

# PERIODICALS

*Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad*

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## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

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### *Who Voted for Lincoln?*

"Cleveland and the First Lincoln Election: The Ethnic Response to Nativism" by Thomas W. Kremm, in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer 1977), 28 Carleton St., Cambridge, Mass. 02142

Historians have long believed that Abraham Lincoln owed his election as President in 1860 to the votes of the foreign-born. Naturalized citizens—particularly German-Americans who had taken part in the middle-class uprisings of Europe in 1848—shared a hostility toward both slavery and the overwhelming influence of the South in Congress. They therefore voted in solid blocs for the Republican Party.

Kremm, an archivist at the Illinois State Archives, contends that it was religion, not nationality, that determined the voting behavior of the foreign-born electorate. Comparing 1860 election returns for Cleveland, Ohio, with contemporary demographic data, he notes that Lincoln won a city-wide 58 percent majority over the Democratic candidate, Senator Stephen A. Douglas. While Lincoln did poll a large number of "foreign" votes, this is not surprising, Kremm finds, since 70 percent of Cleveland's electorate in 1860 was born outside the United States. Lincoln in fact won his biggest victory in the city's second most "native American" sector, while he fared badly in Irish-American wards. And Douglas scored his victories in wards heavily populated by German immigrants.

Examining census and church records, Kremm finds that the most Democratic wards were also the most Catholic. Lincoln won his greatest majorities in areas where less than 35 percent of the voters were Catholic. The immigrant vote, argues Kremm, divided along distinct patterns: Catholic Democrats versus non-Catholic Republicans.

Ohio nativism, he concludes, was anti-Catholic, not anti-immigrant. Catholics were regarded with suspicion—as "wet nurses of despotism"—across ethnic and economic lines. In the end, the new Republican Party in Ohio was more an "anti-Catholic coalition" than an "anti-slavery-extension organization."