



Potential Grosse Pointe History Day Topics

History Day 2025 Rights AND Responsibilities

To study rights and responsibilities in history, we must ask questions. Who decides who has rights? Does everyone have the same rights? Who decides on the limits individuals should or should not have? Why? What led to establishing certain rights, and to whom were they given? How have people, governments, or institutions decided what parameters should be set to enforce responsibilities? How are such decisions justified?

What are the rights and responsibilities of your community to provide an education?

- Right to public education in the state constitution
- Funding of public education
- What role did Dexter Ferry play?
 - Dexter Ferry - President of the DM Ferry & Co, Vice-President of Standard Insurance Company, President of Michigan Fire & Marine Insurance Company, Director of a few Michigan banks, representative in the Michigan House, president of the Michigan State Board of Education, co-founder of Provident Loan and Savings Society, a trustee of Grace Hospital, board member of the DIA, Captain in the Army Quartermaster's Reserve Corps.

What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals or groups of individuals to ensure free speech?

- Brianne Nadeau - Gold award winner from the Girl Scouts, member of the Council of the District of Columbia, board member of Jews United for Justice, and a member of the DC chapter of the Anti-Defamation League, an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in DC, extended benefits of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program in DC.

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to access information and prevent misinformation/disinformation?

- Miles O'Brien - National Science correspondent for PBS NewsHour, correspondent for the National Science Foundation, chairman of the NASA Advisory Council's Education and Outreach Committee

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to protect and defend democracy?

- Military service
 - James Edward Service - Vice Admiral of the US Navy, recipient of: Distinguished Service Medal (Libya), 3 Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with combat "V" (Vietnam Operations), 7 Air Medals, Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" (Korean Operations)
 - Maire School project: "[Marie Students Fly Through History](#)" GP News article
- Grosse Pointe War Memorial origins - Alger family
 - Article from Betsy Alexander: "[Alger Services Through the Ages](#)" (staffperson at the War Memorial)
 - [Russell A. Alger family papers, 1842-1975 \(majority within 1863-1865, 1888-1945\)](#) at UM Bentley Library

What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals or groups of individuals to participate in the democratic process?

- Eric O'Keefe - A political activist focused on congressional term limits, a founding board member of Citizens for Self-Governance,[1] co-chairman and co-founder of the Campaign for Primary Accountability Political Action Committee, and chairman of the Health Care Compact Alliance, national director of the Libertarian Party
- Jill Alper - Electoral strategist for Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and John Kerry; former DNC Political Director, a superdelegate from Michigan in 2016
- Tim Bledsoe - Former representative in the Michigan House of Representatives, a precinct organizer for John Kerry in 2004

What are the rights and responsibilities of the state in crime and punishment?

- Michigan is the first state to abolish the death penalty
- https://www.michbar.org/programs/milestone/milestones_firsttoabolish
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/curriculum/high-school/about-the-death-penalty/history-of-the-death-penalty>

What are the rights and responsibilities of your community to address civil rights issues and prevent discrimination?

- Sarah Elizabeth Ray - fight for civil rights at Boblo Island
- The Sarah E. Ray Project - <https://www.detroitsotherrosaparks.com/>
- Article: [The Unsinkable Sarah E. Ray](#)
- [Bob-Lo Excursion Co. v. Michigan, 333 U.S. 28 \(1948\)](#) - Supreme Court case

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to establish and maintain community parks & recreation

- History of GPW Parks ([brochure](#))
- Lakefront Park (GPW) Chronology ([brochure](#))

- Clarence E. Brewer, advocate for Detroit parks ([papers at U of M library](#))
- Belle Isle

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to establish and maintain arts & culture in the community - e.g., Detroit Institute of Arts

- <https://historicdetroit.org/buildings/detroit-museum-of-art>
- Ferry Family (Dexter Ferry) papers at the University of Michigan Library ([summary](#)), which includes the development of the DIA
- Detroit History Podcast [episode](#)

What are the rights and responsibilities of the federal government to support job creation and conserving the environment

- **Civilian Conservation Corps in Michigan**
- <https://www.michigan.gov/mhc/museums/hln-ccc/ccc-in-michigan>
- <https://www.michigan.gov/mhc/museums/hln-ccc>
- The Veteran Civilian Conservation Corps Companies in Michigan (presentation on [youtube from the Michigan Military Technical & History Museum](#))

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to provide access to information?

- **Grosse Pointe Cable TV - community owned cable**
- WMTV - public access TV station
- Studio at the War Memorial
- [John Prost talks about the history of WMTV](#)

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to manage international relations?

- **The Detroit - Windsor Tunnel**
- Detroit History Podcast [episode](#)
- Windsor Public Library [digital exhibit on the history of the tunnel](#)

What are the rights and responsibilities of the federal government to conserve the natural environment in your community

- **Michigan Conservation Districts**
- Established as a result of the 1930s Dust Bowl
- Local providers of natural resources management (units of government)
- <https://www.macd.org/>
- [Wayne County Conservation District](#) address is listed in GP Farms

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to manage border relations and maintain prosperity and peace?

- Great Lakes History
- Why are there no warships on the lake?

- Rush Bagot Treaty

What rights and responsibilities do influential families, such as the Ford family, have to shape their community?

- Henry Ford
- Edsel Ford
- Eleanor Ford in the community

What rights and responsibilities in your community does your community have in the civil rights movement and to address discrimination?

- The point system
- The first African American resident (1964)
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speech at Grosse Pointe High School (1968)
- Kathy Groehn Cosseboom ElMessidi, a Grosse Pointe resident, wrote a book "Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Race Against Race" (Michigan State University Press, 1972). The book deals with racial and social attitudes in the Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe as revealed in education, school-community relations, housing discrimination, and religious institutions. It won the American Pen Women's first prize for information books in 1974. [Kathy Groehn Cosseboom ElMessidi Papers](#) are archived at the Walter P. Reuther Library.
- [Grosse Pointe Civil Rights Organizations Papers](#) at Walter P. Reuther Library
- Grosse Pointe/Harper Woods NAACP

What rights and responsibilities did your community play in the constitutional amendment to prohibit alcohol consumption?

- How did your community advocate for the amendment
- How did you community respond when prohibition was implemented
- How did your community help end the amendment

Who has the right to the land and existence in your community?

- Fox Creek incident
- Burt Lake Burn-Out
 - <https://burtlakeband.org/category/burt-lake-burn-out/>
 - [Report on U of M Biological Station](#)
 - [Michigan Radio report](#)

What rights and responsibilities did your community have during the cholera epidemic?

- Provencal-Weir House
- Cholera epidemic
- Gabriel Richard

What are the rights and responsibilities of your local municipality?

- Home Rule Act

- The incorporation of Grosse Pointe Park
- The incorporation of Grosse Pointe Woods

What are the rights and responsibilities of your community in creating economic opportunities and infrastructure?

- **The Erie Canal's Impact on Grosse Pointe**
- Also the Clinton and Kalamazoo Canal's impact on the area

What are the rights and responsibilities of ensuring the right to vote

- **Women's Suffrage in Grosse Pointe**
- **Black Americans**

What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals or groups of individuals to comply (or not) with the Fugitive Slave Act?

- The Underground Railroad

What rights and responsibilities did women take on to improve and influence their community?

- **The History of Tau Beta**
 - [Tau Beta website](#)
 - Ford House maintains their archive material
- Connected to the Dodge Main, 1900 Hamtramck Drive, Hamtramck MI
 - [Dodge Main Historical Marker](#)
- The Detroit Institute for Children

What are the rights and responsibilities of individuals or groups of individuals to ensure the rights of the LGBTQ community?

- The turning point for Jeff Montgomery and LGBTQ advocacy (Grosse Pointe resident, founder of Triangle Foundation)
 - [Triangle Foundation records](#)
 - [Detroit History Podcast episode](#)
- michmemories.org - <https://michmemories.org/>

What rights and responsibilities did people have in civil rights activities?

- Frank Joyce - Grosse Pointe resident
- Northern Student Movement, City-Wide Citizens Action Committee, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers
- [Organizing Your Own book](#)

What are the rights and responsibilities in your community to ensure people with disabilities have access?