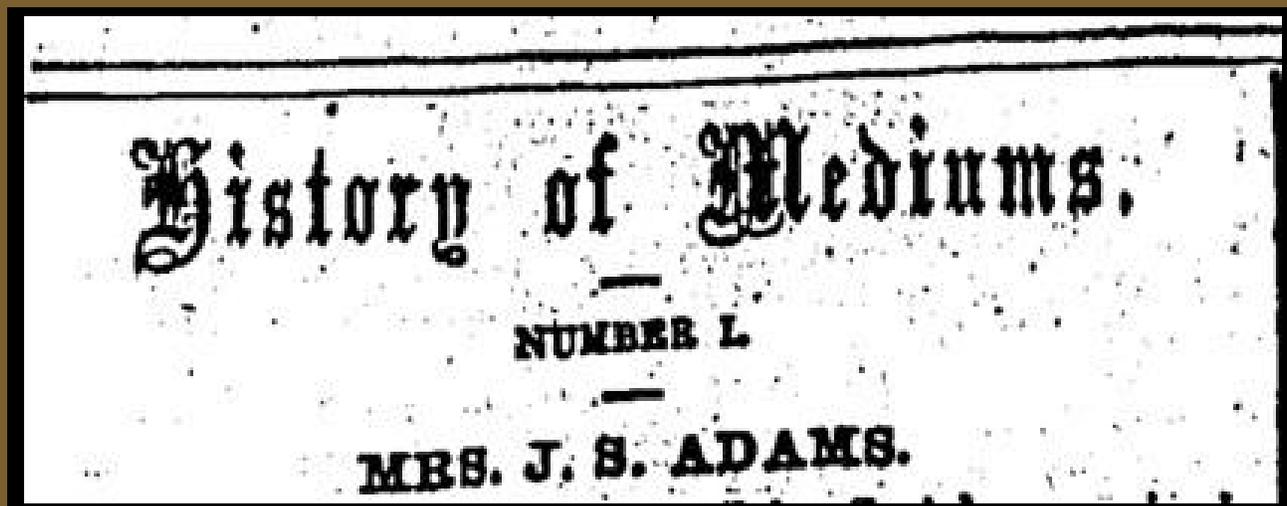


Pioneer of the Month

Ms. J. S. Adams

While doing research for the biography of Maria B. Hayden, M.D., I came across a column titled "History of Mediums," which was printed in several issues of the Boston-based Spiritualist newspaper, Banner of Light. The column sheds light on the pioneers of the day with some names we recognize. Other mediums were well known in their day, but have mostly been lost to posterity. For women in particular, not even their birth names are mentioned. To make sure these pioneers are not forgotten, we begin our new column "Pioneer of the Month," with Mrs. J. S. Adams.[1] Her mediumship biography appeared in the 29 May 1858 issue of Banner of Light, page 7, and was written by Dr. Asaph Bemis Child. I have annotated the text with additional information from my research.

—Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, MFA, DSNU



[1] Harriet A. Adams née Jones (1830–11 May 1897) was the daughter of John D. and Lorena (McCurdy) Jones. She was born in Gardiner, Mass., and married on 27 Nov. 1851 in Chelsea, Mass., in the Orthodox Congregational Church, John S. Adams, a music dealer, who was the son of Isaac and Mary S. Adams. John was born in Boston. Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1840-1915, image on Ancestry.com; Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915, image on Ancestry.com.

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Mrs. Adams is the wife of John S. Adams, who is well known to Spiritualists as a firm advocate and a powerful defender of its precious revelations. He is the author of many published works on the subject of Spiritualism.[2] As a writer, is he clear, comprehensive, forcible, and intuitional. How much the association of Mrs. Adams' spirit with a congenial partner, for many years of so spiritual a nature, has done for her medium development, cannot easily be estimated.

Mrs. Adams was born in the state of Maine, in 1830, and from her earliest days has manifested proclivities of character that have since developed themselves in a marked fondness for the works of Nature. In all things she sees beauties to love and admire, even in deformity, and in the lowest conditions of life. She recognizes the God-life, in all life, and the sleeping germ of this life even in the grains of sand we tread upon. Her conceptions of God, His love, His power and wisdom, are unmeasured, and the relations we bear to Him are the tenderest and the holiest of all relations. He is the Father of all alike—loves all alike—the high and the low, the favored and the degraded; His sunlight of love shines on all the same—the just and the unjust.

When a mere child, Mrs. A.'s parents were taken from her to the spirit land. When she came to maturer [sic] years, she was urged and persuaded to join herself to the Orthodox church, of which she was a member for many years; not, however, without feelings within her inmost soul that the character to the voice of Nature, which whispered in her heart more truth and love.

Her attention was first called to Spiritualism in the Spring of 1852. The hand of a medium was seized by spirit influence at her first sitting, and wrote for her as follow[s]: "You are a medium, and your mediumship will be like writing on rice paper—the more light you expose it to, the easier can you read and understand it." This prophecy has proved true of communications given through Mrs. A., for the more we read, examine and criticise them in the sunlight of truth, the more significant, truthful and beautiful they appear. Mrs. A. continued investigations and sittings, mostly in her own house, for some months, feeling a strong and constantly increasing interest when she began to be conscious of a gradual development of medium powers within herself. Among the first manifestations through her own mediumship, were, the opening and closing of doors, the displacement of moveable objects, playing upon the pianoforte, etc.; all without visible agency. The name of her spirit mother,[3] on one occasion, was written in a closed drawer, in which paper and pencil had been placed by spirit direction.

[2] John Stowell Adams (1823-1893) wrote, for example, *Answers to Seventeen Objections against Spiritual Intercourse and Inquiries Relating to the Manifestations of the Present Time* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1853), as well as short stories and other narratives. He also edited and published anthologies of poetry and music.

[3] This was common terminology in the nineteenth-century for a reference to a loved one in the spirit world.

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Mrs. A. was next developed a writing medium, which was soon followed by trance, personating, speaking, psychometrical, and seeing and conversing with spirits in a normal state. Her visions, which convey ideas in the language of symbols, have been, and are now, exceedingly fine. The character and disposition of the various persons for whom these visions have been given, having passed the strictest and most impartial analysis, have appeared faultless and correct delineations.

The life of Mrs. A., as it is believed to be the case with all excellent mediums, has been characterized with much bodily and mental suffering. It may not be an error to suppose that every pain we suffer helps unfold our medium powers; that all suffering is friction to the material covering of the soul, that makes the gem within shine brighter.

In February, 1854, the *Lily Wreath*,^[4] a volume of 188 12mo. pages,^[5] was commenced, and concluded in about eight months; the principal part of which was spoken through Mrs. Adams in deep trances, five or six pages at a sitting, one week between each.

This volume, in the purport of its language, is addressed to one, but it is adapted to all; it is for all who read and admire the gems of spirit love therein recorded. "It is whispered in love; it is breathed from the happy home of angels, where earth's children shall all abide; where brighter, softer garlands shall crown their brows, undying, forever."...

In the fall of 1854 the *Bouquet of Spirit Flowers* was commenced, and completed in the spring of 1855.^[6] This volume is a continuation of the *Lily Wreath*, of the same size and character, given chiefly through Mrs. Adams, and published by Bela Marsh, of Boston, the same year....

Many unprogressed spirits, at different times, have communicated through Mrs. A., and in consequence of thus coming to mortals have been made better and happier in their spirit life.

The "Progressive Life of Spirits after Death," a pamphlet of thirty pages, published by Bela Marsh, in 1855, given by unprogressed spirits, was chiefly communicated through Mrs. Adams....^[7]

Many believe that unprogressed spirits cannot communicate through the truest and best mediums. This belief seems erroneous. It is the work of angels to lead souls from darkness to light, and with the assistance of their own spirits, through mediums more congenial to themselves, dark spirits under their immediate influence are brought to mortals for the light that they should have found in the material form. It is angel work to lead souls to God, to

[4] *The Lily-Wreath Of Spiritual Communications: Described Chiefly Through The Mediumship Of Mrs. J. S. Adams* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1854). A copy of this book is available in print from on Amazon or can be downloaded for free on GoogleBooks.

[5] "12mo (usually pronounced 'twelve-mo') describes a book about 7 inches tall." Book Size and Type, <https://www.babcockbooks.com/bookSize.php>.

[6] A copy of this book is available for free download on GoogleBooks.

[7] One spirit spoke through George A. Redman while he was in trance, and the mother of that spirit spoke through Mrs. Adams while she was in trance. A. B. Child is credited as the author of this pamphlet.

THE
B O U Q U E T

OF
SPIRITUAL FLOWERS:

Received chiefly through the Mediumship of
MRS. J. S. ADAMS.

BY
A. B. CHILD, M. D.

28.2
Cold, cold must be the heart that does not soften at the repeated coming and sound of
angel foot-steps. — FLORA.



BOSTON:
BELA MARSH, PUBLISHER,
15 FRANKLIN STREET.
1856.

lessen the pains of human woe, and such effort in sympathy and compassion is the true language of *Christian love*.

Many communications have been received through Mrs. A., by a large number of persons; and all, without exception, have evinced truthfulness, clearness and beauty. Communications through her have been sought for by all who knew her, with feelings of interest and eagerness; but from her physical inability, many, many who have sought them have gone away disappointed. Her heart has ever been willing, without the consideration of material reward, to communicate to all; for her soul loves spiritual more than earthly treasures; love to give more than to receive.

During the last two years very few communications have been given through Mrs. A., owing to a general weakness of her whole physical being; but her spirit vision and intuition in a normal condition, has often been clear and active. Her bodily sufferings have been, at times, very great; she has been at death's door. During the last twenty weeks previous to May 1, she has been confined to her bed, most of which time she has been helpless; has suffered constant pain, at periods, almost beyond endurance. In this sickness she has been closely watched, and lovingly cared for by great numbers of spirit friends....

Mrs. A.'s character is humble, simple, child-like, forgiving, passive, and affectionate. She has a large soul.... In her demeanor she is modest and retiring, shrinking from any reputation of earthly greatness—from all the false ceremonies of life—from fashion and all its vanities. Her soul rises without pretence [sic] above the love of earthly things, and breathes and grows in more congenial world of spirit-life.