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Most people are acquainted with the Bill of Rights, another name for the first ten amendments to the Constitution. In fact, I think we are aware of the first (the freedom of speech), the second (right to own a gun), perhaps the fourth (unreasonable searches and seizures), the fifth (self-incrimination) and maybe the eighth (cruel and unusual punishments) and the tenth (powers not delegated to the States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it are reserved to the states respectively).

In the March 22-28 issue of The Epoch Times, was an article about the ninth amendment written by Rob Natelson, a former constitutional law professor and now a senior fellow in constitutional jurisprudence at the Independence Institute in Denver. The paper has been running a series on people and ideas that helped form the Constitution and this one was about John Locke and the ninth amendment. My interest was peaked because I knew nothing about the ninth.

The ninth amendment states "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." This amendment was added to the Constitution on 15 December 1791.

I had to go to Ducksters for some definitions: "enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights". The word "enumeration" means an ordered or numbered list so, here they are referring to a "list of rights" in the Constitution. The word "construed" in "shall not be construed" means "to interpret the meaning of something", so this means something like "don't take this to mean". The other phrase, "deny or disparage others retained by the people" means that the government can't take away (deny or disparage) other rights of the people.

So the general meaning of the ninth amendment is "Just because there is a list of rights in the Constitution, it doesn't mean that the government can take away other rights of the people that are not listed there or in the first eight amendments."

Since 1955, this amendment has been used as a secondary source of liberties and emerged as important in the extension of the rights of privacy. Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg used this amendment when he concurred in the 1965 case of Griswold v. the State of Connecticut, that married couples had the right to birth control.

In his article, Rob Natelson lists some of Locke's beliefs such as (1) God gives every person certain rights or powers.....which may be exercised at adulthood. (2) Government must exercise its rights/powers as a trustee, fairly and for the benefit of all. (3) As a rule, neither government nor individuals may infringe on the rights of others without their consent. (4) However, infringement sometimes occurs. This may be because of wrongdoing, a clash of individual rights, or the needs of government in performing its functions. (5) When infringement occurs, those who benefit from the infringement must compensate the injured person for his loss. The last three not only influenced the Constitution, but have been imported extensively into American civil law of contracts and other interpersonal relationships. However, he feels that "The Constitution's most obvious Lockean provision is the Ninth Amendment."

Locke's ideas about government provide moral guidance for how governments should treat citizens and how citizens should treat each other. According to Mr. Natelson, "His [Locke's] influence on the

American Founding was enormous. Some have referred to him as a "Founding Grandfather." ' A good "Founding Grandfather" to have, right?