

The majority of Americans take this naturally, however, voting rights were the result of a lengthy and tough fight. When US citizens go to vote on election day, they owe a lot to the antecedent generations who gave a fight for choosing the person they will be ruled by.

They might not love each governor selected, however, leastways they would have an option to send them out of the office in a couple of years.

This book review observes the groundbreaking developments for democracy in the US in a more detailed way and describes how people and organizations defied the authorities and obtained voting rights for everyone including people who are needy, female, or minority.

In this book review, we will go through

- the reasons John Adams did not prop democracy up as is known;
- how the voting rights of black people were rejected after the Civil War; and
- the reasons for today's threats to our democracy.

Chapter 1 - Even though American democracy was started with the signature of the Constitution, the rights to vote were only given to a chosen few.

The American Revolutionary War was fought to draw power from the British who later ruled the Thirteen Colonies on the east coast of North America. Before the historic clash in the 1770s, the three million colonists who lived in what would be the United States had narrow democratic rights, and just men who had a particular amount of commodity could vote.

However, the argument for the right to vote was not completely defined. In fact, on the road to the preparation of the United States Constitution in 1787, there were two counter sides in the argument on the right to vote, one represented by Benjamin Franklin and the other by John Adams. These two men were impactful characters in the clash for independence and constituted the Founding Fathers of the US.

Franklin's opinion was to broaden voting rights to all free men, no matter what their race was. He had previously battled for and obtained this transformation in the preparation of the Pennsylvania Constitution in 1776. At that time, John Adams, Franklin's eternal opponent, was objecting to the broadening of the rights to vote.

On the subject of voting rights, Adams even perfectly stated that if the property requirement for men is lifted "there will be no end to it" and will finally cause demand for the right to vote from women and the working poor.

As you can understand, these two opinions were completely different, and advocates of each discussed at substantial length as the constitution was being developed. Ultimately, they ended up with an agreement: voting rights will not be mentioned in the constitution.

Rather, this contentious topic would remain not closed for individual states to address. In conclusion, for almost 100 years, voting rights were in majority reserved for the white males who were paying taxes and owning commodities. The constitution though allowed the federal government to interfere if the states misused their power.

Although only white men somehow have the right to vote, they were just let to choose members of the House of Representatives. They are not allowed to vote for presidents nor for senators, which were assigned by the Electoral College and state governments respectively.

Chapter 2 - In the first half of the nineteenth century, global voting rights for white males experienced great benefits.

There was a big desire developing in the people to enhance voting rights when the enfranchisement antipathetic Federalist Party of John Adam earned the first congressional poll in 1789. This enthusiasm was channeled by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in 1791 when they developed a new party called Democratic-Republicans.

The pair achieved to gather a huge number of people under this challenging political purpose, which would in the end form the contemporary Democratic Party. They were addressing liberty, freedom of individuals, and innate rights, all the popular problems of the soaring class of farmers and small merchants.

The party's endeavors to the 1800 presidential election were so accomplished that although the Federalist gerrymandered, i.e. redefined the district boundaries so that the party will obtain a positive outcome, Jefferson earned the presidency with a regret that arose as the Revolution of 1800.

In 1809, Madison take over Jefferson, and during his presidency, six new states developed into the Union were given voting rights for males, including free black men. Furthermore, four states that existed during the same period abolished all property requirements to vote.

However, the pressure for global voting rights for white males was still under threat. John Adams was working to daunt the expansion of voting rights even in 1821 and accomplished to block the right to vote in Massachusetts during that year.

However, the democratic repression was too powerful to be ceased. In 1828, the newly developed Democratic Party earned the presidency with Andrew Jackson being nominated. This win initiated what would later be called the Jacksonian period, a period in which public political participation rose to new levels.

For example, the effort of the party caused voter participation to be doubled in the presidential election; from 27 percent in 1824 to 57 percent in 1828. This excellent feedback of 30 point increase resulted from community arrangements on behalf of local party chapters and mass distribution of party newspapers.

The emerging instrument was possibly the first mass political party in the world, and it stimulated America's transformation to mass democracy.

Chapter 3 - After much tumult, black men were given voting rights after the Civil War.

As you learned, some states started to provide black men with voting rights early in the 19th century, but this trend would not continue. The white men who were in the working classes perceived providing black men with voting rights as a danger and many people started to strongly oppose it. In conclusion, when the Civil War blew out, the states that earlier provided black men with voting rights canceled the rights.

At the end of the Civil war, black Americans were freed from slavery but still cried out for political representation. At that evolutionary time, Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist leader who helped Abraham Lincoln in gathering black soldiers to the Union's war endeavor, was a pioneer.

Without the undertaking of these black warriors, who constituted 10 percent of the Union army, the battle could last for years. Douglass, who grasped the significance of this undertaking completely, announced to the public that the abolition of slavery stands for nothing without full enfranchisement.

At the same time, Lincoln was little by little getting engaged to the idea that black Americans should be given the right to vote, specifically for their crucial part during the war. The slow alteration of his heart would ultimately cause his assassination in April 1865 by the white supremacist John Wilkes Booth at the end of the Civil War.

Together with the murder of 47 black men in Louisiana by white supremacist military forces, Lincoln's assassination led to a swift change in the public opinion of suffrage. This change in minds led to the confirmation of every state in the Union in the next two years of the 14th Amendment that assures equal rights to everyone regardless of race and became law in 1868.

This fantastic new law is strengthened more with the 15th Amendment, a constitutional modification made in the 1870s, that clearly remarks that voting rights cannot be defied because of race. In conclusion, with these changes coming into force, voting rights are officially guaranteed in the constitution.

In the following lines, you will learn about the pernicious gap in the 15th Amendment that would bring grievous results.

Chapter 4 - After the initial happiness, the wave turned against the political representation of blacks.

In the 1870s, the percentage of African-Americans chosen for office increased impressively. Black voter participation was approximately 90 percent and about 15 percent of representatives in congress were African-American.

This excellent change was well facilitated with the continuous occupation of the southern states by Union troops, in many situations guarding polling areas where black men vote. As a result, this political revolution was quickly inverted when the southern provinces rejoined the Union and northern troops were repatriated.

In the following years, carnages of black men mounted up in the South. This was during the time that the Ku Klux Klan was developed, specifically as a retrograde arm of the Democratic Party, which during the time was antiabolitionist.

The recently reunited southern states necessitating literacy tests, poll taxes, registration for voting, and lots of other things that caused the voting rights of black men and poor white men to drop. These evaluations in the end started to be mentioned as the Jim Crow laws.

Just think about a state that the impact of these evaluations was harsh, such as Mississippi where black people constituted 50 percent of the population in the 1870s. From the 1870s to the early 20th century, total participation to vote decreased in this place from 70 percent to only 15 percent!

By 1877, things got worse with the reinstatement of all the southern states in the Union with their complete political power reconditioned. Southern white supremacy was the victor of the war in clearing the developments of black suffrage.

Thus, easily, with little or no dissent from black voters, the southern Democrats practically entered into an assertive position to form state laws that would strengthen their power forwards.

Despite the anti-discriminatory 14th and 15th Amendments placed in the Constitution, the Supreme Court rejected to govern against these new forms of discrimination. In proving their place right, they stated that to implement equal voting rights, the federal government should have been sent armed forces to the South to preserve polling areas infinitely - a move they did not want to make.

Chapter 5 - American politics' "The Progressive Era" experienced women gain voting rights.

As the 20th century came closer, the surpluses of American capitalism and increasing inequality started to influence the political life of the country. The range of precautions

applied to fight this crisis involving different social reforms such as income taxes caused the start of a time that has been called the Progressive Era.

The struggle for women enfranchisement was a major issue at that time but when Woodrow Wilson was chosen as the president in 1912, he was the only nominee who was not considering voting rights for women positively out of the four on the voting paper.

Therefore, activists approached to grab his attention. One day before the inauguration of Wilson, the famous suffragette Alice Paul, with the fellow activists, arranged an unparalleled women's march in the city center of Washington, DC.

The march came upon a staggering severity from crowds of males in the majority that congregated to object to the march. As the stories of this attack distributed quickly through the press, public turmoil ensued and mobilized support for women's suffrage across the country.

Simultaneously, other strategies were being utilized. For example, in 1913, an application signed by 200,000 people was submitted to Congress, even though it was not discussed. Over the next two years, the application reached two million signatures and Congress was pushed to vote on a constitutional adjustment for providing women with voting rights. While this vote did not work, it was a direct endeavor that grabbed Wilson's attention.

In 1917, after the exit of Wilson from a gathering of famous suffragettes, the women made a protest by picketing the White House. Their protest continued for two years with 5,000 women participants at most. The team behind this named themselves the Silent Sentinels and their purpose was strengthened by the United States' entry into World War I.

When men went for the war to Europe, women were left to work. The bolstered economic power they cultivated, in addition to the protest of the Silent Sentinels, were the things that pushed Wilson to reconsider his opinions in 1918.

Chapter 6 - The 1950s' and 60s' Civil Rights Movement obtained the implementation of tantamount voting rights.

The United States fought bravely counter to white supremacy in Europe and obtained the victory. However, after the war, lots of Americans questioned the still-continuing racial persecution in their own country.

Jim Crow law was still in force in the country and only three percent of black Americans of the South could register to vote - in other words, the same low rate as the beginning of the century. This ongoing deprivation of voting rights, paired with the widespread change of mind across the country, roused the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s.

It was thanks to this diachronic movement that a smart leader and strong talker pastor Martin Luther King Jr. arose. All through the 50s, King assisted in arranging a series of protests and

marches, but it was not until the 1965 March on Selma that the movement caused a crucial change.

The protestors at this march faced ruthless police severity and the occurrence was disseminated live on national TV; a severe disgrace followed as the country arranges itself with the marchers.

Furthermore, this amazing national realization quickly united with a crucial legislative adjustment. Only after a week that the march is published on TV, President Lyndon Johnson made an ambitious talk before a collective sitting of Congress. Johnson announced that things should transform by defining how black Americans were being ignored the American dream.

This talk, together with the march that accelerated it, availed entry of a new Voting Rights Act into Congress, which is made law by autumn. The main provision of the law obligated that the federal government to implement the 14th and 15th Amendments.

With this federal voting control in the South, voting participation increased impressively. For example, in Mississippi, black voter registration rose strikingly from only 6.7 percent in 1964 to 59.3 percent in 1968 and 71 percent in 1998.

Chapter 7 - The democracy of America has been taken back in the last 20 years.

The 2000 presidential election is written in history not only since it was such a firmly competitive race, but also since the rigid legal fights that eventually determined the winner. Of course, this catastrophe caused a fervent controversy on voter fraud, by both Democrats and Republicans.

It was in this replete environment that the Republican Party, the party that then in rule, pressed new limitations on voting rights. However, the truth was completely different from what they stated was happening. For example, countrywide research conducted in 2005 by Arizona State University discovered that, although there are thousands of assertions of voter fraud had been recorded, just 10 approved instances of fraud had happened over 12 years ago the publication date of the research.

However, if the chaos was completely groundless, then why were the Republicans trying to force harsh limitations for voters?

The reason is, the Republicans began to be anxious about the increasing number of black and Hispanic voters who are likely to support Democrats. Limitations for voters were a method to restrict the strength of this democratic change.

Consider Indiana, which forced new limitations in 2004 that asserted to fight voter fraud. They required voters to provide photo identification to make ballot papers.

Although this regulation looks like an unbiased one, it extremely impacted African-Americans, who were three times less probable to possess an ID with a picture. What is more, acquiring an ID can be challenging and pricey. In some states, to obtain an ID, one may even need to show a birth certificate whose replacement was priced up to \$25.

In conclusion, this law extremely impacted the right to vote for poor people. The thing that made these limitations more terrible was that they were enforced in a state with only two occurrences of voter fraud since 1868!

Therefore, voter limitations rose under the Republican management, however since Barack Obama's election in 2008, they have only got worse.

19 states have passed laws that make it difficult to vote since the 2010 midterm elections, where Republicans won both state and congressional elections. This inclination is specifically clear in 11 states that experienced high black participation in 2008.

Chapter 8 - The fight for voting rights is not even close to completion.

The anxious voter ID laws have been destructive for American democracy, however, they are not the only danger for this order of administration. Do not neglect the milestone Supreme Court decision from 2010 that allowed firms and wealthy people to expend more on the US elections.

Although the case Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission began comparatively small, it rapidly obtained great importance. In general, this case was about deciding whether a movie made by Citizens United, a conservative nonprofit that criticized Hillary Clinton, should be let to be published before the 2008 elections.

The case was carried to court initially since the FEC had earlier decided that the movie was categorized as a political advertisement and should thus be dependent on the rules directing campaign spendings. Eventually, the court decided in favor of Citizens United, stating the FEC had violated their right to freedom of expression.

But the meanings of the case stretch way further of this straightforward problem; the Citizens United judgment enabled nonprofit organizations to expend unlimited sums of money in bolstering political nominees up, provided that these are not made directly in collaboration with formal political campaigns.

In conclusion, from 2010 to 2015, \$2 billion in total was collected from these "independent" communities, which have been named Super Political Action Committees or Super PACs, to bolster federal nominees up. This has stamped a huge rise compared to earlier grades of campaign expenditures.

Still, there are some promising indicators for the renewal and future strengthening of democracy in America. For instance, early voting systems are being enhanced with big achievement; around one-third of the votes taken into account in the 2012 election of the US were given before election day.

Furthermore, online enrollment became extremely widely-used. Overall, 25 states have applied this implementation since 2015, with huge rises in voter participation.

However, with such shines of transformation, voters and activists of suffrage are encountering a challenging battle. While the poor and minorities are still ordinarily depriving of their voting rights, money is bribing politics. Considering this, there is a long way to go.

The Fight to Vote by Michael Waldman Book Review

There has been a battle for voting rights since the early days of independence of America, and today, this is still a key topic for the country. Substantial benefits have been obtained over generations, involving giving the right to vote for black Americans and women. However, currently, ID restrictions for voters and the bribing impact of money in politics introduce new struggles in the war to protect American democracy.

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