

Fulfilling the Promise of America:



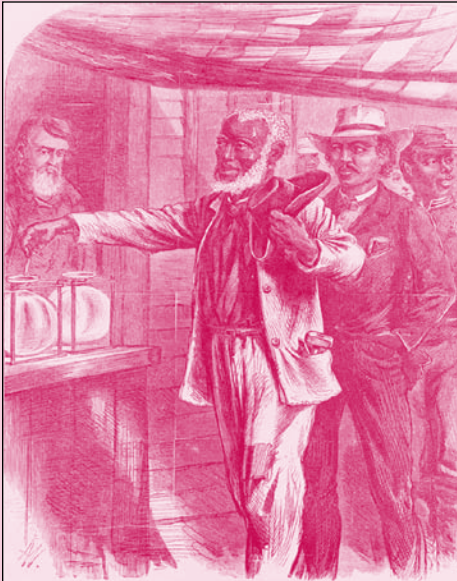
The Struggle for Voting Rights

Lessons, primary sources, charts, pictures, and engaging students through The Interview Project

by Ohio Youth Voices

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INTRODUCTION

Why Teach About the History of Voting?

■ by *Michael Charney, Ohio Youth Voices Director*

IN A FEW WEEKS, possibly 100 million United States citizens over the age of 18 will vote for an African American for President or a woman for Vice-President representing the major parties.

It is hard to believe that a little over 220 years ago when the Constitution was being ratified, only white males who owned property could vote.

That expansion of that most basic democratic right did not happen miraculously. People argued, debated, marched, picketed, engaged in civil disobedience and in some cases died for the right to vote. Since the Constitution allowed the states to set voting requirements, a crazy quilt of state laws varied from state to state. At times people on relief could not vote in Maine and Narragansett Indians were explicitly excluded in Rhode Island as well as the Chinese in California and many Mexico-Americans throughout the Southwest.

That expansion was not linear with more people getting the right to vote over the course of this nation's history. Requiring people to register to vote did not take place until after the Civil War. Women could vote in New Jersey in 1776 and in some states non-citizens could vote before the Civil War.

After winning the right to vote with the Fifteenth Amendment, most African American males residing in the South lost that right through widespread white terrorism and then through the passage of white supremacist laws requiring a white primary, poll taxes, and convoluted literacy tests. In fact, more African Americans were killed by organized and unorganized white terrorism than innocent civilians lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

One of the goals of Ohio Youth Voices is to engage students in having their voices heard among policy makers. By understanding the ups and downs of voting and the activism of people engaged in getting the right to vote, hopefully many more students will see their place in history. Then active Ohio Youth Voices students will reach out to their 18-20-year-old peers and motivate them to vote this November.

The title of this lesson plan booklet, *Fulfilling the Promise of America: The struggle for Voting Rights*, reflects a perspective that there has been a constant creative tension between the ideals of America and their practical application to all citizens. As African Americans and women especially gained their voice and challenged the structures of exclusion, they were eventually able to be involved in making the laws. The changes during Reconstruction when Black men served at all levels of elected office are just one example of the positive changes that flow from expanding who can vote.

Ohio Youth Voices plans to involve high school students across Ohio in helping to create a pro-voting climate within their schools and with their peers and families. Not only will this lesson plan booklet be used in hundreds of classrooms, students will hold non-partisan Youth Agenda forums where they question candidates for Congress, state representative, state senate and Ohio Board of Education about their views on the 2008 Ohio Youth Agenda.

Students will also participate in the Interview Project where high school students will interview 18-24-year-olds about their voting behavior and their knowledge of the candidates and the issues. Students then will hold student-led press conferences to announce their research.

Feel free to photocopy any part of this booklet. If you want to get your students involved in some of the other student-led activities of Ohio Youth Voices, call me at 216-548-4059 or by email at michaelctu@aol.com

Our website has all the lessons as well as YouTube references. The address is ohioyouthvoices.org.

Michael Charney

In the Classroom: Teaching Voting Rights

■ **First, don't worry! These lessons fit into the Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies and English.**

NOW THAT THEY PASS TEST REGIMEN MUSTER we can go onto how to use these lessons.

Wait, let's go back to the standards so teachers can feel comfortable.

These lessons illustrate the separations of power, the system of federalism, the role of the Constitution, the mechanics of voting, the way in which the Supreme Court decides to use judicial review, the influence of slavery, how to amend the Constitution, grassroots movements, and the role of women, ethnic minorities, white supremacy, and language minorities. And that's just the content.

There are lessons using graphs, pictures, and charts so that all the necessary test items can be gleaned from these lessons. Students can examine such topics as compromise and point of view as they examine primary sources. These lessons allow English teachers to connect the English Language Arts standards for thinking, writing, and analysis.

There are even lessons about Reconstruction and the interaction between the struggle for racial equality and the women's movement, two topics sorely neglected in the rush to have students pass the state required tests.

The leading questions at the end of each lesson provoke critical thinking and possibly could be used to practice for the OGT writing sample

More than OGT preparation — the structure of the lessons

The lessons are arranged chronologically from the 3/5ths compromise at the Constitutional Convention to the 2008 Supreme Court case validating the Indiana law requiring a photo ID to vote.

Each lesson contains a primary source, a summary of the historical context, a graphic or chart, and two leading questions.

For convenience, each lesson can be photocopied on 8½x11" paper.

Students can be asked to examine the primary source, find out the point of view, and use linguistic analysis to determine the precise use of advocacy or compromise.

At the end of each lesson there are a few leading questions. The purpose of these questions is not to summarize the content. We assume students will carefully read the primary source and the historical background. These leading questions are meant to provoke the thinking of the student and assist in drawing conclusions about the present day. In addition,

they can be used for small group discussions.

We deliberately did not suggest instructional approaches since teachers can tailor their role plays, vocabulary lessons, research papers, debates, panel discussions, and small group interactions to the specifics of their classes and the amount of time they have.

The Interview Project — an opportunity for real life student engagement

Ohio Youth Voices urges you to assign the Interview Project for your students. Look at the directions on page 16 and then photocopy the list of questions on page 17. The purpose is for high school students to interview 18-24-year-olds about their voting behavior, their knowledge of the candidates for different offices, and then to hold a student-led press conference with other students from the same area and announce their research results.

Please contact the Ohio Youth Voice Director if your students are participating in the Interview Project so that he can work with your students and others in your area about the student-led press conferences.

We would like to have these press conferences during the second and third weeks of October.

Feel free to photocopy all the information. For a nominal charge Ohio Youth Voices can provide class sets, but *Fulfilling the Promise of America: The Struggle for Voting Rights* is aimed at photocopying the information.

Visit our website at ohioyouthvoices.org for all these lessons and more!

Michael Charney

Youth Voices Director

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Thanks to all who helped contribute to *Fulfilling the Promise of America: The Struggle for Voting Rights*.

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LESSON 1

Three-Fifths, According to the U.S. Constitution

■ *Slaves are counted as 3/5 of a person, for purposes of representation*

IN ORDER TO GAIN SUPPORT for the eventual ratification of the US Constitution, the delegates developed a series of compromises among different interests. Delegates opposed to slavery wanted to only count the free people in each state to determine representation in the House of Representatives. Supporters of slavery wanted to count all people. The 3/5ths compromise counted slaves as 3/5ths of a person for purposes of representation in the US Congress and for taxation. It significantly increased the influence of slaveholding states in the US Congress and in the Electoral College.

Of the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention 39 signed the document — with 12 owning slaves.

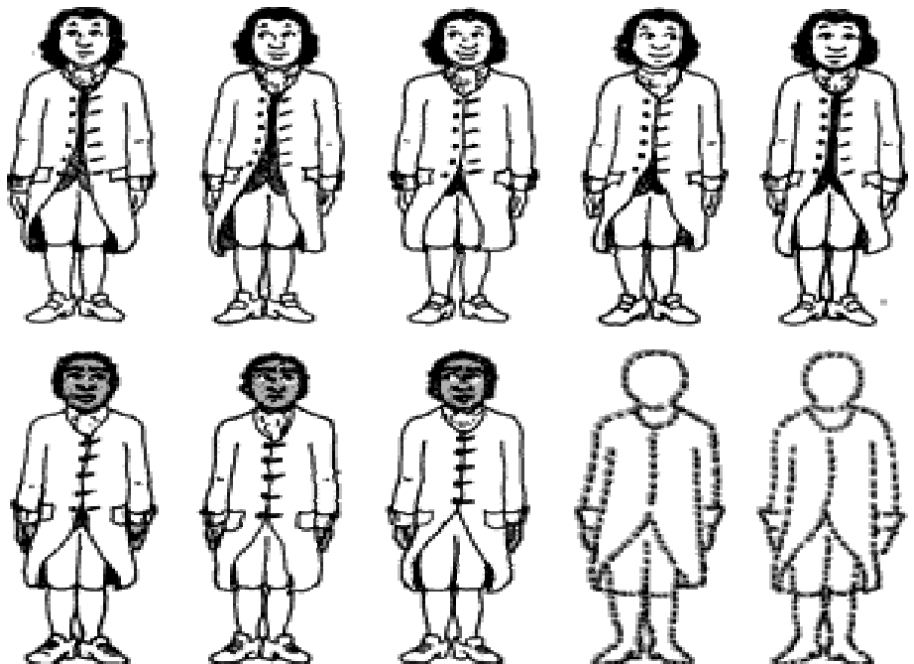
Prior to 1850, southerners, nearly all of whom owned slaves, held the Presidency for 50 of the 62 years; and 18 of the 31 Supreme Court Justices were southerners, despite the north having nearly twice the population by 1850.

That added influence could also be found in the House of Representatives. In 1793 slave states would have had 33 seats had the seats been assigned based on the free population; instead they had 47. By 1833 the numbers had changed to having 98 seats instead of 73. Some historians have speculated that Thomas Jefferson would have lost the Election of 1800 without the 3/5ths compromise in place.

Important pieces of legislation, especially regarding the expansion of slavery, may not have passed if the slaveholding states had not gained extra power in the US Congress.

Representatives and direct taxes should be apportioned among the several states which may be included with this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons.

— Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3
of the United States Constitution



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What questions would you ask the delegates to the Constitutional Convention about the 3/5ths compromise?
2. What questions would you ask someone who was enslaved?

LESSON 2

Free Blacks Lose the Right to Vote in Most States

■ *New England is an exception*

AT THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR most African Americans were slaves. But at least five percent of the Black population was free, with free Blacks living in free and slave states. People had gained their freedom by running away, by the end of slave laws in most northern states, by the prohibition of slavery in the states that formed the original Northwest Territory, by purchasing their freedom, by their masters freeing them or writing wills that ordered their freedom, by fighting in the American Revolution, and by being descendants of indentured servants, not lifetime slaves.

When the nation began, relatively few states excluded free Blacks from voting. But gradually that changed. Before 1820 New Jersey, Maryland, and Connecticut formally took away the right to vote; North Carolina added the word “white” to its Constitution in 1835 and Pennsylvania did the same in 1838. No state admitted to the Union after 1819 allowed African Americans to vote.

Ohio not only forbade Blacks to vote when it became a state in 1803 but also reinforced that exclusion at a constitutional convention. Yet the Black population in Ohio was less than 1 percent.

By 1855, the New England states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire allowed African Americans to vote, though their population made up only 4% of the nation’s free Black population.

However, the abolitionist movement gained traction at the same time and actually led to one sector of the population expanding its vision of equality. The white backlash to abolitionism led to defeats of referenda to allow African American voting. In some states opponents of Black suffrage asserted that runaway slaves would head to their state if they could vote.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the right to vote should have been a high priority for free Blacks in the North at the time of slavery in the South? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think that the New England states did not take away the right to vote from free Blacks as other free states did?

PRIMARY SOURCE:

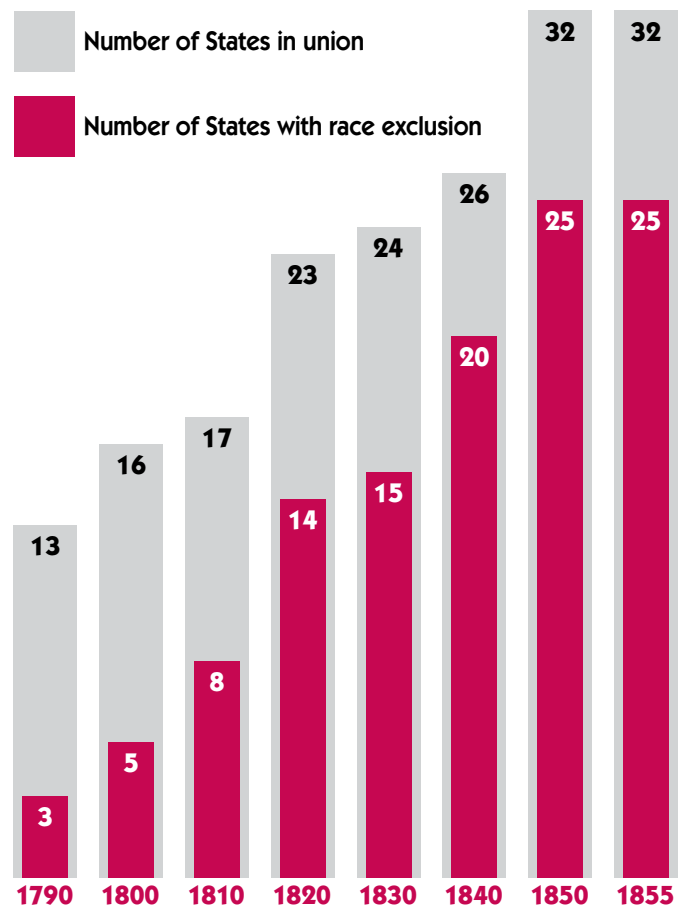
“According to our general understanding of the right of universal suffrage, I have no objection; but if it is the intention of the mover of this resolution to extend the right of suffrage to females and Negroes I am against it. All free, white male citizens over the age of twenty one years, I understand this language to be the measure of universal suffrage.”

— Mr. Kelso, delegate to Indiana Constitutional Convention, 1850

“Because a man is born with a dark skin, he is forever to be disenfranchised. This is a horrible, damnable doctrine that will not stand the scrutiny of the spirit of the age; neither will its apologists stand with clean hands at a tribunal where there is no respect of persons.”

— delegate to Wisconsin Constitutional Convention, 1846

Race Exclusion for Suffrage, 1790-1855



LESSON 3

The Property Qualification Falls

■ *As America becomes more urban, city dwellers demand the vote*

AS EARLY AS 1715 Connecticut required voters to be property owners. By 1790, 10 of the original 13 states had a property qualification for voting. Most Americans lived on farms and government officials reasoned that only those men with a stake in the society should be able to vote.

But after 1790 none of the new states admitted to the Union required ownership of property to vote.

Gradually the original states dropped the property requirement; **by 1855 property was no longer a requirement for voting**, except in New York state where free African American males needed to own at least \$250 of property.

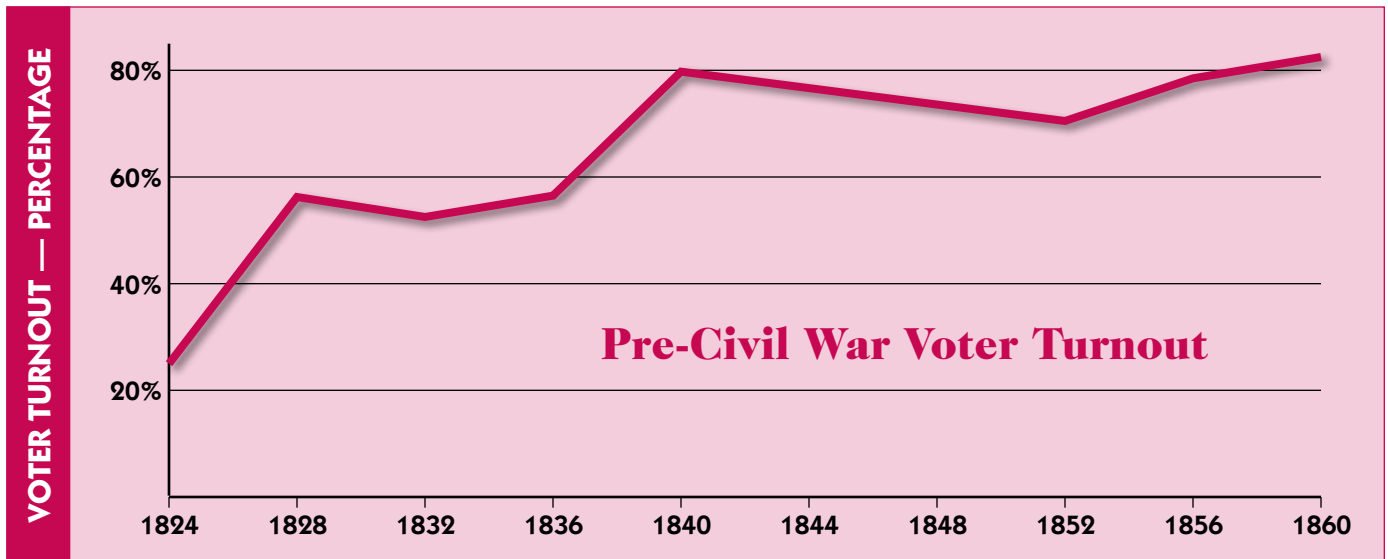
Many states, however, added taxpaying requirements to replace property ownership. Ohio eventually dropped that requirement in 1851.

The United States was changing from a population almost exclusively residing on small farms in 1776 to one where many workers and small business owners lived in towns and cities. Boston had a population of 18,000 in 1790 and by 1860 had grown to 177,000. An increasing number of men could not meet the property qualification.

City and townspeople demanded that they too should be granted the basic right to choose their representatives. They argued that they were participating in the social and economic life of the state but did not have political rights.

It creates an odious distinction between members of the same community; robs them of all sharing in the enactment of laws, a large portion of the citizens bound by them and whose blood and treasure are pledged to maintain them and vests in a favored class, not in consideration of their public services but of their private possessions, the highest of all privileges.

— *Memorial of the Non-Freeholders of the City of Richmond, presented on October 13, 1829 to the Virginia Constitutional Convention.*



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. If you lived in the 1820's what reasons would you give for keeping the property qualification?
2. What changes do you think took place in terms of laws and political campaigns when the property qualification ended?

LESSON 4

1848: Women Demand Equality

■ Seneca Falls Convention

THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

involved thousands of people with a variety of activities to end slavery. From petitions, to resolutions, to marches, to numerous newspapers and pamphlets, to involvement in the underground railroad, organizations with different strategies and outlooks rose up to confront plantation slavery.

Dominated by free Blacks and religious leaders, these abolitionist organizations offered women the opportunity to speak in public and become political leaders of their own even without the right to vote. At the same time the essential question of equality followed the movement to end slavery.

In July, 1848 Lucretia Mott, a Quaker minister and outspoken abolitionist, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, led the Seneca Falls Convention (named after the town of Seneca Falls in upstate New York). Over 300 people attended, including many men. A fourth were Quakers. The goal was to discuss the “social, civil and religious rights of women.”

Over 100 people signed the Declaration of Sentiments written by Stanton and modeled after the Declaration of Independence with the edited phrase, **“All men and women are created equal”** defining the thinking of its supporters. This Declaration denounced the denial of “the first right of a citizen, the elected franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation,” and “oppressed on all sides.” Laws passed only by men, the declaration explained, made women inferior in the social, civil and economic order.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. If you had a chance to interview Elizabeth Cady Stanton right after the Seneca Falls Convention, what questions would you ask her?
2. Why do you think it took over 70 years from the Seneca Falls Convention for women to win the right to vote across the nation?

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, . . .

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; . . .

“The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she has no voice.

Having deprived her of this first right as a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

— *The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments*
signed in 1848 by 68 women and 32 men,
delegates to the first women’s rights convention
in Seneca Falls, New York

The Seneca Falls Convention came at a time of increasing participation of women in the labor force and in civil and social life. Women saw themselves as more than active family members.

The end of the property qualification for voting and the constant struggle for ending slavery created a climate where the question of women’s equality could at least be raised. Despite women’s conventions in Massachusetts and Akron, Ohio where the African American abolitionist Sojourner Truth gave her famous “Ain’t I A Woman” speech, no state passed women suffrage legislation before the Civil War.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Lucretia Mott

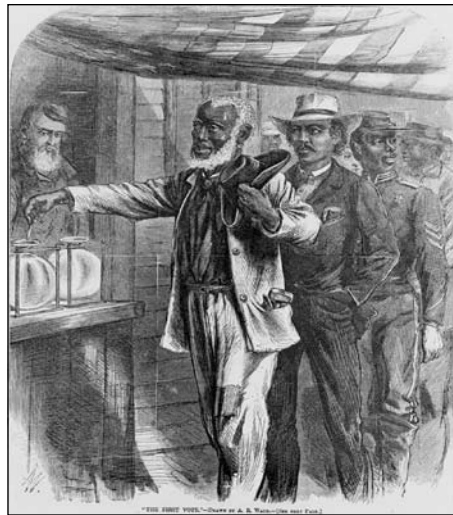
15th Amendment Guarantees Black Men the Vote

■ The Federal Government Gets Involved

THE GOALS OF THE UNION for the Civil War did not originally include freeing the slaves of the Confederacy — but the changing political and military situation led to passage of the Thirteenth Amendment making slavery illegal. As millions of freemen attempted to exercise their newly won rights, many of the former slave states instituted a series of Black Codes that effectively controlled the African American population. And with the rise of white terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, it was unclear in 1866 whether people would really be free.

The Federal Government stepped in by stationing troops in the defeated South and forcing acceptance of the Fourteenth Amendment, requiring its passage as a prerequisite for the former Confederate states to gain readmission to the Union. The Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed equal protection of the laws and granted citizenship to African Americans that had been denied by the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision. Newly reconstructed state governments with many African American lawmakers in place passed legislation for schools, roads, divorce and other political changes aimed at improving the lives of the newly freed people and poor whites who would also benefit.

But the issue of the Federal role in guaranteeing voting rights was not yet determined. Before this time states, not the Federal government, determined eligibility for voting. Between 1863 and 1870 African American voting rights were subject to legislation and state referenda in 15 states. In all cases attempts to gain voting rights for African American men failed.



The Rights of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

— Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, 1870

The Reconstruction Act of 1867 passed by Congress required southern states to approve a state constitution that permitted blacks to vote on the same terms as whites in order to be re-admitted to the union. It was vetoed by President Andrew Johnson but Congress overturned his veto.

Black enthusiasm for voting was so great that when elections were held they put down their tools and stopped working so they could vote in large numbers.

At the same time Republicans wanted to solidify their support, so voting rights for African American men fit into their partisan goals. An Amendment to the Constitution would overturn the results of statewide referenda in the North and make it more difficult to disenfranchise African American voters. They did not foresee history, however.

The amendment was quickly passed by the required number of states though it met with defeat on the West Coast because of anti-Chinese hostility.

Thousands of African Americans, many in their Civil War military uniforms, marched in triumphant celebration when the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified in February, 1870.



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. If you had the chance to interview a former slave who had just voted for the first time, what questions would you ask?
2. Why do you think voting by African American men led to such a violent reaction by the former Confederates?

LESSON 6

Voting Rights Lead to Black Elected Officials

■ *Over 1500 in office by 1876*

BETWEEN 1865 AND 1876 over 1500 African Americans held office. All were Republicans. Along with their white allies, often non-slaveholders and poor, and transplanted Northerners, the Reconstruction governments created significant changes beyond the political and legal arena.

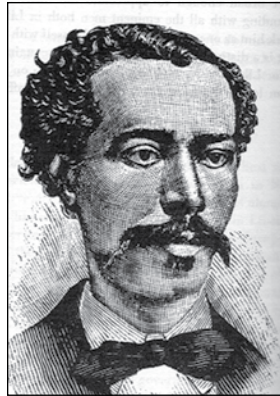
For the first time the government was responsible for education. Literacy dramatically increased, roads were built, and the rights of women expanded.

African Americans served in Congress, in the US Senate, as state legislators, as secretary of state, and P.S. Pinchback served as Louisiana Governor. John Mercer Langston got his start in Ohio as a town clerk and moved to Congress from Virginia.

Despite the official end of Reconstruction after the removal of Federal troops in 1877, African Americans served in Congress up to 1900.



BLANCHE K. BRUCE
U.S. Senator, Mississippi



JOHN R. LYNCH
U.S. Representative, Mississippi



JOSEPH H. RAINEY
U.S. Representative, S.C.



SAMUEL A. McELWEE
Tennessee General Assembly

PRIMARY SOURCE:

a partial list some of the most notable of the African American office holders pre-1900

- ☛ **Blanche K. Bruce**, U.S. Senator from Mississippi
- ☛ **Tunis Campbell**, Georgia State Senator
- ☛ **Robert B. Elliott**, State House lawmaker, and U.S. Representative from South Carolina
- ☛ **Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs**, Secretary of State and Secretary of Public Instruction of Florida
- ☛ **Mifflin Wistar Gibbs**, Arkansas, judge, younger brother of Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs
- ☛ **Thomas Van Renssalaer Gibbs**, Florida House of Representatives, son of Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs
- ☛ **John R. Lynch**, Mississippi House of Representatives, U.S. House of Representatives
- ☛ **John Mercer Langston**, first African-American elected to U.S. Congress from Virginia; first African-American to hold elected office in U.S. History (Township Clerk in Ohio).
- ☛ **James D. Lynch**, Secretary of State of Mississippi
- ☛ **Samuel A. McElwee**, member of the Tennessee General Assembly from 1883 to 1888
- ☛ **Robert Meacham**, Florida Senator
- ☛ **John Willis Menard**, first African American elected to the U.S. Congress (denied his seat)
- ☛ **Charles H. Pearce**, Florida Senate
- ☛ **P.B.S. Pinchback**, governor of Louisiana
- ☛ **Joseph Hayne Rainey**, U.S. Representative from South Carolina, member of the South Carolina Senate; first African American elected to the U.S. House of Representatives
- ☛ **James T. Rapier**, U.S. House of Representatives
- ☛ **Hiram Revels**, U.S. Senator from Mississippi; first African American elected to either house of Congress
- ☛ **Robert Smalls**, South Carolina Representative, South Carolina Senator, U.S. Representative
- ☛ **Josiah T. Walls**, U.S. Representative

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What questions would you ask the first African American members of Congress and the US Senate?
2. What questions would you ask a white member of Congress from Ohio who was serving with these southern Congressmen?

1870: Feminists Divide over 15th Amendment

■ “Sambo” first?

AFTER THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony broke with their abolitionist backgrounds and lobbied strongly against ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments. Stanton and Anthony argued that African American men, by virtue of the 13th Amendment, already had the legal protections, except for suffrage, offered to white male citizens. They were angry that the abolitionists, their former partners in working for both African American and women’s rights, refused to demand that the language of the amendments be changed to include women.

Stanton’s argument soon took on racial overtones. She felt that women voters of “wealth, education, and refinement” were needed to offset the effect of former slaves and immigrants whose “pauperism, ignorance, and degradation” might harm the American political system. She declared it to be “a serious question whether we had better stand aside



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

and see ‘Sambo’ walk into the kingdom [of civil rights] first.” Stanton’s frustration was clear and understandable after her long

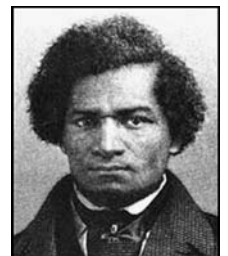
fight for female suffrage. But her emphasis on property ownership and education and her desire to hold out for universal suffrage fragmented the civil rights movement by pitting African-American men against women. Stanton’s emphasis on “educated suffrage” may have helped establish a basis for the literacy requirements that followed passage of the 15th Amendment.

Stanton’s position caused a deep rift between herself and many civil rights leaders, particularly Frederick Douglass, who believed that white women, already empowered by their con-

Will the foreign element, the dregs of China, Germany, England, Ireland and Africa, supply this needed force [i.e. new virtue], or the nobler types of American womanhood who have taught our president, senators and congressmen the rudiments of all they know? . . . Hence, the highest feelings of patriotism, justice to woman, and love for the race, impel us to protest against this wholesale enfranchisement of all types and shades of men, until women are admitted to the polls to outweigh the dangerous excess of the male element. . . . If American women find it hard to bear the oppressions of their own Saxon Fathers, the best orders of manhood, what may she not be called to endure when all the lower orders of foreigners now crowding our shores legislate for her and her daughters. Think of Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung, who do not know the difference between a monarchy and a republic, who cannot read the Declaration of Independence or Webster’s spelling book, making laws for Lucretia Mott, Ernestine L. Rose, Susan B. Anthony or Anna E. Dickinson. Think of jurors and jailors drawn from these ranks to watch and try young girls for the crime of infanticide, to decide the moral code by which the mothers of this republic shall be governed?

— Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1870

nection to fathers, husbands, and brothers, at least vicariously had the vote. According to Douglass, their horrifying treatment as slaves entitled African-American men, who lacked women’s indirect empowerment, to voting rights before women were granted the franchise. African-American women, he believed, would have the same degree of empowerment as white women once African-American men had the vote; hence, general female suffrage was, according to Douglass, of less concern than black male suffrage.



Frederick Douglass

Stanton’s position led to a major schism in the women’s rights movement. Many leaders including Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe, argued strongly against Stanton’s “all or nothing” position.

The 15th Amendment passed, as originally written, in 1870.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What questions would you want to ask Elizabeth Cady Stanton? Frederick Douglass?
2. In what ways was the debate in 1870 similar or different from the divide between supporters of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in 2008?

White Terrorism Halts Reconstruction Gains

■ *The Ku Klux Klan*

BLACK-LED RECONSTRUCTION overturned centuries of white supremacy. Not only did African American men gain new political rights, but the legislative changes produced improvements in education, roads and other physical infrastructure changes and new ways to treat women.

Though the white backlash was immediate, it took decades to finally uproot the progress that voting rights created. White vigilantism killed hundreds of Freedmen in the year 1870 alone. More African Americans were killed by forms of terror than perished in the Twin Towers. The Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1866 by former Confederate officers, led these unlawful attacks — but they were not alone. The Democratic Party explicitly promoted a doctrine of white supremacy as part of their electoral campaigns.

The attack on Black voting rights was a way of keeping African Americans in their place through extralegal terror. It also was a way to attempt to control labor and the ability to own land.

In response to the wide scale violence, the federal government passed the Enforcement Act of 1870 that made interference with voting rights a federal crime; and the Klux Klan Act authorized the President to deploy the army to protect the electoral process.

Despite these laws, the Democratic Party gained traction in most states. The disputed presidential election of 1876 brought a deal where in exchange for the election of Republican candidate Rutherford Hayes, the Federal troops were withdrawn from the South.

The changes were not immediate. African Americans formed alliances with up-country whites who had not been connected to slavery and maintained some semblance of political rights for over a decade in some areas of the South. White terror continued often targeting the most politically active Republican African Americans.

Northern Republican support for African American voting rights faded. When Congress failed in 1890 to pass the Force Act, which would have increased the Federal role in southern voting, the counter-

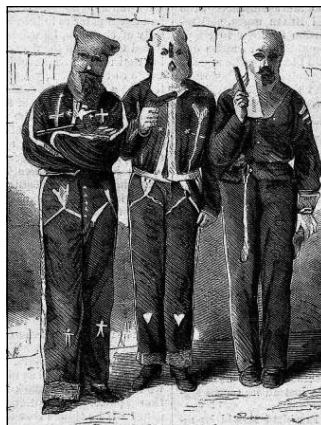
revolution of white terror had succeeded.

Between 1890 and 1905, white supremacist state governments passed Jim Crow laws of racial segregation and new requirements in the areas of residency, poll taxes, and literacy tests. In some areas, only whites were allowed to vote in the Democratic Primary, the only relevant election after the demise of the Republican Party in the South. The infamous grandfather clause allowed voting for people whose ancestors voted in the 1860's when most African Americans were slaves. Literacy tests were administered by county officials, who had great latitude to interpret the tests results and disenfranchise many very literate voters.

The results were stark. In 1896 130,000 African American men were registered in Louisiana; but by 1904 only 1,342 were registered.

During Reconstruction between 60% and 85% of the eligible voting age population turned out; but by 1905 voting had dropped to only 50% for whites and single digits for African Americans. Many poor whites, disenfranchised by poll tax requirements (especially ones that required the payment of all poll taxes from years past) joined African Americans as spectators to the political process.

The best way to stop N-----rs from voting is to visit them the night before the election.
— Sen. Theodore Bilbo (D-Mississippi)



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. If you had the opportunity, what questions would you ask to a voter who had just experienced a vigilante attack of white terror?
2. Imagine you were attending a strategy meeting in a small rural town after one of these attacks. What plans would you propose to maintain African American voting rights?

LESSON 9

Winning Women's Suffrage

■ *Decades of struggle end in victory*

NEW JERSEY ALLOWED WOMEN TO VOTE by its state convention in 1776 and by election law in 1790 — but had eliminated that right by 1807.

After the failure to win women the right to vote when African America men won that their voting rights in the Fifteenth Amendment, the women's suffrage movement adopted a variety of strategies. The National Women's Suffrage Association under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony pressured the federal government for change. The American Women's Suffrage Association led by Lucy Stone went the state route to amend state constitutions. A third way focused on a step-by-step strategy to win suffrage in school elections, for prohibition, and when people voted on municipal taxes.

The key obstacle was that male voters needed to be persuaded.

Though some gains were made, especially in the West, male voters were not convinced in the East and South. White male southern voters feared suffrage for Black women, and held fast to a family code that claimed voting would stain the moral role of women.

After 1905, strategy changed and a sector of the women's suffrage movement looked to alliances with the growing push for social reform and support from labor. That alliance strengthened their claims.

Referenda for women's suffrage failed in Ohio in 1912 and 1914.

In November 1917, New York State approved a state constitutional amendment with large support in the working class immigrant districts of New York City.

Other women moved beyond agitation to civil disobedience, picketing the White House and causing mass arrests. These Silent Sentinels picketed the White for 18 months starting in 1917.

PRIMARY SOURCE:

“To get the word ‘male’ in effect out of the Constitution cost the women of the country fifty-two years of pauseless campaign . . . During that time they were forced to conduct 56 campaigns of referenda to male voters, 480 campaigns to get legislators to submit suffrage amendments to voters, 47 campaigns to get state constitutional conventions to write women suffrage into state constitutions, 277 campaigns to get state party conventions to include women suffrage planks in party platforms and 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congress.”

— *Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Shuler*
Women Suffrage and Politics (1926)



Suffragist March, 1912

These more militant tactics made the mainstream organizations seem more acceptable.

President Wilson announced his support for the Women's Suffrage Amendment to the Constitution in January, 1918. It passed in the US House but failed narrowly in the Senate.

The National Woman's Party campaigned against anti-suffrage Senators in 1918 and Congress passed the amendment.

The thirty-sixth state (3/4 of the 48 states were needed) to ratify was Tennessee, and the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote was officially certified in August 1920.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What would you ask Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the founder of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, if she was alive when the Nineteenth Amendment was finally ratified in 1920?
2. Why do you think it took so long for women to win the right to vote?

The Literacy Test

■ A new roadblock

REGISTERING TO VOTE is pretty easy today — often a post-card will do it. But not before 1965.

Southern states (and a few in the west) had elaborate procedures to make sure that almost no blacks (and in some areas, Latinos) ever got to register. Among the devices they used:

- Police harassment — arrest of anyone who tried to register, and often of family members as well.
- Economic retaliation — White Citizens Councils made sure that a registrant would be evicted, fired, boycotted, foreclosed. Sharecroppers would lose the loans they needed to plant crops.
- If that wasn't enough, the KKK was ready with cross burnings, night rides, beatings, rapes, church bombings, arson, drove-by shootings, and lynchings.
- Police harassment — arrest of anyone who tried to register, and often of family members as well.

And if anyone still tried to register, she faced a host of stumbling blocks to make sure she never made it to the voting booth.

- Courthouse hours — in rural counties where most people lived, the Registrar's Office was only open 2 or 3 days each month for a couple of hours. You had to take off work, with or without your employer's permission. And any employer who gave permission could be driven out of business by the White Citizens Council.

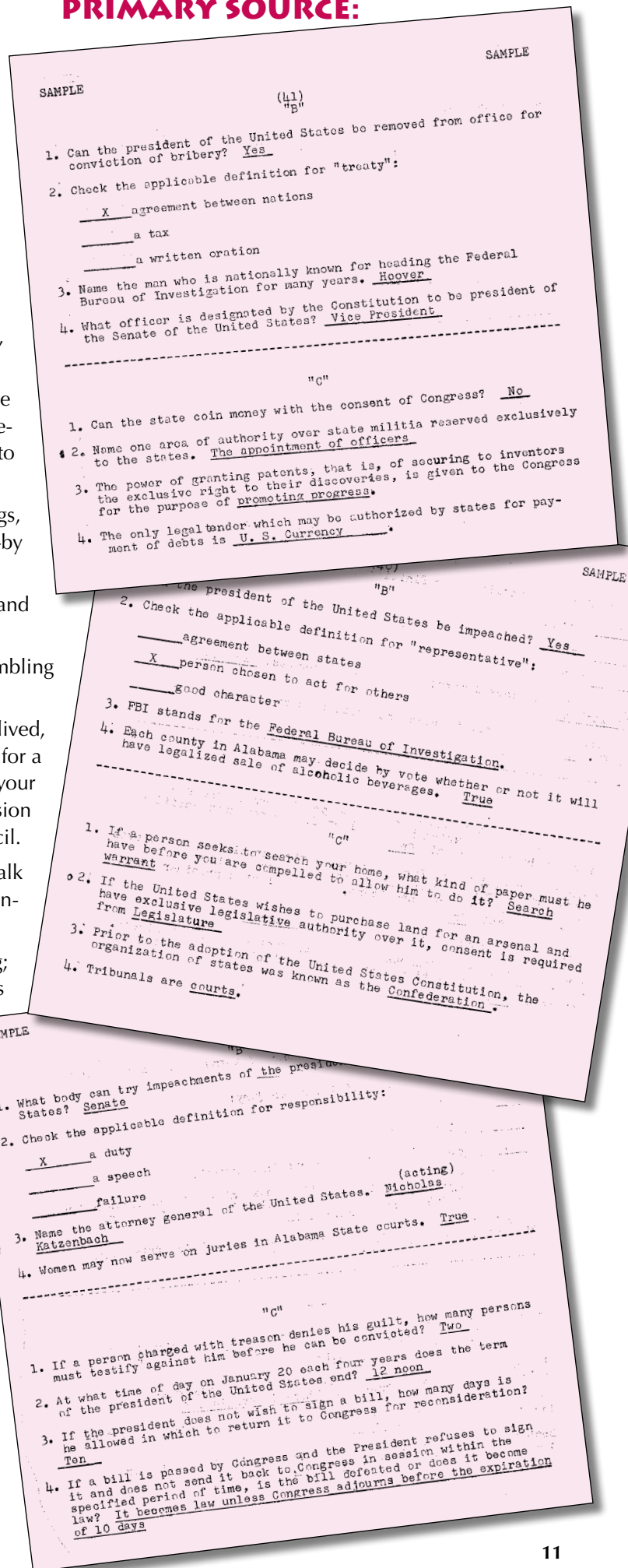
- When you showed up to register, you would have to walk through a crowd of sheriff, deputies, and others throwing insults, intimidation, and threats.

- And then there were the forms, usually several pages long; you had to swear under penalty of perjury that your answers to ever single question were true.

- The "voucher system" — in many counties you had to have someone who was already a voter "vouch" for you that you met the residence qualification, again under penalty of perjury. Often the person who vouched was only allowed to vouch for two or three new voters in a year.

- And finally there was the literacy test itself. First there was "Part A" where you had to read and then write from dictation a section of the Constitution — a black registrant would be given a complex section filled with "legalese." And the "Part B" and "Part C" — two different sets of written questions (examples at right are from Alabama).

- And afterward: your name was published in the local newspaper, and all your personal information passed on to the White Citizens Council or Ku Klux Klan for appropriate remedial action (see above).



1964: The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

■ *Fannie Lou Hamer tells the world about voter intimidation and shakes up the Democratic Party*

DESPITE THE 1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON and the incredible outpouring of grass roots protest throughout the small towns, villages and cities in the Jim Crow South, by 1964 potential African American voters faced police intimidation, legal restrictions, and employer attacks if they tried to register to vote.

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party as an alternative to the all-white Democratic Party. They challenged the Credentials Committee at the Atlantic City Democratic Convention to seat their integrated delegation, chosen in their own independent elections.

Fannie Lou Hamer, one of their leaders, electrified the nation by her moving simple eloquence in describing what took place when she tried to register to vote. A compromise seating of a few of the integrated delegation developed by Democratic Party leaders did not satisfy the grassroots national supporters of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party. They walked out in anger but their agitation paved the way for many of the rule changes that led to 25% of the delegates to the 2008 Democratic Convention being African American. The flipside: most Southern white Democrats left the Democratic Party in and after 1964, resulting in later victories of Republicans Richard Nixon. Ron-

PRIMARY SOURCE: Testimony of Fannie Lou Hamer

before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, July 22, 1964

Mr. Chairman, and the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland, and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that 18 of us traveled 26 miles to the country courthouse in Indianola to try to register to try to become first-class citizens.

We was met in Indianola by Mississippi men, Highway Patrolmen and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time. After we had taken this test and started back to Ruleville, we was held up by the City Police and the State Highway Patrolmen and carried back to Indianola where the bus driver was charged that day with driving a bus the wrong color.

After we paid the fine among us, we continued on to Ruleville, and Reverend Jeff Sunny carried me four miles in the rural area where I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for 18 years. I was met there by my children, who told me that the plantation owner was angry because I had gone down to try to register.

After they told me, my husband came, and said that the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tired to register, and before he quit talking the plantation owner came, and said, "Fanny Lou, do you know — did Pap tell you what I said?"

And I said, "yes, sir."

He said, "I mean that," he said, "If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave," said, "Then if you go down and withdraw," he said, "You will — you might have to go because we are not ready for that in Mississippi."

And I addressed him and told him and said, "I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself."

I had to leave that same night.

On the 10th of September 1962, 16 bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in.

And in June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop, was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is in Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people — to use the restaurant — two of the people wanted to use the washroom.

The four people that had gone in to use the restaurant was ordered out. During this time I was on the bus. But when I looked through the window and saw they had rushed out I got off of the bus to see what had happened, and one of the ladies said, "It was a State Highway Patrolman and a Chief of Police ordered us out."

I got back on the bus and one of the persons had used the washroom got back on the bus, too.

As soon as I was seated on the bus, I saw when they began to get the four people in a highway patrolman's car, I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the four workers was in and said, "Get that one there," and when I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail, and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Ivesta Simpson. After I was placed in the cell I began to hear the sound of kicks and horrible screams, and I could hear somebody say, "Can you say, yes, sir, nigger? Can you say yes, sir?"

And they would say other horrible names.

She would say, "Yes, I can say yes, sir."

"So say it."

She says, "I don't know you well enough."

They beat her, I don't know how long, and after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn't too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman and he asked me where I was from, and I told him Ruleville, he said, "We are going to check this."

And they left my cell and it wasn't too long before they came back. He said, "You are from Ruleville all right," and he used a curse work, and he said, "We are going to make you wish you was dead."

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack.

The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman for me, to lay down on a bunk bed on my face, and I laid on my face.

The first Negro began to beat, and I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted, and I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side because I suffered from polio when I was six years old.

After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack.

The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat me to sit upon my feet to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me my head and told me to hush.

One white man — since my dress had worked up high, walked over and pulled my dress down and he pulled my dress back, back up.

I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account of us wanting to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America, is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

Thank you.



Fannie Lou Hamer speaks at a rally in 1964. Stokely Carmichael is behind her.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What part of Fannie Lou Hamer's testimony made the most impression on you?
2. Why do you think that the Democratic party would not seat all the integrated delegation from Mississippi and allowed the all-white delegation elected without African American input to be seated?

1965: The Voting Rights Act

■ *Massive protests, murder and beatings finally help change the law*

“GIVE US THE BALLOT and we will fill our legislative halls with men of good will,” declared Martin Luther King Jr. in front of a crowd of 30,000 people in 1957 at the Lincoln Memorial.

Gaining the right to vote was always one of the underlying goals of the Civil Rights Movement. Though much of the protest activity from 1956-1964 focused on direct action to end racial segregation, the leaders recognized that once segregation fell fair laws could only follow if elected officials saw the pressure of a mobilized African American electorate.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had outlawed racial segregation but did not address enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment directly.

After sustained protest in Selma Alabama showed the nation the underlying white supremacist violence to maintain voting segregation, President Johnson responded. The nation was galvanized when Alabama state troopers attacked peaceful protestors attempting to march on the Edmund Pettus Bridge — on national TV. The Selma to Montgomery March attracted 50,000 people despite the aggressive legal maneuvering by Alabama Governor George Wallace. Three people, including two northern white supporters, were murdered in Alabama near but not at the march.

President Johnson, invoking the civil rights anthem “We Shall Overcome,” forcefully pushed for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. That law required Federal examiners to supervise the right to vote, ended literacy and poll taxes, demanded pre-clearance of election laws to guarantee non-discriminatory rules, and when extended in 1975 covered language minorities including Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Asian Americans. One result: where only 10% of Mississippi African American voted in 1964, just four years later, in 1968, 60% voted.

Whenever the Attorney General institutes a proceeding under any statute to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment in any State or political subdivision the court shall authorize the **appointment of Federal examiners** by the United States Civil Service Commission.

... [When] the court finds that a **test** or device has been used for the purpose or with the effect of denying or abridging the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color, it shall suspend the use of tests.

... it is necessary to prohibit the States from conditioning the right to vote of such persons on ability to read, write, understand, or **interpret any matter in the English language.**

... Upon the basis of these findings, Congress declares that the constitutional right of citizens to vote is denied or abridged in some areas by the requirement of the payment of a **poll tax** as a precondition to voting.

— Excerpts from the Voting Rights Act of 1965



Above: Selma to Montgomery March in March 1965. Left: Martin Luther King leads return march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where marchers had been brutally attacked weeks before.

LEADING QUESTIONS

1. The 15th Amendment was passed in 1870. Why do you think it took so long to guarantee protection of the right to vote for African Americans in the South?
2. If you had the chance, what questions would you ask one of the voting rights protesters beaten by Alabama State Troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge?

LESSON 13

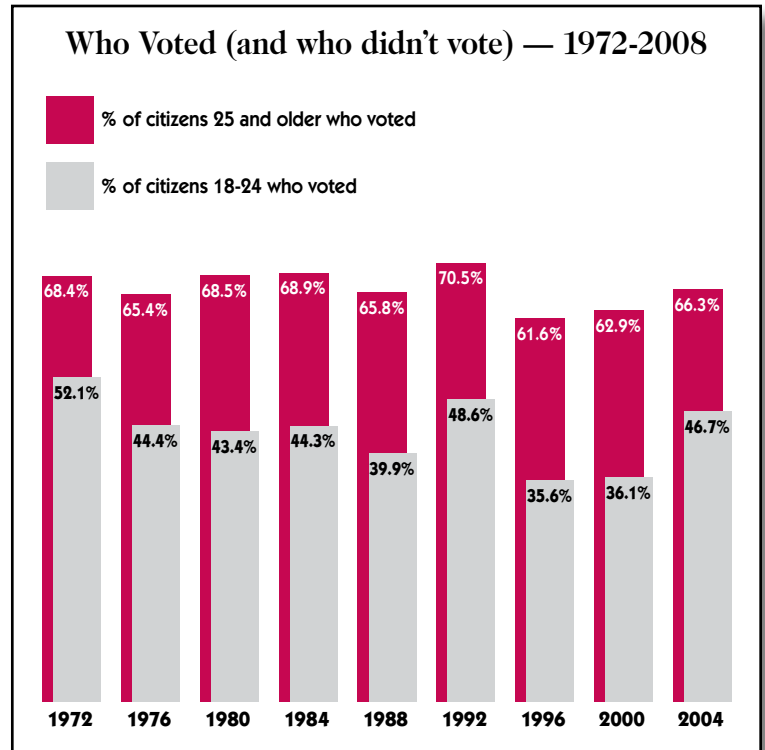
1971: 18-Year-Olds Get the Vote

■ *Vietnam changes the electorate*

IN 1942 DURING WORLD WAR II an amendment to the Constitution was drafted to lower the voting age to 18. The reasoning was: anyone who could be drafted and fight in a war should be able to vote. Nothing materialized from this effort.

As the protests against the War in Vietnam accelerated in the 1960s, a similar amendment was drafted. The lack of voting rights for most draftees undermined the democratic support for the war and legitimized the increasing resistance.

Antiwar Democrats joined with President Nixon to support the 26th Amendment. It passed with no opposition in the Senate in March 1971, and by June 1971 the required 38 states had ratified the change.



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think younger people are so less likely to vote than older eligible citizens?
2. What suggestions do you have to increase voter turnout by 18-24 year old registered voters?

Voting Rights Today: New Ways to Lower Turnout

■ *In Indiana case, Supreme Court upholds law to discourage “voter fraud”*

THE UNITED STATES HAS COME A LONG WAY towards universal suffrage since only white property owning males over the age of 21 could vote. But voter turnout, especially among new and young voters, remains an issue. Few states make it so easy to vote that they offer same day registration. But in general, many of the economic, gender, and racial barriers have fallen.

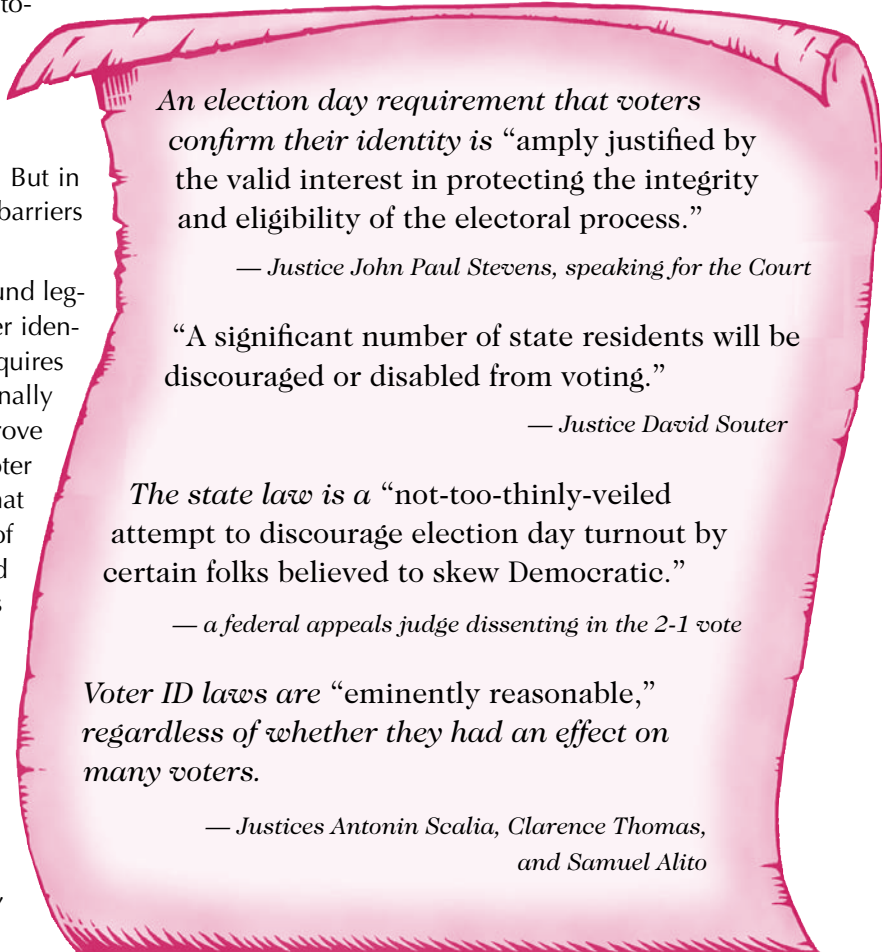
The latest controversy over voting revolves around legislation in 20 states that require some form of voter identification. Ohio passed House Bill 3, which requires identification proving residency for voting. Originally the Republican majority wanted a photo ID to prove identity. They asserted that ID’s would prevent voter fraud. Democrats, on the other hand, declared that individual voter fraud was a problem in search of facts since examples did not exist. Nothing existed like what took place in the 1890’s in rural Adams County, Ohio where 90% of the population was being paid to vote. Ohio law does not require a photo ID but other proof of residency.

Indiana adopted a photo ID law based on a party line vote. The state Democrats and the ACLU sued, claiming that the law was unconstitutional because it put an undue burden on the right to vote for some residents. They did not, however, cite people who have been prevented from voting.

Republicans had asserted that Indiana needed more than a registration system with poll workers confirming name, address, and signature. Such systems, they argued, were prone to abuse; so a photo ID was needed. Republicans could not point to a single instance in Indiana of person posing as another in order to cast a ballot.

The case went to the Supreme Court, and in a 6-3 decision the Supreme Court upheld the Indiana photo ID law. The majority decision written by Justice David Souter argued that the challengers failed to show that the voter ID requirement would pose a “severe burden” for many voters. The challengers had predicted that the law would deter thousands of poor, disabled or elderly people who may not have photo IDs from voting.

The majority decision did not close the door to a future legal challenge if it could be shown that eligible voters were deterred from voting.



LEADING QUESTIONS

1. What questions would you ask to the people who passed the photo ID law?
2. Do you think that a photo ID law will deter eligible people from voting. Why or why not?

THE INTERVIEW PROJECT

What is the Interview Project?

Ohio Youth Voices is sponsoring the Interview Project for high school students all across Ohio.

The goals of the Interview Project are to have high school students learn about the habits, knowledge and voting behavior of young people, to learn more about the issues and candidates on the November, 2008 ballot, to encourage a higher rate of voting by young people, and to develop leadership skills as they present their research in a series of student lead press conferences across the state.

Timeline: September-Prepare for the Interview Project by identifying young people to interview and finding out about the candidates and issues on the ballot.

Early October: Interview five to ten people between the ages of 18-24 and record their answers to the same set of questions

Mid-October: After compiling the results, hold a student lead press conference in cooperation with the staff of Ohio Youth Voices with other students in your area to inform the media of the results of the interviews.

Note to teachers: Please contact Ohio Youth Voices staff if you plan to have students participating in the Interview Project. We can assist in researching the candidates in your area and in arranging all the press coverage for your student lead press conference as well as connect you with other teachers and students in your area who are also following through with the Interview project.

Feel free to use this project and the questions as a springboard for further discussion about the youth vote, the candidates for election and the issues on the ballot. Ohio Youth Voices is non-partisan (a good word to teach your students) and non-profit and does not endorse candidates.

We will need at least 200 interviews from a geographic area but most teachers will teach at least 50-100 students (OK: some teachers teach 180!) and if each student interviewed five young people between the ages of 18-24 that would be more than enough to compile the results for the local media.

Feel free to photocopy these questions.

Contact information:

Michael Charney

michaelctu@aol.com

216-548-4059

THE INTERVIEW PROJECT

Questions for the Interview Project

DIRECTIONS: Read over all the questions before you begin. You will ask the questions directly as they appear so that the results will be uniform across the state. Find out the candidates for Congress, state representative, and State Board of Education (if applicable) before you begin. Feel free to contact the staff of Ohio Youth Voices if you have questions.

PLEASE READ TO THE PERSON YOU ARE INTERVIEWING:

“Hello, my name is _____ and I go to _____ school. We are participating in a statewide project with Ohio Youth Voices to find out about the voting behavior and knowledge of young people. We are **not** interested in finding out what candidates you support. This will only take about five minutes. Can I begin?”

1. How old are you?
2. Are you registered to vote?
 A. Yes B. No
 C. Not yet but plans to register before Oct. 6
3. Did you vote in the March Ohio Primary
 A. Yes B. No
4. Do you plan to vote in November?
 A. Yes B. No C. Undecided
5. Do you know the names of the major party candidates for President?
 A. Obama only B. McCain only
 C. Both D. Neither
6. Do you know the names of the minor candidates for President?
 A. Cynthia McKinney B. Ralph Nader
 C. Bob Barr D. None
7. Do you know the names of the candidates running for Congress in your area?
Note to interviewer: You will need to know the names so that you can see if the answers are correct. We have not listed them here because each district has different candidates.
 A. One correct B. Two correct C. None

8. Do you know the names of the candidates for state representative in your area?
 A. One correct B. Two correct C. None
9. Do you know the names of the candidates for State Board of Education? *(If applicable. Not all areas will have elections this year.)*
 A. One correct B. Two correct C. None
10. The Ohio General Assembly passed a law that would limit the amount of interest a payday lender could charge on a loan to 28%. An issue on the ballot would overturn this law and allow lenders to charge a much higher rate of interest. Have you heard about this attempt to change the law?
 A. Yes B. No
11. Do you support overturning the law that limited the interest rate?
 A. Support overturning the law and going back to different interest rates
 B. Keep the law that was passed limiting interest rates.

FINISH WITH:

“Thank you for your time.
Do you have any questions or comments?”

Before you pass in your interview page, complete this information:

Name _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Date of Interview _____

E-mail _____

1776-early 1800s:

Struggle to remove religious restrictions. In 1787, Article VI of the new United States Constitution prohibits religious restrictions:

“ . . . no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” Struggles to remove pre-existing religious bars continue through the early 1800s, with Maryland finally extending voting rights to Jews in 1828.

1787

U.S. Constitution Adopted. In the debates over adopting the U.S. Constitution, there are bitter arguments over who should be allowed to vote. The Constitutional Convention cannot agree on any national voting-rights standard, so they leave it up to each individual state.

Most states decree that only white males are eligible to vote, and most limit the vote to those white males who own a certain amount of property. (In other words, if you are a renter you can't vote.)

1777-1807

Women lose the right to vote in all states. The states of New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New Jersey, which had previously allowed women to vote, rescind those rights.

1790

Citizenship limited to “whites.” The 1790 Naturalization Law explicitly states that only “free white” immigrants can become naturalized citizens. Since “white” is defined as pure European ancestry, this effectively prevents immigrants from anywhere else (or immigrants of mixed ancestry) from becoming naturalized citizens.

And under the myth that Native-Americans are “citizens” of their “sovereign” Indian “nations” (meaning the reservations), they cannot be citizens of the United States. Therefore, Indians cannot vote.

1788-1856

Struggle to remove property restrictions. For 68 years there are struggles and movements in the various states to remove the property restrictions on the right to vote. These battles are often bitter and occasionally violent.

1820-1865

Abolition movement to end slavery. Political opposition to slavery among whites in the northern states begins to coalesce in the early 1820s. With the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, a broad political movement involving both Blacks and whites committed to ending slavery commences — openly in the northern states, clandestinely in the south.

1836

Texas denies vote to Mexicans. After revolting from Mexico in 1836, the “independent” Republic of Texas denies citizenship (and the right to own property) to anyone who had not supported the revolution. All non-Anglos are assumed to be part of that category — even those who had fought for the revolution.

When Texas is admitted to the union as a slave state in 1845, the Mexicans remaining in Texas are granted U.S. citizenship and property rights by the Federal government — in theory. But Mexican-Americans who try to independently vote face widespread beatings, burnings, and lynchings — except in cases where large landowners force their employees to vote as a group under supervision of their foremen who ensure that they all vote for the owner's preferred candidates.

1848

Mexican-Americans are denied voting rights in the southwest.

While technically U.S. citizens, Mexican-Americans in both Texas and California are denied the vote through violence and state “voter eligibility” laws.

1848-1920

Women's Suffrage Movement. In 1848 the first Women's Rights Convention is held in Seneca Falls, NY. It demands that women be granted all rights as full citizens including the right to vote.

For the next 72 years women — and some male supporters — speak out, petition, lobby, sue, protest, march, and engage in civil-disobedience, for the right to vote. They brave beatings, mob attacks, rape, jail, seizure and destruction of property, forced-divorce (and consequent loss of children), force-feeding of hunger strikers, and murder, to fight for their right to be full citizens.

1850

Asian immigration. With the California gold rush, Asian immigration becomes significant for the first time, particularly in the West. Under the “whites-only” clause of the 1790 Naturalization Law, Asian immigrants cannot be citizens — but what about their children born in America? Government officials try to avoid this “problem” by preventing Asian women from stepping ashore. Many are sent back, but some avoid detection and manage to get off the ship. And some Asian men marry women of other races — some of whom are citizens — what happens when their boys reach age 21?

1856

Property restrictions removed. The last state to finally eliminate the property qualification is North Carolina in 1856.

1861-1865

Civil War and Emancipation. The struggle against slavery eventually leads to bloody Civil War. 360,000 Union soldiers — Black and white — die to defeat slavery. That is 130 out of every 10,000 persons in the Northern states. (For comparison, deaths in the Vietnam War numbered 3 out of every 10,000.)

The Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and the 13th Amendment (1865) eventually end slavery as a legal concept (though the actual treatment of share-croppers, tenant farmers, and plantation laborers continues to closely resemble slavery in all but the legal formalities).

It is still left to individual states to determine who is eligible to vote. Some Northern states extend the vote to African-Americans — but most states do not.

1867

14th Amendment extends citizenship to Blacks. Under the 14th Amendment all states are required to recognize Black (and white) males as citizens.

But for the first time women of all races are explicitly excluded in the Constitution from full citizenship in regards to voting.

1868

Women petition that womens' suffrage be included in the draft 15th Amendment. The men of Congress deny their petition.

*Thanks to Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement
for this timeline.*

1870

15th Amendment extends vote to African-Americans. Adoption of the 15th Amendment in 1870 extends voting rights to Black males — in theory.

In reality, there is massive resistance to the intent of the 15th Amendment, particularly in the Southern states, but also in the North and Midwest. Violence and economic reprisal are used to intimidate and prevent Black men from voting.

The 15th Amendment does not apply to Native Americans or Asians because they cannot be citizens. Similarly, it does not apply to Mexican-Americans in New Mexico and Arizona because they live in “territories” that are not yet states. While legally eligible to vote in Texas and California, Mexican-Americans are still denied the vote through violence and economic retaliation.

1867-1877

Reconstruction. During the Reconstruction period hundreds of thousands of Black men risk their lives and property to vote, and many are elected to office. In fact, for a period in the late 1860s more African-Americans are registered to vote than whites in the 10 Deep South states of the former Confederacy.

1877

End of reconstruction, abandonment of 15th Amendment and the rise of white terror. President Hays takes office and the terms of the Compromise of 1877 take hold. Federal troops are removed from the South. Civil rights enforcement ends, with these results:

- **Reign of terror.** The Ku Klux Klan and other racist terrorist organizations increase their attacks against African-Americans. Blacks are expelled from office. African-American males who try to vote are fired from their jobs, evicted from their homes, beaten, and uncounted numbers are brutally lynched. Black property owners are burned out, Black businesses destroyed, and entire African-American towns are wiped out.
- **Legal disfranchisement.** New state laws are passed to sabotage and render ineffective the 15th Amendment. Among these are the so-called “Literacy Tests” that make it impossible for non-whites to register, and “Grandfather Clauses” that restrict voting rights to those men whose grandfathers had been eligible to vote — a requirement that descendants of slaves cannot possibly meet.
- **Poll taxes.** Many states impose taxes on voting. Anyone — Black or white — who cannot afford to pay the tax cannot vote. Since the taxes are high and have to be paid in cash, voting is thus limited to affluent white males.
- **Segregation laws.** Laws mandating separation of the races in education, government services, public facilities & accommodations, restrooms, transportation, drinking fountains and so on are passed throughout the South and Midwest. Known as the “Jim Crow” system, its goal is to force African-Americans into feudal semi-slavery. The many Blacks who resist are beaten, jailed, and murdered. Similar systems are imposed in western states against Latinos, Native-Americans, and Asians.

Within a few years all African-Americans who hold elected office are driven out. Blacks are removed from the voter registration rolls and denied the right to vote. In Louisiana, for example, by 1900 fewer than 5,000 African-Americans are registered to vote, down from a high of 130,000.

1870-1923

Asians denied citizenship. The Naturalization Act of 1870 amends the 1790 Naturalization Law to limit citizenship to “white persons and persons of African descent.” Thus the ban preventing Asian and Latino immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens is continued.

But the wave of Asian immigration to California and other Western states in the mid-19th Century begins to weaken the “whites only” provision, particularly in regards to children who are born in the United States and are thus (presumptively) American citizens.

1878

Woman Suffrage Amendment introduced in Congress. The amendment is introduced in 1878. It takes 42 years of continuous courageous struggle to finally ratify it in 1920.

1890-1920

Some states grant women the right to vote. First Wyoming, then Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, and California extend voting rights to women. Other states follow.

1920

19th Amendment extends right to vote to women. After an epic 72-year struggle, women finally win the right to vote. Prejudice and discrimination against women candidates and officeholders continues for decades into the present era.

1924

Native American citizenship. Congress passes legislation extending United States citizenship to all Indians born in the United States. Many states continue to deny Native Americans the right to vote, using the same kinds of legal fictions, violence, and economic retaliation that is used to deny the vote to Blacks, Latinos, and Asians.

1944

“White Only” primaries ruled unconstitutional. In practical terms, the “Solid South” means that the real election is the Democratic Primary because the Democrat who wins the nomination inevitably wins the general election. In many southern states, the white-controlled Democratic Party decrees that only whites can vote in the Democratic primary. This effectively disenfranchises the few Blacks who have managed to register to vote, because they are prevented from voting in the only elections that have any meaning (the primaries).

In 1944, NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall wins *Smith v. Allwright* in the U.S. Supreme Court which rules that “all-white” primary elections are unconstitutional.

1948

State laws denying the vote to Native Americans are overturned. In one of the postwar period’s few successful legal challenges, the Federal courts overturn the last state laws (Maine, Arizona, New Mexico) that explicitly prevent Indians from voting. Violence, economic retaliation, and different kinds of legal tricks continue to be used to prevent Native Americans from voting.

1960-1965

Civil Rights Movement demands the right to vote. With the explosion of the direct-action phase of the Civil Rights Movement — sit-ins, freedom rides, marches, boycotts — voting rights and desegregation emerge as the two central issues, intertwined and inseparable.

Participatory direct-action organizations such as CORE, SCLC, and SNCC take the fight for voting rights and desegregation into the deepest depths of the racist South — Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia. The slogan becomes “One Man, One Vote,” and instead of lawsuits the strategy is to organize people at the grass-roots to directly challenge and defy the entire “whites only” system by demanding desegregation and the right to vote face-to-face, county-by-county, state-by-state.

Resistance to Black voter registration and defense of segregation by the KKK and White Citizens Councils is ruthless. And the entire range of law-enforcement — from the cop on the beat to FBI Headquarters in Washington — viciously defends the established order. Tens of thousands of would-be voters are fired or evicted, entire tent cities have to be set up to house sharecroppers thrown off their land for trying to register to vote. Hundreds, then thousands, are jailed. Beatings, burnings, and economic retaliation are widespread. Many — the actual number has never been determined — are murdered. This resistance to civil-rights is co-ordinated and orchestrated by powerful political and economic interests.

1964

24th Amendment ends poll taxes. The 24th Amendment prohibits poll taxes in federal elections.

1964-1965

Freedom Summer and the Selma to Montgomery March. During the “Freedom Summer” of 1964 close to a thousand civil rights workers of all races and backgrounds from across the country converge on Mississippi to support voting rights and confront segregation.

A few months later, mass protests and marches begin in Selma, Alabama. Thousands of African-Americans put their lives on the line by attempting to register to vote in Selma and nearby counties. They are met with ruthless violence from police and Klan. They face beatings, gassing, jailings, and murder. Mass marches in Selma, Montgomery, Demopolis, Marion, Camden and elsewhere are viciously attacked. 25,000 people — of all races — march to the Statehouse in Montgomery, Alabama, the “cradle of the Confederacy.”

1965

Passage of Voting Rights Act. It takes 57 days of floor-fighting and mass protests in the streets of Washington to break the filibuster by Southern Senators blocking the Voting Rights Act. Finally, the act is passed and signed into law. Though in some respects weaker than what had been hoped for, the Voting Rights Act:

- Outlaws voting phony “requirements” — such as “literacy tests” — designed to deny the vote to people based on their race or color. This applies not only to Blacks but also to Indians, Asians, and Mexican-Americans.
- Authorizes the Federal government to take over registration of voters in areas where local officials had consistently denied voting rights to African-Americans.
- Determines that fluency in English cannot be made a requirement for voting eligibility.

1966

Voting Rights Act begins to be (slowly) enforced. Though initial enforcement is half-hearted and inadequate, by the end of the 1965, some 250,000 new Black voters have been registered in the South. By the end of 1966, only 4 out of the 13 southern states have fewer than 50 percent of African-Americans registered to vote. Black registration in Alabama grows more than ten-fold, from 50,000 in 1960 to more than 500,000 in 1990. By 1990, the number of southern Black legislators has risen from 2 to 160 — an increase of 8000%.

But though the legal barriers to voter registration are weakened or overturned by the Voting Rights Act, terror and economic retaliation continue to be used against citizens-of-color who try to register to vote, particularly Blacks in the South and Latinos and Native-Americans in the west. The Civil Rights Movement continues the fight, with the “Meredith Mississippi March Against Fear,” and mass direct-action campaigns in towns such as Grenada and Natchez Mississippi.

1966

Poll taxes outlawed in state elections. The Supreme Court finally rules that the use of poll taxes in state elections violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. The last remaining poll taxes are eliminated.

1970

26th Amendment lowers voting age to 18. Faced with widespread protests against the Vietnam war and growing resistance to the military draft, the voting age is lowered to equal the draft age. (Anti-war protests and draft resistance continue.)

1975

Extension of Voting Rights Act to “language minorities.” The Voting Rights Act is expanded to address voting rights of “language minorities.” Based on the determination that voting discrimination against language minorities “is pervasive and national in scope,” provisions are added to ensure that citizens who speak languages other than English are not denied their voting rights. For example, non-English voting materials and assistance now have to be provided where needed.

Today

Voting rights and the criminal justice system. 1.4 million Black men (13% of adult African-American males) are denied the right to vote because they served time in prison. In five states (including Florida) more than one in four adult male African-Americans are disenfranchised. Latinos and Native Americans are similarly affected.

From 1980 to 2000 the number of prisoners in the U.S. increased by more than 300% (while total population increased by only 24%). At the present rate of incarceration, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 6.6% of Americans born in 2001 will spend time in prison. This is the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Despite having served their sentences and paid their penalties, many states (not Ohio) disenfranchise ex-prisoners after their release:

- 14 states disenfranchise former inmates for life.
- 32 states disenfranchise former inmates while on parole.
- 29 states disenfranchise former inmates on probation.

THE OHIO YOUTH AGENDA

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD . . .



These students were among 175 who attended the Youth Agenda Conference to create the 2008 Ohio Youth Agenda.

Photo by Lisa Zellner, Ohio Federation of Teachers.

YOUTH VOICES is a statewide group of high schools students who create the Ohio Youth Agenda, communicate that agenda to leaders who make policy, and develop innovative ways to improve race relations among students across Ohio. Students in over 30 high schools have been active with Youth Voices in just the last year. **Check out what we have done.**

YOUTH VOICES 2007

FEBRUARY Students from across Ohio created the 2007 Ohio Youth Agenda aimed at making changes for educational and economic success.

MARCH Students met with Ohio First Lady Frances Strickland and other top staff from Governor Strickland's office to support the Youth Agenda.

APRIL Students testified before the Ohio House of Representatives and wrote and edited their statewide newspaper, the Young Ohioan.

MAY Students engaged in urban/rural school visits.

JULY The Governor's representative listened to Youth Voices and included the idea of peer leadership to prevent drop-outs in her plan to increase high school graduation rates.

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER Student organizers listened to students as they charted progress of the Youth Agenda at their high schools. New topics in the areas of thriving in a multicultural society, a realistic OGT, helping students in jail, and improving teaching were added for the Youth Agenda conference.

DECEMBER Over 175 students led the Youth Agenda conference where they created the 2008 Ohio Youth Agenda.

YOUTH VOICES 2008

JANUARY Students registered over 3,000 new high school students as part of Youth Voices' "No Vote, No Voice" Voter registration campaign. That campaign received front page news coverage in Cleveland, Athens, Columbus, and Marietta.

FEBRUARY Youth Voices held Youth Agenda forums with candidates in contested primaries for Congress and State Representative.

MARCH Students surveyed their peers about the progress of the Youth Agenda.

APRIL Students met with members of the Ohio General Assembly in Cleveland and Columbus.

MAY Students wrote a briefing paper for Governor Strickland about piloting senior projects as an alternative to the OGT. Students completed urban/suburban/rural school visits. Students produced a checklist for teachers to connect with the background and culture of their students.

THE SPECIFIC ITEMS OF THE 2008 OHIO YOUTH AGENDA

A. FULL CURRICULUM

1. High level academic courses
2. Career education
3. A full arts curriculum
4. A full music curriculum
5. Understanding of our place in a multicultural economy
6. A curriculum that teaches basic financial skills
7. A curriculum that teaches technological skills
8. A curriculum that prepares students for active citizen engagement
9. Opportunities for job shadowing
10. Opportunities for internships
11. High-speed computer availability at school and at home

B. KNOWLEDGEABLE, FLEXIBLE, AND THOUGHTFUL TEACHERS

12. Flexible teaching styles
13. Teaching beyond just to the test
14. Able to connect with students from all backgrounds and cultures
15. In classes no larger than 25 for teacher personal attention

C. PREPARING AND AFFORDING COLLEGE

16. Knowledge about college applications and scholarships
17. An equal number of individual college and military recruiters at our high schools
18. Reduced college tuition and increased state and federal scholarships to make college affordable

D. YOUTH LEADERSHIP TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

19. Peer mediation in schools
20. School counselors to help with mental and social problems and not just schedule classes

21. Peer-run youth centers in the community focused on after-school activities and peer leadership to prevent violence
22. Ways to make weapons less obtainable for young people in school.

E. A REALISTIC OHIO GRADUATION TEST

23. Less teaching directly to the test by teachers
24. Additional ways to assess students such as projects and teaching recommendations
25. If a student just missed passing in one test by a small amount by 12th grade, use a composite score for all the tests and use the progress measure of the student since 10th grade.

F. PEER LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL ATTENTION TO PREVENT DROPOUTS

26. Older students work directly with younger students who may drop out
27. Smaller classes for students who are having trouble staying in school
28. Individual tutoring for students having trouble

G. ACTIVE SUPPORT, EDUCATION, AND ATTENTION WHILE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IN JAIL

29. Teaching based on their grade level
30. Small classes no larger than 15
31. Counselors who regularly prepare students to succeed when they leave
32. Opportunities for work and school when they leave

H. A CONSTITUTIONAL STATE FUNDING SYSTEM

33. Not based on passing levies to increase local property taxes
34. More funding from the state
35. Funding based on the actual cost of providing opportunities for students