

Voting Runs in the Family in West Branch, Iowa

As told by Terry Henning

West Branch, Iowa

Story Narrative:

My name is Terry Henning. I live on a farm just north of West Branch, Iowa, that has been in my family for over 100 years. My family moved to West Branch from Ohio in the mid-1800s. On November 7th, 1928, the Gazette Republican reported that my Aunt Mary [Wirtzbacher 00:00:25] was the youngest voter in West Branch, Iowa. Mary was a student at State University and had celebrated her 21st birthday the day before, just in time to vote for Hoover. The oldest voter was her grandfather, John Wesley Wirtzbacher, who was 94 at the time and a Civil War vet. He cast his 17th vote for Hoover, his first vote being for Abraham Lincoln.

Terry Henning (00:59): In 1971, the 26th Amendment was passed and the age to vote was lowered from 21 to 18 years of age. This was important; because at the time, you could be drafted, but had no say, no voice in the government. I turned 18 in the spring of 1972, which allowed me to vote for the very first time. To me, the opportunity to vote meant that for the first time I could make a difference. I had a say in who was elected, not just in Washington, but state and local too.

Terry Henning (01:42): Voting is a privilege that I do not take lightly. I do my best to learn about all candidates and form my own opinion before voting. I'm proud to say that my daughter is involved too. She gets out and caucuses for the candidate of her choice. I hope everyone will get out and vote this year. Thank you.

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