

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS IN TOWNS.

The following rules have been compiled for the use of Selectmen and others concerned or interested in the Registration of Voters in Towns:—

1. REGISTER OF VOTERS TO BE KEPT.—Selectmen are required to make and keep a record of all persons entitled to vote in their respective towns, which record “shall be known as a Register of Voters.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 13.
2. CONTENTS OF REGISTER OF VOTERS.—A Register of Voters should contain “the name of each voter, written in full (or his Christian name, or that name by which he is generally known, written in full, with the initial or initials of any other name or names which he may have in addition to his surname), the street or place in the town where he resides at the time of registration, his occupation, and such other particulars as may be necessary fully to identify him, and the date of registration.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 14.
3. WHEN REGISTRATION MUST CEASE.—In towns, “the registration of voters shall cease at ten o'clock in the afternoon of the Saturday next preceding the day of any election.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 23.
4. NOTICE OF REGISTRATION.—Selectmen are required to “cause proper notices to be published or posted, and proper opportunity given, at least two weeks before any annual election, to all persons to present themselves for registration.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 15.
5. INQUIRIES TO BE MADE, ETC. BEFORE A NAME IS REGISTERED.—“Before registering any person, they (*i. e.*, the selectmen) shall inquire into his qualifications to vote, and shall *require such person to write his name before they place it in said Register*, unless such person is exempted by Article Twenty of the Amendments to the Constitution. or unless his name is upon the Register or Voting List of the preceding year.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 15. The persons exempted by Article Twenty of the Amendments to the Constitution are: 1st, Those who are prevented from writing by a physical disability; and, 2d, Those who, on May 1, 1857 (when this amendment took effect), had already acquired the right to vote, or were then of the age of sixty or upwards. Another qualification of a voter, prescribed by this Amendment to the Constitution, and which it is the duty of selectmen to inquire into, is the ability to “*read the Constitution in the English language*.” This qualification, however, is not required of those who are prevented from reading by a physical disability nor of those who, on May 1, 1857, had already acquired a right to vote, or were then of the age of sixty or upwards. Before entering the name of a *naturalized citizen*, selectmen “shall require him to produce for their inspection his papers of naturalization, and shall be satisfied that he has been legally naturalized, but they need not require the production of such papers after they have once examined and passed upon them.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 26.
6. VOTING LISTS TO BE MADE AND POSTED.—Fifteen days at least before the day of the State election, selectmen must make “correct alphabetical lists of all persons qualified to vote” at that election, and must “cause such lists to be posted in two or more public places in their respective towns.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 18. Names on such Voting Lists must be written in full or in the manner above specified relative to names on the Register of Voters. Pub. St., c. 6, § 27. “The place of residence of each voter on the first day of May next preceding the making up of the Voting List shall be entered thereon, opposite the name of the voter.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 20.
7. ADDITION OF NAMES TO VOTING LISTS.—“No name shall be added to a Voting List until it has been recorded in the Register of Voters; and none shall be added to a List of Voters in use at any election after the opening of the polls, except to correct a clerical error or omission.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 27. But, “if a qualified voter of any city or town whose name was on the Voting List of such city or town for the preceding year, who has been assessed for a poll tax for the current year, and who has paid a State or County tax assessed upon him for the preceding or current year, finds, after the close of registration, that his name is not placed on the Voting List of the current year by reason of the same being omitted by clerical error or mistake from the list of polls as assessed and transmitted by the board of assessors to the board charged with the preparation of the Voting List, the board of assessors shall, upon the personal application of such voter, correct such omission or mistake, and give to him a certificate of such correction, to be presented by him, in person, to the board charged with the preparation of the Voting List, who shall, on the receipt thereof, place the name of such voter on the Voting List of the precinct, ward, or town in which he was entitled to be registered; or if application is made on the day of election, the said board last mentioned shall give to such voter a certificate, on presentation of which to the election officers of his precinct, ward, or town, he shall be allowed to vote therein; and such certificate shall be returned and preserved in like manner as the ballots cast in such precinct, ward, or town.” St. 1882, c. 268.
8. SESSIONS OF SELECTMEN FOR REGISTERING VOTERS AND CORRECTING VOTING LISTS.—Selectmen are required to “be in session at some convenient place for a reasonable time on the Saturday next preceding” the day of the election, “and for such time previous thereto as they may judge necessary, for the purpose of receiving evidence of the qualifications of persons claiming a right to vote in such elections, and of correcting the Lists of Voters.” They are required to give notice of the time and place of holding such sessions upon the Voting Lists which they are required to post up in two or more public places in the town. Pub. St., c. 6, § 23.
9. GENERAL CORRECTION OF VOTING LISTS.—It is the general duty of selectmen to “enter on such lists the name of any person known to them to be qualified to vote,” and to “erase therefrom the name of any person known to them not to be qualified.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 24.
10. UPON AFFIDAVIT MADE THAT A PERSON HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY REGISTERED, RE-EXAMINATION TO BE MADE, ETC.—Upon the affidavit of a legal voter in the town, “made at least seven days before an election, setting forth that, in his opinion, a certain person is illegally registered, and the reasons therefor,” the selectmen “shall re-examine the matter of the registration of such person, and, if they deem it necessary, may summon such person to appear before them at a time and place named, and examine him under oath in regard to the matter set forth in the affidavit, and, if satisfied that he is not a qualified voter, they shall strike his name from the list; but notice and an opportunity for a hearing shall first be given to such person.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 22.
11. PENALTY ON SELECTMEN FOR NEGLECTING DUTIES.—A selectman, who “wilfully neglects or refuses to perform” any of the duties above mentioned, is liable to “forfeit for each offence a sum not exceeding two hundred dollars.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 30.
12. PENALTY FOR GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO SELECTMEN.—“Whoever gives a false name or false answer” to selectmen “concerning any matter relating to the registration of voters, or to the right of any person to vote, shall forfeit thirty dollars for each offence.” Pub. St., c. 6, § 31.

10th OCTOBER, 1883.