



History of the Common Law: The Development of Anglo-American Legal Institutions

John H. Langbein, Renee Lettow Lerner, Bruce P. Smith

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This introductory text explores the historical origins of the main legal institutions that came to characterize the Anglo-American legal tradition, and to distinguish it from European legal systems. The book contains both text and extracts from historical sources and literature. The book is published in color, and contains over 250 illustrations, many in color, including medieval illuminated manuscripts, paintings, books and manuscripts, caricatures, and photographs.

Two great themes dominate the book: (1) the origins, development, and pervasive influence of the jury system and judge/jury relations across eight centuries of Anglo-American civil and criminal justice; and (2) the law/equity division, from the emergence of the Court of Chancery in the fourteenth century down through equity's conquest of common law in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The chapters on criminal justice explore the history of pretrial investigation, policing, trial, and sentencing, as well as the movement in modern times to nonjury resolution through plea bargaining. Considerable attention is devoted to distinctively American developments, such as the elective bench, and the influence of race relations on the law of criminal procedure.

Other major subjects of this book include the development of the legal profession, from the serjeants, barristers, and attorneys of medieval times down to the transnational megafirms of twenty-first century practice; the literature of the law, especially law reports and treatises, from the Year Books and Bracton down to the American state reports and today's electronic services; and legal education, from the founding of the Inns of Court to the emergence and growth of university law schools in the United States.

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Vivid writing, engaging source materials, and lavish illustrations breathe life into nearly 1,000 years of Anglo-American legal history. Concise summaries, manageable extracts, clear organization, and a detailed **Teacher's Manual** consistently support your teaching.

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