

### Historical Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections 1788-2004

Written by J. Clark Archer, Stephen J. Lavin, Kenneth C. Martis and Fred M. Shelley

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Reviewed by Edith Scarletto, Kent State University

J. Clark Archer is the author of several books and articles concerning the mapping and geography of elections, including the seminal *Section and Party: A Political Geography of American Presidential Elections, from Andrew Jackson to Ronald Reagan*, and *American Electoral Mosaics*. The former work was the first to use factor analysis to look at the voting patterns and critical geographies of elections. Archer is a Professor of Geography from University of Nebraska, and the winner of several Journal of Geography Awards. Stephen J. Lavin, also a Professor of Geography at the University of Nebraska, was a partner in the *Atlas of American Politics, 1960-2000* and created maps for the *Atlas of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. Kenneth C. Martis, Professor of Geography at West Virginia University, is the author of *The Historical Atlas of the United States Congressional Districts* and has authored several additional electoral and congressional district atlases. Fred M. Shelley is Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Oklahoma and has co-authored *Political Geography of the United States, American Election Mosaics* with Archer. All four geographers also recently published *Atlas of American Politics, 1960-2000* (2002).

The *Atlas* is a great resource for undergraduates or casual history buffs who want to browse through the map section and to see the detail of presidential election outcomes. It is very accessible in the map keys and descriptions, and is even inviting to students of history in its analysis of each election. The real resource, though, is the Introduction, which may only be fully appreciated by geographers and overlooked by others who skip to the maps and ignore the text.

The Introduction begins with a review of the Electoral College, the presidential election process, and party nomenclature. It goes on to discuss the candidate selection process, geographic voting patterns and election theory, as well as touching on the patterns of voter participation. Further discussion includes a review of the history of mapping presidential elections, accompanying theory, and previous atlases on the subject, including Turner's *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States*. There is an extensive review of the methodology of the mapping processes for the *Atlas*, data gathering, and analysis techniques, as well

as software and color choices for the maps themselves. The map section is brightly marked with blue edge margin so the reader can turn directly to this, the most interesting section of the book.

In this hard cover text, each election outcome is both described in several pages of text and illustrated in the election maps themselves. A two page entry is used for each election year, highlighting geographic voting trends as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in question. Research notes regarding where data was recovered for each report are given. Special attention is paid to the geography of voting patterns and changes in voting / election laws for each new presidential election. The authors discuss any data irregularities for the election year and how those data were addressed within the project. Subsequent pages note the national candidates and figures for the popular vote percentage as well as Electoral College Vote Percentage. Each entry concludes with a citation for additional reading.

Two map pages are presented for each election result. On the left page, the percentage of popular support for each candidate is displayed in three graduated color shaded maps. The maps are presented using consistent color coding throughout the map section: red for Republican affiliation, blue for Democratic, and green for Independent. On the right page is illustrated the winning popular vote by party and majority, as well as pie charts illustrating the difference between popular and electoral vote percentages. The authors map each election result making clear distinctions for states with appointed electors and areas with either no reporting or no voting rights. For years when a state was not included in the election, (there are, for instance several states which during the Civil War or during reconstruction did not participate) an explanation is given and noted on the map. These markings are employed consistently throughout the atlas. The *Atlas* concludes with an extensive bibliography for each election discussion and an index containing each candidate discussed as well as applicable scandals, voting populations, historical events and definitions used within the text.

Archer, Lavin, Martis, and Shelley give a comprehensive look at the results of each presidential election from 1788 through the recent 2004 election. They aim to produce "the first reference book to map election outcomes for all the counties in every presidential election, through 2004" (ix). They do so in a very clear and readable way, even for the reader who merely flips through the map sections.

The Introduction gives a brief scholarly overview of election cartography with detailed discussion of electoral politics and voting patterns. Using plain language to explain detailed spatial analysis and election theory, they step even a non-geographer through

the stages of election mapping and cartographic techniques. Later, in the section *Construction of the Presidential Election Maps*, they provide a very nice and detailed discussion of sources consulted, data manipulations conducted, and techniques used so that each stage of the process can be critiqued.

In discussing the history and lines of historical demarcation in the eras of political parties, they present interesting analysis of third party eras and the difference between traditional thinking on dating the eras. "Most literature suggests that the Third Party System begins in 1960. Because the presidential election of 1856 displays a geographical pattern unlike previous elections, one could argue that the Second Party System had sufficiently broken down and that a new party system had begun in the mid-1850's" (p.9). Because of the nature of the data collected, and the painstaking way that it was analyzed using current spatial theory, Archer *et al.* can discuss geographic patterns in a more meaningful way than with historical literature alone, or without the benefit of the entire data set. While the maps themselves are the centerpiece of this atlas, the text could serve the geography student well as an explanation of applied mapping and the use of GIS. The research for this volume, and the level of detail used to distinguish and define variables from sources as varied as Census figures, local newspaper reports, and private data collections provides the most comprehensive comparable data set for presidential election results.

The maps themselves are very colorful and easily distinguished using clear keys and distinctive shading. Often other atlases use color coding that can be so difficult to distinguish that it renders any analysis moot. This is definitely not the case here. My only criticism is that some of the maps could have been reproduced larger so that finding and determining counties might be easier, although this would take away from the ability to see the all of the maps for a single election spread out before you at once (if they appeared on separate pages). Additionally, a chart at the beginning of the map section showing how each state selects electors may answer some of the questions raised by the display of popular vs. Electoral College results.

The fortunes of third party national candidates are represented as well, with number of electoral votes and party affiliation. Care is taken to be as inclusive and detailed as possible while leaving the display of the maps uncluttered and easy to read. Shading the percentages of popular vote, they invite the reader to casually flip through the map section between election years and scan for patterns in popular votes as well as checking for electoral vote patterns using the color scheme.

In comparison to the *Routledge Historical Atlas of Presidential Elections* (Mieczkowski, 2001), I again go

back to the geographical analysis of this atlas. It is the point of the authors of this book, a task I assert that they accomplish quite effectively, to study the geography of the data and to come to conclusions based on it. The *Routeledge* is a much more historical reading, using the maps to illustrate a point, rather than to bring you towards it. Another contrast between the two are the maps themselves. Mieczkowski maps only the electoral vote, leaving off the support of the states based on political party affiliation, as well as the all important popular vote.

In conclusion, as an atlas this volume may seem a hefty price for historical voting patterns. However, using the text as a reference for further electoral analysis and as a source for interpreting spatial patterns, it would be well worth the cost. Additionally, its inclusion of each presidential election that was contested does tend it toward a definitive reference for an academic or large public library for historical research. It is unique in its approach to the subject matter and in its treatment of data. All in all, a great product.

#### Works Cited

Mieczkowski, Yanek. 2001. *Routledge Historical Atlas of Presidential Elections*. New York: Routledge, 160pp.

#### disORIENTATION

Counter-Cartographies Collective  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2006

*Reviewed by Denis Wood, Independent Scholar*

I love this map!

I love almost everything about it. The cover fold – the map is available rolled but most will encounter it folded – carries the title "dis" (and this is lower case running vertically) "ORIENTATION" (all caps and horizontal). Below, the phrase, "your guide to UNC-Chapel Hill," with a credit to "Counter-Cartographies Collective, 2006." The map on the cover? An azimuthal equidistant projection centered on Chapel Hill's antipode in the Indian Ocean.

I mean, right off the bat: this is not your ordinary map. In fact, it's an anti-ordinary map. Instead of orienting you, it wants to disorient you. Instead of decorating its cover fold with cute images of Chapel Hill, it displays the world that *isn't* Chapel Hill. Its author is ... "Counter-Cartographies."

So no surprise that when you make the first unfolding you're confronted with a Mercator projection of "The World Through Course Titles" based on UNC's 2005 Undergraduate Bulletin. The next unfolding adds Mollweide projections of "International students