

A Remarkable American Family



PRESIDENT JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

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By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

IT HAS become almost axiomatic that genius does not transmit itself and that the sons of great men rarely, if ever, turn out to be great. Certainly that has been as true in America as in other nations, although we have had a few families which, over a period of years, have contributed several individuals of distinction. Two of these which come readily to mind are the Lees, who during the Revolution produced a statesman and a soldier, both of more than ordinary ability, and during the Civil war a really great military leader; and the Harrisons, who produced a Revolutionary war statesman and two Presidents.

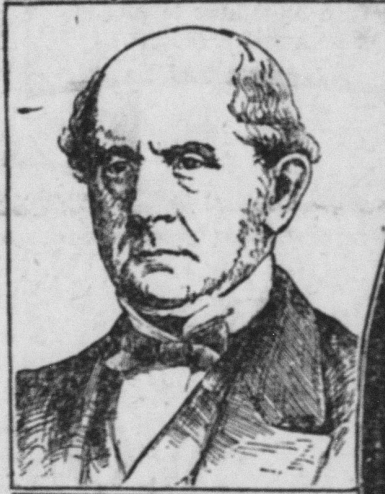
But if it is necessary to find an exception to prove the rule it may be found, perhaps, in the statement made by some one that "American history is all cluttered up with Adamses." For "in America there is one family, and only one, that generation after generation has consistently and without interruption, made contributions of the highest order to our history and civilization." Those are the words of James Truslow Adams (who, by the way, is a Virginia Adams and not related to the Massachusetts family of whom he writes) in the prologue to his book, "The Adams Family," published recently by Little, Brown and company of Boston.

The Adams family was established in America about 1636 when a certain Henry Adams, probably because of a combination of religious and economic reasons, decided to leave England and try his luck in the New world. By chance he settled at a place called Braintree in Massachusetts. He married and had children, who in turn married and handed down the family name. This went on for four generations without producing any man of distinction until we come to John Adams, a farmer and shoemaker in Braintree married Susanna Boylston, daughter of a family prominent in the medical history of the colony.

"With the fifth generation, in the person of John Adams, historian, publicist, diplomat, President of the United States, the family not only suddenly achieves national and international position, but maintains it in successive generations for two centuries. Was it due to some mysterious result from the combination of Adams and Boylston blood far beyond the ken of science even today; or to some unfathomable synchronism between the peculiar qualities of the Adamses and the whole social atmosphere of the next few generations, a subtle interplay of unknown forces; or to mere chance in a universe in which atoms rush and collide chaotically? Fascinating as is the problem, it is insoluble. All we shall see is that without warning, like a 'fault' in the geologic record, there is a sudden and immense rise recorded in the psychical energy of the family."

The stage was set for the first great Adams, John, to play his part in American history when the dispute between England and her rebellious colonies sent him to the Continental congress, where clear heads were headed to see that independence was inevitable and union of the colonies essential. While most Americans think of the Revolution mainly in terms of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and a few others of those times could not be written without the name of John Adams. It was he who had much to do with bringing congress to the point of declaring independence; he was the master stroke which caused the adoption of the New England troops around Boston as a Continental army and which checkmated intercolonial jealousies by placing George Washington, a Virginian, in command; he deserves the principal credit for establishing the American navy, and he furnished many of the political ideas on which the new nation based its government.

The international career of the



AMBASSADOR CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS



SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

Adamses began when John Adams was sent to France as one of the American commissioners—his son, John Quincy Adams, going with him to begin his education in European schools, and after a brief stay there and a brief return to this country he went back to England as one of the commissioners to arrange the terms of the treaty of peace and later to become American minister at the Court of St. James. His career as vice president and finally as President completes the pattern of the life of this first great Adams.

In John Quincy Adams, the second generation kept up the standard set by the first and even advanced it. Before he was seventeen years of age he was private secretary to the minister to Russia and to his own father in Paris and in London. On his twenty-seventh birthday, after his graduation from Harvard, President Washington sent him as minister to The Hague and later to Portugal, Prussia and Russia. Then followed a term of teaching at Harvard but he was soon called back to public service on the peace commission of 1815. Next he emulated his father by becoming minister to England and came home in 1817 to serve President Monroe as secretary of state.

John Quincy Adams was a master diplomat, having learned his lessons in the European school of international relations. He brought Spain to terms in Florida and his conciliatory actions offset the rash deeds of Jackson without blunting the force of the American policy. To him, according to Historian Adams, belongs most of the credit for the Monroe doctrine, though it has come down in history bearing the name of the Virginia President. Like his father he failed of reelection to the Presidency, but his great years came during his service as congressman from the Plymouth district when he stood almost alone in defense of constitutional government during the period of the slavery dispute. Finally he died at his desk, worn out in the service of the republic.

The third generation of Adamses did not produce another President, but it did keep up the family tradition of diplomatic service to the nation, and if there were any way to evaluate comparative worth of national and international service it might show that the contribution of Charles Francis Adams was just as great as were those of John and John Quincy. Originally a Democrat, he turned Whig in defense of freedom and union. After a career as editor and congressman, his great opportunity came when Lincoln and Seward sent him to the post his father and his grandfather had held—minister to England. There he successfully checkmated the Confederate attempts to secure recognition, and when his firmness forced Lord Russell to forbid the English-built rams to leave the shipyards for Confederate service, he sealed the doom of the southern cause. And as a member of the Alabama claims commission his conciliatory spirit tempered

the excessive demands of his colleagues, convinced Great Britain of the fairness of the American cause and won a just settlement.

The fourth generation is remarkable for the fact that the Adams genius was scattered among four sons, which accounts perhaps for the fact that no one is so outstanding as had been representatives in the previous generations. Only one, John Quincy, turned to politics and he, having chosen the unpopular Democratic party, had little chance to rise to prominence. Charles Francis was first a writer and then a business man. He became president of the Kansas City Stockyards association and later president of the Union Pacific railroad. He led his state in railway regulation, but he was never very well satisfied as a business man and later returned to writing. Perhaps the greatest of the four was Henry Adams who won his distinction in the field of literature. His book, "The Education of Henry Adams," has been called "the most thought-provoking autobiography, though it was not so intended, that American has produced." Nearly as famous is his "Mont St. Michel and Chartres." Brooks Adams dabbled in law and in writing history without making any profound impression upon either.

In his "Epilogue," the Adams historian carries the record of this remarkable American family down to the present when he writes:

"On September 20, 1824, John Quincy Adams wandered among the tombstones of the family burial plot at Quincy musing on the past and future of his line. 'Four generations of whom very little is known' he wrote in his diary, 'than is recorded upon these stones. There are three succeeding generations of us now living. Pass another century and we shall all be mouldering in the same dust, or resolved into the same elements. Who then of our posterity shall visit this yard? And what shall he read engraved upon the stones? This is known only to the Creator of all. The record may be longer. May it be of blameless lives!'"

"The century has passed. We have seen the generations, and today a third Charles Francis, a son of John Quincy's grandson, John Quincy, is head of the family. A Harvard graduate, like all his family since John; for thirty years treasurer of the university; a lawyer, like all his family; a famous yachtman who defended the American cup against the British; a man true to the family tradition and honored in his community, he sits in the cabinet at Washington as secretary of the navy which was founded by John.

"John Quincy's wistful hope has been fulfilled: 'The record may be longer.'"

(© by Western Newspaper Union.)

Community Building

Cleanliness Should Be Matter of Civic Pride

"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."

That expression by Theodore Roosevelt, farseeing American, epitomizes the spirit of clean-up campaigns which also have been likened to the great crusades of history.

This is a crusade of personal self-respect, of civic and neighborhood pride, and of the desire to make the world, or each individual's corner of the world, a better place in which to live.

These campaigns help not only to "clean up," but to publicly and permanently commit to cleanliness and attractiveness everything cleaned up. The mere cleaning is transient and futile without this public commitment to the new order of things—so that being "clothed in the garb of righteousness," as it were, and in its new dress, of grass, or shrubbery, thrift garden, or paint, the place will so inspire the respect of everybody that it will not be permitted to revert to its former disorderliness.

American Ideals Based on Atmosphere of Home

The very basis of American culture is created in the home. In the development of character and mind in growing boys and girls it is of far greater significance than even the school. In the creation of a stable, sensible electorate that will keep our democracy functioning on a successful basis it means far more than new laws or governmental and economic reforms. The significance of home ownership and home interests to the general well being of the country is epitomized in the statement: "Men will fight for a home but never for a boarding house." In other words those who own homes are interested in good government, schooling that will raise the general level of American intelligence, improvements that spell true progress spiritually as well as financially.—Lebanon Reporter.

War on "Uglification"

The British campaign against the disfigurement of the countryside has reached a constructive stage. The movement has become so strong that recently a large convention was held at the city of Leicester and vigorous action taken to check, before it is too late, the transformation of the famed loveliness of rural England into sheer hideousness.

A similar problem exists in the United States, but here distress and indignation have assumed no concrete form and are, therefore, mostly ineffective. England has beautiful oldness, we have beautiful newness, but both alike have been outraged by the spirit of this machine age which has no time to consider the esthetic side of any problem and which will scarcely admit that such a side even exists.

Better-Home Movement

The movement for better homes in America was inspired and developed under the personal leadership of President Hoover, who still serves as its honorary chairman. The contributions which the thousands of local committees are making in civic welfare through their contests for home improvement, their demonstrations of the better types of home design and furnishing, and their campaigns for neighborhood protection and development are the product of much thoughtful planning and disinterested and unselfish civic service on the part of community leaders, the professions and the educational groups throughout the country.

Landscape Gardening

The right kind of landscape effects are not the result of haphazard planting. It must be borne in mind by the amateur gardener.

Careful study will reveal the fact that even the small home grounds can be made attractive with the bloom of flowers for the greater part of the year, in moderate climates, if the planting has been worked out in rotation. The more hardy plants will bloom from early spring until frost and the wise planter will even assure beauty throughout the winter by the judicious addition of a few evergreens!

Oregon's Clean-Up Day


Boy scouts, school children, members of service clubs and other civic organizations of Oregon left ordinary pursuits for a day, May 10, and turned out to help clean up highways of the state.

This day, sponsored by the State Federation of Garden Clubs, was proclaimed by Gov. A. W. Norblad as highway cleanup day and offered an opportunity to public-spirited citizens to get cut and do their bit for the state.

Give Thought to Planning

The most important part of the building of a home is often accomplished before the spade is set into the earth. Its economy, comfort and convenience are dependent mainly upon the care and thought devoted to the plan. The well-planned house is a joy to live in and the poorly planned one is costly and a continuing source of dissatisfaction.

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Vitality of Germs

Germs sealed up in culture tubes 20 years ago have been found to be still alive by Dr. Ortiz Patto, reports Modern Mechanics Magazine. Having a number of these culture tubes made up as long ago as 1903, he inoculated samples into living animals to see if typical diseases would be produced. Many of the germs grew in the new cultures and some produced disease just as these same germs would have done when young.

Value of an outing is in its relaxation. What relaxation do you get driving on a crowded cement highway?

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Apple Possibilities
One co-operative of fruit growers in the Shenandoah valley is now making 400 separate products from apples and marketing them around the world.—Country Home.

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Rejuvenation


Dr. Sims Lee Rice, the Richmond surgeon, was talking about the Voro-noff and other methods of rejuvenation.

"These methods," he said, "rejuvenate, yes, but the rejuvenation only lasts a short time. A year or so passes, and you are older, far older, than before."

"One of our millionaires," Professor Rice went on, "underwent the rejuvenating operation, and temporarily the change in him was remarkable. Though he was seventy years old, a crop of thick brown hair burst forth on his bald head, his wrinkles disappeared, and the strength of youth came back to him."

"When he returned home the home papers all called him the grand old man."

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