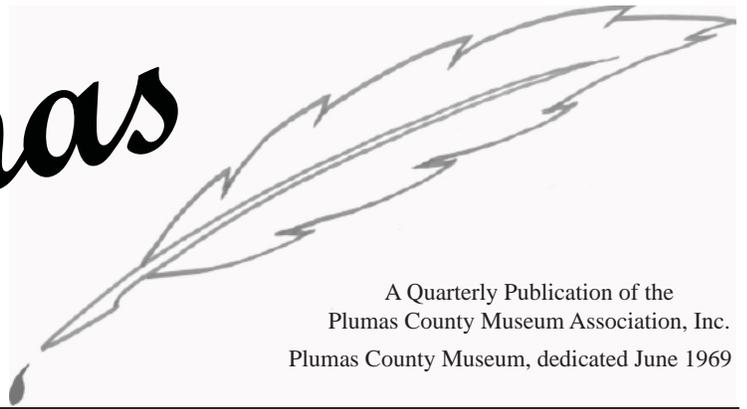


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Annette Abbott Adams: Suffragette, Attorney, Plumas Native.

By Marilyn Morris Quadrio, Chester-Lake Almanor Museum.

Few California women are as deserving of fame and have had less recognition than Plumas County native Annette Abbott Adams. Born in Prattville in Big Meadows, now Lake Almanor, in 1877, Annette's determination to have an unprecedented career in law led to meteoric success, the likes of which were not seen again until the latter part of the twentieth century.

Annette was the daughter of two early Plumas County pioneers. Her father Hiram Abbott had come to California as a 49'er from Ohio. Mother Annette "Nettie" Stubbs, seventeen years younger than her beau, was an educated schoolteacher from Maine who arrived at a later date. The pair met, courted, and married in June of 1872. Settling in Prattville, they operated a store, one of two in the small community, opposite the large hotel Willard Pratt had built as the centerpiece of the small village. Civic-minded Hiram served the town as justice of the peace, building a collection of law books that were a large part of the family library.

Early in their marriage, in 1873, a son was born whom the couple lost nine months later, in June 1874. That tragic event was followed by the birth of daughters Julia May in September 1874, Annette Grace in 1877, and finally, son Edward Hiram, in 1879. Father Hiram wouldn't live to see his children into adulthood; dying in 1889, he was laid to rest with his infant son in the Prattville cemetery. The little family regrouped. Quick-witted, practical Annette became her mother's mainstay in running the store. Julia, always called May by family and friends, took over the household chores, while brother Edward was in charge of the outside chores and tending the animals.

Nettie Stubbs Abbott valued education to the extent that every fall the family left Prattville for Chico, where her three children finished high school. By the mid-1890's, both girls had graduated from Chico Normal with teaching certificates, allowing them to earn a small living. They both returned to Plumas County to teach school, and saved their small salaries, for Annette had a plan. As a child, whenever she ran out of reading material, she would immerse herself in her father's law books. She now convinced sister May to enter U.C. Berkeley with her, where Annette would engage in the study of law, an unheard of ambition for a female at the time.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Law degree in 1904, Annette could find no work as a lawyer, the doors of all the law offices in the Bay Area were closed to her. It was not regarded as suitable for a woman to practice law. Frustrated and downhearted, Annette returned to teaching. She was offered a position at Modoc County High School in Alturas where she could use her Chico Normal majors of history and economics.

By 1906, Annette was appointed principal, one of the first female high school principals in California. That same year she made, for her, an unusual error in judgment, she met and married a young man, Martin H. Adams, who had come with his family to the northeast corner of California from Illinois. Though he appeared intelligent and well-spoken, Annette



Annette at graduation from U.C. Berkeley.

soon realized that her duties as wife did not match her goals, and a divorce or separation soon followed, some sources say within a month! Her new friends in Alturas had already shown her a new path.

Through a colleague, Mrs. Clarence Raker, she became part of the Raker social circle, which included influential Judge John Raker and his suffragette wife, Iva Spencer Raker. Impressed with her intellect and ambition, John Raker convinced Annette to return to Berkeley in 1910 to seek a doctorate in law. Annette became the only female in a class with eleven men, and the first female to complete a J.D. at Boalt School of Law in 1912. Western Pacific Railroad came to the Dean seeking his "best man" to head up their new legal department. The Dean replied that his "Best Man" was Annette Abbott Adams, but once again the doors slammed in Annette's face. She returned to Plumas County, to work in the law office of L. N. Peter in Quincy, but fate stepped in again.

John Raker had been elected to the U. S. Congress in 1910. He and wife Ida were strong supporters of the proposed California state constitutional amendment allowing the women of California the right to vote. They were also supporters of the candidacy of Woodrow Wilson for President. They convinced Annette to return to the Bay Area and help in the campaign efforts. There, Annette grew her political wings as president of the Women's State Democratic Club of San Francisco. The amendment passed in March of 1911, and with the womens' vote, Wilson was elected President. Annette was invited by the Rakers to join them in Washington D.C. for the 1913 inauguration, where she was introduced around the political circles of the city. She then took a leisurely five-month tour of the United States and Canada by train on her way home.

Annette's legal career blossomed when in 1913, she and Marguerite Ogden, the daughter of an Alameda County judge, opened their own law office in San Francisco. Their practice was successful in spite of derisive newspaper cartoons and articles; and despite predictions to the contrary, nearly all of their clients were men. In 1914 Annette was defending a man accused in federal court of violating the Mann Act, which prohibits bringing a female over state lines for immoral purposes. Prosecuting U. S. Attorney John Preston was so impressed by her defense, that he offered her a job on the spot, as one of his staff of Assistant U. S. Attorneys.



Prattville, about the time Annette was a young girl.

She was the first ever woman to be sworn into that position when she took office in October 1914. She was so successful, that when Preston was appointed an Assistant Attorney General in Washington, she was appointed to his vacancy, becoming the first woman U. S. Attorney on July 25, 1918. In 1920, John Preston and John Raker heavily lobbied in Washington for her appointment to fill a vacancy on the Attorney General's staff. With the appointment, Annette was now the first woman ever to hold the position of Assistant Attorney General. As such, she prosecuted cases involving prohibition, tax law violations, and federal compensation laws. Five of her cases she handled before the U. S. Supreme Court. She held this office for little more than a year before a new, incoming administration swept her and other political appointees out of office.

Returning to her San Francisco office, Annette resumed private practice, even joining John Preston and his son in their Los Angeles law office for a time. She and Preston were asked by the federal government to come on board as special prosecutors on the big Elk Hills oil lands case against Standard Oil in the 1930's. They won a twenty-two million dollar settlement for the government, later reduced on appeal. Then in 1942, Annette was appointed by California's Governor Olson to fill a vacancy as Justice on the Third Court of Appeals. That November the people of California elected her to a twelve-year term on the bench, where she authored over three hundred judicial opinions. In 1950, she was again honored, when the Governor asked her to sit on a case before the California Supreme Court. Thus decades before Rose Bird, Annette became the first woman to sit as an Associate Justice on California's Supreme Court.

Ill health required Annette's retirement on November 30, 1952. After the banquets and fetes in her honor, she lived quietly in her comfortable home in Sacramento, gardening when she was able, having friends over for dinner or tea, enjoying the company of one of a succession of beloved cats, and visits from her lifelong Prattville friend, Mame Cadle. Annette died at home in the wee hours of October 26, 1956.

Though still remembered by the old-timers I met during my youth in Plumas County, the passage of years has wiped her from memory. This year, the hundredth anniversary of the passage of the state amendment allowing California women to vote, it seems an appropriate time to pay her tribute.

Women's History Luncheon

This year's featured presenter will be Marilyn Morris Quadrio of Chester-Lake Almanor Museum. Marilyn has been researching the life of Annette Abbott Adams (see feature story) for years and has graciously accepted our invitation to enlighten us on Mrs. Adam's life and times. A catered lunch will be part of the program. Call the Museum at 283-6320 to reserve your seat as this event sells out quickly. You can also purchase your tickets online at the Museum Store at www.plumasmuseum.org.

Volunteers Get Ready!

Our busy volunteer season is almost upon us and we are looking forward to having a great year. Now is the time to consider volunteering at some of our many events or activities at the Museum. We are always looking for volunteers to manage our many gardening projects both in front of the Museum and at the Variel Home as well as help keep our exhibit yard looking spiffy. Major events needing volunteer help are our 4th Grade Living History Days in May, staffing the Peppard Cabin and Pioneer School during the Fair, and giving Variel Home tours on Saturdays in spring and summer. A meeting for volunteers is planned for April. Please call to learn how you can help!

Thank you to museum members Mike & Valerie Flanagan for providing our Christmas Tree and to Sally & Ray Nichol for decorating the front of the Museum in Holiday style with evergreen swags and ribbons. Sally also did a great job on the massive "winter debris" she cleaned up at the Variel Home lawn and gardens!

Around & About the Museum

The Plumas County Museum Association kicked off a fund drive on July 12, 2010 with a target of \$34,000. The funding is needed for Assistant Museum Director Paul Russell's salary. Plumas County has agreed to pick up the additional \$23,000 in benefits and insurance. To date, the PCMA has raised over \$31,000, mainly from its membership, and we thank you heartily! Other activities geared at raising the needed funds will be an Art Auction at Longboards Restaurant at Plumas Pines on May 21st. The Museum needs your help, now more than ever. If you appreciate Plumas County's history and would like to see the Museum continue to function at the level of high quality that residents and visitors have come to expect, please send your donation now, or contact the staff at the museum at 283-6320 to see how you can help.

We appreciate your continued support of the Museum, but cannot slow down in our effort to raise the funds necessary to keep the Museum open. If you haven't already made a monetary commitment to the Museum, would you please take the time to do so now? Every bit of help is greatly appreciated. Thank you again to all of you who have stepped up to the plate to support us!

Nat Snyder, a long-time Director on the museum's Board of Directors has resigned from his position of 23 years to devote more time to his family. We wish Doc well and thank him for all of his years of support. It is expected that Supervisor Jon Kennedy will make a replacement appointment shortly.

The "Gold Crew" consisting of Len Mosley, Ken Myers, and Jay Ricks could REALLY use some help not only with the Spanish Peak Railroad Project, but with the 1922 Studebaker pickup truck project. If you would like some hands-on-history, please call the Museum at 283-6320.

We have a supply of handsome new coffee mugs for sale. You can get them at the Museum as well as at Courthouse Cafe, Morning Thunder, Poppa's Donuts, Plumas Cafe, Epilog Books, Express Cafe, Pangaea, and Village Antiques. Please take some time to visit these fine establishments.

Dino Don Dailey presented another successful dinosaur and fossil program January 29th; people love it! The Museum has assisted Caltrans with its new interpretive panels for the Sierra Valley Rest Stop. The Transient Occupancy Tax was up significantly this past autumn, thanks in part to the county's museums. We are helping Far West Ski Association with a DVD on the history of skiing in the western hemisphere; Plumas County is the 1861 birthplace of ski racing! We are also involved in the General Plan update. Congratulations to the Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council on their acquisition of the White Sulphur Springs Ranch. It's been a long, rough road that's only beginning.

Check out our new online store at www.plumasmuseum.org. You can now purchase new and used books, event tickets, mugs, jewelry, DVDs, and a host of other items with just a few clicks of your mouse. Members will also receive 10% off on most items.

2011 Exhibits on the Stella Fay Miller Mezzanine

January & February: *Plumas County Museum Historic Artists*
March & April: *Ryan Willis - Inventive Creations - Mixed Media, Sculpture*
May & June: *Joe Willis - It's A Small World - Nature Photography*
July & August: *Willie Hyman - Fine Art Photography*
September & October: *Feather River Fine Arts Group Show - Photography, Paintings*
November & December: *Malcolm Parkhurst, aka Xan - Paintings, Sculpture*

Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9-4:30, closed Sun., Mon., holidays.

Please call if you would like to exhibit on the Mezzanine in 2012.

TRUSTEES:

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Charlie Brown, Quincy
Don Clark, Graeagle
Patrick Cook, Graeagle
Bob Edwards, Quincy
Jerry Holland, American Valley
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