

"VOTING RIGHTS FOR BLACKS AND POOR WHITES IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH"

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From about 1900 to 1965, most African Americans were not allowed to vote in the South. This was especially true in states considered the Deep South: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. White people in power used many methods to keep African Americans from voting. Some of these methods also prevented poor White people from voting.



Image: Jim Pepler Southern Courier. ADAH.

EIGHT WAYS PEOPLE WERE KEPT FROM VOTING

1) Violence

Blacks who tried to vote were threatened, beaten, and killed; their families were also harmed. Sometimes their homes were burnt down. Often, they lost their jobs or were thrown off their farms.

2) Literacy tests

One hundred years ago many people were illiterate, unable to read. Most illiterate people were not allowed to vote.

3) Property tests

In the South 100 years ago, many states allowed only property owners to vote. Many Blacks and Whites had no property and could not vote.

4) Grandfather Clause

People who could not read and owned no property were allowed to vote if their fathers or grandfathers had voted before 1867. Of course, practically no Blacks could vote before 1867, so the Grandfather Clause worked only for Whites.

“VOTING RIGHTS FOR BLACKS AND POOR WHITES IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH” CONTINUED

5) All-White primary elections

In the South from about 1900 to about 1960, Democratic candidates typically won elections. Republicans were almost never elected. African Americans were not allowed to vote in the Democratic primary elections. White Democrats said the Democratic Party was a “club” and did not allow Black members. So Blacks could not vote in the only elections that mattered.

6) Purges

From time to time, White officials purged the voting rolls. That means they took people’s names off the official lists of voters. Some voters would arrive at the polls and find that they were not registered to vote. Often, they could not register to vote again until after the election.

7) Former prisoners

People who had gone to prison were often not allowed to vote. Blacks were very often arrested on trumped-up charges or for minor offenses. This law kept many more Blacks from voting than Whites.

8) Poll taxes

In Southern states, people had to pay a tax to vote. The taxes were about \$25-50 in today’s money. Many people had extremely low incomes and could not afford this tax.

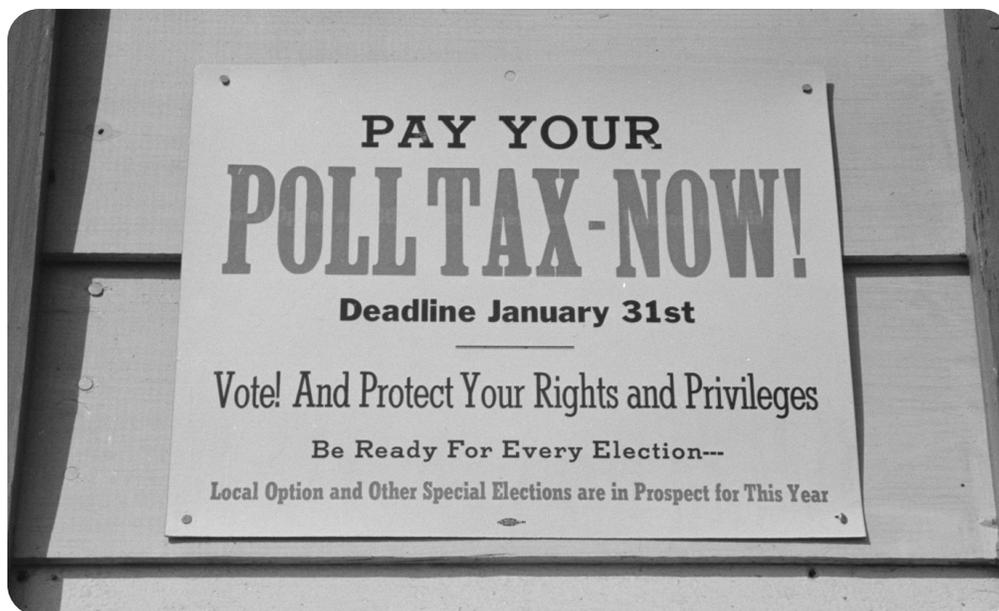


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