

ADELINE ADAMS, NÉE MILLER

CONDUCTED BY
ALICE STONE

April 5, 1978

ARCHIVES
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Pasadena, California



Preface to the Caltech Women's Club History Project Interviews

The interview with Adeline Miller Adams was done as part of a series of oral histories conducted by Alice Stone in 1978 to document the early history of the Caltech Women's Club and social life of the campus. They capture the observations and perspectives of the times.

Subject area

Caltech Women's Club

Abstract

An interview in April 1978 with Adeline Miller Adams, second wife of Walter H. Adams, astronomer and Director of Mount Wilson Observatory, 1923-1945.

Administrative information

Access

The interview is unrestricted.

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Preferred citation

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CALTECH WOMEN'S CLUB
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW WITH ADELINE ADAMS, NÉE MILLER

[WIFE OF WALTER H. ADAMS, MOUNT WILSON OBSERVATORY DIRECTOR]

CONDUCTED BY ALICE STONE

APRIL 5, 1978

**WOMEN'S CLUB
OF THE
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

HISTORY PROJECT

Interviews with Club Presidents serving from 1916 to 1931

1979

INTRODUCTION

When Roxana Anson was president of the Caltech Women's Club in 1977-1978, she noticed that though the Club was founded in 1916, there were no records dating before 1931. She asked me to establish some form of historical record for that period.

We decided to limit ourselves to informal interviews of women who served as president from 1916 to 1931. Tapes or notes would be transcribed, and excerpts published in the monthly Club *Bulletin*. To ensure continuity of possession of at least one copy of the Project, the Caltech Archives agreed to become the primary repository, with a duplicate to remain in the Club files.

The Project assumed a pattern and identity stemming directly from the Women's Club, which was formed as a purely social organization and still sees itself as such. In this context, it seemed inappropriate to ask for personal details that were not volunteered and to pursue apparent inaccuracies.

Caveats should be noted. First, not all the living 1916-1931 presidents are included. Hazel Bates (Mrs. Stuart J. Bates, Chemistry), was unable to complete her interview because of illness, though it is hoped she will be able to at some later date. Second, we interviewed a gracious lady we mistakenly believed to have been the first Women's Club president, Mrs. Walter Adams. Unfortunately, the first Mrs. Adams died shortly after she served as president, and we were unaware of Mr. Adams' second marriage until after the interview appeared in the *Bulletin*. Third, the Project has been completed without the benefit of several pairs of eyes checking for errors. Therefore, there are probably many, and are all mine.

We hope the Project will be viewed as being both complementary and complimentary: complementary in that it concentrates on the Institute's social—as opposed to scientific life—through memories of faculty wives; and complimentary in that through the Project we spent some time with—and thus paid homage to—those women who established traditions of helpfulness and friendliness that make our lives more pleasant.

Alice Stone

A VISIT WITH ADELINE MILLER ADAMS

[wife of Walter H. Adams, astronomer and Director of Mt. Wilson Observatory]

Visit conducted by Alice Stone

April 5, 1978

PLEASE NOTE: The Mrs. Walter Adams who was interviewed in April 1978 was not the first president of the Women's Club. Walter Adams' first wife, Lillian [Wickham], died in 1920, and it was she who was the first president, not his second wife, Adeline, the lady I visited.

The interview appeared in the Women's Club *Bulletin* before the mistake was brought to my attention, but no correction was published since, after these many years, so few people were aware of the true situation. Those who knew were assured that the archival copies would carry the correction.

My apologies.

Alice Stone [1979]

On Wednesday morning, April 5, 1978, I visited Mrs. Walter H. Adams in the medical unit of Mount San Antonio Gardens, in Pomona, after having first spoken with her son, Mr. Edmund Adams. He told me that because of a stroke two years earlier Mrs. Adams, now 86, remembered very little of her early years as the first president of the Women's Club in 1916.

Mrs. Adams moved with the aid of a walker and spoke with me in a small private room in the presence of her special nurse. A slender woman, Mrs. Adams was dressed in a green and white print dress and a yellow sweater, and her white hair was closely but beautifully coiffed. Her face was narrow and somewhat aquiline, and her skin was clear and translucent.

She graciously offered me her hand when we met, and though she was unable to give any detailed answers to my questions, I did gather that she remembered being always willing to participate in social activities and eager to make them enjoyable. She said several times that her friends of that time were "all so very nice." I believe, from her manner and the great affection with which the staff treated her, that Mrs. Adams was a warm woman who understood the value of social ties in a growing institute of science, as Throop then was.

Even at this distance of years, I felt she must have been a gracious and charming lady.

Alice Stone