

First election for the General Court

There seems evidence that nearly all the adult male settlers in the three Towns could vote for Deputies to this first General Court from their Town, providing the man was willing to take the required oath of fidelity. (Collier)

Under the Fundamental Orders

The "admitted inhabitants" of each Town who had taken the oath of fidelity chose Deputies to the General Court in "a reasonable proportion to the number of Freemen that are in said town". At first the usual number was 4. The Deputies had to be freemen, but did not have to be members of the Congregational Church.

Freemen were adult men who had been certified by the Town officials as members in good standing in the community, of "sober and up-right behavior and conversation", and who had property in land worth about L40. They were given freemen status by vote of the General Court.

Only freemen were qualified to vote for the Magistrates (at first 6, later 12, and later called Assistants). For this a special election meeting was held, at first in Hartford at the General Court, later in each Town.

The Governor was elected by the freemen at the same time they chose the Magistrates. It was explicitly stated in the Orders that he must "be a member of some approved congregation, and formerly of the magistracy within this Jurisdiction. No man could be Governor more than one year out of every two.

By the 1640s to become a freeman a man still had to be over 21 years of age, of sober behavior and conversation, take the oath of fidelity, and be certified by the Town officials to be a member of the community in good standing, but the value of his land had to be only L30.

It seems probable that fewer than 1/3 of the adult males were freemen. The others were "inhabitants", and continued to have the right to attend town meetings and discuss and vote on town affairs as well as

elect the Town's Deputies to the General Court. All "inhabitants", however, also had to take the oath of fidelity, which by its wording excluded Jews, Quakers and atheists, as well as unsettled folk.

Note that only in the case of the Governor is membership in an "approved congregation" required. To vote on church matters, a man had to be a full member of a church, but in civil matters, except for the Governor, there were no stated religious qualifications in Connecticut.



WE THE PEOPLE...who had no vote

All women, all males under 21, most Negroes (because they could not meet the property requirement), all slaves and indentured servants as well as others who had no property in land, and, of course, the Indians. Also excluded were those who, for whatever reason, would not take the required oath of fidelity.

OBJECTIVES:

- I. Review "We the People...who had the right to vote"
- II. Identify who had the right to vote in Puritan Ct.
- III. Analyze why certain people couldn't vote

The Power of the Vote

Although the government of Connecticut let some people choose their leaders, seven-teenth century Connecticut would not be "democratic" by today's standards and values.

By reading "WE THE PEOPLE...who had the right to vote" you will discover why early Connecticut was a democracy but not very democratic.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who had the right to vote in Connecticut in the 1640's? _____

List the persons who did not have the right to choose their leaders and have influence on what laws were made. _____

Can you make a reasonable guess as to why the Puritans would not allow these people to vote?

(How about a hint! - Could the people who were not given the right to vote be a threat to the Puritan way of life? Could their strange beliefs, values and goals be different from the Puritans and therefore disrupt the common good of the Puritan society?)

OBJECTIVES

- I. Review "Time Warp" activity and "Test of a Good Law".
- II. Analyze why 1650 law is "good" or "bad".

The Law Code of 1650: Was It Fair?

Remember the laws and punishments you created on your island? You made some of these laws to protect the common good. The common good was defined by your beliefs about what was right and what was wrong. The Connecticut Puritans did the same thing. As you already know, many of their beliefs about right and wrong came from their interpretation of the Bible. Below is an edited law contained in the Law Code of 1650. Using the "Test of a Good Law" (Intro, page 18) find out if this law is what we today think is a "good" law:

Any child of sixteen years or older and of sufficient understanding, curses (swears at) or smites (hits) their natural father or mother and these parents have educated the child in proper behavior and have not provoked him by extreme and cruel punishment, the child shall surely be put to death.

If this is not good, can it be corrected?
(yes) (no)

If it can be corrected, rewrite the law and punishment, either in the space below or in your Journal.

The Charter of 1662 was never ratified by a vote of the people. It was granted by King Charles II and accepted by the General Court. By the legal practices of the time, it was a charter given to a corporation and could not be changed by votes of the Deputies and the Assistants.

The Charter continued the tradition of election of officials by people who had the right to vote beginning with the Fundamental Orders.

Under the Charter those who had the right to vote were white adult males owning land and property worth 50 shillings, who were of "sober conversation and quiet, peaceable behavior", were certified by the Town officials and admitted by the General Assembly to freemen status.

It is estimated that by 1669 there were 1,789 qualified voters out of more than 3,000 adult white males in the Colony.

Dr. Christopher Collier writes of limited voter participation in "A Constitutional History of the Connecticut General Assembly: A Preliminary Sketch" (typed manuscript, p. 19): "Most of the people's concerns were local and were dealt with in town meetings [which any "inhabitant" was free to attend]. Traditionally meetings of freemen to vote for Deputies and Assistants were held at the conclusion of town meetings, and few men bothered to stay on after dark when they had miles to travel home. Colony affairs [as opposed to local affairs] and the election of delegates to the General Assembly were the business of a small proportion of the men, and very large numbers of those eligible to participate left matters in the hands of those -such as lawyers and merchants- whose business gave them wider concerns, or others who lived close to the meeting house. Indeed, proximity to the meeting house was one of the major determinants of political participation until well after the colonial era."

It is important to note that most matters of importance to most men were local, or Town matters. These were dealt with at Town meetings where virtually all adult men could vote.

...WHO HAD NO RIGHT TO VOTE

As under the Fundamental Orders, this group included all women, all males under 21 years of age, all Negro slaves, all indentured servants and other "hired hands" who had no property, as well as men who had property of less value than 50 shillings, and of course the Indians. It also included those who, because of religious beliefs, would not take the required oath of allegiance.

While there was no religious qualification for voting, after 1727 in order to hold public office a man had to take an oath against a belief in transubstantiation which eliminated Roman Catholics.

In the case of free Negroes, there were no specific prohibitions against voting, except the lawful qualifications for all voters. But few could meet those, and in practice probably even fewer voted.

In 1784, the General Assembly passed an Act which emancipated all Negroes who were born after March 15, 1784 when they reached the age of 25. But that did not end slavery for those born on March 14, 1784 or before. Those unlucky people stayed slaves for life unless privately emancipated by their owner. Slavery was not completely outlawed until 1848.

Fifteen Dollars Reward.

RUN-away from the subscriber on the night of the 27th instant, a Negro Man named **FORTUNE**, a stout well built fellow, about 26 years old, speaks good English, and is supposed to have pushed for Boston---Any person that shall take him and give information thereof, or return him to his master, shall have the above reward and all charges paid, by **JOHN OLCOTT**.
N. B. Said Negro has very wide feet.
Hartford, June 28, 1784.

CONSTITUTION JOURNAL ACTIVITIES

How Does Voting Guarantee the Common Good?

OBJECTIVES:

- I. Identify who was eligible to vote in Connecticut in the 1700's;
- II. Speculate problems caused by limited suffrage;
- III. Analyze the concept of democracy in 17th century Connecticut;
- IV. Evaluate the authority given to citizens by suffrage.

The right of citizens to vote is perhaps the single most important right granted under a democracy. It is this one act that separates a democracy from a totalitarian government. Can you reason why voting is so important?

Answer the following questions in groups of two:

1. How can voting by the people determine if a government is democratic or totalitarian?
2. Who should decide on what?
 - A. What should the people be able to decide and vote on in their local communities and what things should be decided by government leaders? (in your town or city today)
 - B. Who should have the right to vote in local elections? (List the qualifications of good voter.)
 - C. What should people be able to decide and vote on in state matters and what should be determined by state leaders? (List the things that are different from question A.)
 - D. Who should have the right to vote on state government matters? (List the differences, if any, from local voters.)
3. In the Connecticut colony in 1700, white male property owners twenty-one years old or older could vote for colony leaders to the General Assembly. These men also had to be

"of sober conversation and quiet, peaceable behavior". They also had to be certified by town officials through an oath of allegiance to Puritan beliefs and had to be educated, good and faithful people. These voters were called freemen. More people were eligible to vote in town meetings but they had to be white males. The voters were called inhabitants. All women, certain followers of other religions, slaves and indentured servants, native Americans, anyone under twenty-one, and anyone who didn't own property couldn't vote.

4. Why do you think the Connecticut colonists put such restrictions on voting? (Explain your thoughts. Perhaps the following questions will help you create your answer.)

Why did freeman have to own property? Why only males? Why restrict voting for General Assembly leaders? Why do you think an Oath of Allegiance was necessary? What does "sober conversation" mean?

5. Why did they allow inhabitants vote in town meetings but not for colonial government leaders?
6. What problems could be caused by restricting the voting to only freeman?
7. Can colonial Connecticut be called a democracy if all citizens can not vote?
8. One of the reasons for the 13 American Colonies revolting against the British government was the lack of representation in the English Parliament. Should the women, non-property owners, slaves, indentured servants, non-Puritans, and native Americans in colonial Connecticut have revolted against the General Assembly because they were not allowed to vote? Explain your reasoning.

1776 - 1818

The General Assembly did not liberalize the election laws after the Revolution as most states did, nor did it change its poll tax.

- In Town meetings and elections for local officers minimal property qualifications meant that nearly all male inhabitants could vote on Town matters.

- There were stricter requirements for a man to vote for state officers. As before the Revolution, any male at least 21 years old could become a "freeman" (voter in state elections) if he:

owned real estate with assessed yearly value of 40 shillings (about \$7);

or owned personal property assessed at L40 (about \$134);

or was certified by the Town selectmen as of good repute in the community.

After 1800 restrictions on the right to vote in state elections increased as the Federalist "establishment" felt its dominance in state affairs being challenged by the Jeffersonian Republicans.

1801 The General Assembly passed the "Stand Up" Law which required that voters physically stand up in election meetings to show their choices in state elections.

In 1801 the General Assembly passed a law requiring that a new voter had to be approved by state officials as well as by local selectmen, and that the applicant had to have owned his property for at least 4 months before applying for the right to vote in state elections.

1813 another law required that property used to establish voting eligibility be free of mortgage.

1814 Blacks were disenfranchised by law.

1814 An act established heavy fines for dishonesty in presenting qualifications for the right to vote.

The result of these laws, as well as earlier restrictions on voting in elections for state offices was that only about 50% of the adult males actually voted; and popular support for easing the restrictions was one of the major forces behind the call for a new Constitution.

In 1818 control of the General Assembly was won by the Republic/Toleration Party. In the session that year the right to vote in state elections was given to all adult males who either paid taxes or served in the militia. All other laws restricting suffrage were repealed.

...who had the right to vote after 1818

ARTICLE SIXTH OF THE QUALIFICATION OF ELECTORS

Sec. 1-All persons who have been, or shall hereafter, previous to the ratification of this Constitution, be admitted freemen, according to the existing laws of the state, shall be electors.

Sec. 2-Every white male citizen of the United States, who shall have gained a settlement in this state, attained the age of twenty one years, and resided in the Town in which he may offer himself to be admitted to the privilege of an elector, at least six months preceding, and have a freehold estate of the yearly value of seven dollars in this state; or having been enrolled in the militia, shall have performed military duty therein for the term of one year next preceding the time he shall offer himself for admission, or being liable thereto, shall have been, by authority of law, excused therefrom; or shall have paid a state tax within the year next preceding the time he shall present himself for such admission, and he shall sustain a good moral character; shall, on his taking such oath as may be prescribed by law, be an elector.

Sec. 3 - the privileges of an elector shall be forfeited by a conviction of bribery, forgery perjury, duelling, fraudulent bankruptcy, theft, or other offence for which infamous punishment is inflicted.

Sec. 4 - Every elector shall be eligible to any office in this state, except in cases provided for in this constitution.

Sec. 5 -The selectmen and town clerk of the several Towns, shall decide on the qualifications of electors, at such times, and in such manner as may be prescribed by law.

Sec. 6-Laws shall be made to support the privilege of free suffrage, prescribing the manner of regulating and conducting meetings of the electors, and prohibiting, under adequate penalties all undue influence therein, from power, bribery, tumult, and other improper conduct.

Sec. 7-In all elections of officers of the state, or members of the General Assembly, the votes of the electors shall be by ballot.

Sec. 8-At all elections of officers of the state, or members of the General Assembly, the electors shall be privileged from arrest, during their attendance upon, and going to, and returning from the same. on any civil process.

Sec. 9-The meetings of the electors for the election of the several state officers, by law, annually to be elected, and members of the General Assembly of this state, shall be holden on the first Monday of April in each year.

1845- the 8th Amendment to the State Constitution removed property qualifications for voting - but did not change the "white male" qualification.

WE THE PEOPLE ...who had no right to vote

Blacks were deprived of all right to vote by the Constitution of 1818 since it specifies "white males..."

Blacks were further deprived of voting rights in 1844 when a law was passed saying they could not vote in School District meetings.

Efforts to remove the word "white" from the Constitution failed, and blacks did not receive the right to vote until 1869 when the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.



Women had no right to vote since the Constitution of 1818 specified "males". Efforts to win the franchise failed in 1867, 1887 and 1889.

In 1893 the General Assembly passed a law giving them the right to vote in School District matters.

In 1919 the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, at last giving the right to vote in all elections to the other half of the adult population. In spite of the fears of the political "establishment", adding approximately 200,000 new voters did not upset the basic balance of political power in the state.

MOVERS, SHAKERS and COLORFUL CHARACTERS

1818-1965

Isabella Beecher Hooker

Born: 1822- Litchfield

Died:

Youngest of 4 daughters of Dr. Lyman Beecher, one of her sisters was Harriet Beecher Stowe. She had 7 brothers.

As was usual at that time, the girls were educated at home, but Dr. Beecher saw to it that his energetic, talented daughters received a broad, serious training through reading, as well as training in the accepted domestic arts.

1841 married John Hooker, a lawyer in Hartford. He was a 6th generation descendent of Thomas Hooker. He became Reporter of the Supreme Court of Connecticut in 1858 and continued a distinguished legal career in Hartford throughout his life.

Her biographer states, "she kept pace intellectually with her husband...learning from him much of his profession, and making a study of the basis and evolution of the laws that govern the United States."

She considered woman suffrage "the greatest movement in the world's history" ... and for 30 years was at the forefront of the movement as writer and lecturer. "She has gone cheerful and undeterred through years of that ridicule and abuse that fall to the lot of earnest agitators and reformers. ...Her lectures on legislation and jurisprudence have done much to educate the people upon relations of the individual to the commonwealth of Connecticut and the nation."

She was Vice President for Connecticut of the National Woman Suffrage Association. (Founded in 1864).

She was an active and vocal support of Susan B. Anthony, speaking out with special effectiveness on her behalf when a New York Judge refused Miss Anthony a trial by jury when she was accused of voting illegally for President and members of Congress in the election of November, 1872.

She appeared before Congress in 1878 asking for legislation to give the vote to women.

A full statement of her arguments is given in her address in March, 1888 before the International Council of Women. Here are some excerpts:

Beginning with the assertion that nothing in the U.S. Constitution forbids women voting, she took up each phrase of the preamble. "Women are 'people' as much as men."

"Brothers, you will never insure domestic tranquility in the days to come unless you allow women to vote, who pay taxes and bear equally with yourselves all the burdens of society. ... you must graciously submit to become equals of your mother, wives and daughters, and aye of your grandmothers."

"Have we not talked about our forefathers long enough? Our foremothers did their full share in the work of establishing justice, providing for the common defense, and promoting the general welfare in those early days."

"It is now established that ballots instead of bullets are to rule the world."

"About the only right that is cheerfully accorded to us today is the right to assemble peaceably and petition for redress - because it is so easy to get rid of us and silence us in that way."

She then paraphrased the Declaration of Independence, saying that men did not "secure the blessing of liberty to women... women already have these rights from God and by their own free nature."

"Consent of the governed doesn't mean the male half of the governed"

"It makes my blood boil to hear such words as men shall grant women a right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; to hear from the lips of mere boys the assertion they and their sex alone have the rights to make and execute the laws that I and my daughters are to live under; that they are born to rule and I born to obey."

Using the 14th Amendment, she insisted the definition of citizen given there included women. She protested that the Connecticut Constitution of 1818 was, therefore, unconstitutional because it included both "white" and "male", and reminded her listeners that "we have been petitioning our State Legislature since 1848" to remove those words.

Material from pamphlet giving her speech in 1888, and from AMERICAN WOMEN: A COMPREHENSIVE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE LIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMERICAN WOMEN, Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, Editors, Mast, Crowell & Kirkpatrick, vol. I., New York, 1897.



Sabella Beecher Hooker John Hooker

Where is the Source of Higher Law
in the Constitution of 1818?

JOURNAL WRITING ACTIVITY



Answer the following questions in your Connecticut Constitution Journal:

1. From the "Preamble" and Section 2 of the Constitution of 1818, who is the source of authority in the State of Connecticut?
2. What was the highest law of the state? Can you explain your reasoning?
3. From Article Second, who has the power to enact governing authority?
4. The common good is defined by those in authority. In a democracy, electors choose who shall have authority to secure the common good. From Article Sixth, (or "We the People - Who Had the Right to Vote - 1776 - 1818"),

Who qualifies as an elector?

Who did not qualify as an elector in 1818?

5. Are problems caused for groups of people when denied the right to vote? (Does their inability to vote affect the common good? Can you explain your reasoning?)



CONSTITUTION JOURNAL ACTIVITIES

Voter Qualification Test

Objectives:

- Review information in "We the People..who had the right to vote" under the Constitution of 1818
- Identify, discuss, and analyze characteristics of a good voter in a republic

The success of a democracy depends upon informed and active citizens. If good and successful leaders are to be chosen, the people must have the ability and the desire to select the best among them to serve the common good. Voting is the primary and most important way for citizens to insure elected leader serve the public interest. It is often stated that the success of a democratic society depends upon competent, fair, and educated voters.

But what makes a competent, fair, and educated voter?

To analyze this question, take the "Voter Qualification Test" below (choose the number that best matches your opinion):

1 = required to vote 2 = very important, but not required 3 = important 4 = not very important 5 = not necessary to vote 6 = should be forbidden by law

A voter in the State of Connecticut today must meet the following conditions:

1. Own property ()
2. Understand the process of government ()
3. Know the views & background of political candidates ()
4. Be employed ()
5. Pay state taxes ()
6. Be married ()
7. Join a political party ()
8. Read & write English ()
9. Know about U.S. and Connecticut history ()
10. Be a citizen of the U.S. ()
11. Maintain certain religious standards & beliefs ()
12. Can't be a member of the Communist or Nazi Parties ()
13. Pass an intelligence test or graduate from high school ()
14. Be of a certain race, ethnic background, or gender ()
15. Live in Connecticut for a certain time ()
16. Be at least 18 years old ()
17. Can not have committed a serious crime ()
18. Promise to obey state laws ()
19. Promise to defend the U.S. or state ()
20. Be of good moral character ()
21. Be a resident of the town before registering to vote..... ()

Voter Qualification Test

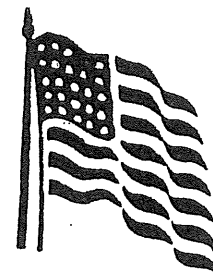
Writing Activity:



Write an opinion paper pro and con on the issue of voter qualifications in your Constitution Journal.

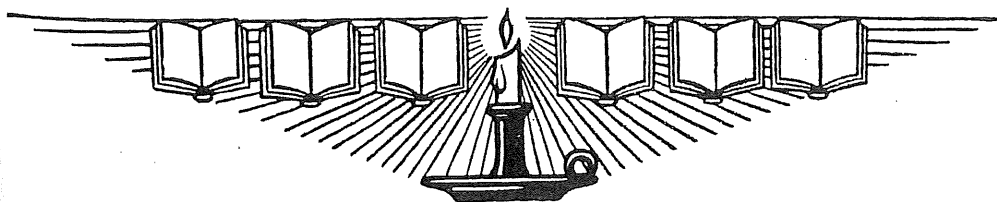
FIRST - As an introduction to your paper, explain why you believe voting to be important for maintenance of a democratic government.

SECOND - For the items you marked 1 (required to vote), explain your reasoning and try to use at least two points to support your position. And, for each of these items, give two points or reasons why someone would disagree with you.



THIRD - For the items you marked 6 (forbidden by law), explain your reasoning and try to use at least two points to support your position. And, for each of these items, give two points or reasons why someone would disagree with you.

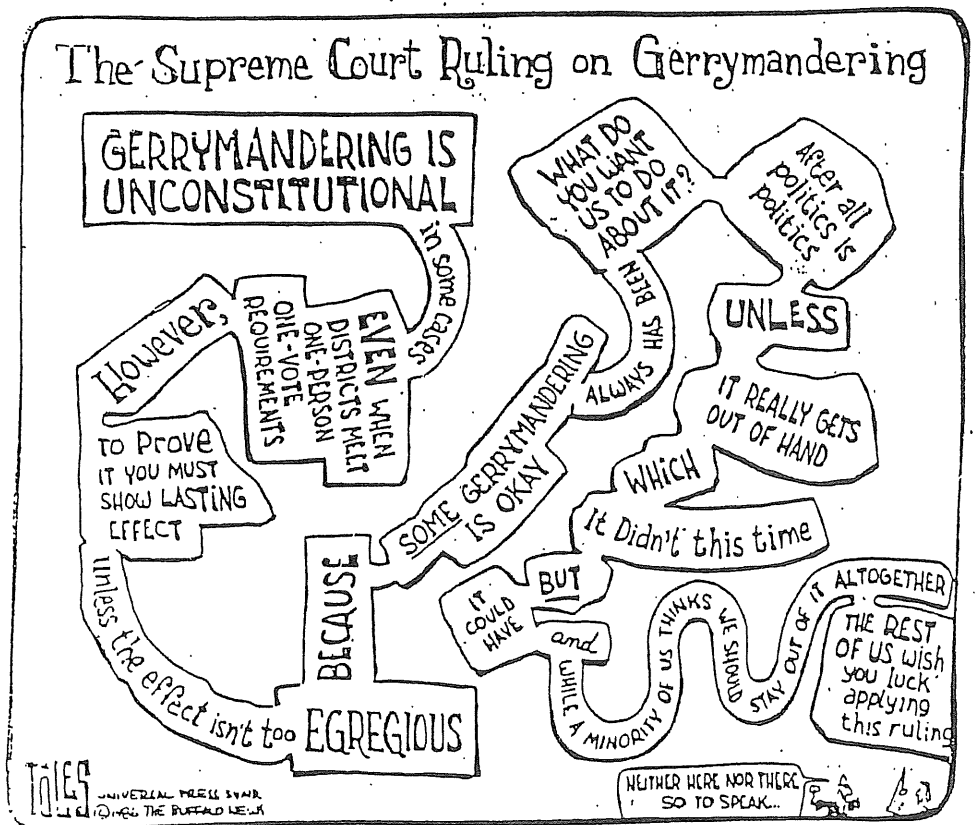
FINALLY - Why do you think or Connecticut ancestors placed restrictions upon voting? What do you project to be the future of voting in this state? Answer these questions as a conclusion to your paper.



One Person - One Vote

The system of representation to the Connecticut General Assembly established by the Constitution of 1818 remained basically the same through 1960's. The citizen's of Connecticut elected one or two representatives to the General Assembly from their individual city or town. A municipality received two representatives if it was incorporated prior to 1818 and awarded one representative after that date. This method of choosing state representatives caused the United States Supreme Court to mandate reapportionment of Connecticut's voting districts. In 1960, Connecticut was known as the most undemocratic state in the United States due to unequal and unfair representation. Reapportionment of General Assembly voting districts became the driving force behind the adoption of the Constitution of 1965. By ratifying a new constitution, the citizens of Connecticut once again established a just, representative government that served the common good of all citizens.

But why all the fuss? Why did the Federal Supreme Court mandate the way Connecticut conducted its state elections? In 1960, 96 Connecticut towns with a combined population of 303,086 elected 148 representatives. The other 103 towns, with a combined population of 2,232,148, elected 294 representatives. This meant only 12% of Connecticut voters had a majority of the votes in the lower house of the General Assembly. What ever that small group of citizens wanted, they got! The large cities had many severe problems: poverty, poor and over crowded housing, high unemployment, crime, inadequate medical care, and substandard educational opportunities. When the cities came to the General Assembly for needed programs, they were voted down as being too costly by the smaller towns. A 1892 cartoon provides a good illustration of this problem:



TEACHING IDEAS

132

LEVEL: Senior High School

Congressional Reapportionment/Redistricting

Jesse Palmer, University of Southern Mississippi

Fair and equal representation in our government has always been difficult to achieve. This lesson on reapportionment helps students encounter some of the problems legislators face in accomplishing this goal. As a social studies lesson, it seems most effective in 12th grade American Government classes.

Preview: This lesson describes reapportionment of congressional districts and related terms. Students learn by reapportioning an imaginary state.

Objectives:

1. Define the following terms:
 - apportionment
 - reapportionment
 - census
 - congressman-at-large
 - gerrymander
2. Describe the significance of the court case *Wesberry vs. Sanders* (1964) and the "one man, one vote" rule.
3. Identify the Reapportionment Act of 1929.
4. Practice skills in applying information obtained about reapportionment.

Opening the Lesson:

- Inform students of the lesson's main point.
- Ask students what they know about reapportionment.
- Ask the following questions: (1) What is it? (2) Why do states do it? (3) Who is responsible for doing it? (4) How is it done? Inform students that this lesson presents information pertaining to these questions.

Developing the Lesson:

- Discuss with students the terms important for understanding reapportionment.
- Show and explain the Congressional Apportionment map of the United States and a map of your state's Congressional districts.

Concluding the Lesson:

- Hand out map of the imaginary state and have students go through the process of reapportionment.
- Use an overhead projector and allow students to show the class how they reapportioned their state.
- Have students explain problems they encountered in reapportioning their state.

Directions for the Reapportionment Exercise: The imaginary state shown below has 34 counties. The population of each county is indicated. The state is entitled to ten members in the United States House of Representatives because its total population is 5 million. Divide the state into ten districts in such a way as to

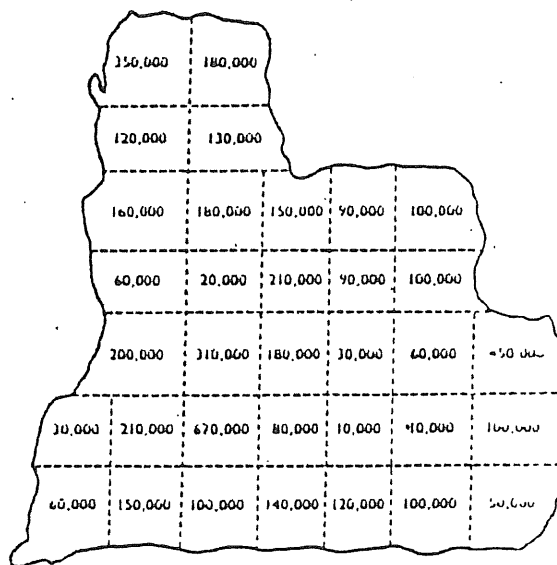
make each district (1) as nearly equal as possible in population and (2) as geographically compact as possible. A district may be smaller than a county or include more than one county. The variance between congressional districts should be no more than $\pm 10,000$.

Teacher's Note: The ideal district should contain 500,000 people. However, a district's population may have as low as 450,000 people or as many as 510,000 people. All people in the state must be accounted for.

Reference

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Imaginary Reapportionment Map



Reprinted with permission from 9/87 *Social Education*

Equal Rights in the 20th Century

Since the *Horton v. Meskill* decision in 1977, the Connecticut Supreme Court has been a continual source of important decisions concerning individual constitutional rights. At a time when the United States Supreme Court is deferring more to the states, the Connecticut Supreme Court increasingly is the place where the action is.

There is presently a suit coming before the State courts dealing with the issue of unequal educational opportunity for some students because of de facto segregation by race in schools (*Schiff v. O'Neill*). This will be an important case to follow. Students can see the meaning of Connecticut's Constitution being argued out by current Judges, and perhaps have a first-hand experience with how an Equal Protection decision affects their school.

Equal Rights in Voting

Equal rights to vote in all elections was achieved by blacks following the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and by women following the 21st Amendment in 1920. The state was slow, however, in making the power of each vote equal. That was not fully achieved until the 1965 Constitution changed the old system of representation by town described earlier to representation in proportion to population. Even then, the Reapportionment Plan passed by the Assembly following the 1970 U.S. Census was tested in suits brought before the State Supreme Court, and revised to bring it into compliance with the one-person one-vote standard established by the U.S. Supreme Court. After 1980, however, when the next Re-apportionment Plan was voted by the Assembly, there were no court suits, so the voters clearly felt that each person's vote in elections counted as much as every other's.

Voting has become not only more equal but also easier. In the 1965 Constitution there is no reference to religious belief for either voters or office-holders. Thus all believers - and those with no religious beliefs - are on an equal footing. Since 1965 the time limit for registering to vote before an election has been reduced to 21 days, with only proof of bona fide residence in a town required. There is no literacy test, no property requirement and no poll tax. By Amendment XIV in 1980 citizens who are 18 years old may vote and hold office (except for the governorship, for which a person must be 30). Absentee ballots are readily available, beginning 30 days before a regular election and 19 days before a primary, with provisions for getting an emergency absentee ballot as late as 6 days before the polls close.

Protection for Individuals

- 1937 Connecticut ratified U.S. Bill of Rights
- 1948 *Griswold v. Connecticut* (U.S. Supreme Court) finds "right to privacy"
- 1965 Constitution, Sec. I - Declaration of Rights includes Rights in Amendments 1-10, 13,14 & 15 of the U.S. Constitution. Further guarantees right to a free public education
- 1974 Amendment V - prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender
- 1977 *Horton v. Meskill* tested equality of education under school financing system (Based on property taxes in school district)
- 1980 Amendment XXI - prohibits discrimination on basis of physical & mental handicap

Right to Vote

- 1965 Constitution and Amendments
- 1970 Court cases established standard for Apportionment
- 1972 Plan - "one man - one vote"
- 1976 Amendment IX - 18 year olds right to vote
- 1980 Amendment XVI - Apportionment Plan revised after each decennial census - to meet federal standard.