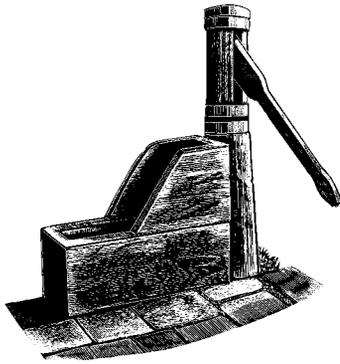


Missing Man



“Your wooden arm you hold outstretched to shake with passers-by.”

READER William R. Crout, S.T.B. '58, A.M. '69, founder and curator of Harvard's Paul Tillich Lectures, writes as follows: “The article about *Enterprising Women*, the exhibition organized by the Schlesinger Library and the National Heritage Museum (January-February, page 42), features a counter display showing a pilot and female passenger in a biplane advertising Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound on its fuselage. The passenger is identified on the display as Lydia Pinkham Gove, granddaughter of the founder and ‘the First Woman to fly across the United States.’

“But there was a second passenger, a male, on this historic 1926 flight. Expunged from the image is James Luther Adams, then in his third year at Harvard Divinity and a graduate student in comparative literature, later Mallinckrodt professor of divinity, one of Harvard's most distinguished theologians, a widely influential ethicist, and illustrious recipient of a 350th Commemorative Medal. Adams, a witty raconteur, relished telling this story to students and friends—I was both—and wrote of it in his posthumously published autobiography, *Not without Dust and Heat* (1995).

“As a 24-year-old Unitarian minister in

Salem, Adams was engaged for \$5 a day by the Gove family, descendants of Lydia E. Pinkham, to accompany them—two boys; a college-age daughter; mother; formidable maiden aunt, Miss Gove, 40; and grandmother—on a train trip West. Ostensibly the trip was to visit national parks, but Adams suspected its real purpose was to separate the daughter from an unwanted suitor; then Adams became uneasy, sensing that he was the desired suitor.

“None had flown before, but inspired by pay-per-ride seaplanes at Catalina Island, Miss Gove asked Adams in Los Angeles to charter a plane to visit coastal missions. (This meant taking off at Santa Barbara from the edge of a high cliff above the Pacific.) When the redoubtable Miss Gove learned that no one had ever flown across the United States in a passenger plane—it was the era of mail-plane relays—she determined to be the first. A single woman of her class, however, could not risk her reputation by flying alone with a male pilot. Once again Adams was the requisite companion, and the family returned by train.

“The plane, with pilot and two passengers, was open cockpit. Adams wiped oil spray forced by the propeller from his face with his tie and wrung it out over the side, while Miss Gove did the same with her scarf. When the plane bounced in airpockets over Utah mountains, Adams wrote, ‘It was all so distractingly exciting, that we did not have time to be fully terrified.’ Unable to find the Chicago airport, and running out of gas, the pilot landed in a Wisconsin field among startled threshers. When they came running

up, he shouted for directions to Chicago, stepping out of the plane, its propeller still whirling, to learn their landmarks.

“Word of the history-making, five-day flight preceded them, and on landing in Boston they were met by a clamor of news reporters. The next day, August 31, the *Salem Evening News* headlined: ‘Ritzville Cleric and Girl Take Air Taxi from Los Angeles to Boston on “Impulse.”’ Ritzville, Washington, was Adams's birthplace. He died in Cambridge in 1994, full of honors, his works perpetuated, with Unitarian-Universalist support, by the James Luther Adams Foundation.”



SPEAKING HARVARD: Associate professor of linguistics Bert Vaux has put online “The Harvard Dialect Survey” (<http://hcs.harvard.edu/~golder/harvard-dialect/>; the call for a Harvard ID number may be ignored), inviting respondents to say whether they know the meaning of 388 words and phrases peculiar to Harvardese. They include place names: Big Wigg (the larger portion of Wigglesworth), PfoHo (Pforzheimer House), *the projects* (Canada). People: *gunner* (kid who talks a lot in class), *LBD* (the type of girl who goes to final-club parties; short for Little Black Dress). Course names: Dots and Spots (“The Meanings of Abstraction in 20th-Century Art”), Jesus and Butthead (“The Bible and Its Interpreters”). Things: *two-entryway rule* (you should not have a relationship with someone who lives less than two entryways from you), *dormcest* (what happens when you violate the two-entryway rule). And miscellaneous terms: *harvard*, the adjective, as in, “He doesn't look harvard to me.” ~PRIMUS V

