



Examples of Changes in the Franchise

NOTE: A few unusual words or spellings have been underlined and are clarified in italics.

Massachusetts

Constitution of 1780, Section III. House of Representatives

IV. Every male person, being twenty-one years of age, and resident in any particular town in this Commonwealth for the space of one year... having a freehold estate (*that is, property owned outright*) within the same town, of the annual income of three pounds, or any estate of the value of sixty pounds, shall have a right to vote....

Amendment of 1821

Article III. Every male citizen of twenty-one years of age and upwards... who shall have resided within the commonwealth one year, and within the town or district in which he may claim a right to vote, six calendar months... and who shall have paid, by himself or his parent, master or guardian, any state or county tax...; and also, every citizen who shall be, by law, exempted from taxation, and who shall be, in all other respects, qualified as above mentioned, shall have a right to vote...; and no other person shall be entitled to vote in such election.

New York

Constitution of 1777

VII. That every male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election, shall... be entitled to vote for representatives...; if, during the time aforesaid, he shall have been a freeholder, possessing a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, within the said county, or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings, and been rated and actually paid taxes to this State... shall be entitled to vote...

Constitution of 1821, Article II

Section 1. [Qualifications of voters.]—Every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been an inhabitant of this state one year preceding any election, and for the last six months a resident of the town or county where he may offer his vote; and shall have, within the next year preceding the election, paid a tax to the state or county, assessed upon his real or personal property; or shall by law be exempted from taxation; or...shall have performed, within that year, military duty...; and also, every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been, for three years...an inhabitant of this state...shall be entitled to vote in the town or ward where he actually resides...but no man of colour (*color*), unless he shall have been for three years a citizen of this state, and for one year next preceding any election, shall be...possessed of a freehold estate of the

value of two hundred and fifty dollars... shall be entitled to vote at any such election. And no person of colour shall be subject to direct taxation unless he shall be... possessed of such real estate as aforesaid.

New Jersey

Constitution of 1776

All inhabitants of this colony of full age, who are worth fifty pounds (*basic unit of currency in use at the time*)... and have resided within the county in which they claim to vote for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote.

1807 New Jersey Legislature's "Act to regulate the election of members of the legislative council and general assembly, sheriffs and coroners in this state"

...no person shall vote in any state or county election for officers in the government of the United States, or of this state, unless such person be a free, white male citizen of this state, of the age of twenty-one years, worth fifty pounds..., and have resided in the county where he claims a vote, for at least twelve months immediately preceding the election.

1844 New Jersey Constitution

Every white male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of this state one year, and of the county in which he claims to vote five months... shall be entitled to vote.