Could You Have Voted?

The laws about who can vote have changed many times during North Carolina's history. Read below. Pick a year. Then see whether you would have been able to vote!

1776
North Carolina's first "white" constitutional amendments were written. It lists voting as wealth and property ownership.
WHITE MEN: Yes, white men can vote for governor and for members of the state House of Commons (representatives). Only men who own 50 or more acres of land can vote for members of the state senate.
MEN OF COLOR: No. Non-white men cannot vote.
WHITE WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOR: No vote.

1835
North Carolina's state constitution is greatly amended. Women own voting rights; others have them.
WHITE MEN: Yes. All white men can vote for governor and for members of the state House of Commons (representatives). Only men who own 50 or more acres of land can vote for members of the state senate.
MEN OF COLOR: Not anymore. Free African American men can vote, but their votes are not counted. Emancipated people of color still can't vote.
WHITE WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOR: Still no vote. The new constitution defines a voter as a "male person."

1868
A new state constitutional amendment is adopted that prevents any person who has ever been a slave, anyone who has ever received a false passport, or anyone who has ever cast a vote for a Union soldier from voting.
WHITE MEN: Still yes. All white men can vote for governor and for members of the state House of Commons (representatives). Only men who own 50 or more acres of land can vote for members of the state senate.
MEN OF COLOR: Still no. Non-white men cannot vote.
WHITE WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOR: Still no vote. The new constitution defines a voter as a "male person."

1900
A constitutional amendment is adopted that directly limits the right to vote based on literacy. This linguistic and numerical literacy tests are used to disenfranchise North Carolina's African American population.
WHITE MEN: Still yes. All white men can vote for governor and for members of the state House of Commons (representatives). Only men who own 50 or more acres of land can vote for members of the state senate.
MEN OF COLOR: Probable vote for a tax that must be paid before voting. A person's wealth, among some poor whites. If a man who cannot read is a "grandfather" who takes care of his family, he is allowed to vote.
WHITE WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOR: Still no vote. The new constitution defines a voter as a "male person."

1920
The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution grants voting rights for women. This legislation overrules local laws and ensures that women have the right to vote. Any woman who owns a property is eligible to vote. However, North Carolina requires an extra step for black women. It limits the right to vote to white men.
WHITE MEN: Yes. All white men can vote for governor and for members of the state House of Commons (representatives). Only men who own 50 or more acres of land can vote for members of the state senate.
MEN OF COLOR: Yes. All white men age 21 or older can vote.
WHITE WOMEN: No vote. Women of color are not eligible to vote.

SUFFRAGE: the right to vote
DISENFRANCHISE: to deprive someone of the right to vote

Words to Know