

How Did Adams Farm Get Its Name?

Adams Farm was named in honor of [Helen Coolidge Adams Isaacs](#), an accomplished artist and a descendant of presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams and of Hannah Adams in Walpole.

Helen moved to Walpole in 1941 with and her husband [Kenneth L. Isaacs](#) where they lived across the road from today's Adams Farm entrance in what is now Hillcrest Farm. There they raised two children and several herds of beef cattle in the fashion of a gentleman's farming operation. Their son Kenneth C.A. Isaacs tells the story in this [letter](#).

Born in New York City in 1917, Helen attended Miss Porter's School in Connecticut and then studied art at the Fontainebleau School of Art in Paris. Marriage to Kenneth, a senior executive who would go on to become chairman of Massachusetts Investors Trust (now MFS Investment Management) brought Helen to Boston and the city and its parks would go on to become frequent subjects of her paintings. Her neo-impressionist works are displayed at the [Harvard Art Museums](#), the [Child's Gallery](#), and in private collections.

While Helen's first visit to Walpole occurred in the 1940s, her family tree connects her to this area starting three centuries earlier. In 1630, Henry Adams, great grandfather to John Adams, and from there John Quincy Adams, and eventually to Helen, landed in Braintree, MA from Somerset, England. He brought with him his wife, eight sons and one daughter. Four of these sons, Edward, Henry junior, Peter and Jonathan, moved to Medfield in 1652 where they helped to settle the town. Lt Henry Adams junior would later die in an assault at his front door during the King's Philip War.

Over the intervening centuries, several offspring of these Medfield Adamses would marry into the Ellis and the Chenery families (records detail at least 12 marriages). These names may be familiar to Walpole residents as they were among the largest land holding families in the area, and some of their property encompassed or abutted today's Adams Farm—land that Helen's husband, Kenneth, would later come to purchase.

A distant cousin of Helen's is Medfield's Hannah Adams (1755-1831) who was one of the first women to be published in the United States and the first to make her living from writing. [Her story](#) is well worth reading in its own right.

Sources:

- "North Walpole/Adams Farm Cultural Resources Inventory: the history of human presence and activity in North Walpole, Massachusetts" by Melinda W. Green. (Walpole Historical Society.)
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- <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/11/obituaries/kenneth-l-isaacs-86-an-investment-banker.html>
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