



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 9, 2017
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Mercy Otis Warren: Formidable Female

Mercy Otis Warren was a mother, not a soldier. But the pen she wielded in support of liberty was more powerful than many a sword.

The people of the United States are bound together in sacred compact and a union of interests which ought never to be separated. But the confederation is recent, and their experience immatured; they are, however, generally sensible ... [understanding that history demonstrates that] deception as well as violence have operated to the subversion of the freedom of the people.

— Mercy Otis Warren



Some seven months after the “Shot Heard ‘Round the World” was fired on Lexington Green, James Warren sat responding to a letter from John Adams on the subject of the rebellion of the colonies against the king. Warren’s wife was anxious that her assessment on the historic matter be communicated to the famous patriot. Obliging, Mr. Warren included the following contribution from his wife in his letter to Adams:

She [Mrs. Warren] sits at the table with me, will have a paragraph of her own; says you [Congress] “should no longer piddle at the threshold. It is time to leap into the theatre, to unlock the bars, and open every gate that impedes the rise and growth of the American republic, and then let the giddy potentate send forth his puerile proclamations to France, to Spain and all the commercial world who may be united in building up an Empire which he can’t prevent.

This is Mercy Otis Warren. Historian Lester Cohen calls her “the most formidable female of the 18th Century.” She was a pious and patriotic woman who would not be kept quiet on matters that would impact her family (and this war certainly would), and she was a historian who appreciated the historical value of a record of the players, principles, and progress of the American War for Independence.

Faith and Fortune

Mercy was born on September 14, 1728 to a prosperous and pious family. In 1630, four generations before her birth, James Otis arrived in America and set out immediately to establish a reputation as a hard-working man with a rock-ribbed devotion to his faith. These traits were passed down to his descendants, and the Otis family achieved wealth and prominence in Massachusetts. Mercy was steeped in this tradition and hewed rigidly to it.

As a child (the third of four and the first daughter), Mercy was taught that her duty was to her family. She would, her mother taught her, one day be a mother herself and it was her duty as a Christian woman to raise up a generation of children who would worship God and obey His commandments. Mercy learned these lessons, and the unwavering commitment to her family became the rock upon which she would build her long life.



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Being a daughter, it was not necessary for Mercy to receive the formal education by tutors that her brothers were given. As sons, these young men would need to develop a fluency in the affairs of history — Rome and Greece — as well as a familiarity with mathematics, science, and logic that were the raw materials with which successful men from notable families would build their riches and their reputations.

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Image: Bronze statue of Mercy Otis Warren in front of Barnstable County Courthouse, by Kenenth C. Zirkel - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32733257>



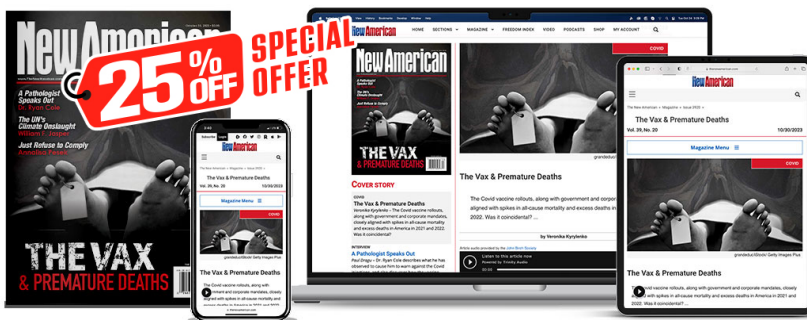
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