



Volume 16

Article 2

2010

Front Matter

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(2010) "Front Matter," *Adams County History*: Vol. 16 , Article 2.
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Front Matter

ADAMS COUNTY HISTORY



2010

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Statement of Purpose

The Adams County Historical Society is committed to the preservation of the social, political, and religious history of the county and to the promotion of the study of history. Expressing its commitment, the society maintains museum displays a valuable library of publications, and manuscript material which includes estate papers, deed books, land surveys, and newspapers. In addition, it publishes important historical studies and reprints of earlier studies on Adams County, a newsletter, and a journal.

The editorial board of *Adams County History* encourages and invites the submission of essays and notices reflecting the rich history of Adams County. Submission should be typed double spaced and available in a pc compatible word processing format. Contributors should include a hardcopy and electronic copy of their work on a CD-ROM. Generally, style should conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Contributors should retain copies of the typescript submitted. If return is desired, a self-addressed envelope with postage should be included.

Submissions and inquires should be addressed to:

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Adams County History
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Editor's Note

A half century passes quickly! Fifty years ago the editor of this journal was an eleven year old caught up in Civil War Centennial fever. Begging my parents to take him to Gettysburg (they didn't), signing up as a charter subscriber of *Civil War Times Illustrated*, and reading all the Lincoln books I could get my hands infringed on time normally spent with schoolwork and sports. The Civil War Centennial was a big deal!

We expect the Sesquicentennial will be a pretty big deal also, especially here in Adams County, the mecca of Civil War commemoration. The next four years are going to be exciting times for Adams Countians and the Adams County Historical Society in particular, as the annual wave of tourists (including a new batch of eleven year old Civil War enthusiasts) will sweep into Gettysburg in larger numbers than ever. The Society's big plans for these years, culminating in the full renovation of Schmucker Hall, are aptly described in Brad Hoch and Gerald Christianson's essay for this number of *Adams County History*. As Hoch and Christianson describe it, the historic structure from whose cupola General John Buford famously observed the Confederates advance west towards Gettysburg will be transformed into a modern museum that complements the interpretation at the visitor center just outside of town. It seems easy to imagine that the new version of Schmucker Hall will become a must-stop for thousands of visitors to Gettysburg—and a wonderful enhancement to the Seminary campus.

Today tourists "invade" Gettysburg most seasons of the year. Back in 1861, with the firing on Fort Sumter and President Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops to suppress the southern insurrection, Gettysburg residents were aware of another potential invasion, with the potential to cause havoc. As Tim Smith's detailed and patient recitation of the immediate aftermath Lincoln's call for troops shows, Gettysburg was overtaken by rumor and panic. Southern troops, plug-uglies from Baltimore and other bad characters seemed en route to Gettysburg, with no good intent.

As a consequence the able bodied community prepared to meet the potential danger and braced for the worst—which, of course, never came. It's a fascinating story, told with panache by drawing heavily on accounts in daily newspapers of the time and other pertinent primary sources.

Rounding out this issue of Adams County history are two non-Civil War related items. The first, a study of one street in Gettysburg during the year 1910, is part of a broader project to provide a historical “map” of Gettysburg in the 20th century, as part of the historical methods course at Gettysburg College. Drawing on Census Records, the Sanborn Fire Map, newspaper articles and other relevant sources Danielle Hiss and Megan Gray describe the people and activities relevant to a vibrant county seat at the end of the first full decade of the twentieth century. Pre-eminently a walking town, Gettysburg was a place where people lived “above the shop,” walked to church and social activities, and where virtually all material needs could be accommodated within the borough’s confines. The work Hiss and Gray did, like that of their peers, adds a new dimension to our understanding of Gettysburg a century ago. The project has continued, with the full support of the Society’s staff, and you are likely to see more fruits of student work in these pages in the future.

We offer a follow-up to Larry Bolin’s original exploration in these pages of one of those “inevitable” questions of history: did the great man stop in our community? In this case, the great man was George Washington, the year was 1794, and the issue was not so much whether Washington slept here as whether he stopped here. Larry Bolin has unearthed a new source, a memoir by Jacob Eyster, which suggests the first president did indeed pass through Adams County on his return to the national capital in Philadelphia after dealing with the Whiskey Rebels. Eyster’s recollection cannot be called definitive. But it is fair to say in the context of Larry Bolin’s ongoing research effort that a preponderance of evidence now favors the notion that the father of our country set foot in Adams County during his presidency.

Our final item is David Preston’s thoughtful review of James P. Myers’ new book on Thomas Bartram in the Pennsylvania backcountry. Adams County Readers will notice the local history connection. Enjoy!

Michael Birkner
2010