

Jay County, Voter Registration Book for Balbec, Indiana, 1888

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Voter registration began towards the end of the nineteenth century when the swell of immigrants to the United States began to climb toward a peak. State governments sought to ensure that only citizens were able to vote. County clerks were given voter registration books in which to write the names of male constituents who were twenty-one and met the state's voting requirements.¹ Indiana required its voters to be twenty-one, to have lived in the county for at least four months, and upon registration, to affirm that they would not: vote in another county, register another person to vote, prohibit another person from registering to vote, hire another person to vote, vote without registering, or advise another person not to register to vote under penalty of a jail sentence of one to five years.²

In the nineteenth century, Indiana allowed voters to register with or without party affiliation and also as "floaters."³ The William H. Smith Memorial Library at the Indiana Historical Society houses an 1888 voter registration book from Jay County, located in eastern Indiana. The book lists residents of Balbec who met the state's voting requirements and indicates which political party they associated with: Republican, Democrat, Union Labor, Prohibitionist, or Floaters. At the end of the book, there are tallies for these groups, including voters "doubtful" of the party they indicated. Also, the Floaters did designate a party as well as the fact that they were floating. The tally presents other interesting statistics. There were 201 "Republican Germans," 1 Republican "colored" man, 15 Republican soldiers, 3 "Democratic" soldiers, and 12 first-time voters.⁴ The list of registered voters is extracted below. Editorial additions are in brackets.

Notes

1. Tom Huskerson, “A Brief History of Voter Registration in the United States,” in Electoral Reform, September 8, 2014, IVN [Independent Voter Network], <https://ivn.us/2014/09/08/brief-history-voter-registration-united-states/>. For more on voting laws and who was given the right to vote when, see Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
2. *The Revised Statutes of Indiana: A Continuation of the Editions of 1881 and 1888, Containing All Statutes of a General Nature Enacted Subsequent to those Editions and Completing the Record of the Laws in Force with Annotations of All Cases Decided, Since the Plate of the Edition of 1888, Construing or Illustrating such General Statues to Date*, vol. 3 (Chicago: E. B. Myers and Law Publishers, 1892), 561, available on Google Books. For more on the history of voting in Indiana, see Ray E. Boomhower, “Vote Early, Vote Often,” on Ray E. Boomhower’s Books blog page, <http://rayboomhower.blogspot.com/2008/11/vote-early-vote-often.html>.
3. R. G. Saltman, *The History and Politics of Voting Technology: In Quest of Integrity and Public Confidence* (New York: MacMillan, 2006), 93, available on Google Books.
4. Balbec, Jay County, Indiana, Voter Documents, 1888–1900, SC 3153, Indiana Historical Society.

List of Voters in 1888 Jay County Voters Registration Book

[R=Republican; D=Democrat; L=Union Labor Party; P=Prohibition Party; F=Floater; Dou=Doubtful]

[A]

Acre, John U S	R / Dou
Acre, Charles	R / Dou
Allen, HB	R
Albertson, Benny	R
Alexander, William	R
Allen, William	L / Dou
Allen, H. B.	L

[B]

Brown, Lorenzo	R / Dou
Barnes, James	R
Budsall, [Joel/Jack]	R
Bunker, [B/Z]	R
Budsall, N. J.	R
Bourne, Chas.	R
Brown, J. W.	R
Borse, Sam	D / Dou
Borse, Nat	D / Dou
Brown, [Lew/Sam]	L F
[Bennett/Bern]	[not marked]
[Brown/Braner]	D
Bouse, Wm Chals.	D F
Banta, R.	D
Brown, [Orlan/Alexander]	L
Bowman, Bob	L F

[C]

Campbell, Alonzo	R / Dou
Campbell, Alex	R
Chang, Charles	R
Confer, Peter	R
Cash, Hamilton	R
Cash, Alonzo	R
Couts, John	R / Dou
Cecil, [H./Tim]	R
Cash, Hamilton Jr.	R
Cory, Joe	L

[D]

Dawly, James	R
Davis, Shade	R
Deweese, B. L.	R
Davenport, O.	R
Dugdale, Wm.	R

Democrats

Davis, King	D
Davis, Joseph	D

[E]

Elliot, Joseph	R / Dou
Eberly, Peter	R
Engle, J. D.	R
Eberly, William	R

Eberly, Daniel	R
Eberly, R R	R
Eberly, Joseph	R
Edmundson, Wm	R
Edmundson, Louis	R
Earhart, Stine	R
Earhart, James	R
Edwards, Jake	R

Democrats	
Ellsworth, Jesse	D / Dou
Edmundson, John	D F

[F]

Fairchild, John	R
Fields, Oli[s/v] [Frelde/Chris]	R / Dou

[G]

Grissim, H[iram?]	R
Glendenny, Willis	R F
Greist, Reuben	R
Hamra, John	R
Garret, [Alvis/Arlis]	R
Grey, Sillian	R
Grissell, Lovell	R
Gove, Joel	R
Grey, John	R
Grassell, H. B.	R
Grassell, Albert J.	R
Grey, D Thos.	R
Grey, E A	[not marked]
Grogg, Edd	L
Grey, F S	L
Grey, Reese	L
Gaskill, Jim	P
Grey, Thos	L

[H]

Hopkins, B. B.	R
Hopkins, Edward	R
Hanna, John	R / Dou
Rosser, Harry	R
Hulzler, Jacob	R
Horn, Wm	R
Horn, Melvin	R
Hall, Abram	R

Hopkins, Ambrose	R	
Hopkins, J. R.	R	
Hunt, S.	R	
[Hanes/Harnes], Ell	P	
Heaulin, Albert	[An "x," indicating a signature, is marked in the "Democrat" box.]	
Heaulin, Geo	D	
Harris, Henry	D	
Heaulin, Steve	D	
Heaulin, Jacob	D	
Harris, John	D	
Harris, Darrel	D	
Harris, Ben	D	
Harris, [Brett/Budd]	D / Dou	
Haines, Ike	L	
Hiatt, Anson	L	
[I]		
Inez, Phineas	R	
Inez, Jonas	R	
Inez, Alf	L	
[J]		
Jones, J.	R / Dou	
[K]		
King, Cyrus	R	
Democrats		
Kelly, Martin	D	F
[L]		
Lewis, Emiry	R	
Roberts, S [---]	R	
Layport, C Mc	R	
Lewis, J. G.	R	
Lewis, Joseph	R	
Lewis, Enon	R	
Lehman, Perry	D	
Lehman, Martin	D	
Linco, Perry	D	
Lines, A. J.	D	F
Lines, Geo.	D	F

[M]

Mason, John	R
Martin, Albert	R
Manley, Robert	R
Mendenhall, Wm	R
Malatt, William	R
Miller, David	R
Manly, [Theo/Thos.]	R
McLean, Jack	D
Gaskill, Jim	P
Marker, Dan	D
McDorman, Jim	D
McDaniels, Joseph	D
Miller, Jacob	D / Dou
McClish ? JNO	D
McCurces, Wm?	L
Marks, Louis	R

[O]

Oulcel[t?] H. J.	R
Odell, James	R
Odell, [Mart?]	R

[P]

Paxson, Wm	R
Paxson, Eli	R
Paxson, B. F.	R
Paxson, P. [L./I./J.]	R
Paxson, J. E.	R
Paxson, P. A.	R
Paxson, J. K.	R
Perry, Phin	R / Dou
Paxson, George	R
Paxson, John	R
Paxson, Wm (of Ben)	R
Paxon, Arthur	R
Pence, Levi	D
Pence, J. R.	D
Pence, D. W.	D
Porlen, R.	D
Pugh, [Barney/Benny]	[L/D]
Penn, Thom	L
Pugh, J. H. F.	L
Pugh, A. J.	L / Dou
Paxson, Joseph	P
Paxson, Walker	P

[R]

Rigby, Sillian	R / Dou
Roberts, Sprunger	R
Roscer, Hary	R
Rigby, Erin	R
Ressler, Wm	R / Dou
Rankin, Chas.	R
Regester, Amos	L
Romans, Jesse	L F
Romano, Joseph	L F
Regester, Theo	L
Regester, Aaron	L

[S]

Shaley, James	R
Sawyer, James	R / Dou
Stevens, J. E. [W./T.]	R F / Dou
Shook, E. A.	R
Showallin, Alonzo	R
Sutton, John	R
Stratton, [—]	R
Sutton, James	R
Sofner, E. [W./H.]	R
Sibray, Nathan	R
Surgant, Adam	R
Suleis, Jim	R / Dou
Sibray, Vance	R
Sibray, John	R
Stratten, [William?]	D
Schmit, Andy	D
Schmit, John	D
Stout, Wm	D/P F
Smith, William	D
Smith, Alf	D
Sebray, Ben	L F
Swarthwood, Jas	L
Sweeney, Geo.	L / Dou
Suleis, Frank	L F
Sibray, Loi	L / Dou
Swarthwood, Wm	L F / Dou
Smith, Dillon R.	[R/P]
[Shim/Shinn], Neely	L
Sullivan, Levi	[not marked]

[T]

Thompson, Geo.	R / Dou
Thomas, Nash	D / Dou
[Thornbury/Thernbuy], [Harv?]	L F / Dou

[U]

[The names in the block under "U" are marked with an "x" by each name in lieu of a signature. No political affiliation is indicated.]

Charles Chaney
 Alex Caulfibell
 H Cash
 Jake Edwards
 Lei[t/l] Grey
 Joe Lewis
 John Paxson
~~J. A. Pugh~~
 E. M. Pigby
 E[n/m]os Walker
 H B Grisell

[W]

Willson, Dan	R
[Willson?]	R
Williams, [Mike]	R
Willson, William	R
West, E. S.	R
Walker, J. S.	R
Wheeler, [Julius/Julian]	R F
Whright, Samuel	R
Woodard, Ezekel	R
White, C J?	R / Dou
Rosser, Harry	R
Wheeler, Thomas	R
White, Harlow	R
Walker, E[n/m]os	R
Wible, J.	R F / Dou
White, H.	R
Willson, Wm Jr.	R
Watt, John	D
Weaver, David	D
Weadd, [Lewis?]	D
Whitely, Jacob	D / Dou
Williams, Luther	L
Wilson, Frank	[not marked]

Ward, Sherman	R
Ward, Charlie	R

[Y/Z]

Nelson, William	R
Edwards, Jake	R
Sebray, Ben.	R
Sebray, John	R
Sebray, Vance	R
Brown, John U.	R
[Suleis?], Jim	R
Paxson, Wm	R

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Jay County is part of Indiana's 6th congressional district; Indiana Senate district 27;^[10] and Indiana House of Representatives district 33.^[11] Demographics. As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 21,253 people, 8,133 households, and 5,647 families residing in the county.^[17] The population density was 55.4 inhabitants per square mile (21.4/km²).[^] The average household size was 2.58 and the average family size was 3.10. The median age was 39.0 years.^[17] The median income for a household in the county was \$47,697 and the median income for a family was \$47,926. Males had a median income of \$38,142 versus \$26,928 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$18,946. Jay County, Indiana genealogy research page. Uncover links to record collections, history, and genealogy sources to aid you find your ancestors.[^] Balbec Historical Club, 7638 N. 650 W., Bryant, IN 47326-8905; Phone: (260) 731-3951. Jay County Historical Society. Jay County, Indiana Message Boards. Jay County, Indiana External Links. Indiana Historical Newspapers - Newspapers.com. Jay County, Indiana Books - Amazon. Internet Archives online books for Jay County. Jay County Newspaper Holdings at the Indiana State Library. Jay Co., Indiana - FindaGrave. Book for your chance to win UEFA EURO 2020 tickets. Open. Your chance to win the ultimate Stadium Suite experience. Book and stay before 31 March 2020 for a chance to win a night at the Wembley Stadium Suite along with an all-expenses-paid trip to the UEFA EURO 2020 Final. Contest details & other prizes. Hide details.