Voting Rights in American History

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| Era | Year | Event/Law |
| Colonial America  | 1607-1820s | Voter requirements depend on communities and colonies. But only white male property owners over the age of 21 can vote.  |
| Constitutional Era | 1787 | No federal voting standards, states decide who can vote. In most cases, it’s still white male property owners. Only 6% of the population elects GW. |
|  | 1790 | 1790 Naturalization Law passes. Explicitly states that only “free white” immigrants can become naturalized citizens. |
| Jacksonian Era  | 1824-36 | Elimination of property requirement in many states |
| Antebellum Era | 1848 | Activists for abolition and women’s rights join together. Resolution passed for voting rights for women at Seneca Falls Convention.  |
| Mexican American War | 1848 | Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends war and guarantees US citizenship to Mexicans living in territory conquered by the US. However, English language requirements and violent intimidation limit access. |
|  | 1856 | North Carolina becomes the last state to remove property ownership as requirement to vote. |
| Reconstruction | 1868 | 14th Amendment grants citizenship to former slaves. Voters still defined as male. Regulation of voting left to the states.  |
|  | 1870 | 15th Amendment states right to vote cannot be denied by federal or state governments based on race. Some states enact literacy tests, poll taxes, violence, or other intimidation tactics to limit participation. |
|  | 1872 | Susan B. Anthony tries to vote in presidential election and is arrested. Sojourner Truth also tries to vote and is turned away.  |
| Late 19th century | 1876 | Supremes rule that Native Americans are not citizens as defined by the 14th amendment, and therefore cannot vote.  |
|   | 1882 | Chinese Exclusion Act Bars people of Chinese ancestry from naturalizing to become US citizens. |
|   | 1887 | Dawes Act grants citizenship to Native Americans who give up tribal affiliations. |
|  | 1890 | Wyoming joins the union and includes voting rights for women. (1st) |
| Early 20th Century | 1919 | Congress grants US citizenship for Native Americans who served in the military.  |
|   | 1920 | 19th Amendment grants voting rights to women in state and federal elections. |
|  | 1922 | Supreme Court rules that people of Japanese heritage are ineligible to become naturalized citizens. In 1922, Court finds Asian Indians are also not eligible to naturalize. |
|  | 1924 | Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to Native Americans but many states make laws and policies that prohibit Native Americans from voting.  |
|   | 1925 | Congress bars Filipinos from US citizenship unless they have served three years in the US Navy.  |
|  | 1926 | Group of African American women are beaten by election officials.  |
| Post World War II | 1952 | McCarran-Walter Act grants all people of Asian ancestry the right to become citizens.  |
| Civil Rights Movement | 1964 | 24th Amendment passes – guarantees that right to vote in federal elections will not be denied for the failure to pay any tax.  |
|  | 1965 | Voting Rights Act passed. Forbids states from imposing discriminatory restrictions on who can vote and provides mechanisms for the federal government enforcement. Act follows months of violent protests, particularly in Alabama |
| Turbulent 70’s | 1971 | 26th Amendment Voting age lowered to 18. Also requires voting materials to be printed in languages other than English.  |
|  | 1993 | Nation Voter Registration Act increases the number of eligible citizens who register to vote by adding registration to DMV offices, welfare offices, and disability offices.  |
|  | 2000 | Federal Court rules that residents of Puerto Rico and other US territories cannot vote for US president. (4.1 million) |
|  | 2001 | Debate about removing voting rights for felons. (4 million) National Commission recommends felons regain right to vote after serving sentences. Remnant of civil war – ex-felons are largely poor and of color.  |
|  | 2002 | Help America Vote Act passed in response to hanging chad and other issues from the Bush v Gore election in 2000. Massive voting reform effort requires states to comply with federal mandate for provisional ballots, disability access, centralized computerized voting lists, electronic voting and identification requirements.  |
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