

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

Select Correspondence

Edited with a
Biographical Essay by

Allan
Nevins



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I

The Busy Career of James Truslow Adams: A Personal Memoir

By Allan Nevins

Ancestry and Family

In and after the year 1922, when I was writing editorials first for the New York *Herald* and then briefly for the *Evening Sun*, newspapers which occupied the spacious marble building erected long before by A. T. Stewart at Broadway and Chambers Street, a man in whom I took a growing interest frequently came to my office. Erect, with regular features set off by a trim brown mustache and dressed in London-cut garments, he looked rather a businessman or broker than a writer. In garb, manners, and familiarity with city life, this bachelor member of the Yale Club seemed to fit that undefinable phrase, a man about town. He walked briskly. His talk reflected not only a nimble, precise mind, but a stubborn set of opinions, some liberal, some conservative. He was clearly a gentleman, possessing high standards of conduct and a genial courtesy. His family had for three generations moved in the better circles of New York life; he knew a few leaders of finance, and he had just come through interesting wartime experiences. Essentially, however, he was a scholar.

It did not require much penetration to discern that James Truslow Adams was really a lonely man. He was reserved and meditative, with intellectual standards even more rigorous than his social and moral standards. It was partly to obtain commissions for book reviews and articles that he sought the Frank A. Munsey dailies, but partly for com-

panionship. When he arrived late in the afternoon, we would sometimes swing into City Hall Park and down to the Battery, or uptown to Washington and Union Squares. Though shy and addicted to long silences, he could be hearty in speech when aroused, quick to chuckle over ironies of the day, scornful of the seamy side of those Harding-Coolidge years. I would have suspected a Latin vein in his ancestry even had he not mentioned it. Better read than most university men, he obviously knew literature and history more than any other subject except finance. His observations upon Matthew Arnold and Emerson were crisp, critical, and illuminating.

In his reticence, he seldom spoke about himself, a fact that made misapprehension of his position easy. Because he talked familiarly about Wall Street and clearly possessed independent income, it was natural to exaggerate his affluence, just as references to his banker grandfather William Newton Adams, and to well-placed uncles and cousins scattered over America and England made it natural to overestimate his social connections. The facts were that he had only modest means, that postwar inflation threatened him with financial difficulties, and that relatives played little part in his life. The Yale Club was generally barren of any but nodding acquaintances, for he was not really a Yale man; the village of Bridgehampton where he had his small Long Island cottage afforded hardly more society in winter than Nova Zemlya. Writing on scholarly subjects is a lonely occupation even in universities and when pursued in public libraries can be frigidly monastic. A shy worker passing into middle age, Adams made friends with difficulty.

Having been reared in an austere, gloomy home, his father a morose failure in Wall Street and his mother an invalid, Adams (as I learned later) had missed a normal boyhood and youth. One result was his studious, reflective temper. Another was a strong interest in people younger than himself. This interest doubtless accounted for his ready acceptance of me, a dozen years younger and not long out of college, as companion. Little by little he made revealing remarks about his past. From these, from letters, the memories of a few intimates, and a manuscript dictated in his last years under the title *An American Family*, it is possible to compose an account of his life.

"In American history I believe in a completely unsectional attitude," wrote Adams in mid-career.¹ "We are today all Americans, and to

¹ James T. Adams, "My Methods as a Historian," *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 30, 1934, p. 778.

adopt a provincial point of view or a sectional defense-mechanism is to invalidate the value of one's work. In this my family background has been useful to me. Settled in America since 1658, we have lived in both the North and South, and for four generations in foreign countries — South America, the West Indies, and various countries of Europe — for considerable intervals at a time. I am thoroughly American, but my father was born in South America; and though myself born in New York, my memory begins in France, although I have lived over nine-tenths of my life at home."

This statement suggests the cosmopolitan background of Adam's life. He sprang from a family mainly British, but he had one grandmother of Spanish blood; his forebears had lived chiefly in the United States, but for short periods in Venezuela and Cuba; he had been born in Brooklyn but taken immediately to Paris, where his first memories were of a wealthy American aunt on the Parc Monceau; and he had grown up in a rather large world, where some of his elders knew money, leisure, and travel. His outlook, however, was neither complicated nor cosmopolitan. He was reared simply, with no direct knowledge of Latin America, and little real acquaintance with Europe. Although his grandfathers once possessed wealth, they both lost it. Sent not to one of the great universities or ivy league colleges, but to Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, he had been reared for a life of hard work.

People who supposed that as he was an Adams he must be of New England family or connections were in error. His first English ancestor had arrived in Maryland as an indentured servant in 1638. In time the Adamases had moved across the Potomac to Virginia, and later the center of family life had been in or near New York City. He would have called himself just a plain American of Anglo-Saxon stock, with a tincture of Spanish blood but few foreign tastes or ideas, and of no particular family. Yet his ancestral history did have much interest.²

The indentured servant, whose name was Francis Adams, had soon risen in the world. Only sixteen or seventeen when he arrived, at the beginning he got a poor living by hard labor. But land was cheap and could be obtained on credit. Three years after he came he was recorded in possession of 185 acres called "Troop's Rendezvous," and he added other parcels. His son, a second Francis Adams who was born the year of Bacon's rebellion, 1676, acquired more land, married well, and reared a large family. In the fourth American generation an

² His father searched many of the colonial records and supplied most of the data on the family line.

Abednego Adams (1721-1809) made the bold stroke of moving out of Maryland into Fairfax County, Virginia, taking a plantation between the branches of Little Hunting Creek. One creek branch divided his estate from Mount Vernon, which Abednego and his wife, Mary Peake, came to know well.

"The Adamses and the Peakes," wrote James Truslow Adams in his family record, "were close friends of the Washingtons, and I have always thought that George had his eye on the plantations of these two members of my family. In Washington's library, just to the right of the the door as you go into it from the back entrance, is a map in Washington's own handwriting of his Mount Vernon estate, and the map extends over Little Hunting Creek, indicating two houses in the first President's handwriting as A. Adams and M. Peake. I think the old boy certainly coveted those neighboring lands, although he never got them. I have, however, some china still in my house which Martha Washington gave to my great-great-grandmother, and Washington frequently spoke of his neighbors in his diary." Although not a line in this diary suggests any covetous inclinations, it does show that Washington enjoyed fox hunting and card playing with Abednego Adams.³

After Abednego came still another Francis Adams, who lived in Alexandria on the Potomac and had inclinations to rove. This great-grandfather of James Truslow Adams served as a private in the War of 1812, married an Alexandria girl named Mary R. Newton, and went into shipping ventures in West Indian and European waters. He unquestionably had enterprise; in 1819 he got himself appointed American consul to Trieste, and a few years later helped establish the firm of Latting, Adams, & Stewart to trade in coffee and sugar with Cuba. While still young he settled upon a sugar estate near Matanzas. James Truslow Adams owned a portrait of him painted in Vienna on burnished copper by an unknown Austrian artist, and a number of his letters, one of which told of being chased by pirates on the coast between Matanzas and Havana until he took refuge under Morro Castle.⁴

But how did the Spanish grandmother enter the family? The story, which has romantic touches, involved the son of this shipping merchant, consul, and coffee planter, a young man named William Newton Adams, the most forceful and talented of all the historian's ancestors. When his father died at an untimely age, this lad was brought

³ See this great document as edited in four volumes by John Fitzpatrick.

⁴ These papers passed into the possession of Francis Adams Truslow, who died in 1951, and his descendants.

to Connecticut to be educated. The family had means. They had also a connection with the Howland family of Howland & Aspinwall, merchants who had originally lived in Norwich, Connecticut, and it was in Norwich that William Newton Adams got his schooling. Naturally, he entered the Howland & Aspinwall offices to begin his business career. At nineteen he was sent to Venezuela to represent the firm. Here he fell in love with a Spanish girl, Carmen de Michelena de Salias, whom he married in Caracas on September 29, 1844.

The Michelenas of Venezuela were at least as distinguished a family as the Adamses of Virginia. They traced themselves back to the province of Guipuzcoa in northern Spain, a Basque area with the seaport San Sebastián its capital. In the eighteenth century two of the Michelena line migrated to Venezuela, where Jose Ignacio de Michelena married into a family from Seville. From this union sprang Carmen de Michelena, the bride of William Newton Adams. The couple, grandfather and grandmother of the historian, doubtless expected to remain long in Venezuela. Their child, William Newton Adams, Jr., was born in Caracas on November 25, 1846. But in 1848 a revolution overthrew the government, some leading citizens were slain, and the Adams family was driven into exile. In fact, family records state that they were given just forty-eight hours to leave. They made their way to Havana happy to escape alive.

The alert William Newton Adams of course remembered that his father Francis had lived for a time in the Matanzas area. Perhaps he retained his position with Howland & Aspinwall, perhaps not. At any rate, he chose temporary Cuban residence, settling in Santiago on the south coast. His talents soon made him partner in the English banking firm of Brooks & Company, which had offices in the West Indies and New York. In Santiago one of his daughters, James Truslow Adams's aunt, married into the wealthy Brooks family.

"My grandfather," writes James Truslow Adams, "very quickly took a part in all the life, business and social, of the island. Always fond of music, and an excellent businessman, he became president of the Philharmonic Society, and also of the Cuba Gas Company. In addition, he was commissioned by President Fillmore on September 24, 1850, as United States consul. He afterwards resigned that office when Congress passed a law that a consul could not occupy the position if he had a private income from business of over fifteen hundred dollars a year." While thus active, William Newton Adams helped his wife bring up thirteen children; saw that all of them were decently educated; paid

frequent visits to the United States; and wrote occasionally for the American press. He remained a staunch Protestant, and a patriot of New England views. A pamphlet of his on American financial policy during the Civil War attracted some attention.

In 1865, the war over and his native Virginia back in the Union, William Newton Adams returned to the United States to become an officer in the banking firm of Moses Taylor. This was a logical choice. Taylor, the last and possibly greatest of the old school of New York merchants, had made his start in the West India trading firm of G. G. and S. Howland,⁵ had gone into business independently, and had become the principal dealer in raw sugar. He was made president in 1855 of the powerful City Bank. William Newton Adams had known him for years and had joined other Cuban planters in entrusting surplus funds to his care.

But where should the repatriated merchant live? William Newton Adams considered buying a house on Washington Square, then a center of social life, but decided instead on a development on West Twenty-third Street called London Terrace. The Terrace houses had long front gardens that he thought his large family would like. Doña Carmen, however, had never learned much English and cared nothing for the social amenities of Manhattan. They therefore shortly removed to a two-and-a-half-story house with large grounds at 186 Brooklyn Avenue in a section known as Bedford Village. This place was later bought by the City of Brooklyn to house its Children's Museum.

Family reminiscences and other sources indicate that in his prime William Newton Adams was an indomitable businessman and banker of many-sided interests. He planted shade trees all along Brooklyn Avenue from Fulton Street to his house. He helped beautify St. Marks Avenue hard by, and with other prominent Brooklyn citizens, including the Seth Low family, laid out Eastern Parkway running from Prospect Park past Brooklyn Museum. While his fortune was still large, according to James Truslow Adams, he used to hire instrumentalists every Saturday night to play classical selections for the family and friends. "He spoke four or five languages with perfect ease, and would debate in Greek with the tutors whom he had for my father's younger brothers. At one time, when a number of distinguished clergy from Rome met some citizens who may have been good Catholics but were not good Latinists, grandfather was perfectly at ease acting as interpreter, talking English to the Brooklyn citizens and Latin to the Roman hierarchy."

⁵ John Moody, *The Masters of Capital* (New York, 1919), pp. 59 ff.

As William Newton Adams died in 1877, more than a decade before J. T. Adams was born, these reminiscences may have passed through a dilating haze.⁶

The Spanish grandmother, Doña Carmen, has a less important place in the family annals. Evidently she was too busy rearing the thirteen children born between 1845 and 1863 to take part in community life. Then cancer overtook her soon after the removal to the United States. She was stoic enough to pay a last visit to Cuba, and died there in 1871. Her devoted husband, who had visited her assiduously while she was under treatment at Clifton Springs in upper New York, was almost prostrated by her loss.

The last years of Grandfather Adams, alas, were dark. A trusted employee absconded with \$80,000 of his funds. The panic of 1873 swept away much of the remainder of his fortune. As he aged, his health declined. He spent some time on a farm he owned near Culpeper in Virginia, to get outdoor life and horseback riding. Meanwhile, he carried on real estate ventures in Brooklyn, and we hear of a trip to Havana to look after business interests. Finally, he made a sea voyage to California, and died on June 26, 1877, the day before his returning steamer reached New York. He had lived a stirring, energetic life, and if he had concentrated his energies within the United States might have left a name.

Education and Early Reading

It is somewhat astonishing that the Spanish grandmother and the Venezuelan and Cuban chapters in family history made little direct impression on James Truslow Adams. He could not read or speak Spanish, which his father and grandfather knew well, he never visited Havana or Caracas, and he took little interest in Spanish-American history. He knew some striking family stories — that was all. The most thrilling was an account of the exit of the Matanzas family from Cuba just after the death of Francis Adams, the adventurous former consul in Trieste who had established his own coffee plantation.

This story was told with bated breath. Francis Adams, amid grief and lamentation, had been buried under the palms just when his protection was most needed by wife and children. Signs of discontent among the slaves of the island had become increasingly manifest. Half-

⁶ But Miss Leonie Adams, another descendant, confirms some of them in a letter to me January 12, 1967, adding that in his wealthiest years William Newton Adams sometimes took his family to other cities in a private car.

suppressed mutterings were caught as white folk passed the Negroes. One dark night the family listened in terror as they heard machetes being sharpened, and excited fieldhands whispering about an uprising. Fortunately Mrs. Adams had been kind to the blacks, and one family servant with a sick wife was especially grateful for assistance. He gave the household secret warning, and, when the time came, carried the children in his arms to a sailing vessel to take them to the mainland. Weeks afterward, ran the melodramatic tale, the escaped family heard that a terrible insurrection had broken out, that many had been massacred, and that this particular Negro had distinguished himself by brutal murders accompanied with torture. However doubtful the details, this story laid its imprint on the imagination of James Truslow Adams.

The boy's imagination was quickened, also, by ancient family papers. Most of them were English, but some concerned the rights or *fueros* granted by Spanish monarchs to prominent Basques; exemptions from taxation, and other privileges. Nor did he forget the fact that on the Spanish side he was entitled to what Samuel Johnson called that most worthless of coats, a coat of arms. Various records showed that when William Newton Adams began rearing his great household of children, his wife Carmen had regarded slaves as essential.⁷

A family so large, and with such varied connections in banking and shipping, was certain to have interesting members. James Truslow Adams's Uncle Theodore Brooks, of the British banking family in Cuba, was long remembered. After the Spanish War, when J. T. A. was eleven or twelve, the family heard of the warm friendship of Uncle Theodore with Leonard Wood, who as military governor of Cuba sometimes stayed at the Brooks house in Santiago. A drink of General Wood's concoction is recorded. "Take a tall whisky-and-soda glass," we are told, "and pour into the bottom of it about an inch of cold tea, a great blender of flavors for a mixed drink. Squeeze in the juice of two fresh limes; and one or two teaspoons of powdered sugar; put some cracked ice in the glass; then fill with champagne, and stir well." The Brooks cousins included a young man named Richard who paid occasional visits to New York. He had been graduated from an English engineering school, married a stunningly beautiful English girl, and built canals and other public works in the Punjab. Leaving India, he

⁷ J. T. Adams bequeathed the main body of family papers he held to Francis Adams Truslow, along with Truslow relics, and (after his wife's life-use) portraits of William Newton Adams, Sr., and Francis Peake Adams.

returned to Cuba, where he became head of the street railway system in Havana. Once when he brought his family, J. T. A. found that one small child spoke nothing but Hindustani.

Another cousin named Theodore Brooks had a tragic history. He chose America, went through Yale, saw naval service in World War I, and with the rank of ensign came to California to be discharged. One dark night when ship lights were dimmed he fell through open hatches to his death. On his father's side J. T. A. had a great-uncle named Charles Frederick Adams, who began his legal career in the office of William M. Evarts, and then distinguished himself in that of Charles R. Coudert. He was so prominent as a single-taxer and reformer that some of the first citizens of New York attended his funeral in 1918. It was his daughter, Leonie Adams, who became well known as a teacher in Columbia University and as a poet, being elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1951. Still another cousin, Josephine Truslow Adams, became professor of art in Swarthmore.

The most picturesquely eccentric of the family was Henry Augustus Adams, who changed his middle name to Austin. Born in Santiago, he was sent to the United States to become a clergyman. After taking degrees in Trinity College at Hartford and the General Theological Seminary in New York,⁸ he became an assistant rector of Trinity Church in lower Manhattan, then pastor of a church in Buffalo, and finally rector of the Church of the Redeemer in New York. A brilliant man, he could deliver addresses that held his audience spellbound. Adams remembered attending a lecture upon the career of Napoleon, in which, to his astonishment, Uncle Henry declaimed: "To understand Napoleon, you must stand as I have stood upon the summit of the mountains of Corsica, and look out over the blue waters of the beckoning Mediterranean." As Adams knew that his uncle had never set foot on Corsica, he swallowed hard, but the statement added an impressive touch.

This Uncle Henry, if we may believe family recollections, had a commanding and luxuriant personality that carried him through rich adventures. Early in his career a wealthy widow endowed him with \$100,000 to devote himself to writing religious works,⁹ and he built a

⁸ The alumni records of Trinity College list Henricus Augustus Adams, S.T.B. Sem. Theol. General, 1886, as a graduate of Trinity in the class of 1887.

⁹ His published works under the name Henry Austin Adams include *Larger Life* (1893); *Napoleon, a Play in Four Acts* (1894); *Westchester: Tale of Revolution* (1899); and *Orations of Henry Austin Adams, with an Introduction by His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons* (1902). He also wrote *The Man John*

house at Great River, Long Island, as a studious retreat. Moving toward Roman Catholicism, he baptized one of his sons John Henry Newman. Then, becoming restless, he suddenly left his family and eloped to New Zealand with a girl of musical talent from Baltimore. According to the story told to Adams, the couple presently returned to British Columbia, where Uncle Henry brought a suit for divorce from his first wife on grounds of desertion! The Adams family sometimes said that when all Gaul was divided into three parts, Henry had seized the largest share. Ultimately it was the discarded wife who got the divorce. Besides his religious writings, Uncle Henry brought out plays, one of which, "Ception Shoals," ran for thirty-seven nights in New York early in 1917, with Alla Nazimova as star.¹⁰

When Adams became acquainted with the colonial historian Charles M. Andrews, he found that he had roomed with Uncle Henry in Trinity College; and Andrews told Adams that after a long life he still regarded Henry as the most fascinating man he had ever known.

The Truslows, a family that Adams ascertained to be of Yorkshire origin, produced no such salient personalities. Their most distinguished scion was the artist Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), best remembered for his murals in the Boston Public Library depicting the legend of the Holy Grail. He was the great-grandson of a John Truslow born in Reading, England. When Abbey left his native Philadelphia to work in New York with Harper Brothers, he sometimes came to the house of William Newton Adams, Jr., for Sunday dinner, a shy young man who blushed when addressed. This was just before the birth of James Truslow Adams. Later he lived for some years in the Cotswold village of Broadway, where Adams once visited him. He died in London.

In the Truslow line as in the Adams line it was the historian's grandfather who was the most successful and impressive figure; James Linklater Truslow became a successful manufacturer of corks and by the end of the century was rated a millionaire. His business was eventually absorbed by the Armstrong Cork Company. For years he lived at 783 St. Marks Avenue in Brooklyn, a house that Adams remembered vividly. It had a spacious central hall paved in black and white marble

Spreckels (1924), an interesting character study, for the sugar magnate Spreckels, who did much to develop San Diego into a great city, was a close friend. Adams, who finished the biography on Spreckels's yacht, declared that he had watched the magnate in moments of exultation, hilarity, and crushing sorrow.

¹⁰ See the reviews in *The Theatre*, XXV (January-June, 1917), and Burns Mantle and Garrison P. Sherwood, *The Best Plays of 1909-1919* (New York, 1933), p. 592.

running from front to rear, a large first-floor library, and parlors of Victorian dignity. J. T. A. always recalled it in association with the opening of Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, the cork factory being only a short distance from the eastern end. The day the great suspension bridge was opened members of the family attended the ceremonies, and in the evening gazed in wonder at the brilliant illumination of piers, cables, and gracefully arching roadway.

"Grandfather," writes J. T. A., "gave a party for the family and some of his friends on the roof of the factory, where we could see the fireworks. It was the first time, at the age of four and a half, that I had ever stayed up till ten o'clock to eat ice-cream and cake, and watch the world burst into flame. The sight made a tremendous impression."

In all this period we obtain no clear view of J. T. A.'s father, William Newton Adams, Jr., and the glimpses we have are not happy. We know that he studied finance in Germany, reading and working in Bremen; that he had scholarly tastes, evinced by his life membership in the Virginia and Long Island Historical Societies and in the Brooklyn Library; and that late in life he joined the brokerage firm of Henderson, Linley & Company at Two Wall Street. In the risky brokerage business lack of financial acumen kept him unsuccessful. He was handicapped also by the fact that his wife was a lifelong invalid. One acquaintance recalls the elder Adams as a sour, disappointed man, who never forgave fate for the loss of the family fortune; ill-tempered, and complaining. Other associates found him pleasanter but inclined to excessive worry about money. It may be significant that the historian wrote nothing about him.

The principal boyhood reminiscence that J. T. A. has left us deals with the great blizzard of 1888, which he witnessed at nearly ten. "That storm," he writes,

the only really great one which New York has had to fight, started in the morning in ordinary fashion. My father went to business. The storm steadily increased in intensity. About two o'clock the stock exchange decided to close and let the people go home. By that time not a wheel was turning in the whole city. My father had to walk the three-quarters of a mile or so from the corner of Wall Street and Broadway to the Brooklyn Bridge, across the mile-long bridge in the face of blinding snow and biting wind, and then begin to walk the three miles out to where we lived on St. Marks Avenue. When he got to within two blocks of our house he fell completely exhausted. The snow was over his knees at every step, and he was not a strong man. Fortunately, he fell in front of the house of a Mr. Carpenter, a friend of ours. . . . Mr. Carpenter and his two boys went out and gathered my father into the house, and revived him. After three or four hours he finally made the last two

blocks to his own house. We had no idea where he had been or what had happened to him, for in those days hardly anybody had telephones.

Father got home, but the snow kept up all night and next morning, so that in Brooklyn and New York the drifts were up to the second-story windows. Front stoops had disappeared entirely, and in order to clear some of the snow away from the area-way, we had to take it from the inside, carry it through the house, and dump it into the back yard, where the wind had not drifted it. The next morning, my grandfather sent his coachman from his house to ours to see if we had enough food. From the bay window in the front of our house I watched Daniel work his way along. To walk was impossible, for the snow must have been fifteen or twenty feet deep. He lay on his stomach and practically swam on top of the snow, and it took him a half hour to make the six hundred feet from grandfather's house.

Early in 1888 Adams's father removed from Brooklyn Avenue to St. Marks Avenue, where the family were just getting settled when the blizzard struck. In 1901 Grandfather Truslow died. His once large fortune had dwindled, for he had placed much of his savings in real estate, which for years proved practically unsaleable. At his death his estate was estimated at about \$600,000. He had two sons, to whom he bequeathed his stock in Armstrong Cork, and two daughters (one of them J. T. A.'s mother), to whom he left the realty. The stock declared handsome dividends, and rose rapidly in value; the land brought little, and this little by the terms of the will had to be invested in bonds legal for trust funds, which yielded only about 3½ per cent. Thus losing for the second time his great expectations, Adams's father showed greater moroseness than ever. If only Grandfather Truslow had given the cork stock to the daughters!

In a general view, James Truslow Adams's American ancestors were interesting but not significant figures. Not one of them made any name in the United States; not one appears in any biographical dictionary or state or city history. The only touch of distinction discernible is that in William Newton Adams, Sr. Yet, although J. T. A. always spoke scornfully of genealogical studies, he took much interest in his own family history. Its color and adventure appealed to his imagination and widened his vision. Confined mainly to his book-lined study, he found refreshment in thinking of the indentured servant seizing upon Maryland land, the Virginia planter riding to hounds with George Washington, the Alexandria shipmaster and merchant coming back from Trieste to buy sugarcane holdings near Matanzas, the Caracas don bestowing the hand of his lovely daughter Carmen upon a Yankee adventurer while revolution rumbled in the background, and this adventurer, grown older, becoming a respected figure in New York banking.

Of James Truslow Adams's early education we have scanty records. In 1889, when he was eleven, he entered the private school of a Miss Parsons in an old-fashioned Brooklyn residence at Pacific Street and New York Avenue. After a year or two he was transferred to a boy's school across the street kept by a man named Maury; a military school that put him into a gray uniform with silver buttons. He disliked Maury, the strict discipline, and the necessity of running five or six blocks around the drill hall with a heavy gun on his shoulder. By emphatic complaints he got himself removed at the end of a year.

Meanwhile, he began to enjoy some country life. His mother's brother, James Truslow, rented a place in South Woodstock, Connecticut, an old farmhouse on a lake, and during summers in the middle 1880's Adams's parents boarded nearby. He played with other children of the family, mostly Truslows, in a group who called themselves, after Louisa M. Alcott's book, the Eight Cousins. They got acquainted here with the household of Hamilton Wright Mabie, whose essays and lectures were then in high repute. They rowed, swam, climbed on hay-wagons, petted the farm animals, kept rabbits of their own, and had a thoroughly satisfactory time.

In the autumn of 1890 J. T. A. began attending the Polytechnic School on Livingston Street. It was reached by horsecar on the Bergen Street line, the Kings County Elevated Railroad not being built until a few years later. He thought the ride delightful, especially when open cars were used in spring and summer — the horses jogging along, the bells around their necks ringing, at three miles an hour.

Meanwhile, by a stroke of fortune, a genial attendant in the Brooklyn Library gave the boy access to the stacks, where he often spent his Saturdays. He came upon books which not only assisted him to good marks at school, but delighted him by their variety. He was an avid consumer of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, the *Journey to the Moon*, and other romances; he devoured the inevitable G. A. Henty; and in time he progressed to Walter Scott. Before long he discovered some secondhand bookshops. Thereupon he dropped the horsecars, for he found he could save money by walking the three miles and use it in buying books.

One bookstore on Court Street, managed by an old gentleman named Farnell and his son, became a favorite. "After fifty years," Adams writes, "I still recall them both well, for they seemed to take an interest in me. A high spot in my purchases at Farnell's was when I bought a copy of Brydon's *Tour of Sicily* for ten cents. I called Farnell's atten-

tion to the fact that there were two volumes bound in one, and I still remember that he said: 'My God, I thought it was only the first volume. If I had known there were both, you would not have got it!' I began to feel like a real book collector." The remarkable fact was that the boy should want such a book.

Adams spent four years in the lower grades of the Polytechnic School before emerging into the Polytechnic Institute, where he was a pupil in the preparatory department 1890-94. When he thus completed his high school studies he should have gone to one of the older Eastern colleges. Columbia even in pre-subway days was within easy reach. But his brother Herbert had recently died of scarlet fever; his mother, still a semi-invalid, felt in her bereavement that she must keep him near her; and his father always practiced economy. The Polytechnic was now giving college courses, and they decided to keep him there. He would have done better at Columbia, Yale, or Harvard. Significantly, he mentions no teacher by name. However, he found some unusual fellow students. One was Paul Dougherty, who became a distinguished marine painter; another was Dougherty's younger brother, who, going on the stage, shortened his name to Walter Hampden; and a third was Clayton Hamilton, later a distinguished dramatic critic, playwright, and author of several books, including a life of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Throughout four years of work in the Brooklyn Polytechnic for an arts degree, Adams felt concerned over his future occupation. He considered becoming a lawyer, and always believed that he might have made a good one, for he loved legal and constitutional problems. But since the weekly declamations that the Institute required were tortures to his shy spirit, and he supposed lawyers had to do constant public speaking, he gave up the idea. He thought of engineering. That dream vanished, however, when a friendly mechanical engineer sent him a copy of Ganot's *Physics* as a book to begin. Toward the end of his four years he suspected that he had some literary talent. In 1897 he became editor of the monthly school publication, which he converted into a weekly. That same year he wrote the libretto of a fairy opera, which with music by a neighborhood violin teacher, was performed by forty girls of the Packer Institute; and throwing enthusiasm into helping stage "The Culprit's Quest," as he called it, he had the satisfaction at nineteen of seeing it achieve a local success.

He was clearly a brilliant young man, for he was graduated in June, 1898, as president of his class, valedictorian, and class poet. Thinking he might become a teacher of philosophy, he made the mistake of going

to Yale for the year 1898-99. A competent adviser would have sent him to Harvard, where William James, George Santayana, and Josiah Royce might have instilled a lasting interest in the subject, but Yale offered little inspiration. Adams perhaps never really knew, and certainly never spoke of, the principal figure in philosophy at Yale, George Trumbull Ladd, better remembered for his books on Indian and Japanese life than for his *Theory of Reality*. In disappointment, he returned to his father's office in New York as unpaid messenger. The firm paid for his carfare and lunches, but by paternal edict offered not a cent more, until, at Christmas in 1898, the senior partner gave him an envelope out of which, to his astonishment, he shook a \$500 bill.

Another unexpected gift followed. A Japanese student he had known in New Haven dropped into his office and asked if he were going back to Yale. Adams returned an emphatic "No!" But, expostulated the Japanese, if you simply write them they will give you an M.A. virtually as a matter of routine. This information proved correct. Adams wrote the authorities, went to commencement, paid a \$10 fee, and became Master of Arts, "upon examination" — the "examination" meaning nothing.¹¹

About the same time he made a favorable impression on a railroad executive, a Scot named Ewen, in his building. This man, a former officer of the Southern Railroad who had left it to help reorganize the Central of Georgia, not only proposed that Adams enter his employ, but gave him more business instruction that he had gotten from his father. The first day, Adams later recalled, Ewen looked at a typewriter on his desk, and remarked meaningly: "You know, when I went on the railroad the first thing they did was to make me run a locomotive." Catching the hint, Adams learned typewriting. He also kept account books, handled routine correspondence, and held a power-of-attorney enabling him to sign his employer's name to checks on the First National Bank not exceeding \$500,000; he worked long hours at an initial \$3.50 a week. Presently Ewen began reorganizing a little railroad in western New York called the Jamestown & Chautauqua.

"In order that I should be an officer and do some of the work, he had the directors make me secretary. For this I once more got \$3.50 a week, but I was not a little proud of being secretary of a railroad cor-

¹¹ See the *Catalogue of the Officers of Graduates of Yale University 1701-1924* (1924), p. 422. Not until two years later was control of the M.A. degree transferred to the new Graduate Faculty, and the standard raised to demand two years of postgraduate instruction. See George W. Pierson, *Yale College and University 1871-1937*, I (1952), 227.

poration. It was a nice little thing twenty-nine miles long, but just as wide as any other, and connected with five trunk lines. I being an executive officer, it gave me in those happy days free passes on all the railroads of the country, and just to see what it felt like I once went to Chicago for dinner."

For his \$7 a week Adams learned so much about transportation, analysis of railway accounts and general investment business that he could well have made larger sacrifices for his tuition. He inspected the Jamestown & Chautauqua from time to time, using his own private locomotive. Eating at cheap Italian and Spanish restaurants in downtown Manhattan, he made the \$7 do. Finally, aware that he had learned all he could, he asked Ewen to audit his books, certify that his accounts were correct, and accept his resignation.

Then came the crowning touch of his education, a trip to Europe. He had saved a little money, and Grandfather Truslow, who approved him as a cleancut young businessman, gave him \$500. After three weeks in London, where he celebrated his twenty-second birthday, he went to Paris to view the Exposition of 1900, later recalled as "one of the ugliest things I have ever seen." In a long run on the Continent he saw the Emperor Franz Josef face to face in a Vienna hotel, made friends with a Scottish publisher named Isbister and an old Irish lady named Mrs. D'Oyley Carte, who both took a fancy to him, and finally spent three weeks in a Florentine *pension* where he got lodging, three meals, and afternoon tea for ninety-five cents a day. In 1901 he was home again, refreshed and instructed, but still uncertain what he wanted to do.

The family situation was changing. His Uncle James Truslow had died in 1899, and Grandfather Truslow followed in 1901. His mother, to whom he was devoted, did not wish to remain in the Brooklyn neighborhood where she had lived almost a lifetime with all of her family about her, and the four of them — father, mother, sister Amy, and Adams — decided to go to Summit, New Jersey, a place full of acquaintances. Here, after several moves, they took a house built by Uncle James for Hamilton Wright Mabie, in which Mabie had written a popular volume of essays called *My Study Fire*. Mabie's study fire became J. T. A.'s. In time, also, his father served two terms as unpaid mayor of Summit, while he himself was elected a councilman. They made friends, for Summit was full of interesting people. One was Rollo Ogden, editor of the New York *Evening Post*; another was Constance Adams (not related), who married Cecil De Mille.

From Summit, Adams could commute to a new business post that he soon found in Wall Street. A smouldering coal of literary ambition, a suppressed passion for writing, however, burned in his bosom, and neither business nor Summit was to hold him long.

Bridgehampton, Local History, and War Service

Adams, who had a way of avoiding disagreeable topics, never told me why, after his experience with a railroad and his European trip, he turned to the kind of brokerage business in which his father had fared badly. He repeatedly made it plain, however, that he thought Wall Street a dangerous wilderness, its atmosphere hectic, and its routines deadening. Supposing that it was a place where men made money, I once spoke with compassion of an elderly Staten Island friend who had come to grief there, his family suffering. "That doesn't astonish me," said Adams emphatically. "Men are always coming croppers in Wall Street. A lot of them end by ruining themselves and their families." He never said that he thought his father's life there was unhappy, for he seldom spoke to me of his father at all, but I later concluded that he felt it was. When he did turn toward the street it was temporarily and unwillingly.

He went to Columbia for six weeks, thinking that history might prove more attractive than philosophy, but found sitting in a classroom with undergraduates intolerable. He then attempted entrance into book publishing, not realizing how many neophytes in letters besieged the offices for jobs and how low the salary levels then were.

Armed with a letter from Hamilton W. Mabie, he called upon Frank Dodd, head of Dodd, Mead & Company. The firm was then one of the most conservative and compactly organized in the city. As one publisher said, "it made money by never spending any," and Frank Dodd politely told him that it had no opening. He met a different rebuff when he went to Frederick A. Stokes & Company. Stokes thought he might be given a job, took him to dinner at the Yale Club with champagne, and offered him a two-year contract — at \$15 a week. "We believe in the apprentice system," he said. "I do not," replied Adams. A call on Frank N. Doubleday of Doubleday, Page completed his exploration. They had a pleasant talk. As Adams explained his recent connection with the Jamestown & Chautauqua, "Effendi" was delighted. "My secret ambition has always been to run a railroad," he exclaimed. Adams responded happily. "You are a publisher who has

always wanted to get into the railroad business," he pointed out; "I am a railroad man who wants to get into publishing. Let us trade jobs!" But Doubleday declined.

At this point an old friend, Allen L. Lindley, intervened with an attractive business offer. Holding a seat in the New York Stock Exchange, Lindley and several associates established the firm of Henderson, Lindley & Company, and invited Adams to take an interest, contributing experience and talents but no capital.¹² Adams set to work. Although the profits proved fairly good, he chafed under the uncertainties of the market. When the panic of 1907 fell upon the country, he suggested to his partners that as business was slack, one of them might travel over the country to investigate the economic situation and look for opportunities. The result was that, setting out with introductions to manufacturers, bankers, and railroad executives, he inspected enterprises ranging from the Cudahy meat-packing plant in Chicago to a large shirt factory in Kansas City. Finally, in Idaho he found an opportunity he could recommend to the firm.

The capitalist Charles R. Flint, who arranged so many mergers that he became known as "the father of trusts," had run up heavy obligations with the United States Rubber Company, and wished to use the Pacific & Idaho Northern Railroad in Idaho as part payment. Adams's firm volunteered to examine it. By personal inspection J. T. A. found that after winding up the valley of the Snake River the railroad stopped at a dead end in a canyon so narrow that it did not give room for a turntable. Some thirty miles beyond, however, in the Meadows Valley, the bed of a prehistoric lake filled by soil eroded from the mountains, lay about 100,000 acres of remarkably rich land. As long as this area remained sealed, land could be bought for \$10 an acre, but a good rail connection would lift it to \$100. Adams suggested that the company buy large holdings, extend the railroad, sell its land to apple growers at reasonable prices, and thus establish a thriving community with trainloads of fruit going out and trainloads of supplies coming in.¹³

¹² Adams spoke to me of four men initially in the firm, but notices in the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* show that it consisted of Francis Henderson, D. A. Lindley, J. A. Janney, A. W. Howe, and Allen L. Lindley. It appears from the brief statement about William Newton Adams, Jr., in *Who's Who in New York, 1909*, that he also had a brief connection with it, and that its offices were at Two Wall Street. James Truslow Adams at first held an interest without being a full partner; surviving letterheads list neither him nor his father. However, he was admitted to partnership December 1, 1908, the offices then being at 100 Broadway.

¹³ The Pacific and Idaho Northern reached the town of New Meadows, and

Ultimately Adams had the satisfaction of seeing this terminal stretch of the Pacific & Idaho Northern constructed, the district about Meadows become a rich horticultural district, and his firm turn a neat profit. He had enlisted Governor James H. Brady in Boise, and others helped. When he completed his business tour with a swing from the Far West through the South, he found the country rapidly recovering from the panic. "As a result of what I had seen," he wrote later, "I think my firm was the first one to turn bullish and advise people to buy stocks." Taking a vacation trip up the Saguenay, he sent an account of an old French-Canadian newspaper vendor he met there to the *New York Times*, which paid him \$20. On June 7, 1907, he wrote the poet Robert Underwood Johnson: "I enclose my check for \$5 drawn to the order of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Fund. This is part of the first payment I ever received for literary work, and I take great pleasure in applying it for this purpose."¹⁴

During the next few years Adams was irritated and rebellious under the daily routine of his firm. Much as he enjoyed adventures like the promotion of Meadows, Idaho, he detested his eternal preoccupation with bonds, shares, and syndicates, the sickening risks of the daily rise and fall, and the necessity of mastering business trends. He felt that like everybody else, he thought and talked too much about money. Moreover, he worked in an anxious round chained to a clock. In Summit he gobbled a hasty breakfast facing the dining-room clock, left the house at 7:45 precisely, strode a mile to the station, and caught the 8:06 train. He was on his office telephone at 9:00; the stock exchange opened at 10:00; loans were called at 10:30; stock deliveries ceased at 2:15; and the exchange closed at 3:00. A Western Union clock stood in each room of the firm's offices. With the evening schedule of trains back to Summit fixed in memory, he watched the hands, ready at the last moment to spring from Wall Street to the Hoboken Ferry. It was much too mechanical a round for a young man of literary tastes.

He bought books—all kinds of them, including poetry, but more and more history. His father grumbled over the cost. "We can't afford them," he complained, so Adams smuggled expensive titles into the

people in Idaho for a time dreamed of a ninety-mile connection with Fenn in Idaho County, thus giving Idaho the north-and-south railroad it needed; but this connection was never built. Sister M. Alfreda Eisensohn treats the subject in *Pioneer Days in Idaho County* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1947), II, 547, 548, and has written me additional information.

¹⁴ Robert Underwood Johnson Papers, American Academy of Arts and Letters, 633 West 155th Street, New York, New York.

house under his coat; but the old gentleman, like the sister Amy, read them.

Adams often said to himself, "I shall get out of Wall Street as soon as I reach thirty-five or save a hundred thousand dollars, whichever comes first; and then I shall try writing." On his thirty-fifth birthday, in 1912, he cast up his accounts. He had his hundred thousand. "This is Kismet!" he exclaimed. "I shall defy fortune no longer!" Next day he told his associates he was quitting. They expostulated, but he was adamant.

"I remember that day walking to the Hoboken Ferry for the last time," he later recalled. "On Broadway I passed the show-window of the Waltham Watch Company. When I saw all the watches it suddenly struck me that, as I had retired at a very early age, my time was all my own, and I ought to keep track of it. I went in and bought a watch—the watch I carried in my pocket for the next thirty-five years."¹⁵

He knew that, for a writer, he was getting a tardy start. He had not drilled himself in historical method or rules of scholarship; his Wall Street cell had taught him little about life; he had never played the assiduous ape, like Stevenson, to some great stylist like Hazlitt. He could say that he had done an immense amount of careful reading in the better English and American authors, and that few men knew the novelists, essayists, and historians from Clarendon to Parkman better. He had written a good deal of doggerel verse, realizing that it was not worth sending to any magazine, but pleased when he hit out a felicitous word or phrase. Shy, reserved, with only one really close friend he had made in Brooklyn, Ed Schermerhorn, spending much time with his mother and his sister Amy, but without other feminine companionship, and giving his complex emotions expression mainly in his fondness for children, he knew that he had not yet found himself. But he had two eminent virtues: he was thoughtful and he was independent-minded, reaching and following his own conclusions.¹⁶

For a time, uncertain of his course, he looked into another corner of

¹⁵ His mother's sad end in 1911 had disturbed him greatly, for he was a devoted son, and helped persuade him that he ought to make a new start, if possible, away from his father and sister. She had become paralyzed in 1910. After that Summit was distasteful.

¹⁶ Once in these years, he told me later, he fell in love with an attractive girl, but she was of a very rich family, he was poor, and he seized upon this absurd reason for withdrawing. Various letters indicated that in youth he had the romantic impulses common to adolescents and had his share of flirtation, hampered by shyness.

business. He took a part-time position as treasurer of a rock plaster concern, thinking he might unite this job with writing. He soon found it excessively time consuming, and he was troubled by its ethical problems. The fierce competition in the plaster business, so that a price variance of a fraction of a cent might mean the difference between decent profit and ruin, tempted executives of major companies to reach agreements on their charges. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act had steel teeth. If Adams attended a meeting where price collusion could be proved, he might pay a \$5,000 fine or spend a year in jail. Meanwhile, the firm was using a lad to carry a valise with the cash payroll from the bank every Saturday. Although the route he followed had seen some dangerous holdups, it was unlawful to carry a revolver without a license, and to get one he had to pay a police captain \$15. Adams had the choice of risking the life of the boy by sending him out unarmed, or bribing the police. Such dilemmas helped him make up his mind to quit business forever.

For a time, he occupied himself in studying Persian. Like George Nathaniel Curzon and Anthony Eden, he learned to read the language and speak it a little, familiarized himself with Firdousi, Omar Khayyam, and Hafiz, and explored the Bagdad and Ispahan schools of art. This, he remarked later, was "just for something to get my teeth into." He never taught Persian or tried translating.¹⁷ Meanwhile, he gave more attention to Summit affairs, becoming head of the finance committee and street committee of the city council. He had to meet curious problems when a horse fell dead in the middle of a boundary street, so that Summit and a neighboring town quarreled obstinately over disposal of the carcass, and when a spring suddenly gushed up in front of the Episcopal Church, defying the engineers.

The autumn after leaving business in 1912 Adams bought a little land and began building a cottage at Bridgehampton, far down the south coast of Long Island; a seemingly casual decision on which his whole future hung. His original plan was to erect a cabin where he, Ed Schermerhorn, and other companions could go camping, and where he could write alone, a first step in his plan for striking out independently. But Amy vigorously demurred. Why not make the house large enough for herself and their father as well? So, on his two-acre site he reluctantly finished a cottage big enough for all, at first without a furnace because he meant it only for summer use. The Summit house

¹⁷ When I first knew him long after this, he had a Persian dictionary, the two volumes of Lord Curzon's *Persia*, and related books, and still read Persian.

was sold. Then, as the family failed to get a suitable substitute in that town, he installed a furnace in the Bridgehampton place. His plan to gain solitude had failed. But in this new house he at last sat down to write.

"The three requirements of life which I have always made," Adams later wrote, "are quiet, space, and service, three of the most unobtainable and expensive things of our present life." The two acres gave him space. He ensured quiet by buying his land opposite one of the oldest graveyards in New York State, long since disused. The cemetery stones not only fascinated him, but suggested the theme of his first printed book. Working hard, he produced a little volume thorough in scholarship and charming in style, called *Memorials of Old Bridgehampton*. This he published at his own expense in 1916, through the local newspaper office. It was not quite his first venture into authorship, for he had previously issued two pamphlets on financial affairs, distributed free.¹⁸ He regarded it as apprentice work, however, and thought that at \$1.50 a copy the *Memorials* would sell very slowly among residents of Bridgehampton, Southampton, and East Hampton, three towns lining the coast from Patchogue to Montauk. He was astonished to see the edition rapidly sold out, and still more astonished — "my eyes popped" — when a year or two later he saw a copy advertised by Goodspeed's in Boston at \$75.

Actually Adams was unjust when he wrote later, "I think it was a very rotten book." Treating Bridgehampton primarily as a whaling village much like its north-shore neighbor Sag Harbor, he brought out the picturesqueness of its economic and social past. Even he admitted in time that "it had a lot of interesting information." He was fortunate in his subject, for in colonial days the town had sheltered not only whalers and various other adventurous mariners, but a considerable number of slaves who gradually achieved freedom. The reason the price shot to \$75, however, was that he had printed in an appendix the complete inscriptions on all gravestones in five old cemeteries of the vicinity, beginning with the one just across the way. While the quaintness in the epitaphs was pleasing, they attracted eager students of genealogy. Professor Albert S. Cook of Yale, influential in English studies,

¹⁸ *Some Notes on Currency Problems*, New York, 1908, 38 pp. and *Speculation and the Reform of the New York Stock Exchange*, Summit, New Jersey, 1913, 27 pp., both privately printed. The former dealt with the complicated circumstances leading up to the Aldrich-Vreeland Act of 1908; the latter argued for a closer oversight by the New York Stock Exchange of the books and practises of members.

found so much in his copy that he hunted up Adams, with the result that they became warm friends.

The logical ensuing step was to expand this little volume to cover the whole coastal township of Southampton, thirty miles long and holding a number of villages settled in the early seventeenth century from Old England and New England. This offered larger opportunities for a treatment of whaling, piracy, and merchant voyages European and Asiatic. Adams seized them with enthusiasm. His book, *History of the Town of Southampton, East of Canoe Place*, appeared in 1918 from the Hampton Press in Bridgehampton, in handsome format. It met a reception worthy of its thoroughness, scholarly accuracy, and literary merit. Professor Dixon Ryan Fox of Columbia, later president of Union College, a specialist in New York history, called it almost a model piece of local history. Professor Marcus W. Jernegan of the University of Chicago gave the same verdict in the *American Historical Review*.

This time the sale was gratifyingly large. The United States was being drawn into the First World War as he finished the book, and his ardor made him so eager to be free for enlistment that he had worked day and night. Although his last chapters were hurried, they were not in the least scamped.

The book began with a careful physiographic study of the area, and a description of Indian life. He proceeded to a realistic account of town government and included spirited narratives of the Revolutionary period and the War of 1812. As he covered whaling and the growth of commerce, he paused to offer honest studies of the social groups and town life. Numerous photographs of mills, houses, ships, churches, and landscapes helped give the story life and color. Maps were interspersed, and an appendix provided valuable documents, including inventories of estates. Readers could see that the research had been laborious, that the author had unusual literary ability, and that he scorned a filio-pietistic approach. Only through scholarly studies of this character, wrote Jernegan, could the country gain an understanding of the spirit of local history, and of "the development of a most important characteristic of the native American, the notion of self-government." People who paid \$2.65 for the 424-page volume got one of the best bargains of the time.¹⁹

¹⁹ Both the *Memorials of Old Bridgehampton* and the *History of the Town of Southampton* were reprinted by Empire State Historical Publications in 1962.

At last Adams had found his proper occupation, only to encounter the interruption of war.

A late start in life — there was no doubt of that, for he was thirty-nine in the autumn of 1917. Most people would have thought it unfortunate that he had gone to a technological college, third-rate in the humanities; that neither there nor in his brief attendance at Yale had any teacher inspired him; and that he had spent his best early years in a deadening Wall Street routine. Such a statement would have been unjust. His incessant reading in literature and history more than atoned for any deficiencies of his colleges; given his literary tastes and ability, he had been fortunate in escaping the graduate school pedantry of the time; and he had learned a good deal of economics from Wall Street. Nobody who crossed the barrier of his shyness could talk to him for five minutes without seeing that he was informed, thoughtful, and tolerant.

The Southampton book completed, he received a telegram from Isaiah Bowman, president of the American Geographical Society, asking if he could come in to help meet an emergency. Bowman was facing a tough problem. President Wilson had asked Colonel House to assemble a commission to gather facts, ideas, and documents in preparation for an eventual peace conference, and House had made his wife's brother-in-law, Sidney E. Mezes, a Californian once head of the University of Texas and now president of City College in New York, director of the enterprise. Mezes had then chosen Bowman as executive officer. They had gathered about ninety specialists from all over the country, begun a survey of the history, geography, ethnology, economics, and religions of fifty lands, and wound themselves up in such a ball of detail that they needed a few systematic men to unwind them. When Bowman asked Cook of Yale to suggest somebody, Cook named Adams. Within a few days Adams was living at the Yale Club, working in the Geographical Society offices, and looking after a variety of assignments.

At once he began meeting new men, new adventures, and new ideas. Bowman got him elected a member of the Explorers' Club on the ground that he had explored the "Upper Reaches of the Bronx River." He talked there with such scientists as Stefansson, William Beebe, and Peary's associate Robert Bartlett, while his work on the Mezes commission brought him in touch with Robert Lansing and Walter Lippmann. One of his main jobs was to prepare accurate maps, using newly invented photostatic apparatus. Once he worked until two in the morn-

ing to produce a large-scale map of a debatable area from more than twenty small maps on different scales. He was pleased next morning to hear Bowman tell a high government officer: "I went home, and left Adams to do the job, and of course he did it."

His superiors, including Lippmann, praised his zeal and competence. After some months, however, as the war situation grew more critical, he felt he would be happier in uniform. Bowman protested that he was useful just where he was and that plenty of others could go into the trenches. Adams nevertheless insisted and shortly got a commission in Washington as captain in the Military Intelligence Service, doing more map work. He never forgot some of his experiences in the summer of 1918. The capital that season had equatorial temperatures. For a whole week, declares Adams, the official thermometer several hundred feet above the street never went below 100° day or night.

"I used to see it one hundred and twelve degrees in the drugstores. There were no cold drinks, as the ice gave out. It was rather ghastly, because at that time we had the flu epidemic. Not only was there no ice, but after a while there were no caskets. My secretary, a nice girl and a very competent one, got the flu and was dead in three days. I had to look after that, as she came from Minnesota. The girls were often living four and five in a room owing to the crowded housing conditions, and to add to our difficulties, many of them had come to Washington to do war work as a sort of lark, and had come under assumed names and with false addresses, so that when they died it was a mess."

Besides making maps, he compiled guide books for field officers. One that he wrote on the Murmansk Peninsula in Russia, where American, British, and French troops were to stage an expedition against Communist forces, and where the Germans had a coastal submarine base, gave him endless trouble. He had to assemble the data, write his text, and see the brochure through the press within six weeks. The otherwise impossible task was made feasible by the help of Secret Service men. These sleuths found a Russian woman, for example, who before the war had lived part of the time in a Murmansk village, and part of the time in California. She gave the Secret Service all kinds of information, with photographs showing the very harbor in which the German submarines were concealed. A year or two after the war Adams was told that his booklet was so good that the British and French had gladly made use of it; but he gave the credit to the Secret Service, which had covered even details like the availability of standing timber to repair damaged railway bridges, and the facilities in various villages for quartering troops.

Adams spent most of October, 1918, in New York, doing little but putter about in his old offices in the Geographical Society. Bowman wanted him to go overseas on the *George Washington* with Wilson and the Commission, taking charge of numerous cases of books and papers, but some eager soul in the State Department seized that assignment. He lingered on through the false armistice and real armistice, still doing nothing but draw a captain's pay for living at the Yale Club, until his sharp protest brought him back to Washington. Again he did little but look after some secret files in his 1330 F Street office until one evening he went down in the elevator with a colonel named Dunn. The colonel asked if he had on his seven-league boots. Startled, Adams demanded an explanation and got the reply: "Oh, you are going to Paris tomorrow." Sure enough, he received immediate orders, and hurried to Hoboken to board the *Leviathan* — only to sit in his cabin for ten days while the vessel stayed tied up at the dock. She finally pulled out on January 23, 1919, with a contingent of about 900 homegoing Polish troops aboard.

The voyage to Europe was enlivened by an ebullient, self-assured Major Colby, who had been a lawyer in Boston before the war, and since a recent transfer from the Belgian artillery to the American army was now going to Serbia as military attaché. William S. Sharp, the Ohioan then ambassador to France, was also abroad. The crossing took ten days, during which Adams mounted guard over a heavy case containing additional books and documents for the Peace Conference. The one bit of drama occurred when they reached Brest to find that a single train ran to Paris every twenty-four hours, and that the one then puffing in the station was already full. The despairing Adams saw himself perched for a night and day on the precious box! Major Colby, however, was equal to any occasion. "Leave it to me," he said — and Adams records the sequel:

There was a whole car for the ambassador, his son, and suite, but that was sacred ground. Colby went in and talked to the *chef de gare*, and came dashing out. He said, "Come along, we're going." I asked where, and he said, "In the ambassador's car."

A little French official was making an awful fuss about weighing my box of documents when we heard the whistle begin to blow. Just then a big Negro, as black as the ace of spades, who looked as if he had come out of the rice plantations of Georgia, a private in our army, saw my captain's bars and said: "Boss, you want something?" I told him that I had to have that box weighed and put on the platform of the train before we left, and there was no time. He grabbed the French official by the back of the neck, threw him aside, weighed my box, called two or three other men, and put it on