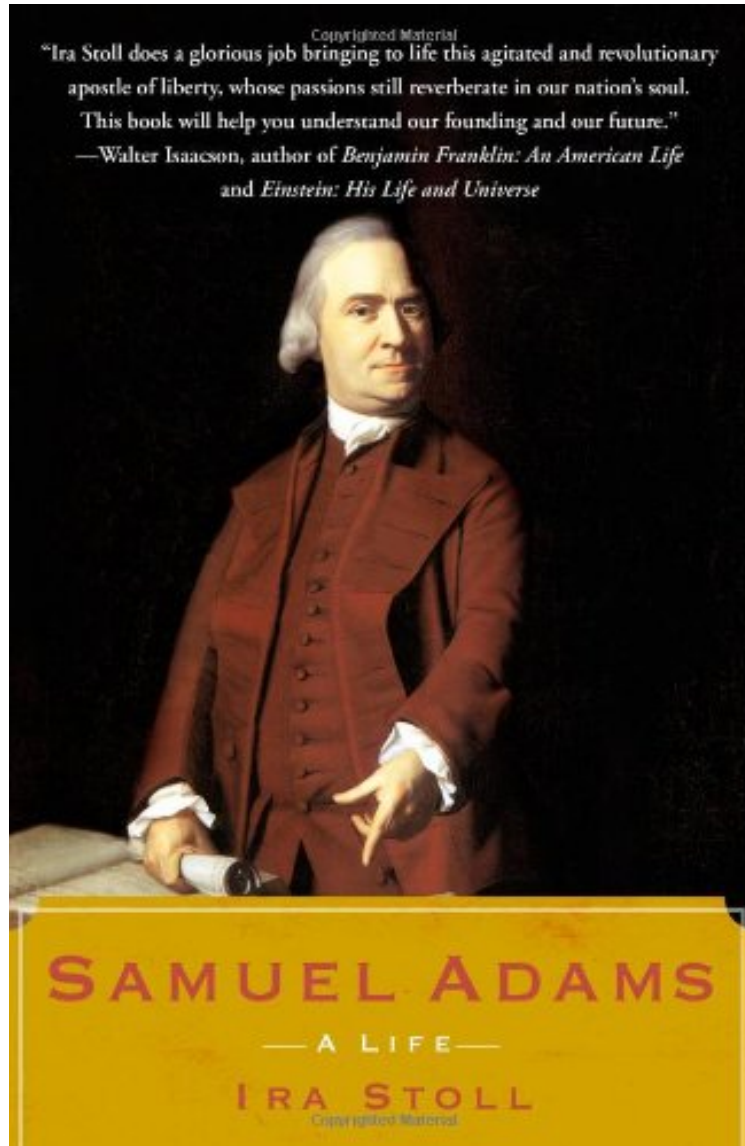


[Download] Samuel Adams: A Life

## Samuel Adams: A Life

*Ira Stoll*

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**Ira Stoll : Samuel Adams: A Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Samuel Adams: A Life:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A more complex Sam Adams By Daniel Putman Thanks in part to television portrayals and many history books, the common perception of Samuel Adams today is of a firebrand who organized the Boston Tea Party, openly threw insults at the British occupiers of Boston, and liked his taverns. There is truth here but this view basically makes a stereotype of the man. The great advantage of Ira Stoll's biography is to put

Sam Adams into a much larger context, parts of which may be completely unknown to most Americans today. I learned two valuable facts from this book about Adams. First, he was much more literate than we realize. His writings, especially before and during the Revolution, were not just broadsides against the British. They were diverse and literate. He very often published under pseudonyms in newspapers and his writing has the fervor of a Hamilton or Madison, especially when it comes to the moral justification of the Revolution. While it is true that Sam Adams did not have Madison or Hamilton's incisive minds, his writings portray a man who spent long hours with his pen and whose ideas often portray a depth of understanding that goes far beyond the tavern broadsides we might associate with him. But probably the most important factor brought out by Stoll and which I never realized was how deeply rooted religion was in Adams' life. This is virtually never brought up in popular depictions of him. While many of his more famous contemporaries became Deists, Adams appears to be the Revolutionary figure who had the deepest roots in the Great Awakening and who continued to accept the theology that came with it. Franklin lived through much of that also but he rejected most of it in one way or another. Not Sam Adams. His political writings and speeches are constantly comparing the Americans to the Jewish people searching for freedom or to the fight for freedom of the Puritans; his view of the Revolution was to see the new country as the fulfillment of the virtuous city on the hill. One is tempted today to think of this as a good front, a cover for his political ideas filled out with a lot of Biblical quotations. Many modern politicians are great at that. But, as Stoll shows time and again, religion was no political cover for Adams. In his private writings, which he never thought would be made public, he consistently refers to religious analogies for America and as inspiration for the future of the country. Making Adams a child of the Great Awakening must be tied to his intense love of liberty and his constant identification with the common people, both before, during and after the Revolution. These ideas came as a package in his personality. The same religious zeal and oneness with the common folks that led him to be the early and loud critic of the British led him to detest the centralizing government of the Federalists in the 1790s. Stoll also brings out many other interesting facts. In Adams' religious zeal also lay a deep-seated anti-Catholicism. A fear of Popery runs through a large number of his writings and was transferred to the Church of England trying to impose itself on the colonies. Adams comes across as irrational at times, sometimes exaggerating or distorting to make a point. It helps to see this not just as a specific personality trait, but as a result of a religious calling about this country. The end, Liberty, justified the means and the means had religious/nationalistic justifications. I wish there were more about how Adams developed as a young man into the adult he became but, as Stoll mentions at the end, Adams made a point of destroying and burning the majority of his personal letters. If the book has a weakness, it is that Stoll goes out of his way to show that religion was much more important than we think not just to Adams but to many of the people he associated with. Stoll cites many speeches and sermons by other people that support Adams' view of the religious nature of the Revolution. But it gets a bit tiring to read so many religious selections from sermons or speeches of others who lived at or near the time of Adams, especially when several of them have only an indirect bearing on Adams' actual life. Context is important but it can be overdone. All in all, however, this book is an important corrective about the life of Samuel Adams. Given the scarcity of material at times, Stoll does a fine job of laying out aspects of this man whose life is often forgotten or distorted today but who played a critical role in defining the history of this country.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Samuel Adams  
By 2017  
I rank this a five because it provided a picture of Samuel Adams that was new and the more I read the more real it became. The points made were supported by quotes from newspapers published at that time. His religious thoughts and positions that he took became more understandable and consistent as the book progressed. My picture of S A was admittedly naive. What convinced me was the posture he took time after time and how it never changed. His convictions were his guiding light right to the end. It is a picture of American history that I lack and it is a picture of S A that is not clearly presented to the citizens of America. It would be good to put him into the proper perspective and place in the American Revolution story.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Samuel Adams: He was the man of the revolution  
By WSV1975  
Great book! Thanks to the author and publisher for giving us the exceptional account of our most important, principled, courageous, political leaders in the history of the nation. The author takes the reader back to the days of early America, where people are trying to live a religiously principled life, and trying to carve a living out of the new world, and trying to sort through how government should be formed. Everyone interested in the cultural, political, and institutional founding of the greatest nation in the history of the universe should read this book.

The gripping story of the man who was the American Revolution's moral compass Ira Stoll tells readers who Samuel Adams was, why he has been forgotten, and why he must be remembered. Thomas Jefferson called Samuel Adams truly the man of the Revolution. Adams, filled with religious fervor, inspired others to fight on and overcome the challenges of the Revolutionary War. He was the editor of the influential Boston Gazette, planner of the Boston Tea Party, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, and yet, he is largely ignored and unknown today. Understanding the leading part Adams played in building and sustaining support for the revolutionary cause gives readers new insight into the way religion motivated the founding of America.

From Publishers Weekly Thomas Jefferson once declared, For depth of purpose, zeal, and sagacity, no man in Congress exceeded, if any equaled, Sam Adams. Yet the American revolutionary from Massachusetts (1722-1803, cousin of John Adams) has become the forgotten founding father, and Stoll attempts to pull Adams out of this oblivion. Rebellious Americans' passionate vision of themselves as an incarnation of the Israelites freeing themselves from Egyptian slavery was invoked by Adams, one of the most religious American revolutionaries. He called on Americans to fulfill their God-given freedom and was a radical who endured physical danger, poverty and the death of 37 of his only son. But for Stoll, a managing editor of the New York Sun with a long career in newspapers, Adams was also the consummate newspaperman, a pundit dispersing the ideals of freedom. Occasionally apt to settle into litanies of Adams's various tasks and redundant statements on the divine right of American independence, Stoll also sporadically recounts evocative details of the period, such as the lyrics from revolutionary songs. This account might sustain a renewed interest in Adams as the founder of a distinctly American spirit. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist Unlike Jefferson, Washington, or other Founding Fathers, Sam Adams could point to few accomplishments before the era of the Revolution began. With the end of benign neglect and the onset of the efforts by Britain to tighten restrictions on the American colonies, Adams' true talents emerged. He was, as his cousin John Adams stated, a born rebel. Stoll has written a compact, admiring biography of Adams aimed at general readers. He examines Adams' rich but sometimes sad personal life, including his marriages and family tragedies. The strongest part of the narrative, of course, concerns his career as a Revolutionary agitator and statesman. Many of Adams' comrades in the struggle were secular deists, but Adams was a devout Christian who sincerely saw the hand of God working in the struggle for his concept of liberty and eventually independence. His fiery rhetoric was infused with biblical allusions. Like many successful Revolutionaries, Adams was single-minded, frequently intolerant of other views, and frighteningly confident of his own righteousness. Stoll effectively conveys both the virtues and defects of a somewhat neglected but very essential figure in our Revolutionary struggle.

-- Jay Freeman "In order to understand the moral and religious roots of America's zeal for liberty, you need to know and appreciate Samuel Adams. Ira Stoll does a glorious job bringing to life this agitated and revolutionary apostle of liberty, whose passions still reverberate in our nation's soul. This book will help you understand our founding, and our future." -- Walter Isaacson, author of Benjamin Franklin: An American Life and Einstein: His Life and Universe "Samuel Adams was a life-long journalist who left a meager paper trail; a pious believer who was a flaming radical; the jumpstarter of our independence whom we have unaccountably lost track of. Ira Stoll lets the Founding Firebrand shine once more." -- Richard Brookhiser, author of George Washington on Leadership "Ira Stoll here manages the daunting task of anchoring Sam Adams in his own time yet making him relevant to ours. A triumph of learning and understanding." -- James Grant, author of John Adams: A Party of One