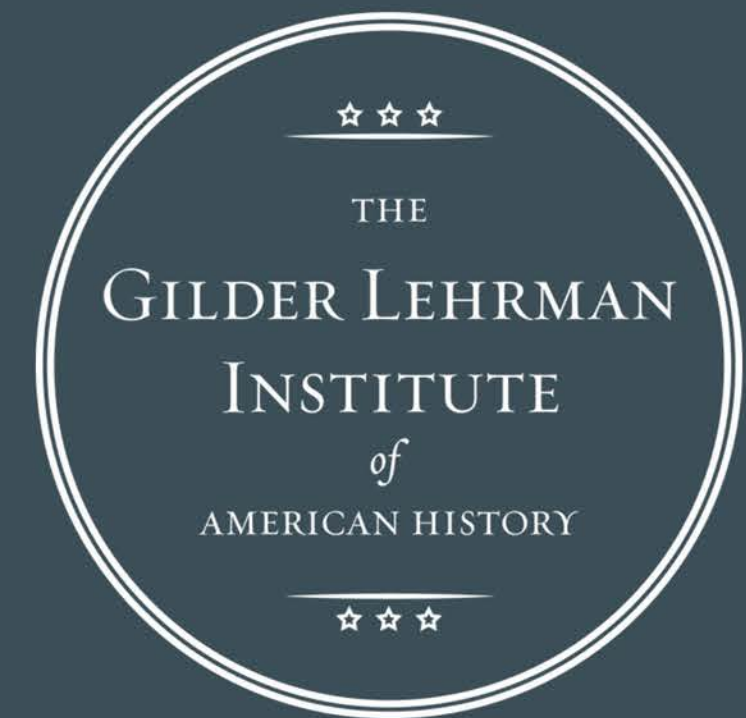




# INSIDE THE VAULT

Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Voting Rights  
with Dr. Andrew Robertson

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023



# How to Participate



- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.
- The views expressed here are those of the historian.

## For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.



# Andrew Robertson



Andrew W. Robertson is associate professor of history at the CUNY Graduate Center and at Lehman College, CUNY. From 2011 to 2017 he was deputy executive officer and then acting executive officer of the History PhD Program at the CUNY Graduate Center. In 2017-2018, he was Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri. He has also served as NEH Distinguished Professor of History and as A. Lindsay O'Connor Visiting Professor of American Institutions at Colgate University.

For the past twelve years, Professor Robertson has been involved in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating voting data on the “New Nation Votes” website, jointly sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society and Tufts University. He lectures frequently on early American democracy, the American Revolution, and early US political history. Professor Robertson is writing a book entitled *Democracy: America’s Other ‘Peculiar Institution’*.

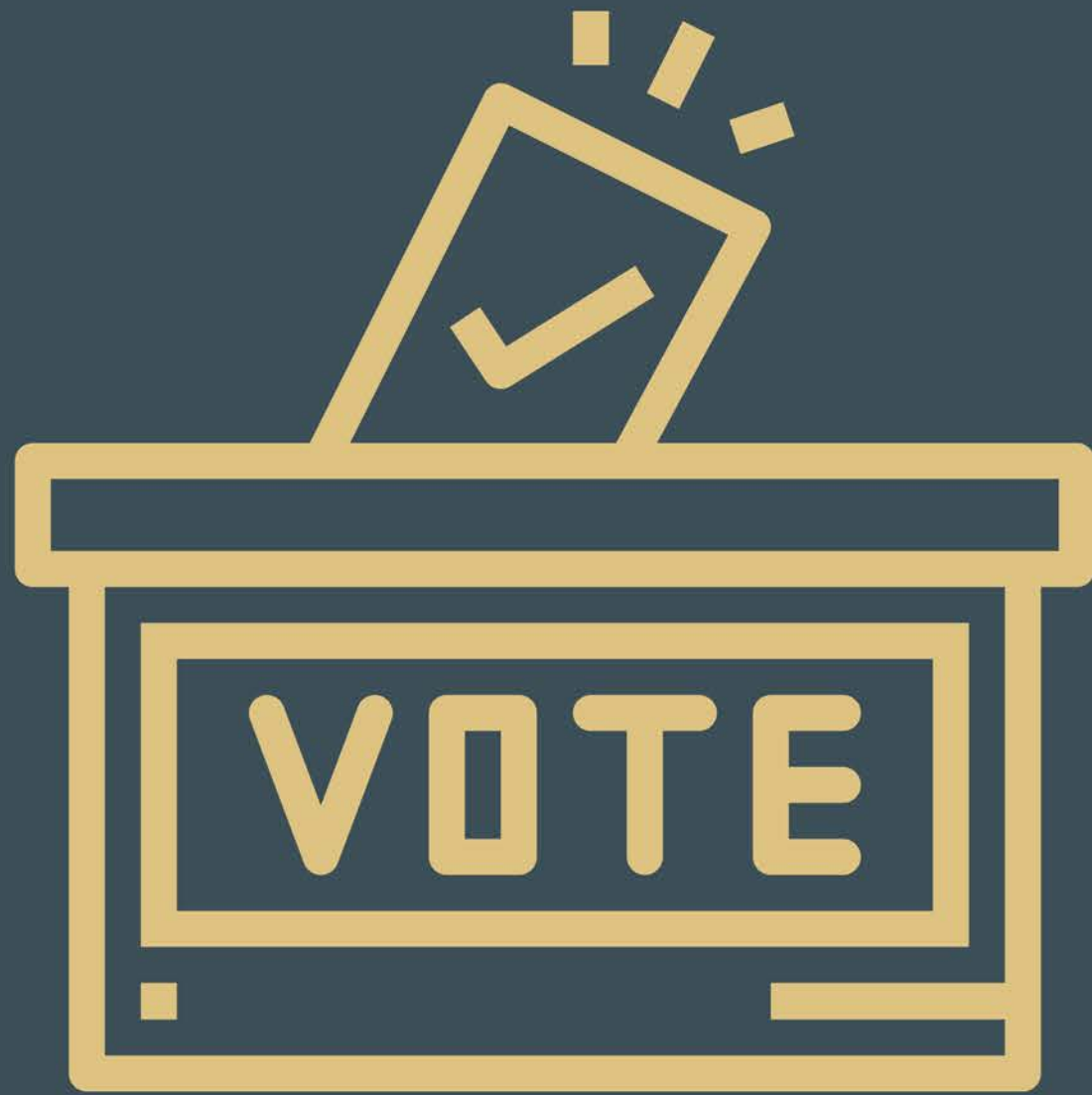


# Daniel Pecoraro



Daniel Pecoraro is a senior program manager at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Along with being the project lead for *The Right to Vote: The Role of States and the US Constitution*, he is responsible for the management of the Institute's online Teacher Seminars along with various other professional development programs. A proud alumnus of the New York City public school system from kindergarten through graduate school, Daniel received his BA in History at the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College and his MA in History at Hunter College.

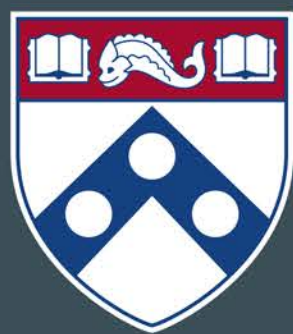




## About The Right to Vote

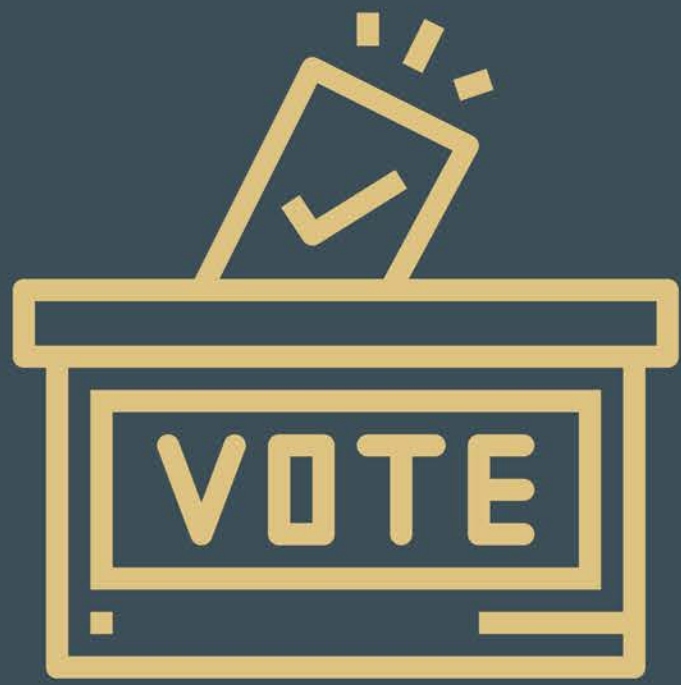
- Production of a new suite of resources for high school students, their teachers, and the general public launching this month
- Will culminate in a Voting Rights Forum held in New York City and livestreamed on September 15

**The Right to Vote:**  
The Role of States  
and the US Constitution



**Annenberg**  
PUBLIC POLICY CENTER  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

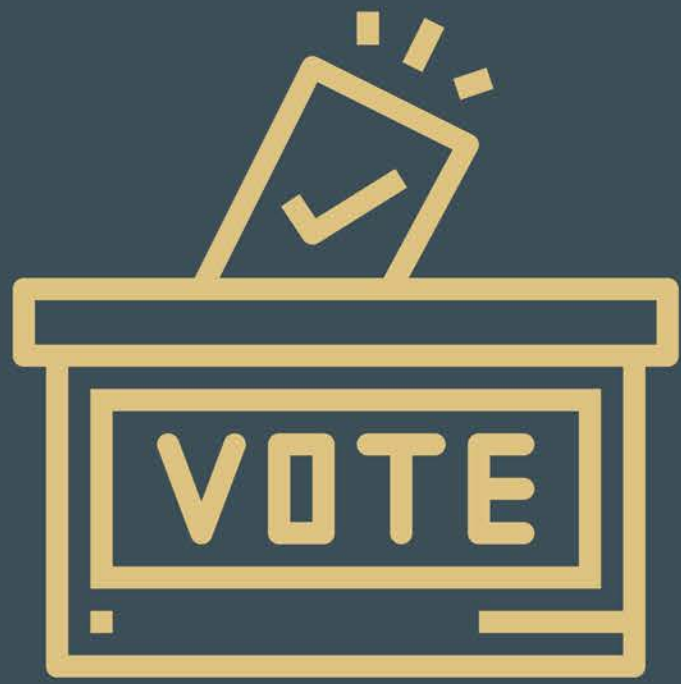




**The Right to Vote:**  
The Role of States  
and the US Constitution

## Key Project Takeaways

- States primarily determine voting requirements.
- The right to vote is fundamental to representative democracy.
- Voting rights have expanded significantly since the Constitution was ratified in 1789.
- Throughout American history, people have fought to gain and keep the right to vote, while others have fought to limit its extension.

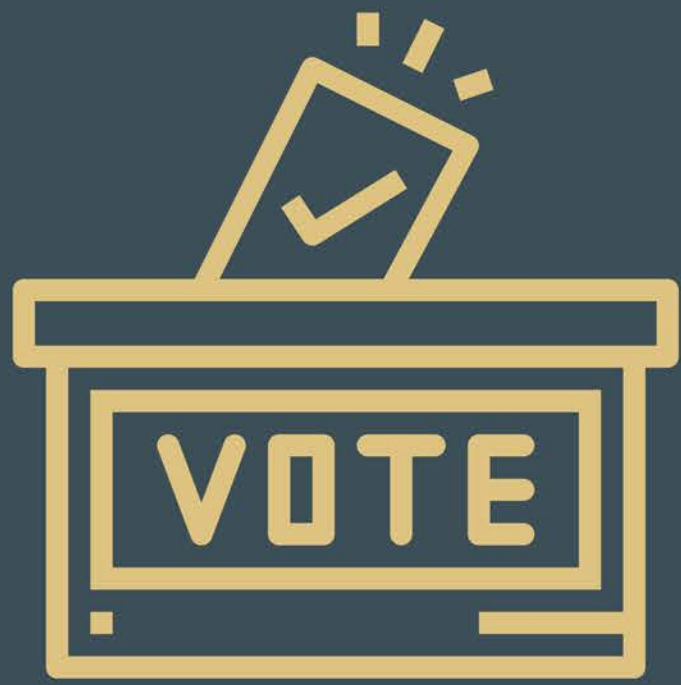


**The Right to Vote:**  
The Role of States  
and the US Constitution

## Resource Suite

- Three historical background essays
- “Taking a Stand for Voting Rights: Six States, Six Stories, One Goal,” a new multi-lesson, modular unit in our Teaching Civics through History curriculum, supported by ten \$500 Voting Rights Prizes to be awarded to outstanding student entries
- A four-part digital exhibition

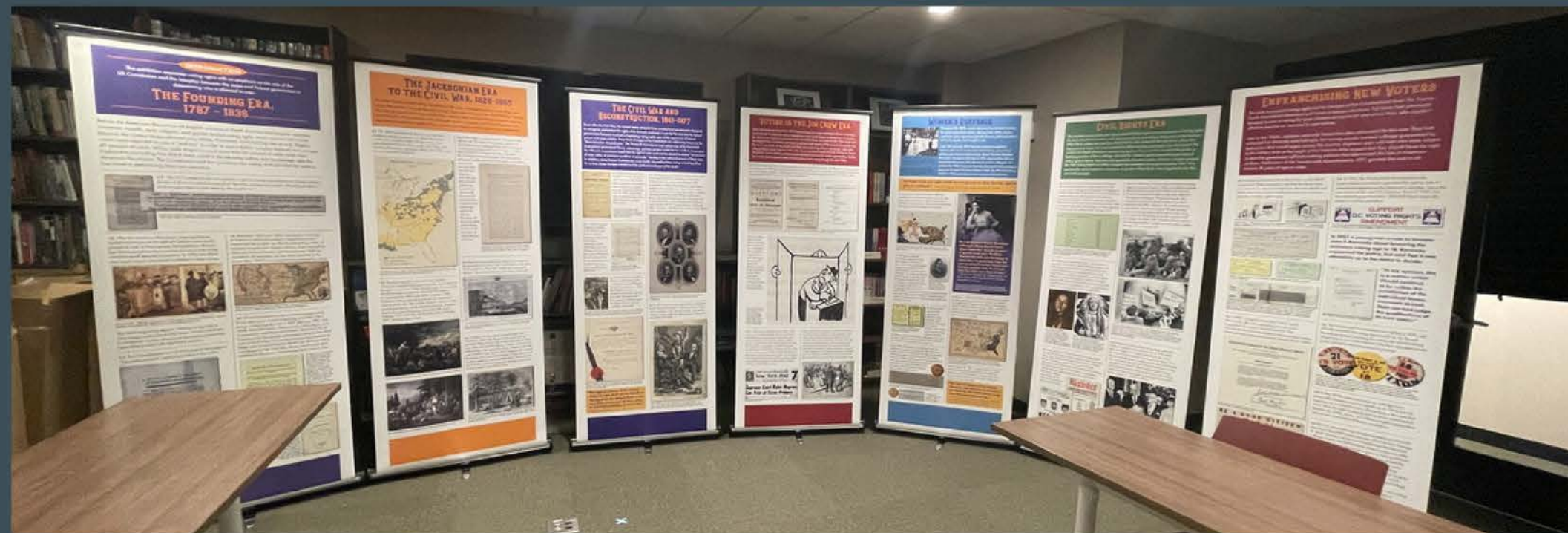




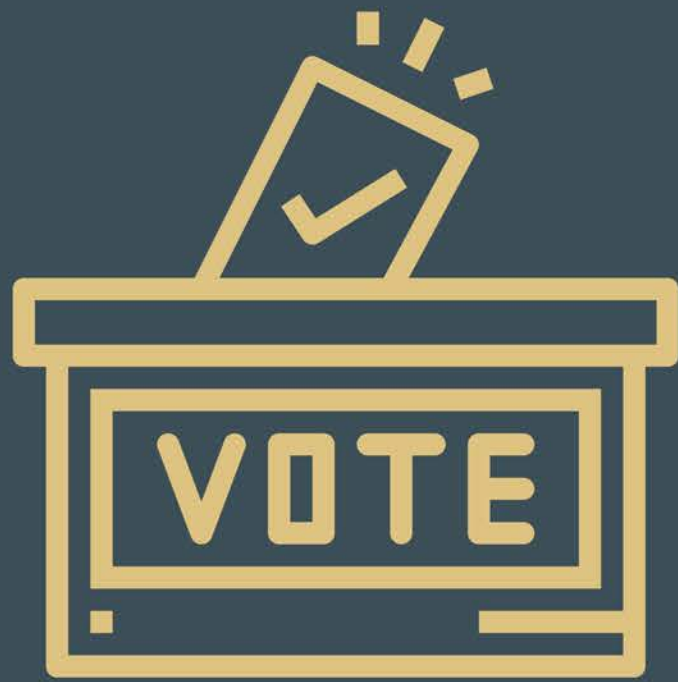
**The Right to Vote:**  
The Role of States  
and the US Constitution

## Resource Suite

- *Who Can Vote? A Brief History of Voting Rights in the US*, a new seven-panel exhibition on the history of voting rights from the founding era to the twenty-first century
  - Apply to host the exhibition for free at [gilderlehrman.org/whocanvoteapp](http://gilderlehrman.org/whocanvoteapp)







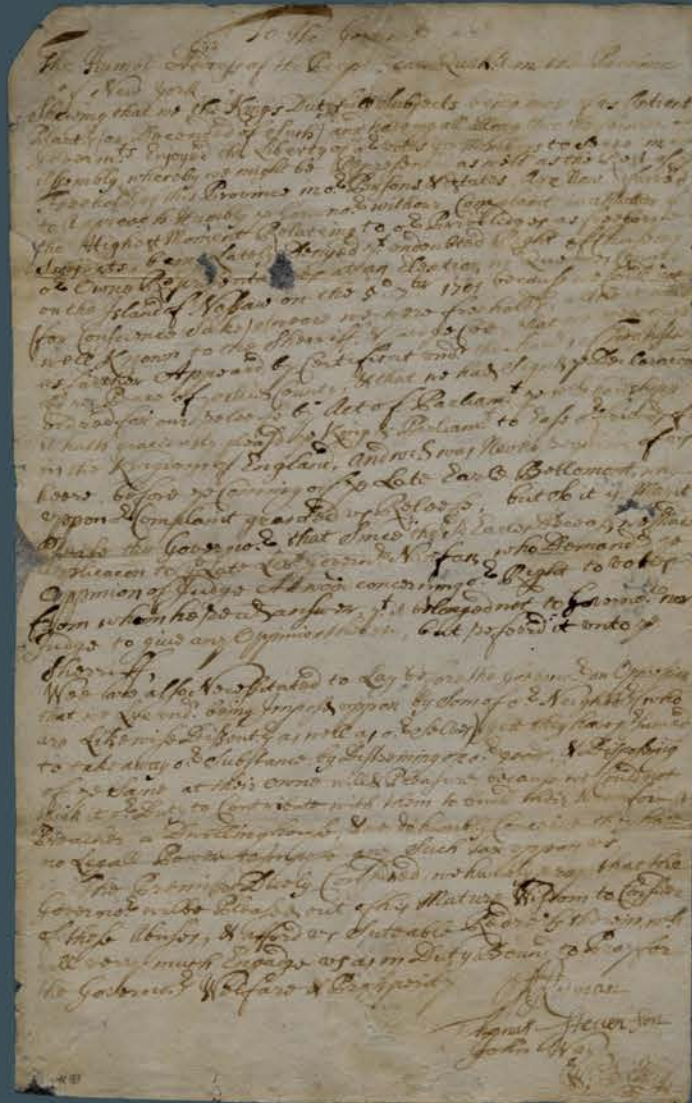
**The Right to Vote:**  
The Role of States  
and the US Constitution

## Special Events

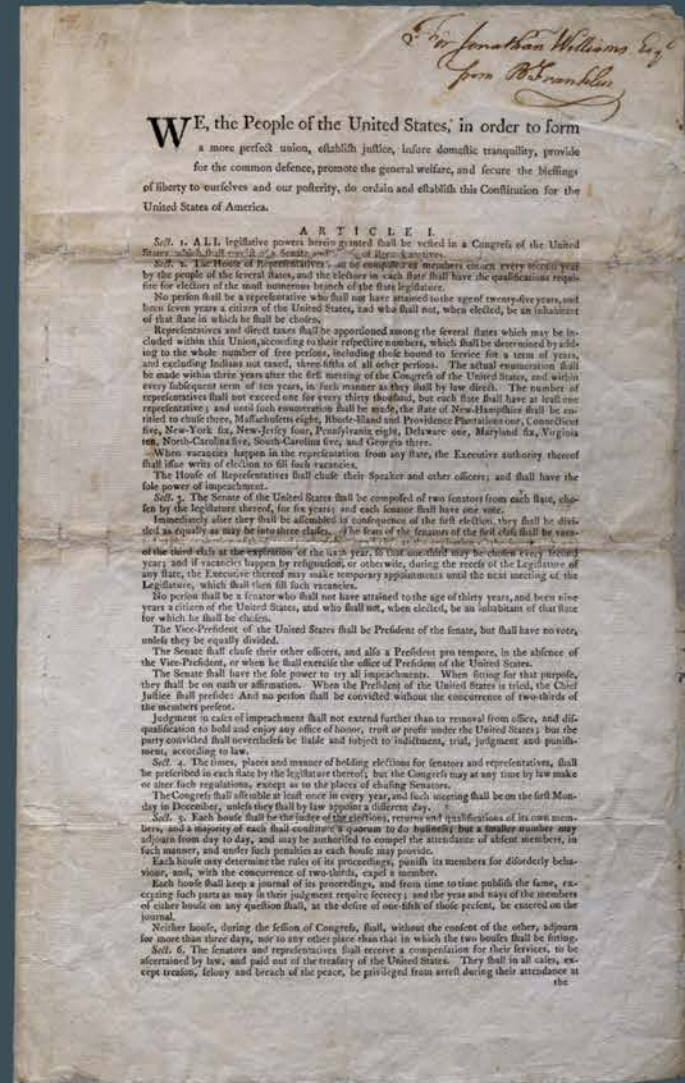
- *Inside the Vault*: August 3, 7:00–8:00 p.m. ET
  - with Prof. Barbara A. Perry and Kenneth Alyass
- Voting Rights Forum: September 15, 2023, 2 p.m.–3 p.m. ET
  - Sign up for livestream at [gilderlehrman.org/votingrightslivestream](https://gilderlehrman.org/votingrightslivestream)
- Professional Development Programs
  - October 11, 8:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. ET
  - October 14, 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. ET



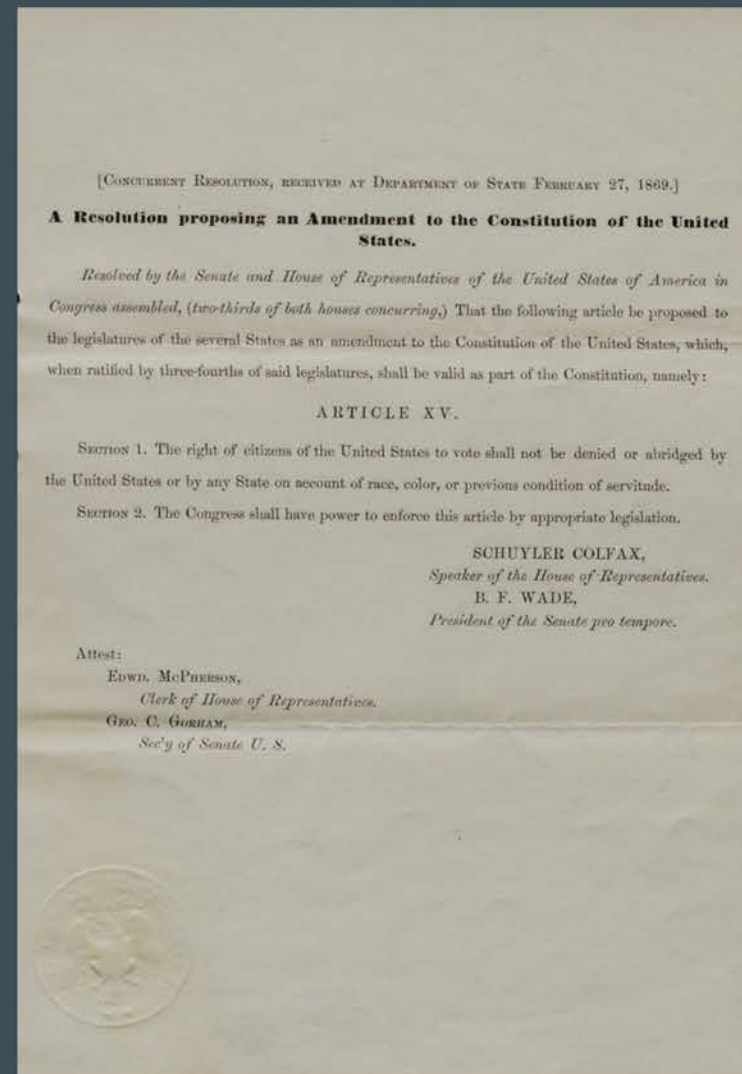
# Today's Documents



Thomas Stevenson to Lord Cornbury,  
November 11, 1702.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute,  
GLC02509.01)



Dunlap & Claypoole, *US Constitution*  
inscribed to Jonathan Williams,  
September 17, 1787.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute,  
GLC03585)



William Henry Seward, [Fifteenth  
Amendment resolution], 1869.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute,  
GLC00788.01)



George Caleb Bingham, *Stump Speaking*, 1856.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04075)



# Quaker Petition to Lord Cornbury

November 11, 1702

To the Governour  
The Humble Petition of the Quakers in the Province  
of New York  
Shewing that as the Kings Duty to his Subjects being most of us Antient  
Blacks (or Freedmen of Africa) we have by all along this Province  
been in the Enjoyment of Liberty of Person as well as the Rest of  
the Province whereby we might be as well as the Rest of  
the Province in all our Persons & Estates are now  
to a great & Humble without Complaint in relation  
to the Highest Moment Relating to our Liberties as  
Subjects being lately denied in an Election in  
of Crown Lands in the Year 1701 because we had  
on the Island of Nevers on the 5<sup>th</sup> of 1701  
for Confirmed & confirmed in the Year 1700  
well known to the Sheriff of the County  
as further Appointed by Certificate and  
in the County of Dutchess in the Year 1700  
in our Petition to the King & Parliament to pass  
it hath graciously pleased the King & Parliament to pass  
in the Kingdom of England, and we have never received  
before the forming of the Late Earl of Bolton, was  
upon Complaint granted in the Year 1700  
to the Governour that since the Earl of Bolton  
Application to the Governour in the Year 1700  
Opinion of Judges at New York, & Right to  
from whom he had a Certificate, & it belonged not to the Governour  
Judges to give any Opinion thereon, but referred it unto  
the Sheriff,  
Who was also petitioned to lay before the Governour an Opinion  
that we were being oppressed by some of our Neighbours who  
are like to be oppressed as well as ourselves, & they have  
to take away our Substance by Distressing our Goods, & by  
of our Land at their own will & pleasure because we could not  
think it our Duty to contribute with them to build their  
Brethren a Brethren, & it doth seeme to us that we have  
no legal Power to impose any such Tax upon us  
The Governour Duely Considered we humbly pray that the  
Governour will be pleased out of his Mature Wisdom to consider  
of these Abuses, & afford us suitable Redress of them, we  
will ever much Engage as in Duty bound to pray for  
the Governour's Welfare & Prosperity  
Thomas Stevenson  
John Wain

Received at Jamaica in Queen  
Carols this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of November 1702  
In presence of the Governour Edward Viscount Cornbury  
William Smith - }  
Peter Schuyler - }  
Sir Peter Brouncker }  
Wm Lawrence  
James Poston  
By Order of the Governour  
Thomas Stevenson



Thomas Stevenson to Lord Cornbury, November 11, 1702. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC02509.01)

# Quaker Petition to Lord Cornbury

November 11, 1702

“[We] are now forced to Approach Humbly the Governor without Complaint, in a Matter of the Highest Moment Relateing to our Privilidges as freeborne Subjects, being Lately Denied the undoubted Right of Chusing our Owne Representation at an Election in Queenes County... because we Could not (for Conscience Sake) Swear we were freeholders...”

Thomas Stevenson to Lord Cornbury, November 11, 1702.

(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC02509.01)



# The US Constitution

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## September 17, 1787

*For Jonathan Williams Esq  
from B. Franklin*

**WE**, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

### ARTICLE I

*Sect. 1.* ALL legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

*Sect. 2.* The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states, and the electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature.

No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the state of New-Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New-Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North-Carolina five, South-Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the representation from any state, the Executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

*Sect. 3.* The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one-third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the Legislature of any state, the Executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.

No person shall be a senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice-President of the United States shall be President of the senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice-President, or when he shall exercise the office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States; but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.

*Sect. 4.* The times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

*Sect. 5.* Each house shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties as each house may provide.

Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behaviour, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member.

Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

Neither house, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two houses shall be sitting.

*Sect. 6.* The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the



Dunlap & Claypoole, *US Constitution* inscribed to Jonathan Williams, September 17, 1787. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC03585)

# Women's Suffrage

1776-1807



WOMEN AT THE POLLS IN NEW JERSEY IN THE GOOD OLD TIMES.—DRAWN BY HOWARD PYLE.—[SEE PAGE 723.]

Howard Pyle, "Women at the Polls in New Jersey in the Good Old Times," *Harper's Weekly*, November 13, 1880. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC10078)

# Women's Suffrage

1776-1807

## WOMEN AT THE POLLS.

COLONEL HIGGINSON is reported to have said at the late Convention for equal suffrage in Worcester that the failure of women to vote at the school elections showed that they did not care to vote, and that when they showed the wish, the right of suffrage would be granted. As a statement of the fact of the indisposition to vote, this remark is undoubtedly true. The number of women who wish to vote is very small, and, so far as our own observation extends, the diligent efforts of those who insist that they ought to wish to vote do not produce much effect. Yet it is unquestionably true that laws made by men exclusively have been often very unjust to women. A quarter of a century ago Mr. GLADSTONE denounced some such laws as a reproach to England and to civilization. But there is a constant amelioration of harsh laws, and despite the injustice it remains true that women at large are not greatly interested in the movement for their enfranchisement.

But because women who do not feel disfranchisement to be unjust are indifferent, shall those who do feel the injustice be denied the right? The question is much like that of all emancipation. It is not whether the individual slaves or any considerable number of them wish to be free, but whether slavery is not necessarily hurtful to the whole community. The principle of popular government is the participation of all intelligent adult citizens under equal conditions. How can a political community wisely condemn its fundamental principle even although the disregard does not threaten it with immediate disaster? Is not permanent disregard of conceded rights dangerously demoralizing? And what reason is there in the argument that a hundred persons who are qualified to do something, and desire to do it, should not be allowed to do it until a thousand

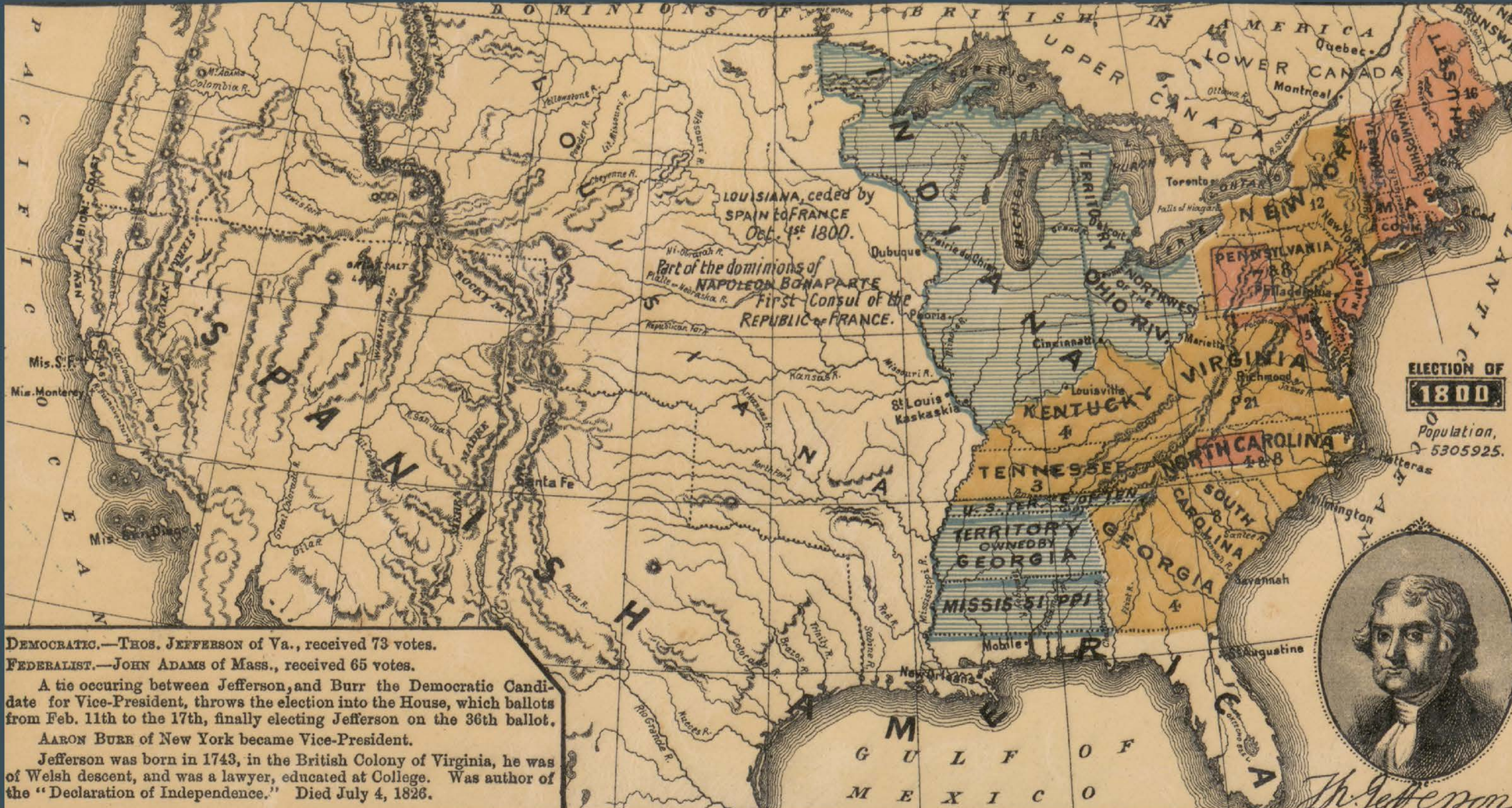
who are equally qualified, but have no desire, shall change their minds?

The extension to women of the right of voting at school meetings in New York was evidently not the result of an overwhelming wish of the women of New York to vote at school meetings, as the elections of the 12th of October proved. The law was passed because there was no good reason against it. The Legislature said that if Mrs. A., whose children went to the school, and who was taxed to maintain it, wished to have a voice in the disposition of the money and the management of the school, she should not be debarred because Mrs. B. thought it would be a great nuisance. We understand the difficulties. But the principle is sound that in a popular government the whole adult intelligence should take part. If women are competent to vote at school meetings, they can not, on other questions involving the common interests of the sexes, be classed fairly with criminals and lunatics. This was the conviction of the people of New Jersey many years ago, and women were enfranchised and voted. The charming picture drawn for the WEEKLY by Mr. HOWARD PYLE, which appears in this number, is a glimpse of the quaint old times, and is in itself a pleasant argument. There is nothing disagreeable nor unwomanly in the expression of interest and preference which is indicated by casting the ballot in this drawing, and there is an intimation of the humanizing and refining influence which would result from the voting of women upon subjects in which they have a common concern with men—an influence which is felt in every fair association of men and women.

"Women at the Polls," *Harper's Weekly*,  
November 13, 1880, pg. 723.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC10078)



# Election of 1800



DEMOCRATIC.—THOS. JEFFERSON of Va., received 73 votes.  
FEDERALIST.—JOHN ADAMS of Mass., received 65 votes.  
A tie occurring between Jefferson, and Burr the Democratic Candidate for Vice-President, throws the election into the House, which ballots from Feb. 11th to the 17th, finally electing Jefferson on the 36th ballot.  
AARON BURR of New York became Vice-President.  
Jefferson was born in 1743, in the British Colony of Virginia, he was of Welsh descent, and was a lawyer, educated at College. Was author of the "Declaration of Independence." Died July 4, 1826.

Henry Clay Donnell, *The Presidential Elections of the United States*, 1877.  
(Library of Congress, 2012586608)





# Jacksonian Reaction



George Caleb Bingham, *Stump Speaking*, 1856.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04075)

# The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments

WHEREAS, at a Session of the Thirty-ninth Congress, it was *Resolved* by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both houses concurring,) That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, viz:

## ARTICLE XIV.

SECTION 1. 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. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

SECTION 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive or Judicial officers of a State, or the Members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens, twenty-one years of age in such State.

SECTION 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President or Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who having previously taken an oath as a Member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State Legislature, or as an Executive or Judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each house, remove such disability.

SECTION 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States, nor any State, shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

SECTION 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Therefore *Resolved*, (if the Assembly concur,) That the said proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, be, and the same is, hereby ratified by the Legislature of the State of New-York.

Francis C. Barlow, [Certifying copy of New York resolution ratifying Fourteenth amendment], 1867.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04556)

[CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, RECEIVED AT DEPARTMENT OF STATE FEBRUARY 27, 1869.]

## A Resolution proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

*Resolved* by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both houses concurring,) That the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said legislatures, shall be valid as part of the Constitution, namely:

## ARTICLE XV.

SECTION 1. 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.

SECTION 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

SCHUYLER COLFAX,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*  
B. F. WADE,  
*President of the Senate pro tempore.*

Attest:

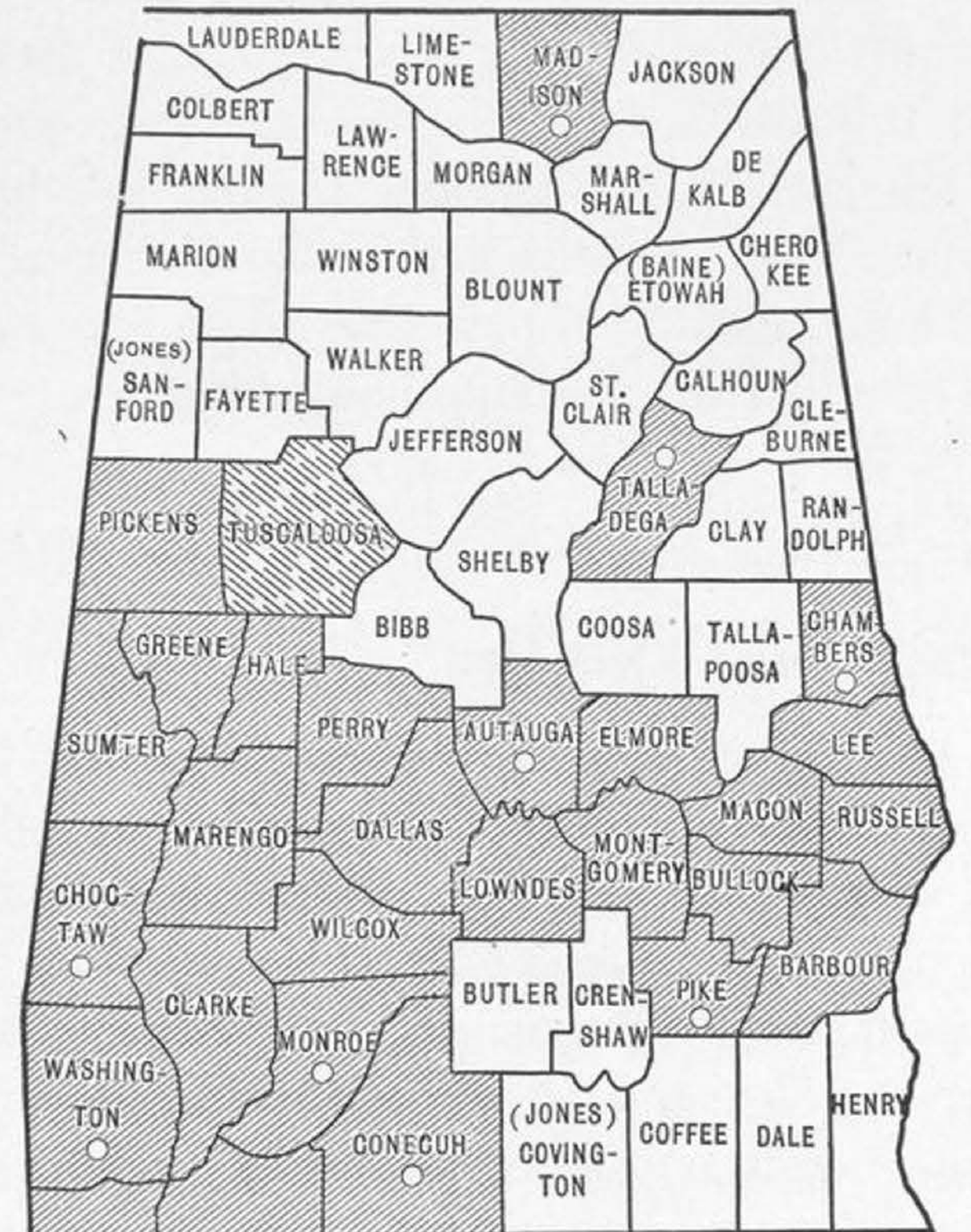
EDWD. MCPHERSON,  
*Clerk of House of Representatives.*  
GEO. C. GORHAM,  
*Sec'y of Senate U. S.*

William Henry Seward, [Fifteenth Amendment resolution], 1869.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00788.01)



# Racial Democracy and Reconstruction

1867-1877



## REGISTRATION OF VOTERS UNDER RECONSTRUCTION ACTS, 1867.

- Voters about evenly divided according to color.
- Majority of Whites registered.
- Majority of Blacks registered.
- White counties where disfranchisement has created a black majority.

White voters, 74,450 : Black voters, 90,310.

After the lists were revised by Meade.

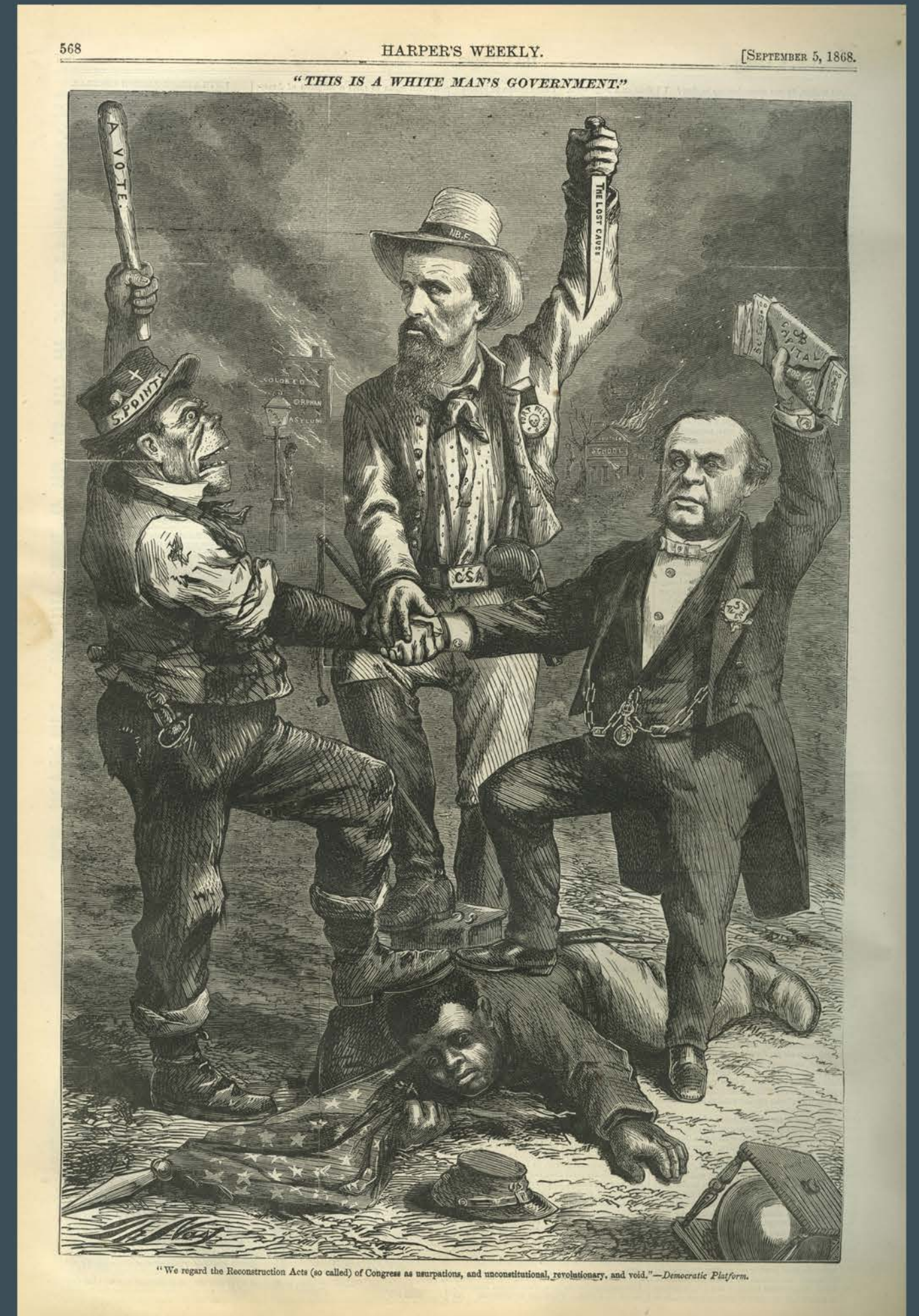
Walter L. Fleming, "Registration of Voters under Reconstruction Acts," 1905.  
(The New York Public Library, 05034462)



# "This is a White Man's Government"

September 5, 1868

Thomas Nast, "This Is a White Man's Government,"  
*Harper's Weekly*, September 5, 1868.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01733.10)



# Upcoming Programs

**INSIDE THE VAULT:** June 1 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)

- We will be joined by Dr. Gautham Rao (American University) to discuss the Whiskey Rebellion and the United States Great Seal.

**BOOK BREAKS:** May 7 at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT)

- Jeremi Suri will discuss his book *Civil War by Other Means: America's Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy*.

**HISTORY SCHOOL:** We are offering two AP prep courses for high school students (grades 9–12), "AP United States History: Strategies and Techniques" and "AP US Government and Politics: American Government and You." Each course consists of six one-hour-long classes held weekly via Zoom.

