

Legal History and Legal Issues: Library Resources
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Famous Legal Cases from History

347.737 / KRA

Sensational trials of the 20th century.

Betsy Harvey Kraft. 1998. 216p. (MJS)

From School Library Journal "The concept of justice combined with the drama of the courtroom pervades this volume, making it a real attention-grabber. Some of the most notorious legal battles of the last 100 years are presented with mesmerizing you-are-there immediacy: the Sacco-Vanzetti trial, the Scopes "Monkey" trial, the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, the Julius and Ethel Rosenberg spy trial, Brown v. the Board of Education, the Watergate trials, the John Hinckley, Jr. trial, and, of course, the O. J. Simpson trial. The chapters are fast paced, well illustrated, and packed with interesting details. Each one concludes by showing the impact of the proceedings and the court decision on such enduring issues as civil rights, national security, education, religion, and the office of the presidency, making the trials as timely today as they were when they were headlines. This book is sure to be a hit, even with reluctant readers."

Salem Witch Trials

133.43 / ARO

Witch-hunt: Mysteries of the Salem witch trials.

Marc Aronson. 2003. 272p. (S)

From Booklist "Was it pagan faith or a trick gone bad? A devious teenager's power play or a rebellion against the strictures of a rigid religious community? Aronson shows off both his talent for historical interpretation and his facility as a nonfiction writer as he reconstructs events surrounding the witch trials of 1692. He isn't shy about injecting his own voice in the mix; he often speaks directly to readers, putting the history into a context that sharp teens can grasp and encouraging them to think about how the events connect to their lives and to contemporary culture and politics. To enrich and clarify the history, he quotes from an extraordinary, well-

documented array of sources and recorded testimonies (of accused and accuser alike), producing a dense, wide-angle view of the tragedy that evaluates causative theories ranging from deceit and outright fraud to spoiled food that caused hallucinations."

Y / Hearn

The minister's daughter.

Julie Hearn. 2005. 263p. (JS)

In 1645 in England, the daughters of the town minister successfully accuse a local healer and her granddaughter of witchcraft to conceal an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, but years later during the 1692 Salem trials their lie has unexpected repercussions. See also the excellent Book on Disc version of this story (BOD / Y / HEARN)

Y / DUBLE

The sacrifice.

Kathleen Benner Duple. 2005. 211p. (EMJ)

From Booklist "What was it like to be accused during the Salem witch hunts in 1692? Duple brings the history close through the viewpoint of Abigail, 10, who is accused of working with the devil, imprisoned, and tried along with her older sister. The social history is intensely dramatic: the spread of fear and hatred; the horrific conditions in the packed jail; the public meetings, with the accusers "moaning and groaning and screaming for the accused to stop tormenting them." But it is the story of one young girl and her family that will grab readers. Abigail is always in trouble for not knowing her place as a woman, and the book opens with her in the stocks for daring to run and raise her skirt above her knees. Her strong mother supports her irrepressible nature, unlike weak Father, who is mentally ill and whose "fits" frighten people (Is he in the devil's thrall?). The surprising climax of family sacrifice is heartrending. The author's note adds another surprise: some of Duple's own Puritan ancestors were accused of witchcraft, and this novel imagines their story."

United States v. Amistad (1839)

J326.8 / MYE

Amistad: A long road to freedom.

Walter Dean Myers. 1998. 98p. (EMJ)

Traces the 1839 revolt of Africans against their Spanish captors aboard the slave ship *Amistad*, their landing in the United States and arrest for piracy and murder, and trials which ended in their acquittal by the Supreme Court.

J326.0973 / HUL

United States v. the Amistad: The question of slavery in a free country.

David Hulm. 2004. 64p. (EM)

From the series *Supreme Court Cases Through Primary Sources*. Includes a glossary, recommended reading and websites, a bibliography, and primary source list.

VCV / 973.0496 / VOY

The voyage of la amistad: A quest for freedom.

H. G. Motyl. 1998. 70min. (JS)

This documentary chronicles the story of the abducted Africans and their battles for freedom, first on the *Amistad* and then as they stood trial in a strange land, taking their case all the way to the Supreme Court with various abolitionists and former president John Quincy Adams leading the way. See also Stephen Spielberg's 1998 drama, *Amistad*, starring Morgan Freeman and Anthony Hopkins.

Dred Scott (1857)

Y / MOSES

I, Dred Scott: A fictional narrative based on the life and legal precedent of Dred Scott.

Sheila Moses. 2005. 96p. (JS)

From Booklist "Few people know why the Dred Scott decision is considered one of the causes of the Civil War. This fictionalized slave narrative humanizes the struggle of brave Dred Scott and supplies extensive historical notes that explain the complex legal facts. Scott, born a slave, traveled with his master to several northern states. Sixteen years later he discovered that, according to the Missouri Compromise, his slavery ended when he "stepped foot in free territory." Abolitionist lawyers helped him sue for freedom, and although he triumphed at first, his owners appealed and won, with the Supreme Court eventually deciding that slaves like Scott were not free--a notorious decision that polarized the country. The legal stuff is

dense, but it's balanced somewhat by the personal anguish of slave family separation. The small, beautifully designed book, with spacious type, is illustrated with stirring full-page wood engravings, and the commentary and eloquent foreword by Scott's great-grandson are part of the story."

The Chicago "Black Sox" Trial (1921)

796.357 / PEL

The Chicago "black sox" baseball scandal: A headline court case.

Michael J. Pellowski. 2003. 128p. (MJ)

"Do you feel Shoeless Joe Jackson should be allowed to enter Baseball's Hall of Fame?" "Do you think gambling still affects the outcome of professional and college sporting events?" Author Michael Pellowski lays out the facts of the infamous scandal-ridden 1919 World Series, then encourages students to think and draw their own conclusions with several provocative discussion questions. Entries in this series include notes, glossary, recommended reading and websites.

J796.357 / AND

The Chicago black sox trial: A primary source account.

Wayne Anderson. 2004. 64p. (EM)

The *Great Trials of the Twentieth Century series* are short volumes with large print and many illustrations. Information is solid, clear and well-researched, and is enhanced by a glossary, links for more info and a bibliography.

J / Gutman

Shoeless Joe & me.

Dan Gutman. 2002. 164p. (EM)

In Gutman's popular *Baseball Card Adventure series*, young Joe Stoshack travels back in time to meet baseball players at crucial times in their career. Each book features archival photos and draws on the actual events to create dramatic, often humorous stories that appeal to even reluctant readers. In this book, young Joe visits Shoeless Joe during that fateful 1919 World Series.

The Trial of Sacco and Vanzetti (1920s)

345.73 / LAN

Sacco and Vanzetti.

Elaine Landau. 2004. 48p. (EM)

This volume from the *Cornerstones of Freedom series* covers the dramatic trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants accused of murder and robbery in a politically charged trial from the 1920s. Their execution rallied opposition around the world. While simply told, author Elaine Landau brings their story to life with moving quotes and a description of the evidence that leads many to conclude that Sacco and Vanzetti were wrongfully convicted.

345.7 / HIN

The Trial of Sacco and Vanzetti: A primary source account.

Kerry Hinton. 64p. (EM)

From the *Great Trials of the Twentieth Century series*.

The Scopes Monkey Trial (1925)

VCV / INH

Inherit the Wind.

Produced and directed by Stanley Kramer. 1960. 128min.

The classic film starring Spencer Tracy.

Y / Kidd

Monkey town: The summer of the Scopes trial.

Ronald Kidd. 2006. 259p. (MJ)

This fictionalized account of the Scopes Trial - told through the eyes of a 15 year old girl - is remarkably true to the historical record. Kidd brings the trial's colorful historical figures to life - Clarence Darrow, H. L. Mencken, and William Jennings Bryant - and also gives real meaning to the controversies surrounding fundamentalist religion and the schools.

VCV / 345.7302 / MONKEY

Monkey trial: An all-out duel between science and religion.

Written, produced and directed by Christine Lesiak. 2002. 90min. (MJS)

This PBS American Experience documentary shows that fact really is stranger than fiction sometimes! This documentary manages to challenge all

the myths and pre-conceptions one might have about the Scopes Trial - and it's also funny, dramatic, and profoundly informative in the process.

345.73 / CRE

The Scopes "monkey" trial.

Sabrina Crewe and Michael V. Uschan. 2005. 32p. (EM)

This short text from the *Events that Shaped America series* gives an excellent introduction to the issues of the case, the trial itself, and its relevance for today. Timeline, "things to think about and do", glossary and recommended books and websites included.

345.73 / GRA

The Scopes trial.

Renee Graves. 2003. 48p. (EM)

Cornerstones of Freedom series.

576.8 / BIO / DARWIN

The tree of life: A book depicting the life of Charles Darwin - naturalist, geologist & thinker.

Peter Sis. 2003. (All ages)

School Library Journal says Sis' award-winning book is "a fabulous, visually exciting introduction to the man, his ideas, and the science of the natural world. This richly illustrated picture book is packed with Darwin's letters and journal entries. An important look at the man and the theory that have been at the heart of an important American controversy for decades.

J345.73 / OLS

The trial of John T. Scopes: A primary source account.

Steven P. Olson. 2004. 64p. (EM)

Great Trials of the Twentieth Century series.

The Scottsboro Case (1931)

364.1532 / KIN

The man from Scottsboro: Clarence Norris and the infamous 1931 Alabama rape trial in his own words.

Kwando Mbiassi Kinshasa. 231p. 1997. (S)

Rich and accessible this book tells the gripping story of Norris' arrest, trial and imprisonment in one of our country's most notorious and racially charged trials. In addition the book includes powerful testimony of Norris' life in the Jim Crow South as a sharecropper, hobo and laborer.

Q364.1532 / KHA

Scottsboro, Alabama: A story in linoleum cuts.

Lin Shi Khan and Tony Perez. Edited by Andrew Lee. 2002. 147p.

This book reprints 118 linoleum prints, originally published in 1935 by a Communist journalist and editor. These images attest to the outrage felt by many leftists and union workers about the Scottsboro case, and the extent to which the case became an international rallying point for those opposed to capitalism.

345.73 / CRE

The Scottsboro case.

Sabrina Crewe and Michael V. Uschan. 2005. 32p.

Events that Shaped America series.

The Lindbergh Baby Kidnapping (1932)

VCV / CRI

Crime of the century.

HBO Home Video. Based on the book by Ludovic Kennedy. 1997. 116min.

The kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby caused a public outpouring of rage and grief. It so angered a nation that in the desperate hunt for justice, an equally shocking crime may have been committed. Was Bruno Richard Hauptmann, the man who was tried, convicted and executed for the kidnapping, innocent as he claimed?

J345.73 / ROE

The Lindbergh baby kidnapping trial: A primary source account.

Greg Roensch. 2004. 63p.

Great Trials of the 20th Century series.

J / Bryant

The trial.

Jen Bryant. 2004. 168p. (EMJ)

From *Booklist*: " 'Nothing much happens but eggs, chickens, and Santa Claus,' complains restless Katie Leigh Flynn about life in her small New Jersey town. But on March 1, 1932, something *does* happen--something sensational and tragic. The baby son of Colonel and Mrs. Charles Lindbergh is kidnapped in nearby Hopewell. Bruno Richard Hauptmann is arrested and put on trial for the crime - right there in Katie's hometown - and the 12-year-old finds herself caught up in the case as assistant to her journalist uncle....Bryant does an extraordinary job of re-creating the Depression-era milieu during which the trial unfolded and, at the same time, conveying the gravity of an event that may have been a miscarriage of justice."

The Rosenberg Spy Case

B / Meeropol

An execution in the family: One son's journey.

Robert Meeropol. 2003. 273p.

From *Publishers Weekly* "Bravery is rare. Tyranny is commonplace. Both define the life of Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. In his heart-wrenching, honest memoir, Meeropol recounts the emotional terrors of his childhood, the kindness of Abel and Anne Meeropol-who adopted him and his older brother after their parents' execution-his struggle to vindicate his parents, and his own political activism, culminating in the creation of the Rosenberg Fund for Children, which he now directs."

DVD / 321.12 / HEIR

Heir to an execution: A granddaughter's story.

Ivy Meeropol. 2003. 99min. (S)

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are Cold War iconic symbols and their trial and execution embody the hysteria fueled by the McCarthy's red scare. But who were the Rosenberg's as people? Listen to staunch Rosenberg comrades and hear the intimate interviews with the filmmaker's father, Michael Meeropol, who brings an immediacy to his parents' story. This painful revelation eerily underscores the depth of political paranoia of the time and the impossibility of discovering the ultimate truth about the Rosenberg's guilt or innocence.

345.73 / MOS

The Rosenberg espionage case.

Francis Moss. 2000. 112p. (JS)

The *Famous Trials series* provide a dense, complex look at controversial trials from history. This volume explores some of the more complicated issues in the evidence presented at the Rosenbergs' trial, and also updates readers on revelations since the release of documents from the Soviet Union that implicate Julius Rosenberg in some spy activity.

J345.73 / LAR

The Rosenbergs.

Anita Larsen. 1992. 48p. (E)

This short chapter book provides a clear, simple introduction to this complicated and politically charged case.

J345.73 / BUR

The trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg: A primary source account.

Betty Burnett. 2004. 64p. (EM)

From the *Great Trials of the Twentieth Century series*.

The Murder of Emmett Till (1955)

361.1523 / CROWE

Getting away with murder: The true story of the Emmett Till case.

Chris Crowe. 2003. 128p. (MJS)

The shocking account of Emmett Till, an African American teenager who was brutally murdered during a visit to Mississippi in the summer of 1955. See also Chris Crowe's novel *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, about a white teen who meets Emmett Till just before Till is murdered by racists.

Y / Crowe

Mississippi Trial, 1955.

Chris Crowe. 2002. 231p. (MJ)

In Mississippi in 1955, a sixteen-year-old finds himself at odds with his grandfather over issues surrounding the kidnapping and murder of a fourteen-year-old African American from Chicago.

364.1523 / MUR

The murder of Emmett Till.

Stanley Nelson and Marcia Smith. 2003. 60min.

Aired originally on PBS' American Experience, this documentary examines the 1955 murder of Emmett Till - the broad impact of his death, his funeral, and the subsequent trial and acquittal of his accused killers.

364.1532 / UNT

The untold story of Emmett Louis Till.

Keith A. Beauchamp. 2005. 70min.

The film that helped reopen one of history's most notorious cold case civil rights murders is the result of the director's 10-year journey to uncover the truth. In August, 1955, Mamie Till-Mobley of Chicago sent her only child, Emmett Louis Till, to visit relatives in the Mississippi Delta. Little did she know that only 8 days later, Emmett would be abducted from his Great-Uncle's home, brutally beaten and murdered for one of the oldest Southern taboos : whistling at a white woman in public. It was Beauchamp's nine years of investigation, summarized in the film, that was primarily responsible for the Justice Department reopening the case.

811.54 / NEL

A wreath for Emmett Till.

Marilyn Nelson. 2005. 48p. (S)

From School Library Journal "This memorial to the lynched teen is in the Homeric tradition of poet-as-historian....There are 15 poems in the cycle, the last line of one being the first line of the next, and each of the first lines makes up the entirety of the 15th. This chosen formality brings distance and reflection to readers, but also calls attention to the horrifically ugly events. The language is highly figurative in one sonnet, cruelly graphic in the next. The illustrations echo the representative nature of the poetry, using images from nature and taking advantage of the emotional quality of color. There is an introduction by the author, a page about Emmett Till, and literary and poetical footnotes to the sonnets."

High Interest Stories about Today's Legal Issues

Y / Volponi

Black and white.

Paul Volponi. 2005. 185p. (JS)

Two star high school basketball players, one black and one white, experience the justice system differently after committing a crime together and getting caught.

Q 363.25 / Platt

Crime scene: The ultimate guide to forensic science.

Richard Platt. 2003.

A bloodstain, a muddy footprint, a trace of poison in a hair sample - small clues that could solve the crime. Read all about it in this fascinating book of forensic science - lots of photos and info on some of the most famous crimes of the century.

DVD / 364.66 / DEA

Deadline.

Katie Chevigny and Kirsten Johnson. 2004. 89min.

What would you do if you discovered that 13 people slated for execution had been found innocent? That was exactly the dilemma that Illinois Governor George Ryan faced in his final days in office. He, alone, was left to decide whether the remaining 167 death row inmates should live or die. This details the gripping drama of the clemency hearings during the countdown to Ryan's decision. Documented as the events unfolded, this is a compelling look inside America's prisons, highlighting one man's unlikely and historic actions against the system.

365.6 / WIL

Life in prison.

Stanley "Tookie" Williams. 1998. (EMJS)

Tookie Williams, co-founder of the Crips gang, was executed this year after living on Death Row at San Quentin State Prison since 1981. Here he presents a riveting account of day-to-day life behind bars and challenges the reader to think how life would be different as a prisoner on death row. For a documentary view of life in prison see "**The Farm**", a disturbing look at life inside Angola Prison in Louisiana (365.34 / FAR) that could be used with high schoolers. The film tackles tough issues - the death penalty, racism in the criminal justice system, and the hopelessness and despair of prison life.

For those interested in more about Stanley Williams, see also his newly released memoir, **Blue Rage, Black Redemption** (365.6 / WIL) and the film "Redemption" which stars Jamie Foxx as Williams.

Y / Myers

Monster.

Walter Dean Myers. 1999. (MJS)

Sixteen year old Steve Harmon stands accused of murder in a robbery gone bad. Did he do it? Read his journal and the screenplay he is writing about his life, and judge for yourself. See also **Shooter**, another novel by Myers, which tells the story of a tragic school shooting in journal entries, interviews and reports. (Y / Myers)

DVD / 364.1523 / MUR

Murder on a Sunday morning.

Jean Xavier de-Lestrade. 2001. 111min. (JS)

Everyone in Jacksonville, Florida was convinced that Brenton Butler, a 15 year old African American boy living in Jacksonville, Florida, had murdered a white tourist in 2000. This riveting documentary followed the case from start to finish, revealing some very disturbing facts about the police investigation and interrogation techniques used to implicate Butler. Some graphic photos of the murder victim are seen in beginning sequences of the documentary.

Y / Alphin

The perfect shot.

Elaine Marie Alphin. 2005. 360p. (S)

From School Library Journal "This engrossing thriller weaves issues of civil rights, racial prejudice, the judicial system, and the lessons of history into a suspenseful tale of a high-school senior who wants to do the right thing. Brian's girlfriend, Amanda; her sister; and their mother are shot to death in their garage. The girls' father is put on trial for the crime. On the day of the murders, however, Brian saw something that he thinks might affect the case. The story is told in flashbacks as he struggles for his life after being shot-as readers will suspect-by the true killer. What might have been a straightforward mystery grows richer as Brian compares Amanda's father's situation to the 1913 Leo Frank murder case he is researching for class. Another thread follows the arrest of Brian's friend and basketball

teammate Julius, one of the few African Americans in their small Indiana town. Brian must also cope with pressure from his father to excel in basketball, and with his overwhelming grief over Amanda's death. Some of the insights about the flaws in our justice system come across as preachy, but Brian's personal dilemma—should he speak out and make waves or keep his doubts to himself—prevent the story from turning into a lesson on social justice. This novel will resonate with readers long after the final page. Sports fans will also enjoy the action-packed games as Brian attempts to lead his team to victory."

Y / Cormier

The rag and bone shop.

Robert Cormier. 2001. 154p. (MJ)

Trent, an ace interrogator from Vermont, works to procure a confession from an introverted twelve-year-old accused of murdering his seven-year-old friend in Monument, Massachusetts.

345.7308 / JAC

They broke the law - you be the judge: True cases of teen crime.

Thomas A. Jacobs. 2003. (MJS)

A real-life judge describes 21 cases, including the teen's background, details of the crime, and how it all turned out. Another book, **You Are the Juror** by Nathan Aaseng (345.7307 / AAS) presents historical cases such as the Patty Hearst trial, the Lindbergh kidnapping, the O.J. Simpson murder trial, and others. Readers "become the jury" after reviewing a brief presentation of the evidence for both sides. Information on how a jury is selected is included.

E - Elementary grades (4th and 5th grade)

M - Middle School (6th, 7th, & 8th grade)

J - Junior High (7th, 8th, and 9th grade)

H - High School (9th - 12th grade)