

Thomas Adams (1725-1812)¹

Adams was a voracious collector of books – a passion that no doubt influenced his daughter Hannah in her love of learning and writing. As she writes in her memoir,

I was born in Medfield, a country town about eighteen miles from Boston. My father early imbibed a love of literature, and prepared to enter the university. But as his constitution then appeared to be very infirm, and he was an only son, his parents were strenuously opposed to his leaving them. Accordingly, to his inexpressible disappointment, he was obliged to settle upon their large farm, without a suitable knowledge of, or taste for, agricultural pursuits. This induced him to open a shop, for the sale, principally, of English Goods and Books. His taste for reading continued unabated till his death, which took place at the advanced age of eightyeight years.

A Memoir of Miss Hannah Adams, Written by Herself. With Additional Notices by a Friend (Boston: Gray and Bowen, 1832), 1-2

William Parkman, son of Ebenezer Parkman, married Lydia Adams, September 9, 1766. She and Thomas Adams were first cousins.

1766 March 29 (Saturday). Billy returns from Medfield and brings me a Letter from Squire Adams of Feb. 21 in answer to mine of December 6th last.

1766 May 26 (Monday). At Mr. Townshends at Medfield and at Squire Adams's where we drank Tea, Supped and lodged.

1766 August 18 (Monday). Mr. Moore returned with my Daughters Sarah and Suse from Boston, but last from Medfield, where they kept Sabbath. The Girls had lodged three Nights at Squire Adams's.

1766 September 10 (Wednesday). Though it was a rainy Day, yet at Evening *Billy* came and the Young Lady (heretofore Miss *Lydia Adams*) whom he had last night married at *Medfield*. Besides those that went with *Billy* then, none except her Brother Mr. *Elijah Adams*, came hither with them. We were altogether unprepared, having no Expectation at all of them, but designed, tomorrow, to give our Selves to make Preparations for them. Mr. *Adams* and *Barrett* lodge here. The Others, respectively, went home.

1766 September 11 (Thursday). My Son *Billy* and his Bride leave us for *Townshend*. All the Company we have a Breakfast (besides my son and Daughter) is Mr. *Adams* and *Barrett* -- And but two more join them to go home with them, viz. Messrs. *Wheelock* and *John Maynard*.

1768 September 15 (Thursday). Call at Mr. Paysons in Walpole. N.B. his wife languishes. Visit

¹Thomas, s. Thomas and Mary Adams, b. Mr. 31, 1725 (*Vital Records of Medfield, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* [Boston: New-England Historical Genealogical Society, 1903], 13); m. Elisebeth Clark, Feb. 13, 1750 (*ibid.*, 113); d. July __, 1812 (*ibid.*, 191). Hannah Adams b. Oct. 2, 1755 (*ibid.*, 10).

Squire Adams at Medfield -- and Mr. Thomas Adams -- his Library -- dined at Mr. Townsends with Mr. Moses Adams and Mr. Jason Whitney who were returning from *Mendon* Ordination.

1769 January 13 (Friday). Wrote by Billy also to Mr. *Thomas Adams* and Sent his *Select Collection of Poems*.

1769 January 26 (Thursday). At Eve my son William returned from Rochester, with Letters etc. He came by the way of Roxbury. He brings me from Mr. *West* of Dartmouth, *Sale's* 2d Volume of the *Koran*, and from Mr. Thomas Adams of Medfield, *Kennicotts* two Dissertations, viz. on the Tree of Life; and on the Offerings of *Cain* and *Abel*.

1769 March 31 (Friday). Mr. *Wheelock* having carryed to *Medfield* Mr. *Thomas Adams's* Book, viz. *Kennicot's* two Discourses, to return it to Mr. *Adams*, makes Return to me that *That* was done, and he had brought two more from him, viz. Mrs. *Wentworths* Court Miscellany Vol. 1 and A. *Ricker's* Great Events from little Causes.

1769 June 19 (Monday). Miss *Kezia Adams* from Medfield, here and dined with us. P.M. she went to her Uncle Morse's at Shrewsbury.

1770 October 30 (Tuesday). Sent a Letter by Dr. Hawes to Mr. Thomas Adams.

1770 November 7 (Wednesday). The Doctor [James Hawes] brought me from Mr. *Thomas Adams* of *Medfield*, Court Miscellanys in which an Account of Mrs. *Macaulay*, Lord *Bolingbroke* etc.

1771 January 2 (Wednesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* of *Medfield* made me a Visit and lodged here. He brought me several Books to read. *Baumgartens* new Theory of human Nature and Education. *Saaldfields* Philosophical Discourse of Dreams. [Sturmys?] plurality of worlds. And a General Table of Europe, its present and Future state.

1771 January 3 (Thursday). Mr. Adams p.m. went to Grafton.... Read Mr. Adams's *Sabrina*.

1771 January 4 (Friday). Mr. Adams returned and dined -- Conversed with him. He lodged here.

1771 January 5 (Saturday). Mr. Adams communicated Several pieces of his. Left his *Seraphima* etc. [here?] with reluctance. He himself left us.

1772 February 13 (Thursday). At 10 at night came Mr. *Thomas Adams* from Medfield and lodged.

1772 February 14 (Friday). Mr. *Adams* here with me and Spends the Day here; which does exceedingly interrupt my Studys. He wants a Number of my Books, and importunes me till I consent. He has *St. Augustine* of the City of God. Translation of *Juvenal* and *Persius*, by *Dryden* etc. and the Latin by *Farnaby*: The *Causes of the Decay* of Christian Piety: the *Gentlemans* Library: Life of de *Rente* and the *Christian Philosopher*. For which he gives me Mr.

Gouge's Works, Calvins Institutions; Dr. Youngs Night Thoughts, Dr. Whitbys Protestant Reconciler; Dr. Evans Christian Temper; and Dr. Stillingfleets Orig. Sacrae 4to. To which he adds a Number of Pamphlets. At Eve he goes to Dr. *Hawes*.

1772 March 25 (Wednesday). Receive from Mr. Thomas *Adams* of Medfield via *Boston* three Books, viz. *Origines Sacrae*, Mr. Thomas *Gouge*, and Dr. *Youngs Night Thoughts*.

1772 March 31 (Tuesday). Wrote to Mr. *Thomas Adams* of Medfield.

1773 March 13 (Saturday). Have received last Evening a Letter from Mr. Thomas *Adams* of *Medfield*, with Several Books I had lent him, and Dr. *Evans* of the Christian Temper which he had bargained to me and was long looked for.

1774 October 3 (Monday). Sat out early for *Boston*. Journeyed to Dr. *Corbetts* at Bellingham. Took Some Refreshment there -- and thence to Mr. Bucknams at *Medway*. Proceed to Squire *Elisha Adams*, where was Squire *Lyscombe* of *Taunton*. Dined with them. At *Medfield*, Mr. *Enoch Adams's*.

1775 April 4 (Tuesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* of Medfield came, late in the Evening and Snow storm; Cold; brought a Number of Books with him: Lodges here.

1775 April 5 (Wednesday). A Winter scene. Mr. *Adams* tarrys and endeavours to change divers Books with me. He gives me The Modern Edition in Quarto of Mr. *Thomas Nortons* Translation of *Calvins Institutions*, for *Whistons* Theory of the Earth, and *Hasselquists* Travels into the Levant: and the first Volume of *Weemse's* Works (to complete my set); for which I let him have Dr. *Edw. Hyde* on Christ and his Church 4to and the famous Book of *Bertram* of the Body and Blood of Christ. We also lend reciprocally several other Books. N.B. He gave me Mr. *Barrys* [Reviving?] Cordial -- to make up for the brokenness of *Calvins Institutions* in Folio Latin.

1775 April 6 (Thursday). Mr. *Adams* leaves us.

1775 May 26 (Friday). Miss *Kezia Adams* came from *Holliston* and lodged here.

1775 May 27 (Saturday). Miss *Kezia Adams* p.m. after Coffee returns to *Holliston*. I wrote by her to Mr. Thomas Adams for Bostons 4 fold state and Mason on self-Knowledge.

1775 June 1 (Thursday). [Boston.] I also Saw Mr. *Thomas Adams* of *Medfield*, who brought me Several Books according to agreement, viz. Bostons 4 fold State; *Mason* of Self Knowledge, Life of Mr. *Whitefield*.

1775 July 7 (Friday). Mr. Adams leaves us to return to *Medfield*.

1775 July 11 (Tuesday). Called at [Rev.] Prentice's, at Mr. [illegible] *Marsh's*, and at Mr. *Enoch Adams's* in Medfield. Stopped at Mr. *Thomas Adams's*, and returned him his *Baumgarten* [torn]man Nature and Education of Children. Lodged [torn] *Adams's*; and was thus far well. D.G. [torn]ted with Mr. *Thomas Adams*, and Saw his Daughter *Han*[torn] is remarkable for her

Memory and progress in her [torn] Latin.

1775 July 13 (Thursday). Rose early, and having prayed with Such as could attend I sat out soon after 4 o'Clock in the Morning. Rode before sunrise to Mr. Paysons -- to Justice *Adams* -- breakfast at Mr. Thomas *Adams*' -- borrow of him *Burton* on Melancholy, and The View of human Nature in Select Historys. Called to See Mr. *Jonathan Townsend* -- Mr. *Adams* and Lady, of *Roxbury*, at his Brother Enochs -- [at?] Mr. *Ezek Marsh*'s, Mr. Prentice's at *Holliston*.

1776 March 29 (Friday). At Eve came Mr. *Thomas Adams*. They both lodged here.

1776 March 30 (Saturday). I deliver Mr. *Adams* the Books I have borrowed of him, Except what I have bought of him, and except *Johnsons* Christian Plea. He takes away with him, of my Books, Dr. *Twiss*'s *Vendicæ Gratiæ*; and *Shepherds Parables*. For which he is to Send me Dr. *Fullers Worthys*, and Lord *Landsdown*; and I have his *View of human Nature*. Both Mr. *Adams* and Mr. *Coollidge* left us a.m.

1776 July 2 (Tuesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* brings home my Books, and Dr. *Fullers Englands* *Worthys* which I bought of him before. He has brought a Number more which he urges me to Exchange Some of mine for. He dined with me, and having Shewn me some of his Daughters Compositions (by ways of Essays) he left me, to return to *Medfield*.

1777 April 23 (Wednesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* from *Medfield* -- dined; changed a Book or two -- and returned.

1778 April 8 (Wednesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* of *Medfield* came. Wants to exchange Sundry Books with me. He lodges here.

1778 April 9 (Thursday). Mr. *Adams* carries away *Voetius* 3 very thick 4to Vols. and leaves Monsieur *Claudus* Defence of the Reform. 4to. President *Chauncys* Doctrine of Justification 4to. Mr. *Reb. Nasmiths* *Entail of the Covenant of Grace: and Human Prudence*.

1779 June 14 (Monday). Send by Dr. Hawes, a letter to Mr. Moore, also to Mr. Thos. Adams.

1779 June 25 (Friday). By him I wrote to his Father now at Newtown and to Mr. Thos. Adams of Medfield, who I hear is much out of Health.

1779 July 12 (Monday). Mr. Thomas Adams of Medfield came at Evening with a number of Books and lodged here.

1779 July 13 (Tuesday). Mr. Adams has brought home to me at length Sir William Temple. He has led me also into an Exchange of a number of Books, viz. For *Voetius* 3 vols. I have Dr. Stanhope's *Thomas a Kempis*, Dr. Calamy, of *Vows: Horneck's crucified Jesus*, and Dr. Goodman's *Old Religion*. For Monsr. Boileau's 2d vol. and Mat Prior's *Works* 2 vols. I have Dr. Hammond's *Annotations* in large Folio. For the *Lay Monastery*, I have *Herman Prudence*, and Three Select Pieces of Mr. Thos. Shepherd. For *Comin's Real Christian*, unbound, I gave him at his proposal a Pound of Sugar. He presented me a Pamphlet, Dr. Gibson on the

Sinfulness of Neglecting and profaning the Lord's Day. N.B. I returned him his Drexilius on Eternity. He showed me a Manuscript of his Daughter's forming in 4to Alphabetical, and contains an account of all manner of Errors, Sects, etc. in every age of Christianity. He sold Breck a number of unbound Books, Firmin, Shaw, Shepherd, Doelittle etc. After dinner he left us to go to Sherburn.

1779 July 15 (Thursday). Am variously employed among the Books which I lately had from Mr. Adams and Mr. Barrett.

1780 May 12 (Friday). Mr. Thomas Adams of Medfield came to see me and lodges here.

1780 May 13 (Saturday). Mr. Adams wants my Volume of Chubb's Tracts in 4to. He gives me Dr. Brown Languith's Modern Theory and Practice of Physick; Dr. Goodman's Penitent Pardon. Judge Hale's Contemplations, part 3, with his Life, and Mr. Durham on Scandal. Besides Chubb, he has Dennis's Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry, and leaves me two Pamphlets, viz: Dr. Cardogan on the Gout etc. and Mr. S. Webster's two Discourses on Infant Baptism. He promises Dr. Owen on Spiritual Mindedness: for which he takes with him Dr. Bray's Bibliotheca Parochialis. Further I lent him Cornelius Agrippa of the Vanity of the Sciences. To be sent to my son Samuel Boston. Mrs. Harrington here p.m. Makes Return of their Visit to Mrs. Adams, and gives me a Paper signed by her, and the Committee.

1780 June 27 (Tuesday). Another [letter] to Mr. Thos. Adams at Medfield, also to Mr. Ripley, his Melmoth on Sublime and Beautiful of Script.

1780 October 12 (Thursday). I have writ by them to Mr. Moore, to Mr. Fitch and to Mr. Thos. Adams.

1781 February 8 (Thursday). Received a Letter from Mr. Thomas Adams with 2 Books, viz. *Corn. Agrippa*, and Dr. Owen of Spiritual Mindedness.

1781 April 12 (Thursday). Mr. *Brigham* to *Boston*. Write by him to Mr. *Quincy*, and sent *Dennis* on the Advertisement and Reflection of [Modern?] Poetry for Mr. *Thomas Adams* of *Medfield*, whose it is now become.

1782 June 5 (Wednesday). Mr. *Thomas Adams* came and brings me Dr. *Owens* Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ. He lodges here.

1782 June 6 (Thursday). Mr. *Adams* changes Dr. *Owen* on the *Glory of Christ* (and which hath in it the Doctors Life and Letters) and with this Dr. *Colmans Incomprehensibleness of God*. He leaves these two for *Bacchus's* History of the Anabaptists. He goes to *Ashburnham* to See his Daughter *Hill*.