

The document below is transcribed from a Mississippi voter registration form used in 1955. It is used with the gracious permission of Civil Rights Movement Veterans (<http://crmvet.org/>).

Note that the form does not ask for the applicant's party affiliation. This was one way Democratic party officials kept African Americans from voting – election officials could decide who was eligible to vote (or to run for office) in primaries or other important local elections.

SWORN WRITTEN APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

(By reason of the provisions of Section 244 of the Constitution of Mississippi and House Bill NO. 95, approved March 24, 1955, the applicant for registration, if not physically disabled, is required to fill in this form in his own handwriting in the presence of the registrar and without assistance or suggestion of any other person or memorandum.)

1. Write the date of this application: _____
2. What is your full name? _____
3. State your age and date of birth: _____
4. What is your occupation? _____
5. Where is your business carried on? _____
6. By whom are you employed? _____
7. Are you a citizen of the United States and an inhabitant of Mississippi?

8. For how long have you resided in Mississippi? _____
9. Where is your place of residence in the District? _____
10. Specify the date when such residence began: _____
11. State your prior place of residence, if any: _____
12. Check which oath you desire to take: 1. General _____ 2. Minister's _____
3. Minister's Wife _____ 4. If under 21 years at present, but 21 years by
date of general election _____.
13. If there is more than one person of your same name in the precinct, by what name
do you wish to be called? _____
14. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following crimes: bribery, theft,
arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, forgery,
embezzlement, or bigamy? _____
15. If your answer to Question 14 is "yes", name the crime or crimes of which you

have been convicted, and the date and place of such conviction or convictions:

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16. Are you a minister of the gospel in charge of an organized church, or the wife of such a minister? _____
17. If your answer to Question 16 is "yes", state the length of your residence in the election district: _____
18. Write and copy in the space below: Section _____ of the Constitution of Mississippi: (Instruction to Registrar: You will designate the section of the Constitution and point out same to applicant.)
19. Write in the space below a reasonable interpretation (the meaning) of the section of the Constitution of Mississippi which you have just copied:
20. Write in the space below a statement setting forth your understanding of the duties and obligations of citizenship under a constitutional form of government.
21. Sign and attach thereto [*sic*] the oath or affirmation named in Question 12.

The applicant will sign his name here.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me by the within named _____
_____ on this, the _____ day of _____, 19____

COUNTY REGISTRAR

SAMPLE SECTIONS OF THE MISSISSIPPI CONSTITUTION

Section 8. All persons, resident in this state, citizens of the United States, are hereby declared citizens of the State of Mississippi.

Sample interpretation: Anybody who lives in Mississippi and is an American citizen is also a citizen of the State of Mississippi.

Section 30. There shall be no imprisonment for debt.

Sample interpretation: A person cannot be put in jail just because he owes money.

Now write your own interpretations for the sections given below.

Section 14. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, except by due process of law.

Section 20. No person shall be elected or appointed to office in this state for life or during good behaviour, but the term of all offices shall be for some specified period.

Section 21. The privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in the case of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it, not ever without the authority of the Legislature.

Section 22. No person's life or liberty shall be twice placed in jeopardy for the same offense; but there must be an actual acquittal or conviction on the merits to bar another prosecution.

Section 23. The people shall be secure in their persons, houses, and possessions, from unreasonable seizure or search; and no warrant shall be issued without probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, specially [*sic*] designating the place to be searched and the person or thing to be seized.

Section 32. The enumeration of rights in this constitution shall not be construed to deny and impair others retained by, and inherent in, the people.

Section 209. Separate schools shall be maintained for children of the white and colored races.