



Anthony-PA-2

Two script initial marks of the silversmith Joseph Anthony (w1783–1814, Philadelphia) have at various times been ascribed to James or John Adam. Script “JA” in a short rectangle (mark Anthony-PA-1) is distinguished by a V-d crossbar on the A, The upper J stopping at the stem, and the lower scrolls of the J and A connecting as if a continuous loop, The mark shown here is from a pair of beakers (4 inches high) with tapered sides and engraved on the side with a large feathered “JA,” a size more often seen on Philadelphia silver than on Virginia-made silver (ref. Anthony-PA-1a). They were identified as John Adam silver in the May and Howard Joynt Collection when they were exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston 1968 exhibition *Southern Silver*, and as tentatively Adam, possibly Anthony, when exhibited at The Lyceum 1994 exhibition *In the Neatest and Most Fashionable Manner: Three Centuries of Alexandria Silver*. They are now in the Joynt Collection at The Lyceum in Alexandria. Other Anthony silver with this mark include a double-bellied coffee-pot with gadroon edging in the Winterthur collection, a bowl with gadroon edge, a salver with gadroon and shell edge, and a spoon with shell-back bowl (ref. Anthony-PA-1b)

The second Anthony script-initial “JA” in rectangle (Anthony-PA-2) is distinguished by the crossbar of the A stopping at the verticals, the upper scroll of the J passing beyond the stem, and the left bottom scroll of the A curling back over the J stem. The double-bellied covered sugar dish in the May and Howard Joynt Collection was purchased as a James Adam piece, but reattributed to Anthony in the 1994 exhibition and catalog *In the Neatest and Most Fashionable Manner: Three Centuries of Alexandria Silver* (ref. Anthony-PA-2a). The sugar dish has heavy gadroon at the rim and two rows of punched-bead bands at the base. Other Anthony silver with this mark include a double-bellied cream pot with punchwork similar to the Joynt sugar, possibly its mate; a helmet creamer in the Clearwater Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and a pear-shaped creamer and sugar advertised by Firestone & Parson in 1987 (ref. Anthony-PA-2b). Two spoons with this mark in the Richard Tousey Collection now at Winterthur (T78.058 and T84.065) were initially entered in his notebooks as James Adam of Alexandria, but reattributed in later years to Joseph Anthony; one is a bird-back, typical of Philadelphia.

James L. Adam (1849–1884)
jeweler; Alexandria, VA, c1863–84

James L. Adam was born on 25 October 1849, the son of silversmith William Wallace

and Hannah Adam. He clerked in his father’s silversmith shop, probably from his early teenage years. The 1870 and 1873 Virginia directories listed James as a clerk, working alongside his brothers John G., Robert, and Charles in their father’s jewelry store on King Street opposite the Market Square. He probably continued there after his elder brother Charles was taken in partnership as W.W. Adam & Son in 1875, and supported his mother in the business after the father died in 1877. James was listed in the 1881/2 directory as boarding at the City Hotel. James died on 7 January 1884 and was buried in the family plot in Union Cemetery of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

John Adam Jr., Alexandria, c1800—see John Adam (1775–1848) and “Mis-Identified Virginia.”

John Adam (1775–1848)
silversmith & jeweler; Alexandria, VA, c1796–98, 1801–48; Georgetown, DC 1801



There were four generations of Adam silversmiths in Alexandria. John Adam, representing the second generation, is one of the more recognizable names of Virginia silversmiths, partly due to the large amount of marked silver still extant, and partly due to having three sons and four grandsons who continued the family business in Alexandria. Nothing is known about the youth of silversmith John Adam. He probably learned silversmithing from his father James Adam who worked in Alexandria, was limited by poor health, and died in 1798. It is commonly accepted that John continued the use of his father’s name punches, which were used over long periods, both too early for the son to have been making large hollowware pieces and well after the father had died. This may have provoked some early silversmith listings to use the inaccurate designation *John Jr.* for the son. Contemporary local records did not use Jr. for the son of James, or for that matter to differentiate him from John, the son of Robert. John

Adam would have been a journeyman by 1796, and worked for others several years before opening his own shop. He seems to have been working in the shop of Burnett & Ridgen in Georgetown, District of Columbia, in September 1801 when Thomas Bruff arranged demonstrations of his patented spoon manufacturing device there. Bruff advertised in Washington, Richmond, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, appending certificates of acclaim from various silversmiths, including John Adam, whom he called “a possessed spoon maker” at the seat of government:

Certificate of Mr. Adam,
of George-town, Potomack.

September 18, 1801

I certify that I have tried Mr. Bruff’s spoon machine, and have proved by the watch, that the advantage gained by the machine in working spoons from the bar to the punch, is 25 to one faster than with the hammer, the machine turning out one in a minute, with the name and heel impressed; that the bars are sooner prepared; and that the whole difference, finishing included, is nearly three to one. I further certify, that the spoons need no preparation for the burnisher except the edge, consequently almost all the loss of filings, scrapings and stonings is saved. JOHN ADAM³⁶

In December 1801 Bruff advertised in Baltimore that he had made improvements—the machine tested in Washington, D.C., burdened with cogs had made a spoon a minute in September, and the improved machine without cogs tested in Philadelphia in November was done much sooner. Adam’s detailed certificate again was cited, followed by the Philadelphia timings of a spoon per twelve seconds.³⁷ Spoon making was hand-work activity up to this time, soon to be replaced by manufacturing shops that specialized in turning out basic spoons for smaller shops. Spoon machines such as Bruff’s were not used much at this time, although there was interest and a few patents for different spoon engines. Bruff’s advertisements say that Samuel Alexander of Philadelphia bought a machine thereby controlling the rights in that city, but no one in Alexandria or Georgetown seems to have bought from Bruff. Spoons were probably the bulk of Adam’s work in his early career. Former Mount Vernon curator Worth Bailey said John Adam did work for George Washington Parke Custis in 1799.³⁸

On 28 July 1803 John Adam married Mary Hayes, who was probably the daughter of John and Mary Hayes of Fairfax County.³⁹ Their eldest child, Robert F., was born on 8 June 1804, and was called “grandson Robert Adam” in a deed in 1812 by the grandmother Mary Hayes in which Robert was to inherit a strip of property on King Street after she and her son John Hayes had died.⁴⁰ In July 1831 John and Mary Adam gave to her sister Sarah Parks their interest in a property on Commerce Street that had belonged to the mother-in-law Mary Hayes, when she died intestate.⁴¹ John Adam and family rented from Thomas Shreve a two-story brick house on Prince Street at the southwest corner

of St. Asaph Street from 1805 to 1806. Then in January 1807 he bought a house from James McGuire on the south side of Prince Street and west side of St. Asaph Street, selling it in May 1821, and on 27 June 1821 buying from Shreve's trustees the former Prince Street house he had occupied.⁴² This residence remained in the family until September 1858.⁴³ John invested in a few other properties over time.⁴⁴ In March 1819 John Adam bought from Thomas Brocchus the ground rent on a three-story house on the west side of Fairfax Street midway between King and Prince streets; almost repossessing it in 1822 for nonpayment of ground rent, he acquired the mortgage for the property and eventually bought the house in a forfeiture sale in March 1828, selling it in August 1839 to Eleanor C. Hutchinson.⁴⁵

John Adam's first business advertisement in Alexandria was on 18 November 1803, as a gold- and silversmith on King Street near Royal.⁴⁶ When Jacob Resler died in 1804, silversmiths John Adam, John Pittman, and Mordecai Miller were among the nine from whose names three appraisers would be chosen to inventory his large estate, which included much silver; John Muir, silversmith John Pittman, and Alexander Perry subsequently submitted the detailed evaluation totaling \$1,950.50.⁴⁷ Always listing himself as a silversmith and sometimes as a jeweler, Adam's advertisements emphasized his changing supply of retail goods—tortoise shell combs received direct from Linvill's comb manufactory in Baltimore, which could be "bought plain or sett" (probably set in silver or other decorative fittings) (February 1807), and handsome assortments of jewelry such as cornelian and coral earrings and drops and bracelets (March 1810).⁴⁸ He also repaired silver and jewelry items and sold silverware as would be expected of every silversmith shop. A ledger book of Charles Alexander referenced his silver and jewelry work under accounts of Ludwell Lee Esq. One entry dated 20 January 1809 recorded "to cash paid Adams for mending Miss Mary Anne's [Lee] breast pin \$0.25, " and another on 4 July for \$11 paid for a half dozen dessert spoons bought from J. Adam.⁴⁹

His advertisements fell into a routine, offering little change of format or goods over the years—"John Adam, Gold and Silversmith, King Street/ Has just received from Philadelphia and New York, a handsome assortment of" characteristically "Cornelian, Jet, and Topaz Earrings, and Pearl Breast pins, of the newest fashion—Also, Gold Scales, Keys and Hair Watch Chains, Cornelian, Coral and Patent Wax Beads," then a general statement on silver ware such as "He keeps as usual a general assortment of SILVER WARE" or "together with a good assortment of silver spoons &c. and a general assortment of open and other thimbles."⁵⁰ He usually ended by offering a premium for old gold and silver (20 June 1815). Among his Philadelphia suppliers was Samuel Williamson, whose ledgers indicate Williamson did a large business supplying other silversmiths with ready-made hollowware. A marginal note in one ledger for about October 1812 suggests Williamson supplied an order either marked with the "J. Adams name punch," or perhaps

supplied the new punch. The order reads "1 sugar dish, 2 cream to match plain oval raised, 1 teapot border No.3 swaged light, 1 pr goblets [probably beakers] plain not gilt, 1 sett flat with balls borders No.1 like the M-line sett castors retail \$6,10..to 15, neat baskets, tongs and snuffers, 1 pitcher as usual."⁵¹ A fragment of a preceding page reads "Jam[] Jun/ Alexandria" possibly for James Adam Junior, that is, the son of James—although other possibilities are endless, since both wholesale and retail accounts are found in the ledger. Williamson retired from business in 1813, seemingly at the height of success, without an obvious successor.

John Adam seems to have made regular fall trips north and perhaps in the spring as well. On these buying trips to Philadelphia and New York, silversmiths could see changes in fashion and bring back items that might sell in their markets. John Adam's ads frequently noted his new and "most fashionable" items had been "selected by himself," usually shipped out later to be opened after he returned to Alexandria. New items on October 1822 included "a handsome/ assortment of/ jewelry/ also pebble and glass spectacles, coral necklaces, white wax beads &c. &c."⁵²

John Adam had apprentices and journeymen working in his shop, but they are largely unidentified. The 1810 and 1812 personal property tax lists counted three males over sixteen and two under sixteen in John Adam's silversmith household, possibly this was John and two journeymen, his son Robert, and one apprentice. One apprentice's name is known, John Potter, an orphan who was sent to live with relatives in Alexandria and who apprenticed under his uncle's surname as John W. Ward but later went into business as John Potter. The boy completed his apprenticeship in about 1810 or 1812 and moved to Pittsburgh, the gateway to the west, where the British embargo during the War of 1812 was less directly felt than in Alexandria. After the peace was declared, he returned to Alexandria with another young silversmith from Pittsburgh, advertising their partnership Potter & Patterson, 15 May 1815.⁵³ The firm dissolved in July with a hostile series of newspaper notices, each hurling accusations at the other, and each believing the other had misrepresented his skills and responsibilities. Potter was of the opinion that John Adam and Benjamin D. Patterson had taken John Patterson's side in the dispute, publishing John Patterson's response after he had left town. Potter directly attacked their act as a response "to do me all injury in their power." Patterson had tried to discredit Potter as having "employed much time making gambling boxes" while in Pittsburgh, to which Potter replied that he had learned to make them from John Adam whose shop had sold many—"I never made gambling boxes until employed by John Adam where I made a great deal of money for him as his shop had a preference for work of that kind." With youthful hubris, Potter attacked his former master, "I lived with John Adam 4 to 5 years, he injures me because I established myself here and got preference for some jobs of work because I execute it more to the satisfaction of those who employ me." The last of these notices was published in

September and within eight months John Potter had moved to Norfolk where he successfully and skillfully practiced silversmithing.⁵⁴

The gambling boxes made in Adam's shop were probably silver dealing boxes for the game of faro, a popular but frequently illegal game. It is likely that John Adam made several dealing boxes for the Virginia gambler and gentleman-want-to-be Robert Bailey and possibly for others. Bailey patented on 15 May 1812 his "Fair Dealer," a metal box sized a little deeper than a deck of cards and to contain a pack of playing cards that were pressed to the top by "springs and an elevator."⁵⁵ The box could be opened on one side by hinges (or by a grooved moveable side) to insert the deck of cards, and there was a hole in the top for touching the top card to slide it out a groove on the side, one card at a time. Two or more springs pushed a plate (the "elevator") under the cards against the top of the box. The dealing box was used in the game faro, in which any number of players placed bets on a field of cards arrayed ace through king, betting their numbered card would be the winner in a pair of cards drawn by a dealer who immediately collected from the loser and paid off the winner. New bets could be played at any time and a full deck was played out in twelve to fifteen minutes. Some skill was required to remember which cards had played out. The dealing box was a tool against cheating to ensure the top card was dealt. A gambling house might have several games going at one time, and thus need several boxes. At first they were silver, although later German silver boxes were common. Although Bailey is credited with inventing this gambling box, the idea was copied in the marketplace. Bailey related a story of confronting a Dr. Crittenton who came to his public house with one of his patented boxes.⁵⁶ Bailey requested his fee for using his patent on threat of exposing him as a faro player, and received the begrudging premium. In 1822 watchmaker Joseph Graves of Ohio patented an improved version of the dealing box with the top cut mostly out to display the top card, which became the standard design for the next hundred years.

On 15 April 1817 John Adam bought from Robert Gray a property with 15.5 feet fronting on the south side of King Street east of Royal Street; the deed was witnessed by Adam Lynn, James Carson, and Samuel Smith.⁵⁷ The day books (1815-18) for Patton & Butcher's hardware store have accounts for John Adam buying two shovels, two pounds of six penny nails, screws, and paint brushes in April, June, and September—possibly used to spruce up his recently purchased King Street property.⁵⁸ This property was eventually conveyed from his estate to his youngest son William Wallace Adam in 1849 and continued as the son's silversmith store for years afterward. John Adam did not immediately use this property for himself, but first rented it out, in 1822-23 to J. & A. Douglass, before moving into the building himself on 6 October 1823. He advertised on 25 October his "REMOVAL/...to south side King street opposite Brandon, Morgan & Co. in the house lately occupied by J. & A. Douglass as a bookstore."⁵⁹ He published a particularly long advertisement of new goods:

He has just received from New York and Philadelphia a handsome assortment of

JEWELRY;

which having been bid low for cash, will be sold uncommonly low. Among the articles are—

Sprig Broaches, Garnet & Pearl of the latest fashions & uncommonly handsome

Gold seals, chains and keys

Earrings & finger rings, of different patterns

Friendship rings

Handsome gilt clasps and rings for cloaks

Steel buckles of the first quality for ladies' belts

Necklaces of different colors and descriptions

Fine gold chain

Seed beads of different colors

Coral do. of different sizes

Gilt and black shoe buckles for ladies.

ON HAND,

35 dozen silver spoons, consisting of soup ladles, table spoons, dessert do., tea do., salt do.

Elegant silver pencil cases with penknives in them

Do. Do. with a calendar

Gilt, plated, steel and black hooks and eyes

First quality scissors

SPECTACLES

made and repaired and glasses furnished to suit all ages.

He daily expects by arrivals from Philadelphia and N. York a handsome assortment of

Castors, Candlesticks and Britannia Ware.

Gold and Silver work executed in the best manner, and on as low terms as any shop in the District.⁶⁰

Not stated in the notice was that Adam had invited Benjamin Barton to share a part of the shop, Adam providing the silversmith and jewelry branches, Barton the watch and mathematical instrument sales and repair branches. Barton advertised on 25 October as a watch- and clockmaker that he was moving to "the shop occupied by Mr. Adam where he is prepared to execute all kinds of work in his line, compasses and quadrants neatly and expeditiously repaired."⁶¹ Adam was then forty-eight and Barton was twenty-two, and since the death of his father and older brother (in 1816 and November 1822, respectively), Barton had become the breadwinner of his family. Adam offered Barton the use of part of the shop for \$75 a year and there he remained for eleven years.⁶² Adam's shop expanded to include a wider selection of goods "selected by himself with the greatest care." He published long, eye-catching listings of goods in his advertisements of the 1820s and 1830s, emphasizing jewelry, adding Britannia ware and plated castors, and single- and double-barreled pistols for gentlemen. Silverware was rarely described in detail in the advertisements. He offered "a large assortment of silver spoons of different sizes" (3 September 1825), "SIL-

VER WARE and JEWELRY of his own manufacture of all descriptions" (12 October 1826), "on hand, 35 dozen silver spoons, consisting of soup ladles, table spoons, dessert do., tea do., salt do." (25 October 1823), and "A great variety of silver soup, table, dessert, tea, cream, salt and mustard spoons all of his own manufacture, and warranted genuine, and marked to order, without extra charge" (27 April 1836).

Spectacles became a larger part of Adam's business in the 1820s. At first offering Philadelphia "pebble and glass spectacles" for sale (31 October 1822), he began making and repairing spectacles himself and offering "glasses furnished to suit all ages" (25 October 1823).⁶³ In 1826 Adam offered "Silver mounted pebble spectacles, manufactured by McAllister of Philadelphia" and "glasses of different colors...Spectacles Repaired and glasses of any color required put in."⁶⁴ James McAllister of Philadelphia was a large supplier of silver and other metal spectacle frames, whose name is frequently found marked on the arm of spectacles of this period. Adam deemphasized spectacles in the 1840s, probably only carrying ready-made ones; he advertised "Gold and Silver Spectacles" (23 October 1839), and added "German Silver Perifocal and other Spectacles" (18 May 1846).⁶⁵ A pair of silver spectacles marked on each arm "J.ADAM/ALEXa" incuse is owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. Measuring 4-1/2 inches across the front, the hinged arms expand on a slider from 4-1/4 inches to 6 inches. These were possibly made by Adam; spectacles are frequently unmarked or marked only on one arm. A related item, but not listed in any of his notices, was a silver case to hold the spectacles. Two cases are known, both hinged, rounded-end boxes, engraved on the cover with the owner's name and city. One is engraved "E. Greene, Alexandria, DC" and the other is engraved "John Gadsby, City of Washington, 1828" for the former owner of the Gadsby Tavern and city hotel of Alexandria (ref. Adam-10).

After Adam moved to the new store in 1823, he began listing Britannia ware and plated wares in his advertisements—"He daily expects by arrivals from Philadelphia and New York a handsome assortment of Castors, Candlesticks and Britannia Ware" (25 October 1823) and "Britannia ware, single or in sets, Plated candlesticks and castors" (12 October 1826). He first listed plated cake baskets in 1836, and by October 1839 his offerings were more substantial and he had added German silver as well—"Plated Candle Sticks and Urns/ Britannia Ware, with and without sets/ Plated Waiters/ Super Plated Castors, different patterns/ Cake Baskets, of superior quality/ Ladies and Gentlemen's Gold Chains/ German Silver Table and Tea Spoons."⁶⁶ German silver was a new nickle plating that looked like silver, but provided a very inexpensive alternative, cheaper than coin, "genuine silver," or silver-plated ware.

John Adam occupied his shop on King Street when a fire started in cabinet maker James Green's workshop at King near Royal Street and devastated the interior square of the 300 block of King Street. Strong winds blew the flames down the back alley toward Fairfax Street and the river front, damaging the back buildings of

the businesses fronting on King Street but particularly destroying those on Fairfax and below. Fire engines and hoses came from all over Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington to help fight the fire; Congress adjourned, and the Navy Yard and other public offices closed so that men could help.⁶⁷ Benjamin Barton who was sharing Adam's store related "In January 1827 a fire broke out back of us (J&M Adam occupying one shop) which caused us to move our goods out, but there was no damage done more than the injury of tools and fixtures as to myself; but Mr. Adam lost his back fence."⁶⁸ Adam's lot was 15.5 by 100 feet with separate back buildings, probably including a workshop, and a fence across the alley on the back line, which was probably replaced after the fire.

Barton shared the store on King Street until "October 1834 having lived with Mr. J. Adam eleven years without ever falling out with him, and we still remain in good terms although we are now opponents in business, being the only two persons of the same trade [full service combined silversmithing and watchmaking] in town." After Barton left, Adam made an offer to twenty-year-old William E. Harpur to share his store and handle the watchmaking branch. Harpur advertised on 9 December 1834:

WM. E. HARPUR.

Clock and Watch Maker,
(late of Philadelphia)

Respectfully informs the citizens of Alexandria, and the public generally, that he has taken the old established stand occupied by Mr. Adam, Silver Smith, and formerly occupied by Mr. Barton, where he will give particular attention to Duplex, Horizontal Lepine, Patent Lever, Repeating and Plain Watches,—Musical Boxes and Clocks repaired.

N.B. Chronometers cleaned, adjusted, and their rates verified.

Watches, Chains, Seals, Keys, &c. for sale.⁶⁹

Harpur advertised separately and sometimes appended smaller ads to Adam's silver and jewelry listings. On 27 April 1836 John Adam advertised a long list headed "New and Fashionable Jewellery" which he had personally selected in New York and Philadelphia and was now receiving and opening, as well as a great variety of silver flatware of his own manufacture.

NEW AND FASHIONABLE
JEWELRY

The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public generally, that he has just returned from New York and Philadelphia, and is now receiving and opening a splendid assortment of Fashionable Jewellery, consisting in part as follows:—

An elegant assortment of gold, jett, cornelian, and gold stone ear rings, in setts or without

A large asst fine breastpins, comprising diamond, enameled plain, cornelian, pearl, coral, jett, &c. &c.

Finger rings, of all kinds, amongst which are diamond, pearl, rubies, emerald, jett, &c.

Gold and silver safety chains

Gold medallions, very handsome

Russia iron, in sets, consisting of necklace, ear-rings, breastpins, and slides

Gold and silver pencil cases, splendid

Gold and Silver thimbles

Silver, steel, and gilt purse clasps

Elegant silver combs, new patterns, plated do.

Ladies' tortoise card boxes and silk purses

Silver, butter, and fruit knives, pearl handles

Penknives and scissors, of extra quality

Silver and coral bells

Hair and pocket brushes

Coral and seed coral beads

Seed beads of every color

Percussion pistols, dirks and Spanish knives

Silver sugar tongs, gold watch seals and keys

Plated corsette Rings and hook and eyes steel busks

A splendid assortment of silver plated candlesticks and castors, plated cake baskets

Silver, gilt, pearl, and jett waist buckles and slides

Tortoise and Brazil tuck, neck and side combs

Best ivory fine and redding combs; tooth brushes

A great variety of silver soup, table, dessert, tea, cream, salt and mustard spoons all of his own manufacture, and warranted genuine, and marked to order, without extra charge

With a variety of other articles too tedious to enumerate all of which having been purchased for cash, with great care, he flatters himself he can, and will sell as cheap as can be had in the District.

JOHN ADAM⁷⁰

A similar listing in November offered "All kinds of Silver Ware manufactured at the shortest notice and warranted genuine. On hand of my own manufacture, a large assortment of Silver Table, Tea, Desert, Mustard and Salt Spoons; Soup Ladles; Sugar Tongs, &c. &c. The highest cash price at all times given for old gold and silver."⁷¹ Harpur appended his own notices, some very specific:

an assortment of Gold and Silver Watches, gold dial chased case patent lever's, double cased M.J. Tobias's detached Lever; ladies' gold dial watches; silver patent Lever's, double cased and double bottomed; plain watches of all prices; chains, seals; keys, guards, Mohawk and silk watch ribbons; Boston patent timepieces, &c. &c. for sale on the most accommodating terms.⁷²

Other notices were more general—"The CLOCK and WATCH making business will be

carried on as usual in the above establishment in all it various branches, at the shortest notice, by the subscriber./ W.M.E.HARPUR."⁷³ Harpur left Alexandria in November 1838, and was replaced by Adam's twenty-seven-year-old son John G. Adam. Harpur advertised from Philadelphia that he had removed and "takes pleasure in recommending Mr. John G. Adam, as his successor in the Watch and Clock repairing department, who is competent for the same."⁷⁴

John G. Adam appended a notice headed "Clock and Watch Repairing" that he had "taken the Room lately occupied by Mr. Wm. E. Harpur, (in the house occupied by his father as a Jewelry Store)." He offered that he had "spent several years in the best establishments in New York and Boston acquiring a knowledge of his profession, " and had just returned from New York and Philadelphia where he had selected a handsome assortment of watches and related articles that he offered for sale.⁷⁵ John Adam never mentioned his son's arrival, maintaining a business-like detachment; they never appended advertisements to each other as his earlier watchmakers had. John G. advertised separately in April 1839. It is not of record when he left the shop, but probably left for reasons of health. He died on 22 August 1848 at age thirty-eight, his funeral starting from his father's house on Prince Street between Washington and St. Asaph streets.⁷⁶

John Adam was an amateur oil painter and was said to be a friend of the portraitist Thomas Sully.⁷⁷ Two unsigned portraits descended in the family with the tradition they were painted by John Adam (ref. Adam-41). One is by tradition a self-portrait of the silversmith holding a porte-crayon, a chalk holder used in sketching, probably painted about 1835 to 1840. The portrait and a companion portrait believed to be of John's son William Wallace descended through William Wallace Adam's daughter Mary Adam Henderson and were sold in about 1980 to a collector. William Wallace Adam, like his brother John G., probably also spent time broadening and finishing his skills in Philadelphia, and married about 1839 the Pennsylvania born Hannah Brady. William Wallace was living in Alexandria, presumably working for his father and brother from at least 1840 on. In May 1846 William Wallace published his first notice, appended as a watchmaker's advertisement to his father's longer silversmith's listing:

JEWELRY, SILVER, PLATED WARE, &c—I have just received from the north, in addition to my stock of goods, a splendid assortment of NEW JEWELRY, of the most fashionable kind, among which is a choice lot of EAR-RINGS, which are so much in demand in the northern cities; also Breastpins, Finger-rings, Gold Pencils; Gold Fob, Vest, and Guard Chains; Gold Pens and Pen-holders, Gold Thimbles and a variety of other Jewelry, making in all as complete an assortment as can be found in the District of Columbia. I have also on hand some splendid silver-plated Waiters, Castors, Candlesticks, Coffee Pots, Tea Pots, and some beautiful

sets of Britannia Ware; Pocket Books, Pen-knives, Scissors, Silver, German Silver Perifocal and other Spectacles, and a few patent Revolving Pistols, in cases, with fixtures complete; also a large lot of Silver Work, of my own manufacture, such as Spoons, Forks, &c. which are inferior to none, all of which I will sell cheap for cash. All kinds of Jewelry repaired at shortest notice.

JOHN ADAM.

A good assortment of GOLD & SILVER WATCHES, which will be sold low. Clocks, Watches, and Music Boxes repaired carefully and warranted by WM.W. ADAM.⁷⁸

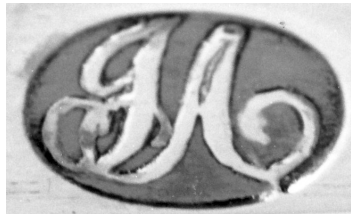
R.G. Dun financial agents first reported on John Adam's silversmith business in October 1847, noting he was about seventy years old and had an active son William, both appearing to be "good for [financial] engagements, very cautious, attentive, and honest." The agents were not sure how much property Adam owned and were pleasantly surprised to discover the next year that he had left an estate of \$20,000 to \$25,000, "much more than he was supposed to be worth."⁷⁹

John Adam died at age seventy-three on 4 August 1848 and was buried in the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Alexandria.⁸⁰ His will, which had been written on 26 October 1832 before either of his sons were involved in the business, and not amended, directed that his "Stock in Trade be sold and the proceeds invested in some productive stocks or let out on interest upon good security" for the benefit of his wife and children.⁸¹ He named his wife Mary his executor and guardian of their children, giving all the estate to Mary to care and educate their children, and after her death the estate was to be divided equally among the surviving children, paying particular attention to put daughter Mary Ann's share in trust out of the reach of her husband John S. Mills. He also named as co-executor former silversmith Adam Lynn, who had pre-deceased him by many years. It is not clear from the estate accountings whether the silversmith's stock was sold. The heirs did deed to William Wallace on 10 May 1849 the store property described as the lot on King Street that John Adam had bought from Robert Grey on 14 April 1817.⁸² William Wallace Adam succeeded his father, continuing the store on King Street, and passing the silversmithing tradition on to his children, who in turn succeeded their father, taking the business into the twentieth century.

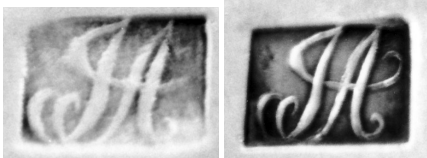
Mary Adam died on 25 January 1857, leaving a simple will directing \$1,000 of her own money in the bank to be given to her two daughters Cornelia and Elizabeth.⁸³ Son William Wallace witnessed the will and acted as her executor. After her death, the real and personal property from John Adam's estate was divided among the children. Mary's accounting of the years 1848 to 1857 are not on file, but son-in-law William N. McVeitch succeeded as administrator, filing a final accounting for the years 1857 to 1859. He sold the widow's furniture, paid and

collected the debts, and on 7 September 1858 sold the family residence on the south side of Prince Street between St. Asaph and Washington streets for \$3,000 to the United States possibly for the Customs House, and bought Bank of Old Dominion stock at \$100 a share with the proceeds.⁸⁴ He disbursed the proceeds to heirs Jane S. (wife of William McVeigh), William W. (and wife Hannah), Robert E. (and wife Helen S.) then of Loudoun County, Cornelia V., Elizabeth (Lizzie), and Mary Ann (widow of John S. Mills). Robert and John G. had both pre-deceased their mother. A family tombstone in the Presbyterian Cemetery marks the graves of John and Mary and their sons Robert F. and John G. It reads: "Departed this life/ August 4th, 1848/ John Adam aged 73 years.// Sacred to the memory of/ Robert F. Adam/ son of/ John and Mary Adam who was born/8th day of June 1804 and departed this life/ on 8th of June 1840, aged 36 years// John G. Adam/son of John and Mary Adam/ was born 6th March 1811/ died 21st August 1848 in 38th year of his age.// Mary/ wife of/ John Adam/ born Nov. 4th, 1780/ died Jan. 25, 1857."⁸⁵

John Adam continued using his father's two punch marks, the "JA" in oval and "JAdam" in stepped rectangle (without the eagle); silver bearing these marks are distinguished stylistically as much as possible, pre-1800 styles identified as James' work and post-1800 styles as John's. John Adam does not seem to have used the eagle in circular reserve found with some of his father's silver. A large quantity of silver flatware and hollowware exists, particularly in the Alexandria and northern Virginia areas marked by one of the several name punches of John Adam.



a



b

b



c



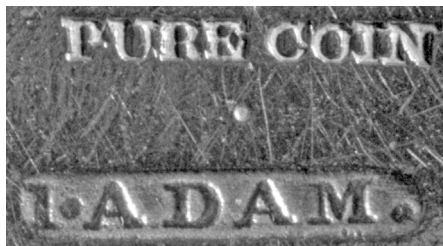
c-1



c-1



d



d-1



e



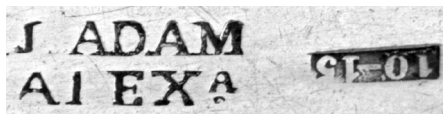
f



g



h



i-1



i-2

Mark a: "JA" in script letters in an oval reserve was recorded on helmet creamers attributed to the father, but also on footed teawares of the neoclassical period. The three-piece Snowdon service (ref. Adam-11) was struck with this mark once each on the front and back of the foot of the teapot (which stands 10 inches to the top of the finial) and covered sugar dish (9 inches to the top of the finial), and struck only once on the front of the creamer (7-1/2 inches in height). The oval urn-shaped bodies on an oval base have a narrow plain band at the shoulder and a reeded band at the rim. The teapot and creamer have elongated concave necks, and the teapot and sugar dish have domed covers topped by an urn finial. The sugar dish is without handles; the creamer has strap handles. The set is engraved with a large "Y" on the side, by family tradition acquired that way, probably from an early estate sale in Alexandria. The tea service descended in the family of Samuel Snowdon (d1831) who founded the Alexandria Gazette in 1800. The set descended to Samuel's only son Edgar (1810-1875) who succeeded his father as editor of the Gazette. Edgar had thirteen children, three of whom served as editors on the Gazette, the last of whom was Hubert (d1911), who was editor from 1901 to 1911, and who inherited this set. The service was held by each of Hubert's three children, the two daughters, Miss Elsie (d1952) and Miss Edith (died in the 1980s at age 98), and Edgar (d1965), then descended to his son Edgar Jr. (d1995), and has been inherited by his son.

A similar open bowl without handles, engraved "PEL" in large script on the side, was sold in 1936 from the collection of Mrs. Miles White, who collected and identified silver from old Maryland families of the Maryland and Virginia eastern peninsula (ref. Adam-12). This bowl, like the Snowdon pieces, was marked with the oval initial mark on the front of the plinth. A third piece in this style is a covered sugar dish, also without handles, but with a cover having one step less than the covered sugar of the Snowdon set, and with a thicker urn-type finial with a bud knob (ref. Adam-13). This sugar dish, engraved "PES," measures 9-1/2 inches in height and 4-1/2 by 6 inches at the bowl, and is in the Ruth J. Nutt Collection of American Silver.

The oval mark was used on the front of the oval plinth of a 6-inch-tall creamer and 7-1/2-inch-tall open-sugar with large melon-lobed bodies, a plain band at the shoulder, a narrow gadroon band at the rim, and squared strap handles (ref. Adam-14). ...