

## Adam Gillespie Adams



Adam Gillespie Adams  
1820 - 1895

**THE *Nashville American* of April 1, 1895, had the following sketch of the life of Mr. A. G. Adams, who was one of the first members to join the Scotch-Irish Society of America, and who was the Vice President for Tennessee in the Society from the first year of its existence until he passed away, March 31, 1895:**

**"Adam Gillespie Adams was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, July 12, 1820. He was one of a family of twelve children, his father being a blacksmith. His mother's name was Jane Gillespie, and both sides of his family are of Scotch-Irish descent. His early life was surrounded by an atmosphere of piety, and the influence of his mother's training made him a leader in that favorite Church of the Scotch-Irish, the Presbyterian. His school privileges ended when he was twelve years old, and he went into a wholesale house as clerk, remaining till nineteen years old, when he came to America, accompanied by a younger brother. In his seven years' service he acquired wide experience with men and with merchandise, and this served him in the new world.**

**"Landing in New York in 1839, Mr. Adams undertook the long journey to Nashville, where he had two brothers and other relatives living. He arrived here July 1, having refused then and ever since to travel on Sunday. Through a Nashville wholesale house having two branch stores in Shelbyville he secured employment there, and after a year returned to Nashville. He**

remained with the firm of Eakin Bros. until 1850, when two of the firm died, and he became a partner in the house. In 1858 the business was divided, and Mr. Adams bought the boot, shoe, and clothing departments, and bought the old Eakin & Bros. house on the Public Square, and continued business, under the firm name of A. G. Adams & Co.

"Since the age of fifteen Mr. Adams has been a member of the Presbyterian Church. In 1842 he was one of the first movers in organizing the Second Presbyterian Church. He was elected an elder and superintendent of the Sunday school, and held the office till 1862. During the war he resided for the most part in New York, where had once before thought of locating. The beautiful country of Middle Tennessee, however, was too attractive, and he returned to Nashville. In 1866 he removed his membership to the First Presbyterian Church, where he was elected a ruling elder and superintendent of the Sabbath school. Ever since then he has been the senior elder in the Church.

"After the war he resumed business, under the name of A. G. Adams & Co., and so continued till 1876, when the firm was changed to Adams, Throne & Co. Some years ago he retired from active business, and his sons, A. G., Jr., and David P., succeeded him, the firm becoming Throne, Franklin & Adams.

Mr. Adams's whole soul has always been enlisted in religious work of all sorts, and especially in that of his own denomination and in the work of the Nashville Bible Society. He has been known long for his quiet liberality in all Church and charitable work, an example not only to his own Church, but to the community at large. Since 1854 he had been Treasurer of the Nashville Bible Society till a few weeks ago, when he resigned.

He was at times Director in numerous enterprises, and took an active part in establishing the first cotton mill in Nashville, the Tennessee Manufacturing Company. At a public meeting of the citizens of Nashville to take steps to celebrate their centennial in 1880, Mr. Adams was made Chairman of the Committee of Reception and member of the Board of Directors of the Centennial Commission.

"Mr. Adams had been twice married—first, in 1846, to Susan Porterfield, daughter of Francis Porterfield and Malinda Morgan; after whose death he married, in 1851, Mary J. Strickler, of Shelbyville, Tenn. By this marriage he had eight children, five sons and three daughters, of whom two daughters and all the sons survive. Mr. Adams's surviving children are: Mrs. W. G.

Ewing, of Nashville; Mrs. T. E. Matthews, of Louisiana; Benjamin S., of St. Louis; and David P., Thomas H., A. G., Jr., and Henry William, of this city.

"No man was better known or more highly regarded than the deceased, being esteemed as a public-spirited, honest, and upright man; a man of sound judgment, courteous and elegant manners, kindly sympathies, and strong religious tendencies. His place will be hard to fill."

### Nashville's First Telephone Call

It's not that far from the site of the old Polk Place downtown to the "Batman Building" of BellSouth/AT&T. This week in 1877, the antebellum mansion where the widow of President James K. Polk lived was the scene of an experiment that would lead to the construction of that distinctive, twin-pronged skyscraper: Nashville's first telephone call.

The new technology made its debut during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, being held in a Southern city for the first time since the unpleasantness of 1861-65. Along with the establishment in the past decade of Fisk and Vanderbilt Universities, the gathering symbolized the Nashville's emergence as the "Athens of the South." The *Daily American* was giving it prominent coverage, throwing in for good measure an editorial extolling the "obvious general truths" expressed in the recent writings of Charles Darwin.

On September 1, the meeting's official agenda reflected a broad range of scientific inquiries. Mrs. H.K. Ingram of Edgefield, across the river from Nashville, read a paper on "Atmospheric Concussion as a Means of Disinfection." The Reverend Doctor Thomas O. Summers Jr., professor of anatomy and histology at the medical schools of Vanderbilt University and the University of Nashville as well as an ordained pastor, offered up "Some Observations on the Skill of the Comanche." Other speakers covered such themes as "The Physics of the Gulf of Mexico" and the surely crowd-pleasing proposition: "All Life Conditionally Immortal."

But a few blocks from the State Capitol, where the meeting was taking place, an unofficial activity got underway at midday. Visiting scientists Francis E. Nipher (of Washington University in St. Louis) and Joseph T. Lovewell (of the State College in Pennsylvania) had stretched a bare copper wire across Union Street. The filament crossed Union Street, linking the homes of Adam G. Adams (where the Snodgrass Tennessee Tower now stands) and the esteemed Mrs. Polk (now the site of a Days Inn). By "speaking trumpet

fashion" into a "little magnet battery — a box-like contrivance some two inches square," sounds could be transmitted, the scientists promised.

It worked. Several parties in each house were able to converse clearly with each other, although Mrs. Polk had trouble hearing things clearly. "How do you pronounce it?" Dr. Summers asked. "Is it '*telephone*' or '*telephone*'?" A voice at the other end replied: "Take your choice."

The device was placed on the Adams' piano. "Play Dixie," commanded a woman at the Polk residence. Another asked for "The Blue Danube." Both were obliged. "Play some more," said a third lady. "We cannot get enough."

(Source note: The *Daily American* ran a full account on September 2, 1877. The most complete and accurate modern account is Hugh Walker's "Over the wire, a voice..." in the *Nashville Tennessean Magazine*, March 2, 1958, pp. 14-15. Thanks to the people of the Metro Nashville Archives for locating that source.)

**Adam Gillespie Adams**

**Adam Gillespie Adams II**

**The 7 Adams Brothers  
(Sons of A Gillespie Adams II and Susan Howell)**



**ca. 1919**

**Seated; Adam G. Adams III, Howell E. Adams, George Elliot Adams, David P. Adams**

**Standing; Alfred T. Adams, Morton B. Adams, Marion S. Adams**

**Adams Family**

**2008**

**DRAFT**

## Descendants of Adam G. Adams

### *Generation No. 1*

1. ADAM G.<sup>1</sup> ADAMS (*UNK<sup>A</sup>*)<sup>1,2,3</sup> was born Jul 12, 1820 in County Tyrone, Ireland, and died Mar 30, 1895. He married (1) SUSAN PORTERFIELD 1846. She died Bef. 1851. He married (2) MARY JANE STRICKLER<sup>4,5,6</sup> 1851<sup>7</sup>. She was born Abt. 1831 in Tennessee.

Notes for ADAM G. ADAMS:

Sept 1877 the first telephone in Nashville was demonstrated by connecting A.G. Adams' house with Mrs Polk's house, widow of President Polk, across the street and transmitting a message.

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More About ADAM ADAMS and SUSAN PORTERFIELD:

Marriage: 1846

More About ADAM ADAMS and MARY STRICKLER:

Marriage: 1851<sup>7</sup>

Children of ADAM ADAMS and MARY STRICKLER are:

- i. BENJAMIN S.<sup>2</sup> ADAMS, b. Abt. 1854.
- ii. DAVID P. ADAMS, b. Abt. 1856.
- iii. SARAH E. ADAMS, b. Abt. 1858.
- iv. THOMAS H. ADAMS, b. Abt. 1860.
2. v. ADAM GILLESPIE ADAMS. II, b. Jul 1861; d. Aft. 1910.
- vi. MARY J. ADAMS, b. Abt. 1867.
- vii. HENRY WILLIAM ADAMS, b. Abt. 1872.
- viii. MARTHA ADAMS, b. Abt. 1875.

### *Generation No. 2*

2. ADAM GILLESPIE<sup>2</sup> ADAMS. II (ADAM G.<sup>1</sup> ADAMS, UNK<sup>A</sup>)<sup>8,9</sup> was born Jul 1861, and died Aft. 1910. He married SUSAN TOY HOWELL<sup>10</sup> Oct 14, 1886, daughter of MORTON HOWELL and ISABEL ELLIOTT. She was born Sep 1861<sup>11</sup>.

Notes for ADAM GILLESPIE ADAMS. II:

By 1914 had served at 1st pres for a total of 28 years,<sup>10</sup> as a Deacon and 18 as an Elder.

"The Centenary OF The First Presbyterian Church OF Nashville, Tennessee"

Published 1914

Notes for SUSAN TOY HOWELL:

Mrs. Adams of Nashville was Sue Howell, eldest child of Morton B. Howell, who bought Bishop Polk's cottage during her childhood.

More About ADAM ADAMS. and SUSAN HOWELL:

Marriage: Oct 14, 1886

Children of ADAM ADAMS. and SUSAN HOWELL are:

- i. ADAM GILLESPIE<sup>3</sup> ADAMS III<sup>12,13</sup>, b. Jul 24, 1887; m. MARY FAITH DORSEY YOW, Aug 15, 1924.

More About ADAM ADAMS and MARY YOW:

Marriage: Aug 15, 1924

- ii. MORTON B. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Jul 1889.
- iii. MARION S. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Aug 1891.



- iv. HOWELL E. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Aug 1893.
- v. DAVID P. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Jul 1895.
- vi. ALFRED T. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Jun 1898.
- vii. GEORGE E. ADAMS<sup>13</sup>, b. Mar 1900.

### *Endnotes*

1. 1870 Federal Census, Source Citation: Year: 1870; Census Place: Nashville Ward 5, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: M593\_1523; Page: 296; Image: 236. , A G Adams 49 Mary J Adams 39 Ben S Adams 16 Dave Adams 14 Sarah E Adams 12 Thos E Adams 10 A G Adams 7 Mary J Adams 3 Wiliam (Born 1872) Martha (Born 1875)(See 1880 census) Susie P Adams 21 (Unknown Connection - Ireland) .
2. Document, As Noted, THE SCOTCH-IRISH INiMERICA. PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES OF THE SEVENTH CONGRESS, AT LEXINGTON, VA., JUNE 20-23, 1895. PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THf. SCOTCH-IRISH SOCIeTY or AMBRICA. , "Adam Gillespie Adamf! was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, July 12, 1820. He was one of a family of twelve children, his father being a blacksmith. His mother's name was Jane Gillespie, and both sides of his family are of Scotch-Irish descent. Adams & Co., and !10 continued till 1876, when the firm was changed to Adams, Throne & Co. Some years ago he retired from active business, and his sons, A. G., Jr., and David P., succeeded him, the firm becoming Throne, Franklin & Adams. Mr. Adams's whole soul has always!! been enlisted in religious work of all sorts, and especially in that of his own denomination and in the work of the Nashville Bible Society. He "Landing in New York in 1839, Mr. Adams undertook the long journey to Nashville, where he had two brothers and other relatives living. He arrived here July 1,.
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11. *History Of Beersheba Springs*, Howell Cottage, However, he traveled back and forth between Nashville and Richmond, and was married in 1858 to Isabel Howard Elliott of Hampton, Virginia, who later came with him and other members of the family to Nashville. The following year, 1859, Susan Toy Howell, later Mrs. Adam G. Adams, was born. Alfred Elliott Howell was born in April, 1863, and Ralph (later renamed Morton Boyte Howell, Jr.) by his mother, in 1865. Isabel (Ma Belle) died in 1868. Morton then married Pattie Curd of Louisville, Kentucky in June 1869. She died within four months. The next year he married her younger sister, Bettie.
12. Ancestry. Com data base, WWI Draft Registration, Source Citation: Registration Location: Caldwell County, Kentucky; Roll: 1644034; Draft Board: 0., Adam Gillespie Adams Jr. City: Not Stated County: Caldwell State: Kentucky Birthplace: Tennessee;United States of America Birth Date: 24 Jul 1887 Race: Caucasian (White) Roll: 1644034 .
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## *Index of Individuals*

### *Adams -*

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Alfred T.: 3  
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David P.: 2  
David P.: 3  
George E.: 3  
Henry William: 2  
Howell E.: 3  
Marion S.: 2  
Martha: 2  
Mary J.: 2  
Morton B.: 2  
Sarah E.: 2  
Thomas H.: 2  
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### *Adams. -*

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Isabel Howard: 2

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Susan Toy: 2

### *Porterfield -*

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