Topic Ideas
Rights and Responsibilities in History

Americans believe that citizens have rights - political, economic, and social - that no government can take away. How have those rights evolved over time? What are the responsibilities that accompany those rights? These are a few possible topics; many others are possible. You may choose any US History topic that interests you as long as the major event occurred before 1920 and the historical consequences impacted rights and responsibilities.

Rights and Responsibilities in the Colonies

Captain John Smith proclaimed, "He Who Does Not Work Does Not Eat," summing up the *responsibility* an individual must fulfill in order to retain a basic *right.*

The Mayflower Compact established the *responsibilities* of individuals toward the group, along with their *rights* to participate in government.

Anne Hutchison and **Roger Williams** both believed their *responsibility* to God was greater than to the Puritan local government, and they believed in a *right* to religious liberty. Consequently, both left – Williams founded Rhode Island and Hutchison died in exile..

Englishman John Locke stated that governments had a *responsibility* to protect *rights,* and the people had a *right* to revolution if that did not occur. Jefferson enshrined this belief in the **Declaration of Independence.**

Social Contracts involve individuals giving up certain *rights* and assuming *responsibilities* to a group for mutual benefit.

At New England **Town Meetings,** men had the *right* to represent their families and a *responsibility* to make decisions in the community.

In the **Virginia House of Burgesses** and the **Massachusetts General Court,** colonists had the *right* to create laws that citizens had the *responsibility* to obey.

Rights and Responsibilities in the Revolution

The Proclamation of 1763 stated that, even though the Ohio River Valley had been taken from the French, the colonists had no *right* to settle it, but had a *responsibility* to stay on the coast, to avoid conflicts with Native Americans.

John Adams' defense of the Boston Massacre defendants(1770) established the *responsibility* of the revolutionaries to follow the rule of law and the *right* of defendants to have a fair trial, even if they were unpopular.

The **Stamp Act Congress** was the first time multiple colonies together asserted their *rights* to

self-government. They believed their *responsibility* to pay taxes existed only where they had a *right* to representation.

The **Boston Tea Party** (1773) was motivated by a belief in the *right* of the people to set their own taxes and the *responsibility* of Britain to allow them some self-government.

Ethan Allen was a feisty independent farmer who did not like large landholders. He believed the *responsibilities* of working the land gave farmers *rights* that were as valid as a property deed, and he led several revolts against New York landlords. His band of fighters, the Green Mountain Boys, joined the Revolution and won an important battle at Ticoderoga.

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* argues for the American Revolution and his *Rights of Man* makes the case for the French Revolution. He maintains that when a government does not fulfill its *responsibilities* to protect natural *rights*, revolution is the *right* of the people.

The Declaration of Independence lists exactly which *rights* Americans believed Britain violated, and which *responsibilities* it had not upheld; that was why America declared its independence.

Benedict Arnold violated his *responsibilities* when he sold secrets to the British because he felt he had a *right* to a promotion he did not get. To this day, his name means "traitor."

George Washington believed the *responsibilities* of leadership included a full financial commitment, as well as stepping down after the war. This surprised many foreign aristocrats, who assumed he would pursue the *rights* of a king.

Rights and Responsibilities - Articles of Confederation

The Land Ordinance of 1785 provided land for public schools, suggesting a *right* of the public to participate in democracy and a *responsibility* of the government to help citizens become educated.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 transferred *responsibility* for governing unsettled US territories from the states to the nation. This

explicitly provided certain *rights*, such as no slavery, rivers open to navigation, and a path to statehood.

Shay's Rebellion occurred when farmers believed they had a *right* to keep their land even when they could not pay their property taxes, and Massachusetts believed they had a *responsibility* to give the land in payment.

Rights and Responsibilities – The New Constitution

Habeas Corpus is a fundamental *right* suspended only when the government's *responsibility* to the many is greater that the right of an individual. Some believe Lincoln violated this right.

The Great Compromise balances the *right* of proportional representation with the *responsibility* to honor the power of each state.

Federalism balances the *rights* and *responsibilities* of the states with those of the nation.

Separation of Powers divides *responsibilities* into three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) so that *rights* are easier to protect.

Federalists, like Alexander Hamilton, believed the government had a *responsibility* to act energetically on behalf of the people; **Antifederalists**, like Thomas Jefferson, believed the government had no *right* to do more than the Constitution specifically stated.

James Madison, the "father of the Constitution," carefully balanced *rights* and *responsibilities* in the government.

The English Bill of Rights was a precursor to the **US Bill of Rights,** which reserves certain rights to the states and people**.**

Freedom of Speech and of the Press are important *rights*, but citizens have legal *responsibilities* to practice them safely, especially during wartime. **Peter Zenger** (in colonial times) established the *right* to criticize the government and the *responsibility* to print the truth. **The Sedition Act (1918)** tested the *right* to freedom of speech and the *responsibility* of loyalty during wartime.

The **Fourth Amendment** prohibits unreasonable search and seizure. Citizens have a *right* to be secure in their homes and government has a *responsibility* to obtain search warrants.

The Whiskey Rebellion tested the new government's *right* to tax and the people's *responsibility* to pay. When federal troops arrived in Pennsylvania, people agreed to pay without a fight.

Marbury v. Madison established the Supreme Court's *right* to interpret the new Constitution and the public's *responsibility* to accept that judgment.

Citizenship and **Voting Rights** expanded slowly. At first, only wealthy property owners could vote, but after the Revolution, states began granting that *right* to more ordinary people.

Jacksonian Democracy assumed that all white men, even poor men, had both a *right* and a *responsibility* to be politically active.

Andrew Jackson, hero of the War of 1812 and president (1829-1837), believed he had the *right* to broad executive powers, because he was the only public official elected by and *responsible* to, all of the people. He was famous for vetoing legislation and ignoring the Supreme Court.

Rights and Responsibilities – Religious Philosophy

The Great Awakening and the **Second Great Awakening** broadened religious participation and strengthened citizens' belief in their *right* and *responsibility* to follow their own conscience. Some preachers were jailed in the controversy.

Quakers believed in the equal *rights* of all people, including women and African-Americans, and they believed in the *responsibility* of following one's conscience.

Shakers accepted the *responsibility* to live simply and never marry, in order to enjoy the *rights* of a peaceful community.

Mormons accepted the *responsibility* of commitment to a community and gained the *right* of support from the group.

Transcendentalism philosophy emphasized the basic goodness of human beings and nature. They advocated finding truth within themselves and nature, and were suspicious of government, church, and institutions. **Henry David Thoreau** believed citizens had both a *right* and *responsibility* to follow their individual consciences, even if that meant breaking the law through **civil disobedience.** Thoreau went to jail for refusing to pay taxes to support the Mexican War. Fellow writer **Ralph Waldo Emerson** bailed him out.

Transcendentalist supporters of John Brown (the "secret six") provided money for the weapons he used at **Harpers Ferry.** They believed abolition was *right* and it was their *responsibility*

to take action against slavery. But when Brown was captured, only **Thomas Wentworth Higginson** announced his support; the other five abandoned him. Higginson later served in the Union Army, even leading an African American regiment.

Changing Rights and Responsibilities of Women

Louisa May Alcott, daughter of a Transcendentalist and Civil War nurse, described traditional *rights* and *responsibilities* of girls in her novel <u>Little Women,</u> still a favorite of many today.

Margaret Fuller advocated women's *right* to an education, and much more. An active Transcendentalist, writer, and journalist, she never married, but had a child with an Italian revolutionary. All three drowned in a shipwreck in New York harbor in 1850.

Elias Howe's Sewing Machine (1846) changed the *rights* and *responsibilities* of women, as many entered industry and others sped up production in the home.

Women's Property Rights - to keep wages, own real estate, file patents – began to change, state by state, in the 1800's. Married women in California had the *right* to keep their own property from the beginning of the state.

The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 outlined basic *rights* for women and organized people willing to take *responsibility* for achieving those rights.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and **Susan B. Anthony** took *responsibility* for working tirelessly for the *right* to vote.

Lucretia Mott was an early Quaker reformer who believed in the *responsibility* of government to protect equal *rights.*

Clara Barton believed women had the *right* to be paid as much as men for the same work. She assumed *responsibility* for large-scale relief efforts during the Civil War, managed efforts to find missing soldiers, and founded the Red Cross.

Women's Voting Rights began when Wyoming allowed women the vote in 1869.

Carrie Chapman Cat, Alice Paul, and **Lucy Burns** led the final crusade for the *right* to vote.

Bicycles increased women's mobility in the 1890's, encouraging them to seize more *rights* to go, do, and wear what they wanted.

World War I moved women into more *responsible* positions, making them demand more *rights.*

The 19th Amendment assigned government the *responsibility* for providing the *right* to vote for women.

Rights and Responsibilities of African Americans

African American Revolutionary War soldiers believed they would receive their *right* to freedom if they took on the *responsibilities* of military service. Only a few were freed.

Phyllis Wheatley was an African-American poet during the Revolution. Living both as a slave and free woman, she experienced many changes in *rights* and *responsibilities.*

Nat Turner felt it was his *responsibility* to answer God's call to rebel on behalf of his community's *rights.* Whites put down the rebellion.

William Still used his *rights* as a free African American to carry out the *responsibilities* of freeing others on the Underground Railroad. He provided assistance, money, and food, and kept meticulous records of each person freed.

Harriett Tubman believed in the *right* of slaves to be free and believed her *responsibility* was to guide them to freedom.

Spirituals were religious songs that African Americans had the *right* to sing even on oppressive plantations. By inserting codes into the lyrics, enslaved people carried out their *responsibility* to help each other escape.

Military Service was a *responsibility* African Americans fulfilled in large numbers during the Civil War. Ultimately this led to increased citizenship *rights*.

The Freedmen's Bureau helped protect African American *rights* after the war and provided assistance as the new citizens managed new *responsibilities.*

Robert Smalls stole a Confederate ship and escaped to serve in the Union military. He later served in politics, using his new *rights* to carry out the *responsibilities* of citizenship.

Sojourner Truth worked for both African American and women's *rights*. Her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech is a radical claim to both rights and *responsibilities* of full citizenship.

Susie King Taylor was a Civil War nurse in the nation's first African American regiment. She saw her *responsibility* as helping all the soldiers in any way she could, and wondered, later in life, why their *rights* were restricted*.

Allensworth, CA (founded in 1908) became the first African-American town in California. Its purpose was to provide an opportunity for equal *rights* and its citizens had the *responsibility* of planning and organizing the entire community.

Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant sued to desegregate streetcars in San Francisco in the 1860's. A successful African American businesswoman, she took on the *responsibility* to help others have basic *rights.*

Rights and Responsibilities of Progressive Government

The Sherman Anti-Trust Acts and **The Breakup of Standard Oil** in 1911 proved that government had a *responsibility* to limit the *rights* of corporations remove monopolies so that other businesses could compete fairly. **Ida Tarbell's** use of the *right* to free press pressured the government to carry out this *responsibility.*

Direct Democracy became popular during the Progressive Era. In 1911, under the leadership of Governor **Hiram Johnson,** in an effort to break the railroad's stranglehold on the state legislature, California became the ninth state to allow **initiative, referendum, and recall,** processes that greatly influence state government today. Citizens have the *right* to bring issues directly to a vote of the people, without interference from the state legislature, and also have a *responsibility* to become educated on propositions. Citizens may also throw out state officials, and they did recall Governor Gray Davis in 2003.

Montana's Anti-Corruption Acts (1912) asserted that wealth did not give corporations the *right* to run state government and that government had a *responsibility* to keep that money out of politics. Last year, the Supreme Court overturned those laws.

The Federal Reserve Act (1913) gave government the *right* to regulate banking and the *responsibility* to stabilize the money supply.

The 16th Amendment (1913) establishes the nation's *right* to charge income taxes, and the citizen's *responsibility* to pay them.

The Seventeenth Amendment (1913) gave citizens the *right* to vote directly for senators; previously, state legislatures had the *responsibility* to choose them.

Rights And Responsibilities – Foreign Policy

The War of 1812 established America's *right* to trade internationally without Britain attacking its ships; it also established Britain's *responsibility* to give up the remaining forts in US territory. The US was here to stay.

The Monroe Doctrine asserted the US *right* to fend off European colonization anywhere in the Western hemisphere. The US also assumed a *responsibility* to stay out of affairs in Europe.

Commodore Calbraith Perry (1853) had the *responsibility* of opening relations with Japan so that Americans would have the *right* to trade. Previously, he had modernized the navy to use steam ships.

John Hay had the *responsibility* of implementing the Open Door Policy with China, so that other nations would have the *right* to trade. (Hay began his career as Lincoln's secretary)

The Spanish-American War (1898) and the Conquest of the Philippines increased American *responsibility* and decreased the *rights* of native people. This inspired British poet Rudyard Kipling to send his famous poem "The White Man's Burden" to Teddy Roosevelt.

Yellow Journalism encouraged U.S. participation in the war. Was it the newspapers' *right* to say what they pleased or did they have a *responsibility* for more balanced reporting?

Obtaining land for **The Panama Canal** (1914) gave Americans the *right* to profitable trade and a *responsibility* to deal fairly with a smaller, less powerful nation. Teddy Roosevelt accomplished this.

President Woodrow Wilson encouraged the United States to take leadership in world affairs. His Twelve Points outlined *rights* and *responsibilities* for foreign involvement.

Rights and Responsibilities – Westward Expansion

Wagon Trains involved groups of people traveling together. They had *rights* and *responsibilities* to their fellow travelers. To what extend were they required to share, and to what extent did they expect to fend for themselves?

Military Forts dotted the trails, and soldiers had some *rights* and *responsibilities* to protect the migrants and enforce treaties with Indians.

Texans had a legal *responsibility* to follow Mexican laws before their rebellion in 1836. Only military victory gave them the *right* to independence.

Manifest Destiny asserted a *right* of the US to expand to the Pacific Ocean, and minimized a *responsibility* to honor the claims of the people already living there.

The Mexican War assumed a *responsibility* to retaliate for a border skirmish with a major war and a *right* to claim one third of a continent as the spoils of war.

Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo protested to the Mexican government over U.S. migrants into California. He feared that they would not fulfill their *responsibilities* to follow Mexican law, and Mexico would lose the *right* to control its country.

The Bear Flag Revolt asserted California's *right* to independence from Mexico and a *responsibility* for John C. Fremont and others to defend that right.

Kit Carson, explorer, had the *responsibility* of guiding troops West during the Mexican War, assisting the US in New Mexico during the Civil War, and gaining the *right* to make Indian policy a little more humane after the war.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo stated that Mexicans could choose between U.S. and Mexican citizenship, and that new citizens would have the same *rights* as other U.S. citizens. Did the U.S. fulfill its *responsibility* to honor the treaty?

The U.S. Federal Land Act (1851) assigned land-owners the *responsibility* of filing new claims for land they had held under Mexican rule. Many retained their *rights;* some lost land. The Peraltas and Vallejos kept some of their land.

The Homestead Act of 1862 gave settlers the *right* to free land, if they carried out the *responsibility* of farming.

Frederick Remington (1861-1901) assumed the *responsibility* of painting the disappearing West and using an artist's *right* to interpretation.

Railroads had *rights* from the government to develop the land and the *responsibility* to provide transportation for people and merchandise. **Railroad time** was exact and standardized nation-wide. People soon had the *responsibility* to be punctual.

The Transcontinental Railroad was a massive undertaking. The government gave private companies the *rights* to enormous amounts of land, along with the *responsibility* to develop the railroad.

Rights, Responsibilities, and the Environment

Conservation and protecting the environment became a *responsibility* of government after 1890,

when the Census Bureau declared the frontier closed. **John Muir** and President Teddy Roosevelt were early advocates for nature and the *rights* of future generations to enjoy it.

Yellowstone Park gave the U.S. the *responsibility* to protect a unique terrain so future generations would have the *right* to enjoy it.

Yosemite was the first park under the National Parks Act.

The Colorado River inspired fights over *rights* and the *responsibility* to share resources between Colorado, California, and Mexico.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct (completed 1913) was the result of much conflict and political chicanery. Who had a *right* to the Owens Valley water, and were they *responsible* with it?

Rights and Responsibilities and Native Americans

"Praying Indians" were those in the early American colonies who converted to Christianity and adopted English methods of farming and raising livestock. Their villages were evidence of the English sense of a *right* to control native lives and a *responsibility* to convert them. Conflicts persisted, and the experiment ultimately failed.

The Battle of Tippecanoe (1811) deprived many natives of their *rights* to the Ohio River Valley and gave the U.S. the *responsibility* for managing the settlement.

Tecumseh, a Native leader, assumed *responsibility* for uniting many tribes against the U.S. Army, but died in the War of 1812, when Natives lost *rights* to more land.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (1828) attempted to inject some *responsibility* into relations with Natives, even though they consistently lost more *rights.*

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced Natives out of Georgia, even though the Supreme Court supported Cherokee *rights.* President Andrew Jackson believed his *responsibility* was to white Americans.

The Surrender of the Nez Perce (1877) deprived the tribe of the *right* to live freely and gave them the *responsibility* of adapting to life on reservations. The Apache lost their native lands with the surrender of **Geronimo** in 1886.

The Wounded Knee Massacre (1890) was the last military action against Native Americans. How did that event change the *rights* and *responsibilities* of the US and the natives?

The Dawes Act (1909-1934), in an attempt at *responsibility,* deprived Natives of their *right* to a traditional culture.

Edward Curtis took on the *responsibility* of photographing Native Americans before their way of life disappeared. In the process, he lost his *rights* to his children, along with his health and his money. His work is preserved in the Smithsonian.

Helen Hunt Jackson worked on behalf of Native American *rights*. By writing, speaking, and serving in government, she urged the US to live up to its *responsibilities.*

The Act for the Government and Protection of Indians (1850) denied basic *rights* to natives in California. By 1857, other laws forbade US troops from carrying out their traditional *responsibility* of keeping settlers off Native land.

The Mendocino War (1859-1860) included so many atrocities that the state legislature appointed a committee to investigate. What were the *rights* of natives and settlers, and what were the *responsibilities* of the state to enforce them?

The Modoc War (1872-1873) in California occurred when Natives lost their *rights* to live in their homeland and were deported. Did California's government live up to its *responsibilities?*

Rights and Responsibilities – Race and Ethnicity

Anti-Irish discrimination was common throughout the 19th century. The **Know-Nothing Party** gained enough political power to deny them certain *rights;* after the Civil War the 14th Amendment established the *responsibility* of the federal government to provide more fairness.

The Statue of Liberty (1875) symbolizes the *right* of immigrant Americans to be free, work hard, and improve their lives, and it stands for the *responsibility* of America to provide freedom and opportunity.

Angel Island Immigration Station represented the community's perceived *responsibility* to regulate and limit Asian immigration. This limited the *rights* of many immigrants.

California's Constitution (1849) was written in both English and Spanish. How did the *responsibility* to include Spanish speakers and the *right* to use it in politics change?

The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) asserted the *right* of the government to exclude a specific group from entering the United States. This policy made it easier for citizens to ignore *responsibilities*

to treat the Chinese fairly. This policy existed until WWII.

The Foreign Miner's Tax restricted Mexican-American and Chinese *rights* to mine for gold, since it made them *responsible* for paying more in taxes than they would probably earn.

Locke, California, was an all-Chinese town near Sacramento. Residents had the *right* to run their own affairs and were able to carry out *responsibilities* for the community.

Native Hawaiians lost their *rights* to self-government when the U.S. took over in 1893. What were the new *responsibilities* of Hawaiian leaders and U.S. officials?

Rights and Responsibilities of Labor and Business

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) took away the *right* of state legislatures to grant monopolies to their favorite businesses; companies had the *responsibility* to compete. Capitalism soared.

Cornelius Vanderbilt established monopolies in the ferry and railroad businesses, becoming the nation's first wealthy tycoon. He believed in the *right* to take over whatever he could manage, without much *responsibility* to the public.

Leland Stanford, businessman, railroad tycoon, California governor and founder of Stanford University, was *responsible* for beginning the Republican Party in California. Did he have a *right* to become so rich?

Andrew Carnegie believed he had a *right* to make enormous profits in steel, but also a *responsibility* to give back to the community through philanthropy. He ended strikes by shooting workers; he also built lots of libraries.

William Walker believed he had the *right* to conquer parts of Latin America, both to create new slave states and to establish profitable trade routes to California in the 1850's. He did not bother with the *responsibility* of following the law. After a brief stint as President of Nicaragua, he was defeated by the US Navy.

Munn v. Illinois (1877) established the government's *responsibility* to regulate the railroads and protect citizens' *rights* against powerful business interests.

Financial Tycoon J.P. Morgan had enjoyed the *right* to amass enormous wealth and therefore assumed *responsibility* when the country faced a financial crisis in 1893. His personal credit backed several banks and even the US government until the crisis passed.

Robbie See, William Mendenhall Middle School

Henry Ford succeeded, in part, because he recognized management's *responsibility* to its workers. Giving them a *right* to a living wage created a stable work force.

The Haymarket Riot (1886) resulted in a trial favoring business over labor. The defendant's *rights* to due process were not fully enforced; the government acted on its *responsibility* to big business rather than to individual workers.

Lowell Mill girls had the *responsibilities* of hard work and a strict schedule, but also the *right* to decent wages.

The Knights of Labor worked for the *rights* of all workers, including women and minorities, and pushed companies to take *responsibility* for fair wages.

Mother Jones worked for the *rights* of laborers from 1871 until her death in 1930. She believed industry had a *responsibility* to its workers. She founded the United Mine Workers and was an active Communist.

Eugene Debs was an active labor organizer, who believed strongly in the *rights* of workers and the *responsibility* of government to act on behalf of ordinary people. He once ran for president; he also spent time in jail.

Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor (which still exists today) in the 1880's as a way for workers to press for their *rights.* He believed in joint *responsibility* (a major principle of unions), even across industries.

In the Anthracite Coal Strike (1902), miners believed they had a *right* to strike for higher wages. The company believed workers had a *responsibility* to work. President Teddy Roosevelt assumed *responsibility* to negotiate a solution so the public would have coal during the winter months.

The International Workers of the World believed that workers should have the *right* to elect their managers, and that workers had a *responsibility* to support labor actions and strikes in places far from their home. They welcomed women and immigrants.

Labor Strikes always involve a conflict over *rights* and *responsibilities.* Several important strikes were: the Lowell Mill Girl Turnouts of 1834 and 1836; the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, the Pullman Strike of 1894, the Homestead Strike of 1892, the Uprising of 20,000 (garment workers) in 1909, and many others.

Child Labor was slow to disappear. Despite heart-breaking photography by Lewis Hine, a child's *right* to go to school instead of work, and the *responsibility* of government to protect the child, were not protected by the Keating-Owen Act of 1916 (which Congress declared unconstitutional) but by the Wagner Act of 1935.

Rights and Responsibilities in Social Change

Horace Mann became the first Secretary of Education of a state (Massachusetts) in 1837. He believed that education was "the great equalizer" and a positive force for democracy. Students had a *right* to an education, and the state had a *responsibility* to provide it.

John Swett, known as the "Horace Mann of the West" became California's Superintendent of Schools in 1863, making school free for all students, so that education was a *right* of citizens and a *responsibility* of the state. Unlike Mann, Swett had been a teacher.

Dorothea Dix successfully established the *responsibility* of government to provide *rights* to humane treatment for the mentally ill.

Jane Addams encouraged social *responsibility* and basic *rights* for the poor by founding Hull House in Chicago.

The Children's Bureau was established in 1912 under President Taft. This agency represented a broadening of the nation's *responsibility* for the well-being of its citizens, and belief that children had some basic *rights.* The agency was staffed almost entirely by women, eight years before women could vote.

The Pure Food And Drug Act of 1906 assigned the *responsibility* for inspection to the government and established the *right* of the people to expect safe food and drugs. The stimulus for this change was Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, describing the meat packing industry.

Rights and Responsibilities - Causes of the Civil War

William Lloyd Garrison was a passionate abolitionist who believed slaves had the *right* to be free and the nation had a *responsibility* to free them peacefully.

Elijah Lovejoy was an abolitionist newspaper editor whose printing presses were repeatedly destroyed by pro-slavery mobs. In 1837, he fought back and was killed. By assuming the *responsibility* to publish what he believed was *right,* he lost his life. His brother Owen Lovejoy

entered politics and became a founder of the Republican Party.

James Birney was an abolitionist publisher who twice ran for president on the Liberty Party ticket. Along with **Salmon Chase** (who later became Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury), he felt a *responsibility* to provide legal defense to fugitive slaves and believed northern states had a *right* to act to end slavery.

Frederick Douglass, an African American abolitionist, believed in the *right* to be free and the *responsibility* of the nation to live out its belief in equality.

The Grimke sisters grew up in the South but soon recognized African Americans' need for basic *rights.* The moved North and assumed *responsibility* in the Abolitionist and women's movements. Angelina married journalist **Theodore Weld**, an early Republican. Sarah opened a school.

The Fugitive Slave Act, part of the 1850 Compromise, made northerners *responsible* for tracking down and returning fugitive slaves and limited their *right* to follow their conscience. This radicalized many Northerners.

Harriett Beecher Stowe, in her 1852 novel Uncle Tom's Cabin, dramatized the absence of basic *rights* for slaves and the failure of slave owners to carry out basic *responsibilities* for their condition.

The Republican Party (previously, the Free Soil Party) asserted the *right* of government to restrict slavery and the *responsibility* of Americans to uphold the principles of equality and liberty.

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates contrasted Lincoln's anti-slavery views of *rights* and *responsibilities* with Douglas's states-rights views. Douglas won the senate seat that Lincoln wanted, but the debates positioned Lincoln favorably for the presidential election.

The Compromise of 1850 established California's *right* to enter the Union as a free state and the South's *right* to attempt to spread slavery into other western territories. Northerners had a *responsibility* to comply with the strict Fugitive Slave Act. The Compromise caused as much conflict as it resolved.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 placed the *responsibility* for deciding the slavery issue in the hands of the territories and withdrew that *right* from Congress. This sparked bloody **border conflicts** in the territories, especially Kansas.

The *Dred Scott v. Sanford court decision (1857)* denied citizenship *rights* to African-Americans and

stated that Congress had no *right* to regulate slavery in the territories. Many anti-slavery citizens felt a *responsibility* to become more politically active. War was getting closer.

John Brown believed he had a *right* to take up arms because his *responsibility* to God was greater than his *responsibility* to the state. He attacked Harper's Ferry (a federal arsenal) in 1859.

Lincoln believed all people had the basic economic *right* to "eat the bread his own hand has raised," and he believed government had the *responsibility* to protect that right, though also to follow the law. This made him an anti-slavery moderate, which was enough to kick off a war with the south when he was elected.

Rights and Responsibilities in the Civil War

Ft. Sumter (first Civil War battle) represented a conflict between the *rights* of state and nation to control a fort, and the *responsibilities* of individual soldiers to choose sides. **Robert E. Lee, Johnston, and Armistead** were among those who chose their *responsibility* to the state over the nation. By doing so, many lost *rights* after the war. Armistead died at Gettysburg, leaving his Bible to old friend and Union General Hancock.

David Glasgow Farragut was a successful Union admiral who carried out his *responsibilities* to preserve the *rights* of the nation. His victories included New Orleans and Mobile Bay.

Shiloh, a battle that took more lives than all previous US wars combined, raised questions of whether General Grant had the *right* to press so hard for victory, or had a *responsibility* to cut his losses*.* Lincoln said, "I can't spare this man; he fights."

Contraband of War policies and the **Confiscation Acts** gave the military the *right* to assist runaway African Americans and the *responsibility* to direct their labor in the war effort. These practices paved the way for the Emancipation Act.

The Emancipation Act asserted an executive *right* to free slaves in rebellious territories and allowed African Americans to carry out the *responsibilities* of military service.

William Quantrill, a border ruffian in Missouri, assumed the *right* to storm any pro-Union towns without taking *responsibility* for following any rules of warfare. Trying to control the violence, Union General Ewing issued **Order Number 11** to evacuate the region, trampling on civilian *rights* in

an attempt to carry out military *responsibilities.* Union loyalty was badly damaged.

General Fremont's attempt to **free slaves** in Civil War Missouri respected black *rights* but ignored *responsibilities* to cautious civilian authority. Lincoln removed him, even though Fremont's wife **Jessie Fremont** traveled more than 1000 miles to argue the point. The Fremonts' actions may have sped up emancipation.

Did **Sherman's Total War** policy violate basic civilian *rights* as he met his *responsibility* to the Union? The Fall of Atlanta and March to the Sea were critical but bloody successes.

 Was Grant's **Siege of Vicksburg** a violation of those rights?

Military Service, including Conscription (the draft) is a *responsibility* of citizenship and a *right* of the nation.

The New York City Draft Riots during the Civil War were some of the nation's bloodiest non-military conflicts. The nation believed citizens had a *responsibility* to fight for the Union; many whites did not want to die for black *rights.* Lincoln replied "some of them seem willing to die for you."

At **Appamatox, Grant** respected the human *rights,* allowing soldiers to keep their horses for the spring planting, while fulfilling his *responsibilities* to obtain a complete surrender.

Secession – Does a state have a *right* to leave the Union, or a *responsibility* to sustain the Union? The Civil War decided this, and the Supreme Court confirmed it in Texas v. White in 1869.

John Wilkes Booth believed his *responsibilities* of citizenship included assassinating the president to prevent African-American *rights*.

Ordinary Soldiers give up many *rights* of their own and take on a *responsibility* to protect the community. This contract was almost sacred to some.

Returning Soldiers changed *responsibilities* from violence to cultivation (Veteran in a New Field).

African American families asserted their *rights* by abandoning *responsibilities* to slave owners and moving toward the Union Army.

Drummer Boys were children who served. During marches, they had the *responsibility* to set a pace, and during battle, they tended the wounded. Many worried that they had to *right* to the safety and security of childhood.

Women and Children were *responsibilities* of soldiers, and if the soldiers failed, the innocent would lose their *rights.* Civilian families felt *responsible* for support. Confederate "Lost Cause"

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images (Surrender, Burial of Latane) illustrate these relationships.

Families who had the *right* to be protected also had the *responsibility* of retaining the basic humanity of civilization (In the Hands of the Enemy).

Civilians have *rights* that wars supposedly protect, and have a *responsibility* to support the war effort, both individually and as par of organized efforts like **Sanitary Fairs** that raised money for Civil War military hospitals.

Priests and ministers had a *right* to the attention of soldiers and a *responsibility* to support the cause.

Artists and Writers have a *right* to observe and a *responsibility* to portray the destruction of war so that government can direct its course. **James Hope** sketched Antietam.

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) had the *responsibility* of illustrating the Civil War for Harper's Magazine. As a journalist he had the *right* to mingle with the troops, observe, and record the Army camp life and surrounding civilians, both black and white.

President and Government have a constitutional *right* to direct the war, but also a *responsibility* to fund it.

The **US Sanitary Commission** recognized medical care as a *right* of soldiers and a *responsibility* of government.

Military Pensions were a new *responsibility* of government and a *right* of veterans. **Veterans** had a *right* to respect and a *responsibility to* remember and honor the cause.

General Orders 100 (The "Lieber Orders") defined the rules of military conduct, laying the foundations for the Geneva Conventions followed by most nations engaged in war today.

Alabama **Claims**. The Union believed it had a *right* to trade and believed Britain had a *responsibility* to remain neutral in the Civil War. When Britain built ships for the South and those ships interrupted Union trade, the ship *Kearsage* destroyed the *Alabama* and later, the US sued Britain, regaining $15.5 million.

Rights and Responsibilities After The Civil War

The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) guaranteed African Americans the *right* to be free and declared that Congress had a *responsibility* to enforce that right.

The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) granted equal citizenship *rights* to everyone born in the US

and made the states *responsible* for providing those rights.

The Fifteenth Amendment (1870) promised the *right* to vote for all citizens, regardless of race, and made Congress *responsible* for enforcing that right.

The Reconstruction Acts (1867) gave the national government *responsibility* for protecting African American *rights* in the South. This involved military occupation, which many Southerners believed trampled on the *rights* of states and white people.

The Ku Klux Klan believed it was their *responsibility* to violently suppress African American *rights* in the South. As President, Grant had some success in stopping their actions.

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was the last civil rights legislation for about 90 years. It guaranteed equal *rights* by outlawing segregation in public services and promising that African Americans carry out *responsibilities* for jury service.

U.S. v. Cruikshank (1876) ruled that the federal government had no *right* to punish those who violated the *rights* of African Americans. Only states had that *responsibility.*

U.S. v. Reese (1876) ruled that states had the *right* to limit voting by any means not listed in the 15th amendment.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) gave states the *right* to segregate facilities and services.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 after a race riot in Springfield, Illinois. The organization assumes *responsibility* for helping African Americans achieve equal *rights.*

Mary Church Terrell was a teacher, writer, founding member of NAACP who used the new *rights* of African Americans to fulfill *responsibilities* to her community.

Ida B. Wells, an African American journalist, wrote about violations of *rights* and the need for *responsibility* in government.

Rights and Responsibilities – Trouble with the Law

Joaquin Murrieta, angry about losing a California mining claim after the Mexican War, began to steal horses and attack camps. Was he defending *rights* of Mexican natives or just failing in his *responsibility* to respect property?

Jesse James, angry after losing the Civil War, regularly robbed banks and held up trains with connections to former Union generals. Was this simple revenge, or was he carrying out a *responsibility* to Southern citizens? Had his own *rights* been violated?

Tiburcio Vasquez had a long career as a California bandit, punctuated with two stints in San Quentin and ended by hanging in Hollywood in 1875. What *responsibilities* did he think he had? In that racist time, what *rights* of his were violated? Who lost their *rights* to life, and why?

The San Francisco Committee of Vigilance assumed the *responsibility* for policing San Francisco during its lawless early days. As enthusiastic amateurs, its members had little respect for the *rights* of the accused.

Harry Morse, sheriff of Alameda County in 1864, had the *responsibility* of protecting the *rights* of a widely dispersed population. He captured many horse and cattle thieves. In the 1880's he opened a detective agency and tracked down notorious bandits.

Black Bart, gentleman stagecoach robber and poet, fulfilled his *responsibilities* in the Union Army at Vicksburg and during the March to the Sea. Afterward, he formed a grudge against Wells Fargo and began depriving people of their property *rights.* Eventually caught be Harry Morse, he disappeared after serving six years in San Quentin.

"Boss" Tweed was the leader of a New York City's corrupt political organization, Tammany Hall. *Responsible* for assisting immigrants find work, housing, and other connections, Tammany nevertheless violated citizens' *rights* to honest government by stealing more than $25 million dollars.

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