

The Right to Vote

What opportunities does the right to vote provide?

Up until the Civil War, in most places, the right to vote in the United State was restricted to white males 21 years and older. Each state, not the federal government, established its own voter qualifications, but by far, adult white males accounted for almost all of the ballots cast. In the Dred Scott decision in 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that slaves were property of their owners, were not citizens and had no legal rights at all. A decade later, African Americans were not only free, but they were free citizens, and in Iowa, the path had been set to grant them the right to vote.

American-Indian Suffrage

American Indians had a long and complex legal status within the United States. The tribes were considered sovereign nations and the federal government signed treaties with them just as if they were foreign powers. In most cases, American Indians could not vote unless they left their tribes and lived in white communities. During World War I, many American Indians served with distinction in the armed forces. In recognition to their service, the U.S. Congress passed the Snyder Act, which granted full citizenship to American Indians whether they remained on tribal lands or moved into mainstream society.

The 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1971. It expanded the right to vote in federal elections to citizens 18 years and older, lowering the legal voting age from 21. Each state had to approve it for state and local elections.

The number of legal voters has expanded widely since the U.S. Constitution was adopted. Voting is the most basic right of each citizen, and who gets the right to cast a ballot for elected leaders has been a contentious issue. Today, there is a debate over whether those who have committed a felony should have the vote, even after they have served their time. Other issues may still surface.

Supporting Question

How did American Indians obtain the right to vote?

- [Sac and Fox Treaty, 1842 \(Document\)](#)
- [Iowa Law to "Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa," July 15, 1856 \(Document\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Proclamation Day Brochure: "Old Indian Town," July 13, 1857 \(Document\)](#)
- [Sac and Fox Treaty, 1867 \(Document\)](#)
- [Motion Presented by Iowa Senator J.B. Grinnell, February 5, 1867 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Move On!" Political Cartoon, April 22, 1871 \(Political Cartoon\)](#)
- [Citizenship Act, June 2, 1924 \(Document\)](#)
- [Toledo Indian Industrial School, ca. 1910 \(Image\)](#)
- [Staff and Students at the Toledo Indian Industrial School, ca. 1910 \(Image\)](#)
- [President Calvin Coolidge Posing with Native Americans at White House, February 18, 1925 \(Image\)](#)
- ["Political Rights from Citizenship" in The Problem of Indian Administration, February 21, 1928 \(Document\)](#)
- [Constitution and Bylaws of the Sac and Fox Tribes in Iowa, December 29, 1937 \(Document\)](#)
- [Oral History Interview with Henry Mitchell, an American Indian Canoe Maker, 1938 \(Document\)](#)
- [Civil Rights Act of 1957, September 9, 1957 \(Document\)](#)
- [Voting Rights Act, 1965 \(Document\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Land Purchases, 2004 \(Map\)](#)

[*Printable Image and Document Guide](#)

Additional Resources

American-Indian Suffrage:

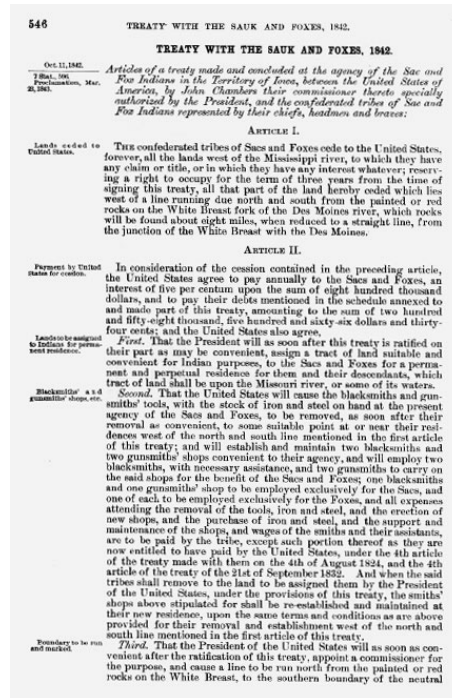
[Congress Granted Citizenship to All American Indians](#): This website includes a three-part timeline on legislation to grant citizenship to American Indians born in the United States.

[Indian Citizenship Act](#): This day in history feature from the Library of Congress summarizes the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act on June 2, 1924.

[Civil Rights Act of 1957](#): This webpage from govtrack.us contains infographics and summaries of the record of the U.S. Senate's vote on the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

[Voting Rights for American Indians](#): This Library of Congress webpage contains an article and photos that summarizes the struggle American Indians faced in the process of being granted voting rights in America.

Sac and Fox Treaty, 1842



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1842

Description

The introduction reads, “articles of a treaty made and concluded at the agency of the Sac and Fox Indians in the Territory of Iowa, between the United States of America, by John Chambers their commissioner thereto specially authorized by the President, and the confederated tribe of Sac and Fox Indians represented by their chiefs, headmen and braves.” In this treaty, Chief Poweshiek signed over rights to Sac and Fox land in Iowa, and nearly all American Indians relocated to Kansas. A small remnant remained in Tama County, Iowa. The move to Kansas proved to be painful and violent for the Meskwaki people. Old tribal rivalries arose and poverty set in. Some risked arrest to return to their relatives still living in Iowa. That remnant group has now become the Meskwaki Tribe that we know today.

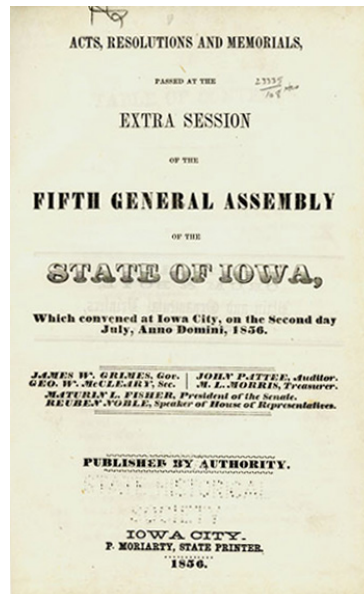
[Full Transcript of 1842 Sac and Fox Treaty](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from 1842 Sac and Fox Treaty](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- How many years after the signing of this treaty are the Sac and Fox tribes required to relocate?
- At the end of the treaty, it is signed by 44 members of the Sac and Fox tribes. All of them signed with “a mark” (“To the Indian names are subjoined marks”). What does it mean that the tribal members signed with a mark instead of signing their name? What does it mean that the tribal members names were spelled phonetically?

Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa,” July 15, 1856



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 15 July 1856

Description

This is an excerpt of the journal from the 5th General Assembly of Iowa in 1856. The journal page shows the law that was enacted so the Meskwaki could purchase land and live in Tama, Iowa.

[Full Transcript of Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa”](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt from Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa”](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Where did the Sac and Fox tribes want to remain living? Infer as to why they might have wanted to remain there.
- Refer to [Sac and Fox Treaty of 1842](#). Why did they have to ask permission to continue living where they were already living?

Meskwaki Proclamation Day Brochure: "Old Indian Town," July 13, 1857

After the passage of the Act, the Mesquaki went out to buy some land. David Butler penned a letter telling how the bargain was made.

OLD INDIAN TOWN

This was a temporary village or lodgment of the Mesquakes in the NE 1/4 of Sec. 17 of what is now Indian Village township. The region is since known as Butlerville, because of its being the location of the several Butler families from whom these Indians first bought land. The Mesquakes had lodged here before the Butlers came in 1855. At the time the Butlers settled here the Mesquakes had gone. In the spring of 1857 an Indian came on horseback and talked with Isaac Butler about the purchase of some land. He went away and came again, in all about three times. Finally a bargain was made for 80 acres in township -- of Sec. 30, 83, 15. Isaac Butler and his sons Philip and David went to Toledo and made out the deed on July 13, 1857. The consideration paid was \$1,000 in cash. The money was taken to Iowa City by the Indians and paid to Gov. Jas. W. Grimes. It was brought back to the Butlers by Ebenezer Coffin, a farmer in Tama Co. The money was in the form of gold and Mr. Coffin carried it in a rough sack in his lumber wagon. There were no ponies in the payment, as has been so often reported.

from David Butler
August 18, 1905

The following is the land deed that the Butlers made at Toledo in 1857:

This Deed of Bargain and Sale made and executed the thirteenth day of July A.D. 1857 by and between Philip Butler, David Butler, and Isaac Butler Guardian for William Butler and Ozias Butler Minors, all of Tama County and State of Iowa, parties of the first part and James W. Grimes Governor of the State of Iowa and his successors in office in trust for the following named persons, Indians and their heirs forever viz. Mah a Nah, Wau la no, Chalk kal a Mah, Mat aa a quah, Pat a ca to of the Second part. Witnesseth that the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of One Thousand Dollars to them paid by the said party of the Second part the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged has granted and sold and do by these presents Grant Bargain Sell Convey and Confirm unto the said Party of the Second part and to his Successors in office in trust for the said Indians their heirs forever the certain tract or parcel of Real Estate Situated in the County of Tama and State of Iowa, to wit The West half of the South East fourth of Section number thirty (30) Township number Eighty-three (83) North of Range fifteen (15) West of the 5th P.M. containing Eighty Acres according to Government Survey, and the said Isaac Butler sells the interest of his wards the said William Butler and Ozias Butler Infants aforesaid, in and to the said tract or Parcel of Land by virtue and authority of an order of County Court of Tama County, aforesaid made granted and decreed and adjudged to him as guardian of the property of said Infants upon an application to said Court made by said Isaac Butler as Guardian aforesaid, Notice of the copy of the petition of each said infant first being legally served on all the parties interested, and the said Isaac Butler having given a Bond as required by law conditioned for the faithful performance of his duty and the just and true application of, and accounting for all moneys by him received, which said order was made by the County Court at the May term thereof, held on the first Monday in May, 1857 and duly recorded in the Book of Records of Said Court. To have and to hold the premises above described with all the appurtenances thereto belonging unto him the said party of the Second part and to his successors in office forever. The said Philip Butler, David Butler and Isaac Butler as guardian for said minors hereby covenanting for themselves, their heirs, executors and administrator that the above described premises are free from all incumbrances that they have full right power and authority to sell the same and they will warrant and defend the title unto the said party of the second part their Successors, Heirs and Assigns against the claims of all persons whomsoever lawfully claiming the same. In witness whereof the said parties of the first part have thereto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Philip Butler, L.S.
David Butler, L.S.
Isaac Butler, L.S.
Guardian of William and
Ozias Butler, minors.

In presence of
Allen Dingee.

4

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, pp. 4, 13 July 1857

Description

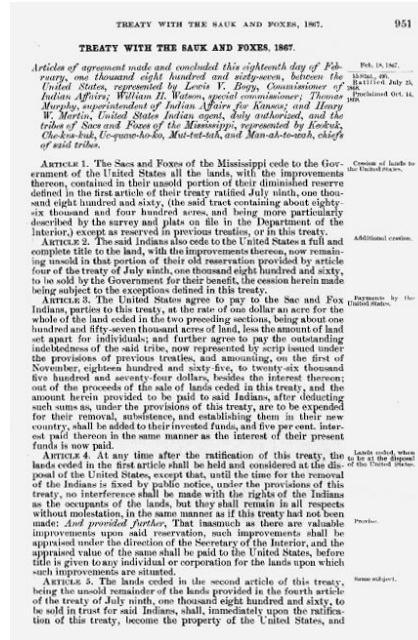
As printed in "Proclamation Day Brochure," a publication of the Meskwaki tribe to commemorate those who defied orders to relocate to "Indian Territory" and remained in Iowa, the brochure tells the laws, treaties, resolutions and official statements on the relocation - or non-relocation of some members - of the Sac and Fox tribes in Iowa. In this way, the brochure chronicles legal injunctions placed upon the Meskwaki people. This particular story was a recollection by David Butler as to the land bargaining process.

[Transcribed Excerpt from Meskwaki Proclamation Day Brochure: "Old Indian Town"](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What took place on July 13, 1857?
- Why would this purchase make a difference for the Meskwaki tribe?

Sac and Fox Treaty, 1867



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1867

Description

In this 1867 treaty, the Sac and Fox tribes agreed to purchase 750,000 square miles of land in portions of what is now Payne, Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties. The introduction states: "Articles of agreement made and concluded this eighteenth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, between the United States, represented by [various officials], duly authorized, and the tribes of Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi, represented by Keokuk, Chekuskuk, Uequawhoko, Muttuttah, and Manahtowah, chiefs of said tribes."

[Full Transcript of 1867 Sac and Fox Treaty](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from 1867 Sac and Fox Treaty](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- In the [1842 treaty](#), the Sac and Fox gave up land west of the Mississippi River. According to this treaty, how much of their land was signed over to the American government?
- This treaty was signed 10 years after the Meskwaki started purchasing land in Tama County, Iowa. What difference did that make for the Meskwaki? Use evidence from the source to explain why.
- An annuity is a fixed sum of money to be paid to a person every year for the rest of their life. According to this treaty, "no part of the funds arising from or due the nation under this or previous treaty stipulations shall be paid to any bands or parts of bands who do not permanently reside on the reservation set apart to them by the Government in the Indian Territory ..." What does that mean for the Meskwaki who lived on land that they owned, rather than living on a government appointed reservation? Do you think the trade off would be worth it?

Motion Presented by Iowa Senator J.B. Grinnell, February 5, 1867

the 15th ultimo, and at the request of the Honorable J.B. Grinnell, has so far modified his decision of the 17th of November last as to authorize me to instruct you to pay to the Sac and Fox Indians in Tama County, Iowa, that portion of the tribal fund which was placed in your hands for such purpose by my predecessor, amounting to \$5,587.33, but with the distinct understanding that no further annuities will hereafter be paid to them, except on their reservation in Kansas, or at such other place as may be hereafter selected as a home for the tribe.

The instructions contained in my letter of the 27th of November, 1866, directing you to close up all the business of your Special Agency on or before the 31st ultimo, are hereby revoked, and the tenure of your office will be extended for a sufficient time to enable you to comply with the above instructions.

The amount of money deposited by you to the credit of the United States in the National Bank at Dubuque will be remanded for its original purpose, and a requisition for the same amount will immediately be issued in your favor.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
Lewis V. Bogy, Commissioner.

Leander Clark, Esq.,
Special Indian Agent,
Tolofo, Tama County, Iowa.

The Mesquaki had white friends that spoke for the Tribe. Congressman Grinnell spoke for them in Congress asking that the Mesquaki should be paid their annuities in Iowa. The following is part of the proceedings of the Congress.

February 5, 1867.

Mr. Grinnell. I move on page 42, after line one thousand and eight, to insert the following:

Provided, That the band of Sacs and Foxes now in Tama county, Iowa, shall be paid pro rata their portion of annuity so long as they are peaceful and have the assent of the governor of Iowa to reside in that State.

Mr. Chairman, this proviso I desire to explain, and trust it will appear so manifestly just as to meet with no opposition. The Indians to whom this will apply are a band called Nausquokas, of the Sacs and Foxes, numbering some two hundred, with their lodges near the Iowa river, and about twenty miles from my own residence. On their removal near twenty years ago, to the reservation west of the Missouri river, a powerful band made war on them, and coming back to their old haunts declared that they would all be killed if they remained. Some ten years since, on their petition and that of their white neighbors to the State Legislature, they being in the senatorial district which I happened to represent, I took up their cause, and without objection a law was passed permitting them to own land and reside in the State. Their just portion of the annuity of the Sacs and Foxes was denied them until last year, when it was granted by Secretary Harlan, and is only given now as a temporary allowance by the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I see no good reason why it should not be permanent. I know of no other band which has not been decimated in numbers and suffered by the vices of the whites. Where they are without money they are objects of our charities. To compel them to go to Kansas is to settle them where they are not wanted or to provoke the murderous spirit of the warriors from whom they once fled. As to their character, of which I am asked, I have never heard that they were thievish or quarrelsome. they may have no Logan among their "braves," but with their pro rata of the annuity which I ask schools may be established, more comfort brought to their wigwags, and it is to be hoped such a christian civilization as will not require the romance of a Jefferson or Seth Smith to find heroes worthy to adorn the sad history of our Indian tribes, which, without a change of policy, will soon be as far beyond our reach as they now seem below our consideration. (THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE: CONTAINING THE DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH CONGRESS 1867.)

8

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 5 February 1867

Description

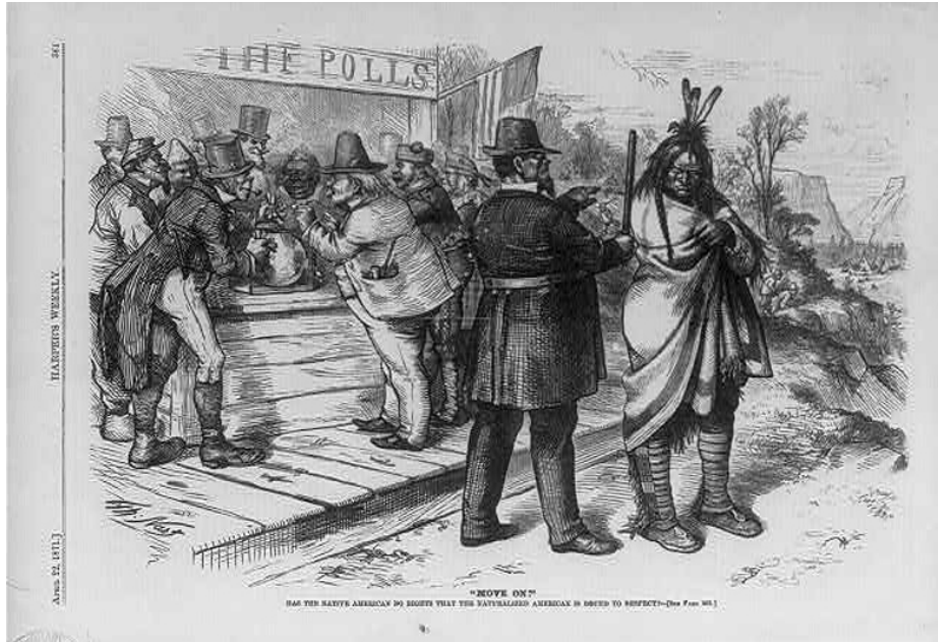
This document summarizes the motion made by United States Senator J.B. Grinnell from Iowa to an appropriations bill being debated in the U. S. Senate on February 5, 1867. Grinnell's request was to insert text to allow the band of Sacs and Foxes, who would later become known as the Meskwaki, to continue to live on their land in Tama County, Iowa, and to receive annuities from the U.S. government, even though they did not reside in "Indian Territory." This is the federal action for the resolution passed by the 5th General Assembly of the Iowa legislature. His motion was approved. According to *The Palimpsest*, the annual government annuity was \$24.36 per Meskwaki in 1905, though the Chief Push-e-to-ne-qua received \$600 annually.

[Transcribed Excerpt of Motion Presented by Iowa Senator J.B. Grinnell](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What is Senator J.B. Grinnell asking the United States Senate to do? Why is he asking this? Provide evidence from the source supporting your answer.
- Refer to the [Sac and Fox Treaty of 1867](#). What reasons does J. B. Grinnell give for this change? Are these changes justified? Why or why not?

“Move On!” Political Cartoon, April 22, 1871



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Nast, Thomas, ““Move on!” Has the Native American no rights that the naturalized American is bound to respect?” 22 April 1871

Description

In this political cartoon appearing in *Harper's Weekly* on April 22, 1871, a policeman is seen ordering an American Indian man to “move on” away from a voting poll where other stereotyped “naturalized” Americans are clustered.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What ethnicities are represented in this political cartoon?
- Infer a possible location for this scene based on the background landscape and tell why.
- Conclude what “message” is being delivered in this political cartoon.

Citation Information

Nast, Thomas, ““Move on!” Has the Native American no rights that the naturalized American is bound to respect?” 22 April 1871. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Citizenship Act, June 2, 1924

SIXTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS, Sess. I. Chs. 231-234. 1924. 253

patents in fee, or any other disposition authorized by existing law relating to Indian allotments.
Approved, June 2, 1924.

CHAP. 232.—An Act To provide for the addition of the names of Chester Calf and Crooked Nose Woman to the final roll of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, Seeger jurisdiction, Oklahoma. Page 1, 2001
(Public, No. 191)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he hereby is, authorized to add to the final roll of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians of the Seeger jurisdiction, Oklahoma, approved May 15, 1911, the names of Chester Calf and Crooked Nose Woman, which names were inadvertently omitted from the said roll, and to pay to each of these persons a sum equal to that heretofore paid per capita to those whose names appear on the approved roll, such payment to be made from any tribal funds to the credit of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.
Approved, June 2, 1924. Chester and Arapaho Indians, Oklahoma
Per capita payment

CHAP. 233.—An Act To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians. Page 1, 2001
(Public, No. 191)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: *Provided,* That the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property.
Approved, June 2, 1924. Indians born in United States
Declared citizens
Rights not affected

CHAP. 234.—An Act To reduce and equalize taxation, to provide revenue, and for other purposes. Page 1, 2001
(Public, No. 191)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE I.—GENERAL DEFINITIONS. General Definitions

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Revenue Act of 1924."
SEC. 2. (a) When used in this Act—
(1) The term "person" means an individual, a trust or estate, a partnership, or a corporation.
(2) The term "corporation" includes associations, joint-stock companies, and insurance companies.
(3) The term "domestic" when applied to a corporation or partnership means created or organized in the United States or under the law of the United States or of any State or Territory.
(4) The term "foreign" when applied to a corporation or partnership means a corporation or partnership which is not domestic.
(5) The term "United States" when used in a geographical sense includes only the States, the Territories of Alaska and Hawaii, and the District of Columbia.
(6) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Treasury.
(7) The term "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. Title of Act
Terms mentioned
"Person."
"Corporation."
"Domestic."
"Foreign."
"United States."
"Secretary."
"Commissioner."

Courtesy of U.S. Congress, "Chap. 233 - An Act To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians," 2 June 1924

Description

This 1924 act by Congress granted citizenship to all American Indians born in the United States. However, the right to vote was governed by state law. Until 1957, some states barred American Indians from voting.

[Transcript of the Citizenship Act of 1924](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Why would it be important for American Indians to be recognized as citizens of the United States?
- If American Indians were not considered citizens, discuss reasons why [Iowa allowed the Meskwaki to purchase land in 1856](#).

Citation Information

"Chap. 233 - An Act To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians," 2 June 1924. [Courtesy of U.S. Congress](#)

President Calvin Coolidge Posing with Native Americans at White House, February 18, 1925



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “[President Calvin Coolidge posed with Natives, possibly from the Plateau area in the Northwestern United States, near the south lawn of the White House],” February 18, 1925

Description

President Calvin Coolidge posed with American Indians, possibly from the plateau area in the northwestern United States, near the south lawn of the White House on February 18, 1925. In June of 1924, Congress passed The Citizenship Act of 1924, granting citizenship to all American Indians born in the United States. However, this did not guarantee all American Indians the right to vote, because voting was governed by state law at that time. Many American Indians did not get the right to vote until the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Text-Dependent Questions

- The Citizenship Act of 1924 granted citizenship to all American Indians born in the United States. How does the Citizenship Act of 1924 support or differ from the 15th Amendment passed in 1870? As a reminder, the 15th Amendment states that “The right of citizens of the United States 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.”
- Using clues from the clothing of the men in the photograph, what are possible inferences about the varied values of American Indians?

Citation Information

“[President Calvin Coolidge posed with Natives, possibly from the Plateau area in the Northwestern United States, near the south lawn of the White House],” February 18, 1925. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

“Political Rights from Citizenship” in The Problem of Indian Administration, February 21, 1928

756 PROBLEM OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

to handle but in strengthening the Indian Service so that it can better perform its functions as an educational agency.

The United States courts only have been mentioned in this discussion. Such experiments as have been tried in conferring jurisdiction over Indian property on the state courts have resulted in an exploitation of individual Indians that has no parallel in the administration of the Indian property by the national government. If evidence be required, let anyone contrast the present excellent federal administration of the property of the restricted Osages with the state courts' work among the Five Civilized Tribes or with conditions among the Osages before the passage of recent acts materially strengthening the power of the national government over guardians appointed by state courts.

Political Rights from Citizenship. Citizenship is, as has been said, primarily an individual and political right. It, however, does not carry with it necessarily the right to vote. Prior to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, women in many states were citizens and yet they had no right to vote. The Indian who has been declared a citizen of the United States by statute does not by virtue of that act secure the right to vote in the state in which he resides. With respect to his right to vote he is subject to the state law and must satisfy the requirements of that law before securing the franchise.

In many states the Indians can and do vote. In some of the more sparsely settled Western states, where the Indians form a considerable proportion of the population, their vote is an important factor in closely contested primaries and general elections, and party leaders organize them. Some evidence tends to show that they are appreciative of their political power and are inclined to consider the attitude toward measures in which they are interested, such as tribal claims and water rights. The survey staff, however, made no effort to collect information as to their political affiliation and activities, merely noting what came to the members incidentally.

In at least one state, New Mexico, the state constitution denies to untaxed Indians the right to vote. The act of Congress declaring the Indians citizens of the United States raises sharply the question of the constitutionality of such a provision in any state constitution. Apparently it denies to a citizen of the United States the

Courtesy of the Brookings Institute, “The Problem of Indian Administration,” The Johns Hopkins Press, 21 February 1928.

Description

“The Problem of Indian Administration” report was created by a group of 10 staff members who spent seven months gathering information about the social and economic status of American Indians throughout the country. This 872-page report, also known as the Meriam Report, revealed how government policy oppressed American Indians. Its publication spurred Congress to create the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This particular excerpt from the report focuses on whether or not American Indians who are citizens actually have the ability to vote in the United States.

[Transcript of pp. 756 in *The Problem of Indian Administration*](#)

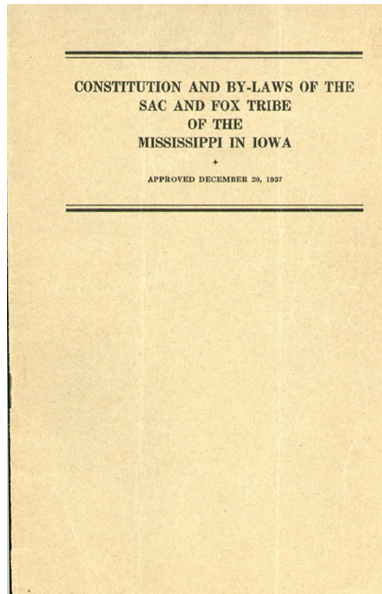
Text-Dependent Questions

- According to this report, what is the connection to citizenship and the right to vote? The report compared the plight of the American Indian’s being unable to vote to women before the passage the 19th Amendment. What was similar between the two groups of people? What was different?
- In the states where American Indians were voting at the time of this report, what impact did their vote have?
- What is one way that American Indians were prevented from voting?

Citation Information

“The Problem of Indian Administration,” The Johns Hopkins Press, pp. 756, 21 February 1928. [Courtesy of the Brookings Institute](#)

Constitution and Bylaws of the Sac and Fox Tribes in Iowa, December 29, 1937



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 29 December 1937

Description

After the U.S. Congress created the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Meskwaki established their own constitution. This document is the constitution and its by-laws as it was created in 1937. The preamble states, "We, the Mesquakie Indians, enrolled members of the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, hereinafter referred to as the Sac and Fox Tribe in Iowa, now living on the Sac and Fox Settlement located near Tama, Tama County, Iowa in order that we may perpetuate our ancient tribal affairs, transact tribal business, and promote our own and our posterity's social, economic, educational, and general welfare, with the guidance of Providence, do hereby organize ourselves into one body and adopt this Constitution as the basis of our community self-government."

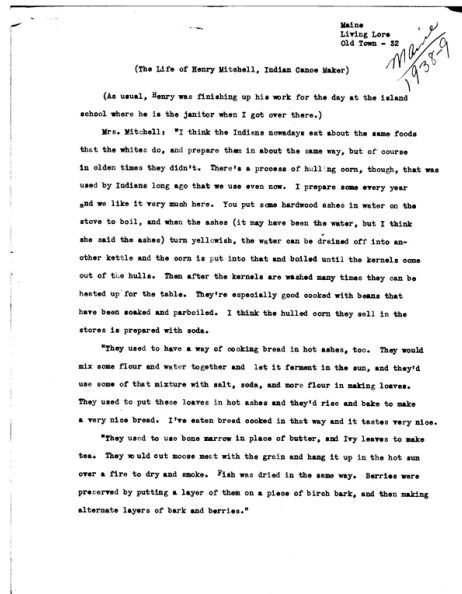
[Full Transcript of the Sac and Fox Tribes Constitution](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Sac and Fox Tribes Constitution](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- According to the constitution of the Meskwaki tribe, the Tribal Council would determine important matters for the tribe. What are the rules of forming a Tribal Council?
- According to this constitution, who is eligible to vote in tribal elections? What factors might have influenced these criteria?

Oral History Interview with Henry Mitchell, an American Indian Canoe Maker, 1938



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Mitchell, Henry, "[The Life of Henry Mitchell]," 1938

Description

This oral interview of Henry Mitchell and his wife, American Indians in Maine, was completed by Robert Grady with the Federal Writers' Project in 1938. Henry Mitchell was a professional canoe maker and talks about the beliefs and customs he grew up with along with moments of great adversity he and other American Indians faced in Maine.

[Full Transcript of Henry Mitchell's Interview](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt from Henry Mitchell's Interview](#)

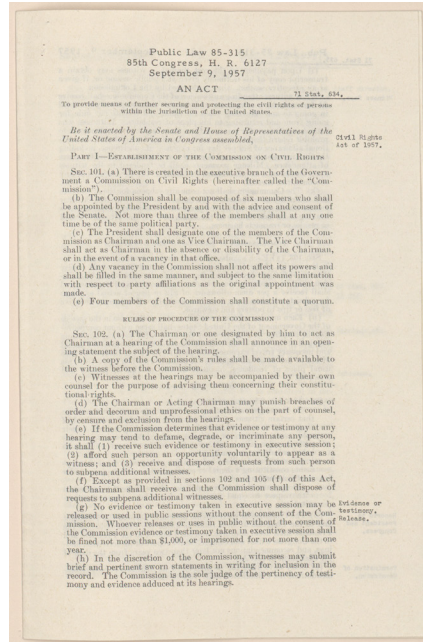
Text-Dependent Questions

- What role did American Indians have in the state legislature of Maine in 1938?
- American Indians in Maine could not vote in state elections but could in tribal elections, like explained in the [Constitution and Bylaws of the Sac and Fox Tribes](#) in Iowa. According to the Mitchells, what was unfair about these roles and salaries in Maine?
- Write a conclusion about how much value the input from American Indians had to the legislators in Maine at that time.

Citation Information

Mitchell, Henry, "[The Life of Henry Mitchell]," 1938. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Civil Rights Act of 1957, September 9, 1957



Courtesy of University of Maryland Law Library, "An Act to provide means of further securing and protecting the civil rights of persons within the jurisdiction of the United States," 9 September 1957

Description

This legislation established a Commission on Civil Rights to investigate civil rights violations and also established a Civil Rights Division within the Department of Justice. The Civil Rights Act of 1957 authorized the prosecution for those who violated the right to vote for United States citizens. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 took the issue one step further and authorized federal law enforcement to make sure that citizens of all people groups, in all states, were allowed to vote.

[Full Transcript of the Civil Rights Act of 1957](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Civil Rights Act of 1957](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Which groups of people did the Civil Rights Act of 1957 seek to help?
- What was the problem the Civil Rights Act of 1957 worked to solve?
- How will the United States government go about solving that problem?

Citation Information

"An Act to provide means of further securing and protecting the civil rights of persons within the jurisdiction of the United States," 9 September 1957. [Courtesy of University of Maryland Law Library](#)

Voting Rights Act, 1965

Public Law 89-110
Voting Rights Act of 1965
Eighty-ninth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Began and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the fourth day of January,
One thousand nine hundred and sixty-five

An Act to enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act shall be known as the "Voting Rights Act of 1965."

SEC. 2. No voting qualifications or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.

SEC. 3. (a) 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 in accordance with section 6 to serve for such period of time and for such political subdivisions as the court shall determine is appropriate to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment (1) as part of any interlocutory order if the court determines that the appointment of such examiners is necessary to enforce such guarantees or (2) as part of any final judgment if the court finds that violations of the fifteenth amendment justifying equitable relief have occurred in such State or subdivision: *Provided*, That the court need not authorize the appointment of examiners if any incidents of denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race or color (1) have been few in number and have been promptly and effectively corrected by State or local action, (2) the continuing effect of such incidents has been eliminated, and (3) there is no reasonable probability of their recurrence in the future.

(b) If in a proceeding instituted by the Attorney General under any statute to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment in any State or political subdivision 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 and devices in such State or political subdivisions as the court shall determine is appropriate and for such period as it deems necessary.

(c) If in any proceeding instituted by the Attorney General under any statute to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment in any State or political subdivision the court finds that violations of the fifteenth amendment justifying equitable relief have

Page 1 of 26

Courtesy of U.S. Congress, "Public Law 89-110: Voting Rights Act of 1965," 1965

Description

This act was signed into law on August 6, 1965, by President Lyndon B. Johnson. It outlawed the discriminatory voting practices adopted in many southern states after the Civil War, including literacy tests as a prerequisite to voting. This was a landmark piece of federal legislation in America that prohibited racial discrimination in voting.

[Full Transcript of the Voting Rights Act of 1965](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt from the Voting Rights Act of 1965](#)

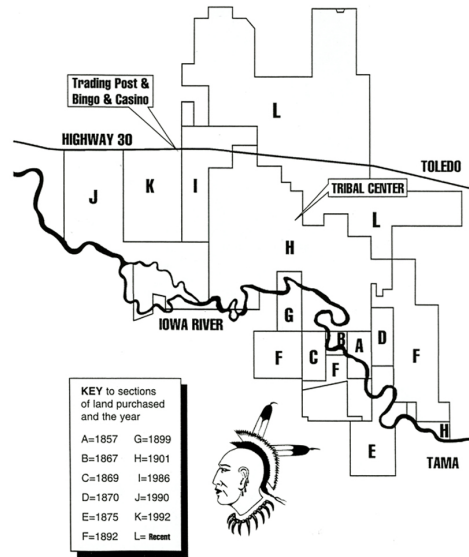
Text-Dependent Questions

- After reading this act, analyze the excerpt of [Political Rights from Citizenship](#). How did the Voting Rights act of 1965 impact all American Indians?
- Speculate as to why it took so long for American Indians to receive the right to vote in all states, especially after the [Civil Rights Act](#) was passed in 1957?

Citation Information

"Public Law 89-110: Voting Rights Act of 1965," 1965. [Courtesy of U.S. Congress](#)

Meskwaki Land Purchases, 2004



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 2004

Description

This map and accompanying text show the history of land purchases made by the Meskwaki tribe. This particular political map shows the dates of multiple land purchases around Highway 30 and the Iowa River by the Meskwaki tribe from 1857 to recent years.

[Transcript about Meskwaki Land Purchases](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- How has the land that the Meskwaki owned changed over time? Cite evidence from the source to support your answer.
- Make a timeline showing the years the parcels of land were purchased.