

## **PART III**

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### **The Public**

## 9. The Citizen and Voter



Photo by Dave "Rollie" Dobson, Portland Oregonian

### THE CITIZEN

**A** CITIZEN is a member of a political community who has some voice in the government of that community. He is not a subject, a national, a slave, or an alien. These terms vary in meaning from time to time and country to country. Like the word "republic," the word "citizen" has been fouled in the nets of political propaganda. Where the word has a favorable sense, people call themselves by it, even though they may in fact be slaves. Throughout world history most people have been subjects, not citizens. Since the American and French Revolutions, however, there have come to be only a few countries whose inhabitants do not view themselves as citizens.

A subject is a member of a political community who owes allegiance not so much to the community as to the ruler or the ruling group of the community, and who is authorized to take little if any part in the governing of the community. Yet at ceremonial functions Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain may be addressed by her "loyal subjects." Moreover, although the inhabitants of the Soviet Union and of other totalitarian powers are called "citizens," they cannot take part in the governing process of their countries to the degree that American citizens can in the United States. In terms of political participation, the citizen is also to be distinguished from the *national*. A national occupies a status much like that of a subject save that the term usually connotes a republican form of government whereas the term "subject" connotes a monarchy. An inhabitant of Samoa today

is a national of the United States; an inhabitant of France in 1700 was a subject of King Louis XIV.

In terms of his allegiance to the political community in which he resides, a citizen is to be differentiated from an *alien*. An alien is a citizen or subject of one country who is residing in another country. Usually the alien may take no part whatsoever in the ruling process of the country in which he resides; however, there have been occasional exceptions to this principle. On the other hand, the alien enjoys to a large extent the protection of the laws regarding his person and his property.

### ***Citizenship in the United States***

Today most of the people in the United States are citizens. At one time a large percentage of the population consisted of aliens. However, the barriers against immigration, and the public pressure to become citizens brought on those aliens who had taken up permanent residence in the United States, have so reduced the number of aliens that today there are only about three million.

The actual nature of citizenship in the United States was for many years rather vague. Although the term "citizen" appears several times in the Constitution, it is nowhere defined in that document. Indeed, prior to the War between the States many Americans tended to think of themselves first as citizens of a specific State, and only second as citizens of the United States; they had not yet adapted themselves to the concept of a powerful central government. At length, after the War between the States, chiefly in order to protect the southern Negroes, Congress proposed and the States ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which asserts that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Hence all American citizens in the United States save those residing in the District of Columbia or other federal territory possess dual citizenship: of the United States, and of the State in which they live.

*Acquisition of Citizenship:* Citizenship *by birth* in the United States has been extended to mean birth in an American territory, such as Alaska or Puerto Rico. It has been limited so as to exclude infants of foreign diplomatic personnel in the United States. There are other minor conditions that need not be delved into here, although they sometimes bring about interesting and complicated cases in court. Similarly, under certain circumstances, the children of Americans abroad are citizens by birth.

Citizenship *by naturalization* has been of great concern in American history because the nation was formed almost entirely of immigrants. The problem of naturalization of whole groups of people arose early in the history of the republic. The Louisiana Territory (1803), Florida (1819), Texas (1845), the lands taken from Mexico (1848), Alaska (1867), Hawaii (1898), Puerto Rico and Guam (1898), and the Virgin Islands (1917)

**New Citizens Taking the Oath of Allegiance.** Federal Court House, Portland, Oregon, U. S. District Court.

brought new groups into the nation. Sometimes immediately and sometimes with a brief delay, their residents were granted citizenship. The Fourteenth Amendment affirmed that Negroes are American citizens by birth, along with all other native-born residents. All native-born Indians were declared citizens in 1924.

Naturalization of individuals is a power of Congress under the Constitution (Art. I, sec. 8, cl. 4). Many laws have been passed under this clause, beginning in 1790 and ending for the present with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which supersedes all previous legislation. An alien can become a citizen by satisfying a number of conditions and passing successfully a court examination in any one of about 2,000 different courts at the federal or State level. The courts in turn rely heavily upon the advice of the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice. The conditions to be satisfied are in general the following: the alien must be eighteen years of age or more; he must have entered the United States legally; he must have resided in the United States continuously for five years and in his State for six months; he must speak, read, and write the English language; he must know the essential principles and facts of the American government; he must be of "good moral character" and must be attached to the principles of the Constitution; he must renounce his foreign allegiances and swear to defend the United States against all enemies.

The alien asserts that all these conditions are satisfied when he petitions the court for naturalization. The Immigration and Naturalization Service investigates the assertion. Some of the conditions can be readily confirmed. Difficulty is often caused by questions of moral character and of loyalty to the United States. Since the government and the public recently have been more agitated by these questions than in times past, an alien is scrutinized far more closely in these regards than he would have been ten, twenty, or one hundred years ago, or, in fact, ever before.

*Loss of Citizenship:* Recent attitudes and laws have made retaining citizenship more difficult. A naturalized citizen is almost certain to lose his citizenship if, within ten years of his being naturalized, he refuses to testify concerning alleged subversive activities on his part before a congressional investigating committee, and is subsequently convicted of contempt of Congress; if, within five years of his being naturalized, he joins any subversive organization, membership in which would have barred him from citizenship at the time he took the oath of allegiance; if, within five years of being naturalized, he establishes a permanent residence in any foreign country; if he resides for three years in the country of which he was once a national, or for five years in any foreign country; or if it is discovered, at any time after he is naturalized, that he has falsified any material fact in his application for naturalization.

Any American citizen, natural-born or naturalized, may be threatened by loss of citizenship if he obtains naturalization in another country; swears allegiance to another country; serves in the armed forces of another country without written permission from the United States government;

secures employment with the government of another country which provides that he must declare allegiance to that country to obtain the employment, or acquires citizenship in that country by accepting the employment; is convicted of committing treason against the United States; votes in a political election in another country, or in a plebiscite to fix geographic boundaries; deserts the United States armed forces in time of war, is convicted thereof by court martial, and receives a dishonorable discharge; or leaves or stays out of the United States in time of national emergency so as to avoid military service.

*Problems of Dual Citizenship:* Conceivably a person may be claimed as a citizen by more than one country. Many countries have not permitted expatriation—the act of voluntarily surrendering one's citizenship—until the recent past. Hence a person might or even may still possess dual citizenship if he was or is a naturalized American citizen. This situation may prove embarrassing; for, should such an American visit his native country he might be convicted of evading military conscription, since in the eyes of that government he is still a citizen. Under such circumstances there is little that the government of the United States can do.

## THE VOTER

In recent years, the title of citizen has come to imply the title of voter as well. The very idea that a citizen is an active, responsible member of the community demands a channel for expressing that role. The basic channel is the vote for the selection of public officials, a channel that is also termed the suffrage. In the national, State, and local governments the voter chooses the legislative branch, which, although it may have yielded some of its initiative to the executive, still formally establishes the policy of the government; moreover, the legislature appropriates the money which finances the operations of the government. In the national and State governments, and in many local governments, the voter also names the chief of the executive branch; and in most States he elects the judiciary. Also, thanks to the practice of periodic elections, the voter exercises a constant check upon elected officials; should their behavior displease him, he may vote to replace them at some future election. Furthermore, in many localities the voter takes a direct part in the enactment of laws and the ratification of constitutional amendments through the initiative and the referendum. Finally, during political campaigns the voter becomes the most ardently courted man in America; virtually all the activity of the party leaders is aimed at winning his sometimes reluctantly given favors. Hence American politics revolve about the voter.

### *Emergence of the suffrage*

The suffrage, or franchise, has existed in many societies since ancient times. In numerous primitive communities the chief of the tribe was elected by the heads of the principal families, usually out of their own number. Indeed, there is evidence to show that hereditary succession

to the throne—that is, succession by the nearest blood relative or descendant—was sometimes a later principle that was adopted partly in an effort to avoid the disorders often incident to the election of a king. Practically every culture that man has developed in historic times has on occasion showed signs of the doctrine that the people must consent to the choice of their rulers by some open manifestation of approval. But it is a far cry from most of these practices to the elaborate apparatus of modern voting systems.

The beginnings of the modern theory of the suffrage are to be found in medieval legislatures such as the British Parliament, the French Estates-General, the Sicilian *Parlamento*, and the Spanish *Cortes*. Although many members of these assemblies held their seats through personal rights, many others obtained them through election by groups of qualified voters. These bodies came to represent the distinctive interests of the Church, the landed nobility, and the townspeople. Moreover, for a time they afforded a strong check upon the actions of the hereditary king. The constitutional history of these countries is the account of the struggle between the king and the legislature for preeminence. By the time of the American Revolution, the king had been victorious on the European continent, so that the suffrage had all but disappeared. In Great Britain, on the contrary, the legislature was paramount; and the elected colonial legislatures had come to control strictly the prerogatives of the colonial governors. Hence early American leaders, nearly all of whom were of British descent, viewed a legislature named by the voters as the surest rein upon arbitrary government and the best guarantee of a regime founded upon the rule of law. Thus from the beginning the voter has had a major role in the American government.

### *Evolution of the suffrage in the United States*

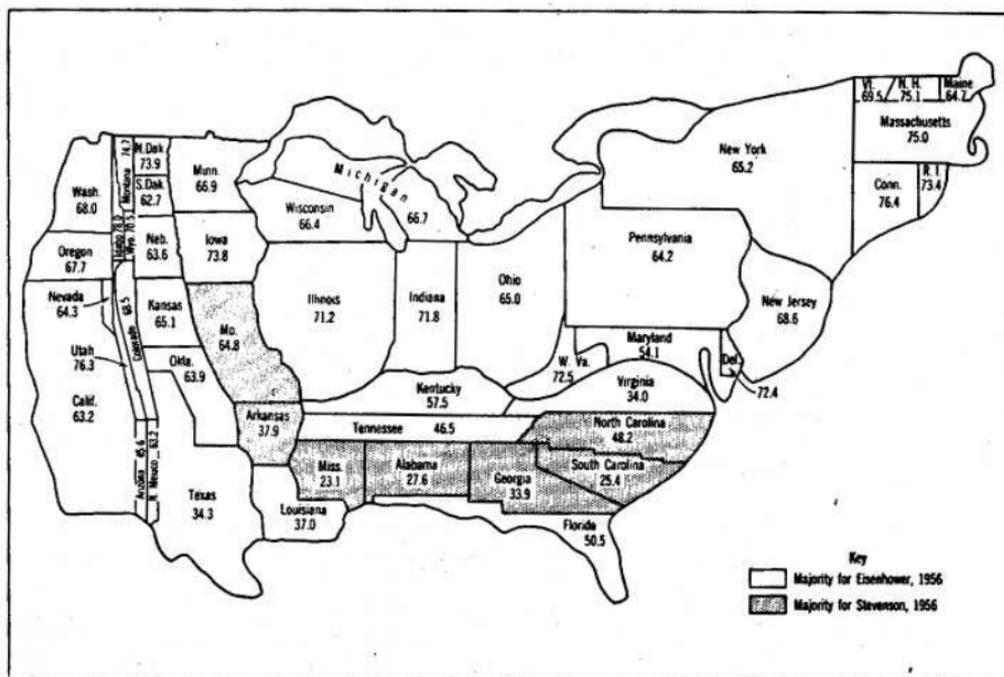
However, few early American leaders believed that all adults should have the vote. Therefore the present suffrage in the United States ends a process whereby the power of voting, which was extended to only a small percentage of the population when the Constitution was adopted, has been granted to almost all the adults in the country. This change, occupying 150 years, has had three phases: extension of the suffrage (1) to all white men, (2) to all white women, and (3) to all Negroes. Figure 19 shows how the huge potential vote of 102,743,000 persons in 1956 was distributed among the forty-eight States, and also what proportion of such persons actually voted in each State in the November presidential election.

*State Control of the Suffrage:* The evolution of the suffrage in the United States has been strongly conditioned by one important factor: the States, not the national government, determine the composition of the electorate, or the persons qualified to vote. Hence every extension of the suffrage has had to cope with the social, economic, and political structures of the separate States. Although the suffrage is a function of national citizenship, the national government cannot extend the suffrage to anyone. This fact is visible in the qualifications that the federal Constitution sets for the

electors of the House of Representatives, who "shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature" (Art. I, sec. 2, cl. 1). The Seventeenth Amendment provides that the electors of members of the United States Senate shall have the same qualifications. These qualifications, of course, are established by the individual States. The only power of the national government with respect to the requirements for the suffrage is to forbid the States to fix certain qualifications, as it did in the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments.

*Extension of the Suffrage to Adult White Men:* When George Washington was elected to his first term as President, fewer than ten per cent of the population may have possessed the suffrage. In no State were women authorized to vote; and in every State many if not most men were denied the suffrage by taxpaying or property-owning requirements. This sort of limitation on voting had been common during colonial times; but even during the period of the Confederation, a movement to broaden the suffrage was becoming evident. For example, in New York all adult males were empowered to vote for the members of the convention which was to ratify the Constitution.

Then, in 1791, the State of Vermont was admitted to the Union with a constitution that enfranchised all adult males. Vermont, which was then



Based on unofficial and incomplete returns by the Associated Press, Nov. 9, 1956. In every case where returns were incomplete, an unweighted projection was made from the votes counted to the votes remaining unreported. Potential vote by States was taken from the Bureau of Census Series P-25, No. 143, Oct. 5, 1956.

**Figure 19. The Potential and Actual Vote in 1956.** The States are shown on a scale nearly proportionate to their potential vote (and, incidentally, this scale is fairly close to their proportionate electoral vote and population, too). The figure within each State is the per cent of the potential vote that actually voted for President in November, 1956. The potential vote is the number of civilians over twenty-one years of age in every State except Georgia and Kentucky, where the voting age is eighteen.

a western frontier State, set a pattern for other new States, which were successively admitted to the Union with universal, or almost universal, adult white male suffrage. In these western States land was so plentiful that its ownership did not set one man off from his fellows. Moreover, there was a rough equality among the western population that discouraged economic requirements for the suffrage. Too, western States felt that widening the franchise would tend to attract immigrants from the older coastal States, where restrictions on voting barred many of the less prosperous people from the polls. Eventually, especially after the election of Andrew Jackson as President in 1828, one eastern State after another also discarded its qualifications for voting, partly in an effort to avoid losing more of their already scanty labor force to the western States. In fact, this movement was simply the American contribution to a trend throughout the western world that was reflected in the European revolutions of 1830 and the English Reform Bill of 1832. The American movement was the most successful. By about 1850 universal adult white male suffrage prevailed in nearly every State, and America had the largest electorate in the world.

*Extension of the Suffrage to Adult White Women:* The nineteenth-century movement toward extending the franchise to women was one aspect of a process in western Europe and America wherein women were accorded general legal equality with men. Also it was but one of the many campaigns for reform, such as those to abolish slavery and to prohibit the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, which agitated the United States during this era. The first State to grant women any power at the polls was Kentucky, which in 1838 authorized them to take part in school elections. Other States began to enfranchise women, especially after 1900, so that by 1918 more than half, particularly in the North Central and Far Western regions, had awarded women either partial or full voting authority.

Shortly after World War I, in 1919, Congress proposed a women's suffrage amendment and submitted it to the States. Within little more than a year the necessary three-fourths of the State legislatures had ratified this, the Nineteenth Amendment, so that women in every State could take part in the presidential election of 1920. The Amendment provides merely that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex." The Nineteenth Amendment, then, does not empower women to vote. It only forbids the States to bar a woman from voting because she is a woman.

*Development of the Suffrage in the South:* The development of the suffrage in the South, and the general conditions underlying voting there, are different from those in any other section of the country. The most obvious singularity of the South is the concerted effort to bar Negroes from the polls. However, the matter of Negro voting in the South is not only a racial issue; it also was part of a doctrine of "rule by the few" that goes back to colonial days in that region. The South was slowest to remove property qualifications and slowest to give the vote to women. After the Civil War the emancipated Negroes, for reasons of class as well as race, fell

**TABLE 3. KEY DATES IN THE LEGAL HISTORY OF  
NEGRO RIGHTS<sup>1</sup>**

- JAN. 1, 1863—President Lincoln puts into effect his Proclamation, declaring all persons held as slaves in rebel states to be free.
- DEC. 18, 1865—Thirteenth Amendment ratified, abolishing slavery in the United States and its territories.
- JULY 28, 1868—Guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" for all citizens is written into the Constitution as the Fourteenth Amendment.
- MARCH 30, 1870—Fifteenth Amendment ratified, declaring that the right to vote should not be denied to anyone on grounds of "race, color or previous condition of servitude."
- MAY 31, 1870—Enforcement Act, designed to bring Federal Government pressure to bear against any effort to circumvent the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, passed by Congress. (Six years later the act was nullified by the Supreme Court as exceeding the Federal Government's proper role.)
- MARCH 1, 1875—Congress, in an act subsequently nullified by the courts, passes Civil Rights Law guaranteeing all persons, regardless of race, the use of "inns, public conveyances on land or water, theatres, and other places of amusement."
- MAY 18, 1896—Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, establishes principle of "separate but equal" facilities for Negroes, in a decision upholding a Louisiana railway segregation law as not violating "equal protection" clause of Fourteenth Amendment.
- JUNE 21, 1915—Supreme Court declares unconstitutional the so-called "grandfather clause," a voting-qualification device employed by Southern states to restrict Negro suffrage. The clause exempted persons who had voted or whose progenitors had voted prior to 1867 from the fulfillment of educational tests and property qualifications required of other voters.
- MARCH 7, 1927—Texas law barring Negroes from voting in Democratic primary elections is unanimously overruled by Supreme Court. (Five years later, Texas Democrats' attempt to bar Negroes from primaries by party resolution is declared illegal by the Supreme Court.)
- DEC. 12, 1938—Supreme Court rules a state must admit a Negro to its law school or establish comparable separate facilities.
- NOV. 25, 1940—Conviction of a Southern Negro is overturned by Supreme Court on grounds that Negroes had been barred from jury service at his trial.
- JUNE 25, 1941—President Roosevelt establishes Federal Fair Employment Practices Commission, with instructions to seek the elimination of discriminatory practices in industry.
- DEC. 18, 1944—Supreme Court rules that Railway Brotherhoods cannot act as bargaining agents under Railway Act of 1934 unless they grant equality of membership rights to Negroes.
- MARCH 12, 1945—New York passes first state Fair Employment Practices law forbidding "discrimination because of race, creed, color or national origin" in employment, and sets up a State Commission against discrimination.
- JUNE 3, 1946—Jim Crow practices on interstate buses barred by the Supreme Court.
- OCT. 29, 1947—President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights calls for an end to all forms of segregation.
- MAY 3, 1948—Supreme Court rules that "racial covenants," private real estate agreements involving residential race restrictions, cannot be enforced by the courts.
- JULY 26, 1948—President Truman issues executive order establishing as a policy for the armed forces "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons . . . without regard to race, color or national origin."

<sup>1</sup>From *N. Y. Times*, May 23, 1955, p. E5.

**Table 3 (Continued)**

- JAN. 7, 1949—Alabama constitutional provision giving local registrars wide powers to deny franchise nullified by a Federal court.
- JUNE 5, 1950—Segregation in railroad dining cars is banned by the Supreme Court.
- JUNE 5, 1950—Supreme Court, in a decision acknowledging that inequality is inherent in segregation, directs University of Oklahoma to stop segregating a Negro student in classrooms, library and other facilities.
- MAY 17, 1954—Supreme Court, in a ruling based on the principle that separate facilities are inherently unequal, outlaws segregation in public schools as "a denial of the equal protection of the laws" guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

into the category of the impoverished groups that the southern ruling group was wont to disfranchise, or at least to discourage from political activity. In those States in which payment of a poll tax (a small sum, such as a dollar or two, levied per person yearly) is a qualification for voting, the tax probably disfranchises many whites as well as Negroes. Furthermore, many southern whites, as well as Negroes, seem to have been convinced, or to have convinced themselves, that they need not or should not take part in elections. The proportion of the potential electorate that votes regularly in the southern States is smaller than that in any other part of the country.

The situation is changing. The economy of the South grows daily more complex and productive. Durable factions are springing up. Lumber, cattle, citrus fruits, chemicals, oil, and other industries are introducing a new way of life to many Southerners. More Northerners have migrated to the South. More Southerners, both white and Negro, have fanned out to the North and West. A new middle class of business and commerce is growing up in the cities, both large and small. The old South, as pictured by Northerners, is vanishing; the magnolia trees, sleepy hamlets, and slow-moving country folk belong to the historical motion pictures rather than to the modern South. Southern universities have greatly expanded and improved.

Reflecting these cultural changes, both white and Negro electoral participation has risen. The number of registered Negro voters in the southern States increased from 650,000 in 1947 to 1,100,000 in 1952. All competent observers agree that this figure will steadily grow. Despite frequent evidence of hostility from the "white supremacy" groups, leaders and agents of Negro civic organizations continually penetrate new areas of the South, ingeniously probing for opportunities to extend the privilege of voting to local Negroes. The watchful eye of the federal government under both Democrats and Republicans guards against many of the worst incidents that might occur; too, there is a growing willingness among Southerners to allow the extension of the suffrage, which makes the position of the white supremacists not at all so comfortable as it is portrayed by many Northerners. Table 3 gives some of the most important dates in the recovery

of rights that the Negroes possessed in the Reconstruction Era and lost shortly thereafter.

The major restrictions that remain on Negro voting are the following:

(1) The anti-Negro sentiment that intimidates Negroes from time to time and place to place, especially in the rural, predominantly Negro sectors where the sentiment is strongest. This restriction is supported by those less hostile but tradition-minded county registrars and election officials who make it as difficult as possible for a Negro to vote.

(2) The apathy and fear of many Negroes that deter them from "taking chances" for an "unimportant" benefit.

(3) The absence of an opposition party that can seek votes from among the non-voters.

(4) The payment of a poll tax, disfranchising poor whites as well as poor Negroes, that is used in five States of the South as a requirement for voting. The Alabama and Virginia laws are most difficult to comply with and therefore are most effective in excluding voters.

(5) The literacy requirements, ranging from a demand that voters know their ABC's to a stipulation that they be able to "interpret" the federal and State constitutions. This kind of requirement is often administered loosely for whites and rigidly for Negroes.

It should be realized that all of this struggle was conducted within a framework of legal statement in the Constitution that specifically demands the equal treatment of Negroes. As such, it is an object lesson of what can cause a law, even a constitutional clause, to be null. The Fifteenth Amendment states that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Furthermore, Section Two of the Fourteenth Amendment penalizes any State for establishing restrictions on the suffrage of twenty-one-year-old male citizens (with some minor exceptions) by reducing their representation in the House of Representatives proportionately. Thus, if a State, half of whose population is Negro, were to prevent Negroes from voting, the delegation of the State in Congress would be halved. (Of course, the exclusion of Negroes would have been unconstitutional in the first place under the later—1870—Fifteenth Amendment.) Needless to say, Congress and the President found it convenient over many years to ignore this clause, and even the Fifteenth Amendment itself, so disciplined was the southern public, so inarticulate the Negroes, both North and South, and so preoccupied the northern and western people and their leaders with other issues.

### ***General qualifications for voting in the United States***

Aside from the diminishing fact of Negro exclusion in the South, there exist few significant restrictions on a universal adult suffrage in the United States. There are only three general qualifications for voting: citizenship, age, and residence. Beyond these, there are two special qualifications which have been set in some of the States: taxpaying or property-owning, and literacy. Insanity and conviction of a felony usually bar an individual

from the polls. Finally, there is a qualification that is at the same time an assertion that other qualifications have been satisfied: registration.

*Citizenship:* Voting actually follows citizenship; but in certain periods of history, citizenship was not in fact required of voters. Aliens who had declared their intention of becoming citizens were enfranchised in some of the early western States; this authorization was probably made chiefly in order to attract population. (Argentina had a similar law.) Since Arkansas did away with this practice in 1926, every State has extended the vote only to citizens of the United States.

*Age:* It is traditional that the vote is granted only to those who are twenty-one years of age or older; in fact, that age is specifically named in the Section of the Fourteenth Amendment cited above. However, in 1943 the government of Georgia lowered the required age to eighteen years, partly in the belief that "those who are old enough to bear arms are also old enough to vote"; in 1955 the government of Kentucky did likewise. It has been urged (by President Eisenhower, for instance) that the federal Constitution be amended so as to lower the voting age to eighteen for all federal elections. Moreover, a number of States have received like proposals in their legislatures. Actually, the effect of lowering the voting age in Georgia seems to have been rather slight. It may generally produce an accenting of "liberalism" in the electorate, that is, of the feeling that the government should take a more vigorous role in managing the national economy for the direct benefit of the lower-income groups. At present, younger people are more negligent in exercising the suffrage than older people are—at least up to the age of sixty. It is possible that a lowering of the voting age throughout the country, although it is not apt to work any major change in the composition of the electorate or in the machinery of government, would start the voting habit early in life, before the problems of jobholding, marriage, and homebuilding sap people's interest in casting ballots.

*Residence:* Every State demands that the citizen have a certain period of residence in the State; and most States demand residence also for shorter periods in the county and the voting district. This qualification has been established largely to prevent party agents from bringing added voters into a district in which a close contest is foreseen. Some southern States demand unusually long residence periods mainly in order to disfranchise migrant farm workers and other relatively unsettled persons who might vote against the *status quo*. By contrast, some central and western States have rather short requirements: Nevada, for example, asks six months in the State, thirty days in the county, and ten days in the district—probably in order to attract settlement. Over the whole country, the residence qualifications average about one year in the State, three months in the county, and one month in the district.

*Taxpaying and Property-owning:* Although a taxpaying requirement for the suffrage was fairly common at one time, today it has almost everywhere disappeared save under exceptional circumstances. As noted above, five southern States make payment of a poll tax obligatory for voters, in order

to disfranchise Negroes and also the less prosperous whites. The once widespread property-owning qualification has virtually everywhere been abandoned. However, in Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah, only property-owners are permitted to vote on bond issues, probably from the fear that those who do not own property might combine to pass a bond issue that would fall directly on property-owners alone. Finally, in South Carolina property-owning is an alternative qualification to the literacy test.

*Literacy Tests:* Seventeen States now require evidence of the ability to read or write English, or both, to qualify an individual for the suffrage. Seven of these States are in the South (in South Carolina the test is an alternative to property-owning); five are in the Far West; four are in New England; and the last is New York. The ability that is demanded, and the way in which the test is administered, vary widely from State to State. In the South the principal function of the test is to disqualify Negroes. Generally these tests are supervised by election officials; hence passage or failure depends upon the discretion and will of the officials. In New York, however, the test is administered by the State department of education, and is required only of those persons who cannot prove that they have completed the fifth grade in public school, or secured equivalent instruction elsewhere.

*Registration:* Every State save Arkansas and Texas requires all voters to register in one way or another, so that at election time officials may quickly establish who shall be permitted to vote. In the two exceptional States, the Texas constitution empowers cities of more than 10,000 population to institute registration, but the power has never been used; the Arkansas constitution forbids personal registration. In these States poll tax receipts serve to register voters.

Registration may be either permanent or periodic. That is, a voter may be required to register only once for any given address, so that his name will remain on the list until he moves away or dies. On the other hand, he may have to register periodically, since all names are cleared from the list after a certain lapse of time. At one time periodic registration was the more common. However, it has in late years been generally supplanted by the permanent registration system; for although periodic registration is apt to be more nearly accurate, it is expensive and imposes on the voter the need for keeping his registration current. Today thirty-three States have permanent statewide registration, and eleven others have it in some areas. Periodic registration is used in all areas in only two States: South Carolina and Wyoming.

*Conclusion:* Existing citizenship, tax, property, residential, literacy, and registration requirements bar about 22 million American adults from the polls. That is, although there were about 102 million potential voters in 1956, there were only about 80 million legally qualified electors entitled to vote for President. Nevertheless, America, which started out far ahead of the rest of the world in the extension of the suffrage to adult males, and which was bogged down in bitter quarrels over racialism for seventy-five

years, is assuming presently the condition of universal suffrage with none save truly administrative restrictions. This condition is normal in the contemporary world, where every large nation possesses universal suffrage.

## QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Distinguish among a citizen, a subject, a national, and an alien.
2. Interview one foreign-born person whom you know regarding the procedures he followed in getting to America; describe his or her present status. (Note: The foreign-born person may be a foreign student, a naturalized citizen, a visitor, or a resident alien.)
3. List the conditions that may cause a loss of citizenship and in each case give a doctrine or reason that to your mind can be used to justify the action.
4. Using the index to this book and going back to previous chapters, write an essay of 400 words on the changing attitude toward universal suffrage from 1620 to the Civil War.
5. Repeat problem (4) above for the period from 1865 to the present.
6. Using *The World Almanac*, compute the average proportion of the qualified electorate in 1952 voting in the South, West, Midwest, and Northeast regions. Which region showed the heaviest and which the lightest, turnout?
7. Using figures obtained from *The Book of the States* or elsewhere, determine what region of the country has the shortest, and which the longest, residence requirements for voting. Can you give any reasons for these requirements?