

THE AMENDMENTS

1798–1870: Amendments XI–XV

(See Amendments XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV)

After the Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution, other changes were made by other amendments.

The Eleventh Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1798. Under the amendment, people in one state, or foreigners, cannot sue another state in a federal court.

The Twelfth Amendment, concerning presidential elections, was ratified in 1804. Before the Twelfth Amendment, the person who received the most votes was the president, and the person with the second most votes was the vice president. But by the election of 1800, political parties had developed, and it was clear that having two people from different parties was not a good leadership situation. The Twelfth Amendment allowed voters to vote for the president and vice president on separate ballots so that members of the same political party would not be running against each other for the presidency.

The Thirteenth Amendment was a result of the Civil War. Passed in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. Slavery had been a part of the United States since the 1600s, and it took a civil war to end the practice.

The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, was part of the Reconstruction Era. Under this amendment, all Americans, regardless of race, were guaranteed the rights listed in the Constitution. This amendment also included blacks in population counts for the census. Finally, the Fourteenth Amendment prohibited Confederate officers from holding government positions and refused to pay Confederate war debts or reimburse owners for their now-freed slaves.

Finally, the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, gave blacks *suffrage*, or the right to vote. Before 1870, many states had prohibited blacks from voting. But with the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, the next step was to give black males the right to vote.

Between 1791 and 1870—eighty years—only five changes had been made to the Constitution. In the next lesson, you will study the changes made from 1900 to 1950.

