

JAMES ADAM — TEACHER AND SCHOLAR

By RUTH S. KERR

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James Adam was born on 29 October 1881 at Balquhain by Pitcaple, Inverurie in Aberdeenshire, Scotland (1), the son of a blacksmith and the eldest of five children. He began school at the Chapel of Garioch School at Chapel of Garioch, Inverurie on 27 June 1887. The Garioch district, in the centre of Aberdeenshire in the north of Scotland, is a beautiful, undulating, loamy fertile valley, once called the granary of Aberdeen. No details are available as to the subjects he studied or of his academic achievements during his seven years of primary schooling. (2)

On 13 August 1894 James Adam entered Robert Gordon's College, Schoolhill, in Aberdeen (3), a school founded in 1729 by Robert Gordon of Straloch and further endowed in 1816 by Alexander Simpson, of Collyhill. While originally devoted to the instruction of the sons of poor burgesses of guild and trade in the city, it was reorganized in 1881 as a day and night school for secondary and technical education, and became unusually successful.

Adam received two years of Secondary School education at Robert Gordon's college. In his first year, in class 2B, he studied English, Scriptures, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Algebra, Geometry, Science and Latin. He obtained very good marks in most subjects and excellent marks in Geography and Latin. His progress through school was apparently accelerated because in the 1895-96 school year he was in class 4C studying an additional subject, French. English as well as Geography and Latin were again his best subjects but at the end of that school year he left Robert Gordon's college (4). The reason for his leaving was not entered in the school records but it is known that Adam's father did not believe in education and did not want his son to study any further.

James Adam's surviving relatives in Scotland understand that he was also a Greek scholar whilst in Aberdeen, and coached some of his friends including Mr. William Moir Calder who was

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later Professor of Greek at Edinburgh University for 21 years. He was also a self-taught student of Hebrew.

After leaving school, Adam went to London and entered the Civil Service in the General Post Office, near Threadneedle Street. He had spent only a few years working there when his health broke down and he was threatened with continued bronchial ailments if he remained there. He was advised to leave London for a warmer climate, and decided to emigrate to New Zealand and take up farming.

James Adam was just twenty when he packed his black portmanteau and trunk and left for New Zealand on 28 November 1901. He went to Palmerston North in the North Island, but was not impressed with the farming prospects there, and decided to come to Australia, arriving in Sydney with 2/6 in his pocket, as he later informed his relatives. How long he spent in New South Wales is uncertain but in 1903 he was working on a boat which



JAMES ADAM — 26 November 1901

This photograph was taken two days before he left Scotland for New Zealand.

— Courtesy: Mr. D. Adam

plied between Northern Queensland and Brisbane. It was suggested to him by friends that because he was well educated, he should apply to be a school teacher. Accordingly, on 25 October 1902 (5), he sat for the entrance exam. At the time there was a shortage of school teachers in Queensland and the Government was recruiting them from Great Britain.

As Adam was anxious to begin teaching, he agreed to be appointed to a Provisional School with a very small attendance, and at a reduced salary. Thus, on 16 March 1903 (6) he arrived at Garradunga, five miles north of Innisfail and he re-opened the school two days later.

Like his predecessor, the young teacher boarded in the slab hut of the Secretary of the School Committee. There were only eight children on the roll and five of them were the children of the secretary of the committee. The twelve months stay at Garradunga, his first year of teaching, made an idelible impression on Adam. Twenty years later he retold the story in the Queensland Teachers Journal (7), but with the identity of the characters concealed. He had arrived in the district without a scintilla of knowledge of his predecessor's troubles, plenty of hope in his heart, but with a woeful dearth of legal tender in his pocket. His salary at appointment was £70 per annum.

To the young Scot the school building looked like a closed-in canary cage, perched on high sticks in the middle of the steaming jungle of North Queensland. The previous teacher at Garradunga had been sacked after a humiliating court case arising from his chastisement of one of the Graham children at school.

Adam soon sized up the situation but made up his mind to make the best of a bad job, for he could do no other. The change in the mode of life was startlingly painful. The food was different, the accommodation, the company, the conversation were not only new but disgusting, and, as well, he had to listen to the exultant cacklings of glee at his predecessor's downfall. He had to sleep in a green-hide and bush timber bed, the walls were slabs and the floor dirt.

The food was the worst. As the butcher had stopped credit, "the staples of diet were wallaby, cassowary; cassowary for weeks at a stretch, grilled, boiled, fried, stewed, baked and, when it began to go 'high', curried. It was always smoked, for the chimney-place was festooned with chunks of it. Vegetables were limited to boiled bananas (thrown out by the Chinamen), papaws which grew wild and potatoes. The bread was damper. There was nearly always a shortage of some commodity." (8)

During the 1903 Christmas vacation (9) Adam reported the situation to the Department which advised that he either resign in the hope of an early re-appointment to another Provisional School, or wait for a transfer when a vacancy arose. So he decided to return to Garradunga for the beginning of the 1904 school year, but to board with another committeeman's family. The secretary of the committee was furious and withdrew his five children from school. With the sudden drop in enrolment the Department decided to transfer James Adam in March 1904 (10). When the secretary heard the news of the transfer, in a towering rage he rode over to the school where the teacher was encabined with his two pupils. He accused Adam of sending false attendance figures to Brisbane and bawled out that he was going to report him to the Department and not sign the transfer papers.

After school that day, Adam set off to the home of the German committeeman Mr. Tielkemeyer, to ask him to sign his transfer papers before the secretary arrived there to persuade or threaten him to do otherwise. Off he raced, down the bullock tracks, through water up to his knees, over the North Johnstone River, along canefields, past the Goondi sugar mill, on to the tramway and along it to the German's. He arrived there first and had the forms completed. When the secretary learnt that the teacher had outsmarted him, he fell into a paroxysm of frenzy that he could do nothing to prevent the school closing. No doubt he never admitted that it was his treatment of the teachers that forced the early closure of the school, and severely blighted two young men's impressions of teaching as a career.

ON THE CHILLAGOE FIELD

Calcifer Provisional School on the Chillagoe mineral field was James Adam's second school. He spent $6\frac{1}{4}$ years teaching in three mining camps on the Chillagoe field. No doubt the dry climate suited his health, having left the English climate for health reasons; but the living conditions for a teacher in mining camps were harsh and demoralizing. Altogether, Adam closed Calcifer school because of falling attendance, opened Redcap school, and both opened and closed O.K. school, an indication of the mobility of population in the area. These years of teaching on the mining frontier moulded his blunt and realistic approach to the inadequacies of the Department's management of the school system over enormous distances.

The Chillagoe Mineral Field was discovered in 1883. The development of the copper, silver and lead deposits on the field were pioneered by John Moffatt of Irvinebank fame. John Moffatt's Company erected water jacket type copper smelters at Calcifer

in July 1894 having removed them from Newellton near Herberton (11). Calcifer was the first significant township developed on the Chillagoe Field. Small numbers of people soon arrived from Muldiva where the silver mines had closed, and from Herberton tin mining areas, but the real influx of population was in 1899 when people came from Broken Hill and Southern Australia.



Calcifer Provisional School stumps, June 1974.

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At this time, the Mareeba to Chillagoe Railway was being constructed by the Chillagoe Railway and Mines Company, of which John Moffatt was a large shareholder, under the Mareeba-Chillagoe Railway Act of 1897. Substantial copper smelters were established at a new town, Chillagoe, named after William Atherton's pioneer station, in 1902, to serve the copper mines at Calcifer, Ruddygore, Zillmanton, Mungana and Redcap. When these proved insufficient to supply the smelters, the Etheridge Railway was constructed to tap deposits at Einasleigh and Forsyth. The settlement at O.K., 50 miles north of Mungana, had its own copper smelters, and the metallic copper was transported to the Mungana railhead by camel and horse teams, and later traction engines. But the O.K. smelters closed in 1910 following a court action, the population left and the township disappeared.

The Chillagoe Company's anticipated profits failed to materialize and prospects diminished following the closure of the Redcap mines, the dwindling supplies from the Calcifer mines and problems of water in the Zillmanton mines and in the Girofla at Mungana. The Chillagoe smelters closed in 1914 and were not

re-opened until after the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways, Mines and Smelter had been purchased by the Ryan Labour Government in 1919. During this time the social and economic outlook on the field changed markedly.

In the context of the brief, turbulent prosperity of the Chillagoe field, the population frontier drifted across the field as one mine closed and another opened. The development of the schools is a fine illustration of the evolving social history of the field. The changing fortunes of these one teacher schools illustrate the operational difficulties for the Department, teachers and School Committees, as well as the social structures of the area, the hopes and ideals of parents, and the diligence of the pupils.

Calcifer school had been opened on 12 March 1900 (12). The Chillagoe Company had supplied the material for the school and the Department paid a subsidy of £130.4.9 for the 20 foot 9 inch by 26 foot building (13). It was situated approximately 500 yards west of the township. James Adam arrived to take charge of the school after the previous teacher was transferred to Southern Queensland in March 1904. Unfortunately for Adam, the attendance fell off markedly during the year because the Calcifer smelters had closed — due to the opening of the centralized Chillagoe smelters — and the company shifted families to other parts of the field. James Adam's teaching tasks were not burdensome, but boarding at McCarthy's Star Hotel, a typical hotel for mining settlements, did prove almost unbearable for the young studious teacher, especially after his salary was reduced in accordance with normal Departmental practice for teachers at Provsional Schools with falling attendances.

Because there was no likelihood of an increase in school attendance, and living on an annual salary of £70 per annum — half that of a labourer — was almost beyond the bounds of possibility, James Adam applied for a transfer. However the local parliamentarian, Mr. M. Woods (14), had arranged with the Department that Adam should keep Calcifer school open during 1905 until the new school at Redcap, three miles north east of Mungana, was ready for opening.

When the Department informed him of the arrangement, giving him the option of resigning if he did not wish to continue at Calcifer, Adam was utterly demoralized. He explained the desperation of his situation in a letter to the Department on 28 April 1905:

“How can I resign when the Department has left me nothing to resign upon? If I had any money I would resign, but as things are, I am perfectly helpless. I have been sent

away up here on a reduced salary and now I am curtly told I can leave it if I like, the alternative being, waiting until Redcap is opened. Redcap I have seen twice, and I put the case mildly when I say it is perhaps the roughest camp in North Queensland . . . I have refrained as long as I could from making any complaint believing that the Department would act generously to me sooner or later. The generosity has not as yet been shown, and, as a last straw, I am to be sent to Redcap. Since I cannot resign without borrowed money, I must accept Redcap, whenever the builder is sober enough to finish it. The school should have been completed a month ago, but that is the contractor's fault that it is not, he has been drunk for nearly a month." (15)

Adam sought permission to take the Calcifer blackboard to Redcap because the one at Redcap was "so absurdly small as to be almost useless." Then there was the difficulty of transporting his belongings to Redcap as it was three miles from the railway. The Department sanctioned his proposal to hire a cart for 25/- or 30/- instead of the usual railway pass. The General Inspector, Mr. David Ewart, insulated by distance from the Redcap atmosphere, did not however feel inclined to blame Adam for the bluntness of his expressions but hoped he would see the reasonableness of the Department's handling of the difficulties in staffing schools which served itinerant mining populations.

The Redcap school was built by Mr. Alberte Dette of Mungana for £114.10.0 in 1905 (16). The Department paid a subsidy of £91.12.0 or four-fifths the cost, the usual policy towards Provisional Schools. The remaining one-fifth was required to be raised by local subscriptions as evidence of the sincerity of their desire for education. The contract time for the building was five weeks, but it was actually five months before the buildings were passed by the inspector as satisfactorily completed and ready for occupation. Dissension between the contractor and the Committee was prevalent over the unnecessary delay in completing the school, the inferior workmanship which the Committee claimed to have found in the building, and what was described as the contractor's insulting and condescending remarks to all inquirers.(17)

THE PROBLEMS MULTIPLY

From this point, the problems of Redcap seemed to multiply in severity and in their repercussions for the young teacher and the school's future. Firstly, the only accommodation for the teacher was squalid. There were two hotels, but both catered for the miners, and neither proprietor was anxious for the presence of a teacher who demanded something better. However, James Adam had no choice but to board at one of these hotels.

Redcap school opened on 19 June 1905, with an enrolment of 12 which increased to 26 by the end of the year. Interestingly, Adam opened a night school not long after, in August 1905. There were classes in Composition, Writing and Arithmetic on Monday and Wednesday nights between 7 p.m. and 8.30 for youths and men aspiring to the position of engine driver at the mines. On Tuesday and Friday nights, classes were held for women who wished to attend. The organizing of these classes, which were probably the only cultural activities at the settlement, reflect something of Adam's initiative, given his first teaching post with some prospects of permanency. No doubt he was also eager to prevent a recurrence of the situation at Calcifer where his salary was impossible to live on.

The first administrative difficulty at Redcap was in obtaining a school committee. Only a handful of people came to the first meeting, and as they couldn't agree, the election of the committee was postponed. A meeting a week later was successful.

More trouble arose in October 1905. All the school committee with the exception of Alfred Strugnell, resigned at a meeting on the ninth(18). Apparently the meeting was convened by Strugnell to lay complaints about the teacher's mismanagement of the school. The other committeemen thought the complaints "foolish and puerile" and they resigned in disgust. They expressed their confidence in the teacher and suggested to the Department that he be allowed to carry on without a committee. Adam summarized the situation at Redcap in his report to the Department:

"Since I have been here, I have had nothing but trouble and tumult. On two different occasions I have had to seek the aid and advice of the police, having several times been threatened with dire bodily injury . . . Life up here is no picnic at the best of times, but being pestered and harrassed by some parents makes it all but unbearable."

There was a further crisis early in 1906 when Adam suspended one of the girls from school(19). He was convinced that her mother had been the real cause of the disturbance since the school began. Fortunately for Adam, the Department supported the teacher strongly and insisted that the girl's mother give an assurance of her support for the school teacher before Mr. Adam should re-admit the girl.

Then during May 1906, Adam was implicated as a witness in an assault charge involving two Redcap men(20): But, incredible as it seems, this was the last of the trouble in Redcap. However the local MLA, Mr. Mick Woods, being aware of the previous upheavals at Redcap, kindly suggested to the Department that,

because Adam had incurred the ill-will of some of the Redcap parents and was unhappy there, it might be advisable to transfer him to the new school at O.K. The Department acceded to the suggestion and on 12 May 1906(21) he was appointed to the new school at the O.K. Mines. Having struggled through all the difficulties, Adam was dismayed by the news. He replied to the Department, on 25 May(22), that everything concerning the Redcap school was now harmonious, and friction was now happily at an end — even the parents wanted him retained at Redcap. The night school was progressing well, and Adam was building a calico home. However, despite his letter and despite a petition of Redcap residents to the Department (23), the decision was irreversible. So it was that Adam opened the O.K. Provisional School in June 1906.

The mines at O.K. were discovered in 1902 by prospectors employed by John Moffatt (24). The traditional explanation of the name is that the prospectors found a jam tin near the site, bearing the label O.K., and named the discovery after it(25). Smelters were moved from Mount Garnet and re-erected at O.K. in 1902 (26). For eight years, O.K. was a booming mining camp. There were five hotels, the largest and most notable being Brown's Commercial Hotel where about 70 miners boarded. The local store-keeper and butcher was E. A. Atherton(27) who entered Parliament in 1929 and immediately became Mines Minister in the Moore Government. The town area was on a very small flat near the creek. The mines were located to the north, the smelters to the west, with the mine manager's house and the church on a hill in the direction of the smelters. The school, hospital and police station were on the hill to the east, beside the Mungana Road leading out of the town.

A TOWNSHIP VANISHES

Today all that remains is the smelter chimney beside a large plateau of slag, a derelict traction engine, and, in the town area, sheets and sheets of galvanized iron, bricks and bottles where the shops and houses were. A large stove marks the site of one of the hotels and further up the hill only the foundations and an old tank remain of the school(28). To those with an eye for history, the littered ground and harsh landscape tell of a vigorous mining township, with a hectic, short life and, when hurriedly deserted, quickly destroyed by the elements.

The school was built of silky oak in early 1906, and cost £195 of which the O.K. School Committee contributed £45 (29). The builder was Albert May of Mungana, and it was a very solid building of which James Adam was proud. Two years later a



OK Smelter Chimney and slag plateau, August 1975.

— Author

large playshed was erected by the Committee with a subsidy from the Department. The company, the O.K. Copper Mining Development Syndicate, kindly provided canvas blinds for the playshed which could be lowered in wet weather or when the sulphur fumes from its smelters blew across to the school and made the children's eyes smart.

Adam found life at O.K. congenial by comparison with his previous postings, and generally liked teaching there. While the town was booming, he taught between forty and fifty pupils on his own. He always exercised stern discipline as teacher. Teaching large classes, often including children who had missed schooling for a number of years of their itinerant life, Adam undoubtedly found that strict discipline was a great asset in maintaining control and imparting instruction.

At first he lived in a room at the back of the school, and had his meals either at one of the hotels, or with the policeman, Mr. Peters, who lived nearby. One can imagine Adam having little in common with the fighting and drinking around the pubs, and understand the report that he was ostracized by some of the folk because he concentrated on his teaching studies.

But Adam found a far more enduring happiness at Brown's Hotel than helping the mine workers empty the thousands of bottles that litter O.K. He met Isabella McDonald, a young lass in her twenties who had come to O.K. from the Darling Downs and who was working at Brown's Hotel. They were married on 5 November 1908 (30). The event was postponed due to floods

which delayed the Anglican Minister from Cooktown in making his yearly visit to this part of the Chillagoe Field. The minister was Rev. N. M. Wilkinson who was popularly known as "Deafy" Wilkinson. In order to hear conversations, he carried a bullock horn with him and people wishing to talk to him had to shout down the horn. The service was held in a private house and Dr. Loney was the best man while "Matron" Dan from the hospital was bridesmaid(31).

After their marriage they lived in a good house, built for over £100 by Mr. Jensen, a local carpenter. Food was often scarce at that remote outpost, and was mainly produced by the Chinese market gardeners. Aborigines were often seen in the gully behind the Adam's house. Mrs. Adam taught sewing to both boys and girls in the O.K. school. She received a very favourable report from the Inspector, Mr. Earnshaw for her sewing lessons, which were one of the normal duties of the wife of a married teacher. One of her former pupils, who now lives at Home Hill, is very proud of a sampler which she made at O.K.

The Adams were members of the local tennis club, which a photograph shows to have been a well-supported body in O.K. They were friends with Mr. Davidson the mine manager, and Mr. Atherton the general storekeeper. But these halcyon days came to a sudden end when, through losing a court case, the mine's future was clouded. Mr. Davidson warned them that the mine would close and was not likely to reopen. With their family of two, the Adam's naturally became apprehensive as they watched enrolments dwindle. James Adam applied for a transfer in June 1910(32), informing the Department of the situation, but the Department did nothing about it, and so they watched the exodus from the town.

Then the traction engines and teams ceased running and families could take but a few of their belongings. Houses were left standing and the furniture still in them, as families trudged out of O.K., past the school, carrying swags with a few pathetic belongings in them.

A well-planned accident was the burning down of Brown's Hotel. It turned out to be an hilarious occasion for the remaining townspeople. Although, regrettably, the school committee's books were left inside(33), most of the furniture including the piano, was removed from the building before it was lit. Mr. Peters the policeman, was expecting the fire for sometime and rushed down and attempted forlornly to put it out. The Adams joined in the dancing and singing in the street around the piano. (34)

THE TRANSFER SOUTH

When the transfer finally arrived in December 1910, the O.K.

area was in flood, and they had to arrange a special coach to take them out to Mungana, the rail head. They packed away all the school requisites in the press, and locked up the school before leaving(35). Most of their furniture had to be left behind as it could not be carried in the coach. The trip down to their new school at Teutoberg (now Witta) in Southern Queensland, was an eventful one to say the least. Most of the creeks were running bankers while the Walsh River was in high flood, and the coach had to be pushed through the swirling waters. Even the rail journey was interrupted. James Adam, his wife and two children joined the dozens of others who had to walk around No. 10 tunnel on the Cairns Range which had collapsed following the exceptionally heavy rains of December 1910. What belongings they had rescued from O.K. had to be left on the far side of the tunnel.

They travelled from Cairns to Brisbane by steamer and then by train to Landsborough. Here they were met by one of the Teutoberg school committee who had a wagonette. Their trip up the range in pouring rain was not free from incident. The coach pole broke and they had to chop down a tree and hurriedly improvise a new one. The coach took them only to Maleny that night, and on searching for accommodation, they found none of the three hotels could take them. Through the generosity of the German coachman, they settled down on his bed of corn husks(35).

Having spent so many years in the north, and being forced to leave their house at O.K. with no hope of receiving a penny for it, the Adams were counting on being transferred to a school with a residence. Technically, the family was not entitled to a house because Adam was not yet a classified teacher, but, as he pointed out, "for two years (he) was prevented, by impassable roads and uncrossable creeks and rivers from attending at the examination centre" (37), and he hoped that a point could be stretched in their favour. Thus James Adam applied for a transfer to a school with a residence provided. At least now he was within reach of the examination centres, and not cut off by impassable roads during the wet season that always coincided with the long vacation in the north.

While at Teutoberg, that Adams had to rent a house which belonged to the former teacher, Mr. Thomas Pelham Keys, for 5/- a week. The house, although new, wasn't finished and was very open to the weather, a considerable hardship for former northerners in the wet Maleny climate. Apparently the previous teacher had been keeping possums in the house, and it was full of fleas. As well, the School Committee were at first unco-operative in improving conditions at the school. As he reported in March 1911—while still waiting for his belongings from Cairns:(38)

“When I arrived here, I found the school grounds and garden like a wilderness. The spear grass is as high as one’s waist; great logs and trees are lying about; and the shrubs are over one’s head and quite impenetrable. I set to work, as soon as was practicable, to clean both somewhat, . . . when I pointed out the disgraceful state of the grounds, I was told they had been like that for **nineteen** years and was openly laughed at for my foolishness in attempting to alter things. . .

“Next: there is not one article of equipment in the school, not even a sand-tray or a shadow-stick, or a tape-measure, not to mention other things. And as for a school library, it **was** a rare joke! They had apparently never heard of such a thing.”

Nevertheless the residents and parents were appreciative of Adam’s teaching methods and especially of Mrs. Adam’s expert needlework teaching for the girls. The family frequently received invitations to Sunday dinner with local families and received gifts of fresh milk, cream and fruit, often left anonymously on the verandah.

The transfer to Gilston State School in the Gold Coast hinterland in July 1911 began fifteen happy years of Adam’s teaching career in Southern Queensland, a time when he was able to spend much more time on his studies, and advancement in the teaching profession. At Gilston, in the Upper Nerang, the surroundings were pleasant and a new school had just been built. During his stay of four years, Adam turned his hand to gardening and agricultural studies too. He was one of the sixty State School teachers who took part in the two-week Winter Course at Queensland Agricultural College, Gatton. He passed theoretical and practical examinations in milk and cream testing. Adam developed both experimental agricultural work and gardening in the education of the Gilston children. Soon after his arrival in 1911 he won third prize in the Department’s School Gardens and Experimental Agricultural Work Competition for improving the Gilston school grounds under adverse conditions of soil and fencing. The next year he won second prize for the flower gardens, practical experimental work and his adornment of the school. In 1913 he won first prize. The school had a fine flowering garden and bush-house, and in 1914 he won first prize again(39). As well, the children had been encouraged to form gardens at home. Every home now had a garden and most of them had a bush-house too. Under Adam’s direction the children had successfully cultivated fodder plants too. So Gilston school must have looked a model school during this period.



Mr. and Mrs. Adam and family — Elfreda, Alan and Connie. Photo taken while the family was living at Gilston.

Courtesy: Mrs. I. Adam

James Adam voluntarily applied to leave Gilston in order to continue his studies to become a classified teacher, and to study for a University degree. In mid 1915 he was transferred as head teacher to Seventeen Mile Rocks, now known as the Jindalee area of Brisbane. The school, and a newer residence, are still standing near the Jindalee Hotel, though they are no longer used by the

Department of Education. At the time of his arrival in mid-1915 the residence was an old one and the school needed lining and a new floor to make it more weatherproof.



Seventeen Mile Rocks State School, 1975

— Author

A CLASSICAL SCHOLAR

Adam gained his classification status whilst at Seventeen Mile Rocks. He studied Greek with a minister, the Rev. A. L. Brine of Sherwood, a grandson of the famous Oxford scholar, Dr. Pusey (40). On arriving in Southern Queensland, Adam contacted Professor John Michie, a newly arrived professor at Queensland University which opened in 1911. While he found Michie was not the former classmate he had expected, their common background, and attendance of the same school at Aberdeen formed the basis of a very firm and long friendship between them. This was a stimulating friendship for Adam so long cut off from his colleagues, and the two had ample opportunity for discussing their studies in Classics. During his 6½ years in the Brisbane area, Adam lived more the life of a pure scholar. No doubt his wide reading would have equipped him well for a University degree in Classics.

When attendance at Seventeen Mile Rocks decreased so much that the school was closed at the end of the 1918 school year, the Department allowed the Adam family to continue living in the residence(41). Adam was transferred as an Assistant Teacher to Sherwood, and then, in January 1920, to Oxley State School which was a shorter distance for him to travel each day from Seventeen Mile Rocks. Judging from the progress of his previous studies, Adam matriculated to the University of Queensland during 1921.

Thus his transfer in 1922 to Jimboomba, near Beaudesert, must have been disappointing for his hopes of pursuing University studies; the records of the University of Queensland show that he was never a student there. However at Jimboomba there was a comfortable and well built school residence situated a short distance away from the town. There was an average enrolment of forty, not quite sufficient to obtain a pupil teacher for the school. Mrs. Adam taught sewing to the girls regularly. Adam was a very experienced teacher by now, having taught for almost twenty years.

Considering that he had persevered through the trying conditions of the early years of his career, he felt he could offer some aspects of his varied experience. On 22 April 1923, the twentieth anniversary of his entering the teaching profession, his article discussing the horrid conditions under which many teachers in the North were forced to teach, was published in the Queensland Teachers' Journal. Understandably he was concerned about the training — he had no formal training — and their morale in their first years of teaching.

At Jimboomba Adam had an extensive personal library, built up over the years, predominantly in Classics. Professor Michie visited the Adam's frequently, travelling down to Jimboomba by train, and the two scholars shared their literary and classics interests.

The year 1924 was a sad one for the family. At a time when Adam was very ill in Beaudesert Hospital, their eldest son, Alan Harold, died on 8 May 1924. Aged fifteen he had been susceptible to illness for most of his life. There seems to be little doubt that the cool wet climate of Southern Queensland had an adverse effect on the health of both compared to the drier inland climate of the Chillagoe area of North Queensland.

In June 1925, James Adam was transferred as an itinerant teacher to the Winton District because the drier climate would benefit his health. Mrs. Adam and the family settled in Taringa, Brisbane. The Winton District(42) comprised 100,000 square miles and extended as far as Camooweal and Boulia, and Adam visited Birdsville at least once while its school was closed. He obtained a Ford truck approximately a year after he was appointed to the Winton District, but unfortunately the vehicle was not mechanically reliable. Dust-storms were another hazard of travelling and living in the west.

The change in the style of teaching was marked. Many of the parents saw few visitors and would not come out to meet him immediately after he arrived. Naturally Adam found the children shy too. There were no formal school-houses and the standard varied from rough lean-to's to proper, small buildings set aside for teaching the station children.

Sometimes the Inspectors travelled around the district with Adam between schools they were inspecting, grateful for the motorized transport around the isolated Western district. Adam travelled between seven and eight thousand miles per year around the district, visiting as many as ninety families during the year. The Itinerant Teachers aimed to visit each family four times a year but an average of twice a year appeared to be fairly normal.

SCOTTISH HOMECOMING

On 11 November 1930(43) Adam relinquished his duties as itinerant teacher and took long service leave. He journeyed back to Scotland for his parents' golden wedding anniversary, having not seen them for twenty-nine years. As James was the eldest in the family and the only one to emigrate, it must have been a special home-coming. He also renewed his acquaintance with many of his friends from schooldays in Aberdeen, notably William Calder, a Greek scholar at Edinburgh University. On re-visiting the General Post Office near Threadneedle Street in London where he had worked in the 1890's, and observing its cold and drab aspect, he felt relieved that he had chosen to live in the Queensland climate which had proved much more suitable for his health.

In fact, the Scottish climate in the winter of 1929-30 took its toll of Adam's health. While returning to Australia by ship, he began to feel the effects of how the cold and damp had aggravated his kidney condition. His health deteriorated further after his arrival back in Queensland. He had hoped to be appointed to a Brisbane school on his return in June 1931, and so was not happy about his transfer to the position of Head Teacher at Cootharaba Road State School, on the eastern outskirts of Gympie(44). He taught at Cootharaba Road for less than two months. His health deteriorated quickly and he suffered an attack diagnosed as appendicitis. He died in Brisbane on 21 August 1931 aged forty-nine, having given his life to Education.

His wife, Mrs. Isabella Adam, survives him, aged ninety-four. She lives in Brisbane with her daughter, Mrs. Freda Bardwell of Rainworth. The Adams' two sons also live in Brisbane. Mr. Douglas Adam entered the Queensland Public Service on leaving school and advanced to the position of private secretary to the Minister for Health, the late Hon. Dr. Noble, and then the Hon. Sir Douglas Tooth, before entering the insurance industry. Mr. Gordon Adam is a clerk for Gillespie's Flour Milling Company in Brisbane. Another daughter, Mrs. Connie Blunt, resides in Sydney.

James Adam's career typifies the range of positions that a teacher, especially as head teacher of a one-teacher school, might have held in the first half of this century. As a young Scotsman

newly arrived in Queensland, he entered the teaching profession without any formal training in education. He joined the service in a period of rapid expansion, quite unaware of the deplorable working conditions. He served in schools on the tropical cane-fields, the mining frontier, the dairying and agricultural areas of Southern Queensland, the metropolitan schools, and as well, as an itinerant teacher in the far west. His experiences were in common with many other teachers, but his breadth of experience, his scholarly abilities and his understanding of the conditions of teaching in the distant outposts, would surely have fitted him for an executive position within the head office of the Department of Public Instruction, had his health permitted.

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