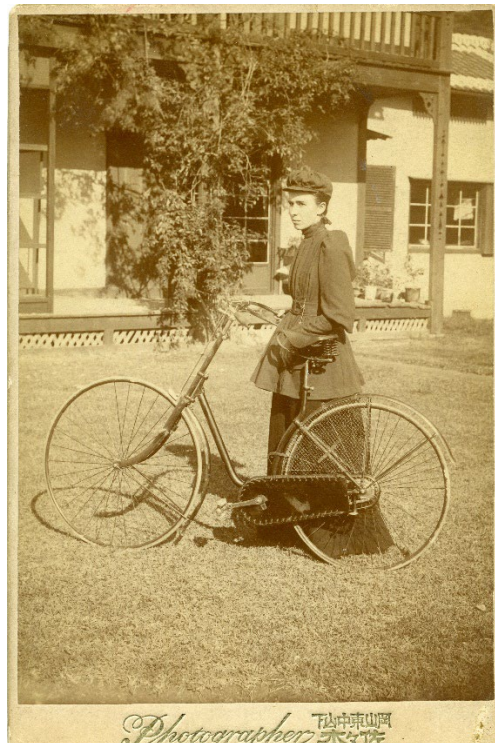


Bridgewater State University

Maxwell Library
Archives & Special Collections

Alice Pettee Adams Collection, 1880-1990 (MSS-053)

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley, 2023*



Last Updated: May 14, 2024

Maxwell Library
Bridgewater State University / 10 Shaw Road / Bridgewater MA 02325
archives@bridgew.edu / 508-531-1389

Volume: 4 linear feet (9 document boxes)

Acquisition: All items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by Constance Adams in 2022.

Access: Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright: The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the Maxwell Library will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the University Archivist.

Alice Pettee Adams Biographical Sketch

Alice Pettee Adams came from Jaffrey, New Hampshire when she enrolled at the Bridgewater Normal School (now Bridgewater State University) in 1885. She graduated from the four-year program in 1889. In 1891, after a brief stint as a teacher and principal of a high school in her hometown, she went to Okayama, Japan through a Christian Missionary program. She originally had the ambition of dedicating ten years of her life to this social work/education endeavor. Rather than ten years, she went on to dedicate the rest of her life to helping the poor and impoverished in Okayama, Japan.

Upon her arrival at Okayama, she quickly found the city to be filled with poverty, slums and children in need. She took action and began creating new social service programs for impoverished children with an emphasis on educational and vocational training, putting to use methods and theories she learned from her public education at the Normal School. She would go on to open an early settlement house in the early social work movement of Japan, later named the Hakuai Institute, with the translation being "Loving All" Institute. By 1910, the house had expanded to include in-patient and hospital rooms, a kindergarten, a day nursery, and rooms for the sick and poor—all despite facing severe financial restraints and problems the entire time.

By the 1920s, her methods had proved so successful that the Japanese Imperial Government not only began to give her financial support, but also recognition. In 1928, Emperor Hirohito was formally enthroned, and at the accompanying festivities "Japan's mother of social service" was presented with a silver medal for her work. She would later be invited by and received in audience by the Emperor. Upon her final departure from Japan, after 46 years of sowing the seeds of social services and reform, she was awarded the Sixth Order of the Sacred Treasure by the Emperor. This award was presented for distinguished civil merit, seldom given to women and typically awarded posthumously. As *The New York Times* noted after her death in 1937, "Probably no other woman has received so many decorations from the Japanese Government."

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains both original material from Alice P. Adams and others, artifacts, and photocopied material created during past research. Photocopied items are indicated in the box and folder list. The bulk of the correspondence from Alice Pettee Adams dates from the 1890s. Prior to leaving Okayama, Japan for the final time in 1936, Adams destroyed all her diaries she had kept since being in Japan. This was done to prevent the organization she ran from spending money on creating a biography of her. Due to this, only one diary exists in the collection.

Due to the amount of correspondence in series 1, letters from Adams back to the United States are generally grouped by month in each folder. Letters from different people and letters containing more than correspondence are noted in the box and folder list. The great-niece of Alice Adams, Constance (Connie) Adams did extensive research on her great aunt during the 1970s. This material can be found in series 4.

Related collections include the [Shuji Isawa Collection](#).

Box and Folder List

Series 1: Correspondence and Diaries, 1880-1940, 1961

Box 1

Folder

1. Letter from James H. Pettee in Okayama, Japan to cousin Lilla S. Adams, May 15, 1880
2. Carbon copy letter from James H. Pettee in Japan, 1880
3. Letter from James H. Pettee in Okayama, Japan to Marshal C. Adams, May 19, 1888
4. Letter from Belle Wilson Pettee in Mt. Hiei, Japan to family in New Hampshire, Aug. 15, 1890
5. Carbon copies of letters from James H. Pettee in Japan, 1890-1891
6. Letter from James H. Pettee in Okayama, Japan to Alice Pettee Adams' family giving background information on where she would be going in Japan (letter intended to give her family some news while she was in the process of traveling to Japan), Feb. 21, 1891
 - [Letter](#)
7. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1891; contains letters from Adams as she traveled across the country to the West Coast to catch a ship
 - March 16, 1891 (Written by James Pettee): [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 21, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 23, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 25, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 25, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 26, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 27, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 30, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - March 31, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)

8. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1891; includes letters about Adams' trip across the Pacific Ocean; includes ship passenger list; includes first postcard sent back from Japan
 - April 1, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - April 2, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - April 9, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - April 21, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - April 22, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
9. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1891; contains hand-drawn floor plan of Adams' living quarters; Includes list of names of her students
 - May 2, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - May 11, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - May 13, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - May 25, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
10. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1891; contains handwritten roster of teachers and students
 - June 3, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - June 7, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - June 17, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - June 17, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#)
 - June 21, 1891: [Letter](#) | [Transcript](#) | [Class Roster](#)
11. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1891; includes letter from James H. Pettee
12. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1891; includes letter from Adams on experiencing a typhoon
13. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1891
14. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1891; one letter contains extensive list of items Adams
 - 15. sent back to her family
16. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1891
17. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1891
18. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January 1892.
19. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, February 1892; includes correspondence from Cousin Anna
20. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1892.
21. "The Story of Two Orphans," March 1892; written by Alice Pettee Adams
22. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1892.
23. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1892; includes student correspondence written to "Ms. Adams"
24. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1892
25. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1892; includes student letters
26. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1892
27. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1892; includes copy of Okayama Newsletter, sent by James H. Pettee
28. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1892; includes letter by James H. Pettee
29. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1892
30. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1892
31. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January 1893

32. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, February 1893
33. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1893
34. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1893
35. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1893
36. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1893; includes letter by James H. Pettee
37. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1893
38. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1893
39. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1893
40. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1893
41. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1893
42. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1893; contains unidentified list of pictures
43. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January 1894
44. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, February 1894
45. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1894
46. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1894
47. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1894; contains fabric samples
48. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1894
49. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1894
50. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1894
51. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1894
52. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1894
53. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1894
54. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1894

Box 2

Folder

1. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January 1895
2. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, February 1895
3. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1895; includes letter by T. Koizumi
4. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1895
5. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1895; includes letter by "JPH" (James H. Pettee)
6. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1895
7. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1895
8. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1895
9. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1895
10. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1895
11. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1895
12. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1895
13. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January 1896; includes student correspondence
14. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, February 1896
15. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, March 1896
16. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1896
17. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, May 1896
18. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1896; includes letter from J. Okada
19. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, July 1896
20. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, August 1896

21. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, September 1896
22. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, October 1896
23. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, November 1896
24. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1896
25. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, undated; located in 1896 correspondence folder
26. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January and February 1897
27. Copy of a letter by James H. Pettee to "Christian Endeavorers," May 1897
28. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, December 1898; undated month, 1898
29. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, April 1899
30. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, January and March 1900
31. Postcard from Alice Pettee Adams to a family member after reaching the United States from Japan on her way to New Hampshire, August 12, 1908
32. Postcards sent to New Hampshire from a member of the Cutter family—probably traveling with Alice P. Adams to New Hampshire from the tuberculosis clinic in California where Adams spent time, 1915
33. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, June 1925
34. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, 1932-1934
35. Alice Pettee Adams Correspondence, undated
36. Letter from one of Alice Pettee Adams' students with a paragraph written by Adams, undated
37. Miscellaneous material found in Adams' correspondence, 1899, undated
38. Diary of Alice Pettee Adams, Jan. 1, 1934 – Aug. 14, 1936 (she supposedly destroyed all of her other diaries and writings before leaving Japan for the last time)
39. Two letters from the Cary family to a "Mrs. Thrasher," a niece of Adams (the Cary's were in Japan in 1887-1888, see James H. Pettee letter dated May 19, 1888), 1938
40. Letter from R.L. Ogawa, Treasurer of the Hakuaiikai, to Lilla S. Adams," Feb. 12, 1940
41. Letter from Yoshio Sarai, Director of the Okayama Hakuaiikai, March 19, 1961

Box 3

- Transcriptions of all the letters from James Pettee and Alice P. Adams on index cards filed in chronological order [dates on envelopes in pencil in boxes 1 and 2 match up to transcription cards]; created by Connie Adams, c. 1975

Series 2: Photographs, 1890-1936, 1960, undated

Box 4

Folder

1. Photograph of Adams when she was a teacher before going to Japan, c. 1890
2. Adams with relatives, Dr. James H. Pettee and his family, taken shortly after her arrival in Japan, c. 1891
3. Carte-de-visite photograph of Adams, c. 1892
4. Adams standing next to her bicycle, c. 1895
5. Cabinet card style portraits of Adams, c. 1900-1910
6. Cabinet card photograph of Adams with a Japanese woman, c. 1905; cabinet card photo of a Japanese couple, 1902
7. Two portraits of Adams after being decorated by Emperor Hirohito of Japan, c. 1936
8. Photographs of Adams Memorial Hospital and Adams Memorial Church, undated

9. Postcards of bronze bust of Hakuai Director Adams, undated
10. Photographs of Adams' headstone in Jaffrey, NH, undated
11. Okayama Castle, c. 1890s
12. Photograph of Japanese children at the Printing Department of the Okayama Orphan Asylum, c. 1895
13. Photograph of Japanese workers at a lantern store, c. 1895
14. Photographs of Adams' students/children, c. 1910s
15. Photograph of church members, Okayama Habuaikai American Mission Church, c. 1960
16. Yoshio Sarai and his family at the American Mission Church, c. 1960
17. Two photographs of unknown Japanese people, undated
18. Very early 20th century Japanese postcard, c. 1900-1907
19. Assortment of postcards of Japanese buildings, c. 1935

Series 3: Artifacts, 1936, undated

Box 5

- Silver vase given to Adams in 1936 with her name engraved [in Japanese] on it as well as the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communication, Ushio Shigenosuke (1881-1955); contains images of flowers and birds, 1936
 - Transcribed and Translated by Dr. Minae Savas

贈呈 財団法人 岡山博愛会 創立者 アリス・ペテター・アダムス女史
 昭和十一年九月十九日
 内務大臣 潮 恵之輔

Gift presented to Miss Alice Pettee Adams, the founder of the Okayama Hakuai
 September 19, 1936.

By Ushio Shigenosuke, the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communication

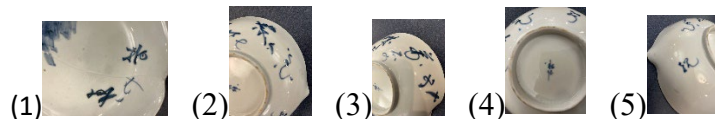
- Vase made of unknown material with two small handles and flower design around it; contains maker's mark and Japanese writing on bottom, undated

- Transcribed and Translated by Dr. Mina Savas:

表彰 岡山市 市制實施 四十年記念

Commemoration of 40th Anniversary of the Implementation of the Okayama
 Municipal Government System in 1889:

- Porcelain bowl with Japanese inscriptions on both sides, possibly a poem, undated
 - Transcribed and Translated by Dr. Minae Savas:



(4) 磯部 Isobe (Name?) (5) 祝 celebration

- Pair of Getas—wooden Japanese sandals, painted red with cloth thong, undated
- Some type of wooden candle holder, undated

Box 6

- Takamakura 高枕—traditionally used by Japanese women while sleeping to keep their hair in place by resting their heads on a takamakura made of wood and cloth, undated

Series 4: Documents Involving Adams and Other Research Material, 1891-1990, undated

Original Material from Alice Adams

Box 7

Folder

1. News clippings; includes article written by Adams in 1891 about an earthquake and a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, 1891, 1977
2. “The Okayama Orphanage,” by James H. Pettee—short publication for fundraising purposes, Dec. 13, 1892
3. “My vacation trip to the West,” possibly written by Adams while traveling from the East to Yellow Stone National Park, undated
4. Adams’ receipts for school supplies, 1934-1935
5. Origami from Japan belonging to Adams, undated
6. Scrapbook probably created by Adams seeming to focus on Japanese fashion, c. 1930

Writings on Adams

(Box 7 continued)

7. Pamphlet – “Our Missionary Workers: Japan,” c. 1902
8. News clippings on Adams, 1926, 1937-c. 1957
9. “Interview with Miss Alice Adams of Japan, Sept. 10, 1931” [photocopy], 1931
10. “The Missionary Herald: At Home and Abroad,” includes two articles on Adams, May 1937
11. “A Living Presence: A Sermon Preached in Remembrance of Miss Alice P. Adams,” by Rev. Richard Stoughton, Jr. at the Federated Church of Jaffrey, N.H., May 27, 1956
12. Book – English title: “The Short History of the Okayama Hakuakai (1891-1966)” ; “The Story of Miss Alice Pettee Adams (1866-1937); Japanese translated title: The Works of God: A Lasting Legacy of Alice Pettee Adams (1866-1937). Written in Japanese by Yoshio Sarai, c. 1967

- Transcribed and Translated by Dr. Minae Savas:

新約聖書 ローマ人への手紙 第十二章 アダムス女史愛誦聖句

Bible: The New Testament – The Letter of Paul to the Romans – Miss Adams’ favorite passages of scripture

13. Commemoration of 10th Anniversary of Nursing Home, “Adams House,” [photocopy in Japanese], Nov. 27, 1970
14. Manuscript draft of a biography of Adams (ends c. 1895) written by her great niece, Constance [Connie] Adams, c. 1977

15. Short write up of Adams' history by Connie Adams, 1990
16. Copy of biography of Adams taken from the History of Jaffrey, Vol. 1, undated

Research Material on Alice Adams

Box 8

Folder

1. Chronologies of Adams' life and research by Connie Adams, represents 1889-1937
2. Binder of research on Adams by Connie Adams, split up by decade, c. 1976
3. Binder of research notes on Adams by Connie Adams, c. 1976
4. Research correspondence of Connie Adams with individuals and organizations in the United States and Japan—includes correspondence with Yoshio Sarai, 1976-1977
5. Correspondence from the First Congregational Church in Jaffrey, NH about Adams material they have, 1980
6. Research and material on the California Tuberculosis Commission and the Arequipa Sanatorium, photocopied material, represents 1914 and 1915
7. Photocopied letters from the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions Collection at Harvard's Houghton Library; includes 1931 letter from Adams explaining economic problems from the Depression, 1931, 1956
8. Photocopied letters from the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions Collection at Harvard's Houghton Library; includes a letter from 1932 and a letter from 1936 where Adams explains her health situation and is planning on retiring and heading back to the United States, as well as details of an award she was given, 1932, 1936
9. Photocopied research from Harvard's Houghton Library's American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions Collection, undated
10. Series of articles from databases and copied news clippings on and by Adams, represents 1912, 1914, and 1937

Miscellaneous Material, 1937-1972, undated

Box 9

Folder

1. Incomplete pamphlet – “A Social Settlement in Okayama,” by Kate G. Lamson, undated
2. Pamphlet – “The Sino-Japanese Conflict,” propaganda piece published by The Business Men of Kyoto, c. 1937
3. Pamphlet – “Okayama Hakuai-kai's Yearly Book” [in Japanese], 1938
4. Magazine – “Missions: An International Baptist Magazine,” Nov. 1945
5. Publication – “Witnessing Together in Japan,” published by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1953
6. Pamphlet – “Okayama Hakuai-kai (1891-1971)” [in Japanese], c. 1972
7. Japanese business cards, potentially of Adams' associates, undated
 - Five folders of Japanese publications that need titles translated