

The History of Michigan Law

Edited by Paul Finkelman and Martin J. Hershock

(Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv, 290. Notes, list of contributors, index. \$49.95.)

The History of Michigan Law is a volume in Ohio University's Law, Society, and Politics in the Midwest series, which aims to illuminate some of the key topics that have helped to shape the development of the law in individual states. Edited by Paul Finkelman and Martin J. Hershock, the book is comprised of twelve articles on various topics written by professors, lawyers, and other legal experts. Arranged chronologically by subject, the offerings trace the development of Michigan law from pioneer days to the early 2000s.

Several overarching themes become evident. First, the implementation of law in territorial days and the drafting of the state's early constitutions reflected the influence of settlers who came predominantly from New England and New York, and whose outlooks often differed substantially from those of settlers in other midwestern states. These eastern values and concerns remained evident, as well, in early nineteenth-century temperance and prohibition efforts and in the development of antebellum laws applied to address the rights of free African Americans and to assist escaped slaves who entered the state.

A second major element that emerges from this survey of the development of Michigan law is the continued necessity of addressing

conflicts between traditional values and the changing conditions that came with modernization. Construction of railroads in the mid-nineteenth century raised questions about private property, taxation, and eminent domain. The development of industry and the exploitation of natural resources prompted other concerns, including the drive of reformers to enact and enforce labor law, and the efforts of environmentalists to prevent the complete devastation of the state's natural resources.

In the twentieth century, Michigan law faced many of the same challenges that arose in other states' legal systems. Guarantees of the rights of African Americans after the Civil War were not always effectively enforced. Organized labor's major gains (culminating with new federal legislation in the 1930s) were hindered by backlash against new activist techniques such as the sit-down strike. In the 1960s and 1970s the Michigan Women's Commission led a relatively unsuccessful campaign for equal pay, abortion rights, and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The increasing formalization of legal education in the twentieth century sparked the establishment of numerous law schools intended to address the varying needs of would-be lawyers from around the country.

This volume presents an interesting and readable account of the development of some key areas of Michigan law, and is particularly useful in its comparison and contrast of Michigan's legal history with that of surrounding states. But further interstate comparisons would have been welcome, as would a more detailed, contemporary analysis of criminal law, labor law, and civil rights legislation. The extensive notes provided

at the end of each chapter are particularly useful for scholars interested in pursuing those topics on their own.

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British Buckeyes

The English, Scots, and Welsh in Ohio, 1700-1900

By William E. Van Vugt

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2006. Pp. xiii, 295. Photographs, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00.)

This interesting and informative book focuses on the role played by British settlers in the development of Ohio, mainly in the nineteenth century. Some individuals helped to open the area before 1800 and immigration increased hugely after 1815, but the British still represented only twenty percent of foreign-born immigrants in 1850 and sixteen percent in 1880. The British struggled to adjust to the unfamiliar agricultural conditions they found in Ohio, but by mid-century they were introducing scientific methods and improving agricultural practice. Overall, they came from a broad spectrum of occupational backgrounds and possessed skills that ensured they would contribute disproportionately to the industrializa-

tion of Ohio, as well as enriching its educational and cultural attainments. These contributions were facilitated by the similarity of their language and cultural heritage to those of most Americans, which ensured that they would integrate more quickly and easily than other immigrant groups.

Of course not all Britons were the same. The author spells out how the Welsh formed tight, inward-looking communities and retained their language, religion, and distinctive cultural identity, though the picture could be considerably enriched by using the many revealing letters home, written mainly in Welsh, now in the National Library of Wales. Similar separateness was certainly displayed by people from the Isle of Man