

THE REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS



In his journal for February 13, 1855 Henry Thoreau instances a "Reverend William Adams." No Thoreau scholar has to date taken the trouble to figure out who this guy was and how it was that he came to Thoreau's attention. It seems there have been a whole bunch of William Adamses, so considerable disambiguation is needed. One "William Adams" went to Japan early on and lived there the remainder of his life. Another "Reverend William Adams" was Brit rather than American. It turns out that the "Reverend William Adams" Thoreau cited had been a student at Harvard College, who for a period of time kept a sort of perfunctory diary, which had been preserved by his dutiful son.

(It is to be noted that the only thing that interested Thoreau, in the life of this Puritan divine full of spiritual counsel, was a few chance mentions of snowfalls.)

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Here is the information we have been able to collect on this particular "Reverend William Adams," the one who had interested Thoreau:

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1599

September: When the Netherlands expedition of 5 ships and 494 men sponsored by Pieter van den Hagen and Johan van der Veken entered the Pacific Ocean, its ships were separated in a storm and swept back into the Straits. The *Liefde* met Olivier van Noort, another Dutchman who tried to reach the east through the Straits of Magelhaes (and indeed succeeded, completing the 1st Dutch and 4th overall circumnavigation). Sebald de Weert (who after Mahu's death had moved to the *Liefde*) tried to join forces with Olivier van Noort in order to reach the Indies. Once again they were blown back into the Straits, and after another visit by Van Noort, who too was blown back, De Weert decided to hunt for penguins at the Penguin Islands, at the eastern end of the Straits. When adverse winds and streams again blew them east, De Weert decided to sail back home. They discovered the Sebald de Weert islands, but were unable to land there to replenish their food supplies. Only 36 out of 105 crewmembers were left when they returned to the Netherlands. The *Trouwe* did manage to beat through the Straits and landed on Chiloe, an island on the Chilean coast. On request of the local population the dutchmen took a Spanish fortress and locked the Spanish into their church building. However, the Chileans came and started to kill the Spanish, and Captain Balthasar de Cordes (Van Boekhout had died in Patagonia) had to give the Spanish back their arms in order that they might protect themselves, and the Dutch vacated the fortress. When the Spanish began to slaughter the Chileans the Dutch attacked the fortress a second time, and again succeeded in capturing it. The Spanish soldiers fled, and when the governor and other inhabitants surrendered, most were executed by the Dutch. Additional Spanish forces arrived, the Dutch were beaten, and many Dutch were killed. The surviving Dutch captured a Spanish ship near Truxillo and somehow managed to cross the Pacific to Ternate. On Tidore almost all of them were killed by the Portuguese, and those who managed to escape were captured and taken to Goa. The *Blijde Boodschap* (better known as *Vliegend Hart* or "Flying Heart") was so short on supplies that they entered the Spanish harbour of Valparaiso, where they were captured by the Spanish. It took a long time for some of them to return home, the last was captain Dirck Gerritsz, who had visited [China](#) and [Japan](#) in Portuguese service in the 1580s. He was freed in a prison exchange in 1604. Both the *Hoop* and the *Liefde* met hostile natives, who probably thought they were Spaniards, and lost their captains and a large number of men. After the ships met again, the new captains, Jacob Jansz. Quackernaek and Huydekooper decided to try to reach Japan. The *Hoop* was lost in a storm. When Quackernaek's *Liefde* reached Kyushu only six of the remaining 24 men were still able to walk. [William Adams](#), an Englishman, was among the crewmembers that reached Japan. He was sent to the shogun Iyeyasu, who soon became very fond of him. He managed to get freedom for his fellow crewmembers. He remained in Japan for the remainder of his life, becoming important and wealthy as a shipbuilder, math teacher and tradesman. Quackernaek himself reached the Dutch trade settlement in Patani in 1605, carrying an invitation of the shogun for the Dutch to trade in his country, and in the following year would be killed in a fight against the Portuguese.





REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1650

May 27, Monday (Old Style): [William Adams, Junior](#) was born in Ipswich, Massachusetts to William Adams (1620-1659) and Elizabeth Stacy Adams (1624-1655).¹

I was born a sinner into an evil world.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT



1. For the history of this Adams family of Ipswich, refer to Kenneth L. Bosworth's 1996 genealogy study, WILLIAM ADAMS, 1594-1661, OF IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS, AND SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS: A HISTORY OF THE ANCESTRAL ADAMS LINEAGE OF MADELINE (ADAMS) WHITEHEAD AND DESCENDANTS OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS OF MOUND CITY, KANSAS WITH DETAILS OF RELATED FAMILIES, INCLUDING : DICKINSON, KNOWLTON, LEACH, LOCKE ... (Heritage Books).



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1659

[William Adams](#) of Ipswich, Massachusetts was left an orphan at the age of 9 years.

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1666

June 11, Monday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “first went to school to Mr. Andrews: abode with him till Aug. 10. 1667.”

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1667

August 13, Tuesday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “came down to Cambridge to y^e commencement, sought for admission into colledge, could nto obtain it, pecunia^e deerant.”

[HARVARD COLLEGE](#)

August 14, Wednesday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “returned home, lived a disconsolate month at home.”

September 20, Friday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “came to Cambridge again with my uncle N.A.”

[HARVARD COLLEGE](#)

September 21, Saturday (Old Style): According to the [Concord](#) Town Record, “Mary daughter of Joseph heaward & hanna his wife [Hannah Hosmer Heywood] borne 21 Sept 1667”

[William Adams](#) “was admitted into Colledge.”

[HARVARD COLLEGE](#)

[John Evelyn](#)’s diary entry for this day was in part as follows:

John Evelyn’s Diary

This don, 21. I accompanied Mr. Howard to his Villa at Alburie, where I designed for him the plat for his Canale & Garden, with a Crypta thro the hill &c:

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

November 22, Friday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “went home to Ipswich afoot.”

November 27, Wednesday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) “returned to Cambridge upon Mr. D. Epps’s horse, was lost in Charlestowne woods and lay in y^e woods all night, so bewildered I took N. for S. and contra.”

[William Adams](#)

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1670

October 8, Saturday (Old Style): [William Adams](#), a student at [Harvard College](#), “was at [Boston](#), saw a thief and an Indian [hanged](#): the Indian turned off singing.” (The hangings took place on Boston Common. This native American, who was suspected in the murder of Zachary Smith in Dedham Woods, was hanged inside a gibbet cage so the decomposing body would hold together longer in warning to others.)

**WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**

November 10, Thursday (Old Style): [William Adams](#), a student at [Harvard College](#), began his diary by making a bunch of retrospective entries.

December 1, Thursday (Old Style): [William Adams](#), a student at [Harvard College](#), wrote in his diary that “This day was the first flight of snow this winter it being hardly over shoes.”



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1671

August 8, Tuesday (Old Style): Samuel Sewall and [William Adams](#) graduated at [Harvard College](#) with the Bachelor of Arts degree. Adams wrote in his diary “I was admitted to y^e degree of Batchelour of Arts in Harvard Colledge in N.E. under y^e Reverend Charles Chancey President.”

August 12, Saturday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) wrote in his diary “A great Eclipse of the Sun, though not fully totall here at Cambridge.”

SKY EVENT

October 6, Friday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) wrote in his diary “I rid out with some others to se y^e strange effects of a violent hurricane y^e had been on y^e —— of Aug. about a mile and a half from Rehoboth, carrying about 20 rod in breadth, tearing up by y^e roots, or breaking y^e bodyes of almost all trees within its compasse saving only some small and low ones, and it is thought in all probability to have gone 15 miles in length.”

November 24, Friday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) wrote in his diary “The first great snow this winter being almost knee deep.”

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1673

March 21, Friday (1672, Old Style): [William Adams](#) wrote in his diary “The Castle burnt at [Boston](#) about a league from y^e town” (this castle at the entrance of Boston Harbor had been a timber construction and the fire was an accident; the castle would be rebuilt in stone).

December 3, Wednesday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) was ordained as the 2d pastor of the Church of Christ in Dedham, Massachusetts, “Mr. Wilson giving y^e charge, Elder Hunting and Deacon Aldis joyning in laying of hands: Mr. Danforth of Roxbury gave y^e right hand of fellowship.”



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1674

October 21, Wednesday (Old Style): The [Reverend William Adams](#) got married with Mary Manning of Cambridge in Dedham, Massachusetts. The union would produce Mary Adams on November 12, 1675, who would die in a few months, and the Reverend Eliphalet Adams on March 26, 1677, who would live until 1753 (MASSACHUSETTS VITAL RECORDS — “Mr William Addams & Mary Manning married 15: of ye 8 mo. 1674” [we notice that October was listed as the 8th month of the year, since it was an Old Style year which had begun on March 25th]).



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1678

November 21, Thursday (Old Style): The [Reverend William Adams](#) delivered a sermon on a day of General Fast, that would be published in 1679 as THE | NECESSITY | OF | THE POURING OUT OF THE SPIRIT | FROM ON HIGH | UPON A | SINNING APOSTATIZING PEOPLE, SET UNDER | JUDGMENT, IN ORDER TO THEIR MERCIFUL | DELIVERANCE AND SALVATION. | AS IT WAS DELIVERED IN PART, UPON 21.9.1678, BEING A GENERAL | FAST THROUGHOUT THE UNITED COLONIES OF N.E. [ISA. xxxii. 13-18.] (Boston: ...John Foster, for William Avery).



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1679

June 24, Tuesday (Old Style): Mary Manning Adams died in Dedham, Massachusetts and her husband the [Reverend William Adams](#) noted in his diary that “My dear and loving wife departed this life after we had been married 4 years and 8 months, whereby I am bereaved of a sweet and pleasant companion and left in a very lonely and solitary condition.” The widower would remarry soon and there would be additional children (MASSACHUSETTS VITAL RECORDS — “Mrs. Mary Addams, dec. 24: 4: 79” [the meticulous will notice that June was listed as the 4th month of the year, since it was an Old Style year which had begun as of March 25th]).



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1680

March 29, Monday (Old Style): At the age of 29 the widowed [Reverend William Adams](#), who had a 3-year-old son to raise, remarried in Dedham, Massachusetts with Alice Bradford, 20- or 21-year-old daughter of Major William Bradford and granddaughter of Governor William Bradford (MASSACHUSETTS VITAL RECORDS — “Mr. William Addams and Mrs. Alice Bradford married 29: 1: 1680” [we notice that March was listed as the 1st month of the year, since it was an Old Style year which did not begin until March 25th]). The union would produce Elizabeth Adams on February 23, 1681, Alice Adams on April 3, 1682, William Adams on December 17, 1683, and (after the father’s death) daughter Abiel Adams on December 15, 1685 (the widow would remarry after his death and produce 8 additional children).



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1681

July 24, Sunday (Old Style): The [Reverend William Adams](#) wrote in his diary “Mr. Vrian Oakes Pastor of y^e Ch. at Cambr. and President of [Harvard College](#) died.” (The [Reverend Urian Oakes](#) had begun acting as President after the forced resignation of [President Leonard Hoar](#) in 1675, until after several years he was selected as the new President; he would be succeeded by [President John Rogers](#).)



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1682

In about this timeframe the [Reverend William Adams](#) of Dedham, Massachusetts wrote “A Latin Poem on the death of [Urian Oakes](#),” 4th president of [Harvard College](#) and minister at the Congregational Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who had died on July 25, 1681.

THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1685

May , Wednesday (Old Style): Magistrate Samuel Sewall was re-elected to the Board of Overseers of [Harvard College](#).

[Reverend William Adams](#)

August 17, Monday (Old Style): [William Adams](#) died in Dedham, Massachusetts after serving 12 years as its pastor (MASSACHUSETTS VITAL RECORDS — “Mr. William Adams, ye Reuerend Pastor of the Church, deceased 17: 6: 85” [we notice that August was listed as the 6th month of the year, since it was an Old Style year which had begun on March 25th]). His son the Reverend Eliphalet Adams would preserve a 15-page diary he began as a college student, for posterity. Judge Sewall attended the funeral and informs us not only that the prayers offered at this funeral were public, but also that this was the initial occasion on which New Englanders did offer public prayers on such an occasion. The widow Alice Bradford Adams would remarry, becoming the 2d wife of Major James Fitch of Norwich, and would produce for him 8 additional children.



**THE BURIAL PLACE
THIS PORTION SET APART IN 1636,
ENLARGED IN 1638. IT WAS
THE ONLY BURIAL PLACE FOR
NEARLY A CENTURY. HERE
WERE BURIED ALLIN, ADAMS
BELCHER, DEXTER AND HAVEN
MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH
AND ALLEYNE, LUSHER, DWIGHT
AND FISHER WITH OTHER
FOUNDERS OF THE TOWN.**



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

1847

[Luke Howard](#)'s *BAROMETROGRAPHIA*.



HOWARD PUBLICATIONS

The [Reverend William Adams](#), Late Vicar of St. Peter's in the East, Oxford, and Fellow of Merton College's WARNINGS OF THE HOLY WEEK, &C. BEING A COURSE OF PAROCHIAL LECTURES FOR THE WEEK BEFORE EASTER, AND THE EASTER FESTIVALS (London: Francis & John Rivington, St. Paul's Church Yard, and Waterloo Place; Gilbert & Rivington, Printers, St. John's Square).²

WARNINGS OF EASTER WEEK

2. This is a British reverend, not the New England reverend afterward settled in Dedham, Massachusetts, whom Thoreau mentions in his journal for February 13, 1855. (Thoreau read the [Rev. William Adams](#)'s early Cambridge, Massachusetts journal because of Adams's making record of snowfalls.)



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

1849

[Professor Thomas Bell](#)'s A HISTORY OF BRITISH REPTILES ILLUSTRATED BY MORE THAN 40 WOODCUTS (London: J. Van Voorst).

THE BRITISH REPTILES

The [Reverend William Adams, M.A.](#), Late Fellow of Merton College, Oxford's SACRED ALLEGORIES, THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS. THE DISTANT HILLS. THE OLD MAN'S HOME. THE KING'S MESSENGERS. (London: Francis & John Rivington, St. Paul's Churchyard and Waterloo-Place; Printed by Richard Clay, Bread Street Hill. With engravings from original designs by Charles W. Cope, John C. Horsley, Samuel Palmer, Birket Foster and George E. Hicks).³

SACRED ALLEGORIES

MEMOIR OF THE [REV. WILLIAM ADAMS](#), OF DEDHAM, MASS., AND OF THE REV. ELIPHALET ADAMS, OF NEW LONDON, CONN. BY MISS F[RANCES] M[ANWARING] CAULKINS (Cambridge: Metcalf and Company, Printers to the University).⁴

MEMOIR OF WILLIAM ADAMS

3. This is a British reverend, not the New England reverend afterward settled in Dedham, whom Thoreau mentions in his journal for February 13, 1855. Thoreau read the [Rev. William Adams](#)'s early Cambridge, Massachusetts journal because of Adams's making record of snowfalls.

4. This is the New England [Rev. William Adams](#) whose preserved 15-page diary Thoreau consulted.



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS


1855

February 13, Tuesday: At 10 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Walden Woods. It was not cold but the sky was somewhat overcast.



February 13. In A. M.—To Walden Woods

Not cold; sky somewhat overcast

The tracks of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] are more remarkable in this snow than usual, it is so light, being at the same time a foot deep. I see where one has waddled along several rods, making a chain-like track about three inches wide (or two and a half), and at the end has squatted in the snow, making a perfectly smooth and regular oval impression, like the bowl of a spoon, five inches wide. Then, six inches beyond this, are the marks of its wings where it struck the snow on each side when it took flight. It must have risen at once without running. In one place I see where one, after running a little way, has left four impressions of its wings on the snow on each side extending eighteen or twenty inches and twelve or fifteen in width: In one case almost entire wing was distinctly impressed, eight primaries and five or six secondaries. In one place, when alighting, the primary quills, five of them, have marked the snow for a foot. I see where many have dived into the snow, apparently last night, on the side of a shrub oak hollow. In four places they have passed quite underneath it for more than a foot; in one place, eighteen inches. They appear to have dived or burrowed into it, then passed along a foot or more underneath and squatted there, perhaps, with their heads out, and have invariably left much dung at the end of this hole. I scared one from its hole only half a rod in front of me now at 11 A. M. These holes seen sidewise look thus:— It is evidently a hardy bird, and in the above respects, too, is like the rabbit, which squats under a brake or bush on the snow. I see the traces of the latter in hollows in the snow in such places, — their forms



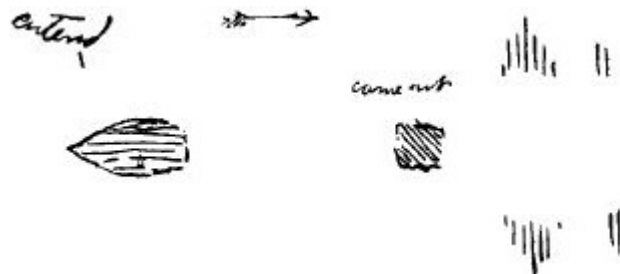
In the Journal of the [Rev. William Adams](#) (afterward settled in Dedham), written apparently in and about Cambridge, Mass. (he graduated in 1671 at Cambridge), he says under “Dece 1” (1670), “This day was the first flight of snow this winter it being hardly over shoes.” And 1671, November “24. The first great snow this winter being almost knee deep.” (Hist. Coll., 4th Series, vol. I.)

An English antiquarian says, “May-Flower was a very favorite name with English seamen, and given by them to vessels from almost every port in England.” (Ibid. p. 85.)

“Hurts” is an old English word used in heraldry, where, according to Bailey, it is “certain balls resembling hurtle berries.”

One of these pigweeds in the yard lasts the snowbirds all winter, and after every new storm they revisit it. How inexhaustible their granary!

To resume the subject of partridges, looking further in an open place or glade amid the shrub oaks and low pitch pines, I found as many as twenty or thirty places where partridges had lodged in the snow, apparently the last night or the night before. You could see commonly where their bodies had first struck the snow and furrowed it for a foot or two, and six inches wide, then entered and gone underneath two feet and rested at the further end, where the manure is left. Is it not likely that they remain quite under the snow there, and do not put their heads out till ready to start? In many places they walked along before they went under the snow. They do not go under deep, and the gallery they make is mostly filled up behind them, leaving only a thin crust above. Then invariably, just beyond this resting-place, you could see the marks made by their wings when they took their departure:



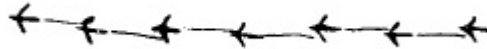
NATHAN BAILEY



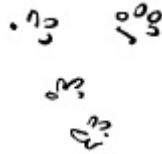
REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

These distinct impressions made by their wings, in the pure snow, so common on all hands, though the bird that made it is gone and there is no trace beyond, affect me like some mystic Oriental symbol, — the winged globe or what-not, — as if made by a spirit. In some places you would see a furrow and hollow in the snow where there was no track for rods around, as if a large snowball or a cannon-ball had struck it, where apparently the birds had not paused in their flight. It is evidently a regular thing with them thus to lodge in the snow. Their tracks, when perfectly distinct, are seen to be almost in one straight line thus, trailing the middle toe:



about five inches apart. In one place I saw where one had evidently trailed the tips of the wings, making two distinct lines five or six inches apart, one on each side the foot-tracks; probably made by a male. In the same place were many great tracks of the white rabbit. The earliest, made while the snow was very soft, were very large and shapeless, somewhat like the marks made by snow falling from the trees. More recent ones had settled and broken the slight crust around them, leaving a large indentation. The distinct track was like this:



the front tracks, which are the largest, being about two and a half inches in diameter, and the whole track of the four feet often one foot long. These impressions so slight (though distinct) it is hard to realize that so heavy an animal made them. I see where the squirrels have been eating the pitch pine cones since the last snow.

BAILEY'S DICTIONARY

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: August 13, 2014



REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

WILLIAM ADAMS

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



WILLIAM ADAMS

REVEREND WILLIAM ADAMS

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.