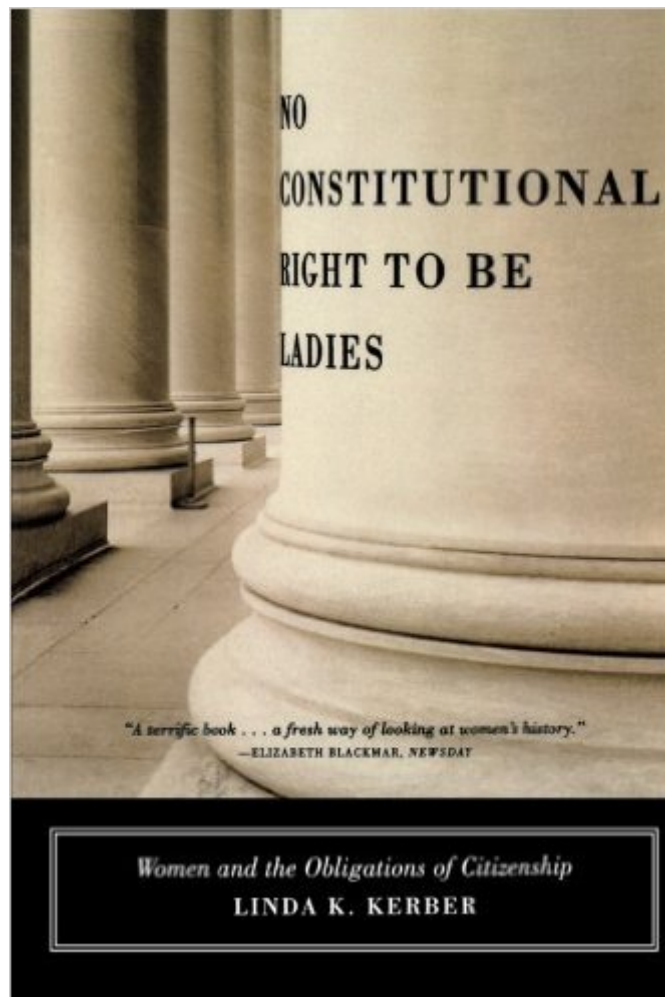


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No Constitutional Right To Be Ladies: Women And The Obligations Of Citizenship



Synopsis

This pioneering study redefines women's history in the United States by focusing on civic obligations rather than rights. Looking closely at thirty telling cases from the pages of American legal history, Kerber's analysis reaches from the Revolution, when married women did not have the same obligation as their husbands to be "patriots," up to the present, when men and women, regardless of their marital status, still have different obligations to serve in the Armed Forces. An original and compelling consideration of American law and culture, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies* emphasizes the dangers of excluding women from other civic responsibilities as well, such as loyalty oaths and jury duty. Exploring the lives of the plaintiffs, the strategies of the lawyers, and the decisions of the courts, Kerber offers readers a convincing argument for equal treatment under the law.

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Customer Reviews

This is an absolutely fascinating book. The material in it is interesting, detailed and very well written. She uses legal cases as a starting point to discuss women's civic obligations. It becomes very clear that people's obligations have an enormous effect on their rights and the roles they are expected to play in society. The individual cases help keep things grounded in people's lives and not just legal theories. There is an amazing amount of information that I never knew which really helped me understand how things were and how they changed. One case study was two women who felt that they were being charged more in property taxes than the other land owners in the area. They

decided to stop paying property taxes using the slogan "no taxation without representation". These two women had received training in political activism with the abolition and temperance movements which was common among the people who worked for women's suffrage. The "no taxation without representation" was one of the first legal arguments used to try and obtain voting rights for women and initially it was a strong one. It had certainly worked to increase the various classes of men that were allowed to vote. With women, unfortunately, the courts chipped away at the legal precedent rather than following it. This one case allowed Ms. Kerber to talk about how women were hurt by being kept out of the political system, the women's suffrage movement, and the response of the courts and politicians. This book gave me an immense amount of food for thought. I highly recommend it.

This is that rare history book that can keep one up late, utterly unable to wait til the next day for the end of the story. Kerber focuses on little-known women and their conflicts with government over their rights and obligations as citizens: loyalty during wartime, voting, serving on juries, paying taxes. She brings these stories to life with dramatic, clear writing. If you're interested in American history, don't miss this book

I have read a lot of women's and Constitutional history, and still my jaw literally dropped open several times while reading this book. Her use of real scenarios made the book readable and enjoyable. People have said lately that we are focused too much on our rights and not our responsibilities; it's scary to see that whether women must bear the responsibilities of citizenship is still in many ways an open question.

I'm definately interested in reading and understanding more about the situation women face today. This book was an incredibly informative education on the evolution of debate about what exactly is a woman's place in society. It helped clarify vague confusion I've felt about things being not yet fully equal, but not having the background or vocabulary to explain why.

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