**The Importance of One Vote**

**Though ridiculed as an “icebox,” or a “polar bear garden,” some 586,000 square miles of Alaska joined America when U.S. Secretary of State William Henry Seward signed a treaty to buy the land from Russia, March 30, 1867. The price tag, $7.2 million – about two cents an acre – made for a tough sell in the Senate, which ratified “Seward’s Folly” by a single vote. Attitudes changed with the discoveries of gold later in the century. Alaska gained statehood in 1959. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**In the balloting to decide which New York town, Hudson or Albany, would become the state capital, Albany won by just one vote. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Calling All Voters: Every vote counts. But what happens when there are no votes at all? That’s the case in Tamarac, Florida. No voters showed up Wednesday night to cast a ballot in an annexation referendum for an unincorporated Broward County community. There are 68 registered voters in the 200-person Prospect Bend neighborhood. Tamarac officials have proposed annexing the neighborhood. If just one voter had shown up, that vote would have decided the neighborhood’s fate. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, March 14, 2008)***

**Baseball fans in the nation’s capital can start dreaming again of their first Opening Day in 34 years. The District of Columbia Council voted 7-6 to approve legislation that clears the way for the Montreal Expos to move to Washington next season and be renamed the Nationals. The measure allows the city to sell up to $584 million in bonds for construction of a 41,000-seat stadium about a mile south of the U.S. Capitol and renovations to RFK stadium, where the team will play next year. Ticket and merchandise sales were to resume today. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, December 22, 2004)***

**Remember that it was one vote that gave Oliver Cromwell control of England in 1656. It was one vote that gave America the English instead of the German language in 1776. It was one vote that changed France from a Monarchy into a Republic in 1875. It was one vote that gave the Presidency of the United States to Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876. And it was one vote that gave Adolf Hitler the leadership of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1923. Never underestimate the power of one vote or of one witness. (I. D. E. Thomas, in The Hidden Hand)**

**Bush vs. Gore: The Supreme Court voted 5-4, in December 2000, to end the disputed Florida recount and hand the White House to George W. Bush. (The Week magazine, December 17, 2010)**

**German nearly became our nation's official language after the American colonies severed ties with England. The Continental Congress met to vote on the issue, and German had the inside tract because of the many German and Dutch settlers living in New York and Pennsylvania. English won out by a single vote. *(Paul F. Levy)***

**On July 16, 1787, the Great Compromise, as it came to be called, passed by a vote of 5 to 4, saving the Constitutional Convention -- and the United States of America -- from collapse. *(Thomas Fleming, in Reader's Digest)***

**The press called Republican president Rutherford B. Hayes His Fraudulency because he “stole” the 1876 election from Democrat Samuel Tilden. Hayes won the election by one electoral vote, after much controversy in which thousands of ballots were disputed and some ruled invalid. With the results in several states completely unclear and with competing slates of electors attempting to cast votes for their own candidates, Congress chose to appoint an Electoral Commission to decide the election. After Tilden was declared the loser, Southern Democrats were so outraged that they declared they would not accept Hayes’s leadership unless he removed the federal troops that had occupied the South since the Civil War. *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 115)***

**No voter should forget the fact that Adolf Hitler managed to get himself elected to the leadership of the Nazi party in 1921 by a single ballot.    
*(Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 246)***

**Most people never heard of a man who should be one of the great heroes of America. Caesar Rodney rode eighty miles on horseback to resolve a deadlock in the Delaware delegation, and thus enable the Continental Congress to vote for independence. Had he not made it in time, the vote would have been indecisive. So here’s to Rodney, the one man who triggered the birth of a nation. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 241)**

**The following quote from humorist Jacob M. Braude indicates the importance of a single vote, whether it be from citizens or a judicial panel or the Electoral College: “The margin of a single vote has been responsible for many of the great decisions, victories, defeats and disappointments of history. Thomas Jefferson was elected president by one vote in the Electoral College. So was John Quincy Adams. Rutherford B. Hayes was elected president by one vote. His election was contested; referred to an electoral commission . . . the matter was again decided by a single vote. The man who had cast the deciding vote for President Hayes was himself elected to Congress by a margin of one vote. That one vote was cast by a voter who, though desperately ill, insisted on being taken to the polls. Marcus Morton was elected governor of Massachusetts by one vote. Countless mayors, legislators, councilmen and other public officials have enjoyed the sweet wine of victory or the bitter gall of defeat by a single vote. California, Washington, Idaho, Texas and Oregon gained statehood by one vote." Proportionately, this year's presidential election, which was based on million of votes, certainly indicates the importance of a single vote. Consider also that the Supreme Court decision that eventually decided the outcome was by a single vote. *(Jim Lytle, in Rocky Mountain News, December 20, 2000)***

**Andrew Johnson, who became president in 1865, showed leniency to the Southern states in the wake of their defeat in the Civil War. When Johnson would not yield to the demands of a group of congressmen called the Radical Republicans, they called for his impeachment. He was saved from being removed from office by just one vote in the Senate. *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 181)***

**Do you think one vote counts for much? One counted for a whole lot in the 1649 trial by Parliament of England's King Charles I. He lost 68 to 67, so was beheaded. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Over the past 20 years, there have been more than a dozen local and state elections in the United States that either were decided by a single vote or ended in a tie. (NPR.org, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 16, 2018)**

**Samuel Tilden ran for President of the United States in 1876, and got more popular votes than anyone else that year -- but Tilden never became President. Tilden received 4,284,757 votes, while runner-up Rutherford Hayes got 4,033,950. But neither man had the required 185 electoral votes. Tilden had 184 and Hayes had 165, with 20 votes in dispute over the eligibility of electors in four states. A special congressional committee was chosen to decide the election. They debated until March 2, 1877, just three days before Inauguration Day. From the time of the general election in November 1876, until March 2, 1877, the nation didn't know who would be President. Finally, the fifteen-member committee voted 8-7 on strict party lines to award the election to Hayes. Tilden was never nominated again. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 7)***

**The House of Representatives impeached President Andrew Johnson in 1868. Impeachment does not mean conviction. It is only a charge, and the Senate votes to convict or not to convict. By one vote, the Senate acquitted Johnson -- and he remained President after being impeached.   
*(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 20)***

**The presidential elections of 1876 and 2000 both ended in a deadlock, with Florida’s electoral votes in dispute. In both elections, partisan Florida Republicans gave the state’s electoral votes to the Republican candidate, and Democrats challenged the result. Both challenges were decided by a single vote by a Republican Supreme Court justice in favor of the Republicans. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 28)***

**While serving in Congress, Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill that attempted to bar slavery from all future states admitted to the Union, a measure than might later have prevented the Civil War if it had not been defeated -- by a single vote. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 339)***

**Although we've always heard that Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, at least two other inventors contested that opinion. Elisha Gray filed a patent for a telephone the same day as Bell, but lost out in a legal fight. Daniel Drawbaugh came close to convincing the Supreme Court, losing to Bell by a 4-3 decision. Thus, instead of the Bell Telephone Company, we might have had the Gray or Drawbaugh Telephone Company. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 174)***

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