

Adams

By William F. Willingham

Adams is a small town about thirteen miles northeast of Pendleton on Wildhorse Creek in Umatilla County. The town got its name from the homestead of John F. Adams, which became part of the town. The federal government established a post office in Adams in 1883, and the first postmaster was the town druggist.

Adams got its start as a small trading center for the surrounding dry-land wheat ranches. It became a wheat-shipping station once the railroad arrived in the early 1890s, a branch line of the Union Pacific that ran between Pendleton and Walla Walla, Washington.

The state legislature incorporated Adams in 1893, and by 1900 it had 263 inhabitants. The town boasted a weekly newspaper, the *Adams Advance*, and a two-story Oddfellows Hall. One of the town's oldest organizations, the Adams Ladies Club, organized in 1906 and is still in existence.

Over time, improved roads and the popularity of automobiles lessened the commercial importance of the town, and Adams gradually declined as a business center. The town's population declined below 200 during much of the twentieth century, but it experienced some growth late in the century, reaching 389 in 2020.

Sources

Macnab, Gordon. *A Century of News and People in the East Oregonian, 1875-1975*. Pendleton, Ore.: East Oregonian Publishing Co., 1975.

McArthur, Lewis A. and Lewis L. McArthur. *Oregon Geographic Names*, 7th ed. Portland, Ore.: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2003.

Umatilla County Historical Society. *Umatilla County: A Backward Glance*. Pendleton, Ore.: E.O. Master Printers, 1980.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

<https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/adams/>