



**THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LEGAL PUBLISHING:  
A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY\***

**BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS**

Friedman, Lawrence M. *A History of American Law*. Chapter VIII and XI. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.

→ Chapters VIII and XI discuss American legal publishing.

Marvin, William W. *West Publishing Company: Origin, Growth, Leadership*. St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1969.

→ The only book-length history of the West Publishing Co. As of 6/1/07, there is no comparable history of LexisNexis.

Surrency, Edwin C. *A History of American Law Publishing*. New York: Oceana, 1990.

→ Cited by many of the other resources in this bibliography, Surrency's study is still the leading work on the history of American legal publishing.

Taylor, Betty W. and Robert John Munro. *American Law Publishing, 1860 – 1900*. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Glanville Publications, 1984.

Woxland, Thomas A., ed. *Symposium of Law Publishers*. New York: Haworth Press, 1991.

→ Reprints the 1889 Symposium originally published in *American Law Review* by Charles Soule (publisher of *Green Bag*), John West (founder of West Publishing), and James Briggs (co-founder of Lawyers Cooperative Publishing).

**JOURNAL ARTICLES**

Bacchus, Michael. "Strung Out: Legal Citation, *The Bluebook*, and the Anxiety of Authority." 151 *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* (Nov. 2002): 245-266.

→ History of legal citation and the development of the Harvard Bluebook.

Charpentier, Arthur A., et. al. "Bicentennial History of American Law Publishing." 69 *Law Library Journal* (1976): 576-93.

---

\* This bibliography is not meant to be comprehensive. It does not include:

- Histories of the legal literature of only one particular state.
- Anything published before 1900.
- Legal research textbooks, most of which include a short history of case reporting and the West National Reporter System.



Cheskis, Joel H. "Copyright of Legal Materials: From Wheaton to West—Shaping the Practice of Law in America." 20 *Communications and the Law* (1998): 1-38.

→ The first part of this article tells the story of John B. West and the origins of the West Publishing Company.

Cohen, Morris L, "An Historical Overview of American Law Publishing," *International Journal of Legal Information* 31:2 (Summer 2003): 168-174.

Cohen, Morris L, "Researching Legal History in the Digital Age," 99 *Law Library Journal* (Spring 2007): 377-393.

→ Discusses online sources of English and American legal publications, from 1220 to the present.

Emery, Robert A. "The Albany Law School Journal: The Only Surviving Copy." 89 *Law Library Journal* (1997): 463-66.

→ Discusses whether *The Albany Law School Journal* (1875-76) was the first student-edited law review, as some scholars have called it.

Hoeflich, Michael H. "John Livingston and the Business of Law in Nineteenth-Century America." 44 *American Journal of Legal History* (2000): 347-368.

→ A study of the business side of practicing law in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, as now, the business of law included buying and using legal publications.

Joyce, Craig. "The Rise of the Supreme Court Reporter: An Institutional Perspective on Marshal Court Ascendancy." 83 *Michigan Law Review* (1985): 1291-

→ Exploration of the subjectivity and idiosyncrasy of publication of the U.S. Supreme Court reports in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Kenyon, Carleton W. "Legal Newspapers in the United States." 63 *Law Library Journal* (1970): 241-48.

Mersky, Roy M. "The Evolution and Impact of Legal Dictionaries." 23 *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* (2004): 19-35.

Ogden, Patti. "'Mastering the Lawless Science of Our Law': A Story of Legal Citation Indexes." 85 *Law Library Journal* (1993): 1-48.

→ History of Shepard's and how it came to dominate the citation index market.



## CHARLOTTE SCHOOL *of* LAW

Parrish, Jenni. "Law Books and Legal Publishing in America, 1760-1840." *72 Law Library Journal* (1979): 355-452.

Senzel, Howard T., "Looseleafing the Flow: An Anecdotal History of One Technology for Updating," *44 American Journal of Legal History* 115-197 (2000).

→ A unique history of loose-leaf publications.

Surrency, Erwin C. "The Publication of Federal Laws: A Short History." *79 Law Library Journal* (1987): 469-84.

→ Focuses on the history of U.S. statute publishing by the federal government.

Wallach, Kate. "The Publication of Legal Treatises in America from 1800 to 1830." *45 Law Library Journal* (1952): 136-48.

Whisner, Mary. "Bouvier's, Black's, and Tinkerbell." *92 Law Library Journal* (2000): 99-106.

→ Includes a history of *Bouvier's Law Dictionary*, an 1856 work that is considered more scholarly than *Black's Law Dictionary*.

Woxland, Thomas A. "Forever Associated with the Practice of Law: The Early Years of the West Publishing Company." *5 Legal Reference Services Quarterly* (1985): 115-124.

Young, Thomas J., Jr. "A Look at American Law Reporting in the 19th Century." *68 Law Library Journal* (1975): 294-306.

### **INTERNET SITES**

[Brief History of the Consolidation of Legal Publishing](#)

[History of the Federal Register](#)

[A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation, U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates](#)

→ Includes free full-text versions of U.S. Statutes at Large (1789 – 1875) and other historical documents, as well as information on how these documents were developed.

[History of Books and Printing](#)

→ This New York Public Library research guide covers publishing history in general.

[Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing](#)

→ Another excellent source of information on book and publishing history.