

## Local History Topics Rights & Responsibilities in History

History happens every day and in your own backyard! In fact, Ohio has played an essential role in both U.S. and World History. Below we've put together a list of Ohio topics for the 2025 NHD theme of Rights & Responsibilities in History. Be sure to check out some example topics, marked with asterisk (\*), after the local history list!

### African American History

- Brigadier General Charles Young – First African American man to achieve the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army
- Carl B. Stokes – First African American mayor of a major US city (Cleveland, 1967), later a judge and ambassador
- Charlene Mitchell – Civil rights activist and socialist. She was the first African American woman candidate to run for President of the United States
- Ohio in the Underground Railroad
- Levi Coffin
- John P. Parker
- John Rankin
- Henry Boyd
- AME Church (see Dr. Cheryl LaRoche)
- Abraham Depp
- Lady Fanm Goumen
- W.C.A. No. 2—First African American branch of the YWCA in the nation
- Wilberforce University—First Black owned and operated private HBCU

### American Indian History

- American Indian Movement, 1960s/70s
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978
- American Indian Wars, 1789-1795
- French Indian Wars, 1754-1763
- Haudenosaunee Confederation
- Indian Removal Act, 1830
- Lord Dunmore's War (1774)
- Michikinikwa, or Little Turtle, leader of the Myaamia
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990 \*

- Proclamation of 1763
- Tecumseh- leader of the Shawnee
- Western Confederacy

### Diplomatic History

- Bouquet's Expedition
- Constitutional Conventions, 1851, 1870, 1912
- King Philip's War, 1675-1678
- The Dayton Accord
- Toledo War & the Frostbitten Convention, 1835-1836
- Treaty of Greenville, 1795
- War of 1812

### Economic History

- Baldemar Velasquez – American labor union activist and co-founder of Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO.
- Building of the Miami and Erie Canal
- Cincinnati meatpacking "Porkopolis," 1840-1875
- Cleveland Strike at General Motors –
- Construction of the National Road in Ohio, 1825-1838
- Formation of the United Auto Workers
- Panic of 1907 & the founding of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
- United Mine Workers coal strike of 1919 in Ohio
- Youngstown "Little Steel" Strike – Led to the formation of the United Steels Workers Union

### Environmental History

- Cuyahoga River Fires
- National Environment Policy Act, 1970
- Ohio Conservancy Law
- Scioto River pollution

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- The Great Dayton Flood
- The Wilderness Act of 1964

### Political History

- Associate Justice Harold Burton, 1 of 9 Supreme Court Justices to rule on *Brown v. the Board of Education*, 1954
- Benjamin Lundy – Abolitionist, publisher of antislavery newspapers
- *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 1969
- Clement Vallandigham – Leader of the Ohio Democratic Party and opponent of the American Civil War \*
- *Columbus Board of Education v. Penick*, 1979
- *Equality Foundation of Cincinnati vs. City of Cincinnati*, 1997 \*
- Florence Ellinwood Allen – First woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court and first to serve on the Supreme Court of any state
- Joshua R. Giddings – Abolitionist, one of the founders and member of the Republican Party
- Kent State University shootings, 1970
- *Mapp v. Ohio*, 1961
- Maxwell's Code, 1795
- Ohio Black Codes & Ohio Black Laws, 1804 & 1807 respectively
- Ohio Civil Rights Act of 1959
- Ohio Public Accommodations Law of 1884
- Ohio Statehood, 1803
- Stonewall Union (now known as Stonewall Columbus)
- The Bing Act, 1921
- The Northwest Ordinance, 1787

### Science & Medicine

- 1918 Flu Epidemic at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio
- AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland
- Albert Sabin & the invention of the oral polio vaccine
- Ella P. Stewart – First African American female pharmacist in the U.S.
- Neil Armstrong & Apollo 11 mission \*

- Thomas Alva Edison – Menlo Park laboratory & his inventions
- Willem Kolff – Cleveland Clinic doctor who invented kidney dialysis

### Social & Cultural History

- 'Red Power' – Pan Indian Identity, 1960s
- Cleveland Black Gay Pride Weekends
- Harry C. Smith – Journalist & Legislator who championed Civil Rights in Ohio
- Jean O'Leary – one of the founders of National Coming Out Day
- Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster- creators of the "first superhero," Superman \*
- Jesse Owens & 1936 Berlin Olympics
- Lane Seminary Debates \*
- Lockbourne Army Air Force Base (Columbus) – Tuskegee Airmen
- McGuffey Readers – standardized textbook for students around the country in 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Natalie Clifford Barney – American playwright, poet and novelist
- Paul Laurence Dunbar– African American Poet and activist
- Protest & labor songs of Appalachian coal miners
- Toni Morrison, author & first African American woman to win the Nobel prize in literature
- United Freedom Movement

### Women's History

- 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Betsy Mix Cowles – Prominent educator, activist & suffragist
- Gloria Steinem – Famed women's rights advocate
- Lucy Stone – Abolitionist & Suffragist
- Oberlin College – First college to admit women and one of the first to admit African Americans
- Ohio Women's Convention at Salem
- Victoria Woodhull – First woman to be nominated for president in 1872 and member of the suffrage movement

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Dig deeper into some Ohio topics! Take a look through the background on each topic and think through the research questions. What other research questions could help you think about these topics and how they relate to rights and responsibilities?

### Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

#### *Background*

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was enacted in 1990 to ensure the protection and return of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural significance. NAGPRA lays out the process for proper treatment of the remains of Native ancestors and their belongings “with dignity and respect,” as well as the procedures for remains found on Federal or Tribal land. Additionally, the Act requires Federal agencies and institutions that receive Federal funds (including museums, universities, state agencies, and local governments) to return or transfer Native American human remains and other cultural items to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated Native American tribes. Though the law was enacted in 1990, the repatriation of objects is ongoing as Federal agencies and organizations receiving Federal funds continue to work through collections housing thousands of remains and objects.



NAGPRA: National Park Service  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm>

#### *Questions to Consider*

How did the enactment of NAGPRA change the rights of Indigenous people? How did it impact the access archaeologists, anthropologists and other scientists have to study Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred and cultural objects? How can policy balance the need to treat

all people with dignity while also allowing for continued advancement in fields like anthropology and

archaeology? NAGPRA does not dictate what actions must be taken for remains and objects found on private or State lands. How have state governments handled this issue differently than the Federal government?



## Local History Topics Rights & Responsibilities in History

### **Equality Foundation of Cincinnati vs. City of Cincinnati, 1997**

#### *Background*

In 1993, Cincinnatians voted to implement a City Charter amendment stating, "No special class status may be granted based upon sexual orientation, conduct or relationships." This amendment ultimately prevented the city from providing legal protections to LGBTQ+ individuals and repealed all prior legislation that provided legal protections. As a result, the Equality Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. brought a lawsuit against the City of Cincinnati, arguing that the amendment would violate the First and Fourteenth Amendment rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. The Equality Foundation ultimately lost the case on appeal at the Federal level. The amendment was implemented and prevented the passage of any laws protecting LGBTQ+ Cincinnatians until 2004, when the amendment was repealed by voters.

#### *Questions to Consider*

How did Cincinnatians exercise their rights in voting for the amendment? How did the implementation of the amendment change the rights of Cincinnatians? Did it have the same effect on all people? What responsibilities do voters have to ensure legal protection for minorities? What role do the courts play in determining rights and responsibilities?



## Local History Topics Rights & Responsibilities in History

### Apollo 11

#### *Background*

In July 1969, the Apollo 11 mission successfully landed the first humans on the moon. The American mission was part of the Space Race, a period of competition between the United States and Soviet Union to determine which superpower possessed spaceflight superiority. The astronauts collected samples, left behind equipment to monitor and collect more data from the moon, and took measurements while they were on the surface. Though an American flag was planted on the surface of the moon, the United States did not claim ownership of the moon. This was in line with the so-called Outer Space Treaty, an agreement drafted by the United Nations that outlined the basic principles of space law, including provisions that prevented any claims of ownership or sovereignty by a nation and that declared space exploration for the benefit of all nations. The American people celebrated the Apollo 11 mission as a great victory and many considered it to be the final battle in the Space Race between the Soviet Union and United States.



#### *Questions to Consider*

What rights and responsibilities were at play in the Apollo 11 mission? In what ways did NASA employees view their work on the Apollo 11 mission as a civic responsibility? What rights did the United States give up in signing the Outer Space Treaty and how did that impact the Apollo 11 mission? What responsibilities did the treaty place on the United States during the mission? What responsibilities did the United States have to preserve and protect the moon? Who should own and control the samples astronauts took from the moon? How did the Apollo 11 mission impact the rights and responsibilities of spacefaring nations?

*Apollo 11 launch photograph. (1969).*

<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll32/id/14757>



## Local History Topics Rights & Responsibilities in History

### Clement Vallandigham

#### *Background & Questions to Get You Thinking*

Clement Vallandigham was a leader of the Ohio Democratic Party and an opponent of the American Civil War during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the years leading up to the American Civil War, Vallandigham was a staunch opponent of war to settle the differences between the North and the South and believed that the Union had no right to regulate slavery or use military force against the South. Vallandigham was one of President Lincoln's most outspoken critics and the leading Peace Democrat in Ohio. He delivered a speech denouncing General No. 38 (issued by Union Gen. Burnside, it banned "sympathies for the enemy"), which Vallandigham believed was a violation of civil liberties. He was arrested, tried and ultimately sentenced into exile in the Confederacy. Vallandigham quickly escaped from the Confederacy into Canada and would return to Ohio after the war to become a leader in the Ohio Democratic Party.

#### *Questions to Consider*

What rights and responsibilities were at play in the leadup to and duration of the American Civil War? How did opponents and proponents of the Civil War view states' rights? Should First

Amendment rights be limited during wartime?

Should those rights be applied differently depending on the level of influence a person

has? How did Vallandigham view the rights of the Southern states? How did his view differ from Ohio Republicans and President Lincoln? Should conviction of a wartime crime prevent a politician from regaining office?



*Clement Vallandigham Conscription Bill Speech. (1863).*  
<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll36/id/4496>

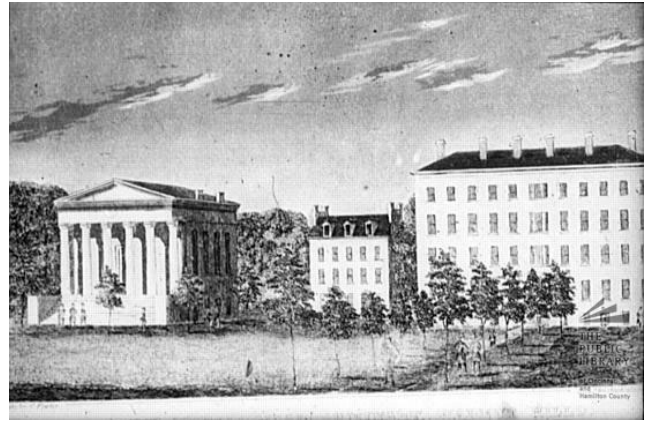
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### Lane Seminary Debates

#### *Background*

In the winter of 1834, the students of Lane Theological Seminary, including some southerners and one former slave, organized an eighteen-night revival under the leadership of Theodore Dwight Weld. These antislavery debates over immediate abolition versus colonization (sending free African Americans to a colony in Africa) effectively converted almost all the students to prefer immediate abolition. American newspapers publicized the debates, and women supporters, "the Cincinnati Sisters," organized local schools for African American children.

The debates caused considerable controversy and even prompted threats of violence against the seminary. In response, the trustees prohibited the students from discussing controversial issues. As a result of this prohibition, most of the students withdrew, set up a seminary in exile in Cumminsville, Ohio and then moved it to Oberlin College. The Lane Seminary Debates marked the shift in American antislavery efforts from colonization to abolition, and the "Lane Rebels" became ministers, abolitionists, and social reformers across the country.



*Sketch of Lane Seminary. (1830).*

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LaneSeminary.jpg#filehistory>

#### *Questions to Consider*

What responsibilities did the students believe they had to speak out against slavery? How were students exercising their rights in hosting these debates? How did the students' right to free speech clash with the board of trustees' responsibility to the seminary? How did the students' arguments for immediate abolition or colonization reflect their views of rights and responsibilities? How would the two primary proposed plans for the end of slavery (immediate abolition versus colonization) impact the rights of formerly enslaved people, in enacted? How would they change the responsibilities of the United States government and the American people?

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*Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, creators of Superman.. (1942).*  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/06/24/kryptonics>

### **Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster- creators of the "first superhero," Superman**

#### *Background*

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster met in 1930 as high school students in Cleveland, Ohio, creating comics together. In 1938, the duo agreed to sell Superman to National Allied Publications (a forerunner of DC Comics) for \$135 and a 10-year contract as the principal writer and artist for the Superman comics, earning half of the net profits. When the contract ended in 1948, Siegel & Shuster sued to regain the copyright for Superman and to receive compensation for DC's use of the Superboy story (for which the company had never paid), but ultimately lost the case and received a \$100,000 settlement. Their names were subsequently removed from the comic bylines. Siegel sued for the rights to Superman again in 1967 but lost. Finally, in 1975, Siegel launched a campaign to pressure Warner Bros. (the parent company of DC Comics) for financial compensation. Due to public pressure,

Warner Bros. agreed to give Siegel and Shuster each a yearly stipend of \$20,000 and added their names back into the comic bylines.

#### *Questions to Consider*

How did Siegel & Shuster's rights to their intellectual property change throughout the life of the Superman comics? What rights did they give up in order to get their comics published? What did they gain in return? What responsibilities did DC have to Siegel & Shuster? Did both parties always find this to be a fair exchange?