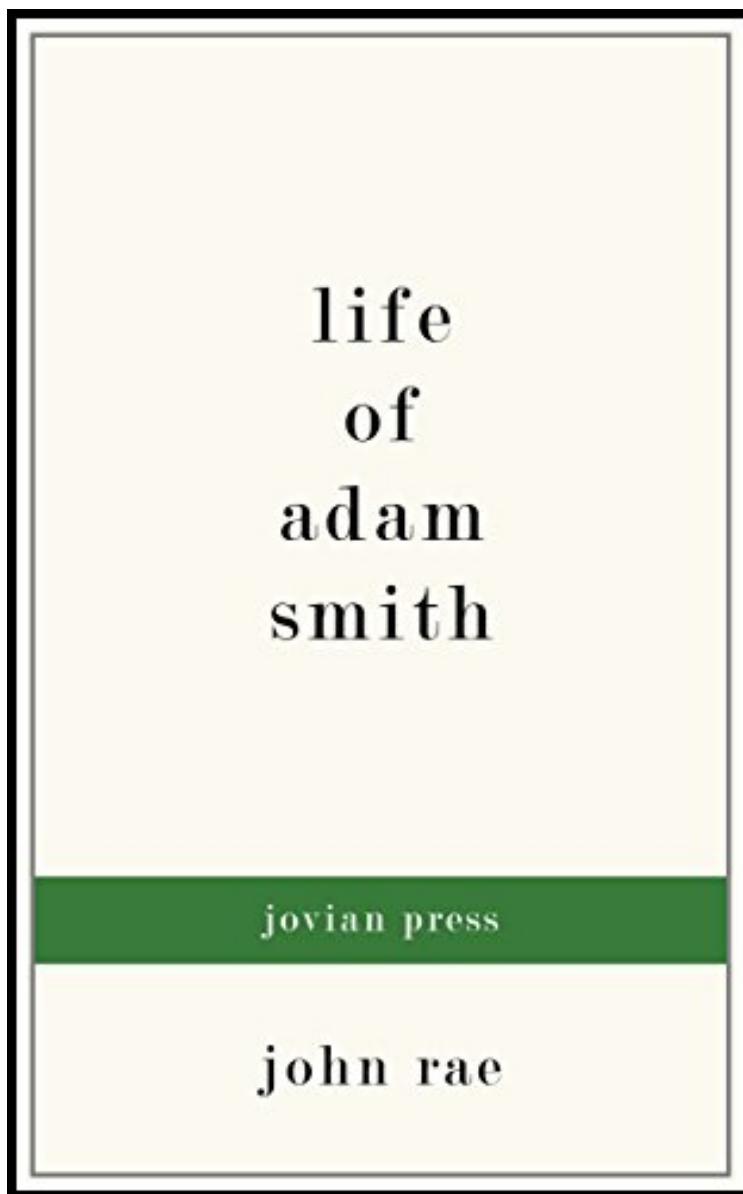


## Life of Adam Smith

*John Rae*

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**John Rae : Life of Adam Smith** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life of Adam Smith:

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy, in the county of Fife, Scotland, on the 5th of June 1723. He was the son of Adam Smith, Writer to the Signet, Judge Advocate for Scotland and Comptroller of the Customs in the Kirkcaldy district, by

Margaret, daughter of John Douglas of Strathendry, a considerable landed proprietor in the same county. Of his father little is known. He was a native of Aberdeen, and his people must have been in a position to make interest in influential quarters, for we find him immediately after his admission to the Society of Writers to the Signet in 1707, appointed to the newly-established office of Judge Advocate for Scotland, and in the following year to the post of Private Secretary to the Scotch Minister, the Earl of Loudon. When he lost this post in consequence of Lord Loudon's retirement from office in 1713, he was provided for with the Comptrollership of Customs at Kirkcaldy, which he continued to hold, along with the Judge Advocateship, till his premature death in 1723. The Earl of Loudon having been a zealous Whig and Presbyterian, it is perhaps legitimate to infer that his secretary must have been the same, and from the public appointments he held we may further gather that he was a man of parts. The office of Judge Advocate for Scotland, which was founded at the Union, and which he was the first to fill, was a position of considerable responsibility, and was occupied after him by men, some of them of great distinction. Alexander Fraser Tytler, the historian, for example, was Judge Advocate till he went to the bench as Lord Woodhouselee. The Judge Advocate was clerk and legal adviser to the Courts Martial, but as military trials were not frequent in Scotland, the duties of this office took up but a minor share of the elder Smith's time. His chief business, at least for the last ten years of his life, was his work in the Custom-house, for though he was bred a Writer to the Signet—that is, a solicitor privileged to practise before the Supreme Court—he never seems to have actually practised that profession. A local collectorship or controllership of the Customs was in itself a more important administrative office at that period, when duties were levied on twelve hundred articles, than it is now, when duties are levied on twelve only, and it was much sought after for the younger, or even the elder, sons of the gentry. The very place held by Smith's father at Kirkcaldy was held for many years after his day by a Scotch baronet, Sir Michael Balfour. The salary was not high. Adam Smith began in 1713 with pound;30 a year, and had only pound;40 when he died in 1723, but then the perquisites of those offices in the Customs were usually twice or thrice the salary, as we know from the *Wealth of Nations* itself (Book V. chap. ii.). Smith had a cousin, a third Adam Smith, who was in 1754 Collector of Customs at Alloa with a salary of pound;60 a year, and who writes his cousin, in connection with a negotiation the latter was conducting on behalf of a friend for the purchase of the office, that the place was worth pound;200 a year, and that he would not sell it for less than ten years' purchase...

About the Author John Rae was a Scottish doctor and explorer born on September 30, 1813, in Orkney. As a child, he enjoyed sailing, climbing, hunting, and fishing—skills that would serve him well in his future exploits. In 1833, shortly after graduating from medical school, Rae was appointed surgeon of the "Prince of Wales", a Hudson's Bay Company ship bound for Moose Factory, Ontario, where he would remain for the next ten years. He had great respect for the people native to northern Canada and adopted many of their survival skills. He learned to hunt caribou, store meat, construct shelter, and walk using snowshoes. He was particularly known for this last skill, once walking 1,200 miles in snowshoes through winter forest in order to learn how to survey. Rae embarked on his first expedition in 1846. Over the next decade, he explored much of northern Canada's coastline and, in fact, discovered the final link in the Northwest Passage. However, his achievements have gone largely unrecognized due to the discovery he made in 1854. While exploring the Boothia Peninsula, Rae obtained the first information about the fate of the Franklin expedition, which had been missing since 1845. He met a group of Inuit who claimed to have seen the missing men four years earlier. Through their reports, Rae concluded that the last survivors of the Franklin expedition had resorted to cannibalism, before perishing in 1850. Upon his return to England, he was heavily criticized by Franklin's wife and the author Charles Dickens and shunned by the British establishment. John Rae retired from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1856 but retained his love of exploration. In 1860, he was hired to explore Iceland and Greenland in an effort to establish a telegraph line to America. And in 1884, at the age of seventy-one, he was hired by the HBC to survey another telegraph route, in the west of Canada, from Red River to Victoria. John Rae died in London on July 22, 1893. He was the only major explorer of his time not to receive a knighthood.