

# Scope and Content

This collection consists of original papers, transcripts, and a calendar. The first owner of these papers was Samuel Adams Wells, Adams's earliest biographer. The historian George Bancroft acquired the papers after Wells's death in the midnineteenth century. The Lenox Library bought the Bancroft Collection of historical papers, which included the Adams material, from Bancroft's estate in 1893. It became part of The New York Public Library's collections in 1895, when the two libraries merged.

The **Originals (1635–1826)** document Adams's public activities and private life during the late colonial, Revolutionary, and post-Revolutionary periods and consist mainly of correspondence. Manuscripts of petitions, committee records, and other documents are also included. Major correspondents include Elizabeth Wells Adams, John Adams, Jeremy Belknap, James Bowdoin, Sir Archibald Campbell, Samuel Cooper, Eliphalet Dyer, Benjamin Franklin, Horatio Gates, Elbridge Gerry, Joseph Hawley, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Kent, the Marquis de Lafayette, Arthur Lee, Richard Henry Lee, James Lovell, Thomas McKean, Samuel Mather, Samuel Allyne Otis, Thomas Paine, Paul Revere, Darius Sessions, Artemas Ward, James Warren, Joseph Warren, George Washington, and Noah Webster. A significant amount of material, largely correspondence that is neither addressed to Samuel Adams nor written by him, is also included among these papers and dates from approximately 1635 to 1826 (the seventeenth-century items are later copies, not originals), with the bulk dating from 1760 to 1790. Included, among others, are letters by John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Samuel Adams, M.D., John Allan, Benedict Arnold, Benjamin Franklin, Elbridge Gerry, John Hancock, the Marquis de Lafayette, Richard Henry Lee, Peter Oliver, James Sullivan, and George Washington.

The second part of the collection, **Transcripts (1768–1803)**, consists of five volumes of manuscript copies of the Samuel Adams Papers, of Massachusetts public documents, and of pseudonymous articles submitted to Boston newspapers that Samuel Adams Wells, under whose direction the transcripts were made in the early nineteenth century, had reason to believe were by Adams.

A two-volume **Calendar**, made by George D. Curtis in the early twentieth century while the papers were on deposit at The New York Public Library, provides a detailed inventory of the Samuel Adams

Papers between 1760 and 1803. The Calendar contains a synopsis of each item, indicating in some cases where the item was published. Synopses are arranged in chronological order. The indexes in the second volume of the calendar serve as the most complete indexes to the papers themselves. While this is a Calendar of the originals and not of the transcripts, Curtis included entries for transcripts that were not represented by originals in the papers. The Calendar is extensive, but it does not describe every item in the papers.