James Lovell (October 31, 1737 – July 14, 1814) was an American educator and statesman from Boston, Massachusetts. He was a delegate for Massachusetts to the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1782. He was a signatory to the Articles of Confederation.

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Early life

James was born in Boston and had his preparatory education at the Boston Latin School. His father, John Lovell (1710–1778) was the school's headmaster from 1738 until 1775. James attended Harvard and graduated in 1756. He then joined his father and taught at the Latin School, while continuing his own studies. He received an MA (Master of Arts) degree from Harvard in 1759. Father and son continued their work in the Latin School until it was closed on April, 1775, during the Siege of Boston in the American Revolutionary War.

While the school produced a number of revolutionary leaders, including John Hancock and Samuel Adams, the approaching revolution split father and son. John wrote and endorsed loyalist or Tory positions, while James became aligned with the Whigs and associated growing rebel sentiment. Following the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, the new military Governor William Howe, ordered the arrest of likely dissidents in Boston. James Lovell was picked up in the sweep, and transported as a prisoner to Halifax (former city), Nova Scotia. The following year, his father also came to Halifax, but as a refugee. The elder Lovell left Boston in March 1776 as part of the general exodus of Loyalists when British forces abandoned the city. In November 1776, James was exchanged for Colonel Philip Skene. When he got back to Boston in December, he was elected to be a delegate to the Continental Congress. He would serve in Congress until 1782.

Congressional career

Lovell served effectively in the Congress during the six years that were critical to the American Revolution. He was particularly important as a long term member of the Committee of Foreign Correspondence and that of Secret Correspondence. He signed the Articles of Confederation, endorsing them for Massachusetts on July 9, 1778.

In one area his performance was controversial. In 1776 and 1777, there was a growing struggle for influence and command in the Continental Army. Lovell became a supporter of Horatio Gates in his lobbying quest for command. He encouraged Gates in reporting directly to Congress, in effect going over Washington's head. This reached its peak when Gates was given command of the Northern Department, replacing Philip Schuyler in the
summer of 1777.

A womanizer in Philadelphia, Lovell was also a frequent correspondent with both John and Abigail Adams. In his correspondence to Abigail he flirted wondering what John was doing with his private time in France. He also used Abigail's pet name of Portia in his correspondence.

Later events

After his term in Congress, Lovell returned to teaching, but continued to hold various political offices. He was collector of taxes in Massachusetts from 1784 to 1788 and Customs Officer of Boston in 1778 and 1789. He died in Windham, Maine (then part of Massachusetts) on July 14, 1814.

Family

His son, James Lovell (1758–1850) served in the Continental Army from 1776 to 1782. After graduating from Harvard in 1776, he joined the 16th Massachusetts regiment as a lieutenant, and saw action at Battle of Monmouth and in Rhode Island. In 1779 he was assigned as adjutant and major to Light Horse Harry Lee's Southern Legion and fought in the Southern Campaigns. He is reported to have fought valiantly and was wounded several times.

James's grandson, by James S., was Joseph Lovell who served as Surgeon General of the Army from 1818 when Congress created the position until 1836.

External links


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