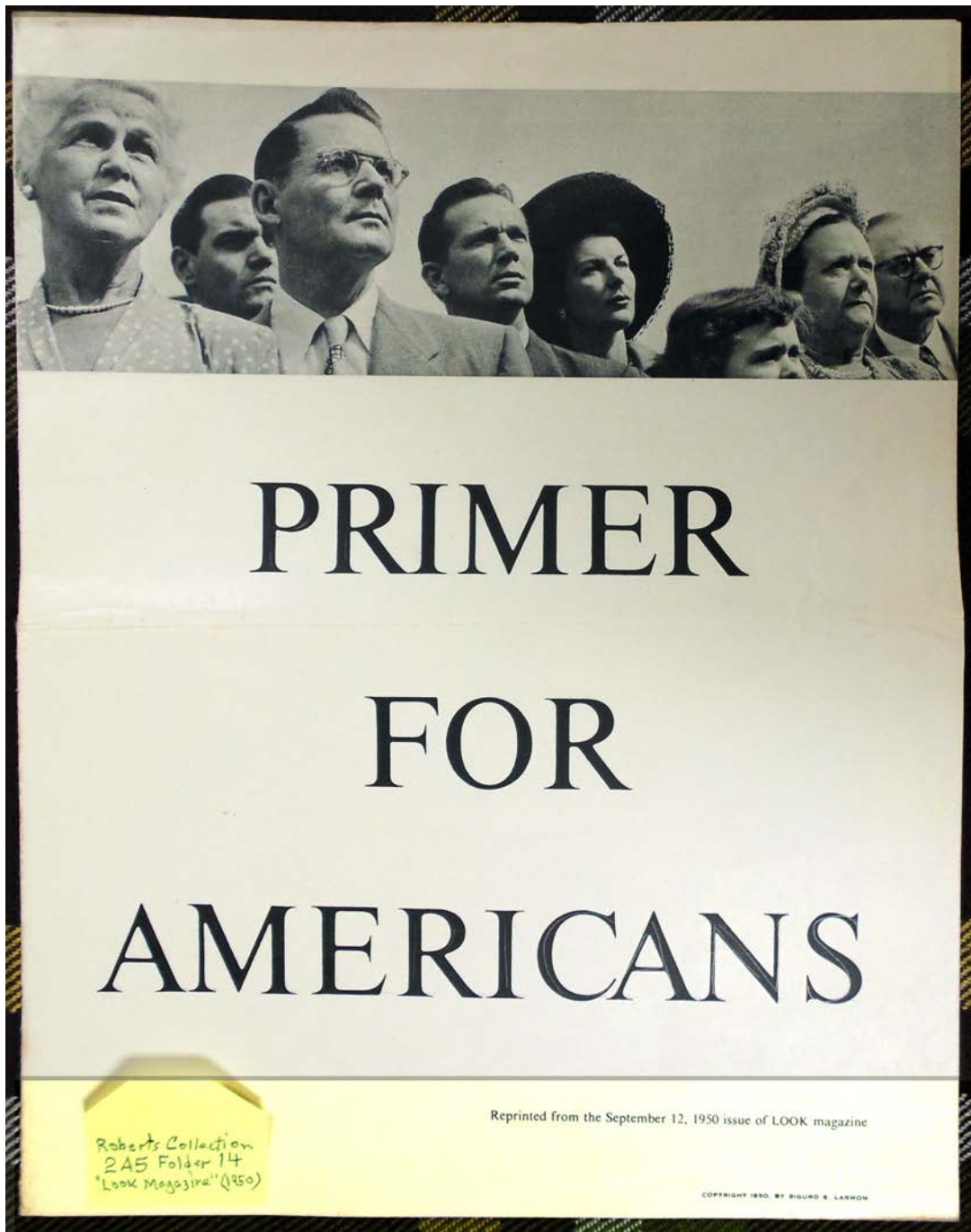


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Primer for Americans from "Look Magazine," 1950

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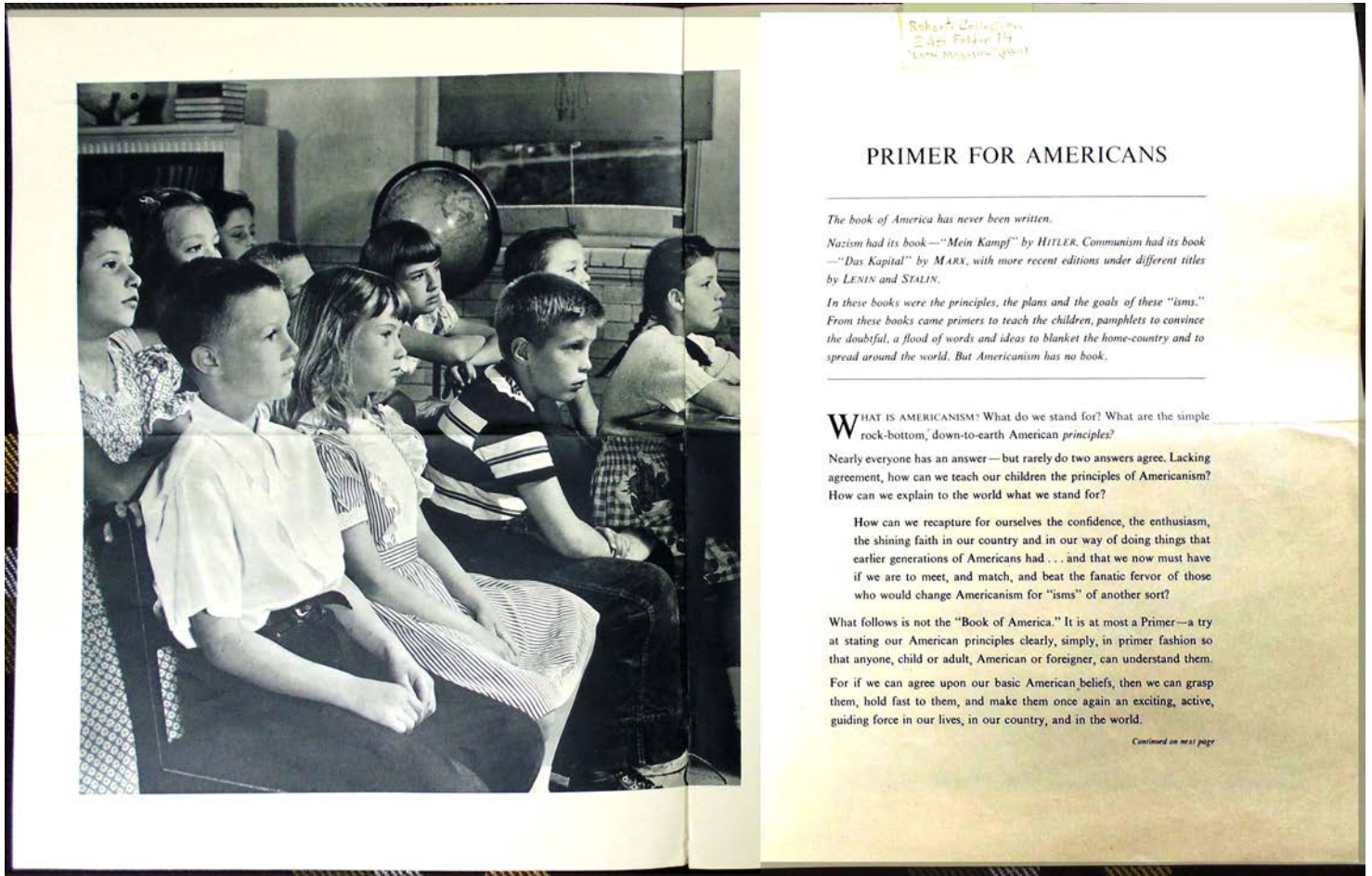
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**Dates:**

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## PRIMER FOR AMERICANS

*The book of America has never been written.*

*Nazism had its book—"Mein Kampf" by HITLER. Communism had its book—"Das Kapital" by MARX, with more recent editions under different titles by LENIN and STALIN.*

*In these books were the principles, the plans and the goals of these "isms." From these books came primers to teach the children, pamphlets to convince the doubtful, a flood of words and ideas to blanket the home-country and to spread around the world. But Americanism has no book.*

**W**HAT IS AMERICANISM? What do we stand for? What are the simple rock-bottom, down-to-earth American principles?

Nearly everyone has an answer—but rarely do two answers agree. Lacking agreement, how can we teach our children the principles of Americanism? How can we explain to the world what we stand for?

How can we recapture for ourselves the confidence, the enthusiasm, the shining faith in our country and in our way of doing things that earlier generations of Americans had . . . and that we now must have if we are to meet, and match, and beat the fanatic fervor of those who would change Americanism for "isms" of another sort?

What follows is not the "Book of America." It is at most a Primer—a try at stating our American principles clearly, simply, in primer fashion so that anyone, child or adult, American or foreigner, can understand them.

For if we can agree upon our basic American beliefs, then we can grasp them, hold fast to them, and make them once again an exciting, active, guiding force in our lives, in our country, and in the world.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF AMERICA ARE THESE

1. Each Person is of Importance and Value as an Individual.

This is the cornerstone... the foundation of all our other beliefs in the individual's right to live his own life, to speak for himself, to choose and change his leaders.

From it comes our hatred of those "isms" under which the individual has no value or importance as an individual, but is only one of many faceless beings in a countless herd called "the people."

Coming directly from that first principle are two other principles—two basic beliefs that are also part of the foundations of Americanism.

2. We Believe that All Men should Enjoy Personal Freedom.

3. We Believe that All Men are Created Equal.

It is worth noting that the Declaration of Independence expressed the belief that "all men are created equal." It did not state or imply a belief that men develop equally or have equal ability, or that they should ever be forced to an exact equality of thought, speech or material possessions.

This would be equality without freedom. Americans have always believed the two should go together.

From the days of the Declaration of Independence and the writing of the Constitution, Americans have been wise enough to know that even though Life, Liberty, and other unalienable rights are granted to man by his Creator, they require some protection by man, himself.

So, in our Constitution, and in other laws of our land, there are set down principles to protect the rights and freedoms and equality of individuals. And these, also, are part of the foundations of America.

4. The Right to Freedom of Speech.

This includes freedom of the press, of radio, of motion pictures, of every means by which man may express his thoughts on any subject.

5. The Right to Freedom of Assembly.

As we believe in the right of individual action, so we believe that individuals should be free to act together for the benefit of all. This is Democracy.

6. The Right to Freedom of Worship.

Not only is the individual free to worship as he will, but

religious themselves are free and equal... regardless of their size or their beliefs.

7. The Right to Security of Person and Property.

Not just one, but three Amendments to the Constitution (4th, 5th and 14th) protect against illegal search and seizure, or loss of life, liberty, or property, without "due process of law."

8. The Right to Equal Protection before the Law.

As individuals are equally important, so laws must apply equally to all, without special privileges for any particular individuals or groups.

9. The Right to Freedom from Slavery.

This includes "the right to quit," for no individual may be forced to work for another.

10. The Right to Petition the Government.

The legally guaranteed right of the individual to "petition the government for redress of grievances" is evidence of the American belief that government is the servant, not the master, of the people.

11. The Right to Vote for the person of your choice.

This is the individual's most potent weapon in the protection of his rights and freedoms... a weapon that to be effective must be constantly and wisely used.

The Principles of Americanism hold that every man has...

12. The Right to a Good Education.

13. The Right to Live where he pleases.

14. The Right to Work where he wants to.

15. The Right to Join and Belong to an Organization.

16. The Right to Own Property.

17. The Right to Start his Own Business.

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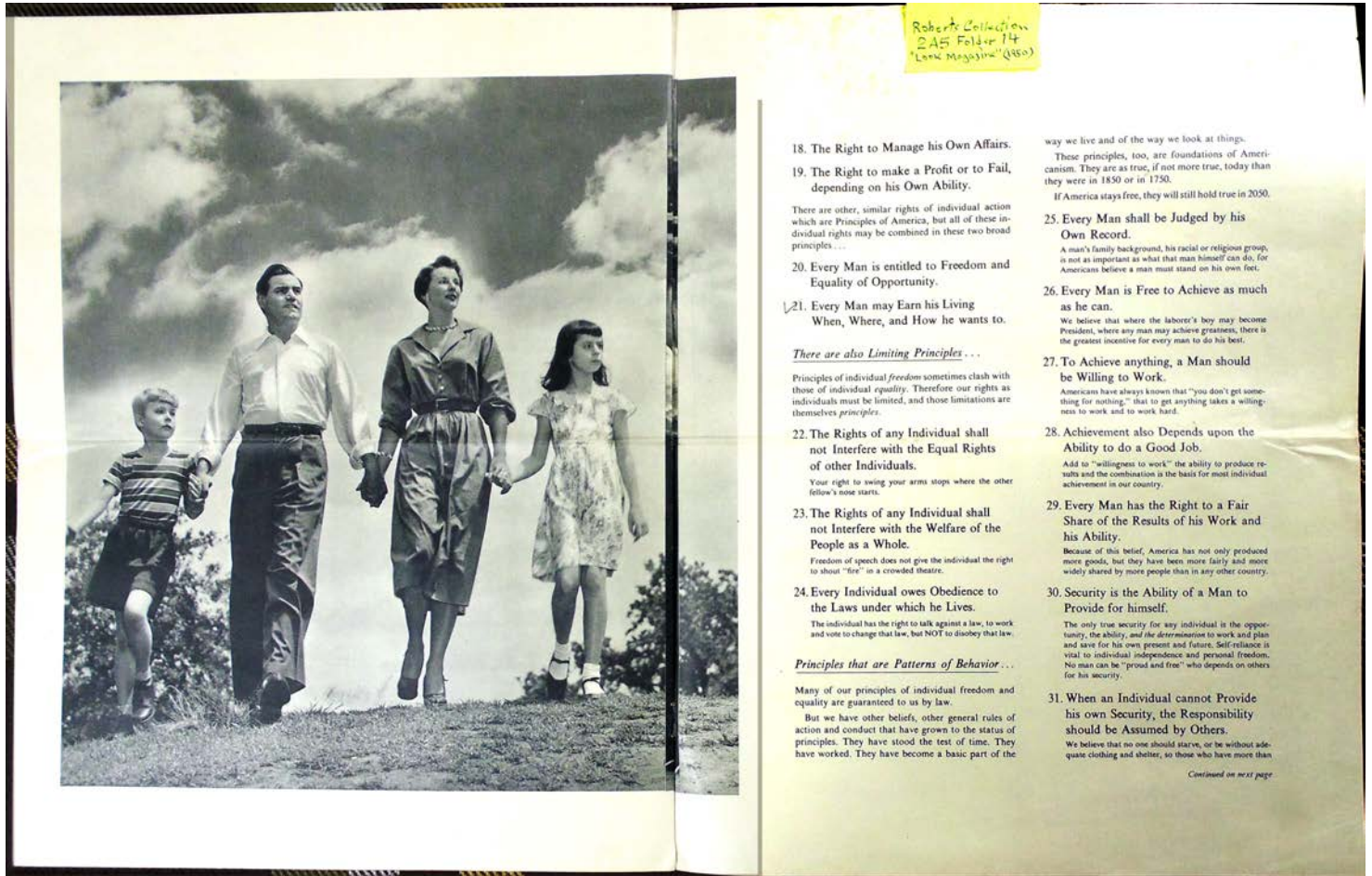
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18. The Right to Manage his Own Affairs.

19. The Right to make a Profit or to Fail, depending on his Own Ability.

There are other, similar rights of individual action which are Principles of America, but all of these individual rights may be combined in these two broad principles. . .

20. Every Man is entitled to Freedom and Equality of Opportunity.

21. Every Man may Earn his Living When, Where, and How he wants to.

*There are also Limiting Principles. . .*

Principles of individual freedom sometimes clash with those of individual equality. Therefore our rights as individuals must be limited, and those limitations are themselves principles.

22. The Rights of any Individual shall not Interfere with the Equal Rights of other Individuals.

Your right to swing your arms stops where the other fellow's nose starts.

23. The Rights of any Individual shall not Interfere with the Welfare of the People as a Whole.

Freedom of speech does not give the individual the right to shout "fire" in a crowded theatre.

24. Every Individual owes Obedience to the Laws under which he Lives.

The individual has the right to talk against a law, to work and vote to change that law, but NOT to disobey that law.

*Principles that are Patterns of Behavior. . .*

Many of our principles of individual freedom and equality are guaranteed to us by law.

But we have other beliefs, other general rules of action and conduct that have grown to the status of principles. They have stood the test of time. They have worked. They have become a basic part of the

way we live and of the way we look at things.

These principles, too, are foundations of Americanism. They are as true, if not more true, today than they were in 1850 or in 1750.

If America stays free, they will still hold true in 2050.

25. Every Man shall be Judged by his Own Record.

A man's family background, his racial or religious group, is not as important as what that man himself can do, for Americans believe a man must stand on his own feet.

26. Every Man is Free to Achieve as much as he can.

We believe that where the laborer's boy may become President, where any man may achieve greatness, there is the greatest incentive for every man to do his best.

27. To Achieve anything, a Man should be Willing to Work.

Americans have always known that "you don't get something for nothing," that to get anything takes a willingness to work and to work hard.

28. Achievement also Depends upon the Ability to do a Good Job.

Add to "willingness to work" the ability to produce results and the combination is the basis for most individual achievement in our country.

29. Every Man has the Right to a Fair Share of the Results of his Work and his Ability.

Because of this belief, America has not only produced more goods, but they have been more fairly and more widely shared by more people than in any other country.

30. Security is the Ability of a Man to Provide for himself.

The only true security for any individual is the opportunity, the ability, and the determination to work and plan and save for his own present and future. Self-reliance is vital to individual independence and personal freedom. No man can be "proud and free" who depends on others for his security.

31. When an Individual cannot Provide his own Security, the Responsibility should be Assumed by Others.

We believe that no one should starve, or be without adequate clothing and shelter, so those who have more than

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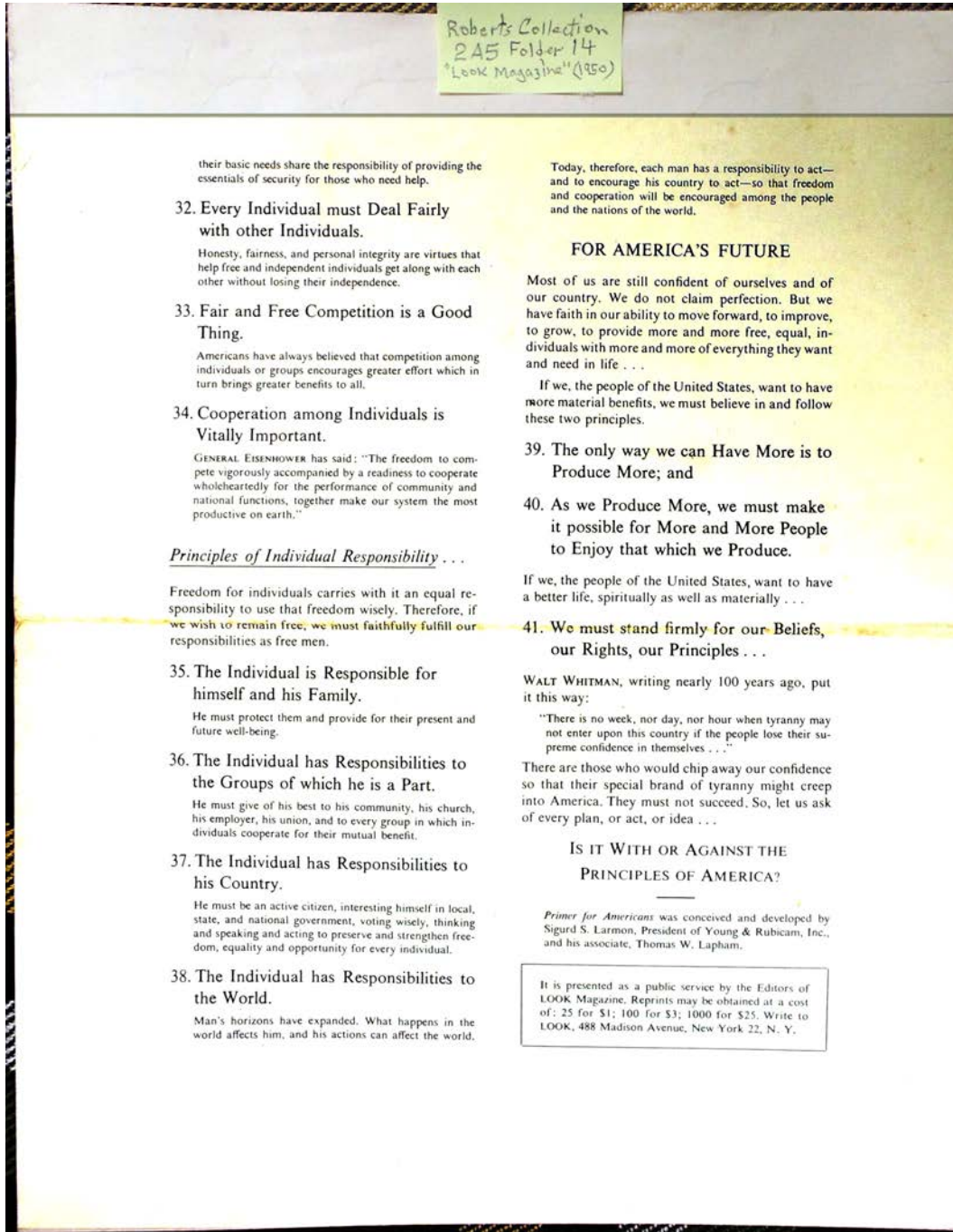
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Americans

**Types:**

magazine article

**Dates:**

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**Names:**

Primer For  
Americans

**Types:**

magazine article

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# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

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