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## Front Matter

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## Front Matter

# ADAMS COUNTY HISTORY



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2009

Volume 15

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*Dr. Michael J. Birkner, editor*  
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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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## Editor's Note

When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008 he made history. But the genuine enthusiasm his candidacy generated, along with a tidal wave of votes, did not change the historical trend line of presidential balloting in Adams County. As Charles Glatfelter demonstrates in "Adams County Votes for President," Countians have been enthusiastic participants in this great ritual, but they have not always mirrored the nation's preferences. Over the course of two centuries of presidential voting, under different systems and with different levels of enthusiasm, the majority poll in the county has favored losers more than winners. Adams said "no" in thunder to the popular Thomas Jefferson in 1804, to war president Abraham Lincoln in 1864, to Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 and 1944, among others. More recently the county lined up against Barack Obama and decidedly in favor of his Republican opponent, Arizona Senator John McCain.

Glatfelter's exegesis of voting trends in Adams County—the extension of several previous explorations of the subject during his years as Executive Director of the Historical Society—offers a wide lens on the business of presidential voting. He follows Adams County from its Federalist leanings in the early republic, to consistent adherence to Whigs, to intermittent Republican surges in 1860, 1872, and 1896. (It's not a local source of pride that Adams Countians preferred Democrat Gen. George B. McClellan to Republican Lincoln in 1864.) Since 1900, however, the County has evolved into a Republican stronghold, except for a few years where the Democratic nominee (Wilson in 1912, Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936, and Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964), overwhelmed the opposition throughout the country. In those cases, Adams joined the pack.

Glatfelter highlights several themes: the rise of voter participation in the Jacksonian Era, the arrival of female suffrage in 1920, and fairly steady population growth but continued Republican dominance into the 21st century. Given Adams County's continued rural complexion, it is not difficult to grasp its adherence to Republican tickets in the modern era. Democrats have consistently run stronger in urban areas, while Republicans have prospered most in small towns, the exurbs and the hinterland.

The author of this article announces that this will be his last word on the topic. Let us hope that in this one case, he speaks without authority.

Our annual book review this year was produced by Gettysburg College reference librarian emerita Anna Jane Moyer. Herself a keen student of women's history, and author of papers on Elsie Singmaster and other women writers, Jane Moyer was the ideal reviewer for Susan Hill's new book. It is good to see Singmaster brought to life again as Ms. Hill has done, and for that work to receive the discerning attention it receives in the pages of *Adams County History*.

Michael J. Birkner  
March 10, 2010