

A TREATISE  
ON THE  
ANGLO-AMERICAN SYSTEM OF  
EVIDENCE  
IN  
TRIALS AT COMMON LAW  
INCLUDING  
THE STATUTES AND JUDICIAL DECISIONS  
OF ALL JURISDICTIONS OF  
THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

BY  
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IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME V

*WIGMORE ON EVIDENCE*  
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# CONTENTS VOLUME FIVE

	PAGE
LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED . . . . .	xiii
LIST OF CHANGED SECTION-NUMBERS . . . . .	xviii
LIST OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE OF EVIDENCE . . . . .	xix
TABULAR ANALYSIS SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF PRINCIPAL TOPICS . . . . .	xxviii

## TOPIC B. — PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

### CHAPTER LXXIX

#### SUB-TOPIC I. — CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN GENERAL

§ 2285. General Principle of Privileged Com- munications.	not privileged; Clerks, Trustees, Bankers, Journalists, etc.
§ 2286. Sundry Confidential Communications	§ 2287. Same: Telegrams.

### CHAPTER LXXX

#### SUB-TOPIC II. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ATTORNEY AND CLIENT

§ 2290. History.	3. "The communications relevant to that purpose"
§ 2291. Policy.	
§ 2292. General Principle; Statutory Defini- tions.	§ 2306. Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct and Appear- ance.
1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought"	§ 2307. Same: Production of the Client's Documents.
§ 2294. Privilege is irrespective of Litigation begun or contemplated; History of the doctrine.	§ 2308. Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents.
§ 2295. Same: General Principle and Policy.	§ 2309. Same: Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Docu- ments.
§ 2296. Advice for Non-Legal Purposes; Prosecuting Attorneys.	§ 2310. Relevancy or Necessity of the Com- munication.
§ 2297. Advice in Conveyancing or Drafting.	4. "Made in Confidence"
§ 2298. Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction.	§ 2311. Communications must be Confiden- tial; Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle.
2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such"	§ 2312. Communications to Opponent or his Attorney, or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney.
§ 2300. Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not Admitted to Practice.	§ 2313. Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit.
§ 2301. Attorneys' Clerks and other Agents.	§ 2314. Execution of a Will or Deed.
§ 2302. Client's Belief in Attorney's Status.	§ 2315. Same: Attorney as Attesting Wit- ness.
§ 2303. Consultation in Attorney's Capacity; Gratuitous Advice.	§ 2316. State Prosecutor.
§ 2304. Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney.	

## CONTENTS

### 5. "By the Client"

- § 2317. Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired from Other Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents.
- § 2318. Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Discovery, distinguished.
- § 2319. Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles illustrated.
- § 2320. Communications by the Attorney to the Client.

### 6. "Are at the client's instance permanently protected"

- § 2321. Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Who may claim.

- § 2322. Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege.
- § 2323. Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended.

### 7. "From disclosure by himself or by the Legal Adviser"

- § 2324. Testimony by the Client or by the Attorney.
- § 2325. Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney.
- § 2326. Third Persons overhearing.

### 8. "Except the protection be waived"

- § 2327. Waiver, in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver.
- § 2328. Waiver at Former Trial; Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees.
- § 2329. Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative.

## CHAPTER LXXXI

### SUB-TOPIC III. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

#### 1. In General

- § 2332. Policy.
- § 2333. History.
- § 2334. Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.

#### 2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged

- § 2336. Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.
- § 2337. Communications, not Acts.

- § 2338. Exceptions and Distinctions.

#### 3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled

- § 2339. Third Persons overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.
- § 2340. Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.

#### 4. Cessation of the Privilege

- § 2341. Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.

## CHAPTER LXXXII

### SUB-TOPIC IV. — COMMUNICATIONS BY AND TO JURORS

- § 2345. General Principles involved.

#### A. PETIT JURY

##### 1. Privileged Communications Rule

- § 2346. Scope of the Principle.

##### 2. Parol Evidence Rule

- § 2348. General Principle.
- § 2349. (a) Jurors' Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, Intentions, and the like, as Immaterial.
- § 2350. Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.
- § 2351. (b) Issues of the Trial, as Material.
- § 2352. (c) Irregularities and Misconduct, as Material; Jurors Impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.
- § 2353. Same: Policy of the Rule.
- § 2354. Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.
- § 2355. (d) Mistake in Recording or Delivering the Verdict.

- § 2356. Same: Explaining the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to its Legal Effect; Retiring to Reconsider.

##### 3. Arbitrators' Awards

- § 2358. Foregoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.

#### B. GRAND JURY

##### 1. Privileged Communications Rule

- § 2360. History and General Principle.
- § 2361. (a) Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.
- § 2362. (b) Privilege of Witnesses before Grand Jury; General Principle.
- § 2363. Same: Instances of Cessation of Privilege.

##### 2. Parol Evidence Rule

- § 2364. Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes, etc.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER LXXXIII

### SUB-TOPIC V. — STATE SECRETS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>§ 2367. Several Principles discriminated.</p> <p>§ 2368. (a) Tortious Liability of the Executive.</p> <p>§ 2369. (b) Constitutional Subjection of the Executive to Judicial Process.</p> <p>§ 2370. (c) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness.</p> <p>§ 2371. (d) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to Attend Court.</p> <p>§ 2372. Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges.</p> <p>§ 2373. (e) Irremovability of Official Records.</p> | <p>§ 2374. (f) Privilege for Communications by Information to Government.</p> <p>§ 2375. State Prosecutor.</p> <p>§ 2376. Judge, Conciliator, Arbitrator.</p> <p>§ 2377. Reports made by Citizens under Compulsion of Law (Taxes, Inventions, Industrial Accidents, Disease, Illegitimacy, Death, etc.)</p> <p>§ 2378. (g) Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications.</p> <p>§ 2379. Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy.</p> |
|---|---|

## CHAPTER LXXXIV

### SUB-TOPIC VI. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2380. History and Policy; Statutes.</p> <p>§ 2381. (a) Confidentiality of Communications; (1) Implied Confidence; Burden of Proof; Third Persons' Testimony.</p> <p>§ 2382. Same: (2) Professional Character of the Consultation.</p> <p>§ 2383. (b) Communications Necessary for Prescription.</p> <p>§ 2384. (c) Information, Active and Passive.</p> <p>§ 2385. (d) Criminal Cases; Malpractice.</p> <p>§ 2385a. Certificates of Death.</p> | <p>§ 2386. (e) Whose is the Privilege; Claim of Privilege; Inference from Claim.</p> <p>§ 2387. (f) Termination of the Privilege; Death.</p> <p>§ 2388. Same: Waiver, in general; Express and Implied Waiver.</p> <p>§ 2389. Same: Waiver by Bringing Suit; by Testifying; by Former Waiver.</p> <p>§ 2390. Same: Waiver by Calling the Physician; by using "Proofs of Death."</p> <p>§ 2391. Same: Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative.</p> |
|---|--|

## CHAPTER LXXXV

### SUB-TOPIC VII. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRIEST AND PENITENT

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2394. History; No Privilege at Common Law.</p> | <p>§ 2395. Statutes recognizing the Privilege.</p> <p>§ 2396. Policy of the Privilege.</p> |
|---|--|

## CHAPTER LXXXVI

### PART IV.—PAROL EVIDENCE RULE (CONSTITUTION OF JURAL ACTS)

#### INTRODUCTION

- § 2400. Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.
- § 2401. Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Jural Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.
- A. CREATION OF JURAL ACTS  
(VOIDNESS AND VOIDABLENESS)
- § 2404. General Principle; Intent and Expression; Subject, Tenor, and Delivery.
- § 2405. History of the Principle.

#### 1. Subject, Terms, Delivery, in General

- § 2406. (a) Subject must concern Jural Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence.
- § 2407. (b) Terms must be Definite; Terms Implied from Conduct; Document Void for Uncertainty.
- § 2408. (c) Act must be Final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.
- § 2409. Same: (2) Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.
- § 2410. Same: (3) Delivery, as Applied to Contracts in general; Conditions



## CONTENTS

- Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.  
 § 2411. Same: (4) Publication as applied to Wills.

### 2. Intent and Mistake, as Affecting Subject, Terms, and Delivery, of an Act

- § 2413. Intention and Mistake in General; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent.  
 § 2414. (A) Jural Subject of an Act; Intent not to be Bound at all; Illegal Transactions.  
 § 2415. (B) Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document; (1) Individual Mistake, not known to or induced by the Second Party.  
 § 2416. Same: (2) Individual Mistake known to or induced by the Second Party.  
 § 2417. Same: (3) Mutual Mistake; General Principle.  
 § 2418. Same: Mutual Mistake as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.  
 § 2419. Same: (b) Signing a Document having Blanks or Capable of Alteration; Writing one's Name not as a Signature.  
 § 2420. (C) Delivery of a Document; Escrow; Deeds or Negotiable Instruments delivered to Bona Fide Holders, contrary to Intent of Maker.  
 § 2421. Unilateral Acts; Foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.

### 3. Voidable Acts

- § 2423. Motive as making an act Voidable; Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.

### B. INTEGRATION OF JURAL ACTS (VARYING THE TERMS OF AN INSTRUMENT)

- § 2425. General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of an Instrument.  
 § 2426. History of the Rule.

#### 1. Integration of Unilateral Acts

- § 2427. Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).

#### 2. Integration of Bilateral Acts

- § 2429. No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.  
 § 2430. Partial Integration; General Test for Applying the Rules; "Collateral Agreements."  
 § 2431. Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing"; (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion"; (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.  
 § 2432. Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.

- § 2433. Recital of Consideration in a Deed.  
 § 2434. Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.  
 § 2434a. Agent's Authority to alter Contract.  
 § 2435. Agreements not to Sue, or not to Enforce, or to hold Conditional only.  
 § 2436. Agreements of Counterclaim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.  
 § 2437. Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Security only; Agreement to hold in Trust.  
 § 2438. Agreement to hold as Agent or Surety only.  
 § 2439. Fraud.  
 § 2440. Trade Usage and Custom.  
 § 2441. Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.  
 § 2442. Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule to admit or exclude "Collateral" Agreements.  
 § 2443. Rule applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle.  
 § 2444. Same: (a) Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.  
 § 2445. Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms.  
 § 2446. Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.  
 § 2447. Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.  
 § 2448. Loss of the Instrument; Oral Transaction Immaterial.  
 § 2449. Agreement to Treat a Specific Copy as the Original.

### 3. Integration Required by Law

- § 2450. At Common Law: (1) Judicial Records.  
 § 2451. Same: (2) Corporate Acts and Records; (3) Negotiable Instruments.  
 § 2452. Under Statutes; (1) Wills; (2) Ballots; (3) Insurance Policies.  
 § 2453. Conclusive Certificates, distinguished.

### C. SOLEMNIZATION OF JURAL ACTS

- § 2454. Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.  
 § 2455. Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.  
 § 2456. Other Formalities than Writing; Signature, Seal, Attestation, Registration, Stamp.

### D. INTERPRETATION OF JURAL ACTS

- § 2458. General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.  
 § 2459. Same: "Intention" and "Meaning", distinguished.

#### 1. Standard of Interpretation

- § 2460. General Principle; Four Stand-

## CONTENTS

	ards, — Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.	§ 2471.	Exceptions for Declarations of Intention.
§ 2461.	Rule against "Disturbing a Plain Meaning", or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History.	§ 2472.	Same: (1) Exception for Equivocation or Latent Ambiguity.
§ 2462.	Same: Theory and Policy of the Rule.	§ 2473.	Same: Blanks and Patent Ambiguities.
§ 2463.	Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, etc.	§ 2474.	Same: (2) Exception for Erroneous Description.
§ 2464.	Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.	§ 2475.	Same: (3) Exception for Rebutting an Equity (Legacies, Advancements, and Disinheritance).
§ 2465.	Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.	§ 2476.	'Falsa Demonstratio non Nocet'; General Principle.
§ 2466.	Individual Party's Meaning; (1) Deeds and Contracts.	§ 2477.	Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.
§ 2467.	Same: (2) Wills.	§ 2478.	Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.
	<b>2. Sources of Interpretation</b>		
§ 2470.	General Principle: All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.		

### CHAPTER LXXXVII

## BOOK II.—BY WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (BURDEN OF PROOF; PRESUMPTION)

### TITLE I.—GENERAL THEORY

§ 2483.	Production of Evidence by the Parties.	§ 2492.	Same: Conclusive Presumptions; Rebuttable Presumptions.
§ 2484.	Evidence sought by the Judge 'ex mero motu'; Questions to Witness by the Judge.	§ 2493.	Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter Presumptions.
§ 2485.	Burden of Proof; (1) First Meaning: Risk of Non-persuasion.	§ 2494.	Same: 'Prima facie' Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; Scintilla of Evidence.
§ 2486.	Same: Test for this Burden; Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.	§ 2495.	Same: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence, distinguished.
§ 2487.	Burden of Proof; (2) Second Meaning: Duty of Producing Evidence.	§ 2496.	Same: Waiver of Motion by subsequent Introduction of Evidence.
§ 2488.	Same: Test for this Burden.	§ 2497.	Measure of Jury's Persuasion; (1) Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt; Rule for Criminal Cases.
§ 2489.	Shifting the Burden of Proof.	§ 2498.	Same: (2) Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.
§ 2490.	Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.		
§ 2491.	Same: Presumptions of Law and Presumptions of Fact.		

### CHAPTER LXXXVIII

## TITLE II.—BURDENS AND PRESUMPTIONS IN SPECIFIC ISSUES

§ 2499.	Introductory	§ 2507.	Negligence and Accident: (1) Contributory Negligence.
§ 2500.	Sanity: (1) Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.	§ 2508.	Same: (2) Loss by Bailee.
§ 2501.	Same: (2) Criminal Causes.	§ 2509.	Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.
§ 2502.	Undue Influence and Fraud: (1) Testamentary Execution.	§ 2510.	Same: (4) Death by Violence.
§ 2503.	Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Beneficiary.	§ 2510a.	Same: (5) Ownership and Agency of Vehicle.
§ 2504.	Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.	§ 2511.	Crimes: (1) Innocence.
§ 2505.	Marriage: (1) Consent, from Co-habitation or Ceremony.	§ 2511a.	Same: (2) Malice, Intent.
§ 2506.	Same: (2) Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.	§ 2512.	Same: (3) Self-Defence, Alibi.
		§ 2513.	Same: (4) Possession of Stolen Goods.
		§ 2514.	Same: (5) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).



## CONTENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>§ 2515. Ownership: (1) Possession of Land and Personalty.</p> <p>§ 2516. Same: (2) Possession of Negotiable Instrument.</p> <p>§ 2517. Payment: (1) Lapse of Time.</p> <p>§ 2518. Same: (2) Possession of Instrument or Receipt.</p> <p>§ 2518a. Same: (3) Delivery of Money.</p> <p>§ 2519. Execution and Contents of Document: (1) Letters and Telegrams.</p> <p>§ 2520. Same: (2) Execution of Documents (Delivery, Date, Seal, Consideration).</p> <p>§ 2521. Same: (3) Ancient Documents.</p> <p>§ 2522. Same: (4) Lost Grant or other Document.</p> <p>§ 2523. Same: (5) Will (Execution and Revocation).</p> <p>§ 2524. Same: (6) Spoliation or Suppression of Documents.</p> <p>§ 2525. Same: (7) Alteration of Documents.</p> | <p>§ 2526. Gifts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement, Child's Services).</p> <p>§ 2527. Legitimacy.</p> <p>§ 2528. Chastity; Sterility (Child-bearing); Impotency.</p> <p>§ 2529. Identity of Person (from Name, etc.).</p> <p>§ 2530. Continuity: (1) in General (Ownership, Possession, Residence, Insanity, etc.).</p> <p>§ 2531. Same: Life and Death.</p> <p>§ 2532. Same: Survivorship.</p> <p>§ 2533. Seaworthiness.</p> <p>§ 2534. Regularity: (1) Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.</p> <p>§ 2535. Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers; Incorporation.</p> <p>§ 2536. Similarity of Foreign Law.</p> <p>§ 2537. Contracts.</p> <p>§ 2538. Statute of Limitations.</p> <p>§ 2539. Malicious Prosecution.</p> <p>§ 2540. Sundry Presumptions and Burdens.</p> |
|---|---|

## CHAPTER LXXXIX

### BOOK III.—TO WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (LAW AND FACT; JUDGE AND JURY)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2549. General Principles.</p> <p>§ 2550. Admissibility of Evidence.</p> <p>§ 2551. Sufficiency of Proof.</p> <p>§ 2552. Negligence.</p> <p>§ 2553. Reasonableness.</p> <p>§ 2554. Same: Malicious Prosecution.</p> <p>§ 2555. Facts judicially noticed; Trial by In-</p> | <p>spection; 'Nul Tiel' Record; Constitutional Considerations.</p> <p>§ 2556. Construction of Documents.</p> <p>§ 2557. Criminal Intent.</p> <p>§ 2558. Foreign Law.</p> <p>§ 2559. Local Law.</p> |
|---|--|

## CHAPTER XC

### BOOK IV.—OF WHAT PROPOSITIONS NO EVIDENCE NEED BE PRESENTED

#### TITLE I.—JUDICIAL NOTICE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. General Principles</b>  |   |
| <p>§ 2565. Theory of Judicial Notice.</p> <p>§ 2566. Anomalous Meanings.</p> <p>§ 2567. Effect of Judicial Notice: (1) not Conclusive.</p> <p>§ 2568. Same: (2) Notice must be requested: Pleading a Statute.</p> <p>§ 2569. Same: (3) Judge may investigate.</p> <p>§ 2570. Judicial Notice by the Jury's own Knowledge.</p> | <p>§ 2575. Same: (2) Domestic Political Organization; Boundaries, Capitals, etc.</p> <p>§ 2576. Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identity and Authority; Genuineness of Official Documents.</p> <p>§ 2577. Same: (4) Official Acts; Elections, Census, Legislative Proceedings, etc.</p> <p>§ 2578. Judicial Proceedings: (1) Officers and Rules of Court.</p> <p>§ 2579. Same: (2) Records of Proceedings.</p> <p>§ 2580. Notorious Miscellaneous Facts: (1) Commerce, Industry, History, Natural Science, etc.</p> <p>§ 2581. Same: (2) Times and Distances.</p> <p>§ 2582. Same: (3) Meaning of Words; Names of Intoxicating Liquors.</p> <p>§ 2583. Future of the Doctrine of Judicial Notice.</p> |
| <b>2. Specific Facts Noted</b>  |   |
| <p>§ 2571. Scope of Principle.</p> <p>§ 2572. Laws: (1) Domestic Statutes and Ordinances.</p> <p>§ 2573. Same: (2) Foreign Law.</p> <p>§ 2574. Political Facts: (1) International Affairs; Seals of State.</p>  |   |

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XCI

TITLE II.—JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS

§ 2588. Theory of Judicial Admissions.	§ 2594. Form and Tenor of the Admission; Who is authorized.
§ 2589. Distinction between Judicial Admissions, Pleadings, and Estoppels.	§ 2595. Avoiding a Continuance by Judicial Admission; Testimony of an Absent Witness of the Opponent.
§ 2590. Effect of Judicial Admissions: (1) Conclusive upon the Party making.	§ 2596. Admissions of the Genuineness of a Document.
§ 2591. Same: (2) Prohibitive of Evidence by the Party benefiting.	§ 2597. Future of the Doctrine of Judicial Admissions.
§ 2592. Same. (3) Validity as a Waiver of Unconstitutionality or other Illegality.	
§ 2593. Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials.	

---

LIST OF STATUTES CITED . . . . .	621
LIST OF CASES CITED . . . . .	717
TOPICAL INDEX . . . . .	997

## LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED

THE following Tables show the dates of latest sources examined, and the editions of legislative sources used.

### TABLE I

Table I shows in Col. 2 the code or compilation of legislation used.

Col. 3 shows the latest year-laws (session laws) examined.

Col. 4 shows the latest official report of judicial decisions cited. For *England* and *Ireland*, only the official reports were examined. For *Canada*, only the unofficial reports (Dominion Law Reports) were examined; as no table of parallel citations is available, the official reports are not cited in this book for cases reported since 1912 (the date of beginning of the D. L. R.); hence, the official report here shown in Col. 4 is merely the latest volume that had appeared at the time of going to press; indicating that the citations of cases in this work will include at least the cases down to those official numbers of volumes, as well as a few later ones. For the *United States*, only the unofficial reports (National Reporter System) were examined; except for Alaska, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, and Porto Rico, and for District of Columbia down to 1919, — these not being included in the National Reporter System. Parallel citations of the official reports are invariably given, so far as these had appeared at the date of going to press. The official report shown in Col. 4 is merely the latest volume cited; the cases examined come down to a later date in the unofficial citations (Table II).

Col. 5 shows, by jurisdictions, the latest unofficial report examined and cited, — for Canada, the Dominion Law Reports; for the United States, the National Reporter System.

The decisions of the Appellate (intermediate) Courts which exist in some States have been cited only on interesting matters for which there is scanty authority; partly because their rulings are not final (except in Texas and in Oklahoma, for criminal cases), and partly because in some jurisdictions they are expressly made not binding as precedents. The rulings of Federal District Courts have also been left unnoticed to a similar extent.



# LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED

TABLE I. JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SOURCES USED

JURISDICTION	STATUTES		REPORTED DECISIONS	
	Revision or Code Edition Used	Latest Annual Laws Examined	Latest Official Report Cited	Latest Unofficial Report Examined
ENGLAND:	Rules of Court, ed. 1922	1921	1922 K. B. 1 1922 Ch. 1 1922 P. to June 1 1922 A. C. to June 1	
IRELAND:		1921	1921 L. R. Ire.	
CANADA:				
<i>Dominion</i>	Revised Statutes of C. 1906	1921	62 Can. Sup.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Alberta</i>	[see Northwest Territories] Rules of Court 1914	1921	16 Alta.	65 D. L. R.
<i>British Columbia</i>	Revised Statutes 1911 Supreme Court Rules 1912	1921	28 B. C.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Manitoba</i>	Revised Statutes 1913 Rules of Court 1913	1921	30 Man.	65 D. L. R.
<i>New Brunswick</i>	Consolidated Statutes 1903 Rules of Court 1909	1921	47 N. B.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Newfoundland</i>	Consolidated Statutes 1916	1921	9 Newf.	
<i>Northwest Terr.<sup>1</sup></i>	Consolidated Ordinances 1898	1904	7 N. W. Terr.	
<i>Nova Scotia</i>	Revised Statutes 1900 Rules of the Supreme Court 1919	1921	53 N. S.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Ontario</i>	Revised Statutes 1914 Rules of Practice and Procedure 1913	1921	49 Ont.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Prince Edward Island<sup>2</sup></i>		1920	2 P. E. I.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Saskatchewan</i>	Revised Statutes 1920	1921-2	14 Sask.	65 D. L. R.
<i>Yukon</i>	Consolidated Ordinances 1914	1920		65 D. L. R.
UNITED STATES:				
<i>Federal</i>	Revised Statutes 1878 U. S. Code 1919 <sup>3</sup>	1922 to June 1	258 U. S.	42 Sup. 279 Fed. 10 Porto Rico Fed. 1 Extra-terr. Cas.
<i>Alabama</i>	Code 1907	1919	206 Ala. 17 Ala. App.	91 So. 91 So.

<sup>1</sup> The legislation and decisions of this region are now continued by those of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Yukon.

<sup>2</sup> There being no Compilation here, and the Evidence Act of 1889 having codified most of the rules, no search was made for statutes prior to 1889, except that those of 1873 and 1887, dealing with Evidence, were collated.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of going to press, still pending in the Senate; passed in the House of Representatives, May 16, 1921.

# LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED

TABLE I. JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SOURCES USED—*Continued*

JURISDICTION	STATUTES		REPORTED DECISIONS	
	Revision or Code Edition Used	Latest Annual Laws Examined	Latest Official Report Cited	Latest Unofficial Report Examined
<i>Alaska</i>	Compiled Laws 1913	1921	4 Alaska	279 Fed.
<i>Arizona</i>	Revised Statutes 1913	1921	22 Ariz.	206 Pac.
<i>Arkansas</i>	Digest of the Statutes 1919	1921	150 Ark.	240 S. W.
<i>California</i>	Codes 1872		187 Cal.	206 Pac.
	General Laws ed. 1915	1921	45 Cal. App.	206 Pac.
<i>Colorado</i>	Compiled Laws 1921	1921	70 Colo.	206 Pac.
<i>Columbia (Dist.)</i>	Code of Law 1919	1921	50 D. C. App.	279 Fed.
<i>Connecticut</i>	General Statutes, Revision of 1918	1921	96 Conn.	116 Atl.
<i>Delaware</i>	Revised Statutes 1915	1921	11 Del. Ch.	116 Atl.
			7 Boyce	116 Atl.
<i>Florida</i>	Revised General Statutes 1919	1921	82 Fla.	91 So.
<i>Georgia</i>	Code 1910	1921	152 Ga.	111 S. E.
	Park's Annotated Code ed. 1918		27 Ga. App.	111 S. E.
<i>Hawaii</i>	Revised Laws 1915	1921	25 Haw.	
<i>Idaho</i>	Compiled Statutes 1919	1921	34 Ida.	206 Pac.
<i>Illinois</i>	Revised Statutes 1874	1921	303 Ill.	135 N. E.
<i>Indiana</i>	Burns' Annotated Statutes 1914	1921	189 Ind.	135 N. E.
			125 Ind. App.	135 N. E.
<i>Iowa</i>	Code 1897	1921	192 Ia.	187 N. W.
	Compiled Code 1919			
<i>Kansas</i>	General Statutes 1915	1921	110 Kan.	206 Pac.
<i>Kentucky</i>	Civil and Criminal Codes, Carroll's 3d ed., 1900	1922	194 Ky.	240 S. W.
	Kentucky Statutes, Carroll's 5th ed., 1915, 1918			
<i>Louisiana</i>	Revised Civil Code, ed. Marr, 1920	1922	150 La.	91 So.
	Code of Practice, ed. Garland and Wolff, 1900			
	Annotated Revision of the Statutes, ed. Marr, 1915			
<i>Maine</i>	Revised Statutes 1916	1921	120 Me.	116 Atl.
<i>Maryland</i>	Annotated Code of Public Civil Laws, ed. Bagby, 1911, 1914	1922	139 Md.	116 Atl.
<i>Massachusetts</i>	General Laws 1921	1921	237 Mass.	135 N. E.
<i>Michigan</i>	Compiled Laws 1915	1921	216 Mich.	187 N. W.
<i>Minnesota</i>	General Statutes 1913	1921	150 Minn.	187 N. W.
<i>Mississippi</i>	Annotated Code 1906, ed. Hemingway, 1917	1920	126 Miss.	91 So.
<i>Missouri</i>	Revised Statutes 1919	1921	288 Mo.	240 S. W.
			207 Mo. App.	240 S. W.
<i>Montana</i>	Revised Codes 1921	1921	60 Mont.	206 Pac.
<i>Nebraska</i>	Revised Statutes 1921	1921	106 Nebr.	187 N. W.
<i>Nevada</i>	Revised Laws 1912	1921	44 Nev.	206 Pac.
<i>New Hampshire</i>	Public Statutes 1901	1921	79 N. H.	116 Atl.
<i>New Jersey</i>	Compiled Statutes 1910	1921	95 N. J. L.	116 Atl.
			92 N. J. Eq.	116 Atl.

# LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED

TABLE I. JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SOURCES USED—*Continued*

JURISDICTION	STATUTES		REPORTED DECISIONS	
	Revision or Code Edition Used	Latest Annual Laws Examined	Latest Official Report Cited	Latest Unofficial Report Examined
<i>New Mexico</i> <i>New York</i>	N. M. Statutes Annotated 1915 Consolidated Laws 1909 Code of Criminal Procedure 1881  Civil Practice Act 1920 Surrogate Court Act 1920 Justice Court Act 1920 City Court Act 1920 Court of Claims Act 1920 N. Y. City Municipal Court Code 1920	1921 1922	26 N. M. 233 N. Y. 196 App. Div.	206 Pac. 135 N. E. 194 N. Y. Suppl.
<i>North Carolina</i> <i>North Dakota</i> <i>Ohio</i> <i>Oklahoma</i>	Consolidated Statutes 1919 Compiled Laws 1913 General Code Annotated 1921 Compiled Statutes 1921	1921 1921 1921 1921	182 N. C. 45 N. D. 100 Oh. 82 Okl. 16 Okl. Cr.	111 S. E. 187 N. W. 135 N. E. 206 Pac. 206 Pac.
<i>Oregon</i> <i>Pennsylvania</i> <i>Philippine Isl.</i>	Or. Laws 1920 Digest of Statute Law 1920 Code of Civil Procedure, ed. 1920 Administrative Code 1917 Civil Code, ed. 1918 Penal Code, Penal Laws, and General Order 58, ed. 1911	1921 1921 1920 to Apr. 6 No. 2931 vol. 15	102 Or. 272 Pa. 40 P. I.	206 Pac. 116 Atl.
<i>Porto Rico</i> <i>Rhode Island</i> <i>South Carolina</i> <i>South Dakota</i> <i>Tennessee</i> <i>Texas</i>	Revised Statutes and Codes 1911 General Laws, Revision of 1909 Code of Laws 1922 Revised Code 1919 Shannon's Code 1917 Revised Civil Statutes 1911 Revised Criminal Statutes 1911, Vernon ed. 1919	1921 1921 1921 1921 1921 1921	28 P. R. 43 R. I. 116 S. C. 44 S. D. 145 Tenn. 110 Tex. 90 Tex. Cr.	116 Atl. 111 S. E. 187 N. W. 240 S. W. 240 S. W.
<i>Utah</i> <i>Vermont</i> <i>Virginia</i> <i>Washington</i>	Compiled Laws 1917 General Laws 1917 Code 1919 Remington & Ballinger's Annotated Codes and Statutes 1909	1921 1921 1922	57 Utah 93 Vt. 130 Va. 117 Wash.	206 Pac. 116 Atl. 111 S. E.
<i>West Virginia</i> <i>Wisconsin</i> <i>Wyoming</i>	Hogg's W. Va. Code Annotated 1914 Statutes 1919 Compiled Statutes Annotated 1920	1921 1921 1921	89 W. Va. 174 Wis. 27 Wyo.	111 S. E. 187 N. W. 206 Pac.



# LIST OF LATEST SOURCES EXAMINED

## TABLE II

The printing of this treatise began in August, 1922, and occupied many months; it was therefore desirable to set a definite point of time for the ending of citations (instead of inserting current late cases in the latter portions of the book only), in order that those who use the book may know where to begin in examining later sources appearing since its publication. The point of stoppage taken was therefore that volume of the several National Reporters which ended nearest to July 1, 1922; this ranged (dating by the weekly issues) between May, 1922, and August, 1922. The latest volumes of Reporters consulted were as follows:

### TABLE II. LATEST NATIONAL REPORTERS EXAMINED

	VOLUME
Atlantic Reporter . . . . .	146
Federal Reporter . . . . .	279
New York Supplement <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	194
Northeastern Reporter . . . . .	135
Northwestern Reporter . . . . .	187
Pacific Reporter . . . . .	206
Southern Reporter . . . . .	91
Southeastern Reporter . . . . .	111
Southwestern Reporter . . . . .	240
Supreme Court Reporter . . . . .	42

<sup>1</sup> This Series was not examined prior to Vol. 178.

# LIST OF CHANGED SECTION NUMBERS IN THIS EDITION

(Where the number given for the Second Edition is the same as that for the First, but is followed by others or by italic letters, the material in the original section has been expanded into several sections.)

1st Ed.	2d Ed.	1st Ed.	2d Ed.	1st Ed.	2d Ed.
6	6, 6 <i>a</i> , 6 <i>b</i>	936	937	1856	1856, 1856 <i>a-e</i>
68	68, 68 <i>a</i>	938	939	1859	1859, 1859 <i>a-g</i>
150	150, 150 <i>a</i>	990	989	1862	1862, 1863
164	163	1031	1032	1863	1864
165	164	1032	1033	2090	2091
208	208, 208 <i>a</i>	1056	1057	2091	2093
318	309	1057	1058	2129	2128
321	320	1058	1059	2130	2129
367	367-370	1232	1233	2183	2183, 2184
370	371	1345	1344	2184	2185
371	372	1346	1345	2213	2212
372	373	1347	1346, 1347	2214	2213
414	416	1354	1354, 1355,	2215	2214
415	417		1356	2259	2259, 2259 <i>a-d</i>
416	418	1633	1633, 1633 <i>a</i>	2281 <i>a</i>	2282
464	464, 465	1662	1662, 1663	2282	2283
562	562, 563	1676	1676, 1676 <i>a</i> ,	2374	2376
617	618		1676 <i>b</i>	2375	2378
785	785, 767	1768	1766	2376	2379
787	787, 787 <i>a</i>	1795	1767	2461	2466
875	874	1796	1768	2462	2461, 2462
934	934, 938	1797	1769	2511	2511, 2511 <i>a</i>
935	936	1855	1855, 1855 <i>a</i>		

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO THE POCKET CODE OF EVIDENCE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
1	1	61	134	152-153	200
3	2	62	138-140	154-155	201
2	3	63	140-145	156	202
4	8-11	64	146-147	157	203
5	17-20	65	148	158-160	205
6	27-30	66	149	163	207
6 <i>a</i>	21-22	67	150	164	208
7	31-34	68	151	165, 168	206
9	35	68 <i>a</i>	152	166	209
10	36	70-76	154-158	167	210
11	37	77	160	172-176	211
12	38-41	78	163-164	177	212
13	42-44	79	165	191	215
14	45	80	161	192-194	218-219
15	46-48	83	167	195	224
16	49-53	84-88	168	196-197	216, 222, 223
17	55-70	89	169	198	226-227
18	71-93	92	170	199	228
19	94	93-99	171	200	229
20	97-101	102-104	177	201	230
21	102-103	105-109	178-181	202	231
24	105-114	110-111	182	203	232
26	115-116	112	184	204	233
30-36	117	113	183	205	234
38	118, 119	117	185-186	206	235
39	120	118	187	207	236
40	121	130-132	188-190	208	238
41	122	133	191	208 <i>a</i>	237
42	123	135	192	209-213	239
43	124	136	192 <i>a</i>	215	219
51	125	137	193	216	220
52-54	126-130	139-142	194	218	221
55	130	143-144	195	219	240
56	136	148	196	220	241
57-58	137	149	197	221	242
59	131-133	150-150 <i>a</i>	198	222	245
60	135	151	199	223	246-249

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
224	243	293	294, 665	483	362
225	250	300	297	484	363
227	251	301	298	485	364
228	252-253, 256-258	302-303	299	486	365
229	254-255	304	300	487	366
230	259	305	220	492-496	367
231	261-262	309-317	302	497	368-369
232	263	321	303	498-500	367
233	264	324-327	304	505-506	370
235	265	329-331	305	507	371
237	266	333-338	306	508	372
238	267	340-344	307	515	373
239	268	346-349	308	516-518	374
240	269	351-352	309	519-524	375
241	270	354	310	525-531	376
242	271-275	357-360	311	555-556	378
244	276	363-365	312	557-559	379
245	277	367	314	560	380
246	278	368	313	561	381
247	279	369-370	314	564-566	383
248	280	371-373	315	567	386
249	281	375-376	316	568-569	384
250	282	377	317	570	385
251	283	378	318	571	387
252	284	379	319	576-577	387
253	285	382	320	578	390
254	286	383	321	579-580	389
255	287	385-387	322	581	392
256	285	389-391	324	583-587	393
257	285	392	326	600	395
258	288	394	327	601-620	396
259	286	395	328	608	397
260	289	396-397	329	650-653	400
265-266	290	398-402	330	654	401
267	291-292	402-406	331	655	402
268-272	293	410-417	333-334	657	405 412
273	650	418	336	658	403
274	651	431-432	337	659-663	404
276	652	434	338	664	413
277-279	654	435-436	339	665	406-408
280	655-656	437	340-341	666	410
281	664	438-440	342	667	411
282	647-648, 653	441-449	344-349	669	412
283	649	451-456	350-351	672-674	414, 1416
284	657	457-458	352-353	675	1417
285-290	658-661, 664	459-465	354-357	677	1418
291	662-663	475-480	360-361	679	1419



# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
681	1420	780	467	901	506
682	1421-1423	781	468	902-907	507
687	408	782	467-472	907-908	508
688	409	783	473	909-913	509-511
689	416	784	474	914-915	512
690	408	785	475	916	513-514
691-692	417	786-788	455-459	917-918	515
693	418	789	479	920-921	518
694-697	419	790-792	480	922-926	519-520
699-707	420	793	481	927-929	521
709	420 bis	794	482	930	522
711-713	422	795	483	931	523
714	423	796-797	484	932	524
715	424	799	488	933	525
716	425	800-801	489	934	526
725	427	802	490	935	527
726-729	428	803	491	936-937	528
730	429	804	492	939-940	529
734	431	805	494-495	943	532
738-739	442	811	496-497	944	533
744	431, 443	815	700	946	534
745	432	821	701	948	535
746	433	822	702	949	536
747	434	824	703	950-952	537-538
748	435	825	704	953	539
749	436	826	705	956	540
750	437	827-830	706	957-959	541
751	438	832	707	960-962	542-543
752	439	833	708	963	544
753	440	834	709	964	545
754	441	835-836	710	966	546
758	444	837	711	967	547
759	446	838	712	968	546
760	447	840	713	969	548
761	448	841	714, 715	977-978	549
762	449	842-852	716-720	979	550
763	450	853-855	721	980	551, 555
764	451	856-859	722	981	552
766	454	860	723	982	553, 556
767	461, 475	861	724-727	983	554
769-770	462	862	728	984	554
771-772	463	874-881	500	986-987	550-556
773	464	884-888	501	988	557
774	465	889-892	502	989	558
775	465	894	503	990	555
776	462	896-899	504	991-996	561-564
777-779	466	900	505	1000-1002	567



# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
1003	568	1081	689-691	1183	750
1004	569	1082	692-693	1185	751-753
1005	570	1083	694	1186	754
1006	572	1084	695	1187	757
1007	571	1085	696	1189	758
1008-1015	573	1086	697-698	1190	755
1017-1019	574	1100	595	1191	757
1020	575	1104	596	1192	756
1021	576	1105	597	1193	759
1022	577	1106	598	1194	760
1023	578	1107	599-600	1195	761
1025-1028	579	1108	601	1196-1197	762
1029	581	1109	602	1198	763
1030-1034	582	1111	604-605	1199	764
1035	583	1112	606, 607	1200	765
1036	584, 591	1116	608	1201	766
1037	585	1117	609	1202-1203	767
1038	578	1119	611	1204	770
1040	586	1122-1124	612	1205	768
1041	587	1125	613	1206-1207	771
1042	588	1126	615	1208	769
1043	589-590	1127	616	1209	772
1044-1045	591	1128	617	1210	773
1048	630	1129	618	1211	774
1049	631-632	1130	619	1212	775
1051	633	1131	443, 614	1213	776
1053	634	1134	622	1214	777
1055	640	1135	623-624	1215-1217	778
1057	636	1136	623	1218-1221	779
1058	637	1137-1138	625	1223	780
1059	638	1139	625	1224-1227	781
1060	641	1141	626	1230	782
1061-1062	642-645	1142	627	1232	783
1063	680	1144	628	1233	784-785
1064	681	1150-1156	730	1234	786-789
1065	682	1157-1158	731	1235	790
1066	683	1159	732	1236-1240	791
1067	684	1162	734	1241	792
1069-1070	667	1163	735-736	1242	793
1071	666, 668	1164	737	1243	794-795
1072	668, 670	1165	738	1244	796-797
1073	671, 673	1168	739	1245	798
1074	675, 676	1171-1172	745	1246-1247	799
1075	677	1173	746	1248	800
1076	686	1178	747	1249-1250	801
1077-1079	687	1181	748	1252-1254	806
1080	688	1182	749	1255-1257	807-810

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
1258	811	1339	897	1448	962
1259-1263	812-818	1344	900	1450	963
1265	820, 826	1345-1346	901	1451	964
1267	821, 825	1348	900	1455	966
1268	822, 826	1349	902	1456	967
1269	827	1350	903	1457	966, 968
1270	828	1351	904	1458-1459	969
1271	829	1352	905	1460	970
1273	831	1353-1355	906	1461	972
1274-1275	832-835	1356	907	1463-1465	973-974
1277-1280	823	1360-1362	910, 912	1466	975
1281	824	1365	911	1469	977
1285	850	1371	913	1471	976
1289	851	1373-1376	914-915	1472	978
1290	852	1378-1382	916	1476	971
1291	855	1383	917	1480	980
1292	853	1384	918	1481	981-982
1293	854	1386-1388	919-920	1482	980
1294	857	1389	921	1483-1484	983
1295	858	1390	922-923	1485	984
1296	859	1391	924	1486	984-985
1297	860	1392	925-926	1487	987
1298	861	1393-1394	927	1488	1069
1299	862-863	1395	928	1489	988
1300	864	1396-1398	929	1490	991
1301	865	1402	930, 939	1491	989
1302	866	1403	931	1492	990
1303	866	1404	932	1493	994
1304	868	1405	933-934	1495	992
1305	867	1406	935	1496-1497	997
1306	884	1407	936-937	1500-1502	995
1308-1310	869	1408-1410	938	1503	996
1311	870-871	1414	940	1505	1000
1312	872	1415	941	1511-1512	886
1313	873	1416	942-944	1513	887
1314	874	1417	945	1514	1001
1315	875-876	1420	950	1517	1002
1316	877	1424	950	1521	1003
1317	878	1431-1433	952	1523	1005
1318	879	1434	953	1524	1006
1319	880	1435	952	1525	1007
1320	881	1438-1441	954	1526	1008
1321	885	1442	956	1528	1011
1326-1329	890-892	1443	955	1530	1012-1015
1330	893	1445	957-959	1531	1009
1331	894	1446	960	1532	1016
1335-1338	896	1447	961	1536-1537	1018

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
1538	1019	1633	1092-1096	1702	1180
1539	1020	1633 <i>a</i>	1094	1703	1181
1540-1543	1021	1635	1097	1704	1182
1547	1022	1637	1098	1705	1183
1548	1023	1639	1100	1706	1180
1550	1024	1640	1101	1709	1186
1551	1025	1641	1102	1710	1187-1191
1552	1026	1642-1644	1103-1105	1712-1713	1195-1198
1554	1029-1030	1645	1106	1714	1200
1555	1028	1647	1107	1718	1201
1556	1027	1648-1651	1110	1719-1720	1202
1557	1031	1652	1111	1721	1205
1558	1032	1653	1112-1115	1722	1203-1204
1564	1035	1655	1116	1725-1726	1207-1208
1565	1036	1657	1117	1727	1209
1566-1567	1037	1658	1118	1728	1210
1568	1038	1659	1119	1729	1211
1570	1039	1660	1120	1730	1212
1573	1040-1043	1661	1121-1123	1732	1213-1217
1576	1045-1047	1662	1124-1125	1734	1218
1580	1050	1664	1130-1132	1735	1219
1582	1053	1665	1133	1736	1220
1584	1060	1666	1136	1737	1221
1585	1056	1667	1137	1738	1222-1223
1586-1587	1054	1668	1138	1740	1224
1588	1055, 1058	1669	1139	1747-1749	1230-1232
1591	1059	1670	1130	1750	1233-1235
1592	1060	1671	1141-1142	1751	1236
1597	1062-1063	1674	1144-1145	1755	1237
1598	1064	1675	1146	1760-1761	1238
1599	1065	1676	1148	1762	1239
1602	1066	1676 <i>a</i>	1147	1768	1240
1603	1067-1068	1676 <i>b</i>	1149	1770	1242-1244
1605	1069	1677	1152-1154	1772-1776	1245
1610	1071	1678	1155-1156	1777	1246
1612	1072	1679	1158	1778	1248
1614	1073	1680	1145, 1152	1779	1249
1615	1074	1681	1145, 1152, 1160	1781	1250
1616	1075	1682	1161-1162	1782	1251
1617	1076	1683	1163	1783	1252
1618	1077	1684	1164, 1181	1784	1254
1620	1078-1080	1690	1170	1786	1260
1621	1081-1083	1694	1171	1788	1255
1623	1085	1697	1173	1789	1256
1624	1086	1698	1174	1790	1257
1625	1087	1699	1175	1791	1258
1631-1632	1090	1700	1177	1792	1259



# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
1800	1266	1878-1880	1367	2009	1484
1801	1267	1882	1369-1371	2010	1485
1802	1268	1883	1372, 1375	2011	1482
1803	1269	1884	1373-1374	2012	1481
1805	1270	1885-1890	1376	2013	1483
1806	1271-1272	1892-1894	1378	2014-2015	1487
1807	1273-1275	1896	1379	2016	1488-1490
1808	1277-1278	1897	1380	2018	1484
1810	1280-1282	1898-1900	1381	2019	1485
1816	1286	1904 1383-1384, 1390-1391		2020	1483
1817	1286-1288	1906	1400	2021	1483
1818	1295-1297	1907	1401	2023-2027	1491
1819	1298-1301	1908	1401-1403	2034	1500
1820	1291-1293	1909	1404	2037-2039	1503
1821	1289, 1294	1910	1405	2041-2043	1504-1505
1822	1290	1911	1406	2044	1506
1824	1285	1918	1410	2046	1528
1827-1828	1302-1307	1923	1413-1415	2047	1507
1831	1310	1924	1411-1412	2048	1509
1832	1311	1929	1424-1425	2050	1510
1834-1836	1312	1934-1938	1430-1434	2051	1511-1512
1837-1838	1314	1940-1944	1435-1438	2052	1513
1839	1315	1946-1947	1440-1443	2054	1514
1840	1316-1317	1949-1951	1445	2056-2060	1516
1841	1318-1320	1952	1446	2061-2062	1520
1842	1321	1953	1447-1449	2063	1521, 398
1845-1847	1325	1954	1450	2065	1522
1849	1326	1955	1451	2066	1523-1525
1850-1851	1327-1329	1956	1452	2067-2069	1529
1852-1853	1330	1957	1453	2070-2071	1530
1854	1328-1330	1958	1454	2072	1531
1855	1330	1959-1960	1455	2073	1532-1533
1856-1856 <i>e</i>	1332-1334	1962	1457	2078	1534
1856 <i>d</i>	1341	1963-1968	1458	2079	1535
1859-1859 <i>c</i>	1335-1336	1969-1972	1459	2081	1536
1859 <i>f</i>	1342	1974	1461	2082-2084	1537
1861	1345	1975	1462	2085	1538-1541
1862	1339	1976	1463	2086	1542
1863	1344	1977	1464	2088	1543
1866	1352	1983	1468-1469	2089	1544
1867	1350-1351	1984	1470	2093	1545
1869-1870	1353-1358	1985	1471	2094	1547
1871	1360	1997-2000	1475-1480	2097	1549-1550, 1552
1872	1362-1364	2004	1479	2098	1551
1873	1361	2006	1476-1477	2099-2100	1553-1559
1874-1875	1366	2007	1478	2102	1561-1562
1876-1877	1367	2008	1480	2103	1563

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
2104	1565	2180	1652	2259	1734
2105-2107	1566	2182	1654	2259 <i>a</i>	1735
2108	1568	2183-2184	1656	2260-2261	1736
2109	1569-1570	2185	1656	2263	1737
2110	1571-1573	2191	1670	2264	1738
2113	1575	2192	1660	2265	1739
2115	1576	2193-2194	1662	2268	1740-1741
2116	1578	2195	1671	2269	1742
2117	1579	2196	1673-1675	2270	1743-1744
2118	1581	2197	1672	2271	1745
2119	1580	2199	1663-1666	2272	1746-1747
2120	1582	2200	1667-1669	2273	1748
2121-2123	1583-1586	2201	1680	2275	1750
2124	1587-1588	2202	1681	2276-2277	1751-1752
2125	1589	2203	1682	2279-2280	1753
2128	1591	2204	1685	2281	1754
2129	1592	2205	1686	2282	1755
2130	1595	2206	1688-1691	2283	1754
2131	1596	2207	1692	2285	1760
2132-2133	1597-1603, 1605	2210	1694	2286	1762
2135	1604	2211	1695	2287	1763
2137	1608	2212	1696-1697	2292	1765
2138	1609-1610	2213	1699	2294	1767
2139	1611	2214	1700	2296	1768-1769
2140	1612	2215	1701	2297	1770
2141	1613	2217-2218	1702	2298	1771
2143	1614-1616	2219	1703	2300	1774
2144	1617	2220	1704	2301	1775
2145	1618	2221	1705	2302	1776
2148	1620	2223	1707	2303	1777
2150	1620-1621	2228	1710	2304	1778
2151	1622-1623	2230-2231	1711	2306	1780
2152	1624	2232-2233	1713-1714	2307	1781
2153	1625	2234	1715	2308	1782, 1784-1785
2154	1626	2235	1716	2309	1783
2155	1594	2236	1717	2310	1786
2156	1627	2237	1712	2311	1787-1789
2158-2159	1630-1631	2239	1723	2312	1790-1792
2161	1633-1634	2240	1721-1722	2313	1793
2163	1638	2241	1724	2314	1794
2164	1639	2242	1725	2315	1795
2165	1640	2243	1726	2317	1796
2166	1641	2245	1719-1720	2318-2319	1785, 1797
2167	1642	2251	1730	2321	1789-1800
2168	1635-1637	2252	1731	2322	1801
2169	1643	2254-2257	1732	2323	1802
2175	1650	2258	1733	2324	1803

# TABLE OF CROSS-REFERENCES TO POCKET CODE

TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §	TREATISE §	Code §
2325	1804-1806	2430	1921	2506	2059
2326	1804	2431	1922-1925	2507	2060
2327	1805, 1808	2432	1927-1928	2508	2061
2328-2329	1807	2433	1929	2509	2062
2334	1812	2434	1930	2510	2063
2336	1813-1815	2435	1931	2511	2064
2337	1816	2436	1932	2512-2513	2066
2338	1817	2437	1933	2514	2065
2339	1819	2438	1934	2515-2516	2067
2340	1822-1823	2439	1936	2517-2518	2068
2341	1820-1821	2440	1937	2519-2525	2069-2079
2346	1825, 1947	2441	1938	2527	2080
2348-2356	1947	2442	1935	2528	2081
2361	1830, 1832	2443-2445	1934 <i>a</i>	2529	2082
2362-2363	1834-1836	2446	1939	2530	2083
2368-2373	1850	2447	1941	2531-2532	2084-2086
2374	1833	2450	1946	2533	2087
2375	1837-1840	2451-2452	1944-1955	2534	2088
2378-2379	1842-1849	2454-2456	1950	2535	2089
2380	1855	2458	1953-1954	2536	2091-2092
2381	1856	2459	1955	2537	2093
2382	1857	2460	1958-1960	2538	2094
2383	1858	2461-2463	1961	2539	2095
2384	1859	2464	1962-1965	2549	2100
2385	1860	2465	1966-1969	2550	2101-2103
2386	1861-1862	2466-2467	1970-1972, 1977	2552	2104-2106
2387	1863	2470	1975	2553-2554	2107-2109
2388	1864-1865	2471	1976	2556	2110-2112
2389-2390	1866	2472	1978	2557	2113-2114
2391	1867	2473	1979-1980	2558	2115
2395	1870	2474	1981	2559	2116
2400-2401	1871-1874	2475	1982	2565	2120, 2130
2404	1877	2476-2477	1983-1984	2567	2121-2123
2406	1878-1881	2483-2484	1990-1992	2568	2124
2407	1882	2485-2487	1994-1998	2569	2125-2126
2408-2409	1883-1892	2486	2035	2570	2127
2410	1893	2488-2494	1999-2003	2571	2130
2411	1894	2490	2012-2013	2572	2131
2413	1895	2493	2014	2573	2132
2414	1896	2495	2006-2009	2574-2577	2133
2415	1897-1898	2496	2010, 2015-2019	2578-2579	2134
2416	1899-1905	2497	2022-2026	2580-2582	2135
2417-2418	1906	2498	2027-2031	2588-2589	2140
2419	1907	2500	2041-2043	2590	2141, 2145
2420	1908-1910	2501	2045	2591	2143
2421	1911-1912	2502	2046	2592	2144
2423	1913	2503	2047	2593	2146
2425	1915	2504	2048-2054	2594	2148-2150
2427	1917	2505	2055-2058	2596	1599



## 1. TABULAR ANALYSIS OF TOPICS

### BOOK I. ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE.

#### INTRODUCTORY: THEORY AND PROCEDURE.

- I. RULES OF RELEVANCY.
- II. RULES OF AUXILIARY PROBATIVE POLICY.
- III. RULES OF EXTRINSIC POLICY.
- IV. PAROL EVIDENCE RULES.

*[See Table 2, for further analysis.]*

### BOOK II. BY WHOM EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED.

- I. BURDEN OF PROOF, AND PRESUMPTIONS.  
GENERAL PRINCIPLES.
- II. BURDENS AND PRESUMPTIONS IN  
SPECIFIC ISSUES.

### BOOK III. TO WHOM EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED.

- I. JUDGE.
- II. JURY.

### BOOK IV. PROPOSITIONS NEEDING NO EVIDENCE.

- I. JUDICIAL NOTICE.
- II. JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS.

TABLES

2. TABULAR ANALYSIS OF BOOK I (ADMISSIBILITY)

PART I. RULES OF RELEVANCY

<u>I. Circumstantial Evidence</u>	<u>II. Testimonial Evidence</u>
<div><div>I. of Human Act</div><div>II. of Human Quality, etc.</div><div>III. of Inanimate Fact</div></div> <div>[See Table 3]</div>	<div><div>I. Qualifications</div><div>II. Impeachment</div><div>III. Rehabilitation</div><div>IV. Admissions</div></div> <div>[See Table 4]</div>
<u>III. Autoptic Preference</u>	

PART II. RULES OF AUXILIARY PROBATIVE POLICY

<u>I. Preferential</u>	<u>II. Analytic</u>	<u>III. Prophylactic</u>
<div><div>I. Documentary Originals</div><div>II. Attesting Witness, etc.</div></div>	<div><div><u>Hearsay</u></div><div>1. Cross-Examination</div><div>2. Confrontation</div></div>	<div><div>I. Oath</div><div>II. Perjury-Penalty</div><div>III. Publicity</div><div>IV. Sequestration</div><div>V. Discovery</div></div>
<u>IV. Simplificative</u>	<u>V. Synthetic</u>	
<div><div>I. Order of Evidence</div><div>II. Sundries</div><div>III. Opinion</div></div>	<div><div>I. No. of Witnesses</div><div>II. Kind of Witness</div><div>III. Verbal Completeness</div><div>IV. Authentication</div></div>	

PART III. RULES OF EXTRINSIC POLICY

<u>I. Absolute Exclusion</u>	<u>II. Optional Exclusion (Privilege)</u>
<div>I. Testimonial Duty</div>	<div><div>II. Privileges of Non-Attendance</div><div>III. Privileges of Silence</div></div>
<u>A. Topics</u>	<u>B. Communications</u>
<div><div>1. Sundry</div><div>2. Ante-Marital</div><div>3. Self-Criminating</div></div>	<div><div><div>1. Sundries</div><div>2. Attorney</div><div>3. Marital</div><div>4. Jurors</div></div><div><div>5. Informers; Officials</div><div>6. Physician</div><div>7. Priest</div></div></div>

PART IV. PAROL EVIDENCE RULES

<div>I. Enaction</div>	<div>II. Integration</div>	<div>III. Formalities</div>	<div>IV. Interpretation</div>
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6. TABULAR ANALYSIS OF BOOK I, PART II (CONCLUSION)  
AND PART III (§§ 1864-2396) \*

PART II. RULES OF AUXILIARY PROBATIVE POLICY  
(CONCLUSION) (§§ 1864-2169)

TITLE IV. SIMPLIFICATIVE RULES

<u>(I) Order of Presenting Evidence</u>		<u>(II) Sundry Rules</u> <u>excluding Witnesses</u>	<u>(III) Opinion Rule</u>
<u>A. Stages for the Case</u>	<u>B. Stages for the Witness</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Putting in the Case</li> <li>2. Case Closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Original Call <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Direct Examination</li> <li>b. Cross-examination</li> <li>c. Re-direct, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Recall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Excessive Number</li> <li>2. Judge</li> <li>3. Juror</li> <li>4. Counsel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Principle</li> <li>2. Sanity</li> <li>3. Value</li> <li>4. Insurance Risk</li> <li>5. Care, Safety, etc.</li> <li>6. State of Mind</li> <li>7. Sundries</li> <li>8. Character</li> <li>9. Hand-writing</li> </ul>

TITLE V. SYNTHETIC RULES

<u>(I) Required Numbers of Witnesses</u>	<u>(II) Required Kinds of Witnesses</u>	<u>(III) Verbal Completeness</u>	<u>(IV) Authentication of Documents</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Treason, Perjury</li> <li>2. Wills, Chancery</li> <li>3. Divorce</li> <li>4. Accomplice</li> <li>5. Prosecutrix, etc.</li> <li>6. Confessions</li> <li>7. Sundries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eye-Witnesses of Crime</li> <li>2. Corpus Delicti</li> <li>3. Marriage</li> <li>4. Medical Experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compulsory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Oral Utterances</li> <li>b. Writings</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Optional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sundries</li> <li>b. Chancery Answer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By Age</li> <li>2. By Contents</li> <li>3. By Custody</li> <li>4. By Seal</li> </ul>

PART III. RULES OF EXTRINSIC POLICY (§§ 2175-2396)

TITLE I. RULES OF ABSOLUTE EXCLUSION

<u>(I) Indecencies, etc.</u>	<u>(II) Evidence Illegally Obtained</u>
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TITLE II. RULES OF CONDITIONAL EXCLUSION (PRIVILEGE)

<u>(I) Testimonial Duty in general</u>	<u>(II) Privilege of Non-attendance</u>	<u>(III) Privileges of Silence</u>	
		<u>A. Topics</u>	<u>B. Communications</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Testimony, Premises, Chattels, etc.</li> <li>2. Privileged Exceptions</li> <li>3. Jurisdictional Powers of Compulsion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subpoena</li> <li>2. Indemnity</li> <li>3. Ability to Attend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Irrelevancies</li> <li>2. Title-Deeds</li> <li>3. Trade-Secrets</li> <li>4. Religious Belief</li> <li>5. Votes</li> <li>6. Infamy</li> <li>7. Party-Opponent</li> <li>8. Spouses</li> <li>9. Self-Crimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sundries</li> <li>2. Attorney</li> <li>3. Spouses</li> <li>4. Jurors</li> <li>5. Informers</li> <li>6. Compulsory Reports</li> <li>7. Officials</li> <li>8. Physician</li> <li>9. Priest</li> </ul>

\* For Tabular Analysis of Book I, Part II, Titles I-III, see Table 5, prefixed to Vols. II and III.

# EVIDENCE

## IN

### TRIALS AT COMMON LAW

BOOK I (*continued*): RULES OF ADMISSIBILITY

PART III (*continued*): RULES OF EXTRINSIC POLICY

TITLE II, SUB-TITLE III (*continued*): TESTIMONIAL PRIVILEGE

TOPIC B: PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC I: CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN GENERAL

#### CHAPTER LXXIX.

§ 2285. General Principle of Privileged Communications.

communications not Privileged: Clerks, Trustees, Bankers, Journalists, etc.

§ 2286. Sundry Confidential Communi-

§ 2287. Same: Telegrams.

§ 2285. **General Principle of Privileged Communications.** Looking back at the principle of Privilege, as an exception to the general liability of every person to give testimony upon all facts inquired of in a court of justice, and having in view that preponderance of extrinsic policy which alone can justify the recognition of any such exception (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2197), four fundamental conditions may be predicated as necessary to the establishment of a privilege against the disclosure of communications between persons standing in a given relation:<sup>1</sup>

(1) The communications must originate in a *confidence* that they will not be disclosed;

(2) This element of *confidentiality must be essential* to the full and satisfactory maintenance of the relation between the parties;

(3) The *relation* must be one which in the opinion of the community ought to be sedulously *fostered*; and

§ 2285. <sup>1</sup> 1851, Wigram, V. C., in Russell v. Jackson, 9 Hare 387, 391 ("The rule which protects from disclosure confidential communications between solicitor and client, does not rest simply upon the confidence reposed by the client in the solicitor, for there is no such rule in other cases in which at least equal confidence is reposed; . . . it seems to rest, not upon the confidence itself, but upon the necessity of carrying it out"); 1814, Phillips on Evidence, 134 ("The expediency of this rule [of attorney and client] must depend not on the impropriety of violating the confidence reposed, but on a consideration that

the collateral inconvenience, which would ensue if no such confidence were reposed, would preponderate over the direct mischief produced by a chance of the failure of justice resulting from the exclusion of evidence"); 1860, Appleton on Evidence, 167 ("The preservation of confidence may be right; that will depend on the confidence to be encouraged, and, being encouraged, to be preserved inviolate. The confidence should be that between those in the right, — between those seeking no wrong and violating no right, — a confidence compatible with the ends of justice; none other").



(4) The *injury* that would inure to the relation by the disclosure of the communications must be *greater than the benefit* thereby gained for the correct disposal of litigation.<sup>2</sup>

These four conditions being present, a privilege should be recognized; and not otherwise. That they are present in most of the recognized privileges is plain enough; and the absence of one or more of them serves to explain why certain privileges have failed to obtain the recognition sometimes demanded for them. In the privilege for communications between Attorney and Client, for example, all four are present; and the doubt which Bentham has raised as to the policy of that privilege fixes upon the only condition therein open to dispute, namely, the fourth. In the privilege for communications between Husband and Wife, all four conditions are again present; and the chief variance of judicial opinion in defining the privilege (*i. e.* in holding, as some do, that the protection extends to all communications, or, as others do, to confidential communications only) is due to a question as to the fulfilment of the first condition. In the privileges for communications between Jurors and between Informer and Government, the four conditions are clearly present. In the privilege (denied at common law) for communications between Physician and Patient, the fallacy of recognizing it lies in the incorrect assumption that the second and fourth conditions are generally present. In the privilege (also denied at common law) for communications between Priest and Penitent, the objection to its recognition has probably lain in a tacit denial of the third condition. In the privilege (sometimes urged) for communications sent by telegraph, the reluctance to recognize it has apparently been due to a perception that no one of the four conditions is thoroughly fulfilled.—These four conditions must serve as the foundation of policy for determining all such privileges, whether claimed or established.

§ 2286. **Sundry Confidential Communications not privileged; Clerks, Trustees, etc.** In general, then, the *mere fact that a communication was made in express confidence*, or in the implied confidence of a *confidential relation*, does not create a privilege. This rule is not questioned to-day.<sup>1</sup> No pledge of privacy, nor oath of secrecy,<sup>2</sup> can avail against demand for the truth in a court of justice:

<sup>2</sup> Cited with approval in *O'Toole v. Ohio G. F. Ins. Co.*, 159 Mich. 187, 123 N. W. 795.

§ 2286. <sup>1</sup> With the following cases should be compared those cited *ante*, §§ 2211–2215, involving disclosures of secret topics, irrespective of communications: *Eng.* 1811, Berkeley Peerage Trial, Sherwood's Abstract, 41 (general principle); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145 ("persons in the most closely confidential relation are bound to disclose communications made to them"); 1867, *Hopkinson v. Burghley*, L. R. 2 Ch. App. 447 (letter to defendant, with confidential communication from a third person, held not privileged); 1881, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Wheeler v. Le Marchant*, L. R. 17 Ch. D. 675, 681 (general

principle); *U. S.* 1897, *Cox v. Montague*, 24 C. C. A. 364, 78 Fed. 845 (general principle); 1906, *Rogers v. State*, 88 Miss. 38, 40 So. 744 (good opinion by Calhoun, J.; a "solemn promise of secrecy" as to the name of a person returning stolen goods, held not to give a privilege).

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1834, *R. v. Shaw*, 6 C. & P. 373 (communication under oath of secrecy to a fellow-prisoner in jail); 1836, *R. v. Thomas*, 7 C. & P. 346 (confession under a promise of secrecy); *U. S.* 1898, *Owens v. Frank*, 7 Wyo. 457, 53 Pac. 282 (communication made in confidence between members of the Masonic order).

The rule that a *confession obtained by fraud* is nevertheless admissible (*ante*, § 841) also illustrates the principle.



1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 103d day, 'Times' Rep. pt. 28, pp. 19 ff.; Mr. John O'Connor, M. P., once an active Fenian, was under examination as to his transactions in 1879 with various persons concerned in the Fenian brotherhood; in refusing to speak upon those matters, he said in explanation: "I may as well tell you that I do not intend to admit to you who were associated with me in these transactions. I was bound to these people by an obligation that they accepted in good faith, and I am not going to betray them." . . . *Counsel*: "Did you see Devoy at the end of 1878 or the beginning of 1879?" *Witness*: "I must decline to answer." *Counsel*: "I submit, my lord, that I have a right to press this question." President *Hannan*: "I have explained several times that these excuses which are made for not giving evidence are not for a moment tenable in a court of justice. That a man has bound himself by an illegal oath in connection with an illegal association cannot of course be recognized as an excuse. But we have a delicate task to perform, and I do not propose at present to take the measures which are in my power." After a subsequent refusal to answer other questions, *Counsel*: "What is your objection?" *Witness*: "It is an objection to break my oath. It is a regard for an obligation that I respect, even though others may not respect it." President *Hannan*: "Are you a Protestant or a Roman Catholic?" *Witness*: "A Roman Catholic"; President *Hannan*: "Do you mean to assert that your Church justifies a refusal to give evidence on the ground that you have taken the illegal oath of an illegal society?" *Witness*: "I have not studied the theology of the matter." President *Hannan*: "Nor the morality?" *Witness*: "I know what my code of honor is, my lord, and I intend to adhere to it."

Accordingly, a confidential communication to a *clerk*,<sup>3</sup> to a *trustee*,<sup>4</sup> to a *commercial agency*,<sup>5</sup> to a *banker*,<sup>6</sup> to a *journalist*,<sup>7</sup> or to *any other*

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1824, *Webb v. Smith*, 1 C. & P. 337 (an articulated clerk, held compellable to disclose a matter learned in the employer's business, but not "specially entrusted as a matter of secrecy"); *U. S.* 1809, *Corps v. Robinson*, 2 Wash. C. C. 388 (the head clerk of the defendant, compelled to testify to confidential matters; "it has never been considered an objection which the witness can make"); *Oh. St.* 1908, p. 20, Feb. 26, *Gen. C. Annot.* 1921, § 13410 (no stenographer shall disclose any matter received from employer, under penalty; except when "called as a witness and directed to testify by a proper court as to matters within his employment").

*Contra*: *Ia. Code* 1897, § 4608 (privilege established for a "stenographer or confidential clerk of any person, who obtains such information by reason of his employment"; the amendment, which practically abolishes this, is quoted *post*, § 2292); 1915, *Ewing v. Hatcher*, 175 *Ia.* 443, 154 *N. W.* 869 (communications to a stenographer not made in relation to her duties as such, held not privileged under Code § 4608).

Compare the privilege for *trade secrets*, *i. e.* for the facts of the business, as distinguished from communications (*ante*, § 2212).

<sup>4</sup> *Jones v. Manchester*, quoted *infra*. Compare Mr. J. Buller's two statements, quoted *infra*. But a trustee, so far as identified with a *party*, was privileged from discovery, before modern legislation: *ante*, § 2218.

<sup>5</sup> 1894, *Shauer v. Alerton*, 151 *U. S.* 607, 617, 14 *Sup.* 442.

<sup>6</sup> *Eng.* 1826, *Loyd v. Freshfield*, 2 C. & P. 325, 329 (clerk of a banker compelled to state the figures of a depositor's balance); *Can.* 1897, *Hannum v. McRae*, 17 *Ont. Pr.* 567, 18 *id.* 185 (bank manager must attend with the bank's books on subpoena; even the English statute allowing a party to prove them by copy — quoted *ante*, § 1223 — does not create a privilege not to disclose the accounts of customers; though that statute is not in force in Ontario; good opinion by MacLennan, J.); *U. S.* 1904, *Re Davies*, 68 *Kan.* 791, 75 *Pac.* 1048 (perjury of B. in returning personalty for taxation; a banker held not privileged as to the amount of money held on deposit by him for B.; good opinion by Smith, J.).

For the privilege for pecuniary reports to a *tax-assessor*, see *post*, § 2377.

<sup>7</sup> *Eng.* 1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 52d day, 'Times' Rep. pt. 14, p. 18 (ruled that a newspaper had no privilege to withhold the name of a contributor); *U. S.* 1895, *U. S. v. Edwards*, *U. S. v. Shriver*, D. C., reported, with Senator Edmunds' brief, in *Smith's Digest of Precedents of Privilege of Congress*, 1894, pp. 828, 848, 856 ("Such a rule [of privilege] would be in violation of a sound public policy"); 1897, *People v. Durrant*, 116 *Cal.* 179, 48 *Pac.* 75 ("Considering that Miss C. was a newspaper reporter, . . . the claim scarcely merits comment"); 1897,



person,<sup>8</sup> not holding one of the specific relations hereafter considered, is not privileged from disclosure.

But this was not always so. In the trials of the 1600s, the obligations of honor among gentlemen (and the English bench and bar were peculiarly dominated by that standard) were often put forward as a sufficient ground for maintaining silence.<sup>9</sup> By the middle of the 1700s it seemed as though this notion would prevail, at any rate in certain worthy cases.<sup>10</sup> The same

Ex parte Lawrence, 116 Cal. 298, 48 Pac. 124 (reporter's refusal to disclose information to a legislative committee, held improper); 1919, Joslyn v. People, 67 Colo. 297, 184 Pac. 375 (inquiry into newspaper charges of corruption in a grand jury; the owner of the newspaper, called as a witness, declined to say whether he was the writer of the article, on the ground of "private, confidential, and personal business"; held, not privileged); 1911, Plunkett v. Hamilton, Hamilton v. Plunkett, 136 Ga. 72, 70 S. E. 781 (newspaper reporter; privilege denied; forceful opinion by Lumpkin, J.).

The following enactment, as detestable in substance as it is crude in form, will probably remain unique: Md. St. 1896, c. 249 Ann. Code 1914, Art. 35, § 2 ("No person engaged in, connected with, or employed on a newspaper or journal shall be compelled to disclose in any legal proceeding or trial, or before any committee of the Legislature or elsewhere, the source of any news or information procured or obtained by him for or published in the newspaper on and in which he is engaged, connected with or employed").

Distinguish here the practice of refusing, in an action against a newspaper for libel, to compel discovery by the defendant of the names of defendant's informants; this rests not on a principle of privilege, but on the limitations of discovery (*ante*, § 1856 c).

<sup>8</sup> The following are miscellaneous instances, where special and local statutes have been involved: Mass. 1922, Attorney-General v. Pelletier, 240 Mass. 264, 134 N. E. 406 (employee of licensed private detective; no privilege is created by Gen. L. c. 147, § 28, forbidding disclosure of information except as "required by law to do"); Mich. Comp. L. 1915, §§ 11387, 11390 (where an unmarried woman is with child or has "lived with a man and has been considered as his wife," "or for other good reason . . . deemed to be sufficient by the judge of probate, desires to keep the exact date of the marriage a secret, to protect the good name of herself and the reputation of her family," the probate judge may issue "without publicity a marriage license," and "all knowledge of any facts" about it coming to the judge, officials, physicians, and witnesses "shall be deemed to be privileged communications"); N. Y. 1915, People v. Roach, 215 N. Y. 592, 109 N. E. 618 (St. 1910, c. 515, prohibiting a licensed detective from revealing

without his employer's consent information obtained by him, "except as required by law," held not to exclude, *semble*, an inquiry in a trial in Court); Wis. Stats. 1919, § 4078 m (no official court reporter shall be permitted to make any statement made to him by an injured person as to the manner or extent of injury).

For a taxpayer's return of property to the assessor, see *post*, § 2377. For other reports made in confidence to a government official (industrial accidents, etc.), see *post*, § 2377.

<sup>9</sup> 1613, Countess of Shrewsbury's Case, 12 Rep. 94 (before a council, including the Chancellor, Chief Justices, and Chief Baron; the Countess, being "required to declare her knowledge" concerning the escape of Lady Arabella Stuart, refused, for one reason, because "she had made a rash vow that she would not declare anything in particular touching the said points"; but she was adjudged in contempt, since "rash and illegal vows make not an excuse"; and the subject's very oath of allegiance binds her "without being demanded, to reveal to the king what she knows concerning the premises, upon which great mischief may happen to the king and the realm"; possibly in a civil case the conclusion might have been different); 1673, Jones v. Countess of Manchester, 1 Ventr. 197 (the Earl of Manchester, brother to the plaintiff, had the key of a box, held by a stranger, and containing her deeds; the box was in court, but the earl refused to surrender the key, being a trustee for his sister, claiming that "it would be a breach of the trust reposed in him, which he held sacred and inviolable"; but Lord Hale told him, though they could not compel him there to do it, yet the law required it; "for though it is against the duty of a counsellor or solicitor, etc., to discover the evidence which he who retains him acquaints him with, yet a trustee may and ought to produce writings, etc."). Lord Kenyon's allusion (in Wilson v. Rastall, 4 T. R. 753, 758) to the testimony of Lord Howard against Lord Russell, in 1683 (9 How. St. Tr. 611), as an example of compelling the revelation of confidences, seems not to be founded on anything in the report of the trial.

<sup>10</sup> 1676, Bulstrode v. Letchmere, Freem. Ch. 5 ("the Lord Chancellor made it a doubt if a thing were revealed under the condition of secrecy to one that was not a barrister, whether or no he would oblige him to answer"); 1682, Lord Grey's Trial, 9 How. St. Tr. 127, 175 (infor-



point of view is also plain at that time in the treatment of the privilege for attorney and client, which was then supposed to rest upon the honorable obligations of the attorney, rather than upon objective considerations of policy (*post*, § 2290). But a stricter view of justice finally dominated, and in the notorious *Duchess of Kingston's Case* the older point of view was definitely abandoned and the new one thoroughly promulgated:

1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Case*, 20 How. St. Tr. 586; bigamy; trial by the House of Lords; to prove the first and disputed marriage, the question was asked of Lord Barrington, an old friend of the accused: "Did you ever hear from the lady at the bar that she was married to Mr. Hervey"? Lord Barrington: "If anything has been confided to my honor, or confidentially told me, I do hold, with humble submission to your lordships, that as a man of honor, as a man regardful of the laws of society, I cannot reveal it." Then the Duchess released Lord Barrington from every obligation of honor; and the Solicitor-General, not to be outdone, declared that he would ask no more questions; but several lords insisted on their right to continue the questioning. Lord CAMDEN: "I hope that your lordships, sitting in judgment on criminal cases — the highest and most important that may affect the lives, liberties, and properties of your lordships — that you shall not think it befitting the dignity of this high Court of justice to be debating the etiquette of honor at the same time when we are trying lives and liberties. My lords, the laws of this land — I speak it boldly in this grave assembly — are to receive another answer from those who are called to depose at your bar, than to be told that in point of honor and of conscience they do not think that they acquit themselves like persons of that description when they declare what they know"; Duke of Richmond: "I do not look on a witness at the bar to be the witness of the counsel or of the prisoner, but the witness of the House"; Lord Barrington still refusing, the Lords adjourned to discuss the point of law, and it was announced to him that "it is the judgment of this House that you are bound by law to answer all such questions as shall be put to you."

1777, HOTHAM, B., in *Hill's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 1362 (to the jury, commenting on the testimony of an informer who disclosed the defendant's secrets): "The defendant certainly thought him his friend, and he [the defendant] therefore did disclose all this to him. Gentlemen, one has only to say further, that if this point of honor was to be so sacred as that a man who comes by knowledge of this sort from an offender was not to be at liberty to disclose it, the most atrocious criminals would every day escape punishment; and therefore it is that the wisdom of the law knows nothing of that point of honor. If the man is a legal witness, you are bound to receive his testimony, giving it, however, that weight only which you think it deserves."

The "point of honor" thus disappeared forever as a motive for recognizing a privilege. But its expiry was undoubtedly viewed with reluctance by

mation against several persons for carrying off and debauching Lady Henrietta Berkeley; Lady Henrietta testified for the defendant that she left her parents' house voluntarily; on being asked who was with her, she answered, "I shall not give any account of that, for I will not betray anybody for their kindness to me; . . . I will not break my vow to them"; Mr. J. Dolben: "If they ask you of anybody in the information, . . . you must tell if it were any of them, but you are not bound to tell if it were any one else"; L. Henrietta: "No, it was none of them"; 1722, *Layer's Trial*, 16 How.

St. Tr. 93, 245 (Lords North and Grey: "It is a little hard for a man of honour to betray conversation, what passed over a bottle of wine in discourse; but since your lordship requires it, I must submit"); 1767, Buller, *Trials at Nisi Prius*, 284 (a naked trust does not disqualify the trustee as interested; "however, a trustee shall not be a witness to betray the trust"; citing a ruling of L. C. J. Holt's that a broker of offices should not be received to testify to the occasion of giving a bond, "because it appeared he was privately entrusted to make the bargain by both parties, and to keep it secret").

many;<sup>11</sup> and traces of its later survival across the water were to be noticed for some time thereafter.<sup>12</sup>

§ 2287. **Same: Telegrams.** That the relation between the telegram-transmitter and the telegram-sender, and the confidence of the communication as between them, are sufficient to establish a privilege against the operator's disclosure has been supported by a few distinguished judicial names:

1874, BRAMWELL, B., in the *Stroud Election Case*, 2 O'M. & H. 107, 112: "I really think that for the public good there ought to be no power of compelling the production of these documents. It is the necessary consequence that persons who correspond by telegram are obliged to repose confidence in the Crown, and I believe it will be for the public good if it is found that that is a confidence that the Crown cannot be compelled to violate. Inconvenience might arise in many cases. It might arise in the case of a confidential communication between attorney and client, or husband and wife; therefore we must look to the general principle."

1890, COOLEY, J., *Constitutional Limitations*, 6th ed., p. 371, note: "The telegraph is used as a means of correspondence, and as a valuable and in many cases an indispensable substitute for the postal facilities; and the communication is made, not because the party desires to put the operator in possession of facts, but because transmission without it is impossible. It is not voluntary in any other sense than this, that the party makes it rather than deprive himself of the benefits of this great invention and improvement. The reasons of a public nature for maintaining the secrecy of telegraphic communication are the same with those which protect correspondence by mail; and though the operator is not a public officer, that circumstance appears to us immaterial. He fulfils an important public function; and the propriety of his preserving inviolable secrecy in regard to communications is so obvious that it is common to provide statutory penalties for disclosure. If on grounds of public policy the operator should not voluntarily disclose, why do not the same considerations forbid the Courts compelling him to do so?"<sup>1</sup>

These arguments have been adequately met in the following passages:

1869, *Dublin Election Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 270, 271: "Mr. Sanger, the telegraph-officer, when called as a witness to produce the telegrams, said, 'My lord, before I produce these telegrams, I must object to their production. We have always looked upon a telegram as sacred, and we think that this decision of your lordship will shake the confidence of the public in the telegraph.' Mr. Justice Keogh said that the opinion of the telegraph company as to this could make no difference. The telegrams were produced. . . . Mr. Justice Keogh in his judgment said further as to this: 'Telegrams are nothing but electric letters, written by the candidates or their agents to electors. If such letters were in the pockets of the electors, or if copies of them were in desks of the candidates, the petitioners of course would have a right to insist upon their production; and there is no reason why, because they are transmitted along a wire instead of being written on paper with pen and ink, they should have any greater protection.'"

<sup>11</sup> 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 759 (Buller, J.: "The privilege is confined to the cases of counsel, solicitor, and attorney; . . . it is indeed hard in many cases to compel a friend to disclose a confidential conversation; and I should be glad if by law such evidence could be excluded").

<sup>12</sup> 1782, *Morris v. Vanderen*, 1 Dall. Pa. 64 (testimony of a clerk, who acted as scrivener of deeds for his employer, offered, but withdrawn on objection made); 1792, *Mills v.*

*Griswold*, 1 Root Conn. 383 ("what the defendant had told him in confidence," held subject to disclosure; the distinction being between "communications which are voluntary" and those which are "necessary in the course of business, as of a client to his attorney"); 1796, *Calkins v. Lee*, 2 Root Conn. 363 (similar).

§ 2287. <sup>1</sup> See also the learned jurist's more elaborate exposition in his article (1879) on Inviolability of Telegraphic Correspondence, 18 Amer. Law Reg. N. S. 65.



1851, KING, P. J., in *Henislaw v. Freedman*, 2 Pars. Eq. Cas. 274: "If we adopt this [alleged] construction of the law, the telegraph may be used with the most absolute security for purposes destructive to the well-being of society, — a state of things rendering its absolute usefulness at least questionable. The correspondence of the traitor, the murderer, the robber, and the swindler, by means of which their crimes and frauds could be the more readily accomplished and their detection and punishment avoided, would become things so sacred that they never could be accessible to the public justice, however deep might be the public interest involved in their production. For the result of the principle contended for is that the seal of secrecy is placed on all telegraphic communications, as well in courts of justice as elsewhere, and that they are to be classed with privileged communications, such as those between husband and wife, counsel and client. . . . The law is jealous of extending the circle of persons excused or interdicted from giving testimony. Parents are required to testify against children, children against parents, brothers against brothers, friends against friends. Communications by letter, made under the deepest obligations of friendship, affection or honor, still must be produced, if deemed necessary to the ascertainment of the truth and the administration of justice by the public tribunals. To this great end of social organization, all secondary causes are required to give way."<sup>2</sup>

1879, Mr. *Henry Hitchcock*, *The Inviolability of Telegrams*, 5 South. L. Rev. N. S. 473, 491: "The offence which this section [of the postal statutes] proscribes is not the disclosure of the contents, nor even primarily the opening or reading of private letters. It consists in taking out of the mail, before its delivery to the person to whom directed, any letter, postal-card, or packet. . . . It is evident, therefore, that the intent and policy of the postal statutes is to protect and assure, not so much the secrecy of private correspondence, as the due fulfilment of a trust voluntarily undertaken by the government in respect of its safe and prompt delivery. It has undertaken this mode of serving the public, and invites the public confidence in such service; therefore it will punish any violation of the confidence so invited, any interference with its execution of that trust, not sanctioned by law. But, in respect of telegrams transmitted by private companies, the United States have undertaken no trust or duty, nor invited any confidence whatever. The postal statutes, therefore, not only do not protect the secrecy of telegrams, directly or by intent, but they are founded on reasons which, so far as the government is concerned, furnish no argument, even by analogy, for their protection. . . . The argument from the confidential character of telegrams as between the parties to them, and the expressed or implied pledge of secrecy by the telegraph companies, is still less satisfactory. It assumes that the law respects as privileged, without regard to their contents or relevancy to the pending issues, all communications which the parties to them intend shall be secret or confidential. It must amount to this, or to nothing. But it is perfectly well settled that no communication, however confidential, or growing out of personal, social, or business relations however intimate, is for that reason protected from disclosure on the witness-stand, unless it fall within one of the special and limited classes which the law itself makes privileged for reasons of public policy. In truth, all these arguments amount simply to the claim that private telegraphic messages, *as such*, without reference to their contents, constitute a new class of privileged communications. . . . How can it be said that if A, wishing to communicate with B, chooses to transmit his thoughts by electric telegraph instead of by oral or written message, he thereby creates or enters into a relation with B which it is the paramount interest of society itself to protect, by making privileged and inviolable every communication transmitted in that manner, without reference to its contents, even at the expense of the regular administration of justice? Such a rule, if prescribed at all, must be uniform; every communication sent by telegraph must be privileged, as is every communication between attorney and client, or husband and wife. But why should a given message, which, if orally communicated or delivered through the mail, would be subject

<sup>2</sup> Similar reasoning is used by Appleton, C. J., in *State v. Litchfield*, 58 Me. 267, 270 (1870).



to compulsory disclosure, become a privileged communication if sent by telegraph? This would be discriminating, not in the interest of the parties concerned, or of society at large, but of the business of the telegraph companies. Public policy, in respect of what communications shall be privileged, has nothing to do with the mode of their transmission, nor with the motive of its selection, nor with the desire of either or both parties for secrecy, but solely with the consequences to society at large of permitting or prohibiting their disclosure in aid of justice. In order, therefore, to support the claim that telegraphic messages, as such, should be held privileged communications, it must be shown that unless they are, the electric telegraph cannot be generally made available as a medium of communication, and also that this consequence would be more injurious to society than the denial to the Courts of this means of attaining the truth. But the former proposition is untrue, as experience demonstrates; and as to the latter, the unquestionable danger of abuse is to be met by applying, not by perverting, sound legal principles. On the other hand, the immensely increased facilities for crime, and the grave obstructions to public justice which would result from placing telegraphic messages, as such, on the list of privileged communications, are forcibly stated by the Court in the cases, already cited, of *The State v. Litchfield* and *Henisslaw v. Freedman*."

A sufficient answer, when all is said, to those who advocate this privilege, is that the very first condition of a privilege (*ante*, § 2285) is lacking, namely, the intention to keep the message secret in the hands of the transmitter. It is given to him for the sole purpose of being delivered to some one else; and that some one else is not only compellable to disclose it in court, but (for aught that appears) may freely and honorably publish it to others at any time. In short, there is no ultimate and absolute confidentiality in a telegram, but only a mediate and relative secrecy. Since the law need not respect its privacy in its ultimate state, there is no reason for respecting the intermediate stage. Were the telegram addressed to an attorney, in whose hands it would become privileged, the situation would be different; but there the doctrine of agency, as applied to the client's privilege, suffices to protect,<sup>3</sup> without creating a new privilege.

In *England*, the privilege for telegrams was at first repudiated,<sup>4</sup> but after the Government's assumption of the telegraphic service in 1868,<sup>5</sup> it was for a while conceded.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, however, this attitude was abandoned, and now no privilege appears to be recognized.<sup>7</sup> In *Canada*

<sup>3</sup> *Post*, § 2301.

<sup>4</sup> 1869, *Coventry Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 97, 104 (privilege denied for telegrams sent by a private company); *Bridgewater Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 112, 114; *Dublin Election Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 270, 271 (same; quoted *supra*).

<sup>5</sup> 1868, St. 31 & 32 Vict. c. 110, § 20 (forbids disclosure of telegrams by officials); 1869, St. 32 & 33 Vict. c. 73, § 23 (provides that nothing shall relieve an officer of the post from any liability which before existed for telegraph company to produce communications in a court of law when duly required).

<sup>6</sup> 1874, *Taunton Case*, 2 O'M. & H. 16, 72; *Stroud Case*, 3 O'M. & H. 107, 110 (production not required, partly because of lack of

power, because the documents "are in the custody of her Majesty," and partly because of policy; quoted *supra*); *Bolton Case*, 2 O'M. & H. 138, 140 (here required only because the contents had been otherwise disclosed).

<sup>7</sup> 1880, *Harwich Case*, 3 O'M. & H. 61, 62, 44 L. T. N. S. 187 (Lush, J., treated the *Bolton* case as overruling the prior two, and thought that when the Legislature "transferred the telegraphs to the Post-Office, they intended that the public should be just as well off as they were before"); 1881, *Re Smith*, L. R. Ir. 7 Ch. D. 286 (order for production of telegrams by the Post-Office authorities, granted).

and the *United States*, no Court has yet given any recognition to the privilege.<sup>8</sup>

It may be added that precisely the same considerations apply to the transmission of messages by *letter-post*. But no one has ever proposed that a privilege be recognized for ordinary letters, any more than for ordinary conversations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Canada*: 1861, *Re New York, Newf. & L. Tel. Co.*, 2 Morris Newf. 575 (telegraphic messages in the hands of the operator are not privileged, in spite of his oath under the statute forbidding disclosure); 1862, *Waddell's Case*, 8 Jur. N. S. 181 (Newfoundland; telegraph operator, not privileged from disclosing dispatches, even under a statute forbidding their wilful disclosure); 1888, *Re Dwight v. Macklam*, 15 Ont. 148, 154 (careful opinion by Boyd, C.); 1870, *Leslie v. Hervey*, 15 Low. Can. Jur. 9 (a telegraph company is not privileged to withhold dispatches received, in spite of a statute forbidding disclosure; "the right of this third party to compel the disclosure of all facts bearing on the subject-matter of the suit takes precedence, for the time, of the general right, subject to the law's limitation, which belongs to every man to prevent his private affairs being enquired into by others").

*United States*: *Fed.* 1876, Dec. 20, Louisiana Elections, Congressional Record, 44th Cong. 2d sess. vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 325-330 (the House adopted the following resolution: "That there is nothing in the law rendering a communication transmitted by telegraph any more privileged than a communication made orally or in any other manner whatsoever"); 1877, *Barnes' Case*, ib. pp. 452-455, 602-608, 678, 694 (rule applied to enforce production of telegrams in the hands of a telegraph operator at New Orleans); 1882, *U. S. v. Hunter*, 15 Fed. 712 (relevant telegrams must be produced); *Ia.* 1880, *Woods v. Miller*, 55 Ia. 168, 7 N. W. 484 (a statute prohibiting the disclosure of telegraphic messages does not prevent their production as evidence under an order of

court); *Me.* 1870, *State v. Litchfield*, 58 Me. 267 (a telegraph company is not privileged to withhold dispatches received); *Mo.* 1880, *Ex parte Brown*, 72 Mo. 83, 91 (telegrams in possession of a telegraph company, not privileged); *Pa.* 1851, *Henislaw v. Freedman*, 2 Pars. Eq. Cas. 274, Pa. Com. Pl. (a telegraph company held not privileged to withhold messages received by it, even under a statute expressly forbidding its operators to disclose dispatches without the consent of sender or receiver; quoted *supra*); 1876, *Kehoe's Trial (Molly Maguires)*, Pa., West's Rep. 128 (statute construed not to privilege telegrams); *Tex.* 1910, *Ex parte Gould*, 60 Tex. Cr. 442, 132 S. W. 364; *W. Va.* 1874, *National Bank v. National Bank*, 7 W. Va. 544, 546 (telegraph company not privileged to withhold telegrams from defendant; the whole privilege repudiated).

For *radio-telegrams*, the Federal statute recognizes no privilege: U. S. Code 1919, § 7025, par. 19 (no person shall "divulge or publish the contents" of a message at any station, "unless legally required to do so by the court of competent jurisdiction or other competent authority").

A statute forbidding disclosure unless "lawfully directed" (*e. g.* Can. Rev. St. 1886, c. 134, § 3, S. D. Rev. C. 1919, § 9801, § 3) obviously does not create a privilege.

<sup>9</sup> Whether as between Government and citizen there is a *right of inspection*, in war-time or in peace-time, is a different question; the history has been examined by Prof. Edw. R. Turner, "The Secrecy of the Post," English Historical Rev. XXIII, 320, July, 1918.



TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC II: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ATTORNEY AND CLIENT

CHAPTER LXXX.

§ 2290. History of the Privilege.

§ 2291. Policy of the Privilege.

§ 2292. General Principle; Statutory Definitions.

1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought"

§ 2294. Privilege is irrespective of Litigation begun or contemplated; History of the Doctrine.

§ 2295. Same: General Principle and Policy.

§ 2296. Advice sought for Sundry Non-Legal Purposes; Consultation with Prosecuting Attorneys.

§ 2297. Advice in Conveyancing or Drafting.

§ 2298. Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction.

2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such"

§ 2300. Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not admitted to Practice.

§ 2301. Attorney's Clerks and other Agents.

§ 2302. Client's Belief in the Attorney's Status.

§ 2303. Consultation in Attorney's Capacity; Gratuitous Advice.

§ 2304. Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney.

3. "The communications relevant to that purpose"

§ 2306. Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct, Appearance, Abode, etc.

§ 2307. Same: Production of the Client's Documents.

§ 2308. Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents.

§ 2309. Same: Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Documents.

§ 2310. Relevancy or Necessity of the Communication.

4. "Made in confidence"

§ 2311. Communications must be Confidential; Confidentiality not presumed;

Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle.

§ 2312. Communications to the Opponent or his Attorney, or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney.

§ 2313. Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit.

§ 2314. Execution of a Will or Deed; Temporary Confidentiality.

§ 2315. Same: Attorney as Attesting Witness.

§ 2316. State Prosecutor (District Attorney, State's Attorney).

5. "By the client"

§ 2317. Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired by the Attorney from Third Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents.

§ 2318. Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Production by Discovery, distinguished.

§ 2319. Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles, illustrated.

§ 2320. Communications by the Attorney to the Client.

6. "Are at his instance permanently protected"

§ 2321. Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Whom may Claim.

§ 2322. Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege.

§ 2323. Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended.

7. "From disclosure by himself or by the legal adviser"

§ 2324. Testimony by the Client or by the Attorney.

§ 2325. Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney.

§ 2326. Third Persons overhearing.

8. "Except the protection be waived"

§ 2327. Waiver in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver.

§ 2328. Waiver at Former Trial; Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees.

§ 2329. Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative.



§ 2290. **History of the Privilege.** (The history of this privilege goes back to the reign of Elizabeth, where it already appears as unquestioned.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore the oldest of the privileges for confidential communications. Inasmuch as the testimony of witnesses (in the modern sense) did not come to be a common source of proof in jury trials till the early 1500s (*ante*, § 1364) and as testimonial compulsion does not appear to have been generally authorized until the early part of Elizabeth's reign (*ante*, § 2190), it would seem that the privilege could hardly have come much earlier into existence; for there could have been but little material for its application. It thus appears to have commended itself, at the very outset, as a natural exception to the then novel right of testimonial compulsion.

But the theory of its exclusion, in those days, was very different from that of modern times. It was an objective, not a subjective one, — a consideration for the oath and the honor of the attorney, rather than for the apprehensions of his client. How significant the "point of honor" was, until the end of the 1700s, in almost securing other exemptions from testimonial disclosure, has been already seen (*ante*, § 2286). Clearly the attorney and the barrister are under a solemn pledge of secrecy, not less binding because it is implied and seldom expressed. "The first duty of an attorney," it has been said, "is to keep the secrets of his clients."<sup>2</sup> If the "point of honor" was to be recognized at all as a ground for exemption, then surely the attorney fell within this exemption. And no doubt this was, in the beginning, and so long as any countenance was given to that general doctrine, the theory of the attorney's exemption.

That doctrine, however, finally lost ground, and by the last quarter of the 1700s, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2286), was entirely repudiated. The judicial search for truth could not endure to be obstructed by a voluntary pledge of secrecy; nor was there any moral delinquency or public odium in breaking one's pledge under force of the law. Doubtless the attorney's exemption would have fallen at the same time with the others of like origin, had not a

§ 2290. <sup>1</sup> 1577, *Berd v. Lovelace*, Cary 88 (solicitor exempted from examination touching the cause); 1580, *Dennis v. Codrington*, Cary 143 (on a motion to examine one Oldsworth, "touching a matter in variance, wherein he hath been of Counsel, it is ordered he shall not be compelled by subpoena or otherwise to be examined upon any matter concerning the same, wherein he the said Mr. Oldsworth was of counsel, either by the indifferent choice of both parties or with either of them by reason of any annuity or fee"); 1580, *Kelway v. Kelway*, Cary 127 (solicitor of plaintiff to be examined for defendant, "upon any interrogatory which shall not be touching the secrecy of the title or of any other matter which he knoweth as solicitor only"); 1642, *Onbie's Case*, March pl. 136 ("a lawyer who was of counsel may be examined upon oath as to the matter of agreement, not to the validity

of an assurance, or to matter of counsel"); 1654, *Roll, C. J.*, in *Waldron v. Ward*, Style 449 ("He is not bound to make answer for things which may disclose the secrets of his client's cause"); 1664, *Sparke v. Middleton*, 1 Keb. 505 (counsel required in testifying to tell only "such things as he either knew before he was of counsel or that came to his knowledge since by other persons"); 1673, *Legard v. Foot*, Rep. temp. Finch 82 (attorney privileged); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (counsel privileged).

A few other rulings of the 1600s will be found in the ensuing sections.

<sup>2</sup> 1836, *Gaselee, J.*, in *Taylor v. Blacklow*, 3 Bing. N. C. 249. This conservative character is said to have been the original of Dickens' judicial fossil, Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who presided in *Bardell v. Pickwick*.



new theory, ample to sustain and even to enlarge it, by that time come to be recognized. That new theory looked to the necessity of providing subjectively for the client's freedom of apprehension in consulting his legal adviser (*post*, § 2291), and proposed to assure this by removing the risk of disclosure by the attorney even at the hands of the law. The new theory begins to appear in the early 1700s, coexists with the older one for half a century,<sup>3</sup> and then, upon the latter's disappearance, begins for the first time to be much dwelt upon and thoroughly developed. One consequence of this tardy origin was that the detailed rules of this privilege (oldest though it really was) were still in the formative stage in the first half of the 1800s. Another and most unfortunate one was that, by reason of the inconsistency of the two theories, in some of their practical applications, the older notion, so far as represented in precedents, struggled along for some time by the side of the newer one, like two powerful streams debouching into the same channel; and until the domination of the newer one was finally established throughout its boundaries, a turbid and confused volume of rulings abounded. Probably in no rule of Evidence having so early an origin were so many points still unsettled until the middle of the 1800s.

The history of the changes of detailed rule that were made necessary by the supervention of the newer theory can better be followed under their separate heads. But it is worth while to sum up here the chief marks of difference:

(1) In the first place, under the original theory, the privilege did not at all exempt the *client himself*. The pledge of secrecy had not been taken by him, and therefore the "point of honor" was not his to make.<sup>4</sup> This, to be sure, was a consequence of little practical moment, except in answering a bill of discovery in chancery; for all through that period the party was privileged in common-law courts from testifying in the trial of civil cases (*ante*, § 2217). As the newer theory developed, the client began to be exempted from making discovery of communications relating to the very case at bar; but in this stage the matter still stood as late as the first quarter of the 1800s.<sup>5</sup> Even up to that period it had to be insisted from the bar that "the privilege is that of the client and not of the attorney." The earliest judicial pronouncement in this form appears to have been made before 1700;<sup>6</sup> but it passed unheeded. Mr. Justice Buller, about 1767, repeats that "it is the privilege of the client and not of the counsel or attorney," but complains that "it is mistaking it for

<sup>3</sup> The following passage shows the mingling of the two: *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 136: "After the retainer, they are considered as the same person with their clients and are trusted with their secrets, which without a breach of confidence cannot be revealed, and without such sort of confidence there could be no trust or dependence on any man, nor any transacting of affairs by the ministry or mediation of another; and therefore the law in this

case maintains such sort of confidence inviolable."

<sup>4</sup> *Post*, § 2321.

<sup>5</sup> *Post*, § 2294. The much-cited opinion in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, in 1833, which to-day seems to declare nothing but commonplaces, was in that generation a leading case because of its bearing on this stage of development.

<sup>6</sup> L. C. J. North, in *Lea v. Wheatley*, 1679, cited in 20 How. St. Tr. 574, note.

the privilege of the witness that has sometimes led judges into the suffering of such a witness to be examined." <sup>7</sup> Then, when Lord Eldon, in 1801, declares it to be "the privilege of the client and the public," <sup>8</sup> the new theory begins to bear fruit.<sup>9</sup>

(2) In the next place, the attorney's exemption was by the original theory limited to communications received since the beginning of the *litigation at bar* and for its purposes only. The point of honor would protect him thus far; but it was gradually falling into disfavor as the 1700s progressed (*ante*, § 2286), and it would not be recognized further than could be helped. "When the cause is ended," says Chief Baron Bowes in 1743, "he is then only to be considered, with respect to his former employer, as one man to another; and then the breach of trust does not fall within the jurisdiction of this Court; for the Court can't determine what is honor, but what is law."<sup>10</sup> Under the influence of the newer theory, an extension of the attorney's exemption of course took place, to include communications made, first, during any other litigation,<sup>11</sup> next, in contemplation of litigation, next, during a controversy but not yet looking to litigation, and, lastly, in any consultation for legal advice, wholly irrespective of litigation or even of controversy. But this gradual extension occupied (in England, at least) nearly a hundred years of judicial annals; and the shackles of the earlier precedents were not finally thrown off until the decade of 1870.<sup>12</sup>

(3) It followed also, under the original theory, that the privilege could be *waived by the attorney*. Since only the attorney's honor is involved, the Court would not always attempt to judge its standards or to enforce them, if the attorney himself was willing to risk his conscience and his reputation. "The Court can't determine what is honor," said Chief Baron Bowes, in 1743.<sup>13</sup> Sir John Strange, Master of the Rolls, a decade later,<sup>14</sup> when pressed to exclude an attorney's deposition, "who ought not to betray the secrets of their clients," left it to the attorney to do as he pleased; "it is a very right rule; but as he himself has not objected to it, the Court has nothing to do with it." Such liberty, no doubt, was seldom exercised by attorneys; but they clearly had it, under the older theory; and this also took some time in disappearing.

It is plain, then, that the newer theory met the older one at several points of conflict; and it is no wonder that the development of the new and the

<sup>7</sup> Trials at Nisi Prius, 284.

<sup>8</sup> Wright v. Mayer, 6 Ves. Jr. 281.

<sup>9</sup> The persistence of the older notion is seen as late as 1826; Alexander, C. B., in Preston v. Carr, 1 Y. & J. 175, 178: "I cannot accede to the proposition which has been contended for, that the privilege of an attorney is the privilege of the client, to the extent that the client himself may avail himself of that privilege to avoid discovering communications which have passed between him and his solicitor."

<sup>10</sup> Annesley v. Anglessea, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229.

<sup>11</sup> The cases of DuBarre v. Livette, Peake

N. P. 77 (1791) and Wilson v. Rastall, 4 T. R. 753 (1752) seem to have been the first to recognize this. Wilson v. Rastall is another of the cases which meant a great deal to their generation, but are now landmarks of forgotten struggles.

<sup>12</sup> In 1873, in Minet v. Morgan, L. R. 8 Ch. 361, 366, L. C. Selborne said, in commenting on counsel's citation of the earlier rulings. "The law has now attained to a footing which made me a little surprised to hear the matter reopened now."

<sup>13</sup> Quoted *supra*.

<sup>14</sup> Winchester v. Fournier, 2 Ves. Sr. 445, 447.



ousting of the old came to be a process of many decades, and brought a residuum of trouble and confusion into the precedents of the 1800s.

§ 2291. *Policy of the Privilege.* The policy of the privilege has been plainly grounded, since the latter part of the 1700s, on subjective considerations. In order to promote freedom of consultation of legal advisers by clients, the apprehension of compelled disclosure by the legal advisers must be removed; and hence the law must prohibit such disclosure except on the client's consent. Such is the modern theory. In short, all four of the elements already noted (*ante*, § 2285) as essential to such a privilege are here deemed to exist. The policy has been expounded and defended from all points of view in the following passages:

1743, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1225; Mr. Recorder (arguing for the privilege): "My lord, formerly persons appeared in court themselves; but as business multiplied and became more intricate and titles more perplexed, both the distance of places and the multiplicity of business made it absolutely necessary that there should be a set of people who should stand in the place of suitors, and these persons are called attornies. Since this has been thought necessary, all people and all courts have looked upon that confidence between the party and attorney to be so great that it would be destructive to all business if attornies were to disclose the business of their clients. In many cases men hold their estates without titles; in others, by such titles, that if their deeds could be got out of their hands, they must lose their fortunes. When persons become purchasers for valuable considerations, and get a deed that makes against them, they are not obliged to disclose whether they have that deed. Now, if an attorney was to be examined in every case, what man would trust an attorney with the secret of his estate, if he should be permitted to offer himself as a witness? If an attorney had it in his option to be examined, there would be an entire stop to business; nobody would trust an attorney with the state of his affairs. The reason why attornies are not to be examined to anything relating to their clients or their affairs is because they would destroy the confidence that is necessary to be preserved between them. This confidence between the employer and the person employed, is so sacred a thing, that if they were at liberty, when the present cause was over that they were employed in, to give testimony in favour of any other person, it would not answer the end for which it was instituted. The end is, that persons with safety may substitute others in their room; and therefore if you cannot ask me, you cannot ask that man; for everything said to him, is as if I had said it to myself, and he is not to answer it." MOUNTENEY, B.: "Mr. Recorder hath very properly mentioned the foundation. . . . that an increase of legal business, and the inabilities of parties to transact that business themselves, made it necessary for them to employ (and as the law properly expresses it, 'ponere in loco suo') other persons who might transact that business for them; that this necessity introduced with it the necessity of what the law hath very justly established, an inviolable secrecy to be observed by attornies, in order to render it safe for clients to communicate to their attornies all proper instructions for the carrying on those causes which they found themselves under a necessity of intrusting to their care."

1833, L. C. BROUGHAM, in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 103: "The foundation of this rule is not difficult to discover. It is not (as has sometimes been said) on account of any particular importance which the law attributes to the business of legal professors, or any particular disposition to afford them protection (though certainly it may not be very easy to discover why a like privilege has been refused to others, and especially to medical advisers). But it is out of regard to the interests of justice, which cannot be upheld, and to the administration of justice, which cannot go on without the aid of men skilled in jurisprudence, in the practice of the courts, and in those matters affecting rights and obli-



gations which form the subject of all judicial proceedings. If the privilege did not exist at all, every one would be thrown upon his own legal resources. Deprived of all professional assistance, a man would not venture to consult any skillful person, or would only dare to tell his counsellor half his case."

1876, JESSEL, M. R., in *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649: "The object and meaning of the rule is this: 'That as, by reason of the complexity and difficulty of our law, litigation can only be properly conducted by professional men, it is absolutely necessary that a man, in order to prosecute his rights or to defend himself from an improper claim, should have recourse to the assistance of professional lawyers, and it being so absolutely necessary, it is equally necessary, to use a vulgar phrase, that he should be able to make a clean breast of it to the gentleman whom he consults with a view to the prosecution of his claim, or the substantiating his defence against the claim of others; that he should be able to place unrestricted and unbounded confidence in the professional agent, and that the communications he so makes to him should be kept secret, unless with his consent (for it is his privilege, and not the privilege of the confidential agent), that he should be enabled properly to conduct his litigation. That is the meaning of the rule.'"

1833, SHAW, C. J., in *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 416, 422: "This principle we take to be this; that so numerous and complex are the laws by which the rights and duties of citizens are governed, so important is it that they should be permitted to avail themselves of the superior skill and learning of those who are sanctioned by the law as its ministers and expounders, both in ascertaining their rights in the country, and maintaining them most safely in courts, without publishing those facts, which they have a right to keep secret, but which must be disclosed to a legal adviser and advocate, to enable him successfully to perform the duties of his office, that the law has considered it the wisest policy to encourage and sanction this confidence, by requiring that on such facts the mouth of the attorney shall be forever sealed."

1895, EMERY, J., in *Wade v. Ridley*, 87 Me. 368, 32 Atl. 975: "An order of men, honorable, enlightened, learned in the law, and skilled in legal procedure, is essential to the beneficent administration of justice. The aid of such men is now practically indispensable to the orderly, accurate, and equitable determination and adjustment of legal rights and duties. While the right of every person to conduct his own litigation should be scrupulously respected, he should not be discouraged, but rather encouraged, in early seeking the assistance or advice of a good lawyer upon any question of legal right. In order that the lawyer may properly perform his important function, he should be fully informed of all facts possibly bearing upon the question. The person consulting a lawyer should be encouraged to communicate all such facts without fear that his statements may be possibly used against him."

1837, *Anon.* ("C."), in *The Law Magazine*, XVII, 68; *Production of Cases prepared for the Opinion of Counsel*: "[1] One great object of our legal system is that the rights of all persons shall be submitted with equal force to our courts of justice. . . . Let the person be who he may, strong or weak, learned or unlearned, wise or foolish, a man of influence and invested with authority, or destitute of means and utterly helpless, his claims are equally to be laid before the judge with all the power of advocacy of which they are susceptible. To accomplish this object, the first indispensable requisite is, that the client shall state to his legal advisers *all* the facts of his case. Very few clients can perceive wherein their strength lies. They must state *the whole* to the legal adviser, and leave him to form his own judgment. By this means the balance is adjusted. The weakness of the client finds a compensation in his lawyer's strength: the looseness of thought, carelessness and inaccuracy of the one, in the precision and subtlety and judgment of the other; and thus every man's case is brought with nearly equal ability and chance of success under the consideration of the judge. But how will a client venture to lay before his counsel a statement of all the facts of his case, if that very statement may hereafter



be evidenced against him? There will be an end to equality, if one person has an advantage over another, because he is sufficiently cunning in the law to know what may, and what may not, be safely revealed to counsel. Such equality never can exist unless client and counsel are completely identified, and their communications held to be as impervious to judicial investigation, as if they never had been uttered. [2] It is a received axiom, that every man knows the law. The axiom works but little injustice, because every man can ascertain the law by consulting a lawyer. But then the condition, upon which this power of ascertaining the law will rest, is, that he may make the inquiry without incurring any danger. The communication must be privileged to the utmost extent, or it will not be made. Thus it will be one consequence of the rule, that the law will be in no way open to the community at large; to them it will be a sealed book; and this axiom, from which every decision, in a greater or less degree, derives its justification in point of morality, will work very grievous injury. . . . [3] We would ask whether the advocates of this rule have seriously considered the fearful relation which it will create between a lawyer and his client. We are not so utopian as to suppose that, in the long lists of our profession, names will not be found of lawyers treacherous to their clients, of men who 'scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timeri.' Such lawyers, if this rule is to prevail, will have their clients at their mercy, and may at any moment contrive their ruin. . . . Many of our readers will recollect the passage in Mr. Bentham's work upon 'Judicial Evidence,' in which he maintains the propriety of compelling lawyers to disclose the secrets of their clients. In the note upon this passage in Mr. Dumont's very pertinent remark: 'Admit this opinion of Mr. Bentham, it is said, and the accused have no longer counsel; they are surrounded by agents of justice and the police, against whom they ought to be so much the more upon their guard, as no man of a noble or elevated mind would stoop to such an employment. They are so many spies and informers placed round the accused.' This is to suppress the defence entirely. . . . [4] Our limits confine us to only one more argument bearing upon the subject before us. Mr. Preston once said, that out of thirty questions submitted for his consideration, not more than one found its way into a court of justice. Indeed, the adjustment of disputes by the opinion of counsel takes place so far more frequently than by a suit or trial, that it may be said to form in this country the practical administration of civil justice. . . . 'The greatest trust,' says Lord Bacon, 'between men and men, is the trust of giving counsel. For in other confidences men commit the parts of life; their lands, their goods, their children, their credit, some particular affair; but to such as they make their counsellors they commit the whole, by how much the more they are obliged to all faith and integrity.' The condition upon which alone this counsel can be given requires particular attention. The lawyer must have the *whole* of his client's case, or he cannot pretend to give any useful advice. Upon a partial statement of facts he may judge correctly, and yet give his opinion in favour of a claim, which, if he had known all the circumstances, he would have perceived to be unjust, and which a court of justice upon full investigation at once overthrows. That the whole will not be told to counsel unless the privilege is confidential, is perfectly clear. A man who seeks advice, seeks it because he believes that he may do so safely; he will rarely make disclosures which may be used against him; rather than create an adverse witness in his lawyer, he will refuse all private arbitration, and take the chance of a trial. We submit, that any rule which tends to prevent the settlement of quarrels by such arbitration will work an enormous evil. Our judges ought to pause before they sanction the received rule upon the production of cases, which, as it interferes with the communication between client and counsel, renders it dangerous to adopt this course, so easy and so safe, so free from vexation, and satisfactory to all honourable minds."<sup>1</sup>

§ 2291. <sup>1</sup> The reasons in favor of the privilege have also been set forth, impartially but forcefully, by Edward Livingston (*circa* 1823), in his Introductory Report to the Code of

Evidence (Works, ed. 1872, I, 459-467), in a passage which, next to the one last quoted, is perhaps the best of all treatments of the subject.



Can these plausible reasonings be questioned? Is there lacking no one of those four essential elements (*ante*, § 2285) for a privilege against disclosing communications? Rarely indeed has any question been made of the soundness of this privilege. Nevertheless, how much there is to be said in answer can hardly be appreciated until we have heard the incisive arguments of Bentham, who stands out, with Lord Langdale and Chief Justice Appleton, as the only eminent names enrolled in our annals in radical opposition to the privilege:

1827, Mr. *Jeremy Bentham*, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, b. IX, pt. IV, c. 5 (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, pp. 474 ff.): "When, in consulting with a law adviser, attorney or advocate, a man has confessed his delinquency, or disclosed some fact which, if stated in court, might tend to operate in proof of it, such law adviser is not to be suffered to be examined as to any such point. The law adviser is neither to be compelled, nor so much as suffered, to betray the trust thus reposed in him. Not suffered? Why not? [1] Oh, because 'to betray a trust is treachery; and an act of treachery is an immoral act.' . . . If the law adviser, of his own motion, the law neither commanding nor forbidding him, were to offer his testimony for the purpose of promoting the conviction of his client, the imputation of treachery would have, if not a good ground, at any rate a better, a more plausible ground. But the question is not, whether the lawyer shall thus offer his testimony; but, whether the law shall command it, or authorize him, nay force him, to refuse it. . . . [2] But if such confidence, when reposed, is permitted to be violated, and if this be known (which, if such be the law, it will be,) the consequence will be, that no such confidence will be reposed. Not reposed? Well; and if it be not, wherein will consist the mischief? The man by the supposition is guilty; if not, by the supposition there is nothing to betray: let the law adviser say everything he has heard, everything he can have heard from his client, the client cannot have anything to fear from it. That it will often happen that in the case supposed no such confidence will be reposed, is natural enough: the first thing the advocate or attorney will say to his client, will be, 'Remember that, whatever you say to me, I shall be obliged to tell, if asked about it.' What, then, will be the consequence? That a guilty person will not in general be able to derive quite so much assistance from his law adviser, in the way of concerting a false defence, as he may do at present. . . . [3] 'A counsel, solicitor, or attorney, cannot conduct the cause of his client,' (it has been observed) 'if he is not fully instructed in the circumstances attending it; but the client' (it is added) 'could not give the instructions *with safety*, if the facts confided to his advocate were to be disclosed.' Not with safety? So much the better. To what object is the whole system of penal law directed, if it be not that no man shall have it in his power to flatter himself with the hope of safety, in the event of his engaging in the commission of an act which the law, on account of its supposed mischievousness, has thought fit to prohibit? The argument employed as a reason against the compelling such disclosure, is the very argument that pleads in favour of it. . . . [4. It has been argued<sup>2</sup> by a defender of this privilege that the guilty are entitled to be protected to a certain extent; that supposed policy has been thus phrased:] 'Even in the few instances where the accused has intrusted his defender with a full confession of his crime, we hold it to be clear that he may still be lawfully defended. The guilt of which he may be conscious, and which he may have so disclosed, he has still a right to see distinctly proved upon him by legal evidence. . . . Human beings are never to be run down like beasts of prey, without respect to the laws of the chase. If society must make a sacrifice of any

<sup>2</sup> By Mr. (later L. C. J.) Denman, in the *Edinburgh Review*, March, 1824, reviewing the original French edition of Mr. Bentham's treatise. The answering argument, following

the above quotation, is by Mr. J. S. Mill, who edited his master's treatise, but is conceived in the best Benthamic spirit and is worthy of the context.

one of its members, let it proceed according to general rules, upon known principles, and with clear proof of necessity; "let us carve him as a feast fit for the gods, not hew him as a carcass for the hounds." . . . In reading the above declaration, one is at a loss to discover what it is which the writer is aiming at. Does he really think that, all other things being the same, a system of procedure is the better, for affording to criminals a chance of escape? If this be his serious opinion, there is no more to be said; since it must be freely admitted that, reasoning upon this principle, there is no fault to be found with the rule. If it be your object not to find the prisoner guilty, there cannot be a better way than refusing to hear the person who is most likely to know of his guilt, if it exist. The rule is perfectly well adapted to its end; but is that end the true end of procedure? This question surely requires no answer. But if the safety of the innocent, and not that of the guilty, be the object of the reviewer's solicitude, — had he shown how an innocent man could be endangered by his lawyer's telling all he has to tell, he would have delivered something more to the purpose than any illustration which the subject of carcasses and hounds could yield. If he can be content for one moment to view the question with other than fox-hunting eyes, even he must perceive that, to the man who, having no guilt to disclose, has disclosed none to his lawyer, nothing could be of greater advantage than that this should appear; as it naturally would if the lawyer were subjected to examination. . . . The denunciation which follows against hunting down human beings without respect for the laws of the chase, is one of those proofs which meet us every day, how little, as yet, even instructed Englishmen are accustomed to look upon judicature as a means to an end, and that end the execution of the law. They speak and act, every now and then, as if they regarded a criminal trial as a sort of game, partly of chance, partly of skill, in which the proper end to be aimed at is, not that the truth may be discovered, but that both parties may have fair play: in a word, that whether a guilty person shall be acquitted or punished, may be, as nearly as possible, an even chance. . . . Whence all this dread of the truth? Whence comes it that anyone loves darkness better than light, except it be that his deeds are evil? Whence but from a confirmed habit of viewing the law as the enemy of innocence — as scattering its punishments with so ill-directed and so unsparing a hand, that the most virtuous of mankind, were all his actions known, could no more hope to escape from them, than the most abandoned of malefactors? Whether the law be really in this state, I will not take upon myself to say; sure I am, that if it be, it is high time it should be amended. But if it be not, where is the cause of alarm? In men's consciousness of their own improbity. . . . [5] Thus much in vindication of the proposed rule [abolishing the privilege]. As for its advantages, they are to be sought for not so much in its direct, as in its indirect, operation. The party himself having been, as he ought to be, previously subjected to interrogation, his lawyer's evidence, which, though good of its kind, is no better than hearsay evidence, would not often add any new facts to those which had already been extracted from the lips of the client. The benefit which would arise from the abolition of the exclusionary rule, would consist rather in the higher tone of morality which would be introduced into the profession itself. A rule of law which, in the case of the lawyer, gives an express licence to that wilful concealment of the criminal's guilt, which would have constituted any other person an accessory in the crime, plainly declares that the practice of knowingly engaging one's self as the hired advocate of an unjust cause, is, in the eye of the law, or (to speak intelligibly) in that of the law-makers, an innocent, if not a virtuous practice. But for this implied declaration, the man who in this way hires himself out to do injustice or frustrate justice with his tongue, would be viewed in exactly the same light as he who frustrates justice or does injustice with any other instrument. We should not then hear an advocate boasting of the artifices by which he had trepanned a deluded jury into a verdict in direct opposition to the strongest evidence; or of the effrontery with which he had, by repeated insults, thrown the faculties of a 'bona fide' witness into a state of confusion, which had caused him to be taken for a perjurer, and as such disbelieved. Nor would an Old Bailey counsel any longer plume himself upon the number of



pickpockets whom, in the course of a long career, he had succeeded in rescuing from the arm of the law. The professional lawyer would be a minister of justice, not an abettor of crime."<sup>3</sup>

1844, Lord LANGDALE, in *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 38: "I own that it is difficult for me to comprehend how it is possible to apply to such cases the rules which are applied to cases totally different. An innocent man, falsely accused of fraud, will scarcely be desirous of concealing the facts, which he may have stated to his legal adviser for the purpose of obtaining legal protection to which he is justly entitled. A man engaged in a scheme of fraud will be very unwilling to disclose the statement of facts, which he may have made to his legal adviser for the purpose of better enabling him to conceal or to secure and enjoy the fruits of his fraud; and it is a question, which I would willingly submit to the consideration of those who have to decide upon cases of this kind, whether the interests of society and of justice, or the honour and utility of the legal profession, which are so closely bound up with those interests, are more or less likely to be promoted, by the author of the fraud being compelled to disclose, or permitted to conceal, the fact of his own admissions contained in such a statement of facts."

At first sight the Benthamic argument seems irresistible. It always comes back to this, that the deterring of a guilty man from seeking legal advice is no harm to justice, while the innocent man has nothing to fear and therefore will not be deterred. In answer to this, nevertheless, three suggestions are to be made, the least weighty of which may be first noticed:

(1) There is in civil cases often *no hard-and-fast line between guilt and innocence*, which will justify us as stigmatizing one or the other party and banning him from our sympathy. In land-titles, for example, the one claimant has perhaps bought in good faith a title resting on a chain of conveyances reaching back to a Government grant, which itself involves a Mexican alcalde's authority; while the other claimant has bought from an occupier who has apparently gained title by adverse possession. The decision of the contested right will depend on some abstract rule of law which produces its effect far back in the tangle of documents, and is wholly irrespective of the personal merits of the claimants' conduct. There is no moral right or wrong, in a concrete sense, for either of them. Such was, and still is to some extent, the status of all land-litigation in England, where registration of deeds was practically not observed. We are therefore not necessarily abetting crime or other moral delinquency when we permit the concealment of the party's admissions to his attorney.

(2) Even assuming that the party against whom the law would decide is, by virtue of the illegality (technical or otherwise) of his cause, not to be considered as worthy of aid or encouragement, nevertheless, in a great part of civil litigation, it does not happen that *all the acts and facts on one side have been wholly right* and lawful and all of those on the other wholly wrong and unlawful. There is more commonly a mixture of these qualities, in infinitely varying proportions. Hence we cannot assume that the operation of the supposed deterrent influences upon the client's mind will be as simple as is supposed in Bentham's abstract argument. In other words, it

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bentham's arguments will be found paralleled in the treatise (1860) of his disciple, Chief Justice Appleton of Maine. Evidence, c. X, p. 161.



does not commonly happen that A, by reason of the state of his case, will have no fear at all of disclosure, while B, by the same reason, will have all the fear. In a large proportion of cases, each will have something to fear. The consequence would be (if the quantity of unfavorable data in his case be large enough to exercise an influence) that a person who has a partly good cause would often be deterred from consultation by virtue of the bad part or of the part that might possibly (to his notion) be bad. Now the abstinence from seeking legal advice in a good cause is by hypothesis an evil which is fatal to the administration of justice; and even Bentham does not go so far as to question this hypothesis. — It should be added that the client's attitude in criminal cases (where we may assume that, if guilty, he is wholly and indivisibly guilty) need not be taken as justifying Bentham's argument in that class of cases; because the communications will there be in effect self-criminating admissions; and, if they could be obtained from the attorney, the same evils would follow which, as has been seen (*ante*, § 2251), constitute the chief reason for forbidding compulsory self-crimination, — namely, the tendency of the prosecution to degenerate into a reliance upon that mode of proof to the neglect of others. Moreover, it seems more likely that, if the privilege were abolished, guilty persons would no less than before seek legal aid, but would merely refrain from self-criminating confidences; so that the prosecution would not gain at all thereby, while the defendant's adviser would lose the opportunity of exercising that discretion which he sometimes has.

(3) Even assuming, for civil cases, the negative of the foregoing argument — *i. e.* assuming that in any cause one party's case is wholly right and the other's wholly wrong —, still, so far as the wrongdoer is consequently deterred from seeking legal advice, that result is not, as Bentham would have it, an unmixed good; for it does not follow that "a guilty person would not in general derive quite so much assistance from his law adviser, in the way of concerting a false defence, as he may do at present." This does not follow except on the assumption that every legal adviser invariably proceeds, on request, to assist, by litigation or otherwise, the unjust causes that may be laid before him by his clients. How far this assumption is true varies no doubt with the individual and the locality. But there are at least many fraternities of the bar among whom are many practitioners who do not pursue such a course. Either they decline the cause utterly, in heinous cases (and even the privilege as it exists would not protect them if they consented to concert with the client a fraud or a crime), or they persuade the client that the cause is hopeless to support, or they secure a settlement with the opponent in which the client's interests are satisfied to the extent that there is any moral justice in them. To guarantee for clients of unjust causes a freedom of consultation with legal advisers cannot be deemed an evil except to the extent that the bar is unprincipled; and in that condition more radical remedies are needed than the denial of the privilege.

(4) The consideration of "treachery," so inviting an argument for Ben-

tham's sarcasms, is after all not to be dismissed with a sneer. It is impalpable and somewhat speculative; but it has a validity nevertheless. It is well emphasized by M. Dumont.<sup>4</sup> If the counsellor were compellable to disclose, "no man," says that very disciple of Bentham, "of a noble or elevated mind would stoop to such an employment."<sup>5</sup> Certainly the position of the legal adviser would be a difficult and disagreeable one; for it must be repugnant to any honorable man to feel that the confidences which his relation naturally invites are liable at the opponent's behest to be laid open through his own testimony. He cannot but feel the disagreeable inconsistency of being at the same time the solicitor and the revealer of the secrets of the cause. This double-minded attitude would create an unhealthy moral state in the practitioner. Its concrete impropriety could not be overbalanced by the recollection of its abstract desirability. If only for the sake of the peace of mind of the counsellor, it is better that the privilege should exist.

After all, the loss to truth is comparatively small, in modern times. It was much greater in the period when the civil party's own privilege of silence was still in force; for then his admissions to his attorney would have constituted a distinct and substantial addition to the available sources of proof. But now that he can be freely interrogated and called to the stand by the opponent and made to disclose on oath all that he knows, it is evident that the disclosure of his admissions made to his attorney would add little to the proof, except so far as the client is a person capable of perjuring himself when interrogated in court.

Nevertheless, the privilege remains an anomaly. Its benefits are all indirect and speculative; its obstruction is plain and concrete. Even the answers to Bentham's argument concede that it is accurate and well-founded in its application to a certain proportion of cases. It is worth preserving for the sake of a general policy; but it is none the less an obstacle to the investigation of the truth. It ought to be strictly confined within the narrowest possible limits consistent with the logic of its principle.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2292. **General Principle; Statutory Definitions.** The phrasing of the general principle, so as to represent all its essentials, but only essentials, and to group them in natural sequence, is a matter of some difficulty. The following form seems to accomplish this: (1) *Where legal advice of any kind is sought* (2) *from a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such,* (3) *the communications relating to that purpose,* (4) *made in confidence* (5) *by the client,* (6) *are at his instance permanently protected* (7) *from disclosure by him-*

<sup>4</sup> In the passage above quoted.

<sup>5</sup> V. C. Knight-Bruce, in *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 25: "And surely the meanness and the mischief of prying into a man's confidential consultations with his legal adviser, the general evil of infusing reserve and dissimulation, uneasiness and suspicion and fear, into those communications which must take place, and which, unless in a condition of perfect

security, must take place uselessly or worse, are too great a prize to pay for truth itself."

<sup>6</sup> *Eng.* 1828, Best, C. J., in *Broad v. Pitt*, 1 M. & M. 233, 3 C. & P. 518 ("The privilege is an anomaly, and ought not to be extended"); *U. S.* 1831, Shaw, C. J., in *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. Mass. 89, 97 ("The rule of privilege, having a tendency to prevent the full disclosure of the truth, ought to be construed strictly").



self or by the legal adviser, (8) except the protection be waived. These various parts will be taken up in the above order.

It may here be noted that the privilege has in many jurisdictions been embodied in statutes.<sup>1</sup> These have seldom helped to settle any mooted point;

§ 2292. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: for a discussion of the attorney's privilege as affected by the Bankruptcy Act of 1883, see Mr. G. W. Edwards' article in 33 Law Journ. 489 (1898);

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: Code 1907, § 3962 ("Communications to any attorney, or to his clerk, either by the client or attorney, pending his employment, or in anticipation thereof, shall never be heard by the court unless called to testify by the client. So the attorney cannot disclose the advice or counsel he may give to his client. This rule does not exclude the attorney as a witness to any facts which may transpire in connection with his employment"); § 4012 ("No attorney shall be competent or compellable to testify in any court in this state, for or against his client to any matter or thing, knowledge of which he may have acquired from his client, by virtue of his relations as attorney, or by reason of the anticipated employment of him as attorney, but shall be both competent and compellable to testify, for or against his client, as to any matter or thing, knowledge of which he may have acquired in any other manner");

*Alaska*: Comp. L. 1913, § 1868 (like Or. Annot. C. 1892, § 712, par. 2);

*Arizona*: Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 1677, par. 4, P. C. § 1228, par. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); par. 6 (waiver by testifying; quoted *post*, § 2380);

*Arkansas*: Dig. 1919, § 4146 ("an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent," is incompetent);

*California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1881 ("There are particular relations in which it is the policy of the law to encourage confidence and to preserve it inviolate; therefore a person cannot be examined as a witness in the following cases:

. . . 2. An attorney cannot, without the consent of his client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him, or his advice given thereon in the course of professional employment; nor can an attorney's secretary, stenographer, or clerk, be examined, without the consent of his employer, concerning any fact the knowledge of which has been acquired in such capacity");

*Colorado*: Comp. L. 1921, § 6563 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); § 6564 (waiver by consent, allowed; quoted *ante*, § 488);

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5785 (communications "between attorney or counsel and client" are excluded); § 5786 ("communications to any attorney, or his clerk, to be transmitted to the attorney pending his employment, or in anticipation thereof," are inadmissible; "so

the attorney cannot disclose the advice or counsel he may give to his client, nor produce or deliver up title-deeds or other papers, except evidences of debt left in his possession by his client; this rule does not exclude the attorney as a witness to any facts which may transpire in connection with his employment"); § 5860, P. C. 1910, § 1037, par. 5 ("No attorney shall be competent or compellable to testify in any court in this State, for or against his client, to any matter or thing, knowledge of which he may have acquired from his client, by virtue of his relations as attorney, or by reason of the anticipated employment of him as attorney, but shall be both competent and compellable to testify, for or against his client, as to any matter or thing, knowledge of which he may have acquired in any other manner"; as to an attorney's testimony in general, under this statute, see the cases cited *ante*, § 1911); §§ 4544, 5877 (a witness need not disclose "the advice of his professional advisers, nor his consultation with them");

*Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 7937 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, down to "professional employment");

*Indiana*: Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 520, par. 3 ("Attorneys, as to confidential communications made to them in the course of their professional business, and as to advice given in such cases," shall not be competent);

*Iowa*: Code 1897, § 4608, Comp. Code § 7315 ("No practicing attorney, counselor, physician, surgeon, or the stenographer or confidential clerk of any such person, who obtains such information by reason of his employment, minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination, shall be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly intrusted to him in his professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his office according to the usual course of practice or discipline. Such prohibition shall not apply to cases where the party in whose favor the same is made waives the rights conferred");

*Kansas*: Gen. St. 1915, § 7223 (like Mo. Rev. St. 1919, § 5418; adding, "but if a person without objection on his part testifies concerning any such communication, the attorney, clergyman, priest, or physician communicated with may also be required to testify on the same subject as though consent had been given within the meaning of the last three subdivisions");

*Kentucky*: C. C. P. 1895, § 606, par. 4 ("No attorney shall testify concerning a communication made to him, in his professional character, by his client, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent");



but on the other hand they have seldom chanced to disfigure the common-law rule or to unsettle its logical development. Their phraseology is commonly ignored by the Courts, as being merely an attempt to name and to recognize the common-law privilege.

*Louisiana:* Rev. Civ. C. 1920, § 2283 ("No attorney or counsellor at law shall give evidence of anything that has been confided to him by his client, without the consent of such client");

*Minnesota:* Gen. St. 1913, § 8375 ("There are particular relations [etc., as in Cal. Code] . . . : 2. An attorney cannot, without the consent of his client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him, or his advice given thereon, in the course of professional duty nor can any employee of such attorney be examined as to any such communication or advice without the client's consent");

*Missouri:* 1919, § 5418 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . third, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the consent of such client");

*Montana:* Rev. C. 1921, § 10536 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881);

*Nebraska:* Rev. St. 1921, § 8835 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fourth, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client during that relation or his advice thereon, without the client's consent in open court or in writing produced in court"); § 8840 ("No practicing attorney, counsellor, physician, surgeon, minister of the gospel, or priest of any denomination, shall be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication, properly intrusted to him in his professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his office according to the usual course of practice or discipline"); § 8841 (preceding prohibition not to apply "to cases where the party in whose favor the respective prohibitions are enacted waives the rights thereby conferred");

*Nevada:* Rev. L. 1912, § 5425 (substantially like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881);

*New York:* C. P. A. 1920, § 353 ("an attorney or counselor-at-law shall not be allowed to disclose a communication made by his client to him, or his advice given thereon, in the course of his professional employment; [L. 1896] nor shall any clerk, stenographer, or other person employed by such attorney or counselor be allowed to disclose any such communication or advice given thereon"); C. P. A. § 354 ("The last three sections apply to any examination of a person as witness unless the provisions thereof are expressly waived upon the trial or examination by the . . . client; . . . But nothing herein contained shall be construed to disqualify an attor-

ney in the probate of a will heretofore executed or offered for probate or hereafter to be executed or offered for probate from becoming a witness as to its preparation and execution in case such attorney is one of the subscribing witnesses thereto. . . . The waivers herein provided for must be made in open court on the trial of the action or proceeding, and a paper executed by a party prior to the trial providing for such waiver shall be insufficient as such a waiver. But the attorneys for the respective parties prior to the trial may stipulate such waiver and the same shall be sufficient therefor");

*North Carolina:* Con. St. 1919, § 1797 (on a charge of "fraud upon the State," no answer shall be refused "because he came into the possession of such evidence or information by his position as counsel or attorney before the consummation of such fraud");

*North Dakota:* Comp. L. 1913, § 7923 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, down to "employment"); § 7924 ("If a person offers himself as a witness," it is a consent to his attorney's examination "on the same subject");

*Ohio:* Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 11494 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: 1. An attorney, concerning a communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice to his client; or a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testifies, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same subject");

*Oklahoma:* Comp. St. 1921, § 589 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . Fourth, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent; . . . provided that, if a person offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; also, if [of?] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon, on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section");

*Oregon:* Laws 1920, § 733, par. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, par. 2, first sentence); § 734 (waiver; quoted *post*, § 2380);

*Pennsylvania:* St. 1887, May 23, § 2, as re-enacted by St. 1909, Apr. 27, Dig. 1920, § 21841, Witnesses ("Nor shall counsel be competent or permitted to testify to confidential communications made to him by his client, or the client be compelled to disclose the same, unless in either



## 1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought"

§ 2294. **Privilege is irrespective of Litigation begun or contemplated; History of the Doctrine.** Under the original theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2290) the confidences of the client were respected only when given for the purpose of securing aid in litigation, and in the very litigation in which they were given. It is obvious, however, that this limitation would be wholly inconsistent with the modern theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2291). That theory, however, was slow in making its logic felt. Even after it had become the acknowledged basis of the privilege, the abolition of the earlier limitations was not attained (in England, at least) until after nearly a century of rulings, in the course of which the expansion was gradually taking place.

(1) The first stage of expansion consisted in extending the privilege to the *attorney's testimony* concerning confidences made in *some other litigation*, now ended and not at bar. Up to the end of the 1700s these had generally been regarded as without the privilege,<sup>1</sup> although the broader view had begun to make headway.<sup>2</sup> It was next seen that the principle applied equally to

case the privilege be waived upon the trial by the client");

*Philippine Islands*: C. C. P. 1901, § 31 ("A lawyer must strictly maintain inviolate the confidence and preserve the secrets of his client. He shall not be permitted in any court, without the consent of his client, given in open court, to testify to any facts imparted to him by his client in professional consultation, or for the purpose of obtaining advice upon legal matters"); § 353 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); Civ. C. § 1247 (quoted *ante*, § 488); *Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1408 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881; adding the paragraph originally found in the latter, viz., excepting a communication intended to be transmitted to a person adverse in interest to the client or a communication "made in furtherance of a crime or fraud then being perpetrated or in contemplation," and also a proviso excepting lawsuits between lawyer and client over the former's fees); § 1409 (the attorney may testify to the contents of a lost will, and as to information received relating to its execution; also, the privileged person waives the privilege by testifying to any part of the communication); *South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 2730 (like Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1881, par. 1, first part); § 2731 (like N. D. Comp. L. § 7924);

*Tennessee*: Shannon's Code 1916, § 5785 ("No attorney or counsel shall be permitted, in giving testimony against a client or person who consulted him professionally, to disclose any communication made to him as attorney by such person, during the pendency of the suit, before or afterwards, to his injury");

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 7124 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881);

*Vermont*: Gen. L. 1917, § 7240 (officer of prison is not to testify to a communication between

prisoner and counsel concerning preparation for trial);

*Washington*: R. & B. Code 1909, § 1214 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, first sentence, inserting "or counselor");

*Wisconsin*: Stats. 1919, § 4076 (like N. Y. C. P. A. § 353 as unamended);

*Wyoming*: Comp. St. 1920, § 5806 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: First, an attorney, concerning a communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice to his client; or a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testify, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same subject").

§ 2294. <sup>1</sup> See the remarks of Bowes, C. B., in 1743, in *Annesley v. Anglesea*, quoted *supra*, § 2290. In the cases of the 1600s, there quoted, the plain inference is the same. In 1792, L. C. J. Kenyon, in *Duffin v. Smith*, Peake N. P. 108, referred to the privilege as covering only communications "for the purpose of his defence." In 1799, the same judge, in *Sloman v. Herne*, 2 Esp. 696, refused to compel an attorney to disclose a communication from clients in another cause, "the parties were virtually the same" being his ground of decision.

<sup>2</sup> It had been advanced in 1743 by Dawson, B., in *Annesley v. Anglesea*, *supra*. The first rulings seem to be the following: 1791, *Du Barre v. Livette*, Peake N. P. 77 (communications excluded, though the suit had ended); 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 759 (Buller J.: "In such a case it is not sufficient to say that the cause is at an end; the mouth of such a person is closed forever").



communications made *in contemplation of a suit*,<sup>3</sup> or even *after dispute arisen* though not directly with a view to litigation.<sup>4</sup> Meantime, and while this was still the extreme limit of the orthodox view, it had been ruled that communications made in seeking *legal advice for any purpose* were within the principle of the privilege.<sup>5</sup> Within a short time after Lord Tenterden's death this final step was judicially accepted, and has never since been doubted to be the law.<sup>6</sup>

(2) But this expansion had thus far affected only the compulsion of the attorney. The rule for the *client himself* was passing more tardily through an independent though parallel development. Originally, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2290), the privilege did not protect the client himself from the usual methods of discovery in equity. As the 1700s drew to a close, it came first to be conceded that "the privilege was that of the client." By this time, a recognition began to be given to the logical consequence that he could not be interrogated as to communications made *for the purpose of the litigation at bar*; yet the tradition was apparently still to the contrary.<sup>7</sup> The case of *Preston v. Carr*, in 1826, was the last effort to preserve this tradition.<sup>8</sup> It was thereafter immediately settled, by a series of nearly simultaneous rulings, that

<sup>3</sup> 1809, *Gainsford v. Grammar*, 2 Camp. 9 (communications before suit begun, privileged); 1819, *Wadsworth v. Hamshaw*, 2 B. & B. 5, note, Abbott, C. J. (communications as to a dissolution of partnership, not privileged, but only those "related to a cause existing at the time of the communication or then about to be commenced"); 1824, *Williams v. Mudie*, 1 C. & P. 158, Ry. & Mo. 34 (Abbott, C. J., held that "whatever is communicated for the purpose of bringing or defending an action is privileged, but not otherwise; . . . I have considered the subject a great deal, and my mind is made up upon it"); 1828, *Broad v. Pitt*, 3 C. & P. 518, 1 M. & M. 233, Best, C. J. (communications not "made for the purpose of a suit or proceeding intended or apprehended," not privileged; here, the time of a deed's execution).

<sup>4</sup> 1830, *Clark v. Clark*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 3 (L. C. J. Tenterden [Abbott] further expounded his view by recognizing the privilege for consultations "with respect to a matter then in dispute and controversy, although no cause was in existence with respect to it").

<sup>5</sup> 1820, *Cromack v. Heathcote*, 2 B. & B. 4, Dallas, C. J. (communications as to drawing a deed, privileged; "I know of no such distinction as that arising from the attorney being employed or not employed in the cause").

<sup>6</sup> 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 88, 101 (L. C. Brougham declared that, for attorneys, "it does not appear that the protection is qualified by any reference to proceedings pending or in contemplation"); 1833, *Moore v. Terrell*, 4 B. & Ad. 870, 876 (Parke, J., declared that Tindal, C. J., Lyndhurst, L. C. B., and himself, were consulted by Brougham, L. C., in deciding *Greenough v.*

*Gaskell*, and approved of it); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 C. & P. 592 (Parke, J., declared the limitation of *Williams v. Mudie* to have been recently repudiated by the Chancellor, consulting with the Chief Justices and Chief Baron; (meaning the case of *Greenough v. Gaskell*); 1846, *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 12, 25, 11 Jur. 52 (V. C. Knight-Bruce: "I suppose *Cromack v. Heathcote* to be now universally acceded to; . . . as far as any discovery by the solicitor or counsel is concerned, the question of the existence of any suit, claim, or dispute, is immaterial").

<sup>7</sup> The early case of *Radeliffe v. Fursman*, in the House of Lords, in 1730 (2 Bro. P. C. 514), much relied upon for the narrower view, is obscurely reported as having compelled the client's discovery of admissions "stated in some case for the opinion of some counsel"; but it was apparently treated by Lord Eldon as practically ignoring the privilege for the client: 1801, *Wright v. Mayer*, 6 Ves. Jr. 208 (L. C. Eldon refused to compel the attorney to produce cases and opinions placed confidentially with him by the client, but intimated that by a motion for production on a bill of discovery against the client himself they could be produced, being "in her power, if in the custody of her attorney"); 1812, *Richards v. Jackson*, 18 Ves. Jr. 472 (L. C. Eldon on a bill of discovery compelled the client to produce his case stated, though not the counsel's opinion, following *Radeliffe v. Fursman* reluctantly; and said that in his experience that had been the practice).

<sup>8</sup> 1826, *Preston v. Carr*, 1 Y. & J. 175 (Alexander, C. B.; the Exchequer compelled the production of two cases stated, apparently for the very litigation in hand).



communications relative to the cause at bar, or even in contemplation of it, were protected from discovery by the client himself.<sup>9</sup> The question then came to be whether communications made for *other litigations* were also to be privileged. At first, Lord Brougham hesitated to take this step;<sup>10</sup> but Lord Abinger,<sup>11</sup> and then Lord Lyndhurst and his Vice-Chancellor,<sup>12</sup> made the advance. The further extension of the privilege to communications made *in contemplation* of any litigation was then speedily conceded.<sup>13</sup> Here, however, a stand was made by Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls, the determined opponent of the privilege; he, with Vice-Chancellor Wigram, succeeded for a short space in restricting it at most to communications made *after dispute arisen*, though irrespective of litigation contemplated.<sup>14</sup> But Lord Chancellor

<sup>9</sup> 1827, *Hughes v. Biddulph*, 4 Russ. 190, L. C. Lyndhurst (letters passed between solicitor and client "in the progress of this cause, and with reference to this cause previously to its being instituted," held privileged); 1827, *Vent v. Pacey*, 4 Russ. 193, same judge (letter to a solicitor "with a view to taking the opinion of counsel upon the matter in question and which matter afterwards became the subject of the suit," privileged); 1830, *Garland v. Scott*, 3 Sim. 396 (privilege held to cover communications "passed in the progress of this cause, or with reference to this cause previously to its being instituted"); 1833, *Bolton v. Liverpool*, 1 Myl. & K. 95, 98, L. C. Brougham (a case protected when "laid before counsel in reference to or in contemplation of or pending the suit or action for the purpose of which the production is sought"; preceding cases examined, *Hughes v. Biddulph* approved); 1833, *Whitbread v. Gurney*, 1 Younge 541 (L. C. B. Lyndhurst applied the rule in *Bolton v. Liverpool*); 1837, *Nias v. R. Co.*, 3 Myl. & Cr. 355 (L. C. Cottenham; case and opinion concerning the very litigation, but made before bill filed, held privileged).

<sup>10</sup> 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 88, 101, L. C. Brougham ("the authorities are that he [the client] must disclose the cases he has laid before counsel for their opinion, unconnected with the suit itself"; while as regards attorneys, "it does not appear that the protection is qualified by any reference to proceedings pending or in contemplation"; though the distinction "seems inconsistent"); 1836, *Meath v. Winchester*, 10 Bligh, N. S. 375 (Lord Brougham, referring to his ruling in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, spoke of the practice theretofore obtaining as "the inveterate and not now to be changed practice in courts of equity," and said that only the case of *Radcliffe v. Fursman*, a ruling of the House of Lords, prevented the overthrow of an illogical limitation now felt by all the judges to be utterly repugnant).

<sup>11</sup> 1836, *Knight v. Waterford*, 2 Y. & C. Ch. 22, 31, 41 (L. C. B. Abinger disapproved of the ruling in *Bolton v. Liverpool* in so far as it

refused the privilege for cases stated in litigation prior to or other than the pending one; here intimating that the privilege extended to a brief filed in a suit in 1683).

<sup>12</sup> 1842, *Herring v. Clobery*, 1 Phil. Ch. 91 (L. C. Lyndhurst's principle, quoted *infra*, § 2295, went this far); 1842, *Combe v. London*, 1 Y. & C. Ch. 631, 650, Shadwell, V. C. (cases prepared and opinions taken for litigations with other parties were protected, the issues being the same or related); 1843, *Hughes v. Garnous*, 6 Beav. 352 (correspondence in another suit, indirectly involved, held privileged); 1844, *Holmes v. Baddeley*, 1 Phil. Ch. 476, L. C. Lyndhurst (cases and opinions given for another suit with another party concerning the same property, and possibly raising a similar issue, held privileged; overruling Lord Langdale's decision below in 6 Beav. 521).

<sup>13</sup> 1842, *Herring v. Clobery*, *supra*; 1842, *Clagett v. Phillips*, 2 Y. & C. Ch. 82, Knight-Bruce, V. C. (communication privileged, if a dispute had arisen which "might terminate in a suit"); 1844, *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 38, Lord Langdale, M. R. (cited *infra*). The supposed authority of *Radcliffe v. Fursman*, and the limitation, hitherto obtaining up to the 1830s, in tradition and practice, to consultations concerning the litigation in hand, was carefully discussed and strongly deprecated in 1837 and 1843, in two articles in the *London Law Magazine* (vol. 17, p. 51, and vol. 30, p. 107) which must have had much influence on professional opinion.

<sup>14</sup> 1843, *Walsingham v. Goodricke*, 3 Hare 122, 125 (Wigram, V. C., after noting that prior decisions recognized the privilege for those communications only which were had after dispute arising, though not in contemplation of litigation, apparently declined to recognize it for those had "before any dispute arose"); 1843, *Woods v. Woods*, 4 Hare 83 (Wigram, V. C., repeated his views as expressed in the prior case); 1844, *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 38 (Lord Langdale, M. R., restricted the privilege to communications taking place "either in the progress of the suit, or with reference to the suit previously to its



Lyndhurst was already on record, in *Herring v. Cloberry*, as favoring the final and broadest expansion to communications seeking *any legal advice under all circumstances*.<sup>15</sup> For another twenty years this final step remained arguable.<sup>16</sup> But logic prevailed; and after *Minet v. Morgan* there was no pretext for doubt as to the law in England.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, for the client and for the attorney the broad boundaries of the privilege were the same.

(3) In the United States this lengthy controversy seems never to have found echoes. With the exception of one or two early rulings observing some of the original English limitations,<sup>18</sup> the Courts seemed to gravitate naturally to the largest interpretation of the privilege.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Justice Selden, of New York, alone raised his voice in opposition.<sup>20</sup>

commencement"); 1845, *Carpmael v. Powis*, 9 Beav. 16, 20 (Lord Langdale, as to his former denial of the privilege where "no litigation was contemplated," conceded that "this doctrine has been overruled"); 1845, *Reece v. Trye*, 9 Beav. 316 (Lord Langdale conceded that the protection was not confined to communications in contemplation of litigation; reluctantly acknowledging that his own view "has not been approved"); 1848, *Penraddock v. Hammond*, 11 Beav. 59 (similar to *Reece v. Trye*).

<sup>15</sup> 1842, *Herring v. Cloberry*, 1 Phil. Ch. 91 (quoted *infra*, § 2295). This view had been advanced many years before, in a ruling little noticed: 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (Leach, V. C.; privilege held to apply not merely to "communications pending an action," but to every communication "for professional assistance").

<sup>16</sup> 1846, *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 12, 25, 11 Jur. 50 (V. C. Knight-Bruce declared that it was "not a disputable point" that "the question of the existence or non-existence of any suit, claim, or dispute, is immaterial"; *Herring v. Cloberry* declared to state the rule correctly); 1855, *Manser v. Dix*, 1 K. & J. 451, 453 (Page-Wood, V. C., was perplexed by the prior rulings, and was inclined to draw the line at communications made with reference to a dispute, including possible as well as actual disputes, and therefore held as privileged a communication made regarding a supposed defect in the title, as being a consultation "against all possible claimants who may hereafter dispute the title"); 1859, *Lawrence v. Campbell*, 4 Drew. 485 (Kindersley, V. C., declared that "it is not now necessary, as it formerly was. . . that the communications should be made either during or relating to an actual or even to an expected litigation"); 1866, *Jenkyns v. Bushby*, L. R. 2 Eq. 547 (case and opinion, prepared for defendant's predecessor for litigation as to the same property, held privileged).

<sup>17</sup> 1873, *Minet v. Morgan*, L. R. 8 Ch. 361, 366 (L. C. Selborne reviewed the cases, and

approved the broad principle of *Pearse v. Pearse*; "the law has now attained to a footing which made me a little surprised to hear the matter reopened now"); 1889, *Lowden v. Blakey*, L. R. 23 Q. B. D. 332 (*Minet v. Morgan* approved); 1891, *O'Shea v. Wood*, Prob. 287 (modern doctrine approved).

In *Canada* the doubt in English practice was reflected in a contemporary ruling: 1865, *Macdonald v. Putnam*, 11 Grant Ch. 258, 264 (communications from the client, held not privileged if not made pending or anticipating litigation; otherwise of the attorney; here the then English cases and their uncertainty were considered); 1874, *Hamelyn v. White*, 6 Ont. Pr. 143 (*Minet v. Morgan* followed; *Macdonald v. Putnam* practically repudiated).

<sup>18</sup> 1829, *Dixon v. Parmelee*, 2 Vt. 185, 188; 1845, *March v. Ludlum*, 3 Sandf. Ch. 35, 49 (Sandford, V. C., recognizes the privilege as applying "where there is a dispute," though no litigation actual or contemplated).

<sup>19</sup> Besides the following rulings, the doctrine is of course now assumed in almost every opinion discussing the privilege at large: 1891, *Alexander v. U. S.*, 138 U. S. 353, 11 Sup. 350; 1845, *State v. Marshall*, 8 Ala. 302, 306; 1860, *Bobo v. Bryson*, 21 Ark. 387; 1899, *Brown v. Butler*, 71 Conn. 576, 42 Atl. 654 (instructions as to drawing a bill of sale, excluded); 1856, *Johnson v. Sullivan*, 23 Mo. 474, 479; 1831, *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. Mass. 89, 97 (see quotation *infra*, § 2295); 1833, *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Mass. 416, 421; 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. N. Y. 528, 592, Walworth, C.; 1859, *Williams v. Fitch*, 18 N. Y. 546, 551 (conversation relating to an affidavit for reducing an assessment, held privileged; as to the supposed limitation to judicial proceedings, "it appears to be now settled otherwise, and we think with great propriety"); 1871, *Britton v. Lorenz*, 45 N. Y. 51, 57 (rule confirmed); 1874, *Yates v. Olmsted*, 56 N. Y. 632 (same); 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 N. Y. 72, 76 (the rule "extends to communications in reference to all matters which are the proper subject of professional employment"); 1834,

<sup>20</sup> Quoted *post*, § 2295.



The reasons for this contrast in the American history, and for the easy acceptance of the broader rule with us, may be imagined without much risk of error. In the first place, there was not the same strong body of direct tradition to be overcome. The profession of the attorneys was in many of our colonies for a long time unrecognized; and there can hardly have been any inheritance of the old principle to stand in the way of the logic of the newer theory. But, more than this, the functions of counsel and attorney not having been with us maintained in separation, the chief occasion for the long-drawn-out English controversy was lacking, — namely, the existence of a complete written statement of facts by the party himself, available against him as an admission, in the form of a “case made for counsel,” customarily presented to the latter by the attorney for an opinion before venturing on litigation. This it was which, in English practice, formed the objective eagerly sought after by bills of discovery, and was only protected from disclosure by the bulwark of the present privilege. Most of the rulings in the long list already examined were concerned with demands for the production by the client of this key to his case; and under the rules of discovery (*ante*, §§ 1846, 1857, 2219) most of its parts must have been demandable except as they might fall within the present privilege.<sup>21</sup> It is no wonder that the loss of such an advantage was so stubbornly contested by inquisitive opponents. In the United States, however, no “case” needed to be stated in this written form; for counsel and attorney were one. The client’s admissions to his adviser were likely to be made orally; and the chance of extracting from him a repetition of the same admissions by answers to interrogatories was of little value, compared to the opportunity of inspecting the unchangeable writing which he was obliged, in English practice, to commit to the counsel’s hands. All that was to be obtained by discovery, under the other practice, was the preëxisting documents of title or obligation, and these were not to be protected by the attorney-privilege.<sup>21</sup> There was thus no appreciable motive for raising the distinctions which marked the successive stages of development in England, nor for struggling so long at each successive outpost in the extension of the privilege. The progress of its logic was unimpeded.

§ 2295. **Same : General Principle and Policy.** It has been hitherto assumed that the logic of the modern theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2290) leads inevitably to the broad scope of rule just noticed. But is this its inevitable result? Does the policy of securing subjective freedom of consultation for the client require us to guarantee that freedom as well for non-litigious as for litigious consultation? To argue that every right and obligation is

Beltzhoover v. Blackstock, 3 Watts Pa. 20, 27 (“It is sufficient if the witness were consulted professionally and acted or advised as counsel”); 1832, Durkee v. Leland, 4 Vt. 612; 1856, Coon v. Swan, 30 Vt. 6, *semble*; 1873, Earle v. Grout, 46 Vt. 113, 125, *semble*;

1814, Parker v. Carter, 4 Munf. Va. 273, 287.

<sup>21</sup> So far as the documents in such a “case” were not created for the purpose of communicating with the attorney, the limits of privilege still are important; they are examined *post*, § 2318.



potentially the subject of litigation is natural; but this, though abstractly true and sufficient, is hardly tangible enough to support so broad a claim of expansion. The case against expansion, from this point of view, has been made the most of in the following passage:

1864, SELDEN, J., in *Whiting v. Barney*, 30 N. Y. 330, 332: "As law-suits multiplied, and the modes of judicial proceeding became more complex and formal, it became necessary to have these suits conducted by persons skilled in the laws and in the practice of the courts. This necessity gave rise, at an early day, to the class of attorneys; to facilitate the business of the courts, it was important that these men should be employed. But as parties were not then obliged to testify in their own cases, and could not be compelled to disclose facts known only to themselves, they would hesitate to employ professional men, and make the necessary disclosures to them, if the facts thus communicated were thus within the reach of their opponent. To encourage the employment of attorneys, therefore, it became indispensable to extend to them the immunity enjoyed by the party. . . . If this was the true foundation of the rule, it would follow, that the protection is confined to communications made with a view to the conduct of a suit, or some judicial proceeding, and it goes most forcibly to confirm and strengthen the direct authority to which I have referred, that in the earlier cases, and while the origin of the rule was most likely to be kept in view, the doctrine would seem to have had this application. . . . But, unfortunately, there is another class of cases, still more numerous, which indicate a different doctrine, viz., that the privilege has no special relation to suits in court or judicial proceedings of any kind, but extends to every case where a member of the legal profession is consulted or employed *professionally*. . . . It seems to me, that enough has been adduced, to make it clear that the privilege in question is not founded upon any idea of the sacredness of confidential communications, whether made to an attorney or to any other person; nor upon any particular policy of the law which distinguishes the *general* business of an attorney from that of any other class in the community; but it was the result of that rule of the common law, which excused parties from testifying in their own cases, and of the necessity, for the convenience of the public, as well as the benefit of suitors, of having the business of the courts conducted by professional men. Whether, therefore, the recent legislation of this State, compelling parties to testify as witnesses in their own suits, shall be deemed to have removed the whole foundation of the rule, and terminated all necessity for its continuance or not, which may admit of some doubt, it follows, from the views here expressed, if correct, that the protection should only be held to extend to such communications as have relation to some suit or other judicial proceeding, either existing or contemplated."

The true answer to Mr. Justice Selden's argument is found by recurring to the basis of all privileges for communications (*ante*, § 2285). Their object is to protect the perfect working of a special relation, wherever confidence is a necessary feature of that perfect working. Now it cannot be denied that professional legal advice is as often needed for avoiding litigation as for carrying it on; still less can it be denied that the avowed ideal of the law, and the prudent custom of the profession, is to diminish litigation by so ordering the affairs of clients that litigation is not needed to correct their plight. It is a truism that much of litigation is due to the very failure of clients to seek legal advice until a resort to the courts cannot be avoided. Thus the relation of client and legal adviser, and the freedom of entering into it, are of at least equal importance for matters that are still in the non-litigious stage;



and the promotion of the relation in that stage tends to prevent its necessity in the further and less desirable stage. The best judicial opinion, therefore, when not opposed (as Lord Langdale was) to the privilege as a whole, has not hesitated to accept the reasoning which leads to the broad rule now universally accepted:

1833, L. C. BROUGHAM, in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 102: "If the protection were confined to proceedings begun or in contemplation, then every communication would be unprotected which a party makes with a view to his general defense against attacks which he apprehends, although at the time no one may have resolved to assail him. But, were it allowed to extend over such communications, the protection would be insufficient if it only included communications more or less connected with judicial proceedings: for a person oftentimes requires the aid of professional advice upon the subject of his rights and liabilities with no reference to any particular litigation, and without any other reference to litigation generally than all human affairs have in so far as every transaction may by possibility become the subject of judicial inquiry."

1831, SHAW, C. J., in *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. 89, 98: "We are of opinion that although this rule of privilege, having a tendency to prevent the full disclosure of the truth, ought to be construed strictly; yet still, whether we consider the principle of public policy upon which the rule is founded, or the weight of authority by which its extent and limits are fixed, the rule is not strictly confined to communications made for the purpose of enabling an attorney to conduct a cause in court, but does extend so as to include communications made by one to his legal adviser, whilst engaged and employed in that character, and when the object is to get his legal advice and opinion as to legal rights and obligations, although the purpose be to correct a defect of title by obtaining a release, to avoid litigation by compromise, to ascertain what acts are necessary to constitute a legal compliance with an obligation, and thus avoid a forfeiture or claim for damages, or for other legal and proper purposes not connected with a suit in court."

§ 2296. **Advice sought for Sundry Non-Legal Purposes; Consultation with Prosecuting Attorneys.** Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles; yet they may enter one and the same field and find diverse fruits. A lawyer is sometimes employed without reference to his knowledge and discretion in the law, — as where he is charged with finding a profitable investment for trust funds. So, too, one not a lawyer is sometimes asked for legal advice, — as where a policeman or a clerk of court is consulted. It is not easy to frame a definite test for distinguishing *legal from non-legal advice*. Where the general purpose concerns legal rights and obligations, a particular incidental transaction would receive protection, though in itself it were merely commercial in nature<sup>1</sup> — as where the financial condition of a shareholder is discussed, in the course of a proceeding to enforce a claim against a corporation. But apart from such cases, the most that can be said, by way of generalization, is that a matter committed to a professional legal adviser is 'prima facie' so committed for the sake of the legal advice which may be more or less desirable for some aspect of the matter, and is therefore within the privilege, unless it clearly appears to be lacking in

§ 2296. <sup>1</sup> 1855, *Maas v. Bloch*, 7 Ind. 202 (one part of a conversation being privileged, the rest not, the whole was held protected).



aspects requiring legal advice. Obviously, much depends upon the circumstances of individual transactions.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty of drawing the line is noticeable in the case of complaints made to *prosecuting attorneys*. Under our system of criminal prosecution, the injured person does not usually, as in England at common law, employ the counsel, nor become liable for the costs; he may be obliged to make oath to the complaint, but he is in the criminal procedure no more than an informer and a witness. There is, therefore, nominally, for him no cause at issue and no need for legal advice. On the other hand, he may become liable for malicious prosecution, and may therefore desire legal advice before incurring any risk. His application to the prosecuting attorney will therefore usually not involve a request for legal advice in his own interest; yet conceivably it may. On the other hand, if it does not, the person seeking the State prosecutor may fall within the protection of the privilege for *communications between government and informer*; the authorities can therefore best be considered in that connection (*post*, §§ 2374, 2375).

<sup>2</sup> Various instances are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (Leach, V. C.; privilege held not applicable to employment "in matters not professional, as in a treaty for the purchase of an estate"); 1824, *Bramwell v. Lucas*, 2 B. & C. 745 ("a question for information as to a matter of fact, as to a communication the attorney has made to others, where the communication might have been made by any other person as well as an attorney and where the character or office of attorney has not been called into action," is not privileged; here, a question by a bankrupt whether the state of things was such that he could attend his creditors' meeting without the prospect of arrest); 1836, *Turquand v. Knight*, 2 M. & W. 98 (consultation of an attorney for procuring a loan, held privileged); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 Bing. N. C. 421 (communications by a person desiring to obtain a loan and seeking an attorney C., acting for a lender, held privileged; "C. was to assist professionally in raising the money for the applicant"); 1842, *Jones v. Pugh*, 1 Phil. Ch. 96 (bill by a judgment creditor against P. and his mortgage, a solicitor; the solicitor, having taken mortgages for his clients in his own name, as an "ordinary part of a solicitor's duty to lay out money for his clients," was not compelled to disclose the names of his *'cestuis que trustent'*).

CANADA: 1917, *Duncan v. Vancouver*, 36 D. L. R. 218, B. C. (plaintiff was attorney for one who had had a claim against the city; the city made a settlement with plaintiff's client, through the city solicitor, thus depriving plaintiff of certain costs; in an action to recover them, plaintiff asked discovery on interrogatories to the city solicitor; the trial Court's ruling that the solicitor was examinable as an officer of the corporation, and was

not privileged as solicitor, was affirmed by a divided Court; the difference turning on whether the solicitor's contract to give exclusive service to the city dominated over his status as attorney).

UNITED STATES: 1896, *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Selby*, 19 C. C. A. 331, 72 Fed. 980 (consultation with an attorney in applying for a pension, excluded); 1899, *Turner's Appeal*, 72 Conn. 305, 44 Atl. 310 (conversations in regard to the amount receivable from an estate, etc., not privileged); 1895, *Freeman v. Brewster*, 93 Ga. 648, 21 S. E. 165 (the contents of an insurance policy, the collection of the money, etc., as attorney, held privileged); 1905, *Turner v. Turner*, 123 Ga. 5, 50 S. E. 969 (statements to an attorney employed to obtain a loan, not privileged); 1904, *State v. Gosey*, 111 La. 616, 35 So. 786 (consultation during trial, between a co-indictee, not on trial, and his counsel, as to the former's consenting to take the stand, held privileged); 1823, *Wilson v. Troup*, 2 Cow. N. Y. 195, 205, 242 (privilege held applicable to an attorney, acting as a general business agent, so far as the communications concerned professional legal services; here, the foreclosure of a mortgage); 1862, *Flack v. Neill*, 26 Tex. 273, 276 (a "voluntary narrative of the circumstances attending a past transaction," held not privileged on the facts); 1800, *Heister v. Davis*, 3 Yeates Tenn. 4 (privilege held not to cover the vendor's delivery of a bond to the attorney of the vendee and the latter's statement that he was satisfied with the security); 1849, *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 523 (conversation in regard to a confession of judgment to cover liabilities, and a dispute arising therefrom, held privileged); 1900, *Burraston v. Bank*, 22 Utah 328, 62 Pac. 425 (attorney employed to "straighten out an account" by a man who could not read; statements not privileged).



§ 2297. **Advice in Conveyancing.** A deed or other conveyance is drafted sometimes by the parties, sometimes by a real-estate broker, sometimes (as on the Continent, and formerly in England) by a notary or scrivener, and sometimes by an attorney-at-law. Though it necessarily affects rights and obligations, there is not necessarily a contribution of legal advice in its preparation. It is conceivable, therefore, that an attorney may be asked to draft a deed of a certain tenor, without any express reference to his knowledge of the law. On the other hand, he will undoubtedly use that knowledge, and his employer impliedly requests him to use it, in phrasing the instrument. The question thus arises whether the communications then made by his employer, although they may not in terms concern legal aspects of the transaction, are to be regarded as communications made in the course of an employment for legal advice.

This question has naturally received conflicting answers.<sup>1</sup> The tendency at first in England was to make a sharp distinction between services as a conveyancer and services as an attorney-at-law.<sup>2</sup> But this was probably due in part to the original limitation of the privilege to communications for the purpose of litigation (*ante*, § 2294); and since this limitation disappeared, the inclination has been to take the larger view of the privilege in the present respect also.<sup>3</sup>

In the United States, the drafting of a *will* has almost always been assumed (and naturally) to bring the testator's communications within the privilege.<sup>4</sup> But for *deeds* and other instruments the privilege has been strictly construed,

§ 2297. <sup>1</sup> The early cases dealing with "scriveners" are hardly of any significance, inasmuch as the general principle of privilege tended at that time to include all confidential communications (*ante*, § 2286), and as the occupation of "scrivener," as distinguished from attorney-at-law, was then more common: 16 —, *Morris and Clayton's Case*, cited *Freem. Ch. 5* ("that they, being but scriveners, should not have that privilege"); 1675, *Harvey v. Clayton*, 2 *Swanst.* 221, note (discovery of a mortgage; plea, that defendant "is a scrivener and trusted with men's estates," allowed, "for it may be a ruin to the defendant in his trade to discover it, for no man hereafter will employ him"); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (L. C. J. Holt: "It seems to be the same law of a scrivener, . . . for he is a counsel to a man, with whom he will advise, if he be intrusted and educated in such way of practice; otherwise of a gentleman, parson, etc.")).

<sup>2</sup> 1730 (?), *South Sea Co. v. Dolliffe*, cited in 2 *Atk.* 524; L. C. King (attorney examined concerning the alteration before execution of a covenant drawn by him; demurrer overruled, "for that what he knew was as the conveyancer only"); 1743, *Vaillant v. Dodemead*, 2 *Atk.* 524, L. C. Hardwicke (attorney compelled to answer "concerning the proving of the deed of assignment"); 1792, *Duffin v.*

*Smith*, *Peake N. P.* 108 (attorney compelled to testify to the consideration of a bond and mortgage, since it "does not come to his knowledge in the character of an attorney").

<sup>3</sup> 1820, *Re Aitkin*, 4 *B. & Ald.* 47 (Abbott, C. J.: "Inasmuch as a conveyance requires knowledge of law, the trust is reposed by the client [in employing him for a conveyance] in the party in respect of his being an attorney"); 1828, *Broad v. Pitt*, 3 *C. & P.* 518 (Best, C. J.: "A man is not acting as an attorney when he is consulted about a deed"); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 *C. & P.* 592, 594 (Parke, J., held that "an application to draw a deed" was a professional consultation); 1846, *Carpmael v. Powis*, 1 *Phil. Ch.* 687, 692 (L. C. Lyndhurst; communications in regard to preparing a conveyance, fixing bids, etc., held privileged; "it is impossible to split the duties in that manner without getting into inextricable confusion; I consider them all parts of one transaction, the sale of an estate, and that a transaction in which solicitors are ordinarily employed by their clients"); 1889, *Lowden v. Blakey*, *L. R.* 23 *Q. B. D.* 332 (communication in regard to the drafting of an advertisement stating the result of a lawsuit, held privileged).

<sup>4</sup> The cases are more conveniently examined *post*, § 2314, under another aspect of the principle.



and where no legal problem has been expressly brought forward by the client, his communications concerning the mere drafting of the instrument have commonly been admitted.<sup>5</sup> The circumstances of each case must affect the result; but in general a strict construction is the proper one, especially in those cases where attorneys combine the occupation of real estate and insurance brokers or act also as executive officers of a corporate business.

The following opinion is typical of the judicial attitude:

<sup>5</sup> *Fed.* 1839, *Linthicum v. Remington*, 5 Cr. C. C. 546 (facts stated to the attorney at the time of drawing a deed as "attorney, counsellor, and conveyancer," held privileged); 1918, *Beaver v. Stuart*, 5th C. C. A., 250 Fed. 972 (claim against a bankrupt; an attorney who had prepared two notes to be given for the purchase of real estate, held not privileged); *Ala.* 1845, *State v. Marshall*, 8 Ala. 302, 306 (application by a negro to an attorney to draw up a petition to the Legislature for freedom, held to be "such as did not require legal skill in its execution," and therefore not privileged); *Ark.* 1906, *Fox v. Spears*, 78 Ark. 71, 93 S. W. 560 (statements made while consulting over the drafting of a deed, excluded); *Cal.* 1912, *Delger v. Jacobs*, 19 Cal. App. 197, 125 Pac. 258 (drafting of a money-security, held not privileged on the facts); 1920, *Ong v. Cole*, — Cal. App. —, 188 Pac. 812 (drafting a deed, held not privileged, on the facts); 1920, *Collette v. Sarrasin*, 184 Cal. 283, 193 Pac. 571 (lawyer acting as "mere scrivener in drawing the deed" and giving no advice; privilege not applicable); *Colo.* 1873, *Machette v. Wanless*, 2 Colo. 169, 179 (conversation with an attorney "simply asked to prepare a mortgage," held not privileged); 1887, *Caldwell v. Davis*, 10 Colo. 481, 492, 15 Pac. 696 ("the only employment of L. by D. was to draw the release and deed"; conversation held not privileged); *Ill.* 1861, *DeWolf v. Strader*, 26 Ill. 225, 230 (an attorney "acting as scrivener, merely to draw a deed," and not "consulted as counsel or asked for a legal opinion on a state of facts," held not privileged); 1883, *Smith v. Long*, 106 Ill. 485, 488 (similar); 1886, *Hollenback v. Todd*, 119 Ill. 543, 546, 8 N. E. 829 (an attorney who drew the client's assignment and was asked and gave his opinion thereon, held privileged); *Ind.* 1860, *Borum v. Fouts*, 15 Ind. 50, 53 (consultation of an attorney as scrivener, to draw notes and a bond and to reckon interest, held not privileged); 1887, *Hanlon v. Doherty*, 109 Ind. 37, 44, 9 N. E. 782 (preceding case approved); *Ia.* 1906, *Mueller v. Batcheler*, 131 Ia. 650, 109 N. W. 186 (conversations between parties consulting an attorney merely "as a scrivener or conveyancer," admitted); *Kan.* 1893, *Sparks v. Sparks*, 51 Kan. 195, 201, 32 Pac. 892 (a mere scrivener of documents, though professionally an attorney, not privileged); 1903, *Grimshaw v. Kent*, 67 Kan. 463, 73 Pac. 92 (a lawyer

drafting a contract; privilege not applied); *Ky.* 1892, *Carter v. West*, 93 Ky. 211, 19 S. W. 592 ("in this instance the attorney . . . was the legal adviser of the party, and not a mere scrivener; she was relying on him to see that she got a good title," and the privilege was applied); *Md.* 1882, *Crane v. Barkdoll*, 59 Md. 534, 538 (here the client "employed the attorney to draw the deed and sought his professional advice in reference to it"; held privileged); *Mass.* 1833, *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 416, 423 (an attorney drawing a conveyance, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); *Mo.* 1856, *Johnson v. Sullivan*, 23 Mo. 474, 479 (communications to one "employed in his professional capacity to draft a deed," and to one employed "to prepare insolvent papers," held privileged); *Mont.* 1899, *Smith v. Caldwell*, 22 Mont. 331, 56 Pac. 590 (a person was attorney, justice of the peace, and notary; a communication by one securing his services in drawing a deed, and not consulting him for legal advice, held admissible); *N. Y.* 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 N. Y. 74, 76 (privilege held applicable to the drawing of a contract where the attorney's advice was sought as to its terms); *Pa.* 1888, *Goodwin, G. S. & M. Co.'s Appeal*, 117 Pa. 514, 523, 537, 12 Atl. 736 ("a legal scrivener does not become the repository of confidences within the rule of the law," and is not privileged); 1916, *Alexander v. Queen*, 253 Pa. 195, 97 Atl. 1063 (preparation of a deed of trust, held privileged on the facts); *Tex.* 1891, *Stallings v. Hullum*, 79 Tex. 421, 15 S. W. 677 (communications as to a deed's consideration, made to an attorney employed solely as an abstractor of title, held not privileged); *Va.* 1811, *Clay v. Williams*, 2 Munf. 105, 113, 121, per Roane, J. (privilege held applicable to an attorney drafting a bond and advising as to its legal effect); 1814, *Parker v. Carter*, 4 Munf. 273, 275, 280, 285 (communications made to an attorney employed to draw such a deed as would settle slaves on his daughter to be exempt from creditors, held privileged); *Wis.* 1877, *Getzlaff v. Seliger*, 43 Wis. 299, 302 (an attorney giving legal advice in the drafting of a mortgage, held subject to the privilege, though he claimed that he was "acting as a notary and not as attorney").

The cases dealing with the mere *fact of execution* of the instrument, apart from conversations at the time, are examined *post*, § 2309.



1833, SHAW, C. J., in *Hutton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 416, 422: "There are many cases, in which an attorney is employed in transacting business, not properly professional, and where the same might have been transacted by another agent. In such case the fact that the agent sustains the character of an attorney, does not render the communications attending it, privileged; and they may be testified to by him, as by any other agent. . . . We cannot perceive that the communications were made to [the attorney, Mr. Ames,] by Winch with the purpose of instructing him in any cause, or engaging him in the conduct of any professional business, or of obtaining any legal advice or opinion. If the disclosure of his views and purposes, in the conveyance of property proposed to be drawn, was not, as stated in some of the books, a mere 'gratis dictum,' the only purpose seems to have been to satisfy Mr. Ames' mind, and remove any scruple that he might entertain, as to the character of the transaction, and to convince him, that whatever might be the legal character of the act, it was not intended with moral turpitude. It did satisfy him that he was not to be engaged in a conspiracy to cheat, and induced him to consent to draw the deed. Here was no legal advice asked, no opinion requested as to the effect and operation of such a conveyance in point of law, and none given. We are therefore necessarily brought to the conclusion, that either these disclosures were made without any particular motive, or if there was a purpose, connected with the proposed draft, it was to satisfy Mr. Ames' mind, upon a point of fact, not for the information of his own in point of law, and in either event they are not to be deemed privileged communications, which the witness was prohibited from disclosing."

Assuming that legal advice is in fact being expressly sought, as it commonly is, in connection with the drafting, and that the client's communications are therefore within the privilege, the question then arises whether the *contents* and the *execution* of the instrument, thus coming to the attorney's knowledge by his own vision, are privileged from disclosure. This question depends upon another aspect of the principle (*post*, §§ 2308, 2309).

§ 2298. **Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction.** It has been agreed from the beginning that the privilege cannot avail to protect the client in concerting with the attorney a crime or other evil enterprise; and for the logically sufficient reason that no such enterprise falls within the just scope of the relation between legal adviser and client. But the difficulty has been to define the boundaries of this limitation. It has not always been kept in mind that the privilege, in its very fundamentals, presupposes what Bentham so drastically censured,—the furnishing of legal advice to the culpable client, as well as to the worthy one, *i. e.* to a client who, if the law were duly enforced, would lose in the litigation. How, then, can the privilege continue to exist at all, if any exception is to be made by which the confidences of the guilty are to be disclosed?

It is possible, of course, to take merely the practical point of view, and to declare that the privilege must at least cease to be a cloak for criminal conspiracy, regardless of its logic, and to contrive an arbitrary limit for this exception. But it seems hardly necessary thus to do violence to the theory of the privilege. Looking at the reasons of policy upon which it rests (*ante*, § 2291), they appear by their natural limits to end with the same conclusion. They predicate the need of confidence on the part not only of injured persons, but also of those who, being already wrongdoers in part or all of their cause,



are seeking legal advice suitable for their plight. The confidences of such persons may legitimately be protected, wrongdoers though they have been, because, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2291), the element of wrong is not always found separated from an element of right; because, even when it is, a legal adviser may properly be employed to obtain the best available or lawful terms of making redress; and because the legal adviser must not habitually be placed in the position of an informer. But these reasons all cease to operate at a certain point, namely, where the desired advice refers *not to prior wrongdoing*, but to *future wrongdoing*. From that point onwards, no protection is called for by any of these considerations.

Upon this much there has been a fair consensus among all who have declared themselves upon the subject. But certain minor points of detail still remain, if a practical rule for disclosure is to be settled upon. (1) Must not the advice be sought for a *knowingly* unlawful end? (2) Must not that unlawfulness be either a *crime* or a civil wrong involving *moral turpitude*? (3) Must not the attorney have so far abandoned his professional attitude as to have become, by *assent* to the design, a partaker in the client's intended wrong? The judicial attitudes on these questions may be gathered from the following passages:<sup>1</sup>

§ 2298. <sup>1</sup> The cases on the whole subject are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1673, *Rothwell v. King*, 2 Swans. 221, note (bill charging the suppression of a will; discovery compelled, "for the trust of counsel does not extend to the suppression of deeds or will"); 1699, *R. v. Warden of the Fleet*, 12 Mod. 337, 341 (an obscure passage, concerning the limits of the privilege of criminal secrets); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 C. & P. 592, 594 (conveyance in fraud of creditors; the question being proposed, as preliminary to the ascertainment of the privilege, whether the insolvent had "asked his advice for a lawful or an unlawful purpose," Parke, J., would not allow the question to be put); 1838, *R. v. Avery*, 8 C. & P. 596 (consultation for the purpose of raising money on a forged will; the privilege was denied, but not on this ground); 1846, *R. v. Hayward*, 2 C. & K. 234, 2 Cox Cr. 23, s. v. *R. v. Jones*, 1 Den. Cr. 166 (documents sent to an attorney for advice, including a forged will, with the intent that the attorney should see it and act on it; on a prosecution for forgery, production was compelled); 1846, *R. v. Farley*, 2 C. & K. 313, 2 Cox Cr. 82, 1 Den. Cr. 197 (forgery of a will; the defendant's wife had taken another forged will to a solicitor to obtain an advance of money; this was compelled to be produced); 1846, *Reynell v. Sprye*, 10 Beav. 51, 56, 11 Beav. 618 (a letter procured by defendant to be written by his solicitor to show to plaintiff, held not privileged, as being part of a plan to deceive; the solicitor "acting as 'particeps criminis,' and not in the true relationship of

solicitor and client"); 1848, *R. v. Tylney*, 1 Den. Cr. 319 (forgery of a will; the document had been placed by the defendant in a solicitor's hands to "enforce her rights under it"; production was required, the question being reserved but never decided); 1850, *Follett v. Jefferyes*, 1 Sim. N. S. 3, 17 (Lord Cranworth, V. C.; communications respecting an attempt to dispose of property in evasion of creditors, held privileged; "such an act *per se* is no fraud, if the disposition is one which the law allows"); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391 (Wigram, V. C., referring to a testamentary purpose forbidden by law: "The contriving of a fraud is no part of his duty as solicitor, and I think it can as little be said that it is part of the duty of a solicitor to advise his client as to the means of evading the law"); 1863, *Charlton v. Coombs*, 32 L. J. Ch. N. S. 284 (the attorney must be privy to the fraud, in order that the privilege should cease; unsound); 1873, *R. v. Castro*, and *Tieghorne v. Lushington*, Report of Case, III, 9, 2381, 5211, quoted in L. R. 14 Q. B. D. 162 (general principle affirmed); 1884, *R. v. Cox and Railton*, L. R. 14 Q. B. D. 153, 164 (conspiracy to defraud creditors; communication preparatory to the conspiracy, the solicitor acting in good faith and without knowledge of the fraud, held not privileged); 1887, *Postlethwaite v. Rickman*, L. R. 35 Ch. D. 722, 724 (general principle applied to certain frauds by trustees); 1895, *Williams v. Quebrada R. L. & C. Co.*, 2 Ch. 751 (fraud by a corporation upon its bondholders; corporate minute-books and legal opinions in reference to the



1743, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229 (the facts of this celebrated case are stated *post* § 2310). Serjeant *Tisdall* (arguing): "If he is employed as an attorney in any unlawful or wicked act, his duty to the public obliges him to disclose

plan, held not privileged; there is no distinction between crime and civil fraud); 1900, *R. v. Bullivant*, 2 Q. B. 163 (testator's instructions as to a conveyance to be made with intent to evade succession taxes, held not privileged); 1920, *O'Rourke v. Darbishire*, A. C. 581 (communications made with a view to carry out a fraud are not privileged).

CANADA: 1864, *Mackenzie v. Mackenzie*, 9 Low. Can. Jur. 87 (testimony as to the client's money or goods in the attorney's hands, held not privileged, where the issue was whether they had been there placed to evade the law); 1873, *Ethier v. Homier*, 18 Low. Can. Jur. 83 (the privilege does not apply where the advocate is "not only adviser, but also party to the transaction"; here an attorney was compelled to testify whether he wrote a libellous letter at the client's instance).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1891, *Alexander v. U. S.*, 138 U. S. 353, 357, 11 Sup. 350 (communication with regard to a crime or fraud, held privileged otherwise than in the trial "for the crime in furtherance of which the communication was made"; this distinction is groundless, upon either principle or precedent, and seems to have been due to a confusion of the old controversy [*ante*, § 2294] as to communications for other litigation); 1907, *Will v. Tornabelli & Co.*, 1 P. R. Fed. 125, 145 (a strange case, where the counsel afterwards changed sides and became interested in a contingent fee); *Conn.* 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 325 (the client's statement that she intended to testify differently from what she had already said, held not a confession of intended perjury, and therefore without the rule; general principle expressly reserved from decision); 1902, *Supplee v. Hall*, 75 Conn. 17, 52 Atl. 407 (validity of a mortgage as against creditors; questions to the mortgagor's attorney as to information acquired in consultations contemplating "some conduct which might render him liable to a civil action by reason of actual or constructive fraud," held privileged); *Ia.* 1893, *State v. Kidd*, 89 Ia. 54, 56 N. W. 263 (sending a false copy of a jury's findings to the attorney, with intent to deceive himself and the Court, held not privileged); *Kan.* 1913, *State v. Wilcox*, 90 Kan. 80, 132 Pac. 982 (criminal libel; communications to a county attorney, to secure the prosecution of an innocent man by false testimony, held not privileged, being acts done as a part of a criminal plan); 1919, *Emerson v. Western Automobile Ind. Ass'n*, 105 Kan. 242, 182 Pac. 647 (communications said to involve the perpetration of fraud, here held privileged); *Ky.* 1919, *Standard Fire Ins. Co. v. Smithhart*, 183 Ky. 679, 211 S. W. 441 (communications to enable recovery of insurance money on a

house burned by fraud, not privileged; careful opinion by Hurt, J.); *Me.* 1851, *McLellan v. Longfellow*, 32 Me. 494 (conversations while seeking advice for the drafting of a bill of sale, held privileged); *Mass.* 1870, *Highbee v. Dresser*, 103 Mass. 523, 526 ("a mere suggestion of fraud, in general terms," is not sufficient); *Mo.* 1902, *Lehman's Trial*, 9 Amer. St. Tr. 417, 448 (corrupt action by municipal officials; the defendant's conversation with an attorney seeking his assistance in obtaining the bribe-money, not privileged); 1903, *State v. Faulkner*, 175 Mo. 546, 75 S. W. 116 (communication after the crime was complete; "to assist one criminal in requiring or inducing his confederate in crime to disgorge the price of his crime," held not privileged); 1920, *Gelhardt v. United R. Co.*, — Mo. —, 220 S. W. 677 (personal injury received while in a street car of defendant; plaintiff's admissions to F., while seeking to retain him as counsel, that she was not in the car at all, held not privileged, being made in an attempt to commit "a future crime or fraud"); *N. J.* 1891, *Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 N. J. Eq. 455, 465, 21 Atl. 1054 (quoted *supra*; privilege held applicable to a contemplated fraud, as well as a crime, for which the attorney's advice is sought; "it falls within the rule as to crime"); *Bank v. Mersereau*, N. Y., declared to be founded on unsatisfactory authority; (*R. v. Cox and Railton*, Eng., approved); *N. Y.* 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill 33, 35, 41 (privilege held not to cover the execution of an instrument in fraud of creditors; quoted *supra*); 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 598, Walworth, C. (privilege held applicable to communications concerning a proposed fraud upon creditors; the exception extending only to "a felony or other crime which was 'malum in se'"; but "I admit I should have been much better satisfied if I had found this question an open one"); 1909, *People v. Farmer*, 194 N. Y. 251, 87 N. E. 457 (rule applied to deny the privilege as to the execution of a deed material on a charge of homicide); *Tenn.* 1858, *M'Mannus v. State*, 2 Head 213, 216 (questions as to "a contemplated crime," held not privileged); *Tex.* 1920, *Ott v. State*, 87 Tex. Cr. 382, 222 S. W. 261 (murder of husband by wife; plea, self-defence; deceased's consultation of an attorney to find what would be the penalty in case he killed his wife, held not privileged); *Utah*: 1875, *People v. Mahon*, 1 Utah 205, 208 (communications relating to a contemplated forgery, held not privileged); *Wash.* 1917, *State v. Richards*, 97 Wash. 587, 167 Pac. 47 (black-mail; privilege held not to protect consultation of defendant with an attorney as to the illegal or legal nature of the act and the plans for deliver-



it; no private obligations can dispense with that universal one, which lies on every member of the society, to discover every design which may be formed, contrary to the laws of the society, to destroy the public welfare. For this reason I apprehend, that if a secret, which is contrary to the public good, such as a design to commit treason, murder, or perjury, comes to the knowledge of an attorney, even in a cause wherein he is concerned, the obligation to the public must dispense with the private obligation to the client." Mr. *Harvard* (arguing): "I take the distinction to be, that where an attorney comes to the knowledge of a thing that is 'malum in se,' against the common rules of morality and honesty, though from his client, and necessary to procure success in the cause, yet it is no breach of trust in him to disclose it, as it can't be presumed an honest man would engage in a trust that by law prevented him from discharging that moral duty all are bound to, nor can private obligation cancel the justice owing by us to the public." MOUNTENEY, B.: "For God's sake then let us consider, what will be the consequence of the doctrine now laid down [by the defendant] and so earnestly contended for, that such a declaration made by any person to his attorney ought not by that attorney to be proved? A man (without any natural call to it) promotes a prosecution against another for a capital offence; he is desirous and determined, at all events, to get him hanged; he retains an attorney to carry on the prosecution, and makes such a declaration to him as I have before mentioned (the meaning and intention of which, if the attorney hath common understanding about him, it is impossible he should mistake); he happens to be too honest a man to engage in such an affair; he declines the prosecution; but he must never discover this declaration, because he was retained as attorney. This prosecutor applies in the same manner to a second, a third, and so on, who still refuse, but are still to keep this inviolably secret. At last, he finds an attorney wicked enough to carry this iniquitous scheme into execution. And after all, none of these persons are to be admitted to prove this, in order either to bring the guilty party to condign punishment, or to prevent the evil consequences of his crime with regard to civil property. Is this law? Is this reason? I think it is absolutely contrary to both. . . . The declaration now offered to be proved is of that nature, and so highly criminal, that, in my opinion, mankind is interested in the discovery; and whoever it was made to, attorney or not attorney, lies under an obligation to society in general, prior and superior to any obligation he can lie under to a particular individual, to make it known."

1841, BRONSON, J., in *Coreney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35, 41: "It is the privilege of one who is charged with a wrong, either public or private, to speak unreservedly with his counsel in preparing for his defence; but he should not be allowed to stop the mouth of one who was present when the wrong was done, upon the allegation that he was retained as counsel to see, or aid in the transaction. Indeed, I think there can be no such relation as that of attorney and client, either in the commission of a crime, or the doing of a wrong by force or fraud to an individual. The privileged relation of attorney and client can only exist for lawful and honest purposes. . . . Now, if the plaintiff consulted counsel beforehand as to the means, the expediency, or consequences of committing such a fraud, his communications may, perhaps, be privileged; and they are clearly so, as to what he may have said to counsel since the wrong was done. But the attorney may, I think, be required to disclose whatever act was done in his presence towards the perpetration of the fraud. One who is charged with having done an injury to another, either in his person, his fame, or his property, may freely communicate with his counsel, without the danger of having his confidence betrayed through any legal agency. But when he is not disclosing what has already happened, but is actually engaged in committing the wrong, he can have no privileged witness."

ing the demands); *Wis.* 1854, *Dudley v. Beck*, 3 *Wis.* 274, 283 (fraud; question reserved, whether the mere disclosure of a fraud at the request for

aid therein is privileged; but here a fraudulent agreement between client and attorney to act together was held not privileged).



1872, *McMaster's Trial*, 9 Amer. St. Tr. 861: "On the last day of the trial of Edward T. Avery — a Monday morning — just as the prisoner's counsel, Mr. McMaster, was beginning his closing address to the jury, the Prosecuting Attorney interrupted him with the question, 'I don't notice the prisoner in court; where is he?' to which the attorney replied, 'That is for you to find out.' The Presiding Judge, BOND, then asked, 'Where is your client, Mr. McMaster?' 'I understood,' said Mr. McMaster, 'when we adjourned on Saturday night that Dr. Avery had gone to see his family and that he would return to-day.' Then the Court asked his other counsel, Mr. Wilson, if he expected him back. 'I expected him to return by the next train. I know nothing save for the information I have received from Mr. McMaster.' The attorney, McMaster, asked to be excused from answering these questions, whereupon the Court ordered him to show cause on a future day why he should not be disbarred for contempt. The trial went on and the prisoner was convicted in his absence. Several days later the question of contempt was argued before the Judges who sat on the Avery trial. Mr. *Fickling*, for the respondent: . . . 'Mr. McMaster was not bound to be an informer; he was in no wise the custodian of the person of Dr. Avery, and in no way responsible for his safe-keeping. He was not morally or professionally bound to declare where he was, even if he knew; indeed, it would have been a violation of his professional confidence, if, knowing, he had confessed.' Mr. *Chamberlin*, for the State: . . . 'Is Mr. McMaster defending Dr. Avery, in any just sense of the term, when he connives, conspires or communicates with him in reference to his escape from the jurisdiction and authority of this Court? . . . It is true that the privilege of client to attorney is very broad, but it does not cover everything, and it does not conflict with that great duty which the attorney from the nature of his office, under his oath, holds to a Court of justice. . . . This, therefore, could not have been a privileged communication. It could not have been advice or assistance given by Mr. McMaster to his client, because it was, upon the face of it, a palpable and direct attempt, not to act as an officer of this Court, but to act in defiance of this Court, and for the express purpose of enabling his client not to stand his defense and meet his verdict, but to escape beyond the reach of justice. . . . The just rights of Dr. Avery were in the keeping and protection of Mr. McMaster, but nothing more. His rights here were to a fair trial, to a full examination of all his evidence, and the opportunity to present every circumstance and every particle of evidence that might be presented in his behalf; but it extended no further. He was bound to protect the just rights of his client, but he was not bound — he was forbidden, by honorable professional conduct — to attempt to evade the operations of the law, or to defeat the administration of justice.' . . . Judge BOND took the matter 'under advisement,' and so kept it to the day of his death."

1891, GREEN, V. C., in *Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 N. J. Eq. 455, 469, 21 Atl. 1054: "In order that the rule may apply, there must be both professional confidence and professional employment; but if the client has a criminal object in view in his communications with his solicitor, one of these elements must necessarily be absent. The client must either conspire with his solicitor or deceive him. If his criminal object is avowed, the client does not consult his adviser professionally, because it cannot be the solicitor's business to further any criminal object. If the client does not avow his object he reposes no confidence, for the state of facts, which is the foundation of the supposed confidence, does not exist. The solicitor's advice is obtained by a fraud. As I understand the case, the rule, in its different phases and the reasons, may be thus stated: If the client consults the lawyer with reference to the perpetration of a crime, and they coöperate in effecting it, there is no privilege, for it is no part of an attorney's duty to assist in crime; he ceases to be counsel and becomes a criminal. If he refuses to be a party to the act, still there is no privilege, because he cannot properly be consulted professionally for advice to aid in the perpetration of a crime. In the case of a fraud, if it is effected by the coöperation of the attorney, it falls within the rule as to crime, for the consultation to carry it out



is a conspiracy, which, on its accomplishment by the commission of the overt act, becomes criminal and an indictable offence."

Looking at the reasons for the privilege, and construing it as strictly as possible, the first of the above three questions should be answered in the affirmative, but the second and the third in the negative. The decisions apparently reach this general result, except in the second respect, where there is an inclination to mark the line at crime and civil fraud. Yet it is difficult to see how any moral line can properly be drawn at that crude boundary, or how the law can protect a deliberate plan to defy the law and oust another person of his rights, whatever the precise nature of those rights may be. The law, in its endeavor to maintain abstract fundamentals, is already sufficiently callous to concrete failures of justice, and needs rather to cultivate greater sensitiveness in such matters.

## 2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such"

§ 2300. **Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not Admitted to Practice.** There is no ground for encouraging the relation of client and legal adviser except when the adviser is one who has been formally admitted to the office of attorney or counsellor as duly qualified to give legal advice. That the person consulted is in fact practising, without formal sanction of the Court, is certainly not sufficient.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, where a distinct sanction is required for the several grades of Courts within the same sovereignty, a practitioner admitted for a lower Court only is clearly within the privilege for the purpose of litigation before that Court. So, too, a duly admitted practitioner, while acting for a client belonging to his jurisdiction, is within the privilege in whatever other jurisdiction it may be invoked.<sup>2</sup> In any jurisdiction still maintaining the self-stultifying rule that every citizen, even though not possessing any specific qualifications, is entitled to practise at the bar, it may be supposed that a 'de facto' professional practice suffices.<sup>3</sup> Finally, a mere student of law, aspiring to future entrance to the profession, is

§ 2300. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1880, *Slade v. Tucker*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 824, 827 (communications to a pursuivant of the Herald's College, assisting in a pedigree protest, held not privileged); *U. S.* 1859, *Sample v. Frost*, 10 Ia. 226 (consultation with one who "was receiving business to transact as an attorney and expecting to be admitted and was admitted at the next term," held not privileged); 1905, *State v. Smith*, 138 N. C. 700, 50 S. E. 859 (communications to an "attorney in fact," not being an attorney at law, not privileged); 1879, *Scales v. Kelley*, 2 Lea Tenn. 706 (licensed practitioner before justices of the peace and the county court, held within the privilege); 1854, *Brayton v. Chase*, 3 Wis. 456 (privilege held not applicable to one not licensed as an attorney, though practising before a justice of the peace).

*Contra*: 1887, *Benedict v. State*, 44 Oh. St. 679, 688, 11 N. E. 125 (consultation with one

who practised before justices of the peace, but was not admitted to the bar, held privileged; but the Court's remark that nothing was lacking "except the mere form of the admission of the adviser to practice in courts of record" shows a singular notion of the guarantees implied in the professional status); 1906, *English v. Ricks*, 117 Tenn. 73, 95 S. W. 189 (a license to practise before justices of the peace only; privilege applied; no authority cited).

<sup>2</sup> 1859, *Lawrence v. Campbell*, 4 Drew. 485 (the privilege applies to a Scotch solicitor, residing in London, and acting for a Scotch client resident in Scotland).

<sup>3</sup> 1829, *Bean v. Quimby*, 5 N. H. 94, 97 (communication to one not an admitted attorney, but acting as attorney and legal adviser, held privileged, under a statute permitting any citizen to appear as attorney).

without the privilege, however much legal skill he may possess in comparison with some of those who are within it.<sup>4</sup>

A consultation with a *judge*, in his capacity as such, falls unquestionably outside the present privilege. But such communications may be protected by a specific independent privilege (*post*, § 2376).

§ 2301. **Attorney's Clerks and other Agents.** It has never been questioned that the privilege protects communications to the attorney's clerks and his other agents for rendering his services.<sup>1</sup> The assistance of these agents being indispensable to his work, and the communications of the client being often necessarily committed to them by the attorney or by the client himself, the privilege must include all the persons who act as the attorney's agents.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2302. **Client's Belief in the Attorney's Status.** The theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2291) clearly requires that the client's 'bona fide' belief in the status of his adviser as an admitted attorney should entitle him to the privilege. No doubt an intention to employ only such a person is necessary, as well as a respectable degree of precaution in seeking one; but from that point onwards he is entitled to peace of mind, and need not take the risk of a deception, or of a defective professional title.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2303. **Consultation in Attorney's Capacity.** An attorney may often be brought into a discussion upon the law without any purpose of treating his

<sup>4</sup> 1816, *Andrews v. Solomon*, 1 Pet. C. C. 337, 359 (Washington, J.: "Not one of these reasons [for the privilege] apply to the student"); 1851, *Barnes v. Harris*, 7 Cush. Mass. 576 (student in an office, not being the attorney's agent or clerk, not privileged); 1890, *Schubkagel v. Dierstein*, 131 Pa. 46, 54, 18 Atl. 1059 ("A law student is in this respect on no higher plane than a blacksmith retained in a like service"); 1850, *Holman v. Kimball*, 22 Vt. 555 (a law student having an office of his own, but not yet admitted to the bar; privilege denied).

§ 2301. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1825, *Taylor v. Forster*, 2 C. & P. 195; 1831, *Bowman v. Norton*, 5 C. & P. 177; 1829, *Eicke v. Nokes*, 1 M. & M. 303, *semble*; 1881, *Lyell v. Kennedy*, L. R. 27 Ch. D. 1, 19 ("such agents as every solicitor's clerk may be said to be" are privileged); *U. S.* 1855, *Landsberger v. Gorham*, 5 Cal. 450 (the privilege held applicable to "a person acting in the capacity of an attorney," and apparently an attorney's clerk); 1857, *Sibley v. Waffle*, 16 N. Y. 180, 183, per Bowen, J. Compare the rule as to mere *students of law* (*ante*, § 2300).

The amendments to certain of the statutes (*ante*, § 2292), extending the privilege to the attorney's "*clerk, stenographer, or other person employed*," were therefore unnecessary. The irresponsible presumption of some who undertake to instruct the profession is shown in a certain editorial remark, when pointing out one of these amendments, that it made "a notable change in the law."

<sup>2</sup> For the case of communications to *third persons in the attorney's presence*, see *post*, §§ 2311, 2312. For the distinction between *clerks, agents*, and witnesses or other volunteers, see *post*, § 2317.

§ 2302. <sup>1</sup> Besides the following cases, compare the doctrine as to the client's *belief in the relevancy* of his communication (*post*, § 2310), and as to the admissibility of a *confession procured by trick* (*ante*, § 841):

*Admitted: Eng.* 1807, *Fountain v. Young*, 6 Esp. 113 (here the person was in fact only a clerk in Newgate); 1918, *Feuerheerd v. London G. O. Co.*, 2 K. B. 565 (cited *post*, § 2319); *U. S.* 1890, *Hawes v. State*, 88 Ala. 38, 7 So. 302 (said *obiter*); 1859, *Sample v. Frost*, 10 Ia. 266 (one who was just about to be admitted to the bar); 1851, *Barnes v. Harris*, 7 Cush. Mass. 576 (student in a law office).

*Excluded: Can.* 1908, *R. v. Choney*, 17 Man. 467 (confession to one falsely pretending to be the agent of the accused's attorney and asserting that the latter had sent word to tell about the case, excluded); *U. S.* 1886, *People v. Barker*, 60 Mich. 277, 297, 307, 27 N. W. 539 (confession made to a detective, fraudulently pretending to be an attorney, held privileged); 1893, *State v. Russell*, 83 Wis. 330, 53 N. W. 441 (communication by a woman in prison to the district attorney and his agent, pretending to be her counsel, held privileged); 1856, *Coon v. Swan*, 30 Vt. 6, *semble*.

The following ruling seems peculiar: 1890, *Hawes v. State*, 88 Ala. 38, 7 So. 302 (communications made "to an attorney in ignorance of his professional character," excluded).



expression of opinion as a service rendered professionally. Such a conversation is not privileged, because the reason of the privilege designs to secure only the freedom of resort to attorneys where some appreciable interest of the client is to be protected and the advice is sought and given with a view to its protection. On the other hand, an attorney may render his services *without charge*, if he pleases, and hence the mere circumstance that the advice is given gratuitously does not nullify the privilege.<sup>1</sup> In view of the frequency with which some persons seek to obtain informally and gratuitously valuable legal advice, and the lamentable frequency with which attorneys weakly submit to such an imposition, especially in rural communities, it is often difficult to determine whether the consultation is a professional one, within the privilege. The local habits of life, and the circumstances of the case, must largely determine the ruling.<sup>2</sup>

The case of a consultation of the *opponent's attorney* seems rather to fall under another head (*post*, § 2312), as also the case of a consultation by one person not on his own behalf but as *the agent of another* (*post*, § 2317). Con-

§ 2303. <sup>1</sup> 1878, *Andrews v. Simms*, 33 Ark. 771, 733; 1850, *Reed v. Smith*, 2 Ind. 160; 1903, *Sheehan v. Allen*, 67 Kan. 712, 74 Pac. 245; 1904, *Mack v. Sharp*, 138 Mich. 448, 101 N. W. 631; 1897, *Davis v. Morgan*, 19 Mont. 141, 47 Pac. 793.

The *value* of such communications is quite another matter: *King Lear*, I, 4; "*Fool*: Then 't is like the breath of an unfec'd lawyer, —you gave me nothing for it."

<sup>2</sup> Various instances are as follows:

*England*: 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 758 (letters handed to an attorney, but not in his character as a professional adviser, held not privileged); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, Lord Langdale, M. R. (correspondence with a solicitor, but only as "agent and confidential friend," not privileged);

*Can.* 1889, *Rudd v. Frank*, 17 Ont. 758, 764 (communications as to a friend, held not privileged);

*United States*: *D. C.* 1893, *Patten v. Glover*, 1 D. C. App. 466, 476 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); *Ga.* 1887, *Brown v. Matthews*, 79 Ga. 1, 4 S. E. 13 (consultation held not privileged, where the attorney was "'raided," not retained"; it must be "the offspring of the relation, present or prospective, not of taking or expecting to take the fruits of such a relation without forming it"); 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 Ga. 490, 31 S. E. 100 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1902, *Harkless v. Smith*, 115 Ga. 350, 41 S. E. 634 (one who prepared a deed without compensation and in his own interest, held not the legal adviser of the parties); 1889, *Skellie v. James*, 81 Ga. 419, 8 S. E. 607 (knowledge not acquired as attorney; statute held not applicable); *Ill.* 1852, *Goltra v. Wolcott*, 14 Ill. 89 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); *Ind.* 1895, *McDonald v. McDonald*, 142 Ind. 55, 41

N. E. 343 (attorney consulted as a friend by a widow about her husband's affairs, held not privileged); *Ia.* 1896, *State v. Swafford*, 98 Ia. 362, 67 N. W. 284 (a friendly consultation between the defendant and the then prosecutrix's attorney, to contrive means for helping her to get occupation, held not privileged); *Kan.* 1904, *Union P. R. Co. v. Day*, 68 Kan. 726, 75 Pac. 1021 (consultation with a poormaster, who was also a lawyer, held not privileged on the facts); *Me.* 1895, *Wade v. Ridley*, 87 Me. 368, 372, 32 Atl. 975 (consultation held professional, on the facts); *Nebr.* 1886, *Romberg v. Hughes*, 18 Nebr. 579, 26 N. W. 351 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1895, *Basye v. State*, 45 Nebr. 261, 63 N. W. 811 (consultation held not professional, on the facts); *Pa.* 1848, *Beeson v. Beeson*, 9 Pa. St. 279, 301 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1903, *Sargent v. Johns*, 206 Pa. 386, 55 Atl. 1051 (similar); *Tenn.* 1858, *M'Mannus v. State*, 2 Head 213 (questions as to "abstract legal opinions," without reference to "some act past, or right or interest in existence," held not privileged); *Vt.* 1856, *Thompson v. Kilboren*, 28 Vt. 750, 757 (friendly consultation, held, upon the facts and the local custom, not to be a professional consultation; Chief Justice Redfield rebukes the local profession for their lax habits in conversing without formal retainer upon legal subjects); 1856, *Coon v. Swan*, 30 Vt. 6 (legal advice given merely "as a neighbor," held not protected); 1873, *Earle v. Grout*, 46 Vt. 113, 125 (similar); *Wis.* 1861, *Dunn v. Amos*, 14 Wis. 106, 109, 114 (legal advice held not a professional consultation on the facts); 1873, *Orton v. McCord*, 33 Wis. 205, 211 (legal advice held professional, on the facts); 1900, *Bruley v. Garvin*, 105 Wis. 625, 81 N. W. 1038 (communication at a casual consultation on a railway train; excluded on the facts).

sultation of a *prosecuting attorney* or a *judge* may involve several questions (examined *post*, §§ 2374–2376).

§ 2304. **Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney.** The privilege exists, not for the sake of the legal profession in general, but for the sake of clients needing legal advice (*ante*, § 2290, *post*, § 2321). It therefore assumes that the relation of client and adviser has been formed (or is forming) for a *particular person as client*; *i. e.* communications are protected, not merely when the person consulted is a professional legal adviser, but only when the person consulting is seeking the benefit of that relation. Hence a communication to an attorney is without the privilege if made *before* the relation was entered into or *after* it was ended.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting question, however, arises when the communication is made *pending negotiations for the retainer*. Here it would seem plain, by the reason of the privilege, that, since the would-be client cannot certainly predict the attorney's acceptance of the employment, the former must be protected in his preliminary statements when making the overtures, even if the overture is refused. It would further be immaterial that the refusal was due to a disagreement as to fees and to the client's own withdrawal by reason of the fee demanded; for upon none of these matters could he predict the result until his preliminary statement had been made. Obviously, too, if the retainer is accepted, the privilege covers the preliminary statement. On the other hand, if the client continues his communication after the attorney's refusal to act for him, or if the client knowingly attempts to retain one who is already retained by the opponent, he does not need or deserve the protection of the privilege.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2304. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1664, *Sparke v. Middleton*, 1 Keb. 505 (cited *ante*, § 2290); 1673, *Cuts v. Pickering*, 1 Ventr. 197; *U. S.* 1868, *Chilliothe F. R. & B. Co. v. Jameson*, 48 Ill. 281, 283; 1870, *People v. Barker*, 56 Ill. 299; 1895, *Jennings v. Sturdevant*, 140 Ind. 641, 40 N. E. 61; 1895, *Harless v. Harless*, 144 Ind. 196, 41 N. E. 592; 1901, *State v. Herbert*, 63 Kan. 516, 66 Pac. 235; 1894, *Brady v. State*, 39 Nebr. 529, 532, 58 N. W. 161 (even though the same as one made during the relation); 1896, *Home Ins. Co. v. Berg*, 46 Nebr. 600, 65 N. W. 780; 1816, *Yordan v. Hess*, 13 Johns. N. Y. 492, 494; 1904, *Eckhout v. Cole*, 135 N. C. 583, 47 S. E. 655; 1895, *Turner's Estate*, 167 Pa. 609, 31 Atl. 867; 1901, *State v. Snowden*, 23 Utah 318, 65 Pac. 479.

<sup>2</sup> The rulings are not entirely harmonious, but the above applications of the principle are fairly borne out: *Colo.* 1894, *Denver T. Co. v. Owens*, 20 Colo. 107, 125, 36 Pac. 848 (preliminary statement of the case with a view to employing, privileged); *Ga.* 1872, *McLean v. Clark*, 47 Ga. 24, 45, 69 (S. made a proposition to the plaintiff's attorney, declaring that, if it was accepted, S. would employ the attorney; held, that the latter was not S.'s attorney so as

to create a privilege in S.'s favor); 1893, *Peck v. Boone*, 90 Ga. 769, 17 S. E. 66 (consultation with a view to the attorney's employment, whether or not the attorney is ultimately retained, held privileged; here the attorney had declined the employment); *Ill.* 1877, *Thorp v. Goewey*, 85 Ill. 611, 615 (consultation for litigation, the attorney finally not being employed because of a disagreement as to his fee, held privileged); *Ia.* 1891, *Theisen v. Dayton*, 82 Ia. 74, 47 N. W. 891 (statements to an attorney to secure his employment to "keep a mortgage alive," the attorney declining the employment, held not privileged); *Me.* 1854, *Sargent v. Hampden*, 38 Me. 581, 584 (conversations with a view to a retainer, even though it be afterwards declined, said to be privileged); *Md.* 1909, *Lanasa v. State*, 109 Md. 602, 71 Atl. 1058 (communications pending a tentative employment never actually authorized, admitted); *Mich.* 1857, *Alderman v. People*, 4 Mich. 414, 422 (privilege applies to communications to "an attorney in fact by a party under an impression that such attorney had consented or agreed to act," "although the attorney himself may not have so understood the agreement"); *Miss.* 1848, *Crisler v. Garland*, 11



## 3. "The communications relevant to that purpose"

§ 2306. Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct, Appearance, Abode, etc. Does the privilege cover only that knowledge of the attorney which is obtained from hearing the client's *utterances*, or also that which comes from seeing the client's *acts*?

This question has given rise to a difference of opinion more apparent than real. It is sometimes discussed as if the word "communications" were synonymous with "utterances of words"; that is, those who favor its largest answer repudiate the limits of the word "communications," as if it included no more than "utterances"; and yet it is of course conceivable that an act or a bodily condition may be voluntarily disclosed and wittingly made known to the attorney by the client without any utterance of words. The problem is also sometimes discussed, from the point of view of the attorney, as involving the inquiry whether the privileged knowledge of the attorney is restricted to that which he obtains by the sense of hearing only, or includes also that which he learns by seeing; and this mode of statement corresponds more closely to the distinction between utterances and acts of the client. In the following passages the various judicial attitudes are represented:

*Ante*, 1767, BULLER, J., *Trials at Nisi Prius*, 284: "[The privilege does not cover] a fact of his own knowledge, and of which he might have had knowledge without being counsel or attorney in the cause; as, suppose him witness to a deed produced in the cause, he shall be examined to the true time of execution; <sup>1</sup> so, if the question were about a rasure in a deed or a will, he might be examined to the question whether he had ever seen such deed or will in other plight, for that is a fact of his own knowledge; but he ought not to be permitted to discover any confessions his client may have made to him on such head."

1803, ELLENBOROUGH, L. C. J., in *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esq. 52, 55: "The act [of destroying a power of attorney] cannot be stripped of the confidence and communication as an attorney, the witness being then acting in that character. One sense is as privileged as another. He cannot be said to be privileged as to what he hears, but not to what he sees, where the knowledge acquired as to both has been derived from his situation as an attorney."

1833, L. C. BROUGHAM, in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104: "[The privilege does not exist] where there could not be said, in any correctness of speech, to be a com-

Sm. & M. 136 (communications while seeking to retain the attorney, who declined employment, held privileged); *Mo.* 1872, *Cross v. Riggins*, 50 *Mo.* 335 (communication to an attorney, seeking advice, the attorney declining to give an opinion, held privileged); *Nebr.* 1897, *Farley v. Peebles*, 50 *Nebr.* 723, 70 *N. W.* 231 (excluded, where the attorney had already refused to accept the employment); *Okl.* 1911, *Evans v. State*, 5 *Okl. Cr.* 643, 115 *Pac.* 809 (preliminary consultations, followed by withdrawal on account of the proposed fee being too high; held privileged on the facts); *Pa.* 1849, *Heaton v. Findlay*, 12 *Pa. St.* 304, 310 (communications "preliminary to his engagement as counsel," made in satisfying the counsel of the propriety of his retainer, held not privileged); *Vt.* 1875, *Strong v. Dodds*, 47 *Vt.*

348, 353 (communication seeking to retain an attorney, who then declines to bring suit, held privileged); *Wis.* 1886, *Tucker v. Finch*, 66 *Wis.* 17, 21, 27 *N. W.* 817 (communications seeking to retain an attorney, who declined because of a prior retainer on the other side, held not privileged); 1887, *Plano Mfg. Co. v. Frawley*, 68 *Wis.* 577, 584, 32 *N. W.* 768 (communications after an attorney has given notice that he is retained on the other side, held not privileged).

§ 2306. <sup>1</sup> This statement is clearly correct on the ground that the request to attest makes the act non-confidential (*post*, § 2315); but its association with the ensuing statements has sometimes given rise to misunderstanding. Buller's notions of the modern principle were naturally (*ante*, § 2290) not quite clear.

munication at all, — as where, for instance, a fact, something that was done, became known to him from his having been brought to a certain place by the circumstance of his being attorney, but of which fact any other man if there would have been equally cognisant."

1857, *Brown v. Foster*, 1 H. & N. 736. POLLOCK, C. B.: "A legal adviser may give evidence of a fact which is patent to his senses." MARTIN, B.: "With respect to matters which the counsel sees with his eyes, he cannot refuse to answer."

1841, BRONSON, J., in *Coreney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill, N. Y. 33, 35: "This privilege of a client does not extend to every fact which the attorney may learn in the course of his employment. There is a difference in principle between communications made by the client and acts done by him in the presence of the attorney; . . . I will not undertake to say how far the distinction between the communications and the acts of the client may extend"; apparently holding that the execution of a document is an act.

1861, WOODWARD, J., in *Daniel v. Daniel*, 39 Pa. 191, 210 (permitting the question, to an attorney, why he could not have had with the testator, his client, any conversation worth repeating): "Communications made to a counsel are privileged; but if a client is too imbecile to make any communications, I never before heard that that fact was incompetent testimony on account of the professional relation, — no more than the shape of the client's head, which is the subject of the next bill. If a lawyer learns from professional visits that he has a fool for a client, whether he acquires the knowledge by the want of intelligent answers, or by study of phrenological developments, the fact is competent evidence in a proper case, and no rule of law forbids the lawyer from delivering it."

The marked contrast is between the statement of Lord Ellenborough, in *Robson v. Kemp*, and that of Baron Martin, in *Brown v. Foster*. Can they be reconciled? And is either of them consistent with Mr. Justice Bronson's distinction between a communication and an act? The truth is that each is right, under some circumstances, and all are harmonious, when the proper allowance is made. Looking back at the reason of the privilege, it is seen to secure the client's freedom of mind in committing his affairs to the attorney's knowledge. It is designed to influence him when he may be hesitating between the positive action of disclosure and the inaction of secrecy. There is, therefore, by hypothesis, always some voluntary act of disclosure, — some removal of that secrecy which would otherwise have existed as between the client and the attorney.

On the one hand, then, those data which would have come to the attorney's notice in any event, by mere observation, without any action on the client's part — such as the color of his hat or the pattern of his shoe — and those data which become known by such acts as the client would ordinarily have done in any event, without any purpose of communicating them to the attorney as his adviser — such as the style of his handwriting or the amount of money in the roll of bills from which he pays his retainer —, these are not any part of the communications of the client; in the language of Lord Chancellor Brougham and Mr. Justice Buller, they are "facts of which any other man if there would have been equally cognisant." On the other hand, almost any act, done by the client in the sight of the attorney and during the consultation, may conceivably be done by the client as the subject of a communication, and the only question will be whether, in the circumstances of



the case, it was intended to be done as such. The client, supposedly, may make a specimen of his handwriting for the attorney's information, or may exhibit an identifying scar, or may show a secret token. If any of these acts are done as part of a communication to the attorney, and if further the communication is intended to be confidential (*post*, § 2311), the privilege comes into play.<sup>2</sup>

Ordinarily, then, it is true, as Chief Baron Pollock said, that "a legal adviser may give evidence of a fact which is patent to his senses"; that is, of anything which he either sees or even hears, so far as it is otherwise patent, — in other words, is not the subject of an express disclosure. Yet, in a given case, any of these things *may* be committed to the attorney in such a way as to be within the privilege. It is to be noted, however, that many such acts, which thus become the subject of a communication, may still not be confidentially committed to the attorney, and thus be not privileged (*post*, §§ 2311-2314); and some of the rulings now to be noticed in the ensuing sections can perhaps be attributed to that consideration. Obviously no fixed form of rule can be stated for the present application of the principle. In the ordinary case, it is only the expressed communications of the client that will be privileged.

§ 2307. **Same: Production of the Client's Documents.** The application of the foregoing principle to the tenor of documents delivered or shown to the attorney is not without difficulty. But, before examining it, a superficially related question, dependent upon other principles, must be disposed of. Is the attorney compellable to *produce in court*, by subpoena or bill of discovery, the documents placed in his possession by the client? This is not a question of compelling the disclosure of the attorney's knowledge; he may know nothing of the contents of the document, nor is he asked to testify about

<sup>2</sup> Sundry examples are as follows:

*Eng.* 1790, *Hooper v. Harcourt*, 1 H. Bl. 534 (after judgment, an attorney was held not compellable to disclose his client's abode for the purpose of his being taken on execution; the application "came too late after verdict"); 1817, *Parkins v. Hawkshaw*, 2 Stark. 239 (to prove the identity of defendant with the obligor of a bond, the defendant's attorney was not allowed to testify to "communications which he had had with the defendant").

*U. S.* 1903, *Sheehan v. Allen*, 67 Kan. 712, 74 Pac. 245 (attorney not allowed to testify as to insanity learned solely in professional consultation); 1898, *Wicks v. Dean*, 103 Ky. 69, 44 S. W. 397 (attorney may speak of the client's mental condition as learned at the time of a consultation); 1868, *White v. Bird*, 20 La. An. 188 (attorney held compellable as garnishee to disclose whether he has assets belonging to the client, unless he cannot do so without disclosing matters confided to him by the client); 1861, *Daniel v. Daniel*, 39 Pa. 191, 211 (attorney's opinion of his client's sanity, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); 1894,

*Turner v. Warren*, 160 Pa. 336, 343, 28 Atl. 781 (fact of delivery of papers, date, person, and condition, held not privileged); 1910, *Surface v. Bentz*, 228 Pa. 610, 77 Atl. 922 (the above passage cited); 1896, *State v. Fitzgerald*, 68 Vt. 125, 34 Atl. 429 (whether the client was intoxicated when seen in the jail with B., admissible, since the attorney saw "nothing that was not observable by B. and by all other persons who saw him during the time of his alleged intoxication"); 1882, *State v. Douglass*, 20 W. Va. 770, 779 (testimony that a pistol produced had been received from the defendant's counsel, held admissible; but the counsel's statement, at the time of delivering it, that he had obtained it in consequence of a communication from the defendant, and the counsel's testimony that he had so obtained it, held not admissible; careful opinion by Green, J.).

For rulings as to disclosing the *identity* of the client, see *post*, § 2313.

For rulings as to the disclosure by an attorney drafting a will as to the *testator's sanity* or *undue influence*, see *post*, §§ 2314-2315.



them. Whether the package contains a diamond or a deed is immaterial. But must he produce it?

(1) The answer depends upon the other privileges of the client *irrespective of the present privilege*. The attorney is but the agent of the client to hold the deed; if the client is compellable to give up possession, then the attorney is; if the client is not, then the attorney is not. It is merely a question of possession, and the attorney is in this respect like any other agent. There is, to be sure, the added consideration of policy, namely, that if the attorney were not compellable when the client was, then the client's obligation to produce could always be evaded in very simple fashion by placing the deed with the attorney; and such a quibble could not be tolerated by any practical system of law. But, apart from this, the doctrine of agency is ample to justify the result.

The extent of the *client's obligation to produce* must therefore be taken as determining the present question; and that obligation has undergone radical change in the history of our law. In the first place, at common law, the client who was a *party opponent* in the suit was not obliged to produce, either at or before the trial, except so far as the rule of *proferat et ovet* extended; but in equity he was obliged to produce any document (except that before trial he could not be obliged to discover the documents affecting his own case alone); and under modern statutes the equitable rule has been made available by motion or subpoena to produce in common-law proceedings (*ante*, §§ 1857-1859, 2219). In the next place, the client who was a *third person* was at common law bound to produce upon subpoena, except when the document was a deed supporting some title of his own (*ante*, §§ 2193, 2211). In the third place, the client was and is in any instance not bound to produce a self-incriminating document (*ante*, § 2264).

It follows, then, that *when the client himself would be privileged* from production of the document, either as a party at common law, or as a third person claiming title, or as exempt from self-crimination, the attorney having possession of the document is not bound to produce; and such has invariably been the ruling.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if the *client would be compellable*

§ 2307. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1765, *R. v. Dixon*, 3 Burr. 1687 (attorney not required to produce vouchers of his client before the grand jury on a charge of forgery); 1797, *Bothomly v. Usborne*, Peake Add. Cas. 99, 101 (attorney not compellable to produce the client's documents nor to prove their contents, when the client is privileged as a party to the cause); 1821, *Laing v. Barclay*, 3 Stark. 38, 42 (attorney of defendant not required to produce bankruptcy proceedings confidentially deposited with him); 1822, *Harris v. Hill*, 3 Stark. 140 (attorney in possession of a privileged third person's document, not compellable to produce); 1831, *Nixon v. Mayoh*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 76 (attorney not compelled to produce the party-opponent's document); 1834, *Mills v.*

*Oddy*, 6 C. & P. 728, 731 ("the attorney is not to produce his client's title-deeds nor to disclose their contents"; here the client was not a party); 1834, *Bate v. Kinsey*, 1 Cr. M. & R. 38 (attorney in possession of documents of the plaintiff, held not compellable to produce them or to disclose their contents); 1834, *Doe v. Seaton*, 2 A. & E. 171, 181 (attorney holding a deed for both vendor and vendee; deed held privileged as to the vendee, although the vendor consented to production); 1840, *Doe v. Ross*, 7 M. & W. 102, 122, *semble* (attorney possessing the title-deed of a third person is not compellable to produce; otherwise, if his client is called and waives the privilege); 1849, *R. v. Hankins*, 2 C. & K. 823, 3 Cox Cr. 434 (perjury in swearing to the signature of an



to produce, either by motion or by subpoena or by bill of discovery, then the attorney is equally compellable, if the document is in his custody, to produce under the appropriate procedure.<sup>2</sup>

account; the account being in the possession of the attorney, who had a lien thereon, (Coltman, J., declined to compel production); 1850, *Newton v. Chaplin*, 10 C. B. 356 (production of a corporate minute-book, placed in the attorney's hands for legal advice by W. C., not a party to the cause, held not compellable, W. C. refusing under his privilege to allow production; Maule, J.: "The privilege of W. C. as to the book was the same in the hands of F., [the attorney,] as if he had kept the book in his own hands").

*United States: Conn.* 1807, *Lynde v. Judd*, 3 Day 499 (attorney not compellable to produce the client's document); *N. H.* 1908, *Ex parte Snow*, *Gibson v. Snow*, 75 N. H. 7, 70 Atl. 120 (counsel held not bound to produce a copy in his possession on behalf of his client and privileged as to the client); *N. Y.* 1817, *Jackson v. Burtis*, 14 Johns, 391, 399 (documents left with the attorney by the client's agent, held not demandable on subpoena); 1830, *Jackson v. Denison*, 4 Wend. 558 (counsel held not bound to produce a client's deed); 1831, *McPherson v. Rathbone*, 7 Wend. 216 (paper delivered by the client to the attorney, held not demandable from the attorney by subpoena); 1841, *Bronson, J.*, in *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35 (quoted *ante*, § 2306); 1801, *State v. Squires*, Tyler 147 (attorney held not amenable to compulsory process for the delivery of notes, alleged to be forged by his client, which were deposited with him as attorney: "in contemplation of law they are in the possession of the client"); *Vt.* 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt. 612, 615, *semble* (see citation *infra*); *Wis.* 1889, *Selden v. State*, 74 Wis. 271, 275, 42 N. W. 218 (letters of husband to wife, deposited by her with her attorney for divorce, not producible).

For the question *who is to determine* whether the document is privileged as claimed, see *post* § 2322.

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1803, *Pearson v. Fletcher*, 5 Esp. 90 (L. C. J. Ellenborough, on facts similar to those in *Bateson v. Hartsink*, *infra*, compelled the solicitor to produce the proceedings); 1815, *Copeland v. Watts*, 1 Stark. 95 (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *infra*); 1816, *Corsen v. Dubois*, Holt 239 (attorney compelled to produce a bankruptcy commission which was not privileged for his clients the assignees); 1817, *Cohen v. Templar*, 2 Stark. 260 (attorney compellable to produce the document of a third person having no privilege); 1822, *Lowe v. Firkins*, 11 Price 455, 461, 464 (steward of plaintiff, held bound to answer as to documents of his master in his possession; and also bound to produce them on a bill of discovery, though not on a subpoena d. t. inasmuch as his custody

was the plaintiff's); 1824, *Nawkins v. Howard*, Ry. & Mo. 64 (books of assignees, not parties, held producible by their attorney); 1829, *Doe v. Thomas*, 9 B. & C. 288, 293 (lease placed with the attorney by the party; the attorney held bound to produce on subpoena); 1848, *Doe v. Langdon*, 12 Q. B. 711, 719 (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *supra*); 1853, *Volant v. Soyer*, 13 C. B. 231 (attorney held not bound to produce a title-deed of his client; Jervis, C. J., doubted whether the rule of professional confidence covered documents of the client in general, since the statutory sanction for motions to compel a party's production of documents; Maule, J., placed the ruling on the ground of professional confidence; this ruling was made just after the statutory reform, and illustrates both aspects of the rule);

*Canada*: 1863, *Livingstone v. Gartshore*, 23 U. C. Q. B. 166, *semble* (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *supra*).

*United States: Fed.* 1827, *Rhoades v. Selim*, 4 Wash. C. C. 715, 718 (attorney compellable, to produce papers which the client himself was compellable to produce); 1890, *Edison El. L. Co. v. U. S. El. L. Co.*, 44 Fed. 294, 297, 45 id. 55, C. C. ("If documents are not privileged while in the hands of a party, he does not make them privileged by merely handing them to his counsel"); *Conn.* 1900, *Allen v. Ins. Co.*, 72 Conn. 693, 45 Atl. 955 (production required, where the answer of the client admitted its possession); *Ind.* 1860, *Andrews v. R. Co.*, 14 Ind. 169, 174 ("the party himself might have been compelled under the statute to produce the receipts on the trial; he could not defeat that production by passing it into the hands of his attorney," and the attorney was held compellable to testify to contents); *La.* 1842, *Travis v. January*, 3 Rob. La. 227, 230 ("the attorney may be as properly called on to produce the papers and documents necessary to establish the rights of the adversary . . . as his client himself could be under our laws"); *N. Y.* 1861, *Mitchell's Case*, 12 Abb. Pr. 249, 262 (attorney must produce the party's documents where the party has no privilege; good opinion by Daly, J.); 1902, *Jones v. Reilly*, 174 N. Y. 97, 66 N. E. 649 ("The privilege was that of the client, not of the counsel; and when, by change in the law, the client could be compelled by subpoena to produce documents in his possession, the rule that the attorney could not be forced to produce them when in his possession necessarily fell"); *Okl.* 1913, *Pearson v. Yoder*, 39 Okl. 105, 134 Pac. 421 (attorney having a mortgage in court, required to deliver it to be put in evidence).

*Contra*, but unsound: *Eng.* 1801, *Bateson v. Hartsink*, 4 Esp. 4 (L. C. J. Kenyon; the so-



(2) So much as precedes is the rule for documents *independently pre-existing*. But where the document is itself the client's written communication, *coming into existence merely as a communication to the attorney*, the situation is obviously different. This communication itself is not to be disclosed, whether it was made by the client by word of mouth or by writing. Where the document already had an independent existence, the communication consists in bringing its contents to the attorney's knowledge, and that knowledge is not to be disclosed by his testimony, as will be seen (*post*, § 2308); but the physical possession of the document is distinct from that knowledge, and to compel production of the document is not to compel the disclosure of the communication (*supra*, par. 1). But since a document which is itself a communication is within the privilege, the test is whether the document first came into existence as a part of a communication to the attorney. For example, a client obtains his foreman's report as to an injury in the factory, together with the card of instructions furnished to the injured employee when he first came into the service, and sends these to the attorney, with a letter of his own stating the circumstances of the injury as ascertained by him. Of these, the second is clearly without the privilege, the third is clearly within it, while the first may or may not be.

The application of this distinction is sometimes difficult enough in a particular case. But the situation is often further complicated by two other considerations. In the first place, a communication to the attorney by an *agent of the client* or by an *agent of the attorney* is protected by the present privilege, while a communication by a mere stranger is not (*post*, § 2317). Thus the application of the above doctrine, as to documents coming into existence for the purpose of communication to the attorney, becomes particularly difficult when the actual maker of the document is some person other than the client himself, and can only be solved by a reference to the rule as to agents. For this reason the precedents may better be considered in connection with the latter subject (*post*, § 2319). In the second place, the party is not obliged to disclose, by *discovery* before trial, the testimony of his *prospective witnesses* (*ante*, §§ 1856, 1857, 1859); and hence, on grounds wholly independent of the present privilege, it may become necessary to distinguish between the written information given beforehand by a witness as such and that furnished by the party's employee as his agent. These various principles so intermingle in their application that an examination of the precedents can better be made elsewhere (*post*, § 2318).

licitor of third persons, the assignees in bankruptcy of the present defendant, was held not compellable to produce the proceedings of the assignees; here they were otherwise obtainable by motion against the assignees; this ruling was virtually repudiated in the later English ones; *U. S.* 1877, *Dover v. Harrell*, 58 Ga. 572 (rejection; deed placed in the attorney's possession by the defendant for preparing his defence; the

attorney held not compellable to produce; this is expressly sanctioned by the local Code, quoted *ante*, § 2292); 1889, *Stokoe v. R. Co.*, 40 Minn. 545, 42 N. W. 482 (attorney is not compellable to produce his client's documents); 1897, *Davis v. R. Co.*, 70 Minn. 37, 72 N. W. 823 (documents "intrusted" to the attorney by the client, held privileged).



§ 2308. **Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents.** The client's disclosure of the contents of a preëxisting document will almost always be an act of communication (*ante*, § 2306), *i. e.* a part of the matters voluntarily committed to the notice of the attorney. It is impossible, in the language of Mr. Justice Bronson,<sup>1</sup> to perceive "any solid distinction between the oral statement of a fact to counsel and a communication of the same fact by delivering to him a deed or other written instrument." Unless, therefore, a particular communication of this sort is not confidential (*post*, § 2311), it is within the privilege, and the testimony of the attorney on the stand cannot be required.<sup>2</sup> Nor does it here make any difference that the client would have been compellable to produce the deed, in chancery or otherwise; for he is also compellable to tell what he knows on other subjects, and yet his communications about them, made to the attorney, are privileged. The communication of the document is distinct from the document itself.

It is, however, worth noting that if the communication were made as a part of an expedient to avoid production (as, if the client should show the document to the attorney and then destroy it), the privilege ought not to be conceded.

§ 2308. <sup>1</sup> *Coveney v. Tannahill*, N.Y., *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Sundry examples are as follows:

*England*: 1676, *Bulstrode v. Letchmere*, Freem. Ch. 5 ("the defendant being a counsellor at law shall not be bound to answer concerning any writings which he hath seen nor, for anything which he knoweth in the cause as counsellor"); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (attorney who had "drawn an indenture of agreement," not compellable "to discover the matter of it"); 1797, *Bothomly v. Usborne*, Peake Add. Cas. 99, 101 (cited *ante*, § 2307); 1826, *R. v. Upper Boddington*, 8 Dowl. & R. 726 (the attorney held mortgage deeds of H., not a party, who claimed his privilege; the attorney was therefore forbidden to testify to their contents, "because the whole of those contents were a confidential communication between a client and his attorney"); 1834, *Bate v. Kinsey*, 1 Cr. M. & R. 38 (cited *ante*, § 2307); 1834, *Marston v. Downes*, 6 C. & P. 381, 1 A. & E. 31 (attorney of a third person cannot prove the contents of the client's title deeds); 1836, *Wheatley v. Williams*, 1 M. & W. 533 (attorney not allowed to testify whether a paper shown in consultation bore a stamp; "all that appears on the face of such document is a part of the confidential communication"; the passage in *Buller's Nisi Prius*, *ante*, § 2306, interpreted); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 Bing. N. C. 421 (like *Marston v. Downes*, *supra*); 1842, *Herring v. Clobery*, 1 Phil. Ch. 91, L. C. Lyndhurst (testimony as to the client's suggestions of alterations and her execution of the deed with knowledge of its contents, held privileged); 1848, *Hibberd v. Knight*, 2 Exch. 11 (*Marston v. Downes*, *supra*, approved); 1842, *Davies v. Waters*, 9 M. & W. 608, 612 (attorney

held privileged from testifying to a deed read by him at a consultation with counsel; to do otherwise "would be in fact seeking to have in evidence what occurs at a consultation between the parties").

*Canada*: 1857, *Lynch v. O'Hara*, 6 U. C. C. P. 259, 265 (he must disclose possession and identity, but not contents).

*United States*: 1834, *Crawford v. McKissack*, 1 Port. Ala. 433 (indorsement on the bond in action had been obliterated; the plaintiff's attorney held not compellable to state its tenor); 1867, *Donald v. Mitchell*, 43 Ill. 40, 45 (whether a promissory note, when handed to the attorney for bringing suit, was indorsed, held privileged); 1811, *Anon.*, 8 Mass. 370 (the Court refused to compel the attorney to disclose a document handed to him by the client for use in litigation; "it is in the keeping of his client as much as if it were in his own pocket"); 1869, *Gray v. Fox*, 43 Mo. 570 (testimony of the attorney as to the condition of notes when placed in his hands for litigation, held privileged); 1833, *Brown v. Payson*, 6 N. H. 443, 448 ("the situation and contents of a paper, delivered to an attorney for inspection in the course of employment as attorney," held privileged); 1891, *Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 N. J. Eq. 455, 464, 21 Atl. 1054 (whether a certificate, obtained from the client, was indorsed when the attorney saw it, held privileged); 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35 (quoted *ante*, § 2306); 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt. 612, 615 (a statute made parties compellable to produce, but no notice had been given; held, that the attorney of the party was not compellable to produce, nor, *semble*, to testify about it); 1892, *Arbuckle v.*

§ 2309. **Same: Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Documents.** The existence, the execution, or the place of custody of a document, may be a part of a communication to the attorney, in the sense already noted (*ante*, § 2306), and may also be a confidential one (*post*, § 2312). But ordinarily it will be neither. The signing, for example, of a release or a note in the attorney's presence is not usually intended as an act of disclosure to him, or, if it is, as a confidential one. For lack of both of these elements, then, the Courts have usually declared the attorney's testimony to these acts not to be within the privilege.<sup>1</sup> Upon which ground these rulings have been intended

Templeton, 65 Vt. 205, 208, 25 Atl. 1095 (action on a note; the defendant had shown the note to the attorney for advice about it; whether the note then bore an indorsement, privileged).

*Contra*: 1767, Buller, Trials at Nisi Prius 284, *semble* (quoted *supra*, § 2306); 1857, Brown v. Foster, 1 H. & N. 736 (an account book was produced in court, and counsel and magistrate examined it; the counsel held not privileged for testimony to an item therein; quoted *supra*, § 2306); 1834, John v. John, Wright Oh. 584, 586 (action on note; the note was in defendant's possession, but no notice to produce had been given; by statute a party could notify the opponent to produce documents and the Court could compel production or give judgment by default; the attorney had the notes in court, but refused to produce, whereon the Court obliged him to testify to their contents; here the ruling was wrong, in that it treated his disclosure as not a violation of the privilege; but the result was right, because notice in court was sufficient, where the documents were already there [*ante*, § 1204], and hence production was compellable).

§ 2309. <sup>1</sup> Additional cases, concerning the execution of wills, are for convenience' sake collected *post*, § 2314.

*England*: 1712, Lord Say & Seal's Case, 10 Mod. 40 (attorney compelled to testify to a deed's ante-dating; "the time of executing a deed could not be called the secret of his client; it was a thing he might come to the knowledge of without his client's acquainting him"); 1776, Duchess of Kingston's Trial, 20 How. St. Tr. 613 (Lord Mansfield: "Even if he swears to an answer in Chancery, he cannot protect himself from swearing whether that is his client's hand or not, or to his having sworn it, or the execution of a deed; it does not come within the objection to an attorney revealing the secrets of his client"); 1793, Sanford v. Remington, 2 Ves. Jr. 189 (L. C. Loughborough compelled an attorney "to disclose all that did pass in his presence at the execution of the deed, as a witness; so, ~~his~~ having been sent by his client with orders to put the judgment into execution; that is an act; but he is not to disclose the private conversation as to the deed with regard to what was communicated as to

the reasons for making it, etc."); 1803, Robson v. Kemp, 5 Esp. 52, 55 (circumstances of destruction of a deed, privileged, if known to the witness as attorney; quoted *ante*, § 2306); 1804, Brard v. Ackerman, *ib.* 119 (existence and description of a certain bill in the attorney's possession by professional confidence, held privileged); 1824, Hurd v. Moring, 1 C. & P. 372 (attorney compelled to testify to the handwriting of a bill, though his knowledge rested solely on seeing the defendant sign the bail-bond, while engaged in the cause); 1828, Bevan v. Waters, M. & M. 235 (like Dwyer v. Collins, *infra*); 1834, Bate v. Kinsey, 1 Cr. M. & R. 38 (attorney need not disclose whether he has a document in his possession); 1852, Dwyer v. Collins, 7 Exch. 639 (action on a bill of exchange; the defendant wished the bill in proving his plea, and in order to lay a foundation for a copy, asked the plaintiff's counsel if he had the bill with him; the objection of "breach of professional confidence," as an excuse for not answering, was overruled).

*Canada*: 1848, James v. Mills, 4 U. C. Q. B. 366 (whether the attorney has the document in court; not decided); 1857, Lynch v. O'Hara, 6 U. C. C. P. 259, 265 (cited *ante*, § 2308).

*United States*: *Ala.* 1888, Chapman v. Peebles, 84 Ala. 283, 4 So. 273 (that the attorney wrote a note in the client's presence, that the latter signed it, and that money was then paid, held not privileged, being "acts, not communications in professional confidence"); *Colo.* 1878, Cole v. Cheovenda, 4 Colo. 17, 21 (like Dwyer v. Collins, *supra*); *Ga.* 1877, Raefle v. Moore, 58 Ga. 94, 100, 164 (the date of signing certain notes, made on the attorney's advice, held privileged); *La.* 1842, Travis v. January, 3 Rob. La. 227, 230 (attorney may be compelled to state whether he has documents of the client and what he has done with them); *Mass.* 1876, Brown v. Jewett, 120 Mass. 215 (counsel compelled to testify to the signature of client on a note, so long as he did not disclose confidential communications nor base his testimony thereon); *Minn.* 1889, Stokoe v. R. Co., 40 Minn. 545, 42 N. W. 482 (attorney must state whether he possesses the client's document, when the foundation for using a copy is to be laid); *Mo.* 1903, Ex parte Gfeller, 178 Mo. 248, 77 S. W. 552 (where he last saw cer-



to stand is not always clear; and the circumstances of each case must be considered. But the principle is not doubtful.

It should be noted, however, that where the attorney is an *attesting witness* to the document, the transaction is not a confidential one, and therefore, in another aspect of the principle (*post*, § 2315), he may be called to testify.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2310. **Relevancy or Necessity of the Communication.** The Courts have not always used consistent language in answering the question whether the privilege is limited in some way to communications necessary or material or relevant to some purpose of the consultation.<sup>1</sup> In the following passages, the two typical attitudes are represented:

tain bonds of the client, allowed); *N. Y.* 1820, *Brandt v. Klein*, 17 Johns. 335, 339 (in showing notice to produce a will, it became necessary to prove that the will was at the place of trial; the opponent's attorney was held compellable to testify whether it was in his possession; this not being a fact "communicated as a secret" nor involving "any confidential communication between them"); 1820, *Jackson v. M'Vey*, 18 Johns. 330 (same); 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35 ("The attorney may be called to prove the existence of a paper and that it is in his possession, for the purpose of enabling the other party to give parol evidence of its contents"); *Okl.* 1913, *Pearson v. Yoder*, 39 Okl. 105, 134 Pac. 421 (attorney compellable to say whether a mortgage in his custody is the one in suit); *Tenn.* 1878, *Rundle v. Foster*, 3 Tenn. Ch. 658 (disclosure of the date of a bill of sale drawn for the client by the attorney, held compellable, as being not a communication but an act); *Vt.* 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt. 612, 615 (attorney must disclose whether the document exists and where he last saw it); *Wis.* 1897, *Stanhilbert v. Graves*, 97 Wis. 515, 73 N. W. 48, *semble* (date of execution of a mortgage in his presence, held not privileged).

Compare the cases *ante*, § 2297, where the consultation of an attorney as a *conveyancer* is sometimes held not to be within the privilege; under such rulings, not even the express communications of the party are privileged; but under the rulings in the present section it is assumed that the privilege applies to express communications, and the only question is as to the act of execution or the like.

<sup>2</sup> The cases of wills are placed *post*, § 2315; the following are cases of deeds: 1793, *Sandford v. Remington*, 2 Ves. Jr. 189, quoted *supra*; 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52, quoted *post*, § 2315; 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 868.

In *Robson v. Kemp*, *supra*, as again reported in 4 Esp. 233, 236, Lord Ellenborough is made to say that an attorney "from his situation is bound to prove the execution of a deed"; but this is inconsistent with other statements of his in the report in 5 Esp. 52, as quoted *ante*, § 2306. The two reports appear to represent the same trial; but in any event the document

was the same, and was attested by the attorney; so that the remark reported in 4 Esp. was plainly made of that "situation," and was in that application correct.

§ 2310. <sup>1</sup> The rulings are as follows: *England*: 1743, *Annesley v. Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229 (quoted *supra*); 1791, *Cobden v. Kenrick*, 4 T. R. 431 (after the attorney had secured a settlement, though before it was paid, the client said to him that "he was glad it was settled, for he had only given £10 in cash, etc."; this was held not privileged; the difference is "whether the communications were made by the client to his attorney in confidence as instructions for conducting his cause, or a mere 'gratis dictum'"); 1840, *Gillard v. Bates*, 6 M. & W. 547 ("The test is, whether the communication is necessary for the purpose of carrying on the proceeding in which the attorney is employed").

*United States*: 1892, *Liggett v. Glenn*, 2 C. C. A. 286, 51 Fed. 381, 4 U. S. App. 438, 474 (questions as to a fee-contract with the attorney, excluded; if the relation of legal adviser exists, the communications need not concern precisely the topic of advice); 1877, *State v. Mewherter*, 46 Ia. 88, 93 (consultation with an attorney respecting a suit with H.; threats against H.'s life, made during the consultation, held not privileged, since they "in no manner pertained to the business of the professional consultation"); 1903, *Denunzio's Receiver v. Scholtz*, 117 Ky. 182, 77 S. W. 715 (a communication "not in regard to the subject matter of the employment is not privileged"); 1847, *Aiken v. Kilburne*, 27 Me. 252, 262 (the privilege "does not depend upon the importance or materiality of the communications in the defence of that suit"); 1883, *Snow v. Gould*, 74 Me. 540, 543 ("The privilege does not concern extraneous or impertinent communications"); 1901, *National Bank v. Delano*, 177 Mass. 362, 58 N. E. 1079 (privilege applies to statements made to the attorney as such, even as to facts not expressly made the subject of the request for advice); 1849, *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 524 (incidental or unnecessary parts of a consultation are equally privileged; quoted *supra*); 1922, *McDermott v. Bateman*, — Wash. —, 203 Pac. 66 (attorney's services;



1743, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229; it was proposed to show that the defendant, by supporting a criminal prosecution for murder against the plaintiff, who claimed the defendant's estate and peerage, had tried to put the plaintiff out of the way, and had expressed such plans in an interview with Mr. Giffard, a solicitor; this solicitor had often been employed by the defendant, but for six months had had no affairs of his in hand, and did not expect to be employed again; on May 1 the plaintiff had killed a person, — by accident, as he claimed; on May 2, the defendant, hearing of it, sent for Mr. Giffard and told him to go and conduct the prosecution, not disclosing the defendant's name, and incidentally made certain remarks, now offered in evidence, as to being easy in his title and willing to give £10,000 if the plaintiff could be hanged for the murder. Mr. Prime Sergeant *Malone* (for the defendant): "The mutual confidence between client and attorney requires the preservation of secrecy; and as the client cannot be supposed to be qualified to distinguish what is, or is not necessary to his cause, if he should be mistaken, and entrust his attorney with what the attorney should be of opinion was unnecessary, yet surely his attorney ought not to reveal it. As clients are not versed in law affairs, they must be informed by their attorney, for which purpose they must tell them their whole case, and this necessity creates a confidence between them. . . . There seems to be no difference whether the conversation relates to the principal cause in which the attorney is concerned, or to a collateral action, in which he is not; it is in either case grounded on the confidence that arises from the attorney's being employed, and therefore ought not to be disclosed." BOWES, L. C. B.: "Now, admitting the policy of the law in protecting secrets disclosed by the client to his attorney, to be, as has been said, in favour of the client, and principally for his service, and that the attorney is 'in loco' of the client, and therefore his trustee, does it follow from thence, that everything said by a client to his attorney falls under the same reason? I own, I think not; because there is not the same necessity upon the client to trust him in one case as in the other; and of this the Court may judge, from the particulars of the conversation. Nor do I see any impropriety in supposing the same person to be trusted in one case as an attorney or agent, and in another as a common acquaintance. . . . But where the client talks to him at large as a friend, and not in the way of his profession, I think the Court is not under the same obligations to guard such secrets, though in the breast of an attorney." MOUNTENEY, B.: "If this original principle be kept constantly in view, I think it cannot be difficult to determine either the present question or any other which may arise upon this head; for upon this principle, whatever either is, or by the party concerned can naturally be supposed, necessary to be communicated to the attorney in order to the carrying on any suit or prosecution in which he is retained, — that the attorney shall inviolably keep secret. On the other hand, whatever is not, nor can possibly by any man living be supposed to be, necessary for that purpose, that the attorney is at liberty, and in many cases — as particularly, I think, in the present case — the attorney ought to disclose." DAWSON, B.: "Nothing that came properly to the knowledge of the attorney in defence of his client's cause ought to be revealed. I will suppose an unknowing man to have twenty deeds by him, and he delivers them all to his attorney to see which were relative to the suit; he looks them over, and finds not half of them to be relative thereto. I apprehend the attorney is not compellable to disclose the contents of any one of those deeds; neither do I think it necessary; . . . and I think the Court must in this case be satisfied, first, that what came to this man's knowledge was not necessary to his client's affairs; and in the next place, that the client could not think it necessary. . . . The motive for carrying on the prosecution against the plaintiff is said to be, because he has a right to the estate the defendant was in possession of. Can any

testimony of another attorney to negotiations with the same client, the plaintiff, for fees in the same case, held not privileged).

Whether the privileged and the unprivileged parts of a conversation can be *separated*, for

the purpose of proving the latter alone, must depend upon the circumstances of each case: 1895, *McDonald v. McDonald*, 142 Ind. 55, 41 N. E. 343 (where the last part of a conversation was held separable).



man think that this was necessary to tell the attorney, or that the defendant could have thought it so? What was necessary, or what a man might have thought necessary, ought not to be disclosed. But if the defendant in this case has gone anything further, he has trusted him, not as an attorney, but as an acquaintance."

1849, BELL, J., in *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 524: "It seems, however, to have been thought [by counsel here] that, because the facts disclosed, in reference to the consideration of the assignment of the mortgage, were unessential to the conduct of the suit, and the communications regarded by the counsel in the light of casual conversations, they are not entitled to protection. But this is a mistake. It is true, the rule does not embrace the disclosure of collateral facts, made during accidental conversations, held irrespective of the professional character of the recipient. But the circle of protection is not so narrow as to exclude communications a professional person may deem unimportant to the controversy, or the briefest and lightest talk the client may choose to indulge with his legal adviser, provided he regards him as such, at the moment. To found a distinction on such a ground, would be to measure the safety of the confiding party by the extent of his intelligence and knowledge, and to expose to betrayal those very anxieties which prompt those in difficulty to seek the ear of him in whom they trust, in season and out of season."

It should be clear, on the one hand, that the actual necessity of making a particular statement, or the materiality to the cause of a particular fact, cannot determine the answer; for the client cannot know what is necessary or material, and the object of the privilege (*ante*, §§ 2291, 2302) is that he should be unhampered in his quest for advice. On the other hand, when he knowingly departs from that purpose and interjects other matters not relevant to it, he is in that respect not seeking legal advice and the privilege does not design to protect him (*ante*, § 2296). The test is, therefore, not whether the fact or the statement is actually necessary or material or relevant to the subject of the consultation, but whether the statement is made as *a part of the purpose of the client* to obtain advice on that subject. Some such rule would seem to have been in the minds of all the judges, in spite of the occasional apparent inconsistency of their utterances.

#### 4. "Made in confidence"

§ 2311. **Communications must be Confidential; Confidentiality not presumed; Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle.** The privilege assumes, of course, that the communications are made with the intention of confidentiality. The reason for prohibiting disclosure (*ante*, § 2291) ceases when the client does not appear to have been desirous of secrecy. "The moment confidence ceases," said Lord Eldon, "privilege ceases."<sup>1</sup>

This much is universally conceded.<sup>2</sup> No express request for secrecy, to

§ 2311. <sup>1</sup> 1819, *Parkhurst v. Lowten*, 2 Swanst. 194, 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104 (not privileged "where the matter communicated was not in its nature private, and could in no sense be termed the subject of a confidential disclosure"); *U. S.* 1865, *Hager*

*v. Shindler*, 29 Cal. 47, 63; 1884, *Johnson v. Patterson*, 13 Lea Tenn. 626, 649 (principle enforced, even under a statute not expressly using the word "confidential"). This is apparently accepted even under those statutes (*ante*, § 2292) which, like the California Code, describe the privilege without using the word "confidential."

be sure, is necessary;<sup>3</sup> but the mere relation of attorney and client does not raise a presumption of confidentiality,<sup>4</sup> and the circumstances are to indicate whether by implication the communication was of a sort intended to be confidential. These circumstances will of course vary in individual cases, and the ruling must therefore depend much on the case in hand.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1839, *Wheeler v. Hill*, 16 Me. 329, 333 (it is not necessary that there should have been "any particular circumstances or injunctions of secrecy").

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1878, *Gardner v. Irvin*, L. R. Exch. D. 49, 53 ("It is not sufficient for the affidavits to say that the letters are a correspondence between a client and his solicitor; the letters must be professional communications of a confidential character for the purpose of getting legal advice"); 1891, *O'Shea v. Wood*, Prob. 237, 286 (foregoing passage approved; "letters are not necessarily privileged because they pass between solicitor and client; in order to be privileged, there must be a professional element in the correspondence"); *Can.* 1874, *Hamelyn v. White*, 6 Ont. Pr. 143 (that it is a communication between solicitor and client, held sufficient); 1897, *Hoffman v. Crerar*, 17 Ont. Pr. 404 (preceding case followed, with hesitation); 1901, *Clergue v. McKay*, 3 Ont. L. R. 478 (*Hoffman v. Crerar* repudiated; the communication must also be stated to be "confidential and of a professional character"; modern English cases reviewed); *U. S.* 1920, *Collette v. Sarrasin*, 184 Cal. 283, 193 Pac. 571; 1905, *Mackel v. Bartlett*, 33 Mont. 123, 82 Pac. 795.

Add the following, which seem reasonable: 1870, *People v. Atkinson*, 40 Cal. 284 (the privilege is presumed, if the attorney fails to recollect whether the specific communication was during confidential relations); 1881, *Carroll v. Sprague*, 59 Cal. 655, 666 (same; provided it is shown that the confidential relation actually existed for the transaction in question).

<sup>5</sup> ENGLAND: 1797, *Bothomly v. Usborne*, Peake Add. Cas. 99, 101 ("the preparation of the agreement was not an act of confidence"; and the drafting attorney was allowed to prove the contents); 1829, *Eicke v. Nokes*, 1 M. & M. 303 (receipt of a copy of a bill, held not privileged); 1849, *Doe v. Hertford*, 13 Jur. 632 (map given by the owner to an attorney employed to effect a sale, held not privileged: "he is authorized to show the map to all the world").

CANADA: 1851, *Fraser v. Sutherland*, 2 Grant Ch. 442, 446 (communications to the solicitor, intended to be laid before creditors, held not privileged).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1907, *Aaron v. U. S.*, 8th C. C. A., 155 Fed. 833 (communications here held not privileged); *Alabama*: 1919, *Sovereign Camp W. O. W. v. Pritchett*, 203 Ala. 33, 81 So. 823 (letter from defendant's general attorney to defendant's agent, intended

to be communicated to plaintiff, held not privileged); *California*: 1865, *Hager v. Shindler*, 29 Cal. 47, 62 (the attorney being by arrangement a grantee for the purpose of raising money for the client, the latter's communications for this independent purpose were held not privileged, as being "foreign to the object for which the attorney was retained"); 1896, *Ruiz v. Dow*, 113 Cal. 490, 45 Pac. 867 (instructions regarding the delivery of a deed, admitted); 1920, *Collette v. Sarrasin*, 184 Cal. 283, 193 Pac. 571 (communication directed by client to be made by attorney to grantee in a deed, not privileged); *Connecticut*: 1886, *Todd v. Munson*, 53 Conn. 579, 4 Atl. 99 (an instruction to an attorney to prepare a deed expressing a trust, held not privileged; otherwise, of a parol declaration of trust); *Georgia*: 1874, *Burnside v. Terry*, 51 Ga. 186, 191 (instructions to an attorney, intended for communication to the opponent as the basis of a contract, and by the latter accepted as such, held not privileged); *Illinois*: 1873, *Burnham v. Roberts*, 70 Ill. 21 (bill in chancery, sworn but never excluded, as a communication by the client, held unsound); 1885, *Scott v. Harris*, 113 Ill. 44, 455 (communications directing the attorney to make certain statements to legatees interested, held not privileged); *Iowa*: 1893, *State v. Kidd*, 89 Ia. 54, 56 N. W. 263 (copy of special findings of a jury, and letter of request to return, sent to the attorney, held not confidential); 1894, *Toms v. Beebe*, 90 Ia. 612, 58 N. W. 925 (conversation held not privileged, under the Code wording); 1895, *Caldwell v. Meltveldt*, 93 Ia. 730, 61 N. W. 1090 (collection of a note and execution of deed to reconvey mortgaged property, held not privileged); 1909, *Moyers v. Fogarty*, 140 Ia. 701, 119 N. W. 159 (on the facts); 1913, *Cochburn v. Hawkeye C. M. Ass'n*, 163 Ia. 28, 143 N. W. 1006 (attorney allowed to verify a printed copy of a client's by-laws); *Massachusetts*: 1906, *Temple v. Phelps*, 193 Mass. 297, 79 N. E. 482 (communications made concerning a third person's public testimony, not privileged); *Michigan*: 1882, *Lange v. Perley*, 47 Mich. 353, 357, 11 N. W. 193 (communications with a county attorney, one of a committee of three to obtain a settlement with a defaulting official's sureties, held not privileged on the facts); 1900, *Lorimer v. Lorimer*, 124 Mich. 631, 83 N. W. 609 (consultation as to a provision for a woman now claiming as wife, held privileged); *New York*: 1863, *Mulford v. Mueller*, 3 Abb. App. Dec. 330 (that S. acted under C.'s direction in collecting a judgment,



One of the circumstances, by which it is commonly apparent that the communication is not confidential, is the *presence of a third person*, not being the agent of either client or attorney.<sup>6</sup> Here, even if we might predicate a desire for confidence by the client, the policy of the privilege would still not protect him, because it goes no further than is necessary to secure the client's subjective freedom of consultation (*ante*, § 2291), and the presence of a third person (other than the agent of either) is obviously unnecessary for communications to the attorney as such, — however useful it may be for communications in negotiation with the third person.<sup>7</sup>

It follows, of course, 'a fortiori,' that communications *to the third person* in the presence of the attorney are not within the privilege.<sup>8</sup>

§ 2312. **Communications to Opponent or his Attorney or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney.** There may be a relative, not an absolute, confi-

and that C. directed him to pay to X. and not to M., held not privileged); 1892, *Rosseau v. Bleau*, 131 N. Y. 177, 183, 30 N. E. 52 (delivery of a deed by the client to the attorney, for the purpose of the latter's delivery to another person, held not privileged); *Pennsylvania*: 1849, *Heaton v. Findlay*, 12 Pa. St. 304, 310 (communication of facts to be embodied in a letter sent to the sheriff, held not privileged); *Texas*: 1884, *Henderson v. Terry*, 62 Tex. 281, 285 (communication to a third person made through the attorney, held not privileged); 1907, *Yardley v. State*, 50 Tex. Cr. 644, 100 S. W. 399 (attorney compelled to testify to his client's testimony given in open court at a former trial); *Wisconsin*: 1892, *Aultman v. Ritter*, 81 Wis. 395, 398, 21 N. W. 569 (receipt of a check from the client, with which to pay certain charges, held not privileged).

<sup>6</sup> *California*: 1889, *Sharon v. Sharon*, 79 Cal. 633, 677, 22 Pac. 26, 131 (communication "on a public street and in the presence of and mostly with a third party," held not privileged); *Connecticut*: 1859, *Goddard v. Gardner*, 28 Conn. 172 (consultation in the presence of the attorney's son, who was in no way assisting in the cause; the son held compellable); 1880, *Pulford's Appeal*, 48 Conn. 247, 249 (principle approved); *Kentucky*: 1906, *Denunzio's Receiver v. Scholtz*, 117 Ky. 182, 77 S. W. 715 (presence of a third person; privilege denied); *Michigan*: 1877, *Hartford F. Ins. Co. v. Reynolds*, 36 Mich. 502, 504 (presence of a third person, held to destroy the privilege); 1886, *House v. House*, 61 Mich. 69, 27 N. W. 858, *semble* (similar); *Missouri*: 1921, *Mason v. Mason*, — Mo. —, 231 S. W. 971 (conversation in presence of two disinterested third persons, held not confidential); *New York*: 1895, *People v. Buchanan*, 145 N. Y. 1, 39 N. E. 846; 1915, *Baumann v. Steingester*, 213 N. Y. 328, 107 N. E. 578 (instructions for a will; presence of a third person here held to take away confidentiality); *Ohio*: 1876, *Bowers v. State*, 29 Oh. St. 542, 546 (pres-

ence of the mother of the prosecutrix in a rape case, during the consultation, held not to destroy the privilege); *Pennsylvania*: 1897, *Hummel v. Kistner*, 182 Pa. 216, 37 Atl. 815 (by a client to the attorney during the drawing of a deed and in the grantee's presence, held not privileged).

*Contra*: 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (that others were present at the execution of a will does not take away the privilege of the drafting attorney as to the contents and execution then communicated to him; unsound); *Vt. Gen. L.* 1917, § 7240 (prison official present at interview between accused and counsel; cited *ante*, § 2292).

<sup>7</sup> The distinction, sometimes taken, that in such cases the attorney alone is still bound to secrecy is unsound: 1892, *Blount v. Kimpton*, 155 Mass. 378, 29 N. E. 596 (here the plaintiff and defendant were present with the attorney, and the attorney was prevented from testifying to the former's communications; "as between the client and attorney, they are still confidential, though made in the presence or hearing of a third party"); 1899, *Hartness v. Brown*, 21 Wash. 655, 59 Pac. 491 (the presence of a third person does not render the attorney compellable to disclose).

<sup>8</sup> 1863, *Gallagher v. Williamson*, 23 Cal. 331 (communications between the client and other persons present, held not privileged; otherwise, of confidential communications directly to the attorney at the same meeting); 1892, *Hanson v. Bean*, 51 Minn. 546, 53 N. W. 871 (communication to a third person in the attorney's presence, held not privileged); 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 37 ("What was done and said between the plaintiff and Tannahill in the way of business cannot be turned into a confidential communication between attorney and client merely because the plaintiff had an attorney present to hear and see what took place. No secret was confided to him").

For the compellability of a *third person* over-hearing the communication to disclose it, see *post*, § 2326.



dence. The chief instance occurs when the *same attorney acts for two parties* having a common interest, and each party communicates with him. Here the communications are clearly privileged from disclosure at the instance of a third person.<sup>1</sup> Yet they are not privileged in a controversy between the two original parties, inasmuch as the common interest and employment forbade concealment by either from the other. On the other hand, a communication to the *opposing party's* attorney, as such, is clearly without the privilege, since no confidence is reposed, nor, if reposed, could be accepted.<sup>2</sup>

But between these two extremes occur a number of situations, shading into each other. It is necessary to examine these situations separately, with their respective solutions:<sup>3</sup>

§ 2312. <sup>1</sup> This is universally conceded: *Eng.* 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 233, 235 (an attorney who had prepared a deed from father to son, acting for both, was not compelled to disclose for the assignees in bankruptcy of the father, adversary to the son); 1920, *O'Rourke v. Darbishire*, App. Cas. 581 (a solicitor was a trustee and acted as professional adviser to himself and co-trustees; scope of privilege considered); *U. S.* 1908, *Lopez v. Rubert Bros.*, 4 P. R. Fed. 221, 223 (partnership; privilege not applicable, between the parties to a joint counsel); 1919, *Stewart v. Todd*, 190 Ia. 283, 173 N. W. 619 (partnership contract); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 Bing. N. C. 421 (attorney for borrower and lender); 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 N. Y. 72, 76; 1886, *Kaut v. Kessler*, 114 Pa. 603, 610, 7 Atl. 586; 1889, *Harris v. Daugherty*, 74 Tex. 1, 11 S. W. 921 (conversations with a joint attorney, declared privileged as against third persons; but here the attorney was held to be acting for one party only).

<sup>2</sup> *Offers of compromise* may of course be excluded, but not by reason of any privilege; *ante*, § 1061.

For communications to a *prosecuting attorney*, or to a *judge*, see *post*, §§ 2375, 2376.

<sup>3</sup> The rulings, however, cannot well be arranged under the appropriate heads, inasmuch as their reasoning is often loosely or obscurely stated; they are as follows:

ENGLAND; 1778, *Captain Baillie's Trial*, 21 How. St. Tr. 1, 359, 385 (Mr. Murphy declined to relate a confidential conversation had by him, as counsel for the defendant, with the opposite party; but the opposite party waived objection, and the witness was ordered to testify; in fact, Mr. Murphy's motives for refusing seem not to have been above suspicion); 1806, *Spenceley v. Schulenburg*, 7 East 357 (the defendant's attorney, held compellable to testify to the contents of a notice served on him by the plaintiff; "in the disclosure of this there could be no breach of confidence"); 1833, *Griffith v. Davies*, 5 B. & Ad. 502 (conversation between the plaintiff and the defendant, at which the defendant's

attorney was present, held not privileged); 1833, *Ripon v. Davies*, 2 Nev. & M. 310 (conversation between the defendant and his attorney, and the plaintiff, after action begun, held not privileged); 1834, *Marston v. Downes*, 6 C. & P. 381, 382 (the mortgagor's conversation with the mortgagee's attorney, the former having his own attorney for the raising of the money, held not privileged); 1838, *R. v. Avery*, 8 C. & P. 596, 598 (forgery of a will, with intent to defraud W.; the defendant having applied to S., a solicitor for W., to act as solicitor in raising the money, Patteson, J., with some doubt, compelled S. to disclose the communication); 1838, *Desborough v. Rawlins*, 3 Myl. & Cr. 515 (communication by an agent representing the adverse interest to the solicitor and his client, held not privileged); 1843, *Shore v. Bedford*, 5 M. & Gr. 271 (defendant's communication in the plaintiff's presence to the plaintiff's attorney, held not privileged); 1846, *Reynell v. Sprye*, 10 Beav. 51, 55 (case and opinion procured by the defendant and the plaintiff, both being interested in an estate, admitted); 1847, *Tugwell v. Hooper*, *ib.* 348 ("This gentleman, who had become a trustee for two parties, could not act separately as the solicitor for one against the other having an opposite interest" and then acquire information in the trust matters and conceal it from one 'cestui' on the pretext of being solicitor for the other); 1847, *Weeks v. Argent*, 16 M. & W. 817 (attorney for the payee, held compellable to disclose the consideration for a note signed by the maker in the presence of the payee and their two attorneys); 1848, *Chant v. Brown*, 7 Hare 79, 88 (a solicitor having afterwards become devisee and thus a party to the suit, the privilege did not cease as to prior communications made to him as solicitor, and discovery of them could not be obtained from him as a party; apparently unsound); 1851, *Gore v. Bowser*, 5 DeG. & Sm. 30, 34 (communication by a solicitor with the opposite party, not privileged); 1852, *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 426 (action for money advanced by the attorney; the client's account, rendered to the attorney, held privileged against the latter;



(1) First, then, a communication by A to X as the common attorney of A and B, who afterwards become party opponents, is not privileged, as

unsound); 1865, *Talbot v. Marshfield*, 2 Dr. & Sm. 549 (certain cases and opinions taken by trustees under a will, held in part privileged, in part not, as against the residuary legatees); 1869, *Ross v. Gibbs*, L. R. 8 Eq. 522, 524 (communications between mortgagor and mortgagee and an attorney acting on their joint behalf, held not privileged for the latter against the former, if made before litigation was begun by the former); 1883, *Mason v. Cattley*, L. R. 22 Ch. D. 609 (action by 'cestuis' against trustees; the latter's communications before action brought, held not privileged); 1900, *Ainsworth v. Wilding*, 2 Ch. 315, 320 ("a mere record of what takes place in chambers, in the course of a hostile action, in the presence of parties on both sides, is not privileged"); 1918, *Feuerheerd v. London G. O. Co.*, 2 K. B. 565 (cited *post*, § 2319).

CANADA: 1914, *R. v. Prentice*, 20 D. L. R. 791, Alta. (client's authorization to his solicitor to send a certain letter to the solicitor of the opposite party, held not privileged).

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: 1846, *Brazier v. Fortune*, 10 Ala. 516 (incidental remark, made during a consultation in the presence of the opposing attorney also, held privileged, by a majority; unsound); 1856, *Parish v. Gates*, 29 Ala. 254, 260 ("by selecting the same attorney, and making their communications in the presence of each other, each party waived" the confidence);

*California*: 1889, *Bauer's Estate*, 79 Cal. 304, 312, 21 Pac. 759 ("When two persons address a lawyer as their common agent," the privilege ceases as between them); 1896, *Murphy v. Waterhouse*, 113 Cal. 467, 45 Pac. 866 (conversations between the parties where a lawyer is present as the adviser of one or of both, not privileged as between them); 1902, *Harris v. Harris*, 136 Cal. 379, 69 Pac. 23 (communications with the opponent, not privileged); 1912, *Piercy v. Piercy*, 18 Cal. App. 751, 124 Pac. 561 (conversations with attorney for both parties are not privileged as between the parties);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1894, *Olmstead v. Webb*, 5 D. C. App. 38, 51, 55 ("The object of the rule ceases . . . when the client or his representatives charge him [the attorney], either directly or indirectly, with fraud or other improper or unprofessional conduct");

*Delaware*: 1910, *Real Estate Trust Co. v. Wilmington & N. C. E. R. Co.*, 9 Del. Ch. 99, 77 Atl. 756 (service of notice upon the opponent; no privilege);

*Georgia*: 1858, *Corbett v. Gilbert*, 24 Ga. 454, 459 (conversation between the plaintiff and the defendant in an attorney's presence, admitted);

*Illinois*: 1873, *Burnham v. Roberts*, 70 Ill. 19, 21 *semble* (bill in chancery made by the attorney for a while also attorney for B.

excluded); 1885, *Lynn v. Lyerle*, 113 Ill. 128, 134 (communications when "both parties were present and what each said was communicated to the other as well as to the attorney," held not privileged); 1888, *Tyler v. Tyler*, 126 Ill. 525, 541, 21 N. E. 616 (similar); 1888, *Griffin v. Griffin*, 125 Ill. 430, 17 N. E. 782 (similar); 1900, *Funk v. Mohr*, 185 Ill. 395, 57 N. E. 2 (an attorney allowed to testify to the construction put by him on a contract made by him for one party with the other); 1904, *Scott v. Aultman Co.*, 211 Ill. 612, 71 N. E. 1112 (divorce; communications in the presence of the opposing attorney at a consultation, not privileged);

*Indiana*: 1859, *Mave v. Baird*, 12 Ind. 318 (privilege not applicable where the attorney is sued by the client for negligent management and disobedience of instructions); 1863, *Bowers v. Briggs*, 20 Ind. 139 (privilege held applicable where C and D as sureties on a note by B consulted the attorney of A who had begun suit on the note, to inquire as to confessing judgment; the consultation being independent of A and yet with a view to advise in the interest of C and D); 1875, *Scranton v. Stewart*, 52 Ind. 68, 79 (the wife's consultation of the husband's attorney regarding personalty purchased by the proceeds of her realty, held to make him her attorney); 1887, *Hanlon v. Doherty*, 109 Ind. 37, 44, 9 N. E. 782 (conversation with a joint attorney, both parties being present, held not privileged); 1888, *Colt v. McConnell*, 116 Ind. 256, 19 N. E. 106 ("When both parties are present," there is no privilege);

*Iowa*: 1895, *Wyland v. Griffith*, 96 Ia. 24, 64 N. W. 673 (an agreement between plaintiff and defendant, made in the presence of the latter's attorney, not privileged);

*Kansas*: 1893, *Sparks v. Sparks*, 51 Kan. 195, 201, 32 Pac. 892 (an attorney drafting a deed for both parties and in the presence of both; not privileged); 1921, *O'Brien v. New England M. L. Ins. Co.*, 109 Kan. 138, 197 Pac. 1100 (insurance on death; statements made to attorney by one party to a divorce action in the presence of the other party during conference for settlement, held privileged; unsound);

*Kentucky*: 1901, *Taylor v. Roulstone*, — Ky. —, 61 S. W. 354 (joint attorney; communications not privileged as between the parties); 1902, *Smick v. Beswick*, — Ky. —, 68 S. W. 439 (statements by the clients of a joint attorney, in each other's presence, in a controversy between them, held admissible); 1904, *List's Ex'r v. List*, — Ky. —, 82 S. W. 446 (message sent by the party through his attorney to the opponent, not privileged);

*Massachusetts*: 1902, *Thompson v. Cashman*, 181 Mass. 36, 62 N. E. 976 (communications



between A and B; since there was no secrecy between them at the time of communication;

(2) A communication by A to X as A's attorney, X afterwards becoming A's party-opponent (as, in a suit for fees or for negligence) is not privileged; since there was no secrecy as between them at the time of communication;<sup>4</sup>

(3) A communication by A to X as A's attorney, X being then also the attorney of B, now become the party-opponent, is ordinarily privileged, because of the relation of X towards A. Nor does the fact of A's knowledge that X is already B's attorney, nor the fact of B's being already adversely

to a joint attorney, not privileged, as between the parties);

*Michigan*: 1886, *Cady v. Walker*, 62 Mich. 157, 28 N. W. 805 (communication with a joint attorney in each other's presence, held not privileged);

*Minnesota*: 1901, *Shove v. Martine*, 85 Minn. 29, 88 N. W. 254 (communications to a joint attorney, not privileged as between the parties);

*Missouri*: 1858, *Hull v. Lyon*, 27 Mo. 570, 576 (consultation by M., under whom the defendant claimed, with the common attorney of M. and plaintiff, both parties being present, held privileged as against the plaintiff; no precedent cited);

*Nebraska*: 1886, *Clay v. Tyson*, 19 Nebr. 530, 26 N. W. 240 (communication to an attorney already employed in adverse interests, and nevertheless knowingly employed by the plaintiff, held not privileged; but here the employment was merely to close up accounts, and not for litigation); 1891, *Nelson v. Becker*, 32 Nebr. 99, 48 N. W. 962 (communication to one already employed, unknown to the client, by the opponent, held privileged); 1898, *David Adler & S. C. Co. v. Hellman*, 55 Nebr. 266, 75 N. W. 877 (communications with both parties present, not privileged); 1903, *Jahnke v. State*, 68 Nebr. 154, 94 N. W. 158; 104 N. W. 154 (communication by one of two joint defendants under arrest, to their joint attorney, held privileged);

*Nevada*: 1895, *Livingston v. Wagner*, 23 Nev. 53, 42 Pac. 290 (communications to attorney of both parties, not privileged);

*New Jersey*: 1884, *Gulick v. Gulick*, 38 N. J. Eq. 402, 39 id. 516 (communication to an attorney who was the joint adviser of both parties, held not privileged); 1896, *Roper v. State*, 58 N. J. L. 420, 33 Atl. 969 (an interview between the plaintiff and the defendant, the former's counsel being present, held not privileged for the defendant).

*New York*: 1864, *Whiting v. Barney*, 30 N. Y. 330, 343 ("both parties being present, there was nothing confidential in the communication"; three judges dissenting, on various grounds); 1871, *Britton v. Lorenz*, 45 N. Y. 51, 57 ("Where the communications are made in the presence of all parties to the controversy, they are not privileged . . . as to

either of these parties"); 1877, *Hebbard v. Haughian*, 70 N. Y. 54, 61, *semble* (an attorney not privileged as to directions given him at a transaction with both parties); 1891, *Hurlburt v. Hurlburt*, 128 N. Y. 420, 424, 28 N. E. 651 (like *Britton v. Lorenz*); 1901, *Doheny v. Lacy*, 168 N. Y. 213, 61 N. E. 259 (communications to a joint attorney, not privileged as between the parties); 1915, *Wallace v. Wallace*, 216 N. Y. 28, 109 N. E. 872 (mutual wills of husband and wife drawn by the same attorney; in a contest between the legatees of both, after their death, the privilege held not applicable; *Hurlburt v. Hurlburt* followed); *North Carolina*: 1888, *Michael v. Foil*, 100 N. C. 17, 6 S. E. 264 ("a communication made to counsel by two defendants is not privileged from disclosure in a subsequent suit between the two");

*Pennsylvania*: 1888, *Goodwin G. S. & M. Co.'s Appeal*, 117 Pa. 514, 522, 537, 12 Atl. 736 (conversations with a joint attorney, in each other's presence, held not privileged); 1898, *Kramer v. Kister*, 187 Pa. 227, 40 Atl. 1008 (an agreement between parties and counsel at a former trial regarding the verdict, held not privileged); 1905, *Brown v. Moosic M. C. Co.*, 211 Pa. 579, 61 Atl. 76 (communications with a joint attorney, not privileged);

*Philippine Isl.* 1915, *Uy Chico v. Union Life Ass. Soc.*, 29 P. I. 163 (attorney's understanding upon surrendering a document to an administrator, as authorized by heir; privilege not applicable);

*South Carolina*: 1884, *Moffatt v. Hardin*, 22 S. C. 9, 12 (apparently by one party to the attorney in the opponent's presence; not privileged); 1905, *Wilson v. Gordon*, 73 S. C. 155, 53 S. E. 79 (mutual wills by sisters, the same attorney drafting for both; privilege held not applicable to the instructions for drafting the wills, "as between them or those claiming under them");

*Texas*: 1873, *Allen v. Root*, 39 Tex. 589, 593, 597 (a communication from the opponent in the suit, held not privileged);

*Virginia*: 1888, *Hall v. Rixey*, 84 Va. 790, 6 S. E. 215 (a conversation with the opponent held not privileged).

<sup>4</sup> *Chant v. Brown*, *Cleave v. Jones*, Eng., *Nave v. Baird*, Ind., *supra*.



interested, destroy the privilege; for, although X ought not to undertake to act for both in any matter where there is a possibility of adverse interests, none the less is A protected by reason of the relation. In practice, difficulty often will arise here in distinguishing this situation from that of (1) *supra*, and that of (5) *infra*, in either of which the privilege exists. For example, when a 'cestui' employs the attorney for the trustee to report upon the investments, does the case fall under (1) or (3) ?<sup>5</sup> Again, a mortgagor communicates with the mortgagee's attorney, who has threatened to foreclose, in regard to obtaining a second mortgage; does the case fall within (3) or (5) ?<sup>6</sup>

(4) In the foregoing case, if A consults X as his attorney, with the express purpose of inducing him, while B's attorney, to act adversely to B, the communication would clearly cease to be privileged; for, by a former part of the principle (*ante*, § 2298), the privilege cannot cover communications designed to achieve a fraud.

(5) X being the attorney of B, the party-opponent A consults X as B's attorney (as, when B is suing A upon a note, and A comes to ask for delay); here, the privilege clearly does not exist, for there is no relation of legal adviser on X's part to A.

(6) In the same situation, B is also present; this is also not within the privilege, for the additional reason of lack of confidentiality (*ante*, § 2311). So, too, if A's attorney Y be also present, the case is no different.

(7) X being the attorney of B, and the opponent A being also present, B's communication to X is not privileged, for the reasons already noted (*ante*, § 2311).

Of these various situations, those of (6) and (7) are the commonest subject of rulings. Upon these there can be no doubt or practical difficulty, for the principle of confidentiality (*ante*, § 2311) disposes of them.

Distinguish, of course, the rule of propriety (*ante*, § 1911) against calling *one's own attorney* as a witness even in the foregoing cases where he is to testify to a non-privileged communication with an opponent.

§ 2313. **Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit.** The identity of the attorney's client, or the name of the real party in interest, will seldom be a matter communicated in confidence; for the procedure of litigation ordinarily presupposes a disclosure of these facts. Furthermore, so far as a client may in fact desire secrecy and may be able to secure action without appearing as a party to the proceedings, it would be improper to sanction such a wish. Every litigant is in justice entitled to know the identity of his opponents. He cannot be obliged to struggle in the dark against unknown forces. He has by anticipation the right, in later proceedings, if desired, to enforce the legal responsibility of those who may have maliciously sued or prosecuted him or fraudulently evaded his claim. He has as much right to ask the

<sup>5</sup> Tugwell v. Hooper, Mason v. Cattley, R. v. Avery, Eng., Scranton v. Stewart, Ind., *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> Marston v. Downes, Ross v. Gibbs, Eng., Bowers v. Briggs, Ind., Clay v. Tyson, Nebr., *supra*.



attorney "Who pays your fees?" as to ask the witness (*ante*, § 966), "Who maintains you during this trial?" Upon the analogy of the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2298), the privilege cannot be used to evade a client's responsibility for the use of legal process; and if it is necessary for that purpose to make a plain exception to the rule of confidence, then it must be made.

On the other hand, the litigant is not entitled to ask any more than serves to fix the *client's identity*. A communication as to the nature of the title claimed, or the capacity in which suit was brought, or the ultimate motive of the litigation, is equally protected with others, so far as any policy of the privilege is concerned. Here, however, as always, there may have been in the nature of the communication nothing confidential, — as where the claim put forward in former litigation is inquired of; and in such cases the privilege falls away.

Such seem to be the correct distinctions for this much-mooted class of cases.<sup>1</sup> There is not entire harmony in the rulings; but no doubt much ought to depend upon the circumstances of each case.

§ 2313. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1721, *Gynn v. Kirby*, 1 Stra. 402 (the attorney for the plaintiff was summoned to produce his client, where the defendant claimed that the client was fictitious); 1740, *R. v. Watkinson*, 2 Stra. 1122 (a solicitor not compelled to speak to the identity of a client signing an answer in chancery; but the reporter adds, "'quære,' for this was to a fact in his own knowledge and no matter of secrecy committed to him by his client"); 1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 613 (*contra* to the preceding case; cited *ante*, § 2309); 1823, *Studdy v. Sanders*, 2 Dowl. & R. 347 (testimony to the identity of parties in two causes, not privileged, "because it was a fact easily cognizable to the witness and to many other persons, without any confidence on the subject being reposed in him"); 1824, *Foot v. Hayne*, 1 C. & L. 545, 546 (in proving the defendant's conduct, the fact that he had on a certain day applied to counsel to retain him was held privileged); 1829, *Levy v. Pope*, 1 M. & M. 410 (who was the party employing him, held not privileged); 1834, *Beckwith v. Benner*, 6 C. & P. 681 (an attorney allowed to be asked whether the defendants, charged as executors, had employed him in that character); 1841, *Jones v. Jones*, 9 M. & W. 75, Parke, B. (an attorney may disclose the client's name for identification); 1855, *Forshaw v. Lewis*, 1 Jur. N. S. 263 (letters merely showing "the existence of the relation of attorney and client," held not privileged).

CANADA: *Alta.* Rules of Court 1914, No. 145 (like Ont. Rule 13); *Man.* Rev. St. 1913, c. 46, Rule 180 (every solicitor of record for a claimant shall on demand disclose "the profession or occupation and the place of

abode" of the plaintiff). *Ont.* 1848, *Beamer v. Darling*, 4 U. C. Q. B. 249 (trespass for causing an arrest under a writ; the attorney compelled to testify who employed him to sue out the writ); Rules of Court 1914, Rule 13 (a solicitor must on demand disclose the name and abode of the plaintiff).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1826, *Chirac v. Reinicker*, 11 Wheat. 280, 294 (trespass for mesne profits; to prove the real party in interest in the prior ejectment suit, a question as to the defendant's retainer, as landlord of the premises, of certain counsel, was held privileged, as involving "a disclosure of the title and claim set up"; though a question merely as to the fact of retainer was intimated to be without the privilege); 1901, *U. S. v. Lee*, 107 Fed. 702 (an attorney compelled to disclose the name and residence of one who had retained him for the defence, but not that person's interest in the defence);

*Alabama*: 1880, *Mobile & M. R. Co. v. Yeates*, 67 Ala. 164, 168 (whether suits were defended on instructions from M., held not privileged); *California*: 1869, *Satterlee v. Bliss*, 36 Cal. 489, 507 (disclosure of "the character in which the client employed him," held compellable; doubting *Chirac v. Reinicker*, U. S., *supra*); 1915, *Ex parte McDonough*, 170 Cal. 230, 149 Pac. 566 (attorney retained by W. and by H. to defend on a charge of election frauds, held privileged in a grand jury inquiry to answer whether in representing H. he had been employed therefor by W.; citing the above text with approval);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1904, *Elliott v. U. S.*, 23 D. C. App. 456, 467 (the attorney-witness, having related a conversation with the testator in which the former had said that he was



§ 2314. **Execution of a Will or Deed; Temporary Confidentiality.** It has already been noticed (*ante*, § 2309) that the fact of *execution* of a *deed* has commonly been declared to be without the privilege, partly because it was not a subject of communication at all, and partly because, if a communication, it was not impliedly a confidential one. On the other hand, the *contents of the deed are generally within the privilege* (*ante*, § 2308). No further examination of the principle as applied to deeds is here necessary.

But for *wills* a special consideration comes into play. Here it can hardly be doubted that the execution and especially the contents are impliedly desired by the client to be kept secret during his lifetime, and are accordingly a part of his confidential communication. It must be assumed that during that period the attorney ought not to be called upon to disclose even the fact of a will's execution, much less its tenor. But, on the other hand, this confidence is intended to be temporary only. That there may be such a qualification to the privilege is plain.<sup>1</sup> That it appropriately explains the client's relation with an attorney drafting a will seems almost equally clear.

preparing memoranda for the will of another person, the name of that other person was held to be within the privilege; *Chirac v. Reinicker*, U. S., *supra*, distinguished; *Shepard, J.*, diss.);

*Georgia*: 1857, *Martin v. Anderson*, 21 Ga. 301, 308 (an attorney held compellable to answer whether A. was his client in the cause, or had given him instructions to sue, or was dead, or was a fictitious person); 1867, *Stephens v. Mattox*, 37 Ga. 289, 291 (ejectment; the plaintiff's attorney held compellable to state whether the plaintiff had employed him, but not to state whether the employment was to sue for the plaintiff individually or as administrator); 1898, *Alger v. Turner*, 105 Ga. 178, 31 S. E. 423 (whether he had authority from A. as client to begin a suit, not privileged);

*Louisiana*: 1828, *Cormier v. Richard*, 7 Mart. N. S. 177 (that the attorney was employed to resist a claim on a certain ground, held "not a secret confided to the attorney, since he was to spread the opposition on the record"); 1860, *Shaughnessy v. Fogg*, 15 La. An. 330 ("the attorney may be interrogated as to who is his client; he may also be asked through whose agency or in what manner and at what time he was retained");

*Maine*: 1839, *Wheeler v. Hill*, 16 Me. 329, 333 (disclosure by the attorney "that B. employed him," held compellable, but nothing as to the purpose of instituting the suit); 1841, *Gower v. Emery*, 18 Me. 79, 83 (disclosure compelled of the fact of employment by B. and S.); 1882, *Alden v. Goddard*, 73 Me. 345, 348 (the privilege does not forbid testimony to the client's signing a bill in equity, in which he stated his place of residence);

*New Hampshire*: 1833, *Brown v. Payson*, 6 N. H. 443, 448 ("there is no right in any one

to employ an attorney in court and say that the attorney is privileged from disclosing who sent him there"); 1878, *Harriman v. Jones*, 58 N. H. 328 (similar);

*Pennsylvania*: 1846, *Levers v. Van Buskirk*, 4 Pa. St. 309, 316 (privilege held not applicable to the attorney's testimony that the same title was in question in a former trial); 1848, *Beeson v. Beeson*, 9 Pa. St. 279, 301 (an attorney held compellable to testify who as the real party in interest employed him); 1853, *Miller v. Weeks*, 22 Pa. St. 89, 92 (an attorney held not compellable to testify that the plaintiff was a mere trustee for W. & Co. who were the real bringers of the suit; no precedent cited);

*South Carolina*: 1906, *Strickland v. Capital C. Mills*, 74 S. C. 16, 54 S. C. 220 (the attorneys' contract for fee and the assignment of an interest in a judgment are not privileged);

*Vermont*: 1852, *Wetherbe v. Ezekiel*, 25 Vt. 47 (information as to two actions being "commenced for the same cause of action," held privileged);

*Washington*: 1901, *Williams v. Blumenthal*, 27 Wash. 24, 67 Pac. 393 (the authorization of the attorney to settle a claim, held not privileged);

*West Virginia*: 1881, *Mostz v. Rymer*, 18 W. Va. 642, 645 (the fee agreed to be received by the attorney, being material to affect his credit as a witness for his client, held not privileged).

§ 2314. <sup>1</sup> 1883, *Snow v. Gould*, 74 Me. 540, 543 ("That which may be private at a time may not be private at an after-time"; holding that a client's letter to an attorney instructing divorce proceedings was not privileged, after divorce obtained, in a controversy between the attorney and the client concerning compensation).



It follows, therefore, that after the *testator's death* the attorney is at liberty to disclose all that affects the execution and tenor of the will.<sup>2</sup> The only

<sup>2</sup> *Accord*: ENGLAND: 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 392 (Wigram, V. C., held that "in the cases of testamentary dispositions the very foundation on which the rule proceeds seems to be wanting"; here allowing disclosure of a secret trust in devisees).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1856, *Blackburn v. Crawfords*, 3 Wall. 175, 184, 192 (legitimacy and inheritance; a testator's statements to his attorney in the preparation of a will, concerning the children's legitimacy, the will describing them as natural children, held not privileged, partly because the protection of the client under the privilege was not affected by corroboration of the will, and partly because the assertions in the will indicated that the statements were not confidentially intended; Clifford, J., diss.); 1898, *Fayerweather v. Ritch*, C. C., 90 Fed. 13, *semble* (an attorney preparing a will may testify to its contents as executed, because otherwise perhaps "the whole object of a testator's action would be destroyed"); s. c. on appeal, 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (an attorney compellable at common law, *semble*, to disclose the contents of a lost will and the fact of due execution, where he drew but did not attest it); *Arkansas*: 1919, *Bradway v. Thompson*, 139 Ark. 542, 214 S. W. 27 (quoting with approval the above language); *California*: 1901, *Nelson's Estate*, 132 Cal. 182, 64 Pac. 294 (the attorney drawing a will, admitted to testify to his instructions; testator's employment of him operating as a waiver); 1907, *Dominici's Estate*, 151 Cal. 181, 90 Pac. 448 (*Nelson's Estate* followed); *Colorado*: 1906, *Shapter's Estate*, 35 Colo. 578, 85 Pac. 688 (*Doherty v. O'Callaghan*, Mass., followed); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1894, *Olmstead v. Webb*, 5 D. C. App. 38, 50 (the attorney drafting a will, allowed to testify that he conformed to testator's instructions; *Russell v. Jackson*, Eng., followed); *Georgia*: 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 Ga. 490, 31 S. E. 100 (probate of a will; the attorney drawing it may after the testator's death testify to "what passed between her when he read over to her" the will; the statute of 1887, Code § 5271, does not change this); *Illinois*: 1907, *Champion v. McCarthy*, 228 Ill. 87, 81 N. E. 808 (the above passage cited with approval and *Blackburn v. Crawfords*, U. S., followed); 1912, *Norton v. Clerk*, 352 Ill. 557, 97 N. E. 1079 (testator's sanity; privilege not applied); *Iowa*: 1916, *Ball v. James*, 176 Ia. 647, 158 N. W. 684 (attorney copying a will and not consulted as an attorney; privilege not applicable); 1917, *Graham v. Courtright*, 180 Ia. 394, 161 N. W. 774 (attorney-draftsman; whether he acted as scrivener only or as legal advisor, held properly submitted to the jury; unsound, on the principle of § 2550, *post*); *Kansas*: 1914,

*Black v. Funk*, 93 Kan. 60, 143 Pac. 427, 426 (attorney-draftsman held compellable after testator's death to testify to the circumstances of execution, to rebut evidence of undue influence); 1916, *Durant v. Whitcher*, 97 Kan. 603, 156 Pac. 739 (attorney-draftsman not privileged as to conversations at the time of execution); 1920, *Cunningham v. Cunningham*, 107 Kan. 318, 191 Pac. 294 (conversation between the testator and the attorney-scrivener, about his objects in the will's provision, admitted); *Maryland*: 1919, *Benzinger v. Hemler*, 134 Md. 581, 107 Atl. 355 (undue influence; attorney who was draftsman and executor, allowed to testify as to the testatrix' instructions, etc.); *Massachusetts*: 1892, *Doherty v. O'Callaghan*, 157 Mass. 90, 31 N. E. 726 (the testator's instructions to the attorney for drawing the will, held not privileged, since after the testator's death "the case does not fall within the reason of the rule"); 1909, *Phillips v. Chase*, 201 Mass. 444, 87 N. E. 755 (the client's instruction, to the attorney drafting a will and affidavit, to tell her brothers certain things after her death, held to remove the privilege; miscalled a waiver); *Michigan*: 1909, *Loree's Estate*, 158 Mich. 372, 122 N. W. 623; *Missouri*: 1836, *Graham v. O'Fallon*, 4 Mo. 338 (the attorney drawing a will, allowed to testify to the drafting, the reading over, and the contents; no principle stated); *New Jersey*: 1912, *Veazey's Will*, 80 N. J. Eq. 466, 85 Atl. 176; 1919, *Anderson v. Searles*, 93 N. J. L. 227, 107 Atl. 429 (contract to pay by bequest for services as housekeeper; the attorney who drafted the will and attested it, not allowed to testify to the testator's admissions of such contract; distinguishing the execution and validity of the will from the above subject of communication); *Pennsylvania*: 1861, *Daniel v. Daniel*, 39 Pa. 191, 211 (quoted *ante*, § 2306); *Utah*: 1908, *Young's Estate*, 33 Utah 382, 94 Pac. 731 (privilege not applicable to the preparation of a will); *Wisconsin*: 1903, *Downing's Will*, 118 Wis. 581, 95 N. W. 876 (attorney drafting a will, held not privileged as to the facts of execution).

*Contra*: *Federal*: 1898, *Fayerweather v. Ritch*, C. C. 90 Fed. 13 (under N. Y. St. 1893, c. 295, which amended the Code, quoted *ante*, § 2292, in consequence of the ruling in *Colman's Will*, cited *post*, § 2315, the privilege still does not apply to the testimony of the drafting attorney to the execution and contents of a will, even where he is not an attesting witness, because the document "ceased to be confidential when it was executed"; overruled on appeal); s. c. on appeal: 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (an attorney not attesting the will, but drawing it, held not compellable under the N. Y. Code as amended, to disclose the



question could be as to communications tending to show the invalidity of the will, *i. e.* from which a circumstantial inference could be drawn that the testator was insane or was unduly influenced. It may be conceded that the testator would not wish the attorney to assist in any way the overthrow of the will. But the answer is that such utterances were obviously not confidentially made with reference to the secrecy of the fact of insanity or undue influence, for the testator of course did not believe those facts to exist and therefore could not possibly be said to have communicated them.<sup>3</sup> As to the tenor and execution of the will, it seems hardly open to dispute that they are the very facts which the testator expected and intended to be disclosed after his death; and, with this general intention covering the whole transaction, it is impossible to select a circumstance here or there (such as the absence of one witness in another room) and argue that the testator would have wanted it kept secret if he had known that it would tend to defeat his intended act. The confidence is not apportionable by a reference to what the testator might have intended had he known or reflected on certain facts which now bear against the will.

§ 2315. **Same: Attorney as Attesting Witness.** When the attorney is made a witness to *attest the execution* of a document (and not merely to draft it), there is no confidence contemplated, and therefore no privilege for the occasion when the attorney is called upon to fulfil the function thereby assumed. He cannot be an attesting witness and yet not attest:

1803, ELLENBOROUGH, L. C. J., in *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52, 54: "If an attorney puts his name to an instrument as a witness, he makes himself thereby a public man, and no longer clothed with the character of an attorney."

1888, RUGER, C. J., in *Coleman's Will*, 111 N. Y. 220, 226, 19 N. E. 71: "An examination of the will itself, as well as the evidence of all of the witnesses present on the occasion of the execution, concur in establishing the fact that the testator requested both Hughes and Northrup to sign the attestation clause of his first as well as of his second will, as witnesses thereto. That request implies not only information as to the necessity of such signatures to the validity of the instrument executed, but also knowledge of the obliga-

contents or execution of a lost will; for the common-law principle as accepted in this ruling, see *supra*, under Accord); *Indiana* 1893, *Gurley v. Park*, 135 Ind. 440, 442, 35 N. E. 279 (testimony to sanity, by the attorney drawing the will, privileged); *New York*: 1888, *Loder v. Whelpley*, 111 N. Y. 239, 248, 18 N. E. 874 (the attorney drafting a will under instructions from the testator, held privileged as to conversations bearing on the issue of undue influence, etc.; "he acts in that capacity, although, asking no questions and without advising, he does nothing more than to reduce those directions to writing"); 1911, *Cunnion's Will*, 201 N. Y. 123, 94 N. E. 648 (similar to *Butler v. Fayerweather*, *supra*; holding that the Code amendments of 1892, 1893, and 1899, do not alter the rule as laid down in *Loder v. Whelpley*, *supra*; but conceding that this is the result of the N. Y. stat-

ute and was not the rule at common law); 1921, *Eno's Will*, Sup. App. Div., 187 N. Y. Suppl. 757, 761 (testamentary capacity; testator's counsel, who drafted the will, not allowed to produce the interim drafts showing testator's changes; applying C. C. P. § 836, quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Ohio*: 1922, *Knepper v. Knepper* — Oh. —, 134 N. E. 476 (cancellation of a deed obtained by undue influence upon a testator; testimony of the attorney-scrivener of the will to the testator's statements about his children, etc., held privileged).

Still other rulings reach the conclusion stated above, in the text, on the ground that either executor or heir has the *right of waiver* on behalf of the deceased: *post*, § 2329. Some of the rulings above cited meant perhaps to proceed on that principle.

<sup>3</sup> This is pointed out in *Daniel v. Daniel*, Pa., quoted *ante*, § 2306.



tions which they assumed in respect to the proof thereof after his death. He must have been aware that his object in making a will might prove to be ineffectual unless these witnesses could be called to testify to the circumstances attending its execution, including the condition of his mental faculties at that time. . . . It cannot be doubted that, if a client in his lifetime should call his attorney as a witness in a legal proceeding, to testify to transactions taking place between himself and his attorney, while occupying the relation of attorney and client, such an act would be held to constitute an express waiver of the seal of secrecy imposed by the statute, and can it be any less so when the client has left written and oral evidence of his desire that his attorney should testify to facts, learned through their professional relations, upon a judicial proceeding to take place after his death? We think not."

Accordingly, it has always been held that an attorney who signs in attestation of a *deed* is compellable to testify.<sup>1</sup> The same consequence ensues for a *will*,<sup>2</sup> not only as to the tenor and the act of execution, but also as to the circumstances affecting sanity and influence; for, since the intention at large negatives confidence, no discrimination can be made, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2314), for particular facts which now turn out to invalidate the will.

§ 2315. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1778, *Doe v. Andrews*, Cowp. 845 ("by attesting an instrument, a man pledges himself to give evidence of it, whenever he is called upon"); 1793, *Sandford v. Remington*, 2 Ves. Jr. 189 (*deed*; cited *ante*, § 2309); 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52 (*destroyed power of attorney*; the attorney's attestation requires disclosure of "all that passed at the time respecting the execution of the instrument; but not what took place in the concoction and preparation of the deed"); 1830, *Grindall v. Grindall*, K. B., Butterworth's Rep. 63, Lord Tenterden, C. J.; 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104 (not privileged "where the attorney made himself a subscribing witness and thereby assumed another character for the occasion, and adopting the duties which it imposes became bound to give evidence of all that a subscribing witness can be required to prove"); 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 868 ("the witnessing the execution of a deed being no part of the duty of a solicitor," he is not privileged for what he knows as witness).

*United States*: 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. N. Y. 528, 596 (an attorney attesting a power of attorney, held compellable to testify to matters connected with the execution of the instrument, but not to conversations as to the purpose of the judgment to be confessed by the power); 1906, *Strickland v. Capital C. Mills*, 74 S. C. 16, 54 S. E. 220 (*assignment*).

But such an attestation is of course no waiver for prior distinct communications: 1907, *Hardy v. Martin*, 150 Cal. 341, 89 Pac. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal.* 1895, *Wax's Estate*, 106 Cal. 343, 347, 39 Pac. 624; 1895, *Mullin's Estate*, 110 Cal. 252, 42 Pac. 645; *Conn.* 1915, *Middletown Trust Co. v. Crowell*, 89 Conn. 290, 93 Atl. 785; *Ga.* 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 Ga.

490, 31 S. E. 100 (repudiating the theory of waiver, Code § 5271 prohibiting a waiver); *Ill.* 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 Ill. 106, 114, 77 N. E. 837 (an attorney also drawing the will; allowed to speak as to undue influence); *Ind.* 1893, *Pence v. Waugh*, 135 Ind. 143, 153, 34 N. E. 860 (an attorney also drawing the will; not privileged as to proof of the will, including sanity); 1900, *Kern v. Kern*, 154 Ind. 29, 55 N. E. 1004 (contents of a lost will, in an issue between heirs and devisees, the attorney being a subscribing witness, held not privileged; distinguishing *Gurley v. Park*, *ante*, § 2314); 1906, *Inlow v. Hughes*, 38 Ind. App. 375, 76 N. E. 763 (like *Kern v. Kern*, *supra*); *Ia.* 1894, *Denning v. Butcher*, 91 Ia. 425, 434, 59 N. W. 69 (attorney also drawing the will; not privileged as to "all facts and circumstances attending its execution," including sanity); *Minn.* 1901, *Coates v. Semper*, 82 Minn. 460, 85 N. W. 217 (attorney drafting and witnessing a will, allowed to be asked whether he made the contents known to testatrix); *Nebr.* 1906, *Brown v. Brown*, 77 Nebr. 125, 108 N. W. 180 ("the testator, by permitting his attorney to become a witness to the will, thereby consented" to his testifying to the circumstances of execution); *N. Y.* C. C. P. § 836 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); 1888, *Coleman's Will*, 111 N. Y. 220, 226, 19 N. E. 71 (an attorney attesting a will, held not privileged as to the testator's conduct and conversation at the time of execution, on the theory of waiver; quoted *supra*); 1889, *Alberti v. R. Co.*, 118 N. Y. 77, 85, 23 N. E. 35 (preceding case approved); *Wis.* 1893, *McMaster v. Scriven*, 85 Wis. 162, 167, 55 N. W. 149 (the attorney who had also drawn the will, allowed to speak of "any matter in relation to the will and its execution," including the maker's mental condition).



It may be added that this generally accepted result can hardly be reached through predicated a *waiver by the testator*,<sup>3</sup> for there cannot be a waiver of that which never came into existence; the true explanation is that no confidence was intended to be instituted. On the other hand, if it could be assumed that there had been a confidence and therefore a privilege, it could then still be maintained, in testamentary contests, that both executor and heir have the right of waiver (*post*, § 2329).

§ 2316. **State Prosecutor (State's Attorney, District Attorney).** Communications to a State prosecuting attorney admit of three interpretations:

(1) If the party consults the attorney *in ignorance of his official capacity*, and in search of legal advice, then (assuming that the client's belief is decisive, on the principle of § 2302, *ante*) the present privilege applies.<sup>1</sup>

(2) If the party, *knowing the attorney's official capacity*, makes the communication as *complainant* seeking redress or penalty for a wrong done, the official and disinterested status of the attorney disables him from giving advice as a partisan attorney; hence, the present privilege does not apply. But the privilege for an informer's communications to the government (*post*, § 2374) may apply to the information thus given, even though it concerns the party's own conduct as well as that of others.<sup>1</sup>

(3) If the party, knowing the attorney's official capacity, makes the communication as one *accused* of a wrong done, the present privilege does not apply; first, for the same reason as in par. (1); and, secondly, because the prosecuting attorney is virtually there the attorney for an opponent, and in such case (*ante*, § 2312, par. 5) the present privilege does not apply. But the privilege for an informer's communications (*post*, § 2374a) may apply, in so far as the revelations involve other persons.<sup>1</sup>

##### 5. "By the client"

§ 2317. **Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired by the Attorney from Third Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents.** 1. The privilege is designed to secure subjective freedom of mind for the client in seeking legal advice (*ante*, § 2291). It has no concern with other persons' freedom of mind, nor with the attorney's own desire for secrecy in his conduct of a client's case. It is therefore not sufficient for the attorney, in invoking the privilege, to state that the information came somehow to him while acting for the client, nor that it came from some particular *third person* for the benefit of the client.<sup>1</sup>

2. On the other hand, the client's freedom of communication requires a liberty of employing other means than his own personal action. The privilege of confidence would be a vain one unless its exercise could be thus dele-

<sup>3</sup> As suggested in *Mullin's Estate*, Cal., *Coleman's Will*, N.Y., *supra*.

§ 2316. <sup>1</sup> All the precedents involving disclosures to prosecuting attorneys have been placed *post*, § 2375.

§ 2317. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1806, *Spenceley v. Schulenburgh*, 7 East 357 (L. C. J. Ellenborough said that the privilege extended only "to confidential communications from his client, and not to communications from collat-



gated. A communication, then, by *any form of agency* employed or set in motion by the client is within the privilege. This of course includes communications through an *interpreter*,<sup>2</sup> and also communications *through a messenger* or any other *agent of transmission*,<sup>3</sup> as well as communications *originating with the client's agent* and made to the attorney.<sup>4</sup> It follows, too,

eral quarters"); 1835, *Sawyer v. Birchmore*, 3 Myl. & K. 572 (Pepys, M. R.; letters communicated to the solicitor "from collateral quarters," held not privileged); 1860, *Marsh v. Keith*, 1 Dr. & Sm. 342, 348, 6 Jur. n. s. 1182 (Kindersley, V. C.; plea that the knowledge had been acquired "by virtue of the solicitor's employment as solicitor," held insufficient, since it might have been obtained "without any communication from or consultation with the client"); 1863, *Ford v. Tennant*, 32 Beav. 162, 168 (Romilly, M. R., held the privilege to cover communications with "all other persons with whom the solicitor must communicate in order to conduct the cause," but not to "information derived from third parties, from strangers, or from the opponents of the client"; repudiating the obiter dictum in *Greenough v. Gaskell* covering all communications "either from a client or on his account or for his benefit").

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1908, *In re Ruos*, D. C. E. D. Pa., 159 Fed. 252 (communications with a third person, not privileged); *New Hampshire*: 1854, *Patten v. Moor*, 29 N. H. 163, 166 (an attorney present at the execution of a mortgage by M. and G. to the client P., the latter not being present, held compellable to testify to the execution, since the facts were "not communicated or confided to him by his client, although he became acquainted with them while engaged in his professional duty as the attorney or counsel of his client"); *New York*: 1803, *Baker v. Arnold*, 1 Caines 258, 266, *semble*; 1821, *Johnson v. Daverne*, 19 Johns, 135 (an attorney held compellable to testify to his client's signature, if he "became acquainted with it in any other way [than by the client's communication], though it was subsequent to his retainer"); 1834, *Bogert v. Bogert*, 2 Edw. Ch. 399, 403; 1844, *Crosby v. Berger*, 11 Paige 377, Walworth, C., ("information derived from other persons or other sources, although such information is derived or obtained while acting as attorney or counsel, is not privileged"); 1904, *King v. Ashley*, 179 N. Y. 281, 72 N. E. 106; 1921, *Le Long v. Siebrecht*, Sup. App. Div., 187 N. Y. Suppl. 150 (letter written to wife's attorney by husband, about wife's property; not privileged, the husband not being shown to be the wife's agent); *Ohio*: *Rogers v. Dore*, Wright 136.

*Contra*: 1894, *Freeman v. Brewster*, 93 Ga. 649, 21 S. E. 165 (the privilege held to cover not only all statements by the client, but also "all facts knowledge of which he obtained concern-

ing his client's case pending his employment"; Code § 5271 seems not literally to justify this).

The question *who is the client* arises here, but is usually a question of fact: 1851, *Warde v. Warde*, 15 Jur. 758; 1859, *Shean v. Philips*, 1 F. & F. 449; 1858, *Allen v. Harrison*, 30 Vt. 219 (information given by one who was a nominal party only, held not a professional consultation on the facts). Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2312.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1791, *Du Barre v. Livette*, Peake N. P. 77 (conversation had through an interpreter with the attorney, the client being a Frenchman and the attorney not understanding French, held privileged; the interpreter was here the prohibited witness); 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 756 (L. C. J. Kenyon said, "In *Madam Du Barre's* case, I said at the trial that the interpreter was the organ of the attorney"); *U. S.* 1814, *Parker v. Carter*, 4 Munf. Va. 273, 287.

<sup>3</sup> 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (the privilege held applicable to communications "through the intervention of a third person"); 1834, *R. v. Brewer*, 6 C. & P. 363, 365 (Park, J.; a letter by an accused in jail, requesting a friend to consult a solicitor, held not privileged); 1839, *Bunbury v. Bunbury*, 2 Beav. 173 ("The necessity which arises of transmitting such communications through another party renders it privileged"; but here the communication was held not "professional or confidential"); 1849, *Reid v. Langlois*, 1 McN. & G. 627, 638 (letters by the defendant to his agent for communication to the legal adviser, held privileged, irrespective of the necessity of employing an agent); 1851, *Glyn v. Caulfield*, 3 McN. & G. 463, 473 (preceding case approved); 1862, *Hooper v. Gumm*, 2 J. & Hem. 602, 608 (similar); 1876, *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649 (Jessel, M. R.: "He may employ a third person to write the letter, or he may send the letter through a messenger, or he may give a verbal message to a messenger").

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1845, *Carpmael v. Powis*, 9 Beav. 16, 20, on appeal in 1 Phil. Ch. 687 (communication "from the brother of the client as representing her," and as the medium of communication, held privileged; nor, so far as the solicitor is concerned, is it essential that an agent was a necessity under the circumstances); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391 (the privilege is the same for the agent's communications "as if had with the principal"); 1862, *Hooper v. Gumm*, 2 J. & Hem. 602, 606 (agent's letters to the solicitor, protected); *U. S.* 1887,



that the communications of the *attorney's agent* to the attorney are within the privilege, because the attorney's agent is also the client's sub-agent and is acting as such for the client.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2318. **Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Production by Discovery, distinguished.** At this point it is necessary to recall certain principles of Discovery, otherwise established, which complicate the application of the foregoing principle as to agents' communications. The principles of discovery are those already considered in detail (*ante*, §§ 1856-1859, 2219).

(a) In the first place, a document of the client *existing before it was communicated* to the attorney is not within the present privilege so as to be exempt from production (*ante*, § 2307). But a *document* which has *come into existence as a communication* to the attorney, being itself a communication, is within the present privilege (*ante*, § 2307). Documents of the latter sort are therefore *exempt from production* under a bill of discovery;<sup>1</sup> while documents of the former sort are not exempt from production under a bill of discovery or the modern statutory motion to produce,<sup>2</sup> although at common law the party as such would not have been compellable to produce. That is to say, at common law, he was protected in the first instance as party and in the second instance as client; while in chancery and under statutes he has ceased to be protected as party but is still protected as client. Only those documents, therefore, which he has created as a communicating client are now privileged. The application of this distinction would in any case lead obviously to certain fine discriminations; but when the principle of agent's communications (*ante*, § 2317) additionally comes into play, it will be seen that the various documents which may be made by agents on behalf of clients

*Fire Ass'n v. Flemming*, 78 Ga. 733, 3 S. E. 420 (client's agent's correspondence, protected); 1855, *Maas v. Bloch*, 7 Ind. 202 (client's agent's conversation with the attorney, held privileged); 1891, *Bingham v. Walk*, 128 Ind. 164, 27 N. E. 483 (husband as the agent of the wife to consult; privilege recognized); 1895, *Frank v. Moreley's Estate*, 106 Mich. 635, 64 N. W. 577 (where M. employed the attorney on F.'s behalf to draw a petition for F., a communication by M. in F.'s presence was held not privileged); 1879, *Scales v. Kelley*, 2 Lea Tenn. 706 (communications by the client's wife and daughter seeking to engage counsel for the client, held privileged).

<sup>5</sup> 1844, *Steel v. Stewart*, 1 Phil. Ch. 471, 475 (communications by the solicitor's agent to the client, and also to the solicitor, held privileged; here there was a necessity, the witnesses being in India and an agent being sent to collect evidence); 1850, *Goodall v. Little*, 1 Sim. N. S. 155, 163 (letters between the solicitor and an attorney, in a local jurisdiction, employed by the solicitor, held privileged); 1863, *Ford v. Tennant*, 32 Beav. 162, 168 (cited

*supra*); 1876, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Anderson v. Benk*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649.

§ 2318. <sup>1</sup> 1852, *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 426 (an account made out by the client for the attorney's use in preparing a case for counsel, held privileged); 1878, *Southwark & V. W. Co. v. Quick*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 315, 318, 323 ("If a document comes into existence for the purpose of being communicated to the solicitor with the object of obtaining his advice or of enabling him either to prosecute or defend an action, it is privileged, because it is something done for the purpose of serving as a communication between the client and the solicitor," even though the latter did not suggest its preparation, and even though he did not ultimately receive it; here applied to exclude certain notes of interviews with expected witnesses, experts, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> 1886, *Chadwick v. Bowman*, L. R. 10 Q. B. D. 561 (copies, procured by a solicitor from third persons, of letters written by the client, held not privileged, the originals not having "come into existence for the purposes of the action").

present infinitely varied openings for the doubt whether or not they came into existence in the ordinary course of the client's affairs or only with the intention of furnishing information to the attorney. Of this difficulty, the cases of *reports of accidents by railway officers* are a typical instance.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Secondly, the ordinary rule of Discovery, by which a party, by *answers to interrogatories*, must disclose all facts on a bill of discovery, is subject to one limitation, namely, that the party need not before trial discover the *names of his witnesses*, nor the *tenor of their testimony* proving the facts of his own case (*ante*, § 1856). A prospective witness' communication may therefore be exempt from discovery before trial on this ground,<sup>4</sup> while it would not be exempt merely as a communication to the attorney.<sup>5</sup> The application of this distinction also may lead in particular cases to some doubt.

§ 2319. **Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles, illustrated.** A. In *England*, the result of the combined application of the foregoing principles (*ante*, §§ 2317, 2318) led for a while to confusion of precedents, in the following ways:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* Woolley v. R. Co., *post*, § 2319; Lyell v. Kennedy, *post*, § 2319, is the great modern case.

<sup>4</sup> 1826, Preston v. Carr, 1 Y. & J. 175 (letters from witnesses, not compelled to be discovered).

<sup>5</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 2317.

§ 2319. <sup>1</sup> The rulings are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1831, Whitbread v. Gurney, 1 Younge 541, Exch. (L. C. B. Lyndhurst; letters between the parties themselves, with reference to their defence, held not privileged); 1833, Greenough v. Gaskell, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 102 (excluding book-entries, letters, and papers made and received as solicitor acting for a client); 1835, Curling v. Perring, 2 Myl. & K. 380 (Pepys, M. R., held that letters by a solicitor of the defendant to a person not a party but a material witness were privileged); 1836, Storey v. Lord Lennox, 1 Myl. & Cr. 525, 537 (documents obtained by the party himself in correspondence with third persons preparatory to litigation; L. C. Cottenham declined to express an opinion); 1840, Dartmouth v. Holdsworth, 10 Sim. 476 (solicitor's letters to a witness, held not privileged, unless shown to have been confidential); 1841, Smith v. Fell, 2 Curt. Eccl. 667, 670 (conversations by B. with F.'s solicitor, in F.'s presence and at F.'s request, relating to B.'s information on the matter for which the solicitor was employed, held privileged); 1841, Mackenzie v. Yeo, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 870 (memorandum of a communication by a subscribing witness to the solicitor, had before litigation begun but after legal advice sought, held not privileged; "there is no confidence between him and his client in this matter"; but letters from another attorney to the same solicitor, both being employed about the same cause, were held privileged); 1844, Maden v. Veevers, 7 Beav. 489 (documents made "in contemplation of litigation," but not for or by a legal adviser, not privileged); 1850, Balguy v.

Broadhurst, 1 Sim. N. S. 111 (documents procured by the solicitor for the purpose of defence held not privileged on that ground merely); 1850, Goodall v. Little, 1 Sim. N. S. 155, 161 (Lord Cranworth, V. C.; letters written by one co-defendant to another, with a view to enable the addressee to consult the solicitor upon them, held not privileged); 1851, Glyn v. Caulfield, 3 McN. & G. 463, 473 (L. C. Truro; letters written after suit begun, by and to the defendants, shareholders in a company, to and by other shareholders and directors, for the purpose of being communicated to legal advisers, held not privileged; Goodall v. Little approved); 1853, Wright v. Vernon, 1 Drew. 344, 350 (Kindersley, V. C.; extracts from a parish register "obtained by the defendants to enable them to conduct their defence," not privileged; but a statement of the supposed pedigree, made for instruction of counsel, held privileged); 1857, Lafone v. Falkland Islands Co., 4 K. & J. 34 (Page-Wood, V. C.; report of an agent of the defendant, made in consequence of the solicitor's instructions to procure evidence, held privileged, as "procured for the purpose of being communicated to the solicitor" and to be used as evidence); 1857, Betts v. Menzies, 3 Jur. N. S. 885 (Page-Wood, V. C.; correspondence between co-defendants, held not privileged); 1858, Colman v. Trueman, 3 H. & N. 871 (breach of contract of sale; correspondence between the vendors, their broker, and their consignors, after the alleged breach, held not privileged; yet, per Pollock, C. B., "it would be monstrous if an attorney could not write to a stranger for information respecting the suit, without being liable to have his correspondence called for"); 1859, London Gaslight Co. v. Chelsea, 6 C. B. N. S. 411, 424 (dispute as to gas supply; the defendants' officers' reports and records of consumption, etc., held not privileged, as not



(1) In applying the privilege for communications of *clients and their agents* or their attorneys' agents (*ante*, § 2317) the more clearly the communicator

being "mere proofs collected by the defendants' attorney for the purpose of establishing their defence"); 1862, *Jenkyns v. Bushby*, L. R. 2 Eq. 547 (Kindersley, V. C.; letter by one defendant to another, with directions to send it on to their solicitor, held privileged); 1863, *Walsham v. Stainton*, 2 Hem. & M. 1, 4 (Page-Wood, V. C.: "Where the solicitor, in order to enable himself to advise on the matter, calls in some other person to assist and give his opinion," the privilege applies; here applied to schedules made by an accountant); 1863, *Ford v. Tennant*, 32 Beav. 162 (cited *ante*, § 2317); 1863, *Chartered Bank v. Rich*, 4 B. & S. 73 (letters between the plaintiff and its agents abroad, after dispute arisen, referring to the evidence and other information affecting proceedings against the defendant, held privileged, as "matters which would have been done by an attorney but for the distance of the place occasioning the necessity of employing an agent"); 1865, *Nicholl v. Jones*, 2 Hem. & M. 588, 595 (shorthand notes, taken by the defendant, in prior litigation between the defendant and other persons, held not privileged; except as to "observations and notes made thereon"); 1867, *Baker v. R. Co.*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 91 (reports by a medical agent and another, after visiting the injured person at the defendant's request, but apparently before claim filed, held not privileged); 1869, *Ross v. Gibbs*, L. R. 8 Eq. 522 (Stuart, V. C.; reports from an agent of defendant, sent to collect evidence for the suit, held privileged, though the agent was not a legal adviser); 1869, *Woolley v. R. Co.*, L. R. 4 C. P. 602, 608 (reports as to an accident, made by the defendant's inspector in the course of his duty, held not privileged, irrespective of litigation begun or anticipated; otherwise of reports from scientific men consulted as to the causes of the accident "with a direct view to litigation"); 1870, *Cossey v. R. Co.*, L. R. 5 C. P. 146 (a medical officer's report, made to the defendant after claim filed by an injured person, and in consequence thereof, held privileged, as made "with a view to litigation or impending litigation"); 1872, *Fenner v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 767 (reports made by a freight manager of the defendant, after claim for injury filed, and in consequence thereof, held not privileged); 1872, *McFarlan v. Rolt*, L. R. 14 Eq. 580 (documents passing between the defendant's solicitor and D., a person said to be "acting on behalf" of the defendant, before dispute arising, held privileged); 1874, *Skinner v. R. Co.*, L. R. 9 Exch. 298 (a medical officer's report, made to the defendant after claim by an injured person and in consequence thereof, held privileged; otherwise for a report made in the ordinary course of duty, "whether before or after action brought"; approving *Cossey*

*v. R. Co.*); 1875, *Hutchinson v. Glover*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 141 (letters between the defendant and a third person, relating to information as to claims against the defendant, and written in consequence of letters of complaint from the plaintiff's attorney, held not privileged); 1876, *Bustros v. White*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 423 (letters between the plaintiffs and their agents, relative to the plaintiffs' claim, held not privileged); 1876, *M'Corquodale v. Bell*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 471 (communication by the representative of a third person to the plaintiff's solicitor, held privileged, on the ground that "documents obtained by a party or his solicitor with a view to and in contemplation of litigation either pending or anticipated, are protected"); 1876, *Pacey v. R. Co.*, L. R. 2 Exch. D. 440 (report of the defendant's medical officer, made after claim filed but before action brought, and based on an inspection consented to, held privileged); 1876, *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 647 (Jessel, M. R.; report by the defendant's agent, to the defendant, at the latter's request, without any suggestion to the former that it was for submission to a legal adviser, held not privileged; approved on appeal; *Ross v. Gibbs* repudiated; L. J. James declared that all that had been written as to the reason for the privilege would be "puerile nonsense if there had been that law . . . that any communication made by a person with a view to litigation, whoever the person is, must be protected"; L. J. Mellish discriminated between information from the defendant's own agent, as here, and information from indifferent persons as prospective witnesses); 1877, *Friend v. R. Co.*, L. R. 2 Exch. D. 437 (report of a medical man, examining an injured plaintiff under an order of Court obtained by the defendant, held privileged, as being made for the information of their solicitor); 1878, *The Theodore Korner*, L. R. 3 P. D. 162 (reports of surveyors of shipping, made to the plaintiff in order to prepare for making a claim against the ship for an injury to goods, held privileged); 1878, *Southwark & V. W. C. v. Quick*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 315 (cited *ante*, § 2318); 1881, *Wheeler v. LeMarchant*, L. R. 17 Ch. D. 675, 681 (documents by third persons are protected "where they have come into existence after litigation commenced or in contemplation and when they have been made with a view to such litigation, either for the purpose of obtaining advice as to such litigation or of obtaining evidence to be used in such litigation or of obtaining information which might lead to the obtaining of such evidence"; but not, as here, a report from a surveyor as to the state of property, asked by the solicitor as preliminary to legal advice, but not with reference to litigation or actual dispute; in short, that "communications between



is a stranger to the parties, the more plainly he falls without the privilege; while the more markedly the relation of agent for the litigation appears, the

a solicitor and a third person in the course of his advising his client" are not as such privileged); 1882, *Nordon v. Defries*, L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 508 (shorthand notes, taken by the defendant in another action between the same parties touching the same subject, and in part for the purpose of informing counsel in subsequent litigation, held privileged; approving *M'Corquodale v. Bell*); 1883, *The Palermo*, L. R. 9 P. D. 6 (copies of depositions of the crew of the plaintiff's ship, taken at the instance of the solicitor for the purpose of litigation, held privileged); 1883, *Kennedy v. Lyell*, L. R. 23 Ch. D. 387, 402, 407, 27 id. 1, 26; s. c. on appeal, *Lyell v. Kennedy*, L. R. 9 App. Cas. 81, 87, 93 (the party's knowledge or belief, derived from reading a brief of facts or other report of facts ascertained by the solicitor and furnished to the party, held privileged; "as soon as you say that the particular premises are privileged and protected, it follows that the mere opinion and belief of the party from those premises should be privileged and protected also"; "a man ought not to be called upon to state what his belief is, founded upon information, which information is privileged"); furthermore, documents obtained by a defendant, "at the instigation of a solicitor," "for the purpose of defending himself against various claimants," and placed in his solicitor's hands, are privileged; "a collection of records may be the result of professional knowledge research and skill; . . . it is the solicitor's mind, if that be so, which has selected the materials; . . . you cannot have disclosure of them without asking for the key to the labor which the solicitor has bestowed in obtaining them"; (here, copies of burial certificates and other records, of inscriptions on tombstones, and photographs of houses, were held privileged); 1885, *Pearce v. Foster*, L. R. 15 Q. B. D. 114, 118 (documents "brought into existence for the purposes or in the course of communications between solicitor and client" held privileged); 1884, *Bristol v. Cox*, L. R. 26 Ch. D. 678, 682 (reports by committees of the corporation, made in contemplation of and reference to the litigation in hand, held privileged; "this corporation cannot in its corporate capacity either think or write or act except by certain machinery which is so to speak extraneous of itself"); 1885, *Rawstone v. Preston Co.* 30 Ch. D. 116 (shorthand notes of evidence and speeches at a prior arbitration on another matter between the same parties, held not privileged); 1886, *Chadwick v. Bowman*, L. R. 16 Q. B. D. 561 (cited *ante*, § 2318); 1887, *Robson v. Worswick*, L. R. 38 Ch. D. 370 (shorthand notes taken by the defendants, in prior litigation between the defendants and other persons, held not privileged, because taken in open court); 1887, *Young v. Holloway*, L. R. 12

P. D. 167 (letters sent to the client by third persons to be communicated to her solicitor to help the cause, held privileged; also anonymous letters sent to the solicitor, "with a view to the conduct of the action," but not on his express request or inquiry; *Bowen*, L. J., thought that the solicitor's employment was an implied invitation on his client's behalf to send information); 1893, *Learoyd v. Halifax J. S. B. Co.*, 1 Ch. 687 (shorthand writer's notes of a private examination of witnesses by the solicitor, at the instance of the plaintiff, a trustee in bankruptcy, with a view to possible litigation, held privileged; *Anderson v. Bank and Wheeler v. LeMarchant* discussed); 1895, *Re Strachan*, 1 Ch. 439, 444 (the privilege does not extend to documents filed with a master in lunacy); 1898, *Calcraft v. Guest*, 1 Q. B. 759 (documents prepared for former litigation over the same rights, privileged; "*Wheeler v. LeMarchant* was right, and *Minet v. Morgan* [*ante*, § 2294] was right too"); 1900, *Ainsworth v. Wilding*, 2 Ch. 315, 322 (notes made by a solicitor pending suit; opinion not clear); 1900, *R. v. Bullivant*, 2 Q. B. 163 (*Wheeler v. LeMarchant* followed); *Jones v. Great Central R. Co.*, [1910] A. C. 4 (plaintiff, an employee of defendant, was dismissed and sues; by his trade-union rules he was obliged to give them full information, and was also entitled to free legal assistance from them, on order of the union officials; his letters to the union officials, before action brought, pending the officials' decision as to suing, were held not privileged; citing *Anderson v. Bank*); 1911, *Curtis v. Beaney*, Prob. 181 (testamentary proceeding involving the testatrix' insanity; the testatrix had once been sued on a contract, and had apparently pleaded insanity; her then solicitor's brief prepared by him for counsel, held within the privilege; *Walsham v. Stainton and Nicholl v. Jones*, *supra*, followed; no other cases cited); 1913, *Birmingham & M. M. O. Co. v. London & N. W. R. Co.*, 3 K. B. 550 (loss of goods by fire at defendant's station; reports on the fire by defendant's agents to superintendent, held privileged); 1914, *Adam S. S. Co. v. London Ass. Co.*, 3 K. B. 1256 (policy of marine insurance on abandoned vessel; defendants employed the Salvage Association to protect their interests; telegrams after that date between the Salvage Association and defendant's agents at the port of loss, to obtain advice and evidence, held privileged, as documents "obtained for the purpose of being used, not necessarily in an existing litigation, but in an anticipated litigation"); 1918, *Feuerherd v. London G. O. Co.*, C. A., 2 K. B. 565 (personal injury; defendant sent a claim agent to the room of a witness who was riding with plaintiff at the time of the collision, and the agent took in



clearer the privilege is. On the other hand, in applying the rule of discovery exempting *prospective witnesses'* statements (*ante*, § 2318, par. *b*), the more clearly the person is an indifferent witness, the more plain is the exemption from discovery; while the more marked his capacity as a mere agent of the party, the plainer the liability to disclose. The two principles thus pull in opposite directions. What helps to apply the one exemption will tend to disfavor the other. Whether the judicial intention is to invoke the one or the other is not always plain to see. A ruling which is sound enough from the one point of view would be unsound from the other; and it becomes difficult to determine whether the ruling harmonizes or conflicts with either principle.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Furthermore, under both of these principles, the circumstance that *litigation has begun*, or not, is commonly important. That is, whether under the one principle (the exemption from discovery) the person is to be deemed to have written as prospective witness will often be determined by the circumstance that litigation has begun or not; and whether under the other principle (the privilege for communications to an attorney) he is to be deemed to have written as the client's agent for communication to the attorney, will also often be dependent on the same circumstance. But, on the other hand, the privilege at large was (in England) until 1870 in a state of controversy involving the very same circumstance (*ante*, § 2294), *i. e.* whether the privilege was restricted to litigious communications or not. Thus the rulings which helped to repudiate that restriction for the privilege at large helped at the same time to confuse the discussion of it in its present relation to the boundaries of ordinary discovery.<sup>3</sup>

(3) Finally, the proper limits of the principle of *agents' communications* (*ante*, § 2317) are withal apparently too intricate to permit of a definite rule which will solve all concrete cases. In 1835, in *Curling v. Perring*, the Master of the Rolls applied the privilege to a solicitor's correspondence with a witness; in 1841, in *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, the contrary was done; forty years later, in *Anderson v. Bank* and *Wheeler v. LeMarchant*,<sup>4</sup> the same incon-

writing the statement of the witness; plaintiff called at the same time, by appointment, to meet her solicitor's agent, and joined in the statement; both plaintiff and the witness supposed that the third person was the plaintiff's solicitor's agent, but the claim agent had made no misrepresentation as to his identity; the document in the defendant's possession was held privileged; this seems unsound).

IRELAND: 1905, *Kerry Co. C. v. Liverpool S. Ass'n*, L. R. 2 Ire. 38 (action for stranding a wrecked vessel; documents obtained by the defendant as agent of an insurance company with reference to the ship-owner's claim and the circumstances of the loss, held not privileged); 1905, *Tobakin v. Dublin S. D. T. Co.*, L. R. 2 Ire. 58 (a statement of injury by the plaintiff, furnished to the defendant's agent at the latter's request after the injury, held not privileged in the defendant's hands).

<sup>2</sup> The cases of *Storey v. Lord Lennox*, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, *London Gaslight Co. v. Chelsea*, *Ross v. Gibbs*, *Woolley v. R. Co.*, and *Anderson v. Bank*, *supra*, illustrate this.

<sup>3</sup> *Balguy v. Broadhurst*, *Goodall v. Little*, *Cossey v. R. Co.*, *Anderson v. Bank*, and *Wheeler v. LeMarchant*, *supra*, illustrate this. As late as 1898, an English judge (in *Calcraft v. Guest*, *supra*) thought it worth while to explain that "*Wheeler v. LeMarchant* was right, and *Minet v. Morgan* [*ante*, § 2294] was right too."

<sup>4</sup> The proposition of Jessel, M. R., that for third persons' communications to solicitors the test is whether they are made after litigation begun or contemplated seems unsound; for it ignores the necessity of a request, implied or expressed, sufficient to make the person the solicitor's agent; compare *Young v. Holloway*.



sistency prevailed, and the line between a mere witness and an agent of the solicitor appeared to be ignored. *Young v. Holloway* and *Learoyd v. Halifax Co.*, ten years later, left the distinctions still unsatisfactory. Later rulings cleared up the practice. But the exact bearings and effect of all the different principles involved have not yet been clearly stated by any judge. Whenever such a statement shall have been made and generally sanctioned, the proper course will be to leave its application to the trial judge.

B. In *Canada*, the practice has reached substantial definiteness, in the light of the modern English decisions clearing up the original doubts.<sup>5</sup>

C. In the *United States*, it is noticeable that these bearings of the privilege have received very little development, — probably in part for the reasons elsewhere noted (*ante*, § 2294).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> CANADA: *British Columbia*: 1896, *Van Volkenburg v. Bank of B. N. A.*, 5 Br. C. 4 (letters between bank managers; *Anderson v. Bank*, *supra*, followed); 1904, *Leadbetter v. Crow's Nest*, 10 Br. C. 106 (general principle applied); *Manitoba*: 1906, *Savage v. Canadian Pacific R. Co.*, 16 Man. 381 (reports upon an accident, sent in by the defendant's agents under standing orders, held not privileged); 1915, *London Guarantee v. Henderson*, 25 D. L. R. 754 (false representations; certain auditors' reports, in hands of counsel, but not originating "for the purpose of instructing counsel in view of contemplated litigation", not privileged); *Ontario*: 1875, *Toronto G. R. Co. v. Taylor*, 6 Ont. Pr. 227 (expert opinions on a patent, not procured in contemplation of the present litigation, not privileged); 1876, *Merchants' Bank v. Moffatt*, Ont. Pr. 348 (correspondence between the plaintiff's agents, written at the advice of the solicitor, held privileged); 1883, *Guelph C. Co. v. Whitehead*, 9 Ont. Pr. 509 (documents procured by the defendant's solicitor from third persons, for use in the cause, held privileged); 1883, *Canada C. R. Co. v. M'Laren*, 8 Ont. App. 564 (railway engine-driver's report in a repairs-book; question not decided); 1887, *Betts v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 12 Ont. Pr. 86, 634 (report of an investigation made by the defendant's officers immediately after the accident, held not privileged; following *Wheeler v. LeMarchant*, *supra*); 1892, *Donahue v. Johnston*, 14 Ont. Pr. 476 (correspondence between the defendant and a third person, written at the advice of the defendant's solicitor to obtain information, after litigation threatened by the plaintiff, held privileged); 1895, *Hunter v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 16 Ont. Pr. 385 (similar reports, made for the benefit of the defendant's solicitor in the suit, held privileged); 1902, *Platt v. Buck*, 4 Ont. L. R. 421 (letters between P. and his attorney, given to the defendant by P.'s executor, and plaintiff and defendant both claiming title under P.; held not privileged); 1904, *Elmsley v. Miller*, 10 Ont. L. R. 343 (establishment of a highway;

solicitors, employed by the plaintiff town to investigate its right to use the road, secured written evidence favorable to the claim, and action was begun; these documents were held privileged, though no litigation was resolved on at the time of the solicitor's investigations; *Wheeler v. LeMarchant* followed); 1906, *Thomson v. Maryland Gas Co.*, 11 Ont. L. R. 44 (letters between the defendant's agent and its main office, concerning matters which the latter might refer to solicitors for legal advice, held not privileged, following the rule of *Southwark & V. W. Co. v. Quick*, cited *ante*, § 2318, n. 1); 1912, *Swaissland v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 5 D. L. R. 750 (report of a railway investigating officer, upon an accident; not decided); *Quebec*: 1912, *Feigleman v. Montreal St. R. Co.*, 3 D. L. R. 125 (railway company's motorman's report of an accident, held not privileged); 1912, *Montreal St. R. Co. v. Feigleman*, 7 D. L. R. 6 (report of an accident prepared by defendant's conductor and motorman under standing regulations, held privileged).

<sup>6</sup> *Federal*: 1874, *Re Aspinwall*, 7 Ben. 433 (the privilege extends to information received on behalf of the client from persons to whom the client has referred the attorney for such information); 1898, *Lalanc & G. M. Co. v. Haberman M. Co.*, 87 Fed. 563 (while communications with a witness are not privileged, a scientific expert engaged to help in presenting the case is in effect an assistant counsel; and the privilege exists for communications between legal counsel and himself, so long as he does not become a witness; the opinion clearly explains the reasons); 1890, *Edison El. L. Co. v. U. S. El. L. Co.*, 44 Fed. 294, 298, 45 id. 55 (English cases considered, and the doctrine stated); 1915, *U. S. Louisville v. N. R. Co.*, 236 U. S. 318, 35 Sup. 363 (mandamus to compel carriers to permit inspection of their accounts, etc., by the Interstate Commerce Commission; plea objecting to disclose communications of the carrier with its agents not relating to matters not lawfully enforceable by the Commission; held that the inspection could not include "confidential correspondence of the railroad



§ 2320. **Communications by the Attorney to the Client.** That the attorney's communications to the client are also within the privilege was always assumed in the earlier cases,<sup>1</sup> and has seldom been brought into question.<sup>2</sup> The reason

companies between itself and its counsel'); *California*: 1921, *Coldwell v. Board of Public Works*, 187 Cal. 501, 202 Pac. 870 (documents in the office of county engineer relating to the construction of a reservoir etc. in the Hetch Hetchy Valley; application for mandate to permit inspection by the plaintiff, refused; the fact that the documents had been communicated to the city attorney to enable him to prepare for litigation, held not to override the plaintiff's right of inspection as a citizen); *Connecticut*: 1880, *Pulford's Appeal*, 48 Conn. 247, 249 (bill of particulars, prepared for the party by O., and handed by him to the attorney; O. and the party held compellable to produce it); *Georgia*: 1889, *Carroll v. East Tenn. V. & Ga. R. Co.*, 82 Ga. 452, 473, 10 S. E. 163 (personal injury; reports to the defendant by its employees, concerning the circumstances, held not receivable in evidence as admissions; the present question not passed upon); 1917, *Atlantic Coast Line R. Co., v. Williams*, 21 Ga. App. 421, 9 S. E. 584 (personal injury; conductor's report made out on a printed form and forwarded to the superintendent of transportation, held privileged; but the subject is confused in the opinion with that of an agent's admissions; here the plaintiff's counsel made the false step of calling for the report's production at the trial as evidence, instead of merely obtaining discovery of it before trial); *Iowa*: 1877, *Williams v. Young*, 46 Ia. 140, 143 (attorney not privileged as to his deposit of the client's money with a third person); *Kansas*: 1901, *State v. Herbert*, 63 Kan. 516, 66 Pac. 237 (testimony by a witness in the county attorney's hearing is not privileged); *New Hampshire*: 1917, *Lacoss v. Lebanon*, 78 N. H. 413, 101 Atl. 364 (injury by breaking of apparatus; bill of discovery for sketch and photograph thereof, allowed, though made after the accident and given to counsel); *Ohio*: 1906, *Ex parte Schoepf*, 74 Oh. 1, 77 N. E. 276 (personal injury on a street railroad; the conductor's and motorman's reports of the accident, made to the claim-agent of the defendant, under its rule requiring such reports on matters from which a claim might arise and for submission to counsel if necessary, held privileged); *Pennsylvania*: 1895, *Davenport Co. v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 166 Pa. 480, 31 Atl. 245 (loss of a shipper's goods; a report to the defendant by its agent, concerning the loss, held privileged, because made "after the plaintiff's claim for damages was made" and "in effect made to counsel, for they were made for the use of counsel in resisting this particular claim"); *Virginia*: 1907, *Virginia-Carolina C. Co. v. Knight*, 106 Va. 674, 56 S. E. 725

(report of an accident made by agent to principal, in the routine of business, before action brought or threatened, one copy being filed, another sent to the manufacturing department, and another to the attorney's, the last copy being offered; held not privileged); *Washington*: 1899, *Hartness v. Brown*, 21 Wash. 655, 59 Pac. 491 (deed by W. to the plaintiff; W. consulted an attorney about the deed and the attorney sent for the plaintiff; communications by the plaintiff excluded, because made to W.'s attorney about a matter of joint interest); 1904, *Cully v. Northern Pacific R. Co.*, 35 Wash. 241, 77 Pac. 202 (personal injury; reports of unspecified persons to the defendant concerning the circumstances of the injury, held privileged, and not demandable on answer to interrogatories under Ballinger's Code, § 6009, cited *ante*, § 1856; not distinguishing between the present principle and that of § 1856, *ante*, and somewhat inconsistently intimating that inspection of the documents could be obtained under Ballinger's Code, § 6047, quoted *ante*, § 1859); *Wisconsin*: 1913, *Horlick's Malted Milk Co. v. Spiegel Co.*, 155 Wis. 201, 144 N. W. 272 (action for unfair competition; discovery sought from plaintiff under Stats. § 4096 as to reports made by plaintiff's employees; the order held properly to exclude reports of agents to plaintiff's attorney or by plaintiff's attorney to agents; this exception is probably both too broad and too narrow; *Koeber v. Somers*, 108 Wis. 497, 84 N. W. 991, and *Herman v. Schlesinger*, 114 Wis. 382, 90 N. W. 460, approved); 1919, *Lehan v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 169 Wis. 327, 172 N. W. 787 (written statements made by defendant's witnesses to defendant's claim-agent before trial, held not to be "documents which the party holding them should be required to produce" at the plaintiff's request, on cross-examination; but the opinion inconsistently adds "that whether these statements should be classed as privileged communications . . . it is not necessary to decide"; the opinion seems not to distinguish the principles involved); 1919, *Bell v. Milwaukee E. R. & L. Co.*, 169 Wis. 408, 172 N. W. 791 (report of defendant's conductor, upon the accident in which plaintiff was injured, made at the end of the run; the defendant not required to produce it; citing the foregoing case, and not appreciating the principles involved).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 1856c (discovery of names of witnesses).

§ 2320. <sup>1</sup> *Ante*, § 2294.

<sup>2</sup> 1840, *Jenkinson v. Andrews*, 5 Blackf. Ind. 465 (whether the attorney had informed the client of the meaning of an affidavit, held privileged).

for it is, not any design of securing the attorney's freedom of expression, but the necessity of preventing the use of his statements as admissions of the client (*ante*, § 1071), or as leading to inferences of the tenor of the client's communications, — although in this latter aspect, being hearsay statements, they could seldom be available at all (*ante*, § 1063).

6. "Are at his instance permanently protected"

§ 2321. **Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Who may Claim.** Under the original theory of the privilege, it was the attorney's, not the client's (*ante*, § 2290). But under the modern theory (*ante*, § 2291), it is plainly the client's, not the attorney's; and this is now a commonplace, never disputed.<sup>1</sup>

But it is as client, *not as party to the cause*, that he is entitled; for the reason of the privilege applies to all clients as such, whether or not they are parties when the disclosure is sought from them. Hence, the privilege equally forbids disclosure by the attorney of a client not in any way concerned in the cause.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, when the client is not a party, then on general principles (*ante*, § 2196) the party cannot invoke the privilege;<sup>3</sup> and, if the privilege is erroneously refused, the party cannot appeal on the ground of this error.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the privilege not being the attorney's but the client's, the attorney is not justified (when the client is a party to the cause) in refusing to obey a ruling (though erroneous) against the privilege; the client is the one to protect himself by appellate proceedings, on the general principle of § 2196, *ante*.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2321. Except in the following opinion, which without citing any authority, goes upon an erroneous interpretation of Ga. Civ. C. 1910, § 5785: 1915, *Braxley v. State*, 17 Ga. App. 196, 86 S. E. 425.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 760, per Buller, J.; 1811, *R. v. Withers*, 2 Camp. 578, L. C. J. Ellenborough (communications by a third person, privileged, "although he be not in any shape before the court"); U. S. 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. N. Y. 528, 596; 1880, *Bacon v. Frisbie*, 80 N. Y. 394, 400 (nor, when the client objects, can the communication be disclosed under instructions to use it only against a party not the client); 1876, *Bowers v. State*, 29 Oh. St. 542, 546 (prosecutrix in a rape case, held privileged as to consultations with her attorney).

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* *Merle v. Moore*, 2 C. & P. 275 (Best, C. J.; action by an assignee in bankruptcy against the debtor's fraudulent vendee; the bankrupt's attorney being called by the plaintiff, it was held that the defendant could not invoke the privilege, since the bankrupt alone could object); U. S. 1899, *McCooe v. R. Co.* 173 Mass. 117, 53 N. E. 133 (counsel may not object for the party, even where the client is the party in the case); 1920, *State v. Snook*,

94 N. J. L. 271, 109 Atl. 289 (manslaughter by recklessly driving and killing D.; one M. was in the car at the time, and had consulted an attorney for advice; the attorney's testimony to M.'s remarks, admitted, neither M. nor the attorney claiming privilege; six judges dissenting); 1890, *Dowie's Estate*, 135 Pa. 210, 19 Atl. 936 ("It is the privilege of the client to object, and not of a stranger, [though he be the party to the cause,] even if the testimony objected to was a privileged communication").

*Contra*: 1880, *Bacon v. Frisbie*, 80 N. Y. 394, 401.

For this general principle as applicable to all privileges, see *ante*, § 2196.

<sup>4</sup> 1847, *Weeks v. Argent*, 16 M. & W. 817, per Parke, B. *Contra*: 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 326. Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2196.

<sup>5</sup> 1922, *Ex parte Lipscomb*, — Tex. —, 239 S. W. 1101 (contempt for refusing to testify to a deed once drawn for G. by respondent, G. being plaintiff in a suit against T. for title, and T. summoning respondent; where the attorney claims the privilege, "and the client as a party to the suit also interposes the objection, . . . [the client] has an ample, complete, and adequate remedy by appeal from erroneous rulings, and the witness must answer the questions").



§ 2322. **Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege.** If a client-party claims the privilege, *no inference* should be drawn against him as to the unfavorable nature of the information sought.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the reasoning may be for other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2243, 2272), it is plain that here the drawing of such an inference would virtually disclose the communication, and it is this very disclosure against which the privilege protects.

The claim of privilege being made, the *trial judge determines* whether the facts justify the allowance of the claim.<sup>2</sup> This follows from the general principle of the judicial function (*post*, § 2550). Its application is usually of no difficulty, except sometimes in determining what weight to give to the party's oath in answering a bill of discovery.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2323. **Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended.** The subjective freedom of the client, which it is the purpose of the privilege to secure (*ante*, § 2291), could not be attained if the client understood that, when the relation ended, or even after the client's death, the attorney could be compelled to disclose the confidences; for there is no limit of time beyond which the disclosures might not be used to the detriment of the client or of his estate. It has therefore never been questioned, since the domination of the modern theory,<sup>1</sup> that the privilege continues even after the *end of the litigation* or other occasion for legal advice,<sup>2</sup> and even after the *death of the client*. It follows, also, on another aspect of the principle (*post*, § 2324), that even after the *death of the attorney* the client could not be compelled to disclose the communications.

The doctrine of *waiver* belongs in another place (*post*, § 2327).

§ 2322. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1864, Lord Chelmsford, in *Wentworth v. Lloyd*, 10 H. L. C. 591. *Contra*: *U. S.* 1899, *McCooe v. R. Co.*, 173 Mass. 117, 53 N. E. 133; 1909, *Phillips v. Chase*, 201 Mass. 444, 87 N. E. 755 (following *McCooe v. R. Co.*).

<sup>2</sup> 1895, *McDonald v. McDonald*, 142 Ind. 55, 41 N. E. 342; 1901, *Press Publishing Co. v. Lefferts*, 67 N. J. L. 172, 50 Atl. 342; 1901, *People's Bank v. Brown*, 50 C. C. A. 411, 112 Fed. 652 (and the witness may "by way of preliminary investigation be subjected to such interrogation as may be necessary").

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1853, *Volant v. Soyer*, 13 C. B. 231 (the attorney's statement that a document is privileged should ordinarily suffice); 1881, *Lyell v. Kennedy*, L. R. 27 Ch. D. 1, 21 (per Cotton, L. J.; in answers to interrogatories of discovery, "the Court must be satisfied, clearly satisfied, either from admissions or from other documents, that the oath of the defendant by which he claims his protection cannot be really available for the purpose for which he puts it forward"); *U. S.* 1842, *Reynolds v. Rowley*, 3 Rob. La. 201, 204 (the Court may refuse to accept the attorney's statement); 1921, *Bujac v. Wilson*, — N. M. —, 196 Pac. 513 (administration of an estate; the judge having directed an attorney to pro-

duce correspondence, held that the determination of the privilege was for the Court, but that the documents need not be produced for inspection until after the determination).

§ 2323. <sup>1</sup> Under the original theory, as already noticed in § 2290, the privilege might be thought to end with the ending of the relation.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1815, *Cholmondeley v. Clinton*, 19 Ves. Jr. 261, 268, per L. C. Eldon; 1878, *Bullock v. Corry*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 356 ("The rule is, once privileged, always privileged"); 1885, *Pearce v. Foster*, L. R. 15 Q. B. D. 114, 118; *U. S.* 1899, *Struckmeyer v. Lamb*, 75 Minn. 366, 77 N. W. 987; 1914, *Thomas v. Herring*, 244 Pa. 550, 91 Atl. 500 (cross-examination of a party by an attorney who had formerly been retained and consulted by her in the same transaction, held to be a violation of the privilege).

The doctrine of *waiver* is examined *post*, § 2327.

For the question of professional ethics, whether an attorney will be restrained from going over to the *service of the opponent*, see the following: 1815, *Earl Cholmondeley v. Lord Clinton*, 19 Ves. Jr. 261, and notes to Sumner's edition; 1821, *Beer v. Ward*, 1 Jac. 77; 1821, *Bricheno v. Thorp*, 1 Jac. 300; 1908, *Canons of Ethics* (Proceedings of the American Bar Association); 1917, *Costigan, Cases and Other Authorities on Legal Ethics, passim*.

## 7. "From disclosure by himself or by the legal adviser"

§ 2324. **Testimony by the Client or the Attorney.** The privilege being for the protection of the client in his subjective freedom of consultation (*ante*, §§ 2291, 2321), it would plainly be defeated if the disclosure of the confidences, though not compellable from the attorney, was still obtainable from the *client*. Accordingly, under the modern theory,<sup>1</sup> it has never been doubted that the client's own testimony is equally privileged.<sup>2</sup>

That the *attorney* himself is prohibited, whether he is willing or not, is of course the fundamental assumption of the modern theory.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2325. **Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney.** Clearly the privilege could not permit an evasion by receiving the voluntary extrajudicial disclosures of the attorney. Supposing them to be somehow admissible in spite of the Hearsay rule, they would be equally a violation of the privilege with his voluntary disclosures on the stand. If his disclosure has taken the form of handing a confidential document to a third person, the objection is equally forcible, and the question is not complicated with the Hearsay rule. On the other hand, the attorney must be credited with some authority for negotiating with the opposing party, and in the course of such negotiations it becomes necessary to make communications and to deliver documents or copies which, apart from the rule as to compromise-admissions (*ante*, § 1061), may afterwards with propriety form the subject of proof as part of the transactions between the parties; indeed, to refuse to examine them would often be to sanction the breaking of faith with the opponent. How can these opposing considerations be reconciled?

The judicial rulings are in confusion, and no clear appreciation of the significance of the dilemma is shown.<sup>1</sup> The following distinctions may perhaps furnish a solution:

§ 2324. <sup>1</sup> But not under the earlier theory: *ante*, § 2290.

<sup>2</sup> 1898, *Birmingham R. & E. Co. v. Wildman*, 119 Ala. 547, 24 So. 548; 1877, *State v. White*, 19 Kan. 445; 1856, *Hemenway v. Smith*, 28 Vt. 701, 707; and the cases cited *ante*, § 2319, assume this.

<sup>3</sup> Distinguish the question whether it is allowable for him to testify, at the client's request, *on behalf of the client* (*ante*, § 1911). In the Georgia Code that question and the present privilege are confusedly dealt with in the same paragraph.

§ 2325. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1833, *Cocks v. Nash*, 6 C. & P. 154 (a deed was not producible, being in a trustee's hands for the plaintiff and therefore privileged; but a copy furnished by the trustee to the defendant and proved correct by the trustee was admitted); 1842, *Lloyd v. Mostyn*, 4 Dowl. Pr. n. s. 476 (the attorney refusing to produce by claim of privilege, proof was allowed by a copy already made by the attorney and furnished to the opponent under a judge's order; *semble*, *Parke, B.*, declared the

same rule applicable to a copy of a document stolen from the attorney); 1852, *Enthoven v. Cobb*, 17 Jur. 81 (communication of a privileged document to another party and a solicitor, having a common interest, held "not made to allow an unlimited communication"); 1868, *R. v. Leverton*, 11 Cox Cr. 152 (letter to the prosecutrix' attorney, coming somehow to the hands of the defendant's attorney, not allowed to be read); 1880, *R. v. Downer*, 14 Cox Cr. 486, 487 (solicitor's letter to a railway company, making claim for lost articles, held not privileged as involving facts communicated in confidence); 1898, *Calcraft v. Guest*, 1 Q. B. 759 (copy of a privileged document obtained by accidental transfer of possession, admitted).

*United States*: 1892, *Liggett v. Glenn*, 2 C. C. A. 286, 51 Fed. 381, 4 U. S. App. 438, 472 (the communication being a letter or other writing, although it may pass, by loss or otherwise, into a third person's or the adversary's hands, it cannot be used); 1899, *Southern R. Co. v. White*, 108 Ga. 201, 33 S. E. 952 (letter to a party's attorney, handed by the latter to



(1) Since the attorney has implied authority from the client (*ante*, § 1063) to make admissions and otherwise to act in all that concerns the management of the cause, all disclosures (oral or written) *voluntarily* made to the opposing party or to third persons in the course of negotiations for settlement, or in the course of taking adverse steps in litigation (*e. g.* in serving notices), are receivable, as being made under an implied waiver of privilege, giving authority to disclose the confidences when necessary in the opinion of the attorney; unless it appears that the attorney has acted in bad faith towards the client.

(2) All other *voluntary* disclosures are inadmissible, except so far as the special circumstances show an implied authority of disclosure from the client over and above the general authority to conduct litigation.

(3) All *involuntary* disclosures, in particular, through the loss or theft of documents from the attorney's possession, are not protected by the privilege, on the principle (*post*, § 2326) that, since the law has granted secrecy so far as its own process goes, it leaves to the client and attorney to take measures of caution sufficient to prevent the overhearing of third persons; and the risk of insufficient precautions is upon the client. This principle applies equally to documents.

§ 2326. **Third Persons Overhearing.** The law provides subjective freedom for the client by assuring him of exemption from its processes of disclosure against himself or the attorney or their agents of communication. This much, but not a whit more, is necessary for the maintenance of the privilege. Since the means of preserving secrecy of communication are entirely in the client's hands, and since the privilege is a derogation from the general testimonial duty and should be strictly construed, it would be improper to extend its prohibition to third persons who obtain knowledge of the communications. One who overhears the communication, whether with or without the client's knowledge,<sup>1</sup> is not within the protection of the privilege.<sup>2</sup> The same rule ought to apply to one who surreptitiously reads or obtains possession of a document in original or copy (*ante*, § 2325).

the opponent's attorney, excluded): 1887, *Tays v. Carr*, 37 Kan. 141, 14 Pac. 456 (letter from a client to the attorney, produced by a third person, held not privileged); 1904, *Jones v. Nantahala M. & T. Co.*, 137 N. C. 237, 49 S. E. 94 (letter sent by the attorney to a third person, excluded); 1888, *Hicks' Estate v. Blanchard*, 60 Vt. 673, 15 Atl. 401 (action on a note; the defendant not allowed to use a copy of the specifications of claim obtained from the plaintiff's attorney).

In *Perry v. State*, 4 Ida. 224, 38 Pac. 658 (1895), where the attorney's exclamation, when found digging up money, "That is my client's money," was admitted as "part of an act," the opinion is confused and useless.

§ 2326.<sup>1</sup> The fallacious distinction, here sometimes taken, that when the third person is present to the client's knowledge, that person may disclose, but not the attorney, has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2311).

<sup>2</sup> 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (execution and contents of will); 1889, *Cotton v. State*, 87 Ala. 75, 6 So. 396 (conversation between the accused and his attorney, in the jailer's presence, held not privileged, as to the jailer's testimony); 1894, *Denver T. Co. v. Owens*, 20 Colo. 107, 125, 36 Pac. 848, *semble*; 1895, *Perry v. State*, 4 Ida. 224, 38 Pac. 658 (third person overhearing); 1885, *State v. Sterrett*, 68 Ia. 76, 25 N.W. 936 (third person overhearing); 1859, *Hoy v. Morris*, 13 Gray Mass. 519 (a "mere bystander," casually overhearing, and not an agent of the attorney, held not within the privilege; good opinion); 1895, *Basye v. State*, 45 Nebr. 261, 63 N. W. 811 (third person, known to the client to be present); 1829, *Jackson v. French*, 3 Wend. 337 (third person going with the client); 1874, *Cary v. White*, 59 N. Y. 336, 338; 1906, *State v. Falsetta*, 43 Wash. 159, 86 Pac. 168 (policemen overhearing the conversation).

## 8. "Except the protection be waived"

§ 2327. **Waiver in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver.** The privilege is designed to secure the client's confidence in the secrecy of his communications (*ante*, § 2291); hence, the privilege is not violated by receiving such disclosures as the client by his own will permits to be made. There is no analogy between a rule of conditional exclusion in the nature of privilege (*ante*, § 2196) and an absolute rule of disqualification (*ante*, § 477). Yet the common juxtaposition of the two classes of rules in statutory enactments — due in part to the indiscriminate use of the term "competent," long ago denounced by Bentham — has from time to time made it necessary for the Bench to correct this elementary misunderstanding on the part of the Bar.

In respect to the present privilege, it has always been recognized that a *waiver may be made*;<sup>1</sup> although only since the domination of the modern theory (*ante*, § 2290) has it been perfectly plain that the waiver, like the privilege, belongs solely to the client (*ante*, § 2321), and not to the attorney.<sup>2</sup>

What constitutes a *waiver by implication*? Judicial decision gives no clear answer to this question.<sup>3</sup> In deciding it, regard must be had to the double

§ 2327. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1778, Captain Baillie's Trial, 21 How. St. Tr. 1, 341, 360, 408; 1826, *Merle v. Moore*, Ry. & Mo. 390; *U. S.* 1905, *Wood v. Etiwanda W. Co.*, 147 Cal. 228, 81 Pac. 512; 1883, *Passmore v. Passmore's Estate*, 50 Mich. 626, 16 N. W. 170. In Georgia, where the attorney is disqualified on behalf of the client, as well as privileged, the client of course cannot waive the disqualification: *ante*, § 1911.

<sup>2</sup> In 1816, in *Fenwick v. Reed*, 1 Meriv. 114, 122, L. C. Eldon was undecided whether the attorney's executor could waive; but this doubt would not arise to-day.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the Codes cited *ante*, § 2292, lay down a rule. Judicial decisions are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1654, *Waldron v. Ward*, Style 449 (counsel in the cause, being examined to prove a death, was not allowed to be examined by the opponent on privileged matters); 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 876 (a direct examination to matters within the privilege is a waiver permitting cross-examination on those matters):

CANADA: 1868, *Forsyth v. Charlebois*, 12 Low. Can. Jur. 264, *semble* (calling the attorney as a witness amounts to a waiver for all matters touched on in the direct examination).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1888, *Hunt v. Blackburn*, 128 U. S. 464, 470, 9 Sup. 125 (privilege held waived by "entering upon a line of defence which involved what transpired between herself and Mr. W. [the attorney]"); *Alabama*: 1873, *Rowland v. Plummer*, 50 Ala. 182, 194, *semble* (the client's taking the stand, held a waiver as to the attorney's testimony to those facts); 1897, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Hill*, 115 Ala. 334, 22 So. 163 (by using the same conversation for his own purposes, the client was held to waive the

privilege); *California*: 1855, *Landsberger v. Gorham*, 5 Cal. 450 (direct testimony held on the facts not to amount to a waiver on a certain subject); *Connecticut*: 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 325 (witness' voluntary testimony to a preliminary statement to her attorney, held not a waiver for the whole consultation); *Hawaii*: 1897, *Takamori v. Kanai*, 11 Haw. 1 (malicious prosecution; advice of counsel as furnishing probable cause; the client's calling the counsel, held a waiver); *Indiana*: 1873, *Bigler v. Reyher*, 43 Ind. 112 (the client's taking the stand, held not to be a waiver, for the purpose either of calling the attorney or of cross-examining the client); 1873, *Oliver v. Pate*, 43 Ind. 132, 142 (similar; but voluntary testimony to the communication is a waiver, permitting the attorney to be called); 1905, *Wilson v. Ohio F. Ins. Co.*, 164 Ind. 462, 73 N. E. 892 (action against a surety; the plaintiff's attorney's testimony on the trial of the principal for embezzlement, held not a waiver of privilege for this trial; no authority cited); *Iowa*: 1874, *Barker v. Kuhn*, 38 Ia. 392, 395, *semble* (like *State v. White*, Kan., *infra*); 1909, *Kelly v. Cummins*, 143 Ia. 148, 121 N. W. 540 (client's testimony to a transaction with the attorney is a waiver); 1912, *State v. Hector*, 158 Ia. 664, 138 N. W. 917 (seduction; the woman having made explanations of her testimony before the grand jury and the county attorney, the latter was allowed to be called to contradict them); *Kansas*: 1877, *State v. White*, 19 Kan. 445, 447 (the client's taking the stand is not in itself a waiver of the privilege); 1878, *Wilkins v. Moore*, 20 Kan. 538, 540 (same); 1906, *Re Burnette*, 73 Kan. 609, 85 Pac. 547 (certain prior publication, held a waiver); *G. S.* 1915, § 7223



elements that are predicated in every waiver, *i. e.* not only the element of implied intention, but also the element of fairness and consistency. A privileged person would seldom be found to waive, if his intention not to abandon could alone control the situation. There is always also the objective consideration that when his conduct touches a certain point of disclosure, fairness requires that his immunity shall cease, whether he intended that result or not. He cannot be allowed, after disclosing as much as he pleases, to withhold the remainder. He may elect to withhold or to disclose, but after a certain point, his election must remain final. As a fair canon of decision, the following distinctions may be suggested:

(1) The client's offer of his *own testimony* in the cause *at large* is not a waiver, for the purpose either of cross-examining him to the communications or of calling the attorney to prove them; otherwise the privilege of consultation would be exercised only at the penalty of closing the client's own mouth on the stand.

(2) The client's offer of the *attorney's testimony* in the cause *at large* is not a waiver so far as the attorney's knowledge has been acquired casually as an ordinary witness; but otherwise it is a waiver; for, considering that the attorney ought in general not to be used as a witness (*ante*, § 1911), the client ought to be discouraged from utilizing his attorney in double and inconsistent capacities, and if he has seen fit to furnish him knowledge as a witness, he should deny himself the right to invoke the attorney's function as an adviser.

(quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Massachusetts*: 1869, *Woburn v. Henshaw*, 101 Mass. 193, 200 ("If the client sees fit to be a witness, he makes himself liable to full cross-examination like any other witness"); 1874, *Montgomery v. Pickering*, 116 Mass. 227, 231, 237 (calling the attorney is not in itself a waiver of the privilege; nor is the client's own testimony); 1892, *Blount v. Kimpton*, 155 Mass. 378, 29 N. E. 590 (same, on the first point); 1920, *Com. v. Barronian*, 235 Mass. 364, 126 N. E. 833 (perjury; cross-examination of defendant to a statement made an attorney; point not decided); *Michigan*: 1857, *Alderman v. People*, 4 Mich. 414, 423 (accomplice taking the stand for the State under promise of immunity waives his privilege; "he should be allowed no privileged communications; these he has voluntarily surrendered"); 1889, *People v. Gallagher*, 75 Mich. 512, 515, 42 N. W. 1063 (an accomplice, testifying for the State, waives "all privilege as regards the crime in question"); *Minnesota*: 1890, *State v. Tall*, 43 Minn. 276, 45 N. W. 449 (the client's testimony to a specific fact is a waiver of the privilege as to the communication of that fact to his attorney); 1903, *State v. Nelson*, 91 Minn. 143, 97 N. W. 652 (whether the client's testimony given generally is a waiver; not decided); *Mississippi*: 1888, *Jones v. State*, 65 Miss. 179, 3 So. 379 (taking the stand is not in general a waiver; but here an accomplice, who had

become State's evidence, was held to have waived and to be subject to cross-examination to his statements to counsel); *New York*: 1905, *People v. Patrick*, 182 N. Y. 131, 74 N. E. 843 (a co-principal's voluntary testimony held, under the statute, "equivalent to an express waiver in open court" of his privilege); 1909, *People v. Farmer*, 194 N. Y. 251, 87 N. E. 457 (whether the defendant called herself B. where acknowledging a deed before an attorney; her subsequent public avowal of it, held a waiver); *North Carolina*: 1904, *Jones v. Nantahala M. & T. Co.*, 137 N. C. 237, 49 S. E. 94 (calling the attorney as a witness is a waiver as to prior inconsistent statements by the attorney); *Ohio*: 1860, *King v. Barrett*, 11 Oh. St. 261, 263 (Code applied; in a civil case the client's voluntary testimony is a waiver of the privilege on the same subject); 1877, *Duttenhofer v. State*, 34 Oh. 91 (in a criminal case the accused's voluntary testimony is not a waiver; the Code provision not being applicable to criminal cases); *Virginia*: 1871, *Chahoon v. Com.*, 21 Gratt. 822, 835 (one of three joint defendants, by taking the stand at the instance of the State and testifying to a communication between counsel and another defendant, held not to waive the privilege by implication); 1881, *Tate v. Tate*, 75 Va. 522, 533 (the client's testimony, not relating to the "privileged matter," held not a waiver, even where on cross-examination the communications were testified to).



(3) The client's offer of his *own testimony* as to *specific facts* about which he has happened to communicate with the attorney is not a waiver, for the same reason as in (1), *supra*; but his offer of the *attorney's testimony* as to such specific facts is a waiver, for the same reason as in (2), *supra*.

(4) The client's offer of his own or the attorney's testimony as to a *specific communication* to the attorney is a waiver as to all other communications to the attorney on the same matter; for the privilege of secret consultation is intended only as an incidental means of defence, and not as an independent means of attack, and to use it in the latter character is to abandon it in the former.

(5) The client's offer of his own or the attorney's testimony as to a *part of any communication* to the attorney is a waiver as to the whole of that communication, on the analogy of the principle of Completeness (*ante*, § 2113).

§ 2328. **Waiver at Former Trial; Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees.** A waiver at one stage of a trial should be final for all further stages;<sup>1</sup> and a waiver at a *first trial* should suffice as a waiver for a later trial,<sup>2</sup> since there is no longer any reason for preserving secrecy.

Where the consultation was had by *several clients jointly*, the waiver should be joint for joint statements, and neither could waive for the disclosure of the other's statements; yet neither should be able to obstruct the other in the disclosure of the latter's own statements.<sup>3</sup> Where the consultation was had by an *agent* of the client, it is ordinarily the client alone who may waive;<sup>4</sup> but it has been already noticed that for certain extrajudicial purposes the attorney himself must be regarded as authorized to waive secrecy on behalf of his client (*ante*, § 2325). Where the client's interest has been *assigned*, it seems proper to say that the privilege is transferred to the assignee, for the purpose of waiver, so far as the communications affect merely the realization of the transferred interest; but it remains with the client so far as they affect any liability or right remaining in him.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2328. <sup>1</sup> 1913, *In re Whiting*, 110 Me. 232, 85 Atl. 791 (guardian for insane; waiver at Probate Court trial; held a waiver on appellate trial); 1902, *Green v. Crapo*, 181 Mass. 55, 62 N. E. 956 (waiver for a hearing before the Probate Court prevents claim of privilege on a hearing before a Supreme Court justice).

<sup>2</sup> *Accord*: 1906, *Elliott v. Kansas City*, 198 Mo. 593, 96 S. W. 1023 (approving the principle of *Green v. Crapo*, *supra*, n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> There are few rulings: 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. N. Y. 528, 596 ("Where the privilege belongs to several clients, I do not think any one of them, or even a majority, contrary to the expressed will of the others, can waive the privilege"); 1871, *Chahoon v. Com.*, 21 Gratt. Va. 822, 835 (C. J. S., and R. S., being jointly indicted for conspiracy, met for consultation with counsel; each had a counsel, but C.'s was absent; L.

was counsel for R. S. at the trial, R. S. having testified to a statement of C. at the meeting, C. called L. to testify to C.'s statement; but L. claimed the privilege; held, that L. could not testify without a waiver by all three, J. S. having in fact made no waiver; this seems unsound).

<sup>4</sup> 1891, *Bingham v. Walk*, 128 Ind. 164, 27 N. E. 483 (here the agent was deceased); 1904, *Leyner v. Leach*, 123 Ia. 185, 98 N. W. 628 (wife as agent).

<sup>5</sup> The few rulings on this point do not take this distinction: *Eng.* 1831, *Bowman v. Norton*, 5 C. & P. 177 (similar facts to *Merle v. Moore*, § 2321, *supra*; *Tindal*, C. J., would not allow the assignees, as such, to waive the privilege on the bankrupt's behalf); *U. S.* 1838, *Benjamin v. Coventry*, 19 Wend. N. Y. 353 (waiver may be by the client A, even though by assignment A's interest in the cause has passed to B; *Bronson*, J., diss.).



§ 2329. **Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative.** That an executor or administrator may exercise authority over all the interests of the estate left by the client, and yet may not incidentally have the right, in the interest of that estate, to waive the privilege of concealing confidential communications affecting it, would seem too inconsistent to be maintained under any system of law. It has, indeed, seldom been maintained for the present privilege; but the denial of this waiver for another privilege, by some Courts (*post*, § 2391), demands here the more emphatic repudiation of such a fallacy:

1851, TURNER, V. C., in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 393: "In the cases of testamentary dispositions, the very foundation on which the rule proceeds seems to be wanting; and in the absence, therefore, of any illegal purpose entertained by the testator, there does not appear to be any ground for applying it. . . . That the privilege does not in all cases terminate with the death of the party, I entertain no doubt. That it belongs equally to parties claiming under the client as against parties claiming adversely to him, I entertain as little doubt; but it does not, I think, therefore follow that it belongs to the executor as against the next of kin, and in such a case as the present. In the one case the question is whether the property belongs to the client or his estate, and the rule may well apply for the protection of the client's interests. In the other case the question is to which of two parties claiming under the client the property in equity belongs, and it would seem to be a mere arbitrary rule to hold that it belongs to one of them, rather than to the other."

1889, COLLINS, J., in *Layman's Will*, 40 Minn. 372, 42 N. W. 286: "There is an abundance of authority for saying that, upon the decease of the only person who could, in his life-time, exercise the privilege of waiver, the rule should not be so perverted by a strict adherence to it as to render it inconsistent with its objects, and thus bring it into direct conflict with the reason upon which it is founded. The object of the rule, so far as it relates to this class of communications, being the protection of the estate, there remains no reason for continuing it when the very foundation upon which it proceeds is wanting. The testimony called for was quite necessary in order to determine the weight which ought to be given the witness' opinion as to the mental condition of the testator, and his disclosures in no way reflected upon the character or reputation of the deceased. The testimony when given served to protect the estate, and tended to aid in a proper disposition of it. The issue in the case was as to the mental soundness of a person under whom each litigant claimed, and, whatever the result, the interest and the estate of the deceased were not prejudicially affected. It is not an action in which the success of an adverse third party must prove detrimental to the property. Neither of these litigants can be permitted to invoke the rule respecting privileged communications for the purpose of excluding material and important evidence of the character above described upon the only question involved in the dispute, namely, the sanity of the deceased."

1900, BARKER, J., in *Brooks v. Holden*, 175 Mass. 137, 55 N. E. 802: "To allow the executor or administrator of the deceased client to waive the privilege, and to call the attorney to testify as to a privileged communication, in a suit involving the client's estate, no more militates against the principle of public policy involved, than to allow the client himself to waive the privilege. Nor does it tend to weaken the protection which the rule gives for the benefit of the client as an individual. The executor or administrator acts with reference to the question of waiver as the personal representative of the deceased client, and solely in the interest of his estate."

This view is accepted with practical unanimity. It is further generally agreed that in testamentary contests the privilege is *divisible*, and may be



waived by the executor, the administrator, the heir, the next of kin, or the legatee.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2329. *Accord*: <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1849, *Doe v. Hertford*, 13 Jur. 632 (waiver by heir and executors, against third persons, held proper, per Erle, J.); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 392 (in a contest, between the next of kin and devisees, the privilege was held to belong to neither as against the other; quoted *supra*); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, *semble*, per Lord Langdale, M. R. (waiver by the executor, allowable).

CANADA: 1893, *Magee v. R.*, 3 Exch. Can. 304, 327 (he must disclose "all that passed at the time relating to such execution"); 1903, *Stewart v. Walker*, 6 Ont. L. R. 495 (*Russell v. Jackson*, Eng., followed, in an issue of 'deviseavit vel non').

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1897, *Grover v. Patten*, 165 U. S. 394, 17 Sup. 411 (privilege ceases "between devisees under a will," "between heirs or next of kin"); *Connecticut*: 1915, *Middletown Trust Co. v. Crowell*, 83 Conn. 290, 93 Atl. 785 (following *Phillips v. Chase*, Mass.); *Illinois*: 1865, *Fossler v. Schriber*, 38 Ill. 173 (the "only heir" of the client, held competent to waive the privilege; and even if there were other heirs not parties, "the Court would presume their concurrence"); 1885, *Scott v. Harris*, 113 Ill. 447, 454, *semble* (in a controversy between legatees and grantees the privilege ceases); 1911, *Wilkinson v. Service*, 249 Ill. 146, 94 N. E. 50; *Iowa*: 1897, *Winters v. Winters*, 102 Ia. 53, 71 N. W. 184 (an heir, devisee, or other representative, but not a stranger, may waive; and hence, in a will contest, either party in interest may waive); *Maine*: 1907, *Le Prohon's Appeal*, *Greene's Estate*, 102 Me. 455, 67 Atl. 317 (personal representative or heir may waive); 1913, *Folyoke v. Holyoke's Estate*, 110 Me. 469, 87 Atl. 40, *semble*; *Massachusetts*: 1900, *Brooks*

*v. Holden*, 175 Mass. 137, 55 N. E. 802 (representative of a deceased client may waive; quoted *supra*); 1909, *Phillips v. Chase*, 201 Mass. 444, 87 N. E. 755 (in a controversy of succession, where both parties claim under the testator, neither can claim the privilege); *Minnesota*: 1889, *Layman's Will*, 40 Minn. 372, 42 N. W. 286 (the attorney who prepared a will, permitted to testify as to the testator's sanity, in probate proceedings; quoted *supra*); *Missouri*: 1903, *Ex parte Gfeller*, 178 Mo. 248, 77 S. W. 552 (privilege allowed to be waived by the executor, here seeking discovery against the attorney; following the analogy of *Thompson v. Ish*, Mo., cited *post*, § 2391, as to physician's privilege); *Nebraska*: 1907, *Parker v. Parker*, 78 Nebr. 535, 111 N. W. 119 (proponent allowed to waive the privilege); *Virginia*: 1919, *Hugo v. Clark*, 125 Va. 126, 99 S. E. 521 (issue as to the contents of a later will, revoking a prior one, but itself later destroyed; the drafting attorneys, one of them being an attesting witness, allowed to testify, the privilege not being applicable as between heir and devisee).

*Contra*: 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 N. Y. 56, 59, 1 N. E. 104 (neither an executor, nor any one else, may waive the privilege after the party's death; said *obiter*); 1920, *Swetland v. Miles*, — Oh. —, 130 N. E. 22 (whether a document was the will of T.; testimony of an attorney, who had been consulted by T. about the document, offered by proponents, held inadmissible on the ground that the representatives could not waive the privilege; unsound).

*Undecided*: 1906, *Brown v. Brown*, 77 Nebr. 125, 108 N. W. 180.

Compare the testamentary cases decided on other grounds, *ante*, §§ 2314, 2315, and the Codes quoted *ante*, § 2292.



TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC III: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

CHAPTER LXXXI.

1. In general

- § 2332. Policy of the Privilege.
- § 2333. History of the Privilege.
- § 2334. Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.

2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged

- § 2336. Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.
- § 2337. Communications, not Acts.
- § 2338. Exceptions and Distinctions.

3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled

- § 2339. Third Persons Overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.
- § 2340. Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.

4. Cessation of the Privilege

- § 2341. Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.

1. In general

§ 2332. **Policy of the Privilege.** The policy which should lie at the foundation of every rule of privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285) is amply satisfied in the present privilege. The communications originate in confidence; the confidence is essential to the relation; the relation is a proper object of encouragement by the law; and the injury that would inure to it by disclosure is probably greater than the benefit that would result in the judicial investigation of truth. There seems therefore to be no reason for objecting to the recognition of the present privilege:

1853, *Commissioners on Common Law Procedure*, Second Report, 13: "The question how far communications of married persons 'inter se' should be matter of testimony in courts of justice stands on a very different ground [from that of compelling one to testify to facts against the other]. So much of the happiness of human life may fairly be said to depend on the inviolability of domestic confidence that the alarm and unhappiness occasioned to society by invading its sanctity and compelling the public disclosures of confidential communications between husband and wife would be far a greater evil than the disadvantage which may occasionally arise from the loss of light which such revelations might throw on questions in dispute. . . . [Hence,] all communications between them should be held to be privileged."

1871, FREEMAN, J., in *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432: "If this could be permitted, it would tend to destroy that bond of mutual confidence and unquestioning trust that is essential to the peace and happiness of the most sacred of all domestic relations. No man would be willing to have his wife called on in a court of justice to detail the facts of which she gains a knowledge by reason of the fact that she is the companion of his privacy and has unlimited freedom of access to all the occurrences that transpire in his home and around the fireside."

1898, TAYLOR, C. J., in *Mercer v. State*, 40 Fla. 216, 24 So. 154: "Society has a deeply-rooted interest in the preservation of the peace of families, and in the maintenance of the

sacred institution of marriage; and its strongest safeguard is to preserve with jealous care any violation of those hallowed confidences inherent in, and inseparable from, the marital status. Therefore the law places the ban of its prohibition upon any breach of the confidence between husband and wife, by declaring all confidential communications between them to be incompetent matter for either of them to expose as witnesses. The reason of the old rule for rendering interested witnesses incompetent to testify at all in any case to which they were parties was because their interest was supposed to be such a strong incentive to perjury, and, where husband or wife was interested in a cause, both of them were excluded as incompetent witnesses for any purpose, because of their unity of interest; they, in the eye of the law, being regarded as one person, and whenever either was interested both were considered to be equally interested; and the incentive to perjury from such interest was considered to be as strongly operative upon the one as upon the other. But the reason of the rule for excluding the confidences between husband and wife as incompetent matter to be deposed by either of them, though they may be competent witnesses to testify to other facts, is found to rest in that public policy that seeks to preserve inviolate the peace, good order, and limitless confidence between the heads of the family circle so necessary to every well-ordered civilized society."

§ 2333. **History of the Privilege.** The privilege for communications between husband and wife is apparently, in time of origin, the second of such privileges to be enforced at common law, and yet the last to be definitely recognized and distinguished. In the second half of the 1600s an instance of its application is found;<sup>1</sup> and yet the explicit statement of the privilege, as a distinct one from any other rule, did not come in England until the statutory reforms of the Common Law Procedure Act, just as the second half of the 1800s was beginning.<sup>2</sup> The explanation of the paradox is that until that time the present privilege for communications between husband and wife had not been plainly separated from the other privilege of husband or wife not to testify to any facts against the other. This latter privilege was fully established by the end of the 1600s (*ante*, § 2227). But among the various reasons advanced for its support was the policy of protecting domestic confidence by prohibiting their mutual disclosures (*ante*, § 2228). In other words, the true policy of the present privilege was perceived, and yet it was not enforced in the shape of any rule distinct from the old-established privilege of each not to testify against the other as a party or interested in the suit. That the two are distinct is plain; for the privilege not to testify against the other is broader in the respect that it excludes testimony to any adverse facts even though they have been learned wholly apart from marital confidence, and is narrower in the respect that it applies only to testimony adverse in its tenor and adverse to a party to the cause or to one in an equivalent position.

Nevertheless, the privilege against adverse testimony remained for a long time alone in its recognition; and not unnaturally, for two reasons. In the first place, in the great majority of instances in which it was desired to make

§ 2333. <sup>1</sup> 1684, *Lady Ivy's Trial*, 10 How. St. Tr. 555, 628 (a husband's oath to the wife's request to him to commit forgery, not admitted against her as witness).

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1852, Mr. J. Erle, in *Stapleton*

*v. Crofts*, 18 Q. B. 367, 374, believed that "as no protection was given to conjugal confidence in respect of the wives of witnesses not parties," the rule must be regarded as "not yet established."



a wife reveal her husband's communications, he was an adverse party, and his long-established privilege against her adverse testimony served equally to protect him against that sort of her adverse testimony as against any other. In the second place, the other instances where it might be desired that she should reveal his communications would ordinarily be those in which he himself desired her testimony in his behalf, and this was of course prevented by her disqualification (*ante*, § 600). Thus there remained only one situation, and that the least common one, in which the two existing rules of disqualification and privilege did not already suffice to dispose of the evidence, namely, the situation in which the husband was not a party but an indifferent person and yet his communications to his wife were material to the cause and were offered to be proved by her. In view of the rarity of this situation under the system of married women's disabilities then prevailing, it is not to be wondered that at common law the question was not forced upon the consideration of the judges, and that the recognition of the present privilege as a rule independent of any other was so belated.

Not until the marital disqualification and the marital privilege against adverse testimony were proposed to be abolished or modified did the existence of this third aspect of the subject begin to be perceived.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, when the legislators in the various jurisdictions took the first steps, in the period from 1840 to 1870, to reform the other two rules, by abolishing or restricting the disqualification and the other privilege, they invariably preserved by express enactment the present privilege for communications. So this privilege, before then existing rather in principle than in rule, practically begins its existence and is defined in its terms by the legislation of that period.

§ 2334. **Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.** (1) That the *disqualification* of husband and wife to testify the one *on the other's behalf* (*ante*, §§ 600-620) is distinct from the privilege of either against the other's disclosure of communications ought to be plain enough. The judicial confusion of them is nevertheless frequent; and the occasional legislative commingling of them in the same sentence of the same enactment has given rise to much of this confusion. Perhaps the commonest error is to ignore the husband's *right to waive* the privilege (*post*, § 2340), *i. e.* when he offers the wife to prove his communications to her, the erroneous tendency is to treat the disclosure as absolutely prohibited in spite of his consent. A disqualification, of course, cannot be waived; but it is of the essence of this privilege (as of every privilege) that it may be; and yet the communications, when offered by the privileged person, are even yet repeatedly excluded, in apparent ignorance of the distinction. Another practical difference is that the *disqualification affects only a party's* or interested person's husband or wife (*ante*, § 607), while the privilege is equally valid for the communications of a husband or wife not a party nor

<sup>3</sup> Compare Mr. J. Erle's remark, *supra*.

interested.<sup>1</sup> Still another difference is that the disqualification may cease upon the *death or divorce* of the husband or wife (*ante*, § 610), while the present privilege cannot (*post*, § 2341).

(2) The distinction between the present privilege for communications and the privilege against *adverse marital testimony* in general (*ante*, §§ 2227-2245) has already been noticed in dealing with the history of the rules (*ante*, § 2333). One of the practical differences between them is that the former applies only where the testimony is adverse, *i. e.* where the other spouse is either a party or in an equivalent position (*ante*, § 2234), while the latter may be invoked by any spouse however indifferent to the cause.<sup>2</sup> Another difference is that the former may cease with the death or divorce of the spouse against whom the testimony may be offered (*ante*, § 2237), while the latter is perpetual (*post*, § 2341). Another and still more important difference is that the former prohibits the spouse's adverse testimony regardless of the source of knowledge, while the latter covers only knowledge obtained through the confidence of the marriage relation.<sup>3</sup> The two privileges have practically nothing in common, either in policy or in rule; and their complete separation needs repeated emphasis before the possibility of confusion can be cleared away.

(3) The *statutory provisions* dealing with the present privilege are commonly united in the same enactment with the marital disqualification and the other marital privilege, and their interpretation cannot be always accurately made without comparing the entire enactment.<sup>4</sup> The ensuing examination of the present privilege is made with reference to these statutes.<sup>5</sup> In a few instances the phrasing of the local statute is peculiar and determining; but certain types of enactment are common to many jurisdictions, and in only one or two respects do the different types represent any substantial difference of policy or rule.

§ 2334. <sup>1</sup> 1920, *Dalton v. People*, 68 Colo. 44, 189 Pac. 37 (cited more fully *post*, § 2340, n. 1a); 1878, *Winchester F. Ins. Co. v. Foster*, 90 Ill. 121, 125; 1904, *Howard v. Cohn*, 118 Ky. 1, 80 S. W. 211, 81 S. W. 704 (husband a witness only).

*Contra* (but the words of the extraordinary Illinois statute permit of this ruling): 1877, *Galbraith v. McLain*, 84 Ill. 379, 383.

<sup>2</sup> 1873, *Moore v. Wingate*, 53 Mo. 398, 409; 1878, *Willis v. Gammill*, 67 Mo. 730, 731.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, C. J., in *Mercer v. State*, Fla., partly quoted *ante*, § 2332; 1905, *Marshall v. Marshall*, 71 Kan. 313, 80 Pac. 629 (removal of general marital disability for or against the other does not affect the privilege for communications).

<sup>4</sup> The statutes have therefore been collected in one place (*ante*, § 488).

<sup>5</sup> In the following cases, sundry interpretations are made of the effect of the local statutes: 1897, *Hopkins v. Grimshaw*, 165 U. S. 342, 17 Sup. 401 (the privilege is not abolished by the statute; yet the dictum that the

last proviso in § 877 merely qualifies the preceding section, and applies only to spouses who are parties, seems unsound); 1897, *People v. Warner*, 117 Cal. 637, 49 Pac. 841 (privilege applies to criminal cases); 1916, *Williams v. Betts*, 11 Del. Ch. 128, 98 Atl. 371 (St. 1907, now Rev. C. 1915, § 4216, making husband and wife competent to testify for or against each other, does not abolish the privilege for communications; careful opinion by Curtis, Ch.); 1910, *Schreffler v. Chase*, 245 Ill. 395, 92 N. E. 272 (Rev. St. 1873, c. 51, § 5, leaves the common-law rule untouched except so far as exceptions are expressly enumerated); 1900, *Hyde v. Gannett*, 175 Mass. 177, 55 N. E. 991 (privilege still obtains in offering evidence under St. 1896, c. 445, quoted *ante*, § 1576, admitting certain hearsay evidence); 1916, *McCormick v. State*, 135 Tenn. 218, 186 S. W. 95 (St. 1915, c. 161, abolishing the privilege of spouses not to testify or be testified against in criminal cases, held not to permit the spouse to testify to confidential communications falling under the present privilege).



## 2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged

§ 2336. **Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.** The essence of the privilege is to protect confidences only. This is inevitably required by the very nature of this class of privileges (*ante*, § 2285). The purpose is to insure subjectively the free and unrestrained secrecy of communication, divested of any apprehension of compulsory disclosure; and if the communication is not intended to be a secret one, the privilege has no application to it. The chief question must be, for the present privilege, merely whether *confidence* or *secrecy* is to be *presumed to have been intended*, in all marital communications, until the contrary appears, or whether the burden of showing the intention of secrecy should be upon the person claiming the privilege.

It would seem proper to hold that *all* marital communications are by implication confidential, and that the contrary intention must be made to appear by the circumstances of any given instance. Looking at the habits of married persons and the infrequency of express injunctions of secrecy, this implication of confidence seems more consonant with the facts of life. Such is practically the general judicial attitude, in spite of apparent differences of phrasing:

1830, CARR, J., in *Robin v. King*, 2 Leigh 140, 144: "Suppose it proved that the declarations were so made [in the family's presence] and no secrecy enjoined; would it follow that the husband wished or expected they should be divulged? Are we to say that every word spoken in the thoughtless, careless confidence of the domestic circle is free for public disclosure unless secrecy be enjoined? Is not the converse of this proposition true? And would it not have a most mischievous effect, would it not seriously break in upon that confidence which is the charm of domestic life, if men should from our decisions have cause to fear that after they were in their graves their reputation might be injured and their children ruined by the declarations they had made in the bosoms of their families? This freedom from restraint or apprehension in the intercourse of one's own fireside seems to me so necessary to the quiet and repose of society that I am fearful of trenching upon it in the slightest degree."

1833, DANIEL, J., in *Hester v. Hester*, 4 Dev. 228, 230: "The sanctity of such [confidential] communications will be protected. Persons connected by marriage tie have, as was said at the bar, the right to think aloud in the presence of each other. But the question remains, what communications are to be deemed confidential? Not those, we think, which are made to the wife to be by her communicated to others; nor those which the husband makes to the wife as to a matter of fact upon which a thing is to operate after his death, when it must be the wish of the husband that the operation should be according to the truth of the fact as established by his declaration. Suppose a husband to disclose to his wife that he has given to one of their children a horse, can she not after his death prove that as against the executor? . . . The same reason equally applies when from the subject of the conversation it is obvious he did not wish it concealed, but on the contrary must have desired to make it known, and through her, if he found no other means of doing so."

1872, SARGENT, J., in *Clements v. Marston*, 52 N. H. 31, 38 (allowing the wife to testify to the expenditures made by her for her husband on account of the defendant's intestate and to conversations in her presence between the latter and the husband): "This violation of marital confidence must be something confided by one to the other simply and specially

as husband or wife, and not what would be communicated to any other person under the same circumstances. In this case the wife acted as the husband's agent and kept his money and knew how it was expended; but all the communications made to her were made to her as such agent, just as he would have made the same communications to any other agent doing the same business. There was no confidential communication between them as husband and wife, but simply the ordinary communications between principal and agent; and the communications would be no more confidential than those between any other principal and agent. . . . Allowing the wife to testify for or against her husband, in any case where a stranger would have been a competent witness, seems to be the rule now; and, in that view of the case, nothing should be excluded except something that is strictly confidential, and not only so but communicated in strict marital confidence."

1878, GREEN, President, in *White v. Perry*, 14 W. Va. 66, 80: "Where there is not even a seeming confidence, when the act done or declaration made by the husband, so far from being private or confidential, is designedly public at the time, and from its nature must have been intended to be afterwards public, there is no interest of the marriage relation or of society which in the absence of all interest of the husband or wife requires the latter to be precluded from testifying between other parties to such act or declaration not affecting the character or person of her husband."

1905, BISHOP, J., in *Sexton v. Sexton*, 129 Ia. 487, 105 N. W. 314: "We come, then, to the question, what is meant by the expression 'any communication' as used in the statute? As we have seen, the privilege is bottomed upon considerations of public policy. Accordingly it would seem that, whatever the form of expression adopted, no more is required than that the confidences inherent in the marital relation, or incident thereto, should be fully protected. Says Mr. Wigmore, in his recent work on Evidence (§ 2336): 'The essence of the privilege is to protect confidences only.' And this must be true, because there can be no reason arising out of public policy, or otherwise, requiring that every word spoken between husband and wife shall be privileged, irrespective of the presence in which spoken or the subject or occasion thereof. And, within our observation, no Court has ever gone so far as to so hold. The spirit of the rule as enforced at common law, and, within our understanding, the meaning to be gathered from the statute, is that the privilege shall be construed to embrace only the knowledge which the husband or wife obtains from the other, which, but for the marriage relation and the confidence growing out of it, would not have been communicated, or which is of such nature or character as that, to repeat the same, would tend to unduly embarrass or disturb the parties in their marital relations. It is the marital communication, then, that is sought to be protected. . . . Thus it cannot be that words spoken by husband to wife, or vice versa, in the presence and hearing of one or more third persons, and hence in the very nature of things not to be construed as in any marital sense private or confidential, must be held within the protection of the privilege, although clearly within the letter of the statute. . . . So, too, it cannot be that the rule of privilege must be held to extend so far as to exclude all communications between husband and wife having reference to business relations existing either as between them directly, or as between them — one or both — and others. Certainly as to business relations existing between husband and wife directly, there can be no adverse consideration of public policy. Quite to the contrary, public policy, as reflected by statute and by our decisions, permits of such relations to the fullest extent. And it would be shocking to say that a contract thus made, or rights or liabilities thus accruing, could not be enforced because, forsooth, a communication between the parties having relation thereto, and essential to proof, was privileged. . . .

"What has been said foregoing will be sufficient to make clear the reasons for our conclusion that the statute was intended to protect only marital communications. . . . It may be confessed that what are marital communications cannot be answered according to any fixed rule. The varying circumstances of married life are such that the question must be made to depend for its answer upon the peculiar circumstances of the case out



of which it arises. Perhaps no better guide for general observance can be found than to say that impliedly all communications between husband and wife are confidential in character, and hence privileged, and that the party asserting the contrary in any given instance must satisfy the Court by the circumstances of the case that grounds for exclusion do not exist."

The circumstances which will negative this implication of secrecy must of course vary with the particular case.<sup>1</sup> Commonly, the *presence of a third*

§ 2336.<sup>1</sup> The following citations include those rulings which construe the statutes expressly making a requirement of confidentiality, as well as those which apply the principle of confidentiality to various situations; the text of statutes is given *ante*, § 488: *Federal*: 1839, *Stein v. Bowman*, 13 Pet. 209, 221 (a husband's admissions to the wife that he had committed perjury, excluded); *Alabama*: 1874, *Sumner v. Cooke*, 51 Ala. 521 ("the line of separation . . . is incapable of expression definite enough for a rule"); 1881, *Gordon v. Tweedy*, 71 Ala. 202, 210 (certain deed-transactions, allowed to be disclosed); 1885, *Owen v. State*, 78 Ala. 425, 432 ("any transaction or communication between husband and wife which does not on its face appear to have been intended to be public or to become so," is privileged); 1906, *Caldwell v. State*, 146 Ala. 141, 41 So. 473 (letters not "of a private or confidential nature," admitted); *Arkansas*: 1874, *Spivey v. Platon*, 29 Ark. 603, 607 (a wife's testimony to sundry transactions by the husband with third parties, admitted); 1884, *Nolen v. Harden*, 43 Ark. 307, 315 (a wife admitted to testify to the delivery by her husband of a bag of gold to a bailee and the bailee's delivery to her); 1905, *Hannaford v. Dowdle*, 75 Ark. 127, 86 S. W. 818 (husband testifying to business transactions with his wife; allowed); 1905, *Hight v. Klingensmith*, 75 Ark. 218, 87 S. W. 138 (wife's declarations in a third person's presence, admitted); *Connecticut*: 1888, *Spitz's Appeal*, 56 Conn. 184, 187, 14 Atl. 776 (promises made by the husband on borrowing money from the wife, held "no more privileged than a promissory note would have been"); *Delaware*: 1916, *Williams v. Betts*, 11 Del. Ch. 128, 98 Atl. 371 (agreement for sale of land; plaintiff wife not allowed to testify to communications to husband); *Illinois*: 1871, *Reeves v. Herr*, 59 Ill. 81, 85 (the privilege is not confined to "subjects which are confidential in their nature"; but includes "any matter which came to her knowledge in consequence of the family relation"; here, an admission by the opponent in conversation with the husband); 1908, *Donnan v. Donnan*, 236 Ill. 341, 86 N. E. 279 (will-contest; the widow's testimony to the testator's conversations with one of the heirs, excluded, under an express statutory clause; unsound at common law); 1912, *Weigand v.*

*Ruts' hke*, 253 Ill. 260, 97 N. E. 641 (husband not allowed to testify to statements by his wife, in an action by his son to set aside the wife's deed to a sister); 1912, *Stephens v. Collison*, 256 Ill. 238, 99 N. E. 914 (excluding statements made by the wife to third persons in the presence of her husband; applying the anomalous rule of the Illinois statute, c. 51, § 5); 1915, *Mahlstedt v. Ideal Lighting Co.*, 271 Ill. 154, 110 N. E. 795 (death of M. by the explosion of a gasoline machine bought from the defendant; B. was salesman of the defendant; to prove the deceased's contributory negligence, the defendant called Mrs. B. to show that at the deceased's house, in the presence of herself and another person, B. had given the deceased a warning as to the proper use of the machine; held inadmissible, under Rev. St. 1874, c. 51, § 5, notwithstanding the presence of other persons); *Indiana*: 1872, *Mercer v. Patterson*, 41 Ind. 440, 444 (the husband's statements to a third person in the wife's presence, not privileged); 1873, *Griffin v. Smith*, 45 Ind. 366 (same); 1876, *Denbo v. Wright*, 53 Ind. 226 (same); 1878, *Floyd v. Miller*, 61 Ind. 224, 235 (same); 1881, *Smith v. Smith*, 77 Ind. 80, 82 (the husband's intoxication, not within the privilege); 1882, *Schmied v. Frank*, 86 Ind. 250, 257 (statements made between them in regard to a purchase by one as agent, not privileged; "the authority given by the wife to the husband to transact her business is not confidential nor intended to be private; . . . it is intended to be known, and would be worthless unless known"); 1883, *Sedgwick v. Tucker*, 90 Ind. 271, 281 (wife's testimony to agreements with the husband as to property interests, admitted); 1886, *Beitman v. Hopkins*, 109 Ind. 177, 9 N. E. 720 (privilege not applied to the wife's testimony to the husband's agreement to convey land to her); 1887, *Stanley v. Stanley*, 112 Ind. 143, 13 N. E. 261 (a wife allowed to testify to the husband's intoxication, not being under the circumstances a confidential fact); 1897, *Reynolds v. State*, 147 Ind. 3, 46 N. E. 31 (the privilege not applied to statements made in a third person's presence, after a robbery, as to the identity of an assailant); 1919, *Kraeger v. Kraeger*, — Ind. App. —, 125 N. E. 484 (alienation of affections; husband's declarations to his wife, evidencing loss of affection, held admissible, the privilege being limited to confidential communications);



person within hearing will negative a marital confidence; so, too, the intended transmission of the communication to a third person. But fixed rules are scarcely possible.

1922, *Kreager v. Kreager*, — Ind. —, 135 N. E. 660 (alienation of husband's affections; the plaintiff's testimony to her husband's recitals to her of his doings with the defendant and of defendant's remarks to him about plaintiff, held a violation of the privilege, under Burns' Stats. 1914, § 520);

*Iowa*: 1883, *State v. Middleham*, 62 Ia. 150, 17 N. W. 446 (exclamations to others in the defendant's presence, as to the defendant's murder of his stepson, admitted, as not made to the defendant); 1897, *Allbright v. Hannah*, 103 Ia. 98, 72 N. W. 421 (conversation between the wife and her father, in the husband's presence, admitted); 1901, *Hertrich v. Herttrich*, 114 Ia. 643, 87 N. W. 689 (the statute excludes "any" communication); *Wright v. Wright*, 114 Ia. 748, 87 N. W. 709 (communications "explanatory of transactions," held admissible); 1905, *Sexton v. Sexton*, 129 Ia. 487, 105 N. W. 315 (alienation of husband's affections; the wife allowed to testify to acts and conversations of the husband exhibiting his former affection and his subsequent loss thereof; quoted *supra*; the broad statements of *Hertrich v. Hertrich*, *supra*, are qualified); 1906, *Hardwick v. Hardwick*, 130 Ia. 230, 106 N. W. 639 (loss of consortium; *Sexton v. Sexton* followed);

*Kansas*: 1893, *Chicago K. & N. R. Co. v. Ellis*, 52 Kan. 41, 47, 33 Pac. 478 (agreement of conveyance between husband and wife, excluded); 1899, *Eagon v. Eagon*, 60 Kan. 697, 57 Pac. 942 (communications are privileged, even though not confidential); 1920, *Tucker v. Finch*, 106 Kan. 419, 188 Pac. 235 (duress of wife by husband in signing a deed; statement of husband to wife at the time, whether privileged, not decided);

*Kentucky*: 1841, *McGuire v. Maloney*, 1 B. Monr. 224 (the wife's testimony to the execution of an instrument with attesting witnesses, admitted; the transaction being "designedly public at the time, and from its nature must have been intended to be afterwards public"); 1899, *Hilbert v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 51 S. W. 817 (dying declaration to the spouse, admissible); 1903, *Arnett v. Com.*, 114 Ky. 593, 71 S. W. 635 (a husband's dying declaration to his wife may be proved by her, as not being confidential, under Civ. C. § 606); 1905, *Shepherd v. Com.*, 119 Ky. 931, 85 S. W. 191 (murder; the wife's communication to the defendant of threats by the deceased, admitted; but the opinion lacks appreciation of the proper reasoning); 1905, *Bright v. Com.*, 120 Ky. 298, 86 S. W. 527 (*Arnett v. Com.*, *supra*, followed); 1908, *Leucht v. Leucht*, 129 Ky. 700, 112 S. W. 845 ("although the word 'confidential' was not used [in the Code], it was evidently the purpose

to exclude only such communications as would naturally grow out of the marriage relation"); 1914, *Hostetter v. Green*, 159 Ky. 611, 167 S. W. 919 (conversation between the husband and the wife's father, at which the wife was present, held not privileged, under Civ. C. § 606); 1916, *McLain v. Com.*, 171 Ky. 373, 188 S. W. 377 (certain testimony not shown to have originated in marital confidences; not decided); *Maine*: 1859, *Walker v. Sanborn*, 46 Me. 470, 473 (the privilege does not cover an agreement between the husband and a third person made in the wife's presence); 1920, *Burrill v. Giles*, 119 Me. 111, 109 Atl. 390 (widow allowed to testify to non-confidential communications); *Massachusetts*: 1861, *Dexter v. Booth*, 2 All. 559 ("private conversations," held to include the husband's ratification, in private, of a purchase made by wife); 1866, *Bliss v. Franklin*, 13 All. 244 (the privilege applied to communications by the wife as agent, showing good faith in the husband's prosecution of the defendant); 1873, *Jacobs v. Hesler*, 113 Mass. 157, 160 (conversation in the presence of their young children not paying any attention, held "private"); 1874, *Raynes v. Bennett*, 114 Mass. 424, 427 (similar to *Dexter v. Booth*, *supra*); 1875, *Drew v. Tarbell*, 117 Mass. 90 (similar); 1876, *Brown v. Wood*, 121 Mass. 137 (conversation promising to repay money borrowed, excluded); 1881, *Fay v. Guynon*, 131 Mass. 31, 33 (conversation in the presence of the wife's sister, who heard a part, admitted); 1887, *Com. v. Jardine*, 143 Mass. 567, 10 N. E. 250 (exclamations of pain made in the wife's presence, admitted); 1887, *Com. v. Hayes*, 145 Mass. 289, 293, 14 N. E. 151 (a wife's instructions to the husband as agent, excluded); 1890, *Com. v. Cleary*, 152 Mass. 491, 25 N. E. 834 (a husband's prohibition to the wife to sell liquors, excluded); 1891, *Lyon v. Prouty*, 154 Mass. 489, 28 N. E. 908 (the privilege not applied to the husband's communication to his wife in the presence of a daughter fourteen years old, who was not shown to have heard it); 1900, *Fuller v. Fuller*, 177 Mass. 184, 58 N. E. 588 (the privilege applied to an ordinary private conversation); 1921, *Freeman v. Freeman*, — Mass. —, 130 N. E. 220 (conversation in the presence of young daughters; trial judge decides whether they were old enough "to pay attention and to understand"); *Michigan*: 1874, *Herrick v. Odell*, 29 Mich. 47, 49 (the privilege does not cover admissions by the husband to a third person, in the wife's presence); 1884, *Hunt v. Eaton*, 55 Mich. 362, 366, 21 N. W. 429 (the privilege does not cover contracts between them as to separate property, when the parties are competent in that class of litigation); 1896, *Hagerman v. Wigent*,



In many jurisdictions this fundamental element of confidence is not expressly named in the statutory enactment; it privileges "any communica-

108 Mich. 192, 65 N. W. 756 (delivery of a mortgage by a wife to her husband, with instructions to deliver it to the plaintiff after her death, admitted, because involving "an expectation on her part that the communication would be disclosed"); 1897, *McKenzie v. Lautenschlager*, 113 Mich. 171, 71 N. W. 489 (alienation of the wife's affections; testimony by the husband excluded); 1903, *Chaddock v. Chaddock*, 134 Mich. 48, 95 N. W. 972 (deed transaction; no point decided); 1915, *Thayer v. Thayer*, 188 Mich. 261, 154 N. W. 32 (whether husband had ever accused the wife of unchastity, held not to call for a confidential communication);

*Minnesota*: 1886, *Leppla v. Tribune Co.*, 35 Minn. 310, 29 N. W. 127 ("communication," in the statute, includes "all conversations between husband and wife, though on subjects not confidential in their nature"); 1895, *Newstrom v. R. Co.*, 61 Minn. 78, 63 N. W. 253 (same; "except perhaps those which from their very nature were evidently intended to be communicated to others"); 1907, *White v. White*, 101 Minn. 451, 112 N. W. 627 (not decided, where a third party raised the question);

*Mississippi*: 1870, *Whitfield v. Whitfield*, 44 Miss. 254, 262 (a widow allowed to testify to her husband's management of slaves, as "facts not in their nature confidential"); 1895, *Saffold v. Horne*, 72 Miss. 470, 18 So. 433 (conversations between the husband and the deceased opponent, admitted);

*Missouri*: 1874, *Darrier v. Darrier*, 58 Mo. 222, 234 (letter from a husband to the wife on a matter of business unspecified, held not a "confidential communication"); 1899, *Long v. Martin*, 152 Mo. 668, 54 S. W. 473 (communications in a third person's presence, admitted); 1901, *Lynn v. Hockaday*, 162 Mo. 123, 61 S. W. 888 (the proviso in Rev. St. 1899, § 4656, R. S. 1919, § 5415 at the end, is limited to the cases in which the spouse is qualified by the prior part of the statute, and does not extend to cases in which she might have testified at common law); 1909, *Brown v. Patterson*, 224 Mo. 639, 124 S. W. 1 (widow admitted to testify to an agreement between H. and her husband: *Lynn v. Hockaday* approved);

*Montana*: 1921, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Slocum*, 9th C. C. A., 272 Fed. 28 (under Mont. Stats. § 7892, in an action by a wife as beneficiary of a policy, the issue being suicide of the insured her husband, the wife's testimony to communications to her by the husband was held admissible, the communications not appearing to be confidential; the above text quoted with approval);

*New Hampshire*: 1843, *Pike v. Hayes*, 14 N. H. 19, 22 ("facts which came to her knowledge from other sources, and not by means

of her situation as a wife," admissible); 1859, *Aiken v. Gale*, 57 N. H. 494, 500 (knowledge acquired "through confidential communications from her husband," inadmissible); 1872, *Clements v. Marston*, 52 N. H. 31, 38 (quoted *supra*);

*New Jersey*: 1876, *Wood v. Chetwood*, 27 N. J. L. 311 (husband and wife as trustees; their communications respecting the trust property, held not confidential; a trustee "can have no secrets or confidences respecting the trust property");

*New York*: 1838, *Ratcliff v. Wales*, 1 Hill 63 (criminal conversation; like the next case); 1861, *Chamberlain v. People*, 23 N. Y. 85, 89 (divorce; the wife's testimony to her intercourse with a third person, not privileged); 1888, *Parkhurst v. Berdell*, 110 N. Y. 386, 393, 18 N. E. 123 ("not all communications made between husband and wife when alone" are included; but only such as are "expressly made confidential" or are "of a confidential nature or induced by the marital relation");

*North Carolina*: 1833, *Hester v. Hester*, 4 Dev. 228 (the husband's remarks of dissatisfaction with his will and of an intention to call in neighbors to help him revise it, held not confidential; quoted *supra*); 1851, *Gaskill v. King*, 12 Ired. 211, 215 (a wife's testimony to the husband's handing her a deed and telling her to record it for A. when she pleased, admitted); 1893, *Toole v. Toole*, 112 N. C. 152, 156, 16 S. E. 912 (communication in a third person's presence, admitted); 1895, *State v. Brittain*, 117 N. C. 783, 23 S. E. 433 (confession of incest by a wife to a husband, excluded);

*Ohio*: 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 Oh. 526, 531 (the privilege covers all matters, whether confidential or not; here held to cover a contract made between the husband and a third person); 1855, *Stober v. McCarter*, 4 Oh. St. 513, 523 (preceding case limited to a divorcee's testimony; the survivor may testify to non-confidential facts, other than conversations; the rule for conversations left undecided); 1877, *Duval v. Davey*, 32 Oh. 604, 609 (the statute does not exclude the husband's testimony to defamatory words uttered to the wife in his presence); 1878, *Bean v. Green*, 33 Oh. 444, 447 (the wife's testimony in action for loss of support by furnishing liquor to the husband, admitted); 1881, *McCague v. Miller*, 36 Oh. 595 (a spouse may testify to the "known presence, hearing, or knowledge of such third person"); 1881, *Stevenson v. Morris*, 37 Oh. 11, 19 (a wife's testimony to the husband's directions, when alone with her, as to a trespass, excluded); 1883, *Sessions v. Trevitt*, 39 Oh. 259, 267 (testimony admissible, where a third person was present, even though he has died);

*Oregon*: 1921, *Pugsley v. Smyth*, 98 Or. 448,



tion." Some Courts, however, have construed this phrase in the spirit of the correct principle, and have implied a limitation to confidential communica-

194 Pac. 686 (alienation of affections; the Oregon statute held to exclude all communications, not merely confidential ones, but the spouse may give implied consent to the revelation of a communication);

*Pennsylvania*: 1846, *Cornell v. Vanartsdalen*, 4 Pa. St. 364, 374 ("the rule is the same, in its spirit and extent, as that which excludes confidential communications made by a client to an attorney"; here admitting the wife's testimony to the husband's transactions with a tenant); 1867, *Hitner's Appeal*, 54 Pa. 110, 111, 117 (reconciliation being a fact sufficient to avoid a deed of separation, a widow was not allowed to testify to cohabitation with the deceased husband after separation; *Thompson and Agnew, JJ., diss.*); 1868, *Peiffer v. Lytle*, 58 Pa. 386, 392 (communications about an advancement, admitted); 1881, *Robb's Appeal*, 98 Pa. 501, 503 ("ordinary business transactions and conversations in which others have participated," not included); 1887, *Brock v. Brock*, 116 Pa. 109, 113, 9 Atl. 486 (certain business communications, excluded); 1887, *Adams v. Bleakley*, 117 Pa., 283, 292, 10 Atl. 884 (certain transactions, admitted); 1895, *Seitz v. Seitz*, 170 Pa. 71, 32 Atl. 578 (an avowal by the husband to the wife of his marital misconduct and of his intention to persist in it, admitted); 1898, *Dumbach v. Bishop*, 183 Pa. 602, 39 Atl. 38 (transactions between the wife, husband, and a third person, received);

*Philippine Islands*: 1918, *U. S. v. Antipolo*, 37 P. I. 726 (murder of D.; D.'s wife admitted to testify to his dying declarations);

*Rhode Island*: 1879, *Campbell v. Chace*, 12 R. I. 333 (privilege held applicable to communications made in the presence of a third person);

*South Carolina*: 1868, *Moseley v. Eakin*, 15 Rich. 324, 339 (the former statute of 1866 excluding "communications," held to "preserve the principles of the common law" and to mean "confidential communications");

*South Dakota*: 1911, *In re Sherin*, 28 S. D. 420, 133 N. W. 701 (on rehearing; letters written by the wife's attorney, but authorized by her, held not privileged);

*Tennessee*: 1851, *Brewer v. Ferguson*, 11 Humph. 565, 566 (the widow of the testator not admitted for contestants of his will to prove his "conduct and conversation" evidencing insanity; "the law will presume the trust and confidence from the relation"); 1858, *Kimbrough v. Mitchell*, 1 Head 539 (a wife not admitted to prove a husband's ill-usage leading to his quarrel with a third person); 1860, *Queener v. Morrow*, 1 Coldw. 123, 128 (a wife's statements to her husband in a third person's presence, admissible); 1866, *Allison v. Barrow*, 3 Coldw. 414, 416 (same); 1869, *German v. German*, 7 Coldw. 180, 181

(unspecified "statements and conversations," excluded); 1871, *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432 (transactions between the husband and a third party, held not provable by the wife who had been present; preceding cases not cited); 1878, *Patton v. Wilson*, 2 Lea 101, 112, (the wife's testimony that she saw documents and money in the husband's possession, excluded); 1879, *Orr v. Cox*, 3 Lea 617, 621 (privilege confined to "facts coming to their knowledge through the mutual relation"); after the trial of this case the statute of 1879, Code 1896, § 5596, was enacted; 1882, *Washington v. Bedford*, 10 Lea 243, 246 (the wife's testimony to the husband's giving her money, etc., excluded); 1895, *Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Shoemaker*, 95 Tenn. 72, 31 S. W. 270 ("all secret confidential disclosures and communications between the husband and wife, the publication of which would betray conjugal confidence and trust and tend to produce discord in the family are prohibited" from disclosure, and "all transactions and conversations had between the husband and wife in relation to their own affairs, not in the presence of some third person," are also prohibited; yet "matters and conversations that occur between the husband and wife and third persons or in the presence of third persons, and are not intended to be secret or of a confidential character," are admissible; and, further than this, the facts of each case must largely control; here excluding conversations and payments alleged to concern a resulting trust, and the delivery of a deed by husband to wife); 1898, *Young v. Hurst*, — Tenn. —, 48 S. W. 355 (the rule in *Ins. Co. v. Shoemaker* applied to exclude the wife's testimony as to the husband's gift to her of money and a chattel, but admitting it as to her husband's statements to third persons concerning the title); 1916, *McCormick v. State*, 135 Tenn. 218, 186 S. W. 95 (marital communications are presumed to be confidential);

*Texas*: 1891, *Mitchell v. Mitchell*, 80 Tex. 101, 116, 15 S. W. 705 (the meaning of "confidential" must be determined "by the subject-matter of the communication, or by the circumstances under which it is made, or by both"; here, certain letters were excluded); 1905, *Cole v. State*, 48 Tex. Cr. 439, 88 S. W. 341 (statements of accused in the presence of his wife and her mother, admitted); 1912, *Lanham v. Lanham*, 105 Tex. 91, 145 S. W. 336 (will probate; letters of testator to wife reproaching her for misconduct, excluded); 1917, *Norwood v. State*, 80 Tex. Cr. 552, 192 S. W. 248 (murder; conversation between accused and his wife, on his return home, not admitted for the State); 1917, *Bennett v. State*, 80 Tex. Cr. 652, 194 S. W. 148 (murder; wife's diary held inadmissible);



tions. Others have literally applied the words of the statute, which is thus allowed to create an intolerable anomaly in the law of privileged communications. No justification for such an extension of the privilege has ever been attempted, and it must be supposed that this broad statutory phrasing originated in inadvertence. It is proper enough to maintain (as already noticed) that all marital communications should be presumed to be confidential until the contrary appears; but if the contrary appears, there is no reason for recognizing the privilege.

§ 2337. **Communications, not Acts.** The privilege has for its object the security from apprehension of disclosure, — a security in consequence of which confidences will be freely given and not withheld. The protection therefore extends only to *communications, i. e. utterances, not acts*, — the reasoning being analogous to that which establishes a similar limitation for communications between attorney and client (*ante*, § 2306).

Nevertheless, the statute in some jurisdictions extends the privilege to “transactions,” or to knowledge of any fact acquired in the marital relation; and there is at first sight some plausibility in this extension. The confidence, it may be argued, which the husband or wife desires, and the freedom from apprehension which the privilege is designed to secure, must be supposed to be equally as desirable for conduct as for utterances. For example, a husband intending a secret journey must be equally desirous to prevent the disclosure of his preparations of accoutrement as of his communications of plan. To be obliged, under pain of disclosure by legal process, to remain dumb as to his destination is no more incongruous with marital confidence than to be obliged to conceal his valise and his railroad-ticket and his travelling garb from the wife’s inspection. Must not the confidence be as desirable for the latter as

*Utah*: 1903, *Van Alstine’s Estate*, 26 *Utah* 193, 72 *Pac.* 942 (the communication must be confidential);

*Virginia*: 1830, *Robin v. King*, 2 *Leigh* 140 (a widow not admitted to prove the husband’s disclaimers of title, “made in the presence of the family”; quoted *supra*); 1873, *Murphy v. Com.*, 23 *Gratt.* 960, 965 (assault; the injured person’s admission to his wife that the defendant struck in defence only, excluded, though the two were then living apart); 1914, *Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. v. O’Grady*, 115 *Va.* 830, 80 *S. E.* 743 (under Code § 3346 *a* there is no limitation to confidential communications; here, communications concerning the drafting of a will were held privileged);

*Vermont*: 1835, *Williams v. Baldwin*, 7 *Vt.* 503 (a husband’s possession of a letter, and its contents, provable by the wife); 1855, *Smith v. Proctor*, 27 *Vt.* 304, 308 (services rendered by a third person to the husband; the wife admitted); 1895, *Wheeler v. Campbell*, 68 *Vt.* 98, 34 *Atl.* 35 (a wife may testify to conversations between the husband and a third person);

*Washington*: 1901, *Sackman v. Thomas*, 24

*Wash.* 660, 64 *Pac.* 819, *semble* (the statute does not apply to conversations on business matters, but only to confidential communications);

*West Virginia*: 1878, *White v. Perry*, 14 *W. Va.* 66, 80 (the wife admitted to prove certain transactions of sale by the husband; quoted *supra*);

*Wisconsin*: 1870, *Cook v. Henry*, 25 *Wis.* 569, 571 (authority to the wife to sell household goods, not a confidential communication); 1890, *Bigelow v. Sickles*, 75 *Wis.* 427, 429, 44 *N. W.* 761 (the husband’s testimony to the wife’s conduct with an adulterer, admitted); 1890, *Smith v. Merrill*, 75 *Wis.* 461, 462, 44 *N. W.* 759 (note written by a wife to an adulterer in the husband’s presence, but kept by her; his testimony to it, excluded); 1897, *Lancetot v. State*, 98 *Wis.* 136, 138, 73 *N. W.* 575 (letters from a husband to the wife, revealing his identity, excluded); 1920, *Barber v. State*, 172 *Wis.* 542, 179 *N. W.* 798 (assault with intent to rape *P.*; defendant’s confession to his wife, held privileged, under Stats. § 4072 as amended by St. 1917, c. 433).

for the former? And is not every act of domestic privacy, equally with every utterance, done in reliance upon a supposed confidence in the maintenance of that privacy? In short, in the preposterously extreme logic of one Court, must not the law "assume that no husband will commit a crime in the presence of his wife except in the confidence induced by the marital relation?"<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with this argument is that it proves too much. It requires quite as effectually that the same privilege be extended to the testimony of a son or a brother or a parent or a servant. It amounts merely to this, that every man would of course much prefer that no member of his family should, without his consent, be allowed to disclose the private doings of the household. This is natural enough; but it is not at all what the principle of privileged communications has ever assumed as its goal (*ante*, § 2285). The privilege concerns solely the relation of husband and wife; it cares nothing for the family as such, — nothing for parent and child, nothing for brother and sister, nothing for master and servant. It is the peculiar interest of the marital relation, and of that alone, which requires unrestricted confidence; and therefore that relation alone is protected and those confidences alone which spring from that relation are protected. Domestic conduct, therefore, may doubtless be private and confidential, but the confidence is towards the family at large, and not towards the wife in particular. It is only so far as there has been a special confiding of it to the wife (or husband) that it comes within the privilege.

It follows, therefore, on the one hand, that the privilege does not apply to domestic conduct as such. On the other hand, it is equally true that *any particular act or conduct may in fact become the subject of a special confidence* in the wife alone, *i. e.* may become a communication to her. For example, the husband, bringing home a package of valuables, and calling his wife's attention, "Note that I place this in the fourth desk-drawer," in effect communicates to her not only the words but also the act of placing the package. While his domestic acts are ordinarily not to be treated as communications, nevertheless it is always conceivable that they may by special circumstances be made part of a communication.

To formulate a precise test would perhaps be impracticable.<sup>2</sup> It is clear,

§ 2337. <sup>1</sup> Ross, C. J., in *French v. Ware*, 65 Vt. 338, 347, 26 Atl. 1096.

<sup>2</sup> The cases are as follows; compare also some of the rulings cited *ante*, § 2336:

CANADA: 1903, *Gosselin v. King*, 33 Can. Sup. 255, 263 (questions to a wife as to intercourse, with a view to contradicting her husband, held not communications; *Girouard, J.*, diss.).

UNITED STATES: *Arkansas*: 1905, *Wiley v. McBride*, 74 Ark. 34, 85 S.W. 84 (bill to set aside a fraudulent conveyance to a wife; discovery as to the gift, held not privileged); *California*: 1898, *Poulson v. Stanley*, 122 Cal. 655, 55 Pac. 605 (delivery of a deed, not a

"communication"); 1910, *People v. Loper*, 159 Cal. 6, 112 Pac. 720 (sanity or insanity; not privileged); 1919, *Pusey's Estate*, 180 Cal. 368, 181 Pac. 648 (fact of communication, admitted to show husband's knowledge of wife's whereabouts); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1882, *U. S. v. Guiteau*, 12 D. C. 498, 547 ("whether in your association with him you ever saw anything that would indicate that he was a man of unsound mind," allowed; quoted *supra*); *Georgia*: 1869, *Williams v. Phillips*, 39 Ga. 597, 605 (similar to the next case); 1869, *Jackson v. Jackson*, 40 Ga. 150, 153 (privilege covers "any fact which came to her knowledge



however, that the mere doing of an act by the husband in the wife's presence is not a communication of it by him; for it is done for the sake of the doing,

by reason of the confidential relation of husband and wife"); 1869, *McIntyre v. Meldrum*, 40 Ga. 490, 491 (similar); 1872, *Davis v. Weaver*, 46 Ga. 626, 629 (similar); 1878, *Goodrum v. State*, 60 Ga. 509, 511 (a husband not allowed to testify that a wife did not complain to him of an assault; "the wife ought to feel . . . as secure that her silence will not be disclosed, to her detriment or disadvantage, as that what she says will not be repeated"); 1879, *Stanford v. Murphy*, 63 Ga. 411, 416 (testimony by the wife to a note deposited with her by the husband, excluded; the privilege covers "facts ascertained by reason of such confidential intercourse"); 1905, *Macon R. & L. Co. v. Mason*, 123 Ga. 773, 51 S. E. 569 (a wife allowed to testify to her husband's personal injuries observed by her); *Illinois*: 1896, *Griffeth v. Griffeth*, 162 Ill. 368, 44 N. E. 820 (acts of self-abuse by the husband, observed by the wife, held privileged); 1908, *Donnan v. Donnan*, 236 Ill. 341, 86 N. E. 279 (will contest; the widow's testimony to the testator's mental condition, not admissible); 1910, *Schreffler v. Chase*, 245 Ill. 395, 92 N. E. 272 (probate of a wife's will, contested on the ground of unsoundness of mind; the husband's testimony for the contestant, as to her insane conduct, held privileged); 1912, *Stephens v. Collison*, 256 Ill. 238, 99 N. E. 914 (excluding the widow's testimony to the assets of her husband, on the present principle); 1912, *Donnan v. Donnan*, 256 Ill. 244, 99 N. E. 931 (widow of testator, not allowed to testify to his condition of health); 1915, *Mahlstedt v. Ideal Lighting Co.*, 271 Ill. 154, 110 N. E. 795 (death of M. by the explosion of a gasoline machine; plea, contributory negligence; the wife of M. was called to testify for the estate that no gasoline had been stored in the cellar, that a catalogue of the defendant's machines had been given to M., etc.; held, inadmissible, as facts "coming to the knowledge of the witness because of the confidential relation of husband and wife," though only by her own observation, and not by his communication; following *Schreffler v. Chase*; it is a pity that this Court adheres to this unsound limitation, which goes directly in the face of the words of the remedial statute); *Indiana*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143 (action for money lost by the plaintiff in the defendant's house and found and kept by the defendant; the defendant's wife not admissible to testify to the defendant's conduct in dealing with the money in her presence); 1893, *Polson v. State*, 137 Ind. 519, 524, 35 N. E. 907 (the fact of imparting a loathsome disease, not privileged); 1897, *Beyerline v. State*, 147 Ind. 125, 45 N. E. 772 (that the wife, testifying, had been taken by the neck by the husband and compelled to forge a signature, ad-

mitted, partly because not a communication, partly because not confidential, partly because a crime);

*Indian Territory*: 1899, *German-American Ins. Co. v. Paul*, 2 Ind. T. 625, 53 S. W. 442 (that his wife had given him property, admitted);

*Iowa*: 1861, *Romans v. Hay*, 12 Ia. 270 (the privilege does not cover the fact of desertion); 1882, *Hanks v. Van Garder*, 59 Ia. 179, 182, 13 N. W. 103 (the privilege does not cover a husband's transfer of a claim to the wife);

*Kansas*: 1900, *State Bank v. Hutchinson*, 62 Kan. 9, 61 Pac. 443 (issue whether a wife's mortgage was executed in fear of threats to prosecute her husband; her testimony that she had heard that he was threatened, admissible, though the source of her hearing was a communication from the husband);

*Kentucky*: 1871, *English v. Cropper*, 8 Bush 292 (the privilege does not cover facts known "from other means of information than such as result from the marriage relation"); 1877, *Elswick v. Com.*, 13 Bush 155, 156 (same); 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 Ky. 580, 585, 14 S. W. 834 (same; a wife admitted to testify to the husband's attempt to poison her);

*Massachusetts*: 1868, *Baldwin v. Parker*, 99 Mass. 79, 83 (the fact of a communication, not merely its tenor, is privileged); 1916, *Sampson v. Sampson*, 223 Mass. 451, 112 N. E. 84 (divorce; in proof of fraud resulting in the wife's failure to contest divorce proceedings, the fact that she did nothing to contest the divorce after a conversation with the husband was admitted on the principle that the fact of a conversation may be disclosed, as also the fact of conduct in consequence of a conversation);

*Michigan*: 1909, *Pierson v. Illinois C. R. Co.*, 159 Mich. 110, 123 N. W. 576 (husband's physical condition; privilege applicable);

*Missouri*: 1880, *Holman v. Bachus*, 73 Mo. 49, 51 (the privilege covers an act of payment which might be explained by the conversation accompanying); 1893, *McFadin v. Catron*, 120 Mo. 252, 274, 25 S. W. 506 (preceding case approved); 1895, *Harlan v. Moore*, 132 Mo. 483, 492, 34 S. W. 70 (the privilege does not cover mere "acts" of a spouse); 1897, *Shanklin v. McCracken*, 140 Mo. 348, 41 S. W. 898 (testimony of the wife, that M. handed her husband a package, which he opened and handed back to M., and that she saw that it contained deeds, admitted);

*New Hampshire*: 1899, *Noyes v. Marston*, 70 N. H. 7, 47 Atl. 592 (in Pub. St. § 20, the restriction of "violation of marital confidence" applies to "statement, etc.," as well as to "any matters," in spite of the lack of a comma after "matters");

*Ohio*: 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 Oh. 526, 531 (the privilege covers "all transactions which occurred during marriage"); 1855, *Stober v.*



not for the sake of the disclosure. There must be something in the way of an invitation of the wife's presence or attention with the object of bringing the act directly to her knowledge. Except in such cases, the privilege cannot cover anything but an utterance of words, spoken or written.

One of the many aspects of this principle is illustrated in the following passage:

1882, JAMES, J., in *U. S. v. Guiteau*, 12 D. C. 498, 547: "The exhibition of sanity or insanity is not a communication at all, in the sense of the rule which protects the privacy and confidence of the marriage relation, any more than the height or color or blindness or the loss of an arm of one of the parties is a communication. The rule which is supposed to have been violated was established in order that the conduct, the voluntary conduct, of married life might rest secure upon a basis of peace and trust, and relates to matters which the parties may elect to disclose or not disclose. It was provided in order that matters should not come to the light which would not do so at all without a disturbance and disregard of the bond of peace and confidence between the married pair. Therefore it has not been applied to any matter which the husband for example has elected to make public, by doing or saying it in presence of third persons along with his wife; and it cannot be applied to that which, whether he will or no, he inevitably exhibits to the world as well as to his wife. Some diseases a husband may conceal, and he may choose whether to reveal them or not. . . . But sanity or insanity are conditions which are not of choice; and when the disease of insanity exists, the exhibition of it is neither a matter of voluntary confidence nor capable of being one of the secrets of the married relation."

Apart from the statutes above mentioned, whose wording requires a broader scope, the privilege is commonly accepted as applying to utterances only.

§ 2338. **Exceptions and Distinctions.** (1) At *common law*, where exceptions were recognized to the rule forbidding one spouse to testify against the other, *i. e.* in the case of certain *injuries done by one to the other* (*ante*, § 2239), it would seem that the present rule suffered also an exception, and properly. Under a few *statutes*, by express words or by construction, the communications

*McCarter*, 4 Oh. St. 513, 523 (preceding case limited to a divorcee's testimony; the survivor's testimony may include facts, other than conversations, occurring during coverture which do not violate deceased's confidence or injure his reputation); 1884, *Holtz v. Dick*, 42 Oh. St. 23 (husband allowed to testify to wife's handwriting); 1916, *Dick v. Hyer*, 94 Oh. 351, 114 N. E. 251 (whether a wife signed at the husband's request a note which he handed to her, and what was the date of the note when shown to her; held that the privilege covered her testimony to the condition of the paper as observed by her);

*Tennessee*: 1906, *English v. Ricks*, 117 Tenn. 73, 95 S. W. 189 (probate contest, over a will bequeathing chiefly to a wife; to show the testator's marital unhappiness, his declarations that he was "living in hell," excluded; this seems erroneous);

*Utah*: 1903, *Van Alstine's Estate*, 26 Utah 193, 72 Pac. 942 (condition of the husband as to intoxication in his wife's presence, held not a communication);

*Vermont*: 1893, *French v. Ware*, 65 Vt. 338, 344, 26 Atl. 1096 (battery; complaints by the injured husband as to bodily pains, the fact of his inability to labor, and a perusal of accounts with others; the first held privileged, the others not; confidential are "matters of confidence" and "transactions affecting the character," including "direct testimony to the act of a crime"; opinion unsound);

*Washington*: 1915, *State v. Snyder*, 84 Wash. 485, 147 Pac. 38 (statutory rape; under Rem. & Ball. Code § 1214, wife was allowed to testify to the husband's intercourse with his step-daughter);

*Wisconsin*: 1897, *Lancetot v. State*, 98 Wis. 136, 73 N. W. 575 (adultery; to prove the defendant's name and identity, letters to his wife bearing the name J. L., and signed as husband, were excluded); 1905, *Schultz v. Culbertson*, 125 Wis. 169, 103 N. W. 234 (widow allowed to testify to the deceased husband's mental incapacity based on acts observed by her without participation or influence on her part).



may exceptionally be disclosed, commonly in cases involving the commission of an injury by one spouse upon the other.<sup>1</sup>

(2) At common law, before any statutory recognition of the present privilege had taken place, the wife's correspondence with the husband was always admitted in actions for *criminal conversation* or *alienation of affections* (*ante*, § 1730). So far as it was admitted for the plaintiff, the husband's offer of it might be treated as a waiver; but so far as admitted for the defendant, it must have implied the recognition of an exception, and properly, on the principle of par. 1, above.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Under modern statutes (*ante*, § 48S), an exception is often (and properly) provided for criminal cases involving a charge of *family-desertion*.

(4) In many cases involving a charge of crime brought against a spouse, marital communications may become the key to the case. It is plain that *where either spouse needs the evidence* of communications (by either to the other) in a trial involving a controversy between them, the privilege should cease, or a cruel injustice may be done.<sup>3</sup>

(5) Under statutes, questions may arise, as to the effect of *sundry words* making exceptions to the rule.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2338. <sup>1</sup> *Ind.* 1883, *Doolittle v. State*, 93 Ind. 272 (criminal cases "where the wife is the injured party"; based on a comparison of Rev. St. § 1889, par. 2, "the party injured by the offence committed," with the general provision making the rules in criminal cases the same as in civil cases); 1895, *Jordan v. State*, 142 Ind. 422, 424, 41 N. E. 817 (same); *Mo.* 1889, *Henry v. Sneed*, 99 Mo. 407, 12 S. W. 663 ("in the present case, S. attempted to take advantage of a legal technicality as to conversations between husband and wife, to prevent the full extent of his fraud from being unearthed," and an exception to the privilege was recognized for fraud); 1896, *Moeckel v. Heim*, 134 Mo. 576, 36 S. W. 226 (fraud; the husband, as alleged, having persuaded his wife to sign a note, the conversations between them were testified to); 1902, *Rice v. Waddill*, 168 Mo. 99, 67 S. W. 605 (a husband's letters to his wife, showing a fraudulent scheme to deprive her of property, admitted against his grantees).

<sup>2</sup> 1905, *Sexton v. Sexton*, 129 Ia. 487, 105 N. W. 315 (cited *ante*, § 2336, n. 1); 1896, *Horner v. Yance*, 93 Wis. 352, 67 N. W. 720 (but it is difficult to reconcile this with the local statute, § 4072).

<sup>3</sup> For lack of recognizing such an exception, the rule is often enforced with needless harshness:

*Admitted*: 1897, *Beyerline v. State*, 147 Ind. 125, 45 N. E. 772 (cited *ante*, § 2337, n. 2); 1913, *Spearman v. State*, 68 Tex. Cr. 449, 152 S. W. 915 (wife's perjury in a divorce suit; the wife had deposed in the suit admitting that she was pregnant, unknown to him, and by another man, before marriage; to show that

in fact the husband himself was her seducer, and that she had admitted the opposite facts to save him from an alleged prosecution, her testimony to his fraudulent solicitations to make such deposition was admitted; per Harper, J.: "the law . . . will not prevent her from telling the truth . . . when he seeks by this means to wrong her"; Davidson, P. J., diss.).

*Excluded*: 1911, *People v. Bowen*, 165 Mich. 231, 130 N. W. 706 (wife-murder; to show information of her infidelity, causing insanity, the defendant was not allowed to testify to her confessions to him); 1919, *Tingley v. State*, 16 Okl. Cr. App. 639, 184 Pac. 599 (homicide of alleged paramour of defendant's wife; defendant's testimony to his statements to the wife about her relations with deceased, etc., on the issue of his mental condition, excluded); 1920, *Steeley v. State*, — Okl. Cr. App. —, 187 Pac. 820 (murder of a man said to have debauched defendant's wife; the defendant was not allowed to testify to the wife's communications to him setting forth the deceased's conduct in debauching her; this ruling shows the cruel absurdity of the operation of the privilege as to-day administered).

<sup>4</sup> 1913, *Treiber v. McCormack*, 90 Kan. 675, 136 Pac. 268 (under Gen. St. 1909, § 5015, C. C. P. § 321, a wife or husband may testify for the other as to transactions done as agent for the other, the omission of the exception-clause to that effect in the former statute not having changed the law; but it is strange that the Court did not lay hold of the doctrine of waiver, *post* § 2340, which was precisely the ground why the privilege need not here be applied).



(6) The wife's statements *in her husband's presence* are receivable against him as his admissions implied by silent assent (*ante*, § 2232); yet if the interview was private, the present privilege seems to forbid this; for, even regarding the statements as adopted and made by him, they are still private and confidential.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled

#### § 2339. Third Persons Overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.

(1) A *third person overhearing* a confidential communication may testify to it,<sup>1</sup> for the same reason recognized in the privilege for a client's communications with his attorney (*ante*, § 2326).

(2) For *documents* of communication coming into the *possession of a third person*, a distinction should obtain, analogous to that already indicated for a client's communications (*ante*, §§ 2325, 2326); *i. e.* if they were obtained from the addressee by voluntary delivery, they should still be privileged (for otherwise the privilege could by collusion be practically nullified for written communications); but if they were obtained surreptitiously or otherwise without the addressee's consent, the privilege should cease.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 1871, *R. v. Hilditch*, 12 Cox Cr. 131, Cox, J. ("what a wife says in the presence of her husband is admissible, and what she writes to him, if received and recognized by him, is equivalent to a statement made verbally by her in his presence"; a letter found on his person, here doubtfully held admissible).

§ 2339. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1834, *R. v. Simons*, 6 C. & P. 540; *U. S.* 1889, *Gannon v. State*, 127 Ill. 507, 518, 21 N. E. 525; 1900, *State Bank v. Hutchinson*, 62 Kan. 9, 61 Pac. 443; 1906, *Com. v. Everson*, 123 Ky. 330, 96 S. W. 460 (by an eavesdropper); 1872, *Com. v. Griffin*, 110 Mass. 181; 1918, *Com. v. Wakelin*, 230 Mass. 567, 120 N. E. 209 (homicide; conversations between husband and wife in jail, overheard by dictagraph, admitted); 1915, *State v. Randall*, 170 A. C. 757, 87 S. E. 227 (liquor traffic; conversation overheard by a police officer); 1918, *State v. McKinney*, 175 N. C. 784, 95 S. E. 162 (liquor offence; constable's testimony to the wife's reproach, "I have told you a thousand times about selling whiskey and that you would get caught", admitted); 1916, *Hampton v. State*, 78 Tex. Cr. 639, 183 S. W. 387 (wife-murder); 1862, *State v. Center*, 35 Vt. 378, 382, 386 (proved by a police officer who was in the next room).

Where an accused's *confession* has been *partly stated* by one hearing it, the principle of § 2100, *ante* (Completeness), requires that the whole should be given, even if it involves a communication to the wife: 1912, *People v. Bowen*, 170 Mich. 129, 135 N. W. 824, *semble*.

<sup>2</sup> The rulings are not harmonious; compare the rulings on confession obtained by trick (*ante*, § 841):

ENGLAND: 1872, *R. v. Pamenter*, 12 Cox

Cr. 177 (letter to a wife, given to a constable to post, but retained by him, excluded).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1887, *Bowman v. Patrick*, 32 Fed. 368 (letters from a husband to a wife, found among his papers by the husband's administrator, and by him delivered to the party, excluded); *Arizona*: 1905, *DeLeon v. Terr.*, 9 Ariz. 161, 80 Pac. 348 (letter by the defendant to his wife, written with knowledge that by jail rules it would be opened and read by the jailer; the jailer allowed to testify to its contents); *Arkansas*: 1902, *Ward v. State*, 70 Ark. 204, 66 S. W. 926 (a defendant, in jail, gave to his wife a letter, partly to her and partly to N., and the letter was taken from her; held, that the part to her was inadmissible, and, by a majority, that the part to N. was admissible); 1905, *Hammons v. State*, 73 Ark. 495, 84 S. W. 718 (defendant in jail gave to a messenger a letter for the wife; the messenger delivered it to the wife's father, who handed it to a relative of the injured party; admitted; *McCulloch and Battle, JJ., diss.*); *California*: 1909, *People v. Swaile*, 12 Cal. App. 192, 107 Pac. 134 (letter sent by accused to his wife through a police officer, read by the wife, given back to the officer at his request, and brought to court; admitted); *Colorado*: 1920, *Dalton v. People*, 68 Colo. 44, 180 Pac. 37 (cited more fully *post*, § 2340, n. 1); *Connecticut*: 1880, *State v. Hoyt*, 47 Conn. 540 (letters of the defendant to his wife, admitted from one who had obtained possession of them); *Florida*: 1898, *Mercer v. State*, 40 Fla. 216, 24 So. 154 (a husband's letter to his wife, obtained somehow by the defendant; excluded, regardless of the persons by whom it was possessed); *Georgia*: 1893, *Wilkerson*



§ 2340. **Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.** (1) The privilege is intended to secure freedom from apprehension in the mind of the one desiring to communicate (*ante*, § 2332); it thus belongs to the *communicating one*.<sup>1</sup> The other one — the addressee of the communication — is therefore not entitled to object;<sup>2</sup> unless, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2338, par. 4), the

*v. State*, 91 Ga. 729, 738, 17 S. E. 990 (a letter from a husband to the wife, given by her to her paramour, excluded); *Kansas*: 1878, *State v. Buffington*, 20 Kan. 599, 613 (a letter from the defendant to his wife, handed by her to the prosecuting witness, admitted; "it is privileged only while it remains in their custody and control, or while it remains within the custody and control of their agents or representatives"); *Kentucky*: 1893, *Scott v. Com.*, 94 Ky. 511, 23 S. W. 219 (a letter by a husband to the wife, obtained from her by a third person, whether by force or otherwise, privileged); *Louisiana*: 1920, *State v. Morgan*, 147 La. 205, 84 So. 584 (murder; a letter of the accused, mailed to the wife, opened and read by her, and then delivered voluntarily by her to the sheriff, admitted; but on the erroneous theory that La. St. 1916, No. 157, p. 379, privileging "private conversations" does not include written communications); *Michigan*: 1909, *O'Toole v. Ohio G. F. Ins. Co.*, 159 Mich. 187, 123 N. W. 795 (letters lost by the husband and found by a third person without collusion, admitted; careful opinion, by Ostrander, J.); 1910, *People v. Dunnigan*, 163 Mich. 349, 128 N. W. 180 (defendant's letter to his wife, obtained, before delivery to her, by a trick of the sheriff, admitted); *Missouri*: 1892, *State v. Ulrich*, 110 Mo. 350, 364, 19 S. W. 656 (a husband's letters to the wife produced from her custody, excluded); *Nebraska*: 1877, *Geiger v. State*, 6 Nebr. 545, 549 (a letter from a husband to the wife, found by a third person in the husband's house, admitted; "the Court will not take notice how they are obtained"); *New York*: 1902, *People v. Truck*, 170 N. Y. 203, 63 N. E. 281 (the defendant's wife permitted to prove her receipt from him in jail of two letters, and her mailing of them, the wife not being aware of the contents or of the addresses); *North Carolina*: 1913, *State v. Wallace*, 162 N. C. 622, 78 S. E. 1 (husband's letter found by a policeman in husband's house, admitted); *Oklahoma*: 1906, *Connella v. Terr.*, 16 Okl. 365, 86 Pac. 72 (forgery; letter sent by defendant to his wife, not reaching her, but falling into the sheriff's possession, admitted); *Oregon*: 1914, *State v. Wilkins*, 72 Or. 77, 142 Pac. 589 (not clear); *Pennsylvania*: 1921, *Com. v. Smith*, 270 Pa. 583, 113 Atl. 844 (defendant in jail wrote a letter to his wife, who was locked up in another room there; defendant handed the letter to a fellow-prisoner for delivery to the wife, but it never reached her; held admissible, on the ground that it never reached her; unsound in prin-

ciple; on the subjective theory of protecting his confidences, it would not be admissible, regardless of how it was obtained; but on the objective theory of protecting only his successful confidences, it is admissible even after it reaches the wife provided it is obtained without her voluntary surrender); *Rhode Island*: 1917, *State v. Deslovers*, 40 R. I. 89, 100 Atl. 64 (murder; letters from a woman witness to her husband, obtained by the prosecution in a manner not stated, allowed to be used on her cross-examination); *South Dakota*: 1910, *State v. Sysinger*, 25 S. D. 110, 125 N. W. 879 (letters written by defendant to his wife and by her delivered to the prosecuting attorney, admitted); *Texas*: 1911, *Gross v. State*, 61 Tex. Cr. 176, 135 S. W. 373 (husband's letter to wife, found by a prying third person on the latter's premises, excluded; unsound); *Washington*: 1905, *State v. Nelson*, 39 Wash. 221, 81 Pac. 721 (adultery of N. with S.; S.'s letter to her husband, offered to impeach her as a witness for the defendant N., admitted, because "produced by the officers of the State"); *Wisconsin*: 1889, *Selden v. State*, 71 Wis. 271, 274, 42 N. W. 218 (letters by a husband to a wife, deposited by her with her attorney for a divorce, held not producible by the latter in a prosecution of the husband for perjury; addresses and postmarks on the envelopes, equally excluded).

§ 2340.<sup>1</sup> 1920, *Dalton v. People*, 68 Colo. 44, 189 Pac. 37 (conspiracy with Mrs. R. to steal an automobile; Mrs. R. had been convicted; a letter from Mrs. R. to her husband, written in the prison, was shown by him to defendant's counsel, who made a copy, and the letter was then destroyed; the privilege held to prevent R. from testifying to the copy, on behalf of the defendant).

<sup>2</sup> 1900, *Derham v. Derham*, 125 Mich. 109, 83 N. W. 1005; 1888, *Stickney v. Stickney*, 131 U. S. 227, 237, 9 Sup. 677, *semble* (cited *post*, § 2341).

*Contra* (that the privilege belongs to both): 1890, *People v. Mullings*, 83 Cal. 138, 143, 23 Pac. 229; 1915, *Sweikbart v. Hanrahan*, 184 Mich. 201, 150 N. W. 833 (crim. con.); 1891, *People v. Wood*, 126 N. Y. 249, 271, 27 N. E. 362, *semble*; 1912, *Hampton v. State*, 7 Okl. Cr. 291, 123 Pac. 571; 1911, *Luick v. Arends*, — S. D. —, 132 N. W. 353.

*Undecided*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143, 146, *semble*.

The privilege, of course, does not belong to the *party to the suit* as such (*ante*, § 2196); hence, the party cannot appeal on the ground



latter's silence is desired to be treated as an assent and an adoption of the statement, which thus makes it doubly a communication and doubly privileged.

(2) The spouse possessing the privilege may of course *waive* it. The waiver may be found in some extrajudicial disclosure,<sup>3</sup> or in some act of testimony which in fairness places the person in a position not to object consistently to further disclosure,<sup>4</sup> — for, as already noted (*ante*, § 2327), the principle of waiver cannot depend solely upon the interpretation of conduct implying willingness to waive.

Nevertheless, in a few Courts the doctrine of waiver appears to be ignored entirely.<sup>5</sup> This confusion of a disqualification with a privilege has been already adverted to (*ante*, § 2334); it is entirely unjustifiable (except as required by the express words of some perversely-phrased statute), and is

of an erroneous denial of the privilege: 1911, *Luick v. Arends*, — S. D. —, 132 N. W. 353 (alienation of wife's affections; the defendant cannot object to a ruling admitting for the plaintiff a letter from the wife to the plaintiff).

In strictness, no *third person* can raise the question: 1907, *White v. White*, 101 Minn. 451, 112 N. W. 627 (not decided).

May an *inference* be drawn from a party's failure to call his spouse to testify to a communication for which the privilege could have been waived? Yes; for the considerations applicable to the other privilege (*ante*, § 2243) seem here not applicable: 1912, *Hampton v. State*, 7 Okl. Cr. 291, 123 Pac. 571.

<sup>3</sup> 1915, *Sweikhart v. Hanrahan*, 184 Mich. 201, 150 N. W. 833 (crim. con.; the circumstances held to amount to a consent); 1894, *People v. Hayes*, 140 N. Y. 484, 495, 35 N. E. 951 (letters from a wife to a husband, given by him to his mistress and by her to the district attorney, not privileged for the husband).

<sup>4</sup> The statutes cited *ante*, § 488, sometimes provide for this: *Ga.* 1913, *McCord v. McCord* 140 Ga. 170, 78 S. E. 833 (divorce; wife's testimony to desertion held a waiver of her privilege as to a letter written by her to the husband explaining his desertion); *Ind.* 1898, *Driver v. Driver*, — Ind. —, 52 N. E. 401 (divorce; husband's use of his own communications to the wife, treated as a waiver of privilege as to his letters on the same subjects); *Ia.* 1897, *Kelley v. Andrews*, 102 Ia. 119, 71 N. W. 251 (presence of the wife in Court at a former trial when the husband disclosed the communications in question, not a waiver of the privilege for the second trial); *Mo.* 1898, *Nichols v. Nichols*, 147 Mo. 387, 48 S. W. 947 (examination of wife by opponent as to communications waives the privilege as to such communications); *R. I.* 1899, *Rose v. Mitchell*, 21 R. I. 270, 43 Atl. 67 (alienation of wife's affections; whether plaintiff's testimony to wife's language to him is a waiver, allowing her to testify to similar matters, undecided); *Tex.* 1913, *Spearman v. State*,

68 Tex. Cr. 449, 152 S. W. 915 (husband's use of a deposition of his wife, held to allow her explanation of his solicitations to make it; cited *ante*, § 2338, n. 1; Davidson, P. J., diss.); 1917, *Bennett v. State*, 80 Tex. Cr. 652, 194 S. W. 148 (murder; defendant's use of his wife's diary in part, held not a waiver as to the remainder).

But the *opponent's* calling of the wife cannot be a waiver: 1910, *Abrahams v. Woolley*, 243 Ill. 365, 90 N. E. 667.

The following ruling is unsound; compare § 2276, *ante*: 1891, *Connolly v. Murrell*, 14 Ont. Pr. 187 (the husband may at any time claim the privilege, even after making partial disclosure).

<sup>5</sup> *Ala.* 1877, *Chapman v. Holding*, 60 Ala. 522, 533, *semble*; *Ill.* 1913, *Marks v. Madsen*, 261 Ill. 51, 103 N. E. 625 (here the statute is a jumble of inconsistencies, and impliedly negatives any waiver); *Kan.* 1913, *Treiber v. McCormack*, 90 Kan. 675, 136 Pac. 268 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2338, n. 1); *Mass.* 1904, *Com. v. Cronin*, 185 Mass. 96, 69 N. E. 1065 (defendant's wife's testimony to her husband's private declarations to her, offered by him, excluded; erroneous); *Oh.* 1916, *Dick v. Hyer*, 94 Oh. 351, 114 N. E. 251 (whether a note signed by husband and wife was duly executed; the wife testified on her own behalf that she signed it at his request, etc.; held, on objection by the plaintiff that the privilege was violated; here the privilege is absurdly made to exclude testimony which both husband and wife desire to offer, waiving their privilege); *R. I.* 1900, *Robinson v. Robinson*, 22 R. I. 121, 46 Atl. 455; *Tenn.* 1919, *Crane & Co. v. Hall*, 141 Tenn. 556, 213 S. W. 414 (marital conveyance in fraud of creditors; husband and wife not allowed to testify in their own behalf to the consideration; this ruling virtually revives the abolished disqualification of husband and wife to testify in each other's behalf; the opinion gives no consideration to the distinct principles involved).

*Undecided*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143, 146, *semble*.



so radical an error of principle that no further argument would cure such a misapprehension.

#### 4. Cessation of the Privilege

§ 2341. **Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.** The privilege is intended to secure such a guarantee against apprehension of disclosure as will induce absolute freedom of communication; and this can be attained only by continuing the protection in spite of the termination of the marital relation:

1859, STEPHENS, J., in *Lingo v. State*, 29 Ga. 470, 483: "Communications between husband and wife are protected forever. This is necessary to the preservation of that perfect confidence and trust which should characterize and bless the relation of man and wife. Each must feel that the other is a safe and sacred depository of all secrets; and the protection which the law holds over the dead is the very source of greatest security to all the living."

(1) Hence, it has always been conceded that the *death* of the person communicating does not terminate the privilege.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the present privilege differs not only from the marital disqualification (*ante*, § 610) but

§ 2341. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1824, *Doker v. Hasler*, Ry. & Moo. 198 (a widow not admitted to prove a conversation between herself and the testator).

UNITED STATES: *California*: 1895, *Emmons v. Barton*, 109 Cal. 662, 669, 42 Pac. 303; *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1879, *Brooks v. Francis*, 10 D. C. 109; *Delaware*: 1852, *Farmers' Bank v. Cole*, 5 Harringt. 418; *Georgia*: 1859, *Lingo v. State*, 29 Ga. 470, 483; 1869, *Jackson v. Jackson*, 40 Ga. 150, 153; *Illinois*: 1895, *Goelz v. Goelz*, 157 Ill. 33, 41, 41 N. E. 756; 1895, *Gillespie v. Gillespie*, 159 Ill. 84, 90, 42 N. E. 305; 1898, *Geer v. Goudy*, 174 Ill. 514, 51 N. E. 623; 1910, *Schreffler v. Chase*, 245 Ill. 395, 92 N. E. 272 (appeal against a decree setting aside a wife's will for unsoundness of mind; the husband's testimony for the contestants, as to the wife's conduct and language in the family, held improperly admitted; Rev. St. 1873, c. 51, § 5, held to contain no exception to the common-law rule for such a case); 1912, *Neice v. Chicago & Alton R. Co.*, 254 Ill. 595, 98 N. E. 989 (widow of deceased person killed by defendant's train, not allowed to testify to a conversation with him as to his intention in taking a journey); *Indiana*: 1872, *Mercer v. Patterson*, 41 Ind. 440, 444; 1873, *Griffin v. Smith*, 45 Ind. 366; *Iowa*: 1900, *Shuman v. Supreme Lodge*, 110 Ia. 480, 81 N. W. 717 (statute applied); 1901, *Hertrich v. Hertrich*, 114 Ia. 643, 87 N. W. 689; *Kentucky*: 1841, *McGuire v. Maloney*, 1 B. Monr. 224; 1858, *Short v. Tinsley*, 1 Metc. Ky. 397, 401; 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 Ky. 580, 584, 14 S. W. 834; 1901, *Murphy v. Murphy*, — Ky. —, 65 S. W. 165 (privilege held not applicable to a widow's testimony to the testator's declarations in a will contest; *Du Relle, J.*, diss.); 1902, *Manhattan L. I. Co. v. Beard*,

112 Ky. 455, 66 S. W. 35 (privilege held applicable to a widow's testimony in a suit on the husband's insurance policy); 1903, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Johnson*, — Ky. —, 72 S. W. 762 (widow's testimony in favor of the deceased's estate, excluded); *Maine*: 1859, *Walker v. Sanborn*, 46 Me. 470, 472; *Massachusetts*: 1861, *Dexter v. Booth*, 2 All. 559; *Michigan*: 1886, *Maynard v. Vinton*, 59 Mich. 139, 152, 26 N. W. 401; 1911, *People v. Bowen*, 165 Mich. 231, 130 N. W. 706; *Minnesota*: 1895, *Newstrom v. R. Co.* 61 Minn. 78, 63 N. W. 253; *Nebraska*: 1895, *Buckingham v. Roar*, 45 Nebr. 244, 63 N. W. 398; 1910, *Metzger v. Royal Neighbors*, 86 Nebr. 61, 124 N. W. 913; *New York*: 1842, *Babcock v. Booth*, 2 Hill 181, 187; 1842, *Osterhout v. Shoemaker*, 3 Hill 513, 519; 1872, *Southwick v. Southwick*, 49 N. Y. 510; *Pennsylvania*: 1846, *Cornell v. Vanartsdalen*, 4 Pa. St. 364, 374; *Tennessee*: 1871, *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432; *Wisconsin*: 1905, *Schultz v. Culbertson*, 125 Wis. 169, 103 N. W. 234.

In some of the above cases the testimony was excluded even when it favored the deceased, partly because of the erroneous view already noticed (*ante*, § 2334, par. 1), partly because of a too strict view of the principle of waiver (*ante*, §§ 2329, 2340); a correct solution is seen in the following cases: 1888, *Stickney v. Stickney*, 131 U. S. 227, 237, 9 Sup. 677 (a widow held to be "at liberty, though not compellable, to state the directions given by her to her husband respecting the investment of her money"); 1897, *Smith v. Cook*, 10 D. C. App. 488, 492; *Posey v. Hanson*, 10 D. C. App. 497, 509 (the widow allowed to disclose communications with the deceased husband in a suit against her involving the title to property).



also from the marital privilege against adverse testimony (*ante*, § 2237); so that, even where those two have been terminated by death or have been abolished by statute, the present privilege remains, for communications had during marriage.

(2) In the same way, the privilege does not terminate with *divorce*.<sup>2</sup>

(3) But the application of the privilege to a communication made between husband and wife *living in separation*,<sup>3</sup> or between persons living in *unlawful cohabitation*,<sup>4</sup> cannot be conceded; for here the policy of the privilege does not apply (*ante*, § 2332), since the relation is not one in which the law need seek to foster confidence, and no privilege ever came into existence.

(4) And neither in policy nor in logic does the privilege protect during marriage the communications made between the man and the woman *before their marriage*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Ala.* 1885, *Owen v. State*, 78 *Ala.* 425, 428; 1888, *Long v. State*, 86 *Ala.* 36, 41, 5 *So.* 443; *Ark.* 1884, *Nolen v. Harden*, 43 *Ark.* 307, 315; *Cal.* 1890, *People v. Mullings*, 83 *Cal.* 138, 143, 23 *Pac.* 229; *Ill.* 1896, *Griffeth v. Griffeth*, 162 *Ill.* 368, 44 *N. E.* 820 (divorced wife not allowed to testify for the plaintiff in an action by the second wife for divorce); 1898, *Geer v. Goudy*, 174 *Ill.* 514, 51 *N. E.* 623; 1907, *Wickes v. Walden*, 228 *Ill.* 56, 81 *N. E.* 798; *Ind.* 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 *Ind.* 143; *Ind. Terr.* 1904, *German-Amer. Ins. Co. v. Paul*, 5 *Ind. Terr.* 703, 83 *S. W.* 60; *Ia.* 1901, *Evans' Estate*, 114 *Ia.* 240, 86 *N. W.* 283; *Kan.* 1872, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 9 *Kan.* 112, 115; *Ky.* 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 *Ky.* 580, 584, 14 *S. W.* 834; *Mich.* 1888, *Hitchcock v. Moore*, 70 *Mich.* 112, 116, 37 *N. W.* 914; 1909, *Pierson v. Illinois C. R. Co.*, 159 *Mich.* 110, 123 *N. W.* 576 (point not noticed in opinion); *Minn.* 1886, *Leppla v. Tribune Co.*, 35 *Minn.* 310, 29 *N. W.* 127; *Mo.* 1900, *State v. Kodat*, 158 *Mo.* 125, 59 *S. W.* 73; *N. Y.* *Ratcliff v. Wales*, 1 *Hill N. Y.* 63; 1861, *Chamberlain v. People*, 23 *N. Y.* 85, 89; *Oh.* 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 *Oh.* 526, 529; *Pa.* 1887, *Brock v. Brock*, 116 *Pa.* 109, 113, 9 *Atl.* 486; *R. I.* 1900, *Robinson v.*

*Robinson*, 22 *R. I.* 121, 46 *Atl.* 455; *S. D.* 1911, *Luick v. Arends*, — *S. D.* —, 132 *N. W.* 352 (divorce since suit begun; point not noticed); *Tenn.* 1858, *Kimbrough v. Mitchell*, 1 *Head* 539, 540; *Tex.* 1903, *Davis v. State*, 45 *Tex. Cr.* 292, 77 *S. W.* 451; *Wash.* 1915, *State v. Snyder*, 84 *Wash.* 485, 147 *Pac.* 38 (for communications during marriage); *Wis.* 1870, *Cook v. Henry*, 25 *Wis.* 569, 571.

<sup>3</sup> *Accord*: 1913, *Holyoke v. Holyoke's Estate*, 110 *Me.* 469, 87 *Atl.* 40. *Contra*: 1884, *Holtz v. Dick*, 42 *Oh. St.* 23, 26 (a wife's letters to a husband, while living separate from him, admitted on common-law principles; "that rule has not been limited by the present legislation, but enlarged").

<sup>4</sup> 1831, *Wells v. Fisher*, 1 *Moo. & Rob.* 99 (here the man was a second husband, but the first husband, who had been supposed dead, had returned from foreign parts).

<sup>5</sup> 1920, *Halback v. Hill*, — *D. C. App.* —, 261 *Fed.* 1007 (letters written by the wife to the husband before marriage, produced against him; more fully stated *ante*, § 2235, note 6); 1920, *Com. v. Barronian*, 235 *Mass.* 364, 126 *N. E.* 833 (perjury; wife of defendant allowed to testify to his statements made before marriage).



TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

## SUB-TOPIC IV: COMMUNICATIONS BY AND TO JURORS

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

## § 2345. General Principles involved.

## A. PETIT JURY

## 1. Privileged Communications Rule

## § 2346. Scope of the Principle.

## 2. Parol Evidence Rule

## § 2348. General Principle.

§ 2349. (a) Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, or Intentions of Jurors, as immaterial.

§ 2350. Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.

§ 2351. (b) Issues of the Trial, as material; Judge's Instructions, as considered by the Jury.

§ 2352. (c) Irregularities and Miscon-

duct, as material; Jurors Impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.

§ 2353. Same: Policy of the Rule.

§ 2354. Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.

§ 2355. (d) Mistake in Recording or Announcing the Verdict.

§ 2356. Same: Explaining the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to its Legal Effect; Retiring to Reconsider.

## 3. Arbitrators' Awards

§ 2358. Foregoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.

## B. GRAND JURY

## 1. Privileged Communications Rule

## § 2360. History and General Principle.

§ 2361. (a) Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.

§ 2362. (b) Privilege of Witnesses before the Grand Jury; General Principle.

§ 2363. Same: Instances of the Cessation of the Privilege.

## 2. Parol Evidence Rule

§ 2364. Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes; etc.

§ 2345. **General Principles involved.** The doctrine of Privilege for confidential communications, when applied to jurors in their deliberations, found itself side by side with two other and totally distinct doctrines. To the natural risks of entanglement, add that one of these doctrines is not a principle of Evidence at all, and that the other is a now discarded principle which at one time had great vogue in other relations; and it is easy to see that much obscurity of rule has resulted, together with much difference of judicial opinion.

As the common formula has run, "a juror's testimony or affidavit is not receivable to impeach his own verdict." But this rule of thumb is in itself neither strictly correct as a statement of the acknowledged law, nor at all defensible upon any principle in this unqualified form. It is a mere shibboleth, and has no intrinsic signification whatever. It resembles the popular notion in times of stringency that "the country needs more money," or the old tradal fallacy that a people's money ought to be spent within its

own borders and not paid to foreign merchants for foreign goods, — both of which have a certain plausibility, and yet can be exposed only by a consideration of independent and fundamental economic principles which combine under certain circumstances to produce the facts that give plausibility to the popular dogmas.

The dogma that *a juror may not impeach his verdict* is, then, in itself neither correct in law nor reasonable in principle; but it has reference to a group of rules deducible from three general and independent principles, which must be examined separately:

A. *Petit Jury*. 1. *Privileged Communications*. The juror's subjective freedom of expression in consultation must be guaranteed. Hence the evidential principle of privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285) genuinely applies to the deliberations of a jury, so as to forbid any one of them to reveal the communications of another made during retirement, without the latter's consent.

2. *Parol Evidence (Integration)*. The verdict of a jury is a written act, like a will or a contract or a judgment reduced to writing, and the "parol evidence" rule (*post*, § 2401) governs it, in a special application adapted to its circumstances. The results of this principle's application fall under four heads: *a*. The *negotiations* and *motives* preceding and leading up to the final act of uttering the verdict are immaterial and cannot be used to vary or set aside the verdict as uttered; *b*. The precise scope of the *issues* upon which the verdict is founded is always open to ascertainment; *c*. The failure to observe those forms of *behavior* which are essential to the validity of jurors' actions is always open to establishment; *d*. The incorrectness of the *foreman's declaration* or of the *clerk of court's record*, in not representing the actual terms of the verdict as finally assented to by the jury as a body, may always be established, for the purpose of correcting the record, by proceedings taken at a proper time; provided always that this permissible process is to be distinguished from the things prohibited by the rule of (*a*), above.

3. *Self-stultifying Testimony*. In so far as the rule of 2, *c*, above, is attempted to be carried out by using a juror's testimony to prove his own misbehavior, this would be forbidden by the principle 'nemo turpitudinem suam allegans audietur' (*ante*, § 525), if there were any such principle. But that principle of Evidence has long ago disappeared from every other part of our law, and it should not survive for the present purpose.

B. *Grand Jury*. The foregoing principles have application as well to *grand jurors* as to *petit jurors*, but naturally with some differences of result. The chief difference is that under the principle of 1, above (*Privileged Communications*), the communications of witnesses to the jurors, not merely of the jurors among themselves, are included, and a special development of the principle becomes necessary.

So also the award of *Arbitrators* is governed by the same principles, the chief difference occurring in the application of 2, *b*, above, because of the arbitrators' combination of the functions of judge and jury.



## A. PETIT JURY

## 1. Privileged Communications Rule

§ 2346. **Scope of the Principle.** The requirements of the general principle of Privileged Communications (*ante*, § 2285) are fully satisfied for communications between jurors during retirement. The communications originate in a confidence of secrecy; this confidence is essential to the due attainment of the jury's constitutional purpose; the relation of juror is clearly entitled to the highest consideration and the most careful protection; and the injury from disclosure would certainly overbalance the benefits thereby gained.<sup>1</sup> It has therefore always been assumed and conceded that a *juror is privileged not to have his communications with a fellow-juror disclosed* upon the witness-stand against his consent.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless this principle has in practice not played a frequent part, and for three reasons: (a) The communications between jurors are seldom relevant in any way upon another trial;<sup>3</sup> (b) even when they are desired to be used on motions for a new trial, they are usually excluded by virtue of the parol evidence rule in some aspect; when they are not so excluded, they are still usually without the privilege because they involve misconduct, which is perhaps not protected by the principle of the privilege;<sup>4</sup> (c) even when the privilege would apply, the juror himself waives it by making voluntary affidavit.

It remains, however, to notice the practical differences between the application of the present principle, *i. e.* the genuine Privilege, and the ensuing one, *i. e.* the Parol Evidence rule:

(1) Under the Parol Evidence rule, the juror's testimony is excluded only when it is offered to prove facts nullifying the verdict, on a motion for a new trial. But under the Privileged Communications rule, the juror's testimony would be excluded for any purpose whatever, — for example, where upon another trial he was a witness and his bias was offered to be shown by his expressions during retirement with the former jury. Thus the genuine Privilege may have a larger scope than the Parol Evidence rule.

§ 2346. <sup>1</sup> 1834, Johnson, J., in *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill S. C. 506 ("We know from experience that, in questions admitting of any doubt, the only possible means of arriving at unanimity of opinion amongst many is by a free interchange of thought, and to deny it to a jury would be to defeat the object of trial by jury").

In 1757, Admiral Byng having been condemned to death by a court-martial, whose decision many thought harsh, a bill was presented to release from their oath of secrecy the members of the court-martial, so that an investigation might be had; this bill Lord Mansfield and Lord Hardwicke both opposed, and their arguments are analogous to those urged against the disclosure of a jury's deliberations and reasonings (Cobbett's *Parl. Hist.* 803-822, Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, VI, 273).

<sup>2</sup> 1873, *R. v. Kahalewai*, 3 Haw. 465, 470 (rule applied); 1824, *State v. Powell*, 7 N. J. L. 244, 248 (knowledge of the condition of the body, acquired as a coroner's juror upon the same death, not privileged).

But the rule does not prevent a juror from testifying at a subsequent trial to *knowledge obtained by a view of premises* at a former trial: 1875, *Cramer v. Burlington*, 42 Ia. 315 (juror who had examined a sidewalk at a view on a former trial, admitted); 1906, *Hughes v. Chicago, St. P. M. & O. R. Co.*, 126 Wis. 525, 106 N. W. 526 (similar).

Compare § 1168, *ante*.

<sup>3</sup> They might be relevant to impeach the juror as a witness in a later trial; *e. g.* as attempted in *Phillips v. Marblehead*, 148 Mass. 326, 330, 19 N. E. 547 (1889).

<sup>4</sup> *Post*, § 2354.

(2) Under the Parol Evidence rule, the juror's testimony is excluded (by the prevailing rule) in proving either his own misconduct or a fellow-juror's; but under the Privileged Communications rule the former is obviously not excluded, where the juror makes voluntary affidavit. Contrariwise, in the few jurisdictions which do not accept the rule prohibiting proof of misconduct, the juror might still be prevented from disclosing a fellow-juror's communications unless the latter consented.

(3) Under the Parol Evidence rule, the prohibitions, so far as they exist at all, are absolute and independent of the juror's consent; but under the Privileged Communications rule there is nothing left to prohibit if the privileged juror once consents.

## 2. Parol Evidence Rule

§ 2348. **General Principle.** The principle of the Parol Evidence rule (the constitution of jural acts) is later examined in detail (*post*, §§ 2400–2478); and a jury's verdict is one of the most important acts illustrating the application of that principle. To consider its application here is to separate the subject from its natural place, but is unavoidable.

That principle is that where the existence and tenor of a jural act — *i. e.* an utterance to which legal effects are attached — are in issue, the outward utterance as finally and formally made, and not the prior and private intention, is taken as exclusively constituting the act (*post*, §§ 2404, 2425); and therefore where the act is required (as judicial proceedings are) to be made in writing, the writing is the act (*post*, § 2450). But this assumes that there was an act; nothing therefore prohibits the investigation of the circumstances to determine whether an act of the alleged tenor was consummated by the will of the parties (*post*, § 2408). Moreover, if any formalities are essential to the validity of the act, their absence may of course be shown (*post*, § 2456). Finally, even when an act of the tenor alleged appears to have been done by written utterance, the failure of the written utterance to correspond with the private intention is good ground, in a proper proceeding, for judicial revision and correction of the writing, so far as there is no impolicy in unsettling the transaction and risking controversial uncertainty (*post*, §§ 2413, 2417).

In applying this principle to a jury's verdict, the subject naturally falls under four heads:

*a.* The *jurors' deliberations* during retirement, their expressions, arguments, motives, and beliefs, represent that state of mind which must precede every legal act and is in itself of no jural consequence. The verdict, as finally agreed upon and pronounced in court by the jurors, must be taken as the sole embodiment of the jury's act. Hence it stands, irrespective of what led up to it in the privacy of the jury-room, — precisely as the prior negotiations of the parties to a contract disappear from legal consideration when once the final agreement is reduced to writing and signed. The difference is that the parties need not have reduced their transaction to a single memorial (*i. e.* by



integration) unless they wished to, while the law requires the verdict thus to be made; but the effect is the same, when the act is once done.

b. The *issues* submitted to a jury must be known before the scope of the verdict can be completely determined, because a general verdict purports only to state the net fact of a decision *pro* or *con*, and the subject of law and fact, upon which the decision is given, must still be sought in the pleadings, the testimony, and the instructions, — precisely as a written contract may by the parties' express intention cover only a part of a transaction and leave the rest to be determined from other materials (*post*, § 2430). Hence, properly, the issues covered by a verdict may always be established, in order to determine the scope of the judgment, and by a juror's testimony, if needed. Here, however, certain discriminations, as will be seen, come into play.

c. The jury's *failure to obey essential formalities of conduct* may invalidate the verdict, — just as the parties' failure to observe the required formality of recording a deed or attesting a will or stamping a contract (under the revenue law) or making a memorandum (under the statute of frauds) may invalidate a transaction otherwise perfect (*post*, §§ 2454-2456). The transgression of these rules of formality may therefore of course be established as a ground for invalidating the verdict. What these formalities shall be is determined by the policy applicable to jury-trials, and is in no sense a question of evidence. There is, however, a rule of Evidence, now generally but improperly accepted, that the fact of informality, so far as it involves improper conduct by the jurors, shall not be proved by one of the jurors themselves. This rule has nothing to do, in principle, with the trial rules of informality, nor with the parol evidence rule permitting informalities to be established.

d. The *correction of a mistake* in the jury's uttered verdict, occurring between the time of the act of voting or assenting in the jury-room and the final entry of the verdict by the clerk in court, may properly be made, upon the same principle that a deed may be reformed in equity for mutual mistake, so as to make it correspond with the expressed agreement of the parties as informally reached before the execution of the deed (*post*, § 2417), or that a judgment-roll may be corrected 'nunc pro tunc' to correspond with the proceedings as originally contained in the pleadings or the clerk's minutes (*post*, § 2450). This process, however, has constantly to be distinguished from the improper attempt to violate the principle of (a) above by giving effect to the motives or beliefs of the jurors leading up to their final act of voting or assent.

From the general principle of the Parol Evidence rule, therefore, may be adequately deduced all the detailed rules that control the methods of correcting or setting aside the jury's verdict. So far as the Privileged Communications rule incidentally forbids anything which the Parol Evidence rule would permit, its effect will be noticed under the appropriate head. The effect of the supposed rule against self-stultification ('*nemo turpitudinem suam*') will also thus be noticed. The rules defining the informalities fatal to a verdict will be assumed to be already prescribed by the law of trials.



§ 2349. (a) **Jurors' Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, Intentions, and the like, as Immaterial.** For the reason already stated (*ante*, § 2348, par. a), the verdict as uttered is the sole embodiment of the jury's act, and must stand as such without regard to the motives or beliefs which have led up to their act. The policy which requires this is the same which forbids a consideration of the negotiations of parties to a contract leading up to the final terms as deliberately embodied in their deed, namely, the loss of all certainty in the verdict, the impracticability of seeking for definiteness in the preliminary views, the risk of misrepresentation after disclosure of the verdict, and the impossibility of expecting any end to trials if the grounds for the verdict were allowed to effect its overthrow:

1872, CLEASBY, B., in *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 5 H. L. 418, 434:<sup>1</sup> "As soon as the award is made, it must speak for itself. It must be applied, as in other cases, by extrinsic evidence to the subject-matter, but cannot be explained or varied or extended by extrinsic evidence of the intention of the person making it. There appear to me to be the strongest objections against allowing the umpire to be examined for the purpose of shewing what he intended to be included in the award. In the first place it is (and, indeed, must be) a written instrument, and the general rule is applicable, that its effect must be collected from the instrument itself. . . . The award taken by itself is something certain and fixed, and settles the rights of the parties; but if evidence be admitted of the intention and state of mind of the umpire when he made it, its certainty is destroyed, and its effect depends upon his memory, clearness of intellect, and perhaps upon his views and wishes taken up afterwards. Surely it would be a most dangerous thing, after an award has been made which becomes of itself the foundation of a right, to allow any one to retain the power of explaining it away, or even of defeating it. We can properly investigate the acts of a judge or arbitrator in prosecuting a particular inquiry, and his judgment founded upon it; but how can we investigate his secret thoughts or intentions? He is the only master of them, and what he says must be conclusive, as there is nothing which can contradict or explain it. The objection to such evidence would be more striking if, instead of the umpire being appealed to, two arbitrators had joined in an award. Could each have been questioned as to the composition of the award? Although they had agreed as to the result and amount of the award, it would not at all follow that they agreed in the steps by which it was arrived at. Indeed, we know that agreement in such a result is often only arrived at by some concession and compromise, and in a case of a difference in the evidence of what was intended, which is to govern and influence the award. Or it may be farther illustrated by supposing the case, instead of going to arbitration, to go to a jury. There is an assessor who presides, and he directs the jury to reject certain heads of claim and to compensate for others. The jurymen give a general verdict. Could the twelve jurymen be called as witnesses to shew to what extent they had severally acted upon the direction given, or against it, so as to vitiate the verdict by shewing that some jurymen included in it matters they could not properly include? I submit not, and that the verdict must speak for itself. . . . The state of the arbitrator's or judge's mind is of no importance, except so far as it is embodied in some judicial act done by him. His mind may fluctuate and change more than once until the decision is delivered, and then, whether it be upon an interlocutory or final matter, the case is so far bound."

1802, TYLER, J., in *Robbins v. Windorer*, 2 Tyl. Vt. 11, 13: "The common law requires that the twelve jurors shall unite in a verdict. Whoever considers the variety and intricacy

§ 2349.<sup>1</sup> This opinion is dealing with an arbitrator's award, but its reasoning is expressly applied to jurors' verdicts, and it contains the soundest statement of the principle.



of causes they have to determine, the difficulty of bringing twelve persons of different habits and modes of thinking, and of unequal abilities, fortuitously elected, to concur in opinion, will perceive the wisdom of the Legislature in directing that their deliberations should be secret; for it was to be expected, that in bringing about a union of sentiment in the panel, the subject under consideration would be presented in various lights; that futile objections would be met with inconclusive arguments, theory opposed to practice, and legal science to common sense; that the reputations of witnesses would be scanned, the character of parties too often adverted to, and the whole investigation illustrated by relations of what each juror had heard or known in cases supposed similar; that the warmth of debate would excite an obstinacy of opinion, and a reluctant and tardy assent to the verdict, perhaps drawn from some one, which, on after reflection, might leave in the juror's mind a doubt of its rectitude. It would be of dangerous tendency to admit jurors by affidavit to detail these deliberations of the jury room, to testify to subjects not perfectly comprehended at the time, or but imperfectly recollected. From a natural commiseration for the losing party, or a desire to apologize for the discharge of an ungrateful duty, after the juror had been discharged from office, he would be too apt to intimate, that if some part of the testimony had been adverted to, or something not in evidence omitted, his opinion would have been otherwise, whilst others of the panel, with different impressions or different recollections, might testify favorably for the prevailing party. This would open a novel and alarming source of litigation, and it would be difficult to say when a suit was terminated."

1836, TURLEY, J., in *Hudson v. State*, 9 Yerg. 407, 410: "To establish the principle that jurors may file affidavits showing upon what particular parts of testimony they may have found their verdict, with a view of granting new trials if the Court shall be of opinion that the testimony thus made the basis of the verdict was not legal, and therefore ought not to have been received, would be casting obstacles in the way of criminal trials that would render it almost impossible ever to bring them to a conclusion."

1839, SHAW, C. J., in *Murdock v. Sumner*, 22 Pick. 156: "The general rule is that affidavits of jurors will not be received to prove any mistake of the evidence or misapprehension of the law on the part of the jury. Different jurors, according to their different degrees of intelligence, of attention, and habits of thought, may entertain different views of the evidence and of the instructions of the Court in point of law. But the verdict, in which they all concur, must be the best evidence of their belief both as to the fact and the law, and therefore must be taken to be conclusive."

Accordingly, it is to-day universally agreed that, on a motion to set aside a verdict and grant a new trial, the verdict cannot be affected, either favorably or unfavorably, by the circumstances:

- that one or more jurors *misunderstood* the judge's instruction;
- or were influenced by an *illegal paper* or by an *improper remark* of a fellow-juror;
- or *assented* because of *weariness* or illness or importunities;
- or *assented* under an *erroneous belief* that the judge would use clemency or have the legal right to vary the sentence;
- or had been *influenced by inadmissible evidence*;
- or had decided upon grounds which rendered *newly-discovered evidence immaterial*;
- or had *omitted to consider* important evidence or issues;
- or had *miscalculated accounts* by errors of fact or of law;

or that any other *motive or belief, leading to their decision*, had existed prior to their final assent and vote.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ENGLAND: 1754, *Canning's Trial*, 19 How. St. Tr. 283, 669 (the jury having brought in a verdict of "guilty of perjury, but not wilful and corrupt," and the Court refusing to receive it, the jury retired and brought in a verdict of "guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury"; and, upon a motion for a new trial, based on two jurors' affidavits, the foreman of the jury "was sent for by the Court," and stated that two of the jurors would not consent to the second verdict unless the jury recommended the accused for mercy, whereon they all agreed on that basis; and the motion, being argued before five of the superior judges among others, was overruled); 1770, *R. v. Almon*, 5 Burr. 2686 (a juror's affidavit, that he had understood the judge's direction to be that certain evidence was conclusive, and that "if he had apprehended that the jury were at liberty to exercise their own judgment, he would have acquitted the defendant," was excluded; *Aston, J.*: "A juryman's affidavit with regard to his sentiments in point of law, at the trial, ought not to be admitted"); 1832, *Ramadge v. Ryan*, 9 Bing. 333, 338 (a juror having been charged with expressions of bias before the trial, the foreman's affidavit that "the verdict was not occasioned by the practice of that individual" was excluded, the Court "observing that the affidavits on the other side applied only to the conduct of the juror before he entered the jury-box").

CANADA: 1900, *Fraser v. Drew*, 30 Can. Sup. 241 (misunderstanding the evidence).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1806, *Ladd v. Wilson*, 1 Cr. C. C. 305 (jurors' affidavit that "a mistake was made by the foreman in calculating upon the principles agreed on by the jury," said to be "dangerous," and the practice of receiving them not to be sanctioned); 1890, *Glaspell v. R. Co.*, 43 Fed. 900, 907, *Thomas, J.* (jurors' affidavits as to their method of reckoning the damages, offered to show that an erroneous instruction was not followed and was therefore harmless, excluded); 1890, *Fuller v. Fletcher*, 44 id. 34, 39 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show that they were or were not influenced by certain motives); 1892, *Mattox v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 140, 142, 147, 13 Sup. 50 (rule of *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan., and *Woodward v. Leavitt*, Mass., approved; quoted *post*, § 2352);

*Arkansas*: 1881, *St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Cantrell*, 37 Ark. 519, 523, 527 (juror's affidavit as to the effect of the Court's instruction upon his vote, excluded); 1917, *Reiff v. Interstate B. M. Acc. Ass'n*, 127 Ark. 254, 192 S. W. 216 (affidavits that "they did not understand the effect of their verdict," excluded);

*California*: 1854, *Amsby v. Dickhouse*, 4 Cal. 103 (juror's affidavit that he was dissuaded from a contrary verdict by a fellow-juror's

improper conduct, excluded); 1860, *People v. Wyman*, 15 Cal. 70, 75 (that the verdict was not "a fair expression of the opinion of the jury," excluded); 1865, *People v. Hughes*, 29 Cal. 258, 263 (that two jurors would not have agreed to a verdict but for fear of being shut up over night, excluded); see the later cases cited *infra*, n. 3;

*Colorado*: 1890, *Knight v. Fisher*, 15 Colo. 176, 25 Pac. 78 (jurors' affidavits not received to show "improper arguments advanced by their fellow-jurors"); 1891, *Wray v. Carpenter*, 16 Colo. 271, 27 Pac. 248 (jurors' affidavits as to the "theory or ground upon which they rendered their verdict," excluded); 1919, *McLean v. People*, 66 Colo. 483, 180 Pac. 676 (liquor offence; jurors' affidavits as to "what influenced their minds," excluded);

*Connecticut*: 1852, *Haight v. Turner*, 21 Conn. 593, 596 (juror's affidavit that the jury had considered certain evidence contrary to the Court's instruction, excluded);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1910, *Hyde v. U. S.*, 35 D. C. App. 451, 486 (jurors' affidavits that the verdict in a conspiracy case was reached by a compromise as to acquittal and conviction of the several defendants);

*Florida*: 1878, *Coker v. Hayes*, 16 Fla. 368, 392 (juror's affidavit not received to show that he assented to the verdict "because of the discontent of many of the jurors at his not agreeing with them");

*Georgia*: 1850, *Bishop v. State*, 9 Ga. 121, 125 (juror's affidavit that he was induced to agree "by the persuasion of his fellow-jurors and by their misrepresentations as to the effect of the verdict," excluded); 1853, *Clark v. Carter*, 12 Ga. 500, 503 (juror's affidavit that he misunderstood the case in arriving at his verdict, excluded); 1855, *Mercer v. State*, 17 Ga. 146, 174 (juror's admissions that he yielded to the verdict only "because he could not control the rest of the jury," excluded); 1859, *Coleman v. State*, 28 Ga. 78, 84 (similar); 1867, *Rutland v. Hathorn*, 36 Ga. 380, 384, 386 (similar); 1873, *King v. King*, 49 Ga. 622 (similar); 1885, *Coleman v. Slade*, 75 Ga. 61, 72 (like *Clark v. Carter*, *supra*);

*Hawaii*: 1859, *Howland v. Jacobs*, 2 Haw. 155 (juror's affidavit as to fellow-jurors' improper reasons for the verdict, excluded); 1873, *R. v. Kahalewai*, 3 Haw. 465, 469 (affidavits of jurors and third persons as to the language of jurors during deliberation, indicating bias, excluded);

*Illinois*: 1841, *Smith v. Eames*, 4 Ill. 76, 81 (jurors' affidavits as to their understanding of the judge's instructions, excluded); 1878, *Nicolls v. Foster*, 89 Ill. 386 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show "what the jury thought and did in their retirement"); 1916, *People v. Duzan*, 272 Ill. 478, 112 N. E. 315 (erroneous



The following discriminations, however, must be made:

(1) Many Courts reach this result by merely pronouncing the shibboleth that "a juror *cannot impeach his verdict*," and do not appreciate the vital

refusal of an instruction; jurors' affidavits that they did not notice that any of the written instructions were marked as refused, etc., not admitted; repudiation of the distinction that jurors' affidavits can be received to support a verdict);

*Indiana*: 1846, *Ward v. State*, 8 Blackf. 102 (juror's affidavit as to his "particular view of the testimony," excluded); 1858, *Elliott v. Mills*, 10 Ind. 368, 371 (jurors' statements that they "unintentionally overlooked" a credit in defendant's favor, excluded); 1864, *Hughes v. Listner*, 23 Ind. 396 (juror's affidavit that he yielded his verdict only to avoid further confinement, excluded); 1872, *Withers v. Fiscus*, 40 Ind. 131 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show that they had made a mistake in calculating the interest);

*Indian Terr.* 1903, *Langford v. U. S.*, 4 Ind. T. 567, 76 S. W. 111 (juror's affidavit as to his reason for consenting, excluded);

*Iowa*: 1849, *Lloyd v. McClure*, 2 G. Gr. 139, 142 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show "what items they had allowed and what rejected," in an action on an account); 1851, *Abel v. Kennedy*, 3 Ia. 47 (not admitted to show that "the reading of the deposition [after retirement] did not influence their verdict"); 1856, *Cook v. Sypher*, 3 Ia. 484, 486 (juror's affidavit that "the verdict was not voluntary on his part," excluded); 1859, *Butt v. Tuthill*, 10 Ia. 585 (obscurely reported); 1863, *Davenport v. Cummings*, 15 Ia. 219, 228 (jurors' affidavits that they understood by an instruction that "a preponderance of evidence was not required," excluded); 1863, *Jack v. Naber*, 15 Ia. 450, 452 (jurors' affidavits that they "misunderstood the testimony," excluded); 1866, *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, 20 Ia. 195, 212 (principle of the prior cases approved; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1871, *Cowles v. R. Co.*, 32 Ia. 515, 518 (juror's affidavit that he found his verdict upon certain evidence alone, excluded); 1877, *Brown v. Cole*, 45 Ia. 601 (juror's affidavit that he had assented solely because of illness, excluded); 1878, *Ward v. Thompson*, 48 Ia. 588, 594 (jurors' affidavits as to their misunderstanding of the rule of damages, excluded); 1878, *State v. McConkey*, 49 Ia. 499, 504 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously rejected evidence before them, excluded); 1884, *Fox v. Wunderlich*, 64 Ia. 187, 20 N. W. 7 (juror's affidavit that he assented to the verdict in order to shorten his confinement, excluded); 1885, *Wilkins v. Bent*, 66 Ia. 531, 24 N. W. 29 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously deducted a certain amount, excluded); 1894, *State v. Beste*, 91 Ia. 565, 60 N. W. 112 (juror's affidavit that another juror argued that the defendant ought to have taken the stand, excluded); 1895, *State v.*

*Lauderbeck*, 96 Ia. 258, 65 N. W. 158 (like sundry prior cases); 1896, *State v. Whalen*, 98 Ia. 662, 68 N. W. 554 (jurors' affidavits, to the influence upon them of an illegal reading of law books by another juror, excluded); 1896, *Kassing v. Walter*, — Ia. —, 65 N. W. 832 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously reckoned interest, admitted for the purpose of argument); 1898, *Christ v. Webster City*, 105 Ia. 119, 74 N. W. 743 (jurors' affidavits as to a misunderstanding of instructions, excluded); but this foregoing line of precedents seems to have been abandoned in recent cases, based probably on a misconception of the doctrine of *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, *post*, § 2353: 1904, *Douglas v. Agne*, 125 Ia. 67, 99 N. W. 550 (jurors' testimony that they gave weight to evidence not properly before them, admissible); 1907, *Brown Land Co. v. Lehman*, 134 Ia. 712, 112 N. W. 165 (same);

*Kansas*: 1874, *Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 544 (juror's affidavit not admissible to show "a matter resting in the personal consciousness"; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1885, *State v. Burwell*, 34 Kan. 312, 8 Pac. 470 (foreman's affidavit that he "would not have signed the verdict had he known its real meaning," excluded); 1885, *State v. Clark*, 34 Kan. 289, 8 Pac. 528 (jurors' affidavits that documents illegally read by them influenced the verdict, excluded); 1892, *State v. Plum*, 49 Kan. 679, 31 Pac. 308 (jurors' affidavits that they consented only to avoid a hung jury, excluded); 1911, *State v. Keehn*, 85 Kan. 765, 118 Pac. 851 (two jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding of judge's power to reduce degree of crime, as a ground for their vote, excluded; following *Perry v. Bailey*); 1919, *Ohlson v. Central Kansas P. Co.*, 105 Kan. 252, 182 Pac. 393 (affidavit as to jurors' consideration of improper remarks by counsel, excluded);

*Kentucky*: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, Hardin 595, 598 (jurors' affidavits not admissible "to explain the train of reasoning or the grounds either of law or fact assumed by them"; here, to show an improper consideration of future damage by a continuing trespass); 1826, *Doran v. Shaw*, 3 T. B. Monr. 411, 415 (preceding rule applied to exclude proof of being influenced by the sheriff's directions); 1919, *Caldwell v. Spears & Sons*, 186 Ky. 64, 216 S. W. 83 (jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding instructions not admissible); 1922, *Byers' Adm'r v. Hines*, 194 Ky. 448, 239 S. W. 783 (juror's affidavit as to evidence considered, excluded);

*Louisiana*: 1860, *State v. Millican*, 15 La. An. 557 (juror's testimony not received to show the jury's misunderstanding of the judge's charge); 1876, *State v. Frugé*, 28 La. An. 657



distinction between impeaching it in the manner of the present rule and impeaching it in the manner of rule *c* (*post*, § 2352).

(juror's testimony that a juror had used fallacious arguments, excluded); 1879, *State v. Wallman*, 31 La. An. 146 (juror's testimony that he had consented only in the belief that a petition for clemency would secure a commutation of sentence, excluded); 1886, *State v. Bird*, 38 La. An. 497 (similar); 1886, *State v. Bates*, 38 La. An. 491 (similar); 1889, *State v. Morris*, 41 La. An. 785, 6 So. 639 (juror's affidavit and statements that he consented only because of illness and a desire to be released, held inadmissible); 1905, *State v. Ferguson*, 114 La. 70, 38 So. 23 (jurors' affidavits that they considered the defendant's previous record, excluded); 1906, *State v. Barrett*, 117 La. 1086, 42 So. 513 (juror's statement after verdict that he had a fixed opinion when selected, excluded);

*Maine*: 1831, *Bishop v. Williamson*, 8 Me. 162, *semble* (juror's testimony as to misunderstanding the evidence, held inadmissible); 1868, *Heffron v. Gallupe*, 55 Me. 563, 566 (jurors' depositions as to the influence of a paper illegally introduced before them, excluded); 1874, *Greeley v. Mansur*, 64 Me. 211, 213 (juror's affidavit that by reason of illness he did not understand the deliberations in the jury-room, excluded);

*Maryland*: 1766, *Bladen v. Cockey*, 1 H. & McH. 230, 235 (juror's testimony that "he gave his verdict because the witness A gave such evidence as he credited," said to be improper, because parol proof should not be used "to lessen the weight of the record"); 1831, *Bosley v. Ins. Co.*, 3 G. & J. 450, 473 (jurymen's depositions that they charged the plaintiff with interest to a certain time in estimating damages, excluded);

*Massachusetts*: Here the rule of *Pierce v. Woodward*, *infra*, was afterwards repudiated in *Hannum v. Belchertown*: 1809, *Whitney v. Whitman*, 5 Mass. 405 (the Court refused to examine jurors as to whether they had been influenced by a paper illegally delivered to them; "the Court must be governed by the tendency of the paper apparent from the face of it"); 1827, *Hix v. Drury*, 5 Pick. 296, 302 (jurors not examinable to the effect of papers accidentally delivered; "although the jury may think that they were not influenced by such paper, it is impossible for them to say what effect it may have had on their minds"); 1828, *Pierce v. Woodward*, 6 Pick. 206 ("Where the judge is surprised by the verdict, it is not unusual to ask the jury upon what principle it was found"; new trial granted because "the principle [of damages] upon which they proceeded was incorrect"); 1829, *Ferrill v. Simpson*, 8 Pick. 359 (juror's testimony admitted to show "that a misapprehension at the trial, in regard to a certain line, had no influence upon the verdict"; the Court's discretion being in-

voked); 1830, *Parrott v. Thacher*, 9 Pick. 426, 431 ("Where there are distinct grounds upon which the verdict may be given, perhaps it is not improper to ascertain which they adopted, as there may be little or no evidence upon one and sufficient upon another; and if it appears that they did not agree [unanimously] upon either of the grounds, I do not see how their verdict can stand"); 1832, *Dorr v. Fenno*, 12 Pick. 520, 526 (preceding case and its language approved; "this is, however, a discretionary power, which the Court will exercise very sparingly and with great caution"; here the principle was held to permit an inquiry into the jury's principle of computing interest; but an inquiry into their mode of agreeing upon damages by striking an average was treated as involving an act of misbehavior and therefore not ascertainable through the jurors themselves); 1837, *Hannum v. Belchertown*, 19 Pick. 311 (jurors' depositions not admitted to show that they had obeyed the rule permitting double damages; *Dorr v. Fenno* approved, but its principle impliedly repudiated); 1839, *Murdock v. Sumner*, 22 Pick. 156 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show that they made a mistake of law in believing themselves bound to accept the opinion of an expert witness; quoted *supra*); 1854, *Boston & Worcester R. Co. v. Dana*, 1 Gray 83, 91, 105 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show that they had averaged damages, on the principle of *Dorr v. Fenno*); 1867, *Bridgewater v. Plymouth*, 97 Mass. 382, 390 ("the affidavits or testimony of a part of the jury cannot be received to show that they misunderstood the instructions of the judge or that they were induced by misapprehension to assent to the affirmation of the verdict"; preceding cases not noticed; moreover the principle laid down in *Hannum v. Belchertown*, *supra*, was there applied even to the entire jury's unanimous testimony); 1871, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, 107 Mass. 453, 459, 471 (jurors' affidavits held not admissible to show that a juror B., alleged to have been prejudiced, did not take part in the discussion nor vote on the side of the alleged bias; *Dorr v. Fenno* and *Ferrill v. Simpson* disapproved, in this respect; yet their doctrine is accepted so far as it allows a questioning as to the grounds of verdict by the judge before the final delivery and affirmation of the verdict); 1887, *Warren v. Spencer Water Co.*, 143 Mass. 155, 165, 9 N. E. 527 (juror's subsequent declarations, or even his testimony, to the reasons for and manner of arriving at a verdict, held inadmissible); 1893, *Harrington v. R. Co.*, 157 Mass. 579, 580, 32 N. E. 955 (*Woodward v. Leavitt* approved); *Minnesota*: 1868, *Knowlton v. McMahon*, 13 Minn. 386 (jurors' affidavits not received to show that the officer in charge "sought to, and did, influence the verdict"); 1870, *State v.*



(2) In consequence of the foregoing indiscrimination, a few Courts have occasionally received testimony of the juror's state of mind *in support*

Stokely, 16 Minn. 249, 255 (juror's affidavit that "he would not have concurred in the verdict" had not his health compelled his release from confinement, excluded); 1920, *Brown v. Duluth S. S. & A. R. Co.*, 147 Minn. 167, 179 N. W. 1003 (jurors' affidavits to "reasons and motives," excluded);

*Missouri*: 1883, *State v. Fox*, 79 Mo. 109, 112 (some one threw a rope with a hangman's noose into the jury-room; juror's testimony as to the effect of this incident, excluded); 1893, *State v. Schaefer*, 116 Mo. 96, 22 S. W. 447 (jurors' affidavits that the evidence was misunderstood by them, excluded); 1896, *State v. Burk*, 132 Mo. 363, 34 S. W. 48 (jurors' affidavits that they consented to the verdict on the understanding that the Court would reduce the sentence, excluded);

*Montana*: 1895, *Fitzgerald v. Clark*, 17 Mont. 100, 42 Pac. 273 (juror's affidavit that he consented to the verdict because he was ill and desired to be released, excluded); 1906, *State v. Beesskove*, 34 Mont. 41, 85 Pac. 376 (misunderstanding of the instructions; excluded);

*Nebraska*: 1888, *Harris v. State*, 24 Nebr. 803, 40 N. W. 317 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to impeach a verdict in a matter "which essentially inheres in the verdict itself"; following the rule in *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, Ia.); 1908, *Hamblin v. State*, 81 Nebr. 148, 115 N. W. 850 (jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding instructions, excluded);

*New Hampshire*: 1827, *Tyler v. Stevens*, 4 N. H. 116 (jurors' affidavits that they had "misunderstood the directions by the Court," excluded); 1829, *Page v. Wheeler*, 5 N. H. 91 (following *Whitney v. Whitman*, Mass.); 1833, *State v. Hascall*, 6 N. H. 352, 363 ("They state generally that they were influenced by nothing except the law and evidence given at the trial; but this we cannot consider"); 1850, *State v. Pike*, 20 N. H. 344 (juror's affidavit that the absence of a certain paper, improperly withheld, did not affect the jury's opinion of its contents or effect, admitted; *State v. Hascall* not cited); 1852, *Folsom v. Brown*, 25 N. H. 114, 123 (like *Griffin v. Auburn*, *infra*; jurors' affidavits here excluded); 1855, *Leighton v. Sargent*, 31 N. H. 119, 122, 137 (jurors' affidavits as to their consultations and how they determined the amount of damages, excluded); 1856, *Walker v. Kennison*, 34 N. H. 257 (jurors' affidavits that a fellow-juror misrepresented the testimony, etc., excluded); 1879, *Griffin v. Auburn*, 59 N. H. 286 (jurors' admissions, after verdict, as to having considered the question of costs, excluded); 1906, *Winslow v. Smith*, 74 N. H. 65, 65 Atl. 108 (jurors' affidavits as to misconstruing instructions, excluded); 1912, *Boston & M. R. Co. v. Franklin*, 76 N. H. 459, 84 Atl. 44 (preceding cases affirmed; the ground not clearly appearing);

*New Jersey*: 1792, *Randall v. Grover*, 1 N. J. L. 151 (juror's affidavit stating the "insufficiency of the evidence to justify the verdict," excluded); 1798, *Jessup v. Cook*, 6 N. J. L. 434, 439 (juror's affidavit that the jury divided a debt between the partners, offered to show that new evidence was material; Court equally divided); 1872, *Hutchinson v. Consumers' Coal Co.*, 36 N. J. L. 24 (jurors' affidavits "to explain the reasons or motives of the jurors, or any of them, for giving or consenting to the verdict," inadmissible);

*New Mexico*: 1895, *U. S. v. Biena*, 8 N. Mex. 99, 42 Pac. 70 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was based upon the testimony of one L., subsequently convicted of perjury, apparently held admissible; the true solution here would have been to grant a new trial on the sole fact of L.'s perjury, if on a material point, without regard to its probable influence on the jury);

*North Carolina*: 1878, *State v. Smallwood*, 78 N. C. 560 (like *State v. Best*, *infra*); 1884, *State v. Royal*, 90 N. C. 755 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was influenced by the defendant's failure to call his son as a witness, excluded); 1887, *Jones v. Parker*, 97 N. C. 33, 2 S. E. 370 (jurors' affidavits that they did not understand the judge's charge and did not concur in the verdict, excluded); 1888, *Johnson v. Allen*, 100 N. C. 131, 5 S. E. 666, 670 (affidavits based on jurors' statements as to the mode of reckoning damages, excluded); 1892, *State v. Best*, 111 N. C. 638, 15 S. E. 930 (jurors' affidavits that they assented only on the supposition that a recommendation to mercy would save from the death penalty, excluded); 1896, *Purcell v. R. Co.*, 119 N. C. 728, 26 S. E. 161 (like *Johnson v. Allen*, *supra*); *North Dakota*: 1905, *State v. Forrester*, 14 N. D. 335, 103 N. W. 625 (jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding the instructions, excluded); *Ohio*: 1858, *Holman v. Riddle*, 8 Oh. St. 384, 389 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded);

*Pennsylvania*: 1915, *Com. v. Filer*, 249 Pa. 171, 94 Atl. 822 (jurors' affidavits as to "what influenced them in reaching a conclusion," excluded);

*Rhode Island*: 1850, *Handy v. Ins. Co.*, 1 R. I. 400 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded; "the proper time . . . is immediately after the verdict is returned, while the jury may be polled"); 1859, *Tucker v. South Kingston*, 5 R. I. 558, 560 (similar affidavits, excluded); *South Carolina*: 1855, *Smith v. Culbertson*, 9 Rich. L. 106, 111 (juror's affidavit "that his assent was forced or was given under some misconception," said to be inadmissible); 1890, *State v. Senn*, 32 S. C. 392, 11 S. E. 292 (jurors' affidavits as to "the manner in which the verdict was reached," held inadmissible);



of the verdict, — applying that part of the rule of thumb (rule c) which receives jurors' testimony to disprove misconduct and thus to support the

1894, *State v. Bennett*, 40 S. C. 308, 18 S. E. 886 (juror's affidavit that he consented only on the erroneous supposition that the recommendation to mercy would secure pardon or commutation, excluded); 1897, *State v. Aughtry*, 49 S. C. 285, 26 S. E. 619, 27 S. E. 199 (jurors' statement of their misunderstanding of the charge, not received); *Tennessee*: 1821, *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. 60 (two jurors' affidavits admitted, that they had consented to a verdict of guilty for the sole reason that they believed that a new trial would be granted or that the Governor would by pardon act upon the recommendation to mercy which they made a condition of assenting to the verdict); 1836, *Hudson v. State*, 9 Yerg. 407 (juror's affidavit that he had founded his verdict upon a fact improperly presented to the jury by a witness re-examined in open court after the trial, excluded; in effect repudiating *Crawford v. State* on this point; quoted *supra*); 1842, *Norris v. State*, 3 Humph. 333, 338 (preceding case approved; jurors' affidavits that they had misunderstood the judge's charge as to believing a witness, held not admissible); 1844, *Saunders v. Fuller*, 4 Humph. 514 (same ruling on similar facts); 1847, *Cochran v. State*, 7 Humph. 544, 547 (similar to *Crawford v. State*, *supra*); 1850, *Nelson v. State*, 10 Humph. 518, 532 (jurors' affidavits that they supposed a verdict of murder in the second degree to carry a possibility of sentence less than death, received on the facts, in consequence of the trial judge's conduct); 1856, *Larkins v. Tarter*, 3 Sneed 681, 686 (jurors' affidavits as to the influence of improper remarks of counsel, excluded); 1869, *Galvin v. State*, 6 Coldw. 283, 286 (juror's affidavit that he consented to the verdict only on the erroneous supposition that the Court could fix a punishment less than death, excluded); *Nelson v. State* treated as exceptional); 1872, *Wade v. Ordway*, 1 Baxt. 229, 234 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's statements, excluded); 1873, *Dunnaway v. State*, 3 Baxt. 206, 208 (affidavits of the entire jury as to basing their verdict upon a state of facts not in issue, excluded); 1875, *Richardson v. McLemore*, 5 Baxt. 586, 589 (juror's affidavit as to the influence of part of the charge, excluded); 1880, *Roller v. Bachman*, 5 Lea 153, 159 (jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding the charge and miscalculating the statutory period of limitation, excluded); 1891, *Scruggs v. State*, 90 Tenn. 81, 15 S. W. 1074 (juror's affidavit not received to show a misunderstanding of the judge's charge); *Texas*: 1846, *Campbell v. Skidmore*, 1 Tex. 475 (juror's affidavit as to the influence of the judge's charge, excluded); 1856, *Kilgore v. Jordan*, 17 Tex. 342, 346 (jurors' affidavits

that they misapprehended the law, excluded); 1858, *Little v. Birdwell*, 21 Tex. 597, 602, 612 (jurors' affidavits that evidence withheld from them would have influenced their verdict, excluded); 1865, *Johnson v. State*, 27 Tex. 758, 769 (jurors' affidavits that they misconstrued the judge's charge, excluded); 1888, *Wills Point Bank v. Bates*, 72 Tex. 137, 10 S. W. 348 (jurors' affidavits as to their understanding of the facts, excluded); 1895, *McCulloch v. State*, 35 Tex. Cr. 268, 33 S. W. 230 (similar to *Johnson v. State*; "this practice is getting entirely too common, and the lower courts should take occasion to correct it"); 1903, *Blackwell v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 73 S. W. 960 (that the jurors misunderstood the testimony, excluded); 1904, *Bearden v. State*, 47 Tex. Cr. 271, 83 S. W. 808 (jurors' affidavits that they assented on agreement to petition for pardon, excluded); 1913, *Rogers v. State*, 71 Tex. Cr. 149, 159 S. W. 40 (juror's affidavit that he agreed because of the others' promise to sign a recommendation for pardon, excluded); *Utah*: 1891, *People v. Flynn*, 7 Utah 378, 26 Pac. 1114 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show a misunderstanding of the judge's charge); *Vermont*: 1865, *Sheldon v. Perkins*, 37 Vt. 550, 557 (juror's affidavit, after separation, that a verdict was based on a particular ground, excluded; if the ground of the verdict is material, "the proper course is to suggest it to the Court so that it may be learned from the jury in open court while they are together and under the control and direction of the judge"); 1905, *Marcy v. Parker*, 78 Vt. 73, 62 Atl. 19 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the instructions, excluded); *Virginia*: 1791, *Cochran v. Street*, 1 Wash. 79 (jurors' affidavits that four of them were opposed to the verdict, but yielded in the belief that they were legally bound to abide by the majority's view, admitted and a new trial ordered; the ensuing cases practically overrule this); 1822, *Shobe v. Bell*, 1 Rand. 39 (jurors' affidavits that they yielded only in order to avoid further detention, not considered); 1849, *Harnsbarger v. Kinney*, 6 Gratt. 287, 300 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's instruction, excluded); 1854, *Koiner v. Rankin*, 11 Gratt. 420, 431 (similar; "they will not readily be received to invalidate the verdict"); 1857, *Bull v. Com.*, 14 Gratt. 613, 626 (jurors' affidavits that one of them agreed to the verdict only on the understanding that all should unite in a request for a pardon, excluded); 1872, *Read v. Com.*, 22 Gratt. 924, 947 (affidavits of admissions of two of the jurors that they had decided because of the defendant's failure to explain certain evidence, excluded);



verdict.<sup>3</sup> There is of course no justification for this; the principle of the present rule accepts the jury's utterance as the final and exclusive expression of their views and declines to investigate for any purpose their prior and preliminary states of mind.

(3) The jurors' *motives* or *beliefs*, as ineffective to control the uttered verdict, are to be distinguished from the facts that may properly be considered under rules *b* and *d*, *post*; though the distinction is sometimes a subtle one.

(4) Where the jurors' belief is offered as material *for any other purpose* than that of controlling the verdict upon a motion for a new trial, it may be considered, so far as no other rule of Evidence prevents, — as, for example, on a prosecution for corruptly rendering a verdict contrary to his belief.<sup>4</sup>

1879, *Danville Bank v. Waddill*, 31 Gratt. 469, 482 (like *Harnsbarger v. Kinney*, *supra*); 1879, *Steptoe v. Flood*, 31 Gratt. 323, 343 (two jurors' affidavits that the jury did not pass upon a document's genuineness, contrary to the wishes of these two, who were "persuaded against our judgments to agree to the verdict," excluded); 1899, *Street v. Broadus*, 96 Va. 823, 32 S. E. 466 (jurors' affidavits that certain elements of damage were not allowed for, excluded); 1921, *Bryan v. Com.*, — Va. —, 109 S. E. 477 (quotient verdict for sentence, based on a misunderstanding of instructions; juror's testimony inadmissible);

*Washington*: 1905, *State v. Strodemier*, 41 Wash. 159, 83 Pac. 22 (that misconduct did not influence the verdict; excluded); 1909, *Ralton v. Sherwood L. Co.* 54 Wash. 254, 103 Pac. 28 (affidavits that the jurors did not consider certain instructions, excluded); 1909, *State v. Aker*, 54 Wash. 342, 103 Pac. 420 (juror's affidavit that he assented through intimidation, excluded);

*West Virginia*: 1872, *Lewis v. McMullin*, 5 W. Va. 582 (juror's affidavit that the verdict would have been for defendant, if certain evidence had been believed, excluded); 1883, *Reynolds v. Tompkins*, 23 W. Va. 229, 234 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded); 1884, *Probst v. Bravenlich*, 24 W. Va. 356, 360 (jurors' affidavits as to the items of claim entering into their consideration, excluded); 1892, *State v. Harrison*, 36 W. Va. 729, 15 S. E. 982 (juror's affidavit that his absence from the jury-room did not influence his verdict, not received); 1895, *State v. Cobbs*, 40 W. Va. 718, 22 S. E. 310 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the law as to the effect of a verdict of murder in the first degree, in respect to the Court's discretion in sentencing, excluded);

*Wisconsin*: 1891, *Schultz v. Catlin*, 78 Wis. 611, 614, 47 N.W. 946 (juror's affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded).

<sup>3</sup> 1894, *Ewers' Adm'r v. National I. Co.*, 63 Fed. 562, Paul, J. (jurors' affidavits admitted

to show that a fellow-juror's prejudice had no influence on them); 1892, *Fulton Co. v. Phillips*, 91 Ga. 65, 16 S. E. 260 (jurors' affidavits admitted to "sustain the verdict," by showing that they did not read and were not influenced by a verdict in a former case contained in the pleading); 1903, *Davis v. Huber Mfg. Co.*, 119 Ia. 56, 93 N. W. 78 (affidavit as to the items of claim allowed); 1877, *Zickefoose v. Kuykendall*, 12 W. Va. 23, 27, 35 (that the juror could not have been biased because he voted at first against the party for whom he was said to be biased, allowed; this would probably not be followed, since *State v. Cartwright*, *post* § 2353).

In *California* the cases originally exhibiting this view have been overruled: 1888, *People v. Goldenson*, 76 Cal. 352, 19 Pac. 161 (juror's affidavit that a paper did not influence him, held admissible); 1890, *People v. Murray*, 85 Cal. 350, 361, 24 Pac. 666 *semble* (same); 1892, *People v. Murray*, 94 Cal. 212, 29 Pac. 494 (preceding cases approved; De Haven and Harrison, JJ., diss.; Garoutte, J., concurred in the judgment); 1894, *People v. Stokes*, 103 Cal. 193, 37 Pac. 207 (preceding cases repudiated; "A juror is not allowed to say, 'these matters had no influence upon my mind when casting my vote in the jury-room'; . . . there are intimations [!] in the cases of *People v. Goldenson* and *People v. Murray* tending to oppose the foregoing views, but they do not express the law"); 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 Cal. 632, 39 Pac. 59 (approving the preceding case); 1905, *People v. Chin Non*, 146 Cal. 561, 80 Pac. 681 (jurors' affidavits that the reading of certain newspapers did not influence them, excluded); 1909, *Kimic v. San Jose L. G. I. R. Co.*, 156 Cal. 379, 104 Pac. 986 (affidavits as to influence of misconduct, excluded).

<sup>4</sup> The following ruling is therefore erroneous, for the Opinion rule (*ante*, § 1963), upon which it was made, would present no obstacle: 1861, *Hatch v. Lewis*, 2 F. & F. 467, 475 (action against attorneys for negligent management of the plaintiff's case whereby he was convicted: to show that the conviction would not have occurred had the defendant called certain witnesses, the jurymen at the former trial were not



(5) Where the jurors' belief is so embodied in their *inquiries to the judge*, and in his answers, that a case of misinstruction by the judge is presented, this can of course be made a ground for invalidating the verdict;<sup>5</sup> but here it is not because of their belief, but because of his instructions.

§ 2350. **Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to Ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.** The reasons for the foregoing rule, namely, the dangers of uncertainty and of tampering with the jurors to procure testimony, disappear in large part if such investigation as may be desired is *made by the judge*, and takes place *before the jurors' discharge* and separation. When therefore the jury brings in its verdict, the judge, in his just and usual control of the proceedings, may *refuse to accept it* as final, and may require the *jury to retire again* to make the verdict more specific or more clear. This procedure is a traditional part of jury-trial;<sup>1</sup> in principle it is equivalent to holding the first utterance of the foreman as tentative and informal only; and even after an initial discharge, the judge may re-convene them, 'nunc pro tunc,' for making such correction. It is not that the jury adds explanations to the verdict; there is no verdict as yet; and they retire to restate it and to give it a final form:

No doubt a practice of questioning by the judge upon the delivery of verdict might be abused, for the purpose of browbeating a jury out of their sincere verdict. This was sometimes done in the older days, notably in Erskine's celebrated scene:

1784, *R. v. Dean of St. Asaph's*, 18 How. St. Tr. 1203, 1230; seditious libel; the great legal controversy at this time was whether the jury could lawfully find, not only upon the fact of publication, but also upon the fact of criminal intent, and here Mr. Justice Buller had charged the jury that they could not find upon the latter; the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty of publishing *only*"; then the judge endeavored to have the jury withdraw the word "only," on the theory that it went beyond their function, which concededly they did not intend to do. BULLER, J.: "You say he is guilty of publishing the pamphlet, and that the meaning of the innuendoes is as stated in the indictment?" A *Juror*: "Cer-

allowed to be asked what verdict they would have rendered, on the ground of the Opinion rule).

<sup>5</sup> The first of the New York rulings *infra* is apparently erroneous: *N. Y.* 1825, *Sargent v. —*, 5 Cow. 106, 120 (affidavits of two jurors, that the jury considered, and supposed that the judge had so permitted them, in estimating damages for seduction, the expense of maintaining the child, admitted, on the theory that "this is in effect equivalent to a misdirection of the judge," misleading the jurors; but this decision was reached "not without some hesitation"); 1826, 'Ex parte' Caykendoll, 6 Cow. 53 (jurors' affidavits as to a mistake in reckoning damages, arising from a misreading of the written contract, excluded; preceding case distinguished, as "equivalent to a positive misdirection of the judge," the counsel having there laid down in his argument a rule of law which the judge did not expressly deny); *Tenn.*

1850, *Nelson v. State*, 10 Humph. 518 (cited *ante*, § 2349); *Wis.* 1892, *McBean v. State*, 83 Wis. 206, 53 N. W. 497 (the jury sent to the trial judge a message, "If we bring in a verdict of guilty, can we depend on the clemency of the Court?" to which the judge answered "Yes," on which a verdict of guilty was brought in; this was allowed to be shown, the judge's answer being equivalent to an instruction in open court, and therefore an error demanding a new trial).

§ 2350. <sup>1</sup> Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, pp. 145, 155, and the following later case: 1697, *Ash v. Ash*, Comberb. 357 (Holt, C. J.: "The jury were very shy of giving a reason of their verdict, thinking they have an absolute despotic power; but I did rectify that mistake, for the jury are to try causes with the assistance of the judges, and ought to give reasons when required, that if they go upon any mistake, they may be set right").

*Canada*: 1906, *R. v. Burdell*, 11 Ont. L.R. 440.



tainly." Mr. *Erskine*: "Is the word 'only' to stand as part of your verdict?" A *Juror*: "Certainly." Mr. *Erskine*: "Then I insist it shall be recorded." BULLER, J.: "Then the verdict must be misunderstood. Let me understand the jury." Mr. *Erskine*: "The jury *do* understand their verdict." BULLER, J.: "Sir, I will not be interrupted!" Mr. *Erskine*: "I stand here as an advocate for a brother citizen, and I desire the word 'only' may be recorded." BULLER, J.: "Sit down, sir! Remember your duty, or I shall be obliged to proceed in another manner." Mr. *Erskine*: "Your lordship may proceed in what manner you think fit. I know *my* duty as well as your lordship knows *yours*. I shall not alter my conduct." In the end, the jury accepted the judge's statement of what their verdict ought to be.

But there is nowadays, in this era of judicial self-abnegation, no likelihood of the abuse repeating itself:

1832, MORTON, J., in *Dorr v. Fenno*, 12 Pick. 520, 526: "It sometimes happens that the verdict first returned by the jury is not entirely certain, or does not precisely meet the issue joined, or some of the issues do not appear to be definitely found; in such cases, before the verdict can be drawn in form, it is not only proper but necessary to ascertain from the jury the real meaning of their finding, that when the verdict is affirmed it may with certainty express the intent of the jury, or that the jury may again be sent out for further deliberation if any material question appears not to have been determined by them."

1884, *Dearborn v. Newhall*, 63 N. H. 301; Assumpsit, for wood bargained and sold. The defendant bargained with the plaintiffs for the wood on a lot in Hampton at \$2 a cord, and after removing a part he refused to take the rest, claiming that the plaintiffs had induced him to make the bargain by false and fraudulent representations. In this action the plaintiffs attached the wood remaining on the lot as the property of the defendant, and caused it to be sold on the writ. Two days after a verdict had been returned for the plaintiffs, one of the jurors by whom the case had been tried informed the Court that a remark made by the clerk, and overheard by him, had caused him to think the jury had made a mistake; that they had treated the money received by the officer from the sale of the attached wood as a payment received by the plaintiffs from the defendant; and that the verdict was for the balance due the plaintiffs beyond that amount. The Court caused the jurors to be called by the clerk, stated to them what one of them had said, and inquired if they had treated the money received by the officer as a payment to the plaintiffs. Several jurors replied in the affirmative. The Court then instructed the jury that the money received by the officer was not a payment to the plaintiffs, and should not be deducted as a payment, but was security for any judgment the plaintiffs might recover, and directed them to retire and correct their verdict, if it was erroneous on that point; and a second verdict was returned in which the mistake was corrected. The counsel of both parties left town when the case was first submitted, and had not returned when it was recommitted. Judgment was ordered on the second verdict, and the defendant excepted.

DOE, C. J.: "In some jurisdictions a recorded verdict cannot be amended by the jury after their separation; but in this State a different practice prevails. The error in this case could be corrected, whether the verdict had or had not been recorded, and whether the jury had or had not separated. Their separation increased the danger of wrong being done by their amendment of the verdict. The increased danger raised the question whether justice required a recommitment of the case for reconsideration, and when, on reconsideration, the verdict was amended, there was a question whether justice required a judgment on the amended verdict. Both questions were matters of fact to be determined at the trial term. The Court could inquire of the jury touching their verdict, and the grounds upon which they proceeded, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the case had been properly tried. The inquiry could be made after the jury, being discharged from the case, had

separated. The reason for making the inquiry did not suspend either the power of inquiry, or the power of commitment. For an immaterial reason, a proper inquiry was made; upon proper answers, the case was properly recommitted; and by the correction of an undoubted and natural mistake, justice was legally done. The recording of an erroneous verdict, award, or judgment does not necessarily render all its errors incurable; and the separation of jurors, referees, or other judges, does not necessarily disable them to undo the injustice of such a mistake as the jury fell into in this case."

Accordingly, some Courts, chiefly in New England, concede the propriety of examining the jurors while still in their box, after verdict pronounced, to ascertain the particular issues on which a general verdict is founded or the detailed propositions of fact or of law which entered into the verdict; so that the jurors may be sent back to re-formulate their verdict, or that the verdict may then and there be set aside if for the issue upon which it rested there is not in the judge's opinion sufficient evidence, or if they proceeded on a palpable mistake of law.<sup>2</sup> This process of making more precise the details of their finding has the same purpose as the expedient of a special verdict or a special finding on interrogatories, and is related in principle to rule *b*, *post*. Under the modern practice in the United States, in which the judges tend to degenerate into mere umpires, it is not likely to be often seen. But there is no reason why such a control of the verdict should not be exercised; for it merely assumes to remedy the verdict's aberrations before it has become a recorded finality and before the crucial line has been passed which must somewhere always be recognized in order that there may be an end of controversy. At the same time, this expedient is practically not of frequent utility, because the misapprehensions which it is designed to cure can seldom become the subject of suspicion and investigation by the parties until the jurors after their discharge have by public conversation disclosed the nature of the mistake.

§ 2351. (*b*) **Issues of the Trial, as Material; Judge's Instructions, as considered by the Jury.** (1) The tenor of the issues at the trial, as submitted to the jury, may be material for the purpose of *ordering a new trial in the same cause*. These issues will be ascertainable in part from the pleadings, which of course speak for themselves, and in part from the *judge's instructions*. An erroneous statement of the issue by the judge, or of the law applicable to the

<sup>2</sup> *Ga.* 1917, *Wooten v. State*, 19 *Ga. App.* 739, 92 *S. E.* 233 (poll of jurors held entitled to be taken after verdict entered, but before jurors excused and during discussion about sentence, a juror having meanwhile stated to the Court that there was a misunderstanding); *Ky.* 1905, *Denham v. Com.*, 119 *Ky.* 508, 84 *S. W.* 538 (mistake in the wording); *Mass.* *Parrott v. Thacher*, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, *ante*, § 2349; *Miss.* 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 *How.* 90, 95; *Mo.* 1885, *Cattell v. Dispatch Pub. Co.*, 88 *Mo.* 356; 1906, *State v. Miles*, 199 *Mo.* 530, 98 *S. W.* 25; *N. H.* 1884, *Dearborn v. Newhall*, 63 *N. H.* 301 (quoted *supra*); 1906, *Winslow v. Smith*, 74 *N. H.* 65, 65 *Atl.* 108 (good opinion by Chase, J.); *N. C.* 1905, *State v. Godwin*,

138 *N. C.* 582, 50 *S. E.* 277 (here the judge refused to accept a verdict of "Guilty, but innocently"); *R. I.* *Handy v. Ins. Co.*, *ante*, § 2349; *Vt.* *Sheldon v. Perkins*, *ante*, § 2349.

Compare the rule of § 2356, *post*.

That the trial judge may properly ask the jury, when they *cannot reach a verdict*, how their votes divide (without asking which way the majority stands), seems harmless enough especially as these facts and more are shortly afterwards told freely out of court; but a finical spirit has recently rebuked such questions, and has even not scrupled to delay the course of justice for this petty cause: 1906, *Burton v. U. S.* 196, *U. S.* 283, 25 *Sup.* 243; 1906, *McCoy v. U. S.*, 6 *Ind. Terr.* 415, 98 *S. W.* 144.



issue, being sufficient to justify a new trial, by the rules of new trials, may of course be proved; and there is no reason why it may not be proved by the testimony of one or more of the jurors. This will not be a frequent case, for other materials for proof are usually at hand; but there is no objection to it in principle, for the fact to be proved is separate from the jury's deliberations upon the issue, and the process does not consist in putting their deliberations in conflict with their verdict. The line between this and the preceding principle may be seen closely drawn in the distinction already noted (*ante*, § 2349, par. 5).<sup>1</sup>

(2) The tenor of the issues as submitted to the jury may also become important, *upon a different trial* for a related claim, as determining the scope of matters adjudicated at the first trial. Our system of general verdicts does not adequately provide for the precise statement of details of claim covered by the jury's award. In cases of continuing trespasses, of consequential damages, of repeated libels, of running accounts, and the like, the matters actually included in the verdict depend as much upon the instructions as upon the pleadings, and do not always even then become precise. In particular, an affirmative finding, *i. e.* for the plaintiff, may leave it uncertain whether the jury has in fact passed at all upon some of the items of the plaintiff's claim. In such a case it is therefore proper to prove what issues were submitted to the jurors; and, as a part of the criteria of definition, the *judge's instructions* limiting the matter for their consideration may be proved, and of course by jurors as well as by any one else who heard them. In so doing, the offer sometimes is to show that the *jury did or did not "consider"* a certain item. This offer, though incorrect in form, may practically be sufficient; for though the jury's belief and reasoning upon the issues, as distinct from the Court's definition of the issues, is immaterial, upon the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), yet where no attempt is being made to overthrow the original verdict, the jury's understanding of the issues is merely a convenient though loose mode of ascertaining the issues as actually submitted.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2351. <sup>1</sup> In revising an arbitrator's award the same question arises, though the solution is slightly different (*post*, § 2358).

<sup>2</sup> Compare with the following examples those cited *ante*, § 2349, par. 5, and *post*, § 2358 (arbitrators' awards); and § 2450, n. 12; *Michigan*: 1882, *Hewett v. Chapman*, 49 Mich. 4, 12 N. W. 888 (trover<sup>2</sup> for timber; to show that the jury in a former trial had allowed for this claim, a juror's testimony was excluded); *New Hampshire*: 1870, *Smith v. Smith*, 50 N. H. 212, 219<sup>7</sup> (jurors' statements that they did not include in the former verdict in trespass certain fences, etc., now in issue in trespass, excluded; but here the judge's instructions were not offered to be shown, and the offer also included other doubtful matters; moreover the Court held that "it appears here that the whole matter was in point of fact submitted to the jury;

. . . thus it appears that the issues presented by the declaration were in fact tried"); *New York*: 1848, *Brownell v. McEwen*, 5 Denio 367 (affidavits of individual jurors, *pro* and *con*, as to having considered, in an action for seduction, the breach of promise of marriage and other claims as covered by the amount awarded, held inadmissible; but the Court further declared that proof of their unanimous consideration of the point would have been admissible); *Pennsylvania*: 1817, *Haak v. Breidenbach*, 3 S. & R. 204 (continuing trespass by overflow; a former verdict for the same trespass being pleaded, and the plaintiff replying that the former verdict was confined to a different period, the testimony of one of the prior jurors was received that "the jury was directed by the Court not to include that period of time in estimating the damages, and that they therefore only

§ 2352. (c) **Irregularities and Misconduct, as material; Jurors Impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.** The deliberations of a jury must be conducted with strict regard to certain formalities of *conduct during retirement*, — formalities which, though not vital in a particular case, yet are indisputably wholesome as requirements of general policy. They are mere outward marks or conventions; but they are the more technically strict because the impossibility, under the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), of regarding jurors' actual motives and reasonings, makes it the more necessary to depend upon the conventional canons of behavior for confidence in the verdict. Like the analogous formalities of other legal acts, already mentioned (*ante*, § 2348, par. c; *post*, § 2456), they are not inherent logical elements, but formal marks of precaution. A particular will may have been genuine and deliberate, though not executed in the presence of attesting witnesses; but the propriety of attestation as a fixed general rule cannot be doubted. So a particular jury's verdict may be a just and well-reasoned one, when the jurors during retirement have separated or talked with the parties or drunk intoxicating liquors; yet as a general rule it is proper to invalidate verdicts marked by such conduct.

Now the law of Trials in general, and of Verdicts in particular, must prescribe these requisite formalities of conduct for the jurors, and define those informalities and irregularities which 'per se' invalidate the verdict. What those shall be is thus elsewhere in the law predetermined. The principle of the Parol Evidence rule (*ante*, § 2346, par. c; *post*, § 2456) then enters and declares that the lack of such formalities, for this as for every other legal act (whatever the respective required formality may be), is always proper to establish as a ground for declaring the act void. Whatever misconduct of the jury, therefore, is an irregularity fatal to the verdict may always be proved.

But by whom? Naturally, by one or more of the jurors themselves, who will commonly be the sole witnesses, — at least to misconduct during retirement. Should the misconduct consist in improper utterances, the privilege proper (*ante*, § 2346) would apply, if the juror to be informed against should claim it. But if he does not, and if he is even willing by affidavit to avow his utterance, all question of privilege ceases. In that case, and in all cases of misconduct other than utterances, what is there to prevent the use of jurors' testimony in proof, as well as any other person's? Nothing in the

included the damages subsequently to the 4th August, 1786"); 1841, *Leonard v. Leonard*, 1 W. & S. 342 (account rendered; plea, former judgment for the defendant in assumpsit for the same claim; the plaintiff was then allowed to prove by a prior juror that "the verdict was given in pursuance of the instruction of the Court exclusively on the ground that the agreement was fraudulent, and that the respective claims of the parties were not considered"); 1873, *Follansbee v. Walker*, 74 Pa. 306, 309 (assumpsit by F. and W.; plea of former judgment for the defendants on a

suit by F. for the same promise; replication, that the former suit alleged a promise by F. alone and that the defendant there claimed that the promise if any was to F. and W. jointly, and that the judge charged the jury, on this preliminary issue, that if they believed the defendant's allegation the verdict must be for the defendant and another action must be brought on the promise to F. and W. jointly; on this issue, testimony of the prior jurors was admitted that that jury "decided only on the preliminary question submitted by the Court, whether the transaction was with the firm of W. and F.")).



world, except a curious doctrine of Evidence once and temporarily in vogue, long ago discarded in every other relation, and now here persisting through the sponsorship of Lord Mansfield's great name, — the doctrine that a *witness shall not be heard to allege his own turpitude*: 'nemo turpitudinem suam allegans audietur.'

The gradual appearance of this doctrine in the early 1700s, and its rapid spread under the earnest patronage of Lord Mansfield in the last quarter of the 1700s, has already been traced in another connection (*ante*, § 525). Its chief application was to forbid the drawer of commercial paper from proving usury or other illegal consideration, and to forbid similar occasional sorts of testimony; but, after two generations of controversy, these important aspects of it, together with the principle at large, were utterly repudiated, both in England and America (*ante*, §§ 525-531). Besides this, however, it led in Lord Mansfield's hands to the rule prohibiting married parents to testify to non-access in proof of bastardy (*ante*, § 2063); and here, the relation of the original principle having been early lost sight of, the rule survived. Furthermore, however, it received application, at his hands, to the present subject, — the testimony of a juror to his own misconduct.<sup>1</sup> Here it thrived, — apparently because new supposed reasons of policy were found, which buoyed up Lord Mansfield's rule long after the general repudiation of that favorite maxim, which had for him served apparently as its only justification.

The curious feature of his doctrine is that it came, in all these three of its chief applications, as an innovation upon the prior practice. Having no sound basis of policy (as its modern repudiation now testifies), it had also no basis of precedent. This appears abundantly for the other two rules already mentioned (*ante*, §§ 525, 2063). It is also true for the present rule. Up to Lord Mansfield's time, and within half a decade of his decision in *Vaise v. Delaval*, the unquestioned practice had been to receive jurors' testimony or affidavits without scruple. There were of course variances of ruling as to the sufficiency of this or that misconduct to invalidate a verdict; but the proof of it was received equally from jurors and others, without discrimination.<sup>2</sup> If

§ 2352. <sup>1</sup> 1785, *Vaise v. Delaval*, 1 T. R. 11, K. B. (two jurors' affidavits of a decision based upon chance were rejected; L. C. J. Mansfield: "The Court cannot receive such an affidavit from any of the jurymen themselves, in all of whom such conduct is a very high misdemeanor; but in every such case the Court must derive their knowledge from some other source, such as some person having seen the transaction through a window or by some such other means").

<sup>2</sup> In *Prior v. Powers*, *infra*, the sole case of doubt, the affidavit was not actually rejected; moreover, the last clause of the ruling is inconsistent with the practice of the times: 1590, *Metcalfe v. Deane*, Cro. El. 189 (complaint having been made to the judge of the jury's having re-summoned one of the witnesses dur-

ing retirement, "he examined the inquest, who confessed all the matter." and a new trial was awarded); 1595, *Vivary v. Farthing*, Cro. El. 411 (foregoing case cited, in dealing with a jury's inspection of a written document handed them by the party); 1623, *Heylor v. Hall*, Palmer 325 (the solicitor having handed certain depositions to the jurors when about to retire, they were examined on oath whether more had been read to them after retirement than had been read in court, and how they had been inclined to give their verdict before reading the depositions; apparently the verdict was held bad); 1665, *Prior v. Powers*, 1 Keb. 811 (a new trial, on the ground that the verdict was obtained by lot, was denied, "because it appeared only by pumping a jurymen, who confessed all; but, being



corroboration were needed, it is found in the early American practice, where many rulings were made upon the jurors' affidavits of misconduct.<sup>3</sup> But *Vaise v. Delaval*, with the prestige of the great Chief Justice, soon prevailed in England,<sup>4</sup> and its authority came to receive in this country an adherence almost unquestioned.

§ 2353. **Same: Policy of the Rule.** What is to be said in support of this supposed rule, which distinguishes so sharply between the testimony of the juror himself and that of any other person? The question, it is to be remembered, is not whether certain conduct constitutes a fatal irregularity, or whether it can be proved at all, but whether a *juror alone* is to be forbidden to prove it:

against himself, it was not much regarded; also the Court cannot grant new trial without punishing the jury, which cannot be by this confession against themselves"); 1675, *Lord Fitzwater's Case*, Freeman K. B. 415 (verdict set aside because determined by lot; the jurors' affidavits must have been received, but no question was made); 1696, *Dent v. Hertford*, 2 Salk. 645 ("a new trial was granted upon affidavit that the foreman declared the plaintiff should never have a verdict, whatever witnesses he produced"); 1719, *Mellish v. Arnold*, Bunbury 51 (new trial granted because damages were determined by lot; the affidavits "were made by persons who heard the jurymen talk of the matter, and the jurymen did not think fit to make any affidavit to clear themselves"); 1734, *Parr v. Scames*, Barnes, 3d ed., 438 (on a motion to set aside a verdict because determined by "hustling half-pence in a hat," "this matter not appearing upon the oath of any of the jurors, but by affidavit that two of them had confessed the same," the Court stayed judgment "to give plaintiff an opportunity to procure affidavits from some of the jurors"); 1735, *Philips v. Fowler*, Barnes, 3d ed., 441, *Comyns* 525 ("it being disclosed to defendant by two of the jurors" that lots had been cast, "defendant moved to set aside the verdict upon an affidavit of the fact made by the two jurors"; "the fact as to the jurors determining by chance being undisputed, the verdict was set aside"); 1744, *Norman v. Beaumont*, Willes 484, 487 (in admitting an affidavit of a juror as to his disqualification, the Court added: "In cases of this sort where the objection could not appear of record, we always admitted of affidavits, — as in respect to a misbehaviour of any of the jury, or any declaration made by any of them either before or after the verdict to show that a jurymen was partial"); 1779, *Aylett v. Jewel*, 2 W. Bl. 1299, C. P. (new trial not granted on the affidavit of the attorney that "some of the jury had confessed to him" that the verdict had been reached by lot; "there being no affidavit by the jurymen, or any other that

was cognizant of this transaction, but merely this hearsay affidavit, the Court, 'absente' De Grey, C. J., thought it too dangerous to call a verdict in question that had been so deliberately given, upon so loose and slight a suggestion").

<sup>3</sup> 1793, *Talmadge v. Northrup*, 1 Root Conn. 522 (cited *infra*); 1792, *Bradley v. Bradley*, Pa., 4 Dall. 112 (jurors' affidavits "that the jury had misbehaved by hearing testimony which was not delivered in open court," admitted); 1805, *Smith v. Cheetham*, 3 Caines N. Y. 57 (constable's affidavit, based partly on jurors' admissions, that damages had been reached by average, admitted; general principle of receiving jurors' affidavits to show misconduct, sanctioned; Kent, C. J., diss.); 1805, *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542, per Sewall, J. (jurors' testimony admissible to prove "overt acts which may be the subject of legal inquiry," such as "gross misbehaviour or legal impropriety of conduct sufficient to destroy the credit of a verdict"; *semble*, Thacher, J., *contra*).

Compare also the early cases in New York, Virginia, and elsewhere, admitting such affidavits even in cases under the principle of § 2349, *ante*.

<sup>4</sup> 1807, *Owen v. Warburton*, 1 B. & P. N. R. 326 (juror's affidavit, not receivable to show a decision by lot; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1839, *Straker v. Grahame*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 223, 4 M. & W. 721 (juror's affidavit that a verdict was reached by tossing up, held inadmissible; Alderson, B.: "It is entirely against policy to allow a jurymen to make an affidavit of anything which passes in agreeing to a verdict"; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1843, *Burgess v. Langley*, 5 M. & Gr. 722 (affidavit of the attorney as to declarations in open court, by one juror in the others' hearing, just after verdict rendered, that they had reached a verdict by lot, excluded; Cresswell, J.: "Had the statement made in the affidavit come from the officer who had charge of the jury we might have attended to it; but it has long been decided that the affidavit of a jurymen as to the mode in which the jury arrived at their verdict cannot be received").



1807, MANSFIELD, C. J.,<sup>1</sup> in *Owen v. Warburton*, 1 B. & P. N. R. 326, 329: "The affidavit of a jurymen [to the jury's misconduct] cannot be received. It is singular indeed that almost the only evidence of which the case admits should be shut out; but considering the arts which might be used if a contrary rule were to prevail, we think it necessary to exclude such evidence. If it were understood to be the law that a jurymen might set aside a verdict by such evidence, it might sometimes happen that a jurymen, being a friend to one of the parties, and not being able to bring over his companions to his opinion, might propose a decision by lot, with a view afterwards to set aside the verdict by his own affidavit, if the decision should be against him."

1839, *Straker v. Graham*, 4 M. & W. 721; an attorney's affidavit that a juror had admitted the drawing of lots for a verdict was offered. Serjt. Atcherley (for admission): "The affidavit of the jurymen himself is rejected because the conduct which he admits is such as would render him liable to punishment." L. C. B. ABINGER: "No; it is because otherwise no verdict would be safe." PARKE, B.: "When the jury have openly concurred in a verdict in open court, which ought to be their binding decision on the case, it would be most dangerous and lead to the greatest fraud and abuse to set it aside on such statements as that which is made in this case."

1811, YEATES, J., in *Cluggage v. Swan*, 4 Binn. 150, 155: "I frankly confess that I feel the utmost repugnance to such testimony, although I am fully aware, that I thereby exclude almost the only evidence, which the case naturally admits of. But, by admitting it, I as readily perceive that I should open a door to the exercise of the most pernicious arts, and tampering with jurors; and that the practice would be replete with dangerous consequences. Jurors, who would have been sworn or solemnly affirmed to give a verdict according to evidence, come with a bad grace into a tribunal of justice to prove their own dishonorable conduct, and affix a stigma on their companions who may be unheard in their defence. Besides, in the language of some of the cases, I cannot see how such testimony could be heard by the Court, without proceeding against the jurors criminally. Should this happen, will it not justly be deemed entrapping the jurors whose affidavits have been used? And will it not expose others implicated in the charge, to the temptations naturally incident to persons in a state of accusations? But above all, I greatly fear that the practice, if adopted, would tend to an inquisition over the consciences of jurors, as to the grounds and reasons of their verdict, and bring questions of fact more frequently before the Court for their decision than is consistent with sound policy. I am opposed to penetrating into the recesses of a jury-room, through the instrumentality of jurors, who are kept together until they have agreed upon their verdict."

1915, LAMAR, J., in *McDonald v. Pless*, 238 U. S. 264, 35 Sup. 783: "Let it once be established that verdicts solemnly made and publicly returned into court can be attacked and set aside on the testimony of those who took part in their publication, and all verdicts could be, and many would be, followed by an inquiry in the hope of discovering something which might invalidate the finding. Jurors would be harassed and beset by the defeated party in an effort to secure from them evidence of facts which might establish misconduct sufficient to set aside a verdict. If evidence thus secured could be thus used, the result would be to make what was intended to be a private deliberation, the constant subject of public investigation — to the destruction of all frankness and freedom of discussion and conference."

As to these various reasons, it is unnecessary to refute the argument drawn in *Owen v. Warburton* from a fantastic imagination of what an occasional scheming jurymen might conceivably try to do. As well abolish appeals, because a wicked judge might give a wrong reason for a decision against a party whom he favored, so that there might be a new trial. Nor need

§ 2353. <sup>1</sup> This of course was not Lord Mansfield (Murray), but a judge of the next generation.

the original notion of Lord Mansfield, rejecting self-stultifying testimony, be further noticed.

Of the remaining arguments, this much can be said, that they prove, if anything, much more than the rule in question. That is, they prove that certain facts of misconduct, such as the casting of lots or the communication of a juror's personal knowledge, should not as facts be considered at all, for the purpose of overturning the verdict, but should rather be regarded, under the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), as part of the motives and methods of deliberation leading up to the verdict, and therefore as immaterial. So far as any argument can be founded on the uncertainty that results from investigating the jury's deliberations, it rests virtually on the assumption that their methods or grounds of decision should be ignored, and that is another principle entirely. Whether a given piece of conduct during retirement should be classed as a formal and fatal irregularity (which may be proved) or as an erroneous ground of the verdict (which may not be proved) is often an arguable question (as noticed *post*, § 2354); but that is very different from the question whether, conceding that it is a fatal irregularity, the juror alone is to be prohibited from proving it. Finally, it must be pointed out that while Lord Mansfield's own statement of the rule obliged the proof of the misconduct to depend solely on the testimony of "some person having seen the transaction through a window or by some such other means," his successors have committed an absurdity which he would hardly have condoned. A bailiff or other court officer, who may have been present at the jury's deliberations, may by universal concession (*post*, § 2354) prove their misconduct, though it is a gross breach of duty (except in one or two jurisdictions) for him to attend or overhear. Thus, not only does the rule tempt the parties to seduce the bailiffs to tricky expedients and surreptitious eavesdroppings; but the law, furthermore, while with one hand it sanctimoniously puts away the jurymen who report their own misconduct done during the privacy of retirement, yet with the other hand it inconsistently invites to the same witness-stand the bailiff whose shameless disregard of his duty, in intruding upon that privacy, forms his only qualification as a witness and the sole tenor of his testimony. If there cannot be any principle in this rule, it should at least possess logic.

In the following passages, its defects have been sufficiently exposed:

1805, LIVINGSTON, J., in *Smith v. Cheetham*, 3 Caines N. Y. 57, 59: "With proper submission to his lordship [Mansfield], it appears the best and highest evidence of which the case admits. If a man will voluntarily charge himself with a misdemeanor, why should he not be indulged? Are not criminals in England every day convicted and even executed on their own confession? And is not our State prison filled in the same way? . . . If we ask for stronger proofs, and at the same time adopt Lord Mansfield's rule of shutting the mouths of the jurors, we may as well at once close the door on all inquiries of the kind, and leave them to act and decide as they please."

1821, WHYTE, J., in *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. Tenn. 60, 67: "[The observation of Chief Justice Mansfield in *Owen v. Warburton*, is] 'It was singular indeed that the only evidence



the case admits should be shut out,' and yet that decision excluded it. It might be added, that it is also the best evidence the case admits of; the jury from their recluse and retired situation are not subject to inspection, nor their proceedings to observation, at least of that kind to admit of a correct account to be given of them by an indifferent person. They themselves are alone adequate to a development of their own conduct and proceedings. In *Vaux v. Delavel*, Lord Mansfield says, the Court must derive their knowledge from other sources. What source? The law contemplates their seclusion; the only alternative is the ignominious eavesdropper. Surely the jurors who fill this important office are not to be put on a level with those who by their own conduct have debased themselves. But it is said in the argument, the receiving the affidavit of jurors is against public policy; it would expose them to the being tampered with, the effect of which would be numerous applications to set aside verdicts. The like objection applies to every witness — the possibility of being practiced upon. But this does not produce the effect; the danger is imaginary; jurors in general are above attacks of this kind; and for the honor of human nature, I think there are few that would be found capable of making the attempt. Again, it is said, public policy forbids that a man should attempt to invalidate what he has himself done; a juror to defeat, to contradict, to impeach the verdict he has given. We have seen that this was not the public policy of the period of our law before the time of Lord Mansfield, . . . and in England at this day a man may come forward as a witness in all the above cases [of alleged turpitude], except as a juror to impeach his verdict, which we have seen does not constitute the rule here; and which is not the better opinion in my humble judgment, as it is in opposition to all the other analogies of law. . . . A verdict under such circumstances is to be approached with great caution and great circumspection; but it is not altogether intangible, and beyond the reach of the redressing power of the Court; if it were, I for one would think it a defect in the administration of the justice of the country, and a defect in the policy of the law."

1866, COLE, J., in *Wright v. Telegraph Co.*, 20 Ia. 195, 210: "While we do not feel entirely confident of its correctness, nor state it without considerable hesitation, yet we are not without that assurance which, under the circumstances, justifies us in laying down the following as the true rule: That affidavits of jurors may be received for the purpose of avoiding a verdict, to show any matter occurring during the trial or in the jury room, which does not essentially inhere in the verdict itself, as, that a juror was improperly approached by a party, his agent, or attorney; that witnesses or others conversed as to the facts or merits of the cause, out of court and in the presence of jurors; that the verdict was determined by aggregation and average, or by lot, or game of chance or other artifice or improper manner; but that such affidavit to avoid the verdict may not be received to show any matter which does essentially inhere in the verdict itself,<sup>2</sup> as, that the juror did not assent to the verdict; that he misunderstood the instructions of the Court, the statements of the witnesses, or the pleadings in the case; that he was unduly influenced by the statements or otherwise of his fellow-jurors, or mistaken in his calculations or judgment, or other matter resting alone in the juror's breast. That the verdict was obtained by lot, for instance, is a fact independent of the verdict itself, and which is not necessarily involved in it. While every verdict necessarily involves the pleadings, the evidence, the instructions, the deliberation, conversations, debates, and judgments of the jurors themselves; and the effect or influence of any of these upon the juror's mind, must rest in his own breast, and he is and ought to be concluded thereon by his solemn assent to and rendition of the verdict ('verdictum' — a true declaration). To allow a juror to make affidavit against the conclusiveness of the verdict by reason of and as to the effect and influence of any of these matters upon his mind, which in their very nature are, though untrue, incapable of disproof, would be practically to open the jury room to the importunities and appliances of parties and their attorneys, and, of course, thereby

<sup>2</sup> This is the principle of § 2349, *ante*.

to unsettle verdicts and destroy their sanctity and conclusiveness. But to receive the affidavit of a juror as to the independent fact that the verdict was obtained by lot, or game of chance, or the like, is to receive his testimony as to a fact, which, if not true, can be readily and certainly disproved by his fellow-jurors; and to hear such proof would have a tendency to diminish such practices and to purify the jury-room, by rendering such improprieties capable and probable of exposure, and consequently deterring jurors from resorting to them. . . . While it is certainly illegal and reprehensible in a juror, to resort to lot or the like to determine a verdict, which ought always to be the result of a deliberate judgment, yet such resort might not evince more turpitude tending to the discredit of his statement than would be evinced by a person not of the jury, in the espionage indicated by Lord Mansfield and necessary to gain a knowledge of the facts to enable him to make the affidavit. At all events the superior opportunities of knowledge and less liability to mistake, which the juror has over the spy, would entitle his statement to the most credit. And if, as is universally conceded, it is the *fact* of improper practice, which avoids the verdict, there is no reason why a Court should close its ears to the evidence of it from one class of persons, while it will hear it from another class, which stands in no more enviable light and is certainly no more entitled to credit. Nor does the consideration of the affidavits of jurors, for the purposes stated, contravene sound public policy. It is true, however, that public policy does require that when a juror has discharged his duty and rendered a verdict, such verdict should remain undisturbed and unaffected by any subsequent change of opinion upon any fact or pretext whatever; and, therefore, a juror should not be heard to contradict or impeach that which, in the legitimate discharge of his duty, he has solemnly asseverated. But when he has done an act entirely independent and outside of his duty and in violation of it and the law, there can be no sound public policy which should prevent a Court from hearing the best evidence of which the matter is susceptible, in order to administer justice to the party whose rights have been prejudiced by such unlawful act. In other words, public policy protects a juror in the legitimate discharge of his duty, and sanctifies the result attained thereby; but if he steps aside from his duty, and does an unlawful act, he is a competent witness to prove such fact, and thereby prevent the sanction of the law from attaching to that which would otherwise be colorably lawful."

1874, BREWER, J., in *Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 544: "As to all those matters lying outside the personal consciousness of the individual juror, those things which are matters of sight and hearing, and therefore accessible to the testimony of others, and subject to contradiction, — 'overt acts,' as the Massachusetts Court expresses it, — it seems to us that the interests of justice will be promoted, and no sound public policy disturbed, if the secret of the jury-box is not permitted to be the safe cover for the perpetration of wrongs upon parties litigant. If the jury has been guilty of no misconduct, no harm has been done by permitting their testimony to be received. If the jury has been guilty of misconduct, but such misconduct was not of such a nature as to prejudice the rights of the parties, the modern rule is to let the verdict stand, and simply punish the offending juror. But if such misconduct has wrought prejudice, not only should the juror be punished, but the verdict also should be set aside. Public policy forbids that a matter resting in the personal consciousness of one juror should be received to overthrow the verdict, because, being personal, it is not accessible to other testimony. It gives to the secret thought of one the power to disturb the expressed conclusions of twelve. Its tendency is to induce bad faith on the part of a minority; to induce an apparent acquiescence with the purpose of subsequent dissent; to induce tampering with individual jurors subsequent to the verdict. But as to overt acts, they are accessible to the knowledge of all the jurors. If one affirms misconduct, the remaining eleven can deny. One cannot disturb the action of the twelve. It is useless to tamper with one, for the eleven may be heard."

§ 2354. **Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.** The doctrine of Lord Mansfield was so rapidly accepted that most



of the Courts had committed themselves upon the subject long before the opinion of Mr. Justice Cole of Iowa, in 1866, was delivered. The exposition of Mr. Justice Whyte, in Tennessee, in 1821, which had accurately pointed out the true nature of the innovation, seems to have received no consideration from other Courts. Except in a few jurisdictions, where the rule of Iowa is accepted,<sup>1</sup> the rule of Lord Mansfield seems now too firmly settled in most jurisdictions to be repudiated by judicial decision.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2354. <sup>1</sup> Iowa (perhaps), Kansas, Nebraska (perhaps), Ohio (perhaps), Tennessee, Texas (criminal cases), and Federal Courts; in Ohio there is some doubt; in nearly a dozen Codes there is one express exception.

<sup>2</sup> The various rulings and statutes are as follows; certain distinctions made in some of them are noticed later in the text above:

FEDERAL: 1851, *U. S. v. Reid*, 12 How. 361, 362, 366 (jurors' affidavits that they read a newspaper report of the evidence during retirement but were not influenced by it; question not decided; "it would perhaps hardly be safe to lay down any general rule upon this subject"); 1890, *Hyman v. Eames*, 41 Fed. 676, *Hallett, J.* (jurors' affidavits as to a fellow-juror's statements of personal knowledge during retirement, admitted, to corroborate evidence of prejudice expressed before trial); 1890, *Fuller v. Fletcher*, 44 Fed. 34, 39, *Gray, J.* (jurors' affidavits admitted to show that a paper was not read by them); 1892, *Mattox v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 140, 142, 147, 13 Sup. 50 (jurors' affidavits that newspaper comments were read to them during retirement and that the bailiff made statements concerning the cause, admitted; rule of *Woodward v. Leavitt*, Mass., and *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan., approved); 1893, *Consolidated I. M. Co. v. Trenton H. I. Co.*, 57 Fed. 898, *Green, J.* (juror's affidavit not admitted to show a determination of damages by average); 1912, *Hyde & Schneider v. U. S.*, 225 U. S. 347, 381, 32 Sup. 793 (jurors' affidavits not received to show that the verdict of guilty against two defendants was a compromise between those jurors who believed that all three defendants should be convicted and those who believed that all three should be acquitted); 1913, *McDonald v. Pless*, 4th C. C. A., 206 Fed. 263 (quotient verdict; juror's testimony not admissible; the opinion fails to make the proper distinctions); 1915, *McDonald v. Pless*, 238 U. S. 264, 35 Sup. 783 (quotient verdict; jurors' testimony excluded).

ALABAMA: 1906, *Birmingham R. L. & P. Co. v. Moore*, 148 Ala. 115, 42 So. 1024 (juror's affidavit not admitted to show a quotient verdict).

ARIZONA: 1913, *Hull v. Larson*, 14 Ariz. 492, 131 Pac. 668 (quotient verdict; juror's affidavit inadmissible, in civil cases).

ARKANSAS: 1853, *Stanton v. State*, 13 Ark. 317, 319 (juror's affidavit as to a fellow-juror's

absence from the room, said to be "subject to many serious objections"); 1855, *Pleasants v. Heard*, 15 Ark. 403, 408 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, held inadmissible, as well as jurors' admissions out of doors after verdict); *Gantt's Dig.* § 1971, *Mansfield's Dig.* § 2298, *Sandels & Hill's Dig.* 1894, § 2269, *Dig.* 1919, § 3220 ("a juror cannot be examined to establish [in criminal cases] a ground for a new trial, except it be to establish as a ground for a new trial that the verdict was made by lot"); 1874, *Wilder v. State*, 29 Ark. 293, 298 (statute applied to exclude jurors' testimony as to a bailiff's undue influence); 1879, *Fain v. Goodwin*, 35 Ark. 109, 113 (statute applied to exclude an affidavit as to jurors acting upon personal knowledge); 1887, *Ward v. Blackwood*, 48 Ark. 396, 3 S. W. 624 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by drawing lots, excluded, following *Pleasants v. Heard, supra*); 1894, *Smith v. State*, 59 Ark. 132, 26 S. W. 712 (juror's affidavit not received to show the taking of evidence after retirement).

CALIFORNIA: 1854, *Amsby v. Dickhouse*, 4 Cal. 103 (juror's affidavit as to improper remarks during retirement, excluded); 1855, *Wilson v. Berryman*, 5 Cal. 44, 46 (computing damages by average; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1862, *Practice Act*, § 193, C. C. P. 1872, § 657 (where "any one or more of the jurors have been induced to assent" to a verdict by "a resort to the determination of chance, such misconduct may be proved by the affidavit of any one of the jurors"); 1863, *Donner v. Palmer*, 23 Cal. 40, 47 (statute applied to a verdict based upon guessing the face of a coin); 1864, *Turner v. Water Co.*, 25 Cal. 398, 401 ("as the law now stands, there are certain irregularities fatal to a verdict which may be proved by the affidavits of the jurors, and certain other irregularities equally fatal which can only be proved in the manner authorized by the common law"; here, the reckoning of damages by average was held improper, but not a "chance verdict," and therefore not provable by jurors' affidavits); 1864, *Boyce v. Stage Co.*, 25 Cal. 460, 474, 477 (preceding opinion approved and the same ruling made; the history of the above statute explained); 1882, *People v. Gray*, 61 Cal. 164, 183 (jurors' affidavits as to intoxication, excluded); 1891, *People v. Deegan*, 88 Cal. 602, 26 Pac. 500 (same); 1893, *Dixon*



It remains to notice certain discriminations and qualifications.

- (1) What *kinds of misconduct* of jurors shall constitute an irregularity sufficient to avoid the verdict is to be determined by the law of jury-procedure;

*v. Pluns*, 98 Cal. 384, 33 Pac. 268 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show determination of damages by average; *Turner v. Water Co.*, *supra*, repudiated on this point); 1893, *Weinburg v. Somps*, 98 Cal. 384, 33 Pac. 341 (same); 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 Cal. 632, 39 Pac. 59 (jurors' affidavits that papers were illegally transmitted to them, excluded); 1901, *Siemens v. Electric R. Co.*, 134 Cal. 494, 66 Pac. 672 (jurors' affidavits to prove misconduct in visiting the premises in question, excluded); 1905, *People v. Chin Non*, 146 Cal. 561, 80 Pac. 681 (jurors' affidavits to show improper reading of newspapers, admitted, because offered by the prosecution; no authority cited); 1909, *Kimie v. San Jose L. G. I. R. Co.*, 156 Cal. 379, 104 Pac. 986 (affidavits as to misconduct, excluded).

COLORADO: Comp. St. 1921, C. C. P. § 237 (juror's affidavit receivable to show a "determination by chance"); 1890, *Knight v. Fisher*, 15 Colo. 176, 25 Pac. 78 (jurors' affidavits offered to show a determination of damages by average; question reserved); 1895, *Heller v. People*, 22 Colo. 11, 43 Pac. 124 (jurors' affidavits not received to show intoxication and other misconduct of fellow-jurors).

CONNECTICUT: 1824, *State v. Freeman*, 5 Conn. 348 (jurors' affidavits as to a fellow-juror's communication of personal knowledge on a fact not in evidence and not admissible, excluded; repudiating the earlier local practice to the contrary, as indicated in *Talmadge v. Northrop*, 1 Root 522, in 1793); 1824, *Meado v. Smith*, 16 Conn. 346, 356 (foregoing case approved); 1844, *State v. Fasset*, 16 Conn. 457, 466 (rule applied to grand jurors' testimony as to illegal testimony before them); 1920, *Valentine v. Pollak*, 95 Conn. 556, 111 Atl. 869 (juror's testimony as to determination by lot, excluded).

DELAWARE: 1881, *Crossdale v. Tatum*, 6 Houst. 218 (jurors' affidavits not received to show a determination of damages by average).

FLORIDA: 1897, *Kelly v. State*, 39 Fla. 122, 22 So. 303 (general principle against impeachment, applied).

GEORGIA: 1811, *State v. Doon*, R. M. Charl. 1 (Lord Mansfield's doctrine in *Vaise v. Delaval*, approved *obiter*); 1850, *Bishop v. State*, 9 Ga. 121, 125 (general principle that jurors cannot "impeach their own verdict," conceded *obiter*); 1853, *Clark v. Carter*, 12 Ga. 500, 503 (same); 1859, *Brown v. State*, 28 Ga. 199, 200, 217 (juror's affidavit that a fellow-juror gave private testimony to them, excluded); 1860, *McElven v. State*, 30 Ga. 869, 871 (same); 1867, *O'Barr v. Alexander*, 37 Ga. 195, 200, 203 (juror's affidavit as to the jurors' drinking of whiskey, excluded); 1869,

*Hoye v. State*, 39 Ga. 718, 723 (like *Brown v. State*, *supra*); 1877, *Moughon v. State*, 59 Ga. 308 (juror's affidavit to a fellow-juror's improper bias during retirement, excluded); 1877, *Oatis v. Brown*, 59 Ga. 711, 717 (like *Brown v. State*, *supra*); 1893, *Hill v. State*, 91 Ga. 153, 16 So. 976 (like *Moughon v. State*, *supra*); 1892, *McTyier v. State*, 91 Ga. 254, 18 So. 140 (apparently similar); 1893, *Cornwall v. State*, 91 Ga. 277, 18 So. 154 (apparently similar); 1895, *Carr v. State*, 96 Ga. 284, 22 So. 570 (jurors' affidavits that newspaper reports were read, excluded); 1897, *Bolden v. R. Co.*, 102 Ga. 558, 27 S. E. 664 (general principle affirmed).

HAWAII: 1882, *Kapohaku v. Koa*, 6 Haw. 326 (juror's affidavit as to another juror's conversation with an officer during the deliberations, admitted).

IDAHO: Rev. St. 1887, § 4439, subdiv. 2, Code Civ. Pr. 1901, § 3524, Comp. St. 1919, § 6888 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1893, *Flood v. McClure*, 3 Ida. 587, 32 Pac. 254 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, held admissible under the statute, such a verdict being a "determination of chance"; the California rulings upon the like statute, repudiated); 1895, *Griffiths v. Montandon*, 4 Ida. 377, 39 Pac. 548 (rule of the California Code, as adopted in the Idaho statutes, § 4439, and interpreted in *Boyce v. Stage Co.*, Cal., applied, notwithstanding erroneous punctuation in the Idaho Code; here applied to misconduct in taking a private view).

ILLINOIS: 1820, *Sawyer v. Stephenson*, 1 Ill. 24 (juror's affidavit of personal knowledge communicated by another juror after retirement, admitted: no question raised); 1823, *Forester v. Guard*, 1 Ill. 74 (similar facts, affidavit excluded); 1860, *Martin v. Ehrenfels*, 24 Ill. 187, 189 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1863, *Reins v. People*, 30 Ill. 256, 266, 274 (similar to *Forester v. Guard*, *supra*); 1867, *Allison v. People*, 45 Ill. 37, 39 (jurors' affidavits, and others' affidavits founded on jurors' statements, not admitted to show misconduct in permitting the constable to join in their discussions); 1868, *Peck v. Brewer*, 48 Ill. 54, 62 (like *Martin v. Ehrenfels*, *supra*); 1871, *Chicago v. Dermody*, 61 Ill. 431, 435 (general principle affirmed); 1873, *Bertholf v. Quinlan*, 68 Ill. 297, 303 (similar); 1878, *Reed v. Thompson*, 88 Ill. 245, 247 (similar; applying it to the determination of damages by average); 1885, *Roy v. Goings*, 112 Ill. 656, 667 (similar, forbidding a questioning of the jurors upon rendering the verdict); 1893, *Sanitary District v. Cullerton*, 147 Ill. 385, 389, 35 N. E. 723 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified misconduct,



given such irregularities, and the present rule applies. Of this sort, plainly, are the acts of intoxication, separation, private view, consultation of

excluded); 1908, *Wyckoff v. Chicago City R. Co.*, 234 Ill. 613, 85 N. E. 237 (affidavit of juror's private view of premises, excluded); 1919, *People v. Strause*, 290 Ill. 259, 125 N. E. 339, (jurors' affidavits as to unauthorized visit to place, excluded).

INDIANA: 1840, *Drummond v. Leslie*, 5 Blackf. 453 (affidavit or admission of jurors that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1846, *Dunn v. Hall*, 8 Blackf. 32, 34 (same); 1851, *Bennett v. State*, 3 Ind. 167, 170 (jurors' affidavits not received to show an improper agreement as to the balloting); 1861, *McCray v. Stewart*, 16 Ind. 377 (general principle affirmed); 1867, *Haun v. Wilson*, 30 Ind. 296, 298 (like *Drummond v. Leslie*, *supra*); 1876, *Stanley v. Sutherland*, 54 Ind. 339, 356 (jurors' statements or affidavits as to fellow-jurors' communication of personal belief, excluded); 1883, *Jones v. State*, 89 Ind. 82, 87 (jurors' affidavits that a book had been improperly read, held inadmissible); 1884, *Long v. State*, 95 Ind. 481, 485 (similar); 1887, *Taylor v. Garnett*, 110 Ind. 290, 11 N. E. 309 (jurors' affidavits excluded, as in *Stanley v. Sutherland*, *supra*; prior doctrine confirmed in a careful opinion by Zollars, J.); 1890, *Houk v. Allen*, 126 Ind. 569, 25 N. E. 897 (jurors' affidavits that a verdict was obtained by majority-agreement, excluded).

IOWA: 1851, *Abel v. Kennedy*, 3 G. Gr. 47 (jurors' affidavits, held inadmissible, when alone offered as the basis of the motion, to prove their misconduct); 1856, *Forshee v. Abrams*, 2 Ia. 571, 578 (jurors' affidavits as to misconduct in determining damages by average, apparently held admissible under Code § 1810; but jurors held not compellable to make affidavits); 1856, *Cook v. Sypher*, 3 Ia. 484, 486 (jurors' affidavits said *obiter* to be inadmissible in general to impeach their verdict); 1857, *State v. Grady*, 4 Ia. 461 (like *Forshee v. Abrams*, *supra*, on the point of non-compellability); 1858, *Manix v. Malony*, 7 Ia. 81, 83 (juror's affidavit held admissible to show a determination of damages by average); 1858, *Ruble v. McDonald*, 7 Ia. 90 (same, for a verdict reached by lot); 1859, *Schanler v. Porter*, 7 Ia. 481 (like *Manix v. Malony*, *supra*); 1860, *Stewart v. R. Co.*, 11 Ia. 62, 65 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to show the reading of a paper illegally in their hands); 1860, *State v. Accola*, 11 Ia. 246 (similar); 1861, *Crumley v. Adkins*, 12 Ia. 363 (like *State v. Grady*, *supra*); 1863, *Shepherd v. Brenton*, 15 Ia. 84, 89 (preceding cases approved); 1866, *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, 20 Ia. 195, 212 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to prove misconduct and irregularity; quoted *supra*); 1873, *Bingham v. Foster*, 37 Ia. 339 (jurors' affidavits that fellow-jurors gave personal testimony during retirement, excluded; erroneously

applying the rule in *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, *supra*); 1874, *Dunlavey v. Watson*, 38 Ia. 398, 402 (similar); 1888, *Griffin v. Harriman*, 74 Ia. 438, 38 N. W. 139 (similar); 1896, *State v. Whalen*, 98 Ia. 662, 68 N. W. 554 (jurors' affidavits that a law-book was unlawfully read and expounded by a juror, admitted; this is correct, but of course inconsistent with the preceding three rulings); 1904, *Douglass v. Agne*, 125 Ia. 67, 99 N. W. 550 (*contra* to *Bingham v. Foster*, *supra*, but not noticing it); 1907, *Clark v. Van Vleck*, 135 Ia. 194, 112 N. W. 648 (jurors' affidavits that they reckoned damages for matters not properly before them, excluded).

KANSAS: 1874, *Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 543 (juror's affidavit to show overt acts of misconduct in general, held admissible; here, to show a fellow-juror's intoxication; quoted *supra*); 1879, *Johnson v. Husband*, 22 Kan. 277, 285 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show a determination of damages by average); 1885, *State v. Clark*, 34 Kan. 289, 8 Pac. 528 (jurors' affidavits that certain documents were illegally read and considered by the jury, admitted); 1889, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Bayes*, 42 Kan. 609, 22 Pac. 741 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show another juror's improper statements of personal knowledge); 1896, *State v. McCormick*, 57 Kan. 440, 46 Pac. 777 (like the preceding case); 1898, *Wichita v. Stallings*, 59 Kan. 779, 54 Pac. 689 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show a determination of damage by averaging; *Doster, C. J.*, diss., on the ground that "the method by which a conclusion of fact is reached by the jury" is not within the principle); 1904, *State v. Rambo*, 69 Kan. 777, 77 Pac. 563 (juror's testimony received as to the juror's allusion to the defendant's failure to testify).

KENTUCKY: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, Hardin 595, 597 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show "misbehavior in themselves and their fellow-jurors"); 1826, *Doran v. Shaw*, 3 T. B. Monr. 411, 415 (preceding rule approved); 1821, *Steele v. Logan*, 3 A. K. Marsh. 394, 396 (jurors' affidavits that a fellow-juror gave personal testimony during retirement, excluded, on the principle that they were inadmissible to prove "anything which may have transpired in the jury-room whilst consulting of their verdict"); 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh. 390, 393 (preceding rule approved); C. Cr. P. 1895, § 272 ("A juror cannot be examined to establish a ground for a new trial, except it be to establish that the verdict was made by lot"); 1896, *Pittsburg Coal Co. v. Withers*, — Ky. —, 37 S. W. 584 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified tenor, excluded); 1912, *Beard v. Com.*, 149 Ky. 632, 149 S. W. 989 (under C. Cr. P. § 272, "a juror cannot be examined to establish a ground for a new trial except it be to establish



witness or party, acceptance of bribes, and reading of illegal documents. But there are some kinds of behavior which, though commonly classed as mis-

that the verdict was made by lot"; here, a separation of the jury); 1920, *Sizemore v. Com.*, 189 Ky. 46, 224 S. W. 637 (juror's affidavit as to improper use of clothing handed to jury, excluded); 1921, *Dunbar v. Com.*, 192 Ky. 263, 232 S. W. 655 (larceny; juror's information as to misconduct in giving a majority verdict, excluded).

LOUISIANA: 1823, *Campbell v. Miller*, 1 Mart. N. S. 514, 518 (juror's affidavit not admitted to show a fellow-juror's communication of personal evidence after retirement); 1877, *Hawkins v. Publishing Co.*, 29 La. An. 134, 139 (juror's affidavit to his receipt of a bribe, through the court crier, during the jury's presence in court, apparently treated as admissible, but not "decided authoritatively"); 1878, *State v. Beatty*, 30 La. An. 1266 (juror's statements as to a fellow-juror's offer of a bribe during retirement, excluded); 1880, *State v. Nelson*, 32 La. An. 842 (juror's testimony to misconduct, apparently in reading law-books, excluded); 1883, *State v. Chretien*, 35 La. An. 1031 (general principle affirmed that jurors may not impeach their verdict); 1890, *State v. Richmond*, 42 La. An. 299, 7 So. 459 (juror's affidavit as to improper separation, excluded); 1903, *State v. Riggs*, 110 La. 509, 34 So. 655 ("an overt act can be shown by the testimony of a juror"; here, intimidation of a juror; following *Mattox v. U. S.*, Fed., and *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan.); 1912, *State v. Cloud*, 130 La. 955, 58 So. 827 (juror's testimony to disqualifying knowledge of the case, excluded).

MAINE: 1867, *Heffron v. Gallupe*, 55 Me. 563, 566 (juror held not admissible to prove irregularity of misconduct during the jury's deliberations; except perhaps "such gross misconduct" as a party's attempt to bribe, etc.); 1876, *State v. Pike*, 65 Me. 111, 117 (juror's affidavit that a legal report was read to the jury, excluded); 1890, *Shepherd v. Camden*, 82 Me. 535, 20 Atl. 91 (juror's testimony that he communicated personal knowledge during retirement, excluded).

MARYLAND: 1909, *Brinsfield v. Howeth*, 110 Md. 520, 73 Atl. 289 (juror's affidavit to browbeating in the jury-room, excluded).

MASSACHUSETTS: 1832, *Dorr v. Fenno*, 12 Pick. 520, 525 ("The rule is now perfectly well-settled in both countries, and may be laid down to be that the testimony of jurors is inadmissible to show their own misbehavior, but may be received to explain or contradict other evidence tending to impeach their conduct"; here not received to show a determination of damages by averaging); 1837, *Hannum v. Belchertown*, 19 Pick. 311, 313 (same; doubling damages under a statute requiring double damages); 1852, *Cook v. Castner*, 9 Cush. 266, 278 (like the next case); 1853,

*Folsom v. Manchester*, 11 Cush. 334, 337 (misconduct of a juror in stating his personal knowledge privately to the others; excluded); 1854, *Boston and Worcester R. Co. v. Dana*, 1 Gray 83, 91, 105 (like *Dorr v. Fenno*); 1855, *Chadbourn v. Franklin*, 5 Gray 312, 315 (taking a private view of the locality in issue; excluded); 1885, *Rowe v. Canney*, 139 Mass. 41, 29 N. E. 219 (unspecified improper utterance by one juror to another; excluded); 1888, *Com. v. White*, 147 Mass. 76, 80, 16 N. E. 707 (juror's testimony to another's expressions of opinion during trial and to threats by him and the foreman, excluded; the rule applying equally to misconduct out of the court-room, if during the pendency of the trial); 1892, *Com. v. Meserve*, 156 Mass. 61, 30 N. E. 166 (jurors' affidavits, and testimony of others as to admissions out of court, about a juror's giving of personal testimony during retirement, excluded).

MICHIGAN: 1896, *Merriman's Appeal*, 108 Mich. 454, 462, 66 N. W. 372 (jurors' affidavits to their own misconduct, excluded; here the misconduct was unspecified, except that it included expressions of bias); 1901, *Wixom v. Bixby*, 127 Mich. 486, 86 N. W. 1001 (rule applied to exclude a juror's affidavit as to a quotient verdict of damages); 1905, *Battle Creek v. Haak*, 139 Mich. 514, 102 N. W. 1005 (rule applied to exclude jurors' affidavits as to an average verdict of damages).

MINNESOTA: 1853-7, *St. Martin v. Desnoyer*, 1 Minn. 156, 159 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show damages determined by average); 1879, *State v. Mims*, 26 Minn. 183, 2 N. W. 494, 683 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1880, *Bradt v. Rommel*, 26 Minn. 505, 5 N. W. 680 (similar); 1891, *State v. Lentz*, 45 Minn. 177, 47 N. W. 720 (jurors' affidavits as to the reading of newspaper reports and the misstatements of a juror as to the law, excluded); 1897, *Rush v. R. Co.*, 70 Minn. 5, 72 N. W. 733 (general principle applied).

MISSISSIPPI: 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. 90, 95 ("the rule is well settled that a juror shall not impeach his verdict"); 1905, *Brister v. State*, 86 Miss. 461, 38 So. 678 (juror's affidavit as to reading law-books, excluded).

MISSOURI: 1862, *Pratt v. Coffman*, 33 Mo. 71, 77 (jurors' testimony to misconduct, held generally inadmissible, with exceptions for serious cases where a foundation has been laid by other evidence; here, not received to show the improper reading of law-books); 1866, *Sawyer v. R. Co.*, 37 Mo. 240, 263 (juror's affidavit that the damages were determined by average, excluded); 1867, *State v. Coupenhaver*, 39 Mo. 430 (similar ruling, as to a verdict by majority vote); 1877, *State v. Branstetter*, 65 Mo. 149, 156 (jurors' affidavits that



conduct constituting an irregularity, ought perhaps rather to fall under the head of methods of reasoning and grounds of verdict, and thus to be governed by the other principle (*ante*, § 2349):

a sentence was determined by average, excluded; repudiating the qualification intimated in *Pratt v. Coffman*, *supra*; 1877, *State v. Alexander*, 66 Mo. 148, 163 (juror's affidavit as to his improper communication with the judge, excluded); 1878, *Philips v. Stewart*, 69 Mo. 149 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1883, *State v. Dunn*, 80 Mo. 681, 694 (principle applied to misconduct in the manner of reaching the verdict); 1884, *State v. Cooper*, 85 Mo. 256, 261 (principle applied to misconduct in giving personal testimony during retirement); 1888, *State v. Rush*, 95 Mo. 99, 8 S. W. 221 (like the preceding case); 1892, *Easley v. R. Co.*, 113 Mo. 236, 20 S. W. 1073 (principle applied to misconduct in taking a private view); 1894, *State v. Wood*, 124 Mo. 412, 27 S. W. 1114 (like *State v. Branstetter*, *supra*).

MONTANA: Rev. C. 1921, § 9397, subdiv. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. 657); 1893, *Gordon v. Trevanthen*, 13 Mont. 387, 34 Pac. 185 (statute applied to admit jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average; *Turner v. Water Co.*, Cal., *supra*, not followed in its interpretation of "determination of chance").

NEBRASKA: 1888, *Harris v. State*, 24 Nebr. 803, 40 N. W. 317 (juror's misconduct in procuring law-books, etc., and reading from them, allowed to be proved by other jurors' affidavits; rule in *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan., followed, as "much more reasonable and promotive of justice"); 1892, *Johnson v. Parrotte*, 34 Nebr. 26, 51 N. W. 290 (jurors' admissions that he had given personal testimony and that he was prejudiced, excluded); 1895, *Gran v. Houston*, 45 Nebr. 813, 64 N. W. 245 (jurors' affidavits as to conversations in the jury-room showing prejudice and improper motives, excluded); 1903, *Falls City v. Sperry*, 68 Nebr. 420, 94 N. W. 529 (expressions of personal knowledge).

NEW HAMPSHIRE: 1827, *Tyler v. Stevens*, 4 N. H. 116 (general principle of exclusion laid down); 1851, *State v. Ayer*, 23 N. H. 301, 321 (same); 1879, *Dodge v. Carroll*, 59 N. H. 237 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1882, *Knight v. Epsom*, 62 N. H. 356, 361 (like the preceding case, which however is not cited); 1888, *Clark v. Manchester*, 64 N. H. 471, 13 Atl. 867 (like the preceding case); 1890, *Palmer v. Statz*, 65 N. H. 221, 19 Atl. 1003 (general principle held to exclude a juror's expressions of bias); 1912, *Boston & M. R. Co. v. Franklin*, 76 N. H. 459, 84 Atl. 44 (preceding cases affirmed; the ground not clearly appearing).

NEW JERSEY: 1790, *Brewster v. Thompson*, 1 N. J. L. 32 (a juror's affidavit that the verdict was reached by lot, excluded); 1823, *Deu*

*v. M'Allister*, 7 N. J. L. 46, 51 (jurors' affidavits stating a communication to them of private knowledge by a fellow-juror, excluded, because "it is a high misdemeanor" and "criminate the jurors themselves"; *Rossell, J.*, diss.); 1842, *Kennedy v. Kennedy*, 18 N. J. L. 450, 454 (principle affirmed); 1849, *Deacon v. Shreve*, 22 N. J. L. 176, 181 (jurors' affidavits as to a private meeting with the parties, held inadmissible, as also testimony to the jurors' admissions of the fact during a recess of court; otherwise, if the juror's statement had been "part of the transaction and while the alleged payment was being made"); 1893, *Peters v. Fogarty*, 55 N. J. L. 386, 26 Atl. 855 (general principle affirmed).

NEW MEXICO: 1913, *Goldenberg v. Law*, 17 N. M. 546, 131 Pac. 499 (damages determined by coin-tossing; jurors' affidavits, excluded).

NEW YORK: 1809, *Dana v. Tucker*, 4 John. 487 (damages determined by average; "the better opinion is, and such is the rule adopted by the Court, that the affidavits of jurors are not to be received to impeach a verdict"; *Smith v. Cheetham*, *ante*, § 2352, not mentioned; *Kent, C. J.*, who there dissented, was still on the bench. and *Livingston, J.*, the champion of the contrary view in the earlier decision, had retired); 1825, *Sargent v. —* 5 Cow. 106, 120 (*Dana v. Tucker* approved; *Smith v. Cheetham* treated as overruled); 1843, *Clum v. Smith*, 5 Hill 560 (jurors' affidavits not received to show misconduct in separating and obtaining information outside); 1875, *Williams v. Montgomery*, 60 N. Y. 648 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified misconduct, excluded).

NORTH CAROLINA: 1821, *State v. M'Leod*, 1 Hawks 344 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1883, *State v. Brittain*, 89 N. C. 481, 504 (jurors not allowed to be examined to show undue influence by the deputy-sheriff); 1836, *Lafoon v. Shearin*, 95 N. C. 391, 394 (juror's affidavit that he gave personal testimony after retirement, excluded).

NORTH DAKOTA: Rev. C. 1899, § 5472, Comp. L. 1913, § 7660, par. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1913, *Johnson v. Seel*, 26 N. D. 299, 144 N. W. 237 (jurors' affidavits to another juror's remarks in the jury room showing bias, excluded).

OHIO: 1841, *Hulet v. Barnett*, 10 Oh. 459 (juror's affidavits that the jury took evidence from the constable after retirement, excluded); 1853, *Farrer v. State*, 2 Oh. St. 54, 73, 77 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to show misconduct in reading newspapers, etc., but only in an "exceptional case," and after a foundation laid "by other means than the affidavits of the jurors themselves").

OKLAHOMA: 1912, *Keith v. State*, 7 Okl. Cr.



156, 123 Pac. 172 ("manner in which the jury arrived at their verdict," two jurors' affidavits excluded); 1915, *Baumle v. Verde*, 50 Okl. 609, 150 Pac. 876 (jurors' affidavits and testimony to a verdict by casting lots, held improper); 1916, *Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Brown*, 55 Okl. 173, 154 Pac. 1161 (jurors' affidavits to misconduct, excluded); 1918, *Egan v. First Nat'l Bank*, — Okl. —, 169 Pac. 621 (jurors' affidavits to a juror's improper utterances, excluded); 1919, *Oklahoma City v. Stewart*, 76 Okl. 211, 184 Pac. 779 (quotient verdict; jurors' testimony excluded).

OREGON: 1853, *Cline v. Broy*, 1 Or. 89 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded).

PENNSYLVANIA: 1811, *Cluggage v. Swan*, 4 Binn. 150, 155 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was reached by lot, held inadmissible, per Yeates, J.; Tilghman, C. J., and Brackenridge, J., expressing no opinion; quoted *supra*); 1821, *Ritchie v. Holbrooke*, 7 S. & R. 458 (juror's affidavit of another juror's having admitted consulting privately with a party to the cause, held admissible; Tilghman, C. J., distinguishing *Cluggage v. Swan* as involving the juror's own misconduct); 1835, *White v. White*, 5 Rawle 61, 63 (jurors' affidavits "are inadmissible to inculcate their fellows or themselves"; here, to prove damages reckoned by average); 1893, *Smalley v. Morris*, 157 Pa. 349, 27 Atl. 734 (preceding cases approved); 1900, *Stull v. Stull*, 197 Pa. 243, 47 Atl. 240 (verdict reached by lottery; jurors' affidavits excluded).

RHODE ISLAND: 1891, *Luft v. Linganie*, 17 R. I. 420, 22 Atl. 942 (jurors' affidavits not received to show determination of damages by average); 1910, *Phillips v. Rhode Island Co.*, 32 R. I. 16, 78 Atl. 342 (unauthorized view; jurors' affidavits excluded).

SOUTH CAROLINA: 1814, *Price v. M'Ilvain*, 3 Brev. 419 (jurors' declarations or affidavits not receivable to prove a fellow-juror's statement of personal knowledge and expression of bias after retirement); 1834, *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill 506 (juror's testimony to a fellow-juror's statement, after retirement, of personal belief as to a witness' character, admitted, but on the ground that such communication of personal belief was not improper in respect to a witness' character); 1855, *Smith v. Culbertson*, 9 Rich. L. 106, 111 (jurors' affidavits that the verdict was reached by lot, held inadmissible; good opinion by Wardlaw, J.); 1856, *State v. Tindall*, 10 Rich. L. 212 ("We never listen to the affidavit of a juror ascribing misconduct to himself or fellows in the jury-room"; here, the reading of papers improperly before them during retirement).

SOUTH DAKOTA: Stats. 1901, § 6306 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1891, *Gaines v. White*, 1 S. D. 434, 441, 47 N. W. 524 (unspecified misconduct; statute applied); 1891, *Ulrick*

*v. Dakota L. & T. Co.*, 2 S. D. 285, 294, 49 N. W. 1054 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded; following *Boyce v. Stage Co.*, Cal.); 1897, *Thompson Co. v. Gundersen*, 10 S. D. 42, 71 N. W. 764 (jurors' affidavits not received to show an improper separation); 1908, *Ewing v. Lunn*, 22 S. D. 95, 115 N. W. 527 (jurors' affidavits as to a juror's intoxication, excluded).

TENNESSEE: 1821, *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. 60 (jurors' affidavits admissible "to exhibit to the Court matter for setting aside the verdict they themselves have rendered"; quoted *supra*); 1833, *Booby v. State*, 4 Yerg. 111 (juror's affidavit that a fellow-juror had stated his own knowledge after retirement, admitted); 1836, *Hudson v. State*, 9 Yerg. 407, 411 (preceding case approved on this point); 1839, *Elledge v. Todd*, 1 Humph. 43 (juror's affidavit that 'the verdict had been reached by averaging, held admissible); 1842, *Norris v. State*, 3 Humph. 333, 337 (preceding cases approved on this point); 1872, *Wade v. Ordway*, 1 Baxt. 229, 236, 244 (juror's affidavit that another juror had taken a private view and communicated his observations, admitted).

TEXAS: 1846, *Mason v. Russell*, 1 Tex. 721, 726 (jurors' affidavits, not admitted to show unspecified "irregularities of their proceedings, while out and considering of their verdict"); 1848, *Cannon v. State*, 3 Tex. 31 (same general principle affirmed); 1852, *Burns v. Paine*, 8 Tex. 159 (same principle implied); 1852, *Handleigh v. Leigh*, 8 Tex. 129 (like the next case); 1888, *International & G. N. R. Co. v. Gordon*, 72 Tex. 44, 11 S. W. 1033 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); C. Cr. P. 1895, § 817, par. 8, Rev. C. Cr. P. 1911, § 837 (new trial allowable "where from the misconduct of the jury the Court is of opinion that the defendant has not received a fair and impartial trial, and it shall be competent to prove such misconduct by the voluntary affidavit of a juror; and a verdict may in like manner in such cases be sustained by such affidavit"); 1895, *Mitchell v. State*, 36 Tex. Cr. 278, 33 S. W. 367, 36 S. W. 456 (jurors' affidavits that fellow-jurors had stated their personal knowledge after retirement, admitted); 1896, *Ray v. State*, 35 Tex. Cr. 354, 33 S. W. 869 (similar).

UTAH: Comp. L. 1917, § 6978 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1893, *Homer v. Inter-Mountain A. Co.*, 9 Utah 193, 33 Pac. 700 (jurors' affidavits not received to show the jurors' improper reading of a book of accounts); 1895, *People v. Ritchie*, 12 Utah 180, 42 Pac. 209 (juror's testimony "cannot be received to defeat his own verdict," — here, by showing an unauthorized view; the statute not applying to criminal cases, nor permitting self-impeachment other than on the specified charge of resorting to chance); 1903, *Black v. R. M. B. Tel. Co.*, 26 Utah 451, 73 Pac. 514 (preceding



(a) The determination of a *verdict by lot* or other chance, and the estimation of *damages by average*, seem to be of this sort.<sup>3</sup> Under the rule of Lord Mansfield, the result is of course the same in either class of cases; but under the Iowa rule the effect would be to exclude under the other principle (*ante*, § 2349) what would otherwise be admissible under the present one. The curious circumstance is that the single exception made to the prohibitive rule by the Codes following the California Code is directed to this kind of misconduct, *i. e.* the very one of all upon which no exception should exist. Moreover, of the usual rule (excluding jurors' testimony upon this point) it may be said that since a determination by lot can hardly ever be established by other than jurors' testimony, it becomes a mere pretence to declare a certain irregularity fatal and yet to exclude all practical means of proving it;<sup>4</sup> so that the franker plan would be to decline to recognize it as falling under the class of irregularities of conduct. The only substantial reason for treating it as such is that it virtually signifies that the jury never deliberated at all, — which however is seldom the fact.

(b) The *communication of a juror's personal knowledge during retirement* is of course improper, since the juror ought to offer himself upon the stand as a witness (*ante*, § 1800). Nevertheless, his use and his fellows' use of that

case approved); 1917, *Ogden L. & I. R. Co. v. Jones*, 51 Utah 62, 168 Pac. 548.

VERMONT: 1802, *Robbins v. Windover*, 2 Tyl. 11 (juror's affidavit that fellow-jurors "related certain matters and things, in relation to the issue, to others of the panel after the cause was submitted to them, not witnessed on the trial of the cause in court," excluded); 1865, *Sheldon v. Perkins*, 37 Vt. 550, 557 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show "any impropriety in the conduct of the jury or improper mode of arriving at the verdict"); 1893, *Carpenter v. Willey*, 65 Vt. 168, 26 Atl. 488 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded).

VIRGINIA: 1812, *Com. v. McCaul*, 1 Va. Cas. 271, 275, 302 (juror's affidavit as to his separation from the jury, admitted; no question raised on this point); 1851, *Thompson v. Com.*, 8 Gratt. 637, 650 (jurors' affidavits as to determining a sentence by average; not decided, "because it has never yet been so maturely considered and solemnly adjudged in Virginia . . . as to render it a settled question in causes either civil or criminal"); 1884, *Moses v. Cromwell*, 78 Va. 671, 675 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, not admitted); 1889, *Elam v. Commercial Bank*, 86 Va. 92, 9 S. E. 498 (jurors' affidavits as to unspecified misconduct, excluded); 1893, *Taylor v. Com.*, 90 Va. 109, 17 S. E. 812 (general principle affirmed).

WEST VIRGINIA: 1876, *Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Patton*, 9 W. Va. 648, 662 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by

average, excluded); 1889, *Bartlett v. Patton*, 33 W. Va. 71, 10 S. E. 21 (jurors' affidavits that a fellow-juror gave personal testimony after retirement, excluded).

WASHINGTON: 1913, *Maryland Casualty Co. v. Seattle El. Co.*, 75 Wash. 430, 134 Pac. 1097 (misconduct in taking a private view; jurors' affidavits admitted to show the fact, but not its effect on their minds; discriminating opinion by Ellis, J.).

WISCONSIN: 1864, *Edmister v. Garrison*, 18 Wis. 594 (jurors' affidavits to unspecified misconduct, excluded); 1867, *Shaw v. Fisk*, 21 Wis. 368 (jurors' affidavits that they were incompetent by ignorance of English, and had to have an interpreter in the jury-room, excluded on the latter point); 1894, *Peppercorn v. Black River Falls*, 89 Wis. 38, 61 N. W. 79 (jurors' affidavits that they took a private view, admitted, the rule applying only to "matters taking place during their retirement").

WYOMING: 1895, *Bunce v. McMahon*, 6 Wyo. 24, 42 Pac. 23 (jurors' affidavits that a paper was illegally introduced and read in the jury-room, excluded); 1912, *Pullman Co. v. Finley*, 20 Wyo. 456, 125 Pac. 380 (quotient verdict; two jurors' affidavits, not admitted).

<sup>3</sup> They were so considered by Baron Parke, in *Straker v. Graham*, and by Chief Justice Doster in *Wichita v. Stallings* (Kansas).

<sup>4</sup> 1894, Field, C. J., in *Wright v. Abbott*, 160 Mass. 395, 397, 36 N. E. 32 ("Either the law that a verdict must be set aside if determined by lot is nugatory, because the fact cannot be proved; or there must be a possible means of proving it").



information during their deliberations is rather to be regarded as affecting the grounds of their verdict, and thus as falling under the other principle (*ante*, § 2349).

(2) Under the Iowa rule, a juror's *expressions of personal knowledge* and of *bias*, uttered during retirement, are provable. But the genuine privilege for confidential communications (*ante*, § 2346) ought to exclude them, when offered from any one but the juror himself voluntarily. The object of the privilege is to enable the jurors to speak out freely; and if a juror has stated that he knows the plaintiff to be a villain or that he will always vote against a money-lender like the defendant, surely it is precisely such statements which he is entitled to prevent from being afterwards disclosed without his consent. The only opposing argument could be that the privilege ought not to cover statements by the juror involving his own breach of duty; yet there is no such limitation for the other classes of privileged communications, and none should exist here.

(3) The usual rule of exclusion, on Lord Mansfield's theory of forbidding self-stultification, (a) ought equally to prohibit his own affidavit of his own *expressions of disqualifying bias uttered before entering or after leaving the panel*; <sup>5</sup> and (b) it ought equally to prohibit his own proof of his misconduct during the trial but *outside the jury-room* <sup>6</sup> and (c) it ought equally to prohibit a juror's proof of similar misconduct in a *fellow-juror*, since the principle regards the jurors as a single body and the shibboleth of "impeaching the verdict" applies equally to the impeachment of a fellow-juror's conduct.<sup>7</sup>

(4) On the other hand, the same usual rule ought to admit a juror's testimony *in support of a verdict* attempted to be impeached by other testimony, whether the juror's testimony goes to deny or explain *expressions of bias before the trial*,<sup>8</sup> or to deny or explain *misconduct during retirement*.<sup>9</sup> The Iowa

<sup>5</sup> 1851, *People v. Baker*, 1 Cal. 404, 406 (juror's affidavit that he had expressed an opinion before trial, excluded); 1912, *State v. Cloud*, 130 La. 955, 58 So. 827;

<sup>6</sup> *Contra*: 1868, *Heffron v. Gallupe*, 55 Me. 563, 566 (juror's obtaining evidential papers from a party by calling at his house, admitted); 1901, *Pierce v. Brennan*, 83 Minn. 422, 86 N. W. 417; 1901, *Hempton v. State*, 111 Wis. 127, 86 N. W. 596.

<sup>7</sup> 1841, *Cain v. Cain*, 1 B. Monr. 213 (juror's affidavit of a fellow-juror's expressions of bias since the finding, excluded).

<sup>8</sup> 1883, *Irvin v. State*, 19 Fla. 872, 890; 1886, *Hughes v. People*, 116 Ill. 330, 337, 6 N. E. 55; 1887, *Spies v. People*, 122 Ill. 1, 264, 12 N. E. 865, 17 N. E. 898; 1824, *Haskell v. Becket*, 3 Me. 92; 1824, *Taylor v. Greeley*, 3 Me. 204; 1871, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, 107 Mass. 453, 459, 471.

<sup>9</sup> *Federal*: 1799, *U. S. v. Fries*, 3 Dall. 515, 517 (juror admitted to disprove expressions of prejudice alleged to have been uttered after being summoned); *Alabama*: 1905,

*Birmingham R. & E. Co. v. Mason*, 144 Ala. 387, 29 So. 590 (jurors' affidavits that an improper document was not read by them, admitted); 1906, *Birmingham R. L. & P. Co. v. Moore*, 148 Ala. 115, 42 So. 1024; *Arkansas*: 1853, *Stanton v. State*, 13 Ark. 317, 319; 1855, *Pleasants v. Heard*, 15 Ark. 403, 408; *California*: 1888, *People v. Golden-son*, 76 Cal. 352, 19 Pac. 161; 1892, *People v. Murray*, 94 Cal. 212, 29 Pac. 494; 1894, *People v. Stokes*, 103 Cal. 193, 37 Pac. 207, *semble*; 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 Cal. 632, 39 Pac. 59; *Idaho*: 1905, *State v. West*, 11 Ida. 157, 31 Pac. 107 (juror's affidavit admissible to explain his separation from the jury during retirement; but uncorroborated it is insufficient); *Illinois*: 1871, *Chicago v. Dermody*, 61 Ill. 431, 435; 1878, *Reed v. Thompson*, 88 Ill. 245, 247; 1903, *Groves & S. R. R. Co. v. Herman*, 206 Ill. 34, 69 N. E. 36, *semble* (chance-verdict); *Indiana*: 1827, *Barlow v. State*, 2 Blackf. 114; 1865, *Alexander v. Thomas*, 25 Ind. 268; 1867, *Haun v. Wilson*, 28 Ind. 296, 298; 1883, *Jones v. State*, 89 Ind.



rule leads to the same result. Moreover, this object of disproving bias alleged to have existed before trial may be attained by showing the juror's expressions and conduct during retirement, as an evidential fact relating back and negating the supposed prior bias.<sup>10</sup> But where the object is to determine the *grounds or motives* of the verdict as in themselves important for sustaining it (for example, to show that a certain illegal paper or erroneous charge did not influence the verdict), here the other principle (*ante*, § 2349) applies to forbid this.<sup>11</sup> The distinction is that in the former case the juror's expressions are not considered in their aspect as establishing motives for the verdict, but merely as part of his whole conduct going to determine the question of his former bias.

(5) The usual rule, upon Lord Mansfield's theory of forbidding self-stultification, (a) does not exclude the juror's testimony to the *misconduct of a party or a court officer*;<sup>12</sup> though a few Courts, taking literally the phrase

82, 88; *Iowa*: 1907, *Strand v. Grinnell* A. G. Co., 136 Ia. 68, 113 N. W. 488; *Kentucky*: 1902, *Howard v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 69 S. W. 721 (juror's affidavit "may always be received to sustain the verdict"); *Louisiana*: 1898, *State v. Favre*, 51 La. An. 434, 25 So. 93 (juror's disqualification by a previous bet on the trial); *Massachusetts*: 1827, *Hix v. Drury*, 5 Pick. 296, 302; 1871, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, 107 Mass. 453, 459, 466; *Minnesota*: 1853-7, *St. Martin v. Desnoyer*, 1 Minn. 156, 160; *Missouri*: 1874, *State v. Underwood*, 57 Mo. 40, 52 (tampering by outsiders); 1888, *State v. Rush*, 95 Mo. 99, 8 S. W. 221; *Montana*: 1896, *State v. Gay*, 18 Mont. 51, 44 Pac. 411; *New Hampshire*: 1833, *State v. Hascall*, 6 N. H. 352, 362; 1843, *Tenney v. Evans*, 13 N. H. 462 (jurors' affidavits received, "in exculpation of themselves and in support of the verdict," "where evidence has been introduced *aliunde* to impeach the verdict"; here the affidavits to rebut bias stated that the juror in question had expressed no opinion on retirement until after the others; good opinion); 1845, *State v. Howard*, 17 N. H. 171, 187 (to repel evidence of bias expressed before trial, jurors' affidavits were admitted that they had at first, during retirement, proposed a finding of murder in the second degree, instead of the verdict for the first degree as finally rendered); 1851, *State v. Ayer*, 23 N. H. 301, 303, 321 (juror's testimony denying and explaining alleged expressions of bias, held admissible); 1864, *Boynton v. Trumbull*, 45 N. H. 408 (reaching a verdict by lot); 1882, *Knight v. Epsom*, 62 N. H. 356; 1890, *Palmer v. State*, 65 N. H. 221, 19 Atl. 1003; *New Jersey*: 1842, *Kennedy v. Kennedy*, 18 N. J. L. 450, 453 (jurors' affidavits received to disprove a determination of damages by average; *Nevins and Elmer*, JJ., diss.); *New York*: 1808, *Hackley v. Hastie*, 3 Johns. 252; 1809, *Dana v. Tucker*, 4 Johns. 487

(damages determined by average); *South Dakota*: 1897, *Thompson Co. v. Gunderson*, 10 S. D. 42, 71 N. W. 764; *Texas*: 1848, *Cannon v. State*, 3 Tex. 31; *Vermont*: 1857, *Downer v. Baxter*, 30 Vt. 467, 475; *West Virginia*: 1882, *State v. Cartwright*, 20 W. Va. 32, 41 (jurors' affidavits in exculpation said to be inadmissible both in "reason and the theory of criminal proceedings"; yet "the practice has been" to receive them); 1882, *State v. Robinson*, 20 W. Va. 713, 756 (jurors' testimony admissible "to disprove or explain any such separation, misconduct, or irregularity; but their testimony will not be received to show by what motives they were actuated, or that any admitted fact, misconduct, or irregularity had no influence or effect upon their minds in producing the verdict"); 1892, *State v. Harrison*, 36 W. Va. 729, 15 S. E. 982.

*Contra*: 1822, *Coster v. Merest*, 3 B. & B. 272, C. P. (to rebut affidavits that prejudicial papers had been seen by the jury, affidavits of all the jurymen, denying that they had seen them, were rejected; no authority cited).

<sup>10</sup> As in *Tenney v. Evans*, *State v. Howard*, N. H. *supra*, note 9, on the principle of §§ 387, 950, *ante*.

<sup>11</sup> Yet a few Courts, misunderstanding the principle, have admitted this; the rulings are noted *ante*, § 2349. Compare *State v. Robinson*, W. Va., *supra*, note 9.

<sup>12</sup> 1895, *Heller v. People*, 22 Colo. 11, 43 Pac. 124 (bailiff's misconduct); 1858, *Spurck v. Crook*, 19 Ill. 415, 426 (juror may testify to improper conduct of the party in furnishing evidence after the hearing in court or to other acts of corruption or impropriety by the party); 1868, *Knowlton v. McMahon*, 13 Minn. 386 ("perhaps" they are admissible to show "the misconduct of the prevailing party"); 1850, *Nelms v. State*, 13 Sm. & M. Miss. 500, 508 (Clayton, J., diss.; officer's misconduct).

about "impeaching a verdict" have reached a contrary conclusion;<sup>13</sup> and it is true that, so far as the third person's misconduct involves also the juror's own misconduct, the latter would be prohibited. (b) Nor does the rule of thumb interpose to prohibit a *court officer* from testifying to the juror's misconduct,<sup>14</sup> — in spite of the plain inconsistency of principle, already noted (*ante*, § 2353). But, apart from that inconsistency, it would seem that the genuine privilege for confidential communications (*ante*, § 2346) should suffice to protect jurors completely against the disclosure of their utterances by a third person present at their deliberations, especially when his presence is unlawful.

(6) So far as any of the foregoing facts may be proved at all by jurors, they should be proved by the juror's own testimony under oath, either by affidavit or on the stand, and not by his *hearsay statements* reported by others.<sup>15</sup>

§ 2355. (d) **Mistake in Announcing or Recording the Verdict.** The act of assent to the terms of a document is constituted by the act of signing. The act of assent to a verdict is constituted by the express answer to the clerk at the polling in open court, or by the silence which implies an assent.<sup>1</sup> This outward act is final. Just as the act of the party to a deed is judged and determined by his outward conduct, so the act of a juror is judged and determined by the jury's polling, — irrespective, on the one hand, of motives or beliefs which may have led up to the verdict's terms (*post*, § 2413), and, on the other hand, of the deliberations and utterances of the juror during retirement (*post*, § 2425). The very purpose of the formality of polling is to afford an opportunity for free expression, unhampered by the fears or the errors which may have attended the private proceedings:

1805, SEWALL, J., in *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542 (rejecting an affidavit "that he thought it his duty to coincide with the rest of the jury, but in his mind he had never approved of the verdict or consented to it"); "He is not to be believed or heard. The record of a verdict implies a unanimous consent of the jury, and is conclusive and incontrovertible evidence of the fact. Besides, the secret or mental act of a juror can never be a

<sup>13</sup> 1893, *Sanitary District v. Cullerton*, 147 Ill. 385, 392, 35 N. E. 723 (officer's misconduct); 1891, *Gardner v. Minea*, 47 Minn. 295, 50 N. W. 199 (bailiff's misconduct); 1883, *State v. Brittain*, 89 N. C. 481, 504 (jurors not allowed to be examined to show the deputy-sheriff's undue influence).

<sup>14</sup> 1855, *Wilson v. Berryman*, 5 Cal. 44, 46 (sheriff); 1890, *Houk v. Allen*, 126 Ind. 569, 25 N. E. 897; 1894, *Wright v. Abbott*, 160 Mass. 395, 36 N. E. 62 (deputy-sheriff); 1880, *Bradt v. Rommel*, 26 Minn. 505, 5 N. W. 680 (sheriff); 1864, *Boynton v. Trumbull*, 45 N. H. 408 (officer).

<sup>15</sup> 1839, *Straker v. Graham*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 223; 1903, *People v. Dobbins*, 138 Cal. 694, 72 Pac. 339; 1905, *People v. Murphy*, 146 Cal. 502, 80 Pac. 709; 1891, *Cain Bros. Co. v. Wallace*, 46 Kan. 138, 26 Pac. 445; 1918, *State v. Howard*, 144 La. 97, 80 So. 213; 1885, *Dearborn v. New-*

*hall*, 63 N. H. 301; 1913, *Maryland Casualty Co. v. Seattle El. Co.*, 75 Wash. 430, 134 Pac. 1097; this is universally accepted.

Whether the juror is *orally examinable* in court is sometimes said to lie in discretion; 1903, *State v. King*, 88 Minn. 175, 92 N. W. 965; 1906, *Goodwin v. Blanchard*, 73 N. H. 550, 64 Atl. 22 (collecting authorities).

Distinguish the offer of a juror's expressions of bias before or during trial as *ground for disqualification to serve*; for here his utterances are themselves the disqualifying facts to be proved, and the Hearsay rule is not violated (*ante*, § 1770).

§ 2355. <sup>1</sup> For the manner of polling, the right to a poll, and the sort of expression that is equivalent to a dissent at the polling, see the following cases: 1852, *Nichols v. Suncook Mfg. Co.*, 24 N. H. 431; 1903, *Smith v. Paul*, 133 N. C. 66, 45 S. E. 348.



subject of legal inquiry; and, from the necessity of the case, his conduct before the court is the best and only evidence that can be admitted of his assent to a verdict delivered in his presence."

(1) Hence, the fact that the verdict as delivered was *by one or more individual jurors not assented to* by them in the jury-room, or is different from the one there informally assented to by them, is no ground for later correcting or setting aside the verdict. Much less is the fact that the juror in his own mind was mistaken or unwilling in the assent which he confessedly gave in the jury-room; for here he has doubly committed himself to the verdict as delivered.<sup>2</sup> It may be added that this principle is to be discriminated from

<sup>2</sup> The rulings seldom distinguish between the above two cases; but the principle is best illustrated and tested by the former of the two. The rulings are unanimous:

ENGLAND: 1753, *Lawrence v. Boswell*, Sayer 100 (at the rendering of the verdict in open court, no objection was made by any juror; held, that five of them "shall not now be received to say that they did not acquiesce").

UNITED STATES: *Arizona*: 1876, *Torque v. Carrillo*, 1 Ariz. 336, 25 Pac. 526 (juror's affidavit that he "did not agree to the verdict," excluded, where the verdict had been read aloud by the clerk and the jury had replied that it was their verdict); *Connecticut*: 1844, *Meade v. Smith*, 16 Conn. 346, 351, 356 (the foreman, before delivering the verdict, handed to the judge a paper stating that "the jury have agreed on a verdict handed in; the minority, however, desiring to have it understood that they come in silent"; the verdict was then read aloud and no dissent made by any juror; the jurors' affidavits were excluded, and the facts were further held not to avoid the verdict); *Delaware*: 1853, *McCombs v. Chandler*, 5 Harringt. 423 (juror's affidavit that he "did not agree to the verdict and did not answer when polled," excluded); *Georgia*: 1811, *State v. Doon*, R. M. Charl. 1 (two jurors' affidavits that they "did not in fact agree to the verdict which was rendered," excluded); 1880, *Hill v. State*, 64 Ga. 453, 466 (juror held to have signified his assent, when polled; his "affidavit afterwards taken," excluded); *Iowa*: 1871, *Garretty v. Brazell*, 34 Ia. 100, 104 (jurors' affidavits that the findings "were not assented to by all of the jury," excluded); 1895, *Hallenbeck v. Garst*, 96 Ia. 509, 65 N. W. 417 (juror's affidavit that his ballot for "plaintiff" was wrongly read out as "defendant" by the foreman in the jury-room, not admitted, since he did not there dissent and did afterwards answer for the defendant with the others when polled in court); *Kentucky*: 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh. Ky. 390, 392 (juror's affidavit that he did not consent to the verdict, though on the calling of the clerk "So say you all," he made no dissenting expression, held not admissible); *Louisiana*: 1837, *Cire v. Rightor*, 11 La. 140 (the jurors were polled and answered "verdict for Rightor";

affidavit of two jurors, "that they were mistaken in their verdict, that when they rendered it they were under the impression it granted the land to the plaintiffs," excluded); 1848, *State v. Caldwell*, 3 La. An. 435 (affidavit of two jurors "that they were overawed by abuse and threat from other jurors and forced to render a verdict contrary to their judgment," excluded); 1851, *State v. Brette*, 6 La. An. 652, 657 (preceding case approved); 1885, *State v. Price*, 37 La. An. 215, 218 (apparently like *State v. Caldwell*, *supra*); *Massachusetts*: 1805, *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542, per Sewall J. (affidavit that "he thought it his duty to coincide with the rest of the jury," but had not really approved the verdict, excluded; quoted *supra*); 1817, *Bridge v. Eggleston*, 14 Mass. 245, 247 (similar); 1904, *McCoy v. Jordan*, 184 Mass. 575, 69 N. E. 358 (a juror, on being asked by the clerk whether he assented, answered, "Under protest"; the verdict was held properly recorded as unanimous); *Missouri*: 1890, *State v. McNamara*, 100 Mo. 100, 13 S. W. 938 (juror's affidavit that he intended to find a verdict of carrying concealed weapons, and not of shooting with intent to kill, excluded); *New Jersey*: 1819, *Clark v. Read*, 5 N. J. L. 486 ("Some time after the jury was dismissed, one of the jurors swore that he was not agreed to the verdict, previous to judgment being rendered"; excluded); *North Carolina*: 1805, *Suttrell v. Dry*, 1 Murph. 94 (juror's affidavit "that he did not consent to the verdict," excluded); 1888, *State v. Harper*, 101 N. C. 761, 7 S. E. 730 (certain jurors' "surrender of convictions" to the majority, not allowed to be shown, where at the polling in court they were unanimous); *Texas*: 1858, *Boetge v. Landa*, 22 Tex. 105, 107 (on the polling of the jury, one juror denied his assent; the jury then retired again, and upon returning to court, this juror assented with the others when polled; his subsequent affidavit that he had been coerced to assent was excluded); 1891, *Letcher v. Morrison*, 79 Tex. 240, 14 S. W. 1010 (affidavits of certain jurors that the verdict was reached by a majority only, excluded); *Wisconsin*: 1907, *Butteris v. Mifflin & L. M. Co.*, 133 Wis. 343, 113 N. W. 642 (affidavits that four jurors "did not intend to return a verdict" as found, excluded).

that of certain cases under the prior principle (*ante*, § 2349) about the grounds of a verdict (though the result is the same) for there the assent is conceded and the motive for the assent is the fact offered to be shown, while here the assent itself is desired to be negatived.

(2) But where the error at the time of announcement of the verdict is a *unanimous one*, by all the jury, the situation is a different one. When the verdict as announced or delivered is different unanimously from the verdict as assented to in the jury-room at the time of voting, the case is the same as that of a deed which by mutual or common mistake does not conform to the original agreement as avowedly made by the parties to the deed. Just as such a deed may be reformed in equity, upon satisfactory proof of the error (*post*, § 2417), so such a verdict may be corrected to represent the verdict actually agreed upon by the jury as a whole. The same reasons of policy here also permit a departure from the general rule that formal acts of assent are conclusive; for a unanimous or mutual error can safely be inquired into and easily established, while an individual error opens a wide door for vacillation and uncertainty. As individuals, they must be judged by their open acts; but as an entire jury they may be trusted to correct that which is merely an error in the transmission of their act from the jury-room to the court-room:

1839, TROTTER, J., in *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. Miss. 90, 96 (action of trespass against the defendant and six others, including Allen and McDonald; verdict for the plaintiff; after verdict announced and entered, when all but one jurymen had left the court, he stated, on suggestion from the counsel and the judge, that the jury had intended not to include in their finding either Allen, who was dead, or McDonald, who was not concerned; "the Court then directed the verdict to be changed so as to correspond with this statement; immediately after this, the whole panel came into court and confirmed the statement of the juror"; this alteration was approved on appeal): "[In a case cited] it was decided that the Court might send the jury back to re-consider their verdict, if it appears to be a mistaken one. This is constantly done; sometimes upon an intimation from the judge and more frequently from a suggestion of one of the parties or his counsel. It is highly conducive to justice to suffer mere slips of the jury to be remedied. Can there be any distinction in principle, between the case at bar, and that of sending the jury back before they are divested of the case by a manual delivery of the papers to the clerk? Does the naked fact of their separation before the discovery of the error deprive the Court of this salutary power? . . . In the case before us, the jury had a right to find some of the defendants guilty, and others not; and if they thought McDonald not guilty, he was entitled to the benefit of their verdict, and ought not to be deprived of it by a mistake which occurred at the time of delivering it. Nor was the Court bound to send the case to a new jury."

1860, BIGELOW, C. J., in *Capen v. Stoughton*, 16 Gray 364 (admitting the jurors' testimony to show that "after agreeing on a verdict for the petitioners and filling up a blank form accordingly, the jury by mistake signed the form of verdict for the respondents"): "The evidence of the jurors is offered only to show a mistake, in the nature of a clerical error, which happened after the deliberations of the jury had ceased, and they had actually agreed on their verdict. The error consisted, not in making up their verdict on wrong principles or on a mistake of facts, but in an omission to state correctly in writing the verdict to which they had, by a due and regular course of proceeding, honestly and fairly



arrived. . . . No considerations of public policy require that the uncontradicted testimony of jurors to establish an error of this nature should be excluded. Its admission does not in any degree infringe on the sanctity with which the law surrounds the deliberations of juries, or expose their verdicts to be set aside through improper influences, or upon grounds which might prove dangerous to the purity and steadiness of the administration of public justice. On the contrary, it is a case of manifest mistake, of a merely formal and clerical character, which the Court ought to interfere to correct, in order to prevent the rights of parties from being sacrificed by a blind adherence to a rule of evidence, in itself highly salutary and reasonable, but which upon principle has no application to the present case."

It has occasionally been said that this correction must be claimed before the jury are discharged;<sup>3</sup> but this seems unsound, because such errors are seldom ascertained until after the jury have separated and conversed out of court; and if the error is satisfactorily established, there can hardly be any fixed time to limit its correction.

Subject to this qualification, it is universally conceded that a unanimous error of the jury in *delivering the verdict* as already unanimously agreed on in the jury-room may be shown for the purpose of correcting it to correspond, or, when this is not safely to be done, of ordering a new trial.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1835, *Bridgewood v. Wynn*, 1 Harr. & Woll. 574 (affidavits of two of the jurors that the verdict was by mistake given for the defendant instead of the plaintiff, the jury being "misled by the circumstance of the defendant beginning the case" and thinking that they were finding for the plaintiff, held not sufficient, "the jury as such being now separated"); 1853, *Breck v. Blanchard*, 27 N. H. 100, 103 (the jury having rendered a signed and written but informal verdict, and having been discharged with the understanding that the foreman should afterwards draw up a formal verdict, a further inquiry of the jurors, and the affidavits of some of them, as to their non-assent to the verdict as first signed and read aloud, was refused; "there must be a limit fixed, beyond and after which no such inquiry can be made; and we think that time is well settled to be the time when the verdict is recorded").

<sup>4</sup> ENGLAND: 1731, *Parker v. Thornton*, 21 Vin. Abr. 484, "Trial," T, g, pl. 12 (new trial granted "upon an affidavit of eleven of the jury that they had agreed on a verdict for the plaintiff, and 5s. damages, but by mistake the foreman gave a verdict for the defendant"); s. c., s. v. *Baker v. Miles*, Cooke 66 (98): 1757, *Gogan v. Ebdon*, 1 Burr. 383, L. C. J. Mansfield and others (there being two different issues, and the foreman having given in a "general verdict for the defendant upon both issues," affidavits of eight of the jury were received that "it was the meaning and intention of the whole jury" to find the former issue for the defendant, and the latter for the plaintiff, and that this mistake was discovered by them an hour afterwards, but not till the judge was

gone to his lodgings; the Court holding, first, that the intent of the whole jury was sufficiently proved, and, next, that it indicated "a mistake, arising from the jury's being unacquainted with business of this nature, and from the associate's omission in not asking the jury particularly how they found each respective issue and in not making the jury fully understand their own finding"); 1845, *Bentley v. Fleming*, 1 C. B. 479 (the judge's substitute having failed to take the answers separately to three issues submitted by the judge, and the colloquy in court showing that the verdict recorded for the plaintiff was probably a misrepresentation of the jury's findings, a new trial was ordered).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1885, *Burlingame v. Central R. Co.*, 23 Fed. 706, Wheeler, J. (a verdict for \$3500 was allowed to be corrected to \$3500 with interest, by reassembling the jurors on the second day after the verdict and ascertaining from their unanimous answers that the original verdict as handed in did not represent their consensus); 1896, *Pelzer Mfg. Co. v. Hamburg-Bremen F. I. Co.*, 71 Fed. 826, Simonton, J. (jurors' testimony that "the jury, with the full purpose and intention to find a verdict upon both policies set out in the complaint, inadvertently and by mistake brought in their verdict upon one policy only," held admissible, the case being that the jury had actually voted and agreed and the error came in reducing the verdict to writing; *Capen v. Stoughton*, Mass., followed); 1896, *Hamburg-Bremen F. Ins. Co. v. Pelzer Mfg. Co.*, 22 C. C. A. 283, 76 Fed. 479 (allowing the correction of a clerical error by the foreman in announcing the verdict); *Iowa*: 1904, *Gillespie v. Ashford*,

It follows, for the same reason, that an error in the *clerk's entry* of the verdict, making it to appear different from the verdict as actually pronounced by the foreman and assented to by the other jurors, may be shown,<sup>5</sup>

125 Ia. 729, 101 N. W. 649 (like *Capen v. Stoughton*, Mass.); *Kentucky*: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, Hardin Ky. 595, 597, *semble* (jurors' affidavits admissible to show "that there was in truth no verdict," as by a mistaken announcement); 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh, 390, 394 (preceding case apparently doubted); *Maine*: 1822, *Little v. Larrabee*, 2 Me. 37 (jurors' affidavits that they had "misunderstood the legal terms in which they had drawn up their verdict and that they had returned a verdict for the demandant instead of one for the tenant, which last was their sole intention," admitted; the verdict was not corrected, but a new trial granted); *Massachusetts*: 1860, *Capen v. Stoughton*, 16 Gray 364 (a mistake of the entire jury in filling up the wrong blank form, allowed to be shown; quoted *supra*); 1912, *Randall v. Peerless Motor Car Co.*, 212 Mass. 352, 99 N. E. 221 (the unanimous affidavits of the jurors that the answer "No" to an interrogatory was intended to be "Yes" but was mistakenly recorded, was received, though made after separation); *Mississippi*: 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. Miss. 90, 95 (jurors' testimony admitted to correct a mistake in the delivery of the verdict; quoted *supra*); 1893, *Peters v. Fogarty*, 55 N. J. L. 386, 26 Atl. 855 (jurors' depositions as to a mistaken announcement by the foreman of a verdict for the defendant, "the jury having agreed upon a verdict for the plaintiff," admitted; procedure for correcting the record, explained); 1875, *Dalrymple v. Williams*, 63 N. Y. 361, 363 (jurors' affidavits that "the verdict as agreed upon by them was in favor of defendant W. and against the other defendant, . . . and that the announcement of the foreman [against both defendants] was made through mistake and inadvertence," admitted; "it is in the nature of an attempt to correct a clerical mistake"); *South Carolina*: 1824, *Cohen v. Dubose*, Harp. Eq. 102 (the foreman wrote a verdict for "two hundred and four dollars with interest," the agreement having been for \$244 with interest; the jurors discovering the error in omitting the word "forty," the verdict was rewritten with the correct sum, but this time the words "with interest" were inadvertently omitted; this was allowed to be shown by jurors' testimony, on a bill to correct the verdict); *South Dakota*: 1890, *Murphy v. Murphy*, 1 S. D. 316, 320, 47 N. W. 142 (jurors' affidavits offered that they had agreed on a verdict for the defendant for \$2, but through a misunderstanding as to the proper form of stating their verdict, due to the existence of set-off claims, they handed in a verdict for \$690 "over and above the amount claimed in the complaint," believ-

ing that this would net \$2 for the defendant; excluded, on the words of the statute: the Court nevertheless admitting that the plaintiff's purpose was in fact to correct a formal error, and was "just and right and highly salutary and reasonable"; this case falls fairly on the line between the present principle and that of § 2356, *post*, but it also illustrates the unfortunate effect of patchwork statutes).

*Contra*: 1889, *McKinley v. Bank*, 118 Ind. 375, 21 N. E. 36 (answers to interrogatories by special findings; after verdict and before judgment, jurors' affidavits were offered to show that "by inadvertence and mistake the word 'yes' was written and returned as the answer," instead of "no,"; excluded, on the ground that it was an impeachment of the verdict; clearly unsound; Elliott, C. J., diss.).

Distinguish the case of a *directed verdict*, where the jury's unwillingness to assent to it is immaterial: *Eng.* 1828, *Saville v. Farnham*, 2 Man. & R. 216 (the judge having directed a verdict for the defendant, a juror's affidavit that "the jury gave no verdict at all" was excluded); *U. S.* 1898, *Turney v. Barr*, 75 Ia. 763, 38 N. W. 550 (jurors' affidavit that they did not deliberate on their verdict, but merely signed a written verdict by order of the Court, excluded, partly on the present principle, but partly also because the offer was made on an application for habeas corpus and not a motion for a new trial).

<sup>5</sup> *England*: 1599, *Madox v. Dawson*, Cro. El. 678 (the "note given by the jury to the clerk" was resorted to for amending a verdict erroneous in form "by the mis-entry of the clerk"); 1634, *Eliot v. Skyppe*, Cro. Car. 338 (the clerk returning the postea with a verdict for the plaintiff in 10s. and for the defendant in 19l., the return was amended "because that issue was tried before Justice Berkley and he well remembered that the jury found" for the plaintiff in 10s. of freehold rent, etc.); 1751, *R. v. Simons*, Sayer 35, 19 How. St. Tr. 680, 684 (the jury having found a verdict of guilty, a new trial was asked upon affidavits of the twelve jurors, substantially coinciding that they had agreed to find the defendant guilty of "putting the said three ducats into the prosecutor's pocket," and that "the deponent apprehended that he and the rest of the jury had given such a verdict," "but the deponent hath since been informed that the verdict recorded finds the defendant guilty on the third count in the indictment," which alleged a putting into the pocket with intent to make it believed that the prosecutor had robbed the defendant, "whereas the deponent and the rest of the jury did not find that the same was done with such intent or any intent whatever"; these affidavits were



just as any judicial record may be corrected 'nunc pro tunc' (*post*, § 2450). Whether the verdict as entered should be corrected, or a new trial be ordered, would depend on whether under the circumstances the precise tenor of the verdict as pronounced could be satisfactorily ascertained.

§ 2356. **Same: Explaining Later the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to Legal Effect.** (1) The judge may *refuse to accept a verdict*, because of his doubts as to the jurors' understanding of it, or because of its lack of clarity or propriety; and may examine the jury to clear up such doubts, and may direct their retirement for reconsideration (*ante*, § 2350). Meantime, the verdict remains provisional only.

(2) *After the verdict*, however, has been pronounced by the jury and accepted by the judge, and the jury has been discharged, the verdict is final, as regards its meaning and effect. Hence, *no statements by the jurors*, either unanimously or individually, can be resorted to for *explaining or changing its meaning or legal effect*. This must be so by virtue of the general principle that a legal act is to be construed by the words used in it, and not by the private meaning or intention of the person uttering them (*post*, § 2413). To resort to the jurors' motives, beliefs, or intentions, would be to violate the general principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349); and would be equally improper for the purpose of altering the uttered terms of the verdict (as here) as for the purpose of repudiating it altogether (as there). In the former application of the principle (*ante*, § 2349), the motive or ground of decision was sought to be shown as an improper one, invalidating the whole verdict; in the present application, though preserving it, yet as changing its effect; but, in either case, principle requires that the verdict as uttered be a finality in its terms. It may be so uncertain or inconsistent as to be incapable of application, and therefore void. But in any case its meaning and effect must be drawn from its terms alone:

1770, MANSFIELD, L. C. J., in *R. v. Woodfall*, 5 Burr. 2661, 2667 (the jury brought in a verdict, on a charge of seditious libel, of "guilty of the printing and publishing only"; on a subsequent motion to omit the word "only" and enter up a verdict of guilty, a juror's affidavit of what he intended by the verdict was rejected). "Where there is a doubt, upon the judge's report, as to what passed at the time of bringing in the verdict, there the affidavits of jurors or bystanders may be received, upon a motion for a new trial or to rectify a mistake in the minutes; but an affidavit of a juror never can be read

considered by the King's Bench, no doubt of their propriety being expressed, and a new trial granted; which was said to be the first precedent of a new trial for a criminal offence); 1841, *Roberts v. Hughes*, 9 M. & W. 399 (juror's affidavit received as to "what passed on the delivery of their verdict," to show a mistaken entry of it; "the rule does not exclude jurymen from swearing to what took place in open court, but only as to what took place in their private room on the grounds upon which they found their verdict").

*United States*: 1855, *Castro v. Gill*, 5 Cal.

40, 42 (affidavits of several jurors, held not sufficient to overthrow the correctness of the record of the verdict); 1818, *Jackson v. Dickenson*, 15 Johns. N. Y. 309, 317 (affidavits of five jurors, admitted to show that a mistake in recording the verdict was made, in omitting the answer to a question by the Court).

The following ruling is not law, in its limitation of time: 1818, *Davis v. Taylor*, 2 Chitty 268 (affidavits based on conversations with jurymen that "the verdict was entered by mistake," excluded; "it must be whilst the jury are together").

as to what he then thought or intended. . . . No argument can be urged for omitting the word 'only' which does not prove that it can have no effect though inserted; and therefore it is a question of law upon the face of the verdict. . . . The question is whether any meaning can be put upon the word 'only,' as it stands upon the record, which will affect the verdict. . . . It is impossible to say with certainty what the jury really did mean. Probably they had different meanings. If they could possibly mean that which, if expressed, would acquit the defendant, he ought not to be concluded by the verdict. . . . If a doubt arises from an ambiguous and unusual word in the verdict, the Court ought to lean in favor of a 'venire de novo.'"

This principle has ever been conceded;<sup>1</sup> although its application is sometimes difficult to distinguish from that which permits the correction of a

§ 2356. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1738, *Palmer v. Crowle*, Andrews 382 (the defendant having paid 23*l.* 7*s.* into court, and the law being that this was regarded as part payment received, a verdict for 23*l.* 17*s.* was rendered; the jurors' affidavits that the jury by mistake gave that verdict, intending only to give 10*s.* over and above the 23*l.* 7*s.* were held insufficient to call for a correction or a new trial); 1772, *Clark v. Stevenson*, 2 W. Bl. 803 (action against an executor; the jury rendered a verdict for \$1,000; but "after some interval," to a question by the judge, gave an answer of fact inconsistent with this verdict; a new trial was refused, "for the danger that might happen if a subsequent declaration of the jury might be let in to explain a general verdict given upon full consideration"); 1788, *Jackson v. Williamson*, 2 T. R. 281 (trespass for personalty; a verdict having been rendered and entered for £30, the entire jury's affidavits that they meant this to be for damages additional to the value of the goods, and that they had supposed that the clerk would add the two together, were excluded; the Court holding that "if any doubt had arisen, as to the meaning of the jury, if they had found a sum inadequate to the value proved, the proper time for requiring an explanation was at the trial; it was too late now"); 1855, *Raphael v. Bank of England*, 17 C. B. 161 (the questions being put by the judge to the jury on an issue of 'bona fide' purchase of a bank-note, whether the purchaser had been notified and had the means of knowing that it was stolen, and these questions being answered in the affirmative, jurymen's affidavits that they did not suppose that these answers, as given in open court, were to be taken by the judge as equivalent to a verdict for the plaintiff and that they would not have concurred in such a verdict, were held inadmissible, chiefly on the ground that they amounted in effect to stating that the jury were prepared to disobey the rule of law as contained in the instructions of the judge relative to the meaning of 'bona fides').

UNITED STATES: *Georgia*: 1872, *Anderson v. Green*, 46 Ga. 361, 374, 375 (jurors' affidavits, or their examination after verdict

returned, as to whether "they intended to find defendant individually liable," held improper; "to justify such a course, the verdict must at least be so ambiguous as to convey no definite meaning upon one or more of the issues involved"); *Indiana*: 1856, *Conner v. Winton*, 8 Ind. 315 (verdict "for the plaintiff one cent, and costs to the defendant"; juror's affidavit that the verdict meant the defendant to pay costs, excluded); 1860, *Sinclair v. Roush*, 14 Ind. 450 (similar); *Kentucky*: 1888, *Alexander v. Humber*, 86 Ky. 565, 6 S. W. 453 (a verdict finding "for the plaintiff, \$1000, jointly"; jurors' testimony and affidavits that the effect of this was mistaken, in that they intended to sever the damages and charge \$500 against each defendant, excluded); *Minnesota*: 1880, *Stevens v. Montgomery*, 27 Minn. 108, 6 N. W. 456 (testimony of all the jury, through the foreman, two days after discharge, that a verdict for \$27.50 was intended to be a verdict for the full claim of \$91.84 less a counterclaim of \$27.50, excluded; but apparently this was merely a case of mistaken announcement, falling under § 2355, *ante*); *New Hampshire*: 1852, *Folsom v. Brown*, 25 N. H. 114, 123 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show a misapprehension as to the effect of the verdict upon the costs); *New Jersey*: 1808, *Schenck v. Stevenson*, 2 N. J. L. 386 (affidavit of one of a jury of inquiry, as to the "items allowed by the jury," excluded, as being "nothing less than calling on the juror to disclose to this Court the ground and foundation of the verdict"; Rossell, J., diss.); 1879, *Lindauer v. Teeter*, 41 N. J. L. 255, 259 (juror's affidavit, in replevin, with a verdict for the plaintiff and damages for \$225, not admitted to show that they intended to find that "of the goods in dispute, so much of them as were of the value of \$225 only, belonged to the plaintiff"); *New York*: 1828, *People v. Columbia Common Pleas*, 1 Wend. 297 (jurors' affidavits that their verdict finding a fraudulent judgment was supposed by them to have the effect of allowing recovery for a limited sum and not of denying recovery entirely, not received); *Pennsylvania*: 1833, *Hutchinson v. Sandt*, 4 Rawle 234 (an inquisi-



unanimous mistake in delivering or recording the verdict (*ante*, § 2355), and from that which permits the questioning of the jury by the judge to correct a verdict founded on mistake of law (*ante*, § 2350).

(3) From the foregoing principle must be distinguished also that by which the precise *scope of the issues* submitted to the jury may be investigated in order to determine whether a particular issue is 'res judicata' (*ante*, § 2351). In such cases it is sometimes said that the jurors may testify to the matters which they considered and intended to include; but this loose form of statement, which is in apparent violation of the present principle, signifies properly nothing more than that certain issues were in fact submitted to their consideration.

### 3. Arbitrators' Awards

§ 2358. **Foregoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.** The arbitrator appointed to make an award includes in his functions that of a jury; he hears evidence, and investigates and determines the facts in issue. But he has also a judge's function, in that he determines the rules of right governing his decision. Furthermore, in combining these functions, his procedure makes more difficult the discrimination between the two. To his function as jury, the foregoing principles apply, subject to such modifications as are involved in the peculiar nature of his authority:

1870, BLACKBURN, J., in *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 5 Exch. 221, 229: "An award is the decision of one having a limited authority to determine those matters submitted to him by the parties, or, as in the present case, by a statute, and no other. And from this it follows that if that limited authority has not been pursued and the arbitrator has awarded something beyond the authority, the award is 'pro tanto' void, and if the void part is so mixed up with the rest that it cannot be rejected, the award is void altogether, otherwise those against whom the award is made would be compelled to fulfil the void part. And I think, both on authority and principle, this is a matter which may be pleaded as a defence to an action. In old times the only way of enforcing an award was by action upon it, and the only mode of resisting the enforcement of the award was by pleading to that action, and consequently all the old authorities, to the effect that an award is void for an excess of jurisdiction, are authorities that it may be shewn in evidence at the trial under a proper plea. . . . Now, in cases where an award is good on the face of it, but the arbitrator has made a mistake either of law or fact, if that mistake has been as to a matter within the arbitrator's authority, then, inasmuch as there is no

tion of lunacy found H. unsound in mind "for the space of five years last past and upwards"; at a trial in ejectment, the inquisition having been admitted, two members of the jury of inquest were offered to prove that "at the time of signing the inquisition they did not mean to overreach the period of five years"; excluded); 1893, *Smalley v. Morris*, 157 Pa. 349, 17 Atl. 734 (jurors' affidavits, as to a verdict for \$1500 on a note, that they all supposed that they were awarding a sum equal to the amount of the note in suit less a credit of \$1500, excluded); *Vermont*: 1888, *Tarbell v. Tarbell*, 60 Vt. 494, 15 Atl. 104 (five jurors' affi-

davits that they had disallowed certain items, intending to deduct them, but did not deduct them, as appeared in the special verdict, excluded); *Virginia*: 1871, *Howard v. McCall*, 21 Gratt. 205, 212 (affidavits of six jurors that they intended the verdict to entitle the defendant to the allowance of a certain credit, excluded); 1922, *Melton v. Com.*, — Va. —, 111 S. E. 291 (correction of a verdict after discharge of the jury but while the jurors were in their room, held improper); *Wisconsin*: 1906, *Koch v. State*, 126 Wis. 470, 106 N. W. 531 (correction of a sealed verdict after discharge, not allowed on the facts).



court of appeal from the arbitrator, the mistake cannot be remedied; nor can the Court, even in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, set aside the award, unless it can be shewn there was misconduct or some other equitable ground for interference; and in the case of the verdict of a compensation jury, inasmuch as the certiorari is taken away, there is no remedy at law at all unless there be excess of jurisdiction. But if the mistake has been as to the extent and nature of the arbitrator's authority, leading him to exceed it, then, inasmuch as an excess of authority by mistake is just as much an excess as if it had been in consequence of a wilful disregard of the limits of the authority, the award may be impeached as being made without jurisdiction. Were this otherwise, no one who submits to a reference of one thing could be safe from having an award put upon him as to anything else. . . . Of course any attempt to annoy an arbitrator by asking questions tending to shew that he had mistaken the law [upon matters within his authority], or found a verdict against the weight of evidence, should be at once checked, for these matters are irrelevant. But where the question is whether he did or did not entertain a question over which he had no jurisdiction, the matter is relevant, and nobody can be better qualified to give testimony on that matter than the umpire. I wish to guard against being supposed to express an opinion that a jurymen might be asked on what grounds he and his fellows gave their verdict; that involves very different considerations."

In applying the foregoing principles of the Parol Evidence rule, 'mutatis mutandis,' the following results would be reached:

a. The evidence and the facts forming the *grounds for the award* are immaterial and cannot be used to invalidate the award, and this upon the general principle (*ante*, § 2349). Thus, the arbitrator's mistake of fact or improper consideration of evidence, or his misapplication of the law, or his motives or intentions, in deciding the facts, are immaterial.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, his errors of law, in framing as judge the law to be applied by himself as juror, are immaterial, because there is by the nature of the proceeding no appeal from him in his capacity as judge.

b. The *scope of the issues* submitted to him defines the limit of his authority to award; hence, the award as made may always be invalidated by the circumstance that it exceeds that scope. In a jury trial, this is ascertainable from the pleadings and the judge's instructions; and the scope of a verdict and a judgment may always be examined in that respect (*ante*, § 2351). In an award, the terms of the contract of submission serve in part the corresponding purpose. But, furthermore, since the judge's and jury's functions are united in the arbitrator, and since he does not by distinct instructions to himself define the issues which he submits to himself, the ascertainment of the

§ 2358. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1800, *Habershon v. Troby*, 3 Esp. 38 (arbitrator held not examinable to the evidence before him, in a suit for malicious arrest in the proceeding which had been submitted to arbitration; partly because "the arbitrator might have proceeded to cut the knot, rather than to unloose it according to the strict rules of law, from a wish to do complete justice between the parties"); 1868, *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board* (quoted *ante*, § 2349); *Can.* 1895, *Re Christie & T. Junction*, 22 Ont. App. 21, 33, per Osler, J.; *U. S.* 1845, *Withington v.*

*Warren*, 10 Metc. Mass. 431, 433 ("he could not be received thus by his parol testimony to contradict his formal award in writing"); 1849, *Bigelow v. Maynard*, 4 Cush. Mass. 317, 321; 1892, *Corrigan v. Rockefeller*, 67 Oh. 354, 66 N. E. 95 (arbitrator's written statement of reasons for award, excluded).

Upon the distinction between *general* and *special submissions* to award, for which the rule differs somewhat, see the lengthy opinions in the following case: 1906, *White Star Mining Co. v. Hultberg*, 220 Ill. 578, 77 N. E. 327 (two judges dissenting).



issues which he has actually investigated and decided may have to be made by inquiring of him *whether he considered certain issues*, in order to learn whether those issues, as considered, are within the scope of his authority. Such inquiries, however, must be distinguished from an inquiry as to the grounds of fact *believed* by him, within the scope of the issues actually submitted; for the latter inquiry would fall within the prohibition of *a*, above. This distinction between the scope of authority assumed by him and the grounds of belief reached by him is plain enough; but the similarity of the concrete questions put to the arbitrator, properly for the one purpose and improperly for the other, has naturally led to some confusion of judicial language and an apparent conflict of rulings.<sup>2</sup>

*c.* That an arbitrator's *misconduct* is material to invalidate the award cannot be doubted. Whether he himself can be received to prove his own misconduct depends upon the same principle applicable to jurors. The sound doctrine (*ante*, §§ 2352-2354) admits them to testify.<sup>3</sup> That there is, in the arbitrator's function as *judge*, nothing which should make it improper to testify (apart from the question of impeaching his award) has been elsewhere noticed (*ante*, § 1912).<sup>4</sup>

*d.* That the arbitrator by inadvertence *incorrectly stated the award* as reached by him could properly be shown, on the same principles as for verdicts (*ante*, §§ 2355-2356), and with the same limitations, 'mutatis mutandis.'

The principles applicable to arbitrators might be equally applicable to *other*

<sup>2</sup> The opinion of Lord Blackburn (above quoted) sufficiently clears up the principles involved. The following cases illustrate them: *England*: 1868, *Re Dare Valley R. Co.*, L. R. 6 Eq. 429, 432, 435 (damages for land taken; Giffard, V. C. held the arbitrator's testimony admissible "if there is a mistake in point of subject-matter, — that is, if a particular thing is referred to an arbitrator and he has mistaken the subject-matter on which he ought to make his award, or if there is a mistake in point of legal principle going directly to the basis on which the award is founded"; and admitted the arbitrator's "paper of reasons for his award"); 1868-1871, *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 3 Exch. 307, 314, 324, 327, 329 (damages for land taken; held that the arbitrator's testimony was admissible to show that the "sum awarded includes an amount for something over which he had no jurisdiction"; Bramwell, B., diss., with hesitation); L. R. 5 Exch. 221, 229, Exch. Ch. on appeal (Blackburn, J., delivered an opinion collating prior cases and approving the ruling below; quoted *supra*); on appeal, L. R. 5 E. & I. App. 418, 421, 433, 442, 449, 457, 462; 1890, *O'Rourke v. Commissioner*, L. R. 15 App. Cas. 371, 376 (arbitration of railway damages; held that "the Court below erred

in authorizing a general examination of the arbitrators with a view to the prothonotary informing himself as to the issues upon which the defendant succeeded");

*Canada*: 1916, *Re Clarkson and Campbellford L. O. & W. R. Co.*, 26 D. L. R. 783, Ont. (arbitrator not allowed to be called "to ascertain the reasons actuating the arbitrators," etc.);

*United States*: 1858, *Spurck v. Crook*, 19 Ill. 415, 426 (arbitrators may testify that certain evidence was given or that "certain matters were or were not examined or acted upon by them or that there is a mistake in the award"); 1914, *Long Dock Co. v. State Board*, 86 N. J. L. 592, 92 Atl. 439 (analogy applied to the valuation of a State board of assessors); 1903, *Jensen v. Deep Creek F. & L. S. Co.*, 27 Utah 66, 74 Pac. 427 (arbitrator's testimony may be received to show that "all matters included in the submission were considered and adjudicated").

Compare Morse on Arbitration (1872), cc. X and XXI.

<sup>3</sup> But, as with jurors, their hearsay admissions will not suffice: 1891, *Whiteley and Roberts' Arbitration*, 1 Ch. 558, 567.

<sup>4</sup> For the once supposed *privilege* of an arbitrator not to be harassed by questions as to his award, see *post*, § 2376.



*officials* exercising similar functions.<sup>5</sup> But the arbitrator is to be distinguished from the *referee* (from whose rulings an appeal may lie),<sup>6</sup> from the *master in chancery*, and from the officer known in New England practice as *audior*. It is sufficient here to note that differences of function and procedure may produce differences of result in the application of the Parol Evidence rule.

## B. GRAND JURY

### 1. Privileged Communications Rule

§ 2360. **History and General Principle.** That the proceedings of the grand jury, in taking testimony and in deliberating, must be held in privacy, has been the customary practice from early times. The traditional and peculiar form of oath administered to the grand jurors testifies to this:

"The foreman, by himself, lays his hand on the book, and the marshal administers to him the following oath: 'My lord, or sir (as the foreman's name may be), you, as the foreman of this grand inquest for the body of the county of A, shall diligently inquire and true presentment make of all such matters and things as shall be given you in charge; the king's counsel, your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret; You shall present no one for envy, hatred, or malice; but you shall present all things truly as they come to your knowledge, according to the best of your understanding: So help you God.' The rest of the grand jury, by three at a time, in order, are sworn in the following manner: 'The same oath which your foreman hath taken on his part, you and every of you, shall well and truly observe and keep on your part: So help you God.'"<sup>1</sup>

But the legal privilege of the jurors to hold their inquiries and deliberations in secret seems not to have been established until a comparatively late period. Under the last Stuart, attempts were frequently made to control the verdicts of petit juries in political causes, — though in this respect the efforts were rather survivals of the earlier Tudor and Stuart methods than original innovations.<sup>2</sup> As a part of this general effort, the control of the grand jury of indictment, by requiring the publicity of their proceedings, was also attempted, and for the time successfully. The colloquy on this notable occasion is interesting as expounding the reasons which were then advanced to justify the grand jury's privacy of investigation:

<sup>5</sup> 1907, Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Babcock, 204 U. S. 585, 27 Sup. 326 (assessment of a railroad by a State board of equalization, alleged to be invalid by reason of the board's improper method of calculating valuations and taxable amounts; the "operation of their [the board's] minds in valuing and taxing the roads," held to be immaterial; "all the often-repeated reasons for the rule as to jurymen apply with redoubled force to the attempt, by exhibiting on cross-examination the confusion of the members' minds, to attack in another proceeding the judgment of a lay tribunal, which is intended, so far as may be, to be final, notwithstanding mistakes of fact or law"); 1889, Phillips v. Marblehead, 148 Mass. 326, 330, 19 N. E. 547 (board of selectmen, condemning land).

*Contra* to the foregoing: 1877, Schettler v. Fort Howard, 43 Wis. 48 (assessors); 1879, Plumer v. Board, 46 Wis. 163, 174, 50 N. W. 416 (assessors).

<sup>6</sup> 1899, Story v. De Armond, 179 Ill. 510, 53 N. E. 990.

§ 2360. <sup>1</sup> 8 How. St. Tr. 771.

<sup>2</sup> In 1616, L. C. J. Coke, when the grand jury did not satisfy him in his effort to indict for premunire those persons who went to Chancery to prevent the enforcement of common-law judgments, "caused them to be called by the poll, and perceiving that 17 of the 19 were agreed to return 'ignoramus,' seemed much offended, and said . . . he would have a more sufficient jury, and evidence given openly at the bar" (Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors, II, 363).



1681, *Earl of Shaftesbury's Trial*, 3 How. St. Tr. 759, 771; Sir F. Withins moved, after the charge to the grand jury, that the evidence be heard in court; and L. C. J. Pemberton declared that he would grant the motion; the jury then desired to have a copy of their oath, which was given them, and they withdrew; after returning shortly, the following colloquy ensued. *Foreman*: "My lord Chief Justice, it is the opinion of the jury that they ought to examine the witnesses in private, and it hath been the constant practice of our ancestors and predecessors to do it; and they insist upon it as their right to examine in private, because they are bound to keep the king's secrets, which they cannot do if it be done in court." L. C. J. PEMBERTON: "Look ye, gentlemen of the jury, it may very probably be, that some late usage has brought you into error that it is your right; but it is not your right in truth. . . . What you say concerning keeping your counsels, that is quite of another nature, that is, your debates, and those things, there you shall be in private, for to consider of what you hear publicly. But certainly it is the best way, both for the king, and for you, that there should, in a case of this nature, be an open and plain examination of the witnesses, that all the world may see what they say." *Foreman*: "My lord, if your lordship pleases, I must beg your lordship's pardon, if I mistake in anything, it is contrary to the sense of what the jury apprehend. First, they apprehend that the very words of the oath doth bind them, it says, 'That they shall keep the counsels', and their own secrets:' Now, my lord, there can be no secret in public; the very intimation of that doth imply, that the examination should be secret; besides, my lord, I beg your lordship's pardon if we mistake, we do not understand anything of law." Mr. *Papillon* [a juror]: "If it be the ancient custom of the kingdom to examine in private, then there is something maybe very prejudicial to the king in this public examination; for sometimes in examining witnesses in private, there come to be discovered some persons guilty of treason, and misprision of treason, that were not known, nor thought on before. Then the jury sends down to the court, and gives them intimation, and these men are presently secured; whereas, my lord, in case they be examined in open court publicly, then presently there is intimation given and these men are gone away. Another thing that may be prejudicial to the king, is, that all the evidences here, will be foreknown before they come to the main trial upon issue by the petty jury; then if there be not a very great deal of care, these witnesses may be confronted by raising up witnesses to prejudice them, as in some cases it has been. Then besides, the jury do apprehend, that in private they are more free to examine things in particular, for the satisfying their own consciences, and that without favour or affection; and we hope we shall do our duty." L. C. J. PEMBERTON: "The king's counsel have examined whether he hath cause to accuse these persons, or not; and, gentlemen, they understand very well, that it will be no prejudice to the king to have the evidence heard openly in court; or else the king would never desire it." *Foreman*: "My lord, the gentlemen of the jury desire that it may be recorded, that we insisted upon it as our right; but if the Court overrule, we must submit to it."

This attempt was never repeated, and the investigations of grand jurors were thereafter invariably made in privacy. But, owing perhaps to this ruling and to the earlier uncertainty of the law, the inviolability of the proceedings, when their disclosure was sought upon some later occasion, appears to have remained without defined limits in English precedents for a century or more.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1613, *Scarlet's Case*, 12 Co. 98 (indictment for fraudulently procuring himself to be sworn on the jury with malicious intent to indict innocent men; it appeared that the judges had discovered the fraud through noticing the number of "honest men" indicted and demanding then of the jurors on what testimony they had

proceeded; whereon Scarlet's testimony appeared to have been the foundation); 1641, *Dr. Micklethwart's Case*, Clayt. 84, pl. 140 ("The judge would not suffer a grand jurymen to be produced as a witness to swear what was given in evidence to them, because he is sworn not to reveal the secrets of his companions.



At some early period in American practice, the principle received a tacit though firm acceptance. In most of the statutes regulating criminal procedure it was recognized; though the statement of its limitations is found to have various phrasings.<sup>4</sup>

See, if a witness is questioned for a false oath to the grand jury, how it shall be proved if some of the jury be not sworn in such case"); 1641, Mass. Body of Liberties (Whitmore's ed.), § 61 ("No magistrate, juror, officer, or other man, shall be bound to informe present or reveale any private crim or offence, wherein there is no perill or danger to this plantation or any member thereof, when any necessarie tye of conscience binds him to secrecie grounded upon the word of God, unlesse it be in case of testimony lawfully required"; repeated in the revisions of 1660 and 1672, under "Jurors"); 1817, Watson's Trial, 32 How. St. Tr. 107 (Mr. Solicitor-General: "My lord, I apprehend it is not competent for my learned friend to ask him what he deposed before the grand jury"; Mr. Wetherell: "I ask him only to facts, — the day of his attendance, and whether he produced the note [of the speeches]"; Ellenborough, L. C. J.: "On that subject I have a considerable doubt").

<sup>4</sup> The following list does not include statutes which merely prescribe that the jurors must keep secret their proceedings, for those do not have direct bearing on the rule of Evidence; nor the statutes providing that the juror "shall not be questioned for anything he may say" during deliberation, for those refer to a civil or criminal liability for his utterances: Ala. Code 1907, § 6994 (a grand juror may testify that a witness privileged against prosecution for an offence testified to before the grand jury has so testified); § 7298 (a grand juror may be required to disclose a witness' testimony to ascertain "whether it is consistent with the testimony given by the witness before the court", or on a charge of perjury); St. 1915, No. 2, p. 8, § 12 (intemperance; like Code 1907, § 6994, *supra*); Alaska: Comp. L. 1913, § 2136 (like Or. Laws 1920, § 1426); Ariz. Rev. St. 1913, P. C. § 925 (grand juror may be examined to a witness' testimony to ascertain "whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before the court," or on the charge of a witness' perjury); Ark. Dig. 1919, § 2993 (disclosure compellable of the testimony of an examined witness "for the purpose of ascertaining its consistency with the testimony given by the witness on trial" or on a charge of the witness' perjury); Cal. P. C. 1872, § 926 ("Every member of the grand jury must keep secret whatever he himself or any other grand juror may have said or in what manner he or any other grand juror may have voted on a matter before them; but may, however, be required by any Court to disclose the testimony of a witness examined before the grand jury, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before

the Court or to disclose the testimony given before them by any person upon a charge against such person for perjury in giving his testimony or upon trial therefor"); Fla. Rev. G. S. 1919, § 5957 (a grand juror is not allowed "to state or testify in any court in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question"); § 5958 (a grand juror is compellable to testify whether a witness' testimony "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and also to disclose testimony on a charge of perjury); Ga. Rev. C. 1910, § 5785, § 5787 (communications "among grand jurors," excluded, but they "shall disclose everything which occurs in their service, whenever it becomes necessary"); P. C. 1910, §§ 830, 831; Ida. Comp. St. 1919, § 8800 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Ill. Rev. St. 1874, c. 38, § 412 ("No grand juror or officer of the court or other person shall disclose that an indictment for felony is found or about to be found against any person not in custody or under recognizance, except by issuing process for his arrest, until he is arrested; nor shall any grand juror state how any member of the jury voted or what opinion he expressed on any question before them"); Ind. Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 1971 (a grand juror may be required to disclose a witness' testimony "for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before the court," or on his trial for perjury); Ia. Code 1897, § 5267, Comp. Code § 9334 ("Every member of the grand jury must keep secret the proceedings of that body and the testimony given before it, except as provided in the next section, nor shall any grand juror or officer of the court disclose the fact that an indictment for a felony has been found against a person not in custody or under bail, otherwise than by presenting the same in court or issuing or executing process thereon, until such person has been arrested"); § 5268, Comp. Code § 9335 (disclosure of a witness' testimony may be made to ascertain its consistency or to prove perjury); § 5269, Comp. Code § 9336 ("No grand juror shall be questioned for anything he may say or any vote he may give in the grand-jury room relative to a matter legally pending before it," except for perjury); Kan. Gen. St. 1915, §§ 8005, 8007 (a grand juror shall not disclose the evidence or name of a witness except when lawfully required as a witness; he may be required to testify whether testimony of an examined witness "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and to disclose such



What those limitations ought to be must depend upon the reasons for the principle; and these reasons find exposition in the following passages:

1846, RUFFIN, C. J., in *State v. Broughton*, 7 Ired. 96: "By the policy of the law, grand juries act in secret; and, with a view of sustaining that policy, it is prescribed that a grand juror shall, amongst other things, swear, that 'the State's counsel, your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret.' The whole sense in which those words are to be received, or the duration of the secrecy imposed, we do not find accurately stated by any

testimony on a charge of perjury); § 8006 (he is not obliged or allowed to disclose the vote or expressed opinion of any grand juror); St. 1901, c. 233 (no person shall disclose any evidence or witness' name, in an inquisition in liquor cases, "except when lawfully required to testify as a witness in relation thereto," until the person charged has been arrested); Ky. C. Cr. P. 1895, § 113 (similar to Tenn. Code § 7043); La. Ann. Rev. St. 1915, § 2141 (a grand juror may testify to another's neglect of duty); C. Pr. 1870, §§ 530, 531 (the vote of a sick or deceased juror after adjournment may be ascertained by the testimony of himself or another juror); Me. Rev. St. 1916, c. 136, § 8 (no grand juror or court officer shall disclose an indictment until after arrest, "nor shall any grand juror state how any member of the jury voted, or what opinion he expressed, on any question before them"); Mass. Gen. L. 1920, c. 277, § 13 (a grand juror is not allowed to state "in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted" or "what opinion was expressed in relation to such question" before them); Mich. Comp. L. 1915, § 15714 (a grand juror may be required to testify "whether the testimony of a witness examined before such jury is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and also his testimony on a charge of perjury therein, but not to disclose the vote or expression of opinion of any juror); Minn. Gen. St. 1913, § 9124 (may be required by Court to disclose testimony "for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witnesses before the court," or on a perjury charge); Miss. Code 1906, § 2710, Hem. § 2203 (a grand juror, "except when called as a witness in court," shall not disclose the proceedings; "nor shall any grand juror disclose the name or testimony of any witness who has been before it"); Mo. Rev. St. 1919, § 3878 (grand juror compellable to disclose whether a witness's testimony "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," or to disclose testimony on charge of perjury); § 3879 (a grand juror is not compellable nor allowable to disclose votes or opinions expressed); Mont. Rev. C. 1921, § 11830 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Neb. Rev. St. 1922, § 10069 (like Wash. R. & B. Code 1909, § 2040); Nev. Rev. L. 1912, § 7032 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); N. M. Annot. St. 1915, § 3137 (a grand juror may be required to disclose testimony to ascertain "whether it

is consistent with that given before them, by any other person, upon a charge against him for perjury, or in giving his testimony, or upon his trial thereof"); N. Y. C. Cr. P. 1881, § 266 (disclosure is compellable of the testimony before grand jury, to ascertain its consistency with testimony in court or to prove perjury of the witness); N. D. Comp. L. 1913, §§ 10667, 10668 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Oh. Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 13570 (a grand juror is not to testify to the tenor of vote or expression of opinion of any juror); Okl. Comp. St. 1921, §§ 2544, 2545 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Or. Laws 1920, § 1426 (substantially like Cal. P. C. § 926, beginning at "may be required," etc.); S. D. Rev. C. 1919, § 4689, 4690 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Tenn. Shannon's Code 1916, § 7043 (a grand juror may be examined as to a witness' testimony to "ascertain whether it is consistent" with his testimony at trial, or to prove testimony charged as perjured); Tex. Rev. C. Cr. P. 1911, § 416 (the grand juror's oath is to be: "The State's counsel, your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret, unless you are required to disclose the same in the course of a judicial proceeding in which the truth or falsity of evidence given in the grand-jury room in a criminal case shall be under investigation"); § 439 (oath to witnesses); Utah: Comp. L. 1917, § 8815 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); Vt. Gen. Laws 1917, § 2505 (clerk of grand jury shall not disclose the evidence except on order of court); Wash. R. & B. Code 1909, § 2040 ("No grand-jury juror shall be allowed to state or to testify in any court in what manner he or any member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question, or what question was before them"); Wis. Stats. 1919, § 2553 (no grand juror or court officer shall disclose an indictment before arrest, if the Court so order); § 2554 ("No grand juror shall be allowed to state or testify in any court in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question"); § 2555 (grand jurors "may be required by any Court to testify whether the testimony of a witness examined before such jury is consistent with or different from the testimony given before them by any person upon a complaint against such person for perjury or upon his trial for such offense"); Wyo. Comp. St. 1920, § 7453 (like Oh. Gen. Code Ann. § 13570).



ancient writer on the common law. There are some reasons for the rule, which are obvious enough; and as far as the public interests can be subserved by it, the secrecy ought to be kept, not only while the grand jury continues empanelled, but it ought also to be subsequently observed. The principal ground of policy is, no doubt, to inspire the jurors with a confidence of security in the discharge of their responsible duties, so that they may deliberate and decide without an apprehension of any detriment from an accused or any other person, but be free 'true presentment to make' Therefore it is clear, that at no time nor upon any occasion ought a grand juror to make known who concurred in or opposed the presentment; as the power to do so would or might in some degree impair that perfect freedom from external bias, which a grand juror ought to feel. It is probable, likewise, that another ground is, that it might lead to the escape of criminals, if their friends or others on the grand jury were at liberty to make known the institution and progress of an inquisition into their guilt. But as that reason can operate only while the accused is at large, it would seem, that, as far as the rule depends on that, it would not be obligatory after his arrest. We think, too, that, in furtherance of justice, the law may have intended to forbid a grand juror from giving aid to one indicted, and thus found to be probably guilty, in his efforts to defeat the prosecution, by publishing the evidence before the grand jury, and thus enabling him to counteract it, perhaps by foul means, after he knew where the case pinched. That would be betraying 'the State's counsel,' which is necessarily opened to the grand jury. But that is the immunity of the public, and not the privilege of the witness; and, therefore, it would seem that the rule should create an obligation on the conscience of the juror and be enforced by a Court, when the public justice may be advanced by it, and that it cannot be urged by the witness himself, when it would defeat justice, and thus encourage witnesses before that body to commit perjury, by false statements or the suppression of the truth. For it is obvious, that if grand jurors are, through all time and to all purposes, prohibited from disclosing and proving the testimony of witnesses before them, there is a perfect exemption from temporal penalties of perjury before a grand jury. The consequences of such a doctrine would be alarming; for, besides the danger of tempting the witnesses to commit so great a crime without the fear of punishment, grand jurors would have no credible evidence on which to act, on the one hand, and the citizen, on the other, would be deprived of one of his most boasted and valuable protections against arbitrary accusations and arrests. It would be extraordinary were witnesses thus enabled to perjure themselves without responsibility."

1849, THACHER, J., in *Sands v. Robinson*, 12 Sm. & M. 704, 710: "It would certainly be a great breach of duty for a grand juror, while the inquest was in session, to disclose the business of that body, by means whereof persons accused and not yet arrested, might make their escape, or take other measures to defeat the course of public justice. Indeed, in a certain state of case, a grand juror might thereby render himself liable to a criminal charge as an accessory, after the fact, in the commission of a crime. So, as many charges are confided to that body against individuals, which, for want of sufficient proof, or from want of foundation in fact, do not mature to a presentment or indictment, common prudence and charity, and a regard for the peace of society, and innocent men's reputations, imperatively should close the mouths of grand jurors, as to their proceedings, after the expiration of their session. It is the interest of all good citizens to observe this rule, in order to secure freedom of deliberation and opinion, which would be to a great extent impaired if the occurrences of a session were afterwards made the subject of comment and loose and malicious conversation. Indeed, thus a grand juror might well subject himself to an action of slander. But the policy of the law was never designed to injure or punish the innocent, or to obstruct the course of justice; nor can that rule be upheld, by which a grand-jury room shall be converted into an occasion for the safe and irresponsible utterance of false and malicious slander against upright and honorable citizens. Hence it will be seen that so much depends upon time and circumstances, that the com-



petency of a grand juror to testify is peculiarly a matter of discretion with the Court to discriminate as to it."

1858, BIGELOW, J., in *Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167: "The reasons on which the sanction of secrecy which the common law gives to proceedings before grand juries is founded are said in the books to be threefold. One is that the utmost freedom of disclosure of alleged crimes and offences by prosecutors may be secured. A second is that perjury and subornation of perjury may be prevented by withholding the knowledge of facts testified to before the grand jury, which, if known, it would be for the interest of the accused or their confederates to attempt to disprove by procuring false testimony. The third is to conceal the fact that an indictment is found against a party, in order to avoid the danger that he may escape and elude arrest upon it, before the presentment is made."

1922, RUGG, C. J., in *Attorney-General v. Pelletier*, 240 Mass. 264, 134 N. E. 406 (misconduct of a district attorney): "In a case like the present, when justice may be outraged or go unsatisfied unless such conduct before the grand jury can be disclosed, the ban of secrecy may be removed by the court and the truth be ascertained. The reasons for the sanction of secrecy to proceedings before the grand jury no longer obtain. Those reasons are (1) that the utmost freedom of disclosure of alleged crimes and offenses by prosecutors may be secured; (2) that the temptation to the accused for perjury and subornation of perjury arising from knowledge of facts presented to the grand jury may be diminished; and (3) that the escape by flight of those indicted, which would be likely to follow publicity as to the investigation by the grand jury, may be averted. These and kindred reasons for the secrecy of grand jury proceedings have no applicability in an inquest into the conduct of the district attorney himself where he is charged with grave wrongs as ground for his removal. He cannot seek shelter behind that rule of secrecy to prevent inquiry into his malfeasance or misfeasance in office. When the reason for the rule of secrecy ceases, the rule itself becomes inoperative. Any other principle would permit a dishonest, corrupt and vicious district attorney to use the great power of his office and his influence with the grand jury as an engine of oppression and be entirely safe from inquiry under a seal of secrecy which would prevent investigation. This is not the law." <sup>5</sup>

These reasons are obviously fourfold in their bearing. (a) The *grand jurors themselves* are to be secured in freedom from the apprehension that their opinions and votes may be subsequently disclosed by compulsion. (b) The *complainants* and the *witnesses* summoned are to be secured in freedom from the apprehension that their testimony may be subsequently disclosed by compulsion, and this in order that the State may secure willing witnesses. (c) The *guilty accused* is not to be provided with such clues as will enable him to flee from arrest or to suborn false testimony or tamper with witnesses. (d) The *innocent accused*, who is charged by complaint before the jury, but is exonerated by their refusal to indict, is entitled to be protected from the compulsory disclosure of the fact that he has been groundlessly accused.

Of these four classes of reasons, the third and the fourth disappear practically from consideration as a ground of *privilege for witnesses*. (c) The third disappears, in regard to the accused's opportunity of escape, as soon as he either escapes or is arrested, and cannot therefore have any bearing upon later stages of the proceeding. It affects merely the *grand jurors' obligation* not to give extrajudicial information between the times of their session

<sup>5</sup> For another exposition of the reasons for secrecy, see Edward Livingston's Introductory Report to the Code of Criminal Procedure (Works, ed. 1872, I, 370); and the opinion of Boyd, J., in *Re Atwell*, 140 Fed. 368, D. C. (1905).



and of the arrest. This reason also disappears, in regard to the accused's opportunity of tampering with the witnesses or suborning others in defence, as soon as the indictment is returned; for the indictment must bear the witnesses' names indorsed. Modern criminal procedure disregards the danger of subornation, and acknowledges that the accused is in fairness entitled to know before trial who are to be the witnesses against him (*ante*, §§ 1850-1854). (d) The fourth reason aims chiefly to prohibit the *grand juror's extrajudicial disclosure* of the details of the charges against persons found innocent. It can have little or no application to compulsory disclosure in court; first, because the bill is returned "ignoramus" or "not found," and thus the fact of the charge is necessarily published upon the records, and, secondly, because the only mode in which such a disclosure would practically be relevant would be an attempt to impeach a witness who testifies to the person's innocence by his former testimony before the grand jury to the person's guilt, and this implies that the person's doings have become so far a relevant matter of public investigation that it would be vain to secure any further technical privacy for the charges.

Thus the only reasons which remain as the possible foundation of any privilege in subsequent testimony are the first and the second. The effect of these may now be examined.

§ 2361. (a) **Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.** The necessity for securing to the grand jurors an absolute freedom of deliberation and decision, immune from apprehensions of injury from the persons charged by them, demands a guarantee that by no legal process will the disclosure of their *votes and expressions of opinion* in the jury room be compelled.<sup>1</sup> This rests upon precisely the same footing as the privilege of petit jurors (*ante*, § 2346) or that of husband and wife (*ante*, § 2332). It forbids that any grand juror shall be compelled to disclose his own utterances or permitted to disclose the utterances of his fellows. On principle, this privilege, like all others (*ante*, § 2196), may be waived by the person entitled to it. In practice, the privilege has little occasion to be exercised, because the utterances protected by it can seldom be relevant upon any issue.

§ 2362. (b) **Privilege of Witnesses before Grand Jury; General Principle.** The witnesses and complainants appearing before the grand jury must be guaranteed temporarily against compulsory disclosure of their testimony and complaints, because otherwise the State could not expect to secure ample quantity of evidence for the information of the grand jury. The secrecy is the State's inducement for obtaining testimony. The policy is analogous to that of the privilege for informers in general (*post*, § 2374). The privilege,

§ 2361. <sup>1</sup> 1884, *Ex parte Sontag*, 64 Cal. 525, 2 Pac. 402; 1870, *Elbin v. Wilson*, 33 Md. 135, 144 (witness not allowed to be impeached by questions as to his conduct as grand juror in endeavoring to have the appellee indicted for perjury); 1917, *Burns Int. Detective Agency v. Holt*, 138 Minn. 165, 164 N. W. 590 (action

for detective services performed for defendants who were members of a grand jury; to show whether the foreman had authority to act, the clerk of the grand jury was not allowed to testify to conversations between the jurors while in session); 1879, *Gordon v. Com.*, 92 Pa. 216, 220 (votes may not be disclosed).



therefore, is not the grand juror's; for he is merely an indifferent mouthpiece of the disclosure. Nor is it entirely the State's; for the State's interest is merely the motive for constituting the privilege. The theory of the privilege is that the witness is guaranteed against compulsory disclosure; the privilege must therefore be that of the witness, and rests upon his consent.

But obviously the secrecy that is guaranteed is only *temporary* and *provisional*. Permanent secrecy would be more than is necessary to render the witness willing. Moreover, it would go too far by creating an opportunity for abuse; since a corrupt witness would be able to utilize it for perjured charges. This much is now universally conceded:

1858, BIGELOW, J., in *Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167: "But when these purposes [as above quoted] are accomplished, the necessity and expediency of retaining the seal of secrecy are at an end. 'Cessante ratione, cessat regula.' After the indictment is found and presented, and the accused is held to answer and the trial before the traverse jury is begun, all the facts relative to the crime charged and its prosecution are necessarily opened, and no harm can arise to the cause of public justice by no longer withholding facts material and relevant to the issue, merely because their disclosure may lead to the development of some part of the proceedings before the grand jury. On the contrary, great hardship and injustice might often be occasioned by depriving a party of important evidence, essential to his defence, by enforcing a rule of exclusion, having its origin and foundation in public policy, after the reasons on which this rule is based have ceased to exist. The case at bar furnishes a good illustration of the truth of this remark. No possible injury to the interests or rights of the government that we can see could happen by a disclosure of the testimony given by the witness before the grand jury. . . . On the other hand, it is clear that the rights of the accused might be greatly affected and his peril much increased, if he can be shut out from showing the fact that an important witness against him is unworthy of credit, or that his testimony before the jury of trials is to be taken with great caution and doubt, because on a previous occasion, when called to testify on oath, he had given a different account of the same transaction from that which he has stated in his evidence at the trial."

1893, MCSHERRY, J., in *Izer v. State*, 77 Md. 110, 26 Atl. 282: "If witnesses who testify falsely before the grand jury are free from all the penalties of perjury merely because of the juror's oath of secrecy, the object designed to be effected by that clause of his oath would be perverted, and a measure intended to promote the public welfare would be transformed into a means to defeat the ends of justice. The law does not permit the obligation of secrecy which has been imposed for one purpose to be availed of for a totally different one. The grand juror's oath of secrecy cannot, therefore, be interposed to obstruct the administration of justice."

But what are the limits of this temporary secrecy? The answer is, on principle, that it ceases when the grand jury has finished its duties and has either indicted or discharged the persons accused. (1) Supposing the grand jury to *indict* J. S. on Doe's testimony, it is plain that secrecy is no longer of any avail, for Doe will be summoned as a witness at the trial and will be compellable to testify. If he tells the truth, and the truth is the same as he testified before the grand jury, the disclosure of the former testimony cannot possibly bring to him any harm (in the shape of corporal injury or personal ill-will) which his testimony on the open trial does not equally tend to produce. If, on the other hand, he now testifies falsely, or if he testifies truly



but formerly falsely, he is in no way a person who ought to have any privilege. The privilege therefore has no longer any reason to exist. (2) Supposing, on the contrary, that the grand jury, after hearing Doe's testimony, nevertheless *discharge* J. S., there may now be a motive for Doe to desire secrecy, — as when on a subsequent trial it is desired to impeach Doe as a witness by showing his biassed utterances against J. S. before the grand jury. But here the privilege ought also to cease, for another reason, namely, that the chance that such a disclosure will be called for is too small a contingency to have any effect 'a priori' in rendering Doe unwilling to make complaint or give testimony before the grand jury; Doe naturally will have expected that J. S. would be indicted. Moreover, when Doe is summoned on a civil trial involving the same matters as the criminal charge, and it is desired to impeach him by his former testimony, all motive for secrecy ends, for the same reasons noted in par. (1), *supra*. Furthermore, in the other rare contingencies in which his testimony before the grand jury might become relevant (*post*, § 2363, par. 2), justice requires in any case that Doe should not be exempted from disclosure.

There remain, therefore, on principle, no cases at all in which, *after the grand jury's functions are ended*, the privilege of the witnesses not to have their testimony disclosed should be deemed to continue. This is, in effect, the law as generally accepted to-day. It is, however, not usually stated in such a broad form. The common phrase is that disclosure may be required "*whenever it becomes necessary in the course of justice.*" Disregarding a few local exceptions, this is in practice no narrower a rule than the one above deducible from principle.

§ 2363. **Same: Instances of the Cessation of the Privilege.** The instances in which the privilege ceases to operate, by virtue of the foregoing reasons, may be grouped according to the purpose for which the testimony is offered to be used:

(a) *Using the testimony as a self-contradiction in impeachment of the witness.* It is now universally conceded that a witness may be impeached, in any subsequent trial civil or criminal, by self-contradictory testimony (*ante*, § 1017) given by him before the grand jury.<sup>1</sup> In the same way, a party to

§ 2363. <sup>1</sup> To the statutes cited *ante*, § 2360, add the following cases:

ENGLAND: 1842, *R. v. Gibson*, Car. & M. 672 (cross-examination of a witness to his prior testimony before the grand jury, allowed).

UNITED STATES: Ill. 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 310; 1886, *Bressler v. People*, 117 Ill. 422, 436, 8 N. E. 62 (after an accused is put on trial, there is no reason against publicity "if the ends of justice require it"); Ind. 1838, *Burnham v. Hatfield*, 5 Blackf. 21 (plaintiff's admissions, when before the jury); 1853, *Perkins v. State*, 4 Ind. 222 (witness' corroborative statements before the jury); 1873, *Burdick v. Hunt*, 43 Ind. 381, 389 (wit-

ness' self-contradiction); 1877, *State v. Van Buskirk*, 59 Ind. 384, 388 (preceding cases approved); Ia. 1901, *State v. McPherson*, 114 Ia. 492, 87 N. W. 421 (disclosure by the clerk of the grand jury, as to prior testimony of a witness, in impeachment, held admissible, on common-law principles); 1905, *State v. Brown*, 128 Ia. 24, 102 N. W. 799 (wife of defendant); Me. 1874, *State v. Benner*, 64 Me. 267, 282 (disposing of the prior contrary intimation in *State v. Knight*, 43 Me. 1, 128); Md. 1896, *Kirk v. Garrett*, 84 Md. 383, 35 Atl. 1089; Mass. 1858, *Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167 (quoted *supra*); 1870, *Way v. Butterworth*, 106 Mass. 75; 1899, *Com. v. Chance*, 174 Mass. 245, 54 N. E.



the cause, not taking the stand as a witness, may be impeached by his *admissions* (*ante*, § 1048) made in testifying before the grand jury.<sup>2</sup> The occasional statutory sanction for the former of these uses cannot be construed to prohibit the latter, which goes upon the same reasoning.

Nor should any of the ensuing legitimate purposes of disclosure be considered to be obstructed by the *statutory omission* to mention

551; 1919, *Com. v. Harris*, 231 Mass. 584, 121 N. E. 409 (receipt of stolen goods); *Mich.* 1895, *People v. O'Neill*, 107 Mich. 556, 65 N. W. 540 (applying the statute); *Mo.* 1889, *State v. Thomas*, 99 Mo. 235, 255, 259, 12 S. W. 643 (statute applied); *N. H.* 1873, *State v. Wood*, 53 N. H. 484, 487, 493; *N. Y.* 1847, *People v. Hulbut*, 4 Denio 133 (statutory rule confirmed); *Or.* 1887, *State v. Moran*, 15 Or. 262, 14 Pac. 419; 1895, *State v. Brown*, 28 Or. 147, 41 Pac. 1042; *Pa.* 1879, *Gordon v. Com.*, 92 Pa. 216, 219; *Tex.* 1901, *Wooley v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 64 S. W. 1054 (citing prior cases); 1922, *Rodgers v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 236 S. W. 748; *Va.* 1874, *Little v. Com.*, 25 Gratt. 921, 930, *semble*; 1910, *Harris v. Com.*, 110 Va. 905, 68 S. E. 834 (order entered upon confession of error by the attorney-general); *W. Va.* 1918, *State v. Rice*, 83 W. Va. 409, 98 S. E. 432 (incest; grand juror's testimony to a witness' self-contradictory testimony, allowed).

The early *Connecticut* doctrine was very strict; this was the more absurd because the local practice of permitting the accused's presence at the grand jury's sessions utterly nullified the ground of the privilege. On the present point, however, the privilege seems always to have been denied, and would certainly to-day be denied: 1844, *State v. Fasset*, 16 Conn. 457, 467 (grand juror not admitted to prove certain evidence given to them); 1888, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Conn. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (preceding opinion doubted as to the unqualified nature of its expressions).

The following early doubt in *New Jersey* would to-day be repudiated: 1800, *Imlay v. Rogers*, 2 N. J. L. 347 (two judges *pro*, and two judges *con*); and was in fact repudiated in the following case: 1916, *State v. Bovino*, 89 N. J. L. 586, 99 Atl. 313 (testimony of a witness before the grand jury, admitted to contradict her testimony at the trial; Garrison, J., quoting the above text and the foregoing note on *Imlay v. Rogers*: "In this conclusion of Prof. Wigmore we concur, even as to the prophetic note").

<sup>2</sup> *Federal*: 1813, *U. S. v. Charles*, 2 Cr. C. C. 76, *semble* (an accused's confessions when a witness); *Fla.* 1895, *Jenkins v. State*, 35 Fla. 737, 18 So. 182 (accused's testimony as a witness before the jury; admitted, under a statute in part like the Missouri statute, though the accused had not taken the stand at the trial; the statutory specified cases for permitted use "do not exclude an inquiry in other cases sanctioned by the law"); *Ind.* 1897, *Hinshaw v.*

*State*, 147 Ind. 334, 47 N. E. 158 (disclosure of the testimony of the defendant, who had not taken the stand, allowed; R. S. 1894, § 1731, not excluding any uses before recognized, but confirming and adding others); *Ill.* 1922, *People v. Goldberg*, — Ill. —, 135 N. E. 84; 1899, *Steele-Smith G. Co. v. Potthast*, 109 Ia. 413, 80 N. W. 517 (party's admissions); *Kan.* 1906, *State v. Campbell*, 73 Kan. 688, 85 Pac. 784 (accused's testimony; repudiating the construction by the Missouri Court, in *Tindal v. Nichols*, *infra*, of the statute on which the Kansas statute was founded); *Mass.* 1890, *New Hampshire F. I. Co. v. Healey*, 151 Mass. 537, 24 N. E. 913 (party's admissions); 1846, *State v. Broughton*, 7 Ired. 96 (accused's testimony before the grand jury as a witness, making criminating statements; quoted *ante*, § 2360); *Or.* 1921, *State v. Rathie*, 101 Or. 339, 199 Pac. 169 (grand jurors allowed to testify to admissions made by defendants as witnesses); *Utah*: 1887, *U. S. v. Kirkwood*, 5 Utah 123, 13 Pac. 234 (accused's confessions in testifying before the jury; the statute held not to contain any express prohibition of this); 1892, *People v. Reggel*, 8 Utah 21, 28 Pac. 955 (similar).

In *Connecticut* the usual result is reached, but is attainable on peculiar grounds due to local practice: 1888, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Conn. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (the accused by local practice being permitted to attend the session of the jury, his confession to some of the jurors, made informally, was allowed to be proved by them, as not being "a part of the secrets of the cause," nor obtained by them as "a part of their duty").

The ruling in *Missouri* would presumably be contrary to the sound doctrine: 1855, *Tindle v. Nichols*, 20 Mo. 326 (cited *infra*).

The present law in *Texas* seems to be sound: 1898, *Gutgesell v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 43 S. W. 1016 (the Code exception is exclusive of others; hence, an accused's testimony as a witness before the grand jury cannot be used against him as an admission, if he is not a witness on his trial; unsound); 1900, *Spangler v. State*, 41 Tex. Cr. 424, 55 S. W. 326 (preceding case approved); 1901, *Wisdom v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 61 S. W. 926 (admitting testimony to a confession, and repudiating any limitations "after the hearing before that body has been terminated"; explaining *Gutgesell v. State*, *supra*, and prior cases; Henderson, J., diss.); compare the peculiar rule in this State for confessions (*ante*, §§ 852, 1039).



them,<sup>3</sup> — else the integrity of common-law principles would tend to be diminished in direct ratio to the ignorance or unskilfulness of the Legislature which attempted in any respect to make a declaratory statute.

(b) A witness' testimony before a grand jury may always be used upon a prosecution for *perjury* therein.<sup>4</sup>

(c) The *mere fact* that a certain person *was a witness*<sup>5</sup> or a *complainant*<sup>6</sup> before the grand jury may always be used, for the simple reason that the names of witnesses and of complainants are necessarily given publicity in the usual procedure of finding or rejecting indictments.

(d) Where a plaintiff seeking redress for *defamation* or *malicious prosecution* desires in his proof the testimony of witnesses, other than the defendant, before the grand jury, the privilege should not apply.<sup>7</sup> Where the suit is for defamation uttered by the defendant in the course of testimony before the

<sup>3</sup> *Accord*: 1906, *State v. Campbell*, 73 Kan. 688, 85 Pac. 784 (good opinion by Porter, J.); 1905, *Murphy v. State*, 124 Wis. 635, 102 N. W. 1087; and *Jenkins v. State*, Fla., *Hinshaw v. State*, Ind., cited *supra*, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> This is usually declared in the statutes (*ante*, § 2360). Add the following rulings: *Eng.* 1844, *R. v. Hughes*, 1 C. & K. 519, 528, Tindal, C. J. (perjury before the grand jury; another witness before them admitted to prove the defendants' testimony; "it is for the purposes of public justice"); *U. S.* 1867, *People v. Young*, 31 Cal. 563; 1893, *Izer v. State*, 77 Md. 110, 26 Atl. 282; 1838, *Crocker v. State*, Meigs Tenn. 127.

<sup>5</sup> 1886, *Ex parte Schmidt*, 71 Cal. 212, 12 Pac. 55 (like the next case); 1888, *People v. Northey*, 77 Cal. 618, 19 Pac. 865, 20 Pac. 129 ("The fact that a person was called, sworn, and examined as a witness before a grand jury does not come within the rule of secrecy; if it did, it is violated whenever an indictment is returned with the names of the witnesses indorsed on it or inserted at its foot"); 1853, *Com. v. Hill*, 11 Cush. Mass. 137, 140 (to prove that no variance between the indictment and proof existed, a grand juror was allowed to testify, in impeachment of one who testified to his prior testimony before the grand jury, that he was not a witness at all before that jury); 1903, *Re Archer*, 134 Mich. 408, 96 N. W. 442 (grand jurors' report to the judge that a witness on appearing refused to exhibit his books, held not privileged, in proceedings for contempt); 1914, *State v. Ayles*, 74 Or. 153, 145 Pac. 19 (adultery; that the woman and her husband had testified against the defendant before the grand jury, allowed).

<sup>6</sup> 1823, *Freeman v. Arkell*, 1 C. & P. 135 (that a certain person was the prosecutor on a bill ignored by them); 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 310 (malicious prosecution; name of the complainant required to be disclosed; but the Court offer the unsound reason that no oath of secrecy was then locally

required of grand jurors); 1834, *Huidekoper v. Cotton*, 3 Watts Pa. 56 (malicious prosecution, the bill having been returned "ignoramus"; "so far is our law from forbidding the grand jury from disclosing the name of the prosecutor that it is provided that . . . if they return that the prosecutor shall pay the costs, they shall name who is the prosecutor"). Such statutes exist in many jurisdictions, requiring a prosecutor to be named.

Compare the statutes giving the right to a list of witnesses before trial (*ante*, §§ 1850-1854).

So also on proceedings involving the indictment's validity: 1908, *Atwell v. U. S.*, 4th C. C. A., 162 Fed. 97 (after the indictment has been presented and published, and the grand jury discharged, a juror is amenable to subpoena to testify on a plea in abatement as to testimony given by witnesses before the grand jury).

<sup>7</sup> 1879, *Hunter v. Randall*, 69 Me. 183, 189 (malicious prosecution; plaintiff allowed to prove what witnesses testified before the grand jury on the then complaint against the plaintiff for perjury); 1917, *State v. Fish*, 90 N. J. L. 17, 100 Atl. 181 (criminal libel; communication to defendant by a witness before the grand jury, as affecting his belief, admitted). *Contra*: 1855, *Tindle v. Nichols*, 20 Mo. 326 (under a statute permitting the jury to testify in contradiction of a witness or on his trial for perjury, and forbidding them "except when lawfully required," the disclosure is forbidden in all other but the specified cases; here, in an action for slander charging the plaintiff with perjury before the jury, on a plea of truth; this is clearly unsound, as well as unjust; compare *par. (a) supra*); 1858, *Beam v. Link*, 27 Mo. 261 (similar ruling, in an action for malicious prosecution by procuring the plaintiff to be indicted; here the local substantive law would apparently have exempted the defendant from liability in any case).



grand jury, much less should the privilege apply;<sup>8</sup> for otherwise the right of action would be a vain pretence of the law, the sole means of establishing it being denied. It may be, however, that the utterance is privileged from liability by the substantive law of torts; in that event it is the substantive law, and not the law of Evidence, that forbids its proof.

(e) When a person *pleads immunity* from prosecution by reason of testimony given before a grand jury under an immunity statute (*ante*, § 2281), the present privilege should of course not apply to prevent proof of his testimony by a grand juror.<sup>9</sup>

(f) Where the witness is sought to be impeached at a subsequent trial upon other issues, by *expressions of bias* in his testimony before the grand jury, the privilege does not necessarily apply. But here, if anywhere after the grand jury's session is ended, the privilege may conceivably be held to continue.

(g) So far as the privilege exists and continues, it prohibits disclosures, not only by the grand jurors themselves, but also by the *State's officers* and others who may be present, lawfully or unlawfully, at the private sessions; for the witness has no control over these persons' presence and their secrecy is as essential as that of the grand jurors to his security.<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, so far as the privilege ceases in its policy, the grand jurors' testimony may be used to prove conduct and utterances of the State's officers and others in the grand jury's presence, and not merely the utterances of witnesses.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Parol Evidence Rule

§ 2364. **Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes; etc.** The finding of an indictment by the grand jury, like the verdict of a petit jury, is a jural act and a part of a judicial record; and the Parol Evidence rule therefore applies to all attempts to invalidate it. The principles upon which depends the application of that rule to verdicts have been

<sup>8</sup> 1849, *Sands v. Robinson*, 12 Sm. & M. Miss. 704, 711 (a grand juror allowed to testify to utterances by a witness before them, in an action against the witness for defamatory utterances, the previous disclosure of the topic not making it necessary to preserve secrecy, and the utterances not being absolutely privileged from suit). Compare the rulings upon an *informant's privilege* (*post*, § 2374).

<sup>9</sup> *Ala. St.* 1909, No. 191, Spec. Sess. p. 63, Aug. 25, § 12; *Ala. St.* 1911, No. 259, p. 249, Apr. 6, § 32; *Wis.* 1905, *Murphy v. State*, 124 Wis. 635, 102 N. W. 1087; 1905, *Havenor v. State*, 125 Wis. 444, 104 N. W. 116.

<sup>10</sup> 1844, *State v. Fasset*, 16 Conn. 457, 470 (disclosure by "others who were present and have not taken this oath," not permitted); 1895, *Jenkins v. State*, 35 Fla. 737, 18 So. 182 (State's attorney); 1836, *McLellan v. Richardson*, 13 Me. 82, 86 (county attorney); 1899, *People v. Thompson*, 122 Mich. 411, 81 N. W. 344 (prosecuting attorney's stipu-

lation as to testimony, not admitted on plea of abatement to indictment); 1839, *Clark v. Field*, 12 Vt. 485 (State's attorney); Vt. St. 1910, No. 221, p. 228 (amending Pub. St. §§ 5523-29; stenographer shall not disclose testimony taken at a criminal inquest, but this shall not prevent disclosure "on an order of the Supreme or County Court").

*Contra*, but unsound: 1877, *State v. Van Buskirk*, 59 Ind. 384, 388 (prosecuting attorney held not subject to the grand jurors' rule, because he "is not bound by any such oath of secrecy"; yet here, where he was allowed to impeach a witness, a juror would equally have been allowed); 1874, *Little v. Com.*, 25 Gratt. Va. 921, 931 (third person present).

<sup>11</sup> 1922, *Attorney-General v. Pelletier*, 240 Mass. 264, 134 N. E. 406 (misconduct of a district attorney; grand jurors admitted to testify to statements made to them in conference by the defendant's assistant; quoted *supra*, § 2360).

already examined (*ante*, §§ 2348-2356); and it will be sufficient here to note briefly, under the same heads, the effect of those principles 'mutatis mutandis,' upon the grand jury's jural act of finding an indictment.

(a) The *motives, reasons, and grounds* upon which the indictment was based cannot be availed of to invalidate it (*ante*, § 2349). This much is generally conceded.<sup>1</sup> But suppose that there is a limitation of the grand jury's sources of investigation in the shape of a rule (*ante*, § 4) that they may receive only such *kinds of evidence* as are receivable on a trial before a petit jury. Such a rule is a plain obstruction of justice, unsound in policy. But if it exists, it logically obliges the Court to permit the indictment to be invalidated by the fact of the jury's reception of illegal evidence. In an ordinary trial, the record of proceedings, containing the exceptions, furnishes the means of establishing the fact, and the fact, when established, may be used to invalidate the verdict. But in the grand jury's proceedings, if the rule is to be enforced at all, as it is for petit juries, the fact must be allowed to be shown by the grand jurors or others present. If, then, any community is willing to accept so deleterious a rule of criminal procedure, its enforcement in the only feasible way must be permitted by showing the facts.<sup>2</sup> Upon the recognition of such a rule the various jurisdictions are divided.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Where the question is as to the *issues* covered by the indictment (as when a former conviction for the same offence is pleaded), it may be necessary to ascertain the precise charge made by the testimony before the grand jury, so as to define the charge covered by the indictment. This is permissible on the general principle (*ante*, § 2351).<sup>4</sup>

§ 2364. <sup>1</sup> *Ala.* 1902, *Hall v. State*, 134 *Ala.* 90, 32 *So.* 750 (jurors' testimony not admissible to show that the grand jury were brought to find a true bill only after several contrary votings, followed by repeated urgings of the prosecuting attorney and the judge); *La.* 1906, *State v. Hopkins*, 115 *La.* 786, 40 *So.* 166 (motion to quash the indictment; a grand juror's testimony, and the district attorney's, as to the attorney's advice regarding the jurors' action, excluded); *Md.* 1895, *Owens v. Owens*, 81 *Md.* 518, 32 *Atl.* 247 (inquiry of the foreman of a grand jury why a bill was dismissed, not allowed); *N. M.* 1907, *United States v. Tallmadge*, 14 *N. M.* 293, 91 *Pac.* 729; *N. Y.* 1847, *People v. Hulbut*, 4 *Denio* 133 (illegal liquor-selling, on an indictment in five counts charging five offences; grand jurors not allowed to testify that only one offence was testified to before them, mainly on the theory that the indictment "like other records, imports absolute verity," and cannot be disputed "unless it be done upon motion" to quash or to strike out counts).

In Pennsylvania an unwise rule as to the jury's methods of investigation has led naturally to a variation from the present principle: 1889, *Com. v. Green*, 126 *Pa.* 531, 17 *Atl.* 878 (grand juror's testimony admitted, on a motion

for quashing the indictment, to show that the indictment was founded on testimony of witnesses and not on their own "knowledge and observation," a procedure which under the local law was forbidden and constituted "a breach of privilege on the part of the grand jury").

<sup>2</sup> 1881, *U. S. v. Farrington*, 5 *Fed.* 343, Wallace, J. (for quashing an indictment, the proceedings may be inquired into with reference to the sufficiency or legality of the evidence; "whenever it becomes essential to ascertain what has transpired before a grand jury, it may be shown, no matter by whom; and the only limitation is that it may not be shown how the individual jurors voted or what they said during their investigations").

<sup>3</sup> See the following typical cases: 1871, *U. S. v. Brown*, 1 *Sawyer* 531; 1904, *U. S. v. Cobban*, 127 *Fed.* 713, *C. C.*; 1905, *Chadwick v. U. S.*, 141 *Fed.* 225, 234, *C. C. A.*; 1905, *Taylor v. State*, 49 *Fla.* 69, 38 *So.* 380 (collecting many cases); 1902, *State v. Comer*, 157 *Ind.* 611, 62 *N. E.* 452; 1871, *State v. Beebe*, 17 *Minn.* 241; 1905, *State v. Faulkner*, 185 *Mo.* 673, 84 *S. W.* 967; 1907, *People v. Sexton*, 187 *N. Y.* 495, 80 *N. E.* 396; and the statutes cited *ante*, § 4.

<sup>4</sup> 1859, *Rocco v. State*, 37 *Miss.* 357, 369 (on a plea of former conviction for the same



(c) Where the *misconduct* of the jurors, or the *irregularity* of their proceedings, constitutes by the law of criminal procedure a ground for invalidating the indictment, the fact may properly be proved by the testimony of a grand juror, on the general principle (*ante*, § 2352);<sup>5</sup> though a Court acknowledging the rule against a petit juror's impeaching his own misconduct should equally apply it here.

(d) That *less than the required number assented* to the verdict of a petit jury cannot be shown (*ante*, § 2355). Does the same consequence follow for a grand jury's indictment? For the petit jurors, the reason is that their outward assent, express or implied, at the time of polling, is the sole effective conduct constituting assent. This act of assent is in reality individual as well as joint, whether there is an individual polling or not. But the grand jurors are not polled; nor do they individually subscribe the indictment; nor is the tenor of each indictment brought home to them individually by public reading, as is that of a petit jury's verdict. There is, to be sure, some opportunity of dissent, but hardly a practical one. There is no formal outward act of assent in the sense in which there clearly is for petit jurors. Virtually, then, the time of the act of assent is carried back to the time of voting in the jury room. It is therefore consistent with principle to allow the absence of such assent by the requisite number to be shown.<sup>6</sup> Some Courts are found to maintain the opposite view, following the analogy of a petit jury's verdict.<sup>7</sup>

So long as the present procedure is followed, the former view seems inevitably sound. But the proper course would be to poll the grand jurors upon each indictment after the manner of a petit jury, and thus to satisfy the requirements of principle, for it is undeniably poor policy to hold out any inducement (as the present rule does) to ferret among the grand jurors and ascertain the tenor of their votes, and to make necessary the quashing of an indictment which ought never to have been received in the beginning.

offence of illegal liquor-selling, a grand juror's testimony to the parties and evidence before them on the indictment was received, applying a statute).

<sup>5</sup> 1815, *U. S. v. Coolidge*, 2 Gall. 364 (testimony of court officers that a witness before the grand jury was not duly sworn, admitted); 1858, *Shattuck v. State*, 11 Ind. 473, 477 (propriety of the indictment with reference to irregularities of proceeding before the grand jury; grand juror's testimony held admissible).

*Contra*: 1909, *People v. Nall*, 242 Ill. 284, 89 N. E. 1012 (misconduct of State's attorney in the jury-room; testimony of foreman and of attorney, excluded).

<sup>6</sup> The leading opinion, fully expounding the principle and policy, is found in *Low's Case*, 4 Me. 439 (1827). To this add the following: 1888, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Conn. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (suggested as "one possible exception");

1878, *People v. Shattuck*, 6 Abb. N. C. 33 (on a motion to quash, the number of votes may be shown).

<sup>7</sup> 1702, *Colonel Bayard's Trial*, 14 How. St. Tr. 478, New York (here the counsel for the defendant makes a good argument); 1878, *Spigener v. State*, 62 Ala. 383, 386 (neither jurors' testimony, nor that of others, admitted to show that less than twelve jurors assented to the bill; good opinion by Stone, J.); 1902, *Hall v. State*, 134 Ala. 90, 32 So. 750 (like *Spigener v. State*, *supra*); 1904, *Nash v. State*, 73 Ark. 399, 84 S. W. 497 (here the Court misapplies the secrecy principle); 1855, *State v. Baker*, 20 Mo. 339; 1867, *State v. Oxford*, 30 Tex. 428 (that an indictment was not found by the requisite twelve can be shown only by the records of the court, and not by the testimony of the jurors; "our Code but follows the principles of the common law").

TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC V: STATE SECRETS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

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| <p>§ 2367. Several Principles discriminated.</p> <p>§ 2368. (a) Tortious Non-Liability of the Executive.</p> <p>§ 2369. (b) Constitutional Exemption of the Executive from Judicial Process.</p> <p>§ 2370. (c) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness.</p> <p>§ 2371. (d) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive and Subordinate Officers, not to attend Court.</p> <p>§ 2372. Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges, Arbitrators.</p> <p>§ 2373. (e) Irremovability of Official Records.</p> | <p>§ 2374. (f) Privilege for Communications by Information to Government.</p> <p>§ 2375. Same: State Prosecutor (District Attorney, etc.).</p> <p>§ 2376. Same: Judge; Juvenile Court; Conciliator; Arbitrator.</p> <p>§ 2377. Same: Reports made by Citizens under Compulsion of Law (Taxes, Inventions, Industrial Accidents, Disease, Illegitimacy, Death, etc.).</p> <p>§ 2378. (g) Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications.</p> <p>§ 2379. Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy.</p> |
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§ 2367. **Several Principles discriminated.** The principle of Privilege which protects from disclosure, through the testimony of governmental officers, the secrets of State and communications made to administrative officials, is in practice superficially related to certain other principles, not resting upon testimonial privilege in general or upon this kind of privilege in particular. In order to discriminate the precise scope of these different principles, it is necessary to consider them together here. The necessity is the greater because some of them, being plainly valid, have in some courts been misused to give an unwarrantable scope to the present privileges for State secrets and informers' communications. By comparing their boundaries, the true and limited scope of the testimonial privileges can best be understood.

There are, then, seven or eight distinct principles which in superficial features tend often to be counfounded:

(a) There is a doctrine of the *substantive law*, that the chief Executive and subordinate executive officers are in some respects *exempt from liability for torts* of violence and defamation.

(b) There is a question of *constitutional law*, whether the chief Executive is *procedurally exempt from the legal process of the Judiciary* for any purpose whatever.

(c) There is a question of *testimonial privilege* at large, whether the Executive is exempted from the ordinary *duty to give testimony*; this is usually united with the preceding question, yet is distinct in theory.

(d) There is a question of *testimonial privilege of attendance in court*, whether executive and other officers are exempted from the general duty to



attend, though still liable testimonially to give evidence by deposition while remaining at their offices.

(e) There is a doctrine, analogous to the foregoing privilege, that *official records are irremovable* and cannot be required to be taken, in the original, from their place of official custody to the court-room.

The foregoing five (except the third) do not involve any evidential principle of privilege for topics or communications.

(f) There is a genuine *communications-privilege*, permitting secrecy for communications by *informers to official prosecutors*, by parties or witnesses to a *judge*, and by citizens making *compulsory reports* to the State.

(g) There is a genuine *topical privilege* for facts constituting *secrets of State*, and this, by improper extension, has often been made to include

(h) An anomalous *communications-privilege* for *communications between officials of the government*.

These various doctrines may now be examined in the above order.

§ 2368. (a) **Tortious Non-Liability of the Executive.** The chief Executive and subordinate executive officers have unquestionably some exemptions from liability for harm done in the course of their official acts. A sheriff, for example, is not liable for the death of a person hanged by him in pursuance to a lawful order of execution.

In general, two classes of officials are distinguished in applying this principle. A subordinate or ministerial official, *i. e.* one who acts under the orders of a superior official, is absolutely exempted from liability if the harm done by him is done solely in the implicit obedience of an order lawful upon its face; conversely, he is not exempt, if he varies from the order, though in good faith. A superior official, *i. e.* one who is given by the law a discretionary authority and exercises his judgment independently and without looking higher for orders, is exempted from liability, because the nature of his responsibility requires that he should exercise his judgment free from apprehension of the harassment of subsequent litigation. Some Courts exempt such an official only when he has acted in good faith; but sound policy requires an absolute exemption, not in order to protect the malicious official, but in order that the upright official may be exempted from the burden of defending himself from a charge of malice.<sup>1</sup> In the following passage this doctrine is exemplified:

1888, Chief Justice COOLEY, Torts, 2d ed., \*376: "If we take the case of legislative officers, their rightful exemption from liability is very plain. Let it be supposed that an individual has a just claim against the State which the Legislature ought to allow, but neglects or refuses to allow. In such a case there may be a moral wrong, but there can be no legal wrong. The Legislature has full discretionary authority in all matters of legislation, and it is not consistent with this that the members should be called to account at the suit of individuals for their acts and neglects. Discretionary power is, in its nature, independent; to make those who wield it liable to be called to account by some other

§ 2368. <sup>1</sup> Compare the following opinions: 1774, *Mostyn v. Fabrigas*, Cowp. 161, 175, L. C. J. Mansfield; 1841, *Hill v. Bigge*, 3 Moore P. C. 465, 4 St. Tr. n. s. 723, Lord

Brougham; and the cases and articles quoted and cited in Wigmore's *Select Cases on the Law of Torts* (1912), II, 752-800.

authority is to take away discretion and destroy independence. . . . If we take next the case of executive officers, the rule will be found to be the same. The governor of the State is vested with a power to grant pardons and reprieves, to command the militia, to refuse his assent to laws, and to take the steps necessary for the proper enforcement of the laws; but neglect of none of these can make him responsible in damages to the party suffering therefrom. No one has any legal right to be pardoned, or to have any particular law signed by the governor, or to have any definite step taken by the governor in the enforcement of the laws. The Executive in these particulars exercises his discretion, and he is not responsible to the Courts for the manner in which his duties are performed. Moreover, he could not be made responsible to private parties without subordinating the executive department to the judicial department, and this would be inconsistent with the theory of republican institutions. Each department, within its province, is and must be independent. Taking next the case of the judicial department, the same rule still applies. For mere neglect in judicial duties no action can lie. A judge cannot be sued because of delaying his judgments, or because he fails to bring to his duties all the care, prudence, and diligence that he ought to bring, or because he decides on partial views and without sufficient information. His selection for his office implies that he is to be governed in it by his own judgment; and it is always to be assumed that that judgment has been honestly exercised and applied. . . . For all duties the time, manner, and extent of the performance of which are left to the wisdom, integrity, and judgment of the officer himself, it is conceded that, as a general rule, the only liability of the officer is to the criminal law, in case he shall wrongfully and maliciously neglect to perform his duties, or shall perform them improperly. Duties of this nature are usually spoken of as duties in the exercise of discretionary and judicial powers, and it is deemed a conclusive answer to any private action for an injury resulting from neglect or unfaithful performance to say that where a matter is trusted to the discretion or judgment of an officer, the very nature of the authority is inconsistent with responsibility in damages for the manner of its exercise, since to hold the officer to such responsibility would be to confer a discretion and then make its exercise a wrong."

The foregoing principle of substantive law comes, at two points, into apparent contact with the ensuing principles here to be considered:

In the first place, a chief Executive who has ordered a *trespass* — for example, a Governor who has ordered the military to fire upon a mob — may appeal to the foregoing principle to exempt him from civil or criminal liability. At the same time and in the same litigation the question may arise whether he is constitutionally subject to judicial process compelling him to appear (*post*, § 2369), and whether he is privileged from testifying at all (*post*, § 2370), and, if not, whether he is privileged from attendance at court (*post*, § 2371). All of these questions are independent of each other; yet they have sometimes been confused.

In the second place, an officer who has in an official report made a *libellous statement* may appeal to the principle of substantive law to privilege him from liability. If he is thus legally exempt and pleads his exemption, no question of testimonial privilege arises. Yet some Courts have preferred to attain the same end, not by recognizing a plea of substantive law, but by declaring a privilege of testimonial secrecy (*post*, § 2378), — thus defeating the action indirectly by suppressing the means of proof. Yet the testimonial and the tortious privileges should be strictly discriminated.



§ 2369. (b) **Constitutional Exemption of the Executive from Judicial Process.** Whether the apportionment of functions between Executive and Judiciary, in coördinate independent supremacy, signifies that the Executive can never be corporally subjected to the compulsory process of the Judiciary, is an interesting question, but solely one of constitutional law. The distinction between this question and the foregoing one (of exemption from tortious liability) is obscured when it is sought (for example) to sue the Governor of a State for a trespass done by the military under his order and at the same time to summon or to enjoin him by subpœna or to arrest him upon execution-process. But in a suit against him after expiration of his office, his supposed exemption from judicial process has clearly disappeared, and yet a proper plea claiming exoneration from tortious liability for executive acts would present that question nakedly and plainly, and would still defeat the action.

Whether, then, he has during office, as Executive, a constitutional *immunity from compulsory process*, after the analogy of the sovereign of a monarchy, is a large question independent of all others. Chief Justice Marshall, in Aaron Burr's trial,<sup>1</sup> raising the question in connection with the process of subpœna, noted that "a difference of opinion may exist with respect to the power to compel the same obedience to the process as if it had been directed to a private citizen," but did not attempt to force the issue. Since his time, the theory has received some attention, with differing judicial views, in determining the judicial power to enforce by mandamus the performance of ministerial duties by the Executive.<sup>2</sup> In the following passage the principle has been convincingly expounded, in its application to testimonial process:

1877, AGNEW, C. J., in *Hartranft's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433, 455: "The first point to be noticed is the argument that he is exempt from a subpœna because he is a coördinate branch of the State government. What is coördination or equality of rank, under the Constitution? It is not the absolute independence of each. If it were, the end would be disorder, conflict, and finally disorganization. It is not absolute superiority each over the others, for then they would not coexist in unity, as essential parts of the same common whole. . . . From the very nature of coördination in one and the same government, and the distribution to each branch of its appropriate functions, each is necessarily supreme in its own department, for neither can freely exercise its proper functions if it can be obstructed by the other. For example, *the Judiciary cannot control or interfere with the discretion of the Governor in the exercise of an executive function.* And for the same reason the legislative and executive branches cannot control the appropriate functions of the judicial. If the Legislative or Executive can oppose or obstruct the exercise of an appropriate judicial power the purpose of separation is defeated; a practical union takes place in them, and the surrender by the Judiciary is effected. One of the appropriate and exclusive functions of the Judiciary is the detection, trial, and punishment of offenders against the law. On the true principles of constitutional coördination, therefore, the Governor cannot obstruct this function, and must yield obedience to the judicial branch in

§ 2369. <sup>1</sup> Quoted *post*, § 2371.

<sup>2</sup> The following authorities exhibit the arguments: 1878, *People v. Governor*, 29 Mich. 320; 1888, *Martin v. Ingham*, 38 Kan. 641, 17 Pac. 162; *Merrill on Mandamus*, ed. 1892, §§ 92-96.

Note that a foreign *ambassador*, as his sovereign's personal representative, and, by treaty sometimes, a *consul* also, is exempt from process: *post*, § 2372.

this respect as the appropriate and superior repository of the power conferred by the people themselves. . . . The appropriate function of the Judiciary being the detection, trial, and punishment of offenders, and the inquiry for this purpose by witnesses being the constitutional and legal mode of procedure, it is equally clear that the Governor, just as any other citizen, being subordinate to the judicial power *in this respect*, must yield his obedience to the process necessary for the exercise of this judicial function. Good government and the welfare of the people demand this."

§ 2370. (c) **Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness.** The public (in the words of Lord Hardwicke) has a right to every man's evidence.<sup>1</sup> Is there any reason why this right should suffer an exception when the desired knowledge is in the possession of a person occupying at the moment the office of chief Executive of a State? There is no reason at all. His temporary duties as an official cannot override his permanent and fundamental duty as a citizen and as a debtor to justice. The general principle (*ante*, § 2192) of testimonial duty to disclose knowledge needed in judicial investigations is of universal force. It does not suffer an exemption which would be irrespective of the nature of the person's knowledge and would rest wholly on the nature of the person's occupation. This duty, and its equal application to the Executive and subordinate officers, has perhaps never been doubted. But it tends to become confused with three other distinct principles.

In the first place, the amenability of the Executive to *compulsory process* (just examined) is a different question. It may be held that the person is thus exempt, and yet that the duty exists. That the enforcement of it is constitutionally impossible is still consistent with its existence. Indeed, the specific or direct enforcement of it is never possible, for if a subpoenaed witness be willing to lie in jail perpetually for contempt, no judicial power can actually effect any testimonial utterance. Neither the corporal nor the constitutional impossibility of enforcing the performance of the duty prevents us from recognizing and declaring its existence. Such, in effect, was the attitude of Chief Justice Marshall and Chancellor Zabriskie in their dealings with this problem. Such is presumably the attitude of the Department of State in its definition of a consul's duty, under a treaty expressly exempting consuls from compulsory process but not exempting them from testimonial duties (*post*, § 2372).

In the second place, this testimonial duty to disclose one's knowledge may coexist with exemption from *attendance in court* as a witness, — the duty to testify (*ante*, § 2192) and the duty to attend for the purpose of testifying (*ante*, § 2204) being plainly separable. The official's exemption from attendance is later examined (*post*, § 2371).

In the third place, this general testimonial duty of disclosure is compatible with definite exceptions to it for certain *official topics*, upon which secrecy may be preserved. The scope of this exception, by way of testimonial privilege, is elsewhere examined (*post*, §§ 2378–2379).

§ 2370. <sup>1</sup> Cited *ante*, § 2192.



Let it be understood, then, that there is no exemption, for officials as such, or for the Executive as such, from the universal testimonial duty to give evidence in judicial investigations. The exemptions that exist are defined by other principles.

§ 2371. (*d*) **Testimonial Privilege of the Executive and Subordinate Officers, not to attend Court.** That an exemption from attendance in court may be sometimes properly recognized has already been noticed in its general principle (*ante*, § 2204). This exemption is conceded sometimes on the ground of illness, sometimes on the ground of the excessive inconvenience of travelling a long distance (*ante*, §§ 2205-2207). Whenever it applies, the testimonial duty at large — *i. e.* to disclose one's evidential knowledge — nevertheless continues, and may be exacted and performed by the taking of a deposition, which is then admissible on the ground of necessity (*ante*, §§ 1401-1418), instead of oral testimony.

The question now is whether the requirements of official business, demanding continual presence at the seat of office, bring within this principle the chief Executive or subordinate executive officers. That the principle does apply to exempt them, within certain limits, cannot be doubted. Such an exemption was at common law in England conceded to the monarch, though to no other person;<sup>1</sup> and the dignity of the position seems here to have been a sufficient reason (apart from the monarch's immunity from compulsory process). In the United States the exemption must be placed upon grounds of public convenience, — a more inclusive consideration. In Chief Justice Marshall's notable exposition of the principle, it will be observed that his concession of this mere exemption from attendance does not involve any concession of an exemption from the Executive's general testimonial duty to furnish evidence or of a judicial inability to enforce the performance of that duty:

1807, *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep., I, 121, 127 ff., 136, 181, 255; on motion for a 'subpœna duces tecum' to the President of the United States to attend and bring certain correspondence with General Wilkinson, material to aid the defence, the counsel for the prosecution did not deny that the President was "as amenable to that process as any other citizen," but claimed that "if his public functions disable him from obeying the process,

§ 2371. <sup>1</sup> 1613, Countess of Shrewsbury's Case, 12 Co. Rep. 94 (before a Council including the Chancellor, Chief Justices, and Chief Baron; the Countess being required to declare her knowledge concerning Lady Arabella Stuart's escape, declined, for one reason, on the ground of her "privilege of nobility, *sc.*, to answer only when she was called judicially before her peers"; the Council denied that nobility had "such privilege as is alledged," and the liability of a peer to be examined in Chancery, common-law Courts, and the Star-Chamber, was pointed out); 1854. Parke, B., in *Attorney-General v. Radloff*, 10 Exch. 84, 94 ("It is clear that the Sovereign cannot be a witness, because there

is no means of compelling her attendance"); 1861, Willes, J., in *Ex parte Fernandez*, 10 C. B. N. S. 3, 39 ("Every person in the kingdom, except the sovereign," is bound to give evidence). In L. C. J. Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, III, 215, 4th ed., the learned author sets forth the authorities.

Compare also the cases cited *ante*, § 1674 (certificate of the King).

In *Lady Daburgaveny's Case*, cited 6 Co. Rep. 53 *a*, it would seem that there had been a ruling that *peers* were not subject to examination upon oath, at least as parties in wager of law. Distinguish also the question whether a peer was obliged to take an *oath* or could merely affirm (*ante*, § 1825).

that would be a satisfactory excuse 'pro hac vice,'" and that the papers here asked for were State secrets and irrelevant. In granting the motion, and holding the papers relevant and not State secrets, the general principle of the President's amenability to process 'ad testificandum' was thus expounded by MARSHALL, C. J.: "The exceptions [to the accused's right to process] furnished by the law of evidence, with one reservation, so far as they are personal, are of those [persons] only whose testimony could not be received. The single reservation alluded to is the case of the King. Although he may, perhaps, give testimony, it is said to be incompatible with his dignity to appear under the process of the Court. Of the many points of difference which exist between the First Magistrate in England and the First Magistrate in the United States, in respect to the personal dignity conferred on them by the constitutions of their respective nations, the Court will only mention two. (1) It is a principle of the English Constitution that the King can do no wrong, that no blame can be imputed to him, that he cannot be named in debate. By the Constitution of the United States, the President, as well as every other officer of the government, may be impeached, and may be removed from office on high crimes and misdemeanors. (2) By the Constitution of Great Britain the crown is hereditary, and the monarch can never be a subject. By that of the United States, the President is elected from the mass of the people, and, on the expiration of the time for which he is elected, returns to the mass of the people again. How essentially this difference of circumstances must vary the policy of the laws of the two countries, in reference to the personal dignity of the executive chief, will be perceived by every one. In this respect, the First Magistrate of the Union may more properly be likened to the first magistrate of a State, — at any rate, under the former Confederation; and it is not known ever to have been doubted but that the chief magistrate of a State might be served with a 'subpœna ad testificandum.' If in any court of the United States it has ever been decided that a subpœna cannot issue to the President, that decision is unknown to this Court. If upon any principle the President could be construed to stand exempt from the general provisions of the Constitution, it would be because his duties as chief magistrate demand his whole time for national objects. But it is apparent that this demand is not unremitting; and, if it should exist at the time when his attendance on a court is required, it would be sworn on the return of the subpœna, and would rather constitute a reason for not obeying the process of the Court than a reason against its being issued. In point of fact, it cannot be doubted that the people of England have the same interest in the service of the executive government — that is, of the cabinet council — that the American people have in the service of the Executive of the United States, and that their duties are as arduous and as unremitting; yet it has never been alleged that a subpœna might not be directed to them. It cannot be denied that to issue a subpœna to a person filling the exalted station of the Chief Magistrate is a duty which would be dispensed with more cheerfully than it would be performed; but, if it be a duty, the Court can have no choice in the case. If then, as is admitted by the counsel for the United States, a subpœna may issue to the President, the accused is entitled to it of course; and, whatever difference may exist with respect to the power to compel the same obedience to the process as if it had been directed to a private citizen, there exists no difference with respect to the right to obtain it. The guard furnished to this high officer to protect him from being harassed by vexatious and unnecessary subpœnas is to be looked for in the conduct of a Court after those subpœnas have issued, — not in any circumstance which is to precede their being issued."

To this subpœna, President JEFFERSON responded, without attendance, by a letter to the prosecuting counsel, in which he offered to be examined at Washington by deposition, but explained his non-attendance at Court as follows: "As to our personal attendance at Richmond, I am persuaded the Court is sensible that paramount duties to the nation at large control the obligation of compliance with its summons in this case; as it would, should we receive a similar one to attend the trials of Blennerhasset and others [co-conspirators] in Mississippi Territory, those instituted at St. Louis and other places on the



western waters, or at any place other than the seat of government. To comply with such calls would leave the nation without an executive branch, whose agency nevertheless is understood to be so constantly necessary that it is the sole branch which the Constitution requires to be always in function. It could not, then, intend that it should be withdrawn from its station by any coördinate authority."

1871, *ZABRISKIE, C.*, in *Thompson v. R. Co.*, 22 N. J. Eq. 111, 113: "The subpoena was directed to the Governor by his individual name, and not as Governor. Every person, whatever his office or dignity, is bound to appear and testify in courts of law when required to do so by proper process, unless he has a lawful excuse. The official engagements and duties of the higher officers of the government may be, and in many cases are, a sufficient excuse. The dignity of the office, or the mere fact of official position, is not of itself an excuse, and whether the official engagements are sufficient must be determined from the circumstances of each case. . . . There is no reason why the Governor should not be called upon to testify as to the time when the engrossed bill was delivered to him. . . . But I will make no order on him for that purpose. . . . Such order ought not to be made against the Executive of the State, because it might bring the Executive in conflict with the Judiciary. If the Executive thinks he ought to testify, in compliance with the opinion of the Court, he will do it without an order; if he thinks it to be his official duty, in protecting the right and dignity of his office, he will not comply, even if directed by an order; and in his case, the Court would hardly entertain proceedings to compel him by adjudging him in contempt. . . . If the Governor, without sufficient or lawful reasons, refuses to appear and testify, he is, like all other citizens, liable to respond in damages to any party injured by his refusal."

That this exemption from attendance exists for the chief Executive of a State cannot be doubted. Perhaps also it exists for members of Congress during sessions. Whether it exists for subordinate executive officials must be doubted.<sup>2</sup>

By statute, in a few jurisdictions, specific officials have been exempted,

<sup>2</sup> In the following rulings, the distinctions of §§ 2368, 2369, 2370, and 2371, *ante*, are not always observed:

*England*: 1909, *R. v. Baines*, 1 K. B. 258 (the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary were subpoenaed to testify as to a breach of the peace committed by woman suffragists at a public meeting; on a motion to set aside the subpoenas, the applicants alleged that their "attendance at the assizes would involve a serious interruption of any public duties as a minister of the Crown"; held, that "it must not be supposed that the position which the applicants occupy affords them any privilege; they stand in the same position as any other of His Majesty's subjects");

*Canada*: 1914, *R. v. Allerton*, 17 D. L. R. 294, B. C. (magistrate held justified in refusing a subpoena to summon the Attorney-General, under Cr. C. § 671, providing that the magistrate may summon if it appears that "any person is likely to give material evidence"; privilege repudiated, following *R. v. Baines, supra*);

*United States*: *Fed.* 1800, *U. S. v. Cooper*, Whart. St. Tr. 659, 10 Amer. St. Tr. 774, 783 (seditious libel on President Adams; the

accused desired to subpoena the President, but Justice Chase "refused to permit the subpoena to issue to the President of the United States, saying that it was an improper and indecent act"; the accused also desired to compel the attendance of several members of the Congress, then in session, and "asked the Court to address a letter to the Speaker of the House, requesting him to have the process served; Judge Peters thought this the proper course; Judge Chase ordered process to issue without such letter, saying that if it was necessary to compel the attendance of the members, the case would be continued until the session was over"; ultimately several members appeared voluntarily to testify); 1803, *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cr. 137, 142, 144 (clerks of the department of State, and the Attorney-General, held liable to attend on a subpoena); 1806, *Smith's and Ogden's Trial*, Lloyd's Rep. 2, 7, 13, 89 (a subpoena having issued for James Madison and two other heads of Federal departments, who responded that the President had signified to them that their "official duties cannot at this juncture be dispensed with," the Court of two judges divided, without reasons given, as to issuing an attach-



—presumably those whose official duties are most likely to be seriously interfered with by frequent calls for attendance to give evidence;<sup>3</sup> but the policy of such statutes is a poor one; and in these days of rapid transit and of ready communication the measure is anachronistic.

That the Court should determine whether a proper excuse exists in each case seems the sounder rule, for the reasons elsewhere noted (*post*, § 2376), though they do not apply as strongly to this exemption; and Chief Justice Marshall apparently reserves this power. But no decisive judicial opinion has here been expressed.<sup>4</sup> For any officer other than the chief Executive, it seems hard to believe that a Court would abdicate its normal authority to determine all questions of privilege.

§ 2372. **Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges, Arbitrators.** (1) An *ambassador*, being the personal representative of the foreign sovereign, is concededly immune from compulsory process. This immunity rests also on a sound public policy, and is therefore by common custom of international law extended to *ministers* and (to some indefinite extent) to the persons of their

ment); 1807, Burr's Trial, Robertson's Rep. I, 121 (Marshall, C. J., quoted *supra*); *N. J.* 1871, Thompson v. R. Co., 22 N. J. Eq. 111 (a Governor is liable to attend; but no process of compulsion will issue; quoted *supra*); *Pa.* 1815, Gray v. Pentland, 2 S. & R. 23, 28, 32 (whether a Governor is compellable on subpoena d. t. to attend and produce a paper in his official custody, not decided); 1877, Hartranft's Appeal, 85 Pa. 433 (grand jury's subpoena to the Governor and other officers, to attend and testify as to a riot; on a written answer alleging that public duties elsewhere prevented their attendance, an attachment was refused, partly on the ground that the Governor could not be summoned, partly on the principle of Thompson v. R. Co., *supra*; the opinion is confused; Agnew, C. J., and Sterrett, J., diss.).

<sup>3</sup> CANADA: *B. C.* Rev. St. 1911, c. 127, § 113 (no land registrar need attend as a witness, but may be examined on commission); *Man.* Rev. St. 1913, c. 171, § 21 (a district registrar of land titles need not attend as witness without the town, except after certain notice); *Sask.* R. S. 1920, c. 67, § 184 (like *Man.* R. S. c. 171, § 21).

UNITED STATES: *Ark.* Dig. 1919, § 4206, (quoted *ante*, § 1411); *Ida.* Comp. St. 1919 § 8006 (attendance "cannot be enforced" of a "State or county officer or judge" at a trial in other than the county of residence); *Ind.* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 439 (a State or county officer, judge, practising physician, or attorney-at-law, cannot be compelled to attend); *Ky.* Stats. 1915, § 217 a, par. 17 (commissioners, officers, and servants, of State charitable institutions may testify at trials without the county by deposition, without attendance); §§ 554, 556 (various kinds of callings and

offices; personal attendance to testify not required, unless Court so orders; quoted *ante*, § 1411); *Tenn.* Shannon's Code 1916, §§ 5624, 5628 (privileged not to attend Court are the following: an officer of U. S., an officer of this State or of a county, a clerk of another Court of record, a member of General Assembly in session or clerk or officer thereof, a practising physician or attorney, a jailer or prison-keeper of another county); *Va.* Code 1919, § 2618 (no officer or employee of the treasurer, auditor, or second auditor is compellable to leave his office to testify as to the genuineness of coupon tendered in payment of State dues); *Wash.* R. & B. Code 1909, § 5947 (a superintendent of a State insane hospital is not required to attend as witness in a civil suit; nor in a criminal case, unless the judge of the court of trial shall require his attendance "upon being satisfied of the materiality of his testimony"); *Wis.* Stats. 1919, § 51.16 (a superintendent of a State insane hospital is not compellable to attend, except on certain specified conditions).

Add also the statutes exempting *custodians of official records*, *post*, § 2373. Compare the general viatorial *privilege not to attend*, *ante*, § 2206.

<sup>4</sup> The possibilities of abuse that lie in conceding to the officer himself the determination of the necessity are suggested in the following passage from the opinion of Agnew, C. J., in Hartranft's Appeal, cited *supra*, n. 2 (*loc. cit.* p. 457): "The argument 'ab inconvenienti' that it is necessary the Governor should always be at the seat of government, is preposterous, in view of frequent visits elsewhere, of business, courtesy, and pleasure. The absence of the Governor in the Rocky Mountains, on the way to California, at the time of these riots, is an apposite example."



official households. As a practical consequence, such officers are also exempt from attendance in court as witnesses.<sup>1</sup>

(2) A *consul*, not being a diplomatic officer, does not by common custom of international law possess this immunity from compulsory process. But by treaty it has in many instances been expressly conceded.<sup>2</sup> Distinguish, however, first, this exemption from process or attendance and the duty to furnish evidence; for the two may properly coexist, and are recognized as co-existent for consuls abroad in the instructions of the Department of State;<sup>3</sup>

§ 2372. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1663, Earl of Clarendon's Trial, 6 How. St. Tr. 291, 340 (the House discussing the sources of certain information, it was objected, "possibly a foreign ambassador, and no oath can be given him"); *U. S.* 1856, Dubois' Case, Wharton, Digest of International Law, I, 668, Lawrence's Wheaton's International Law, 393, Dana's Wheaton, § 226, note 129 (the Netherlands minister held exempt from summons; see Sen. Exec. Doc. 21, 34th Cong. 3d Sess.); 1881, Guiteau's Trial, I, 136 (Sr. Camacho, the Venezuelan minister, testified to what he saw of the murder; and the District Attorney announced that, although the minister was "entitled under the law governing diplomatic relations to be relieved from service by subpoena or sworn as a witness in any case," yet his Government had "instructed him to waive his rights").

For the admissibility, under the Hearsay rule, of an *ambassador's deposition*, see *ante*, §§ 1383, 1407.

<sup>2</sup> 1854, *Re Dillon*, 7 Sawyer 561 (the consul of France was summoned by subpoena d. t. in favor of a defendant in a criminal case; the treaty of 1853 with France, art. 2, provided for immunity of consuls from appearance in court as witnesses; held, that the constitutional provision entitling an accused to compulsory process did not override the treaty provision, the Constitution having given merely the same right to process which had before existed for the prosecution only, and therefore having given it subject to the established exemption for foreign ambassadors; and the subsequent addition of consuls to the exempt class, by treaty, was no new exemption but merely an enlargement of the class already exempt; official documents in a consular office were held privileged, here under express provision of the treaty of 1853 with France; the party summoning must show that the desired document is not an official one); 1854, *Dillon's Case*, Wharton's Digest of International Law, I, 665 (Mr. Marcy, Secretary of State, opposed the privilege in the preceding case, on the ground that the constitutional right was subject to such exemptions only as existed specifically at the Constitution's adoption, and the treaty exemptions of consuls were thus not included); 1855, *Portuguese Consul's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 775 (a Portuguese consul, assuming that the most-favored-nation clause

gives him the French treaty-privileges, is exempted from process as a witness, except when required by an accused in a criminal case; per Marcy, Secretary); 1862, *Hanoverian Consul's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 776 (a trading consul of Hanover held not exempt; per Seward, Secretary; no reason stated); 1867, *Janssen's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 777, Sen. Ex. Doc. 1, spec. sess. 1867 (consul's exequatur may be revoked for failure to obey summons, when he is not privileged by treaty); 1891, *U. S. v. Trumbull*, 48 Fed. 94 (the Chilean vice-consul, under the existing treaty with Chili, which by the most-favored-nation clause secured the immunity for consuls under the treaty of 1853 with France, held exempt from compulsory process as witness on behalf of the prosecution; the constitutional guarantee invoked in *Dillon's case* not being applicable; here the testimony was asked against persons charged with violating the neutrality laws by aiding the insurrectionary party which by the time of the trial had become the lawful Government represented by the witness); 1894, *Mason's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, p. 304 (U. S. consul in Germany summoned; held, not privileged, unless by the most-favored-nation clause of Treaty 1871, art. V, the U. S. obtains the benefit of other treaties by Germany); 1899, *Guenther's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, 302 (similar); 1899, *Clancy's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, 566, 583 (similar; Nicaragua treaty of 1867, art. X, applied; but "information which came to him in his official capacity" is privileged); 1899, *Baiz v. Malo*, 27 N. Y. Miscell. 685 (under treaties with Columbia giving most-favored-nation privileges, the French treaty-provision with the United States applies and exempts consuls from attendance); 1900, *Bruni's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1900, p. 705 ("a consul engaged in business [in Guatemala] is amenable to summons, etc., only for causes apart from his official functions; he cannot be summoned to give evidence of any matter of his consular business, nor to produce to the Court any part of the consular archives").

For a full account of American practice on this subject, see the following work: 1922, Charles Cheney Hyde, *International Law*, chiefly as interpreted and applied by the United States, I, § 436 (diplomatic officers), § 476 (consuls).

<sup>3</sup> See the cases *infra*, note 4.



secondly, a genuine privilege of secrecy (even where no exemption from attendance exists by treaty) for the *official archives* of the consulate<sup>4</sup> and the official facts known to the consul;<sup>5</sup> for the privilege for secrets of State (*post*, § 2378) may well be deemed to apply (in the absence of any rule obtaining in the International Court of Justice) to all matters of international concern.

(3) A *judge* of a superior court seems to have been regarded as *exempt from attendance* at common law.<sup>6</sup> But the exemption cannot be put upon any broader ground, so as to negative either the general duty to furnish evidence (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2370) or the amenability to compulsory process (*ante*, § 2371). Whether, on grounds other than privilege, a judge should be *prohibited* (not merely exempted) *from testifying* in the very cause over which he is presiding, is a distinct question, elsewhere examined (*ante*, § 1909). Whether a judge is privileged not to disclose *communications received in confidence*, from an informer or a party confessing, is considered *post*, § 2376.

<sup>4</sup> 1894, *Mason's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, p. 304 (charges of under-valuation filed in U. S. consul's office in Germany; treaty provision of 1871, art. V, that consular archives shall be inviolable, applied); 1899, *Guenther's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, p. 302 (similar); 1899, *Clancy's Case*, *ib.* p. 566, 583 (similar; U. S. consul in Nicaragua; consular archives held inviolable, irrespective of treaties; but "personal books and papers of the consul" are not privileged); 1900, *Bruni's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1900, p. 705 (quoted *supra*); 1903, *Kessler v. Best*, C. C., 121 Fed. 439 (documents being "part of the archives of the German consulate," privileged; no authority cited).

<sup>5</sup> *Clancy's Case*, *Bruni's Case*, *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> *England*: 1620, Declaration of Grievances, Cobbett's Parl. Hist. I, 1206 (the Lords having sent for several members of the Commons to testify in the investigation into abuses of royal patents, it was objected in the Commons that the members were virtually judges upon grievances, and therefore not liable to be sworn; Sir E. Coke arguing that "the judges of the Common Pleas, or of any court, are never sworn as witnesses in any case, albeit they know of something concerning it and can testify in it; but if their knowledge be asked, they answer it without an oath; that no judge of the Star Chamber can be served with a subpoena 'ad testificandum' in that court"; but finally the members volunteered their oaths out of courtesy); 1692, *Knowles' Trial*, 12 How. St. Tr. 1179 ff. (Holt, C. J., and Eyre, J., having quashed an indictment against a person claiming to be a peer, were summoned before the House of Lords to explain their reasons, the proceeding being by express vote not regarded as charging them, but only for information; they declined to make any explanation at that place, as being privileged); 1838, *R. v. Gizard*, 8 C. & P. 595 (perjury; the grand jury inquired whether they "ought to examine" the chairman of the quarter sessions to prove the testimony, the

chairman "having expressed a desire not to be examined as a witness"; *Patteson*, 3 B. & A. 113 (it is a new point, but I should advise the grand jury not to examine him. He is the president of a court of record, and it would be dangerous to allow such an examination, as the judges of England might be called upon to state what occurred before them in court"; an *amicus curiæ* having referred to a contrary instance, *Patteson*, J., replied: "I think it is wrong, and that it ought not to be done"); 1858, *R. v. Harvey*, 8 Cox Cr. 99, 103 (Byles, J., said that he should refuse to appear if subpoenaed to produce his notes of testimony, but that the rule did not apply to inferior magistrates); 1880, *Anon.*, 24 Sol. J. 398 (master of the Supreme Court, summoned to prove testimony before him on a charge of perjury; objection waived).

*United States*: 1916, *Hale v. Wyatt*, 78 N. H. 214, 98 Alt. 379 (said 'obiter' that a judge of probate has a personal privilege not to testify to a statement made before him in court by a party, but that the statement itself is not privileged as to the party, not being confidential); 1917, *White Mountain Freezer Co. v. Murphy*, 78 N. H. 382, 101 Atl. 357 (injunction against picketing; defendant M. representing strikers, made statements before the state labor commissioner; the statements held not privileged, and the labor commissioner therefore held competent to testify to them; held, further, that the commissioner did not occupy a judicial status, and therefore had no privilege as a judge to decline to testify, though he did not claim such a privilege); *Tex. Rev. C. Cr. P.* 1911, § 799 ("When it is proposed to offer the testimony of a judge in a cause pending before him, he is not required to testify if he declares that there is no fact within his knowledge important in the cause").

The admissibility of a *judge's notes*, under the Hearsay rule, is still another question: *ante*, § 1666.



(4) It was at one time thought that an *arbitrator* had some such privilege of not testifying.<sup>7</sup> But this notion was entirely unfounded. It is now thoroughly understood that an arbitrator is not, by reason of that office, either disqualified or privileged (*ante*, § 1912); and that the only prohibitions applicable concern the facts which may be proved as to his award, these facts being determined by the principles of the parol-evidence rule as applied to awards (*ante*, § 2358); or concern the communications made to him in confidence by the parties (*post*, § 2376).

§ 2373. (e) **Irremovability of Official Records.** On the general principle of the public inconvenience and danger involved in removing official records from their usual place of custody (*ante*, § 2182), the Court may refuse to compel the production of the originals in evidence:<sup>1</sup>

1794, *Per CURIAM*, in *Delaney v. Philadelphia*, 1 Yeates 403 (refusing a subpoena d. t. against the surveyor-general): "We ought not to issue a subpoena with such a clause in the present instance; otherwise the surveyor-general, or any other public officer, might be obliged to take any original public papers from his office to the farthest counties

<sup>7</sup> 1808, *Ellis v. Saltau*, 4 C. & P. 327. note (an arbitrator being called to prove that he had exceeded the limits of his submission, "Mansfield, C. J., told the witness that he need not be examined unless he chose it, thinking that an arbitrator was not to be afterwards worried as a witness").

§ 2373. <sup>1</sup> *Accord*: ENGLAND: 1788, *R. v. King*, 2 T. R. 234 (application for an information against assessing-officers; the rule that, in granting an information against magistrates for misconduct, there should be a production of their proceedings before the Court was conceded; but, by exception, on the score of "public inconvenience," the order to bring the assessment books by 'certiorari' was quashed; "every person is entitled to take copies, so that no injury can arise to the party from our refusing a 'certiorari'; but on the contrary very great public inconvenience would ensue from permitting it to issue"); 1788, *Atherfold v. Beard*, 2 T. R. 610 (action on a wager as to the collection of taxes; revenue officers treated as not bound to produce the public books, chiefly on the ground of inconvenience).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1879, *Corbett v. Gibson*, 16 Blatchf. 334 (production of official documents in custody of a major-general, not required, since copies could be obtained and used); *Alabama*: 1887, *Stevenson v. Moody*, 84 Ala. 33, 35, 4 So. 595 ("except in special cases," a public record's original cannot be required for production; here said of probate record-book); *Georgia*: 1886, *Re Lester*, 77 Ga. 143 (a mayor, who was 'ex officio' the presiding judge of a Court of record; held not subject to subpoena d. t. to bring his docket to be used as evidence); *Illinois*: 1870, *Dunham v. Chicago*, 55 Ill. 357 ("books and documents, public records, in the custody of public officers"; the Court has power to order production, but will

not do so where certified copies will answer as well; "public convenience and safety" being the reason); *New Jersey*: 1901, *Delaware Surety Co. v. Layton*, — N. J. Eq. —, 50 Atl. 378 (Secretary of State enjoined from removing official documents out of the State); *Ohio*: 1832, *Peney v. Gilliland*, Wright Oh. 38 (justice's docket; "strong circumstances must be shown to induce a Court to order the removal of the book"); *Pennsylvania*: 1794, *Delaney v. Philadelphia*, 1 Yeates 403 (subpoena d. t. to the surveyor-general to bring official papers, refused; quoted 'supra'); 1840, *Devling v. Williamson*, 9 Watts 311, 317 ("To permit a person other than [the custodian] . . . to take them [out of the office] is a most dangerous and pernicious practice"; they should be taken out only by custodian upon a subpoena or special order).

In a few cases the Court has exercised its power to require production: 1815, *Treasurer v. Moore*, 3 Brev. S. C. 550 ("A sheriff's books are public property, and whoever may be in possession of them is bound to produce them when called for by legal authority, even though as evidence against himself"); 1856, *Bashford v. Barstow*, Wis., Pamph. Rep. p. 289 (the Court required the Secretary of State to bring original election returns, bearing evidence of forgery, from another room in the same building).

The following case is peculiar: 1920, *Best v. Best*, Prob. 75 (to prove birth of a child to the wife charged with adultery during plaintiff's absence in military service, the plaintiff was obliged to subpoena the registrar to bring the original register of births, the registrar having refused to let the plaintiff inspect any part of the register except the index; held, that inspection and the furnishing of a certified copy was a right, the plaintiff being "a person vitally interested").



in the State, and the same papers might be demanded in different counties at the same time."

This rule of the common law has been supplemented in some jurisdictions by express statutes.<sup>2</sup>

Distinguish, however, (1) the *illegality* of removing such records; for this of itself is no ground for refusing to receive them (*ante*, § 2183); (2) the propriety of receiving an *original* always, in preference to a copy; for, apart from the prohibition of the present rule (which leaves much to the Court's discretion) the original of a document is always receivable (*ante*, § 1186); (3) the admissibility of *copies*, whenever the original is not removable; for this raises the question whether a specific kind of record is required to be produced in the original (*ante*, § 1218); the few instances of such required production — for example, on a plea of 'null tiel record' — are thereby made exceptions to the present rule; (4) the right of a citizen or taxpayer to *inspect official records* in their place of custody (*ante*, § 1858).

§ 2374. (f) **Privilege for Communications by Information to Government.** A genuine privilege for communications, on the fundamental principle of privilege (*ante*, § 2285), must be recognized for the communications made by informers to the Government; because such communications ought

<sup>2</sup> CANADA: *Ontario*: Rules of Court 1913, Nos. 274, 275 (no subpoena shall issue for "production of an original record or of an original document from any registry office"; but a judge's order may be made, but not for a document provable by a certified copy, "except in special circumstances"); *Manitoba*: R. S. 1913, c. 46, Rule 471 (like Ont. Rule 274, but including court offices); *New Brunswick*: Consol. St. 1903, c. 151, § 56 (registrar of deeds need not attend with the registry book, unless the judge specially orders production); *Saskatchewan*: R. S. 1920, c. 67, § 184 (original record of a land-title registry shall be produced only on order of a judge).

UNITED STATES: *Fed. St.* 1904, April 19, c. 1398, Stat. L. vol. 33, p. 186, Code § 683 (land-office applications, etc., to be produced; cited more fully *ante*, § 1676); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1950 (no record of any sort of which a transcript is receivable may be removed from the office of custody, except on order of Court "in cases where the inspection of the record is shown to be essential to the just determination of the cause or proceeding pending, or where the court is held in the same building with such office"); *Kan. Gen. St.* 1915, § 7273 ("no public officer herein named," viz., a probate judge, county clerk, county treasurer, register of deeds, clerk of the district court, justice of the peace, police judge, or other public officer, or "other custodian of public records shall be compelled to attend any court, officer, or tribunal sitting more than one mile from his office" with the records in his custody); *La. St.* 1912, No. 242, p. 539, July 11, § 12 (certain

public records to be irremovable, except on giving bond); *Miss. Code* 1906, § 2813, Hem. § 2314 ("a book of record of public conveyances shall not be removed by writ or subpoena 'duces tecum' . . . out of the courthouse" if a transcript is receivable in evidence); *N. J. Comp. St.* 1910, Conveyances § 45 (no record shall be removed before any court out of the county, where a transcript may be given in evidence); *N. Y. C. P. A.* 1920, §§ 410-414 (regulation of the use of records, by a qualified prohibition of removal); *Ok. Gen. Code Ann.* 1921, § 11506 (the custodian of irremovable official documents is not compellable to attend, on certain conditions); *Ok. Comp. St.* 1921, § 654 (no public officer or other custodian of public records is to be compelled to attend with official records "more than one mile from his office"); *Pa. St.* 1823, Mar. 31, § 1, Dig. 1920, § 10333, Evidence (documents in the offices of the secretaries of the Commonwealth and of the land-office, of the surveyor-general, auditor-general, and State treasurer, are producible on proper process); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 330 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1950); *Va. Code* 1919, § 2618 (no documents in office of State treasurer, auditor, or second auditor, shall be removed for evidence as to "genuineness of a coupon tendered in payment of taxes," etc., nor shall any such officer, etc. attend to testify thereto); *Wash. R. & B. Code* 1909, § 1216 ("no public officer having the possession or control of public records or papers which are required by law to be kept in any particular office or place shall be compelled to produce the same").



to receive encouragement, and because that confidence which will lead to such communications can be created only by holding out exemption from a compulsory disclosure of the informant's identity: —

1794, *Hardy's Trial*, 24 How. St. Tr. 99; the witness had reported the existence and doings of secret political societies: "I did not do it of myself, but by advice; a gentleman recommended me by all means to make a report. It was not to a magistrate." Mr. *Erskine*: "Then to whom was it?" Objection was made. "I submit he must state the name of the person to whom he communicated it; then have I not a right to subpoena that person? I will then ask [this witness], When did you tell it him? At what place? Who were present? Then I ask that person, Is it true? . . . And if he were to say, I never saw his face [the witness'] till I saw him in court, would not that shake the credit of the witness with any man of understanding? I apprehend it would." Mr. *Attorney-General* [opposing]: "What is the principle upon which the Court says, You shall never ask where he got that information? . . . A court of justice does not sit to catch the little whispers or the huzzas of popularity; it proceeds upon great principles of general justice. It says that individuals must suffer inconveniences rather than great public mischief should be incurred; and it says that if men's names are to be mentioned who interpose in situations of this kind, the consequence must be that great crimes will be passed over without any information being offered about them, or without persons taking that part which is always a disagreeable part to take but which at the same time it is necessary should be taken for the interest of the public. . . . Nobody will deny but that it is a hard case; but it has become a settled rule, because private mischief gives way to public convenience." *Eyre*, L. C. J.: "It is perfectly right that all opportunities should be given to discuss the truth of the evidence given against a prisoner; but there is a rule which has universally obtained on account of its importance to the public for the detection of crimes, that those persons who are the channel by means of which that detection is made should not unnecessarily be disclosed. . . . [As to (1) the person reported to,] I cannot satisfy myself that there is any substantial distinction between the case of this man's going to a justice of the peace or going to a magistrate superior to a justice of the peace, or to some other person who communicated with a justice of the peace. . . . [As to (2) the person above advising a report,] I am of opinion the principle extends to that question, because the disclosing who the friend was that advised him to go to a magistrate is a thing which puts that friend in a situation into which he ought not to be put, and into which it is inconvenient to general justice that he should be put. . . . My apprehension is that, among those questions which are not permitted to be asked, are all those questions which tend to the discovery of the channels by whom the disclosure was made to the officers of justice; that it is upon the general principle of the convenience of public justice not to be disclosed; that all persons in that situation are protected from the discovery; and that, if it is objected to, it is no more competent for the defendant to ask who the person was that advised him to make a disclosure than it is to whom he made the disclosure in consequence of that advice, [or] than it is to ask any other question respecting the channel of communication or all that was done under it." *BULLER*, J.: "My lord chief justice and my lord chief baron both say the principle is that the discovery is necessary for the purpose of obtaining public justice; and if you call for the name of informer in such cases, no man will make a discovery, and public justice will be defeated. Upon that ground, therefore, it is that the informer for the purpose of a public prosecution shall not be disclosed."

1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 20th day, *Times' Rep.* pt. 6, p. 28; the *Times* had charged the Irish Land League with complicity in crime and agrarian outrage; part of its case was that, in spite of the League's avowedly peaceable purpose, there were inner circles of conspirators who used the League to advance criminal purposes; one of the police inspectors had testified that there was such an inner circle of criminals; on cross-examination he was asked by Mr. *Reid*: "You now say that you obtained this information from



an informer?" A. "Yes." Q. "Give me the name of the informer." A. "I will not." Q. "I must press you." A. "I repeat to my Lords that I cannot do any such thing." A. L. SMITH, J.: "I always understood that a police-constable is not bound to state the name of a person from whom he received information." Mr. Reid: "We are wanting to get to the bottom of this matter. Here is a police-constable who states that the Land League has an inner circle, according to his information. I am entitled to find out who gave him the information, otherwise we are at the mercy of an anonymous informer whom we are not allowed to ascertain, whose name even we are not allowed to find out. We may be able to prove him to be the greatest liar in the three kingdoms. I submit that I am entitled to have the name." Sir H. James (opposing): "My lords, we have to ask you to consider the entire question. I gather we may assume that Inspector Davis has some good reason for refusing to give this information. 'This man's life might not be safe.'" President HANNEN: "When this sort of question arose before, I suggested that the question might be asked why the witness refused to give an answer. . . . It will be for us to say whether the excuse he gives will be a sufficient reason in our opinion, and whether we should or should not exercise the power we have of calling upon the witness to answer the question."

1872, GRAY, C. J., in *Worthington v. Scribner*, 109 Mass. 487, 488: "It is the duty of every citizen to communicate to his Government any information which he has of the commission of an offence against the laws. To encourage him in performing this duty without fear of consequences, the law holds such information to be among secrets of State, and leaves the question how far and under what circumstances the names of the informers and the channel of communication shall be suffered to be known to the absolute discretion of the Government, to be exercised according to its views of what the interests of the public require. Courts of justice therefore will not compel or allow the discovery of such information, either by the subordinate officer to whom it is given, by the informer himself, or by any other person, without the permission of the Government."

This privilege is well established,<sup>1</sup> and its soundness cannot be questioned. But it is subject to certain limitations, inherent in its logic and its policy:

§ 2374. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1790, *R. v. Akers*, 6 Esp. 126, note (information for obstructing a customs officer; the defendant not allowed to inquire the name of the person informing of the smuggling); 1794, *Hardy's Trial*, 24 How. St. Tr. 8 (quoted *supra*); 1817, *R. v. Watson*, 2 Stark. 116, 135, 32 How. St. Tr. 102 (a shorthand reporter of seditious speeches, not allowed to be asked as to delivering his notes to the Under-Secretary of State; L. C. L. Ellenborough "said that a communication to a member of the Government was a communication to Government"); 1845, *R. v. O'Connell*, 1 Cox Cr. 403, 5 State Tr. N. S. 1, 208 (a witness for the Crown was not allowed to ask "at whose suggestion" he came over to Ireland, even on cross-examination); 1845 (?), *R. v. Candy*, cited 15 M. & W. 176 (the witness was allowed to be asked whether he was the informer; Rolfe, B.: "That was tried before me; the principle was rather followed than violated by asking that question of B., because it was perfectly clear and admitted that he was the informer, and it went to exclude the notion of anybody else being an informer"); 1846, *Attorney-General v. Briant*, 15 M. & W. 169 (information for penalties; the question, "Did

you give the information?" was not allowed; "in a public prosecution a witness cannot be asked such questions as will disclose the informer, if he be a third person; . . . the principle of the rule applies to the case where a witness is asked if he himself is the informer"); 1848, *R. v. O'Brien*, 7 State Tr. N. S. 1, 123 (an informer was told by someone, not an official, to attend a treasonable meeting, but refused to name him on account of supposed danger of assassination; not compelled); 1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 20th day, *Times'* Rep. pt. 6, p. 28 (quoted *supra*: another instance occurs on the 35th day, pt. 9, p. 241); 1890, *Marks v. Beyfus*, L. R. 25 Q. B. D. 494, 498 (malicious prosecution; on testimony by the director of public prosecutions that the original proceeding had been instituted by himself, he was held privileged from naming his informants or producing their written statements; following *Attorney-General v. Briant, supra*).

CANADA: 1884, *Bradley v. McIntosh*, 5 Ont. 227, 232 (libel; an anonymous letter sent by the defendant to the Attorney-General concerning the plaintiff was refused production by the head of the department; production not compelled); 1893, *Humphrey v. Archibald*, 20 Ont.



(1) The privilege applies only to the *identity* of the informant, not to the contents of his statement as such, for, by hypothesis, the contents of the communication are to be used and published in the course of prosecution. Much less does the privilege apply to prevent merely the proof of contents which have already been 'de facto' disclosed, — as in an action against the informant for libel. To deny production in such a case is in effect to declare

App. 267 (police-officer sued for malicious prosecution, and refusing to disclose his informants, held privileged: "it is not the privilege of the witness, but is adopted on the grounds of public policy on account of its importance to the public").

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1827, U. S. v. Moses, 4 Wash. C. C. 726 ("the officer who apprehended the prisoner is not bound to disclose the name of the person from whom he received the information which led to the detection and apprehension"); 1807, Burr's Trial, Robertson's Rep. II, 508, 520, 525 (a motion was made that "a communication confidentially made to the President, respecting the conduct of certain persons holding places of trust and confidence, but who have not hitherto been prosecuted or even suspected, should be produced"; Chief Justice Marshall in this instance ordered production of the letter, because it did not appear that the President objected to production; but the Chief Justice, while recognizing a privilege, did not indicate the limits of it, nor whether it here rested on the present ground or on that of State secrecy; the arguments of counsel *pro* and *con* are useful); 1884, Vogel v. Gruaz, 110 U. S. 311, 316, 4 Sup. 12 (Worthington v. Scribner, *infra*, followed, in holding a communication privileged when made to a State's attorney with reference to securing an indictment); 1902, King v. U. S., 50 C. C. A. 647, 112 Fed. 988 (answers as to an accomplice-witness' immunity from prosecution under a promise from the government attorney, held not privileged as involving State secrets); *Connecticut*: 1787, State v. Phelps, Kirby Conn. 282 (State's attorney not allowed to testify "what the prisoner had disclosed to him, upon an application to be admitted a witness for the State; for such disclosures "would tend to defeat the benefits the public may derive from them"); *Kansas*: 1909, Michael v. Matson, 81 Kan. 360, 105 Pac. 537 (communication to the district attorney, privileged; "in this country the privilege has been treated as covering the communication itself"); *Massachusetts*: 1872, Worthington v. Scribner, 109 Mass. 487 (action for falsely informing the U. S. Treasury that the plaintiff was a fraudulent impostor; interrogatories to the defendant as to his giving such information, held privileged from answer; quoted *supra*); *Michigan*: 1900, Shinglemeyer v. Wright, 124 Mich. 230, 82 N. W. 887 (slander; defendant's communications of his suspicions to detective officers,

not admitted to show malice, because privileged; this seems unsound); 1911, Wells v. Toogood, 165 Mich. 677, 131 N. W. 124 (communications to a deputy-sheriff, by one complaining of a theft, held privileged); *Mississippi*: 1906, Rogers v. State, 88 Miss. 38, 40 So. 744 (larceny of a package; R. having been summoned before the grand jury, and testifying that the package was brought back and given to him for the owner, by a woman to whom he promised secrecy, he was held not privileged not to disclose her name); *Pennsylvania*: 1815, Gray v. Pentland, 2 S. & R. 23, 28, 32 (libel for a deposition made by defendant before a justice, charging the defendant, clerk of a court, with unfitness and forwarded to the Governor; on a subpoena d. t. to the Governor and Secretary, they refused to attend, and evidence of the document's contents was offered; held inadmissible, since to allow such proof "would be a check on representations to the competent authority"; this is unsound, because both the name and the contents were already disclosed); 1837, Yoter v. Sanno, 6 Watts 164, 166 (preceding ruling approved); *Virginia*: 1816, Morris v. Creel, 2 Va. Cas. 49 (subpoena d. t. upon the clerk of the Executive Council, for "a certain memorial to the Executive," submitted "for public purposes, to enable the council to determine upon the conduct of executive officers"; attachment refused, because the clerk ought not to produce without the Council's order); *West Virginia*: 1913, Sullivan v. Hill, 73 W. Va. 49, 79 S. E. 670 (prosecuting attorney held not privileged, before a legislative committee, not to disclose his information, or its source, concerning an alleged bribery for which criminal prosecution was then in contemplation); *Wisconsin*: 1906, Schultz v. Strauss, 127 Wis. 325, 106 N. W. 1066 (defendant held privileged from disclosing, on interrogatories of discovery by the plaintiff, his testimony before the grand jury and district attorney, on which the plaintiff desired to found an action for defamation and malicious prosecution; the opinion properly places the ruling on grounds of substantive law).

Note that a communication not protected by this privilege may be protected by the privileges for communications to an *attorney* (*ante*, § 2296) or to a *grand jury* (*ante*, § 2363) and vice versa. Distinguish the non-privilege of a *journalist* to disclose the source of his information (*ante*, § 2286).

that the libel is privileged from liability. If that is indeed the judicial belief and the law, it should be frankly declared; if not, the action should not be defeated by an evasion which pretends to keep secret that which is not secret.<sup>2</sup>

(2) If the identity of the informer is *admitted or known*, then there is no reason for pretended concealment, and the privilege of secrecy would be merely an artificial obstacle to proof.<sup>3</sup>

(3) The privilege applies to communications to such officers only as have a *responsibility or duty* to investigate or to prevent public wrongs, and not to officials in general. This ordinarily signifies the *police*, and officials of *criminal justice* generally. But it may also include *administrative officials* having a duty of inspection or of law-enforcement in their particular spheres.<sup>4</sup> The truth is that the principle is a large and flexible one; it applies wherever the situation is one where without this encouragement the citizens who have special information of a violation of law might be deterred otherwise from reporting it to the appropriate official.

(4) Even where the privilege is strictly applicable, the *trial Court may compel disclosure*, if it appears necessary in order to avoid the risk of false testimony or to secure useful testimony.<sup>5</sup> The reasons for this qualification have been thus set forth:

1863, *R. v. Richardson*, 3 F. & F. 693; murder by poison; a policeman, having testified to finding poison on a search of defendant's premises in consequence of information received, refused under police regulations to give the names of his informants. COCKBURN, C. J., "ordered him immediately to answer the question, observing that in this case it was most material to the ends of justice that it should be stated"; and it then appeared that the informants were "two girls who were not called as witnesses for the prosecution." The Chief Justice afterwards commenting strongly on the failure to produce them, the *Reporters* add: "Though in this particular case it was not so, yet it might be in similar cases that the information was given by or derived from the really guilty party with a view to divert suspicion from himself and fix it on an innocent person; or again, it might be (and in this case it was so) that the information was derived from the accused herself and was accompanied by a statement showing her innocence. . . . The effect of applying the supposed rule in such cases, it is manifest, would be to enable prosecutors or policemen to produce such portions of evidence as they might please, and to withhold the wit-

<sup>2</sup> For this reason *Gray v. Pentland*, *supra*, seems erroneous.

<sup>3</sup> *R. v. Candy*, *supra*, illustrates this.

<sup>4</sup> Distinguish, from these *volunteered complaints*, the case of *compulsory reports* made to an official, *post*, § 2377; *Del.* 1899, *Smith v. Smith*, 2 Penne. (Del.) 365, 45 Atl. 848 (communications by a citizen to a letter carrier as to addresses and other matters relating to mail delivery, not protected); *Me.* 1839, *State v. Soper*, 16 Me. 293 (larceny of logs; questions as to the employees giving information to the owner, leading to a search by him, excluded on the facts; the informants being in fear of mob violence in case of disclosure); *Mich. Comp. L.* 1915, § 5513 (mine employee's information

as to need of a mine inspector; "such notice shall be forever privileged in any court either civil or criminal"); *Nev. Rev. L.* 1912, § 4204 (complaint of mine-dangers to State inspector; "the names of the complainants" not to be divulged, "except such action be necessary in the administration of justice in the courts"); *N. Y.* 1839, *Howard v. Thompson*, 21 Wend. 319, 335 (libel, for a letter by a postmaster to the Secretary of the Treasury charging with fraud the plaintiff a customs inspector; intimated 'obiter' that the letter was privileged; *Gray v. Pentland*, *supra*, approved).

<sup>5</sup> 1893, *Burton, J.*, in *Humphrey v. Archibald*, 20 Ont. App. 267, 269 (similar to *Marks v. Beyfus*, *supra*).



nesses the whole of whose evidence might demonstrate the innocence of the accused. It is extraordinary that it should ever have been supposed that (in ordinary cases at all events) there ever was such a rule; and the latest writer on the subject, Mr. Best, entirely ignores it except in political cases. And it may deserve consideration whether ever in such cases it applies where the question is asked, not merely with a view to elicit the name for purposes of observation or credit, etc., but when (as in the present instance) the party who gave the information must have been in a position to disclose something further as to the facts of the case."

1890, Lord ESHER, M. R., in *Marks v. Beyfus*, L. R. 25 Q. B. D. 494, 498: "I do not say it is a rule which can never be departed from; if upon the trial of a prisoner the judge should be of opinion that the disclosure of the name of the informant is necessary or right in order to show the prisoner's innocence, then one public policy is in conflict with another public policy, and that which says that an innocent man is not to be condemned when his innocence can be proved is the policy that must prevail."

§ 2375. **Same: State Prosecutor (District Attorney, etc.).** Inasmuch as the official State prosecutor (district attorney, State's attorney, city attorney) is in American custom always a member of the bar, who has gone into office direct from private practice, and often is permitted (by law or by professional ethics) to continue in private practice while holding office, it constantly happens that he is consulted by citizens in some other than his official capacity. Thus it becomes necessary to discriminate between a communication protected by the foregoing privilege, and a communication protected by the attorney-and-client privilege (*ante*, § 2316):

1846, LOCKWOOD, J., in *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 308 (malicious prosecution: the defendant, being plaintiff in a suit for the taking of a horse, had gone to the prosecuting attorney of the county and made complaint preparatory to appearing before the grand jury; the attorney advised him that no indictment would lie): "The relation of client and attorney must exist. The party must consult the attorney in a matter in which his private interest is concerned, and make his statements to him with a view to enable the attorney correctly to understand his cause, so that he may manage it with greater skill; or if legal advice only is wanted, to enable the attorney the better to counsel him as to his legal rights. Did, then, Granger employ Curtiss as an attorney, either to investigate a question of law, in which his private interests were concerned, or to commence or to defend a suit in which he was a party? He clearly had no such object. He had no personal interest in the result at which Curtiss should arrive, and he did not expect to compensate him for his advice. Consequently the relation of client and attorney did not arise; and consequently the conversation was not privileged from being disclosed by Curtiss as a witness. Granger can be considered in no other light than a witness on the part of the people, communicating to the law officer of the government, his knowledge in relation to the commission of a supposed crime, and inquiring of that officer whether the facts thus communicated amounted to an offence. We think that no considerations of public policy require that the conversations between Granger and the State's attorney should be regarded as confidential and privileged."

The precedents do not yield complete light. The following distinctions (already noted *ante*, § 2316) may be offered:<sup>1</sup> (a) A communication from an

§ 2375. <sup>1</sup> The following cases cover the various points above in the text: *Fed.* 1884, *Vogel v. Gruaz*, 110 U. S. 311, 314, 4 Sup. 12 (an injured person's consultation with a State's

attorney with reference to securing an indictment, held privileged, but partly on the ground of an informer's privilege, *ante*, § 2374); *Conn.* 1787, *State v. Phelps*, Kirby Conn. 282 (stated



*accused person*, made with knowledge of the official's status, is privileged on the principle of § 2374, so far as it relates to *third persons*, but no farther.

(b) A communication from a *complainant*, seeking redress, made with knowledge of the official's status, is not protected by the attorney-and-client privilege, because the prosecutor's official responsibility disables him in that case from giving advice as a retained partisan attorney. (c) A communication from a party to a controversy, seeking legal advice, and *made in ignorance of the prosecutor's official status*, is privileged, on the principle of § 2302, *ante*.

§ 2376. **Same: Judge; Juvenile Court; Conciliator, Arbitrator.** (1) That a *judge* is an official to whom the ordinary *informer's* communications (*ante*, § 2374) are no less privileged than to the police or the State prosecutor would seem indubitable.

(2) But is there not a distinct principle, by which communications in the nature of *confessions*, or similar confidences, made privately and not in open court, by parties who are implicated in a wrong or crime and desire guidance for their course of action, are privileged from disclosure by him, at his option?<sup>1</sup>

*ante*, § 2374); *Ga.* 1914, *Fite v. Bennett*, 142 Ga. 660, 83 S. E. 515 (complainant consulting the prosecuting attorney to instigate an indictment against B.; no privilege in an ensuing civil suit by B. against the complainant); *Ill.* 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 308 (injured party's consultation of a prosecuting attorney, with a view to complaint and indictment, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); *Ind.* 1873, *Oliver v. Pate*, 43 Ind. 132, 139 (consultation with a county prosecuting attorney, for instituting a prosecution, held privileged; the Court's reasoning, however, is substantially upon the principle applicable between informers and government officers, *ante*, § 2374); 1877, *State v. Van Buskirk*, 59 Ind. 384, 388 (witness' testimony before a grand jury, in the prosecuting attorney's presence, held not a privileged communication to the latter); *Kan.* 1909, *Michael v. Matson*, 81 Kan. 360, 105 Pac. 537 (stated *ante*, § 2374); *La.* 1920, *State v. Guagliardo*, 146 La. 949, 84 So. 216 (the injured person in an assault was taken from the hospital to the jail, and there made a statement to the district attorney; privilege held not applicable); *Minn.* 1898, *Cole v. Andrews*, 74 Minn. 93, 76 N. W. 962 (consulting a county attorney as public prosecutor to institute a prosecution; not privileged); *Mass.* 1921, *Attorney-General v. Tufts*, 239 Mass. 458, 132 N. E. 325 (removal of district-attorney from office for corruption; the privilege held not to apply in such a proceeding to exclude conversations between the respondent and persons consulting him to avoid prosecution); *Nebr.* 1920, *Fimple v. State*, 104 Nebr. 471, 177 N. W. 798 (battery upon defendant's wife; his consultation with his usual legal adviser, who unknown to him was also county attorney, held privileged); *N. Y.* 1915, *People v. Roach*, 215 N. Y. 592,

109 N. E. 618 (communications to a prosecuting attorney when "several other persons were present," excluded); *Tex.* 1921, *Needham v. State*, 90 Tex. Cr. 86, 233 S. W. 966 (county attorney's promise to an accomplice's attorney, as to immunity against prosecution, held not privileged; "Jones became the State's witness, but not the State's client"); *Utah*: 1909, *State v. Hoben*, 36 Utah 186, 102 Pac. 1000 (not decided as a general rule; here the State had opened the matter, and the district attorney was not allowed to claim privilege for consultation with the prosecutrix in a charge of rape under age); *W. Va.* 1913, *Sullivan v. Hill*, 73 W. Va. 49, 79 S. E. 670 (stated *ante*, § 2374); *Wis.* 1903, *Cobb v. Simon*, 119 Wis. 597, 97 N. W. 276 (defendant's consultation with district-attorney, not privileged).

Compare the privilege for communications between *witness and grand jury* (*ante*, § 2362).

§ 2376. <sup>1</sup> 1919, *Lindsey v. People*, 66 Colo. 343, 181 Pac. 531 (John W. was shot and killed; his wife and his son aged 12 alone were present; the wife was tried for the murder; meanwhile the son had gone to the plaintiff in error, who was judge of the Juvenile Court, and had stated in confidence that he, the son, had fired the fatal shot, giving his reasons; on the trial of the mother, the son testified in her behalf; to discredit his testimony, the plaintiff in error was called to disclose the statement made to him by the son; he claimed privilege; held, by a majority, that no privilege existed, three judges diss.; the dissenting opinion is based on the special nature of the Juvenile Court; but the principle conceded seems broader); 1841, *Pierson v. Steortz*, 1 Morris Ia. 136 (consultation with an "acting magistrate," who "frequently gave advice and counsel" and "usually did the business of the defendant," held not privileged; here it



No obstruction to the course of justice can be apprehended by allowing such confidences to be preserved. The necessity and propriety, for the administration of justice, of assuring official confidence to informants desiring to unburden themselves is even plainer when a judge is the repository of that confidence, than in the case of prosecuting officials. That the Anglo-American judge, unlike the Continental magistrate, is less frequently used for the purpose, does not affect the principle. The judge is indeed the most appropriate person to represent the Law's confessor. And the privilege might well include the communications, not only of those who confess their own misdeeds, but also of those who report the misdeeds of others. In this application, the limits of the principle may be thus phrased:

A judge of any court, who as such receives information upon a matter criminal or civil, from a person, whether party or not, confessing his own offence or liability or reporting the offence or liability of another person, is privileged to withhold testimony to such information, if received in confidence, when called as a witness in any proceeding not tried before himself. Whether a judge may in a given case with propriety receive such information at all, or receive it with a pledge of confidence, is a matter of judicial ethics; but when once received, the privilege applies.

(3) In some of the modern statutes establishing *juvenile courts*, it is provided that the evidence received of the juvenile's delinquency shall not be used against him afterwards (*ante*, § 196). Occasionally, such a statute makes explicit provision for a privilege.<sup>2</sup> The reasoning seems to be that the hearing is private (*ante*, § 1835), that all sorts of irrelevant and intimate family histories are elicited, and that the Court's objective, viz. to learn all the facts about the juvenile, cannot be attained if the persons examined are to be embarrassed by the prospect of a later public disclosure in court. The privilege therefore has a legitimate basis.

(4) It seems also to follow, by the logic of the principle, that the privilege of par. 2, *supra*, should apply to any quasi-judicial officer likely to be sought informally and voluntarily by disputants and to receive their confidences, provided the law's policy encourages such confidences as a means of diminishing litigation, *e. g.* boards of *conciliation*, *arbitrators*, and the like.<sup>3</sup>

concerned an alleged theft of timber); 1903, *People v. Pratt*, 133 Mich. 125, 94 N. W. 752 (accused stated that he would like to talk to an attorney, "some one that I have confidence in," before examination by the grand jury, and asked to speak with Judge P., in charge of the grand jury; the judge stated that he could not advise him as an attorney, and warned him of his privilege; the accused then wept and confessed to the judge certain facts; held privileged, two judges dissenting; this result might be reached on the principle of a client's communication to an attorney, *ante*, § 2303; but if it be not construable as such, then it was a confession to a judge, protected under the present principle, unless it be deemed

to have been not confidential in view of the judge's warning); 1920, *People v. Sharac*, 209 Mich. 249, 176 N. W. 431 (statement of an accused under arrest, made to the examining magistrate, who had formerly practiced law, and in the presence of the police officer, not privileged; *People v. Pratt* distinguished).

<sup>2</sup> *Conn. St.* 1921, c. 336, § 11 (juvenile courts; "the conversations of the judge with a child whose case is before the court shall be privileged"); *Ky. Stats.* 1915, § 331 *e. par.* 20 (probation officer of juvenile court shall not disclose information obtained, except "as a witness on the trial of any case").

<sup>3</sup> *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 2295 (in proceedings of arbitration by State labor commission,

(5) Distinguish the various other principles applicable to a *judge's testimony* (*ante*, § 2372).

§ 2377. **Same: Reports made by Citizens under Compulsion of Law** (Taxes, Inventions, Industrial Accidents, Illegitimacy, Disease, Death, etc.). The policy underlying the principle of § 2374, *ante*, is that where the Government needs information for the conduct of its functions, and the persons possessing the information need the encouragement of privacy in order to be induced to make full disclosure, the protection of a privilege should be accorded.

In that well-settled common-law application of this policy, the privilege concerned information relating to the conduct of third persons. But many situations exist where the information can best be obtained only from the person himself whose affairs are desired to be known by the Government. And where the ultimate purpose to be served is administrative, and not penal, it may well be that the Government can afford to promise secrecy in respect to purposes penal or litigious, as the price of readily achieving its administrative purpose when it demands a report of the truth.

It is some such principle that justifies the modern creation of a number of privileges, all statutory in origin, covering sundry *matters required by law to be reported to some administrative official*.

(1) Reports of *taxable property* made to the assessor, or like official, are in some jurisdictions thus privileged; although the measure is not always expressly made applicable to judicial proceedings, but merely forbids disclosure generally.<sup>1</sup>

employer's statement of facts whose "publication would be likely to be injurious to his business," shall be "held as confidential and shall not be disclosed in the report or otherwise"; *N. H.* 1917, *White Mountain Freezer Co. v. Murphy*, 78 N. H. 398, 101 Atl. 357 (injunction against picketing; statements made by a party to the State labor commissioner, held not privileged; cited more fully *ante*, § 2371; whether St. 1913, c. 186, § 1, providing that proceedings before the commissioner shall not be received in evidence, covered this case, not decided); St. 1917, c. 142, amending St. 1911, c. 198, § 4 (proceedings before the labor commissioner shall not be received in evidence for any purpose); *N. D.* Comp. L. 1913, § 9192 (commissioners of conciliation; "no part of the proceedings" to be admissible at a trial before a justice of the peace, "nor shall any of the commissioners who took part in such hearing before them be allowed to testify therein"); St. 1921, c. 38, Mar. 10, § 6 (boards of conciliation; the proceedings shall not be admissible "at the trial of the case," and "no conciliator shall be competent as a witness thereto in any subsequent proceeding").

Distinguish here the privilege for *reports made under compulsion of law* to factory

inspectors, railroad commissioners, etc., and for information acquired by them in the exercise of their powers (*post*, § 2377); in the latter aspect these two privileges may overlap in application.

Distinguish the privilege for *trade-secrets* (*ante*, § 2212), and the parol-evidence rule for proceedings before *arbitrators* (*ante*, § 2358).

Distinguish also the rule against construing *offers of compromise* as admissions (*ante*, § 1061).

§ 2377. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1900. *Re Joseph Hargreaves, Limited*, 1 Ch. 347 (financial misdoings of a corporation; the corporation balance sheets, filed with the income-tax commissioner, were refused production by that officer, on the ground of public policy and also of the prohibition of disclosure in his oath required by the income-tax statute; held privileged from discovery on the facts; Wright, J.: "It seems to me it must be a matter of public concern that persons should have confidence in the secrecy of that procedure [of the Inland Revenue Board]").

CANADA: *Ont. R. S.* 1914, c. 195, § 20 (no assessor shall disclose information acquired concerning assessments, etc., "except when examined as a witness before any court").

UNITED STATES: *Fed. St.* 1921, Nov. 23. *Income Tax*, § 257 ("Returns upon which the



(2) The provisional secrecy accorded to an application for a *patent for an incomplete invention*<sup>2</sup> seems to fall near to the principle of this privilege; because the patent-right is obtainable only by making full disclosure to the Federal patent-office, and thus the disclosure becomes quasi-compulsory.

tax has been determined by the Commissioner shall constitute public records; but they shall be open to inspection only upon order of the President and under rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary and approved by the President"); *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 3366 ("all information derived" from county assessor's examination of mining books "shall be deemed confidential," and not to be disclosed except in proceedings affecting taxation or on prosecution for perjury); *Ind. St.* 1919, Mar. 11, c. 59, § 125 (tax-payer's return of "the earnings of any business," to State board, to be "confidential," and disclosed only "in due course in some judicial proceeding where the regularity of the assessment" is in issue); *Mass. Gen. L.* 1920, c. 62, § 58 (income tax returns; no tax officer or employee shall disclose information "except in proceedings to collect the tax or by proper judicial order, or for the purpose of criminal prosecution under this chapter"); *Mich.* 1902, *Bowman v. Montcalm Circuit Judge*, 129 Mich. 608, 89 N. W. 334 (in a proceeding to lower an assessment, the taxpayer may not compel the disclosure of the sworn assessment-lists of other persons; *Comp. L.* 1897, § 3846, providing that "no such statement shall be used for any other purpose" than enforcing the act); 1906, *In re Reid*, D. C. E. D. Mich., 155 Fed. 933 (bankruptcy; tax statement filed by the bankrupt with the Detroit assessors, held privileged for the Detroit assessors, under *Mich. Comp. L.* 1897, § 3846, forbidding disclosure); *Minn.* 1917, *Thaden v. Bagan*, 139 Minn. 46, 165 N. W. 864 (compensation for farm-land taken; under *Gen. St.* 1913, § 2320, forbidding disclosures of tax-lists "except by order of court," and *G. S.* § 8375, forbidding disclosures of communications to officials, the tax-list was held not privileged from disclosure as to plaintiff's claim); *St.* 1921, c. 527 (referred to *infra* in this note); *Mo. Rev. St.* 1919, § 13135 (State tax officials shall not divulge "to any other person or persons" information concerning incomes); *Oh. Gen. C. Annot.* 1921, § 1465-16 (State tax agent, punishable for disclosure of information, except in reporting to the commission "or when called on to testify in any court or proceeding"); *Vt. Gen. L.* 1917, § 813 (inventory filed by taxpayer; town clerk, "upon subpoena for the purpose, shall produce in court any inventory in his custody"; otherwise, inventories are not to be disclosed); § 1074 (national bank depositors' accounts, as reported for taxation, to be disclosed "except by the direction of a court of competent jurisdiction"); *Va. Code* 1919, § 2227 (information obtained by assessors, etc.,

shall be "confidential" and not disclosed except to officers concerned); 1917, *Peden v. Peden's Adm'r.* 121 Va. 147, 92 S. E. 984 (action by an administrator to recover notes held by defendant, son of the intestate; issue whether the son or the mother was owner of them, and whether the son came into possession and title before the mother's death; the revenue officials were called by plaintiff to testify to statements made to them by the son, on a date in 1915 before the death, disaffirming title; *St.* 1915, p. 158, provided that "answers required [to tax officials] . . . shall not be disclosed unless called for by a court," etc.; held, (1) that the statute of 1915 did not protect these answers; (2) that *St.* 1916, p. 420, providing that tax-information "shall not be disclosed except to the State tax board, . . . or to a court of record upon its order," was not applicable to answers given in 1915; and (3) that at common law no privilege existed for this class of answers made to officials; lucid opinion by Sims, J.).

Distinguish the privilege for *trade secrets*, preventing the disclosure in *tax-proceedings* of business transactions not already reported to the assessors (*ante*, § 2212).

The following case verges on the boundaries of several rules: 1921, *State v. Minneapolis Cold Storage Co.*, 150 Minn. 208, 184 N. W. 854 (defendant's assessment having been raised, and payment of taxes refused, the State sued to collect, moved for discovery of records of persons storing goods with defendant, and on cross-examination asked the defendant's agent to give their names; these disclosures were held not to be compellable, on the ground (1) that they were sought "solely to enable the representatives of the State to embark on a fishing expedition to ascertain who were the owners of the goods with a view to taxing them," and (2) that "the relation of a public warehouseman to his patrons is such that he is not bound to become an informer when called upon to disclose their names in order that they may be taxed," at least until *Minn. St.* 1921, c. 527, providing for such disclosure; the first ground alone was sufficient on the principle of § 1859, *ante*; but the second ground, viz. privilege, is without foundation).

<sup>2</sup> *Eng. St.* 1907, 7 Edw. VII, c. 29, § 68, Patents and Designs Act (reports of examiners to be privileged, unless the Court certifies "that such production or inspection is desirable in the interests of justice"); *U. S. Rev. St.* 1878, §§ 4902 and 4908 (caveat of an incomplete invention "shall be filed in the confidential archives of the office and preserved in



(3) The most apt instance of it is the privilege, established in most jurisdictions, for reports of *commercial* and *industrial facts*, required by law to be made by employers of various sorts, or by commercial houses, or by common carriers, to the appropriate administrative official.<sup>3</sup> Here the main object is

secrecy, and shall be operative for the term of one year from the filing thereof"; not found in Code 1919); 1891, Edison El. L. Co. v. U. S. El. L. Co., 44 Fed. 294, 299 and 45 Fed. 55, 59 (statute held not applicable to an ordinary application pending); compare also the following: Code 1919 § 6123 (in the time of war, the commissioner of patents "may order that the invention be kept secret," if publication would be detrimental); § 6150 (a witness in patent causes is not in contempt "for refusing to disclose any secret invention or discovery made or owned by himself").

Compare the rulings upon *trade secrets* (ante, § 2212).

<sup>3</sup> These statutes also include measures specially applicable to *mines, railways, common carriers, and factories*, as well as to *commercial and industrial establishments* generally; they often include information obtained in general by the official, as well as *specific reports required* to be made to the official; compare here the privilege for *volunteered complaints* (ante, § 2376) and the privilege against *self-crimination* (ante, § 2259c):

CANADA: *Dominion*: R. S. 1906, c. 37, § 292 (reports of accidents made to railway board; the board "may declare any such information so given to be privileged"); R. S. 1906, c. 126, §§ 5, 6 (bridge company's return of bridge-casualties, to be privileged communications); *British Columbia*: St. 1919, c. 71, § 53 (public utilities commission; no member, etc., "shall be required to give testimony in any civil action to which the commission is not a party with respect to information obtained by him in the discharge of his official duty"); *Manitoba*: St. 1915, c. 24, inserting § 50 A in the Factories Act (factories inspector not competent to testify in any civil cause to information obtained through his duties, and not to be competent "as an expert witness" on any subject whatever in any civil cause); St. 1920, c. 157, § 76 (workmen's compensation board; information not to be divulged except "under the authority of the board"); *Newfoundland*: St. 1918, S. Geo. V, c. 37, § 72 (workmen's compensation board; no member, etc., shall divulge information obtained by official inspection or inquiry, "except in the performance of his duties or under authority of the board"); *Nova Scotia*: Rev. St. 1900, c. 99, § 307 (railway company's returns of casualties, expenditures, etc., to be "privileged communications, and shall not be evidence in any court whatsoever"); St. 1915, c. 1, § 72 (workmen's compensation board; no member or agent shall divulge information obtained "in making or in connection with an

inspection or inquiry," except in performance of duty or by authority of the board); *Ontario*: Rev. St. 1914, c. 229, § 22 (a factory-inspector, when called as a witness, "shall be entitled acting herein by the direction and on behalf of the attorney-general or a member of the Executive Council to object to giving evidence as to any factory inspected by him in the course of his official duty"); c. 185, § 279 (returns by railway companies to the railway board of accidents, made in pursuance of this act shall not be admissible evidence in any court, except in enforcing penalty for failure to make returns); c. 32, § 13 (mining; "the Deputy Minister, the Commissioner, the Provincial Geologist, the Provincial Assayer, and any Inspector, inspecting officer, or Recorder shall not be bound to disclose any information obtained by him in his official capacity which a member of the Executive Council certifies ought not in the public interest to be divulged or cannot without prejudice to the interests of persons not concerned in the litigation be divulged, and all such information shall be privileged"); *Saskatchewan*: R. S. 1920, c. 79, § 226 (railway company's returns of accidents "shall be privileged communications," and not admissible "except to enforce the penalties," etc. for failure to make return); c. 176, § 60 (factory inspector; when called as a witness he may by direction of the attorney-general "object to giving evidence as to any factory inspected by him in the course of his official duty").

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: St. 1901, Mar. 3, c. 866, Code 1919, § 7433 (common carriers are to make "statements" of locomotive accidents; and the inspector of the Interstate commerce commission is to investigate and report; but "neither said report nor any report of such investigation nor any part thereof, shall be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any suit for damages" arising from the matter reported); St. 1911, Feb. 17, c. 103, § 8, Code 1919, § 7443 (similar, for all railroad accident reports as to "collisions, derailments, or other accidents resulting to person or to the property of a railroad" in interstate or foreign commerce); 1916, *Donaldson v. Great Northern R. Co.*, 89 Wash. 161, 154 Pac. 133 (death of an employee; U. S. St. 1911, Feb. 17, applied to exclude the Federal inspector's report); *Arizona*: Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 2320 (State corporation commission; corporation's required report of accidents shall not be admissible "in any action for damage based on or arising out of the loss of life or injury to person or property" referred to); *California*: St. 1912, Jan. 10, Ex. Sess. 1911,



to investigate conditions and causes with a view to future administrative action; hence the State can afford to abdicate the use of such reports for

p. 217, No. 2144 *a* in Deering's Gen. L., § 6 (employer's record of injury to employee, required to be made and forwarded to State industrial accident commission, "shall not be admissible in evidence in any action arising out of the death or injury," etc.); St. 1915, p. 115, April 23, § 44 (public utilities; every public utility must file with the State commission "a report of each accident so occurring"; but no such accident report "shall be admitted as evidence in any action for damages based on or arising out of the loss of life or injury to person or property, in this section referred to"; commission's order or recommendation as to an accident resulting in "loss of life or injury to person or property," is not admissible in litigation arising therefrom); St. 1917, p. 831, May 23, § 48 (State industrial accident commission; every order and finding as to safety appliances, etc., "shall be admissible as evidence in any prosecution" for violation of this act, to show "a reasonable and proper standard and requirement of safety"); § 53 (State industrial accident commission; employer's report of injury to employee, required to be made to commission; but no officer or employee of commission shall "divulge any such information," except on order of the commission, etc.); § 54 (as to industrial injuries occurring during employment, "neither the order nor the recommendation of the commission shall be admitted as evidence in any action for damages," etc.);

*Connecticut*: Gen. St. 1918, § 2348 (factory owner's reports of accidents to be "privileged and confidential"; and the factory inspector shall not testify unless "he was present at the time of the occurrence of the accident");

*Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, § 4197 (employer's reports to State bureau of labor statistics shall be deemed "confidential"); § 4343, amended by St. 1921, p. 835, § 6 (State industrial commission; information furnished by employers, etc., as required by law "shall not be open to the public nor to be used in any court . . . unless the commission is a party"); § 4406 (similar, for reports of accidents);

*Delaware*: St. 1917, Apr. 2, c. 233, adding § 3193  $\pi$  117 to the Revised Code (State workmen's compensation board; employer's report of accidents "shall not be evidence against the employer in any proceedings under this Article or otherwise");

*Florida*: Rev. G. S. 1919, § 4641 (common carrier's reports of accidents, etc., to State commissioners, not to be evidence "against the common carriers making it in any court");

*Indiana*: Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 5553 (railroad company's reports of accidents, etc., to State railroad commission, "not to be used in the trial of any suits for damages arising out of said accidents"); 1919, Hege & Co. v.

Tompkins, 69 Ind. App. 273, 121 N. E. 677 (employer's report of accident; under Comp. Act § 56, such a report is not privileged from use in a proceeding before the Industrial Board by the employee);

*Iowa*: Code 1919, § 845 (workmen's compensation; employer's report of accidents shall be used only for the information of the commissioner, etc.); § 879 (employer's reports to State bureau of labor shall be "deemed confidential"); 1918, Hawthorne v. Delano, 183 Ia. 444, 167 N. W. 196 (death on a railroad; under Code Suppl. 1913, § 2120 *k*, providing that the State railroad commission's report of an accident "shall not be evidence," a report or notice of accident by the railroad to the commission under the same statute is not privileged, being a mere notice, and any details added to the notice do not make it a privileged report; unsound);

*Kansas*: Gen. St. 1915, § 5943, St. 1909, c. 119 (workmen's compensation; employer's report of accident, required by law, not to be "competent evidence");

*Maine*: Rev. St. 1916, c. 49, § 15 (factory manager's report to State commissioner of labor on injury at factory, etc., shall not be admissible "in any action arising out of the death or accident"); c. 55, § 35 (reports of accidents made to State public utilities commission privileged);

*Maryland*: Ann. Code 1914, Art. 23, § 434 (common carrier's compulsory report of accident to State public service commission "shall not be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose" in an action for damages);

*Massachusetts*: Gen. L. 1920, c. 149, § 172 (reports to State labor commissioner; "all such information shall be held strictly confidential");

*Michigan*: 1915, Fitzgerald v. Lozier Motor Co., 187 Mich. 660, 154 N. W. 67 (cause of employee's injury; foreman's memorandum of injury reporting to superior and later reported to the insurer, held receivable as an admission of the employer); 1918, Perdew v. Nufer Cedar Co., 201 Mich. 520, 167 N. W. 868 (similar);

*Minnesota*: Gen. St. 1913, §§ 3895, 3898 (employer's or insurer's report of accident required to be made to State commissioner of labor; "no report . . . shall be admitted in evidence . . . except in prosecutions for the violation of this act"); St. 1921, c. 82, § 33 (workmen's compensation; employer's compulsory reports of accidents to State industrial commission shall not be disclosed except "upon the hearings under this act or for state investigations");

*Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, § 10454 (report of accident required to be made by common carrier, etc. to State public service commission "shall not be admitted as evidence or used



purposes of punishment or of private litigation in case the facts reported reveal a legal liability or a commercial secret on the part of the person reporting.

Whether this measure needs to be resorted to, for the purpose of securing a particular class of information, will of course depend upon circumstances, and will vary with different topics. Only one or two topics have thus far received legislative recognition in many States. But the principle admits equally well of judicial recognition in new topics from time to time. There must always be a first precedent.

(4) The records of *banks*, submitted by law for the scrutiny of State supervising officials, are in some statutes given protection from further disclosure by them, but not usually in judicial proceedings.<sup>4</sup> Sundry other records of

for any purpose" against it in an action for damages, etc.); § 13626 (employers must report injuries, etc. to State commission; but no information thus obtained "shall be disclosed to persons other than the parties" and their attorneys, except by order of the commission or at a hearing); St. 1921, Mar. 28, p. 425, § 34 (like Rev. St. § 13626, which is superseded);

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 3031 (State industrial accident board; neither its recommendation after investigating an industrial accident, nor "any accident report filed with the board," shall be admissible in any action, etc., arising out of the accident);

*Nebraska*: Rev. St. 1922, § 5399 (railroad company's compulsory report of animal killed or injured shall not be deemed "an admission of liability," etc.);

*New Jersey*: 1917, *Christy v. New York C. & H. R. R. Co.*, 90 N. J. L. 540, 101 Atl. 373 (timber destroyed by fire; communication made by defendant's agent to N. Y. public service commission at a hearing, and also by defendant's attorney at the hearing, held admissible); St. 1917, Mar. 26, c. 156, § 3 (employer's compulsory reports of industrial accidents to State labor commissioner "shall not be used as evidence against any employer" in an action by employee for damages);

*New York*: Cons. L. 1909, Pub. Service Com. § 47, St. 1910, c. 480, § 47 (common carrier's compulsory notice of accidents, reported to State public service commission, "shall not be admitted as evidence" against the carrier in any action for damages arising from the matter reported);

*North Dakota*: St. 1921, c. 143, Mar. 9, amending St. 1919, c. 162, § 5 (reports by employers to State bureau shall not "be used in any court in any action or proceeding pending therein" unless the bureau is a party);

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 6653 (State industrial accident commission; employers must report accidents, but no such report "shall be used as evidence" or for any purpose against the employer in an action for damages);

*Porto Rico*: St. 1916, April 13, No. 19, § 11, St. 1921, May 6, No. 1, § 1 (workmen's compensation; employer's required report of accidents to the bureau of labor "shall not be evidence against the employer in any proceeding either under this Act or otherwise");

*Tennessee*: Shannon's Code 1916, § 3052 a 58 (employer's report of accident, made to State department of workshop inspection, not admissible in evidence);

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 3030 (State commissioner of immigration, labor and statistics; information acquired shall be deemed "confidential"); § 4812 (State public utilities commission's report upon an accident, not admissible "in any action for damage based on or arising out of the loss of life or injury to person or property");

*Washington*: R. & B. Code 1909, § 8659 (State railroad commission; reports of accidents by railroad officials shall not be admitted as evidence in any action for damages "growing out of any matter mentioned in said report"); *Wisconsin*: Stats. 1919, § 2394-38 (employer's reports of accidents to State industrial commission shall not be admissible "in any action arising out of the death or accident reported"); 1919, *Eggers v. S. Co. v. Ind. Com.*, 168 Wis. 377, 170 N. W. 280 (employer's report under Stats. § 2394-16, admissible);

<sup>4</sup> *Maryland*: Ann. Code 1914, Art. II, § 14 (State bank commissioner shall "keep secret all the facts and information obtained," except when "called as a witness in any criminal proceeding"); *Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, § 11679 (State banking department; staff shall "keep secret all facts and information obtained," except when "called as a witness in any criminal proceedings"); *Pennsylvania*: St. 1919, May 21, Dig. 1920, § 1254, Banks (State bank commissioner not allowed to disclose records of information obtained, except "by special order of court or other legal process"); *So. Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 8923 (State bank superintendent, and his staff, take oath to keep secret "all facts and information obtained in the discharge of his official duties," except "when called as



*commercial data* are similarly protected when required by law to be divulged to administrative officials.<sup>5</sup>

(5) *Family facts*, required to be disclosed to *census* officials, fall within the principle.<sup>6</sup>

(6) Modern sanitation and public health having become the subject of systematic administrative inquiry for preventive purposes, the necessary data must be obtained, on some topics, chiefly by reports from persons having direct information. Such reports are therefore required by law. To encourage the fulfilment of this duty, a privilege has been recognized, in some States. Whether such a privilege is a necessary measure, can hardly be determined until greater experience has been gained. The legislative recognition thus far extended rests apparently upon 'a priori' beliefs or upon complaisant caution. The subjects covered are these:

(a) Reports of *occupational disease*, required to be made by physicians to State industrial commissions, are sometimes given this privilege.<sup>7</sup>

a witness in a proceeding in a court of justice"); *Wisconsin*: 1919, *Cousins v. Schroeder*, 169 Wis. 438, 172 N. W. 953 (under Stats. § 2020, requiring secrecy for information obtained by a bank commissioner "except when called as a witness in any criminal proceeding or trial in a court of justice," held (1) that the exception does not include civil cases, here, an action by the commissioner to recover delinquent sums from the bank officers, and (2) that the insolvency of the bank in question, and the institution of liquidation proceedings, did not terminate the privilege).

<sup>5</sup> *Federal*: Code 1919, §§ 3722, 3727, 3734, 3751, 3754 (census data; quoted *infra*, n. 6); § 9710 (tariff commission; no member or employee shall divulge "in any manner whatever not provided for by law, to any person, the trade secrets or processes of any person embraced in any investigation by the commission); *Arkansas*: Dig. 1919, § 5956 (fire insurance inquiries by State commissioner and fire marshal; the result shall not "be given in evidence upon the trial of any civil action upon any policy," nor shall any statement made by an insurer or his agent, as to the cause of the fire, to the marshal, etc., be admitted in evidence); *Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, § 443 (reports required to be made to State commissioner of immigration "shall be regarded as confidential"); *Maryland*: Ann. Code 1914, Art. 89, § 1968 (State bureau of industrial statistics and arbitrators thereunder; "all information of a personal character or pertaining to the private business of any person," etc., "shall be deemed confidential"); *Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, §§ 9817, 9847 (inspection of corporate books by corporation supervisor, etc.; information, etc. obtained shall be confidential and not disclosed except "upon the order of court," etc.); *Texas*: Rev. Civ. St. 1911, § 1188 (corporate books, etc., inspected by attorney general; the inspecting officer "shall not make public or use

said copies or any information derived," etc., "except in the course of some judicial proceedings of [to?] which the State is a party," etc.).

<sup>6</sup> *Federal*: Code 1919, § 3722 (penalty for any census official who "shall, without the authority of the Director of the Census, publish or communicate any information coming into his possession by reason of his employment"); § 3727 (the information furnished by the owner, etc., of any "company, business, institution, establishment, religious body, or organization of any nature whatsoever," shall be "used only for the statistical purposes for which it is supplied. No publication shall be made by the Census Office whereby the data furnished by any particular establishment can be identified"); § 3734 (the director may "in his discretion furnish to individuals such data from the population schedules as may be desired for genealogical or other proper purposes," provided that "in no case shall information furnished under the authority of this title be used to the detriment of the person or persons to whom such information relates"); §§ 3751, 3754 (cotton and cottonseed data; "the information furnished by any individual establishment . . . shall be considered as strictly confidential, and shall be used only for the statistical purposes for which it is supplied"); *Philippine Isl.* Act No. 2352, Feb. 28, 1914, § 24 (answers to census officials are required; but "no information secured by any census form shall be divulged . . . except in the form of tabulations or summaries having no reference to individuals," and no entry made in the course of a census officer's duty, etc., "shall be admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding, save and except a prosecution instituted under this Act").

<sup>7</sup> *Ohio*: Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 1243-3 (physician's compulsory report to State department of health of occupational disease, "shall not be evidence of the facts therein stated in any



(b) Reports of *venereal disease*, required to be made to State boards of health, are sometimes accorded a limited privilege.<sup>8</sup>

(c) Reports of *illegitimate birth*, required to be made to official bureaus of vital statistics, by physicians, parents, midwives, or others, are sometimes given administrative privacy; but obviously their relevant use in judicial inquiries need not and must not be forbidden.<sup>9</sup>

(d) *Certificates of death*, required to be made to official bureaus of vital statistics, by the attendant physicians, are ordinarily made expressly admissible (so as to pass the barrier of the Hearsay rule) by the modern statutes organizing vital statistics (*ante*, § 1644). But, among the sundry data required to be reported, the *cause of death* is obviously a fact which may call for the physician's knowledge obtained by communication from the patient. Hence, in a State where the physician-and-patient privilege obtains, it would be appropriate to check its indirect violation by forbidding the use of these certificates to evidence the cause of death.<sup>10</sup> Such a prohibition, however, is merely a corollary of the physician-and-patient privilege. Where the latter does not exist, the former has no reason for being. It is in no way justified by the present principle, because these reports of physicians, in general, need no encouragement by a grant of the present privilege; and the fact of the cause of death stands on no different footing in this respect than any others of the sundry facts required to be returned in the certificate. In respect to the physician-and-patient privilege, these certificates are considered *post*, § 2385a.

§ 2378. (g) **Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications.** What, then, yet remains, in the shape of official privilege? Eliminating the

action arising out of the disease therein reported"); St. 1921, Apr. 20, p. 177, adding to the Gen. Code § 1465-99 a (physician shall report to State industrial commission occupational diseases; but such reports "shall not be evidence in any action arising out of a disease therein reported").

<sup>8</sup> CANADA: *Alberta*: St. 1918, c. 50, § 4 (venereal disease; no report of a medical practitioner made bona fide and without negligence shall be admissible against him in any proceeding).

UNITED STATES: *Iowa*: Rev. C. § 1291, 1297 (physicians shall report venereal diseases to board of health; but all reports "shall be confidential"); *Massachusetts*: Gen. L. 1920, c. 111, § 119 ("Hospital, dispensary, laboratory, and morbidity reports and records pertaining to gonorrhea or syphilis shall not be public records, and the contents thereof shall not be divulged . . . except upon proper judicial order" or to an official entitled to know); *New Jersey*: St. 1917, Mar. 29, c. 232, § 3 (compulsory reports of venereal diseases by physicians, etc., to State department of health; the department "shall not disclose the names or addresses of such persons," except in Court "in prosecutions under this or any other State law"); *Oklahoma*: St. 1919, c. 17, Mar. 19,

§ 9 (venereal disease; quoted *ante*, § 2220); *Rhode Island*: St. 1921, c. 2081 (reports of venereal disease required by law from physicians, "shall be regarded as absolutely confidential").

Compare the statutes, *ante*, § 2220, requiring examination for venereal disease, and *post*, § 2380, privileging communications to a physician.

<sup>9</sup> *Uniform Vital Statistics Act*, 1920, § 19 ("Except when ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction in a case where such information is necessary for the determination of personal or property rights, and then only for such purpose, no member of the State Board of Health, nor any State nor local registrar, nor any person connected with the office of either, shall disclose the fact that any record in this act provided for shows that any child was either legitimate or illegitimate"); § 23 (similar, for copies given out from records); *Ohio*: Gen. C. Annot. 1921, § 6274 (records required to be kept by maternity boarding-houses, etc.; no officer of board of health shall disclose contents "except upon inquiry before a court of law," etc.).

<sup>10</sup> *Ky. Stats.* 1915, § 2062 b, par. 24 (physician's report of cause of death to State registrar of vital statistics; quoted *post*, § 2380).



foregoing principles, is there still a genuine testimonial privilege which is to protect public officers from the disclosure of certain kinds of facts or communications received through their official duties? Some such privilege undoubtedly exists. But the scope of that privilege has not yet been defined with certainty.

So far as the tenor of the precedents has gone, they may be grouped into several classes:

(1) First, several rulings (all of them British), in actions against an official for *defamation* contained in an *official report*, privilege the defendant from producing the defamatory writing, *i. e.* practically accord to him an exoneration from liability (*ante*, § 2368) by refusing the means of proof.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2378. <sup>1</sup> 1816, *Wyatt v. Gore*, Holt 299, 302 (libel against the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, by the surveyor-general thereof; the defendant's consultation with the attorney-general, held privileged; Gibbs, C. J.: "No office of this kind could be executed with safety, if conversations between the governor of a distant province and his attorney-general, who is the only person upon whom such governor can lean for advice, were suffered to be disclosed"); 1820, *Home v. Bentinck*, 2 B. & B. 130, 134 (leading case; libel by a lieutenant-colonel, who was engaged in a mining company, against one of a court of inquiry appointed by the commander-in-chief to inquire into the plaintiff's conduct in the mining adventure and reporting his misconduct; the military secretary of the commander was held privileged, for the defendant, not to produce the minutes of the court of inquiry containing the alleged libel, nor was a copy obtained from the commander's office received; on the ground that the report was made under lawful orders, was confidential, and contained the names of witnesses and tenor of their evidence, and thus was privileged as an informer's report); 1822, *Earl v. Vass*, 1 Shaw 229, 236 (libel, for a letter by H. to the customs commissioners and the Treasury Office, in relation to the fitness of the plaintiff, nominee to a customs comptrollership; the commissioners were held privileged not to produce the correspondence; the application was 'ex parte,' the opinion by L. C. Eldon, citing *Home v. Bentinck*; the Scotch Court had ordered production by a vote of 3 to 2); 1832, *Blake v. Pilfold*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 198 (libel of a post-office employee; defendant's letter of complaint to the secretary of the postmaster-general, offered as the libellous statement, held not privileged, because not written by a public officer); 1860, *Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 838, 853 (leading case; libel on an army-officer; letters to the Secretary of War and minutes of a court of inquiry, the Secretary of War having been subpoenaed to produce but having attended and objected on the ground of "prejudice to the public service," held privileged on that

ground); 1863, *Gugy v. Maguire*, 13 Low. Can. 33, 49 (libel, for a communication to the Government by the defendant a police superintendent; on a subpoena d. t. to the provincial secretary for the document, in order to prove the plaintiff's case, and on objection on the ground of "injury to the public service," production was held not compellable, because "the disclosure is to divulge 'inter arcana imperii,' which no judge can dare to undertake"; Mondelet, J., diss.; an absurdity was given to the ruling by the fact that the secretary had already sent a copy of the document to the plaintiff); 1864, *M'Elveney v. Connellan*, 17 Ir. C. L. 55, 69 (libel, for a report by defendant as inspector-general of prisons to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; motion to produce the report and the minutes of testimony taken before defendant, not granted, the Lord Lieutenant having stated that "in his opinion it would be injurious to the public service to produce the report"; the principle covering "official communications, or communications made to an official person in the discharge of a public duty, whenever it is plain that the duty in compliance with which they have been made requires an unreserved communication in relation to the matter of it"); 1869, *State v. Griffith*, L. R. 2 P. C. 420, 425, 428 (libel for a letter of complaint to the colonial secretary of St. Helena; Lord Chelmsford said *obiter* that in *Anderson v. Hamilton*, *infra*, n. 2, "the rule is correctly laid down"); 1873, *Dawkins v. Rokeby*, L. R. 8 Q. B. 255, 267 (leading case; libel, for testimony against the plaintiff by the defendant, his general, at a military court of inquiry; held, that the proceedings and testimony were privileged; the opinion confusing the two questions of defamation-privilege in the substantive law and evidence-privilege); 1888, *Hennessy v. Wright*, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 509 (libel by the governor of Mauritius; dispatches, etc., between the governor or royal commissioner and the Secretary of State for Colonies or between the first two, directed by the Secretary of State not to be produced "on the ground of the interest of the State and of the public service," held privileged, approving *Beatson v.*

(2) Next, several similar precedents, in actions against officials for *other kinds of wrong* done to the plaintiff by *official acts*, have protected the defendant from disclosure of his acts or his written admissions, — thus again indirectly effecting his exoneration in substantive law by refusing the means of proof.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Again, several precedents (representing England, the United States Federal Court, and some State Courts) have declared a *privilege of secrecy in general for official documents* in an officer's possession, particularly (so far as any definition has been attempted) for *communications between officials*; and in these precedents no question whatever of international politics or military defence was involved.<sup>3</sup>

Skene, *supra*; the personal appearance or affidavit of the Secretary to claim privilege not being here necessary).

*Contra* (but practically repudiated by the foregoing cases): 1804, Robinson v. May, 2 J. P. Smith 3 (libel; defendant's letter of information to the Admiralty Commissioners, produced); 1859, Dickson v. Wilton, 1 F. & F. 419 (libel, for a letter by defendant as colonel reporting to the field-marshal about the plaintiff, and inclosing the report of a court of inquiry and other documents; "a clerk from the War Office was called to produce the letter, but submitted on behalf of the Secretary of War whether the proceedings ought to be produced"; Campbell, L. C. J.: "You must produce the letter," and both letter and documents were produced; that the Secretary did not attend to object personally is not mentioned as the ground of the ruling, and the distinction of this ruling on that ground in subsequent decisions does not affect the meaning of this ruling when made).

<sup>2</sup> ENGLAND: 1816, Anderson v. Hamilton, 2 B. & B. 156, note (action for imprisonment against the Governor of Heligoland; correspondence between the Governor and the Secretary of State for Colonies, with the plaintiff's letter to the Secretary giving rise to the correspondence, held privileged, first because "it might be pregnant with a thousand facts of the utmost consequence respecting the state of the government, the connection of parties, the state of politics, and the suspicion of foreign powers with whom we may be in alliance"; secondly, because no extract material alone to the case could be received, "for the plaintiff must be entitled to the whole or none" — a ruling absurd in two respects, first, because it was not shown or even claimed that international secrets were in fact mentioned in the letters, and secondly, in that even the innocuous and separable parts were held inadmissible); 1817, Cooke v. Maxwell, 2 Stark. 183 (action for arrest of person and destruction of property in Africa; plea, that the plaintiff was illegally trading in slaves and defendant had acted as governor under the law; to prove the defend-

ant's responsibility, the plaintiff called the military officer who had acted, and asked whether the defendant had given him the orders; upon objection that public policy prevented disclosure, Bayley, J., apparently agreed, but allowed oral testimony to the fact of the order; "the law will not work injustice"; this was indeed beating the devil around a stump); 1875, The Bellerophon, 44 L. J. Adm. 5 (action for injury by collision with a Government vessel; its commander's report to the Admiralty Office, held privileged, following Beatson v. Skene, *supra*).

UNITED STATES: Conn. Gen. St. 1918, § 775, St. 1921, c. 222, § 55 ("the reports and communications of all officers and members of the organized militia or national guard in the line of duty, addressed to their superiors, shall be privileged communications, and shall not be competent evidence against the writer in any civil or criminal action"); Pa. 1877, Hartranft's Appeal, 85 Pa. 433 (grand jury's subpoena to the Governor, Secretary, Adjutant-General, General, and Major, to testify as to a riot; on application for attachment, the respondents answered that their knowledge was obtained by official communications and its disclosure would be "detrimental to the public service"; the testimony was held privileged, approving Beatson v. Skene; the opinion inextricably confuses the present subject with the privilege against attendance; Agnew, C. J., and Sterrett, J., diss., quoted *ante*, § 2369);

<sup>3</sup> ENGLAND: 1723, Bishop Atterbury's Trial, 16 How. St. Tr. 495 (the Crown having obtained treasonable letters, imputed to the defendant, by intercepting the mails under a statute, it was resolved to be "inconsistent with the public safety," to allow any inquiry as to the special warrants issued for the purpose or the methods used in obeying them; many Lords dissenting; it was also resolved that a clerk of the Secretary's office, asked as to the skill of a fellow-clerk in unsealing letters and re-sealing with counterfeit seals, should not be examined "touching any transaction any way relating to the government, which came to his knowledge by reason of his being employed in the secre-



(4) To these classes must be added the rulings refusing to compel disclosure of the *votes or speeches of a member of the House of Commons* or of

tary's office"); 16 How. St. Tr. pp. 494, 543, 587, 629, 672 (the key by which Crown detectives deciphered alleged cipher letters was not allowed to be disclosed, as "tending to the discovery of their art," and thus destroying their usefulness); 1839, *R. v. Russell*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 693 (papers "of a public nature and in the possession of Lord John Russell in his public character as Secretary of State," held not producible); 1841, *Smith v. East India Co.*, 1 Phill. 50, 11 L. J. Ch. 71, L. C. Lyndhurst (bill for freight; correspondence on the subject between defendant's directors and the royal commissioners, held privileged on account of the company's governmental duties; without such a privilege "the effect would be to restrain the freedom of the communications and to render them more cautious, guarded, and reserved"); 1856, *Wadeer v. East India Co.*, 25 L. J. Ch. 345, 8 DeG. M. & G. 182, 187, 190 (bill for delivery of notes of Governor-General of India; discovery refused of political communications between defendant and its Indian governments; privilege held to cover "State papers, dispatches, minutes, or documents of any such description which relate to the carrying on of the government and are connected with the transaction of public affairs"; placed on the usual ground of the possibility of their affecting "the question of peace or war"; decided by LL. J. Turner and Knight-Bruce, overruling the contrary decision of Romilly, M. R., who had said that "official documents in many cases are privileged, but in some cases they are not"); 1911, *Steinie Morrison's Trial*, p. 240 (Notable British Trials Series, 1922; to discredit the accused's account of himself as a native of Australia, etc., the prosecution introduced a petition sent by him when in prison for a former offence to the Home Secretary, asking for a remission of sentence and representing himself as a Russian, etc.; *Darling, J.*, held that "the rule with regard to public offices is that they are allowed a very large discretion"; the Home Secretary could not have been compelled to produce the petition, "if he had taken the objection that it was against the public interest that it should be produced"; but held, he violated no privilege of the petitioner in giving it to the prosecution for production).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1800, *U. S. v. Cooper*, Whart. St. Tr. 659, 662 (libel on the President; production of unspecified official documents, not compelled); 1872, *U. S. v. Six Lots of Ground*, 1 Woods 234, 236 (correspondence between the attorney-general and a district attorney as to dismissing a writ of error, held confidential); 1895, *Re Huttman*, 70 Fed. 699 (Federal deputy collector of internal revenue not compellable to testify in a State court to statements made by an applicant for a liquor dealer's tax-stamp, the statements being made

for record in the office; on the ground that a State court in a prosecution under a State law has no jurisdiction to compel a Federal officer's disobedience to a Federal regulation, equivalent to law, forbidding such disclosure; on this point compare the principle of jurisdiction, *ante*, § 6); 1896, *Re Hirsch*, 74 Fed. 928 (unlawful liquor-selling by C.; the payment of a liquor-tax being admissible to show an intent to sell liquor, the deputy-collector of Federal internal revenue was ordered to produce a document in his custody in which C. applied for a license and declared his intention of selling liquor; held, that no privilege existed, in the absence of statute, requiring the secrecy of such declarations); 1897, *Re Weeks*, 82 Fed. 729 (habeas corpus for a U. S. collector imprisoned for contempt in refusing to produce evidence for the Court of Vermont as to the payment of a liquor-tax by a defendant in that court; on being asked whether X. had paid him for obtaining a tax-stamp, he replied that he could not remember but had the means of ascertaining, "whereupon he was asked to ascertain and state the fact, which he refused to do because his means of knowledge of it had come to him solely in his official capacity," and because his superior's instructions forbade disclosure; held, that although by law the official records were open to public inspection, the official could not be compelled to give evidence; "the Federal government . . . cannot be required to provide evidence for the State Courts"); 1899, *Re Comingore*, 96 Fed. 552 (a Treasury regulation forbade revenue-collectors from producing records or furnishing copies; held, in a State action for taxes against a distiller, that his reports to the Federal collector were privileged not to be disclosed by the latter, on the grounds partly that the State could not control a Federal official, partly that the document was an official "quasi confidential" document designed solely to aid in the collection of Federal revenue); 1900, *Boske v. Comingore*, 177 U. S. 459, 20 Sup. 701 (the preceding ruling affirmed on appeal); 1903, *Re Lamberton*, Ark. Dist., 124 Fed. 446 (deputy collector of internal revenue, held privileged from testifying whether he had seen a Federal license to sell liquor publicly posted in a certain house; applying the principle of *Boske v. Comingore*); 1910, *Stegall v. Thurman*, D. C. N. D. Ga., 175 Fed. 813 (operations of a distillery under grand jury inquiry for violation of State prohibition law; the U. S. store-keeper and gauger on duty thereat, held privileged from disclosing information obtained by him in the course of duty, and prohibited to be disclosed by U. S. Rev. St. 1878, § 3167, "except as provided by law," and Treasury Circulars of April 15, 1898, Oct. 10, 1900 and April 18, 1904; "the method prescribed by the Secre-

Congress,<sup>4</sup> or to compel disclosure of the *proceedings of the House of Commons*;<sup>5</sup> the former being in effect (like the rulings in libel actions) virtually an indirect enforcement of the member's non-liability for his utterances, and the latter resting merely on a traditional fiction of secrecy once much cherished by the British House.

(5) An occasional precedent has applied the genuine testimonial privilege to refusing disclosure of matters involving "secrets of State" in *military or international affairs*; including proceedings before a *military court of inquiry*.<sup>6</sup>

tary of the Treasury for courts obtaining this information is an application to the Secretary of the Treasury by the judge of the Court in which the information is desired"; *Boske v. Comingore* followed); Code 1919, § 656 (documents, etc., in department of Interior may be furnished, by copy, to applicant "when not prejudicial to the interests of the government," in the officer's opinion).

*Alabama*: 1906, *Davis v. State*, 145 Ala. 69, 40 So. 663 (under Code 1897, § 5086, providing that a U. S. revenue liquor-license may be proved orally, the defendant was allowed to be asked if he had one);

*Kansas*: 1906, *State v. Nippert*, 74 Kan. 371, 86 Pac. 478 (illegal liquor sales; the Federal revenue collector having refused to produce the record of liquor-tax-lists or to furnish a copy, under the rule in *Re Weeks*, *supra*, an examined copy was admitted; the present principle not considered); 1906, *State v. Schaeffer*, 74 Kan. 390, 86 Pac. 477 (similar); *New Jersey*: 1871, *Thompson v. R. Co.*, 22 N. J. Eq. 111 (subpœna d. t. upon the Governor for the engrossed copy of a private statute; held that he might withhold "any paper or document in his possession, or any part of it, if in his opinion his official duty requires him to do so"; here the Governor did place the document at the Chancellor's disposal);

*Vermont*: 1839, *Redfield, J.*, in *Clark v. Field*, 12 Vt. 485 ("I apprehend that the true doctrine, in regard to requiring a witness to disclose State secrets, is that the Court will exercise its discretion in each particular case"); 1902, *Nye v. Daniels*, 81 Vt. 75, 53 Atl. 150 (a postmaster held privileged not to disclose whether the plaintiff sent a registered letter, on the theory that a postal regulation prohibiting such a disclosure had the force of law; the fallacy of the Court appears in the proviso of the U. S. Rev. St. § 161, Code 1919, § 226 authorizing such regulations provided they be "not inconsistent with law");

*Wisconsin*: 1906, *Meyer v. Home Ins. Co.*, 127 Wis. 293, 106 N. W. 1087 (tobacco lost by fire; records of the U. S. internal-revenue department at Milwaukee showing the amount of goods, held privileged, on demand of the deputy collector; following *Boske v. Comingore*, U. S.).

For rulings under statutes concerning *assessment-lists* and *unfinished inventions*, see *ante*, § 2377.

Doubtless some of the Federal Executive *Departmental Regulations* prohibit subordinate officials from disclosing the contents of official records without specific consent of the head of the Department, even on subpœna to appear in a judicial proceeding. But such regulations do not have the force of law, as against a judicial ruling, unless they are based upon an express or implied authority of the Executive to make such rules. For example, it is maintainable that the President's authority under the Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917, gave such effect to his regulations; see the citations in note 6, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1804, *Plunkett v. Cobbett*, 5 Esp. 136 (libel on plaintiff's conduct in parliament in Ireland; a witness called to prove the plaintiff's expressions in parliament, held privileged from disclosing the tenor of the speeches, though not from stating the fact of speaking there); 1852, *Chubb v. Salomons*, 3 C. & K. 75 (Pollock, C. B., after consulting the other judges of the Exchequer, refused to compel a member of the House of Commons to relate whether the defendant voted in the House, without the permission of the House that he might testify; an officer of the House was then examined, the House having given permission); *U. S.* 1822, *Law v. Scott*, 5 H. & J. Md. 438, 458 (slander; testimony to a vote in the Senate rejecting the plaintiff's nomination; question apparently not decided).

<sup>5</sup> 1818, *Commons Journal*, vol. 73, p. 389, May 26, quoted in 3 C. & K. 77 (in consequence of the case of *R. v. Mercer*, 2 Stark. 366, in which the shorthand reporter of the House had been examined without its leave, "Resolved, that all witnesses examined before this House or any committee thereof are entitled to the protection of this House in respect of anything that may be said by them in their evidence"); 1839, *Stockdale v. Hansard*, 9 A. & E. 1, 212, per Patteson, J. (Commons proceedings are in theory secret until the House permits publication); 1868, *Wason v. Walter*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 73, 95, *semble*, per Cockburn, C. J. (similar). Compare the following: *Can. Rev. St.* 1906, c. 10, §§ 7-9.

<sup>6</sup> *England*: 1817, *R. v. Watson*, 2 Stark. 116 148 (sedition; a clerk of the War department, after testifying that a plan found in defendant's possession was a plan of the interior of the Tower of London, was asked on cross-



(6) Furthermore, the supposed testimonial privilege of these foregoing precedents has been embodied in broad form in several statutes, by legislators who perhaps did not perceive the possible scope of their phrasing.<sup>7</sup>

examination whether another plan, printed and purchasable, was a correct plan of the Tower, but "the Court held that it might be attended with public mischief to allow an officer of the Tower to be examined as to the accuracy of such a plan"; 1904, *Mercer v. Denne*, 2 Ch. 535, 544 (ancient plans and maps of seashore boundaries prepared for the War Office in 1641-47 were excluded, by Farwell, J., because "it would be most dangerous to admit confidential reports, made to the War Office"; the ruling is absurd, first, because the War Office made no claim of privilege, and secondly, because the offering counsel had become fully conversant with the "confidential" documents, and thirdly, because the lapse of time had made the secret of no consequence; no authority at all is cited); 1905, *Mercer v. Denne*, 2 Ch. 538, 560 (foregoing ruling affirmed on appeal; Vaughan Williams, J.: "I agree, although not perhaps exactly on the same grounds").

*United States*: 1807, Aaron Burr's Trial (cited *post*, § 2376; here the correspondence desired might have involved international relations with Spain and France); 1875, *Totten v. U. S.*, 92 U. S. 105 (no action can be maintained on a contract with the Government for secret service as a spy during war; "the secrecy which such contracts impose precludes any action for its enforcement"); 1910, *In re Grove*, 3d C. C. A. 180 Fed. 62 (infringement of patent on engines for torpedo-boat-destroyers; the defendant having pleaded the official secrecy of plans drawn for the construction of government vessels, the Secretary of the Navy on request from the Court declared that the proof would not be detrimental to public interests, and the witness was held compellable); 1919, Sept. 11, War Department, Judge Advocate General's Office, Reply to The Adjutant General, No. 327.01 (under Selective Service Reg. Nov. 1917, § 11, made by the President under the war-time Act of May 18, 1917, disclosure of the dependency records of deceased registrants is not permissible for use in litigation to establish relationship, property, etc.; but the amendment of the regulation to permit such disclosure is recommended); 1922, *Harris v. Walsh*, — D. C. —, 277 Fed. 569 (divorce by husband for wife's cruelty in filing an affidavit with the Selective Service board and thus causing him to be inducted into military service; on application for an order to The Adjutant General of the Army for inspection of the records of Selective Service boards, held that §§ 11 and 12 of the Presidential regulations, forbidding disclosure without the registrant's consent except in prosecutions for violation of the regulations, and forbidding even disclosure to the regis-

trant of names of informants, The Adjutant General was entitled to withhold disclosure; the measure being based on military policy).

The following measures, for *military courts of inquiry*, rest rather on the principle of § 2362, *ante*, such a court being comparable to a grand jury: *Eng. St.* 1881, 44 & 45 Viet. c. 58, Army Act, § 70, Rule 124 L ("The proceedings of a court of inquiry, or any confession, statement, or answer to a question made or given at a court of inquiry, shall not be admissible in evidence against an officer or soldier," except upon trial for perjury); 1916, *R. v. Colpus and Boorman*, 1 K. B. 575 (conspiracy to defraud military authorities; statements by the accused before a court of inquiry, held admissible; the privilege declared in Army Act 1881, § 70, Rule 124 (L), applies "only to proceedings in military tribunals"); 1921, *The King v. Murphy*, 2 Ir. R. 190, 221 (the accused, desiring to cross-examine a witness for the prosecution, at a court-martial, called for the proceedings at a court of inquiry where the witness had testified; this was refused, on the ground that by the Army Act, St. 1881, c. 58, Rule of Procedure 124 L, "the proceedings of a court of inquiry . . . shall not be admissible in evidence against any officer or soldier"; held that the rule did forbid the use of the testimony for the purpose desired); *U. S.* The American Articles of War provide (U. S. St. 1920, June 4, c. II, Articles of War, No. 27) that the proceedings of a court of inquiry "may *with the consent of the accused* be read in evidence before any court-martial," etc., in a case not capital nor involving an officer's dismissal, and for the defence, unconditionally; the italicized clause was inserted in the Revision of 1920.

Compare the rulings based on *non-liability for defamation* in court-martial proceedings, (*supra*, notes 1 and 2).

<sup>7</sup> CANADA: *Alta. St.* 1910, 2d sess., Evidence Act, c. 3, § 30 (like Ont. Rev. St. c. 76, § 27); *N. Br. Consol. St.* 1903, c. 127, § 56 (like Ont. R. S. c. 76, § 27); *Ont. Rev. St.* 1914, c. 76, § 27 ("Where documents in the official possession, custody, or power of a member of the Executive Council or the head of a department of the public service of this province," and the officer having the documents is called as a witness, "he shall be entitled, acting herein by the direction and on behalf of such member of the Executive Council or head of the department, to object to produce the documents on the ground that they are privileged"; the objection to have the same effect as if the superior officer had made it); *P. E. I. St.* 1889, § 29 (like Ont. R. S. c. 76, § 27).

UNITED STATES: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1881,

(7) Finally, there are a few rulings (none of them important, except perhaps *Marbury v. Madison*) in which the existence of a *privilege* in the large scope predicated by the modern English rulings is *negatived*.<sup>8</sup>

*Policy of the Privilege.* It may be said, then, that the extent to which this privilege has gone (beyond "secrets of State" in the military or international sense) is by no means clearly defined; and, furthermore, that it has not become a matter of precedent or even of debate in more than a few jurisdictions. Its scope and bearing are therefore open to careful examination in the light of logic and policy. What are the reasons which have been advanced for this privilege, and how do they bear testing? They are sufficiently represented in the following passages:

1640, *Earl of Strafford's Trial*, 3 How. St. Tr. 1427, 1441; Parliament was now striking at Charles I by prosecuting his chief political adviser; Sir Henry Vane having testified, as a member of the King's Council, that the defendant Strafford "did say at the Council Board" that he would help his Majesty Charles I with force to reduce the kingdom, if Parliament remained obstinate, Lord *Clarendon* remarks: "The ruin that this

par. 5 ("A public officer cannot be examined as to communications made to him in official confidence, when the public interests would suffer by the disclosure"); *Colo. Comp. St.* 1921, § 6563 ("A public officer shall not be examined as to communications made to him in official confidence, when the public interests, in the judgment of the Court, would suffer by the disclosure"); *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, §§ 4544, 5877 ("official persons" cannot be called on "to disclose any State matters of which the policy of State and the interest of the community require concealment"); § 5785 ("secrets of State" are excluded); *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 7937 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Ia. Code* 1897, § 4609, Comp. C. § 7316 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Minn. Gen. St.* 1913, § 8375 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Mont. Rev. C.* 1921, § 10536 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Nebr. Comp. St.* 1921, § 8842 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Nev. Rev. L.* 1912, § 5423 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *N. D. Comp. L.* 1913, § 7923 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Or. Laws* 1920, § 733 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 383 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, inserting "during his term of office or afterwards," after "examined"); § 1247 (quoted *ante*, § 488); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1408 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *S. D. Rev. C.* 1919, § 2730 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Utah: Comp. L.* 1917, § 7124 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Wash. R. & B. Code* 1909, § 1214 (substantially like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881).

<sup>8</sup> ENGLAND: 1775, *Maharajah Nundocomar's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 1057 (records of the Governor and Council of the East India Company, required to be produced, though the "safety of the State" was urged in opposing production); 1813, *Lee v. Birrell*, 3 Camp. 337 (action for penalty; to prove the defendant a collector of property tax the commissioners' clerk was summoned to pro-

duce the records; on objection that he had taken an official oath of secrecy, L. C. J. Ellenborough said that the giving of evidence in court was an implied exception to the oath, and compelled production).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1803, *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cr. 137, 143 (mandamus to the Secretary of State to deliver commissions to justices of the peace; the commissions were alleged to have been duly made out and sealed, but unlawfully withheld; clerks of the department of State being summoned to prove the fact, they claimed a privilege not to disclose the transactions of the office, and the Attorney-General being summoned for the same purpose made the same claim; held that they must answer, the facts not being confidential; the Court said, "they had no doubt he ought to answer; there was nothing confidential required to be disclosed. If there had been, he was not required to answer it. . . . But the fact whether such commissions had been in the office or not could not be a confidential fact; it is a fact which all the world have a right to know"; good argument by Mr. Lee); *Minnesota*: 1913, *Schall v. Northland M. C. Co.*, 123 Minn. 214, 143 N. W. 357 (trustee in Federal bankruptcy court, held not privileged against a subpoena d. t.); *Pennsylvania*: 1843, *Capt. McKenzie's Case*, 2 Pars. Eq. Cas. 227, Pa. Com. Pl. (letters rogatory in an action for libel; testimony by officers of a court-martial to the votes given for and against the plaintiff therein charged, held not privileged; the Court, however unwilling "to establish a precedent which might in any way weaken the naval arm of the government, saw in all this no legal bar to the adduction of evidence to which a citizen is entitled under the laws").

Distinguish of course the question how far a citizen may claim access to and inspection of judicial or similar records (*ante*, § 1858).



last act [of producing this testimony] brought to the King was irreparable; for . . . it was matter of horror to the counsellors to find that they might be arraigned for every rash, every inconsiderate, every imperious expression or word they had used there; and so made them more engaged to servile applications. It banished forever all future freedom from that board and those persons from whom his Majesty was to expect advice in his greatest streights; all men satisfying themselves 'that they were no more obliged to deliver their opinions there freely, when they might be impeached in another place for so doing'; and the evincing this so useful doctrine was without doubt more the design of those grand managers [of the prosecution] than any hope they had of receiving further information thereby."

1820, DALLAS, C. J., *Home v. Bentinck*, 2 B. & B. 130, 162: "What is the ground upon which these cases [of informers] stand, except it be the ground of danger to the public good, which would result from disclosing the sources of such informations? For no person would become an informer if his name might be disclosed in a court of justice and if he might be subjected to the resentment of the party against whom he had informed. Does not this reasoning apply closely to the case now before us — [a report by a court of inquiry to a commander-in-chief] — on the broad rule of public policy and convenience, that these matters, secret in their natures and involving delicate inquiry and the names of persons, stand protected? Now what is this proceeding but consulting with those who are bound to give the advice which is required as to the exercise of a public duty? And whether the case be that of the attorney-general of a province advising a governor, or an officer present at a court of inquiry directed to be held by the commander-in-chief, it is equally a case of advice and information given for the regulation of a public officer."

1860, POLLOCK, C. B., in *Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 838, 853: "We are of opinion that it cannot be laid down that all public documents, including treaties with foreign powers and all the correspondence that may precede or accompany them, and all communications to the heads of departments, are to be produced and made public whenever a suitor in a court of justice thinks that his case requires such production. It is manifest, we think, that there must be a limit to the duty or the power of compelling the production of papers which are connected with acts of State. As an instance, we would put the case of a British minister at a foreign Court writing in that capacity a letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in this country, containing matter injurious to the reputation of a foreigner or a British subject; can it be contended that the person referred to would have a right to compel the production of the letter in order to take the opinion of a jury whether the injurious matter was written maliciously or not? We are of opinion that, if the production of a State paper would be injurious to the public service, the general public interest must be considered paramount to the individual interest of a suitor in a court of justice."

1888, FIELD, J., in *Hennessey v. Wright*, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 509, 512: "There are two aspects of this question. First, the publication of a State document may involve danger to the nation. If the confidential communications made by servants of the Crown to each other, by superiors to inferiors or by inferiors to superiors, in the discharge of their duty to the Crown, were liable to be made public in a court of justice at the instance of any suitor who thought proper to say 'fiat justitia ruat cœlum,' an order for discovery might involve the country in a war. Secondly, the publication of a State paper may be injurious to servants of the Crown as individuals; there would be an end of all freedom in their official communications if they knew that any suitor, that as in this case any one of their own body whom circumstances had made a suitor, could legally insist that any official communication, of no matter how secret a character, should be produced openly in a court of justice."

Of these reasonings three things are to be said:

(1) The brunt of the argument is that *an official should be secured from liability* based on his official communications made in the course of duty.



Nobody can dispute this general principle. But it signifies nothing for the law of Evidence. It signifies an exoneration from tortious or criminal liability. Whether and how far such exoneration should be conceded is a question of substantive law, and is now solved by that law liberally in favor of officials. But wherever that law has declined to concede an exoneration, and has predicated liability, all this reason for protection ceases, by hypothesis. It is a mockery to reserve, against righteous claims, a privilege of testimonial secrecy. This much seems plain. All the argument based upon hardship to officials may therefore at once be conceded; but for the purpose of testimonial privilege all such cases are irrelevant, being duly safeguarded by other means.

(2) The remainder of the argument consists in invoking secrecy for *acts of pending international negotiations or military precautions against foreign enemies*. This, too, may be conceded. There ought to be a protection for "secrets of State," in this narrow sense. But, this done, what remains? In only three or four of the precedents has there been even a pretence that the matters actually preserved from disclosure concerned international facts of negotiation or defence. If they do not, then this reason is insufficient; for it is vain to claim secrecy on the ground that something else might have been asked for, which is in fact not asked for.

(3) The question is then reduced to this, Whether there are any matters of fact, in the possession of officials, concerning *solely the internal affairs* of public business, civil or military, which ought to be privileged from disclosure when material to be ascertained upon an issue in a court of justice?

Ordinarily, there are not. In any community under a system of representative government and removable officials, there can be no facts which require to be kept secret with that solidity which defies even the inquiries of a court of justice. "To cover with the veil of secrecy," said Patrick Henry,<sup>9</sup> "the common routine of business, is an abomination in the eyes of every intelligent man and every friend to his country." Such a secrecy can seldom be legitimately desired. It is generally desired for the purposes of partisan politics or personal self-interest. The responsibility of officials to explain and to justify their acts is the chief safeguard against oppression and corruption. Whether it is the relations of the Treasury to the Stock Exchange, or the dealings of the Interior Department with government lands, the facts must constitutionally be demandable, sooner or later, on the floor of Congress. To concede to them a sacrosanct secrecy in a court of justice is to attribute to them a character which for other purposes is never maintained, — a character which appears to have been advanced only when it happens to have served the interests of some individual to obstruct investigation into facts which might fix him with a liability.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Elliot's Debates, III, 170.

<sup>10</sup> The Federal Government's deliberate obstruction, by this means at one time, of the enforcement of the State liquor laws has been reprehensible. In *Stegall v. Thurman*, Fed.,

cited *supra*, n. 3, Newman, J., has some sensible remarks on the seemliness of the Federal government's removing obstructions of this sort from the ordinary course of justice in the State courts.



It is urged, to be sure (as in *Beatson v. Skene*), that the "public interest must be considered paramount to the individual interest of a suitor in a court of justice." As if the public interest were not involved in the administration of justice! As if the denial of justice to a single suitor were not as much a public injury as is the disclosure of any official record! When justice is at stake, the appeal to the necessities of the public interest on the other side is of no superior weight. "Necessity," as Joshua Evans said,<sup>11</sup> "is always a suspicious argument, and never wanting to the worst of causes." What is the necessity for secrecy in such matters? To justify a privilege, it must be, on settled principles (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2285), a secrecy indispensable to induce freedom of official communication or efficacy in the transaction of official business, and it must further be a secrecy which has remained and would have remained inviolable but for this compulsory disclosure. In how many transactions of official business is there ordinarily such a secrecy? After guaranteeing to official communications and acts an immunity from liability to civil or criminal consequences, and after further eliminating those acts and communications which are in no sense secret from their inception, what remains of real and intrinsic secrecy of transaction? If there arises at any time a genuine instance of such otherwise inviolate secrecy, let the necessity of maintaining it be determined upon its merits. But the solemn invocation, in the precedents above chronicled, of a supposed inherent secrecy, has commonly been only a canting appeal to a fiction. It seems to lend itself naturally to mere sham and evasion.

The leading case of *Beatson v. Skene* is a sufficient example, 'ex quo disce omnes.' The plaintiff, Skene, was a general of cavalry; at the close of the Crimean war he was superseded in command, and resigned; an investigation into the state of the corps was made by General Shirley, whose secretary and commissioner the defendant Beatson was; the defendant reported to his superior that the plaintiff had stirred up mutiny in the corps, and afterwards so testified as a witness before a military court of inquiry held to investigate General Shirley's alleged libel on the plaintiff; for this testimony the plaintiff's suit for libel was brought, and he sought production, in his proof, of the court's minutes of the defendant's testimony, and of the plaintiff's own letters to the Secretary of War. Now a plea of privilege in the substantive law might immediately have disposed of the matter. Since it did not, the case placed the defendant in the position of having uttered an unjustifiable libel on the plaintiff. To refuse the production of the desired documents was therefore virtually to deprive the plaintiff of his means of proving a just claim. And yet to protect the defendant, as the Court did, by placing this refusal on the ground of the secrecy of State affairs was to lay hold of the merest fiction, — first, because the topic involved was only one of the plaintiff's personal conduct in his own cavalry corps; next, because the whole subject and its details had long and notoriously been the theme of military

<sup>11</sup> Arguing in *Home v. Bentinck*.

and public gossip, and was in its inception known to scores of persons; and, again, because the very Court which appealed to this inviolable secrecy for withholding the notes of the testimony permitted a person who had been present at the military court to prove publicly the same oral testimony of the defendant which was recorded in the suppressed minutes!

With such pharisaic shams and resounding incongruities is the rule replete in almost every instance.<sup>12</sup> Rested upon such fictions, and applied in such a spirit, it tends to become merely a technical advantage on the side of that party who happens to be interested as an official and to be in possession of important proof. Let John Doe sue a neighbor for encroaching on his boundary line, and he may compel the neighbor to produce the documents which vindicate Doe's just claim. But let him sue a colonial officer for exploiting his land or imprisoning his person, — let him sue a postmaster for destroying his business by refusing the use of the mails, or a revenue collector for the illegal impounding of goods, — let him be the complainant against any government official for any oppressive conduct, and the same discovery of the facts is refused by law, provided only that the wrongdoer is sufficiently strong in interest with his superiors to induce them to invoke the privilege of official secrecy. The time has not yet come, with us, when such deliberate combination for the oppression of citizens by officials is rife. But the possibilities of such abuse are plainly latent in this supposed privilege. There is needed only the willingness to exercise them. The liquor-tax cases show how simple the expedient would be, 'mutatis mutandis,' in a thousand cases, and how effective as an obstruction to justice and a refuge for cowardly oppressors. Rules of law much more innocent in appearance have been made to serve evil purposes upon a large scale. "No nation" (in the words of a great American jurist<sup>13</sup>), "ever yet found any inconvenience from too close an inspection into the conduct of its officers; but many have been brought to ruin, and reduced to slavery, by suffering gradual imposition and abuses which were imperceptible only because the means of publicity had not been secured."

The menace which this supposed privilege implies to individual liberty and private right will justify us in repudiating it before it is too solidly entrenched in precedent. More than once have plain warnings been given us of the potency of its abuse for partisan and selfish ends:

1807, Mr. BORRS, arguing, in *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep. II, 517: "I can never express, in terms sufficiently strong, the detestation and abhorrence which every American should feel towards a system of State secrecy. It never can conduce to public utility, though it may furnish pretexts to men in power to shelter themselves and their friends and agents from the just animadversion of the law, — to direct their malignant plots to the destruction of other men while they are themselves secure from punishment. In a government of responsibility like ours, where all the agents of the public must be responsible for their conduct, there can be but few secrets. The people of the United

<sup>12</sup> *E.g.*, *Gugy v. Maguire*, *Hartranft's Appeal* and other cases *ante*, especially those of the Federal liquor-tax receipts.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Livingston, *Works*, I, 15.



States have a right to know every public act, every thing that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They ought to know the particulars of public transactions in all their bearings and relations, so as to be able to distinguish whether and how far they are conducted with fidelity and ability; and with the exception of what relates to negotiations with foreign nations, or what is called the diplomatic department, there ought to be nothing suppressed or concealed. . . . I will again predict that, if a secret inquisitorial tribunal be established by your decision now, . . . if you determine that we be deprived of the benefit of important written or oral evidence by the introduction of this State secrecy, you lay, without intending it, the foundation for a system of oppression. If these things be established, to go down to posterity as precedents, the inevitable consequences will be that, whenever any man in the United States becomes an object of the vengeance or jealousy of those in power, he may easily be ruined. A wicked executive power will have nothing to do to effect his destruction but to foment divisions in this country, to encourage and excite accusations by its officers, to deny the use of all public documents that may tend to the justification of the accused, or to render the attainment of exculpatory evidence dependent on the arbitrary whim of its prosecuting officers, and he will be condemned to sink without the smallest effectual resistance."

1863, MONDELET, J., in *Gugy v. Maguire*, 13 Low. Can. 33, 38 (upon a Provincial Secretary's refusal to produce the report of a superintendent of police); "It has been pretended, as in the case of *Home v. Bentinck*, that it is necessary for the interest of the public that secrecy should be had in such and similar matters. . . . I cannot, I ought not, for a moment, as a judge living and administering justice under constitutional institutions, admit such a monstrous doctrine, — a doctrine which prostrates to the ground that liberty, that protection to life, honour, property, and to civil and religious liberty, which this country has so much right to boast of, too valuable to be thus thrown away and scattered to the four winds of Heaven! A doctrine which reduces the judge on the Bench to an automaton, who, like the statue of Don Juan, will bend at the bidding of any reckless politician, whatever shade of politics or party spirit it may be his misfortune to be tainted with, or of any unprincipled member of society, whoever he is or may be, who is desirous of, or has interest in being screened, or of screening others, from the responsibility his misdeeds have subjected them to. If that doctrine be law, or rather, were law, it would be appalling. It would be such that no one would feel himself secure. I cannot, I must not assent to it. It is not law. It is unconstitutional. It is tyrannical. It is monstrous. And it must more glaringly appear so, when we come to reflect that an attempt is made to give it currency, and to fasten it on the judges of the land, under constitutional responsible government. Such a pretension reminds me of what was so often done in France, under the old régime, by means of the maxim then looked upon as sacred by the government. The following will, much better than I could myself, illustrate this branch of the subject: 'Vainement les Parlemens et les autres Cours souveraines élevaient une voix courageuse contre cet intolérable abus; la Cour ne répondait qu'en lançant de nouvelles lettres de cachet, ou par cette maxime, "qu'il ne faut pas soumettre à l'inspection des tribunaux le secret de l'administration et l'exécution des ordres du roi"; d'où l'on concluait qu'il n'existait aucun recours contre les ordres donnés par ses ministres.' . . . I never can, and I trust never shall acknowledge as a true one, the paradoxical proposition, that under the protection of the freest and best constitution in the world, and the most solemn imperial statute guaranteeing our rights, an action may be instituted against any one who has caused damage to his fellow subject, but that it will be in the power of a secretary, or of any member of the government, to deprive the injured of the evidence which he may adduce to entitle him legally to a verdict or a judgment. . . . [It is] a dangerous, monstrous pretension."

1877, AGNEW, C. J., in *Hartranft's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433, 458: "There were fearful crimes committed on the 21st and 22d of July. These are the undoubted subjects of judicial inquiry in the mode prescribed by law, — to wit, through a grand jury. In that



unknown and vast multitude of citizens and soldiers, who were guilty? Who were innocent? By the 22d section of the Declaration of Rights, it is declared that the 'military shall in *all cases*, and *at all times*, be in *strict subordination* to the *civil power*.' The military took many lives — the multitude some. Did the military act under the authority of the civil power? This is one of the first points of inquiry by a grand jury, for it involves the question, whether their acts were murder, manslaughter, excusable or justifiable homicide. Thus the evidence of civil authority becomes essential to the inquiry. Did the Governor, as commander-in-chief, command their presence, and aid in quelling the violence of the mob? Or was his authority assumed by unauthorized persons? These are questions which the Governor alone, as a witness, might be able to answer satisfactorily, by competent testimony in a common-law proceeding. They are not State secrets, but acts of authority in their very nature public, and cannot be concealed from the inquiry of the law. The rights of life and public safety are too sacred to be subordinated to any right to conceal the authority by which they are destroyed or jeopardized. If the executive authority was duly given, he neither can nor ought to withhold the knowledge which acquits of crime the military acting under his own orders. Indeed, from the character of our excellent Governor, he would not for a moment refuse to come to their rescue, if he believed his duty demanded it. On the other hand, if his authority was unlawfully assumed, or was simulated, or was exercised at the bidding of persons without right — an inference which his absence in California very naturally raises — and the military have been involved in an unlawful act, his duty and the rights of the people demand his testimony, that the parties who have thus misled them may be reached. This is no State secret as to them, but its concealment is a crime against society, which no one who knows the Governor would attribute to him, if aware of his duty. . . . In every respect of personal and official duty, the State has a right to the disclosure. A contrary doctrine strikes at the essential and fundamental principles of a free government as set forth in the Declaration of Rights."

§ 2379. **Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy.** So far as the privilege has any legitimate scope, it raises the question how the existence of the facts which make it applicable is to be determined. If it extends only (as its just limits prescribe) to matters involving international negotiations or military precautions against a foreign enemy, the presence of such matters in the documents or communications sought to be disclosed must by some authority be predetermined, before the privilege can be deemed applicable. If it extends to the larger scope indicated by the English rulings, still the existence of a necessity for secrecy must be in each instance declared. Who shall make this determination? Obviously, and by analogy with other privileges, the Court (*ante*, §§ 2193, 2271, 2322, *post*, § 2550). But the judge, urges the learned incumbent of that office, in *Beatson v. Skene*,<sup>1</sup> "would be unable to determine it without ascertaining what the document was," — surely an unavoidable process; "which inquiry," however, it is added, "cannot take place in private," — a singular assumption. It would rather seem that the simple and natural process of determination was precisely such a private perusal by the judge. Is it to be said that even this much of disclosure cannot be trusted? Shall every subordinate in the department have access to the secret, and not the presiding officer of justice? Cannot the constitutionally coördinate body of government share the confidence? It is ludicrous to

§ 2379. <sup>1</sup> *Ante*, § 2378, note 1.



observe a chief magistrate, as in *Beatson v. Skene*, solemnly protesting his incompetence to share the knowledge of a fact which had never been secret at all and had for months been spread abroad by the hundred tongues of scandal. By the doctrine of judicial notice, to be sure, he could not judicially know anything that was not already notorious; by a sarcastic perversion of that doctrine, the perusal of the documents in *Beatson v. Skene* might have been urged upon the Court.

The truth cannot be escaped that a Court which abdicates its inherent function of determining the facts upon which the admissibility of evidence depends will furnish to designing officials too ample opportunities for abusing the privilege. The lawful limits of the privilege are extensible beyond any control, if its applicability is left to the determination of the very official whose interest it is to shield his wrongdoing under the privilege. Both principle and policy demand that the determination of the privilege shall be for the judge:<sup>2</sup>

1807, *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep. I, 121, 127, 136, 255, II, 536; treason; a subpoena 'duces tecum' was issued by Chief Justice Marshall to President Jefferson, to attend and bring certain correspondence with General Wilkinson said to be material to the defence; as to the argument that reasons of State might forbid the disclosure, MARSHALL, C. J., said: "There is certainly nothing before the Court which shows that the letter in question contains any matter the disclosure of which would endanger the public safety; . . . if it does contain any matter which it would be imprudent to disclose, which it is not the wish of the Executive to disclose, such matter, if it be not immediately and essentially applicable to the point, will of course be suppressed. . . . Everything of this kind, however, will have its due consideration on the return of the subpoena. . . . I admit, in such a case, much reliance must be placed on the declaration of the President; . . . perhaps the Court ought to consider the reasons which would induce the President to refuse to exhibit such a letter as conclusive on it, unless such letter could be shown to be absolutely necessary in the defence. The President may himself state the particular reasons which may have induced him to withhold a paper, and the Court would unquestionably allow their full force to those reasons."<sup>3</sup> President JEFFERSON, while forwarding the desired letter, added the following: "With respect to papers, there is certainly a public and private side to our offices. To the former belong grants of land, patents for inventions, certain commissions, proclamations, and other papers patent in their nature. To the other belong mere executive proceedings. All nations have found it necessary that for the advantageous conduct of their affairs some of these proceedings at least should remain known to their executive functionary only. He, of course, from the nature of the case, must be the sole judge of which of them the public interest will permit publication."

1863, MONDELET, J., in *Gugy v. Maguire*, 13 Low. Can. 33, 38 (upon a provincial secretary's refusal to produce the report of a superintendent of police): "[Conceding that the privilege may exist,] are you to compare the discretion, the unbiassed mind, the position

<sup>2</sup> What the English ruling to-day would be is uncertain: 1860, *Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 838, 853 (the executive officer's claim of injury to public interests determines the recognition of the privilege; unless perhaps where he merely sends a subordinate to make objection without such explanation; *Martin, B., diss.*); 1888, *Hennessey v. Wright*, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 509,

515, 521 (disapproving *Beatson v. Skene*, on this point); 1884, *Bradley v. McIntosh*, 5 Ont. 227, 232, 236 (the officer determines). Compare some remarks by the judges in *Re Joseph Hargreaves, Limited*, 1900, 1 Ch. 347.

<sup>3</sup> He also held (II, 513, 536) that the President's delegation of discretion to the prosecuting counsel was not lawful.

of the judge who is alike independent of the Crown and of the People, who is free from party spirit, who knows or should know no one, to the biassed mind -- naturally, necessarily, biassed mind -- of a politician, not independent as the judge is, but dependent upon a party, who knows or must know, the contending parties, and may have the most cogent reasons for supporting one party, in preference to another; who has to bear, and does bear the external pressure which the judge is or should be inaccessible to; whose interest it may be, under the flimsy pretence, under the transparent veil of pretended public interest, to screen some petty minion in office? The comparison cannot hold for a moment. In the case of the judge, you have sacred guarantees; in that of a politician, you have none. External pressure will curb down the politician, whilst you will behold the judge more erect than ever, calmly and firmly resisting and baffling its baneful influence. Clearly then, manifestly, should it be left to the judge on the Bench, in his discretion, to determine the question, instead of allowing a secretary, or any member of the government, to silence him, to interfere with the administration of justice, and to become the judge. . . . This very case, this very flimsy, unfounded pretence, this unjustifiable refusal of the honorable secretary to prove the letter, which, through the instrumentality of the assistant provincial secretary, one of the acknowledged channels of communication with the department of the secretary, and actually, in most cases of importance, the medium of such communication, has been made public, shews up, in its true light, the danger, were it even legal or constitutional (which it is not), of the exorbitant pretension now set up. The honorable Judge, who presided at the trial, had it in his power, and at a mere glance at it, with his well known clear mind and sound judgment, had he thought proper to do so, might have seen through the transparency of the objection raised by the honorable secretary and the respondent. Such a letter, if proved, injurious to the public service! In what respect? How could the fact that the respondent had libelled the appellant, supposing he has, be injurious to the public service? . . . It is manifestly laying down the rule, that a secretary, or other public functionary, member of the government, will be at liberty to say that white is black, and that he must be believed."



TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC VI: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

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| § 2380. History and Policy ; Statutes.   | § 2386. Whose is the Privilege ; Claim of Privilege ; Inference from Claim.  |
| § 2381. Confidentiality of Communications ; (1) Implied Confidence ; Burden of Proof ; Third Persons' Testimony.   | § 2387. Termination of the Privilege ; Death.                                |
| § 2382. Same : (2) Professional Character of the Consultation ; Opponent's Physician ; Hospital Records : Autopsy. | § 2388. Same : Waiver, in general ; Express and Implied Waiver.              |
| § 2383. Communications Necessary for Prescription.   | § 2389. Same : Waiver by Bringing Suit ; by Testifying ; by Former Waiver.   |
| § 2384. Information, Active and Passive.   | § 2390. Same : Waiver by Calling the Physician ; by using "Proofs of Death." |
| § 2385. Criminal Cases ; Malpractice.  | § 2391. Same : Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative.                  |
| § 2385a. Death Certificate.  |  |

§ 2380. **History and Policy ; Statutes.** It was early understood, in the precedents of English law, as soon as the secrecy of private confidence in general was finally settled to be no justification for a legal privilege (*ante*, §§ 2286, 2290), that confidences given to a physician stand upon no better legal footing than others:

1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 573; bigamy; Mr. Hawkins, a physician, who had attended the accused and her alleged husband, was asked: "Do you know from the parties of any marriage between them?" Ans.: "I do not know how far anything that has come before me in a confidential trust in my profession should be disclosed, consistent with my professional honor." L. C. J. MANSFIELD: "If all your lordships will acquiesce, Mr. Hawkins will understand that it is your judgment and opinion that a surgeon has no privilege, where it is a material question in a civil or criminal cause to know whether parties were married or whether a child was born, to say that his introduction to the parties was in the course of his profession and in that way he came to the knowledge of it. . . . If a surgeon was voluntarily to reveal these secrets, to be sure, he would be guilty of a breach of honor and of great indiscretion; but to give that information in a court of justice, which by the law of the land he is bound to do, will never be imputed to him as any indiscretion whatever."

This has ever since been accepted by English judges<sup>1</sup> (in spite of an occasional and proper dispensation by courtesy<sup>2</sup>); and would probably

§ 2380. <sup>1</sup> 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 760, per Buller, J. ("It is much to be lamented that the law of privilege is not extended" to medical persons; this judge's views on the subject were anachronistic, as noted *ante*, § 2285); 1822, *Garrow, B.*, in *Falmouth v. Moss*, 11 Price 455, 470; 1823, *R. v. Powell*, 1 C. & P. 97, Parke B., (a surgeon attending an accused indicted for the murder of her bastard child, held not entitled to refuse

testimony to her confession); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, per Lord Langdale, M. R.; 1851, in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391, per Wigram, V. C.; 1876, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 650, *obiter*; 1881, the same judge in *Wheeler v. Le Marchant*, 17 id. 675, 681, *obiter*.

<sup>2</sup> 1825, *Gardner Peerage Case*, *Le Marchant's Rep.* 65, 88, 133 (names of women whose periods of gestation were testified to).

have been acknowledged as a common-law principle in every American court.<sup>3</sup>

But in New York in 1828<sup>4</sup> came a statutory innovation, establishing a privilege; and the legislation of other States,<sup>5</sup> accepting in this respect (as in

<sup>3</sup> 1793, *Sherman v. Sherman*, 1 Root Conn. 486 (divorce for adultery; a doctor's testimony compelled, though "all he could testify came to his knowledge in confidence"); 1904, *Banigan v. Banigan*, 26 R. I. 454, 59 Atl. 313; 1915, *Remington v. Rhode Island Co.*, 37 R. I. 393, 93 Atl. 33 (physician's report of a medical examination of the plaintiff, the report being made to the defendant, held not privileged as to the defendant); 1921, *Crow v. State*, 89 Tex. Cr. 149, 230 S. W. 148 (murder by poison; there is no privilege at common law).

<sup>4</sup> N. Y. Rev. St. 1828, II, 406 (Part III, c. VII, art. 9, § 73); in the second edition, in 1836, in an Appendix to the Revisers' Reports, vol. III, p. 737, is found their reasoning in justification, quoted *supra*. In 1849 the Commissioners on Practice and Pleadings embodied the rule in the new Code of Civil Procedure (§ 1710, part 4).

<sup>5</sup> For the statutes on *venereal disease*, see *ante*, § 2220 (party's privilege) and § 2377 (compulsory reports); the general statutes are as follows:

*Federal*: 1884, *Connecticut L. Ins. Co. v. Union Trust Co.*, 112 U. S. 250, 254, 5 Sup. 119 (the privilege given by the New York statute is to be applied in trials in the Federal Courts in New York);

*Alaska*: Comp L. 1913, § 1870 (like Or. Laws 1920, § 733, par. 4, omitting "regular," and substituting for "without the consent," "against the objection");

*Arizona*: 1913, Civ. C. § 1677, par. 6, P. C. § 1228, par. 4 ("A physician or surgeon cannot be examined, without the consent of his patient, as to any communication made by his patient with reference to any physical or supposed physical disease or any knowledge obtained by personal examination of such patient; provided that if a person offer himself as a witness and voluntarily testify with reference to such communications, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination of such physician or attorney");

*Arkansas*: Dig. 1919, § 4149 ("No person authorized to practice physic or surgery and no trained nurse shall be compelled to disclose any information which he may have acquired from his patient while attending him in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe as a physician or do any act for him as a surgeon or trained nurse");

*California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1881, par. 4 ("A licensed physician or surgeon cannot, without the consent of his patient, be examined in a civil action as to any information acquired in attending the patient which was necessary to

enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"; amended May 26, 1917, by adding: "provided, however, that after the death of the patient, the executor of his will, or the administrator of his estate, or the surviving spouse of the deceased, or, if there be no surviving spouse, the children, of the deceased personally, or, if minors, by their guardian, may give such consent, in any action or proceeding brought to recover damages on account of the death of the patient; provided, further that where any person brings an action to recover damages for personal injuries, such action shall be deemed to constitute a consent by the person bringing such action that any physician who has prescribed for or treated said person and whose testimony is material in said action shall testify; and provided, further, that the bringing of an action to recover for the death of a patient, by the executor of his will, or by the administrator of his estate, or by the surviving spouse of the deceased, or if there be no surviving spouse, by the children personally, or if minors by their guardian, shall constitute a consent by such executor, administrator, surviving spouse, or children or guardian, to the testimony of any physician who attended said deceased"); *Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, § 6563 ("A physician or surgeon duly authorized to practice his profession under the laws of this State shall not, without the consent of his patient be examined as to any information acquired in attending the patient, which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); § 6564 (waiver by consent; quoted *ante*, § 488); *Columbia (Dist.)*: Code 1919, § 1073 ("In the Courts of the District of Columbia no physician or surgeon shall be permitted, without the consent of the person afflicted, or of his legal representatives, to disclose any information, confidential in its nature, which he shall have acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity; provided, that this section shall not apply to evidence in criminal cases where the accused is charged with causing the death of or inflicting injuries upon a human being, and the disclosure shall be required in the interest of public justice"); *Hawaii*: Rev. L. 1915, § 2615 ("No physician or surgeon shall, without the consent of his patient, divulge in any civil suit, action, or proceeding (unless the sanity of the patient be the matter in dispute) any information which he may have acquired in attending the patient, and which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); *Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 7937 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, down to proviso);



so many others) the model constructed by the distinguished leaders of legal reform in that epoch-making movement in New York, embodied the privi-

*Indiana:* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 520, par. 4 ("Physicians, as to matter communicated to them, as such, by their patients, in the course of their professional business, or advice given in such cases," shall not be competent);

*Iowa:* Code 1897, § 4608, Comp. Code § 7315 (quoted *ante*, § 2292);

*Kansas:* Gen. St. 1915, § 7223 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify . . . sixth, a physician or surgeon, concerning any communication made to him by his patient with reference to any physical or supposed physical disease, defect, or injury, or the time, manner, or circumstances under which the ailment was incurred, or concerning any knowledge obtained by a personal examination of any such patient, without the consent of the patient"; proviso for waiver, quoted *ante*, § 2292);

*Kentucky:* Stats. 1915, § 2062b, par. 24 (vital statistics; medical certificate of death must be signed by attendant physician and state nature of illness, etc.; "for the purpose of this Act, and all other matter, the confidential relations and communications between physician and patient are placed upon the same basis as those provided by law between attorney and client, and nothing in this act shall be so construed as to require any such privileged communication to be disclosed");

*Michigan:* Comp. L. 1915, § 12550 ("No person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be allowed to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending any patient in his professional character, which information was necessary in order to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or to do any act for him as a surgeon"; added by St. 1909, No. 234; "provided, however, that in case such patient shall bring an action against any defendant to recover for any personal injuries or for malpractice, if such plaintiff shall produce any physician as a witness in his own behalf, who has treated him for such injury, or for any disease or condition, with reference to which such malpractice is alleged, he shall be deemed to have waived the privilege hereinbefore provided for, as to any or all other physicians, who may have treated him for such injuries, disease or condition"; and provided that on an issue of probating a patient's will the heirs at law "shall be deemed to be personal representatives of such deceased patient for the purpose of waiving the privilege" etc.); St. 1905, No. 136, Comp. L. 1915, § 11367 (in prosecutions for illegal marriage of persons sexually diseased, "any physician who has attended or prescribed for husband or wife for either of the diseases above mentioned shall be compelled to testify to any facts found by him from such attendance"); 1904, Dickr. Supreme Body, 138 Mich. 372, 101 N. W.

564 (statute held applicable to a hearing before a fraternal insurance board);

*Minnesota:* Gen. St. 1913, § 8375 (like N. Y. C. P. A. § 352 down to the proviso); St. 1917, c. 210, § 1 (bastardy; licensed physician or surgeon may testify to "pregnancy of his patient without her consent"); St. 1919, Apr. 25, c. 513, amending Gen. St. 1913, § 8375, by adding proviso ("provided that after the decease of such patient, in an action to recover insurance benefits, where the insurance has been in existence two years or more the beneficiaries shall be deemed to be the personal representatives of such deceased person for the purpose of waiving the privilege hereinbefore created, and that no oral or written waiver of the privilege hereinbefore created shall have any binding force or effect, except that the same be made upon the trial of [or?] examination where the evidence is offered or received").

*Missouri:* Rev. St. 1919, § 5418 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fifth, a physician or surgeon, concerning any information which he may have acquired from any patient while attending him in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician, or to any act for him as a surgeon"); § 4034 (dying declarations of woman in abortion cases; attendant physician is competent to testify, and his relation shall not disqualify him);

*Montana:* Rev. C. 1921, § 10536 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended);

*Nebraska:* Rev. St. 1922, §§ 8840-8841 (quoted *ante*, § 2292);

*Nevada:* Rev. L. 1912, § 5427 (like unamended Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, omitting "in a civil action," and adding: "provided, however, in any suit or prosecution against a physician or surgeon for malpractice, if the patient or party suing or prosecuting shall give such consent, and any such witness shall give testimony, then such physician or surgeon, defendant, may call any other physicians or surgeons as witnesses on behalf of defendant, without the consent of such patient or party suing or prosecuting");

*New York:* C. P. A. 1920, § 352 ("a person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery or a professional or registered nurse shall not be allowed to disclose any information which he acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity; [St. 1905] unless where the patient is a child under the age of sixteen the information so acquired indicates that the patient has been the victim or subject of a crime, in which case the physician or nurses may be required to testify," etc., when the crime is the subject of the inquiry: this proviso is a poor sop to the demands of justice and does not palliate the injustice of



lege in other statutes — Missouri following next in 1835; and before long, in one half of the jurisdictions, the privilege was a settled part of the law.

closing the physician's mouth where the victim was an adult); C. P. A. § 354 (including amendments added by St. 1897-1899; the preceding section not to apply if "expressly waived upon the trial or examination" by the patient; moreover, except for "confidential communications and such facts as would tend to disgrace the memory of the patient," express waiver by the personal representative of the deceased suffices, or, in testamentary controversies, by the executor, surviving husband, widow, heir, next of kin, etc.; quoted in full, *ante*, § 2292);

*North Carolina*: Con. St. 1919, § 1798 ("No person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be required to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending a patient in a professional character and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or to enable him to do any act for him as a surgeon; provided that the presiding judge of a superior court may compel such disclosure if in his opinion the same is necessary to a proper administration of justice");

*North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, § 7923 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended, omitting "in a civil action" and "licensed"); § 7924 ("If a person offers himself as a witness," it is a consent to the physician's examination "on the same subject");

*Ohio*: Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 11494 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: . . . a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testifies, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same subject"); 1903, *Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. v. Howle*, 68 Oh. 614, 68 N. E. 4 (statute applied);

*Oklahoma*: Comp. St. 1921, 589 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify . . . Sixth, a physician or surgeon concerning any communication made to him by his patient with reference to any physical or supposed physical disease, or any knowledge obtained by a personal examination of any such patient; provided, that if a person offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; (*sic?*) also, if [also of?] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section");

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 733 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, first sentence); § 734 ("If a party to the suit, action, or proceeding offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination also of a wife, husband, attorney, clergyman, physician, or surgeon, on the same

subject, within the meaning of subdivisions 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the last section");

*Pennsylvania*: St. 1895, June 18, as amended by St. 1907, June 7, Dig. 1920, § 21860 ("No person authorized to practice physics or surgery shall be allowed, in any civil case, to disclose any information which he acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity, and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity, which shall tend to blacken the character of the patient, without consent of said patient, except in civil cases brought by such patient for damages on account of personal injuries");

*Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 383 (like Pa. St. 1895, omitting the exception); Civ. C. § 1247 (quoted *ante*, § 488);

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1408 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, first clause; but excepting actions for medical malpractice, and providing that a medical man is "competent to testify as to the cause of the death of any person"); § 1409 (in an action on a policy of life insurance, the physician may testify with the consent of the beneficiary; also in general a privileged person waives the privilege by testifying to any part of the communication); *South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 2730 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, up to "provided," omitting "licensed"); § 2731 (like N. D. Comp. L. § 2731);

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 7124 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, omitting "licensed" and omitting the proviso);

*Washington*: R. & B. Code 1909, § 1214 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, substituting "regular" for "licensed"); § 2147 ("[Witnesses are competent in criminal as in civil cases; but] regular physicians or surgeons, clergymen or priests shall be protected from testifying as to confessions, or information received from any defendant, by virtue of their profession and character"); 1919, *State v. Miller*, 105 Wash. 475, 178 Pac. 459 (Rem. C. §§ 1214 and 2147 construed; the privilege applies in criminal and not only in civil cases; Holcomb, J., diss.); *West Virginia*: St. 1897, c. 44, Code 1914, § 4879 (quoted *ante*, § 488);

*Wisconsin*: Stats. 1919, § 4075 ("No person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be permitted to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending any patient in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or do any act for him as a surgeon; [1911] but as a witness in his own behalf he may disclose such information in any civil action brought by such patient or his legal representatives to recover damages for malpractice in such professional attendance, and also in any criminal prosecution for such malpractice, whenever such patient or his legal



But modern industrial accident legislation has invariably repudiated the privilege in that class of inquiries;<sup>6</sup> though this is explainable on the principle of waiver (*post*, § 2389); and modern sanitary legislation has also abolished the privilege, in part, for venereal disease (*ante*, § 2220).

What is to be said in favor of such an innovation upon the common law? The privilege has been supported, in the home of its origin, in the following passages:

1836, *Commissioners on Revision of the Statutes of New York*, III, 737: "The ground on which communications to counsel are privileged, is the supposed necessity of a full knowledge of the facts, to advise correctly, and to prepare for the proper defence or

representatives shall have first given evidence relating to such information"); St. 1921, c. 122 (amends Stats. § 4075, by adding: "and also when the patient or those authorized to bring and who do bring actions for personal injury in case of the patient's death permit the physician in writing to do so");

*Wyoming*: Comp. St. 1920, § 5806 (like Oh. Gen. Code Ann. § 11494).

<sup>6</sup> *Alabama*: St. 1919, No. 245, p. 206, § 18 (workmen's compensation; any physician who treats or is present at the examination of an injured employee "may be required to testify as to any knowledge" thus obtained); *Arizona*: St. 1921, c. 103, § 80, par. b (workmen's compensation; any physician attending the claimant in a professional capacity may be required to testify; "information gained by the attending physician or surgeon while in attendance on the injured man shall not be considered a privileged communication," if required by the commission); *California*: St. 1917, p. 831, May 23, § 16 (workmen's compensation; physician of employer or commission examining injured employee may testify; quoted *ante*, § 2380); St. 1912, Jan. 10, Ex. Sess. 1911, p. 217, No. 2144 d in Deering's Gen. L., § 6 (employer's report of accident containing physician's report "shall not be admissible as evidence in an action arising out of the death or injury, etc."); *Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, § 4455 (workmen's compensation; a physician making or present at a physical examination under the Act "may be required to testify," also a physician who has "attended the employee in a professional capacity"; but not to disclose "confidential communications imparted to him for the purpose of treatment and which are unnecessary to a proper understanding of the case"); *Delaware*: St. 1917, Apr. 2, c. 233, adding § 3193 m 106 to the Revised Code (workmen's compensation claim; "no fact communicated to or otherwise learned by any physician or surgeon . . . shall be privileged . . . in any action at law"); *Iowa*: Code 1919, § 839 (workmen's compensation; physician examining employee "shall not be prohibiting from testifying" as to employee's condition); *Kansas*: Gen. St. 1915, § 5911 (workmen's compensation; upon a statutory medical

examination of the employee, "there shall be no other disqualification or privilege preventing the testimony of a physician who actually makes an examination"); *Michigan*: Comp. L. 1915, § 5449 (workmen's compensation; any physician "who shall make or be present at such examination [of a claimant] may be required to testify"); *Minnesota*: St. 1921, c. 82, § 23 (workmen's compensation; any physician assigned by industrial commission or furnished or paid by employer may be required to testify "as to any knowledge acquired by him in the course of such treatment or examination relative to the injury or the disability resulting therefrom"); *Missouri*: R. S. 1919, § 13605 (workmen's compensation; (e) "the testimony of any physician who treated the employee shall be admissible in any proceedings for compensation"; (f) records of "every hospital or other person furnishing the employee with medical aid," provable by certified copy); § 13642 (report of commission's physician admissible, if made accessible to parties beforehand); St. 1921, Mar. 28, p. 425, §§ 13, 50 (like Rev. St. §§ 13605, 13642, which are superseded); *Nevada*: St. 1913, Mar. 15, p. 137, § 32 (industrial insurance; claimant must submit to medical examination, "and any physician who shall make or be present at any such examination may be required to testify as to the result thereof"); *Rhode Island*: St. 1912, c. 831, § 21 (employers' liability; report of medical examiner appointed by the Court is admissible); *Tennessee*: St. 1919, Apr. 15, c. 123, § 25 (workmen's compensation; physician treating the employee "may be required to testify as to any knowledge acquired by him in the course of such treatment," etc.); *Washington*: R. & B. Code 1909, § 6604-12 a, as added by St. 1915, Mar. 22, c. 188 (industrial insurance; any physician examining a claimant may be required to testify, "and shall not be exempt from testifying by reason of the relation of physician to patient"); *Wyoming*: Comp. St. 1920, § 4341 (workmen's compensation; attendant physician must testify when directed "and the law of privileged communication between physician and patient as fixed by statute shall not apply in such cases").

prosecution of a suit. But surely the necessity of consulting a medical adviser, when life itself may be in jeopardy, is still stronger. And unless such consultations are privileged, men will be incidentally punished by being obliged to suffer the consequences of injuries without relief from the medical art, and without conviction of any offence. Besides, in such cases, during the struggle between legal duty on the one hand, and professional honor on the other, the latter, aided by a strong sense of the injustice and inhumanity of the rule, will, in most cases, furnish a temptation to the perversion or concealment of truth, too strong for human resistance."

1871, MILLER, J., in *Edington v. Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194: "It is a just and useful enactment introduced to give protection to those who were in charge of physicians from the secrets disclosed to enable them properly to prescribe for diseases of the patient. To open the door to the disclosure of secrets revealed on the sickbed, or when consulting a physician, would destroy confidence between the physician and the patient, and, it is easy to see, might tend very much to prevent the advantages and benefits which flow from this confidential relationship."<sup>7</sup>

To test these arguments, let us refer to the fundamental canons which must be satisfied by every privilege for communications (*ante*, § 2285). The questions must be asked: Does the communication originate in a confidence? Is the inviolability of that confidence vital to the due attainment of the purposes of the relation of physician and patient? Is the relation one that should be fostered? Is the expected injury to the relation, through disclosure, greater than the expected benefit to justice? A negative answer to any one of these questions would leave the privilege without support. In truth, all of them, except the third, may justly be answered in the negative:

(1) In only a few instances, out of the thousands daily occurring, is the fact communicated to a physician confidential in any real sense. Barring the facts of venereal disease and criminal abortion, there is hardly a fact in the categories of pathology in which the patient himself attempts to preserve any real secrecy.<sup>8</sup> Most of one's ailments are immediately disclosed and discussed; the few that are not openly visible are at least explained to intimates. No statistical reckoning is needed; these facts are well enough known.

(2) Even where the disclosure to the physician is actually confidential, it would none the less be made though no privilege existed. People would not be deterred from seeking medical help because of the possibility of disclosure in court. If they would, how did they fare in the generations before the privilege came? Is it noted in medical chronicles that, after the privilege was established in New York, the floodgates of patronage were let open upon the medical profession, and long-concealed ailments were then for the first time brought forth to receive the blessings of cure? And how is it to-day in those jurisdictions where no privilege exists, — does the medical profession

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Wm. A. Purrington, in Hamilton and Godkin's *System of Legal Medicine* (1900), 2d ed., I, 625-632, expounds the supposed reasons for the privilege.

A careful discussion of the scope and policy of the privilege will also be found in Professor H. B. Hutchins' article in the *Michigan Law*

*Review*, II, 687 (1904), "The Physician as an Expert."

<sup>8</sup> A modern Michigan statute (cited *supra*, n. 5) commits the absurdity of abolishing the privilege for sexual disease in certain cases, while retaining it on other facts.



in one half of the Union enjoy, in a marked way, an afflux of confidence contrasting with the scanty revelations vouchsafed in that other half where no privilege protects? If no difference appears, then this reason for the privilege is weakened; for it is undoubted that the rule of privilege is intended (*ante*, § 2285), not to subserve the party's wish for secrecy as an end in itself, but merely to provide secrecy as a means of preserving the relation in question, whenever without the guarantee of secrecy the party would probably abstain from fulfilling the requirements of the relation.

(3) That the relation of physician and patient should be fostered, no one will deny.

But (4) that the injury to that relation is greater than the injury to justice — the final canon to be satisfied — must most emphatically be denied. The injury is decidedly in the contrary direction. Indeed, the facts of litigation to-day are such that the answer can hardly be seriously doubted. Of the kinds of ailments that are commonly claimed as the subject of the privilege, there is seldom an instance where it is not ludicrous to suggest that the party cared at the time to preserve the knowledge of it from any person but the physician. From asthma to broken ribs, from ague to tetanus, the facts of the disease are not only disclosable without shame, but are in fact often publicly known and knowable by every one — except the appointed investigators of truth. The extreme of farcicality is often reached in litigation over personal injuries, — in the common case, a person injured by a street-car amid a throng of sympathizing onlookers. Here the element of absurdity will sometimes be double; in the first place, there is nothing in the world, by the nature of the injury, for the physician to disclose, which any person would ordinarily care to keep private from his neighbors; and, in the second place, the fact which would be most strenuously secreted and effectively protected, when the defendant called the plaintiff's physician and sought its disclosure, would be the fact that the plaintiff was not injured at all! Upon such a foundation of vain imaginations is the privilege reared. The injury to justice by the repression of the facts of corporal injury and disease is a hundred fold greater than any injury which might be done by disclosure. And furthermore, the few topics — such as venereal disease and abortion — upon which secrecy might be seriously desired by the patient come into litigation ordinarily in such issues (as when they constitute cause for a bill of divorce or a charge of crime) that for these very facts common sense and common justice demand that the desire for secrecy shall not be listened to:

1920, OWEN, J., *diss.*, in *Maine v. Maryland Casualty Co.*, 172 Wis. 350, 178 N. W. 749: "The rule did not obtain at common law. It had its origin in the State of New York, and has been adopted by approximately one-half of the states of this country. It is said that it was enacted for the purpose of encouraging patients to disclose fully their ailments to their attending physicians without apprehension that their statements so made could be disclosed upon the witness stand to their humiliation and disgrace. As compared with the innumerable ailments to which the human flesh is heir, those which bring shame or disgrace to the sufferer are inconsiderable. Of those so afflicted who consult physicians

but an inconsequential proportion are restrained from complete disclosure by apprehension of enforced publicity of shameful secrets. When we realize that but an insignificant segment of society requires protection of this nature, well may we wonder whether the shield designed for their benefit should be made so broad and ample as to constitute an insuperable barrier to the attainment of justice by the heirs and representatives of those who do not need such protection.

"Ordinarily bodily affliction and disease are attended with neither shame nor disgrace. The character of one's ailment is not usually a secret. It is generally known to one's neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. In all the range of human affliction one can think of but one class of diseases that he would hide from his friends and neighbors, and that is venereal diseases. No other diseases, nor class of diseases, bring humiliation or shame or disgrace to the sufferer. He who has acquired venereal disease by clandestine liaison has scant claim upon legislative consideration for protection from the shame which he has deliberately invited. In the last analysis, therefore, this statute must be said to have been enacted to save from shame and disgrace those who by their own acts have forfeited their honor. If this could be done without at the same time working injustice to the innocent and the pure, the purpose might be generous and praiseworthy. But where the innocent are made to suffer to shield the wicked and the guilty from the publicity of their own misconduct, the cost of generous consideration becomes too great.

"Taking society as a whole, this statute cheats rather than promotes justice. It suppresses rather than reveals truth. This case furnishes a splendid illustration of its consequences. Here a poor widow is turned out of court, unable to recover on a contract made by her deceased husband for her benefit because this statute closes the mouth of his attending physician. The same result must follow in any case for the recovery of damages for death caused by wrongful act, where the testimony of the attending physician is necessary to establish the causal relation between the injury and the death. The innocent should not be thus deprived of justice and made to pay the cost of the protection which this statute would afford to those who have forfeited all right to protection.

"The centuries of experience during which the common law was developed did not give rise to this rule. . . . Well may this statute receive legislative reconsideration, and if it be still thought desirable to afford protection to those who have but scant claim upon the consideration of society, then let it be so framed that such protection can be extended without working hardship and injustice to the innocent and the pure."

There is but one form in which the argument for the privilege can be put with any semblance of plausibility, and in that form it commonly presents itself to the view of medical men justly jealous for the honor of their profession. This argument is that, since the secrets of the legal profession are allowed to be inviolable, the secrets of the medical profession have at least an equal title to consideration. This, to be sure, is no more than analogy; and nothing is more fallible than an argument from analogy. But, leaving aside the consideration that the privilege for communications to attorneys stands itself on none too firm a foundation (*ante*, § 2291), and leaving aside the primary tests (just examined) by which every privilege must be judged, and answering the argument as it is put, — the answer is that the services of an attorney are sought primarily for aid in litigation, actual or expected, while those of the physician are sought for physical cure; that hence the rendering of that aid would result directly and surely in the disclosure of the client's admissions, if the attorney's privilege did not exist, while the physician's curative aid can always be rendered irrespective of making disclosure; and,



finally, that thus the absence of the privilege would convert the attorney habitually and inevitably into a mere informer for the benefit of the opponent, while the physician, being called upon only rarely to make disclosures, is not consciously affected in his relation with the patient. The function of the two professions being entirely distinct, the moral effect upon them of the absence of the privilege is different.

Certain it is that the practical employment of the privilege has come to mean little but the suppression of useful truth. — truth which ought to have been disclosed and would never have been suppressed for the sake of any inherent repugnancy in the medical facts involved. Nine-tenths of the litigation in which the privilege is invoked consist of actions on policies of life insurance, where the deceased's misrepresentations of his health are involved; actions for corporal injuries, where the extent of the plaintiff's injury is at issue; and testamentary actions, where the testator's mental capacity is disputed. In all of these the medical testimony is absolutely needed for the purpose of learning the truth. In none of them is there any reason for the party to conceal the facts, except as a tactical manoeuvre in litigation. In the first two of these, the advancement of fraudulent claims is notoriously common; nor do the culpable methods of some insurers or carriers, whatever they may have been or still are, justify the infliction of retaliatory penalties, indirectly and indiscriminately, by means of an unsound rule for the suppression of truth.<sup>9</sup> In none of these cases need there be any fear that the absence of the privilege will subjectively hinder people from consulting physicians freely; the actually injured person would still seek medical aid, the honest insured would still submit to medical examination, and the testator would still summon physicians to his cure. There is little to be said in favor of the privilege, and a great deal to be said against it.<sup>10</sup> The adoption of it in any other jurisdictions is earnestly to be deprecated.

§ 2381. **Confidentiality of Communications; (1) Implied Confidence; Burden of Proof; Third Persons' Testimony.** In the foregoing privileges for communications, the fundamental assumption has been that the communications, in order to deserve protection, must be confidential in their origin. This principle obtains equally for the present privilege.

When the confidential nature of the communication has been expressly stated at the time of making it, the application of the privilege is plain. But is *confidentiality to be implied from the mere relation of physician and patient?* Or is it to be implied only according to the circumstances of each case, including the nature of the ailment and the occasion of consultation? The latter solution seems the natural one. Some Courts, however, have de-

<sup>9</sup> See the comment of Earl, J., in *Renihan v. Dennin*, 103 N. Y. 573, 580, 9 N. E. 320.

Several of the statutes quoted *supra*, n. 5, abrogate the patient's privilege in actions for personal injury.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Albert Bach, in the *Medico-Legal*

*Journal*, X, 33, 40 (1892), "The Medico-Legal Aspect of Privileged Communications," and Mr. Wm. A. Purrington in the *Columbia Law Review*, VI, 388 (1906), "An Abused Privilege," have stated forcibly the objections to the privilege.



clared that the mere relation of physician and patient implies a confidentiality for all communications;<sup>1</sup> and this assumption is tacitly made in other Courts and in all statutes. Nevertheless, there is a general and sound doctrine, occasionally enforced, that the claimant of the privilege has the *burden of establishing* in each instance all the facts necessary to create the privilege;<sup>2</sup> and it would seem to be a consequence of this that the circumstances indicating confidentiality must also be established.

As with the other privileges, however, the privilege forbids compulsory disclosure by that person only to whom the confidence was extended. It therefore does not exempt a *third person*, overhearing the communication, from testifying to it;<sup>3</sup> except so far as the third person is an agent of the physician.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2382. **Same: (2) Professional Character of the Consultation; Opponent's Physician; Hospital Records; Autopsy.** The confidence which is protected is that only which is given to a professional physician during a consultation with a view to a curative treatment; for it is that relation only which the law desires to facilitate.

(a) Hence, the person consulted must be a *professional physician*, in the usual sense of the word. This does not include a veterinary surgeon;<sup>1</sup> nor a pharmacist;<sup>2</sup> nor a *nurse*, or other skilled auxiliary practitioner.<sup>3</sup> Nor

§ 2381. <sup>1</sup> 1905, *Murphy v. Board*, 2 Cal. App. 468, 83 Pac. 577; 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 210; 1902, *Munz v. R. Co.*, — Utah —, 70 Pac. 852 (physician sent by railroad company to the injured person; privilege held applicable; Rolapp, J., diss.). *Contra*: 1920, *Swartz's Will*, *Gleason v. Jones*, 79 Okl. 191, 192 Pac. 203 (testamentary capacity; the accused being ill of jaundice, and the physician making his examination in the presence of other persons and telling her that she was fatally ill, held that the privilege did not apply to statements not confidential, made openly, in the presence of other persons).

<sup>2</sup> 1902, *Wheeler v. State*, 158 Ind. 687, 63 N. E. 975; 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 571 (the proponent of the evidence is not required to negative the privilege; "the party objecting must in some way make it appear, if it does not otherwise appear, that the information is within the statutory exclusion"); 1887, *People v. Schuyler*, 106 N. Y. 298, 304, 12 N. E. 783 (preceding case approved); 1902, *Griffiths v. R. Co.*, 171 N. Y. 106, 63 N. E. 808; 1902, *Green v. R. Co.*, 171 N. Y. 201, 63 N. E. 958; 1914, *Booren v. McWilliams*, 26 N. D. 558, 145 N. W. 410.

<sup>3</sup> 1894, *Springer v. Byram*, 137 Ind. 15, 36 N. E. 361 (undertaker's employers, allowed to testify to a conversation with the physician in the ambulance).

<sup>4</sup> 1914, *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Owen*, 111 Ark. 554, 164 S. W. 720 (a second physician, attending the first as a guest and adviser only,

held within the privilege); 1917, *Stalker v. Breeze*, 186 Ind. 221, 114 N. E. 968 (clinical record at hospital, kept by a nurse, *semble*, held privileged); 1884, *Raymond v. R. Co.*, 65 Ia. 152, 21 N. W. 495 (a physician attending with his partner, not allowed to disclose the patient's statement made to his partner); 1886, *Renihan v. Dennin*, 103 N. Y. 573, 578, 9 N. E. 320 (a physician called in for consultation by the regular physician is within the privilege).

See also § 2382, n. 3, *post* (nurses).

§ 2382. <sup>1</sup> 1898, *Hendershot v. Tel. Co.*, 106 Ia. 529, 76 N. W. 828 (treating a horse).

<sup>2</sup> 1877, *Brown v. R. Co.*, 66 Mo. 597 (a drug-clerk, asked what medicines he had sold the plaintiff); 1904, *Schermer v. McMahon*, 108 Mo. App. 36, 82 S. W. 535.

<sup>3</sup> 1909, *Laurie Co. v. McCullough*, 174 Ind. 477, 90 N. E. 1014 (a teacher of gymnastic exercises taken by medical advice, held not within the privilege).

But a few of the statutes (quoted *ante*, § 2380) include nurses; 1909, *Homnyack v. Prudential Ins. Co.*, 194 N. Y. 456, 87 N. E. 769 (life insurance; St. 1904 and St. 1906, applied to concede the privilege to a professional nurse; effect of St. 1906 on pending actions, considered).

Compare the rule for third persons as *agents* (*ante*, § 2381); a nurse as an independent person, receiving medical confidences as such, is not within the privilege; but a nurse acting as the agent of a physician is within the privilege; see the analogy of the attorney-and-client privilege (*ante*, § 2301).



does it include a *dentist*;<sup>4</sup> the modern recognition of dental science as strictly a branch of medical science does not lead to the opposite conclusion; for dental operations cannot be deemed to involve the sentiment of personal privacy on which the privilege rests. A practitioner of any branch or school of medical science, recognized as such by the reputable medical profession, is included; some of the statutes define the privileged class as "licensed" practitioners. A surgeon is in any case within the definition. How far the class should be extended in these days of pretentious and successful quackery, may become difficult to determine.

(b) The consultation with such a person must be had in his *professional character at the time*. A consultation, therefore, for some purpose other than that of ultimate curative or alleviative treatment is not privileged;<sup>5</sup> nor is a communication made at some time when the professional relation is not pending.<sup>6</sup> Hence a communication made to a physician invited to the inspection or consultation *at the opponent's instance* is not privileged, because it is not usually made for the purpose of curative treatment, and because a confidence cannot be implied in the absence of an invitation on the part of

<sup>4</sup> 1875, *People v. De France*, 104 Mich. 526, 62 N. W. 709.

<sup>5</sup> *California*: 1916, *Baird's Estate*, 173 Cal. 617, 160 Pac. 1078 (inheritance; physician attendant at birth of an illegitimate child; admissions of paternity by B., held not privileged); *Indiana*: 1895, *Bower v. Bower*, 143 Ind. 194, 41 N. E. 523 (admitted, where the physician called upon the patient for a money matter); 1917, *Cincinnati H. and D. R. Co. v. Gross*, 186 Ind. 471, 114 N. E. 962 (attendant surgeon in defendant's hospital was present when the defendant's agents talked with plaintiff; held on the facts that the patient's communication to the agents was privileged, the witness being "in the course of his professional business" under the statute; but the Court unsoundly declares that the privilege is "a beneficent one"); *Louisiana*: 1904, *State v. Lyons*, 113 La. 959, 37 So. 890 (a coroner-physician, visiting the accused at a charity-hospital after the affray, held not within the privilege); *Missouri*: 1905, *Arnold v. Maryville*, 110 Mo. App. 254, 85 S. W. 107 (a consultation "only with a view of qualifying them to testify in the cause," not privileged); 1906, *Obermeyer v. Lageman C. M. Co.*, 120 Mo. App. 59, 96 S. W. 673 (statements at an interview with the opponent's physician in which the latter was partly trying to cure and partly trying to get evidence, held entirely privileged); 1907, *Smart v. Kansas City*, 208 Mo. 162, 105 S. W. 709 (physicians of a city hospital where the plaintiff went for treatment, held all within the privilege, regardless of whether any one was specially retained); 1915, *McGuire v. Chicago & A. R. Co.*, — Mo. —, 178 S. W. 79 (personal injury; information as to gonorrhea, acquired solely through inter-

views to qualify as a witness, held not privileged); *New York*: 1889, *Hoyt v. Hoyt*, 112 N. Y. 493, 515, 20 N. E. 402 (physician's testimony as to interviews had with a testator to ascertain his opinion of his daughter's mental condition, held not privileged); 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 570 (that "the witness attended the assured for some disease" does not raise a presumption "that he discovered that disease or learned its nature while attending him professionally"); 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 N. Y. 281, 296 (professional character, found on the facts); 1910, *People v. Austin*, 199 N. Y. 446, 93 N. E. 57 (examination of accused made by the physician in jail at the defendant's request for the purpose of testifying as to sanity; the defendant did not call him on the trial, but the prosecution did; held not privileged); *Wisconsin*: 1899, *Bruendl's Will*, 102 Wis. 45, 147, 78 N. W. 169 (examination of patient with reference to her mental competency as being fit for release from guardianship, held not within the statute).

<sup>6</sup> 1922, *Chicago L. S. & S. B. R. Co. v. Walas*, — Ind. —, 135 N. E. 150 (privilege applied to a hospital doctor who saw the plaintiff intoxicated on arrival but before the doctor had been assigned to the case; a truly delicate morsel of quibble); 1901, *Herries v. Waterloo*, 114 La. 374, 86 N. W. 306 (opinion based on information acquired when not employed as physician, not privileged); 1903, *Patterson v. Cole*, 67 Kan. 441, 73 Pac. 54; 1906, *Smoot v. Kansas City*, 194 Mo. 513, 92 S. W. 363; 1897, *People v. Koerner*, 154 N. Y. 355, 48 N. E. 730 (communications during trial, but after the relation of physician had ended, excluded); 1907, *State v. Werner*, 16 N. D. 83, 112 N. W.



the communicating person.<sup>7</sup> Hence, also, the examination of an *injured employee* by a physician designated by the employer or by the industrial commission would not be privileged;<sup>8</sup> and this is usually stated expressly in the statutes for industrial accident insurance (quoted *ante*, § 2380). So, too, a compulsory disclosure of *venereal disease*, on demand of the State, through an inspecting physician (*ante*, § 2220) falls without the principle of the privilege.

(c) The privilege is universally agreed to include the physicians' entries in medical records of a *hospital*. But 'quære' whether it should include the records of a *State hospital*, where the undoubtedly medical character of the records is overridden by the public nature of the books (*ante*, § 1858).<sup>9</sup> Distinguish, however, the physician's certificate of *cause of death*, required by

60 (conversation between the accused, the State's attorney, and the physician, held not privileged); 1917, *McGinty v. Brotherhood*, 166 Wis. 83, 164 N. W. 249 (life insurance).

A *hypothetical question* to a physician who has had professional relations with the patient is of course not privileged: 1904, *Crago v. Cedar Rapids*, 123 La. 48, 98 N. W. 354.

<sup>7</sup> *California*: 1892, *Freel v. R. Co.*, 97 Cal. 40, 45, 31 Pac. 730, *semble* (a physician sent by the opponent to examine, held not privileged); *Colorado*: 1894, *Nesbit v. People*, 19 Colo. 441, 461, 36 Pac. 221 (examination by a physician agreed on between the defendant and the prosecution, held not privileged); *Iowa*: 1902, *State v. Height*, 117 La. 650, 91 N. W. 935 (information obtained by a physician examining the defendant, while in jail, for the prosecution, held not within the privilege); 1921, *Walmer & Roberts v. Hennessey*, 191 Ia. 86, 181 N. W. 798 (physician who is employee of opponent and examines on the latter's behalf is not within the privilege; otherwise where he afterwards treats the party as her physician); *Michigan*: 1888, *People v. Glover*, 71 Mich. 307, 38 N. W. 874 (rape; a physician's examination of the defendant in jail, at the district attorney's instance, held not privileged); *Minnesota*: 1915, *Cherpeski v. Great Northern R. Co.*, 128 Minn. 360, 150 N. W. 1091 (employee's examination by the employer's surgeon, before entering employment, for ascertaining his physical capacity to work, held not privileged); *New York*: 1890, *People v. Kemmler*, 119 N. Y. 580, 585, 24 N. E. 9 (a physician's opinion of an accused's mental condition, obtained by watching him in jail at the instance of the district attorney, held not privileged); 1893, *People v. Sliney*, 137 N. Y. 570, 33 N. E. 150 (a physician sent by the district attorney to examine the defendant for insanity; the defendant's admissions not privileged); 1896, *People v. Hoch*, 150 N. Y. 291, 44 N. E. 977 (an examination of the defendant for insanity, made by the witness as an expert for the prosecution, held not privi-

leged); 1907, *People v. Furlong*, 187 N. Y. 198, 79 N. E. 978 (*People v. Hoch* followed).

*Contra*: 1907, *Union Pacific R. Co. v. Thomas*, 152 Fed. 365, 367 (a physician sent by the defendant to treat the injured plaintiff against the protest of the plaintiff; privilege held applicable); 1913, *Arizona & N. M. R. Co. v. Clark*, 9th C. C. A., 207 Fed. 817, 823 (consultation with an oculist, employed by the opponent, but called by the plaintiff and supposed by the plaintiff to have come at his own request alone, held privileged); *Cal.* 1905, *McRae v. Erickson*, 1 Cal. App. 326, 82 Pac. 209 (privilege applied to the surgeon of defendant's hospital, treating an injured employee); *Colo.* 1907, *Colorado Midland R. Co. v. McGarry*, 41 Colo. 398, 92 Pac. 915 (physician sent by the defendant to treat him professionally, and not merely to get information for defendant, held within the privilege); *Ia.* 1904, *Battis v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 124 Ia. 623, 100 N. W. 543 (railway company's surgeon sent to examine plaintiff after the injury, and treating him; privilege held applicable); *N. Y.* 1904, *Meyer v. Supreme Lodge*, 178 N. Y. 63, 70 N. E. 111 (a physician called by strangers to save a would-be suicide, and prescribing for the purpose, is within the privilege, even though the patient repels his services; *Gray, J., and Parker, C. J., diss.*).

<sup>8</sup> *Accord*: Cases *supra*, n. 7. *Contra*: 1921, *Phelps Dodge Co. v. Guerrero*, 9th C. C. A., 273 Fed. 415 (employee examined by employer's physician; held privileged on the evidence).

<sup>9</sup> 1915, *Carmody v. Capital Traction Co.*, 43 D. C. App. 245; 1913, *Massachusetts M. L. Ins. Co. v. Board*, 178 Mich. 193, 144 N. W. 538 (mandamus to compel the trustees of the State Asylum for the Insane to permit inspection of their records of an insured confined there; the records held to be within the privilege, because consisting of entries by medical officers, and the privilege held to override the public nature of the books, though this last point is not discussed; another instance of the absurdity of the privilege).



law to be filed, which falls without the privilege on other grounds (*post*, § 2385a), and the physician's report of *occupational or venereal disease*, which may be privileged on other grounds (*ante*, § 2377).

(d) An *autopsy* of a corpse is of course not privileged.<sup>10</sup>

§ 2383. **Communications Necessary for Prescription.** The privilege is intended (and by most statutes is declared) to protect only those communications which are necessary for obtaining the benefits of the professional relation,—in other words, for enabling the physician to prescribe remedies.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the patient's belief of what was necessary should be the test. The burden of showing necessity should in any case be upon the claimant of the privilege.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 1897, *Harrison v. R. Co.*, 116 Cal. 156, 47 Pac. 1019; 1910, *Ossenkop v. State*, 86 Nebr. 539, 126 N. W. 72 (autopsy of the deceased by a physician employed by defendant); 1919, *Chadwick v. Beneficial Life Assur. Co.*, 54 Utah 443, 181 Pac. 448.

*Contra*: 1912, *Thomas v. Byron Tp.*, 168 Mich. 593, 134 N. W. 1021 (privilege allowed, where the physician's privileged relation to deceased during lifetime facilitated his performance of the autopsy).

For the *party's privilege* as affecting an autopsy, see *ante* § 2220.

§ 2383. <sup>1</sup> *Federal*: 1909, *Missouri Pac. R. Co. v. Castle*, 8th C. C. A., 172 Fed. 841 (a statement by a person with a crushed ankle as to the cause of the injury, held not necessary); *Arkansas*: 1877, *Collins v. Mack*, 31 Ark. 693 (by a woman after a childbirth, that the father had never promised to marry her, held not privileged); *California*: 1897, *Redfield's Estate*, 116 Cal. 644, 48 Pac. 794 (mental condition learned while treating for consumption; may be "necessary," etc.); 1901, *Black's Estate*, 132 Cal. 392, 64 Pac. 695 (testamentary capacity; preceding case approved); 1905, *McRae v. Erickson*, 1 Cal. App. 326, 82 Pac. 209 (details of the cause of the injury, held privileged); 1920, *Casarotti's Estate*, *Casarotti v. Lyons*, 184 Cal. 73, 192 Pac. 1085 (statute applied); *Indiana*: 1890, *Pennsylvania Co. v. Marion*, 123 Ind. 415, 23 N. E. 973 (incidental facts, not necessary to be disclosed for the purpose of the treatment, held privileged); *Iowa*: 1884, *Raymond v. R. Co.*, 65 Ia. 152, 21 N. W. 495 (injured person's statement that he "stepped off the car while it was in motion and thus fell," held privileged; this seems unsound); 1904, *Battis v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 124 Ia. 623, 100 N. W. 543; *Kansas*: 1895, *Kansas C. F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Murray*, 55 Kan. 336, 40 Pac. 646 (injured person's statements as to the facts leading up to the injury, held not privileged); *Michigan*: 1890, *Briesenmeister v. Supreme Lodge*, 81 Mich. 525, 531, 45 N. W. 977 ("all disclosures by the patient . . . respecting his ailments" are privileged, whether they are necessary for prescribing or not; said *obiter*); 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 Mich. 47, 48 N. W. 176 (patient's statements about the liti-

gation, held not privileged); 1897, *People v. Cole*, 113 Mich. 83, 71 N. W. 455 (by the complainant in a bastardy action, to the attending physician, as to the father of the child); 1912, *Steketee v. Newkirk*, 173 Mich. 222, 138 N. W. 1034 (testimony held not privileged, on the facts); *Missouri*: 1874, *Harriman v. Stowe*, 57 Mo. 93, 95, *semble* (plaintiff's statement to the physician that she had fallen through a trap-door left insecure, held admissible); 1908, *Green v. Terminal R. Ass'n*, 211 Mo. 18, 109 S. W. 715 (statement of the place where plaintiff was at the time of the injury, made to the defendant's surgeon in response to their inquiries in preparation for a report held not privileged on the facts); *Nebraska*: 1921, *Koskovich v. Rodestock*, — Nebr. —, 185 N. W. 343- (personal injury; statement to physician as to pulling his revolver, etc., held not necessary); *New York*: 1839, *Hewitt v. Praine*, 21 Wend. 79 (seduction; defendant's admission, when asking for drugs for an abortion, that the woman was the plaintiff's daughter, held not privileged); 1898, *Nelson v. Oneida*, 156 N. Y. 219, 50 N. E. 802 (a disease discovered while treating for another disease, held privileged); 1902, *Green v. R. Co.*, 171 N. Y. 201, 63 N. E. 958 ("information of how the accident happened," held not necessary for surgical treatment; three judges diss.); 1908, *Re Newcomb's Estate*, 192 N. Y. 238, 84 N. E. 950 (a question as to the deceased's ability to travel held improper, though it specified no disease; "the question is close"); *North Dakota*: 1914, *Booren v. McWilliams*, 26 N. D. 558, 145 N. W. 410 (seduction under promise of marriage; the woman's statements to the physician, made a week after the child's birth, and concerning the promise to marry, held not within the privilege; two judges diss.); *Utah*: 1918, *Dovich v. Chief Consol. Mining Co.*, 53 Utah 522, 174 Pac. 627 (how long the party was under anesthetic at the hospital, allowed); *Wisconsin*: 1897, *Kenyon v. Mondovi*, 98 Wis. 53, 73 N. W. 314 (statute applied); 1905, *James v. State*, 124 Wis. 130, 102 N. W. 320 (examination of a raped child, merely to determine the existence of venereal disease, not privileged).

<sup>2</sup> *Mich.* 1878, *Campau v. North*, 39 Mich. 606, 609; 1894, *Lincoln v. Detroit*, 101 Mich.



§ 2384. **Information, Active and Passive.** Communications are the subject of the protection. But communication may be made by exhibition, or by submission to inspection, as well as by oral or written narration or utterance. The invitation to the physician to prescribe assumes that he will first obtain the data for the prescription; and since the usual method of obtaining these involves the physician's own observation as well as the patient's narration, the invitation to prescribe is an implied communication of all the data which the physician may by any method seek to obtain as necessary for the prescription. It is therefore well settled that the data furnished *passively, through submission to inspection*, are equally within the privilege, — and this whether the patient was himself aware or not of the existence of the specific data discovered. It might be doubtful whether the data of *insanity* are thus privileged, where the physician is called for another purpose, because here the foregoing principle — that the data must be necessary for prescription — would seem not to be satisfied; but so far as the present principle is concerned, they fall within it.<sup>1</sup>

245, 249, 59 N. W. 617 (claimant of the privilege must show the necessity); N. Y. 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (evidence of the "necessity," is not required, "as it must be assumed from the relationship existing that the information would not have been imparted except for the purpose of aiding the physician in prescribing"); 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 570 (the Court must be able "upon the evidence to say that such information was necessary"; the mere relation does not suffice; preceding ruling not noticed); 1887, *People v. Schuyler*, 106 N. Y. 298, 300, 12 N. E. 783 (foregoing ruling approved); 1889, *Feeney v. R. Co.*, 116 N. Y. 375, 380, 22 N. E. 402 (first *Edington* case approved; second one ignored); *Utah*: 1909, *Madsen v. Utah L. & R. Co.*, 36 Utah 528, 105 Pac. 799 (the Court is to determine what is necessary, the physician's statement not being conclusive; the necessity must specifically appear in each instance, and not merely be presumed from the relation, but the inference may be drawn from the circumstances; Straup, C. J., diss.).

The Court ought ultimately to determine (*ante*, § 2322) whether a necessity existed; 1909, *Madsen v. Utah L. & R. Co.*, 36 Utah 528, 105 Pac. 799 (cited *supra*, this note). *Contra*: 1905, *McRae v. Erickson*, 1 Cal. App. 326, 82 Pac. 209 ("The physician must commonly be regarded as the sole judge"); 1903, *State v. Kennedy*, 177 Mo. 98, 75 S. W. 979 (in general, the physician must be the judge of the necessity; except as to matters "apparent to the ordinary observer").

§ 2384.<sup>1</sup> Compare the same question in other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2306, 2337):

*California*: 1901, *Nelson's Estate*, 132 Cal. 182, 64 Pac. 294 (capacity to make a will; attending physician's testimony inadmissible);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1919, *Hutchins v. Hutchins*, 48 D. C. App. 495 (statute applied to a family physician testifying to testator's mental capacity); *Idaho*: 1921, *Fritcher v. Kelley*, 34 Ida. 471, 201 Pac. 1037 (physician called to treat a cold, not allowed to testify as to sanity); *Indiana*: 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 210 (like *Heuston v. Simpson*, *infra*); 1883, *Excelsior M. A. Ass'n v. Riddle*, 91 Ind. 84, 88 (same, under a revised phrasing of the statute); 1884, *Penn M. L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 Ind. 92, 100 (same); 1887, *Williams v. Johnson*, 112 Ind. 273, 13 N. E. 872 (same); 1888, *Heuston v. Simpson*, 115 Ind. 62, 17 N. E. 261 (the statute applies "whether the knowledge is communicated by the words of the patient or is gained by observation"); 1889, *Morris v. Morris*, 119 Ind. 343, 21 N. E. 918 (same; applied to insanity); 1893, *Gurley v. Park*, 135 Ind. 440, 442, 35 N. E. 279 (sanity, in a will case, privileged); 1902, *Aspy v. Botkins*, 160 Ind. 170, 66 N. E. 462 (vacuum-ray photograph taken by the physician in the course of treatment, excluded); 1904, *Towles v. McCurdy*, 163 Ind. 12, 71 N. E. 129 ("all that the physician sees or observes" is privileged; here, the facts as to a testator's sanity); *Iowa*: 1895, *Prader v. Accident Ass'n*, 95 Ia. 159, 63 N. W. 601 (privilege covers all information obtained by observation); 1904, *Battis v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 124 Ia. 623, 100 N. W. 543 (like *Prader v. Ass'n*); 1919, *Burns v. Waterloo*, 187 Ia. 922, 173 N. W. 16 (personal injury; whether plaintiff was intoxicated, as observed by the physician, held privileged); *Michigan*: 1870, *Briggs v. Briggs*, 20 Mich. 34, 41 (privilege includes "whatever was disclosed to any of his senses and which in any way was brought to his knowledge for that purpose"); 1879, *Fraser v. Jennison*, 42 Mich. 206, 225, 3 N. W. 882 (same; applied to a testator's



But it is the tenor only of the communication that is privileged. The mere *fact of making a communication*, as well as the *date* of a consultation and the *number of consultations*, are therefore not privileged from disclosure, so long as the subject communicated is not stated.<sup>2</sup> This distinction is often of some practical significance; for example, in life insurance cases, the insured's allegation of complete health during a certain period may be disproved by the fact that a physician was often consulted; and in personal injury cases, the fact that a certain physician was consulted may give rise in effect to an unfavorable inference because he was not called for the plaintiff, although no inference could technically have been drawn from the plaintiff's claim of privilege if the defendant had sought to call and examine the physician (*post*, § 2386).

mental condition); 1901, *Rose v. Supreme Court*, 126 Mich. 577, 85 N. W. 1073 (opinion based on the patient's appearance alone, excluded); 1907, *Mansbach's Estate*, 150 Mich. 348, 114 N. W. 65 (mental condition; privilege held applicable); *Mississippi*: 1922, *Hunter v. Hunter*, — Miss. —, 90 So. 440 (will-contest; attending physician's testimony to testator's mental condition, not admitted for the contestant; *McCaw v. Turner*, cited *post*, § 2391 "has entirely and finally settled the question"); *Missouri*: 1882, *Gartside v. Ins. Co.*, 76 Mo. 446 ("information acquired by a physician from inspection, examination, or observation of the person of the patient," is equally privileged; leading opinion by Norton, J., with a good argument by Mr. Jacob Klein); 1906, *Smoot v. Kansas City*, 194 Mo. 513, 92 S. W. 363 (*Gartside v. Ins. Co.* followed); *Nebraska*: 1917, *Stapleton v. Chicago B. & O. R. Co.*, 101 Nebr. 201, 162 N. W. 644 (personal injury; physician taking radiographs of an injured foot, excluded); *New York*: 1871, *Sloan v. R. Co.*, 45 N. Y. 125, 128 (existence of a disease, held within the privilege); 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (the statute includes "such knowledge as may be acquired from the patient himself, from the statement of others who may surround him at the time, or from observation of his appearances and symptoms"); 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 571 (the exclusion affects only "such information as a physician may acquire of secret ailments by an examination of the person"; but not of the fact that the patient "has a fever or a fractured leg or skull or is a raving maniac"; the remaining judges apparently did not concur in the details of the opinion); 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 N. Y. 281, 297 ("though the patient had been dumb, it would make no difference; the communication to his sense of sight is within the statute, as much so as if it had been oral and reached his ear"; the first *Edington* case cited, and the second ignored on this point); 1883, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 92 N. Y. 274, 287 (preceding case approved); 1886, *Renihan*

*v. Dennin*, 103 N. Y. 573, 579, 9 N. E. 320 (*Grattan* case approved); 1906, *Myer's Will*, 184 N. Y. 54, 76 N. E. 920 (insanity; privileged); *Wisconsin*: 1900, *Shafer v. Eau Claire*, 105 Wis. 244, 81 N. W. 409 ("all that he discovered by examination of her person," held privileged).

<sup>2</sup> *Indiana*: 1905, *Haughton v. Aetna L. Ins. Co.*, 165 Ind. 32, 73 N. E. 592 (fact of professional attendance just before the making of the policy, admitted); *Iowa*: 1900, *Nelson v. Ins. Co.*, 110 Ia. 600, 81 N. W. 807 (that he was consulted and that he prescribed; not privileged); *Michigan*: 1887, *Brown v. Ins. Co.*, 65 Mich. 306, 316, 32 N. W. 610 (the fact of the physician's treatment for typhoid fever, held not privileged, under the particular circumstances); 1890, *Briesenmeister v. Supreme Lodge*, 81 Mich. 525, 532, 45 N. W. 977 ("the fact that he attended the insured professionally, and the dates and number of his visits," held not privileged); 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 Mich. 47, 48 N. W. 176 (similar to the preceding case); 1893, *Dittrich v. Detroit*, 98 Mich. 248, 57 N. W. 125 (same); 1897, *Lammiman v. R. Co.*, 112 Mich. 602, 71 N. W. 153 (for what disease he had treated the party, excluded); 1899, *Jones v. P. B. L. Assur. Co.*, 120 Mich. 211, 79 N. W. 204 (that the person had consulted a physician for a certain illness, excluded); *Minnesota*: 1903, *Price v. Standard L. & A. Ins. Co.*, 90 Minn. 264, 95 N. W. 1118 (the fact of treatment and number of visits, admissible; "this doctrine, looking at the question in a logical way, comes very near trespassing on the statute"); *Nebraska*: 1902, *Sovereign Camp v. Grandon*, 64 Nebr. 39, 89 N. W. 448 (the fact that a physician was called is not within the privilege); *New York*: 1892, *Patten v. Ins. Ass'n*, 133 N. Y. 450, 452, 31 N. E. 342 (whether P. was a patient of the doctor and was attended as such and was sick, and how many times and when he attended P., held not privileged); 1917, *Klein v. Prudential Ins. Co.*, 221 N. Y. 449, 117 N. E. 942 (death policy; the physician's testimony that the insured on a certain date was sick, admitted;



§ 2385. **Criminal Cases; Malpractice.** The privilege, in general, applies as well in *criminal* as in civil cases; unless the statute expressly limits it to the latter.<sup>1</sup> But in two classes of instances the privilege, though apparently applicable, exhibits its inherent impropriety so plainly that Courts have sometimes sought, by main force, to set limits and prevent its evil effects, namely, in cases where the physician is himself a *partaker in the criminal transaction*, and in cases where the physician has acted *on behalf of the victim* of a crime. Courts have chosen various methods, more or less reasonable, of escaping from the dilemma.<sup>2</sup> All that can be said is that an ill-advised initial principle is sure to tempt judges, sooner or later, to do violence to it.

The same temptation exists to save an innocent physician who, when charged with *malpractice*, might otherwise be stifled by the privilege;<sup>3</sup> but the doctrine of waiver (*post*, § 2389) usually assists him here.

following *Patten v. Ins. Ass'n*; *Utah*: 1919, *Chadwick v. Beneficial Life Assur. Co.*, 54 *Utah* 443, 181 *Pac.* 448 (that the witness had been consulted by deceased more than once, allowed); *Washington*: 1911, *State v. Stapp*, 65 *Wash.* 438, 118 *Pac.* 337 (cross-examination to an operation for abortion at a hospital, without naming or identifying the patient, held not a violation of the privilege); *Wisconsin*: 1899, *McGowan v. Supreme Court*, 104 *Wis.* 186, 80 *N. W.* 603 (that he treated the person for a disease, excluded).

§ 2385.<sup>1</sup> 1894, *People v. Lane*, 101 *Cal.* 513, 516, 36 *Pac.* 16; 1895, *People v. West*, 106, *Cal.* 89, 39 *Pac.* 207; 1905, *People v. Griffith*, 146 *Cal.* 339, 80 *Pac.* 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Federal*: 1921, *Manufacturers' Life Ins. Co. v. Brennan*, 1st *C. C. A.*, 270 *Fed.* 173 (attendant physician, not allowed to testify to cause of death; the proviso of *P. R. Rev. St.* par. 1408, § 40, as to cause of death, held not to apply to an action on an insurance policy, but to be intended to cover a criminal prosecution for death, following *New York* ruling; *Johnson, J.*, diss.); *Indiana*: 1897, *Hank v. State*, 148 *Ind.* 238, 46 *N. E.* 127, 47 *N. E.* 465 (a disclosure by a physician attending a miscarriage, allowed in a prosecution for the abortion, the privilege not being intended "to shield one who is charged with perpetrating an unlawful act upon the patient"); 1903, *Seifert v. State*, 160 *Ind.* 464, 67 *N. E.* 100 ("a request to a physician to commit a crime is not privileged"; applied to a woman consulting for an abortion); *Iowa*: 1882, *Guptill v. Verback*, 58 *Ia.* 99, 12 *N. W.* 125 (the act of producing a miscarriage in order to save the mother's life being not criminal, a physician's advice as to the best means of "getting rid of a child" was held presumably "made for a lawful purpose"; this ruling, as regards the presumption, is unsound); 1896, *State v. Smith*, 99 *Ia.* 26, 68 *N. W.* 428 (causing a miscarriage; privilege applied); 1901, *State v. Grimmell*, 116 *Ia.* 596, 88 *N. W.* 342 (murder by abortion;

the privilege does not apply to the testimony of a physician, called by the prosecution, who attended the deceased just before her death; whether a formal waiver is necessary, and by whom, not stated; compare § 2382, *ante*); *Minnesota*: 1905, *McKenzie v. Banks*, 94 *Minn.* 496, 103 *N. W.* 497 (communications for the purpose of securing the physician's service for a criminal abortion are not privileged); *Nebraska*: 1912, *Thrasher v. State*, 92 *Nebr.* 110, 138 *N. W.* 120 (rape under age, the woman being deceased; the privilege held not available for the defendant to exclude testimony of the physicians attending her); *New York*: 1880, *Pierson v. People*, 79 *N. Y.* 424, 432 (murder by poisoning; a physician's information acquired while attending the deceased for the poison, admitted for the prosecution, as not within the spirit of the privilege; but no "general rule applicable to all cases" was ventured); 1886, *People v. Murphy*, 101 *N. Y.* 126, 4 *N. E.* 326 (abortion; testimony of the physician attending after the operation, not admitted); 1893, *People v. Harris*, 136 *N. Y.* 423, 437, 448, 33 *N. E.* 65 (defendant, a physician, told a physician attending the deceased that he had twice performed operations for abortion on her; not privileged, the statutory privilege not being intended to "shield a person charged with the murder of his patient"); *St.* 1905, c. 331, *C. P. A.* 1920, § 352 (quoted *ante*, § 2380, n. 5); *Wisconsin*: 1912, *State v. Law*, 150 *Wis.* 313, 136 *N. W.* 803, 137 *N. W.* 457 (*Stats.* 1898, § 4078 *d*, providing that no person shall be privileged etc. in prosecutions under § 4352 — abortion — or § 4583, is not limited to the privilege against self-elimination, but takes away also the present privilege under § 4075, in a prosecution for abortion; two judges diss.).

<sup>3</sup> Add here the express statutory provisions quoted *ante*, § 2380; 1900, *Cramer v. Hurt*, 154 *Mo.* 112, 55 *S. W.* 258 (action for loss of a wife's services by the defendant's malpractice; the defendant allowed on the facts, as of necessity,



§ 2385a. **Death Certificate.** Where a statute (*ante*, § 1644) has provided (by way of exception to the Hearsay rule) for the use of an official certificate of death, including *cause of death*, filed by a physician under a duty imposed by law, the question arises whether the former express provision is to be balked by the implied barrier of the present privilege. It might be argued that the privilege to withhold the physician's testimony on the stand implies as a corollary the withholding of his testimony by certificate, and that to permit the use of the certificate would be to evade the privilege by indirection. But this argument is fallacious. In the first place, the express legislative declaration would virtually remain otherwise inoperative (though arguments from supposed legislative intention are more or less speculative). In the second place, the privilege aims primarily at securing personal peace of mind by confidentiality as to the patient's communications during his lifetime; while the vital statistics legislation considers the public interest in ascertaining causes of death, with a view to protection against malpractice, felonious killing, and epidemics. The latter interest must prevail; personal privilege can never be allowed to obstruct public welfare. In the third place, the filing of the physician's certificate has already made public the nature of the disease or injury causing death (as believed by the physician); thus, the publicity against which the privilege is supposed to protect has already taken place. There can be no further assistance in that respect rendered by the privilege; it can now serve merely to obstruct the course of justice. Hence, to enforce it is to commit an absurdity.

This view has been recognized by some Courts;<sup>1</sup> others have unsoundly allowed the privilege to prevail.<sup>2</sup>

to testify for himself); 1909, *Capron v. Douglass*, 193 N. Y. 11, 85 N. E. 827 (malpractice; but the ruling is here placed on the ground of the plaintiff's failure to object to defendant's calling of physician G., as being a waiver of the privilege for physician D., especially since the plaintiff himself had also testified); Wis. Stats. 1911, c. 332, Stats. 1919, § 4075 (quoted *ante*, § 2380; but a comparison with the Indiana case, *Aspy v. Botkins*, *infra*, will show that this patchwork legislation did not go as far as it ought to have gone, to relieve the medical practitioner from the unfairness of the rule).

*Contra*: 1903, *Aspy v. Botkins*, 160 Ind. 170, 66 N. E. 462 (action for malpractice; the plaintiff held privileged to withhold the testimony of other physicians attending her after the defendant; the ground of the ruling does not appear; but it is at any rate a mockery of justice).

§ 2385a. <sup>1</sup> *Mich.* 1906, *Krapp v. Metrop. L. Ins. Co.*, 143 Mich. 369, 106 N. W. 1107 (physician's certificate of death filed as required by law, and admissible under Comp. L. § 4617, cited *ante*, § 1644, held admissible; the former statute not to be overridden by the present privilege); *Utah*: 1921, *Bogicevich v. Kenilworth Merc. Co.*, — *Utah* —, 199 Pac. 406

(Comp. St. 1917, § 5045, held to prevail over ib. § 7123; able opinion by Frick, J.; Gideon, J., diss.); *Wis.* 1917, *McGinty v. Brotherhood*, 166 Wis. 83, 164 N. W. 249 (life insurance; medical certificate of cause of death, made pursuant to Stats. § 4160, received; "such certificate becomes a public record; its contents are published to the world, and are no longer treated as privileged").

<sup>2</sup> *Ind.* 1910, *Beglin v. Brotherhood*, 46 Ind. App. 160, 92 N. E. 64 (under St. 1907, p. 246, c. 152, a board of health record based on a physician's certificate of cause of death is not admissible, the privilege preventing; Roby, J., diss.); *Ky.* Here a statute expressly so provides (quoted *ante*, § 2380); *Nebr.* 1902, *Sovereign Camp v. Grandon*, 64 Nebr. 39, 89 N. W. 448 (physician's certificate of death required by city ordinance, held inadmissible, partly on the ground of privilege); *N. Y.* 1900, *Davis v. Supreme Lodge*, 165 N. Y. 159, 58 N. E. 891 (physician's certificate of death, required by law, excluded; *N. Y. City Charter, Laws 1897, c. 378, § 1172*, making admissible the record of the board of health, does not repeal the Code section; Gray and Landon, JJ., diss.); 1903, *Beglin v. Ins. Co.*, 173 N. Y. 374, 66 N. E. 102 (preceding case followed).

Distinguish the use of the death-certificate by virtue of *waiver* on the part of an insurance beneficiary (*post*, § 2390); its admissibility as a statement not based on personal *knowledge* (*ante*, § 1646); its protection by the privilege for *reports required by law* (*ante*, § 2377); and the doctrine about *contracts to waive* rules of Evidence (*ante*, § 7a).

§ 2386. **Whose is the Privilege; Claim of Privilege; Inference from Claim.** The privilege is plainly that of the *patient*, not of the physician; and the latter therefore cannot claim it if the patient abandons it.<sup>1</sup> Although in the first instance it is commonly the physician who as witness declines to answer, still the claim of privilege must formally be made, in analogy to the other privileges (*ante*, § 2196) by the patient, if he is before the Court; if he is not, then technically he should be given an opportunity to claim before the examination is proceeded with.

The privilege, furthermore, is that of the patient as such, not of the *party*; hence, the claim should be made by the patient himself, in accordance with the analogy of other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2270, 2321) — though this rule is seldom observed in practice.<sup>2</sup>

The privilege, furthermore, may be claimed by the *representative* of a deceased patient, as his personal successor;<sup>3</sup> but not by a mere assignee of a contract-interest.<sup>4</sup>

When the privilege is claimed by a patient who is also a party, *no inference* as to the facts suppressed can be drawn,<sup>5</sup> — following here the analogy of the other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2272, 2322). Perhaps it is sound to distinguish between *failing to call the witness* on one's own behalf (which is open to in-

§ 2386. <sup>1</sup> 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 Ia. 275, 86 N. W. 307; 1920, *Cromeenes v. Sovereign Camp*, 205 Mo. App. 419, 224 S. W. 15 (physician cannot claim the privilege if patient has waived it); 1835, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 14 Wend. N. Y. 636, 641; 1897, *Boyle v. Relief Assoc.*, 95 Wis. 312, 70 N. W. 351 (showing that "shall not be compelled" is equivalent to "shall not be allowed"; Newman, J., diss.); 1919, *Angerstein v. Milwaukee Monument Co.*, 169 Wis. 502, 173 N. W. 215 (personal injury; plaintiff may waive the privilege).

*Contra*: 1919, *State v. Miller*, 105 Wash. 475, 178 Pac. 459 (but here the result is due solely to the bungling wording of Rem. Code § 2147, that "regular physicians . . . shall be protected from testifying," etc.; plainly, the history of privilege, *ante*, § 2286, shows that the privilege does not exist for the sake of the physician).

Of course the privilege is that of the patient as such, and applies equally for patients *not parties* to the case; this is everywhere assumed and conceded; 1906, *Myer's Will*, 184 N. Y. 54, 76 N. E. 920 (members of the testatrix' family).

Compare the theories of attorneys' privilege (*ante*, § 2290).

<sup>2</sup> On the general principle for all privileges (*ante*, §§ 2270, 2321), a *party not a patient* can-

not as such object to a denial of the privilege; and this principle ought to be enforced oftener than it is: 1912, *Thrasher v. State*, 92 Nebr. 110, 138 N. W. 120 (rape under age; the woman being deceased, the defendant was not allowed to invoke the privilege to exclude medical testimony to her condition). *Contra*: 1920, *Cromeenes v. Sovereign Camp*, 205 Mo. App. 419, 224 S. W. 15 (misrepresentation as to gonorrhea; the physician being called to treat the eyes of insured's child, the physician's testimony to the child having gonorrhea held privileged, the child not waiving; unsound; the privilege only applies when invoked).

<sup>3</sup> *Post*, § 2391.

<sup>4</sup> *Contra*: 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (assignee of an insurance policy may assert the privilege of the insured).

<sup>5</sup> 1906, *Pennsylvania R. Co. v. Durkee*, 147 Fed. 99, C. C. A. (applying the N. Y. Code); 1901, *Brackney v. Fogle*, 156 Ind. 535, 60 N. E. 303; 1909, *Laurie Co. v. McCullough*, 174 Ind. 477, 90 N. E. 1014; 1890, *McConnell v. Osage*, 80 Ia. 293, 45 N. W. 550 (refusing to allow the question on cross-examination whether the patient was willing to let the physician speak); 1905, *Arnold v. Maryville*, 110 Mo. App. 254, 85 S. W. 107; 1899, *Lane v. R. Co.*, 21 Wash. 119, 57 Pac. 367.



ference; *ante*, § 285) and claiming the privilege when the opponent calls him (which is not open to inference).<sup>6</sup> And the *opponent* may at least *call the physician* and force the patient-party (on the principle of § 2268, *ante*) to object and make claim.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2387. **Termination of the Privilege; Death.** The object of the privilege is to secure subjectively the patient's freedom from apprehension of disclosure; it is therefore to be preserved even after the death of the patient,<sup>1</sup> — following the analogies of the other similar privileges (*ante*, §§ 2323, 2341).

§ 2388. **Same: Waiver, in general; Express and Implied Waiver.** The privilege may be waived,<sup>1</sup> like all other privileges. It is astonishing to find that this question could ever have been regarded as debatable. Nothing but a confusion of fundamental ideas could ever create any doubt.<sup>2</sup>

(a) That the waiver must be in *express* language is not necessary, upon any principle. But this is sometimes by statute required.<sup>3</sup> Distinguish, however, this statutory waiver, which is valid only within certain limits, and the ordinary principle that a rule of Evidence will not be enforced if the opposing counsel fails to make objection when the witness is examined (*ante*, § 18); thus, whether or not the statutory waiver was permitted to be made by the attorney for the witness or party before or during trial,<sup>4</sup> still the counsel's failure to object to the compulsion of the witness' answer would render futile any exception to the answer.<sup>5</sup>

(b) An *express waiver by contract*, *e. g.* in a policy of insurance, ought to be given effect, on the general principle already noticed in § 7a. Since experience has shown that the testimony of physicians who might assist the discovery of the truth is likely to be suppressed by the insured's claim of privilege, and since the contract of insurance is a voluntary transaction for both

<sup>6</sup> 1920, *Bernhardt v. City & Suburban R. Co.*, — D. C. App. —, 263 Fed. 1009 (personal injury; failure of plaintiff to call a physician who had examined him, held open to inference; present point not raised); 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 Mich. 47, 48 N. W. 176 (plaintiff's failure to produce her physician, held "a legitimate fact for the jury"); 1920, *Willitts v. Chicago B. & O. R. Co.*, — Mo. —, 221 S. W. 65 (personal injury; failure to call physicians, held to permit inference; the opinion, however, does not notice the privilege aspect of the question).

<sup>7</sup> 1903, *State v. Booth*, 121 Ia. 710, 97 N. W. 74.

§ 2387. <sup>1</sup> 1876, *Edington v. Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194; 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 N. Y. 281, 298; 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 N. Y. 56, 1 N. E. 104; 1900, *Davis v. Supreme Lodge*, 165 id. 159, 58 N. E. 891 (physician's certificate of death, recorded with the board of health, excluded on the ground of privilege); 1903, *Beglin v. Ins. Co.*, 173 N. Y. 374, 66 N. E. 102 (*Davis v. Supreme Lodge* followed).

§ 2388. <sup>1</sup> 1879, *Grand Rapids & I. R. Co. v. Martin*, 41 Mich. 667, 671, 3 N. W. 173; 1879, *Scripps v. Foster*, 41 Mich. 742, 748, 3 N. W. 216; 1884, *Groll v. Tower*, 85 Mo. 249, 255 (repudiating

the apparently contrary assumption in *Harriman v. Stowe*, 57 Mo. 93); 1886, *Carrington v. St. Louis*, 89 Mo. 212, 1 S. W. 240; 1886, *Blair v. R. Co.*, 89 Mo. 337, 1 S. W. 367.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the theory of Privilege (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2196, 2197), and the forceful opinion of Faris, J., in *Epstein v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 250 Mo. 1, 156 S. W. 699.

<sup>3</sup> *E. g.*, in New York, by the amendment of 1891; 1906, *Roche v. Nason*, 185 N. Y. 128, 77 N. E. 1007 (the trial Court's ignoring of an express waiver, here held harmless).

Otherwise, the particular circumstances are to be considered: 1907, *Druhe H. L. Co. v. Fishbein*, 101 Minn. 81, 111 N. W. 950 (client's informal expression of willingness that the physician should testify, made on the stand and before consulting his attorney, held not a waiver).

<sup>4</sup> *E. g.* 1889, *Alberti v. R. Co.*, 118 N. Y. 77, 23 N. E. 35.

<sup>5</sup> This distinction was ignored in the following case: 1889, *Hoyt v. Hoyt*, 112 N. Y. 493, 515, 20 N. E. 402; but it was recognized in the following: 1906, *Williams v. Spokane F. & N. R. Co.*, 42 Wash. 597, 84 Pac. 1129.



parties, the insurer's insistence on a provision of this sort in his contract is no more than a reasonable measure of self-protection, and does not affect the interest of patients in general other than the insured party to the contract.<sup>6</sup> A contract of life or accident insurance ought to be deemed an implied waiver by both parties, because otherwise it leaves the prospects of proof for both parties a mere gamble.<sup>7</sup> Of course, such a contract could not be deemed a waiver for either party, unless the waiver was complete, *i. e.* allowed the testimony to be available equally to both parties.

(c) Coming now to waivers *implied from conduct*, it is to be noticed that these depend, as already observed for other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2327, 2340), on two considerations — the interpretation of the actual conduct, and the fairness of the situation created by that conduct. A waiver is to be predicated, not only when the conduct indicates a plain intention to abandon the privilege, but also when the conduct (though not evincing that intention) places the claimant in such a position, with reference to the evidence, that it would be unfair and inconsistent to permit the retention of the privilege. It is not to be both a sword and a shield (in Lord Mansfield's phrase concerning an infant's exemption from liability).

The question then arises, What sorts of conduct, by inference or by fairness, should be treated as a waiver of the privilege to keep secret the communications to a physician?

§ 2389. **Same: Waiver by Bringing Suit; by Testifying; by Former Waiver.** (1) In the first place, the *bringing of an action* in which an essential part of the issue is the existence of physical ailment should be a *waiver* of the privilege for all communications concerning that ailment. The whole reason for the privilege is the patient's supposed unwillingness that the ailment should be disclosed to the world at large; hence the bringing of a suit in which the very declaration, and much more the proof, discloses the ailment to the world at large, is of itself an indication that the supposed repugnancy to disclosure does not exist. If the privilege means anything at all in its origin, it means this as a sequel. By any other conclusion the law practically permits the plaintiff to make a claim somewhat as follows: "One month ago I was by the defendant's negligence severely injured in the spine and am consequently unable to walk; I tender witnesses A, B, and C, who will openly prove the severe nature of my injury. But, stay! Witness D, a physician, is now, I perceive, called by the opponent to prove that my injury is not so severe as I claim; I object to his testimony because it is extremely repugnant to me that my neighbors should learn the nature of my injury, and I can keep it forever secret if the Court will forbid his testimony." If the utter ab-

<sup>6</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 7a.

<sup>7</sup> *Contra*: 1920, *Maine v. Maryland Casualty Co.*, 172 Wis. 350, 178 N. W. 749 (policy of accident insurance; the insured's acceptance of the policy held not a waiver; Owen, J., and Siebecker, J., diss.: "the deceased, in applying

for, taking out, and paying premiums upon this policy, waived the privilege; . . . the waiver of the statute follows as logically in this case as it does when a testator calls upon his attorney to witness his will").



surdity of this statement (which is virtually that of every such claimant) could be heightened by anything, it would be by the circumstance (frequently observable) that the dreaded disclosure, which the privilege prevents, is the fact that the plaintiff has suffered no injury at all! The privilege under these circumstances becomes a burlesque upon logic and justice.

The state of the law is as follows:

(a) In actions for *personal injury*, it is generally held that the bringing of the action is not a waiver;<sup>1</sup> except that in actions against a *physician for malpractice* a waiver has sometimes been implied;<sup>2</sup> and except that in the industrial-accident legislation, providing for claims for *compensation as an injured employee*, the privilege ceases for any claimant who has been examined by a physician pursuant to the procedure in such cases.<sup>3</sup>

(b) In actions upon *insurance policies*, where fraudulent misrepresentations as to health are in issue, the insured's initial conduct in volunteering a supposedly full avowal of his state of health has put him in the position of abandoning any desire to be secretive towards the insurer on that subject, and of giving the insurer in fairness the right to ascertain the truth; and a waiver should be predicated by the nature of the action. But Courts have not so held. — Yet here the injury to justice by denying a waiver is not so considerable; for in fairness (that is, to honest applicants, who have nothing to fear) the insurer ought immediately to make his extrinsic investigations among prior attendant physicians (which commonly he does not do), instead of waiting till more premiums have been paid and the insured has left the world;<sup>4</sup> so that here the moral inequities are more nearly balanced, and no particular harm is done by the privilege — except to the logic of the law.

§ 2389. <sup>1</sup> *Fed.* 1918. *Federal Mining & S. Co. v. Dalo*, 9th C. C. A., 252 *Fed.* 356 (personal injury in Idaho; bringing of action held not a waiver permitting defendant to call a physician who had attended plaintiff; though "the views of the learned text-writer on Evidence are always entitled to respectful consideration, and much may be said in favor of the equity of the view which he takes"); *Mo.* 1907, *Smart v. Kansas City*, 208 *Mo.* 162, 105 S. W. 709 (personal injuries; suit held not a waiver; the reasoning of the text above, answered by Woodson, J., but not convincingly; the present ruling, excluding three attending physicians to an alleged injury to a knee of a person who had concededly suffered tuberculosis of the knee and had already been crippled in it, shows what a farce the privilege is; this whole investigation, shutting out by law the most important testimony, was a huge parody on justice, so far as justice purports to rest on truth); *Okl.* 1917, *American Bankers' Ins. Co. v. Hopkins*, — *Okl.* —, 169 *Pac.* 489 (insurance policy). *Contra*: *Cal. St.* 1917 (quoted *ante*, § 2380).

<sup>2</sup> *Ind.* 1894, *Beckwell v. Hosier*, 10 *Ind. App.* 5, 37 N. E. 580 (patient's action for malprac-

tice, held a waiver, permitting the defendant to testify); *Mo.* 1900, *Cramer v. Hurt*, 154 *Mo.* 112, 55 S. W. 258 (an action by a wife for personal injury by malpractice by a physician is a waiver of privilege as to professional confidence; but not an action by a husband for loss of services of the injured wife); *Or.* 1913, *Forrest v. Portland R. L. & P. Co.*, 64 *Or.* 240, 129 *Pac.* 1048 (personal injury; party's voluntary testimony held a waiver of privilege as to a physician's testimony, under L. O. L. § 734 by express words); 1919, *Caldwell v. Hoskins*, 94 *Or.* 567, 186 *Pac.* 50 (personal injury; plaintiff's testimony is a waiver as to testimony of a physician taking an X-ray photograph).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2385; a few of the statutes quoted *ante*, § 2380 expressly so provide.

<sup>3</sup> Statutes cited *ante*, § 2380.

<sup>4</sup> This is recognized by the insurers in the now usual issuance of policies which are made incontestable after a short period; i. e. the insurer virtually has to make his inquiries within that period or not at all. But so far as these policies are contestable (*e. g.* for "wilful misrepresentations"), the statement still applies.



(c) In *testamentary* causes, there is ordinarily no conduct amounting to waiver, — although it is otherwise unsound (*ante*, §§ 2381, 2384) to treat the data of sanity and insanity as having been consciously confided, in any sense of the word, to the physician.

(d) In a few special classes of actions, an occasional statute makes an exception.<sup>5</sup>

(2) The *party's own voluntary testimony*, on trial, to his physical condition in issue, should be a waiver of the privilege for the testimony of a physician who has been consulted about the same physical condition in issue; the reasons here being merely somewhat stronger than those above noted.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Statutes cited *ante*, § 2380.

<sup>6</sup> *Accord*: Cal. 1918, *Moreno v. New Guadalupe M. Co.*, 35 Cal. App. 744, 170 Pac. 1088 (administratrix' action for the death of M., her husband; since the party injured himself would have waived the privilege by taking the stand and testifying to the alleged injury, held that the plaintiff here "in the dual capacity of surviving spouse and administratrix," impliedly waived, by taking the stand and calling other witnesses; advanced opinion, by Lennon, P. J.); Ind. 1891, *Lane v. Boicourt*, 128 Ind. 420, 27 N. E. 1111 (malpractice on the plaintiff's wife; the plaintiff's use of the testimony of himself, his wife, and her mother, held a waiver); Kan. G. S. 1915, § 7223 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); N. Y. 1908, *Capron v. Douglass*, 193 N. Y. 11, 85 N. E. 827 (malpractice; after the defendant had treated the plaintiff, two other surgeons treated him at a hospital; one of them was called by defendant; held that under C. C. P. §§ 834, 836, providing that the privilege might be "expressly waived upon the trial or examination . . . by the patient," the plaintiff's testimony at the trial to his physical condition was a waiver; Haight, J.; "He himself has given to the public the full details of his case, thereby disclosing the secrets which the statute was designed to protect, thus removing it from the operation of the statute; in other words, he has waived in open court upon the trial all information which he might have kept secret, by disclosing it himself"); 1922, *Hethier v. Jones*, 233 N. Y. 370, 135 N. E. 603 (plaintiff in personal injury action who testifies to his injury waives the privilege; "the rule as it was formerly understood was altered by our decision in *Capron v. Douglass*"); Oh. Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 11494 (quoted *ante*, § 2380); Okl. 1917, *Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Hughes*, 64 Okl. 74, 166 Pac. 411 (under Rev. L. 1910, § 5050, the plaintiff's testimony to personal injuries is a waiver of the privilege as to the testimony of a physician concerning either physical examination or statements of the party); Pa. St. 1907 (quoted *ante*, § 2380); Wyo. Comp. St. 1920, § 5806 (quoted *ante*, § 2380).

*Contra*: Federal: 1907, *Union Pacific R. Co. v. Thomas*, 152 Fed. 365, 369; 1915, *Arizona &*

*N. M. R. Co. v. Clark*, 235 U. S. 669, 35 Sup. 210 (personal injury; the plaintiff himself had testified to his injury, and also had called the attending nurse; the defendant was held not entitled to call two attending physicians, under Ariz. Rev. St. 1901, § 2535; Hughes, J., with Day, J., diss.: "[It was not the legislative intent] to give him a monopoly of the testimony as to his condition while under treatment"); 1921, *Phelps Dodge Co. v. Guerrero*, 9th C. C. A., 273 Fed. 415 (under Ariz. Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 1677, testimony by plaintiff that he used to go to a doctor, etc., held not a waiver by testifying "to such communications"; unsound; Hunt, J., diss.); Arkansas: 1915, *Kansas City So. R. Co. v. Miller*, 117 Ark. 396, 175 S. W. 1164; Indiana: 1887, *Williams v. Johnson*, 112 Ind. 273, 13 N. E. 872 (the plaintiff's testimony that she had called Dr. H. and he had "prescribed for her back and side," held not to permit the opponent to call Dr. H. to testify that he had found no injury; this was a gross error; it practically permitted the plaintiff to invoke the physician's credit falsely, with a guarantee against the exposure of her lie); 1905, *Indianapolis & M. R. T. Co. v. Hall*, 165 Ind. 557, 76 N. E. 242 (personal injury; ruling in *Williams v. Johnson* approved); Iowa: 1890, *McConnell v. Osage*, 80 Ia. 293, 45 N. W. 550 (plaintiff's direct testimony to her previous condition of health and sickness, naming her physician, held not a waiver permitting the calling of the physician to contradict her); 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 Ia. 275, 86 N. W. 307 (testifying on cross-examination to the subject of the desired testimony of the physician is not a waiver, because not voluntary); 1904, *Battis v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 124 Ia. 623, 100 N. W. 543; 1911, *Woods v. Lisbon*, 150 Ia. 433, 130 N. W. 372 (plaintiff's testimony to the physician's treatment, held a waiver as to all physicians engaged in the same operation); 1913, *Reed v. Rex Fuel Co.*, 160 Ia. 510, 141 N. W. 1056 (*Woods v. Lisbon* followed); 1919, *Burns v. Waterloo*, 187 Ia. 922, 173 N. W. 16 (personal injury; whether plaintiff was intoxicated, held not covered by waiver, though the wife had testified as to his physical condition, and had on cross-examination denied the fact



Certainly it is a spectacle fit to increase the layman's traditional contempt for the chicanery of the law, when a plaintiff describes at length to the jury and a crowded court-room the details of his supposed ailment and then neatly suppresses the available proof of his falsities by wielding a weapon nominally termed a privilege.

(3) The party's *reference* in his testimony to his *communications with a physician* should be deemed a waiver of the privilege as to that physician's knowledge; otherwise, the privilege offers a license to perjury.<sup>7</sup>

(4) A waiver at a *former trial* should bar a claim of the privilege at a later trial; for the original disclosure takes away once for all the benefit aimed at by privilege; to enforce it thereafter is to seek to preserve a privacy which exists in legal fiction only.<sup>8</sup>

(5) An *express voluntary extra-judicial disclosure* by the party, *before trial*,

of intoxication; such a ruling emasculates the virile doctrine of waiver); 1919, *Arnold v. Ft. Dodge D. M. & S. R. Co.*, 186 Ia. 538, 173 N. W. 252 (testimony by plaintiff on cross-examination is not a waiver as to that topic); 1921, *Walmer-Roberts v. Hennessey*, 191 Ia. 86, 181 N. W. 798 (plaintiff introduced her own testimony, and also that of a traffic officer, present at the time of the physician's examination, as to her going to the physician's office; this was held not a waiver; again the ruling exhibits the stoppage of a legitimate source of inquiry and the judicial farce of acting as though such trials were a real search for truth; they are no more than a game of cards); *Michigan*: 1911, *Slater v. Sorge*, 166 Mich. 173, 131 N. W. 565 (see the citation *post*, § 2390, n. 3); *Missouri*: 1904, *Holloway v. Kansas City*, 184 Mo. 19, 82 S. W. 89 (like *Burgess v. Sims D. Co.*, Ia., *supra*; but a voluntary testimony by the party to the circumstances of a physician's examination is a waiver of the privilege); 1913, *Epstein v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 250 Mo. 1, 156 S. W. 699 (cited more fully *post*, § 2390, n. 3); *Montana*: 1905, *May v. Northern P. R. Co.*, 32 Mont. 522, 81 Pac. 328 (plaintiff's testimony to her injury and its treatment by two physicians, held not a waiver as to the testimony of a third); *Nebraska*: 1912, *Larson v. State*, 92 Nebr. 24, 137 N. W. 894 (the defendant's answers on cross-examination as to his treatment by Dr. H., held not to be a waiver of the privilege allowing the prosecution to call Dr. H.); *Washington*: 1907, *Noelle v. Hoquiam L. & S. Co.*, 47 Wash. 519, 92 Pac. 372 (Root, J., with Hadley, C. J., diss., in an opinion of sound sense and logic); *Wisconsin*: 1902, *Green v. Nebagamain*, 113 Wis. 508, 89 N. W. 520 (a party's own testimony to the same injury, held not a waiver).

<sup>7</sup> 1917, *Inspiration Consol. Copper Co. v. Mendez*, 19 Ariz. 151, 166 Pac. 278 (the patient's reference in testimony to his 'communications to the physician is a waiver as to the physician's knowledge so gained, but not as to

knowledge gained by personal examination; applying Civ. C. 1913, § 1677; an illogical and unpractical distinction); 1918, *Dahlquist v. Denver & R. G. R. Co.*, 52 Utah 438, 174 Pac. 833 (personal injury; plaintiff testified to his injuries, and referred to their nature as described to him by Dr. C. and as treated by Dr. C.; plaintiff also called Dr. S.; held, that the privilege had been so far waived as to permit the defendant to call Dr. C. to testify to the injury as observed by him; the privilege was waived "when the plaintiff by himself and one of his examining physicians voluntarily disclosed . . . all the statute was designed to preserve to the plaintiff as inviolate," per Corfman, J., for the majority; but on rehearing the ruling is based solely on the plaintiff's reference in his testimony to Dr. C.'s diagnosis; two judges diss.); and some of the cases cited *supra*, note 6, involve this situation also.

<sup>8</sup> *Accord*: 1906, *Elliott v. Kansas City*, 198 Mo. 593, 96 S. W. 1023 (failure to claim privilege for testimony of the same physician to substantially the same facts at a prior trial of the same cause is a waiver of the privilege for the subsequent trial also; following *McKinney v. R. Co.*, N. Y.); 1887, *McKinney v. R. Co.*, 104 N. Y. 352, 355, 10 N. E. 544 ("after its publication no further injury can be inflicted upon the rights and interests which the statute was intended to protect; . . . the consent, having been once given and acted upon, cannot be recalled"). *Contra*: 1915, *Maryland Casualty Co. v. Maloney*, 119 Ark. 434, 178 S. W. 387 (accident insurance; physicians' testimony was admitted at the first trial without objection; held, that the privilege could be claimed at the second trial; careful opinion by McCulloch, C. J., defending this absurd result); 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 Ia. 275, 86 N. W. 307 (testifying to the same subject, or calling the same physician, at a former trial, held not a waiver); 1883, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 92 N. Y. 274, 288 (questioning the physician on a former trial, held not a waiver).

of the fact of his physical condition, good or bad, in the respect now in issue, is a virtual abandonment of that privacy which the privilege aims to protect. Hence it should be a waiver,<sup>9</sup> if the logic and the spirit of the privilege are to be followed. But as the privilege, in to-day's administration of it, is merely a clever legerdemain, loaned by the Law to the parties to suppress the truth, it hardly matters what its spirit is.

§ 2390. **Same: Waiver by Calling the Physician.** (1) To request a physician to *attest one's will* is by implication to request him to bear testimony, if called on, to all facts affecting the validity of the will, and is therefore a waiver.<sup>1</sup>

(2) To call a physician to the stand, and *examine him as a witness* to one's physical condition formerly communicated to him, is a waiver of the privilege in regard to his knowledge of the physical condition asked about;<sup>2</sup> no reasoning could pretend to maintain the contrary.

(3) To call a physician as a witness to one's physical condition is a waiver of the privilege as to the knowledge acquired by *other physicians* of the same condition.<sup>3</sup> So, also, a waiver (by failure to object) of the privilege as to

<sup>9</sup> *Contra*: 1919, *State v. Miller*, 105 Wash. 475, 178 Pac. 459 (indecent liberties; voluntary extra-judicial disclosures to others of a condition of gonorrhea, held not a waiver of the privilege).

§ 2390. <sup>1</sup> 1895, *Mullin's Estate*, 110 Cal. 252, 42 Pac. 646.

<sup>2</sup> *Federal*: 1902, *Metropolitan St. R. Co. v. Jacobi*, 50 C. C. A. 619, 112 Fed. 924 (following *Hope v. R. Co.*); *Cal.* 1893, *Wheelock v. Godfrey*, 100 Cal. 587, 35 Pac. 317 (calling the physician, held on the facts a waiver); 1897, *Lissak v. Crocker Est. Co.*, 119 Cal. 442, 51 Pac. 688 (calling the physician to testify to an examination, held a waiver); *Ind.* 1908, *Pittsburgh C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. O'Conner*, 171 Ind. 686, 85 N. E. 969 (the plaintiff's calling, at the first trial, of a physician who had examined him, held a waiver permitting the defendant to call him at the second trial; the same facts were the subject of both testimonies); 1917, *Stalker v. Breeze*, 186 Ind. 221, 114 N. E. 968 (privilege waived by asking a nurse as to part of the same hospital record offered by opponent); *Ia.* 1905, *Nugent v. Cudahy P. Co.*, 126 Ia. 517, 102 N. W. 442 (cross-examination, held no waiver on the facts); *Nebr.* 1902, *Sovereign Camp v. Grandon*, 64 Nebr. 39, 89 N. W. 448 (cross-examination of the physician to the injury; held a waiver); *Okl.* 1917, *Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Hughes*, 64 Okl. 74, 16 Pac. 411.

Statutes (*ante*, § 2380) often declare this in terms.

So, too, for a *deposition taken on behalf of the patient*: 1907, *Clifford v. Denver & R. G. R. Co.*, 188 N. Y. 349, 80 N. E. 1094 (the plaintiff took the physician's testimony in a deposition, with cross-interrogatories and answers, but

rested without reading any part of it; held that the taking and filing of the deposition was a waiver of the secrecy of privilege, and that the statutory amendments as to the form of express waiver did not apply to such a case; careful opinion by Vann, J.; such a victory of common sense over the quiddities of the statute is matter for congratulation).

<sup>3</sup> Most Courts do not yet accept this:

*Federal*: 1915, *Arizona & N. M. R. Co. v. Clark*, 235 U. S. 669, 35 Sup. 210 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2389);

*Arkansas*: 1911, *Missouri & N. A. R. Co. v. Daniels*, 98 Ark. 352, 136 S. W. 651 (calling one physician is not a waiver of the privilege for other physicians' testimony to the same ailment; another of these permissions to plaintiffs to misuse the privilege solely as an instrument for winning a case, and not as a protection for privacy of one's ailments; Dr. F. was allowed to testify that the plaintiff had a prolapsus of the uterus, but two other physicians were not allowed to testify to the same fact; obviously the plaintiff had no desire to keep private the fact; hence, the privilege lost its only purpose, and became simply a tool for tinkering with the truth); 1915, *Kansas City So. R. Co. v. Miller*, 117 Ark. 396, 175 S. W. 1164 (affirming *Missouri & N. A. R. Co. v. Daniels*; though "there is much reason for holding that the privilege is waived under such conditions");

*California*: 1919, *Hirschburg v. Southern Pacific R. Co.*, 180 Cal. 774, 183 Pac. 141 (plaintiff's calling of a physician who had attended her after the injury, held no waiver of the privilege as to a physician who had attended her before the injury; unsound; this case particularly shows the chicanery licensed



one physician, called by the opponent, is a waiver of the entire privilege as to other physicians.<sup>4</sup> What further reason is there for secrecy, if the patient

by the privilege, for here the plaintiff denied that the second physician had ever treated her for uterus trouble, though admitting that he had treated her for lumbago, and yet was allowed to insist on the privilege; in other words, the privilege as thus interpreted licenses a plaintiff to lie on the stand, for when he denies former ailments not privileged, he may still exercise the privilege to suppress the proof of falsity);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1913, *Mays v. New Amsterdam C. Co.*, 40 D. C. App. 249, 257 (calling one physician is not a waiver as to another physician who examined at a separate time; distinguishing *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Morgan*, 35 D. C. App. 195);

*Idaho*: 1911, *Jones v. Caldwell*, 20 Ida. 5, 116 Pac. 110 (calling one physician is not a waiver as to the other);

*Indiana*: 1884, *Penn. Mutual L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 Ind. 92, 102 (calling physician A is not a waiver of the privilege as to the same subject for physicians B and C);

*Iowa*: 1897, *Baxter v. Cedar Rapids*, 103 Ia. 599, 72 N. W. 790 (several physicians having examined the plaintiff, the calling of one does not waive the privilege as to the others);

*Michigan*: 1885, *Dotton v. Albion*, 57 Mich. 575, 577, 24 N. W. 786 (the calling of one physician to prove the plaintiff's good health before the injury, held not to permit the calling of other physicians to negative her good health before the injury); 1911, *Slater v. Sorge*, 166 Mich. 173, 131 N. W. 565 (plaintiff consulted Dr. A for a dogbite, and then Dr. B; at the trial he testified to both consultations, and then called Dr. B; held, that the defendant could not call Dr. A; following *Dotton v. Albion*); Comp. L. 1915, § 12550 (personal injuries; changing the law; quoted *ante*, § 2380);

*Mississippi*: 1921, *United States Fidelity & G. Co. v. Hood*, 124 Miss. 548, 87 So. 115 (calling two of three attendant physicians is not a waiver so as to permit the opponent to call the third; thus do courts lend themselves to stifle inquiry into the truth);

*Missouri*: 1891, *Mellor v. R. Co.*, 105 Mo. 455, 16 S. W. 849 (plaintiff's calling of C., who attended him for the injury, held not to permit the calling of S., who had preceded C. in attending for the same injury); 1907, *Smart v. Kansas City*, 208 Mo. 162, 105 S. W. 709 (calling one of several physicians is not a waiver as to the others; Lamm and Graves, JJ., diss.; "to hold so leaves a travesty on justice at the whimsical beck and call of a litigant"; the opinion of Lamm, J., is one of the signs observable of the judicial realization of the preposterous absurdity of the privilege in to-day's practice); 1913, *Epstein v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 250 Mo. 1, 156, S. W. 599 (three physicians examined the plaintiff while in the

hospital; the defendant offered the testimony of one, to which the defendant did not object; but to the testimony of the other two, when next offered, he then objected; already he himself and a physician called by him had testified to his injuries; held, that the plaintiff's own testimony, with its references to the treatment by the first of the three doctors, was a waiver, as to the other two; expressly reserving the question whether waiver by calling or not objecting to one physician is a waiver as to others; Woodson, J., diss.; excellent opinion by Faris, J., one of the few that has shown a correct moral attitude to the privilege); 1914, *State v. Long*, 257 Mo. 199, 165 S. W. 748; (seduction in 1909; issue whether the prosecutrix was chaste or pregnant in 1908; the State having called a physician who attended her for womb trouble in Dec., 1908, the defendant sought to use two other physicians who attended her for the same trouble in Nov., 1908; held that the State by offering the testimony of one physician, with the prosecutrix' consent, as to a specific ailment, waived the privilege as to all other physicians consulted for that ailment; liberal opinion, harmonizing prior authorities, by Graves, J.; Woodson, J., concurring, because he "can see no useful purpose to be achieved by my continual dissent"); 1915, *Williams v. Wabash R. Co.*, — Mo. —, 175 S. W. 900 (three physicians, one being called by the plaintiff; "We adhere to the rule of the *Epstein Case*");

*New York*: 1888, *Hope v. R. Co.*, 110 N. Y. 643, 17 N. E. 873, 40 Hun 438 (calling one of three physicians who had visited the plaintiff at separate times for the same injury; held not a waiver as to the other two; Earl and Finch, JJ., diss.); 1895, *Morris v. R. Co.*, 148 N. Y. 88, 42 N. E. 410 (where two physicians were called in attendance for a joint examination, the plaintiff, by putting one on the stand, also waived the privilege as to the other; in effect overruling *Record v. Saratoga Springs*, 120 N. Y. 646, 24 N. E. 1102); 1921, *Hethier v. Johns*, N. Y. Sup. App., 189 N. Y. Suppl. 605 (personal injury; plaintiff having called "physicians who attended her," held, that this was not a waiver as to another physician who had attended her; prior cases collected and reviewed; Kruse, P. J., diss.);

*Oklahoma*: 1917, *American Bankers' Ins. Co. v. Hopkins*, — Okl. —, 169 Pac. 489 (applying Rev. L. 1910, § 5050 to an insurance claim; the calling of lay witnesses, held not a waiver); *Utah*: 1918, *Dahlquist v. Denver & R. Gr. R. Co.*, 52 Utah 438, 174 Pac. 833 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2389).

<sup>4</sup> 1908, *Capron v. Douglass*, 193 N. Y. 11, 85 N. E. 827 (malpractice; after the defendant had treated the plaintiff, two other surgeons, D. and G., treated him at a hospital; the defendant

has thrown it aside by permitting one physician to testify? The unfairness of allowing a party to play fast and loose with medical testimony in this shifty manner is obvious to the untechnical intelligence.

(4) The sending of a physician's certificate, as part of the "*proofs of death*," by the beneficiary of a contract of life insurance or the representative of the insured, is a voluntary disclosure of the physician's knowledge, though made in pursuance of contract, and is therefore a waiver.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2391. **Same: Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative.** The *personal representative* of the deceased may waive the privilege. One who is entrusted with the management of the deceased's property may surely be trusted to protect the memory and reputation of the deceased, in so far as it is liable to injury by the disclosure of his physical condition when alive. It is incongruous to hold that the person who manages the litigation of the deceased's property-interests has no power to waive rules of Evidence for the purpose of advancing those interests. The power of an *heir* may also be conceded, if we remember that the heir, first, is at least equally interested in preserving the ancestor's reputation, and, secondly, has an equal moral claim to protect the deceased's property-rights from unwarranted diminution. The futility, under the circumstances, of predicating any privilege is the more apparent when (as in the usual case) the issue turns upon the fact of insanity, which is so bruited publicly in the litigation that the pretence of preserving secrecy is a vain one. Except in two or three jurisdictions, it is usually agreed that the deceased's representative (and probably also the heir) may waive the privilege.<sup>1</sup>

called G. without objection by the plaintiff: held that this was a waiver as to D. also; "plaintiff and his counsel sat by and permitted the testimony of Dr. G. to be given without interposing any objection thereto, thereby waiving the privilege which the plaintiff might have availed himself of had he seen fit").

<sup>5</sup> 1900. *Nelson v. Ins. Co.*, 110 Ia. 600, 81 N. W. 807 (physician's affidavit, sent with proofs of death, received as an admission of the beneficiary); 1891, *Buffalo, L. T. & S. D. Co. v. Knights, T. & M. M. A. Ass'n*, 126 N. Y. 450, 454, 27 N. E. 942 (physician's certificate of cause of death, sent with proofs of death, receivable as the party's admission).

*Contra*: 1916, *Hicks v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.*, 196 Mo. App. 162, 190 S. W. 661.

For the question how far these "proofs" may be used as *admissions* or otherwise, see *ante*, § 1073.

For the use of physician's certificates of *cause of death*, apart from these "proofs," see *ante*, § 2385a.

§ 2391. <sup>1</sup> *California*: 1893, *Flint's Estate*, 100 Cal. 391, 395, 34 Pac. 863 (no waiver, following the N. Y. construction; here, not for an heir as against a devisee); 1897, *Harrison v. R. Co.*, 116 Cal. 156, 47 Pac. 1019 (following the New York rulings);

*Colorado*: 1906, *Shapter's Estate*, 35 Colo. 578, 85 Pac. 688 (*Thompson v. Ish*, Mo., followed); *Indiana*: 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 210 (said *obiter*; waiver by deceased's representative, allowable); 1884, *Penn. M. L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 Ind. 92, 101 (same; beneficiary of an insurance policy held to have the right of waiver); 1889, *Morris v. Morris*, 119 Ind. 343, 21 N. E. 918 (administrator allowed to waive); the later cases look the other way: 1901, *Brackney v. Fogle*, 156 Ind. 535, 60 N. E. 303 (see the next case); 1904, *Towles v. McCurdy*, 163 Ind. 12, 71, N. E. 129 ("This Court in *Brackney v. Fogle* expressly decided that the rule announced in *Kern v. Kern* [*ante*, § 2315, n. 2, denying the privilege to an attorney attesting a will] did not apply to the testimony of physicians, . . . even where the controversy was confined to the heirs and devisees of the decedent"); 1906, *Heaston v. Kreig*, 167 Ind. 101, 77 N. E. 805 (on the facts, held that the privilege could be waived only by the executor who is seeking to support a will 'prima facie' valid); 1908, *Scott v. Smith*, 171 Ind. 453, 85 N. E. 774 (while the personal representative may waive the privilege to protect the interests of the estate, yet an administrator may not waive it in a proceeding to remove himself);



*Iowa*: 1894, *Denning v. Butcher*, 91 Ia. 425, 436, 59 N. W. 69 (waiver by an executor allowable; here, by calling as a witness); 1879, *Winters v. Winters*, 102 Ia. 53, 71 N. W. 184 (a physician may testify to the deceased's mental condition; whether on the ground that either heir or alleged devisee has the right to waive the privilege as representative, or that the statute does not apply where the proceedings are not adverse to the estate, as in a will contest, is expressly not decided, both grounds being approved); 1900, *Shuman v. Supreme Lodge*, 100 Ia. 480, 81 N. W. 717 (contest between beneficiaries of insurance; the privilege held to apply); 1906, *Long v. Garey Inv. Co.*, — Ia. —, 110 N. W. 26 (action by creditors to reach property transferred by the deceased, fraud of creditors and mental incapacity being the grounds of action; held that the administrator could waive the privilege, so far as the issue of incapacity was concerned);

*Kansas*: 1911, *Fish v. Poorman*, 85 Kan. 237, 116 Pac. 898 (representative may waive); 1917, *Bruington v. Wagner*, 100 Kan. 10, 439, 164 Pac. 1057 (cancellation of deeds by insane person; the heirs held entitled to waive the privilege); 1920, *Flack v. Brewster*, 107 Kan. 63, 190 Pac. 616 (action by brother and sister against another sister, grantee under a death-bed deed by a still another sister; privilege held waivable "by his legal representatives and those interested in the preservation of the estate," here by the plaintiffs);

*Michigan*: 1879, *Fraser v. Jennison*, 42 Mich. 206, 225, 3 N. W. 882 (testamentary contest; waiver by an executor allowed); 1907, *Mansbach's Estate*, 150 Mich. 348, 114 N. W. 65 (devisee seeking probate, held not entitled to waive);

*Minnesota*: 1907, *Olson v. Court of Honor*, 100 Minn. 117, 110 N. W. 374 (defence of suicide, in an action on an insurance policy; the deceased's representative allowed to call the physician; "the purpose of the statute is to protect the patient, and not his adversary; . . . as a general rule, those who represent him after his death may also waive the privilege, for the protection of interests which they claim under him"; good opinion by Start, C. J.); 1908, *Mageau v. Great Northern R. Co.*, 103 Minn. 290, 115 N. W. 651 (*Olson v. Court of Honor* approved; but whether a husband may waive, in an action for loss of wife's services, not decided); St. 1919, Apr. 25, c. 513 (quoted *ante*, § 2380);

*Mississippi*: 1913, *McCaw v. Turner*, 126 Miss. 260, 88 So. 705 (undue influence and mental incapacity; held, that under Code 1906, § 3695, the heirs could not waive the privilege by calling a physician to testify to the testatrix' mental condition); 1922, *Hunter v.*

*Hunter*, — Miss. —, 90, So. 440 (approving *McCaw v. Turner*);

*Missouri*: 1884, *Groll v. Tower*, 85 Mo. 249, 255 (personal injury; waiver by a representative, allowed); 1889, *Thompson v. Ish*, 99 Mo. 160, 12 S. W. 510 (testamentary contest; a residuary legatee allowed to waive; "all claiming under the deceased" may waive);

*Nebraska*: 1907, *Parker v. Parker*, 78 Nebr. 535, 111 N. W. 119 (proponent allowed to waive the privilege);

*New York*: 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 N. Y. 56, 1 N. E. 104; 1888, *Loder v. Whelpley*, 111 N. Y. 239, 246, 18 N. E. 874; the amendments of 1891-1899, cited *ante* § 2380, have modified the rule; 1922, *Saad v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, Sup. App. Div., 194 N. Y. Suppl. 445 (in the policy the deceased had warranted that he had not consulted or been treated by any physician within 5 years; the insurer called Dr. R. to evidence numerous consultations with him within 5 years; the beneficiary countered by Dr. R.'s statement of the same physician, answering a question in the proofs of death as to date of last treatment, "phimosi operation 10 years ago; nothing else of any importance"; the insurer's question, asking him to explain what he meant by that statement, was then excluded by the trial Court, who further ruled that the proof-of-death statement tended to impeach the physician; held (1) that the beneficiary could not waive the privilege; (2) that the physician should have been allowed to explain his statement; this is correct; (3) that the statement did not tend to impeach his testimony; this is egregiously incorrect, and is inconsistent with the second ruling; it may be added that so long as the privilege exists as a legal trump card, it should be allowed to be used to exclude the original testimony of the doctor entirely, for such warranty clauses are obsolete Shylock-expedients);

*North Dakota*: 1910 *Auld v. Cathro*, 20 N. D. 461, 128 N. W. 1025 ("the privilege cannot be waived by the heirs and personal representatives"; following the New York doctrine, but ignoring the feature that the N. Y. Code has a peculiar clause about express waiver);

*Utah*: 1919, *Grieve v. Howard*, 54 Utah 225, 180 Pac. 423 (action by special administrator to set aside the intestate's deed for incapacity; the plaintiff allowed to waive the privilege under Comp. L. 1917, § 7124; former rulings explained);

*Wisconsin*: 1904, *Hunt's Will*, 122 Wis. 460, 100 N. W. 874 (will contest; the contestants may not waive the privilege; "no one, save the patient himself," can do so); 1920, *Maine v. Maryland Casualty Co.*, 172 Wis. 350, 178 N. W. 749 (deceased's personal representatives cannot waive).

TOPIC B (*continued*): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

SUB-TOPIC VII: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRIEST AND PENITENT  
CHAPTER LXXXV.

§ 2394. History : No Privilege at Common Law.

§ 2395. Statutes recognizing the Privilege.  
§ 2396. Policy of the Privilege.

§ 2394. **History; No Privilege at Common Law.** It is perhaps open to argument whether a privilege for confessions to priests was recognized in common-law courts during the period before the Restoration. The only available data appear to be an indecisive incident in the Jesuit trials under James I,<sup>1</sup> and a statute of much earlier date and of ambiguous purport,<sup>2</sup> together with the general probabilities to be drawn from the recognition of Roman ecclesiastical practices prior to Henry VIII.<sup>3</sup> But since the Restoration, and for more than two centuries of English practice, the almost unanimous expression of judicial opinion (including at least two decisive rulings) has denied the existence of a privilege.<sup>4</sup> A single judge, to be sure, distinctly

§ 2394. <sup>1</sup> 1606, Garnett's Trial, 2 How. St. Tr. 218, 255 (Garnett was Superior of the Jesuits, and on his trial refused certain answers because "he was bound to keep the secrets of confession"; "whereupon the earl of Nottingham asked him, if one confessed this day to him that to-morrow morning he meant to kill the king with a dagger, if he must conceal it? Whereunto Garnett answered that he must conceal it"; but the questioners did not attempt to compel a disclosure of the confessional's secrets).

<sup>2</sup> St. 9 Edw. II, c. 10 (Articuli Cleri); quoted and commented on in 2 Co. Inst. 629.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Badeley's pamphlet, written about 1860 (a copy of which has not been accessible), rested the privilege on the supposed demonstration that it was recognized directly in the canon law, and implicitly in the English authorities of the 1600s; but his data seem to have been adequately explained away by Mr. Hopwood, in his learned article on Confessions in Criminal Causes (1865; Juridical Society's Papers, III, 129, 137). The arguments of Mr. Badeley are in part reproduced in a note to R. v. Hay, 2 F. & F. 4, and are criticised in a note in 6 Jurist, N. S., pt. 2, p. 319 (1860).

<sup>4</sup> 1693, Anon., Skinner 404 (L. C. J. Holt declared communications with an attorney or scrivener were with the protection of a counsellor; "for he is counsel to a man, with whom he will advise, if he be intrusted and educated in such way of practice; otherwise, of a gentle-

man, parson, etc."); 1791, R. v. Sparkes, cited in Peake N. P. 77 (the confession of a papist to a protestant clergyman was admitted by Buller, J.); 1792, Buller, J., in Wilson v. Rastall, 4 T. R. 753, 759 ("I take the distinction to be now well settled that the privilege extends to those three enumerated cases [of counsel, solicitor, and attorney] at all times, but that it is confined to these cases only"); 1802, Butler v. Moore, Ire., McNally, Evidence, 253 (title to property under a will; on the question whether the testator by having conformed to the Roman church had become incapable of devising his estates, a Roman clergyman was asked by the heir "what religion did Lord Dunboyne profess at the time of his death?"; Smith, M. R., declined to recognize the privilege claimed by the witness on the ground of "confidential communications made to him in the exercise of his clerical functions"); 1823, R. v. Radford, cited by Mr. Moody, arguing in R. v. Gilham, Moo. Cr. C. 197 (confession to a clergyman, excluded; but probably not because of the privilege, but on the principles of confessions); 1828, R. v. Gilham, *ubi supra* (confession to a mayor, made after exhortations by a clergyman, admitted); 1828, Broad v. Pitt, 3 C. & P. 518, Best, C. J. ("The privilege does not apply to clergyman, since the decision the other day in the case of Gilham. I for one will never compel a clergymen to disclose communications made to him by a prisoner; but if he chooses to disclose them, I shall receive them");



declared for the privilege;<sup>5</sup> and several took occasion to avow that in their discretion they would not compel disclosure in practice.<sup>6</sup> But the privilege cannot be said to have been recognized as a rule of the common law, either in England or in the United States:<sup>7</sup>

1890, L. C. J. COLERIDGE, Letter to Mr. Gladstone (Life and Correspondence, 1904, II, 364): "I should not bore you, but I think perhaps it may interest you to know what Willes (Sir James) once told me he thought as to confession. He was, on the whole, the greatest and *largest* lawyer I ever knew, and I knew Jessel, Cairns and Campbell. I defended Constance Kent, John Karslake prosecuted her, and Willes tried her at Salisbury. Wagner was to have been a witness, and Willes had made up his mind that he should have to *hold* one way or the other as to the sanctity of confession. He took infinite pains to be right and he was much interested, because the point, since the Reformation, had never been decided. There were strong dicta of strong Judges — Lord Ellenborough, Lord Wynford and Alderson — that they would never allow Counsel to ask a clergyman the question. On the other hand, Hill, a great lawyer and good man, *but* a strong Ulster Protestant, had said there was no *legal* privilege in a clergyman. The thing did not come to a decision, for Constance

1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, *obiter*, per Lord Langdale, M. R. (privilege denied); 1851, *Wigram, V. C.*, in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391, *obiter* (privilege denied); 1860, *R. v. Hay*, 2 F. & F. 4 (a Catholic priest objected to reveal from whom he received the watch charged as stolen, claiming that he "received it in connection with the confessional"; Hill, J.: "You are not asked at present to disclose anything stated to you in the confessional"; and committed the witness for contempt, on his continued refusal to answer); 1865, *Nash's Life of Lord Westbury*, II, 104 (Lord Westbury, in the controversy over the "Road Murder," declared that no such privilege existed); 1876, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 651, *obiter* (privilege denied); 1881, the same judge in *Wheeler v. LeMarchant*, 17 Ch. D. 675, 681, *obiter* (same); 1893, *Normanshaw v. Normanshaw*, 69 L. T. Rep. 468, *Jeune, P. J.* (divorcee for adultery; an answer compelled as to the respondent's admissions to the vicar; "each case of confidential communication should be dealt with on its own merits, but . . . it was not to be supposed for a single moment that a clergyman had any right to withhold information from a court of law").

<sup>5</sup> 1846, *Alderson, B.*, in *Attorney-General v. Briant*, 15 L. J. Exch. 265, 271 (on *R. v. Gilham* being cited: "That case was not well argued; there was a statute upon the subject, which was not referred to; I think the words are: 'Let confessors beware that they do not disclose that which they receive from prisoners, excepting in treason'; the exception proves the rule"; this statute's meaning is explained by Mr. Hopwood, in the article cited, *supra*); 1853, *R. v. Griffin*, 6 Cox Cr. 219, *Alderson, B.* (the chaplain of a workhouse, who had visited the accused "as her spiritual adviser to administer the consolations of religion" was held privileged, on the ground that by analogy to

the attorney's privilege, which secures "proper legal assistance," so the accused should have "proper spiritual assistance"; yet the judge added: "I do not lay this down as an absolute rule; but I think that such evidence ought not to be given").

<sup>6</sup> 1828, *Best, C. J.*, in *Broad v. Pitt*, quoted *supra*, n. 1; 1874, *R. v. Castro* (Tichborne Case), *Charge of C. J.*, I, 648 (a priest refused to disclose subject-matter of a confession, and was not compelled to speak); and the instances cited in L. C. J. Coleridge's letter quoted *supra* in the text.

<sup>7</sup> It was early denied in Massachusetts: 1818, *Com. v. Drake*, 15 Mass. 161 (lewdness; defendant's penitential confessions to fellow-members of his church, admitted); but was recognized in an inferior court in New York: 1820 *circa*, *People v. Phillips*, 1 West. L. J. 109, *Anthon's Law Student*, 217; 1817, *Christian Smith's Trial*, N. Y., 1 Amer. St. Tr. 779 (murder; Rev. Peter J. Van Pelt being called by the prosecution to testify to a confession made by the accused to him, "communicated to me as a minister of the gospel," on objection, Van Ness, J., having been told by the witness that he himself had no objection to testify, ruled the confession not privileged; "there is a grave distinction, between auricular confessions made to a priest in the course of discipline, according to the canons of the church, and those made to a minister of the gospel in confidence, merely as a friend or adviser"; Mr. Price, in argument, cited a ruling of Mayor DeWitt Clinton, that "although confessions made to a Roman Catholic priest were received in England, and no privilege could be claimed by a priest of that order in the English courts, yet his honor considered that in this country we were at liberty to establish a different rule," excluding a confession made by a Roman Catholic to his priest in the course of discipline).

Kent pleaded guilty; and Karslake told me he should never have thought of putting the question to Wagner; and I had resolved *if* he did (but I knew he was a gentleman) that as an advocate I would not object, but use it in my speech. Willes, however, I suppose did not know us quite so well as we knew each other; and he had prepared himself to *uphold* my objection if I made it. He said he had satisfied himself that there was a *legal* privilege in a priest to withhold what passed in confession. Confession, he said, is made for the purpose of absolution. Absolution is a judicial act. The priest in absolving acts as a Judge, and no Judge is ever obliged to state his reasons for his judicial determination. 'This, you see, puts it on grounds of general law, and would be as applicable to Manton, Oliver Cromwell's chaplain, who, most certainly, heard confessions and absolved, as to the Pope himself. Whether the English Judges would have upheld Willes's *law* I own I doubt, but I thought it might interest you to know the opinion, and the grounds of it, of so great a lawyer and so really considerable a man. Practically, while Barristers and Judges are gentlemen the question can never arise. I am told it never *has* arisen in Ireland in the worst times.'

§ 2395. **Statutes recognizing the Privilege.** In two jurisdictions of Canada and in more than one half of the jurisdictions of the United States the privilege has been sanctioned by statute.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2395. <sup>1</sup> CANADA: *Newf. Consol. St.* 1916, c. 91, § 5 ('A clergyman or priest shall not be compellable to give evidence as to any confession made to him in his professional character'); *Que. C. C. P.* (ed. 1886) § 275 ('[A witness] cannot be compelled to declare what has been revealed to him confidentially in his professional character as religious or legal adviser').

UNITED STATES: *Alaska: Comp. L.* 1913, § 1869 (substantially like *Or. Laws* 1920, § 733); *Ariz. Rev. St.* 1913, Civ. C. § 1677, par. 5, P. C. § 1228, par. 3 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Ark. Dig.* 1919, § 4148 ('No minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination shall be compelled to testify in relation to any confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of such denomination'); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1881, par. 3 ('A clergyman or priest cannot, without the consent of the person making the confession, be examined as to any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs'); *Colo. Comp. St.* 1921, § 6563 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); § 6564 (waiver by consent; quoted *ante*, § 2380); *Haw. Rev. L.* 1915, § 2615 ('No clergyman of any church or religious denomination shall, without the consent of the person making the confession, divulge in any action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, any confession made to him in his professional character according to the uses of the church or religious denomination to which he belongs'); *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 7937 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Ind. Burns' Ann. St.* 1914, § 520, par. 5 ('Clergymen, as to confessions or admissions made to them in course of discipline enjoined by their respective churches,' shall not be competent);

*Ia. Code* 1897, § 4608, *Comp. Code* § 7315 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Kan. Gen. St.* 1915, § 7223 (like *Nebr. Rev. St.* § 8835, with proviso for waiver, quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Ky. C. C. P.* 1895, § 606 (4) ('Nor shall a clergyman or priest testify to any confession made to him, in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person confessing'); *Mich. Comp. L.* 1915, § 12549 ('No minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatsoever shall be allowed to disclose any confessions made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of such denomination'); *Minn. Gen. St.* 1913, § 8375 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Mo. Rev. St.* 1919, § 5418 ('The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fourth, a minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination, concerning a confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules of practice of such denomination'); *Mont. Rev. C.* 1921, § 10536 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Nebr. Rev. St.* 1921, § 8835 ('. . . The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fifth, a clergyman or priest, concerning any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person making the confession'); §§ 8840, 8841 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Nev. Rev. L.* 1912, § 5426 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881; down to 'character'); *N. Y. C. P. A.* 1920, § 351 ('a clergyman or other minister of any religion shall not be allowed to disclose a confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of the religious body to which he belongs'); § 352 (express waiver; quoted *ante*,



In the application of these statutes, it has been held, following the dictates of principle, that the privilege applies only to communications made in the understood pursuance of that church discipline which gives rise to the confessional relation,<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, in particular to confessions of sin only, not to communications of other tenor;<sup>3</sup> that it includes only the communications, and not information otherwise acquired;<sup>4</sup> and that it exempts the penitent also, as well as the priest, from disclosure.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2396. **Policy of the Privilege.** Even by Bentham, the greatest opponent of privileges, this privilege has, in the following argument, been conceded to justify recognition:

1827, Mr. *Jeremy Bentham*, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, b. IX, pt. II, c. VI (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, pp. 367 ff.): "To form any comparative estimate of the bad and good effects flowing from this institution, belongs not, even in a point of view purely temporal, to the design of this work. The basis of the inquiry is, that this institution is an essential feature of the catholic religion, and that the catholic religion is not to be suppressed by force. . . . I set out with the supposition, that, in the country in question, the catholic religion was meant to be tolerated. But with any idea of toleration, a coercion of this nature is altogether inconsistent and incompatible. In the character of penitents, the

§ 2292); *N. D. Comp. L.* 1913, § 7923 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); § 7924 ("If a person offers himself as a witness," it is a consent to the priest's examination "on the same subject"); *Oh. Gen. Code Ann.* 1921, § 11494 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: . . . 2. A clergyman or priest, concerning a confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs"); *Okl. Comp. St.* 1921, § 589 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . Fifth, a clergyman or priest concerning any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person making the confession . . . provided that, if a person offers himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; also, if [of?] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section"); *Or. Laws* 1920, § 733, par. 3 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881, par. 3); § 734 (waiver; quoted *ante*, § 2380); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 383 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Civ. C.* § 1247 (quoted *ante*, § 488); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1408 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881, adding "nor as to any information obtained by him from a person about to make such confession and received in the course of preparation for such confession"); § 1409 (the privileged person waives the privilege by testimony to any part of the communication); *S. D. Rev. C.* 1919, § 2730 (substantially like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); § 2731 (like *N. D. Comp. L.* § 7924); *Utah: Comp. L.* 1917, § 7124 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Vt. Gen. St.* 1917, § 1896 ("A priest or minister of the gos-

pel shall not be permitted to testify in court to statements made to him by a person under the sanctity of a religious confessional"); *Wash. R. & B. Code* 1909, § 1214 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); § 2147 (quoted *ante*, § 2380); *Wis. Stats.* 1919, § 4074 (like *N. Y. C. P. A.* 1920, § 351, adding "without consent thereto by the party confessing"); *Wyo. Comp. St.* 1920, § 5806 (like *Oh. Gen. Code Ann.* 1921, § 11494).

<sup>2</sup> 1895, *State v. Brown*, 95 Ia. 381, 64 N. W. 277 (the defendant met the minister on the train, and communicated his story without any purpose of obtaining advice or assistance; held not privileged); 1906, *State v. Morgan*, 196 Mo. 177, 95 S. W. 402 (communication to a minister not professionally admitted); 1835, *People v. Gates*, 13 Wend. N. Y. 311, 323 (admissions "not in the course of discipline," held not privileged); 1905, *Colbert v. State*, 125 Wis. 423, 104 N. W. 61 (interview between a priest and a parishioner, held not a confession to him professionally).

<sup>3</sup> 1877, *Gillooley v. State*, 58 Ind. 182; 1901, *Hills v. State*, 61 Neb. 589, 85 N. W. 836 (bigamy; defendant's memorandum of instructions, given to a clergyman, who was to communicate to the first wife the reasons stated therein for influencing her to abandon the prosecution, admitted).

<sup>4</sup> 1880, *Toomes' Estate*, 54 Cal. 509, 515 (a priest's testimony to a testatrix' mental condition just before death, admitted, because covering, not a confession, but only the testatrix' "proper condition of mind to make a confession"). Compare *R. v. Hay*, 2 F. & F. 4, cited *ante*, § 2394.

<sup>5</sup> 1880, *Massé v. Robillard*, 10 Rev. Légale 527 (under the statutory privilege in Quebec, the penitent himself cannot be compelled to disclose the communications of the priest).



people would be pressed with the whole weight of the penal branch of the law; inhibited from the exercise of this essential and indispensable article of their religion; prohibited, on pain of death, from the confession of all such misdeeds as, if judicially disclosed, would have the effect of drawing down upon them that punishment; and so, in the case of inferior misdeeds, combated by inferior punishments. Such would be the consequences to penitents; to confessors, the consequences would be at least equally oppressive. To them, it would be a downright persecution, if any hardship, inflicted on a man on a religious account, be susceptible of that, now happily odious, name. To all individuals of that profession, it would be an order to violate what by them is numbered amongst the most sacred of religious duties. In this case, as in the case of all conflicts of this kind, some would stand firm under the persecution, others would sink under it. To the former, supposing arrangements on this head efficient and consistent, it would have the effect of imprisonment — a most severe imprisonment for life. . . . The advantage gained by the coercion — gained in the shape of assistance to justice — would be casual, and even rare; the mischief produced by it, constant and all-extensive. Without reckoning the instances in which it happened to the apprehension to be realized, the alarm itself, intense and all-comprehensive as it would be, would be a most extensive as well as afflictive grievance. . . . If in some shapes the revelation of testimony thus obtained would be of use to justice, there are others in which the disclosures thus made are actually of use to justice under the assurance of their never reaching the ears of the judge. Repentance, and consequent abstinence from future misdeeds of the like nature, — repentance, followed even by satisfaction in some shape or other, satisfaction more or less adequate for the past, — such are the well-known consequences of the institution; though in a proportion which, besides being everywhere unascertainable, will in every country and in every age be variable, according to the degree and quality of the influence exercised over the people by the religious sanction in that form, and the complexion of the moral part of their character in other respects. But, without any violation of this part of his religious duty, and even without having succeeded so far as to have produced in the breast of the misdoer any permanent and efficacious repentance, modes are not wanting in which it may be in the power, as it naturally will be in the inclination, of a conscientious and intelligent confessor, to furnish such information as shall render essential service to the interests of justice. I mean, by ministering to the prevention of such individual misdeeds as, though meditated, are as yet at a stage short of consummation; or of such others as, though as yet not distinctly in contemplation, are in a way to present themselves to the same corrupted mind. Who the misdoer is, the confessor knows better than to disclose; as little will he give any such information as may lead to the arrestation of the delinquent, under circumstances likely to end in his being crushed by the afflictive hand of the law. But, without any such disclosure, he may disclose what shall be sufficient to prevent the consummation of the impending mischief. . . . Warnings of this kind, if I understand aright, have not unfrequently been given, — warnings, which might have been given and would have been given in better times, — might (had they been given) have operated as preventives to the most grievous public calamities.”<sup>1</sup>

The propriety of the privilege may be tested by the four canons already laid down for privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285). (1) Does the communication originate in a confidence of secrecy? It is so commonly understood. The ecclesiastical rules, to be sure, do provide in some measure that the penitent cannot obtain absolution unless he makes reparation, which may

§ 2396.<sup>1</sup> In the following place also the arguments are considered: *circa* 1823, Edward Livingston, *Introductory Report to the Code of Evidence* (Works, ed. 1872, I, 467).

The pith of the matter can also be seen in L. C. J. Coleridge's letter, quoted *ante*, § 2394.



involve an open repetition of the confession; and this, it may be argued, indicates that ultimate secrecy is not an assumption of the confessional. Whether in theory or in practice such is the case, must be a question of fact as to actual ecclesiastical rules. In any event the ultimate disclosure in that manner must be supposed to rest upon the priest's discretion according to the needs of each case. Thus, in effect, it may be assumed that a permanent secrecy, subject only to an optional variation by the priest, is an essential of any real confessional system as now maintained. In so far as it may not be, in the discipline of any particular church, the privilege cannot apply. (2) Is confidentiality of communication essential to the relation? In other words, would penitential confessions, under such a system as the above, continue to be made if they were liable to be demanded for disclosure in a court of justice when needed? In so far as such confessions concern crimes and wrongs, they would certainly, in some indefinite but substantial measure, be discontinued, and the penitential relation be to that extent annulled. (3) Does the penitential relation deserve recognition and countenance? In a State where toleration of religions exists by law, and where a substantial part of the community professes a religion practising a confessional system, this question must be answered in the affirmative. Historically, the failure to recognize the privilege during three centuries in England has probably been due to a reluctance to concede this affirmative answer. The disabilities of adherents of the Roman Church in England and Ireland — the only church actually enforcing a confessional system — also involved a disfavor to that system. In the United States, these disabilities and that disfavor do not exist; they have now disappeared in their original home. The privilege therefore satisfies this canon. (4) Would the injury to the penitential relation by compulsory disclosure be greater than the benefit to justice? Apparently it would. The injury is plain; it has been forcibly set forth by Bentham. The benefit would be doubtful. Even assuming that confessions of legal misdeeds continued to be made, the gain would be merely the party's own confession. This species of evidence, as already noticed in other connections (*ante*, §§ 2251, 2291), ought in no system of law to be relied upon as a chief material of proof; for it tempts prosecutors to lack of diligence and thoroughness in the investigation of the entire case against an accused. In criminal cases, it would be impolitic to encourage a resort to this too facile channel of confessions. In civil cases, the ordinary process of discovery upon oath would be a sufficient equivalent.

On the whole, then, this privilege has adequate grounds for recognition.

## PART IV: PAROL EVIDENCE RULE (CONSTITUTION OF JURAL ACTS)

### CHAPTER LXXXVI.

#### INTRODUCTORY

§ 2400. Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.

§ 2401. Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Jural Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.

#### A. CREATION OF JURAL ACTS (VOIDNESS AND VOIDABLENESS)

§ 2404. General Principle; Subject, Terms, and Delivery; Intent and Expression.

§ 2405. History of the Principle.

##### 1. Subject, Terms, Delivery, in general

§ 2406. (a) Subject must concern Jural Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence; Illegalities.

§ 2407. (b) Terms must be Definite; Terms implied from Conduct; Document void for Uncertainty.

§ 2408. (c) Act must be Final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.

§ 2409. Same: (2) Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.

§ 2410. Same: (3) Delivery, as applied to Contracts in general; Conditions Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.

§ 2411. Same: (4) Publication, as applied to Wills.

##### 2. Intent and Mistake, as applied to Subject, Terms, and Delivery, of an Act

§ 2413. Intent and Mistake, in general; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent.

§ 2414. (a) Subject of an Act; Intent not intended at all; Illegal Transactions.

§ 2415. (B) Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake not Known to or Induced by the Second Party.

§ 2416. Same: (2) Individual Mistake Known to or Induced by the Second Party.

§ 2417. Same: (3) Mutual Mistake; General Principle.

§ 2418. Same: Mutual Mistake as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.

§ 2419. Same: (b) Signing a Document having Blanks, or capable of Alteration; Writing one's Name not as a Signature.

§ 2420. (C) Delivery of a Document; Escrow Deeds or Negotiable Instruments delivered to Bona Fide Holder contrary to Intent of Maker.

§ 2421. Unilateral Acts; foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.

##### 3. Voidable Acts

§ 2423. Motive as making an Act Voidable; Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.

#### B. INTEGRATION OF JURAL ACTS (VARYING THE TERMS OF A DOCUMENT)

§ 2425. General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of a Writing.

§ 2426. History of the Rule.

##### 1. Integration of Unilateral Acts

§ 2427. Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).

##### 2. Integration of Bilateral Acts

§ 2429. No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.

§ 2430. Partial Integration; General Test for Applying the Rule; "Collateral Agreements."

§ 2431. Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing"; (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion"; (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.

§ 2432. Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.

§ 2433. Recital of Consideration in a Deed.

§ 2434. Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.



§ 2434a. Agent's Authority to Alter Contract.

§ 2435. Agreements not to Sue, or not to Enforce, or to hold Conditional only.

§ 2436. Agreements of Counter-claim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.

§ 2437. Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Security only; Agreement to hold in Trust.

§ 2438. Agreement to hold as Agent or Surety only.

§ 2439. Fraud; Illegality.

§ 2440. Trade Usage and Custom.

§ 2441. Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.

§ 2442. Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule, to admit or exclude "Collateral" Agreements.

§ 2443. Rule Applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle.

§ 2444. Same: (a) Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.

§ 2445. Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms.

§ 2446. Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.

§ 2447. Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.

§ 2448. Loss of the Instrument; Oral Transaction still Immaterial.

§ 2449. Agreement to Treat a Specified Copy as the "Original."

### 3. Integration required by Law

§ 2450. At Common Law: (1) Judicial Records.

§ 2451. Same: (2) Corporate Acts and Records; (3) Negotiable Instruments.

§ 2452. Under Statutes: (1) Wills; (2) Ballots; (3) Insurance Policies.

§ 2453. Conclusive Certificates, distinguished.

## C. SOLEMNIZATION OF JURAL ACTS

§ 2454. Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.

§ 2455. Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.

§ 2456. Other Formalities than Writing; Signature, Seal, Attestation, Registration, Stamp.

## D. INTERPRETATION OF JURAL ACTS

§ 2458. General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.

§ 2459. Same: "Intention" and "Meaning," distinguished.

### 1. Standard of Interpretation

§ 2460. General Principle; Four Standards,—Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.

§ 2461. Rule against "Disturbing a Plain Meaning," or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History.

§ 2462. Same: Theory and Policy of the Rule.

§ 2463. Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, etc.

§ 2464. Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.

§ 2465. Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.

§ 2466. Individual Party's Meaning; (1) Deeds and Contracts.

§ 2467. Same: (2) Wills.

### 2. Sources of Interpretation

§ 2470. General Principle; All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.

§ 2471. Exception for Declarations of Intention.

§ 2472. Same: (1) Exception for Equivocation or Latent Ambiguities.

§ 2473. Same: Blanks and Patent Ambiguities.

§ 2474. Same: (2) Exception for Erroneous Description.

§ 2475. Same: (3) Exception for "Rebutting an Equity" (Legacies, Advancements, and Disinheritance).

§ 2476. 'Falsa Demonstratio non Nocet'; General Principle.

§ 2477. Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.

§ 2478. Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.

## INTRODUCTORY

§ 2400. **Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.** "Few things," wrote Professor Thayer, "are darker than this, or fuller of subtle difficulties"; and this condition of the law all members of the profession will concede. Two circumstances appear to be responsible for it,—first, an inherent necessity for certain distinctions, simple in themselves but subtle and elusive in their application, and, secondly, the unfortunate prevalence of a termi-

nology in which the subject cannot possibly be discussed with entire accuracy and lucidity. With these two features as marked as they are, it is not strange that the so-called Parol Evidence rule is attended with a confusion and an obscurity which make it the most discouraging subject in the whole field of Evidence. Rather is it surprising that, in spite of these obstacles, so much has actually been achieved of consistency and of definiteness in the law as it stands.

What is chiefly needed to-day, for clarifying the subject and rendering manageable its mass of rules, is, first of all, a systematic arrangement of all the connected principles in their due relation, and, secondly, a simple and accurate nomenclature which shall replace the present absurdly incorrect usage and thus make intelligible discussion possible. In the following treatment the object will be, while preserving as much as possible the language of present usage, to set forth the rules systematically and to discuss them in their proper terms, and thus to assist the future development to proceed along natural and harmonious lines.

But at the outset certain discriminations must be kept in mind:

(1) First and foremost, *the rule is in no sense a rule of Evidence*, but a rule of Substantive Law. It does not exclude certain data because they are for one or another reason untrustworthy or undesirable means of evidencing some fact to be proved. It does not concern a probative mental process, — the process of believing one fact on the faith of another. What the rule does is to declare that certain kinds of fact are legally ineffective in the substantive law; and this of course (like any other ruling of substantive law) results in forbidding the fact to be proved at all (*ante*, § 2). But this prohibition of proving it is merely the dramatic aspect of the process of applying the rule of substantive law. When a thing is not to be proved at all, the rule of prohibition does not become a rule of Evidence merely because it comes into play when the counsel offers to “prove” it or “give evidence” of it; otherwise, any rule of law whatever might be reduced to a rule of Evidence; a ruling (for example) that on a plea of self-defence, in an action of battery, no evidence of the plaintiff’s insulting words is to be received, would become the legitimate progeny of the law of Evidence. This employment of terms of evidence for rulings of substantive law, by reason of the constant dramatic presentation of the latter in the course of a trial, is an old and natural failing of the profession, and has been already noticed at the outset of the general subject of Evidence (*ante*, § 2). But in the present department it has risen to a dominating influence of confusion, because there existed in this branch of the law no systematic terminology capable of holding its ground against the usurpation. Let us dismiss, then, once for all, any notion that the Parol Evidence rule, in any of its aspects,<sup>1</sup> is concerned with any precautions or limitations based on probative value, or indeed with any regulation of evi-

§ 2400. <sup>1</sup> Except, perhaps, the statute of frauds and the rule for interpreting by declara-

tions of intention, where there is a possible question.



dence in the legitimate sense of that word. This must be the first step to a clear understanding of the working of the rule.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Next, *the matter excluded by the rule is not inherently or even most commonly anything that can be properly termed "parol."* That word (in spite of its numerous other derived applications) signifies and implies essentially the idea "oral," *i. e.* matter of speech, as contrasted with matter of writing.<sup>3</sup> Now, so far as the phrase "parol evidence rule" conveys the impression that what is excluded is excluded because it is oral — because somebody spoke or acted other than in writing, or is now offering to testify orally — that impression is radically incorrect. When the prohibition of the rule is applicable, what is excluded may equally be written as oral, — may be letters and telegrams as well as conversations; and where the prohibition is applicable on the facts to certain written material, nevertheless for the very same transaction certain oral material may not be prohibited. So that the term "parol" not only affords no necessary clue to the material excluded, but is even positively misleading. It must be understood to be employed in a purely unnatural and conventional sense.<sup>4</sup>

(3) *There is no one and undivided Parol Evidence Rule.* There are at least four distinct principles or bodies of doctrine. They concern a common subject — jural acts — but their content and details are separate and distinct. The case lies very much as if we possessed one term "action" for all the various forms of remedial procedure. It is true enough that they all may be looked upon as mere species of the general notion of a remedy, but it would by all be conceived impossible to discuss the details of mandamus, certiorari, injunction, capias, replevin, bill in chancery, action on the case, scire facias, subpoena, and the rest, with no better word-materials than the one word "action." Yet this is not far from the impossible task which has been attempted with the term "parol evidence rule." There is no one generalization for that rule, — at least none which has any practical consequence. The four general groups of doctrine which go to make up the whole have each a separate set of rules; the chief problem in their application is to ascertain which kind of rule is involved in the case in hand, and to keep one from being mistaken for another.

(4) *The Parol Evidence Rules are not the only rules which concern the use of written things.* There are several other rules, with which it has nothing to do, that have also something to say about writings, — the chief of which are the rule about Producing Documentary Originals (*ante*, §§ 1177-1282) and the rule about Authenticating Documents (*ante*, §§ 2129-2169). These are

<sup>2</sup> 1903, Archibald, J., in *Pitcairn v. Hiss Co.*, 125 Fed. 110 ("According to the modern and better view, the rule which prohibits the modification of a contract by parol is a rule, not of evidence, but of substantive law. . . . The writing is the contractual act, of which that which is extrinsic, whether resting in parol or in other writings, forms no part"). Compare Professor Thayer's exposition, in his *Preliminary Treatise*, p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> It is necessary to abandon the improper use of "verbal" as synonymous with "oral." The former signifies "relating to words," whether written or oral; the latter signifies "spoken," whether words or sentences.

<sup>4</sup> How unnatural it is may be seen from the phrase "written parol contract," used in contrast to "sealed contract," in *Briggs v. Partridge*, 64 N. Y. 357.

rules of Evidence in the genuine sense, and the term "parol" is often naturally employed (especially with the former) in discussing them. But they are of no kith or kin with the Parol Evidence rule proper, as here involved, *i. e.* the rule of substantive law. Their difference from the present rule is plain enough; but the false nomenclature of the latter has sometimes caused a relation between them to be suspected.

(5) Finally, it needs to be insisted, in opposition to the popular and natural view which tends to thrust itself forward at trials, that *a writing has no efficacy per se*, but only in consequence of and dependence upon other circumstances external to itself. The exhibition of a writing is often made as though it possessed some intrinsic and indefinite power of dominating the situation and quelling further dispute. But it needs rather to be remembered that a writing is, of itself alone considered, nothing, — simply nothing. It must take life and efficacy from other facts, to which it owes its birth; and these facts, as its creator, have as great a right to be known and considered as their creator has. Granting that there is a writing before us: Has it been brought home to anybody as his act? Was it meant to supersede other materials? Was it essential to the transaction? What external objects does it apply to? These are questions which cannot be answered without looking away from the writing to other data; and until they are answered the efficacy of the writing is merely hypothetical. There is no magic in the writing itself. It hangs in mid-air, incapable of self-support, until some foundation of other facts has been built for it. So far as the Parol Evidence rule is concerned with writings at all, it concerns these questions of the relation between the writing and other data, and it points out what other data are essential and available for the proper use of the writing. It conduces, then, to a sound understanding of the rule if we dispel wholly that natural notion which falsely attributes to a writing some mystic independence and automatism.<sup>5</sup>

In short, then, (1) the Parol Evidence rule is *not a rule of Evidence*; (2) nor is it *a rule for things parol only*; (3) nor is it *a single rule*; (4) nor is it *all of the rules* that concern either parol or writing; (5) nor does it involve the assumption that a writing can possess, independently of the surrounding circumstances, any inherent status or efficacy.

§ 2401. **Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Legal Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.** What, then, is the Parol Evidence rule? It concerns the Constitution of Jural Acts. This requires a brief notice of the nature of jural acts.

Only a small part of conduct is jural conduct, *i. e.* conduct having jural effectiveness. The nature of such conduct as will be given jural effect is therefore a question of general consequence in all departments of the law. Leaving aside the field of crimes (which deal with the relation between State and individual) and of torts (which deal with irrecusable or involuntary civil

<sup>5</sup> The above text cited with approval by Burch, J., in *Moon v. Moon*, 102 Kan. 737, 173 Pac. 9 (1918).



relations), we are here concerned with voluntary relations, *i. e.* those relations which may be created, defined, transferred, or extinguished by expressed will of the parties. The conduct which is allowed to have such effect is a *jural act*.<sup>1</sup>

For the purpose of specific varieties of jural effects — sale, contract, release, and so on —, there are specific requirements, varying according to the subject. But there are also certain fundamental elements, common to all, and capable of being generalized. These elements present problems which run through all the varieties of jural acts, and must therefore be analyzed and discussed in union. Their principles, when applied to specific kinds of acts, usually give substantially similar results; and, when they do not, it is merely because special circumstances call for local variances. It is therefore impossible to solve these problems adequately as a peculiarity of any one kind of act, since they do not peculiarly belong there, and do not take their significance from any one variety. For example, whether a mistake due to signing a document unread can avoid the effect of the document is not a question solvable separately for deeds, wills, simple contracts, and negotiable instruments; it is a question common to all, and solvable only in comparison. So, too, the question whether an oral promise to give money, made at the same time with a written one, is legally effective, is not essentially one question for deeds, another for promissory notes, and another for wills; whatever variation there is must be a variation from a common principle underneath all. Again, whether the word “dollars” may be considered to signify the lawful money of the United States or the money of the unlawful Confederate States, is the same kind of a question for bills of exchange, for ordinary contracts, and for wills, — a question of some general principle of interpretation. Even when the answer is different for different kinds of acts, it appears in all cases as a variation from some general doctrine. What has to be done, therefore, is to compare under one head the principles common to

§ 2401.<sup>1</sup> “There is a very important class of acts in which the legal result follows because that result was itself contemplated and desired as one of the consequences of the act. From the fact that legal results are in contemplation in this class of acts, the Germans call them ‘*Rechtsgeschäfte*,’ Frenchmen call them ‘*actes juridiques*.’ English lawyers have not yet agreed upon any name for them. The terms ‘juristic acts’ and ‘acts in the law’ have been suggested” (Markby, *Elements of Law*, 3d ed., § 235). “It has been defined, by a high authority [Puchta], as an ‘act the intention of which is directed to the production of a legal result.’ . . . A better definition [by Windscheid] is ‘a manifestation of the will of a private individual directed to the origin, termination, or alteration of rights.’ A juristic act has also been well described [by Ihering] as ‘the form in which the subjective will develops its activity in creating rights, within the limits assigned to it by the law’ ” (Holland, *Jurisprudence*, 3d ed., c. 8).

Further expositions of the theory of jural acts will be found in the following works: Henry T. Terry, *Some Leading Principles of Anglo-American Law* (1884), §§172, 178, 180, 596, 605; Sir John W. Salmond, *Jurisprudence* (1910), 3d ed., § 121; (1920) 6th ed., § 128; Karl Gareis, *Introduction to the Science of Law* (1911), pp. 51, 102, 107, 120, 162; N. M. Korkunov, *General Theory of Law* (1909), § 31, p. 224; these last works are translated as volumes of the *Modern Legal Philosophy Series*; Albert Kocourek, *Tabulae Minores Jurisprudentiae* (*Yale Law J.*, 1921, XXX, 215); *Primary Jural Relations* (1923); the analysis of Professor Kocourek will doubtless supersede other systems in due time, and would require a re-statement of the term “jural act” as here defined; but for present purposes the definition may stand.

For another analysis of the parol-evidence rules, see Professor Samuel Williston’s *Treatise on Contracts* (1921), § 636.

all jural acts, and to take account of the specific variations for specific kinds of acts. This is what the "parol evidence" rule does in our law.

These principles fall into four groups, marking the four possible elements of every jural act: (A), The Enaction, or Creation, of the act; (B), its Integration, or embodiment in a single memorial, when desired; (C), its Solemnization, or fulfilment of the prescribed forms, if any; and (D), the Interpretation, or application of the act to the external objects affected by it. Of these four, the first and the fourth are necessarily involved in every jural act; the second and the third may or may not become practically important, but are always possible elements.

A. The Enaction, or Creation, of an act is concerned with the question *whether any jural act at all, or a jural act of the alleged tenor*, has been consummated; or, if consummated, whether the circumstances attending its creation authorize its *avoidance or annulment*. Under the first head arise the questions whether a writing is anything more than a preparatory draft, whether it has been completed by delivery, whether its tenor is to be judged by its actual words or the intended words, and the like. Under the second head arise the questions whether it can be avoided because of mistake, fraud, or duress, affecting the motive leading to its enaction.

B. The Integration of the act consists in embodying it in a *single utterance or memorial*, — commonly, of course, a written one. This process of integration may be required by law, or it may be adopted voluntarily by the actor or actors; and, in the latter case, either wholly or partially. Thus the question in its usual form is whether a particular document is the one deemed by law to be the sole memorial of the act, or how far a particular document was intended by the parties to cover certain subjects of transaction between them and therefore to deprive of legal effect all their other utterances.

C. The Solemnization of the act concerns the *forms* which are *required by law* to attend it in order to give it jural effect. This always becomes a question of some particular subject in the law, because there is no universal formality required in common for all acts. Thus the formalities of attestation, seal, registration, and the like, are essential for some but not for other acts. Writing is naturally the most important and most common instance of a required formality. The resort to writing may sometimes be an instance of Integration and sometimes of Solemnization, but either may exist without the other.

D. The Interpretation of an act is the *application of it to external objects*, in the process of defining and enforcing the right or obligation affected by its terms. The words of a jural act are merely the symbols by which the actor indicates the external objects which the act is expected to affect — a parcel of land or a barrel of sugar or John Doe the legatee. The connection between these words and their possible objects must be judicially established before the terms of the act can be given the effects expected by the parties. In this process of Interpretation, the main questions concern the standard of



meaning to be adopted and the data which may be used in determining that meaning.

For these four elements in the act, the principles are independent of each other, — so independent, indeed, that they sometimes appear to be contradictory; and the chief inherent difficulty in their application arises from the necessity of distinguishing which element and which principle is really involved.

In the present exposition, it is impossible to do more than trace the general principles into their main details. Not only is the subject properly one of substantive law, instead of Evidence; but it involves logically an application to many particular branches of the substantive law. Nothing short of separate treatises would suffice for a complete collection of precedents.<sup>2</sup> For example, the statute of frauds, with its myriad rulings, is involved; and the doctrine of collateral agreements as applied to negotiable instruments, the doctrine of mistake and misrepresentation as a motive for a deed or contract, the doctrine of judicial records as unimpeachable, — these and numerous other applications of the principle, would require for their complete exposition far more scope than is appropriate in a treatise upon the law of Evidence. The purpose in this chapter is to collect in systematic form the various applications of the principles and to examine in as much detail as is necessary those particular topics which have hitherto been commonly discussed as a part of the law of Evidence and not of the substantive law.

#### A. CREATION OF JURAL ACTS (VOIDNESS AND VOIDABLENESS)

§ 2404. **General Principle; Subject, Terms, and Delivery; Intent and Expression.** A jural act — that is, here, an act regarded as capable of having jural effects in civil relations other than tort — may be analyzed from two points of view. With reference to its *tenor*, it involves three elements, — its Subject, its Terms, and its Stages of Utterance. With reference to the *mental condition* of the *actor* himself, it involves two elements, Volition and Expression.

1. In the former aspect, it is clear that each of these three elements raises its own set of questions. (a) The act must be *jural*, as to its *subject*. Thus, on the one hand, an act which concerns merely relations of courtesy, or duties of morality, or other non-jural subjects, will receive no legal effects. On the other hand, acts which concern transactions prohibited by some policy of law — such as gambling or cheating — will equally be left without jural effects. (b) The act must be *definite* as to its terms. This excludes all acts whose terms are so uncertain or unintelligible that they are incapable of enforcement. Within these limits, the terms of the act will be whatever the actor

<sup>2</sup> No attempt has been made to collect all of the precedents on any of the topics; but in those topics commonly appropriated to the law of Evidence the greatest part of the English cases and a large portion of the American cases are believed to be here collected.



has used. (c) The act must be *final* in its *utterance*. It does not come into existence as an act until the whole has been uttered. As almost all important transactions are preceded by tentative and preparatory negotiations and drafts, the problem is to ascertain whether and when the utterance was final; because until there has been some finality of utterance, there is no act. The necessity for a delivery of a document, and the nature of a delivery, are here the most usual questions in practice. — These three elements, then, are all essential to any jural act, and no others are essential to all jural acts.

2. In the second aspect, it is clear that there must be both Volition and Expression; for an unexpressed volition would receive no jural effect, and an expression without some sort of volition would be equally ignored. But the volition and the expression may not correspond, and thus the usual problem is to define the *relation that must exist between volition (or intention) and expression*, in each one of the three elements of (1), above, in order to make the act jurally effective. For example, Doe and Roe go through the form of marriage, Doe secretly intending it in jest, but Roe seriously; here the *subject* is jural in Doe's expression, but not in his volition; which shall prevail? Again, Doe by mistake of absent-mindedness writes in a contract "\$100," instead of "\$10," and hands it to Roe; here the *terms*, in expression, are different from the terms in volition; which is to prevail? Again, Doe writes a check payable to bearer and places it in his desk, and the check is stolen and handed to Roe; here, in expression — that is, in outward appearance — there has been *finality of utterance*, but not in Doe's volition; shall the former or the latter be decisive?

This is the world-old legal problem, inevitably faced in the history of every system, — the problem of the competition between the external and the internal standards, the objective and the subjective points of view. It is useless to prescribe either that the internal will alone or that the external expression alone shall be decisive. Probably no developed system of law has ever practically enforced either the one or the other standard exclusively. It is rather a question of the relation between the two elements, *i. e.* not whether the jural act shall be only as willed or only as expressed, but what sort of volition is sufficient in order to make the actor responsible for a given expression; and this must depend more or less on varying experience in different epochs and communities and in different kinds of transactions. The modern test, for bilateral acts, will be found, with fair uniformity, to predicate some relation of reasonable consequence (judged by the community's standard) between the outward expression and the inward volition; because in bilateral acts the just reliance of the other party to the transaction upon the first party's outward expression must be the salient consideration. For unilateral acts — chiefly wills — more of a concession can be made, and is made, to the actual volition, so far as it is ascertainable.

Such, then, are the elements and the problems with which we are concerned in defining the creation of jural acts in general.



§ 2405. **History of the Principle.** The two chief problems that have most commonly occupied the Courts have been that of the finality of the utterance (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, *c*) and that of the correspondence between intent and expression (*ante*, § 2404, par. 2), *i. e.* how far a *formal delivery* of a document is essential and decisive, and how far an *unexpressed intent* can be allowed to overthrow the outward act.

(1) As might have been expected, the progress has been from a strict *formalism* to a liberal and flexible practicality. The mark of primitive legal standards, throughout all, is formalism, — a characteristic already noted here in its effects upon other parts of the law (*ante*, §§ 2032, 575, 1815). It must be kept in mind, for appreciating the traditions against which the modern law has had to struggle:

1885, Professor *Andreas Heusler*, *Institutions of Germanic Private Law*, I, 70, 74: "Without such formalism the [primitive] people could not perceive their law; it would be to them but a buried treasure; and thus to them form is itself law. They resort to form for its own sake, and because in it alone is law perceived. To us, because we cannot in thought put ourselves back to that stage of intellectual development, this stiff domination of form is too apt to appear as an intolerable fetter of the free exercise of the will. But, when these things prevailed, there was no such attitude towards them. . . . The Frankish period is the flourishing period of this symbolism. Thus, in the process of commendation, the act of placing the clasped hands of the ward or the vassal in the opened hands of the lord symbolizes the submission to the wardship or the suzerainty; the acts of pointing and crooking the fingers in the Saxon release (*'digitis incurvatis abnegationem facere'*), symbolizes the surrender of claim to the transferred property; the handing of twig and turf, the delivery of seisin of land; the grasping of altar-cloth or bell-rope, the taking possession of church and chapel; the widow's act of laying the house-key or the cloak on the bier or the tomb of the deceased husband, her surrender of the entire marriage-estate to the husband's creditors; the handing over of a lock of hair from head and beard, the transfer into household service; the delivery of hat or glove, the transfer of ownership; the lending of staff, scepter, spear, or pennon, the granting of a fief. . . . But by the time of the [Germanic] codes [1200-1300] this symbolism is already in decay. Writing is the sworn enemy of all symbolic representation. A people who do not write feel the need of making the law visible by external and perceivable symbols, and thereby of providing expression for acts and volitions as legal acts and legal volitions. But as soon as acts come to be put into writing, this formalism becomes first a luxury, then a burden, and finally is repudiated entirely."

(2) The persistence of this formalism, however, even under the régime of writing, is equally notable in the first stages of Anglo-Norman history. In its present relations, it has left its mark in the technical rule concerning delivery of a deed:

1895, Sir *F. Pollock*, and Professor *F. W. Maitland*, *History of the English Law*, II, 83-86, 190: "[In Bracton's time] a livery of seisin either on the land or within the view was necessary. Until such livery had taken place there was no gift; there was nothing but an imperfect attempt to give. . . . But this change of possession and the accompanying declaration must be made in very formal fashion. . . . A knife is produced, a sod of turf is cut, the twig of a tree is broken off; the turf and twig are handed by the donor to the donee; they are the land in miniature, and thus the land passes from hand to hand. Along with them the knife also may be delivered. . . . When, under Roman influence,



the written document comes into use, this also can be treated as a symbol. It is delivered in the name of the land; the effectual act is not the signing and sealing, but the delivery of the deed, and the parchment can be regarded as being as good a representative of land as a knife or a glove would be. Just as of old the sod was taken up from the ground in order that it might be delivered, so now the charter is laid on the ground and thence it is solemnly lifted up or 'levied' ('levatio cartæ'); Englishmen hereafter will know how to 'levy a fine.' . . . The written document, which few have the art to manufacture, is regarded with mystical awe, it takes its place beside the 'festuca.' The act of setting one's hand to it is a 'stipulatio'; it is delivered over as a symbol along with twig and turf and glove."

Thus it comes down to the succeeding centuries that the technical and unvarying symbol of finality is a delivery of the deed. "Delivery," says Chief Baron Gilbert, in the early 1700s,<sup>1</sup> is necessary to the essence of a deed, and the deed takes effect from the delivery; so that unless the delivery be proved, there is no perfect proof of the deed." The first signs of flexibility are seen in the concession that a prepared deed (an "escrow," or mere scroll), placed in the hands of a second person for subsequent handing to the grantee, is not yet effective.<sup>2</sup> Yet even here the formalism — now becoming dead bark — encases the rule, and the requirement of delivery is merely made abstract, so as not to have inherent connection with the maker's own hand. This concession, moreover, is still refused for a draft deed placed directly in the grantee's hands in anticipation of some future event which shall make it effective; there can be no escrow to a grantee, it was said.<sup>3</sup> At the same time there had already begun an effort to refine this technicality, and to deny effectiveness to a manual transfer even to the grantee himself, if it purported to be, not a true delivery, but only a draft or escrow.<sup>4</sup> But the authority and vogue of Coke's and Sheppard's writings obscured and suppressed prematurely this progressive conception; and it has been reserved for very modern times to repudiate this last relic of primitive formalism.<sup>5</sup>

(3) Passing to the problem of intent as competing with expression, it is equally plain that the primitive legal conception was strictly formalistic:

1885, Professor *Andreas Heusler*, *Institutions of Germanic Private Law*, I, 60: "A strictly formal system of law knows no contrast between the will and the utterance, and no possibility of a contradiction between the two. This is thoroughly the conception of the

§ 2405. <sup>1</sup> 5th ed., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> 1432, Y. B. 10 H. VI, 25. Later, the rule comes to be analyzed and philosophized: 1523, Y. B. 14 H. VIII, 17, 6 and 7 (Brundel, J.: "If I deliver a deed [to a second person] to be delivered to another [third person] as my deed, then if he takes it [from the second person] without delivery, though he has the deed, he will have no action; for in these cases the act which makes them perfect was not accomplished nor performed").

<sup>3</sup> 1612, *Thoroughgood's Case*, 9 Co. Rep. 137 ("If A makes a writing to B and seals it and delivers it to B as an escrow, to take effect as his deed when certain conditions are performed, it has been adjudged to be immediately

his deed; for the law respects the delivery to the party himself, and rejects the words which will make the express delivery to the party upon the matter no delivery"); Sheppard, *Touchstone*, IV, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> 1601, *Hawkeand v. Gatchel*, Cro. El. 835 ("There is not any difference where it is delivered to the party himself as an escrow and where to a stranger; . . . when it is first delivered as an escrow, though to the party himself, it is clear that it is not his deed until it be performed; . . . for if upon the delivery the words spoken by the obligor purport that it shall not be his deed, it is clear it is not").

<sup>5</sup> The authorities are examined *post*, § 2408.



Germanic law. The utterance is the law's embodiment. No more, and yet no less, than what is uttered can bind or loose. Hence the minute precision with which obligations of debt were written out. . . . Hence the legal proverbs, 'one man one word,' 'the word stands,' 'words make the bargain,' and the like. A necessary result is that mistake in contractual relations receives but scanty consideration. . . . All that a man does is judged alone by its external manifestations and its objective effect, not by his inward motive. The law concedes nothing either to good or to bad faith, as long as it is concerned with the legal consequences of conduct."

In the field of jural acts the application of this notion to writings plays but a small part until the rise and spread of the seal, in the 1100s and 1200s; for until then the contents of the document seldom enter into the inquiries of a trial.<sup>6</sup> But it is amply illustrated by the formalism of all *oral transactions* and pleadings:

1892, Professor *Heinrich Brunner*, *Germanic Legal History*, II, 347: "Plea and answer of the parties were, in the formalism of legal procedure, bound to legal forms. Their utterances must contain the precise formal catchwords. Every assertion of the parties is treated on the principle of strict and literal interpretation. . . . The party is bound to the spoken word. If he has made some faulty utterance, still he cannot correct his speech."

1892, Mr. *Henry C. Lea*, *Superstition and Force*, 4th ed., 78-9: "[In Lille, until 1351,] the minutest regulations were enforced as to this ceremony [of the oath of denial]. . . . The slightest error committed by either party lost him the suit irrecoverably. The royal ordinance [abrogating the older rules] declares that the oath was 'in strange language and peculiar words, not easy to remember or to pronounce,' and yet that if either party 'failed in form or words, or by weakness of tongue misspoke or forgot his words, or lifted his hand more than required by the regular manner, or did not hold firmly his sack in his palm, or failed to preserve and follow various other trifling and vain things and rules belonging to the oath, according to the trial mode of the city when done by parol, he has lost his whole cause.'"

1895, Sir *F. Pollock* and Professor *F. W. Maitland*, *History of English Law*, I, 190: "The old procedure required of a litigant that he should appear before the court in his own person and conduct his own cause in his own words. . . . The extreme captiousness of the old procedure is [in the 1100s] defeating its own end, and so a man is allowed to put forward some one else to speak for him, — not in order that he may be bound by that other person's words, but in order that he may have a chance of correcting formal blunders and supplying omissions. What the litigant himself has said in court, he has said once for all, and he is bound by it; but what a friend has said in his favor he may disavow. . . . Perhaps the main object of having a [professional] pleader is that one may have two chances of pleading correctly."<sup>7</sup>

This strictness of spirit is slow in changing. The chief statutes of jeofails, removing by degrees the primitive crudities which made difficult the amend-

<sup>6</sup> See *1st*, § 2426.

<sup>7</sup> This general feature has been elaborately demonstrated by Professor Brunner in his *Wort und Form in altfranzösischen Prozess*, 1868 (*Sitzungsber. d. K. Akad. d. Wiss. b. Wien*, vol. 77, p. 655; translated, in 1871, in the *Revue critique de législation et de jurisprudence*, vol. 21, pp. 22 ff.; reprinted in Brunner's *Forschungen z. Geschichte des deutschen u.*

*französischen Rechts* (1894), 260, 266); Professor Heusler, in his *Institutionen des deutschen Rechts* (1885; I, 45) has also acutely analyzed it; see also Professor Siegel's *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* (1895), p. 545.

So also in the English borough courts, which earlier passed out of formalism: Bateson, *Borough Customs*, II, *Introd.* pp. 150-152 (*Seldon Soc. Pub.*, XXI; 1906).



ment of pleadings, are strewn along the statute-book from 1341 to 1711,<sup>8</sup> and did not even then cease to be needed. The persistence of the older notions, in their application to oral utterances, is seen markedly in the struggle against the modern doctrine of interpretation,<sup>9</sup> for the "meaning" of words and the "intent" of the speaker were not distinguished, and both alike were supposed to be determinable from the uttered words alone. "The sense and signification of the words must be expounded by the law,"<sup>10</sup> and "the intent of a man is uncertain, and a man should plead such matter as is or may be known to the jury."<sup>11</sup> With regard to its present application to the mistaken use of words, modern policy confirms primitive tradition in binding a man, irrespective of his mistakes, to those precise utterances which another party has taken at their face value; but this is a rationalized rule, and falls far short of the early formalism which inexorably and invariably pledged the man upon his spoken word.

(4) If this was the strictness of formalism for acts contained in winged words, it might be assumed to have been at least as marked for *written acts*. But in one aspect the history seems to have begun to change at an early stage, — namely, the doctrine of *mistake as applied to the contents* of the writing. That a man who could not read had sealed a document which had been incorrectly read over to him, was recognized, before the 1400s, as sufficient to relieve him from liability.<sup>12</sup> When it is remembered that as yet the mass of the community could not read, this rule is seen to be almost the normal rule, to which the contrary case would be the exception; indeed the rule is in form laid down for "lay people," that is, those who were not "clerks" and therefore not skilled in reading. How did such an anomalous rule develop? The course of it would seem to have been somewhat as follows: At the time of the Conquest, the form of most transactions still lay "in pais," *i. e.* livery of seisin or the like. Comparatively few transactions were in writing.<sup>13</sup> When writing was used, the terms were none the less orally stated, to be proved, if need arose, by the witnesses called in for the transaction; the witnesses' oath controlled, and the terms of the writing played only a minor part.<sup>14</sup> It was thus not a question likely to arise whether the

<sup>8</sup> Blackstone, Commentaries, III, 407.

<sup>9</sup> *Post*, § 2462.

<sup>10</sup> *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 4th ed., 79.

<sup>11</sup> 1465, Y. B. 4 Edw. IV, 8, 9.

<sup>12</sup> 1371, Y. B. 44 Ass. 30 (here the general principle appears to be already conceded); 1374, Y. B. 47 Edw. III, 3, 5 ("To every deed there ought to be writing, seal, and delivery, and when a thing is to pass from those who have no understanding except by hearing, there ought to be a reading to them; . . . it would be very unfair if the [other] party's own deceit should help him, for it is a principle of our law, 'fraus et dolus nemini patrocinantur'; . . . and for the reason that the law does not favor fraud or trickery, it wishes also that no one shall be prejudiced by his ignorance and error in his

deed, for in the one party was 'bona fides', and in the other 'dolus malus'"); 1422, Y. B. 9 H. V, 15, 3; 1494, Y. B. 9 H. VI, 59, 8 (here Strange, J., seems to have doubted, on the ground that "he has acknowledged the delivery into the hands of the person").

<sup>13</sup> "To all appearance, writing has hardly been used for any legal purpose [in 1066] except when land is to be conveyed or a last will made. . . . When making a feoffment, it was possible for the giver to impose conditions or to establish remainders, and all this by word of mouth; it is probable, however, that a character was executed if anything elaborate was to be done" (Pollock & Maitland, Hist. Eng. Law, II, 191, 193).

<sup>14</sup> *Post*, § 2426, where this part of the history is examined.



party could read the writing, or whether it had been read over to him beforehand; it *could* not be so read over to him, considering that by the traditional procedure the words were not written on the parchment by the scribe till after formal delivery of it by the maker.<sup>15</sup> But by the 1200s the seal comes into general use, for authenticating documents; legal writings become more common; and the other rule develops, that the terms of a sealed writing shall be indisputable as representing the actual transaction.<sup>16</sup> This development, however, begins while the great mass of the community are still illiterate. They have seals, and can now bind themselves indisputably by affixing the seal, yet they cannot read what they have sealed. They are even bound by a seal stolen and used by the thief.<sup>17</sup> This combination of rules immediately raises the present problem, and presents itself as an intolerable consequence. Hence, almost at the very outset, comes the rule that a layman, not being a "clerk," is not bound by a document sealed by him but erroneously read over to him by another person.

The present part of the parol evidence rule thus appears as a natural alleviation and a practically contemporary consequence of the other part of that rule (*post*, § 2425) making the terms of the document indisputable as to the actual transaction. Had printing come into use a century earlier than it did, and had the mass of the community thus earlier ceased to be illiterate, the present rule might not have arisen. As it was, the rule appears almost full-fledged by the 1400s. Perhaps in the earlier cases, the inclination was to restrict it to instances of fraud by the other party to the document, and the Latin maxims used by the judges suggest that they had borrowed something from an alien and more advanced system. But by the 1500s it appears to be conceded that a false reading by a stranger is equally fatal to the deed; and the only controversy then remaining is whether the deed may be valid as to the part correctly read while void as to the part falsely read.<sup>18</sup> For literate persons, there seems never to have been any doubt; and the doctrines of mutual mistake and the like (*post*, § 2417) are the product of equity and modern rationalism.

<sup>15</sup> 1877, Brunner, *Die frankisch-romanische Urkunde als Wertpapier*, *Zeitschr. für Handelsrecht*, XXII, 64, 505, 530, republished in his *Forschungen z. Geschichte d. deutschen u. französischen Prozess* (1894), 524, 612 ('im juristischen Sinne erfolgt das "scribere cartulam" nach der Uebergabe des Pergaments'). So also Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, I, 397; compare Bresslau, *Urkundenlehre*, 778; Fosse, *Privaturkunden*, 135; R. Hübner, *History of Germanic Private Law*, §§ 71, 72, 88 (1918; vol. IV of the *Continental Legal History Series*); J. Brissaud, *History of French Private Law*, § 377, "Contracts in English Law" (1912; vol. III of the above series). Some of the conclusions of Professor Brunner, as to negotiability, etc., have since been successfully disputed, notably by Professor Francesco Brandileone (formerly of Bologna,

now of Rome); for example, in his monograph, 'Le cosi dette clausole al portatore nei documenti medievali italiani' (*Rivista di diritto commerciale e marittimo*, 1903, vol. I, no. 5), and in later publications; but the result of this controversy does not affect the general truth of the statements above in the text.

<sup>16</sup> This part of the rule is examined *post*, § 2426.

<sup>17</sup> Schroeder, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 701; Schultze, *Urkundenbeweis* (cited *post*, § 2426), 118; 1187-89, *Glanvil*, X, 6, § 8; Holmes, *Common Law*, 272; Barbour, *History of Contract in Early English Equity*, p. 21 (*Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, IV, 1914). By the time of Britton (65*b*), about 1300, this is relaxed.

<sup>18</sup> 1523, *Y. B. 14 H. VIII*, 25, 7; 1582, *Thoroughgood's Case*, 2 Co. Rep. 9; 1615, *Pigot's Case*, 11 Co. Rep. 27.



## 1. Subject, Tenor, Delivery

§ 2406. (a) **Subject must concern Jural Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence; Illegalities.** Conduct, to be given jural effects, must be *jural in its subject* (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, a), *i. e.* must concern jural relations, not relations of friendship or other non-jural relations.<sup>1</sup> The father who promises to bring home a box of tools for his boy is not bound in contract, though the same promise to his neighbor may be binding. The friend who promises to come to dinner is not legally liable, though he who agrees with a restaurant-keeper to dine there is under a contract of liability. Barristers could not, as late as Blackstone's time, recover for their fees, because the client's payment was theoretically 'quiddam honorarium,'<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* the transaction was looked upon as outside the field of legal relations. In all such cases, therefore, the conduct is jurally ineffective, or void. In the traditional phraseology of the parol evidence rule, then, it may always be shown that the transaction was *understood by the parties not to have jural effect*.

(1) Ordinarily, the bearing of this principle is plain enough on the circumstances. It has been judicially applied to household services rendered by a *member of the family*,<sup>3</sup> and to a writing representing merely a family understanding.<sup>4</sup> It is of course also applicable to the signature of an *attesting witness*.<sup>5</sup>

When the document is to serve the purpose of a mere *sham*, this principle in strictness exonerates the makers; but a just policy would seem to concede this only when the pretence is a morally justifiable one (as, to calm a lunatic or to console a dying person),<sup>6</sup> and not when it is morally beyond

§ 2406. <sup>1</sup> 1811, Lord Stowell, in *Dalrymple v. Dalrymple*, 2 Hagg. Consist. 54, 105 ("It is said they [marriage engagements] must be serious; so surely must all contracts; they must not be the sports of an idle hour, mere matters of pleasantry and badinage, never intended by the parties to have any serious effect. . . . [But] it is not to be presumed 'a priori' that a man is sporting with such dangerous playthings as marriage engagements").

<sup>2</sup> Commentaries, III, 28.

<sup>3</sup> 1870, *Bundy v. Hyde*, 50 N. H. 116, 122 ("The relationship of debtor and creditor depends upon the simple question whether the parties understood that relationship to exist").

<sup>4</sup> 1872, *Earle v. Rice*, 111 Mass. 17 (husband and wife signed a document providing that her land should be sold and the proceeds handed to trustees for her life and then for her children; her land having been sold and the proceeds given to trustees, it was allowed to be shown, for the wife, that this document was made between husband and wife merely as a memorandum of moral obligation, not as a legal transaction).

<sup>5</sup> 1921, *Figari v. Olcese*, 184 Cal. 775, 195 Pac. 425 (defendant's signature to a note was placed under the maker's, preceded by the word "witness"; testimony to the oral understanding that defendant signed as witness

only, admitted); 1892, *Tombler v. Reitz*, 134 Ind. 9, 14, 33 N. E. 789 (that a name indorsed on a note was signed as witness only, allowed to be shown); 1898, *Isham v. Cooper*, 56 N. J. Eq. 398, 37 Atl. 462, 39 Atl. 760 (parol evidence admitted to show that initials were signed to a paper, not as a party to the contract, but merely to attest an interlineation); 1844, *Garrison v. Owens*, 1 Pinney Wis. 473 (that a name has been signed as attesting witness, admitted).

For the case of a *surety*, see *post*, § 2438.

<sup>6</sup> 1904, *Fleming v. Morrison*, 187 Mass. 120, 72 N. E. 499 (the testator's declaration to the attesting witness, after the attestation, that "it was a fake, made for a purpose," admitted, and the document held void); 1896, *Church v. Case*, 110 Mich. 621, 68 N. W. 424 (a mortgage for \$6,000 given by a son who had received the land in return for an agreement to support the mother; a showing allowed that no consideration had been received for the mortgage, and that it was given as a mere form, to satisfy the jealous relatives, and to safeguard the interests of the grantor; the mortgage decreed void); 1900, *McCartney v. McCartney*, 93 Tex. 359, 55 S. W. 311 (the plaintiff's wife was losing her mind, and importuned him to execute deed to her, which he did "to satisfy her mind"; he then retained it without recording, and later it was taken from his papers without his knowl-



sanction.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes the illustrations of this principle, that a transaction which is a sham is without the scope of legal acts, are hard to distinguish from those cases where the transaction is in substance a legal one but the understanding is that it shall be merely *nominal*; here, in effect, one party agrees to hold the other party harmless, and this involves rather the rule about varying a document's terms.<sup>8</sup>

In all these cases a common understanding for all parties is here assumed to exist; when the intent of one party is different from his outward act as understood by the other, the question becomes a different one, and involves the other part of the principle (*post*, § 2414).

(2) Conduct, furthermore, will be denied jural effect when it falls within a class of facts prohibited by some policy of the law. The act is then commonly said to be "illegal," or void on grounds of *public policy*, — for example, trading with an enemy in war, selling public offices, engaging to render champertous services, stifling a public prosecution, ousting a court's jurisdiction, wagering, restraining trade, and scores of other transactions. Such acts are jural, but not lawful.<sup>9</sup> These prohibitions, however, concern the validity of particular kinds of acts, and not jural acts in general or uniformly, and therefore need be referred to here only to note their place in the theory of legal acts.

§ 2407. (b) **Terms must be Definite; Terms implied from Conduct; Document void for Uncertainty.** It is clear that the terms of the act need not be in express words; the terms may be *implied from conduct*, as in the case

edge and recorded; this was allowed to be shown to defeat it).

<sup>7</sup> *Can.* 1914, *Kelly v. Sayle*, 15 D. L. R. 776, Br. C. (a partnership agreement made to cover a loan, held on the facts to be a mere form and not effective; *Macdonald, C. J. A. diss.*); *U. S.* 1911, *Lavalleur v. Hahn*, 152 Ia. 649, 132 N. W. 877 (contract intended to be a sham, in fraud of a third person; facts shown; the opinion is hazy on the theory, and uses the term "fraud" too loosely; the parol evidence rules concededly stifle the revelation of a great deal of fraud; there is no general principle that fraud may be shown; rather the contrary); 1904, *Humphrey v. Timken C. Co.*, — Kan. —, 75 Pac. 528 (order of purchase signed by H.; H. allowed to show an understanding that he was nominal purchaser only, B. being the real purchaser but insolvent, and the seller being desirous to evade proceedings by B.'s creditors; this is apparently unsound); 1900, *Southern St. R. Adv. Co. v. Mfg. Co.*, 91 Md. 61, 46 Atl. 513 (instrument of advertising contract, allowed to be shown to have been signed merely for exhibition to other advertisers to induce them to pay the stated rates; this seems unsound); 1856, *Conner v. Carpenter*, 28 Vt. 237, 240 (written contract of sale and hire of horses; that it was "understood to be a sham, and to be only to keep off the creditors

of the plaintiff from attaching the property," held not sufficient to permit the party "to thus escape from his contract"); 1898, *Grand Isle v. Kinney*, 70 Vt. 381, 41 Atl. 130 (that a party was not to pay anything under a contract signed to deceive the State engineer, excluded).

<sup>8</sup> These cases are collected *post*, § 2435, but the following will serve as an example: 1896, *Gumz v. Giegling*, 108 Mich. 295, 66 N. W. 48 (that the defendant W. indorsed a note given to the plaintiff for a debt of the defendant G., on the plaintiff's representation that it was a mere matter of form, to induce G. to pay, and that no claim should be made upon the defendant W.; treated as involving the principle of § 2443, *post*, and not allowed to exonerate the defendant).

<sup>9</sup> Of course, the facts constituting the real transaction, and making it void for illegality, may here always be shown: 1922, *Morey v. Paladini*, 187 Cal. 727, 203 Pac. 760; 1908, *Clemens v. Crane*, 234 Ill. 215, 84 N. E. 884 (the rule does not prevent proof of usury in a loan); 1903, *Wheeler v. Metrop. Stock Exchange*, 72 N. H. 315, 56 Atl. 754 (wagering contract); 1919, *U. S. v. Constantino Tan Quingco Chua*, 39 P. I. 552 (usury); 1921, *Williston, Contracts*, III, § 1753; and cases cited *post*, § 2414, n. 2.

of the commoner contracts of service. *Usage* may thus by implication furnish the terms, — subject to the limitations of another principle (*post*, § 2440).

When express words are employed, they must be in themselves definitely intelligible, so that the act may be capable of enforcement (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, *b*). It is common learning that a deed or a will is often held *void for uncertainty*. Lord Bacon, giving his classical instance of a grant to “J. D. et J. S. et heredibus,” calls this a “patent ambiguity . . . by matter within the deed,” such as “shall make the deed void for uncertainty.” So, too, Mr. Elphinstone’s example, “I give my dog Ranger to my nephew John or Thomas,”<sup>1</sup> illustrates the same kind of uncertainty. A blank, an illegible word, an unknown language, — these various instances show how an act which is impossible to comprehend and therefore to enforce cannot be deemed a jural act. This doctrine is more particularly involved in distinguishing it from the interpretation of “latent ambiguities” (*post*, § 2472); it is enough here to notice its correct place in the theory of jural acts.<sup>2</sup>

So far, then, as concerns the precise terms of an act, they will be — if intelligible — whatever the actor has made them. There are no other requirements. When, however, the terms as expressed do not correspond to the terms as intended, we are brought to the other question, — that of Intention (*post*, § 2415).

§ 2408. (c) **Act must be final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.** A jural act does not come into existence as such until its utterance is final and complete (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, *c*).<sup>1</sup> All transactions require an appreciable lapse of time for their fulfilment; most important transactions in writing are consummated only after successive inchoate acts of preparation, drafting, and revision. Moreover, the written terms may be prepared with a precision which leaves nothing to alter (as it turns out), and still may be for a while retained for reflection or submitted for suggestion, without as yet any final adoption. Until some finality of utterance takes place, there is no jural act. Whenever, therefore, certain conduct or writing is put forward against a party as his purporting act, no principle prevents him from showing that there *never was a consummation of the act*.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2407. <sup>1</sup> Juridical Soc. Papers, III, 266.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Justice Holmes’ classification (Common Law, 310) of certain contracts under this head seems doubtful; “suppose that A. agreed to buy and B. to sell ‘these barrels of mackerel,’ and that the barrels turn out to contain salt; . . . the promise is meaningless; . . . two of its essential terms are repugnant, and their union is insensible.” On the contrary, the words are in themselves certain in meaning; it is only in their application to external objects that they become impossible, and the question is not as to a mistake or uncertainty in the terms of the contract, but as to the materiality of an assumption of fact exterior to the contract, i. e. a condition rendering it void or

voidable, and falling under the principle of § 2423, *post*.

§ 2408. <sup>1</sup> For a German statement of the theory, see Schultze, *Urkundenbeweis* (cited *post*, § 2426), pp. 70, 88, 104.

<sup>2</sup> 1866, Wilde, P. J., in *Guardhouse v. Blackburn*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 109 (“The truth is that the rules excluding parol evidence have no place in any inquiry in which the Court has not got before it some ascertained paper binding and of full effect”); 1905, *Grilley v. Atkins*, 78 Conn. 380, 62 Atl. 337; 1871, *Dixon, C. J.*, in *Walker v. Ebert*, 29 Wis. 194, 197 (“It must always be competent for the party proposed to be charged upon any written instrument to show that it is not his instrument or obligation”).



But where shall the line be drawn?

(1) The earlier law (*ante*, § 2405) drew the line formally for *deeds* — *i. e.* sealed instruments — at the stage technically known as “delivery.” The mark of finality was the *delivery of the deed*.<sup>3</sup> But it is clear that there can be no fixed and invariable mark of finality; or, in the older phraseology, what amounts to a delivery depends upon the circumstances of the case. No specific manual act is decisive.

On the one hand, it is well accepted that the *handing* of the deed to a *third person* is not necessarily final; the document may still be withdrawn, or (less correctly) “revoked.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the *maker's retention* of the

<sup>3</sup> In the Codes founded on Field's Draft N. Y. Civil Code, this doctrine has been thus enshrined (Field, § 465): “A grant takes effect, so as to vest the interest intended to be transferred, only upon its delivery by the grantor”; *Cal. Civ. C.* 1872, § 1054; *Mont. Rev. C.* 1921, § 6843; *N. D. Comp. L.* 1913, § 5495; *S. Dak. Rev. Code* 1919, § 529.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the following cases.

*Alabama*: 1912, *Culver v. Carrol*, 175 Ala. 469, 57 So. 767; 1917, *Burgess v. Fowler*, 200 Ala. 196, 75 So. 954;

*Arizona*: 1921, *Pass v. Stephens*, 22 Ariz. 461, 198 Pac. 712 (deed handed by the grantee to the scrivener to keep);

*California*: *Civ. Code* 1872, § 1059 (a deed is “constructively delivered, . . . 2, when it is delivered to a stranger for the benefit of a grantee and his assent is shown or may be presumed”); 1915, *Williams v. Kidd*, 170 Cal. 631, 151 Pac. 1; 1916, *Holland v. McCarthy*, 173 Cal. 597, 160 Pac. 1069; 1916, *Smith v. Smith*, 173 Cal. 725, 161 Pac. 495; 1917, *Burkett v. Doty*, 176 Cal. 89, 167 Pac. 518 (applying *Civ. C.* § 1656, etc.); 1921, *McCully v. McArthur*, 187 Cal. 194, 201 Pac. 323; 1922, *McCarthy v. Security T. & S. Bank*, — Cal. —, 204 Pac. 818;

*Connecticut*: 1847, *Merrills v. Swift*, 18 Conn. 257;

*Florida*: 1920, *Pratt v. Carns*, 80 Fla. 243, 85 So. 681 (deed by father to daughter, deposited with bank officer);

*Idaho*: 1909, *Flynn v. Flynn*, 17 Ida. 147, 104 Pac. 1030 (good opinion by Sullivan, C. J.);

*Illinois*: 1905, *Spacy v. Ritter*, 214 Ill. 266, 73 N. E. 447; 1904, *Van der Aa v. Van Drunen*, 208 Ill. 108, 70 N. E. 33 (a deed held on the facts not delivered); 1905, *Coleman v. Coleman*, 216 Ill. 261, 74 N. E. 701 (delivery to a third person for the grantor's children; “the test is the intent with which the act or acts relied on as the equivalent or substitute for actual delivery were done”); 1906, *Blake v. Ogden*, 223 Ill. 204, 79 N. E. 68; 1906, *Phelps v. Pratt*, 225 Ill. 85, 80 N. E. 69; 1909, *Calleraud v. Piot*, 241 Ill. 120, 89 N. E. 266 (deed deposited with a notary and left there until the grantor's death); 1911, *De Graff v. Manz*, 251 Ill. 531, 96 N. E. 516; 1912, *Weigand v. Rut-*

*schke*, 253 Ill. 260, 97 N. E. 641 (deed); 1915, *Kunkel v. Johnson*, 268 Ill. 442, 109 N. E. 279; 1918, *O'Brien v. O'Brien*, 285 Ill. 570, 121 N. E. 243; 1919, *Hudson v. Hudson*, 187 Ill. 286, 122 N. E. 497 (escrow not revocable); 1922, *Pheneger v. Kendrick*, 301 Ill. 163, 133 N. E. 736 (deed handed to banker, for delivery on death); 1922, *Johnson v. Fleming*, 301 Ill. 139, 133 N. E. 667 (deed handed to conveyancer, for delivery on death); 1922, *Weir v. Hann*, 301 Ill. 422, 134 N. E. 52 (deed handed to a depositary for delivery on death); 1922, *Selby v. Smith*, 301 Ill. 554, 134 N. E. 109; for a scholarly treatment of the Illinois cases, see Mr. Albert S. Long's article, “Delivery of Deeds in Illinois” (*Illinois Law Rev.* VIII, 159) and notes in later volumes of that Review;

*Indiana*: 1904, *Emmons v. Harding*, 162 Ind. 154, 70 N. E. 142 (elements of delivery considered);

*Iowa*: 1906, *Foreman v. Archer*, 130 Ia. 49, 106 N. W. 372; 1919, *McKenney v. Ketchum*, 188 Ia. 1081, 175 N. W. 325 (deed found in bank after death); 1922, *Mather v. Sewell*, — Ia. —, 186 N. W. 636;

*Kansas*: 1907, *Young v. McWilliams*, 85 Kan. 243, 89 Pac. 12;

*Kentucky*: 1917, *Kirby v. Hulette*, 174 Ky. 257, 192 S. W. 63;

*Maine*: 1907, *Wilkins v. Somerville*, — Me. —, 66 Atl. 893;

*Maryland*: 1909, *Hearn v. Purnell*, 110 Md. 458, 72 Atl. 906;

*Massachusetts*: 1813, *Maynard v. Maynard*, 10 Mass. 456; 1921, *Murphy v. Hanright*, — Mass. —, 130 N. E. 204 (“A deed may remain undelivered, although it has been recorded”);

*Michigan*: 1904, *Roup v. Roup*, 136 Mich. 385, 99 N. W. 389; 1912, *Luscombe v. Peterson*, 173 Mich. 165, 138 N. W. 1057; 1915, *Shumway v. Mason*, 189 Mich. 623, 155 N. W. 521; 1916, *Peterson v. Bisbee*, 191 Mich. 439, 158 N. W. 134; 1917, *Pollack v. McCarthy*, 198 Mich. 66, 164 N. W. 391;

*Minnesota*: 1919, *Kessler v. Von Bank*, 144 Minn. 220, 174 N. W. 839;

*Missouri*: 1905, *Rausch v. Michel*, 192 Mo. 293, 91 S. W. 99; 1920, *Peterman v. Crowley*, — Mo. —, 226 S. W. 944 (deed left with a bank; to be delivered at grantor's death);



document does not necessarily negative the act's finality; this, too, may be deemed unquestionable law since Mr. Justice Blackburn's masterly exposition.<sup>5</sup>

1921, *Meredith v. Meredith*, 287 Mo. 250, 229 S. W. 179 (deed delivered to a bank);

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 6848 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1059);

*New Hampshire*: 1857, *Cook v. Brown*, 34 N. H. 460;

*New Jersey*: 1901, *Fred v. Fred*, — N. J. Eq. —, 50 Atl. 776; 1908, *Rowley v. Bowyer*, 75 N. J. Eq. 80, 71 Atl. 398; 1909, *Gould v. Hurley*, 75 N. J. Eq. 512, 73 Atl. 129 (deed to H., handed by the grantor to her father, etc.);

*North Carolina*: 1913, *Buchanan v. Clark*, 164 N. C. 56, 80 S. E. 424; 1916, *Lynch v. Johnson*, 171 N. C. 611, 89 S. E. 91;

*North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, §§ 5500, 5892;

*Oklahoma*: 1904, *Powers v. Kude*, 14 Okl. 381, 79 Pac. 89 (escrow);

*Pennsylvania*: 1849, *Blight v. Schenck*, 10 Pa. 285;

*South Carolina*: 1922, *Patterson v. Causey*, — S. C. —, 111 S. E. 725;

*Texas*: 1917, *Taylor v. Sanford*, 108 Tex. 340, 193 S. W. 661;

*Vermont*: 1909, *Morgan v. Morgan*, 82 Vt. 243, 73 Atl. 24 (deed handed by grantor to town clerk, with instructions to file but not to record now; the clerk afterwards recorded on instructions from the grantee and handed it to the grantee; held, no delivery);

*Virginia*: 1913, *Leftwich v. Early*, 115 Va. 323, 79 S. E. 384 (deed of life estate, retained in grantor's possession); 1920, *Mumpower v. State*, 128 Va. 1, 104 S. E. 706;

*Washington*: 1910, *Jackson v. Lamar*, 58 Wash. 383, 108 Pac. 946; 1916, *Showalter v. Spangle*, 93 Wash. 326, 160 Pac. 1042; 1917, *McLain v. Healy*, 98 Wash. 489, 168 Pac. 1 (explaining prior cases); 1922, *Miller v. Smith*, — Wash. —, 205 Pac. 386 (escrow to a bank);

*Wisconsin*: 1904, *Kittoe v. Willey*, 121 Wis. 548, 99 N. W. 337; 1919, *Chaudoir v. Witt*, 170 Wis. 556, 170 N. W. 932, 174 N. W. 925.

The following important essays should also be consulted: Professor H. W. Ballantine, "Delivery in Escrow and the Parol Evidence Rule" (1920; Yale Law J., XXIX, 826); Professor Oliver S. Rundell, "Delivery and Acceptance of Deeds in Wisconsin" (1921; Wisconsin Law Rev., I, 65).

<sup>5</sup> ENGLAND: 1826, *Doe v. Knight*, 5 B. & C. 671 (the question "whether when a deed is duly signed and sealed and formally delivered with apt words of delivery, but is retained by the party executing it, that retention will obstruct the operation of the deed," was answered in the negative); 1856, *Gudgen v. Besset*, 6 E. & B. 986 (action for rent; whether 'indebitatus assumpsit' or covenant was the proper action depended on whether a written and sealed lease in the plaintiff's possession was in force; the understanding between the parties that the tenant should go into possession but that the

lease was signed and sealed and nominally delivered should be kept by the lessor till the payment of a certain sum of money was held to have prevented the operation of the document); 1866, *Xenos v. Wickham*, 2 H. L. C. 296 (insurance policy, signed by the defendant-insurer, but left in his custody according to trade usage; held that it was not "essential that the deed should be given out of the defendant's possession in order to its perfect delivery as an operative instrument"; Blackburn, J.: "No particular technical form of words or acts is necessary to render an instrument the deed of the party sealing it; the mere affixing the seal does not render it a deed; but as soon as there are acts or words sufficient to show that it is intended by the party to be executed as his deed presently binding on him, it is sufficient"; L. C. Chelmsford: "The question is one more of fact than of law").

CANADA: 1899, *Zwicker v. Zwicker*, 31 N. Sc. 333, 29 Can. Sup. 527, 5:2 (following Lord Blackburn, in *Xenos v. Wickham*).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1865, *Younge v. Guilbeau*, 3 Wall. 636; *Cal. Civ. C.* 1872, 1059 ("Though a grant be not actually delivered into the possession of the grantee, it is yet to be deemed constructively delivered, . . . 1, when the instrument is by the agreement of the parties at the time of execution understood to be delivered and under such circumstances that the grantee is entitled to immediate delivery"); 1911, *Hammond v. McCullough*, 159 Cal. 639, 115 Pac. 216; *Colo.* 1912, *Walker v. Green*, 23 Colo. App. 154, 128 Pac. 855; *Conn.* 1921, *McDermott v. McDermott*, — Conn. —, 115 Atl. 638 (deed taken from husband's desk by wife); *Ga.* 1921, *Willingham v. Smith*, 151 Ga. 102, 106 S. E. 117 (deed to an imbecile, retained by the maker and found among his papers after his death, held not delivered); *Ida.* 1908, *Bowers v. Cottrell*, 15 Ida. 221, 96 Pac. 936 (an especially interesting case); *Ill.* 1908, *White v. Willard*, 232 Ill. 464, 83 N. E. 954 (voluntary conveyance); *Kan.* 1909, *Good v. Williams*, 81 Kan. 388, 105 Pac. 433 (deed returned to grantor to be recorded in the locus of the land); *Ky.* 1906, *Interstate Inv. Co. v. Bailey*, — Ky. —, 93 S. W. 578; 1908, *O'Neal v. Sovereign Woodmen*, 130 Ky. 68, 113 S. W. 52; *Mass.* 1907, *Blackwell v. Blackwell*, 196 Mass. 186, 81 N. E. 910; *Minn.* 1861, *Stevens v. Hatch*, 6 Minn. 64 (19); 1904, *Chastek v. Souba*, 93 Minn. 418, 101 N. W. 618; *Mont.* Rev. C. 1921, § 6848 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1059); *Nebr.* 1909, *Russell v. Close's Est.*, 83 Nebr. 232, 119 N. W. 515 (contract for services as nurse); 1909, *McGuire v. Clark*, 85 Nebr. 102, 122 N. W. 675; *N. J.* 1921, *Rommell v. Happe*, — N. J. Eq. —, 115 Atl. 906 (deed to wife and daughter, found in grantor's box after death); *N. Y.* 1869,



Again, that specific variety of delivery to a *third person* which consists in naming a condition precedent to be performed, and making the act final except for the happening of the condition — the usual meaning of "*escrow*" (*ante*, § 2405) —, has long been recognized as leaving the act incomplete;<sup>6</sup> though here it may well be that the document cannot be withdrawn, since nothing but the condition remains to complete the act.<sup>7</sup> A conditional delivery *in escrow to the grantee*, however, has come down to us traditionally as a complete act, the condition being deemed vain.<sup>8</sup> But this is an arbitrary distinction; no reason and no policy justifies it. In England, the older rule, as handed down in Coke's treatises, has for more than two generations been repudiated.<sup>9</sup> In the United States, it has been generally trenched upon so

Fisher v. Hall, 41 N. Y. 416; N. D. Comp. L. 1913, §§ 5500, 5892; S. D. Rev. Code 1919, § 529; 1905, Wheaton v. Liverpool & L. & G. Ins. Co., 20 S. D. 62, 104 N. W. 850 (insurance policy); Tex. 1912, Henry v. Phillips, 105 Tex. 459, 151 S. W. 533; Va. 1920, Mumpower v. Castle, 128 Va. 1, 104 S. E. 706 (deed acknowledged for record); Wash. 1908, Kershner v. Henderson, 48 Wash. 228, 93 Pac. 323 (deed and will).

Distinguish the much-mooted but wholly separate question whether the *grantee's assent* is *necessary* for the passing of title: 1866, Xenos v. Wickham, *supra*; 1847, Merrills v. Swift, 18 Conn. 257; 1908, Matheson v. Matheson, 139 Ia. 511, 117 N. W. 755; 1913, Houlton v. Houlton, 119 Md. 180, 86 Atl. 514; 1880, Jones v. Swayze, 42 N. J. L. 279; 1860, Welch v. Sackett, 12 Wis. 243.

Whether delivery is necessary for the *gift, pledge, or sale of a chattel* is a question, not of legal acts in general, but of the requisites of a specific kind of act: 1913, In re Van Alstyne, 207 N. Y. 298, 100 N. E. 802 (gift of personality; requisites of delivery discussed).

See also Professor H. A. Bigelow's valuable article, "Conditional Deliveries of Deeds of Land" (Harvard Law Rev., XXVI, 565).

<sup>6</sup> 1921, Pickens v. Merriam, 9th C. C. A., 274 Fed. 1, 15 (grantor's handing of deed to T. to be delivered on death); 1921, Jones v. First National Bank, 206 Ala. 203, 89 So. 437 (escrow of land contract to a bank); Cal. Civ. C. 1872, § 1057; Mont. Rev. C. 1921, § 6846; N. D. Comp. L. 1913, §§ 5498, 5892; 1911, Horton v. Stone, 32 R. I. 499, 80 Atl. 1 (replevin bond, delivered by one of the sureties to the other with the condition that the principal sign before delivery to the obligee, but the document was delivered in breach of that condition; the document held not binding).

<sup>7</sup> Cases cited *supra*, note 4, and the following: 1920, Ullendorff v. Graham, 80 Fla. 845, 87 So. 50; 1913, Thurston v. Tubbs, 257 Ill. 465, 100 N. E. 947; 1908, Matheson v. Matheson, 139 Ia. 511, 117 N. W. 755; 1907, Nolan v. Otney, 75 Kan. 311, 89 Pac. 690 (an interesting case, and a careful opinion by Mason, J.); 1906,

Craddock v. Barnes, 142 N. C. 89, 54 S. E. 1003 (good opinion by Walker, J.); 1910, O'Brien v. O'Brien, 19 N. D. 713, 125 N. W. 307; Jackson v. Jackson, 67 Or. 44, 135 Pac. 201.

As to the *time of an escrow's taking effect* by relation, see the following opinions: Conn. 1809, Belden v. Carter, 4 Day 66; 1905, Grilley v. Atkins, 78 Conn. 380, 62 Atl. 337; Mass. 1841, Foster v. Mansfield, 3 Metc. 412; Mich. 1907, McIntyre v. McIntyre, 147 Mich. 365, 110 N. W. 960; Mo. 1921, Peterman v. Peterman, — Mo. —, 228 S. W. 1062 (deed left with banker and then withdrawn by act of both parties); N. Car. 1848, Hall v. Harris, 5 Ired. Eq. 303; S. D. Rev. Code 1919, § 527; Wis. 1860, Welch v. Sackett, 12 Wis. 243.

<sup>8</sup> *Ante*, § 2405. This rule, in the Codes founded on Field's Civil Code, is embodied in the following language: "A grant cannot be delivered to the grantee conditionally; delivery to him or to his agent as such is necessarily absolute"; Field's Draft N. Y. Civil Code, § 466; Cal. Civ. C. 1872, § 1056; Mont. Rev. C. 1921, § 10517; N. D. Comp. L. 1913, §§ 5497, 5892; S. D. Rev. C. 1919, § 526.

This technical rule does not apply except where the deed's delivery is made dependent on a specific condition; the mere manual handing of a finished writing to the grantee does not of itself invoke this rule: 1898, Curry v. Colburn, 99 Wis. 319, 74 N. W. 778 (that a deed was handed to the grantee to take to his attorney for inspection, allowed to be shown).

<sup>9</sup> *England*: 1821, Johnson v. Baker, 4 B. & Ald. 440 (delivery of a deed of covenant by a debtor to a creditor, on condition of obtaining other creditors' signatures, held invalid); 1829, Hudson v. Revett, 5 Bing. 368 (deeds of lease and release and of trust for the benefit of creditors, signed, sealed, and delivered by the debtor in prison to the creditors' agent, with a blank for the amount of a certain claim, which was afterwards filled in, according to the understanding, by the creditors' agent; Best, C. J.: "This position about delivery as an escrow is merely a technical subtlety; . . . I decide the case on this, that either it was no deed at all until the sums were written in, and that then



far as to recognize an escrow to a co-obligor as incomplete.<sup>10</sup> In other respects, it is maintained by the authority of the earlier codes and the older decisions in most jurisdictions.<sup>11</sup> But it is being gradually cut away, sometimes by subtly re-casting the definition of a delivery;<sup>12</sup> and the solid establishment of the contrary rule (*post*, § 2410) for contracts and writings

the jury were warranted in presuming a delivery to make it a deed; or, if it were a deed, it was delivered only to have operation from the time that those sums were written in which were to give it all its effect"); 1843, *Bowker v. Burdekin*, 11 M. & W. 128, 146 (conveyance in fraud of creditors, by one partner to take effect upon the execution by the other two partners; Parke, B.: "I take it now to be settled, though the law was otherwise in ancient times, as appears by Sheppard's Touchstone, that in order to constitute the delivery of a writing as an escrow, it is not necessary it should be done by express words, but you are to look at all the facts attending the execution"); 1856, *Gudgen v. Besset*, *supra*, note 5; 1866, *Xenos v. Wickham*, *supra*, note 5; 1875, *Watkins v. Nash*, L. R. 20 Eq. 262.

*Canada*: 1882, *Confederation L. Ass'n v. O'Donnell*, 10 Can. Sup. 92 (policy forwarded to the agent on conditions, and handed by him to the applicant to read, without countersigning or exacting the conditions; held not valid on the facts; two judges diss.).

<sup>10</sup> 1808, *Pawling v. U. S.*, 4 Cr. 219, 222 (a bond delivered as an escrow by a surety to the obligor, conditioned on the signatures of others, is not valid if the condition is unperformed).

<sup>11</sup> 1911, *Dennison v. Barney*, 49 Colo. 442, 113 Pac. 519; 1905, *Bieber v. Gans*, 24 D. C. App. 517 (bond; distinguishing *Burke v. Dulaney*, U. S., *post*, § 2409, and confining the rule to sealed instruments); 1905, *Whitney v. Dewey*, 10 Ida. 633, 80 Pac. 1117 (the opinion calls it a "well-settled principle of law," and cites the early English authorities, ignoring the later ones); 1920, *City National Bank v. Anderson*, 189 Ky. 487, 225 S. W. 361 ("Courts uniformly hold that a delivery to the grantee is an absolute delivery"; thus might have spoken a juristic Rip Van Winkle); 1918, *Reed v. Reed*, 117 Me. 281, 104 Atl. 227 (careful opinion by Cornish, C. J.); 1908, *Wipfler v. Wipfler*, 153 Mich. 18, 116 N. W. 544 (where the inequity of the rule is illustrated); 1908, *Hamlin v. Hamlin*, 192 N. Y. 164, 84 N. E. 805; 1905, *Richmond v. Caruthers*, 103 Va. 774, 50 S. E. 265 (maintaining the old-fashioned distinction between sealed and unsealed instruments); 1909, *Dorr v. Midelburg*, 65 W. Va. 778, 65 S. E. 97.

<sup>12</sup> *Arkansas*: *Graham v. Remmel*, 76 Ark. 140, 88 S. W. 899 (explaining the escrow rule as involving a condition subsequent only); *California*: 1919, *Stone v. Daily*, 181 Cal. 571, 185 Pac. 665 (delivery by wife to husband); *Georgia*: 1905, *Anderson v. Goodwin*, 125 Ga.

663, 54 S. E. 679 (deed delivered by the agent contrary to condition); *Illinois*: 1888, *Price v. Hudson*, 125 Ill. 284, 287, 17 N. E. 817 (Shope, J.: "It is not competent to control the effect of a deed by parol evidence when it has once taken effect by delivery; but it is always competent to show that the deed, although in the grantee's hands, has never in fact been delivered; unless the grantor, or those claiming under him, are estopped in some way from asserting the non-delivery of the deed"); 1896, *Stanley v. White*, 160 Ill. 605, 43 N. E. 729 (a deed manually placed with the grantee, on condition that it should not take effect until all the heirs of M. S. signed it, would be ineffective until the condition was fulfilled; but where the mutually understood intention was to give title immediately on delivery, subject to the condition subsequent that the other heirs should sign, the non-performance of the condition cannot be set up to defeat the absolute terms of the deed); 1906, *Elliott v. Murray*, 225 Ill. 107, 80 N. E. 77 (good example; prior cases collected); 1906, *Oswald v. Caldwell*, 225 Ill. 224, 80 N. E. 131; 1907, *Van Norman v. Young*, 228 Ill. 425, 81 N. E. 1060 (that a chattel mortgage was delivered on condition that it was "not to be enforced" unless the mortgagor desired to borrow money at the mortgagee's bank, allowed to be shown); 1908, *Ward v. Conklin*, 232 Ill. 553, 83 N. E. 1058 (delivery of deed on alleged oral conditions); 1908, *Benner v. Bailey*, 234 Ill. 79, 84 N. E. 638; 1908, *Potter v. Barringer*, 236 Ill. 224, 86 N. E. 233 ("a deed cannot be delivered to the grantee in escrow"); 1920, *Mitchell v. Clem*, 295 Ill. 150, 128 N. E. 815 (doctrine of *Price v. Hudson* re-affirmed; but the dissenting opinion seems not to appreciate the significance of the prior rulings); 1921, *Troup v. Hunter*, 300 Ill. 110, 133 N. E. 56 (deed handed to trustee shortly before death); *Maine*: 1916, *Coombs v. Fessenden*, 114 Me. 347, 96 Atl. 242; 1917, *Coombs v. Fessenden*, 116 Me. 304, 101 Atl. 465 (deed by son to mother); *South Dakota*: 1911, *Koester v. Northwestern P. H. Co.*, 24 S. D. 546, 124 N. W. 740 (construing Civ. Code, § 924, and Cal. Civ. Code, § 1056, which declare that "a grant cannot be delivered to the grantee conditionally").

Of course, a condition subsequent is not effective: *post*, §§ 2410, 2435.

The effectiveness of an escrow against one ignorant of the condition raises the question of Intention (*post*, § 2420).

For the case of a blank, to be filled later, see *post*, § 2410.



in general (*i. e.* other than sealed instruments — bonds and land-deeds) will ultimately efface this last tradition of formalism.<sup>13</sup>

Even the grantor's conduct in surrendering the document to an official for *registration* or *recording* does not of itself and invariably complete the act, though it is of course a strong circumstance of presumption.<sup>14</sup>

There is, therefore, no invariable mark of finality for a deed, — whether it be the act of writing, or of sealing, or of manually delivering, or of publicly recording. Subject to certain usual presumptions of conduct, the circumstances of each case must control.<sup>15</sup>

§ 2409. **Same: (2) Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.** The English custom of merchants, in respect to the rules for written instruments, represented the advanced ideas of Mediterranean, Flemish, and Hanseatic mercantile law. As early as the 1200s and 1300s, when the common law of the King's courts was still dealing with the raw material of the more primitive Germanic system of a feudal, pastoral, and agricultural life, the mercantile notions were already in a more modern stage, and furnished some of the lessons for the progress of the former.<sup>1</sup> Thus it happened that no formal rule about delivery or escrow-delivery found a place in the law of Negotiable Instruments, when that law came into the ordinary courts for recognition.

<sup>13</sup> 1909, approved by Russell, J., in *Heitmann v. Commercial Bank*, 6 Ga. App. 584, 65 S. E. 590; 1920, *Whitaker v. Lane*, 128 Va. 317, 104 S. E. 252 (contract under seal; elaborate opinion by Burks, J., approving the above doctrine; "the common-law rule has been trenched upon in many respects, is not adapted to present day methods, . . . and is wholly unnecessary for the protection of the rights of litigants").

<sup>14</sup> Compare the following opinions, and the rule of presumption (*post*, § 2520); some of the cases cited *supra*, note 4, also deal with this point: 1908, *Kirby v. Kirby*, 236 Ill. 255, 86 N. E. 259 (deed recorded without grantee's knowledge); 1904, *Erler v. Erler*, 124 Ia. 726, 100 N. W. 856 (recording of a deed in the name of a son, instead of the father); 1862, *Derry Bank v. Webster*, 44 N. H. 264; 1854, *Mitchell v. Ryan*, 3 Oh. St. 377; 1859, *Smith v. South Royalton Bank*, 32 Vt. 341; 1906, *Whiting v. Hoglund*, 127 Wis. 135, 106 N. W. 391.

<sup>15</sup> Compare the following examples: 1906, *Griswold v. Griswold*, 148 Ala. 239, 42 So. 554; 1905, *Cribbs v. Walker*, 74 Ark. 104, 85 S. W. 244; 1904, *Wilenou v. Handlon*, 207 Ill. 104, 69 N. E. 892; 1907, *Noble v. Fickes*, 230 Ill. 594, 82 N. E. 950 (useful opinions, illustrating the arguments on both sides); 1908, *Potter v. Barringer*, 236 Ill. 224, 86 N. E. 233 (deed); 1910, *Phillips v. Gannon*, 246 Ill. 98, 92 N. E. 616 (deed to be defeasible on death in certain circumstances); 1916, *Tewksbury v. Tewksbury*, 222 Mass. 595, 111 N. E. 394; 1906, *Leonard v. Leonard*, 145 Mich. 563, 108 N. W. 985; 1905, *Schlicher v. Keeler*, 67 N. J. Eq.

645, 61 Atl. 434; 1907, *Sappingfield v. King*, 49 Or. 102, 89 Pac. 142.

Whether an instrument is a *deed* or a *will* depends upon the intent of the maker as to the *time of its operation*; whether this intent goes to the existence of the instrument and therefore depends on conduct of the maker exterior to the instrument, or whether it is a part of the terms of the grant and must therefore be determined by the contents of the instrument, is an interesting question, which acquires practical importance not only from the special rules for formal execution of wills, but also from inheritance-tax rules applicable to gifts "made in contemplation of death"; *Fed.* 1921, *Shwab v. Doyle*, 6th C. C. A., 269 Fed. 321 (collecting the cases); *Conn. Gen. St.* 1918, § 1270; *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 3828; 1920, *Crawford v. Thomas*, 150 Ga. 435, 104 S. E.; *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 3371 (inheritance tax; deed "made in contemplation of death . . . intended to take effect in possession or enjoyment after such death"); *Mass.* 1912, *Stratton v. Athol Savings Bank*, 213 Mass. 46, 99 N. E. 454; *S. D. Rev. C.* 1919, § 6870 (conveyance delivered out of escrow, or recorded, after death of transferor, is presumed to be in contemplation of death, for the purpose of inheritance taxation); *Va.* 1846, *Pollock v. Glassell*, 2 Gratt. 439, 455 (useful opinion by Baldwin, J., collecting precedents). See also "Extrinsic Evidence to Establish an Instrument as a Will" (*Col. L. R.*, XV, 258).

For the *presumption of delivery*, arising from various circumstances, see *post*, § 2520.

§ 2409. <sup>1</sup> The history is more fully noticed *post*, § 2426.



In particular, for the acts of *making*, *drawing*, or *accepting*, no one formal piece of conduct has been deemed invariably necessary or decisive.<sup>2</sup> So also, for the act of *indorsement*, a manual transfer may, on the one hand, be decisive even without writing,<sup>3</sup> while, on the other hand, it may not be in itself decisive, even when coupled with the writing.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a manual handing to a third person on a condition precedent may leave the instrument incomplete;<sup>5</sup> and the doctrine that an *escrow to the grantee* is binding, in spite of the condition (*ante*, § 2408), never found any orthodox place in this part of the law,<sup>6</sup> though in some jurisdictions the analogy of deeds has

<sup>2</sup> 1822, *Bayley, B.*, in *Cox v. Troy*, 5 B. & Ald. 474 (with reference to the completion of an acceptance, "I have no difficulty in saying, from principles of common sense, that it is not the mere act of writing on the bill, but the communication of what is so written, that binds the acceptor"; holding void a bill on which the drawee's signature had been placed and then erased by him before return to the payee's agent); cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 135, note, 157-166, 207 ff.; *Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act*, § 14; 1916, *Snelling State Bank v. Clasen*, 132 Minn. 404, 157 N. W. 643.

<sup>3</sup> 1861, *Harrop v. Fisher*, 10 C. B. 196 ("If by mistake, accident, or fraud, a bill has been omitted to be indorsed upon a transfer, when it was intended that it should be, the party may be compelled by a court of equity to make the indorsement").

<sup>4</sup> 1836, *Brind v. Hampshire*, 1 M. & W. 365 (indorsement is effected, "either by the actual delivery . . . or by some binding engagement"); 1841, *Marston v. Allen*, 8 M. & W. 494 (indorsement followed by a placing in the custody of the indorser's agent, not sufficient).

<sup>5</sup> 1912, *Young v. Hayes*, 212 Mass. 525, 99 N. E. 327 (promissory note indorsed and handed over on condition that it should not be binding until the signatures of G. and P. were secured, held not binding between the parties); 1875, *Chipman v. Tucker*, 38 Wis. 43 (that a note was delivered to a third person with an agreement not to deliver to the payee unless a certain vote of mortgagors took place, and that the custodian delivered it without such a vote, allowed to invalidate the note).

<sup>6</sup> ENGLAND: 1840, *Adams v. Jones*, 12 A. & E. 455 (bill accepted by the defendant for F. as payee and indorsed in blank and delivered by F. to the plaintiff as agent for R. only; defendant's plea denying title in the plaintiff, held good); 1848, *Bell v. Ingestre*, 12 Q. B. 317 (indorsement of bills sent by mail to plaintiff, on the express condition that certain other bills should be returned by post, but they were not; "they were delivered to them as mere trustees"; "on a plea traversing the indorsement of a bill, its delivery with intent to transfer an interest is put in issue").

UNITED STATES: *Uniform Acts*: *Uniform*

*Negotiable Instruments Act*, § 16; *Federal*: 1894, *Burke v. Dulaney*, 153 U. S. 228, 234, 14 Sup. 816 (admitting proof of an agreement that a note was left in the payee's hands "to become an absolute obligation of the maker in the event of his electing, upon examination or investigation, to take the stipulated interest in the property in question"); *Arizona*: 1914, *Fidelity Title Guaranty Co. v. Ruby*, 16 Ariz. 74, 147 Pac. 116 (a note given on condition that the sum should not be collectible until another interested party paid another sum to the maker; action on the note dismissed without prejudice); *Arkansas*: 1905, *Graham v. Remmel*, 76 Ark. 140, 88 S. W. 899 (note for an insurance policy; collecting prior cases); *Colorado*: 1914, *Norman v. McCarthy*, 56 Colo. 290, 138 Pac. 28 (check given temporarily in lieu of bond); *Connecticut*: 1899, *Burns & S. L. Co. v. Doyle*, 71 Conn. 742, 43 Atl. 483 (acceptance of a bill delivered with the condition that it should not operate until a cottage was completed and money became due, admitted); *Georgia*: 1908, *Purcell v. Armour Packing Co.*, 4 Ga. App. 253, 61 S. E. 138 (check; able opinion by Powell, J.); *Indiana*: 1909, *Hunter v. First National Bank*, 172 Ind. 62, 87 N. E. 734 (renewal note was sent to H. to be signed as co-surety; H. signed it, and pencilled "Get S. on this as well," and handed it to the payee's agent; S. refused to sign; held that this could be shown to deny H.'s liability); *Indian Terr.* 1899, *Mehlin v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n*, 2 Ind. Terr. 386, 51 S. W. 1063 (handing of a note to payee's agent, to be delivered to payee on certain conditions only, allowed); *Massachusetts*: 1893, *Robertson v. Rowell*, 158 Mass. 94, 32 N. E. 898 (agreement to leave a note with payee as incomplete until indorsement by a third person, admitted); *Minnesota*: 1904, *Mendenhall v. Ulrich*, 94 Minn. 100, 101 N. W. 1057 (note to be operative only on subsequent acceptance of a policy); *New York*: 1911, *Smith v. Dotterweich*, 200 N. Y. 299, 93 N. E. 985 (note given for insurance policy, conditionally on the insurer obtaining a loan for the insured, admitted; good opinion by Werner, J.); 1922, *Title Guarantee & Trust Co. v. Pam*, 232 N. Y. 441, 134 N. E. 525 (promissory notes conditional on bills being adjusted); *North Carolina*: 1921, *Acme Mfg. Co. v. McPhail*, 181 N. C. 205, 106 S. E. 672



naturally been given recognition.<sup>7</sup> For purchasers for value without notice, the principle of Intention may affect these results (*post*, § 2420). Moreover, the agreement must be strictly in the nature of a *condition precedent* to validity; for a condition subsequent would infringe upon the rule of Integration (*post*, § 2444).

§ 2410. **Same: (3) Delivery, as applied to Contracts in general; Conditions Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.** Sealed instruments — otherwise known as deeds — were the chief legal documents, in the earlier history of our legal system, and for a long time the only ones whose contents were indisputable.<sup>1</sup> Other writings thus came down to us without the tradition of delivery as a formal and arbitrary mark of the finality of the act. It has therefore long been well understood, for other writings, that the finality of the writing as a jural act depends upon the circumstances of each case; that it may be left to depend on a third person's assent or upon any other precedent condition, and, in particular, that this is so whether the writing (or escrow) is provisionally handed to the grantee himself or to any one else.

The case of *Pym v. Campbell*, in England,<sup>2</sup> is commonly taken as the leading one. In the United States, the doctrine is not only completely accepted,<sup>3</sup>

(sale-notes delivered to plaintiff's agent on condition of return if plaintiff refused to assent to a proposal to credit defendant with another item, admitted); *Oklahoma*: 1912, *Mitchell v. Altus State Bank*, 32 Okl. 628, 122 Pac. 666 (surety's signature on condition that others first sign); *South Dakota*: 1895, *McCormick Co. v. Faulkner*, 7 S. D. 363, 64 N. W. 163 (condition enforced that notes should not become operative till signed by a third person); *Utah*: 1921, *Central Bank v. Stephens*, — *Utah* —, 199 Pac. 1019 (note signed conditionally); *Wisconsin*: 1907, *Hodge v. Smith*, 130 Wis. 326, 110 N. W. 192 (here the question also was involved whether the transferee acquired it in due course); 1908, *Paulson v. Boyd*, 137 Wis. 241, 118 N. W. 841 (note in connection with stock transfer).

<sup>7</sup> 1877, *Stewart v. Anderson*, 59 Ind. 375; and cases cited *pro* and *con* in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, II, 99, note.

The question whether a *conditional acceptance* is valid (*i. e.* an acceptance, final as such, but expressly subject to the contingency of a *condition subsequent*) is a different one; see *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, II, 152-154.

§ 2410. <sup>1</sup> *Post*, § 2426.

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1856, *Pym v. Campbell*, 6 E. & B. 370 (purchase of an invention; a writing formally complete and signed, and delivered to plaintiff, was offered by the plaintiff; the defendant was allowed to show that, upon a meeting of all persons concerned except A., "it was then proposed that, as the parties were all present, and might find it troublesome to meet again, an agreement should then be drawn up

and signed, which, if A. approved of the invention, should be the agreement, but, if A. did not approve, should not be one; A. did not approve of the invention when he saw it"; *Erle, J.*: "If it be proved that in fact the paper was signed with the express intention that it should not be an agreement, the other party cannot fix it as an agreement upon those signing. The distinction in point of law is that evidence to vary the terms of an agreement in writing is not admissible, but evidence to show that there is not an agreement at all is admissible"); 1856, *Davis v. Jones*, 17 C. B. 625 (agreement for a lease, allowed to be invalidated by the fact that by agreement no obligation was to arise until repairs had been completed and then a date inserted in the instrument); 1861, *Wallis v. Littell*, 11 C. B. N. S. 369 (similar ruling for agreement of assignment of a lease, conditioned on the landlord's assent; *Erle, C. J.*: "It is in analogy with the delivery of a deed as an escrow; it neither varies nor contradicts the writing, but suspends the commencement of the obligation"); 1897, *Pattle v. Hornibrook*, 1 Ch. 25 (allowing proof that the plaintiff signed a lease as lessee, and subsequently the defendant signed it, but handed it to his solicitor and told him "not to complete" until two additional persons signed as responsible lessees); *Canada*: 1920, *Standard Bank v. McCrossan*, 55 D. L. R. 238, Can. S. C. (guarantee signed on condition that certain notes be first paid for which the signer was endorser; the Court was equally divided; *Pym v. Campbell* cited).

<sup>3</sup> *Federal*: 1888, *Ware v. Allen*, 128 U. S. 590, 595, 9 Sup. 174 (contract to pay money;



the fact that "before the paper was signed or agreed upon, it was distinctly understood that it was to be of no effect, unless upon consultation with H. or A. or both of them the defendants were assured that the proceeding was lawful," and that H. and A. were consulted and did not assure them but declined to approve, held to invalidate the instrument); 1898, *Tug R. C. & S. Co. v. Brigel*, 30 C. C. A. 415, 86 Fed. 818 (that an agreement should not be binding until approved by the signer's attorney, admissible); 1917, *Bijur M. L. Co. v. Eclipse Machine Co.*, 2d C. C. A., 243 Fed. 600 (contract for use of patents; oral understanding that the contract was dependent upon a party's approval of another patent, excluded, presumably correctly; but the opinion's statement that "the incompleteness must there [*i. e.* in the contract made] be completely apparent; it cannot be created by parol" is obviously unsound); *Arkansas*: 1906, *Barton P. M. Co. v. Taylor*, 78 Ark. 586, 94 S. W. 713 (contract-memorandum, not to be binding till corrected; query, does this overrule *Findley v. Means*, *infra*, par. 2?); *Colorado*: 1899, *Hurlburt v. Dusenbery*, 26 Colo. 240, 57 Pac. 860 (agreement not to be effective until a third person advanced money, admitted); *Georgia*: 1909, *Heitmann v. Commercial Bank*, 6 Ga. App. 584, 65 S. E. 590 (cited more fully *post*, § 2435, n. 3); *Illinois*: 1896, *Stanley v. White*, 160 Ill. 605, 43 N. E. 729 (cited *ante*, § 2408); *Iowa*: 1902, *Sutton v. Griebel*, 118 Ia. 78, 91 N. W. 825 (agreement of subscription; an agreement that the defendant might withdraw, if he substituted another subscriber, before the meeting of the subscribers for final arrangement, allowed to be shown); 1909, *Wiltse v. Fifield*, 143 Ia. 332, 121 N. W. 1086 (contract signed but operation reserved until it was re-written with corrections); 1912, *Cedar Rapids Nat'l B'k v. Carlson*, 156 Ia. 343, 136 N. W. 659 (note that the defendants were not to be bound unless 24 signatures were obtained, allowed); 1919, *Carney v. Miller*, 187 Ia. 927, 174 N. W. 643 (assignment of a patent license; condition precedent as to written consent of licensor, allowed to be shown); *Kansas*: 1913, *Stroupe v. Hewitt*, 90 Kan. 200, 133 Pac. 562 (agreement for a five days' test of a business bought); *Maine*: 1917, *Rivard v. Continental Casualty Co.*, 116 Me. 46, 100 Atl. 101 (insurance policy handed over on approval); *Maryland*: 1910, *Colonial Park Estates v. Massart*, 112 Md. 648, 77 Atl. 275 (paper signed as temporary memorandum only); *Massachusetts*: 1881, *Wilson v. Powers*, 131 Mass. 539 (document by the payee of a note, purporting to extend time to the maker, and thus to discharge the sureties, allowed to be shown to have been delivered to the maker with a condition to become binding only upon assent of the sureties); 1902, *Nichols v. Rosenfeld*, 181 Mass. 525, 63 N. E. 1063 (effect of a temporary custody of finished documents before final delivery, discussed); 1904, *Elastic Tip Co. v. Graham*, 185 Mass. 597, 71

N. E. 117 (defendant was allowed to nullify a creditor's agreement, signed by him and handed to the plaintiff's agent on condition that it should not be valid till signed by a certain proportion of other creditors, though this condition did not come to the plaintiff's own knowledge); 1910, *Brown v. Quinby Co.*, 204 Mass. 206, 90 N. E. 586 (that an agreement, though delivered, was to take effect only after a corporation should be organized, etc., allowed); 1910, *LaPrade v. Fitchburg & L. St. R. Co.*, 205 Mass. 77, 90 N. E. 982 (negotiations for a release; one draft having been proposed, and then a different one, and the testimony differing as to whether the first had been accepted and the second substituted or no document signed, it was held proper to let the jury consider the oral negotiations as being possibly the sole actual agreement); 1920, *Massachusetts Biog. Soc. v. Howard*, 234 Mass. 483, 125 N. E. 605 (book-purchase, not to be effective until notice was sent); *Michigan*: 1897, *Cleveland Ref. Co. v. Dunning*, 115 Mich. 238, 73 N. W. 239 (that an order was given conditionally on the consent of a third person which was not given, allowed); 1900, *Ada Dairy Ass'n v. Mears*, 123 Mich. 470, 82 N. W. 258 (that a contract was signed, but not to be binding until the signer had seen a third person and verified a statement of the promisee's agent, admitted); *Nebraska*: 1905, *Dodd v. Kemnitz*, 74 Nebr. 634, 104 N. W. 1069 (contract of sale, delivered subject to a third person's approval); *New Jersey*: 1917, *Trenton & M. Co. Traction Co. v. Trenton*, 90 N. J. L. 378, 101 Atl. 562 (contract between city and traction company); *New York*: 1873, *Benton v. Martin*, 52 N. Y. 570, 573 (general principle stated, in a clear opinion by Folger, J.); 1894, *Blewitt v. Boorum*, 142 N. Y. 357, 37 N. E. 119 (the present doctrine and that of deeds, distinguished); 1908, *Sarasohn v. Kamaiky*, 193 N. Y. 203, 86 N. E. 20 (a Jewish rabbi and his son the plaintiff negotiated for certain payments and transfers by the father; another rabbi acted as scribe and drew up a contract; father and son signed it, and the scribe attested it and kept it; a copy certified by the scribe and signed by the father was given to the son; held, that the scribe's custody of the original did not prevent the contract from being legally binding as a completed instrument); 1911, *Stiebel v. Grosberg*, 202 N. Y. 266, 95 N. E. 692 (a release under seal may be shown orally to have been delivered on a condition precedent as to its validity; but this Court still insists on the theoretical fallacy that "the delivery is a separate, independent act from that of executing it"); *North Carolina*: 1893, *Kelly v. Oliver*, 113 N. C. 442, 18 S. E. 698 (that an agreement signed by defendant was not to bind until the plaintiff had procured twenty other signatures, admissible); 1913, *Blackstad N. Co. v. Parker*, 163 N. C. 275, 79 S. E. 606 (draft order, left by defendant with plaintiff's salesman to await final decision); *Oklahoma*: 1913,



but has even been applied to sealed instruments other than deeds of land<sup>4</sup> in jurisdictions still bound by precedent to the older rule for deeds (*ante*, § 2408).

The only opportunity for doubt arises, not from any question as to the correct theory, but from the difficulty of distinguishing in practical application the present principle and that other one (*post*, § 2435), also a part of the Parol Evidence rule, which denies validity to any oral part of an act when the act has been reduced completely to writing. By the other principle, a *condition subsequent*, which of course forms a part of the act which it qualifies, must be contained in the writing, in order to be enforced, and an oral one is therefore ineffective. But by the present principle, the act is not an act until the final moment appointed, and that moment may by the parties be made to depend upon some future event, which thus becomes a condition precedent to the jural existence of the act. Theoretically, these two things are entirely distinct, but in particular negotiations it may become difficult to determine judicially which of them the parties were providing for. In such cases, opposite results may turn upon an apparently trifling difference of phrase.<sup>5</sup>

It follows, from the present principle, that a writing signed and delivered, but left with a *blank part*, may or may not be final, according to circumstances; and that whether the filling up of the blank by a third person completes the instrument and makes it effective depends upon whether this

Colonial Jewelry Co. v. Brown, 38 Okl. 44, 131 Pac. 1077 (agreement that an order should not become effective for 5 days, within which it could be canceled, admitted); 1913, Gamble v. Riley, 39 Okl. 363, 135 Pac. 390 (agreement for stock-delivery, conditional on a third person's approval; condition allowed to be shown); *Philippine Islands*: 1918, Peabody & Co. v. Bromfield, 38 P. I. 841, 853 (contract to be signed by four persons); *South Carolina*: 1921, Seacoast Packing Co. v. Long, 116 S. C. 406, 108 S. E. 159 (conditional subscription to stock); *South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 861 ("a contract in writing takes effect upon its delivery to the party in whose favor it is made or to his agent"); 1895, Manufacturers' Furn. Co. v. Kremer, 7 S. D. 463, 64 N. W. 528 (contract delivered to the promisee on condition that it should not be binding till other signatures were obtained); *Washington*: 1901, Reiner v. Crawford, 23 Wash. 669, 63 Pac. 516 (contract to sell stock, delivered on condition that the seller's agent at S. had not sold it before the buyer's arrival at S.; condition allowed to be shown); 1904, O'Connor v. Lighthizer, 34 Wash. 152, 75 Pac. 643 (condition that a contract of sale should not have effect unless a corporation was organized, allowed to invalidate the instrument); *Wisconsin*: 1897, Gilman v. Gross, 97 Wis. 224, 72 N. W. 885 (stock subscription agreement that it should not be binding till a certain number subscribed, admissible); 1904, State v. Chamber of Commerce, 121 Wis. 110,

98 N. W. 930 (sale of a certificate of stock on a condition precedent as to the authority of L.).

Curiously, the only Court that insists on adopting here, for writings in general, the analogy of the old escrow-rule for deeds is a Court which had already repudiated that rule (*ante*, § 2409, *infra*, note 4) for notes and bonds: 1903, Findley v. Means, 71 Ark. 289, 73 S. W. 101.

<sup>4</sup> 1893, State v. Wallis, 57 Ark. 64, 73, 20 S. W. 811 (agreement that a bond should not bind until another person signed, admitted); 1907, Cavanagh v. Iowa Beer Co., 136 Ia. 236, 113 N. W. 856 (city license as condition precedent to a lease); 1894, Blewitt v. Boorum, 142 N. Y. 357, 37 N. E. 119 (contract under seal, delivered not to be binding till the plaintiff had acquired the interest of a third person; admitted, distinguishing between this and the special prohibition of escrow of deeds to the grantee).

The principle seems also to be generally accepted for *insurance policies*: 1897, Joyce, Insurance, I, §§ 90, 102; and cases cited *ante*, § 2408.

The parties may *expressly define in the document* the idea of delivery: 1921, Glover v. N. Y. Life Ins. Co., 27 Ga. App. 615, 109 S. E. 546 (a clause making delivery during good health of the insured a condition precedent).

<sup>5</sup> The cases of doubt are placed *post*, § 2435. Compare the instructive case of Stanley v. White, 160 Ill. 605, 43 N. E. 729, cited *ante*, § 2408.

circumstance was agreed upon beforehand as the decisive one.<sup>6</sup> It also follows that the *date* of a document's execution may be established by proving the actual time of the conduct, regardless of any statement of date contained in the writing;<sup>7</sup> because the time of finality of the utterance, as a legal act, is something essentially independent of and exterior to the writing itself.

It may also be suggested that the much-mooted questions, in the specific field of contracts, whether the *acceptance of a contractual offer*,<sup>8</sup> or the *revocation* of such an offer,<sup>9</sup> must be communicated, are dependent (in part, at least) upon this principle that the finality of an act varies according to circumstances and cannot be prejudged by any invariable test.

§ 2411. **Same: (4) Publication, as applied to Wills.** The formal rule of delivery was never applied to wills, — partly, no doubt, because their history was distinct from that of other written acts, and partly because the notion of delivery does not naturally suggest itself for unilateral acts. Yet the element of finality of utterance must somehow be marked, and the term "publication" came to be used for that purpose. But this test, concededly, was flexible. Apart from the statutory formality of attestation, no arbitrary or uniform mark of finality was ever fixed upon in the law of wills. Thus, for all wills between the statute of Henry VIII (1540) and the statute of Charles II (1678), and for wills of personalty from the latter date until the statute of Victoria in England (1837) and the corresponding statutes in the United States, the problem constantly arose whether a particular testamentary writing had been finally acted upon by the decedent; and this question depended entirely upon the circumstances.<sup>1</sup> But under the statutory

<sup>6</sup> 1829, *Hudson v. Revett*, 5 Bing. 368 (a deed may be prepared leaving a blank, and prescribing this to be filled by a specified person, and will then have effect from the time when the blank is filled in; quoted *ante*, § 2408); 1907, *Hall v. Kary*, 133 Ia. 465, 110 N. W. 930; 1908, *Craveling v. Banta*, 138 Ia. 47, 115 N. W. 598 (deeds prepared in blank for the grantee's name, and left at a bank); 1909, *Mahoney v. Salisbury*, 83 Nebr. 488, 120 N. W. 144 (deed blank for grantee, then filled in by agent, but not recorded till after attachment by grantor's creditors).

The following ruling is therefore unsound: 1811, *Weeks v. Maillardet*, 14 East 568 (contract to sell certain machinery "as per schedule annexed"; the parties signed, sealed, and delivered duplicate originals, lacking any schedule, and separated; held, that a schedule afterwards written in by one G. P., a subscribing witness, in accordance with the understanding and expectation of the parties, was no part of the deed).

Whether the *authority* to fill the blank may be in parol or must be under seal, is a separate question; the authorities are noticed in *Carr v. McColgan*, 100 Md. 462, 60 Atl. 606 (1905).

<sup>7</sup> 1804, *Hall v. Cazenove*, 4 East 477, 482 (date of delivery); 1866, *Reffell v. Reffell*, L. R.

1 P. & D. 139 (a will's date of 1855, shown to be a mistake for 1865; thus effecting a revocation of a will of 1858); 1898, *Lambe v. Manning*, 171 Ill. 612, 49 N. E. 509 (date of execution of undated paper attached to a deed); 1892, *Saunders v. Blythe*, 112 Mo. 1, 6, 20 S. W. 319 (deed); 1893, *Vaughan v. Parker*, 112 N. C. 96, 100, 16 S. E. 908 (deed); 1917, *Vernont Marble Co. v. Eastman*, 91 Vt. 425, 101 Atl. 151, 164 (bond); 1895, *Moore v. Smead*, 89 Wis. 558, 62 N. W. 426 (deed).

<sup>8</sup> 1879, *Household F. & C. A. Ins. Co. v. Grant*, L. R. 4 Exch. D. 216; 1857, *Hallock v. Ins. Co.*, 26 N. J. L. 268; 1871, *White v. Corlies*, 40 N. Y. 467 ("A mental determination not indicated by speech, or put in course of indication by act to the other party, is not an acceptance which will bind the other; nor does an act which in itself is no indication of an acceptance become such because accompanied by an unevinced mental determination").

<sup>9</sup> 1880, *Byrne v. Van Tienhoven*, L. R. 5 C. P. D. 344; 1887, *Coleman v. Applegarth*, 68 Md. 21, 11 Atl. 284.

§ 2411. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1814, *Nichols v. Nichols*, 2 Phillim. 180 (a paper drawn merely as an example of conciseness in testamentary language was held not to be a will); *U. S.* 1853, *Boling v. Boling*, 22 Ala. 826 (certain unfinished papers



solemnity of attestation (*post*, §§ 2421, 2456) this question practically disappeared; for the attestation serves as an unquestionable mark of finality.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Intent and Mistake, as applied to Subject, Terms, and Delivery, of an Act

§ 2413. **Intent and Mistake, in general; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent.** The elements of an act, in themselves considered, being its subject, its terms, and its final utterance (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1), it is obvious that these must all be preceded and brought into being by some sort of volition or intent.<sup>1</sup> The result, however, that is thus brought into outward being does not always correspond with the inward intent; and the problem thus arises (*ante*, § 2404, par. 2) how far either the expression or the intent shall be treated as legally paramount the one over the other. The primitive law (*ante*, § 2405) looked only at the expression. Juristic speculation of the metaphysical sort tended in modern times at first to regard the intent as vital. But in truth neither can be exclusively the standard; it is a question of adjusting the due relation between the two; and this is the trend of the last half-century in law and in juristic thought.

In order to solve the problem, it is indispensable that the different possible meanings of the words "intent" or "intention" be kept apart, and that the distinction between "volition" and "intention," in the proper sense of the words, be established:

*Circa* 1832, Mr. John Austin, Jurisprudence, Campbell's ed., Sect. XVIII, XIX, §§ 602-617: "In order that we may settle the import of the term 'intention,' it is necessary to settle the import of the term 'will.' For, although an intention is not a volition, they are inseparably connected. . . . These expressions, and others of the same import, merely signify this: Certain movements of our bodies follow invariably and immediately our wishes or desires for those same movements. . . . For example: If I wish that my arm should rise, the desired movement of my arm immediately follows my wish. There is nothing to which I resort, nothing which I wish, as a mean or instrument wherewith to attain my purpose. But if I wish to lift the book which is now lying before me, I wish certain movements of my bodily organs, and I employ these as a mean or instrument for the accomplishment of my ultimate end. . . . Our desires of those bodily movements which immediately follow our desires of them, are therefore the only objects which

held not a will of personalty; "the final action, the settled purpose of mind to pass his property, did not then exist"; here the paper was olographic, but undated and unsigned).

<sup>1</sup> *Eng. Temp. Geo. II, circa 1730, Allen v. Hill, Gilbert 257, 261* ("The design [of the statute requiring attestation] was that the will may appear to be compleat, and not a preparation only; for by taking the names of the witnesses to his paper, the testator has shown that he has compleated his will").

The surviving use of the publication-principle may still be seen in the following case: *U. S. 1906, Bogert v. Bateman, — N. J. Eq. —, 65 Atl. 238.*

There may be a *sham* will, and its true nature then may be shown (*ante*, § 2406).

§ 2413. <sup>1</sup> 1568, *Brett v. Rigdon, Plowd. 340, 343* ("The making of a testament consists of three parts, as do all other human acts which are done with discretion, [*i. e.* sound mind], viz., inception, progression, and consummation. . . . But there is one same thing annexed to each of these parts, and that is the intent of the party, for every one who does any act with discretion has an intent in the inception of it, . . . and in the progression and consummation of it the same intent also subsists; so that one same intent runs through all the parts and continues in the doing of them").

can be styled volitions. And as these are the only volitions, so are the bodily movements, by which they are immediately followed, the only acts or actions properly so called. . . . Most of the names which seem to be names of acts, are names of acts coupled with certain of their consequences. For example: If I kill you with a gun or pistol, I shoot you. And the long train of incidents which are denoted by that brief expression, are considered (or spoken of) as if they constituted an act, perpetrated by me. In truth, the only parts of the train which are my act or acts, are the muscular motions by which I raise the weapon, point it at your head or body and pull the trigger. These I will. The contact of the flint and steel, the ignition of the powder, the flight of the ball towards your body, the wound and subsequent death, with the numberless incidents included in these, are consequences of the act which I will. I will not those consequences, although I may intend them. But in common language the words 'will' and 'intend' are often confounded. . . . To desire the act is to will it. To expect any of its consequences is to intend those consequences. The act itself is intended as well as willed. For every volition is accompanied by an expectation or belief that the bodily movement will immediately follow the wish. And hence (no doubt) the frequent confusion of will and intention. Feeling that will implies intention, numerous writers upon jurisprudence (and Mr. Bentham amongst the number) employ 'will' and 'intention' as synonymous or equivalent terms. They forgot that intention does not imply will."

It may be assumed, then, that there must at least be a volition of some sort preceding that conduct which forms a jural act. But it is also apparent that the act, as expressed and apprehensible to the world at large, or to the other party in particular, may not be such as was intended. In those cases, then, where a volition was exercised, but the outward produced consequences were other than those intended, are we to say that because there was a volition, the person is necessarily to be fixed with all the consequences, of whatever sort they be? Or are we to say that, because there was no intention of certain consequences, the person is necessarily not to be fixed with them?

We are to accept neither solution in this absolute form. The latter solution is not fair to the community dealing with the person. The former solution is not fair to the person himself. No practical system of law could be content with either, applied in rigid uniformity. The established doctrine of tortious responsibility suggests an analogy and provides a solution. We are to fix the person with such expressed consequences as are the reasonable result of his volition. In other words, *the act as jurally effective will be determined, in respect to the three elements of subject, terms, and finality, by that expression of it which results, to the other person in the transaction, as the consequence, reasonably to have been anticipated under all the circumstances, of the volition of the actor.*<sup>2</sup> This avoids on the one hand the impracticality of the merely external standard, so far as it would have held the person liable for an apparent act which was not the reasonable consequence of his conduct; and, on the other hand, it avoids the impracticality of the merely internal standard, so far as it would have exonerated the person from an unintended consequence which he ought to have foreseen and might have avoided. In short, it adapts, to the general doctrine of legal acts, the test of *negligence, i. e.* responsibility

<sup>2</sup> Approved in an elaborate and careful opinion by Russell, J., in *Heitmann v. Commercial Bank*, 6 Ga. App. 584, 65 S. E. 590 (1909).



resting on a volition having consequences which ought reasonably to have been foreseen.

Such, without doubt, is the general principle of the modern law. Whatever may happen to be said, here and there, broadly declaring an actual and precise intent either to be necessary or to be immaterial, nevertheless, whenever the precise problem is presented, modern judicial good sense has usually accepted this median rule, for all sorts of jural acts:<sup>3</sup>

1886, Professor *T. E. Holland*, *Jurisprudence*, 3d ed., 99: "It was laid down by Savigny that, in order to the production of a juristic act, the will and its expression must be in correspondence. This view is in accordance with the 'prima facie' interpretation of most of the relevant passages in the Roman lawyers, and is still predominant in Germany, but certainly cannot be accepted as universally true. An investigation into the correspondence between the inner will and its outward manifestations is in most cases impossible, and where possible is in many cases undesirable. . . . Is it the case that a contract is not entered into unless the will of the parties are really at one? Must there be, as Savigny puts it, 'a union of several wills to a single, whole, and undivided will?' Or should we not rather say that here, more even than elsewhere, the law looks, not at the will itself, but at the will as voluntarily manifested? When the law enforces contracts, it does so to prevent disappointment of well-founded expectations, which, though they usually arise from expressions truly representing intention, yet may occasionally arise otherwise. If, for instance, one of the parties to a contract enters into it, and induces the other party to enter into it, resolved all the while not to perform his part under it, the contract will surely be good nevertheless. Not only will the dishonest contractor be unable to set up his original dishonest intent as an excuse for non-performance, but should he, from any change of circumstances, become desirous of enforcing the agreement against the other party, the latter will never be heard to establish, even were he in a position to do so by irrefragable proof, that at the time when the agreement was made the parties to it were not really of one mind. . . . The language of systems of positive law upon the point is generally ambiguous, nor is this to be wondered at. The question is practically a new one. The process of giving effect to the free acts of the parties to a contract, rather than to the fact that certain rigidly defined formalities have been complied with, has lasted so long that legal speculation has only recently begun to analyse the free act itself into its two factors of an inner will and an outward expression, and to assign to one or to the other a dominant place in the theory of contract. Just as the Romans used, without analysing them, the terms 'velle,' 'consensus,' 'sententia,' so the modern Codes, though some appear to look rather to the inner will, others rather to its outward expression, as a rule employ language which is capable of being interpreted in either direction. The same may be said of the English cases. In these one constantly meets with such phrases as 'between him and them there was no *consensus* of mind,' 'with him they never intended to deal'; but one also meets with much that supports the view of the question which we venture to hope may ultimately commend itself to the Courts as being at once the most logical and the most favourable to the interests of commerce. . . . In other words:<sup>4</sup> the legal meaning of such acts on the part of one man as induce another to enter into a contract with him, is not what the former really intended, nor what the latter really supposed the former to intend, but what a 'reasonable man,' *i. e.* a judge or jury, would put upon such acts. This luminous principle at once sweeps away the

<sup>3</sup> For tortious responsibility, its phrasing was first broadly given in the epoch-making book of Mr. Justice Holmes, *The Common Law* (pp. 110, 161).

<sup>4</sup> This principle is here put forward by the learned author for contracts only.

ingenious speculations of several generations of moralists, while it renders needless long lists of subtle distinctions which have been drawn from decided cases."

1859, POLLOCK, C. B., in *Cornish v. Abington*, 4 H. & N. 549, 555: "The word 'wilfully,' in the rule as laid down in *Pickard v. Sears*, means nothing more than 'voluntarily.' Lord Wensleydale, perceiving that the word 'wilfully' might be read as opposed not merely to 'involuntarily' but to 'unintentionally,' showed that if the representation was made voluntarily, though the effect on the mind of the hearer was produced unintentionally, the same result would follow. If a party uses language which, in the ordinary course of business and the general sense in which words are understood, conveys a certain meaning, he cannot afterwards say he is not bound if another, so understanding it, has acted upon it. If any person, by a course of conduct, or by actual expressions, so conducts himself that another may reasonably infer the existence of an agreement or license, whether the party intends that he should do so or not, it has the effect that the party using that language, or who has so conducted himself, cannot afterwards gainsay the reasonable inference to be drawn from his words or conduct."

1871, BLACKBURN, J., in *Smith v. Hughes*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 597, 607: "I apprehend that if one of the parties intends to make a contract on one set of terms, and the other intends to make a contract on another set of terms, or as it is sometimes expressed, if the parties are not 'ad idem,' there is no contract, unless the circumstances are such as to preclude one of the parties from denying that he has agreed to the terms of the other. The rule of law is that stated in *Freeman v. Cooke*. If, whatever a man's real intention may be, he so conducts himself that a reasonable man would believe that he was assenting to the terms proposed by the other party, and that other party upon that belief enters into the contract with him, the man thus conducting himself would be equally bound as if he had intended to agree to the other party's terms."

1840, DENMAN, L. C. J., in *Trueman v. Loder*, 11 A. & E. 588 (action on a contract of sale in the name of one Higginbotham; the plaintiff was allowed to show that H., though carrying on business in his own name, had been held out by the defendant as his agent, so that the business was virtually the defendant's, done in H.'s name): "Some cases were quoted in which the question whether an agent or a partner bound himself only, or his principal or firm, has been held to depend on his intention to deal for himself or for the principal or partnership. But on examining all those cases, it will be found that the contracting party was carrying on two different concerns, one for himself, the other for his principal or his firm. The world would know him in two different characters; and each party dealing with him was bound to inquire in which he appeared on any particular occasion. But here is the case of one exclusively an agent for another, and in that light only regarded by the customer. Having full authority so to represent himself, he forms the design in his own mind to divert one of his numerous contracts from its expected destination to some purpose of his own. But that design cannot operate to oust the opposite party of those rights against the principal, which both the principal and agent had by their conduct concurred in persuading him that he possessed. Suppose a landed proprietor to send his steward habitually to the neighboring fairs and markets to make sales and purchases for him in matters connected with the management of his estate; that the steward makes all these contracts in his own name, but that he is universally known to have no land of his own, and to be acting solely for his employer, by his direction and on his credit; could his intention to make himself the owner of articles bought on one particular occasion in the course of the same dealing deprive the vendor of his recourse against the master? Certainly not."

1884, ELLIOTT, J., in *Indianapolis v. Kingsbury*, 101 Ind. 201, 213: "We fully agree with counsel for the appellees that an essential element of dedication is the intent of the owner to devote his land to a public purpose, and we unhesitatingly affirm that without such an intention it is impossible that there should be a valid dedication. But the intention to which Courts give heed is not an intention hidden in the mind of the landowner, but an



intention manifested by his acts. It is the intention which finds expression in conduct, and not that which is secreted in the heart of the owner, that the law regards. Acts indicate the intention, and upon the intention clearly expressed by open acts and visible conduct the public and individual citizens may act. Nor is it to mere secret agreements or arrangements unknown to public officers and to purchasers of lots that Courts are to look. What they do look to, and what good conscience and fair dealing require they should regard, is the conduct of the landowner; that is open to the scrutiny and knowledge of the community and its members." <sup>5</sup>

The foregoing principle, it will be noticed, throws useful light on the time-honored but misused distinction between *void* acts and *voidable* acts. The *voidness* of an act (or, more correctly, of conduct which has never become a legal act) is seen to be a quality *purely relative*, *i. e.* an instrument may be void, as against the grantee or payee, yet valid as against the indorsee or the grantee's grantee. It may even be valid as against one of two grantees, though void as against the other, or valid for one clause and void for the next, — consequences thoroughly accepted in the modern judicial rulings (*post*, §§ 2415-2420, *passim*). The conception, so often met with, that voidness, when conceded for one person, necessarily involves voidness in the absolute sense, *i. e.* for every other person, <sup>6</sup> is therefore unfounded and unpractical, since the test of reasonable consequences will differ for different persons affected by the conduct.

As a part of the same erroneous conception, the *relative quality* of an act,

<sup>5</sup> The following opinions further illustrate this principle: *Conn.* 1898, *Fox v. R. Co.*, 70 *Conn.* 1, 38 *Atl.* 871 (transfer of bonds; the transferor was not allowed to be asked, "Was it your intention to convey the coupons?" because it called for "the actual, secret, unmanifested intention of H., which under the circumstances was of no legal significance; the real question was as to his manifested intention, and this could be ascertained only from the contract, read in the light of the circumstances under which it was made"); *Mass.* 1880, *Stoddard v. Ham*, 129 *Mass.* 383 (the plaintiff sold goods to L., believing without good ground that he was only agent for the defendant, and the defendant bought the goods from L.; the defendant was held not liable; "a party cannot escape the natural and reasonable interpretation which must be put on what he says and does, by showing that his words were used and his acts done with a different and undisclosed intention"); 1893, *Hobbs v. Massasoit W. Co.*, 158 *Mass.* 194, 33 *N. E.* 495 ("the general principle that conduct which imports acceptance or assent is acceptance or assent in the view of the law, whatever may have been the actual state of mind of the party"; per Holmes, J.); *Pa.* 1854, *Lennig v. Ralston*, 23 *Pa.* 137 (under a statute giving extra damages for dishonor of a bill drawn in Pennsylvania upon a foreign drawee, the defendant was held liable upon a bill bearing the word "Philadelphia" but actually completed by the defend-

ant's partner in England; "it bore the dress of a bill of exchange drawn in Pennsylvania, and, upon the principle that every one is presumed to intend to produce all the consequences to which his acts naturally and necessarily tend, the presumption is that the defendants intended that the purchasers should receive it under the belief that it was a bill drawn in Philadelphia").

For the course of juristic opinion on the Continent, see *Der Irrthum bei nichtigen Verträgen*, Rudolph Leonhard, Berlin, 1882, *passim*; the references *ante*, § 2401, n. 1, and the following: K. G. Würzel, "Methods of Juridical Thinking," being c. X of *Science of Legal Method* (1917; vol. X of the *Modern Legal Philosophy Series*); F. Gény, "Autonomy of the Will," in c. I of the same volume; J. Kohler, "Personality and Activity," being c. V, § 9, of *Philosophy of Law* (1914; vol. XII of the above series).

<sup>6</sup> *E. g.* 1824, *Parker, C. J.*, in *Somes v. Brewer*, 2 *Pick. Mass.* 184, 191: "Between the grantor and the grantee in such cases, the technical difference between 'void' and 'voidable' is wholly immaterial. Whatever may be avoided may in good sense, to this purpose, be called void. . . . But in regard to the consequences to third persons the distinction is highly important, because nothing can be founded upon a deed which is absolutely void; whereas from those which are only voidable fair titles may flow."

as valid for one person while invalid for another, has been associated exclusively with the term *voidable*. But this is the confounding of two separate ideas in the same term. A voidable act is one which may be annulled at the actor's option (*post*, § 2423), but is valid till annulled; while a void act is of itself null, and requires no further act exercising an option, — the practical differences being, first, that the voidable act remains valid if the option is never exercised, and, secondly, that its invalidity must be pleaded affirmatively.<sup>7</sup> Now the relative quality — *i. e.* of affecting one person though not another — is concededly true of voidable acts. But that it is not their inherent mark may be perceived from two circumstances; on the one hand, that a voidable act may continue to be voidable in the hands of a third person, so far as he is a transferee with notice (*i. e.* the voidability, like the voidness, may absolutely affect the act under certain circumstances), and, on the other hand, that some acts ordinarily voidable are by modern doctrine (*e. g.* the contracts of a lunatic<sup>8</sup>) valid for even the immediate promisee, if he did not and could not know of the avoiding circumstance.

The result is, then, that the distinction between relative and absolute validity must be separated from the idea of voidness and voidableness. The only place for the former contrast is between acts permitted and acts prohibited by public policy (*post*, § 2414). So long as an act does not fall within the classes absolutely prohibited and made null, *its validity is always relative*, depending on the foregoing principle of reasonable consequences as governing intent.

The application of that principle is now to be examined.<sup>9</sup> It comes to be applied under each of the three elements (*ante*, § 2404) of a jural act, namely, (A) its subject, (B) its terms, and (C) its finality.

§ 2414. (A) **Jural Subject of an Act; Secret Intent not to be Bound; Illegal Transactions.** The result of the foregoing principle, as applied to the requirement that an act must be jural in its subject (*ante*, § 2404, par. (1), *a*, § 2406), is plain:

(a) When the first party has so conducted himself that the natural outward import of his act is a jural transaction, it is immaterial what his own actual secret intent was, — whether to jest, or to do a charity, or otherwise to be without legal consequences. This rule has been applied to *marriage ceremonies*, to *household services*, and to a variety of transactions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 1765, *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1794, 1805 (L. C. J. Mansfield: "An infant, or they who stand in his place, cannot plead 'non est factum' and give the infancy in evidence; but they must plead the infancy specially, to avoid the deed").

<sup>8</sup> 1892, *Imperial Loan Co. v. Stone*, 1 Q. B. 599; *Harriman, Contracts*, § 409.

<sup>9</sup> The ensuing principles sometimes receive specific application in the Codes of States following the Field Draft New York Civil Code (§§ 744-774) as well as in the Georgia Code; and these Code provisions should be consulted:

*Cal. Civ. C.* 1872, §§1565-1589 (consent); §§3339-3408 (revision and rescission); *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 4572 ("Parol evidence is admissible to prove a mistake in a deed or any other contract required by law to be in writing"); §§4573-4582 (reformation or other relief in equity); § 5790 ("Parol evidence is admissible to show that the writing was either originally void or has subsequently become so").

§ 2414. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1727, *Osborn v. Guy's Hospital*, 2 Str. 728 (services as a friend, not as a broker in transacting stock affairs); 1813, *Taylor v. Brewer*, 1 M. & S. 290 (a promise that



(b) In the other aspect (*ante*, § 2406), however, viz. in what concerns the prohibitions of *public policy against transactions* of certain kinds, making them void, this consequence may not always be independent of the will of the parties. But they cannot be allowed to control or evade the prohibition in any manner. Hence, the nature of the transaction, as being *usurious* or the like, may always be shown, and the Parol Evidence rule interposes no obstacle.<sup>2</sup> In other words, if the actual intent was illegal, it may always be shown, even though the parties have expressed in their document a different intent, with a view to evading the law by misrepresenting to other persons their actual intent.

§ 2415. (B) Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake not known to or induced by the Second Party. In applying the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) to the second element of an act, namely, its terms or contents (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, b), the doctrine of reasonable consequences calls for several important distinctions in order to solve the various forms of practical problems.

In the *first* place, a distinction may arise between *negotiable instruments* and other documents, for in the former a new person, entering posterior to the original circumstances, may by the law acquire original rights; and thus the rule may have a different result according as the second party is the immediate or the subsequent holder of the instrument. Furthermore, specific kinds of contracts are in experience often accompanied by inattention or by imposition — such as bills of lading and insurance policies —, and the principle of reasonableness may be affected by this feature of practical life. In the *second* place, and running through all kinds of jural acts, a distinction

"such remuneration shall be made as shall be deemed right"; this was held "merely an engagement of honor," "throwing the plaintiff upon the mercy" of the defendant).

*United States: Fed.* 1890, *Henderson Bridge Co. v. McGrath*, 134 U. S. 260, 275, 10 Sup. 730 (an assurance to "do what was right"); *Mass.* 1876, *Day v. Caton*, 119 Mass. 513 ("the circumstances of each case would necessarily determine whether silence, with a knowledge that another was doing valuable work for his benefit and with the expectation of payment, indicated that consent which would give rise to a contract"); *Mich.* 1863, *Keller v. Holderman*, 11 Mich. 248 (check for an old watch, given as a jest); *N. J.* 1870, *McClurg v. Terry*, 21 N. J. Eq. 225, 227 (marriage in jest); *R. I.* 1851, *Perkins v. Hersey*, 1 R. I. 493 ("It is not necessary for you to consider that there was an express promise made and accepted in terms; but if his conduct was such as to induce her to believe that he intended to marry her, and she acted upon that belief, . . . that will raise a promise"); *Vt.* 1845, *Andrus v. Foster*, 17 Vt. 556 (household services of a child; "it is incumbent upon her to show that at the time it was expected by both parties that she should

receive such compensation, or that the circumstances under which the services were performed were such that such expectation was reasonable and natural"); *Wis.* 1910, *Lepley v. Anderson*, 142 Wis. 668, 125 N. W. 433 (understanding that the document should serve only as a sham, to deceive a third person liable to one of the parties, apparently enforced).

<sup>2</sup> 1767, *Collins v. Blantern*, 2 Wils. 347 (usury); 1781, *Lowe v. Waller*, 2 Doug. 736 (usury); cases cited in Ames' *Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 400, note, 416, note, 464, note, 574, note; and cases cited *ante*, § 2406, n. 9. *Contra*: 1920, *Hoefeld v. Ozelle*, 290 Ill. 147, 125 N. E. 5 (clause in a saloon lease allowing termination on notice if the Sunday-closing law "is generally enforced in Chicago"; the tenant, pleading intent to violate the law, in defence to an action for rent, offered to show the parties' oral understanding that the Sunday-closing law was not to be obeyed by him; excluded, as varying the terms of the lease; questionable result; see a valuable comment in *Illinois Law Review*, XV, 213). Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2406, where perhaps this case belongs.

is necessary (based on the principle of reasonable consequences) between *individual* and *mutual mistake* (*i. e.* by one party alone and by both parties), and also between *unilateral mistakes* which are *known to the second party* and those which are *not known* to him. In the *third* place, a distinction is necessary between signing a specific and *complete document* under mistake as to its actual terms, and signing a paper which is *blank* or *unfinished* or is capable of being altered. These various distinctions are to be noted separately under each head.

(a) *Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake, not known to or induced by the Second Party.* Where a jural act is executed by signing a specific and complete document, the second party has a right to treat the signed contents as representing the terms of the act. The principle of reasonable consequences plainly requires this result. That the signer did not intend to execute such terms is immaterial; and whether the lack of intent was due to a *failure to read it over*, or to some other cause, is immaterial. In other words, his individual innocent mistake or deliberate secret dissent cannot be shown. Such may be taken to be the general rule.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2415. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1860, *Lewis v. R. Co.*, 5 H. & N. 867 (Pollock, C. B., sanctioned a ruling "that if a person signs a contract [without reading], and will not venture to deny that he was aware it was a contract, and that he saw the 'conditions,' and there is no evidence to detract from the apparent result, he is bound by it").

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1875, *Upton v. Tribilcock*, 91 U. S. 45, 50 (subscription to stock); 1899, *Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Howard*, 14 D. C. App. 262, 294, 178 U. S. 153, 167, 20 Sup. 880; 1917, *Hoshaw v. Cosgriff*, 8th C. C. A., 247 Fed. 22 (agreement about mortgages); *Alabama*: 1905, *Main v. Radney*, — Ala. —, 39 So. 981 (order of purchase; signature held conclusive); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1906, *Toledo C. S. Co. v. Garrison*, 28 D. C. App. 243, 248 (contract); *Georgia*: 1903, *Georgia Med. Co. v. Hyman & Co.*, 117 Ga. 851, 45 S. E. 238 ("that ignorance [of the contents] was due to his own negligence"); *Illinois*: 1884, *Black v. R. Co.*, 111 Ill. 351, 358 ("When a party of mature years and sound mind, being able to read and write, without any imposition or artifice to throw him off his guard, deliberately signs a written agreement without informing himself as to the nature of its contents, he will nevertheless be bound"; whether here the plaintiff was misled by the defendant's representations that a release of liability was a free pass, held a question of fact); 1894, *State National Bank v. Butler*, 149 Ill. 575, 36 N. E. 1005 (defendant held liable as partner, to the payee of a partnership note, the partnership agreement having been signed by the defendant in ignorance of its contents and in reliance upon the statements of her brother, who was a partner); *Iowa*: 1907, *Mower Harwood C. & D. S.*

*Co. v. Hill*, 135 Ia. 600, 113 N. W. 466 (signing a contract without reading it); 1918, *Garner v. Johns*, 182 Ia. 684, 166 N. W. 111 (exchange of lands); *Kansas*: 1903, *Johnson v. Richardson*, 67 Kan. 521, 73 Pac. 113 (release of liability for injuries); 1922, *Price v. Shay*, 110 Kan. 351, 203 Pac. 1105 (contract to sell a stock of goods); *Kentucky*: 1911, *Case Threshing M. Co. v. Mattingly*, 142 Ky. 581, 134 S. W. 1131 (contract not read by plaintiff, held valid); *Nebraska*: 1904, *Bradley v. Basta*, 71 Nebr. 169, 98 N. W. 697 (sale of an engine); *North Carolina*: 1919, *Newbern v. Newbern*, 178 N. C. 3, 100 S. E. 77 (deed absolute, signed under the belief that it was a mortgage); *Ohio*: 1909, *McAdams v. McAdams*, 80 Oh. 232, 88 N. E. 542 (defendant son being in a confidential relation to the plaintiff father, and having drafted a deed of grant from plaintiff to defendant, the plaintiff claimed that the deed omitted a certain reservation which was intended to be inserted; the plaintiff maintained that he had not read the deed, but he had it in his possession for six weeks before signing; held, that the deed was binding); *Rhode Island*: 1858, *Diman v. R. Co.*, 5 R. I. 130 (the defendant, being solicited to increase or renew his subscription to stock of the plaintiff railroad company, having formerly been a subscriber to 10 shares of a total value of \$1000, took the subscription-book from the agent, intending to renew his old subscription, and wrote 20 shares and \$2000, and handed the book to the agent; on later discovering his mistake, the subscription as written was held binding; "grant that he designed, and at the time expressed his design, of renewing only his old subscription . . . and permitted his hand to write what his will did not direct," yet this "necessarily im-



As exceptions to this rule, there may be two classes of cases: 1. Where a document was drafted and *prepared by the second party*, and contains also parts which physically constitute virtually a *separate document* and are not included in the scope of the first party's signature, it may be proper, in order to protect against imposition, to exonerate him if he misunderstood the extent of the terms to which his signature apparently applied. In particular, this may be the case for an *insurance application*; <sup>2</sup> and the frequent occurrence of such cases in this class of documents has led to the curative statutory rule noticed *post*, § 2452. 2. Where a person is *illiterate*, or *blind*, or *ignorant of the alien language* of the document, his case, again, is to be tested by the doctrine of reasonable consequences as applied to the circumstances. In other words, he is of course not bound as against the second party if that party himself misrepresented the contents (*post*, § 2416), nor is he bound against a transferee of a chose in action, who can be in no better position; but if the instrument is negotiable, and has come to the hands of a 'bona fide' holder for value, then the signer is liable if under the circumstances he had not taken proper precaution to ascertain the contents, *i. e.* if he was negligent.<sup>3</sup>

ported, in such a personal act, negligence or carelessness on his part"); *South Carolina*: 1896, *Coates v. Early*, 46 S. C. 220, 24 S. E. 305 (the plaintiff sent the defendant a sample card of needles containing 25, and a blank order for "needle cards"; the defendant filled out an order for five thousand needle cards; held that the defendant could not show that he thought that he was ordering five thousand needles, instead of five thousand cards of needles); *Wisconsin*: 1904, *Standard Mfg. Co. v. Slot*, 121 Wis. 14, 98 N. W. 923 (commission contract); 1905, *Kruse v. Koelzer*, 124 Wis. 536, 102 N. W. 1072 (deed).

For individual mistake as a bar to specific performance, see *post*, § 2417.

For bills of lading, the peculiar rule in Illinois is different: *infra*, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal.* 1895, *Yoch v. Ins. Co.*, 111 Cal. 503, 44 Pac. 189 (application for insurance, containing the words "less than 15 rooms," and signed by the insured; the insured was allowed to testify that he did not read the application nor know that the words were there; the ordinary rule was held not to apply where "the instrument contains no words of obligation and the cause invoked by the signer does not purport to be a statement by him or in answer to a question put to him"); *Ill.* 1875, *Hartford L. Ins. Co. v. Gray*, 80 Ill. 28, 21 (insurance application; the signature being proved, "it affords 'prima facie' evidence that the contents of the instrument were known to the subscriber, and that it is his act, and hence that the burden is upon those who assert the contrary"); *Ia.* 1910, *Eckert v. Century F. Ins. Co.*, 147 Ia. 507, 124 N. W. 170; *Mich.* 1916, *Sowiczki v. Modern Woodmen*, 192 Mich. 265, 158 N. W. 891 (insurance application); 1916, *Northern*

*Ass. Co. v. Meyer*, 194 Mich. 371, 160 N. W. 607 (insurance policy); *N. C.* 1903, *Gwaltney v. Provident S. L. Assur. Co.*, 132 N. C. 925, 44 S. E. 659 (insurance policy handed to the insured on the street; failure to read, allowed to be shown); *Pa.* 1917, *Feinberg v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, 256 Pa. 61, 100 Alt. 538 (insurance application by an alien); *Tenn.* 1904, *Continental F. Ins. Co. v. Whitaker*, 112 Tenn. 151, 79 S. W. 119; *Wis.* 1914, *Rayborn v. Galena I. Wks. Co.*, 159 Wis. 164, 149 N. W. 701 (release signed without understanding).

The following opinion collects numerous cases: 1902, *Bostwick v. Ins. Co.*, 116 Wis. 392, 89 N. W. 538, 92 N. Y. 246 (insurance policy signed without reading).

Compare the question arising when the insured signs a document containing answers erroneously transcribed by the insurer's agent (*post*, § 2416, § 2418, § 2434).

<sup>3</sup> The earlier rule, as laid down in *Thoroughgood's Case* (*ante*, § 2405), seems to have made it a formal test whether the illiterate demanded a reading and obtained a false one; but the modern rule is more flexible:

ENGLAND: 1869, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 (when a document is falsely read over to a blind or illiterate person, "then at least if there be no negligence, the signature so obtained is of no force").

CANADA: 1904, *Letourneau v. Carbonneau*, 35 Can. Sup. 110 (an illiterate's signature is ineffective "where there is either (a) a request that the document shall be read by the party putting it forward, which is refused, or (b) where it is misread, or (c) where the contents are misrepresented"); 1914, *Copresham v. Parsons*, 19 D. L. R. 443, Alta. (whether a party of foreign birth and unfamiliar with Eng-



Where the document has been *not signed*, but merely *taken into possession* — as a bill of lading or a notice —, it is less easy to fix upon a definite test. For formal *bills of lading*, there is a tendency to lay down a general rule that the shipper's acceptance of the manual custody of the document from the carrier is conclusive;<sup>4</sup> though even here it is in Illinois always left to the jury as a question of fact in each case.<sup>5</sup> But for *tickets, receipts, and notices*,

lish understood the written terms signed, was left to the jury).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1903, New York C. & H. R. R. Co. v. Difendaffer, 162 C. C. A. 1, 125 Fed. 893 (contract signed by an illiterate person, without seeking explanation from the other party or from third persons, held binding); 1904, Delaware Indians v. Cherokee Nation, 193 U. S. 127, 24 Sup. 342 (contract or treaty between the Cherokee Nation and the Delaware tribe; an understanding of the latter as to the nature of the title conveyed, not considered, the treaty having been read over repeatedly to both parties); *Ariz.* 1916, Smith v. Mosbarger, 18 Ariz. 19, 156 Pac. 79 (grantor illiterate and feeble); *Ill.* 1871, Puffer v. Smith, 57 Ill. 527 (similar to Walker v. Ebert, Wis., *infra*); *Ind.* 1905, Ray v. Baker, 165 Ind. 74, 74 N. E. 619 (an illiterate held not bound by obligations signed not negligently through the fraud of the beneficiary for amounts in excess of agreement; the fact that the obligor did not ask the assistance of a third person held not negligence in law on the facts); *Ia.* 1896, Green v. Wilkie, 98 Ia. 74, 66 N. W. 1046 (note signed by an illiterate person on false representations that it was a note of an entirely different tenor from the one agreed, held invalid in the hands of a *bona fide* holder for value; "the rule we apply is not the usual one in which innocent holders of negotiable paper are protected against fraud in the inception of a note; in such cases there is a note, but the *bona fides* of it is questioned; in this case the note has never existed in the sense of the minds of the parties meeting, and there is no negligence to render the defendant liable on other grounds"); 1904, Stoner v. Zachary, 122 Ia. 287, 97 N. W. 1098 (signing a draft without reading, for lack of spectacles; issue of negligence allowed); 1909, Blossi v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co., 144 Ia. 697, 123 N. W. 360 (good opinion, by Deemer, J.); *Md.* 1904, Wilson, Close & Co. v. Pritchett, 99 Md. 583, 58 Atl. 360 (rule for illiterates, considered); *Mass.* 1881, Trambly v. Ricard, 130 Mass. 259 ("The fact that the plaintiff was an unlettered person, who could not read and write, is of controlling importance . . . a party who is ignorant of the contents of a written instrument, from inability to read, who signs it without intending to, and who is chargeable with no negligence in not ascertaining the character of it, is no more bound than if it were a forgery"); *Minn.* 1908, Sundvall v. Interstate Iron Co., 104 Minn. 499, 116 N. W. 1118 (alien signing release explained by inter-

preter; correctness of interpreter's information, held to be a proper issue); *Nebr.* 1909, First State Bank v. Borchers, 83 Nebr. 530, 120 N. W. 142 (note signed by alien); *N. C.* 1918, Hunter & Co. v. Sherron, 176 N. C. 226, 97 S. E. 5 (fertilizer contract, by an illiterate); *P. I.* 1918, De la Cruz v. Capinpin, 38 P. I. 492; *Wash.* 1914, Miller v. Spokane International R. Co., 82 Wash. 170, 143 Pac. 981 (alien illiterate signing release); 1916, Faucett v. Northern Clay Co., 93 Wash. 239, 160 Pac. 643 (grantor an aged man of "low mentality"); *Wis.* 1871, Walker v. Ebert, 29 Wis. 194, 196 ("the party whose signature to such paper is obtained by fraud as to the character of the paper itself, who is ignorant of such character and has no intention of signing it, and who is guilty of no negligence in affixing his signature or in not ascertaining the character of the instrument, is no more bound by it than if it were a total forgery, the signature included"); 1909, Illinois Steel Co. v. Paczocha, 139 Wis. 23, 119 N. W. 550 (lease by an alien).

<sup>4</sup> 1905, Atlantic Coast L. R. Co. v. Dester, 50 Fla. 180, 39 So. 634 (bill of lading signed); 1868, Grace v. Adams, 100 Mass. 505 (a consignor of a package held to assent to the terms of a bill of lading taken by him without reading; "it was his duty to read it; the law presumes, in the absence of fraud or imposition, that he did read it, or was otherwise informed of its contents and was willing to assent to its terms without reading it . . . the defendants have a right to this protection, and are not to be deprived of it by the wilful or negligent omission of the plaintiff to read the paper"); 1906, Tewes v. North German L. S. S. Co., 186 N. Y. 151, 78 N. E. 864.

*Contra*: 1905, Hayes v. Adams Exp. Co., 73 N. J. L. 105, 62 Atl. 284.

The following rulings do not go so far: 1909, Florman v. Dodds & C. Ex. Co., 79 N. J. L. 63, 74 Atl. 446 (a shipper presumed to have read, but not conclusively); 1909, Hill v. Adams Ex. Co., 78 N. J. L. 333, 74 Atl. 674 (similar).

<sup>5</sup> In Illinois, the mere acceptance of the bill of lading, or even the reading of it, is treated as 'per se' inconclusive: 1873, Anchor Line v. Dater, 68 Ill. 369 ("the shipper had no alternative but an acceptance of it, and his assent to its conditions cannot be inferred from that fact alone"); 1895, Chicago & Alton R. Co. v. Davis, 159 Ill. 53, 42 N. E. 382; 1893, Wabash R. Co. v. Harris, 55 Ill. App. 159, 162 ("It was necessary to show that he accepted it with a



the circumstances of each case are usually investigated (as a question of law, however), and the decision turns upon varying considerations of good sense and experience.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2416. Same: (a) **Signing a Completed Document**; (2) **Individual Mistake known to or induced by the Second Party**. Where the party's error as to the contents of his signed document is *known to the second party*, the first party may, of course, by the general principle (*ante*, § 2413), insist upon the terms as supposed by him, because these are identical with those which he appeared to the second party to be intending to utter. In other words, the actual and therefore the reasonable consequence of his volition to express himself in certain terms was precisely what the second party understood to be that expression.

1. The ordinary instance is that of *fraudulent misrepresentations* of the *document's terms* by the second party;<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, a false reading to

full understanding on his part of the condition or limitation, and actually intended to assent to it; and these were questions for the jury"); 1906, *Wabash R. Co. v. Thomas*, 222 Ill. 337, 78 N. E. 777 (even the signature by the shipper is not conclusive); 1909, *Coats v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 239 Ill. 154, 87 N. E. 929 (but here applying the contrary law of Iowa); 1911, *Illinois Match Co. v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 250 Ill. 396, 95 N. E. 492.

<sup>6</sup> *Mass.* 1848, *Rice v. Mfg. Co.*, 2 Cush. 80 (regulations for mill hands, given to an applying employee, who thereupon went to work; held that the plaintiff was bound "if she had read the regulations, or if she had received from the operatives in the mill or from other sources general information as to their contents, and was content to waive further inquiry"); 1891, *Fonseca v. Cunard S. Co.*, 153 Mass. 553, 27 N. E. 665 (the plaintiff held to have assented to the conditions of a passenger ticket, printed on two large quarto pages, received by him but not signed nor read, the circumstances being such that "the passenger taking it should have understood that it was a contract containing stipulations"; the case of a check or pasteboard ticket distinguished, because it does not "purport to be a contract"); *N. Y.* 1870, *Blossom v. Dodd*, 43 N. Y. 264 (a passenger held not to have assented to terms printed in small type on the face of a baggage receipt given to him at a time and place which made it illegible and given without oral notice of its tenor).

§ 2416.<sup>1</sup> The following citations include a few cases exceptionally holding the contrary: CANADA: 1902, *Jones Stacker Co. v. Green*, 14 Man. 61 (contract for a stacker, not read by the party signing; held void for misrepresentations, not fraudulent, as to the contents).

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: 1896, *Bank of Guntersville v. Webb*, 108 Ala. 132, 19 So. 14 (as between the parties, a deposit-slip signed

without reading, upon the faith of misrepresentations by the other party as to the contents, is not binding);

*Arkansas*: 1910, *St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Carter*, 93 Ark. 589, 526 S. W. 93 (release of personal-injury claim); 1910, *Stewart v. Fleming*, 96 Ark. 371, 131 S. W. 955 (misrepresentations as to contents by plaintiff's agent, defendant not reading it; prior cases examined); 1913, *Ingram v. Coleman*, 110 Ark. 632, 160 S. W. 886 (contract to sell land);

*Georgia*: 1904, *Central of Ga. R. Co. v. Goodwin*, 120 Ga. 83, 47 S. E. 641 (release signed without reading, on fraudulent representations, held not binding);

*Illinois*: 1912, *Turner v. Mers' & Consumers' Coal Co.*, 254 Ill. 187, 98 N. E. 234 (personal injury release by the injured man while in a hospital);

*Iowa*: 1907, *Eldorado Jewelry Co. v. Darnell*, 135 Ia. 555, 113 N. W. 344 (but the opinion does not correctly distinguish between fraud and unilateral mistake); 1909, *Providence Jewelry Co. v. Fessler*, 145 Ia. 74, 123 N. W. 957 (good opinion, by Weaver, J.); 1913, *Shores-Mueller Co. v. Lonning*, 159 Ia. 95, 140 N. W. 197 (omission to read because of the other party's fraudulent statements; document is binding; careful opinion; this seems to be settled doctrine for Iowa; but is it not unique as well as unsound?); 1919, *Westendorf v. Westendorf*, 187 Ia. 659, 174 N. W. 359 (mother's agreement to permit adoption); 1920, *Lillie v. Schriver*, 190 Ia. 861, 179 N. W. 632 ("the perpetrator of the fraud may still urge that nothing prevented the party from reading before signing"); 1920, *Christensen v. Harris*, 190 Ia. 256, 180 N. W. 325 (contract to install heating system; defendant's fraud and plaintiff's failure to read, construed);

*Kansas*: 1906, *Deming Inv. Co. v. Wallace*, 73 Kan. 291, 85 Pac. 139; 1909, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Coltrane*, 80 Kan. 317, 102 Pac. 835 (release of personal injury claim); 1921,



a person *illiterate, blind, or alien*;<sup>2</sup> here the contrast is marked between the present situation and that of § 2415, *ante*.

Where the instrument is *negotiable*, and a 'bona fide' holder later receives it, the question becomes one of negligence at large, *i. e.* whether, with reference to the possible consequences to people in general of signing documents, the person signing used such caution as was reasonable; and this principle will be the same for illiterate<sup>3</sup> as for literate<sup>4</sup> persons, though the decision of

*Haymaker v. Alford*, 109 Kan. 710, 201 Pac. 1112 (contract of conveyance, read over to a widow, omitting a material clause);

*Kentucky*: 1907, *Western Mfg. Co. v. Cotton*, 126 Ky. 749, 104 S. W. 758; 1913, *New Bell J. C. Co. v. Oxendine*, 155 Ky. 840, 160 S. W. 737 (release);

*Maine*: 1917, *Bixler v. Wright*, 116 Me. 133, 100 Atl. 467 (sale order; careful opinion by Savage, C. J.);

*Maryland*: 1916, *McGrath v. Peterson*, 127 Md. 412, 96 Atl. 551 (contract for sale of land);

*Massachusetts*: 1908, *McNamara v. Boston Elevated R. Co.*, 197 Mass. 383, 83 N. E. 878 (release signed on fraudulent representations of its contents by the releasee is not binding; misrepresentation distinguished from concealment); 1910, *Kiely v. Corbett*, 205 Mass. 158, 91 N. E. 410 (fraudulent misrepresentation, not found on the facts); 1912, *Kean v. New York C. & H. R. R. Co.*, 210 Mass. 449, 97 N. E. 64 (document signed on fraudulent misrepresentations is not binding); 1912, *Barry v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 211 Mass. 306, 97 N. E. 779 (check, indorsed upon the fraudulent representation of the defendant's agent that it was only a voucher);

*Michigan*: 1906, *Hulett v. Marine S. Bank*, 143 Mich. 219, 106 N. W. 879 (notes signed under false representations as to the tenor);

*Minnesota*: 1905, *Eggleston v. Advance T. Co.*, 98 Minn. 241, 104 N. W. 891 (sale of farm implements); 1920, *Rosenberg v. Nelson*, — Minn. —, 177 N. W. 659 (release of a partnership interest);

*Missouri*: 1908, *Tait v. Locke*, 130 Mo. App. 273, 109 S. W. 105 (agent misreading);

*New Jersey*: 1913, *Dunston Lithograph Co. v. Borgo*, 84 N. J. L. 623, 87 Atl. 334 (order for goods);

*New York*: 1879, *Kilmer v. Smith*, 77 N. Y. 226 (conveyance containing an undertaking to pay a mortgage debt; the parties not having orally understood this as a term, and the defendant having inserted it deliberately with the intent of deceiving the plaintiff, though the plaintiff signed it without noticing the clause, the clause was struck out); 1881, *Albany C. S. Instit. v. Bardick*, 87 N. Y. 40 (facts and ruling similar to *Kilmer v. Smith*, *supra*);

*North Carolina*: 1909, *Gray v. James*, 151 N. C. 80, 65 S. E. 644 (deed misrepresented, and signed without reading); 1910, *McCall v. Toxaway T. Co.*, 152 N. C. 648, 68 S. E. 136 (rule of

*Gray v. James*, *supra*, applied to a release for personal injury claims);

*Oklahoma*: 1921, *Ozark States Trust Co. v. Winkler*, — Okl. —, 202 Pac. 12 (stock-subscription misrepresentations to party signing without reading, held not to relieve him);

*Vermont*: 1915, *Drown v. Oderkirk*, 89 Vt. 484, 96 Atl. 11 (deed fraudulently read over to a deaf person);

*Washington*: 1906, *Stone v. Moody*, 41 Wash. 680, 84 Pac. 617 (admirable opinion by Root, J.); 1915, *Farley v. Letterman*, 87 Wash. 641, 152 Pac. 515 (lease);

*West Virginia*: 1908, *Hale v. Hale*, 62 W. Va. 609, 59 S. E. 1056 (interesting case of a grantor alleged to have been defrauded by his wife and his son; careful opinion by Poffenbarger, J.).

If the fraudulent representation was made by a *third person*, *e. g.* an agent, the third person in an action for deceit cannot invoke the parol evidence rule: *post*, § 2439.

<sup>2</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 2415, note 3, and the following: *Ga.* 1909, *Grimsley v. Singletary*, 133 Ga. 56, 65 S. E. 92 (an illiterate signing on fraudulent misrepresentations is not negligent by mere failure to consult a third person); *Ill.* 1900, *Pioneer Cooperage Co. v. Romanowicz*, 186 Ill. 9, 57 N. E. 864 (release of right of action by a workman); *Ia.* 1913, *Shores-Mueller Co. v. Lonning*, 159 Ia. 95, 140 N. W. 197 (doctrine of negligence applied; but this is also erroneous, as is the doctrine of the same case cited in note 1, *supra*; has not the Court been misled by failing to notice the distinctions between errors known and not known to the other party; in the present case, the document was sued on by the party perpetrating the alleged rascality, and not by a 'bona fide' transferee; none of the present doctrines are supposed to protect proved rascals); *Ky.* 1920, *White Sewing Machine Co. v. Smith*, 188 Ky. 407, 222 S. W. 81 (sale of a machine to one who "was almost blind, could not read," and relied on the agent's reading); *Okl.* 1917, *Myler v. Fidelity M. L. Ins. Co.*, 64 Okl. 293, 167 Pac. 601 (false reading to a person of defective eyesight); *Vt.* 1901, *Cameron v. Estabrooks*, 73 Vt. 73, 50 Atl. 638; 1909, *Vaillancourt v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 82 Vt. 416, 74 Atl. 99 (release of right of action by a workman).

<sup>3</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 2415, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *England*: 1869, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 (C. brought to the defendant, who was aged, a bill of exchange, stating that



it might be different in the two cases. Here the principle should flexibly adapt itself to the policy required by the local necessities of the times, as based on the dangers shown by experience and the relative interests needing protection. Accordingly, in a number of States, legislation has required, under penalty, that *promissory notes* given for certain articles (including lightning rods, patent medicines, and jackasses) shall be *stamped* "non-negotiable" in red ink.<sup>5</sup>

2. Where the first party's error is merely *known to* the second party, *without fraudulent means* by the latter, the result is still the same, for the latter cannot claim that the first party's expressed words were reasonably so accepted by him;<sup>6</sup> the only difference ought to be that in this case the first party should be satisfied with having the document reformed, while in

it was a guarantee, and the defendant, seeing only the back of the paper, and believing it to be a guarantee of a sort formerly signed, wrote his name; an instruction that the defendant was not liable to a *bona fide* holder if he signed it on fraudulent representations "in the belief that it was a guarantee and if the defendant was not guilty of any negligence in so signing the paper," was held correct; "it was not his design, and, if he were guilty of no negligence, it was not even his fault, that the instrument he signed turned out to be a bill of exchange; it was as if he had written his name on a sheet of paper for the purpose of franking a letter, or in a lady's album"); *Howatson v. Webb*, [1908] 1 Ch. 1 (defendant signed certain deeds on H.'s representation that they transferred the E. property; in fact, they contained a mortgage to W. covenanting for payments and came to the hands of W. an innocent party; held binding, as the defendant knew at least that the deed did deal with that property).

*United States*: 1905, *Home Nat'l Bank v. Hill*, 165 Ind. 226, 74 N. E. 1086 (a note inserted by trick between the folds of another paper presented to the defendant for his signature; not liable, because not negligent on the facts); 1916, *Lundean v. Hamilton*, 184 Ia. 907, 169 N. W. 208 (mortgage; holder not protected because not 'bona fide'); 1907, *Biddeford Nat'l Bank v. Hill*, 102 Me. 346, 66 Atl. 721 (note signed by defendant on O.'s fraudulent representations that it was a receipt; as against a 'bona fide' holder, an issue of negligence was submitted); 1905, *Brown v. Feldwert*, 46 Or. 363, 80 Pac. 414 (promissory note signed without reading, held binding; placed on the ground of negligence).

<sup>5</sup> The statutes are not here collected. A survey of the questions arising under the statutes (which vary in their extremity of measures) is given in the following opinion: 1920, *McCabe v. Williams*, 45 N. D. 330, 177 N. W. 378.

<sup>6</sup> *Conn.* 1885, *Loomis v. Day*, 52 Conn. 483 (the plaintiff was held entitled to the correction

of certain bonds whose terms made them redeemable in 20 years, instead of in 10 years as by the vote of the town-meeting; the plaintiff's treasurer having signed the bonds without reading them, but the defendant knowing of the error; good opinion by Loomis, J.); *Ga.* 1883, *Shelton v. Ellis*, 70 Ga. 297 (the plaintiff printed some schedules of railroad-fares, in which by mistake a certain fare was printed as \$21.25 instead of \$36.70; the defendant, knowing of the error, bought from an agent of the railroad a quantity of tickets at the erroneous price; the plaintiff was held entitled to have the tickets impounded); *Ind.* 1888, *Keister v. Myers*, 115 Ind. 312, 17 N. E. 161 (similar situation for a mortgage; "a party who admits that an instrument which a court of equity is asked to reform does not set forth the agreement as it was actually made, and as the other party believed it did, will not be heard to say that he intentionally brought about or silently acquiesced in the discrepancy between the instrument and the agreement as made"); *Ia.* 1905, *Daly v. Simonson*, 126 Ia. 716, 102 N. W. 780 (lease by the plaintiff, omitting a clause giving to the defendant, the lessee and illiterate, the right to remove fixtures; reformation allowed); *Nebr.* 1903, *Story v. Gammell*, 68 Nebr. 709, 94 N. W. 982; *Pa.* 1890, *Wanner v. Landis*, 137 Pa. 61, 20 Atl. 950 (the plaintiff signed a deed on the representation that its contents affected only a tenancy in common, but it in fact included a release of dower; the defendant purchased at a public sale, but after notice of the error given by the plaintiff; the deed was held invalid as to the dower); *R. I.* 1911, *Weil v. Quidnick Mfg. Co.*, 33 R. I. 58, 80 Atl. 447 (oral offer of a contract, mis-written by the offeree, and then signed inadvertently by the offeror; held void, if the offeree was fraudulent in the mis-writing); *S. C.* 1921, *Jumper v. Queen Mab Lumber Co.*, 115 S. C. 452, 106 S. E. 473 (defendant had not read the contract before signing, but plaintiff had read it; the terms being contrary to oral contract, reformation was allowed).



the case of fraud, he ought to be entitled to repudiate the entire transaction, by way of penalty upon the trickster.

3. Where the first party's error was *not known* to the second party, but was *induced by the latter's own conduct*, here also the first party may not be bound; for in such case it may well be that the terms actually expressed did not come to be expressed as the natural consequence of the first party's volition, but were due rather to the second party's own conduct. In that event, the latter is not entitled to charge the former with them; in the contrary event, the case becomes the ordinary one of individual mistake, which is immaterial (*ante*, § 2415). This distinction in practical application may lead, of course, to fine shades of interpretation of conduct.<sup>7</sup> — Whether the remedy lies in cancellation or reformation of the instrument is a different question (*post*, § 2417).

4. A release of a cause of action for *personal injury* is often sought to be

<sup>7</sup> ENGLAND: 1869, *Mackenzie v. Coulson*, L. R. 8 Eq. 368 (the defendants, desiring to secure an insurance against particular average by rust, engaged F. to secure insurance; F., acting through H., who acted through S., whose clerk W. negotiated, procured from the plaintiffs a memorandum which expressly excepted particular average, but in filling out the policy this clause was inadvertently omitted, and the plaintiff signed the policy without reading it or knowing of the omission, and the policy on being transmitted to the defendants was accepted by them as being in accordance with their intention; held, (1) that the policy as signed and sent by the plaintiffs was a mere proposal, and became a contract only when accepted; (2) that the defendant was not responsible for the erroneous transcription by S.'s clerk; and (3) that the plaintiffs' own carelessness made them responsible for the terms of the instrument as transmitted by them and accepted by the defendants).

CANADA: 1915, *Jadis v. Porte*, 23 D. L. R. 713, Alta. (reformation for mutual mistake, not necessarily refused because the applicant himself drafted the instrument).

UNITED STATES: Ala. 1909, *Prestwood v. Carlton*, 162 Ala. 327, 50 So. 254 (warranty of title in a lease; defendant allowed to show that he signed the lease in reliance on plaintiff's erroneous draft of the description of lands included; good opinion, by Mayfield, J.); Conn. 1887, *Palmer v. Ins. Co.*, 54 Conn. 488, 9 Atl. 248 (the parties having agreed to renew a policy of insurance the defendant wrote into the new policy without calling the plaintiff's attention, a new clause of co-insurance, and the plaintiff signed it without reading; "the rule of law that no person shall be permitted to deliver himself from contract obligations by saying that he did not read what he signed or accepted is subject to this limitation, namely, that it is not to be applied in behalf of any per-

son who by word or act has induced the omission to read"); Ia. 1896, *Marshall v. Westrope*, 98 Ia. 324, 67 N. W. 257 (defendant and plaintiff, negotiating for a sale, differed as to the medium of payment; the defendant, having said that he would consider the matter and make a final proposition, sent by mail a draft-contract signed by himself containing his original terms, which the plaintiff after reading, signed, in the supposition that the terms represented his own original terms; held, that the only agreement made "was the one expressed in writing," and that even if the plaintiffs wished to cancel it, "their own negligence in signing the contract would seem to be a bar"); 1921, *Merriam v. Leeper*, 192 Ia. 587, 185 N. W. 134 (notes and mortgage not read over; reformed on the ground of mutual mistake); N. J. 1903, *Wirsching v. Grand Lodge*, 67 N. J. Eq. 711, 56 Atl. 713 (deed of transfer signed by a foreigner, under peculiar circumstances; rescission allowed; the other party being under mistake as to another fact, but not knowing of the grantor's mistake); N. Y. 1878, *Moran v. McLarty*, 75 N. Y. 25 (plaintiff held not entitled to the reformation of an instrument containing a guaranty clause, which was to have been a part of the agreement by the defendant's understanding but not by the plaintiff's, the plaintiff having partially read the instrument and then signed it without noticing the clause); N. C. 1904, *Jones v. Warren*, 134 N. C. 390, 46 S. E. 740 (here the defendant drew the contract, and by mistake inserted the wrong price, and the plaintiff was illiterate; reformation allowed); W. Va. 1904, *Medley v. German A. Ins. Co.*, 55 W. Va. 342, 47 S. E. 101 (insurance policy written by the agent of the insurer, and mistakenly reciting the title, etc., of the property, the insured not having read it; reformation allowed; Brannon, J., diss.).

Compare the insurance cases cited *post*, § 2434, n. 4.



avoided on one or another of the foregoing grounds. The circumstances attending their execution sometimes make two or more of these grounds applicable; hence it is not always possible to learn which circumstance is judicially treated as decisive. In general, the modern trend is to lay down no one or more rules of thumb, but to develop a special doctrine in each Court for that class of cases, liberally relieving the party who has signed the release.<sup>8</sup>

§ 2417. **Same: (a) Signing a Completed Document; (3) Mutual Mistake; General Principle.** 1. Concerning mutual mistake and its effect on the terms of the jural act, it is necessary at the outset to exclude two questions which do not involve the present principle. In the first place, the question what sort of mistake — including individual mistake — will suffice to *bar a bill for specific performance*, is a distinct one; it involves merely the choice of remedies, not the terms of the valid act.<sup>1</sup> In the next place, the question whether an act may be avoided for a *mistaken assumption of fact external to the contract*, is a distinct one, belonging under the principle of avoidability (*post*, § 2423). This kind of question arises for all varieties of acts, — for example, a will or a gift is made to a younger son on the erroneous assumption that the elder

<sup>8</sup> With the following citations should be considered some of the earlier ones cited *supra* in this section and *ante*, § 2415: *Fed.* 1920, *Pacific Mail S. S. Co. v. Lucas*, 9th C. C. A. 264 *Fed.* 938 (validity of a "mutual release" required by U. S. R. S. § 4552 for discharge of seamen; here the seaman had not read the document; held invalid); *Cal.* 1920, *Wilson v. San Francisco-Oakland T. R. Co.*, — *Cal. App.*—, 191 *Pac.* 975 (release obtained by fraudulent representations); *D. C.* 1910, *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Morgan*, 35 *D. C. App.* 195 (release signed without reading on the supposition that it was a receipt only); *Ia.* 1908, *Kelly v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 138 *Ia.* 273, 114 *N. W.* 536 (collecting prior cases); *Kan.* 1918, *Black v. Wichita*, 103 *Kan.* 332, 173 *Pac.* 1068; *Md.* 1916, *Hammond v. New York P. & N. R. Co.*, 128 *Md.* 442, 97 *Atl.* 1001 (release not read by plaintiff, but without fraud by defendant; held valid); *Minn.* 1918, *Oestreich v. Chicago St. P. M. & O. R. Co.*, 140 *Minn.* 280, 167 *N. W.* 1032 (release signed in a hospital); *N. M.* 1918, *Morstad v. Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 23 *N. M.* 663, 170 *Pac.* 886 (in bed at the hospital; "his sole excuse for not reading the document is that he did not have his glasses and consequently could not read it"); *Okla.* 1917, *Ralls v. Caylor Lumber Co.*, — *Okla.* —, 162 *Pac.* 711; *Pa.* 1920, *Ralston v. Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co.*, 267 *Pa.* 257, 110 *Atl.* 329 (release of personal injury claim; plaintiff had not read over the document before signing; the majority opinion mingles the determination of the question of fact whether there was fraud with the discussion of the applicable law, fails to define fraud and discriminate its distinct kinds in this connection, and leaves the subject in

clouds, though elaborately expatiating upon it; the concurring opinion of Simpson, J., lays down a codified rule in concise definite phrase; but expresses the view on grounds of modern policy that a release given shortly after a physical injury and while under the influence of mental shock, at the solicitation of the injuring party, should be presumed to have been made under undue influence); 1920, *Palkovitz v. American S. & T. P. Co.*, 266 *Pa.* 176, 109 *Atl.* 789 (release not explained to foreigner); *Utah:* 1918, *Dovich v. Chief Consol. Mining Co.*, 53 *Utah* 522, 174 *Pac.* 627 (release given at the hospital); *Wash.* 1912, *Hicks v. Jenkins*, 68 *Wash.* 401, 123 *Pac.* 526 (release signed by a person mentally ill).

§ 2417. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1746, *Joynes v. Statham*, 3 *Atk.* 388; 1794, *Rich v. Jackson*, 6 *Ves. Jr.* 334, note (L. C. Hardwicke: "Parol evidence of the conduct of the parties, the manner of conducting the transaction, the unfairness and hardship, may afford a good ground to leave the party in the condition in which he puts himself at law, to make what he chooses to make of it; but ought not to make this Court give him any aid"); 1801, *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 *Ves. Jr.* 328, 333 (L. C. Eldon; holding it not true "that because parol evidence [of unilateral mistake] should not be admitted at law, therefore it shall not be admitted in equity upon the question whether, admitting the agreement to be such as at law it is said to be, the party shall have a specific execution"); *U. S.* 1918, *Woldenburg v. Riphan*, 166 *Wis.* 433, 166 *N. W.* 21 (exchange of land; a singular case); compare the cases and citations in Ames' *Cases on Equity Jurisdiction*, 374 ff.

one is deceased; or a deed is made of land seen by the parties and accurately described in the deed, on the erroneous assumption that it contains forty acres, though in fact it contains only thirty acres; or a deed attempting merely to release dower employs, by error of law, terms which effect a transfer of the wife's estate sole.<sup>2</sup> In all such instances the present principle is not involved. This is to be seen in three respects; for one thing, the terms of the act itself are not the subject of error; they are precisely as intended, and the error is as to a fact exterior to the instrument; for another thing, there is no variance between the oral understanding and the subsequent document; the question would be precisely the same had no writing been used, — as when a horse, sold orally, proves to have been dead at the time of the sale; and, finally, in these cases the problem varies for different kinds of acts, for the rules about materiality of error as applied to the case of a testator or donor are different from those which apply to sales and other contracts.

2. The kind of mutual mistake involved in the present principle is purely a mistake as to the *actual words intended to form part of the act*, just as in the cases of individual mistake already considered (*ante*, §§ 2415–2416). This sort of mutual mistake can rarely occur in oral acts, but it is common enough in written acts. The case is the simple one of an oral agreement which, when reduced to writing for signature, contains terms varying from the actual understanding of the parties, but is nevertheless signed by them both in ignorance of the variance. No one appears ever to have doubted that in such cases the instrument should be judicially amended to represent the actual agreement.<sup>3</sup> The only uncertainty has been in the theory of this proceeding. The important aspect of theory is that the amendment ought not to be conceived as a change or correction of the actual agreement. The erroneous instrument itself is not the actual agreement; *that* is found in the parties' common supposition of what the instrument contained, because, on the general principle (*ante*, § 2413), the terms of the act, for either party, are such as were reasonably caused by him to be apprehended by the other, and these clearly the instrument itself does not represent. "Neither party," in the language of Mr. Justice Holmes, "has purported or been understood to

<sup>2</sup> The following cases will serve as examples: 1871, *Stockbridge Iron Co. v. Hudson Iron Co.*, 107 Mass. 290, 318 (where the mistake is only as to the legal effect of intended words, reformation will not be granted); 1920, *Nygard v. Minneapolis St. R. Co.*, 147 Minn. 109, 179 N. W. 642 (release of "all actions . . . arising or to grow out of an accident," held not to include results of injuries unknown to both parties; placed on the ground of mutual mistake); 1889, *Newton v. Tolles*, 66 N. H. 136, 19 Atl. 1092; 1875, *Bush v. Hicks*, 60 N. Y. 298, 301 (a deed reformed in which the descriptive words of the boundaries were the intended ones, but the description covered more land than was intended); 1921, *Charles v.*

*McClanahan*, — Va. —, 108 S. E. 859 (reservation of "one half of the mineral" in a conveyance).

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine goes back to the beginnings of modern equity: 1750, *Baker v. Paine*, 1 Ves. Sr. 456 (bill for account on a sale of goods, with a deduction for certain charges; but "it appeared by the minutes and the calculations made by themselves at the time that this was contrary to the intent and a mistake by the drawer"; L. C. Hardwicke held that "these minutes must be taken to be the agreement of the parties, and if any material variation [as is admitted by the defendant], the articles must be rectified"). Some of the Codes, cited *ante*, § 2413, cover the subject sketchily.



express assent to the conveyance as it stands.”<sup>4</sup> Hence the frequent emphasis of judicial opinion upon this theory of the process:

1869, JAMES, V. C., in *Mackenzie v. Coulson*, L. R. 8 Eq. 368: “Courts of equity do not rectify contracts; they may and do rectify instruments purporting to have been made in pursuance of the terms of contracts.”

1858, AMES, C. J., in *Diman v. R. Co.*, 5 R. I. 130: “A court of equity has no power to alter or reform an agreement made between parties, since this would be in truth a power to contract for them; but merely to correct the writing executed as evidence of the agreement, so as to make it express [to all the world] what the parties actually agreed to. It follows that the mistake which it may correct in such a writing must be, as it is usually expressed, the mistake of both parties to it; that is, such a mistake in the draughting of the writing as makes it convey the intent or meaning of neither party to the contract.”

1879, RAPALLO, J., in *Whittemore v. Farrington*, 76 N. Y. 452: “The jurisdiction to reform written instruments in cases free from fraud is exercised only where the instrument actually executed differs from what both parties intended to execute and supposed that they were executing or accepting.”

1894, TORRANCE, J., in *Park Bros. & Co. v. Blodgett & C. Co.*, 64 Conn. 28, 29 Atl. 133: “The written agreement certainly fails to express the real agreement of the parties in a material point; it fails to do so by mutual mistake; . . . and the instrument, if corrected, will place both parties just where they intended to place themselves in their relations to each other.”

3. There is therefore an insidious fallacy in the language of an early and much quoted decision<sup>5</sup> which places this doctrine upon the ground of enforcing *specific performance of contracts*, *i. e.* of assuming that there are two acts of contract, the prior one including by implication an oral agreement to reduce the oral transaction to written form. But written contracts are not necessarily preceded by oral ones; the moment of assent, and thus of the beginning of obligation, to the terms as finally settled upon may be the moment of signature of the writing, — as in numerous negotiations by mail; and in such instances it is equally possible (though not common) for an erroneous term to be inserted in the draft at the last moment. The correction of erroneous instruments therefore does not rest necessarily upon any assumption that a prior completed oral contract is being enforced. This fallacious assumption has, however, led practically, in a few jurisdictions, to the anomalous doctrine that a term *omitted* from the writing *by mutual mistake* (as distinguished from a term inserted by mistake) cannot be inserted in amendment, if the contract is one *required by the statute of frauds to be in writing*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 1891, *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228.

<sup>5</sup> 1825, Washington, J., in *Hunt v. Rousmanier*, 1 Pet. 1: “The execution of agreements, fairly and legally entered into, is one of the peculiar branches of equity jurisprudence, and if the instrument which is intended to execute the agreement be from any cause insufficient for that purpose, the agreement remains as much unexecuted as if one of the parties had refused altogether to comply with his engagement; and a court of equity will in the exer-

cise of its acknowledged jurisdiction afford relief in the one case as well as in the other, by compelling the delinquent party fully to perform his agreement according to the terms of it and to the manifest intention of the parties.”

<sup>6</sup> 1869, *Glass v. Hulbert*, 102 Mass. 24 (“From the oral agreement there can be derived no legal right, either to have performance of its stipulations or written evidence of its terms”); 1920, *Bryant Electric Co. v. Stein*, 95 Conn. 211, 111 Atl. 204 (reformation of wrong description of party).

If it had been appreciated that the process of reformation consists in making the instrument state what the parties supposed that it represented — in short, in making it represent what they *are* doing, not what they have already agreed to do, this anomaly would not have been accepted. For example, if the parties, for the first and last time, met and signed a document in ink which proved to be a disappearing ink and became straightway invisible, the Court could undoubtedly cause the terms to be indelibly restored according to the parties' understanding of what the paper contained; here the process is in effect precisely the ordinary one known as "reformation," and yet there is no writing as required by the statute. The theory of reformation is that the instrument already *is* subjectively — *i. e.* to the parties — what they supposed it to be, and therefore that the statutory requirement of writing is, subjectively at least, satisfied; and that the "reformation" is needed only to make the instrument appear to all the rest of the world as it appeared (and therefore legally was) to the parties when they signed it.

The really complicated and troublesome questions concerning mutual mistake, as commonly so called, are those of the character first mentioned, namely, questions as to the materiality of some expressed term or unexpressed assumption. These are questions common to all contracts, written or unwritten, and involve the theory of avoidability (*post*, § 2423).

✓ § 2418. **Same: (a) Signing a Completed Document; (3) Mutual Mistake, as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.** The theory of reformation is to make the instrument state, objectively and in appearance to others, what it did subjectively state to the parties themselves. The one party is not bound to the other by the purporting tenor of the act, because the other party shared the error. But as against third persons, who are not sharers of the same supposition, and who are authorized by the substantive law to rely upon the instrument as defining the rights acquired by it, the tenor of the instrument controls, as a necessary result of the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) that the actor is responsible for the reasonable consequences of his act. In other words, an instrument may be reformable as against one person, but not as against another; the only condition being, in the latter case, that the transaction is one by which subsequent transferees may acquire rights not wholly dependent on the title (*i. e.* the jural acts) of their transferors. This will of course be the case with *commercial paper*. It should also be recognized for *deeds*.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2418. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1862, *Garrard v. Frankel*, 30 Beav. 445 (the plaintiff and the defendant agreed for a lease by the former to the latter at 230*l.*, but the plaintiff, in filling out the blanks, wrote by mistake 130*l.* for 230*l.*; the defendant signed the lease with knowledge of the discrepancy; held, (1) that the defendant might give up the lease, but if she retained the lease, could do so only at a rent of 230*l.*; but (2) that B., who had advanced money to the defendant on an assignment of the lease, was to be treated as a purchaser for value without notice and

have a lien on the house for the amount of the advances, whether the defendant retained or gave up the lease); *U. S.* 1891, *Holmes, J.*, in *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228 ("As things stand, a purchaser without notice could hold him to the words which he has used"); 1905, *Shields v. Mongollon Explor. Co.*, 137 Fed. 539, 549, C. C. A., *semble* ("There is no hard-and-fast rule that one who fails to read a deed before signing it may not seek its reformation in equity in a case where there has been a mutual mistake").



The theory of the law is well illustrated in the circumstance that the same deed may at the same time be reformable as against one of the original parties to it, though not as against another.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2419. **Same: (b) Signing a Document having Blanks, or capable of Alteration; Writing One's Name not as a Signature.** (1) When a document as signed contains a *blank space*, and the blank is afterwards filled in by another person, the liability of the maker to be charged with the terms thus filled in is determined by the general principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413). As against the *person filling the blank*, the maker is of course chargeable with such terms as accord with his own authority or consent,<sup>1</sup> and is not chargeable with any other terms. But even against *third persons* who may by substantive law rely on the instrument as the foundation of their rights, the maker may be chargeable, by the test of reasonable consequences; because an improper insertion by the immediate transferee may be (in the circumstances) a consequence which a prudent man might well have apprehended.

For negotiable instruments,<sup>2</sup> as well as for deeds,<sup>3</sup> this principle seems to

<sup>2</sup> 1862, *Garrard v. Frankel*, *supra*; 1876, *Wilcox v. Lucas*, 121 Mass. 22 (W. sold his share of mining land to L. and A., and, by mistake in supposing certain ore land not to be within the share, an intended reservation of rights was omitted; reformation was ordered as to L., who shared the mistake, "to prevent him from relying on the grant," but not as to A., who did not share the mistake).

Whether reformation can be afforded *at law*, under code procedure, is an interesting question: 1905, *Ætna Ins. Co. v. Brannon*, 99 Tex. 391, 89 S. W. 1057 (misdescription by mutual mistake in an insurance policy; whether after a fire the contract can be treated as having been reformed, for the purpose of allowing recovery); 1905, *Phoenix Assur. Co. v. Boyette*, 77 Ark. 41, 90 S. W. 284 (similar).

§ 2419. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1829, *Hudson v. Revett*, 5 Bing. 368 (quoted *ante*, § 2408); *U. S.* 1918, *Merchants' National B'k v. Brastrup*, 39 N. D. 619, 168 N. W. 42 (note with interest-figure left blank).

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1853, *Montague v. Perkins*, 22 L. J. C. P. 187 (defendant held liable on an acceptance in blank, filled up and negotiated by the payee twelve years later; "he must be taken to have intended the natural consequence of his act"); *Smith v. Prosser*, [1907] 2 K. B. 735 (blank notes signed by defendant and left with an agent under instructions not to use until authorized by cable; the agent filled them without authority and negotiated them to the plaintiff on false representations; held, not liable; unsound; the opinion of Vaughan Williams, L. J., draws a scholastic and untenable distinction between placing signed blanks with an agent "for the purpose of its being issued as a negotiable instrument," and "as

custodian only, and intending that the notes should not be issued until he sent instructions"); *Can.* 1911, *Jarvis v. Willson*, 45 Can. Sup. 401 (blank filled wrongfully by agent); *U. S.* 1914, *Gronvold v. Federal Union S. Co.*, 8th C. C. A., 212 Fed. 908 (bond).

<sup>3</sup> *Cal.* 1920, *Riverside P. C. Co. v. Maryland Casualty Co.*, — Cal. App. —, 189 Pac. 808 (sureties signing a bond in blank); 1913, *Osby v. Reynolds*, 260 Ill. 576, 103 N. E. 556; *Kan.* 1890, *State v. Matthews*, 44 Kan. 596, 25 Pac. 36 (the grantor executed a deed with a blank for the grantee's name, and left it with M. to negotiate with a proposed grantee; M. filled in his own name, and recorded the deed, then mortgaging the land to T., on the faith of the record; T. was held to obtain a good title); 1911, *Guthrie v. Field*, 85 Kan. 58, 116 Pac. 217 (a strange case on the facts); *Minn.* 1889, *Dobbin v. Cordiner*, 41 Minn. 165, 42 N. W. 870 (a deed executed by a married woman without reading it, on her husband's false representations, was left blank as to grantee and description of property, and the husband filled it with a grantee's name and a description of the wife's property; the 'bona fide' grantee was held to obtain a good title, on the ground of the wife's "culpable negligence"); 1920, *Hedding v. Schaeble*, 146 Minn. 95, 177 N. W. 1019 (defendant handed to H., a real estate broker, a deed duly executed, with grantee's name in blank; plaintiff, negotiating for sale with the broker, saw the deed yet blank, and the broker filled in plaintiff's name before delivering the deed; held, (1) that the burden of proof was on plaintiff to show by other evidence H.'s authority, (2) that the defendant's instructions to H. as to not delivering the deed or filling the blank were admissible



have settled into a rule of thumb, where the blank is *expressly left* for the purpose of later completion and the document is *handed away*. But where the document, though expressly left incomplete, is *retained* by the maker and later leaves his custody without his consent,<sup>4</sup> or where the blank is a mere *superfluous space* left uncanceled in an otherwise complete instrument,<sup>5</sup> the act is treated as not negligence 'per se,' and the question turns upon the circumstances of each case.

(2) Where after execution a document has been *altered* and is acquired by a third person in its altered condition, the same principle serves as a test;<sup>6</sup> here the question seems always to be open upon the circumstances of each case.

(3) Where the person charged had not signed any document at all, but had *written his name alone*, *i. e.* for some other purpose than as a signature to a preceding written statement, it is natural to find the Courts holding him

though not communicated to the plaintiff; unsound on both points, for the broker's possession of an executed deed with blank grantee is sufficient evidence of authority, and the private understanding between broker and defendant was legally immaterial to affect a purchaser without notice; *Or.* 1914, *Telschow v. Quiggle*, 74 *Or.* 105, 145 *Pac.* 11 (*contra*; but the ground of the buyer's negligence would here have been sufficient, even on the opposite principle);

*Contra*: 1918, *Butte Investment Co. v. Bell*, — *Mo.* —, 201 *S. W.* 880.

<sup>4</sup> 1839, *Van Amringe v. Morton*, 4 *Whart.* 382 (a deed executed and acknowledged, with a blank for the grantee's name, locked by the grantor in a drawer of which the key was given to his brother, who abstracted the deed, filled out the name of a grantee and delivered it, was held not effective, there being no negligence or default in the maker).

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1827, *Young v. Grote*, 4 *Bing.* 253 (defendant held liable for checks signed by him in blank, left in his wife's custody, and so filled out by her direction that a blank space before the amount could be filled in to make 50*l.* into 350*l.*; "we decide here on the ground that the banker has been misled by want of proper caution on the part of his customer"; "the checks, left by him to be filled up by his wife, when filled up by her become his genuine orders"); 1854, *Barker v. Sterne*, 9 *Exch.* 684 ("whether the better ground for supporting that decision is that the drawer is responsible for his negligence . . . or that the rest of the world must judge of the authority to fill it up by the paper itself and not by any private instructions, it is unnecessary to inquire"); 1875, *Halifax Union v. Wright*, L. R. 10 *Exch.* 183 (the ruling in *Young v. Grote* approved, as "perhaps only an application of one of those general principles . . . that a man cannot complain of the consequences of his own default against a person who was misled by that default without any fault

of his own"); *U. S.* 1910, *Diamond Distilleries Co. v. Gott*, 137 *Ky.* 585, 126 *S. W.* 131 (insertion of a place of payment in a blank left unfilled on a printed form).

<sup>6</sup> *ENGLAND*: 1859, *Ingham v. Primrose*, 7 *C. B. N. S.* 82 (defendant held liable on an acceptance delivered to M. without consideration to be discounted, returned to the defendant by M. after failing to obtain discount, then torn in two pieces by the defendant and thrown into the street, and picked up by M. in the defendant's presence, and afterwards negotiated by M.; "the case appears to turn on the question whether the act of tearing the bill in two pieces, being manifest on the face of it, is such an act as 'prima facie' ought to have indicated to the plaintiff that it had been withheld or withdrawn from circulation; . . . it was properly a question for the jury whether the bill exhibited appearances which would have led a man of ordinary intelligence to the conclusion that it had been torn for the latter purpose").

*UNITED STATES*: *Mich.* 1870, *Wait v. Pomeroy*, 20 *Mich.* 576 (defendant held not liable on a note from which, before indorsement to the plaintiff, had been detached a memorandum at the foot, conditioning payment on delivery of a machine; "no one is bound to guard against every possibility of felony"); *Ill.* 1870, *Harvey v. Smith*, 55 *Ill.* 224 (similar note, bearing the condition in pencil, which was erased before transfer; the defendant held guilty of "gross carelessness," and an instruction that he was liable if the erasure could have been made "without leaving any trace which could be detected by a prudent and careful man," held proper); *Pa.* 1875, *Brown v. Reed*, 79 *Pa.* 370 (defendant signed an agreement to pay over the proceeds of machines sold by him as agent, the words being so printed that, on separating the paper vertically, one half bore the signature and a form of promissory note; "whether there was negligence in the maker was clearly a question of fact for the jury").



not responsible, as a matter of law.<sup>7</sup> Only rarely could the circumstances here justify leaving the question of negligence to the jury.

(4) Where the document contains additional words *on the margin*, or some other unusual place, and the issue is whether the signer is responsible for terms thus inserted either before or after the act of signing, the same general principles apply.<sup>8</sup>

§ 2420. (C) **Delivery of a Document; Deed or Negotiable Instrument delivered to Bona Fide Holder contrary to Intent of Maker.** The third element of every act, its finality of utterance (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, c, § 2408)—usually marked by the delivery of the instrument—is equally governed, in respect to the competition between intent and expression, by the principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413). Whether the act has been completed, or delivered, is not to be determined by the actual intention of the actor, but by the inquiry whether his conduct produced as a reasonable consequence the appearance of finality to the other person.

Where the other person is an *immediate party to the transaction*, and the mutual understanding is that the document has not yet been finally issued and delivered, there is no difficulty; in such cases, the first party is of course not to be charged with the document.<sup>1</sup>

But where the other party is a *subsequent transferee* in good faith, and the document is of that sort which permits third persons to acquire independent rights under it, the conduct of the first party, in so dealing with it that as a reasonable consequence it appeared to have been delivered, may charge him, even when he has not actually intended to consummate its delivery. For *commercial paper* there is no doubt, whether the document has been manually handed away subject to a condition,<sup>2</sup> or whether it has been retained after preparation but unlawfully abstracted from the maker's custody;<sup>3</sup> though

<sup>7</sup> 1869, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 ("It was as if he had written his name on a sheet of paper for the purpose of franking a letter, or in a lady's album"); 1870, *Caulkins v. Whisler*, 29 Ia. 495 (the defendant wrote his name upon a blank piece of paper and gave it to S. to be sent to S.'s employer so as to identify the defendant's signature when orders for machines were sent to them bearing his name as sales-agent; S. filled in with the words of a note; the defendant was held not liable, because not "so far in fault in the transaction that he ought to be required to bear the loss resulting from the crime").

<sup>8</sup> 1920, *Scholbe v. Schuchardt*, 292 Ill. 529, 127 N. E. 169 (marginal words on a note, below the signature but placed there before signing, held a part of the instrument).

§ 2420. <sup>1</sup> The cases in §§ 2408-2410, *ante*, illustrate this.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1841, *Marston v. Allen*, 8 M. & W. 494 (indorsed bill placed in the custody of the indorser's agent and by him transferred in fraud, held binding); *U. S.* 1860, *Fearing v.*

*Clark*, 16 Gray Mass. 74 (defendant held liable on a note wrongfully negotiated by the custodian in escrow; "it is essential that there should have been a delivery of the note by the maker, to take effect as a contract; . . . but this rule is qualified and limited as between the maker and a 'bona fide' holder"); and cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 573, note.

<sup>3</sup> ENGLAND: 1878, *Baxendale v. Bennett*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 525 (the defendant held not liable on a bill of exchange, written by him, with an acceptance to his own order, but without a drawer's name, this being then stolen from his desk and negotiated after filling in the drawer's name; *Bramwell*, L. J.: "The defendant here has not voluntarily put into any one's hands the means, or part of the means, for committing a crime; . . . I confess I think he has been negligent, . . . but then this negligence is not the proximate or necessary cause of the fraud; a crime was necessary for its completion"; *Brett*, L. J.: "It was not negligence, for two reasons, first, he did not owe



in the latter case it would of course be rare that the conduct would be deemed negligent, while in the former case the manual transfer would as a rule be made at peril. For *deeds*, an *escrow to the grantee* would be treated as absolute, by the Courts accepting the modern doctrine (*ante*, § 2408), if the grantee was reasonably led to suppose that the delivery was absolute, in spite of the grantor's private intent to the contrary;<sup>4</sup> and even in those Courts which preserve the traditional arbitrary rule making absolute an escrow to the grantee (*ante*, § 2408), there is a tendency to rest the result on the ground of negligence, where a 'bona fide' third party's interests are involved.<sup>5</sup> Where the escrow has been made to a *third person*, the principle of reasonable consequences, and the analogy of all the preceding rules, require that the grantor should be bound, to one subsequently holding it, by a delivery made without observance of the condition and contrary to his intent; and such is the rule of most Courts to-day.<sup>6</sup> But the metaphysical error that a specific actual intent is an indispensable feature of every act (*ante*, § 2413), and the failure to perceive (what the foregoing topics amply illustrate) that the very same conduct may constitute a valid legal act as against one person, though at the same time not as against another person, *i. e.*, that nullity is a relative term only, has induced some Courts to refuse to accept this rule, and to deny title to the subsequent holder.<sup>7</sup>

any duty to any one, and, secondly, he did not act otherwise than in a way which an ordinary careful man would act").

UNITED STATES: *Uniform Acts*: Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, §§ 15, 16; *Ia.* 1907, *McKnight v. Parsons*, 136 *Ia.* 390, 113 *N. W.* 858 (reviewing the cases); *Mass.* 1909, *Buzzell v. Tobin*, 201 *Mass.* 1, 86 *N. E.* 923 (check handed to payee by clerk without authority and negotiated to the holder); *Mich.* 1870, *Burson v. Huntington*, 21 *Mich.* 415, 431 (holding invalid a note which had been signed by the maker, left on a table pending the obtaining of a surety and the delivery of the payee's deed, and thence taken forcibly by the payee and transferred to the plaintiff); *N. Y.* 1915, *People's Trust Co. v. Smith*, 215 *N. Y.* 488, 109 *N. E.* 56 (the defendant executed a bond and mortgage to G. F. S., who gave them in custody to his nephew, a lawyer, also named G. F. S., who delivered and assigned them to the plaintiff; held, that no estoppel and no negligence had given plaintiff a right under the assignment).

<sup>4</sup> 1856, *L. C. J. Campbell*, in *Gudgen v. Besset*, 6 *E. & B.* 986, 992 ("I should attach no weight whatever to what the grantor might think or intend when he delivered the instrument, unless I thought that it was intended and agreed by both parties that the delivery should operate only as the delivery of an escrow"); 1905, *Wilbur v. Grover*, 140 *Mich.* 187, 103 *N. W.* 583; 1906, *Blake v. Ogden*, 223 *Ill.* 204, 79 *N. W.* 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Illinois*: 1913, *Osby v. Reynolds*, 260 *Ill.* 576, 103 *N. E.* 556; *New Jersey*: 1879, *Ordinary v. Thatcher*, 41 *N. J. L.* 403 (guardian's

bond delivered to the county surrogate as agent for the probate judge, the obligee; a delivery in escrow, conditionally on another surety's signature, held absolute; though the old doctrine was invoked, the opinion proceeded upon the ground that "if the matter is left in doubt as to the character of the delivery of this instrument, such doubt should be resolved in favor of the innocent person to secure whom the bond was given, rather than to the advantage of these defendants, whose carelessness has at all events produced this situation"); *South Carolina*: 1909, *Merck v. Merck*, 83 *S. C.* 329, 65 *S. E.* 347.

<sup>6</sup> 1849, *Blight v. Schenck*, 10 *Pa. St.* 285, 294 (escrow delivered by the third person without performance of conditions prescribed by the grantor, held effective in favor of a 'bona fide' grantee, "who acts on the presumption that the records of the county are not intended to mislead, but speak the truth, that the acts and declarations of the grantor are such as they purport to be"); 1892, *Hubbard v. Greeley*, 84 *Me.* 340, 24 *Atl.* 799 ("Escrows are deceptive instruments; they are not what they purport to be; they purport to be instruments which have been delivered, when in fact they have not been delivered; . . . they are capable of being used to deceive innocent purchasers, and the makers of such instruments cannot fail to foresee that they are liable to be so used; . . . [the maker] ought to be responsible for the use that may in fact be made of it").

<sup>7</sup> 1903, *Mays v. Shields*, 117 *Ga.* 814, 45 *S. E.* 68 (yet modifying the doctrine to some extent on lines of negligence); 1859, *Smith v. South Royalton Bank*, 32 *Vt.* 341 (*Bennett, J.*; "The deed not having been delivered, it was



§ 2421. **Unilateral Acts; foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.**

(1) A *will* is a unilateral act, *i. e.* there is no second party who acts upon the faith of it as a part of the transaction. Is there then the same reason to require the enforcement, for wills, of the general principle of intent (*ante*, § 2413), namely, that the terms of the act shall be such as were by the actor caused to be expressed as a reasonable consequence to the other party dealing with him? It would seem not.

(a) So far as the *terms of the will* are concerned, it is clear that the law does not attempt to apply that principle in its stringency. The signing of a specific document as a will does not, as it does with bilateral acts (*ante*, § 2415), conclude all consideration of the signer's intent to enact those terms into the will; the question of intent is still open. Nevertheless, since the maker is deceased, and the ascertainment of his actual intent is always an elusive and jeopardous inquiry, some practical rule of thumb must if possible be adopted, taking some tangible circumstance of outward conduct as the mark of intent. Such a circumstance, for one, is the *reading over* of the will to or by the testator; and there may be other circumstances which mark his knowledge of the document's contents. Given his knowledge and his ensuing act of signature, and further inquiry must cease, — subject only to those varying circumstances of fraud which may here and there arise. Such apparently is the judicial attitude to-day:

1866, WILDE, P. J., in *Guardhouse v. Blackburn*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 109: "The following propositions commend themselves to the Court as rules which, since the statute, ought to govern its action in respect of a duly executed paper: First, that before a paper so executed is entitled to probate, the Court must be satisfied that the testator knew and approved of the contents at the time he signed it. Secondly, that except in certain cases, where suspicion attaches to the document, the fact of the testator's execution is sufficient proof that he knew and approved the contents. Thirdly, that although the testator knew and approved the contents, the paper may still be rejected, on proof establishing, beyond all possibility of mistake, that he did not intend the paper to operate as a will. Fourthly, that although the testator did know and approve the contents, the paper may be refused probate, if it be proved that any fraud has been purposely practised on the testator in obtaining his execution thereof. Fifthly, that, subject to this last preceding proposition, the fact that the will has been duly read over to a capable testator on the occasion of its execution, or that its contents have been brought to his notice in any other way, should, when coupled with his execution thereof, be held conclusive evidence that he approved as well as that he knew the contents thereof. Sixthly, that the above rules apply equally to a portion of the will as to the whole." <sup>1</sup>

a nullity and void, or, more properly speaking, never existed; . . . there is a radical distinction, as it respects the rights of a 'bona fide' purchaser or assignee without notice, between a void and a voidable instrument; . . . let the principle be as it may in regard to commercial paper, no question can be made as to a void deed"); 1905, *Franklin v. Killilea*, 126 Wis. 88, 104 N. W. 993 (release).

In 2 *Illinois Law Rev.* 110 (1907) is a valuable note by Professor A. M. Kales, critically analyzing the theories.

The authorities are collected in Jones, *Real Property*, §§ 1315 ff.

§ 2421.<sup>1</sup> *Accord*: ENGLAND: 1873, *Harter v. Harter*, L. R. 3 P. & D. 11; 1891, *Boehm's Goods*, Prob. 247; 1901, *Garnett-Botfield v. same*, Prob. 335; 1917, *Gregson v. Taylor*, Prob. 256 (motion to strike out a clause giving money to M. A. A. inserted by a misunderstanding; the testatrix was mentally capable, but nearly blind, and the will was read over to her and then signed by her; motion denied).

IRELAND: 1894, *Beamish v. Beamish*, L. R.,



(b) So far as concerns the *finality* of the act — that which corresponds to delivery in deeds — the question was once an open one, as already noticed

1 Ire. 7 (Warren, P. J., "ventured to state the following propositions: 1. Knowledge and approval of a will is necessary, and must be proved; 2. The execution of a will by a competent testator is presumptive and 'prima facie' evidence of the fact; 3. If the competent testator has read the will or heard it read, the presumption is strong and conclusive, unless there are special circumstances attending the execution of the will; 4. Among such special circumstances are fraud, . . . ; 5. Whether read or not, if in any way the contents of the will have been brought to the notice of the testator, the effect is the same; 6. Even where there has been a reading of the will, but the state of the testator was such that he could not have had an intelligent appreciation of the words, he must be taken to have known and approved of the will if the words have been 'bona fide' used by a person whom he trusts to draw it up for him").

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: 1921, *Kay v. Elston*, 205 Ala. 307, 87 So. 525 (will drafted by testatrix and copied out by E. for her signature; whether she knew the contents, left to the jury); 1921, *Goldsmith v. Gates*, 205 Ala. 632, 88 So. 861 (will draft mailed by attorney to testator, locked up by him in a trunk for months, then carried to town and executed; knowledge of contents presumed); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1906, *Lipphard v. Humphrey*, 28 D. C. App. 355, 360 (knowledge of contents is presumed for illiterates also); *Georgia*: Rev. Code 1910, § 3850 ("In all cases, knowledge of the contents of the paper by the testator is necessary to its validity; but usually where a testator can read and write, his signature or the acknowledgment of his signature is sufficient," etc.); *Illinois*: 1896, *Sheer v. Sheer*, 159 Ill. 591, 43 N. E. 334 (the testator had personally requested the witnesses to sign the document he produced as his will; the Court listened to evidence as to its non-conformity with the instructions and as to his probably not having read the final draft; but decided that the presumption arising from his act of signing was not overthrown); 1906, *Todd v. Todd*, 221 Ill. 410, 77 N. E. 680 (*Sheer v. Sheer*, *supra*, approved); 1908, *Jones v. Abbott*, 235 Ill. 220, 85 N. E. 279 (rule applied to a testator's contract not to make a will); *Iowa*: 1908, *Ross v. Ross*, 140 Ia. 51, 117 N. W. 1105 (execution is sufficient evidence of knowledge); *Maryland*: 1917, *Hall v. Yellott*, 130 Md. 245, 100 Alt. 290 (form of issue prescribed); *Massachusetts*: 1916, *Dunham v. Holmes*, 225 Mass. 68, 113 N. E. 845 ("It is to be presumed from its execution that he knew its contents, unless affirmative evidence to the contrary is produced"); 1921, *Fuller v. Sylvia*, — Mass. —, 133 N. E. 384 (the issue of execution "involves not only the points of sig-

nature by the testator and of proper attestation by the witnesses, but also of knowledge by the testator of the contents of the instrument"); *Minnesota*: 1919, *Knutson's Estate*, *Benrud v. Anderson*, 144 Minn. 111, 174 N. W. 617 (conditions defined for execution of a will prepared in English for one who spoke a foreign language with the scrivener); *Missouri*: 1907, *Bradford v. Blossom*, 207 Mo. 177, 105 S. W. 289; 1921, *Elain v. Phariss*, — Mo. —, 232 S. W. 693 (testatrix' misunderstanding of legal effect of words used, immaterial); *New Jersey*: 1917, *Gluckman's Will*, 87 N. J. Eq. 638, 101 Alt. 295 (alien); *North Carolina*: 1834, *Downey v. Murphy*, 1 Dev. & B. 82 ("It should have been left to the jury to say whether . . . the presumption, from execution, that the party knew the contents of the paper, understood them, and assented to them, was in fact rebutted by the state of his mind and health at the time the will was prepared and executed, by its contents, and by the circumstances relied on by the defendant"); *Oklahoma*: 1916, *Bell v. Davis*, 55 Okl. 121, 155 Pac. 1132 (whether a will can be made through an interpreter); *South Carolina*: 1917, *Ex parte McKie*, 107 S. C. 57, 91 S. E. 978; *South Dakota*: 1921, *Hauer v. Hauer*, 44 S. D. 375, 184 N. W. 1 (will in English read over to a testatrix understanding only German); *Philippine Isl.* 1903, *Hernaez v. Hernaez*, 1 P. I. 689 (will prepared by a notary using Spanish only for a Visayan testatrix ignorant of Spanish, an interpreter being employed); *West Virginia*: 1913, *Bailey v. Bee*, 73 W. Va. 286, 80 S. E. 454.

Compare the following: 1905, *Reems' Succession*, 115 La. 102, 38 So. 930; 1905, *Massey's Estate*, 213 Pa. 136, 62 Atl. 640.

Consequently, *words inserted by mistake* may be struck out, though (perhaps inconsistently) words omitted by mistake will not be inserted: 1891, *Boehm's Goods*, *supra* (bequest of 10,000l each to two daughters F. and G.; the name of F. having been inserted by mistake instead of G., it was struck out, though the Court would not replace it by the name of G.); 1901, *Garnett-Botfield v. same*, *supra*; 1901, *Schott's Goods*, Prob. 190; 1902, *Brisco v. Baillie Hamilton*, Prob. 234; 1908, *In re Wrenn*, 2 Ir. R. 370 (cited more fully *post*, § 2463, n. 3); 1902, *O'Connell v. Dow*, 182 Mass. 541, 66 N. E. 788; 1904, *Boston Safe D. & T. Co. v. Buffum*, 186 Mass. 242, 71 N. E. 549 (missing words can be supplied only where the words used show by necessary implication the words that are lacking); 1908, *Polsey v. Newton*, 199 Mass. 450, 85 N. E. 574.

*Contra*: as to inserting words: 1907, *Munro v. Henderson*, 1 Ir. R. 440 (a bequest in case of a daughter's death, with an obvious syntactical omission of a clause; the Court supplied a clause "to effectuate the intention which was



(*ante*, § 2411); whether an intent to consummate execution existed, was a question of the circumstances of each case. But the formality of attestation has indirectly put such questions at rest; for this formality, indispensable to almost all wills, effectually marks the final adoption of the document as a testamentary utterance;<sup>2</sup> and no one has ever suggested that such a thing as an attestation in escrow would be judicially sanctioned. Only for holographic wills, so far as these are still recognized, can the question of finality be now raised.<sup>3</sup>

(2) *Ballots* of election furnish the only other important type of unilateral act. Here again, theoretically, the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) does not necessarily govern, and the voter's intent — for example, in voting by mistake for an unintended person — might be open to inquiry. But the difficulties of investigation and the possibilities of cajolery and fraud are too great to permit this. Practical needs oblige us to take the written expression of the ballot as the sole and definite element of the voter's act:<sup>4</sup>

1863, SELDEN, J., in *People v. Pease*, 27 N. Y. 72, 81: "It is proper to ask him for whom he intended to vote; not however, on the ground that his intention as an independent fact could be material, but on the ground that it was a circumstance tending to raise a presumption for whom he did vote; DENIO, C. J.: "It is only the intention of the voter as expressed by the ballot — interpreted, if necessary, as all written evidence may be — by proof of the concomitant circumstances — which can be taken into consideration on the trial. If the elector who deposited the vote should swear ever so strongly that he intended it to be for a particular candidate, it could not be allowed to him, unless it appeared upon the other competent evidence that his name was actually written or printed upon it."

(3) *Other unilateral documents* may be governed by the same principle, where the possibilities of fraud or evasion are material.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Voidable Acts

§ 2423. **Motive as making an Act Voidable; Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.** The distinction between acts void and voidable is well enough established, and the specific conditions of avoidability are for the most part

imperfectly expressed but can be gathered from the context and from the rest of the will").

Compare, however, the searching discussion of this topic in Mr. Roland Gray's article, "Striking Words out of a Will" (Harvard Law Rev., XXVI, 212), and in Professor Henry Schofield's article "The So-called Equity Jurisdiction to Construe and Reform Wills" (Illinois Law Review, VI, 485, now reprinted in his *Essays on Constitutional Law and Equity*, 1921).

The following seem sound: 1870, *Hubbard v. Alexandder*, L. R. 3 Ch. D. 738 (testator's declaration, at the time of signing a codicil, that it was a duplicate, admitted); 1875, *Hunt's Goods*, L. R. 3, P. & D. 250 (two sisters, each executing by mistake the will prepared for the other).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2411.

<sup>2</sup> See the quotation *ante*, § 2411.

<sup>3</sup> But the actual *date* of a will is always open to inquiry (*ante*, § 2410); and the intent not to sign it as a *testamentary* paper (*ante*, §§ 2406, 2411).

<sup>4</sup> *Accord*: 1875, *Beardstown v. Virginia*, 76 Ill. 34, 48 (that a ballot was cast by mistake, held inadmissible); 1908, *Bloedel v. Cromwell*, 104 Minn. 487, 116 N. W. 947; 1898, *Tutt v. Hawkins*, 53 Nebr. 367, 73 N. W. 692 (that ballots were improperly printed in distinguishing between full and unexpired terms, excluded); 1896, *State v. Steinborn*, 92 Wis. 605, 66 N. W. 798 (a voter's intent to vote for a different person, excluded).

How an *ambiguous ballot* may be interpreted is a different question (*post*, § 2461). Whether the ballots, not the *election officer's certificates*; are the ultimate subject of inquiry is another question (*ante*, § 1351).

<sup>5</sup> 1920, *Re Tomarchio*, D. C. E. D. Mo., 269 Fed. 400 (naturalization by one who had claimed exemption from military service: "when he signed and swore to this questionnaire, that document became his writing"; the error of a scrivener could not be availed of).



settled in the law. It is here necessary merely to ascertain the part played by this doctrine in the so-called Parol Evidence rule.<sup>1</sup>

That an act is voidable assumes that it is an act, — in other words, that all the requirements of an act, as already examined, are satisfied. So far, then, as an act is held to be voidable, it must be for some other reason than one of the foregoing elements, that is, some reason which concedes that the act is jural and lawful in its subject, intelligible and definite in its terms, and final in its utterance, and that in all these respects there existed in the actor an intention to do the act, or a volition having consequences equivalent to intention. The inquiry, therefore, is, What is the distinction between these elements, the lack of which leaves the act void, and those other elements which merely make the act voidable?

The other elements are all reducible finally to a single consideration, namely, that of *motive*, — *i. e.* the relation between the actor's state of mind and some fact external to himself and his act.<sup>2</sup> This consideration of Motive falls under three general heads:

1. When the fact creating the motive is somewhere mentioned in the *terms of the act*, it is commonly spoken of as a *Condition*, *i. e.* a reservation of an option to annul. Conditions may be established by *express stipulation* in the act, or by *implication* of law. Of the latter sort may be, for example, in contracts, a warranty of a horse's pedigree; in deeds, a description of land as containing specified buildings; in wills, a recital (incorrectly) of the death of an elder son as the reason for devising to a younger one.<sup>3</sup>

2. When the fact creating the motive is *not* mentioned *in the terms of the act*, the recognized grounds of avoidance are of two general sorts, *Error* and *Compulsion*;

(a) *Error* may exist either by the inducement of the second party, or without it. (1) *Error induced by the second party* may involve a fact misrepresented *fraudulently* or *innocently*. In both cases, the fact must have been material as a motive to induce the act; but the right to avoid is much narrower in scope in the latter case than in the former. In both cases, however, the avoidance is due to a fact external to the jural act itself,<sup>4</sup> and this

§ 2423. <sup>1</sup> Whether an act may be void or voidable as to one person, but not to another has already been considered (*ante*, § 2413).

<sup>2</sup> "It is not true, then, as it is sometimes said, that the law does not concern itself with the motives for making contracts. On the contrary, the whole scope of fraud outside the contract is the creation of false motives and the removal of true ones" (Holmes, *The Common Law*, 326).

<sup>3</sup> Under this head falls Mr. Justice Holmes' well-known illustration (*Common Law*, 310) of a sale of "this barrel of mackerel," the barrel turning out to contain salt. Here the question is merely whether the mackerel contents are by implication an essential term and therefore a condition, just as when land is described by metes and bounds and by area and the two are

inconsistent. In both cases the terms of the contractual act in themselves are perfectly intelligible and valid, and it is only in application to the external objects that they prove inaccurate; hence it seems not the real explanation to hold (*Common Law*, 311) that the act is "meaningless," and therefore void; rather, it is sensible and valid, but it rests upon the assumption of the external correctness of an essential term, and is therefore voidable.

<sup>4</sup> 1751, *Pitcairn v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. Sr. 375 ("The present evidence [of fraud] is offered not to contradict the import of the bond on the face of it; . . . it is admitted the written instrument is as it was designed to appear at the original transaction"); 1905, *Rockwell v. Capital T. Co.*, 25 D.C. App. 98, 112 (fraud; release under seal).



marks the distinction between void and voidable acts. (2) Error *not induced by the second party* will involve either mutual or individual mistake. Where the mistake is *mutual* — for example, where the parties agree to buy and sell a specific lot of land, supposing it to contain forty acres, and in fact it contains thirty-four acres only, but the price is made proportionate to forty acres, and the terms of the deed do not mention the area — the question is whether this mistaken mutual motive will authorize either the total avoidance of the act, or at least its judicial reformation on equitable lines. This is one of the chief sources of controversy in the so-called doctrine of mutual mistake; and it has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2417) that this is entirely distinct in its problem from the doctrines of mutual mistake as to the actual contents of a document signed. So, too, a mutual erroneous assumption as to the legal effect of words intentionally used belongs under the present head. The practical problem here is a difficult one, and the rules are by no means uniform in acceptance; but in nature it is a problem common to all jural acts, whether oral or written.<sup>5</sup> Where the mistake is *individual* only — for example, in the above case, if one party alone entertained the mistake as to area — it is generally conceded that the act cannot be avoided.

(b) *Compulsion*, or duress, so far as it means a coercion to choose between the signing of a document and the suffering of some harm, whether corporal or otherwise, signifies that the act has been consummated because of the motive of fear of that harm. Since motive alone is thus involved, it follows that compulsion, like fraud, merely makes the act voidable. In fact, then, compulsion is always of this nature, and there is no clear distinction of principle between “equitable” and “legal” duress so-called. The only conceivable case in which duress could go to deny the very existence of the act is that of the physical seizure of the person’s hand, and a forcible movement of his pen, by another person, for there the first person’s volition (*ante*, § 2413) is lacking.<sup>6</sup>

3. A peculiar variety of the foregoing doctrine is found in the avoidability of acts of *infants* and *lunatics*. Here a rule of thumb is adopted, by which the person’s age or disease serves of itself virtually to raise a fixed presumption of fraud or compulsion, and thus to create the option to avoid, regardless of any inquiry whether there was in the individual case deceit or duress.

<sup>5</sup> For ordinary parol contracts, but little recognition seems to be given to such mutual mistake as a ground of avoidance (Harriman on Contracts, 2d ed., § 418). But in equity the term “mutual mistake” is so often employed without discrimination that the legitimate doctrine as to the terms of the writing (*ante*, § 2417) has often been used to extend to the present cases.

<sup>6</sup> 1887, *Fairbanks v. Snow*, 145 Mass. 153, 13 N. E. 596 (Holmes, J.: “No doubt, if the defendant’s hand had been forcibly taken and compelled to hold the pen and write her name, and the note had been carried off and delivered, the signature and delivery would not have been her acts; . . . there sometimes still is shown

an inclination to put all cases of duress upon this ground; but . . . it is well settled that where, as usual, the so-called duress consists only of threats, the contract is only voidable . . . the ground upon which a contract is voidable for duress is the same as in the case of fraud, and is that, whether it springs from a fear or a belief, the party has been subjected to an improper motive for action; but if duress and fraud are so far alike, there seems to be no sufficient reason why the limits of their operation should be different”). Compare the article of Professor J. B. Ames, *Specialty Contracts and Equitable Defences*, 1895, *Harvard Law Review*, IX, 49.



The general probability of it is regarded as sufficient. At the same time there has always been a tendency, in one or another court, to break from the fixed rule, and to treat such persons' contracts, especially after performance on one side, as voidable then only when in fact there was in the particular case fraud or duress. It may be added that the earlier doctrine that a lunatic's contracts are void, not merely voidable, is referable to the natural opportunity for doubting whether his mental condition, as respects jural acts, is that of total absence of real volition or merely of an unintelligent apprehension of the proper motives of his conduct; for, if the former be the case, it is logical to treat his act as void. — The voidness of a *married woman's* acts at common law was a pure anomaly; either it had no reason at all (as modern legislation practically pronounces), or it was based on an apprehension of imposition, in which view the rule of voidability should have been applied. — The invalidity of acts 'ultra vires' of a *corporation* does not involve the present principle, but rather that of prohibited acts (*ante*, § 2414); for the law's prohibitions of such acts by corporations are of the same nature as its prohibition of gaming or trading contracts by natural persons.

#### B. INTEGRATION OF JURAL ACTS (VARYING THE TERMS OF A DOCUMENT)

§ 2425. **General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of a Writing.** When parties negotiate at a distance, by letters and telegrams, — first an offer, then a declination, then a revision of the offer, then a halt upon an important term, afterwards an offer of its concession in return for the concession of some prior term now to be changed, and finally an acceptance of this concession, and thus an end of the negotiations, — where are the terms of this contract to be found? Obviously, in this congeries of letters and telegrams, as mutually modifying and complementing each other. The whole of the contract is not in any one document. Nor, on the other hand, does the whole of any one document (probably) represent a part of the contract, because some of its terms have been impaired and replaced by other documents in the series. Nor can it be said that there is a series of legal acts, each one independent, successively modifying the preceding ones; for each letter and telegram is merely tentative and preparatory, and there exists no legal act (*ante*, §§ 2401, 2404) until the final assent is given. That assent, when it comes, adopts and vivifies the entire mass, which until then was legally inchoate only. The process is not unlike the fall of cards in the play of a trick at whist; the total effect cannot be determined till the last card has fallen, and no one card exhibits in itself the effect of the trick; yet, when all are played, the second card may prove to be the decisive factor and may remain unimpaired by any later play.

On the other hand, if instead of leaving the net effect of the negotiations to be gleaned from the mass of writings, a single document is finally drawn up to replace them and to embody their net effect, and is signed or otherwise adopted by the parties, this document will now alone represent the terms of the



act. Instead of leaving the wheat mingled with the chaff, the wheat has been definitely selected and set apart in a single mass. The wheat existed there, no less before than now, but it has now been placed in a single receptacle by itself.

This process of embodying the terms of a jural act in a single memorial may be termed the Integration of the act, *i. e.* its formation from scattered parts into an integral documentary unity. The practical consequence of this is that its scattered parts, in their former and inchoate shape, have no longer any jural effect; they are replaced by a single embodiment of the act. In other words: *When a jural act is embodied in a single memorial, all other utterances of the parties on that topic are legally immaterial for the purpose of determining what are the terms of their act.*

This principle is perfectly well settled in our law.<sup>1</sup> But it has several aspects which may here be noticed, before following it into details:

§ 2425. The following Code provisions cover the general principle and some of the details: *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1856 ("When the terms of an agreement have been reduced to writing by the parties, it is to be considered as containing all those terms, and therefore there can be between the parties and their representatives, or successors in interest, no evidence of the terms of the agreement other than the contents of the writing, except in the following cases: 1. Where a mistake or imperfection of the writing is put in issue by the pleadings; 2. Where the validity of the agreement is the fact in dispute. "But this section does not exclude other evidence of the circumstances under which the agreement was made or to which it relates, as defined in § 1860, or to explain an extrinsic ambiguity, or to establish illegality or fraud. The term 'agreement' includes deeds and wills, as well as contracts between parties"); for a survey of California rulings, see the following: Robert L. Williams, "The Parol Evidence Rule in California" (*California Law Review*, VII, 417, Sept. 1919).

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5752 ("Where the parties have reduced their contract, agreement, or stipulation to writing and assented thereto, it is the best evidence of the same"); § 5788 ("Parol contemporaneous evidence is inadmissible generally to contradict or vary the terms of a valid written instrument"); § 5789 ("All contemporaneous writings are admissible to explain each other; and parol evidence is admissible to explain all ambiguities, both latent and patent"); § 5791 ("If the writing does not purport to contain all the stipulations of the contract, parol evidence is admissible to prove other portions thereof not inconsistent with the writing; so collateral undertakings between parties of the same part among themselves would not properly be looked for in the writing"); § 5794 ("Parol evidence is also admissible to rebut an equity, to discharge the entire contract, to prove a new and distinct subse-

quent agreement, to enlarge the time, or change the place of performance"); § 5795 ("Receipts for money are always only 'prima facie' evidence of payment, and may be denied or explained by parol"); § 5796 ("Blank indorsements of negotiable paper may always be explained between the parties themselves, or those taking with notice of dishonor or of the actual facts of such indorsements").

*Louisiana*: here, the whole French theory of jural acts being different from the Anglo-American one, the Code and its interpretation present peculiar problems, in which the language of both systems appears mingled; Rev. Civ. Code 1920, §§ 2234-2279; *Bostwick v. Thompson*, 149 La. 88 So. 775 (verbal sale to husband before marriage followed by deed after marriage).

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 10517 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1856).

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 713 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1856).

*Philippine Islands*: Civ. C. §§ 1278-1280, 1321 (like P. R. Rev. St. & C. §§ 4351-4353, 4394); here, too, the Spanish system is similar to the French, and contrasts with the Anglo-American, in theory at least, but the American legislators have genially adopted them both; C. C. P. 1901, § 285 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1856);

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, §§ 4351-4353, 4394 (kinds of contracts required to be made by a public instrument); § 1393 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1856).

*South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 860 ("The execution of a contract in writing, whether the law requires it to be written or not, supersedes all the oral negotiations or stipulations concerning its matter, which preceded or accompanied the execution of the instrument").

In *Pennsylvania*, the rule has had a long history and is so anomalous (*post*, § 2531) that the rulings are of no significance for other courts; an admirable survey is given in the following: Stanley Fols, "Oral Contemporaneous Inducing Promises to Affect Written Instruments" (*Pennsylvania Law Register*, LII, 601, 1904).

(1) In the first place, it is *not a rule of Evidence*, because it has nothing to do with the probative value of one fact as persuading us of the probable existence of another fact (*ante*, § 2). It is a rule of substantive law, because it deals with the question where and in what sources and materials are to be found the terms of a jural act (*ante*, § 2401). This understanding of the rule is plain enough in the modern judicial utterances, in spite of the frequent loose employment of the word "evidence" — a faulty habit, but easily succumbed to when applying the rule at trials:<sup>2</sup>

1813, GIBBS, J., in *Pickering v. Dowson*, 4 Taunt. 779, 786: "I hold that if a man brings me a horse and makes any representation whatever of his quality and soundness, and afterwards we agree in writing for the purchase of the horse, that shortens and corrects the representations; and whatever terms are not contained in the [written] contract do not bind the seller, and must be struck out of the case."

1824, ABBOTT, C. J., in *Kain v. Old*, 2 B. & C. 627, 634: "Where the whole matter passes in parol, all that passes may sometimes be taken together as forming parcel of the contract (though not always, because matter talked of at the commencement of a bargain may be excluded by the language used at its termination). But if the contract be in the end reduced into writing, nothing which is not found in the writing can be considered as a part of the contract."

1846, PARKE, B., in *Knight v. Barber*, 16 M. & W. 66 (the plaintiff and the defendant had made an oral agreement for the sale of shares; on the same afternoon the defendant signed a memorandum, which was then handed to the plaintiff, reciting the sale, the price, etc.; it was held that this memorandum should have borne a stamp): "With respect to the first point made by Mr. Baines [for the plaintiff], that there was a distinct parol contract between these parties before the memorandum was signed, if that memorandum was afterwards made and signed by the defendant, and was intended to contain the terms of the contract and to be acted upon by the plaintiff, it became, when it was so acted upon, the real contract between the parties. The parol agreement goes for nothing, if it was intended that it should be reduced into writing and this is afterwards done."

1875, BLACKBURN, J., in *Angell v. Duke*, 32 Law T. Rep. n.s. 320: "It is a most important rule that, where there is a contract in writing, it should not be added to, if the written contract is intended to be the record of all the terms agreed upon between the parties. Where there is a collateral contract, the written contract does not contain the whole of the terms."

1880, VAN FLEET, C., in *Van Syckel v. Dalrymple*, 32 N. J. Eq. 233: "What was said during the negotiation of the contract or at the time of its execution must be excluded, on the ground that the parties have made the writing the only repository and memorial of the truth, and whatever is not found in the writing must be understood to have been waived and abandoned."

(2) In the next place, this rule has no necessary relation to any rule of law *requiring* acts to be done with a *particular formality*, such as *writing*. On

<sup>2</sup> In the following passages the theory is concisely stated: *Eng.* 1781, L. C. Thurlow, in *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. C. 92 ("The rule is perfectly clear that where there is a deed in writing, it will admit of no contract that is not part of the deed"); 1859, Pollock, C. B., in *Harris v. Pickett*, 4 H. & N. 1, 7 ("The rule relied on by the plaintiffs only applies where the parties to an agreement reduce it to writing and agree or intend that that writing shall be their agreement"); 1859, Martin, B., in *Lang-*

*ton v. Higgins*, 4 H. & N. 401, 408 ("Where two parties enter into a contract and put it into [single] writing, that writing determines the terms of the bargain"); *U. S.* 1861, Hoar, J., in *Kelly v. Cunningham*, 1 All. Mass. 473 ("The writing is the contract of the parties, in the view of the law, and supersedes all the previous parol agreements"); 1878, Depue, J., in *Franklin F. Ins. Co. v. Martin*, 40 N.J.L. 568, 581 ("The written contract shall be regarded as the sole repository of the intentions of the parties").



the one hand, a contract may be entirely in written form, prescribed by law, and yet the terms may be scattered through many writings and not integrated in a single document; for example, a will of personalty under the statute of Charles II (against frauds and perjuries) had to be in writing, and yet the ecclesiastical Courts constantly dealt with valid wills which were made up from numerous separate writings of all sorts.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, even where no form of writing is prescribed, the rule of integration applies if the parties have in fact embodied their act in a single memorial.<sup>4</sup>

(3) As a consequence of the same principle, it is to be noted that, in theory, the rule of Integration would apply equally to an act embodied in *oral form*, *i. e.* to a single oral pronouncement.<sup>5</sup> Such a transaction is entirely unlikely in fact; it can be imagined, perhaps, in a contract by heliograph or by radiograph. But it serves to illustrate and emphasize the principle that the essence of the present rule is the embodiment of the act in a single utterance and that the rule applies to acts as acts, independently of whether the form be written or oral.

(4) Finally, the notion of Integration is not that any *additional terms* are involved in that process, but merely that the terms are contained in a different material or embodiment; and therefore the act is complete and binding when finally assented to before integration, even if it is an agreed condition that the act shall be so reduced or integrated.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2426. **History of the Rule.** Looking back to find the origin and development of this rule, the precise inquiry, then, is this: The modern rule being that when the parties have embodied a transaction in a single document, the writing is indisputable as to the terms of the transaction, how far back in our history does this rule go, and what were the circumstances of its origin and development?

It might have been supposed that this great principle of our law had come down to us as a continuous tradition from the earliest days. The indisputability of the terms of a writing seems to harmonize with that rigid formalism

<sup>3</sup> See the cases cited *post*, § 2454.

<sup>4</sup> 1845, *Pollock, C. B.*, in *Eden v. Blake*, 13 M. & W. 614, 618 ("Whatever be the value of the goods sold, whether it be such as calls for a memorandum in writing, under the statute of frauds, or not, if there has been a memorandum in writing, it cannot be altered by extrinsic evidence").

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1854, Mr. (later Justice) Blackburn, arguing, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703 ("It may be convenient first to answer a question, put from the Bench, as to whether there is a distinction between written and verbal contracts. There is a difference; but in this respect there is none. If the parties met for the first and last time, and made a contract entirely by [oral] words, these words would, if proved, have precisely the same construction as if they had been written down"); *U. S.* 1885, *Mulkey, J.*, in *Gilbert v. McGinnis*,

114 Ill. 28, 28 N. E. 382 ("The rule here stated [as to interpolating a usage] is equally applicable to a verbal contract, where the terms of it are definitely fixed, as they are in the present case").

<sup>6</sup> 1894, *Sansers v. Pottlitzer B. F. Co.*, 144 N. Y. 209, 39 N. E. 75 (defendant and plaintiff had settled by letters and telegrams upon the terms of their contract, and had mutually assented, the intention being also to embody the terms thereupon in a single document; the defendant then refused to execute the document unless a new condition was inserted; held, that the understanding that the contract should be embodied in a single document did not involve the addition of any substantive terms to the obligation, and that the contract could therefore be enforced in spite of its not having been so embodied); 1906, *International Harv. Co. v. Campbell*, 43 Tex. Civ. App. 421, 96 S. W. 93 (collecting other cases).

of primitive days which is elsewhere in the law constantly observable (*ante*, § 2405). Resting though it does now on a rational foundation of experience and policy, did it not nevertheless exist, even at the very beginning, as a natural part of the earlier system? Curiously enough, its history is quite the contrary. Our primitive system knew it not. Only towards the end of the middle ages does it come into being; and only in fairly modern times does it gain complete recognition.

Its history falls, by a rough division, into three periods: I, from primitive times till the vogue of the seal, in the 1200s; II, then, on English soil, till the statute of frauds and perjuries, in 1678; III, and thence, its modern recognition.<sup>1</sup>

I. In the primitive Germanic notions, at the time of the barbarian invasions and under the Merovingian and Carolingian monarchies, there was certainly no notion of the indisputability of the terms of a document. This is explained, and was indeed predetermined, by the character of the civilization of those peoples. When the Germanic tribes spread west and south, and absorbed the Roman territories in Gaul, Spain, and Northern Italy, they brought with them two marked traits, — an ignorance of letters, and a legal system of formal oral transactions. They found writing in use among the Romanized peoples, and (in Italy at least) an advanced habit of transaction by notarial documents; and this they in part fell in with. But it remained alien to their own ideas; and after the dissolution of the Carolingian empire and the subsidence of Romanesque influence (say, by the 900s), the alien element that had found entrance was excised, and the development of their native system proceeded on its own main lines.<sup>2</sup> The document, then, even

§ 2426. <sup>1</sup> The materials for this first part of the story are to be gleaned from the following works; 1877-8, Ficker, *Beiträge zur Urkundenlehre*, 1885, Heusler, *Institutionen des Deutschen Privatrechts*; 1887, Posse, *Die Lehre von Privaturkunden*; 1889, Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, I, 476-555; 1887-92, Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* (based upon earlier separate essays by the same author, especially his *Rechtsgeschichte der römischen und germanischen Urkunden*); 1903, Brunner, *Grundzüge der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte* (confirming his earlier results); 1894, A. Giry, *Manuel de la diplomatie*, c. IX, quoted *ante*, § 2161; 1895, A. S. Schultze, *Zur Lehre vom Urkundenbeweise*, *Zeitschrift für das privatrecht und öffentliches Recht*, XXII, 70; 1898, Déclareuil, *Les preuves judiciaires dans le droit franc du V<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Nouv. revue hist. du droit fr. et étranger*, XXI, 220, 747, 757 (independently reaching results in harmony with the German scholars); 1902, Schroeder, *Lehrbuch der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, 4th ed., 361, 698; 1918, Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (*Harvard Studies in History*, No. XXIV); 1920, Tout, *Chapters in the Adminis-*

*trative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber, and the Small Seals*, c. IV, § 1, "The King's Seal, and Sealing as the Means of Authentication" (*University of Manchester Publications, Historical Series*, No. XXXIV; quoted *ante*, § 2161).

All these scholars are in substantial agreement upon the historical facts to be referred to: Ficker and Bresslau having contributed most to establish the correct history of the great fact, the relation of the seal and the attesting witnesses to the effect of the document. Pertile (*Storia del diritto italiano*, ed. 1900, b. V, c. II, sect. III, b. VI, pt. 1, pp. 417-419) is in accord as to most points, yet does not notice the importance of the seal; but in Italy the early vogue of notaries gave a different turn to the story of its local law. Stouffe (*Étude sur la formation des contrats par l'écriture dans le droit des formules du V<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*; *Nouvelle revue hist. du droit*, XI, 249; 1887) ignores entirely the historical place of the seal; but Bresslau and Posse had not at that date published their researches copiously confirming Ficker's.

<sup>2</sup> Ficker, I, 83-88; Brunner, R. G., I, 399, II, 420; *id.*, *Grundz.* 41, 119; Pollock & Maitland, II, 88-190.



in its most definite type ('carta'), is in the Germanic system merely one of the symbols that entered into the formalism of the transaction, and, like the wand, the glove, and the knife, has an efficacy independent of its written tenor, — which indeed could mean nothing to the parties who employed it:

"In the legal affairs of a people who, from the lowest churl to the great Emperor Charles, were unskilled alike in reading and in writing, the written document could have but a precarious position, and its acceptance into legal practice was opposed by all sorts of obstacles, — in particular, by an almost ineradicable distrust of everything written, which they feared with the fear of a man who stands weaponless and helpless. For us moderns a written document is quite another thing than for the Germanic tribes, confronted with it yet not comprehending it. Nowadays, our documents of debt, or the like, we write ourselves, or at least sign them after perusal; we are masters of them, and we know that the thing we have written or signed is precisely what it is, and no fearsome mysterious thing. Quite otherwise with the Germanic peoples, confronted with the alien practice of legal writings, upon their invasions of Roman regions. The grantor of land, the borrower of money, could neither read nor write the document which might be executed in his name; he could but mark his cross at the bottom, and hope that all was right. Thus we hear, even in the early 1200s, a certain bailiff of the abbey of Pruem, in a litigation with the abbey before Henry IV, scornfully protesting, when the abbey produces a royal charter against him, that a partisan scribe could indite whatever he might please to invent ('irridens testamenta, dicens quod penna cuiuslibet quelibet notare posset, non ideo suum jus amittere deberet'). So too, in even a later age, there was an almost proverbial verse<sup>3</sup> which ran, 'On parchment, scribes may place with ease Exactly what their own minds please.' It is, in short, easy to imagine the mistrust which must in those days have attached itself to the written document. . . . The truth is that the legal value of the 'carta' consisted in this, that by means of it the legal transaction was completed. . . . The grantor of a piece of land could transfer it in the ancient national form of 'sale' and 'vestitura,' or he could now accomplish the transfer by means of the document 'per cartam venditionis', and the 'traditio per cartam' effected the transfer of ownership, just as before this the 'sale' had done. . . . Thus the 'traditio cartæ' was itself a formal act. The act of delivery of the document was performed by the maker grasping the still blank parchment, lifting it from the earth (in land transfers at least, by Frankish usage), calling upon the witnesses to grasp it with him, handing it to the scribe to fill out the writing, and, after signatures affixed, delivering it to the grantee."<sup>4</sup>

In this stage, then, the 'carta' merely plays a convenient part, first, by enabling the formal delivery of the land to be made symbolically, away from the premises, and, next, by preserving against future forgetfulness the names of the witnesses.<sup>5</sup>

The important and unquestionable fact is that the tenor of the writing *does not legally and bindingly establish anything*.<sup>6</sup> If the truth of its statement is disputed — the amount of money loaned, the area of land conveyed, the conditions of tenure annexed —, the terms of the transaction may and must be proved by calling the witnesses to it, regardless of any contradiction of the writing.<sup>7</sup> The attendant witnesses continued to be, as they had been,

<sup>3</sup> Konrad von Würzburg, Schwanritter, l. 571.

<sup>4</sup> Heusler, I, 86.

<sup>5</sup> Ficker, I, 85; Bresslau, I, 729, 730.

<sup>6</sup> Ficker, 82 ff.; Posse, 63; Brunner, R. G., I, 393, II, 420; id., Grundz., 76, 119, 159; Heusler, I, 91; Déclarcuil, 757; Bresslau, 483, 500, 799; Schultze, 101; Schroeder, 361, 698;

Pertile, I, pt. 1, p. 417, pt. 2, p. 192; Glasson, Hist. du droit et des inst. de la France, III, 503,

<sup>7</sup> "That the probative value of a document lay only in its witnesses may be gathered from the fact that the word 'urkunde' meant nothing else than 'witness'": Schroeder, 361; so Brunner, R. G. II, 391.



the main reliance for the proof of a disputed transaction. The procedure for disputing by the witnesses' oaths the correctness of the document was elaborate and well-settled, and its ultimate settlement might turn upon a wager of battle. How long was the persistence of this subsidiary status of the document, and how continuous the connection between Germanic usage and early Anglo-Norman legal ideas, may be seen from the following records of English litigation two hundred years after the Conquest:

1292, *Anon.*, Year Book 20 Edw. I, 258 (Horwood's ed.): "A brought the mordancester against B, on the death of his father, for tenements in C; and he prayed the assise. — B. 'There ought not to be an assise: for see here your father's charter, by which he enfeoffed us and put us in good seisin. Judgment if there ought to be an assise.' — A. 'I admit perfectly that the charter is the deed of my father; but I tell you that he gave you the tenements by that charter upon these terms, viz., that you should hold it for one month, and that at the end of the month you should espouse his daughter Emma; and that if you did not, the land should revert to him and his heirs. Now, he died within the month, and at the end of the month you would not marry his daughter; therefore we pray judgment if there ought not to be an assise.' — B. 'You have admitted the charter, which is simple and unconditional. Judgment if there ought to be an assise.' — A. 'Whatever the words of the charter may be, such was the covenant between my father and his friends and your friends; ready, etc.' — B. 'The reverse. — Therefore to the country.' — The Jurors said that such was the contract even as A said; and that his father died within the month. — They were asked if he died seised in his demesne as of fee. — The Jurors. 'We pray your assistance.' — The Justice. 'And inasmuch as it is found that the estate of B was conditional, which condition was not specifically performed, by reason of the default of B, and therefore his seisin was null.'"

1314, *Rye v. Humby*, Year Book, 8 Edw. II, pp. 36-51, No. 9 (Bolland's ed., Selden Soc. Pub., vol. XXXVII, 1920); writ of dower against Humby, who vouched Rye to warranty, who tendered a "charter without conditions." Humby's counsel avers that at the time of making the deed it was covenanted that on a certain condition the deed should be void. *Counsel* argues: "The charter is nought but a little ink and parchment which will not avail to override my will at the time of livery; . . . the charter vesteth no estate in you other than in accordance with the livery of seisin; and the reason of this is that the charter is not seisin but evidence of seisin." SCROPE, J.: "If I make you a charter in fee and deliver you seisin for the term of your life, the charter vesteth in you naught more than an estate in accordance with the terms of the livery of seisin; and the reason of that is that the charter is not an enfeoffment, but evidence only; and you will certainly be received to aver a feoffment at variance with it." <sup>8</sup>

II. The *rise of the seal* brings a new era for written documents, not merely by furnishing them with a means of authenticating genuineness (*ante*, § 2161), but also by rendering them indisputable as to the terms of the transaction

<sup>8</sup> Another case of a similar sort is cited by Professor Thayer (Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 105) from Forsyth, who cites from Jocelyn de Brakelonde. Other Year-Book cases are: 1308, *Pastrel v. Amory*, Y. B. 1 Ed. II (Maitland's ed. I, 32; Selden Society Pub. vol. XVII), Trin. No. 3 (the same point, but the decision was reserved, and is not recorded); 1310, *Willoughby v. Queeneby*, Y. B. 4 Edw. II, Maitland's ed. No. 54, p. 166 (Selden Society Pub. vol. XXII). Sundry cases appear in the Chan-

cellor's court in the 1400s as cited in Barbour's *History of Contract in Early English Equity*, p. 91 (Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History, IV, 1914); but Mr. Barbour is apparently not correct in assuming that these cases were due to the Chancellor's "being restricted by no stringent rules of evidence." About the 1300s, the following passage also is found: *Mirror of Justices*, *ubi infra*, pp. 75, 115, 152, 163 ("a charter is vicious if it testifies that a gift has been made, whereas as yet there has been no delivery of seisin").



and thus dispensing with the summoning of witnesses. The vogue of the seal and of the transaction-witness wax and wane, the one relatively to the other.<sup>9</sup> This legal value of the seal was the result of a practice working from above downwards, from the King to the people at large. It is involved, in the beginning, with the Germanic principle that the King's word is undisputable. Who gives him the lie, forfeits life. The King's seal to a document makes the truth of the document incontestable. This leads, along another line, to the modern doctrine of the verity of judicial records, — to be noticed later. Here, for private men's documents, its significance is that the indisputability of a document sealed by the King marked it with an extraordinary quality, much to be sought after. As the habitual use of the seal extends downwards, its valuable attributes go with it. First, a few counts and bishops acquire seals; and then their courtesies are sought in lending the impress and guarantee of their seal to some document of an inferior person, as serving him in future instead of witnesses.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the ordinary freeman comes usually to have a seal; and his seal too makes a document indisputable — at least, by himself. This extension of the seal begins in the 1000s, and is completed by the 1200s.<sup>11</sup> Thus the old régime of proof by transaction-witnesses disappears by degrees; by the 1300s they are almost superfluous.<sup>12</sup> This means that when a transaction has been made by writing, the parties rely for their future proof no longer on witnesses called in at the time of the transaction, but on the opponent's seal found affixed to the document, which thereby makes its terms indisputable by him as representing the actual terms of the transaction between the parties.<sup>13</sup>

The tool for shaping the new doctrine had now been supplied; and it remained to develop and extend the doctrine. Here it must be remembered that in Anglo-Norman times people are still, on the whole, unfamiliar with writing, and that the chief varieties of transaction — namely, those affecting land — are still practised with oral forms;<sup>14</sup> the essential, working concep-

<sup>9</sup> Ficker, I, 94, 95, 106, 107, 115; Bresslau, 510-549; Brunner, R. G., I, 393, II, 420, 523.

<sup>10</sup> Ficker, 94; Posse, 130; *ante*, § 2161.

<sup>11</sup> Ficker, 91, 97; Posse, 129; Bresslau, 534 ("by the second half of the 1200s even ordinary burgers seal their documents"); Holmes, *The Common Law*, 272; Pollock and Maitland, II, 221 ("at the date of the Conquest the Norman duke has a seal, and his cousin the late King of England had a seal; . . . before the end of the thirteenth century the free and lawful man usually had a seal"); see the full statement by Professor Tout, quoted *ante*, § 2161.

<sup>12</sup> Ficker, 95-97; Bresslau, 545. The course of thought is seen in the attribution of the qualities of a witness to the seal, as in a much quoted passage of the *Schwabenspiegel*, c. 34, § 2: "Hilfet ein toter geziuge [*i. e.* die briefe] als wol dir als ein lebendiger" (Schultze, 119).

<sup>13</sup> Ficker, 82-91; Bresslau, 546 ("there is therefore no counter-proof allowable against the statements of fact [*den sachlichen Ber-*

*icht*'] in a sealed document"); id. 539 ("as a first principle of the law for documentary proof in Germany after the 1200s, it may be considered . . . [exceptions excepted] that the sealing was an indispensable requirement for the legal evidential force of a document, no matter who was its author"); Schroeder, 701; Schultze, 103, 118. This was long ago noted by Mr. Justice Holmes for English law: 1881, *The Common Law*, 272. Space does not suffice to note the interesting stages of progress, pointed out by Ficker, Bresslau, Giry, and Tout, by which this result was reached. The indenture or chirograph of the Anglo-Saxons was one of the intermediate expedients for securing genuineness and conclusiveness. But the seal proved its superiority for the latter purpose, and finally prevailed.

<sup>14</sup> Pollock & Maitland, II, 83, 93, 202, 217 (quoted *ante*, § 2405); Holdsworth, *History of English Law*, vol. III, 1st ed., 1909, p. 191, 3d ed., 1923, pp. 222, 401.

tion is the livery of seisin, not the charter. Whatever virtue there is in the writing is testimonial only. It furnishes one sort of proof; but it is not a necessary kind of proof, and the main thing is something done apart from the writing. "This indenture" merely "witnesseth"; and the now time-worn phrase was once the actual conception.<sup>15</sup>

So long as this notion of the operative element of transactions persisted, it must oppose a constant obstacle to the progress of the idea of an indisputable sealed document. Since the writing is not the vital thing, why yield to its terms? And so for two centuries or more the extension and adaptation of the new idea is slow. For mercantile contracts, the advance seems to have been settled by the 1300s.<sup>16</sup> But for land-transactions there was more tardy progress. By that time, charters (*i. e.* deeds) were becoming necessary accompaniments;<sup>17</sup> but they were not yet indisputable in every respect. For example, Littleton, about 1466, tells us<sup>18</sup> that where the deed is in terms absolute but the livery of seisin was made with an oral condition, still the condition is enforceable, because "nothing of the tenements passeth by the deed, for that the condition is not comprised"; and again, that though, for a condition attached to the transfer of a freehold, some writing must be shown, yet "a man may be aided upon such a condition by the verdict of twelve men taken at large,"<sup>19</sup> — just as the twelve men, in the case (above cited) of two centuries before, aided the plaintiff by a verdict directly contradicting the deed.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The word 'urkunde' signified, by etymology, "witness": note 9, *supra*. This was the usual conception still in the 1300s and 1400s; see the citation *supra*, n. 12, *infra*, c. 19; and the following: 1310, *Boys v. Charles*, Maitland's Yearbooks, II, 168, 3 Ed. II, No. 8 (Selden Soc. vol. XIX) ("a charter is not a feoffment; it is only evidence of a feoffment"); 1310, *Boxendone v. Haliburne*, Maitland's Yearbooks, II, 182, 186, 3 Ed. II, No. 12 ("The deeds are only evidence"); circa 1300, *Mirror of Justices*, b. II, c. 27, Seld. Soc. Pub. VII, 75 ("escritz testimonials de contracts," *i. e.* deeds) b. III, c. 23, *ib.* 107, 152 ("by way of aid for men's memory are writings, charters, and muniments very necessary for to testify the conditions and the points of contracts"); 1466(?), Littleton's Tenures, sect. 365, 371 ("un escript south seale provent mesme la condition"); 1881, Holmes, *The Common Law*, 270 ("a writing was a more general way of establishing a debt in Glanvill's time than witnesses; . . . [it was] only another, although more conclusive, mode of proof"); and it persists as a phrase to the time of Sheppard's Touchstone, in the 1600s: c. IV. p. 50 ("a deed is a writing or instrument, written on paper or parchment, sealed and delivered, to prove and testify the agreement of the parties whose deed it is to the things contained in the deed").

<sup>16</sup> 1368, Y. B. 41 Edw. III, 10, 6 (quoted *infra*, note 30).

<sup>17</sup> Pollock & Maitland, II, 82, 91.

<sup>18</sup> Tenures, sect. 359.

<sup>19</sup> Tenures, sect. 366. Compare the following, in 1523: Y. B. 14 H. VIII, 17, 6 and 7 (*Brudnel, J.*: "Such things as pass by parol, are as well by parol as written on condition; for every grant of a chattel is good on condition without writing; for a deed is nothing but a proof and testimonial of the agreement of the party,— as a deed of feoffment is nothing but a proof of the livery, for the land passes by the livery; but when the deed and the livery are joined together, that is a proof of the livery").

<sup>20</sup> In a later day, this tradition is thus expounded: *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, *Evidence*, 84 ("Things that lie in livery may be pleaded without deed; . . . so a man may plead a demise, without deed, and give the indenture in evidence, for the indenture may be used as an evidence of the contract that would be good whether there were any indenture or not. . . . [Livery of seisin] is a fact a man cannot impeach or deny, and this is from the notoriety of the ceremony, . . . therefore if the defendant *pleads* the livery and seisin of the plaintiff, the plaintiff cannot reply that the delivery was conditional, without showing the deed, inasmuch as the plaintiff is estopped to defeat his own livery by a naked averment and parol evidence only. But the jury are not estopped on the *general issue* from finding such a conditional feoffment, for the jury are men of the



On the other hand, Littleton in the very same treatise<sup>21</sup> is mentioning as "common learning" that a plea of condition, except in some special cases, shall not defeat a freehold "unless he showeth the proof in writing." The 1400s were evidently a transition period. By the time of Coke's commentary upon Littleton and of Sheppard's Touchstone — by the 1600s, on the whole — the modern rule of indisputability is established for all transactions affecting realty.<sup>22</sup>

No doubt by that time the surrounding circumstances had facilitated, and judicial reflection and conscious policy had stimulated, the natural growth of the newer rule. In the first place, the community had become *more generally lettered*, and this in its turn had resulted from the spread of the printing process in the late 1400s. Reading and writing were no longer the mysterious arts of a few. It was natural to hold that a man was bound by his written version of the transaction, when he might easily guard himself against the writing's being deficient in some of the agreed terms;<sup>23</sup> and it was the more natural to rely wholly upon the writing since the dying out of old methods (due in part to jury-trial) had made transaction-witnesses not commonly available. In the second place, *mercantile custom* had already pointed the way in advance. The Lombards in London (and doubtless also — somewhat later — the Flemings and the Hansas) were employing the commercial forms which had developed with the revival of commerce in the preceding three centuries. These mercantile documents of debt had already invented the device of indisputability, — to some extent, no doubt, preserving in tradition the expedients of the advanced Roman law. Such models can be seen to have had some influence upon English ideas.<sup>24</sup> In the third place, the rigid

neighborhood that are supposed to be present at the solemnity . . . and by consequence may exhibit the condition on the feoffment. But since the use of the solemnities before men of the country hath ceased . . . therefore the statute of frauds and perjuries hath enacted that no . . . [estates] shall be assigned, granted, or surrendered unless it be by deed or note in writing").

<sup>21</sup> Sect. 365.

<sup>22</sup> Yet, even in Sheppard's day, relics remain, as where he says (c. IX) that if the words of livery are to one effect and the deed to another effect the deed is void; though if the livery is 'secundum formam chartæ,' any additional words of oral livery are void.

<sup>23</sup> *E. g.* Babington, J., in 1430, Y. B. 8 H. VI, 26, 15, repudiating proof of an oral condition to qualify a deed: "And it will be adjudged my own folly that I did not wish to have it written in." The contrast between this effect of the spread of letters, and the effect on the doctrine of intention or mistake (*ante*, § 2405), is worth noticing; in the latter aspect, it bound a man to what was in the deed; in the present aspect, it kept out what was *not* in the deed.

Compare the popular view even a century later: *King Henry VI*, pt. II; IV, 2:

"*Dick*. The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

"*Cade*. Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment, that parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings; but I say 'tis the bee's wax, for I did but seal once to a thing and I was never mine own man since."

<sup>24</sup> As early as the 1200s, this leaver is seen working; "Note that by the law merchant a man cannot wage his law against a tally": 1222, Y. B. 20 Edw. I, p. 68; and the same rule for a sealed confession of debt is put forward as late as 1460 as a "custom of London": Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46, cited in Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, 394. Further illustrations are furnished in Pollock & Maitland, II, 212, 222. For this doctrine of the foreigners' commercial law, see Baldus, *Consilia* I, note 48 ("Stabiles et firmæ debent esse scripturæ mercatorum, — juxta illud vulgare dictum 'quod scripsi scripsi,' quia scriptura mercatorum et camporum habetur pro sententia et sua fide transit in rem judicatam"), quoted in Gold-



*control of the jury* influenced the judges, indirectly, by leading them to keep from the jury all alleged oral transactions which might be misused by them to overturn the words of the writing. The safety of written proof was supposed to be at stake. If the parties were allowed to put in averments extraneous to the writing, it must go to the jury, and there was no telling what the jury might do; but if the judges took exclusive charge, they could better control the situation. This reasoning is not much reported till later times,<sup>25</sup> but it was plainly there.<sup>26</sup> Finally, a general policy of regard for the *trustworthiness of writing*, as against the shiftiness of mere testimonial recollection, was beginning to be consciously avowed, irrespective of any discrimination against the jury. This is a distinctly modern attitude, but it emerges as one of the considerations that finally tended to fix the rule. "Thus you would avoid a matter of record by simple surmise," says Paston, J., in 1430.<sup>27</sup> Coke, of course, furnishes such reflections in plenty, by the time of the 1600s; "it would be full of great inconvenience that none should know by the written words of a will what construction to make or advice to give but it should be controlled by collateral averments."<sup>28</sup> Thus a judicial legislative policy comes to reënforce the other influences.

But, meantime, what of the theory of the rule? At the outset, in the Anglo-Norman times, as already noticed, it arises merely as a testimonial rule; the writing replaces the transaction-witnesses as a mode of proof. But in its modern shape it is a constitutive rule (*ante*, § 2425). The writing itself is operative; the writing *is* the act, not merely one of the possible ways of proving the act. By what sequence of ideas was this transition of theory effected?

(1) At first, the new principle appears merely as a *waiver of ordinary proof*, permitting the substitution of another. The man who has sealed a document is not allowed to bring his transaction-witnesses or his compurgators to prove what the transaction really was; he has in advance waived this

schmidt, Handb. des Handelsrechts, (1891) 3d ed., I, 1. p. 389, note; see also *ib.* 306; Franken, Das Französische Pfandrecht (1879), 258; Pertile, *ubi supra*, note 1, vol. VI, pt. 1, 421. The part played by foreign mercantile custom in developing other aspects of our law is well illustrated in Mr. Hazeltine's essay on The Gage of Land in Mediæval England (1904, Harvard Law Review, XVIII, 36, 43).

<sup>25</sup> The examples cited *supra*, note 8, show how the earlier juries might make short work of deeds. A passage in Thayer, Prelim. Treat. 105, further illustrates this. It must be noted, too, as indicated in the quotation from Gilbert, *supra*, note 20, that "the use of the solemnities of livery before men of the country" was dying out, and that so long as the vital thing had been this livery, the matter might well be left to them; but there was no reason for considering a transaction of writing as within their province.

<sup>26</sup> 1610, Altham's Case, 8 Co. Rep. 155 ("It

was resolved that the said foreign or collateral averment out of the said deed [setting up a prior inconsistent agreement] was not of any force or effect in the law. For every deed consists upon two parts, *scil.*, matter of fact, and upon the construction in law; matter of fact is to be averred by the party and triable by the jurors; the other, being matter in law, is to be discussed by the judges of the law"); 1659, Lawrence v. Dodwell, 1 Lutw. 734 (Powell, J.: "The averment should be gathered from the words of the will; it is not safe to admit a jury to try the intent of a testator"); 1708, Strode v. Russell, 2 Vern. 621 (in chancery; "We will consider how far it shall be allowed and how far not, after it is read; and this is not like the case of evidence to a jury, who are easily biased by it, which this Court is not").

<sup>27</sup> Y. B. 8 H. VI, 26, 15.

<sup>28</sup> 1591, Lord Cheyney's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 68a; 1605, Countess of Rutland's Case, *ib.* 26 (quoted *infra*, n. 38).



right. Such was the notion on the Continent;<sup>29</sup> and such was the first conception in England. This waiver is commonly spoken of as an "estoppel," *i. e.* a conception which concedes that the truth might be as alleged, and that ordinarily the party would have a right to prove it in the usual way, but that here he is "stopped" from that proof, by his own sealed act. "It does not lie in your mouth to say the obligation is not good."<sup>30</sup> The merely subjective effect of the seal in this respect is well illustrated by a controversy surviving in Littleton's time;<sup>31</sup> some lawyers thought, where a feoffment had been made, and a deed-poll given (*i. e.* in the single name of the feoffor, not sealed by both and indentured), naming a condition to the feoffment, that the feoffor could not take advantage of the condition; that is, because it could be used only by way of estoppel, and the feoffee was not estopped by a deed which he had not sealed; the effect being to refuse efficacy to the condition though named in the deed.<sup>32</sup>

(2) Alongside of this theory, but playing gradually a more important part, was the theory that a transaction of one "nature" cannot be overturned by *anything of an inferior "nature."* This is the real lever which helps on the progress to the modern idea. But it appears early, and apparently as a borrowing from the Roman law.<sup>33</sup> It has broad aspects, and is responsible for some other rules, now mostly abandoned, — such as the rule that the oral payment of a bond is no discharge.<sup>34</sup> But in its present relations it serves to introduce and emphasize the operative notion of a writing. Once concede the possibility that a sealed document may be indisputable, and then this other idea will expand and reënforce the former in every direction. In particular, the sealed instrument will "discharge" and "determine" any prior transactions, whether really separate and distinct in time, or practically contemporaneous. In other words, the sealed instrument will not merely *prove* the transaction, but rather, by replacement, will now *be* the transaction.

This theory was struggling for ascendancy in the 1400s. In 1422, where the plaintiff sues for money given on account, and the defendant asks for

<sup>29</sup> Ficker, I, 93.

<sup>30</sup> 1368, Y. B. 41 Edw. III, 10, 6. So also in 1460: Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46: "If I bring a writ of debt, and count that the defendant bought of me a horse for 10*l.*, and he wishes to wage his law, I may estop him by the specialty proving the said contract; the same law of a receipt,—if he wishes to plead, 'never received,' and tenders his law, he will be estopped of his law by the specialty proving the receipt," but some were of contrary opinion. In the neat phrase of Mr. Justice Holmes (*The Common Law*, 262), "if a man said he was bound, he was bound."

<sup>31</sup> Tenures, sect. 375.

<sup>32</sup> This notion of estoppel is illustrated in Pollock & Maitland, II, 205-222, *passim*. It is still seen in Sheppard's day: *Touchstone*, c. 14 (in deeds, "an estoppel doth bar and conclude either party to say or except anything against anything contained in it").

<sup>33</sup> It has been noted, by Pollock & Maitland, II, 219, as occurring in Bracton and elsewhere, *e. g.* Y. B. 33-5 Edw. I, pp. 331, 547 (1306). In the Digest, it appears in *de solutionibus*, 46, 3, 80, and also in *de diversis regulis*, 50, 17, 35 (Ulpian: "Nihil tam naturale est quam eo genere quidque dissolvere quo colligatum est; ideo verborum obligatio verbis tollitur; nudi consensus obligatio contrario consensu tollitur").

<sup>34</sup> 1542, *Waberley v. Cockerel*, Dyer 51 (payment of a bond is no discharge; "although the truth be that the plaintiff is paid his money, still it is better to suffer a mischief to one man than an inconvenience to many, which would subvert a law; for if matter in writing may be so easily defeated and avoided by such surmise and naked breath, a matter in writing would be of no greater authority than a matter of fact").

profert of the deed of acknowledgment given by him, and argues that the deed superseded everything else, just as a bond for 20*l.* would have discharged a prior simple contract for the same, the plaintiff, replying, concedes the case put, "for the contract and the bond are two different contracts, and by the greater I am discharged from the less; but in the case of this receipt of money, and the deed which proves its receipt, there is but one contract," *i. e.* a contract by delivery of the money, the deed being merely evidence.<sup>35</sup> Again, in 1460, "if I make a contract [of loan] by deed indented, I shall not be compelled to count on the indenture; for the contract is not 'determined' by the indenture, but continues [as independent], and a man may elect how he will bring his action,"<sup>36</sup> — although if he had chosen to bring it on the deed, its terms could not have been disputed.<sup>37</sup> Here appears plainly enough the idea of the indisputability of the document coexisting with the idea that the transaction is something independent of the document and is merely proved by it; and yet the notion that the document "determines" and merges the whole transaction is winning its way. For two centuries to come this mode of speech — that the writing "dissolves," "discharges," "determines," or "destroys" all other prior or coexisting transactions — is predominant in expounding the theory of the rule.<sup>38</sup> The way is thus prepared for the modern idea of operativeness, forming the third stage of the rule's history.

III. However, one step still remains to be taken. As yet — say, in the 1500s — this theory is applicable to "matter of a higher nature," *i. e.*, specialties, sealed documents, and *not to writings as such*. How and when did this last extension of ideas occur?

The Statute of Frauds and Perjuries, in 1678, seems to note the modern epoch's full beginning. The result was predetermined by the influences already mentioned; this statute appears, of course, as the mark rather than the cause of the final development. But still its literal scope was limited, as to the kinds of transactions and documents; and it had a really causal influ-

<sup>35</sup> Y. B. I H. VI, 7, 31; cited in Thayer, Prelim. Treat. 394.

<sup>36</sup> Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46; cited in Thayer, *ubi supra*.

<sup>37</sup> Again: 1439, Y. B. 18 H. VI, 17, 8 (where a lease is by deed, and action brought on it; "the foundation of my action, which is a specialty, is so high in its nature that it cannot be destroyed by anything except a thing of as high a nature as it is, such as a release").

<sup>38</sup> 1605, Countess of Rutland's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 26 ("every contract or agreement ought to be dissolved by matter of as high a nature as the first deed; . . . also it would be inconvenient that matters in writing made by advice and on consideration, and which finally import the certain truth of the agreement of the parties should be controlled by averment of the parties to be proved by the uncertain testimony of slippery memory"); *circa* 1610, *Burglacy v. Ellington*, Brownl. 191 (title to

land by deed of bargain and sale, alleged to be void for usury; plea that the buyer orally agreed that the seller could keep the rents; the counsel for the deed's validity "put that maxim that everything must be dissolved by that by which it is bound, and his whole argument depended upon that"; notice that he was evidently relying on the phrase of Ulpian, quoted *supra*, note 33); 1696, L. C. J. Holt, in *Falkland v. Bertie*, 2 Vern. 334, 339 ("the last will . . . must be admitted sufficient to repeal all former wills, and much more to control all parol declarations"); *ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 279 (a release under seal is a good discharge of an account, for "any deceit or mistake in former payments is but matter in 'pais,' and therefore not of as high a nature as the deed; and in giving evidence, everything must be contradicted by a matter of the same notoriety as that whereby it is proved").



ence of its own, as a plain example leading the Courts to complete the process by expanding and familiarizing the general idea for all writings whatever.

That example was furnished by the first and third sections, in which the estate was spoken of as "*put in writing*" and as "assigned, granted, or surrendered, . . . by *deed or note in writing*." Here were two notable features, practically novel in this relation. The legal act was to be constituted, not merely proved, by the document, and the document might be an ordinary writing, not necessarily a "deed," *i. e.*, under seal. It is true that these features were not absolutely without precedent. There had been already two other statutes, — one in 1535, requiring a transfer by bargain and sale to be "made by writing,"<sup>39</sup> and the other in 1540, permitting freedom of devise of lands by "last will and testament in writing."<sup>40</sup> But the former statute had required the writing to be a deed, "indented and sealed," so that in this respect it involved no novelty; and the latter statute was as yet so little conceived from the modern point of view that in its construction the Courts had preserved rather the old testimonial idea, and had virtually treated the testator's oral utterance as merely evidenced by the writing.<sup>41</sup> The contrast between this attitude of the 1500s and the attitude of a century later is seen in the corresponding provision (sect. 5) of the statute of frauds, which requires devises of land to "be in writing and signed, . . . or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect." The lingering of the old, also, and its meeting with the new, are to be seen in the same statute's provisions about trust estates; for the creation of these (by sect. 7) "shall be manifested and *proved* by some writing signed, . . . or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect," while their assignments (by sect. 9) "shall likewise *be* in writing signed, . . . or else they shall likewise be utterly void and of none effect." The contrast between the two ideas is further apparent in the phrases of sect. 4 ("unless the agreement, . . . or some note or memorandum thereof, shall be in writing"), which distinctly signified that the contract and the writing might be separate things.

The significance of the statute for the present purpose, then, was in the main, first, that it abolished the practice of creating estates of freehold by oral livery of seisin only, and, secondly, that it permitted the required document (for leases) to be a writing without seal.<sup>42</sup> By the former, it emphasized the constitutive (as opposed to the testimonial) nature of the document; by the latter, it extended the conception of constitutive documents beyond sealed ones to include all writings. The scope of these provisions was limited; but their moral and logical influence was wide and immediate. The

<sup>39</sup> St. 27 H. VIII, c. 16.

<sup>40</sup> St. 32 H. VIII, c. 1, § 1.

<sup>41</sup> Sheppard's Touchstone, 406 ("If the notary do only take certain rude notes or directions from the sick man, which he doth agree unto, and they be afterwards written fair in his life-time, and not showed to him again, or not written fair until

after his death, these are good testaments of lands").

<sup>42</sup> These effects have been clearly analyzed in *Mayberry v. Johnson*, 3 Green N. J. Eq. 116. Compare the article of Mr. Frank Goodwin, "Must an Agreement to Stand Seized have been in Writing before the Statute of Frauds?" (*Harvard Law Review*, VII, 464).



statute now began to be appealed to, in all questions of "parol evidence," as setting an example and typifying a general principle.<sup>43</sup>

The important consequence was that for that great mass of transactions which were not affected by the statute, but were none the less put in writing voluntarily by the parties, though not sealed — *i. e.* transactions for which by the older idea the writing would merely have been "evidence" —, the writing now came to be treated and spoken of as the constitutive thing. The modern view had come into complete existence; and the period of this seems to be about the end of the 1600s.<sup>44</sup> There are still recurring traces of the older theories;<sup>45</sup> but the modern result is practically achieved. The Chancellor's Court seems to have been slow to accept the full doctrine, — partly, no doubt, because of the older idea that it had something to do with the untrustworthiness of juries,<sup>46</sup> but also partly because that Court was still invoked as having a discretionary power to relieve against fixed rules of law.<sup>47</sup> But this inconsistency of practice soon disappeared; and the transition-period of four hundred years was accomplished. A legal transaction when reduced in writing was now to be conceived of as constituted, not merely indisputably proved, by the writing, — and this whether the writing was a requirement of

<sup>43</sup> *E. g.* 1696, *Falkland v. Bertie*, 2 Vern. 333 (proof of the testator's parol intention contrary to the legal effect of his will was excluded; L. C. J. Holt said that "the great uncertainty there is of proof in this case shows how necessary it was to make the statute against frauds and perjuries"); 1708, *Strode v. Russell*, 2 Vern. 621 ("No parol proof or declaration ought to be admitted out of the will to ascertain it; . . . and now since the statute of frauds and perjuries, this is stronger, because by that statute all wills are to be in writing"). Compare also Chief Baron Gilbert's remarks, about the same period, quoted *supra*, note 20.

<sup>44</sup> 1719, *Lilly's Practical Register*, 48, as quoted in *Viner's Abridgment*, "Contract," G. 18 ("If an agreement made by parol to do anything be afterwards reduced into writing, the parol agreement is thereby discharged; and if an action be brought for the non-performance of this agreement, it must be brought upon the agreement reduced into writing, and not upon the parol agreement; for both cannot stand together, because it appears to be but one agreement, and that shall be taken which is the latter and reduced to the greater certainty by writing, for 'vox emissa volat litera scripta manet'").

<sup>45</sup> As in the passages from *Lilly* and *Gilbert*, *supra*, and in *Benson v. Bellasis*, *infra*.

<sup>46</sup> See *Strode v. Russell*, *supra*, note 26.

<sup>47</sup> 1673, *Tyler v. Peversham*, Rep. temp. Finch 80 (deed of conveyance of a farm; the oral agreement was much considered, and apparently became decisive); 1673, *Feilder v. Studley*, Finch 90 (covenant in deed, not enforced); 1673, *Cheek v. Lisle*, Finch 98; 1674, *Garnan v. Fox*, Finch 172; 1681, *Fane v. Fane*, 1 Vern. 30 ("One may aver a trust of personal

estate," here upon testimony to the testator's intention); 1681, *Lee v. Henley*, 1 Vern. 37 (a scrivener's mistake in a settlement of land, in the nature of a will, was not allowed to be corrected); 1684, *Beachinall v. Beachinall*, 1 Vern. 246 (a deed of marriage-settlement, proved to have been "not drawn according to the agreement," was ordered by L. C. Nottingham to be "left out of the case"; but this decree was reversed by L. Keeper Guilford, to the extent of letting the deed be "given in evidence" at the trial at law); 1631-5, *Benson v. Bellasis*, 1 Vern. 15, 369 (deed of marriage-jointure; a parol agreement "made on the marriage" was set up; L. C. Jeffries said that "the jointure-deed is an evidence that all the precedent treaties and agreements were resolved into that"; but afterwards he increased the jointure "on evidence of her father and uncle that B., [the husband], when he proposed the treaty of marriage, offered to settle £500 per annum jointure; . . . but note, there was no [written] covenant or agreement proved whereby he bound himself to make a jointure of that value"); 1686, *Harvey v. Harvey*, 2 Ch. Cas. 180 (similar agreement of marriage-settlement allowed to overturn a deed); 1689, *Towers v. Moor*, 2 Vern. 98 (a testator's instructions were not received to show a mistake in a will; "we cannot go against the act of Parliament"; but in case of a surrender made [on the roll] by a steward of a copyhold, "if there be any mistake there, that is only a matter of fact, and the Courts of law will in that case admit an averment that there is a mistake, etc., either as to the lands or uses"); 1706, *Hill v. Wiggett*, 2 Vern. 547 (good example of the overturning by parol of such a copyhold-transfer).



law or merely voluntary, and whether it was sealed or unsealed. The reminiscence of the older idea, in the use of the term "parol evidence," to designate that which was legally inoperative, still persisted as a convenient term of discussion; but the correct legal theory, whenever it has been forced into consideration, has not failed to be avowed.

It remains to notice the development of the older conception in one other direction but to the same end. The King's word, it has been seen, was incontestable, and this quality attached itself to his sealed sanction of documents.<sup>48</sup> But, long before this, it was also conceived to sanction the indisputability of his judges' reports of their judicial doings.<sup>49</sup> Their *recordatio* (recollection or relation), oral though it be, is made indisputable. The progress of this doctrine is traced in the following passage:

1895, Sir *F. Pollock* and Professor *F. W. Maitland*, *History of the English Law*, II, 666: "The distinction that we still draw between 'courts of record' and courts that are 'not of record' takes us back to very early times when the King asserts that his own word as to all that has taken place in his presence is incontestible. This privilege he communicates to his own special court; its testimony as to all that is done before it is conclusive. If any question arises as to what happened on a previous occasion, the justices decide this by recording or bearing record ('recordantur,' 'portant recordum'). Other courts, as we have lately seen, may and, upon occasion, must bear record; but their records are not irrefragable; the assertions made by the representative doomsmen of the shire-moot may be contested by a witness who is ready to fight. We easily slip into saying that a court whose record is incontrovertible is a court which has record ('habet recordum') or is a court of record, while a court whose record may be disputed has no record ('non habet recordum') and is no court of record. In England, only the King's court — in course of time it becomes several courts — is a court of record for all purposes, though some of the lower courts 'have record' of some particulars, and sheriffs and coroners 'have record' of certain transactions, such as confessions of felony. In the old days, when as yet there were no plea rolls, the justices when they bore record relied upon their memories. From Normandy we obtain some elaborate rules as to the manner in which record is to be borne or made; for example a record of the Exchequer is made by seven men, and, if six of them agree, the voice of the seventh may be neglected. In England at a yet early time the proceedings of the royal court were committed to writing. Thenceforward the appeal to its record tended to become a reference to a roll, but it was long before the theory was forgotten that the rolls of the court were mere aids for the memories of the justices; and as duplicate and triplicate rolls were kept there was always a chance of disagreement among them. A line is drawn between 'matter of record' and 'matter in pays' or matter which lies in the cognizance of the country and can therefore be established by a verdict of jurors."

As the art of keeping the written records developed, and the practice of indisputability became trite, it might have been supposed that the constitutive feature of these writings would have developed early. But it is late in appearing; the record is usually said to "import absolute verity";<sup>50</sup> but no

<sup>48</sup> *Supra*, note 10.

<sup>49</sup> Brunner, *Schwurgerichte*, 189; *Rechtsgeschichte*, II, 523; *Wort und Form im alt-französischen Prozess*, republished in his *Forschungen z. Geschichte des deutschen und französischen Prozess*, 269 (quoting the maxim, "Ne contre recort ne puet en riens fère").

<sup>50</sup> 1628, Coke upon Littleton, 260a ("Recordum is a memoriall or remembrance in rolles of parchment of the proceedings and acts of a Court of justice. . . . And the rolles, being the records or memorialls of the judges of Courts of record, import in them such incontrollable credit and veritie as they admit no averment,



further progress is for a long time made. And naturally enough; for any other theory, however necessary, is here palpably artificial. When a seller orally names a price and then writes it in a contract, it is easy to conceive of the writing as displacing the oral utterance and constituting alone the act. But when a counsel files a pleading or makes a motion, or a jury renders a verdict, it is plain that the clerk's act of writing is an actually separate thing from any of these. Only for the utterances of the judge himself is it entirely natural to think of the record as 'per se' his own act. Nevertheless, in the end, the most practical and easily handled notion is that which identifies the record with the proceedings. This theory has finally prevailed,<sup>51</sup> and the notion of a constitutive writing is now extended to include the record of a judicial proceeding.<sup>52</sup>

### 1. Integration of Unilateral Acts

§ 2427. **Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).** The reduction of an act to a writing, so as to bring it under the present rule (*ante*, § 2425), may be made as well for a unilateral act (*i. e.* an act involving a single party only) as for a bilateral act (*i. e.* an act involving two or more parties). In either case, it is a question of the nature of the act and of the party's intention to embody it solely in the writing.

Of ordinary *acts of private persons*, there are few that are integrated. A *notice* or *demand* would be a not uncommon instance; for example, if orally a party should give notice of a lease's termination or forfeiture, or should demand a payment, and then should follow this by the same notice in written form, the latter would presumably merge and replace the former, and the terms of the writing would be decisive, so far as concerned the sufficiency of the act of notification.<sup>1</sup> Other instances are rare.<sup>2</sup>

Of *acts of officials*, there are occasional instances of integration, though they come infrequently into litigation. It may be said that where the act is not by law required to be integrated, the Courts are not inclined to discover a voluntary integration. For example, the *appointment of a sheriff's*

plea, or prooffe to the contrarie; . . . and the reason hereof is apparent, for otherwise (as our old authors say, and that truly) there should never be any end of controversies, which should be inconvenient").

<sup>51</sup> *Eng.* 1774, L. C. J. Mansfield, in *Jones v. Randall*, Cowp. 17 ("The minutes of the judgment are the solemn judgment itself"); *U. S.* 1846, Nisbet, J., in *Bryant v. Owen*, 1 Ga. 355, 367 ("The record is tried by inspection; and if the judgment does not there appear, the conclusion is that none has been rendered").

<sup>52</sup> The history of the two other chief instances of the application of the principle, negotiable instruments and records of corporate proceedings, is beyond the present purview.

§ 2427. <sup>1</sup> Though so far as concerned the state of mind of the party notified, both sources of his information would be equally material.

<sup>2</sup> The following is an example: 1820, *Thistlewood's Trial*, 33 How. St. Tr. 757 (high treason; inquiry was made as to certain proclamations prepared by the defendant; the latter dictated the words to H., who wrote them down, but owing to a difference of opinion as to the phrasing, the writing was not completed; the Court doubted as to the propriety of any inquiry as to the words spoken in dictation, and intimated that the contents of the document alone were to be regarded).

For *Louisiana*, *Philippines*, and *Porto Rico*, the principle of the Continental law prevails, that an "authentic act," *i. e.* a transaction done in writing or recorded under the hand of a public officer, is conclusive. The theoretical position of that rule is not easy to allot; see *ante*, §§ 1352, 2425.



*deputy*<sup>3</sup> or the *enlistment of a recruit*<sup>4</sup> have been allowed to be proved as oral acts, even though a writing was also made. On the other hand, the *levy of an assessment* has been treated as embodied solely in the book-entry.<sup>5</sup>

Both the foregoing classes of cases must be distinguished from cases involving the application of two other principles, superficially similar, namely, compulsory integration (*post*, § 2453) and conclusive testimony (*ante*, §§ 1336, 1345):

(1) Where by law an act is *required to be done in writing*, *i. e.* is ineffective unless so done, the writing is of course the only permissible subject of proof. It is immaterial what the person intended; his act must be in the writing and must be judged by the writing alone (*post*, § 2453).

(2) Certain official documents are sometimes made *preferred conclusive testimony*, and it is difficult to distinguish whether that principle or the present one is involved.<sup>6</sup> For example, the question may be whether a sheriff's record of prisoners received is conclusive,<sup>7</sup> or whether a State auditor's books are conclusive,<sup>8</sup> and here the mere principle of conclusive testimony is concerned. But when the question is whether an official survey is conclusive as to boundary lines,<sup>9</sup> it is in fact an inquiry as to the terms of the government's grant as defined by the grantor's agent; the written survey therefore constitutes the surveyor's act, and is not merely a testimony to some independent fact. In general, then, where an official writing represents the act itself of the officer, it is an instance of the present principle of integration; but where the official writing states another person's acts or some external happening, it is an instance of testimony; how far, in the latter case, it is preferred and is made conclusive has been already examined under that head (*ante*, §§ 1345-1353). The practical differences in the effect of the two rules have also been there pointed out (*ante*, § 1346), but may here be compared. (a) If a conclusive testimonial writing *never was made*, then the fact to be proved may be otherwise evidenced, — for example, where an officer's jurat (or certificate of an oath made before him) has not been recorded on the document, the fact of the swearing may be otherwise evidenced;<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1895, *Pentecost v. State*, 107 Ala. 81, 18 So. 146 ("It was like a receipt").

<sup>4</sup> 1869, *Wilson v. McClure*, 50 Ill. 366 (that substitutes were received into the service of the army; the officer's entry of it not necessary to be proved).

<sup>5</sup> 1903, *Allen v. McKay*, 139 Cal. 94, 72 Pac. 713 (the assessment-roll, completed and certified by the assessor, "is the only evidence of his acts and intentions"); 1897, *Dresden v. Bridge*, 90 Me. 489, 38 Atl. 545 (assessment to "S. J. B., Est. of"; evidence of the assessor's intention to assess the tax to the executor, excluded).

<sup>6</sup> Compare the additional cases cited *ante*, §§ 1335, 1339, 1345-1352.

<sup>7</sup> 1898, *Goodrich v. Senate*, 92 Me. 248, 42 Atl. 409 (sheriff's calendar of prisoners kept, not conclusive).

<sup>8</sup> 1878, *State v. Newton*, 33 Ark. 276, 284

(action on an official bond; the State Auditor's books held not conclusive under a statute making them "sufficient evidence").

<sup>9</sup> 1814, *Ringgold v. Galloway*, 3 H. & J. Md. 451, 461 (an official survey being lost, a junior survey of the same estate was admitted; in the absence of loss, the former would be conclusive); 1897, *Carter v. Hornback*, 139 Mo. 238, 40 S.W. 893 (U. S. survey, held conclusive as to "the actual locations of the boundary lines of sections," etc.); 1895, *Reusens v. Lawson*, 91 Va. 226, 21 S. E. 347 ("Such [extrinsic] declarations of the surveyor are not admissible, because the policy of the law forbids that his solemn acts, done in the discharge of his official duty, should be annulled by his subsequent declarations").

Whether a *ship-survey* is conclusive is a question of contract.

<sup>10</sup> 1895, *Bantley v. Finney*, 43 Nebr. 794, 62 N. W. 213.

though if the written jurat had been the sole embodiment of an official act, the failure to write it would be the failure to act at all, and hence no other proof could have been made. (b) If a conclusive testimonial writing was made but is *lost*, its preferential nature is at an end, and any other testimony to the fact in issue may be received in its stead;<sup>11</sup> but if a written legal act is lost, the proof must be of its contents, because the very fact to be proved is the writing itself. Thus, while these marked differences result, there remains the common feature that, by both principles, the oral utterance of the official cannot be proved, nor can the terms of the writing (if available) be contradicted by his oral utterance; yet this is due in the one instance to the conclusiveness of the written testimony, and in the other instance to the operative character of the writing as an act.

## 2. Integration of Bilateral Acts

§ 2429. **No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.** The mere circumstance that *some* writing has been made by parties, for the better recollection of the terms of their transaction, does not of itself make that writing the sole memorial of the transaction, even to the extent covered by the writing. There may have been no integration at all, in spite of the written notes; *i. e.* no attempt to make the writing embody the transaction or any part of it (*ante*, § 2425), but merely to furnish an aid to the writer's recollection or a written admission for the other party's satisfaction. The essential idea remains for it, that the writing is something distinct from the transaction itself. There can hardly be any precise test; the circumstances of each case, as indicating the parties' intent, must control.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>11</sup> 1855, *People v. Clingan*, 5 Cal. 389 (a certificate of election being lost, testimony was admitted both of its contents and of the fact of election as known to others); 1847, *Dutchess Co. Bank v. Ibbotson*, 5 Denio N. Y. 110 (a notary's certificate of demand and notice, made evidence by statute; if lost, its contents cannot be proved; the notary's testimony in some other form must be obtained); 1846, *Lloyd v. McGarr*, 3 Pa. St. 475, 482 (similar).

§ 2429. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1803, *Dalison v. Stark*, 4 Esp. 163 (action for goods sold; the plaintiff called his selling agent, who had taken the order, and it appeared that "the order was given to him verbally by the defendant, and that he had put it down in writing to assist his own recollection, merely as a memorandum; it was not made by the buyer, nor was his name signed"; held, that the writing was not the contract); 1814, *Ramsbottom v. Tunbridge*, 2 M. & S. 434 (a memorandum of a lease handed to a purchaser by an auctioneer after the knocking down; held, not an integration); 1820, *Doe v. Cartwright*, 3 B. & Ald. 326 (a memorandum of tenancy, drawn up and assented to, but conditional on getting a surety, and never signed; held, not controlling);

1835, *R. v. Wrangle*, 2 A. & E. 514 (employer and employee went to a clerk, who entered the terms of hiring in writing, which however was not read or shown to them or signed by them; held not integrated); 1838, *Allen v. Pink*, 4 M. & W. 140 ("Bought of G. P. a horse for the sum of 7l. 2s. 6d., G. P.," held to be intended "merely as a memorandum of the transaction or an informal receipt for money, not as containing the terms of the contract itself").

UNITED STATES: *Ga.* 1910, *Goldsmith v. Marcus*, 7 Ga. App. 849, 68 S. E. 462 (unsigned memorandum); *Ill.* 1920, *El Reno Wholesale Grocery Co. v. Stocking*, 293 Ill. 494, 127 N. E. 642 (whether a contract of food-purchase by exchange of notes was intended to be binding unless and until all details were later reduced to a formal written contract); *Ky.* 1900, *Atwater v. Cardwell*, — *Ky.* —, 54 S. W. 960 (a mere temporary memorandum, held not indisputable); *Mass.* 1906, *Wright v. Anderson*, 191 Mass. 148, 77 N. E. 704 (agreement for dismissing a suit, etc., held a mere memorandum); *Minn.* 1895, *Vaughan v. McCarthy*, 63 Minn. 221, 65 N. W. 249 (a "mere informal memorandum," held not indisputable);



When the parties during their negotiations reach a final agreement, but provide therein that the terms shall be reduced to a single memorial, the *failure to execute such an agreed memorial* does not preclude resort to the prior negotiations to ascertain and enforce their terms; for the subsequent reduction to a memorial was a separable condition, and leaves the prior agreement valid until supplanted, — as in the case of judicial records (*post*, § 2450).<sup>2</sup>

§ 2430. **Partial Integration; General Test for applying the Rule; "Collateral Agreements."** The most usual controversy arises in cases of partial integration, *i. e.* where a certain part of a transaction has been embodied in a single writing, but another part has been left in some other form. Here obviously the rule against disputing the terms of the document will be applicable to *so much of the transaction as is so embodied, but not to the remainder.*

It is of course incorrect to assume that what was not so embodied was in truth a part of that same transaction; it may have been a totally distinct transaction, merely coinciding in time. For example, a banker, at an interview with a promoter, who comes from a distant city and compresses all their affairs into a short interview, may within the same half-hour sign articles of incorporation, authorize an overdraft, assign a mortgage, and join in a committee's report to stockholders. Or a purchaser of land, negotiating with a broker, may at the same sitting accept a deed of grant of one piece of land and appoint the broker his agent to sell another piece. In such instances, the transactions are so clearly distinct, that each one, if integrated, will certainly be embodied in a writing wholly distinct from the others and regardless of whether the others are reduced to writing at all; and no controversy can plausibly arise. But in those instances in which a negotiation concerns one general subject — such as the purchase of a single lot of land having buildings on it — and yet several more or less separable features of bargain, the relation between the writing and the whole bargain is usually difficult to ascertain, and forms a perpetually recurring controversy. To say that the question is whether the parties intended to embody "the whole of the transaction" or only a part, is therefore hardly correct; because by hypothesis the writing *does* represent the whole of what was finally done on the subject covered by it; and because to assume that the subject not covered was a "part" of the transaction covered would be inconsistent, and would involve holding that the writing which embodies the transaction does not embody

*N. Car.* 1906, *Ivey v. Bessemer C. C. Mills*, 143 N. C. 189, 55 S. E. 613 (letter); *Vt.* 1897, *Burditt v. Howe*, 69 Vt. 563, 38 Atl. 240 (a series of letters, held not to have been made the sole memorial of the contract); *Va.* 1921, *Manss-Owens Co. v. Owens & Son*, 129 Va. 183, 105 S. E. 543 (sale of shoes; "the mere fact that a written contract was contemplated does not necessarily show that no binding agreement has been entered into").

There is a doctrine that "where two instruments are executed as a part of the same

transaction, whether at the same or different times, they will be construed together"; but its bearings are not here involved; *e. g.* 1916, *Carter v. Prairie Oil & Gas Co.*, 58 Okl. 365, 160 Pac. 319.

<sup>2</sup> 1922, *Norris v. Reed & Co.*, 5th C. C. A., 278 Fed. 19; 1920, *El Reno Wholesale Grocery Co. v. Stocking*, Ill., *supra*, n. 1; 1917, *Lamoureux v. Weisman*, 136 Minn. 207, 161 N. W. 504 (architect's services; collecting the cases); *Manss-Owens Co. v. Owens & Son*, Va., *supra*, n. 1.

that "part" of it. More correctly, the inquiry is whether the writing was intended to cover *a certain subject* of negotiation; for if it was not, then the writing does not embody the transaction on that *subject*; and one of the circumstances of decision will be whether the one subject is so associated with the others that they are in effect "parts" of the same transaction, and therefore, if reduced to writing at all, they must be governed by the same writing.

In searching for a general test for this inquiry, three propositions at least are capable of being generally laid down:

(1) Whether a particular subject of negotiation is embodied by the writing *depends wholly upon the intent of the parties* thereto.<sup>1</sup> In this respect the contrast is between voluntary integration and integration by law (*post*, § 2450). Here the parties are not obliged to embody their transaction in a single document; yet they may, if they choose. Hence it becomes merely a question whether they have intended to do so.

(2) This intent must be sought where always intent must be sought (*ante*, §§ 42, 1714, 1790), namely, in the *conduct and language* of the parties and the *surrounding circumstances*. The document alone will not suffice. What it was intended to cover cannot be known till we know what there was to cover. The question being whether certain subjects of negotiation were intended to be covered, we must compare the writing and the negotiations before we can determine whether they were in fact covered. Thus the apparent paradox is committed of receiving proof of certain negotiations in order to determine whether to exclude them; and this doubtless has sometimes seemed to lower the rule to a quibble. But the paradox is apparent only. The explanation is that these alleged negotiations are received only provisionally. Although in form the witnesses may be allowed to recite the facts, yet in truth the facts will be afterwards treated as immaterial and legally void, if the rule is held applicable.<sup>2</sup> There is a preliminary question for the judge to decide as to the intent of the parties, and upon this he hears evidence on both sides;<sup>3</sup> his decision here, *pro* or *con*, concerns merely this question preliminary to the ruling of law. If he decides that the transaction was covered by the writing, he does not decide that the excluded negotiations did not take place, but merely that *if* they did take place they are nevertheless legally immaterial. If he decides that the transaction was not intended to be covered by the writing, he does not decide that the negotiations did take place, but merely that *if* they did, they are legally effective, and he then leaves to the jury the determination of fact whether they did take place. In this anomalous process, it merely happens that some of the conduct and other data which are at first resorted to *evidentially* on the question of intent are usually identical with the conduct that may subsequently be treated as legally *inoperative*; but this is a mere coincidence. The two

§ 2430. <sup>1</sup> This intent must of course be judged by an external standard: *ante*, § 2413.

<sup>2</sup> Cited with approval: 1908, *Moran B. Co. v. Pacific C. C. Co.*, 48 Wash. 592, 94 Pac. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, not always in form; but he considers the data *pro* and *con*. Sometimes, but erroneously, the question of intent is left to the jury.



vital differences are, first, that they are looked at for different purposes, and secondly, that they may be dealt with by different branches of the tribunal.

(3) In deciding upon this intent, the chief and most satisfactory index for the judge is found in the circumstance whether or not the *particular element of the alleged extrinsic negotiation is dealt with at all* in the writing. If it is mentioned, covered, or dealt with in the writing, then presumably the writing was meant to represent all of the transaction on that element; if it is not, then probably the writing was not intended to embody that element of the negotiation. This test is the one used by the most careful judges,<sup>4</sup> and is in contrast with the looser and incorrect inquiry (*post*, § 2431) whether the alleged extrinsic negotiation contradicts the terms of the writing.

§ 2431. **Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing"; (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion"; (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.** (a) It is not uncommon to speak of the present rule as a rule against "*varying the terms of the writing*." No doubt that is precisely the effect of applying the rule. But it can never serve as a test to determine in the first instance whether the rule is applicable. The applicability and the effect of the rule are distinct things. To employ this phrase as a test is to reason in a circle; for it is to attempt to decide whether something conceded to be different from the writing ought to be excluded, by showing that it is different. All the phrases about transactions that "vary," or "contradict," or are "inconsistent," involve the same futility. The fundamental question is as to the intent of the parties to restrict the writing to specific elements or subjects of negotiation (*ante*, § 2430, par. 3); and if that intent existed, then the other subjects of negotiation can be established, even though they be (as they always are) different from the writing:

1854, Mr. (later Justice) BLACKBURN, arguing, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703: "The parties may by express words or by implication agree to exclude the incident which the general law would annex if they were silent; and it is exactly the same where the incident is annexed by custom or local law. . . . Then the question is, not whether the custom if admitted will vary or be inconsistent with the contract as it would stand without the custom; but whether it is impliedly excluded by the tenor of the instrument. The other mode of enunciating the proposition has been used by high authorities, but evidently

<sup>4</sup> The following will serve as examples: 1815, *Yeats v. Pim*, Holt 95 (sale of bacon, warranted to be prime singed; a custom to claim a breach at the time of inspection or waive it, excluded; "by requiring a warranty, he is to be understood as excepting against all terms but such as are stipulated in the bargain"); 1819, Bayley, J., in *Webb v. Plummer*, 2 B. & Ald. 746, 750 ("Where there is a written agreement between the parties, it is naturally to be expected that it will contain all the terms of their bargain. But if it is entirely silent as to the terms of quitting, it may let in the custom of the country as to that particular. If, however, it specifies any of those terms, we must then go by the lease alone"); 1851,

Maule, J., in *Dickson v. Zizinia*, 10 C. B. 602, 610 ("We should not by inference insert in a contract implied provisions with respect to a subject which the contract has expressly provided for"); U. S. 1892, *Bretto v. Levine*, 50 Minn. 168, 52 N. W. 525 (deed of land and store, including "all the shelving in the building"; an agreement to sell part of the stock also, admitted; "if the clause had mentioned one or more articles of personal property, as chairs, of such a nature that there could be no doubt that they constituted a part of the realty so as to pass under a deed of the property, the result would probably be different"); 1909, *Lese v. Lamprecht*, 196 N. Y. 32, 89 N. E. 365 (approving the above text).



is inaccurate. No one ever did or ever will seek to annex an incident by proof of a custom except for the express purpose of varying the contract from what it would be if the custom were not proved." COLERIDGE, J. (for the Court): "Merely that it varies the apparent contract is not enough to exclude the evidence; for it is impossible to add any material incident to the written terms of a contract without altering its effect more or less."

1873, GROVE, J., in *Hutchinson v. Tatham*, L. R. 8 C. P. 482, 488: "In one sense the contract must always be varied by the admission of the evidence of custom, inasmuch as the effect of the contract would not be the same without the parol evidence, or else the parol evidence would itself be unnecessary."

(b) It has occasionally been laid down that, in ascertaining, in the first instance, the parties' intent to embody or not in the writing certain subjects of negotiation, "*the writing is the sole criterion*," i. e. no search for data of intent can be made outside the four corners of the document:<sup>1</sup>

1892, DEPUE, J., in *Naumberg v. Young*, 44 N. J. L. 331: "In what manner shall it be ascertained whether the parties intended to express the whole of their agreement in the written contract? . . . The only safe criterion of the completeness of a written contract as the full expression of the terms of the parties' agreement is the contract itself. . . . If the written contract purports to contain the whole agreement, and it is not apparent from the writing itself that something has been left out to be supplied by extrinsic evidence, parol evidence to vary or add to its terms is not admissible."

Such a proposition, however, is untenable, both on principle and in practice. In practice, it is not enforced by its theoretical advocates.<sup>2</sup> In theory, its fallacy is indicated by what has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2430). The problem being to ascertain whether the parties intended a certain writing to cover certain subjects, the relation between the writing and those subjects and their conduct is necessarily involved; and all these matters must be considered. When two parties are found playing a game of chess, it cannot be told whether this is the sole and decisive game, or merely one of a series, by watching that particular game. Whether a piece of land which we see a surveyor marking out is the entirety of the owner's estate cannot be determined by looking merely at the boundaries of that piece; if we look far enough, we may find that it is only a part of a larger survey. Whether a certain box of cards represents the whole catalogue of a man's library cannot be determined by the mere contents, nor by the circumstance that they are all in one box, nor yet by the circumstance that they are arranged alphabetically and include titles from A to Z; for perhaps he has also a separate catalogue of French and German books, or perhaps he has separate catalogues

§ 2431. <sup>1</sup> So also, but less rigid in statement, the following exposition: 1901, Potter v. Easton, 82 Minn. 247, 84 N. W. 1011 (Start, C. J.: "In considering whether or not a particular writing is an incomplete contract, within the rule stated, the controlling question is whether it appears upon the face of the writing that the parties intended it to be the exclusive evidence of their agreement. While the writing itself is the only criterion by which the intention of the parties is to be ascertained,

yet it is not necessary that the incompleteness of the writing should appear on its face from a mere inspection of it, for it is to be construed in the light of its subject-matter and the circumstances under which and the purposes for which it was executed"); 1921, Braude v. Cohen Co., 87 W. Va. 763, 106 S. E. 52 (privilege of return of goods bought).

<sup>2</sup> See a good illustration of this in *Naumberg v. Young*, the case quoted *supra*.



for law books and for general literature, or possibly he has taken out all the cards for books sent to the bindery. The conception of a writing as wholly and intrinsically self-determinative of the parties' intent to make it the sole memorial of one or seven or twenty-seven subjects of negotiation is an impossible one.

(c) In *Pennsylvania*, the application of the rule seems to be governed by a test so anomalous that it may almost be said to destroy the essence of the rule in that jurisdiction. That test is *fraud*; although it would seem that every attempt knowingly to invoke the letter of a writing against the actual oral understanding of the parties (however different from the written terms) could properly be considered as fraudulent:<sup>3</sup>

1884, PAXSON, J., in *Phillips v. Meily*, 106 Pa. 536, 543: "The English rule that parol evidence is inadmissible to vary the terms of a written instrument does not exist in this State; . . . the cases in this State in which parol evidence has been allowed to contradict or vary written instruments may be classed under two heads: 1st, where there was fraud, accident, or mistake in the creation of the instrument itself; and 2d, where there has been an attempt to make a fraudulent use of the instrument in violation of a promise or agreement made at the time the instrument was signed and without which it would not have been executed."

The Pennsylvania doctrine has been thus criticized:

1857, ALLEN, J., in *Towner v. Lucas Ex'r*, 13 Gratt. Va. 705: "It is reasoning in a circle, to argue that fraud is made out, when it is shown by oral testimony that the obligee, contemporaneously with the execution of a bond, promised not to enforce it. Such a principle would nullify the rule; for conceding that such an agreement is proved, or any other contradicting the written instrument, the party seeking to enforce the written agreement according to its terms, would always be guilty of fraud. The true question is, Was there any such agreement, and this can only be established by legitimate testimony. For reasons founded in wisdom and to prevent frauds and perjuries, the rules of the common law exclude such oral testimony of the alleged agreement; and as it cannot be proved by legal evidence, the agreement itself in legal contemplation, cannot be regarded as existing in fact. Neither a court of law or of equity can act upon the hypothesis of fraud where there is no legal proof of it."

The application of the general principle to various specific kinds of transactions and documents may now be examined.

§ 2432. **Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.** A *receipt* — *i. e.* a written acknowledgment, handed by one party to the other, of the manual custody of money or other personalty — will in general fall without the line of the rule; *i. e.* it is not intended to be an exclusive memorial, and the facts may be shown irrespective of the terms of the receipt.<sup>1</sup> This is because usually a

<sup>3</sup> A clue to the numerous rulings in Pennsylvania may be found in the following cases: 1886, *Thomas v. Loose*, 114 Pa. 35, 45, 6 Atl. 326; 1902, *Sutch's Estate*, 201 Pa. 305, 50 Atl. 943; 1920, *Kerr v. McClure*, 266 Pa. 103, 109 Atl. 600 (assignment of insurance policies); 1921, *Neville v. Kretzschmar*, 271 Pa. 222, 114 Atl. 625 (agreement to sell stock); 1922, *Moerlein Brewing Co. v. Rusch*, 272 Pa. 181, 116 Atl.

145 (lease); and cases cited *post*, § 2442, note 1. The development and present state of the Pennsylvania rule has been carefully examined in an article by Mr. Stanley Folz, "Oral Contemporaneous Inducing Promises to affect Written Instruments in Pennsylvania," 1904, *Univ. of Pennsylvania Law Rev.*, LII, 601.

§ 2432. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1788, *Buller, J.*, in *Straton v. Rastall*, 2 T. R. 366, 371 ("Equity

receipt is merely a written admission of a transaction independently existing, and, like other admissions, is not conclusive (*ante*, § 1058). But where the writing is itself the very act, as where it grants a discharge or *release* of a claim, or embodies a new obligation, it obviously falls within the rule, and its terms cannot be overthrown:

1832, TENTERDEN, C. J., in *Graves v. Key*, 3 B. & Ad. 313 (admitting the circumstances of payment of a bill, so as to show an indorsed receipt not to be a satisfaction): "A receipt is an admission only, and the general rule is that an admission, though evidence against the person who made it and those claiming under him, is not conclusive evidence (except as to the person who may have been induced by it to alter his condition). A receipt therefore may be contradicted or explained."

1836, COWEN, J., in *M'Crea v. Purmort*, 16 Wend. 460, 473: "A release cannot be contradicted or explained by parol, because it extinguishes a preëxisting right. But no receipt can have the effect of destroying 'per se' any subsisting right; it is only evidence of a fact. The payment of the money discharges or extinguishes the debt; a receipt for the payment does not extinguish the debt; it is only evidence that it has been paid. Not so of a written release; it is not only evidence of the extinguishment; but it is the extinguisher itself."

1897, BUCK, J., in *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591: "Whether a receipt possesses any contractual feature or not must often be determined from its entire language, and also, at times, from the language in connection with the circumstances under which it was given. If A, to whom B is indebted in the undisputed sum of \$200, is paid by the latter \$100, and signs a receipt for the sum of \$200, or, mentioning the sum paid, acknowledges payment in full of the debt, nevertheless A, in an action against B for the unpaid balance, without showing any fraud, mistake, or other excuse for having signed the receipt, can contradict it by extrinsic evidence, and show that only \$100 was paid. It would only be evidence of B's having paid the debt, just as an oral admission proved against A would be. If, however, B has been indebted to A on an account the amount of which has been in dispute between them, a receipt by A definitely specifying the entire account, and acknowledging a sum received as payment in full of the same, would possess a contractual feature; and, in order to contradict or vary the terms of it by extrinsic evidence in so far as it would be a contract, A would be required to observe the rules of law

distinguishes between the persons who join in a receipt and him who actually receives the money; and the receipt is not conclusive against him [the defendant], as he was only a surety and in fact received no part of the consideration-money"); 1832, *Singleton v. Barrett*, 2 Cr. & J. 368.

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* *Keene v. Meade*, 3 Pet. 1, 7 (entry in a cash-book, acknowledging an advance of money, held not to exclude proof of the payment by parol); 1893, *Riddle v. Hudgins*, 7 C. C. A. 335, 58 Fed. 490, 19 U. S. App. 144, 150; *Ala.* 1898, *Gravlee v. Lamkin*, 120 Ala. 210, 24 So. 756; 1905, *Stegall v. Wright*, 143 Ala. 204, 38 So. 844 (receipt in full allowed to be contradicted on the facts); *Cal.* 1907, *Brown v. Crown G. M. Co.*, 150 Cal. 376, 89 Pac. 86; 1916, *Carpenter v. Markham*, 172 Cal. 112, 155 Pac. 644 (building contract); 1918, *Doolittle v. McConnell*, 178 Cal. 697, 174 Pac. 305; *Fla.* 1919, *Schmitt v. Bethea*, 78 Fla. 304, 82 So. 817 ("full credit for the same"); *Ill.* 1902, *Stark-*

*weather v. Maginnis*, 196 Ill. 274, 63 N. E. 692; *Ia.* 1897, *Mounce v. Kurtz*, 101 Ia. 192, 70 N. W. 119; *Kan.* 1896, *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Lovelace*, 57 Kan. 195, 45 Pac. 590; *La.* 1897, *Equitable Secur. Co. v. Talbert*, 49 La. An. 1393, 22 So. 762 (even when acknowledged notarially); *Mich.* 1912, *Prisel v. Coney*, 168 Mich. 602, 134 N. W. 989; *Nev.* 1905, *Devencenzi v. Cassinelli*, 28 Nev. 222, 81 Pac. 41; *N. J.* 1897, *Joslin v. Giese*, 59 N. J. L. 130, 36 Atl. 680; *N. Y.* 1903, *Komp v. Raymond*, 175 N. Y. 102, 67 N. E. 113; *N. C.* 1896, *Keaton v. Jones*, 119 N. C. 43, 25 S. E. 710 ("have this day settled all accounts"); *Vt.* 1917, *Jones v. Campbell*, — Vt. —, 102 Atl. 102 (payment for services).

The following utterance may therefore be regarded as overruled: 1808, *Alner v. George*, 1 Camp. 392 (L. C. J. Ellenborough: "A receipt in full, where the person who gave it was under no misapprehension and can complain of no fraud or imposition, is binding upon him").



applicable to contracts, and could not treat it in evidence against him as if it were of no greater weight than a mere oral admission on his part."

Which of these characters a given document possesses must of course depend on the particular case; but it is well understood that a document which is a receipt may in some instances be indisputable as being also in effect a release or a contract.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2433. **Recital of Consideration in a Deed.** By an application of principle similar to the foregoing, a recital of consideration received, when it occurs in a deed of grant, is usually intended merely as a written acknowledgment of the distinct act of payment, being there inserted for convenience. Hence it is not an embodiment of an act 'per se' written, and may be disputed like any other admission (*ante*, § 1058). But the statement of a consideration may, on the other hand, sometimes be itself an operative part of a contractual act, — as when in the same writing the parties set out their mutual promises as considerations for each other; here the word "consideration" signifies a term of the contract, and hence the writing alone can be examined:

1895, COOPER, C. J., in *Baum v. Lynn*, 72 Miss. 932, 18 So. 428 (in a deed I. recited that, whereas L.'s guardian had loaned money to I., I., in consideration of a full release from such loans, and of ten dollars paid in hand, conveyed, etc.; the fact that a release of the guardian's

<sup>2</sup> *Ala.* 1906, *Murphy v. Black*, 148 Ala. 675, 41 So. 877 (a receipt containing a release, held to "import a contract"); *Dak.* 1877, *Bone-steel v. Gardner*, 1 Dak. 372, 46 N. W. 590 (bill of sale); *Ky.* 1905, *Lanham v. Louisville & N. R. Co.*, 120 Ky. 371, 86 S. W. 680; 1909, *Offutt v. Doyle*, — Ky. —, 122 S. W. 156; *Mass.* 1884, *Goss v. Ellison*, 136 Mass. 503 (a receipt for \$51 "as full payment, as per claim," held conclusive, because equivalent to a "settlement and satisfaction of the claim" for tort thus discharged); 1907, *Budro v. Burgess*, 197 Mass. 74, 83 N. E. 318; *Mich.* 1917, *Christopherson v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.*, 199 Mich. 634, 165 N. W. 793 (life insurance policy); *Mo.* 1905, *Interurban C. Co. v. Hayes*, 191 Mo. 248, 89 S. W. 927; *Mont.* 1897, *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591 (quoted *supra*); 1904, *Hennessy v. Kennedy F. Co.*, 30 Mont. 264, 76 Pac. 291 (*Ramsdell v. Clark*, *supra*, followed); *Rev. C.* 1921, § 8119 (insurance policy; acknowledgment of payment of premium in receipt is conclusive evidence, "so far as to make the policy binding"); *Nebr.* 1908, *Waters v. Phelps*, 81 Nebr. 674, 116 N. W. 783 (contract for a conveyance); *N. H.* 1880, *Goodwin v. Goodwin*, 59 N. H. 548 (a receipt for \$2,500, "in consideration of which I hereby waive all right to contest said will or the proof thereof and all claim I have or might have as heir of said deceased" was held to exclude the oral agreement concerning the precise claims released thereby); *N. Y.* 1911, *Stiebel v. Grosberg*, 202 N. Y. 266, 95 N. E. 692 (release distinguished from a receipt); *Oh.* 1898, *Jackson*

*v. Ely*, 57 Oh. 450, 49 N. E. 792 (receipt for money, with statement of settlement in full, treated as a memorial not to be varied); 1898, *Cassilly v. Cassilly*, 57 Oh. 582, 49 N. E. 775 (receipt for money, including release of a claim in an estate, not variable by parol); *Or.* 1915, *United States Fidelity & G. Co. v. Martin*, 77 Or. 369, 149 Pac. 1023 (receipt for judgment debt); *Wash.* 1897, *Allen v. Mill Co.*, 18 Wash. 216, 51 Pac. 372 (receipt, held not explainable on the facts).

The *presumption of payment* arising from a receipt is another question (*post*, § 2518).

The application of the above doctrine to a *bill of lading* may be seen in the following cases: 1871, *The Delaware*, 14 Wall. 579; 1898, *Tallassee F. M. Co. v. R. Co.*, 117 Ala. 520, 23 So. 139; *McClain*, *Cases on Carriers*, 233-248; 1910, *Alabama Gt. So. R. Co. v. Norris*, 167 Ala. 311, 52 So. 891; 1905, *Atlantic Coast L.R. Co. v. Dexter*, 50 Fla. 180, 39 So. 634; 1903, *Lake Erie & W. R. Co. v. Holland*, 162 Ind. 406, 69 N. E. 138 (a recital of a reduction from the usual freight rate may be contradicted); 1916, *Knapp v. Minneapolis Lt. P. & O. R. Co.*, 34 N. D. 466, 159 N. W. 81.

Its application to a *passenger ticket* may be seen in the following: 1893, *Mann B. C. Co. v. Dupre*, 4 C. C. A. 540, 54 Fed. 646; 1904, *Coine v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 123 Ia. 458, 99 N. W. 134; 1907, *McCollum v. Southern P. R. Co.*, 31 Utah 494, 88 Pac. 663; Professor J. H. Beale, "Tickets" (*Harvard Law Review*, I, 17).

The application to an *indorsement of payment on commercial paper* may be seen *post*, § 2445, note 6.



liability to L. was also a part of the consideration was excluded): "Judge Robertson [in a case cited] illustrates his own views by noting the difference between the mere statement of a fact (*e. g.* the admission of the receipt of the purchase price) and the vesting, creating, or extinguishing a right (*e. g.* by the execution of a release), in the following language: 'A party is estopped by his deed. He is not to be permitted to contradict it. So far as the deed is intended to pass a right, or to be the exclusive evidence of a contract, it concludes the parties to it. But the principle goes no further. A deed is not conclusive evidence of everything it may contain. For instance, it is not the only evidence of the date of its execution, nor is its omission of a consideration conclusive evidence that none passed, nor is its acknowledgment of a particular consideration an objection to other proof of other and consistent considerations; and, by analogy, the acknowledgment in a deed is not conclusive of the fact. This is but a fact, and testing it by the rationality of the rule we have laid down, it may be explained or contradicted. It does not necessarily and undeniably prove the fact. It creates no right; it extinguishes none. A release cannot be contradicted or explained by proof, because it extinguishes a preëxisting right. But no receipt can have the effect of destroying "per se" any subsisting right. It is only evidence of a fact. The payment of the money discharges or extinguishes the debt. A receipt for the payment does not pay the debt. It is only evidence that it has been paid. Not so of a written release. It is not only evidence of the extinguishment, but is the extinguishment itself.' The deed now under examination contains, as is clearly to be seen, no mere recital of a consideration paid or to be paid. Its recital is only of the facts necessary to be stated to intelligently apply the contract of the parties to the subject-matter. Having set out the relationship of debtor and creditor, and the history of the transaction from which it arose, the deed then proceeds to state what the parties agreed, contracted, and did in reference to the dissolution of the relationship. Mrs. Irving did something. She conveyed the land to Mrs. Lynn. Mrs. Lynn did something. She released the debt to Mrs. Irving. One transferred a right; the other released a right. If it be said that the release was a mere recited consideration for the conveyance, it may with equal accuracy be replied that the conveyance was a mere recited consideration for the release; and therefore, if one of the terms of the contract may be varied by parol, because it is a consideration, so also may the other for the same reason, and by this process a solemn and executed written contract would be totally eaten away. The true rule is that a consideration recited to have been paid or contracted for may be varied by parol, while the terms of a contract may not be, though the contract they disclose may be the consideration on which the act or obligation of the other party rests."

In general, then, it may be said that a recital of consideration received is, like other admissions, disputable so far as concerns the thing actually received;<sup>1</sup> but that, so far as the terms of a contractual act are involved,

§ 2433. <sup>1</sup> Some of the rulings, of course, may be open to argument:

ENGLAND: 1789, *R. v. Scammonden*, 3 T. R. 474 (pauper settlement; the deed of purchase reciting a consideration of 28*l.*, it was allowed to show that 30*l.* was in fact the amount received).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1917, *Missouri D. Tel. Co. v. Morris & Co.*, 8th C. C. A., 243 Fed. 481 (contract for fire-alarm signals); *Alabama*: 1896, *Hendon v. Morris*, 110 Ala. 106, 20 So. 27; 1916, *Windham v. Hydrick*, 197 Ala. 125, 72 So. 403 (sale of mower); Code 1907, § 35 (fertilizer contracts; consideration and value may be shown by parol evidence, "notwithstanding any writing in the

premises"); § 3964 ("Receipts for money are always only 'prima facie' evidence of payment, and may be denied or explained by parol"); *California*: 1892, *Guidery v. Green*, 95 Cal. 630, 635, 30 Pac. 786; *Colorado*: 1906, *Gibbons v. Jos. Gibbons C. M. & M. Co.*, 37 Colo. 96, 86 Pac. 94 (bill of sale of mining stock); *Connecticut*: 1881, *Feltz v. Walker*, 49 Conn. 93 (the plaintiff's assignor, B., buying land, had it conveyed to the defendant's name, and took a bond and mortgage from the defendant for \$3,250, the sole consideration for the bond being the land thus conveyed to the defendant for B.; held that the bond could be enforced only to the extent of appropriating the land in satisfaction); 1922, *Hartford-Conn. Trust Co.*



the writing must control, whether it uses the term "consideration" or not.<sup>2</sup>

*v. Divine*, — Conn. —, 116 Atl. 239 (deed under seal); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1897, Droop *v.* Ridenhour, 11 D. C. App. 224, 238; *Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 4183; 1895, Reese *v.* Strickland, 96 Ga. 784, 22 S. E. 323; 1897, Thompson *v.* Cody, 100 Ga. 771, 28 S. E. 669; 1909, Bashinski *v.* Swint, 133 Ga. 38, 65 S. E. 152; 1913, Read *v.* Gould, 139 Ga. 499, 77 S. E. 642 (separate contract-document as consideration); *Illinois*: 1904, Brosseau *v.* Lawy, 209 Ill. 405, 70 N. E. 901 (amount of incumbrance assumed by grantee); 1908, Spence *v.* Central Accident Ins. Co., 236 Ill. 444, 86 N. E. 104; 1919, Metzger *v.* Emmel, 289 Ill. 52, 124 N. E. 360 (agreement as to sequence of sale of mortgaged properties); *Indiana*: 1895, Stewart *v.* R. Co., 141 Ind. 55, 40 N. E. 67; *Iowa*: 1913, State Bank *v.* Young, 159 Ia. 375, 140 N. W. 376; *Kentucky*: Stats. 1915, § 470 (statute of frauds; "but the consideration need not be expressed in the writing; it may be proved when necessary, or disproved by parol or other evidence"); § 472 ("The consideration of any writing, with or without seal, may be impeached or denied by pleading verified by oath"); *Maryland*: 1909, Koogle *v.* Cline, 110 Md. 587, 73 Atl. 672; *Massachusetts*: 1893, Hill *v.* Whidden, 158 Mass. 267, 274, 33 N. E. 526; 1902, Galvin *v.* R. Co., 180 Mass. 587, 62 N. E. 961 (release of claim for personal injury, reciting a money consideration; a promise of employment by the releasee, allowed to be proved); 1907, Way *v.* Greer, 196 Mass. 237, 81 N. E. 1002 (money loaned for bail); *Michigan*: 1880, Strohauser *v.* Voltz, 42 Mich. 444, 4 N. W. 161; 1895, Fitzpatrick *v.* Hoffman, 104 Mich. 228, 62 N. W. 349; 1897, Ford *v.* Savage, 111 Mich. 144, 69 N. W. 240; 1909, Scovel *v.* Detroit, 159 Mich. 95, 123 N. W. 569; 1909, Ruch *v.* Ruch, 159 Mich. 231, 124 N. W. 52; *Minnesota*: 1904, Johnson *v.* McClure, 92 Minn. 257, 99 N. W. 893; *Mississippi*: 1905, Fowlkes *v.* Lea, 84 Miss. 509, 36 So. 1036 (recital of receipt of consideration, allowed to be contradicted, in an action for non-payment; Truly, J., diss.); *Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, § 2779; 1895, Squier *v.* Evans, 127 Mo. 514, 30 S. W. 143; *Montana*: 1920, Noyes Estate *v.* Granite-Alaska Co., 57 Mont. 511, 189 Pac. 225 ("future advances made by the mortgagee," in a note); *Nebraska*: 1912, Harman *v.* Fisher, 90 Nebr. 688, 134 N. W. 246 (deed to children; Root, J., diss.); *New Jersey*: 1905, Perkins *v.* Trinity R. Co., 69 N. J. Eq. 723, 61 Atl. 167; *New York*: 1836, M'Crea *v.* Purmort, 16 Wend. 460, 467 (summing up the cases in England and the United States; pointing out that the acknowledgment of a consideration is merely a receipt); 1895, Baird *v.* Baird, 145 N. Y. 659, 40 N. E. 222; 1904, Medical College Laboratory *v.* N. Y. University, 178 N. Y. 153,

70 N. E. 467 (bill for reconveyance for non-performance of oral promises); *North Carolina*: 1898, Marcom *v.* Adams, 122 N. C. 222, 29 S. E. 333; *Ohio*: 1909, Shehy *v.* Cunningham, 81 Oh. 289, 90 N. E. 805 (a father having deeded land to his son for a recited consideration of \$4,700, and the son bringing suit after the father's death for his share of the estate, held, that in determining whether the land was an advancement the recital as to payment of money by the son could be contradicted); *Oregon*: 1892, Velten *v.* Carmack, 23 Or. 282, 289, 31 Pac. 658 (consideration in a deed to a married woman, shown to have been a gift to her by the grantor); 1921, Marks *v.* Twohy Bros. Co., 98 Or. 514, 194 Pac. 675 (general principle elaborately examined; here, an irrigation contract); *Pennsylvania*: 1904, McGary *v.* McDermott, 207 Pa. 620, 57 Atl. 46; 1920, Tasin *v.* Bastress, 268 Pa. 85, 110 Atl. 744 (real estate syndicate); *Porto Rico*: 1916, DeDiego *v.* Rovira, 9 P. R. 71, 83; *South Carolina*: 1904, Willcox *v.* Priester, 68 S. C. 106, 46 S. E. 557; *Vermont*: 1895, Wheeler *v.* Campbell, 68 Vt. 98, 34 Atl. 35; *Washington*: 1896, Van Lehn *v.* Morse, 16 Wash. 219, 47 Pac. 435; 1897, Don Yook *v.* Milling Co., 16 Wash. 459, 47 Pac. 964; 1905, Windsor *v.* St. Paul M. & M. R. Co., 37 Wash. 156, 79 Pac. 613; 1908, Warwick *v.* Hitchings, 50 Wash. 140, 96 Pac. 960; 1916, Roberts *v.* Stiltner, 101 Wash. 397, 172 Pac. 738 (contract to sell land); *Wisconsin*: 1904, Lathrop *v.* Humble, 120 Wis. 331, 97 N. W. 905; 1903, Halvorsen *v.* Halvorsen, 120 Wis. 52, 97 N. W. 494; 1905, Mueller *v.* Cook, 126 Wis. 504, 105 N. W. 1054.

So also for the real object to be secured by a mortgage: 1905, Campbell *v.* Perth Amboy S. & E. Co., 70 N. J. Eq. 40, 62 Atl. 319.

<sup>2</sup> *Fed.* 1915, Watkins Salt Co. *v.* Mulkey, 2d C. C. A., 225 Fed. 739, 744 (agreement for stock in a reorganized corporation); *Ariz.* 1921, Jarnagin *v.* Edwards, 22 Ariz. 216, 194 Pac. 1097 (lease of land); *Ark.* 1913, Williams *v.* Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co., 109 Ark. 82, 158 S. W. 967 (release and contract by injured employee); *Cal.* 1902, Arnold *v.* Arnold, 137 Cal. 291, 70 Pac. 23 (deeds of transfer by one partner to another, containing mutual covenants as a part of the consideration; other consideration excluded); *Ga.* 1909, Louisville & N. R. Co. *v.* Willbanks, 133 Ga. 15, 65 S. E. 86 (deed of right of way, with a contract as to crossings); 1918, Rheney *v.* Anderson, 22 Ga. App. 417, 96 S. E. 217; *Ind.* 1895, Sandage *v.* Mfg. Co., 142 Ind. 148, 41 N. E. 380 (rejecting the fact that for a supplementary contract dealing with a prior contract buying a patent the consideration was a release of the guaranty in the prior one); *Ia.* 1900, Schrimper *v.* R. Co., — Ia. —, 82 N. W. 916;



§ 2434. **Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.** When a document embodies terms of a *sale*, it is the more natural to suppose that the document would cover such warranties, if any, as accompanied the sale, because the warranty is certainly a part of the contract and not a separate obligation. But when obviously only some of the terms of the bargain are represented in the document, and there must have been others — such as the time of delivery — left unembodied in it, it is possible to regard a warranty as equally without its purview. The decision will thus depend almost entirely on the circumstances of each transaction; and generalizations can hardly be made. In most instances, however, Courts are found treating the writing of sale as the sole memorial of the transaction as to warranties;<sup>1</sup> occasionally, in the

*La.* 1915, *Robinson v. Britton*, 137 *La.* 863, 69 *So.* 282 (examining the Code provisions as to authentic acts); *Mass.* 1907, *Farquhar v. Farquhar*, 194 *Mass.* 400, 80 *N. E.* 654; *Minn.* 1908, *Kramer v. Gardner*, 104 *Minn.* 370, 116 *N. W.* 925 (recital forming part of a contract to assume a mortgage); *Miss.* 1897, *Thompson v. Bryant*, 75 *Miss.* 12, 21 *So.* 655 (the assumption of the seller's share of his liability as partner for firm debts, excluded as contractual); *N. C.* 1887, *Parker v. Morrill*, 98 *N. C.* 232, 3 *S. E.* 511 (agreement of accounting between a ward P. and her guardian B., by which "in consideration of one dollar to us paid by B., the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged," the ward grants to B. the sum of money due, and "do forever release and discharge said B." from his bond, the money to be applied by B. to certain named uses; the plaintiff ward offered to show an oral agreement by which B. additionally promised to devise property to the ward, and to prove that "only upon this promise and agreement did the plaintiff agree to sign the written agreement"; excluded, as "a consideration not mentioned or referred to in it"); *Okl.* 1909, *Southard v. Arkansas Valley & W. R. Co.*, 24 *Okl.* 408, 103 *Pac.* 750 (contract to pay in consideration of a railroad location; good opinion by Williams, J.); *P. I.* 1919, *Rios v. Amorós*, 27 *P. R.* 735 (notarial deed of land); *S. C.* 1914, *Gill v. Ruggles*, 97 *S. C.* 278, 81 *S. E.* 519 (lumber contract); *S. D.* 1918, *Rosholt v. Woulph*, 40 *S. D.* 269, 167 *N. W.* 158 (agreement to locate a railroad station); *Tex.* 1900, *Kahn v. Kahn*, 94 *Tex.* 114, 58 *S. W.* 825; *Wash.* 1910, *Spokane Canal Co. v. Coffman*, 61 *Wash.* 357, 112 *Pac.* 383 (contract for land); *Wis.* 1881, *Hei v. Heller*, 53 *Wis.* 415, 10 *N. W.* 620 (sale of land, in consideration of mortgage and bond; a further consideration of certain personalty, excluded); 1904, *Butt v. Smith*, 121 *Wis.* 566, 99 *N. W.* 328 (alleged overpayment on a deed describing the land; an extrinsic agreement as to its area and price per acre, not given effect); *Wyo.* 1904, *Stickney v. Hughes*, 12 *Wyo.* 397, 75 *Pac.* 945.

Note that as between "good" and "valuable" consideration, on which the line of de-

scient may depend, it is said that the nature of it cannot be determined by oral facts, though the amount of it may be: 1902, *Groves v. Groves*, 65 *Oh. St.* 442, 62 *N. E.* 1044.

Distinguish also cases in which the recital of consideration is said to be not disputable for the purpose of *invalidating the deed*; this seems often to mean merely that the deed or contract is valid regardless of consideration: 1865, *Illinois C. Ins. Co. v. Wolf*, 37 *Ill.* 354 (insurance policy); 1906, *Stannard v. Aurora E. & C. R. Co.*, 220 *Ill.* 469, 77 *N. E.* 254.

For the peculiar application of the rule that as between *solicitor and client* the deed must show on its face the true consideration, see the following: 1913, *Duffy v. Mathieson*, *P. E. I.*, 13 *D. L. R.* 587.

§ 2434. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1805, *Hodges v. Drakeford*, 1 *B. & P. N. R.* 270 (action on a warranty that the trade of a shop bought by the plaintiff reached a certain amount; the writing of assignment held to control); 1810, *Powell v. Edmunds*, 12 *East* 6, 10 (sale of timber described by number and kind of trees; an oral warranty as to the weight excluded); 1813, *Pickering v. Dowson*, 4 *Taunt.* 775, 785 (warranty of a ship, excluded); 1814, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 *Camp.* 22 (bought-note of a sugar sale, naming "50 hogsheads of H. sugar loaves, at 155 s. free on board of a British ship, acceptance at 70 days"; an oral warranty of quality like sample, excluded); 1815, *Gardiner v. Gray*, *ib.* 144 (similar); 1824, *Kain v. Old*, 2 *B. & C.* 627 (bill of sale of ship, containing warranties of title and of further assurance: a parol warranty of copper-bolting, excluded); 1831, *Bradshaw v. Bennett*, 5 *C. & P.* 48, 49 (sale of property held on three lives; the auctioneer's statement at the sale that one of the persons was dead, *semble*, not admissible); 1838, *Chanter v. Hopkins*, 4 *M. & W.* 399 (sale of a smoke-consuming furnace; oral warranty of suitability for a brewery, excluded).

CANADA: 1897, *Saults v. Eaket*, 11 *Man.* 597 (warranty of a binder, excluded on the facts).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1890, *DeWitt v. Berry*, 134 *U. S.* 312, 10 *Sup.* 536 ("If a contract of sale is in writing and contains no warranty, parol evidence is not admissible to add



circumstances, they permit extrinsic warranties to be valid.<sup>2</sup> The enforcement of an *implied warranty* of fitness seems to involve a similar question.<sup>3</sup>

a warranty"); 1891, *Seitz v. Refrig. Co.*, 141 U. S. 510, 12 Sup. 46 (sale of refrigerating machine, mentioning only size and price; warranty excluded); 1892, *Van Winkle v. Crowell*, 146 U. S. 42, 48, 13 Sup. 18 (machinery furnished; oral warranty excluded); *Cal.* 1905, *Gardiner v. McDonough*, 147 Cal. 313, 81 Pac. 964 (sale of beans, etc., by memorandum; oral agreement to equal sample, excluded; Shaw, J., diss.; prior cases considered); *Conn.* 1898, *Hills v. Farmington*, 70 Conn. 450, 39 Atl. 795 (building contract in great detail; oral warranty of the architect's plans, excluded); *Ga.* 1897, *Maxwell v. Willingham*, 101 Ga. 55, 28 S. E. 672 (agreement to buy a tract of "about 150 acres"; oral warranty by seller that it contained no more than 150, excluded); 1898, *Barrie v. Smith*, 105 Ga. 34, 31 S. E. 121 (oral warranty of the moral quality of Balzac's works, excluded); 1903, *Bullard v. Brewer*, 118 Ga. 918, 45 S. E. 711 (sale of a horse); *Ill.* 1904, *Telluride P. T. Co. v. Crane Co.*, 208 Ill. 218, 70 N. E. 319 (warranty of pipe, excluded); 1911, *Grubb v. Milan*, 249 Ill. 456, 94 N. E. 927 (contract for sale of restaurant); *Ind.* 1889, *Conant v. Bank*, 121 Ind. 324, 22 N. E. 250 ("We will furnish the following machinery for a 100-barrel mill, of 24 hours, set up in your mill building"; warranty of grade, excluded); 1920, *Michigan Pipe Co. v. Sullivan Co. Water Co.*, — Ind. —, 127 N. E. 768 (manufacture of pipes); *Ia.* 1898, *Younie v. Walrod*, 104 Ia. 475, 73 N. W. 1021 (written agreement to buy land, vendor to furnish abstract, etc.; oral agreement as to time of furnishing abstract, etc., excluded); *Kan.* 1902, *Ehrsam v. Brown*, 64 Kan. 466, 67 Pac. 867 (machinery; warranty excluded); *Mass.* 1904, *Neale v. American E. V. Co.*, 186 Mass. 303, 71 N. E. 566 (excluded); 1906, *Scholl v. Killorin*, 190 Mass. 493, 77 N. E. 382 (oral warranty as to a steam roller, excluded); 1907, *Leavitt v. Fiberloid Co.*, 196 Mass. 440, 82 N. E. 682 (quality of goods); 1917, *Glackin v. Bennett*, 226 Mass. 316, 115 N. E. 490 (written sale of an automobile; express parol guaranty rejected); 1920, *Bennett v. Thomson*, 235 Mass. 463, 126 N. E. 795 (sale of brick; oral warranty excluded); *Mich.* 1894, *McCray R. & C. S. Co. v. Woods*, 99 Mich. 269, 58 N. W. 320 (refrigerator sale; oral warranty excluded; prior cases distinguished); 1895, *Zimmerman M'fg Co. v. Dolph*, 104 Mich. 281, 62 N. W. 339 (oral warranty, additional to the written warranty, excluded); *Minn.* 1885, *Thompson v. Libby*, 34 Minn. 374, 26 N. W. 1 (bill of sale of logs; warranty excluded); *Mo.* 1896, *Miller v. Electric Co.*, 133 Mo. 205, 34 S. W. 585 (a contract for boilers of a certain horse-power; collateral oral agreement excluded); 1905,

*Gerhardt v. Tucker*, 187 Mo. 46, 85 S. W. 552; *Nebr.* 1895, *Quinn v. Moss*, 45 Nebr. 614, 63 N. W. 931 (a guarantee that cigars sold should be "union made," excluded); *N. J.* 1882, *Naumberg v. Young*, 44 N. J. L. 331 (lease of a building for the purposes of a button factory, an engine and boiler passing as fixtures; oral guarantee that the engine and boiler were in thorough repair, excluded); *Vt.* 1893, *Wilcox v. Cate*, 65 Vt. 478, 26 Atl. 1105 (boiler-engine lease; oral warranty excluded); *W. Va.* 1914, *Griffin v. Runnion*, 74 W. Va. 641, 82 S. E. 686 (horse); *Wis.* 1894, *Milwaukee B. Co. v. Duncan*, 87 Wis. 120, 125, 58 N. W. 232 (boiler-sales; oral warranty excluded); 1895, *Case Plow Works v. N. & S. Co.*, 90 Wis. 590, 63 N. W. 1013 (a written warranty as to quality of wheels; an oral warranty as to manner of securing spokes in hubs rejected); 1896, *Caldwell v. Perkins*, 93 Wis. 89, 67 N. W. 29 (contract to sell fixtures and stock of merchandise; agreement to include furniture and tools, excluded).

Where the written warranty, whose existence is disputed, is said to have been *lost*, the oral transaction may of course, on another principle (*ante*, § 102), be used as evidence of its existence and terms: 1898, *Ingram v. Music House*, 51 S. C. 281, 28 S. E. 396.

<sup>2</sup> *Canada*: 1895, *Gordon v. Waterous*, 36 U. C. Q. B. 321, 322 (oral warranty here admitted); 1884, *Ellis v. Abell*, 10 Ont. App. 226, 242, 246 (good opinion by Burton, J.; oral warranty here held admissible by a divided court).

*United States*: 1879, *Chapin v. Dobson*, 78 N. Y. 74 (written sale of machinery described; oral guarantee that it should work satisfactorily and, if not, might be returned, admitted; "it is one thing to agree to sell or furnish machines of a specific kind, as of such a patent or of a particular designation, and another thing to undertake that they shall operate in a particular manner"); 1885, *Eighmie v. Taylor*, 98 N. Y. 288 (transfer of lease of oil wells; warranty of capacity offered; "if upon inspection of the writing, read, it may be, in the light of surrounding circumstances in order to its proper understanding and interpretation, it appears to contain the engagement, . . . it constitutes the contract between them. . . . If Chapin v. Dobson be near the border line in the application of the exception to the facts, there can be no question of the soundness of the doctrine"); 1906, *Cooper v. Payne*, 186 N. Y. 334, 78 N. E. 1076 (sale of a knitting machine; foregoing cases followed; a passage from *Thomas v. Scutt*, *post*, § 2437, cited as "a compendium of the law applicable to this case").

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1814, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 Camp. 22 (cited *supra*, note 1); 1917, *Allerdale Estate Co. v. McGrory*, 1 Ch. 414 (contract to



The insurer's *oral waiver* of the *insured's written warranty* is also commonly determined upon the same principle;<sup>4</sup> this troublesome question of theory and policy is usually raised by the agent's *erroneous transcription of the insured's representations* as to material facts, the insured then ignorantly signing the transcript.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2434a. **Agent's Authority to Alter Contract.** Often a draft contract-document, *e. g.*, an insurance policy, is placed by one party in the hands of his agent for execution, and among the terms inserted in the draft by the principal is a clause declaring that no additional or variant terms assented to by the agent shall be binding unless expressly assented to by the principal. By this clause, any terms thus inserted or altered by the agent alone remain ineffective as against the principal.<sup>1</sup> The document represents for the latter, an intention to make it the exclusive memorial under the present principle. In effect, it is a denial of the agent's authority to employ any other memorial than the original one.

Nevertheless, this result (which is not open to question) could be equally reached upon the principle of § 2416, *ante*, *i. e.* by reasoning that the principal has never assented to the terms added or altered, and that the special clause sufficiently shows (in the absence of other evidence) that he did not hold out the agent as having any authority to devise different terms.

Distinguish here the question of the *agent's erroneous transcription* of the other party's representations (*ante*, § 2434), which often arises in the same connection.

§ 2435. **Agreements not to Sue, or not to Enforce, or to hold Conditional only.** (a) Where an obligation is embodied in a single document, the very essence of the obligation is its validity and enforcement. Hence an agreement, alleged to have been a part of the transaction, that the obligation should *not be used as binding* or enforceable can never be permitted to be shown, for the writing necessarily determines that very subject to the

convey, with covenant to make good title; grantee's knowledge of defects before date of contract, admitted); *U. S.* 1921, *Rowe v. Emerson-Brantingham Implement Co.*, — Mont. —, 201 Pac. 316 (thresher); 1895, *Case Plow Works v. N. & S. Co.*, 90 Wis. 590, 63 N. W. 1013 (a written warranty of wheels "against defects in material and workmanship" excludes an implied warranty of suitability for the purposes intended; distinguishing *Merriam v. Field*, 24 Wis. 640).

<sup>4</sup> 1872, *Deweese v. Ins. Co.*, 35 N. J. L. 366 (stipulation in an insurance policy that the property shall not be used for any other purpose than that described; the insurer's knowledge of such actual use at the time of the contract, excluded); 1878, *Franklin Ins. Co. v. Martin*, 40 N. J. L. 568, 574 (same; leading case, dealing with the further question of reforming the policy in equity); 1906, *Deming Inv. Co. v. Shawnee F. Ins. Co.*, 16 Okl. 1,

83 Pac. 918; 1895, *Knudson v. Grand Council*, 7 S. D. 214, 63 N. W. 911; 1903, *Maupin v. Scottish U. & N. I. Co.*, 53 W. Va. 557, 45 S. E. 1003.

<sup>5</sup> 1906, *Lyon v. United Moderns*, 148 Cal. 470, 83 Pac. 804 (collecting cases); 1906, *Prudential Ins. Co. v. Hummer*, 36 Colo. 208, 84 Pac. 61; 1904, *Medley v. German Alliance Ins. Co.*, 55 W. Va. 342, 47 S. E. 101; and other cases cited *ante*, § 2415, § 2416, § 2418.

§ 2434a. <sup>1</sup> 1920, *Cohen v. Home Ins. Co.*, — Del. —, 111 Atl. 264 (waiver of the iron-safe clause); 1920, *Eastern Advertising Co. v. Patch Co.*, 235 Mass. 580, 127 N. E. 516 (oral promise by defendant's agent that plaintiff might cancel on 30 days' notice; the original document contained a clause; "no verbal conditions made by agents will be recognized").

Compare the similar expedient of declaring one party's duplicate to be the "original" (*post*, § 2449).



contrary; in the ordinary phrase, it is necessarily inconsistent with the writing.

But here some distinctions are necessary:

(1) By the general principle of jural acts (*ante*, § 2406), *no jural obligation* is created by a document which concerns merely *transactions of friendship* or the like. Hence a difficulty to determine whether that or the present principle should control, *i. e.* whether the understanding not to enforce the document signifies that it never became a jural act at all, or that it was a jural act which is still not to be observed in its terms; the former sort of agreement can be established, the latter not.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Where the obligation is a *negotiable instrument*, different considerations may control; these are separately examined (*post*, § 2443).

(3) Where an agreement *not to sue* is made *subsequent to the original and written agreement*, it is of course an independent transaction and may be established (*post*, § 2441). But such an independent agreement could not in a common-law trial defeat the claim; it could only create a separate cause of action for its breach, to be pursued by a separate suit. If, however, the damages in such a separate suit would be precisely equivalent to the amount recovered in the present suit, a Court of chancery, to avoid circuitry of action, would enjoin the present suit; and that situation would be presented when the agreement was to *refrain forever* from suit, but not when it was to refrain for a *limited time*. In the former instance, therefore, the independent subsequent agreement could be availed of in chancery for that purpose, or in the original suit at law wherever equitable defences are permissible in common-law actions.<sup>2</sup>

(b) An extrinsic agreement providing a *condition qualifying the operation* of a written obligation is of course equally ineffective; for an obligation absolute is plainly exclusive of a condition. So far as the present principle is concerned, there is no doubt. But by the general principle of delivery (*ante*, § 2410), no conduct becomes effective as a jural act if its consummation is suspended until the happening of a condition precedent; and hence such a condition, precedent to the existence of the obligation, may always be established, and has the effect of destroying the apparent obligation of the

§ 2435. <sup>1</sup> Examples are found in the following cases, which should be compared with the cases cited *ante*, § 2406: 1896, *Lowenfeld v. Curtis*, — C. C. —, 72 Fed. 105 (a clause in a theatrical contract as to the prior submission to the play-owner of the personnel of the cast; the fact that the submission was not intended to be required, excluded); 1921, *McCaull-Dinsmore Co. v. Stevens*, 59 Mont. 206, 196 Pac. 213 (action on a grain contract memorandum; defendant allowed to show that the writing was prepared for plaintiff only as a memorandum of quantities bought by defendant as agent for plaintiff, and not as a contract to deliver such quantities to plaintiff); 1898,

*Western Mfg. Co. v. Rogers*, 54 Nebr. 456, 74 N. W. 849 (sale of goods with note; oral agreement that buyer took on commission only, excluded); 1897, *Ellison v. Gray*, 55 N. J. Eq. 581, 37 Atl. 1018 (a promise that a certain requirement in a contract was "all right," meaning that it would not be binding, excluded); 1857, *Towner v. Lucas*, 13 Gratt. Va. 705 (oral agreement between obligee and surety of a bond, to abstain from enforcement of it and to give a written indemnity, excluded).

<sup>2</sup> *Harriman on Contracts*, 2d ed., § 508, citing *Ford v. Beech*, 11 Q. B. 852; *Guard v. Whitehouse*, 13 Ill. 7; *Chicago v. Babcock*, 143 Ill. 358, 32 N. E. 271.



writing embodying the draft of the act. The difficulty is to distinguish whether, in a given case, the condition is such a precedent one, or whether it is a subsequent one such as the present principle forbids recognizing. Here some subtlety of construction may be required.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2436. **Agreements of Counter-Claim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.** For the same reason as in the foregoing class of cases, an agreement concerning the *mode or medium of payment* of an obligation cannot be established, where the document in any respect deals with that subject; but documents bear such variances of detail in those matters that no fixed rule

<sup>3</sup> Compare with the following the cases cited *ante*, §§ 2408, 2410, especially the Illinois rulings:

CANADA: 1906, *Jackson v. Drake*, 37 Can. Sup. 315 (account stated settling a balance; oral agreement that the amount was not to be deemed due unless and until certain moneys were collected, held ineffective); 1915, *Bible v. Croasdale*, 24 D. L. R. 763, Alta. (oral agreement that the loan covered by the writing should not be repayable till the sale of property, excluded); 1916, *Amar Singh v. Mitchell*, 30 D. L. R. 719, Que. (deeds handed over by parties in exchange of lands; condition not to be binding until the one party's vendor had completed title, not allowed to be shown); 1919, *Shields v. Landreth*, 45 D. L. R. 330, Sask. (option on land purchase).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1898, *Shea v. Leisy*, 85 Fed. 243 (bond and mortgage to pay in four years; agreement to cancel on a lesser payment upon conditions, excluded); *Arizona*: 1914, *Hurley v. Young Men's Christian Ass'n*, 16 Ariz. 26, 140 Pac. 816 (subscription contract); *Connecticut*: 1890, *Beard v. Boylan*, 59 Conn. 181, 22 Atl. 152 (action for a debt; the defendant setting up a composition agreement with creditors, signed by the plaintiff, the plaintiff was not allowed to show that the writing was signed on an agreement that "it should be void unless so signed by all the creditors etc.," this being treated by the Court as a condition subsequent); *Georgia*: 1909, *Heitmann v. Commercial Bank*, 6 Ga. App. 584, 65 S. E. 590 (thirteen persons indorsed a note, and ten of them had indorsed successive renewal notes; a final renewal note was signed by nine of the ten, with a letter to the bank asking for the return of the old notes; held that the understanding that the tenth person should indorse before the final note became valid was admissible; *Hill, C. J., diss.*, on the ground that the letter signed by nine was a final act and that the alleged understanding was virtually a condition subsequent in contradiction of it); *Illinois*: 1898, *Ryan v. Cooke*, 172 Ill. 302, 50 N. E. 213 (sealed contract to manufacture; oral agreement on delivery that it was to be binding only on condition that the promisor obtained a city contract, excluded); 1922, *Kilcoin v. Ortell*, 302 Ill. 531, 135 N. E. 16 (contract for ex-

change of lands); *Kansas*: 1914, *Little v. Liggett*, 92 Kan. 385, 140 Pac. 838 (application for loan); *Massachusetts*: 1915, *O'Malley v. Grady*, 222 Mass. 202, 109 N. E. 831 (lease of a saloon); *Mississippi*: 1898, *Houck v. Wright*, — Miss. —, 23 So. 422 (written contract for a piano; oral condition that the order might be countermanded within 30 days in case of a flood, etc., excluded); *Nebraska*: 1896, *Nebraska Expos. Ass'n v. Townley*, 46 Nebr. 893, 65 N. W. 1062 (condition to liability on a stock-subscription contract, excluded); *New Jersey*: 1880, *Van Syckel v. Dalrymple*, 32 N. J. Eq. 233 (mortgage payable April 1, 1873; agreement that "the mortgage should not be due and payable during the mortgagor's life, provided the mortgagor kept the interest paid up, and put the property in repair and kept it so," excluded); *North Carolina*: 1896, *Taylor v. Hunt*, 118 N. C. 168, 24 S. E. 359 (agreement that if a debt was not indulged a lease should be void, excluded); 1908, *Basnight v. Southern Jobbing Co.*, 148 N. C. 350, 62 S. E. 420 (stock subscription); 1912, *Garrison v. Case Threshing M. Co.*, 159 N. C. 285, 74 S. E. 821 (sale and mortgage of machinery); 1913, *Lytton Mfg. Co. v. House Mfg. Co.*, 161 N. C. 430, 77 S. E. 233 (sale of kiln apparatus); 1921, *Thomas v. Carteret Co.*, 182 N. C. 374, 109 S. E. 384 (understanding that someone else should first be sued, before a note should be valid, given by a defaulting official on receiving pardon from the governor, not admitted; a remarkable case; *Walker, J., diss.*); *North Dakota*: 1915, *First State Bank v. Kelly*, 30 N. D. 84, 152 N. W. 125 (note signed as surety for C., on the understanding that C. should first sign before the money was loaned; this was admitted, but not an understanding that the payee's liability was to last only until C. had gone through bankruptcy and then had given a sale note); *Oklahoma*: 1919, *Shaw v. Hutton*, 75 Okl. 255, 183 Pac. 477 (guaranty of a draft); *Vermont*: 1914, *Kinnear & G. Mfg. Co. v. Miner*, 88 Vt. 324, 92 Atl. 459 (building materials contract; that defendant signed it without liability as buyer only for the purpose of enabling the plaintiff to obtain credit from another firm, not allowed to be shown; *Powers, C. J., and Taylor, J., diss.*, on the principle of § 2410, *ante*).



can be laid down.<sup>1</sup> An agreement of *renewal*, though it might be construed as virtually affecting the length of term of an obligation,<sup>2</sup> seems really to concern a new and different obligation. An agreement of *counter-claim* or *set-off*, provided it is not in form or essence a mere qualification of the mode of payment specified in the document, may properly be established, for it concerns a separate obligation.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2437. **Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Security only; Agreement to hold in Trust.** When a document of transfer of property is absolute in its terms, may an extrinsic contemporary agreement to *hold the property as security only* be established?

This question has generally been answered in the affirmative;<sup>1</sup> though in

§ 2436. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1819, *Campbell v. Hodgson*, Gow 74 (agreement between acceptor and payee that the latter should not demand payment if he should reimburse himself from the effects of J., excluded; otherwise, so far as the reimbursement amounts to payment); *U. S.* 1921, *Beasley v. Beasley*, 206 Ala. 480, 90 So. 347 (date of interest due); 1909, *Woodson v. Beck*, 151 N. C. 144, 65 S. E. 751 (duchill accompanying an insurance policy; agreement as to surrender of old policy instead of payment of cash, excluded).

Compare also the cases cited *ante*, § 2435, and, for negotiable instruments, *post*, § 2443.

<sup>2</sup> 1902, *Armington v. Stelle*, 27 Mont. 13, 69 Pac. 115 (agreement of renewal of a lease, excluded). For the renewal of negotiable instruments, see *post*, § 2443.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra*: 1845, *St. Louis Perp. Ins. Co. v. Homer*, 9 Metc. Mass. 39 (agreement that a sum found to be due under an insurance policy should be set off and applied in satisfaction of a note, excluded); 1837, *Eaves v. Henderson*, 14 Wend. N. Y. 190 (agreement that a book account and the purchase of goods should serve as a set-off to a note for \$28.84, excluded). For negotiable instruments, see *post*, § 2443.

§ 2437. <sup>1</sup> These cases apply their conclusion alike to transfers of realty and of personalty, and also to negotiable instruments as between the original parties:

CANADA: 1852, *Le Targe v. De Tuyll*, 3 Grant U. C. 369 (best opinion, by Blake, C.); 1852, *Holmes v. Matthews*, 3 Grant U. C. 379, 384; 1892, *McMicken v. Ontario Bank*, 20 Can. Sup. 548, 575; 1916, *Roscoe v. McConnell*, 29 D. L. R. 121, Ont.

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: 1898, *Hieronymus v. Glass*, 120 Ala. 46, 23 So. 674; 1919, *Smith v. Thompson*, 203 Ala. 87, 82 So. 101; 1920, *Corley v. Vizard*, 203 Ala. 564, 84 So. 299 (collecting prior cases); *California*: 1895, *Ahern v. McCarthy*, 107 Cal. 382, 40 Pac. 482; 1906, *Wadleigh v. Phelps*, 149 Cal. 627, 87 Pac. 93; *Colorado*: 1903, *Clark v. Ducheneau*, — Colo. —, 72 Pac. 831 (that a note was given only as security for performance of

another contract, allowed); 1906, *Gibbons v. Jos. Gibbons, C. M. & M. Co.*, 37 Colo. 69, 86 Pac. 94; *Connecticut*: 1918, *Anderson v. Colwell*, 93 Conn. 61, 104 Atl. 242; *Florida*: 1893, *Shad v. Livingston*, 31 Fla. 89, 97, 12 So. 646; *Georgia*: 1919, *Renitz v. Williamson*, 149 Ga. 241, 99 S. E. 869 (deed absolute of land may be shown to be a mortgage, where grantor remains in possession); *Hawaii*: 1888, *Okuu v. Kaiikawaha*, 7 Haw. 34 (in a common-law court); *Illinois*: 1894, *Helbreg v. Schumann*, 150 Ill. 12, 21, 37 N. E. 99; 1896, *Trogdon v. Trogdon*, 164 Ill. 144, 45 N. E. 575; 1904, *Gannon v. Moles*, 209 Ill. 180, 70 N. E. 689; 1904, *Merriman v. Schmitt*, 211 Ill. 263, 71 N. E. 986; 1920, *Totten v. Totten*, 294 Ill. 70, 128 N. E. 295; *Indiana*: 1895, *Bever v. Bever*, 144 Ind. 157, 41 N. E. 944 (a reservation of a life estate shown to have been intended as a mortgage); *Iowa*: 1907, *Krebs v. Lauser*, 133 Ia. 241, 110 N. W. 443; 1921, *Bilbo v. Ball*, — Ia. —, 181 N. W. 657 (land-trade); *Maine*: 1895, *Libby v. Clark*, 88 Me. 32, 33 Atl. 657; *Massachusetts*: 1872, *Campbell v. Dearborn*, 109 Mass. 130; 1895, *Riley v. Bank*, 164 Mass. 482, 41 N. E. 679 (stock-shares); 1897, *Dixon v. Ins. Co.*, 168 Mass. 48, 46 N. E. 436 (insurance policy); *Michigan*: 1868, *Bowker v. Johnson*, 17 Mich. 42; 1896, *Pinch v. Willard*, 108 Mich. 204, 66 N. W. 42; 1897, *Kellogg v. Northrup*, 115 Mich. 327, 73 N. W. 230; 1898, *Germain v. Lumber Co.*, 116 Mich. 245, 74 N. W. 644; *Minnesota*: 1905, *Stitt v. Rat Portage L. Co.*, 98 Minn. 52, 104 N. W. 561; *New Jersey*: 1893, *Winters v. Earl*, 52 N. J. Eq. 52, 588, 28 Atl. 15; 1898, *Vanderhoven v. Romaine*, 56 N. J. Eq. 1, 39 Atl. 129; *Nevada*: 1919, *Dixon v. Miller*, 43 Nev. 280, 184 Pac. 926 (promissory note); *New York*: 1891, *Barry v. Colville*, 129 N. Y. 302, 29 N. E. 307; *Oklahoma*: 1896, *Stith v. Peckham*, 4 Okl. 254, 46 Pac. 664; 1898, *Weissham v. Hocker*, 7 Okl. 250, 54 Pac. 464; *Philippine Isl.* 1916, *Cuyugan v. Santos*, 34 P. I. 100 (on the facts); 1916, *Laureano v. Kilayco*, 34 P. I. 148; 1918, *Villa v. Santiago*, 38 P. I. 157; 1918, *Cayugan v. Santos*, 39 P. I. 970, 972; *Porto Rico*: 1917, *Lizardi*



one or two jurisdictions the contrary view is maintained,<sup>2</sup> and though in any event the terms of a particular document may require the contrary result.<sup>3</sup> But the theory upon which the prevailing view rests has varied decidedly. By some Courts it has been placed on the ground (*post*, § 2439) of fraud,<sup>4</sup> by others on the doctrine (*ante*, § 2433) of consideration,<sup>5</sup> or both of those;<sup>6</sup> and again it is said to involve merely the "object" of the parties,<sup>7</sup> — whatever that may signify. Still others suggest a distinction between chancery and law,<sup>8</sup> and between a proceeding in ejectment and other remedies.<sup>9</sup>

But none of these theories seem to be adequate, — for one reason (to name no others), because the rule of exclusion may sometimes become applicable on the facts of a given case.<sup>10</sup> The apparent obstacle, which invokes the rule, is the absolute terms of the transfer, together with the circumstance that the traditional form of mortgage at common law — a condition of defeasance — seems to be plainly at war with the terms of such a deed. But

*v. Registrar*, 24 P. I. 804; *South Dakota*: 1906, *Gardner v. Welch*, 21 S. D. 151, 110 N. W. 110 (interesting example); *Washington*: 1893, *Voorhies v. Hennessy*, 7 Wash. 243, 34 Pac. 931; 1913, *Hoover v. Bouffleur*, 74 Wash. 382, 133 Pac. 602; 1920, *Manahan v. Aumiller*, 110 Wash. 673, 188 Pac. 789; *West Virginia*: 1897, *Shank v. Grott*, 43 W. Va. 337, 27 S. E. 340; 1904, *Hursey v. Hursey*, 56 W. Va. 148, 49 S. E. 367; *Wisconsin*: 1897, *Gettelman v. Aetna Co.*, 57 Wis. 237, 72 N. W. 627 (insurance policy).

Compare the alleged rule that such an agreement is not sufficiently proved by the grantee's uncorroborated admissions (*ante*, § 2054).

<sup>2</sup> *Georgia*: 1920, *Avera L. & I. Co. v. Yopp*, 25 Ga. App. 279, 103 S. E. 42 (personalty); *North Carolina*: 1913, *Carson v. National Life Ins. Co.* 161 N. C. 441, 77 S. E. 353 (absolute assignment of insurance policy); 1919, *Newbern v. Newbern*, 178 N. C. 3, 100 S. E. 77 (collecting prior cases; in this State, therefore, the contestant is thrown back upon the general doctrines, *ante*, §§ 2413-2421, *i. e.* that relief depends on whether "the clause of redemption was omitted by reason of ignorance, mistake, fraud, or undue advantage"); *Texas*: 1894, *Eckford v. Berry*, 87 Tex. 415, 28 S. W. 937; *Washington*: 1897, *Goon Gan v. Richardson*, 16 Wash. 373, 47 Pac. 762. In *Kentucky*, there was much vacillation: 1824, *Thompson v. Patton*, 5 Litt. 74; 1830, *Edrington v. Harper*, 3 J. J. M. 353; 1839, *Thomas v. McCormack*, 9 Dana 108; 1898, *Munford v. Green*, 103 Ky. 140, 44 S. W. 419 (repudiating the remark in *Seiler v. Bank*, 86 Ky. 131); but the Kentucky Court now accepts the orthodox doctrine, expressly overruling contrary decisions: 1909, *Hobbs v. Rowland*, 136 Ky. 197, 123 S. W. 1185.

<sup>3</sup> 1891, *Thomas v. Scutt*, 127 N. Y. 133, 27 N. E. 961 (sale of logs; that the transfer was merely in satisfaction of a chattel mortgage

and the vendee was to pay only what remained after the debt and expenses were deducted, excluded on the facts); 1912, *Duffey v. Scientific A. C. Deptmt.*, 30 Okl. 742, 120 Pac. 1088 (book-order).

<sup>4</sup> 1895, *Baird v. Baird*, 145 N. Y. 659, 40 N. E. 222 ("The rule which excludes evidence of parol negotiations or conditions, when offered to contradict or substantially vary the legal import of a written agreement, does not prevent a party to the agreement, in an action between the parties, from showing by way of defence the existence of a contemporaneous oral agreement, made at the time the writing was executed and delivered, which would render the use of the written instrument, for any purpose contrary to or inconsistent with the oral stipulation, dishonest or fraudulent").

<sup>5</sup> 1888, *Colt v. McConnell*, 116 Ind. 249, 19 N. E. 106 (Elliott, J.: "The facts pleaded do not impeach the conveying qualities of the mortgage; they simply impeach its consideration"); 1886, *McMillan v. Bissell*, 63 Mich. 66, 70, 29 N. W. 737 ("The agreement for the defeasance, whether written or unwritten, is no more than one of the conditions upon which the deed was given, and therefore constitutes a part of the consideration for the conveyance").

<sup>6</sup> 1851, *Russell v. Southard*, 12 How. U. S. 139, 148 (said by Curtis, J., to involve in effect "both fraud and a vice in the consideration").

<sup>7</sup> 1878, *Brick v. Brick*, 98 U. S. 514 (transfer of shares of stock, shown to be a pledge only; "the rule does not forbid an inquiry into the object of parties in executing and receiving the instrument").

<sup>8</sup> Considered in the following cases: 1865, *Newton v. Fay*, 10 All. Mass. 505, 507; 1896, *German Ins. Co. v. Gibe*, 162 Ill. 251, 44 N. E. 490; 1909, *Ah Hoy v. Raymond*, 19 Haw. 568 (chattel mortgage).

<sup>9</sup> *German Ins. Co. v. Gibe*, Ill., *supra*.

<sup>10</sup> *Thomas v. Scutt*, N. Y., *supra*.



that traditional form is a form merely, not recognized in modern law as literally valid. The essence of a security is an agreement to deal with the property so as to extinguish a certain debt, and no otherwise. In other words, the act of transfer and the user of the property transferred are distinct legal ideas; or, put still differently, the kind of estate — according to the categories of fee simple, life estate, and the like — is a different thing from the quality of the estate, *i. e.* trust or security. The simple question is, then, whether the parties, under all the circumstances, appear to have intended the document to cover merely the kind of estate transferred, or to cover all possible aspects of the transfer, including that of the quality of the estate, *i. e.* its subjection to an equity of redemption; in the latter case, no extrinsic agreement can be considered.

By the same reasoning is to be determined the question whether an extrinsic *agreement to hold in trust* can be established. So far as the present rule is concerned, there would seem to be no objection; and this would be so also for agreements equivalent to a trust, for example, an agreement to reconvey on demand.<sup>11</sup> But by the statute of frauds (*post*, § 2454) such an agreement not in writing may be unenforceable; and thus, for a different reason, the agreement may still be unavailable; unless the doctrine of resulting trusts be held to remove the objection of the statute of frauds.<sup>12</sup>

§ 2438. **Agreement to hold as Surety or Agent only.** (1) Where a document is executed by A and B, apparently as equal principals, B may of course establish, as against A, an extrinsic agreement that between themselves B should be *surety only*, because the document does not embody the transaction between A and B, but only the transaction between them and the obligee.<sup>1</sup> But may B avail himself of an extrinsic agreement between himself and the obligee to treat B as surety only? On the analogy of the foregoing doctrine (*ante*, § 2437), it would seem that he may.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the execution is general and not limited in form; yet it may be said that the agreement

<sup>11</sup> 1914, *Re Gardom*, *LePage v. Attorney-General*, 1 Ch. 662; 1922, *O'Donnell v. O'Donnell*, 303 Ill. 31, 135 N. E. 28; 1885, *Hutchins v. Hutchins*, 98 N. Y. 56, 63.

<sup>12</sup> The cases are cited in Ames' *Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., pp. 291, 295-320; add the following cases: *Can.* 1921, *Vaselenak v. Vaselenak*, 57 D. L. R. 370, *Alta.* (purchase of land as joint owners); *U. S.* 1904, *Ostenson v. Severson*, 126 Ia. 197, 101 N. W. 789; 1919, *Nolan v. Guggerty*, 187 Ia. 980, 174 N. W. 706; 1920, *Silvers v. Howard*, 106 Kan. 762, 190 Pac. 1 (parol trust as between son and mother); 1920, *Chilton v. Smith*, 180 N. C. 472, 105 S. E. 1; 1915, *Chandler v. Roe*, 46 Okl. 349, 148 Pac. 1026; 1910, *Fernandez v. Gonzalez*, 16 P. R. 618 (donation with agreement of donee to convey further);

The subject has been exhaustively examined in the following articles: Professor J. B. Ames, "Constructive Trusts based upon the

Breach of an Express Oral Trust of Land" (*Harvard Law Review*, XX, 549; 1907); Professor George P. Costigan, Jr., "Trusts based on Oral Promises," etc. (*Michigan Law Review*, XII, 423, 535; 1914); Professor H. F. Stone, "Resulting Trusts and the Statute of Frauds" (*Columbia Law Review*, VI, 326; 1906).

§ 2438. <sup>1</sup> The cases are cited in Brandt, *Suretyship*, 2 ed., §§ 29, 30.

<sup>2</sup> The following case is opposed: 1897, *Hobbs v. Batory*, 86 Md. 68, 37 Atl. 713 ("J. B. has rented his farm . . . to the said T. A. H. and S. R. H. for one year"; an agreement that S. R. H. was to be surety only, not admitted against the lessor).

The agreement must of course, on the principle of § 2415, *ante*, be one known to and shared by the party holding the obligation. Where the document is a negotiable instrument, special considerations apply: *post*, § 2443.

does not dispute the existence and tenor of the obligation, but merely affects the use to which it may be put by the holder.

(2) Where a document is executed by "*A, agent for B,*" or by "*A, treasurer of B Co.,*" whether A or B shall be liable, and whether A may avail himself of an agreement not to hold him personally, seems to be essentially a question of the proper interpretation of the terms used.<sup>3</sup>

(3) Where, however, a document is executed by A without any indication of agency in the document, and it is desired to establish an agreement between A and B that B shall as *undisclosed principal* be a party, for the purpose either of charging or entitling B or of exonerating A, the applicability of the present rule is directly involved. Here several distinctions have been taken. (a) In the first place, where the unnamed principal is *unknown* to the obligee, it is proper to give force to the contract between principal and agent for the purpose of charging or entitling the principal, though not of exonerating the agent;<sup>4</sup> unless in the particular case the document plainly was intended to deal otherwise with the transaction.<sup>5</sup> (b) In the second place, where the unnamed principal was *known* to the obligee, nevertheless not named in the document, the rule *may* here equally apply, the agreement to be available for the former purpose above mentioned, yet the ordinary inference will be that the named parties intended the document to be exclusive of all other parties, unless a contrary intention be made to appear.

The general state of the law is sufficiently outlined in the following passage:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ala.* 1905, *Russell v. Broadus C. Mills*, — *Ala.* —, 39 So. 712; *Ga.* 1905, *Raleigh & G. R. Co. v. Pullman Co.*, 122 Ga. 700, 50 S. E. 1008; *Ill.* 1904, *Reed v. Fleming*, 209 Ill. 390, 70 N. E. 667; *Ia.* 1893, *Mathews v. Mattress Co.*, 87 Ia. 246, 54 N. W. 225; 1916, *Farmers' National Bank v. Hatcher*, 176 Ia. 259, 157 N. W. 876; 1918, *Schuling v. Ervin*, 185 Ia. 1, 169 N. W. 636 (church trustees); *Kan.* 1920, *Solomon N. Bank v. Continental Trust Co.*, 107 Kan. 700, 193 Pac. 316 (treasurer of a corporation; authorities collected); *Mass.* 1914, *Brooks Co. v. Wilson*, 218 Mass. 205, 105 N. E. 607 ("ordered by"); *Nebr.* 1904, *Western W. S. Co. v. McMillen*, 71 Nebr. 686, 99 N. W. 512; *Okl.* 1911, *Wiers v. Treese*, 27 Okl. 774, 117 Pac. 182; 1915, *Denman v. Brennamen*, 48 Okl. 566, 149 Pac. 1105; 1916, *Roberts v. Morgan*, 56 Okl. 513, 156 Pac. 319.

<sup>4</sup> 1841, *Higgins v. Senior*, 8 M. & W. 834, 844 (Parke, B.: "[To allow an unnamed principal to be entitled or charged] in no way contradicts the written agreement; it does not deny that it is binding on those whom, on the face of it, it purports to bind, but shows that it binds also another, by reason that the act of the agent in signing the agreement in pursuance of his authority is in law the act of the principal. But, on the other hand, to allow

evidence to be given that the party who appears on the face of the instrument to be personally a contracting party is not such, would be to allow parol evidence to contradict the written agreement").

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1848, *Humble v. Hunter*, 12 Q. B. 310 (rule not applicable to a charter-party wherein the alleged agent described himself as "owner" of the ship); 1871, *Fleet v. Murton*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 126, 130 (broker's contract expressly as broker for undisclosed principal; custom to undertake personal liability in case the principal is not disclosed, admitted); 1873, *Hutchinson v. Tatham*, L. R. 8 C. P. 482, 486 (similar); 1918, *Rederi Aktiebolaget Transatlantic v. Drughorn*, 1 K. B. 394 (charter-party with L.: evidence that plaintiff was L's. undisclosed principal, admitted, though L. was termed "charterer" in the contract; *Humble v. Hunter* distinguished); 1919, *Drughorn v. Rederi Aktiebolaget Transatlantic*, A. C. 203 ("charterer" allowed to be shown to be agent only; *Humble v. Hunter* explained); *U. S.* 1905, *Usher v. Daniels*, 73 N. H. 206, 60 Atl. 746 (citing cases).

<sup>6</sup> The authorities are collected in Wambaugh, *Cases on Agency*, 627-657, 673-723; *Fed.* 1917, *Chapman v. Java Pacific Line*, 9th C. C. A., 241 Fed. 850; *Ariz.* 1914, *Arizona*



1896, *WOLVERTON, J.*, in *Barbre v. Goodale*, 28 Or. 465, 38 Pac. 67, 43 Pac. 378: "The question is here presented whether it is competent to show by parol testimony that a contract executed by and in the name of an agent is the contract of the principal, where the principal was known to the other contracting party at the date of its execution. There are two opinions touching the question, among American authorities, — the one affirming, and the other denying; but the case is one of first impression here, and we feel constrained to adopt the rule which may seem the more compatible with the promotion of justice, and the exaction of honest and candid transactions between individuals. The English authorities are agreed that parol evidence is admissible to show that a written contract executed in the name of an agent is the contract of the principal, whether he was known or unknown; and the American authorities are a unit, so far as the rule is applied to an unknown principal, but disagree where he was known at the time the contract was executed or entered into by the parties. All the authorities, both English and American, concur in holding that, as applied to such contracts executed when the principal was unknown, parol evidence which shows that the agent who made the contract in his own name was acting for the principal does not contradict the writing, but simply explains the transaction; for the effect is not to show that the person appearing to be bound is not bound, but to show that some other person is bound also. And those authorities which deny the application of the rule where the principal was known do not assert or maintain that such parol testimony tends to vary or contradict the written contract, but find support upon the doctrine of estoppel; it being maintained that a party thus dealing with an agent of a known principal elects to rely solely upon the agent's responsibility, and is therefore estopped to proceed against the principal. The underlying principle, therefore, upon which the authorities seem to diverge, is the presumption created by the execution of the contract in the name of the agent, and the acceptance thereof by a party, where the principal is known. Is this presumption conclusive, or is it disputable? Without attempting to reconcile the decisions, we believe the better rule to be that the presumption thus created is a disputable one, and that the intention of the party must be gathered from his words, and the various circumstances which surround the transaction, as its practical effect is to promote justice and fair dealing. — The principal may have recourse to the same doctrine to bind the party thus entering into contract with his agent. Parol evidence, however, is not admissible to discharge the agent, as the party with whom he has dealt has his election as to whether he will hold him or the principal responsible."

§ 2439. **Fraud; Illegality.** (a) The doctrine of extrinsic fraud as sufficient to make a legal act voidable has already been considered (*ante*, § 2423). But what is the bearing of the present rule? When a transaction has been reduced to a single document, how is it that *fraud* can be established extrinsically?

A simple answer seems to be that since the present rule depends (*ante*, § 2430) on the intent of the parties to embody one or more subjects of transaction exclusively in the document, it is impossible to suppose that the subject of fraud was intended thus to be covered, since by hypothesis the party upon whom the fraud is practised does not know of it and therefore could

*L. Ins. Co. v. Lindell*, 15 Ariz. 471, 140 Pac. 60; *Cal.* 1903, *Curran v. Holland*, 141 Cal. 437, 75 Pac. 46; *Ky.* 1921, *Chambers v. Murphy*, 192 Ky. 839, 234 S. W. 960 (sale of land); *Mass.* 1906, *Buffington v. McNally*, 192 Mass. 198, 78 N. E. 309; *Minn.* 1911, *Davidson v. Hurtz*, 116 Minn. 280, 133 N. W. 862; *S. Dak.* 1906, *Schriner v. Dickinson*, 20 S. D. 433, 107 N. W.

536; *Utah*: 1919, *Roe v. Schweitzer*, 55 Utah 204, 184 Pac. 938 (sale of mining stock); *Wis.* 1920, *Rathmann v. Schwarz*, 170 Wis. 459, 175 N. W. 812 (sale of motor truck).

The distinction sometimes made between sealed contracts and simple contracts (*Briggs v. Partridge*, 1876, 64 N. Y. 357) ought to have no place here.



not have had such an intent. But, if this be true, what becomes of that other application of the rule, well established for most transactions (*ante*, § 2434), that warranty-representations extrinsic to the document cannot be availed of? Fraud is always a matter of false representations; and how is it that extrinsic representations are as warranties to be ignored but as fraud to be admitted? The explanation seems to be that the vital additional element in fraud is the party's state of mind, which neither can be nor is intended to be embodied in the written document, and that hence the rule does not forbid considering it wherever it is the vital element of the claim. In other words, in an action of *deceit*, or in a proceeding of *rescission of contract* wherever this by the law depends upon the promisor's conscious falsity, the present rule interposes no obstacle; although in an action of contract upon an alleged warranty as a part of it, or in a proceeding of rescission for breach of warranty or innocent misrepresentation, the same representations could not be considered.<sup>1</sup>

It may be added that the term "fraud" must here be understood in its legitimate narrow sense, *i. e.* a misrepresentation of a *present* or *past fact*; for, although a much looser significance has been occasionally intimated,<sup>2</sup> yet it is obvious that an intent not to perform a promise (*i. e.* a misrepresentation as to a future fact), or a subsequent failure knowingly to perform an extrinsic agreement not embodied in the writing, cannot in strictness be legally included in the term "fraud." It seems to be a disregard of this distinction that is in part responsible for the anomalous attitude of the Pennsylvania Court (*ante*, § 2431) towards the general rule.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Similarly, where the *illegality* of a transaction, forbidden by public policy, depends upon the parties' intent (*e. g.* a lease of premises for gambling), the actual intent of the parties may always be shown, in spite of the

§ 2439. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1814, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 Camp. 22 (deceit); *U. S.* 1917, *Freeman v. U. S.*, 7th C. C. A. 244 Fed. 1, 12 (using a business agency to defraud; defendant's representations variant from the terms of contracts with victims, admitted); 1911, *Brown v. LeMay*, 101 Ark. 95, 141 S. W. 761 (false representations as to land sold); 1910, *Delaney v. Jackson*, 95 Ark. 131, 128 S. W. 859 (lease); 1921, *Mooney v. Cyriacks*, 185 Cal. 70, 195 Pac. 922 (fraudulent representations in sale of an automobile); 1904, *McCrary v. Pritchard*, 119 Ga. 876, 47 S. E. 341; 1904, *Wilson, Close & Co. v. Pritchett*, 99 Md. 583, 58 Atl. 360; 1905, *Patten-W. D. Co. v. Planters' M. Co.*, 86 Miss. 423, 38 So. 209 (sale-contract); 1889, *State v. Cass*, 52 N. J. L. 77, 18 Atl. 972 (fraudulent representations as to speed, in the sale of a horse; "as an additional warranty, that is, an addition to the contract, the present representations were clearly inadmissible; so soon, however, as they displayed such features as went to show that through them the contract had been

fraudulently induced, and so was unenforceable for that reason at the election of the defrauded party, the rule excluding parol testimony to enlarge a written contract became inoperative"); 1910, *Adams v. Gillig*, 199 N. Y. 314, 92 N. E. 670 (deed obtained by fraudulent representations of an intention to build dwellings on the land, the actual intention being to build an automobile garage); 1917, *Raich v. Lindebek*, 36 N. D. 133, 161 N. W. 1026 (stock subscriptions); 1917, *Dupilas v. Cabacungan*, 36 P. I. 254, 262 (applying C. C. P. § 285); 1919, *Bough v. Cantiveros*, 40 P. I. 209 (similar); 1909, *Baker v. Berry Hill M. S. Co.*, 109 Va. 776, 65 S. E. 656.

<sup>2</sup> 1840, *Story, J.*, in *Bottomley v. U. S.*, 1 Story 135, 152 ("I know of no case where parol evidence is not admissible to establish fraud, even in the most solemn transactions and conveyances").

<sup>3</sup> The unsoundness of that theory of fraud is well expounded in an opinion by Allen, P., in *Towner v. Lucas* (1857), 13 Gratt. Va. 705, 716 (quoted *ante*, § 2431).



terms of the document (*ante*, §§ 2406, 2414). The reason is that the Integration rule purports merely to protect one party against opening an inquiry into the mutual intent as finally embodied in the document; if therefore the mutual and actual intent was different and the document was designed merely to mislead other persons, *viz.* the authorities of justice, there is no more objection to inquiring into that actual intent than there is in the case of mutual mistake (*ante*, § 2417).

§ 2440. **Trade Usage and Custom.** Where the parties have not intended to make the document embody the transaction upon a particular topic, its terms may be as well supplied by implied extrinsic agreement as by express extrinsic agreement. In other words, that *usage* or *custom of a trade or locality*, which would otherwise by implication form a part of the transaction, will equally form a part when the transaction has been embodied in a document, provided the document was not intended to cover the topic affected by the custom. The test is on principle the same as for express extrinsic agreements; except that in the case of the custom the ordinary presumption is in favor of its implication, because the topics covered by the writing will usually be those which do not concern some known and usual term but vary in each particular transaction:

1836, PARKE, B., in *Hutton v. Warren*, 1 M. & W. 466, 475: "[The inclusion of customs into written contracts] has been done upon the principle of presumption that in such transactions the parties did not mean to express in writing the whole of the contract by which they intended to be bound, but a contract with reference to those known usages."

1854, COLERIDGE, J., in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703: "In all contracts, as to the subject-matter of which known usages prevail, parties are found to proceed with the tacit assumption of these usages; they commonly reduce into writing the special particulars of their agreement, but omit to specify these known usages, which are included however, as of course, by mutual understanding; evidence therefore of such incidents is receivable. The contract in truth is partly express and in writing, partly implied or understood and unwritten."

1837, STORY, J., in *The Schooner Reeside*, 2 Sumn. 567: "I own myself no friend to the almost indiscriminate habit, of late years, of setting up particular usages or customs, in almost all kinds of business and trade, to control, vary, or annul the general liabilities of parties under the common law, as well as under the commercial law. It has long appeared to me, that there is no small danger in admitting such loose and inconclusive usages and customs, often unknown to particular parties, and always liable to great misunderstandings and misinterpretations and abuses, to outweigh the well-known and well-settled principles of law. And I rejoice to find, that, of late years, the Courts of law, both in England and in America, have been disposed to narrow the limits of the operation of such usages and customs, and to discountenance any further extension of them. The true and appropriate office of a usage or custom is, to interpret the otherwise indeterminate intentions of parties, and to ascertain the nature and extent of their contracts, arising, not from express stipulations, but from mere implications and presumptions, and acts of a doubtful or equivocal character. It may also be admitted to ascertain the true meaning of a particular word, or of particular words, in a given instrument, when the word or words have various senses, some common, some qualified, and some technical, according to the subject-matter to which they are applied. But I apprehend that it never can be proper to resort to any usage or custom to control or vary the positive stipulations in a written contract, and, 'a

fortiori,' not in order to contradict them. An express contract of the parties is always admissible to supersede, or vary, or control a usage or custom; for the latter may always be waived at the will of the parties. But a written and express contract cannot be controlled or varied, or contradicted by a usage or custom; for that would not only be to admit parol evidence to control, vary, or contradict written contracts, but it would be to allow mere presumptions and implications, properly arising in the absence of any positive expressions of intention, to control, vary, or contradict the most formal and deliberate written declarations of the parties."

1921, *BURKS, J.*, in *North Shore Improvement Co. v. New York P. & N. R. Co.*, 130 Va. 464, 108 S. E. 11 (a bill of lading agreed to deliver to Colley Avenue Siding, in Norfolk; a usage to deliver only to Port Norfolk was set up in excuse for non-delivery to the Siding): "The existence of the usage, however, if known to the plaintiff, would not override the express provisions of a contract in conflict therewith. Contracts not contrary to a trade usage, and which are silent on the subject of the usage, are deemed to have been made with reference to such usage, because such is the presumed intention of the parties, provided the parties have actual or imputed knowledge of the usage. But if the contract deals with the subject of the usage and conflicts therewith, the contract prevails. Thus, if I contract for the construction of a brick wall at so much per thousand, saying nothing as to how the count is to be made, and there is a trade usage to estimate the number of bricks by allowing so many per cubic foot, I will be bound by that usage if I know of it, or if it was so general and universal that I ought to have known of it. But if I contract for the wall at so much per thousand, actual count, the trade usage is eliminated, and the contract fixes the method of ascertaining the number of bricks to be paid for. So here it is immaterial how general and universal the usage may have been as to cars consigned to Norfolk, or what knowledge the plaintiff may have had thereof; the usage is eliminated as a part of the agreement of the parties, because the contract of the parties (the bill of lading) called for delivery of the car at a particular siding in the city of Norfolk. The contract is in conflict with the usage, if otherwise applicable, and overrides it."

The application of the rule in a given instance depends entirely on the nature of the transaction and the terms of the particular document, and precedents are of little service.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2440. <sup>1</sup> The following will suffice as examples; distinguish the cases cited *post*, §§ 2462, 2464 (usage to interpret the words in a document):

ENGLAND: 1779, *Wigglesworth v. Dallison*, 1 Doug. 201 (lease for 21 years; custom for the tenant to take crops sown before expiration of the lease, admitted); 1800, *Ougier v. Jennings*, 1 Camp. 505, note (policy on a ship from Newfoundland to Portugal "beginning the adventure from the loading thereof"; usage admitted to include an intermediate loading before the voyage to Portugal); 1808, *Vallance v. Dewar*, 1 Camp. 503 (policy on a ship "at and from any port or ports in Newfoundland"; usage admitted to include an intermediate voyage after arrival in Newfoundland and before starting homeward); 1816, *Yates v. Pym*, 6 Taunt. 446 (written sale of bacon; trade usage requiring inspection of defects before a certain time, excluded); 1832, *Blackett v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Cr. & J. 244, 249 (policy on a ship, tackle, apparel, etc.; a usage of underwriters not to pay for boats hung outside

the ship on the quarter, excluded, since the policy was "upon the face of it, upon the whole ship, on all her furniture, and all her apparel") 1838, *Bottomley v. Forbes*, 5 Bing. N. C. 121 (a charter-party provided for the payment of freight on cotton, "cotton to be calculated at 50 cubic feet per ton"; cotton after unloading expands so that the cubic measurement at loading and unloading differ greatly; a usage to measure at the shipper's warehouse was admitted); 1843, *R. v. Stoke-upon-Trent*, 5 Q. B. 303 (contract to work "from the 11th day of November next until the 11th November 1817"; a custom in that branch of manufacturing "to allow holidays at certain fixed times of the year," on the ground that "its notoriety makes it virtually part of the contract"); 1848, *Syers v. Jonas*, 2 Exch. 111, 116 (usage in the tobacco trade that sales should be conditioned on correspondence with sample, admitted; "such usage is admissible whenever it is not expressly or impliedly excluded by the tenor of the written instrument"); 1854, *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & E. 703 (bill of lading



From the foregoing rule are to be distinguished three other classes of questions in which usage becomes material: (a) The question of *contract*, whether a particular usage may be *implied* into a contract, supposing it not to have been reduced to writing; and the doctrine that a local custom will not be added by implication alone to the terms of a contract, where a definite rule of law obtains to the contrary; (b) The question of *standard of interpretation*, whether a term used in a transaction, written or oral, is to be interpreted by a *usage not known to both parties* (*post*, § 2464); (c) The further question of *interpretation*, whether a usage adopted by both parties can be allowed to *displace the general meaning of a word* when contrary to the usage (*post*, § 2462); the cases involving this question are apt to be confused with cases involving the rule here under consideration about varying the terms of a document.

agreeing to pay "freight  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound, with 5 per cent primage, and average accustomed," and saying nothing about time of payment or discount; a local custom to allow 3 mos. discount, admitted); 1859, *Martin, B.*, in *Langton v. Higgins*, 4 H. & N. 401, 408 (sale of goods in writing, and issue as to time of delivery to pass title; "they cannot add to the writing by showing that at the time the contract was made they had been accustomed to do something further"); 1917, *Sutro & Co. v. Heilbut Symons & Co.*, 2 K. B. 347 (shipping contract for Singapore rubber "from the East to New York direct"; custom to ship via Seattle and partly by rail, held (1) not established, and (2) in any event, not admissible, being "inconsistent with the terms of the written contract and repugnant to them"; *Scrutton, L. J.*, diss.); 1917, *Enlayde v. Roberts*, 1 Ch. 109 (policy of insurance against fire; usage as to fire caused by acts of foreign enemies, not here admitted).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1904, *Portland F. M. Co. v. British & F. M. Ins. Co.*, 130 Fed. 860, 65 C. C. A. 344 (usage as to collection of freight charges from the person named in the bill of lading as the one to be notified, excluded); *Cal.* 1903, *Withers v. Moore*, 140 Cal. 591, 71 Pac. 697 (custom as to alteration of coal prices, excluded); *Conn.* 1841, *Kilgore v. Bulkley*, 14 Conn. 362, 391 (note falling due on a date which was Sunday; local usage admitted to show that in such cases the note was payable on the Saturday before; clear opinion by *Storrs, J.*); *Ill.* 1885, *Gilbert v. McGinnis*, 114 Ill. 28, 28 N. E. 382 (sale of corn, with an agreement by the buyer to make "advances" of money; a custom among grain merchants to make such an advance only upon a note by the seller for the amount advanced, excluded); *Ind.* 1890, *Scott v. Hartley*, 126 Ind. 239, 25 N. E. 826 (sale of grain at "50½ net"; a custom to deduct freight paid by the consignee, excluded); *Ia.* 1913, *Smith v. Bloom*, 159 Ia. 592, 141 N. W. 32 (stockyards methods); *Kan.* 1913, *Atkinson v. Kirk-*

*patrick*, 90 Kan. 515, 135 Pac. 579 (custom of landlord and tenant in Arkansas City, not applied to a party living in another city); *La.* 1893, *Destrehan v. Lumber Co.*, 45 La. An. 920, 924, 13 So. 230 (custom of measuring, etc., allowed, to supply the contract on matters not covered by the writing); *Md.* 1921, *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Co.*, 138 Md. 604, 114 Atl. 731 (custom of notifying consignees of arrival of goods, held not general enough); *Mass.* 1900, *Menage v. Rosenthal*, 175 Mass. 358, 56 N. E. 579 (salesman's contract to travel "throughout the New England States"; custom to stay and work in New York "whenever trade is in town," excluded); 1905, *Garfield v. Peerless M. C. Co.*, 189 Mass. 395, 75 N. E. 695 (commission on a sale of an automobile; trade usage admitted, on the facts); 1906, *Shute v. Bills*, 191 Mass. 433, 78 N. E. 96 (lease; usage as to repairs and control of gutters, etc.); 1910, *Barrie v. Quinby*, 206 Mass. 259, 92 N. E. 451 (usage in the book-trade as to an interval between expensive and cheap editions of the same book); *Mich.* 1898, *Germain v. Lumber Co.*, 116 Mich. 245, 74 N. W. 644 (custom as to taking away logs, not admitted on the facts); *N. C.* 1904, *Blalock v. Clark*, 137 N. C. 140, 49 S. E. 88 (custom as to the mode of payment for cotton); *S. C.* 1895, *Fairly v. Wappoo Mills*, 44 S. C. 227, 22 S. E. 112, 114 ("sold 2000 tons, seller paying brokerage at 10 cents per ton"; evidence of a custom to pay brokerage on only the amount delivered, not the amount contracted for, was rejected); *Va.* 1895, *Richards Co. v. Hildebeitel*, 92 Va. 91, 22 S. E. 806 (a contract specifying the prices for laying bricks; local usage admitted as to the method of ascertaining the quantities laid); 1897, *Hansbrough v. Neal*, 94 Va. 722, 27 S. E. 593 (custom admitted to fix the value of services). 1921, *North Shore Improvement Co. v. New York P. & N. R. Co.*, 130 Va. 464, 108 S. E. 11 (bill of lading promising delivery to Colley Ave. siding; usage to deliver only to Port Norfolk, not given effect; quoted *supra*).



§ 2441. **Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.** The general rule now under consideration rests on the assumption that a specific transaction has been embodied exclusively in a single document. All distinct and separate transactions may therefore be established and availed of, whenever they are in themselves valid. Now a transaction *subsequent in time* must always be a separate transaction. The rule of exclusion can only apply to negotiations contemporaneous in time, or prior but incomplete. Where a document, for example, is executed on July 1, it may be held to embody the final and exclusive result of negotiations before and up to the time of execution; but a transaction on August 1 must be a separate one and therefore can never be excluded, so far as the effect of the document of July 1 is concerned. It may be that some rule of form (*post*, § 2454) will sometimes make the transaction of August 1 invalid in itself; as when a writing is required by the statute of frauds, or where a parol release will not discharge a sealed contract; or when an agreement not to sue will not be enforced at common law (*ante*, § 2435). But the present rule can interpose no obstacle.

In particular, any subsequent agreement *altering, waiving, discharging, or otherwise novating* a prior transaction is not excluded by reason of the prior transaction having been reduced to writing: <sup>1</sup>

1833, DENMAN, L. C. J., in *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, 5 B. & Ad. 58: "By the general rules of the common law, if there be a contract which has been reduced into writing, verbal

§ 2441. <sup>1</sup> The following rulings will serve as examples:

ENGLAND: 1773, *Milton v. Edgworth*, 5 Bro. P. C. 313 (the rate of interest on a mortgage loan made in writing may be reduced by subsequent oral agreement).

UNITED STATES: 1907, *Roquemore v. Vulcan I. W. Co.*, 151 Ala. 643, 44 So. 557 (lease of a shovel); 1919, *McWhorter v. Tyson*, 203 Ala. 509, 83 So. 330 (considering the conflict between this principle and the principle of the statute of frauds preventing the transfer of a mortgage to a new defendant by parol agreement); *Ariz.* 1922, *Kilbourn v. Marshall* — *Ariz.* —, 206 Pac. 785 (citing the above text with approval); *Ark.* 1921, *Webb v. Shea*, 149 Ark. 406, 232 S. W. 602 (tenancy); *Cal.* 1892, *Guidery v. Green*, 95 Cal. 630, 634, 30 Pac. 786 (oral agreement that another instrument should be substituted for the one in question, admitted); 1919, *People v. Neetens*, 42 Cal. App. 596, 184 Pac. 27 (obtaining money under false pretences; P. C. § 1110, applied); *Conn.* 1909, *O'Laughlin v. Poll*, 82 Conn., 427, 74 Atl. 763 (building contract, with agreement for extra work); *Ga.* 1913, *Elyea-Austell Co. v. Jackson Garage*, 13 Ga. App. 182, 79 S. E. 38 (waiver of a condition); *Ill.* 1892, *Chicago B. & O. R. Co. v. Dickson*, 143 Ill. 368, 32 N. E. 380 (agreement not to ride in stock-car; a practice of the railroad to permit it, admitted as a waiver); *Me.* 1921, *Johnson v. Burnham*, 120 Me. 491, 115 Atl.

201 (log-sawing contract); *Mass.* 1919, *Gilman & Son Co. v. Turner T. M. Co.*, 232 Mass. 573, 122 N. E. 747 (contract for royalties); *Mo.* 1901, *Warren v. Mayer Mfg. Co.*, 161 Mo. 112, 61 S. W. 644 (examining the authorities); 1909, *Reigart v. Mfrs. C. & C. Co.*, 217 Mo. 142, 117 S. W. 61; 1919, *Hamburger v. Hirsch*, — Mo. App. —, 212 S. W. 49; *Nebr.* 1904, *Strahl v. Western G. Co.*, — *Nebr.* —, 98 N. W. 1043 (services); *N. Y.* 1837, *Eaves v. Henderson*, 14 Wend. 190 (though a contemporary agreement to apply other claims in set-off of a note was excluded, a subsequent agreement to accept them in payment was admitted); *N. C.* 1896, *Harris v. Murphy*, 119 N. C. 34, 25 S. E. 708 (contract for work and labor in raising a barge; a subsequent alteration admitted); 1914, *Palmer v. Lowder*, 167 N. C. 331, 83 S. E. 464 (contract to sell land); *Or.* 1919, *Propst v. William Hanley Co.*, 94 Or. 397, 185 Pac. 766 (sale of a crop); *R. I.* 1904, *Putnam F. & M. Co. v. Canfield*, 25 R. I. 548, 56 Atl. 1033 (contract for steam-heating); *Vt.* 1896, *Dunklee v. Goodnough*, 68 Vt. 113, 34 Atl. 427 (subsequent agreement relating to the mode of payment; admitted); *Wash.* 1899, *Keating v. Pacific S. W. Co.*, 21 Wash. 415, 58 Pac. 224 (the plaintiff signed shipping-articles as seaman; on boarding the vessel, he found a sail unseaworthy; he had then the right to abandon the voyage, and a parol agreement by the ship not to use the defective sail was a new contract which could be availed of).



evidence is not allowed to be given of what passed between the parties, either before the written instrument was made, or during the time that it was in a state of preparation, so as to add or subtract from, or in any manner to vary or qualify the written contract; but after the agreement has been reduced into writing, it is competent to the parties, at any time before breach of it, by a new contract not in writing, either altogether to waive, dissolve, or annul the former agreements, or in any manner to add to, or subtract from, or vary or qualify the terms of it, and thus to make a new contract; which is to be proved, partly by the written agreement, and partly by the subsequent verbal terms engrafted upon what will be thus left of the written agreement. And if the present contract was not subject to the control of any act of Parliament, we think that it would have been competent for the parties, by word of mouth, to dispense with requiring a good title to be made to the lot in question, and that the action might be maintained. But the Statute of Frauds has made certain regulations as to contracts for the sale of lands."

The application of this principle varies in practice according to the nature of the particular legal right and the actual separation of the transactions in time.

§ 2412. **Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule to exclude or admit "Collateral" Agreements.** It does not seem possible to generalize further than on the preceding topics.<sup>1</sup> The application of the rule, resting as it does upon the

§ 2442. <sup>1</sup> The following citations may serve to illustrate the variety of application of the rule:

ENGLAND: 1769, *Preston v. Merceau*, 2 W. Bl. 1249 (in an action for rent on a house-lease "for 21 years at 26*l.* per annum," the lessor, who owned the house only, was not allowed to prove a further agreement by the defendant to pay the ground rent of 2*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* a year); 1808, *Higginson v. Clowes*, 15 Ves. Jr. 516 (auction-sale in writing of lots of land, the purchaser "to take the timber at a fair valuation"; the auctioneer's oral statement at the sale that the timber of each lot was to be valued separately, excluded); 1838, *Ellis v. Thompson*, 3 M. & W. 445, 452 (sale of lead, "deliverable in the river Thames"; "the question of reasonable or not reasonable time is collateral to the contract"); 1845, *Eden v. Blake*, 13 M. & W. 614 (at an auction sale the catalogue described an article as silver, but the auctioneer before selling announced publicly that it was only plated; the defendant bought but refused to accept; held, that the oral declaration of the auctioneer could be received, subject to the jury's finding that the catalogue was understood by the buyer not to be the exclusive basis of the purchase; "the sole question is, what were the terms upon which this article was sold? Are they in writing? . . . It is for the jury to say whether the contract existed in the printed particulars alone or partly in them and partly in parol"); 1871, *Morgan v. Griffith*, L. R. 6 Exch. 70 (lease of grass land; oral agreement by the landlord to destroy the rabbits, held "collateral to the lease"); 1875, *Angell v. Duke*, 32 Law T. Rep. N. S. 320 (lease of premises, with the furniture on the premises; an agreement by the lessor to put in more furniture, excluded); 1894, *Grims-ton v. Cunningham*, 1 Q. B. 125 (written agreement to employ an actor; oral agreement to

give him certain parts, excluded); 1919, *The Lizzie*, Prob. 22, 37 (alleged custom as to wharfage, affecting a bill of lading).

CANADA: 1904, *Guiou v. Thibeau*, 36 N. Sc. 542 (agreement to maintain for life); 1904, *Meisner v. Meisner*, 37 N. Sc. 23 (lease of a farm, and agreement as to maintenance, etc.).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1895, *The Poconoket*, 67 Fed. 267 (agreement as to the vesting of title of a vessel, the construction-agreement being silent, admitted); 1895, *Harman v. Harman*, 17 C. C. A. 479, 70 Fed. 894, 896 (lease of land in writing; parol agreement by the lessor to devise the lands to the lessees on his death, on condition that they improved the land and paid an annual rent, admitted); 1897, *Godkin v. Monahan*, 27 C. C. A. 410, 83 Fed. 116 (written agreement to cut, bank, and deliver timber; oral agreement by the other party to furnish a place for banking, excluded); 1898, *Reid v. Diamond P. G. Co.*, 29 C. C. A. 110, 85 Fed. 193 (written agreement for sale at a certain price; oral agreement for reduction of price in case of a fall in the market, excluded); 1902, *Sun P. & P. Ass'n v. Edwards*, 51 C. C. A. 279, 113 Fed. 445 (contract of employment of a superintendent of printing, mentioning salary and powers, held to exclude an additional oral agreement by the appointee to furnish compositors and other employees); 1913, *Cressey v. International Harvester Co.*, 9th C. C. A., 206 Fed. 29 (contract as collecting agent; the employer's obligation, stated as the consideration for the agent's obligation, was to pay a monthly salary of \$125 and expenses; held that an oral contemporary promise of the employer to pay a bonus or commission additionally was not enforceable; citing § 2430 above); 1918, *Du Pont de Nemours Co. v. Kelly*, 4th C. C. A., 252 Fed. 523 (promise of employees' benefit,



parties' intent, can be properly made only after a comparison of the kind of transaction, the terms of the document, and the circumstances of the parties.

accompanying a release); 1922, *Kramer v. Harsch*, 3d C. C. A., 278 Fed. 860 (contract for purchase of sugar, by writing replacing a telephone conversation);

*Alabama*: 1897, *Brewton v. Glass*, 116 Ala. 629, 22 So. 916 (written agreement to build waterworks, etc.; oral agreement to give bond for faithful performance, excluded); 1905, *Pearson v. Dancer*, 144 Ala. 427, 39 So. 474 (mortgage notes); 1905, *Weir v. Long*, 145 Ala. 328, 39 So. 974 (contract of sale of goods); *Arizona*: 1920, *Kress & Co. v. Evans*, 21 Ariz. 442, 189 Pac. 625 (contract of employment, with oral agreement for percentage of profits); *Arkansas*: 1898, *Rector v. Bernaschina*, 64 Ark. 650, 44 S. W. 222 (written agreement to board "three persons"; oral agreement specifying the three, excluded); 1906, *Thomas v. Johnston*, 78 Ark. 574, 95 S. W. 468 (whether an agreement was a lease or a sale of land); 1910, *Bradley Gin Co. v. Means M. Co.*, 94 Ark. 130, 126 S. W. 81 (machinery sale; promise to furnish a man to erect it, excluded); *California*: 1897, *Bradford S. Co. v. Joost*, 117 Cal. 204, 48 Pac. 1383 (agreement as to the use of collateral security); 1897, *Wolters v. King*, 119 Cal. 172, 51 Pac. 35 (written agreement for commissions; oral agreement as to time of payment received); 1919, *Heffner v. Gross*, 179 Cal. 738, 178 Pac. 860 (exchange of lands);

*Colorado*: 1896, *United States M. A. Ass'n v. Kittenring*, 22 Colo. 257, 44 Pac. 595 (oral agreement different from terms of policy; excluded);

*Connecticut*: 1904, *Hartford v. Maslen*, — Conn. —, 57 Atl. 740 (whether land was tendered to the State in lieu of other land; the understanding of citizens at a mass-meeting, excluded); 1906, *Brosty v. Thompson*, 79 Conn. 133, 64 Atl. 1 (sale of a farm and of personalty used thereon); 1904, *Davis v. Fidelity Fire Ins. Co.*, 208 Ill. 375, 70 N. E. 359 (appointment of an agent); 1919, *Smith & Co. v. Hurlburt Co.*, 93 Conn. 391, 106 Atl. 319 (plastering contract); 1922, *Asbestos Products Co. v. Matson*, — Conn. —, 116 Atl. 680 (sale of merchandise);

*Florida*: 1897, *Chamberlain v. Lesley*, 39 Fla. 452, 22 So. 736 (papers not purporting to contain the whole agreement; other evidence admitted); 1920, *Milton v. Burton*, 79 Fla. 266, 34 So. 147 (surety-bond for an insurance agent; oral agreement as to the extent of agent's authority to take notes for first premiums, admitted; "careful opinion by Reaves, J.");

*Idaho*: 1897, *First Nat'l Bank v. Bews*, 5 Ida. 678, 51 Pac. 777 (mortgage of building, etc.; oral agreement of mortgagees to insure for \$25,000, excluded);

*Illinois*: 1904, *Schneider v. Sulzer*, 212 Ill. 87, 72 N. E. 19 (oral agreement to dedicate

for a street the land adjacent to land contracted for sale, excluded); 1904, *Osgood v. Skinner*, 211 Ill. 229, 71 N. E. 869 (contract to repurchase stock);

*Indiana*: 1855, *Noble v. Epperly*, 6 Ind. 468, 471 (replevin; written agreement between the parties affecting an alleged partnership; their true intent in making the agreement allowed to be shown, on the facts); 1859, *Draper v. Vanhorn*, 12 Ind. 352 (treated as similar); 1859, *Williams v. Dewitt*, 12 Ind. 309, 312 (writing containing terms of arbitration, held exclusive); 1896, *Smith v. McClain*, 146 Ind. 77, 45 N. E. 41 (the fact rejected that a quitclaim deed transferring the interest of heirs to an estate was intended merely as a partition, and therefore merely severed unity of possession without conferring additional title); 1898, *Lowry v. Downey*, 150 Ind. 364, 50 N. E. 79 (exchange of land by deeds; oral agreement by one party to pay off an incumbrance on the land conveyed, admitted);

*Iowa*: 1894, *Lerch v. Times Co.*, 91 Ia. 750, 60 N. W. 611 (written lease; oral agreement to put in a steam-heating apparatus, excluded); 1897, *Beeson v. Green*, 103 Ia. 406, 72 N. W. 555 (deed containing assumption of mortgages; grantee not allowed to deny the agreement); 1904, *Ingram v. Dailey*, 123 Ia. 188, 98 N. W. 627 (labor and rent); 1904, *Sutton v. Weber*, 127 Ia. 361, 101 N. W. 775 (sale of goods by an agent, with condition of return); 1921, *Rath v. Schoon*, 192 Ia. 180, 182 N. W. 180 (farm-lease; oral promise as to tiling);

*Kansas*: 1899, *Milich v. Packing Co.*, 60 Kan. 229, 56 Pac. 1 (contract between next of kin and one charged with deceased's death, the former releasing and agreeing to procure a release from another, the latter agreeing to pay; parol agreement by the latter to employ the former, excluded); 1915, *Clark v. Townsend*, 96 Kan. 650, 153 Pac. 555 (commission in land purchase);

*Kentucky*: 1898, *Sutton v. Lumber Co.*, — Ky. —, 44 S. W. 86 (written agreement for hauling lumber; agreement to furnish right of way, excluded); 1898, *Vansant v. Runyon*, — Ky. —, 44 S. W. 949 (lumber-contract; agreement as to mode of advances, excluded); *Louisiana*: 1905, *Davies v. Bierce*, 114 La. 663, 38 So. 488 (contract for stock and notes); *Maine*: 1898, *Gould v. Excelsior Co.*, 91 Me. 214, 39 Atl. 555 (written agreement for cutting, peeling, and driving poplar timber; oral agreement as to who should scale it, received); 1911, *Tainter v. Wentworth*, 107 Me. 439, 78 Atl. 572 (warranty of a piano's quality);

*Maryland*: 1900, *Hawley Down-Draft Furnace Co. v. Hooper*, 90 Md. 390, 45 Atl. 456 (defendant bought of plaintiff a furnace with the written guaranty that it "will save 12 per cent in cost of fuel over present method of



Even in the foregoing classes of transactions, it is rare that the circumstances of a particular case cannot justify a special result contrary to the

making steam"; oral agreement that the "saving of 12 per cent" was to be determined by a comparative test "measured by the number of tons of coal consumed before the Hawley furnace was put in with the coal consumed after it was put in"; held admissible); 1916, *Boswell v. Hostetter*, 129 Md. 53, 98 Atl. 222 (commission sales-agency);

*Massachusetts*: 1843, *Brockett v. Bartholomew*, 6 Metc. 396 (the understanding of all the parties to a lease, that the amounts payable included the price for the stock of goods agreed by the writing to be purchased, excluded); 1876, *Carr v. Dooley*, 119 Mass. 294 (deed of land; oral agreement by the vendor to pay for an adjacent sewer in the course of construction, admitted); 1887, *Graffam v. Pierce*, 143 Mass. 386, 9 N. E. 819 (deed of two houses and lease of a hall, by defendant to plaintiff; an oral agreement by defendant to put hard-pine flooring into the hall, admitted); 1888, *Ayer v. Mfg. Co.*, 147 Mass. 46, 16 N. E. 754 (sale of soap; vendor's agreement to advertise it, admitted); 1892, *Durkin v. Cobleigh*, 156 Mass. 108, 30 N. E. 474 (deed of land described as bounded on a street; the vendor's oral agreement to build the street, and to put in water connections, admitted as "an independent collateral agreement which need not be included in the deed"); 1896, *Rackemann v. Impr. Co.*, 167 Mass. 1, 44 N. E. 990 (agreement by a vendor of land not to sell adjoining lots at a less price, admitted); 1921, *Spevack v. Budish*, — Mass. —, 130 N. E. 191 (broker's commission-contract);

*Michigan*: 1894, *Adams v. Watkins*, 103 Mich. 431, 61 N. W. 774 (sale of land; agreement to return one third of the proceeds of the crop, excluded); 1895, *Hutchison Mfg. Co. v. Pinch*, 107 Mich. 12, 64 N. W. 729, 66 N. W. 340 (agreement to pay for machinery when the mill "gives good results"; parol condition as to the power of the machinery, excluded); 1896, *Harrison v. Howe*, 109 Mich. 476, 67 N. W. 527 (a lease allowed sub-leasing for "business purposes"; an agreement not to sub-lease for a saloon, excluded); 1897, *Patek v. Waples*, 114 Mich. 669, 72 N. W. 995 (written stipulation for discontinuance without costs; oral agreement to pay counsel fees, admitted);

*Minnesota*: 1896, *Hand v. Ryan Drug Co.*, 63 Minn. 539, 65 N. W. 1081 (a contract to give a credit on specified terms; agreement to give similar credits on other terms held admissible);

*Mississippi*: 1898, *Maxwell v. Chamberlin*, — Miss. —, 23 So. 266 (written agreement conveying property subject to a lien; oral agreement by the grantee to assume the debt secured, excluded); 1904, *Hightower v. Henry*, 85 Miss. 476, 37 So. 745 (contract of rent; oral contract to build a fence, excluded);

*Montana*: 1920, *Koch v. Rhodes*, 57 Mont. 447, 188 Pac. 933 (sale of real estate);

*Nebraska*: 1898, *Sylvester v. Paper Co.*, 55 Nebr. 621, 75 N. W. 1092 (agreement concerning personal services in a printing establishment); 1910, *Cooper v. Kennedy*, 86 Nebr. 119, 124 N. W. 1131 (in a deed of realty, the reservation of growing crops may be made by oral agreement); 1921, *Spiegel & Son v. Alpirn*, — Nebr. —, 185 N. W. 415 (sale of scrap-iron); 1921, *Schuster v. North American Hotel Co.*, — Nebr. —, 186 N. W. 87 (stock subscription; oral promise to return the money on request within two years, excluded); *New Jersey*: 1896, *McTague v. Finnegan*, 54 N. J. Eq. 454, 35 Atl. 542 (agreement as to inheritance and support); 1904, *Hallenbeck v. Chapman*, 71 N. J. L. 477, 58 Atl. 1096 (repairs); 1905, *Grueber Eng. Co. v. Waldron*, 71 N. J. L. 597, 60 Atl. 386 (building contract); 1907, *Loxley v. Studebaker*, 75 N. J. L. 599, 68 Atl. 98 (broker's contract);

*New York*: 1897, *Emmett v. Penoyer*, 151 N. Y. 564, 45 N. E. 1041 (a contract of sale of stock and fixtures contained nothing about the price, except the figures "\$2500"; extrinsic agreement as to the price, admitted); 1909, *Lossing v. Cushman*, 195 N. Y. 386, 88 N. E. 649 (building plans provided for a "cellar"; a prior agreement that the cellar need be only 8 x 12, excluded); 1909, *Lese v. Lamprecht*, 196 N. Y. 32, 89 N. E. 365 (contract to convey; oral agreement making an exception to the covenant against incumbrances, etc., excluded on the facts); 1912, *Studwell v. Bush Co.*, 206 N. Y. 416, 100 N. E. 129 (services in a warehousing business);

*North Carolina*: 1905, *Orion K. Mills v. U. S. F. & G. Co.*, 137 N. C. 565, 50 S. E. 304 (surety bond); 1917, *Vaughan-Robertson Drug Co. v. Grimes-Mills Drug Co.*, 173 N. C. 502, 92 S. E. 376 (stock-subscription contract); 1919, *Patton v. Sinclair Lumber Co.*, 179 N. C. 103, 101 S. E. 613 (contract for cutting and logging timber); 1920, *Carrothers v. Stewart & Co.*, 179 N. C. 693, 102 S. E. 615 (contract of employment; agreement with U. S. government at a lower rate, held a separate transaction);

*North Dakota*: 1906, *Alsterberg v. Bennett*, 14 N. D. 596, 106 N. W. 49 (oral covenant with quitclaim deed); 1915, *Harney v. Wirz*, 30 N. D. 292, 152 N. W. 803 (chattel mortgage of crops; conversations as to the mortgage including the realty also, excluded); 1918, *Gilbert Mfg. Co. v. Bryan*, 39 N. D. 13, 166 N. W. 805 (artesian well contract);

*Ohio*: 1895, *Tuttle v. Burgett*, 53 Oh. St. 498, 42 N. E. 427 (in a contract in covenant form to furnish support, an agreement that the promise would live at a certain place was excluded);

*Oklahoma*: 1913, *Mandler v. Starks*, 35 Okl.



ordinary one. Such is the complexity of circumstance and the variety of documentary phraseology, and so minute the indicia of intent, that one ruling can seldom be of controlling authority or even of utility for a subsequent one. The opinions of judges are cumbered with citations of cases which serve no purpose there except to prove what is not disputed, — the general principle. Other than in relation to some of the foregoing topics which have broad and uniform bearings, individual rulings can have little value as precedents unless the entire detail of the documents and circumstances is set forth; and an abbreviation of them is therefore more likely to mislead than to profit. The application of the rule should in almost all instances be left (*ante*, § 16) to the trial judge's determination.

809, 131 Pac. 912 (covenant against incumbrances); 1920, *Stone v. Spencer*, 79 Okl. 85, 191 Pac. 197 (dissolution of partnership); *Pennsylvania*: the peculiar rule of this State (*ante*, § 2431) is illustrated in the following cases: 1895, *Dixon-Woods Co. v. Glass Co.*, 169 Pa. 167, 32 Atl. 432 (written contract to give the plaintiff possession of defendant's premises for the purpose of building; parol agreement at the time to provide certain room for storage, excluded); 1897, *Dickson v. Mfg. Co.*, 179 Pa. 343, 36 Atl. 246 (agreement as to time, the original contract of employment being silent, excluded); 1897, *Beaver v. Slear*, 182 Pa. 213, 37 Atl. 991 (a note for one day not mentioning interest, but legally subject to interest after maturity; an agreement as to the payment of interest during life, admitted); 1898, *Myerstown Bank v. Roessler*, 186 Pa. 431, 40 Atl. 963 (agreement not to assign a mortgage in a certain way, admitted); *Philippine Isl.* 1903, *Pastor v. Gaspar*, 2 P. I. 592 (loan to a partnership); 1908, *De Guzman v. Balarag*, 11 P. I. 503 (loan contract); 1912, *Lozano v. Tan Suico*, 23 P. I. 16 (contract to pay money); 1915, *Yu Tek & Co. v. Gonzalez*, 29 P. I. 384 (contract for sugar); 1915, *Government v. Philippine Sugar Est. D. Co.*, 30 P. I. 27 (sale of real estate); *Porto Rico*: 1911, *Betancourt v. Rodriguez*, 17 P. R. 5, 13 (sale of property; explanatory document, admitted on the facts, applying Evid. Act § 101, par. 2); *South Carolina*: 1921, *Blackwell v. Faucett*, — S. C. —, 108 S. E. 295 (mortgage of land and sale of shingles); *South Dakota*: 1896, *Roberts v. Machine Co.*, 8 S. D. 579, 67 N. W. 607 (commission-agent's contract); 1905, *Bowen v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 20 S. D. 103, 104 N. W. 1040 (insurance premium receipt); *Tennessee*: 1896, *Hines v. Wilcox*, 96 Tenn. 148, 33 S. W. 914 (memorandum of lease dealing only with the obligations of the tenant; oral promise of the landlord to put in repair, admitted); 1896, *Lewis v. Tumley*, 97 Tenn. 197, 36 S. W. 872 (deed of sale; provision for the transfer of insurance policies, admitted); *Texas*: 1895, *Jones v. Risley*, 91 Tex. 1, 32

S. W. 1027 (building contract; agreement as to powers of engineer, rejected); *Utah*: 1897, *Moyle v. Congreg. Soc.*, 16 Utah 69, 50 Pac. 806 (agreement as to the effect of an assignment of a contract, excluded); 1913, *Vance v. Heath*, 42 Utah 148, 129 Pac. 365 (construction and lease contract); *Vermont*: 1897, *Pictorial League v. Nelson*, 69 Vt. 162, 37 Atl. 247 (contract to send cuts, etc.); 1920, *Kimball v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, 94 Vt. 100, 108 Atl. 921 (defendant's indorsement on a policy, extending time, allowed to be explained by defendant as a mere admission, not a part of the contract); *Virginia*: 1895, *Witz v. Fite*, 91 Va. 446, 22 S. E. 171 (whether the giving of a higher security merges other securities); 1920, *Scott v. Albemarle Horse Show Ass'n*, 128 Va. 517, 104 S. E. 842 (covenant against incumbrances; oral understanding as to excepting a certain incumbrance, excluded); *West Virginia*: 1895, *Long v. Perine*, 41 W. Va. 314, 23 S. E. 611 (sale of fruit-land; oral agreement to allow the buyer to take fruit from adjoining land of the seller till the trees bought should bear fruit, excluded); 1895, *Wilfong v. Johnson*, 41 W. Va. 283, 23 S. E. 730 (agreement to furnish support, as a consideration for a conveyance); *Washington*: 1906, *Hubenthal v. Spokane & I. R. Co.*, 43 Wash. 677, 86 Pac. 955 (reservation of a right of way); 1910, *Tobin v. McArthur*, 56 Wash. 523, 106 Pac. 180 (excavation contract); *Wisconsin*: 1897, *Oliver v. Hail*, 95 Wis. 364, 70 N. W. 346 (time of payment excluded); 1897, *Morgan v. S. M. L. V. Co.*, 97 Wis. 275, 72 N. W. 872 (conveyance subject to mortgage; grantee's agreement to pay mortgage, allowed to be shown); 1904, *Fosha v. Prosser*, 120 Wis. 336, 97 N. W. 924 (sale of a business); 1922, *Equitable Surety Co. v. Hartmann*, — Wis. —, 187 N. W. 686 (indemnity bond).

For proving a document's date erroneous, see *ante*, § 2410.

For proving the parties' "understanding" as to the terms of a contract, see *ante*, § 1971 (Opinion rule) and *post*, § 2465 (Interpretation).

For the use of an account stated, as embodying an agreement, see *ante*, § 1071.



§ 2443. **Rule applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle.** The general principle of Integration (*ante*, § 2425) — in other words, the rule against “varying the terms” of a document — takes on an altogether peculiar aspect when applied to agreements collateral to a negotiable instrument.

The first characteristic feature of such a document, as being the embodiment of an obligation capable of transfer without hindrance, is, not merely that *all the essential terms of the obligation* — persons, amount, and time, — *must* be therein contained in writing (*post*, § 2451), but that certain others than these essential terms *must not* be. The advantages of unhindered transfer, due to the certainty and precision of its terms and the independence of a transferee’s rights, can be attained only by limiting the scope of the obligation to a few elemental attributes. Its contents therefore are both predetermined and limited, if it is to possess the character of negotiability at all:

1789, EYRE, L. C. B., in *Minet v. Gibson*, 2 H. Bl. 569: “Everything which is necessary to be known, in order that it may be seen whether a writing is a bill of exchange, and as such by the custom of merchants partakes of the nature of a specialty and creates a debt or duty by its own proper force (whether by the same custom it be assignable, and how it shall be assigned, and whether it has in fact been assigned agreeable to the custom) appears at once by the bare inspection of the writing; with the circumstance, in the case of a bill payable to bearer, of that bill being in the possession of him who claims title to it. The wit of man cannot devise anything better calculated for circulation. The value of the writing, the assignable quality of it, and the particular mode of assigning, are created and determined in the original frame and constitution of the instrument itself; and the party to whom such a bill of exchange is tendered has only to read it, need look no further, and has nothing to do with any private history that may belong to it. The policy which introduced this simple instrument demands that the simplicity of it should be protected, and that it should never be entangled in the infinitely complicated transactions of particular individuals into whose hands it may happen to come.”

1846, GIBSON, C. J., in *Overton v. Tyler*, 3 Pa. St. 346: “A negotiable bill or note is a courier without luggage. It is a requisite that it be framed in the fewest possible words, and those importing the most certain and precise contract; and, though this requisite be a minor one, it is entitled to weight in determining a question of intention. To be within the statute, it must be free from contingencies or conditions that would embarrass it in its course; for a memorandum to control it, though indorsed on it, would be incorporated with it, and destroy it.”

That it *must* contain some things is therefore not so important for the present purpose as that it *must not* contain other things.

The other important consideration, tending to affect the present principle, is that the largest part of the terms of the obligation of a negotiable instrument is *impliedly annexed to it by the law*, without expression in the document. The rules of presentment and demand, of acceptance and dishonor, of transfer of title and obligations by indorsement, of primary and secondary liability — all of the terms, except the individually variant ones of person, amount, time, and perhaps place, are prescribed and annexed by the law. Moreover, they form a systematic whole, and are implied as a whole if at all.

What is the situation, then, of parties who wish to employ a negotiable instrument for the sake of some one or more specific attributes, but wish also



to modify for their own case some of the other generic consequences ordinarily implied as a part of the whole? They cannot specify these modifications in the instrument without destroying all its negotiable qualities, including those which they desire to secure.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, by making no specific modification, they will be fixed with consequences which they do not desire. For example, A is desirous of obtaining the use of B's credit in buying from C, but B owes nothing to A; if B draws a bill of exchange on A, payable to C, and A accepts it, this will secure the purpose of adding B's credit and liability to the obligation and C will consent to receive it; then if A fails to pay at maturity, and B is obliged to pay, the normal consequence, by implication of law, is that B recovers the amount from A. Here no modification of the law's annexed incidents is necessary for carrying out all parts of their desired transaction. But suppose that C will not consent to receive A as the primary obligor, but insists on having B in that relation; then this purpose can be accomplished by drafting the bill in A's name as drawer and B's name as drawee and acceptor, or by drafting a note in B's name as maker, with A's name as payee and indorser. But in these two cases, if B, the primary obligor, is compelled by C to pay, there remains to him, as acceptor or maker, no claim for reimbursement by A, or, if A is compelled to pay C, then A as indorser or drawer has a claim for reimbursement against B, — at least so far as the law's annexed incidents prescribe. Here, then, an agreement by A to reimburse or not to sue B must be made, and this agreement can find no place in the document, though it modifies the fixed implications of the instrument. Will the parol evidence rule refuse to recognize that agreement as enforceable? It is a platitude of the law that it will not; an accommodation bill or note is never allowed to be used against the accommodating party by the accommodated one.

The law, then, it is plain, has recognized the dilemma. It perceives that parties must constantly wish to employ a negotiable instrument for the sake of one or more of its special attributes while discarding others; it concedes that commercial transactions are variant in their exigencies, while the normal incidents of a negotiable instrument are fixed; and it does not force parties into the alternative of employing either all or none of them. It therefore concedes that by special agreement the parties may discard or alter a specific implied incident, so far as its operation would affect themselves.

But the applicability of the present rule in a given case is always a question of the parties' intention (*ante*, § 2430). Now, while the extent of this agreement to discard or modify would thus ordinarily be a mere question of fact as to intention, still the parties' choice of a negotiable instrument necessarily signifies the adoption of *some* essential implied feature of such an in-

§ 2443. <sup>1</sup> The importance of this consideration is seen in an analogous situation under a statute requiring a certain document to cover named terms and no others: 1860, *Chapman v. Callis*, 2 F. & F. 161 (written

bill of sale of a ship, under the Merchant Shipping Act 1854, held not to displace a prior agreement to assume the vendor's liabilities; "the parties could not have put this term of their agreement in the bills of sale").



strument, — else they would have used some other form of document; hence, *they cannot be allowed to avail themselves of an agreement which would render that choice practically meaningless.* Moreover, the written tenor of the obligation — as to person, time, and amount — varies with each document as the parties choose; hence the writing is clearly the final embodiment of the obligation in these respects. For testing the application of the rule, therefore, the following two canons may be laid down:

(a) As regards the *variable*, or *expressed*, terms of the obligation in the document, *no extrinsic agreement* can be availed of to avoid their enforcement; but, (b) As regards the *fixed*, or *implied*, terms of the obligation, *an extrinsic agreement* can be availed of, if the transaction in hand is such, as a whole, that for one purpose of it the form of a negotiable instrument, or some particular feature of it, would be essential or peculiarly convenient, while for another and separate part of the transaction a different contract would be feasible and consistent.

These two canons may now be applied to the kinds of agreements most commonly arising, — the purpose here being not to consider the state of the law in detail, but merely to illustrate the application of the general principle to this class of documents. — It is of course to be understood that agreements of these sorts are not valid against a *holder in due course*;<sup>2</sup> the ensuing discriminations affect only the parties to the agreement.

§ 2444. **Same:** (a) **Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.** (1) An extrinsic agreement as to the *mode of payment*,<sup>1</sup> or the *amount* of payment,<sup>2</sup> must be, by the foregoing test, ineffective, since the parties have expressly dealt with those matters in the instrument; and although an agreement to concede a *credit* or *counter claim*, as offsetting the obligation of the instrument, would be a separate transaction and therefore valid, yet the distinction between the two may sometimes be hard to draw.<sup>3</sup>

(2) An extrinsic agreement as to the *time of payment* is for the same reason ineffectual,<sup>4</sup> although an agreement of *renewal*, which may practically be

<sup>2</sup> Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, §§ 16, 57.

§ 2444. <sup>1</sup> 1915, *Hancock v. Empire Cotton Oil Co.*, 17 Ga. App. 170, 86 S. E. 434; 1896, *Stein v. Fogarty*, 4 Ida. 702, 43 Pac. 681 (agreement that a promissory note should be payable in labor, excluded); 1895, *Mumford v. Tolman*, 157 Ill. 258, 41 N. E. 617 (excluding a parol agreement that a note was payable only out of certain dividends).

*Contra*: 1906, *Evans v. Freeman*, 142 N. C. 61, 54 S. E. 847 (note for \$50, given for a machine; agreement that it should be paid out of proceeds of sales, admitted).

<sup>2</sup> 1895, *Loudermilk v. Loudermilk*, 93 Ga. 443, 21 S. E. 77 (agreement not to collect more than a limited sum on a note, excluded); 1920, *Tross v. Bills' Ex.*, 189 Ky. 115, 224 S. W. 660 (indorser's agreement to be liable for a less sum, excluded); 1920, *Davidson v. Guarantee*

*Life Ins. Co.*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 220 S. W. 582 (agreement to return part of the sum due on a note, construed).

<sup>3</sup> 1897, *Phelps v. Abbott*, 114 Mich. 88, 72 N. W. 3 (agreement to credit on a note a sum to be found due the maker, excluded); 1902, *Roe v. Bank*, 167 Mo. 406, 67 S. W. 303 (agreement that any deposit made in the payee bank by the maker should be credited against the note, held admissible); 1896, *Bennett v. Tillmon*, 18 Mont. 28, 44 Pac. 80 (agreement that notes should be paid by an account-counter-claim, admitted).

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1819, *Woodbridge v. Spooner*, 3 B. & Ald. 233 (agreement between maker and payee that a note payable on demand should not be payable till the death of the maker, excluded); *U. S.* 1857, *Brown v. Wiley*, 20 How. 442, 447 (bill of exchange payable May 1, 1855; agreement between the parties

equivalent, is in theory an agreement for an independent transaction and should be recognized.<sup>5</sup> An agreement subjecting the obligation of the instrument to any *condition* or contingency, whether in time or otherwise, is ineffective, because the terms of a negotiable instrument are expressly unconditional;<sup>6</sup> if it be said that the law would not permit the condition to be

that it should not be presented for acceptance until a certain other draft had been provided for, excluded); 1895, *Getto v. Binkert*, 55 Kan. 617, 40 Pac. 925 (agreement fixing a different time of payment, excluded); 1894, *Van Etten v. Howell*, 40 Nebr. 850, 59 N. W. 389 (that a note due in a certain time should not be collected till a certain suit was decided, excluded); 1917, *Cherokee Co. v. Meroney*, 173 N. C. 653, 92 S. E. 616.

*Contra*: 1808, *Dow v. Tuttle*, 4 Mass. 414 (note payable one year from Feb. 16, 1804; an agreement that "payment should not be demanded until the expiration of five years," held to be "a collateral promise" and actionable, and said to be "in chancery a sufficient ground for injunction").

<sup>5</sup> *Contra*: 1811, *Hoare v. Graham*, 3 Camp. 57 (agreement by indorsees with indorsers that the note should be renewed when due, excluded, as an "incongruous parol condition"); 1898, *New London Cred. Syndicate v. Neale*, 2 Q. B. 487 (agreement to renew a bill of exchange if not paid at maturity, excluded). Cases *pro* and *con* are cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 124, note.

<sup>6</sup> ENGLAND: 1917, *Free v. Hawkins*, Holt N. P. 550, 8 Taunt. 92 (agreement, between plaintiff as indorsee and defendant as indorser of a note indorsed as security for the maker, not to enforce payment till after the sale of the maker's effects, held not receivable); 1830, *Moseley v. Hanford*, 10 B. & C. 729 (note payable on demand; stipulation that the note should not be payable till the payee delivered possession of premises and rendered account, excluded); 1835, *Foster v. Jolly*, 1 C. M. & R. 703 (action by the payee against the maker, on a note payable 14 days after date; agreement that it should not be enforced in case the plaintiff's principal obtained a verdict against the defendant's brother-in-law, excluded); L. C. B. Abinger: "The maker of a note payable on a day certain cannot be allowed to say, 'I only meant to pay you upon a contingency'"; 1836, *Adams v. Wordley*, 1 M. & W. 374 (action by the drawer against the maker of bills payable in 6 and 12 months; agreement that until the plaintiff should recover on a certain note he should not require payment of the bills, excluded; Parke, B.: "You seek by a parol contemporaneous agreement to alter the absolute engagement entered into by the bills").

CANADA: 1904, *McNeil v. Cullen*, 37 N. Sc. 18 (demand note; agreement not to demand payment unless on the death of children, etc.,

excluded); 1915, *Standard Bank v. Wettlaufer*, 23 D. L. R. 507, Ont. (elaborate examination of the authorities by Clute, J.); 1915, *Wilton v. Manitoba Independent Oil*, 25 D. L. R. 243, Man. (instalment of an oil tank; agreement that the note should be returned if the tank was not put in, excluded); 1917, *Canadian Credit Men's T. Ass. v. Anderson*, 37 D. L. R. 805, Man. (agreement to sign a note as trustee only, not admitted); 1920, *Dennis v. Ivey and Boyce*, 55 D. L. R. 264, Sask. (note signed conditionally on starting in business).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1902, *Levy & Cohn M. Co. v. Kauffman*, 52 C. C. A. 126, 114 Fed. 170 (oral agreement that an acceptance of a draft be on condition that the payee should advance other money to other parties, excluded); *Colorado*: 1915, *George v. Williams*, 27 Colo. App. 400, 149 Pac. 837 (careful opinion by Hurlburt, J.); *Illinois*: 1853, *Harlow v. Boswell*, 15 Ill. 56 (note payable 12 months after date "or as soon as I can sell \$50 worth" of goods; an oral agreement that the note should not become due until \$50 of goods were sold was excluded); 1896, *Murchie v. Peck*, 160 Ill. 175, 43 N. E. 356 (agreement that payment of a note be dependent upon the sale of property by the maker, excluded); *Massachusetts*: 1906, *Hill v. Hall*, 191 Mass. 253, 77 N. E. 831 (peculiar facts); *Minnesota*: 1895, *Northern Trust Co. v. Hiltgen*, 62 Minn. 361, 64 N. W. 909 (excluding an agreement that a note should not be valid if the maker performed a certain contract); 1915, *Security Nat'l Bank v. Pulver*, 131 Minn. 454, 155 N. W. 641 (agreement that no demand could be made until collateral was exhausted, excluded); *Oregon*: 1894, *Wilson v. Wilson*, 26 Or. 251, 38 Pac. 185 (agreement that a note should not be paid except on a specified condition, excluded); *Utah*: 1916, *Martineau v. Hanson*, 47 Utah 549, 155 Pac. 432 (note for commissions on a sale; applying Comp. L. 1907, § 1568); *Washington*: 1895, *Gurney v. Morrison*, 12 Wash. 456, 41 Pac. 192 (an agreement that notes given for the benefit of a corporation to be formed should not be binding after its formation, excluded); 1918, *Rhodes v. Owens*, 101 Wash. 324, 172 Pac. 241 (note accompanying exchange of lands).

*Contra*: 1920, *Herron v. Brinton*, 188 Ia. 60, 175 N. W. 831 (agreement that the maker should only pay the interest during the payee's lifetime, and that the principal should not become due so long as interest was paid,



inserted and that thus it must be extrinsic if at all, the answer is (according to the second canon above stated) that there would then have been no peculiar necessity for resorting to the form of a negotiable instrument.

(3) An agreement *not to enforce* or *sue upon the instrument at all* must be equally ineffective;<sup>7</sup> the only doubt here arises from the necessity of distinguishing between this rule and the rule (*ante*, § 2406) which concedes that a document intended merely as a *friendly memorandum* is without legal effect, and the rule (§§ 2409, 2420) which concedes that a document *never duly delivered* is without effect against any holder, and that lack of delivery may therefore always be shown. On the other hand, an agreement by an *accommodated party*, who appears on the face of the document as the obligee (*e. g.* the payee of a note), not to enforce it against the nominal obligor who accommodates him, is of course effective.<sup>8</sup> The distinction between the two is apparent from what has been already said (*ante*, § 2443). In the former

admitted; this seems unsound); 1908, Commonwealth Trust Co. v. Coveney, 200 Mass. 379, 86 N. E. 895 (agreement to renew repeatedly until repaid by certain profits); 1905, O'Brien v. Paterson B. & M. Co., 69 N. J. Eq. 117, 61 Atl. 437 (note given on the agreement that it should not be enforced so long as the maker bought beer of the payee; agreement given effect, on the theory that the whole transaction was virtually a mortgage); 1899, Quin v. Sexton, 125 N. C. 447, 34 S. E. 542 (that a note for 12 months was not to be paid until a note of K. was paid, allowed to be shown); 1917, Farrington v. McNeill, 174 N. C. 420, 93 S. E. 957 (agreement to pay only if a title-lawsuit was won).

The only doubt in these cases can arise from the occasional necessity of distinguishing the principle of § 2409, *ante*, which permits a condition precedent to the existence of the obligation, *i. e.* an *escrow*, to be valid.

Sometimes an agreement to hold the instrument as *security* (which by the principle of § 2437, *ante*, would be valid) presents in appearance an agreement resembling the present sort: 1897, Clinch Co. v. Willing, 180 Pa. 165, 36 Atl. 737 (notes given for the purchase of land; an agreement that the land held as security should first be sold and the proceeds applied before proceeding against the maker, enforced).

<sup>7</sup> *Can.* 1912, Vineberg v. Jones, 8 D. L. R. 513, Que. (agreement to pay only on condition, not enforced); *U. S.* 1920, Naftzger v. Buser, 106 Kan. 115, 186 Pac. 997 (agreement that a note given in payment for shares of stock should be collectible only in case the stock was resold at a certain price, not given effect); 1874, Davis v. Randall, 115 Mass. 547, 551 (agreement between an indorsee and an acceptor for accommodation that the indorsee would not enforce payment, excluded; "the acceptance of the defendant was an absolute promise to pay"); 1905, Western Carolina

Bank v. Moore, 138 N. C. 529, 51 S. E. 79 (note given for bank-stock, etc.; agreement that the maker should not be liable, excluded); 1921, Edwards v. City National Bank, — Okl. —, 201 Pac. 233 (here an agreement with the bank as to liquidating a business was construed not to be within the prohibition); 1895, First Nat'l Bank v. Foote, 12 Utah 157, 42 Pac. 205 (that a note was signed on the assurance that it would not be enforced, excluded); 1904, Schmidt v. Schmidt's Estate, 123 Wis. 295, 101 N. W. 678 (father's action on the son's promissory note; agreement to consider it only as evidence of an advancement, excluded, under Stats. 1898, § 3959, requiring advancements to be in writing in some form).

*Contra*: 1858, Norman v. Norman, 11 Ind. 288 (agreement to hold merely as a receipt a note given by the defendant's son to his father's executrix for money received by the former as an advancement, admitted, as an agreement which would have "entitled in equity to a cancellation of the instruments"). This ruling, as well as a few similar ones cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 99, note, are probably due to a misapplication of the distinction above-mentioned in the text.

<sup>8</sup> *Eng.* 1836, Thompson v. Clubley, 1 M. & W. 212 (indorsee's accommodation; the agreement that "no claim or demand should at any time be made against the defendant" was objected to as "contradicting the written contract of acceptance, which purported to be an absolute engagement to pay the bill"; but it was held a "collateral agreement, and not part of the original contract"); *U. S.* Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 29; 1917, Rice v. Rice, 101 Kan. 20, 165 Pac. 799; 1919, First Nat'l Bank v. Stroup, 104 Kan. 11; 177 Pac. 836; 1909, Conrad v. Clarke, 106 Minn. 430, 119 N. W. 214; 1905, People's Nat'l Bank v. Schepflin, 73 N. J. L. 29, 62 Atl. 333; 1905, Morgan v. Thompson, 72 N. J. L. 244, 62 Atl. 410; 1914, Maulini v. Serrano, 28 P. I. 640.



instance, there being no purpose of further negotiation of the obligation, the form of a negotiable instrument was wholly unnecessary, if the transaction had been what the defendant claims, for a receipt or some other memorandum would have served equally well. But in the latter instance, the essential purpose being to negotiate the obligor's credit with other parties, a negotiable instrument was indispensable, and the transaction between the original parties was necessarily extrinsic to that instrument. It may be added that the explanation, advanced by high authority, that the avoidance of circuitry of action is the ground of this distinction,<sup>9</sup> seems not to suffice; for it serves only to determine whether a valid agreement which would secure an injunction in equity would suffice as an equitable defence in a common-law suit, and it leaves undetermined the question whether the agreement can be recognized at all under the parol evidence rule, even in equity.

(4) An agreement between one *co-maker* and the *payee*, to hold the *former as surety* only, seems at first sight to be a mere condition qualifying the face of the instrument, and therefore ineffective; but, as in the case of accommodation paper, it may be that the negotiation of the instrument requires several parties having primary liability; hence the surety would have to appear as co-maker and not as a drawer, and the suretyship agreement would have to be extrinsic. Such an agreement is generally given effect.<sup>10</sup>

(5) The question whether one who signs as "*agent*"<sup>11</sup> or "*president*"<sup>12</sup> or "*guardian*"<sup>13</sup> is personally liable seems to be mainly a question of interpretation; for if no such word had been inserted, the agreement would be ineffectual, as totally destroying the validity of the instrument; while if the signature had been of the principal, ward, or company, "by" the representa-

<sup>9</sup> Professor Ames, in his *Cases on Bills and Notes*, Summary, II, 804.

<sup>10</sup> *Eng.* 1809, *Leeds v. Lancashire*, 2 Camp. 205 (as between the original parties, two signers of a promissory note were allowed to show that they signed merely as guarantors of the maker); *U. S.* 1849, *Bank v. Mumford*, 6 Ga. 44, 52, 61, 66 (Nisbet, J., diss.); 1905, *Trammell v. Swift Fer. Wks.*, 121 Ga. 778, 49 S. E. 739; 1863, *Ward v. Stout*, 32 Ill. 399, 409; 1870, *Rose v. Williams*, 5 Kan. 483, 489 ("It is simply pleading and proving a fact outside and beyond the terms of the contract"); 1838, *Harris v. Brooks*, 21 Pick. Mass. 195 ("It is not to affect the terms of the contract, but to prove a collateral fact and rebut a presumption"; 1906, *Kaufman v. Barbour*, 98 Minn. 158, 107 N. W. 1128; 1845, *Garrett v. Ferguson*, 9 Mo. 125; 1912, *First National B'k v. Burney*, 90 Nebr. 432, 133 N. W. 647, 91 Nebr. 269, 136 N. W. 37; 1904, *Machan v. De La Trinidad*, 3 P. I. 684; and cases cited in *Brandt, Suretyship*, 1891, 2d ed., §§ 29, 30.

*Contra*: 1895, *McCollum v. Boughton*, 132 Mo. 601, 30 S. W. 1028, 33 S. W. 476, 34 S. W. 480 (a married woman pledged land to pay

a note signed by her husband and others; the fact that they were agreed to be sureties only, and that she knew it, was excluded, on the ground of the pledgor being a married woman; three judges dissenting).

So, too, the question whether an agreement between *maker and indorser*, that the former shall be *surety* only, is enforceable, seems to rest on the same considerations; compare the following: *Eng.* 1913, *Fentum v. Pocock*, 5 Taunt. 192; 1857, *Pooley v. Harradine*, 7 E. & B. 431; *U. S.* 1905, *Jennings v. Moore*, 189 Mass. 197, 75 N. E. 214.

Distinguish the following question: 1906, *City Deposit Bank v. Green*, 130 Ia. 384, 106 N. W. 942 (joint and several note; agreement for several liability only, excluded).

<sup>11</sup> 1850, *Hicks v. Hinde*, 9 Barb. N. Y. 528; 1893, *Frankland v. Johnson*, 147 Ill. 520, 523, 35 N. E. 480; Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 20; and cases cited in Ames' *Cases on Bills and Notes*, II, 224, note. Compare § 2438, *ante*.

<sup>12</sup> 1847, *Kean v. Davis*, 21 N. J. L. 683, 688; *Cook, Corporations*, 4th ed., 1891, § 722.

<sup>13</sup> 1901, *Andrus v. Blazzard*, 23 Utah 233, 63 Pac. 888.



tive, the representative would not have been liable; the question thus becomes one of the construction of the document.

It may be added that by the principle of novation (*ante*, § 2441), any of these agreements which when contemporaneous with the instrument's execution are ineffective, may of course be effective when *made subsequently*, as a separate transaction; and further, that by the nature of negotiable instruments, these extrinsic agreements, so far as recognized at all, are effective, naturally, against only the parties assenting to them, and not against *holders for value without notice* before maturity.<sup>14</sup>

§ 2445. **Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms of the Instrument.** The application of the rule to cases falling under the second class above-mentioned (§ 2443) may now be considered.

(1) An extrinsic agreement *not to transfer* an instrument payable "to order" cannot be effective;<sup>1</sup> for the term "to order" imports negotiability, and there is no purpose which the term could serve if that element were discarded.

(2) An extrinsic agreement, between drawer and payee, *not to enforce the drawer's secondary liability* on the bill, is plainly a discarding of the implied terms of a drawer's contract. Nevertheless, since there are several varieties of transactions for which such a form of draft would be peculiarly appropriate without involving the nominal drawer's liability — such as payment by a seller's agent to his principal, or payment by a buyer's agent to the seller, or assignment of a claim without guaranty of the amount collectible —, the agreement ought to be given effect.<sup>2</sup>

(3) For the same reason, an extrinsic agreement between *indorser* and *indorsee*, cutting down the indorser's implied liability, either by *denying recourse* altogether, or by placing both as co-sureties for a prior party, or by limiting liability to a *warranty of genuineness* of prior signatures, is effective;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, §§ 16, 57.

§ 2445. <sup>1</sup> Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 55; 1903, *Black v. Bank*, 96 Md. 399, 54 Atl. 88 (agreement with a payee not to negotiate notes, excluded); 1913, *Berenson v. Conant*, 214 Mass. 127, 101 N. E. 60 (but here held valid for a one taking with notice; Neg. Instr. Act, § 138 applied); 1895, *Waddle v. Owen*, 43 Nebr. 489, 61 N. W. 731 (agreement between drawer and payee of a bill to the payee's order that the payee should merely collect and not negotiate it, excluded; "having deliberately inserted words importing negotiability, the drawer cannot be heard to urge a contemporaneous oral agreement contrary to the plain terms of the bill").

<sup>2</sup> Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 61; 1840, *Roberts v. Austin*, 5 Whart. Pa. 313 (payment by a buyer's agent to the seller); 1850, *Hicks v. Hinde*, 9 Barb. N. Y. 528 (similar); 1896, *Montgomery v. Page*, 29 Or. 320, 44 Pac. 689 (agreement between maker

and indorser to be co-sureties only). *Contra*: 1895, *Bryan v. Duff*, 12 Wash. 233, 48 Pac. 936 (the defendant being indebted to the plaintiff, and H. being indebted to the defendant, the latter drew a bill on H. to the plaintiff's order; an agreement between the plaintiff and the defendant that the former would not hold the latter liable for the drawee's default, excluded; *Dunbar, J., diss.*, on the ground that this was virtually an agreement to take the bill in absolute payment of the plaintiff's claim). Other cases *pro* and *con* are cited in Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes, II, 218, 224, note.

<sup>3</sup> 1828, *Pike v. Street*, 11. & M. 226 (oral agreement that the indorsee should not sue the defendant as indorser, received); and cases *pro* and *con* cited in Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes, II, 135, note; 1870, *Denton v. Peters*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 475 (agreement by an indorsee to hold merely as agent for collection); and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes, II, 185, note; Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 68; 1870, *Ross v. Espy*, 66 Pa. 481



because the act of indorsement is necessary for the purpose of transferring title, and yet the transfer of title may be only one feature of several transactions, the remaining features of which cannot be embodied in the instrument without impairing its credit, — such as a purchase of a claim on speculation as to the obligor's credit, or a transfer to an agent for collection. A distinction, however, is in some jurisdictions here taken between an indorsement in full and an *indorsement in blank*; and in the latter case the agreement, either when denying recourse,<sup>4</sup> or when limiting the liability to that of guarantor,<sup>5</sup> is treated as invalid; but it is difficult to see what ground there is on principle for this distinction.

(4) The extrinsic agreement made with an *anomalous indorser* — *i. e.* one who, not being the maker, drawer, drawee, or payee, writes his name upon the back of a negotiable note before delivery to the payee or before indorsement by him — should on the same principle be given effect; but Courts differ on this point.<sup>6</sup>

✓ § 2446. **Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.** It is commonly said that the Parol Evidence rule, in the present aspect, is *binding upon only those persons who are parties to the document*. This form of statement suffices in most instances to reach correct results; but it is not sound on principle.

The theory of the rule is that the parties have determined that a particular document shall be made the sole embodiment of their legal act for certain

(agreement between the plaintiff indorsee and the defendant indorser, that they should be merely sureties for the maker, admitted as a defence, the defendant having paid into Court one half of the amount; "the agreement . . . was a flat bar to Espy's right to recover more than the one-half of the money"); and cases cited in Ames' Cases, *id.*, II, 245, note.

The further question may then arise whether, on an indorsement *expressly made without recourse*, an extrinsic *waiver* even of the *implied warranty of genuineness* may be effective: 1902, Carroll v. Nodine, 41 Or. 412, 69 Pac. 51.

<sup>4</sup> 1865, Harrison v. McKim, 18 Ia. 485 (leading opinion, by Wright, C. J.; Cole, J., diss.); 1895, Iowa V. S. Bank v. Sigstad, 96 Ia. 491, 65 N. W. 407 (rule applied to a blank indorsement of a note containing a full indorser's contract on the face of it); 1881, Martin v. Cole, 104 U. S. 30 (leading opinion, by Matthews, J.). *Contra*: 1895, True v. Bullard, 45 Nebr. 409, 63 N. W. 824.

<sup>5</sup> 1872, Beattie v. Browne, 64 Ill. 360 ("It cannot be a parol contract where the payee indorses a note in blank, for there is in legal contemplation written over his name the extent and character of his undertaking"); 1896, Hatley v. Pike, 162 Ill. 241, 44 N. E. 441 (indorsement in blank; oral agreement to sign as guarantor not admitted; explaining prior cases, and distinguishing the contrary rule for a stranger's indorsed signature); 1856, Pres-

cott Bank v. Caverly, 7 Gray Mass. 217 (agreement by indorsee with indorser that the latter signed only as guarantor of identity, not received); 1920, Geiger v. Sanitary Farm Dairies Co., 146 Minn. 235, 178 N. W. 501 (liability of the assignee-corporation for tort by agent of the assignor-corporation; rule held applicable to the instrument of assignment); 1920, Hall v. Geissell, 179 N. C. 657, 103 S. E. 392 (oral statements about a mortgage, admitted in an action for goods supplied by plaintiff to defendant, the mortgage being to or by a third person to secure credit for defendant with plaintiff); and cases cited *pro* and *con* in Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes, II, 233, note.

<sup>6</sup> Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act, § 64; 1875, Boynton v. Pierce, 79 Ill. 145; 1895, Richardson v. Foster, 73 Miss. 12, 18 So. 573; 1905, Harnett v. Holdredge, 5 Nebr. 114, 97 N. W. 443; 73 Nebr. 570, 103 N. W. 277; 1903, Elliott v. Moreland, 69 N. J. L. 216, 54 Atl. 224; 1908, Haddock B. & Co. v. Haddock, 192 N. Y. 499, 85 N. E. 682 (under the Negotiable Instruments Code); and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, I, 269, note.

*Contra*: 1909, Hackley Nat'l Bank v. Barry, 139 Wis. 96, 120 N. W. 275.

An *indorsement of payment* is subject to the usual rule for receipts (*ante*, § 2432), and may therefore be contradicted: 1905, McCaffrey v. Burkhardt, 97 Minn. 1, 105 N. W. 971.



legal purposes (*ante*, § 2425). Hence, so far as that effect and those purposes are concerned, they must be found in that writing and nowhere else, no matter who may desire to avail himself of it. But so far as other effects and purposes are concerned, the writing has not superseded their other conduct, nor other persons' conduct, and it may still be resorted to for any other purpose for which it is material, either by other persons or by themselves. For example, where the issue is as to title by adverse possession of a right of way, and the deed has not reserved such a right, a conversation between grantor and grantee, the former conceding the way, would be available as affecting the permissive nature of the grantee's possession;<sup>1</sup> because the deed embodied only the title as constituted by grant, and did not cover the act of permissive user. So, too, a creditor, attacking a mortgage-deed as fraudulent, may establish the debtor's fraudulent extrinsic agreement with the mortgagee,<sup>2</sup> because the agreement is here invoked not as effecting a transfer but as constituting fraud; for a creditor claiming under the deed could not avail himself of the agreement to enlarge the terms of the transfer. Again, an oral promise by an employer to concede certain moneys to an employee could not be availed of to enlarge the employee's rights, where a written contract covered the subject; but in a prosecution for embezzlement, where the employee's criminal intent in taking the money is the issue, the extrinsic agreement of the employer may be availed of as affecting the employee's honest belief that he was entitled.<sup>3</sup> Again, to overthrow the words of a will, the testator's extrinsic declarations of testamentary intent cannot be used, because here the object is to give testamentary effect to that which the will has superseded for that purpose; but if the object be merely to use these declarations evidentially as indication of the testator's plan, to prove the probable contents of a lost will, they may be used for this distinct purpose.<sup>4</sup>

The truth seems to be, then, that the rule will still apply to exclude extrinsic utterances, even as against other parties, provided it is sought to use those utterances for the very purpose for which the writing has superseded them as the legal act.

Nevertheless, owing to the inaccurate phrasing of the doctrine as commonly laid down — that the rule does not apply to others than the parties to the document — the precedents are often arbitrary and confused, and cannot be reconciled by any general distinctions.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2446. <sup>1</sup> 1855, *Ashley v. Ashley*, 4 Gray 197.

<sup>2</sup> 1894, *Jewett v. Sundback*, 5 S. D. 111, 119, 58 N. W. 20.

<sup>3</sup> 1898, *Walker v. State*, 117 Ala. 42, 23 So. 149; 1906, *State v. Davison*, — N. H. —, 64 Atl. 761 (embezzlement of corporate funds; the intent of the defendant, expressed in their oral statements, allowed to be shown, in spite of a written bill of sale).

<sup>4</sup> Cases cited *ante*, §§ 1735-1737.

<sup>5</sup> ENGLAND: 1848, *Re Clapton*, 3 Cox Cr. 126 (embezzlement of funds by a servant; the

memorandum of agreement covering the nature of his duties, required to be produced).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1901, *O'Shea v. R. Co.*, 44 C. C. A. 601, 105 Fed. 559 (the plaintiff was injured by the joint negligence of defendant and C., and executed an instrument to C. in form acknowledging satisfaction; held, that as against the defendant, though a joint tort-feasor, the plaintiff might show that the instrument was understood to be merely a covenant not to sue C.); *Ala.* 1905, *Wilson v. State*, — Ala. —, 39 So. 776 (charge of re-



§ 2447. **Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.** If a document has by the parties' intent been made the sole embodiment of the trans-

moving corn with intent to defraud creditors, viz. one Mrs. J. having a claim for advances; "the written contract determines the relation that existed between Mrs. J. and the defendant," and proof by parol was excluded); *Cal.* 1896, *Dunn v. Price*, 112 *Cal.* 46, 44 *Pac.* 354 (agreement of sale; between assignees of buyer and seller, not claiming under them, an oral agreement admitted); *Fla.* 1895, *Roof v. Pulley Co.*, 36 *Fla.* 284, 18 *So.* 597 (assignee of property and note); *Ga.* 1900, *Dickey v. Grice*, 110 *Ga.* 315, 35 *S. E.* 291; *Ind. Terr.* 1901, *Central Coal & C. Co. v. Good*, 4 *Ind. T.* 74, 64 *S. W.* 677 (breach of contract to pay for lumber furnished for a railroad; defendant claimed that plaintiff had failed to perform and had thus caused him damage; testimony by another contractor as to the part of the construction to be done by him, held admissible, irrespective of the terms of this contract); 1907, *Good & Co. v. Central C. & C. Co.*, 7 *Ind. Terr.* 268, 104 *S. W.* 613 (railroad contractor); *Ind.* 1915, *White v. Woods*, 183 *Ind.* 500, 109 *N. E.* 761 (fraud in exchange of real estate for corporate shares; the plaintiff introduced a deed to himself and wife to show title to the land; evidence that his wife had no actual interest was admitted, as "this action is not between the parties to the deed, but is between one of the grantees and a stranger to the deed," and the parol evidence rule did not apply); *Ia.* 1903, *Livingston v. Heck*, 122 *Ia.* 74, 94 *N. W.* 1098 (action against the purchaser from T. of cattle sold to T. by the plaintiff, and mortgaged back to the plaintiff; the oral agreement between T. and the plaintiff, permitting a sale free from the mortgage, admitted); 1912, *Rampton v. Dobson*, 156 *Ia.* 315, 136 *N. W.* 682 (assessment by the county; whether a contract for the sale of land was assessable as a credit; the parties' understanding that it was only an option, admitted; *Evans, J.*, diss., places the case on the present ground); *Ky.* 1911, *Levine v. Mitchell & S. Co.*, 144 *Ky.* 380, 138 *S. W.* 261 (pledge of diamonds); 1914, *Williams v. National Cash Register Co.*, 157 *Ky.* 836, 164 *S. W.* 112 (liability of principal for agent's torts); *La.* 1919, *Commercial G. T. & S. Bank v. White*, 145 *La.* 54, 81 *So.* 753 (action by a bank on a note transferred as collateral; *Civ. C.* § 2276 held to make the parol evidence rule applicable only as between the parties and their privies, but the bank here held not to be a privy); *Me.* 1899, *Gould v. Leavitt*, 92 *Me.* 416, 43 *Atl.* 17 (mortgage from S. to defendant, expressly excluding intoxicating liquors, and an assignment of the mortgage by defendant to plaintiff; that the transaction in truth covered intoxicating liquors, allowed to be shown); *Mass.* 1904, *Wilson v. Mulloney*, 185 *Mass.* 430, 70 *N. E.* 448 (assignment of a mortgage, etc.); 1905,

*Flynn v. Butler*, 189 *Mass.* 377, 75 *N. E.* 730 (joint tortfeasors; a release of claims to one tortfeasor, held not variable by parol evidence); *Nebr.* 1903, *First Nat'l Bank v. Tolerton*, 5 *Nebr.* 43, 97 *N. W.* 248 (chattel mortgage); *N. H.* 1895, *Libby v. Land Co.*, 67 *N. H.* 587, 32 *Atl.* 772 (garnisher against a stock-subscriber as garnishee, whose parol agreement to pay 25% only of face value of stock was not received); *N. J.* 1893, *Plainfield F. N. Bank v. Dunn*, 58 *N. J. L.* 404, 27 *Atl.* 908 (action against indorser; oral agreement with J., not a party to the written agreement, to extend time of payment, admitted); 1906, *Shreve v. Crosby*, 72 *N. J. L.* 491, 63 *Atl.* 333 (stock transactions); *N. Y.* 1897, *Hankinson v. Vantine*, 152 *N. Y.* 20, 46 *N. E.* 292 (mechanic's lien for labor done by the plaintiff upon a building owned by the defendant and leased by R.; the lease of R. containing a clause against alterations without the lessor's consent, on penalty of forfeiture, the defendant gave a written consent; held, that since the sole purpose of this writing was to avoid the lessee's forfeiture, it did not exclude the oral transactions at the time relative to the defendant's consent, for the purpose of determining whether the statutory consent to the plaintiff's labor had been given; a good example of the principle); *Or.* 1902, *Pacific Biscuit Co. v. Dugger*, 42 *Or.* 513, 70 *Pac.* 523 (action for goods sold to defendant through her agent S., the issue being whether S. was general selling-agent or not; the plaintiff having introduced a bill of sale of the store from S. to defendant, in which defendant appointed S. to remain as general selling-agent, the defendant was allowed to show that the sale was a mortgage only, and thus S. remained owner; unsound, because the document was offered as creating the plaintiff's right; the Court erroneously saying that it was "not offered for the purpose of asserting any rights thereunder"); *Tenn.* 1901, *Myers v. Taylor*, 107 *Tenn.* 364, 64 *S. W.* 719 (plaintiff claimed lumber under a sale from M., who claimed by purchase of it from defendant's land, and this purchase was denied by defendant; M. was not allowed to testify to his contract irrespective of the writing; this ruling seems unsound); *Tex.* 1896, *Johnson v. Portwood*, 82 *Tex.* 235, 34 *S. W.* 596, 787 (agreement of sale on terms; a third person claiming a lien on the vendee's interest was allowed to show other oral terms for the sale); *Wash.* 1903, *Carmack v. Drum*, 32 *Wash.* 236, 73 *Pac.* 377 (a landlord suing for rent was allowed to show, in spite of his deed transferring the premises, an oral agreement with the grantee that the grantor should retain the right to the rents); 1909, *Brown v. Wisner*, 51 *Wash.* 509, 99 *Pac.* 581 (action by a broker for commissions on a sale; the rule held not to apply to the contract between defendant and vendee).



action, then all proof of the transaction involves proof of the document (*ante*, § 2425); and proof of the document involves a production of the original document or an accounting for its absence (*ante*, § 1179). But obviously the latter requirement depends upon the assumption first above made, namely, that the parties *have* embodied the transaction in writing. The question then arises, On whom is the burden of proof to show that they have or have not done so? This question, in turn, has two branches.

(1) In an action on a contract, for example, *must the plaintiff show* that the contract is *not* a written one, or must the defendant rather show that it is a written one? The practical difference will be, when it is a written one, that the plaintiff must produce or account for it, in the former view; while in the latter view, the defendant must produce or account for it, in order to prove its terms, and this requirement may be difficult to fulfil.

The correct solution here seems to favor the plaintiff. In other words, there is no presumption that the transaction was reduced to a single document; therefore if the plaintiff does not involuntarily disclose such a document as a part of his case, the opponent must raise the objection and establish the fact, if he wishes to invoke the operation of the rule.<sup>1</sup> The practical justification for this is that, though some document may exist, it remains uncertain whether the documents covered the precise transaction in issue, and until the opponent, by production, has demonstrated that it does, it is fairer that no assumptions should be made:

1818, BURROUGH, J., in *Sterens v. Pinney*, 3 B. & Ald. 349, 355 (action for work and labor): "The distinction in this case turns on the proof of the existence of the original agreement having been given by the defendant's witness instead of the plaintiff's. The latter had fully made out his case [by evidence of oral hiring], and nothing whatever was proved as to whether there had been such an agreement or not. It was therefore incumbent on the defendant to show that there had been a legal instrument of that description, or to give the plaintiff notice to produce it."

(2) But may not this rule be modified where the fact of a writing *appears from the plaintiff's own witnesses*? In other words, if, even before the defend-

§ 2447. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1818, *Stevens v. Pinney*, 3 B. & Ald. 349, 8 Taunt. 327 (work and labor; on the defendant's side it appeared that there was a writing covering the subject; held, that it was for the defendant to prove; therefore, he should have given notice to produce, before proving the contents, *i. e.* before being able to invoke its controlling effect); 1827, *Littledale, J., in Reed v. Deere*, 7 B. & C. 261 ("If indeed a plaintiff gets through his case without giving the defendant any opportunity of mentioning the written instrument, the latter must produce it"); 1840, *Magnay v. Knight*, 1 Man. & G. 944 (action for services; general rule applied; production required of the defendant, and the defendant held not to cure his position by having given notice; since the document being unstamped was unavailable); 1860, *Cox v. Couvless*, 2 F. & F. 139 (the cross-examination may be

interposed, and, on denial of any writing, evidence of its existence may be offered by the opponent, to prevent the proponent from proving the transaction orally).

*United States*: 1866, *Patterson v. Mining Co.*, 30 Cal. 360, 365 (allegation by the defendant of a sale; on the defendant's evidence, the sale appeared to be in writing; production by him required); 1867, *King v. Randlett*, 33 Cal. 318, 321 (same, the plaintiff alleging a sale); 1895, *St. Louis A. & T. H. R. Co. v. Bauer*, 156 Ill. 106, 40 N. E. 448 (testimony as to a railroad rule; the opponent was required to object and discover whether it was in writing, before the rule would be applied).

*Contra*: 1823, *Allen v. Potter*, 2 McC. S. C. 322 (assumpsit for the value of articles bought but not delivered, etc.; in the defendant's evidence, it appeared that a bill of sale existed; production required from the plaintiff).



ant has proved the precise terms of the writing, it appears that there was *some* writing connected with the transaction, may it not then be presumed against the plaintiff that this writing covered the transaction in issue, so as to shift to him the burden of showing, by production, that it does *not* cover the transaction?

Here a distinction is to be taken between the direct and the cross-examination. It is generally conceded that, when the fact of writing appears on *direct examination*, the plaintiff must produce or account for it before he can go any further.<sup>2</sup> But whether the same rule will be applied where the same fact has been made to appear by the defendant on the *cross-examination* of the plaintiff's witness has been the subject of variant rulings and much controversy in English practice. The argument against applying the same rule has been thus stated:

1829, TINDAL, C. J., in *Fielder v. Ray*, 6 Bing. 332: "It has been argued that if it be shown that a contract is evidenced by writing, it is immaterial whether this appear on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witnesses or in the course of the defendant's evidence. But there is this difference in the case, — that if it appear by the [direct] testimony of the plaintiff's witness, the absence of the writing is an inherent defect in his cause which it is incumbent on him to get over; whereas if it appears from the defendant's witness, it is an objection which the defendant must substantiate by the production of the instrument in the regular way. Otherwise this inconvenience might follow, that the plaintiff might, on a mere assertion of the defendant, be non-suited for the non-production of a written instrument, which if it had been produced might turn out not to apply to the contract in question."

This reasoning does not seem adequate, although a few rulings have accepted it.<sup>3</sup> To place the burden on the plaintiff equally in such cases seems more satisfactory, because his own witness' testimony has sufficed to show that there was *some* writing, and because a distinction between the direct and the cross-examination would tend to increase petty manœuvring and the suppression of facts. Such was the view of the majority of English judges.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1818, *Stevens v. Pinney*, 2 J. B. Moore 349 (action for work and labor; held, that if a writing had appeared, as a part of the plaintiff's case, to cover the matter, the plaintiff must produce it; but where he proved his case without involving it, then it was for the defendant to show its existence and give notice to produce it); 1824, *Sinclair v. Stevenson*, 1 C. & P. 582 (negotiations for a lease or sale); 1825, *Cotterill v. Hobby*, 4 B. & C. 465 (case, for injury to a reversioner's interest, the plaintiff's evidence of his interest referring to a written agreement; held, that he should produce it); 1842, *Parton v. Cole*, 6 Jur. 370 (but here the judge first looked at the document).

*Canada*: 1855, *Doe v. Blanche*, 3 All. N. Br. 180 (written agreement for possession).

*United States*: 1877, *Com. v. Goodwin*, 122 Mass. 19, 34 (whether a building was insured; production not required because no written contract was mentioned); 1867, *Hatch v. Pryor*, 42 N. Y. 441, 443 (agreement to pay a

note); 1842, *Eubanks v. Harris*, 1 Spear S. C. 183, 192 (agreement as to a boundary).

<sup>3</sup> 1810, *Doe v. Morris*, 12 East 237 (action of ejectment, turning upon whether the landlord had a right to end the lease; on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witness, it appeared that there was a lease in writing; held, that it was for the defendant to put it in, not the plaintiff); 1810, *Doe v. Pearson*, East 239, note (ejectment against a tenant, turning upon the time of notice to quit; the plaintiff's witness disclosed that there was a written agreement; held, that the plaintiff was not bound to produce it); 1829, *Reid v. Batte, M. & M.* 413 (assumpsit for an entablature put on the front of a house; on cross-examination it appeared that there was a written contract for the inside work on the house, but that the present claim was sued on as an extra; held that the plaintiff need not produce the contract).

<sup>4</sup> *England*: 1800, *Brewer v. Palmer*, 3 Esp. 213 (action for use and occupation; on cross-



Here certain questions may properly be distinguished: (a) When the document is *void for want of a legal stamp*, or does not fulfil the requirement of the *statute of frauds*, it may be ineffective as a legal act, and therefore the party who is bound to produce it if he relies upon it may fail (*post*, § 2456); and thus the incidents of the burden of proof may indirectly have other consequences. (b) Where the plaintiff desires to prove a *fact independent of the document* — as when he relies upon a person's acts and not upon his written appointment, to prove his agency or official incumbency<sup>5</sup> — there is of course no burden of producing the document; whether the purpose in hand is really the proof of the document or of the independent fact depends upon the principle of documentary originals, already examined (*ante*, §§ 1242-1250). (c) Where the parties have by mutual consent *waived the resort to the written transaction* and agreed to rest upon the oral facts, the question arises whether by stipulation or judicial admission a rule of substantive law or of evidence may be waived (*post*, § 2592).

§ 2448. **Loss of the Instrument; Oral Transaction is still Immaterial.** It follows, from the theory of the present rule (*ante*, § 2425), that if the instrument is *lost*, it is nevertheless the 'factum probandum,' being the embodiment of the transaction. The superseded oral transactions do not therefore become the object of proof.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, so far as the parties' intentions, or other conduct, would ordinarily be evidence of an act done, so here such circumstances may be evidentially offered to show by probability the contents of the lost instrument as consummated.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2449. **Agreement to Treat a Specific Copy as the "Original."** Where two or more counterparts or "copies" are made, one to be retained by each

examination, it appeared that there had been an agreement in writing; Eldon, C. J., said that "the plaintiff was bound to show what that contract was; it might contain some clauses which might prevent the plaintiff from recovering, and others for the benefit of the defendant, which he had a right to have produced"; 1816, Jeffery v. Walton, 1 Stark. 267; 1828, Vincent v. Cole, M. & M. 257 (assumpsit for building a party-wall; on cross-examination it appeared that there was a written contract for the building of the house but that the party-wall claim was sued on as extra; held, that the plaintiff must first produce the document, so that it could be seen whether it covered the claim in question); 1828, R. v. Rawden, 8 B. & C. 708 (in proving a tenancy, the cross-examination showed a written instrument to have been made; the prover held bound to produce it); 1832, R. v. Padstow, 4 B. & Ad. 208; 1844, Buxton v. Cornish, 12 M. & W. 426 (Abinger, L. C. B.: "The practice has prevailed in Westminster Hall ever since I have known it, and before every judge for the last quarter of a century").

*Ireland*: 1841, Bridge v. M'Carthy, 4 Ir. L. R. 157; 1845, Thunder v. Warren, 8 id. 181

(requiring the plaintiff to give notice to produce).

*Canada*: 1873, Betts v. Veening, 14 N. Br. 267, 269 (on cross-examination, here); 1852, Farley v. Graham, 9 U. C. Q. B. 438.

*United States*: 1826, Boone v. Dyke, 3 T. B. Monr. Ky. 530, 531; 1868, Littlejohn v. Fowler, 5 Coldw. 1 Tenn. 284, 286 (contract for cutting timber; the existence of a writing appearing on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witness, other testimony was excluded). The following ruling stands by itself: 1854, Campbell v. Moore, 3 Wis. 767 (peculiar facts; Court's discretion discussed).

<sup>5</sup> For example: 1895, Newby v. Security Co., 110 Ala. 663, 17 So. 940.

§ 2448. <sup>1</sup> 1903, Aldeguer v. Hoskyn, 2 P. I. 500 (sale of land); 1904, Capell v. Fagan, 29 Mont. 507, 77 Pac. 55 (misusing the word "evidence"); and cases cited *ante*, § 2427, note 11.

<sup>2</sup> Cases cited *ante*, §§ 1735, 1737; § 112; § 392; § 273; § 377.

*Contra*: 1891, Nicholson v. Tarpey, 89 Cal. 617, 26 Pac. 1101 (deed); 1899, Nicholson v. Tarpey, 124 Cal. 442, 57 Pac. 457 (similar).

The opinion in Tayloe v. Riggs, 1 Pet. 591, 599 (1828), sometimes cited *contra*, is based in reality upon the principle of § 2105, *ante*.



party, it is of course theoretically allowable to agree that a specific one shall be deemed "the original," *i. e.* (*ante*, § 1133) the controlling text of the transaction. Such an agreement is ordinarily needless and gives an unfair advantage, and would usually not be assented to by the party not holding the "original," unless either he was the weaker party in the negotiation or he failed to observe such a clause in a document drafted by the other party. In international diplomacy, the custom has been to provide that each party shall be bound by the text in his own language, or by the text prepared in a third language.

On the other hand, the provision for deeming a specific copy the "original" becomes a defensible measure of precaution for protecting a principal against the unauthorized promises of his agent, made in his absence; the principal is morally entitled to make sure that he is bound only by the text as returned to himself. To be sure, the fairest method to attain that purpose is to require the countersigning of all copies or counterparts by the principal (as is the practice with life-insurers). But the protective motive is at least a tenable one.

However, where a specific copy is thus made the "original," and the agent writes unauthorized promises in the other party's copy, and the other party fails to notice the protective clause, a hardship to the other party will ensue.<sup>1</sup> It may be said that here there are equities on both sides. A decision by mere general rule, in either direction, will be unsatisfactory. The true solution is not to adopt either rule rigidly, but to inquire into the circumstances of each case and adjust the result to produce the least net hardship.

### 3. Integration required by Law

§ 2450. **At Common Law; (1) Judicial Records.** The integration of a transaction (*ante*, § 2425), *i. e.* its reduction to a single document, is either voluntary or compulsory. In the former instance it may or may not be made, as the party or parties to the act may choose; but when made, the jural consequences already noticed will follow, and the document supersedes all other utterances. In the latter instance — compulsory integration — the law insists, independently of the parties' choice, that the transaction be embodied in a single document, and when this is done, the same jural consequences attach.

The instances of compulsory integration are few. At common law the only instances appear to be those of *judicial records*, *corporate records*, and *negotiable instruments*. By statute have been added *testaments* and a few miscellaneous documents.

(1) *Judicial Records.* The theory of *judicial records* is that the judgment roll, as finally made up, embodies in itself alone the entirety of the controversy as adjudicated, and thus supersedes the miscellaneous mass of oral and written pleading, motions, and orders, which have gone to make up the pro-

§ 2449. <sup>1</sup> The following case is an example: 1922, *Lieberman v. Lexington Motor Co.*, Sup. App. Div., 194 N. Y. Suppl. 578 (sale of a car by an agent who promised on the copy to

give the buyer the benefit of a reduction of price).

Compare the similar expedient by limiting an agent's authority (*ante*, § 2434a).



ceedings. The history of this theory has already been examined (*ante*, § 2426). Its principle is to-day well established in the law:

1814, ELLENBOROUGH, C. J., in *Ramsbottom v. Buckhurst*, 2 M. & S. 565, 567: "The judgment roll imports incontrovertible verity as to all proceedings which it sets forth; and so much so that a party cannot be admitted to plead that the things which it professes to state are not true. . . . Every part of the record, as long as it remains on the files of the Court, must be taken to speak absolute verity."

1842, HUBBARD, J., in *Sayles v. Briggs*, 4 Metc. 421, 423 (in an action for malicious prosecution, to show the acquittal in the previous proceeding, the plaintiff produced the written complaint only, and wished to show orally the issuance of warrant, the arrest, the arraignment, and the discharge; no record or minutes had been made): "A record is a memorial or history of the judicial proceedings in a case, commencing with the writ or complaint, and terminating with the judgment; and the design is, not merely to settle the particular question in difference between the parties, or the government and the subject, but to furnish fixed and determinate rules and precedents for all future like cases. A record, therefore, must be precise and clear, containing proof within itself of every important fact on which the judgment rests; and it cannot exist partly in writing and partly in parol. Its allegations and facts are not the subject of contradiction. They are received as the truth itself, and no averment can be made against them nor can they be varied by parol. . . . It is argued that this testimony should be received from necessity, as there is no way by which the plaintiff can obtain redress, and that this is the best evidence which now exists. But in my judgment it will be productive of far less mischief for an individual to suffer from the neglect or misfortune of an officer in not making a judicial record than to establish a precedent that the record itself or a part of it may be proved by parol, — that it may speak one language to-day and another to-morrow, depending on the different witnesses who are called or on their changing recollections. And without prescribing a rule for a case where a magistrate might by the act of God be deprived of the opportunity of making even any minutes of proceedings before him from which a record could be made (if such a case should ever occur), we are of opinion that the want of a judicial record cannot be supplied by parol evidence; and that the rules which apply to the admission of testimony to prove the contents of a lost record, or to the introduction of minutes by which the record may be extended, have no real bearing on a case like the present, where no such loss ever took place and no such minutes ever were made. A party who is to be affected by the record will in the exercise of ordinary care see that it is correctly made up; and if the officer should neglect or refuse to perform his duty, he can be compelled by mandamus to make a true record."

1854, MERRICK, J., in *Wells v. Stevens*, 2 Gray, 115, 119: "It has been argued in behalf of the plaintiff [offering to show orally a claim of appeal not in the record] that the evidence offered by him should have been received, because otherwise he can obtain no redress for the loss of the right of which he complains that he has been unjustly deprived; and also because a magistrate ought not to be allowed to shield himself from responsibility for an act of wrong or oppression by an additional violation of duty in neglecting or wilfully refusing truly to record the proceedings of a case tried before him. But the rejection of such evidence is an obvious and inevitable consequence of the incontrovertible verity which the law, for reasons lying (as it has been said) at the foundation of all well-ordered jurisprudence, attaches to judicial records. Judges and magistrates are responsible to the government from which they derive their authority, but not to individuals, for the negligent performance or wilful violation of official duty."

It is not within the present purview to trace in detail the state of the law of records, involving as it does a separate body of law, contained in a mass of



variant statutes and local differences of practice. But it is worth while to notice the logical consequences of this general principle as applied at common law.

(a) In the first place, the record being the sole embodiment of the judicial proceedings, no other materials or utterances, oral or written, can be set up in competition with it. In other words, but less correctly, the record is *conclusive*.<sup>1</sup>

This is so even though the record has *not been made up*; <sup>2</sup> for herein appears the compulsory nature of the rule, as distinguished from voluntary integration (*ante*, § 2430). It *must* be made up; and if it is not, then in legal theory there is yet no judgment or other proceeding; and it is always in the power of litigating parties to prevent hardship by compelling the proper officer to make up the record. Furthermore, if the record has been made up and is then *lost or destroyed*, the proof of the proceedings consists in proof of the

§ 2450. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1874, *Ex parte Gillebrand*, Re Sidebotham, L. R. 10 Ch. App. 52 (when they "purport to contain a full record of what took place at the trial, they must be taken as the sole materials on which the Court of Appeal can proceed," unless by agreement); *U. S. Ky.* 1911, *Desha's Adm'r's v. Harrison Co.*, 141 Ky. 692, 133 S. W. 545 (county fiscal court's record of claim presented and allowed); *Miss.* 1884, *Jones v. Williams*, 62 Miss. 183 (contradiction of the record as to the day of adjournment, not allowed under Code 1880, § 2282); 1908, *Childress v. Carley*, 92 Miss. 571, 46 So. 164 (similar, quoting the above text with approval; Whitfield, C. J., diss. on the ground that here the offer was to show that the entry of judgment was not inserted until after the actual date of adjournment, and hence it was not in contradiction of an official record, because "no such record had any existence," citing *People v. Gray*, N. Y., *infra*, note 2, as the determining case); 1909, *Bank of Meadville v. Hardy*, 94 Miss. 587, 48 So. 731 (order for a receiver purporting to have been signed after bill filed; an offer to show by the chancellor's own statement that the order was signed before bill filed, and therefore void, not admitted, following *Childress v. Carley*; Whitfield, C. J., accord, but renewing his dissent from *Childress v. Carley*); 1919, *Steverson v. McLeod Lumber Co.*, 120 Miss. 65, 81 So. 788 (evidence not admitted to contradict the date shown in the minutes as the first day of court for the term); *N. J.* 1863, *Michener v. Lloyd*, 16 N. J. Eq. 38, 40 (order of a Court directing payment; oral evidence of "what passed at the time of making the order," excluded); *N. Y.* 1841, *People v. Gray*, 25 Wend. 465 (minutes or other record of a criminal trial, not contradictable as to the plea entered); *N. C.* 1846, *Ward v. Saunders*, 6 Ired. 382, 385 (theoretically, the enrolled memorial of all the documents in a cause is the record, not the original documents them-

selves; here an objection to the originals' not having been enrolled was held waived by consent to use the originals); 1920, *Gauldin v. Madison*, 179 N. C. 461, 102 S. E. 851 (to identify the cause of action covered by two separate suits, an affidavit filed in the earlier suit, in which no complaint had been filed, was excluded); *Pa.* 1869, *Coyne v. Souther*, 61 Pa. 455, 457 (entry of satisfaction of judgment in docket by clerk, conclusive in favor of purchaser at sheriff's sale).

The principle that a *judgment* is conclusive upon the parties is a different thing (*ante*, § 1347). The present question is not what external facts are established by the judgment, but what were the actual terms of the judgment itself.

<sup>2</sup> *Kan.* 1908, *Graden v. Mais*, 77 Kan. 700, 95 Pac. 412 (administrator's deed; oral notice of hearing, not valid); *Mass.* 1842, *Kendall v. Powers*, 4 Metc. 553 (a record cannot be affected by parol; in an action for false imprisonment, the defendant justice was not allowed to show that a waiver of appeal, not in the record, had been made); 1842 *Sayles v. Briggs*, 4 Metc. 421, 423 (proceedings in a prosecution alleged as malicious; quoted *supra*); 1854, *Wells v. Stevens*, 2 Gray 115 (trespass against a magistrate for committing to prison without allowing an appeal; the plaintiff not allowed to show orally that he claimed an appeal, no claim being contained in the record of the magistrate; quoted *supra*); 1863, *Hackett v. King*, 3 All. 58, 60 (warrant and arrest, not provable by parol); 1866, *Fleming v. Clark*, 15 Mo. 191, 198 (whether a trial Court had authority to allow exceptions; an agreement of counsel, for a 'habeas corpus' hearing, as to this fact, excluded; "the rulings of the Superior Court can appear only by its own records"); *N. Y.* 1841, *People v. Gray*, 25 Wend. 465 (original minutes of a trial during session, not made up as required by statute, are not the record).



contents of the record,<sup>3</sup> — though if copies are unavailable, other materials may be resorted to.<sup>4</sup> Finally, though the record is the sole embodiment of the transaction, yet in an appropriate proceeding the Court may *amend* it so as to remove errors;<sup>5</sup> and thus the theory is preserved while practical injustice is avoided.

(b) Of the various books kept in a court, which of them is *deemed to be this record*? Here the practice and the phraseology have come to vary so much in different jurisdictions that uniformity of ruling is not attainable. But on principle there is one final and comprehensive document, termed the *judgment-roll*, for each litigation; in this are set forth all the proceedings from beginning to end; and this is theoretically *the* record:

1768, Sir *William Blackstone*, *Commentaries on the Law of England*, III, 317: "The record is a history of the most material proceedings in the cause, entered on a parchment roll, and continued down to the present time; in which must be stated the original writ and summons, all the pleadings, the declaration, view oroyer prayed, the imparlances, plea, replication, rejoinder, continuances, and whatever farther proceedings have been had, all entered 'verbatim' on the roll, and also the issue or demurrer and joinder therein." <sup>6</sup>

This roll then is primarily the record, and supersedes all intermediate books of docket, minutes, entries, and the like, as well as the original papers containing the pleadings of the parties.<sup>7</sup> If however the time has not yet elapsed

<sup>3</sup> 1843, *Gore v. Elwell*, 9 Shepl. Me. 442, 444 (lost writ and return are to be proved by evidence of the record's contents, not of the parol acts); 1894, *Burden v. Taylor*, 124 Mo. 12, 22, 27 S. W. 349 (tax-collector's testimony to supply want of recitals of proceedings in a tax-deed; only the record of the proceedings, or copies of them where destroyed, receivable); 1876, *Mandeville v. Reynolds*, 68 N. Y. 528, 533 (where a judgment roll is lost, the proof is to be of the contents of the lost roll, and *semble* not of anything but its contents).

<sup>4</sup> 1905, *Holford v. James*, 136 Fed. 553, C. C. A. (lost pleadings; parol evidence received); 1859, *Conger v. Converse*, 9 Ia. 554, 557 (lost execution; docket-entries as preferred to oral evidence; question not decided); 1821, *Cook v. Wood*, 1 McC. S. C. 139 (on the loss of records of Court, its journals were received).

<sup>5</sup> The following cases exemplify the rules on this subject: *Fed.* 1873, *Ex parte Lange*, 18 Wall. 163, 167; *Conn.* 1856, *Weed v. Weed*, 25 Conn. 337, 343 (where the analogy with reformation of deeds in chancery is noted); *Ind.* 1906, *Boonville Nat'l Bank v. Blakey*, 166 Ind. 427, 76 N. E. 529; *Ia.* 1905, *Hofacre v. Monticello*, 128 Ia. 239, 103 N. W. 488; 1907, *Thompson v. Great Western Acc. Ass'n*, 136 Ia. 557, 114 N. W. 31 (court's correction of erroneous entry by clerk); 1907, *Puckett v. Gunther*, 137 Ia. 647, 114 N. W. 34 (prior case "distinguished"); 1913, *Hamill v. Schlitz Brewing Co.*, 165 Ia. 266, 143 N. W. 99, 145 N. W. 111 (procedure for making corrections);

*Ky.* 1910, *Ralls v. Sharp's Adm'r*, 140 Ky. 744, 131 S. W. 998 ('nunc pro tunc' entry after term time); *Minn.* 1917, *National Council v. Silver*, 138 Minn. 330, 164 N. W. 1015 (judgment erroneous as to findings); *Nebr.* 1922, *Amos v. Eichenberger*, — *Nebr.* —, 186 N. W. 330 (justice's docket-notes); *N. H.* 1862, *Frink v. Frink*, 43 N. H. 508, 514; *N. C.* 1916, *Cropsey v. Markham*, 171 N. C. 43, 87 S. E. 950 (scope of a judgment for money due for services); *Oh.* 1897, *Jacks v. Adamson*, 56 Oh. 397, 47 N. E. 48 ("all sources of information that are competent under general rules"; here the testimony of the ex-judge of probate to the fact of an order of sale); *Okl.* 1917, *Jones v. Gallagher*, 64 Okl. 41, 166 Pac. 204; 1917, *Courtney v. Barnett*, — *Okl.* —, 166 Pac. 207; *Or.* 1897, *State v. Fiester*, 32 Or. 254, 50 Pac. 561; *Tex.* 1904, *Fort Worth & D. C. R. Co. v. Roberts*, 98 Tex. 42, 81 S. W. 25 (entry 'nunc pro tunc' where no minute was made); *W. Va.* 1908, *Guinn v. Warbutton*, 64 W. Va. 76, 60 S. E. 1100 (whether prior notice is necessary for a correction made during the same term); 1918, *Ex parte Coon*, 81 W. Va. 532, 94 S. E. 957 (record of criminal case continued).

<sup>6</sup> Examples of records set out in full are given in the *Commentaries*, Appendix to Book III.

<sup>7</sup> *England*: 1807, *Ayrey v. Davenport*, 2 B. & P. N. R. 474 (the book of entries of judgments is not evidence of a judgment); 1805, *Lee v. Meacock*, 5 Esp. 177 (a day-book from the judgment-office, containing copies of the entries of judgments, etc., not admitted; "an



when the roll can be made up, the clerk's temporary *minutes and entries*, together with the original papers of the parties, constitute the *record ad interim*; <sup>8</sup> this relaxation being conceded to practical necessity. Moreover, in *inferior courts* — typically, that of a justice of the peace — in which by tradition (*ante*, § 2426) the doctrine of incontrovertible records never obtained, the final enrolment was never customary at common law. Hence the justice's docket or minutes, with the original papers, represent in the first instance the proceedings; <sup>9</sup> and though the legal theory persevered that these courts do not possess records at all, in the strict

office copy of the judgment ought to be produced," if not the docket itself).

*United States: Ariz.* 1921, *McFadden v. McFadden*, 22 Ariz. 246, 196 Pac. 452 (divorce; "solemn judgment of the Court" controls, rather than the clerk's minutes); *Ill.* 1916, *Moore v. Shook*, 276 Ill. 47, 114 N. E. 592 (divorce; whether the date of a decree is that of the minute of the oral announcement or that of the filing of the formal decree two weeks later); *Ia.* 1901, *Baxter v. Pritchard*, 113 Ia. 422, 85 N. W. 633 (record book, not judgment docket, is the judicial record); *N. D.* 1910, *Yokell v. Elder*, 20 N. D. 142, 127 N. W. 514 (following *Baxter v. Pritchard*, *supra*); *Vt.* 1905, *Gibson v. Holmes*, 78 Vt. 110, 62 Atl. 11 (certified copy of docket entries in a Massachusetts court, excluded, "as those entries were no record, but only minutes from which to make a record").

But this strictness of the common law is not always observed; compare the following opinions: 1897, *Simmons v. Threshour*, 118 Cal. 100, 50 Pac. 312 (whether the judgment-book suffices instead of the judgment-roll); 1849, *Browning v. Flanagan*, 22 N. J. L. 567, 573 (clerk's "sealing-docket"; its nature well explained); 1902, *Amundson v. Wilson*, 11 N. D. 193, 91 N. W. 37 (whether a judgment-docket suffices to establish a judgment, instead of the record book).

<sup>8</sup> *Ia.* 1909, *Puckett v. Gunther*, 142 Ia. 35, 120 N. W. 123 (the spreading of the record by the clerk at a later time is not a judicial act and may be made on Sunday; the conflicting doctrines discussed; interesting and valuable opinion by Evans, C. J.); 1909, *Burke v. Burke*, 142 Ia. 206, 119 N. W. 129 (judgment and minute made in term time; formal entry prepared in vacation; the judgment held to have been rendered in term time); 1909, *Owens v. National Hatchet Co.*, 147 Ia. 393, 121 N. W. 1076; 126 N. W. 333 (minutes unspread may suffice for an appeal); *Mass.* 1839, *Pruden v. Alden*, 23 Pick. 184, 187 (the clerk first records the doings briefly "in a minute-book, called the docket, from which a full, extended, and intelligible record is afterwards to be made up; but until they can be made up, these short notes must stand as the record"); 1848, *Read v. Sutton*, 2 Cush. 115, 123 ("The docket is the

record until the record is fully extended, and the same rules of presumed verity apply to it as to the record"; excluding testimony of the clerk and the judge as to the non-making of an order of judgment); 1861, *McGrath v. Seagrave*, 2 All. 443 ("minutes may be introduced when the record has not been drawn out 'in extenso,' as containing the elements of a record, and in truth for the time being constituting the record itself"; here a docket entry, together with the original papers, was received where "every essential fact appears . . . without resorting to parol proof"); *Or.* 1921, *Peterson v. Beals*, 102 Or. 245, 201 Pac. 727 (tardy appeal; recital of the court journal, held not open to contradiction by the clerk's affidavit).

How much depends on local custom may be seen by the following case: 1850, *Willard v. Harvey*, 24 N. H. 344, 348 (the custom in this State had been not to extend the record of a judgment from the minutes and original papers until a resort to the judgment in another proceeding was needed, and then the clerk made a copy "of the record supposed to exist in legal intendment, and certified as such [copy], without the labor of first making an original"; so that "the record thus extended is deemed by the Court an original record," and is conclusive; corrections can be made only by process of amendment).

<sup>9</sup> 1860, *State v. Bartlett*, 47 Me. 396, 401 (original complaint and warrant with return, admitted); 1882, *Folsom v. Cressey*, 73 Me. 270 (citation and return, etc., in poor-debtor's Court; "such inferior Courts are not required to make up full and formal records, and their doings may be shown by their minutes and the original papers, or certified copies"); 1825, *Com. v. Bolkom*, 3 Pick. Mass. 281, 282 (a Court of Sessions licensing innholders does not act judicially; its minutes are therefore admissible); 1836, *Davidson v. Slocomb*, 18 Pick. Mass. 464, 466 ("the minutes of the justice [of the peace] are not technically a record; but they contain all the material parts which the record would comprise if it were made up at large and in the usual form"; here used because the justice had died before extending them); 1897, *State v. Rice*, 49 S. C. 418, 27 S. E. 452 (conviction of a crime; the trial justice's book admitted as the record).



sense,<sup>10</sup> yet the practical features of a record are usually attributed to these books, so as to exclude proof of oral transactions.<sup>11</sup>

(c) What are *the transactions* which in legal theory *form part of the record*? Obviously many things are said and done, and many documents used, not only out of court but in court, which do not in strictness form a part of the proceedings in the controversy, and hence do not need to appear in the record, — hence may be established without regard to the contents of the record. This involves the whole theory of trials and appeals. It is enough to note that the application of the present principle is dependent on that theory;<sup>12</sup> for example, whether the date of a writ or declaration is disputable depends on the theory of terms of court and times of filing of pleadings,<sup>13</sup> and further to note that so far as the purpose is not to rely on the judicial proceeding and therefore on the record, but to prove the parties' conduct in other aspects, the record is not involved and therefore does not control.<sup>14</sup>

It remains to distinguish some other principles often invoked in the proof of records, — genuinely principles of Evidence. (1) The doctrine about *producing the original* of a document, or accounting for its absence, permits copies to be used when the original is not obtainable; the application of this to the production of the original judicial record is elsewhere dealt with (*ante*,

<sup>10</sup> 1824, *Dyson v. Wood*, 3 B. & C. 449 (for a court not of record, the judgment must be pleaded or denied as a fact, and not the memorandum or docket that may have been kept; while for a court of record, though the record itself is pleaded or denied, it merely "imports," or not, a judgment).

<sup>11</sup> *Eng.* 1772, *Fisher v. Lane*, 2 W. Bl. 834 (minute-book of the Mayor's Court of London; in proving its judgment on foreign attachment, in defence to an action, the omission in the minutes of a record of summons, etc., held fatal, and *semble* not to be supplied by parol); *U. S.* 1833, *Boomer v. Lane*, 10 Wend. N. Y. 525 (parol evidence of a justice's judgment, not admissible).

<sup>12</sup> The following rulings will show the scope of the inquiry: *Georgia*: 1878, *Williams v. Goodell*, 60 Ga. 482 (that a notice had not been served; the opponent's testimony excluded, the record of proceedings being the proper source); 1897, *Pritchett v. Davis*, 101 Ga. 236, 28 S. E. 666 ("homestead papers," not the record in the Court, are the original, in proving the setting-apart); *Illinois*: 1915, *People ex rel. Bear v. Burt*, 267 Ill. 640, 108 N. E. 708 (former recovery pleaded in bar; the scope of the judgment may be shown by testimony as to the evidence adduced; here, a drainage assessment); *Maine*: 1831, *Frost v. Shapleigh*, 7 Greenl. 236 (writ of attachment never returned and thus not matter of record; the attachment proved orally); *Maryland*: 1824, *Craufurd v. State*, 6 H. & J. 231, 234 (a bond filed in the Orphan's Court; non-delivery allowed to be shown); *Michigan*:

1893, *Munro v. Meech*, 94 Mich. 596, 54 N. W. 290 (that the former suit was not tried on its merits, admitted); *New Hampshire*: 1825, *Judge of Probate v. Briggs*, 3 N. H. 309 (Probate Court; record held conclusive as to the filing of a claim); 1850, *Brackett v. Hoitt*, 20 N. H. 257, 260 (the case made by the presiding judge for determination on appeal is a part of the record); *New York*: 1826, *Wolfe v. Washburn*, 6 Cow. 261, 265 (minutes of a justice as to a claim of set-off, held no part of the records and therefore contradictable); *Washington*: 1911, *Seattle v. Northern Pacific R. Co.*, 63 Wash. 167, 114 Pac. 1041 (whether a liability was covered in a former judgment; the trial Court's instructions excluded).

<sup>13</sup> *Eng.* 1761, *Morris v. Pugh*, 3 Burr. 1242 (whether a writ in trover was dated before the demand and refusal; the nisi prius record spoke of it as "of Easter term"; held, that the presumption that it was filed on the first day of the term could be rebutted by the writ itself); 1826, *Granger v. George*, 5 B. & C. 149 (the declaration's statement of the time of action begun is disputable); 1828, *Lester v. Jenkins*, 8 B. & C. 339 (so also for a writ); *U. S.* 1826, *Johnston v. Darrah*, 8 N. J. L. 282, 285 (the time of recording an execution may be shown).

<sup>14</sup> 1905, *Baker Co. v. Huntington*, 46 Or. 275, 79 Pac. 187 (acceptance of a sheriff's bond may be shown orally, if no court record exists); 1832, *Loury v. Cady*, 4 Vt. 504, 505 (the fact of attachment may be proved, between sheriff and receipters, by the receipt; the attachment-writ itself not required).



§§ 1215-1217). (2) The copy thus used must be verified by a witness; but the hearsay verification of the official custodian, in the shape of a *certified copy*, may be used, under an exception to the Hearsay rule, without calling the officer to the stand in person (*ante*, §§ 1677-1681). (3) The doctrine of the completeness requires in many cases that the *whole of a document* be produced (*ante*, § 2110). (4) The rules of authentication often have a special application in the proof of *genuineness* of a judicial record (*ante*, §§ 2158-2164). (5) The conclusiveness or admissibility of a *sheriff's return* involves sometimes the present principle and sometimes certain distinct ones (*ante*, §§ 1347, 1664).

§ 2451. **Same: (2) Corporate Acts and Records; (3) Negotiable Instruments.** (2) Whether the *acts* of a *corporation* must at common law be integrated in a written record is a question which has given rise to a great variety of opinions and of practice,<sup>1</sup> though the modern tendency is to apply no different rule to corporate than to natural persons.<sup>2</sup> Whether the *proceedings* of a corporate meeting are subject to the same rule is a distinct question, and the analogy of judicial records here makes for preserving the same compulsory rule;<sup>3</sup> but again the modern tendency is to leave the transaction without legal restriction.<sup>4</sup> Where such a record is made, the

§ 2451. <sup>1</sup> 1827, *Bank v. Dandridge*, 12 Wheat. 64, 67, 69 (Story, J.: "In ancient times it was held that corporations aggregate could do nothing but by deed under their common seal; but . . . the rule has been broken in upon in a vast variety of cases, in modern times, and cannot now as a general proposition be supported; . . . we do not admit as a general proposition that the acts of a corporation, although in all other respects rightly transacted, are invalid merely from the omission to have them reduced to writing, unless the statute creating it makes such writing indispensable as evidence or to give them an obligatory force"; Marshall, C. J., dissents at 91).

<sup>2</sup> Cases cited in Cook, *Corporations*, 1898, 4th ed., §§ 721, 725.

<sup>3</sup> *Mass.* 1824, *Taylor v. Henry*, 2 Pick. 397, 401 (an unrecorded adjournment, not provable orally; "if a fact of this kind can be proved by parol evidence, it is difficult to see why the election of officers may not be proved in the same manner; this goes to the foundation of our system of civil society"); 1827, *Manning v. Fifth Parish*, 6 Mass. 6, 16 (agreement as to church property; a vote of a parish corporation, not provable in parol); *Nebr.* 1914, *Yonda v. Royal Neighbors*, 96 Nebr. 730, 148 N. W. 926 (corporate by-laws; the original record required; here, the custodian's verification of a printed copy was held insufficient); *R. I.* 1896, *Dennis v. Mfg. Co.*, 19 R. I. 666, 36 Atl. 129 (parol proceedings not admissible; but an exception to the rule is conceded); *Wis.* 1904, *Chippewa Bridge Co. v. Durand*, 122 Wis. 85, 99 N. W. 603 (city council).

For a learned opinion to the contrary, see that of Story, J., in *Bank v. Dandridge*, *supra*, 12 Wheat. 64, 82; Marshall, C. J., dissents at 113.

<sup>4</sup> *England*: 196, *Re Fireproof Doors Co., Umney v. Co.*, 2 Ch. 147 (Astbury, J.: "An unrecorded resolution may be proved aliunde"); *United States: Cal.* 1896, *Boggs v. Ass'n*, 111 Cal. 354, 43 Pac. 1106 (if no record is kept, the parol proceedings suffice); 1919, *Lawrence v. Premier Ind. Ass. Co.*, 180 Cal. 688, 182 Pac. 431 (minutes of a directors' meeting, held not exclusive evidence of proceedings); *Colo.* 1905, *Denver v. Spencer*, 34 Colo. 270, 82 Pac. 590 (park commission; authorities collected in an opinion by Campbell, J.); *Ill.* 1910, *Alton Mfg. Co. v. Garrett Biblical Institute*, 243 Ill. 298, 90 N. E. 704 (board of trustees); *Ia.* 1897, *Zalesky v. Ins. Co.*, 102 Ia. 512, 70 N. W. 187, 71 N. W. 433 (similar); *Minn.* 1917, *State ex rel. Gall v. Barnes*, 136 Minn. 413, 162 N. W. 513 (fraternal society); 1918, *Daggett v. St. Paul T. D. Co.*, 141 Minn. 51, 169 N. W. 252 (meeting of board of directors); *Nebr.* 1901, *Green v. Lancaster Co.*, 61 Nebr. 473, 85 N. W. 439 (county board's administrative acts — here, an accord and satisfaction of a claim — need not be by written record); 1920, *Smith v. Johnson*, 105 Nebr. 61, 178 N. W. 835 (though a statute require a school board to record its proceedings, the proceedings may be valid by parol, and may be so evidenced); *N. H.* 1892, *Winnebepesaukee C. M. Ass. v. Gordon*, 67 N. H. 98, 29 Atl. 412 (religious camp-meeting; acts provable by parol, no charter, rule, or vote to record them being shown); *N. J.*



principle of voluntary integration (*ante*, § 2430) may of course be applied, and the record made to control.<sup>5</sup>

It may be added that for corporate records analogous subordinate questions arise as for judicial records, — for example, concerning the particular book or paper which constitutes the record,<sup>6</sup> and the correction of records 'nunc pro tunc' by special proceeding.<sup>7</sup>

(3) A *negotiable instrument* is by common-law custom required to be integrated into a single document. The only feature in which this appears to have been left doubtful at common law was the acceptance, which (even though distinguished from a promise to accept) was by some thought to be effective though not contained in the bill; but this anomaly was cured by statute.<sup>8</sup> The peculiarity of the general rule in its application to negotiable instruments is that it not only requires the essential features of the negotiable obligation to be included, but also requires the exclusion of other terms of the transaction. Hence the peculiar aspect of the rule of voluntary integration when applied to the remaining parts of the transaction, as already examined (*ante*, §§ 2443-2445). Whether, as a matter of theory, those consequences should be deemed to belong under the present head, as due to the element of compulsory integration, may be open to argument.

§ 2452. **Under Statutes:** (1) **Wills;** (2) **Ballots;** (3) **Insurance Policies.** (1) By the statute of Henry VIII (*post*, § 2454), a *will* of land was required to be in writing, and by the statute of frauds of Charles II a will of personalty was practically (through the restrictions of section 19 on nuncupative

1910, *Cook v. Manasquan*, 80 N. J. L. 206, 76 Atl. 310; N. M. 1918, *Rueb v. Rehder*, 24 N. M. 534, 174 Pac. 992 (expulsion from a labor union; minutes held not conclusive); N. Y. St. 1909, c. 65, p. 22, Feb. 17, C. P. A. 1920, § 378 (recital in a record of a meeting, etc., that the meeting was notified, held, or adjourned, to be evidence); *Okl.* 1917, *Rogers v. Bass & Harbour Co.*, 64 Okl. 321, 168 Pac. 212 (minutes of an excise board); *P. R.* 1920, *Gandia v. Porto Rico Fert. Co.*, 28 P. R. 516, 519 (ownership of stock); *Wash.* 1904, *Gove v. Tacoma*, 34 Wash. 434, 76 Pac. 73 (county board); and cases cited in *Cook, Corporations*, § 714.

<sup>5</sup> *Conn.* 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 Conn. 123, 37 Atl. 80 (destruction of trees having a contagious disease; to show that certain alleged regulations of the State Board of Agriculture had not been adopted, evidence that the record of their adoption had been subsequently interlined was rejected); *Ida.* 1909, *Just v. Idaho C. & I. Co.*, 16 Ida. 639, 102 Pac. 381 (not conclusive against minority stockholders); *La.* 1905, *State v. Farrier*, 114 La. 579, 38 So. 460 (lodge of Masons); *Mich.* 1909, *Derosia v. Loree*, 158 Mich. 64, 122 N. W. 357 (municipal corporation records); 1920, *North Star T. v. Cowdry*, 212 Mich. 7, 179 N. W. 259 (township board records cannot be contra-

dicted, but omissions may be supplied); *Or.* 1905, *Norwich Ins. Co. v. Oregon R. Co.*, 46 Or. 123, 78 Pac. 1025 (master mechanics' association); *Pa.* 1894, *Roland v. District*, 161 Pa. 102, 106, 28 Atl. 995, 1007 (school-directors; the record must be used, if there is one).

*Contra*: 1906, *Rose v. Indept. C. Kadisho*, 215 Pa. 69, 64 Atl. 401.

For the *admissibility* of such records in general, see *ante*, §§ 1074, 1661.

<sup>6</sup> 1876, *Fraser v. Charleston*, 8 S. C. 318, 337 (transfer-book of a corporation is secondary to the share-certificate, in showing the fact of a transfer); 1869, *Iowa & M. R. Co. v. Perkins*, 28 Ia. 281, 283 (corporation subscription-book, not the memoranda containing the actual signatures, treated as the original contract, the officer being the agent to prepare it).

<sup>7</sup> 1920, *Robbins v. Herrin*, — Ill. —, 127 N. E. 353 (city council's journal); 1897, *Everett v. Deal*, 148 Ind. 90, 47 N. E. 219 (town board's records).

<sup>8</sup> Cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 168, 186, notes; 1704, St. 3 & 4 Anne, c. 9, §§ 4, 5; 1821, St. 1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 78, § 2; 1878, St. 41 & 42 Viet. c. 13, § 1; *Crawford, Negotiable Instruments Law*, §§ 226-233; 1875, *Seudder v. Union Nat'l Bank*, 91 U. S. 406, 410.



wills) required also to be in writing. But under neither of these provisions was any integration required, *i. e.* any reduction of the testamentary acts into a single document. Hence, wills of land, from 1540 to 1678, and wills of personalty, down to 1837 in England, might be contained in several writings, more or less fragmentary and inconsistent, and yet valid as written testamentary utterances taking effect as a single will upon the testator's death. In the practice of the ecclesiastical Courts up to the last moment of this régime might be found frequent instances of the lack of any rule of integration.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was the change effected by any express legislative statement. But the formality of attestation, indirectly but practically, produced an equivalent result. By the statute of frauds (in 1678) wills of land, and by the statute of wills (in 1837) all kinds of wills, were required to be executed with the formality of attestation. This formality ousted the earlier loose practices, and in effect compelled testators to place all their testamentary provisions in a *single document*:

1866, WILDE, P. J., in *Guardhouse v. Blackburn*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 109: "The Wills Act [of 1837, requiring signature and attestation] has worked a great change in the testamentary law, as administered by the ecclesiastical Courts on this head. Under that [prior] law, a testamentary paper needed not to have been signed, provided it was in the testator's writing; and all papers of a testamentary purport, if in his writing, commanded the equal attention of the Court, save so far as one, from its date or form, might be manifestly intended to supersede or revoke another, as a will superseding instructions, or a subsequent will revoking a former."<sup>2</sup>

Under this requirement, to be sure, the document containing testamentary act need not be a *physically single* and undivided paper; but the physically separate pieces must at least form a single grammatical or literary structure.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it remains true in theory that no statute compels the

§ 2452. <sup>1</sup> 1783, *Blackwood v. Damer*, 3 Phillim. Eccl. 458, note; 1830, *Taylor v. D'Egville*, 3 Hagg. Eccl. 202; 1830, *Bragge v. Dyer*, 3 Hagg. Eccl. 207; 1830, *King's Proctor v. Daines*, 3 Hagg. Eccl. 218, 231 (showing the looseness of practice then obtaining in the ecclesiastical Court).

<sup>2</sup> So also in this country: 1895, *Barnewall v. Murrell*, 108 Ala. 366, 18 So. 831 (under modern statutes, "the true inquiry is not as to the completeness of the paper, but as to the finality of the intent and purpose of the testatrix, manifested by the observance of the formalities of execution required by the statute").

<sup>3</sup> ENGLAND: 1801, *Smart v. Prujean*, 6 Ves. Jr. 560, 565 (L. C. Eldon: "The rule of law is that an instrument properly attested, in order to incorporate another instrument not attested, must describe it so as to be a manifestation of what the paper is which is meant to be incorporated, in such a way that the Court can be under no mistake. . . . The true

question is, if these papers were found in the bureau with the will, can I say, from the contents of the will, these two papers are the papers referred to?"); 1830, *Dillon v. Harris*, 4 Bligh. n. s. 321, 358 (will devising property to a son so long as he keeps a certain "solemn engagement, . . . which engagement signed by him I have put into the hands of my said trustees"; a certain engagement not admitted, because not sufficiently identified); 1858, *Allen v. Maddock*, 11 Moore P. C. 427; 1881, *Gould v. Lakes*, L. R. 6 P. D. 1; 1894, *Garnett's Goods*, Prob. 90; *Lewis v. Lewis*, [1907] Prob. 1; *University College of North Wales v. Taylor*, [1908] Prob. 140.

IRELAND: 1896, *White's Goods*, L. R. 1 Ire. 269 (words added below the signature); 1905, *O'Carroll v. Hastings*, L. R. 2 Ire. 612.

UNITED STATES: *Ala.* 1895, *Barnewall v. Murrell*, 108 Ala. 366, 18 So. 831 ("The validity of the instrument as a will is unaffected because of the fact that it is composed of or written on several separate sheets, if they are



testator to integrate in a single document; if the formality of attestation is observed, he may have any number of documents. — The only aspect in which the theory can have any practical consequence is in the difference between a will and a codicil. In effect, a codicil is a document, separate perhaps in existence and time, which is made appurtenant to a will, and goes to modify it and to make up with it one entire testamentary act. A will, on the other hand, is an independent document complete in itself, superseding and integrating all other testamentary acts.<sup>4</sup> Hence, for example, a document which is strictly a will must be held to revoke by implication all parts of a prior will, though a codicil would revoke only such parts as were inconsistent with it. Possibly, however, this aspect of the distinction may better be explained by denominating each codicil a separate testamentary act, altering or novating the prior act, — as contracts are novated (*ante*, § 2441), and this would leave it practically true in every aspect that the formality of attestation has in effect compelled the integration of testamentary acts.

(2) By statute an electoral *ballot* is now almost universally required to be integrated into a single document; although even under the system of the common law there was seldom any opportunity of casting a written vote in any other way.<sup>5</sup>

(3) By statute in several jurisdictions all parts of a transaction of *insurance* must be embodied in a single document;<sup>6</sup> and the construction of this

connected and coherent in sense and by an adaptation of the several parts"); *Colo.* 1906, *Whitney v. Hanington*, 36 *Colo.* 407, 85 *Pac.* 84; *Conn.* 1904, *Bryan's Appeal*, 77 *Conn.* 240, 58 *Atl.* 748 (doctrine of "incorporation by reference" applied); 1907, *Hatheway v. Smith*, 79 *Conn.* 506, 65 *Atl.* 1058 (able opinion by Hamersley, J.; dealing with the distinction between a separate unattested and therefore void document incorporated by reference and a separate document aiding to interpret a description); *Ill.* 1907, *Palmer v. Owen*, 229 *Ill.* 115, 82 *N. E.* 275; *Ia.* 1907, *Schillinger v. Bawek*, 135 *Ia.* 131, 112 *N. W.* 210; *Kan.* 1916, *Shulsky v. Shulsky*, 98 *Kan.* 69, 157 *Pac.* 407 (incorporation by reference); *La.* 1909, *Drysdale's Succession*, 124 *La.* 256, 50 *So.* 30; *Mich.* 1909, *Bresler's Estate*, 155 *Mich.* 567, 119 *N. W.* 1104 (doctrine of incorporation by reference, applied); *Mo.* 1922, *White v. Reading*, — *Mo.* —, 239 *S. W.* 90 (deeds referred to in a will); *N. Y.* 1918, *Reynolds v. Reynolds*, 224 *N. Y.* 429, 121 *N. E.* 61 (bequest in trust to dispose "as I have advised and directed him to do"); *N. C.* 1913, *Watson v. Hinson*, 162 *N. C.* 72, 77 *S. E.* 1089; *Pa.* 1919, *Seiter's Estate*, 265 *Pa.* 202, 108 *Atl.* 614 (principle applied).

Compare *Burge v. Hamilton*, 1884, 72 *Ga.* 568, 619. See: *Raleigh C. Minor*, "Testamentary Incorporation by Reference" (*Virginia L. Rev.*, III, 583).

<sup>4</sup> 1799, *Arden, M. R.*, in *Crosbie v. Macdonal*,

4 *Ves. Jr.* 10 ("There is a great distinction between wills and codicils in this respect. If there are two separate papers, both called wills, inconsistent with each other, it is not the rule to prove both, in the Ecclesiastical Court; the last is the will; from the nature of the instrument it revokes the other. . . . But if it does purport to be coupled with another instrument, it is as much a part of that instrument as if it was written upon the same paper").

<sup>5</sup> Compare §§ 1240, 1967, 2421, *ante*.

<sup>6</sup> *Fed.* 1902, *Albro v. Ins. Co.*, *C. C.*, 119 *Fed.* 629 (*Considine v. Ins. Co.*, *Mass.*, followed); 1904, *Manhattan L. Ins. Co. v. Albro*, 127 *Fed.* 281, 62 *C. C. A.* 213 (*Massachusetts statute construed*); *Ill.* 1922, *Keller v. North American Life Ins. Co.*, 301 *Ill.* 198, 133 *N. E.* 726 (*St.* 1907, p. 367, § 1, requiring the policy to constitute the entire contract, applied); *Ky.* 1904, *Hunziker v. Supreme Lodge*, 117 *Ky.* 418, 78 *S. W.* 201; 1910, *Southern States M. L. Ins. Co. v. Herlihy*, 138 *Ky.* 359, 128 *S. W.* 91; 1921, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Long*, 193 *Ky.* 19, 234 *S. W.* 735 (statute of Wyoming, held not to require attachment of application to policy as required by *Ky. Stats.* §§ 656, 679); *Mass. St.* 1894, c. 522, § 73, *Gen. L.* 1920, c. 175, § 131 (every insurance policy must have the application attached thereto, "otherwise the application shall not be considered a part of the policy or received in evidence"); 1896, *Considine v. Ins. Co.*, 165 *Mass.* 462, 43 *N. E.* 201 (both the



type of statute illustrates neatly the distinction between the doctrine of Integration (*ante*, § 2425) and that of Written Formality (*post*, § 2454); because even written parts of the transaction not embodied in the policy will by this rule be ignored. It is also to be noted that these statutes go further than any other application of the rule, in that they require a physical, and not merely (as for wills) a grammatical or literary integration.

(4) Similar requirements have been made by statute occasionally for *sundry transactions*, requiring all terms to be contained in a physically single instrument.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2453. **Conclusive Certificates, distinguished.** The principle of Integration, by which the document becomes the very embodiment of the transaction, must be distinguished from the principle of Conclusive Testimony (*ante*, §§ 1345-1353), by which a particular person's written report is taken as conclusive and no contrary testimony is allowed to overthrow it. The common result of both principles, though by different reasonings, is that the terms of the writing are decisive. But the practical difference between the two principles appears when the writing itself is lost and cannot be produced; for here, by the former principle, the terms of the writing must nevertheless be proved (*ante*, § 2450) because it is the sole embodiment of the transaction; while by the latter principle the conclusive testimony is merely preferred to others, and therefore when it becomes unavailable the preference ceases, and other testimony may be used (*ante*, § 1346).

There are but few genuine instances, of the principle of conclusive testimony, and these not universally conceded; the chief of these are a *magistrate's report of testimony* at a preliminary examination (*ante*, § 1349), the *enrolled copy of a legislative act* (*ante*, § 1350), and the *election-judges' certificate of votes* (*ante*, § 1351). There are a few other instances (*ante*, § 1352) in

unattached application and the insured's oral utterances, excluded); 1906, *Holden v. Prudential L. Ins. Co.*, 191 Mass. 153, 77 N. E. 309 (where the policy does not refer to the application, the latter may be used to show fraudulent misrepresentations; this seems unsound); 1906, *Paquette v. Prudential Ins. Co.*, 193 Mass. 215, 79 N. E. 250; 1907, *Langdeau v. John Hancock M. L. Ins. Co.*, 194 Mass. 56, 80 N. E. 452; *Miss. Code* 1906, § 2675, Hem. § 5141; 1918, *Sovereign Camp v. Farmer*, 116 Miss. 626, 77 So. 655 (Code 1906, § 2675, held to create "not a rule of evidence, but a rule of substantive law"); *Mo.* 1915, *Schuler v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.*, 191 Mo. App. 52, 176 S. W. 274 (under Rev. St. 1909, § 6978, "the failure [of the insurer] to attach the application or its substance to the policy . . . bars the defendant [insurer] from using it against plaintiff" to show false representations as to health); *N. Y.* 1916, *Archer v. Equitable Life Ass. Soc.*, 218 N. Y. 18, 112 N. E. 433 (under Consol. L. c. 28, Insurance, § 58, alleged false representations made knowingly by the insured, and

not contained in the policy, cannot be considered; *Collin, J.*: "It is clear that the Legislature enacted by the section that the policy, that is, the paper or document, should contain physically the entire contract"); *Penn. St.* 1881, May 11; 1905, *Custer v. Fidelity M. A. Ass'n*, 211 Pa. 257, 60 Atl. 776 (citing prior cases); *Tex. Rev. St.* 1911, § 4951; 1921, *Southwestern Surety Ins. Co. v. Hico Oil Mill*, — *Tex.* —, 229 S. W. 479 (under Rev. St. 1911, § 4951, requiring every policy of insurance to be "accompanied by a written, photographic, or printed copy of the application for such insurance policy or contract, as well as a copy of all questions asked and answers given thereto," the insured's answers contained in an application not so accompanying the policy cannot be used to prove a defence of false representations, even though the statute does not expressly so provide).

<sup>7</sup> 1917, *Columbus Merchandise Co. v. Kline*, D. C. S. D. Oh., 248 Fed. 296 (applying Ohio Gen. C. § 8568, concerning sales of personal property; cases collected).



which the principle is involved in appearance only; for example, the conclusiveness (in some jurisdictions) of a notary's certificate of a *married woman's voluntary acknowledgment* of a deed at a privy examination is in reality an instance of the binding effect of a judicial proceeding, and depends upon the law of judgments. In all the foregoing cases, the difference between the rule of conclusiveness of testimony and the rule of judicial records is seen in this feature, that the judicial record represents and is in legal theory the transaction itself of the Court, while in the former instances the certificate is the officer's report of somebody else's doing or of some external happening. Obviously, in such instances the theory of integration cannot apply, because the writing of the officer cannot be the embodiment of the act of some other person, but can only be testimony about it. In the case of a deposition, on the other hand (*ante*, § 802), the written deposition signed by the deponent is the embodiment of his testimony, while the caption-certificate is the officer's report of what happened in his presence.<sup>1</sup>

Further to be distinguished are statutory rules of substantive law which, in the guise of rules of conclusive evidence, practically declare certain facts legally immaterial, — for example, the rule that a tax-officer's recitals, in his deed, of the due performance of certain prior proceedings shall be conclusive evidence of these facts (*ante*, § 1353). Such a rule, so far as constitutionally valid, is no rule of Evidence, but merely a rule declaring certain facts legally immaterial to avoid or produce a certain result.

### C. SOLEMNIZATION OF JURAL ACTS

§ 2454. **Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.** When it is required that a transaction, to have jural effect, must be in writing, the requirement is one of *form* or solemnity. The principle of Solemnization differs from the two preceding ones in that it does not inquire whether the act was done at all, nor whether it was embodied in a single utterance, but merely whether its form of utterance was sufficient. Stamp, Seal, Attestation, Writing, — all these are different varieties of formality; but the fundamental and most common one, in all modern systems of law, is Writing.

1. That the rule of Written Formality is independent of the rule of Integration, just examined, is plain. For example, a will of land, during the century after it was first required to be in writing (*ante*, § 2452), was in all that time not required to be in a single document. So, too, of insurance applications under modern statutes (*ante*, § 2452). On the other hand, when the parties have reduced their transaction to a single writing, the rule of Integration applies (*ante*, § 2425), although the transaction might have been valid without any writing. Whenever, then, the question is whether a transaction, to be valid, must be in writing, not merely oral, it is a question of Written Formality. This question is presented when the parties have used no writing, and is a distinct one from that which arises after the trans-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Mr. Gulson's analysis, in his treatise cited *ante*, § 1349.



action has been done in writing, *i. e.* from the question of "varying the writing" already dealt with.

What transactions, then, are *required by law to be done in writing*, as a condition of jural validity?

2. At common law, none, it would seem. The historical surroundings of the common law in its origins were unfavorable to such a requirement (*ante*, § 2426). Even for dealings with land, livery of seisin persisted for centuries as a sufficient formality; and only where livery was impossible, namely, for incorporeal rights, was the requirement of a written deed of grant developed, and even here some sort of symbolic seisin, in the way of attornment or view or the like, was needed to complete the title.<sup>1</sup> Judicial records, another example of the modern necessity of writing, began as the mere recollection of the judge (*ante*, § 2426); and negotiable instruments, the one full and indubitable instance of compulsory writing, were a distinct borrowing from international mercantile custom. In modern times, numerous local statutes have insisted on the formality of writing for specific miscellaneous transactions.<sup>2</sup> Yet it may be said that, in general, apart from statutes, and apart from one special doctrine (*post*, § 2455), no jural act was required to be in writing.<sup>3</sup>

Even among statutes, there are few of wide scope. These date back to the innovating provisions of the 1500s, by which bargains and sales,<sup>4</sup> as well as wills,<sup>5</sup> of land must be in writing. The next and greatest measure of this kind was the *statute of frauds and perjuries*, in 1678, which extended the formality of writing to the remaining most important transactions in land

§ 2454. <sup>1</sup> Pollock and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, II, 82, 93, 139.

The development of a rule requiring writing, as contrasted with oral testimony, was going on during this same period on the Continent also, where Roman law traditions were equally lacking in such a requirement and the maxim ran "*témoins passent lettres*." A history of the measure which corresponds in France to the Statute of Frauds and Perjuries, viz. the Ordinance of Moulins, Feb. 1566, will be found in the following places: Brissaud, *History of French Private Law*, § 378 (tr. Howell, 1912, *Continental Legal History Series*, vol. III); H. Capitant, *Étude critique des restrictions apportées par Art. 1341 . . . à la recevabilité de la preuve testimoniale* (*Bulletin de la Société des Études Législatives*, 14th yr., 1918, p. 190).

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* The following will serve as examples: 1800, *White v. Wilson*, 2 B. & P. 116, 119 (the statute requiring agreements for wages of crews to be in writing, and the articles in this case having noted the wages of the mate at 6*l.* a month, a further oral agreement that the mate should have the average price of a negro slave sold on the ship's account was excluded, because the statute required writing); 1814, St. 54 Geo. III, c. 144, §§ 3-5 (contracts of

marine insurance to be in writing); *U. S.* 1851, *Greeley v. Quimby*, 22 N. H. 335, 338 ("As the law required that the return of the selectmen laying out the road should be in writing, no other proof can be substituted for it, so long as it is in existence and within the power of the party to produce"); 1826, *Fox v. Lambson*, 8 N. J. L. 275, 276 (manumission being required to be done in writing, etc., other evidence of manumission was excluded).

<sup>3</sup> 1900, *Johnson v. Griswold*, 177 Mass. 34, 58 N. E. 157 (where no statute controls, an official resignation may be oral); and cases cited *ante*, § 2427. The case of corporate records (*ante*, § 2451) was perhaps an exception.

<sup>4</sup> 1535, St. 27 H. VIII, c. 16 ("no manors, lands, tenements, or other hereditaments, shall pass, alter, or change from one to another, . . . by reason only of any bargain and sale thereof, except the same bargain and sale be made by writing indented, sealed, and inrolled in one of the king's courts of record . . .").

<sup>5</sup> 1540, St. 32 H. VIII, c. 1, § 1 (gives liberty to devise all lands "as well by his last will and testament in writing, or otherwise by any act or acts lawfully executed in his life"); 1603, *Molineux v. Molineux*, Cro. Jac. 144 ("a will cannot refer to words only, without writing; but it ought to be a will in writing for all").



and to many classes of contracts and of dealings with personalty.<sup>6</sup> This is not the place to follow out in detail the requirements of this statute and those which have adopted its provisions in the United States. But it is necessary here to examine its provisions so far as they bear on the theory of the parol evidence rule, and to discriminate its relation to the principles already considered.

3. The provisions of the statute fall into two classes, — those of Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, and those of Sections 4 and 17.

(a) The terms of the first group of these sections are significant; they deal plainly with the *formality* of the act. It must be "put in writing," and otherwise it "shall be utterly void." Such a transaction, then, if not in writing, is of no jural effect. The writing is constitutive, not merely evidential. But if it is put in writing, according to the statute, is the writing the exclusive memorial of the transaction, — in other words, is there compulsory integration, under the principle already considered (*ante*, §§ 2450-2452)? Not necessarily, — that is, not in consequence of the statute. The requirement of signature, in all those five sections, will tend to induce parties to reduce their transaction in its entirety into a single document, but this is only an indirect consequence of the statute, — as already noticed in the

<sup>6</sup> 1678, St. 29 Car. II, c. 3, § 1 ("all leases, estates, interests of freehold, or terms of years, or any uncertain interest of, in, to, or out of any messuages, manors, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, made or created by livery and seisin only, or by parol, and not put in writing and signed by the parties so making or creating the same, or their agents thereunto lawfully authorized by writing, shall have the force and effect of leases or estates at will only, and shall not either in law or equity be deemed or taken to have any other or greater force or effect . . ."); § 3 ("no leases, estates, or interests . . . [in land] shall . . . be assigned, granted, or surrendered, unless it be by deed or note in writing, signed by the party so assigning . . ."); § 4 ("no action shall be brought whereby to charge any executor or administrator upon any special promise to answer damages out of his own estate, or whereby to charge the defendant upon any special promise to answer for the debt, default, or miscarriages of another person, or to charge any person upon any agreement made upon consideration of marriage, or upon any contract of sale of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or any interest in or concerning them, or upon any agreement that is not to be performed within the space of one year from the making thereof, unless the agreement upon which such action shall be brought, or some memorandum or note thereof, shall be in writing, and signed by the party to be charged therewith, or some other person thereunto by him lawfully authorized"); § 5 ("all devises and bequests of any lands or tenements . . . shall be in writing, and signed by the party so devising the same, or by some other person in

his presence and by his express directions, and shall be attested and subscribed in the presence of the said devisor by three or four credible witnesses, or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect"); § 7 ("all declarations or creations of trusts or confidences of any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, shall be manifested and proved by some writing signed by the party . . . , or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect"); § 9 ("all grants and assignments of any trust or confidence shall likewise be in writing signed by the party granting or assigning . . . or else shall likewise be utterly void and of none effect"); § 17 ("no contract for the sale of any goods . . . shall be allowed to be good, except the buyer shall accept part of the goods so sold, and actually receive the same, or give something in earnest to bind the bargain, or in part of payment, or that some note or memorandum in writing of the said bargain be made and signed by the parties to be charged by such contract, or their agents thereunto lawfully authorized"); § 19 ("no nuncupative will shall be good . . . that is not proved by the oaths of three witnesses (at the least) that were present at the making thereof, nor unless it be proved that the testator at the time of pronouncing the same did bid the persons present, or some of them, bear witness that such was his will, or to that effect"); § 20 ("after six months passed from the speaking of the pretended testamentary words, no testimony shall be received to prove any will nuncupative, except the said testimony, or the substance thereof, were committed to writing within six days after the making of the said will").



case of wills (*ante*, § 2452). The embodiment in a single writing is voluntary, not compulsory. For example, if the owner of a farm by a single negotiation makes leases and crop-contracts of various parts of it,<sup>7</sup> the statute would be apparently satisfied by a series of signed letters between the parties.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, if the transaction covered matters both within and without the statute, such as a lease of land and a sale of tools, and the former was embodied in a single writing, there is nothing in the statute to render the latter part of the transaction invalid; and if a Court should refuse to give effect to the oral part, it would be solely because of the principle of voluntary integration, leading the Court to believe that by the intent of the parties the document was the sole memorial of the entire transaction.<sup>9</sup> Thus, so far as the Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, of the statute are concerned, the question whether the transaction satisfies the statute by being "in writing" is essentially distinct from the further question whether by the other rule (of integration) the transaction has been so embodied in a single document as to exclude other writings or oral utterances which passed in the course of the negotiations.

(b) The terms of the second group — Sections 4 and 17 — differ radically in theory of Formality, but their relation to the principle of Integration is the same.

They differ, in theory of *formality*, from Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, because they require only a "note or memorandum in writing" of the "agreement" or "bargain." In other words, the writing is *not* the contract, but is distinct from it and is merely the party's admission that such a contract was made. This difference is plain, and is generally conceded,<sup>10</sup> and shows its practical results in various ways. For example, the written admission may be made subsequently to the contract;<sup>11</sup> it may even in terms attempt to repudiate the contract;<sup>12</sup> it may be a letter to a third person.<sup>13</sup> Practically, to be sure, the effect is the same, so far as the necessity of a writing is concerned; for it must mention and cover all the essential terms, if not all the terms whatever, of that part of the transaction covered by the statutory requirement;<sup>14</sup> and these terms so written, of course, cannot be overthrown or varied by other

<sup>7</sup> The case of a transfer of freehold estates would be different, because a sealed deed is there required: Browne, *Statute of Frauds*, 5th ed., § 6.

<sup>8</sup> This point does not appear to have been decided, so far as the citations in Browne, *ubi supra*, show.

<sup>9</sup> A good example of this is seen in *Bretto v. Levine*, 50 Minn. 168, 52 N. W. 525 (1892), cited *ante*, § 2430. Compare also *Lowrey v. Downey*, Ind., *Brockett v. Bartholomew*, Carr v. Dooley, *Durkin v. Cobleigh*, Mass., *Harman v. Harman*, U. S., *Long v. Perine*, W. Va., cited *ante*, § 2442.

<sup>10</sup> *Eng. Browne, ubi supra*, §§ 115a, 135, 136, 344; 1852, *Leroux v. Brown*, 12 C. B. 801, 824 (oral contract made in France, and there

valid, not enforced in England, since the 4th section did not make contracts void, but only affected the remedy by requiring a specific kind of evidence); 1883, *Maddison v. Alderson*, L. R. 8 App. Cas. 467, 474; 1902, *Vaughan Williams, L. J.*, in *Re Holland*, 2 Ch. 360, 375 ("The statute of frauds does not deal with the validity of the agreement; it deals only with the evidence to prove the agreement"); U. S. 1875, *Townsend v. Hargreaves*, 118 Mass. 325, 334.

<sup>11</sup> Browne, *ubi supra*, § 352a.

<sup>12</sup> Browne, § 354a.

<sup>13</sup> Browne, § 354a.

<sup>14</sup> 1804, *Wain v. Warlters*, 5 East 10, 19; 1878, *Grafton v. Cummings*, 99 U. S. 100; Browne, *ubi supra*, §§ 331 ff.



written or oral utterances;<sup>15</sup> so that the parties are in this respect in the same plight practically as under Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, in spite of the difference of theory.

But what of the rule of *integration*? Is there any difference in that respect? By no means. For example, under Sections 4 and 17, a series of letters or other documents will suffice to satisfy the statute, and yet the terms of the transaction may be scattered through the negotiation and not embodied in a single document.<sup>16</sup> Again, if a transaction includes matters both within and without the statute, the satisfaction of the statute for the former may be made, and then the remainder though not in writing may be enforced.<sup>17</sup> In short, the parties may satisfy the statute without embodying their entire transaction in a single writing, or with embodying the statutory part of it in writing and the remainder orally. Thus the question whether any particular writing is the sole embodiment of their transaction is a distinct one, and depends upon the intent of the parties. Here, then, as under the other Sections of the statute, the principle of Integration is found to be independent of the principle of Written Formality.

§ 2455. **Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.** (1) Although writing was in general *at common law* no necessary formality to any transaction (*ante*, § 2454), yet in one respect it was made necessary by the application of a peculiar doctrine, whose Roman origin and mediæval vogue have been already noticed (*ante*, § 2426), namely, the doctrine that an *act of a "higher nature" cannot be altered or annulled by anything of an "inferior nature."* The result of this was that where the parties had chosen to adopt the "higher" form in their original transaction, a form equally "high" could alone suffice to dispose of it. This notion was seen in the rules that a sealed covenant could not be discharged by a transaction 'in pais,'<sup>1</sup> and that an assumpsit was dischargeable by parol, unless broken, and then only by sealed deed,<sup>2</sup> and in the controversies whether payment before maturity could discharge a bond,<sup>3</sup> and whether a parol extension of time to the principal of a bond would discharge the surety.<sup>4</sup> Most of these questions are now governed by a rational policy irrespective of the scholastic technicality of the traditional maxim.<sup>5</sup> It is enough here to note the place they hold in the general theory of jural acts.

<sup>15</sup> Browne, *ubi supra*, §§ 417, 418.

<sup>16</sup> Browne, § 348. Compare the cases cited in Ames' Cases on Trusts, 2d ed., p. 179, note.

<sup>17</sup> Browne, §§ 117, 117a.

§ 2455. <sup>1</sup> 1606, Blake's Case, 6 Co. Rep. 43b.

<sup>2</sup> 1676, Milward v. Ingram, 2 Mod. 43.

<sup>3</sup> 1790, Sturdy v. Arnaud, 3 T. R. 599.

<sup>4</sup> 1821, Davey v. Prendergass, 5 B. & Ald. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the cases cited in Professor Ames' Cases on Trusts, 2d ed., p. 128, note, and his article on Specialty Contracts in the Harvard Law Review, IX, 49, 55 (1895), and in Professor Williston's article on Discharge of Contracts, in the Columbia Law Review, IV, 455 (1904); 1917, Sachs v. Owings, 121 Va. 162, 92 S.E. 997.

Legislation has often intervened to make the change: Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1932 ("A writing under seal may therefore be changed or altogether discharged by a writing not under seal"); Ind. Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 466 ("A writing under seal, except conveyances of real estate or any interest therein, may be changed or altogether discharged by a writing not under seal"); Or. Laws 1920, § 776 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1932).

A good illustration of the distinction between an invalid oral alteration of a sealed contract and a valid waiver by estoppel is found in the following case: 1911, Becker v. Becker, 250 Ill. 117, 95 N.E. 70 (ante-nuptial contract).



(2) Under the *statute of frauds*, a not dissimilar question arises, when a transaction covered by the statute is duly made in writing and then an *oral alteration* is afterwards made. This oral alteration makes a new transaction together with the terms of the original transaction. Yet the result is that the new transaction as a whole is no longer in writing as required by the statute, but is partly oral and partly written; and thus, although the mere alteration is in itself not expressly required to be in writing, yet the transaction as a whole is now unenforceable.<sup>6</sup>

Neither of the foregoing doctrines involves the rule of Integration. By that rule, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2441), the reduction of a transaction to a single document makes it exclusive and controlling for that transaction only, and hence any subsequent transaction of discharge, novation, or alteration may be availed of to vary the original document.<sup>7</sup> Whatever there is, therefore, to prevent the parties from availing themselves of the subsequent transaction is the result of one of these rules of Written Formality, and not of the rule of Integration.

§ 2456. **Other Formalities than Writing; Signature; Seal; Attestation; Registration; Stamp.** It remains here to note, summarily, the remaining formalities receiving the sanction of modern law.<sup>1</sup> These formalities, so far as required, take their place with the rule for writing, in some of the sections of the statute of frauds, as an inherent element of form in the validity of the transaction. Like all other requirements of form, they are arbitrary, in the sense that the act may be sufficient in its terms (for example, to constitute a contract or a release), and may be fully proved by evidence, and yet remains legally ineffectual. Nevertheless, they are not arbitrary, to the extent that they rest on a conscious policy of avoiding certain general dangers or abuses, and that they enforce a rigid rule merely for the sake of this policy.

(1) A *signature* is required by the statute of frauds, for all of the transactions in which writing is required; and obviously the signature is a formal requirement over and above that of writing alone.<sup>2</sup> A signature, however, was not required at common law for a deed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *England*: 1833, *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, 5 B. & Ad. 58; 1840, *Marshall v. Lynn*, 6 M. & W. 109, 114; 1918, *Morris v. Baron & Co.*, A. C. 1 (elaborate opinions by Lord Finlay, L. C., Viscount Haldane, and others); *Canada*: 1913, *Halifax Automobile Co. v. Redden*, 15 D. L. R. 34, N. Sc. (sale of automobile); *United States*: 1906, *Beld v. Darst*, 146 Mich. 143, 109 N. W. 275 (per Hooker, J., diss.; the majority refusing to consider the point on appeal); 1920, *Imperator Realty Co. v. Tull*, 228 N. Y. 447, 127 N. E. 263 (careful opinions, representing the different theories); S. Dak. Rev. C. 1919, § 908; 1921, *Wangness v. Stephenson*, 44 S. D. 536, 184 N. W. 362 (contract to convey); 1921, *McInnis v. Watson*, 116 Wash. 680, 200 Pac. 578 (farm lease).

<sup>7</sup> *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, quoted *ante*, § 2441;

1904, *Vezey v. Rashleigh*, 1 Ch. 634 (distinguishing between an alteration and a novation); 1904, *Putnam F. & M. Co. v. Canfield*, 25 R. I. 548, 56 Atl. 1033.

§ 2456. <sup>1</sup> An interesting exposition of the development of formalism in primitive and modern Germanic law will be found in Heusler, *Institutionen des deutschen Rechts*, I, 68 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 1895, *Browne*, *Statute of Frauds*, §§ 10, 106, 355.

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1698, *Cromwell v. Grunsden*, 2 Salk. 462; *U. S.* 1845, *Parks v. Hazelrigg*, 7 Blackf. Ind. 536.

Whether a deed is valid as to a person who signs, seals, and delivers it, but is not *named in it as grantor*, is well considered in a careful opinion of Evans, J., in *Sterling v. Park*, 129 Ga. 309, 58 S. E. 828 (1907).



(2) A *seal* was essential at common law for the chief sorts of documents.<sup>4</sup> The origin of the significance of the seal, in its relation to the use of writings, has already been noticed (*ante*, § 2426). What the form of a seal should be was long a subject of elaborate discussion.<sup>5</sup>

(3) The *attestation* of a document was originally not a formality to the validity of the document, but merely a precaution desirable for securing testimony to the transaction (*ante*, § 2426); the noting of the names of the witnesses on the document was thus only a memorandum for future usefulness. But the statute of frauds (*ante*, § 2454) introduced, for wills, the act of attestation as a formality. This formality includes two things, first, the presence of the witnesses at the act of signature by the testator, and, secondly, the signature of the document by the witnesses. The two together thus constitute an intrinsic element in the validity of the document.<sup>6</sup> It may be noted that whatever questions are thus raised — for example, whether the document must bear a written recital of the witnesses' presence, or whether, if their signatures are borne, the fact of presence may be otherwise established<sup>7</sup> — do not involve the principle of integration (*ante*, § 2425), but only the principle of formality.

(4) The *registration* of a document may be made an essential formality of its validity, apart from and additionally to its service as a constructive notice of the document's validity. But this quality is seldom attributed to it unless by express statutory declaration.<sup>8</sup> Under the modern (or Torrens) system of registration of title (*ante*, § 1239) no doubt this is the actual result.<sup>9</sup> It may be noted that by this modern system the document of title would seem also to furnish one of the rare instances (*ante*, § 2452) of a compulsory integration.

(5) A *stamp* has by some legislation been made formally necessary to the validity of a document; the policy of such laws being to compel indirectly the payment of a tax. So far as a rule of evidence may be involved, the subject has been elsewhere briefly examined (*ante*, § 2184). It may be here noted that in one respect the rule of integration is affected by the stamp-requirement; for, though a transaction has been embodied in writing, yet

<sup>4</sup> Pollock and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, II, 218-222.

Of course the lack of a seal, when it is essential, may always be shown: 1907, *Burnette v. Young*, 107 W. Va. 184, 57 S.E. 641 (seal later appearing on the document; the opinion seems to regard the point as worth arguing).

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1871, *Re Sandilands*, L. R. 6 C. P. 411; 1886, *National Provincial Bank v. Jackson*, L.R. 33 Ch. D. 1; *U. S.* 1810, *Warren v. Lynch*, 5 Johns. N. Y. 239, Kent, C. J.; 1851, *Pillow v. Roberts*, 13 How. N. Y. 472; 1845, *Corrigan v. Trenton D. F. Co.*, 1 Halst. Ch. N. J. 52; 1865, *Bates v. R. Co.*, 10 All. Mass. 251; and a note in *Gray's Cases on Real Property*, III, 644.

<sup>6</sup> See *ante*, §§ 1287, 1292, for its relation to the rule of evidence requiring the calling of an attesting witness.

<sup>7</sup> 1846, *Pollock v. Glassell*, 2 Gratt. Va. 439, 463 (examining the cases upon wills and powers).

<sup>8</sup> 1835, *Doe v. Ford*, 3 A. & E. 649 (annuity deeds on premises of less than a certain value being by statute void unless registered, the defendant was allowed to plead the non-registration in avoidance, although a covenant in the deed declared the premises to be of a value sufficient to satisfy the statute); *Jones*, *Real Property*, § 1382.

<sup>9</sup> See the treatises of Olmstead, Niblack, Sheldon, Fortescue-Brickdale, Cameron, Massie, Powell, and others, and articles cited in "Problems of Contemporary Legislation: Supplementary Reference Lists 1914-1920" (*Northwestern University Law School Bulletin*, 1920, p. 4). The statutes are noted *ante*, § 1225.



the writing if unstamped cannot be given any jural effect, either as superseding the oral transaction or as altering a previous written one, and consequently the party on whom lies the burden of proof of integration (*ante*, § 2447) must fail in the establishment of that part of his case.<sup>10</sup>

#### D. INTERPRETATION OF JURAL ACTS

§ 2458. **General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.** 1. The process of Interpretation is a part of the procedure of *realizing a person's act in the external world*. It is, in a sense, the completion of the act; for without it the utterance, whether written or oral, must remain vain words. If a person could be content with proclaiming his contracts at the top of a mountain, or nailing his deeds to the garden gate, he would not need to be concerned with the process of interpretation. But deeds and contracts and wills, if they are not to remain empty manifestoes, must be enforced. They must be applied to external objects. Somewhere possession must be yielded, or goods delivered, or money transferred; and in order that the law may enforce these changes in external objects, the relation between the terms of the jural act and certain specific external objects must be determined, as an indispensable part of the process. In short, the interpretation of the terms of a jural act is an essential part of the act considered as capable of legal realization and enforcement.<sup>1</sup> The only difference is that the actor alone creates the terms of his act, while the interpretation of it, being a part of the enforcement, comes into the hands of the law.

2. The process of interpretation, then, though it is commonly simple and often unobserved, is always present, being inherently indispensable.<sup>2</sup> The method of it consists in *ascertaining the actor's associations or connections between the terms of the act and the various possible objects of the external world*. Those terms may be dramatic or verbal. The lantern of Paul Revere, and the twenty-one guns of a warship's salute, are as much the subject of interpretation as the words of a will. In all cases, the process is that of applying the symbol or word to external objects. Since men cannot go forth and instantaneously transform, with the 'presto' of a magician, the existing to the desired state of things, they must embody their desire in marks which

<sup>10</sup> 1818, *Stevens v. Pinney*, 8 Taunt. 327 (Dallas, J.: "It turned out to be unstamped, and therefore inadmissible in evidence, and consequently not amounting to an agreement"; Park, J.: "It was not in fact an existing agreement"); 1829, *Fielder v. Ray*, 6 Bing. 332 (action for work and labor in printing; the defendant offered to show that there was an agreement in writing, but as it was unstamped, it could not be used, and the objection was held to fail). *Contra*: 1827, *Reed v. Deere*, 7 B. & C. 261 (the plaintiff sued on a written agreement to arbitrate; when it appeared that a later agreement had been made, held that the fact that it put an end to

the first could be considered, though it was itself not admissible to sue upon because unstamped).

§ 2458. <sup>1</sup> 1789, Answer of the Judges to the House of Lords, 22 How. St. Tr. 301 ("Your lordships ask us, 'whether the sense of the letter be matter of law or matter of fact?' We find a difficulty in separating the sense of the letter from the letter. The paper without the sense is not a letter").

<sup>2</sup> Such remarks as the following illustrate the occasional thoughtlessness on this subject: *Hartford I. M. Co. v. Cambria M. Co.*, 80 Mich. 491, 499, 45 N. W. 351 (1890): "There should be interpretation only when it is needed."



will serve to point out the effects desired, and then wait for the law, or for some one's voluntary obedience to it, to produce the realization of the effects thus pointed out in advance. The process of interpretation may be compared to a wireless telegraph station. A vessel sails the seas ; somewhere, on some shore, a lofty tower of steel thrusts itself towards the sky. Until the current can be intercepted, it is but a dumb rod of metal; it sends no message and accomplishes no purpose. It may have any one of various attunements; and it will tell nothing until a similar attunement be established by the vessel. To ascertain that attunement, the particular country where it is fixed must be known, and then the authorized records of its methods and signals must be consulted. Not until then can the station's message be made actual to the vessel.

3. Such is the process of interpretation. The analogy of the telegraph-station illustrates the important distinction between the two great divisions of the process. The first question must always be, What is the *standard* of interpretation? The second question is, In what *sources* is the tenor of that standard to be ascertained? Sometimes one or the other of these questions may interpose no difficulty; but both must always be settled.

(1) The *standard* of interpretation, as involved in jural acts, is the personality whose utterances are to be interpreted. There are practically four different available standards. First, there is the standard of the normal users of the language of the forum, the *community at large*, represented by the ordinary meaning of words. Next, there is the standard of a *special class of persons* within the community, — the followers of a particular trade or occupation, the members of a particular religious sect, the aliens of a particular tongue, the natives of a particular dialect, who use certain words in a sense common to the entire class, but different from that of the community at large. Thirdly, there is the standard of the *specific parties* coöperating in a *bilateral act*, who may use words in a sense common to themselves and unknown to any others. Finally, there is the standard of an *individual actor*, who may use words in a sense wholly peculiar to himself; and here the question will naturally arise whether he may insist on his individual standard in the interpretation of the words of a contract, or even of a unilateral act such as a will. The first inquiry in interpretation, then, is to determine which of these standards is the proper one for the particular act to be interpreted; and for this purpose certain working rules have to be formulated.

(2) The *sources* for ascertaining the tenor of the standard form the second object of inquiry. Since interpretation consists in ascertaining the associations between the specific terms used and certain external objects, and since these associations must be somehow knowable in order to proceed, the question is where they are to be looked for. So far as the standard of interpretation is solely the normal one of the community, the inquiry is a simple one; the usage of the community (as represented in dictionaries and elsewhere) is the source of information. But that standard (as will be seen) is rarely the



exclusive one. The mutual standard of parties to a bilateral act, and for wills the individual standard of the testator, is constantly conceded to control; and it then becomes necessary to search among the prior and subsequent utterances of the party or parties to ascertain their usage, or fixed associations with the terms employed. In resorting to these data, the question then arises whether there is any prohibitive rule of law which limits the scope of search and forbids the use of certain data. These rules, if any, form the second part of the law of interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In some States, legislative attempts have been made at entire or partial codification of the principles of Interpretation. These statutes involve several of the rules examined in the ensuing sections:

*California*: Civ. C. 1872, § 1324 ("The words of a will are to be taken in their ordinary grammatical sense, unless a clear intention to use them in another sense can be collected, and that other can be ascertained"); and the following sections cover specific rules of thumb: §§ 1066-1072 (deeds); §§ 1635-1661 (contracts); §§ 1317-1351 (wills); C. C. P. § 1857 ("The language of a writing is to be interpreted according to the meaning it bears in the place of its execution, unless the parties have reference to a different place"); § 1858 ("In the construction of a statute or instrument, the office of the judge is simply to ascertain and declare what is in terms or in substance contained therein, not to insert what has been omitted, or to omit what has been inserted; and where there are several provisions or particulars, such a construction is, if possible, to be adopted as will give effect to all"); § 1859 ("In the construction of a statute the intention of the legislature, and in the construction of the instrument the intention of the parties, is to be pursued, if possible; and when a general and [a] particular provision are inconsistent, the latter is paramount to the former. So a particular intent will control a general one that is inconsistent with it"); § 1860 ("For the proper construction of an instrument, the circumstances under which it was made, including the situation of the subject of the instrument, and of the parties to it, may also be shown, so that the judge be placed in the position of those whose language he is to interpret"); § 1861 ("The terms of a writing are presumed to have been used in their primary and general acceptance, but evidence is nevertheless admissible that they have a local, technical, or otherwise peculiar signification, and were so used and understood in the particular instance, in which case the agreement must be construed accordingly"); § 1862 ("When an instrument consists partly of written words and partly of a printed form, and the two are inconsistent, the former controls the latter"); § 1864 ("When the terms of an agreement have been intended in a different sense by the different

parties to it, that sense is to prevail against either party in which he supposed the other understood it, and when different constructions of a provision are otherwise equally proper, that is to be taken which is most favorable to the party in whose favor the provision was made"); § 1870, par. 12 ("Usage, to explain the true character of an act, contract, or instrument, where such true character is not otherwise plain; but usage is never admissible, except as an instrument of interpretation"); § 2077 (rules for construing descriptions of realty); Pen. Code 1872, § 7, par. 16 ("Words and phrases must be construed according to the context and the approved usage of the language; but technical words and phrases, and such others as may have acquired a peculiar and appropriate meaning in law, must be construed according to such peculiar and appropriate meaning").

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 3901 (wills; "parol evidence of the circumstances surrounding the testator at the time of its execution" is admissible; also "parol evidence to explain all ambiguities, both latent and patent"); § 4268 (contracts; "all the attendant and surrounding circumstances may be proved; and if there is an ambiguity, latent or patent, it may be explained"); § 4608 (charitable bequests; ambiguous terms may be interpreted by other evidence, etc.); § 5792 ("The surrounding circumstances are always proper subjects of proof to aid in the construction of contracts"); § 5793 ("In like manner evidence of known and established usage is admissible for the same purpose as well as to annex incidents").

*Iowa*: Comp. Code, § 7323 ("When an instrument consists partly of written and partly of printed form, the former controls the latter, if the two are inconsistent"); § 7324 ("When the terms of an agreement have been intended in a different sense by the parties to it, that sense is to prevail against either party in which he had reason to suppose the other understood it").

*Louisiana*: Rev. Civ. C. 1920, §§ 1712-1723 (rules for interpretation of wills); §§ 1945-1967 (rules for interpretation of contracts).

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, §§ 7016-7050 (wills); §§ 7526-7552 (contracts); §§ 10518-



Before proceeding, however, to these two parts of the subject in their order, it is necessary to fix upon a terminology and to avoid misunderstanding in the use of words.

§ 2459. **Same: "Intention" and "Meaning," distinguished.** When we seek to ascertain the standard and the sources of interpretation, thereby to discover the actor's association of words with external objects, what is the term, in one word, which describes the object of the search? Is it the person's "meaning"? Or is it his "intention"? Over this difference of phraseology has persisted an endless controversy, which, like that of the two knights and the shields at the cross-roads, is after all resolvable mainly into a difference of epithets only.

The distinction between "intention" and "meaning" is vital. The distinction is independent of any question over the relative propriety of these names; for there exist two things, which must be kept apart, yet never can be unless different terms are used. The words "*will*" and "*sense*" will here be adopted, as sufficiently indicative of these two things and free from the ambiguity of the other terms.<sup>1</sup>

Will and Sense, then, are distinct. Interpretation as a juristic process is concerned with the Sense of the word used, and not with the Will to use that particular word. The contrast is between that Will, or volition to utter,

10527 (in general): § 10683 (land-descriptions).

*North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, §§ 5685-5719, §§ 5895-5921.

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, §§ 715-719, 721, 727, par. 12 (like Cal. C. C. P. §§ 1857-1862, 1864, 1870, par. 12); § 878 (rules for construing descriptions of real property; like Cal. C. C. P. § 2077).

*Philippine Isl.* Civ. C. §§ 1281-1288 (like P. R. Rev. St. & C. §§ 4354-4361); C. C. P. 1901, §§ 286-293, 294 (like Cal. C. C. P. §§ 1857-1864, 1866); § 298, par. 12 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1870).

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, §§ 1394-1399 (like Cal. C. C. P. §§ 1858-1863); § 1403, par. 10 (like *ib.* § 1870, par. 12); §§ 4354-4361 (interpretation of contracts; rules based on the Spanish Code).

*South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 650 ("the words of a will are to be taken in their ordinary and grammatical sense, unless a clear intention to use them in another sense can be collected and that other [sense] can be ascertained"); § 869 ("When a contract is in writing, the intention of the parties is to be ascertained from the writing alone, if possible, subject however to the other provisions of this article"); § 877 ("a contract may be explained by references to the circumstances under which it was made and the matter to which it relates"); § 874 ("The words of a contract are to be understood in their ordinary and popular sense, rather than according to their strict legal meaning, unless used by the

parties in a technical sense, or unless a special meaning is given to them by usage, in which case the latter must be followed"); § 875 ("Technical words are to be interpreted as usually understood by persons in the profession or business to which they relate, unless clearly used in a different sense").

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, §§ 6347-6381 (like Cal. Civ. C. §§ 1318-1351).

For collections of cases applying the ensuing rules in specific States, and a discussion of them, see the essays cited *ante*, § 2425.

§ 2459. <sup>1</sup> This distinction has been approved in the following opinion: 1909, *Lancaster & J. E. L. Co. v. Jones*, 75 N. H. 172, 71 Atl. 871.

The word "meaning" has been favored by Mr. Nichols, in his article on Extrinsic Evidence in the Interpretation of Wills (*Juridical Society Papers*, II, 352), and before him by Sir J. Wigram, in his treatise on Extrinsic Evidence in Aid of the Interpretation of Wills (who however often uses the words interchangeably). The word "intention" has been favored by Mr. Hawkins, in his article on Principles of Legal Interpretation (*Jurid. Soc. Pap.* II, 298, reprinted in Thayer, *Prelim. Treat. on Evidence*, App. C), who declares the opposite usage to involve "a fallacy of no small importance." Mr. Phipson has compared the views of these and other writers in the *Law Quarterly Review* for July, 1904. Professor Thayer's treatment of the subject is found in his *Preliminary Treatise*, pp. 412, 480.



which, as the initiative element of an act, makes a person responsible for a particular utterance as his, and that Sense or meaning which involves the fixed association between the uttered word and some external object. It has already been seen (*ante*, § 2413) that, by the general canon of jural acts, the person's actual will or intent to utter a given word can seldom be considered for juristic purposes. If he has exercised a volition to utter something, then he is responsible for such utterance as is in external appearance the utterance he intended, — whether or not he actually intended it. On the other hand, the sense of his word as thus uttered — his fixed association between that symbol and some external object — may usually be given full effect, if it can be ascertained. The rules for the two things may be different.

The law has thus constantly to emphasize the contrast between the *prohibitive rule* applicable to the creation of an act (*ante*, § 2413), and the present *permissive rule* applicable to its interpretation. Judges are desirous, when investigating the sense of the words as uttered by the person, of emphasizing that they do not violate the rule against inquiring whether he actually intended to utter those words. Hence the reiteration of the contrast between "intention" and "meaning":

1789. KENYON, L. C. J., in *Hay v. Corentry*, 3 T. R. 83, 86: "We must collect the meaning of the testator from those words which he has used, and cannot add words which he has not used."

1821, DALLAS, C. J., in *Pocock v. Lincoln*, 3 B. & B. 27, 47: "I must apply the principle so often applied in cases of this description, 'voluit sed non dixit'; and, he not having said so, I cannot on any conjecture of my own, say so for him."

1833, PARKE, J., in *Doe v. Gwillim*, 5 B. & Ad. 122, 129: "In expounding a will, the Court is to ascertain, not what the testator actually intended, as contradistinguished from what his words express, but what is the meaning of the words he used."

1833, DENMAN, L. C. J., in *Rickman v. Carstairs*, 5 B. & Ad. 663: "The question . . . is not what was the intention of the parties, but what is the meaning of the words they have used."

1920, PRENTICE, C. J., in *Ziulkoski v. Barker*, 94 Conn. 491, 109 Atl. 185: "The aim of Interpretation is to ascertain what a writer intended by what he *said*, — and not either to put words into his mouth, or to give effect to that which it may be thought that he either intended to say, or would have wished to say, but did n't."

The usual terminology of these judicial explanations is unfortunate, because "meaning" has a suggestion of the state of the person's mind as fixed on certain objects, and "intention" bears the same suggestion. The constant exclusion of the state of the person's mind in one aspect, and yet its consideration in another aspect, are thus apparently contradictory and irreconcilable. But the terms "will," or "volition," and "sense," serve to avoid this ambiguity. They emphasize the distinction that the instant will to utter a specific word is one thing, and the fixed association of that word is another thing. Thus the Creation of the act and its Interpretation as created are kept distinct.

The analogy of other symbols than words will best illustrate how common and fundamental is this difference in other affairs, and how instinctively it is appreciated and applied. Suppose a foreign vessel to be coasting the



shore and entering various harbors where the Government maintains a uniform system of harbor-buoys in various colors and shapes, indicating respectively channels, sandbars, sunken rocks, and safe anchorages; here the significance of each kind of buoy is known to be the same in every harbor under Government control. But suppose the vessel to enter a harbor or inlet under the control of an individual or a city having a peculiar and different code of usage for the buoys; here it is immaterial whether a red buoy under the Government system signifies a channel or a sandbar; the vital question for the vessel now is what a red buoy signifies under the code of the local authority, and all other systems of meaning are thrown aside as useless. This illustrates that though, in interpreting a person's (for example, a testator's) words, we are concerned with *his* individual meaning, as distinguished from the customary sense of words, still we are not dealing with his state of mind as to volition of that word as distinct from another word, but with the associations affixed by him to an expressed symbol as indicating to others an external object. That is to say, the local harbor authorities may have "intended" to put a green buoy instead of a red buoy, or to have put the red buoy at another spot; they may have made a "mistake," just as the testator may have intended to use other words; but in both cases the state of mind as to volition, or mistake, is a wholly different thing from the fixed association, according to that individual's standard, between the expressed symbol and some external object.

To illustrate another aspect of the subject: Suppose a game of chess to be played by B with his guest A. If the two are of the same nation, their standards of interpretation — for example, as to the character of each chessman, the allowable moves, and the effect of a move — will be the same. But some nations differ from others in one or more of these respects; so that if, for example, B's national rules allowed a rook to threaten diagonally on the board, A as guest would accept and accommodate himself, as best he might, to this standard of operation. But, though this much might be conceded to B as host, in the adoption of his standards for giving meaning to his acts of moving the chessmen, yet it would remain true that his private intent or volition, as distinguished from the significance of his acts of moving, would be immaterial; so that, for example, his intent to have touched and moved a different piece, or to have placed the piece on a different square, would not be taken into consideration. So, again, if A and B engage in a shooting match, with two targets of 100 yards' and 500 yards' distance, it may be that, after the shooting, A and B will discover that they have not agreed which prize is to be associated with which target, or whether the victory at the 500-yard target is to count for more than the victory at the 100-yard target, and they may have to repeat the match after coming to a common understanding of rules. But in no case would A think of claiming that B, who has hit the 100-yard bull's-eye, could not win because he was really aiming at the 500-yard target and hit the other by mistake only; nor could A have a



second trial, on missing the 500-yard target, because by mistake he shot at the 100-yard target.

A person, then, who wills to utter words is like a man placing a buoy, or moving a chessman, or shooting at a target. His will or intent or volition as to the terms of the particular utterance is one thing; his sense or meaning attached to the terms actually uttered is a different thing. Whatever may be the rules for the former element of his act, the rules for the latter element are independent of them.

### 1. Standard of Interpretation

§ 2460. **General Principle; Four Standards, — Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.** The standard of interpretation, which forms the first part of the inquiry (*ante*, § 2458), is the association between words and objects considered with reference to the persons fixing that association.

It has already been noted (*ante*, § 2458), that the possible standards fall roughly into four classes, — the standard of the community, or *popular* standard, meaning the common and normal sense of words; the *local* standard, including the special usages of a religious sect, a body of traders, an alien population, or a local dialect; the *mutual* standard, covering those meanings which are peculiar to both or all the parties to a transaction, but shared in common by them; and the *individual* standard of one party to an act, as different from that of the other party or parties, if any. These standards, from the first-mentioned to the fourth, increase in intension (as the logicians have it), while they decrease in extension. The possible meanings are more and more; for the local and the mutual and the individual standards each add to the one or a few normal meanings; while the number of persons involved in each standard becomes fewer.

The main question is, of course, whether one or more of these standards is *exclusive of the others*, or whether they are all available at the same time. The answer is, first, that, in general, they are all available coincidently; and, secondly, that where the transaction involves more than one party, the standard must be common to all.

1. In the first place, then, *all the standards are provisional only*, and therefore *each may in turn be resorted to* for help. The search is for the sense of a word or phrase as used, and the object is therefore to find the standard actually employed by the party. Now, as a member of the community, he presumably uses words in the normal sense of the community; this standard will therefore be 'prima facie' accepted. But if it appears that, as a resident of a special village, he used the sense of that village, then this local standard may be substituted for the other. Still further, if it appears that the parties to a specific contract have a special mutual sense, or that a testator has a special individual sense, the mutual or the individual standard may replace the normal or the local standard. Thus for any particular word or phrase one standard, provisionally applicable, may be finally replaced by



another; and for a given document, its various parts may be interpreted by different standards. The single condition is that before the standard 'prima facie' applicable can be replaced, *it must be made to appear probable that the party was actually using the other standard*. No one standard, then, is absolute and essential.

2. In the second place, *no person* taking part in a transaction *can invoke a standard which is not at least common to all parties*.<sup>1</sup> For example, the contract of a person dealing with a wheat broker and using words in the normal sense cannot be judged by the usage of the wheat trade, unless that standard appears to have been adopted by him as well as by the other party. Or a person issuing a negotiable instrument, and understanding its terms in a mutual sense with the payee, cannot expect to enforce it against a holder for value without notice. So, too, in a purely bilateral transaction, the private sense of one party cannot be imposed upon the other party. The standard, then, must at least be common to all parties to the transaction, and here the nature of the transaction in the substantive law will control.<sup>2</sup>

Before following the application of this general principle, however, it is necessary to dispose of a supposed rule which, if valid, would seriously qualify the first part of the principle above stated; namely, the rule against "disturbing a clear meaning," — in other words, a rule which forbids departing from the normal standard even where it can be proved to have been not the standard actually employed.

§ 2461. **Rule against "Disturbing a Clear Meaning," or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History.** The history of the law of Interpretation is the history of a progress from a stiff and superstitious formalism to a flexible rationalism.

The marked features of primitive formalism have been already noticed in other aspects (*ante*, § 2405). The word of a man is in itself almost a magic formula. The wrong word produces its evil effects in spite of the good will of the party; without the right word, nothing will move, however plainly he seek to express himself.<sup>1</sup> When the brother of Ali Baba forgot the word "sesame," he was powerless to open the door of safety. This inherent potency of words was for primitive minds, as it now is for children, no mere fairy tale, but a reality of life.

These notions come down into Coke's time shorn of their first crudeness.

§ 2460. <sup>1</sup> Compare the theory as stated by Mr. Justice Holmes, in *The Theory of Legal Interpretation*, 12 Harv. L. Rev. 417 ("Each party to a contract has notice that the other will understand his words according to the usage of the normal speaker of English under the circumstances and therefore cannot complain if his words are taken in that sense"). Compare also the learned and enlightening article by Professor Roscoe Pound, "Spurious Interpretation," *Columbia Law Review*, VII, 379 (1907).

<sup>2</sup> Applicable throughout the ensuing topics

are the rules of interpretation prescribed in the Codes founded on the Field N. Y. Civil Code (§§ 472 ff., 800 ff.); they not only cover some of the ensuing general principles, but also go into details as to the meaning of specific terms of conveyancing; their precise effect in applying the ensuing general principles can be determined only by comparing their texts in entirety. The principal sections of these Codes have been quoted *ante*, § 2458.

§ 2461. <sup>1</sup> Compare the passages in Brunner and Heusler, cited *ante*, §§ 2426, 2456.



But they explain nevertheless the scholastic technicality of those later days. A word was still a fixed symbol. Its meaning was something inherent and objective, not subjective and personal. A man who wrote a document dealt with words as he might deal with a blunderbuss or a carpenter's tool. They had their uses; and he must understand and choose the proper word for the purpose in hand, just as he must take the risk of not handling the gun or the adze in the proper fashion. "*Rerum enim vocabula immutabilia sunt, homines mutabilia,*" sufficiently illustrates the attitude of the times.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude was of course, from the point of view of intellectual development, bound to change gradually. But progress was retarded, in the English judicial world, by three circumstances (with others) particular to that sphere. (1) One of these was the prejudice (for such it may be termed) in favor of the *legal heir*,—an instinct naturally strong in a nation whose greatest and most explanatory fact was its dependence upon landed wealth and a system of primogeniture. When a will was to be construed, its effective interpretation was no great matter of concern to the judges, for they would rather than not that its provisions should fail. Until the middle of the 1500s, there was not even liberty to alienate land at all by will;<sup>3</sup> and, for long after this period, the will, as an instrument of disinheritance, continued to be judicially disparaged.<sup>4</sup> Thus in one way, through the lack of a liberal and sympathetic search for testators' meanings, the spirit of rational interpretation was hindered. (2) Another circumstance was the tendency of the judges to keep the construction of writings *out of the jury's hands* and reserve it for themselves; for, though as a practice this dated far enough back, still it came to be justified consciously, and was thought to be a safeguard against the fate of a deed with the jury, "who might construe or refine upon it at pleasure."<sup>5</sup> (3) Still a third consideration was the practice and the interests of *conveyancers*. This branch of the profession had accumulated a store of esoteric learning, which labelled each word and phrase with its traditional meaning. This learning would lose half of its mystery and its value if the rigidity of these terms should disappear. The instinct was to treasure the shibboleths of conveyancing; and the pressure of this body of practitioners against any liberality of interpretation must have been heavy.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This is from Dig. XXXIII, 10, 7, § 2, *de sup. leg.*; but appears transmogrified by Coke as "*nomina sunt mutabilia, res autem immobiles*" (6 Co. Rep. 65a).

<sup>3</sup> St. 32 H. VIII, quoted *ante*, § 2454.

<sup>4</sup> 1599, *Wild's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 16b; 1814, *Doe v. Dring*, 2 M. & S. 448, 454 (L. C. J. Ellenborough, construing "all my effects" to signify only personalty: "The rule of law is peremptory that the heir shall not be disinherited, unless by plain and cogent inference arising from the words of the will"; though "such a decision may and perhaps will disappoint" the testator's intention).

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, § 2426; and the following, said in 1736, of parol evidence to construe deeds and

wills: "A distinction has been taken between evidence that may be offered (1) to a jury and (2) to inform the conscience of the Court [of equity], namely that in the first case no such evidence should be admitted, because the jury might be inveigled thereby, but that in the second, it could do no hurt" (Bacon's Abridgment, II, 309).

<sup>6</sup> 1821, L. C. Eldon, in *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & B. 473, 599 ("The greatest men who have sat in Westminster Hall, I am persuaded, in many instances, if matters had been '*res integræ*,' would have pronounced decisions very different from those which they thought proper to adopt, if they had not taken notice of the practice of conveyancers as authority"); Lord Redesdale,



At the period of the end of the 1700s, then, there is found in the law a settled tradition, bolstered up in artificial survival by considerations such as the above, that the words of a legal document inherently possess a *fixed and unalterable meaning*. The law had prescribed it. How could man, in a document, think himself entitled to mean what he pleased! Some of the judicial utterances seem now obstinate enough in their blindness:

1554, Brook, J., in *Throckmerton v. Tracy*, Plowd. 160 (after hearing Saunders lay down three rules for deeds, of which the third was: "The words shall be construed according to the intent of the parties, and not otherwise," he proceeds to repudiate this heresy in the following ingenuous utterance): "The party ought to direct his meaning according to the law, and not the law according to his meaning; for if a man should bend the law to the intent of the party, rather than the intent of the party to the law, this would be the way to introduce barbarousness and ignorance and to destroy all learning and diligence. For if a man was assured that whatever words he made use of, his meaning only should be considered, he would be very careless about the choice of his words, and it would be the source of infinite confusion and uncertainty to explain what was his meaning."

This notion was barely beginning to give way by the end of the 1700s. Interpretation by local usage, for example (to-day the plainest case of legitimate deviation from the normal standard), was still but making its way.<sup>7</sup> The individual usage of a testator was in the eyes even of Hardwicke and Thurlow, and of course of Kenyon and Eldon (those reactionaries and mainstays of conservatism), heretical enough.<sup>8</sup> One of the judicial contemporaries of the great Tory Chancellor was strongly of opinion that to seek a

2 B. & B. 612 ("I do conceive it is of the utmost importance that your lordships should guide your judgment by that criterion, whenever it can be applied; for otherwise, my lords, all property must be in hazard").

<sup>7</sup> 1592, *Wing v. Earle*, Cro. El. 267 ("If one sells land and is obliged that it contain 20 acres, this shall be according to the law, and not according to the custom of the country"); 1692, *Lethulier's Case*, 2 Salk. 443 ("warranted to depart with convoy" must be construed according to the usage among merchants"; but Holt, C. J., was *contra*, for "we take notice of the laws of merchants that are general, not of those that are particular usages"). In 1795, in *Withnell v. Gartman*, 6 T. R. 388, 395, 397, it was argued, though unsuccessfully, that "no usage can be let in to explain a private deed"; but in the same year it was laid down by Lawrence, J., in *St. Cross v. Walden*, 6 T. R. 338, 344, interpreting the term "quarters of wheat," that "when a word is used having a legal meaning, it must be understood to be used in its legal acceptance"; here a bushel was by statute prescribed to contain 8 gallons, but a local measure contained 9 gallons.

<sup>8</sup> *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, *Evidence*, 80 ("for the operation and effect of a contract cannot be determined but by the rules of law; . . . and without such stated rules in every society, no

man could be certain of any property, for then the sense of the contract must be at the mercy of the judge or jury, who might construe or refine upon it at pleasure"); 1749, L. C. Hardwicke, in *Goodinge v. Goodinge*, 1 Ves. Sr. 231 ("though it has been allowed to ascertain the person or thing, as where two were of the same name, yet not to show that the testator meant to use general words in this or that particular sense"); 1784, L. C. Thurlow, in *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. P. C. 338, 342 ("If the words themselves are intelligible, there is no instance where parol evidence has been admitted to explain them into a more vulgar sense. . . . If words have in themselves a positive precise sense, I have no idea of its being possible to change them"); 1795, L. C. J. Kenyon, in *Lane v. Stanhope*, 6 T. R. 345, 354 ("Where certain words have obtained a precise technical meaning, we ought not to give them a different meaning; that would be, as Lord King and other judges have said, removing landmarks").

The state of opinion at this epoch is well illustrated in the opinions on the rule in *Shelley's Case*, in the great decision of *Perrin v. Blake*, in 1770 (4 Burr. 2579). Even the rational Blackstone stands by the then orthodox principle, while Mansfield, with an illumined insight a century beyond his time, as usual, is found advancing the modern theory.



testator's actual meaning would be "a very dangerous rule to go by, because it would be to say that the same words should vary in construction."<sup>9</sup> As late as 1821 the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas conceded frankly that "if not in a majority of wills, yet certainly in a great number, the construction is contrary to the probable intent."<sup>10</sup> And yet to give effect to a more flexible principle was to threaten the "landmarks of property," as the Bar was repeatedly warned.<sup>11</sup>

But the law of England was merely passing through the same stages as the law of Rome.<sup>12</sup> It was impossible that it could remain perpetually immovable in the old ruts. And so it emerged into the 1800s with a growing spirit of liberality which could not help conceding something, yet was hampered by the stern tradition.

It now conceded that the sense of words is not fixed by rules of law; that the extreme of the old rule had disappeared. But it insisted that *when the meaning is "plain"* — that is, plain by the standard of the community and of the ordinary reader — *no deviation can be permitted*. That is, it preserved the old theory to the extent of legally fixing the meaning for the party, however wrongly, unless the wrongness was glaringly plain on the face of the case:

1833-43, TINDAL, C. J., in *Attorney-General v. Shore*, 11 Sim. 592, 615: "The general rule I take to be, that where the words of any written instrument are free from ambiguity in themselves, and where external circumstances do not create any doubt or difficulty as to the proper application of those words to claimants under the instrument, or the subject-matter to which the instrument relates, such instrument is always to be construed according to the strict, plain, common meaning of the words themselves; and that, in such case, evidence 'dehors' the instrument, for the purpose of explaining it according to the surmised or alleged intention of the parties to the instrument, is utterly inadmissible. If it were otherwise, no lawyer would be safe in advising upon the construction of a written instrument, nor any party in taking under it; for the ablest advice might be controlled, and the clearest title undermined, if, at some future period, parol evidence of the particular meaning which the party affixed to his words, or of his secret intention in making the instrument or of the objects he meant to take benefit under it, might be set up to contradict or vary the plain language of the instrument itself. The true interpretation, however, of every instrument being manifestly that which will make the instrument speak the intention of the party at the time it was made, it has always been considered as an exception, or, perhaps, to speak more precisely, not so much an exception from, as a corollary to, the general rule above stated, that, where any doubt arises upon the true sense and meaning of the words themselves, or any difficulty as to their application under the surrounding circumstances, the sense and meaning of the language may be investigated and ascertained by evidence 'dehors' the instrument itself; for both reason and common sense agree, that by no other means can the language of the instrument be made to speak the real mind of the party. Such investigation does, of necessity, take place in the interpre-

<sup>9</sup> Le Blanc, J., in *Doe v. Dring*, 2 M. & S. 448, 455 (1814).

<sup>10</sup> Dallas, C. J., in *Pocock v. Lincoln*, 3 B. & B. 27, 46. "On one occasion the counsel asserted that it was the duty of the Court to find out the meaning of the testator. 'My duty, sir, to find out his meaning!' exclaimed Lord Alvanley. 'Suppose the will had contained

only these words, 'Fustum funnidos tantaraboo'; am I to find out the meaning of his gibberish?'" (Law and Lawyers, II, 74).

<sup>11</sup> Le Blanc, J., in *Doe v. Lyford*, 4 M. & S. 550, 556 (1816); Kenyon, L. C. J., in *Lane v. Stanhope*, *supra*.

<sup>12</sup> The same controversy is seen in Dig. XXXIII, 10, 7, § 12, *de sup. leg.*



tation of instruments written in a foreign language; in the case of ancient instruments where, by the lapse of time and change of manners, the words have acquired, in the present age, a different meaning from that which they bore when originally employed; in cases where terms of art or science occur; in mercantile contracts, which, in many instances, use a peculiar language, employed by those only who are conversant in trade and commerce; and in other instances in which the words, besides their general common meaning, have acquired, by custom or otherwise, a well-known, peculiar, idiomatic meaning, in the particular country in which the party using them was dwelling, or in the particular society of which he formed a member, and in which he passed his life. . . . But I conceive the exception to be strictly limited to cases of the description above given, and to evidence of the nature above detailed."

1862, Lord CHELMSFORD, in *Beacon L. & F. Ass. Co.*, 1 Moore P. C. N. S. 73, 98: "In order to construe a term in a written instrument where it is used in a sense differing from its ordinary meaning, evidence is admissible to prove the peculiar sense in which the parties understood the word; but it is not admissible to contradict or vary what is plain."

1871, MALINS, V. C., in *Kilvert's Trusts*, L. R. 12 Eq. 183, 186: "There is one rule without exception in construing a will, — which is that wherever a bequest, whether made to a person or a charity, is perfect and unequivocal in all its parts, no parol evidence is admissible to explain it."

1839, CATRON, J., in *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.*, 13 Pet. 89, 105: "To control an instrument's construction by oral proof of the objects of the contracting parties and the purposes of the contract would lead to the dangerous result of construing every writing not by its face, not by the language employed, but by matters extrinsic, variant in each case, as human testimony should make it."

1891, HOLMES, J., in *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228: "You cannot prove a mere private convention between the two parties to give language a different meaning from its common one. It would open too great risks, if evidence were admissible to show that when they said five hundred feet they agreed it should mean one hundred inches, or that Bunker Hill Monument should signify the Old South Church. An artificial construction cannot be given to plain words by express agreement."<sup>13</sup>

Such is the rule still surviving to us, in many Courts, from the old formalism, namely, the rule that you *cannot disturb a plain meaning*.

§ 2462. **Same: Theory and Policy of the Rule.** As to this rule, of course, both theory and policy must be considered.

(1) That the *theory* of it is unsound, ought not to be doubted. There can be, in the nature of things, no absoluteness of standard in interpretation. An advanced communism might conceivably bring men to such a level of intellectual uniformity that their thoughts would be expressed in invariably identical symbols. But till that day comes, the varieties of individual expression and sense must be unquenchable. So long as men are allowed to grant and contract freely, and so long as the law undertakes to carry out those acts by enforcement, just so long must the standard of interpretation continue to be mobile, subjective, and individual. Mr. Justice Brook once thought it "barbarous" that a man should be "assured that whatever words he made use of, his meaning only should be considered." But as the law of to-day has broken with his premise, so it must break with his con-

<sup>13</sup> The learned justice later repeated this view, in 1899, in an essay, in 12 Harvard Law Review, 417, 420 ("The Theory of Legal Interpretation").



clusion. The ordinary standard, or "plain meaning," is simply the meaning of the people who did *not* write the document.

The fallacy consists in assuming that there is or ever can be *some one real* or absolute meaning. In truth, there can be only *some person's* meaning; and that person, whose meaning the law is seeking, is the writer of the document:

1696, *John Locke*, Letter to the Bishop of Worcester (Works, IV, 85): "Your lordship says, 'Peter, James, and John are all true and real men.' Answer: Without doubt, *supposing* them to be 'men,' they are true and real men, *i. e.* supposing the name of that species belongs to them. And so three bobaques are all true and real bobaques, supposing the name of that species of animals belongs to them. For I beseech your lordship to consider, whether in your way of arguing, by naming them Peter, James, and John, names familiar to us, as appropriated to individuals of the species 'man,' your lordship does not at first *suppose* them 'men' and then very safely ask, whether they be not all true and real 'men'? But if I should ask your lordship, whether Weweena, Chuckerey, and Coucheda, were true and real men or no? your lordship would not be able to tell me, until I have pointed out to your lordship the individuals called by those names. . . . Your lordship, in your fore-cited words, says, 'here lies the true idea of a person'; and in the foregoing discourse speaks of 'nature,' as if it were some steady, established being, to which one certain precise idea necessarily belongs to make it a true idea: whereas, my lord, in the way of ideas, I begin at the other end, and think that the word 'person' in itself signifies nothing; and so, no idea belonging to it, nothing can be said to be the true idea of it. But as soon as the common use of any language has appropriated it to any idea, then that is the true idea of a 'person,' and so of 'nature.' But because the propriety of language, *i. e.* the precise idea that every word stands for, is not always exactly known, but is often disputed, there is no other way for him that uses a word that is in dispute, but to define what *he* signifies by it; and then the dispute can be no longer verbal, but must necessarily be about the idea which he tells us he puts it for."

1827, *Jeremy Bentham*, Rationale of Judicial Evidence, b. IX, pt. VI, c. IV (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, p. 556, note): "The refusal to put upon the words used by a man in penning a deed or a will the meaning which it is all the while acknowledged he put upon them himself, is an enormity, an act of barefaced injustice, unknown everywhere but in English jurisprudence. It is, in fact, making for a man a will that he never made; a practice exactly upon a par (impunity excepted) with forgery. Lawyers putting upon it their own sense? Yes, *their* own sense. But which of all possible senses is *their* own sense? They are as far from agreeing with one another, or each with himself, as with the body of the people. In evident reason and common justice, no one will ought to be taken as a rule for any other; no more than the evidence in one cause is a rule for the evidence to different facts in another cause."

(2) As to the argument of *policy*, the case is somewhat different. There is much to be said for the traditional rule, — though not all that is said is sound. For example, Chief Justice Tindal, in his apprehensions that under any other rule "no lawyer would be safe in advising upon the construction of a written instrument, nor any party in taking under it,"<sup>1</sup> apparently assumes that under the traditional rule an ideal facility and certainty of interpretation can be had. He retires (in Professor Thayer's words) "into that lawyer's Paradise, where all words have a fixed, precisely ascertained meaning, and

§ 2462. <sup>1</sup> Quoted *ante*, § 2461.



where, if the writer has been careful, a lawyer having a document referred to him may sit in his chair, inspect the text, and answer all questions without raising his eyes. Men have dreamed of attaining for their solemn muniments of title such an absolute security." But it is a dream of the impossible; and the dominance of either the old or the new rule will make little practical difference in the certainty of a given instrument. In the very case of Lady Hewley's Charities, for which Chief Justice Tindal laid down his rule of exclusion, even the admitted data were so voluminous and complex that the excluded material was comparatively a trifle.

The real strength of the argument is rather found in the practical statement of Mr. Justice Holmes<sup>1</sup> that "it would open too great risks [*i. e.* of false pretences] if evidence were admissible to show that when they said 'five hundred feet' they agreed that it should mean one hundred inches, or that 'Bunker Hill Monument' should signify the Old South Church." Now the interesting feature of this illustration is that in important instances the very opposite fact is daily and hourly illustrated, — in the private cipher-codes of commercial houses. By these agreements words *are* employed in a sense totally alien, and sometimes exactly opposite, to the ordinary meaning. In one of the printed cable codes now in use, for example, "Innovate" is made to mean "Do this only as a last resort"; and "Invective" is made to mean "We all unite in sending you our heartiest congratulations"!<sup>2</sup> No doubt, too, some brokers who are particularly apprehensive of the interception of their messages are accustomed to agree that "buy" shall mean "do *not* buy." There are, then, abundant instances in which not only there is no "great risk," but there is an absolute necessity, of accepting proof of these private conventions; and these instances shatter the whole argument for the rule as a rule. The fallacy of the person who declared that "He was open to conviction, but he would like to meet the person who could convince him," is here reversed; for the judicial attitude thus illustrated is that "We are not open to conviction, because we are afraid that somebody will sometimes convince us."

The truth is that whatever virtue and strength lies in the argument for the antique rule leads not to a fixed rule of law, but only to a general maxim of prudent discretion. In the felicitous alliteration of that great judge, Lord Justice Bowen, it is "not so much a canon of construction as a counsel of caution."<sup>3</sup> The distinguished Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel, once

<sup>2</sup> "Young Richleigh's father allowed him to take a trip to Europe this summer. Before starting, the youth made up a cable code of his own for possible use while abroad, and handed a copy to his father, who locked it up in his desk without looking at it. A month later the elder Richleigh received a cable consisting of one word: 'Laugh.' He laughed. It seemed to be something quite pleasant; clever boy, that; always ready for a jest; proud of that boy; sure to get along in the

world; nice of him to send such a cheery message to his old father. But, come to think of it, the cable message must have been a code word. Wonder what's the rest of the joke? The code was at the house. Father went up there in the best of humor. He got out the code and read: 'Laugh = Send me \$500.' !!!" (G. H. W., in Boston "Transcript.")

<sup>3</sup> 1890, *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 Ch. D. 590; quoted *infra*.



wittily declared to counsel that "nobody could convince *him* that black [selvedge] was white!"; and yet the Court of Appeals reversed his judgment because they were after all convinced of that precise proposition.<sup>4</sup> To say that it would be difficult to convince him, and upon the evidence to fail to be convinced, would have been a rational attitude. But that is very different from an arbitrary rule declaring 'a priori' that the judicial mind is legally not open to conviction.

There is, then, neither in theory nor in policy any basis for an absolute rule declaring that when a word has a "plain meaning," *i. e.* by the popular standard, neither the local nor the mutual nor the individual standard can be substituted. Such a rule is still maintained by many utterances like those above quoted. But its vogue is disappearing; as may be seen from the utterances of judges who have plainly championed the modern and more liberal rule:<sup>5</sup>

1854, COLERIDGE, J., in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703: "Neither, in the construction of a contract among merchants, tradesmen, or others, will the evidence [of a local usage] be excluded because the words are in their ordinary meaning unambiguous; for the principle of admission is that words perfectly unambiguous in their ordinary meaning *are* used by the contractors in a different sense from that. What words more plain than 'a thousand,' 'a week,' 'a day'? Yet the cases are familiar in which 'a thousand' has been held to mean 'twelve hundred,' 'a week' 'a week only during the theatrical season,' 'a day' 'a working day.'"

1860, BLACKBURN, J., in *Myers v. Sarl*, 3 E. & E. 306 (admitting trade usage): "I do not think that it is necessary, in order to render such evidence admissible, that there should be any ambiguity on the face of the phrase which has to be construed. . . . I take to be the true rule of law upon the subject that when it is shown that a term or phrase in a written contract bears a peculiar meaning in the trade or business to which the instrument relates, that meaning is 'prima facie' to be attributed to it; unless upon the construction of the whole contract enough appears, either from express words or by necessary implication, to show that the parties did not intend that meaning to prevail. The consequence is that every individual case must be decided on its own grounds."

1890, LINDLEY, L. J., in *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 Ch. D. 590, 609, 614: "I do not propose to deal with decided cases at all. It may be that there were expressions in the documents then before the Court which made the judges come to conclusions which I cannot arrive at when I come to look at the will and codicils with which I have to deal. I do not consider that a decision which is more or less at variance with other cases is wrong because it is so at variance. Cases of construction are useful when they lay down canons or rules of construction, and they are useful when they put an interpretation on common forms — whether in deeds, wills, or mercantile documents. They may be valuable guides; but when I am told that because something occurs in one will I am to give a precisely similar effect to a similar expression occurring in another will dealing with a different property and in another context, I object altogether to do it. The only principle that I know of is that which has been expressed before. Look at the words, avail yourself of such evidence as is legitimately admissible, and see what the testator has said, and expound it as best you can with reference to what is legitimately before you." BOWEN, L. J.: "It seems to me that the only weight one can give to such language [as the so-called rule against disturbing a clear meaning] is to treat it not so much as a canon of construction as a counsel

<sup>4</sup> 1880, *Mitchell v. Henry*, cited *post*, (approving the similar language of L. C. Halsbury in *Re Jodrell*).  
§ 2463.

<sup>5</sup> 1902, *Miles v. Wilson*, 1 Ch. 138, 142



of caution, to warn you in dealing with such cases not to give way to guesses or mere speculation as to the probabilities of an intention, but to act only on such evidence as can lead a reasonable man to a distinct conclusion. But I protest, that as soon as you see upon the will, read by the light of such extrinsic circumstances as you may survey, what the true construction is, and what the true intention expressed by the testator is, then your journey is performed. You require no more counsellors to assist you; and after once arriving at the journey's end, to pause in giving effect to the true interpretation because, forsooth, the language has not been framed according to some measure or standard of correct expression, which is supposed to be imposed by judges out of regard for social or other reasons, appears to me to be using the language of such learned judges, not as laying down canons for construing a will, but as justifications for misconstruing it. As soon as you once arrive at your journey's end, you have no more to do than to give effect to the true construction as you see it."

1866, SHAFER, J., in *Morrison v. Wilson*, 30 Cal. 344 (deed to M. "to have and to hold to the said M. his heirs and assigns, free from claims of said P. or his heirs," and concluding "it is fully understood that as to title this is only a quitclaim deed"; by statute under a deed in fee simple by one not owning it, a later acquired title passed by operation of law; the question was whether the first clause here could be modified by the last clause; held, that it could be and was): "If contracting parties have power to define the words which they use, their definitions can never be attacked on the ground that they are repugnant to the words defined; . . . The question then comes to this, have the parties to a written contract the right to set aside the general sense of the words which they use, and for the purposes of the contract to assign to them another and different meaning by convention? That they have both the right and the power to do this there can be no question. The meaning of language depends upon usage, and varies with it. If parties should insert a clause in their contract to the effect that the language used by them should be taken in a certain sense which had become provincial, or in the meaning borne by it in a particular trade, and particularly if they should proceed to state the agreed definition in detail and the definition turned out to be clear and unambiguous, the general meaning would have to give way; and it follows that it must be considered that parties have the power to innovate upon the general meaning of words at large free from all legal restrictions. If they see fit to agree that mile shall stand for league, or grant, bargain, and sell for quit claim, or even black for white, however we might marvel at the caprice, we could not question the power."

1880, DOE, C. J., in *Tilton v. American Bible Society*, 60 N. H. 377, 382 (dealing with a bequest to "the Bible Society"): "The question is not whether a plea of misnomer of a party is sustained by proof, nor whether there is a variance between the evidence and the name of a third person set forth in pleading. The question is not by what name any Bible society was known to others, but which one of several Bible societies was intended by the testator. . . . Evidence showing what name was given to a Bible society in its charter, what name it used or recognized as its own, and by what name or names it was known to others, tends to prove a name by which the legatee *might* have been known to the testator, and a name which he *might* have used in his will to express his intention. But the society intended by *him* and identified by competent evidence, is the legatee, by whatever name described in the will, and notwithstanding any other name or names by which it may have been invariably or usually known to others. . . . A person known to a testator as A. B., and to all others as C. D., may take a legacy given to A. B." <sup>6</sup>

§ 2463. **Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, Contracts, etc.** The traditional rule is found in application almost side by side with the

<sup>6</sup> Other opinions are: 1902, Marshall, J., in *Ball v. Phelan*, 94 Miss. 293, 49 So. 956 (powerful opinion).  
Utter v. Sidman, 170 Mo. 284, 294, 70 S. W. 705 (good opinion); 1909, Whitfield, C. J., in



liberal rule. The former is nowadays perhaps less frequently enforced in England. In the United States it is often invoked under the guise that no peculiar and individual meaning can be shown unless there is an "ambiguity." There are nevertheless abundant instances of the liberal rule's recognition.

(1) In *wills*, the *traditional rule* has found application chiefly to proper names of places and persons and to such terms as "estate" and "money."<sup>1</sup> A special form of it occurs for *words of relationship* having in the law of inheritance a precise meaning, such as "child" or "son." In Coke's day, the

§ 2463. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1816, *Doe v. Chichester*, 4 Dow 65, 93 (devise of "my estate of Ashton," Ashton being a parish; the testator had inherited from his mother and his father different properties, that from his mother lying chiefly in Ashton parish and also in others, and that from his father in Youlston; the testimony of his steward and others that the testator "used in speaking of his property which he had derived from his father to call it his Youlston estate, and that in describing the estate derived by him from his mother he used to designate that by the general name of his Ashton estate," and certain accounts tendered to him, entitled "J. Cleave's account for Ashton estate," including properties in other parishes than Ashton, were excluded); 1820, *Cholmondeley v. Clinton*, 2 Jac. & W. 1, 76, 81, 111 (limitation "to the use of the right heirs of S. R. forever"; held to be ambiguous, as applicable equally to right heirs at the time of the remainder created or at the time of its taking effect, and therefore to permit resort to other indications, in the deed or the circumstances, of the grantor's meaning; careful opinion by Plumer, M. R.); 1847, *Reynolds v. Whelan*, 16 L. J. Ch. 434 (bequest to "W. R., one of my farming men"; there were two persons named W. R., one an ordinary farming servant, recently employed, the other a man of all work, forty years in the testator's service; K. Bruce, V. C., held that the latter could be accurately described as a "farming man" and took the bequest; otherwise, if he could not be so described); 1854, *Mostyn v. M. styn*, 5 H. L.C. 15; (there were five children, R. H. M., J. H. M., S. J. M., T. M., and M. M. D.; after bequests to "R. M." and "J. H. M.," there was a bequest over to "S. M., J. M., and M. D., all of them late of Calcott Hall"; held that the name "J. M." could not be applied to the fourth child T. M.; no clear principle stated).

UNITED STATES: Conn. 1877, *Dunham v. Averill*, 45 Conn. 61 (bequest to the "American and Foreign Bible Society"; there was a society so named and also an American Bible Society; declarations of intent to give to the former, which was called by him by the name in the will, excluded); Mass. 1843, *Tucker v. Seaman's Aid Society*, 7 Mete. 188 (bequest to "the Seaman's Aid Society"; in fact there

was in Boston a "Seaman's Aid Society" and a "Seaman's Friend Society"; the circumstances that the testator was well acquainted with the latter and was ignorant of the former, and that he had used the term "Seaman's Aid Society" on the honest representation of one B., the draftsman, who knew only of the former and who gave its name to the testator on the erroneous supposition that the testator had the former society in mind, were held insufficient to give the bequest to the latter; the Seaman's Friend Society "cannot take, because the name and description are not those by which they have ever acted or been known or designated; and because the Seaman's Aid Society is the one precisely named and described in the will"; this ruling is erroneous, but may be accounted for by the apparent reliance of the Friend Society claimant on the declarations of intention, which were as such clearly inadmissible); 1864, *American Bible Society v. Pratt*, 9 All. 109 (bequest of deposit in the "Dedham Bank"; there existed a Dedham Bank and a Dedham Institution for Savings, the latter commonly known as the Dedham Savings Bank; that the testator had a deposit in the latter, excluded; the ruling markedly illustrates the impropriety of the supposed rule); N. Y. 1814, *Mann v. Mann*, 1 Johns. Ch. 231, 236 (bequest of all the rest of the "moneys," held to mean cash only, and not notes, bonds, and mortgages); Tex. 1921, *Haupt v. Michaelis*, — Tex. —, 231 S. W. 706 (a long will drawn by the testator himself in untechnical language; the opinion begins: "There are certain facts material to be understood in order to properly interpret the above will, which facts we will state"; a page of such facts follows, reciting the number of children, the family history, the lay of the land, etc.; it then proceeds, "where the will is plain and unambiguous no evidence of surrounding circumstances is admissible," apparently not realizing that its own processes have consisted in looking at the "evidence of surrounding circumstances"; its authority for the above-quoted astounding proposition of law, which the opinion declares to have been "established almost from time immemorial and are recognized and applied by all courts," is a legal compilation of anonymous authorship).



rule had been that a devise to a "son" named could be taken by a bastard, if the person had been reputed by that name.<sup>2</sup> Later, the rule seemed to form that whenever a word of relationship was used, the law's meaning could be overthrown when a different sense clearly appeared from the will and when there were no persons who corresponded exactly to the law's meaning. The individual opinions of Lord Justice Bowen and others have in later times practically repudiated these two qualifications; but the British decisions cannot be said to have fully accepted this result; they must at any rate be viewed as a developing series, and not as a consistent whole. In the United States, the traditional rule still persists in many States.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 1607, *Sir Moyle Finch's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 65a ("If a grant be made to a bastard by the surname of him who, as is supposed, begot him, it is good, if he be known by such name; so if a remainder be limited 'Rich. filio Rich. Marwood,' it is good although he be a bastard, if in vulgar reputation and knowledge he be known by such a name"); 1737, *Rivers' Case*, 1 Atk. 410 (devise to "his two sons Charles and James R."; though illegitimate, they were given the estate; "anything that amounts to a 'designatio personæ' is sufficient").

<sup>3</sup> ENGLAND: 1778, *Green v. Howard*, 1 Bro. C. C. 31 (L. C. Thurlow, refusing to apply a bequest to "my own relations" to include second cousins: "The sense of the words, as fixed by legal authority, is not to be altered by the language held on any occasion by the testator, or by his behavior"); 1800, *Cartwright v. Vaudry*, 5 Ves. 530 (a testator had four daughters; one of them was illegitimate, but at the time this was known to none but himself; L. C. Loughborough declined to include her under a devise to "children," though he had "no doubt of the intention"; the special circumstances made this ruling an outrage on the name of justice); 1812, *Wilkinson v. Adam*, 1 Ves. & B. 422, 457; 1816, *Beachcroft v. Beachcroft*, 1 Madd. Ch. 430 (good opinion by V. C. Plumer); 1831, *Fraser v. Pigott*, 1 Younge, 354; 1836, *Blackwell v. Bull*, 1 Keen 176, 181 (Langdale, M. R.: "The word 'family' is capable of so many applications that if any one particular construction were attributed to it in wills, the intention of testators would be more frequently defeated than carried into effect"); 1870, *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727 (devise to "my nephew, J. G.;" there were two relations of that name, one the son of a brother, the other of a wife's brother, and the term "nephew" was held not to be necessarily restricted to the former class of persons); 1873, *Hill v. Crook*, L. R. 6 E. & I. App. 265, 282 (general principle approved; the gift was here applied to illegitimate children, because the terms of the will were held to describe them as such; the absurdity of the doubt in this case was that the parties had been formally married, but the wife was a deceased wife's sister and the union

technically illegal); 1875, *Dorin v. Dorin*, L. R. 7 E. & I. App. 569 (power to a woman to dispose of property "amongst our children": the testator had two illegitimate children by her, then married her, made this will the day after the marriage, had no other children, and treated these two as his; held, that "children" was to be interpreted as "legitimate children" and could not be applied to the above children; a ruling which shames common sense, and, to the perversity of the English law denying legitimation by subsequent marriage, adds the harshness of preventing the parent from supplying by will the deficiencies of the law); 1878, *Ellis v. Houstoun*, L. R. 10 Ch. D. 236, 240 (Malins, V. C., applied the rule, summing up the authorities; only where no legitimate children appear can illegitimate ones take under the term "children"; as to *Dorin v. Dorin*, *supra*, he admitted that "in common with most persons, it is a result which anybody may regret"); 1887, *Re Horner*, L. R. 37 Ch. D. 695 (bequest to "my sister Charlotte, the wife of Thomas Horner," and after her death "amongst her children"; C. was only cohabiting with T. H., as the testator knew; held that "children" signified the illegitimate children of C.; "you are to ascertain the sense in which the testator used the words which you find there"); 1890, *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 Ch. D. 590 (bequest to "relatives," held to include "all those the testator had before treated as relatives," whether legitimate or not; "you may put yourself as much as you can into his position, and diving so into the mind of the person who has made the instrument"; quoted *ante*, § 1362); 1894, *Re Fish*, 2 Ch. 83 (gift to his "niece Eliza Waterhouse"; there was no niece E. W., but there was a legitimate and an illegitimate grandniece, each named E. W.; no evidence to show testator's meaning was admitted, and the clause was applied to the legitimate E. W. as the one nearest described; the opinion shows insufficient acquaintance with the precedents and is wholly unsound); 1902, *Miles v. Wilson*, 1 Ch. 138, 142 (cited *ante*, § 2462); 1906, *Re Corsellis*, 2 Ch. 316 (bequest to "all my nephews and nieces then living," applied to children of a deceased illegitimate sister; following *Re*



The *liberal rule*, on the other hand, has been applied even to the extreme of principle, and the results show how practical and just it can be.<sup>4</sup> More-

Jodrell and Hill v. Crook); 1906, Re Glassington, 2 Ch. 305 (devise of "real estate"; to apply the term to a certain freehold interest which was in law personalty, the testatrix' instructions stating that her only real estate consisted in this freehold interest were not held admissible, but on the facts the term "real estate" was nevertheless applied to the personalty interest in the freehold); 1906, Re Loveland, P. 542, 1 Ch. 542 (the testator formally married his niece W. in Scotland, but by Scotch law the marriage was invalid; after the marriage-ceremony he executed a will making a residuary devise to W. and to "all her children living at my decease, etc."; there was one such child; Swinfen Eady, J.: "I am satisfied, as matter of construction, that the word 'children' is used by the testator as including illegitimate children"; by this ruling it would seem that the unjust doctrine of Dorin v. Dorin was abandoned); Estate of Vines, [1910] p. 147 (will conditional on dying before a certain time; if the words are ambiguous, the deceased's declarations are receivable); In re Pearce, Alliance Ass. Co. v. Pearce, [1913] 2 Ch. 675 (bequest to "any the children or child of my said brother W. W. F."; W. F. had six children by a reputed but not lawful wife H., who died in 1900; by a lawful wife R. married in 1904 he had two more children; the six children by H. had been publicly received as legitimate, and were all known to testator, who liked some of them; held, that only the two legitimate ones could take; Lord Bowen's great judgment in Re Jodrell is not even cited by counsel or court).

IRELAND: 1902, Flood v. Flood, L. R. 1 Ire. 538 (bequest of "all the preference stock or shares in the D. W. & W. R. Co. of which I may at the time of my death be possessed"; the testatrix never had any such shares; stock in the D. & K. R. Co. held to be signified); 1908, M'Hugh v. M'Hugh, 1 Ire. 155 (bequest "to my nieces and nephews" of shares of stock, to be put "in their father's and mother's name until they are 21 years old"; the testatrix had many nephews and nieces, the youngest of whom was at the date of the will 26 years old; the testatrix also had one married son who with his five children, aged 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, lived with the testatrix; held, the bequest was void for uncertainty; this decision is not only as perversely wrong as has been seen for many a day, but shows in the opinion an unfamiliarity with the authorities which is disconcerting); 1908, In re Wrenn, 2 Ire. 370 (bequest to "my mother"; the testator's mother was long since deceased, but there survived a sister M., and a son of the sister, also children of a deceased sister and brother; the will was drafted by the sister M's son; the testator told him to make the

bequest to "your mother," and the son inadvertently wrote "my mother"; held, that the sister M. should take; this is as extreme a case as is on record; but it is notable that the Court took the sensible way of striking out for probate the word "my," on the principle of § 2421, n. 1, *ante*; and then of interpreting the word "mother"; note also that this ruling restores the credit of this court as blemished by M'Hugh v. M'Hugh, *supra*).

CANADA: 1849, Doe v. Taylor, 1 All. 525, 534 ("my grandson"); 1908, Marks v. Marks, 40 Can. Sup. 210 (bequest in 1904 to "my wife"; the testator had married A. in 1873, left her in 1878, and married S. in 1902 and was living with her; held that "my wife" meant the woman so treated by him, and not necessarily the legal one; MacLennan, J., diss.).

UNITED STATES: 1895, Flora v. Anderson, 67 Fed. 182, 188 ("issue," not allowed to be interpreted to include illegitimate issue); 1921, Marquette v. Marquette's Ex'rs, 190 Ky. 182, 227 S. W. 157 ("my children," not allowed to include an illegitimate child); 1829, Gardner v. Heyer, 2 Paige N. Y. 11 (bequests to the testator's children; he had only illegitimate children; held that, there being no legitimate children, the term could be applied under the circumstances to the illegitimate ones).

<sup>4</sup> ENGLAND: 1791, Parsons v. Parsons, 1 Ves. Jr. 266 (annuity to a brother "Edward P." and then to his children; at the date of the will, a brother Samuel P. alone survived, with children, but a brother Edward P. had already died without children; since the "testator had been in the habit of calling his brother Samuel by the name of 'Edward' and 'Ned,'" the annuity was given to Samuel); 1801, Druce v. Denison, 6 Ves. Jr. 385 (bequest of "my personal estate"; a paper drawn up by him at the time, indicating that he included in that term certain choses in action of his wife, was admitted by L. C. Eldon); 1825, Doe v. Jersey, 3 B. & C. 870 (devise of "all that my Briton Ferry estate"; held that these words "denote a property or estate known to the testatrix by the name of her B. F. estate, and not an estate locally situate in a parish or township of B. F.," and that for determining its scope the stewards' accounts, rendered to the testatrix, of the lands therein entered as "B. F. estate" should be considered); 1841-1848, Blundell v. Gladstone, 11 Sim. 467; on appeal, 1 H. L. C. 778, 1 Phillips 279 (to "the second son of Edward Weld, of Lulworth"; there was no such person as E. W. of L., but J. W. was in possession of L., and there had been a brother E. W.; J. W. had two sons, E. J. W., commonly called E. W., and T. W.; held, that on the evidence the description should be applied



over, in its application to *words of relationship*, it would seem to be the commoner one to-day in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

to the second son of J. W. and not the second son of E. J. W.; Patteson, J.: "It was contended . . . that where one person, and one only, fully and accurately answers the whole description, the Court is bound to apply the will to that person. Such may be conceded to be a general rule of law and of construction, . . . but it has exceptions"; 1844, Lee v. Pain, 4 Hare 201, 251 (1. a bequest to "Mrs. and Miss Bowden, of H., widow and daughter of the late Rev. Mr. Bowden"; there were no such persons as ordinarily known: but there were Mrs. Washburne, formerly Miss Bowden, and her daughter, Miss Washburne, and the testatrix "had been repeatedly known, when speaking of the claimants, to call them by the name of Bowden, and on the mistake being pointed out, she acknowledged it"; the legacy was given to Mrs. and Miss W.; 2. a bequest to "Miss Sarah Jameson, of Clapham Common"; there was a Mrs. S. J. of that place, and also a daughter named Frances Anne J., who after the testatrix's death married Mr. Winter; the testatrix knew both mother and daughter; the legacy was given to the daughter); 1847, Ryall v. Hannum, 16 Beav. 536 (bequest to "Elizabeth Abbott, a natural daughter of Elizabeth Abbott, of the parish of G., single woman, and who formerly lived in my service"; this was given to the natural son John of a certain Elizabeth Abbott, who had by marriage another name at the time of the will, on proof that the father of the child was reputed to be the testator's son, that the testator had not heard that it was a daughter, and that he had shown an interest in it); 1915, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children v. Scottish National Society for the Prevention, etc., A. C. 207 (a Scotch will bequeathed money to the "National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children"; held that the plaintiff society should take; but per Earl Loreburn, L. C., the rule only requires that "the accurate use of a name in a will creates a strong presumption against any rival who is not the possessor of the name mentioned in the will").

UNITED STATES: Conn. 1921, Southington B. & T. Co. v. American Baptist H. M. Soc., 96 Conn. 107, 113 Atl. 166 (bequest of "personal estate"; evidence admitted to show its meaning restricted to "personal effects"); N. H. 1883, Smith v. Kimball, 62 N. H. 606 (bequest to the "Meredith Institution," given to the Kimball Union Academy of Meriden, on proof that the testator's relatives had gone to that school, that he had shown great interest, and that he had said, at the time of execution, that the Meredith Institution was at Meriden; see the quotation ante, § 2462); N. Y. 1820, Thomas v. Stevens, 4 Johns. Ch. 607 (bequest to "Cornelia Thompson" given

to "Caroline Thomas," on proof that the claimant was a favorite of the testatrix, and "was the person intended," and that no person named Cornelia Thompson had made claim); Pa. 1790, Powell v. Biddle, 2 Dall. 70 (bequest to a friend "Samuel Powell [son of Samuel Powell, of the city of Philadelphia, carpenter]"; on proof that a person named William Powell was the son of the testator's deceased daughter by one Samuel Powell a carpenter, that he was well known to the testator, and that "the testator usually, by mistake or by way of nickname, called him Samuel," the bequest was given to William, though the same carpenter had also a son named Samuel, the son of a second wife and not acquainted with the testator); Tenn. 1917, Mosely v. Goodman, 138 Tenn. 1, 195 S. W. 590 (bequest to "Mrs. Moseley"; the testator had for many years bought cigars from Mr. Trimble, who sold the Moseley cigars, and the Moseley sign was displayed on the building; the custom of the testator to call Mr. Trimble "Mr. Moseley" and to call Mrs. Trimble "Mrs. Moseley," admitted and allowed to apply the bequest to Mrs. Trimble; but the opinion needlessly labors to deem the case one of ambiguity).

<sup>5</sup> UNITED STATES: Ill. 1912, Coon v. McNelly, 254 Ill. 39, 98 N. E. 218 ("my grandchildren" applied by the testator's circumstances and usage to mean grandchildren of the testator's wife by a former husband); 1916, McDole v. Thurm, 276 Ill. 200, 114 N. E. 542 (bequest "to my wife Luella Heavens, to be in lieu of dower and widow's award"; "to my wife, L. H. . . . for her natural life, but upon her death or when she remarries . . . to my daughter"; in 1907, one Luella Thurm had been divorced from her then husband, and in same year she had made a ceremonial marriage with the testator, but in violation of a law forbidding remarriage of divorced parties within one year; held, that pursuant to the testator's intent Luella Thurm, though not lawfully his wife, should receive the property); 1918, Smith v. Garber, 286 Ill. 67, 121 N. E. 173 ("the child or children of J. G.," held on the facts to include an illegitimate child); 1919, Munie v. Gruenewald, 289 Ill. 468, 124 N. E. 605 ("children," held to include an adopted child); 1920, Miller v. Brinton, 294 Ill. 177, 128 N. E. 370 (circumstances held not sufficient to give to "her heirs-at-law," in a will, "an intention different from that expressed by its language"); Ia. 1902, Kohl v. Frederick, 115 Ia. 517, 88 N. W. 1055 ("inherit," shown to be used in a non-legal sense); Md. 1911, Suman v. Harvey, 114 Md. 241, 79 Atl. 197 (cited more fully post, § 2472); Miss. 1909, Ball v. Phelan, 94 Miss. 293, 49 So. 596 (implied limitation



(2) In *deeds* and *contracts*, the traditional rule finds constant and dominant application in excluding the mutual standard, *i. e.* the agreement of the *parties themselves* upon a special sense for their words.<sup>6</sup> It has been some-

of a remainder in fee to children of a life estate); *S. C.* 1891, *Robb's Estate*, 37 S. C. 19, 28, 39, 16 S. E. 241 (devise to "such persons as shall be entitled under the law"; illegitimacy prevented the inheritance by certain related persons; declarations of the testator, speaking of sisters and nieces, received, as showing his usage of the terms in the will).

<sup>6</sup> Here compare the cases cited *post*, § 2465:

ENGLAND: 1827, *Taylor v. Briggs*, 2 C. & P. 525 (the question being whether "cotton in bales" meant an ordinary bag or a cubical compress, the local usage was admitted, but not "what was said at the time" between the parties; *Abbott, C. J.*: "That sort of evidence is of too dangerous a nature to be relied on"); 1847, *Caine v. Horsfall*, 2 C. & K. 349 (contract between a merchant and a captain in the African trade to pay the latter "6 per cent on the net proceeds of the homeward cargo"; the plaintiff claiming that the defendant should not deduct bad debts in reckoning net proceeds, *Rolfe B.*, ruled that "evidence might be admissible to prove their meaning, not in this particular contract, but in all mercantile dealings or to show that they have a different meaning when used in the African trade"); *Canada*: 1893, *Troop v. Union Ins. Co.*, 32 N. Br. 135, 140 (marine policy); 1900, *Northeastern R. Co. v. Hastings*, App. Cas. 260 (railway lease; *Halsbury, L. C.*: "No amount of acting by the parties can alter or qualify words which are plain and unambiguous").

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1897, *Barber v. R. Co.*, 166 U. S. 83, 17 Sup. 488 (circumstances may be consulted "to explain ambiguities of description," but not "to control the construction or extent of devises therein"); 1902, *Dennis v. Slyfield*, 54 C. C. A. 520, 117 Fed. 474 (an option to ship "any or all of this lumber," not allowed to be made an obligation to ship all of it, by the parties' understanding); 1903, *Ocean S. S. Co. v. Aetna Ins. Co.*, 121 Fed. 882 (applied to marine insurance contracts); 1904, *Union Selling Co. v. Jones*, 128 Fed. 672 (contract for binder twine, etc.; prior negotiations excluded; illustrating the difficulty of drawing the line between this principle and that of § 2465, n. 5, *post*); 1917, *Shoninger Bros. v. Dormer Bros. Co.*, 2d C. C. A., 241 Fed. 662 (contract of sale, for delivery in Dec., Jan., Feb., and March; parties' understanding that this meant weekly shipments, excluded); 1921, *Ohio Valley P. Works v. Oneida S. P. Co.*, 2d C. C. A., 271 Fed. 57, 63 ("It is only where a contract is ambiguous that parol evidence is proper to explain its meaning"; here, the annual amount of business done); *California*: 1895, *Balfour*

*v. Fresno C. & I. Co.*, 109 Cal. 221, 41 Pac. 876 (general principle applied to a contract); *Connecticut*: 1900, *Adams v. Turner*, 73 Conn. 38, 46 Atl. 247 ("new and useful improvements," in a patent contract, not allowed to be shown by mutual understanding to include later inventions); *Georgia*: 1897, *Harrison v. Tate*, 100 Ga. 383, 28 S. E. 227 (notes for title to land; the parties' construction excluded, because no ambiguity appeared); *Indiana*: 1901, *Ralya v. Atkins*, 157 Ind. 331, 61 N. E. 726 (contract for the sale of a patent; collecting the authorities; the parties' construction is admissible if the terms are ambiguous); *Iowa*: 1895, *Hamill v. Woods*, 94 Ia. 246, 62 N. W. 735 ("When the language of a guarantee is not so clear as to indicate its meaning conclusively, parol evidence is admissible to show the circumstances . . . to the end that the intent of the parties to it may prevail"; collecting the authorities); *Massachusetts*: 1891, *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228 (quoted *ante*, § 2462); 1893, *Reynolds v. Boston Rubber Co.*, 160 Mass. 240, 245, 35 N. E. 677 ("When the description of granted premises is clear, extrinsic evidence is not admissible to control it; but when it is uncertain, such evidence may be resorted to, and the acts of adjoining owners showing a practical construction adopted and acted upon are of great weight"); 1899, *Violette v. Rice*, 173 Mass. 82, 53 N. E. 144 (evidence of a particular sense of words by particular parties, not admitted, to determine the sense of the word "services" in a theatrical contract); 1900, *Menage v. Rosenthal*, 175 Mass. 358, 56 N. E. 579 (parties' conduct or admissions, receivable only when the meaning of the contract is doubtful); *Michigan*: 1890, *Hartford I. M. Co. v. Cambria M. Co.*, 80 Mich. 491, 45 N. W. 351 (mining location involving the "east half" and "west half" of a lot; "the circumstances of the case held not to alter the regular meaning of "half" from its signification of quantity merely, there being "no possible ambiguity about these descriptions"); 1897, *Brown v. Schiappacasse*, 115 Mich. 47, 72 N. W. 1096 (lease with license; circumstances not received to show that the lease was incidental only to the license); *New York*: 1895, *Armstrong v. Granite Co.*, 147 N. Y. 495, 42 N. E. 186 (that the parties used the term "minerals and ores" in a limited sense, not admitted, except for the purpose of reforming the instrument); 1902, *Uihlein v. Matthews*, 172 N. Y. 154, 64 N. E. 792 (intention of the parties to a quit-claim deed not to release a party-wall restriction established by a prior deed, not allowed to be shown; *Bartlett, J.*, diss.); *Oregon*: 1900, *Abraham v. R. Co.*, 37 Or. 495, 60 Pac. 899 (conveyance



times, in early cases, allowed to exclude even the local standard, *i. e.* the *usage of a trade or locality*.<sup>7</sup>

The liberal rule, on the other hand, is to-day conceded, practically everywhere, to permit resort in any case to the *usage of a trade or locality*, no matter how plain the apparent sense of the word to the ordinary reader; and some of the extreme instances are persuasive to demonstrate the fallacy of ignoring the purely relative meaning of words and the injustice of attempting to enforce a supposed rigid standard.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the notion,

"for all legitimate railroad purposes"; parties' understanding that this included the purpose of a hotel or eating-house, excluded); *Tennessee*: 1898, *First National Bank of Nashville v. R. Co.*, — Tenn. —, 46 S. W. 312 (promise to use bonds to pay "for the floating debt secured by pledge of income bonds"; that the promisor used these words as applying to certain holders of the debt, excluding others, not admitted); *Vermont*: 1915, *Cilley v. Bacon*, 88 Vt. 496, 93 Atl. 261 (timber reserved "on the ridge or hill"; parties' conversation using "ridge or hill" to mean the summit only, excluded, because "their plain and ordinary meaning includes both the top and the sides"; unsound); *Washington*: 1896, *Owen v. Henderson*, 16 Wash. 39, 47 Pac. 215 (the "west half" of a lot; a special alignment, as shown by former transactions of the parties, excluded).

<sup>7</sup> 1856, *Sigsworth v. McIntyre*, 18 Ill. 126, 127; 1834, *Allen v. Kingsbury*, 16 Pick. Mass. 238 (deed calling for a boundary "to an oak-tree marked, thence on the heirs of J. K. to another oak-tree marked"; the commissioners' practice to follow a curved line conforming to the contour of the land and marked by monuments, excluded; "evidence of usage is never to be received to overturn the clear words of a deed"); 1807, *Winthrop v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Wash. C. C. 7, 10 ("usage can only be resorted to where the law is doubtful and unsettled"); and the early English cases cited *ante*, § 2462.

So, too, in a modern case: 1920, *El Reno Wholesale Grocery Co. v. Stocking*, 293 Ill. 494, 127 N. E. 642 (whether a contract of food purchase by exchange of notes was customarily replaced by formal written contract; "While usage may be admissible to explain what is doubtful, it is never admissible to contradict what is plain; 12 Cyc. 1091"; this repetition of old saws on the authority of a digest-compilation will never help along the progress of the law).

<sup>8</sup> ENGLAND: 1832, *Smith v. Wilson*, 3 B. & Ad. 728 (covenant in a lease of a rabbit warren, "that at the expiration of the term they the plaintiffs would leave on the warren 10,000 rabbits or conies, the defendant paying 60*l.* per thousand for the same, and for any more than that number at that rate, the number to be estimated by two indifferent persons"; breach, that the plaintiff left 19,200 rabbits,

but the defendant would not pay for them; it appeared that the appraiser's estimate was 1600 dozen, and the defendant was allowed to prove that by the customary meaning of the locality, "the term 'thousand,' as applied to rabbits, meant '100 dozen'"); 1836, *Bold v. Rayner*, 1 M. & W. 346 (sale of goods on ship-board; the sale notes interchanged by the parties read, the one "from the Speedy or Charlotte," the other "ex Speedy and Charlotte"; the Speedy was lost, but the Charlotte arrived; a usage that, where two vessels are named, the goods may be delivered from either at seller's option was admitted; counsel objected that by the sold note both must arrive; Parke, B.: "Yes, if you read it strictly *and*; but the evidence was that custom reads it *or*"; L. C. B. Abinger: "The Court must look at each contract, and say whether in its whole spirit and meaning *and* did not mean *or* in the understanding of the parties"); 1846, *Grant v. Maddox*, 15 M. & W. 737 (theatrical engagement for "three years at a salary of 5, 6, and 7 pounds per week in those years respectively"; the professional usage that "actors were never paid during the time of vacation," admitted as interpreting the term "years"); 1860, *Myers v. Sarl*, 3 E. & E. 306 (building contract, providing for a "weekly account of the work done"; trade usage admitted to show that "weekly account" was restricted to a particular part of the work, even though "the words have a plain general meaning"; quoted *ante*, § 2462); 1880, *Mitchell v. Henry*, L. R. 15 Ch. D. 181, 24 Sol. J. 690 (trademark infringement; the plaintiff's registered description named a worsted having a "white selvage"; part of the warp being a "dark gray or black mohair," the goods had a dark appearance, and Jessel, M. R., declaring "that is a black selvage and not a white selvage," and that "no amount of evidence would convince him that black was white," declined to give effect to the plaintiff's testimony that the plaintiff's selvage "was what was perfectly well known in the trade as a white selvage"; on appeal, this was reversed, on the ground that "the question is not whether the selvage is white, but whether it is *what the trade know* as a white selvage").

UNITED STATES: *California*: 1905, *Gardiner v. McDonough*, 147 Cal. 313, 81 Pac. 964 (sale of "peas" and "pinks," interpreted by



so frequently observed in the interpretation of wills, that the ordinary legal definition of a word cannot be superseded, is seldom insisted upon in the face of commercial usage.<sup>9</sup>

✓ The liberal rule is rarely so far conceded as to allow the *parties' special mutual sense* to be considered;<sup>10</sup> perhaps the only settled instances are those

usage to mean "white beans," and "pink beans," and "per 100" to mean "per 100 pounds"); *Kentucky*: 1905, Rochester German Ins. Co. v. Peaslee G. Co., 120 Ky. 752, 87 S. W. 1115 ("noon" may be shown by custom to signify standard, not solar time); *Illinois*: 1895, Leavitt v. Kennicott, 157 Ill. 235, 41 N. E. 737 (a theatrical contract employing "at a weekly salary of \$40 per week"; usage admitted to show that "per week" signified the weeks of the theatrical season only, not of the calendar year); 1898, McChesney v. Chicago, 173 Ill. 75, 50 N. E. 191 ("Sec. 23, 38, 14," interpreted by usage to mean "range 38, township 14"); *Iowa*: 1896, Coulter Mfg. Co. v. Grocery Co., 97 Ia. 616, 66 N. W. 875 ("prices guarantied against market price to date of shipment"; usage admitted, even though the words were not apparently obscure or technical); 1898, Brody v. Chittenden, 106 Ia. 524, 76 N. W. 1009 (whether certain jewelers' tools, etc., were included under a mortgage of "furniture"; usage of the trade allowed); *Massachusetts*: 1886, Com. v. Hobbs 140 Mass. 443, 5 N. E. 158 ("The fact that the white arsenic was colored with lamp-black was immaterial; it still remained the substance known as white arsenic, though no longer white in appearance"); 1919, Guild v. Sampson, 232 Mass. 509, 122 N. E. 712 ("rent" in a lease; custom of brokers not admissible to vary the effect of a "contract expressing in clear terms the intention of the parties"; but this is begging the question); *Michigan*: 1904, Barker v. Citizens' M. F. Ins. Co., 136 Mich. 626, 99 N. W. 866 ("winter season" in the logging season); *Minnesota*: 1897, Brown v. Doyle, 69 Minn. 543, 72 N. W. 814 (warranty of a horse as "sure foal-getter"; evidence of the usual percentage of foal-getting from "sure foal-getters," received; here, 60 per cent); *New Hampshire*: 1891, Farnum v. R. Co., 66 N. H. 569, 29 Atl. 541 (authority for "noiseless steam motor"; technical application of that term to motors not operating without certain noise, held admissible); *New York*: 1843, Hinton v. Locke, 5 Hill N. Y. 437 (contract to pay 12s. per day for labor; trade usage admitted to show that "day" signified "ten hours"); *Washington*: 1891, Reed v. Tacoma Ass'n, 2 Wash. 198, 26 Pac. 252 (deed running a line "west"; the custom of the government surveyors, who had surveyed this land, to run lines not due west, but a little north of west, was admitted to show the meaning of "west"); 1912, Turlock F. J. Co. v. Pacific & P. S. B. Co., 71 Wash. 128, 127 Pac. 842 ("fermentation" in a grapejuice contract).

<sup>9</sup> 1868, Thorington v. Smith, 8 Wall. U. S. 1 (a contract to pay in "dollars" may be construed on the facts to mean dollars of the unlawful Confederate Government); 1898, Higgins v. Cal. P. & A. Co., 120 Cal. 629, 52 Pac. 1080 (a contract to pay "fifty cents per ton for each and every gross ton" of asphaltum, etc., the statute providing that "twenty hundred weight constitute a ton"; the trial Court found that the parties used "gross ton" as meaning 2240 pounds; good opinion by Temple, J.); 1920, Kingfisher M. & E. Co. v. Westbrook, 79 Okl. 188, 192 Pac. 209 (telegrams about shipments of cars of flour; millmen not admitted to testify to the meaning of words, because it was not shown that any words had a trade meaning). *Contra*: 1908, Birely v. Dodson, 107 Md. 229, 68 Atl. 488; 1904, Vogt v. Shienebeck, — Mich. —, 100 N. W. 820 (the meaning of "f. o. b." "is so plain that it was not permissible to explain it by custom or otherwise").

For examples of the earlier contrary rule in the 1700s, see *ante*, § 2462.

<sup>10</sup> *Eng.* 1790, Calverley v. Williams, 1 Ves. Sr. 210 (auction sale of "the lands in the possession of Groombridge"; the buyer, having taken the seller's schedule and tallied the land described in it, completed the purchase; but it was then discovered that seven acres more were in fact "in the possession of G."; held, that "the understanding of these parties applied to the lands specifically described" in the schedule, and that the buyer therefore was not entitled to the seven acres); *U. S.* 1920, Nicoll v. Pittsvein Coal Co., 2d C. C. A., 269 Fed. 968 (contract to supply coal; "all contracts subject to car supply" appeared on the letterheads; held, that "it was for the jury to say, not that the notice became incorporated in the contract, but that the usage was intended by the parties so to be incorporated, and the notices used by both parties were some evidence of such intent"; moreover, "we think that there is no reason in the nature of things why the individual parties to a transaction may not employ words or whole phrases in a particular sense irrespective of the ordinary sense; . . . there is no doubt at all that ambiguity of phrase is not necessary to let in evidence of usage"; learned opinion by Hough, J.); 1915, Furness-Withy & Co. v. Fahey, 127 Md. 333, 96 Atl. 619 (meaning of "O.K." on a shipping contract).

Cases *contra* are placed under note 6 *supra*.

For instances where the parties' understanding is allowed, there being an "ambiguity," see *post*, § 2465.



of a secret cipher,<sup>11</sup> and of the designation of a party to a deed by a surname misused or misspelled according to the ordinary standard.<sup>12</sup> The reason for this hesitation is twofold, and is appreciable enough. In the first place, the existence of a special trade usage is much more credible and more definitely provable than a special usage of the parties to a specific transaction; the use of a regular cipher-code is almost the only instance of a tangible usage of the latter sort. In the second place, the parties' mutual "understanding" as to the sense of particular words or phrases is perilously akin to an "understanding" that certain terms not written shall prevail in place of the written terms, and this would be plainly a violation of the rule, already considered (*ante*, §§ 2430, 2442), against "varying terms of the writing." Hence a judicial tendency to confuse the two rules. But neither of these is a sufficient reason for erroneously stating the present principle (*ante*, § 2462). Rather let the principle be acknowledged that the sense to be enforced is the special sense, if any, which the parties have fixed upon; but let there be the most convincing proof that they have distinctly and mutually so agreed, and let this process of interpreting their actual words not be made a cloak for evading the other rule against substituting their extrinsic for their written terms.

It may be added that the same conflict of considerations often applies to interpretation by the special usage of a *trade* or *locality*. So far as this usage merely interprets a particular word or phrase existing in the document, the present principle permits this (as indicated above). But so far as the usage endeavors to intrude into the document, or set up in rivalry with it, additional terms, it may violate the other rule against varying the written terms (*ante*, § 2440). The precedents, therefore, under that and the present rule are sometimes hard to distinguish.

(3) In a *statute*, the legislative meaning depends on the genesis of the statute and the legislators' intent, and the question is therefore a different one.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Can.* N. Br. Consol. St. 1903, c. 127, § 37 (a telegraphic word or term agreed upon "as meaning between them some other word" etc., or as having "any other than the ordinary or apparent meaning," shall be taken "to be the word" etc. so agreed); *U. S.* 1904, *Norman P. S. Co. v. Ford*, 77 Conn. 461, 59 Atl. 499 (parties' private meaning for the words "on contract" in certain books of entry, admitted); 1899, *Penn Tobacco Co. v. Leman*, 109 Ga. 428, 434 S. E. 679 ("O. K." in a contract, allowed to be explained, because the parties agree "these letters should have definite meaning as between themselves"); 1902, *Powers v. Com.*, 114 Ky. 237, 70 S. W. 644, 1050; 71 S. W. 627 (military officer's telegram, "all right," allowed to be shown by him to have a special meaning according to a secret code previously agreed upon).

<sup>12</sup> 1896, *Hicks v. Ivey*, 99 Ga. 648, 26 S. E. 68 (a grant to "Pulling"; deed from "Pullen"; the identity of persons allowed to be shown); 1895, *De Cordova v. Korte*, 7 N. M. 678, 41

*Pac.* 526 (that the grantee's name in a deed, being "H. K."; was used to indicate a partnership doing business under that name, allowed to be shown); 1815, *Jackson v. Hart*, 12 Johns. N. Y. 77, 84 (a State land patent being in issue, "parol evidence would be admissible to prove that 'George Houseman' and 'George Hosmer' are the same person; but certainly it is not explaining a latent ambiguity to prove that a grant to 'George Houseman,' a real person, was intended for another person of the name of 'George Hosmer'"); 1893, *Marmet Co. v. Archibald*, 37 W. Va. 778, 788, 17 S. E. 299 (corporation contracting by an assumed name); and additional instances cited *post*, § 2529 (presumption of identity of person from identity of name).

Compare the doctrine as to a *bill* or *note* in a fictitious or wrong name: cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 347, note; *ib.* 428, note.

<sup>13</sup> 1920, *Murrell v. Industrial Commission*, 291 Ill. 334, 126 N.E. 189 ("child" in a work-



§ 2464. **Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.** The usage of a trade or locality or sect or dialect being always eligible to supersede the ordinary or popular sense of words (*ante*, § 2463), it remains merely a question for the particular case whether the parties have in fact spoken according to that standard.

Where all the parties are members of the same trade or other circle of persons, little difficulty can arise; the only requirement is that the special sense alleged should be in fact a usage, or settled habit of expression, and not merely the expression of a few persons or of casual occasions.<sup>1</sup> But when one of the parties is not a member of the trade or other circle, his acceptance of the standard must be made to appear (on the principle of § 2466, *post*). For this purpose, his *actual knowledge* of the particular sense as applicable to the transaction would suffice; otherwise it must appear to be so generally known in the community that his actual individual knowledge of it may be inferred.<sup>2</sup> The application of the general principle will then be a mere question of the probabilities of meaning for each case.<sup>3</sup> Where the usage is not that of a

men's compensation statute, held to exclude an illegitimate child); 1922, *Broadbent's Case*, — Mass. —, 134 N. E. 632 (similar).

Query: Where *statute* defines a meaning for a technical word, does this exclude resort to trade usage or mutual agreement; 1898, *Higgins v. Cal. P. & A. Co.*, 120 Cal. 629 (cited *supra*, n. 9); 1920, *Dwight & Lloyd S. Co. v. American & R. Co.*, 2d C. C. A., 263 Fed. 315 (N. Y. Consol. Laws, c. 20, providing that all contracts "shall be taken and construed according to the standards of weights and measures adopted in this article," applied to make "ton" mean the ton of 2000 pounds).

§ 2464. <sup>1</sup> For the mode of proving usage, see note 9, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> ENGLAND: 1863, *Russian Steam-Nav. T. Co. v. Silva*, 13 C. B. N. S. 610, 617 ("where the performance has reference to a particular trade, [it] necessarily involves an obligation on the party to make himself acquainted by due inquiry with the usages of that trade"); 1881, *Holt v. Collyer*, L. R. 16 Ch. D. 718, 721 ("beerhouse" as used in an ordinary lease, not interpreted by trade meaning).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1921, *Pond Creek M. & E. Co. v. Clark*, 7th C. C. A., 270 Fed. 482 (flour sale between parties in Chicago and Oklahoma, using the term "basis Chicago"); *Ga.* 1896, *Wheelwright v. Dyal*, 99 Ga. 247, 25 S. E. 170 (lumber trade usage held not broad enough); *Mass.* 1872, *Howard v. Ins. Co.*, 109 Mass. 385 (warranty in a New York policy not to load above a certain quantity of "coal" at Cardiff; certain "patent fuel" having been so loaded, held that the usage not to include it under the term "coal" must be "known beyond Cardiff, and known so generally that the parties may fairly be presumed to have made their contract in view of its existence"); 1904, *Tower Co. v. Southern Pac. Co.*, 184 Mass. 472, 69 N. E. 348 (a usage

to class oil-clothing as "flammable goods" for stowage purposes, admitted; "when a custom is general as applied to a particular transaction," actual knowledge by the other party need not be proved; yet the presumption is "not one of law for the Court"); *Mich.* 1896, *Eaton v. Gladwell*, 108 Mich. 678, 66 N. W. 598 (excluding a custom among carpenters not so general as to be probably known to the opponent); *N. Y.* 1872, *Walls v. Bailey*, 49 N. Y. 463, 473 (collecting the cases); 1895, *Armstrong v. Granite Co.*, 147 N. Y. 495, 42 N. E. 186 (excluding usage as to the meaning of "minerals" "about there," *i. e.* in the C. valley, as not a settled one for the region); 1895, *Rickerson v. Ins. Co.*, 149 N. Y. 307, 43 N. E. 856 (insurance of premises "No. 160 Mott St." containing two buildings; custom to describe a rear building specifically when intended, rejected); *N. D.* 1908, *Continental Hose Co. v. Fargo*, 17 N. D. 5, 114 N. W. 834 ("paid firemen"; the burden is on the party asserting a technical meaning); *Oh.* 1864, *Lowe v. Lehrman*, 15 Oh. St. 179, 185 (good opinion by Welch, J.); *Wis.* 1899, *Shores Lumber Co. v. Stitt*, 102 Wis. 450, 78 N. W. 563 (actual knowledge is not necessary).

<sup>3</sup> The following rulings will illustrate the application:

ENGLAND: 1811, *Uhde v. Walters*, 2 Camp. 16 (policy of insurance to any port "in the Baltic"; evidence admitted of the nautical and mercantile understanding to include the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic, though geographers name them as distinct); 1836, *Clayton v. Gregson*, 5 A. & E. 302 ("level" in a mining contract); 1891, *Dashwood v. Magniac*, 3 Ch. 306, 354, 366 (a will empowering trustees to fell timber; usage admitted to interpret).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1870, *Hearn v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Cliff. 318 ("at and from the port," in a marine insurance policy); *Conn.* 1904, *Soper*



trade, but of a *locality*, the form of it may be common reputation<sup>4</sup> or commonly-used documents.<sup>5</sup> When *initials* or other abbreviations are to be interpreted, the local usage or repute is of course receivable,<sup>6</sup> even for electoral ballots;<sup>7</sup> though here the real doubt, if any, apparently involves the question whether in point of form (*ante*, § 2454) the terms of the vote or other act have been sufficiently embodied in writing.

Whether a usage, instead of interpreting the document's words, introduces additional terms into the transaction and thereby violates the rule against *varying a written transaction*, is a different question (*ante*, § 2440), as also

*v. Tyler*, 77 Conn. 104, 58 Atl. 699 (contract with a Boston grain dealer is subject to the Boston usage in the grain trade); *Ill.* 1906, *People v. Wiemers*, 225 Ill. 17, 80 N. E. 45 ("crushed cobble" in an ordinance); 1908, *Steidtmann v. Lay Co.*, 234 Ill. 84, 84 N. E. 640 ("f.o.b."); *Ind.* 1903, *Rastetter v. Reynolds*, 160 Ind. 133, 66 N. E. 612 (contract for elm strips of specified dimensions; a usage to determine measurements at the time of sawing, held binding); *Ia.* 1900, *Wood v. Allen*, 111 Ia. 97, 82 N. W. 451 ("dry goods"); 1904, *Stoner v. Zachary*, 122 Ia. 287, 97 N. W. 1098 (meaning of "Nfy." on a bill of lading, among carriers); 1905, *Citizens' State Bank v. Chambers*, 129 Ia. 414, 105 N. W. 692 (interest and commissions); 1906, *Tubbs v. Mechanics' Ins. Co.*, 131 Ia. 217, 108 N. W. 324 (usage as to "machinery" in a fire insurance policy, excluded); *Mass.* 1857, *Ford v. Tirrell*, 9 Gray 401 (contract to build a stone wall at 11 cents a foot; to determine whether the inner or the outer face should be taken as the basis, usage was considered); *Minn.* 1896, *St. Paul & M. Trust Co. v. Harrison*, 64 Minn. 300, 66 N. W. 980 ("breeder" in a stallion-warranty); *Mont.* 1898, *Cambers v. Lowry*, 21 Mont. 478, 54 Pac. 816 (mining usage employed to interpret a lease); *Nebr.* 1903, *Bixby v. Bruce*, 69 Nebr. 78, 95 N. W. 34 (contract for "\$8 a thousand for brick in the wall," plaintiff being a contractor; plaintiff's evidence of a custom among masons to charge for empty space in hollow walls, held inadmissible in the absence of defendant's actual knowledge or of general repute); 1919, *Haney v. Collins*, 103 Nebr. 782, 174 N. W. 419 (contract to pasture cattle at 25 cents "per head per month"; issue whether calves running with cows were to be reckoned as separate heads; custom among livestock men in the vicinity to count an unweaned calf with its mother, admitted; *Cornish and Sedgwick, JJs.*, diss., on the ground that knowledge of the custom, actual or implied, by the promisor, was not shown; the dissenting opinion purports to formulate the law didactically, but its doctrine is confused); *N. J.* 1899, *Halsey v. Adams*, 63 N. J. L. 330, 43 Atl. 708 (trade meaning of "reduce" in an insurance contract); *N. Y.* 1872, *Walls v. Bailey*, 49 N. Y. 463, 468 (contract for plastering at a price "per square yard"; local usage admitted to de-

termine whether "yard" included space actually plastered or total superficial area of walls including windows and doors); 1905, *Home Ins. Co. v. Continental Ins. Co.*, 180 N. Y. 389, 73 N. E. 65 ("usage and object of underwriters in inserting the 'pro rata' clause in policies of reinsurance," excluded); *Oh.* 1864, *Lowe v. Lehman*, 15 Oh. St. 179, 184 (contract to furnish brick at \$6.25 "per thousand"; whether this signified the number furnished or used or the like, allowed to be shown by trade usage); *Wis.* 1904, *O'Brien Lumber Co. v. Wilkinson*, 123 Wis. 272, 101 N. W. 1050 (custom of leading cars).

Compare the rulings as to *expert testimony* to meanings of words (*ante*, § 1955).

<sup>4</sup> 1895, *Sullivan v. Collins*, 20 Colo. 528, 39 Pac. 334 (the fact that certain property described in a tax list was well known by that description and in common understanding applied to specific property, admitted).

<sup>5</sup> 1894, *Hanlon v. R. Co.*, 40 Nebr. 52, 58, 58 N. W. 590 (maps in accepted use by community at time of deed, received to interpret an uncertain line).

<sup>6</sup> 1897, *Smith v. Brackett*, 69 Conn. 492, 38 Atl. 57 (insolvency docket); 1920, *People v. Thompson*, 295 Ill. 187, 129 N. E. 155 ("R" in an assessor's book); 1898, *State v. Howard*, 91 Me. 396, 40 Atl. 65 (record of taxpayers; "R. D. M. L.," etc., explainable by interpretation); 1897, *Maurin v. Lyon*, 69 Minn. 257, 72 N. W. 72 (technical abbreviations of the wheat trade); 1898, *State v. White*, 70 Vt. 225, 39 Atl. 1085 (record of taxpayers; "R. L. D." and "\$25," interpreted by usage of office).

<sup>7</sup> 1879, *Clark v. Board*, 126 Mass. 282, 286 (the application of ballot-names, by interpretation, to particular persons, as when the initial only is thereon marked, may be made by the proper tribunal, but not by a board of ministerial election officers); 1868, *People v. Cicott*, 16 Mich. 283, 308, 309, 317 (*contra*, on the first point; but *Christianey, J.*, and *Cooley, C. J.*, approve the orthodox rule; "it has the merit of harmonizing with the rules applied to other written instruments, which I think is no slight recommendation; it is always objectionable and mischievous to lay down different rules for classes of cases which all come within the same reasons"). Compare the application of the Opinion rule, *ante*, § 1967.



the question of *implied contract* whether a usage has been so adopted as to form a term of the transaction.<sup>8</sup> So, too, the question must be distinguished whether and when *expert opinion* may be availed of to prove the technical meaning of a word (*ante*, § 1955).<sup>9</sup>

§ 2465. **Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.** There is no reason, in the nature of things, why the individual parties to a transaction may not employ words in a particular sense, irrespective of the ordinary or popular sense; because what we are seeking, in interpretation, is their actual standard, and the popular standard is merely taken provisionally, as presumably theirs (*ante*, § 2461). It can thus be, in theory, only a question of fact in each case whether the parties *were* using a special mutual sense.

But in practice two rules intervene to obstruct the simple application of this principle. One is the rule against varying the terms of a contract by setting up other terms in competition with it (*ante*, §§ 2430, 2442). This rule makes it often difficult to accept the parties' understanding as a source of interpreting the written words without virtually substituting extrinsic terms.<sup>1</sup> The other is the supposed rule against disturbing a "plain meaning" by any other meaning, or, as sometimes phrased, against using extrinsic evidence unless the terms are ambiguous. This rule, as affecting the present sort of data, has already been considered (*ante*, § 2463); and its policy, though unsound, is often deemed controlling. But, assuming these two rules to be not obstructive in a particular case, the general principle has full sway:

1868, *WELLS, J.*, in *Stoops v. Smith*, 100 Mass. 63 (the defendant having agreed to pay the plaintiff "for inserting business card in 200 copies of his advertising chart," the defendant, refusing to pay, offered to show that the chart, as understood between them, meant a chart of cloth, to be posted up in two hundred public places near Worcester, and that no chart had been so made and posted): "The purpose of all such evidence is, to

<sup>8</sup> The following ruling illustrates the distinction: 1892, *Richmond & D. R. Co. v. Hisson*, 97 Ala. 187, 190, 13 So. 209 (custom of brakemen in coupling, as varying from a rule of contract; not available unless acted on by both so as to alter the contract).

<sup>9</sup> For other rules as to the *mode of evidencing a usage*, see *ante*, §§ 379, 1954 (number and kind of instances) and § 2053 (number of witnesses).

§ 2465. <sup>1</sup> The following rulings illustrate the distinction:

*England*: 1840, *Doe v. Webster*, 4 Perry & D. 270, 274 (deed of land "with the appurtenances"; a certain lot was an appurtenance, but the original offer of sale had expressly excepted it; the purchaser's admissions, after the sale, that he had not bought it were excluded; "this evidence went to contradict the deed, not to apply the words of it to any particular thing").

*United States*: Ill. 1872, *McCormick v. Huse*, 66 Ill. 319; Mass. 1870, *Black v. Bachelder*, 120 Mass. 171 (advertising contract

"payable as convenient"; an understanding that this signified "payable after sales made through the circulation of the advertisement," excluded, as a "construction of the contract in direct violation of its terms"); 1908, *Strong v. Carver*, C. G. Co. 197 Mass. 53, 83 N. E. 328 (contract for license to use patented machines); N. Y. 1903, *Trustees v. Jessup*, 173 N. Y. 84, 65 N. E. 949 (contract to make "a roadway"; the parties' understanding that the roadway should be of wooden piers, not a solid embankment, excluded); Vt. 1906, *Grout v. Moulton*, 79 Vt. 122, 64 Atl. 453 ("satisfactory demonstration" of an automobile; the vendor's statements at the time of sale, not admitted to explain the term).

Similarly, the parties' understanding cannot avail to evade the effect of an obligation in point of law: 1907, *Inman Mfg. Co. v. American Cereal Co.*, 133 Ia. 71, 110 N. W. 287; 1843, *Brockett v. Bartholomew*, 6 Mete. Mass. 396 (whether certain payments were applicable only to the rent of premises).



ascertain in what sense the parties themselves used the ambiguous terms in the writing which sets forth their contract. If the previous negotiations make it manifest in what sense they understood and used those terms, they furnish the best definition to be applied in the interpretation of the contract itself. The effect must be limited to definition of the terms used, and identification of the subject-matter. If so limited, it makes no difference that the language of the negotiations relates to the future, and consists in positive engagements on the part of the other party to the contract. Their effect depends, not upon their promissory obligation, but upon the aid they afford in the interpretation of the contract in suit. They are not the less effective for the purposes of explanation and definition because they purport to carry the force of obligation. The contract in suit may illustrate this principle in a point that is not in dispute. The defendant agrees to pay fifty dollars 'for inserting business card,' etc. In applying this stipulation, if the defendant had a business card distinctively known and recognized as such, there would be no difficulty in giving effect to the contract. But the identification of that card would involve the whole principle of admitting parol evidence for the interpretation and application of written contracts to the subject-matter. It could be done only by the aid of parol testimony. Suppose he had several business cards, differing in form and contents, but one was selected and agreed upon for the purpose at the time the contract was signed; or that one had been prepared specially for the purpose. Clearly parol testimony would be competent to identify the card so selected or prepared, and to prove that the parties assented to and adopted it as the card to which the contract would apply. Suppose, thirdly, that no such card had been selected or prepared, but its form, contents and style had been described verbally and assented to, and the plaintiff had agreed to insert it as so described. Such evidence may be resorted to, not for the promise it contains, but for the aid it affords in fixing the meaning and applying the general language of the written contract. The same considerations render the evidence offered by the defendant competent for similar purposes. The term 'his advertising chart' requires to be practically applied. The representations of the plaintiff are in the nature of a description of the vehicle by which the publication of the business card was to be effected; and his account of the disposition he proposed to make of the charts was a description of the extent and the sense in which it was to be an 'advertising chart.'"

1920, HUGH, J., in *Nicoll v. Pittsrein Coal Co.*, 2d C. C. A. 269 Fed. 968, 971: "We think, with Dean Wigmore, § 2465, that there is no reason in the nature of things why the individual parties to a transaction may not employ words or whole phrases in a particular sense irrespective of the ordinary sense." <sup>2</sup>

The application of the principle has long been seen in the interpretation of *descriptions in deeds*,<sup>3</sup> because there is there always some concrete and

<sup>2</sup> See also a good opinion by Barbour, J., in *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.* (1839), 13 Pet. 89, 101-103.

<sup>3</sup> ENGLAND: 1787, Buller, J., in *Doe v. Burt*, 1 T. R. 701, 704 ("Where there is a conveyance in general terms of all that acre called Blackacre, everything which belongs to Blackacre passes with it. . . . But whether parcel or not of the thing demised is always matter of evidence"); 1836, *Squire v. Campbell*, 1 Myl. & C. 459 (a lease of houses was made, describing the land as "on the north side of a new street then forming"; the plan of the streets was shown at the time, and portrayed an open passage, which passage it was orally represented would be left free to a width of 100 feet; afterwards an obstructing statue

was sought to be erected; on a bill by the lessees for an injunction, held that the plan could be used to identify the "new street," on an issue whether the proposed statue would destroy its character; but that the representations as to the width of the passage could not be treated as a part of a contract); 1906, *Van Diemen's Land Co. v. Marine Board*, App. Cas. 92 (the propriety of resorting to user of the parties, to explain a grant, considered).

CANADA: 1849, *Doe v. Pitt*, 1 All. N. Br. 385 ("all those certain pieces of marsh land").

UNITED STATES: *California*: 1903, *Bell v. Staacke*, 141 Cal. 186, 74 Pac. 774 (conveyance construed by the parties' acts under it); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1907, *Harten v. Loffler*, 29 D. C. App. 490, 503 (contract to convey a piece of



local object, fully known to the parties but unknown to the Court, and in every such case it is obvious that "the words used must be translated into things and facts";<sup>4</sup> the parties to the deed almost always use terms of description which are peculiar to themselves.

But the universal application of the principle to *contracts and other documents* has also gradually been perceived. There is no transaction whatever in which, for some idea or other, the parties do not use words in a sense of their own. Having themselves locked up the idea in the words, themselves must furnish the key to unlock it. The antiquated notion (*post*, § 2470) that a document must be construed solely within its four corners, no matter how puzzling the problem, served for a time to retard the full appreciation of sound doctrine. But it was well settled by the middle of the 1800s in England; the case of *Macdonald v. Longbottom*, in which "your wool" was to be interpreted, served to mark the period of full conviction.<sup>5</sup>

land "fronting on B. Avenue *about* 60 feet with a depth of *about* 200 feet," held a latent ambiguity; the parties' own construction of it, admitted); *Georgia*: 1896, *Derrick v. Sams*, 98 Ga. 397, 25 S. E. 509 ("land purchased by H. of D." identified by evidence); *Kansas*: 1905, *Mayberry v. Beck*, 71 Kan. 609, 81 Pac. 191 ("except one acre, etc., deeded to Moore's Branch Church"); *Kentucky*: 1921, *Kentucky Union Co. v. Shepherd*, 192 Ky. 447, 234 S. W. 10 ("contemporaneous construction of interested parties." admissible to interpret a survey); *Massachusetts*: 1904, *Graves v. Broughton*, 185 Mass. 174, 69 N. E. 1083 ("one undivided moiety" in a deed of partition, construed by subsequent conveyances, etc., to mean an estate in severalty); 1910, *Blais v. Clare*, 207 Mass. 67, 92 N. E. 1009 (construction of an easement); *Michigan*: 1893, *Thompson v. Smith*, 96 Mich. 258, 267, 55 N. W. 886 (mortgage of "block B"; that the mortgagor told the mortgagee that certain lands were not to be included was excluded; but other deeds etc. were admitted to show their usage as to the term "block B"); *Missouri*: 1895, *Calloway v. Henderson*, 130 Mo. 77, 32 S. W. 34 (a farm described as "the farm known as the property of the late G. R.," allowed to be identified); 1896, *Diggs v. Kurtz*, 132 id. 250, 33 S. W. 815 ("lot No. 312"; no boundaries named and no plot referred to; oral agreement as to boundaries, admitted); *New Jersey*: 1897, *Axford v. Meeks*, 59 N. J. L. 502, 36 Atl. 1036 ("my place at Riverside," interpreted by considering the facts of the "place"); *New York*: 1816, *Jackson v. Goes*, 13 Johns. 518, 524 ("The identity of the grantee, as well as of the thing granted, must generally speaking partake more or less of a latent ambiguity, explainable by testimony dehors the grant. It cannot be that this inquiry is restricted to the single case of ambiguity occasioned by there appearing to be two persons bearing the name of the patentee");

1839, *Fish v. Hubbard*, 21 Wend. 651 ("A location on application of the description of parcels must always be made by evidence 'aliunde'"); 1918, *Mullen v. Washburn*, 24 N. Y. 413, 121 N. E. 59 (lands "now or formerly owned by N. P. and E. J. P."); *North Carolina*: 1920, *Norton v. Smith*, — N. C. —, 103 S. E. 14 ("his entire tract or boundary of land"); *South Dakota*: 1897, *Salmer v. Lathrop*, 10 S. D. 216, 72 N. W. 570 (facts to identify a grantee "I. C. McDowell" with one "Thomas C. McDowell," admitted); *Virginia*: 1906, *Shenandoah L. & A. C. Co. v. Clarke*, 106 Va. 100, 55 S. E. 561 (parties' acts under a deed, considered).

<sup>4</sup> *Holmes, J.*, in *Doherty v. Hill*, 144 Mass. 468, 11 N. E. 581.

<sup>5</sup> *England*: 1778, *Cooke v. Booth*, Cowp. 819 (whether a clause "under the same rents and covenants" should be construed inclusive or exclusive of the clause of renewal; *Aston, J.*: "As there have been four successive renewals, the lessor himself has put his own construction upon the covenant, and therefore is bound by it"); 1816, *Birch v. Depeyster*, 1 Stark. 210 (contract mentioning a captain's "privilege"; conversation between the parties beforehand, admitted "to show in which sense it was used on the present occasion"); 1821, *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & B. 473, 597 (marriage settlement containing a power to make leases which should include "a power of re-entry for non-payment of the rent"; the issue was whether leases made in alleged pursuance of the settlement were valid, their powers of re-entry being not absolute, but conditional on extension of time for payment and on inability to distrain; held, by a majority, that the usual and accustomed form of the leases of that estate could be considered in construing the clause in the settlement); 1839, *Doe v. Benjamin*, 9 A. & E. 644, 652 (whether a document agreeing to "take a lease" was a mere agreement or a present lease; *Coleridge, J.*: "The Courts have come to



In the United States the principle has also received ample sanction and illustration.<sup>6</sup>

some inconsistent conclusions in cases of this kind; but from the main body of them the principle results that we must look to the intention of the parties, and that by considering the terms of the particular instrument, with reference, I agree, to the state of facts existing at the time"); 1846, *Smith v. Jeffries*, 15 M. & W. 561 (sale of "60 tons of ware potatoes"; there were two qualities, "Regent's wares" and "kidney wares," and the seller offered to deliver the latter; the parties' express understanding that "Regent's wares" were signified was excluded; this case really rests on a misapplication of the principle of § 2466, *post*); 1859, *Macdonald v. Longbottom*, 28 L. J. Q. B. 297, 1 E. & E. 977 (purchase of "your wool"; a prior conversation admitted to interpret this phrase as used by the parties; L. C. J. Campbell: "Where there is a contract for the sale of a specific subject-matter, oral evidence may be received, for the purpose of showing what that subject-matter was, of every fact within the knowledge of the parties before and at the time of the contract"); 1859, *Symonds v. Lloyd*, 6 C. B. N. s. 691, 696 ("In order to ascertain the intention of the parties, it is necessary to look to that which was the subject of the communication at the time or which was afterwards done"); 1859, *Mumford v. Gething*, 7 C. B. N. s. 305, 321 (contract "in consideration of my entering your employ"; the circumstances and understanding of the parties were received, showing that the employee was already a clerk in the employer's warehouse and had now additionally been employed as salesman to take the Midland district, and that "your employ" thus applied to the latter service only; Erle, C. J.: "[It was admissible] for the purpose of showing the circumstances under which such wide words were used, and of applying them according to the intention of the parties"); 1900, *Bank of New Zealand v. Simpson*, App. Cas. 182 (*Macdonald v. Longbottom* approved); 1902, *Re Huxtable*, 2 Ch. 793 (bequest of 4000*l.* to C., "for the charitable purposes agreed upon between us"; testatrix' agreement with C., admitted to define the charitable purposes; though not to establish that the income alone was to be given to such purposes); 1914, *Savory v. World of Golf*, 2 Ch. 566 (receipt of paying for designs for "four golfing subjects"); *Canada*: 1914, *Provincial Fox v. Tennant*, 18 D. L. R. 389, N. Sc. (contract to sell "blue fox" progeny); 1915, *Brocklebank v. Barter*, 22 D. L. R. 209, Alta. (building-contract; the parties' contemporary letters admitted).

<sup>6</sup> Compare the cases cited *supra*, note 1; *Federal*: 1877, *Reed v. Ins. Co.*, 95 U. S. 23 (insurance of a vessel, "the risk to be suspended while vessel is at Baker's Island loading"; held, that "a reference to the actual

condition of things at the time, as they appeared to the parties themselves," was allowable in interpreting these words, and that their sense included the case of being at the Island with the purpose of loading, though before the loading had actually begun); 1893, *Lonergan v. Buford*, 148 U. S. 581, 588, 13 Sup. 684 (contract reserving "2000 steers heretofore sold"; the previous contract of sale admitted to identify them); 1896, *Sanders v. Munson*, 20 C. C. A. 581, 74 Fed. 649 (shipping contract; "about April 10th"; parties' prior conduct, admitted); 1898, *The Barnstable*, 84 Fed. 895 (agreement to pay "the insurance on the vessel"; that the sense of this, as covering all kinds of risks, was communicated to the maker by the broker beforehand, admitted); 1901, *American Bonding & T. Co. v. Takahashi*, 49 C. C. A. 267, 111 Fed. 125 (contract for payment of money to a certain person as "trustee"; attendant negotiations considered, to interpret and apply the term); 1902, *Sun P. & P. Ass'n v. Edwards*, 51 C. C. A. 279, 113 Fed. 445 (contract to employ in a printing establishment; prior conversations admitted to interpret "what kind of a printing establishment was contemplated by the contract"); 1908, *Hamilton Coal Co. v. New York & P. C. & C. Co.*, 2d C. C. C., 160 Fed. 75 ("our Big Vein, Cumberland" coal; prior negotiations of parties, admitted); 1909, *Harten v. Loeffler*, 212 U. S. 397, 29 Sup. 351 (contract to sell land described as having a frontage of "about 60 feet, with a depth of about 200 feet"; a line run from the 60-foot point would cut through a building on the land; held that the circumstances and the conversations at the time of making the contract could be used to interpret and identify the boundary); 1912, *Standard Scale & S. Co. v. Reiter*, C. C. A., 199 Fed. 91 (contract to employ as "manager"; the parties' conversations admitted); 1913, *Miller v. Spring Garden Ins. Co.*, 9th C. C. A., 202 Fed. 442 ("ordinary alterations and repairs"; parties' conversations, admitted); 1917, *Graham v. National Surety Co.*, 8th C. C. A., 244 Fed. 914 (trust deed to secure a party "against any and all liability," etc.; parties' conversations at the time of execution, admitted);

*Arkansas*: 1905, *Phoenix Assur. Co. v. Boyette*, 77 Ark. 41, 90 S. W. 284 (" \$2000. on cotton in bales");

*California*: 1906, *Mitau v. Roddan*, 149 Cal. 1, 84 Pac. 145 (inspection of crops); 1907, *Peterson v. Chaix*, 5 Cal. App. 525, 90 Pac. 948 ("more or less"; conversations, before or at the time not admitted; cases collected);

*Connecticut*: 1921, *Gendelman v. Mongillo*, 96 Conn. 541, 114 Atl. 914 (sale of "6 Washington Place"; "the description given may be applied by oral proof");

*Florida*: 1895, *Solary v. Webster*, 35 Fla. 363,



17 So. 646 (bond reciting the settlement of previous claims; identification of the claims, permitted); 1920, *People's Savings Bank & T. Co. v. Lundstreet*, 80 Fla. 853, 87 So. 227 (parties' construction, by conduct, admissible only for ambiguous terms);

*Georgia*: 1896, *Maynard v. Render*, 95 Ga. 652, 23 S. E. 194 ("cords" of wood; mutual understanding of the length of a cord, admitted); 1905, *Wellmaker v. Wheatley*, 123 Ga. 201, 51 S. E. 436 ("Miss Lowe Wellmaker's place" identified by parol); 1909, *State Historical Ass'n v. Silverman*, 6 Ga. App. 560, 65 S. E. 293 (book-contract, the book to describe "important events in Georgia history"; parties' more detailed understanding, admitted); 1909, *Georgia Iron & C. Co. v. Ocean Acc. & G. Co.*, 133 Ga. 326, 65 S. E. 775 ("employee" in convict-labor contract; "the construction the parties themselves put upon the agreement," admitted);

*Illinois*: 1904, *Gage v. Cameron*, 212 Ill. 146, 72 N. E. 204 (contract to assume "existing mortgages," etc.; the mortgages, etc., identified by the circumstances); 1908, *McLean Co. Coal Co. v. Bloomington*, 234 Ill. 90, 84 N. E. 624 (coal contract; "the practical construction of the instrument by the parties themselves is admissible"); 1908, *Cumberland v. Brooks*, 235 Ill. 249, 85 N. E. 197 ("my undivided interest in the Chicago lots"); 1922, *Armstrong Paint & V. Works v. Continental Can Co.*, 301 Ill. 102, 193 N. E. 711 (contract of sale; meaning of "as required");

*Indiana*: 1905, *Warner v. Marshall*, 166 Ind. 88, 75 N. E. 582 (contract by letter to deed "the lots"; the correspondence and circumstances considered, to interpret the words); 1906, *Howard v. Adkins*, 167 Ind. 184, 78 N. E. 665 ("120 acres of land"); 1909, *Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Gossett*, 172 Ind. 525, 87 N. E. 723 (the parties' construction of a railroad rule, admitted);

*Iowa*: 1916, *Comptograph Co. v. Burroughs Adding Machine Co.*, 179 Ia. 83, 159 N. W. 465 (contract for royalties; the parties' subsequent action under it, excluded); 1918, *Gardner v. Kiburz*, 184 Ia. 1268, 168 N. W. 814 (sale of land for a gross sum or per acre);

*Kentucky*: 1899, *Kentucky Cit. B. & L. Ass'n v. Laurence*, 106 Ky. 88, 49 S. W. 1059 (agreement to assume liabilities of a company "as shown by their books"; evidence received to show what "books" were meant);

*Maryland*: 1921, *Luria Bros. & Co. v. Klaff*, 139 Md. 586, 115 Atl. 849 (contract for steel shells);

*Massachusetts*: 1868, *Stoops v. Smith*, 100 Mass. 63 (quoted *supra*); 1896, *New England D. M. & W. Co. v. Standard Worsted Co.*, 165 Mass. 328, 43 N. E. 112 (though by the statute the goods sold must be designated in the memorandum, the interpretation of such a phrase as "2000 lbs. F. C." is merely an application of the words to a specific object, and may be shown by the understanding of the

parties); 1904, *Hebb v. Welch*, 185 Mass. 335, 70 N. E. 440 ("all plumbing" interpreted by the parties' conversations, etc.); 1907, *Smith v. Vose & S. P. Co.*, 194 Mass. 193, 80 N. E. 527 (contract to drive a well "to procure water"; the parties' prior conversations, admitted to show that "water" meant drinkable water, of a quality equal to that procured for another person; the ruling seems erroneous as to the last part); 1909, *Jennings v. Puffer*, 203 Mass. 534, 89 N. E. 1036 (sale of "my estate" etc.; the description construed by a conversation stating it to be subject to a lease, etc.); 1910, *Putnam-Hooker Co. v. Hewins*, 204 Mass. 426, 90 N. E. 983 (sale of goods; previous negotiations admitted, not to show a parol warranty, but to interpret the terms used); 1911, *Hodgens v. Sullivan*, 209 Mass. 533, 95 N. E. 969 (contract to be void if a sale failed "as at present agreed"; circumstances admitted); 1906, *Buffington v. McNally*, 192 Mass. 198, 78 N. E. 309 (*Stoops v. Smith* followed); 1920, *New York Central R. Co. v. Stoneman*, 236 Mass. 81, 127 N. E. 506 (contract to furnish heat "for office purposes"; parties' conduct admitted);

*Michigan*: 1897, *Clark v. Lowe*, 113 Mich. 352, 71 N. W. 638 (guarantee of an undivided third of indebtedness; agreement as to the exact amount, admitted); 1906, *Wolverine L. Co. v. Phoenix Ins. Co.*, 145 Mich. 558, 108 N. W. 1088 ("mill buildings," etc., applied by the circumstances); 1922, *Whittlesey v. Herbrand Co.*, — Mich. —, 187 N. W. 279 (sales commissions);

*Minnesota*: 1895, *Pfeifer v. Ins. Co.*, 62 Minn. 536, 64 N. W. 1018 (indorsement cancelling a policy on two horses, so as to "cover one horse only"; evidence admitted as to which horse was actually understood); 1896, *Ripon College v. Brown*, — Minn. —, 68 N. W. 837 (deed subject to certain mortgages "which . . . agrees to assume"; the ambiguous "which" interpreted by the parties' understanding);

*Montana*: 1921, *Cook v. Northern Pac. R. Co.*, — Mont. —, 203 Pac. 512 (shipment of lambs);

*New Hampshire*: 1902, *Gill v. Ferrin*, 71 N. H. 421, 52 Atl. 558 (circumstances of the parties, admitted to show their meaning by the word "incumbrances" in a warranty-deed); 1922, *Weston v. Ball*, — N. H. —, 115 Atl. 99 (contract for services; approving the text above);

*New Mexico*: 1916, *Strickland v. Johnson*, 21 N. M. 599, 157 Pac. 142 ("the sum of \$6000 to be raised at once"); 1917, *Hill v. Hart*, 23 N. M. 226, 167 Pac. 710 (promissory note);

*New York*: 1894, *Streppone v. Lennon*, 143 N. Y. 626, 37 N. E. 638 (agreement to "do brick-work"; usage and the parties' language, admitted to show whether this meant to include providing the bricks); 1895, *Brady v. Cassidy*, 145 N. Y. 171, 39 N. E. 814 ("goods on hand," interpreted by the parties' understanding); 1908, *Murdock v. Gould*, 193 N. Y. 369, 86 N. E. 12 (contract for services in building; parol evidence excluded on the facts as



§ 2466. **Individual Party's Meaning; (1) Deeds and Contracts.** When a person takes part in a *bilateral* act — *i. e.* a transaction in which other persons share — he must accept a common standard; he cannot claim to enforce his

involving virtually the insertion of other terms and not the interpretation of terms actually therein);

*North Carolina*: 1896, Lupton v. Lupton, 117 N. C. 30, 23 S. E. 184 ("one-half of boat" in a sale; circumstances identifying the boat, admitted); 1905, Ward v. Gay, 137 N. C. 397, 49 S. E. 884 (sale of "all the pine, poplar, and cypress trees now standing, etc."; the circumstances admitted, to apply the terms of description); 1916, American Potato Co. v. Jenette Bros. Co., 172 N. C. 1, 89 S. E. 791 (contract for sale of potatoes);

*Ohio*: 1907, Watson v. Lamb, 75 Oh. 481, 79 N. E. 1075 (a contract to sell "my hogs"; an oral specification of eighty and sixty-five hogs, excluded, but the circumstances were considered to ascertain what hogs were referred to by "my hogs");

*Oklahoma*: 1904, American S. F. Co. v. Gerrer's Bakery, 14 Okl. 258, 78 Pac. 115 (meaning of "consignee" in a sale-contract);

*Oregon*: 1921, Stanfield v. Arnwine, 102 Or. 289, 202 Pac. 559 (contract to furnish lambs "of good size and merchantable condition"; the delivery and acceptance in the prior year of lambs of 63 pounds, etc., admitted);

*Pennsylvania*: 1857, Barnhart v. Riddle, 29 Pa. 92, 97 ("Courts take the language employed and apply it to the surrounding circumstances, exactly as they believe the parties applied it"); 1898, Cooper v. Potts, 185 Pa. 115, 39 Atl. 824 (assignment of "all money due or to become due by M"; parties' understanding as to claims covered, received); 1908, Ranney v. Byers, 219 Pa. 332, 68 Atl. 971 ("the Byers place," in a declaration of trust, identified);

*Porto Rico*: 1903, Pastor v. Gaspar, 2 P. I. 592; *South Carolina*: 1902, Murray v. Northwestern R. Co., 64 S. C. 520, 42 S. E. 617 (contract to erect a "freight and passenger depot"; circumstances considered for determining the mutual meaning);

*South Dakota*: 1914, Korte v. O'Neill, 34 S. D. 241, 148 N. W. 12 (the "Rondell quarter" and the "Westport farm"; "parol evidence" admitted to identify them);

*Texas*: 1906, Morrison v. Hazzard, 99 Tex. 583, 92 S. W. 33 ("25 feet" in a lot);

*Utah*: 1896, Bartels v. Brain, 13 Utah 162, 44 Pac. 715 (a lease exempting from injury by "reasonable use"; declarations of the parties admitted to show what uses were understood); 1898, Brown v. Markland, 16 Utah 360, 52 Pac. 597 (conveyance of mining property subject to claims; circumstances resorted to for interpreting); 1906, Fayter v. North, 30 Utah 156, 83 Pac. 742 (deed of land, with "all tenements, hereditaments, privileges, and appurte-

nances thereunto belonging, or therewith used and enjoyed"; a valuable irrigation ditch was on the land; conversations between vendor and vendee at the time of the sale, concerning the use of the ditch, were admitted "to show how the parties themselves construed and applied the contract to the subject matter"); *Vermont*: 1895, Coffrin v. Cole, 67 Vt. 226, 31 Atl. 313 (a conveyance of "all right" possessed by the grantor, interpreted by the facts); 1915, Douglass & Varnum v. Morrisville, 89 Vt. 393, 95 Atl. 810, 836 (contract for a dam, the plan giving lines and levels; the parties' understanding as to where the bottom of the river was, admitted);

*Virginia*: 1896, Richardson v. Bank, 94 Va. 130, 26 S. E. 413 (a receipt for property "left" by H., explained by the circumstances); 1915, Scott's Ex'r v. Chesterman, 117 Va. 584, 85 S. E. 502 (construction contract);

*West Virginia*: 1897, Anderson v. Jarrett, 43 W. Va. 246, 27 S. E. 348 ("the old fence between" F. and S.; Brannon, J.: "You have a right to use oral evidence to apply this bill [reciting the agreement], like a deed, physically to the ground"); 1905, Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Deepwater R. Co., 57 W. Va. 641, 59 S. E. 890 (corporate records); 1906, Armstrong v. Ross, 61 W. Va. 38, 55 S. E. 895 (contract for coal lands);

*Wisconsin*: 1897, Waldheim v. Miller, 97 Wis. 300, 72 N. W. 869 (guaranty of "account of B."; evidence that this meant a future account only, admitted); 1903, Newell v. New Holstein C. Co., 119 Wis. 635, 97 N. W. 487 (contract of sale); 1905, Corbett v. Joannes, 125 Wis. 370, 104 N. W. 69 (compromise of claims: "in such cases the contract may be read very differently from the literal sense thereof"); 1910, Klueter v. Schlitz Brewing Co., 143 Wis. 347, 128 N. W. 43 ("as per your conversation"; the conversation admitted); 1920, Strayer v. Gimbel Bros., 172 Wis. 76, 178 N. W. 241 (excluded on the facts).

The following illustrates an occasional aberration: 1896, Holman v. Whitaker, 119 N. C. 113, 25 S. E. 793 (mortgage of a "one-horse wagon"; the mortgagor had four such; evidence that the mortgagee was working for the mortgagor and driving such a wagon of the latter's, and did not know that he had others, excluded).

Distinguish such a case as the following: 1889, Fudge v. Payne, 86 Va. 306, 309, 10 S. E. 7 (sale of lands "generally known as 'the loop'"; *semble*, a mutual understanding, different from the "generally known" sense would not be enforced; this is an instance of the parties having themselves expressly excluded their own sense of the words).



individual standard of meaning (*ante*, § 2461). The same general principle that applies in determining the tenor of a jural act (*ante*, § 2413) applies also in its interpretation. The other party or parties are entitled to charge the speaker with the standard accepted in common. This was long ago discussed and worked out as a general principle of casuistry:

1785. Dr. *William Paley*, *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, b. III, pt. I, c. V, "Promises": "Temures promised the garrison of Sebastia, that if they would surrender, *no blood should be shed*. The garrison surrendered; and Temures buried them all alive. Now Temures fulfilled the promise in one sense, and in the sense too in which he intended it at the time; but not in the sense in which the garrison of Sebastia actually received it, nor in the sense in which Temures himself knew that the garrison received it; which last sense, according to our rule, was the sense in which he was in conscience bound to have performed it."

The principle is applicable, not only to *deeds* and *contracts*,<sup>1</sup> but also to all bilateral transactions, including *notices* and *demands*,<sup>2</sup> — though not of notices having a purely individual significance,<sup>3</sup> to which rather the principle for wills (*post*, § 2467) would apply.

There is, however, a qualification to be made. The person using words is to be treated from the point of view of the reasonable man, not only in determining the actual tenor of his act (*ante*, § 2413), but also in interpreting it. As a reasonable man, he must be charged with knowing that the standard to be applied is the mutual one, because he has willed to take part in

§ 2466. <sup>1</sup> *Fed.* 1903, *Butte & B. C. M. Co. v. Montana O. P. Co.*, 58 C. C. A. 634, 121 Fed. 524 ("tailings," in a mining contract); *Ariz.* 1917, *Valentine v. Shepherd*, 19 Ariz. 241, 168 Pac. 643 (sale of branded cattle); *Ind.* 1905, *Warner v. Marshall*, 166 Ind. 88, 75 N. E. 582 (contract by letters to deed property; the promisor's will, not admitted to interpret the description in the letters); *Mass.* 1904, *Graham v. Middleby*, 185 Mass. 349, 70 N. E. 416 (alteration of a bond); *Nebr.* 1897, *Gamble v. Mfg. Co.*, 50 Nebr. 463, 69 N. W. 960 (holding that a business habit of an individual must be actually made known to the other party); *N. H.* 1914, *Woburn Nat'l Bank v. Woods*, 77 N. H. 172, 89 Atl. 491 (contract); *N. Y.* 1896, *Rickerson v. Ins. Co.*, 149 N. Y. 307, 43 N. E. 856 (premises "known as 160 Mott St." insured; it contained two buildings; the insurer's testimony that he intended to insure only one, correctly rejected; but the Court did not point out that such intention would have been admissible if it had represented the mutual understanding); 1913, *Schmitt v. Stoss*, 207 N. Y. 731, 100 N. E. 1119 (insurance policy; apparent meaning to the insured, as against the insurer's actual meaning, held to prevail); *W. Va.* 1897, *Anderson v. Jarrett*, 43 W. Va. 246, 27 S. E. 348 ("the old fence" between F. and S., agreed upon as a line; the defendant's interpretation as to which "old fence" was excluded); *Wis.* 1909,

*Hackley Nat'l Bank v. Barry*, 139 Wis. 96, 120 N. W. 275 (promissory note indorsement).

Other instances are cited *ante*, §§ 1967, 1971, in connection with the application of the Opinion rule to proof of a party's intent.

<sup>2</sup> *Ireland*: 1837, *Lawless v. Grogan*, 1 Dru. & Walsh 53, 64 (L. C. Plunket: "When a notice is relied upon for the purpose of forfeiture, . . . [it must appear] that the intention of the landlord to insist on the forfeiture, and the information as to the facts which were peculiarly within the knowledge of the landlord, were fully brought home to the tenant"); *United States*: 1877, *Locke v. R. Co.*, 46 Ia. 109, 111 (whether the plaintiff conductor was negligent in running the train over a weak bridge; the sense of a notice received by him from the superintendent was held to be, not that which the latter meant, but "what did the dispatch mean when read by the conductor in the light of the surrounding circumstances").

<sup>3</sup> 1803, *Holsten v. Jumpson*, 4 Esp. 189 (trover for household furniture, taken by the defendant on execution against the plaintiff's mother, and claimed by the plaintiff as her own; the defendant having put in a written demand by the mother for all the articles "belonging to her which had been seized," the plaintiff was allowed to show that this demand "was made of the effects of the mother herself, and were not those for which the action was brought").



a bilateral transaction. As a reasonable man, however, he may have good reason to believe that the specific mutual meaning — *i. e.* of the other party as well as himself — is one thing, whereas in fact it is a different thing. The common instance is that of a *name corresponding to two objects*, one of which is signified by the one party and the other by the other party. Here each party is entitled to be charged with only that sense of the word which under the circumstances he had good reason to believe was employed by the other party. As in the "Peerless" case,<sup>4</sup> if the seller is ignorant that there is a second "Peerless," and could not reasonably be expected to know it, he is entitled to be charged with the "Peerless" in his own sense; and so of the other party; and thus, the senses of promise and consideration being different, the contract fails. But if the seller had known of the second "Peerless" and also known that the buyer was aware of it, he might be charged with a sale of that cargo, if in fact the buyer was using that sense. The general principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413) governs the interpretation of this class of cases.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2467. **Individual Party's Meaning; (2) Wills.** But a *unilateral* act may be interpreted by the individual standard of the actor (*ante*, § 2461); that is, after resorting to the ordinary sense of words, and the local sense of words, for provisional assistance, we are still entitled to supplant all these by the individual usage, if it appears to have been different from the others.

The *will* is the typical and almost the only instance of a unilateral act. The sense of the testator is therefore to be the ultimate criterion of interpretation:

1870, BLACKBURN, J., in *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727, 729 (quoting a passage from his own treatise on Sales): "The principles of the rules of law regulating the admissibility of extrinsic evidence to aid the construction of wills, and of contracts required to be in writing, seem to be the same. But, in applying them, it seems necessary to bear in mind that there is a distinction between the two classes of instruments. The will is the

<sup>4</sup> 1864, *Raffles v. Wichelhaus*, 2 H. & C. 906 (the plaintiff sold to the defendant cotton to arrive "ex Peerless from Bombay"; the defendant refusing to accept, it appeared that there were two ships Peerless from Bombay, the plaintiff meaning the one to sail in December and the defendant the one to sail in October, and neither apparently knew that the other meant a different ship; a plea by the defendant alleging that the defendant meant the October ship, and that no cotton was delivered from that ship, was held good). Compare the explanation of this case in Holmes, *Common Law*, 309.

<sup>5</sup> Examples are as follows: *England*: 1846, *Alderson, B.*, in *Smith v. Jeffries*, 15 M. & W. 561 ("If I buy 60 tons of potatoes, surely the seller may deliver me kidney [*i. e.* one of several grades] potatoes"); 1900, *Folek v. Williams*, App. Cas. 176 (cipher cablegram; where a message is fairly ambiguous the party seeking to charge the other one fails, because the former cannot show his interpretation to be

the only reasonable one). *United States*: 1832, *Hazard v. Ins. Co.*, 1 Sumner 218 (in a marine insurance policy the parties lived respectively in Boston and New York, and the term "coppered ship" had a different meaning in the two places: Story, J. ruled that if neither party knew of the difference of sense of the word in the other place, neither would be bound, and that the jury were to determine the fact); 1907, *Inman Mfg. Co. v. American Cereal Co.*, 133 Ia. 71, 110 N. W. 287 (the general principle considered); 1869, *Kyle v. Kavanagh*, 103 Mass. 356 (contract for the sale of land "in Waltham on Prospect Street"; there being two Prospect Streets in Waltham, and each party signifying a different one, the buyer was held not bound); 1895, *Stoddard Mfg. Co. v. Miller*, 107 Mich. 51, 64 N. W. 948 (an order reading "Please ship me wone rite stele weel for a drill Two square feeting shafts. 4 ten hoe drills also some note blanks for drills"; the sender was allowed to show that he meant "shafts for 10-hoe drills").



language of the testator, soliloquizing, if one may use the phrase, and the Court in construing his language may properly take into account all that he knew at the time, in order to see in what sense the words were used."

This principle is to-day universally conceded.<sup>1</sup>

Only two particulars need to be noted as corollaries in its application. (a) The sense of the words must be sought in a usage or *habit* of the testator, for it would be impossible to attempt to ascertain the momentary or casual meanings which might have occurred to him. Hence, although all the circumstances and utterances of the testator may be searched (*post*, § 2470), as forming a mass of data in which the habit will appear, yet no one utterance can be emphasized as the sole and decisive embodiment of his usage.<sup>2</sup> (b)

§ 2467. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1856, *Kell v. Charmer*, 23 Beav. 195 (bequest "to my son W. the sum of i. x. x.; to my son R. C. the sum of o. x. x."; the testator having "in the course of his business used certain private marks or symbols to denote prices or sums of money," this usage was resorted to, and showed that the sums of 100*l.* and 200*l.* were signified); 1808, *Leigh v. Leigh*, 15 Ves. Jr. 92 (devise of a remainder to "the first and nearest of my kindred, being male and of my name and blood"; upon a consideration of all the circumstances, including the remainder of the will, it was held that this description was not meant to apply to a next of kin who had by license changed his name from "Smith" to "Leigh"); 1829, *Goblet v. Beechy*, 3 Sim. 24 (a sculptor bequeathed all his "marbles, busts, and models" to P. D. and B.; by a codicil he bequeathed his "tools in the shop, bankers, mod tools for carving," to the plaintiff; the models were valuable, the tools for modelling were not; Shadwell, V. C., held "mod" to mean "models," upon the testimony of a sculptor that he "understood it to be a contraction of the word 'models,'" and of three sculptors that "in their opinion the testator by the word 'mod' meant 'models'"); In re Ofner, *Samuel v. Ofner*, [1909] 2 Ch. 60 (bequest to "my grandnephew Robert O."; there was no Robert O., but there was a Richard O.; memorandum of the testator, showing that he called Richard "Robert," admitted; "a man always having called John 'Richard' is presumed in his will to have meant John when he says 'Richard'"); In re Halston, *Ewen v. Halston*, [1912] 1 Ch. 435 (devise to "John William H., the son of Israel H., of C. in the county of E.," in a will of 1891; Israel H. had four sons, John William H., who had died in 1874, only ten days old; James Malet H.; John Robert H., the claimant; and Horace Edward H.; there was evidence that the testator knew of the eldest child's death; the testator himself was named John William H.; devise awarded to John Robert H., citing In re Ofner, *supra*).

*Canada*: 1903, *Travers v. Casey*, 35 N. Br. 229, 233 ("all property," etc., construed by the testator's circumstances and prior actions).

*United States*: 1916, *Abrahams v. Sanders*, 274 Ill. 452, 113 N. E. 737 ("die without definite issue and before this will takes effect"; the state of the testator's property and family considered); 1919, *Farmer v. Quinn's Trust Estate*, 133 Md. 558, 105 Atl. 763 (effects "at the present invoice price," interpreted by certain documents); 1917, *Moseley v. Goodman*, 138 Tenn. 1, 195 S. W. 590 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2463); 1903, *Reformed Presb. Church v. McMillan*, 31 Wash. 643, 72 Pac. 502 (bequest to the "Society for Disabled Ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Illinois," given to the "Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, General Synod," which had a fund for disabled ministers).

Numerous additional examples are collected *ante*, § 2463.

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1850, *Doe v. Hubbard*, 15 Q. B. 227, 248 (devise of "all those two cottages or tenements, the one occupied by my son J. H., the other occupied by my granddaughter"; there were two cottages which had been subdivided into five residences, two of them only occupied by the persons mentioned; the scrivener's testimony as to "what the testator said about the two cottages" was excluded; L. C. J. Campbell: "This was not confined to an inquiry into the meaning which the testator *usually* affixed to the expression 'his two cottages,' but was calculated to bring out an answer, which could not be admissible evidence, with regard to his intentions in making the will, irrespective of the language of the will itself").

*United States*: 1906, *Shipley v. Merc. T. & D. Co.*, 102 Md. 649, 62 Atl. 814 (meaning of the term "dower and thirds"; the testator's declarations as to how he had provided for his wife, excluded); 1916, *Jones v. Bennett*, 78 N. H. 224, 99 Atl. 18 (bequest to "the heirs of my late husband"; usage of the testatrix to include nephews and nieces in "heirs," held admissible, but here not found in fact; cited more fully *post*, § 2471); 1905, *Ackerman v. Crouter*, 68 N. J. Eq. 49, 59 Atl. 574 (devise of "the farm I own at W. and known



The *time* of the usage must be the time of the will's final sanction; for the will is in fact a standing expression from the date of its formal execution to the date of the testator's death without revoking it;<sup>3</sup> hence a broad range of search. But where a will is in effect left with blanks at the time of execution, any subsequent document is virtually an addition of terms to the will, not an interpretation of existing terms, and hence, if not formerly executed, cannot be considered.<sup>4</sup>

But three other rules, which constantly operate to obscure the full application of this principle, must be distinguished. (1) The rule against disturbing a *plain meaning* (*ante*, §§ 2462-2463), so far as it is recognized, will of course prevent the resort to the testator's individual meaning.<sup>5</sup> (2) The rule against *express declarations of intention* (*post*, § 2471) operates to limit the sources of investigation to some extent. (3) The ignoring of the rule '*falsa demonstratio non nocet*' (*post*, § 2476) sometimes prevents the testator's meaning from being ascertained or fully enforced.

as the David D. A. W. farm"; that the testator "habitually spoke" of a certain three tracts as the "W. farm," admitted); 1913, Arnold's Estate, 240 Pa. 261, 87 Atl. 590 (testatrix' usage of the word "things," admitted; opinion not clear).

Compare the principle of the rule *post*, § 2471, against declarations of intention.

<sup>3</sup> 1871, *Castle v. Fox*, L. R. 11 Eq. 542, 550 (devise of "all my mansion and estate called Cleeve Court"; the testator had bought additional lands, appurtenant thereto, between the execution of the will and his death, and these were held to pass; Malins, V. C.: "The question is, not what was known by that name when he made his will, but what was known by that name and treated by him as coming under that description at any time during his life; . . . [the Wills Act] enacts that every will shall be construed, with reference to the real and personal estate comprised in it, as if it had been executed immediately before the death of the testator, unless a contrary intention should appear").

<sup>4</sup> 1844, *Clayton v. Nugent*, 13 M. & W. 200 (will containing a list of devisees indicated by the letters K, L, M, N, etc., and stating that a "key and index to initials is in my desk"; the will was dated 1820, and a key dated 1828 and found in the desk, was excluded). Compare *Kell v. Charmer*, *supra*, note 1, and cases cited *post*, § 2471.

<sup>5</sup> That rule was the foundation of some of the opinions in the case of Lady Hewley's Charities, though it was not involved; *Eng.* 1833-1843. *Attorney-General v. Shore*, also on appeal *s. v. Shore v. Wilson*, 7 Sim. 309, note, 11 Sim. 592, 615, 5 Cl. & F. 355 (Lady Hewley, a Presbyterian, in 1704, deeded to charities for the assistance of "poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel," etc.; the trustees

having become Unitarians at a later period, a bill was filed to remove them and order the trust's administration for the benefit of persons described in the deed; for this purpose evidence of the founder's personal belief on points of theology was excluded, by apparently all the judges, but evidence of the theological tenets of the sect to which she belonged, and of the usage of that sect, was admitted, by a majority of the judges; the case as a whole is an extreme example of poor judicial treatment; for the opinions though lengthy are obscure, and such is their confusion and indefiniteness of views that the decision settled no principle, and even its actual tenor has been variously stated by commentators). A similar question was presented in the following case: *U. S.* 1885, *Hinckley v. Thatcher*, 139 Mass. 477, 480, 1 N. E. 840 (bequest to "the Authorized Agents of the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies"; testator's religious opinions, as involved in "his acts in connection with churches and religious societies and the usages of those churches and societies," considered; whether they could have been considered, apart from such acts and usages, not decided). In neither of the foregoing cases should there have been any hesitation. Compare the following case: *Eng.* 1835, *Attorney-General v. Pearson*, 7 Sim. 290, 308 (grant of land, in 1701-1726, for a meeting-house, by Presbyterians, for "the worship and service of God"; the trustees and the majority of the congregation having later ceased to be Trinitarian in belief, a bill to restrain the use of the land for non-Trinitarian tenets was brought, asking a decree of inquiry as to the tenets of the founders, for interpreting the terms of the trust, and the "tenets in general" of the founders were considered, by Shadwell, V. C.).



## 2. Sources of Interpretation

§ 2470. **General Principle: All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.** It was a part of the stiff formalism of earlier interpretation, not only that the law should fix the meaning of words and phrases (*ante*, § 2462), but also that all aids to the meaning must be found in the document itself. It is the document that "speaks," and if the document does not speak for itself, we cannot make other things speak instead of it, — such was the notion. The purely relative nature of words — their necessary association with external objects — was as yet not conceived. They were tangible tools, which must do their own work or remain ineffective. The writing fixed the will of the writer, and to look away from the writing was suggestive only of deviation and uncertainty. "The construction of wills," says Lord Coke,<sup>1</sup> "ought to be collected from the words of the will in writing, and not by any averment [*i. e.* circumstances] of evidence out of it," and then he recurs to the old apprehension (*ante*, § 2462) of uncertainty for legal advisers and landed estates, "for it would be full of great inconvenience that none should know by the written words of a will what construction to make or advice to give, but [= if] it should be controlled by collateral averments out of the will." A hundred years later, Lord Holt,<sup>2</sup> a conservative by nature, protests in like strain against the newer spirit: "If we once travel into the affairs of the testator, and leave the will, we shall not know the mind of the testator by his words, but by his circumstances; so that if you go to a lawyer, he shall not know how to expound it. Men's rights will be very precarious upon such construction. We must not depart from the will to find the meaning of it in things out of it." Holt was here dissenting, and his extreme ideas were already becoming obsolete. But even after another century had passed, and the antiquated notions had been thoroughly discredited, the echo of conservatism is heard in Lord Eldon's remark that, "generally speaking, you must construe instruments by what is found within their four corners."<sup>3</sup>

But this earlier notion has long since been discarded. The stages of progress may be marked off somewhat as follows:

(1) Even in Coke's time it was conceded that in case of an equivocation (*post*, § 2472) or double-meaning description, outside data could be sought, because "no inconvenience can arise if an averment [of extrinsic data] in such case be taken; for he who sees such will cannot be deceived by any secret invisible averment, for he ought at his peril to inquire."<sup>4</sup> This was at first the sole specific exception.

§ 2470. <sup>1</sup> 1591, Lord Cheyney's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 68 *a*.

<sup>2</sup> 1702, *Cole v. Rawlinson*, 1 Salk. 234, 2 Ld. Raym. 831.

<sup>3</sup> 1821, *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & B. 473, 602. So, too, in 1801, *Rooke, J.*, in *Coker v. Guy*, 2 B. & P. 565, 569: "Every agreement must receive its construction from its own terms, without the introduction of any evidence

'dehors' the instrument, unless there be some latent ambiguity."

<sup>4</sup> Lord Cheyney's Case, *supra*. In 1708, in *Strode v. Russell*, 3 Ch. Rep. 169, Lord Cowper put it that "where the words stand 'in equilibrio' and are so doubtful that they may be taken one way or the other, there it is proper to have evidence read to explain them."



(2) Little by little it began to be seen that there might be other necessary instances of resort to "things extrinsic" (in Lord Holt's phrase). Lord Cowper and Lord Hardwicke were breakers of new ground in this respect.<sup>5</sup> Their work was continued by Lord Thurlow, whose ruling in *Fonnereau v. Poyntz* was considered a dangerous innovation; it not only cost himself much intellectual perturbation, but was for some time afterwards regarded by many as discreditable to his reputation, and was explained away as imperfectly reported.<sup>6</sup> As late as the beginning of the 1800s there were judges who still thought that the only proper exception was an equivocation,<sup>7</sup> and there was a reactionary ruling which refused to recognize even that much relaxation for a sealed instrument.<sup>8</sup> But in general, by that time, the weight of opinion conceded what Lord Thurlow had laid down, that not only for an equivocation, but also for any real and insurmountable uncertainty of meaning, resort to extrinsic circumstances for light was permissible.<sup>9</sup> The commonest case, of course, was that in which the words of the document turned out not precisely or naturally to fit any external object over which the testator had disposal; and consolation was here obtained, for the apparent stretching of principle, by a plausible play upon words: "If you go to parol evidence to raise the ambiguity, you cannot well refuse it to explain such ambiguity."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 1749. Lord Hardwicke in *Goodinge v. Goodinge*, 1 Ves. Sr. 231 ("That rule is laid down much too large by Holt; for in several cases it is admitted it must be allowed, — namely, where the description or thing is uncertain [not only where two of the same name], it must be admitted to show that the testator knew such a person and used to call her by a nickname"). But even he was unwilling to advance rapidly, and he once criticised his predecessor, Lord Cowper, who had occasionally generalized too liberally: "I was never satisfied with this rule of Lord Cowper's, of admitting parol evidence in doubtful cases" (*Ulrich v. Litchfield*, 2 Atk. 372).

<sup>6</sup> 1785, *Fonnereau v. Poyntz*, 1 Bro. C. C. 472 (bequest of "the sum of 500*l.* stock in long annuities"; this expression would ordinarily signify an income of 500*l.* per year; but L. C. Thurlow allowed the value of the estate to be considered, whence it appeared that she had only 120*l.* a year long annuities, and the bequest was therefore held to mean 500*l.* capital laid out in such stock; the ruling was treated as an inroad upon the rule "which will not admit of an instrument being construed 'aliunde,'" and which prescribes that "where the words used by a testator are sensible, they must be taken as they stand"; "the only question is, how to preserve the law, and yet to decide according to the intention of the testatrix," and was justified by Lord Thurlow "because the words she had used in the description are upon the whole of the context uncertain"). There were by this time some sufficient precedents for such a statement of the rule, — for example, in

1750, *Hampshire v. Pierce*, 2 Ves. 216, by Strange, M. R.

<sup>7</sup> 1816. *Doe v. Chichester*, 4 Dow 65, 93 (Gibbs, C. J.: "The Courts of law have been jealous of the admission of extrinsic evidence to explain the intention of a testator; and I know of only one case in which it is permitted, that is, where an ambiguity is introduced by extrinsic circumstances").

<sup>8</sup> 1821, *Doe v. Benson*, 4 B. & Ald. 588 (lease by parol from "Lady-day"; the local usage to signify "old Lady-day," instead of the new or legal Lady-day, i. e. March 25, was admitted; but *Doe v. Lea*, 11 East 312, was approved, because "there the letting was by deed, which is a solemn instrument, and therefore parol evidence was inadmissible to explain the expression 'Lady-day' there used, even supposing that it was equivocal").

<sup>9</sup> 1822, *Plumer*, M. R., in *Colpoys v. Colpoys*, Jacob 451, 456 ("The admission of extrinsic circumstances to govern the construction of a written instrument is in all cases an exception to the general rule of law, which excludes everything 'dehors' the instrument. . . . It must be the case of an ambiguity which cannot otherwise be removed, and which may by these means be clearly and satisfactorily explained").

<sup>10</sup> L. C. Thurlow, in *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. C. C. 338, 341; *Plumer*, M. R., *ubi supra*, declaring that "where there is a latent ambiguity raised by extrinsic circumstances, it may be got rid of in the same manner." Bacon had already resorted to this phrase in his *Maxim* (XXV) on Ambiguities: "nam quod ex facto oritur ambiguum verificatione facti tollitur."



This conjuring phrase, which appears again and again in a defensive spirit, helped to liberalize the practice, and thus to prepare the way for a broader principle. Meantime the same progress and conflict were reflected in the judicial opinions in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

(3) The truth had finally to be recognized that words always need interpretation; that the process of interpretation inherently and invariably means the ascertainment of the association between words and external objects; and that this makes inevitable a free resort to extrinsic matters for applying and enforcing the document. "Words *must* be translated into things and facts."<sup>12</sup> Instead of the fallacious notion that "there should be interpretation only when it is needed,"<sup>13</sup> the fact is that there must always be interpretation.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the range of search need not be extensive, and perhaps the application of the document will be apparent at the first view; but there must always be a travelling out of the document, a comparison of its words with people and things. The deed must be applied "physically to the ground."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the standard of interpretation will limit our search; perhaps the obligation (as some Courts maintain) to enforce the ordinary standard as against the mutual or the individual standard (*ante*, § 2462), or to enforce the mutual as against the individual standard (*ante*, § 2466), will render certain data immaterial. But these restrictions are independent of the present principle. Once freed from the primitive formalism which views the document as a self-contained and self-operative formula, we can fully appreciate the modern principle that the words of a document are never anything but indices to extrinsic things, and that therefore *all the circumstances must be considered which go to make clear the sense of the words*, — that is, their associations with things.

In the field of *wills*, where there is none but the individual standard of meaning to be considered, this principle is seen in unrestricted operation; and its full sanction has often been judicially avowed:<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> 1839, *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.*, 13 Pet. 89, 99 (question as to the length of validity of a contract "for the use of the steamboat Franklin, until the Sydney is placed on the route to Potomac Creek"; the circumstances preceding the contract were admitted; Barbour, J.: "The rule which admits extrinsic evidence for the purpose of applying a written contract to its proper subject matter extends beyond the mere designation of the thing on which the contract operates, and embraces within its scope the circumstances under which the contract concerning the thing was made, when without the aid of such extrinsic evidence such application of the written contract to its proper subject matter could not be made"; four judges dissenting).

<sup>12</sup> Holmes, J., quoted *ante*, § 2465.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted *ante*, § 2458.

<sup>14</sup> 1835, Coleridge, J., in *Doe v. Holtom*, 4 A. & E. 76, 82 ("Some extrinsic evidence is

necessary for the explanation of every will; if the word 'Blackacre' be used, there must be evidence to show that the field in question is Blackacre"); 1892, Jeune, J., in *Paton v. Ormerod*, 66 Law T. Rep. 381 ("Parol evidence of existing facts and circumstances outside the will is admissible, and in truth is in every case necessarily, though informally, admitted in order to apply the terms of the will to that to which they are intended to refer").

<sup>15</sup> Brannon, J., in *Anderson v. Jarrett*, cited *ante*, § 2465.

<sup>16</sup> 1911, *Northrup v. Columbia Lumber Co.*, 5th C. C. A., 186 Fed. 770, 775 (devise to various children; the facts of the testator's property, admitted; "evidence may be received as to every material fact relating to the person who claims under the will and to the property devised, and to the circumstances of the testator and his family and affairs, so as to lead to a correct decision" etc.; approving



1831, Sir *James Wigram*, V. C., *Extrinsic Evidence in Aid of the Interpretation of Wills*, Proposition V: "For the purpose of determining the object of a testator's bounty, or the subject of disposition, or the quantity of interest intended to be given by his will, a Court may inquire into every *material* fact relating to the person who claims to be interested under the will, and to the property which is claimed as the subject of disposition, and to the circumstances of the testator and of his family and affairs, for the purpose of enabling the Court to identify the person or thing intended by the testator, or to determine the quantity of interest he has given by his will. The same (it is conceived) is true of every other disputed point, respecting which it can be shown that a knowledge of extrinsic facts can, in any way, be made ancillary to the right interpretation of a testator's words."

1833, PARKE, J., in *Doe v. Martin*, 4 B. & Ad. 770, 785: "It may be laid down as a general rule that all facts relating to the subject matter and object of the devise . . . are admissible to aid in ascertaining what is meant by the words used in the will."

1842, SUGDEN, L. C., in *Attorney-General v. Drummond*, 1 Dr. & W. 356 (interpreting a deed containing the words "Christian" and "Protestant dissenter"): "The Court is at liberty to inquire into all the surrounding circumstances which may have acted upon the minds of the persons by whom the deed or will (it matters not whether it was one or the other) was executed. . . . The Court therefore has not merely a right, but it is its duty to inquire into the surrounding circumstances, before it can approach the construction of the instrument itself."

1886, BLACKBURN, J., in *Allgood v. Blake*, L. R. 8 Exch. 160: "The general rule is that in construing a will the Court is entitled to put itself in the position of the testator, and to consider all material facts and circumstances known to the testator with reference to which he is to be taken to have used the words in the will, and then to declare what is the intention [*i. e.* sense] evidenced by the words used, with reference to those facts and circumstances which were (or ought to have been) in the mind of the testator when he used those words. As said in *Wigram on Extrinsic Evidence*, 'The question in expounding a will is, not what the testator meant — as distinguished from what his words express, — but simply, what is the meaning of his words.' But we think that the meaning of words varies according to the circumstances of and concerning which they are used."

1898, Professor *James Bradley Thayer*, *Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, 415: "It had become possible for *Wigram* to lay it solidly down, over seventy years ago, that, with the exception of direct statements of intention, no extrinsic fact, relevant to any legitimate question arising in the interpretation of writings and admissible under the general rules of evidence, could be shut out."

It remains now to notice whatever qualifications there may be of this general principle.

§ 2471. **Exception for Declarations of Intention.** When the search is made for data which will exhibit the sense in which a word is used in a particular writing, not only the external objects (property, persons, localities, and the like) will assist, but also the *other utterances of the party* as embodying his usage. Just as a collation of various passages in the epistles of Paul will serve to expound his sense of the word "faith," so a collation of any person's utterances is useful and necessary for determining the sense of his words in

the text above); 1921, *Re Foss' Est., Paddon v. Thatcher*,—Cal.—, 196 Pac. 10 (bequest to "the Edwin Briscoe Home for Boys"; whether this institution was one for "the support and education of orphans," etc., as limited by the tax-exemption law, allowed to be shown by other evidence).

In applying this and the ensuing principles (§§ 2471-2478) in States having codes founded on the Field Civil Code, resort should be had to the code-sections on Interpretation, quoted *ante*, § 2458.



a particular document, — as in *Doe v. Jersey*,<sup>1</sup> where the sense of the words “my Briton Ferry estate” was ascertained by examining the testator’s rental-books, in which were entered under that name the lands which he so termed. This kind of data is common and natural enough. But it is worth while emphasizing that among the “circumstances” to be investigated are included, not only the corporal objects surrounding the party, but also his *utterances, written and oral*, as applied to those objects.

Among this latter class, however, there is one forbidden variety, namely, *expressions of intention* dealing with the subject of the document. For example, if there is a devise to “Benjamin Franklin, of Boston, my nephew,” and there is no nephew but one John Franklin, a letter of the testator to that nephew, declaring an intent to devise to him his property, would not be considered. This rule has never been questioned.<sup>2</sup> What is the reason for it?

The reason is hardly to be found in any prohibitory rule of Evidence, for such declarations are admissible under the Hearsay exception (*ante*, §§ 1725, 1735). Nor is it that these declarations are not useful, for together with others they would certainly help to throw light on the question whether (as in the above example) the name “Benjamin Franklin” was by the testator habitually applied to designate the nephew. The true reason is found in another rule, already considered, — the rule which prohibits setting up any extrinsic utterance to compete with and overthrow the words of a document which solely embodies the transaction (*ante*, § 2425). The effect of that rule is to deny any jural effect to just such declarations.<sup>3</sup> It is true that where the act is required by statute to be in written form — as, a will — there is the additional reason that the oral utterance would fail to fulfil that formality.<sup>4</sup> But, even without such a statutory requirement, the other rule would be adequate to prohibit. When a transaction has been even voluntarily embodied in a single document, no other utterance of intent or will on the same subject can be given jural effect. Hence, such a declaration is excluded from consideration even in the process of interpretation, not because it would not for that purpose be useful, but because it would be improper for the other purpose. There being two conceivable purposes for which it could be used, the one proper, the latter improper, it is excluded because of the risk that the latter would dominate and that the temptation to abuse would be too strong.

§ 2471. <sup>1</sup> Cited *ante*, § 2463, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the Codes (quoted *ante*, § 2458) mention this rule: Cal. Civ. C. 1872, § 1340 (quoted *post*, § 2477); S. Dak. Rev. C. 1919, § 644.

<sup>3</sup> 1850, Patteson, J., in *Doe v. Hubbard*, 15 Q. B. 227, 243 (such declarations “would in truth have established a verbal will contrary to the written words”).

It may be noted that, through the loose meaning of “intention,” a judge who is referring only to the present exception appears sometimes to be contradicting the general principle

of § 2470, *ante*; e. g., Woods, J., in *Patch v. White*, 117 U. S. 210, 6 Sup. 617 (1886): “If there is any proposition settled in the law of wills, it is that extrinsic evidence is inadmissible to show the [*sc.* declarations of] intention of the testator, unless it be necessary to explain a latent ambiguity.”

<sup>4</sup> 1568, Brett v. Rigdon, Plowd. 340 (“No will is within the statute but that which is in writing, which is as much as to say that all which is effectual and to the purpose must be in writing, without seeking aid of words not written”).



This conclusion might have been declined by the Courts; and certainly the rule as it stands does not obey the principle (*ante*, § 13) that a fact relevant for one purpose but not for another may still be received for the former. Nevertheless, the rule is intelligible and its policy rational. It rests on an attempt to insure an observance of the Integration rule (*ante*, § 2452) even at the cost of losing some useful data for the process of Interpretation.<sup>5</sup> This explanation of it was long ago made clear in the following passages:

1832, *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244. The testator by his will, duly executed, devised "all his freehold and real estates whatsoever, situate *in the county of Limerick, and in the city of Limerick*," to certain trustees therein named and their heirs. At the time of making his will he had no real estate in the county of Limerick, but he had a small real estate in the city of Limerick, and considerable real estates situate in the county of Clare. The real estate in the city of Limerick is admitted to have passed under the devise; but the plaintiff contended that he was at liberty to show by parol evidence that the testator intended his estates in Clare also to pass under the same devise. TINDAL, C. J. . . . "The main question between the parties, and which has formed the principal subject of argument before us, is this, Whether parol evidence is admissible to show the testator's intention that his real estates in the county of Clare should pass by his will? . . . This question arises upon facts, either admitted or proved in the cause, which are few and simple. The general character of the parol evidence which the plaintiff contends he is at liberty to produce, in order to establish such intention in the deviser, is this: first, that the estate in the city of Limerick is so small and so disproportioned to the nature of the charges laid upon it, and the trusts which are declared, as to make it manifest there must have been some mistake; and in order to show what that mistake was, the plaintiff proposes to prove that in the copy of the will which had been submitted to the testator for his inspection, and had been approved and returned by him, the devise in question stood thus: 'All my freehold and real estates whatsoever situate *in the counties of Clare, Limerick and in the city of Limerick*'; that the testator directed some alterations to be made in other parts of his will, and that the same copy of the will, accompanied with a statement of the proposed alterations, was sent by the testator's attorney to his conveyancer, in order that such alterations might be reduced into proper form; and that upon such occasion the conveyancer, besides making the alterations directed, did by mistake, and without any authority, strike out the words "counties of Clare" and substitute the words "county of" in lieu thereof, so as to leave the devise in question in the same precise form as it now stands in the executed will. The plaintiff further proposes to prove that a fair copy of the will so altered was sent to the testator, who, after having kept it by him for some time, executed the same in the manner required by law, without adverting to the alteration above pointed out. Upon the fullest consideration, however, it appears to the Lord Chief Baron and myself, that . . . such intention cannot be supplied by the evidence proposed to be given. . . . The plaintiff, however, contends, that he has a right to prove, that the testator intended to pass not only the estate in the city of Limerick, but an estate in a county not named in the will, namely, the county of Clare, and that the will is to be read and construed as if the word Clare stood in the place of or in addition to that of Limerick. But this, it is manifest, is not merely calling in the aid of extrinsic evidence to apply the intention of the testator, as it is to be collected from the will itself, to the existing state of his property; it is calling in extrinsic evidence to introduce into the will an intention not apparent from a defective or mistaken description; it is making the will speak upon the face of the will. It is not simply removing a difficulty arising upon a subject on which it

<sup>5</sup> Professor Thayer has said (Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 444) that "while it takes of the character of both [a rule of construction and a rule of interpretation], it must hold its place as a rule of evidence." But this statement hardly represents its true foundation.



is altogether silent, and is the same in effect as the filling up a blank which the testator might have left in his will. It amounts, in short, by the admission of parol evidence, to the making of a new devise for the testator, which he is supposed to have omitted. Now, the first objection to the introduction of such evidence is that it is inconsistent with the rule, which reason and sense lay down and which has been universally established for the construction of wills, namely, that the testator's intention is to be collected from the words used in the will, and that words which he has not used cannot be added.

"But it is an objection no less strong that the only mode of proving the alleged intention of the testator is, by setting up the draft of the will against the executed will itself. . . . It is unnecessary to advert to the danger of allowing the draft of the will to be set up as of greater authority to evince the intention of the testator than the will itself, after the will has been solemnly executed, and after the death of the testator. If such evidence is admissible to introduce a new subject-matter of devise, why not also to introduce the name of a devisee altogether omitted in the will? If it is admissible to introduce new matter of devise, or a new devisee, why not to strike out such as are contained in the executed will? The effect of such evidence in either case would be, that the will, though made in form by the testator in his lifetime, would really be made by the attorney after his death; that all the guards intended to be introduced by the Statute of Frauds would be entirely destroyed, and the statute itself virtually repealed."

1860, Mr. *F. M. Nichols*, *Extrinsic Evidence in the Interpretation of Wills*, Juridical Society Papers, II, 352: "There is a kind of evidence to which both of these reasons [securing certainty of title and preventing fraudulent proof], and the analogy of the law requiring the will to be in writing, must strongly apply; I mean, of course, the species of evidence which we have called direct evidence of intention; and which, if admitted, would consist for the most part of declarations and informal written memoranda of the testator, and of instructions given by him to the persons employed in the preparation of the formal instrument. Evidence so nearly allied in character to that furnished by the will itself, presents an aspect of rivalry to the will, which raises a prejudice against its reception. It may be fairly presumed to be the intention of the author that the solemn instrument, in its complete and final form, should supersede and extinguish all the informal and deliberative expressions of intention which preceded or accompanied its making. Again, evidence of this kind presents peculiar facilities to fraud. It may be easily imagined or invented, and when fraudulently produced is difficult of detection. If a witness swears that a deceased testator, in a private interview, explained to him the sense in which he wished some clause of his will to be understood, such evidence, however false, cannot possibly be disproved. The same policy of the law which precludes such evidence from directly governing the rights of the parties ought, it may be argued, to prevent it from indirectly influencing those rights by means of interpretation. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that testimony of this kind presents the most obvious, and possibly in some cases the only satisfactory, means of ascertaining the true meaning of an ambiguous or obscure expression. The practice of our own law has, nevertheless, made us familiar with its exclusion in all but some exceptional cases; and it can scarcely be said that this prohibition leads to any great inconvenience or hardship."

The application of the rule is a matter of little difficulty. In its ordinary form, for *wills*, what it does is to exclude the fact that the draftsman made a *mistake*, *i. e.* it prevents the testator's oral or written instructions, or other expressions of intent, from being set up to overthrow or replace the words of the will.<sup>6</sup> In short, it excludes everything that would be excluded by the

<sup>6</sup> ENGLAND: 1832, *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244 (devise of estates "in the county of Limerick and in the city of Limerick"; the testa-

tor had no estate in that county, but considerable estates in the county of Clare; his draft will, containing the words "counties of



rule of Integration already considered (*ante*, §§ 2425-2447). Its difficulties, if any, arise only under its exceptions.

§ 2472. **Same:** (1) **Exception for Equivocation, or Latent Ambiguity.** The foregoing exception to the general rule has itself an exception, namely, that declarations of intention, though ordinarily excluded from consideration, are receivable to assist in *interpreting an equivocation*, — that is, a term which, upon application to external objects, is found to fit two or more of them equally. This rule dates at least as far back, in recognition, as Lord Coke's time; the only difference being that it was then the sole permissive exception to a general prohibitory rule against looking at any extrinsic circumstances (as noticed *ante*, § 2470), while now it is a permissive exception to a prohibitory rule which is itself an exception (*ante*, § 2471) to a general permissive rule.

1. The reason for the present exception to that exception is plain enough. The original prohibitory exception is based on the risk of allowing an extrinsic utterance of intent to come into competition with the terms of the document on the same subject, and perhaps to prevail against them (*ante*, § 2471). Now in the case of an equivocation this risk does not exist. Since the term of the document describes equally two objects, and since it was

Clare and Limerick," and the scrivener's mistake in changing this, were not allowed to be proved; quoted *supra*).

UNITED STATES: *California*: 1905, Holt's Estate, 146 Cal. 77, 79 Pac. 585 (plaintiff was a daughter by a former marriage of the wife of the testatrix' brother; under a bequest to "my nieces," *semble*, the testatrix' declarations were admissible to show that she had "considered appellant as her niece"); 1921, Watts' Est., 186 Cal. 102, 198 Pac. 1036 (bequest to "my heirs"; testatrix' statements to draftsman that she meant her own next of kin, not including her husband's, excluded); *Connecticut*: 1896, Jackson v. Alsop, 67 Conn. 249, 34 Atl. 1106 (the words of a devise being unambiguous, expressions of intention were excluded); *Iowa*: 1906, Gilmore v. Jenkins, 129 Ia. 686, 106 N. W. 193 ("to my five daughters, the undivided one fifth of," etc.; the testator's intent to give each of them one fifth, excluded); *Massachusetts*: 1905, Best v. Berry, 189 Mass. 510, 75 N. E. 743 (bequest to C. and B. to be divided equally; C. having died before the testatrix, a memorandum of the testatrix' intention was not admitted to show her intent as to the share undisposed of in the will); 1909, Sibley v. Maxwell, 203 Mass. 94, 89 N. E. 232 (direction in a will to deduct from a son's share "an account . . . the amount above written, \$13,959.14"; subsequent letters, etc., showing a reduction of the amount, excluded); 1910, Walton v. Draper, 206 Mass. 20, 91 N. E. 884 (death of devisees childless); *Michigan*: 1896, Defreese v. Lake, 109 Mich. 415, 67 N. W. 505 (the expressed intention of the testator, excluded for construing the

kind of estate given); *Missouri*: 1920, Wooley v. Hays, 285 Mo. 566, 226 S. W. 842 ("lawful heirs"; testator's statements that he wanted his brothers and sisters to have the property, and scrivener's testimony that the words were used in that sense, excluded, the expression not being ambiguous); *New Hampshire*: 1896, Emery v. Haven, 67 N. H. 503, 35 Atl. 940 (whether a wife's will was intended by her to be an execution of a power left her by her husband; an express subsequent written statement that it was not, excluded); 1916, Jones v. Bennett, 78 N. H. 224, 99 Atl. 18 (bequest to "the heirs of my late husband"; the husband left a grandson and nephews and nieces; to show that the nephews and nieces were included, the testatrix' statements as to who were to have the property were held ineffective to determine the meaning of "heirs," inasmuch as the statements did not amount to a special usage attached to that term; lucid opinions by Young and Walker, JJ.); *New York*: 1814, Jackson v. Sill, 11 Johns. 201 (devise "to my wife the farm I now occupy"; declaration of intent not admitted to show that this included seven acres actually occupied by S. under a lease); 1903, Brown v. Quintard, 177 N. Y. 75, 69 N. E. 225 (former revoked will, offered to aid in interpretation, excluded); *Pennsylvania*: 1896, Fuller v. Weaver, 175 Pa. 182, 34 Atl. 634 (a deed-description of premises); *Virginia*: 1906, App v. App, 106 Va. 253, 55 S. E. 672 (meaning of the will).

The rule applies equally to a *contract*: 1908, Middleworth v. Ordway, 191 N. Y. 404, 84 N. E. 290 (contract of adoption; instructions to the scrivener, excluded).



aimed to designate one only, there can be no competition with the words of the document by declarations which merely expand and make more specific those words. The sense of the words can be interpreted without restriction, because the data offered cannot be used for any purpose but that of interpretation. Hence the reason for the original prohibitory rule falls away, and the general principle of interpretation resumes its full range:

1836, PARKE, B., in *Doe v. Needs*, 2 M. & W. 129: "The characteristic of all these cases is that the words of the will do describe the object or subject intended; and the evidence of the declarations of the testator has not the effect of varying the instrument in any way whatever; it only enables the Court to reject one of the subjects or objects to which the description in the will applies, and to determine which of the two the devisor understood to be signified by the description which he used in the will."<sup>1</sup>

The typical illustration of the present exception is found in the much-quoted passage of Lord Coke:

1591, *The Lord Cheyney's Case*, 5 Co. Rep. 68 a; devise to his son H. and the heirs of his body, and then to T. C. and the heirs male of his body, on condition "that he or they or any of them" shall not alienate; proof by witnesses that it was "the intent and meaning of the testator" to include under "he or they" his son H., as well as T. C., was excluded; "he should not be received to such averment out of the will"; "but if a man has two sons, both baptized by the name of John, and conceiving that the elder, who had been long absent, is dead, devises his land by his will in writing to his son John generally, and in truth the elder is living, — in this case the younger son may in pleading or in evidence allege the devise to him, and if it be denied, he may produce witnesses to prove his father's intent, that he thought the other to be dead, or that he at the time of the will named his son John the younger, and the writer left out the addition of the younger."

2. This exception finds frequent application to *wills*.<sup>2</sup> The only point of controversy which it may present is whether a particular term is on the facts

§ 2472. <sup>1</sup> So also: 1833, Parke, J., in *Richardson v. Watson*, 4 B. & Ad. 787, 800 ("Such evidence is admissible to show, not what the testator intended, but what he understood to be signified by the words used in the will").

<sup>2</sup> ENGLAND: 1750, *Hampshire v. Pierce*, 2 Ves. 216 (bequest of 100*l.* to "the four children of my late cousin E. B.," and of 300*l.* to "the children of my late cousin E. B.,"; in fact, E. B. had six children, two by one husband P., and four by another husband B.; evidence that "the testatrix meant the four children by the last husband B." was admitted to interpret the former bequest, but not the latter; the former being ambiguous, but not the latter); 1750, *Jones v. Newman*, 1 W. Bl. 60 (devise to "John Cluer of Calcot"; there appearing to be two persons, father and son, of that name, "parol evidence that the testatrix intended to leave it to J. C. the son" was admitted); 1820, *Doe v. Westlake*, 4 B. & Ald. 57 (gifts to a brother Thomas W., to the daughter of a brother Richard, and then a devise to "Matthew W., my brother, and to Simon W., my brother's son"); each of the

three brothers had a son Simon; declarations of the testator that he intended the devise for Simon the son of Richard were excluded; but this seems erroneous, for "my brother" was not exclusively applicable to Matthew, even on the face of the will; 1836, *Doe v. Needs*, 2 M. & W. 129 (devise to "George Gord, the son of Gord"; there were two Gordes, John and George, each having a son George, and each of these sons was elsewhere explicitly named in the will; the devisor's declarations of intention were admitted); 1840, *Doe v. Allen*, 12 A. & E. 451 (devise to "John A., the grandson of my said brother Thomas," the property to be charged with payments to "each and every the brothers and sisters of the said John A.,"; there were two grandsons of Thomas named John; one had three brothers and four sisters, the other had one brother and one sister, at the time of the will's making; the testatrix' declarations of intention were admitted, on the ground that the statement of the numbers of brothers and sisters was "not part of the description of the devisee"; but the correct ground would have been that the statement, though certainly part of the description, did



an equivocation, *i. e.* whether, in applying it to external objects, the two (or more) which appear to correspond must *precisely* fit the description in the document, in order to invoke this exception. Here there is room for either strict or liberal construction; and the rulings do not differ except in exemplifying one or the other attitude.

The exception is also applicable to *deeds* and *contracts*; <sup>3</sup> but in the latter

not imply the present existence of plural brothers and sisters but included equally a person who might thereafter have more than one of each; 1870, *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727 (devise to "my nephew Joseph Grant"; there were two relations of that name, one being the son of the testator's brother, the other the son of his wife's brother, the testator being ignorant of the former's existence and being in the habit of terming the latter his nephew; declarations of intention were offered, but were expressly not passed upon, the Court having doubts; but these doubts were unnecessary); 1877, *Re Wolverton Mortgaged Estates*, L. R. 7 Ch. D. 197 (bequest to be void upon marriage with "Thomas Fisher, of Bridge Street, Bath"; there was at the time in Bridge Street a Thomas Fisher, married, and his son Henry Tom Fisher, unmarried and "often at his father's house"; the legatee having married the latter, evidence of the testator's intention was admitted as for an ambiguity, because "there appear to be practically two Thomas Fishers living in Bridge Street"); 1905, *Hubbuck's Estate*, Prob. 129 (cited *post*, § 2473, n. 1); 1914, *In re Jeffrey, Nassey v. Jeffrey*, 1 Ch. 375 (a bequest of residue "between my brother W. J. his wife and their daughter"; W. J. had five daughters; proof allowed of the testatrix' special intimacy with only the daughter Phoebe, and of a prior will of 1909 in which the residue was left to W. J. and "his daughter Phebe"; treated as a latent ambiguity); 1920, *Re Battie-Wrightson*, 2 Ch. 330 (legacy to S. of money at a named bank, the limitation to the bank being struck out; then a legacy to Y. of money "at the said bank"; held that the words struck out could be considered, the case being one of latent ambiguity).

CANADA: 1912, *Re Piper*, 2 D. L. R. 132, Ont. (meaning of "residue"; testator's draft of the will, excluded); 1916, *Re Aldridge Will*, 28 D. L. R. 527, Alta. (whether a legacy in a codicil was cumulative, etc.; a letter of the testator written after execution, excluded); 1918, *Berger v. Clavel*, 42 D. L. R. 771, Can. S. C. (bequest of a property numbered 1178-1186 rue St. Denis, and there were "two stores in course of erection at the time"; held that extrinsic evidence of intention was admissible; two judges diss.).

UNITED STATES: *Illinois*: 1913, *Hitchcock v. Board of Home Missions*, 259 Ill. 288, 102 N. E. 741 ("be equally divided between Home Missions," etc.; the testatrix' conversations

as to her intentions, admitted to show which board was signified); *Iowa*: 1882, *Chambers v. Watson*, 60 Ia. 339, 14 N. W. 336 (devise of "60 acres, Se 25, toon 7; 40 acres, se 24, toon 6," not naming any range; the testator's declarations at the time of execution, admitted); *Kentucky*: 1916, *Carroll v. Cave Hill Cemetery Co.*, 172 Ky. 204, 189 S. W. 186 ("the present basin" in a description of the location of a mortuary chapel in a cemetery; declarations of the testatrix excluded; unsound); 1917, *Eichhorn v. Morat*, 175 Ky. 80, 193 S. W. 1013, (the word "he" in a devise to an unnamed person "so long as he will"; usage and declarations signifying the husband of the testatrix, admitted); *Maryland*: 1911, *Suman v. Harvey*, 114 Md. 241, 79 Atl. 197 ("to my heirs-at-law and next of kin"; the testatrix left next of kin four first cousins, but a now deceased first cousin left surviving a son; held, that expressions of intention to provide for and to include the deceased cousin and her son in the will were inadmissible; the opinion does not discuss the real difficulties involved); *Massachusetts*: 1864, *Bodman v. American Tract Society*, 9 All. 447 (bequest to "the American Tract Society"; there being two societies of that name, the testator's intention, as proved by the draftsman, was admitted); *Mississippi*: 1895, *Schlottman v. Hoffman*, 73 Miss. 188, 18 So. 893 (figures in a will which might mean \$5.00 or \$500, allowed to be explained by the testatrix' instructions); *New Hampshire*: 1879, *Bartlett v. Remington*, 59 N. H. 364 (bequest "in trust for Sarah," shown to be intended for Sarah Sturce); 1880, *Tilton v. American Bible Society*, 60 N. H. 377 (bequest to "the Bible Society"; claims being made by the New Hampshire Bible Society and the American Bible Society, it was treated as a latent ambiguity).

<sup>3</sup> Not all of these rulings distinctly declare declarations of intention admissible; a clear appreciation of the distinction between "intention," or meaning, and declarations of intention, is indeed often wanting:

CANADA: 1912, *Hoocy v. Tripp*, Ont. D. C., 2 D. L. R. 136 (deed of "the west half of lot 8," which was an irregular triangle; parties' negotiations considered; annotated case).

UNITED STATES: *Illinois*: 1893, *Hallidy v. Hess*, 147 Ill. 588, 35 N. E. 380 (deed describing land by bounds, and terming it "section 8"; there being in the county several sections 8 in the various townships, "parol evidence" was admitted); 1911, *Decker v. Stansberry*,



kinds of documents, since the standard of interpretation must be a mutual one (*ante*, § 2466), it is naturally less frequent to find a mutual declaration of intention available for the purpose.

3. It is the subject of the present exception which Lord Bacon designated by his much-abused term "*latent ambiguity*." He also terms it by its more specific name "*equivocation*," but, with the exception of a single application (*post*, § 2474), the two were to him synonymous. By the standard of his time, this was the only exception for which any extrinsic circumstances whatever could be consulted (*ante*, § 2470). When he allowed, in case of equivocation, an averment (*i. e.* extrinsic proof) of "intention," he was plainly using this word as signifying "meaning" or "sense," and not as specifically confined to "declarations of intention." Nevertheless, as the scope of interpretation expanded, and the use of words changed, his exposition came to fit in well enough with the modern exception to the exception against declarations of intention. It has thus served as a frequent authority; and though it has rightly been termed an "unprofitable subtlety,"<sup>4</sup> and has unnecessarily confused the subject with artificial distinctions, its tenor must be kept in mind, as explaining much in modern opinions:

*Circa* 1597, Sir Francis Bacon, Maxims, rule XXV (Works, Spedding's ed., 1861, vol. XIV, p. 273): "There be two sorts of ambiguities of words; the one is '*ambiguitas patens*' and the other is '*ambiguitas latens*.' '*Patens*' is that which appears to be ambiguous upon the deed or instrument; '*latens*' is that which seemeth certain and without ambiguity for anything that appeareth upon the deed or instrument, but there is some collateral matter out of the deed that breedeth the ambiguity. '*Ambiguitas patens*' is never holpen by averment, and the reason is, because the law will not couple and mingle matter of specialty,

249 Ill. 487, 94 N. E. 940 (deed of "the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  and the undivided  $\frac{7}{8}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 15"; issue whether this signified the N. E. of Sect. 15, or the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sect. 15; the grantor's ownership of the latter only, and the area of the acreage as described, were taken as facts justifying the latter meaning; the testimony of the justice of the peace preparing the deed, and the grantor's admissions, were considered); *Indiana*: 1894, *Tewksbury v. Howard*, 138 Ind. 105, 37 N. E. 355 (deed describing land as the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 36, T. 25, R. 11, without county or State mentioned; parol evidence admitted); *Massachusetts*: 1854, *Sargent v. Adams*, 3 Gray 72, 79 (lease of "the Adams House"; issue whether it passed the five stores in the building so known; held, a latent ambiguity, upon which the intention of the parties could be resorted to); *Mississippi*: 1897, *Illinois C. R. Co. v. Le Blanc*, 74 Miss. 650, 21 So. 760 ("fractional 38 acres in said S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , assessed to J. J. Carter"; other deeds, etc., admitted to identify the section, township, and range in which Carter owned 38 acres); 1898, *Ladnier v. Ladnier*, 75 Miss. 777, 23 So. 430 (deed omitting State and county of land in description; extrinsic facts admitted); *New York*:

1922, *United States Printing & L. Co. v. Powers*, 233 N. Y. 143, 135 N. E. 225 (whether a contract was joint or several, etc.; the party's statement of the kind of contract he intended to make, excluded); *Oregon*: 1905, *Baker Co. v. Huntington*, 46 Or. 275, 79 Pac. 187 (sheriff's bond to perform "the duties of such office"; intention of the parties to apply it to his office as sheriff or as tax-collector also, admitted); *Virginia*: 1921, *Coffman's Adm'r v. Coffman*, — Va. —, 109 S. E. 454 (bequests to various relatives; careful opinion by Kelly, P., excluding declarations of intention, but admitting other facts); *West Virginia*: 1916, *Snider v. Robinett*, 78 W. Va. 88, 88 S. E. 599 (agreement to "furnish road"; there being two roads, the parties' conversations admitted to identify the one signified).

The following case is therefore erroneous: 1901, *Mudd v. Dillon*, 166 Mo. 110, 65 S. W. 973 (deed of "80 acres of the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. E. of Sec. 13," not mentioning any township or range; held, a patent ambiguity, void for uncertainty, and not aidable by parol; the opinion is apparently ignorant of the principle applicable).

<sup>4</sup> Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, 424; the learned author examines the history of Bacon's maxim at pp. 425, 471.



which is of the higher account, with matter of averment, which is of inferior account in law; for that were to make all deeds hollow and subject to averments, and so, in effect, that to pass without deed, which the law appointeth shall not pass but by deed. Therefore if a man give land to 'I. D. et I. S. hæredibus,' and do not limit to whether of their heirs, it shall not be supplied by averment to whether of them the intention was the inheritance should be limited. . . . But if it be 'ambiguitas latens,' then otherwise it is. As I grant my manor of S. to I. F. and his heirs, here appeareth no ambiguity at all upon the deed; but if the truth be that I have the manors both of South S. and North S., this ambiguity is matter in fact; and therefore it shall be holpen by averment, whether of them it was that the parties intended should pass. . . . Another sort of 'ambiguitas latens' is correlative unto this: for this ambiguity spoken of before is, when one name and appellation doth denominate divers things; and the second is, when the same thing is called by divers names. As, if I give lands to Christ Church in Oxford, and the name of the corporation is 'Ecclesia Christi in Universitate Oxford,' this shall be holpen by averment, because there appears no ambiguity in the words: for the variance is matter in fact. But the averment shall not be of the intention, because it does not stand with the words. For in the case of equivocation the general intent includes both the special, and therefore stands with the words: but so it is not in variance; and therefore the averment must be a matter that doth induce a certainty, and not of intention; as to say that the precinct of 'Oxford' and of 'the University of Oxford' is one and the same, and not to say that the intention of the parties was that the grant should be to Christ Church in the University of Oxford."

§ 2473. **Same: Blanks and Latent Ambiguities.** A document may be void for intrinsic indefiniteness of terms (*ante*, § 2407); or it may be, though definite, impossible to enforce extrinsically, because there are no objects existing upon which its terms can operate. These are simple principles, well established in their sphere; but in concrete application both of them require discrimination from the foregoing principle concerning equivocations.

(1) Is a *blank space* an equivocation? It certainly fits two or more objects equally; and where it represents merely an insufficient term in an attempted description it may be treated as an equivocation; because the writer has fixed upon an object, but his words do not carry the description far enough. On the other hand, where a blank space represents a failure to make a final expression of will, the act is incomplete; to supply declarations of intention would be to set up a rival will; there can be no interpretation, for there is nothing to interpret. It therefore depends on the particular document whether a blank space is an equivocation.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2473. <sup>1</sup> *England*: 1741, *Baylis v. Attorney-General*, 2 Atk. 239 (bequest "to the ward of Bread Street, according to Mr. — his will"; "parol evidence of the intention of the testator, where there is only a blank," excluded); 1790, *Hunt v. Hort*, 3 Prec. Ch. 311 ("my other pictures to become the property of Lady —"; L. C. Thurlow declined to "supply a blank by parol evidence"); 1799, *Price v. Page*, 4 Ves. Jr. 679 (bequest to "Price the son of Price"; declarations of intent to give to a particular Price, admitted; "this is only that the testator did not know the Christian name"); 1877, *De Rosaz' Goods*, L. R. 2 P. D. 66 (an executor named as "Percival

of Brighton, Esq., the father"; applied to William Percival Boxall, who answered the description); 1905, *Hubbuck's Estate*, Prob. 129 (a bequest "unto my grand-daughter all my real and personal etc."; there were three granddaughters, and a son claimed against them on the ground that the bequest was void; held not void, and evidence of declarations of intention admitted; "the distinction is that, in this case, it is not a total blank").

*Ireland*: 1905, *Henderson v. Henderson*, L. R. 1 Ire. 353 (bequest to "my grandsons, R. W. H. and J. B. H."; testator had two grandsons who were brothers, W. R. H. and



(2) Where the words and phrases of a document are *in themselves indeterminate* (as where a devise is made of "one of my seven houses"), there is again a case of failure to make a final expression of will; the actor has failed to make his selection, and his act is incomplete. On the general principle of jural acts (*ante*, § 2407), the document is (in the part in question) ineffective and void for uncertainty. This is Lord Bacon's 'ambiguitas patens';<sup>2</sup> it cannot be interpreted, for there is nothing to interpret.<sup>3</sup> But the terms

J. B. H., and a third grandson, R. W. H.; the testator's instructions to the scrivener, etc., admitted; but the case is erroneously referred to in the opinion as one of "latent ambiguity").

*United States: Georgia:* 1905, Crawford v. Verner, 122 Ga. 814, 56 S. E. 958 (deed held void for uncertainty of description); *Hawaii:* 1915, Mercer v. Kirkpatrick, 22 Haw. 644 ("I give and bequeath all of those certain lots," etc., without naming a grantee; the preceding gift was to his wife, the following one to trustees; declarations of intention to give to his wife, excluded); *Illinois:* 1897, Marske v. Willard, 169 Ill. 276, 48 N. E. 290 (lease of "lot No. — in assessor's subdivision of Whiting's block No. 8"; the identity of the lot provable by parol, since "it is perfectly clear from the lease, considered within itself, that certain particular premises had been selected by the parties"); 1902, Engelthaler v. Engelthaler, 196 Ill. 230, 65 N. E. 669 (the will devised a homestead to the testator's wife for life, and further devised it after her death without naming any person; evidence of the testator's intention to devise it to his son F. E. was excluded); 1905, Harman v. People, 214 Ill. 454, 73 N. E. 760 (tax judgment held not void for ambiguity, the evidence not showing that the property described could not be located); 1920, McKie v. Collinson, 292 Ill. 458, 127 N. E. 92 ("Third, I give to my beloved wife J. C. all the residue and remainder of my personal property . . . Further I give to my the following real estate . . . Further the following described lot . . . All the above described lands lying in the county of Knox and State of Illinois"; held that the clause "Further I give to my the following" was not void as a blank, but should be construed to refer to the testator's wife; distinguishing Engelthaler v. Engelthaler); *Massachusetts:* 1916, Pacific Surety Co. v. Toye, 224 Mass. 98, 112 N. E. 653 (an insurance policy provided for "a premium of — dollars annually"; the parties' mutual understanding as to a \$5 annual payment, enforced; "this will be supplied by the Court"); *Michigan:* 1919, Droppers v. Marshall, 206 Mich. 560, 173 N. W. 356 (contract for conveyance, the description omitting the section number; held void, in an action for damages; unsound); *Montana:* 1920, Parham v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co., 57 Mont. 492, 189 Pac. 227 (contract to forward livestock "via C. R.

S. & P. R. Co., and connections, to —, consigned to Walter Dunbar"; agreement to forward to Chicago, allowed to be shown); *Oregon:* 1903, La Vie v. Tooze, 43 Or. 590, 74 Pac. 210 (power of attorney to "Conrad Krebs and —Krebs, composing the firm of Krebs Brothers"; the blank allowed to be applied by parol to Leonard and M. W. Krebs); *Washington:* 1921, Fagan v. Walters, 115 Wash. 454, 197 Pac. 635 (a description in a deed, held meaningless and incurable by parol).

The following curious case, which seems to belong here, should be compared with the citations in § 2467, *ante*: 1897, Dennis v. Holsapple, 148 Ind. 297, 47 N. E. 631 ("Whoever shall take good care of me, and maintain, nurse, clothe, and furnish me [etc.] . . . during the time of my life yet when I shall need the same, shall have all of my property," etc.; a letter of the testatrix to H. . . her to come and care for the testator . . . referring to the above provision in her . . . stated to show the testatrix' intention).

<sup>2</sup> See the quotation *ante*, § 2407. This is the problem satirized in Alexander Pope's Report of the Case of Stradling v. Styles, wherein it appeared that the testator had bequeathed "all my black and white horses," and the question was whether his six pyed horses passed (Works, Elwin & Courthouse's ed., X, 430).

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1802, Doe v. Joinville, 3 East 172 (devise to "my brother and sister's family"; held void for uncertainty). *U. S.* 1917, Re Petersen, D. C. Nev., 252 Fed. 849 (mortgage of ranch stock); 1901, Hanna v. Palmer, 194 Ill. 41, 61 N. E. 1051 (deed granting a part of the "west half of the northeast quarter . . . containing one acre more or less," held void for uncertainty); 1921, Patterson v. McClenathan, 296 Ill. 475, 129 N. E. 767 (deed of "all interest that I have or now own in section No. 1," etc., etc., held not too uncertain); 1922, Moore v. Crittenden, — Mont. —, 204 Pac. 1035 (chattel mortgage); 1918, DeRemer v. Anderson, 41 Nev. 287, 169 Pac. 737 (option contract; "all or any part of the land herein leased," held void for uncertainty on the facts; Coleman, J., diss., and properly); 1896, Wilkins v. Jones, 119 N. C. 95, 25 S. E. 789 (description of land in a deed, held not too vague); 1917, Hagen v. Dwyer, 36 N. D. 346, 162 N. W. 699 (mortgage; description of land, held too vague); 1918, Rogers v. Lippy, 99 Wash. 312, 169 Pac. 858 (brokerage commis-



may in effect indicate a final expression of will by leaving to some other person an *election* to take whichever object he wishes, — as in a devise of “any one of my seven houses”; here there is certainty of expression, and the act of another person is made a condition precedent.<sup>4</sup> Where the words are on the face of the document not final, but the extrinsic facts happen to make them certain — as where the devise is to “one of the children of A,” and A has but one child,—the terms would seem to be void for uncertainty, whether the devisor knew the facts or not.<sup>5</sup>

(3) Where the terms of the document are definite, but the extrinsic facts make them *impossible of execution* — as where a devise is of “my house on Cedar street,” and in fact the testator has no such house — the act is again void, — not however for lack of finality in expression, but merely for impossibility of enforcement.<sup>6</sup>

(4) Where the terms of a document contain an *erroneous description*, and under the principle of ‘*falsa demonstratio*’ (*post*, § 2476) some part of it can be ignored as non-essential, the remainder may still become too vague and thus be void for uncertainty, on the principle of (2) above.<sup>7</sup> For example, where a devise is made of “the house No. 19 Cedar street,” and there is no house at No. 19 Cedar street, but only at No. 13 Cedar street, it might be possible to ignore the number as non-essential, but what remains would then be too uncertain, “the house on Cedar street”; whereas if there had been an additional term of description, “the house which my son lives in at No. 19 Cedar street,” the remainder, ignoring the number, would have been sufficiently definite.

sion for the exchange of “my stock ranch located in sections 9, 17, and 21, township 3 south, range 13 east, Sweetgrass Co.,” held not to “show certainty upon its face,” under Rem. Code § 5289; Morris, J., dissenting, and properly, with three other judges, invokes the principle considered *ante*, § 2465).

So, too, a case of apparent equivocation may, after declarations of intention are considered, turn out to be a case of failure to make a definite choice; 1833, Richardson v. Watson, 4 B. & Ad. 787 (devise of “the close in K. aforesaid now in the occupation of the said J. W.”; the declarations of intention showed that the testator supposed that he had but one such close, but in fact he had two; the devise held void for uncertainty, and not subject to election).

So, too, the terms may be void for repugnancy, or one repugnant term may override the other; 1839, Saunderson v. Piper, 5 Bing. N. C. 425 (a bill of exchange read “two hundred pounds,” and in the place for figures, “£245”; held, as against the acceptor, that his declarations indicating an intention to accept for £245 were inadmissible, on the theory of patent ambiguity, and that the verdict should be for £200; Coltman, J., diss.); and cases cited *post*, § 2477.

Distinguish the question whether the terms of a description are clear enough to entitle a

promisee to *specific performance* by deed: 1920, O’Connell v. Cease, 267 Pa. 288, 110 Atl. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Bacon, Maxim XXV (in a part of the passage not quoted *supra*); 1900, Re Cheadle, 2 Ch. 620.

<sup>5</sup> Wigram, Extrinsic Evidence, § 79, suggests the contrary solution, where the testator knows the facts; “it is the form of expression only, not the intention, which is ambiguous.” The following case shows the distinction between this and equivocation: 1887, Phelan v. Slattery, 19 L. R. Ire. 177 (bequest to “my nephew,” there being at least five such persons; the testator’s instructions to his solicitor, admitted, because “the description is alike applicable to not only T. D. but to one or more other nephews”).

<sup>6</sup> 1818, Beaumont v. Field, 2 Chitty 275 (deed of all the lands “now in the occupation of the widow K. and son”; at the time no lands were so occupied, the widow K. having been dead two years; held, that a verdict refusing to enforce the deed for uncertainty was good); 1834, King v. Badeley, 3 Myl. & K. 417 (devise over in case “certain contingent property” should vest in his children; there being no contingent interests in the children, the testator’s declarations of his meaning were excluded).

<sup>7</sup> Examples of this are given in §§ 2476, 2477, *post*.



§ 2474. **Same: (2) Exception for Erroneous Description.** Does the exception for equivocations extend also to *misdescriptions*? For example, a devise is made to "J. S., eldest son of R. S.," and there are two persons, each of whom fulfils one part but not the whole of the description, one person being the eldest son of R. S., though not named J., and the other being a son of R. S. and named J., but not the eldest son; are declarations of intention proper to consider?

There are among the earlier rulings some which can be wrested into precedents upon this point.<sup>1</sup> But the attitude towards interpretation by extrinsic circumstances was down to the end of the 1700s so different from the modern attitude (*ante*, § 2470), and the rule for equivocations then held a relation to the rest of the law so different from its present one (*ante*, § 2472), that it is hardly possible to build up any doctrine to-day from the earlier rulings. However, in 1832, in the much-considered case of *Miller v. Travers*, the doctrine was plainly laid down that such a second exception existed:

1832, TINDAL, C. J., in *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244: "The cases to which this construction [*'Ambiguitas verborum latens verificatione suppletur'*] applies will be found to range themselves into two separate classes. . . . The first class is, where the description of

§ 2474. <sup>1</sup> Bacon's Maxim (quoted *ante*, § 2472) seems at first sight to deal with it, in the concluding passage, but his notion is really a distinct one. Omitting some intervening cases, the course of rulings in the half-century before *Miller v. Travers* was as follows: 1790, *Baugh v. Read*, 1 Ves. Jr. 256 (similar to *Selwood v. Mildmay*, *infra*, the actual stock here being not so much as described; per L. C. Thurlow: "where a testator uses certain words which '*prima facie*' give a clear account, the same fact that enables you to prove that there is a latent ambiguity enables you to prove what was his intention"); 1792, *Delmore v. Robello*, 1 Ves. Jr. 412 (bequest to "all the children of his two sisters Reyne and Estrella"; before the date of the will, a sister named Reyne had become a nun and lived at Genoa, and another sister Rebecca living at Leghorn, with Estrella, had children; declarations of intention that he meant to provide for the children of his sisters at Leghorn were excluded, on the theory that this was not a latent ambiguity); 1796, *Thomas v. Thomas*, 6 T. R. 671 (devise "to my granddaughter Mary Thomas of Lleechlloyd in Merther parish"; one M. T. was in fact only a great granddaughter and lived in another parish, and one Elinor Evans, elsewhere named in the will, was a granddaughter and lived in M. parish; though the devise was ultimately held void for uncertainty, yet declarations of the testator were admitted, made on reading the will, that there was a mistake in the name but there was no need to rectify it, as the place of abode would suffice to describe the devisee; the jury found that no such mistake in fact had been

made); 1797, *Selwood v. Mildmay*, 3 Ves. Jr. 306 (bequest of "part of my stock in the 4 per cent. annuities of the Bank of England"; the testator had sold his 4 per cents and at the time of execution owned only "long" annuities; the attorney's testimony was received that the testator's instructions were based on the wording of a former will executed before selling the 4 per cents); 1797, *Walpole v. Cholmondeley*, 7 T. R. 134, 145 (the testator made a will in 1752, and another in 1756, and a third by codicil in 1776; in the third he confirmed "his last will and testament dated Nov. 25, 1752"; it was offered to be shown by the scrivener of the third will that upon asking for the testator's prior will the testator referred him to M., who produced that of 1752; that the codicil of 1776 was then drafted by the scrivener in the belief that the will of 1752 was the last one, and that the recital of its date was not read over to the testator, etc., etc.; this was excluded on the ground that there was no latent ambiguity); 1815, *Stockdale v. Bushby*, 19 Ves. Jr. 381 (bequest to "my namesake Thomas S., the second son of my brother J. S., over and above his equal share with his brothers, 1000l."; there was no son Thomas, but the second son was William, and was given the legacy; the testator's declarations of intention to give the second son 1000l. more than the others being admitted); 1821, *Still v. Hoste*, 6 Madd. 192 (bequest to "Sophia Still, daughter of P. S."; there were two daughters, neither of them named Sophia; the scrivener's testimony to the testator's instructions and a mistake in copying them was admitted).



the thing devised, or of the devisee, is clear upon the face of the will; but upon the death of the testator it is found, that there are more than one estate or subject-matter of devise, or more than one person whose description follows out and fills the words used in the will. As where the testator devises his manor of Dale, and at his death it is found that he has two manors of that name, South Dale and North Dale; or where a man devises to his son John, and he has two sons of that name. In each of these cases respectively parol evidence is admissible to show which manor was intended to pass and which son was intended to take. The other class of cases is that in which the description contained in the will of the thing intended to be devised, or of the person who is intended to take, is true in part, but not true in every particular. As where an estate is devised called A., and is described as in the occupation of B., and it is found, that though there is an estate called A., yet the whole is not in B.'s occupation; or where an estate is devised to a person whose surname or Christian name is mistaken; or whose description is imperfect or inaccurate; in which latter class of cases parol evidence is admissible to show what estate was intended to pass, and who was the devisee intended to take, provided there is sufficient indication of intention appearing on the face of the will to justify the application of the evidence."

Such being the language of the opinion in *Miller v. Travers* — a ruling which appears neither then nor subsequently to have met with anything but approval — it was a singular fate which led to the repeal of the second part of the exception by citation of the authority of the very case itself. An eagle pierced with an arrow winged by its own pinion, — such was the treatment of *Miller v. Travers* in the closely ensuing case of *Doe v. Hiscocks*;<sup>2</sup> which held that the exception for declarations of intention does not apply to an erroneous description which fits each of two objects in some parts but neither object exactly. The latter ruling rested, of course, on some misconception of the former one, — though how this could arise is incomprehensible. *Doe v. Hiscocks* was for a while followed almost implicitly.<sup>3</sup> But some judges ex-

<sup>2</sup> 1839, *Doe v. Hiscocks*, 5 M. & W. 363 (devise to "my grandson John H., eldest son of the said John H."; in fact, there were two sons, Simon, the oldest by a first marriage, and John, the oldest by a second marriage; held that this was not an equivocation, but a misdescription, since J. fulfilled the name but not the relationship, and S. 'vice versa,' and that the testator's instructions and declarations were not admissible; several cases being cited as concededly opposed to this view, it was added that "these cases seem to us at variance with the decision in *Miller v. Travers*, which is a decision entitled to great weight," and "we are prepared on this point, the point in judgment in *Miller v. Travers*, to adhere to the authority of that case"). The facts excluded in *Miller v. Travers* have been already noted (*ante*, § 2471, text). The error in *Doe v. Hiscocks* consisted in not perceiving that the facts excluded in *Miller v. Travers* had been there offered for a very different purpose from that of the facts offered in *Doe v. Hiscocks*; the opinion excluding the facts in *Miller v. Travers* expressly sanctioned the purpose sought by the offer in *Doe v. Hiscocks*.

<sup>3</sup> 1846, *Lindgren v. Lindgren*, 9 Beav. 358

(similar to *Selwood v. Mildmay*, *supra*, note 1; the latter held not to have been overruled by *Miller v. Travers* or *Doe v. Hiscocks*); 1853, *Bernasconi v. Atkinson*, 10 Hare 345 (devise to "my first cousin Vincent B., the son of my late uncle Peter B."; there existed a George Vincent B., son of another uncle Joseph B., and a Frederick B., son of the uncle Peter B.; the former visited the testator, but the latter did not; the Court considered the circumstances and habits of the persons, to ascertain the essential part of the description, but would not consider declarations of intent; following *Doe v. Hiscocks*); 1860, *Drake v. Drake*, 8 H. L. C. 172 (a description fitting two persons, each in part only; the testator's instructions to the draftsman, excluded); 1874, *Charter v. Charter*, L. R. 7 H. L. 364 (the facts are stated *post*, § 2477; declarations of intention were conceded by all the judges to be inadmissible, on the authority of *Doe v. Hiscocks*, *Bernasconi v. Atkinson*, and *Drake v. Drake*, though Lord Selborne added, "why the law should be so, . . . when evidence of the same kind is admitted in what Lord Bacon describes as cases of equivocation, I am not sure that I clearly understand").



pressed their dissatisfaction with the result;<sup>4</sup> and a reversion to the orthodoxy of *Miller v. Travers* may be prophesied for the British law.<sup>5</sup>

In the United States, the question has seldom been raised, and no distinct rule can be predicated,<sup>6</sup> — chiefly because of the frequent ignoring of the

<sup>4</sup> 1874, Lord Selborne, in *Drake v. Drake*, *supra*; 1877, Hannen, J., in *De Rosaz' Goods*, L.R. 2 P.D. 66, 71; Sir J. F. Stephen, *Digest of the Law of Evidence*, 3d ed., note 33, to Art. 91.

<sup>5</sup> The cases subsequent to *Charter v. Charter* are as follows:

*England*: 1894, *Chappell's Goods*, Prob. 98 ("declarations of the testator . . . are probably not admissible"); 1909, *In re Ofner, Samuel v. Ofner*, 2 Ch. 60 (bequest to "my grandnephew Robert O."; there was no relative Robert O.; but there was a grandnephew Richard O., and three other grandnephews, two of whom were otherwise provided for; Richard was a brother of one of them; a memorandum of the testator identifying "Robert O." as this brother, admitted; *Doe v. Hiscocks* mentioned in argument, and virtually departed from); 1912, *In re Halston, Ewen v. Halston*, 1 Ch. 453 (the facts are stated *ante*, § 2467, note 1; testator's expression that the land would be John Robert H.'s some day, admitted; *Doe v. Hiscocks* not cited, nor any of the foregoing cases); 1916, *Re Ray, Cant v. Johnstone*, 1 Ch. 461 (devise to "my great-nephew Frederick J."; there was no such person, but there were three great-nephews, Robert W. J., Joseph F. J., and Richard J.; per Sargant, J., the scrivener's testimony to the testatrix' declaration of intention designating Richard J. was admitted, on the theory that the rule as stated by L. C. Cairns in *Charter v. Charter* permits expressions of intention where the description applies "equally," though not "completely," to several objects);

*Ireland*: 1920, *Robertson v. Flynn*, 1 Ir. R. 78 (bequest to "my sister Annie Neary, who is living in America"; the testator had four sisters living in America, of whom one was named Annie Flynn and one Bridget Neary; held that his instructions to the solicitor could be used to interpret the description).

<sup>6</sup> *California*: Civ. C. 1872, § 1340 ("When, applying a will, it is found that there is an imperfect description, or that no person or property exactly answers the description, mistakes and omissions must be corrected, if the error appears from the context of the will or from extrinsic evidence; but evidence of the declarations of the testator as to his intentions cannot be received"); 1907, *Dominici's Estate*, 151 Cal. 181, 90 Pac. 448 (devise to "my sister L. J., and my nephew H. S., and his sister my niece, all residing in Luchow, Hanover, Germany," and a codicil reciting the death of "my sister L. J." with bequest of her share "to the other two residuary legatees therein named, H. S., and to his sister my niece, whose name is M. K. and

whose residence is Salzwedel, Altmark, Germany"; on inquiry, H. S. had an only sister C. S. still living at Luchow, and the M. K. at Salzwedel was daughter of another sister of the testator; testator's instructions to the scrivener, admitted, in spite of Civ. C. § 1340; distinguishing such instructions from fugitive oral expressions); 1912, *Donnellan's Estate, Tracy v. O'Reilly*, 164 Cal. 14, 127 Pac. 166 (bequest to "my niece Mary, a resident of New York, said Mary being the daughter of my deceased sister Mary"; there were two nieces, one named Mary, in Ireland, and one named Annie in New York; "extrinsic" evidence admissible); a valuable survey of the California rulings is given in Professor A. M. Kidd's Note in the *California Law Review*, 1912, I, 87; *Georgia*: 1905, *Oliver v. Henderson*, 121 Ga. 836, 49 S. E. 743 (the facts are stated in the citation *post*, § 2477, note 8; an allegation that the scrivener was instructed to write "78" and wrote "68" by mistake, was held immaterial); *Illinois*: 1887, *Decker v. Decker*, 121 Ill. 341, 12 N. E. 750 (quoting with approval the above language of Tindal, C. J.); *Iowa*: 1918, *Stuart's Estate*, 184 Ia. 165, 168 N. W. 779 (bequest to the German Lutheran Church; former wills admitted; the point not noted); *Kansas*: 1909, *Parks v. Baker*, 81 Kan. 351, 105 Pac. 439 ("north line of lot 12" etc.; "actual agreement" admitted); *Massachusetts*: 1912, *Bullard v. Leach*, 213 Mass. 117, 100 N. E. 57, *semble* (bequest of moneys now deposited in the Worcester Five Cents Savings Bank; evidence held admissible that the testatrix had no deposit in that bank but had one in the Worcester Co. Institution for Savings, and that she "intended to designate the latter instead of the former"); *Minnesota*: 1904, *Wheaton v. Pope*, 91 Minn. 299, 97 N. W. 1046 (devise to S. of "South west quarter of N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  section one in township, etc., running West 160 rods," making a tract of land whose "location would be in the S. W. quarter of section one, and such tract was never owned by the testator"; on evidence that the testator had described a particular tract to the scrivener as intended to be devised to this devisee, and that the scrivener had erroneously copied it, the devise thus interpreted was given effect); *Mississippi*: 1839, *Ehrman v. Hoskins*, 57 Miss. 192 (devise of "property deeded to B. by Knox," with a description of bounds, etc., and afterwards a devise of the testator's "present home by this will devised"; the former description in one point, and the phrase "present home" applied to a lot deeded by one French, the home being partly on each,



distinction between "intention" or meaning, as a general canon of interpretation, and "declarations of intention" as a specific subject of exception.

That the principle of the exception should include this class of cases can hardly be doubted. The description applies in part only to each object, and yet one of the two (or more) is obviously signified; there is no danger in receiving declarations of intention, because the precise words of the document cannot be literally applied in any event, and there is thus no competition between the words and the extrinsic utterance; it is simply a question which words shall be ignored as the un-essential part of the description:

1902, BRACE, P. J., in *Willard v. Darrah*, 168 Mo. 660, 68 S. W. 1023 (the devise was to "my well-beloved nephews J. and W. W."; the testator had two grandnephews so named and also two grandsons so named, the latter being his intimates and the former being personally unknown to him; evidence of his repeated declarations that he had bought this land for them and that he had instructed the scrivener in their favor was admitted). "The devise is 'to my well-beloved nephews John and William Willard'; and it is found from the indirect parol evidence that there are two sets of brothers, each named John and William Willard, — the plaintiff and his brother, 'well-beloved' grandsons of the testator, and two grandnephews, not 'well beloved' of him, and having no legal or moral claim on his bounty. As to each of these sets of brothers the description contained in the will is partly correct and partly incorrect. It is correct as to the Christian and surnames of each set. It is correct as to neither in the superadded description of relationship to the testator, as the word "nephew," 'simpliciter,' cannot be held to include grandnephews and the inapplicability in this case is re-enforced by the word 'beloved' prefixed thereto. So that the description in the will, when it comes to be applied to those only who can possibly have been intended, is just as equivocal in point of fact as if these additional words of description had been omitted, as in the first case supposed. The description of the persons is partly correct and partly incorrect, leaving something equivocal. The description does not apply precisely to either of these two sets of brothers, but it is morally and legally certain that it was intended to apply to one or the other, thus bringing the case within the rule established by the second class of cases, in which direct or extrinsic parol evidence, including expressions of intention, is admissible. Such evidence was therefore admissible in this case, in order to solve a latent ambiguity produced by extrinsic evidence in the application of the terms of the will to the objects of the testator's bounty, to prevent the fourth clause of the will from perishing, and obviate a partial intestacy of the testator. Its effect is not to establish an intention different in essence from that expressed in the will, but to let in light by which that intention, rendered obscure by outside circumstances, may be more clearly discerned, and the will of the testator, in its entire scope, effectuated according to his true intent and meaning."

§ 2475. Same: (3) **Exception for "Rebutting an Equity" (Legacies, Advancements, and Disinheritance).** Wherever in the interpretation of a will, a certain

and the testator living in the part on the F. lot; declarations of intention were excluded); *Missouri*: 1897, *Gordon v. Burris*, 141 Mo. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (bequest to "Lucy May Gordon, granddaughter"; there was a granddaughter Mary Jane Gordon; evidence received of a conversation between the testatrix and the scrivener in which the former insisted that a granddaughter named May was intended); 1902, *Willard v. Darrah*, 168 Mo. 660, 68 S. W. 1023 (quoted *supra*); *Montana*:

Rev. C. 1921, § 7039 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1340); *New Jersey*: 1899, *Van Nostrand v. Board*, 59 N. J. Eq. 19, 44 Atl. 472 (bequest to "the Domestic Missionary Society," given to the "Board of Domestic Missions of the Reformed Church in America," on consideration of testator's membership in that church, his habitual use of "the Domestic Missionary Society" in referring to that Board, and his expressed intent; treated as an equivocation). *South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 666 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1340).



term or legal effect is implied by a general rule of law (and not as a matter of inference from the specific words or phrases of a particular will), the source of such an implication is something external to the will; therefore the reason for excluding declarations of intention (*ante*, § 2471) — namely, their rivalry with the words of the will, and the risk of their abuse — falls away, and the declarations may be considered. For example, when a testator names an executor, the rule of presumption, that the residue of personalty is by implication bequeathed to him, is a general and artificial rule independent of the particular will. So, too, the counter-presumption that a specific legacy to the executor negatives the implication of a bequest of the residue. Hence, if the rule is to be merely a presumption — *i. e.* if a contrary intent may be established, — the ascertainment of the actual intent may include all useful data, including the testator's circumstances and declarations:

1821, PLUMER, V. C., in *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Madd. 351: "Where the Court raises the presumption against the intention of a double gift, by reason that the sums and the motive are the same in both instruments, it will receive evidence that the testator actually intended the double gift he has expressed; in like manner, evidence is received to repel the presumption raised against the executor's title to the residue from the circumstance of a legacy given to him; and to repel the presumption that a portion [for a child] is satisfied by a legacy."

Accordingly such has long been the practice in dealing with the artificial rules of presumption as to a *bequest of the residue* to an executor,<sup>1</sup> a gift of *advancement to a child*<sup>2</sup> or a *husband*,<sup>3</sup> or *revocation of a will by marriage*,<sup>4</sup>

§ 2475. <sup>1</sup> 1723, *Rachfield v. Careless*, 2 P. Wms. 158; 1734, *Brown v. Selwin*, Cas. t. Talbot, 242; 1791, *Nourse v. Finch*, 2 Ves. Sr. 344, 357; 1794, *Clennell v. Lewthwhite*, 2 Ves. Jr. 465, 644. The earlier doctrine about executors was changed by St. 1 W. IV, c. 40. Compare the following: 1816, *Langham v. Sanford*, 2 Meriv. 6; 1891, *Re Applebee*, 3 Ch. 422, 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1790, *Ellison v. Cookson*, 2 Ves. Sr. 100, 107; *U. S. Cal. Civ. C.* 1872, § 1351 ("Advancements or gifts are not to be taken as adoptions of general legacies, unless such intention is expressed by the testator in writing"); *Ia.* 1897, *Finch v. Garrett*, 102 *Ia.* 381, 71 N. W. 429; *Ky.* Stats. 1915, § 4840 (advancement presumed to apply to a prior bequest, when "it shall appear from parol or other evidence to have been so intended"); *Nev.* Rev. L. 1912, § 6218; *N. Y.* 1894, *Palmer v. Culbertson*, 143 N. Y. 213, 38 N. E. 199; *Utah:* Comp. L. 1917, § 6381 (like *Cal. Civ. C.* § 1351); *W. Va.* Code 1914, c. 77, § 11 (provision for advancement to be satisfaction for former bequest, "in all cases in which it shall appear from parol or other evidence to have been so intended"). *Contra:* 1910, *Arthur v. Arthur*, 143 Wis. 126, 126 N. W. 550 (under statutory implications; authorities collected).

<sup>3</sup> 1790, *Clinton v. Hooper*, 2 Ves. Sr. 173, 181.

<sup>4</sup> But here the rule has been affected by statutes, some of which forbid resort to declarations outside of the will, as in the case of an omitted child, in note 6, *infra*: *Ariz.* Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 1708 (like *Wash. R. & B. Code* 1909, § 1223); *Cal.* Civ. C. 1872, § 1300a (as amended by St. 1919, May 27; marriage and issue revokes a woman's will, unless such issue "are provided for in the will, or in such way mentioned therein as to show an intention not to make such provision; and no other evidence to rebut the presumption of such revocation shall be received"); *Ind.* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 3026 (surviving husband not to take both by curtesy and by wife's will, unless "it plainly appear by the will to have been the intention of the testatrix"); § 3043 (similar, for surviving wife); *Mass.* 1898, *Ingersoll v. Hopkins*, 170 Mass. 401, 49 N. E. 523 (will in contemplation of marriage; extrinsic facts excluded; St. 1892, c. 118, construed); *Mo.* Rev. St. 1919, § 509; *Mont.* Rev. C. 1921, § 7000; *Nev.* Rev. L. 1912, § 6211 (marriage revokes a will, unless a contrary intention appears in the will "not to make such provision" for the wife); *N. Y.* Cons. L. 1909, Decedent Est. § 35, as amended by St. 1919, c. 293 (marriage revokes a will, unless the spouse is "in such way mentioned therein as to show an intention not to make such provision," and "no evidence to rebut



and it is capable of application to any general and artificial rule of inference as distinguished from a specific inference founded on a particular document.<sup>5</sup>

In more recent times an analogous situation has come to be presented under that class of statutes which requires that a child's intestate share be distributed to him, in spite of a testamentary disposal to other persons, unless it is made to appear that the *child was "intentionally omitted" from the will*. Here the rule of the statute is again merely one of presumption, artificially raised for all wills, independently of a particular document, and corresponding precisely (though reversely in tenor) to the rule which took the residue from the next of kin and gave it to the executor, unless a contrary intent appeared. Hence, unless the statute expressly requires the intent to be ascertained from the will alone, the testator's declarations may be considered with the other data.<sup>6</sup>

such presumption 'of revocation shall be received except as herein provided'; Wash. R. & B. Code 1909, § 1323 (marriage revokes a will, unless the wife is mentioned in the will so as to show intent to make no provision, and "no other evidence to rebut the presumption of revocation shall be received"); Wis. 1910, *In re Battis*, 143 Wis. 234, 126 N. W. 9 (whether the presumption of revocation from marriage and birth may be rebutted by expressions of intent).

<sup>5</sup> Compare the following: *Eng.* *In re Shields, Corbould-Ellis v. Dales*, [1912] 1 Ch. 591 (ademption of a legacy by a duplicate gift in the testator's life time); *Can.* 1916, *Re Aldridge Will*, 28 D. L. R. 527, Alta. (whether a legacy given by a codicil was cumulative, and whether it was subject to a provision for abatement; a letter of the testator, held not admissible to rebut any presumed intention); U. S. 1906, *Bromley v. Atwood*, 79 Ark. 357, 96 S. W. 356 (intent of a bequest to forgive a debt; testatrix' statements admitted); 1897, *Wentworth v. Read*, 166 Ill. 139, 46 N. E. 777 (intent to charge legacies on realty; no extrinsic declarations admissible); 1911, *Blackett v. Ziegler*, 153 Ia. 344, 133 N. W. 901 (revivor of an earlier will by revocation of a later one; careful opinion, by Deemer, J.).

<sup>6</sup> But, irrespective of statute, not all Courts accept this result: *Federal*: 1889, *Coulam v. Doull*, 133 U. S. 216, 231, 10 Sup. 253 ("Since under the statute that evidence opens up a question as to the testator's intention which but for the statute could not have arisen, and which by the statute is not required to be determined by the will, we cannot perceive why the disposal of it should be so limited"; applying the Colorado statute, and examining prior cases); *California*: Civ. C. 1872, § 1307 ("When any testator omits to provide in his will for any child, etc., "unless it appears that such omission was intentional, such child" has the same share as if there had been intestacy); § 1308 (where a share is assigned to an omitted child, all devisees and

legatees must contribute, "unless the obvious intention of the testator in relation to some specific devise or bequest, or other provision in the will, would thereby be defeated"); 1895, *Re Salmon's Estate*, 107 Cal. 614, 40 Pac. 1030 (testator's declarations, excluded); 1903, *Ross' Est.*, 140 Cal. 282, 73 Pac. 976 (under Civ. C. § 1308, providing "unless the obvious intention of the testator . . . would be defeated," the intention must be gathered from the will itself); *Colorado*: Comp. L. 1921, § 5189 (after-born child takes a share, "unless it shall appear by such will that it was the intention of the testator to disinherit such child"); *Georgia*: 1918, *Chandler v. Chandler*, 147 Ga. 561, 94 S. E. 995 (after-born child; declarations of intention must be in testamentary form); *Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 7827 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1307); *Illinois*: 1897, *Hawhe v. R. Co.*, 165 Ill. 561, 46 N. E. 240; 1907, *Peet v. Peet*, 229 Ill. 341, 82 N. E. 376 ("the testator's statements, either before or after making the will," held inadmissible; but the circumstances of the testator's affairs, etc., are admissible; on the former part of the ruling the opinion purports to follow the *Hawhe* case, *supra*, but three judges dissent as to the result on the facts); *Kansas*: Gen. St. 1915, § 11792 (there must be mention in the will so as to "show an intention not to make such provision; and no other evidence to rebut the presumption of revocation shall be received"); *Kentucky*: Stats. 1915, § 4842 (issue living unknown to testator; "the presumption that such pretermision was the result of mistake on the part of the testator may be rebutted by parol or other proof"); § 4847 (any descendant "neither provided for nor expressly excluded by the will, but only pretermitted," shall receive his portion); *Massachusetts*: Gen. L. 1920, c. 191, § 20 ("unless it appears that the omission was intentional"); *Michigan*: Comp. L. 1915, § 13790 (after-born child shall take his share, "unless it shall be apparent from the will that it was the intention of the testator"



§ 2476. **Falsa Demonstratio non Nocet; General Principle.** It is not necessary, and it is not humanly possible, for the symbols of description, which we call words, to describe in every detail the objects designated by the symbols. The notion that a description is a complete enumeration is an instinctive fallacy which must be got rid of before interpretation can be properly attempted (*ante*, § 2458). For example, a devise of "the house owned by me at No. 19 Cedar Street, Millville, Massachusetts," is obviously a mere shorthand indication of some simple but essential attributes of the house. How many stories, rooms, doors, windows, closets, has it? What is the color of paper on the respective walls, the kind of wood in the floors, the number of steps on each stair-flight, the pattern of the window frames? These and a hundred other details would go to fill out the description. Without them, it is imperfect, in an absolute sense. Yet no one would insist that the devise was void for uncertainty, for lack of the addition of these details. Why? Because *the few features mentioned do happen to suffice* to fulfil the purpose of interpretation, namely, to enable us to find the object designated, and to select it with fair certainty from others.

Certainty, in other words, is a relative term; it signifies that the few terms employed are the essential ones for the purpose. Had they not been in themselves sufficient, we might even have looked at extrinsic declarations of intention (*ante*, § 2472).

Conversely, then, an *excessive* description is not inherently fatal, if the essential terms of it can be ascertained. A devise of "my yellow house at No. 19 Cedar Street" may lead us to a white house at that place; and if we can surely believe, under all the circumstances, that the street number of the

to make no provision); § 13791 (omitted child, etc., shall take his share, if "it shall appear that such omission was not intentional, but was made by mistake or accident"); 1898, *Carpenter v. Snow*, 117 Mich. 489, 76 N. W. 78; *Minnesota*: Gen. St. 1913, § 7260 (it must appear that "such omission was intentional"); *Mississippi*: Code 1906, § 5080, Hem. § 3368 (pretermitted posthumous child); *Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, § 514 (child of testator "not named or provided for in such will" takes as if decedent were intestate); *Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 7009 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1307); *Nebraska*: 1904, *Brown v. Brown*, 71 Nebr. 200, 98 N. W. 718 (collecting the cases); 1906, *Brown v. Brown*, 77 Nebr. 125, 108 N. W. 180 (no authority cited); *Nevada*: Rev. L. 1912, § 6216 (omitted child is to receive share, "unless it shall appear that such omission was intentional"); *New Jersey*: Comp. St. 1910, Descent § 8 (posthumous children must be "expressly excluded or barred" in the will); *North Carolina*: Con. St. 1919, §§ 4166-4168 (devises to deceased children, etc., not to lapse but to vest in issue, "unless a contrary intention shall appear by the will"); *North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, § 5675 (like Cal. Civ. C. § 1307); 1909,

*Hedderich v. Hedderich*, 18 N. D. 488, 123 N. W. 276; 1910, *Schultz v. Schultz*, 19 N. D. 688, 125 N. W. 555 ("parol testimony" not admissible, under Rev. C. 1905, § 5119 providing "unless it appears that such omission was intentional"); *Rhode Island*: Gen. L. 1909, c. 254, § 22 (omitted child takes a share "unless it appears that the omission was intentional"); 1899, *Re O'Connor*, 21 R. I. 465, 44 Atl. 591; *Utah*: 1896, *Atwood's Estate*, 14 Utah 1, 45 Pac. 1036; *Wisconsin*: Stats. 1919, § 2287 (when a testator omits to provide for a child, etc., "and it shall appear that such omission was not intentional but was made by mistake or accident," such child shall take a share, etc.); 1904, *Sandon v. Sandon*, 123 Wis. 603, 101 N. W. 1089.

Distinguish the following question, arising under such a statute: 1898, *Callaghan's Estate*, 119 Cal. 571, 51 Pac. 860 (will leaving property in A. to grandchildren; the Code, § 1307, would allow them to have an equal share if in the will the testator had "omitted to provide" for them; to show that they had in effect been omitted, evidence that the testatrix did not own or claim any property in A. at the time of making the will, excluded, because there was an express provision).



house, not the color of the paint, is the essential term, we are to apply the devise to that house. Just as we found that the omitted terms were not essential to applying the description, so we may find that some of the inserted terms are not essential. Each description of a single object must be conceived of as a single utterance, — just as one cipher cable word may represent a message of forty words. We are doing it no violence by ignoring the non-essential terms; for neither the omission nor the insertion of non-essential terms alters its essence as a whole. By conceiving clearly the singleness of each description as a symbol of a single object, we appreciate that the imperfections of either omission or insertion do not destroy its character as a single effort at the designation of a single object.

And so we come to the maxim *Falsa demonstratio non nocet*.

The practical problem in a particular case of course is to ascertain *which* specific term is the essential one. But the important point of theory is that the process of ascertaining it, and then of ignoring the others in the application of the description, is entirely consistent with the general process of Interpretation. Ever since the time of Bacon (to go no further back) this has been understood and accepted:

*Circa* 1597, Sir *Francis Bacon*, *Maxims of the Law*, XXIV (Works, Spedding's ed., vol. XIV, p. 267): "‘Præsentia corporis tollit errorem nominis, et veritas nominis tollit errorem demonstrationis.’ There be three degrees of certainty, — presence; name; and demonstration or reference: whereof the presence, the law holdeth of greatest dignity; the name, in the second degree; and the demonstration or reference, in the lowest; and always error or falsity in the less worthy shall not control nor frustrate sufficient certainty and verity in the more worthy. And therefore if I give a horse to I. D. being present, and say unto him, I. S. take this; this is a good gift, notwithstanding I call him by a wrong name; but so had it not been if I had delivered the horse to a stranger to the use of I. S. where I meant I. D. So if I say unto I. S., Here I give you my ring with the ruby, and deliver it with my hand, and the ring bear a diamond and no ruby; this is a good gift notwithstanding I named it amiss. . . . Now, for the second part of this rule, touching the name and the reference; for the explaining thereof it must be noted what things sound in name or in demonstration, and what things sound in demonstration or addition; as first, in lands the greatest certainty is, where the land hath a proper name and cognizance; as, ‘the manor of Dale,’ ‘Grandfield,’ etc.: the next is equal to that, when the land is set forth by bounds and abuttals, as ‘a close of pasture abutting on the east part upon Emsden Wood, on the south upon, etc.’ . . . Therefore if I grant my close called Dale, in the parish of Hurst, in the county of Southampton; and the parish likewise extendeth into the county of Berkshire, and the whole close of Dale lieth in the county of Berkshire; yet because the parcel is specially named, the falsity of the addition hurteth not; and yet this addition did sound in name; but, as was said, it was less worthy than a proper name.”

1861, CATON, C. J., in *Myers v. Ladd*, 26 Ill. 415, 417: “If I give a bill of sale of my black horses, and describe them as being now in my barn, I shall not avoid it by showing that the horses were in the pasture or on the road. The description of the horses being sufficient to enable witnesses acquainted with my stock to identify them, the locality specified would be rejected as surplusage. Nor is this rule confined to personal property. It is equally applicable to real estate. If I sell an estate, and describe it as my dwelling house in which I now reside, situate in the city of Ottawa, I shall not avoid the deed by showing that my residence was outside the city limits. So if a deed describe lands by its



correct numbers, and further describe it as being situated in a wrong county, the latter is rejected. The rule is, that where there are two descriptions in a deed, the one, as it were, superadded to the other, and one description being complete and sufficient of itself, and the other, which is subordinate and superadded, is incorrect, the incorrect description, or feature or circumstance of the description, is rejected as surplusage, and the complete and correct description is allowed to stand alone."

In applying the principle there is no inherent difficulty. The process consists in looking at all the circumstances (*ante*, § 2470) that can throw light on the sense of the words of description and their relative essentiality; and the terms thus found to be the essential ones are applied, unless they are too uncertain (*ante*, § 2473) and therefore void.

But the superficial bearing of other rules has tended often to create confusion, and to obstruct the full operation of the present one:

(1) The supposed rule against *disturbing a "plain meaning"* (*ante*, § 2462). When the present rule is to be applied, a part of the description being found erroneous but non-essential, three situations may be distinguished. First, only one object may be eligible to answer the description; this is the common case (illustrated above by Bacon's examples), about which no difficulty can arise. Secondly, two or more objects may be eligible, the description being in one part imperfect for one, in another part for the other; this is a frequent case, and the rule is equally well settled.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, two or more objects may be eligible, one of which perfectly answers the description, the others imperfectly in some respects. Now in this situation the rule against disturbing a plain meaning (if such a rule be recognized) will of course oblige us to apply the description to the first object, even though it could be made to appear that a part of the description was non-essential and that the essential terms of it were actually used to designate one of the other objects. So far, then, as such a rule is recognized, it prevents the due operation of the present principle.<sup>2</sup>

(2) The rule against overthrowing the terms of a document by reason of a *mistake of drafting* (*ante*, § 2421), or, what is the same thing, by declarations of a contrary intention (*ante*, § 2471), is a legitimate one, and must be observed. Hence, if a devise is of "my white house at No. 19 Cedar Street," and it is proposed to show that the word "white" was by mistake inserted for "green," this proposal must be rejected as improper. Now, in many of the instances of this sort,<sup>3</sup> that has been the form of the proposal, and the Court's necessary rejection of it has therefore seemed to be a discountenancing of the present principle that '*falsa demonstratio non nocet*.' By approaching the problem from the wrong point of view, the party has prevented the document from being rightly dealt with. The words cannot be overthrown from within (as it were), by attacking the terms of the document; but, taking

§ 2476. <sup>1</sup> The only question here is whether declarations of intention may be considered: *ante*, § 2474.

especially *Tucker v. Seaman's Aid Society*, Mass.

<sup>2</sup> Particularly in *Kurtz v. Hibner*, Ill., cited *post*, § 2477.

<sup>3</sup> The cases are collected *ante*, § 2462; see



them as they are, they can be interpreted from without, and the imperfect surplusage of description will not prevent the application of its essential terms. Hence, in such cases as above, if the attempt is made to interpret the description by looking at the testator's circumstances, and if the circumstances are that he had one house only on Cedar Street, that it was numbered 19, and that it was in former days painted white, we may then be willing to conclude that the color-term in the description is entirely subordinate and non-essential, and that the now green house at No. 19 Cedar Street is the identical object which the testator was attempting to describe in the words "my white house at No. 19 Cedar Street." In so doing, we make no assumptions whatever as to how the word "white" came into the will, whether by a draftsman's mistake or otherwise; we merely interpret what is found in the document, and we conclude that the description as a whole was used of a particular house. The occasionally improper method of approaching the problem, then, explains most of the rulings in which the present principle seems to be inoperative.

(3) When, in applying the present principle, the imperfect surplusage is ignored, the remainder must of course be *sufficiently definite* to be capable of application; else it would be void for uncertainty (*ante*, § 2473).

The question, then, often arises whether, in a will, a *term may be implied* which would be necessary, and also sufficient, to remove that uncertainty. For example, in a devise of "a four-story house at No. 19 Cedar Street," it may appear that the testator owns no house at No. 19, but does own a four-story house at No. 219 on that street; assuming, then, that the house-number is non-essential, the remaining terms are "a four-story house on Cedar Street"; but this is obviously by its vagueness incapable of application. Now it may be assumed that the testator would not have devised a house not owned (or believed by him to be owned) by himself;<sup>4</sup> but the fact remains that the terms of a will are merely "a" four-story house. Is there, then, any stretch of reasoning by which, though not directly inserting the words "owned by me," we may construe the word "a" or "house" as signifying "one of mine," or the like? This is the point of controversy on which many rulings turn; and the general opinion is that no such implication is permissible. Such rulings, however, do not involve any doubt of the principle '*falsa demonstratio non nocet*'; they merely decline to imply into the will, for the purpose of being interpreted, words which are not there.

§ 2477. **Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.** (a) In its application to *deeds* of land, the foregoing principle has long been recognized without hesitation. Numerous presumptive canons of interpretation have been formed, as to the prevalence of monuments over distances, and the like, for those parts of a description which deal particularly with the metes and bounds;

<sup>4</sup> In Roman custom, on the contrary, this indirect mode of gift was not uncommon: Just. Instit. II, 20, 4: "Non solum autem testatoris vel heredis res, sed et aliena legari potest; ita ut heres cogatur redimere eam et prestare, vel, si non potest redimere, aestimationem dare."



but the principle is exemplified in all kinds of descriptive terms.<sup>1</sup> Probably the reason why there has not here been the confusion which has marked some

§ 2477. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1898, *Cowen v. Truefitt*, 2 Ch. 551 (deed of rooms on 2d floor of Nos. 13 and 14, Old Bond St., with free ingress "through the staircase and passage of No. 13"; there was a staircase in No. 14 but none in No. 13; held that the words "of No. 13" might be rejected as 'falsa demonstratio,' and the deed made effectual by the only staircase); 1915, *Eastwood v. Ashton*, A. C. 900 (deed describing acreage, occupancy, etc., inconsistently; principle applied); 1919, *Watcham v. Attorney-General of East Africa Protectorate*, A. C. 533 (discrepancy in a grant between acreage named and acreage as given by physical boundaries; user admitted to show actual meaning).

UNITED STATES: Add here the Code sections quoted *ante*, § 2458: *Federal*: 1904, *Resurrection G. M. Co. v. Fortune G. M. Co.*, 128 Fed. 668, C. C. A. (mining claim); 1905, *Clayton v. Gilmer Co. Ct.*, 58 W. Va. 253, 52 S. E. 103; *Arkansas*: 1919, *Brown & Hackney Co. v. Daubs*, 139 Ark. 53, 213 S. W. 4 (interesting example of the distinction between giving effect to a mistaken draft and interpreting a misdescription; here, a contract to sell timber in described areas); *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 2077; 1905, *Garnier's Estate*, 147 Cal. 457, 82 Pac. 68; *Colorado*: 1910, *Duncan v. Eagle Rock G. M. & R. Co.*, 48 Colo. 569, 111 Pac. 588; *Georgia*: 1904, *Leverett v. Bullard*, 121 Ga. 534, 49 S. E. 591; *Illinois*: 1921, *Breneman v. Dillon*, 296 Ill. 140, 129 N. E. 564 ("all that plot of ground," etc., applied to certain property though not correct in some particulars); *Kentucky*: 1906, *Kerr v. De Lancy*, — Ky. —, 91 S. W. 286 (extreme illustration); 1910, *Daniel v. New Era L. Co.*, 137 Ky. 535, 126 S. W. 108 (calls of a survey omitted); *Maine*: 1915, *Perry v. Buswell*, 113 Me. 399, 94 Atl. 483 ("my homestead place in the town of Exeter," but part was in the town of Garland); *Mississippi*: 1897, *Gordon v. Kitrell*, — Miss. —, 21 So. 922 (an assessment of "east fractional section 12, township 6, range 6, W," and a deed of "lot 6, McLeod's subdivision, west side of river, section 12, township 6, range 6, W"; identity of the two parcels shown); *Nebraska*: 1907, *Hart v. Murdock*, 80 Nebr. 274, 114 N. W. 268 (survey describing a course as "east" instead of "west"); *New York*: 1844, *Hathaway v. Power*, 6 Hill N. Y. 453 (a deed of "all that certain tract or parcel of land situate in township number 11 in the third range of townships, . . . it being 160 acres of land, in lot number 14," held to convey all of lot 14, though it contained 185 acres; "the number of acres . . . can only be regarded as an attempted designation of quantity which turns out to be erroneous"); *North Carolina*: Con. St. 1919, § 992 (vagueness of description does

not invalidate deed); § 1783 (in actions for real estate, "parol testimony may be introduced to identify the land sued for, and fit it to the description contained in the paper-writing offered"); 1819, *Cherry v. Slade*, 3 Murph. N. C. 82 (leading opinion, by Taylor, C. J.); 1896, *Higdon v. Rice*, 119 N. C. 623, 26 S. E. 256 (example of erroneous courses, distances, etc., applied); 1896, *Davidson v. Shuler's Heirs*, ib. 582, 26 S. E. 340 (to locate a chestnut-tree corner, evidence of the one actually marked, admitted, although the description "a chestnut, S. E. corner of G. W.'s lot" became erroneous, and read "N. E. corner, etc."); 1900, *Wiseman v. Green*, 127 N. C. 288, 37 S. E. 272 (Furches, J.: "The deed contains the following calls: 'Beginning on the southeast bank of Toe river, two rods below the mill house, and runs west, north, east, and south, to the beginning, so as to include the mill and site and two acres of land, it being and including the land sold as the excess of the homestead of A. Wiseman.' It appears from the survey and the evidence in the case that the land contained in the calls of this deed does not include the saw mill, nor the grist mill, nor the mill site. But, if the first call 'west' is reversed, and read 'east,' instead of 'west,' the description in the deed, 'beginning on the southeast bank of the Toe river, two rods below the mill house,' will include both the saw and grist mill and mill site. . . . It seems to us that common sense, justice, law, and the precedents of this Court sustain the ruling of the Court, and the finding of the jury that 'west' was a mistake, and should have been written 'east.' This being so, the Court does not change the deed, but only puts a legal construction upon it, which creates no new rights, nor does it affect the rights of others"); 1905, *Hill v. Dalton*, 140 N. C. 9, 52 S. E. 273; 1915, *Ritter Lumber Co. v. Montvale Lumber Co.*, 169 N. C. 80, 85 S. E. 438 (whether a surveyor's marked line and corner shall control); *Pennsylvania*: 1900, *Silliman v. Whitmer*, 196 Pa. 363, 46 Atl. 489 (deed describing land erroneously as to county, admitted); *South Carolina*: 1895, *Scates v. Henderson*, 44 S. C. 548, 22 S. E. 724 (where the fourth side of a lot was said to be bounded by a lot owned by C. H. C., and this, on being shown incorrect, was rejected, and a lot owned by K. and F. taken as boundary); *Tennessee*: 1858, *Fancher v. DeMontegre*, 1 Head 40 (deed-land described as "Grant No. 4795 to J. R."; that the grant was really No. 4794 to T. B. E., held immaterial, the land being otherwise sufficiently identified); *Utah*: 1892, *Rushton v. Hallett*, 8 Utah 277, 30 Pac. 1014 (deed reserving "the street heretofore deeded to said city"; a street had been laid off but not deeded; the description was



of the testamentary cases is that, with deeds, no one would ordinarily think of proposing to overturn its words on the ground of individual mistake, the standard necessarily being a mutual one (*ante*, § 2466); and thus the problem is usually approached from the proper point of view.<sup>2</sup>

The principle is of course equally applicable to *contracts* and all other bilateral transactions.<sup>3</sup>

From the foregoing class of cases should be distinguished those in which an insufficient description (as in a deed naming a section, without range or township) creates an equivocation (*ante*, § 2472); those in which the misdescription suffices merely to deprive of the right to the remedy of specific performance; and those in which the misdescription arises on the face of the document, through inconsistencies or uncertainties which require to be reconciled or qualified as between each other.<sup>4</sup>

(b) Many early English rulings upon *wills* recognize the principle, and some of them show a surprising approximation to the modern attitude;<sup>5</sup> in

applied to that street, the error being "matter of description only"); *West Virginia*, 1919, *Ahner v. Young*, 84 W. Va. 336, 99 S. E. 552 (whether boundaries or lines control).

This rule has been applied even to a description in a *statute*: 1904, *Zimmerman v. Brooks*, 118 Ky. 85, 80 S. W. 443.

For cases involving the use of an *erroneous surname* of a person, see *ante*, § 2465.

<sup>2</sup> The following case illustrates how a Court may be misled in this way: 1899, *Donahoo v. Johnson*, 113 Ala. 126, 21 So. 70, 24 So. 888 (deed; described by a line "to a stake at the northwest corner," etc.; the fact that there was a stake at the northeast corner but none at the northwest corner, and that the word "northwest" had by mistake been inserted instead of "northeast," excluded).

<sup>3</sup> 1905, *Warner v. Marshall*, 166 Ind. 88, 75 N. E. 582 (contract by letter to deed certain lots; an inconsistent clause stating the value as \$10,000, held non-essential and rejectible); 1891, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Aitkin*, 125 N. Y. 661, 26 N. E. 732 (D. and his wife mortgaged to the plaintiff; then D. conveyed to G., who covenanted to pay the mortgage; then G. and his wife conveyed to the defendant, who covenanted to pay "a certain mortgage made and executed by the party of the first part to the N. Y. Life Ins. Co. bearing date the 3d day of December, 1868, to secure the sum of \$4000"; the defendant being charged with the mortgage made by D. and his wife, the description in the defendant's covenant was applied under the circumstances to D.'s mortgage, in spite of the error of describing it as G.'s); 1917, *Evans v. Brendle*, 173 N. C. 1, 91 S. E. 723 (decree vesting title in "S. H. Fuller," applied to S. J. Fuller; interesting opinion by Clark, C. J.); S. Dak. Rev. C. 1919, § 883 ("Words in a contract which are wholly inconsistent with its nature, or with the main intention of the parties, are to be rejected").

<sup>4</sup> *E. g. Eng.* 1833, *Doe v. Galloway*, 5 B. & Ad. 43 (deed of "all that part of the park called or known by the name of Blenheim or Woodstock Park, situate and being in the county of Oxford, and now in the occupation of Richard Smallbones, in a direct line across the said park etc."; held, that the land passing was not merely the part in the occupation of R. S.); U. S. 1895, *Lassing v. James*, 107 Cal. 348, 40 Pac. 534 (where the terms of a covenant were contradictory, evidence of a mistake in not striking out one of them was considered). Compare the rule as to applying the written part of a policy when it conflicts with the printed part; *e. g.*: *Eng.* 1845, *Alsager v. St. Katherine's Dock Co.*, 14 M. & W. 794; 1839, *Saunderson v. Piper*, 5 Bing. N. C. 425 (cited *ante*, § 2473, note 3).

<sup>5</sup> 1607, *Sir Moyle Finch's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 65b (a deed held good, for "although the grantor's christian name was mistaken, yet forasmuch as there was a sufficient certainty to ascertain the name of the grantor, *sc.* Abbot of W., for that reason the grant was adjudged good; for in this lease it is true 'nihil facit error nominis cum de corpore constat'; but otherwise it is of a writ"); 1629, *Chamberlaine v. Turner*, Cro. Car. 129 (devise of "the house or tenement wherein W. N. dwelleth, called The White Swan, in Old street"; it appeared that W. N. occupied only the entry and three rooms, while other persons occupied the remainder; the devise was held to pass the entire house); 1636, *Blague v. Gold*, Cro. Car. 447, 473 (devise of a house "called the Corner-House, in Andover, in the tenure of B. and H."; in fact the corner-house was not in H.'s tenure, but the adjoining house was; held, that the corner-house passed; "and the addition 'in tenura H.' although it be not in his tenure and is a mistake, yet it is but surplusage, and although false, shall not vitiate the devise").



the cases of later times there seems to have been a consistent observance of the principle.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> ENGLAND: 1723, *Beaumont v. Fell*, 2 P. Wms. 141 (bequest of 500*l.* to "Catherine Earnley"; Gertrude Yardley claimed it, and the facts were that the testator had usually called her "Gatty" and of course would pronounce her surname "Yarnley," that he spoke so low that the draftsman could hardly understand, and finally that he had declared that he would do well for her in his will; the Master of the Rolls declared that this would not have been considered, for a devise of land, but being a chattel bequest "makes it a different case," even "after making the statute of frauds, provided there is a will in writing"); 1749, *Door v. Geary*, 1 Ves. Sr. 255 (bequest to the wife of "£700 capital East India stock in which he was then interested, possessed of, or intitled unto"; he had no East India stock, but had in his name £700 of Bank stock which had belonged to the wife; L. C. Hardwicke applied the bequest to the latter; "why is this a greater mistake than the devise of a black, having only a white horse, where the word 'black' should be rejected?"); 1784, *Thomas v. Steward*, 7 T. R. 140, note (devise to "Thomas Thomas, eldest son of Thomas Thomas of Chatham"; there was an eldest son Thomas, dead before the making of the will, and a second son Richard; on hearing evidence of the circumstances as known to the testatrix, a verdict was given for Richard); 1812, *Garvey v. Hibbert*, 19 Ves. Jr. 125 (bequest to "the three children of D. D., the sum of 600*l.* each"; D. D. had four children, all born before the date of the will; and the bequest was applied to all; "the ground on which the Court has proceeded is that it is a mere slip in expression; the meaning is all children, or all servants; and the Court conceiving the intention to be to give to each child so much, strikes out the specified number"); 1813, *Goodtitle v. Southern*, 1 M. & S. 299 (devise of "all that my farm, lands, and hereditaments called Trogues-farm, situate within the parish of Darley in the county of Derby, now in the occupation of A. Clay"; two of the closes of Trogues-farm were not in the occupation of Clay, but were held to pass; "the defective description of the occupation will not alter the devise"); 1820, *Doe v. Huthwaite*, 3 B. & Ald. 632 (devise to "G. H. eldest son of J. H.," and in default, etc., to "S. H. second son of J. H.," and in default, etc., to "J. H. third son of J. H.," and in default etc., to "C. H. youngest son of J. H.," in fact, S. H. was the third son, and J. H. was the second son; issue directed to ascertain whether the name or the relative age of the devisees was the essential part of the description); 1844, *Newbolt v. Pryce*, 14 Sim. 354 (bequest to "John N., second son of Rev. W. S. N., vicar of S."; there was a W. R. N., vicar of S.,

and he had three sons, G. D. N., R. H. N., and John P. N., the last being the third; the bequest was given to John P. N.; and the fact of the testatrix' "habit of calling one of the sons by the name of John" was held admissible); 1844, *Lee v. Pain*, 4 Hare 201, 249 (bequest to "the three sisters of the late Miss J. S."; she had four sisters surviving; Wigram, V. C., held that "where a legacy is given to the three children of A, A having four, five, or any larger number of children at the date of the will, the Court will reject the word 'three' upon the presumption of mistake, and all the children of A will be entitled"); 1853, *Bernasconi v. Atkinson*, 10 Hare 345 (cited *ante*, § 2474); 1856, *The Clergy Society*, 2 K. & J. 615 (bequest to "The Clergy Society . . . in London"; several societies considered, but none found to be the precise probable objects of the testatrix' words; the money therefore distributed by the Court upon its own scheme *cy pres*); 1874, *Charter v. Charter*, L. R. 7 H. L. 364 (appointment of "my son Forster Charter, as the executor," and devise of "all my messuages" to him, he to allow maintenance to the testator's wife "as long as they reside together in the same house"; the circumstances were that an elder son, William Forster C., and a younger son, Charles C., survived, and that the former had had disputes with his father and lived 100 miles away, and was known as "William," while the latter lived in his father's house on intimate terms; the probate to William Forster having been revoked, this decree was sustained by an evenly divided vote, one half of the law lords apparently believing that the term of description "resides in the same house" was essential and prevailed over the name); 1894, *Re Seal*, 1 Ch. 316, 321 (rule of 'falsa demonstratio' considered).

IRELAND: 1908, *M'Hugh v. M'Hugh*, 1 Ire. 155 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2463, note 3; the opinion is apparently ignorant that the present doctrine was a simple exit for the dilemma created by the other rule); 1920, *Moore v. Phelan*, 1 Ir. R. 232 (devise of "the seven houses I hold in Sydney Terrace"; the testatrix held eight houses in Sydney Terrace; held that 'falsa descriptio non nocet').

CANADA: 1910, *Re Clement*, 22 Ont. L. R. 121 (devise of "the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of lot No. 3 in the 4th concession of the township of North Dorchester"; the testator owned the S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of lot 3, but not the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; held void, there being no "words in the will which would be effective to dispose of the land actually owned by the testator if the wrong description were entirely omitted"; prior Ontario cases fully examined, per Riddell, J.); 1910, *Smith v. Smith*, 22 Ont. L. R. 127 (devise of "the S. W. 50 acres of lot 1, concession 12, Lobo";



But in the rulings in the United States there has occurred, in a few jurisdictions, more or less apparent confusion of precedents, due chiefly to one or another of the three considerations already noted (*ante*, § 2476). In particular, the case of *Kurtz v. Hibner*, in Illinois,<sup>7</sup> has been the centre of much

the testator did own 50 acres in lot 1, but the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , not the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; the will referred twice to "all my estate"; held effective, on the principle stated in *Re Clement*, *supra*; 1913, *Re Carvill*, Standard Trusts Co. v. King, 15 D. L. R. 206 Sask. (bequest of "N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , S. 2, T. 38, R. 1"; the testator owned the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 2, T. 38, R. 11, and no other item of description sufficed; held that words of ownership could not be implied, and that the bequest was void).

<sup>7</sup> *Illinois*: 1870, *Kurtz v. Hibner*, 55 Ill. 514 (devise to E. of the "W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sect. 32, T. 35, R. 10, containing 80 acres," and to J. of the "S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sect. 31, in T. 35, R. 10, containing 40 acres"; the circumstances were excluded that the testator owned no 80-acre tract in S. 32, but did own such in S. 33, and that he owned a 40-acre tract in S. 32, but — presumably — not in S. 31, and that E. had been long in occupation of the 80-acre tract under a promise to devise it, and further that the draftsman of the will had by mistake inserted 32 for 33, and 31 for 32; the Court's ruling was clearly right, as excluding declarations of intent and the mistaken drafting, on the principle of §§ 2421, 2471, *ante*; and the opinion intimates that, had the will contained any other term of description identifying it, as in *Riggs v. Myers*, Mo., "my estate" or the like, the case could have been treated as one of misdescription and the erroneous term omitted; the opinion having been criticised by Redfield, C. J., the editor, in a note in 10 Am. Law Reg. n. s. 93, it was defended by Caton, J., not the writer of the opinion, in *ibid.* 353, and was justified expressly on the above-named ground, that "if in this case the word 'my' had been used, instead of 'the,' in connection with the description, then indeed there would have been something in the will to construe, . . . an additional description by which the Court might have determined the subject of the devise after having eliminated '32'; . . . the fundamental error of the editor consists in his assuming that necessarily the testator designed to devise land to which he had a present existing title"; the ruling in *Kurtz v. Hibner*, thus explained, therefore stands for two propositions, (1) that if a description does not fit any object exactly, the circumstances may be considered and any part of the description which appears erroneous and unessential may be ignored; (2) that, in settling what is the description to be taken for this purpose, the words "being my property" cannot be read into the will by implication; on the first point, all the later cases in Illinois, except apparently

*Bishop v. Morgan*, are in accord; on the second point, not all expressly meet the question; see further a comment by Julius Rosenthal, Esq., in the Chicago Legal News, Mar. 18, 1871); 1876, *Bishop v. Morgan*, 82 Ill. 351 (devise of "S. E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Sec. 10, . . . containing 40 acres more or less," the testator really owning only the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; the fact of his ownership of the latter, excluded, on the supposed authority of *Kurtz v. Hibner*; Dickey, J., and Sheldon, C. J., diss., on the ground that the clause "containing 40 acres" supplied a sufficient description; the dissent is clearly correct); 1878, *Emmert v. Hayes*, 89 Ill. 16 (devise of "my estate of 195 acres in T. 3, etc.," the testator not owning anything in the section named; this fact was admitted and the devise applied; "where there are two descriptions, one superadded to the other, and one description being complete and sufficient of itself and the other, subordinate and superadded, incorrect, the incorrect feature is rejected as surplusage"; this ruling follows out the implication of *Kurtz v. Hibner*; the above language is reproduced from the opinion in *Myers v. Ladd*, Ill., quoted *ante*, § 2476); 1885, *Bowen v. Allen*, 113 Ill. 53 (devise of "my house and lot in the town of P., Ill., the north  $\frac{2}{3}$  part of lot 19 block no. 10, railroad addition"; held, that if the fact appeared that the testatrix owned no house and lot in lot 19, but did own one in lot 12, the description would be applied; "in *Kurtz v. Hibner*, had the will described the property as his farm in the township and he had held no other in the township, then a different result would have been reached"); 1887, *Decker v. Decker*, 121 Ill. 341, 12 N. E. 750 (devise of "my real estate," including "20 acres off the W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 33, T. 18, R. 11," the testator really owning only the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; doctrine of the two preceding cases followed, in applying the description, treating the erroneous part as immaterial); 1892, *Bingel v. Volz*, 142 Ill. 214, 31 N. E. 13 (devise of "70 acres off the S. side of the N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 16, T. 5, R. 6," the testator really owning only the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , not the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; this fact, and the error of the draftsman in not following the instructions, excluded; though "if the description, after rejecting the repugnant element, were sufficient to describe accurately the land, it might be adopted"; practically following *Kurtz v. Hibner* exactly, and not inconsistent with the three immediately foregoing cases; the error of the opinion consists in expressly reviving the authority of *Bishop v. Morgan*, which had practically been overruled by the



three cases succeeding it); 1905, *Lomax v. Lomax*, 218 Ill. 629, 75 N. E. 1076 (a will devised "the S. W. fractional quarter of Section 24, T. 40, R. 12, E. of the 3d P. M., containing about 55.87 acres more or less," and also devised "the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate"; the testator owned in S. 14, but not in S. 24; it was offered to show that "a mistake was made by the scrivener in drawing the will," in writing "24" for "14"; it appeared that no other quarter section in T. 40 contained approximately 55.87 acres, except the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in S. 14; the offer as made was rejected, and correctly, on the authority of *Kurtz v. Hibner*; but the Court was clearly wrong in not going further and applying the words "my estate" and "55.87 acres" to the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 14, as done in *Bowen v. Allen*, *Decker v. Decker*, *supra*, regardless of the erroneous form of the offer); 1907, *Dillard v. Jones*, 229 Ill. 119, 82 N. E. 206 (certain intestates owned various property, including 10 acres off the north side of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sect. 4, Township 8 S., Range 2 E.; on a bill for partition, the land was sold to the plaintiff; but throughout the proceedings was described as "S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ " instead of "N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ "; held that the decree and deed could be corrected to cover the land actually owned by the intestates); 1907, *Douglas v. Bolinger*, 228 Ill. 23, 81 N. E. 787; 1907, *Felkel v. O'Brien*, 231 Ill. 329, 83 N. E. 170 (bill to construe a devise of "the N. half of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 27, containing 80 acres more or less"; the testator did not own the whole N. half, but owned the E. half; held that the word "north" could be struck out by interpretation, thus reading "the half . . . containing 80 acres"); 1908, *Collins v. Capes*, 235 Ill. 560, 85 N. E. 934 (the testator devised to a son "the west half of the north-east quarter of section ten," etc., "containing about seventy-six acres," and then gave "all the balance and residue of my property" to his wife; he owned no west half but did own a north half of the quarter described, and no other land in that county; the Court applied the description to the north half, on the correct theory as laid down in *Decker v. Decker*; moreover the opinion expressly declares that the absence of the words "my real estate," found in the will of *Decker v. Decker*, is immaterial, since "the presumption is that the testator intended to dispose of property which he owned," citing three cases from other jurisdictions; thus the effect is to overrule the doctrine of *Kurtz v. Hibner* on that point as explained afterwards by *Caton, J.*, and assumed in later cases; the unfortunate thing about the opinion is (1) that it assumes to be following *Kurtz v. Hibner*, and (2) that it does not expressly point out that *Bingel v. Volz* and *Lomax v. Lomax* are also overruled so far as they ignored the present principle of implying the testator's intention; the odd thing is that express words of such intent, "the balance of

my property," were actually in the present will, so that there was no need for the Court to imply them into it); 1909, *Gano v. Gano*, 239 Ill. 539, 88 N. E. 146 (devise of "the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  and the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 14," etc.; testator did not own the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , nor any part of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , but owned all of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; moreover, he had 40 years before acquired property described as "the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ " by mutual mistake for "S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ "; held, three judges dissenting, that the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  passed; following *Decker v. Decker*; but really the will's description should have been treated as a settled term of description for the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , on the theory of §§ 2467, 2463, *ante*); 1910, *Graves v. Rose*, 246 Ill. 76, 92 N. E. 601 (devise of the "N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 12," and the "N. W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of section 9"; the testator in fact owned the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 12 and the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 9; the devisees were already in possession of the tracts owned and said to be intended by the testator, under an alleged promise to convey; the devisees alleged that the wrong words were "used by mistake"; the other heirs prayed for a partition; the trial Court decreed that the letters N and W respectively should be "stricken out as surplusage," and that the devisees should take the tracts thus described and already in their possession; held, erroneous, as "this was nothing but reformation for the purpose of correcting mistakes of the testator"; three judges dissenting; the majority opinion recognized that the letters N and W might be rejected, but held that not enough description remained in the will to identify the tracts; this is of course a tenable view, and is that of *Caton, J.*, above); 1911, *Clancy v. Clancy*, 250 Ill. 297, 95 N. E. 141 (testator devised "the S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sect. 4"; he owned only the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in that section; held, that on ignoring the erroneous part of the description, nothing sufficient remained, and that the devise was void); 1917, *Cochran v. Cochran*, 277 Ill. 244, 115 N. E. 142 (partition of tracts of land devised as "the west half of the west half of section 23," etc.; *Graves v. Rose* followed, as to admitting evidence that the testator owned no other lands, etc.); 1917, *Alford v. Bennett*, 279 Ill. 375, 116 N. E. 89 (devise to M. of "N. 25 acres of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 17, in B. P. township"; the testator owned nothing in the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , but did own (1) the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , (2) the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , (3) the W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and (4) the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , all in that township; in prior clauses, he had devised parcels (2), (3), and (4); and in the next prior clause he had devised 15 acres off the S. side of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , thus leaving undisposed of in parcel (1) 25 acres of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; the will contained no words such as "owned by me"; held that as the only lands owned by



discussion, and serves well enough to illustrate both the principle and the misunderstandings about it. On the whole, a sound result is reached in the great majority of rulings.<sup>8</sup>

him and undisposed of were these 25 acres, the description could be applied thereto; following *Decker v. Decker*; this ruling virtually implies into the will the words "owned by me"); 1918, *Stevenson v. Stevenson*, 285 Ill. 486, 121 N. E. 202 (devise of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5 in T. 7 north, R. 6 west; the testator owned no lands in that range, but did own in T. 7 north, R. 7 east; held void; "it is only where the testator shows by the language of the will itself that the testator intends to dispose of his real estate or all of his real estate by the use therein of such words as 'my real estate' or 'all my land' or their equivalent, that a court is authorized to read, as a part of the description of his land, such words or their equivalent"); 1920, *Johnston v. Gastman*, 291 Ill. 516, 126 N. E. 172 (*Stevenson v. Stevenson* followed; here the descriptions could not be fitted to any property owned by the testator, unless certain items as to the "north half" etc., were ignored; but the residuary clause referred to "the residue of my property," and thus the description was given effect as to three parcels owned by the testator but not described correctly in other particulars); 1921, *Stevenson v. Stevenson*, 297 Ill. 338, 130 N. E. 771 (devise of quarters in Sect. 8, T. 7 North, R. 6, etc., near a ditch and tract owned by the son Ralph; testator owned nothing in T. 7, R. 6, but did own as described in T. 6, R. 7; description applied thereto).

On the *Kurtz v. Hibner* doctrine in Illinois, it is essential, for correct appreciation of the significance of the doctrine, to study Professor Henry Schofield's masterly article, "The So-called Equity Jurisdiction to Construe and Reform Wills" (Illinois Law Rev., VI, 485; reprinted in his posthumous volume, *Essays on Constitutional Law and Equity*, 1921).

<sup>8</sup> Compare here the cases cited *ante*, § 2474:

*Federal*: 1886, *Patch v. White*, 117 U. S. 210, 6 Sup. 617, 710 (will "touching worldly estates wherewith it has pleased Almighty God to bless me in this life," and disposing "of the same" by a devise of "lot no. 6, in square 403," with improvements, in Washington; the testator owned lot 3 in square 406, but not lot 6 in square 403, and the former had improvements, but the latter not, and all his other lots were otherwise disposed of in the will; held, a case of false description, so that the lot could be identified by omitting the erroneous numbers; four judges diss.);

*Georgia*: 1905, *Oliver v. Henderson*, 121 Ga. 836, 49 S. E. 743 (devise of a "lot of land (78) in the Second District of Dooly County"; the testator did not own lot 78, but lot 68; "it should have been alleged also that the

testator owned only one lot in the Second District of D. Co., which lot was No. 68," and then the Court "might well have" given effect to the devise);

*Indiana*: 1865, *Cleveland v. Spillman*, 25 Ind. 95 (devise of "my land, being the S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , T. 36, R. 3, S. 12," but the testator owned only the N. W.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; the devise was applied to that land, by treating the erroneous part of the description as immaterial); 1881, *Judy v. Gilbert*, 77 Ind. 96 (devise of "N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of T. 29, R. 37, S. 11"; but the testator owned only the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; the mistake of the draftsman, not allowed to be shown); 1885, *Funk v. Davis*, 103 Ind. 281, 2 N. E. 739 (devise of "N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of T. 27, R. 28, S. 3," the testator owning only the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; there being in the will no words such as "my land," the devise was not applied to the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; *Judy v. Gilbert* followed, but on correcter reasoning; *Cleveland v. Spillman* distinguished on the above ground); 1889, *Sturgis v. Work*, 122 Ind. 134, 22 N. E. 996 (devise of the "W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S. W.  $\frac{1}{2}$ , etc.," the testator owning only the N. E.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; the fact of this ownership excluded; the correct principle was conceded, but no other sufficient descriptive item was found, and the words "being my property" were refused to be implied); 1895, *Rook v. Wilson*, 142 Ind. 24, 41 N. E. 311 ("My real estate, to wit, the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ " of a certain section; the only land owned by the testator was the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; these facts were considered and the description applied to the latter piece); 1897, *Hartwig v. Schiefer*, 147 Ind. 64, 42 N. E. 471, 46 N. E. 75 ("my life insurance policy amounting to \$1000"; there was only one policy, payable to the wife, and, if dead, to her children; the wife was dead; facts admitted to identify it as having been treated by him as his, though running to his children); 1899, *Whiteman v. Whiteman*, 152 Ind. 263, 53 N. E. 225 (will reciting a former will of Oct. 18, 1890, and purporting to be a codicil thereto; the fact that no such former will existed, except one of Feb. 1890, destroyed after being incorporated in the codicil, admitted, on the theory of "latent ambiguity");

*Iowa*: 1873, *Fitzpatrick v. Fitzpatrick*, 36 Ia. 674 (devise of "W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 23 in T. M. township," the testator owning only the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; declarations of intention excluded; "in all the cases . . . the language of the will, after rejecting the false description, has been sufficient to show what property or person was intended; . . . we cannot presume that the testator intended to assert his ownership of the thing bequeathed"; *Eckford v. Eckford*,



*infra*, seems to ignore the tendency of the first quotation above); 1887, *Christy v. Badger*, 72 Ia. 581, 34 N. W. 427 (devise of "a small farm in Wayne Co., Ia., near the Missouri line"; rule of *Fitzpatrick v. Fitzpatrick*, *supra*, followed); 1887, *Covert v. Sebern*, 73 Ia. 564, 35 N. W. 636 (devise to "my stepson H. S. Covert"; there was only a stepson named John Harvey C.; the mistake of the scrivener allowed to be proved, to identify the devisee); 1892, *Eckford v. Eckford*, 91 Ia. 54, 58 N. W. 1093 (devise of "S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of T. 14, R. 98, S. 17," in a will beginning "I own the following estate"; the testator in fact owning only the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in that section; held, that to omit the erroneous item of description was here impossible, because "there must be a sufficient general description in the will to lead to an identification after the particular description is written out"; the ruling is unsound in its application of the principle); 1907, *Whitehouse v. Whitehouse*, 136 Ia. 165, 113 N. W. 759 (*Eckford v. Eckford* followed); 1921, *Hoeffling v. Borsen*, 190 Ia. 645, 180 N. W. 750 (devise of "our 22-acre farm section 27 Wheeler township north of town"; Wheeler township was south of town, but the only farm owned by testator was one of 22 acres in Section 27 north of town; description applied to that farm);

*Kansas*: 1898, *Wilson v. Stevens*, 59 Kan. 771, 51 Pac. 903 ((1) a will giving to a child Ollie; the fact was received that a daughter Viola was called Ollie in the family; (2) a will giving to a child "Florence Stevens," living "at Wichita"; the fact was received that there was a son living south of Wichita, and that the son's name Alonzo might have been the word understood by the scrivener as "Florence"); 1900, *Zirkle v. Leonard*, 61 Kan. 636, 60 Pac. 318 ("All the land I now have in the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 20, T. 13, R. 17, containing about 72 acres"; he owned only in the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; the description was applied to the latter);

*Kentucky*: 1919, *Hughes v. Orphan Asylum*, 184 Ky. 461, 212 S. W. 428 (a bequest to "the Cleveland Orphan Asylum of Cleveland, Ohio, an orphan asylum for Jewish orphans," held to apply to "The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum");

*Louisiana*: 1919, *Sisters of Charity v. Emery*, 144 La. 614, 81 So. 99 (bequest to "the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word," held applicable to a society not exactly fitting this name);

*Massachusetts*: 1908, *Polsey v. Newton*, 199 Mass. 450, 85 N. E. 574 (bequest to "their three children" applied to the testatrix' three grandchildren; two judges diss.);

*Missouri*: 1855, *Riggs v. Myers*, 20 Mo. 997 (devise of "my estate," naming "the S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. 4, in T. 60, of R. 38, in Holt Co., Mo., with the privilege of using the water of the Big Spring"; the facts being that the testator owned no land in T. 60, but did own quarter-sections in T. 59, the land in T. 59 was given,

being sufficiently identified by the terms "my estate" and "Big Spring"); 1897, *Gordon v. Burris*, 141 Mo. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (bequest to "Lucy May Gordon, granddaughter"; the fact was received that there was a granddaughter Mary Jane G., called "May" by the testatrix); 1909, *Childers v. Pickenpaugh*, 219 Mo. 455, 118 S. W. 478 (*Riggs v. Myers* followed);

*New Hampshire*: 1855, *Winkley v. Kaime*, 32 N. H. 268 (devise of "36 acres more or less in lot 37 in the 2d division in Barnstead," the testator really owning only lot 97; the description was applied to the latter; "by rejecting the words and figures 'in lot 37,' it will stand '36 acres in the 2d division in B., being the same I purchased of J. P.');" 1883, *Smith v. Kimball*, 62 N. H. 606 (cited *ante*, § 2463);

*New Jersey*: 1899, *Congregational Home Missionary Soc. v. Van Arsdale*, 58 N. J. Eq. 293, 42 Atl. 1047 (plaintiff allowed to take a bequest to the "Home Missionary Society of America"); 1900, *Kerrigan v. Conelly*, — N. J. Eq. —, 46 Atl. 227 (bequest to "Woodstock College in Howard Co., Md.," applied to W. College in Baltimore Co., there being no other W. College in Maryland);

*Pennsylvania*: 1903, *Amberson's Estate*, 204 Pa. 397, 54 Atl. 484 (bequest to "the Foreign Missionary Society," held to signify "the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church");

*Virginia*: 1897, *Wildberger v. Cheek's Ex'r*, 94 Va. 517, 27 S. E. 441 ("all the residue . . . among all my nieces and nephews; they are the following": naming several, but omitting some; the testator's feelings towards the omitted ones, received to see whether the "all" should be regarded, or the enumeration);

*Washington*: 1899, *Gorkow's Estate*, 20 Wash. 563, 56 Pac. 385 (bequest to "Otto, the child of Martha K.," held to apply to Arthur K.); 1919, *Schmidt v. Powell*, 107 Wash. 53, 180 Pac. 892 (a description "S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. E. 27-11-19" applied);

*West Virginia*: 1896, *Ross' Ex'r v. Kiger*, 42 W. Va. 402, 26 S. E. 193 (bequest to "the M. E. Church school situated in Buckhannon"; also to "the M. E. Church Foreign Missionary Society"; the facts were admitted, (1) as to the first, there being no such-named institution in B., but one known as the "West Virginia Conference Seminary at B.," that the testatrix had frequently given money to the latter, that it was controlled by Methodist Episcopalians and was often spoken of as "the Methodist school at B.," and that there was no other Methodist school there; (2) as to the second, there being no such-named society, but one known as the "Missionary Society of the M. E. Church," that the testatrix was a member of the M. E. Church and had contributed to its support);

*Wisconsin*: 1878, *Sherwood v. Sherwood*, 45 Wis. 357 (devise of "lot 9 in block 20 in



§ 2478. **Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.** (1) In the course of judicial experience, numerous *presumptive rules* have naturally developed themselves, concerning the probable meaning of various words, phrases, and grammatical constructions. They are in effect definitions of that ordinary usage of language which, by the general principle (*ante*, § 2461), is always the first to be applied, as representing the probable usage of the writer. These specific rules vary with the nature of the document and the transaction. In a complete treatise on Interpretation, they would find a place; but they are not included in the present purview.

(2) A *statute* is an act of expression by a legislative body; and, as a legal act, it presents the same problems as to intention, integration, form, and interpretation, as other legal acts. In general, the foregoing principles and problems recur, 'mutatis mutandis';<sup>1</sup> but the subject cannot be dealt with in the present survey.<sup>2</sup>

(3) In determining the validity of an election as expressing in *ballots* the will of the majority, similar principles of interpretation may be applied. For example, it would seem that the general sense of a ballot as accepted by persons voting would be the standard; and that such standard could be and must be ascertainable by cumulative individual testimony or affidavits.<sup>3</sup>

Oshkosh"; the correct principle conceded, but here, there being no other words "being my land," or the like, in the will, the devise was ineffective; otherwise, if the will had said "my lot 9." or "the lot which I purchased of B.").

§ 2478. <sup>1</sup> This is illustrated in Endlich, *Interpretation of Statutes*, 1888, §§ 28-30, 357-371, 507-510; 1921, *Duplex Printing Co. v. Deering*, 254 U. S. 443, 41 Sup. 172; 1905, *Nye v. Foreman*, 215 Ill. 285, 74 N. E. 140; 1905, *State v. Kelly*, 71 Kan. 811, 81 Pac. 450 (opinion by Greene, J., collecting authorities);

1913, *Pelletier v. O'Connell*, 111 Me. 38, 88 Atl. 55; Or. Laws 1920, §§ 715, 716, 723; 1905, *Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Deepwater R. Co.*, 57 W. Va. 641, 50 S. E. 890.

<sup>2</sup> The question of the conclusiveness of the enrolled copy of a statute has been dealt with *ante*, § 1350.

<sup>3</sup> 1910, *People v. Sullivan*, 247 Ill. 176, 93 N. E. 97 (a ballot "For or Against etc." followed by blanks for "Yes" and "No"; affidavits that voters meant by "Yes" to vote for the proposal, admitted).

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1. *Mutatis mutandis* -
  2. *Chesapeake*
  3. *Known* (by other statutes)
  4. *Known* (by other statutes)
  5. *Known* (by other statutes)
  6. *Known* (by other statutes)
  7. *Known* (by other statutes)
  8. *Known* (by other statutes)
  9. *Known* (by other statutes)
  10. *Known* (by other statutes)



## BOOK II: BY WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (BURDEN OF PROOF, AND PRESUMPTIONS)

### TITLE I: GENERAL THEORY

#### CHAPTER LXXXVII.

§ 2483. Production of Evidence by the Parties.

§ 2484. Evidence sought by the Judge 'ex mero motu': Questions to Witnesses by the Judge.

§ 2485. Burden of Proof: (1) First Meaning: Risk of Non-persuasion of the Jury.

§ 2486. Same: Test for this Burden: Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.

§ 2487. Burden of Proof: (2) Second Meaning: Duty of Producing Evidence to the Judge.

§ 2488. Same: Test for this Burden.

§ 2489. Shifting the Burden of Proof.

§ 2490. Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.

§ 2491. Same: Presumptions of Law and Presumptions of Fact.

§ 2492. Same: Conclusive Presumptions.

§ 2493. Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter Presumptions.

§ 2494. Same: 'Prima facie' Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; Scintilla of Evidence.

§ 2495. Same: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence.

§ 2496. Same: Waiver of Motion by subsequent Introduction of Evidence.

§ 2497. Measure of Jury's Persuasion; (1) Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt; Rule for Criminal Cases.

§ 2498. Same: (2) Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.

§ 2483. **Production of Evidence by the Parties.** The apportionment of the task of producing evidence is one of the most characteristic features of the Anglo-American system. It is placed wholly upon the parties to the litigation; it is not required or expected of the judge. In this respect the emphasis is in contrast to the Continental system.<sup>1</sup> Whether the political notions of self-help, self-government, and 'laissez faire' have ultimately here a common source and analogy would be an interesting question. This Anglo-American feature shows itself, in other aspects, in its frequent relegation of the judge to the position of an umpire (*ante*, §§ 21, 1845), in its abstinence from rules for preferred kinds of witnesses (*ante*, § 1286), and in its reliance upon cross-examination by the opponent (*ante*, § 1367). The Continental feature shows itself in its exaltation of the trial judge's function (as 'Untersuchungsrichter' or 'juge d'instruction'), in his responsibility for initiating the search for evidence, and (historically in the past) in its multiplication of artificial rules of measurement for aiding the judge in estimating the evidence (*ante*, § 2032, *post*, § 2490). Certainly the vital importance of the burden of

§ 2483. <sup>1</sup> The contrast, in general, may be seen by a perusal of the collections of Continental trials cited *ante*, §§ 194, 2251, and of the treatise of De la Grasserie, *De la Preuve au civil et au criminel* (Paris, 1912); O. E.

Bodington, *An Outline of the French Law of Evidence* (1904), cc. VII, VIII; Hans Gross, *Criminal Investigation*, transl. J. and J. C. Adam (1907).



proof means something very different for the parties, in our system of procedure, from its meaning in the other. It is this feature, together with that of the jury, which is responsible for the peculiar double aspect of the burden of proof (*post*, § 2487).

§ 2484. **Evidence sought by the Judge 'ex mero motu'; Questions to Witnesses by the Judge.** So extreme has been the emphasis upon this feature of the production of proof, that even the judge's *power* to call forth evidence has in modern American practice been at times questioned by the Bar. That he has no burden or duty of doing so is plain in the law. But the general judicial power itself, expressly allotted in every State constitution, implies inherently a power to investigate as auxiliary to the power to decide; and the power to investigate implies necessarily a power to summon and to question witnesses:

1794, Mr. *Edmund Burke*, Report of Committee on Warren Hastings' Trial, 31 Parl. Hist. 348: "It is the duty of the Judge to receive every offer of evidence, apparently material, suggested to him, though the parties themselves through negligence, ignorance, or corrupt collusion, should not bring it forward. A judge is not placed in that high situation merely as a passive instrument of parties. He has a duty of his own, independent of them, and that duty is to investigate the truth."

1894, Lord ESHER, M. R., in *Coulson v. Disborough*, 2 Q. B. 316, 318: "If there be a person whom neither party to an action chooses to call as a witness, and the judge thinks that that person is able to elucidate the truth, the judge in my opinion, is himself entitled to call him; and I cannot agree that such a course has never been taken by a judge before."

The trial judge, then, may *call a witness* not called by the parties,<sup>1</sup> or may consult any source of information on topics subject to *judicial*

§ 2484. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1894, *Coulson v. Disborough*, 2 Q. B. 316 (quoted *supra*).

CANADA: *Newfoundland*: Consol. St. 1916, c. 83, § 22 (the Court "may appoint one or more assessors to advise the Court in any matters requiring nautical or other expert or professional knowledge"); the other Canadian statutes declaring the judge's power to call expert witnesses are quoted *ante*, §§ 563, 1674.

UNITED STATES: *Fla.* 1886, *Selph v. State*, 22 Fla. 537, 548 (a judge may "of his own accord, when the interests of justice demand it," call and examine witnesses; the word "not" is apparently omitted by error in the printed opinion); *Ga.* 1852, *Hoskins v. State*, 11 Ga. 92, 97 (the trial judge's right of "directing the necessary proofs to be adduced," conceded); *Haw.* 1919, *Kamahalo v. Coelho*, 24 Haw. 689 (loan of money; receipts purporting to be signed by the plaintiff were in evidence; after both parties had closed their cases, the trial Court "at his own instance summoned to appear before him one R. W. B., Esq., to testify as an expert as to the genuineness of the signatures," cross-examination by the parties being allowed; held proper; sensible opinion by Edings, J.); *Ill.* 1902,

*Carle v. People*, 200 Ill. 494, 56 N. E. 32 (State's attorney allowed to state that he did not wish to call a certain eye-witness, and to request the Court to call him, and then to cross-examine him, the defendant also cross-examining); 1911, *People v. Cleminson*, 250 Ill. 135, 95 N. E. 157 (the trial Court should not call witnesses at the suggestion of the State's attorney, except when they are eye-witnesses and then only in unusual instances; *Carle v. People*, approved; here three witnesses were held improperly called by the judge for cross-examination by the State's attorney); 1921, *People v. Cardinelli*, 297 Ill. 116, 130 N. E. 355 (judge may call a witness not called by either party); *Mo.* 1898, *Fullerton v. Fordyce*, 144 Mo. 519, 44 S. W. 1053 (here, a physician who had made an examination under order of Court previously made on motion); *N. C.* 1916, *State v. Horne*, 171 N. C. 787, 88 S. E. 433 ("It has been the immemorial custom for the trial judge to examine witnesses who are tendered by either side whenever he sees fit to do so; and the calling of a witness on his own motion differs from this practice in degree and not in kind"; here, expert witnesses "who are not desired either by the State or by the defendant");



notice,<sup>2</sup> or may *put additional questions* to a witness called by the parties,<sup>3</sup> or may 'ex mero motu' *exclude inadmissible evidence*,<sup>4</sup> or may *take a view* of a place or thing.<sup>5</sup>

That the trial judge has no power to cause the evidence produced by the parties to be supplemented, never will be conceded, so long as the Bench retains a true conception of its constitutional function and a due sense of self-respect. There could not have been any question on this subject, had not the modern American legal mind been led astray by its habituation to the paralyzing effect of another rule, wholly modern, viz. the rule (*post*, § 2551) forbidding the trial judge to comment to the jury on the weight of evidence.

*P.I.* 1907, U. S. v. Cinco, 8 P.I. 389 (judge calling new witnesses after case submitted); 1907, U. S. v. Base, 9 P. I. 48 (similar); *Vt.* Gen. L. 1917, § 2620 (judge may direct inquiry by experts; quoted *ante*, § 563); *Va.* 1921, *Pendleton v. Com.*, — *Va.* —, 109 S. E. 201 (homicide; the Court called a woman as witness who had "refused to talk" before trial, and allowed the prosecuting attorney to cross-examine her; held proper in the trial Court's discretion).

So, too, where the judge sits without a jury: 1883, *Badische A. & S. Fabrik v. Levinstein*, L. R. 24 Ch. D. 156, 167 (under Ord. 56, Rules of 1883, quoted *ante*, § 1674).

The *appointment of expert witnesses by the Court* is one of the expedients proposed for reforming the shortcomings of the present system; see the articles cited *ante*, § 563, and the statutes there quoted. In *Gentry v. Gulf & S. I. R. Co.*, 109 Miss. 66, 67 So. 849 (1915), where the trial judge had selected two disinterested physicians to examine the plaintiff's injuries, such examination being in that State not allowable, under § 2220, *ante*, the opinion proceeded: "We cannot admit that physicians, or other experts, appointed by the Court at the request of a party to a lawsuit, are more reliable and more disinterested than are others of like attainments and like professional standing, simply because the others have given expert testimony at the request of a party to the suit"; but this is to be blind to the notorious and repulsive facts of professional experience. In *People v. Dickerson*, 164 Mich. 148, 129 N. W. 199 (1910), Mich. St. 1905, No. 175, providing that in homicide cases, on issues of expert knowledge, "the Court shall appoint one or more suitable disinterested persons, not exceeding three, to investigate such issues and testify at the trial," without preventing the parties' use of other witnesses, was held unconstitutional, mainly because "the power of selecting and appointing witnesses . . . is in no sense a judicial act." It is a pity that the Court suffered such a severe attack of dikastophobia on the sight of this harmless statute. As the history and authorities of the present subject are ignored in the opinion and as its fantastic

logic would hardly be followed elsewhere, no further notice of its contents is needed.

The opinion of Brown, J., in *State v. Horne*, 171 N. C. 787, 88 S. E. 433 (1916) is refreshingly curt in its affirmation of the trial judge's full power to call expert witnesses.

That the trial Court has inherent power, without express statutory provision, to summon witnesses seems inevitably included in the holding of the Federal Supreme Court that such power exists to *appoint an auditor*, in an action at law, to hear testimony, make a finding, and present a report on the evidence for consideration of the jury; 1920, *Re Peterson*, 253 U. S. 300, 40 Sup. 543; Mr. Justice Brandeis' masterly opinion states the fundamental postulate thus: "The right of trial by jury does not prohibit the introduction of new methods for determining what facts are actually in issue, nor does it prohibit the introduction of new rules of evidence." A learned Note entitled "Compulsory Reference in Actions at Law" (*Harvard Law Review*, XXXIV, 321) commenting on *Re Peterson*, *supra*, points out the strong foundations of that decision and justly terms it "little short of epoch-making" in its possibilities of greater flexibility in the administration of justice.

<sup>2</sup> *Post*, § 2569.

<sup>3</sup> 1877, *Sparks v. State*, 59 Ala. 82, 87 (distinction drawn between the right to propound questions openly to a witness and the impropriety of privately consulting a witness to discover or suggest further testimony); 1884, *Littleton v. Clayton*, 77 Ala. 571, 575; and cases cited *ante*, § 784, where the scope of this part of the power, as to-day applied, is fully examined.

<sup>4</sup> 1912, *Electric Park Amusement Co. v. Psichos*, 83 N. J. L. 262, 83 Atl. 766 (here the judge excluded an incompetent witness though the opponent had made no objection; the party offering the witness made the unconscionable claim that he had a right to put in any illegal evidence if the opponent failed to object; the Supreme Court sensibly refused to sanction this last step in the reduction of the trial judge to the helpless referee of an unscrupulous combat between skill and ignorance).

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, § 1169.



The judiciary's supine observance of that deleterious principle leads naturally to the extreme assumption that the judge must not reveal to the jurors in any manner his mental attitude towards the trend of the proof on the issues; and that any act of his in calling a new witness or in asking additional questions will thus lay him open to the suspicion of unlawfully expressing himself on the weight of evidence. The morbid jealousy with which some Supreme Courts watch against violations of that rule leads them of course to adopt an attitude of hostility against the trial judge's constitutional power to interrogate witnesses. This attitude will not disappear until, by a healthy reaction, the trial judge's pristine power to act as a thirteenth juror and comment on the weight of evidence is once more restored to him.

§ 2485. **Burden of Proof; (1) First Meaning; Risk of Non-Persuasion of the Jury.** Since, then, the risk and burden of producing evidence falls upon the parties themselves, how is it to be apportioned between them? In short, *which party has the "burden of proof"?*<sup>1</sup>

In every attempt to explain the principles of the law as to burden of proof and presumption, two things at least present themselves for consideration, — the general process, logical and legal, involved in determining the parties by whom evidence is to be produced, and the significance and usage of various terms employed and the incidental problems of each part of the process.

The difficulties of such an attempt, almost insuperable, arise not so much from the intrinsic complication or uncertainty of the situation as from the lamentable ambiguity of phrase and confusion of terminology under which our law has so long suffered.<sup>2</sup> At the outset, then, it will be more satisfactory to analyze the logical and legal situation considered in itself and independently of the various usages and terms that chiefly cause the confusion.

(1) *Burden of Proof; Risk of Non-persuasion.* Whenever A and B are at issue upon any subject of controversy (not necessarily legal), and M is to take action between them, and their desire is, hence, respectively to persuade M as to their contention, it is clear that the situation of the two, as regards its advantages and risks, will be very different. Suppose that A has property in which he would like to have M invest money, and that B is opposed to having M invest money; M will invest in A's property if he can learn that it is a profitable object, and not otherwise. Here it is seen that the advantage is with B, and the disadvantage with A; for unless A succeeds in persuading M up to the point of action, A will fail and B will remain victorious; the burden of proof, or, in other words, the risk of non-persuasion, is upon A. This does not mean that B is absolutely safe though he does nothing, for he cannot tell how much it will require to persuade M; a very little argu-

§ 2485. <sup>1</sup> For an acute and comprehensive examination of the subject of this chapter, see chapters VIII and IX in Professor Thayer's Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, the publication of which in 1898 was epoch-making. Professor Austin Abbott's article in the University Law Review, II, 59, is also enlightening.

<sup>2</sup> The following remark will be thought singular, in view of the condition of the precedents on this subject: "Every student of the law fully understands the exact import of the phrase 'burden of proof'" (1897, *State v. Thornton*, 10 S. D. 349, 73 N. W. 196).



ment from A might suffice; or, if M is of a rashly speculative tendency, the mere mention of the proposition by A might without more effect M's action; so that it may be safer in any case for B to say what he can on his side of the question; and thus in fact he, as well as A, has more or less risk, in the sense that there are always chances of A's persuading M, no matter how trifling his evidence and argument. [But nevertheless the risk is really upon A, in the sense that if M, after all said and done, remains in doubt, and therefore fails to pass to the point of action, it is A that loses and B that succeeds; because it is A who wishes the action taken and needed as a prerequisite to accomplish the persuasion of M.] The risk of non-persuasion, therefore, i. e. the risk of M's non-action because of doubt, may properly be said to be upon A. This is the situation common to all cases of attempted persuasion, whether in the market, the home, or the forum. So far as mere logic is concerned, it is perhaps questionable whether there is much importance in the doctrine of burden of proof as affecting persons in controversy.<sup>3</sup> The removal of the burden is not in itself a matter of logical necessity. It is the *desire to have action taken* that is important. In the affairs of life there is a penalty for not sustaining the burden of proof, — i. e. not persuading M beyond the doubting point, — namely, that M will not take the desired action, to which his persuasion is a prerequisite.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, in practical affairs generally, the burden of proof (in the sense of risk of non-persuasion) signifies that upon a person desiring action from M will fall the penalty of M's non-action unless M can be persuaded beyond the doubting-point as to the truth of the propositions prerequisite to his action. What, then, is the difference, if any, between this risk of non-persuasion in affairs at large and the same risk in litigation? In litigation, the penalty is of course different; the action which is desired of M is the verdict of the jury, the decree, order, or finding of the judge, or some other appropriate action of the tribunal. But so also the action differs in other affairs, according as M is an investor with money to lend, or an employer with a position to fill, or a friend with a favor to grant. Is there no other and more radical difference?

The radical difference in litigation, as distinguished from practical affairs

<sup>3</sup> "In Logic, then, when we speak of the burden of proof, we are not speaking of some merely artificial law, with artificial penalties attached to it. . . . No penalty follows the misplacement of the burden of proof, except the natural consequence that the assertion remains untested, and the audience therefore (if inquiring) unconvinced. . . . There is no 'obligation' on any one to prove an assertion, — other than any wish he may feel to set an inquiring mind at rest or to avoid the imputation of empty boasting. It is a natural law alone with which we are here concerned, — the law that an unsupported assertion may, for all that appears, be either true or false" (Professor Alfred Sidgwick, *Fallacies*, 163).

<sup>4</sup> It is therefore a fallacy to suppose that the necessity of apportioning the burden of proof is a "technical, formal, legal" doctrine, which is due solely to the artificiality of the legal rules of pleading; yet this fallacy has lately made its appearance: 1920, *Martin v. Columbus*, 101 Oh. 1, 127 N. E. 411 (condemnation of land; held error to charge that the burden of proving value is on the owner; the opinion is fundamentally erroneous however in resting this decision on the notion that "this proceeding does not admit of any definite, formal, technical issue touching value; it therefore does not admit of the technical doctrine relating to burden of proof"; the opinion is by Wanamaker, J.).



at large, is as to the *mode of determining the propositions of persuasion which are a prerequisite to M's action*. In affairs at large, these are determined solely by M's notion of the proper grounds for his action, — depending thus on the circumstances of the situation as judged by M. In litigation, these prerequisites are determined, first and broadly, by the *substantive law*, which fixes the groups of data that enter into legal relations and constitute rights and duties, and, secondly and more in detail, by the *laws of pleading and procedure*, which further group and subdivide these larger groups of data, and assign one or another sub-group to this or that party as prerequisites of the tribunal's action in his favor. Thus, if A were endeavoring to persuade M to assist him with money because M's brother B had cruelly assaulted and beaten A, M might conceivably exact of A that the latter first prove to him — *i. e.* persuade him — not merely that B had beaten A, but further that B had not done this in self-defence or by A's consent or in ejecting A from B's premises or otherwise for some reason, legally justifiable or not. In a legal tribunal, on the other hand, the substantive law will define and limit, in the first place, the reasons to be regarded as justifiable, and will thus narrow the total of facts that can in any event be involved; and, in the second place, the law of pleading will further subdivide and apportion these facts. It will inform A that he need persuade the tribunal of two facts only, namely, that A was beaten and it was B who beat him;<sup>5</sup> and that, upon persuading the tribunal of these facts, its action will be taken in his favor, and A's risk of the tribunal's non-action will thereupon cease. It will inform B that at this point the risk of non-action will turn upon him, in the sense that he needs the tribunal's action in order to relieve himself from the consequences of its previous action, and that this action (by way of reversing its provisional action in A's favor) will depend upon his persuading the tribunal as to certain specified facts by way of excuse or justification. Perhaps the same law of pleading may further apportion to A a third set of facts to be the subject of a replication, in case B succeeds in obtaining action in his favor on his plea.

But the groupings defined by the substantive law and the further subdivision by the law of pleading do not necessarily end the process of apportionment by law. Even within a single pleading there are instances in which the burden of proof (in the sense of a risk of non-persuasion) may be taken from the pleader desiring action and placed upon the opponent. In criminal cases, for example, though there is no affirmative pleading for the defence, it is put upon the defendant, in some jurisdictions, to prove the excuse of self-defence; in many jurisdictions in which payment need not be affirma-

<sup>5</sup> Assuming, of course, that there is no controversy as to whether inadvertence or the like is a proper subject for the general issue or for an affirmative plea. Yet this was doubted in the following case: 1919, *Fortier v. Stone*, 79 N. H. 235, 107 Atl. 342 ("whether this

burden, in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion, remains with the defendant throughout the case, [on a plea of self-defence], . . . in view of our decisions, is a question of much difficulty").



tively pleaded to a contract-claim, the burden of proving payment is nevertheless put upon the debtor; and so in many other instances. The difference of effect between an apportionment under this method and an apportionment by requiring a pleading is merely that, in the latter method, all questions of burden of proof might conceivably be disposed of before trial or the entering into evidence;<sup>6</sup> while by the other method the apportionment is not made until the trial proper has begun. The other method is less simple in the handling; but it has come more into vogue under the loose modes of pleading current in modern times in many jurisdictions.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2486. **Same; Test for this Burden; Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.** The characteristic, then, of the burden of proof (in the sense of a risk of non-persuasion) in legal controversies is that the law divides the process into stages, and apportions definitely to each party the specific facts which will in turn fall to him as the prerequisites of obtaining action in his favor by the tribunal. It is this apportionment which forms the important element of controversy for legal purposes. Each party wishes to know of what facts he has the risk of non-persuasion.

By what considerations is this apportionment determined? Is there any single principle or rule which will solve all cases and afford a general test for ascertaining the incidence of this risk? By no means. It is often said that the burden is upon the *party having in form the affirmative allegation*.<sup>1</sup> But this is not an invariable test, nor even always a significant circumstance; the burden is often on one who has a negative assertion to prove;<sup>2</sup> a common instance is that of a promisee alleging non-performance of a contract. It is

<sup>6</sup> Though in practice not usually, at the present time; see Langdell's *Discovery under the Judicature Acts*, Harvard Law Review, XI, 157, 205.

<sup>7</sup> The result is that what were properly questions of pleading are often discussed in terms of the burden of proof. 1896, *Hopson v. Caswell*, 13 Tex. Civ. App. 392, 36 S. W. 312 (indexed under "Burden of proof"; it is said, of a plea in abatement, "the burden of sustaining the plea was upon the defendant"); 1895, *Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gibbons*, 91 Va. 608, 22 S. E. 504 (where the question of pleading affirmatively the statute of limitations is discussed indifferently in terms of pleading and of burden of proof).

§ 2486. <sup>1</sup> 1842, *Greenleaf*, Evidence, § 74; *Ark. Dig.* 1919, § 4112; *Cal. C. C. P.* § 372, § 1869 ("Evidence need not be given in support of a negative allegation, except etc."); *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 5746, P. C. § 1020 (on the party "asserting or affirming a fact and to the existence of whose case or defense the proof of such fact is essential"); 1898, *People v. Boo Doo Hong*, 122 Cal. 606, 55 Pac. 482 (unlawful practice of medicine; the burden placed on the defendant to show a license; citing *Greenleaf*); *Ky. C. C. P.* 1895, § 525; *Or. Laws* 1920, § 726; 1922, *State v. R...*

— *Or. —*, 205 Pac. 290 (excepted cases under *Or. St.* 1915, c. 141, § 33, Prohibition Act).

<sup>2</sup> 1908, *Prentice v. Crane*, 234 Ill. 302, 84 N. E. 916 (that representations were not true); 1914, *Abbau v. Grassie*, 262 Ill. 636, 104 N. E. 1020 (lack of a license for contractor claiming mechanic's lien); *Carmel N. G. & I. Co. v. Small*, 150 Ind. 427, 50 N. E. 476 (action to recover money from an officer not legally elected); 1920, *State v. Bischoff*, 146 La. 748, 84 So. 41 (bigamy; under *Rev. St.* § 986, providing that no prosecution shall be had unless the indictment is found within one year after information lodged with the prosecuting officer, the burden of proof of the non-receipt of information prior to one year is upon the State); 1907, *Beckman v. Lincoln & N. W. R. Co.*, 79 Nebr. 89, 112 N. W. 348 (land-condemnation proceedings); 1870, *Lisbon v. Lyman*, 49 N. H. 553 (leading opinion, by Doe, J.); 1920, *Spilene v. Salmon Falls Mfg. Co.*, 79 N. H. 326, 108 Atl. 808 (whether the defendant, a manufacturer, had taken steps to avoid the application of the *Employer's Liability Act*; burden of producing evidence of being excepted from the Act, held to be on the defendant); 1913, *Young v. ...*, 18 N. Mex. 207, 135 Pac. 86 (non-execution of a contract).



sometimes said that it is upon the party to whose case the fact is essential. — This is correct enough, but it merely advances the inquiry one step; we must then ask whether there is any general principle which determines to what party's case a fact is essential.

The truth is that there is not and cannot be any one general solvent for all cases. It is merely a question of policy and fairness based on experience in the different situations. Thus, in most actions of tort there are many possible justifying circumstances, — self-defence, leave and license, 'volenti non fit injuria,' and the like; but it would be both unfair and contrary to experience to assume that one of them was probably present, and to require the plaintiff to disprove the existence of each one of them; so that the plaintiff is put to prove merely the nature of his harm, and the defendant's share in causing it; and the other circumstances, which would if they existed leave him without a claim, are put upon the defendant to prove. Nevertheless, in malicious prosecution, on the one hand, the facts as to the defendant's good faith and probable cause, which might otherwise have been set down for the defendant to show in excuse (as the analogous facts in an action for defamation are reserved for a plea of privilege), are here put upon the plaintiff, who is required to prove their non-existence; because as a matter of experience and fairness this seems to be the wiser apportionment. So, on the other hand, in an action for defamation ("false words," in the old nomenclature), it might have been supposed on other analogies that to the plaintiff it would fall to prove the falsity of the defendant's utterance; yet as a matter of fairness, it has in fact been put upon the defendant to prove the truth of his utterance. Thus, no one principle will serve in torts as a guiding rule for the various cases. In criminal cases, the innovation, in some jurisdictions, of putting upon the accused the burden of proving his insanity has apparently also been based on an experience in the abuses of the contrary practice. In claims based on written instruments, experience has led in most jurisdictions to a statutory provision, requiring the execution by the defendant to be specially traversed or else taken for admitted, — a step which stops short of changing the burden of proof, but well illustrates the considerations affecting its incidence. The controversy whether a plaintiff in tort should be required to prove his own carefulness, or the defendant should be required to prove the plaintiff's carelessness, has depended in part on experience as to a plaintiff being commonly careful or careless, in part on the fairness of putting the burden on one or the other, and this in part on the consideration which of the parties has the means of proof more available.

This last consideration has often been advanced as a special test for solving a limited class of cases, *i. e.* the burden of proving a fact is said to be put on the party who presumably has peculiar means of knowledge enabling him to prove its falsity if it is false.<sup>3</sup> But this consideration furnishes no working rule; if

<sup>3</sup> 1842, Greenleaf, Evidence, § 79; 1896, 1906, Kettles v. People, 221 Ill. 221, 77 N. E. Lehman v. Knapp, — Ala. —, 20 So. 674, 472 (practising dentistry without a license;



it did, then the plaintiff in an action for defamation charging him to be living in adultery should be required to prove that he is lawfully married. This consideration, after all, merely takes its place among other considerations of fairness and experience as a most important one to be kept in mind in apportioning the burden of proof in a specific case.

There is, then, ~~no one~~ principle, or set of harmonious principles, which afford a sure and universal test for the solution of a given case.<sup>4</sup> The logic of the situation does not demand such a test; it would be useless to attempt to discover or to invent one; and the state of the law does not justify us in saying that it has accepted any. There are merely specific rules for specific cases, resting for their ultimate basis upon broad and undefined reasons of experience and fairness.

§ 2487. **Burden of Proof; (2) Second Meaning; Duty of producing Evidence to the Judge.** So far as concerns the principles examined above, the matter may have come before any kind of tribunal. The inquiry peculiarly concerns the procedure in legal controversies; but the settlement of it was not affected by the nature of the tribunal. The tribunal might be a judge, or a jury, or both, so far as regards apportioning the risk of non-persuasion. Nothing has been said, or need be, about a distinction between judge and jury. But we come now to a peculiar set of rules which have their source in the bipartite constitution of the common-law tribunal. Apart from the distinction of functions between judge and jury, these rules need have had no existence. They owe their existence chiefly to the historic and unquestioned control of the judge over the jury, and to the partial and dependent position of the jury as a member of the tribunal whose functions come into play only within certain limits.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of the situation, and the operation of the rules, can best be comprehended by keeping this consideration in mind, namely, that the *opportunity to decide finally upon the evidential material that may be offered does not fall to the jury as a matter of course*; that each party must first with his evidence pass the gauntlet of the judge; and that the judge, as a part of his function in administering the law, is to keep the jury within the bounds of reasonable action. In short, in order to get to the jury on the issue, and bring into play the other burden of proof (in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury), both parties alike *must first satisfy the judge that*

the defendant has the burden of proving a license); 1922, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Lahr*, — Ind. —, 134 N. E. 657 (insurance); 1920, *State ex rel. Woodbury Co. Anti-Saloon League v. Clark*, 189 Ia. 492, 178 N. W. 419 (bill to enjoin a house of prostitution; burden of showing want of knowledge is on the owner of the house); 1918, *State v. Perello*, 102 Kan. 695, 171 Pac. 630 (proving the exceptions in a liquor-prohibition statute); 1921, *State v. Falkner*, 182 N. C. 793, 108 S. E. 756 (principle held not applicable to the wife's proof of non-adultery on trial of a charge

against the husband of deserting the wife, the husband pleading her adultery as an excuse).

<sup>4</sup> The reasoning upon these various proposed tests may be interestingly traced through the fluctuations and conflicts of view in the following New Hampshire opinions: 1866, *Kendall v. Brownson*, 47 N. H. 186; 1870, *Lisbon v. Lyman*, 49 N. H. 553; *State v. Perkins*, 53 N. H. 435; *State v. Keggon*, 55 N. H. 19; 1920, *Spilene v. Salmon Falls Mfg. Co.*, 79 N. H. 326, 108 Atl. 808.

§ 2487. <sup>1</sup> *Post*, § 2550; Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, c. 5.



*they have a quantity of evidence fit to be considered* by the jury, and to form a reasonable basis for the verdict. This duty of satisfying the judge is peculiar in its operation, because if it is not fulfilled, the party in default loses, by order of the judge, and the jury is not given an opportunity to debate and form conclusions as if the issue were open to them. It operates somewhat as follows:<sup>2</sup>

(a) The party having the risk of non-persuasion (under the pleadings or other rules) is naturally the one upon whom first falls this duty of going forward with evidence; because, since he wishes to have the jury act for him, and since without any legal evidence at all they could properly take no action, there is no need for the opponent to adduce evidence; and this duty thus falls first upon the proponent (a term convenient for designating the party having the risk of non-persuasion). This duty, however, though determined in the first instance by the burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485), is a distinct one, for it is a *duty towards the judge*, and the judge rules against the party if it is not satisfied; there is as yet no opportunity to get to the jury and ask if they are persuaded. The judge, then, requires that at least enough evidence be put in to be worth considering by the jury.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Suppose, then, that the proponent has satisfied this duty towards the judge, and that the judge has ruled that sufficient evidence has been introduced. The duty has then ended. Up to that point the proponent was liable to a ruling of law from the judge which would put an end to his case. After passing this point he is now *before the jury*, bearing only his risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485). There is now no duty on either party, with reference to any rule of law in the hands of the judge, to produce evidence. Either party may introduce it, and doubtless both parties will do so; but there is nothing that requires either to do so under penalty of a ruling of law against him. The proponent, however, still has his burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury; *i. e.* should the jury be in doubt after hearing the evidence of the proponent, either with or without evidence from the opponent, the proponent fails to obtain their verdict upon that issue, and the opponent remains successful. In this second stage of the trial, with the evidence before the jury, the only burden operating is that which concerns the jury, — the risk of non-persuasion; and not that which concerns the judge, — the duty of producing evidence.

(c) Suppose, however, that the proponent is able to go further and to adduce evidence which if believed would make it beyond reason to repudiate the proponent's claim, — evidence such that the jury, acting as reasonable men, must be persuaded and must render a verdict on that issue for the proponent. Here the proponent has now put himself in the same position that

<sup>2</sup> See on this part of the subject a useful article by Professor Austin Abbott, entitled "Two Burdens of Proof," in the *Harvard Law Review*, VI, 125, and his article cited *ante*, § 2485.

<sup>3</sup> The detailed rules for determining this sufficiency of evidence are examined *post*, §§ 2494, 2495.



was occupied by the opponent at the opening of the trial, *i. e.* unless the opponent now offers evidence against the claim and thus changes the situation, the jury should not be allowed to render a verdict against reason, — a verdict which would later have to be set aside as against evidence. The matter is thus *in the hands of the judge again*, as having the supervisory control of the proof; and he may now, as applying a rule of law, *require the opponent to produce evidence*, under penalty of losing the case by direction of the judge. A duty of producing evidence, under this penalty for default, has now arisen for the opponent. It arises for the same reasons, is measured by the same tests, and has the same consequences as the duty of production which was formerly upon the proponent. There are, however, two ways in which it may be invoked by the judge, differing widely in terms and in appearance, but essentially the same in principle. (c') In the ordinary case, this overwhelming mass of evidence, bearing down for the proponent, will be made up of a variety of complicated data, differing in every new trial and not to be tested by any set formulas. The judge's ruling will be based on a survey of this mass of evidence as a whole; and it will direct the jury on that issue to render a verdict on that *mass of evidence* for the proponent. The propriety of this has sometimes been doubted by Courts who do not believe the process to be precisely analogous to that of directing a nonsuit for the proponent or of enforcing a presumption, as shortly to be explained (*post*, § 2495); but the better authority gives ample recognition to this process. (c'') Another mode under which this process is carried out employs the aid of a fixed rule of law, *i. e.* a presumption, applicable to inferences from specific evidence to specific facts forming part of the issue, rather than to the general mass of evidence bearing on the proposition in issue. If it is a part of the proponent's case, for example, to prove that a person is deceased, and he has offered evidence that the person has been absent, unheard from, for seven years or more, and there is no other evidence on the subject, then the proponent may ask that the jury be directed, if they believe this fact of absence, to take as true the proposition that the person is deceased; if that, moreover, were the only proposition at issue, then the direction would be to find a verdict for the proponent if this fact of absence were believed. The result is the same as in the preceding form of the process (c'), *i. e.* the opponent loses as a matter of law, in default of evidence to the contrary; in other words, the presumption creates for the opponent a duty of producing evidence, in default of which he loses as a matter of legal ruling, the matter not being open for the jury, and the risk of non-persuasion, which applies only to the jury's deliberations, having ceased to affect the proponent. This particular form of the process, however (c''), happens to have become known as a "presumption."

The term "presumption" is attended by much confused usage. The particular ambiguity which we need here to guard against is the confusion between the inference itself — *i. e.* the propriety of making the inference from the



evidence to the 'factum probandum' <sup>4</sup>— and the effect of the inference in the hands of the judge. So far as "presumption" means anything for the present purpose, it signifies a ruling as to the duty of producing evidence. "The essential character and operation of presumptions, so far as the law of evidence is concerned, is in all cases the same, whether they be called by one name or the other; that is to say, they throw upon the party against whom they work the duty of going forward with the evidence; and this operation is all their effect, regarded merely in their character as presumptions." <sup>5</sup>

(d) Keeping in mind, then, that a presumption signifies a ruling of law, and that to this extent the matter is in the judge's hands and not the jury's, what is the effect upon the legal situation of the opponent if he does respond to this duty and *comes forward with other evidence* against the fact presumed?— When he has thus fulfilled his duty under the ruling of law, he puts himself out of the hands of the judge and his ruling, and finds himself back again in the hands of the jury. He is precisely where the proponent was in the first place when he fulfilled the duty, then his, of producing evidence and succeeded in getting from the judge to the jury. The case is now open again as to that specific issue, *i. e.* free from any liability to a ruling of law against either side, and is before the jury, where the original proponent (as ever, when the issue is open to the jury) has the burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury. The important thing is that there is now *no longer in force any ruling of law by the judge* requiring the jury to find according to the presumption. "All is then turned into an ordinary question of evidence, and the two or three general facts presupposed in the rule of presumption take their place with the rest, and operate, with their own natural force, as a part of the total mass of probative matter. . . . The main point to observe is that the rule of presumption has vanished;" <sup>6</sup> because its function was as a legal rule to settle the matter only provisionally, and to cast upon the opponent the duty of producing evidence, and this duty and this legal rule he has satisfied. <sup>7</sup>

(e) Are there any further stages in this possible shifting of the duty of producing evidence? It is conceivable that the proponent may be able to invoke other presumptions, though this is not common. But may not the opponent go further than to produce evidence sufficient to remove the presumption?

<sup>4</sup> This is one of the earlier uses of "presumption"; it is in effect an equivalent of "inference" (*ante*, §§ 25, 38). Such are Coke's "presumptions, whereof there be three sorts, viz., violent, probable, and light or temerary" (Co. Litt. 6, b). This is what is usually meant by "presumption of fact" (*post*, §§ 2490, 2491).

<sup>5</sup> Thayer, *ubi supra*, 339.

<sup>6</sup> Thayer, *ubi supra*, 346.

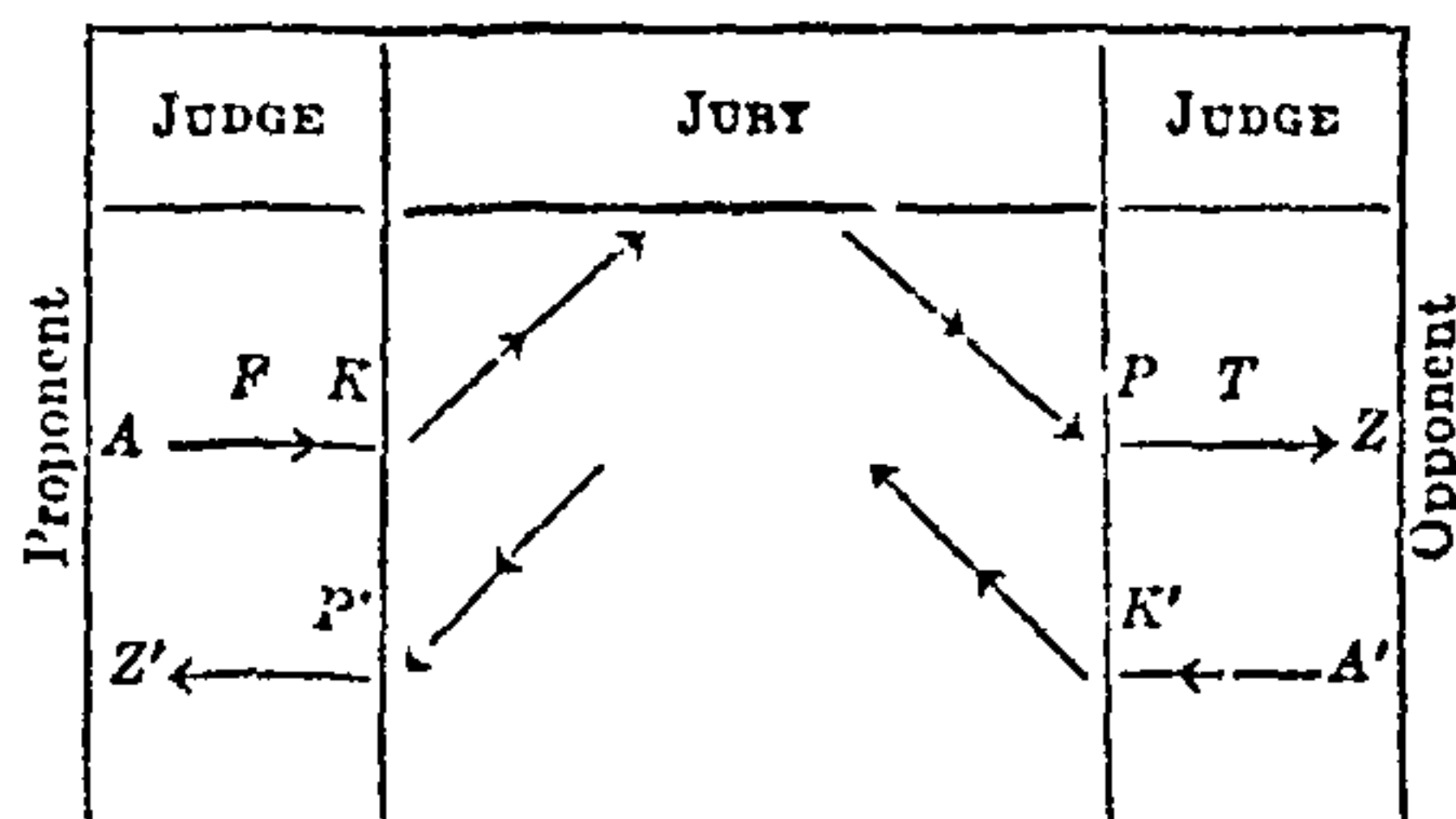
<sup>7</sup> The following passage from Professor Abbott's article, already mentioned, will serve to illustrate the general situation involved in this duty of producing evidence: "To use a homely illustration, a civil jury trial may be compared to a game of shuffle-board. The first and

nearest to the player is the field of mere scintillas; if the plaintiff's evidence halts there, he is lost. The next, or middle, field is that of balancing probabilities: if his evidence reaches and rests there, he gets to the jury; but they alone can decide the cause, and they may decide it either way, or may disagree. The third and last field is that of legal conclusion: if his evidence can be pushed into that division, he is entitled to his victory at the hands of the judge, and the jury cannot draw it into doubt; but before the judge can do so, the defendant has a right to give evidence, and that evidence may bring the plaintiff's evidence back into doubt again, and leave the case in the field of balancing probabilities."



May he not only get the issue opened before the jury again, but also go further and raise what may be termed a *counter-presumption* in his favor, so that the proponent will find himself in his original position at the opening of the trial, namely, subject to the duty of producing sufficient evidence to go to the jury, under penalty, in case of default, of suffering a ruling against him by the judge as a matter of law? This result is possible in principle, and there are instances of it, though rare. For example, a plaintiff, in an action for the burning of his property by the defendant railway-company's negligence, created a presumption of negligence by showing the setting of the fire by sparks from the defendant's locomotive; the duty of producing evidence was thus put upon the defendant, who not only removed it, producing evidence sufficient to go to the jury, but by showing the proper construction, equipment, and inspection of the locomotive was held to have raised a presumption that it had not been negligent, and thus to be entitled to a ruling by the judge against the plaintiff, taking the case from the jury.<sup>8</sup>

The various possible stages in the foregoing process may be illustrated by a diagram; the particular usefulness of the graphic method being that it shows in small compass the relation of the stages and the vital distinction between the judge's and the jury's situation for the two kinds of burdens:



Let  $A$  = the starting-point of the proponent having the risk of non-persuasion on a given issue;

$A'$  = the starting-point of the opponent on the issue;

$Z$  = the point of complete persuasion or proof for the ~~proponent~~ <sup>opponent</sup>;

$Z'$  = the corresponding point for the opponent. The proponent then finds, as soon as he begins his production of evidence, that at any point between  $A$  and  $K$  he is subject to a ruling of the judge defeating him for lack of sufficient evidence. After reaching  $K$ , and obtaining a judicial ruling in his favor as to sufficiency of evidence, he is now free from his duty of producing evidence to the judge, and has only his risk of non-persuasion of the jury. But he may

<sup>8</sup> 1906, *Woodward v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 145 Fed. 577, 580, C. C. A.; 1904, *Olmstead v. Oregon S. L. R. Co.*, 27 Utah 515, 76 Pac. 557; 1895, *Menomenie R. S. & D. Co. v. R. Co.*, 91 Wis. 447, 65 N. W. 176; the opinion particularly distinguishes previous cases in which the defendant had merely removed the presumption against him by evidence

sufficient to go to the jury, but had not raised a counter-presumption requiring a ruling of the judge in his favor.

The best example of this application of the theory is found in the able opinion of Jaggard, J., in *Continental Ins. Co. v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 97 Minn. 467, 107 N. W. 548 (1906).



be able to reach with his evidence the point *P*, and invoke again the control of the judge, thus shifting to the opponent the duty of producing evidence. This may be done either by some general rule of presumption that is applicable, or by a specific ruling of the judge upon the mass of evidence adduced. If the duty is thus created for the opponent, he starts from point *A'* to sustain it. Until he has by some evidence reached point *K'*, he is liable to a judicial ruling defeating him on that issue. If he can reach point *K'*, the duty and liability of satisfying the judge disappears, and he is in the field of the jury again. Here, however, the risk of non-persuasion of the jury is still, as before, upon the proponent for that issue; but neither party has any duty to satisfy the judge. Further, however, the opponent may succeed in reaching point *P'*, at which the judge, either by a general rule of counter-presumption or by a specific ruling on the mass of evidence, will order a verdict for the opponent, unless the proponent comes forward with more evidence. Thus the proponent again has the liability to produce some evidence, and must again attain point *K*, in order to come into the field of the jury once more. The process, however, seldom reaches these advanced stages. — If the parties cease all production of evidence while the case is between points *K* and *P* or *K'* and *P'*, *i. e.* when the risk of non-persuasion of the jury comes to be the only and final stage, there are rules for the jury's guidance, namely, the rules for preponderance of evidence and reasonable doubt (*post*, §§ 2497, 2498).

The important practical distinction between these two senses of "burden of proof" is this: The *risk of non-persuasion* operates when the case has come *into the hands of the jury*, while the *duty of producing evidence* implies a liability to a *ruling by the judge* disposing of the issue without leaving the question open to the jury's deliberations.

§ 2488. **Same: Tests for ascertaining this Burden.** As to the tests for determining this second burden of proof, it has already been pointed out that (*a*) for the one burden (the risk of non-persuasion of the jury) the substantive law and the pleadings, primarily, serve to do this, and, subsidiarily, a rule of practice, within the stage of a single pleading, may further apportion the burden; but this apportionment depends ultimately on broad considerations of policy, and, for individual instances, there is nothing to do but ascertain the rule, if any, that has been judicially determined for that particular class of cases. (*b*) For the other burden (the duty of going forward with evidence to satisfy the judge) there is always, at the outset, such a duty for the party having the first burden, or risk of non-persuasion, until by some rule of law (either by a specific ruling of the judge upon the particular evidence, or by the aid of an appropriate presumption, or by matter judicially noticed) this line is passed. Then comes the stage in which there is no such duty of law for either party (although, if the proponent has invoked some presumption, this stage is immediately passed over). Then, either by a ruling on the general mass of evidence, or by the aid of some applicable presumption,



the duty of law arises anew for the opponent. Finally, it may supposably, by similar modes, be later re-created for the proponent.

There is therefore no one test, of any real significance, for determining the incidence of this duty; at the outset the test is furnished by ascertaining who has the burden of proof, in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury, under the pleadings or other rules declaring what 'facta probanda' are the ultimate facts of each party's case; a little later, the test is whether the proponent has by a ruling of the judge (based on the sufficiency of the evidence, or a presumption, or a fact judicially noticed) fulfilled this duty; later on, it will be whether the proponent, by a ruling of the judge upon a presumption or the evidence as a whole, has created a duty for the opponent; and still later, whether, for the purposes of the judge's ruling, the opponent has satisfied this duty.

It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that "the test ought in strict accuracy to be expressed thus, namely: which party would be successful if no evidence at all, or no more evidence (as the case may be), were given?" But it is obvious that this is not a test, in any sense of being a useful mode for ascertaining the unknown from the known; it is simply defining and re-stating in other words the effect of this duty of producing evidence; it says "the burden of proof, in this sense, means that the party liable to it will lose as a matter of judicial ruling if no evidence or no more evidence is given by him"; and this does not solve the main problem of determining in a given case which is the party thus liable to these consequences.

§ 2489. **Shifting the Burden of Proof.** (a) The *first burden* above described — the risk of non-persuasion of the jury — *never shifts*, since no fixed rule of law can be said to shift. The law of pleading, or, within the stage of a given pleading, some further rule of practice, fixes beforehand the issuable facts respectively apportioned to the case of each party; each party may know beforehand, from these rules, what facts will be a part of his case, so far as concerns the ultimate risk of non-persuasion. He will know from these rules that such facts, whenever the time comes, will be his to prove, and not the other party's; and that they will not be sometimes his and sometimes the other's, or possibly his and possibly the other's. The other party and himself will of course have their turns in proving their respective 'facta probanda' (though under a strict system of pleading these turns of proof will be more clearly fixed before trial, and may occur at different stages and not the same stage of the cause); and the putting-in of evidence may therefore "shift" in the sense that each will take his turn in proving the respective propositions apportioned to him. But the burden does not "shift" in any real sense; for each may once for all ascertain beforehand from rules of law the 'facta probanda' apportioned to him, and this apportion-

§ 2488. <sup>1</sup> 1849, Best, Evidence! § 268; would be defeated, if no evidence were offered  
Ky. C. C. P. 1895, § 526; Oh. Gen. Code on either side, first must produce his evi-  
Ann. 1921, § 11447, par. 3 ("The party who dence").



ment will always remain as thus fixed, to whatever stage the cause may progress.

(b) The *second kind of burden*, however — the duty of producing evidence to satisfy the judge, — *does have* this characteristic referred to as a “*shifting*.” It is the same kind of duty for both parties, but it may rest (within the same stage of pleading and upon the same issue and during one burden of the first sort) at one time upon one party and at another time upon the other. Moreover, neither party can ascertain absolutely beforehand at what time it will come upon him<sup>1</sup> or cease to be upon him, or by what evidence it will be removed or created, — except so far as a presumption has by a rule of law been laid down as determining the effect attached to certain facts. Moreover, in a distinctive sense, this kind of burden “shifts” and the other does not, in that during the unchanged prevalence of the first kind of burden for one party, the second kind may be shared in turn by one and the other, though the first — the risk of non-persuasion of the jury, should the case be left in their hands — has not come to an end:<sup>2</sup>

1920, WALKER, J., in *Page v. Camp Mfg. Co.*, 180 N. C. 330, 104 S. E. 667 (negligence in setting fire): “Instead of charging the jury that when plaintiff made out a ‘prima facie’ case, it was incumbent upon defendant to go forward with its evidence or take the risk of an adverse verdict, the [trial] Court placed the burden upon the defendant to satisfy the jury by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not negligent. This was stating the principle of law much too strongly, and no doubt may have caused the jury to miscarry in their verdict upon the facts. We have repeatedly stated the true rule as formulated by this and other courts. . . . The result of all the decisions upon the question is that the plaintiff’s ‘prima facie’ showing merely carries the case to the jury, and upon it alone they *may* decide for him; but they are not compelled to do so, and whether there is evidence on both sides, or only on the plaintiff’s, the latter has the burden of proving negligence. . . . The burden to prove his case is *always* on the plaintiff, whether the defendant introduces evidence or not. Where we have said, ‘It is the duty of the defendant to go forward with his proof,’ it was only meant in the sense that, if he expects to win, it is his duty to do so or take the risk of an adverse verdict, and not that any burden of proof rested upon him. He pleads no affirmative defense but the general issue, and this puts the burden throughout the case on the plaintiff, who must recover, if at all, by establishing his case by the greater weight of evidence.”

§ 2490. **Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.** The whole situation is complicated, quite apart from any ambiguity of terms, by the operation of presumptions upon specific fragments of the issue under a single pleading, in combination with the established practice of leaving to the jury for a general verdict the whole of the issues under a pleading. For example, suppose that the whole of the plaintiff’s case and the whole proposition as to which he has

§ 2489. <sup>1</sup> Except that it comes first upon the proponent having the burden of proof in the former sense.

<sup>2</sup> The following opinion explains the distinction: 1920, *Jordan v. Jordan Co.*, 94 Conn. 384, 109 Atl. 519 (director’s dealings with the corporation; careful opinion by Gager,

J.); 1884, *Zollars, J., in Carver v. Carver*, 97 Ind. 497, 510; 1909, *Wylie v. Marinofsky*, 201 Mass. 583, 88 N. E. 448 (in replevin, the first burden is on plaintiff throughout); 1909, *Ginn v. Dolan*, 81 Ohio 121, 90 N. E. 141 (notes given for valuable consideration).



the burden of proof in the first sense and the whole of the issue under the pleadings is that A is dead without heirs; suppose that the plaintiff has offered testimony that A has been for seven years absent from home and unheard from, and that there is also testimony in contradiction of these facts from the defendant and also testimony from both sides as to the existence of heirs. Here it is obvious that the case is not in the hands of the judge to order a verdict for the plaintiff, first, because the death of the plaintiff, assuming the presumption from absence to determine this, is not the only proposition essential to the plaintiff's case, and, secondly, because he cannot pass upon the truth of the plaintiff's contradicted testimony as to absence and therefore it cannot then be known whether the fact exists on which the presumption operates; and thus the case is still in appearance in the hands of the jury. Nevertheless, the matter is still in the hands of the judge (in theory of law, at least) as much as it ever was; that is to say, the presumption or rule of law still operates, so that the fact of absence for seven years unheard from is to be taken, by a rule of law independent of the jury's belief, as equivalent to death, in the absence of any explanatory facts to the contrary from the defendant. This rule of law is still applied, notwithstanding the additional elements in the case; for the judge will instruct the jury that if they find the fact of absence for seven years unheard from, and find no explanatory facts to account for it, then *by a rule of law they are to take for true the fact of death*, and are to reckon upon it accordingly in making up their verdict upon the whole issue.<sup>1</sup> The situation here is even simpler than it is in perhaps the majority of issues in litigation; so that the theoretical effect of presumptions as legal rulings affecting the duty of producing evidence tends to be lost sight of, in that the issue does go to the jury and the case of the opponent of the presumption is apparently not brought to an end by a ruling of the judge. Nevertheless, in theory this legal effect is merely postponed, and will have due place if the jury understands the instructions and does its duty.

§ 2491. **Same: Presumptions of Law and of Fact.** The distinction between presumptions "of law" and presumptions "of fact" is in truth the difference between things that are in reality presumptions (in the sense explained above) and things that are not presumptions at all. A presumption, as already noticed, is in its characteristic feature a rule of law laid down by the judge, and attaching to one evidentiary fact certain procedural consequences

§ 2490. <sup>1</sup> 1903, Walker, J., in *Cogdell v. R. Co.*, 132 N. C. 852, 44 S. E. 618: "The Court was requested to charge that there was a presumption that the deceased had exercised care, which the Court refused to give, but charged the jury that there was an inference that due care was exercised. The presumption has a technical force or weight, and the jury, in the absence of sufficient proof to overcome it, should find according to the presumption; but, in the case of a mere inference, there is no

technical force attached to it. The jury, in the case of an inference, are at liberty to find the ultimate fact one way or the other as they may be impressed by the testimony. In the one case the law draws a conclusion from the state of the pleadings and evidence, and in the other case the jury draw it. An inference is nothing more than a permissible deduction from the evidence, while a presumption is compulsory and cannot be disregarded by the jury."



as to the duty of production of other evidence by the opponent. It is based, in policy, upon the probative strength, as a matter of reasoning and inference, of the evidentiary fact; but the presumption is not the fact itself, nor the inference itself, but the legal consequence attached to it. But, the legal consequence being removed, the inference, as a matter of reasoning, may still remain; and a "presumption of fact," in the loose sense, is merely an improper term for the rational potency, or probative value, of the evidentiary fact, regarded as not having this necessary legal consequence. "They are, in truth, but mere arguments," and "depend upon their own natural force and efficacy in generating belief or conviction in the mind."<sup>1</sup> They have no significance so far as affects the duty of one or the other party to produce evidence, because there is no rule of law attached to them, and the jury may give to them whatever force or weight it thinks best, — just as it may to other evidence. There may be a preliminary question whether the evidence is relevant and admissible as having any probative value at all; but, once it is admitted, the probative strength of the evidence is for the jury to consider. So long as the law attaches no legal consequences in the way of a duty upon the opponent to come forward with contrary evidence, there is no propriety in applying the term "presumption" to such facts, however great their probative significance. The employment here of the term "presumption" is due simply to historical usage, by which "presumption" was originally a term equivalent, in one sense, to "inference";<sup>2</sup> and the distinction between presumptions of fact and of law was a mere borrowing of misapplied Continental terms.<sup>3</sup> There is in truth but one kind of presumption; and the term "presumption of fact" should be discarded as useless and confusing.

Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that the peculiar effect of a presumption "of law" (that is, the real presumption) is merely to invoke a rule

§ 2491. <sup>1</sup> Greenleaf, Evidence, § 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, §§ 25, 38; compare the passage from Coke, cited *ante*, § 2487, n. 4; so Abbott, C. J., as late as 1820, in *R. v. Burdett*, 4 B. & Ald. 161: "A presumption of any fact is properly an inferring of that fact from other facts that are known; it is an act of reasoning." Compare Professor Thayer's account (p. 317ff.) of the progress in various instances from the mere suggestion of such inferences to the creation of rules of law attached to them. The following cases show the word in the correct sense: 1810, *Davis v. Curry*, 2 Bibb Ky. 238 ("Two questions are presented by this case; first, whether color and possession afford such a presumption of slavery as to throw the burthen of proof upon the person claiming right to freedom"); 1913, *Morris v. Minneapolis St. P. & S. S. M. R. Co.*, 25 N. D. 136, 141 N. W. 204.

<sup>3</sup> See Thayer, *ubi supra*, p. 343; 1909, *John Hancock Ice Co. v. Perkiomen R. Co.*, 224 Pa. 74, 73 Atl. 194 (shifting the burden in cases of fire; theory examined).

The following Code passages represent the imperfections of transitional theory as crystallized into the Codes: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1958 ("An inference is a deduction which the reason of the jury makes from the facts proved, without an express direction of law to that effect"); § 1959 ("A presumption is a deduction which the law expressly directs to be made from particular facts"); § 1961 ("A presumption (unless declared by law to be conclusive) may be controverted by other evidence, direct or indirect; but unless so controverted the jury are bound to find according to the presumption"); § 1962 ("The following presumptions, and no others, are deemed conclusive: . . ."); § 1963 ("All other presumptions are satisfactory, if uncontradicted. They are denominated disputable presumptions, and may be controverted by other evidence. The following are of that kind: . . ."); *N. D. Comp. L.* 1913, § 7934 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1961); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, §§ 1468, 1469 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* §§ 1961, 1962).



of law compelling the jury to reach the conclusion *in the absence of evidence to the contrary* from the opponent. If the opponent *does* offer evidence to the contrary (sufficient to satisfy the judge's requirement of some evidence), the presumption disappears as a rule of law, and the case is in the jury's hands free from any rule:

1771, *R. v. Almon*, 5 Burr. 2686, 2688 (purchase of a libel imprinted with the defendant's name and bought in his shop); Lord MANSFIELD: "This being 'prima facie' evidence of a publication by the master himself, it stands good till answered by him; and if not answered at all, it thereby becomes conclusive so far as to be sufficient to convict him. . . . [It] must stand *till* contradicted or explained or exculpated by some other evidence, and if not contradicted, explained, or exculpated, would be in point of evidence sufficient or tantamount to conclusive. . . . If it be sufficient in point of law, and the jurymen believe it [*i. e.* the fact of purchase], he is bound in conscience to give his verdict according to it"; Mr. Justice ASTON "laid down the same maxim as being fully and clearly established, 'that 'prima facie' evidence (if believed) is binding *till* contrary evidence be produced.'"

1846, *Smith v. Asbell*, 2 Strobl. 141, 147: "Presumptions . . . are artificial rules which have a legal effect independent of any belief, and stand in the place of proof *until the contrary be shown*."

1906, LAMM, J., in *Mockowik v. Kansas City, St. J. & C. B. R. Co.*, 196 Mo. 550, 571, 94 S. W. 256: "It would seem from his own testimony that this unfortunate plaintiff foolishly shook dice with danger and lost on the throw; for in his testimony at Savannah he says he made a 'run' to get across, and in his testimony at the last trial he said he 'thought he could make it.' Learned counsel somewhat rely upon the proposition that plaintiff had the right to presume that defendant was obeying the ordinances and governed his actions accordingly. . . . But will the law indulge presumptions where all parties to the actual occurrence are alive and go upon the stand and the facts are fully disclosed? If plaintiff knew of the ordinances and relied on the fact that defendant was obeying their provisions and acted on that reliance, could he not have said so? Under such conditions, reliance would seem to be a fact susceptible of proof as are other facts, and should be proved by the best evidence of which the case would admit. He of all men knew what the facts were; and, having declined to speak, may he invoke the aid of friendly presumptions? 'Presumptions,' as happily stated by a scholarly counselor, 'ore tenus,' in another case, 'may be looked on as the bats of the law, flitting in the twilight but disappearing in the sunshine of actual facts.' That presumptions have no place in the presence of the actual facts disclosed to the jury, or where plaintiff should have known the facts had he exercised ordinary care, is held in many cases."<sup>4</sup>

It is therefore a fallacy to attribute (as do some judges) an artificial probative force to a presumption, increasing for the jury the weight of the facts, even when the opponent has come forward with *some* evidence to the contrary.<sup>5</sup> For example, if death be the issue, and the fact of absence for seven

<sup>4</sup> If similes are in order, why not say that presumptions are the pitcher's "fair balls," which, unless the batsman hits them, become "strikes," and may finally put the batsman out?

<sup>5</sup> 1909, *Reclamation Dist. No. 70 v. Sherman*, 11 Cal. App. 399, 105 Pac. 277, 285; 1899, *Sturdevant's Appeal*, 71 Conn. 392, 42 Atl. 70 (where such language to the jury is justified as necessary to explain the case to a jury); 1900, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 187 Ill. 86,

58 N. E. 237; 1909, *Clifford v. Taylor*, 204 Mass. 358, 90 N. E. 862; 1920, *Hansen v. Oregon-Wash. R. & N. Co.*, 97 Or. 190, 191 Pac. 655 (reaching this conclusion under Lord's Or. Laws, §§ 793, 797, making presumptions a species of evidence); 1907, *Sheldon v. Wright*, 80 Vt. 298, 67 Atl. 807.

In the *Coffin Case*, in the Federal Supreme Court (*post*, § 2511) this fallacy played an important part.

A later opinion in *Connecticut* abandons



years unheard from be conceded, but the opponent offers evidence that the absentee, before leaving, proclaimed his intention of staying away for ten years, until a prosecution for crime was barred, this satisfies the opponent's duty of producing evidence, removing the rule of law; and when the case goes to the jury, they are at liberty to give any probative force they think fit to the fact of absence for seven years unheard from. It is not weighed down with any artificial additional probative effect; they may estimate it for just such intrinsic effect as it seems to have under all the circumstances.<sup>6</sup> This much is a plain consequence in our mode of jury trial; and the fallacy has arisen through attempting to follow the ancient Continental phraseology, which grew up under the quantitative system of evidence (*ante*, § 2032) fixing artificial rules for the judge's measurement of proof.

§ 2492. **Same: Conclusive Presumptions.** In strictness, there cannot be such a thing as a "conclusive presumption." Wherever from one fact another is conclusively presumed, in the sense that the opponent is absolutely precluded from showing by any evidence that the second fact does not exist,

this position: 1909, *Bergan v. Central Vermont R. Co.*, 82 Conn. 574, 74 Atl. 937 ("Presumptions like that appealed to have no probative force; they perform an office in the absence of evidence").

In *Fortier v. Stone*, 79 N. H. 235, 107 Atl. 342 (1919), Parsons, C. J., in a carefully reasoned opinion, refers to the "general abandonment of the practice of shifting the burden of proof [*i. e.* risk of non-persuasion] by legal presumption" in New Hampshire decisions.

See an interesting note, upholding a different and median view, in the *Columbia Law Review* (1908), VIII, 127.

<sup>6</sup> *Alabama*: 1901, *Sharpe, J.*, in *Alabama G. S. R. Co. v. Taylor*, 129 Ala. 238, 29 So. 673 (repudiating an instruction that the jury must find negligence if the fire was set by the defendant's locomotive: "In actions of this kind the communication of fire to the property of another by an engine of a defendant railroad company is, when nothing appears to the contrary, presumed to have been the result of negligence on the part of the defendant. The presumption so arising is not a conclusive one, so as to preclude the defendant to rebut it; nor does it take the place of actual evidence of negligence further than to cast upon the defendant the burden of showing by evidence that at the time of the occurrence it was in the exercise of ordinary care in respect to the construction, equipment, and management of the engine. When, by proof, it has so repelled the presumption, the burden shifts to the plaintiff, who must go forward anew with actual evidence to disprove that of the defendant, either directly or inferentially, by showing that a carefully constructed, equipped, and managed engine would not have set fire to the property. When there is no evidence of negligence other than that supplied by the presumption referred to,

and the presumption has been, to its full extent, repelled by undiscredited evidence, the jury should find for the defendant, if they believe the evidence, and the Court should so charge, if requested in writing to do so"); *Connecticut*: 1904, *Vincent v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n*, 77 Conn. 281, 58 Atl. 963, per Prentice, J.; *Illinois*: 1878, *Baker, J.*, in *Graves v. Colwell*, 90 Ill. 612, 616 ("[When contrary evidence has been introduced and the conflicting evidence is being weighed by the jury], in this latter process the presumption of law loses all that it had of mere arbitrary power, and must necessarily be regarded only from the standpoint of logic and reason, and valued and given effect only as it has evidential character"); *Indiana*: 1907, *Cleveland, C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Hadley*, 170 Ind. 204, 82 N. E. 1025; 1919, *Moore v. Ryan*, 188 Ind. 345, 123 N. E. 642 (drainage assessment; the commissioners' report held to be 'prima facie' evidence only so far as "to compel the remonstrants to go forward with evidence," then "the presumption falls, and the case is then tried as if no such presumption ever existed"); *Michigan*: 1920, *Fellows, J.*, in *Cochrane's Estate*, 211 Mich. 370, 178 N. W. 673; *Vermont*: 1916, *Rutland R. L. & P. Co. v. Williams*, 90 Vt. 276, 98 Atl. 85 (careful opinion by Taylor, J.); *Washington*: 1911, *Scarpelli v. Washington W. P. Co.*, 63 Wash. 18, 114 Pac. 870.

In the following case, oddly enough, the opinion commits just the opposite fallacy, *i. e.* holding that when the presumptive circumstance appears, and opposing evidence is offered, even the presumptive circumstance itself cannot go to the jury, because "the presumption itself is not evidence": 1920, *Stack v. General Baking Co.*, 283 Mo. 396, 223 S. W. 89 (cited more fully *post*, § 2529).



the rule really provides that, where the first fact is shown to exist, the second fact's existence is wholly immaterial for the purpose of the proponent's case;<sup>1</sup> and to provide this is to make a rule of substantive law, and not a rule apportioning the burden of persuading as to certain propositions or varying the duty of coming forward with evidence.<sup>2</sup> The term has no place in the principles of Evidence (although the history of a "conclusive presumption" often includes a genuine presumption as its earlier stage<sup>3</sup>), and should be discarded.

✓ § 2493. **Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter-Presumptions.** Presumptions are sometimes spoken of as "*conflicting*." But, in the sense above examined, presumptions do not conflict. The evidentiary facts, free from any rule of law as to the duty of producing evidence, may tend to opposite inferences, which may be said to conflict. But the rule of law ✓ which prescribes this duty of production either is or is not at a given time upon a given party. If it is, and he removes it by producing contrary evidence, ✓ then that presumption, as a rule of law, is satisfied and disappears; he may then by his evidence succeed in creating another presumption which now puts the same duty upon the other party, who may in turn be able to ✓ dispose of it satisfactorily. But the same duty cannot at the same time exist for both parties, and thus in strictness the presumptions raising the duty cannot conflict. There may be successive shiftings of the duty, by — means of presumptions successively invoked by each; but it is not the one presumption that overturns the other, for the mere introduction of sufficient evidence would have the same effect in stopping the operation of the presumption as a rule of law.

✓ This shifting of the duty of production of evidence, by reason of the successive invocation of different presumptions, may create a complicated situation difficult to work out; but it can more properly be spoken of as a case of successive presumptions than of conflicting presumptions; and the ultimate key to the situation is very often found by ascertaining the incidence of the burden of proof in the other sense, i. e. the ultimate risk of non-persuasion.<sup>1</sup>

A *counter-presumption* is merely that presumption which is available for the opponent when he has not only fulfilled the duty of producing evidence against a presumption, but has gone further and evidenced additional facts which create a new presumption in his favor, and thus restored to the

§ 2492. <sup>1</sup> 1870, Willard, A. J., in *State v. Platt*, 2 S. C. 150, 154 ("Where several independent acts are required to be performed in order to accomplish a given result, to say that proof of the performance of one of them shall be admitted as conclusive proof of the performance of the other, is to say in effect that one alone is really requisite").

<sup>2</sup> The various uses of the term have been

examined in detail *ante*, §§ 1345-1354 (conclusive testimonial preferences).

<sup>3</sup> *Post*, § 2522.

§ 2493. <sup>1</sup> Compare the presumption of innocence (*post*, § 2511) and the presumption of marriage (*post*, §§ 2505, 2506), which furnish the chief field for "conflicting" presumptions. Some good instances of these situations are worked out by Professor Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 343-350.



original proponent the duty of producing evidence. This situation is of rare occurrence.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2494. **Same: Prima Facie Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; Scintilla of Evidence.** The term "*prima facie* evidence" or "*prima facie* case" is used in two senses, and it is often difficult to detect which of these is intended in the passage in hand:

(1) In discussing presumptions, the term "*prima facie*" is sometimes used as *equivalent to the notion of a presumption*, even in the strict sense of a ruling of the judge putting upon the ~~opponent~~ the duty of producing evidence.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the term is thus applied to the stage of the case already noted in a preceding section (*ante*, § 2487) as (c') and (c''), namely, where the proponent, having the burden of proving the issue (*i. e.* the risk of non-persuasion of the jury), has not only removed by sufficient evidence the duty of producing evidence to get past the judge to the jury, but has gone further, and, either by means of a presumption or by a general mass of strong evidence, has entitled himself to a ruling that the opponent should fail if he does nothing more in the way of producing evidence. Though this usage for the term is less usual, and being ambiguous, is objectionable, yet it serves to subsume under one name the similar legal effects (c') and (c'') produced by a specific presumption or by a ruling on the mass of evidence in the particular case.

(2) But the phrase "*prima facie*" is also, and clearly enough, found used in a very different sense, representing the stage already noted (*ante*, § 2487) as (a), namely, where the proponent, ~~having the first duty of producing some evidence in order to pass the judge to the jury, has fulfilled that duty, satisfied the judge, and may properly claim that the jury be allowed to consider his case.~~ This *sufficiency of evidence to go to the jury* (the significance of which is that the proponent is no longer liable to a nonsuit or to the direction of the verdict for the opponent) is also often referred to as a '*prima facie*' case.<sup>2</sup> In this sense the phrase is used to emphasize the insufficiency of

<sup>2</sup> Compare the example cited *ante*, § 2487, note 8; 1909, *State v. Forbes*, 75 N. H. 306, 73 Atl. 929 (example of counter-evidence not sufficing to take the case from the jury).

§ 2494. <sup>1</sup> *E. g.* 1883, *Bowen*, L. J., in *Abrath v. R. Co.*, L. R. 11 Q. B. D. 440, 455, 32 W. R. 50, 53 ("If he [the plaintiff] makes a '*prima facie*' case, and nothing is done by the other side to answer it, the defendant fails"); 1810, *Mansfield*, C. J., in *Banbury Peerage Case*, 1 Sim. & St. 153 ("In every case in which there is '*prima facie*' evidence of any right existing in any person, the '*onus probandi*' is always upon the person or party calling such right in question"); 1849, *Best*, Evidence, § 273 ("The burden of proof is shifted . . . by every species of evidence strong enough to establish a '*prima facie*' case against a party"); 1913, *Lehigh Valley R. Co. v. Clark*, 3d C. C. A., 207 Fed. 717 (effect of St. 1887,

Feb. 1, c. 104, § 14, making the Interstate Commerce Commission's findings "'*prima facie*' evidence," considered); 1895, *State v. Sattley*, 131 Mo. 464, 33 S. W. 41 ("the '*prima facie*' case is sufficient and conclusive, unless rebutted by the other evidence in the case"); 1907, *Polhemus v. Prudential R. Co.*, 74 N. J. L. 570, 67 Atl. 303 ("the '*prima facie*' evidence became decisive of the issue").

<sup>2</sup> For example: *U. S.* 1832, *Story*, J., in *Crane v. Morris*, 6 Pet. 598, 621 (referring to evidence of a deed: "Whenever evidence is offered to the jury which is in its nature '*prima facie*' proof, . . . whatever just influence it may derive from that character, the jury have a right to give it; . . . the law has submitted it to them to decide for themselves"). In the following Irish case, the obscurity of the legal phrase was brought out by a question from an intelligent juror: *Eng.* 1848, *R. v. O'Doherty*,



evidence which is indeed admissible, so far as the various rules of Evidence might have excluded it, but yet, being all the evidence offered by the proponent, is not enough in quantity to be worth submitting to the jury:<sup>3</sup>

1871, *DOE, J.*, in *Gray v. Jackson*, 51 N. H. 9 (passing upon the question of a common carrier's implied contract to carry goods beyond his route): "The question whether by an implied contract a carrier undertook to carry goods beyond his route, is a question of fact to be determined upon the evidence by the tribunal authorized to try the questions of fact involved in the issue. How can so plain a question of fact be changed into a question of law? In *Muschamp v. L. & P. J. R. Co.*, 8 M. & W. 421 (decided in 1841, and everywhere accepted as the leading case on this subject), it was held to be a question of fact. A parcel directed to a place beyond the defendants' route, and carried by them through their route and forwarded, was afterwards lost. Baron ROLFE 'stated to the jury, in summing up, that where a common carrier takes into his care a parcel directed to a particular place, and does not by positive agreement limit his responsibility to a part only of the distance, *that is "prima facie" evidence of an undertaking on his part to carry the parcel to the place to which it is directed: and that the same rule applied, although that place were beyond the limits within which he in general professed to carry on his trade of a carrier.*' The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, and the defendants moved 'for a new trial, on the ground of misdirection.' In the Exchequer, [it was held that . . . ] there was no misdirection in this case, and that the jury might fairly infer the contract was such as was stated by the learned judge. . . .

"When Baron ROLFE told the jury that the evidence in the case was 'prima facie' evidence of such an undertaking, by these words he held the undertaking to be a matter of fact to be proved by evidence. In saying that the evidence was 'prima facie' evidence of the fact, he merely expressed his opinion of the weight of the evidence, in accordance with the general custom of English judges. In their practice, such opinions are given in various forms. Where we should say, 'There is *some evidence* to be submitted to the jury,' English judges often say, 'The evidence *proves*,' or 'The *weight* of the evidence is,' or 'From the evidence the inference is,' or 'The presumption is,' or 'This is "*prima facie*" evidence,' or 'This evidence shifts the burden of proof,' or 'This evidence is sufficient to prove the fact unless it is rebutted by the other party.' And when exception is taken to such statements, the point intended to be raised by counsel and decided by the Court is, not whether the judge *may rightfully give* the jury his opinion of the evidence in such forms (that is taken for granted), but whether there is *any* evidence for him to give his opinion of, and for the jury to give their verdict upon. . . . The opinions of English judges on the weight of the evidence being constantly given in such expressions as 'From this evidence the inference

6 State Tr. N. S. 831, 873 (*Pennefather, B.*, charging the jury, in a prosecution for publishing an article with seditious intent: "The publishing them is certainly 'prima facie' evidence against him, as being the registered proprietor [of the newspaper]"; a juror: "There is a difference of opinion among the jurors; some hold that, from your lordship stating there being 'prima facie' evidence of the prisoner's guilt, we should at once go to find him guilty; others receiving the phrase thus, that your lordship did not mean to convey that it was sufficient [to require that finding]"; *Pennefather, B.*: "I did not mean, gentlemen, to direct you or tell you that in point of law, because he was the publisher and proprietor of the paper, he therefore necessarily knew the contents. I did not mean to

convey that. But I told you that it was evidence that he did know the contents, and that you were to form your judgment upon the whole of the case, reading the documents and the evidence").

Here is one of the earliest instances: 1637, *Hampden's Trial*, 3 How. St. Tr. 825, 972 (*Holborne*, arguing: "This 'prima facie' hath a fair shew, and may go far; yet I hope to give it a full reply").

<sup>3</sup> As in *Benoit v. R. Co.*, 154 N. Y. 223, 48 N. E. 524 (1897), where it was ruled, the plaintiff having to show the defendant's 'scienter' of a horse's unmanageable disposition, that a single instance of its having run away, though admissible evidence, was not sufficient evidence to go to the jury.



(or presumption) is,' or 'This is "prima facie" evidence,' or other equivalent phrases, these expressions, having been used for ages in the trial of cases by jury, became the common judicial language used in delivering judgment on motions for new trials as well as in summing up to the jury. *Muschamp v. L. & P. J. R. Co.* is an instance of this practice. . . . But the decision in that case has often been misunderstood. It has been erroneously supposed that the opinions of ROLFE and ABINGER, on the 'prima facie' weight of the evidence, were laid down as law. Through that error, the decision has been taken as the establishment of a peculiar legal principle fixing the liability of common carriers beyond their own routes, although it was held, with remarkable clearness and emphasis, that the whole matter was a question of fact for the jury. By such a mistake, and others of a similar kind, a plain question of fact may inadvertently be changed into a question of law. The mistake in regard to the doctrine of *Muschamp's* case, on the point of 'prima facie' evidence, was promoted, and another mistake was disseminated, by the reporters who made the head note of the case, by adding to a summary of the evidence this unfortunate statement: 'HELD, that the Lancaster and Preston Railway Company *were liable* for the loss.' If they had said 'HELD, by the jury, that the company *were liable*. HELD, by the Court, that *there was evidence competent to be submitted to the jury*,' they would have made a correct and useful statement of the case. In *Angell on Carriers*, § 95, it is said that in *Muschamp's* case 'it was held that the company were liable for the loss,' from which the reader would understand that it was so held by the Court. It has been by no means an unusual thing for fact to be turned into law by the English practice of the judge giving the jury his opinion of the evidence. . . .

"The simple solution of all the difficulties that have arisen on this subject is, *not* to hold fact to be law, and *not* to mistake the opinions of judges on the weight of evidence for opinions on principles of law."

The difference between these two senses of the term is practically of the greatest consequence; for, in the latter sense, it means merely that the proponent is safe in having relieved himself of his duty of going forward, while in the former sense it signifies that he has further succeeded in creating it anew for his opponent.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the chief occasions of its use are therefore of an unfortunate obscurity in the significance of the ruling, as in the proof of execution of attested documents,<sup>5</sup> or of the identity of the person signing them,<sup>6</sup> or of the authentication of ancient writings,<sup>7</sup> where it is often difficult to determine whether the effect of the ruling is merely that the document may be read or amounts to directing the jury to take it for genuine.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The following opinions notice the distinction: *People v. Calpestri*, — Cal. App. 1054 (presumption or inference from possession of a forged instrument; examined); 1876, *Cushing, C. J.*, *Hopkins*, 57 N. H. 334, 359; 1911, *Brock v. Metropolitan L. Ins. Co.*, 156 N. C. 112, 72 S. E. 213; 1913, *State v. Wilkerson*, 164 N. C. 431, 79 S. E. 888 (possession of liquor; opinion by Walker, J.).

<sup>5</sup> *Post*, § 2520.

<sup>6</sup> *Post*, § 2529.

<sup>7</sup> *Post*, § 2521.

<sup>8</sup> The following case has been greatly responsible for the confusion of usage; its language is of no service nowadays: 1820, *R.*

*v. Burdett*, 3 B. & Ald. 717-758 (arguments of counsel); 4 B. & Ald. 95-183 (opinions of the judges); *Best and Holroyd, JJ.*, use the term "presumptive evidence" as equivalent to "circumstantial evidence," and their ruling is merely that there was sufficient of it to go to the jury; *Bayley, J.*, held that "in order to warrant a presumption, a 'prima facie' case must at least be made out," meaning the same as above, but on the facts he thought that there was not here sufficient evidence, adding "if they did draw that presumption, they acted, not upon justifiable inference, but upon unwarrantable conjecture"; *Abbott, C. J.*, used the same meanings; "a presumption of any fact is, properly, an inferring of that fact



The question is thus presented, in determining this sufficiency of evidence to go to the jury, whether there are any detailed *tests to control or to guide the judge* in his ruling. The ruling will, in truth, depend entirely on the nature of the evidence offered in the case in hand; and it is seldom possible that a ruling can serve as a precedent. It has been ruled, for instance, that to show a 'scienter' of a horse's unmanageable disposition, a single instance of its having run away is, though admissible, not sufficient evidence for the jury;<sup>9</sup> mere identity of name has been thought both sufficient and insufficient evidence of identity of person;<sup>10</sup> but even these can hardly be taken as fixed precedents. There is no virtue in any form of words. There was an old phrase that a "mere scintilla of evidence" was sufficient;<sup>11</sup> but this has been abandoned by most Courts.<sup>12</sup> Other varieties of phrasing have sometimes been attempted.<sup>13</sup> In some Courts it is said that the test for the ruling is

from other facts that are known; it is an act of reasoning; . . . if the [jury's] conclusion is a reasonable inference from the premises, we ought not to disturb their verdict".

<sup>9</sup> 1897, *Benoit v. R. Co.*, 154 N. Y. 223, 48 N. E. 524. So also: 1899, *Creamer v. McIlvain*, 89 Md. 343, 43 Atl. 935 (like *Benoit v. R. Co.*); 1899, *Wiegand v. Refining Co.*, 189 Pa. 248, 42 Atl. 132 (one former kick by a mule, not sufficient evidence of viciousness, on the facts).

<sup>10</sup> *Post*, § 2529.

<sup>11</sup> The phrase is mentioned, to be repudiated, in the 1800s: 1857, *Toomey v. R. Co.*, 3 C. B. N. S. 146, 150; 1857, *Wheelton v. Hardisty*, 8 E. & B. 232, 262, 277; 1868, *Ryder v. Wombwell*, L. R. 4 Exch. 32; but it is difficult to find any prior time when it was ever a recognized test in England.

<sup>12</sup> CANADA: 1898, *James v. Crockett*, 22 N. Br. 540, 548.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1876, *Commissioners of Marion Co. v. Clark*, 94 U. S. 278, 284; 1897, *Taft, J., in Ewing v. Goode*, 78 Fed. 442 ("The preliminary question for the Court to settle in this case, therefore, is whether there is any evidence sufficient in law to sustain a verdict that defendant was unskillful or negligent, and that his want of skill or care caused injury. In the Courts of this and other States the rule is that if the party having the burden of proof offer a mere scintilla of evidence to support each necessary element of his case, however overwhelming the evidence to the contrary, the Court must submit the issue thus made to the jury, with the power to set aside the verdict, if found against the weight of the evidence. In the Federal Courts this is not the rule. According to their practice, if the party having the burden submits only a scintilla of evidence to sustain it, the Court, instead of going through the useless form of submitting the issue to the jury, and correcting error, if made, by setting aside the verdict, may in the first instance direct the jury to return a verdict for the defendant.

Hence our inquiry is: Does the case submitted show more than a scintilla of evidence tending to show want of skill or care by defendant, or injury caused thereby?"); 1903, *New York C. & H. R. Co. v. Difendaffer*, 62 C. C. A. 1, 125 Fed. 893 (*Marion County v. Clark* followed); *Hawaii*: 1915, *Holstein v. Benedict*, 22 Haw. 441; *Illinois*: 1887, *Bartelott v. International Bank*, 119 Ill. 259, 269, 9 N. E. 898; 1898, *Offutt v. Expos. Co.*, 175 Ill. 472, 51 N. E. 650 (scintilla rule disapproved; evidence "tending to prove" suffices; *Bartelott* case approved); *Kentucky*: 1914, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Johnson's Adm'x*, 161 Ky. 824, 171 S. W. 847, 852 (the "scintilla rule" of this State, defined); *New York*: 1899, *Laidlaw v. Sage*, 158 N. Y. 73, 52 N. E. 679; 1900, *Schoepflin v. Coffey*, 162 N. Y. 12, 56 N. E. 502; *North Carolina*: 1901, *Cogdell v. R. Co.*, 129 N. C. 398, 40 S. E. 202; 1905, *Campbell v. Everhart*, 139 N. C. 503, 52 S. E. 201; *Pennsylvania*: 1873, *Philadelphia & R. R. Co. v. Yeager*, 73 Pa. 121, 124; *Rhode Island*: 1904, *Hehir v. Rhode Island Co.*, 26 R. I. 30, 58 Atl. 246 (good opinion by Tillinghast, J.).

The opinion of Brannon, J., in *Ketterman v. R. Co.*, 48 W. Va. 606, 37 S. E. 683 (1900) is a valuable one, as is also the opinion of Powell, J., in *Georgia R. & E. Co. v. Harris*, 1 Ga. App. 714, 57 S. E. 1076 (1907).

<sup>13</sup> *Ark.* 1893, *Catlett v. R. Co.*, 34 Ark. 468, 21 S. W. 1062 ("evidence legal to warrant a verdict"); *Ind.* 1893, *M. R. Co. v. Dunn*, 138 Ind. 18, 27, 80 N. E. 702, 37 N. E. 546 ("evidence from which when undisputed" a finding would be justified); 1919, *Schulmeyer v. State*, 188 Ind. 463, 124 N. E. 490; *Md.* 1904, *Vogeler v. Devries*, 98 Md. 302, 56 Atl. 782; *N. H.* 1903, *Lamkin v. Johnson*, 72 N. H. 344, 56 Atl. 750; *Or.* *State v. Couper*, 32 Or. 212, 49 Pac. 959 (either "no competent evidence at all bearing upon the subject," or "so weak that a verdict against the defendant would necessarily be



the same as it would be on a motion after verdict to set aside the verdict as being against the overwhelming weight of evidence.<sup>14</sup> Even if this were so, it would not afford any more concrete and tangible guide. But it seems unsound,<sup>15</sup> on principle, to assert such an identity, for two reasons, — in the first place, because the mass of evidence in the two situations is very different (for after verdict the defendant's evidence has to be considered with the rest), and in the next place, because the setting aside of a verdict leads merely to a new trial, while the ruling of insufficiency leads usually to the direction of a verdict for the opponent (*post*, § 2495), and therefore a total quantity of the proponent's evidence which would justify the former might be more than would justify the latter.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the best statement of the question is this: "[The proposition] cannot merely be, Is there evidence? . . . The proposition seems to me to be this: Are there facts in evidence which if unanswered would justify men of ordinary reason and fairness in affirming the question which the plaintiff is bound to maintain?"<sup>17</sup>

attributable to passion, prejudice, or partiality"); *Tex.* 1898, *Joske v. Irvine*, 91 *Tex.* 574, 44 *S. W.* 1059 (must be more than to raise "a mere surmise or suspicion"); *W. Va.* 1900, *Ketterman v. R. Co.*, 48 *W. Va.* 606, 37 *S. E.* 683; *Wis.* 1906, *Chybowski v. Bucyrus Co.*, 127 *Wis.* 332, 106 *N. W.* 833.

<sup>14</sup> *ENGLAND*: 1874, Brett, J., in *Bridges v. R. Co.*, *L. R.* 7 *H. L.* 213.

*UNITED STATES: Federal*: 1887, *Northern Pa. R. Co. v. Bank*, 123 *U. S.* 727, 733, 8 *Sup.* 266; 1893, *Elliott v. R. Co.*, 150 *U. S.* 245, 246, 14 *Sup.* 85; 1892, *Monroe v. Ins. Co.*, 3 *C. C. A.* 280, 52 *Fed.* 777; 1893, *Colorado C. C. M. Co. v. Turek*, 4 *C. C. A.* 313, 54 *Fed.* 262; 1894, *Laclede F. B. M. Co. v. Hartford Co.*, 9 *C. C. A.* 1, 60 *Fed.* 351 (not merely if "some evidence"); 1896, *Mount Adams & E. P. I. R. Co. v. Lowery*, 20 *C. C. A.* 596, 74 *Fed.* 463 (containing a full survey of cases); *Indiana*: 1905, *Haughton v. Etna L. Ins. Co.*, 107 *Ind.* 32, 73 *N. E.* 592; 1905, *Westfall v. Wait*, 165 *Ind.* 353, 73 *N. E.* 1089; *Iowa*: 1894, *Fornes v. Wright*, 91 *Ia.* 392, 59 *N. W.* 51; *Maine*: 1893, *Market & F. N. Bank v. Sargent*, 85 *Me.* 349, 351, 27 *Atl.* 192; *New Jersey*: 1893, *Haines v. Trust Co.*, 56 *N. J. L.* 31, 27 *Atl.* 796; *Pennsylvania*: 1893, *H. Kindregan*, 155 *Pa.* 156, 160, 25 *Atl.* 192 (Luntilla rule; but treated as equivalent to the Federal rule); *South Carolina*: 1893, *Evans v. Chamberlain*, 40 *S. C.* 104, 106, 18 *S. E.* 213 ("any pertinent evidence"); *Vermont*: 1920, *Spaulding v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 94 *Vt.* 42, 109 *Atl.* 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Accord*: 1899, *Serles v. Serles*, 35 *Or.* 289, 57 *Pac.* 634 (citing cases); 1920, *Derrick v. Harwood Electric Co.*, 268 *Pa.* 136, 111 *Atl.* 48; 1897, *Wright v. Express Co.*, 80 *Fed.* 85. See a useful article in the *Western Reserve Law Journal* for October, 1898.

<sup>16</sup> 1862, *Chapman, J.*, in *Dennie v. Williams*, 5 *All. Mass.* 1, 5; 1871, *Brooks v. Somerville*, 106 *Mass.* 271, 275 (approving *Dennie v. Williams*).

<sup>17</sup> *ENGLAND*: 1874, Brett, J., in *Bridges v. R. Co.*, *L. R.* 7 *H. L.* 213.

*UNITED STATES: Federal*: 1906, *Woodward v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 145 *Fed.* 577, *C. C. A.*; *California*: 1905, *Morey's Estate*, 147 *Cal.* 495, 82 *Pac.* 57; *Connecticut*: 1912, *Donovan v. Connecticut Co.*, 86 *Conn.* 82, 84 *Atl.* 288; *Florida*: 1909, *Wilson v. Jernigan*, 57 *Fla.* 277, 49 *So.* 44 (careful opinion by Shackelford, J., approving Professor Salsbury's exposition and the passage from Wright); *Illinois*: 1903, *Pittsburg, St. Louis R. Co. v. Banfill*, 206 *Ill.* 358, 69 *N. E.* 499; *North Carolina*: 1904, *Craft v. Norfolk & S. R. Co.*, 136 *N. C.* 49, 48 *S. E.* 719; *West Virginia*: 1913, *Wilson v. Johnson*, 72 *W. Va.* 742, 79 *S. E.* 734; *Wisconsin*: 1911, *Kroger v. Cumberland F. P. Co.*, 145 *Wis.* 433, 130 *N. W.* 513 (careful opinions by Marshall, J., and Winslow, C. J., discussing the proper course and test where the appellate judges themselves differ in opinion).

Other examples of rulings are as follows: *Can.* 1900, *Granby v. Ménard*, 31 *Can. Sup.* 14; *U. S.* 1895, *Howard v. State*, 108 *Ala.* 571, 18 *So.* 813; 1891, *Ambler v. Whipple*, 139 *Ill.* 311, 322, 28 *N. E.* 841; 1902, *Kansas C. F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Perry*, 65 *Kan.* 792, 70 *Pac.* 870; 1897, *Fitzgerald v. R. Co.*, 154 *N. Y.* 263, 48 *N. E.* 514; 1897, *State v. Satterfield*, 121 *N. C.* 558, 28 *S. E.* 491.

Distinguish here the questions whether the evidence is sufficient under the present rule and whether it is sufficient under the rule of *conditional relevancy* (*ante*, § 1871); on this



§ 2495. **Same: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence.** It remains to ask, What shall be the form and effect of this ruling of the judge that the proponent's evidence is insufficient to go to the jury? It is commonly said that he "ought to withdraw the question from the jury, and direct a nonsuit or a verdict for the defendant if the onus is on the plaintiff, or direct a verdict for the plaintiff if the onus is on the defendant,"<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* decide against the proponent having the risk of non-persuasion on that particular issue, whether he be plaintiff or defendant. There are, however, three distinct forms of ruling, which raise different questions:

1. The *nonsuit*, which has several other applications, may be employed for the present purpose. Its marked feature is that it does not lead to a judgment against the proponent, and (in England) that the proponent's consent is necessary. But the local rules for nonsuit have been so widely varied by modern statutes and practice that generalizations are hardly possible as to its service for the present purpose.<sup>2</sup>

2. The *direction of a verdict* is the appropriate and most usual form of the ruling.<sup>3</sup> Two main questions here arise: (a) Is there any reason why an order directing a verdict for insufficiency of evidence may not be made *in favor of the opponent* (*i. e.* usually, the defendant)? (b) Is there any reason against making it *in favor of the proponent* (*i. e.* usually, the plaintiff)?

(a) It is almost universally conceded that the direction of a verdict for the opponent is in general a proper form of ruling. That much, and no less, is the very thing that is signified by this part of the judge's function in the trial.<sup>4</sup> In making the decision, however, the truth of the proponent's testi-

point, compare *Reed v. Clark*, 47 Cal. 194, 200 (1873). Distinguish also the test for a judge sitting as *chancellor with a jury*: *Fleming's Estate*, 265 Pa. 399, 108 265.

§ 2495. <sup>1</sup> 1878, Lord Blackburn, in *etc. R. Co. v. Slattery*, L. R. 3 App. Cas. 1156.

<sup>2</sup> The following opinions are useful for the orthodox theory: 1853, Willard, J., in *People v. Cook*, 8 N. Y. 67, 74; 1892, Magruder, C. J., in *Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v. Velie*, 140 Ill. 59, 29 N. E. 706. The following cases illustrate some of the considerations that may enter: 1898, *Williams v. R. Co.*, 155 N. Y. 158, 49 N. E. 672 (where the testimony at a second trial was so different that it appeared to be manufactured to suit the decision in the former appeal, a non-suit was held improper); 1898, *Foskett & B. Co. v. Swayne*, 70 Conn. 74, 38 Atl. 893 (applied to a cause tried by a judge without a jury).

<sup>3</sup> This has an equivalent, in some of the Southern States and elsewhere, in a *motion to exclude all of the evidence*, — an anomalous and misleading term.

<sup>4</sup> 1876, *Commissioners of Marion Co. v. Clark*, 94 U. S. 278, 284 (opinion by Clifford, J.; usually regarded as the leading case); 1919, *Raymer v. Netherwood*, 7th C. C. A.,

257 Fed. 284 (distinguishing the practice where the judge tries without a jury); 1905, *Gunn v. Union R. Co.*, 27 R. I. 320, 62 Atl. 118 (careful opinion by Blodgett, J., full of research); 1919, *Riggie v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 93 Vt. 282, 107 Atl. 126 (practice in Vermont reviewed).

So also, of course in *criminal cases*: 1912, *Blankenship v. Com.*, 147 Ky. 768, 145 S. W. 397.

The contrary rule in a few States is based on some misapprehension of the jury's function; *e. g.*: 1868, *Littlejohn v. Fowler*, 5 Coldw. Tenn. 284, 288; 1898, *Gannon v. Gaslight Co.*, 145 Mo. 502, 46 S. W. 968; 1902, *Don v. Poplar Bluff*, 173 Mo. 39, 72 S. W. 118. This fallacy is dealt with in the following: 1896, *Norris v. Clinkscales*, 47 S. E. 797; 1900, *Ketterman v. R. Co.*, 18 W. Va. 606, 37 S. E. 683. In *Virginia*, where the traditional rule did not permit the direction of a verdict, the growing practice in favor of it was checked in 1912 by a statute expressly prohibiting it: St. Feb. 13, 1912, p. 52; interpreted in *Small v. Virginia R. & P. Co.*, 125 Va. 416, 99 S. E. 525, 1919 (reciting the history of the discussion).

Under the California Code (P. C. § 1118), and its followers, the Court may only *advise*



mony *must be assumed*;<sup>5</sup> for only the jury could have the right to decide to the contrary upon that material. Moreover, the sufficiency of evidence which will defeat such a motion may be found in the opponent's own evidence (which he himself cannot gainsay),<sup>6</sup> just as the insufficiency of facts which will justify such a direction may be found in the opponent's evidence, provided it is undisputed.<sup>7</sup>

(b) That a verdict may also be directed *for the proponent* is accepted by the majority of Courts, though it is more plausibly open to dispute.<sup>8</sup> The usual situation is that of a plaintiff who has produced a mass of evidence sufficient to throw upon the defendant the liability of producing some evidence to the contrary, and if this duty is not sustained, it is the judge's function to make the decision (*ante*, § 2487). The only objection here can be that the judge must not reach his decision by assuming the plaintiff's testimony to be true (because that is the jury's province); yet where the testimony is undisputed, or where in some other way that assumption is unnecessary, this objection disappears. A less common situation is that of a defendant having an affirmative plea (for example, payment of a note, or contributory negligence in personal injury); but here also a verdict may be ordered for the defendant, provided the result can be reached upon undisputed testimony of the defendant, or upon testimony of the plaintiff, which the latter must concede to be true.<sup>9</sup>—It is maintained by most Courts that in a *criminal case* there can be no direction of a verdict for the prosecution;<sup>10</sup>

the jury to acquit, and the jury need not follow the advice; therefore, a refusal to give such advice cannot be an error of law: 1910, *State v. Wright*, 20 N. D. 216, 126 N. W. 1023.

<sup>5</sup> 1920, *Fox v. Shanley*, 94 Conn. 350, 109 Atl. 249; 1920, *Monfort v. Indianapolis & C. T. Co.*, 189 Ind. 683, 128 N. E. 842; 1885, *Meadows v. Ins. Co.*, 67 Ia. 57, 24 N. W. 591.

<sup>6</sup> 1898, *Gagnon v. Dana*, 69 N. H. 264, 39 Atl. 982; 1905, *Van Cott v. North J. St. R. Co.*, 72 N. J. L. 229, 62 Atl. 407. Compare the rule of § 2496, n. 3, *post*.

<sup>7</sup> 1900, *Lonzer v. R. Co.*, 196 Pa. 610, 46 Atl. 937. The ruling in *Ayers v. Wabash R. Co.*, 190 Mo. 228, 88 S. W. 605 (1905), is probably not *contra*.

<sup>8</sup> *Fed.* 1890, *Delaware L. & W. R. Co. v. Converse*, 139 U. S. 469, 472, 11 Sup. 569; 1894, *Union P. R. Co. v. McDonald*, 152 U. S. 262, 28 L. 14 Sup. 619; 1903, *Leach v. Burr*, 188 U. S. 510, 23 Sup. 393 ("the power of a Court to direct a verdict for one party or the other is undoubted"); *Fla.* Rev. G. S. 1919, § 2696; *Ga.* 1899, *Brown v. Drake*, 109 Ga. 179, 34 S. E. 309; *Ill.* 1900, *Marshall v. J. Grosse C. Co.*, 184 Ill. 421, 56 N. E. 807; *Me.* 1906, *Young v. Chandler*, 102 Me. 251, 66 Atl. 539; *N. H.* 1920, *Williams v. Duston*, — N. H. —, 111 Atl. 690 (but "only in exceptional cases"); *N. Y.* 1853, *People v.*

*Cook*, 8 N. Y. 67, 74; *S. Car.* 1905, *Uzzell v. Horn*, 71 S. C. 426, 51 S. E. 253.

*Contra*: 1910, *Giles v. Giles*, 204 Mass. 383, 90 N. E. 595; 1905, *Sperl's Estate*, — Minn. —, 103 N. W. 502 (for wills); 1897, *Anniston National Bank v. Committee*, 121 N. C. 109, 28 S. E. 134; 1897, *Eller v. Church*, 121 N. C. 269, 28 S. E. 364; perhaps *Neal v. R. Co.*, N. C., *infra*, note 9, displaces these North Carolina cases.

<sup>9</sup> 1900, *Neal v. R. Co.*, 126 N. C. 634, 36 S. E. 117 (contributory negligence; *Douglas and Clark, JJ.*, diss.); this case therefore qualifies the following ruling: 1898, *Cable v. R. Co.*, 122 N. C. 892, 900, 29 S. E. 377 (contributory negligence). The following cases illustrate the distinction: 1900, *Haven v. Mo. R. Co.*, 155 Mo. 216, 55 S. W. 1035 (case of contributory negligence not taken from the jury where plaintiff and another witness testified to facts which if true sustained her case); 1896, *American Exchange Bank v. N. Y. B. & P. Co.*, 148 N. Y. 698, 43 N. E. 168 (where the person having the burden proves his facts by a cross-examination of the opponent's witness, the judge may direct the issue to be found for the former, because the only question that can arise is that of the credibility of the witness, and the opponent cannot dispute that).

<sup>10</sup> 1895, *Sparf v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 51, 177, 15 Sup. 273; 1899, *People v. Warren*, 122 Mich. 504, 81 N. W. 360 (collecting cases); 1910,



and this conclusion is supposed (but erroneously) to follow from the rule of persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*post*, § 2497).

Whether the exercise of this power to direct a verdict can be made by the *appellate Court*, overriding the trial Court, is a separate question,<sup>11</sup> — a question vital to the success of modern efforts for improving procedure by preventing needless re-trials.

3. The *demurrer to evidence* is a form of raising an objection of law, which has a history of its own in its original use.<sup>12</sup> But the term and the form came to be used, in some American jurisdictions, as the practical equivalent for the foregoing process, — the motion to direct a verdict for insufficiency of evidence. The chief effect of this has been to introduce a certain confusion into the rulings which deal with the subject of waiver, now to be noticed.

§ 2496. **Same: Waiver of Motion by Subsequent Introduction of Evidence.** When an opponent, at the close of the proponent's case in chief, has made a motion asking in effect for the direction of a verdict, how is the opponent's situation affected by his subsequent conduct, with respect to a *waiver* of the motion?

(1) In the first place, the opponent cannot claim a ruling by the judge, as a matter of right, if he makes the motion at the close of the proponent's case in chief *without then resting his own case*. At that point, he is only invoking the Court's discretion; not until the entire evidence is closed may he demand a ruling as of right.<sup>1</sup>

*People v. Walker*, 198 N. Y. 329, 91 N. E. 806 (receiving stolen goods).

*Contra*: 1873, *Com. v. Magee*, Pa., 12 Cox Cr. 549.

Compare the following: 1897, *Agnew v. U. S.*, 165 U. S. 36, 50, 17 Sup. 35 ("In criminal cases, the burden of establishing guilt rests on the prosecution from the beginning to the end of the trial. But when a 'prima facie' case has been made out, as conviction follows unless it be rebutted, the necessity of adducing evidence then devolves on the accused"); 1902, *McKnight v. U. S.*, 54 C. C. A. 358, 115 Fed. 972; 1902, *U. S. v. German*, 115 Fed. 987; and the cases cited *post*, §§ 2501, 2512-2514.

Compare also the treatment of this question in the following: 1891, *People v. Neumann*, 85 Mich. 98, 48 N. W. 290; 1904, *People v. Remus*, 135 Mich. 629, 98 N. W. 397.

<sup>11</sup> 1912, *Slocum v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, 228 U. S. 264, 33 Sup. 523 (where the trial judge refuses to direct a verdict for the defendant, and the jury finds a verdict for the plaintiff, and the appellate court is of opinion that there was not sufficient evidence for the jury, then the appellate court cannot order a verdict and judgment to be entered for the defendant but can only set aside the verdict and order a new trial; four judges dissenting).

Statutes have attempted to authorize such

action by the trial judge, notably in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The constitutional inhibition, as declared by the majority opinion in the *Slocum* case, has been ably questioned in the report of a Committee of the American Bar Association (Proceedings, 1913, XXXVIII, 561). The most searching and exhaustive examination of the subject, setting forth both the history and the policy of such a practice, is to be found in Professor Henry Schofield's articles, entitled "New Trials and the Seventh Amendment; *Slocum v. N. Y. Life Ins. Co.*" (Illinois Law Review, VIII, 287, 381, 465, reprinted in his posthumous Essays on Constitutional Law and Equity, 1921). See further: 1913, *Bothwell v. Boston E. R. Co.*, 215 Mass. 467, 102 N. E. 665; *Mr. J. L. Thorndike*, "Jury Trial in the United States Courts" (Harvard Law Rev., XXVI, 732).

<sup>12</sup> 1793, *Gibson v. Hunter*, 2 H. Bl. 187; 1903, *Lee v. Missouri Pac. R. Co.*, 67 Kan. 402, 73 Pac. 110; 1873, *Trout v. R. Co.*, 23 Gratt. Va. 619; Thayer, Preliminary Treatise, 234.

§ 2496. <sup>1</sup> 1892, *Columbia & P. S. R. Co. v. Hawthorne*, 144 U. S. 202, 12 Sup. 591; 1906, *State v. Banusik*, — N. J. L. —, 64 Atl. 994, *semble*.

For the effect of a *motion for a new trial* upon exceptions to rulings upon specific evidence, see *ante*, § 20.



(2) In the next place, it follows that the opponent *waires no right by going on to put in his own evidence* after the judge's refusal to rule against the proponent for insufficiency of evidence at the close of the proponent's case in chief. The opponent *may* therefore *renew the motion* at the close of the whole case on both sides, and is entitled to the benefit of the ruling, if in his favor at that time.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Conversely, however, he cannot take advantage of the judge's *original erroneous refusal* to direct a verdict for insufficiency at the time of the first motion, if he does *not renew* the motion at the close of all the evidence, or if at the time of the final motion the ruling *correctly refuses* to order a verdict for insufficiency;<sup>3</sup> the Court is at that time entitled to decide upon a survey

<sup>2</sup> Md. Ann. Code 1914, Art. 75, § 91; Mich. Comp L. 1915, § 12629; 1889, Weber v. Kansas City C. R. Co., 100 Mo. 194, 12 S. W. 804, 13 S. W. 587; 1905, Sorensen v. Sorensen, 68 Nebr. 483, 103 N. W. 455.

In a few States this right of the opponent to proceed to introduce his own evidence, after the motion refused, was formerly denied, probably on the analogy of a demurrer to evidence; but this has usually been changed by statute; e. g., Barabasz v. Kabat, Md., *infra*; 1921, Packard I. & M. Co. v. Pearl & Co., 139 Md. 498, 115 Atl. 761 (following Barabasz v. Kabat); 1896, State v. Groves, 119 N. C. 822, 25 S. E. 819; 1898, Purnell v. R. Co., 122 N. C. 832, 29 S. E. 953; compare N. C. St. 1899, c. 131, cited in note 3, *infra*.  
<sup>3</sup> CANADA: 1913, R. v. Wakelyn, Alta. S. C., 10 D. L. R. 455 (corroboration of prosecutrix on a charge of rape under age). 1920, Donley v. E. D. & B. C. R. Co., 52 D. L. R. 632, Alta. (personal injury to employee).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1892, Columbia & P. S. R. Co. v. Hawthorne, U. S., *supra*; 1894, Union Pacific R. Co. v. Daniels, 152 U. S. 684, 687, 14 Sup. 756; 1902, McCrea v. Parsons, 50 C. C. A. 612, 112 Fed. 917; 1903, Walton v. Wild Goose M. & T. Co., 60 C. C. A. 155, 123 Fed. 209; 1905, Columbia N. & L. R. Co. v. Means, 136 Fed. 83, C. C. A.; 1919, Lancaster v. Foster, 5th C. C. A., 260 Fed. 5 (here the rule is acknowledged, but is held not applicable where the record showed the tenor of the evidence adduced by the defendant and where that evidence added nothing sufficient to go to the jury; here the defendant had lost the technical benefit of his second motion by making it too late to be considered on exceptions, and was thus thrown back on his first motion); 1920, Nichamin v. U. S., 6th C. C. A., 263 Fed. 880; *Arizona*: 1921, Southwest Cotton Co. v. Ryan, 22 Ariz. 520, 199 Pac. 124; *California*: 1906, Lyon v. United Moderns, 148 Cal. 470, 83 Pac. 804; *Idaho*: 1906, Shields v. Johnson, 12 Ida. 329, 85 Pac. 972; *Illinois*: 1892, Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v. Velie, 140 Ill. 59, 63, 26 N. E. 1086; 1893, Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski, 145

Ill. 192, 195, 34 N. E. 48; 1905, Streater I. Tel. Co. v. Continental T. C. Co., 217 Ill. 577, 75 N. E. 546; 1905, Warth v. Loewenstein, 219 Ill. 222, 76 N. E. 378; 1909, Reavely v. Harris, 239 Ill. 526, 88 N. E. 238; *Maryland*: 1900, Barabasz v. Kabat, 91 Md. 53, 46 Atl. 337 (good opinion by Pearce, J.); 1901, New York P. & N. R. Co. v. Jones, 94 Md. 24, 50 Atl. 422; 1915, Commissioners v. Venables, 125 Md. 471, 94 Atl. 89; 1922, Krymski v. Kupidowski, 139 Md. 656, 116 Atl. 470; *Missouri*: 1889, Weber v. Kansas City C. R. Co., Mo., *supra*; 1903, Klockenbrink v. R. Co., 172 Mo. 678, 72 S. W. 900; 1919, Pure Oil Co. v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co., 56 Mont. 266, 185 Pac. 150; *New Jersey*: 1904, Esler v. Camden & S. R. Co., 71 N. J. L. 180, 58 Atl. 113 (nonsuit); 1916, State v. Bacheller, 89 N. J. L. 433, 98 Atl. 829; *New York*: 1902, Signa Iron Co. v. Brown, 171 N. Y. 488, 64 N. E. 194; 1907, Spencer v. State, 187 N. Y. 484, 80 N. E. 375 (applied to Court of Claims); *North Carolina*: Here the rule was originally *contra*: 1898, Purnell v. R. Co., 122 N. C. 832, 29 S. E. 953 (construing St. 1897, c. 109; the original error may be reviewed). But the rule was changed by St. 1899, c. 131, amending St. 1897: 1900, Means v. Carolina C. R. Co., 126 N. C. 424, 35 S. E. 813; 1902, Ratliff v. Ratliff, 131 N. C. 428, 42 S. E. 887; 1904, Jones v. Warren, 134 N. C. 390, 46 S. E. 740; 1904, Southern L. & T. Co. v. Benbow, 135 N. C. 303, 47 S. E. 435; 1904, Earnhardt v. Clement, 137 N. C. 91, 49 S. E. 49 (failure to renew the motion); 1904, Blalock v. Clark, 137 N. C. 140, 49 S. E. 88 (same). The legislative rule is now phrased as follows: Rev. 1905, § 539, Consol. St. 1919, § 567: "Demurrer to Evidence. When . . . the plaintiff shall have produced his evidence and rested his case, the defendant may move to dismiss the action, or for judgment, as in case of nonsuit. If the motion is allowed, the plaintiff may except and appeal to the Supreme Court. If the motion is refused, the defendant may except, and if the defendant introduces no evidence, the jury shall pass upon the issues in the case, and the defendant shall have the



of the whole evidence; and this survey naturally renders any prior error immaterial. This is sometimes put upon the ground of waiver; but it is rather a necessary consequence of the discretionary nature and limited scope of the first ruling.

§ 2497. **Measure of Jury's Persuasion: (1) Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt; Rule for Criminal Cases.** After the tribunal having the function of deciding upon facts, *i. e.* the jury, has retired to reach and frame its decision, a question arises as to the nature or degree of its persuasion. Here, it is to be noticed, we are no longer concerned with the incidence of the duty or burden of proof as between the parties to the cause, but merely with the tribunal's own duty and conduct as to its *standard of persuasion*.

Now the logical notion involved in the situation is that the tribunal must be persuaded to believe the affirmation of the burden-bearer before it can be asked to act as desired, but that this persuasion or conviction in the mind of the tribunal may have more than one degree or quality of positiveness; and an attempt is made by the law to define the degree of positiveness of persuasion which must exist in order to justify action in the shape of a verdict for the burden-bearer. The attempt to define these qualities of persuasion has great difficulties; and many useless refinements and wordy quibbles have marked the countless and more or less unsuccessful attempts.

(1) In *criminal cases* a rule has grown up that the persuasion must be *beyond a reasonable doubt*.<sup>1</sup> This precise distinction seems to have had its origin no earlier than the end of the 1700s, and to have been applied at first

benefit of his exception on appeal to the Supreme Court. But after the motion is refused, he may waive his exception and then introduce his evidence just as if he had not made the motion, and he may again move to dismiss after all the evidence on both sides is in. If the motion is then refused, upon consideration of all the evidence, he may except; and after the jury shall have rendered its verdict, he shall have the benefit of such latter exception on appeal to the Supreme Court." This seems to be a fair solution, straightforwardly expressed, and should serve as a model statute in States where similar doubts have arisen. It is applied in the following cases: 1917, *State v. Killian*, 173 N. C. 792, 92 S. E. 499 (construing Rev. 1905, § 3265a Suppl.); 1917, *Cole Mfg. Co. v. Mendenhall*, 4th C. C. A., 240 Fed. 641 (applying N. C. Rev. 1905, § 539); *Oregon*: 1918, *Weygardt v. Bartle*, 88 Or. 310, 171 Pac. 587; *South Carolina*: 1904, *Koon v. Southern Ry.*, 69 S. C. 101, 48 S. E. 86; *Washington*: 1906, *Gardner v. Porter*, 45 Wash. 158, 88 Pac. 121.

In *Illinois*, there is a local question whether the motion to direct a verdict must be *in writing*, under a statute requiring instructions to the jury to be in writing: 1893, *Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski*, *supra* (undecided); but it is plain that the two are different things.

For the effect of a motion by *both parties* to direct a verdict, see *Wolf v. Chicago S. P. Co.*, 233 Ill. 501, 84 N. E. 614 (1908).

§ 2497. <sup>1</sup> The Codes usually confirm this rule: *Ark. Dig.* 1919, § 3184 ("upon the testimony in the whole case"); *Cal. P. C.* 1872, § 1096; *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 8944; *Ind. Burns' Ann. St.* 1914, § 2137; *Kan. G. S.* 1915, § 8149; *Nev. Rev. L.* 1912, §§ 6277, 7163-7166; *N. D. Comp. L.* 1913, §§ 10831, 10832; *S. D. Rev. C.* 1919, § 4874; *Utah: Comp. St.* 1917, § 8978.

In *Georgia* alone, it seems, this test does not obtain: *Rev. C.* 1910, § 5731, *P. C.* §§ 1012, 1013 (in criminal cases "a greater strength of mental conviction" than preponderance of testimony is necessary); *P. C.* § 1010 (rule for circumstantial evidence, defined).

In *Oklahoma* another special phrase was once tried: *Rev. L.* 1910, § 5876 ("A reasonable doubt is a doubt for which there exists a reason in the minds of the jurors, founded upon the facts and circumstances in proof in the case, and is a state of mind of which an ordinarily intelligent man could readily give an explanation, consistent with the facts disclosed by the evidence, and the law, as given to the jury by the court"). But this was repealed by St. 1915, c. 269, Mar. 30.



only in capital cases, and by no means in a fixed phrase, but in various tentative forms. "A clear impression," "upon clear grounds," "satisfied," are the earlier phrases; and then "rational doubt," "rational and well-grounded doubt," "beyond the probability of doubt," and "reasonable doubt" come into use. Then, in Mr. Starkie's classical treatise, "moral certainty, to the exclusion of all reasonable doubt," is given vogue.<sup>2</sup> From time to time, various ill-advised efforts have been made to define more in detail this elusive and undefinable state of mind. One that has received frequent sanction and has been quoted innumerable times is that of Chief Justice Shaw of Massachusetts, on the trial of Dr. Webster for the murder of Mr. Parkman:<sup>3</sup> "[Reasonable doubt] is that state of the case, which, after the entire comparison and consideration of all the evidence, leaves the minds of jurors in that condition that they cannot say they feel an abiding conviction, to a moral certainty, of the truth of the charge. . . . The evidence must establish the truth of the fact to a reasonable and moral certainty, — a certainty that convinces and directs the understanding, and satisfies the reason and judgment. . . . This we take to be proof beyond a reasonable doubt."

Many others, in varying forms, convey the same notion in more or less well-chosen words; and each Court has its stores of precedents of instructions approved and disapproved.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, when anything more than a

<sup>2</sup> For the historical data above summarized, see an article by Judge May of Boston, in the *American Law Review*, X, 642, 656, the author of the treatise on Criminal Law; and Thayer's *Preliminary Treatise*, pp. 551-558.

<sup>3</sup> 1850, *Com. v. Webster*, 5 Cush. Mass. 295, 320. Another is this: 1875, *Gray, C. J.*, in *Com. v. Costley*, 118 Mass. 1; "Proof 'beyond a reasonable doubt' is not beyond all possible or imaginary doubt, but such proof as precludes every reasonable hypothesis, except that which it tends to support. It is proof to a 'moral certainty,' as distinguished from an absolute certainty. As applied to a judicial trial for crime, the two phrases are synonymous and equivalent; each has been used by eminent judges to explain the other, and each signifies such proof as satisfies the judgment and consciences of the jury, as reasonable men, and applying their reason to the evidence before them, that the crime charged has been committed by the defendant, and so satisfies them as to leave no other reasonable conclusion possible."

<sup>4</sup> The following list represents almost all the jurisdictions; from Alabama is given the material of two or three years' rulings, merely to illustrate what a futile grist of profuse jargon is permitted by some Courts to be ground out annually in the name of truth and justice: *Federal*: 1895, *Isaac v. U. S.*, 159 U. S. 487, 16 Sup. 51; 1914, *Wilson v. U. S.*, 232 U. S. 503, 34 Sup. 347; *Alabama*: 1895, *Jackson v. State*, 106 Ala. 12, 17 So. 333; *Thomas v. State*, 106 Ala. 19, 17 So. 460; *Bonner v. State*,

107 Ala. 97, 18 So. 226; *Howard v. State*, 108 Ala. 571, 18 So. 813; 1896, *Peazler v. State*, 110 Ala. 11, 20 So. 363; *Allen v. State*, 111 Ala. 80, 20 So. 490; *Barnes v. State*, 111 Ala. 56, 20 So. 565; *Crawford v. State*, 113 Ala. 661, 21 So. 214; 1897, *Mitchell v. State*, 114 Ala. 1, 22 So. 71; *Yarbrough v. State*, 115 Ala. 92, 22 So. 534; *Pickens v. State*, 115 Ala. 42, 22 So. 551; *Newell v. State*, 115 Ala. 54, 22 So. 572; *Koch v. State*, 115 Ala. 99, 22 So. 471; 1898, *Bryant v. State*, 116 Ala. 445, 23 So. 40; *Titus v. State*, 117 Ala. 16, 23 So. 77; *Bones v. State*, 117 Ala. 138, 23 So. 138; *Walker v. State*, 117 Ala. 42, 23 So. 149; *Burks v. State*, 117 Ala. 140, 23 So. 530; *Nicholson v. State*, 117 Ala. 32, 23 So. 792; *Dennis v. State*, 118 Ala. 72, 23 So. 1002; *Arkansas*: 1895, *Jones v. State*, 61 Ark. 88, 32 S. W. 81; 1896, *Lewis v. State*, 62 Ark. 494, 36 S. W. 689; *California*: 1897, *People v. White*, 116 Cal. 17, 47 Pac. 771; *People v. Ashmead*, 118 Cal. 508, 50 Pac. 681; *People v. Hubert*, 119 Cal. 216, 51 Pac. 329; 1904, *People v. Perry*, 144 Cal. 748, 78 Pac. 284; *Colorado*: *Boykin v. People*, 22 Colo. 496, 45 Pac. 419; *Florida*: 1898, *Gantling v. State*, 40 Fla. 237, 23 So. 857; *Georgia*: 1896, *Hanye v. State*, 99 Ga. 212, 25 S. E. 307; 1896, *Burney v. State*, 100 Ga. 65, 25 S. E. 911; 1897, *Campbell v. State*, 100 Ga. 267, 28 S. E. 71; *Illinois*: 1898, *Spalding v. People*, 172 Ill. 49, 49 N. E. 993; 1921, *People v. Seff*, 296 Ill. 120, 129 N. E. 533; 1921, *People v. Cramer*, 298 Ill. 509, 131 N. E. 657; *Indiana*: 1897, *Reynolds v. State*, 147 Ind. 3, 46 N. E. 31;



simple caution and a brief definition is given, the matter tends to become one of mere words, and the actual effect upon the jury, instead of being enlightenment, is rather confusion, or, at the least, a continued incomprehension. In practice, these detailed amplifications of the doctrine have usually degenerated into a mere tool for counsel who desire to entrap an unwary judge into forgetfulness of some obscure precedent, or to save a cause for a new trial by quibbling, on appeal, over the verbal propriety of a form of words uttered or declined to be uttered by the judge. The effort to perpetuate and develop these elaborate unserviceable definitions is a useless one, and serves to-day chiefly to aid the purposes of the tactician. It should be abandoned:<sup>5</sup>

1897, *Hauk v. State*, 148 Ind. 238, 46 N. E. 127; 1898, *Shields v. State*, 149 Ind. 395, 49 N. E. 351; 1898, *McIntosh v. State*, 151 Ind. 251, 51 N. E. 354; *Iowa*: 1897, *State v. Van Tassel*, 103 Ia. 6, 72 N. W. 497; 1897, *State v. Debolt*, 104 Ia. 105, 73 N. W. 499; 1898, *State v. Marshall*, 105 Ia. 38, 74 N. W. 763; 1899, *State v. Novak*, 109 Ia. 717, 79 N. W. 465; *Kansas*: 1920, *State v. Ward*, 107 Kan. 498, 192 Pac. 836; *Kentucky*: 1898, *Stevens v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 45 S. W. 76; *Louisiana*: 1898, *State v. Bazile*, 50 La. An. 21, 23 So. 8; *Michigan*: 1898, *People v. Swartz*, 118 Mich. 292, 76 N. W. 491; 1909, *People v. Burke*, 157 Mich. 108, 121 N. W. 282; *Minnesota*: 1904, *State v. Newman*, 93 Minn. 393, 101 N. W. 499; *Mississippi*: 1896, *Webb v. State*, 73 Miss. 456, 19 So. 238; 1896, *Cherry v. State*, — Miss. —, 20 So. 837; 1897, *Powers v. State*, 74 Miss. 779, 21 So. 657; 1898, *Lipsecomb v. State*, 75 Miss. 559, 23 So. 210; *Herman v. State*, 75 Miss. 340, 22 So. 872; *Missouri*: 1896, *State v. Blue*, 136 Mo. 41, 37 S. W. 796; *State v. Goforth*, 136 Mo. 111, 37 S. W. 801; 1898, *State v. Duncan*, 142 Mo. 456, 44 S. W. 263; 1899, *State v. Garrison*, 147 Mo. 548, 49 S. W. 508; *Montana*: 1895, *State v. Gleim*, 17 Mont. 17, 41 Pac. 998; 1898, *State v. Clancy*, 20 Mont. 498, 52 Pac. 267; 1921, *State v. Ducolon*, 60 Mont. 594, 201 Pac. 256 (receiving stolen cattle); 1921, *State v. Riggs*, — Mont. —, 201 Pac. 256 (murder); *Nebraska*: 1895, *Collins v. State*, 46 Nebr. 37, 64 N. W. 432; 1896, *Barney v. State*, 49 Nebr. 515, 68 N. W. 636; 1897, *Davis v. State*, 51 Nebr. 301, 70 N. W. 984; 1897, *Morgan v. State*, 51 Nebr. 672, 71 N. W. 788; 1897, *Johnson v. State*, 53 Nebr. 103, 73 N. W. 463; 1898, *Carrall v. State*, 53 Nebr. 431, 73 N. W. 939; *Whitney v. State*, 53 Nebr. 287, 73 N. W. 696; *Bartley v. State*, 53 Nebr. 310, 73 N. W. 744; *Maxfield v. State*, 55 Nebr. 44, 74 N. W. 401; 1910, *Blue v. State*, 86 Nebr. 189, 125 N. W. 136; *Nevada*: 1898, *State v. Mandich*, 24 Nev. 336, 54 Pac. 516; *New Jersey*: 1910, *State v. Silverio*, 79 N. J. L. 482, 76 Atl. 1069; *New Mexico*: 1896, *Terr. v. Lermo*, 8 N. M. 566, 46 Pac. 16; *Terr. v. Padilla*, 8 N. M. 510, 46

Pac. 346; *New York*: 1897, *People v. Barker*, 153 N. Y. 111, 47 N. E. 31; *North Carolina*: 1896, *State v. Rogers*, 119 N. C. 793, 26 S. E. 142; 1903, *State v. Wilcox*, 132 N. C. 1120, 44 S. E. 625; *Oklahoma*: 1898, *Patzwald v. U. S.*, 7 Okl. 232, 54 Pac. 458; 1908, *Abbott v. Terr.*, 1 Okl. Cr. 1, 94 Pac. 179; 1914, *Harris v. State*, 10 Okl. Cr. 417, 137 Pac. 365, 139 Pac. 846 (reading out of the law the definition in Rev. L. § 5876, quoted *supra*, n. 1); St. 1915, c. 269, Mar. 30 (repealing Rev. L. § 5876); *Philippine Isl.* 1903, *U. S. v. Reyes*, 3 P. I. 3; 1906, *U. S. v. Villos*, 6 P. I. 510; 1908, *U. S. v. Lim Sip*, 10 P. I. 627; 1911, *U. S. v. Levente*, 18 P. I. 439, 446; *South Carolina*: 1897, *State v. Aughtry*, 49 S. C. 285, 26 S. E. 619; *Utah*: 1905, *State v. Overson*, 30 Utah 22, 83 Pac. 562 (as to circumstantial evidence); *Washington*: 1897, *State v. Cushing*, 17 Wash. 544, 50 Pac. 512; *Wisconsin*: 1896, *Emery v. State*, 92 Wis. 146, 65 N. W. 848; *Frank v. State*, 94 Wis. 211, 68 N. W. 657; 1897, *Hoffman v. State*, 97 Wis. 576, 73 N. W. 52; 1899, *Emery v. State*, 101 Wis. 627, 78 N. W. 145; 1903, *Baker v. State*, 120 Wis. 135, 97 N. W. 566.

The following list, collecting some recent quibbles, may serve as a museum of legal curios for future generations: 1910, *State v. Schreiber*, *State v. Adams*, 79 N. J. L. 447, 75 Atl. 476; 1910, *State v. Leo*, 80 N. J. L. 21, 77 Atl. 523.

<sup>5</sup> The following is a model treatment of the subject: 1901, *Lenert v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 63 S. W. 563 ("The jury sent word to the Court . . . that they desired an additional charge upon the meaning of 'reasonable doubt.' . . . Thereupon the Court told the jury verbally 'that the two words "reasonable doubt" were words of common use, and the jury could understand them as easily as the Court, and the Court had a reasonable doubt as to whether or not he could under the law charge them as to their meaning.' We see no error in this action of the trial Court calculated to injure the rights of the appellants"); *Accord*: 1917, *People v. Ahrling*, 279 Ill. 70, 116 N. E. 764 ("any definition on the part of the Courts of 'reasonable doubt' only tends



1876, MAY, C. J., "Some Rules of Evidence: Reasonable Doubt in Civil and Criminal Cases" (American Law Rev., X, 642): "It is not at all to be wondered at, that, in criminal cases, it has been the rule to require a greater quantity, weight, or certainty of evidence than in civil cases. As to the mode of proof of particular facts, the rules are substantially the same; but as to the amount of evidence upon which a jury would be justified to find the existence of a particular fact, or the truth of a particular allegation, the rules are widely different. When these rules began to take form and consistency, the penal code of England was a fearfully bloody code. Death, without benefit of clergy, was denounced against a multitude of misdoings which would now be considered, if offences at all, offences of a comparatively trivial character. The consequences of conviction to the unfortunate prisoner were not only fearful, but they were irremediable. No humane judge could help commiserating the situation of the all but foredoomed prisoner. . . . Starkie published his first edition about 1824, we think. This was at the flood-tide of the great revulsion of public sentiment against the inhumanity of that code which Blackstone had eulogized, — a revulsion, which, if not set on foot by the Edinburgh Reviewers, received from them its most powerful impulses, and which was seized upon by Sir Samuel Romilly to work out those wise and beneficent reforms which have made his name so conspicuous in the annals of criminal jurisprudence. Caught by the rising tide of this great reaction, and yielding too absolutely to its generous tendencies, Mr. Starkie was betrayed into an exaggeration of statement which his judgment must have condemned. 'The maxim of the law is,' says that writer, 'that it is better that ninety-nine (that is, an indefinite number) offenders shall escape than that one innocent man be condemned.' The absurdity of this proposition is too obvious to need remark. . . . But then the British ear was at that time occupied by the criers for reform; and the voice of humanity was so much louder than the voice of justice, that, if men could hear, they would not listen to the latter.

"The doctrine of 'reasonable doubt,' as now applied in criminal cases, always invoked by the prisoner and his counsel and enforced by the courts, is one of the modern phases of the tendency to exaggerate the proper signification, and to unduly extend the application of the maxim of which we have been speaking. . . . It was left for Mr. Starkie, . . . to enlarge upon the rule as theretofore stated by the Courts, and, in the attempt to define its scope, unfortunately to introduce, without the authority or sanction of any court, a new term, still less definable, if possible, than the reasonable doubt with which courts and jurors were already sufficiently distressed. The result of the evidence must be, says Mr. Starkie, a 'moral certainty, to the exclusion of all reasonable doubt.' Now, why perplex the administration of justice by interjecting this new element of uncertainty? Why not leave the courts and juries alone to grapple as best they may with the difficulty of determining, without any test, what constitutes a reasonable doubt, without adding to that difficulty the certainly equal difficulty of determining what constitutes a moral certainty? What possible end can such a heaping up of indefinable terms serve, but to confuse and baffle rather than enlighten and aid the average juror? . . . Ostensibly, under the guidance of that old cautionary doctrine, that it is better to err on the side of mercy than on the side of justice, . . . we have come, by a series of glosses and dilutions and limitations, to a doctrine which logically gives justice to nobody, and mercy to those only who show none and deserve none.

"This is no rhetorical exaggeration: it is a melancholy fact. It is to-day the serious obstacle which stands like a lion in the way of the pursuit of guilt; and nothing saves our

to confuse the jury"); 1904, *State v. Blay*, 77 Vt. 56, 58 Atl. 794 ("No definition of the term need be given"); 1903, *Meehan v. State*, 119 Wis. 621, 97 N. W. 173.

How needless are all these wordy maunderings of the law, for the purpose in hand, may be seen from the brief and pointed terms used

by the modern English judges: 1910, *Crippen's Trial* (ed. Filson Young, 1920, *Notable British Trials Series*), pp. 161, 183, Charge of L. C. J. Alverstone; 1911, *Steinie Morrison's Trial*, same series, pp. 266, 276; 1916, *Casement's Trial* (ed. G. H. Knott, 1917, same series, pp. 178, 196).



criminal courts from a complete paralysis but the stalwart sense of the juror who refuses to adopt methods in the accomplishment of any purpose which seem to him exactly adapted to defeat it. . . . We all know that, when a criminal lawyer has to defend a case where the facts are all against him, his uniform and too often unfailing resource is the law. Upon this he falls back. The doctrine of 'reasonable doubt' is kept always in the front. The reports are ransacked for loose definitions by careless judges in insignificant cases. The extravagant and unsupported 'dicta' of text-writers, made perhaps in support of a theory of what the law ought to be, rather than as proof of what it has been authoritatively declared to be, are hunted up with untiring zeal. These are re-enforced by a series of cases — fabulous and authentic — scattered through the musty annals of crime, in which it is said that innocent persons have been convicted. The whole mass of bewildering definitions, extravagant 'dicta,' astounding facts, or fictions, as the case may be, is then arrayed with greater or less skill, according to the ability of counsel, and paraded before the jury with pathetic solemnity. Of course, the object of all this is to confound and befog; to bring the jury into that state of amazement, apprehension, and uncertainty, which will disqualify them to deal calmly and rationally with the facts of the case before them. . . .

"No man can measure with a rule he does not understand; neither can juries determine by rules obscure in themselves, and made yet more obscure by attempted definition. The law is not so infirm and decrepit as to be inadequate to its purposes, if clearly expounded and firmly administered. . . . We think it high time that a rule invented in a barbarous age for a special and perhaps justifiable purpose, so abounding in absurdity, and so fruitful of mischief, be confined to its original domain, and to the uses and purposes for which it was invented."

1906, Professor *William Trickett*, "Preponderance of Evidence, and Reasonable Doubt" (The Forum, Dickinson School of Law, X, 76): "A statement of Chief Justice Shaw of Massachusetts has been not infrequently quoted by judges. The jury is to render a verdict of guilty, if it believes the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt; and this is the explanation of a reasonable doubt: It is 'that state of the case which, after the entire comparison and consideration of all the evidence, leaves the mind of jurors in that condition that they cannot say they feel an abiding conviction, to a moral certainty, of the truth of the charge. . . . The evidence must establish the truth of the fact to a reasonable and moral certainty, — certainty that convinces and directs the understanding and satisfies the reason and judgment. . . . This we take to be proof beyond a reasonable doubt!' The doubt is a 'state of the case'! I had imagined that it was a state of the mind. The state of the case, viz., the state of the evidence in the case, leaves the jurors' minds in a condition. What condition? This, viz., that they cannot say, that they have a conviction. I suppose that, if they cannot say that they have a conviction, it is because they *have not* the conviction. What conviction? It is an abiding conviction. But, what is that? One that has abode, for a considerable time, or one that is going to abide? How long before rendering the verdict must the conviction expressed by it have been formed? A week, a day, an hour, five minutes? If the abidingness is future, by what faculty does the juror know that it is going to abide? By what quality of the conviction does he recognize its longevity? By its strength? By its defiance of past argument in the jury room? Who knows?"

"But, it is a conviction to a 'moral certainty.' Is the certainty a different state of mind from the conviction, or is the phrase used to mean, a conviction which is a certainty, that is, a very strong conviction? It would be hypocritical to challenge the usage which speaks of a moral certainty, but it is impossible to see how an ordinary juror is to be aided by being told that if he is morally certain of the prisoner's guilt, he is to convict him. . . .

"In order to convict, we are further told, the evidence must produce a 'moral certainty of the guilt.' But this certainty has some very peculiar powers. It 'convinces, and it directs the understanding,' it 'satisfies the reason and judgment.' Certainty is the state of being convinced, but, in Shaw's philosophy, it is the cause of, and therefore different



from, the conviction. A moment ago, there was 'an abiding conviction to a moral certainty,' but now it is a certainty generating a conviction! This certainty (which is not a state, but an actor, a cause) has seemingly, three subjects on which to operate. There is an understanding; there are a reason and a judgment! Or are these three names only for one thing? But, that cannot be, for the operations are different. The certainty convinces and directs the understanding. It does no such thing for the reason or the judgment. Its function is, respecting these, humbler, shall we say, or more exalted? It 'satisfies' the reason and judgment! A certainty satisfies! The certainty that one has fallen heir to a million dollars 'satisfies,' but it does not satisfy the reason; only the cupidity, the desire for happiness. The certainty that X the defendant killed Y satisfies the reason! What is this strange, elusive thing called satisfaction of the reason? And what singular thing is reason, that it should be satisfied by a certainty that the defendant has committed an atrocious crime? Perhaps what is satisfied is the desire to find out who committed it, that is, the official curiosity of the jurors; for which 'reason and judgment' are odd names.

"Doing the best possible with Chief Justice SHAW's phrases, all that can be got out of them is this: Before convicting of a crime a juror should be morally certain that he committed it, and this conviction should be the result of a serious consideration of all the evidence."

1899, MARSHALL, J., in *Buel v. State*, 104 Wis. 132, 80 N. W. 78: "Much discussion is found in the adjudged cases as to whether any attempt to explain it does not tend to confuse rather than to enlighten the jury. It is said that scholastic attempts to explain the meaning of such words, which are more easily understood than explained, are liable to lead such men as commonly make up our juries to think that the ordinary processes of reasoning, by which they are accustomed to come to conclusions in the ordinary affairs of life, are not suitable to the jury room in a criminal case, but that some other process of reasoning is to be adopted which they are to gather from the language of the trial judge, and that they are thereby really weakened in their ability to come to a just conclusion; that it would be better to leave them to exercise their own intelligence in regard to language so plain that it is not easy to make it plainer by explanation. Mr. Justice Newman said, in *Hoffman v. State*: 'It needs be a skilful definer who will make the meaning of the term ("beyond a reasonable doubt") more clear by the multiplication of words,' while the writer expressed the view, in *Emery v. State*, that the due administration of justice in many cases requires a careful explanation of the term to be given to the jury, and that without it justice is liable at times, through ignorance, to be defeated, and the efficacy of the law to protect society, and its administration by courts, discredited. In *State v. Sauer*,<sup>6</sup> Mitchell, J., expressed the opinion that 'most attempts at explaining the meaning of a "reasonable doubt" are made by the use of expressions that themselves need explanation more than the term sought to be explained by them, and that the better way is to omit such attempts, but that if such attempts be indulged in it would be better to adopt those definitions that have received general approval by Courts.' In *People v. Stubenvoll*, Champlin, J., speaking for all the members of the Court, said: 'We do not think that the phrase "reasonable doubt" is of such unknown or uncommon signification that an exposition by the trial judge is called for. Language that is within the comprehension of persons of ordinary intelligence can seldom be made plainer by further defining or refining. All persons who possess the qualifications for jurors know that a doubt of the guilt of the accused, honestly entertained, is a reasonable doubt.' In Judge Thompson's work on Trials, it is said that 'all the definitions are little more than metaphysical paraphrases of an expression invented by the common-law judges for the very reason that it was capable of being understood and applied by men in the jury box.' Many more instances might be given where judges of appellate Courts and text writers have dis-

<sup>6</sup> 38 Minn. 438, 38 N. W. 355; this was one of the great judicial minds of the passing generation.



couraged all attempts at explanation of what is a reasonable doubt, from the standpoint of a juror. Nevertheless the fact remains that trial judges, at least in important criminal trials, generally take great pains to explain the term so that the commonest understanding can grasp its meaning. The practice in that regard has grown up from frequent observations of the necessity of it. It is considered here that it is proper in all cases to make a careful explanation of the term, and that where the prosecution relies wholly on circumstantial evidence it is the better practice to do so, taking the utmost care, however, to use only expressions that have been approved, particularly by this Court."

It is generally and properly said that this measure of reasonable doubt need not be applied to the specific detailed facts, but only to the *whole issue*; <sup>7</sup> and herein is given opportunity for much vain argument whether the strands of a cable or the links of a chain furnish the better simile for testing the measure of persuasion.

The truth is that no one has yet invented or discovered a mode of measurement for the intensity of human belief.<sup>8</sup> Hence there can be yet no successful method of communicating intelligibly to a jury a sound method of self-analysis for one's belief. If this truth be appreciated, Courts will cease to treat any particular form of words as necessary or decisive in the law for that purpose; for the Law cannot expect to do what Logic and Psychology have not yet done.

§ 2498. Same: Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.

1. In *civil cases* it should be enough to say that the extreme caution and the unusual positiveness of persuasion required in criminal cases do not obtain. But it is customary to go further, and here also to attempt to define in words

<sup>7</sup> *Georgia*: 1916, *Watkins v. State*, 18 Ga. App. 60, 88 S. E. 1000 (reviewing prior cases); *Illinois*: 1893, *Jamison v. People*, 145 Ill. 357, 380, 34 N. E. 486; 1896, *Keating v. People*, 160 Ill. 480, 43 N. E. 724; 1897, *Williams v. People*, 166 Ill. 132, 46 N. E. 749; 1899, *Kossakowski v. People*, 177 Ill. 53, 563 N. E. 115; 1902, *Henry v. People*, 198 Ill. 162, 65 N. E. 120; 1904, *Delahoyde v. People*, 212 Ill. 554, 72 N. E. 732; 1909, *People v. Bolik*, 241 Ill. 394, 89 N. E. 700; 1906, *Dunn v. State*, 166 Ind. 694, 78 N. E. 198, *semble* (this opinion illustrates the inherently futile nature of the question); *Indiana*: 1897, *Hinshaw v. State*, 147 Ind. 334, 47 N. E. 158; *Louisiana*: 1918, *State v. Jackson*, 142 La. 540, 77 So. 196 (venue); *Montana*: 1895, *State v. Gleim*, 17 Mont. 17, 41 Pac. 998; *Nebraska*: 1897, *Morgan v. State*, 51 Nebr. 672, 71 N. W. 788; *Wyoming*: 1903, *Horn v. State*, 12 Wyo. 80, 73 Pac. 705 (good opinion by Potter, J.).

*Contra*: 1921, *Wrassman v. State*, — Ind. —, 132 N. E. 673 (keeping liquor with intent to sell); 1899, *State v. Cohen*, 108 Ia. 208, 78 N. W. 857; 1920, *State v. Pack*, 106 Kan. 188, 186 Pac. 742 (where circumstances form separate "links" of proof, the rule applies to each one separately; otherwise only to the whole); 1902, *State v. Flemming*, 130 N. C.

688, 41 S. E. 549; 1900, *State v. Young*, 9 N. D. 165, 82 N. W. 420; 1905, *State v. Johnson*, 14 N. D. 288, 103 N. W. 565; 1912, *Inklebarger v. State*, 8 Okl. Cr. 316, 127 Pac. 707; 1920, *State v. Holbrook*, 98 Or. 43, 188 Pac. 947; 1921, *State v. Crawford*, — Utah —, 201 Pac. 1031 (identity of stolen goods).

In *Georgia*, under Penal Code § 1010, a conviction upon circumstantial evidence must "exclude every other reasonable hypothesis" than guilt; and this seems to be construed as setting up a peculiar rule for a case based on circumstantial evidence only: 1919, *Davis v. State*, 24 Ga. App. 35, 100 S. E. 50; 1919, *Hendrix v. State*, 24 Ga. App. 56, 100 S. E. 55.

The general rule for reasonable doubt ought to apply equally to *misdemeanors*: 1894, *Vandeventer v. State*, 38 Nebr. 592, 595, 57 N. W. 397.

Moreover, the rule does not apply to *incidental issues* where the main issues depend upon testimonial evidence: 1919, *People v. Lapara*, 181 Cal. 66, 183 Pac. 545.

<sup>8</sup> See the materials collected in the present author's "Principles of Judicial Proof, as given by Logic, Psychology, and General Experience, and illustrated in Judicial Trials" (1913), especially § 376.



the quality of persuasion necessary. It is said to be that state of mind in which there is felt to be a "*preponderance of evidence*" in favor of the demandant's proposition.<sup>1</sup> Here, too, moreover, this simple and suggestive phrase has not been allowed to suffice; and in many precedents sundry other phrases — "satisfied," "convinced," and the like — have been put forward as equivalents, and their propriety as a form of words discussed and sanctioned or disapproved, with much waste of judicial effort:

1906, Professor *William Trickett*, "Preponderance of Evidence, and Reasonable Doubt" (The Forum, Dickinson School of Law, X, 76): "The text-books and authorities usually inform us that in civil cases the decision must be according to the 'preponderance of evidence.' A corollary from this rule would be that the juror or the judge must in many cases decide in favor of A or B, the parties to the suit, that a fact did or did not occur, although he does not believe that it occurred or did not occur. A sues B on a note, whose execution B denies. Six witnesses affirm that the signature is in B's handwriting. Five affirm that it is not. No difference in competence, or trustworthiness, between these witnesses appears. Six, however, are more than five. The ordinary man, juror or judge, would say that the evidence 'preponderated' in favor of A's proposition. But would the ordinary discreet man believe that proposition? Instead of six let us suppose twenty witnesses, and instead of five let us suppose nineteen. Still there is a preponderance towards A's contention. But would a sensible man necessarily believe that B signed the note, when nineteen men, each equally credible with each of the twenty, said that he did not sign it? In such a state of the evidence, the prudent and careful man would remain in a state of doubt. He would say, 'There is one-nineteenth more evidence in favor of B's having signed, than in favor of his not having signed, but I am not convinced that he signed it; I neither believe nor disbelieve that he signed it.'

"If the rule quoted is to be adopted, it follows that a verdict in a civil case need not, and therefore does not, express the belief, opinion, or conviction of the jury as to the existence or non-existence of the facts which form the issue, but simply as to the existence of the preponderance of the evidence, a totally different matter. There can be evidence that fact X occurred, when it did not occur, and evidence that fact X did not occur, when it did occur, and, for the same reason, there can be more evidence that it occurred than that

§ 2498. <sup>1</sup> *Federal*: 1898, *Sigafus v. Porter*, 28 C. C. A. 443, 84 Fed. 430; *Alabama*: 1896, *O'Connor M. & M. Co. v. Dickson*, 112 Ala. 304, 20 So. 413; 1896, *American Oak Extr. Co. v. Ryan*, 112 Ala. 337, 20 So. 644; 1897, *Alabama M. R. Co. v. Marcus*, 115 Ala. 389, 22 So. 135; 1897, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Hill*, 115 Ala. 334, 22 So. 163; 1898, *Morrow v. Campbell*, 118 Ala. 330, 24 So. 852 ("clear and convincing proof," not required); 1898, *Moore v. Heineke*, 119 Ala. 627, 24 So. 374; *California*: 1896, *Murphy v. Waterhouse*, 113 Cal. 467, 45 Pac. 866 ("convince the minds" of the jury, held improper); *Colorado*: 1898, *Sams A. C. Co. v. League*, 25 Colo. 129, 54 Pac. 642; *Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, §§ 5730, 5731 (phrase defined); *Illinois*: 1896, *Taylor v. Felsing*, 164 Ill. 331, 45 N. E. 161 (not a "clear preponderance"); 1906, *Sonnemann v. Mertz*, 221 Ill. 362, 77 N. E. 530 (where a preponderance suffices, it is incorrect to charge that the jury must be "satisfied"); *Maine*: 1896, *French v. Day*, 89 Me. 441, 36 Atl. 908 ("clear preponderance and convincing proof,"

held too strong, as understood by "the common mind"); 1898, *Sanborn v. Gerald*, 91 Me. 366, 40 Atl. 67; *Nebraska*: 1898, *First National Bank of Omaha v. Goodman*, 55 Nebr. 409, 75 N. W. 846; *Nevada*: 1905, *Devencenzi v. Cassinelli*, 28 Nev. 222, 81 Pac. 41; *North Carolina*: 1904, *Chaffin v. Fries, M. & P. Co.*, 135 N. C. 95, 47 S. E. 226; *Oklahoma*: 1910, *Moore v. Adams*, 26 Okl. 48, 108 Pac. 392; *Philippine Isl.* 1912, *Worcester v. Ocampo*, 22 P. I. 42; *Texas*: 1896, *Moore v. Stone*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 36 S. W. 909 ("by a preponderance of proof to your reasonable satisfaction," held improper); *Wisconsin*: 1898, *Curran v. Stange Co.*, 98 Wis. 598, 74 N. W. 377; 1898, *Knopke v. Ins. Co.*, 99 Wis. 289, 74 N. W. 795; 1905, *Grotjan v. Rice*, 124 Wis. 253, 102 N. W. 551; 1906, *Anderson v. Chicago Brass Co.*, 127 Wis. 273, 106 N. W. 1077 (a wondrous cobweb of pedantry is here woven to occupy the jury's simple mind and the trial judge's tongue); 1907, *Pelton v. Spider Lake S. & L. Co.*, 132 Wis. 219, 112 N. W. 29 (instruction criticised).



it did not occur, although it in fact did not occur, and to believe that there is this greater degree of evidence of occurrence than of non-occurrence, is not to believe the occurrence rather than the non-occurrence.

"The rule indicated results in palpable absurdity. The object of the law is, or ought to be, to secure the sequence of certain results upon certain objective facts. If B signed the note he ought to be compelled to pay it. It would be, of course, inadmissible to hold that the absolute certainty of the jury that he signed it, should be the preliminary to this compulsion. But would it be too much to hold that the jury should believe, at least in some low degree, that he signed it? Is not the principle abhorrent that B may be coerced into paying a sum of money to A, when the jury does not believe, even in a faint degree, that he promised to pay it, simply because it believes that, of the plaintiff's and defendant's respective pieces of evidence, that of the former is heavier than that of the latter?

"What those who have laid down the principle that 'preponderance' of evidence will justify and require a decision conformable with it, have failed to realize, is that perception of the preponderance of evidence is quite consistent with want of belief. Of two pieces of very weak evidence, one may preponderate. It might be barely enough to convince, had it not encountered the contradictory evidence. Opposed by the latter, it may be insufficient to generate even the lowest degree of belief. To detect a preponderance of evidence that B signed a note, is neither to believe that he signed it, nor to be logically required to believe that he signed it. It would be fatuous to affirm that a man ought to believe, even faintly, everything the evidence for which is, in his opinion, stronger than the evidence against it.

"There is no measure of the weight of evidence (unless the witnesses on the evidential facts are counted) other than the *feeling of probability* which it engenders."

2. But the chief topic of controversy has been whether in certain civil cases the measure of persuasion for *criminal cases* should be applied. Policy suggests that the latter test should be strictly confined to its original field, and that there ought to be no attempt to employ it in any civil case.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the effort has been made (though usually without success) to introduce it in certain sorts of civil cases where an analogy seems to obtain:

(1) It is sometimes said that, in general, wherever in a civil case a *criminal act is charged* as a part of the case, the rule for criminal cases should apply; but this has been generally repudiated.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Accord*: 1918, *Wright v. Young*, 20 Ariz. 46, 176 Pac. 583; 1911, *Fish v. Poorman*, 85 Kan. 237, 116 Pac. 898 (testamentary incapacity). Compare Judge May's article, above cited, § 2497, in which the rule for civil cases is judiciously discussed.

<sup>3</sup> *California*: 1911, *Cooper v. Spring Valley W. Co.*, 16 Cal. App. 17, 116 Pac. 298; *Colorado*: 1897, *Brown v. Tourtelotte*, 24 Colo. 204, 50 Pac. 195 (forgery); *Georgia*: 1919, *Cowart v. Strickland*, 149 Ga. 397, 100 S. E. 447 (ejectment, involving forgery of a deed); *Illinois*: 1894, *Grimes v. Hilliary*, 150 Ill. 141, 146, 36 N. E. 977 (left undecided; though previous rulings in this State had adopted the criminal rule; prior decisions apparently doubted; but the criminal rule held not applicable to a defendant's malicious destruction of a note, the malice not being essential to recovery); 1910, *McInturff v. Ins. Co.*, 248 Ill. 92, 93 N. E. 369 (action on

an insurance policy, fraudulent arson being the issue; rule applied); 1919, *Oliver v. Ross*, 289 Ill. 624, 124 N. E. 800 (validity of certain deeds, involving a forgery; rule said to be the "well established law of this State," citing only *McInturff v. Ins. Co.*); *Missouri*: 1920, *Farmers' Loan & T. Co. v. Southern Surety Co.*, 285 Mo. 621, 226 S. W. 926 (action on a surety bond to indemnify for a bank-officer's larceny or embezzlement; rule for civil cases applied to the proof of larceny by the officer); *Nebraska*: 1897, *Nebraska Nat'l B'k v. Johnson*, 51 Nebr. 546, 71 N. W. 294 (action to recover the proceeds of money stolen by the defendant); *New Jersey*: 1904, *Blackmore v. Ellis*, 70 N. J. L. 264, 57 Atl. 1047 (assault and battery); *New York*: 1904, *Kurz v. Doerr*, 180 N. Y. 88, 72 N. E. 926 (assault by discharging a firearm).

*Contra*: 1913, *Usher v. Severance*, 86 Vt. 523, 86 Atl. 741 (assault and battery; but



(2) Nor is such a doctrine better established for individual kinds of cases. It does not apply to an action for a *statutory penalty*; <sup>4</sup> nor to a plea of truth to an action for a *defamatory charge of crime*; <sup>5</sup> nor to a plea of *arson* by the insurer in an action on a policy of fire insurance; <sup>6</sup> nor in *disbarment* proceedings; <sup>7</sup> nor in an action for *support* charging the defendant as the father of a *bastard*; <sup>8</sup> nor in an action for *seduction*, <sup>9</sup> nor a proceeding for *divorce* on the ground of adultery; <sup>10</sup> nor in proceedings for *contempt* <sup>11</sup> or for an *injunction*. <sup>12</sup>

(3) But a stricter standard, in some such phrase as "clear and convincing proof," is commonly applied to measure the necessary persuasion for a charge of *fraud*, <sup>13</sup> or of *undue influence*; <sup>14</sup> for the existence and contents of

here only the presumption of innocence was involved); 1921, *Vickers v. Vickers*, 89 W. Va. 236, 109 S. E. 234 (divorce for adultery; on circumstantial evidence, it must be "so strong and clear as to carry conviction"); 1914, *Trezevictowski v. Jereski*, 159 Wis. 190, 149 N. W. 743 (father's action for seduction or rape of daughter; the criminal act required to be proved by "clear and satisfactory preponderance of evidence"; another exquisite tangle in the verbal labyrinth which judges fondly believe the jurors to wander in).

<sup>4</sup> 1913, *M. S. v. Regan*, 232 U. S. 37, 34 Sup. 213 (action for penalty due under the alien immigration act); 1900, *Campbell v. Burns*, 94 Me. 127, 46 Atl. 812; 1914, *Hammett v. State*, 42 Okl. 384, 141 Pac. 419 (civil penalty for violation of liquor law); 1891, *Sparta v. Lewis*, 91 Tenn. 370, 374, 23 S. W. 182 (municipal ordinance forbidding battery).

*Contra*: 1908, *Barron v. Anniston*, 157 Ala. 399, 48 So. 58 (city ordinance against sale of liquor).

<sup>5</sup> 1921, *Buckeye Cotton Oil Co. v. Sloan*, 6th C. C. A., 272 Fed. 615, 623 (slander); 1898, *Hearne v. DeYoung*, 119 Cal. 670, 52 Pac. 150; 1893, *Atlanta Journal v. Mayson*, 92 Ga. 640, 18 S. E. 1010; Ill. Rev. St. 1874, c. 126, § 3; 1885, *Scott v. Fleming*, 17 Ill. App. 561; Ind. Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 382; 1872, *Ellis v. Buzzell*, 60 Me. 209, 213 (leading case); 1897, *Finley v. Widner*, 112 Mich. 230, 70 N. W. 433. The supposed doctrine *contra* is criticised by Judge May in 10 Amer. Law Rev. 642.

<sup>6</sup> 1916, *State ex rel. Detroit F. & M. Ins. Co. v. Ellison*, 268 Mo. 239, 187 S. W. 23; 1895, *Blackburn v. Ins. Co.*, 116 N. C. 821, 21 S. E. 922; 1898, *First National Bank v. Commercial Assur. Co.*, 33 Or. 43, 52 Pac. 1050. *Contra*: 1852, *Darling v. Banks*, 14 Ill. 46; 1856, *McConnells v. Ins. Co.*, 18 Ill. 228. The *contra* cases are criticised by Judge May in 10 Amer. Law Rev. 642.

<sup>7</sup> 1899, *Re Wellcome*, 23 Mont. 450, 59 Pac. 445. *Contra*: 1908, *In re Newby*, 82 Nebr.

235, 117 N. W. 691; 1900, *Re Evans*, 22 Utah 366, 62 Pac. 913.

<sup>8</sup> 1900, *Bell v. State*, 124 Ala. 94, 27 So. 414; 1872, *People v. Christman*, 66 Ill. 162; 1870, *Knowles v. Scribner*, 57 Me. 495 (leading case); 1893, *Dukehart v. Caughman*, 36 Nebr. 412, 414, 54 N. W. 680; 1918, *Overseer, etc., of Montclair v. Eason*, 92 N. J. L. 199, 104 Atl. 291.

So in other actions for loss of support: 1904, *Woods v. Dailey*, 211 Ill. 495, 71 N. E. 1068 (action for loss of support, under the dramshop act).

<sup>9</sup> 1894, *Nelson v. Pierce*, 18 R. I. 539, 28 Atl. 806.

<sup>10</sup> 1921, *Neff v. Neff*, 96 Conn. 273, 114 Atl. 126; 1898, *Lenning v. Lenning*, 176 Ill. 180, 52 N. E. 46; 1904, *Heyman v. Heyman*, 210 Ill. 524, 71 N. E. 591; 1922, *Jenkins v. Jenkins*, — Or. —, 204 Pac. 165; 1896, *Lindley v. Lindley*, 68 Vt. 421, 35 Atl. 349. *Contra*: 1921, *German v. German*, 137 Md. 424, 112 Atl. 789; 1916, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 78 W. Va. 118, 88 S. E. 653; 1918, *Nicely v. Nicely*, 81 W. Va. 269, 94 S. E. 749.

But in Pennsylvania, *insanity as a ground for divorce* must be thus established: St. 1905, Apr. 18, Dig. 1920, § 9150.

<sup>11</sup> 1918, *Wright v. Young*, 20 Ariz. 46, 176 Pac. 583; 1896, *Drakeford v. Adams*, 98 Ga. 722, 25 S. E. 833 (proceedings by a receiver for contempt for not turning over moneys); 1917, *State ex rel. Anderson v. Daugherty*, 137 Tenn. 125, 191 S. W. 974. *Contra*: 1918, *Verdon's Appeal*, 91 N. J. L. 491, 104 Atl. 317 (publication of matter reflecting on a court).

<sup>12</sup> 1895, *State v. Collins*, — N. H. —, 44 Atl. 495 (injunction against a liquor-nuisance). *Contra*: 1907, *State v. Blydenbury*, 135 Ia. 264, 112 N. W. 634.

<sup>13</sup> *Fed.* 1896, *Lalone v. U. S.*, 164 U. S. 255, 17 Sup. 74 (pension application); 1897, *U. S. v. American Bell Tel. Co.*, 167 U. S. 224, 17 Sup. 809 ("clear, unequivocal, and convincing"; revocation of a patent for fraud);

<sup>14</sup> 1919, *Downey v. Guilfoyle*, 93 Conn. 630, 107 Atl. 562 (niece of testator as beneficiary).



a *lost deed or will*; <sup>15</sup> for a *parol gift* or an *agreement to bequeath* by will; <sup>16</sup> for *mutual mistake* sufficient to justify *reformation of an instrument*; <sup>17</sup> for a *parol or constructive trust*; <sup>18</sup> for an *oral contract* as a basis for specific performance; <sup>19</sup> for impeaching a *notary's certificate* of acknowledgment; <sup>20</sup> for

*Ia.* 1922, *Harvey v. Phillips*, — *Ia.* —, 186 N. W. 910, *semble* (deed obtained by fraud; commenting on prior cases); *Kan.* 1897, *Kansas M. O. M. Ins. Co. v. Rammelsberg*, 58 Kan. 531, 50 Pac. 446 (requiring something more than a mere preponderance); *Md.* 1900, *Conner v. Groh*, 90 Md. 674, 45 Atl. 1024 ("convincing," not merely preponderating); *Okl.* 1915, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Bruner*, 52 Okl. 349, 152 Pac. 1103; *Pa.* 1918, *Pusic v. Salak*, 261 Pa. 512, 104 Atl. 751 (execution of a deed); *Wis.* 1897, *Dohmen Co. v. Niagara F. Ins. Co.*, 96 Wis. 38, 71 N. W. 69 ("clear and satisfactory evidence"); 1906, *Bowe v. Gage*, 127 Wis. 245, 106 N. W. 1074 (fraud in a sale); 1913, *Ball's Will*, *Ball v. Boston*, 153 Wis. 27, 141 N. W. 8 (fraud or undue influence on a testator; *Barnes, J.*, diss., in an able opinion).

*Contra*: 1897, *Nelms v. Steiner*, 113 Ala. 562, 22 So. 435 (overruling *Claffin Co. v. Rodenberg*, 101 Ala. 213, 13 So. 272); 1918, *Thomas v. Miller*, 202 Mich. 43, 167 N. W. 859.

<sup>15</sup> The cases are collected *ante*, §§ 2052, 2105, 2106.

<sup>16</sup> *Illinois*: 1913, *Willis v. Zorger*, 258 Ill. 574, 101 N. E. 963 (contract to devise; citing prior cases); 1921, *Anderson v. Augustana College*, 300 Ill. 72, 132 N. E. 826 (contract to make a person sole heir); *Iowa*: 1909, *Frye v. Gullion*, 143 Ia. 719, 121 N. W. 563 (deceased's oral gift or sale); *Kansas*: 1922, *Nash v. Harrington*, 110 Kan. 636, 205 Pac. 354; *Michigan*: 1875, *Mundy v. Foster*, 31 Mich. 313, 322 ("should be proved in the clearest manner and the evidence ought to be above suspicion"); *Missouri*: 1904, *McKee v. Higbee*, 180 Mo. 263, 79 S. W. 407; 1905, *Russell v. Sharp*, 192 Mo. 270, 91 S. W. 134; *Montana*: 1921, *Wilburn v. Wagner*, 59 Mont. 386, 196 Pac. 978 (oral promise to devise); *New York*: 1909, *Tousey v. Hastings*, 194 N. Y. 79, 86 N. E. 831 (contract to bequeath); 1911, *Taylor v. Higgs*, 202 N. Y. 65, 95 N. E. 30; 1915, *Wallace v. Wallace*, 216 N. Y. 28, 109 N. E. 872; *Ohio*: 1914, *Merrick v. Ditzler*, 91 Oh. 256, 110 N. E. 493 (action on a promise to pay for domestic services; rule of degree of proof, as prescribed in *Hinkle v. Sage*, 67 Oh. 256, held not applicable where the defendant promisor is alive nor where the promise is in writing); *Pennsylvania*: 1921, *Gilbraith's Est.*, 270 Pa. 288, 113 Atl. 361 (claim on contract against a decedent); *Virginia*: 1921, *Moss v. Moss*, — Va. —, 106 S. E. 429 (parol gift by parents to son); *Washington*: 1920, *Sturgis v. McElroy*, 113 Wash. 192, 193 Pac. 719 (parol gift by parents during lifetime).

<sup>17</sup> 1910, *Wilson-Ward Co. v. Farmers' U. G. Co.*, 94 Ark. 200, 126 S. W. 847; 1922, *Waddell v. Bowdre*, — Ark. —, 236 S. W. 599; 1909, *Prior v. Davis*, 58 Fla. 510, 50 So. 535; 1917, *Anderson v. Stewart*, 281 Ill. 69, 117 N. E. 743; 1916, *Anderson v. Sandy Valley & E. R. Co.*, 171 Ky. 740, 188 S. W. 772 ("fraud or mistake"); 1871, *Stockbridge Iron Co. v. Hudson Iron Co.*, 107 Mass. 290, 317; 1900, *Seitz Brewing Co. v. Ayres*, 60 N. J. Eq. 190, 46 Atl. 535; 1892, *Southard v. Curley*, 134 N. Y. 148, 31 N. E. 330 (collecting many forms of phrasing); 1916, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 172 N. C. 530, 90 S. E. 516 (but otherwise for voidability of a deed due to fraud, incapacity, etc.); 1915, *Cleveland v. Rankin*, 48 Okl. 99, 149 Pac. 1131; 1912, *Fife v. Cate*, 85 Vt. 418, 82 Atl. 741; 1921, *Hitchcock v. Kennison*, — Vt. —, 115 Atl. 157; 1909, *Percy v. First National Bank*, 110 Va. 129, 65 S. E. 475. *Contra*: 1913, *Panhandle Lumber Co. v. Rancour*, 24 Ida. 603, 135 Pac. 558.

<sup>18</sup> 1903, *Copper River Mining Co. v. McClellan*, 1 Alsk. 134, 145 (mining location); 1921, *Hall v. Hall*, 149 Ark. 669, 234 S. W. 173 (resulting trust by parol); 1910, *Ryder v. Ryder*, 244 Ill. 297, 91 N. E. 451 (parol trust, by "clear, definite, and unequivocal testimony"); 1916, *Miller v. Miller*, 272 Ill. 468, 112 N. E. 331 (constructive trust; "clear and convincing" proof; but a single witness may suffice); 1921, *Streeter v. Gamble*, 298 Ill. 332, 131 N. E. 589 ("such convincing proof as leaves no reasonable doubt"); 1922, *Hill v. Berger*, 302 Ill. 312, 134 N. E. 721; 1921, *Lefkowitz v. Silver*, 182 N. C. 339, 109 S. E. 56 (parol trust of land); 1918, *Babcock v. Collison*, — Okl. —, 175 Pac. 762; 1916, *Walker v. Walker*, 254 Pa. 220, 98 Atl. 890; 1922, *Page v. Page*, — Va. —, 110 S. E. 370; 1908, *Hudkins v. Crim.*, 64 W. Va. 225, 61 S. E. 166 (oral trust of land).

<sup>19</sup> 1922, *Foster v. Coffey*, — Colo. —, 204 Pac. 900; 1916, *MacQueen v. Anderson*, 275 Ill. 409, 114 N. E. 159 ("the contract and its terms must be established by clear and unequivocal evidence"); 1904, *McKee v. Higbee*, 180 Mo. 263, 79 S. W. 407 (specific performance).

<sup>20</sup> 1918, *Marden v. Hopkins*, 47 D. C. App. 202; 1903, *Gritten v. Dickerson*, 202 Ill. 372, 66 N. E. 1090; 1913, *Johnston v. Linder*, — Ia. —, 143 N. W. 410; 1919, *Mallory v. Walton*, 119 Miss. 396, 81 So. 113; 1904, *Elliot v. Sheppard*, 179 Mo. 382, 78 S. W. 627; 1908, *Sheridan Co. v. McKinney*, 79 Nebr. 223, 115 N. W. 518; 1907, *Johnson Lumber Co. v. Leonard*, 145 N. C. 339, 59 S. E. 134 (certificate of married woman's privy



prior *anticipatory use of a patent*; <sup>21</sup> for an agreement to hold a *deed absolute as a mortgage*; <sup>22</sup> and for *sundry classes of cases* in local practice.<sup>23</sup>

3. The application of the phrase "preponderance of evidence" is apt to lead the judicial discussion close to the danger line of the fallacious quantitative or numerical theory of testimony (*ante*, § 2035).<sup>24</sup> Although that theory has been generally repudiated in our law, yet there is often a lurking recurrence to it in the statement that an uncontradicted witness must be believed,<sup>25</sup> *i. e.* his testimony constitutes 'per se' a preponderance. The un-

examination); 1913, *Burke v. Burke*, 240 Pa. 379, 87 Atl. 960; 1916, *Chaffee v. Hawkins*, 89 Wash. 130, 157 Pac. 35; 1905, *Swiger v. Swiger*, 58 W. Va. 119, 52 S. E. 23; 1921, *Roberts v. Huntington D. & G. Co.*, 89 W. Va. 384, 109 S. E. 348.

Compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 1347, 1352.

<sup>21</sup> 1894, *Deering v. Winona Harvester Works*, 155 U. S. 286, 301 (patent claim anticipating by prior use one already patented; "the rule requires such anticipations to be proven by evidence so cogent as to leave no reasonable doubt in the mind of the Court"); 1903, *Rodwell v. Tuchfaber*, 127 Fed. 138 (foregoing principle applied); 1915, *Salt's Textile Mfg. Co. v. Tingle Mfg. Co.*, D. C. Conn., 227 Fed. 115; 1916, *National Machine Co. v. Benthall Machine Co.*, 4th C. C. A., 241 Fed. 72 (following *Deering v. Winona*); 1918, *Inflexible Co. v. Megibow*, D. C. N. J., 251 Fed. 924 (collecting prior cases).

Compare the rule for *corroboration of an inventor* (*ante*, § 2065a).

<sup>22</sup> *California*: 1908, *Couts v. Winston*, 153 Cal. 686, 96 Pac. 357; *Colorado*: 1913, *Davis v. Pursel*, 55 Colo. 287, 134 Pac. 107; *Illinois*: 1911, *Patterson v. Patterson*, 251 Ill. 153, 95 N. E. 1051; 1913, *Miller v. Mandel*, 259 Ill. 314, 102 N. E. 760 (to show a deed, absolute on its face, to have been subject to a collateral agreement in a lost document); 1916, *Friend v. Beach*, 276 Ill. 397, 114 N. E. 911; 1922, *Illman v. Kruse*, 301 Ill. 408, 134 N. E. 107; *Iowa*: 1906, *Betts v. Betts*, 132 Ia. 72, 106 N. W. 928; 1910, *Schurz v. Schurz*, 153 Ia. 187, 128 N. W. 944; *Michigan*: 1910, *Schmidt v. Barclay*, 161 Mich. 1, 125 N. W. 729; 1922, *Brennan v. Finn*, — Mich. —, 187 N. W. 353; *Minnesota*: 1905, *Stitt v. Rat Portage L. Co.*, 98 Minn. 52, 104 N. W. 561, *semble*; *Utah*: 1904, *Smyth v. Reed*, 28 Utah 262, 78 Pac. 478; *Washington*: 1913, *Hoover v. Bouffleur*, 74 Wash. 382, 133 Pac. 602; 1913, *Mittlesteadt v. Johnson*, 75 Wash. 550, 135 Pac. 214.

<sup>23</sup> *Alaska*: 1902, *Thomson v. Allen*, 2 Alsk. 636 (forfeiture of a mining location); 1902, *Loeser v. Gardiner*, 2 Alsk. 641 (same); *California*: 1901, *Rowe v. Hibernia S. & L. Soc.*, 134 Cal. 403, 66 Pac. 569 (identifying separate property acquired after marriage); 1921, *Badover v. Guaranty T. & S. Bank*, 186 Cal. 775, 200 Pac. 638 (claim against a decedent's estate, founded on a lost note); 1921,

*Nickson's Estate*, *Clayton v. Perry*, 187 Cal. 603, 203 Pac. 106 (that property acquired since marriage is not community property); *Idaho*: 1919, *Smith v. Smith*, 32 Ida. 478, 185 Pac. 67 (former marriage invalidating a later one); *Illinois*: 1910, *Lambert v. Hemler*, 244 Ill. 254, 91 N. E. 435 (adverse possession, by "clear and positive evidence"); *Maryland*: 1916, *Hammond v. New York P. & N. R. Co.*, 128 Md. 442, 97 Atl. 1011 (release under seal); *North Carolina*: 1905, *Penland v. Ingle*, 138 N. C. 456, 50 S. E. 850 (a custom must be proved "clearly and convincingly"); *Oregon*: 1908, *Abraham v. Miller*, 52 Or. 8, 95 Pac. 814 (sheriff's return, involving validity of a judgment); *Virginia*: 1919, *Ruckdeschall v. Seibel*, 126 Va. 359, 101 S. E. 425 (usury; "clear and satisfactory preponderance of evidence"; repudiating earlier cases); *West Virginia*: 1899, *Seymour v. Alkire*, 47 W. Va. 302, 34 S. E. 953 ("clear, convincing, beyond reasonable controversy," required for correcting a mistake in a decree); *Wisconsin*: 1909, *Boring v. Ott*, 138 Wis. 260, 119 N. W. 865 (setting aside a judgment on the ground of perjury committed to obtain it; Marshall, J., diss.); 1910, *Lenke v. Hage*, 142 Wis. 178, 125 N. W. 440 (local usage affecting a contract); 1910, *Lepley v. Anderson*, 142 Wis. 668, 125 N. W. 433 (oral understanding nullifying a document).

<sup>24</sup> *E. g.* 1902, *West Chicago S. R. Co. v. Lieserowitz*, 197 Ill. 607, 64 N. E. 718; 1921, *Noone v. Olchy*, 297 Ill. 160, 130 N. E. 476 (testamentary competency; trial judge's failure to refer to weight of numbers, held error; unsound); 1896, *People v. Tuzkewitz*, 149 N. Y. 240, 43 N. E. 549.

<sup>25</sup> *Theory accepted*: 1890, *Quock Ting v. U. S.*, 140 U. S. 420, 11 Sup. 734 ("Undoubtedly, as a general rule, positive testimony as to a particular fact, uncontradicted by any one, should control the decision of the Court; but that rule admits of many exceptions"); 1902, *Ray, J.*, in *U. S. v. Lee Huen*, 118 Fed. 442, 457 ("The general rule is that uncontradicted evidence, free from inherent improbability, when given by disinterested witnesses, and in no way discredited, is conclusive"; yet in the very same opinion the Court inconsistently but correctly says: "It is impossible to prescribe any fixed rule by which the credibility of the witness is to be tested or which shall bind the



soundness of this conception has already been noticed (*ante*, §§ 1013, 2033, 2034).<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, the specific rules about number of witnesses required for the proof of lost wills and other facts, and the rules requiring corroboration for certain kinds of witnesses (*ante*, §§ 2036-2074) tend to evoke in judicial language frequent reference to the degree of persuasion required; so that those rules and the present one sometimes become hardly distinguishable.

conscience of the Court as to the conclusiveness of the evidence in a given case") ; 1906, *Dupuis v. Saginaw V. T. Co.*, 146 Mich. 151, 109 N. W. 413 (a quibbling opinion).

*Theory repudiated*: 1905, *McNeill v. Stitt*, 2 Cal. App. 13, 82 Pac. 1121; *McClelland v. Bullis*, 34 Colo. 69, 81 Pac. 771; 1909, *Chenoweth v. Burr*, 242 Ill. 312, 89 N. E. 1008; 1909, *Warren Construction Co. v. Powell*, 173 Ind. 207, 89 N. E. 857; 1915, *Vivian Collieries Co. v. Cahall*, 184 Ind. 473, 110 N. E. 672; 1905, *Heald v. W. U. Tel. Co.*, 129 Ia. 326, 105 N. W. 588; and statutes cited *ante*, § 2034, note 1.

It is now said in Illinois that under some

circumstances an instruction as to preponderance is objectionable if it does not state that "the element of numbers should be considered by them with all the other things"; 1907, *Elgin J. & E. R. Co. v. Lawlor*, 229 Ill. 621, 82 N. E. 407. But the vice of such a rule is the larger one of attempting to lay down rules of law to bind the jury in their exclusive function of estimating the credibilities of the case *without any trammels of law*. This is the growing danger of the times for the law of Evidence, and it should be opposed wherever it appears.

<sup>26</sup> For the relative value of *circumstantial* and *testimonial* evidence, see *ante*, § 26.



## TITLE II: BURDENS AND PRESUMPTIONS IN SPECIFIC ISSUES

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

- § 2499. Introductory.
- § 2500. Sanity: (1) Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.
- § 2501. Same: (2) Criminal Causes.
- § 2502. Undue Influence and Fraud: (1) Testamentary Execution.
- § 2503. Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Beneficiary.
- § 2504. Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.
- § 2505. Marriage: (1) Consent, from Cohabitation or Ceremony.
- § 2506. Same: (2) Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.
- § 2507. Negligence and Accident: (1) Contributory Negligence.
- § 2508. Same: (2) Loss by a Bailee.
- § 2509. Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.
- § 2510. Same: (4) Death by Violence.
- § 2510a. Same: (5) Ownership and Agency of Vehicle.
- § 2511. Crimes: (1) Innocence.
- § 2511a. Same: (2) Malice, Intent.
- § 2512. Same: (3) Self-Defence, Alibi.
- § 2513. Same: (4) Possession of Stolen Goods.
- § 2514. Same: (5) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).
- § 2515. Ownership: (1) Possession of Land and Personalty.
- § 2516. Same: (2) Possession of Negotiable Instrument.
- § 2517. Payment: (1) Lapse of Time.
- § 2518. Same: (2) Possession of Instrument or Receipt.
- § 2518a. (3) Delivery of Money.
- § 2519. Execution and Contents of Documents: (1) Letters and Telegrams.
- § 2520. Same: (2) Execution of Documents (Delivery, Date, Seal, Consideration).
- § 2521. Same: (3) Ancient Documents.
- § 2522. Same: (4) Lost Grant; Lost Documents in General.
- § 2523. Same: (5) Will (Execution and Revocation).
- § 2524. Same: (6) Spoliation or Suppression of Documents.
- § 2525. Same: (7) Alteration of Documents.
- § 2526. Gifts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement, Child's Services).
- § 2527. Legitimacy.
- § 2528. Chastity; Sterility (Child-bearing); Impotency.
- § 2529. Identity of Person (from Name, etc.).
- § 2530. Continuity: (1) in general (Ownership, Possession, Residence, Insanity, etc.).
- § 2531. Same: Life and Death.
- § 2532. Same: Survivorship.
- § 2533. Seaworthiness.
- § 2534. Regularity: (1) Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.
- § 2535. Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers, Incorporation.
- § 2536. Similarity of Foreign Law.
- § 2537. Contracts.
- § 2538. Statute of Limitations.
- § 2539. Malicious Prosecution.
- § 2540. Sundry Presumptions and Burdens.

§ 2499. **Introductory.**<sup>1</sup> In applying the foregoing principles to the different kinds of propositions presented for proof in litigation, it will be found that the rulings are constantly ambiguous in the language, in dealing with the

§ 2499. <sup>1</sup> EXPLANATORY NOTE. In this Chapter, the preceding one, and the three ensuing ones, no attempt has been made to secure all the authorities, for the reasons already stated in the Preface. The subjects are on the border line between Evidence and Procedure, and would require constant excursus into the latter field; most of the rulings on the topics of the present Chapter turn on

minute and voluminous details of the particular case, and the judicial language is often ambiguous and dangerous to state concisely; copious statutes, having only rare application in practice, lay down hundreds of rules for 'prima facie' evidence. Some years of additional labor would be required for a complete presentation of the material.



three chief questions arising under those principles. Sometimes the ruling involves the first "burden of proof," *i. e.* the *risk of non-persuasion of the jury* (*ante*, § 2485); this is, in strictness and usually, a question of Pleading rather than of Evidence. Sometimes the ruling involves the second "burden of proof," the *duty of producing evidence to the judge*, in its initial aspect, *i. e.* whether there is *sufficient evidence* to satisfy that duty and enable the party to go to the jury (*ante*, § 2494). Sometimes it involves the same burden in its ulterior aspect, *i. e.* whether there is a *presumption*, which *shifts the duty* to the opponent to come forward with evidence (*ante*, § 2487). Any topic of proof may give rise to all three of these questions; and it is often impossible to determine which effect the ruling is intended to have, except after a detailed analysis of the whole opinion, — and sometimes not even then. Moreover, many rulings, though using the language of presumptions, do not mean to do anything more than declare the admissibility of circumstantial evidence (*ante*, § 2491). This difficulty of interpretation must be kept in mind in any consideration of the precedents.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The following Code provisions gather together a number of standard presumptions; their text is here set forth, and a cross-reference to these texts will be found later at the appropriate sections in the footnotes:

*California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1963 ("All other presumptions are satisfactory, if uncontradicted. They are denominated disputable presumptions, and may be controverted by other evidence. The following are of that kind:

"1. That a person is innocent of crime or wrong;

"2. That an unlawful act was done with an unlawful intent;

"3. That a person intends the ordinary consequence of his voluntary act;

"4. That a person takes ordinary care of his own concerns;

"5. That evidence willfully suppressed would be adverse if produced;

"6. That higher evidence would be adverse from inferior being produced;

"7. That money paid by one to another was due to the latter;

"8. That a thing delivered by one to another belonged to the latter;

"9. That an obligation delivered up to the debtor has been paid;

"10. That former rent or installments have been paid when a receipt for latter is produced;

"11. That things which a person possesses are owned by him;

"12. That a person is the owner of property from exercising acts of ownership over it, or from common reputation of his ownership;

"13. That a person in possession of an order on himself for the payment of money, or the delivery of a thing, has paid the money or delivered the thing accordingly;

"14. That a person acting in a public office was regularly appointed to it;

"15. That official duty has been regularly performed;

"16. That a court or judge, acting as such, whether in this State or any other State or country, was acting in the lawful exercise of his jurisdiction;

"17. That a judicial record, when not conclusive, does still correctly determine or set forth the rights of the parties;

"18. That all matters within an issue were laid before the jury and passed upon by them; and in like manner, that all matters within a submission to arbitration were laid before the arbitrators and passed upon by them;

"19. That private transactions have been fair and regular;

"20. That the ordinary course of business has been followed;

"21. That a promissory note or bill of exchange was given or indorsed for a sufficient consideration;

"22. That an indorsement of a negotiable promissory note or bill of exchange was made at the time and place of making the note or bill;

"23. That a writing is truly dated;

"24. That a letter duly directed and mailed was received in the regular course of the mail;

"25. Identity of person from identity of name;

"26. That a person not heard from in seven years is dead;

"27. That acquiescence followed from a belief that the thing acquiesced in was conformable to the right or fact;

"28. That things have happened according to the ordinary course of nature and the ordinary habits of life;

"29. That persons acting as copartners have entered into a contract of copartnership;

"30. That a man and woman deporting



§ 2500. **Sanity:** (1) **Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.** (a) It seems to be generally conceded that the burden of proof as to a *testator's sanity* is on the proponent of the will, in the sense that, when the case goes to the jury, he has the risk of non-persuasion; the testator's sanity is a fact essential to the proponent's claim. But there is a difference of views as to the duty of going forward with evidence.<sup>1</sup> According to one view, the

themselves as husband and wife have entered into a lawful contract of marriage;

"31. That a child born in lawful wedlock, there being no divorce from bed and board, is legitimate;

"32. That a thing once proved to exist continues as long as is usual with things of that nature;

"33. That the law has been obeyed;

"34. That a document or writing more than thirty years old is genuine, when the same has been since generally acted upon as genuine, by persons having an interest in the question, and its custody has been satisfactorily explained;

"35. That a printed and published book, purporting to be printed or published by public authority, was so printed or published;

"36. That a printed and published book, purporting to contain reports of cases adjudged in the tribunals of the State or country where the book is published, contains correct reports of such cases;

"37. That a trustee or other person, whose duty it was to convey real property to a particular person, has actually conveyed to him, when such presumption is necessary to perfect the title of such person or his successor in interest;

"38. The uninterrupted use by the public of land for a burial ground, for five years, with the consent of the owner, and without a reservation of his rights, is presumptive evidence of his intention to dedicate it to the public for that purpose;

"39. That there was a good and sufficient consideration for a written contract;

"40. When two persons perish in the same calamity, such as a wreck, a battle, or a conflagration, and it is not shown who died first, and there are no particular circumstances from which it can be inferred, survivorship is presumed from the probabilities resulting from the strength, age, and sex, according to the following rules:

"First. If both of those who have perished were under the age of fifteen years, the older is presumed to have survived;

"Second. If both were above the age of sixty, the younger is presumed to have survived;

"Third. If one be under fifteen and the other above sixty, the former is presumed to have survived;

"Fourth. If both be over fifteen and under sixty, and the sexes be different, the male is presumed to have survived; if the sexes be the same, then the older;

"Fifth. If one be under fifteen, or over sixty, and the other between those ages, the latter is presumed to have survived").

*Georgia:* Rev. C. 1910, § 5736 ("Presumptions of law are sometimes conclusive, and an averment to the contrary will not be allowed. These are termed estoppels, and are not generally favored. Among these are the presumptions in favor of a record or judgment unreversed; of the proper conduct of courts and judicial officers acting within their legitimate sphere; of other officers of the law, after the lapse of time has rendered it dangerous to open the investigation of their acts in regard to mere formalities of the law; of ancient deeds, and other instruments more than thirty years old, when they come from the proper custody, and possession has been held in accordance with them; recitals in deeds, except payment of purchase-money, as against the grantor acting in his own right, and 'sui juris,' and his privies in estate, blood, and in law; the landlord's title, as against his tenant, while tenant in possession; solemn admissions made 'in judicio,' and other admissions upon which other parties have acted, either to their own injury or the benefit of the persons making the admissions; and similar cases where it would be more unjust and productive of more evil to hear the truth than to forbear the investigation").

*Louisiana:* Rev. Civ. C. 1920, § 2285 (presumptions of law); § 2288 ("presumptions not established by law are left to the judgment and discretion of the judge," etc.).

*Montana:* Rev. C. 1921, § 10606 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963).

*North Dakota:* Comp. L. 1913, § 7935 (presumptions deemed conclusive; like Cal. C. C. P. § 1962); § 7936 (denominational presumptions; like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, adding the following: "41, That the foreign law will be presumed to be the common law in the absence of rebutting evidence; 42, A domicile once acquired is presumed to continue until it is shown to have been changed").

*Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 334 (list of presumptions; like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, omitting par. 6, par. 17, and par. 39).

*Porto Rico:* Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, but omitting par. 26).

§ 2500.<sup>1</sup> **ENGLAND:** 1857, *Sutton v. Sadler*, 3 C. B. N. S. 87 (leading case).

**CANADA:** 1883, *Doe v. Gilbert*, 22 N. Br. 576, 581; 1890, *Harrison's Will*, 30 N. Br. 164,



evidence of execution with due formalities, introduced by the proponent, may suffice to raise a presumption of sanity, so as to require the opponent to

184; 1890, *Doe v. Savoy*, 30 N. Br. 227, 231; 1856, *Brocklebank's Will*, 2 Morris Newf. 88, 92; 1916, *Beament v. Foster*, 26 D. L. R. 474, Ont.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1903, *Leach v. Burr*, 188 U. S. 510, 23 Sup. 393; *California*: 1903, *Latour's Estate*, 140 Cal. 414, 74 Pac. 441; 1904, *McKenna's Estate*, 143 Cal. 580, 77 Pac. 461; *Colorado*: 1921, *Roeber v. Cordray*, 70 Colo. 196, 199 Pac. 481; *Connecticut*: 1893, *Barber's Appeal*, 63 Conn. 393, 27 Atl. 973 (evidence of execution shifts the burden to the contestant; subject, however, to the peculiarity that the attesting witnesses must be called by the proponent and asked as to capacity); 1917, *Wheeler v. Rockett*, 91 Conn. 388, 100 Atl. 13; *Georgia*: 1905, *Credille v. Credille*, 123 Ga. 673, 51 S. E. 628; *Hawaii*: 1919, *Lopez' Estate*, 25 Haw. 197 (careful opinion by Kemp, J.); *Illinois*: 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 Ill. 106, 118, 37 N. E. 837 (the burden is on the contestant, provided the attesting witnesses have spoken to capacity); 1897, *Harp v. Parr*, 168 Ill. 459, 48 N. E. 113 (the introduction of proper subscribing-witness testimony to execution is sufficient to shift the burden; here one subscribing-witness and the scrivener were called, and a certificate of testimony at the probate was presented); 1898, *Slingloff v. Bruner*, 174 Ill. 561, 51 N. E. 285; 1898, *Egbers v. Egbers*, 177 Ill. 82, 52 N. E. 285 (bill to set aside probate; the burden of non-persuasion is said to be on the complainant-contestants, and yet the first duty of production to be on the will's proponents; the opinion is confused); 1899, *Entwistle v. Meikle*, 180 Ill. 9, 54 N. E. 217; 1900, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 187 Ill. 86, 58 N. E. 237 (the 'prima facie' case made out by the attesting witnesses' testimony does not fail when one of the witnesses is impeached; "credible," under the statute, meaning merely "competent"); 1901, *Huggins v. Drury*, 192 Ill. 528, 61 N. E. 652; 1901, *Thompson v. Bennett*, 194 Ill. 57, 62 N. E. 321; 1903, *Baker v. Baker*, 202 Ill. 595, 67 N. E. 410 (approving *Egbers v. Egbers*); 1906, *Todd v. Todd*, 221 Ill. 410, 77 N. E. 680; 1906, *Waters v. Waters*, 222 Ill. 26, 78 N. E. 1; 1912, *Norton v. Clark*, 253 Ill. 557, 97 N. E. 1079; 1920, *Valentine v. Second Baptist Church*, 293 Ill. 71, 127 N. E. 178; 1920, *Donovan v. St. Joseph's Home*, 295 Ill. 125, 129 N. E. 1 (re-examining the foregoing series of cases, noting the two distinct burdens, and applying the rules to a case involving the presumption of continued insanity); *Indiana*: 1896, *Blough v. Parry*, 144 Ind. 463, 43 N. E. 562 (treating *Kenworthy v. Williams*, 5 Ind. 375, as overruled, and disapproving the dictum in *Durham v. Smith*, 120 Ind. 465; the burden is on the contestant, but may shift); 1896, *Young v. Miller*, 145 Ind. 652, 44 N. E. 754 (the con-

testant has the burden of establishing insanity; monomania, if shown, raises a presumption of general incapacity and makes a 'prima facie' case; but when the evidence is closed on both sides, the contestant still has the risk of establishing incapacity, and an instruction requiring a preponderance of evidence from the contestee is erroneous); 1898, *Roller v. Kling*, 150 Ind. 159, 49 N. E. 948 (action to set aside a probated will; the burden of convincing the jury by preponderance of evidence is on the applicant, though evidence of prior persistent insanity may raise a presumption in his favor); 1901, *Morell v. Morell*, 157 Ind. 179, 60 N. E. 1092; later decisions leave the law of this State uncertain; the ambiguity of the term "burden of proof" seems to be the cause; 1904, *Branstrator v. Crow*, 162 Ind. 362, 69 N. E. 668; 1907, *Steinkuehler v. Wempner*, 169 Ind. 154, 162, 81 N. E. 482 (changing the rule); 1909, *Hoffbauer v. Morgan*, 172 Ind. 273, 88 N. E. 337 (the burden is on the proponents in a proceeding to probate, following *Steinkuehler v. Wempner*); 1910, *Pepper v. Martin*, 175 Ind. 580, 92 N. E. 777; 1914, *Herring v. Watson*, 182 Ind. 374, 105 N. E. 900; 1917, *Johnson v. Samuels*, 186 Ind. 56, 114 N. E. 977 (*Steinkuehler v. Wempner* followed); *Iowa*: 1906, *Dunahugh's Will*, 130 Ia. 692, 107 N. W. 925; 1908, *Ross v. Ross*, 140 Ia. 51, 117 N. W. 1105; *Kansas*: 1907, *McConnell v. Keir*, 76 Kan. 527, 92 Pac. 540 (good opinion, by Porter, J.); *Kentucky*: 1893, *Johnson v. Stevens*, 95 Ky. 128, 23 S. W. 957; 1904, *Henning v. Stevenson*, 118 Ky. 318, 80 S. W. 1135; *Louisiana*: Rev. Civ. C. 1920, § 1788; 1894, *Bey's Succession*, 46 La. An. 773, 787, 15 So. 297; *Maryland*: 1905, *Gesell v. Baugher*, 100 Md. 677, 60 Atl. 481; *Massachusetts*: 1854, *Crowninshield v. Crowninshield*, 2 Gray 524 (leading case); 1902, *Richardson v. Bly*, 181 Mass. 97, 63 N. E. 3; *Michigan*: 1892, *Prentis v. Bates*, 88 Mich. 567, 50 N. W. 637, 93 Mich. 234, 53 N. W. 153, 17 L. R. A. 494 (leading case); 1896, *Moriarty v. Moriarty*, 108 Mich. 249, 65 N. W. 964; 1907, *Mansbach's Estate*, 150 Mich. 348, 114 N. W. 65; Mich. Comp. L. 1915, § 12546 (wills; mental competency presumed); *Mississippi*: 1896, *Sheehan v. Kearney*, 82 Miss. 688, 21 So. 46 ("Now, when the proponent of a will offers the will and the record of its probate, a presumption is thereby raised that the alleged testator had testamentary capacity, and this presumption satisfies the burden of proof in that respect; and the contestant must fail unless he overcomes this by proof on his part. But there is no shifting of the burden of proof, properly understood"); 1920, *Moore v. Parks*, 122 Miss. 301, 84 So. 230; 1920, *Gathings v. Howard*, 122 Miss. 355, 84 So. 240; *Missouri*: 1892, *Maddox v. Maddox*, 114 Mo. 35, 46,



introduce evidence of insanity. By another view, the evidence of execution does not raise this presumption, and the proponent therefore has the duty of coming forward, as in any other case, with some evidence (it may be but slight) of his 'factum probandum,' *i. e.* sanity. The subject is further complicated, in many jurisdictions, by the variety of modes of trial and re-trial for a will's validity, and by the presumptive effect sometimes given to the preliminary finding, on a later contest in the nature of an appeal, in a chancery or a jury court; as also by the 'prima facie' effect occasionally given to the oath of the attesting witnesses, and by the rule (*ante*, § 1873) as to the scope of evidence in rebuttal.

(b) For *deeds*, however, it is common to find the fact of insanity treated in the nature of an affirmative plea of avoidance, placing the ultimate risk of non-persuasion on the contestant, though the duty to produce evidence may shift.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *Suicide* is generally conceded to be a circumstance from which (with others) insanity may be inferred (*ante*, § 228); but it ought not to create a presumption or shift the duty of producing evidence, though the judicial language is here sometimes ambiguous.<sup>3</sup>

21 S. W. 499; 1897, *Gordon v. Burris*, 141 Mo. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (after proof of execution, the contestant must produce "substantial evidence" of the invalidating ground in order to get to the jury); 1898, *Fulbright v. Perry Co.*, 145 Mo. 432, 46 S. W. 955 (proponent raises a presumption of sanity by testimony to execution and by that of the subscribing witnesses to sanity); 1907, *King v. Gilson*, 206 Mo. 264, 104 S. W. 52; 1913, *Bensberg v. Washington University*, 251 Mo. 641, 158 S. W. 330; 1921, *Mayes v. Mayes*, — Mo. —, 234 S. W. 100; *Nebraska*: 1896, *Murray v. Hennessey*, 48 Nebr. 608, 67 N. W. 470 (the burden of establishing capacity rests on the proponent of the will for probate, and also a preliminary duty to offer some evidence of this; after opposing evidence, the general burden of establishing remains on the proponent); 1907, *Powers' Estate*, 79 Nebr. 680, 113 N. W. 198 (not clear); *New Hampshire*: 1894, *Patten v. Cilley*, 67 N. H. 520, 42 Atl. 47 (burden of non-persuasion is on the executor, no matter how specific the issues, and carries the right to close in argument); *New York*: 1862, *DeLafield v. Parish*, 25 N. Y. 9, 29, 73, 97; *Oklahoma*: 1920, *Son-se-gra's Will*, 78 Okl. 213, 189 Pac. 865 (the burden shifts from proponent to opponent); *Oregon*: 1903, *Mendenhall's Will*, 43 Or. 542, 73 Pac. 1033; *Texas*: 1920, *Day v. Henderson*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 224 S. W. 248 (in a suit to annul a will already probated the burden of showing incapacity is on the plaintiff); *Virginia*: 1903, *Gray v. Rumrill*, 101 Va. 507, 44 S. E. 697; *Washington*: 1902, *Higgins v. Netherby*, 30 Wash. 239, 70 Pac. 489; 1904, *Hunt v. Phillips*, 34 Wash. 362, 75 Pac. 970; *Wyoming*: 1917, *Wood v.*

*Wood*, 25 Wyo. 26, 164 Pac. 844 (authorities examined).

Compare also the cases cited under other rules for proof of insanity, *ante*, § 233 (prior and subsequent insanity), § 1671 (inquisition of lunacy), *post*, § 2531 (presumption of continuance).

<sup>2</sup> 1911, *Pritchard v. Fowler*, 171 Ala. 662, 55 So. 147 (insanity at past intervals does not create a presumption of insanity at the time of a transaction); 1867, *Myatt v. Walker*, 44 Ill. 485; 1896, *Taylor v. Buttrick*, 165 Mass. 547, 43 N. E. 507; 1893, *Jones v. Jones*, 137 N. Y. 610, 612, 33 N. E. 479; 1907, *Hudson v. Hudson*, 144 N. C. 449, 57 S. E. 162 (discussing the shifting of the burden after evidence of prior insanity); 1898, *Artrip v. Rasnake*, 96 Va. 277, 31 S. E. 4; 1903, *Eakin v. Hawkins*, 52 W. Va. 124, 43 S. E. 211; 1909, *Towner v. Towner*, 65 W. Va. 476, 64 S. E. 732 (discussing the effect of an adjudication in committal proceedings); 1919, *In re Farr*, 169 Wis. 451, 171 N. W. 951 (Stats. § 587c, declaring a presumption of insanity for two years after parole from a sanitarium, applied).

<sup>3</sup> Compare the following: 1893, *Connecticut M. L. Ins. Co. v. Akens*, 150 U. S. 468, 475, 14 Sup. 155 (death by self-destruction being shown, the plaintiff is "entitled to the benefit of the presumption that a sane man would not commit suicide"); 1838, *Duffield v. Morris*, 2 Harringt. Del. 375, 382 ("it stands as a fact, together with all the other acts of the deceased's life," but creates no presumption); 1897, *Grand Lodge v. Wieting*, 168 Ill. 408, 48 N. E. 59 ("the act of self-destruction, the manner and mode thereof, and all attending circumstances" may be considered); 1901, *Brashears*



§ 2501. **Same: (2) Criminal Causes.** For proving the commission of a *crime*, the criminal intent being material, three different rules have found vogue:<sup>1</sup> (1) The accused's sanity is, by the orthodox view, a part of the

*v. Orme*, 93 Md. 442, 49 Atl. 620; 1919, *Brunswick v. Standard Acc. Ins. Co.*, 278 Mo. 154, 213 S. W. 45 (collecting authorities); 1901, *Modern Woodmen v. Kozak*, 63 Nebr. 146, 88 N. W. 248; 1875, *Hathaway's Adm'r v. Ins. Co.*, 48 Vt. 336, 353 (admissible); 1894, *Bachmeyer v. M. R. F. L. Assoc.*, 87 Wis. 325, 340, 58 N. W. 399.

For the burden of proof, in an *insurance contract*, that the death was not due to an *excepted cause*, viz. suicide, see *post*, § 2510.

§ 2501. <sup>1</sup> These different views are represented respectively in the following cases, although their language is not always precise:

(1) *First view*: CANADA: *Dom. R. S.* 1906, c. 146, Crim. C. § 19.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1895, *Davis v. U. S.*, 160 U. S. 469, 16 Sup. 353 (quoted *supra*); 1913, *Matheson v. U. S.*, 227 U. S. 540, 33 Sup. 355 (*Davis v. U. S.* followed); *Alabama*: 1910, *Clemmons v. State*, 167 Ala. 20, 52 So. 467 (noting changes of rule in this State); 1913, *Roberson v. State*, 183 Ala. 43, 62 So. 837; *Colorado*: 1896, *Jones v. People*, 23 Colo. 276, 47 Pac. 275 (the duty of going forward is on the defendant, but the general burden of persuasion is on the State); *Connecticut*: 1897, *State v. Lee*, 69 Conn. 186, 37 Atl. 75; 1921, *State v. Joseph*, 96 Conn. 637, 115 Atl. 85; *Florida*: 1892, *Armstrong v. State*, 30 Fla. 170, 196, 11 So. 618; *Georgia*: 1921, *Hinson v. State*, 152 Ga. 243, 109 S. E. 661 (homicide); *Illinois*: 1920, *People v. Haensel*, 293 Ill. 33, 127 N. E. 181; 1917, *People v. Ahrling*, 279 Ill. 70, 116 N. E. 764; *Indiana*: 1915, *Walters v. State*, 183 Ind. 178, 108 N. E. 583; *Kansas*: 1914, *State v. Johnson*, 92 Kan. 441, 140 Pac. 839; *Massachusetts*: 1912, *Com. v. Spencer*, 212 Mass. 438, 99 N. E. 266; *Mississippi*: 1896, *Ford v. State*, 73 Miss. 734, 19 So. 665 (but the Court says the sanity-presumption suffices if the defendant does not offer, not "any testimony," but "sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt"); 1898, *Coffey v. State*, — Miss. —, 24 So. 315; *Nebraska*: 1898, *Snider v. State*, 56 Nebr. 309, 76 N. W. 574 (presumption of sanity ceases when any evidence to the contrary is offered); *New Mexico*: 1892, *Faulkner v. Terr.*, 6 N. M. 464, 36 Pac. 905 (burden of persuasion is on the prosecution, but of producing evidence on the defendant); *Oklahoma*: 1911, *Adair v. State*, 6 Okl. Cr. 284, 118 Pac. 416 (*Davis v. U. S.* followed); *Oregon*: *Laws* 1920, § 1527; *Utah*: 1909, *State v. Brown*, 36 Utah 46, 102 Pac. 641.

(2) *Second view*: 1921, *Cutcliff v. State*, 17 Ala. App. 586, 87 So. 706; 1896, *Nino v. People*, — N. Y. —, 43 N. E. 853; 1897, *People v. Koerner*, 154 N. Y. 355, 48 N. E. 730; 1913, *Witty v. State*, 69 Tex. Cr. 125, 153 S. W. 1146.

(3) *Third view*: CANADA: 1921, *Clark v. The King*, 59 D. L. R. 121, Can.; 1914, *R. v. Anderson*, 16 D. L. R. 203 (but not beyond a reasonable doubt).

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: Code 1907, § 7175; *California*: 1893, *People v. Bemmerly*, 98 Cal. 299, 304, 33 Pac. 263; 1897, *People v. Allender*, 117 Cal. 81, 48 Pac. 1014; 1898, *People v. Barthleman*, 120 Cal. 7, 52 Pac. 112; 1904, *People v. Suesser*, 143 Cal. 354, 75 Pac. 1093; *Georgia*: 1922, *Currie v. State*, — Ga. —, 111 S. E. 727; *Illinois*: 1907, *People v. Casey*, 231 Ill. 261, 83 N. E. 278; 1921, *People v. Geary*, 298 Ill. 236, 131 N. E. 652 (in a proceeding to stay execution, the burden is on the convicted person); *Iowa*: Code 1919, § 9478; *Kentucky*: 1855, *Graham v. Com.*, 16 B. Monr. 587 (leading opinion, by Stites, J.); 1895, *Phelps v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 32 S. W. 470; 1898, *Portwood v. Com.*, 104 Ky. 496, 47 S. W. 339; *Louisiana*: 1897, *State v. Scott*, 49 La. An. 253, 21 So. 271, *Breaux, J.*, diss. (overruling prior precedents, in which the defendant had been required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt); 1907, *State v. Johnston*, 118 La. 276, 42 So. 925; 1915, *State v. McIntosh*, 136 La. 1000, 68 So. 104; *New Jersey*: 1896, *Genz v. State*, 58 N. J. L. 482, 34 Atl. 816; 1897, *Clawson v. State*, 59 N. J. L. 434, 36 Atl. 886; 1898, *Winters v. State*, 61 N. J. L. 613, 41 Atl. 220; *Ohio*: 1896, *Kelch v. State*, 55 Oh. St. 146, 45 N. E. 6 (same; disapproving a charge which required the jury to be "satisfied" of the insanity, and treating this as requiring more than a mere "preponderance" making insanity probable but leaving it open to doubt); 1905, *State v. Austin*, 71 Oh. 317, 73 N. E. 218; 1921, *Rehfeld v. State*, — Oh. —, 131 N. E. 712; *Pennsylvania*: 1895, *Com. v. Berchine*, — Pa. —, 32 Atl. 110; 1911, *Com. v. Molten*, 230 Pa. 399, 79 Atl. 638; *Philippine Isl.* 1914, *U. S. v. Vaquilar*, 27 P. I. 58; *Rhode Island*: 1904, *State v. Quigley*, 20 R. I. 263, 58 Atl. 905 (good opinion by Douglas, J.); *Tennessee*: 1892, *King v. State*, 91 Tenn. 617, 647, 20 S. W. 169; *Texas*: *Rev. P. C.* 1911, § 40; *Washington*: 1904, *State v. Clark*, 34 Wash. 485, 76 Pac. 98 (good opinion by Mount, J., with a full collection of cases from other jurisdictions); *West Virginia*: 1911, *State v. Cook*, 69 W. Va. 717, 72 S. E. 1025 (prior rulings affirmed); *Wisconsin*: 1907, *Duthey v. State*, 131 Wis. 178, 111 N. W. 222.

Compare also the following: *Ala.* 1897, *Scheerer v. Agee*, 113 Ala. 383, 21 So. 79; 1904, *Parrish v. State*, 139 Ala. 16, 36 So. 1012; 1904, *Talbert v. State*, 140 Ala. 96, 37 So. 78; *Ga.* 1897, *Ryder v. State*, 100 Ga. 528, 28 S. E. 246; 1905, *Allams v. State*, 123 Ga. 500, 51 S. E. 506; *Ida.* 1903, *State v. Shuff*, 9 Ida.



case of the prosecution; and the burden of proving it, in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485), is on the prosecution; the measure of persuasion required being, as in other elements of a crime, persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*ante*, § 2497); and, as an incident of this view, the general presumption of sanity suffices for the prosecution's duty to produce evidence, and only the duty of producing evidence of insanity is thrown upon the accused. (2) A variation of this view, held by a few Courts, fixes a mere preponderance of evidence as the measure of persuasion required, instead of persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt. (3) But another view, based on judicial experience in dealing with the issue of insanity in criminal trials, and adopted by an increasing number of Courts, is that the accused has the burden of proving insanity, in the sense that he has the risk of persuading the jury to that effect, at least by a preponderance of evidence, and also, of course, has the duty of producing evidence:

1895, HARLAN, J., in *Davis v. U. S.*, 160 U. S. 469, 16 Sup. 353: "Strictly speaking, the burden of proof, as those words are understood in criminal law, is never upon the accused to establish his innocence, or to disprove the facts necessary to establish the crime for which he is indicted. It is on the prosecution from the beginning to the end of the trial, and applies to every element necessary to constitute the crime. Given to the prosecution, where the defense is insanity, the benefit in the way of proof of the presumption in favor of sanity, the vital question, from the time a plea of not guilty is entered until the return of the verdict, is whether, upon all the evidence, by whatever side adduced, guilt is established beyond reasonable doubt. If the whole evidence, including that supplied by the presumption of sanity, does not exclude beyond reasonable doubt the hypothesis of insanity, of which some proof is adduced, the accused is entitled to an acquittal of the specific offense charged."

1904, DOUGLAS, J., in *State v. Quigley*, 26 R. I. 263, 58 Atl. 905: "The question was settled in England in 1843 by the answer of the Judges to questions propounded by the House of Lords, suggested by the case of Daniel M'Naghten, reported in 10 Cl. & Fin. 200. In that case the law was said to be: That if the accused was conscious that the act was one which he ought not to do; and if the act was at the same time contrary to law, he is punishable; in all cases of this kind the jurors ought to be told that every man is presumed to be sane and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crime until the contrary be proved to their satisfaction; and that to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that at the time of committing the act the party was laboring under such a defect of reason from disease of the mind as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing or as not to know that what he was doing was wrong. . . . The question has arisen in almost every State of the Union, and in the courts of the United States, and between the decisions of these courts there is a hopeless conflict. . . . It would be a fruitless task to review in detail the cases where the question has been considered, for they are divided into two classes, which follow substantially the same two divergent lines of reasoning.

"The English rule implies that the question of guilt and the question of insanity raise two distinct issues, and that while both may be involved in the final verdict, the burden of proof upon each issue lies upon different parties. The most complete and forcible state-

115. 72 Pac. 664; Ill. 1892, *Hornish v. People*, 142 Ill. 620, 626, 32 N. E. 677; La. 1904, *State v. Lyons*, 113 La. 959, 37 So. 890 (re-considering prior cases); Mo. 1896, *State v. Wright*, 134 Mo. 404, 35 S. W. 1145; 1896, *State v. Lewis*, 136 Mo. 84, 37 S. W. 807; *State v. Bell*, 136 Mo. 120, 37 S. W. 823.



ment of the argument in support of this rule which we have found is contained in the opinion of Judge DANFORTH in *State v. Lawrence*, 57 Me. 574, 581. The American rule, so-called, holds that in a criminal case there is but one issue and that the burden throughout is upon the prosecution to prove, not only the criminal act, but the capacity of the accused to commit it beyond a reasonable doubt.

"We think the first of these positions is the more logical. Sanity is not an ingredient of crime. It is a condition precedent of all intelligent action, as well benevolent as nefarious. It is a quality of the actor, not an element of the act. It is incumbent upon the prosecution to show the commission of the act, and from this showing and its circumstances to sustain the inferences of malice and such emotions as the particular crime may include. But sanity is not one of these inferences. It is a pre-existing fact which may be taken for granted as implied by law and general experience. . . . It is argued that criminal intent, malice, and premeditation are facts to be proven by the prosecutor; that these can not exist in any insane mind; hence sanity must be proved by the prosecutor. But these are facts of mental condition and action, and they can only be proved by inference from material facts, circumstances, and acts. It is incumbent, therefore, upon the prosecution to prove such material facts, circumstances, and acts as would compel the inference of guilt in a sane person; and this is the limit of his burden. In murder the prosecution must establish the act, and either by inference or additional evidence, malice, and premeditation. If these ingredients of the crime can not exist without sanity, sanity is presumed. All ingredients of the crime must be proved, and as to these we agree the burden never shifts. But as to sanity it never attaches to the prosecutor. The plea of not guilty by itself does not put the sanity of the accused in issue. He must raise the question otherwise, as all agree, if not by special plea, at least by introducing evidence, and this is confession and avoidance."

§ 2502. **Undue Influence and Fraud; (1) Testamentary Execution.** In the proof of *undue influence*, negating the capacity of a *testator*, there is a difference of judicial opinion, as in the case of insanity (*ante*, § 2500), but here it goes back to the main burden of persuasion; *i. e.* by one opinion, the voluntariness of the testator's act is a part of the proponent's case, and with the jury he has the risk of non-persuasion; by the other view, the fact of undue influence is treated as in the nature of a defensive plea of the contestant, and therefore to be proved as a part of his case.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2503. **Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Other Beneficiary.** Where the grantee or other beneficiary of a deed or will is a person who has maintained intimate relations with the grantor or testator, or has drafted or

§ 2502. <sup>1</sup> The following cases represent both views: *Eng.* 1838, *Barry v. Butlin*, 2 Moore P. C. 480; *Can.* 1896, *McLellan's Estate*, 28 N. Se. 226; *U. S. Ala.* 1892, *Bulger v. Ross*, 98 Ala. 267, 271; *Ark.* 1910, *Miller v. Carr*, 94 Ark. 176, 126 S. W. 1068; *Cal.* 1903, *Latour's Estate*, 140 Cal. 414, 73 Pac. 1070; *Ill.* 1906, *Compher v. Browning*, 219 Ill. 429, 76 N. E. 678; *Ia.* 1901, *Mallow v. Walker*, 115 Ia. 238, 88 N. W. 452; 1902, *Marshall v. Hanby*, 115 Ia. 318, 88 N. W. 801; *Ky.* 1897, *King v. King*, — Ky. —, 42 S. W. 347; *Mich.* 1897, *Bush v. Delano*, 113 Mich. 321, 71 N. W. 628 (repudiating the language in *Maynard v. Vinton*, 29 Mich. 139, 26 N. W. 401, and *Severance v. Severance*, 90 Mich. 417, 52 N. W. 292); *Miss.* 1896, *Sheehan v. Kearney*, 82 Miss. 688, 21 So. 41 (Whitfield, J.: "It is not

only necessary that the testator shall have testamentary capacity, but that capacity shall be exercised freely and voluntarily. If either its existence or the freedom of its exercise is wanting, the instrument is not the alleged testator's will. Both are essential parts of the proponent's case. The issue is single, — will or no will"); 1920, *Moore v. Parks*, 122 Miss. 301, 84 So. 230; *Mo.* 1896, *Morton v. Heidorn*, 135 Mo. 608, 37 S. W. 504; 1897, *McFadin v. Catron*, 138 Mo. 197, 38 S. W. 932; *N. J.* 1898, *Salter v. Ely*, 56 N. J. L. 357, 39 Atl. 365; *N. Y.* 1913, *Kindberg's Will*, 207 N. Y. 220, 100 N. E. 789 (burden is on contestant; explaining prior cases); *Vt.* 1905, *Cowdry's Will*, 77 Vt. 359, 60 Atl. 141; *Wis.* 1905, *Winn v. Itzel*, 125 Wis. 19, 103 N. W. 220; 1913, *Ball's Will*, *Ball v. Boston*, 153 Wis. 27, 141 N. W. 8.



advised the terms of the instrument, a presumption of undue influence or of fraud on the part of the beneficiary has often been applied.<sup>1</sup> But it is not

§ 2503. <sup>1</sup> Cases illustrating the various situations are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1838, *Barry v. Butlin*, 2 Moore P. C. 480 (leading case); 1894, *Tyrrell v. Painton*, Prob. 151 (commenting on *Barry v. Butlin*); 1875, *Fulton v. Andrew*, L. R. 7 H. L. 448, 471 (beneficiary drafting or framing a will); 1920, *Craig v. Lamoureux*, A. C. 349 (husband and wife).

CANADA: 1893, *Adams v. McBeath*, 3 Br. C. 513; 1884, *McEwan v. Milne*, 5 Ont. 100; 1901, *Collins v. Kilroy*, 1 Ont. L. R. 503; 1903, *Stewart v. Walker*, 6 Ont. L. R. 495, 510 (solicitor drawing a will and receiving benefits under it); 1907, *Mayrand v. Dussault*, 38 Can. S. C. 460 (brother); 1914, *Lamoureux v. Craig*, 17 D. L. R. 422, Can. S. C. (husband and wife; doctrine of *Barry v. Butlin* considered); 1914, *Loftus v. Harris*, 19 D. L. R. 670, Ont. (solicitor and client; doctrine of *Barry v. Butlin* applied); 1915, *Koop v. Smith*, 25 D. L. R. 355, Sask. (brother and sister); 1917, *Vangant v. Coates*, 37 D. L. R. 470, Ont. (mother and daughter); 1919, *Sproule v. Murray*, 48 D. L. R. 368, Ont. (uncle and niece); 1919, *Iwanchuk v. Iwanchuk*, 48 D. L. R. 381, Alta. (father and son); 1919, *Craig v. Lamoureux*, 50 D. L. R. 11, Privy Council (husband and wife).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1918, *Crabb v. Watts*, D. C. Or., 249 Fed. 357, 365 (father and sons); *Alabama*: 1891, *Little v. Knox*, 96 Ala. 179, 11 So. 443 (attorney purchasing from an estate managed by him); 1892, *Garrett v. Heffin*, 98 Ala. 615, 618, 13 So. 326 (residuary legatee who wrote the will himself); 1898, *Coghill v. Kennedy*, 119 Ala. 641, 24 So. 459 (drafter of a will); 1901, *McQueen v. Wilson*, 131 Ala. 606, 31 So. 94; 1903, *Harraway v. Harraway*, 136 Ala. 499, 34 So. 836 (husband and wife); 1913, *Hawthorne v. Jenkins*, 182 Ala. 505, 62 So. 505 (parent and child); 1915, *Keeble v. Underwood*, 193 Ala. 582, 69 So. 473 (parent and child); 1916, *McElhanev v. Jones*, 197 Ala. 303, 72 So. 531 (stepmother and stepson); *California*: 1905, *Morey's Estate*, 147 Cal. 495, 82 Pac. 57 (will); 1910, *Broadbus v. Monroe*, 13 Cal. App. 464, 110 Pac. 158 (mother and daughter); 1916, *Cox v. Schnerr*, 172 Cal. 371, 156 Pac. 509 (friendly adviser); 1921, *Anderson's Estate*, 185 Cal. 700, 198 Pac. 407 (aunt); 1922, *Cover's Estate*, — Cal. —, 204 Pac. 583 (husband and wife); *Connecticut*: 1890, *Richmond's Appeal*, 59 Conn. 226, 22 Atl. 82 (will); 1905, *Re Birdseye*, 77 Conn. 623, 60 Atl. 111 (will); 1916, *Kirby's Appeal*, 91 Conn. 40, 98 Atl. 349; 1919, *Gager v. Mathewson*, 93 Conn. 539, 107 Atl. 1; 1919, *Downey v. Guilfoyle*, 93 Conn. 630, 107 Atl. 562 (uncle and niece); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1913, *Madre v. Gaskins*, 39 D. C. App. 19 (friend); 1919, *Overholt v.*

*Matthews*, 48 D. C. App. 482 (attorney and client); *Illinois*: 1901, *Lewis v. McGrath*, 191 Ill. 401, 61 N. E. 135 (gift); 1901, *Blanchard v. Blanchard*, 191 Ill. 450, 61 N. E. 481 (deed); 1902, *Michael v. Marshall*, 201 Ill. 70, 66 N. E. 273 (will); 1904, *Weston v. Teufel*, 213 Ill. 291, 72 N. E. 908 (beneficiary of a will); 1906, *Compher v. Browning*, 219 Ill. 429, 76 N. E. 768 (testator and beneficiary); 1907, *Sears v. Vaughan*, 230 Ill. 572, 82 N. E. 881 (cases reviewed); 1908, *Fish v. Fish*, 235 Ill. 396, 85 N. E. 662 (nephew managing aunt's property); 1908, *Gilmore v. Lee*, 237 Ill. 402, 86 N. E. 568 (priest); 1908, *Hudson v. Hudson*, 237 Ill. 9, 86 N. E. 661; 1909, *Hensan v. Cooksey*, 237 Ill. 620, 86 N. E. 1107 (deed to a son); 1910, *Dick v. Albers*, 243 Ill. 231, 90 N. E. 683 (son); 1912, *Yess v. Yess*, 255 Ill. 414, 99 N. E. 687 (son as beneficiary; issue held proper for the jury); 1915, *O'Day v. Crabb*, 269 Ill. 123, 109 N. E. 724 (confidential friend); 1916, *Pilstrand v. Swedish Methodist Church*, 275 Ill. 46, 113 N. E. 958 (priest as devisee; the presumption applies only where the devisee has been directly connected with the making of the will); 1920, *Blackhurst v. James*, 293 Ill. 11, 127 N. E. 226 (daughter and son-in-law); 1921, *Lipsecomb v. Allen*, 298 Ill. 537, 132 N. E. 206 (executor of husband, held a fiduciary as to the widow); 1918, *Lang v. Lang*, 284 Ill. 148, 119 N. E. 963 (guardian and ward); 1919, *Abbott v. Church*, 288 Ill. 91, 123 N. E. 306 (client and attorney-scribe); 1922, *Egan v. Egan*, 301 Ill. 124, 133 N. E. 663 (mother and son); 1922, *Mees v. Steffey*, 303 Ill. 115, 135 N. E. 206 (parent and child); *Indiana*: 1896, *Teegarden v. Lewis*, 145 Ind. 98, 44 N. E. 9 (action by an administrator for money of the deceased received as a gift, through undue influence, by the defendants, his daughter and son-in-law, by whom he was supported and with whom he lived; held, that "one who challenges the mental capacity of a testator or donor has the burden of establishing the absence of the particular capacity in issue," and that though ordinarily a presumption of undue influence would be created in the plaintiff's favor by a fiduciary position of the defendants, yet the care-taking by a child of the parent does not create that presumption, and did not here, although the father was aged, feeble, and of unsound mind); 1898, *Slayback v. Witt*, 151 Ind. 376, 50 N. E. 389 (parent and child; this relation ordinarily overturns the presumption); 1916, *Westphal v. Heckman*, — Ind. —, 119 N. E. 299 (parent and child); *Iowa*: 1901, *Good v. Zook*, 116 Ia. 582, 88 N. W. 376 (clerical adviser); 1907, *Vannest v. Murphy*, 135 Ia. 123, 112 N. W. 236 (son's fiduciary relation to mother); 1916, *Eveleth's Will*, 177 Ia. 716, 157 N. W. 257 (father and son); 1917, *Graham v. Courtright*,



possible to say that any single circumstance or group of facts is the invariable mark of such a presumption, or that there is any uniform rule capable of application apart from the facts of each case.

§ 2504. **Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.** Conveyances by debtors are attended by circumstances which are often said to raise a presumption of an intent to defraud creditors; but here the distinction between circumstances constituting 'per se' a fraud under the substantive law and circumstances merely evidential of fraud makes the subject inseparable from the whole law of fraudulent conveyances. It is to be noted that at least three distinct presumptions may be involved: (a) the presumption of the grantee's title from his possession (*post*, § 2515), (b) the presumption of the debtor's fraudulent intent, from his retention of possession,<sup>1</sup> and

180 Ia. 394, 161 N. W. 774 (attorney and client); 1920, *Grace v. Callahan*, 189 Ia. 213, 178 N. W. 520 (brother and sister); *Kansas*: Kan. G. S. 1915, § 11765 (special rule provided for this class of cases); 1893, *Hill v. Miller*, 50 Kan. 659, 663, 32 Pac. 354 (a brother in fiduciary relations with aged and infirm grantor); 1918, *Shell v. Mulligan*, 103 Kan. 257, 173 Pac. 284 (grandson and grandmother); *Kentucky*: 1912, *Shacklette v. Goodall*, 151 Ky. 20, 151 S. W. 23 (uncle and nephew); 1913, *McDowell v. Edwards' Adm'r*, 156 Ky. 475, 161 S. W. 534 (infirm person and custodian); 1916, *Herzog v. Gipson*, 170 Ky. 325, 185 S. W. 1119 (mother and son); 1921, *Sword v. Fields*, 192 Ky. 629, 234 S. W. 202 (mother and son); *Maryland*: 1905, *Kennedy v. McCann*, 101 Md. 643, 61 Atl. 625 (gift); 1908, *Saxton v. Krumm*, 107 Md. 393, 68 Atl. 1056 (mistress); 1908, *Zimmerman v. Freshour*, 108 Md. 115, 69 Atl. 796 (principal and agent); 1909, *Reck's Ex'r v. Reck*, 110 Md. 497, 73 Atl. 144 (deed by father to son); 1921, *Coburn v. Shilling*, 138 Md. 177, 113 Atl. 761 (niece); *Massachusetts*: 1906, *Hill v. Hall*, 191 Mass. 253, 77 N. E. 831 (attorney); 1915, *Smith v. Smith*, 222 Mass. 102, 109 N. E. 830 (daughter-in-law); 1917, *Holbrook v. Seagrave*, 228 Mass. 26, 116 N. E. 889 (physician and patient); *Michigan*: 1897, *Bush v. Delano*, 113 Mich. 321, 71 N. W. 628 (the burden of persuasion is on the contestant, but the legatee's drawing of the will shifts the duty of going forward); 1914, *Hartlerode's Will*, 183 Mich. 51, 148 N. W. 774 (priest and parishioner); 1915, *In re Bailey's Estate*, *Williams v. Bailey*, 186 Mich. 677, 153 N. W. 39 (bishop of a church to which bequest was made); 1917, *Noble v. Hunter*, 195 Mich. 713, 162 N. W. 294 (father and son); *Minnesota*: 1905, *Sperl's Estate*, — Minn. —, 103 N. W. 502; *Missouri*: 1913, *Cornet v. Cornet*, 248 Mo. 184, 154 S. W. 121 (brothers); 1917, *McFarland v. Brown*, — Mo. —, 193 S. W. 800 (mother and son); 1920, *Hamlett v. McMillin*, — Mo. —, 223 S. W. 1069 (father and son); 1921, *Kuehn v. Ritter*, — Mo. —, 233 S. W. 5 (father and

daughter); 1921, *Royl v. Golfinopulos*, — Mo. —, 233 S. W. 1050 (wife); *New Jersey*: 1915, *Soper v. Cisco*, 85 N. J. Eq. 165, 95 Atl. 1016 (parent and child); 1919, *Olitsky v. Estersohn*, 90 N. J. Eq. 459, 108 Atl. 88 (deed by husband to wife); *New York*: 1862, *Delafield v. Parish*, 25 N. Y. 9, 35 (will); 1893, *Barnard v. Gautz*, 140 N. Y. 249, 256, 35 N. E. 430 (deed of an aged woman to a son and son-in-law); 1898, *Ten Eyck v. Whitbeck*, 156 N. Y. 341, 50 N. E. 963 (deed); 1901, *Doheny v. Lacy*, 168 N. Y. 213, 61 N. E. 255; 1915, *Allen v. La Vaud*, 213 N. Y. 322, 107 N. E. 570 (parent and child); *North Carolina*: 1908, *Smith v. Moore*, 149 N. C. 185, 62 S. E. 892 (mother-in-law and son-in-law); 1910, *In re Everett's Will*, 153 N. C. 83, 68 S. E. 924 (brother as beneficiary and executor; presumption held applicable on the facts); *Ohio*: 1909, *McAdams v. McAdams*, 80 Oh. 232, 88 N. E. 542 (father and son, the latter being an attorney); *Oklahoma*: 1916, *Daniel v. Tolon*, 53 Okl. 666, 157 Pac. 756 (guardian and ward, parent and child); 1918, *Miller v. Thomas*, — Okl. —, 171 Pac. 850 (client and attorney); *Oregon*: 1918, *Rowe v. Freeman*, 89 Or. 128, 172 Pac. 506 (mother and son); *Pennsylvania*: 1917, *Spence's Estate*, 258 Pa. 542, 102 Atl. 212 (husband and wife); 1922, *Fiscus v. Fiscus*, 272 Pa. 326, 116 Atl. 293 (parent and child); *Rhode Island*: 1907, *Schuyler v. Stephens*, 28 R. I. 506, 68 Atl. 311 (physician and patient); *Utah*: 1915, *Hatch v. Hatch*, 46 Utah 218, 148 Pac. 433 (mother, father, and son); *Vermont*: 1898, *Barney's Will*, 70 Vt. 352, 40 Atl. 1027 (confidential relations by a beneficiary drawing the will and excluding "near, needy, and deserving relatives"; the burden on the beneficiary-proponent to disprove undue influence); *West Virginia*: 1918, *Beamer v. Clayton*, 82 W. Va. 580, 96 S. E. 969 (husband and wife); 1919, *Curtis v. Curtis*, 85 W. Va. 37, 100 S. E. 856 (mother and son); *Wisconsin*: 1917, *Armstrong v. Morrow*, 166 Wis. 1, 163 N. W. 179 (attorney and client).

§ 2504. <sup>1</sup> Cal. Civ. C. 1872, § 3440; 1921, *Luthy & Co. v. Paradis*, 299 Ill. 380, 132



(c) the presumption of the buyer's good faith, from his payment of value.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2505. **Marriage**; (1) **Consent, from Cohabitation or Ceremony.** The conduct of a man and a woman as husband and wife, *i. e.* their "habite" or cohabitation, together with their local repute as married, are not only admissible in evidence (*ante*, §§ 268, 1602, 2083), but also are regarded as sufficient to create a presumption that a *marriage* took place, — whether by mere consent or by ceremony, according as the local law requires.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Where one of the parties to a cohabitation was at its inception incapable (for example, by existing coverture) of a valid marriage, and the impediment is subsequently removed, and the parties continue to cohabit, in a jurisdiction where a ceremonial marriage is not required, the *renewal of marriage consent* as husband and wife may be presumed; although there has here been occasionally a quibbling hesitation in some Courts, based on refinements of speculation as to the party's knowledge of the removal of the impediment, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Where a *ceremonial marriage* is essential, the performance of the cere-

N. E. 556; 1898, *Gilmore v. Swisher*, 59 Kan. 172, 52 Pac. 426; 1905, *Thompson v. Williams*, 100 Md. 195, 60 Atl. 26; Mont. Rev. C. 1921, § 8601; 1893, *First National Bank v. Lowrey*, 36 Nebr. 290, 298, 54 N. W. 568; 1919, *Macedonald v. Fitzgerald*, 42 N. D. 133, 171 N. W. 879; 1916, *De Diego v. Rovira*, 9 P. R. 71, 84 (husband and wife); 1886, *Bindley v. Martin*, 28 W. Va. 773, 789. Compare § 1086, *ante*.

<sup>2</sup> 1893, *Treusch v. Ottenburg*, 4 C. C. A. 629, 54 Fed. 867; 1895, *Peterson Co. v. Steiner*, 108 Ala. 629, 18 So. 688.

The opinion of Pigott, J., in *Finch v. Kent*, 24 Mont. 268, 61 Pac. 653 (1900), contains a useful analysis.

§ 2505. <sup>1</sup> The cases already cited in the sections above noted almost all declare this; the following also emphasize the rule of presumption: ENGLAND: 1876, *De Thoren v. Attorney-General*, L. R. 1 App. Cas. 686; 1904, *Re Shephard*, 1 Ch. 456.

UNITED STATES: Ala. 1898, *Moore v. Heineke*, 119 Ala. 627, 24 So. 374 (presumption here removed by a subsequent separation); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 30; Fla. 1903, *Ferrell v. State*, 45 Fla. 26, 34 So. 220; Ill. 1896, *Griffeth v. Griffeth*, 162 Ill. 368, 44 N. E. 820; 1918, *Gorden v. Gorden*, 283 Ill. 182, 119 N. E. 312 (inheritance, and issue of legitimacy); Ind. 1853, *Nossaman v. Nossaman*, 4 Ind. 648, 651 (presumption rebutted by the absence of a record of license in the proper office, such a record being required); Ky. 1904, *Klenke v. Noonan*, 118 Ky. 436, 81 S. W. 241; 1915, *Rockcastle M. L. & O. Co. v. Baker*, 167 Ky. 66, 179 S. W. 1070; Mo. 1910, *Bishop v. Brittain Inv. Co.*, 229 Mo. 699, 129 S. W. 668; N. H. 1843,

*Young v. Foster*, 14 N. H. 114; N. J. 1897, *Stevens v. Stevens*, 56 N. J. Eq. 488, 38 Atl. 460; N. Y. 1850, *Clayton v. Wardell*, 4 N. Y. 230; Or. Laws 1920, § 799, par. 30; Pa. 1897, *Durning v. Hastings*, 183 Pa. 210, 38 Atl. 627; P. I. C. C. P. 1901, § 334, par. 28; 1915, *Sison v. Ambalada*, 30 P. I. 118, 124; 1916, *U. S. v. Memoracion*, 34 P. I. 637; 1916, *Que Quay v. Collector*, 33 P. I. 129, 138; P. R. Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470; R. I. 1902, *Rhode Island H. T. Co. v. Thorndike*, 24 R. I. 105, 52 Atl. 873; Vt. 1896, *State v. Sherwood*, 68 Vt. 414, 35 Atl. 352 (to show a previous marriage, relied upon to show a later one no bigamy, the presumption was not applied).

<sup>2</sup> Some of the cases on both sides are as follows: ENGLAND: 1867, *The Breadalbane Case* (*Campbell v. Campbell*), L. R. 1 Sc. App. 182 (leading case); 1876, *De Thoren v. Attorney-General*, L. R. 1 App. Cas. 686; UNITED STATES: Fed. 1902, *Adger v. Ackerman*, 52 C. C. A. 568, 115 Fed. 124, 129 (*Breadalbane Case* followed); Ala. 1912, *Prince v. Edwards*, 175 Ala. 532, 57 So. 714; Colo. 1898, *Poole v. People*, 24 Colo. 510, 52 Pac. 1025; Ia. 1876, *Blanchard v. Lambert*, 43 Ia. 228; 1894, *Barnes v. Barnes*, 90 Ia. 282, 57 N. W. 851; 1906, *Smith v. Fuller*, — Ia. —, 108 N. W. 765; La. 1918, *Thomas' Succession*, 144 La. 25, 80 So. 186; Miss. 1898, *Reed v. Moseley*, 76 Miss. 1, 23 So. 451; 1916, *Howard v. Kelly*, 111 Miss. 285, 71 So. 391; Nev. 1917, *Parker v. DeBernardi*, 40 Nev. 361, 164 Pac. 645; N. J. 1890, *Collins v. Voorhees*, 47 N. J. Eq. 315, 555, 20 Atl. 676, 22 Atl. 1054 (leading case); 1899, *Atlantic C. R. Co. v. Goodin*, 62 N. J. L. 394, 42 Atl. 333; Okl. 1917, *Jones v. Jones*, 63 Okl. 208, 164 Pac. 463; Wash. 1903, *Shank v. Wilson*, 33 Wash. 612, 74 Pac. 812.



mony with the appearances of validity may create a presumption as to the lawfulness of the form, the authority of the celebrant, the issuance of a license, and the like; although here much may turn on the circumstances of each case and the additional evidence offered or available.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2506. **Same: (2) Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.** Supposing a party to a marriage to appear to have been a party to a former marriage with another person, the validity of the later marriage will depend upon whether the prior marriage had been in the meantime somehow dissolved, or whether it was itself void; this will raise the question, for example, whether there has been a death or divorce intervening, or whether the other party to the prior marriage was incapable. In thus determining the validity of the later marriage, will one or another of the above facts be presumed to have existed, so as to throw upon the opponent of the later marriage the burden of producing evidence (or even the risk of non-persuasion) of the non-existence of those facts?

In issues of bigamy and of legitimacy, there is a special temptation thus to aid the later marriage. The situation may be additionally complicated by the invocation of the so-called presumption of innocence (*post*, § 2511) and of the presumptions of death or of life (*post*, § 2531). Whether the successive shiftings of the burdens should be worked out with mathematical nicety according to the various presumptions applicable, or whether all should be merged in a general presumption in favor of the later marriage, is a knotty question; and no successful generalization is yet accepted.<sup>1</sup> But it may be

<sup>3</sup> With the following, compare the cases cited *ante*, § 1644 (certificate of marriage), *ante*, § 2085 (proof by eye-witnesses), and *post*, § 2535 (presumption of office); 1849, *Piers v. Piers*, 2 H. L. C. 331; 1909, *Reifschneider v. Reifschneider*, 241 Ill. 92, 89 N. E. 255 (marriage-ceremony in Indiana); 1904, *State v. Eggleston*, 45 Or. 346, 77 Pac. 738 (adultery; marriage by a justice); 1817, *Warner v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 95 (good opinion); 1897, *Lanctot v. State*, 98 Wis. 136, 73 N. W. 575.

In still other issues a rule of presumption relating to marriage may be recognized: 1861, *Erskine v. Davis*, 25 Ill. 251; 256 (ejectment, by one showing a deed from H. C., said to be a 'feme sole'; proof of her singleness, held sufficient to raise a presumption of continuance, not overcome by proof of coverture six years later; obscure); 1893, *Sturbridge v. Franklin*, 160 Mass. 149, 35 N. E. 669 (necessaries furnished to wife; plaintiff must prove not only the marriage but also the separation without fault of the wife).

Compare the citations *ante*, § 382.

§ 2506. <sup>1</sup> Some of the more complicated and interesting cases are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1848, *Lapsley v. Grierson*, 1 H. L. C. 498; 1881, *R. v. Willshire*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 366.

CANADA: 1914, *Hedge v. Morrow*, 20 D. L. R.

561, Ont. (marriage with a testatrix, as revoking a will).

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: 1891, *Banks v. State*, 96 Ala. 78, 11 So. 404 (adultery of a woman; after the defendant's proof of a formal marriage to the man, it is for the prosecution to show his prior marriage and her knowledge);

*Arkansas*: 1915, *Estes v. Merrill*, 121 Ark. 361, 181 S. W. 136;

*California*: 1896, *Hunter v. Hunter*, 111 Cal. 261, 43 Pac. 756 (the defendant married M. in 1858, being then a minor; was taken away after a few days by her parents; on July 3, 1862, married the plaintiff; in 1883 heard that M. was living, and procured in 1894 a judgment by default annulling the marriage with M.; in 1894 brought, but afterwards dismissed, an action against the now plaintiff to have the second marriage declared void; in the present suit for the same purpose by the plaintiff (the judgment of divorce and the defendant's action against the plaintiff being held not to be conclusive as to the fact of M.'s being her lawful husband at the time of the second marriage), held, that as the second marriage during M.'s coverture involved a crime or wrong, the burden was upon the plaintiff to show that the first marriage had not been ended in 1862 by M.'s death or divorce);

*Connecticut*: 1892, *Erwin v. English*, 61 Conn.



noted that the peculiar force of a presumption as merely affecting the opponent's duty to produce some evidence (*ante*, § 2490) is not always observed in the judicial discussion of the problem.

502, 23 Atl. 753; 1912, *Roxbury v. Bridge-water*, 85 Conn. 196, 82 Atl. 193 (prior marriage, without proof of divorce);

*Georgia*: 1907, *Murchison v. Green*, 128 Ga. 339, 57 S. E. 709 (bigamous marriage, and death);

*Idaho*: 1919, *Smith v. Smith*, 32 Ida. 478, 185 Pac. 67 (former marriage, followed by divorce and re-marriage);

*Illinois*: 1893, *Schmisseur v. Beatrice*, 147 Ill. 210, 35 N. E. 525 (bill for partition; issue whether defendants were legitimate children of N. B., by M. H., married in 1876; N. B. had in 1872 married B. A., and had separated, B. A. being alive in 1876; held, that the second marriage raised a presumption of divorce from the first; and that the petitioner's evidence sustained their burden and restored it to respondent to give evidence of the divorce); 1903, *Potter v. Clapp*, 203 Ill. 592, 68 N. E. 81 (collecting the Illinois cases); 1905, *Hoch v. People*, 219 Ill. 265, 76 N. E. 356 (wife-murder);

*Indiana*: 1874, *Squire v. State*, 46 Ind. 459 (bigamy); 1895, *Wenning v. Teeple*, 144 Ind. 189, 41 N. E. 600;

*Iowa*: 1876, *Blanchard v. Lambert*, 43 Ia. 228; 1895, *Leach v. Hall*, 95 Ia. 611, 64 N. W. 791; 1903, *Casley v. Mitchell*, 121 Ia. 96, 96 N. W. 725; 1906, *State v. Rucker*, 130 Ia. 239, 106 N. W. 645 (murder; defendant's wife as witness); 1906, *Smith v. Fuller*, — Ia. —, 108 N. W. 765 (dower; plaintiff was married in 1872 to S., who disappeared in three months, and in 1875 she was married to the intestate; the second marriage presumed legal); 1921, *Farr v. Farr*, 190 Ia. 1005, 181 N. W. 268 (marriage with person already married; prior death or divorce presumed);

*Kentucky*: 1904, *Scott's Adm'r v. Scott*, — Ky. —, 77 S. W. 1122 (first and second wives claiming insurance benefits);

*Maine*: 1859, *Harrison v. Lincoln*, 48 Me. 205;

*Maryland*: 1905, *Bowman v. Little*, 101 Md. 273, 61 Atl. 223, 657, 1084 (collecting prior cases in this State); 1915, *Schaffer v. Richardson's Estate*, 125 Md. 88, 93 Atl. 391 (marriage in 1848, desertion in 1849, marriage again in 1855; child of the second marriage presumed legitimate); 1921, *O'Leary v. Lawrence*, 138 Md. 147, 113 Atl. 638 (inheritance from an intestate having apparently two wives);

*Massachusetts*: *Hyde Park v. Canton*, 130 Mass. 505; 1909, *Turner v. Williams*, 202 Mass. 500, 89 N. E. 110 (action for the value of property settled upon a deceased wife E. by the deceased husband J., induced by her false representations that she was single; E. married N. in 1858; by 1870 he deserted; in

1874 E. married J.; J. died in 1895; N. was heard from indefinitely as alive in 1888; held, that the first burden was on the plaintiff, but that no presumption of singleness in 1874 could be made; and that the case was open on all the facts; hence no verdict for the defendant could be directed); 1918, *Duggan v. Bay State St. R. Co.*, 230 Mass. 370, 119 N. E. 757 (applying St. 1914, c. 553);

*Minnesota*: 1890, *State v. Plym*, 43 Minn. 385, 45 N. W. 848 (bigamy; whether there was a duty for the prosecution directly to evidence the first wife's continued life; leading opinion, by Mitchell, J.);

*Mississippi*: 1901, *Alabama & V. R. Co. v. Beardsley*, 79 Miss. 417, 30 So. 660; 1908, *Colored Knights of Pythias v. Tucker*, 92 Miss. 501, 46 So. 51 (subsequent marriage; whether an intervening divorce will be presumed);

*Missouri*: 1909, *Maier v. Brock*, 222 Mo. 74, 120 S. W. 1167 (five marriages);

*Montana*: 1898, *Rash's Estate*, 21 Mont. 170, 53 Pac. 312 (action for a widow's share of an estate; the plaintiff married the intestate in 1858, left him in 1864, married X in 1872; the intestate married Y in 1894, and died in 1895; the last marriage was presumed legal, and the plaintiff required to prove it illegal by showing that no prior divorce existed);

*Nebraska*: 1899, *Reynolds v. State*, 58 Nebr. 49, 78 N. W. 483 (bigamy; the defendant married F. in 1895 and C. in 1897; F. was previously married to P.; held, no presumption of law as to the innocence of F. and therefore as to P.'s death); 1910, *Purdy v. State*, 86 Nebr. 638, 126 N. W. 90 (adultery);

*Nevada*: 1920, *Clark v. Clark*, 44 Nev. 44, 189 Pac. 676, 194 Nev. 96 (divorce for adultery);

*New Jersey*: 1909, *Sparks v. Ross*, 75 N. J. Eq. 586, 73 Atl. 241; 1911, *Vreeland v. Vreeland*, 78 N. J. Eq. 256, 79 Atl. 336 (alimony; defence, void marriage, the plaintiff having a first husband living and not divorced); 1917, *Schaffer v. Krestovnikow*, 88 N. J. Eq. 192, 102 Atl. 246, 89 N. J. Eq. 549, 105 Atl. 239; 1920, *Michaels v. Michaels*, 91 N. J. Eq. 408, 110 Atl. 573 (separate maintenance; presumption of death, etc., considered);

*New York*: 1900, *Palmer v. Palmer*, 162 N. Y. 130, 56 N. E. 501;

*Ohio*: 1922, *Industrial Com. v. Dell*, — Oh. —, 135 N. E. 669;

*Oklahoma*: 1916, *Zimmerman v. Holmes*, 59 Okl. 253, 159 Pac. 303 (Choctaw marriage); 1922, *Brokeshoulder v. Brokeshoulder*, — Okl. —, 204 Pac. 284;

*Tennessee*: 1899, *Moore v. Moore*, 102 Tenn. 148, 52 S. W. 778; 1912, *Dunlap v. State*, 126 Tenn. 415, 150 S. W. 86 (bigamy; presumption as to first wife's decease).



§ 2507. **Negligence and Accident; (1) Contributory Negligence.** The fact of contributory negligence, sufficient in law to defeat a plaintiff, is regarded by the orthodox rule as a part of the defendant's burden (or risk of non-persuasion), except in a few important jurisdictions; like so many other instances of that burden, however, this is in reality a question of pleading (*ante*, § 2485). Yet even by the orthodox rule, the second burden, or duty of producing evidence, may be shifted by facts which raise a presumption of negligence, and these facts may appear (*ante*, §§ 2489, 2490) from the testimony adduced by the plaintiff himself, or even from the allegations of his declaration, especially under the modern looseness of pleading. Hence it happens that even in the jurisdictions maintaining the orthodox rule, the burden is sometimes said to be upon the plaintiff in certain exceptional cases of the above sort, — the distinction between the two burdens not being strictly observed.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2507. <sup>1</sup> Some of the illustrative cases under both rules are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1819, *R. v. Twynning*, 2 B. & Ald. 386; 1886, *Wakelin v. London & S. W. R. Co.*, L. R. 12 App. Cas. 41 (orthodox rule); 1894, *Morrow v. Canadian P. R. Co.*, 21 Ont. App. 149 (orthodox rule).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1893, *Washington & G. R. Co. v. Harmon's Adm'r.*, 147 U. S. 571, 580, 13 Sup. 557 (burden on the defendant remains the same, though the plaintiff's evidence may disclose facts tending to help the defendant's burden); 1893, *Texas & P. R. Co. v. Volk*, 151 U. S. 73, 78, 14 Sup. 239; 1893, *The Charles L. Jeffrey*, 5 C. C. A. 246, 55 Fed. 685 (in admiralty, the burden is on the plaintiff);

*Arizona*: 1893, *Southern P. R. Co. v. Tomlinson*, — *Ariz.* —, 33 Pac. 710 (orthodox rule); *Arkansas*: Dig. 1919, § 8575, *semble* (burden is on railroad defendant); 1919, *Central Coal & Coke Co. v. Burns*, 140 Ark. 147, 215 S. W. 265 (orthodox rule);

*Florida*: 1908, *Hainlin v. Budge*, 56 Fla. 342, 47 So. 825;

*Georgia*: 1877, *Railroad Co. v. Kenney*, 58 Ga. 485, 489 (Bleckley, C. J.: "Concerning one class of cases, viz. that class in which, as in the instance before us, the injured party shared directly in the act which resulted in his own wounding, the rule as to the burden of proof is as follows: After proving the fact and degree of the injury, if the plaintiff will show himself not to blame, the law then presumes, until the contrary appears, that the company was to blame; or if he will show, on the other hand, that the company was to blame, the law then presumes, until the contrary appears, that he was not to blame. So that in order to make a 'prima facie' case, and change the onus, he need not go further than to show by evidence one or the other of these two propositions, — either that he was not to blame, or that the company was. The company, taking

at this stage the burden of reply, can defend successfully by disproving either proposition"); 1895, *Johnston v. R. Co.*, 95 Ga. 685, 22 S. E. 694;

*Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 6721 (burden is on defendant);

*Illinois*: 1891, *North Chicago St. R. Co. v. Louis*, 138 Ill. 9, 27 N. E. 451 (burden is on the plaintiff);

*Indiana*: 1893, *Cincinnati I. St. L. & C. R. Co. v. Grames*, 136 Ind. 39, 42, 34 N. E. 714 (burden is on the plaintiff); 1895, *Engler v. R. Co.*, 142 Ind. 618, 42 N. E. 219; 1906, *Diamond B. C. Co. v. Cuthbertson*, 166 Ind. 290, 76 N. E. 1060; *Burns' Ann. St.* 1914, § 362 (burden is on defendant);

*Iowa*: 1920, *Hunt v. Des Moines City R. Co.*, 188 Ia. 1068, 177 N. W. 48 (applying Supplement to Code, § 3593a, placing the burden on defendant in actions for personal injury by an employee or a passenger);

*Maine*: Rev. St. 1916, c. 87, § 48 (burden is on the defendant in actions for death);

*Maryland*: 1895, *Baltimore Traction Co. v. Appel*, 80 Md. 603, 31 Atl. 965 (orthodox rule);

*Massachusetts*: 1861, *Gahagan v. R. Co.*, 1 All. 187 (burden is on the plaintiff); *Mass. St.* 1914, c. 553 (burden of proof of contributory negligence, placed on the defendant); *Gen. L.* 1920, c. 231, § 85 (defendant must plead contributory negligence);

*Minnesota*: 1893, *Lillstrom v. R. Co.*, 53 Minn. 464, 468, 55 N. W. 624 (same);

*Mississippi*: 1905, *Simms v. Forbes*, 86 Miss. 412, 38 So. 546;

*Missouri*: 1919, *Tannehill v. Kansas C. C. & S. R. Co.*, 279 Mo. 158, 213 S. W. 818 (rule similar to that of *Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Shieder*, *Tex.*, *infra*);

*Nebraska*: 1894, *Union S. Co. v. Conoyer*, 41 Nebr. 617, 625, 59 N. W. 950 (same); 1904, *Rapp v. Sarpy Co.*, 71 Nebr. 382, 98 N. W. 1042, 102 N. W. 242;



§ 2508. **Same: (2) Loss by a Bailee.** Where goods have been committed to a *bailee*, and have either been lost or been returned in a damaged condition, and the bailee's liability depends upon his negligence, the fact of negligence may be presumed, placing on the bailee at least the duty of producing evidence of some other cause of loss or injury. But the application of this presumption cannot be said to have received definite phrasing for the different kinds of bailees.<sup>1</sup> Where the bailee is a *common carrier*, acting

*North Dakota*: 1896, *Ouverson v. Grafton*, 5 N. D. 281, 65 N. W. 677 (same);

*Ohio*: 1909, *Cincinnati, H. & D. R. Co. v. Frye*, 80 Oh. 289, 88 N. E. 642;

*Pennsylvania*: 1893, *Baker v. Gas Co.*, 157 Pa. 593, 601, 27 Atl. 789 (same);

*Tennessee*: 1896, *Stewart v. Nashville*, 96 Tenn. 50, 33 S. W. 613 (same; except that "whenever plaintiff's own case, or the evidence of the defendant or of both, raises a presumption of negligence on his part, the burden of repelling it is at once placed on him"; as here, where the plaintiff was blind and unattended and knew of the dangerous place; good opinion by Beard, J., on the policy of the rule);

*Texas*: 1895, *Gulf, C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Shieder*, 88 Tex. 152, 30 S. W. 904 (Denman, J.: "To the general rule imposing upon the defendant the burden of proof on the issue of contributory negligence there appear to be, in the very nature of things, two well-defined exceptions: First, Where the legal effect of the facts stated in the petition is such as to establish 'prima facie' negligence on the part of plaintiff as a matter of law, then he must plead and prove such other facts as will rebut such legal presumption. The plain reason is that by pleading facts which, as a matter of law, establish his contributory negligence, he has made a 'prima facie' defense to his cause of action which will be accepted as true against him, both on demurrer and as evidence on the trial, unless he pleads and proves such other facts and circumstances that the Court cannot, as a matter of law, hold him guilty of contributory negligence. When he has done this, he has made a case which must be submitted to the jury. For instance, if plaintiff's petition shows that he was injured by defendant's cars while on the track, under circumstances which in law would make him a trespasser 'prima facie,' then the law would raise a presumption of contributory negligence against him, for which his petition would be bad on demurrer; and it would be necessary for him to plead some fact or circumstance rebutting such presumption, — such as that he was, after going upon the track, stricken down by some providential cause, — in order to save his petition, and on the trial the burden would be upon him to establish such cause. Second, When the undisputed evidence adduced on the trial establishes 'prima facie' as a matter of law contributory negligence on the part of plaintiff,

then the burden of proof is upon him to show facts from which the jury upon the whole case may find him free from negligence; otherwise the Court may instruct a verdict for defendant, there being no issue of fact for the jury");

*Wisconsin*: 1893, *Welsh v. Argyle*, 85 Wis. 307, 311, 55 N. W. 412 (orthodox rule).

So, too, the burden of proving *assumption of risk* is on the defendant under the U. S. Employers' Liability Act: 1919, *Crugley v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 79 N. H. 276, 108 Atl. 293; 1913, *Seaboard Air Line R. Co. v. Moore*, 228 U. S. 433, 33 Sup. 580.

§ 2508. <sup>1</sup> In the following illustrations, it will be seen that there may be a further variance as to successive shiftings of the burden: CANADA: 1908, *Gremley v. Stubbs*, 39 N. Br. 21 (bailee returning horse); 1911, *Pratt v. Waddington*, 23 Ont. 178 (death of horse in bailee's hands).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1920, *Kohlsaat v. Parkersburg & M. S. Co.*, 4th C. C. A., 266 Fed. 283 (lease of a boat; the risk of non-persuasion is on lessor to show negligence, though the duty to go forward is shifted by showing delivery to lessee and failure to return); *Alabama*: 1896, *Higman v. Camody*, 112 Ala. 267, 20 So. 480 (after the bailor shows the loss, the bailee must show 'vis major' or the like, and then the bailor must show a negligence in not avoiding the 'vis major'); 1898, *First Nat'l Bank of B. v. First Nat'l Bank of N.*, 116 Ala. 520, 22 So. 976 (loss of certificates left with a bank; showing the loss raises a presumption of negligence); *California*: 1904, *Dieterle v. Bekin*, 143 Cal. 683, 77 Pac. 664 (warehouseman of goods destroyed by fire); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1914, *Sims v. Roy*, 42 D. C. App. 496 (horse); *Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 3469 (bailees in general); *Louisiana*: 1822, *Nicholls v. Roland*, 11 Mart. La. o. s. 190; *Maine*: 1897, *Buswell v. Fuller*, 89 Me. 600, 36 Atl. 1059 (the risk of non-persuasion is on the bailor to show culpable loss, but proof of demand and refusal without explanation of the loss shifts to the bailee the duty of producing evidence); *Maryland*: 1909, *Baltimore Refrigerating & H. Co. v. Kreiner*, 109 Md. 361, 71 Atl. 1066 (cold storage); *Michigan*: 1897, *Knights v. Piella*, 111 Mich. 9, 69 N. W. 92 (the risk of non-persuasion is on the bailor throughout; but proof of failure to deliver shifts to the bailee the duty of offering evidence); *Minnesota*: 1897, *Davis v. Printing*



under the customary exemptions as to 'vis major' and the like, or under express contractual exemptions, it is generally conceded that the carrier has even the first burden (or risk of non-persuasion) of establishing the fact constituting the exemption;<sup>2</sup> but this involves the analogy of the contract-rule (*post*, § 2537).

§ 2509. **Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.** With the vast increase, in modern times, of the use of powerful machinery, harmless in normal operation, but capable of serious human injury if not constructed or managed in a specific mode, the question has come to be increasingly common whether the fact of the occurrence of an injury (unfortunately now termed "accident," by inveterate misuse) is to be regarded as raising a presumption of culpability on the part of the owner or manager of the apparatus. "Res ipsa loquitur" is the phrase appealed to as symbolizing the argument for such a presumption.

In England and Canada, a rule of that sort has for a generation been conceded to exist, for some classes of cases at least.<sup>1</sup>

Co., 70 Minn. 95, 72 N. W. 814 (book-plates); *Mississippi*: 1908, *Yazoo & M. V. R. Co. v. Hughes*, 94 Miss. 242, 47 So. 662 (warehouseman); *Nebraska*: 1921, *Eckman Chem. Co. v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, — Nebr. —, 185 N. W. 444 (charcoal destroyed by fire during transit); *Nevada*: 1896, *Donlan v. Clark*, 23 Nev. 203, 45 Pac. 1; *New York*: 1871, *Collins v. Bennett*, 46 N. Y. 490 (horse); *North Carolina*: 1920, *Beck v. Wilkins-Ricks Co.*, 179 N. C. 231, 102 S. E. 313 (plaintiff's automobile destroyed by fire while under repairs by defendant); *Oklahoma*: 1912, *Stone v. Case*, 34 Okl. 5, 124 Pac. 960 (piano lease); *Wisconsin*: 1900, *Hildebrand v. Carroll*, 106 Wis. 324, 82 N. W. 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Federal*: 1893, *The Beeche Dene*, 5 C. C. A. 207, 55 Fed. 525 (bill of lading with exceptions; vessel libeled for damage to cargo; vessel-owner must prove the case to be within an exception, after the fact of damage is shown); 1897, *The Majestic*, 166 U. S. 375, 17 Sup. 597 (the carrier must show 'vis major'); *Uniform Act*: Uniform Bills of Lading Act, § 12 (the burden is on the common carrier to prove "the existence of a lawful excuse for such refusal or failure" to deliver); *Ia.* 1917, *Erismann v. Chicago B. & I. R. Co.*, 180 Ia. 759, 163 N. W. 627 (connecting carrier; effect of Carmack Amendment, U. S. St. 1906, June 29); *Mich.* 1920, *Thomas Canning Co. v. Pere Marquette R. Co.*, 211 Mich. 326, 178 N. W. 851 (beans injured in transit); *Minn.* 1895, *Shea v. R. Co.*, 63 Minn. 228, 65 N. W. 458 (the carrier must show no negligence, although the loss occurred from an excepted cause); *Gen. St.* 1913, § 7693 (connecting common carriers; proof of good order of property when delivered to initial carrier is 'prima facie' evidence of negligence); *Miss.* 1904, *Yazoo & M. V. R. Co. v. Humphrey*, 83 Miss.

721, 36 So. 154 (injury to passenger; applying Rev. Code 1892, § 1808); *Mo.* 1903, *Jones v. Kansas C. F. S. & M. R. Co.*, 178 Mo. 528, 77 S. W. 890 (employee); *N. Y.* 1918, *Barnet v. N. Y. C. & H. R. R. Co.*, 222 N. Y. 195, 118 N. E. 625; *N. Car.* 1907, *Harper F. Co. v. Southern Express Co.*, 144 N. C. 639, 57 S. E. 458 (subsequent carrier); *Tenn.* 1903, *East Tennessee & W. N. C. R. Co. v. Linda-mood*, 111 Tenn. 457, 78 S. W. 99 (employee).

§ 2509. <sup>1</sup> **ENGLAND**: 1863, *Byrne v. Boadle*, 2 H. & C. 722 (passer-by injured by a barrel falling from a shop-window; Pollock, C. B.: "There are many accidents from which no presumption of negligence can arise"; but on the facts the occurrence was held "'prima facie' evidence of negligence"); 1865, *Scott v. London & St. K. Docks Co.*, 3 H. & C. 596 (injury to a passer-by, from the falling of goods from a crane; Erle, C. J.: "There must be reasonable evidence of negligence; but where the thing is shown to be under the management of the defendant or his servants, and the accident is such as in the ordinary course of things does not happen if those who have the management use proper care, it affords reasonable evidence, in the absence of explanation by the defendants, that the accident arose from want of care"; Blackburn, J.: "Is not the fact of the accident sufficient evidence to call upon the defendants to prove that there was no negligence?"); 1870, *Kearney v. London B. & S. C. R. Co.*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 411, 6 Q. B. 759 (injury to a passer-by from the fall of a brick from a bridge; it was held "incumbent on the defendants to give evidence rebutting the inference"; but perhaps the actual decision was merely that the fact was "some evidence to go to the jury").

**CANADA**: *Dominion*: *Exchequer*: 1892, *Dubé v. R.*, 3 Exch. Can. 147, 151 (railway



In the United States, the rule has spread rapidly, although with much looseness of phrase and indefiniteness of scope; as against a common carrier, the presumption against a bailee (*ante*, § 2508) has perhaps helped to confirm the rule where injury to goods or passengers is involved. But whether the rule creates a full presumption, or merely satisfies the plaintiff's duty of producing evidence sufficient to go to the jury, is not always made clear:<sup>2</sup>

accident); 1920, *Gauthier v. The King*, 51 D. L. R. 558, Can. Exch. (passenger injured on train by collision); *Supreme*: 1906, *Guardian F. & L. Ass. Co. v. Quebec R. L. & P. Co.*, 37 Can. Sup. 676 (fire from electric wires); 1910, *Dominion Fish Co. v. Isbester*, 43 Can. Sup. 637 (fire on shipboard); 1921, *Canadian Northern R. Co. v. Horner*, 58 D. L. R. 154 (derailment); *Alberta*: 1921, *Carnat v. Mathews*, 59 D. L. R. 505, Alta. (personal injury by an automobile; St. 1911-12, c. 6, § 33, applied); *Manitoba*: 1910, *Isbester v. Dominion Fish Co.*, 19 Man. 430, 442 (fire on a ship); 1913, *Schwartz v. Winnipeg E. R. Co.*, Man. C. C. A., 9 D. L. R. 708 (alighting from street-car); 1914, *Weilgosz v. McGregor*, 16 D. L. R. 406 (applying Man. Rev. St. 1913, c. 131, § 63, placing the burden of proof of negating negligence on the owner or driver of a motor vehicle causing damage); *Ontario*: 1912, *Carlisle v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, Ont. H. C. J., 1 D. L. R. 130 (baggage injured by explosion in baggage-room); 1921, *Plest v. Canadian N. Q. R. Co.*, 64 D. L. R. 316, Ont. (freezing of potatoes); *Quebec*: 1918, *Norcross Bros. Co. v. Gohier*, 41 D. L. R. 687 (elevator); *Saskatchewan*: 1920, *Harris v. McEwen*, 54 D. L. R. 632 (St. 8 Geo. IV, 1917, c. 42, § 43, Vehicles Act, placing on the owner or driver of a motor vehicle the burden of disproving his own negligence, applied); 1921, *Tarasoff v. Zielinsky*, 59 D. L. R. 177, Sask. (woman killed by a ferocious bull).

<sup>2</sup> UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1897, *Pittsburg & W. R. Co. v. Thompson*, 27 C. C. A. 333, 82 Fed. 720 (Ohio statute applied, regarding defective railway cars); 1897, *The Joseph B. Thomas*, 81 Fed. 578 (injury at a ship's hatchway); 1902, *Bradford Glycerine Co. v. Kizer*, 51 C. C. A. 524, 113 Fed. 894 (explosion of nitroglycerine); 1891, *Gleeson v. Virginia M. R. Co.*, 140 U. S. 435, 441, 11 Sup. 859 (landslide on a railway track); 1905, *Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. R. Co. v. South F. C. Co.*, 139 Fed. 528, 533 (fire started by a railroad collision); 1906, *North Jersey St. R. Co. v. Purdy*, 142 Fed. 955, C. C. A. (passenger); 1906, *Southern P. Co. v. Cavin*, 144 Fed. 348, C. C. A. (passenger); 1909, *Nebraska Bridge S. & L. Co. v. Jeffrey*, 8th C. C. A., 169 Fed. 609 (breaking of a rope); 1909, *Eric R. Co. v. Schomer*, 6th C. C. A., 171 Fed. 798 (freight car-handhold); 1909, *Waters-Pierce Oil Co. v. Deselms*, 212 U. S. 159, 29 Sup. 270 (explosion of oil); 1912, *San Juan Light & T. Co. v. Requena*, 224 U. S. 89, 32 Sup. 379

(death by contact with wires); 1913, *Sweeney v. Erving*, 228 U. S. 233, 33 Sup. 416 (X-ray burns); 1914, *Midland Valley R. Co. v. Conner*, 8th C. C. A., 217 Fed. 956 (passenger entering railroad car); 1916, *Dupont de Nemours Powder Co. v. Duboise*, 5th C. C. A., 236 Fed. 690 (explosion of dynamite caps); 1916, *Pacific Power Co. v. Sheaf*, 9th C. C. A., 234 Fed. 553, 565 (derailment); 1918, *Norfolk & W. R. Co. v. Birchett*, 4th C. C. A., 252 Fed. 512 (passenger injured by lurch of car); *Alabama*: 1914, *Athens v. Miller*, 190 Ala. 82, 66 So. 702 (death of customer by electric shock from wire);

*Arkansas*: 1893, *Arkansas Tel. Co. v. Ratteree*, 57 Ark. 429, 435, 21 S. W. 1059 (falling of a telephone wire so as to frighten a horse); 1912, *Denton v. Mammoth S. E. L. & P. Co.*, 105 Ark. 161, 150 S. W. 572 (electric wires); *California*: 1892, *Bush v. Barnett*, 96 Cal. 202, 204, 31 Pac. 2 (common carrier); 1893, *Dixon v. Pluns*, 98 Cal. 384, 388, 33 Pac. 268 (falling of a workman's chisel from a scaffold); 1895, *Judson v. Giant Powder Co.*, 107 Cal. 549, 40 Pac. 1020 (powder explosion; cases cited fully); 1901, *Foerst v. Kelso*, 131 Cal. 376, 63 Pac. 681 (street railway); 1903, *Kahn v. Triest-Rosenberg Cap. Co.*, 139 Cal. 340, 73 Pac. 164 (boiler explosion); 1907, *Valente v. Sierra R. Co.*, 151 Cal. 534, 91 Pac. 481 (train collision); 1909, *Wyatt v. Pacific Electric R. Co.*, 156 Cal. 170, 103 Pac. 892 (street-car's abrupt start); 1915, *O'Connor v. Mennie*, 169 Cal. 217, 146 Pac. 674 (fall of elevator); 1921, *Dowd v. Atlas T. & A. S. Co.*, 187 Cal. 523, 202 Pac. 870 (injury by the overturning of a cab);

*Colorado*: 1905, *Denver v. Spencer*, 34 Colo. 270, 82 Pac. 590 (falling of a park stand); 1911, *Denver City T. Co. v. Hills*, 50 Colo. 328, 116 Pac. 125 (passenger tripping in trolley-rope); 1917, *Colorado Springs & I. R. Co. v. Reese*, 69 Colo. 1, 169 Pac. 572 (passenger in an electric car struck by lightning);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1922, *Robertson v. Washington R. & El. Co.*, — D. C. App. —, 279 Fed. 180 (passenger);

*Connecticut*: 1895, *Donovan v. R. Co.*, 65 Conn. 201, 32 Atl. 352;

*Delaware*: 1906, *Wood v. Wilmington C. R. Co.*, 5 Pen. Del. 369, 64 Atl. 246 (electric shock on a car-track);

*Florida*: 1917, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Rhoda*, 73 Fla. 12, 74 So. 19 (flagman killed on the track); 1921, *Tampa El. Co. v. Barber*, 81 Fla. 405, 88 So. 302 (effect of presumption



1903, LAMAR, J., in *Chenall v. Palmer B. Co.*, 117 Ga. 106, 43 S. E. 443: "There is a disposition to argue that every injury is the result of somebody's negligence, but in many cases they are mere accidents or casualties for which, humanly speaking, no one is to

in Comp. L. 1914, § 3148, examined); 1921, *Stevens v. Tampa El. Co.*, 81 Fla. 512, 88 So. 302 (similar);

*Georgia*: 1898, *Augusta South R. Co. v. McDade*, 105 Ga. 134, 31 S. E. 420; 1903, *Chenall v. Palmer B. Co.*, 117 Ga. 106, 43 S. E. 443 (fall of a brick arch; leading opinion, by Lamar, J.); 1905, *Central of Ga. R. Co. v. Bagley*, 121 Ga. 781, 49 S. E. 780 (killing of animal by a train); 1920, *Atlanta Coca-Cola B. Co. v. Danneman*, 25 Ga. App. 43, 102 S. E. 542 (explosion of a bottle);

*Illinois*: 1901, *Springer v. Ford*, 189 Ill. 430, 59 N. E. 953 (breaking of a passenger-elevator appliance); 1903, *Chicago City R. Co. v. Carroll*, 206 Ill. 318, 68 N. E. 1087 (passenger on a street railway); 1904, *Illinois C. R. Co. v. Swift*, 213 Ill. 307, 72 N. E. 737 (pile-driving machinery); 1905, *Elgin A. & S. Traction Co. v. Wilson*, 217 Ill. 47, 75 N. E. 436 (rule applied to a collision between two cars of the defendant); 1907, *Chicago U. Traction Co. v. Giese*, 229 Ill. 260, 82 N. E. 232 (derailment); 1908, *Greinke v. Chicago City R. Co.*, 234 Ill. 564, 85 N. E. 327 (passenger); 1908, *Barnes v. Danville St. R. & L. Co.*, 235 Ill. 566, 85 N. E. 921 (passenger); 1909, *O'Callaghan v. Dellwood Park Co.*, 242 Ill. 336, 89 N. E. 1005 (scenic railway); 1916, *Devine v. Delano*, 272 Ill. 166, 111 N. E. 742 (switchman run over by a train); 1919, *Feldman v. Chicago Rys. Co.*, 289 Ill. 25, 124 N. E. 334 (passenger alighted and awaiting a connecting train); 1920, *Davis v. South Side El. R. Co.*, 292 Ill. 378, 127 N. E. 66 (falling on a banana skin, at a railway station); 1922, *McClure v. Hoopston G. & E. Co.*, 303 Ill. 89, 135 N. E. 43 (fire caused by a gas-pipe);

*Indiana*: 1904, *Indianapolis St. R. Co. v. Schmidt*, 163 Ind. 360, 71 N. E. 201 ("When an accident happens to a passenger, a presumption of negligence on the part of the carrier arises"); 1911, *Indiana Union T. Co. v. Maher*, 176 Ind. 289, 95 N. E. 1012 (passenger in a collision); 1914, *Prest-O-Lite v. Skeel*, 182 Ind. 593, 106 N. E. 365 (collapse of a building); 1919, *Union Traction Co. v. Berry*, — Ind. —, 124 N. E. 737 (passenger carrier); *Iowa*: 1897, *Faust v. R. Co.*, 104 Ia. 241, 73 N. W. 623 (owner riding with his stock; ordinarily there is no presumption, but where he rode in another car, it was enough to show that the destroying fire was not caused by himself); 1904, *Fitch v. M. C. & C. L. Traction Co.*, 124 Ia. 665, 100 N. W. 618 (passenger); 1906, *Huggard v. Glucose S. R. Co.*, 132 Ia. 724, 109 N. W. 475 (falling of an iron pipe); 1906, *Croft v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 134 Ia. 411, 109 N. W. 723 (derailment); 1908, *Lunde v. Cudahy Packing Co.*, 139 Ia. 688, 117 N. W. 1063 (engine fly-wheel); 1920, *Davis*

*v. Van Camp Packing Co.*, 189 Ia. 775, 176 N. W. 382 (illness from eating a can of defendant's beans, as presumptive evidence of a defect); 1918, *Monaghan v. Equitable Life Ins. Co.*, 184 Ia. 352, 168 N. W. 892 (elevator accident);

*Kansas*: 1900, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Burrows*, 62 Kan. 89, 61 Pac. 439 (passenger); 1908, *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Brandon*, 77 Kan. 612, 95 Pac. 573 (derailment); 1908, *Shawnee L. & P. Co. v. Sears*, — Kan. —, 95 Pac. 449 (electric light wire); 1913, *Root v. Cudahy P. Co.*, 88 Kan. 413, 129 Pac. 147 (elevator falling); 1918, *Cash v. Kansas Oil Ref. Co.*, 103 Kan. 880, 176 Pac. 980 (employee's death in an oil tank);

*Kentucky*: 1902, *Davis v. Paducah R. & L. Co.*, 113 Ky. 267, 68 S. W. 140; 1911, *Shinn Glove Co. v. Sanders*, 147 Ky. 349, 144 S. W. 11 (water-tank falling); 1913, *Corbin v. Benton*, — Ky. —, 152 S. W. 241 (pavement accident); 1917, *West Kentucky Coal Co. v. Key*, 178 Ky. 193, 198 S. W. 724 (broken trolley-wire);

*Louisiana*: 1902, *LeBlanc v. Sweet*, 107 La. 355, 31 So. 766 (passenger); 1920, *Louviere v. Louisiana R. & N. Co.*, 146 La. 667, 83 So. 890 (loading a car of timber); 1918, *Dotson v. Louisiana Central L. Co.*, 144 La. 78, 80 So. 205 (employee's death in a fire);

*Maine*: 1851, *Church v. Cherryfield*, 33 Me. 460 (highway-defect);

*Maryland*: 1894, *Howser v. R. Co.*, 80 Md. 146, 30 Atl. 906 (passer-by injured by the fall of ties from a freight-car; leading case; useful opinions by Roberts, J., and by McSherry, J., diss.); 1905, *State v. U. S. Railways & El. Co.*, 101 Md. 183, 60 Atl. 249 (passenger); 1912, *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Wilson*, 117 Md. 198, 83 Atl. 248 (bridge collapsing); 1913, *Casparis Stone Co. v. Boncore*, 121 Md. 449, 88 Atl. 250 (quarry-blasting); 1920, *Heim v. Roberts*, 135 Md. 600, 109 Atl. 329 (fall of a pile of lumber);

*Massachusetts*: 1894, *Ugla v. R. Co.*, 160 Mass. 351, 35 N. E. 1126 (breaking of car and guy used by electric railway); 1894, *Carmody v. Gaslight Co.*, 162 Mass. 539, 39 N. E. 184; 1903, *Wadsworth v. R. Co.*, 182 Mass. 572, 66 N. E. 421 (sawdust falling from an elevated railway structure); 1903, *Cassady v. Old Colony St. R. Co.*, 184 Mass. 156, 68 N. E. 10 (explosion of electric railroad fuse); 1904, *Hofnauer v. White Co.*, 186 Mass. 47, 70 N. E. 1038 (rule not applied to the fall of a box from a shelf); 1904, *Droney v. Doherty*, 186 Mass. 205, 71 N. E. 547 (elevator accident; the accident held not sufficient evidence 'per se' of negligence); 1904, *Cooley v. Collins*, 186 Mass. 507, 71 N. E. 980 (rule not applied to let the plaintiff go to the jury on an issue of



blame; in others, the person injured is at fault; in some, his negligence contributes to the result; in others, a fellow servant was to blame. In all such instances the maxim, 'Res ipsa loquitur,' affords little or no assistance to the jury, for, even supposing that the in-

employee's negligence, from the mere fact of a railroad torpedo being found at a crossing); 1906, *Byrne v. Boston W. H. & R. Co.*, 191 Mass. 40, 77 N. E. 696 (injury at a printing machine); 1907, *Saures v. Stevens Mfg. Co.*, 196 Mass. 543, 82 N. E. 694 (leakage of electricity); 1907, *Leavitt v. Fiberloid Co.*, 196 Mass. 440, 82 N. E. 682 (spontaneous combustion of goods); 1908, *Minihan v. Boston Elevated R. Co.*, 197 Mass. 367, 83 N. E. 871 (elevated car); 1909, *Carroll v. Boston Elev. R. Co.*, 200 Mass. 527, 86 N. E. 793 (derailment); 1909, *Beattie v. Boston Elev. R. Co.*, 201 Mass. 3, 86 N. E. 920 (explosion); 1909, *McNamara v. Boston & Maine R. Co.*, 202 Mass. 491, 89 N. E. 131 (blowing off of roof of a freight-car); 1910, *Minihan v. Boston Elev. R. Co.*, 205 Mass. 402, 91 N. E. 414 (derailment); 1910, *Martin v. Boston & N. St. R. Co.*, 205 Mass. 16, 91 N. E. 159 (explosion on an electric car); 1912, *Chiuccariello v. Campbell*, 210 Mass. 532, 96 N. E. 1101 (machinery starting up without obvious cause); 1912, *Trim v. Fore River S. B. Co.*, 211 Mass. 593, 98 N. E. 591 (fall of an angle iron); 1912, *Carney v. Boston Elevated R. Co.*, 212 Mass. 179, 98 N. E. 605 (spark dropping from elevated electric road); 1913, *Cook v. Newhall*, 213 Mass. 392, 101 N. E. 72 (machinery automatically starting); 1913, *Killam v. Wellesley & B. St. R. Co.*, 214 Mass. 283, 101 N. E. 374 (inference from the starting of a car, as to its being started by authority); 1913, *Poole v. Boston & M. R. Co.*, 216 Mass. 12, 102 N. E. 918 (train breaking apart); 1913, *St. Louis v. Bay State St. R. Co.*, 216 Mass. 255, 103 N. E. 639 (electrocution of animal at street rail); 1914, *Hull v. Berkshire R. Co.*, 217 Mass. 361, 104 N. E. 747 (trolley-pole breaking); 1914, *Conley v. United Drug Co.*, 218 Mass. 238, 105 N. E. 975 (explosion of gas-tank); 1914, *Cleary v. Cavanaugh*, 219 Mass. 281, 106 N. E. 998 (fall of an elevator); 1914, *Griffin v. Springfield St. R. Co.*, 219 Mass. 55, 106 N. E. 551 (starting of a street-car); 1916, *Sullivan v. Boston Elevated R. Co.*, 224 Mass. 405, 112 N. E. 1025 (starting of a car); 1916, *Kusick v. Thorndike*, 224 Mass. 413, 112 N. E. 1025 (explosion of a can of lime); 1918, *Ash v. Childs D. H. Co.*, 231 Mass. 86, 120 N. E. 396 (tack in a blueberry pie, not held to raise the presumption against the restaurant keeper; unsound; the defendant was the proper one to follow up for evidence his vendors who originally packed the blueberries); 1921, *Russell v. Spaulding*, — Mass. —, 130 N. E. 191 (explosion of a soda-tank); 1922, *Lambert v. Eastern Massachusetts St. R. Co.*, — Mass. —, 134 N. E. 340 (skidding of a motor-car); *Michigan*: 1891, *Barnowski v. Helson*, 89

*Mich.* 523, 50 N. W. 989; 1909, *Sewell v. Detroit United Ry.*, 158 *Mich.* 407, 123 N. W. 2 (collision); 1915, *Elsey v. Hudson Co.*, 189 *Mich.* 135, 155 N. W. 377 (passenger elevator); *Minnesota*: 1907, *Waller v. Ross*, 100 *Minn.* 7, 110 N. W. 252 (fall of an awning; good opinion by Jaggard, J.); 1909, *Olson v. Pike*, 107 *Minn.* 411, 120 N. W. 378 (scaffold-rope); 1914, *Wiles v. Great Northern R. Co.*, 125 *Minn.* 348, 147 N. W. 427 (pulling out of a railroad drawbar); 1916, *Holt v. Ten Broeck*, 134 *Minn.* 458, 159 N. W. 1073 (X-ray machine); 1916, *Manning v. Chicago Gt. Western R. Co.*, 135 *Minn.* 229, 160 N. W. 787 (derailment); 1917, *McGillivray v. Great Northern R. Co.*, 138 *Minn.* 278, 164 N. W. 922 (derailment); 1921, *Kleinman v. Banner Laundry Co.*, 150 *Minn.* 515, 186 N. W. 123 (boiler explosion); *Mississippi*: 1909, *Mobile, J. & K. C. R. Co. v. Kea*, 96 *Miss.* 195, 50 *So.* 628 (Code 1906, § 1985, held not applicable on the facts); 1918, *Yazoo & M. V. R. Co. v. McCaskell*, 118 *Miss.* 629, 79 *So.* 817 (track-repairer struck by train); 1921, *Bonds v. Mobile & O. R. Co.*, 125 *Miss.* 547, 88 *So.* 161 (effect of speed statutes and 'prima facie' negligence statutes, discriminated); 1922, *Davis v. Temple*, — *Miss.* —, 91 *So.* 689 (statute construed); *Missouri*: 1895, *Och v. R. Co.*, 130 *Mo.* 27, 31 *S. W.* 962 (passenger; useful opinion); 1904, *Redmon v. Metropolitan St. R. Co.*, 185 *Mo.* 1, 84 *S. W.* 26 (passenger); 1904, *Allen v. St. Louis T. Co.*, 183 *Mo.* 411, 81 *S. W.* 1142 (passenger); 1916, *Myers v. Independence*, — *Mo.* —, 189 *S. W.* 816 (injury by electric shock); 1919, *Prapuolenis v. Goebel Const. Co.*, 279 *Mo.* 358, 213 *S. W.* 792 (scaffolding); 1919, *Newell v. Boatman's Bank*, 279 *Mo.* 663, 216 *S. W.* 918 (death by fire in a building not equipped with safety appliances); 1919, *Orris v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 279 *Mo.* 1, 214 *S. W.* 124 (locomotive cinders injuring plaintiff's eye); 1921, *Elliott v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.*, — *Mo.* —, 236 *S. W.* 17 (jolt of railroad car); *Montana*: 1915, *Lyon v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 50 *Mont.* 532, 148 *Pac.* 387 (fall of an embankment); *Nebraska*: 1893, *Union P. R. Co. v. Porter*, 38 *Nebr.* 226, 235, 56 N. W. 808 (here a statute makes the carrier absolutely liable for injury to a passenger, irrespective of the former's negligence); 1895, *Spears v. R. Co.*, 43 *Nebr.* 720, 62 N. W. 68 (finding a person dead on the railroad); 1896, *Lincoln R. Co. v. Cox*, 48 *Nebr.* 807, 67 N. W. 740; 1899, *Chicago R. I. P. R. Co. v. Young*, 58 *Nebr.* 678, 79 N. W. 556 (passenger); 1905, *Omaha St. R. Co. v. Boesen*, 74 *Nebr.* 764, 105 N. W. 303 (derailment);



jury itself proclaims negligence, it says nothing as to who was negligent, and fixes no basis for determining whether the plaintiff, the defendant, a fellow servant, or some stranger may not have been at fault. There are other cases where, when it is shown that the

*New Hampshire:* 1911, *Boucher v. Boston & M. R. Co.*, 76 N. H. 91, 79 Atl. 993 (railway car-window falling);

*New Jersey:* 1894, *Excelsior Co. v. Sweet*, 57 N. J. L. 224, 30 Atl. 553; 1897, *Trenton P. R. Co. v. Cooper*, 60 N. J. L. 219, 37 Atl. 730 (escape of electricity from street-railway rails); 1898, *Newark E. L. & P. Co. v. Ruddy*, 62 N. J. L. 505, 41 Atl. 712 (broken wire in highway); 1913, *Levendusky v. Empire R. M. Co.*, 84 N. J. L. 698, 87 Atl. 338 (explosion of boiler); 1919, *Garland v. Furst Store*, 93 N. J. L. 127, 107 Atl. 38 (fall on a store-floor); 1915, *Niebel v. Winslow*, 88 N. J. L. 191, 95 Atl. 995 (surgeon's failure to remove gauze from wound of an operation); 1921, *O'Connor v. Adekman*, — N. J. L. —, 115 Atl. 368 (automobile and bus collision);

*New York:* 1901, *Griffen v. Manice*, 166 N. Y. 188, 59 N. E. 925 (passenger-elevator accident by the falling of the weights); 1906, *Dahme v. Hamburg-Amer. Packet Co.*, 184 N. Y. 404, 77 N. E. 386 (breaking of a hawser); 1908, *Cunningham v. Dody*, 191 N. Y. 152, 83 N. E. 688 (highway); 1909, *Robinson v. Consol. Gas Co.*, 194 N. Y. 37, 86 N. E. 805 (scaffolding); 1909, *Henson v. Lehigh Valley R. Co.*, 194 N. Y. 205, 87 N. E. 85 (employee); 1909, *Eaton v. N. Y. C. & H. R. R. Co.*, 195 N. Y. 267, 88 N. E. 378 (injury by a passing train); 1909, *Ferriek v. Eidlitz*, 195 N. Y. 248, 88 N. E. 33 (fall of roofing); 1912, *Hardie v. Boland Co.*, 205 N. Y. 336, 98 N. E. 661 (fall of chimney); 1922, *Plumb v. Richmond Light & R. Co.*, 233 N. Y. 285, 135 N. E. 504 (collision);

*North Carolina:* 1894, *Haynes v. Gas Co.*, 114 N. C. 203, 207, 19 S. E. 344 (guy-wire of electric light, hanging from a tree and charged from a trolley-wire); 1904, *Womble v. Merchants' G. Co.*, 135 N. C. 474, 47 S. E. 493 (elevator accident); 1905, *Stewart v. Van D. C. Co.*, 138 N. C. 60, 50 S. E. 562 (elevator injury); 1905, *Ross v. Double S. C. Mills*, 140 N. C. 115, 52 S. E. 121 (mill machinery; good opinion by Connor, J.); 1905, *Lyles v. Brannon C. Co.*, 140 N. C. 25, 52 S. E. 233 (soda-water tank explosion); 1908, *Winslow v. Norfolk Hardwood Co.*, 147 N. C. 275, 60 S. E. 1130 (derailment of train); 1921, *Jones v. Bland*, 182 N. C. 70, 108 S. E. 344 (elevator door);

*North Dakota:* 1915, *Wyldes v. Patterson*, 31 N. D. 282, 153 N. W. 630, 641 (breaking of an elevator cable); 1918, *Leiferman v. White*, 40 N. D. 150, 168 N. W. 569 (electric shock);

*Ohio:* 1896, *Pennsylvania Co. v. McCann*, 54 Oh. 10, 42 N. E. 768 (under statute);

*Oklahoma:* 1909, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Gosnell*, 23 Okl. 588, 101 Pac. 1126 (passenger); 1913, *Muskogee Electric T. Co. v. McIntire*,

37 Okl. 684, 133 Pac. 213 (derailment); 1918, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Stacy*, 77 Okl. 165, 171 Pac. 870 (passenger on platform); 1920, *Chicago R. I. & G. R. Co. v. Jones*, 77 Okl. 140, 187 Pac. 233 (breaking of a car-seat); 1921, *Sand Springs Park v. Schrader*, 82 Okl. 244, 198 Pac. 983 (scenic railway);

*Oregon:* 1902, *Chaperon v. Electric Co.*, 41 Or. 39, 67 Pac. 928 (contact with an electric wire); 1909, *Crosby v. Portland R. Co.*, 53 Or. 496, 101 Pac. 201 (sagging trolley wire); 1909, *Chenoweth v. Southern Pacific Co.*, 53 Or. 111, 99 Pac. 86 (method of rebuttal, discussed); 1909, *Rogers v. Portland Lumber Co.*, 54 Or. 387, 102 Pac. 601 (sawmill); 1914, *Sharkey v. Portland G. & C. Co.*, 74 Or. 327, 144 Pac. 1152; 145 Pac. 660 (escape of gas); 1920, *Hansen v. Oregon-Washington R. & N. Co.*, 97 Or. 190, 188 Pac. 963, 191 Pac. 655 (damage by rust to packed salmon tins);

*Pennsylvania:* 1892, *Herstine v. R. Co.*, 151 Pa. 244, 252, 25 Atl. 104 (shock by careless coupling); 1893, *Fleming v. R. Co.*, 158 Pa. 130, 27 Atl. 858 (rock falling on a train); 1895, *Shaefer v. Lacock*, 168 Pa. 497, 32 Atl. 34; 1897, *O'Connor v. Traction Co.*, 180 Pa. 344, 36 Atl. 866; 1899, *Alexander v. Steel Co.*, 139 Pa. 582, 42 Atl. 286 (workman on a scaffolding); 1902, *Baron v. Reading Iron Co.*, 202 Pa. 274, 51 Atl. 979 (boiler explosion); 1908, *Ginn v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 220 Pa. 552, 69 Atl. 992 (passenger injured by broken window); 1911, *Rocaf v. Bell Telephone Co.*, 230 Pa. 597, 79 Atl. 769 (electric wire shock); 1915, *Niebalski v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 249 Pa. 530, 94 Atl. 1097 (train collision); 1917, *Williams v. Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co.*, 257 Pa. 354, 101 Atl. 748 (street railway collision); 1919, *Keyes v. New York O. & W. R. Co.*, 265 Pa. 105, 108 Atl. 406 (burden of proof of employee's death by third person's act, not suicide, under St. June 2, 1915, P. L. 736, considered); 1920, *Fitzpatrick v. Penfield*, 267 Pa. 564, 109 Atl. 653 (wall left standing after a fire);

*Philippine Islands:* 1915, *Barcelo v. Manila Electric R. & L. Co.*, 29 P. I. 351 (fire from electric current);

*Porto Rico:* 1912, *Rosado v. Ponce R. & L. Co.*, 18 P. R. 593, 613 (death by electric wire); 1914, *Rosado v. Ponce R. & L. Co.*, 20 P. R. 528, 537 (death by electric shock); 1915, *West India & P. Tel. Co. v. The Legazpi*, 8 P. R. Fed. 128 (submarine cable break by anchor-dropping); 1916, *Rubio v. Garage Mayaguez*, 23 P. R. 565 (death by a motor-car);

*Rhode Island:* 1905, *Venbuve v. Lafayette W. Mills*, 27 R. I. 89, 60 Atl. 770 (oily factory floor); 1905, *Wilbur v. Rhode Island Co.*, 27 R. I. 205, 61 Atl. 601 (passenger); 1905,



defendant owned or controlled the thing which, when properly constructed, maintained, or operated, did not, in the ordinary course of events, so act as to injure those near by, proof that damage was caused by such thing affords reasonable evidence that the injury was occasioned by want of ordinary care. 'Prima facie,' that want of due care should be referred to him under whose management and control the instrument of injury was found. The jury would not be warranted in reasoning, in a strictly logical form: 'Buildings do not collapse without negligence. This building collapsed. Therefore there was negligence,' — for buildings do fall without any one being to blame, and as a result of flood and storm. But ordinarily extraordinary and external causes may be treated as the exception, to be established by the defendant. All that the plaintiff should be required to do in the first instance is to show that the defendant owned, operated, and maintained, or controlled and was responsible for the management and maintenance of, the thing doing the damage; that the accident was of a kind which, in the absence of proof of some external cause, does not ordinarily happen without negligence. When he has shown this, he has cast a burden

*Edwards v. Manufacturers' B. Co.*, 27 R. I. 248, 61 Atl. 646 (elevator); 1916, *Himes v. Cole Teaming Co.*, 39 R. I. 504, 98 Atl. 897 (backing of a truck);

*South Carolina*: 1899, *Steele v. R. Co.*, 55 S. C. 389, 33 S. E. 509 (passenger); 1912, *McLeod v. Atlantic Coast L. R. Co.*, 93 S. C. 71, 76 S. E. 19 (cattle on railroad track); 1922, *Goode v. Southern R. Co.*, — S. C. —, 111 S. E. 876 (mule on the track; applying "the rule in Danner's Case, which is locally as well known as the rule in Shelley's Case");

*South Dakota*: 1894, *Saunders v. R. Co.*, 6 S. D. 40, 60 N. W. 148;

*Tennessee*: 1898, *Mitchell v. N. C. & St. L. R. Co.*, 100 Tenn. 329, 45 S. W. 337 (blowing a whistle); 1917, *North Memphis S. Bank v. Union B. & C. Co.*, 138 Tenn. 161, 196 S. W. 492 (bridge construction);

*Texas*: 1894, *Mexican C. R. Co. v. Lauricella*, 87 Tex. 277, 28 S. W. 277; 1895, *Gulf, C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Shieder*, 88 Tex. 152, 30 S. W. 902;

*Utah*: 1904, *Wells v. Utah C. Co.*, 27 Utah 524, 76 Pac. 560; 1908, *Dearden v. San Pedro L. A. & S. L. R. Co.*, 36 Utah 147, 93 Pac. 271 (collision by a chain-break); 1918, *Zoccolillo v. Oregon Short Line R. Co.*, 53 Utah 39, 177 Pac. 201 (passenger's frozen feet);

*Vermont*: 1916, *Desmarchier v. Frost*, 91 Vt. 138, 99 Atl. 782 (motor car colliding with a bridge); 1917, *Spinney's Administratrix v. Hooker*, 92 Vt. 146, 102 Atl. 53 (death by use of electric lamp); 1920, *Stewart v. Barre & N. T. & P. Co.*, 94 Vt. 398, 111 Atl. 526 (fall of an electric railway pole);

*Virginia*: 1904, *Norfolk R. & L. Co. v. Spratley*, 103 Va. 379, 49 S. E. 502 (electric wire); 1904, *Moore Lime Co. v. Johnston's Adm'r*, 103 Va. 84, 48 S. E. 557 (stationary engine); 1912, *Washington-Virginia R. Co. v. Bouknight*, 113 Va. 696, 75 S. E. 1032 (derailment); 1918, *Hunter v. Burroughs*, 123 Va. 113, 96 S. E. 360 (X-ray damage); 1921, *Hines, Dir. Gen. v. Beard*, 130 Va. 286, 107 S. E. 717 (derailment); 1921, *Southern R. Co. v. Adams*, 129 Va. 233, 105 S. E. 566 (death on a railroad track);

*Washington*: 1903, *Towle v. Stimson M. Co.*, 33 Wash. 305, 74 Pac. 471 (sawmill); 1904, *Allen v. Northern P. R. Co.*, 35 Wash. 221, 77 Pac. 204 (railroad passenger getting on the car); 1905, *Williams v. Spokane F. & N. R. Co.*, 39 Wash. 77, 80 Pac. 1100 (passengers in a collision); 1905, *Firebaugh v. Seattle El. Co.*, 40 Wash. 658, 82 Pac. 905 (passenger on a street-car); 1909, *De Yoe v. Seattle Electric Co.*, 53 Wash. 588, 102 Pac. 446 (street railway); 1911, *Lynch v. Ninemire P. Co.*, 63 Wash. 423, 115 Pac. 838 (vat explosion); 1915, *Briglio v. Holt*, 85 Wash. 155, 147 Pac. 877 (blasting injury); 1921, *Patrick v. Spokane & E. R. & P. Co.*, 117 Wash. 317, 201 Pac. 23 (crane);

*West Virginia*: 1897, *Snyder v. Electr. Co.*, 43 W. Va. 661, 28 S. E. 733 (falling of a wire); 1911, *Weaver Mercantile Co. v. Thurmond*, 68 W. Va. 530, 70 S. E. 126 (bursting of a wooden tank); 1915, *May v. Charleston I. R. Co.*, 75 W. Va. 797, 84 S. E. 893 (electric shock from street rail); 1916, *Edmonds v. Monongahela V. T. Co.*, 78 W. Va. 714, 90 S. E. 230 (broken electric wire);

*Wisconsin*: 1889, *Koenig v. Arcadia*, 75 Wis. 62, 67, 43 N. W. 734 ("there can be no proof so conclusive that the hole was a dangerous defect as that it did actually cause injury"; this is unsound; whether it was the cause may be the disputed question); 1884, *Cummings v. Furnace Co.*, 60 Wis. 603, 18 N. W. 742, 20 N. W. 665 (highway); 1898, *Carroll v. C. B. & R. Co.*, 99 Wis. 399, 75 N. W. 176 (applying the Cummings case rule to the fall of a window); 1905, *Tiborsky v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 124 Wis. 243, 102 N. W. 549 (railroad obstructing the sidewalk); 1920, *Linden v. Miller*, 172 Wis. 20, 177 N. W. 909 (automobile collision);

*Wyoming*: 1912, *Acme C. P. Co. v. Westman*, 20 Wyo. 143, 122 Pac. 89 (bursting of a coal-bin).

Consult the following essay: *Alex. Macdonald*, "The Doctrine of Res Ipsa Loquitur as applicable to Injuries from Electrical Appliances not under Control of the Person furnishing the Electricity" (Va. L. Rev., III, 349).



on the defendant, who may then proceed to show that the accident was occasioned by 'vis major,' or by other causes for which he was not responsible."

1905, CONNOR, J., in *Ross v. Cotton Mills*, 140 N. C. 115, 52 S. E. 121: "The underlying reason for the rule is that usually the chief evidence of the true cause of procedure is practically accessible to the defendant, but inaccessible to the person injured. It is for this reason that in some cases the Legislature has made the fact of injury 'presumptive evidence' and in others a 'prima facie' case. . . . To prevent any misconstruction of the circumstances under which or the manner in which this principle applies in the trial of causes, we wish to restate: . . . It does not in any degree affect or modify the elementary principle that the burden of the issue is on the plaintiff. WALKER, J., in *Stewart v. Carpet Co.*, 138 N. C. 60, clearly states the law in this respect: "The doctrine does not dispense with the requirement that the party who alleges negligence must prove the fact, but relates only to the mode of proving it. The fact of the accident furnishes merely some evidence to go to the jury which requires the defendant "to go forward with his proof." The rule of 'res ipsa loquitur' does not relieve the plaintiff of the burden of showing negligence, nor does it raise any presumption in his favor." The suggestion has been made in argument of cases at this term that, when the rule applies, it is the duty of the Court to instruct the jury that proof which calls the rule into action constitutes a 'prima facie' case, or raises a presumption of negligence. This is a misapprehension both of the principle upon which the rule is founded and its application. . . . The law says that the plaintiff is entitled to have a jury pass upon the physical facts and condition, and to say whether in their opinion he has made good his allegation of actionable negligence. The defendant may, or may not, introduce evidence as it is advised. By failing to do so, it admits nothing, but simply takes the risk of *non-persuasion*. This is what is meant by 'going forward' with testimony. He, by this course, says that he is willing to go to the jury upon the plaintiff's evidence."

What the final accepted shape of the rule will be can hardly be predicted. But the following considerations ought to limit it: (1) The apparatus must be such that in the ordinary instance no injurious operation is to be expected unless from a careless construction, inspection, or user; (2) Both inspection and user must have been at the time of the injury in the control of the party charged; (3) The injurious occurrence or condition must have happened irrespective of any voluntary action at the time by the party injured. It may be added that the particular force and justice of the presumption, regarded as a rule throwing upon the party charged the duty of producing evidence, consists in the circumstance that the chief evidence of the true cause, whether culpable or innocent, is practically accessible to him but inaccessible to the injured person.

In some jurisdictions there is a rule of substantive law to be distinguished for some classes of injuries. For example, the setting of fire to adjacent property by the emission of sparks from a railway locomotive may be deemed to raise a presumption, by the present rule (either under statute or by judicial decision); but it may also be made 'per se' a cause of action, irrespective of actual negligence, and the course of legislation in the different jurisdictions has to be ascertained. So, too, the killing of live stock, or

\* That such statutes are unconstitutional is pointed out § 1464. For the rule as to the admissibility of other cases see note § 146.

Some of the illustrations are as follows:  
 \* *Walker v. Stewart*, 138 N. C. 60, 52 S. E. 121.  
 \* *Ross v. Cotton Mills*, 140 N. C. 115, 52 S. E. 121.  
 \* *Stewart v. Carpet Co.*, 138 N. C. 60, 52 S. E. 121.



the doing of any *personal injury*, by a railroad train has been the subject of statutory rules.<sup>1</sup>

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1900, McCullen v. C. & N. W. R. Co., 41 C. C. A. 365, 101 Fed. 66; 1900, Garrett v. Southern R. Co., 41 C. C. A. 237, 101 Fed. 102; 1913, Iowa Cent. R. Co. v. Hampton E. L. & P. Co., 8th C. C. A., 204 Fed. 961 (construing Iowa Code 1897, § 2056); *Alabama*: 1896, Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Malone, 109 Ala. 509, 20 So. 33; 1902, Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Marburg L. Co., 132 Ala. 520, 32 So. 745; 1909, Southern R. Co. v. Dickens, 161 Ala. 144, 49 So. 766; 1915, Southern R. Co. v. Slade, 192 Ala. 568, 68 So. 867; 1916, Poe v. Southern R. Co., 196 Ala. 183, 71 So. 917; *California*: 1916, Rock v. Travelers' Ins. Co., 172 Cal. 462, 156 Pac. 1029; *Connecticut*: Gen. St. 1919, § 5739 (injury by locomotive fire; communication of fire by locomotive is 'prima facie' evidence of negligence); *Delaware*: 1921, Director-General of R. R. v. Johnston, — Del. —, 114 Atl. 759 (fire set by locomotives; presumption fully expounded); *Georgia*: 1892, East Tennessee V. & G. R. Co. v. Heskens, 90 Ga. 11, 15 S. E. 828 (under Code § 3033); 1892, East Tennessee V. & G. R. Co. v. Hall, 90 Ga. 17, 16 S. E. 91 (same); 1897, Gainesville J. & S. R. Co. v. Edmondson, 101 Ga. 747, 29 S. E. 213 (that the fire was set by the defendant must first be proved); 1907, Southern R. Co. v. Thompson, 129 Ga. 367, 58 S. E. 1044; *Idaho*: 1908, Osburn v. Oregon R. & N. Co., 15 Ida. 478, 98 Pac. 827 (method of rebuttal discussed); 1912, Foley v. Northern Pacific R. Co., 21 Ida. 713, 123 Pac. 835; *Iowa*: 1897, Hummel v. R. Co., 102 Ia. 25, 70 N. W. 746; 1907, Stewart v. Iowa C. R. Co., 136 Ia. 162, 113 N. W. 764; *Illinois*: 1903, Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Hornsby, 202 Ill. 136, 68 N. E. 1052 (applying Rev. St. c. 114, § 123); *Kansas*: 1904, Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Clauser, 68 Kan. 281, 76 Pac. 68; 1911, Tuttle v. Missouri Pacific R. Co., 66 Kan. 26, 110 Pac. 870; 1917, Smith v. Bush, 102 Kan. 150, 169 Pac. 217; *Louisiana*: 1921, Laurel Hill C. M. Co. v. Yazoo & M. V. R. Co., 140 La. 501 (presumption from sparks and from adequate spark arrester); *Maine*: 1904, Dyer v. Maine C. R. Co., 69 Me. 166, 68 Atl. 604; *Michigan*: 1907, Dolphin Lake Plank & M. R. Co., 140 Mich. 276, 112 N. W. 981; 1907, Clark v. Grand Trunk W. R. Co., 140 Mich. 100, 112 N. W. 1121; 1917, Jones v. Michigan C. R. Co., 196 Mich. 166, 164 N. W. 273; *Minnesota*: 1896, Redman v. R. Co., 64 Minn. 309, 66 N. W. 146; 1906, Continental Ice Co. v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co., 161 Minn. 407, 198 N. W. 166 (fire set by defendant; presumption fully expounded); *Montana*: 1906, Connor v. Empire P. & F. R. Co., 10 Mont. 114, 15 N. W. 102; *Nebraska*: 1906, Hepburn v. R. Co., 10 Neb. 100, 10 N. W. 575; 1902, Raleigh Hosiery Co. v. R. Co., 131 N. C. 238, 42 S. E. 602; 1911, Kornegay v. Atlantic C. L. R. Co., 154 N. C. 389, 70 S. E. 731; 1911, Maguire v. Seaboard A. L. R. Co., 154 N. C. 384, 70 S. E. 737; 1917, Moore & Co. v. Atlantic Coast Line R. Co., 173 N. C. 311, 92 S. E. 1; 1919, Williams v. Camp Mfg. Co., 177 N. C. 512, 99 S. E. 370; 1920, Page v. Camp Mfg. Co., 180 N. C. 330, 104 S. E. 667; *North Dakota*: 1897, Mathews v. R. Co., 7 N. D. 81, 72 N. W. 1085; 1899, McTavish v. R. Co., 8 N. D. 333, 79 N. W. 443 (in spite of the overthrow of the presumption by evidence of proper construction, the fact of repeated fires may suffice for going to the jury); *Oregon*: 1904, Anderson v. Oregon R. Co., 45 Or. 211, 77 Pac. 110; *Texas*: 1899, Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Johnson, 92 Tex. 591, 50 S. W. 563; *Utah*: St. 1919, Feb. 17, c. 24 (locomotive sparks causing fire, to be 'prima facie' evidence of negligence); 1917, Glenson v. San Pedro L. A. & S. L. R. Co., 49 Utah 405, 164 Pac. 484; *Virginia*: 1896, Patteson v. R. Co., 94 Va. 16, 26 S. E. 303 (repudiating Bernard v. R. Co., 85 Va. 792); 1897, Kimball v. Borden, 95 Va. 203, 28 S. E. 207; *Washington*: 1912, Northwestern M. F. Ass'n v. Northern P. R. Co., 68 Wash. 202, 123 Pac. 468; 1911, Thorgrimsen v. Northern Pacific R. Co., 64 Wash. 590, 117 Pac. 406.

Under the modern doctrine of some courts that a landowner may be liable for failure to take active measures to prevent the spread of a fire starting by the act of a third person or by his own non-culpable act, the duty to produce evidence of such active efforts may fall upon the owner. 1920, Jordan v. Spokane P. & S. R. Co., — Wash. —, 176 Pac. 876.

CANADA: *Quebec*: 1909, c. 37, § 204 (damage to stock by railway; defendant liable, unless it proves contributory negligence).

UNITED STATES: *Alabama*: Code 1907, § 5476 (killing of stock or person, burden is on the railroad to disprove negligence); 1892, Birmingham M. R. Co. v. Harris, 98 Ala. 326, 330, 15 So. 377 (analyzing preceding rulings and the statutory changes); *Alaska*: Comp. L. 1913 § 707 (killing or injuring of live stock by 'conclusive evidence of negligence'); Ark. 1919, Kansas City M. R. Co. v. Whites, 199 Ark. 266, 219 N. W. 409; 1919, § 6674 (damages on collisions); Fla. Rev. St. 1919, § 6664 (the personal injury, the presumption is 'in all cases against the railroad company'); § 6666 (live stock killed or injured, the billing is 'prima facie' evidence of negligence of railroad company); 1914, Hemboldt v. Jacksonville P. R. Co., 66 Fla. 346, 100 So. 104 (repeated fires); 1919, § 6664 (the personal injury, the presumption is 'in all cases against the railroad company'); 1919, § 6666 (live stock killed or injured, the billing is 'prima facie' evidence of negligence of railroad company); 1914, Hemboldt v. Jacksonville P. R. Co., 66 Fla. 346, 100 So. 104 (repeated fires); 1919, § 6664 (the personal injury, the presumption is 'in all cases against the railroad company');







quence in those jurisdictions (*ante*, § 2507) which place on the plaintiff the first burden of proof (risk of non-persuasion) as to contributory negligence.

(b) If death by *any cause* but suicide or extreme negligence has been insured against, where is the burden of proof as to the accidental nature of death? Here, on the contract-principle (*post*, § 2537), it would seem that the first burden of proof (risk of non-persuasion) is on the insurer to show the excepted cause.<sup>2</sup>

R. Co., 135 Ia. 409, 109 N. W. 1077; 1906, Ellis v. Republic Oil Co., 133 Ia. 11, 110 N. W. 20 (oil explosion); 1910, Korah v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co., 149 Ia. 711, 128 N. W. 529; 1913, Platter v. Minneapolis & St. Louis R. Co., 162 Ia. 142, 143 N. W. 992; 1920, Anderson v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co., 189 Ia. 739, 175 N. W. 583 (pointing out that the "presumption" of self-protection is virtually only an inference of fact and does not shift the plaintiff's burden of proving due care); 1920, Barrett v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co., 190 Ia. 509, 175 N. W. 950, 180 N. W. 670 (death at a railroad crossing); *Kansas*: 1901, Kansas C. L. R. Co. v. Gallagher, 68 Kan. 424, 75 Pac. 469; 1906, Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Baumgartner, 71 Kan. 148, 85 Pac. 822; *Massachusetts*: 1914, O'Brien v. Boston Elev. R. Co., 217 Mass. 130, 101 N. E. 412; 1914, Chester v. Merrifield Co., 216 Mass. 537, 101 N. E. 183; 1914, McCulloch v. Needham, 217 Mass. 227, 101 N. E. 184; *Michigan*: 1919, Gillett v. Michigan D. T. Co., 205 Mich. 110, 171 N. W. 230 (collision between automobile and street car); *Minnesota*: 1918, Carson v. Turish, 110 Minn. 416, 108 N. W. 319 (motor car collision); *Nebraska*: 1909, Nelson v. Chicago B. & Q. R. Co., 81 Neb. 610, 121 N. W. 1126; *New Hampshire*: 1906, Stevens v. United C. & F. Co., 74 N. H. 169, 69 Atl. 816; 1901, Gilman v. Maine C. R. Co., 76 N. H. 312, 71 Atl. 680; 1910, Greenwood v. Boston & M. R. Co., 77 N. H. 101, 64 Atl. 217 (inference rebuttable); 1922, Little v. Dodge, 85 N. H. 110, 67 Atl. 627 (the inference of self-protection is known to the jury as people know that water is not and stones are hard); *North Carolina*: 1900, Caldwell v. R. Co., 112 N. C. 507, 11 S. E. 610; *South Dakota*: 1907, Farnley v. Adams Express Co., 12 S. D. 111, 10 S. E. 2d 135; *Texas*: 1906, Kierulff v. Fort Worth & C. R. Co., 100 Tex. 461, 94 Tex. 496, 106 Tex. 496, 107 Tex. 496, 108 Tex. 496, 109 Tex. 496, 110 Tex. 496, 111 Tex. 496, 112 Tex. 496, 113 Tex. 496, 114 Tex. 496, 115 Tex. 496, 116 Tex. 496, 117 Tex. 496, 118 Tex. 496, 119 Tex. 496, 120 Tex. 496, 121 Tex. 496, 122 Tex. 496, 123 Tex. 496, 124 Tex. 496, 125 Tex. 496, 126 Tex. 496, 127 Tex. 496, 128 Tex. 496, 129 Tex. 496, 130 Tex. 496, 131 Tex. 496, 132 Tex. 496, 133 Tex. 496, 134 Tex. 496, 135 Tex. 496, 136 Tex. 496, 137 Tex. 496, 138 Tex. 496, 139 Tex. 496, 140 Tex. 496, 141 Tex. 496, 142 Tex. 496, 143 Tex. 496, 144 Tex. 496, 145 Tex. 496, 146 Tex. 496, 147 Tex. 496, 148 Tex. 496, 149 Tex. 496, 150 Tex. 496, 151 Tex. 496, 152 Tex. 496, 153 Tex. 496, 154 Tex. 496, 155 Tex. 496, 156 Tex. 496, 157 Tex. 496, 158 Tex. 496, 159 Tex. 496, 160 Tex. 496, 161 Tex. 496, 162 Tex. 496, 163 Tex. 496, 164 Tex. 496, 165 Tex. 496, 166 Tex. 496, 167 Tex. 496, 168 Tex. 496, 169 Tex. 496, 170 Tex. 496, 171 Tex. 496, 172 Tex. 496, 173 Tex. 496, 174 Tex. 496, 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817 Tex. 496, 818 Tex. 496, 819 Tex. 496, 820 Tex. 496, 821 Tex. 496, 822 Tex. 496, 823 Tex. 496, 824 Tex. 496, 825 Tex. 496, 826 Tex. 496, 827 Tex. 496, 828 Tex. 496, 829 Tex. 496, 830 Tex. 496, 831 Tex. 496, 832 Tex. 496, 833 Tex. 496, 834 Tex. 496, 835 Tex. 496, 836 Tex. 496, 837 Tex. 496, 838 Tex. 496, 839 Tex. 496, 840 Tex. 496, 841 Tex. 496, 842 Tex. 496, 843 Tex. 496, 844 Tex. 496, 845 Tex. 496, 846 Tex. 496, 847 Tex. 496, 848 Tex. 496, 849 Tex. 496, 850 Tex. 496, 851 Tex. 496, 852 Tex. 496, 853 Tex. 496, 854 Tex. 496, 855 Tex. 496, 856 Tex. 496, 857 Tex. 496, 858 Tex. 496, 859 Tex. 496, 860 Tex. 496, 861 Tex. 496, 862 Tex. 496, 863 Tex. 496, 864 Tex. 496, 865 Tex. 496, 866 Tex. 496, 867 Tex. 496, 868 Tex. 496, 869 Tex. 496, 870 Tex. 496, 871 Tex. 496, 872 Tex. 496, 873 Tex. 496, 874 Tex. 496, 875 Tex. 496, 876 Tex. 496, 877 Tex. 496, 878 Tex. 496, 879 Tex. 496, 880 Tex. 496, 881 Tex. 496, 882 Tex. 496, 883 Tex. 496, 884 Tex. 496, 885 Tex. 496, 886 Tex. 496, 887 Tex. 496, 888 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496, 1096 Tex. 496, 1097 Tex. 496, 1098 Tex. 4



(c) If *death by a specific cause only*—usually, by *accident*—has been insured against, the contract-principle leads to the reverse of the foregoing conclusion, i. e. it leads to placing the burden on the *insured* to show that the specific condition precedent on which the liability is contingent has taken place.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2510a. **Same: (5) Ownership and Agency of Vehicle.** The responsibility of a defendant for injury caused by negligence often depends upon his connection as *owner* with the *vehicle* causing the injury, and as *principal* with the *driver* of it as his *agent*. This connection, though often virtually beyond dispute, is a matter of which the plaintiff has usually scanty means of evidence as compared with the defendant. It is therefore a fit subject for presumptions based on common experience, and such presumptions are often recognized.

(1) The *name borne on a vehicle* may raise a presumption of its ownership by that person; so also the *number of a tag*, under a registry system, or of a *brand for cattle*.<sup>4</sup>

(2) Where damage is done by the tortious act of the driver of a vehicle, and the injured person sues the owner of the vehicle, who was not the driver, it is a necessary part of the plaintiff's case that the driver was an agent of the owner and was acting at the time within the scope of his employment. May these two facts be presumed from the fact of ownership? The answer should be affirmative, if we consider the relative facility of proof as between the parties, the ordinary habits of owners of vehicles, and the wisdom of placing the risk of not obtaining evidence upon the person who owns a valuable and dangerous apparatus and therefore should take special precautions against its misuse by irresponsible persons. The reckless irresponsibility of motorists in general, their notorious selfishness in monopolizing the highway against pedestrians, and the prevalence of homicide by motorists who set no value on the lives of others in comparison with their own convenience, all these modern facts demand that the present rule, and every other applicable rule, be employed to improve the standard of care obeyed by vehicle owners.

Nevertheless, Courts have here taken opposite views; some Courts tossing upon the innocent pedestrian the entire burden of producing evidence, in general, the Courts are here apt to take an unsympathetic, inhuman, and over-cautious attitude.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house. See also *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house. See also *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Wright v. Tabor*, 100 N.H. 100, 101 (1908), where the plaintiff's death was caused by a fire which broke out in the defendant's house.







caution (which is perhaps only an implied corollary to the other) to consider, in the material-for-their-belief, nothing but the evidence, i. e., no surmises based on the present-situation of the accused. This caution is indeed particularly needed in criminal cases:

1877, *Anon*, *Scintille Juris*, 28:<sup>2</sup> "The truth is that, although the law pays a prisoner the compliment of supposing him to be wrongly accused, it nevertheless knows very well that the probabilities are in favor of the prosecutor's accusation being well founded. . . . Those who think thus [that a prisoner is more likely to be acquitted than a civil defendant, because of the reasonable-doubt rule] have failed to notice that it is more important to a man to *look* innocent than to be 'prima facie' thought so. No [civil] defendant is brought through a hole in the floor; he is not surrounded by a barrier, nor guarded by a keeper of thieves; he is not made to stand up alone while his actions are being judged; and his latest address is not presumably the jail of his county."

1884, *Anon.*, *Ten Years a Police Judge*, by Judge Wiglittle, p. 207: "*The presumption of innocence.* It is greatly to be feared that the so-called presumption of innocence in favor of the prisoner at the bar is a pretence, a delusion, an empty sound. It ought not so to be, but — it is. Rufus Choate said that 'this presumption is not a mere phrase without meaning'; that 'it is in the nature of evidence for the defendant'; that 'it is as irresistible as the heavens till overcome'; that 'it hovers over the prisoner as a guardian angel throughout the trial'; that 'it goes with every part and parcel of the evidence'; that 'it is equal to one witness.' This is just what it should be, but this is just what it is not. Practically it is of no avail whatever in the trial. The jury tread it under foot; the judge the same moment he admits it in theory forgets it in argument. It is a dead letter. Nay, so far from being merely inoperative, it is not hazardous to say that in the trial the presumption is reversed. By court and jury, by prosecution, police, and the public the accused is presumed guilty. Let every one, as he looks upon a prisoner in the dock, carefully inquire of himself and answer if this be not so.

"The reason is plain. The whole course of criminal procedure, from inception to close, is designed to shut out presumptions of innocence and invite presumptions of guilt. The secrecy of complaint-making at the magistrate's office, the mysterious inquisition of the grand-jury room, the publicity of the arrest, the commitment to the lock-up, the demand of bail, the delay of trial, the enforced silence of defence till prosecution has done its worst, are all so many steps and strokes to blacken the accused before he is permitted to open his mouth with a syllable of evidence to break the force of the damning array of circumstances. To suppose that the presumption of innocence, which unbiased nature prompts, is not before this time choked and strangled to death is an absurdity too gross to dispute.

"The treatment itself of the prisoner negatifies the presumption. If he is presumed innocent why is he manacled? Why is he put in jail? Why is he let out only on bail? Why, when he is put on trial, is he put in the dock? Why does he not have place with the by-standers who are simply presumed innocent? The 'presumption,' in the presence of such things, is a contradiction of terms. How can a person be presumed innocent who is presumably guilty? The fact that he is restricted to his silence presumes guilt. There is no other compensation to be placed on the restraint. Human nature is not capable of any other. Yet human nature ought to presume innocence till the contrary is proved. What chance shall the weak or timid or persecuted applicant suspected violation of law have? What chance shall the noblest human nature have to be acquitted? How can it be acquitted? It

<sup>1</sup> This little group of four is a paraphrase of the famous passage in the *Declaration of Sentiments* of 1848, which reads: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The passage is a paraphrase of the famous passage in the *Declaration of Sentiments* of 1848, which reads: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."



object to be attained is worthy a good deal of experiment at the risk of a good deal of havoc of old-time forms and proceedings."

So far, then, as the "presumption of innocence" adds anything, it is merely a warning not to treat certain things improperly as evidence.

2. As to the second fallacy, it seems to have been mainly propagated by the passage of Professor Greenleaf,<sup>3</sup> declaring that "this legal presumption of innocence is to be regarded by the jury, in every case, as *matter of evidence*, to the benefit of which the party is entitled." But it cannot be regarded as "matter of evidence." No presumption can be evidence; it is a rule about the duty of producing evidence (*ante*, § 2490). This is, in itself, only a matter of the theory of presumptions, and to that extent may be regarded as a mere question of words, — of the way of phrasing a rule upon the substance of which there is no dispute. But when this erroneous theory is made the ground for ordering new trials because of the mere wording of a judge's instruction to a jury, the erroneous theory is capable of causing serious harm to the administration of justice. And, because of a temporary aberration of doctrine in the Federal Supreme Court, in *Coffin v. United States*, such harm was for a time impending.<sup>4</sup> A notable academic deliverance, however, by a master in the law of Evidence,<sup>5</sup> laid bare the fallacy with keen analysis; and it was soon afterwards discarded in the Court of its origin.<sup>6</sup> In some State Courts the contagious influence of the original error was for a time noticeable;<sup>6</sup> but

<sup>3</sup> Evidence, § 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Coffin v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); the opinion of the Court, proceeding upon the above phrase of Greenleaf as a leading authority, declared this "presumption" to be "evidence in favor of the accused." This opinion received apparent sanction in the later case of *Allen v. U. S.*, 164 U. S. 142, 7 Sup. 164 (1896). But in *Agnew v. U. S.*, 166 U. S. 36, 61, 17 Sup. 746 (1897), its particularly objectionable sentence declaring that "legal presumptions are treated as evidence" is referred to as "having a tendency to mislead." In this case the trial Court had refused to give an offered instruction copying that sentence, and the refusal was held proper, so that the *Agnew* decision may perhaps be taken as a retraction to this extent of the unfortunate theory put forward in the *Coffin* case. Later rulings are: 1910 *Holt v. U. S.*, 216 U. S. 50, 11 Sup. 7, 100 Fed. 100; 1911 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1912 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1913 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1914 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1915 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1916 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1917 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1918 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1919 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1920 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1921 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1922 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1923 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1924 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1925 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1926 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1927 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1928 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1929 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1930 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1931 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1932 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1933 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1934 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1935 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1936 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1937 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1938 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1939 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1940 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1941 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1942 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1943 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1944 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1945 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1946 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1947 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1948 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1949 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1950 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1951 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1952 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1953 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1954 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1955 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1956 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1957 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1958 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1959 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1960 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1961 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1962 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1963 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1964 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1965 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1966 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1967 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1968 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1969 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1970 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1971 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1972 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1973 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1974 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1975 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1976 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1977 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1978 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1979 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1980 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1981 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1982 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1983 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1984 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1985 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1986 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1987 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1988 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1989 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1990 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1991 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1992 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1993 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1994 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1995 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1996 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1997 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1998 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 1999 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2000 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2001 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2002 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2003 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2004 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2005 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2006 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2007 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2008 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2009 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2010 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2011 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2012 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2013 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2014 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2015 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2016 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2017 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2018 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2019 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2020 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2021 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2022 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2023 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2024 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100; 2025 *U. S. v. Smith*, 220 U. S. 293, 11 Sup. 293, 100 Fed. 100.

<sup>5</sup> It is to be observed that the opinion in the *Agnew* case (in 1897) was published subsequently to a notable lecture on the Presumption of Innocence, aptly named the *Coffin* case, delivered by Professor James Bradley Thayer, at Yale University (in 1896), in which the history of the presumption was carefully examined, its meaning acutely expounded, and the fallacies of the opinion in the *Coffin* case exposed in detail; this lecture was reprinted in the famous lecture's Preliminary Treatise on Evidence (1897) Appendix B, p. 601.

<sup>6</sup> The following series of rulings shows the influence of the *Coffin* case: 1897 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1898 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1899 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1900 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1901 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1902 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1903 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1904 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1905 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1906 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1907 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1908 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1909 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1910 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1911 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1912 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1913 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1914 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1915 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1916 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1917 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1918 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1919 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1920 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1921 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1922 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1923 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1924 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1925 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1926 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1927 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1928 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1929 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1930 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1931 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1932 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1933 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1934 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1935 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1936 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1937 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1938 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1939 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1940 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1941 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1942 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1943 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1944 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1945 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1946 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1947 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1948 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1949 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1950 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1951 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1952 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1953 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1954 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1955 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1956 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1957 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1958 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1959 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1960 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1961 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1962 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1963 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1964 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1965 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1966 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1967 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1968 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1969 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1970 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1971 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1972 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 664, 16 Sup. 394, 16 Sup. 944 (1896); 1973 *Thayer v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 id. 66











few Courts seem to place upon the accused the burden of showing that he acted in *self-defence*.<sup>2</sup> (c) It is generally conceded that the accused does not have the burden of proving an *alibi*.<sup>3</sup> (d) In sundry other instances,

to "satisfactorily establish his defence"); 1915, *Dorak v. State*, 183 Ind. 622, 109 N. E. 771; 1898, *Herman v. State*, 75 Miss. 340, 22 So. 872 (the burden of proving an excuse is not on the defendant); 1908, *Com. v. Deitrick*, 221 Pa. 7, 70 Atl. 275; 1920, *Com. v. Tompkins*, 267 Pa. 541, 110 Atl. 275 (homicide; the burden of proving first degree is on the State).

<sup>2</sup> The judicial language is seldom entirely clear as to the nature of the burden. The following cases illustrate both views: *Federal*: 1903, *Rutherford v. Foster*, 60 C. C. A. 129, 125 Fed. 187 (in a civil case, the burden is on the defendant); 1915, *U. S. v. Rohrer*, U. S. Court for China, 1 Extraterr. Cas. 515 (homicide); *Alabama*: 1892, *Roden v. State*, 97 Ala. 54, 57, 12 So. 419 (assault with intent; the burden is on the defendant); 1893, *Boulden v. State*, 102 Ala. 78, 83, 15 So. 341 (similar); 1895, *Dent v. State*, 105 Ala. 14, 17 So. 94 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1896, *Scheerer v. Agee*, 113 Ala. 383, 21 So. 79 (the risk of non-persuasion beyond reasonable doubt is on the prosecution); 1907, *McEwen v. State*, 152 Ala. 38, 44 So. 619 (former instructions reviewed); *Arizona*: 1904, *Anderson v. Terr.*, 9 Ariz. 50, 76 Pac. 636; *California*: 1898, *People v. Milner*, 122 Cal. 171, 54 Pac. 833 (the burden is on the defendant); *Colorado*: 1905, *Zipperian v. People*, 33 Colo. 134, 79 Pac. 1018 (prosecution has the burden entirely); *Idaho*: *Comp. St.* 1919, § 8952 (homicide); *Iowa*: 1898, *State v. Shea*, 104 Ia. 724, 74 N. W. 687 (the burden is on the prosecution, nor has the defendant a duty of producing evidence); 1905, *State v. Morris*, 128 Ia. 717, 105 N. W. 213; *Louisiana*: 1911, *State v. Ardoin*, 128 La. 14, 54 So. 407 (the burden is not on the accused); *Maryland*: 1899, *Tucker v. State*, 89 Md. 471, 43 Atl. 778 (the burden is on the defendant to persuade by a preponderance); *Mississippi*: 1897, *Strother v. State*, 74 Miss. 447, 21 So. 147 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1897, *King v. State*, 74 Miss. 576, 21 So. 235 (same); *Nebraska*: 1894, *Gravely v. State*, 38 Nebr. 871, 57 N. W. 751 (the burden is on the prosecution, without shifting); *North Carolina*: 1894, *State v. Barringer*, 114 N. C. 840, 19 S. E. 275 (the defendant must prove it "to the satisfaction of the jury"); 1919, *State v. Little*, 178 N. C. 722, 100 S. E. 877 (burden is on accused to "satisfy the jury"); *North Dakota*: 1907, *State v. Hazlet*, 16 N. D. 426, 113 N. W. 374 (careful examination of the cases, in the light of the peculiar State statute); *Pennsylvania*: 1895, *Com. v. Mika*, 171 Pa. 273, 33 Atl. 65 (if a killing by the defendant is proved, the prosecution has the burden of raising it to the first degree, and the defence that of reduc-

ing it below the second degree); 1908, *Com. v. Palmer*, 222 Pa. 229, 71 Atl. 100; 1911, *Com. v. Colandro*, 231 Pa. 343, 80 Atl. 571 (the defendant must prove by a preponderance); *South Carolina*: 1904, *State v. McDaniel*, 68 S. C. 304, 47 S. E. 384; *South Dakota*: 1899, *State v. Yokum*, 11 S. D. 344, 79 N. W. 835 (the burden is on the defendant); *Utah*: *Comp. L.* 1917, § 8986; *Virginia*: 1894, *Vance v. Com.*, — Va. —, 19 S. E. 785; 1894, *Myers v. Com.*, 90 Va. 705, 19 S. E. 881; *Washington*: 1915, *Welch v. Creech*, 88 Wash. 429, 153 Pac. 355 (civil case; burden is not on defendant; unsound; three judges diss.); *West Virginia*: 1895, *State v. Zeigler*, 40 W. Va. 593, 21 S. E. 763 (doubtful).

But in *civil cases*, a plea of self-defence of course places and keeps the burden on the defendant; *ante*, §§ 2485, 2486.

<sup>3</sup> *Alabama*: 1896, *Towns v. State*, 111 Ala. 1, 20 So. 598 (the defendant must produce evidence, but the prosecution has the risk of non-persuasion beyond reasonable doubt); 1897, *Pickens v. State*, 115 Ala. 42, 22 So. 551; *James v. State*, 115 Ala. 83, 22 So. 565; *Arizona*: 1898, *Schultz v. Terr.*, — Ariz. —, 52 Pac. 352 (the defendant has no burden); 1906, *Barton v. Terr.*, 10 Ariz. 68, 85 Pac. 730; *Arkansas*: 1920, *Morris v. State*, 145 Ark. 241, 224 S. W. 724 (but the defendant must introduce some evidence); *California*: 1898, *People v. Roberts*, 122 Cal. 377, 55 Pac. 137 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1899, *People v. Winters*, 125 Cal. 325, 57 Pac. 1067 (the defendant must introduce evidence, but need not persuade by preponderance); *Colorado*: 1897, *McNamara v. People*, 24 Colo. 61, 48 Pac. 541 (the burden is on the prosecution); *Connecticut*: 1911, *State v. Brauneris*, 84 Conn. 222, 79 Atl. 70; *Florida*: 1908, *McDuffee v. State*, 55 Fla. 125, 46 So. 721; *Georgia*: 1908, *Smith v. State*, 4 Ga. App. 807, 61 S. E. 737; *Illinois*: 1905, *Flanagan v. People*, 214 Ill. 170, 73 N. E. 347; 1905, *Briggs v. People*, 219 Ill. 330, 76 N. E. 499 (phrasing of instruction considered); 1914, *People v. Blair*, 266 Ill. 70, 107 N. E. 116; 1917, *People v. Ahrling*, 279 Ill. 70, 116 N. E. 764; 1919, *People v. Stoneking*, 289 Ill. 308, 124 N. E. 571 (proper instruction as to alibi evidence); 1920, *People v. Pelinski*, 293 Ill. 382, 127 N. E. 678 (confidence game; alibi need be proved only so as to create a reasonable doubt of guilt); *Iowa*: 1904, *State v. Worthen*, 124 Ia. 408, 100 N. W. 330 (peculiar rule); *Louisiana*: 1897, *State v. Ardoin*, 49 La. An. 1145, 22 So. 620 (similar); *Missouri*: 1895, *State v. Harvey*, 131 Mo. 339, 32 S. W. 1110 (similar); *Montana*: 1899, *State v. Spotted Hawk*, 22 Mont. 33, 55 Pac. 1026 (the duty of



a naturally affirmative defence is sometimes apportioned to the accused's burden.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2513. **Same: (4) Possession of Stolen Goods.** One of the most troublesome and fruitless controversies has been whether under certain circumstances the accused's possession of stolen goods raises a presumption that he was the thief. It had long been customary in England to use the language of presumptions for such a situation;<sup>1</sup> but whether the language was intended merely to mean that the specific fact alone was sufficient evidence on which the jury *might* reach a conviction if they desired (*ante*, § 2494), or whether it meant that the specific fact alone created a presumption, *i. e.* placed on the accused a duty of producing evidence, so that if he failed to do so (that is, to offer any "explanation") the jury *must* convict (*ante*, § 2490), was seldom made clear. This obscurity continued in the judicial rulings in the United States. But the general trend is to repudiate any rule of presumption in the strict sense:<sup>2</sup>

production, but not the risk of non-persuasion, is on the defendant); *Nebraska*: 1897, *Beck v. State*, 51 Nebr. 106, 70 N. W. 498 (the defendant need not persuade by a preponderance); 1898, *Peyton v. State*, 54 Nebr. 188, 74 N. W. 597 (burden of proof remains on prosecution throughout); *New Jersey*: 1921, *State v. Parks*, — N. J. L. —, 115 Atl. 305; *New Mexico*: 1896, *Borrego v. Territory*, 8 N. M. 446, 46 Pac. 349 (the defendant need not persuade by a preponderance); 1915, *State v. Smith*, 21 N. M. 173, 153 Pac. 256; *North Carolina*: 1919, *State v. Bryant*, 178 N. C. 702, 100 S. E. 430; *North Dakota*: 1908, *State v. Nelson*, 17 N. D. 13, 114 N. W. 478; *Oklahoma*: 1897, *Wright v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 78, 47 Pac. 1069 (the burden is on the prosecution); *South Dakota*: 1897, *State v. Thornton*, 10 S. D. 349, 73 N. W. 196 (the defendant has the duty of producing evidence; but the prosecution's case must still be made out to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt); *Tennessee*: 1903, *Legere v. State*, 111 Tenn. 368, 77 S. W. 1059; *Virginia*: 1922, *Draper v. Com.*, — Va. —, 111 S. E. 471.

*Contra*: 1917, *U. S. v. Olais*, 36 P. I. 828 (Street, J., diss.).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the *illegal dealing with liquor*, the defendant must prove a *license*: 1920, *U. S. v. Turner*, D. C. W. D. Va., 266 Fed. 248 (transporting liquor without a permit; burden of showing permit is on defendant); 1896, *Hornberger v. State*, 47 Nebr. 40, 66 N. W. 23; 1897, *Durfee v. State*, 53 Nebr. 214, 73 N. W. 676 (the mere possession, irrespective of explanation, raises a presumption of guilt, and shifts the "burden . . . to establish" lawful possession); 1898, *Parker v. State*, 61 N. J. L. 308, 39 Atl. 651; 1897, *State v. Shelton*, 16 Wash. 590, 48 Pac. 253. In some cases, the burden is clearly stated to be merely the second kind, *i. e.* the duty of producing

evidence: 1897, *State v. Lee*, 69 Conn. 186, 37 Atl. 75 (under a statute making an abortion criminal, unless necessary to save life, the necessity must be evidenced by the defendant).

On a charge of *keeping liquor for sale*, after proof of keeping, the burden of proving no sale-intent is not on defendant: 1917, *State v. Bean*, 175 N. C. 748, 94 S. E. 705 (Clark, C. J., diss.).

*Duress* should be likewise treated: 1911, *State v. Sappienza*, 84 Ch. 63, 95 N. E. 381 (duress "is an affirmative defence," to be established by a preponderance of evidence).

§ 2513. <sup>1</sup> 1836, *R. v. Cockin*, 2 Lew. Cr. C. 235, and note by the Reporter; 1845, *R. v. Dredge*, 1 Cox Cr. 235; 1854, *R. v. Burton*, Dears. Cr. C. 282; 1866, *R. v. Harris*, 8 Cox Cr. 333; 1866, *R. v. Exall*, 4 F. & F. 925 (leading case); 1878, *R. v. Hughes*, 14 Cox Cr. 223.

<sup>2</sup> The following cases illustrate the bearings of the question in most jurisdictions; compare the cases cited *ante*, § 152:

CANADA: 1904, *R. v. Theriault*, 11 Br. C. 117.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1901, *Considine v. U. S.*, 50 C. C. A. 272, 112 Fed. 342; 1914, *Ex parte La Page*, D. C. N. D. N. Y., 216 Fed. 256 (extradition proceedings); 1920, *Lindsey v. U. S.*, 4th C. C. A., 264 Fed. 94 (whiskey); 1921, *Boehm v. U. S.*, 2d C. C. A., 271 Fed. 454 (automobile tires);

*Alabama*: 1898, *Bryant v. State*, 116 Ala. 445, 23 So. 40; 1899, *Hale v. State*, 122 Ala. 85, 26 So. 236; 1902, *Smith v. State*, 133 Ala. 145, 31 So. 806; 1921, *Wright v. State*, 17 Ala. App. 621, 88 So. 185 (flour shipped on a railroad);

*Arizona*: 1901, *Taylor v. Terr.*, 7 Ariz. 234, 64 Pac. 423; 1921, *Smith v. State*, 22 Ariz. 229, 196 Pac. 420 (bonds);

*Arkansas*: 1909, *Douglass v. State*, 91 Ark.



1869, *DOE, J.*, in *State v. Hodge*, 50 N. H. 510: "The defendant's counsel claims that the State 'relies on the possession by the respondent of the articles alleged to be stolen;' that 'possession of stolen goods, which will justify conviction, must be recent and exclusive;'

492, 121 S. W. 923; 1909, *Wiley v. State*, 92 Ark. 586, 124 S. W. 249; 1916, *Mitchell v. State*, 125 Ark. 260, 188 S. W. 805; 1920, *Pearrow v. State*, 146 Ark. 182, 225 S. W. 311; *California*: 1898, *People v. Luchetti*, 119 Cal. 501, 51 Pac. 707 (an explanation entitles the matter to be left to the jury); 1901, *People v. Jay*, 135 Cal. xix, 66 Pac. 964; 1902, *People v. Wilson*, 135 Cal. 331, 67 Pac. 322; 1905, *People v. Davis*, 147 Cal. 346, 81 Pac. 718; *Colorado*: 1897, *Brooke v. People*, 23 Colo. 375, 48 Pac. 502 (the defendant must explain, but not as a rule of going forward; and the prosecution's general burden remains); 1899, *VanStraaten v. People*, 26 Colo. 184, 56 Pac. 905; *Delaware*: 1904, *State v. Carr*, 4 Del. 523, 57 Atl. 370; *Florida*: 1895, *Leslie v. State*, 35 Fla. 171, 17 So. 555; 1899, *Williams v. State*, 40 Fla. 480, 25 So. 143; 1908, *McDonald v. State*, 56 Fla. 74, 47 So. 485; 1909, *Bass v. State*, 58 Fla. 1, 50 So. 531; *Georgia*: 1892, *Cornwall v. State*, 91 Ga. 277, 281, 18 S. E. 154; 1895, *Brooks v. State*, 96 Ga. 353, 23 S. E. 413; 1898, *Davidson v. State*, 104 Ga. 761, 30 S. E. 946; 1898, *Jones v. State*, 105 Ga. 649, 31 S. E. 574; 1898, *Sharpe v. State*, 105 Ga. 588, 31 S. E. 541; 1901, *Turner v. State*, 114 Ga. 45, 39 S. E. 863; 1918, *Holliday v. State*, 23 Ga. App. 400, 98 S. E. 386; 1922, *Murray v. State*, 27 Ga. App. 783, 110 S. E. 418; *Idaho*: 1901, *State v. Sanford*, 8 Ida. 187, 67 Pac. 492; 1908, *State v. Peck*, 14 Ida. 712, 95 Pac. 515; 1921, *State v. Sullivan*, 34 Ida. 68, 199 Pac. 647; *Illinois*: 1896, *Keating v. People*, 160 Ill. 480, 43 N. E. 724; 1902, *Williams v. People*, 196 Ill. 173, 63 N. E. 681; 1903, *Watts v. People*, 204 Ill. 233, 68 N. E. 563; 1909, *People v. Deluce*, 237 Ill. 541, 86 N. E. 1080; 1920, *People v. Lardner*, 296 Ill. 190, 129 N. E. 697 (larceny of rugs); 1921, *People v. Bullion*, 299 Ill. 208, 132 N. E. 577 (burglary); 1922, *People v. Clark*, 301 Ill. 428, 134 N. E. 95 (larceny of automobile); *Indiana*: 1866, *Doan v. State*, 26 Ind. 495 (it is not his failure to explain "where it is in his power to do so," because if he was able to explain innocently, though he did not choose to, by hypothesis he is not guilty; but his ability to explain if he were innocent and his then failure); 1897, *Pfau v. State*, 148 Ind. 539, 47 N. E. 926; 1898, *Campbell v. State*, 150 Ind. 74, 49 N. E. 905 (it is a "strong presumption of fact," i. e. in the absence of satisfactory explanation, "the jury were legally bound to find him guilty"; but the Court erroneously declares that a "strong presumption of fact" would have the same effect as a rebuttable presumption of law; the preceding authorities

reviewed); 1908, *Mason v. State*, 171 Ind. 78, 85 N. E. 776; 1922, *Rosenberg v. State*, — Ind. —, 134 N. E. 856; *Indian Terr.* 1896, *Oxier v. U. S.*, 51 Ind. T. 58, 38 S. W. 331; *Iowa*: 1895, *State v. LaGrange*, 94 Ia. 60, 62 N. W. 664; 1899, *State v. Miner*, 107 Ia. 656, 78 N. W. 679; 1903, *State v. Williams*, 120 Ia. 36, 94 N. W. 255; 1903, *State v. King*, 122 Ia. 1, 96 N. W. 712; 1904, *State v. Raphael*, 123 Ia. 452, 99 N. W. 151; 1909, *State v. Carter*, 144 Ia. 280, 121 N. W. 694; 1911, *State v. Kimcs*, 152 Ia. 240, 132 N. W. 180; 1913, *State v. Clark*, 160 Ia. 138, 140 N. W. 821; *Kansas*: 1894, *State v. Hoffman*, 53 Kan. 700, 708, 37 Pac. 138 ("if unexplained, may be sufficient"); 1899, *State v. Powell*, 61 Kan. 81, 58 Pac. 968; 1902, *State v. Herron*, 64 Kan. 363, 67 Pac. 861; 1921, *State v. Bell*, 109 Kan. 767, 201 Pac. 1110; *Louisiana*: 1898, *State v. Kelley*, 50 La. An. 597, 23 So. 543 (possession of recently stolen property, not accounted for, raises the presumption); *Massachusetts*: 1869, *Com. v. Bell*, 102 Mass. 165; 1875, *Com. v. Randall*, 119 Mass. 107; *Michigan*: 1917, *People v. May*, 199 Mich. 574, 165 N. W. 832; *Minnesota*: 1920, *State v. Couplin*, 146 Minn. 189, 178 N. W. 486; 1920, *State v. Morgan*, 146 Minn. 197, 178 N. W. 489; *Missouri*: 1897, *State v. Wilson*, 137 Mo. 592, 39 S. W. 80; 1904, *State v. Drew*, 179 Mo. 315, 78 S. W. 594; 1906, *State v. Wright*, 199 Mo. 161, 97 S. W. 874; 1909, *Rogers v. Wilson*, 220 Mo. 213, 119 S. W. 369; 1910, *State v. Court*, 225 Mo. 609, 125 Mo. 451; 1910, *State v. Hammons*, 226 Mo. 604, 126 S. W. 422; 1918, *State v. Prunty*, 276 Mo. 359, 208 S. W. 91; 1920, *State v. Weiss*, — Mo. —, 219 S. W. 368 (re-affirming the rule in *State v. Kelly*, 73 Mo. 608); 1922, *State v. Conley*, — Mo. —, 238 S. W. 806; *Nebraska*: 1921, *Zediker v. State*, — Nebr. —, 184 N. W. 80; *Nevada*: 1898, *State v. Mandich*, 24 Nev. 336, 54 Pac. 516; *New Jersey*: 1904, *State v. Lax*, 71 N. J. L. 386, 59 Atl. 18; *New Mexico*: 1906, *Terr. v. Livingston*, 13 N. M. 318, 84 Pac. 1021; *North Carolina*: 1913, *State v. Anderson*, 162 N. C. 571, 77 S. E. 238; 1918, *State v. Ford*, 175 N. C. 797, 95 S. E. 154; *North Dakota*: 1900, *State v. Rosencrans*, 9 N. D. 163, 82 N. W. 422; 1913, *State v. Schonberg*, 24 N. D. 532, 140 N. W. 105; 1920, *State v. Ross*, — N. D. —, 179 N. W. 993 (receiving stolen property); 1921, *State v. Lennick*, — N. D. —, 182 N. W. 458 (larceny of cows);



that 'the State has not actually proved either possession by the respondent of the articles alleged to be stolen, or occupancy of the room in which they were found, much less exclusive possession;' and that the Court erred in refusing to instruct the jury, as requested, that the evidence was not sufficient to authorize a verdict against him. It has been generally understood, that the prisoner's exclusive and unexplained possession of stolen property recently after the theft, raises the presumption that he is the thief, and that this presumption takes the burden of proof from the prosecutor and lays it upon the prisoner. When the defendant's possession of stolen property has been the only evidence relied upon to convict him, judges have directed an acquittal because they held the possession was not recent, or was not exclusive, or was explained. Trials have proceeded upon the ground that it was for the Court to determine whether the possession proved was recent enough, or exclusive enough, or explained enough, to shift the burden of proof, and that, if the burden of proof was not thus shifted by the Court, the defendant was entitled to an acquittal. The Court has decided, not whether there was any evidence, however slight, to be submitted to the jury, but whether there was a presumption which shifted the burden of proof. This practice was formerly so common, that it came to be regarded as the application of a rule of law, and is so laid down in many books of high authority.

"In this case, the defendant claims that the evidence does not bring him within the supposed rule in relation to possession of stolen property, and that the Court should have ordered his acquittal. It becomes necessary, therefore, to inquire whether there is any such rule of law as has been supposed, and what the rule is, if there is one, and whether this case comes within it.

"It is obvious, at the outset, that if there is such a rule, the presumption which it draws from the evidence must be a presumption of law declared by the Court, as distinguished from a presumption of fact found by the jury. The first practical difficulty in the way of making it a presumption of law is the impossibility of inventing a rule by which to determine whether the possession is recent or not. Cockin's Case, 2 Lewin C. C. 235, was an indictment for stealing two sacks, found in the defendant's possession about twenty days after they were missed; COLERIDGE, J., said to the jury 'If I was now to lose my watch, and in a few minutes it was to be found on the person of one of you, it would afford the strongest ground for presuming that you had stolen it; but if a month hence it were to be found in your possession, the presumption of your having stolen it would be greatly weakened, because stolen property usually passes through many hands.' . . . It is useless to call such a presumption a presumption of law. Call it what we may, it is a presumption of fact. . . .

"These [precedents cited] are mere instances and illustrations of the general [English] practice of the judge giving to the jury his opinion on the facts; and this general practice, probably, is the chief origin of the supposed legal presumption drawn from the possession of stolen property. When judges, following the common practice of giving the jury their opinions of the facts and the weight of the evidence, had charged juries year after year, for the great length of time, that possession of stolen property was presumptive evidence of guilt, or raised a presumption of guilt, this form of judicial instruction finally came to be considered as the law of the land. Whether it was matter of fact or matter of law was practically immaterial, the influence of the Court upon the jury being then generally overwhelming in cases that touched no political prejudice or sympathy. Being constantly repeated by the Court, it naturally acquired the position and strength of an established dogma. . . . To whatever extent matter of fact involved in the issue is held to be matter of law, to that extent the constitutional system of trial by jury is destroyed; and when part is destroyed, the remainder is put in jeopardy. One precedent is held to justify another. Every matter of fact turned into law, opens the way for a further annexation of the province of the jury to the province of the Court, and a gradual absorption. None the less dangerous is the process because it has been going on for a long time. . . .

"Whether the defendant, in this case, had any possession of the watch and chain, at



any time, either when they were found or before; whether his possession, if any he had, was recent enough, or exclusive enough, or unexplained enough, to raise a presumption of guilt, — were questions of fact for the jury. There was *some* evidence to be submitted to the jury on those questions. If the jury found the defendant had the property in his possession after it was stolen, that fact was evidence against him. If they found an absence of explanatory evidence on his side, under circumstances which tended to show he could furnish such evidence, that fact was additional evidence against him. But if those facts were found, there was no presumption of law, nor was the burden of proof shifted. The State, in the indictment, made an affirmation of the defendant's guilt which the defendant traversed in his plea. The State had the affirmative, and the burden of proof which belongs to the affirmative. The question, from the beginning to the end of the trial, was, whether the affirmative allegation of guilt was proved by the testimony introduced on both sides, and by the evidence which consists of the non-production of testimony, *not* including the refusal of the defendant to testify, if there was such a refusal. The Court rightly refused to instruct the jury as requested."

1902, *WEAVER, J.*, in *State v. Brady*, — Ia. —, 91 N. W. 801: "The use of the terms 'presumption of guilt' and "'prima facie' evidence of guilt' with reference to the possession of stolen goods has perhaps been too long indulged in by Courts and text-writers to be condemned; but we cannot resist the conclusion that, when so employed, these expressions are unfortunate, and often misleading. In a civil proceeding, when a plaintiff makes a 'prima facie' case, the burden is shifted, and, in the absence of any countershowing, he is entitled to recover as a matter of law. This rule is understood by the average intelligent layman as well as by those learned in the law; and when, in a criminal case, an instruction is given that the showing of a specific fact is 'prima facie' evidence of guilt, jurors may very naturally conclude that the establishment of such fact has the effect to cast upon defendant the burden of proving his innocence of the charge against him. . . . 'Presumptions' of guilt and 'prima facie' cases of guilt in the trial of a party charged with crime mean no more than that from the proof of certain facts the jury will be warranted in convicting the accused of the offense with which he is charged."

If no rule of presumption is to be accepted, specific limitations are hardly of any consequence, for the sufficiency of the evidence to go to the jury will usually depend on the variant circumstances of each case. But the follow-

*Oklahoma*: 1897, *Johnson v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 695, 50 Pac. 90; 1898, *Douthitt v. Terr.*, 7 Okl. 55, 54 Pac. 312 (it is "a circumstance" only); 1908, *Slater v. U. S.*, 1 Okl. Cr. 275, 98 Pac. 110; 1909, *Cox v. Terr.*, 2 Okl. Cr. 668, 104 Pac. 378; *Oregon*: 1896, *State v. Pomeroy*, 30 Or. 16, 46 Pac. 797 (it depends on "the character of the property, the nature of the possession, and its proximity in time with the theft"); 1909, *State v. Minnick*, 54 Or. 86, 102 Pac. 605; 1921, *State v. Williams*, 102 Or. 305, 202 Pac. 428 (barbed wire); 1922, *State v. Keelen*, — Or. —, 203 Pac. 306 (larceny of automobile); *Philippine Isl.* 1910, *U. S. v. Espia*, 16 P. I. 506; 1910, *U. S. v. Solinap*, 18 P. I. 77; 1911, *U. S. v. Simbahan*, 19 P. I. 123; 1916, *U. S. v. Catimbang*, 35 P. I. 367; *Porto Rico*: 1914, *People v. Laureano*, 20 P. R. 7; *South Carolina*: 1909, *State v. Winter*, 83 S. C. 153, 65 S. E. 209; *South Dakota*: 1919, *State v. Larson*, 41 S. D. 553, 172 N. W. 114;

*Texas*: 1921, *Seebold v. State*, 89 Tex. Cr. 563, 232 S. W. 328 (larceny of automobile); *Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 8285 ("Possession of property recently stolen, when the party in possession fails to make a satisfactory explanation, shall be deemed 'prima facie' evidence of guilt"); 1911, *State v. Potello*, 40 Utah 56, 119 Pac. 1023 (construing Comp. L. 1907, § 4355); *Vermont*: 1898, *State v. Peach*, 70 Vt. 283, 40 Atl. 732 (unexplained possession may be considered); *Washington*: 1893, *State v. Walters*, 7 Wash. 246, 257, 34 Pac. 938, 1098 (no presumption; but the Court whimsically treats a charge calling such possession "a criminating circumstance tending to show" guilt as if it laid down a rule of law; this is strange distortion of words); 1902, *State v. Bliss*, 27 Wash. 463, 68 Pac. 87; 1911, *State v. Hatfield*, 65 Wash. 550, 118 Pac. 735; *Wyoming*: 1903, *Younger v. State*, 12 Wyo. 24, 73 Pac. 551.



ing considerations have been emphasized, from the point of view of a definite rule: (a) The possession must be *unexplained* by any innocent origin;<sup>3</sup> (b) the possession must be fairly *recent*;<sup>4</sup> (c) and the possession must be *exclusive*.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, if there is any rule at all, it is generally conceded to apply also on a charge of *knowing receipt* of stolen goods,<sup>6</sup> and of *burglary* or the like.<sup>7</sup>

In many additional instances, by statute, a rule of presumption or of "‘prima facie’ evidence" has been declared against persons found in posses-

<sup>3</sup> This is noted in many of the cases *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1836, *R. v. Cockin*, 2 Lew. Cr. C. 235 (sacks stolen in February were found in the defendant's possession some twenty days after; Coleridge, J.: "If I was now to lose my watch, and in a few minutes it was to be found on the person of one of you, it would afford the strongest ground for presuming that you had stolen it. But if a month hence it were to be found in your possession, the presumption of your having stolen it would be greatly weakened; because stolen property usually passes through many hands"); 1845, *R. v. Hall*, 1 Cox Cr. 231 (possession of a shirt, six months after it was missed; Pollock, C. B., and Coleridge, J.: "There is a certain period after which I should think it very unfair to assume theft from mere possession, even where the property is proved 'aliunde' to have been stolen"); *U. S.* 1921, *People v. Kubulis*, 298 Ill. 523, 131 N. E. 595; 1898, *State v. Foulk*, 59 Kan. 775, 52 Pac. 864.

<sup>5</sup> 1909, *Sorenson v. U. S.*, 8th C. C. A., 168 Fed. 785 (possession of a watch by the defendant's wife, not admitted); 1896, *Moncrief v. State*, 99 Ga. 295, 25 S. E. 735 (the possession of the house must be exclusive); 1921, *People v. Kubulis*, 298 Ill. 523, 131 N. E. 595; 1892, *State v. Owsley*, 111 Mo. 450, 455, 20 S. W. 194 (goods found in a house of the defendant's wife where he did not live; not sufficient); 1919, *State v. Moss*, 95 Or. 616, 182 Pac. 149, 188 Pac. 702 (re-branded cattle found with defendant's cattle on a public range; the opinion seems to lay down too strict a rule).

Compare the following: 1900, *Sparks v. State*, 111 Ga. 830, 35 S. E. 654 (what constitutes possession, examined).

<sup>6</sup> *Eng.* 1864, *R. v. Langmead*, Leigh & C. 427 (Blackburn, J.: "I should have said that recent possession was evidence either of stealing or receiving according to circumstances. . . . When it has been shown that property has been stolen and has been found recently after its loss in the possession of the prisoner, he is called upon to account for having it, and, on his failing to do so, the jury may very well infer that his possession was dishonest, and that he was either the thief or the receiver, according to the circumstances"); *U. S.* 1921, *Degnan v. U. S.*, 25 C. C. A., 271 Fed. 291; 1921, *Rosen v. U. S.*, 20 C. C. A., 271 Fed. 651 (stolen copper); 1914, *State v. Janks*, 26 Ida.

567, 144 Pac. 779; 1899, *State v. Guild*, 149 Mo. 370, 50 S. W. 909 (overruling *State v. Bulla*, 89 Mo. 595, 1 S. W. 764); 1905, *State v. Richmond*, 186 Mo. 71, 84 S. W. 880 (declaring both the *Guild* and the *Bulla* cases to be correct!).

<sup>7</sup> *Fed.* 1896, *Wilson v. U. S.*, 162 U. S. 613, 16 Sup. 895 (fruits of any crime; here money and clothes of the deceased); *Ark.* 1906, *Gunter v. State*, 79 Ark. 432, 96 S. W. 181 (burglary); *Cal.* 1904, *People v. Lang*, 142 Cal. 482, 76 Pac. 232; *Fla.* 1898, *Roberson v. State*, 40 Fla. 509, 24 So. 474 (if a breaking and entering at the time of taking is shown); *Ga.* 1899, *Lester v. State*, 106 Ga. 371, 32 S. E. 335 (admissible, if the fact of breaking and entering is first shown); *Ill.* 1907, *Miller v. People*, 229 Ill. 376, 82 N. E. 391; 1921, *People v. Wilson*, 298 Ill. 257, 131 N. E. 609 (burglary); *Ia.* 1902, *State v. Brady*, — *Ia.* —, 91 N. W. 801 (burglary; local rulings reviewed); 1902, *State v. Brundige*, 118 *Ia.* 92, 91 N. W. 920 (breaking and entering with intent to steal); 1903, *State v. Swift*, 120 *Ia.* 8, 94 N. W. 269; 1903, *State v. Brady*, 121 *Ia.* 561, 97 N. W. 62; 1913, *State v. Stutches*, 163 *Ia.* 4, 144 N. W. 597; *Mo.* 1893, *State v. Moore*, 117 Mo. 395, 404, 22 S. W. 1086; 1898, *State v. Hodges*, 144 Mo. 50, 45 S. W. 1093 (forged articles); 1902, *State v. Yandle*, 166 Mo. 589, 66 S. W. 532; *Mont.* 1909, *State v. Sparks*, 40 Mont. 82, 105 Pac. 87; *Okl.* 1897, *Johnson v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 695, 50 Pac. 90; *Va.* 1900, *Henderson v. Com.*, 98 Va. 794, 34 S. E. 881; 1922, *Elmoe v. Com.*, — *Va.* —, 110 S. E. 257 (murder during burglary); *Wash.* 1917, *State v. Dotson*, 97 Wash. 607, 166 Pac. 769; *Wis.* 1905, *Winsky v. State*, 126 Wis. 99, 105 N. W. 480.

Compare the following: 1894, *People v. Hart*, 10 Utah 204, 207, 37 Pac. 330 (mere recent possession, with no other circumstance, insufficient, on a charge of burglary; misapplying the rule of § 2273, *ante*, that failure to testify creates no inference); 1897, *Kibler v. Com.*, 94 Va. 804, 26 S. E. 858 (no presumption from possession of the fruits of a crime).

The same question arises as to a presumption of *fabrication* or of *knowledge*, from the *utterance* or *possession* of a *forged* instrument: 1907, *State v. Waterbury*, 133 *Ia.* 135, 110 N. W. 328; 1903, *State v. Psycher*, 179 Mo. 140, 77 S. W. 836.



sion of forbidden articles, such as game or liquor;<sup>8</sup> but these rules involve closely the substantive law of the respective crimes.

§ 2514. **Same: (5) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).** Capacity is naturally a part of the first burden of proof for the prosecution, although the second burden might well be aided, in the appropriate classes of cases, by a presumption of capacity (*ante*, § 2487). For *infancy*, the so-called conclusive presumption of incapacity of criminal intent under the age of seven is of course genuinely a rule of substantive law that the infant "cannot be guilty of felony," as Blackstone correctly puts it.<sup>1</sup> The rule that incapacity is presumed between the ages of seven and fourteen, for sundry crimes,<sup>2</sup> and for rape in particular,<sup>3</sup> is more correctly stated as a presumption of capacity above the age of fourteen. For *insanity*, the incidence of the burdens has already been considered (*ante*, § 2501). For *intoxication*, no doubt the second burden (of producing some evidence) is on the accused;<sup>4</sup> though the first burden (or risk of non-persuasion) remains on the prosecution.<sup>5</sup> For *coverture*, the coercion of the husband, which in Blackstone's correct phrase may be "an excuse for criminal misconduct" of the wife, may be presumed from the husband's presence; this then creates for the prosecution a duty of adducing evidence of the wife's willing participation; the risk of non-persuasion remaining throughout upon the prosecution.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2515. **Ownership; (1) Possession of Land and Personalty.** Where title to *land* becomes material, the fact of present possession alone may serve to create a presumption of ownership;<sup>1</sup> the emphasis being on the occupation,

<sup>8</sup> 1921, *Pierriero v. U. S.*, 4th C. C. A., 271 Fed. 912 (possession of narcotic drugs, as evidence of purchase and sale); *e. g.* 1911, *State v. Kelly*, 22 N. D. 5, 132 N. W. 223 (liquor); 1921, *Henderson v. Com.*, 130 Va. 761, 107 S. E. 700 (unlawful possession of cocaine).

There are hundreds of statutes on this subject.

§ 2514. <sup>1</sup> Commentaries, III, 23. For rape and kindred crimes, the age of fourteen was taken: *Eng.* 1839, *R. v. Philips*, 8 C. & P. 736; 1839, *R. v. Jordan*, 9 C. & P. 118; but a distinction may be made as to assault with intent: *U. S.* 1824, *Com. v. Green*, 2 Pick. Mass. 380.

<sup>2</sup> 1848, *State v. Goin*, 9 Humph. Tenn. 174.

<sup>3</sup> 1893, *Sutton v. People*, 145 Ill. 279, 286, 34 N. E. 420 (rape; defendant must offer evidence that he is under 14 years of age); 1906, *State v. Fisk*, 15 N. D. 589, 108 N. W. 485 (rape; under the statute, the State must show criminal intent, for a child between 7 and 14; collecting the authorities at common law).

<sup>4</sup> 1894, *State v. Hill*, 46 La. An. 27, 14 So. 294.

<sup>5</sup> 1898, *Davis v. State*, 54 Nebr. 177, 74 N. W. 599 (burden of proof remains on prosecution throughout). *Contra*: 1904, *State v. Corrivau*, 93 Minn. 38, 100 N. W. 638.

<sup>6</sup> 1906, *State v. Harvey*, 130 Ia. 394, 106 N. W. 938 (arson); 1886, *Com. v. Flaherty*, 140 Mass. 454, 5 N. E. 258; 1887, *Com. v. Hill*, 145 Mass. 305, 307, 14 N. E. 124; 1904, *Com. v. Adams*, 186 Mass. 101, 71 N. E. 78; 1891, *State v. MaFoo*, 110 Mo. 7, 19 S. W. 222; 1880, *Goldstein v. People*, 82 N. Y. 231; 1886, *Franklin's Adm'r's Appeal*, 115 Pa. 534, 538, 6 Atl. 70.

Statutes have sometimes abolished this rule; *e. g.* *Can. Dom. R. S.* 1906, c. 146, *Crim. C.* § 21.

The same principle is sometimes applied in *civil cases*; but the jurisdictions differ: 1915, *Millar v. Hilton*, 189 Mich. 635, 155 N. W. 574 (promissory note).

§ 2515. <sup>1</sup> The inference rests on the general principle of Relevancy examined *ante*, § 148. To the following cases, add those cited *ante*, § 1789, where this presumption comes into play: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, pars. 11, 12 (it is presumed "that things which a person possesses are owned by him," and "that a person is the owner of property, from exercising acts of ownership over it, or from common reputation of his ownership"); 1903, *Cahill v. Cahill*, 75 Conn. 522, 54 Atl. 201 (land); 1917, *Davis v. Sim*, 100 Kan. 66, 163 Pac. 622; *Or. Laws* 1920, § 799, pars. 11, 12 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334



or appearance of ownership, and not on the documentary sources of claim;<sup>2</sup> and the rule serving merely to shift to the opponent the second burden, or duty of producing some evidence to the contrary.<sup>3</sup>

The same rule serves in the evidencing of ownership of *personalty*, particularly in cases of larceny or robbery, where a real dispute of ownership is rare.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2516. **Same: (2) Possession of Negotiable Instrument.** Subject to some discriminations, the same presumption may be applied to the possession of a negotiable instrument, especially to one indorsed in blank or to bearer.<sup>1</sup>

(like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); 1905, *Manila v. Del Rosario*, 5 P. I. 223; 1907, *Ayala de Roxas v. Case*, 8 P. I. 199; P. R. Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); 1893, *Teass v. St. Albans*, 38 W. Va. 1, 22, 17 S. E. 400 (land); *Sedgwick & Wait, Trial of Title to Land*, § 717.

Distinguish the presumption of a *lost grant* from long-continued possession (*post*, § 2522).

<sup>2</sup> 1897, *Hewes v. Glos*, 170 Ill. 436, 48 N. E. 922 (deed from grantor, without possession by grantor or grantee, raises no presumption of ownership); 1899, *Glos v. Huey*, 181 Ill. 149, 54 N. E. 905 (similar); 1906, *Glos v. Ault*, 221 Ill. 562, 77 N. E. 939 (possession under claim of ownership being 'prima facie' evidence of ownership, a deed from such a possessor may be 'prima facie' evidence of ownership); 1895, *Newcastle v. Haywood*, 68 N. H. 179, 44 Atl. 132 (similar).

<sup>3</sup> This is connected with other rules of substantive law, such as the rule that in ejectment the claimant must recover on the strength of his own title and not the weakness of his opponent's; *e. g.*, *Richmond v. Jones*, 1910, 111 Va. 214, 68 S. E. 181 (ejectment; defendant set up a prior grant; burden of proof held to be on plaintiff throughout).

There are also occasional rules as to the shifting of the second burden in evidencing the various elements under an *adverse possession*: 1842, *Brown v. King*, 5 Metc. Mass. 173 (writ of entry; a title by disseisin being set up, held, that mere possession by the claimant did not suffice to put the burden of proof on the titular owner to show that possession to be permissive; the burden of showing adverseness was on the claimant throughout); 1894, *Skinner v. Skinner*, 38 Nebr. 756, 766, 57 N. W. 534 (the exclusive possession of land with the titular owner's knowledge may create a presumption of his permission); 1866, *Leport v. Todd*, 32 N. J. L. 124 (a plaintiff in ejectment resting on adverse possession has the burden of showing that a possession originally permissive became adverse).

<sup>4</sup> Add some of the cases cited *ante*, § 1789: *Ala.* 1906, *Roberts v. Ringemann*, 145 Ala. 678, 40 So. 81 (personalty levied on); *Cal.* 1896, *People v. Oldham*, 111 Cal. 648, 44 Pac. 312 (robbery or larceny); *Ill.* 1901, *Howard*

*v. People*, 193 Ill. 615, 61 N. E. 1016 (robbery) 1918, *People v. Picard*, 284 Ill. 588, 120 N. E. 546 (larceny from railroad car); *La.* 1867, *Sullivan v. Goldman*, 19 La. An. 12 (presumption of plaintiff's continued ownership of a horse, held not overturned by presumption of ownership from defendant's possession); *Me.* 1866, *Vining v. Baker*, 53 Me. 544 (trover); *Md.* 1918, *Guyer v. Snyder*, 133 Md. 19, 104 Atl. 116 (personalty levied upon in debtor's hands); *Mass.* 1851, *Magee v. Scott*, 9 Cush. 148; 1865, *Currier v. Gale*, 9 All. 522; 1892, *Com. v. Blanchette*, 157 Mass. 486, 489, 32 N. E. 658 (obtaining goods by false pretences); *Mont.* 1922, *Park v. Grady*, — *Mont.* —, 204 Pac. 382 (conversion); *N. H.* 1900, *Liscomb v. R. Co.*, 70 N. H. 312, 48 Atl. 284 (gift of decedent); *N. Y.* 1877, *Rawley v. Brown*, 71 N. Y. 85 (replevin); *N. Car.* 1905, *Vinson v. Knight*, 137 N. C. 408, 49 S. E. 891 (trover).

It seems practical to hold, as Courts are inclined to do, that the *operation of railroad premises* may be sufficient evidence of ownership or control of the rolling stock: 1904, *Chicago & E. I. R. Co. v. Schmitz*, 211 Ill. 446, 71 N. E. 1050; 1904, *Spink v. N. Y., N. H. & H. R. Co.*, 26 R. I. 115, 58 Atl. 499 (operation of locomotives raises a presumption of ownership or at least control).

Compare the admissibility of *reputation* for this purpose (*ante*, § 1587).

For the application of this rule to property in possession of *husband* or *wife*, see the following cases: 1893, *Farwell v. Cramer*, 38 Nebr. 61, 66, 56 N. W. 716; 1886, *Kingsbury v. Davidson*, 112 Pa. 383, 4 Atl. 33. :

For the reverse presumption, viz. that *ownership* raises a presumption of *control*, see *ante*, § 2510a.

§ 2516. <sup>1</sup> The following cases illustrate the scope of the rule: *Ia.* 1917, *Biggs v. Carter*, 179 Ia. 284, 161 N. W. 322; 1921, *Roberts v. Morse*, 190 Ia. 1344, 181 N. W. 678 (presumption not applied to show acquisition by gift); *Kan.* 1894, *National Bank v. Emmitt*, 52 Kan. 603, 35 Pac. 213; 1910, *King v. Bellamy*, 82 Kan. 220, 108 Pac. 118; *Ky.* 1897, *Jones v. Jones*, 102 Ky. 450, 43 S. W. 412 (rule not applied to an undorsed note held adversely to the payee's representatives); *Mich.* 1901,



§ 2517. **Payment: (1) Lapse of Time.** The discharge of a claim by payment is often said to be presumed after a lapse of time depending on the circumstances of the particular case; the inference being based on the principle of Relevancy already examined (*ante*, § 159). But the multiplied statutes of limitation have reduced the occasions for invoking any other rule, and it is not frequent that a real rule of presumption is intended to be laid down.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2518. **Same: (2) Possession of Instrument or Receipt.** A *receipt* is only an ordinary admission of payment, and is therefore not conclusive (*ante*, § 2432); but it is of course the strongest evidence, and some Courts seem to give it the force of a real presumption.<sup>1</sup> The *obligor's possession of the*

*Battersbee v. Calkins*, 128 Mich. 569, 87 N. W. 760; 1912, *Reed v. McCready*, 170 Mich. 532, 136 N. W. 488; *Minn. Gen. St.* 1913, § 8448 (possession of bill or note is 'prima facie' evidence of genuineness of indorsement); 1904, *Huntley v. Hutchinson*, 91 Minn. 244, 97 N. W. 971; *Nebr.* 1898, *Saunders v. Bates*, 54 Nebr. 209, 74 N. W. 578; 1898, *New England L. & T. Co. v. Robinson*, 56 Nebr. 50, 76 N. W. 415; *N. J.* 1893, *Halsted v. Colvin*, 51 N. J. Eq. 387, 398, 26 Atl. 928; *N. Y.* 1905, *Cuyler v. Wallace*, 183 N. Y. 291, 76 N. E. 1 (insurance policy); *N. Car.* 1905, *Tyson v. Joyner*, 139 N. C. 69, 51 S. E. 803 (indorsed in blank); *P. I.* 1908, *Chua Chienco v. Vargas*, 11 P. I. 219.

Compare the cases cited *post*, § 2520, n. 3 (possession as raising presumption of genuineness of indorsement).

§ 2517. <sup>1</sup> Examples of the use of such a term are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1786, *Oswald v. Leigh*, 1 T. R. 270 (the defendant showed that he "had an estate in the plaintiff's neighborhood, and was constant and regular in all his payments"); 1829, *Sellen v. Norman*, 4 C. & P. 80 (presumption of wages paid, "if a servant has left a considerable time").

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1917, *Chesapeake & D. Canal Co. v. U. S.*, 3d C. C. A., 240 Fed. 903 (payment of dividends); *Ala.* 1909, *Roach v. Cox*, 160 Ala. 425, 49 So. 578 (surety); 1921, *Graham v. Graham*, 205 Ala. 644, 89 So. 25 (mortgage by husband to wife; two judges diss.); *Cal.* 1919, *Pratt v. Pratt*, 43 Cal. App. 261, 184 Pac. 956 (claims against a decedent's estate); *Ill.* 1864, *McCormick v. Evans*, 33 Ill. 328 (after twenty years; here, money due under a contract to convey); 1879, *Locke v. Caldwell*, 91 Ill. 417, 421 (presumption not raised for a mortgage debt, where the statutory time of limitation had not run); *Ia.* 1898, *Hollenbeck v. Ristine*, 105 Ia. 488, 75 N. W. 355 (account stated); *Me.* 1877, *Jarvis v. Albro*, 67 Me. 310, 313 (mortgage); *Mass.* 1910, *Jenkins v. Andover Theol. Seminary*, 205 Mass. 376, 91 N. E. 552 (mortgagor's possession for 20 years); *N. J.* 1905,

*Ayres v. Ayres*, 69 N. J. Eq. 343, 60 Atl. 422 (note); *N. Y.* 1905, *Conkling v. Wetherwax*, 181 N. Y. 258, 73 N. E. 1028 (legacy); *N. C.* 1894, *Cox v. Brower*, 114 N. C. 422, 423, 19 S. E. 365 (legacies; nor is it material that the legatees were non-residents, the domestic Courts being open to them); *Oh.* 1911, *Wright v. Hull*, 83 Oh. 385, 94 N. E. 813 (receipt); *Pa.* 1897, *Young v. Doherty*, 183 Pa. 179, 38 Atl. 587 (action on a note; the plaintiff's failure to mention it in the defendant's testator's lifetime, though "given to boasting of his means and the people in his debt," and his failure to bring suit on it, not received to show a presumable payment); 1898, *Devereux's Estate*, 184 Pa. 429, 39 Atl. 225 (the insolvency of the debtor alone does not rebut the presumption); 1917, *Sheafer v. Woodside*, 257 Pa. 276, 161 Atl. 753 (mortgage); 1918, *Coulter v. Lime*, 262 Pa. 95, 104 Atl. 867 (judgment debt); 1921, *Gilbraith's Est.* 270 Pa. 288, 113 Atl. 361 (claim for wages against a decedent); *Va.* 1893, *King v. King*, 90 Va. 177, 17 S. E. 894 (after twenty-seven years, a tender being originally made, and the parties living near each other); 1905, *Allison's Ex'r v. Wood*, 104 Va. 765, 52 S. E. 559 (bond); *Wis.* 1911, *Holway v. Sanborn*, 145 Wis. 151, 130 N. W. 95 (rebutting evidence, considered).

§ 2518. <sup>1</sup> 1897, *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591; 1872, *Guyette v. Bolton*, 46 Vt. 228, 234. *Contra*: 1897, *Terryberry v. Woods*, 69 Vt. 94, 37 Atl. 246 (on a plea of payment, proof of a receipt does not shift the duty of going forward).

Such a presumption is sometimes applied to include *prior instalments* of the same obligation: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 10 (it is presumed "that former rent or installments have been paid when a receipt for later is produced"); 1853, *Hodgdon v. Wright*, 36 Me. 326, 336, *semble*; 1823, *Brewer v. Knapp*, 1 Pick. Mass. 337; *Or. Laws* 1920, § 799, par. 10 (like *Cal. C. C. P.*, § 1963); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334, par. 9 (like *Cal. C. C. P.*, § 1963, par. 10); 1908, *Rubert & Guamis v. Smith*, 11 P. I. 133; *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1470 (like *Cal. C. C. P.*, § 1963).



*instrument* after maturity is usually said to raise a presumption of payment; the inference being based on the principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, § 156); but there are various limitations laid down, in particular, concerning the obligor's opportunity of surreptitious access to the obligee's papers.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2518a. **Same: (3) Delivery of Money.** Where money, or its equivalent, is handed by one person to another, and is accepted by the latter, the transaction may be a bailment, or a loan, or a gift, or discharge of a debt; the latter two transactions would leave the receiver without any further obligation to restore the money. In an action by the payor, therefore, alleging the transaction to be a bailment or a loan, it is fair and natural that the presumption arising from the mere fact of *delivering and receiving the money* is that of a discharge, rather than a creation, of an obligation; *i. e.* the presumption is one of payment, not one of loan.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2519. **Execution and Contents of Document: (1) Letters and Telegrams.** The act of writing a letter or sending a telegram, and the addressee's receipt of the letter or telegram, give rise to questions both of the admissibility and the sufficiency of evidence. The same evidence is also sometimes said to

<sup>2</sup> With the following examples compare the cases cited *ante*, § 156:

ENGLAND: 1816, *Gibbon v. Featherstonhaugh*, 1 Stark. 225 (drawee's possession of a bill, held to be sufficient evidence); 1816, *Brembridge v. Osborne*, 1 Stark. 374 (possession of a note, said to "turn the scale"); 1816, *Shepherd v. Currie*, 1 Stark. 454 (possession of an order to deliver goods to bearer, held to shift the burden).

UNITED STATES: *Ark.* 1894, *Excelsior Mfg. Co. v. Owens*, 58 Ark. 556, 563, 25 S. W. 868 (presumption applied to a note possessed after maturity); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, pars. 9, 13 (it is presumed "that an obligation delivered up to the debtor has been paid," and "that a person in possession of an order on himself for the payment of money, or the delivery of a thing, has paid the money or delivered the thing accordingly"); 1904, *Sarraille v. Calmon*, 142 Cal. 651, 76 Pac. 497 (note); *Ill.* 1894, *Grimes v. Hilliary*, 150 Ill. 141, 149, 36 N. E. 977 (maker having access to payee's papers as members of the family; no presumption); *Ia.* 1915, *Roy v. Duff*, 170 Ia. 319, 152 N. W. 606 (negotiable instrument not indorsed; no presumption); *Mo.* 1893, *Erhart v. Dietrich*, 118 Mo. 418, 428, 24 S. W. 128 (son taking care of demented payee-father; presumption not applied); *Nebr.* 1893, *Smith v. Gardner*, 36 Nebr. 741, 55 N. W. 245 (maker's possession of a note does not raise a presumption, but is merely sufficient evidence); *N. Y.* 1832, *Alvord v. Baker*, 9 Wend. 323 (like *Shepherd v. Currie*, *supra*); *N. C.* 1898, *Poston v. Jones*, 122 N. C. 536, 29 S. E. 951 (presumption applied to a note);

1902, *Vann v. Edwards*, 130 N. C. 70, 40 S. E. 853 (bond found after the death of the payee's administrator in the maker's possession, presumed paid); *Pa.* 1893, *Collins v. Lynch*, 157 Pa. 246, 256, 27 Atl. 721 (joint occupation of land by husband and wife; presumption not applied); 1899, *Wilkinson's Est.*, 192 Pa. 117, 43 Atl. 466 (check and note of deceased husband found in a wife's possession; that she was executrix, held to raise no presumption that she had taken them from his possession after death and therefore that they were paid); 1916, *Wick v. Roop*, 253 Pa. 264, 98 Atl. 555 (bond); *Or.* Laws 1920, § 799, par. 9, par. 13 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334, par. 8, 12 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963, par. 9, 13); 1916, *Lopez Liso v. Tambunting*, 33 P. I. 226 (presumption not applicable on the facts); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1470 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *Vt.* 1898, *Bates v. Cain's Estate*, 70 Vt. 144, 40 Atl. 36 (possession of a note by a joint promisor is not presumptive of sole payment by him); *Wash.* 1893, *First National Bank v. Harris*, 7 Wash. 139, 143, 34 Pac. 466 (presumption applied to a maker's possession of a note after its issue into circulation).

Conversely, the *creditor's possession* may raise a presumption of *non-payment*: 1916, *Toribio v. Foz*, 34 P. I. 913; but this could hardly apply where the debtor, as ordinarily, has the burden of proving payment.

§ 2518a. <sup>1</sup> 1920. *Weed v. Clark*, 118 Me. 466, 109 Atl. 8 (collecting cases).

Compare the presumption of *gift*, between members of a family (*post*, § 2526).



raise a presumption. It is probable that no real presumption is meant to be predicated in the majority of these instances. For example, the receipt by Doe of an answer, through the mail or the telegraph, to his prior communication to Roe, is usually treated as sufficient evidence of Roe's *authorship* of the answer (*ante*, §§ 2153, 2154); and the mailing or depositing of Doe's letter or telegram to Roe is usually treated as sufficient evidence of Roe's *receipt* of it (*ante*, § 95); but it is seldom, except in the latter class of cases, that a burden of proof is deemed to be affected.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2520. **Same:** (2) **Execution of Documents (Delivery, Date, Seal, Consideration).** (a) In view of the importance, in early times, of the formality of *delivery* for a deed (*ante*, §§ 2405, 2408, 2426), it was natural that the evidence of it should be strictly insisted on.<sup>1</sup> But there came gradually to be conceded some sort of rule of sufficiency or presumption, based on evidence of the signing only;<sup>2</sup> the inference being based on principles of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, §§ 92, 102). But the diminished importance of delivery as a formality has also been marked by other rules, more genuinely rules of Presumption, and resting on a somewhat different principle of Relevancy (*ante*, §§ 148, 157); the *grantee's possession* may raise a presumption of delivery,<sup>3</sup> and the *registration* of the deed, based as it is on

§ 2519. <sup>1</sup> The cases are collected in the places above cited. Compare also § 2135, *ante* (authentication as a rule of presumption). The following cases illustrate the judicial looseness of language: 1828, *McCourry v. Suydam*, 10 N. J. L. 245 (mailing a notice of trial raises a presumption and "stands for proof" of service; but an affidavit of non-receipt "destroys the presumption"); 1897, *State v. Howell*, — N. J. L. —, 38 Atl. 748 (notice of claim; the above language quoted, with the extraordinary addition: "Of course, if there is such a presumption as is assumed, it is one of fact for the jury," and then declining to hold that a refusal to charge such a presumption is erroneous, but recommending attention to "the foregoing deliverance in this Court"; if they had recommended a page from the Sibylline books, they could not have left the trial judge in greater perplexity); 1899, *Fairfield P. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, — Pa. —, 44 Atl. 317 (no presumption of receipt ordinarily from the mailing of a letter; but the opinion inconsistently says that (1) there is no presumption except for notices of commercial paper, and (2) there is no presumption for a notice of insurance loss, if there is rebutting evidence; is there then a presumption, or no presumption, where there is no rebutting evidence?).

§ 2520. <sup>1</sup> *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 99 ("unless the delivery be proved, there is no perfect proof of the deed, and there is no proof of the delivery but by a witness who saw the delivery").

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1792, *Grellier v. Neale*, Peake 146

(proof of handwriting raises a presumption of sealing and delivery); 1840, *Burling v. Paterson*, 9 C. & P. 570, 572 (the witness could recollect seeing the signing only; an inference of sealing and delivery was allowed).

This was applied also to an act of *criminal publication*: 1839, *R. v. Lovett*, 3 State Tr. 1177, 1181 (seditious libel; proof of handwriting is presumptive evidence of publication).

Conversely, a *forging* may be presumed from an uttering: *U. S.* 1899, *State v. Williams*, 152 Mo. 115, 53 S. W. 424.

<sup>3</sup> Compare with the following the cases cited *ante*, § 157: *D. C.* 1908, *Walker v. Warner*, 31 D. C. App. 76, 86; *Fla.* 1893, *Campbell v. Carruth*, 32 Fla. 264, 271, 13 So. 432; *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 4183; *Ill.* 1908, *Potter v. Barringer*, 236 Ill. 224, 86 N. E. 233; 1911, *Schroeder v. Smith*, 249 Ill. 574, 94 N. E. 969; 1916, *Stephens v. Hoffman*, 275 Ill. 497, 114 N. E. 142 (presumption applied; effect of contrary evidence considered); 1919, *Pemberton v. Kraper*, 289 Ill. 295, 124 N. E. 611; *Ia.* 1906, *Shetler v. Stewart*, 133 Ia. 320, 107 N. W. 310 (deed; contrary presumption from grantor's possession, considered); 1922, *Mather v. Sewell*, — Ia. —, 186 N. W. 636; *Kan.* 1896, *Rohr v. Alexander*, 57 Kan. 381, 46 Pac. 699; 1916, *Malaney v. Cameron*, 98 Kan. 620, 159 Pac. 19; *Md.* 1916, *Murdock v. Taylor*, 128 Md. 633, 98 Atl. 149 (payor's signature, and payee's possession, are sufficient evidence of sealing); 1920, *Dever v. Silver*, 135 Md. 355, 109 Atl. 67 (promissory note); *Mich.* 1906, *Amos-*



a prerequisite of the maker's acknowledgment, may also raise the presumption of delivery.<sup>4</sup>

*Richia v. Northwestern M. L. Ins. Co.*, 143 Mich. 684, 107 N. W. 707 (insurance policy; presumption not raised on the facts); *Mo.* 1921, *Lafferty v. Kansas City Casualty Co.*, 287 Mo. 555, 229 S. W. 750 (insurance policy; prior cases cited); 1921, *Mason v. Mason*, — Mo. —, 231 S. W. 971; *Nebr.* 1909, *Wilson v. Wilson*, 85 Nebr. 167, 122 N. W. 856; *N. Y.* 1897, *Jones v. N. Y. L. Ins. Co.*, 168 Mass. 66, 47 N. E. 92 (life insurance policy found among the intestate's papers, evidence of valid delivery); *Or.* 1906, *Pier-son v. Fisher*, 48 Or. 223, 85 Pac. 621; *Pa.* 1918, *Kanawell v. Miller*, 262 Pa. 9, 104 Atl. 861 (collecting prior cases); *Utah*: 1915, *Hatch v. Hatch*, 46 Utah 218, 148 Pac. 433; *W. Va.* 1906, *Webb v. Ritter*, 60 W. Va. 193, 54 S. E. 484 (deed); *Wis.* 1913, *Butts v. Richards*, 152 Wis. 318, 140 N. W. 1.

*Contra*: 1897, *Bergere v. U. S.*, 168 U. S. 66, 18 Sup. 4 (possession of papers of grant by a grantee, held not to raise a presumption of delivery by the official having authority to grant).

For the rule as to the presumption of delivery to aid a *voluntary deed* between *family members* or confidential parties, see the following: 1905, *Henry v. Henry*, 215 Ill. 205, 74 N. E. 126 (deed found in the grantor's custody after death); 1905, *Coleman v. Coleman*, 216 Ill. 261, 74 N. E. 701 ("The law presumes more in favor of the delivery of deeds in case of voluntary settlements, especially when made to infants, than it does in ordinary cases of bargain and sale"); 1905, *Thompson v. Calhoun*, 216 Ill. 161, 74 N. E. 775 (similar; here a deed to an adult son).

Where a deed is found in the *grantor's possession*, the presumption is the opposite: 1905, *Cribbs v. Walker*, 74 Ark. 104, 85 S. W. 244; 1911, *Cassidy v. Holland*, 77 S. D. 287, 130 N. W. 771; 1916, *Tweeddale v. Barnett*, 172 Cal. 271, 156 Pac. 483.

Whether possession of a negotiable instrument indorsed raises a presumption of *genuineness of the indorsement* is another question: *Minn. Gen. St.* 1913, § 8448 ('prima facie' evidence of genuineness); 1916, *Capitol Hill State Bank v. Rawlins Nat'l Bank*, 24 Wyo. 423, 160 Pac. 1171 (certificate of deposit; possession not sufficient without evidence of the genuineness of the indorsement; collecting the cases). Compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 2130, 2134 (evidence of genuineness of handwriting), and § 2516 (possession as raising presumption of ownership).

<sup>4</sup> *Fed.* 1865, *Younge v. Guilbeau*, 3 Wall. 636; *Ala.* 1915, *Skipper v. Holloway*, 191 Ala. 190, 67 So. 991; *Cal.* 1897, *Davis v. Improvement Co.*, 118 Cal. 45, 50 Pac. 7; *Ga.* 1920, *McAlpin v. Ryan*, 150 Ga. 746, 105

S. E. 289; *Ill.* 1906, *Hanchett v. Haas*, 219 Ill. 546, 76 N. E. 845; 1906, *Calkins v. Calkins*, 220 Ill. 111, 77 N. E. 102; 1908, *Blankenship v. Hall*, 233 Ill. 116, 84 N. E. 192; 1911, *Schroeder v. Smith*, 249 Ill. 574, 94 N. E. 969; 1911, *Spencer v. Razor*, 251 Ill. 278, 96 N. E. 300; 1920, *Sellers v. Rike*, 292 Ill. 468, 127 N. E. 24; *Ia.* 1905, *Webb v. Webb*, 130 Ia. 457, 104 N. W. 438; 1911, *Stiles v. Beed*, 151 Ia. 86, 130 N. W. 376; 1913, *Tucker v. Glew*, 158 Ia. 231, 139 N. W. 565; *Kan.* 1907, *Pentico v. Hays*, 75 Kan. 76, 88 Pac. 738; *Ky.* 1906, *Collings v. Collings*, — Ky. —, 92 S. W. 577; 1918, *Sasseen v. Farmer*, 179 Ky. 632, 201 S. W. 39; *Me.* 1901, *Egan v. Horrigan*, 96 Me. 46, 51 Atl. 246; *Mass. Gen. L.* 1920, c. 183, § 5 (conclusive evidence); *Mo.* 1904, *Peters v. Berkemeier*, 184 Mo. 393, 83 S. W. 747; 1910, *Chambers v. Chambers*, 227 Mo. 262, 127 S. W. 86; *N. C.* 1918, *Belk v. Belk*, 175 N. C. 69, 94 S. E. 726.

*Contra*, for an acknowledgment required by law: 1914, *Prince v. Prince*, 188 Ala. 559, 66 So. 27 (a good example of the perverse readiness of present-day judges to let Law go counter to Justice, as slaves to a barren logic; any one who desires a text for a sermon against the Lawyer's idea of Justice will find this case a rewarding one).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 1654 (admissibility of the registry of a deed); the substantive law, and statutory regulations, are here much involved.

So, too, the registration may raise a presumption of *execution generally*; compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 1651, 1676, with the following: 1918, *Gardner v. Hughes*, 136 Ark. 332, 206 S. W. 678; 1898, *Anderson v. Cuthbert*, 103 Ga. 767, 30 S. E. 244; 1909, *Hansen v. Owens*, 132 Ga. 648, 64 S. E. 800 (where a recorded deed bears the purporting signature of one proved to have been an illiterate, but the authority of the illiterate to another person in law might make the signature valid, the presumption of genuineness ceases; on the evidence the jury decides); 1898, *Flynn v. Sullivan*, 91 Me. 355, 40 Atl. 136.

So also the statutory *certificate of acknowledgment* alone: 1907, *Tucker v. Helgren*, 102 Minn. 382, 113 N. W. 912 (giving effect to Rev. L. 1905, § 4710); 1920, *Mumpower v. Castle*, 128 Va. 1, 104 S. E. 706 (acknowledgment for record, held not to raise a presumption of delivery, on the facts).

Compare here the rule for admissibility of certified copies and certificates of acknowledgment (*ante*, §§ 1676, 1680).

For the burden of proof under statutes requiring a *sworn denial* of execution, see *post*, § 2596, *ante*, § 2146.



(b) The *date* of the *signing* may be presumed from the purporting date of the document,<sup>5</sup> as also the date of the *delivery*;<sup>6</sup> though this might not always be made a rule of presumption.

(c) The *authority of an agent*, purporting to execute for his principal, is not presumed.<sup>7</sup>

(d) The *official seal* on a document is not only evidence of the authenticity of the seal and the authority of the person affixing it, but is commonly held to create a presumption of these facts (*ante*, §§ 2161–2169), and sometimes even an *official signature* alone is given the same effect (*ante*, § 2167). Whether a *certified copy* of an official or registered document can raise a presumption that the original bore a seal is a question which has led to difference of judicial opinion (*ante*, § 2108).

(e) Whether a *negotiable instrument* raises a presumption of a *consideration*,<sup>8</sup> and whether a subsequent *recorded deed* raises a presumption of *purchase for value without notice* of a prior unrecorded deed,<sup>9</sup> and whether the *purchase for value of a negotiable instrument* raises a presumption as to absence of fraud,<sup>10</sup> are questions which are inextricably entangled with the substantive law.

§ 2521. **Same: (3) Ancient Documents.** The authentic execution of a specific document produced is also to be evidenced by the antiquity and custody of the document. With certain conditions, this is universally regarded

<sup>5</sup> ENGLAND: 1834, *Smith v. Battens*, 1 Moo. & R. 341; 1834, *Hunt v. Massey*, 5 B. & Ad. 902; 1837, *Goodtitle v. Milburn*, 2 M. & W. 853; 1838, *Sinclair v. Baggaley*, 4 M. & W. 312 (leading opinion); 1840, *Anderson v. Weston*, 6 Bing. N. C. 300.

UNITED STATES: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 23 (it is presumed "that a writing is truly dated"); *Ill.* 1914, *Wilson v. Glos*, 266 Ill. 392, 107 N. E. 630 (abstract of title); *Me. Rev. St.* 1916, c. 87, § 136 (date of a writing on the Lord's Day is not of itself sufficient evidence of execution on that day to make it void); *Mich.* 1910, *People v. Campbell*, 160 Mich. 108, 125 N. W. 42 (note); *N. Car.* 1909, *Barden v. Hornthal*, 151 N. C. 8, 65 S. E. 513 (not decided; whether an indorsement is presumed to have been of the date of the note's execution); *N. Dak.* 1905, *Leonard v. Fleming*, 13 N. D. 629, 102 N. W. 308; *Or. Laws* 1920, § 799, par. 23 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *Pa.* 1917, *Seaman v. Husband*, 256 Pa. 571, 100 Atl. 941 (will); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334, par. 21 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963, par. 23); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1470 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *Wis.* 1898, *McFarlane v. Loudon*, 99 Wis. 620, 75 N. W. 394.

Compare the rule for *indorsements of payment* as statements against interest (*ante*, § 1466).

<sup>6</sup> 1873, *Smiths v. Shoemaker*, 17 Wall. U. S. 630, 637 (rule held not applicable to a letter whose admissibility depended on its

actual date of delivery); *Cal. Civ. C.* 1872, § 1055; 1913, *Calligan v. Calligan*, 259 Ill. 52, 102 N. E. 247; 1908, *Conway v. Rock*, 139 Ia. 162, 117 N. W. 273; 1898, *Conley v. Finn*, 171 Mass. 70, 50 N. E. 460 (though acknowledged later); 1895, *Kendrick v. Dellinger*, 117 N. C. 491, 23 S. E. 438; *N. Dak. Comp. L.* 1913, § 5496; *S. Dak. Rev. Code* 1919, § 525.

But not the time of *affixing a seal*, unless recited: 1910, *In re Pirie*, 198 N. Y. 209, 91 N. E. 587 (citing cases).

<sup>7</sup> 1888, *Fadner v. Hibler*, 26 Ill. App. 639; 1890, *Darst v. Doom*, 38 Ill. App. 397; 1877, *Swaine v. Marriott*, 28 N. J. Eq. 589; 1905, *McClung v. McPherson*, 47 Or. 73, 82 Pac. 13. Otherwise for an *ancient document* (*ante*, § 2144).

Compare the effect of an *admission* in such cases (*ante*, § 2134).

<sup>8</sup> 1881, *Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes*, II, 641, note 2; 1887, *Perley v. Perley*, 144 Mass. 104, 10 N. E. 726; *S. Dak. Rev. C.* 1919, § 848.

The presumption of *consideration* from a *seal* is of course only a rule of substantive law: 1895, *Ames, Specialty Contracts and Equitable Defences*, Harvard Law Review, IX, 49; 1901, *Harriman, Contracts*, 2d ed., § 142.

<sup>9</sup> 1897, *Gratz v. Land & R. I. Co.*, 27 C. C. A. 305, 82 Fed. 381.

<sup>10</sup> 1921, *Downs v. Horton*, 287 Mo. 414, 230 S. W. 103 (under the Uniform Negotiable Instruments Act).



as sufficient evidence for the jury (*ante*, §§ 2137-2146); and the language of presumption is also frequently applied by Courts to the same group of circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2522. **Same: (4) Lost Grant; Lost Documents in general.** (a) When a specific document not produced is offered to be proved by copy, the fact of loss may be evidenced in various ways, and occasionally the force of a presumption is attributed to some of them (*ante*, § 1196).

(b) When a *title to land* is to be proved, the *execution, contents, and loss* of the appropriate document of grant may be presumed from certain circumstances; the inference resting on a principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, §§ 148, 157). Those circumstances are the long-continued *possession* of the land (or an appurtenant right) by a party claiming as owner, the non-claim of possible opponents, and such other varying circumstances of the particular case as increase the probability of an origin of grant for the situation as a whole.<sup>1</sup> The situation is in essence the same as that for which the statutes of limitation have been provided. But these statutes did not wholly obviate the occasion for such a presumption, partly because they were at first limited in the scope of rights barred by them and were extended only by gradual stages, and partly because their originally lengthy periods still left room for a presumption based on a shorter period of possession. For appurtenant rights (such as easements or fisheries), and rights transferable at common law by deed of grant without livery, this presumption had formerly a great vogue; and it remained supplementary to statutes of limitation. But the systematic extension of the principle of acquisition by limitation, the reduction of the required possession to short periods, and (in the United States) the practice of compulsory registration of deeds of conveyance, have left little scope for the presumption. How far it had progressed as a rule of presumption is not always clear; in some opinions it appears as merely a rule of sufficiency of evidence for the jury (*ante*, § 2494), in others it is a genuine presumption (*ante*, § 2490), and in still others it is apparently a rule of substantive law equivalent to a statute of limitation. Its bearings in a given jurisdiction are more or less dependent on the analogies of the local statutes.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2521. <sup>1</sup> The cases are collected at the place above cited.

§ 2522. <sup>1</sup> 1818, *Johnson, J., in Howell v. House*, 2 Mill Const. 80, 85 ("It has been shown that a title may be presumed from length of possession alone; and why? Because it is improbable that a man of common sense and prudence would set down upon and improve lands to which he had no title, and more so that he who was the rightful owner would quietly stand by and see such a wrong done to himself").

<sup>2</sup> The following cases will illustrate its treatment by different Courts:

ENGLAND: 1774, *Eldridge v. Knott*, Cowp. 214, Mansfield, L. C. J.: 1799, *Roe v. Reade*, 8 T. R. 118 (conveyance of a trust estate);

1829, *Doe v. Cooke*, 6 Bing. 174 (surrender of a term); 1867, *Bryant v. Foot*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 161 (customary marriage fee; leading opinions by Blackburn, J., and Cockburn, C. J.); 1903, *Brocklebank v. Thompson*, 2 Ch. 344, 350.

CANADA: 1879, *Pugsley v. Ring*, 2 Pugs. & B. 303, 316; 1916, *Tweedie v. The King*, 27 D. L. R. 53, Can. Sup. (user of foreshore).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1822, *Ricard v. Williams*, 7 Wheat. 59, 109 (opinion by Story, J.); 1913, *Oregon & Cal. R. Co. v. Grubissich*, 9th C. C. A. 206 Fed. 577 (railroad land in Oregon; the above statement approved by Gilbert, J., for the majority); 1918, *Williamson & B. L. & L. Co. v. Mullins L. Co.*, 4th C. C. A., 249 Fed. 522; *Ill.* 1899, *Gage v. Eddy*, 179 Ill. 492, 53 N. E. 1008; *Mass.* 1830, *Melvin v. Whit-*



§ 2523. **Same: (5) Will (Execution and Revocation).** (a) The *execution* of a will may be evidenced by the testimonial assertion of the attestors, implied from their signatures, even when they themselves cannot be brought to the stand (*ante*, §§ 1511, 1512). This is often spoken of as a presumption, though probably no more than a rule of sufficiency of evidence is intended.<sup>1</sup>

(b) The *revocation* of a will *by destruction* may be inferred, on a principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, § 160), from the fact that it once existed but *cannot be found* at the testator's death. Whether this circumstance, with or without others, should create a rule of presumption, or of sufficiency of evidence, has been much debated.<sup>2</sup> Other inferences, or rules of presumption, concerning an implied intention to revoke, are closely connected with the substantive law of revocation.<sup>3</sup>

(c) *Intestacy* upon death is presumed.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2524. **Same: (6) Spoliation or Suppression of Documents.** The opponent's spoliation or suppression of evidential facts (*ante*, § 278), and

ing, 10 Pick. 294 (fishery); 1839, *Valentine v. Piper*, 22 Pick. 85, 93 (shore land; leading opinion by Shaw, C. J.); 1867, *Nichols v. Boston*, 98 Mass. 39, 41 (shore land); 1892, *Clafin v. R. Co.*, 157 Mass. 489, 499, 32 N. E. 659 (easement to cross a railway); *Mo.* 1894, *Brown v. Oldham*, 123 Mo. 621, 630, 27 S. W. 409; *Nebr.* 1903, *Flanagan v. Mathieson*, 70 Nebr. 223, 97 N. W. 287; *N. H.* 1844, *New Boston v. Dumbarton*, 15 N. H. 201 (town charter); *N. J.* 1879, *State v. Wright*, 41 N. J. L. 478 (tax exemption); *Pa.* 1875, *Carter v. Tinicum Fishing Co.*, 77 Pa. 310, 315 (fishery); *S. C.* 1818, *Howell v. House*, 2 Mill Const. 80, 85 ("I know of no rule which has been established in this State fixing the minimum"); 1820, *Duncan v. Beard*, 2 N. & McC. 400, 406; 1849, *Stockdale v. Young*, 3 Strobb. 501 (land); *Tenn.* 1860, *Marr's Heirs v. Gilliam*, 1 Coldw. 488, 501 (pointing out the distinction between this rule and a statute of limitations); 1893, *Dunn v. Eaton*, 92 Tenn. 743, 753, 23 S. W. 163; *Vt.* 1859, *Townsend v. Downer's Adm'r*, 32 Vt. 183, 191, 204 (leading opinion, by Aldis, J.); 1918, *Waterman v. Moody*, 92 Vt. 218, 103 Atl. 325 (farm-land); *W. Va.* 1905, *Logan v. Ward*, 58 W. Va. 366, 52 S. E. 398 (land).

§ 2523.<sup>1</sup> The cases are collected at the place above cited. The presumption of genuineness from the *age* and *custody* of an *ancient document* may also apply to wills (*ante*, § 2145).

<sup>2</sup> The following cases illustrate the different views: ENGLAND: 1858, *Brown v. Brown*, 8 E. & B. 876; 1868, *Sprigge v. Sprigge*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 608; 1900, *Allan v. Morrison*, App. Cas. 604.

UNITED STATES: *Cal.* 1921, *Sweetman's Est.*, *Griffiths v. Johnson*, 185 Cal. 27, 195 Pac. 918; *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 3863; 1901, *Scott*

*v. Maddox*, 113 Ga. 795, 39 S. E. 500; *Ill.* 1886, *Re Page*, 118 Ill. 576, 580, 8 N. E. 852; 1895, *Boyle v. Boyle*, 158 Ill. 228, 233, 42 N. E. 140; 1913, *St. Mary's Home v. Dodge*, 257 Ill. 518, 101 N. E. 46; *Kan.* 1910, *Sellards v. Kirby*, 82 Kan. 291, 108 Pac. 73; 1916, *Barnes v. Brownlee*, 97 Kan. 517, 155 Pac. 962; *Mich.* 1921, *Bradley's Est.*, 215 Mich. 72, 183 N. W. 897; *Mo.* 1903, *Hamilton v. Crowe*, 175 Mo. 634, 75 S. W. 389; *Mont.* 1904, *Colbert's Estate*, 31 Mont. 461, 78 Pac. 971, 80 Pac. 248; *Nebr.* 1903, *Williams v. Miles*, 68 Nebr. 463, 94 N. W. 705, 96 N. W. 151; 1905, *Williams v. Miles*, 73 Nebr. 193, 102 N. W. 482; *N. H.* 1903, *Stevens v. Stevens*, 72 N. H. 260, 56 Atl. 916; *N. Y.* 1830, *Betts v. Jackson*, 6 Wend. 173 (leading opinion, by Walworth, C.); 1911, *Cunnion's Will*, 201 N. Y. 123, 94 N. E. 648; 1921, *Cooley v. Cooley*, Sup., 189 N. Y. Suppl. 577; 1922, *McChesney's Will*, Surr. Ct., 194 N. Y. Suppl. 893 (execution in duplicate); *Pa.* 1904, *Gfeller v. Lappe*, 208 Pa. 48, 5; Atl. 59; 1920, *Weber's Estate*, 268 Pa. 7, 110 Atl. 785 (will in testator's custody); *Tex.* 1903, *McElroy v. Phink*, 97 Tex. 147, 76 S. W. 753; 77 S. W. 1025; *Wis.* 1912, *Zeigenhagen's Will*, 148 Wis. 382, 134 N. W. 905; and a note to *Re Augur* (1899), 9 Yale Law Journal 259.

<sup>3</sup> 1920, *Streeton's Estate*, *Shoults v. Williams*, 183 Cal. 284, 191 Pac. 16 (tearing away the signature); Ohio Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 10558 (alteration of a prior bequest). For the mode of proof of a *lost will*, see *ante*, §§ 2052, 2106.

For the burden of proof under the Ohio statute as to *lost wills probated by an established copy*, see the following: 1905, *Hutson v. Hartley*, 72 Oh. 262, 74 N. E. 197.

<sup>4</sup> 1911, *Sielbeck v. Grothman*, 248 Ill. 435, 94 N. E. 67.



particularly of a document (*ante*, § 291), has always been conceded to be a circumstance against him, and in the case of a document, to be some evidence that its contents are as alleged by the first party. But that a rule of presumption can be predicated is doubtful.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2525. **Same: (7) Alteration of Documents.** It used to be sometimes said that an alteration (*i. e.*, by erasure or interlineation), if apparent on the face of an instrument, placed on the offering party the burden of explanation by evidence. It was also (but inconsistently) said by some that the alteration was to be presumed innocent, *i. e.*, made before execution, unless particular circumstances of suspicion were apparent. For wills, again, it was sometimes maintained that, by exception, alterations should be presumed to have been made after execution. But the modern tendency is to avoid stating the problem in the form of such rules with exceptions, and, in particular, to abandon the so-called presumption against fraud and in favor of innocence, by which the alteration of a deed is presumed to have been made before execution; and to raise no genuine presumption in that regard (*ante*, § 2485). The first burden would thus be determined by the pleadings; and the question would usually go to the jury, upon all the evidence, whether the party claiming a specific tenor for the document has proved his case; although the second burden (*ante*, § 2487), *i. e.*, of producing evidence, might be shifted by particular circumstances, under the ruling of the judge as to a sufficiency of evidence or a presumption:<sup>1</sup>

§ 2524. <sup>1</sup> The cases are collected in the places above cited. The following illustrate the use of language of presumption: 1895, *Fox v. Mining Co.*, 108 Cal. 369, 41 Pac. 308 (the method of a trespasser's dealing with ore wrongfully mined was held not to be such as to raise this presumption against him so as to entitle the plaintiff to reckon the value by a particular standard); 1857, *Thompson v. Thompson*, 9 Ind. 323, 331 (presumption not conclusive); 1856, *Hunt v. Collins*, 4 Ia. 56, 62; 1918, *Union Tanning Co. v. Com.*, 123 Va. 610, 96 S. E. 780 (absence of evidence, from a taxpayer, of incorrectness of items assessed, held to make "conclusive" the presumption of the assessment's correctness); 1896, *Hay v. Peterson*, 6 Wyo. 419, 45 Pac. 1073 (books of account).

§ 2525. <sup>1</sup> The following cases illustrate the rules; the older forms of statement are now seldom found; for the older law, now generally modified or abolished, that any material alteration of an instrument, by any person whatever, after its execution, made the instrument void, see the exhaustive citations in Professor Williston's article, *Discharge of Contracts by Alteration*, 1904, *Harv. L. Rev.*, XVIII, 105, and the chapters on that topic in his treatise (1921) on *Contracts*:

ENGLAND: 1818, *Johnson v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Stark. 313 (date of a bill of exchange); 1844-6, *Cooper v. Bockett*, 4

Moore P. C. 419, 449 (will; leading opinion by Lord Brougham); 1851, *Doe v. Catomore*, 16 Q. B. 745 (deed); 1851, *Doe v. Palmer*, 16 Q. B. 747, 755 (will); 1851, *Simmons v. Rudall*, 1 Sim. N. S. 115 (will); 1860, *Williams v. Ashton*, 1 Johns. & Hem. 115 (will; good opinion by Page-Wood, V. C.); 1868, *Cadge's Goods*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 543 (will); 1905, *Crediton v. Exeter*, L. R. 2 Ch. 455, 458.

CANADA: 1921, *Roan v. Quinn*, 63 D. L. R. 154 Alta. (contract to sell land); 1874, *Doe v. Daniel*, 15 N. Br. 372 (will); 1893, *Re Lawson*, 25 N. Sc. 454 (will); 1870, *Northwood v. Keating*, 17 Grant U. C. 347, 18 Grant U. C. 643 (mortgage); 1899, *Graystock v. Barnhart*, 26 Ont. App. 545 (registered deed); 1910, *R. v. Graves*, 21 Ont. 329, 340 (record of conviction); 1914, *Hedge v. Morrow*, 20 D. L. R. 561 (power of attorney by testatrix).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1826, *U. S. v. Amedy*, 11 Wheat. 392, 408 (certified copy of an act of incorporation); 1896, *Rosenberg v. Jett*, 72 Fed. 90 (bill to foreclose a mortgage; claim of homestead set up; the burden placed on the defendant to show that the words "and homestead," interlined in the mortgage, were inserted after execution); 1921, *City National Bank v. Slocum*, 6th C. C. A., 272 Fed. 11 (will);

Alabama: 1898, *Ward v. Cheney*, 117 Ala. 238, 22 So. 996 (assignment used by the plain-



1909, *Foss v. McRae*, 105 Me. 140, 73 Atl. 827; action on an alleged guaranty by the defendants' testator of the payment of some fifty overdue promissory notes transferred by him to the plaintiff. The notes were given by the various promisors to Walter H. Foss,

tiff to show title; whether interlineations were apparent and suspicions were sufficiently explained, held a question for the trial Court); *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1982 ("The party producing a writing as genuine which has been altered, or appears to have been altered, after its execution, in a part material to the question in dispute, must account for the appearance or alteration. He may show that the alteration was made by another, without his concurrence, or was made by the consent of the parties affected by it, or otherwise properly or innocently made, or that the alteration did not change the meaning or language of the instrument. If he do this, he may give the writing in evidence, but not otherwise"); 1920, *Thorn's Estate*, 183 Cal. 512, 192 Pac. 19 (word inserted at a blank in a will);

*Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, C. C. P. § 392 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1894, *Peugh v. Mitchell*, 3 D. C. App. 321 (action to annul a deed for alteration, the material alterations being in a different hand and ink; not presumed made before execution);

*Connecticut*: 1872, *Hayden v. Goodnow*, 39 Conn. 164 (the party producing does not necessarily account for alterations; each case depends on its own circumstances);

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5831; 1892, *Bedgood v. McLain*, 89 Ga. 793, 796, 15 S. E. 670 (defendant claiming under sheriff's deed interlined by the sheriff; presumed to exist before execution); 1893, *Westmoreland v. Westmoreland*, 92 Ga. 233 (deed offered to show color of title; alterations presumed prior to execution, on the facts); 1896, *Winkles v. Guenther*, 98 Ga. 472, 25 S. E. 527 (Code § 3835 applied); 1903, *Heard v. Tappan*, 116 Ga. 930, 43 S. E. 375; 1921, *Craig v. National City Bank*, 26 Ga. App. 128, 105 S. E. 632 (negotiable instrument);

*Hawaii*: 1890, *Kahai v. Kamai*, 8 Haw. 694;

*Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 7980 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982); 1897, *Mulkey v. Long*, 5 Ida. 213, 47 Pac. 949 (held sufficient to show that the alteration in a note had not been made since it came into the offeror's hands);

*Illinois*: 1899, *Catlin Coal Co. v. Lloyd*, 180 Ill. 398, 54 N. E. 214 (deed offered in a chain of title; no presumption declared as to time of alterations; the question being one of fact, and the party producing the document being called upon to explain; precedents reviewed); 1901, *Merritt v. Boyden*, 191 Ill. 136, 60 N. E. 907; 1903, *Landt v. McCullough*, 206 Ill. 214, 69 N. E. 107 (lease); 1905, *Merritt v. Dewey*, 218 Ill. 599, 75 N. E. 1066 (note); 1906, *Gage v. Chicago*, 225 Ill.

218, 80 N. E. 127 (certified copy of an ordinance); 1917, *Hutchison v. Kelly*, 276 Ill. 438, 114 N. E. 1012 (use of different inks); 1917, *Schmidt v. Bauermeister*, 279 Ill. 504, 117 N. E. 49 (will); 1920, *Waggoner v. Clark*, 293 Ill. 256, 127 N. E. 436 (deed; burden is on the party producing it to explain the alteration); 1921, *Anderson v. Augustana College*, 300 Ill. 72, 132 N. E. 826 (deed);

*Iowa*: 1890, *Hagan v. Merchants' Ins. Co.*, 81 Ia. 321, 46 N. W. 1114 (action on an insurance policy; held that the mere fact of alteration furnished no presumption as to the time of making it or the authority for it, and that the burden of producing evidence that it was made after delivery was on the defendant); 1895, *McGee v. Allison*, 94 Ia. 527, 63 N. W. 323 (the burden is on the party attacking the instrument); 1903, *Rambousek v. Supreme Council*, 119 Ia. 263, 93 N. W. 277; 1905, *Thomas v. Thomas*, 129 Ia. 159, 105 N. W. 403;

*Kansas*: 1908, *Scott v. Thrall*, 77 Kan. 688, 93 Pac. 563 (will; good opinion by Benson, J.);

*Kentucky*: 1920, *Eversole v. Kentucky River C. Co.*, 189 Ky. 471, 225 S. W. 50 (deed acknowledged);

*Louisiana*: 1904, *Wheadon v. Turregano*, 112 La. 931, 36 So. 808 (lease);

*Maine*: 1909, *Foss v. McRae*, 105 Me. 140, 73 Atl. 827 (quoted *supra*);

*Massachusetts*: 1840, *Davis v. Jenney*, 1 Metc. 221 (bill of exchange); 1850, *Wilde v. Armsby*, 6 Cush. 314 (contract of guarantee); 1856, *Ely v. Ely*, 6 Gray 439 (mortgage; good opinion by Dewey, J.); 1904, *Graham v. Middleby*, 185 Mass. 349, 70 N. E. 416 (bond); *Michigan*: 1873, *Comstock v. Smith*, 26 Mich. 306 (deed; good opinion by Graves, J.);

*Missouri*: 1898, *Kelly v. Thuey*, 143 Mo. 422, 45 S. W. 300 (specific performance of an agreement to sell land; burden placed on the plaintiff); 1917, *Carson v. Berthold & J. Lumber Co.*, 270 Mo. 238, 192 S. W. 1018 (assessor's book);

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 10617 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982);

*Nebraska*: 1894, *Courcamp v. Weber*, 39 Nebr. 533, 537, 58 N. W. 187 (foreclosure with a note bearing material alterations; plaintiff required to show their authenticity); 1896, *Stough v. Ogden*, 49 Nebr. 291, 68 N. W. 516 (the question is "in the end, one of fact for the jury, upon all of the evidence adduced"; here, an action on a note according to the altered form); 1903, *Brown v. Kennedy*, — Nebr. —, 93 N. W. 1073; 1907, *Colby v. Foxworthy*, 80 Nebr. 239, 114 N. W. 174 (note);

*Nevada*: Rev. L. 1912, § 5418 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982);



the husband of the plaintiff, and had been by him transferred to the defendants' testator, and later transferred by him to the plaintiff in settlement of matters between them. To sustain her allegations the plaintiff offered in evidence a typewritten instrument bearing the signature of the defendants' testator of the following tenor:

"Machias, M., April 11, 1907.

"This is to certify that I have this day, in a settlement of business transacted with Mary E. Foss, conveyed and sold to her a lot of notes for which I have received payment in full. And will guarantee them.

(Signed) *Asa T. McRae.*

Witness: *M. E. McRae.*"

The defendants had seasonably given written notice to the plaintiff of their denial of the execution of this instrument, and at the trial the subscribing witness, who was one of the defendants' executors, testified that at the time of the execution and delivery of the instrument it did not contain the last four words, "and will guarantee them." There was also evidence upon both sides of this issue. The plaintiff contended that upon this issue the burden of proof was upon the defendants; but the presiding justice instructed the jury as follows: "So the question is narrowed right down to this: Were those words, the final four words in this paper, written on there when Mr. Asa T. McRae signed that paper? And the burden is upon the plaintiff, Mrs. Foss, or her agents, who conduct the suit, to convince you by the evidence that in fact and in truth those words were upon that paper when signed by Asa T. McRae; and has she done so? She claims that she has, and she

*New Hampshire*: 1840, *Hills v. Barnes*, 11 N. H. 395 (note);

*New Jersey*: 1871, *Hunt v. Gray*, 35 N. J. L. 227 (the mere fact that a writing of contract shows a change does not of itself create a presumption of alteration after execution); 1802, *Ward v. Wilcox*, 64 N. J. Eq. 303, 51 Atl. 1094 (will; the burden is on the contestant); 1921, *Atkinson's Estate*, — N. J. —, 115 Atl. 368 (will having interlineations);

*New York*: 1884, *Crossman v. Crossman*, 95 N. Y. 145 (will);

*North Carolina*: 1912, *Wicker v. Jones*, 159 N. C. 102, 74 S. E. 801 (deed; careful opinion by Allen, J.);

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 811;

*Pennsylvania*: 1893, *Nesbitt v. Turner*, 155 Pa. 429, 436, 26 Atl. 750 (action against a woman as bond-surety; the date was altered from time during coverture to time after coverture; the burden placed on the plaintiff to show alteration before execution); 1911, *Cornog v. Wilson*, 231 Pa. 281, 80 Atl. 174 (note); 1917, *Gongaware v. Donehoo*, 255 Pa. 502, 100 Atl. 264 (will);

*Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 336 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982);

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1477 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1982);

*South Carolina*: 1921, *Guerin v. Hunt*, — S. C. —, 110 S. E. 71 (interlineations on margin of will; a remarkable case; careful opinion by Rucker, A. A. J.);

*South Dakota*: 1897, *Moddie v. Breiland*, 9 S. D. 506, 70 N. W. 637 (after proof of signature, the duty of producing evidence that the alteration was before delivery rests on the maker, and, *semble*, also the burden of per-

suasion); 1897, *Foley-Wadsworth Co. v. Solomon*, 9 S. D. 511, 70 N. W. 639 (apparently the same, but putting it that the alteration — here in a contract — is presumed to be made before execution, unless there are circumstances of suspicion; opinion by a different judge);

*Tennessee*: 1920, *Branch v. Branch*, 143 Tenn. 210, 225 S. W. 1038 (deed recorded as altered); *Texas*: 1896, *House v. Robertson*, — Tex. —, 34 S. W. 640 (alteration in a deed, presumed to be before execution, under Civ. Stats. § 2257);

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 7118;

*Virginia*: 1902, *Consumers' Ice Co. v. Jennings*, 100 Va. 719, 42 S. E. 879 (contract);

*Washington*: 1893, *Wolferman v. Bell*, 6 Wash. 84, 32 Pac. 1017 (action on a note; no presumption or burden prescribed); 1893, *Yakima N. Bank v. Knipe*, 6 Wash. 348, 33 Pac. 834 (action on a note bearing an alteration; received, the defendant to show change since execution); 1900, *Blewett v. Bash*, 22 Wash. 536, 61 Pac. 770;

*West Virginia*: 1905, *Philip Carey Mfg. Co. v. Watson*, 58 W. Va. 189, 52 S. E. 515 (contract);

*Wisconsin*: 1896, *Klatt v. Lumber Co.*, 92 Wis. 622, 66 N. W. 791 (the possibility of alteration of a document since original signing does not exclude it; compare § 2134, *ante*); 1897, *Rollins v. Humphrey*, 98 Wis. 66, 73 N. W. 331 (alteration held not suspicious); 1899, *Maldaner v. Smith*, 102 Wis. 30, 78 N. W. 140 (action by the assignee of a mortgage to foreclose; "or order" was interlined in the deed; presumption of innocence applied).



first relies upon the circumstances that the words are found to be on the paper now. That is *prima facie* evidence that they were there when it was signed, but only *prima facie*. By 'prima facie' we mean that, if nothing more appeared, if that was all there was, just the paper itself, with no contradictions, it would be taken as sufficient evidence that they were there when signed; but, it appearing that it is disputed that they were there, and there being some evidence to the contrary, the burden is still upon the plaintiff throughout to convince you by evidence that, upon the whole, you believe the words were there when signed."

SPEAR, J. (after stating the case as above) . . . "The instructions were correct. The plaintiff, under the notice and rule, was required to prove the execution of the instrument upon which she sought to recover. To accomplish this the subscribing witness was put upon the stand. His evidence clearly developed the real issue in the case. When he had testified to the execution of the paper, as we presume he did under the notice, the plaintiff had established a *prima facie* case, as the words in dispute appeared upon the face of the paper whose execution had been proven. Had the case stopped here, the plaintiff would have been entitled to recover. This is precisely what the presiding justice instructed the jury at this stage of the proceedings. But the case did not stop here. The very witness the plaintiff relied upon to prove execution testified that the disputed words — the substance of the plaintiff's case — were not upon the instrument when he witnessed the defendant's signature. Again, it is apparent, if the case had stopped at this point, the defendant would have been entitled to the verdict, as the testimony of the witness, showing a material alteration, is undisputed, and must therefore prevail. Hence it follows that it was incumbent upon the plaintiff, to entitle her to recover, to proceed further and introduce evidence tending to overcome the testimony of the attesting witness. The issue of alteration now having been raised, it became her duty to assume the burden upon all the evidence of persuading the jury that the words of guaranty were upon the paper when it was executed. Now, while the burden of evidence may be said to have shifted from the plaintiff to the defendant, when she had made out a *prima facie* case, and from the defendants to the plaintiff, again, when their evidence had overcome the *prima facie* case, the burden of proof had not changed at all. It was incumbent upon the plaintiff, in the end, upon all the evidence, however it may have shifted from one side to the other, to establish the truth of the allegation upon which she sought to recover, that the instrument contained the disputed words.

"'Burden of proof' and 'burden of evidence' are often confused. The phrase 'burden of proof' is, in fact, more philosophical than practical. It means generally that a plaintiff, however often the evidence shifts, must, upon the whole, persuade the jury, by legal evidence, that his contention is right. The risk of nonpersuasion is all the time upon him. If he fails to persuade, he loses his case. The risk of nonpersuasion is the burden which he must assume."

§ 2526. **Gifts and Trusts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement, Child's Services, etc.).** The pecuniary transactions between members of a family are sometimes made the subject of presumptions, based on the probable motive and intent. It can hardly be said that these rules are uniform, or are universally recognized. Examples of them are the presumption of a *gift* (instead of a trust or loan) of separate estate handed by a wife to her husband;<sup>1</sup> of an *advancement* (in anticipation of succession after death), or

§ 2526. <sup>1</sup> 1915, *Hitchcock v. Rooney*, 171 Cal. 285, 152 Pac. 913 (community funds): 1921, *McKay v. McKay*, 184 Cal. 742, 195 Pac. 385 (money loaned by a wife to a deceased husband; C. C. P. § 1963, presuming that money paid is money due, held not conclusive); 1921, *Dorian v. Dorian*, 298 Ill. 24, 131 N. E. 129; 1893, *Clark v. Patterson*,



gift, in a transfer from a parent to a child;<sup>2</sup> of a gift, or mere performance of duty, in *services rendered by a child* to a parent;<sup>3</sup> or of a *contribution to support* of a relative under industrial compensation systems, from the mere fact of a payment of money;<sup>4</sup> of *community-ownership* of property acquired during marriage;<sup>5</sup> of *intent to defraud creditors* in a transfer to a wife by an insolvent husband;<sup>6</sup> and of *fraudulent concealment* by a husband in an ante-nuptial agreement *barring dower*.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2527. **Legitimacy.** That a child born of a married woman during wedlock is presumed to be the child by her then husband is uniformly conceded. The only doubt has been whether and how far this presumption is conclusive; *i. e.*, to what extent it is a fixed rule of substantive law defining the legal quality of legitimacy. Here there have been stages of doctrine.<sup>1</sup> At the outset of the law, it appears to have allowed no dispute, except by the fact of the husband's absence "beyond the four seas" of England during the appropriate period: but after a gradual relaxation during five centuries the conclusive feature has in English law been almost entirely removed, so that

158 Mass. 388, 391, 33 N. E. 589 (bonds); 1915, *Barrett v. Cady*, 78 N. H. 60, 96 Atl. 325; 1892, *Bennett v. Bennett*, 37 W. Va. 396, 406, 16 S. E. 638. *Contra*, for a deed to a wife: 1916, *Thompson v. Davis*, 172 Cal. 491, 157 Pac. 595 (applying Civ. C. § 164, as amended by St. 1897).

<sup>2</sup> *Can.* 1914, *Groat v. Kinnaird*, 20 D. L. R. 421, B. C. (advance of money from father to son is presumed a gift); *U. S.* *Ida.* Comp. St. 1919, § 7799; *Ind.* 1892, *Culp v. Wilson*, 133 Ind. 294, 296, 32 N. E. 928 (conveyance); *Ia.* 1894, *Phillips v. Phillips*, 90 Ia. 541, 543, 58 N. W. 879; 1895, *West v. Beck*, 95 Ia. 520, 64 N. W. 599 (paying a son's debt); 1897, *Finch v. Garrett*, 102 Ia. 381, 71 N. W. 428 (deed); 1905, *Hoon v. Hoon*, 126 Ia. 391, 102 N. W. 105 (conveyance); *Ky.* Stats. 1915, § 4840; *Va.* 1920, *Poff v. Poff*, 128 Va. 62, 104 S. E. 719 (farm given to four younger sons).

So, also, in a transfer to a nominal purchaser for a consideration paid by a near relative: *Ames, Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., 276-286, 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Ga.* Rev. C. 1910, §§ 4150-4152; 1893, *Donahue v. Donahue*, 53 Minn. 560, 55 N. W. 602; 1898, *Kloke v. Martin*, 55 Nebr. 554, 76 N. W. 168; 1892, *Ulrich v. Ulrich*, 136 N. Y. 120, 123, 32 N. E. 606.

<sup>4</sup> 1919, *Peabody Coal Co. v. Industrial Commission*, 289 Ill. 330, 124 N. E. 603 (to establish the fact of deceased's contribution to relative's support, the mere fact of a payment of money to an aged father raises no presumption; this seems unsound).

<sup>5</sup> 1896, *Boody's Estate*, 113 Cal. 682, 45 Pac. 859 (with a requirement for clear evidence to countervail); 1919, *Ahern v. Julian*, 39 P. I. 607.

Conversely, in the common-law system (as distinguished from community-property

system) the very opposite may be presumed, *i. e.* the husband is presumed to have title to all the property in the wife's possession during coverture: 1916, *Johnson v. Ables*, 119 Va. 593, 89 S. E. 908.

<sup>6</sup> 1898, *Stockslager v. M. L. & S. Institution*, 87 Md. 232, 39 Atl. 742; 1916, *Johnson v. Ables*, 119 Va. 593, 89 S. E. 908.

<sup>7</sup> 1897, *Hessick v. Hessick*, 169 Ill. 486, 48 N. E. 712 (bill for partition by heirs, making the widow a defendant and alleging an ante-nuptial agreement as barring dower, etc.; held, that on proof by the defendant that the sum accepted was disproportionately small, the presumption of fraudulent concealment is raised, and the husband must show knowledge by the wife of his estate's extent).

The large subject of *resulting trusts*, presumed where a transfer is made without consideration, under certain circumstances (*Ames, Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., 262, 291), belongs also in this place.

§ 2527. <sup>1</sup> These have been carefully examined, for England, in an exhaustive treatise by Sir H. Nicolas (1836), on *Adulterine Bastardy*; Mr. Hubback has also considered them in his treatise (1840) on *Succession*, part II, c. 5, and Mr. Hargrave, in his Note 189 to *Coke on Littleton*.

The best opinions on the policy of the rule are those of Lord Erskine, in the *Banbury Peerage Case*, *infra* (at pp. 466, 470), and of Martin, J., in *Matthews' Estate*, N. Y., *infra*.

In the Continental civil law, this subject has had a long history: *Bonnier, Traité théorique et pratique des preuves*, 5th ed. by Larnaude, 1883, § 205; *Baudry-Lacantinerie et al., Traité théorique et pratique de droit civil*, 2d ed. 1902, vol. III, "Des personnes," § 671, "Recherche de la paternité."



it seems now to occur only when actual intercourse of the husband has been established; *i. e.*, the fact of "non-access" during period of gestation may always be disputed.<sup>2</sup> In the United States, the Courts have probably not all reduced the rule to this attenuated form.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The following are the leading modern English cases: 1810, Banbury Peerage Case, in App. to Le Marchant's Gardner Peerage Case, 435, 489; 1825, Gardner Peerage Case, Le Marchant's Rep. 232; 1827, Morris v. Davies, 3 C. & P. 215, 217; 1903, Gordon v. Gordon, Prob. 141 (the passage from Nicolas approved, and said "to represent accurately the law").

<sup>3</sup> Besides the following cases, compare the rules of evidence as to the parentage of a *bastard* (*ante*, §§ 68, 134, 137, 166, 2063); *Federal*: 1902, Adger v. Ackerman, 52 C. C. A. 568, 115 Fed. 124; 1903, Bunel v. O'Day, 125 Fed. 303; 1911, Osborne v. Ramsay, C. C. A. 191 Fed. 114 (presumption applied); *Alabama*: 1892, Bullock v. Knox, 96 Ala. 195, 198, 11 So. 339 (white wife and husband, child a mulatto; legitimacy may be questioned); 1916, Sims v. Burden, 197 Ala. 690, 73 So. 379, 744 (the dissenting opinion of Mayfield, J., is worthy of support); *Arkansas*: 1915, Kennedy v. State, 117 Ark. 113, 173 S. W. 842 (filiation proceedings); *California*: Civ. C. 1872, § 193 ("All children born in wedlock are presumed to be legitimate"); § 194 ("All children of a woman who has been married, born within ten months after the dissolution of the marriage, are presumed to be legitimate children of that marriage"); § 195 ("The presumption of legitimacy can be disputed only by the husband or wife, or the descendant of one or both of them. Illegitimacy, in such case, may be proved like any other fact"); C. C. P. 1872, § 1962 (application of the principle to a divorced wife); § 1963, par. 31 (quoted *ante*, § 2499); 1859, Baker v. Baker, 13 Cal. 87, 99; 1902, Mills' Estate, 137 Cal. 298, 70 Pac. 91; 1916, People v. Woodson, 29 Cal. App. 531, 156 Pac. 378 (adultery); 1917, Ex parte Madalina, 174 Cal. 693, 164 Pac. 348 (failure to provide for a child); 1917, Walker's Estate, 176 Cal. 402, 168 Pac. 689; 1919, McNamara's Estate, 181 Cal. 82, 183 Pac. 552 (whether the conclusive presumption of legitimacy applies where the time between husband's access and child's birth — here, 304 days — would signify a period of gestation extremely rare in fact; the presumption here held not conclusive); 1919, Walker's Estate, 180 Cal. 478, 181 Pac. 792 (definition of the presumption, examined); 1921, Hilton v. Hilton, — Cal. App. —, 201 Pac. 337; *Connecticut*: 1904, Canaan v. Avery, — Conn. —, 58 Atl. 509 (the wife's adultery during the gestation-period cannot be shown); *Delaware*: Rev. St. 1915, §§ 3029, 3030 (presumption of legitimacy in divorce actions; scope defined); *Hawaii*: Rev. L. 1915, § 2941 (divorce); 1883, Hopkins v. Chung Wa, 4 Haw. 650; 1905, Godfrey v. Rowland, 16 Haw. 377, 502; *Illinois*: 1889, Orthwein v. Thomas, 127 Ill. 554, 562, 21 N. E. 430; *Kansas*: 1902, Bethany Hospital Co. v. Hale, 64 Kan. 367, 67 Pac. 848; 1921, Sharp v. Losee, 109 Kan. 211, 199 Pac. 94; *Maryland*: 1895, Scanlon v. Walshe, 81 Md. 118, 31 Atl. 498; *Massachusetts*: 1839, Randolph v. Easton, 23 Pick. 242, 243; *Michigan*: 1897, Rabeke v. Baer, 115 Mich. 328, 73 N. W. 242 (action against B. for the seduction of plaintiff, who married R. before the child was born; B.'s admission of his paternity, received); 1912, People v. Case, 171 Mich. 282, 137 N. W. 55; 1919, Kotzke v. Kotzke's Estate, 205 Mich. 184, 171 N. W. 442; *Missouri*: 1906, Breidenstein v. Bertram, 198 Mo. 328, 95 S. W. 828 (Rev. St. 1892, § 2317, providing that subsequent marriage and the recognition of the child legitimates it, does not make such recognition conclusive); 1920, Busby v. Self, 284 Mo. 206, 221 S. W. 729 (inheritance; under Mo. Rev. St. 1892, § 341, providing that subsequent marriage legitimizes children, the presumption of legitimacy is the same as for children born during marriage); *New York*: 1897, Matthews' Estate, 153 N. Y. 443, 47 N. E. 901 (decree of Surrogate's Court as to "children" entitled to share; H. S. having been proved a child, the burden was upon those opposing her interest to show illegitimacy; good opinion, by Martin, J.); *Ohio*: 1911, Powell v. Fowler, 84 Oh. 165, 95 N. E. 660 (bastardy filiation proceedings; modified rule adopted); *Oklahoma*: 1899, Bell v. Terr. 3 Okl. 75, 56 Pac. 853 (non-access must be proved by "distinct, strong, satisfactory, and conclusive evidence"); *Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 798, par. 6, § 799, par. 32; *Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 333 (divorce; like Cal. C. C. P. § 1962, with a modification); § 334, par. 29 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 31); Civ. C. § 1963; *Puerto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); *South Carolina*: 1891, Robt'n Estate, 37 S. C. 19, 38, 16 S. E. 241 (recognition by parents, with other facts, may after lapse of time raise the presumption without specific evidence of marriage); 1904, Kennington v. Catoe, 68 S. C. 470, 47 S. E. 719 (legitimacy of a son born 11 months after marriage; unchaste conduct with other men before marriage and after birth, excluded); *South Dakota*: Rev. Code 1919, § 152 (presumption as to legitimacy of children begotten before divorce-action begun and after com-



In those jurisdictions where the Continental system prevails — Louisiana, Philippines, and Porto Rico — there is a special proceeding for compulsory filiation of a natural child, involving special rules of inheritance of "civil status," and of required proof.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2528. **Chastity; Sterility (Child-bearing); Impotency.** It is sometimes said that there is a presumption of *chastity*, or of chaste character.<sup>1</sup> But commonly in such cases the result is really determined by the incidence of the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485); for example, it falls to a party impeaching a witness' or complainant's character for chastity to prove the unchastity, and it falls to a party alleging the seduction of a woman of chaste character to prove that character.<sup>2</sup>

There is in the law of real property a rule by which, for the purpose of dealing with estates of remainder and the like, a woman past some limit of age (usually fifty years or more), is regarded as *incapable of bearing children*, or before that age will not be considered as incapable; it is

mission of adultery); § 180 ("All children born in wedlock are presumed legitimate"); § 181 ("All children of a woman who has been married, born within ten months after the dissolution of the marriage" are presumed legitimate); *Vermont*: 1886, *Pittsford v. Chittenden*, 58 Vt. 49, 52; 1915, *State v. Shaw*, 89 Vt. 121, 94 Atl. 434 (adultery; birth of a child during non-access of husband, admitted as evidence; the presumption fully discussed).

<sup>4</sup> For references showing the history of this proceeding, and for other rules affecting the evidence therein, see *ante*, §§ 1336, 1606; *Louisiana*: Rev. Civ. C. 1920, §§ 184-192, 197; 1895, *McNeely v. McNeely*, 47 La. An. 1321, 17 So. 928 (holding that the provision of Code Arts. 188, 191, allowing the presumption of legitimacy to be contested where the child is born 300 days after separation, merely fixes the extreme period which must elapse before the presumption becomes disputable at all; and for children born later it is essential for the disputability that suit be brought; so that if the parent dies without beginning suit the presumption continues indisputable). *Philippine Isl.* Civ. C. §§ 119, 129-138; 1905, *Infante v. Figueras*, 4 P. I. 736; 1907, *Capistrano v. Fabella*, 8 P. I. 135; 1908, *Tengco v. Sanz*, 11 P. I. 163 (bastardy); 1909, *Conde v. Abaya*, 13 P. I. 249; 1915, *Enriquez' and Reyes' Estate*, 29 P. I. 167; 1918, *Concepcion v. Untaran*, 38 P. I. 736; *Porto Rico*: Rev. C. & St. 1911, §§ 3251-3255, 3263, 3264; 1909, *Gual v. Bonafoux*, 15 P. R. 545; 1910, *Armsterdam v. Puente*, 16 P. R. 527; 1910, *Escobar v. Escobar*, 16 P. R. 555; 1910, *Puente v. Puente*, 16 P. R. 556; 1910, *Rijos v. Folgueras*, 16 P. R. 593; 1910, *Charres v. Arroyo*, 16 P. R. 777; 1911, *Lucero v. Vilá's Heirs*, 17 P. R. 141, 154; 1911, *Calaf v. Calaf*, 17 P. R. 185, 202; 1912, *Jesús v. Perez Villamil's Succession*, 18 P. R. 392;

1912, *Accevedo v. Rafols' Heirs*, 18 P. R. 725; 1913, *Rivera v. Diaz*, 19 P. R. 525; 1913, *Camacho v. Balasquide*, 19 P. R. 564; 1913, *Castro v. Solis*, 19 P. R. 645; 1913, *Figueras v. Diaz*, 19 P. R. 683; 1913, *Orama v. Oyanguren*, 19 P. R. 788; 1913, *Villamil v. Romano*, 19 P. R. 832; 1913, *Jesús v. Villamil's Succession*, 19 P. R. 850; 1914, *Mendez v. Martinez*, 21 P. R. 238; 1915, *Delannoy v. Blondet*, 22 P. R. 219; 1916, *Castro v. Solis*, 23 P. R. 478; 1916, *Lopez v. Lopez*, 23 P. R. 766; 1916, *Iturrino v. Iturrino*, 24 P. R. 439; 1917, *Dupont v. Aybar*, 25 P. R. 290.

§ 2528. <sup>1</sup> *Accord*: 1904, *Caldwell v. State*, 73 Ark. 139, 83 S. W. 929 (seduction); 1905, *Rucker v. State*, 77 Ark. 23, 90 S. W. 151 (seduction); 1894, *Bradshaw v. People*, 153 Ill. 156, 38 N. E. 652; 1895, *State v. Bauerkemper*, 95 Ia. 562, 64 N. W. 609; 1873, *People v. Brewer*, 27 Mich. 134, 138; 1921, *Nabower v. State*, 105 Nebr. 848, 182 N. W. 493 (rape under age of girl of previous chaste character; the State may offer evidence of character in chief; but here the prosecutrix' testimony to that fact was held to make no further evidence proper, unless the defendant's evidence called for rebuttal; this seems finical and unjust); 1912, *Knight v. State*, 64 Tex. Cr. 541, 144 S. W. 967 (collecting the authority; but the State may offer evidence in chief); 1914, *State v. Jones*, 80 Wash. 588, 142 Pac. 35 (criminal seduction).

*Contra*: 1901, *Harvey v. Terr.*, 11 Okl. 156, 65 Pac. 837; 1920, *Davis v. State*, — Okl. Cr. —, 191 Pac. 1044 (under P. C. § 2414, the State has the burden of proving prior chastity, in a charge of rape in the second degree; repudiating the statement in *Diffey v. State*, 10 Okl. Cr. 190, 135 Pac. 942, that chastity is presumed).

<sup>2</sup> Compare the rules of evidence applicable where chastity becomes material (*ante*, §§ 75, 79, 205-213, 924, 2061).



often spoken of as a conclusive presumption; but no fixed age is taken as the standard.<sup>3</sup>

Marital *impotency* of the husband, or of the couple, may also be presumed in certain circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2529. **Identity of Person (from Name, etc.).** In regard to the supposed presumption of *identity of person* from *identity of name*, three things are to be premised. (a) "A concordance in name alone is always some evidence of identity; and it is not correct to say with the books that, besides proof of the facts in relation to the persons named, their identity must be shown, implying that the agreement of name goes for nothing; whereas it is always a considerable step towards that conclusion."<sup>1</sup> (b) In the greater number of cases the ruling is merely that identity of name, with or without other evidence, is or is not sufficient evidence to go to the jury or sufficient to support a verdict, on the general principle of sustaining the duty of producing evidence (*ante*, § 2494). The oddness of the name, the size of the district and length of the time within which the persons are shown to have coexisted, and other circumstances, affect this result differently in different cases. (c) Often a genuine presumption is enforced by the Courts, in the sense that the duty of producing evidence to the contrary is thrown upon the opponent (*ante*, § 2487). But these rulings cannot be said to attach a presumption to a definite and constant set of facts; they apply the presumption upon the circumstances of the particular case.

It is thus necessary, in ascertaining the state of the law in a given jurisdiction, to examine the facts in each case. There is, moreover, some difference in the strictness with which the evidence of identity is treated for different sorts of documents or persons. There was perhaps a greater traditional strictness shown in dealing with the identity of a person named as the signer

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1864, *Groves v. Groves*, 9 L. T. R. n. s. 533; 1881, *Re Taylor's Trustees*, 21 id. 795 (here fifty-two years, and during twenty-four a widow); 1871, *Re Widdows' Trusts*, L. R. 11 Eq. 408 (a widow of fifty-five years four months, and a spinster of fifty-three years nine months); 1872, *Re Millner's Estate*, L. R. 14 Eq. 245 (a wife of forty-nine years nine months, never having borne children, married twenty-six years, presumed childless by that marriage); 1876, *Maden v. Taylor*, 45 L. J. Ch. 569, 573 (a spinster over sixty); 1881, *Davidson v. Kimpton*, 18 Ch. D. 213, 217 (a spinster of fifty-four years); 1898, *Re Hocking*, 2 Ch. 567; 1901, *Re White*, 1 Ch. 570; *U. S.* 1903, *Ricards v. Safe Deposit & T. Co.* 97 Md. 608, 55 Atl. 384 (incapacity of child-bearing, not allowed to be investigated, on the ground that "it would be exceedingly unsafe to permit property-rights to depend upon so precarious a basis"; "the single fact to which the law looks is death"); 1883, *Apgar's Case*, 37 N. J. Eq.

502 (collecting the cases in a note); 1913, *Ewell v. Ewell*, 163 N. C. 233, 79 S. E. 509.

*Contra*: 1916, *Sims v. Burden*, 197 Ala. 690, 73 So. 379 (there is no presumption at age fifty); 1920, *Fletcher v. Los Angeles T. & S. Bank*, 182 Cal. 177, 187 Pac. 425 (refusing to apply any presumption of sterility); 1921, *Oleson v. Somogyi*, — N. J. L. —, 115 Atl. 528 (presumption denied).

<sup>4</sup> 1916, *Sims v. Burden*, 197 Ala. 690, 73 So. 379 (after a couple's 25 years of cohabitation without children the birth of a child is "highly improbable"); 1920, *Tompkins v. Tompkins*, — N. J. Eq. —, 111 Atl. 599 (where V. C. Backes adopts the Roman and English rule of a presumption after three marital years).

§ 2529. <sup>1</sup> 1840, *Hubback, Succession*, 444. This principle of Relevancy has already been considered (*ante*, §§ 411–413); other instances are found under the Hearsay rule (*ante*, §§ 1494, 1791).



of an *answer* or *affidavit* in chancery,<sup>2</sup> or as the object of a *conviction for crime*,<sup>3</sup> or as a party to a *marriage* evidenced by a register or certifi-

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1701, Hurly's Trial, 14 How. St. Tr. 433 (the deposition of a witness Carty before L. C. J. Pyne was offered, but its authenticity was denied: "Court: Calaghan Carty, pray were you examined before any of the judges as to that matter? Carty: No, my lord, never in my life. Sol.-Gen.: Never in his life. There is no proving it but by my lord chief-justice, and to prove that this is the man; for a man may come in the name of another person and swear, and the man he personates know nothing of the matter. Court: . . . If the person does not own it now, it must be proved upon him"); 1729, Anon., 3 Mod. 116 (perjury; whether the return of commissioners in chancery that the person named made oath is sufficient with other evidence of identity; the Court was divided); 1761, *R. v. Morris*, 1 Leach, 3d ed. 60 (evidence of the handwriting of the answer being the defendant's, with proof of the *jurat*, sufficient); 1809, *Salter v. Turner*, 2 Camp. 87 (an answer in chancery purporting to be signed by the person charged, sufficient); 1812, *Lady Dartmouth v. Roberts*, 16 East, 334, 340 (an answer in chancery in a suit between other parties; Le Blanc, J.: "It seems that no line of distinction is drawn except in criminal proceedings, or in those which are in their nature criminal, as the case of an action for malicious prosecution; in other cases it is sufficient to produce an examined copy of the answer without proving the handwriting of the party"); 1813, *Hodgkinson v. Willis*, 3 Camp. 401 (answer in chancery; "some evidence of the identity" was required, but nothing as to handwriting, etc.); 1817, *Hennell v. Lyon*, 1 B. & Ald. 185 (Ellenborough, L. C. J., receiving 'prima facie' an answer sworn in another suit by one Charles Lyon, alleged to be the present defendant: "It is said that the evidence wants a further link to connect it with the defendant, and that it ought to be shown that the Charles Lyon in the answer is the present litigant. I do not know any way by which that circumstance can be supplied, but by the description in the answer itself, which tallies in almost every particular. Still, however, it may be shewn that he is not the same person. The question then is, whether public convenience requires that the proof should be given by the plaintiff or the defendant; and I rather think that public convenience is in favour of the admissibility of this proof. . . . Such appears to have been the general practice, except in criminal cases"); 1823, *Studdy v. Sanders*, 2 Dowl. & R. 347 (answer in chancery, offered by copy, the names of the signer and the defendants apparently corresponding; no further proof of identity needed; following *Hennell v. Lyon*); 1824, *Burnand v. Nerot*,

1 C. & P. 578 (an office copy of an answer in chancery rejected, on the trial of an issue in the Common Pleas ordered by the Vice-Chancellor; because the office copy does not prove the identity of the party).

*Ireland*: 1847, *Garvin v. Carroll*, 10 Ir. L. R. 323, 330 (affidavit in Chancery by "John Garvin"; the name with other evidence, held sufficient, even when offered by copy).

*United States*: 1796, *Ellmore v. Mills*, 1 Hayw. 359 (deposition; John Archclaus Ellmore and John Ellmore, presumed the same person).

<sup>3</sup> Compare the statutes cited *ante*, § 1270, which sometimes include this point:

*ENGLAND*: 1843, *R. v. Tissington*, 1 Cox Cr. 51 (a certificate of former conviction of one G. L. being offered against the defendant, the circumstance that the defendant was in the jail during the exact term mentioned was held not sufficient); 1858, *R. v. Levy*, 8 Cox Cr. 73 (identity of the defendant with a person alleged to have been convicted of an offence; identity in all particulars of the magistrate's certificate of conviction of that person and of the warrant of commitment, by the same magistrates, under which the defendant was held, admitted).

*CANADA*: 1906, *R. v. Byron*, 37 N. Br. 383 (certificate of prior conviction, held sufficient on the facts); 1910, *R. v. Atkinson*, 44 N. Sc. 521 (certificate of prior conviction of "Benjamin Atkinson" of the same address, held sufficient).

*UNITED STATES*: *California*: 1882, *People v. Rolfe*, 61 Cal. 540, 543 ("Frank H. Rolfe" shown to be a person formerly convicted as "Frank Rollins"); *Florida*: 1913, *Thompson v. State*, 66 Fla. 206, 63 So. 423 (second offence; more evidence than mere identity of names required); *Illinois*: 1908, *Clifford v. Pioneer Fireproofing Co.*, 232 Ill. 150, 83 N. E. 448 (conviction of Eugene Meyers, admitted; "where the names are identical," no other evidence is needed); *Iowa*: 1905, *State v. Loser*, 132 Ia. 419, 104 N. W. 337 (conviction of "William S. B." admitted to impeach William B.); 1906, *State v. Smith*, 129 Ia. 709, 106 N. W. 187 (former conviction of "John A. Smith," not admitted against John Smith with other evidence of identity; Deemer, J., diss.); *Kansas*: 1897, *Bayha v. Munford*, 58 Kan. 445, 49 Pac. 601 ("ordinarily" in a record of conviction, identity of name suffices); *Massachusetts*: 1913, *Ayers v. Ratschesky*, 213 Mass. 589, 101 N. E. 78 (prior conviction of a witness; identity of name, occupation, and residence, held sufficient on the facts); *Missouri*: 1885, *State v. McGuire*, 87 Mo. 642 (former conviction of crime; sameness of name is 'prima facie' sufficient); 1920, *Stack v. General Baking*



cate.<sup>4</sup> But where an identity of names is found in *deeds, letters, negotiable instruments, or the like, or in tracing title* from ancestors and grantors,<sup>5</sup> the Courts

Co., 283 Mo. 396, 223 S. W. 89 (here the opinion erroneously holds that if the party bearing the name occurring in a record of conviction denies identity, the record cannot be used without further evidence; suppose the record named Aloysius Trismegistus Hiawatha Hideyoshi Russell, and the party in court bore the same name; his mere assertion that he is not the other person may go to the jury with the circumstantial evidence of sameness of name; but to say that his assertion in all cases automatically required more evidence of identity from the other side is to violate the principle of § 2487, *ante*); *Pennsylvania*: 1896, Eifert v. Lytle, 172 Pa. 356, 33 Atl. 572 (the issue being whether a witness had been sent to the penitentiary for a certain offence from a certain county, evidence was received that a person of the same name had been sent for the same offence, that the witness "was missing for about a year" thereafter, and that he was the only one of that name in the region); *Philippine Isl.* 1908, U. S. v. Adolfo, 12 P. I. 296; *South Carolina*: 1912, State v. Wooten, 92 S. C. 61, 75 S. E. 212 ("W. E. Wooten" and "Ed. Wooten"); *Washington*: 1914, State v. Miller, 80 Wash. 75, 141 Pac. 293 ("Frederick Miller": identity presumed); *Wisconsin*: 1905, Colbert v. State, 125 Wis. 423, 104 N. W. 61 (former conviction; identity of name suffices).

<sup>4</sup> Compare the cases on the admissibility of such documents (*ante*, §§ 1644, 1677) and the rule for proof by eye-witnesses (*ante*, § 2082):

ENGLAND: 1718, Draycott v. Talbot, 3 Bro. P. C. 564, 567 (register-entries of a marriage being shown, the mere correspondence of names must be followed by other evidence of identity, etc., to show marriage); 1779, Birt v. Barlow, 1 Doug. 171 (if a register-entry is used, as being the hearsay testimony of the celebrant, some evidence of identity of the persons named in it and the parties in the cause must be additionally offered; but "whatever is sufficient to satisfy a jury is good evidence of this," as the payment of the bell-ringers by these parties, their presence at a wedding-dinner, the identity of their handwriting, the woman being thereafter called by the man's name, etc.); 1784, Hemmings v. Smith, 4 Doug. 33 (to show that the woman debauched by the defendant was the plaintiff's wife, the fact that fourteen years before a marriage had been celebrated between the plaintiff and a certain woman, and that she was still living with him as wife five years before, was held sufficient to go to the jury); 1830, R. v. Drake, 1 Lew. Cr. C. 116, 125 ("on an indictment for bigamy, proof must be given that the person who the prisoner is alleged to have married was in fact such per-

son"); 1848, Parke, B., in Sayer v. Glossop, 2 Exch. 409, 411 ("James Glossop": name held sufficient); 1873, R. v. Weaver, L. R. 2 C. C. R. 85 (child named "Jane Watkins" in a birth-register; the name and other circumstances, sufficient to identify); 1911, Bellis' Case, 6 Cr. App. 283 (rape under age; some evidence of identity of the girl besides the name on the birth certificate, required); 1911, Birtles' Case, 6 Cr. App. 177 (bigamy; similar, for a marriage certificate); 1914, Rogers' Case, 10 Cr. App. 276 (carnal knowledge of a girl under age; on the facts, the identity of the girl was required to be further evidenced than by the certificate of birth, the names varying somewhat).

UNITED STATES: *Ala.* 1918, Darrow v. Darrow, 201 Ala. 477, 78 So. 383 (rival widows); *Me.* 1831, Wedgwood's Case, 8 Greenl. 75 (adultery; besides the certificate of marriage of the person named, other evidence of identity is necessary); 1905, Snowman v. Mason, 99 Me. 490, 59 Atl. 1019 (Wedgwood's Case followed, in a suit for criminal conversation); *Md.* 1905, Bowman v. Little, 101 Md. 273, 61 Atl. 223, 657, 1084 (marriage certificate; evidence of identity held insufficient; Pearce, J., dissenting, and properly, from the extraordinary opinion of the majority); *Mich.* 1882, People v. Broughton, 49 Mich. 339, 13 N. W. 621 ("possibly not sufficient by itself in a criminal case"); 1886, Durfee v. Abbott, 61 Mich. 471, 475, 28 N. W. 521 (baptism record; other evidence is necessary); *Mo.* 1871, Morrissey v. Ferry Co., 47 Mo. 521, 525 (identity of the plaintiff with a person whose birth-entry was offered; identity must be established); 1875, State v. Moore, 61 Mo. 276, 278 (marriage; sameness of name of the woman married and the woman in court, sufficient); *N. H.* 1838, State v. Wallace, 9 N. H. 515 (adultery; other evidence is necessary); *Utah*: 1906, State v. Thompson, 31 Utah 228, 87 Pac. 709 (adultery; some evidence of identity required); 1912, State v. Springer, 40 Utah 471, 121 Pac. 976 (adultery; there must be some other evidence of identity than the names in the marriage certificate).

<sup>5</sup> Compare the principles for authentication of documents (*ante*, §§ 2130, 2156); this question is usually presented in that relation:

ENGLAND: 1800, Barber v. Holmes, 3 Esp. 190 (to show J. H. living, the occurrence of a J. H. on the muster-roll of a frigate "proves nothing as to the fact of whether J. H. whose name is there found" was the one in issue); 1813, Smith v. Fuge, 3 Camp. 456 (shipping-register purporting to be granted on F.'s oath as owner; rejected, because identity of the oath-taker was not shown); 1814, Middleton v. Sandford, 4 Camp. 34 (the attesting wit-



ness knew only that a person calling himself T. S. had signed; held, "some evidence of identity was indispensably necessary"); 1816, *Hughes v. Wilson*, 1 Stark. 179 (entry in a custom-house book of a copy of a bill said to have been made by the plaintiff, not received without evidence to show that it was "made or presented" by him or his agent); 1817, *Nelson v. Whittall*, 1 B. & Ald. 19 (to prove execution, identity of name, with the fact that defendant was present in the room at the time, was held sufficient); 1824, *Bulkeley v. Butler*, 2 B. & C. 434 (to prove the genuineness of an indorsement by "Edward Shanahan" of a bill payable to such a person, evidence that it was indorsed by a person calling himself E. S., bringing the bill, and presenting a letter of introduction for E. S. signed by proper persons, was held sufficient to go to the jury); 1833, *Whitelocke v. Musgrove*, 1 Cr. & M. 522 (Bayley, B.: "I quite agree that it is not necessary to prove the handwriting of the defendant; but if you do not prove that, you must prove something else to connect the party sued with the instrument. . . . In most cases you can either show some acknowledgment, or prove that the party from his residence or other circumstance answers the description on the face of the note, or you can establish the identity of the party in some other mode"); 1833, *Corfield v. Parsons*, 1 Cr. & M. 730 (to prove that certain statements were the defendant's, the fact that a clerk went to the plaintiff's residence and had the conversation with a person in a dressing-gown who opened the door, was held not erroneously rejected; evidence being given, in opposition, that the plaintiff was then out of town and that his brother also lived there part of the time and wore a dressing-gown); 1839, *Warren v. Anderson*, 8 Scott 384 ("J. C. Anderson" as acceptor of a bill; evidence that a person calling himself "Sir J. C. A., Bart." had entered his name as "J. C. A." at a banking-house, of a similarity of handwriting, and of the drawing of checks so signed, held sufficient to go to the jury); 1841, *Simpson v. Dinsmore*, 9 M. & W. 47 (to identify an apothecary's license, the fact that the plaintiff was in that business, bearing the same surname and christian name, was held sufficient for the jury); 1841, *Jones v. Jones*, 9 M. & W. 75 (mere coincidence of the name "Hugh Jones," held not sufficient to charge the defendant as maker of a note, where the name "Hugh Jones" was a common one in the region; *semble*, that the additional coincidence of residence would have sufficed; and that, if the name had not been common in the neighborhood, the coincidence of name alone would have sufficed); 1841, *Green-shields v. Crawford*, 9 M. & W. 314 (to identify "C. B. Crawford," an acceptor of a bill directed to "Charles Banner Crawford, East India House," the fact of the signature being that of a person of that description, without

any further evidence to connect it with the present defendant, was held sufficient); 1842, *Smith v. Henderson*, 9 M. & W. 798 (action against W. H., a pilot; a man rose in Court who answered to the name of H., and was a pilot on board the ship in question; held sufficient to justify a finding of identity); Parke, B.: "Similarity of name and residence, or similarity of name and trade, will do"); 1843, *Sewall v. Evans*, 4 Q. B. 626, 632 (Lord Denman, L. C. J.: "In cases where no particular circumstance tends to raise a question as to the party being the same, even identity of name is something from which an inference may be drawn. If the name were only John Smith, which is of very frequent occurrence, there might not be much ground for drawing the conclusion"; Williams, J.: "That it is a person of the same name is some evidence till another party is pointed out who might have been the acceptor"); 1844, *R. v. Dalmias*, 1 Cox Cr. C. 96 (conversations between the deceased and one alleged to be the defendant were received, after "a correspondence in dress and in general appearance" had been shown); 1844, *R. v. O'Connell*, 1 Cox Cr. 405 (to prove against "C. G. Duffy, late of the Rathmines," an admission in writing of the authorship of a newspaper signed by "C. G. Duffy of the Rathmines and Trinity-street," it was held that "some evidence of identity must be given"; but under St. 6 & 7 Wm. IV, c. 76, § 8, concerning newspaper publishers, the admission was subsequently held receivable without such proof).

CANADA: *Man.* 1894, *Simpson v. Stewart*, 10 Man. 176, 181 (grantee and testator); *Ont.* 1859, *Wilson v. Thorpe*, 18 U. C. Q. B. 443 (affidavit in malicious arrest); 1861, *Nicholson v. Burkholder*, 21 U. C. Q. B. 108 (grantor and grantee); 1870, *Brown v. Livingstone*, 29 U. C. Q. B. 520 (grantee and ancestor); 1873, *Wallbridge v. Jones*, 33 U. C. Q. B. 613 (grantee and ancestor); 1875, *Gallivan v. O'Donnell*, 36 U. C. Q. B. 250 (same).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1892, *Taussig's Ex'rs v. Glean*, 2 C. C. A. 314, 51 Fed. 381 (identity of a stock subscriber); 1905, *Fowler v. Stebbins*, 136 Fed. 365, C. C. A. 209 (parties to a judgment); 1906, *McInerney v. U. S.*, 145 Fed. 729, 739, C. C. A. (immigrant); 1918, *Lee's Will*, U. S. Court for China, 1 Extraterr. Cas. 699 (inheritance; the Chinese name "Alla Lee," presumed to signify the same person); *Alabama*: 1913, *Swindall v. Ford*, 184 Ala. 137, 63 So. 651 ("B. M. Ford" presumed the same, in a deed acknowledgment); 1921, *McMillan v. Aiken*, 205 Ala. 35, 88 So. 135 ("Baudin," "Beaudin," and "Baudan," in an ancient deed);

*Arkansas*: 1899, *Driver v. Lanier*, 66 Ark. 126, 49 S. W. 816 ("Felix R. Lanier," in two actions, presumed the same person);

*California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1693, par. 25 ("identity of person from identity of name"



is presumed); 1897, *Lee v. Murphy*, 119 Cal. 364, 51 Pac. 549 (mortgagee and notary, "W. H. Lee," in the same county, presumed the same); 1900, *Woolsey v. Williams*, 128 Cal. 552, 61 Pac. 670 ("William Frederick Williams"; two persons presumed the same, on the facts); 1906, *People v. Wong Sang Lung*, 3 Cal. App. 221, 84 Pac. 843 (not presumed where there are other persons of the same name in the neighborhood); 1908, *Napa S. Hospital v. Dasso*, 153 Cal. 698, 96 Pac. 355 ("Tasso" and "Dasso" presumed the same, in an order of hospital commitment);

*Columbia (Dist.)*: 1893, *Scott v. Hyde*, 21 D. C. 531, 535 (grantee and ancestor; John Willis, presumed the same, there being no evidence of another person); 1902, *Crandall v. Lynch*, 20 D. C. App. 74, 84 (deeds);

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5765 ("concordance of name alone" is some evidence of identity); 1883, *Millery v. Hamilton*, 71 Ga. 720 (identity of a legatee said to have survived the testatrix; sameness of name, his conversation and knowledge of family affairs, etc., held sufficient under the circumstances); 1890, *Swicard v. Hooks*, 85 Ga. 580, 11 S. E. 863 (deed);

*Illinois*: 1864, *Brown v. Metz*, 33 Ill. 339 (identity of name of grantor and succeeding grantee; identity of person presumed); 1884, *Heacock v. Lubukee*, 108 Ill. 641 (a plaintiff relying on a title established in a former suit; identity shown by a correspondence of all the other features of the suits except that the name of the plaintiff was "Lubeke" instead of "Lubukee"); 1921, *Drda v. Drda*, 298 Ill. 278, 131 N. E. 595 (grantee, father and son having the same name);

*Indiana*: 1883, *Aultman v. Timm*, 93 Ind. 158 (identity of a maker of a note and an intestate whose property the defendants had received; correspondence of name held 'prima facie' sufficient); 1896, *Mode v. Beasley*, 143 Ind. 306, 42 N. E. 727 (the presumption not held to apply where J. S. testified that he had not signed a petition which bore his name, but two or three thousand in all had signed and they were not so classified as to "reduce the probability of any persons of the same name");

*Iowa*: 1889, *Gilman v. Sheets*, 78 Ia. 499, 502, 43 N. W. 299 (identity of name of grantee and next grantor 'prima facie' sufficient);

*Kentucky*: 1805, *Nicholas v. Lansdale*, Litt. Sel. C. 21 (to show the identity of S. N., a plaintiff, said to be dead, the fact of the death of one S. N. who had sailed from Baltimore and died in Madagascar, was held insufficient); 1847, *Cobb v. Haynes*, 8 B. Monr. 137, 138 (William Haynes, defendant and surety on a bond, presumed the same on the facts); 1820, *Cates v. Loftus*, 3 A. K. Marsh. 202 (two land-certificates in the same name; identity presumed);

*Massachusetts*: 1862, *Webber v. Davis*, 5 All.

393, 396 (magistrate's surname with initials of the first names, sufficient); 1899, *United States N. Bank v. Venner*, 172 Mass. 449, 52 N. E. 543 ("United States National Bank" and "United States National Bank of New York, N. Y.," sufficiently shown the same); 1899, *Dolan v. M. R. F. Life Ass'n*, 173 Mass. 197, 53 N. E. 398 (identity of name, with description of person, 'prima facie' evidence of identity of person);

*Michigan*: 1881, *Campbell v. Wallace*, 46 Mich. 320, 9 N. W. 432 (foreign judgment; identity of names sufficient);

*Minnesota*: 1888, *State v. Sannerud*, 38 Minn. 229, 36 N. W. 447 ("Bert Samrud" and "Bernt Sannerud," in a liquor license, sufficient evidence on the facts);

*Missouri*: 1833, *Birch v. Rogers*, 3 Mo. 227 (assignment of a note; "Charles R. Rogers" and "C. R. Rogers," some evidence of identity); 1853, *Flournoy v. Warden*, 17 Mo. 435, 441 (title-deeds of "John Smith"; sameness of names sufficient to go to the jury, and sufficient to create a presumption, *semble*, if no evidence is opposed; the mere fact that there is another person of the same name in the region does not prevent the question from going to the jury); 1853, *Gitt v. Watson*, 18 Mo. 274, 276 (title-documents; sameness of names puts on the opponent the duty of "showing" that they are not the same); 1885, *Long v. McDow*, 87 Mo. 197, 202 (grantee and ancestor, "Ira Nash" and "H. San Ari," presumed the same on the facts); 1904, *Martin v. Brand*, 182 Mo. 116, 81 S. W. 443 (land-patent entry);

*Nebraska*: 1892, *Rupert v. Penner*, 35 Nebr. 587, 594, 53 N. W. 598 ("Arch. T. Finn" and "Archibald T. Finn," in a deed, presumed the same);

*New Hampshire*: 1849, *Jones v. Parker*, 20 N. H. 31 (action on a contract; there were two persons of the name of the promisor; the correspondence of the defendant's name, and other circumstances, held sufficient to "put the burden on the defendant" and sustain a verdict for the plaintiff); 1854, *Mooers v. Bunker*, 29 N. H. 420, 432 (title; "a jury is not at liberty to presume that a person of even so peculiar a name as Timothy Mooers is the same person as a man of the same name");

*New Jersey*: 1849, *West v. State*, 22 N. J. L. 212, 238 (whether a witness' name was forged; testimony that the "C. S." was not the writing of a certain C. S., received, its weight depending on the subsequent evidence of identity); 1899, *Green v. Heritage*, 63 N. J. 455, 43 Atl. 698 (judgment debtors, presumed the same);

*New York*: 1816, *Jackson v. Goes*, 13 Johns. 518 (land-patent to "Peter Schultze," said to be the plaintiff's lessor; the sameness of name taken as 'prima facie' evidence of identity of person, *semble*; evidence admitted to show that the patent was really given to another



than the plaintiff's lessor); 1825, *Jackson v. King*, 5 Cow. 237 (land-patent to "William Appel," said to be the ancestor of the plaintiff's lessor; *per Curiam*: "I have never known a case where a plaintiff having the name of a patentee or grantee was required to go farther than the production of his deed or patent"; the defendant having "the burthen of disproving" identity; *semble*, that to show the existence of another person of the same name would lift the defendant's burden of going forward); 1828, *Jackson v. Cody*, 9 Cow. 140, 148 (land-patentee "William Patterson" and grantor "William Petterson," presumed the same, no other person of the same name and description being shown to exist; so also for "John Blanchard"; but an intimation is made that mere identity of name creates a presumption, which stands till another person of that name is shown not only to have existed but to have been the patentee); 1830, *Jackson v. Christman*, 4 Wend. 278, 283 (an obligor of a bond and a subscribing witness, of the same name, not presumed identical); 1838, *Kimball v. Davis*, 19 Wend. 437, 442 ("Francis Legge," patentee and grantor, presumed the same); 1839, *Cunningham v. Bank*, 21 Wend. 561, *semble* (here the name was "S. A. Cunningham" in New York City, and the defendant was Samuel A. Cunningham of that place; the lack of other persons of the name must be shown); 1840, *Brown v. Kimball*, 25 Wend. 259 (same as *Kimball v. Davis*, *supra*, on error from the Supreme Court; judgment reversed, 11 to 9 apparently on the ground that while the sameness of name raises a presumption, yet suspicious circumstances about the documents, or other evidence, may remove the presumption, and that in this case there was not sufficient evidence of identity to sustain the burden of proof); 1858, *Hatcher v. Rocheleau*, 18 N. Y. 87, 92 ("Joseph Rocheleau," defendant in the case and in a foreign judgment, presumed the same person, in the absence of evidence of two such persons); *North Dakota*: 1915, *State v. Kilmer*, 31 N. D. 442, 153 N. W. 1089 ("H. E. Kilmer" in a liquor license); *Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 799, par. 25 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 25); *Pennsylvania*: 1845, *Sailor v. Hertzogg*, 2 Pa. St. 182 ("Jacob Sailor," said to be the defendant's grantor; Gibson, C. J.: "Identity of name is ordinarily, but not always, 'prima facie' evidence of personal identity"; and because of the lapse of time, and in spite of the oddness of the name, he required "some preliminary evidence, however small," for going to the jury); 1854, *Balbec v. Donaldson*, 2 Pa. 459 ("Mrs. Eliza Braceland," said to be the plaintiff's mother-in-law; case given to the jury with additional evidence, and no rule laid down); 1865, *Philadelphia v. Miller*, 49 Pa. St. 440, 448 (evidence for the identity of assessed land); 1866, *Burford*

*v. McCue*, 53 Pa. 427, 431 ("Patrick O'Neil" and "R. P. O'Neil" as grantee and grantor; the identity held not sufficiently evidenced to go to the jury); 1867, *Lyman v. Philadelphia*, 56 Pa. 488, 499, 503 (like *Philadelphia v. Miller*); 1868, *Glass v. Gilbert*, 58 Pa. 266, 290 (same; the question how uncertain a description must be to avoid an assessment is the main one in these preceding three cases); 1871, *McConeghy v. Kirk*, 68 Pa. 200 ("John J. Kirk" as indorser of a note to "J. J. Kirk"; the correspondence held 'prima facie' evidence of identity); 1871, *Brotherline v. Hammond*, 69 Pa. 128, 133 ("Daniel Kladder" and "Daniel Kritler"; the identity not sufficiently evidenced to go to the jury); 1884, *Sitler v. Gehr*, 105 Pa. 577, 601 ("Conrad Gehr," claimed as identical with the defendant's ancestor in 1739; the rule in *Sailor v. Hertzogg*, *supra*, approved; here the lapse of time was held to require additional evidence before going to the jury); 1895, *Mason F. J. Co. v. Paine*, 166 Pa. 352, 31 Atl. 98 (one uttering an admission must be identified); *Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 334, par. 23 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 25); *Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); *Rhode Island*: 1852, *Kinney v. Flynn*, 2 R. I. 319 ("Bridget Flynn," said to be the defendant's wife; mere sameness of name not sufficient to show that the person was unavailable through interest); 1897, *Liscomb v. Eldredge*, 20 R. I. 335, 38 Atl. 1052 ("Harriet Richmond Eldredge," presumed identical with "Harriet R. Eldredge"); *Texas*: 1921, *Dittman v. Cornelius*, — Tex. —, 234 S. W. 882 ("Sheldon E. Bell" and "E. S. Bell," in deeds of land); *Vermont*: 1857, *Bogue v. Bigelow*, 29 Vt. 179, 182 ("Aaron I. Boge," said to be the plaintiff's ancestor "Aaron Jordan Bogue"; Redfield, C. J.: "In tracing titles . . . it is always regarded as 'prima facie' evidence of identity; while in cases involving charges of crime . . . some further proof is required"); 1873, *Cross v. Martin*, 46 Vt. 14, 18 (grantee and grantor, E. G., but living in different States and thirty years apart; "parties in successive deeds constituting a chain of title, of the same name, are presumptively the same person"); *Virginia*: 1847, *Pollard v. Lively*, 4 Gratt. 73, 76 ("Benjamin Pollard," grantee and ancestor, presumed the same; evidence of the existence of two persons, received in rebuttal); *West Virginia*: 1897, *Sweetland v. Porter*, 43 W. Va. 189, 27 S. E. 352 ("John S. Sweetland" and "J. S. Sweetland," presumed the same); *Wisconsin*: 1902, *Sandberg v. State*, 113 Wis. 578, 89 N. W. 505 ("probably neither rule is universal"); *Wyoming*: 1916, *Harris v. State*, 23 Wyo. 487, 153 Pac. 881 (cattle brand: "Curtis E. Griffin" and "Curtis E. Griffin, Jr.").



are more frequently found enforcing a genuine presumption. Beyond this no general rules or tendencies seem traceable; except that where the two persons of the same name are *father and son*, the name is commonly presumed to have been used of the father.<sup>6</sup>

The identity of *objects or persons* from clothes, features, marks, and the like, may become the subject of a real presumption, though rarely. What is usually signified is either that the evidence is on the whole sufficient to go to the jury (*ante*, § 2494), or that specific facts are admissible.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2530. **Continuity:** (1) in general (**Ownership, Possession, Residence, Insanity, etc.**). It is often said that when a person, or object, or relation, or state of things, is shown to have existed at a given time, its continuance is presumed. In reality, however, a genuine rule of presumption is seldom found; the rulings usually declare merely that certain facts are admissible,<sup>1</sup> or that they are sufficient evidence for the jury's finding (*ante*, § 2494).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Eng.* 1849, *Stebbing v. Spicer*, 8 C. B. 827 (promissory note payable to J. H., and indorsed by J. H. to the plaintiff; plea that J. H. did not indorse it; there were two persons, father and son, of that name; the indorsement was by the son; upon the question whether the real payee was the father or the son, held that the defendant could employ the presumption that it was the father, and the plaintiff had the burden of giving evidence that it was the son, but that there was some evidence to go to the jury upon that point); *U. S.* 1878, *Graves v. Colwell*, 90 Ill. 612, 615 (ejectment by one claiming through T. C. Sr. against one claiming through T. C. Jr., the grantee in the deed being described as T. C.; held, that the presumption gave the plaintiff a 'prima facie' case, that the defendant had removed it by counter-evidence, and that the case was properly before the jury, but in their doubt the legal presumption should prevail); 1921, *Drda v. Drda*, 298 Ill. 278, 131 N. E. 595 (cited *supra*, n. 5); 1838, *State v. Vittum*, 9 N. H. 519 (indictment for adultery with L. W.; the father presumed). Similarly, the following rule has been declared: 1873, *Cross v. Martin*, 46 Vt. 14, 18 (grantor and grantee of a deed, E. G., and E. G., Jr., presumed to be father and son).

<sup>7</sup> The following are not all genuinely rulings of presumption:

ENGLAND: 1858, *R. v. Britton*, 1 F. & F. 354, *Watson, B.* (highway robbery; correspondence of boot-impressions, being "the main evidence," held not sufficient).

UNITED STATES: *Ala.* 1853, *Campbell v. State*, 23 Ala. 44, 48, 68 (that shoes taken from the feet of the horse ridden by the defendant on the morning of the killing "seemed to fit in every particular" the tracks near the place of killing, admitted); *Mass.* 1867, *Com. v. Bentley*, 97 Mass. 552 (identity of a bottle of liquor sent and a bottle received and

testified to; similarity as to size, wrappings, seal, label, and time of sending, held sufficiently shown to authenticate the bottle testified to); 1876, *Com. v. Tolliver*, 119 Mass. 312, 316 (identity of bank bills charged as stolen; partial correspondence with bills found on the defendant, held sufficient to go to the jury); 1883, *Com. v. Nefus*, 135 Mass. 534 (in authenticating a cipher-letter alleged to have been written by the defendant, the fact that his cipher-key fitted it, and that it contained expressions peculiar to the defendant and his situation, were regarded as sufficient); 1889, *Com. v. Finnerty*, 148 Mass. 165, 19 N. E. 215 (authenticating beer-bottles found in a yard as the defendant's; similarity of marks to those of bottles within her building, and absence of liquor in adjacent houses, sufficient); *Mich.* 1895, *People v. Cleveland*, 107 Mich. 367, 65 N. W. 216 (the condition and doings of one of three robbers, of whom defendant was alleged to be one, after the robbery, admitted as a means of identifying the defendant); *Tex.* 1920, *Wayland v. State*, 86 Tex. Cr. App. 522, 218 S. W. 1065 (burglary and larceny of automobile casings; identity of casings not sufficiently evidenced).

The rules of admissibility of evidence of Identity have been already considered (*ante*, §§ 410-416).

§ 2530. <sup>1</sup> The rulings plainly of this sort are placed under the various topics of Relevancy (*ante*, §§ 51-464).

<sup>2</sup> The following are instances under different subjects:

*Ownership* (compare § 382, *ante*): 1894, *Brown v. Castellaw*, 33 Fla. 204, 214, 14 So. 822 (title by tax-deed, presumed to continue two years later); 1898, *Coleman & Burden Co. v. Rice*, 105 Ga. 163, 31 S. E. 424 (title sometime previous to a judgment, presumed to continue); 1901, *State v. Dexter*, 115 Ia. 678, 87 N. W. 417 (personalty; ownership not pre-



§ 2531. **Same: (2) Life and Death.** (a) It is not possible to say that there is a genuine presumption of *life*, with a uniform application. The state of the pleadings will show whose duty it is to prove life at a certain time; and upon his showing life at a preceding time, the Court will usually leave it to the jury to say whether he has proved his case, but may sometimes apply a genuine presumption, shifting the duty of producing evidence, upon the circumstances of the particular case.<sup>1</sup>

sumed at an earlier time); 1893, *Lind v. Lind*, 53 Minn. 48, 54 N. W. 934 (ownership of land in 1874, presumed to continue to death in 1888); 1893, *Chapman v. Taylor*, 136 N. Y. 663, 32 N. E. 1063 (ownership of bonds, presumed to continue from 1881); 1920, *Gandia v. Porto Rico Fert. Co.*, 28 P. R. 516 (title to shares of stock).

**Possession** (compare § 382, *ante*): 1893, *Hollingsworth v. Walker*, 98 Ala. 543, 13 So. 6 (possession of land, presumed to continue during a gap of two years).

**Authority** (compare § 377, *ante*): 1893, *Hensel v. Maas*, 94 Mich. 563, 568, 54 N. W. 381 (authority as agent to sell land six months before, presumed to continue).

**Insanity** (compare §§ 233, 1671, 2500, *ante*): *Fed.* 1815, *Lessee v. Hoge*, 1 Pet. 183 (general insanity, presumed to continue); *Cal.* 1895, *People v. Schmitt*, 106 Cal. 48, 39 Pac. 204 (different phrasings cited); *Fla.* 1892, *Armstrong v. State*, 30 Fla. 170, 204, 11 So. 618 (permanent insanity, presumed to continue); *Ill.* 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 Ill. 106, 119, 37 N. E. 837 (similar); *Ind.* 1904, *Branstrator v. Crow*, 162 Ind. 362, 69 N. E. 668; *Ia.* 1903, *Kirsher v. Kirsher*, 120 Ia. 337, 94 N. W. 846; *Kan.* 1896, *Rodgers v. Rodgers*, 56 Kan. 483, 43 Pac. 779 (the presumption of insanity from an adjudication for commitment in 1883, held overthrown in 1886 by the other evidence); *Oh.* 1905, *State v. Austin*, 71 Oh. 317, 73 N. E. 218.

**Residence** (compare §§ 89, 94, 377, 382, *ante*): *Ill.* 1920, *Hoy v. Kuhn*, 295 Ill. 33, 128 N. E. 829 (number of village voters in April and in August); *Ia.* 1893, *Botna v. S. Bank v. Silver C. Bank*, 87 Ia. 479, 54 N. W. 472 (residence presumed to continue; here, for nine days); *Me.* 1872, *Ripley v. Hebron*, 60 Me. 379, 393 (in establishing a continuous residence of a pauper for five years, as legally required, an interval of some weeks' absence appeared; held, that the burden of explaining this absence remained on the party alleging the settlement); *Mass.* 1841, *Kilburn v. Bennett*, 3 Metc. 199 (assumpsit for taxes; residence before the assessment date being shown, it was the defendant's duty to show a removal before the date arrived); *N. Dak.* 1910, *Holtan v. Beck*, 20 N. D. 5, 125 N. W. 1048 (residence for six months in the same precinct, not presumed on the facts); *Pa.* 1893, *Price v. Price*, 156 Pa. 617, 626, 27 Atl.

291 (domicile presumed to continue fifteen years till death); *Vt.* 1877, *Rixford v. Miller*, 49 Vt. 319 (plea of Statute of Limitations; reply, non-residence of defendant; evidence offered of non-residence at the time of origin of the cause of action; the duty held to fall on the defendant to show cessation of non-residence); 1907, *State v. Jackson*, 79 Vt. 504, 65 Atl. 657 (domicile of an ancestor).

**Sundry instances** (compare § 437, *ante*): *Eng.* 1840, *Scales v. Key*, 11 A. & E. 819, 822 (a custom of election shown to exist in 1689, presumed in law to continue, there being no evidence to the contrary); *U. S.* 1919, *Davis' Will*, U. S. Court for China, 1 Extraterr. Cas. 844 (non-marital status, presumed to continue); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 32 (it is presumed "that a thing once proved to exist continues as long as is usual with a thing of that nature"); 1863, *Murphy v. Orr*, 32 Ill. 489 (a decree of chancery presumed to continue in force, until shown to be overturned); 1898, *McCraw v. McGraw*, 171 Mass. 146, 50 N. E. 526 (divorce; confirmed habits of intoxication five years before, presumed to continue); 1848, *Mullen v. Pryor*, 12 Mo. 307 (action by an indorsee against an indorser, alleging insolvency of the maker of the note; upon a showing of insolvency at maturity, the presumption of continuance applied); *Or. Laws* 1920, § 799, par. 33 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334, par. 30 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1470 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); 1905, *Friend v. Yahr*, 126 Wis. 291, 104 N. W. 997 (possession of documents, presumed to continue).

§ 2531. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1802, *Wilson v. Hodges*, 2 East 313 (death of a debtor before return of the 'capias': *Ellenborough, L. C. J.*, said that "where the issue is upon the life or death of a person once shown to be living, the proof of the fact lies on the party who asserts the death"); 1869, *Phené's Trusts*, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 139 (whether N. P. M., a legatee, had survived the testator, F. P., so as to be entitled to share in the estate; F. P. died on Jan. 5, 1861, and N. P. M. was last heard of in New York on June 16, 1860; held that the burden of proving N. P. M.'s life on Jan. 5, 1861, was on his representative, and was here not sustained); 1905, *Re Aldersey*, 2 Ch. 181 (*Keke-wich, J.*: "Phené's Trusts is not precisely this case, though it is not very far from it");



(b) But there is a genuine presumption, of universal acceptance (on the principle of § 158, *ante*), to aid proof of *death*. It is generally said to arise from the fact of the person's *continuous absence from home, for seven years, unheard of by the persons who would naturally have received news from the absentee*. The phrasings differ, however; sometimes the absence is stated to be from the jurisdiction; sometimes the element of non-receipt of news is not noticed;<sup>2</sup> moreover, the practice is not uniform in defining the precise point, or combination of facts, at which the burden of producing evidence shifts to the opponent. But the general presumption is unquestioned.<sup>3</sup> The rule of the presumption, however, extends merely to the *fact of*

St. 1915, 5 & 6 Geo. V. c. 70, Execution of Trusts (War Facilities) Amendment, § 5 (a trustee or infant to whom the Act applies is to be "presumed to remain alive until definite news of his death has been received or such death has been presumed by a court of competent jurisdiction").

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1844, *Gilleland v. Martin*, 3 McLean, 490 (declaring a real presumption upon proof of life within seven years); *Cal.* 1916, *Wilcox v. Wilcox*, 171 Cal. 770, 155 Pac. 95 (annulment of marriage); *Ill.* 1867, *Whiting v. Nicholl*, 46 Ill. 230 (instructive case; apparently sanctioning a real presumption); 1900, *Chicago & Alton R. Co. v. Keegan*, 185 Ill. 70, 56 N. E. 1088 (deed by E., of June 15, 1865, under power of attorney from A. dated April 3, 1860; A. presumed to have been alive at the former date); 1919, *Keystone Steel & Wire Co. v. Industrial Commission*, 289 Ill. 587, 124 N. E. 542 (the existence of a dependent beneficiary in August, 1915, being material, the fact that the deceased's wife and mother were alive in Servia in November, 1912, was held not to raise a presumption of their survival till August, 1915).

<sup>2</sup> As in some of the statutes *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> The early history of the presumption is given in Thayer's Preliminary Treatise, 319.

ENGLAND: 1763, *Rowe v. Hasland*, 1 W. Bl. 404, Lord Mansfield, C. J. (ejectment; to prove a branch of a family to be extinct, evidence was received, as to a person alive sixty years before, that he "has not been heard of for many years"; which would be sufficient "to put the opposite party upon proof that he still exists"); 1802, *Bailey v. Hammond*, 7 Ves. Jr. 590 (bequest of money on the death of a brother, who had not been heard of for twenty years; bequest paid over); 1805, *Doe v. Jesson*, 6 East 80, 84 (ejectment; the plaintiff's lessor claimed under a deceased brother; she was required by law to enter within ten years of his death and the removal of her disability; he was last heard from in 1778; the presumption of death applied in 1785; her disability ceased in 1792; thus an ejectment in 1804 was too late; but it was apparently not held necessary for the jury to

apply the presumption; the case at most decides that the burden of conviction, not the duty of going forward, was on the lessor; there was "fair ground for the jury to presume" death after seven years from being last heard of, in the absence of later evidence of life); 1821, *Doe v. Deakin*, 4 B. & Ald. 433 (ejectment; T., born in 1759, had been absent from his relatives from 1787 to 1804, when he returned and shortly departed again; since then he had not been seen in the neighborhood; the jury were told that this was "'prima facie' evidence from which they might presume T.'s death"; the defendant contended "that this was not even 'prima facie' evidence"; *per Curiam*: "The evidence unanswered was sufficient to found a presumption of T.'s death," approving the seven-year presumption laid down in *Doe v. Jesson*); 1844, *Watson v. England*, 14 Sim. 28 (a young person abroad, not presumed dead after seven years); 1844, *Dowley v. Winfield*, 14 Sim. 277 (presumption in a similar case, apparently enforced); 1877, *Prudential Assurance Co. v. Edmonds*, L. R. 2 App. Cas. 487 (presumption applied; the element as to "not being heard from," examined).

IRELAND: 1911, *Allman v. M'Cabe*, 2 Ire. 398 (a lease made in 1822 for the term of 21 years after the death of the survivor of three persons, D. C., then aged 11, B. T. aged 15, R. F. aged 9; B. T. was proved to have died in 1888; a witness testified that he had lived in the town for 18 years prior to 1888 and had inquired for D. C. and R. F. but never heard of them; the trial took place in 1910; held, that D. C. and R. F. were presumed to have died before 1888, and that the 21 years began to run in 1888).

CANADA: 1908, *Re Ancient Order of United Workmen and M. A. Marshall*, 18 Ont. L. R. 129 (husband disappearing after entering a sailboat); 1914, *Wilcox v. Wilcox*, 16 D. L. R. 491, Man. (conveyance to wife; presumption not applied to a person absent 16 years, on the facts); 1914, *Hedge v. Morrow*, 20 D. L. R. 561, Ont. (time of death, in an action for recovery of land under a will); 1914, *Duffield v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 20 D. L. R. 467, Ont. (time of running of statute of limitations on



life insurance claims, under R. S. Ont. 1914, c. 183, § 165); 1915, *Re Pinsonneault*, 25 D. L. R. 790, Ont. (insurance policy). The following statute is peculiar: *Ont. St.* 1920, c. 36, § 3 (administration of an absentee's property; an absentee is "one who, having had his usual place of residence or domicile in Ontario, has disappeared, whose whereabouts is unknown, and as to whom there is no knowledge as to whether he is alive or dead").

**UNITED STATES: Federal:** 1894, *Scott v. McNeal*, 154 U. S. 34, 41 (here the presumption was not allowed to prevent the overthrow of a probate decree based on it, where the supposed deceased afterwards returned alive); 1902, *Fidelity Mutual L. Ass'n v. Mettler*, 185 U. S. 308, 22 Sup. 662; 1912, *Fuller v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, C. C. A., 199 Fed. 897 (excellent opinion by J. B. McPherson, J.); Code § 10233 (claims filed under the pension laws);

*Arizona:* Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 728 (seven years);

*Arkansas:* Dig. 1919, § 4111 (absence from the State "for five years successively" raises a presumption);

*California:* C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 26 (it is presumed "that a person not heard from in seven years is dead");

*Colorado:* 1915, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Holek*, 59 Colo. 416, 151 Pac. 916; 1921, *Modern Woodmen v. White*, 70 Colo. 207, 199 Pac. 965 (presumption does not apply unless there has been diligent search to ascertain the person's whereabouts);

*Columbia (Dist.):* Code 1919, § 252 (seven years); 1897, *Posey v. Hanson*, 10 D. C. App. 497, 506;

*Delaware:* Del. Rev. St. 1915, § 128 (on absence from the State "for seven years together, and no evident proof be made of his life in any inquest," "he shall be accounted dead");

*Florida:* Rev. G. S. 1919, § 3714 (proceedings to declare a person dead and distribute his estate);

*Georgia:* 1898, *Watson v. Adams*, 103 Ga. 733, 30 S. E. 574; 1909, *Hansen v. Owens*, 132 Ga. 648, 64 S. E. 800; 1920, *Rudolph v. Brown*, 150 Ga. 147, 103 S. E. 251 (inheritance; there must have been diligent inquiry without results in news);

*Illinois:* 1867, *Whiting v. Nicholl*, 46 Ill. 230 (dower); 1897, *Hitz v. Algreen*, 170 Ill. 60, 48 N. E. 1068 (mere absence is not sufficient; diligent inquiry at the last place of residence and among those likely to hear from him is necessary); 1910, *Kennedy v. Modern Woodmen*, 243 Ill. 560, 90 N. E. 1084 (neither a mere rumor that the alleged deceased has been alive in the interval, nor the party-claimant's failure to follow up such a rumor by inquiry, suffices to prevent the operation of the presumption);

*Indiana:* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 3137 (wills; presumption after five years' absence

from usual place of business and departure to parts unknown, upon publication of notice in newspaper, etc.); St. 1915, Mar. 3, p. 98 (similar, for trusts under wills); Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 2748 (administration of absentee's estate; presumption arises in 5 years);

*Iowa:* 1897, *Sherrod v. Ewell*, 104 Ia. 253, 73 N. W. 493; 1909, *Magness v. Modern Woodmen*, 146 Ia. 1, 123 N. W. 169 (here the rule is stated rather too strictly for raising the presumption); 1918, *Richey v. Sovereign Camp*, 184 Ia. 10, 168 N. W. 276;

*Kansas:* 1905, *Modern Woodmen v. Gerdorn*, 72 Kan. 391, 82 Pac. 1100 (interesting opinion by Burch, J., emphasizing the necessity of inquiry and of consequent lack of news);

*Kentucky:* Stats. 1915, § 1639 (the fact of a resident's leaving the State and not returning for seven successive years, raises a presumption of death); § 1609 (owner of property in the State, when "not known to be living for seven successive years, and no account whatever can be given" of him, is presumed to have died without heirs and his property vests in the State); 1900, *Mutual B. L. I. Co. v. Martin*, 108 Ky. 11, 55 S. W. 694 (the seven years dates from the last hearing from the person); 1918, *Prudential Ins. Co. v. Gratz*, 182 Ky. 218, 206 S. W. 299 (there must have been diligent search); 1921, *Glasscock v. Weare*, 192 Ky. 654, 234 S. W. 216 (inheritance; Stats. § 1639, applied);

*Louisiana:* 1906, *Iberia Cypress Co. v. Thorgeson*, 116 La. 218, 40 So. 682 (disappearance for seven years, not sufficient on the facts, under the peculiar language of the Louisiana Civil Code, art. 70; the opinion ignores the reasoning of the common-law rule); *Massachusetts:* 1831, *King v. Fowler*, 11 Pick. 302 (writ of right, one claiming under S. K. produced deeds from one of the six children of S. K., and offered evidence that the other five had not been heard of for over seventy years; the jury were instructed that the plaintiff was "entitled to recover"; held, that "the legal result was such as the jury have found," "especially as there was no evidence to rebut that evidence," on the part of the defendant); 1840, *Loring v. Steineman*, 1 Mete. 204, 211 (administration of an estate); 1881, *Bowditch v. Jordan*, 131 Mass. 321 (a plaintiff proving title through D.; evidence that D. sailed for foreign parts in 1840, and nothing had since been heard of the vessel, "justified and required the inference of her death");

*Mississippi:* Code 1906, § 1914, Hem. § 1574; 1896, *Manley v. Patterson*, 73 Miss. 417, 19 So. 236 (rule held not to apply to children of seven years and under who were under the control of adults and had not volition as to their movements);

*Missouri:* Rev. St. 1919, §§ 264, 5396; 1905, *Chapman v. Kullman*, 191 Mo. 237, 89 S. W. 924 (statute applied);

*Nebraska:* 1914, *McLaughlin v. Sovereign Camp*, 97 Nebr. 71, 149 N. W. 112 (here the



death from and after the end of the period; it is not understood to specify anything further, — for example, the *time* of death within that period,<sup>4</sup>

Court rather loosely refers to the presumption as depending "largely upon the circumstances and conditions of each particular case";

*New Jersey*: Comp. St. 1910, Death, § 1 (presumption after seven years, wherever death may come in question); St. 1911, Apr. 27, c. 255 (administration of absentee's estate; seven years' absence raises a presumption of death);

*New York*: St. 1918, c. 318, amending C. C. P. § 841 (administration of estate of absentee); C. C. P. 1877, § 841, C. P. A. 1920, § 341 (remaining without the United States, or absenting himself anywhere, for seven years together, is sufficient); § 1065 (unknown heirs to realty unclaimed; presumption upon 25 years after payment of proceeds to State);

*North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, § 7921;

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 799, par. 26; § 1309-5 (determination of heirship); § 1309-7 (administration of absent person's estate);

*Pennsylvania*: St. 1917, June 7, § 6, Dig. 1920, § 8409, Decedents' Est. (seven years' absence); 1897, *Francis v. Francis*, 180 Pa. 644, 37 Atl. 120 (W. had gone to live in a colony in Patagonia, and was there heard from in 1876, but not since; held, that no absence from his last known domicile was shown, and thus a party claiming that his wife in Pennsylvania in 1884 was single, at the time of making a will, had raised no presumption); 1917, *Maley v. Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 258 Pa. 73, 101 Atl. 911;

*Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 334, par. 24 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 26); § 656 (for administering an estate, 15 years' absence); Civ. C. §§ 184, 191 (similar to P. R. Rev. St. & C. §§ 3177, 3190);

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, §§ 3177, 3190 (after 7 years' absence, the presumptive heirs may be put in possession; after another 15 years, or after 90 years from the absentee's birth, the Court shall declare "that he is presumably dead" and distribute the property); *South Dakota*: Rev. C. 1919, § 2729 (where issue of property depends on life of a person, and he "remains without the U. S., or absents himself in the State or elsewhere, for seven years together, such person must be accounted naturally dead," unless sufficient proof of life be made);

*Texas*: Rev. Civ. St. 1911, § 5707 (seven years); 1903, *Latham v. Tombs*, 32 Tex. Civ. App. 270, 73 S. W. 1060 (absence of news is essential);

*Virginia*: Code 1919, § 6239 (the departure from the State and failure to return within seven successive years, by a person residing in the State, raises a presumption of death);

*West Virginia*: Code 1914, c. 86, § 12, as added by St. 1917, c. 27 (administration of absentees' estate; seven years); c. 130, § 44

(like the Virginia statute); 1898, *Boggs v. Harper*, 45 W. Va. 554, 31 S. E. 943;

*Wisconsin*: 1900, *Wisconsin Trust Co. v. Wisconsin M. & F. I. Co. Bank*, 105 Wis. 464, 81 N. W. 642; 1909, *Miller v. Sovereign Camp*, 140 Wis. 505, 122 N. W. 1126 (diligent search is not necessary).

<sup>4</sup> The effect of this rule as developed in later cases, is to direct the jury that they should not from mere absence presume death at any earlier time, unless the facts show "that the individual was at some particular date in contact with a specific peril as a circumstance to quicken the operation of time." But in a few States this rule is repudiated, and the jury is left free to reach a conclusion of earlier death on any circumstances:

ENGLAND: 1833, *Doe v. Nepean*, 5 B. & Ad. 86; 1837, *Nepean v. Knight*, 2 M. & W. 894 (ejectment, for property held by long adverse possession, the plaintiff claiming under M. K.; the question being whether the plaintiff's lessor had begun the action, under St. 3 & 4 W. IV, c. 27, within twenty years since his right accrued, i. e. since the death of M. K., it was held that the plaintiff had the burden of evidencing this; M. K. having gone to America in 1806 or 1807, and being last heard from by a letter received in May, 1807, and the suit having been begun on Jan. 18, 1834, less than seventeen years later, it was held that there was no presumption that M. K. died not before the end of the seven years, or died at any specific time; and that the plaintiff's burden had therefore not been sustained); 1880, *Corbishley's Trusts*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 846; 1902, *Re Benjamin*, 1 Ch. 723; 1905, *Re Aldersey*, 2 Ch. 181, 185 (rule of *Nepean v. Knight* applied).

CANADA: 1848, *Doe v. Strong*, 4 U. C. Q. B. 510, 518, 8 id. 291 (good opinions).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1878, *Davie v. Briggs*, 97 U. S. 628, 634 (leading opinion, by Harlan, J.; adopting the "specific peril" doctrine); 1902, *Fidelity Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Mettler*, 185 U. S. 308, 22 Sup. 662 (repudiating the specific peril doctrine, defined in *Davie v. Briggs*, as an exclusive rule); 1917, *Continental Life Ins. Co. v. Searing*, 3d C. C. A., 240 Fed. 653 ("those firmly established Pennsylvania cases, *Burr v. Sim*," etc.; here the plaintiff was a Pennsylvania citizen); *California*: 1921, *Lesser v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, — Cal. App. —, 200 Pac. 22 (collecting authorities to date; approving the rule in *Tisdale v. Ins. Co.*, Ia.); *Illinois*: 1920, *National Zinc Co. v. Industrial Commission*, 292 Ill. 598, 127 N. E. 135 (whether deceased employee left beneficiaries living; G. left Poland in July, 1914, leaving a father of 60 years, a mother of 40 years, and brothers and sisters; a witness saw mother, father, and



or the *celibate* or *childless* or intestate condition of the person at the time of death.<sup>5</sup>

(c) On similar considerations of experience, the *loss of a ship*, in insurance cases or the like, may become the subject of a presumption or a 'prima facie' ruling, after a long absence from port without news.<sup>6</sup>

a sister there in August 1915, the brothers having gone to the army; held, without other evidence, that the relatives' survival on Oct. 24, 1917, would not be presumed, owing to the war-conditions affecting that region in the meantime); *Iowa*: 1868, *Tisdale v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 26 Ia. 70 (leading case, repudiating the specific peril doctrine); *Kansas*: 1913, *Caldwell v. Modern Woodmen*, 89 Kan. 11, 130 Pac. 642 (the jury may infer a death before that time, on the circumstances); *Maryland*: 1897, *Schaub v. Griffin*, 84 Md. 557, 36 Atl. 443 (property went by S's will in remainder to his four children; one of them C., married K., and had a son, who disappeared in 1881, C. dying in 1888; C.'s administrator was sued by the other three children for her share, their inheritance depending on whether her son predeceased her; held, that the burden of showing his predecease rested on the plaintiffs, a part of whose case it was; that the seven years' presumption had not begun to operate; and that thus there was no aid to be had from it in determining that the son had died at any particular time, so that the duty of producing evidence of survival did not shift to the defendant); *Minnesota*: 1906, *Spahr v. Mutual L. Ins. Co.*, 98 Minn. 471, 108 N. W. 4 (the defendant's policy on S.'s life lapsed on June 1, 1898; on April 4, 1898, S. left his home, and was never again seen or heard of; on July 7, 1905, this action was begun; held that S. was presumed to be dead, but not to have died at any particular time before or after June 1, 1898); 1922, *Eklund v. Supreme Council*, — Minn. —, 187 N. W. 826 (but here the special circumstances sufficed); *Mississippi*: 1917, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Brame*, 112 Miss. 828, 73 So. 806; *New Hampshire*: 1903, *Poff v. N. E. Tel. & Teleg. Co.* 72 N. H. 164, 55 Atl. 891 (in an action for death by wrongful act, the burden of showing the death to have been within the statutory period is on the claimant); *Pennsylvania*: 1838, *Burr v. Sim*, 4 Wharton 150 (absence in South America; leading case; Gibson, C. J., phrases the "specific peril" doctrine, as quoted above); 1896, *Re Mutual Benefit Co.*, 174 Pa. 1, 34 Atl. 283 (*Burr v. Sim* approved); *Texas*: 1916, *Sovereign Camp v. Robinson*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 187 S. W. 215 (rule of *Tisdale v. Ins. Co.* apparently adopted); *Wisconsin*: 1920, *Maine v. Maryland Casualty Co.*, 172 Wis. 350, 178 N. W. 749.

A careful study of the subject has been made by Mr. Chas. B. Welliver, "Proof of Death" (Proceedings of Association of Life

Insurance Counsel, 1921); see also a useful note, "Presumptions of the Time of Death of One Presumed to be Dead after Absence of Seven Years" (Va. L. Rev. III, 451).

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1812, *Doe v. Griffin*, 15 East 293 (ejectment; the plaintiff's lessor, who claimed through the same collateral ancestor as the defendant, was held to have the burden of proving that the ancestor had died without issue, but was held to have placed upon the defendant the duty of going forward by evidence that the ancestor had never been heard of as married); *In re Jackson*, *Jackson v. Ward*, [1907] 1 Ch. 354 (no presumption of death without issue); *U. S.* 1897, *Still v. Hutto*, 48 S. C. 415, 26 S. E. 713 (no presumption that a man, unmarried when last heard from, died childless).

*Contra*: 1908, *Barson v. Mulligan*, 191 N. Y. 306, 84 N. E. 75 (B., unmarried, having disappeared 37 years ago, his death was presumed (1) without issue and (2) intestate).

<sup>6</sup> 1777, *Green v. Brown*, 2 Str. 1199 (insurance; a ship sailing to America in 1739 had never been heard from; the defendant objected "that as captures and seizures were excepted" from the policy, "it lay upon the assured to prove the loss happened in the particular manner declared on." i. e. by foundering; but "the Chief Justice said it would be unreasonable to expect certain evidence of such a loss," and left it to the jury); 1809, *Twemlowe v. Oswin*, 2 Camp. 85 (insurance; a ship sailing from Liverpool April 14, 1807, to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and thence to Hayti; evidence that she had not been heard from up to March 1, 1809, was admitted, but held not sufficient); 1815, *Watson v. King*, 1 Stark. 121 (trover; a ship carrying M., one of the owners, last seen in a hurricane on March 7, 1814, near Jamaica, sailing from England; several others of the fleet foundered, and this one had never been heard from up to Dec. 14, 1815; *Ellenborough*, L. C. J., told the jury "it might be assumed that at that time M. was dead; but that it was for their consideration whether he was dead on the 8th of June, 1814," when his share of the ship was sold); 1816, *Houstman v. Thornton*, Holt N. P. 242 (insurance; a ship leaving Havana in August, 1815, bound to Holland or *Flanders*; up to Easter, 1816, she had not been heard from; Gibbs, C. J., "There is no fixed rule of law upon this subject"; and he left the case to the jury, expressing an opinion that the ship was lost); 1826, *Koster v. Reed*, 6 B. & C. 19 (insurance; a ship sailing from Leghorn to Lisbon in April, 1821;



(d) Moreover, there is a distinct presumption of death from *lapse of lifetime*, — not reducible to a fixed period, but exempt from any requirement as to absence from home or lack of news.<sup>7</sup>

(e) Since the presumption of death after seven years' absence may be fraudulently taken advantage of, as experience has shown, by persons who insure their lives and then elope and conceal themselves for a long period, thus enabling the beneficiary (perhaps collusively) to claim and obtain the sum payable on death, a *contractual clause* establishing a longer period for raising the presumption of death is often inserted in policies as a reasonable precaution. The validity of such contracts has been examined *ante*, § 7a.

§ 2532. **Same: Survivorship.** Where two or more persons have perished in the same calamity, there is no presumption of law that either survived the other, or that all perished at the same time.<sup>1</sup> The burden of proving that one survived another will commonly be on any claimant for whom that fact is essential to his own chain of title.<sup>2</sup> If there is evidence, from the age, sex, or physical condition of the persons who perished, or from the nature of the accident and the manner of death of the parties, which tends to show that some one did in fact survive the others, the whole question is one of fact, to be decided in each case by the jury, according to the incidence of the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485); but without any rule of presumption.

But in escaping the artificial rules prescribed by the Continental law, and by a few of our own Codes,<sup>3</sup> our Courts have left many difficulties unsolved,

evidence that she never arrived; held, that the fact that she had been rumored of as foundered was equivalent to "never having been heard of," and that in any case there was sufficient evidence to go to the jury).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 158.

<sup>7</sup> 1901, *Young v. Shulenberg*, 165 N. Y. 385, 59 N. E. 135 (a person acknowledging a deed in 1817, presumed dead).

In evidencing the *lack of news*, under the above rules, the use of rumors or reports, or their absence, is not a violation of the *Hearsay rule*: cases cited *ante*, § 1789.

§ 2532. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1860, *Wing v. Angrave*, 8 H. L. C. 183; *Can.* 1866, *Hartshorne v. Wilkins*, 6 N. Sc. 276; *U. S.* 1903, *Young Women's Christian Home v. French*, 187 U. S. 401, 23 Sup. 184; 1902, *Middeke v. Balder*, 198 Ill. 590, 64 N. E. 1002 (collecting cases); 1897, *Schaub v. Griffin*, 84 Md. 557, 36 Atl. 443; 1878, *Newell v. Nichols*, 75 N. Y. 78; 1908, *St. John v. Andrews Institute*, 191 N. Y. 254, 83 N. E. 981; 1897, *Re Wilbor*, 20 R. I. 126, 37 Atl. 634, 51 L. R. A. 863; 1907, *Walton v. Burchel*, 121 Tenn. 715, 121 S. W. 391.

<sup>2</sup> The various classes of cases, and the special modifications of principle, have been elaborately treated by Professor C. B. Whittier in an article which makes further examination of them here unnecessary: "Problems of Sur-

vivorship," 1904, *Green Bag*, XVI, 237; the precedents to date are there fully collected. Subsequent rulings are scanty: 1919, *McComas v. Wiley*, 134 Md. 572, 108 Atl. 196 (collision of automobile and railroad train).

<sup>3</sup> *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 40 (quoted *ante*, § 2499); *Maryland*: St. 1920, Apr. 9, c. 108 ("If several persons respectively entitled to inherit from one another should, after the passage of this Act, perish in the same calamity such as a wreck, collision, battle, conflagration, flood, earthquake, storm or accident, and it is not shown who died first, and there are no particular circumstances from which it can be inferred, survivorship shall be presumed from the probabilities resulting from the strength, age and difference of sexes, according to the following rules: A. If those who have perished together were under the age of fifteen years, the eldest or elder (as the case may be) shall be presumed to have survived. B. If those who have perished together were above the age of sixty years, the youngest or younger (as the case may be) shall be presumed to have survived. C. If those who have perished together were under the age of fifteen years, and above sixty years, the former shall be presumed to have survived. D. If any of those who have perished together were under the age of fifteen years, or over the



and have created new artificialities capable of doing inordinate violence to a testator's intentions. For example, the supposed logic which has sometimes permitted the identical devisee of two co-perishing testators to be, after all, judicially deprived of the estate is as unnecessary in legal principle as it is shocking to good sense;<sup>4</sup> and a fairer solution for this frequent problem is a present desideratum in the law.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2533. **Seaworthiness.** In actions on insurance policies, the insurer will usually have the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485) of the unseaworthiness of the vessel, though the circumstances of the loss may afford 'prima facie' evidence (*ante*, § 2494), or even raise a presumption, of the fact of unseaworthiness.<sup>1</sup> Yet there may be issues in which the vessel-owner will have the first burden of proof of seaworthiness.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2534. **Regularity: (1) Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.** The general experience that a rule of official duty, or a requirement of legal conditions, is fulfilled by those upon whom it is incumbent

age of sixty years, and any were between said ages, the latter shall be presumed to have survived. E. If those who have perished together were above the age of fifteen years, and under the age of sixty years, and the sexes be different, the male shall be presumed to have survived. F. If those who have perished together were of the same sex and were above the age of fifteen years, and under the age of sixty years, the youngest or younger (as the case may be) shall be presumed to have survived"); *Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 799, par. 41 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); *Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 334, par. 37 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 40); *Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); *Wyoming*: Comp. St. 1920, § 7009.

<sup>4</sup> As in *Wing v. Angrave and Newell v. Nichols*, *supra*. The following decisions are commendable instances of a refusal to accept such a result: 1903, *Young Women's Christian Home v. French*, 187 U. S. 401, 23 Sup. 184 (the testatrix' intention sought and carried out; "we do not feel compelled . . . , by accepting so technical and literal a view, to reach an adverse result on the theory of a change in the burden of proof, or of an accidental omission to prevent it"); 1918, *Re Fowles' Will*, 222 N. Y. 222, 118 N. E. 611 (here the testator in his will asked the Court to "deem that I shall have predeceased my wife," as the solution of the dilemma; both were drowned in the despicable destruction of the *Lusitania*, May 5, 1917; rational and liberal opinions by Cardozo, J., and Crane, J.); 1916, *Fitzgerald v. Ayres*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 179 S. W. 289 (mutual wills; "the primary devisee will be treated as not surviving, and the gift to the secondary or substituted devisee shall take effect").

<sup>5</sup> In view of these sinister possibilities of judicial decision, and of the contingencies

created by the transmarine voyage annually taken by thousands of families, it may be suggested that the only safe form of will, for a married pair having identical testamentary wishes, must consist in a devise to a trustee, in trust, first, to accumulate the income for six months, next, to transfer the estate to the wife (or husband) if living at the expiration of the six months, and next, if not then appearing to be living, to the desired secondary devisees.

§ 2533. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1878, *Pickup v. Thames Ins. Co.*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 594 (insurance policy; a direction to the jury that a speedy return to port would shift the burden of proof by raising a presumption, held improper; "as a matter of reasoning and inference" only, the jury might so conclude); 1900, *Allan v. Morrison*, App. Cas. 362; *U. S. Fed.* 1910, *The America*, D. C. S. D. N. Y., 174 Fed. 724 (mere sinking does not raise a presumption of unseaworthiness, where the charterer is in possession, in an action by the charterer against the owner); 1918, *Compagnie Maritime Française v. Meyer*, 9th C. C. A., 248 Fed. 881 (serious leak shortly after departure may raise the presumption); 1920, *Hamilton v. U. S.*, 4th C. C. A., 268 Fed. 15 (conspiracy as seamen to revolt); *N. Y.* 1922, *Green v. Globe & R. Fire Ins. Co.*, Sup. App. Div., 192 N. Y. Suppl. 770 (insurance policy; springing a leak shortly after sailing, without encountering any peril of the sea, raises a presumption of unseaworthiness); *Pa.* 1893, *Broadnax v. R. Co.*, 157 Pa. 140, 150, 27 Atl. 412 (the burden of persuasion is on the party affirming unseaworthiness; speedy return to port, etc., raises a presumption thereof).

<sup>2</sup> 1894, *The Edwin I. Morrison*, 153 U. S. 199, 210, 14 Sup. 823 (action for goods lost, on a warranty of seaworthiness; the burden is on the owner to prove seaworthiness).



has given rise occasionally to a presumption of due performance. This presumption is more often mentioned than enforced; and its scope as a real presumption is indefinite and hardly capable of reduction to rules. It may be said that most of the instances of its application are found attended by several conditions; first, that the matter is more or less in the past, and incapable of easily procured evidence; secondly, that it involves a mere formality, or detail of required procedure, in the routine of a litigation or of a public officer's action; next, that it involves to some extent the security of apparently vested rights, so that the presumption will serve to prevent an unwholesome uncertainty; and, finally, that the circumstances of the particular case add some element of probability.<sup>1</sup>

The same principle has sometimes been extended to acts which ought to have been done by a *private person* in the course of business;<sup>2</sup> but this seems unlikely to be common. Furthermore, it has been often extended to include the *truth of an official certificate* or other assertion;<sup>3</sup> but although

§ 2534. <sup>1</sup> The following are illustrations: *Federal*: 1896, *Harkrader v. Carroll*, 76 Fed. 474 (proceedings of the land-office in issuing a patent, presumed); 1901, *New River Mineral Co. v. Roanoke C. & C. Co.*, 49 C. C. A. 78, 110 Fed. 343 (that an undated sheriff's return was made within the due period, presumed); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 15 (quoted *ante*, § 2499); 1908, *People v. Siemsen*, 153 Cal. 387, 95 Pac. 863 (district attorney filing an information); *Ga.* 1893, *American M. Co. v. Hill*, 92 Ga. 297, 18 S. E. 425 (a verdict as the foundation of a judgment, the minutes being lost; regularity presumed); 1909, *Hansen v. Owens*, 132 Ga. 648, 64 S. E. 800 (presumption from notary's regular attestation of a deed); *Ill.* 1840, *Eyman v. People*, 6 Ill. 4, 8 (use and recognition of a highway; presumed duly laid out); 1840, *Nealy v. Brown*, 6 Ill. 10, 13 (same); 1875, *Goldie v. McDonald*, 78 Ill. 605, 607 (defendant's residence in the county, as affecting service of process, presumed); *Mass.* 1827, *Hathaway v. Clark*, 5 Pick. 490 (notice of adjudication of insanity, not presumed, the record of it being lacking and the papers apparently entire); *Mo.* 1893, *State v. Lord*, 118 Mo. 1, 23 S. W. 764 (regularity of an indictment, presumed); 1894, *State v. Hoyt*, 123 Mo. 348, 355, 27 S. W. 382 (correctness of a tax-bill, presumed); 1895, *State v. David*, 131 Mo. 380, 33 S. W. 28 (coroner's mode of taking a deposition; regularity presumed); *Nebr.* 1896, *Green v. Barker*, 47 Nebr. 934, 66 N. W. 1632 (chairman of a city board of trustees; his duty as to matters preceding a conveyance, presumed done); *N. H.* 1826, *Bishop v. Cone*, 3 N. H. 513, 516 (legality of a town meeting, presumed); *Or. Laws*, 1920, § 799, par. 15 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *Pa.* 1895, *Fisher v. Kaufman*, 170 Pa. 444, 33 Atl. 137 (correctness of an old survey in a land-office, presumed); 1895, *Altoona v. Bowman*, 171 Pa. 307, 33 Atl.

187 (a requirement that municipal ordinances shall not be passed to enactment on the day of introduction or reporting; regularity not presumed); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 334, par. 14 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963, par. 15); *P. R. Rev. St. & C.* 1911, § 1470 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963); *Vt.* 1904, *McKinstry v. Collins*, 76 Vt. 221, 56 Atl. 985 (assault by an officer serving process; presumption applied); *Wis.* 1904, *Marchant's Estate*, 121 Wis. 526, 99 N. W. 320 (statutory proceedings).

The regularity of a *tax-title* has been a frequent field of controversy under this presumption, depending more or less on the requirements of the local statute: 1894, *Clarke v. Mead*, 102 Cal. 517, 519, 36 Pac. 862 (tax-deed; presumption made by statutes of regularity of steps in prior proceeding); 1826, *Waldron v. Tuttle*, 3 N. H. 340, 344 ("Very few of those sales have been found to be legal; the presumption is in fact against their validity; . . . in all cases enough of the proceedings should be shown to render it not improbable that the proceedings may have been regular," and this, with possession, may suffice); 1889, *Blackwell, Tax Titles*, 5th ed., §§ 1098, 1140.

<sup>2</sup> 1802, *Ellenborough, L. C. J.*, in *Williams v. E. I. Co.*, 3 East 199 ("Where any act is required to be done on the one part, so that the party neglecting it would be guilty of a criminal neglect of duty in not having done it, the law presumes the affirmative, and throws the burden of proving the contrary — that is, in such case, of proving a negative — on the other side"; here, in an action by a ship-owner against a charterer for placing an explosive on board without notice, the burden was placed on the plaintiff to show the defendant's failure to give notice).

<sup>3</sup> 1885, *Patterson v. Collier*, 75 Ga. 419, 428 (an executive certificate that a person is not justice of the peace is "conclusive," "without



this consideration serves in part to justify for such statements the exception to the Hearsay rule (*ante*, § 1630), it is only occasionally (as in a certificate of acknowledgment) that the force of a real presumption can be expected.

§ 2535. **Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers; Incorporation.** There is a rule of substantive law that for some legal purposes a 'de facto' incumbency of a public office suffices; the 'de jure' appointment would then not be in issue. But supposing that it is, the rule of Evidence, requiring production of documentary originals (*ante*, § 1178), would call for the original document of appointment; unless, under that rule, an exception can be found for them. Such an exception, for reasons already noticed (*ante*, § 1228), is recognized for many classes of cases.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming, then, that the 'de jure' incumbency of office by a particular person is to be shown, and that the document of appointment need not be produced, there may then come into play a well recognized presumption of incumbency, based on the person's prior *notorious action* as such officer. In strictness, there are here two elements, the course of action and its notoriety;<sup>2</sup> but the former alone is commonly mentioned. For *public officers*, the scope of the presumption depends more or less on the issue of substantive law involved, because other evidence may be demanded where the title to the office is the essence of the controversy; moreover, the rule of the sufficiency in substantive law of a 'de facto' incumbency (above noted) tends to be confused with the present evidential rule of presumption.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally the rule is

rebutting evidence"); 1898, *Peyton v. Morgan Park*, 172 Ill. 102, 49 N. E. 1002 (the commissioners' certificate of benefit under Rev. St. 1874, c. 24, § 147, raises a presumption); 1896, *Albany Co. S. Bank v. McCarty*, 149 N. Y. 71, 43 N. E. 427 (a certificate of acknowledgment creates a presumption, under C. C. P. § 935, when nothing more is offered, of the truth of the facts stated; when disputed by evidence, the jury is to decide; here the question was whether the deeds were in fact signed or executed; the opinion collects the cases); 1898, *Rogers v. Pell*, 154 N. Y. 518, 49 N. E. 75 (a certificate of acknowledgment, on the fact of its venue, goes to the jury "against evidence in rebuttal, whatever it may be"); 1903, *Pine Tree L. Co. v. Fargo*, 12 N. D. 360, 96 N. W. 357 (a city treasurer's credit of assessment-receipts, presumed correct).

Compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 1347-1344 (conclusive documents) and §§ 1630-1684 (admissibility of official documents), where the statutes often declare such a rule for those documents.

§ 2535. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1789, *R. v. Gordon*, 2 Leach 3d ed. 581 (murder of a constable; production of the appointment not needed); 1805, *Kirwan v. Cockburn*, 5 Esp. 233 (appointment in the army; the commission itself should be produced); *U. S.* 1883, *James v. State*, 41 Ark.

451, 453 (road-overseer; production not required); 1881, *Hall v. Bishop*, 78 Ind. 370, 372 (deputy auditor and assessor; production not required); 1899, *State v. Haskins*, 109 Ia. 656, 80 N. W. 1063 (production not required).

<sup>2</sup> The latter is nearly the same as using a *reputation* of appointment (*ante*, § 1626); the former rests on a principle of Relevancy (*ante*, § 272).

<sup>3</sup> Examples are as follows:

ENGLAND: 1791, *Berryman v. Wise*, 4 T. R. 366 (action of slander by an attorney); 1796, *Cross v. Kaye*, 6 T. R. 663 (attorney as defendant); 1826, *Pearce v. Whale*, 5 B. & C. 38 (attorney suing for services); 1833, *Butler v. Ford*, 1 Cr. & M. 662, 669 (police officers); 1835, *Cannell v. Curtis*, 2 Bing. N. C. 228 (assistant overseer of a parish); 1836, *M'Gahey v. Allston*, 2 M. & W. 206 (vestry-clerk's action on a bond); 1845, *Doe v. Young*, 8 Q. B. 63 (commissioners of land-tax; Coleridge, J.: "It is an admitted point that acting in an office is proof of being officer. . . . The inference may be carried upwards as well as downwards"; L. C. J.: "If it was within a reasonable time of the act done, that is sufficient"); 1846, *Doe v. Barnes*, 8 Q. B. 1037, 1042 (church-wardens and overseers of a parish; Patteson, J.: "The fact [of acting] does not of itself prove any title, but only that



applied to prove a *private authority*,<sup>4</sup> but usually only in connection with the authentication of documents (*ante*, § 2124). By an extension of the principle the due *incorporation* of a company is often presumed from its course of action as such, together (in some cases) with a notoriety or repute;<sup>5</sup> and

the person fills the office"; but Denman, L. C. J., and Williams, J., rather take the view that the course of action indicates a title; St. 1918, 8 & 9 Geo. V, c. 40, Income Tax, § 233 (the fact that a person "was reputed to be or had acted as commissioner or officer" is 'prima facie' evidence).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1819, Sawyer v. Steele, 3 Wash. C. C. 464, 468 (officers of a revenue cutter, suing for penalty; acting as such is sufficient); 1821, Jacob v. U. S., 1 Brockenb. 520, 528 ("acting notoriously" suffices; here, a revenue collector); 1827, Bank v. Dandridge, 12 Wheat. 64, 70 (cashier of the U. S. Bank, acting and recognized as such, assumed to be properly appointed); 1830, Ronkendorff v. Taylor, 1 Pet. 349, 359 (assessors; action under authority is sufficient); *Arkansas*: 1859, State v. Stroope, 20 Ark. 202 (road-overseer indicted); 1866, Hardage v. Coffman, 24 Ark. 256 (trover; plea of taking while army-officer; notorious action as such, sufficient); *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 14; 1903, Monterey v. Jacks, 139 Cal. 542, 73 Pac. 436 (city trustees); *Georgia*: 1857, Allen v. State, 21 Ga. 217, 219 (constable); Rev. C. 1910, § 5754 (an "officer 'de facto' may be proved by his acts," without producing his appointment); *Illinois*: 1883, Golden v. Bressler, 105 Ill. 419, 428 (trustees of a bank appointed by the Governor); *Iowa*: 1855, Gourley v. Hankins, 2 Ia. 75, 77 (as between third persons, a 'de facto' showing suffices); 1870, Londegan v. Hammer, 30 Ia. 508, 515 (justice of the peace); *Kansas*: 1889, State v. Crowder, 41 Kan. 101, 112, 21 Pac. 208 (government detective); *Louisiana*: 1847, Planters' Bank v. Bass, 2 La. An. 430, 437; *Maine*: 1852, Hutchings v. Van Bokkelen, 34 Me. 126, 132 (arrest by a lieutenant); 1867, New Portland v. Kingfield, 55 Me. 172, 174 (overseers of the poor, furnishing pauper-supplies); *Massachusetts*: 1862, Webber v. Davis, 5 All. 393, 396 (magistrate); 1871, Com. v. Kane, 108 Mass. 423 (indictment for assault upon a police officer); 1893, Com. v. Wright, 158 Mass. 149, 157, 33 N. E. 82 (illegal resistance to the police; the person's own testimony to his office, without evidence of public acting; undecided); 1906, Barry v. Smith, 191 Mass. 78, 77 N. E. 1099 (board of health); *Michigan*: 1843, Scott v. D. Y. M. Society, 1 Doug. 119, 152 (reputation and acting, sufficient; here, of judges); *Missouri*: 1837, Hart v. Robinett, 5 Mo. 11, 16 (constable and deputy; acting is sufficient); 1858, Eads v. Woodbridge, 27 Mo. 251 (district school trustee; acting is sufficient); 1885, State v. Holcomb, 86 Mo. 371, 377 (murder of a police-

man; action and recognition are sufficient); 1890, State v. Findley, 101 Mo. 217, 222, 14 S. W. 185 (tax-collector; acting is sufficient); *New Hampshire*: 1872, State v. Roberts, 52 N. H. 492, 495 (collector of taxes); *New Jersey*: 1798, Gratz v. Wilson, 6 N. J. L. 419, 420 (judge of the Federal Supreme Court); *New York*: 1830, Wilcox v. Smith, 5 Wend. 231, 234 (constable; "there must be some color of an election or appointment, or an exercise of the office, and an acquiescence on the part of the public for a length of time which would afford a strong presumption of at least a colorable election or appointment"); 1831, Ring v. Grout, 7 Wend. 341, 344 (repute and conduct; applied to school-trustees; the repute being as to the 'de facto' and not the 'de jure' exercise of [office]); 1832, McCoy v. Curtice, 9 Wend. 17 (same); *North Carolina*: 1844, Burke v. Elliott, 4 Ired. 355, 359 (besides the 'de facto' exercise, there must be "at least some colourable election and induction into office 'ab origine' or so long an exercise of the office and acquiescence therein of the public authorities as to afford to the individual citizen a presumption strong" of appointment; here, a constable); *Oregon*: Laws 1920, § 799, par. 14; *Philippine Isl.* C. C. P. 1901, § 334, par. 13 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963, par. 14); *Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1470 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1963); *Tennessee*: 1809, State v. Manley, 1 Overt. 428 (acting is sufficient, except where the officer justifies or sues as such); *Texas*: 1902, De Lucenay v. State, — Tex. Cr. —, 68 S. W. 796 (county judge); *Vermont*: 1827, Adams v. Jackson, 2 Aik. 145 (constable); 1856, State v. Abbey, 29 Vt. 60, 64 (justice performing a marriage); 1862, Briggs v. Taylor, 35 Vt. 57, 67 (deputy sheriff); 1898, State v. Taylor, 70 Vt. 1, 39 Atl. 447 (constable making an arrest).

<sup>4</sup> 1837, Campbell v. Bank, 2 Ill. 423 (authority of an attorney to give a supersedeas bond); 1871, Druse v. Wheeler, 22 Mich. 439, 444 (trustees of a church, in an action for trespass). *Contra*: 1853, Bryan v. Walton, 14 Ga. 185, 192 (not applicable to a private trust, e. g. a guardian); 1857, Gilbert v. Boyd, 25 Mo. 27, *semble* (private trustees; rule not applicable).

The following ruling perhaps belongs here: 1898, Baxter v. Camp, 71 Conn. 245, 41 Atl. 803 (whether the defendant's cancellation of his signature to a contract was authorized; his admission of the cancellation, held not to put on him the duty of producing evidence of authority).

<sup>5</sup> Compare the cases on *judicial notice* of charters (*post*, § 2575); *Federal*: 1827, Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge, 12 Wheat 64, 71, per



the statutory admissibility of reputation alone (*ante*, § 1625) would probably be deemed also to create the force of a presumption.

It may be added that many instances, in which this presumption might be brought into question, are otherwise disposed of through the rule of *authentication of documents under seal*, presuming the incumbency of the sealing officer (*ante*, §§ 2161-2169), and by the doctrine of *judicial notice of public officers* (*post*, § 2576).<sup>6</sup>

§ 2536. **Similarity of Foreign Law.** Whether a foreign rule of law is to be adopted as applicable to any part of the litigation before the Court, depends upon principles of substantive law. Supposing the foreign rule to control, then it is to be noted, with reference to ascertaining the terms of the foreign rule, that the Court does not know it judicially (*post*, § 2573) and that it must therefore be proved like any 'factum probandum' (*post*, § 2558), and that in aid of such proof a presumption may within certain limits be resorted to, as follows:

If it is the law of a State possessing the English *common law as the foundation of its system*, in particular, *one of the United States*, it is generally said to be presumed to be the same as that of the forum; even if it involves the existence of a statutory enactment altering the common law, the same rule is often applied (*i. e.* by presuming that the statutory alteration in the forum has been repeated in the other State by a similar process of evolution), though many Courts draw a distinction here and confine the presumption to the common or judicially-declared law. But if the *foreign State is not one whose system is founded on the common law, the presumption will probably not be made*, unless the principle involved is one of the law merchant common to civilized countries.

Story, J.; *Delaware*: Rev. St. 1915, § 4227 (bank's incorporation, provable in criminal proceedings by reputation or by the issuance of notes as a bank); *Illinois*: 1858, President, etc. of Mendota v. Thompson, 20 Ill. 197 (here a peculiarly strict rule; the production of the charter, and proof of acts done under and in conformity with it, suffices); 1884, Louisville N. A. & C. R. Co. v. Shires, 108 Ill. 617, 625 (similar); Rev. St. 1874, c. 38, § 486, St. 1889, June 3 (user is to be 'prima facie' evidence of corporate existence, in criminal prosecutions); 1914, People v. Novick, 265 Ill. 594, 107 N. E. 138 (arson to defraud an insurance company; the incorporation "was assumed by both parties"; "the corporate existence, if no objection is made, may be proved by oral testimony"; the opinions in these two cases were filed on the same day but written by different judges); 1914, People v. Fryer, 266 Ill. 216, 107 N. E. 134 (larceny of chattels of a corporation; the incorporation not sufficiently evidenced by the assertions of a member and an employee); *Massachusetts*: 1876, Merchants' National Bank v. Glendon Co., 120 Mass. 97 (banking corporation, in an

action on a note); *Michigan*: Comp. L. 1915, § 12535; *New Hampshire*: Pub. St. 1891, c. 274, § 7 (offences involving counterfeit bank-notes; currency of the notes, "or other proof," is sufficient to show the bank's establishment); *Tennessee*: 1900, State v. Missio, 105 Tenn. 218, 58 S. W. 216 (larceny; example of the doctrine of the sufficiency in substantive law of a 'de facto' corporation); *Vermont*: 1834, Barnes v. District, 6 Vt. 388, 393 (organization of a school district, proved by action as such and reputation); *Washington*: 1893, Yakima Nat'l Bank v. Knipe, 6 Wash. 348, 350, 33 Pac. 834 (national bank).

The incumbency of a *corporate officer* will sometimes be noticed: 1827, Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge, 12 Wheat. 64, 70, per Story, J.; 1870, State v. Cleavland, 6 Nev. 181, 185 (forgery).

<sup>6</sup> For the rule of presumption as to the incumbency of the *celebrant of a marriage*, see *ante*, § 2505; the question is complicated by two additional ones, namely, whether a 'de facto' clergyman sufficed at common law, and whether the opponent by his conduct has admitted the legality of the celebrant's appointment.



It has been suggested that in reality there is no presumption, and that the true process is merely that of refusing to recognize a presumption that the foreign State has a different law,<sup>1</sup> and no doubt this will sufficiently describe the situation in many cases; but in point of principle it is not tenable. The proper phrasing depends upon the state of the burden of proof in the case in hand.

The following summary of the different rules as recognized (the first one named being substantially like the rule stated above) is worthy of careful judicial consideration:<sup>2</sup>

§ 2536. <sup>1</sup> 1898, *Corson v. P. J.*, in *Meuer v. R. Co.*, 11 S. D. 94, 75 N. W. 823. Compare Story, *Conflict of Laws*, 8th ed., 1883, § 637, note by Professor Bigelow.

<sup>2</sup> The authorities to that date are exhaustively collected in the article quoted above; subsequent rulings are as follows:

CANADA: 1903, *Meritt v. Copper Crown Co.*, 36 N. Sc. 383, 393 (rules of construction by West Virginia law, presumed the same).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1904, *The Matterhorn*, 128 Fed. 863, 63 C. C. A. 331 (maritime law of another country; its difference must be proved); 1918, *Panama El. R. Co. v. Moyers*, 5th C. C. A., 249 Fed. 19 (personal injury in Panama; action brought in the U. S. Canal Zone court; law of Panama required to be evidenced as a fact); *Ala.* 1906, *Southern Express Co. v. Owens*, 146 Ala. 412, 41 So. 752 (common carrier's contract; common law of South Carolina presumed the same); 1907, *Watford v. Alabama & F. L. Co.*, 152 Ala. 178, 44 So. 567 (personal injury received in Florida); *Ga.* 1904, *Rooney v. Southern B. & L. Ass'n*, 119 Ga. 941, 47 S. E. 345 (Alabama contract; common law as to usury presumed); 1904, *Savannah F. & W. R. Co. v. Evans*, 121 Ga. 391, 49 S. E. 308 (statute of Florida as to signals at crossings, not noticed); 1906, *Thomas v. Clarkson*, 125 Ga. 72, 54 S. E. 77 (Alabama law as to usury; the common law presumed to obtain there, but the Alabama judicial rulings were not to control in its interpretation); 1906, *Ellington v. Harris*, 127 Ga. 85, 56 S. E. 134 (marriage); *Ida.* 1910, *Maloney v. Winston Bros. Co.*, 18 Ida. 740, 111 Pac. 1080 (mining law); *Ill.* 1904, *Sokol v. People*, 212 Ill. 238, 72 N. E. 382 (marriage in Turkey); 1905, *Scholten v. Barber*, 217 Ill. 148, 75 N. E. 460 (extension of time to a surety on a note made in Missouri; common law assumed to be the same); 1905, *Leathe v. Thomas*, 218 Ill. 246, 75 N. E. 810 (action on a Missouri judgment; the Missouri statute upon set-off, not noticed); *Ind.* 1903, *Baltimore & O. S. W. R. Co. v. Hollenbeck*, 161 Ind. 452, 69 N. E. 136 (wage-claim, already paid under garnishment in Kentucky; the Indiana statute of exemptions not presumed to be adopted by statute in Kentucky); 1908, *Wabash R. Co. v. Hassett*, 170 Ind. 370, 83 N. E. 705 (personal injury and

death); *Ia.* 1904, *Banco de Sonora v. Bankers' M. C. Co.*, 124 Ia. 576, 100 N. W. 532 (law of Mexico as to age of majority, not presumed to be the same); 1906, *Westheimer v. Habinek*, 131 Ia. 643, 109 N. W. 189 (shipment of liquor; presumption of similarity for Missouri law, not enforced "if the assumption would impose a penalty or work a forfeiture"); 1908, *Varner v. Interstate Exchange*, 138 Ia. 201, 115 N. W. 1111 (foreclosure of trust deed by sale by sheriff in Missouri; bill in equity being required by law in Iowa, the Missouri law was presumed the same); *Kan.* 1904, *First Nat'l Bank v. Nordstrom*, 70 Kan. 485, 78 Pac. 804 (note payable in Iowa; law of Iowa presumed the same); 1906, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Johnson*, 74 Kan. 83, 86 Pac. 156 (death in Indian Territory; common law presumed the same); 1915, *Newton v. New York Life Ins. Co.*, 95 Kan. 427, 148 Pac. 619 (insurance policy made in Illinois); *Ky.* 1904, *Klenke v. Noonan*, 118 Ky. 436, 81 S. W. 241 (common law as to marriage, presumed to obtain in Ohio); 1910, *Yellow P. L. Co. v. Ford*, 141 Ky. 5, 131 S. W. 1010 (personal injury law); *La.* 1904, *State v. Allen*, 113 La. 705, 37 So. 614 (bigamy; the Indiana law of validity of a marriage presumed to be the same as in Louisiana); *Mass.* 1904, *Callender, M. & T. Co. v. Flint*, 187 Mass. 104, 72 N. E. 345 (guaranty; Rhode Island); 1904, *Cherry v. Sprague*, 187 Mass. 113, 72 N. E. 456 (note; South Dakota); 1906, *Farmers' Nat'l Bank v. Venner*, 192 Mass. 531, 78 N. E. 540 (default of a N. Y. note; the law of N. Y. presumed the same); 1907, *Demelman v. Brazier*, 193 Mass. 588, 79 N. E. 812 (days of grace in New York law); 1907, *Com. v. Stevens*, 196 Mass. 280, 82 N. E. 33 (Georgia statute as to marriage, not presumed the same); 1908, *Gordon v. Knott*, 199 Mass. 173, 85 N. E. 184 (English contract); 1913, *Holden v. McGillicuddy*, 215 Mass. 563, 102 N. E. 923 (Vermont law as to negligence per se, presumed the same); 1914, *Lemieux v. Boston & Maine R. Co.*, 219 Mass. 399, 106 N. E. 992 (Vermont employers' liability act; burden is on the plaintiff to prove it); *Mo.* 1912, *Hartwell v. Parks*, 240 Mo. 537, 144 S. W. 793 (regularity of a probate record); *Mont.* 1905, *McKnight v. Oregon S. L. R. Co.*, 33 Mont.



1906, Professor *Albert M. Kales*, "Presumption of Foreign Law" (Harvard Law Review, XIX, 401): "There are three possible rules for determining when the Court of the forum will make a presumption as to the law of the foreign state, and what presumption if any it will make; or as I would prefer to say, there are three possible rules which indicate when the Court of the forum will shift the burden of going forward with evidence as to the foreign law upon the party not having the burden of proof of the whole issue of which the foreign law is a part.

"The first position is as follows: When the Court of the forum takes judicial notice that the foreign state has fundamentally the same system of law as that of the forum, the Court of the forum will presume that the law of the foreign state is the same as that of the system of law (exclusive of statutory changes) fundamentally common to both; otherwise there is no presumption at all.

"The second position is that the law of the forum (even though it be statutory) is always applicable, in the absence of proof of the foreign law. In the application of this rule it is entirely unnecessary to make the slightest distinction between whether the foreign state is one which has fundamentally the same system of law as the forum or not. . . .

"The third possible position is a combination of the first and second. It is like the first when the Court of the forum takes judicial notice that the foreign state has fundamentally the same system of law as that of the forum. It is like the second when the court of the forum takes judicial notice that the foreign state has fundamentally a different system of law from that of the forum. . . .

"In conclusion, then, upon the entire subject; The third position is one the existence of which may fairly be doubted, and which, if it does exist, is an irrational and inconsistent development, heaping an unjust burden upon one who ordinarily does not have to go forward with proof in the first instance. The second is extreme but consistent, and has some advantages of certainty in its application. Its fault is that it also, without any adequate ground, places a burden of going forward with evidence upon the party who ordinarily does not have to do so. The first position, on the contrary, presents a rational and logical development of the law. It does more accurate justice between the parties by leaving the natural burden of going forward with evidence where it belongs unless there is a good reason for changing it. It has also, it is submitted, the support of such eminent judges as Lord Eldon, Chancellor Kent, and, more recently, Mr. Justice Holmes."

§ 2537. **Contracts.** In evidencing the issues of fact arising under a contract right or liability, the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485) is almost

40, 82 Pac. 661 (injury to personalty in Idaho; the statute of Idaho not noticed); *N. Y.* 1906, *Robb v. Washington & J. College*, 185 N. Y. 485, 78 N. E. 359 (restraint on alienation; Pennsylvania not presumed to have a statute like New York); *N. C.* 1904, *Lassiter v. Norfolk & C. R. Co.*, 136 N. C. 89, 48 S. E. 642 (Virginia statute as to death by wrongful act; subject discussed in two opinions); *Okl.* 1909, *Schlatterbeck v. Schwinn*, 23 Okl. 681, 103 Pac. 854 (usury statute of Indian Territory); 1912, *Cole v. District Board*, 32 Okl. 692, 123 Pac. 426 (Kentucky law for colored person's school rights); 1915, *Marx v. Hefner*, 46 Okl. 453, 149 Pac. 207 (legal services rendered under Arkansas law); *Or.* 1915, *United States Fidelity & G. Co. v. Martin*, 77 Or. 369, 149 Pac. 1023 (law of judgments in Washington); *Pa.* 1904, *Linton v. Moorhead*, 209 Pa. 646, 59 Atl. 264 (married woman's power of attorney in England; law of England pre-

sumed the same, for lack of proof); *S. C.* 1904, *Columbian B. & L. Ass'n v. Rice*, 68 S. C. 236, 47 S. E. 63 (Virginia contract; common law as to usury presumed, and the statute not presumed to be the same as in N. C.); *S. D.* 1904, *Baird v. Vines*, 18 S. D. 52, 99 N. W. 89 (non-negotiable note; law of Montana presumed the same); 1905, *Iowa L. & T. Co. v. Schnose*, 19 S. D. 248, 103 N. W. 22 (mortgage in Iowa; law of Iowa presumed the same); *Tex.* 1904, *Ex parte Latham*, 47 Tex. Cr. 208, 82 S. W. 1046 (community property in Oklahoma; law of Oklahoma presumed the same); *Va.* 1905, *Frank v. Gump*, 123 Va. 205, 51 S. E. 358 (Maryland contract; common law presumed the same); 1907, *Norfolk & W. R. Co. v. Denny's Adm'r*, 106 Va. 383, 56 S. E. 321 (statutory action for death); *Wis.* 1905, *Edleman v. Edleman*, 125 Wis. 270, 104 N. W. 56 (alimony in divorce; Tennessee property law presumed the same).



always determined by the rules of pleading, or is directly deducible therefrom; the chief class of questions here, the *performance of a condition*, is included plainly, in common-law tradition, within the sphere of pleading;<sup>1</sup> though in more recent times, under looser methods of procedure, the relaxation of boundaries between affirmative and negative pleas has tended to obscure the old landmarks of discussion. So, too, under the second burden of proof (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494), so far as there are rules of 'prima facie' sufficiency or of presumption, relieving or shifting the duty of producing evidence, they seldom concern facts peculiar to the domain of contracts alone; and any of the preceding presumptions may become applicable.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2538. **Statute of Limitations.** The first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485), affecting the loss of a right by limitation, was at common law usually placed upon the plaintiff, *i. e.* to show that the period of limitation had not elapsed between the accrual of his right and the institution of his suit;<sup>1</sup> this seems to have been due to the peculiar wording of the earliest statutes, whose analogies were afterwards repeated. But the more natural and just view is to treat the fact as one of defeasance, like a release, and thus to place on the opponent the burden of establishing it; this is the result accepted in probably most jurisdictions to-day, either by statute<sup>2</sup> or at common law;<sup>3</sup> in any event, it is in strictness a question of the law of Pleading, not of Evidence. Where the plaintiff's declaration exhibits in itself the lapse of the barring period, a further question arises (not necessarily dependent on the rule for

§ 2537. <sup>1</sup> The following are examples of the commoner problems of this sort:

*Warranties or conditions in an insurance policy:* 1896, Penn. M. L. Ins. Co. v. M. S. B. & T. Co., 19 C. C. A. 286, 72 Fed. 413, 441 (the burden is on the insurer to show materiality and fraudulent intent of a false representation; nor does knowledge of the falsity of the same representation in another policy raise a presumption as to knowledge on this occasion); 1902, Hennessy v. Ins. Co., 74 Conn. 699, 52 Atl. 490; 1904, Vincent v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n, 77 Conn. 281, 58 Atl. 963 (age); 1903, Supreme Tent v. Stensland, 206 Ill. 124, 68 N. E. 1098 (life).

*Exemptions in a bailee's contract:* *ante*, § 2508.

*Reservations in a deed:* 1897, Harman v. Stearns, 95 Va. 58, 27 S. E. 601 (deed with reservations; the claimant must prove that the land claimed is not within the reservations).

*Conditions in a bond or mortgage:* 1906, Temple v. Phelps, 193 Mass. 297, 79 N. E. 482.

*Payment of the premium of an insurance policy:* 1904, Thomas v. Northwestern M. L. Ins. Co., 142 Cal. 79, 75 Pac. 665.

*Payment in general:* 1920, Illinois Steel Bridge Co. v. Wayland, 107 Kan. 532, 192 Pac. 752 (burden of proving payment is not shifted by producing a receipt in full);

*Good faith of a purchaser for value without*

*notice:* 1909, Arnd v. Aylesworth, 145 Ia. 185, 123 N. W. 1000.

For *accident insurance*, see *ante*, § 2510.

<sup>2</sup> The following are some of the rare instances: *Shipper's assent to the terms of a bill of lading received:* 1896, Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v. Simon, 160 Ill. 648, 43 N. E. 596 (the carrier must show that limitations of his common-law liability are brought to the shipper's notice); 1866, Boorman v. Express Co., 21 Wis. 152, 158 (delivery to the shipper raises a presumption of assent); *Partnership books:* 1897, Wilson v. Potter, — Ky. —, 42 S. W. 836 (partnership books are presumed correct; and in attacking them the specific items must be pointed out beforehand).

§ 2538. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1817, Hurst v. Parker, 1 B. & Ald. 92 (trespass to a mine); 1837, Nepean v. Knight, 2 M. & W. 894 ("the 'onus' is also cast on the lessor of the plaintiff of showing that he has commenced his action within twenty years after his right of entry accrued"); U. S. 1897, Leigh v. Evans, 64 Ark. 26, 41 S. W. 427 (administrator's account); 1897, Graham v. O'Bryan, 120 N. C. 463, 27 S. E. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 458; 1896, Thomas v. Glendinning, 13 Utah 47, 44 Pac. 652 (under Comp. I. 1888, § 3244).

<sup>3</sup> 1906, Schell v. Weaver, 225 Ill. 159, 80 N. E. 95; 1895, Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gibbons, 91 Va. 608, 22 S. E. 504.



burden of proof) as to the mode of taking advantage of this admission; in some cases a demurrer, or its equivalent, may suffice; <sup>4</sup> in a jurisdiction where the burden is on the defendant, it would be proper to raise thereby a presumption in his favor, shifting to the plaintiff the duty of producing evidence of some exception; <sup>5</sup> though here again the rules of pleading should furnish the proper mode of determination.

§ 2539. **Malicious Prosecution.** In an action for malicious prosecution, the plaintiff is anomalously required to plead and to prove facts which are otherwise regarded as matters of excuse or privilege, *i. e.* the termination of the prior proceeding in his favor, the lack of probable cause for it, and the malice; <sup>1</sup> this being prescribed for him by the rules of pleading. In the course of sustaining this first burden (*ante*, § 2485), he may sometimes avail himself of rules of presumption or 'prima facie' sufficiency (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2497) or be met by counter-presumptions for the defendant; for example, by a rule that the magistrate's discharge, <sup>2</sup> or the suffering of a nonsuit, <sup>3</sup> is 'prima facie' evidence, or raises a presumption, of lack of probable cause, or that the defendant's receipt of advice from counsel is sufficient evidence of probable cause. But in these and other instances the rule is frequently intended to be one of substantive law, *i. e.* that the fact in question is or is not 'per se' probable cause; and the details of substantive law thus become inextricably mingled with the rules of presumption.

§ 2540. **Sundry Burdens and Presumptions.** In sundry multifarious cases, more or less casual, rules of presumption have been recognized; <sup>1</sup> and experi-

<sup>4</sup> 1879, *Hutchinson v. Hutchinson*, 34 Ark. 164 (provided also the facts in the complaint negative any ground of avoidance); 1876, *People v. Herr*, 81 Ill. 125 (but not in an action on a penal statute); 1895, *Fulton v. Northern Ill. College*, 158 Ill. 333, 336, 42 N. E. 138; 1879, *Lewis v. Alexander*, 51 Tex. 578, 588.

<sup>5</sup> 1879, *Hines v. Potts*, 56 Miss. 346, 352; 1895, *Gross v. Disney*, 95 Tenn. 592, 32 S. W. 632.

§ 2539. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1883, *Abrath v. Northeastern R. Co.*, L. R. 11 Q. B. D. 440; *U. S.* 1858, *Barron v. Mason*, 31 Vt. 189 (leading opinion, by Redfield, C. J.).

For the scientific analysis of the relation of these elements, see the writer's *Select Cases on the Law of Torts* (1912), vol. II, Appendix A, Summary of Principles, § 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Contra*: 1860, *Israel v. Brooks*, 23 Ill. 526 [575]. *Accord*: 1893, *Barhight v. Tammany*, 158 Pa. 545, 28 Atl. 135.

<sup>3</sup> 1902, *Cohn v. Saidel*, 71 N. H. 558, 53 Atl. 800 (collecting the cases *pro* and *con*).

§ 2540. <sup>1</sup> The following are illustrations: *Federal*: 1897, *Foster v. Crawford*, 80 Fed. 991 (levy of execution on sufficient assets raises a presumption of satisfaction); 1901, *U. S. v. Chun Hoy*, 50 C. C. A. 57, 111 Fed. 899 (under St. May 5, 1892, § 3, a Chinese person has the burden of showing his right to

remain in the United States); *Arkansas*: 1897, *Kansas City, F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Becker*, 63 Ark. 477, 39 S. W. 358 (a common employment of plaintiff and the defendant's servant having been shown, a presumption arises that they were fellow servants); *Illinois*: 1895, *Levy v. Chicago N. Bank*, 158 Ill. 88, 42 N. E. 129 (when things are done on the same day, they are presumed to have been done at the same time); 1897, *Crane v. People*, 168 Ill. 395, 48 N. E. 54 (Rev. St. c. 38, § 12, relating to adultery, applied); *Kansas*: 1896, *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Wiswell*, 56 Kan. 765, 44 Pac. 996 (the taking of morphine by the insured's own hand does not create a presumption of suicide, and the burden of proof to show suicide remains on the insurer); *Maine*: 1848, *Brown v. Burnham*, 28 Me. 38 (procedure in taking a deposition); *Massachusetts*: 1839, *Randolph v. Easton*, 23 Pick. 242 (a pauper woman's settlement in E. being shown, the defendants showed a marriage; held, that the burden was still upon them to show that the husband had a settlement elsewhere than at E., and not on the plaintiffs to show that he was settled at E.); *North Carolina*: 1896, *State v. Mitchell*, 119 N. C. 784, 25 S. E. 783; *State v. Rogers*, 119 N. C. 793, 26 S. E. 142 (the sworn examination of a bastard's mother raises a presumption); *Cook v. Guirkin*, 119



ence will doubtless and justly continue to develop new ones. The various burdens of proof of the first class fall properly within the domain of the rules of pleading (*ante*, § 2486).

N. C. 13, 25 S. E. 715 (payment admitted by payee; application of it to other lawful debts alleged in defence; the duty to produce evidence is on the payee); 1905, *Hill v. Dalton*, 140 N. C. 9, 52 S. E. 273 (statutory proceeding to establish a boundary); *Vermont*: 1921,

*Simpson v. Central Vermont R. Co.*, — Vt. —, 115 Atl. 299 (whether railroad rate-schedules were on file); *Virginia*: 1895, *Witz v. Fite*, 91 Va. 446, 22 S. E. 171 (where a higher security is given for the same debt, there is a presumption of merger).



## BOOK III: TO WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (LAW AND FACT; JUDGE AND JURY) <sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER LXXXIX.

§ 2549. Functions of Judge and Jury;  
General Principles.

§ 2550. Admissibility of Evidence.

§ 2551. Sufficiency of Proof.

§ 2552. Negligence.

§ 2553. Reasonableness.

§ 2554. Same: Malicious Prosecution.

§ 2555. Facts Judicially noticed; Trial  
by Inspection; Nul Tiel Record; Constitu-  
tional Considerations.

§ 2556. Construction of Documents.

§ 2557. Criminal Intent.

§ 2558. Foreign Law.

§ 2559. Local Law.

§ 2549. **Functions of Judge and Jury; General Principles.** As a part of the larger procedure of jury trial, the question arises, To whom must evidence be presented for persuasion? To the judge, or to the jury?

Before examining the answer to this question, certain principles, superficially related, must be discriminated:

(a) *The judge's control over the burden of proof.* As a part of the rules regulating the burden of proof, the party on whom rests for the time being the duty of coming forward with evidence may be required to offer not merely any evidence whatever, but a sufficient amount to be worth considering, before he is regarded as satisfying this rule; in other words, he cannot go to the jury unless his evidence is sufficient, by this test; and it is the judge that applies the test. In this sense, then, the judge may be called upon to rule whether the evidence is sufficient, *i. e.* sufficient to go to the jury; if it is, they then solely determine whether it is sufficient, *i. e.* to convince them. This has been already examined (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494).

(b) *The judge's discretion*, or final determination of a question either of fact or of law (*ante*, § 16). The ruling of a trial Court on preliminary questions of fact relating to admissibility is often held to be not subject to review, *i. e.* the trial Court is said to have "discretion"; the instances have been mentioned under the various heads of evidence.

(c) *The judge's application of a rule defining the legal consequences of a fact.* So far as the substantive law gives certain facts 'per se' a legal consequence (as when it makes, for example, the consultation of counsel 'per se' sufficient for good faith, in an action for malicious prosecution), the judge applies the rule, and the case is in this respect beyond the control of the jury. This principle becomes especially important in issues of negligence (*post*, § 2552).

§ 2549. <sup>1</sup> EXPLANATORY NOTE. The explanations made *ante*, § 2499, note 1, as to not presenting a complete array of authorities, apply to this Chapter also.



(d) Finally, the present subject, *i. e. the respective functions of judge and jury, in the ultimate decision of the different issues that arise*; upon this apportionment of function depends the question, To whom is the evidence to be regarded as offered by the parties?

Taking up the last question, then, we find it usually said that *questions of fact are for the jury*,<sup>2</sup> or in the Latin phrase employed by Coke,<sup>3</sup> 'Ad quæstionem facti non respondent iudices, ad quæstionem juris non respondent juratores.' But this conventional brocard cannot be taken as a trustworthy guide to the solution of any particular controversy on the subject:

1898, Professor *James Bradley Thayer*, Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 185, 202: "Courts pass upon a vast number of questions of fact that do not get on the record or form any part of the issue. Courts existed before juries; juries came in to perform only their own special office; and the Courts have always continued to retain a multitude of functions which they exercised before ever juries were heard of, in ascertaining whether disputed things be true. In other words, there is not, and never was, any such thing in jury trials as an allotment of all questions of fact to the jury. The jury simply decides some questions of fact. . . . The allotment to the jury of matters of fact, even in the strict sense of fact which is in issue, is not exact. The judges have always answered a multitude of questions of ultimate fact, or facts, which form part of the issue."<sup>4</sup>

It is therefore of little service to seek for guidance as to the limits of these questions by defining "law" and "fact"; the inquiry is rather as to the kinds of questions of fact which are to be determined by the judge. Moreover, this inquiry in effect concerns the respective division of functions between judge and jury, — a larger subject, and one not so much a part of the law of Evidence as of the law of Trial-Procedure in general; and the matter is thus complicated by other inquiries as to the general powers of the judge in supervising and controlling the jury, — inquiries which must be distinguished from the specific one whether the evidence on a certain point is to be addressed to the judge or to the jury as the functionary immediately concerned with its determination. It is here possible only to indicate the trend of some of the main subjects of controversy or difficulty.

<sup>2</sup> The various Codes usually declare this principle: *Alaska*: Comp. L. 1913, § 1065 (like Or. Laws 1920, § 135); *Ariz.* Rev. St. 1913, P. C. §§ 1066–1068; *Cal.* P. C. 1872, § 1126; C. C. P. 1872, § 2101 ("All questions of fact, where the trial is by jury, other than those mentioned in the next section, are to be decided by the jury, and all evidence thereon is to be addressed to them, except when otherwise provided by this code"); § 2102 ("All questions of law, including the admissibility of testimony, the facts preliminary to such admission, and the construction of statutes and other writings, and other rules of evidence, are to be decided by the court, and all discussions of law addressed to it"); *Conn.* Gen. St. 1918, § 5785; *Ga.* Rev. C. 1910, § 5856 ("The competency of a witness must be decided by the Court"); *Haw.* Rev. L. 1915, § 2435;

*Ida.* Comp. St. 1919, § 7934 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 2102); §§ 8969–8971 (except for libel); *Mont.* Rev. C. 1921, §§ 10698, 10699 (like Cal. C. C. P. §§ 2101, 2102); *N. D.* Comp. L. 1913, §§ 10827–10829; *Or.* Laws 1920, §§ 135, 136; *S. D.* Rev. C. 1919, § 4872; *Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, §§ 7208, 7209 (like Cal. C. C. P. §§ 2101, 2102); §§ 9004–9006 (criminal cases); *Wash.* R. & B. Code 1909, § 342.

<sup>3</sup> 1613–14, *Isaack v. Clark*, Rolle, I, 132, 2 Bulstr. 314.

<sup>4</sup> On the whole subject of this chapter, the reader should consult the masterly historical and analytical survey by Professor Thayer, in his Preliminary Treatise, c. 5, pp. 183–262; or his Law and Fact in Jury Trials, Harvard Law Review, IV, 147; also, Professor Holdsworth's History of English Law, vol. I, 3d ed., 1922, p. 345.



§ 2550. **Admissibility of Evidence.** The admissibility of a given piece of evidence is for the judge to determine. This general principle is not disputed; its application to the various kinds of evidence — qualifications of witnesses, absence of a hearsay deponent, voluntariness of a confession, condition of a dying declarant, and so on — has already been considered under the various heads of evidence. It follows that, so far as the admissibility in law depends on some incidental question of fact — the absence of a deponent from the jurisdiction, the use of threats to obtain a confession, the sanity of a witness, and the like — this also is for the judge to determine, before he admits the evidence to the jury.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2550. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1843, *Bartlett v. Smith*, 11 M. & W. 483 (whether a document is inadmissible through default of stamps; leading case); 1847, *Doe v. Davies*, 10 Q. B. 314, 323.

CANADA: 1920, *F. v. F.*, 52 D. L. R. 446, 455, N. B. (divorce for adultery; the admissibility of a letter depended on whether it had been in defendant's possession; but here that fact was held to be the main issue in the case, and therefore properly left to the jury).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1913, *Gila Valley G. & N. R. Co. v. Hall*, 232 U. S. 94, 34 Sup. 229 (whether a person speaking was so near H. as to be heard by H. thus admitting what the person said: "the finding of the trial judge upon such a preliminary question of fact is not subject to be reversed on appeal or error if it be fairly supported by the evidence"; this phrasing seems to accord little enough credit to the trial judge; why cannot the Federal Supreme Court lend its aid to restore the trial judge from a marionette to a Minos? See the comments of Professor Henry Schofield, on the desirability of letting the rules of procedure encourage trial judges to be strong, in his article "New Trials and the Seventh Amendment" (Illinois Law Review, VIII, 287, *passim*, reprinted in his *Essays in Constitutional Law and Equity*, 1921).

To the following citations add the Codes cited *ante*, § 2549:

*Alabama*: 1904, *Parrish v. State*, 139 Ala. 16, 36 So. 1012 (expert's competency); *California*: 1881, *Fairbank v. Hughson*, 58 Cal. 314 (qualifications of an expert); *Illinois*: 1855, *Miller v. Metzger*, 16 Ill. 390, 393 (necessity of calling an attesting witness); 1905, *Hoch v. People*, 219 Ill. 265, 76 N. E. 356 (the Court decides upon the facts making a second wife competent); *Louisiana*: 1911, *State v. Lee*, 127 La. 1077, 54 So. 356 (defendant claimed not to be M. L. the murderer; the wife of M. L. being called in his behalf to identify him, held that the judge was to pass upon the relationship, for the purpose of declaring her disqualified or not); *Massachusetts*: 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, 146 Mass. 571, 16 N. E. 452 (leading opinion, by C. Allen, J.); 1913, *Slotofski v. Boston Elev. R. Co.*, 215 Mass. 318, 102 N. E.

417 (the judge's exclusion of a deceased's declarations, after hearing evidence to their making and finding that they were in his opinion not made, held to be a just exercise of his power on the facts; where the judge's preliminary finding is adverse, the party may not offer or argue the evidence to the jury, as he may when the finding is in favor of admissibility in the case of confessions, *ante*, § 861, n. 3); 1920, *Coghlan v. White*, 236 Mass. 165, 128 N. E. 33 (action for death caused by defective sidewalk; issue as to notice of injury given by plaintiff to defendant: the trial judge having excluded the notice as not sufficiently shown to have been served upon defendant, held that the trial judge should have left the issue to the jury, under the circumstances; correct, because this was in form only an issue of a fact preliminary to admissibility of evidence; substantially it was an issue as to a fact material in law to the plaintiff's case); *Mississippi*: 1877, *Holly v. State*, 55 Miss. 424, 430 ("It may in short be stated as a universal rule that the Court always decides whether there has been any evidence upon a particular point, when there exists a legal necessity to produce such evidence in order to warrant the introduction of evidence upon some other point; to this extent the Court decides questions of fact"; here said of an overt act, preceding evidence of the deceased's threats); *Nevada*: 1905, *State v. Hancock*, 28 Nev. 300, 82 Pac. 95 (wife as witness); *New Hampshire*: 1922, *Dunklee v. Prior*, — N. H. —, 115 Atl. 138 (trial Court may determine whether an alleged self-contradictory statement was made, for the purpose of excluding or admitting it; careful opinion by Plummer, J., collecting prior cases; this Court has long been the firmest in supporting this doctrine, and is a model which the other Courts might copy); *New Jersey*: 1906, *State v. Monich*, 74 N. J. L. 522, 64 Atl. 1016 (confessions, expertness, dying declarations; good opinion by Pitney, J.); 1911, *Clendennin v. Clancy*, 82 N. J. L. 418, 81 Atl. 750 (competency of witness); *New York*: 1906, *People v. Dolan*, 186 N. Y. 4, 78 N. E. 569 (producing original documents); *Oklahoma*: 1913, *Western N. L. Ins. Co. v. Williamson H. F. Co.*,



This principle, one of the foundation-stones of our law, has countless applications under the various rules of admissibility.<sup>2</sup> In more recent times, however, a heterodox practice has appeared, in places, of leaving some questions of admissibility to the jury.<sup>3</sup> No doubt the judge, after admitting evidence, leaves to the jury to give it what weight they think fit, for they are the triers of the credibility and persuasive sufficiency of all evidence which is admitted for their consideration (*post*, § 2551). But to hand the evidence to them, to be rejected or accepted according to some legal definition, and not according to its intrinsic value to their minds, is to commit a grave blunder. It is an error of policy (as well as a deviation from orthodox principle) for several reasons; in the first place, it is a needless abdication of the judicial function — of which humility we have already too much; furthermore, it adds another to the exceptions to the general rules; and finally, it cumbers the jury with legal definitions and offers an additional opportunity for quibbling over the tenor of the instructions.

In the appurtenant corollaries of this function of the judge, it may be noted that he may of course *hear evidence on both sides* for determining the facts on which the rule of admissibility turns;<sup>4</sup> that during this process the *jury may be retired* out of hearing;<sup>5</sup> and that the judge's determination on this question ought to be *final, beyond review by appeal*, and is so by the whole-some rule of a few Courts.<sup>6</sup>

37 Okl. 213, 131 Pac. 691; *Pennsylvania*: 1898, *Semple v. Callery*, 184 Pa. 95, 39 Atl. 6 (good faith of a release of interest); *Virginia*: 1912, *Mullins v. Com.*, 113 Va. 787, 75 S. E. 193 (conversation of accused).

<sup>2</sup> The detailed applications of it are more conveniently considered under the various rules; in particular, compare the following places: *ante*, §§ 110, 247, 248 (overt act preliminary to proof of deceased's character or threats in homicide), § 487 (testimonial qualifications in general), § 497 (insanity of a witness), § 503 (infancy), § 561 (expertness), § 587 (interest), § 861 (confessions), § 1192 (production of documentary originals), § 1385 (cross-examination), § 1451 (dying declaration), § 1820 (capacity to take an oath), § 1883 (order of evidence), § 2020 (genuineness of handwriting-specimens), § 2060 (accomplice's corroboration), §§ 2271, 2322 (privilege).

<sup>3</sup> *Mass.* 1905, *Com. v. Tucker*, 189 Mass. 457, 76 N. E. 127 ("If in a criminal case the decision is against the defendant, he has another chance before the jury, so far as it depends upon a question of fact"); *Mich.* 1877, *Hartford F. Ins. Co. v. Reynolds*, 36 Mich. 502, 504 (the trial Court allowed to leave to the jury to exclude communications if they believed that the relation of legal adviser existed; "it does not properly belong to a judge to decide upon the truth of matters which have come out during the examination of witnesses who conflict"); *N. H.* 1856, *Bartlett v. Hoyt*, 33 N. H. 151, 165 ("whether

a witness is interested upon this or that given state of facts is a question of law for the Court; whether the facts exist as claimed by one party or the other is a question of fact, which, when presented in the form of the preliminary inquiry as to the competency of witness, may be determined by the Court, or, in the exercise of their discretion, by the jury"); *N. Dak.* 1904, *King v. Hanson*, 13 N. D. 85, 99 N. W. 1085 (privileged letter, whose authenticity was denied; the letter left to the jury to decide upon).

Other examples may be seen in the various passages cited *supra*, note 2, especially in §§ 487, 497, 587, 861, 1385, 1451.

<sup>4</sup> 1852, *Parke, B.*, in *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 425; and cases cited *ante*, § 497 (insanity), § 861 (confessions), § 1385 (cross-examination), § 561 (expert witness' qualifications).

<sup>5</sup> 1893, *State v. Shaffer*, 23 Or. 555, 558, 32 Pac. 545 (dying declarations); and cases cited *ante*, §§ 861, 1451, 1808.

<sup>6</sup> 1844, *Foster v. Mackay*, 7 Metc. Mass. 531, 537; 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, 146 Mass. 571, 16 N. E. 452; and cases cited *ante*, §§ 16, 496, 507, 561, 862, 1194, 1312. Here the principle of Discretion, or Finality (*ante*, § 16) is involved. The more recent doctrine in Massachusetts seems to have abandoned this pristine attitude; 1905, *Com. v. Tucker*, 189 Mass. 457, 76 N. E. 127 (not citing *Com. v. Robinson*).

Other issues of fact may be for the judge:



§ 2551. **Sufficiency of Proof.** When evidential facts are once admitted by the judge, their individual and total weight or probative value is for the jury. This signifies, first, that there are no rules of law to bind them on the subject, though Courts occasionally attempt to formulate some,<sup>1</sup> and, secondly, that the judge's own view of the weight of the evidence is not to be stated to the jury. The latter rule (which obtains by Constitution or statute in almost every State,<sup>2</sup> but not in the Federal Courts<sup>3</sup>) is an unfortunate departure from the orthodox common-law rule. It has done more than any other one thing to impair the general efficiency of jury trial as an instrument of justice.<sup>4</sup> Since it remains the law by grace of statute only, in most States, it can and should be readily abolished. A new birth of long life will then be open for the great and beneficent institution of Trial by Jury.

§ 2552. **Negligence.** The application of the general principle (*ante*, § 2549) suffers a few apparent or real exceptions in certain kinds of issues; and in particular, in an issue of negligence.

When the question is whether a person has been guilty of *negligence*, *i. e.* whether he has used due care under the circumstances, or has acted as a prudent man would have acted, or whatever the form of phrase may be, the evidence is to be addressed to the jury, as upon other issues, because the question is for them to determine. But from this rule must be distinguished several kinds of judicial utterances, closely connected in practice, and superficially though not in truth involving an inconsistency with this principle or a limitation of it:

(a) Where for the kind of case in hand a definite *rule of law*, more precise and concrete, has been framed for determining the effect of the person's con-

1909, *Waller's Case*, 3 Cr. App. 213, 222, 1 K. B. 364 (under a statute permitting proof of former convictions to affect sentence, with consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the proof of such consent is a matter of fact for the judge).

The rule of *reasonable doubt* (*ante*, § 2497) has here no possible application; though such a notion has been advanced: 1898, *Lipscomb v. State*, 75 Miss. 559, 23 So. 210 (the facts must be proved to the judge beyond reasonable doubt; said here as to dying declarations, but the majority do not entirely agree on the doctrine). *Contra*: 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, Mass., *supra*.

§ 2551. <sup>1</sup> This question has been considered *ante*, §§ 29, 1013, 2033, 2034, 2498, in various aspects.

<sup>2</sup> 1919, *State v. Baldwin*, 178 N. C. 687, 100 S. E. 348 (the statutory rule in this State reviewed and interpreted).

The veteran Chief Justice Ruffin, in *State v. Moses*, 2 Dev. N. C. 452, 458 (1830), comments on this degenerate rule with his usual keenness; it seems to have originated in his State. Compare the remarks in Thayer's *Preliminary Treatise*, 188.

In New Jersey the orthodox rule bravely survives: 1920, *State v. Schilling*, 95 N. J. L. 145, 112 Atl. 400; 1921, *State v. Randall*, 95 N. J. L. 452, 113 Atl. 231.

<sup>3</sup> 1886, *Vicksburg R. Co. v. Putnam*, 118 U. S. 545, 553, 7 Sup. 1; 1892, *Simmmons v. U. S.*, 142 U. S. 148, 155, 12 Sup. 171; 1919, *Schulze v. U. S.*, 9th C. C. A., 259 Fed. 189; 1922, *Little v. U. S.*, 8th C. C. A., 276 Fed. 915.

<sup>4</sup> Some practical comments on the operation of this rule in experience will be found in Mr. (Assistant District Attorney) Arthur Train's valuable book, "The Prisoner at the Bar" (1906), pp. 180-189.

In *U. S. v. Foster* (1910), D. C. W. D. Va., 183 Fed. 627, McDowell, J., sets forth with admirable clearness and good sense the attitude to be taken by the judge in charging the jury upon the facts. As one reads his opinion, the reflection cannot be avoided that all lawyers who would ponder it would heartily join to restore in the State courts that practice which it was intemperate folly to abandon. Were Judge McDowell's principles in general force, the jury system would be freed from much of the ground for criticism so often heard nowadays.



duct, this rule of law may, in the hands of the judge, conclude the question, and it may cease to be a question of fact for the jury to the extent that the rule of law applies. Thus, a defendant's conduct in carrying a loaded gun on his shoulder in a city street may be ruled by the Court to be "negligence 'per se,'" or, in a common phrase, he may be held to have acted "at peril" of answering for the harmful consequences; so that the question of fact for the jury is merely whether he carried the gun in that way, and the question whether he acted with due care ceases to be a question for them, because it is covered by a specific and concrete rule of law. Similar rules are constantly laid down for various situations, — leaving a horse unhitched in a street, running a train at a speed in excess of a statutory limit, storing gunpowder in a populous quarter, and the like. So, also, a concrete rule of this sort may be laid down for a plaintiff whose contributory negligence is pleaded, and it may be ruled that his conduct in thrusting his head out of a railway car-window, or in failing to stop, look, and listen at a railway crossing, is "negligence 'per se.'" Whether such a rule should be laid down is a question of the detailed substantive law appropriate to the situation; and, wherever such a rule of law appears, the matter ceases, as of course, to that extent, to be a question of fact for the jury.<sup>1</sup>

(b) In pursuance of the rules regarding the burden of producing evidence, and of the judicial function thus called into play (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494), it is in every case for the Court to say whether there was *sufficient evidence to go to the jury*; and so also in a case of negligence. Thus the Court has constantly, in revising the results of a trial, to ask whether there was any evidence of negligence proper to be left to a jury; and occasionally a more detailed test is attempted for thus exercising this power of revision and determining whether the party has fulfilled the duty of producing sufficient evidence.<sup>2</sup>

(c) Another form of utterance, sometimes and properly treated<sup>3</sup> as another way of phrasing the preceding principle, but often treated as if independent of it and as if forming an exception to the first general principle above stated, is that the question of negligence goes to the jury *unless the facts are undisputed and fair-minded or reasonable men could draw but one inference from them*.<sup>4</sup> So far as this phrase (almost universally used, in one form or another) is intended to mean that the Court would, if the above condition were fulfilled, either declare the evidence of negligence insufficient to go to the jury (if that were the Court's interpretation of the conduct), or set aside, as against the weight of evidence, a verdict finding no negligence and order a new trial or even cause a new verdict to be entered (if that were the Court's interpretation), the phrase is in effect only a more detailed statement of the test to be

§ 2552. <sup>1</sup> The nature of such rules is explained in Holmes, *Common Law*, 150, 152; and in an article by the present writer, *An Analysis of Tort Relations*, *Harvard Law Review*, VIII, 389, and in his *Summary of Principles of Torts* (Appendix A to *Select Cases on the Law of Torts*, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> See the citations in the next notes.

<sup>3</sup> *E. g.* 1874, per Brett, J., in *Bridges v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 H. L. 213.

<sup>4</sup> This is sometimes expressed in the disjunctive, *i. e.* facts undisputed or open to one inference only.



adopted by the Court in its supervisory right, just alluded to, to say whether there is or is not sufficient evidence for the jury or whether a verdict is or is not against the weight of evidence (*ante*, § 2494).

(*d*) But so far as this phrase is intended to mean that, if the specified condition is fulfilled, the Court will take the question into its own hands and say, as a matter of fact to be decided exclusively by the Court itself, that there was or was not negligence, upon facts undisputed and inferences alone conceivable,<sup>5</sup> then the result seems to be in effect an exception to the general principle first above stated, *i. e.* it defines an excepted case in which the question of negligence is to be determined, for that litigation, by the judge and not by the jury. This, however, is unsound.

It is often difficult to ascertain what is the precise nature of the principle involved in this phrasing.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2553. **Reasonableness.** There are many situations in which the issue of *reasonableness* of conduct presents itself. In general it is recognized as an issue of fact for the jury.<sup>1</sup> Here there has been a more or less definite change from an earlier attitude of the Courts, when such questions were usually treated as questions of law, in the sense that the judge determined whether the conduct under all the circumstances was reasonable, or gave instructions

<sup>5</sup> *E. g.* 1897, *Brawley, J., in Patton v. R. Co.*, 27 C. C. A. 287, 82 Fed. 979.

<sup>6</sup> The following will serve as illustrations: ENGLAND: 1877, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Jackson*, L. R. 3 App. Cas. 193; 1878, *Dublin, etc. R. Co. v. Slattery*, L. R. 3 App. Cas. 1155; 1886, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Wright*, L. R. 11 App. Cas. 152.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1888, *Kane v. R. Co.*, 128 U. S. 91, 9 Sup. 16; 1891, *Delaware L. & W. R. Co. v. Converse*, 139 U. S. 469, 11 Sup. 569; 1893, *Washington & G. R. Co. v. Harmon's Adm'r*, 147 U. S. 571, 580, 13 Sup. 557; 1893, *Richmond & D. R. Co. v. Powers*, 149 U. S. 43, 45, 13 Sup. 748; 1893, *Gardner v. M. C. R. Co.*, 150 U. S. 349, 361, 14 Sup. 140; 1893, *Northern P. R. Co. v. Peterson*, 5 C. C. A. 338, 55 Fed. 940; 1897, *Pyle v. Clark*, 25 C. C. A. 190, 79 Fed. 744; 1909, *Missouri Pac. R. Co. v. Castle*, 8th C. C. A., 172 Fed. 841 (a statute declaring "questions of negligence" to be for the jury, held to apply to "questions of fact only"); *California*: 1898, *Herbert v. R. Co.*, 121 Cal. 227, 53 Pac. 651; *Illinois*: 1889, *Terre Haute & I. R. Co. v. Voelker*, 129 Ill. 540, 22 N. E. 20; 1905, *Chicago & E. I. R. Co. v. Crose*, 214 Ill. 602, 73 N. E. 865; 1905, *Chicago City R. Co. v. Nelson*, 215 Ill. 436, 74 N. E. 458; *Indiana*: 1896, *Stroble v. New Albany*, 144 Ind. 695, 42 N. E. 806; 1897, *Young v. R. Co.*, 148 Ind. 54, 47 N. E. 142; 1905, *Buehner Chair Co. v. Feulner*, 164 Ind. 368, 73 N. E. 816; 1905, *Diamond B. C. Co. v. Cuthbertson*, 164 Ind. 368, 73 N. E. 818; *Kansas*: 1909, *Johnson v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 80 Kan. 456, 103

Pac. 90 (careful opinion, by Benson, J.); *Maine*: 1903, *Blumenthal v. R. Co.*, 97 Me. 255, 54 Atl. 747; *Nebraska*: 1895, *Spears v. R. Co.*, 43 Nebr. 720, 62 N. W. 68; *New Jersey*: 1897, *Goldsboro v. R. Co.*, 60 N. J. L. 49, 37 Atl. 433; *New York*: 1880, *Stackus v. R. Co.*, 79 N. Y. 464; *North Carolina*: 1896, *Tillett v. R. Co.*, 118 N. C. 1031, 24 S. E. 111; 1897, *White v. R. Co.*, 121 N. C. 484, 27 S. E. 1002; 1898, *Ward v. Odell Mfg. Co.*, 123 N. C. 248, 31 S. E. 495; *Oklahoma*: 1909, *Harris v. Missouri K. & T. R. Co.*, 24 Okl. 341, 103 Pac. 758; *Pennsylvania*: 1893, *Gates v. R. Co.*, 154 Pa. 566, 572, 26 Atl. 598 (omitting the second clause); 1898, *Boyle v. Mahanoy City*, 187 Pa. 1, 40 Atl. 1093; *West Virginia*: 1892, *Hanley v. Huntington*, 37 W. Va. 378, 16 S. E. 807; *Wisconsin*: 1893, *Salladay v. Dodgeville*, 85 Wis. 318, 328, 55 N. W. 696 (omitting the first clause); 1893, *Hart v. R. Co.*, 86 Wis. 483, 490, 57 N. W. 91 (omitting the second clause); 1897, *Morrison v. Madison*, 96 Wis. 452, 71 N. W. 882.

In a few States, the Legislature has purported to hand "all questions of negligence" over to the jury, *e. g.* Miss. St. 1910, c. 135, Hem. § 503.

§ 2553. <sup>1</sup> 1894, *Gerdes v. Iron & F. Co.*, 124 Mo. 347, 25 S. W. 557 (obstructions to highway by merchandise for an unreasonable time); 1898, *Chesterfield v. Ratliff*, — S. C. —, 30 S. E. 593 (discharging firearms "without a reasonable excuse"); 1897, *White v. Pease*, 15 Utah 170, 49 Pac. 416 (delivery of goods within a reasonable time under a sale in fraud of creditors).



to be applied by the jury to the facts that might be found by them; and instances of this older treatment are to be found to-day.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, an intermediate form appears, reserving the question for the judge where the facts are undisputed.<sup>3</sup>

But from these real variations in the attitude toward the present subject are to be distinguished the instances of the Court's resort to the two other principles already noted in speaking of the question of negligence; (a) the question may, by the development of the substantive law, have ceased to be a broad and open one of reasonableness and have become reduced to detailed and concrete rules of thumb, — as in several instances in the law of negotiable instruments;<sup>4</sup> here there is a rule of law, more or less definite, and the jury are to that extent limited in their inquiry; (b) the Court's supervisory right, upon the present issue as upon others, to declare that there is not evidence sufficient to go to a jury or that a verdict is against evidence (*ante*, § 2494), may be exercised by ordering a nonsuit or setting aside a verdict, without denying the general question to be one of fact for the jury.

§ 2554. **Same: Malicious Prosecution.** The question whether a defendant in a case of *malicious prosecution* or *false arrest* had "reasonable and probable cause" for the suit or arrest, although it may be in the broader sense a question of fact, has nevertheless been retained in the hands of the Court as a matter for its determination.<sup>1</sup> The Court should properly instruct the jury "in the concrete and not in the abstract," by instructions adapted to cover the possible findings of fact.<sup>2</sup> It is sometimes said that the question is for the judge if the facts are undisputed and are open to but one inference;<sup>3</sup> but this fails to recognize the right of the judge, even where the facts are disputed, to submit instructions appropriate to the possible findings.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Eng.* 1824, *Facey v. Hurdom*, 3 B. & C. 213 (reasonable time; here left to the jury); 1832, *Mellish v. Rawdon*, 9 Bing. 416 (Tindal, C. J.: "whether there has been, in any particular case, reasonable diligence used, or whether unreasonable delay has occurred, is a mixed question of law and fact, to be decided by the jury, acting under the direction of the judge, upon the particular circumstances of each case"); 1843, *Burton v. Griffiths*, 11 M. & W. 817 (reasonable time; here left to the jury); 1810, *Chesapeake Ins. Co. v. Starke*, 6 Cr. 268, 278 (whether an abandonment of a vessel was within a reasonable time is for the jury under the Court's direction); *U. S.* 1894, *Joyner v. Roberts*, 114 N. C. 389, 392, 19 S. E. 645 (whether a register of deeds made reasonable inquiry as to age before giving a marriage license is for the Court).

<sup>3</sup> 1892, *Earnshaw v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 60, 67, 13 Sup. 14 (notice); 1896, *American Surety Co. v. Pauly*, 18 C. C. A. 644, 72 Fed. 470 (time of sending notice); 1896, *Comer v. Way*, 107 Ala. 300, 19 So. 966 (time).

<sup>4</sup> So, too, in other subjects; *c. g.*: 1868,

*Ryder v. Wombwell*, L. R. 4 Exch. 32 (necessaries for an infant); 1910, *Kroll v. Close*, 82 Oh. 190, 92 N. E. 29 (probate judge's allowance of reasonable funeral expenses; his finding held not a finding of fact).

§ 2554. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1841, *Panton v. Williams*, 2 Q. B. 169; 1870, *Lister v. Perryman*, L. R. 4 H. L. 521; *Can.* 1894, *Olsen v. Lantalum*, 22 N. Br. 526; *U. S.* 1893, *Sanders v. Palmer*, 5 C. C. A. 77, 55 Fed. 217; 1896, *Kirk v. Garrett*, 84 Md. 383, 35 Atl. 1089; 1893, *White v. McQueen*, 96 Mich. 249, 254, 55 N. W. 843 (facts conceded; taken from the jury); 1893-94, *Filer v. Smith*, 96 Mich. 347, 102 N. W. 98, 55 N. W. 999, 60 N. W. 297; 1897, *Hess v. Oregon G. B. Co.*, 31 Or. 503, 49 Pac. 803; 1892, *Mahaffey v. Byers*, 151 Pa. 92, 96, 25 Atl. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Hess v. Bank*, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> 1895, *Diers v. Mallon*, 46 Nebr. 121, 64 N. W. 722; 1891, *Wass v. Stephens*, 128 N. Y. 123, 28 N. E. 21.

<sup>4</sup> 1894, *Schattgen v. Holnback*, 149 Ill. 646, 652, 36 N. E. 969 (if there are disputed facts, it is to be submitted under instructions).



§ 2555. **Facts Judicially noticed; Trial by Inspection; Nul Tiel Record; Constitutional Considerations.** (a) On such matters as the Court *notices judicially* (*post*, § 2567), it would seem that the judge's ruling does not determine the matter, and the jury need not take it from him as a decided point, unless it concerns something that would otherwise not come to them as matter of fact.

(b) There was once recognized a form of trial *by inspection*, *i. e.* by the judge's own observation of the fact in court.<sup>1</sup> But this is rather to be considered as a survival, in distorted form, of some of the earlier methods of proof prevailing before jury-trial;<sup>2</sup> and no recognition would probably be given to it to-day,<sup>3</sup> except in the ensuing instance.

(c) A *judicial record*, when its existence in a certain tenor is denied, was said to be tried *by inspection* of the judge, on production of the alleged original record before him; and the plea of *nul tiel record* was coextensive with this class of cases.<sup>4</sup> A foreign judgment, however, being evidenced by copy only, fell without this rule.<sup>5</sup>

(d) Where a *legislative act* is argued to be *unconstitutional*, and this is to depend upon the unreasonableness, or lack of possible reasonableness, of the law in its purpose or operation, and thus the external facts furnishing the

§ 2555. <sup>1</sup> 1768, Blackstone, III, 331 ("Trial by inspection . . . [is when the issue] being evidently the object of sense, the judges of the Court, upon the testimony of their own senses, shall decide the point in dispute; . . . when the fact from its nature must be evident to the Court, either from ocular demonstration or other irrefragable proof, there the law departs from its usual resort, the verdict of twelve men, and relies on the judgment of the Court alone"; the instances given being non-age of an infant, life and identity of a party alleged to be dead, idiocy on appeal to the chancellor, mayhem, and a date as appearing in the almanac); so for non-age: Co. Litt. 380 b.

Distinguish the propriety of a *view by a judge*: sitting without a jury (*ante*, § 1169).

<sup>2</sup> Thayer, Preliminary Treatise, 19-24.

<sup>3</sup> 1831, Morton v. Fairbanks, 11 Pick. 368, 370 (whether certain things were shingles or mere chips; "it was ruled that, as the point was clear upon inspection, it was to be decided by the Court"; ruling held improper). One of the rare instances is the following, which however falls rather under the principle for documents (*post*, § 2556): 1836, Cromwell v. Tate's Ex'r, 7 Leigh 301, 303 ("the existence or non-existence of the seal [on a deed] is to be ascertained by an appeal to the senses; and when that is the case, the judges of the Court shall decide"; citing Blackstone).

<sup>4</sup> 1628, Co. Litt. 260a ("If such a record be alleged, and it be pleaded that there is no such record, it shall be tried only by itself"); 1768, Blackstone, Commentaries, III, 330 ("Where a matter of record is pleaded in any action —

as, a fine, a judgment, or the like —, and the opposite party pleads 'nul tiel record' . . . the trial therefore of this issue is merely by the record; . . . it shall not receive any trial by witness, jury, or otherwise, but only by itself"). *Accord*: 1824, State v. Graton, 3 Hawks 187; 1824, State v. Isham, 3 Hawks 185; 1833, Adams v. Betz, 1 Watts 425, 427.

A judge's finding of the *proceedings before himself* may be decisive: 1920, State ex rel. Brown v. Lyons, 106 Kan. 860, 189 Pac. 976 (motion to vacate a judgment against a minor; the trial judge's memorandum as to the fact of a prior motion to appoint a guardian, this fact being in dispute, held decisive).

<sup>5</sup> Eng. 1778, Walker v. Witley, 1 Doug. 1, 7, per Buller, J. ("It is to be tried by the country . . . and not by the Court"); 1804, Collins v. Mathew, 5 East 473; U. S. 1820, Baldwin v. Hale, 17 Johns. N. Y. 272.

The exception for judgments of *another of the United States* "proved the rule": 1818, Mills v. Duryee, 7 Cr. 481, 485 (under the constitutional clause requiring full faith for a judgment of another of the United States, 'nul tiel record' becomes the proper plea of denial; "it may be proved in the manner prescribed by the Act, and such proof is of as high a nature as an inspection by the Court of its own record"; Johnson, J., diss.). *Accord*: 1828, Hall v. Williams, 6 Pick. Mass. 232, 237 (useful opinion); 1905, Clark v. Eltinge, 38 Wash. 376, 80 Pac. 556.

*Contra*: 1835, Carter v. Wilson, 1 Dev. & B. 362.



possible legislative motive or the possible actual effect must be considered, this incidental question of fact is not for the jury, but for the Court. Hence, no testimony, of experts or others, would be admitted for the jury.

But by what theory or method shall the Court receive information of the alleged facts? This is an interesting inquiry, hitherto not carefully worked out by the Courts. The principle of judicial notice has usually been loosely invoked.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2556. **Construction of Documents.** The construction of all *written instruments* belongs to the Court.<sup>1</sup> It may become necessary to hear evidence of the surrounding circumstances that fill out the meaning of the words, as well as of any local or commercial meanings attached to particular words by usage (*ante*, §§ 2461-2478); and the ascertainment of this is for the jury.<sup>2</sup> But, subject to the amplification or precision of the meaning thus ascertained, it is the duty of the jury to take the construction of the instrument from the Court:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See some searching comments on the question in Professor Henry Schofield's article, "New Trials and the Seventh Amendment" (Illinois Law Rev., VIII, p. 403, n. 65, reprinted in his *Essays on Constitutional Law and Equity*, 1921); also the following modern cases: 1910, *Ritchie v. Wayman*, 244 Ill. 509, 91 N. E. 694 (female labor law; the Court noticed the "general consensus of opinion" as to the justifiable conditions leading to such a law, namely, woman's physical organization, her maternal functions, the rearing of children, and the maintenance of home; in truth, the Court found this consensus in passages quoted in a voluminous brief of one of the parties); 1912, *People v. Elerding*, 254 Ill. 579, 583, 98 N. E. 982 (labor law; repeating the expression, from *Ritchie v. Wayman*, that "the Court would take judicial knowledge" as to woman's health being subject to be affected by hours of labor); 1903, *Pittsburg, C., C. & St. Louis R. Co. v. State*, 180 Ind. 245, 102 N. E. 25.

For the question whether the facts of *election*, etc. affecting the operativeness of a statute conditioned on a *referendum* or local option vote for becoming operative shall be inquired into and decided by the Court or submitted to the jury, see the following opinions: 1907, *State v. O'Brien*, 35 Mont. 482, 90 Pac. 514.

§ 2556. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1806, *Stammers v. Dixon*, 7 East 200, 209; 1866, *Lyle v. Richards*, L. R. 1 H. L. 222, 241; *Can.* 1873, *Betts v. Venning*, 14 N. Br. 267, 270.

*U. S.* Add the Codes quoted *ante*, § 2549: 1889, *Hamilton v. Ins. Co.*, 136 U. S. 242, 255, 10 Sup. 945; 1906, *Turner v. Osgood A. C. Co.*, 223 Ill. 629, 79 N. E. 306; 1903, *Smith v. Sovereign Camp*, 179 Mo. 119, 77 S. W. 862 (insurance policy); 1911, *Lynes v. Northern Pacific R. Co.*, 43 Mont. 317, 117 Pac. 81 (railway rules); 1905, *Senterfeit v. Shealy*,

71 S. C. 259, 51 S. E. 142 (the judge may instruct as to the legal effect of a deed).

<sup>2</sup> *Fed.* 1879, *West v. Smith*, 101 U. S. 263, 270 (whether a letter amounted to an admission; "where the effect of the instrument depends not merely on its construction and meaning, but upon collateral facts and circumstances, the inferences of fact to be drawn from the paper must be left to the jury"); 1898, *M'Namee v. Hunt*, 30 C. C. A. 653, 87 Fed. 298; 1903, *Rankin v. Fidelity Ins. T. & S. D. Co.*, 189 U. S. 242, 23 Sup. 553 ("Although [the question of] the construction of written instruments is one for the Court, [yet] where the case turns upon the proper conclusions to be drawn from a series of letters, particularly of a commercial character, taken in connection with other facts and circumstances, it is one which is properly referred to a jury"); 1920, *New York Evening Post v. Chaloner*, 2d C. C. A. 265 Fed. 204, 219 (meaning of "assassin"); *Ky.* 1905, *Locke v. Lyon M. Co.*, — *Ky.* —, 84 S. W. 307; *Md.* 1909, *Ætna Indemnity Co. v. Waters*, 110 Md. 673, 73 Atl. 712; *Mass.* 1921, *Noble v. Mead-Morrison Mfg. Co.*, 237 Mass. 5, 129 N. E. 669 (oral contract left to the jury); *Mo.* 1903, *State v. Brown*, 171 Mo. 477, 71 S. W. 1031 ("the interpretation of writings is always for the Court except when they are ambiguous"); *Nebr.* 1898, *Ricketts v. Rogers*, 53 Nebr. 477, 73 N. W. 946; *N. J.* 1894, *Meeks v. Willard*, 57 N. J. L. 22, 25, 29 Atl. 318; *Vt.* 1915, *Douglass & Varnum v. Morrisville*, 89 Vt. 393, 95 Atl. 810, 836 (contract for a dam); *Va.* 1920, *Turner v. Hall*, 128 Va. 247, 104 S. E. 861 (contract to pay, left to the jury as to its meaning upon conflicting evidence).

<sup>3</sup> 1839, *Hutchison v. Bowker*, 5 M. & W. 535, 541 (meaning of the words "fine barley" and "good barley"; quoted *supra*); 1845, *Alderson, B.*, in *Robertson v. Showler*, 13



1839, *Hutchison v. Bowker*, 5 M. & W. 535, 541; a contract for sale of barley referred to "good barley" and "fine barley"; these were trade terms, and the jury was told to determine their meaning; there was also a question as to the parties' understanding each other's usage. Sir F. Pollock (*W. H. Watson*) with him: "It is admitted that when the words of a contract are clear and unambiguous, it is for the Court to put a construction upon it; but where the words are either unintelligible, or have both a popular and a technical meaning, it is for the jury to say whether the words were used in a technical or ordinary sense." Lord ABINGER, C. B. . . . "It appears to me that the question as to the interpretation of this contract is a question entirely for the Court, and not for the jury. That they should ever be the judges on such a matter was founded on this, that there might be technical words used in a contract, which the jury might understand, and the Court might not; but it would be contrary to all practice to say, after the terms are explained to the satisfaction of the Court, that the jury are to have the interpretation of the contract, and not the Court." . . .

PARKE, B.: "I am of the same opinion. . . . The law I take to be this — that it is the duty of the Court to construe all written instruments; if there are peculiar expressions used in it, which have, in particular places or trades, a known meaning attached to them, it is for the jury to say what the meaning of these expressions was, but for the Court to decide what the meaning of the contract was. It was right, therefore, to leave it to the jury to say whether there was a peculiar meaning attached to the word 'fine,' in the corn market; and the jury having found what it was, the question, whether there was a complete acceptance by the written documents is a question for the judge."

Where a contract is entirely oral, or partly in writing and partly oral, it is usually said that its terms, if disputed, are to be tried by the jury as a question of fact, subject to instructions as to the legal effect of the words.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2557. **Criminal Intent.** In the definition of crime, certain more detailed rules have from time to time been laid down, as rules of law, defining the nature of malice and of the other states of mind that are to be taken as constituting that criminal intent which is one of the elements of the offence. So far as limited by these rules, the question of intent ceases to be one of fact and is one of law.<sup>1</sup>

A chief controversy, which in the course of this development brought into

M. & W. 609, 612 ("The jury are only to find facts, and leave the Court to judge of their meaning"); 1912, *O'Regan v. Canadian P. R. Co.*, N. Br. S. C., 9 D. L. R. 849 (for lost documents, the judge construes the meaning, the jury decides on the evidence of the contents).

<sup>4</sup> *Ill.* 1896, *Nash v. Classen*, 163 Ill. 409, 45 N. E. 277 (a document forming part of a series of acts alleged to indicate an agency-relation); *Kan.* 1919, *Bloom Equity Exchange v. Stephans*, 105 Kan. 196, 182 Pac. 545 (wheat sale); *Md.* 1893, *Eureka F. Co. v. B. C. S. & R. Co.*, 78 Md. 179, 188, 27 Atl. 1035; *Mass.* 1896, *Gassett v. Glazier*, 165 Mass. 473, 43 N. E. 193 ("where a contract is to be gathered from talk between the parties, and especially from talk on more than one occasion, the question what the contract was, if controverted, must usually be tried by the jury as a question of fact"); 1905, *Ellis v. Block*, 187 Mass. 408, 73 N. E. 475 (function of the jury

construed, in an opinion not clear); *N. Y.* 1919, *Hausman v. Buchman*, App. Div. 179 N. Y. Suppl. 26 (contract terms held to be for the judge, on the facts); *N. Car.* 1891, *Spragins v. White*, 108 N. C. 449, 13 S. E. 171 (absolute or conditional effect of an oral agreement to deliver); *Vt.* 1908, *Taplin v. Marcy*, 81 Vt. 428, 71 Atl. 72 (sale of logs; two letters held not to be exclusively for the Court's construction, but to be submitted with other evidence to the jury).

For the practice in determining the meaning of a libel, see *Capital & Counties Bank v. Henty*, L. R. 7 App. Cas. 741 (1882); 1921, *People v. Taylor*, 187 Cal. 378, 203 Pac. 85 (rule for libel applied on a charge of criminal syndicalism).

§ 2557. <sup>1</sup> Distinguish here such legal definitions of "malice," etc., from ordinary presumptions affecting the production of evidence (*ante*, § 2511a).



competition and collision the respective functions of judge and jury, was the question whether, in a criminal prosecution for *libel*, the malicious or seditious intent was an inference of law to be made from the words published and the averments and innuendoes, as found by the jury and spread upon the record, or whether it remained as an inference of fact to be found by the jury. The practice of the English judges in the eighteenth century had not been entirely consistent in maintaining the former view,<sup>2</sup> and the latter view was finally after much popular agitation sanctioned by the Legislature.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2558. **Foreign Law.** It is generally held that a *foreign law* is a matter of "fact," *i. e.* its existence is to be determined by the jury.<sup>1</sup> But the only sound view, either on principle or on policy, is that it should be proved to the judge, who is decidedly the more appropriate person to determine it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The arguments and opinions in the great Trial of the Dean of St. Asaph's, 21 How. St. Tr. 946, 968, 978, 1039, 3 T. R. 428 (in which Erskine was of counsel for the defendant, and Lord Mansfield delivered the opinion), contain the data on both sides; the answer of the Judges to the Lords, in 1789, 22 How. St. Tr. 296, 301, finally dealt with the matter.

<sup>3</sup> 1792, St. 32 G. III, c. 60, known as Fox's Libel Act. For the law in the United States, see Thompson on Trials, § 2025; 1885, Shaw, C. J., in *Com. v. Anthes*, 5 Gray Mass. 185 (giving the history in England); 1910, *Oakes v. State*, 98 Miss. 80, 54 So. 79; 1902, *Jones v. Murray*, 167 Mo. 25, 66 S. W. 981.

The Codes usually declare this rule: *Cal.* P. C. 1872, § 251, § 1125; *Del.* Const. 1897, Art. I, § 5; *Ia.* Code 1919, § 8899; *Kan.* G. S. 1915, § 3772; *Me.* Rev. St. 1916, c. 131, § 6; *Minn.* Gen. St. 1913, § 8464; *Mo.* Const. 1875, Art. II, § 14; *Rev. St.* 1919, § 3616; *Utah:* Comp. L. 1917, §§ 8075, 9005.

Distinguish here, also, however, the question (*ante*, § 2494) whether in a *civil* case there is any evidence upon which a jury might find a libel: 1882, *Capital & Counties Bank v. Henty*, L. R. 7 App. Cas. 741.

§ 2558. <sup>1</sup> The statutes which provide that foreign law may be "proved as facts by parol evidence" (quoted *ante*, § 1271) seem to mean to adopt the unsound rule that the proof is to be made to the jury: *Ariz.* Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 1736; *Ind.* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, §§ 499, 500; *Ia.* Comp. Code 1919, § 7359; *Md.* Const. 1867, Art. XV, § 5; *Mich.* Comp. L. 1915, § 12515; *Minn.* Gen. St. 1913, §§ 8413, 8417; *N. Y.* C. C. P. 1920, § 391; *Oh.* Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 11499; *S. C.* C. C. P. 1922, § 707.

In the following Canadian statute the same principle is assumed: *N. Br.* Consol. St. 1903, c. 127, § 60 (the judge may express his opinion to the jury on the construction of any foreign statute).

<sup>2</sup> The decisions seldom lay down either rule absolutely, owing in part to the desire to retain

the principle of the Court's construction of documents (*ante*, § 2556) while recognizing the jury's function of crediting the evidence; but there is no necessity for here conceding anything to the latter; with the following rulings compare those cited *post*, § 2573 (judicial notice of foreign law), and *ante*, §§ 1271, 1953 (expert testimony to foreign law): *Federal:* 1902, *Mexican N. R. Co. v. Slater*, 53 C. C. A. 239, 115 Fed. 593, 606 (expert testimony to the construction of a foreign statute, held to be "addressed to the judge to aid him in his rulings"); *Illinois:* 1906, *Christiansen v. Graver T. Works*, 223 Ill. 142, 79 N. E. 97 (cause of action in Indiana; the statutes and decisions of Indiana held to have been properly introduced and read "before the Court and out of the presence of the jury"); *Massachusetts:* 1868, *Kline v. Baker*, 99 Mass. 253 (foreign law is matter of fact, except for the construction and effect of a written document forming the entire evidence); 1887, *Gibson v. Ins. Co.*, 144 Mass. 81, 10 N. E. 729 (same); 1898, *Hancock Nat'l Bank v. Ellis*, 172 Mass. 39, 51 N. E. 207 (a question of law when consisting entirely of statutes or decisions; of fact, where decisions are conflicting or inferences of fact are to be drawn); 1901, *Cook v. Bartlett*, 179 Mass. 76, 61 N. E. 266 (the tenor of the law is a question of fact, but the construction of the language in statutes and decisions not conflicting is for the Court); 1906, *Mercantile Guaranty Co. v. Hilton*, 191 Mass. 141, 77 N. E. 312 (here the Court went to the pedantic length of refusing to consider New York decisions, cited in argument but not offered at the trial, upon the interpretation of a New York statute; because "this is here a question of fact"); 1909, *Electric Welding Co. v. Prince*, 200 Mass. 386, 86 N. E. 947 (stating new shadings, which exhibit the irrational nature of the rule leaving foreign law to the jury); *Missouri:* 1857, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 25 Mo. 465, 473 (for the Court, so far as it is a statute, or decisions, experts, or writers resorted to for interpretation; but perhaps for the jury where it is merely un-



Moreover, proving to the jury the law of another State of the American Union, when the law is not presumed (*ante*, § 2536), becomes a peculiarly absurd process:

1857, *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones L. (N. C.) 130: PEARSON, J. . . . "What is the law of another State, or of a foreign country, is as much a 'question of law,' as what is the law of our own State. There is this difference, however: the Court is presumed to know judicially the public laws of our State, while in respect to private laws, and the laws of other States and foreign countries, this knowledge is not presumed; it follows that the existence of the latter must be alleged and proved as *facts*; for otherwise, the Court cannot know or take notice of them. This is familiar learning. In order to give effect to this presumption of a knowledge, on the part of the Court, of the public laws of our State, it is provided that the persons who are entrusted with the administration of justice as a Court, shall be men learned in the law. . . . When an issue of fact involves a question of law, the jury are not entrusted to decide it; but it is the duty of the Court to give to the jury instruction in regard to the law, and it is the duty of the jury to be governed by such instructions. In this way as much accuracy, and as great a degree of fixedness, in respect to questions of law, is secured, as the nature of the subject admits of. Such being the case in respect to questions arising about our own laws, it would seem as a matter of course to be likewise so in respect to questions arising about the laws of other States, or of foreign countries, whenever, in the administration of justice, our Courts are called upon to deal with them.

"The assertion of a contrary opinion is met at once by these considerations, which, as it seems to us, cannot be answered: *i. e.*, if juries are incompetent to decide questions in regard to our own laws, and the Court is required to give them instructions in respect thereto, are they any more competent to decide questions in regard to the laws of other States, or foreign countries? and do not they stand equally in need of instructions in respect to them? If such questions are to be decided by the juries, their decisions cannot be reviewed by the Supreme Court, and where is the security either for accuracy or fixedness? A jury is not a permanent tribunal, and no memorial is kept of its action, except the general conclusion — a *verdict*; which is binding only between the parties to the particular case.

"But it is said our Courts are *not presumed to know* the laws of other States, or of foreign countries. Admit it; still can it be questioned that the Court is more competent to ascertain and understand such laws, than the jury? or that the jury stand as much in need of instruction in respect thereto, as in respect to our own laws?

"Again, it is said the existence of such laws must be alleged and proved as *facts*. Admit it. But how are they to be proved? To the Court, or to the jury? Surely to the Court, because they are 'questions of law.' We are aware that an impression prevails to some extent, that the proof is to be made to the jury. This originated from the expression 'to

written); 1862, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 33 Mo. 194, 200, 201 (unwritten law proved to the jury; English decisions, etc., read to them); *New Hampshire*: 1852, *Pickard v. Bailey*, 26 N. H. 152, 169 (for the Court, where merely preliminary to the legality of a document); 1917, *Hansen v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 78 N. H. 518, 102 Atl. 625 (Canadian law is a question of fact for the trial judge, not reviewable; prior cases explained); *North Carolina*: 1857, *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones 130 (quoted *supra*); *South Dakota*: 1920, *State v. Morgan*, 42 S. D. 517, 176 N. W. 35 (foreign law is a question of fact); *Vermont*: 1888, *Lycoming Ins. Co. v. Wright*, 60 Vt. 522, 12 Atl. 103; *Washington*: 1916, *Bogitch v. Potlatch Lumber Co.*, 93 Wash. 585, 161 Pac. 487 (law of Idaho, held

"a question of law for the Court and not the jury"); *Wisconsin*: 1912, *Hite v. Keene*, 149 Wis. 207, 134 N. W. 383 (Swiss law; a code section, as interpreted by experts, held to be for the jury).

The following method should be adopted in American courts: *Eng. St.* 1859, 22-23 Viet. c. 63 (to ascertain the law in another part of the British Dominions, the opinion of the Court there may be obtained and such opinion may either be adopted as law or "submitted to the jury with the other facts of the case as evidence, or conclusive evidence, as the Court may think fit, of the foreign law"); *St.* 1861, 24 Viet., c. 11 (laws of foreign countries; similar to *St.* 1859, c. 63, but omitting "as evidence or").



be proved as facts,' and many loose dicta are to be met with, scattered through the books, in which these words have been inadvertently added to, so as to make the expression 'to be proven as facts to *the jury*.' . . . If the law be written, and its existence is properly authenticated, the Court, availing itself of the aid of the judicial decisions of the country, puts a construction on it, and explains its meaning and legal effect, and the jury have nothing to do with it, save to follow the instructions of the Court, as if it was our own law. If the law is unwritten, and its existence is presumed or admitted, then the jury have nothing to do with it. For example, if it be presumed, or admitted, that the common law prevails in the State of Virginia, and has not been altered by statute in respect to the particular question, our Court decides what the common law is. . . . But if the existence of an unwritten law of another State, or foreign country, is not presumed or admitted, then its existence must be proved by competent witnesses, and the jury must then pass on the *credibility of the witnesses*, and it is the province of the Court to inform the jury as to the construction, meaning, and legal effect of the law, supposing its existence to be proven; and to this end, the Court should avail itself of the judicial decisions of the State or country."

§ 2559. **Local Law.** The doctrine has obtained in a few jurisdictions that the jury, in dealing with the *local law* applicable to the case, have in criminal cases a legal right to repudiate the instructions of the judge and to determine the law for themselves.<sup>1</sup> But this ill-advised doctrine, defiant of the fundamentals of law, has only a narrow acceptance.

§ 2559. <sup>1</sup> For the jurisdictions in which this view is taken, see Thompson on Trials, §§ 2132-2148; 1909, *State v. Daley*, 54 Or. 514, 103 Pac. 502; 104 Pac. 1.

For a vindication of its orthodoxy and an examination of the rule in the various jurisdictions, see the opinion of Gray, J., in *Spart v. U. S.* (1895), 156 U. S. 51, 110, 15 Sup. 273.

For an examination of its probable origin, see Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, 253.

Leading opinions are the following: 1838, Best, C. J., in *Levi v. Mylne*, 4 Bing. 189, 195; 1835, Story, J., in *U. S. v. Battiste*, 2 Sumn. 243; 1846, Shaw, C. J., in *Com. v. Porter*, 10 Metc. Mass. 263; 1869, Doe, J., in *State v. Hodge*, 50 N. H. 510, 522; 1902, Hamersley, J., in *State v. Gannon*, 75 Conn. 206, 52 Atl. 727. The earlier authorities are collected in Mr. Hargrave's note 276 to *Co. Lit.* 155b.



# BOOK IV: OF WHAT PROPOSITIONS NO EVIDENCE NEED BE PRESENTED

## TITLE I: JUDICIAL NOTICE

### CHAPTER XC.

#### 1. General Principles

- § 2565. Theory of Judicial Notice.
- § 2566. Anomalous Meanings.
- § 2567. Effect of Judicial Notice; (1) not Conclusive.
- § 2568. Same: (2) Notice must be requested; Pleading a Statute.
- § 2569. Same: (3) Judge's Private Knowledge; Judge may Investigate.
- § 2570. Judicial Notice by the Jury's own Knowledge.

#### 2. Specific Facts Noticed

- § 2571. Scope of Principle.
- § 2572. Laws: (1) Domestic Laws and Ordinances.
- § 2573. Same: (2) Foreign Law.
- § 2574. Political Facts: (1) International Affairs; Seals of State.

- § 2575. Same: (2) Domestic Political Organization; Boundaries, Capitals, etc.
- § 2576. Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identity and Authority; Genuineness of Official Documents.
- § 2577. Same: (4) Official Acts; Elections, Census, Legislative Proceedings, etc.
- § 2578. Judicial Proceedings: (1) Officers and Rules of Court.
- § 2579. Same: (2) Records of Proceedings.
- § 2580. Notorious Miscellaneous Facts: (1) Commerce, Industry, History, Natural Science, etc.
- § 2581. Same: (2) Times and Distances.
- § 2582. Same: (3) Meaning of Words; Names of Intoxicating Liquors.
- § 2583. Future of the Doctrine.

#### 1. General Principles

§ 2565. **Theory of Judicial Notice.**<sup>1</sup> Of the propositions involved in the pleadings, or relevant thereto, proof by evidence may be dispensed with in two situations: (1) where the opponent by a solemn or infra-judicial admission has waived dispute, and (2) where the Court is justified by general considerations in declaring the truth of the proposition without requiring evidence from the party. The former is considered under the head of Judicial Admissions (*post*, §§ 2588-2596). The latter is the process most commonly meant by the term Judicial Notice.

There are various senses in which the term Judicial Notice is used. In the orthodox sense above noted, it signifies that there are certain 'facta probanda' (*ante*, § 2), or *propositions in a party's case, as to which he will not be required to offer evidence*; these will be taken for true by the tribunal without the need of evidence. This general principle of Judicial Notice is simple and natural enough.

§ 2566. **Anomalous Meanings of the Term Judicial Notice.** The term Judicial Notice has many applications, distinct from those peculiar to the present purpose. Some of these are traditional, and therefore perhaps not to

§ 2565. <sup>1</sup> The most learned discussion of the subject, and its history, is found in Professor J. B. Thayer's Preliminary Treatise on the Law of Evidence, c. 7.



be termed incorrect; others are merely loose ways of naming some process or rule already properly known under another name. The essential thing is to distinguish these applications from the chief one, here involved, *i. e.* the acceptance of a matter as proved without requiring the party to offer evidence of it.

(1) A usage extending far back in our annals is to apply the term where the question is whether a certain pleading, or a certain *averment in a pleading*, or greater particularity of averment, *is necessary*.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Whether a Court, for the purposes of ordering a new trial or otherwise, may *give effect to a matter capable of being judicially noticed* — *i. e.* assumed without evidence — but not referred to in the record,<sup>2</sup> or falsely alleged in the pleading,<sup>3</sup> is a question of the power and duty of the Court; but this term has been applied to it.

(3) Whether a Court will take judicial notice of the *existence of a foreign State* is really a question whether, as a matter of substantive law and judicial functions, a foreign State will in domestic Courts be treated as existing only so far as the Executive so treats it; here it is conceded that the Executive's recognition is the determining element.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2566. <sup>1</sup> Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 281-286; 1899, *Nichols v. Bardwell Lodge*, 105 Ky. 168, 48 S. W. 426, 1091 (under C. C. P. § 119 and Rev. St. c. 35, § 1); 1897, *Wikel v. Board*, 120 N. C. 451, 27 S. E. 117 (declaring unnecessary a supplemental plea alleging the repeal of an act); 1897, *Douglass v. K. & M. R. Co.*, 44 W. Va. 267, 28 S. E. 705 (holding it unnecessary to allege the defendant to be a corporation).

In such cases, a ruling that no averment is necessary would usually imply a judicial notice of the fact if it were averred in pleading, and in the ensuing topics are instances of this; but it does not follow that a ruling requiring an averment implies that the fact would not be noticed if duly averred.

<sup>2</sup> Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 283, 288; 1897, *Steenerson v. R. Co.*, 69 Minn. 353, 72 N. W. 713 (the Supreme Court, reviewing a finding of the Railroad Commission as to reasonable rates, conceded some weight to the experience of the Commission; Cauty, J.: "[The Commission] should be thoroughly familiar with the many financial and economic problems which enter into the business of constructing and operating railroads. How is a judge, who is not supposed to have any of this special learning or experience, and could not take judicial notice of it if he had it, to review the decision of commissioners, who should have it and should act upon it? It seems to us that such a judge is not fit to act in such a matter. . . . We see no way of disposing of this question except to hold that on appeal from the commission the Courts should, to the best of their ability, take judicial notice of all such technical learning, knowledge, and information

of a general character as should be known and understood by the commission").

<sup>3</sup> *Eng.* 1828, *Taylor v. Barclay*, 2 Sim. 213 (where a pleading alleged that a certain government was recognized by H. M. government, and the Court treated this as incorrect; "notwithstanding there is this averment in the bill [demurred to], I am bound to take the fact as it really exists, and not as it is averred to be"); *U. S.* 1897, *People v. Oakland Water-Front Co.*, 118 Cal. 234, 50 Pac. 305 (declaration alleging title in certain lands; demurrer; a statute incorporating a city declared its title to lands alleged in the declaration as the plaintiff's; the Court took "judicial notice" that this allegation was incorrect; but either it was a question of law, in which case a demurrer does not admit propositions of law, or it was a question whether certain statutory boundaries included the plaintiff's private land, in which case the ruling seems wrong as a matter of judicial notice).

<sup>4</sup> *ENGLAND*: 1894, *Mighell v. Sultan of Johore*, 1 Q. B. 149, 158 (certificate of the Secretary of State for Colonies as to defendant's being an independent sovereign power; "this letter is conclusive"); 1900, *Foster v. Globe Venture Synd.*, 1 Ch. 811 (boundary of a foreign State); *Statham v. Statham and Gaekwar of Baroda*, [1912] P. 92 (like *Mighell v. Sultan of Johore*, *supra*). In *Taylor v. Barclay*, *supra*, note 3, it was decided merely that the allegation in a declaration that a certain foreign State was recognized as such by the King could be found untrue by reference to the Foreign Office; in *Yrisarri v. Clement*, 1825, 2 C. & P. 223, 225 ("If a foreign State is recognized by this country, it



(4) Certain *rules of Evidence*, usually *known under other names*, are frequently referred to in terms of judicial notice. Thus, the admissibility of *almanacs* is mainly a question whether an exception to the Hearsay rule can be made in their favor;<sup>5</sup> but a Court occasionally makes this exception by saying that the almanac is to be judicially noticed; although the term is properly applicable only where the Court declares the day of the month, or other fact, not to need evidence,<sup>6</sup> and then consults the book to inform itself; the practical difference being that in the former case it goes to the jury, but in the latter not.<sup>7</sup> Again, it has been said that judicial notice will

is not necessary to prove that it is an existing State; but if it is not so recognized, such proof becomes necessary"), the latter clause seems misleading.

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: The doctrine of the following cases is that a foreign State will or will not be so considered by the Court according as it is or is not recognized by the Executive: 1817, *U. S. v. Hutchings*, 2 Wheel. Cr. C. 543; 1808, *Rose v. Himely*, 4 Cr. 241, 272; 1818, *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 3 Wheat. 246, 324; 1821, *The Nueva Anna*, 6 Wheat. 193; 1839, *Williams v. Suffolk Ins. Co.*, 13 Pet. 415, 421; 1852, *Kennett v. Chambers*, 14 How. 38, 51; 1889, *Re Baiz*, 135 U. S. 403, 431, 10 Sup. 854; 1890, *Jones v. U. S.*, 137 U. S. 202, 212, 11 Sup. 80 (conclusive); 1897, *Underhill v. Hernandez*, 168 U. S. 250, 18 Sup. 83; 1891, *U. S. v. Trumbull*, 48 Fed. 99, 104; 1893, *The Itata*, 56 Fed. 505, 510; 1918, *Detjen v. Central Leather Co.*, 246 U. S. 297, 38 Sup. 309 (purchase in Mexico; noticed that since the time in issue "the government of the United States recognized the government of Carranza," etc., which is a strange way to state it); 1920, *The Rogdai*, D. C. N. D. Calif., 278 Fed. 294 (action in rem for possession of a steamer, by the "Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic"; the libellant not recognized, upon a "suggestion" by B. B., with certificate of the U. S. State Department that B. B. is recognized as the Russian representative and that the so-called Republic has not been recognized; the certificate held to be proof, but "logically the representations made in the 'suggestion' should come through the appropriate executive channels of the American government; . . . the Courts should be advised of the Executive will directly and from an authoritative source"); 1922, *The Penza*, D. C. E. D. N. Y., 277 Fed. 91 (the "Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic," not recognized, because not recognized by the U. S. State Department). In *U. S. v. Palmer*, 3 Wheat. 610, 634 (1818), the ruling seems merely to concede (and properly) that a defendant denying a piratical intent may plead the authority of a revolutionary government having a colorable existence, in which case its actual recognition is immaterial. *New York*: 1921, *Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Govern-*

*ment v. Cibrario*, Sup. App. Div., 191 N. Y. Suppl. 543 (action for an accounting; objection that the purporting plaintiff had no capacity to sue, not being recognized as a sovereignty, this objection being a virtual denial of one of the assertions in the declaration; held that the sovereignty was a matter for judicial notice; and a letter was used from the Secretary of State of the United States to the U. S. Alien Property Custodian, without date mentioned, stating that the U. S. had not recognized the Government in question); 1922, *Savie v. New York*, Sup. Sp. T., 193 N. Y. Suppl. 577 (action by a consul-general; his status determined by a letter-patent from the President revoking the exequatur; "such action . . . is a final and conclusive determination").

For a full collection of diplomatic and judicial authorities, see Professor Charles Cheney Hyde's *International Law chiefly as Interpreted and Applied by the United States* (1922), I, § 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, § 1698.

<sup>6</sup> *Post*, § 2581, where instances are collected.

<sup>7</sup> The following instances show the correct treatment: 1792, *Attorney-General v. Castplate Glass Co.*, *post*, § 2569; 1898, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Brinkerhoff*, 119 Ala. 606, 24 So. 893 (here the Court intimated that an almanac, offered to show the time of sunset, was not improperly excluded, as there was no need of evidence).

So also *mortality tables* are sometimes said to be judicially noticed: 1894, *Lincoln v. Power*, 151 U. S. 436, 441, 14 Sup. 387 (notice taken of Carlisle Tables, in estimating length of life, whether offered in evidence or not); although in strictness they are evidence admissible under an exception to the Hearsay rule (*ante*, § 1698); the following case shows the correct treatment: 1901, *Western & A. R. Co. v. Hyer*, 113 Ga. 776, 39 S. E. 446 (on exceptions, a statement in the brief of evidence that a mortality table was introduced does not authorize the Court to notice it, though it is stated to have been published in a volume of official reports; *Simmons, C. J., and Lewis, J., diss.*); furthermore, it seems equally incorrect to notice the duration of life without some evidence from tables or the like, but



be taken of the correctness of the *photographic process*; <sup>8</sup> which is merely another way of saying that properly verified photographs are admissible evidence.<sup>9</sup> In the same way, to take notice that "mere pasturage upon these western lands is very slight evidence of possession,"<sup>10</sup> is to measure evidence. The so-called judicial notice of certain *seals*<sup>11</sup> is merely a rule that the production of something purporting to be a seal shall be in these cases sufficient evidence of genuineness to go to the jury or shall suffice to raise a presumption of genuineness. Whether a Court will take judicial notice of the contents of *legislative proceedings* may be properly a question of the present sort;<sup>12</sup> but the same form of expression is also occasionally used where the real inquiry is whether, as evidence of the statute's terms, or of its passage, the journals are to be preferred to the official certificate appended to the enrolled act.<sup>13</sup>

(5) Other loose applications of the term, sometimes dealing with matters of substantive law,<sup>14</sup> sometimes with matters of procedure, will occasionally be found.

It is unfortunate that the phrase should be so often loosely employed, especially as the legitimate doctrine "is an instrument of great capacity in the hands of a competent judge, and is not nearly as much used, in the region of practice and evidence, as it should be."<sup>15</sup>

§ 2567. **Effect of Judicial Notice; (1) not Conclusive.** (a) That a matter is judicially noticed means merely that it is taken as true without the offering of evidence by the party who should ordinarily have done so. But the *opponent is not prevented from disputing the matter by evidence, if he believes it disputable.*<sup>1</sup> It is true that occasionally a Court is found declaring a thing judicially noticed and at the same time refusing to listen to evidence to the contrary;<sup>2</sup> but usually this is in truth laying down a new rule of sub-

this was done in *Nelson v. Bradford L. & W. Co.*, 75 Conn. 548, 54 Atl. 303 (1903).

Again, certain official *interest tables* are sometimes made evidence by statute (*ante*, § 1672); but this does not signify that they are to be judicially noticed: 1886, *Camp v. Randle*, 81 Ala. 240, 2 So. 287.

<sup>8</sup> 1874, *Udderzook v. Com.*, 76 Pa. 340, 352.

<sup>9</sup> *Ante*, § 792.

<sup>10</sup> 1897, *Whitney v. U. S.*, 167 U. S. 529, 546, 17 Sup. 857.

<sup>11</sup> *Ante*, §§ 2161-2169.

<sup>12</sup> *Post*, § 2577.

<sup>13</sup> *Ante*, § 1350.

<sup>14</sup> *E. g.* 1896, *Southern R. Co. v. Covenia*, 100 Ga. 46, 29 S. E. 219 (the declaration in an action for loss of a child's services alleged the services specifically, and gave the age of the child as 1 year, 8 months, and 10 days; the Court took "judicial cognizance of the fact that a child of this tender age is incapable of rendering such services" as justify recovery).

<sup>15</sup> *Thayer, ubi supra*, p. 309.

§ 2567. <sup>1</sup> 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 Cal. 618,

45 Pac. 860; and this seems implied throughout, particularly by the doctrine of § 2569, *post*.

Since judicial notice is an expedient for hastening the trial and eliminating superfluities, it would be proper to prevent the *party in whose favor* the fact is noticed from offering evidence of it: 1898, *State v. Chingren*, 105 Ia. 169, 74 N. W. 946 (that it is customary to mark up the price of land to be sold, not noticed).

And where no contrary evidence is offered, the Court may properly withdraw the fact from submission to the jury as part of the issue and ~~may instruct the jury as matter of law~~: 1920, *Seebach v. U. S.*, 8th C. C. A., 262 Fed. 885, *semble* (state of war noticed).

<sup>2</sup> *E. g.* 1889, *Com. v. Marzynski*, 149 Mass. 68, 72, 21 N. E. 228 (indictment for illegally selling cigars on Sunday; "the Court has judicial knowledge of the meaning of common words, and may well rule that guns and pistols are not drugs or medicines, and may exclude the opinions of witnesses who offer to testify that they are").



stantive law by declaring certain facts immaterial; whenever a Court forbids the production of evidence, it removes the subject from the realm of the law of evidence properly so called.

(b) The process of taking judicial notice often may imply incidentally a ruling as to the respective functions of judge and jury. Does it signify that the settlement of the matter *rests with the judge* and not with the jury, that the jury are to accept the fact from the judge, and that so far as any further investigation is concerned, it is for the judge alone? Such is the view sometimes found, in decisions<sup>3</sup> as well as statutes.<sup>4</sup> Yet it seems rather that the jury are not concluded; that the process of notice is intended chiefly for expedition of proof; and that since the fact is disputable by the opponent (*supra*, par. a), it remains possible for the jury to negative it. In those classes of facts, however, in which the judge has the function of decision and not the jury (*ante*, §§ 2549-2559), it would be true, so far as any such facts were capable of notice, that the judge's determination is exclusive; but this would not be by virtue of the doctrine of judicial notice.<sup>5</sup>

§ 2568. **Same: (2) Notice must be requested; Pleading a Statute.** Judicial notice being a dispensation of one party from producing evidence, it would seem that the party must, in point of form, make a request for it.<sup>1</sup> Upon this request, the Court is bound, it is sometimes said, to declare the fact noticed,<sup>2</sup> or at least to make that investigation (*post*, § 2569) which it deems necessary. No doubt, in most instances, the rule of law has the plain consequence of compelling the judge to declare the dispensation; not to do so would be to err, precisely as under any other rule of law. But it must not be supposed that this is universally true; the decisions demonstrate that there are numerous topics, near the line of doubt in their feature of notoriety, of which the Court may, but not must, take notice. No definite distinction is

<sup>3</sup> *Conn.* The first case is presumably now not law; 1841, *Kilgore v. Bulkley*, 14 *Conn.* 362, 387 (conflicting decisions in another State, submitted to the jury); 1843, *Hale v. N. J. S. N. Co.*, 15 *Conn.* 539, 549 (by statute, reports of decisions in other States are to be judicially noticed; a Court therefore may hold the law to be as therein decided without submitting it to the jury); 1847, *Lockwood v. Crawford*, 18 *Conn.* 361, 370 (same); 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 *Conn.* 123, 37 *Atl.* 80 (excluding from the jury's consideration certain evidence as to a contagious tree-disease; leading opinion, by Baldwin, J.); *Minn.* 1893, *Thomson-Houston El. Co. v. Palmer*, 52 *Minn.* 174, 177, 53 *N. W.* 1137 (proof of foreign law; official copies of decisions of foreign Court not received, the question being for the Court).

In *State v. McCredit* (1921), 149 *La.* 825, 90 *So.* 210 the doctrine about the judge not commenting on facts to the jury (*ante*, § 2551) was invoked to confuse the subject, in opinions which should not be given any weight.

<sup>4</sup> *Alaska Comp. L.* 1913, § 2265 (like *Or.*

*Laws* 1920, § 1543); § 1065 (like *ib.* § 136); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 2102 ("whenever the knowledge of the Court is by this code made evidence of a fact, the Court is to declare such knowledge to the jury, who are bound to accept it"); *Ida. Comp. St.* 1919, § 7934 (like *Cal. C. C. P.*, § 2102); *Or. Laws* 1920, § 136 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 2102, adding, "as conclusive"); § 1543 (same); *Utah Comp. L.* 1917, § 7209 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 2102).

<sup>5</sup> Thus most of the above rulings in note 3 are referable rather to the doctrine (*ante*, § 2558) that foreign law should be evidenced to the Court.

§ 2568. <sup>1</sup> 1902, *Amundson v. Wilson*, 11 *N. D.* 193, 91 *N. W.* 37.

Distinguish the question (*ante*, § 2566) whether the party must have *pleaded* the fact; this arises frequently for the case of a *statute*; e. g., 1898, *Nichols v. Bardwell Lodge*, 105 *Ky.* 168, 48 *S. W.* 426, 1091.

<sup>2</sup> 1899, *State v. Magers*, 35 *Or.* 520, 57 *Pac.* 197 (time of sunset).



recognized; but it is plain that many of the rulings merely authorize the Court to notice a fact, without requiring it.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2569. Same: (3) Judge's Private Knowledge; Judge may Investigate. (a) There is a real but elusive line between the judge's *personal knowledge* as a private man and his knowledge as a judge. The latter does not necessarily include the former; as a judge, indeed, he may have to ignore what he knows as a man, and contrariwise.<sup>1</sup> The dilemma sometimes thus presented has given rise to much discussion over extreme cases, — particularly the celebrated problem once put by a King of England, whether a judge could lawfully respite a convicted person whom he personally knew to be innocent.<sup>2</sup> But it is now well enough understood that there is here no impracticable dilemma. If the judge, as a man and an observer, has any personal knowledge, he may (and sometimes morally must) utilize it by taking the stand as a witness and telling in that capacity what he knows (*ante*, § 1909); this solves

<sup>3</sup> *E. g.* 1902, *Re Osborne*, 52 C. C. A. 595, 115 Fed. 1 (a court's own records; the Court is not obliged to notice them); 1913, *Line v. Line*, 119 Md. 403, 86 Atl. 1032 (if below no request for notice is made, on appeal notice need not be taken; here, of a date making a bond invalid); 1889, *Hunter v. N. Y. O. & W. R. Co.*, 116 N. Y. 615, 621, 23 N. E. 9 ("Courts are not bound to take judicial notice of matters of fact. Whether they will do so or not depends on the nature of the subject, the issue involved, and the apparent justice of the case").

It would of course be unsound to declare a trial Court in error for affirmatively noticing a foreign law which it need not have noticed, as long as no contention is raised as to the incorrectness of the Court's finding as to tenor of the law; yet this has been done: 1915, *Yam Ka Lim v. Insular Collector*, 30 P. I. 46 (law of China).

§ 2569. <sup>1</sup> The following jest of Lord Eldon's illustrates this: 1782 (?), Lord Eldon, in *Twiss' Life*, I, 130: "We had an amusing case at York. Stakes for a race had been deposited in the hands of one party, to be paid to the owner of the horse that won; but then there was a condition that each horse was to be ridden by a 'gentleman'; and it was disputed whether the horse that did win was ridden by a 'gentleman' or not. This action was to ascertain this point. . . . Well, we had a great deal of evidence, and then we came to the summing up of the judge, who addressed the jury in these words: 'Gentlemen of the jury, when I see you in the box, I call you "gentlemen," for I know you are such; custom has authorized me; and from your office there I know you are entitled to be called "gentlemen." But, out of that box, I do not know what may be deemed the requisites that constitute a "gentleman"; therefore I can give you no direction.' The jury returned a verdict that he

was not a 'gentleman.' Well, the next morning he challenged both Law and me, who were conducting the cause against him, for saying that he was no gentleman; we sent him this answer, that we could not think of fighting one who was pronounced by a solemn verdict of twelve of his countrymen to be no gentleman."

<sup>2</sup> 1406, Y. B. 7 H. IV, 41, pl. 5 (in arguing a question as to the duty of the Court not to have rendered a certain judgment, counsel put this case: "Sir, let us put the case, that one man kills another in your presence, you observing it, and another who is not guilty is indicted before you and is found guilty so as to incur the penalty of death; you ought to respite the judgment against him, for you are knowing to the contrary, and should make further report to the King, to give him pardon; no more should you give judgment in this case, before causing those to appear by whose hands the King was paid"; Gascoigne, C. J.: "Once the King himself asked of me the very case that you have put, and asked me what was the law, and I told him just as you say it, and he was well pleased that the law was so"); 1578, Plowden's Commentaries, *Partridge v. Strange*, Plowd. 83 (mentioning, in Saunders' argument, the case in 7 H. IV with apparent approval); 1588, Coke, as counsel in *Marriot v. Pascal*, 1 Leon. 159, 161 (re-stating the case from the Year-book: "The judge he ought not to carry himself according to his private knowledge which he hath of the said fact, *scil.* to acquit the prisoner, but all that he can do is to respite judgment"; it may be noted that Coke mistranslates the word 'veiant' in the original, and the story has been sometimes mistold, through him).

Professor Thayer (*Preliminary Treatise*, 291) has an interesting note on the earlier literature of this problem.



the dilemma without either injuring justice or violating principle.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore plainly accepted that the judge is not to use from the bench, under the guise of judicial knowledge, that which he knows only as an individual observer.<sup>4</sup> The former is in truth "known" to him merely in the peculiar sense that it is known and notorious to all men, and the dilemma is only the result of using the term "knowledge" in two senses. Where to draw the line between knowledge by notoriety and knowledge by personal observation may sometimes be difficult, but the principle is plain.

(b) But the subjects of knowledge which raise the foregoing problem are obviously those "facts," in the ordinary sense, which are ascertainable by personal observation; belonging as they do to the jury's ultimate determination, it is obvious that the judge must in their regard be merely an ordinary witness to the jurors. There are, however, facts of "law" which are for the judge's own ultimate determination, — such as the tenor of foreign or local law (*ante*, §§ 2558, 2559) and the meaning of a document (*ante*, § 2556). Since these are to be decided by the judge, he is at liberty to investigate the facts for himself, in addition to receiving the evidence which the parties may offer. This is done, however, not by virtue of the doctrine of judicial notice, but by virtue of the judge's exclusive function, as against the jury, to try the

<sup>3</sup> 1696, *Sir John Fenwick's Trial*, before the House of Commons, 13 How. St. Tr. 663, 667 (Mr. Hawles, Sol. General, on Mr. Newport having cited the above story of Gascoigne: "It is said, though a judge do think in his conscience a person guilty, yet he ought not to make use of that private knowledge; and a case was quoted out of Henry IV. But I think that judge might have behaved himself something better than he did; and sure I am, now, he would be blamed. I do not say that a judge upon his private knowledge ought to judge; he ought not. But if a judge knows anything whereby the prisoner might be convicted or acquitted (not generally known), then I do say he ought to be called from the place where he sate, and go to the bar and give evidence of his knowledge; and so the judge in Henry IV's time ought to have done, and not to have suffered the prisoner to have been convicted and then get a pardon for him; for a pardon will not always do the business").

<sup>4</sup> 1851, *Fox v. State*, 9 Ga. 373, 376 (refusing a continuance; the judge's personal knowledge of a witness' lack of credit, held improper to be used; good opinion, by Nisbet, J.); 1854, *State v. Edwards*, 19 Mo. 675, 676 (conviction of a witness before the same judge in another county; notice not taken); 1809, *Rosekrans v. Antwerp*, 4 Johns. N. Y. 239 (a statute forbade an appearance by attorney in a justice's court, unless the party was prevented by sickness or by absence from the county, of which proof was to be made; "the justice cannot act from his own knowledge and call that knowledge

proof"); 1920, *Gibson v. Von Glahn Hotel Co.*, Sup. App. T., 185 N. Y. Suppl. 154 (loss of plaintiff's goods at defendant's house, said to be a hotel; defendant's counsel maintained that it was only a rooming-house; the Court said: "I know the V. G. hotel as well as the witness does himself; I will give you a ruling now, It is a hotel"; held, erroneous); 1870, *State v. Horn*, 43 Vt. 20, 23 (marriage certificate by a justice in another domestic State; judge's own knowledge of law of that State not to be used); 1900, *Shafer v. Eau Claire*, 105 Wis. 239, 81 N. W. 409 (a witness to a bridge's bad condition was excluded by the trial judge, because the offer was "contrary to what I know to be the fact from my own personal knowledge"; held erroneous); 1921, *Tullgren v. Karger*, 173 Wis. 288, 181 N. W. 232 (value of architect's services; judge's own experience, not to be used in determining value; the Wisconsin cases *infra* not cited).

Occasionally, however, this is allowed to slip in: 1907, *State v. Porter*, 76 Kan. 411, 91 Pac. 1073 (value of attorneys' fees taxable in a case tried before the judge); 1880, *Wisconsin Central R. Co. v. Cornell Univ.*, 49 Wis. 162, 164 (condemnation of right of way; the trial judge's "great familiarity with that portion of the State," considered in not reversing the judgment); 1881, *Halaska v. Cotzhausen*, 52 Wis. 624, 9 N. W. 401 (action for services as counsel, tried before a judge; the judge's observation of the services as he "saw and knew" them, allowed to be used).



fact (*ante*, § 2549). These investigations are frequently to be observed in rulings upon the recognition of a foreign State,<sup>5</sup> the tenor of foreign law,<sup>6</sup> and the meaning of words.<sup>7</sup>

(c) Finally, there is a process of *investigation* by the judge *prior to a ruling of judicial notice upon a question of fact* determinable by the jury. For example, when the Court is asked to dispense the party from evidencing the fact that the Mississippi joins the Missouri above the city of St. Louis, or that the first of January, 1904, fell on a Friday, *i. e.* to take judicial notice of these facts, he may resort to a map or a calendar, before making the ruling. This process is common enough;<sup>8</sup> but it is distinct from the two preceding ones. It is not a search for evidence to establish the fact; because the fact is plainly of a kind within the province of the jury, not of the judge. Nor is it a contribution of personal testimony, for the judge does not know it by his own observation, nor need he take the stand to testify. It is merely an occasional measure, taken in discretion, to satisfy the judge that he is justified in making the desired ruling for dispensing with evidence. He perceives that the fact probably cannot need evidence; he merely seeks to define the precise tenor of the fact about which he will make his ruling. The fact will still be in theory disputable before the jurors (*ante*, § 2567); the judicial investigation is made, not in order to establish the fact in their stead, but to make a ruling dispensing one party from offering to them evidence of the fact. This process, moreover, though permissible, is not compulsory

<sup>5</sup> *Eng.* 1828, *Taylor v. Barclay*, 2 Sim. 213 ("In consequence of the arguments in this case, I have had communication with the Foreign Office, and I am authorized to state that the Federal Republic of Central America has not been recognized"); 1900, *Foster v. Globe Venture Synd.*, 1 Ch. 811 (boundaries of a foreign State); *U. S.* 1897, *Underhill v. Hernandez*, 168 U. S. 250, 18 Sup. 83 (the Court may consult the Department of State for information as to the Executive recognition of a foreign civil war and 'de facto' government, and may find the fact upon such information). See § 2566, *ante* (recognition of a foreign State).

<sup>6</sup> 1898, *Barranger v. Baum*, 103 Ga. 465, 30 S. E. 524 (extradition); 1903, *Wells v. Gress*, 118 id. 566, 45 S. E. 418 (law of another of the United States); and cases cited *ante*, § 2567, note 3.

<sup>7</sup> *England*: 1789, *Answer of the Judges to the House of Lords*, 22 How. St. Tr. 302 (judges may resort to grammars and lexicons); 1792, *Eyre, C. B.*, in *Attorney-General v. Cast-plate Glass Co.*, 1 Anstr. 39, 44 ("On demurrer, a judge may well inform himself from dictionaries or books on the particular subject concerning the meaning of any word. If he does so at nisi prius, and shews them to the jury, they are not to be considered as evidence, but only as the grounds on which the judge has formed his opinion").

*UNITED STATES*: 1916, *Werk v. Parker*, 3d C. C. A., 231 Fed. 121, 125 (on the question of fact when the practice began of using horse-hair mats in the extraction of oil from seeds, the Court "took judicial notice" of the practice by crediting statements made in a score of technical books, the citations to which were furnished by a number of college libraries); 1902, *Hilton v. Raylance*, 25 Utah 129, 69 Pac. 660 (certain works on the Mormon religion having been excluded in the trial below, the Court held that it was entitled to refer to them nevertheless, as a matter of judicial knowledge, "to ascertain the particular meaning" of the Mormon doctrine of "sealing").

See also instances cited *ante*, § 2556 (construction of documents) and §§ 1699, 1700 (dictionaries, etc., in evidence).

<sup>8</sup> 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 Cal. 618, 45 Pac. 861 ("he is authorized to avail himself of any source of information which he may deem authentic, either by inquiring of others, or by the examination of books, or by receiving the testimony of witnesses"); the Codes quoted *post*, § 2571; and many instances *passim, post*, §§ 2572-2582.

The question of the method of informing the Court on facts relevant to the *constitutionality of a statute* is in need of special and frank consideration; see the citations *ante*, § 2555, n. 6.



upon the judge,<sup>9</sup> inasmuch as judicial notice at large is itself more or less optional (*ante*, § 2568).

§ 2570. **Judicial Notice by the Jury's Own Knowledge.** In general, the jury may in modern times act only upon evidence properly laid before them in the course of the trial. But so far as the matter in question is one upon which men in general have a common fund of experience and knowledge, through data notoriously accepted by all, the analogy of judicial notice obtains to some extent, and the jury are allowed to resort to this information in making up their minds. This doctrine, of course, has several aspects. From the point of view of the jury's duty, it appears as an exception to the rule that they must act only upon what is presented to them at the trial. From the point of view of the Hearsay rule, it may also be thought of as a partial exception to that.<sup>1</sup> But additionally it must be considered from the present point of view, for it authorizes the party to ask the *jury to refer to their general knowledge* upon the matter in question, and thus in effect and to that extent makes it unnecessary for the party to offer such evidence:

1878, *Hunter's Trial*, N. J., 13 Amer. St. Tr. 57, 151; murder of Armstrong by Graham, at Hunter's instigation; a witness as to their doings placed Hunter on the Philadelphia ferry-boat on the evening of the murder. Mr. *George R. Robeson*, for the accused, arguing against this witness' credibility: "As to the testimony of Mrs. Auvache, think of the brilliancy of memory of a witness who could come into court five months after the 23d of January and positively identify Hunter as a man at whom she had taken a passing glance on the evening of that day. And her entry in the diary of her trip to Philadelphia on that day, only two other entries being made in the whole book! She insisted that the ladies' cabin on the boat she came over on was on the left-hand side of the boat, although the ladies' cabin is on the right side of the boat."

Mr. *Jenkins* [for the State]: "Is there any proof in this case as to what side the ladies' cabin is located?"

Mr. *Robeson*: "Does the prosecutor dispute that fact?"

Mr. *Jenkins*: "I dispute that it is in testimony."

Mr. *Robeson*: "I don't care whether it is or not. I think Moore testified to the fact, but it does not matter; the Court knows, the jury knows, the people know, and the prosecutor knows, that the ladies' cabin on the boats of the Camden ferry is on the *right*-hand side. I gave Mrs. Auvache every opportunity to rectify her statement by asking her every form of question about it, but she stuck to her falsehood."

1884, *LYON, J.*, in *Washburn v. R. Co.*, 59 Wis. 364, 370: "A jury is not bound to give and cannot give any weight to testimony which, although undisputed by witnesses, is contrary to what every person of ordinary intelligence knows to be true. To illustrate, should a witness testify that at Boston on a certain day the sun arose at midnight, or that the Mississippi river empties into Lake Michigan, or that white is black, the testimony would be rejected at once. . . . Beyond this the jury cannot properly go. To allow jurors to make up their verdict on their individual knowledge of disputed facts material to the case, not testified to by them in court, or upon their private opinions, would be most dangerous

<sup>9</sup> *E. g.* 1853, *Littlehale v. Dix*, 11 Cush. 364 (magistrate's certificate that a deponent lived more than thirty miles from the place of trial, and no contrary evidence; the Court held not bound to learn what the distance was).

§ 2570. <sup>1</sup> *Ante*, § 1900 (jurors having personal knowledge must take the stand and state it publicly as witnesses subject to cross-examination). Distinguish, however, the propriety of *knowledge acquired at a view* (*ante*, § 1168).



and unjust. It would deprive the losing party of the right of cross-examination and the benefit of all the tests of credibility which the law affords. Besides, the evidence of such knowledge or of the grounds of such opinions could not be preserved in a bill of exceptions or questioned on appeal."

1895, HACKNEY, J., *Jenney Electric Co. v. Branham*, 145 Ind. 314, 41 N. E. 448 (permitting the use of "your experience and relations among men" in judging of the credibility of witnesses): "It is argued that such a rule would permit the disposition of a cause upon the whims of jurors, rather than upon the law and the evidence as they were learned in the trial. Jurors should be, and, as a rule, are, selected because of their extensive experiences among men. The school of experience which men attend in their varied relations among men imparts a keenness of mental vision which enables them the more readily to see the motives and to judge of the selfish or unselfish interests of men. This education, be it much or little, is a part of the juror, and should not, if possible, be laid aside in passing upon the inducements which may surround a witness to speak falsely. It is this education which to a great extent enables a juror to discover in the faltering manner or the downcast eye whether the statement of the witness is made in modesty or in the guilt of falsehood. The value of experience is not to be given up when the man becomes a juror, and is required to apply the tests of credit to the heart and mind of the witness, but whatever qualification that experience gives should be employed to the end that the whole truth may be known and acted upon."

1921, BURNETT, C. J., in *Rostad v. Portland R. L. & P. Co.*, 101 Or. 569, 201 Pac. 184: "The personal knowledge of any juror concerning any probative fact involved in the case under consideration is not to be used in deciding the case. Such a juror should communicate his information to the Court, and if he is not excused from service and it is deemed proper to use his cognizance of such a fact in the trial, he must be sworn as a witness and examined, subject to cross-examination by the adverse party, the same as any other witness. But any juror must consider the testimony in the light of that knowledge and experience which is common to all men. For instance, it is a matter of common knowledge that a bullet piercing the brain of a human being will in all likelihood prove fatal. It is common knowledge, also, that a forest tree cut nearly in two at the butt will fall, if a high wind blows against it. If a witness should testify to the contrary to these ordinary phenomena, the common knowledge of the juror derived from his experience in such matters would naturally compel him to discredit that witness. Many illustrations might be given where men are normally and legitimately influenced in considering testimony by their general knowledge and experience. . . . It is utterly impracticable in the administration of courts of justice to secure a juror whose mind is totally blank as to questions involved in the ordinary transactions of life. Triers of fact cannot, in the nature of things, be divested of general knowledge of practical affairs. The Court cannot do otherwise than to direct them to use such experiences as are common to all men in the decision of questions of fact. It is part of the jury system which cannot be dispensed with."

But the scope of this doctrine is narrow; it is strictly limited to a few matters of elemental experience in human nature, commercial affairs, and everyday life.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the natural instincts of human conduct, with reference

<sup>2</sup> In the palmy days of special juries (Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, pp. 94-97) this class of facts must obviously have been of broad range. But their gradual disuse seems to have been marked by a judicial inclination to disparage a resort to even that special knowledge for which they were first sought: 1836, *R. v. Rosser*, 7 C. & P. 648 (value of a watch; Vaughan, J.: "Any

knowledge you may have on the subject you may use; some of you perhaps may be in the trade"; Parke, B.: "If a gentleman is in the trade, he must be sworn as a witness. That general knowledge which any man can bring to the subject may be used without; but if it depends on any knowledge of the trade, the gentleman must be sworn").



to care or negligence at the time of danger, may be considered,<sup>3</sup> the dangerousness of smoking a pipe in a barn near the straw,<sup>4</sup> the conditions affecting the various kinds of values,<sup>5</sup> the intoxicating nature of a certain liquor,<sup>6</sup> and even (though this illustrates how local conditions may affect the application) that a game played with bone-counters was played for money;<sup>7</sup> but such a

<sup>3</sup> With the following cases, compare the presumption of carefulness (*ante*, § 2510): ENGLAND: 1874, *Bridges v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 H. L. 213 (Pollock, B.: "It appears to me that the jurors were entitled to assume that 'prima facie' the deceased would conduct himself with ordinary prudence and discretion").

UNITED STATES: *Illinois*: 1902, *Chicago & E. I. R. Co. v. Beaver*, 119 Ill. 34, 65 N. E. 144 (jury may consider the natural instinct to preserve life and avoid danger); *Iowa*: 1894, *Hopkinson v. Knapp Co.*, 92 Ia. 328, 60 N. W. 653 (jury may consider the natural instinct to avoid danger); 1899, *Ellis v. Leonard*, 107 Ia. 487, 78 N. W. 246 (the natural instinct of self-preservation from danger is not to be considered, if the plaintiff himself testifies); *Maine*: 1885, *Chase v. Maine Central R. Co.*, 77 Me. 262 (death by a train; the jury having been instructed that they might consider their knowledge of "the habits of thought and mind and the natural instincts of men" to preserve themselves from injury, held, that on the facts the idea was "presented too prominently"); *Massachusetts*: 1896, *Manning v. R. Co.*, 166 Mass. 230, 44 N. E. 135 (injury by the fall of a trolley; to the objection that there was no evidence of negligence, it was said "the jury were at liberty to say, from their experience as men of the world, that under such circumstances such an accident commonly does not happen, unless the stick is carelessly handled; that it is in the power of the holder to see that he does not submit it to such a strain as to make it possible that it should be torn from his hands; and to infer from those general propositions of experience that there was negligence in the particular case"); 1897, *Lamoureux v. R. Co.*, 169 Mass. 338, 47 N. E. 1009 (ordinary conduct at a railroad crossing may be noticed); 1899, *Leary v. Fitchburg R. Co.*, 173 Mass. 373, 53 N. E. 817, *semble* ("common experience" as to the mode of alighting from cars, proper to be considered); *New Hampshire*: 1890, *Huntress v. R. Co.*, 66 N. H. 185, 34 Atl. 154 (Doe, C. J.: "When there is no evidence of insanity, intoxication, or suicidal purpose, and no evidence on the question of his care, except the instinct provided for the preservation of animal life, it may be inferred from this circumstantial proof that, for some reason consistent with ordinary care and freedom from fault on his part, his attempt to cross was due to his inadequate understanding of the risk"); *Vermont*: 1908, *Shum's Adm'r*

*v. Rutland R. Co.*, 81 Vt. 186, 69 Atl. 945 (reviewing cases).

<sup>4</sup> 1898, *Lillibridge v. McCann*, 117 Mich. 84, 75 N. W. 288 (fire set in a barn by smoking a pipe in the straw; no evidence of dangerousness needed).

<sup>5</sup> With the following cases compare those cited *ante*, § 1168 (jury's knowledge acquired at a view); *Federal*: 1881, *Head v. Hargrave*, 105 U. S. 45, 49 ("their own general knowledge and ideas" are available in weighing expert testimony to value); *Illinois*: 1881, *Green v. Chicago*, 97 Ill. 370, 372 (jury's "own knowledge of values" may be considered); 1898, *Springfield C. R. Co. v. Hoeffner*, 175 Ill. 634, 51 N. E. 884 (damages for personal injuries; general knowledge allowed to be used); 1900, *Rock Island & E. I. R. Co. v. Gordon*, 184 Ill. 456, 56 N. E. 810 (value of land: "your own general knowledge of matters and affairs," being struck from the instruction, was held to be mere surplusage); *Kansas*: 1893, *Chicago K. & W. R. Co. v. Parsons*, 51 Kan. 408, 410, 32 Pac. 1083 (personal knowledge as to value of land is not to be considered); *Kentucky*: 1907, *Morehead's Trustee v. Anderson*, 125 Ky. 77, 100 S. W. 340; *Massachusetts*: 1834, *Parks v. Boston*, 15 Pick. 198, 209 (eminent domain; in judging damages, the jury should "take counsel of their own experience and knowledge of like subjects"); 1839, *Murdock v. Sumner*, 22 Pick. 156 (value of goods converted; Shaw, C. J.: "The jury may properly exercise their own judgment and apply their own knowledge and experience in regard to the general subject of inquiry"); 1888, *Bradford v. Cunard Co.*, 147 Mass. 55, 16 N. E. 719, *semble* ("common experience" is usable in finding values); *New Jersey*: 1902, *De Gray v. N. Y. & N. J. Telephone Co.*, 68 N. J. L. 454, 53 Atl. 200 (jurors' experience as to the detriment of telephone structures to the value of property, not allowed to be considered); *Virginia*: 1818, *Cummings v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 128 (larceny of a bank-note; the defendant's passing it off in payment relieved from any further evidence of value); *Wisconsin*: 1884, *Washburn v. R. Co.*, 59 Wis. 364, 371, 18 N. W. 328 (land damages; the jury may use their general knowledge of "the elements affecting the assessment," but their verdict must be supported by the testimony; quoted *supra*); 1921, *Heal v. Stoll*, — Wis. —, 185 N. W. 242 (value of land).

<sup>6</sup> 1854, *Com. v. Peckham*, 2 Gray 514.

<sup>7</sup> 1840, *Stevens v. State*, 3 Ark. 66 (gambling; though there was no evidence that the



matter of private and variable belief as the character of a particular witness cannot be so taken into consideration by the jury.<sup>8</sup>

The range of such general knowledge is not precisely definable.<sup>9</sup> But in

play was for value, yet the jury was allowed to use its "experience" to infer that the bone-counters represented money).

<sup>8</sup> 1895, *Jenney Electric Co. v. Branham*, 145 Ind. 314, 41 N. E. 448 (jurors may use general experience in judging of witnesses' credibility; quoted *supra*); 1854, *Schmidt v. Ins. Co.*, 1 Gray 529 (jurors may act on information which may "fairly be supposed to be within the common knowledge of all the jurors"; but "any particular knowledge of any facts, such as respecting the general infamous character of any of the defendant's witnesses . . . not being open to comment on the part of the defendant's counsel or to instruction on the part of the Court, but which was in possession merely of some one or more, but not the whole of the jury, could not fairly be taken into view by the jury"); 1876, *Wharton v. State*, 45 Tex. 2, 4 (the jury asked the trial judge: "Can we judge a witness just by what he says on the stand, and not by what we know of him privately?" held, that the answer should have been in the affirmative); 1895, *Johnson v. R. Co.*, 91 Wis. 233, 64 N. W. 753 (the jury's knowledge of character of a particular witness is not to be used).

In *Georgia*, this result was at first not accepted: 1881, *Anderson v. Tribble*, 66 Ga. 585, 589 (a charge that a witness' character for veracity, if they knew it, might be considered, was approved); 1881, *Head v. Bridges*, 67 Ga. 227, 237 (same; the ruling defended in an able opinion by Crawford, J.); 1884, *Howard v. State*, 73 Ga. 83 (same ruling); 1892, *Chattanooga R. & C. R. Co. v. Owen*, 90 Ga. 265, 284, 15 S. E. 853 (preceding cases overruled; similar charge disapproved); 1894, *Collins v. State*, 94 Ga. 394, 19 S. E. 243 (same); 1908, *Georgia R. & E. Co. v. Dougherty*, 4 Ga. App. 585, 62 S. E. 157 (same).

In *South Carolina* the earlier theory of a jury's knowledge long persisted: 1834, *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill 503 (the jury may act, "in some degree, from their own knowledge of the character of the parties and their witnesses; it is for this reason that the jurors are drawn from the vicinage").

<sup>9</sup> The following illustrate its further scope:

CANADA: 1912, *Graham v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, Ont. C. A., 1 D. L. R. 554 (death at a switch; knowledge of locality used).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1920, *Schaefer v. U. S.*, 251 U. S. 466, 40 Sup. 259 (false reports with intent to aid the enemy in time of war; the jurors allowed to use their "general information" as to "what was necessary for the spirit and effective conduct of war, and how far a false cast to the dispatches received was depressing or detrimental to patriotic

ardor"); *Alabama*: 1905, *Ward v. State*, — Ala. —, 39 So. 923 (default of duty as road overseer; common knowledge as to the condition of the county roads, not available); *Arkansas*: 1852, *Houston v. State*, 13 Ark. 66 (larceny of a horse; though there was no evidence of its value, the jury's "knowledge and experience" was held to justify inferences that the defendant would not have borrowed it, as alleged, if valueless, etc.); *Illinois*: 1906, *Hayes v. Wagner*, 220 Ill. 256, 77 N. E. 211 (the jury may weigh the evidence "in the light of their common observation and experience"); *Iowa*: 1912, *Downing v. Farmer's M. F. Ins. Co.*, 158 Ia. 1, 138 N. W. 917 (whether a mare was killed by lightning; the jury not allowed to consider "their own observation and experience, if any, with reference to losses of that nature"; and thus the law on the one hand proceeds to eliminate the use of such intelligence as the jury has, while on the other arise lamentations over its lack of intelligence); *Massachusetts*: 1834, *Parks v. Boston*, 15 Pick. 198, 199, 209 (a fact personally known must be testified to; but this does not include the knowledge obtained by a view, nor the common experience of judicial notice); 1898, *McGarrahan v. R. Co.* 171 Mass. 211, 50 N. E. 610 (the jury may employ "their knowledge and experience of affairs"); *Mississippi*: 1897, *Illinois Central R. Co. v. Greaves*, 75 Miss. 360, 22 So. 792 (principle acknowledged; but a general instruction, without specifying the matter so to be known, was held improper); *New Jersey*: 1920, *State v. Elliott*, 94 N. J. L. 76, 110 Atl. 135 (manslaughter by driving an automobile; the jury allowed to consider "general characteristics incidental to verbal proof, such as demeanor," and "such other considerations that may be evolved from experience or which the jury may deem proper under the circumstances"); *Oregon*: 1896, *Wills v. Lance*, 28 Or. 371, 43 Pac. 487 (whether a meteorological wind-record should be believed, against numerous eye-witnesses; jurors may use "such general practical knowledge as they may have upon the subject"); 1921, *Rostad v. Portland R. L. & P. Co.*, 101 Or. 569, 201 Pac. 184 (personal injury by a street-car; an instruction to "bring to your assistance your experience as men of affairs," held proper; quoted *supra*); *Wisconsin*: 1911, *Solberg v. Robbins Lumber Co.*, 147 Wis. 259, 133 N. W. 28 (but this knowledge need not be common to all the jurors; here the jurors were allowed to use their understanding of the construction of the machines in issue, in weighing the evidence; sensible opinion, by Barnes, J.).

The following ruling would probably not be



these days when too much emphasis is placed, in the selection of jurors, on the blankness of their mental tablets, there can be no harm in the liberal application of the present principle.—As a natural part of its doctrine, of course, these matters may be referred to by counsel in their arguments.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Specific Facts Noticed

§ 2571. **Scope of Principle.** The scope of facts that may be noticed includes:

(1) Matters which are so notorious to all that the production of evidence would be unnecessary;

(2) Matters which the judicial function supposes the judge to be acquainted with, either actually or in theory;

(3) Sundry matters not exactly included under either of these heads; they are subject for the most part to the consideration that though they are neither actually notorious nor bound to be judicially known, yet they would be capable of such instant and unquestionable demonstration, if desired, that no party would think of imposing a falsity on the tribunal in the face of an intelligent adversary.

It is hardly feasible, however, in enumerating those matters, to follow strictly this or any other classification.<sup>1</sup>

accepted to-day: 1816, *R. v. Sutton*, 4 M. & S. 532, 537, 542 (riots against weaving machines; the judge told the jury that they might refer to their personal knowledge of the riotous acts; held not improper, because he "did not advise them to rely on that as a source of information on which they were to found their verdict, but only that it might make the proof more satisfactory to their minds if they knew what had passed").

<sup>10</sup> 1895, *State v. Lingle*, 128 Mo. 528, 31 S. W. 20; 1898, *State v. Marsh*, 70 Vt. 288, 40 Atl. 837 (counsel allowed to call the jury's attention to inquest methods, etc.).

§ 2571. <sup>1</sup> The Codes usually attempt a specific enumeration; but these lists should never be deemed exclusive:

*California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1875 ("Courts take judicial notice of the following facts:

1. The true signification of all English words and phrases, and of all legal expressions;

2. Whatever is established by law;

3. Public and private official acts of the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of this state and of the United States;

4. The seals of all the courts of this state and of the United States;

5. The accession to office and the official signatures and seals of office of the principal officers of government in the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of this state and of the United States;

6. The existence, title, national flag, and seal of every state or sovereign recognized by the executive power of the United States;

7. The seals of courts of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction, and of notaries public;

8. The laws of nature, the measure of time, and the geographical divisions and political history of the world.

In all these cases the court may resort for its aid to appropriate books or documents of reference");

*Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5734 ("The existence and territorial extent of States, their forms of government, and symbols of nationality, the laws of nations, and general customs of merchants, the admiralty and maritime courts of the world and their seals, the political constitution and history of our own government, as well as the local divisions of our own State, the seals of the several departments of the government of the United States, and of the several States of the Union, and all similar matters of public knowledge are judicially recognized without the introduction of proof");

*Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 7933 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1875);

*Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 10532 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1875);

*North Dakota*: Comp. L. 1913, § 7937 ("No evidence of any fact of which the court will take judicial notice need be given by the party alleging its existence, but the judge upon being called upon to take judicial notice thereof may, if he is unacquainted with such fact, refer to any person, document or book of reference for his satisfaction in relation thereto, or may refuse to take judicial notice thereof



§ 2572. **Laws: (1) Domestic Laws and Ordinances.** A Court may be expected to dispense with evidence of the law of its own sovereignty;—for it

unless and until the party calling on him to take such notice produces any such document or book of reference. Courts will take judicial notice of the following facts: 1. Official acts of the judicial department of this state and of the United States. 2. The seal of all the courts of this state and of the United States, and the signatures of the judges and clerks thereof. 3. That tribunals are established in the several states for the adjudication of controversies and the ascertainment of rights. 4. Of the external boundary lines of its jurisdiction and that an act or a crime committed at any given place within such boundaries is within such jurisdiction. 5. Of the acts of the legislature and decrees of courts fixing such jurisdiction. 6. That a court is a court of record and who are its officers. 7. Of all persons who have been appointed deputies by the clerks of such court. 8. Appellate courts will take judicial notice of inferior courts and who are their judges, and the rules thereof. 9. Of its own authority. 10. Of the time of holding the various courts of the state, of the history of the country at the time of holding court, and the seats of justice. 11. Of the commencement and duration of the terms of the supreme court, and the district courts, and all the other courts of record. 12. That the terms of court were held at the times and places prescribed by law. 13. Of all prior proceedings in the case pending. 14. That the case before the court had connection with one formerly decided by it. 15. Of the fact that a former adjudication had been reversed. 16. Of attorneys who have appeared in the case. 17. Of the pendency of another action in the same court. 18. That the facts left in issue, being facts of which the court will take judicial notice, are deemed part of the pleadings and not matters of evidence. 19. Of its own records and judgments. 20. Of the genuineness of its own records and the signatures of its officers"); § 7938 ("The courts will take judicial notice: 1. Of the facts stated in the almanac and the days of the week, as shown thereby. 2. Of the day of the week upon which any particular day of the month falls. 3. Of the recurrence of the day on which general elections are held. 4. Of the time the sun and moon rise and set on the several days of the year, and when they rose and set on a certain day. 5. The magnetic variation from the true meridian. 6. Of the unvarying occurrences of the climate and seasons. 7. Of the course of the seasons and of husbandry. 8. Of the succession of the seasons as in relation to vegetables and animals, and the general course of agricultural crops, matured so as to be severed. 9. Of what places are great marts of trade, such as New York, Chicago, and St. Louis. 10. Of the distance between well

known places in the United States and the ordinary time of railroad trains. 11. Of the fact that certain counties join each other. 12. That there are facilities for business, by railroad, telegraph and telephone, between two certain places. 13. Of the distance of a place from the county seat or the capital of the state. 14. Of the limits of a county, and the fact that a place proved was within such limits. 15. Of the lines of the counties, and the towns, villages and cities contained therein. 16. Of the location and distance between well known places within a county. 17. Of the places of intersection of certain streets and alleys in incorporated towns, cities and villages, and the names and numbers thereof. 18. Of the incorporation of towns, cities and villages, and the acts of the legislative assembly under which they were incorporated. 19. Of the fact that a county has adopted township organization. 20. Of the official acts of public officers. 21. Of the officers in the county in which they are holding their sittings. 22. The genuineness of signatures of public officers and those of such deputies as the law authorizes. 23. Of the time at which an officer's term of office expires. 24. Of the official acts and certificates of notaries public, made in the performance of official duty. 25. Of who are justices of the peace for the county in which the court is held, and the time at which their terms of office will expire. 26. Of the civil divisions of the state, such as cities, towns, counties and incorporated villages, and that the state is divided into eight judicial districts, and that each is a distinct organization. 27. Of the counties constituting a judicial district. 28. Of the election of state officers, held at the same time as the election of representatives in congress, and what the ballots offered at such election should contain, and of the changes made in the executive department of the state and of the United States. 29. Of the universal usage of merchants and ordinarily of a common law custom. 30. Of whatever ought to be generally known within the limits of the court's jurisdiction. 31. Of the general certainty that matter carried through the mail will, in spite of imperfection in the address, reach its proper destination. 32. Of transactions and objects which form a part of the history and geography of the country. 33. Of matters of public history affecting the whole people. 34. Of the times and such occurrences as constitute a part of the history of the state and of the United States. 35. Of the history of a country, its topography and general condition. 36. Of the boundaries of the state and the navigability of its large rivers. 37. Of the geographical position of towns in the county. 38. Of the taking and result of the



must be credited with a knowledge of it, or at least with the most competent knowledge where to search for it. No evidence of it need therefore be offered; and the counsel's reference during a trial to the text, or a copy, of the statute, for informing the judge, must be regarded as a judicial license to counsel to

census, and of the population of counties, cities and the state as shown by such census. 39. Of what is commonly known in the various manufactures and industries. 40. Of a manufactured article which has for many years been in common use throughout the country. 41. Of the business of mercantile agencies. 42. Of the inflammable character of kerosene, gin, turpentine and the like. 43. Of the explosive character of nitro-glycerine, dynamite, gun-powder and gun-cotton. 44. Of the constitution of the United States and the public laws of the State where they are exercising their functions. 45. Of the treaties between the United States and the foreign countries and Indian treaties. 46. Of the public acts and proclamations carrying the treaties into effect. 47. Of the dates of the ratification of treaties and of the authority thereunder conferred upon the president of the United States. 48. Of the acts of congress for the survey of lands within the states and the dedication of a portion thereof to educational institutions of the state. 49. Of the government surveys and the legal subdivisions of public lands. 50. Of the rules and regulations of the general land office affecting the sale and disposal of public lands. 51. Of the extent and area of the government subdivisions of public lands. 52. Of the law merchant. 53. Of the custom of mutual credits in business houses. 54. Of the commercial usage to observe Sundays and the great festivities. 55. That whiskey, brandy and alcohol are intoxicating liquors. 56. That beer is a malt liquor and intoxicating. 57. Of the legislative journals and the modes by which domestic laws are authenticated. 58. Of the statute books and journals of the houses of the legislature. 59. Of the journal of each branch of the general assembly. 60. Of such contemporaneous history as led up to and probably induced the passage of a law. 61. Of the history of every statute in its progress through the legislature. 62. Of the true reading of a statute by referring to the original act on file in the office of the secretary of state. 63. Of the laws of a sister state when the printed and authenticated volumes are presented to the court for examination. 64. For the purpose of giving credit to judicial proceedings in another state, courts take notice ex officio of the local laws of the state from which they come, and when the judgment of the court in a sister state is impleaded, cognizance of the law of such a state is taken. 65. Of the circulating medium and the popular language in reference to it. 66. That under the laws of the United States the dollar is the

unit of value. 67. Of the meaning of words and phrases in the English language. 68. Of such matters of common knowledge and science as may be known to all men of ordinary understanding and intelligence. 69. Of the meaning of current phrases which everybody else understands. 70. Of the meaning of initials appended to official signatures. 71. Of the meaning of initials used in the description of land. 72. Of the meaning of the abbreviations C. O. D., F. O. B., and such others as are in common use, and of the customary abbreviations of christian names. 73. Of the official signatures and seals of office of the principal officers of the government in the legislative, executive and judicial departments of this state and of the United States. 74. Of the national flag and seal of every state or sovereign recognized by the executive power of the United States. 75. Of the seals of courts of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction and of notaries public. 76. Of the laws of nature, the measure of time and the geographical divisions and political history of the world");

*Oregon*: Laws 1920, §§ 728, 729 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1875);

*Philippine Islands*: C. C. P. 1901, § 275 ("The existence and territorial extent of states, and of the several islands forming the Philippine Archipelago, their forms of government, and symbols of nationality, the law of nations, the admiralty and maritime courts of the world and their seals, the political constitution and history of the United States and of the Philippine Islands, the seals of the several departments of the Government of the United States, and of the States of the Union, and of the Philippine Islands, public and private, and official acts of the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of the United States and of the Philippine Islands, the laws of nature, and the measure of time, the geographical divisions and political history of the world, and all similar matters of public knowledge shall be judicially recognized by the court without the introduction of proof; but the court may receive evidence upon any of the subjects in this section stated, when it shall find it necessary for its own information, and may resort for its aid to appropriate books, documents, or evidence");

*Porto Rico*: Rev. St. & C. 1911, § 1404 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1875, adding in par. 1 "and Spanish," and in par. 4 "of the States of the Union");

*Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, § 7076 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1875).



employ that evidence which the judge (*ante*, § 2569) would in theory seek for himself.<sup>1</sup>

There are, however, certain natural limitations, by which Courts customarily abdicate their responsibility of knowing or of seeking for themselves:

(a) In the first place, the doctrine applies at common law to *public or general statutes* of the Legislature only.<sup>2</sup> But the distinction between a public or general act and a *private or special act* is, in the United States at least, not always easy to make. It may be said that a restriction of locality does not prevent an act from being public, provided the law is general in its application to persons; *e. g.*, a law regulating within certain districts the right of fishing,<sup>3</sup> or the right of navigation,<sup>4</sup> or the lumber trade,<sup>5</sup> or the sale of liquor.<sup>6</sup> Acts incorporating municipal corporations, even by special charter, are usually regarded as public,<sup>7</sup> as also acts incorporating State banks,<sup>8</sup> and acts incorporating railways by general provisions,<sup>9</sup> though not by special charter.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, an act declared by the Legislature itself to be deemed a public act will be so treated;<sup>11</sup> and of course an amendment of a

§ 2572. <sup>1</sup> 1840, Baron Parke, in *Frost's Trial*, Gurney's Rep. 168, to counsel: "For the future, it would save time if, when you founded an objection upon an Act of Parliament, you had the Act here; for, though we are supposed to keep the statutes in our heads, we do not."

How slender, in earlier formative days of legislative method, was the foundation for attributing to the King's judges a necessary knowledge of statutes, may be seen in Mr. Plucknett's interesting monograph, "Statutes and their Interpretation in the First Half of the 14th Century" (1922), p. 103, (Cambridge Studies in English Legal History, No. II).

For the *authentic text* of a statute, when its contents are disputed, see *ante*, § 1350 (enrolled copy preferred to legislative journals).

<sup>2</sup> 1900, *State v. H. & C. Turnpike Co.*, 65 N. J. L. 97, 46 Atl. 700; 1832, *Leland v. Wilkinson*, 6 Pet. 317, 319 (proceedings of the Legislature on petitions for relief by individuals, not to be noticed or read as public laws).

<sup>3</sup> 1809, *Burnham v. Webster*, 5 Mass. 266, 269.

<sup>4</sup> 1853, *Hammond v. Inloes*, 4 Md. 138, 172.

<sup>5</sup> 1832, *Pierce v. Kimball*, 9 Greenl. Me. 54, 56.

<sup>6</sup> 1855, *Levy v. State*, 6 Ind. 281, 283; 1888, *State v. Cooper*, 101 N. C. 688, 8 S. E. 134. So also for sundry kinds of laws: 1904, *Davis v. State*, 141 Ala. 84, 37 So. 454 (local stock-law, noticed).

<sup>7</sup> 1877, *Albrittin v. Huntsville*, 60 Ala. 486, 492; 1850, *Alderman v. Finley*, 10 Ark. 423, 428; 1860, *Payne v. Treadwell*, 16 Cal. 220, 232; 1878, *Doyle v. Bradford*, 90 Ill. 416 (statute applied, on special facts); 1894, *Jones v. Lake View*, 151 Ill. 663, 675, 38 N. E. 688; 1862, *Macey v. Titcombe*, 19 Ind. 135, 137;

1875, *Stier v. Oskaloosa*, 41 Ia. 353, 355; 1871, *Preli v. McDonald*, 7 Kan. 426, 446; 1868, *State v. Sherman*, 42 Mo. 210, 214; 1835, *Briggs v. Whipple*, 7 Vt. 15, 19; 1864, *Swain v. Comstock*, 18 Wis. 463, 468; 1901, *Davey v. Janesville*, 111 Wis. 628, 87 N. W. 813 (the adoption of a general charter law by a particular city, noticed, as well as amendments thereto).

<sup>8</sup> 1860, *Davis v. Bank of Fulton*, 31 Ga. 69; 1862, *Gordon v. Montgomery*, 19 Ind. 110; 1855, *Bank of Newbury v. R. Co.*, 9 Rich. L. S. C. 495; 1861, *Buell v. Warner*, 33 Vt. 570, 578.

<sup>9</sup> 1905, *Atlanta & W. P. R. Co. v. Atlanta B. & A. R. Co.*, 124 Ga. 125, 52 S. E. 320 (railroad charter granted by the Secretary of State under a general law, noticed); 1861, *Heaston v. R. Co.*, 16 Ind. 275, 278.

<sup>10</sup> 1876, *Perry v. R. Co.*, 55 Ala. 413, 426; 1839, *Ohio etc. R. Co. v. Ridge*, 5 Blackf. Ind. 78; 1872, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Blackshire*, 10 Kan. 477, 487. *Contra*: 1904, *Chesapeake & O. C. Co. v. Western Md. R. Co.*, 99 Md. 570, 58 Atl. 34 (St. 1904, c. 56, affecting a specific railroad company, noticed); 1866, *Wright v. Hawkins*, 28 Tex. 452, 471.

The principle is often liberally treated: 1909, *Dunn, Matter of*, 212 U. S. 374, 29 Sup. 299 (Federal incorporation by act of Congress, noticed);

1898, *Miller v. Matthews*, 87 Md. 464, 40 Atl. 176 (notice taken of a statute chartering a company to be sole surety on official bonds).

But in theory no private corporate charter need be noticed; 1866, *Winnipiscogee Lake Co. v. Young*, 40 N. H. 420, 428 (corporate name).

<sup>11</sup> 1834, *Beaumont v. Mountain*, 10 Bing. 404; 1830, *Beaty v. Knowler*, 4 Pet. 152, 167; 1905, *Foley v. Ray*, 27 R. I. 127, 61 Atl. 50;



private act by a public one,<sup>12</sup> or any amendment of a public one,<sup>13</sup> will be noticed.

In many States, by statute, the sensible rule has been adopted that all private acts are to be noticed.<sup>14</sup>

(b) The ordinances and regulations of local government boards and councils are usually not noticed.<sup>15</sup>

(c) The regulations of *executive departments* or administrative bureaus are sometimes, but not always, noticed.<sup>16</sup>

1896, Missouri, K. & T. R. Co. v. Colburn, 90 Tex. 230, 38 S. W. 153.

<sup>12</sup> 1880, Lavallo v. People, 6 Ill. App. 157.

<sup>13</sup> 1863, Parent v. Walmsly's Adm'rs, 20 Ind. 82, 86; 1879, Belmont v. Morrill, 69 Me. 314, 317.

<sup>14</sup> Alaska: Comp. L. 1913, § 911; Ariz. Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 432; P. C. § 947; Colo. Comp. St. 1921, § 75; Conn. Gen. St. 1918, § 5726 ("private or special acts"); 1905, New York, N. H. & H. R. Co. v. Offield, 78 Conn. 1, 60 Atl. 740; Ill. 1878, Doyle v. Bradford, 90 Ill. 416; Ind. Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 377; § 2049; 1861, Eel River D. Ass'n v. Topp, 16 Ind. 242; Kan. Gen. St. 1915, § 8027 (criminal cases; private statute pleaded by citation must be noticed); Ky. Stats. 1915, § 1624 (courts shall notice "all acts and resolutions of the General Assembly"); Minn. Gen. St. 1913, § 7773 (civil cases); § 9145 (criminal cases); Mo. Rev. St. 1919, § 1260; Mont. Rev. C. 1921, § 11856 (criminal cases); Nebr. Comp. St. 1921, § 8642; Nev. Rev. L. 1912, § 5072; N. C. Con. St. 1919, § 541; N. D. Comp. L. 1913, § 7462 (a private statute pleaded by citation will be judicially noticed); § 10697 (criminal pleading); Or. Laws 1920, § 89; S. Car. C. C. P. 1922, § 401; S. Dak. Rev. C. 1919, § 2367; Va. Code 1919, § 6190; Wash. R. & B. Code 1909, § 289; W. Va. Code 1914, c. 130, § 1; Wis. Stats. 1919, § 2676.

<sup>15</sup> Accord: Ala. 1857, Case v. Mobile, 30 Ala. 538 (city); 1916, Glenn v. Prattville, 14 Ala. App. 621, 71 So. 75; Cal. 1909, Metteer v. Smith, 156 Cal. 572, 105 Pac. 735 (city ordinance); Fla. 1918, Stephens v. Anderson, 75 Fla. 575, 577, 79 So. 205 (city ordinances noticed, under St. 1895, c. 4513, § 11, but only through the printed copy officially published; unsound); Ga. 1899, Moore v. Jonesboro, 107 Ga. 704, 33 S. E. 435 (city); Ill. 1917, People ex rel. Blachly v. Coffin, 279 Ill. 401, 117 N. E. 85; Ind. 1857, Indianapolis & C. R. Co. v. Caldwell, 9 Ind. 397 (county board); Ia. 1859, Garvin v. Wells, 8 Ia. 286 (city); Kan. 1899, Watt v. Jones, 60 Kan. 201, 56 Pac. 16 (city, in civil cases); Ky. 1901, Horne v. Mehler, — Ky. —, 64 S. W. 918 (city); La. 1852, Hassard v. Municipality, 7 La. An. 495 (city); Md. 1895, Shaufelter v. Baltimore, 80 Md. 483, 31 Atl. 439 (city); 1898, Field v. Malster, 88 Md. 691, 41 Atl. 1087; Mass. 1904,

O'Brien v. Woburn, 184 Mass. 598, 69 N. E. 350 (city); Minn. 1876, Winona v. Burke, 23 Minn. 254 (city); Mo. 1854, Mooney v. Kennett, 19 Mo. 551, 555 (city); N. Y. 1877, Porter v. Waring, 69 N. Y. 250, 254 (city); Wis. 1898, Stittgen v. Rundle, 99 Wis. 78, 74 N. W. 536.

Contra: Alaska: Comp. L. 1913, § 912; Minn. Gen. St. 1913, § 1265, § 7773; Or. Laws 1920, § 90; 1909, Mayhew v. Eugene, 56 Or. 102, 104 Pac. 727 (municipal criminal ordinance, noticed under local statutes, B. & C. Comp. § 90); P. I. Admin. C. 1917, § 2478 (city of Manila); 1915, U. S. v. Hernandez, 31 P. I. 342, 349; Wash. R. & B. Code 1909, § 291.

But a *municipal court* will notice a municipal ordinance, by a refinement of quiddity; 1906, Hill v. Atlanta, 125 Ga. 697, 54 S. E. 354; Ill. St. 1905, May 18, § 54 (the Municipal Court of Chicago shall notice general ordinances of Chicago and municipal bodies included therein, and public laws of a U. S. State or Territory); St. 1905, May 18 (Primary Elections), § 119 (this act to be noticed in any municipality to which it applies); 1899, Seranton v. Danenbaum, — Ia. —, 80 N. W. 221; 1912, People v. Quider, 172 Mich. 280, 13 N. W. 546; 1920, Kyle v. Calhoun City, 123 Miss. 542, 86 So. 340 (municipal ordinance); N. Y. St. 1917, c. 382, amending Greater N. Y. Charter § 1556 (N. Y. city courts shall notice city ordinances); 1904, Portland v. Yick, 44 Or. 439, 75 Pac. 706 (and on appeal the Circuit Court will do the same; and will also notice the municipal council's journals); 1917, U. S. v. Blanco, 37 P. I. 126; 1922, Olympia v. Nickert, — Wash. —, 203 Pac. 946 (superior court in a particular city notices ordinances of the city); Wis. St. 1921, c. 390, amending Stats. 1919, § 4137.

<sup>16</sup> Federal: 1894, Caha v. U. S., 152 U. S. 211, 221, 14 Sup. 513 (Interior Department regulations for land-office suits, noticed); 1896, Dominici v. U. S., 72 Fed. 46 (Treasury Department regulations, etc., noticed); 1893, The Clara, 5 C. C. A. 390, 55 Fed. 1021 (marine inspectors' regulations, not noticed); 1899, Smith v. Shakopee, 38 C. C. A. 617, 97 Fed. 974 (regulations of Federal lighthouse board, not noticed); 1905, Sprinkle v. U. S., 141 Fed. 811, 819, C. C. A. (regulations of the commissioner of internal revenue, noticed); 1906, Nagle v. U. S., 145 Fed. 302, C. C. A. (post-



§ 2573. **Same: (2) Foreign Law.** The laws of foreign nations and States—not being laws of the forum at all, except by casual adoption—will not be noticed.<sup>1</sup> But here some further discriminations are necessary:

(a) *Admiralty* law, so far as international and therefore common to all States, may be noticed.<sup>2</sup>

(b) The *State* law of another of the *States of the United States* is in theory that of an independent sovereign; hence its law, equally with the laws of other nations, will in theory not be noticed by the Courts of *another of the United States*.<sup>3</sup> But this theory is now antiquated hypocrisy, as applied in

office regulations not noticed; “it is a hopeless task for an appellate court to determine what such regulations were at any particular time [without formal pleading and evidence]; it must either accept counsel’s statement, or itself make inquiry of the particular department; neither of which practices is to be commended”; why not ask the opposing counsel if he disputes the text?); 1912, *Robinson v. Baltimore & O. R. Co.*, 222 U. S. 506, 32 Sup. 114 (a statute making admissible the reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission’s decisions does not oblige a trial court to take judicial notice of such decisions; but surely the learned Court should have guarded its opinion against leaving the impression that it sanctioned the petty and unpractical view that the decisions of such a national body were not justly noticeable by the common law principle); 1918, *U. S. v. Miller*, D. C. S. D. Fla., 249 Fed. 985 (Presidential regulations issued under St. 1917, May 18, Selective Service Act, noticed); 1921, *Givens v. Zerbst*, 255 U. S. 11, 41 Sup. 227 (general orders of War Department, noticed); *Alabama*: 1920, *Lawrenceburg R. M. Co. v. Jones & Co.*, 204 Ala. 59, 85 So. 719 (U. S. food administrator’s regulations under U. S. St. Aug. 10, 1917, noticed); 1920, *Webb v. White Engin. Co.*, 204 Ala. 429, 85 So. 729 (U. S. Employees’ Compensation Commission’s declaration as to status of employees of U. S. Nitrate Plant No. 2, noticed); *Indiana*: 1905, *Carr v. First National Bank*, 35 Ind. App. 216, 73 N. E. 947 (U. S. Post-Office departmental regulations, noticed); *Maine*: 1881, *Low v. Hanson*, 72 Me. 105 (“rules and regulations of one of the departments established in accordance with the statute” are noticed); *Maryland*: 1920, *Hettleman v. Frank*, 136 Md. 351, 110 Atl. 715 (selective service regulations by the President, under U. S. St. May 18, 1917, noticed); *Massachusetts*: 1893, *Com. v. Crane*, 158 Mass. 218, 33 N. E. 388 (internal revenue regulations as to oleomargarine, not noticed); *Missouri*: 1893, *Campbell v. Wood*, 116 Mo. 196, 202, 22 S. W. 796 (surveyor general’s instructions to deputies, noticed); 1917, *Christy v. Wabash R. Co.*, 195 Mo. App. 232, 191 S. W. 241 (a rule of the U. S. Interstate Commerce Commission would be no-

ticed, if the judicial knowledge were duly invoked by motion); *Nebraska*: 1902, *Larson v. First Nat’l Bank*, 66 Nebr. 595, 92 N. W. 729 (regulations of the Indian bureau in the Interior Department, noticed); *New Mexico*: 1899, *U. S. v. Gumm*, 9 N. M. 611, 58 Pac. 398 (Interior Department regulations for license to cut timber, noticed); *North Carolina*: 1906, *State v. Southern R. Co.*, 141 N. C. 846, 54 S. E. 294 (Federal quarantine regulations of Department of Agriculture, noticed); *Washington*: 1901, *Whitney v. Spratt*, 25 Wash. 62, 64 Pac. 919 (rules and decisions of U. S. land-office, noticed).

§ 2573. <sup>1</sup> *Eng.* 1718, *Fremoult v. Dedire*, 1 P. Wms. 429 (Holland); *U. S. Fed.* 1832, *Strother v. Lucas*, 6 Pet. 763, 768; 1872, *The Pawashick*, 2 Lowell 142; 1875, *Dainese v. Hale*, 91 U. S. 13, 18; 1921, *The Hanna Nielsen*, 2d C. C. A., 273 Fed. 171 (marine tort; British law not noticed); *Haw.* 1884, *Board v. Estrella*, 5 Haw. 211, 214 (law of Portugal); *P. I.* 1915, *Yam Ka Lim v. Insular Collector*, 30 P. I. 46 (laws of China);

By statute the rule has sometimes been changed: *Mich.* Comp. L. 1915, § 12513 (constitution, laws, and resolutions, of another U. S. State or Territory, or of any foreign state, may be judicially noticed); § 12515 (similar, for unwritten or common law); *Miss.* Code 1906, § 1015, Hem. § 735 (law of “any foreign country” shall be noticed); *W. Va.* Code 1914, c. 13, § 4 (foreign law, “statutory or other” is to be noticed).

Compare the citations *ante*, § 2536 (presumption as to foreign law) and § 2558 (proof of law to the judge).

<sup>2</sup> 1801, *Talbot v. Seeman*, 1 Cr. 1, 37 (French marine decrees as to neutral commerce, noticed as laws); 1871, *The Scotia*, 14 Wall. 170, 188; 1899, *The New York*, 175 U. S. 187, 20 Sup. 67 (Canadian statute adopting Revised International Regulations for Navigation, noticed). *Contra*: 1872, *The Pawashick*, 2 Lowell 142, *semble*.

<sup>3</sup> In some Courts, a distinction is made between statute and common law; *Ala.* 1889, *Insurance Co. v. Forcheimer*, 86 Ala. 541, 5 So. 870; *Ark.* 1901, *Louisiana & N. W. R. Co. v. Phelps*, 70 Ark. 17, 65 S. W. 709 (but here a statute of 1899 changed the law);



this field, and there is a wholesome tendency to abandon it.<sup>4</sup> Where the law of another of the United States is involved, the *presumption of similarity* of the foreign law (*ante*, § 2536) may render assistance. The Courts have failed to work out a theory of the relation between that presumption and the present principle of judicial notice.<sup>5</sup> There is much apparent inconsistency, and yet both principles have a legitimate bearing.

(c) The *Federal laws* of the United States (as well as of Canada) are equally the laws of *each State*, and hence the Courts of one of the States notice them, whether ordinary public acts of Congress<sup>6</sup> or treaties.<sup>7</sup> They are of course noticed by the Federal Courts.<sup>8</sup>

Cal. 1854, *Cavender v. Guild*, 4 Cal. 250, 253; Colo. 1886, *Polk v. Butterfield*, 9 Colo. 326, 12 Pac. 216; Conn. 1823, *Brackett v. Norton*, 4 Conn. 517, 520; 1827, *Hempstead v. Reed*, 6 Conn. 480, 486; 1837, *Dyer v. Smith*, 12 Conn. 384, 390; 1843, *Hale v. S. N. Co.*, 15 Conn. 539, 549; Fla. 1893, *Sammis v. Wightman*, 31 Fla. 10, 30, 12 So. 526; 1896, *Duke v. Taylor*, 37 Fla. 64, 19 So. 172 (here the law of organization of corporations); Ga. 1868, *Simms v. Express Co.*, 38 Ga. 129; Ill. 1860, *Chumasero v. Gilbert*, 24 Ill. 293; 1895, *Ferris v. Bank*, 158 Ill. 237, 41 N. E. 1118 (the authority of a foreign notary to administer an oath); Ind. 1859, *Johnson v. Chambers*, 12 Ind. 102, 105; Ind. T. 1900, *Hockett v. Alston*, 3 Ind. T. 432, 58 S. W. 675 (law of Cherokee Indian tribes in the Territory, not noticed); 1902, *Sass v. Thomas*, 4 Ind. T. 331, 69 S. W. 893 (Chickasaw law); 1903, *Rowe v. Henderson*, 4 Ind. T. 597, 76 S. W. 250 (suit between Chickasaw Indians concerning land in the Chickasaw Nation; the Chickasaw law not noticed); Kan. 1900, *Alexandria A. & F. S. R. Co. v. Johnson*, 61 Kan. 417, 59 Pac. 1063; La. 1902, *Rush v. Landers*, 107 La. 549, 32 So. 95; Md. 1867, *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Glenn*, 28 Md. 287, 323; Md. 1921, *Goldsborough v. Tinsley*, 138 Md. 411, 113 Atl. 844; Mass. 1868, *Kline v. Baker*, 99 Mass. 253; 1893, *Chipman v. Peabody*, 159 Mass. 420, 423, 34 N. E. 563; Minn. 1901, *Crandall v. R. Co.*, 83 Minn. 190, 86 N. W. 10; Mo. 1857, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 25 Mo. 465, 473; N. J. 1868, *Condit v. Blackwell*, 19 N. J. Eq. 193, 196; N. C. 1857, *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones L. 130, 132; Okl. 1900, *Greenville N. Bank v. Evans S. B. Co.*, 9 Okl. 353, 60 Pac. 249 (laws of Arkansas, as extended by Federal Act to Indian Territory, not noticed; leading opinion); P. I. 1918, *Johnson's Est.*, 39 P. I. 157, 172 (laws of a U. S. State will not be noticed); R. I. 1898, *Taylor v. Slater*, 21 R. I. 104, 41 Atl. 1001; Tex. 1859, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 23 Tex. 639; Vt. 1899, *Murtey v. Allen*, 71 Vt. 377, 45 Atl. 752; Va. 1817,

*Warner v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 95, 98; 1896, *Union C. Ins. Co. v. Pollard*, 94 Va. 146, 152, 26 S. E. 421; 1896, *App v. App*, 106 Va. 253, 55 S. E. 672 (Pennsylvania probate law).

<sup>4</sup> CANADA: The intercolonial laws are by statute to be noticed: *Dom. St.* 1893, c. 31, § 7, *R. S.* 1906, c. 145, *Evidence*, §§ 17, 18 (specified kinds of British imperial, provincial, and colonial laws, to be noticed); *B. C. Rev. St.* 1911, c. 78, § 27 (like *Dom. Evid. Act* § 17); *Man. Rev. St.* 1913, c. 65, § 17 (like *Dom. Evidence Act*, § 17, specially mentioning "this province"); *Manitoba* deserves a special compliment for a liberal and fraternal statute authorizing judicial notice of the laws of "any part of the United States of America" (*R. S.* 1913, c. 65, § 32).

UNITED STATES: *Ark. Dig.* 1919, § 4110; 1915, *Estes v. Merrill*, 121 Ark. 361, 181 S. W. 136 (marriage-law of Ohio noticed); *Mich. Comp. L.* 1915, § 12513 (constitution, laws, and resolutions); § 12515 (unwritten or common law); *Miss. Code* 1906, § 1015, *Hem.* § 735; 1854, *Bates v. McCully*, 27 Miss. 584; *W. Va.* 1895, *Lockhead v. B. S. W. & I. Co.*, 40 W. Va. 553, 21 S. E. 1031; *Wis. Stats.* 1919, § 2676, and *St.* 1921, c. 214 (adding *Stats.* § 2135m).

A statute sometimes regulates the mode of evidencing: *Tenn. Shannon's Code* 1916, § 5586 (a statute read in evidence in a lower Court will be noticed in a Superior Court, without transcription).

<sup>5</sup> For a good exposition of the distinction between noticing the domestic law, proving the foreign law, and presuming it, see *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones L. N. C. 132.

<sup>6</sup> 1873, *Morris v. Davidson*, 49 Ga. 361; 1832, *Chesapeake & O. Canal Co. v. B. & O. R. Co.* 4 G. & J. Md. 1, 63; *Miss. Code* 1906, § 1015, *Hem.* § 735; 1872-3, *Mims v. Swartz*, 37 Tex. 13; 1904, *Metropolitan Stock Exchange v. Lyndonville N. Bank*, 76 Vt. 303, 57 Atl. 101; 1871, *Bird v. Com.*, 21 Gratt. Va. 800, 808.

<sup>7</sup> CANADA: 1912, *Republic of France v. Peugnet, Sask.*, 1 D. L. R. 204 (extradition

<sup>8</sup> 1850, *U. S. v. Reynes*, 9 How. 127, 147 (Louisiana treaties of cession); 1896, *Callsen v. Hope*, 75 Fed. 758, 761 (the Treaty of

cession of Alaska, March 30, 1867, the protocol of transfer, and the inventories and map attached).



(d) Since the judicial powers of the Federal Courts extend to many cases arising under the laws of the various States of the Union, such *State laws* are for the purpose in hand part of the law of the *Federal Courts*, and will therefore be noticed by them.<sup>9</sup> Extending this principle, it has been held by State Courts that in cases where appeal may be made to the Federal Courts on questions of Federal law, — *e. g.* the effect of a judgment in another State Court — the law of such other State may be noticed.<sup>10</sup>

(e) So far as by subdivision or amalgamation the former laws of another sovereignty have to any extent become a part of the law of the forum, such *former law* of the other sovereignty may properly be noticed. This principle has been applied to the laws of another of the United States from which that of the forum was formed by subdivision,<sup>11</sup> to the laws of Mexico,<sup>12</sup> to the laws of the British colony of Pennsylvania,<sup>13</sup> and to the laws of England before the American Revolution; but is, of course, not applicable to the laws of England since that time.<sup>14</sup>

(f) The theory of *extra-territoriality* here makes an interesting complication; which, however, is easily solved if sound principle be followed.<sup>15</sup>

treaty noticed, without putting in evidence the "Canada Gazette," under Rev. St. C. 1906, c. 155, § 8, Extradition Act).

UNITED STATES: *Kan.* 1904, *LaRue v. Kansas M. L. Ins. Co.*, 68 *Kan.* 539, 75 *Pac.* 494 (Spanish treaty of the Philippines); *Minn.* 1860, *Carson v. Smith*, 5 *Minn.* 78 (Indian treaty); *Nebr.* 1913, *Butschkowski v. Bracks*, 94 *Nebr.* 532, 143 *N. W.* 923; *S. Dak.* 1906, *Peano v. Brennan*, 20 *S. D.* 342, 106 *N. W.* 409 (Indian treaty); *Wis.* 1854, *Montgomery v. Deeley*, 3 *Wis.* 709 (Ashburton treaty).

<sup>9</sup> 1835, *Owings v. Hall*, 9 *Pet.* 607, 624; 1888, *Liverpool & G. W. S. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, 129 *U. S.* 397, 445, 9 *Sup.* 469; 1893, *Loree v. Abner*, 6 *C. C. A.* 302, 57 *Fed.* 159 (Pennsylvania before 1788); 1894, *Merchants Exch. Bank v. McGraw*, 8 *C. C. A.* 420, 59 *Fed.* 972 (Wisconsin); 1894, *Western & A. R. Co. v. Roberson*, 9 *C. C. A.* 646, 61 *Fed.* 592 (Georgia and Tennessee); 1901, *Barry v. Snowden*, 106 *Fed.* 571; 1884, *Lamar v. Micou*, 114 *U. S.* 218, 5 *Sup.* 857 (whether in statutes or in decisions); 1912, *Monongahela R. C. C. & C. Co. v. Schinnerer*, *C. C. A.* 196 *Fed.* 375 (whether in statute or in decisions); 1915, *Re Porto Rico Progress Pub. Co.*, 8 *P. R. Fed.* 264 (New York law of fraudulent transfers, noticed). *Contra*: 1898, *Wilson v. Owens*, 30 *C. C. A.* 257, 86 *Fed.* 571 (notice of the law of the Chickasaw Nation in the Indian Territory, not taken).

So too in *Canada*: *Dom. Rev. St.* 1906, c. 145, §§ 17, 18 (cited *supra*, n. 4); 1907, *Logan v. Lee*, 39 *Can. Sup.* 311, 313 (the Dominion Supreme Court notices laws "in any of the provinces or territories of Canada").

The *District of Columbia's* courts are for this purpose Federal: 1907, *Moore v. Pywell*, 29 *D. C. App.* 312 (action for death based on a Maryland statute not pleaded; the statute noticed).

The Federal Supreme Court, however, on the scholastic theory that it cannot know on appeal what the Court below could not know, has declined, on writ of error to a State Supreme Court, to notice what the latter could not notice, *i. e.* the law of a sister State, 1885, *Hanley v. Donoghue*, 116 *U. S.* 1, 6 *Sup.* 242.

<sup>10</sup> 1863, *Butcher v. Bank of Brownsville*, 2 *Kan.* 70 (Pennsylvania judgment); 1871, *Shotwell v. Harrison*, 22 *Mich.* 410, 414 (certified copy of a Massachusetts deed); 1856, *Ohio v. Hinchman*, 27 *Pa.* 479, 482 (Ohio judgment; leading opinion, by Woodward, J.); 1876, *Paine v. Schenectady Ins. Co.*, 11 *R. I.* 411, 415 (New York judgment); 1922, *Hewett v. Hewett*, — *R. I.* —, 111 *Atl.* 883 (custody of a minor; laws of Massachusetts noticed); 1900, *Trowbridge v. Spinning*, 23 *Wash.* 48, 62 *Pac.* 124 (jurisdiction of a city court of St. Louis, Mo., noticed); 1867, *Jarvis v. Robinson*, 21 *Wis.* 523 (Michigan judgment).

<sup>11</sup> 1912, *Pa Pelekane's Title*, 21 *Haw.* 175, 187 (Hawaiian Islands before annexation, noticed); 1822, *Henthorn v. Doe*, 1 *Blackf. Ind.* 157, 161, 163 (printed statute book of Virginia judicially noticed as of a State originally sovereign in Indiana).

<sup>12</sup> 1895, *U. S. v. Chaves*, 159 *U. S.* 452, 16 *Sup.* 57 (the laws and regulations of Mexico pertaining to land-grants made prior to the cession of 1848).

<sup>13</sup> 1893, *Loree v. Abner*, 6 *C. C. A.* 302, 57 *Fed.* 159 (statutes of the colony of Pennsylvania and of the State under the articles of Confederation).

<sup>14</sup> 1909, *Electric Welding Co. v. Prince*, 200 *Mass.* 386, 86 *N. E.* 947; 1888, *Liverpool & G. W. S. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, *supra*, note 9.

<sup>15</sup> The correct principle was long ago expounded by Mr. (later C. J.) Piggott, in his



All the foregoing quiddities are thoroughly unpractical. The judges manipulate an esoteric logical dream-machine which has caused them to forget the world of reality. Judicial power should be used to get at the facts more directly and candidly.

§ 2574. **Political Facts:** (1) **International Affairs; Seals of State.** The external political facts of *international affairs*, as distinguished on the one hand from the common international law (*ante*, § 2573) and on the other hand from the domestic political facts of the forum of the Court (*post*, § 2575), cannot be said to be the subject of judicial notice.<sup>1</sup> In the chief instance likely to come into litigation, namely, the *existence of a particular foreign State* as independent among nations, the Court follows the action of the Executive of the forum; it recognizes this action, not as an international fact, but as a domestic political fact (*ante*, § 2566, par. 3). In another instance sometimes considered to fall under this head, namely, the *authenticity of a purporting seal* of a foreign State or judge, the process is in truth one of presuming genuine the specific seal-impression offered (*ante*, §§ 2163-2166); for although it might be possible to predicate judicial knowledge of a seal's design, it is preposterous to say that a judge can know whether a specific impress is genuine or who affixed it. Still another fact sometimes here classed, namely, the existence or effect of a *foreign judgment* is either a question of substantive law, not of evidence (*ante*, § 1347), or a question of proving the foreign record by ordinary means (*ante*, § 1681).

§ 2575. **Same:** (2) **Domestic Political Organization; Boundaries, Capitals, etc.** So far as the facts of political organization and operation of the State are determined in the law, they are judicially noticed as a part of the law

masterly treatise on Extra-Territoriality; it is now recognized in the British decisions:

*England:* 1901, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs v. Charlesworth, App. Cas. 373 (land taken for public purposes in Mombasa, Zanzibar, where extra-territorial jurisdiction obtained; the consular Court held entitled to take judicial notice of Zanzibar Mohammedan law, since the extra-territorial judicial authority is a delegation by treaty of Zanzibar sovereignty to the foreign consul acting as a Zanzibar judge); 1904, Macdonald v. Anderson, H. B. M. Supreme Court for China, 1 U. S. Extra-territorial Cases 77 (Lobingier). North China Herald, LXXII, 247, Jan. 16, 1904 (British judges in China notice Chinese law, on the theory of Secretary of State v. Charlesworth, *supra*);

*United States:* 1875, Dainese v. Hale, 91 U. S. 13 (extra-territorial jurisdiction in Egypt, laws and usages of Turkey not noticed); 1914, Bahlke v. Brown, U. S. Court for China, 1 Extra-terr. Cas. 340 (lease by Germans in China; the German law not noticed); 1914, U. S. v. Armstrong, U. S. Court for China, 1 Extra-terr. Cas. 349 (opium-importation; law of China noticed, on the theory of

Secretary of State v. Charlesworth, Eng., *supra*.)

§ 2574. <sup>1</sup> Except such facts as fairly fall within the principle of common notoriety (*post*, § 2580) or Executive action (*ante*, § 2566); *e. g.*, a *state of war*: 1797, Maclean's Trial, 26 How. St. Tr. 797; 1805, Dolder v. Lord Huntingfield, 11 Ves. Jr. 283, 292 ("that France is now at war with Austria," not noticed otherwise of being at war with England); 1814, R. v. De Berenger, 4 M. & S. 67, 69 (Ellenborough, L. C. J., said "there were so many statutes which spoke of a war with France that it was impossible for the judges not to take judicial notice of it"); and this includes a *civil war*, as well as *insurrection* in some forms: 1862, Prize Cases, 2 Black U. S. 635, 667 (civil war with the Southern Confederacy); 1904, LaRue v. Kansas M. L. Ins. Co., 68 Kan. 539, 75 Pac. 494 (insurrection in the Philippines before 1901).

Otherwise of the *date of ending of a war*: 1922, Palmer v. Pokorny, — Mich. —, 186 N. W. 505 (contract of employment: "the question of [sic?] when the war closed is not a judicial one, but one to be determined by the political department of the government."



(*ante*, § 2572). The chief difficulty comes in distinguishing between what is contained solely and abstractly in the law, and what depends more or less on specific official acts done under the law or upon the application of the descriptive terms of the law to concrete things. Courts are apt to be extremely liberal in drawing the line so as to favor judicial notice.

In regard to the *territorial descriptions* in political law — boundaries, capitals, surveys, roads, and the like —, it is difficult to make any generalization; in the liberal application of the principle, exact consistency is hardly possible.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2575. <sup>1</sup> The following are illustrations:

ENGLAND: 1721, *Fazakerley v. Wiltshire*, 1 Stra. 462, 469 (per Eyre, J.: "We must take notice of the extents of ports"); 1821, *Deybel's Case*, 4 B. & Ald. 242, 246 ("the general division of the kingdom into counties," noticed); 1842, *Brunt v. Thompson*, 2 Q. B. 789 (that a certain part of the Tower of London was within the boundary of the city of London, not noticed); 1856, *Cooke v. Wilson*, 1 C. B. N. S. 153, 163 (that the colony of Victoria is out of England, noticed).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1824, *The Apollon*, 9 Wheat. 362, 374 ("public facts and geographical positions" are to be noticed); 1833, *Peyroux v. Howard*, 7 Pet. 321, 342 (that the port of New Orleans was within the jurisdiction, as depending on the ebb and flow of tide at that point, noticed); 1917, *Younge v. U. S.*, 4th C. C. A., 272 Fed. 788 (location of P. in the northern district of W. Va., noticed); 1921, *Young v. California State Board*, 9th C. C. A., 273 Fed. 30 (offense against the Drugs Act; notice taken that Calexico and Mexicala are a single town, the boundary between Mexico and California running through it);

*Alabama*: 1857, *King v. Kent's Adm'r*, 92 Ala. 542, 552 (the location within the State of certain lands defined by statute, noticed); 1858, *Lewis v. Harris*, 31 Ala. 689 (that lands of F. Co. were held under U. S. government title, noticed); 1872, *Smitha v. Flournoy's Adm'r*, 47 Ala. 345 (that Eufaula is a city, in Barbour Co., etc., noticed); 1898, *Waters v. State*, 117 Ala. 189, 23 So. 28 (location of a public road in H. Co., not noticed);

*Arkansas*: 1895, *Re Independence Boulevard — Ark. —*, 30 S. W. 773 (limits of a municipality, noticed); 1900, *St. Louis Iron M. & S. R. Co. v. Cady*, 67 Ark. 512, 55 S. W. 929 (that "Glenwood" was in a certain county, not noticed); 1900, *St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Magness*, 68 Ark. 289, 57 S. W. 933 (that a town is in a certain county, noticed); 1909, *Lyman v. State*, 90 Ark. 596, 119 S. W. 1116 (location of a city in a county, noticed);

*California*: 1893, *People v. Etting*, 99 Cal. 577, 579, 34 Pac. 237 (that a certain town is within a county and is its county-seat, noticed); 1894, *Rogers v. Cady*, 104 Cal. 288, 38 Pac. 1 (government survey, noticed); 1895,

*DeBaker v. R. Co.*, 106 Cal. 257, 39 Pac. 610 (the course of a river frequently mentioned in statutes, and the boundary of a city, noticed); 1895, *Schwerdtle v. Placer Co.*, 108 Cal. 589, 41 Pac. 448 (that certain land is within the public domain, not noticed); 1895, *Diggins v. Hartshorne*, 108 Cal. 154, 41 Pac. 283 (that a mapped space is correctly located, i. e. that boundaries actually run at a given spot, not noticed); 1896, *People v. Faust*, 113 Cal. 172, 45 Pac. 261 (that a town is a county seat, noticed);

*Connecticut*: 1856, *State v. Powers*, 25 Conn. 48 (that Stonington is in New London county, noticed);

*Georgia*: 1901, *Perry v. State*, 113 Ga. 936, 39 S. E. 315 (on evidence that a town is in the State, the county of its location will be noticed);

*Idaho*: Comp. St. 1919, § 3793 (county court to take judicial notice of first class city within the county); § 3859 (similar, for second class city);

*Illinois*: 1832, *Ross v. Reddick*, 2 Ill. 73 (the boundaries of a county, noticed); 1873, *Gooding v. Morgan*, 70 Ill. 275 (similar); 1876, *Gardner v. Eberhart*, 82 Ill. 316 (the subdivision of town and city property into blocks and lots, etc., noticed); 1897, *Sever v. Lyon*, 170 Ill. 395, 48 N. E. 926 (a homestead covering more than one lot; notice taken of the block and lot subdivision); 1898, *Gilbert v. Nat'l C. R. Co.*, 176 Ill. 288, 52 N. E. 22 (that an incorporated town is in a given county, noticed); 1900, *McCoy v. World's Columbian Exposition*, 186 Ill. 356, 57 N. E. 1043 (location of the Exposition in Chicago, noticed); 1901, *Gunning v. People*, 189 Ill. 165, 59 N. E. 494 (that the "Reliance Building" is located in the town of South Chicago, not noticed);

*Indiana*: 1877, *Steinmetz v. Versailles & O. Turnpike Co.*, 57 Ind. 457 (that a road between two towns would lie within a county, noticed); 1877, *Murphy v. Hendricks*, 57 Ind. 593 (Congressional survey of Northwest Territory, noticed); 1897, *Board v. State*, 147 Ind. 476, 46 N. E. 908 (the area and boundaries of a county, noticed);

*Kansas*: 1906, *Topeka v. Cook*, 72 Kan. 595, 84 Pac. 376 (location of an alley within city limits, not noticed); 1906, *State v. Ricksecker*, 73 Kan. 495, 85 Pac. 547 (that C. was a city



§ 2576. **Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identity and Authority; Genuineness of Official Documents.** It is the law that creates certain offices, and attributes certain duties and authorities to the incumbents; but whether the incumbent at a given time and place is a specific person depends on external political action, sometimes recorded or notorious, but sometimes neither. Courts have solved this application of the principle by considerations of practical good sense and convenience; which are, however, difficult to

of the second class, noticed); 1906, *Worden v. Cole*, 74 Kan. 226, 86 Pac. 464 (location of a railroad company as to a section of public land, under a Federal statute, noticed); 1920, *State v. Pack*, 106 Kan. 188, 186 Pac. 742 (that "Gardner" means a town in Johnson Co., Kansas, noticed);

*Louisiana*: 1921, *State v. McCredit*, 149 La. 825, 90 So. 210 (that certain towns are in a certain parish, noticed);

*Maine*: 1855, *Ham v. Ham*, 39 Me. 263 (county lines, and the towns therein, noticed); 1863, *Martin v. Martin*, 51 Me. 366 (that a town is within a certain county, noticed); 1897, *State v. Simpson*, 91 Me. 83, 39 Atl. 287 (the town of Waterville, noticed to be in the county of Kennebec);

*Massachusetts*: 1869, *Com. v. Desmond*, 103 Mass. 445 (that Suffolk county is a county of Massachusetts, noticed); 1894, *Com. v. Wheeler*, 162 Mass. 429, 38 N. E. 1115 (the county within which a town lay, not noticed); *Michigan*: 1864, *Cummings v. Stone*, 13 Mich. 70 (that not all of the St. Clair river is in Michigan, noticed);

*Minnesota*: 1888, *Quinn v. Champagne*, 38 Minn. 323, 37 N. W. 451 (the general system of governmental surveys, noticed); 1896, *Baumann v. Trust Co.*, 66 Minn. 227, 68 N. W. 1074 (location of a city within a given county, noticed); 1898, *Kretzschmar v. Meehan*, 74 Minn. 211, 77 N. W. 41 (that a piece of land is in a certain county, not noticed);

*Missouri*: 1894, *State v. Pennington*, 124 Mo. 388, 27 S. W. 1106 (county-seat, noticed); 1904, *Stealey v. Kansas City*, 179 Mo. 400, 78 S. W. 599 (that a certain avenue was within five miles of the city limits, not noticed);

*New Hampshire*: 1860, *Winnipiseogee Lake Co. v. Young*, 40 N. H. 420, 429 (counties and towns, noticed);

*New Mexico*: Annot. St. 1915, § 2963 ("organization and existence of any irrigation district" to be noticed, after filing of a copy of Board's order);

*North Carolina*: 1896, *State v. Snow*, 117 N. C. 774, 23 S. E. 322 (county-names, noticed as such);

*Oklahoma*: 1909, *Rea v. State*, 3 Okl. Cr. 281, 105 Pac. 386 (that no county of Pontotoc existed before State organization in 1907, noticed);

*Philippine Isl.* 1912, *U. S. v. Chua* Mo. 23 P. I. 233 (survey of city into blocks, etc.,

noticed); 1918, *U. S. v. Alabot*, 38 P. I. 698 (location of a municipality within the jurisdiction);

*Rhode Island*: 1855, *State v. Dunwell*, 3 R. I. 127 (the boundaries of the State as claimed by it, recognized, but not the boundary 'de jure');

*Texas*: 1866, *Wright v. Hawkins*, 28 Tex. 452, 472 (county-boundaries, noticed); 1880,

*Solyer v. Romanet*, 52 Tex. 562, 568 (that the city of Galveston is in the county of Galveston in Texas, noticed); 1896, *Hambel v. Davis*, 89 Tex. 256, 34 S. W. 439 (that a town is the county-seat, noticed); *Whitner v. Belknap*, 89 Tex. 273, 34 S. W. 594 (same); 1904, *Baker v. State*, 47 Tex. Cr. 482, 83 S. W. 1122 (Government ownership of a Federal fort on a city line, noticed, but not the precise boundary on the ground);

*Utah*: 1898, *McMaster v. Morse*, 18 Utah 21, 55 Pac. 70 (that a certain city was surveyed into lots, blocks, and streets, noticed);

*Virginia*: 1902, *Anderson v. Com.*, 100 Va. 860, 42 S. E. 865 (unincorporated town, not noticed);

*Washington*: 1905, *West Seattle v. W. S. L. & I. Co.*, 38 Wash. 359, 80 Pac. 549 (location of land within a city two-mile limit, not noticed); 1919, *Schmidt v. Powell*, 107 Wash. 53, 180 Pac. 892 (manner of survey, location of base lines, etc., noticed);

*Wisconsin*: 1859, *Atwater v. Schenck*, 9 Wis. 160 (the legal subdivisions of public lands, noticed).

Distinguish the question whether the fact will be noticed that there is *only one town* of a given name in existence or in a particular country: *Eng.* 1819, *Kearney v. King*, 2 B. & Ald. 301 (bill of exchange, declared on as drawn and accepted at Dublin for £542; the question being whether it was drawn for Irish or English money, the Court declined "to take judicial notice that there is only one Dublin in the world"; this was correct; but the Court should have presumed that a bill purporting to be in Dublin was in the Dublin of Ireland, on the same principle as the presumption of dating (*ante*, § 2520); this result is plain, and it is curious that the Court could not find a principle on which to reach it); *U. S.* 1849, *Andrews v. Hoxie*, 5 Tex. 171, 182 (promissory note payable in New Orleans; that this was in Louisiana, probably not noticed; here the proper solution was the same as in the preceding case).



reduce to a definite rule. All that can be said is that the incumbencies of the more important and notorious offices are judicially noticed, and that many of the lesser and local ones are not.<sup>1</sup>

But the field for the present principle, applied without other complications, is after all limited. In the first place, the *authentication of official documents* involves usually the additional element of the presumption of genuineness of the seal or signature; this has been elsewhere dealt with (*ante*, §§ 2161-2167); the pure question of judicial notice arises here only when the signature or seal is otherwise evidenced and the incumbency of the person remains alone to be proved. Again, the *presumption of office* from a notorious acting of a person in the office (*ante*, §§ 2168, 2535) does not rest on the present principle; it is invoked only when the present principle fails to aid the purpose.

§ 2577. **Same: (4) Official Acts; Elections, Census, Legislative Proceedings, etc.** It can seldom happen that the doing of an official act can properly be judicially noticed; it must usually be evidenced in the ordinary ways.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps an Executive *proclamation* should be noticed.<sup>2</sup> All Courts take

§ 2576. <sup>1</sup> To the following cases add most of those cited *ante*, §§ 2163-2168, where the same principle is involved; some of the following cases belong there also, but are here placed as illustrations of the usage:

ENGLAND: 1705, *Elderton's Case*, 2 *Ld. Raym.* 978, 980, *semble* (the authority of certain officers as justices of the peace, noticed); 1809, *R. v. Jones*, 2 *Camp.* 131 (the signatures being proved, the incumbency of persons signing as lords Commissioners of the Treasury was presumed).

UNITED STATES: *Fed.* 1854, *York & M. R. Co. v. Winans*, 17 *How.* 30 (the incumbency of the acting commissioner of patents, noticed); 1899, *Smyth v. New Orleans C. & B. Co.*, 35 *C. C. A.* 646, 93 *Fed.* 899 (signature of the government secretary of the Spanish colony of Louisiana, noticed); 1909, *Perovich v. Perry*, 9th *C. C. C.*, 167 *Fed.* 789 ("Bonaparte" noticed to be Charles J. B., U. S. Attorney-General, signed to a telegram refusing commutation of sentence); *Ala.* 1855, *Ingram v. State*, 27 *Ala.* 17, 20 (sheriffs of the several counties, noticed); *Cal.* 1908, *People v. Schmitz*, 153 *Cal.* xviii, 94 *Pae.* 419 (judicial notice not taken that S. was mayor of San Francisco; see the comments thereon, by Francis J. Henry, Chief Justice Beatty, and the present writer, collected at p. 1144 of the present writer's "Cases on Evidence," 2d ed., 1913, and quoted *post*, § 2583); *Ill.* 1874, *Thielmann v. Burg*, 73 *Ill.* 293 (jurat of a notary public, without seal; his incumbency noticed); *Ind.* 1900, *Crawford v. State*, 155 *Ind.* 692, 57 *N. E.* 931 (whether a person was a deputy of the attorney-general, not noticed); *La.* 1842, *Walden v. Canfield*, 2 *Rob. La.* 466, 469 (Edward Livingston's office as Senator

etc., noticed); *Miss.* 1857, *Lindsey v. Attorney-General*, 33 *Miss.* 508, 528 (changes in the governorship, noticed); *Mo.* 1900, *State v. Mason*, 155 *Mo.* 486, 55 *S. W.* 636 (number of members of the Legislature, noticed); *N. H.* 1866, *Wells v. Jackson I. M. Co.*, 47 *N. H.* 235, 260 (that D. L. M. was governor in 1826, noticed); *P. R.* 1916, *People v. Almodóvar*, 23 *P. R.* 703 (supervisor of elections, noticed); *S. D.* 1909, *Kellogg v. Finn*, 22 *S. D.* 578, 119 *N. W.* 545 (Federal surveyor-general, noticed); *Tenn.* 1827, *Bennett v. State*, *Mart. & Y.* 133, 135 (that T. B. C. was attorney-general, noticed); 1854, *Major v. State*, 2 *Sneed* 11 (the incumbency of one signing as clerk of court, noticed, as being a public officer); 1847, *State v. Evans*, 8 *Humph.* 110 ("John P. Campbell, attorney-general"; notice taken of the district for which he was officer; also that N. B. had resigned that office before the term ended, and that J. P. C. had been appointed); 1849, *State v. Cole*, 9 *Humph.* 626 (venire signed "B. H. G."; notice taken that he was clerk of the issuing county); 1874, *Currey v. State*, 7 *Baxt.* 154, 156 (that J. M. T., signing an indictment, was attorney-general, noticed); *Tex.* 1870, *Dewees v. Colorado Co.*, 32 *Tex.* 570 (that H. was Governor of the State, noticed); *W. Va.* Code 1914, c. 130, § 3 (the signature of any domestic judge or of the governor is to be noticed); *Wis.* 1865, *Ward v. Henry*, 19 *Wis.* 76, 81 (the incumbency of a deputy marshal, not noticed).

§ 2577. <sup>1</sup> In particular, by the official's statements (*ante*, §§ 1630-1684).

<sup>2</sup> *Can.* New Br. Consol. St. 1903, c. 127, § 51; *U. S.* 1920, *Krichman v. U. S.*, 2d *C. C. A.*, 263 *Fed.* 538 (that a railroad was



notice, in one or another aspect, of facts concerning *public elections*,<sup>3</sup> though this often involves rather the use of official reports as evidence (*ante*, §§ 1351, 1672). The acts of the *census* officials, in returning the data of population, are commonly said to be judicially noticed;<sup>4</sup> though this is almost always a misnomer for their admissibility in evidence (*ante*, § 1671).

The *proceedings* of the Legislature, as shown in its *journals*, are by some Courts noticed;<sup>5</sup> but this is an artificial theory; on principle, the proceedings as contained in the journal are evidenced by a printed copy or by a certified copy (*ante*, §§ 1662, 1680, 1684).<sup>6</sup>

under U. S. control in November, 1918, by the President's proclamation of Dec. 26, 1917, noticed); 1921, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Shikle*, 206 Ala. 494, 90 So. 900 (personal injury; notice taken of the Presidential proclamation of Dec. 26, 1917, taking control of railroads, etc., etc.); 1921, *Taylor v. W. U. Tel. Co.*, 207 Mo. App. 145, 231 S. W. 78 (President's proclamation taking over telegraph lines under acts of Congress, noticed).

But this usually involves rather the offer of the proclamation as evidence to a fact recited (*ante*, § 1662).

<sup>3</sup> Ill. St. 1905, May 18 (Primary Elections), § 119 (the holding of any election under this act on a primary election day, to be noticed in any municipality to which the act applies); *Ind.* 1897, *State v. Downs*, 148 Ind. 324, 47 N. E. 670 (that at a recent election a "Republican Ticket" was submitted, noticed); 1901, *Re Denny*, 156 Ind. 104, 59 N. E. 359 (number of votes cast for a constitutional amendment, noticed); *Ia.* 1863, *State v. Minnick*, 15 Ia. 123, 125 (that a general election was held on a certain date, and that certain officers were to be voted for, noticed); *Kan.* 1873, *Ellis v. Reddin*, 12 Kan. 306 (similar); *Md.* 1895, *Whitman v. State*, 80 Md. 410, 31 Atl. 325 (the result of a local-option election, not noticed); *Minn.* 1898, *State v. Stearns*, 72 Minn. 200, 75 N. W. 210 (reference had to election returns, etc., to determine whether a proper majority voted for a law); *Mo.* 1896, *Jackson Co. v. Arnold*, 135 Mo. 207, 36 S. W. 662 (the date of election to be held for President of the United States, noticed); *Nebr.* 1898, *Kokes v. State*, 55 Nebr. 691, 76 N. W. 467 (result of State and county elections, noticed); *N. Car.* 1909, *State v. Swink*, 151 N. C. 726, 66 S. E. 448 (special liquor election for a district; result not noticed); *Vt.* 1904, *State v. Scampini*, 77 Vt. 92, 59 Atl. 201 (time and result of an election noticed, when it determines the time of taking effect of a public statute); *Va.* 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 95, 17 S. E. 788 (that a certain district voted against licensing the sale of liquor, noticed).

<sup>4</sup> *Ala.* 1920, *Reynolds v. Collier*, 204 Ala. 38, 85 So. 465 (population of a county by the Federal census); *Cal.* 1883, *People v. Williams*, 64 Cal. 87, 91 (Federal census results); *Ill.* 1880, *Worcester National bank v. Cheney*,

94 Ill. 430 (county population by the census, noticed as not being within the first class); *Ind.* 1898, *Huntington v. Cast*, — Ind. —, 48 N. E. 1025 (the Federal census, as determining a city's population); *Ia.* 1893, *State v. Braskamp*, 87 Ia. 588, 54 N. W. 532 (the population of a county as shown by the last national census); 1898, *Bennett v. Marion*, 106 Ia. 628, 76 N. W. 844 (population of a city by the Federal census); 1906, *Ferrell v. Ellis*, 129 Ia. 614, 105 N. W. 993 (population of towns, by the Federal census, noticed); *Mo.* Rev. St. 1919, § 8868 (population of all cities, under State or Federal census, noticed); 1895, *State v. Marian Co. Court*, 128 Mo. 427, 30 S. W. 103 (Federal census); *Nebr.* 1893, *Brown v. Lutz*, 36 Nebr. 527, 530, 54 N. W. 860 (that a city is of the second class as to population); 1898, *Kokes v. State*, 55 Nebr. 691, 76 N. W. 467 (the Federal census and the State school census); *Or.* 1900, *Stratton v. Oregon City*, 35 Or. 409, 60 Pac. 905 (population of a city by the Federal census); *Vt.* 1906, *Page v. McClure*, 79 Vt. 83, 64 Atl. 451 (town population, noticed by the Federal census to be under 4,000).

<sup>5</sup> 1895, *State v. Hocker*, 36 Fla. 358, 18 So. 767; *Ga. Rev. C.* 1910, § 5797 (legislative journals, recognized without proof); 1918, *Amos v. Moseley*, 74 Fla. 555, 77 So. 619; 1915, *Earnest v. Sargent*, 20 N. M. 427, 150 Pac. 1018 (Senate journal, noticed); 1904, *Portland v. Yick*, 44 Or. 439, 75 Pac. 706; 1899, *Dane Co. v. Reindahl*, 104 Wis. 302, 80 N. W. 438. *Contra*: 1890, *Re Duncan*, 139 U. S. 449, 457, 11 Sup. 573; 1904, *Peckham v. People*, 32 Colo. 140, 75 Pac. 422; 1867, *Illinois C. R. Co. v. Wren*, 43 Ill. 17; 1867, *Bedard v. Hall*, 44 Ill. 91; 1867, *Grob v. Cushman*, 45 Ill. 119, 125; 1856, *Coleman v. Dobbins*, 8 Ind. 156, 161 (the legislative journals will not be searched by the Court, but must be laid before the Court like any other record); 1884, *Burt v. R. Co.*, 31 Minn. 472, 477 (they must be put in evidence in order to overthrow the enrolled statute); 1856, *Green v. Weller*, 32 Miss. 650, 686, 711 (Smith, C. J., diss.).

<sup>6</sup> The question usually arises in determining whether the journals overthrow the enrolled act (*ante*, § 1350).



§ 2578. **Judicial Proceedings: (1) Officers and Rules of Court.** Under the general principle for domestic officials (*ante*, § 2576), notice is taken of the incumbency of other *officers of Courts*; although here, as there, some uncertainty exists as to the extent to which this will include the inferior and more numerous officers, particularly justices of the peace and attorneys.<sup>1</sup> Under the general principle for domestic laws (*ante*, § 2572), notice is commonly taken of the various elements of *jurisdiction* as fixed by law,<sup>2</sup> of the *terms* of Court,<sup>3</sup>

§ 2578. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1705, *Elderton's Case*, 2 Ld. Raym. 978 (cited *ante*, § 2576); 1737, *Skipp v. Hooke*, 2 Stra. 1080 (that Sir John Willes was Chief Justice of the Common Bench; apparently not decided); 1845, *Van Sandau v. Turner*, 6 Q. B. 773, 786 (that Sir G. R. was a judge of the Court of Review in Bankruptcy; not decided).

UNITED STATES: *Ala.* 1858, *Ex parte Peterson*, 33 Ala. 74 (resignation of a circuit judge, noticed); 1899, *McCarver v. Herzberg*, 120 Ala. 523, 25 So. 3 (notice taken that T. G. W. was probate judge of P. Co.); *Ariz.* 1898, *Clark v. Morrison*, 5 Ariz. 349, 52 Pac. 985 (notice not taken of attorneys of a district Court not members of the Supreme Court bar); *Ark.* 1899, *Webb v. Kelsey*, 66 Ark. 180, 49 S. W. 819 (justice of the peace, noticed); *Cal.* 1892, *San Joaquin Co. v. Budd*, 96 Cal. 47, 51, 30 Pac. 967 (the acts of judges, noticed; but not the identity of a defendant having the same name as a judge); 1898, *People v. Ebanks*, 120 Cal. 626, 52 Pac. 1078 (notice taken that a person had ceased to be judge of a Superior Court); 1921, *Chavez v. Times-Mirror Co.*, 185 Cal. 20, 195 Pac. 666 (that P. J. W., not W. J. W., was a judge of the Superior Court, noticed); *Conn.* 1898, *State v. Travelers' Ins. Co.*, 70 Conn. 590, 40 Atl. 465 (whether a party is a citizen of the U. S., not noticed); *Ill.* 1867, *Graham v. Anderson*, 42 Ill. 514 (the justices of the peace in the county where the Court is sitting, noticed); 1895, *People v. McConnell*, 155 Ill. 192, 40 N. E. 608 (resignation of a circuit judge, noticed); 1895, *Ferris v. Bank*, 158 Ill. 237, 41 N. E. 1118 (that a person appearing as attorney is regularly licensed, noticed); 1898, *Gilbert v. Nat'l C. R. Co.*, 176 Ill. 288, 52 N. E. 22 (justice of the peace in the same county, noticed); 1904, *Fisher v. Chicago*, 213 Ill. 268, 72 N. E. 680 (county judge, noticed); 1913, *Rockford v. Mower*, 259 Ill. 604, 102 N. E. 1032 (county court notices the city clerks within the county); *Ky.* 1880, *Kennedy v. Com.*, 78 Ky. 447 (that S. E. D. was a circuit judge, noticed); 1825, *Despau v. Swindler*, 3 Mart. n. s. 705 (magistrates of the parishes, noticed); *La.* 1842, *Follain v. Lefevre*, 3 Rob. La. 13 (N. J., noticed as not being the name of any associate judge of a city Court); *Mass.* 1824, *Ripley v. Warren*, 2 Pick. 592, 596 ("It is at least questionable whether we have any judicial knowledge of the fact" that

J. M. W. was not the first justice of the Common Pleas Court); 1890, *Davis v. McEnaney*, 150 Mass. 451, 23 N. E. 221, *semble* (that E. B. G. was clerk of the Police Court of H. at the time of complaint filed, not noticed); *Pa.* 1858, *Kilpatrick v. Com.*, 31 Pa. 198 (that neither J. R. L. nor J. A. was president of the Court of Common Pleas, noticed; leading opinion, by Strong, J.); *S. C.* 1900, *Barnwell v. Merion*, 58 S. C. 459, 36 S. E. 818 (that a judge was in a certain judicial circuit, that he was assigned to a certain session, that a certain day was the first day of the session, and that a county was in the circuit, noticed); *Wis.* 1898, *Sutton v. R. Co.*, 98 Wis. 157, 73 N. W. 993 (notice not taken that an attorney had removed from the State)

Compare the cross-notice noted *ante*, § 2576.

<sup>2</sup> *England*: 1697, *Trigg v. Fletcher*, 1 Ld. Raym. 154 (that "the Exchequer in Wales is a Court," noticed); 1835, *Chitty v. Dendy*, 3 A. & E. 319, 324 ("that the County Court had no authority to give leave to plead double," noticed).

*United States*: *Fed.* 1919, *Brown v. U. S.*, 5th C. C. A., 257 Fed. 46 (murder; public use of a parcel of land ceded by Texas to the U. S., noticed, as affecting jurisdiction of the Court); *Ky.* 1851, *March v. Com.*, 12 B. Monr. 25 (city ordinances, as affecting the jurisdiction of a City Court, exceptionally noticed, because the case came up for review on a writ of error); *Mass.* 1830, *Newell v. Newton*, 10 Pick. 470 (jurisdiction of a foreign Court, not noticed on a plea of abatement for 'lis pendens'; otherwise, of a Court of the same government); *Nebr.* 1896, *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Hyatt*, 48 Nebr. 161, 67 N. W. 8 (boundaries of a judicial district, noticed).

<sup>3</sup> The following facts were noticed, except as otherwise noted: *Ala.* 1874, *Rodgers v. State*, 50 Ala. 103 (that the fall term of the Circuit Court of L. Co. begins on the fourth Monday of October and may last three weeks, etc.); *Cal.* 1852, *Ross v. Anstill*, 2 Cal. 183, 191 ("the times and places of holding the Courts," noticed, in particular aspects); *Ind.* 1877, *Dorman v. State*, 56 Ind. 454 (that a grand jury drawn for the January term was also for the preceding September term); 1877, *Spencer v. Curtis*, 57 Ind. 221, 227 (that the March term of a trial Court began on Mar. 1 and ended on Mar. 20); 1893, *Rogers v. Venis*,



and perhaps in general of the *rules* of superior Courts, though not those of inferior Courts.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2579. **Same: (2) Records of Proceedings.** The proceedings in a Court are constituted by the record, and this record originally took its name from the judicial memory ('recordari') which could be invoked for recalling those prior proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it seems to-day unreasonable, having regard to the general principle of judicial notice (*ante*, § 2565), to predicate an actual judicial knowledge of the proceedings in specific prior litigations (for they are commonly neither notorious, nor within the judge's duty of knowledge), or to expect the Court to make its own researches into the mass of the records for the purpose of informing itself. Accordingly, it may be said generally that a Court is not by any rule bound to take notice of the tenor of any legal proceedings (other than those transacting at the moment in its presence). Indeed, this much is assumed in the conceded rules of law which require the original of a judicial record to be produced in proof, and define the exceptions by which a copy is allowed to be used instead (*ante*, §§ 1215, 1216).

However, for reasons of convenience, where controversy is unlikely and the expense of a copy would be disproportionate, Courts are often found taking notice of the tenor or effect of some part of a judicial proceeding, without requiring formal evidence. Since this dispensation is not obligatory on the part of the Court, and since it must depend more or less on the practical notoriety and certainty of the fact under the circumstances of each case, little uniformity can be seen in the instances. It is often done for a part of the record in the *same proceeding*, or in a *prior stage of the same*

137 Ind. 221, 223, 36 N. E. 841 (that the first day of the September term of a circuit Court in 1891 was Sept. 7); 1895, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 141 Ind. 567, 40 N. E. 131 (the time of a circuit Court term); *Me.* 1858, *Kidder v. Blaisdell*, 45 Me. 461, 470 (that a session of Court before which a deposition was returnable was a Court of the proper county and State); *Mo.* 1911, *Nickey v. Leader*, 235 Mo. 30, 138 S. W. 18 (terms of court; a discussion showing how vain is frequently the practice of Supreme Judicial Cerebration on a simple matter of fact which could have been settled by a word from either counsel); *N. H.* 1859, *Fabyan v. Russell*, 38 N. H. 84 (attendance fees; the number of days of a Court's session at each term, etc.); *S. Car.* 1894, *State v. Toland*, 36 S. C. 515, 523, 15 S. E. 599 (that the November term was the only remaining term for the year); *Tex.* 1870-71, *Davidson v. Peticolas*, 34 Tex. 27, 35 (that a term of the District Court was held in Victoria Co. on the third Monday of February, etc.); *Va.* 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 94, 17 S. E. 788 (that a June term is not a quarterly term); *Wyo.* 1894, *Donovan v. Terr.*, 3 Wyo. 91, 2 Pac. 532 (that the first day of a term of a

county Court was Sept. 17, 1883, and that a jury-drawing on that date could have taken place in that Court only).

<sup>4</sup> *Eng.* 1845, *Van Sandau v. Turner*, 6 Q. B. 773, 784 (even assuming that the practice and rules of the long established Courts are to be noticed, held that the rules of a Court of Review in Bankruptcy, recently created by statute, would not be noticed); *U. S.* 1897, *Kindel v. LeBert*, 23 Colo. 385, 48 Pac. 641 (rules of a district Court, not noticed); 1914, *Schoening v. Miner*, 22 Haw. 196 (rule of trial Court; not decided); 1913, *Sixby v. Chicago C. R. Co.*, 260 Ill. 478, 103 N. E. 249 (rules of city Courts, not noticed; § 20 of Chicago Municipal Court Act, requiring that Court's rules to be noticed, held void as violating the uniformity clause of the Constitution); 1897, *Cornelieson v. Foushee*, 101 Ky. 257, 40 S. W. 680 (rules of a circuit Court, not noticed); 1860, *Scott v. Scott*, 17 Md. 78, 90 (that a cause was not regularly set for hearing under the rules of a circuit Court; the rules not noticed).

§ 2579. <sup>1</sup> *Ante*, § 2426, p. 3422, § 2450; Pollock & Maitland *History of the English Law*, II, 666.



*controversy*; less often for the record of a *distinct litigation*, especially when in another Court.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2580. **Notorious Miscellaneous Facts:** (1) **Commerce, Industry, History, Natural Science, etc.** Applying the general principle (*ante*, § 2565), especially in regard to the element of notoriousness, Courts are found noticing, from time to time, a varied array of unquestionable facts, ranging throughout the date of commerce, industry, history, and natural science.<sup>1</sup> It is unprofit-

<sup>2</sup> *California*: 1866, *Lake Merced W. Co. v. Cowles*, 31 Cal. 215 (petition for land-condemnation: notice not to be taken of the pendency of another petition in the same Court by another party for the same land); 1905, *Gay v. Gay*, 146 Cal. 237, 79 Pac. 885 (prior proceedings in the same litigation, noticed); 1906, *Southern P. R. Co. v. Lipman*, 148 Cal. 480, 83 Pac. 445 (U. S. land commissioner's letter relating to the litigation, noticed); 1913, *Sewell v. Johnson*, 165 Cal. 762, 134 Pac. 704 (the plaintiff brought an action in the nature of a creditor's bill based on a judgment in an action against P.; the trial court gave judgment for the plaintiff, and the defendant appealed; meantime the defendant had appealed from the original judgment and it was reversed; on the present appeal, the defendant suggested orally this reversal, but he had not pleaded it nor could have done so at the time of pleading; held, that the Court could and would take judicial notice of the reversal; this was a manful liberalization of the doctrine; yet the serious strain apparently necessary in the opinion to meet the opposing argument shows how narrow the tradition has been); *Florida*: 1907, *Winn v. Coggins*, 53 Fla. 327, 42 So. 897 (decree of a court in another county and another cause, not noticed); *Illinois*: 1894, *Lester v. People*, 150 Ill. 408, 37 N. E. 1004, *semble* (in contempt proceedings arising out of a civil case, the record of the original cause, if properly incorporated, may be considered on appeal); 1899, *Bailey v. Kerr*, 180 Ill. 412, 54 N. E. 165 (application to compel execution of a deed by an assignor for benefit of creditors; notice taken of an order approving the sale); 1907, *Waterbury Nat'l Bank v. Reed*, 231 Ill. 246, 83 N. E. 188 ('*scire facias*' to revive a judgment; the record noticed, without evidence thereof); *Indian Terr.* 1899, *Crawford v. Duckworth*, 3 Ind. T. 10, 53 S. W. 465 (that the defendant had in another proceeding in a Federal Court been declared not a Cherokee citizen, noticed); *Iowa*: 1862, *Baker v. Mygatt*, 14 Ia. 131, 133 (that an affidavit offered was duly executed, as known to the judge by its filing in another suit not between these parties; not noticed); 1899, *Lawless v. Stamp*, 108 Ia. 601, 79 N. W. 365 (recitals in a deed of a receiver appointed in another suit, not noticed); 1909, *Haaren v. Mould*, 144 Ia. 296, 122 N. W. 921 (in contempt, the order disobeyed may be noticed);

*Kansas*: 1876, *State v. Bowen*, 16 Kan. 475 (new trial, with plea of former jeopardy; the prior proceedings, noticed); *Kentucky*: 1877, *National Bank of Monticello v. Bryant*, 13 Bush 419 (litigation over a judgment; the records of other connected suits, not noticed); *Louisiana*: 1860, *Pagett v. Curtis*, 15 La. An. 451 (title to slaves; an order of Court pertaining to them, noticed); 1906, *Cumberland T. & T. Co. v. St. Louis, I. M. & S. R. Co.*, 117 La. 199, 41 So. 492 (that the plaintiff was a corporation duly organized under Kentucky statutes, this fact having been proved in another suit in another parish between the plaintiff and another defendant, not noticed; prior rulings repudiated); *Maine*: 1920, *Ladd v. Merrill*, 119 Me. 377, 111 Atl. 428 (assumpsit for personal services; record of an executrix' account, excluded because not relevant; general principle affirmed that "ordinarily a court will not go outside the record of the case before it, unless the records are offered in evidence"); *Maryland*: 1897, *Anderson v. Cecil*, 86 Md. 490, 38 Atl. 1074 (petition for a receiver against a buyer under judicial sale; the record in the suit for sale, not noticed); *Minnesota*: 1899, *Olson Co. v. Brady*, 76 Minn. 8, 78 N. W. 864 (garnishment proceedings; the judgment against the principal defendant, noticed); *Missouri*: 1875, *Banks v. Burnam*, 61 Mo. 76 (specific performance of a contract; a former suit for its rescission, not noticed); *New Jersey*: 1897, *State v. Electric Co.*, 61 N. J. L. 114, 38 Atl. 818 (contempt for disregarding a stay implied in a certiorari writ; notice not taken of the writ or other proceedings in certiorari, the present proceeding being "quasi-criminal"); *Philippine Isl.* 1915, *U. S. v. Chaveria*, 29 P. I. 527 (former conviction; record noticed on the facts); *Utah*: 1900, *State v. Bates*, 22 Utah 65, 61 Pac. 905 (proceedings in the same cause, noticed).

In some of these cases, what the Court really did was to declare that the production of a record from its own files was *sufficient evidence of genuineness*, under the rule of § 2158, *ante*.

§ 2580. <sup>1</sup> Some of these instances, in which notice was taken, are to be accounted for by their close approximation to facts of *law* (*ante*, § 2572); compare also the instances of a *jury's* judicial notice of matters of common knowledge (*ante*, § 2570):

ENGLAND: 1761, *Eddie v. East India Co.*, 2 Burr. 1216, 1228 (the custom of merchants is to



able, as well as impracticable, to seek to connect them by generalities and distinctions; for the notoriousness of a truth varies much with differences

be noticed, so far as it is "part of the law," per Wilmot, J.; but here the question was whether a special usage amounted to law); 1846, *Brandao v. Barnett*, 3 C. B. 519, 530 ("The general lien of bankers is part of the law merchant, and is to be judicially noticed, — like the negotiability of bills of exchange, or the days of grace allowed for their payment. When a general usage has been judicially ascertained and established, it becomes part of the law merchant, which Courts of justice are bound to know and recognize. Such has been the invariable understanding and practice in Westminster Hall for a great many years"); 1902, *Edelstein v. Schuler*, 2 K. B. 144, 155 (negotiable character of certain bonds, in trade usage, noticed).

**UNITED STATES: Federal:** 1875, *Brown v. Piper*, 91 U. S. 37 (patent for a freezing mixture to preserve fish; the method used in an ice-cream freezer, noticed, as "a thing in the common knowledge and use of the people throughout the country"); 1893, *Lyon v. U. S.*, 5 C. C. A. 359, 55 Fed. 964 (the usual existence of hair along with sheep-fleece, noticed); 1897, *Railroad & Tel. Cos. v. Board*, 85 Fed. 302, 308 (notice taken of an assessors' custom to rate property at a percentage of actual value); 1898, *Von Mumm v. Wittemann*, 85 Fed. 966 (notice taken that labels of champagne, as ordinarily served from a cooler, disappear before the bottle is shown to the customer); 1899, *Smyth v. New Orleans C. & B. Co.*, 35 C. C. A. 646, 93 Fed. 899 (existence noticed, as a matter of history, of a certain ancient Spanish land-register); 1899, *Cushman P. B. M. Co. v. Goddard*, 37 C. C. A. 221, 95 Fed. 664 (notice taken of the state of an art of manufacturing, on a matter of general interest, as shown by the Court's prior records); 1899, *United States v. Rio Grande D. & I. Co.*, 174 U. S. 690, 19 Sup. 770 (that the Rio Grande river at a particular place ceased to be navigable, not noticed); 1900, *Austin v. Tennessee*, 179 U. S. 343, 21 Sup. 132 (*contra* to *Austin v. State, Tenn.*, *infra*); 1906, *New Mexico v. Denver & R. G. R. Co.*, 203 U. S. 38, 27 Sup. 1 (law and custom of New Mexico as to the necessity of branding cattle, noticed); 1909, *Waters-Pierce Oil Co. v. Deselms*, 212 U. S. 159, 29 Sup. 270 (explosion of oil; a local usage to kindle a house-fire with coal-oil, held not improperly noticed);

**Alabama:** 1867, *Modawell v. Holmes*, 40 Ala. 391, 405 (depreciation of the currency during the war, not noticed); 1870, *Buford v. Tucker*, 44 Ala. 89, 91 (that contracts were made generally, at a certain period, with reference to Confederate currency, noticed); 1898, *Mobile & O. R. Co. v. Postal T. C. Co.*, 120 Ala. 21, 24 So. 108 (that a telegraph line of a certain sort is a public improvement, noticed); 1906,

*Malone v. LaCroix*, 144 Ala. 648, 41 So. 724 (territorial division of the Methodist Episcopal Church in two bodies, noticed);

**Alaska:** 1901, *Butler v. Good Enough Mining Co.*, 2 Alsk. 246 (customs as to locating and marking mines);

**California:** 1859, *Dutch Flat W. Co. v. Mooney*, 12 Cal. 535, *semble* (mining customs, not noticed); 1873, *Goldsmith v. Sawyer*, 46 Cal. 209 (rules of the San Francisco board of stock-brokers, not noticed); 1893, *Benson v. R. Co.*, 98 Cal. 45, 48, 32 Pac. 809 (the usual speed of trains, away from towns, noticed); 1895, *Fox v. Mining Co.*, 108 Cal. 369, 41 Pac. 308 (the nature of the relation between broker and customer in a certain class of transactions as shown by frequent decisions, noticed); 1898, *Scanlan v. R. Co.*, — Cal. —, 55 Pac. 694 (the art of mensuration as applied to railroad embankments, noticed);

**Colorado:** 1874, *Sullivan v. Hense*, 2 Colo. 424, 429 (mining rules and customs, sanctioned in mass by a statute, not noticed); 1893, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Headland*, 18 Colo. 477, 483, 33 Pac. 185 (custom of separation of passenger and freight trains, noticed);

**Connecticut:** 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 Conn. 123, 37 Atl. 80 (that "peach yellows" was a tree-disease, of a baneful and contagious nature, noticed); 1899, *Knowlton v. R. Co.*, 72 Conn. 188, 44 Atl. 8 (that the railroad between New Haven and New York was opened by Jan. 1, 1849, noticed as an "historic fact"); 1919, *Chiulla de Luca v. Park Com'rs*, 94 Conn. 7, 107 Atl. 611 (that a tall tree in a thunder shower is a place of greater danger, noticed);

**Columbia (Dist.):** 1894, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Snashall*, 3 D. C. App. 420, 433 (that passengers are commonly allowed to ride on the platform of a street-car, noticed);

**Georgia:** 1897, *Southern R. Co. v. Hagan*, 103 Ga. 564, 29 S. E. 760 (notice not taken of the duties of a railway superintendent in a particular town);

**Illinois:** 1898, *Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Jenkins*, 174 Ill. 398, 51 N. E. 811 (notice taken of a railroad custom in regard to clearance-card); 1910, *Ritchie v. Wayman*, 244 Ill. 509, 91 N. E. 694 (female labor law; see the citation *ante*, § 2559);

**Indiana:** 1867, *Neaderhouser v. State*, 28 Ind. 257, 267 (the navigability of the Ohio River, etc., noticed); 1892, *Matchett v. R. Co.*, 132 Ind. 334, 31 N. E. 792 (a brakeman's duties in general); 1904, *State v. Indianapolis Gas Co.*, 163 Ind. 48, 71 N. E. 139 (that natural gas no longer exists in quantities sufficient for heating purposes in Indianapolis, etc., noticed);

**Iowa:** 1905, *Dorr Cattle Co. v. Chicago & G. W. R. Co.*, 128 Ia. 359, 103 N. W. 1003 (that Texas cattle fever is contagious, noticed);



of period and of place. It is even erroneous, in many if not in most instances, to regard them as precedents. It is the spirit and example of the rulings, rather than their precise tenor, that is to be useful in guidance.

*Kansas*: 1905, *State v. Kelly*, 71 Kan. 811, 81 Pac. 450 (economic and political history of a statute, noticed); 1905, *Sun Ins. Office v. Western W. M. Co.*, 72 Kan. 41, 82 Pac. 513 (sundry facts about the burning of wool, noticed);

*Kentucky*: 1827, *Feemster v. Ringo*, 5 T. B. Monr. 336 (the value of paper of the State bank at a particular time, not noticed);

*Maryland*: 1894, *State v. Fox*, 79 Md. 514, 528, 29 Atl. 601 (that glanders is for human beings contagious, not noticed);

*Massachusetts*: 1889, *Com. v. King*, 150 Mass. 221, 224, 22 N. E. 905 (that the Connecticut river at a certain place was not a navigable water under Federal jurisdiction, noticed);

*Michigan*: 1897, *Haines v. Gibson*, 115 Mich. 131, 73 N. W. 126 (notice not taken that certain lake navigation would be closed on April 1);

*Minnesota*: 1899, *Rosted v. R. Co.*, 76 Minn. 123, 78 N. W. 971 (that exposure to cold is likely to cause inflammatory rheumatism, noticed); 1920, *State ex rel. Kile v. District Court*, 146 Minn. 59, 177 N. W. 934 (custom of re-planting missing hills, noticed);

*Mississippi*: 1854, *Turner v. Fish*, 28 Miss. 306, 311 (the Choctaw custom as to family headship, not noticed);

*Missouri*: 1893, *Atkeson v. Lay*, 115 Mo. 538, 557, 22 S. W. 481 (that a newspaper is published in a certain county, not noticed); 1913, *State v. Cummings*, 248 Mo. 509, 154 S. W. 725 (that "Louisville" was a town in Kentucky, not Missouri, noticed);

*Nebraska*: 1899, *Shiverick v. Gunning Co.*, 58 Nebr. 29, 78 N. W. 460 (destruction of a sign-painting of a bull; notice not taken that it was so indecent as to be a nuisance); 1901, *Erickson v. Schmill*, 62 Nebr. 368, 87 N. W. 166 (that gestation may exceed 280 days, not noticed); 1902, *Meyers v. Mentzer*, 63 Nebr. 427, 88 N. W. 662 (that potatoes, sugar-beets, and turnips are not the spontaneous product of the soil, noticed);

*New Jersey*: 1894, *Meyer v. Krauter*, 56 N. J. L. 696, 29 Atl. 426 (that trolley-lines had not in 1884 or 1885 superseded horse-cars, noticed);

*New York*: 1889, *Hunter v. New York O. & W. R. Co.*, 116 N. Y. 615, 621, 23 N. E. 9 (injury at a tunnel; that the sitting height of a man could not be four feet seven inches, noticed); 1893, *Rowland v. Miller*, 139 N. Y. 93, 34 N. E. 765 (that the business of an undertaker in a certain locality was offensive, noticed); 1898, *Baxter v. McDonnell*, 155 N. Y. 83, 49 N. E. 667 (the legal nature and powers of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, not noticed); 1904, *Viemeister v. White*, 179

N. Y. 235, 72 N. E. 97 (common belief that vaccination is effective, noticed);

*North Carolina*: 1904, *Burwell v. Brodie*, 134 N. C. 540, 47 S. E. 47 (season for planting cotton seed, noticed);

*North Dakota*: 1897, *Mathews v. R. Co.*, 7 N. D. 81, 72 N. W. 1085 (notice taken of a general custom to pasture on unsurveyed public lands);

*Oklahoma*: 1898, *Goodson v. U. S.*, 7 Okl. 117, 54 Pac. 423 (that in certain Indian reservations there are no resident freeholders qualified as jurors, noticed);

*Oregon*: 1880, *Lewis v. McClure*, 8 Or. 273 (local customs as to irrigation, given the force of law in mass by Federal statute, not noticed);

*Philippine Isl.* 1912, *Tan Chiong Sian v. Inchausti & Co.*, 22 P. I. 152, 163 (tides noticed); 1918, *Banatao v. Dabbay*, 38 P. I. 613 (navigability of boundary rivers, etc., noticed);

*Rhode Island*: 1893, *State v. South Kingston*, 18 R. I. 258, 273, 27 Atl. 606 (that many Seventh Day Baptists lived in a town S. H., and that they would not vote at an election held on Saturday, noticed);

*Tennessee*: 1898, *Austin v. State*, 101 Tenn. 563, 48 S. W. 305 (that tobacco in cigarette form is deleterious for smoking, noticed; they "are inherently bad, and bad only"); 1898, *Kerns v. Perry*, — Tenn. —, 48 S. W. 724 (that certain lowlands were overflowed by freshets, noticed);

*Washington*: 1896, *Mullen v. Sackett*, 14 Wash. 100, 44 Pac. 136 (that there are always taxes remaining unpaid, noticed); 1898, *Bartholomew v. Bank*, 18 Wash. 683, 62 Pac. 239 (notice not taken of the presence or absence of a bank in a town); 1899, *Prescott Irrig. Co. v. Flathers*, 20 Wash. 454, 55 Pac. 635 (that ordinary sagebrush soil needs irrigation to produce crops, noticed); 1899, *Hill Estate Co. v. Whittlesey*, 21 Wash. 142, 57 Pac. 345 (vestry powers in the Protestant Episcopal Church, not noticed);

*West Virginia*: 1876, *Simmons v. Trumbo*, 9 W. Va. 358, 364 (that Confederate notes were currency in the South during the war, that they were but little depreciated at a certain time, and were never made legal tender by the Confederacy, noticed); 1906, *Lewis, Hubbard & Co. v. Montgomery S. Co.*, 59 W. Va. 75, 52 S. E. 1017 (reasonable time for forwarding a check, etc.; customary hours of opening banks in Charleston, not before 9 A.M., noticed);

*Wisconsin*: 1899, *Katzer v. Milwaukee*, 104 Wis. 16, 79 N. W. 745, 80 N. W. 41 (rules of the Catholic Church, not noticed).



§ 2581. **Same: (2) Times and Distances.** Among the common instances, under this miscellaneous class, are the facts of time or season<sup>1</sup> and of distance;<sup>2</sup> though here also the quality of notoriousness will naturally vary with the place and the epoch, as well as with the greater or less accuracy involved in the facts desired to be noticed.

§ 2582. **Same: (3) Meaning of Words; Names of Intoxicating Liquors.** Another common class of instances, subject to the foregoing general considerations (*ante*, § 2580), is that of the meanings of words and phrases and written symbols. So far as these are notorious and unquestioned, they are constantly found noticed. Here, too, the local circumstances and the usage of the time must more than ever control the ruling. The popular familiarity with the fable of the Frozen Snake, and therefore the general understanding of the meaning of that epithet, may well be noticed in one period and community,<sup>1</sup> yet not in another. So much of special usage in commerce, religion, and industry, and of social life in general, is involved in the meanings of

§ 2581. <sup>1</sup> In some of these instances, the evidential admissibility of the record of the official meteorological bureau (*ante*, § 1639), or of histories and almanacs (*ante*, §§ 1698, 1699), was the real effect of the ruling:

ENGLAND: 1705, *Harvy v. Broad*, 2 Salk. 626 (that the calendar day for a writ being returnable fell on Sunday, noticed); 1705, *Davies v. Salter*, 2 Salk. 626 (similar).

UNITED STATES: *Ala.* 1859, *Sprowl v. Lawrence*, 33 *Ala.* 674, 684 (that the first Monday of August, 1853, was August 1, noticed); *Ark.* 1876, *Tomlinson v. Greenfield*, 31 *Ark.* 557 (that a crop of cotton named in a mortgage of January could not have been planted or in being at that time, noticed); *Cal.* 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 *Cal.* 618, 45 *Pac.* 860 (time of moon-rising, noticed); *Conn.* 1879, *State v. Morris*, 47 *Conn.* 179 (coincidence of days of the month and week, noticed, by refreshment of memory from the almanac); *Fla.* 1851, *Dawkins v. Smithwick*, 4 *Fla.* 158, 162 (that a day of the month fell on Sunday, noticed); *Ga.* 1903, *Dorough v. Equitable M. Co.*, 118 *Ga.* 178, 45 *S. E.* 22 (coincidence of the days of week and month, noticed); *Ill.* 1866, *Dixon v. Niccolls*, 39 *Ill.* 372, 385 (the time of maturity of grain crops in a certain region, not noticed); *Ind.* 1877, *Ross v. Boswell*, 60 *Ind.* 235 (that the use of a farm in cropping season is more valuable than in winter, noticed); *Ia.* 1881, *McIntosh v. Lee*, 57 *Ia.* 358, 10 *N. W.* 895 (that March 10, 1878, was Sunday, noticed); *Md.* 1853, *Sasscer v. Farmers' Bank*, 4 *Md.* 409, 420 (that Dec. 26 fell on Sunday, and that by commercial usage the day of payment of a note is in such cases anticipated, noticed); 1881, *Philadelphia, W. & B. R. Co. v. Lehman*, 56 *Md.* 209, 226 (that July 28, 1878, was Sunday, noticed); *Mass.* 1905, *Com. v. Bond*, 188 *Mass.* 91, 74 *N. E.* 293 (that the date of a forged

check was Sunday, not noticed); *Miss.* 1894, *Morgan v. Burrow*, — *Miss.* —, 16 *So.* 432 (day of the month, noticed); *N. J.* 1879, *Reed v. Wilson*, 41 *N. J. L.* 29, 32 (that the day of a note's maturity fell on Sunday, noticed, and also the law merchant as to days of grace); *N. Dak.* 1905, *Orvik v. Casselman*, 15 *N. D.* 34, 105 *N. W.* 1105 (adoption of standard time at a county-seat, noticed); *Okl.* 1901, *Payne v. McCormick Harvesting M. Co.*, 11 *Okl.* 318, 66 *Pac.* 287 (time of planting and harvesting annual crops, noticed).

<sup>2</sup> 1893, *Mutual Ben. L. Ins. Co. v. Robison*, 7 *C. C. A.* 444, 58 *Fed.* 723 (that the distance between Dubuque, Ia. and Asheville, N. C., exceeds 100 miles, noticed); 1893, *Pettit v. State*, 135 *Ind.* 393, 34 *N. E.* 1118 (that East Portland, Oregon, is distant 2398 miles from Crawfordsville, a place of trial in Indiana, noticed); 1921, *Hart v. Com.*, — *Va.* —, 109 *S. E.* 582 (location of the place of a crime, noticed to be within A. county, because less than 15 miles from S. city; a delectable morsel of quiddity); 1895, *Flumenthal v. Meat Co.*, 12 *Wash.* 331, 41 *Pac.* 47 (the distance between two towns, noticed); 1876, *Siegbert v. Stiles*, 39 *Wis.* 533, 536 (that two towns in the State were separated only by a river and were mutually accessible across the ice, noticed).

Compare § 2575, *ante* (location of towns, highways, etc.).

§ 2582. <sup>1</sup> 1848, *Hoare v. Silverlock*, 12 *Q. B.* 624 (defamation for applying to the plaintiff the "fable of the Frozen Snake"; held, that no innuendo was necessary, and that, in arrest of judgment, the jury might justly attribute a libellous sense; per Erle, J., that their well-known application in a libellous sense could be noticed).



words, that no generalizations are practicable. The rulings must depend upon good sense rather than upon precedent.<sup>2</sup>

A difficult case is presented when the word in question is used in more than one notorious meaning, particularly when it has by custom come to be applied artificially or evasively to objects not strictly entitled to it. Common instances of this sort are the names of *intoxicating liquors*. The true solution here is rather to be found in the theory of presumptions (*ante*, § 2490); first, because judicial notice becomes inappropriate as soon as a fact is in any manner practically dubitable, and, next, because the fact really sought in many such instances is the meaning or use in a concrete instance which could not be notorious. Of various possible meanings, one may be presumed to apply. There is naturally some variance of ruling. Apart from particular local circumstances, it would seem to be proper to hold that "alcohol" or "whiskey" or "gin" may be assumed to signify an intoxicating liquor,<sup>3</sup> and that a liquor termed "brandy" is intoxicating,<sup>4</sup> and even that "wine,"<sup>5</sup> or malt or hop liquors,<sup>6</sup> are intoxicating. But "beer" is a term applied to so many non-

<sup>2</sup> The following are examples: *England*: 1809, *Clementi v. Golding*, 2 Camp. 25 (it was held that "book" in a copyright act might apply to a single printed sheet).

*United States: Fed.* 1849, *U. S. v. Burns*, 5 McLean C. C. 23 ("fifty-cent pieces," etc., noticed); *Ala.* 1861, *Moseley's Adm'r v. Mastin*, 37 Ala. 216, 221 (that "adm'r" signified "administrator," noticed); 1905, *Barddell v. State*, 144 Ala. 54, 39 So. 975 (nickels, noticed to be U. S. coins); *Cal.* 1893, *Edwards v. Publishing Soc.*, 99 Cal. 431, 435, 34 Pac. 128 (that "sack," in discussing electoral corruption, means a corruption-fund, noticed); 1895, *Sinnott v. Colombet*, 107 Cal. 187, 40 Pac. 329 (meaning of "kindergarten" in a resolution of a school-board); 1898, *Hines v. Miller*, 122 Cal. 517, 55 Pac. 401 (meaning of "shafts," "tunnels," etc., noticed); *Haw.* 1913, *Hapai v. Brown*, 21 Haw. 499 (ordinary meaning of Hawaiian words is noticed in this jurisdiction); *Ill.* 1867, *Hill v. Bacon*, 43 Ill. 477 (that the S. E. forty of a quarter-section signified one of four forties, noticed); *Ind.* 1877, *Hart v. State*, 55 Ind. 599, 601 (that "bills" testified to were bank-bills, not presumed; on the theory that the Court would notice the existence of other kinds of "bills"); *Kan.* 1906, *State v. Nippert*, 74 Kan. 371, 86 Pac. 478 ("R. L. D." in a Federal revenue record, noticed to mean "retail liquor-dealer"); *Ky.* 1827, *Jones v. Overstreet*, 4 T. B. Monr. 547 ("money," noticed); *Mass.* 1838, *Com. v. Kneeland*, 20 Pick. 206, 239 (the meaning of "blasphemy," examined); *Minn.* 1879, *State v. Johnson*, 26 Minn. 316, 3 N. W. 982 (the orthography or pronunciation of Polish names, not noticed); *Or.* 1902, *Martin v. Eagle Creek D. Co.*, 41 Or. 448, 69 Pac. 216 (technical meanings are not noticed).

The rules about *expert opinion* of the mean-

ing of words (*ante*, § 1955), about the use of *dictionaries* in evidence (*ante*, § 1699) and about the *signatures of officers* on documents (*ante*, § 2168, n. 4) serve to dispose of many of these questions. Compare also the citations *ante*, § 2556 (construction of documents), and § 2569, n. 7 (judge's resort to dictionaries, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> 1922, *Johnson v. State*, — Ark. —, 238 S. W. 23 (whisky); *Del. Rev. St.* 1915, § 174 (Courts may notice that "spirituous, mixed, or fermented liquors, by their usual or common names, but not cider, are intoxicating"); 1877, *Schlicht v. State*, 56 Ind. 173, 176 (whisky); 1920, *Hiatt v. State*, 189 Ind. 524, 127 N. E. 277 (whisky; but not the intoxicating nature of a compound containing some whisky); 1921, *State v. Wallace*, — Me. —, 115 Atl. 609 (that alcohol is intoxicating, noticed); 1854, *Com. v. Peckham*, 2 Gray Mass. 514 (gin); 1901, *Peterson v. State*, 63 Nebr. 251, 88 N. W. 549 (whisky). So also: 1904, *The Kawaiiani*, 128 Fed. 879, 63 C. C. A. 347 ("oko-lehoa," in Hawaii, noticed to be intoxicating).

<sup>4</sup> 1893, *State v. Tisdale*, 54 Minn. 105, 55 N. W. 903 (that California brandy is intoxicating, noticed); 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 94, 17 S. E. 788 (that apple-brandy is intoxicating, noticed).

<sup>5</sup> 1901, *Caldwell v. State*, 43 Fla. 545, 30 So. 814 (that wine is intoxicating, noticed); 1907, *Nussbaumer v. State*, 54 Fla. 87, 44 So. 712 (like *Caldwell v. State*); 1897, *Starace v. Rossi*, 69 Vt. 303, 37 Atl. 1109 (Italian "sour wine," noticed as intoxicating).

Otherwise, where the description implies different ingredients: 1898, *Loid v. State*, 104 Ga. 726, 30 S. E. 949 (that home-made blackberry wine is intoxicating, not noticed).

<sup>6</sup> *Contra*: 1877, *Shaw v. State*, 56 Ind. 188 (malt liquors); 1894, *People v. Rice*, 103 Mich. 350, 61 N. W. 540 ("hop pop").



intoxicating drinks that evidence of its qualities in a given instance may well be required.<sup>7</sup>

§ 2583. **Future of the Doctrine of Judicial Notice.** The doctrine of Judicial Notice contains the kernel of great possibilities, as yet not used, for improving trial procedure in the courts of to-day. Professor Thayer pointed this out many years ago:<sup>1</sup> "Courts may judicially notice much which they cannot be required to notice. That is well worth emphasizing; for it points to a great possible usefulness in this doctrine, in helping to shorten and simplify trials. It is an instrument of great capacity, in the hands of a competent judge; and it is not nearly as much used, in the region of practice and evidence, as it should be. . . . The failure to exercise it tends daily to smother trials with technicality and monstrosly lengthens them out."

Why has this principle not been adequately used by judges?

One reason is that they apparently forget that (as Professor Thayer says) they *may* notice much that they cannot be *required* to notice by general rule made in advance. *E. g.*, a rule requiring them to notice always the incumbency of a sheriff's office might go too far; but they may in a given case be justified in declaring a specific sheriff to be notorious; and so on, in a thousand classes of facts.

Another reason is that they apparently forget that the principle allows them to notice in *specific* cases, even though no *general rule* for the whole class of such cases could be laid down. This is because notoriety *in fact* is the principle, and facts are not susceptible of inflexible rule. The precedents of former judges, in declining to notice or assenting to notice specific facts, do

<sup>7</sup> Differing views have been judicially expressed, but usually declining notice: *Ala.* 1876, *Adler v. State*, 55 *Ala.* 16, 23 (that lager beer is a malt liquor, noticed); *Colo.* 1915, *Moffitt v. People*, 59 *Colo.* 406, 149 *Pac.* 104 (that "beer" is intoxicating, noticed); *Ga.* 1892, *Bell v. State*, 91 *Ga.* 227, 231, 18 *S. E.* 288 (that rice-beer is intoxicating, not noticed); 1902, *Du Vall v. Augusta*, 115 *Ga.* 813, 42 *S. E.* 265 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed); *Ill.* 1886, *Kansberg v. People*, 120 *Ill.* 21, 23, 8 *N. E.* 857 (similar); *Nebr.* 1883, *Kerkow v. Bauer*, 15 *Nebr.* 150, 155, 18 *N. W.* 27 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed; except so far as defined by statute); 1901, *Peterson v. State*, 63 *Nebr.* 251, 88 *N. W.* 549 (that whiskey and beer are intoxicating, noticed); *N. Y.* 1889, *Blatz v. Rohrbach*, 116 *N. Y.* 450, 22 *N. E.* 1049 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed; Bradley, J., diss.); *Okl.* 1922, *Stanley v. State*, — *Okl. Cr.* —, 205 *Pac.* 775 ("Choctaw beer," not noticed); *R. I.* 1877, *State v. Goyette*, 11 *R. I.* 592 (that "lager bier" is a malt liquor, noticed); 1881, *State v. Beswick*, 13 *R. I.* 211, 220 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed); *S. Dak.* 1894, *State v. Sioux Falls Brewing Co.*, 5 *S. D.* 39, 45, 58

*N. W.* 1 (that beer is a malt or intoxicating liquor, not noticed; because there are many sorts); 1894, *State v. Church*, 6 *S. D.* 89, 60 *N. W.* 143 (that lager beer is intoxicating, noticed); *Tex.* 1906, *Potts v. State*, 50 *Tex. Cr.* 368, 97 *S. W.* 477 (that beer means an intoxicating liquor, not noticed); *W. Va.* 1911, *State v. Durr*, 69 *W. Va.* 251, 71 *S. E.* 767 ("temperance beer").

§ 2583. <sup>1</sup> "Preliminary Treatise on Evidence" (1898), 300.

Coleridge, J., in *Lumley v. Gye* (1853), 2 *El. & Bl.* 266: "Judges are not necessarily to be ignorant in Court of what everybody else, and they themselves out of Court, are familiar with; nor was that unreal ignorance considered to be an attribute of the Bench in early and strict times. We find in the Year Books the judges reasoning about the ability of knights, esquires, and gentlemen to maintain themselves without wages; distinguishing between private chaplains and parochial chaplains from the nature of their employments; and in later days we have ventured to take judicial cognizance of the moral qualities of Robinson Crusoe's 'man Friday' (1 *Dow P.C.* 672) and Æsop's 'frozen snake' (12 *Q. B.* 624)."



not restrict the present judge from noticing a new fact, provided only that the new fact is notorious to the community.

The following controversy, now of historic interest only, serves to illustrate the above general truth:

1908, *People v. Schmitz*, 153 Cal. xviii, 94 Pac. 1908. In Bank. Appeal from Superior Court, City and County of San Francisco; Frank H. Dunne, Judge. Eugene E. Schmitz having been convicted of extortion, and the conviction having been reversed by the District Court of Appeals on his appeal, the People apply to the Supreme Court for a hearing and determination of the appeal. Application denied.

PER CURIAM. "This is an application by respondent for a hearing and determination of this appeal by this Court, after decision and judgment by the District Court of Appeal for the First District. . . . The Court is unanimous in the opinion that the District Court of Appeal was correct in its conclusion that the indictment was insufficient, in that it did not show that the specific injury to the property of the restaurant keepers threatened by the defendant was an 'unlawful injury.' . . . § 520 of the Penal Code provides that the threat must be such as is mentioned in the preceding section, and the preceding section, in subdivision 1 (the only subdivision here applicable), says that the threat must be one 'to do an *unlawful injury* to the person or property of the individual threatened, or to any relative of his, or member of his family.' . . . What is meant by the term 'unlawful injury'? Giving to such term the broadest meaning possible under the authorities, it can include no injury that is not of such a character that, if it had been committed as threatened, it would have constituted an actionable wrong. . . .

"Applying this to the case at bar:

"It was within the lawful power of the police commissioners of San Francisco to withhold from the restaurant keepers a license to sell liquors at retail in their restaurant, no matter how great the pecuniary loss thereby caused to the business. It was also lawful for any person, by legitimate persuasion or argument, to endeavor to prevail upon the commissioners to refuse the license, although such person was actuated by a malicious intent to injure the restaurant keepers and cause them pecuniary loss. The conjunction of the lawful persuasion, inducing the lawful refusal of the license, with the malicious motive instigating the persuasion, would not convert the lawful act of refusing the license into an unlawful one, nor make the resulting injury unlawful or actionable. . . . In this case the indictment charges that the defendant threatened the restaurant keepers that, if money was not paid him, he would prevent them from obtaining or receiving a retail liquor license and thereby destroy or render unprofitable their restaurant business, of which the sale of liquors at retail formed the remunerative part. It is not stated how the defendant proposed to do this, or how it was understood by the parties that he would accomplish it, whether by fair persuasion and lawful influence over the commissioners, or by duress, menace, fraud, or undue influence exercised upon them. This is not a case where it is sufficient to charge an offense in the language of the statute defining it. *The Court cannot assume*, in the absence of any averment to that effect, *that Schmitz was mayor of the city* and as such in a position to exercise power and undue influence over the members of the board of police commissioners; or that *Ruef, his co-defendant, was a person in practical control of the city government* because of his political activity and influence, or otherwise able to exert an undue influence over the board; nor can it be inferred, or presumed, when it is not so charged, that the defendant threatened to prevent the issuance of the license by unlawful means, and not solely by lawful and innocent persuasion and argument. . . .

"The attorneys for the respondent . . . introduce their application with the statement that they are convinced that upon a full discussion of the case 'it will be found and decided by this Court that levying blackmail upon licensed businesses by the mayor and the political boss of a metropolitan community is a crime under the law of California, and



should not go unwhipped of justice.' This is a gross misstatement of the case and of the question to be decided, as presented by the indictment. We again emphasize the fact that the indictment *does not aver* that Schmitz *was* mayor, or that Ruef *was* a political boss, or that either of them had any power, or influence, or control over the police commissioners, or that they threatened to use such power, influence, or control in preventing the issuance of a license. . . .

"The application for a hearing and determination of this appeal by this Court, after decision and judgment by the District Court of Appeal of the First District, is denied."

*Letters on the Case of People v. Schmitz:*

(1) Chief Justice BEATTY. *Letter in the Sacramento Bee* (April 29, 1908). . . . "Though the facts that Schmitz was Mayor and Ruef the political boss of the city may have been as notorious in San Francisco as the fire or the earthquake, no lawyer would contend for a moment that they were facts of which a Court could take judicial notice, in passing upon the sufficiency of the indictment. If these facts [that Schmitz was Mayor and Ruef the political boss] had been alleged in the indictment, then indeed the Court could have considered in that connection the provisions of the charter of San Francisco which empowered the mayor to appoint and remove at will the members of the board of police commissioners, and which invest that board with discretion to issue or refuse licenses to sell liquors at retail. And if by means of these allegations or otherwise it had been made to appear that the defendants had caused the applicants to believe that they could and would influence the police commissioners to reject their application regardless of its merits, I have never doubted that the indictment would have been sufficient. For this would have been a threat to do an unlawful injury — an injury which by reason of the corrupt abuse of official power employed to accomplish it would have been actionable. But the Court, being obliged, as I have shown, to look exclusively to the force of the indictment in determining its validity, and seeing only a charge against two private persons, could see nothing unlawful in the threatened injury. For it could not be assumed that such private persons could prevent the issuance of the license otherwise than by adducing good reasons why, in the exercise of their discretion, the Police Commissioners should refuse it, — as, for instance, that the applicants were unfit persons, or their house an improper place. To oppose and prevent the issuance of a license on such grounds would be perfectly lawful, in the absence of a corrupt or malicious motive. And therefore the question finally resolved itself into this: Did the purpose of the threat (the extortion of money) convert into an unlawful injury that which in the absence of such motive would not have been criminal or actionable?"

"Why, it has been asked, could not the Court have taken into consideration the notorious facts that Schmitz was Mayor of the city and Ruef the political boss of the party in possession of the city government? The answer to this question is that . . . the Legislature of California, by a constitutional law, has enumerated the facts of which Courts may take judicial notice in the absence of proof, and *by necessary implication has excluded all others*, including the fact that any particular person is Mayor or political boss of any particular city. Necessarily, facts which must be proved, where they are matters of proof, must be alleged where they are matter of allegation, as in an indictment."

(2) *Francis J. Heney* (Assistant District Attorney of San Francisco). *Letter in the San Francisco Bulletin* (October 31, 1908). "In the opinion of Chief Justice BEATTY in *People v. Schmitz*, and his subsequent letter, . . . it is thus, in fact, conceded by the learned Chief Justice that if the indictment had alleged that Schmitz was mayor, it would have been sufficient, because the Court could then have taken judicial notice in that connection of the influence which the mayor possesses officially over the board of police commissioners, and that, therefore, when Schmitz threatened the French restaurant-keeper that he could and would prevent him from securing a license, the intended victim was justified, as a reasonable man, in believing that Schmitz possessed the power, through his official position, to influence the police commissioners, whom Schmitz had appointed and over whom



he possessed the power of removal, to reject the French restaurant-keeper's application for a license, regardless of the merits of the application.

"Yet the Court's refusal to take notice in this case ignores the plain language of the Code of Civil Procedure, § 1875, subdiv. 5, enumerating the kinds of facts of which judicial notice may be taken: 'The accession to office and the official signatures and seals of office of the *principal officers of government* in the legislative, *executive* and judicial departments of the State and the United States.' The Political Code, § 343, provides, 'The number and designation of the civil executive officers are as follows: A governor; . . . such other *officers* as fill offices created by or under the authority of *general laws for the government of counties, cities and towns*, or of the *charters* and special laws affecting the same.' Surely the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, the largest in the State, is a 'principal officer' of the executive department of this State, as thus defined. Moreover, in a decision of this Supreme Court rendered in 1896, the broad principle is stated that 'the judicial notice which Courts take of matters of fact embraces those facts which are within common knowledge of all, or are of such general notoriety as to need no evidence in their support.' . . .

"Furthermore, the opinion of the Court indicates that the justices did look into the record of the case to some extent and consequently the Court must have known that the defendant Schmitz was fully apprised, at the time of the trial, of the fact that he was charged with having used the prestige of his official position, together with the prestige of Abe Ruef as political boss, to extort money from the French restaurant-keepers under a threat to prevent them from securing the liquor licenses. The case was tried on behalf of the defendant by able and learned attorneys upon this very theory. It cannot be possible, therefore, that any substantial injustice was done the defendant by not alleging these evidentiary facts in the indictment. Surely no substantial injustice was done to the defendant by failing to inform him in the indictment that he was the mayor of this city and county at the time he is alleged to have made the threat and to have extorted the money. He could not have been taken by surprise by our failure to allege that fact, for he is presumed to be sane and to be gifted with at least ordinary senses of sight and hearing and at least an ordinary memory."

(3) *John H. Wigmore. Letter in the Liberator* (Vol. I, No. 8, San Francisco, Jan. 30, 1909). "I have read the letter of Mr. Heney, and the letter of the Chief Justice, and have re-read the opinion of the Court in *People v. Schmitz*. The Chief Justice's letter and Mr. Heney's reply turn largely on the legal rule of judicial notice. The learned Chief Justice finds himself iron-bound by the rules of that subject. But the whole spirit of the rules is misconceived by him. Their essential and sole purpose is to relieve the party from proof, — that is, from proof of facts which are so notorious as not to need proof. When a party has not averred or evidenced a fact which later turns out, in the Supreme Court's opinion, to be vital, the rule of judicial notice helps out the judge by permitting him to take the fact as true, where it is one so notorious that evidence of it would have been superfluous. Now these helping rules are not intended to bind him, but the contrary, *i. e.*, to make him free to take the fact as proved where he knows the proof was not needed. Moreover, it follows, since these rules cannot foresee every case new times and new conditions will create, that they can always receive new applications. The precedents of former judges, in noticing specific facts, do not restrict present judges from noticing new facts, provided only that the new fact is notorious to all the community. For example, the unquestioned election of William H. Taft as President of the United States is notorious; but no man named William H. Taft has ever before been elected President, and no judicial precedent has noticed the fact. Yet no Court would hesitate to notice this new notorious fact. . . .

"If, then, a man named Schmitz was notoriously Mayor of San Francisco, and a man named Ruef was notoriously its political boss, at the time in question, that is all that any Court needs; and the doctrine of judicial notice gives it all the liberty it needs. It is conceivable that a trial judge might sometimes hesitate in applying this doctrine of notoriety, because the trial Court might fear that the Supreme Court would not perceive the notoriety.



But there never need be any such hesitation in a Supreme Court, if that Court does see the notoriety.

“And this is just where the learned Chief Justice is to be criticised. He does not for a moment ask or answer the question, ‘Did we actually, as men and officers, believe these facts to be notoriously so?’ but refers to certain mechanical rules, external to his mind. What that Supreme Court should have done was to decide whether they under the circumstances did actually believe the facts about the status of Schmitz and Ruef to be notorious. In not so doing, they erred against the whole spirit and principle of judicial notice. And Mr. Heney’s demonstration that there is nothing in the codes to forbid them is complete: for, of course, the Code of Procedure, in telling them (Section 1875) that ‘the Courts take judicial notice of the following facts,’ simply gave them a liberty of belief as to those specified facts, and did not take away their liberty as to other unspecified facts. . . .

“We do not doubt that there are dozens of other Supreme Justices who would decide, and are to-day deciding, in obscure cases, just such points in just the same way as the California case. And we do not doubt that there are hundreds of lawyers whose professional habit of mind would make them decide just that way if they were elevated to the bench to-morrow in place of those other jurists who are now there. The moral is that our profession must be educated out of such habits of thought. Such disputations were the life of scholarship and of the law three hundred years ago. They are out of place to-day. There are enough rules of law to sustain them, if the Court wants to do so. And there are enough rules of law to brush them away, if the Court wants to do that.

“ALL THE RULES IN THE WORLD WILL NOT GET US SUBSTANTIAL JUSTICE IF THE JUDGES HAVE NOT THE CORRECT LIVING MORAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SUBSTANTIAL JUSTICE.”

With these aspects of the principle in mind, a large field opens for reducing the tedious proof of notorious facts. The principle is an instrument of a usefulness hitherto unimagined by judges. Let them make liberal use of it; and thus avoid much of the needless failures of justice that are caused by the artificial impotence of judicial proceedings.



## TITLE II: JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS

## CHAPTER XCI.

§ 2588. Theory of Judicial Admissions.

§ 2589. Distinction between Judicial Admissions, Pleadings, Demurrers to Evidence, and Estoppels.

§ 2590. Effect of Judicial Admissions: (1) Conclusive upon the Party making.

§ 2591. Same: (2) Prohibitive of Evidence by the Party benefiting.

§ 2592. Same: (3) Validity as a Waiver of Unconstitutionality or other Illegality.

§ 2593. Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials.

§ 2594. Form of the Admission; Who is authorized.

§ 2595. Avoiding a Continuance by Judicial Admission; Testimony of an Absent Witness of the Opponent.

§ 2596. Admissions of the Genuineness of a Document.

§ 2597. Future of the Doctrine of Judicial Admissions.

§ 2588. **Theory of Judicial Admissions.** An express waiver, made in court or preparatory to trial, by the party or his attorney, conceding for the purposes of the trial the truth of some alleged fact, has the effect of a confessory pleading, in that the fact is thereafter to be taken for granted; so that the one party need offer no evidence to prove it, and the other is not allowed to disprove it. This is what is commonly termed a solemn — *i. e.* ceremonial or formal — or *judicial admission*, or *stipulation*. It is, in truth, a substitute for evidence, in that it does away with the need for evidence.<sup>1</sup>

This judicial admission is sharply marked off from the ordinary or quasi-admission — which indeed does not deserve to bear the same name. The latter is merely an item of evidence, available against the party on the same theory on which a self-contradiction is available against a witness. The distinctions between the two have already been examined (*ante*, §§ 1048, 1057). It is enough to note that, as to the effect, the latter is not conclusive; while

§ 2588. <sup>1</sup> *Ante*: *Eng.* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 103 ("The consent of the parties concerned must be sufficient and concluding evidence of the truth of such fact, for they [the jury] are only to try the truth of such facts wherein the parties differ"); *U. S.* 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (Brickell, C. J.: "Agreements of this character, intelligently and deliberately made, — whether made by the parties in person, or by their attorneys or solicitors of record, — are encouraged and favored. Their purpose, generally, is to save costs, and to expedite trials, by relieving from rules of practice which in the particular case are deemed mere hindrances, or the dispensation with mere formal proof, or, as in the present case, the admission of uncontroverted facts, of the existence of

which the parties are fully cognizant"); 1855, *Com. v. Desmond*, 5 Gray Mass. 80, 82 (Thomas, J., referring to the prosecuting attorney's admission on trial that a witness was an accomplice: "Admissions made in the course of judicial proceedings are substitutes for, and dispense with, the actual proof of facts"); 1916, *Baldwin v. McDonald*, 24 Wyo. 108, 156 Pac. 27 (citing the above text with approval).

In Louisiana the Continental law has left its mark: *La. Rev. Civ. C.* 1888, § 2291 ("Judicial confession is the declaration which the party, or his special attorney in fact, makes in a judicial proceeding. It amounts to full proof against him who has made it. It cannot be divided against him. It cannot be revoked," unless made through error of fact, but not for error in law).



as to its form, it may be either implied or express, and need not be either written or made in open court.

§ 2589. **Distinction between Judicial Admissions, Pleadings, Demurrers to Evidence, and Estoppels.** The effect which a judicial admission produces is of course an effect shared in common with certain other legal acts. In the first place, a *pleading* may by confessing a fact place it beyond the range either of needing evidence or of permitting dispute; and an omission to plead in denial may have the same consequence. The distinction between a pleading and a judicial admission seems to consist in the circumstances that the latter may be made after issues joined or trial begun, and may thus counteract or diminish the effect of a pleading; that it is not a part of the required statements defining the parties' issues; and that it is therefore not subject to the rules of time, form, amendment, and the like, which govern the allegations of pleading.

Furthermore, a *demurrer to evidence*, the object of which is to raise a question of law, will like other demurrers have the effect of admitting the facts conclusively (*ante*, § 2495). It has the further common feature, frequent in a judicial admission, that it is made after issues formed and trial begun; but nevertheless it is in this respect, like a motion to arrest judgment, merely a postponed pleading.

Finally, an *estoppel* has the similar effect of concluding all dispute of the fact. But here the distinction is that the estoppel is an obligation made by a rule of substantive law, of the same general class as contracts and representations;<sup>1</sup> that it requires some additional act of detriment on the part of the obligee; and that it is absolute as regards the permanent legal relations of the parties, and not merely hypothetical or relative to the procedure of a particular litigation between them.

§ 2590. **Effect of Judicial Admissions; (1) Conclusive upon the Party making.** The vital feature of a judicial admission is universally conceded to be its *conclusiveness* upon the party making it, *i. e.* the prohibition of any further dispute of the fact by him, and of any use of evidence to disprove or contradict it.<sup>1</sup> In view, however, of the commendable purpose which leads (or ought to lead) to the voluntary making of admissions, it is always and properly said that the trial Court may in discretion relieve from this consequence:<sup>2</sup>

§ 2589. <sup>1</sup> Harriman on Contracts, 2d ed., § 618.

§ 2590. <sup>1</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 2588, and the following: *Fed.* 1880, *Oscanyan v. Arms Co.*, 103 U. S. 261, 263 ("Any fact, bearing upon the issue involved, admitted by counsel, may be the ground of the Court's procedure equally as if established by the clearest proof"; here the counsel's opening statement of the issues was taken as sufficient for directing a verdict for the defendant); *Ala.* 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600; *Conn.* 1905, *State v. Marx*, 78 Conn. 18, 60 Atl. 690 (*Oscanyan v. Arms Co.*, U. S., approved);

*Mont.* 1920, *Lewis v. Lambros*, 58 Mont. 555, 194 Pac. 152 (stipulation as to title to a building, the subject of false representations; Hurley, J.: "This Court, as well as the trial Court, must be bound by the stipulations of the parties"); *N. Y.* 1868, *Paige v. Willet*, 38 N. Y. 28, 31 ("A party who formally and explicitly admits by his pleading that which establishes the plaintiff's right will not be suffered to deny its existence or to prove any state of facts inconsistent with that admission").

<sup>2</sup> 1918, *Larson Jr. Co. v. Wrigley Jr. Co.*, 7th C. C. A., 253 Fed. 914 (unfair trade; quoted *supra*); *Prestwood v. Watson*, *Ala.*,



19.8, BAKER, J., in *Larson Jr. Co. v. Wrigley Jr. Co.*, 7th C. C. A., 253 Fed. 914 (unfair competition by imitation of trade-label; each party claimed priority, and also asserted damage by confusion to customers): "In support of the counterclaim, no proof was made of actual confusion. Counsel, however, contend that an inference to that effect may be drawn from Larson's testimony that after 'Doublemint' appeared his sales of 'Wintermint' materially decreased. True, but a falling off in business may result from fair as well as from unfair competition. — Insistence comes to be centered on the proposition that the trial Court was not at liberty to determine the question of actual or probable confusion from a comparison of the packages and from the lack of direct testimony, but was bound to take that issue as settled by Wrigley's averments and admissions in court; and counsel cite many cases as supportive of their contention.

"Undoubtedly a litigant has no cause for complaint if the Court accepts his solemn and sworn admissions in pleadings and testimony as true. But we must reject the contention that his adversary has the right to *compel* the Court to do so. Otherwise a Court could be forced by parties to decide moot, feigned, and collusive cases, or a Chancellor might be made to proceed with an equitable accounting between partners who had stolen the property they brought into court. But the present case on the counterclaim is not moot, nor feigned, nor collusive, and it presents a question of Larson's legitimate property rights. . . . From a comparison the learned District Judge found that the distinctive words and marks were so dominating that the careless purchaser, desiring 'Larson's Wintermint,' would not be misled into taking 'Wrigley's Doublemint.' With nothing before us but the packages, we would be inclined to concur in the finding. But the record contains also Wrigley's averment in his bill that confusion had arisen. There was no proof to support that averment and Larson's parallel averment. But Larson's counsel may have relied on the stipulation of fact in bill and counterclaim to save hunting up and bringing in witnesses of wrongful sales. Furthermore, Wrigley and another interested with him gave testimony as experts in the gum business that confusion was likely to result from the similarities; and so there is a basis for at least the possibility that Wrigley's averment of fact and his expert opinion may be true, and that Larson's diminished sales came from Wrigley's simulation of the 'Wintermint' package.

"In such a situation, the rule, in our judgment, is this: In a real and legitimate controversy, a party should be left within the knot of his averments in pleadings and admissions in testimony, unless the Court can find an absolute demonstration from other evidence in the case, or from facts within judicial notice, like the laws of physics, etc., that under no circumstances could the averments and admissions be true."

§ 2591. **Same: (2) Prohibitive of Evidence by the Party benefiting.** A fact that is judicially admitted *needs* no evidence from the party benefiting by the admission.<sup>1</sup>

But his evidence, if he chooses to offer it, *may* even be *excluded*; first, because it is now as immaterial to the issues as though the pleadings had marked it out of the controversy (*ante*, § 2); next, because it may be superfluous and merely cumber the trial (*ante*, §§ 1863, 1904); and furthermore, because the added dramatic force which might sometimes be gained from the

*supra*, note 1; 1913, *McCarty v. Kepreta*, 24 N. D. 395, 139 N. W. 992, 1005 (affidavits of the defendant and his attorney, filed with a motion to remand after the record had gone up on appeal, held a judicial admission, but subject to the appellate court's discretion to relieve from the ordinary consequences); *Seely v. Cole*, Oh., *post*, § 2594, note 2.

Under the Louisiana Code, quoted *ante*, § 2588, the rule may be different: 1842, *Kohn v. Marsh*, 3 Rob. La. 48, 49 (consent to an order appointing experts; opinion not clear).

§ 2591. <sup>1</sup> 1897, *Charlton v. Kelly*, 24 Colo. 273, 50 Pac. 1042, *semble* (if complete, serves to dispense with production of affidavit required).



examination of a witness to the fact (a force, indeed, which the admission is often designed especially to obviate) is not a thing which the party can be said to be always entitled to. Nevertheless, a colorless admission by the opponent may sometimes have the effect of depriving the party of the legitimate moral force of his evidence; furthermore, a judicial admission may be cleverly made with grudging limitations or evasions or insinuations (especially in criminal cases), so as to be technically but not practically a waiver of proof. Hence, there should be no absolute rule on the subject; and the trial Court's discretion should determine whether a particular admission is so plenary as to render the first party's evidence wholly needless under the circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The rulings have naturally been variant: *Federal*: 1898, *Jones v. Allen*, 85 Fed. 523, 29 C. C. A. 318 (admitted); *Alabama*: 1890, *Dean v. State*, 89 Ala. 46, 8 So. 38 (absent witness's testimony, excluded); *Columbia (Dist.)*: 1921, *McHenry v. U. S.*, — D. C. App. —, 276 Fed. 761 (murder; not decided; here the offer was not broad enough); *Delaware*: 1905, *State v. Powell*, 5 Pen. Del. 24, 61 Atl. 966 (photographs of wounds on the deceased, shown, though the defendant admitted the location and character of the wounds); *Illinois*: 1920, *People v. Munday*, 293 Ill. 191, 127 N. E. 364 (knowing receipt of deposits in an insolvent bank; the defendant having admitted the facts that on the date named the bank was insolvent and that he knew it, nevertheless "he could not prevent the introduction of competent evidence to prove every element of the crime charged by admitting a part of them"); *Iowa*: 1908, *State v. Lewis*, 139 Ia. 405, 116 N. W. 606 (homicide; the accused having admitted the killing on the ground of self-defence, the State was allowed to prove the nature of the wound); 1918, *State v. Strum*, 184 Ia. 1165, 169 N. W. 373 (knowing receipt of stolen goods; former acts, excluded where defendant admitted that whatever was done was done intentionally); 1903, *State v. Vance*, 119 Ia. 685, 94 N. W. 204 (indecent exposure; former acts, excluded, where defendant admitted that the act, if done at all, was done intentionally); 1918, *State v. Strum*, 184 Ia. 1165, 169 N. W. 373 (receiving stolen machinery; defendant having admitted formally that "whatever act he did with which he is charged he did it designedly; that it was not accidental or unintentional or through inadvertence; and that whatever he did he did knowingly," a prior similar act was held improperly admitted; this case illustrates the preposterously artificial application of the principle); 1920, *State v. Kappen*, 191 Ia. 19, 180 N. W. 307 (knowing receipt of stolen goods; defendant's admission of knowledge and intent, construed as to its effect in excluding the prosecution's evidence; impolicy of the above two rulings here revealed; *State v. Strum* and

*State v. Vance* repudiated; "the majority of the Court are not satisfied as to such holding"; *Salinger, J.*, diss.); *Maine*: 1897, *Dunning v. M. C. R. Co.*, 91 Me. 87, 39 Atl. 352 (*Savage, J.*: "It does not lie in the power of one party to prevent the introduction of relevant evidence by admitting in general terms the fact which such evidence tends to prove, if the presiding justice, in his discretion, deems it proper to receive it. Parties, as a general rule, are entitled to prove the essential facts, — to present to the jury a picture of the events relied upon. To substitute for such a picture a naked admission might have the effect to rob the evidence of much of its fair and legitimate weight"); *Massachusetts*: 1849, *Com. v. Miller*, 3 Cush. 243, 250 (other forged notes, to show guilty knowledge, the knowledge being admitted); 1876, *Com. v. Costello*, 120 Mass. 358, 364, 369 (an admission in Court of the fictitious nature of a name on an appeal bond); 1896, *Stetson's Will*, — Mass. —, 44 N. E. 1085 (admission of a will's execution does not prevent the calling of the subscribing witnesses as such); 1898, *Whiteside v. Lowney*, 171 Mass. 431, 50 N. E. 930 (in the trial Court's discretion the evidence may be excluded); *Michigan*: 1912, *Eesley Light & P. Co. v. Commonwealth P. Co.*, 172 Mich. 78, 137 N. W. 663 (certified copy of articles of incorporation, admitted, though incorporation was conceded); *Oregon*: 1916, *State v. Finnegan*, 81 Or. 538, 160 Pac. 370 (ownership of personality; other evidence received); *Pennsylvania*: 1917, *Com. v. Wendt*, 258 Pa. 325, 102 Atl. 27 (murder; defendant's admission of a former crime, evidencing motive, held not to preclude proof by the prosecution); *South Dakota*: 1920, *State v. Morgan*, 42 S. D. 517, 176 N. W. 35 (incest; defendant's admission of an illegal marriage, held not to exclude other evidence of it, under the circumstances); *Texas*: 1920, *Hardy v. State*, — Tex. Cr. App. —, 217 S. W. 939 (murder; defendant's statement, "I killed two men, and twelve men will try me; and if they convict me and don't watch me, I will get some of them"; the defendant having admitted the killing in his testimony, his above utterance was excluded;



§ 2592. **Same: (3) Validity as a Waiver of Unconstitutionality or Other Illegality.** The effect of an admission being to remove the fact from controversy, precisely as if no plea or demurrer had raised the issue, it follows that *any fact whatever* may be the subject of an admission, provided only that the fact does not require the Court to violate those rules of public policy which even a contract could not override or displace:<sup>1</sup>

1885, EARL, J., in *New York, L. & W. R. Co.'s Petition*, 98 N. Y. 447, 453 (stipulation as to commissioners of valuation): "Parties by their stipulations . . . may stipulate away statutory, and even constitutional rights. . . . All such stipulations not unreasonable, not against good morals or sound public policy, have been and will be enforced; and generally, all stipulations made by parties for the government of their conduct or the control of their rights, in the trial of a cause or the conduct of a litigation, are enforced by the Courts. . . . So it is not true that parties cannot enter into stipulations which in some sense will bind and control the action of the Courts."

1905, HAMERSLEY, J., in *State v. Marx*, 78 Conn. 18, 60 Atl. 690: "It is true that in the trial of capital offences the Court will and should exercise care and discretion in respect to admissions made by the accused or by his counsel in open Court, and that every conviction should be supported by some evidence produced in Court, and so even a plea of guilty will not ordinarily be accepted. But it is not true that an accused cannot, either by himself or his counsel, in his own interest, admit some facts which, though necessary for the State to establish, may be consistent with his innocence and the defence he maintains. Subject to the reasonable discretion of the Court in the protection of the accused against improvidence or mistake, admissions during the trial by the accused or his counsel as to the genuineness of a document; admissions as to the testimony a witness not produced would give if present, or the fact his testimony would establish, voluntarily made for the purpose of preventing a postponement of the trial; and admissions in the interest of the accused limiting the issue to the material facts upon which alone his successful defence depends, have long been permitted under our practice, and we think their lawfulness and propriety rest upon sound reason."

Consequently, the admission may relate to a fact proved by *evidence otherwise inadmissible* (by virtually waiving objection to it);<sup>2</sup> or to a fact which the

the reasoning by which this conclusion was reached must be read to be appreciated; it required the quotation of poetry to justify it); *Washington*: 1903, *Smith v. Seattle*, 33 Wash. 481, 74 Pac. 674; *Wisconsin*: 1913, *Serdan v. Falk Co.*, 153 Wis. 169, 140 N. W. 1035 (employer's knowledge of employee's incompetence; reputation admitted).

If admitted, however, it may of course not be sufficient ground for a new trial: 1898, *Davis v. Emmons*, 32 Or. 389, 51 Pac. 652.

§ 2592. <sup>1</sup> Judicial admissions are of course equally effective in *criminal cases* as in civil cases (apart from such questions as the waiver of jury trial): *Can. Dom. R. S.* 1906, c. 146, Crim. C. § 978 ("any accused person," by himself or counsel, "may admit any fact alleged against the accused so as to dispense with proof thereof");

*U. S.* 1905, *State v. Marx*, 78 Conn. 18, 60 Atl. 690 (quoted *supra*); 1901, *Com. v. McMurray*, 198 Pa. 51, 47 Atl. 952. The contrary has been declared: 1878, *Clayton v.*

*State*, 4 Tex. App. 515, 519; but this is carrying tenderness for the accused too far.

<sup>2</sup> 1921, *Kinley v. Largent*, 187 Cal. 71, 200 Pac. 937 (waiver of surviving opponent's incompetency); 1896, *Brady v. Nally*, 151 N. Y. 258, 45 N. E. 547, 549 (the argument that "in view of the conclusive nature of the presumption that the written agreement embraced the entire contract, the parol evidence, although received by consent, cannot overcome that presumption," rejected); 1903, *Thompson v. F. W. & R. G. R. Co.*, 31 Tex. Civ. App. 583, 73 S. W. 29 (hearsay admitted by stipulation); 1910, *United States, for use of E. L. C. Co. v. U. S. Fidelity & G. Co.*, 83 Vt. 278, 75 Atl. 280; 1914, *Newberry v. Watts*, 116 Va. 730, 82 S. E. 703 (said of a failure to object; here, to hearsay).

The statutes for depositions (*ante*, §§ 1380, 1411) frequently assume this. Compare also the citations *ante*, § 13 (waiver of objection).

In *Shaw v. Roberts* (1818), 2 Stark. 445, Abbott, C. J., acknowledged that an "admis-



Court might have *noticed as non-existent*;<sup>3</sup> or to a rule of Evidence *constitutionally sanctioned* for the benefit of the waiving party;<sup>4</sup> or to some other rule constitutionally protected, in particular, to the failure to observe the requirements for *legislative proceedings in a statute's enactment*.<sup>5</sup> Any other result would seem to be inconsistent with the general spirit and practice of our litigation, which judicially leaves to the parties the framing of their pleadings and issues and determines no objection not expressly raised by one of them. Moreover, unless the admission is expressly rejected at the outset by the opponent, the judicial refusal to recognize it would often permit unseemly breaches of faith by counsel who have agreed to the admission.

Whether *by contract* before litigation arisen a party may provide for the *non-enforcement* of a rule of Evidence, or for its *wavier*, or for the adoption of a *stricter rule* than the usual one, is considered *ante*, § 7a.

§ 2593. **Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials.** Whether a judicial admission continues to have effect for a subsequent part of the same proceedings, including a new trial, has been the subject of some opposition of

sion of particular facts" was to be enforced; his further remark, that "it was the business of the Court to guard against the reception of improper evidence, independently of any admissions whatever, and it was the duty of the Court to reject illegal evidence, although the parties on both sides should agree to it," was ill-worded or ill-reported; what he meant was that one counsel's introduction of improper evidence was not such an acknowledgment of its propriety as disentitled him to object to further inquiries on that subject; *i. e.*, the principle of curative admissibility (*ante*, § 15).

But the present principle does not mean that a party can force the trial judge to admit illegal evidence simply because the opponent *fails to object*: 1912, *Electric Park Amusement Co. v. Psychos*, 83 N. J. L. 262, 83 Atl. 766 (cited more fully *ante*, § 2484).

<sup>3</sup> *Contra*: 1887, *Attorney-General v. Rice*, 64 Mich. 385, 391, 31 N. W. 203 (admission that a mere title, with no bill, was introduced cannot avail if the Court sees the fact to be contrary); 1917, *Wright Lumber Co. v. Ripley Co.*, 270 Mo. 121, 192 S. W. 996 (title to an island in the Current river; counsel admitted the navigability of the river; but "this Court will take judicial notice of the navigable and nonnavigable waters of this State. . . . Current river is not navigable, and we are not going to let this case go off on the admission that it is, and hereafter be plagued in future by an opinion of this Court holding that it is such, because, perhaps, counsel for plaintiff in this case admitted it to be such"; yet must the Court have committed itself, by deciding for either party, to any fact admitted for that case by either party?).

<sup>4</sup> Cases cited *post*, § 2595, note 6; 1910, *State v. Vanella*, 40 Mont. 326, 106 Pac. 364 (confrontation of witnesses).

<sup>5</sup> 1892, *Norman v. Kentucky Board*, 93 Ky. 537, 547, 563, 20 S. W. 901 (by demurrer; Pryor, J., diss.).

*Contra*: *Fed.* 1833, *Allen v. McKean*, 1 Sumner 276, 314 (Story, J.: "The people have a deep and vested interest in maintaining all the constitutional limitations upon the exercise of legislative powers; and no private arrangements between such parties can supersede them"; treating as null the acquiescence of a board of trustees in an unconstitutional act. It would seem that in such a case the Court does not have to commit itself to a ruling of unconstitutionality; it can merely ignore the statute for the case in hand); *Colo.* 1904, *Peckham v. People*, 32 Colo. 140, 75 Pac. 422 (like *Happel v. Brethauer*, Ill., *infra*); 1906, *Anderson v. Grand V. I. D.*, 35 Colo. 525, 85 Pac. 313; *Ill.* 1873, *Happel v. Brethauer*, 70 Ill. 166 (stipulation for trial, that a statute was not constitutionally passed); 1918, *People ex rel. Reinhart v. Herrin*, 284 Ill. 368, 120 N. E. 274 (quo warranto against a board of education; stipulation as to the constitutionality of a statute, held not binding); *Mo.* 1899, *State v. Aloe*, 152 Mo. 466, 54 S. W. 494 (similar); *N. J.* 1884, *Passaic Co. v. Stevenson*, 46 N. J. L. 173, 186, 193 (admission of lack of notice of a bill, as making an act unconstitutional, not received); *N. Car.* 1895, *Carr v. Coke*, 116 N. C. 223, 239, 22 S. E. 16 (admission of fraud in enrolment, not received); 1901, *Commissioners v. De Rosset*, 129 N. C. 275, 40 S. E. 43 (legislative journals); 1904, *State v. Armour Packing Co.*, — N. C. —, 47 S. E. 411 (agreed statement of facts cannot be used to overthrow an enrolled statute, if otherwise it is unimpeachable).

Compare the cases on the conclusiveness of enrolled statutes (*ante*, § 1350).



rulings, although the orthodox English practice plainly answered in the affirmative.<sup>1</sup>

§ 2593. <sup>1</sup> ENGLAND: 1832, *Elton v. Larkins*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 196 (Tindal, C. J., reserved the point, but thought that such an admission "applies to every trial which may take place by direction of the Court"); 1835, *Doe v. Bird*, 7 C. & P. 6 (receivable on a new trial, unless there was a limitation to the particular trial); 1836, *Langley v. Oxford*, 1 M. & W. 508 (debt on a bond with a new special plea; the prior admission as to handwriting, received, the issue as to handwriting being not altered; "the admission is to be used on the trial of the cause, whenever the trial takes place; no matter whether it be the first or the second trial").

CANADA: 1884, *McDonald v. Murray*, 5 Ont. 559, 575 (copy agreed to be used instead of the original, admitted on a second trial, per Wilson, C. J.).

UNITED STATES: *Federal*: 1898, *Scaife v. Land Co.*, 33 C. C. A. 47, 90 Fed. 238 (admission in a bill of exceptions in a former trial, received); 1904, *Brown v. Arnold*, 131 Fed. 723, C. C. A. (stipulation held to be in force after judgment rendered); *Alabama*: 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (usable on a new trial; quoted *supra*); *Colorado*: 1906, *Moynahan v. Perkins*, 36 Colo. 481, 85 Pac. 1132 (admission at a former trial, received; but with the wholly erroneous addition that it may be left to the jury to determine its effect); *Connecticut*: 1873, *Perry v. Simpson W. M. Co.*, 40 Conn. 313 (admitted on a second trial; yet allowed to be disputed by denying their correctness); *Florida*: 1905, *Mugge v. Jackson*, 50 Fla. 235, 39 So. 157 (admissible, when "not limited to a particular occasion or temporary object"); *Georgia*: 1897, *Luther v. Clay*, 100 Ga. 236, 28 S. E. 46 (an agreed statement of facts used at a former trial; admissible, unless otherwise expressly provided; but conclusive only for the trial in hand); 1898, *King v. Shepard*, 105 Ga. 473, 30 S. E. 634 (usable on the second trial, but not binding); *Iowa*: 1910, *Neidy v. Littlejohn*, 146 Ia. 355, 125 N. W. 198 (admission as to proposed testimony, made to avoid a continuance, is not receivable on a second trial, except to avoid a continuance); *Kansas*: 1882, *Central Branch U. P. R. Co. v. Shoup*, 28 Kan. 394 (the former admission held binding, if so intended, for the second trial; but the jury are erroneously allowed to determine what the intention was); *Maine*: 1878, *Holley v. Young*, 68 Me. 215 (the admission binds for a new trial, unless the judge sees fit to relieve; "it would be wiser to adopt some rule by which more admissions could be obtained, than to allow parties at their own will and pleasure to withdraw the few now made"); *Maryland*: 1905, *Wells & M. Council v. Littleton*, 100 Md. 416, 60 Atl. 22 (an ad-

mission at a former trial is irrevocable, except for mistake, etc.; here, of by-laws); *Massachusetts*: 1860, *Central B. Co. v. Lowell*, 15 Gray 106, 128 (an agreement for the use of certain computations by an expert accountant, held to apply by intention to a second trial); *New Jersey*: 1901, *Gallagher v. McBride*, 66 N. J. L. 360, 49 Atl. 582 (stipulation as to the manner of payments for property, effective on a second trial); *New York*: 1885, *New York, L. & W. R. Co.'s Petition*, 98 N. Y. 447, 453 (stipulation as to commissioners of valuation, enforced for a new appraisal after an appeal reversing the original award); 1904, *Stemmler v. New York*, 179 N. Y. 473, 72 N. E. 581 (binding, when not expressly limited to the first trial); *North Carolina*: 1902, *Cutler v. Cutler*, 130 N. C. 1, 40 S. E. 689, *semble* (excluded on a second trial; but here the admission had been conditioned on another fact, which no longer existed); 1920, *Turner v. Southeastern G. & L. S. Co.*, 179 N. C. 457, 102 S. E. 849 (not revocable pending appeal); *Oklahoma*: 1899, *Consolidated S. & W. Co. v. Burnham*, 8 Okl. 514, 58 Pac. 654 (agreed statement of facts, effective for a second trial); 1915, *Loman v. Paullin*, 51 Okl. 294, 152 Pac. 73 (deed by an insane person; stipulation as to insanity in another trial not specified, excluded); 1917, *Oklahoma R. Co. v. Thomas*, 63 Okl. 219, 164 Pac. 120 (personal injury; stipulation at a former trial, waiving conditionally plaintiff's privilege against physical examination, held not to be a complete waiver for the second trial); *Pennsylvania*: 1900, *Acme Mfg. Co. v. Reed*, 197 Pa. 359, 47 Atl. 205 (stipulation as to a deposition, not binding in a second action after a non-suit in the first); *Vermont*: 1800, *Pearl v. Allen*, 1 Tyl. 4 (admission of execution on a former trial, "when not attached to the record," insufficient).

Whether, though not binding, they are at least receivable as *ordinary admissions* (as laid down in some of the rulings above) depends on the general principles applicable to the use of pleadings as ordinary admissions (*ante*, §§ 1063-1067).

Of course the admission would not bind between *other parties*: 1847, *Holman's Heirs v. Bank of Norfolk*, 12 Ala. 369, 408 (admission by stipulation of the present complainant's counsel in a prior suit over the same mortgage on a bill by other parties against the present complainant, held not binding here; "it would be a most alarming doctrine that an admission made by counsel in the progress of a cause was proof of the fact so admitted through all future time"); 1863, *Wilkins v. Stidger*, 22 Cal. 231, 238 (action for medical services to an injured person; defendant's attorney's admission of the correctness of the plaintiff's bill, in an



It is true that the pleadings of the parties continue to be binding (subject only to the usual rules for amendment); but the very distinction between pleadings and judicial admissions is that the latter are not subject to the fixed requirements of the former (*ante*, § 2589). On the other hand, a regard for fairness of practice indicates the opposite result; for after the case of the party benefiting by the admission has been exposed at the first trial, the party making the admission may discover that the proof of the fact would have been difficult or onerous, and by withdrawing the admission he may thus obtain a factitious advantage which the law hardly contemplates as the consequence of a new trial. Moreover, the ignorance which may have led to an ill-advised admission is no more a cause for revoking it at the second trial than at the first; and in any event the judge's discretion may grant relief (*ante*, § 2590) in the one instance as well as the other. It would seem, having regard to the voluntary and contractual nature of the act, that the duration of its effect, no less than its scope, depends, after all, on the intent of the parties; that this implied intent may vary with the circumstances; and that where no special circumstances indicate the contrary, the intention should be implied to extend the effect of the admission to all subsequent parts of substantially the same litigation between the same parties, including a new trial:

1896, BRICKELL, C. J., in *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600: "Such agreements are sometimes made to avoid continuances, or for some specific purpose, and, by their terms, are limited to the particular occasion or purpose, and, of course, lose all force when the occasion has passed, or the purpose has been accomplished. But if by their terms they are not limited, and are unqualified admissions of facts, the limitation is not implied, and they are receivable on any subsequent trial between the parties. . . . And when made in open court, and reduced to writing, intended to be used, and used, as an instrument of evidence, and is without limitation as to time or occasion, it cannot be withdrawn or retracted at the mere will of either party. The presence of witnesses to prove the facts stated is waived. If the witnesses had been produced and testified, and they died, or became insane, or removed without the jurisdiction of the court, on a subsequent trial evidence of their testimony would be admissible. The admission of the facts dispensing with evidence, if it could be disregarded by either party on any subsequent trial, in the event of inability to produce witnesses to establish them, would often convert such admissions into instruments of fraud and injury. When they are made deliberately and intelligently, in the presence of the Court, and reduced to writing, they are of the best species of evidence; and parties cannot be permitted to retract them, as they are not permitted at pleasure to retract admissions of fact made in any form. If they are made improvidently and by mistake, and the improvidence and mistake be clearly shown, the Court has a discretion to relieve from their consequences, — a discretion which should be exercised sparingly and cautiously."

§ 2594. **Form of the Admission; Who is Authorized.** (1) It is sometimes declared, in statute, court-rule, or decision, that all agreements between attorneys or counsel, including presumably judicial admissions, *must be in*

action by the defendant against the tortfeasor before arbitrators for the injury, excluded).

The following ruling seems unsound: 1857, *Thompson v. Thompson*, 9 Ind. 323, 333 (con-

clusiveness not given to those made "pending the suit," but only to those "made in court for the purposes of the trial").



*writing*, in order to obtain enforcement from the Courts;<sup>1</sup> and no doubt, for admissions made out of court, or at least prior to trial and out of court, the rigid policy of the law should look only at written admissions, even though professional honor could not suffer such a distinction. But that policy need not apply to admissions *made in court*, where the memory of the judge and the presence of other members of the bar could be trusted for verification in case of misunderstanding and the oral habit of the proceedings is inconsistent with such an exception.<sup>2</sup>

(2) It is of the nature of an admission, plainly, that it be by intention an act of waiver, relating to the opponent's proof of the fact, and not merely a statement of assertion or concession, made for some independent purpose;<sup>3</sup> in particular, a statement made for the purpose of *giving testimony* is not a judicial admission.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2594. <sup>1</sup> Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 283 ("An attorney or counselor shall have authority to bind his client in any of the steps of an action or proceeding by his agreement filed with the clerk or entered upon the minutes of the court, and not otherwise"); Ga. Rev. C. 1910, § 4955 (authority to make "any agreement in relation to the cause, made in writing"); *Ida.* Comp. St. 1919, § 6573 (like Cal. C. C. P., § 283); *Me.* 1878, *Holley v. Young*, 68 Me. 215 ("reduced to writing or incorporated into a record of the case"); *Mass.* Gen. L. 1920, c. 231, § 72 ("No agreement of attorneys relative to an action or proceeding shall be valid unless in writing," except for postponements of trial calendar); *Or.* Laws 1920, § 1083, par. 1 (like Cal. C. C. P., § 283); *Utah:* Comp. L. 1917, § 326 (like C. C. P., § 823); *Wash.* R. & B. Code 1909, § 130.

*Contra:* 1911, *St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Webster*, 99 Ark. 265, 137 S. W. 1103, 1199 (may be oral, unless a statute or rule of court requires writing; here applied to an agreement made while taking a deposition; Wood, J., diss., in a convincing opinion).

The authentication of the attorney's signature may be aided by principles already considered (*ante*, §§ 2167, 2578).

<sup>2</sup> 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (Brickell, C. J.: "That the agreement was not signed by the parties or by the counsel was not of importance. Their signatures were not necessary to impart to it validity. Private agreements between parties or their attorneys, relating to the proceedings in a pending cause, — agreements not made in the presence of the Court, — the rules of practice require, shall be in writing, and signed by the party to be bound thereby. The rule has never been supposed to have any application to agreements or admissions made in the presence of the Court. Upon such agreements or admissions, made verbally, every court is necessitated to act daily. The refusal to recognize and act upon them would delay the transaction of business, and entail upon counsel and parties much unnecessary labor. The

purpose of the rule is to relieve such admissions or agreements from the infirmative considerations attaching to mere oral admissions of facts imputed to the one party or the other, and to avoid the unseemly wrangles, disputes, and contradictions which would ensue if they rested only in memory. Where the agreement or admission is made in the presence of the Court, it is without the purpose or reason, if not without the letter, of the rule"); 1921, *Rich Hardware Co.'s Assignment*, 21 Ariz. 394, 188 Pac. 875 (judge's written recital of an oral stipulation, held conclusive); 1919, *Storey v. U. S. Fidelity & G. Co.*, 32 Ida. 388, 183 Pac. 990 (Comp. L. § 3998, requiring attorney's agreements to be filed or entered, held not applicable to a stipulation in another action not commenced); 1834, *Seely v. Cole*, *Wright Oh.* 681 (an oral admission, made in court on the opponent's offer of a witness, not allowed to be retracted, unless by leave of Court).

Sometimes a larger scope may be conceded: 1892, *Smith v. Whittier*, 95 Cal. 279, 287, 30 Pac. 529 (an oral stipulation, not filed or entered under C. C. P. § 283, *supra*, is nevertheless binding if it has been so acted upon that it would be inequitable to disregard it).

<sup>3</sup> 1901, *Cramer v. Truitt*, 113 Ga. 967, 39 S. E. 459 (admission of attorney in private conversation with the judge out of court, not sufficient).

<sup>4</sup> 1900, *Owen v. Palmour*, 111 Ga. 885, 36 S. E. 969 (a party testifying at a former trial, the brief of evidence therein having been agreed to by counsel and approved by Court, is not estopped from testifying contrary thereto); 1898, *Smith v. Olsen*, 92 Tex. 181, 46 S. W. 631 (answer by way of discovery). *Contra*, but unsound, 1901, *Feary v. R. Co.*, 162 Mo. 75, 62 S. W. 452 (a statement made on the stand while testifying, held conclusive; Valliant, J., diss.).

That the "*proofs of loss*," in insurance, are judicial admissions has sometimes been argued, but not with good reason (*ante*, § 1073).

The payment of money into court was formerly a common type of judicial admission,



But an admission made in the counsel's *statement of the case* may be treated as binding.<sup>5</sup>

(3) Judicial admissions are usually made by the party's *attorney or counsel*. It is settled that the general authority to conduct the trial implies the authority to make such admissions.<sup>6</sup>

§ 2595. **Avoiding a Continuance by Judicial Admission; Testimony of an Absent Witness of the Opponent.** When a continuance, or postponement, of the trial is applied for on the ground of the present impossibility of securing the attendance of a material witness, the granting of the application, by orthodox practice, lies in the Court's discretion, *i. e.* subject to no mandatory rules, provided certain fundamental conditions exist as to materiality, diligence, and the like. Assuming, however, that they exist, and that the Court would by them be justified in ordering the continuance, the opponent may attempt to remove these grounds for granting it, by making a judicial admission either that the witness *would if present testify* as affirmed by the applicant, or that the *tenor of the desired testimony is true*. The earlier practice seems for a time to have left in the Court's discretion the propriety of recognizing this as sufficient to avoid the continuance. But statutes have now come, in most jurisdictions, to prescribe a rule, declaring that one or the other kind of these admissions will 'per se' avoid the continuance, and (sometimes) that, conversely, an application based on specified grounds shall be granted unless one or the other of these admissions is made.<sup>1</sup>

more allied to a pleading; it is briefly noticed *ante*, § 1061, and more fully in Greenleaf, Evidence, § 205; statutes and rules of court often regulate it.

<sup>5</sup> 1880, *Oscanyan v. Arms Co.*, 103 U. S. 261, 263 (cited *ante*, § 2590); 1921, *People ex rel. Brundage v. Hill Top M. M. Co.*, 300 Ill. 564, 133 N. E. 303 (statement of facts made by defendant's counsel at the trial and incorporated into the record, held an admission); 1895, *Lake Erie & W. R. Co. v. Rooker*, 13 Ind. App. 600, 41 N. E. 470 (the incidental statement of counsel, in opening, that he intended to prove the fact in question).

*Contra*: 1910, *Pietsch v. Pietsch*, 245 Ill. 454, 92 N. E. 325 (forcible detainer; defendant's counsel's statement of the facts constituting his defence, made at the close of plaintiff's counsel's opening statement, held not sufficient to base a ruling ordering a verdict for the plaintiff; *Oscanyan v. Arms Co.* distinguished, but not successfully; see the comments on this case, in the *Illinois Law Review*, V, 319); 1913, *Cornell v. Morrison*, 87 Ohio 215, 100 N. E. 817 (counsel's opening statement is ordinarily to be treated as a judicial admission of facts not denied, and thus a nonsuit may be immediately based thereon).

<sup>6</sup> Cases cited *ante*, § 1063; 1916, *Christy v. Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 8th C. C. A., 233 Fed. 255; 1859, *Rosenbaum v. State*, 33 Ala. 361; 1847, *Greenlee v. McDowell*, 4 Ired. Eq.

N. C. 481, 484; 1909, *Multnomah L. & B. Co. v. Weston B. & B. Co.*, 54 Or. 22, 99 Pac. 1046; 1920, *Scotti v. District Court*, 42 R. I. 556, 109 Atl. 207 (trial court may enter decision on counsel's agreed statement of facts, without requiring testimony).

A *change of attorneys* does not abrogate an admission originally binding: 1892, *Smith v. Whittier*, 95 Cal. 279, 289, 30 Pac. 529.

For an *infant's* guardian *ad litem* the counsel's stipulations would bind: 1911, *Byrnes v. Butte Brewing Co.*, 44 Mont. 328, 119 Pac. 788, *semble*. Compare the rule for extrajudicial admissions (*ante*, § 1053).

§ 2595. <sup>1</sup> The following list is not exhaustive; typical statutes are set out in full; this procedure is called a "showing of the witness absent" in some Southern States: *Alaska*: Comp. L. 1913, §§ 1001, 2222; *Arizona*: Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 505; *California*: C. C. P. 1872, § 595 ("The Court may require a moving party, where application is made on account of the absence of a material witness, to state upon affidavit the evidence which he expects to obtain; and if the adverse party thereupon admits that such evidence would be given, and that it be considered as actually given on the trial, or offered, or overruled as improper, the trial must not be postponed"); *Colorado*: Comp. St. 1921, C. C. P. § 195; C. C. P. 1891, § 177; *Georgia*: Rev. C. 1910, § 5716, P. C. § 989; *Illinois*: Rev. St. 1845, Rev. St. 1874, c. 110, § 43 (in



For the *opponent* of such an application, *i. e.* the party making the admission, the difference between the two kinds (so far as concerns the rules of evidence) is that the first kind still leaves it open to him to impeach the credit of the absent witness, just as he could that of a deponent,<sup>2</sup> except

asking a continuance "on account of the absence of testimony," the party's or his agent's affidavit stating the facts expected to be proved thereby, etc., must be offered); § 44 ("if the other party will admit the affidavit in evidence, the cause shall not be continued"); § 45, Laws 1867, p. 157 ("When the affidavit is concerning the evidence of a witness, the party admitting such affidavit shall be held to admit only that if the absent witness were present he would testify as alleged in the affidavit, and such admission shall have no greater force or effect than if such absent witness were present and testified as alleged in the affidavit, leaving it to the party admitting such affidavit to controvert the statements contained therein, or to impeach said witness, the same as if such witness were present and examined in open court"); c. 38, § 428a, St. 1885, June 26, p. 73 (on such affidavits in a criminal case, neither party shall be "required to admit the absolute truth of the matter set up in the affidavit for continuance, but only that such absent witness, if present, would testify as alleged in the affidavit; and if it is so admitted, no continuance shall be granted, but the case shall go to trial, and the party admitting the evidence shall be permitted to controvert the statements contained in such affidavit by other evidence, or to impeach such absent witness the same as if he had testified in person; provided that the Court may in its discretion require the opposite party to admit the truth absolutely of any such affidavit when, from the nature of the case, he may be of opinion that the ends of justice require it"; the act not to apply to applications at the same term of Court when the indictment, etc., is found); St. 1907, June 3, p. 443, § 84 (Practice Act; re-enacts § 45 of c. 110 *supra*); *Indiana*: Burns' Ann. St. 1914, § 419 (civil cases; if "the adverse party will consent that on the trial the facts shall be taken as true, if the absent evidence is written or documentary, and, in case of a witness, that he will testify to said facts as true, the trial shall not be postponed for said cause; and in such case the party against whom such evidence is used shall have the right to impeach such absent witness, as in case where the witness is present or his deposition is used"); § 2089 (criminal cases; if "the prosecuting attorney will admit the truth of the facts which the defendant in his affidavit for a continuance alleges that he can prove by the absent witness, or by the written or documentary evidence therein specified and described, the trial shall not be postponed for that cause"); § 2090 ("If the defendant will admit that the facts which the prosecutor

states he expects to prove are true, the trial shall not be postponed for that cause"); 1919, *Torphy v. State*, 188 Ind. 30, 121 N. E. 659; *Iowa*: Code 1897, § 3665, Comp. Code, § 7460 (if an application for continuance is sufficient, "the cause shall be continued, unless the adverse party will admit that the witness, if present, would testify to the facts therein stated, in which event the cause shall not be continued, but the party may read as evidence of such witness the facts held by the Court to be properly stated"); *Kansas*: Gen. St. 1915, § 7217; *Kentucky*: C. Cr. P. 1895, § 189, C. C. P. 1895, § 315; *Louisiana*: St. 1894, No. 84, Code Pr. 1870, § 466; *Maryland*: Ann. Code 1914, Art. 75, § 66; *Mississippi*: Code 1906, § 1498, Hem. § 1256 (criminal cases); *Missouri*: Rev. St. 1919, §§ 1390, 3997; *Montana*: Rev. C. 1921, § 9669; *Nevada*: Rev. L. 1912, § 5202; *New Mexico*: Annot. St. 1915, §§ 4460-4463; *Porto Rico*: 1906, *Horton v. Roberts*, 11 P. R. 168, 182; *Texas*: Rev. Civ. St. 1911, § 1918; Rev. C. Cr. P. 1911, §§ 603-616; *Utah*: Comp. L. 1917, §§ 6786-7; § 7479; *Washington*: R. & B. Code 1909, § 2135 (criminal cases); *Wyoming*: Comp. St. 1920, § 6416.

Distinguish those statutes by which a continuance is granted on condition that the applicant assent to the taking and using of *depositions of witnesses now present* for the opponent; *e. g.* Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 596; Utah Rev. St. 1898, § 3134; these merely avoid the necessity of notice and other conditions precedent ordinarily to the use of the deposition (*ante*, §§ 1378, 1415).

<sup>2</sup> 1904, *Gregory v. State*, 140 Ala. 16, 37 So. 259 (impeachment of general character, allowed); 1910, *Zobel v. Fanny Rawlings M. Co.*, 49 Colo. 134, 111 Pac. 843 (here the absent witness was himself called by the opponent and his testimony partly contradicted the affidavit); 1881, *Powers v. State*, 80 Ind. 77 (the truth of an absent witness' testimony admitted by the prosecution to avoid postponement; impeachment forbidden; but not in civil cases, where merely the fact of testifying is admitted); 1878, *State v. Miller*, 67 Mo. 604, 608 (by statute); 1878, *State v. Thomas*, 68 Mo. 605, 615. The statutes frequently declare this expressly.

So also the right remains to *exclude specific inadmissible parts* of the testimony: 1904, *State v. Leuhrman*, 123 Ia. 476, 99 N. W. 140.

In any event the opponent ought to be allowed to show that the applicant's sworn statements as to the *grounds for using* the absent witness' testimony are false; compare § 278, *ante*.



that the rule for self-contradictions raises here a special problem;<sup>3</sup> but the second kind obviously precludes him from any impeachment of credit, since the facts to be testified to are judicially admitted.<sup>4</sup> But he cannot be *forced* to make either kind of admission (by an order directing the trial to proceed and receiving in evidence the applicant's statement of the testimony or the facts); for this would be to deprive the opponent of his right to cross-examination.<sup>5</sup> The opponent, however, even though a defendant in a criminal case, may of course waive this right, by a *voluntary* admission of the testimony or the facts.<sup>6</sup>

For the *applicant*, who is refused a continuance when the opponent makes one of these admissions, the difference between the two kinds is obviously a radical one. Whether the Court should require the more stringent of the admissions, *i. e.* of *the facts as established*, not merely of the testimony as uttered, and should, in default of it, as a rule of law grant a continuance otherwise sufficiently grounded, has been one of the controverted questions in judicial opinion.<sup>7</sup> Regarded as a matter of common-law practice or of legislative policy, it seems to rest ultimately on local experience. If either rule is found, in a particular community, to work detriment to the safety of innocent accused persons in general or of the State's justice in general, it should be abandoned. Thus far the common experience has been that the requirement of an admission of facts, not merely of testimony, has served to add a powerful weapon of chicanery to the armory of unscrupulous counsel defending hardened villains.<sup>8</sup>

The constitutional objection, it is true, has been raised against the use of the less stringent form of admission, *i. e.* the objection that to refuse a con-

<sup>3</sup> The authorities are collected *ante*, § 1034.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, § 1384; 1882, *Wills v. State*, 73 Ala. 362 (leading case). This would be equally true in civil cases; unless a statute prescribed a contrary rule; for no constitutional clause would there prevent such a statute.

<sup>6</sup> 1917, *People v. Schultz-Knighten*, 277 Ill. 238, 115 N. E. 140 (a third person's statement read at the inquest and admitted by stipulation); 1884, *State v. Fooks*, 65 Ia. 452, 21 N. W. 773; 1875, *U. S. v. Sacramento*, 3 Mont. 239; 1903, *State v. Mortensen*, 26 Utah 312, 73 Pac. 562; and cases cited *ante*, § 1398.

<sup>7</sup> The following list includes rulings on both kinds of admissions: Ala. 1910, *Bush v. State*, 168 Ala. 77, 53 So. 266; Cal. 1856, *People v. Diaz*, 6 Cal. 248; Ill. 1871, *Van Meter v. People*, 60 Ill. 168; 1892, *Hoyt v. People*, 140 Ill. 588, 30 N. E. 315; 1896, *Keating v. People*, 160 Ill. 480, 43 N. E. 724; Ind. 1866, *Wassels v. State*, 26 Ind. 30; Ia. 1855, *Trulock v. State*, 1 Ia. 515, 519; Ky. 1896, *Adkins v. Com.*, 98 Ky. 539, 33 S. W. 948 (leading case); 1904, *Davis v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 77 S. W. 1101; 1912, *Breeden v. Com.*, 151 Ky. 217, 151 S. W. 407; La. 1902, *State*

*v. Fairfax*, 107 La. 624, 31 So. 101; 1906, *State v. Stewart*, 117 La. 476, 41 So. 798 (good opinion by Nicholls, J.); 1910, *State v. Richard*, 127 La. 413, 53 So. 669; Mo. 1887, *State v. Berkley*, 92 Mo. 41, 4 S. W. 24 (leading case); Nebr. 1901, *Russell v. State*, 62 Nebr. 512, 87 N. W. 344; 1827; N. Y. *People v. Vermilyea*, 7 Cow. 369, 388, 394, 399 (leading case); N. D. 1916, *State v. Uhler*, 32 N. D. 483, 156 N. W. 220; Okl. 1914, *Maddox v. State*, 10 Okl. Cr. 569, 139 Pac. 994 (non-resident witnesses); S. Car. 1907, *State v. Pope*, 78 S. C. 264, 58 S. E. 815; S. Dak. 1908, *State v. Wilcox*, 21 S. D. 532, 114 N. W. 687; Tex. 1867, *De Warren v. State*, 29 Tex. 464, 481; 1921, *Medford v. State*, 89 Tex. Cr. 1, 229 S. W. 504 (collecting authorities).

Of course an admission of the truth of the facts would suffice: 1889, *Pace v. Com.*, 89 Ky 204, 207, 12 S. W. 271 (leading case); 1857, *Browning v. State*, 33 Miss. 47, 71. *Contra*, but anomalous: 1838, *Goodman v. State*, Meigs Tenn. 195.

<sup>8</sup> The opinion of Grace, J., in *Adkins v. Com.*, *supra*, forcefully shows this for Kentucky. In Illinois and Indiana the same stages of experience have developed.



tinuance, if the prosecution admits merely that the *proposed testimony would have been given*, would deprive the accused of his right (*ante*, § 2191) to compulsory process for his witnesses. In spite of the sanction given by some Courts to this objection, it seems to be totally devoid of grounds.<sup>9</sup> The constitutional provision for compulsory process, as the history of that right shows, was designed merely to give equally to the accused (beyond the power of legislative change) the aid of the State's subpoena. The contrast marked by that right is that, without it, the accused must depend (as at common law) solely on his own persuasion and the witness' choice, for securing his witnesses' attendance, but that, with it, the accused, like the prosecution and like civil parties, may invoke the State's compulsive power, whatever that may avail. But the constitutional provision does not have anything to say about the time of holding trial; which is the only question here involved. Much less does it pledge absolutely to the accused the presence of all desired persons, or any other superhuman feat. The Constitution cannot raise witnesses from the dead, nor spirit them from beds of illness or kennels of concealment. To interpret the Constitution into any such pledge is to invent (as experience has shown) a guarantee that no determined offender shall be tried for his crime until he himself pleases. Whether the one or the other kind of admission should be required may depend on the circumstances of each community and each case; but it is impossible to regard the constitutional clause as being in any way involved.

§ 2596. *Admissions of the Genuineness of a Document.* In probably most instances where a document is material under the pleadings, or is evidentially used, its genuineness is not doubtful. Yet the proof of that genuineness may be onerous and expensive. The opponent's admissions, judicial or extrajudicial, are receivable for the purpose (*ante*, §§ 2131, 2132), and may suffice; but it is only casually and seldom that they would be available to the party desiring to make the proof; and for lack of them at common law, the usual evidence must be resorted to, however needless. It would therefore be the part of common sense to recognize the needs of the situation by some expedient for facilitating the proof.

The appropriate remedy seems naturally to lie in securing some sort of *judicial admission*, by rule of pleading or otherwise, where the circumstances justify it. It was Bentham (as usual, one might say) who seems first to have proposed this measure.<sup>1</sup> Almost immediately his proposal bore fruit in one of the Hilary Rules of 1834. By this Rule the opponent was made to take the risks of paying the costs of proof, if after having a prior opportunity to satisfy himself he declined to admit judicially in writing the document's genuineness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The opinion of Grace, J., in *Adkins v. Com.*, Ky., *supra*, best expounds this.

§ 2596. <sup>1</sup> 1827, Bentham, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, b. VII, c. V. (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, pp. 185-188).

<sup>2</sup> *England: Rules of Practice*, Hilary Term,

4 Wm. IV (set out in 10 Bing. 456), No. 20 ("Either party, after plea pleaded, and a reasonable time before trial, may give notice . . . of his intention to adduce in evidence certain written or printed documents; and unless the adverse party shall consent, by in-



This rule was preserved in later British legislation,<sup>3</sup> and furnished one of the two chief types for statutes in the United States.

The other common expedient, now in vogue in perhaps the majority of jurisdictions of the United States, takes the form of a *rule of pleading*,<sup>4</sup> by requiring a special denial on oath (either in the formal plea or in a separate affidavit) of the genuineness of the document; in default of this denial, the genuineness cannot be put in issue. This form is adapted especially to documents named in the pleadings as a foundation of the claim or defence; the other is applicable to any document whatever. In a few jurisdictions, both measures have been separately recognized; in others, the statute combines features of both.<sup>5</sup>

dorsement on such notice, within forty-eight hours, to make the admission specified," the offering party may move that the opponent show cause, and "the judge shall, if he think the application reasonable, make an order that the costs of proving any document specified in the notice, which shall be proved at the trial to the satisfaction of the judge or presiding officer, shall be paid by the party so required, whatever may be the result of the cause"; provided that the judge "may give time for inquiry or examination of the documents intended to be offered in evidence, and give such directions for inspection and examination, and impose such terms upon the party requiring the admission, as he shall think fit"; and no costs of proving a document shall be allowed "to any party who shall have adduced the same in evidence on any trial, unless he shall have given such notice as aforesaid, and the adverse party shall have neglected or refused to make such admission" or the judge have indorsed the application as not reasonable to be granted); 1841, *Rutler v. Chapman*, 8 M. & W. 388 (Rule 20 held to apply to any document, and not merely one in the possession or power of the party seeking to offer it).

<sup>3</sup> 1853, Report of the Commission on Common Law Procedure, I, 44; 1852, St. 15 & 16 Vict. c. 76, §§ 117-119; 1854, St. 17 & 18 Vict. c. 125, § 25; 1883, Rules of Court, Order 32, Rule 2.

*Canada*: B. C. Rules of Court 1912, No. 372; *Newf.* Consol. St. 1916, c. 83, Ord. 29, R. 2.

<sup>4</sup> It is sometimes miscalled a rule of evidence; *e. g.*, 1867, *Joynes, J.*, in *James R. & K. Co. v. Littlejohn*, 18 Gratt. Va. 53, 76.

<sup>5</sup> The following list is not exhaustive; typical statutes are set out in full: *Fed.* Equity Rules 1912, Rule 58; *Ala.* Code 1907, §§ 3966-3968, 3972; *Ariz.* Rev. St. 1913, Civ. C. § 1750; *Ark.* Dig. 1919, §§ 1270, 4114; *Cal.* C. C. P. 1872, § 447, as amended by St. 1874 ("When an action is brought upon a written instrument, and the complaint contains a copy of such instrument, or a copy is annexed thereto, the genuineness

and due execution of such instrument are deemed admitted, unless the answer denying the same be verified"); § 448 ("When the defense to an action is founded on a written instrument, and a copy thereof is contained in the answer, or is annexed thereto, the genuineness and due execution of such instrument are deemed admitted, unless the plaintiff file with the clerk, within ten days after receiving a copy of the answer, an affidavit denying the same, and serve a copy thereof on the defendant"); § 449 ("But the execution of the instrument mentioned in the two preceding sections is not deemed admitted by a failure to deny the same under oath, if the party desiring to controvert the same is upon demand refused an inspection of the original. Such demand must be in writing, served by copy upon the adverse party or his attorney, and filed with the papers in the case"); *Colo.* Comp. St. 1921, C. C. P. 68; *Conn.* Gen. St. 1918, § 5776; *Del.* Rev. St. 1915, § 4170; *Fla.* Rev. G. S. 1919, §§ 2664, 2686; *Haw.* Rev. L. 1915, § 2563; *Ida.* Comp. St. 1919, § 6704 (claim or defense founded on written instrument); 1917, *Austin v. Brown Bros. Co.*, 30 *Ida.* 167, 164 *Pac.* 95; *Ill.* Rev. St. 1874, c. 110, § 34, Rev. St. 1845, p. 415, § 14 ("No person shall be permitted to deny, on trial, the execution or assignment of any instrument in writing, whether sealed or not, upon which any action may have been brought, or which shall be pleaded or set up by way of defense or set-off, or is admissible under the pleadings when a copy is filed, unless the person so denying the same shall, if defendant, verify his plea by affidavit, and if plaintiff shall file his affidavit denying the execution or assignment of such instrument; provided, if the party making such denial be not the party alleged to have executed or assigned such instrument, the denial may be made on the information and belief of such party"); 1908, *Helbig v. Citizens' Ins. Co.*, 234 *Ill.* 251, 84 *N. E.* 897 (the sworn denial does not shift the general burden of proof from the party alleging execution); *Ind.* Burns' Ann. St. 1914, §§ 370, 501; 1904, *Penn. Mut. L. I. Co. v.*



There are also occasional other expedients for applying the principles of pleading or of judicial admissions to facilitate the proof of documents but they are of only local vogue or narrow scope.<sup>6</sup> There is still room for

Norcross, 163 Ind. 379, 72 N. E. 132 (insurance policy); 1904, *Fudge v. Marquell*, 164 Ind. 447, 72 N. E. 565 (note); 1905, *Baum v. Palmer*, 165 Ind. 513, 76 N. E. 108 (burden of proof stated); *Ia.* Code 1919, § 7279; *Kan.* Gen. St. 1915, § 7002; *Ky.* Civ. C. § 128, C. C. P. 1895, § 527; 1912, *Beeler's Ex'r v. Cumberland T. & T. Co.*, 150 Ky. 257, 150 S. W. 335; *La.* C. Pr. 1894, § 324; *Me.* Rev. St. 1916, c. 87, § 23; *Md.* Ann. Code 1914, Art. 75, § 23, subsec. 108; 1906, *Fifer v. Clearfield & C. C. Co.*, 103 Md. 1, 62 Atl. 1122; *Mass.* Gen. L. 1920, c. 231, § 29 ("A signature to an instrument declared on or set forth as a cause of action, or as a ground of defence or set-off, shall be taken as admitted, unless the party sought to be charged thereby files in Court, within the same length of time after such instrument is pleaded as is allowed for an answer, a special denial of the genuineness thereof, and a demand that it shall be proved at the trial"); § 69 (similar to the New York Code, but treating failure to answer as an admission of execution); *Mich.* 1908, *Citizens' Sav. Bank v. Globe B. Works*, 155 Mich. 3, 118 N. W. 507 (Circuit Court Rule 8 applied); *Minn.* Gen. St. 1913, § 7796 (civil cases); 1916, *National City Bank v. Zimmer V. R. Co.*, 132 Minn. 211, 156 N. W. 265; *Miss.* Code 1906, §§ 1974-1977, Hem. §§ 1634-1638; 1906, *Elmslie v. Thurman*, 87 Miss. 537, 40 So. 67 (the rule applies equally where a plaintiff in a bill in chancery waives answer under oath); *Mo.* Rev. St. 1919, § 1379 (for any material paper); §§ 1415, 2781 (for an instrument on which pleading is founded); *Mont.* Rev. C. 1921, § 9650; *Nebr.* Rev. St. 1921, § 8900; *Nev.* Gen. St. 1885, § 3557; Rev. L. 1912, §§ 5062, 5063; *N. J.* Comp. St. 1910, Practice, § 141; St. 1914, Apr. 14, c. 168 (negotiable instruments); *N. M.* Annot. St. 1915, §§ 4144-4147, 4218; *N. Y. C. P. A.* 1920, § 322 ("The attorney for a party may, at any time before the trial, exhibit to the attorney for the adverse party a paper material to the action, and request a written admission of its genuineness. If the admission is not given, within four days after the request, and the paper is proved or admitted on the trial, the expenses, incurred by the party exhibiting it, in order to prove its genuineness, must be ascertained at the trial and paid by the party refusing the admission whatever the result of the cause, matter, or issue may be; unless it appears, to the satisfaction of the Court, that there was a good reason for the refusal"); *N. Car.* Con. St. 1919, § 1825 (similar to N. Y. C. P. A. § 322); *N. D.* Comp. L. 1913, § 7860; *Oh.* Gen. Code Ann. 1921, § 11550; *Okl.* Comp.

St. 1921, § 633; 1915, *Dyal v. Norton*, 47 Okl. 794, 150 Pac. 703 (statute applied); *P. I. C. C. P.* 1901, § 103; 1908, *Choy v. Heredia*, 12 P. I. 259; 1918, *Ramirez v. Orientalist Co.*, 38 P. I. 634; 1919, *Bough v. Cantiveros*, 40 P. I. 209; *P. R.* Rev. St. & C. 1911, §§ 5103-5105; 1909, *Chiques v. Polo*, 15 P. R. 257, 260; 1913, *Arguëlles v. Rossy*, 19 P. R. 995; 1914, *Banco Commercial v. Rodriguez*, 20 P. R. 267; *S. Dak.* Rev. C. 1919, § 2197 (actions on written instruments in justice courts); § 2711 (substantially like N. Y. C. P. A. § 322); *Tenn.* Shannon's Code 1916, §§ 5556-5559; *Tex.* Rev. Civ. St. 1911, §§ 588, 3710; *Utah:* Comp. L. 1917, § 7203; *Va.* Code 1919, §§ 6093, 6125, 6126; *Wash.* R. & B. Code 1909, § 1263; 1904, *Beebe v. Redward*, 35 Wash. 615, 77 Pac. 1052 (statute construed); *W. Va.* Code 1914, c. 125, § 40; *Wis.* Stats. 1919, §§ 4184, 4192; 1915, *In re Skinner's Will*, *Murphy v. Skinner*, 160 Wis. 554, 152 N. W. 172 (interesting case of a forged indorsement to a promissory note, applying Stats. §§ 4192, 4193); *Wyo.* Comp. St. 1920, § 5854.

<sup>6</sup> In *Minnesota*, a statute which in literal reading declares a genuine *presumption of authentication* (*ante*, §§ 2130, 2132) has been judicially construed apparently into one of the above sort: *Minn.* Gen. St. 1913, § 8448 ("Every written instrument purporting to have been signed or executed by any person shall be proof that it was so signed or executed, until such person shall deny the signature or execution of the same by his oath or affidavit"; except where the purporting person "shall have died previous to the requirement of such proof"); 1860, *Pennsylvania Ins. Co. v. Murphy*, 5 Minn. 36, 40 (statute applied to articles of partnership); 1862, *Turrell v. Morgan*, 7 Minn. 368, 372 (held not to apply to unsigned indorsements on a note); 1878, *Brayley v. Kelly*, 25 Minn. 160 (printed notice in plaintiff's name; genuineness not presumed); 1883, *Mast v. Matthews*, 30 Minn. 441, 16 N. W. 155 (the statute applies only in actions against the maker of the instrument or to defences or counterclaims against him); 1897, *Moore v. Holmes*, 68 Minn. 108, 70 N. W. 872 (distinguishing this rule from that which requires a specific traverse of execution in order to put execution in issue; *Canty, J. diss.*, on the ground that the signature purported to be by an agent, and that the authority of an agent could not be presumed); 1898, *Fitzgerald v. English*, 73 Minn. 266, 76 N. W. 22 (does not apply where the alleged signer is dead or is not a party).

In *Georgia* and in *Texas* a statute forbids the use of *deed-copies from the registry* if an



improvement and expansion. Here, as everywhere, the time has not come when the law can afford to consider as closed that great period of rational advance which owed its first marked impulse to the caustic preaching of Bentham.

§ 2597. **Future of the Doctrine of Judicial Admissions.** The doctrine of Judicial Admissions has a large future before it, if judges will but use it adequately. In the first place, the judge should apply it to all *informal*, as well as formal, admissions by counsel during trial. In the next place, the judge should freely call upon counsel to state whether a fact is in good faith disputed, *i. e.* should *require* admissions to be made, where it seems probable that the fact is not actually-disputed. By this method, the presentation of evidence will be confined to those matters of fact alone which the parties do dispute.

It is easy to see how large a mass of needless skirmishing would thereby be eliminated, how much time would be saved, and how much confusion of the jury would be avoided. And this would be attained by the mere application of an existing principle. Already, in England, the principle is so used, on a large scale, in the modern practice of settling issues before masters. But it can also be used by the judge at the trial.<sup>1</sup>

How unappreciative are many judges of the possibility and propriety of such a use of the principle may be seen from a modern case,<sup>2</sup> in which the Supreme Court, refusing to give force to a counsel's admission during argument, put the following illustration as a 'reductio ad absurdum': "It would be a still more expeditious method, and equally conducive to the ends of justice, for the Court to call up the attorneys, and examine them and decide the case on what they say [*i. e.* admit], before calling a jury, whereby much time, labor, and expense would be saved." Precisely. Yet the learned Court is apparently unaware that the method which they ironically describe as absurd is in truth a natural and practical method, applicable with great advantage in thousands of cases, — as practitioners, on reflection, can hardly doubt. It was the method of the common law, some centuries ago, with jury trial in the height of its prestige. It is the method of England and Canada to-day. It must become our own method in the future.

affidavit denying the original's genuineness is made; but this is construed as still permitting a forgery to be shown, even though the sworn denial is omitted (*ante*, § 1651).

In several jurisdictions there are statutes exempting from proof of deeds prior to a *common source of title*, unless the opponent makes a sworn denial; *e. g.*, 1884, *Thatcher v. Olmstead*, 110 Ill. 26; compare *ante*, § 2132.

In *New Mexico*, an account verified by the claimant's oath is sufficient to entitle to judgment unless denied by the opponent's oath; the

practical utility is said to consist in obviating the need for introducing books of account in evidence: *N. Mex. Annot St.* 1915, § 2176.

Provisions similar to those of note 5 above have been in some States extended to *telegraphic copies of documents*; *e. g.* *Or. Laws* 1920, § 6018.

§ 2597. <sup>1</sup> Compare what is said on this subject *ante*, § 8a (shortcomings of the law of Evidence).

<sup>2</sup> 1910, *Pietsch v. Pietsch*, 245 Ill. 454, 92 N. E. 325; and comment in the *Illinois Law Review*, V, 319.



## **LIST OF STATUTES CITED**



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[The full descriptive title of the editions of codes and compilations consulted will be found in the Table of Judicial and Legislative Sources prefixed to each Volume. In the following list, the citations made in the foregoing pages from earlier codes or compilations are not represented, where they are duplicated by corresponding sections in the later editions here cited; except in a few instances, where they have historical or practical importance. All single enactments not embraced in the serial numbering of a code or compilation are here placed under a common heading of Session Laws; a session law amending a specific code-section, but printed in a later code-edition here referred to, is usually not represented in this List of Citations of Session Laws. A list of latest Session Laws consulted will be found prefixed to each Volume.]

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

ENGLAND		Section	
<i>Statutes at Large</i>			
Const. of Clarendon, c. 6	2250	1640, 16 Car. I, c. 4	1518
1285, 13 Edw. I, Westm. Second, c. 31	20	c. 10	2250
1316, 9 Edw. II, c. 10	2394	c. 11	2250
1382, 5 Rich. II, 2d sess., c. 5	2250	1660, 12 Car. II, c. 32	575
1401, 2 H. IV, c. 15	2250	1661, 13 " c. 1	2036
1403, 4 " c. 3	2250	c. 12	2250, 2268
1404, 5 " c. 8	575	1661, 13 & 14 Car. II, c. 23	1364
1414, 2 H. V, c. 7	2250	1677, 29 Car. II, c. 3, § 1	2454
1488, 3 H. VII, c. 1	2250	§ 3	2454
1533, 25 H. VIII, c. 14	2250	§ 4	2454
c. 19	2067, 2250	§ 5	2049, 2454
1535, 27 " c. 4	2032	§ 7	2454
c. 16	1650, 2426, 2454	§ 9	2454
1536, 28 " c. 15	2032	§ 17	2454
1540, 32 " c. 1, § 1	2426, 2454, 2462	§ 19	2050, 2454
1543, 35 " c. 16	2067	§ 20	2050, 2454
1547, 1 Edw. VI, c. 12, § 22	818, 1364, 2036, 2250	1688, 1 W. & M. c. 18, § 14	2032
1551, 5 & 6 Edw. VI, c. 11	818, 1364, 2036	§ 19	2032
1554, 1 & 2 P. & M. c. 6	2250	" 2d sess., c. 2	2250
c. 8	2250	1690, 3 & 4 W. & M. c. 11	2032
c. 10	818, 1364, 2036	1693, 6 & 7 " c. 61	1644
c. 11	2036	1696, 7 W. III, c. 3	575, 818, 1364, 2036, 2038, 2190
c. 13	848, 1326, 1374, 2250	c. 7	2036
1555, 2 & 3 " c. 10	848, 1326, 1374, 2250	1697, 8 & 9 W. III, c. 26	2036
1558, 1 Eliz. c. 1	1364, 2032, 2036, 2067, 2250	1702, 1 Anne, c. 9	575, 1825, 2190
c. 20	2032	1703, 2 & 3 Anne, c. 4	1650
1562, 5 " c. 9	1364, 2190, 2201	1704, 3 & 4 " c. 9	2451
c. 1	1650	1705, 4 Anne, c. 16	1163
1571, 13 " c. 1	2036	1706, 5 & 6 Anne, c. 18	1650
c. 7	2250	1707, 6 Anne, c. 35	1650
1589, 31 " c. 4	575	1708, 7 " c. 20	1650
1593, 35 " c. 2	2250	c. 21	1847, 1851
1601, 43 " c. 6	2250	1711, 10 " c. 18	1224, 1650
1606, 4 Jac. I, c. 1	575	1730, 3 Geo. II, c. 25	1163
1609, 7 " c. 12	1518	1734, 8 " c. 6	1650
1623, 21 " c. 19	2227	1752, 26 " c. 33	1644
c. 27	2066	1781, 21 Geo. III, c. 53	1644
1627, 3 Car. I, c. 1	2250	1786, 26 " c. 57	1312
c. 4	1518	1792, 32 " c. 60	2557
1637, 13 " c. 2	2032	1798, 38 " c. 78	2150
c. 12	2250	1800, 40 " c. 93	2036
		1803, 43 " c. 58	2066
		1804, 44 " c. 77	1644
		1806, 46 " c. 37	2223, 2252, 2254
		1808, 48 " c. 127	1644
		1814, 54 " c. 144	2454
		c. 170	488



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
1821, 1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 24	2036	1853, 16 & 17 Vict. c. 83, §§ 1-3	488
c. 78	2451	§ 4	602
1822, 2 Geo. IV, c. 52	1650	1854, 17 & 18 " c. 104, § 107	1647
1824, 4 " c. 76	1644	§§ 280, 285	1641
1825, 6 " c. 50	1163	§ 526	1290
1826, 7 " c. 64	848, 1326, 1374, 1375	c. 125	1856
1828, 9 " c. 14	1466	§ 22	900, 905, 1028
c. 54	848	§ 23	1028
1830, 1 Wm. IV, c. 22	1374, 1380, 1411	§ 24	1256, 1263
1831, 2 " c. 1	1650	§ 25	986, 1270, 2596
1833, 3 & 4 Wm. IV, c. 42	488, 576	§ 26	1290
c. 49	1828	§ 27	1993, 2016
c. 82	1828	§§ 47, 48	1859/
1834, 4 Wm. IV, Rules of Practice, Hilary Term, No. 20	2596	§ 58	1161, 1163, 1862
1834, 4 & 5 Wm. IV, c. 76	2061	§ 103	986
1836, 6 & 7 " c. 76	2150, 2529	§ 104	2016
c. 86	1644	1856, 19 & 20 " c. 96, § 2	1644
c. 111	194, 196	c. 113	6b, 2195
c. 114	575, 579, 865, 1262, 1364, 1850	c. 85, § 43	2252
1838, 1 & 2 Vict. c. 77	1828	1857, 20 & 21 " c. 25	1644
c. 94	1680, 1681	1858, 21 Vict. c. 25	6b
c. 105	1828	1859, 22 " c. 20	488
1840, 3 & 4 " c. 26	488	22 & 23 Vict. c. 61	6b, 564, 1674
c. 92	1644	c. 63	6b, 564, 1674
1842, 5 & 6 " c. 39	2281	c. 11	1828
c. 51	2036	c. 66	2281, 2282
1843, 6 & 7 " c. 22	6b, 1828	c. 96	1074
c. 85	488, 986	1862, 25 & 26 " c. 89	2281
1844, 7 & 8 " c. 101	2061	1863, 26 & 27 " c. 29	1270, 2016
1845, 8 & 9 " c. 16	1074	1865, 28 & 29 " c. 18, § 1	905
c. 113, § 1	2162	§ 3	1262, 1263
§ 2	2162	§ 5	986
§ 3	1684	§ 6	2061
1846, 9 & 10 " c. 95	488, 577, 602	§ 8	6b
1848, 11 & 12 " c. 12	2036	c. 63, §§ 2, 3	6b, 1080, 1684
c. 42	1374, 1375, 1406	§ 6	2257
§ 17	1326, 1413, 1667	c. 104, § 34	1411
§ 18	848, 1326, 1667	c. 35, § 2	1375, 1380
§ 19	1835	§ 61	1867, British North America Act
§ 27	1850	§ 18	6b
1849, 12 & 13 " c. 69, § 18	848	§§ 56, 91, 92, 94	6b
1851, 14 & 15 " c. 93, § 14	848	§ 143	1680
c. 99, § 1	488, 577	1868, 31 & 32 Vict. c. 37	6b
§ 2	488, 602, 2218	§ 2	1680, 1684
§ 3	488, 602, 2252	c. 110, § 20	2287
§ 4	488	c. 119, § 26	2220
§ 6	1859, 2219	1869, 32 & 33 " c. 68	488, 577, 2264
§ 7	1680, 1681, 2162	§ 2	6b, 488, 2061, 2252
§ 11	6b, 2162	§ 3	488, 602, 2252, 2276
§ 13	1270	§ 4	1828
§ 14	1680, 1681	§ 34	1828
1852, 15 & 16 " c. 57, § 8	2281	c. 75, § 23	2287
c. 76, § 55	1177, 1859a	c. 97	2184
§ 56	1859a	1871, 34 & 35 " c. 112, § 19	326
§ 114	1163	1872, 35 & 36 " c. 33, § 12	2215
§§ 117-119	2596	c. 65, § 4	2061
c. 83, § 42	1862	1873, 36 & 37 " c. 66, Rules of Procedure, No. 36	1380
c. 86	1377	1875, 38 & 39 Vict. c. 77, § 17	1380



# ENGLAND—CANADA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

		Section			Section
1877, 40 & 41 Vict.	c. 14	488	1910, 10 Edw. VII, c. 45, § 2		6
1878, 41 & 42 "	c. 11, § 4	1683	1911, 1 & 2 Geo. V, c. 6, § 13		2042
	c. 13, § 1	2451	1912, 2 & 3 "	c. 5, § 6	1675a
1879, 42 & 43 "	c. 11, § 3	1223, 1519		c. 20, § 7	488
	§ 4	1519	1914, 4 & 5 "	c. 58, § 28	488, 1828
	§ 6	1223		§ 38	1674
	§ 7	1859f		c. 59, § 137	1684
1881, 44 & 45 "	c. 58, § 70, Rule 124L	2374, 2378		§ 139	1681
		1684		§ 141	1411
1882, 45 & 46 "	c. 9, § 2	1680		§ 166	2281
	c. 50, § 24	2281	1915, 5 & 6 "	c. 94, § 1	1413
1883, 46 & 47 "	c. 52, § 17	1136, 1406,		c. 70, § 5	2531
1885, 48 & 49 "	c. 69	1828, 2061	1916, 6 & 7 "	c. 50, § 43	326
	§§ 2, 3	2044, 2061	1917, 7 & 8 "	c. 44, § 4	1680, 1684
	§ 4	488, 1828,		c. 51, § 10	1680, 1684
		2061, 2066	1918, 8 & 9 "	c. 40, § 233	2535
	§ 5	398	1919, 9 & 10 "	c. 69, § 4	4c
1888, 51 & 52 "	c. 46, §§ 1, 3, 5	1828	1920, 10 & 11 "	c. 75, § 8	1835
1889, 52 & 53 "	c. 44, § 8	488, 1828,	1921, 11 & 12 "	c. 7	2195
		2061, 2066			
1890, 53 & 54 "	c. 71, § 27	2281	<i>Rules of Court 1883</i>		
1891, 54 & 55 "	c. 39, § 14	2184	Ord. XXII, R. 22		1061
1893, 56 & 57 "	c. 23, § 3	1672	Ord. XXX, R. 7		1519
1894, 57 & 58 "	c. 14, § 16	1411, 2061,	Ord. XXXI		1856
		2079		R. 1, 2, 5, 11	1056a
	c. 16, § 3	16		R. 12	1859, 1859c
	c. 60, § 239	1641		R. 14, 15	1859
1897, 60 & 61 "	c. 37, first			R. 18, par. 2, 19A, 21	1859c
	schedule, § 3	2220		R. 24	2124
	c. 65	1650	Ord. XXXII, R. 2		2596
1898, 61 & 62 "		58, 194a, 488	Ord. XXXIII, R. 3, 7		1519
	c. 36	488, 580, 602,	Ord. XXXVI, R. 37	73, 207, 209, 1411	
		865, 986, 2243,		R. 38	986
		2245, 2252, 2276	Ord. XXXVII		1380
1904, 4 Edw. VII, c. 15, § 12		488, 2252		R. 4	1411, 1681
	§ 13	1411		R. 5	1383
	§ 14	1380, 1411		R. 9	2203
	§ 15	1828, 2061,		R. 18	1411
		2066		R. 20	1380
	§ 17	1154		R. 25	1387
1905, 5 "	c. 7, § 2	2281	Ord. XXXVIII		1380
	c. 15, § 50	1680	Ord. XXXIX, R. 6		21
	§ 51	1674, 1680	Ord. L, R. 3	445, 1163, 1862, 2220	
	§ 52	2162		R. 4, 5	1163, 2220
1906, 6 "	c. 58	2220	Ord. LVI		2484
1907, 7 "	c. 29, § 68	2374	Ord. LXV, R. 27		2203
	§ 78	1674	Rules of Nov. 1893, R. 9		1061
1908, 8 "	c. 16, § 1	1684		R. 12	1856
	c. 45, § 2	2061			
	c. 48, § 8	2152, 2153	<i>Admiralty Rules</i>		
	§ 9	2152	Rule 6		4a, 4d
	c. 59, § 10	196, 1206			
	c. 67, § 27	488	<i>Commercial Causes Rules</i>		
	§§ 28, 29	1380,	Rule 6		4a
		1411			
	§ 30	1828, 2066			
	§ 67	488			
	§ 88	1674, 1680,			
		1681, 1684	<b>CANADA</b>		
	c. 69, § 33	1074	<b>Dominion</b>		
	§ 220	1074	<i>Revised Statutes 1906</i>		
1909, 9 "	c. 39, § 2	1828	c. 7, § 46		2281
1910, 10 "	c. 11, § 8	1671	c. 8, §§ 25-27		2281
			c. 10, § 6		1684



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
c. 10, §§ 7-9	2378	c. 146, Criminal Code	
c. 31, § 21	6b	§ 19	2501
c. 37, § 66	2281	§ 21	2514
§ 67	2169	§ 642	2281
§§ 68, 69	1680, 2167	§§ 671-677	2199
§ 69	1680	§ 682	1326
§ 292	2377	§ 684	848, 1326
§ 294	2509	§ 794	1681
c. 48, § 262	1674, 1680	§ 847	369
c. 75, § 34	1674	§ 876	1851
c. 77, §§ 40-44	1680	§ 894	1519, 1851
c. 79, § 107	1074	§ 896	1851
§ 109	1683	§ 897	1851
§ 174	1683	§ 908	1416
c. 113, § 112	1680	§§ 963, 964	196
§ 211	1641	§ 968	1163
§ 246	1641	§§ 971-976	2199
§ 288	1339, 1641	§ 977	2199
§ 335	1207	§ 978	2592
c. 126, §§ 5, 6	2287, 2377	§ 979	2167
c. 133, § 17	1674	§ 980	1339
c. 136, § 12	2090	§ 981	341
c. 139, § 94	2162	§ 982	2167
§ 96	1411	§ 984	222, 1644
§ 99	1380	§ 989	150
§§ 102, 103	1411	§ 990	150
c. 140, § 64	1411	§§ 993, 994	326
§ 67	1380	§ 997	1380, 1411
§§ 70, 71	1411	§ 998	1380, 1411
c. 144, § 146	2162, 2167	§ 999	1375, 1380, 1387, 1411, 1413
c. 145, Evidence Act		§ 1000	1387
§ 2	6b	§ 1001	848
§ 3	488	§ 1002	2036, 2042, 2044
§ 4	488, 2272	§ 1003	488, 1828, 2061
§ 5	850, 2223, 2281, 2283	§ 1019	21
§ 6	488, 811	c. 149, § 2	2265
§ 7	1908	c. 152, § 106	2281
§ 8	2016	§ 128	196
§ 9	900, 905, 907	§ 142	488
§ 10	1263		
§ 11	1028	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 12	988, 1270	1893, c. 31, § 19	1859/
§ 14	1828	§ 21	6b
§ 15	1828	1902, c. 40, Rule 164	563
§ 16	488, 1828, 2061, 2066	1913, 3 & 4 Geo. V, c. 13, § 30	1413
§§ 17, 18	2573	1917, 7 & 8 " c. 14, § 1	488
§ 19	1684	1919, 9 & 10 " c. 12	1639
§ 20	1680, 1684	c. 36, § 81	1411
§ 21	1680, 1684	1920, 10 & 11 " c. 46, § 92	488
§ 22	1680, 1684	§ 93	2214, 2281
§ 23	1681		
§ 24	1223, 1680, 1683	<i>Orders in Council</i>	
§ 25	1680	July 21, 1908	2265
§ 26	1639, 1680	Mar. 20, 1911	2265
§ 27	1225, 1651	Aug. 5, 1916	2162
§ 28	1223, 1639, 1651, 1680,		
	1681, 1859	<i>Alberta</i>	
§ 29	2167	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 30	1684	1906, c. 3, § 7, par. 54	1684
§ 31	1680, 2167	par. 55	1680, 1684
§ 32	1290	§ 9	1680
§ 33	2200	c. 24, § 17	1225, 1651
§§ 35, 38, 40	6b	c. 28, §§ 64, 65	1680
§§ 41-46	2195	c. 57, § 535	1680



# CANADA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

1907, c. 13, § 30	Section 1644	378	Section 289
1910, c. 3, §§ 4, 5	488	378-389	2199
§ 6	488, 1856	382	1380
§ 7	2281	383	1856 <i>d</i>
§ 8	488, 2252	384	1856 <i>d</i>
§ 9	488	385	1859 <i>f</i>
§ 11	2061	389	2199
§§ 12, 13	2065	390	1681
§§ 14, 15, 16	1828	393	1380
§ 17	1828, 2066	394	1387
§ 18	789, 811	395	1411
§ 20	1263	395-412	1380
§ 21	1028	409	1411
§ 22	986, 1270	978	1304, 1310
§ 23	905		
§ 24	1680		
§ 25	1684		
§ 26	1680, 1684		
§ 27	2167		
§ 28	1684		
§ 29	1680		
§ 30	2375		
§ 31	1639		
§ 32	1680		
§ 33	2167		
§ 34	1680		
§ 35	1681		
§§ 36, 37	1651		
§§ 38, 39	1675		
§ 40	1676		
§ 41	2162		
§ 43	1681		
§§ 44, 45, 46	1681		
§ 48	1651, 1705		
§ 49	1651		
§ 50	1192, 1223, 1859 <i>f</i>		
§ 52	1290		
§ 54	2016		
§ 55	1573, 1662		
1913, c. 12, § 15	2150		
c. 24, § 5	150		
c. 27, § 4	2066		
1915, c. 6, § 4 <i>c</i>	4 <i>c</i>		
1916, c. 22, § 38	1644		
1918, c. 5, § 43	2220		
c. 50, § 3	2220		
§ 4	2377		
1921, c. 8, § 31	1163		
<i>Rules of Court 1914</i>			
74	1062		
145	2313		
190	1837, 1869		
192	1881		
196	1163, 1862, 2220		
197	1163		
198	73		
199	986		
234-250	1856, 2218		
238-241	1859 <i>b</i> , 2219		
250	2124		
251	2220		
294	1519		
364-376	1859, 2219		
<i>British Columbia</i>			
<i>Revised Statutes 1911</i>			
c. 17, § 93			1680
c. 22, § 11			1644, 1680
c. 26, § 2			1651
c. 53, § 89			1519
c. 58, § 57			1380, 1411
§ 59			1380, 1411
c. 67, § 27			488, 2252
c. 72, § 98			2214
§ 160			2214
§ 297			2281
§ 298			2281
§ 336			2281
c. 76, § 8			2061
c. 78, § 4			488
§ 5			2281
§ 6			488, 1828, 2066
§ 7			488
§ 8			488
§ 9			488
§ 10			2065
§ 11			2065
§§ 12-15			488
§ 12			1828
§§ 13-15			1828
§ 15			1380
§ 16			1263
§ 17			1028
§ 18			986, 1270
§ 19			900, 905, 907
§ 20			1681
§ 22			488
§ 23			167
§ 24			1828
§ 25			1828
§ 27			2573
§ 28			1680, 1684
§ 29			1680, 1684
§ 30			1681
§ 31			1680, 1684
§ 32			1223, 1680, 1683
§ 33			1680
§ 34			1680
§ 35			1680, 2167
§ 36			1684
§ 37			1639
§ 38			1225, 1651
§ 39			1651, 1680, 1859 <i>f</i>



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# CANADA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# CANADA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
1919, c. 21, § 1	1680, 1684	c. 159, § 41	1380, 1411
§ 2	1639	c. 163, § 3	1684
1921, c. 14, § 5	2228	§ 4	1680, 1684
c. 21	4d	§ 5	1680, 1684
§ 27	1225, 1651	§ 6	1680, 1684
<b>Northwest Territories</b>		§ 7	2167
<i>Consolidated Ordinances 1898</i>		§ 8	2167
c. 9, § 23	1680	§ 9	1680
c. 14, § 20	1644, 1680	§ 10	1684
c. 21, R. 191-200	1859, 2219	§ 11	1223, 1680, 1683
R. 201-225	2218	§ 12	1674
R. 207	1859, 2219	§ 13	1639, 1680
R. 208	1859, 2219	§ 14	1680
R. 221-225	1856	§ 15	1647, 1681, 2110
R. 224	2124	§ 16	1681
R. 260	986	§ 17	1680
R. 263	1380, 1411, 1710	§ 18	2162
R. 267	1411	§ 19	1680
R. 271	1380	§ 20	1225, 1651
R. 272	1380	§ 21	1225, 1651, 1681
R. 280	1411	§ 22	1681, 1859/
R. 286	1710	§ 23	1651
R. 287	1387	§ 24	1225, 1651
R. 293	1710	§ 25	1651
R. 490	1674	§ 26	1225, 1676
c. 23, § 25	1680	§ 27	1225, 1651, 1681
c. 43, § 30	1225, 1651	§ 28	1675
c. 44, § 9	1225, 1651	§ 29	1675
c. 70, § 100	1680	§ 30	1236, 2154
c. 76, § 6	150	§ 31	1680
§ 11	1680	§ 32	1290
c. 89, § 105	196	§ 33	2016
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 34	488
1900, c. 22, § 5	150	§ 35	488, 2065, 2218
1901, c. 10, § 1	488	§ 36	488, 617
1902, c. 5, § 1	2124	§ 37	488, 2252
§ 2	1669	§ 38	488
1903, c. 8, § 1	1669	§ 41	1411
<b>Nova Scotia</b>		§ 42	900, 907
<i>Revised Statutes 1900</i>		§ 43	905
c. 3, § 32	1684	§ 44	1263
c. 5, § 82	2215	§ 45	986, 1270
§ 113	2281	§ 45a	2218
c. 6, § 36	2281	§ 46	1828
c. 19, § 51	1680	§ 48	2162
c. 36, § 5	1326	c. 167, § 8	1466
c. 43	1028	<i>Rules of Court 1919</i>	
c. 44, § 10	1674	Ord. 13	18
c. 73, § 63	1680	Ord. 22, R. 17	1061
c. 99, § 127	1680	Ord. 30, R. 1	1856a, 2218
§ 204	1223, 1683	R. 1 ff.	1856
§ 214	1223, 1683	R. 12-22	1859, 2219
§ 307	2377	R. 23	2124
c. 100, § 121	1326	Ord. 32, R. 3	1519
§ 155	1680	Ord. 34, R. 30	73
§ 163	2281	R. 31	986
§ 164	488	R. 36	1163
c. 128, § 47	1074	Ord. 35, R. 1	1411, 1710
§ 79	1683	R. 3	1681
c. 158, § 18	1310	R. 3 B	1380
		R. 4	1411
		R. 10	1380
		R. 17	1404, 1411
		R. 24	1387



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# CANADA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
273	2199	§ 42	1225, 1651
274	1859b, 2219, 2373	§ 43	1225, 1859
275	289, 1856, 2218, 2373	§ 44	1225, 1651
279-281	1380	§ 45	1225, 1651
282	1828	§ 46	1225, 1651
283	811	§ 47	1676
285	803	§ 48	1223, 1859f
287	1411	§ 49	1225, 1651
308	1062	§ 50	1676
327	2124	§ 52	1519
327-337	1856, 2218	§ 53	2167
330	2124	§ 54	2150
341	1859b, 1859f	§ 55	1681
343	18	§ 56	1411, 1681
348-353	1859b, 2219	§ 57	1213
350	1859f	§ 58	1207
370	445, 1163, 1862		
<i>Session Laws</i>		<i>Other Session Laws</i>	
1891, c. 11	2220	1853, c. 12, § 1	1859, 2219
1916, c. 24, § 11	1828	§ 9	1859, 2219
c. 50	1708	1873, c. 21, § 24	1304, 1310, 1320
§ 50	2281	c. 22, § 107	1163
1919, c. 23, § 7	1644	§ 244	1856, 1859, 2219
c. 27, § 1	1310	§ 245	1856, 1859, 2218
c. 70, § 4	150	§ 246	1856, 1859
1920, c. 36, § 3	2531	§ 247	1856, 1859
1921, c. 40	1675a	§ 248	1856, 1859
c. 54, § 25	2061	§ 252	1163, 1862
<i>Prince Edward Island</i>		1887, c. 4, § 2	1380
<i>Statute 1889, c. 9 (Evidence Act)</i>		§ 3	1380
§ 3	488	§ 4	1380
§ 4	488	1889, c. 9, § 10	488, 905
§ 5	488	1890, c. 3, § 35	2281
§ 6	488	1898, c. 3, § 1	1680
§ 7	488, 2252	1899, c. 15, § 5	1669
§ 8	488, 2061	§ 8	1669
§ 9	488	1900, c. 3, § 15	196
§ 10	488	1906, c. 6, § 25	1680
§ 11	2065	§ 30	1644, 1680
§ 12	2065	c. 12	488
§ 13	1828	1907, c. 3, § 25	1270, 2167
§ 15	900, 905, 907	1909, c. 3, § 15	1669
§ 16	1028	c. 6, § 1	1680
§ 17	1263	1910, c. 3, § 45	1380, 1411
§ 18	986, 1270	§ 46	2281
§ 19	1290	c. 8, § 48	1380, 1411
§ 20	2016	c. 15, § 25	1154
§ 21	1680, 1681	1914, c. 2, §§ 4, 5	2195
§ 22	1644, 1680	1915, c. 11, § 12	1681
§ 23	1681	1918, c. 1, § 108	196
§ 25	2162	§ 115	2281
§ 26	1647, 1680	§ 140	2281
§ 27	1680	c. 4, § 5	1684
§ 28	1680	1919, c. 10, § 5	1644
§ 29	2375		
§ 30	1680, 1684	<i>Saskatchewan</i>	
§ 31	1680	<i>Revised Statutes 1920</i>	
§ 32	2167	c. 1, § 53	1684
§ 33	1684	§ 54	1680, 1684
§ 34	1684	§ 59	1680
§§ 35-37	1675	c. 18, § 40	1680
§ 38	2162	c. 26, § 7	1644
		c. 39, § 32	2220
		§ 40	1669



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section	Yukon
c. 41, § 27	1380	
§ 28	1411	
c. 44, § 3	1684	<i>Consolidated Ordinances 1914</i>
§ 4	1684	
§ 5	1684	
§ 6	1684	
§ 7	1684	
§ 8	2167	
§ 9	2167	
§ 10	1684	
§ 11	1680	
§ 12	1639, 1680	
§§ 13-16	1674, 2167	
§ 17	1680	
§ 18	1225, 1651	
§ 19	1681	
§ 20	1681	
§ 21, par. 1	1225, 1651	
par. 2	1674	
§§ 22-24	1675	
§ 25	1681	
§ 26	1223, 1859f, 1859g	
§ 27	2167	
§ 28	488	
§ 29	488	
§ 30	488	
§ 31	2281	
§ 32	900, 905, 907	
§ 33	1028	
§ 34	1263	
§ 35	986, 1270	
§ 36	488, 1828, 2066	
§ 37	2061	
§ 38	789, 811	
§ 40	1828	
§ 41	2016	
§ 42	1908	
§ 43	2201	
§ 44	1676b, 2162	
§§ 45-47	2195	
c. 56, § 15	2150	
c. 67, § 20	1225, 1651	
§ 184	2371, 2373	
c. 74, § 11	1510	
§§ 11-14	1510	
§ 17	2475	
c. 76, § 21	1680	
c. 79, § 226	2377	
c. 123, § 5	150	
c. 135, §§ 62, 63	1680	
c. 156, §§ 15, 16	1141	
c. 175, § 14	2220	
c. 176, § 60	2377	
c. 192, § 25	1835	
§ 28	222	
c. 193, § 4	2090	
c. 194, § 84	196	
§ 87	1674, 2167	
§ 94	2281	
c. 200, § 36	1225, 1651	
	<i>Session Laws</i>	
1920, c. 2, § 10	1684	
c. 28, § 1	488, 2281	
1921-22, c. 6, § 15	2090	
c. 1, § 8, par. 54		1680, 1684
par. 55		1684
c. 1, § 10		1680
c. 6, § 20		1680
c. 7, § 30		1225, 1651
c. 8, § 20		1644
c. 30, § 3		1684
§ 4		1684
§ 5		1680, 1684
§ 6		1680, 1684
§ 7		2167
§ 8		2167
§ 9		1680
§ 10		1684
§ 11		1223, 1651, 1680, 1683
§ 12		1674
§ 13		1639, 1680
§ 14		1680
§ 15		1681
§ 16		1681
§ 17		1680
§ 18		2162
§ 19		1651
§ 20		1651
§ 21		1225, 1651
§ 22		1681
§ 23		1651, 1681, 1859f
§ 24		1225, 1651
§ 25		1651
§ 26		1225, 1651
§ 27		1676
§ 28		1675
§ 29		1675
§ 30		1236
§ 31		1680, 2167
§ 32		1290
§ 33		2016
§ 34		488
§ 35		488, 2065, 2218
§ 36		488
§ 37		488, 2252
§ 38		488
§ 39		2201
§ 40		900, 905, 907
§ 41		1028
§ 42		1263
§ 43		986, 1270
§ 44		1828
§ 46		2162
§ 49		2195
c. 48		
Rule 128		1197
201-210		1859, 2219
211-235		1856, 2218
234		2124
245		1519
268		1881
270		986
273		1380, 1411
275		1681
277		1411



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

635



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 691	1680	§ 3541	488, 516
§ 700	1680	§ 3572	488
§ 1132	1411	§ 3645	516, 2066
§ 1136	1411	§ 3656	1347a, 1354
§ 1138	1381	§ 3657	1347a, 1354
§ 1139	1828	§ 3658	488, 516, 2066
§ 1155	488, 516	§ 3675	516, 2066
§ 1163	4c	§ 3680	516, 2066
§ 1276	1681	§ 3695	1672
§ 1289	1681	§ 3816	1675
§ 1356	6, 488	§§ 3722, 3727, 3734, 3751, 3754	2377
§ 1357	488, 2272	§ 4043	1397, 2191, 2252
§ 1358	488	§ 4112	1397, 2191, 2252
§ 1359	2259c, 2281	§ 4137	2039
§ 1360	1411, 1856	§ 4356	2085, 2086
§ 1361	1859, 2200, 2219	§ 4390	488
§ 1362	6	§ 4528	1680
§ 1363	2016	§ 5907	1684
§ 1364	803, 1381, 1411	§ 6123	2377
§ 1365	803	§ 6141	1657
§ 1366	1381, 1411, 1417	§ 6148	2207
§ 1367	1383, 1411, 1412, 1417	§ 6150	2201, 2377
§ 1368	1383, 1387, 1412	§ 6163	1856c
§ 1369	2195	§ 6187	1680, 1684
§ 1370	2195	§ 6249	1676
§ 1371	2201, 2207	§ 6261	1674
§ 1372	1381, 1417	§ 6275	2195
§§ 1373-1376	2195	§ 6276	2252, 2258
§ 1377	2195	§ 6306	1326
§ 1379	2207	§ 6323	1681
§§ 1380-1384	2195	§ 6325	1828
§ 1385	1680	§ 7025, par. 19	2287
§ 1386	1680	§ 7033	1828
§ 1387	1674, 1680, 2162	§ 7034	2259, 2281, 2282
§ 1388	1680	§ 7038	4c
§ 1389	1639, 1680	§ 7039	1680
§ 1390	1639	§ 7091	2259a, 2281
§ 1391	1639, 1680	§ 7112	1835
§ 1392	1674, 1680	§ 7133	2207
§ 1393	1680	§ 7433	2377
§ 1394	1680	§ 7434	2377
§ 1395	1680	§ 7437	2377
§ 1396	1680	§ 7443	2377
§ 1397	1680	§§ 7781-7783	1205, 1339, 1641
§ 1398	1680	§ 8038	1684
§ 1399	1639, 1680	§ 8043	2207
§ 1400	1275	§ 8044	2259a, 2281
§ 1401	1275	§ 8071	1674, 2162
§§ 1402-1407	1660	§ 8114	1205, 1339, 1641
§ 1408	1680	§ 8118	1205, 1339, 1641
§ 1409	1680, 1681	§ 8122	2162
§ 1410	1680	§ 8123	1205, 1339, 1641
§ 1411	1684	§ 8133	1672
§ 1412	1684	§ 8145	1680
§ 1413	1684	§ 8158	1205, 1339, 1641
§ 1414	1684	§ 8790	2281, 2282
§ 1424	6	§ 8803	1828
§ 1427	6	§ 8804	488, 1681
§ 1507	1851	§ 8823	2201, 2207
§ 1508	2191	§ 8973	2207
§ 3074	1828	§ 9060	1651
§ 3114	987, 2252	§ 9532	2185
§ 3116	1381, 1411	§ 9533	2185
§ 3304	2262	§ 9708	2259a, 2281



# UNITED STATES

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 9710	2377	1904, Apr. 21, c. 1402	1671
§ 10104	291, 1859	1906, Mar. 23	488
§ 10107	488	c. 1131	488, 2085
§ 10188	2085	June 29, c. 3591	1680, 1684, 2508
§ 10189	2085	c. 3592	6, 516, 1356, 1672, 2066
§ 10233	2531	c. 3608	6, 488
§ 10375	1639	June 30, c. 3920	256, 1975, 2259, 2281, 2282
§ 10563	2061	July 29, § 16	1356
§ 10600	2085	1907, Feb. 20, § 3	488
§ 10702	2281	1908, Apr. 22	18
<i>Session Laws</i>		May 27	1347a, 2167
1790, May 26	1680, 1681, 2163	1909, Feb. 16, c. 130	1381, 1411
July 20, c. 29, § 6	1641	Mar. 4, c. 320	1674, 1676
1804, Mar. 27	1680	Aug. 5, § 14	4c
1836, July 4	1856	1910, Mar. 26, c. 107, p. 263	488
1854, July 31	1347, 1671	May 7, c. 216, No. 168, p. 352	7, 852, 2281
1872, June 7, c. 322, § 58	1641	1911, Feb. 17, c. 103, § 8	2377
1874, June 22, c. 391, § 5	1859	Mar. 3, c. 231	5, 488, 1381, 1411, 1828
§ 8	488	Apr. 6, No. 259, p. 249, § 32	2214
1877, Mar. 2, c. 82, § 4	1684	1913, Feb. 26	2016
1878, Mar. 16, c. 37	488, 2272	1914, Feb. 7	1620
1883, Mar. 3, c. 116, § 6	488	Sept. 26, c. 311, § 9	2259a
1884, July 5, c. 220	1354	Dec. 17	368
1887, Feb. 1	4c	1916, Apr. 27	196
c. 104, § 9	2281, 2282	Aug. 29, c. 418, § 3	6
§ 12	2282	1917, Feb. 14, § 7	1708
Feb. 4, §§ 8, 10	2257, 2281	May 18	1213, 2572
Mar. 3, c. 359, § 8	488	June 15, c. 30, § 2	2183
c. 397, § 1	488	§ 3	367, 1663
1890, June 10	4c	Aug. 10	2572
1891, Feb. 10, c. 128	2281	1918, May 16	367
Mar. 3, c. 551, § 8	1641, 1672	1919, Feb. 24	2185
1892, Mar. 9, c. 14	1381, 1417, 1856a	Oct. 28, § 13	1708
May 5, c. 60, § 3	2540	§ 30	2259a, 2282
§ 6	488, 516, 2066	§ 34	1708
1893, Feb. 11, c. 83	2281, 2282	1920, Mar. 19, § 2	1684
Nov. 3, c. 14, § 2	516, 2066	§ 7	1680
1894, Aug. 18, c. 301, § 1	1354	June 4,	
1897, Mar. 3, c. 391, § 5	1657, 1676	Art. of War 19	1828
§ 6	1944	22	2195
July 24	4c	24	987, 2252
1898, June 13, c. 448	1235	25	1381, 1398, 1411
§ 6	2184	27	1413
§ 13	2184	37	21
§ 14	2185	38	4d
June 28	1347	1921, Nov. 23, § 257	2377
July 1, c. 541, § 7	2268, 2276, 2281, 2282, 2283	1922, Jan. 16	1657, 1676
§ 7a	2283	Feb. 18, c. —, § 6	1657
§ 27a	6	§ 8	1944
§ 41	2201, 2207	<i>Equity Rules of the Supreme Court 1912</i>	
§ 70	2264	No. 12	1381
Dec. 21, c. 28, §§ 19, 20	1352	Nos. 12-15	2199
1900, June 6, c. 788	2065	No. 13	18
1901, Mar. 3, c. 866	2377	No. 46	18, 2195
1902, Mar. 8, c. 140, § 9	2039	Nos. 46-48	1411
Apr. 12, c. 500, § 7	2184	No. 47	1381
1903, Feb. 5, c. 487, § 7	488	No. 51	18, 2195
Feb. 14, c. 552	2259a, 2281, 2282	No. 53	1381
Feb. 25	2282	No. 54	1381
Mar. 3, c. 1012	1354		
1904, Apr. 19, c. 1398	1186, 1239, 1676, 2373		



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
No. 58	1856a, 1856b, 1859, 1859c	§ 2466	2085
No. 62	2195	§ 2491	1197, 1710
No. 78	1828	§ 2546	1680, 1681
		§ 2674	1710
<i>Admiralty Rules</i>		§ 2731	1680
No. 9	1381	§ 2993	1710
No. 12	18	§ 2994	1710
No. 32	1859	§ 3117	2124
		§ 3360	1225, 1676
<b>Uniform Acts</b>		§ 3374	1225, 1651, 1676
<i>(National Conference of Commissioners)</i>		§ 3382	2143
Bills of Lading Act, § 12	2508	§ 3395	1225, 1651, 1676
Foreign Depositions Act, § 1	2195	§ 3678	2201
Illegitimacy Act, § 26	1141, 1413	§ 3738	2281
Land Registration Act, §§ 51, 71	1347	§ 3799	2067
Negotiable Instruments Act, § 14	2409	§ 3821	2054
	§ 15	§ 3924	1674
	§ 16	§ 3925	1519
	§ 20	§ 3959	1828
	§ 29	§ 3960	712
	§ 55	§ 3961	1564, 1597
	§ 61	§ 3962	2292
	§ 64	§ 3963	2404
	§ 68	§ 3964	2433
Partnership Act, § 11	1078	§ 3966	2596
Proof of Statutes Act, § 1	1684	§ 3967	2596
Vital Statistics Act, § 7	1644	§ 3968	2596
	§ 14	§ 3970	1710
	§ 19	§ 3972	2596
	§ 23	§ 3976	1519
	1644, 2377	§ 3977	1704
<i>(American Bar Association)</i>		§ 3978	1644, 1680, 1683
Canons of Professional Ethics.		§ 3979	1239, 2167
No. 19	1911	§ 3980	1239, 1680
No. 22	1807, 1808	§ 3981	1680
		§ 3982	1680
		§ 3983	1680
<b>Alabama</b>		§ 3984	1680
<i>Constitution 1901</i>		§ 3985	1680
Art. I, § 6	488, 1397, 2191, 2252	§ 3986	1680
§ 18	2039	§ 3988	1680, 1684
VI, § 169	1835	§ 3989	1680, 1684
VIII, § 189	2281	§ 3990	1672
		§ 3992	1675
<i>Code 1907</i>		§ 3995	1275
§ 26	1680, 1684	§ 3996	1681
§ 35	2433	§ 3998	1681
§§ 43-48	1672	§ 4000	1225, 1651
§ 48	1680	§ 4001	1651
§ 224	1674	§ 4003	1519
§ 227	1848	§ 4004	1290, 1301, 1304
§ 461	1849	§ 4004, par. 1	1311
§ 486	1849	par. 2	1292
§ 549	1672	par. 4	1291
§ 573	1680	par. 5	1299
§ 859	2090	par. 6	1292
§ 875	13, 2206		
§ 984	1674	§ 4005	1302, 1310, 1312, 1320
§ 1259	1684	§ 4006	1299, 1301
§ 1575	1674	§ 4007	488, 2218
§ 1615	1674	§ 4008	488, 987
§ 2226	2281	§ 4009	1270
§ 2277	1640	§ 4010	811
§ 2310	1640, 1680	§ 4011	1923
§ 2358	1680	§ 4012	2292



## ALABAMA—ALASKA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1300-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

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## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

[illegible]



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

641



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section		Section
§ 1225	4, 488	§ 1897	1665, 1680
§ 1226	488, 935, 966, 987, 1828	§ 1901	1665
§ 1227	488	§ 1995	1835
§ 1228	488	§ 2321	2039
par. 2	2292	§ 2414	2061
par. 3	2395	§ 2416	488
par. 4	2380	§ 2597	2085
par. 6	2291	§ 2655	2281
§ 1229	488, 2272, 2276	§ 2709	488
§§ 1230-1238	2199	§ 2928	1837
§ 1232	2195	§ 2929	1837
§ 1236	2199	§ 2930	1326
§ 1237	2207	§ 2988	4
§ 1239	1382	§ 2993	2360
§ 1249	1389, 1411	§ 3010	1851
§ 1250	1382	§ 3110	2201, 2207
§ 1261	1389, 1411	§ 3112	1382
		§ 3115	1411
		§ 3117	369
		§ 3118	370
		§§ 3119-3120	1684
		§ 3119	1625
		§ 3120	1625
		§ 3121	488
		§ 3122	488
		§ 3123	488, 2272
		§ 3124	488
		§ 3125	488
		§§ 3173-3175	1866
		§ 3175	1873
		§ 3176	1163
		§ 3180	2056
		§ 3181	2056
		§ 3182	2071
		§ 3184	2497
		§ 3220	2354
		§ 3504	2067
		§ 4110	2573
		§ 4111	2531
		§ 4112	2486
		§ 4114	2596
		§ 4115	1684
		§ 4116	1684
		§ 4117	1680, 1684
		§ 4118	1681
		§ 4119	1681
		§ 4120	1239
		§ 4121	1680
		§ 4122	1680
		§ 4123	1674, 1680
		§ 4124	1680
		§ 4125	1675
		§ 4126	1675
		§ 4127	1680
		§ 4128	2109
		§ 4129	1680, 1684
		§ 4130	1680
		§ 4131	1680
		§ 4132	1680
		§ 4133	1680
		§ 4134	1519
		§ 4135	1519
		§ 4136	1519
		§§ 4137-4141	1859, 2219

## Session Laws

1918, Sp. Sess., June 20, § 14	1675a
1921, c. 2	1684
c. 3	2195
c. 103, § 9	4c
§ 78	2220
§ 80, par. b	2380
c. 114, § 2	488
c. 131	563, 2220

## Arkansas

### Constitution 1874

II, § 8	2252
§ 10	1397, 2191
§ 14	2039
§ 26	1828
III, § 9	2281
XIX, § 1	1828

### Digest of the Statutes 1919

§ 667	2162
§ 1005	2281
§ 1223	1848, 1859
§§ 1248-1260	1856a, 2218
§ 1258	2207
§ 1270	2596
§ 1292	1866, 1873
§ 1293	1163
§ 1337	1062
§ 1344	1062
§ 1530	1676a
§ 1531	1225, 1651, 1676
§ 1533	1239
§ 1534	1664
§ 1535	1225, 1651
§ 1581	1326
§ 1582	1326
§ 1583	1374
§ 1683	4c
§ 1687	2281
§ 1688	2281
§ 1692	1680
§ 1711	1680
§ 1748	1680



# ARKANSAS—CALIFORNIA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 4143	1859	§ 8817	1680
§ 4144	488, 2218	§ 9404	2090
§ 4145	488, 987	§ 10297	1680
§ 4146	488	§ 10494	2051
§ 4147	488	§ 10497	2050
§ 4148	2395	§ 10499	2050
§ 4149	2380	§ 10501	2051
§§ 4150-4168	2199	§ 10517	1310, 1320, 1382, 1411
§ 4158	2199	§ 10518	1304, 1310, 1320
§ 4159	2195	§ 10521	1411
§ 4161	2207	§§ 10529-10535	1510
§ 4162	2195, 2201	§ 10537	1681
§ 4164	2195	§ 10545	2106
§ 4166	2292		
§ 4169	2199	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 4171	2195	1919, Mar. 28, No. 493	1674
§ 4175	1828	1921, No. 238	1680
§ 4176	1828		
§ 4177	1828	<b>California</b>	
§ 4178	1828	<i>Constitution 1879</i>	
§ 4179	1828	Art. I, § 4	1828
§ 4182	1866, 1867, 1873	§ 13	1397, 2191, 2252
§ 4183	781, 1908	§ 20	2039
§ 4184	1896	Amend. 1911, Art. 6, § 4½	21
§ 4185	770, 773, 914		
§ 4186	905, 907, 917	<i>Political Code 1872</i>	
§ 4187	923, 987, 1021, 1270	§ 282	1411
§ 4188	1028, 1263	§ 303	2195
§ 4189	1104	§ 304	987, 2281
§ 4190	1876, 1896	§ 599	2195
§ 4191	1837	§ 659	2195
§ 4192	2199	§ 795	1675
§ 4193	1909, 1910	§ 1117	1640, 1680, 1710
§ 4194	1861, 1883	§ 1519	2195
§ 4199	1710	§ 1873	1676
§ 4200	1710	§ 2153	2220
§ 4206	1411, 2206, 2371	§ 2169	2054, 2090
§ 4207	2207	§ 2186	2054, 2220
§ 4208	1411, 2207	§ 2444	2195
§ 4210	1411	§ 2461	4c
§§ 4212-4214	2162	§ 2463	4c
§§ 4215-4230	1382	§ 2688	4c
§ 4233	803	§ 2782	4c
§§ 4240-4245	1383	§ 2848	4c
§ 4245	1387, 1412	§ 2870	4c
§ 4246	1681	§ 2892	4c
§ 4249	18	§ 2910	4c
§ 4736	1674	§ 2955	2220
§ 4746	1665, 1680	§ 2979	2220
§ 5764	4d	§ 2984	1644, 1680
§ 5956	2377	§ 3018	2220
§ 6157	1675a	§ 3083	1644, 1680
§ 6178	2281	§ 3168	150
§ 6594	2162	§ 3172	150
§ 6977	1466	§ 3341	1676
§ 6991	1672	§ 3414	4c
§ 7014	1672	§ 3632	2195
§ 7385	1225, 1651	§ 3692	2195
§ 7497	1680, 1684	§ 3769	1710
§ 8390	1664	§ 3789	1640, 1680
§ 8407	150	§ 4065	2195
§ 8421	1680	§ 4070	2201
§ 8574	2509	§ 4076	4c
§ 8575	2507		



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 4142b	1225	§ 1324	2282
§ 4159	1664	§§ 1326-1331	2199
§ 4178	1664	§ 1330	2207
§ 4314	1676	§ 1333	2199
		§ 1335	1398
		§§ 1335-1341	1382
<i>Penal Code 1872</i>		§ 1338	1382
§ 7, par. 16	2458	§ 1339	1382
§ 14	2281	§ 1345	1389, 1398, 1411
§ 64	2281	§ 1346	1411
§ 89	987, 2281	§ 1353	1382
§ 118a	2043	§ 1362	1389, 1411
§ 232	2281	§ 1515	1326
§ 251	2557	§ 1539	1326
§ 266g	488		
§ 269b	1644		
§ 270	488	<i>Civil Code 1872</i>	
§ 270a	488	§ 57	2085
§ 334	2281	§ 69	2195
§ 629	4c	§ 72	2195
§ 637	4c	§ 130	2067
§ 675	488	§ 144	2063
§ 686	1387, 1397, 1398, 1405, 1411, 1413, 1810, 1824	§ 145	2063
§ 688	2252	§ 193	2527
§ 702	1326	§ 194	2527
§ 704	1326	§ 195	2527
§ 811	1326	§ 297	1680
§ 867	1837	§ 629	2195
§ 868	1837	§ 637	2195
§ 869	1326, 1349, 1669, 1824	§ 1055	2520
§ 872	1382	§ 1056	2408
§ 882	1382, 1387, 1398, 1411	§ 1057	2408
§ 919	4	§ 1059	2408
§ 926	2360	§§ 1066-1072	2458
§ 943	1851	§ 1116	1849
§ 1025	196, 2277	§ 1189	1676
§ 1093	196, 1866, 1873, 2277	§ 1201	2195
§ 1099	488, 2279	§ 1207	1225, 1651
§ 1100	188	§ 1280	1510
§ 1101	2279	§ 1282	1510
§ 1102	4, 488, 1008	§ 1283	1510
§ 1103	369, 2039	§ 1289	2050
§ 1103a	2042	§ 1290	2050
§ 1104	370	§ 1293	2051
§ 1105	2512	§ 1300a	2475
§ 1106	2085	§ 1307	2475
§ 1107	1339, 1625	§§ 1317-1351	2458
§ 1108	2061	§ 1324	2458
§ 1110	2044	§ 1340	2471, 2474, 2477
§ 1111	2056, 2060	§ 1426m	1710
§ 1112	2056	§§ 1565-1589	2413
§ 1117	1856	§§ 1635-1661	2458
§ 1118	2495	§ 2059	1674
§ 1119	1163	§ 2471	1639, 1680, 1710
§ 1120	1800	§ 2472	1680
§ 1125	2557	§ 2484	1710
§ 1126	2549	§§ 3339-3408	2413
§ 1204	1710, 1411	§ 3440	2504
§ 1207	1651		
§ 1250	21	<i>Code of Civil Procedure 1872</i>	
§ 1258	21	§ 273	1669
§ 1321	4	§ 283	2594
§ 1322	488	§ 360	1466
§ 1323	488, 2252, 2272, 2276	§ 447	2596
		§ 448	2596



# CALIFORNIA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 449	2596	§ 1893	1225, 1680
§ 454	1848	§ 1900	1684
§ 458	2538	§ 1901	1680
§ 465	1710	§ 1902	1271, 1703
§ 595	2595	§ 1903	1352, 1662
§ 607	1873	§ 1905	1681
§ 610	1163	§ 1906	1681
§ 657	2354	§ 1907	1273, 1681, 2110, 2158
§ 742	1862	§ 1918	1680, 1684
§ 895	1062	§ 1919	1651, 1680
§ 997	1062	§ 1920	1639
§ 1000	1859, 2219	§ 1921	1681
§ 1054	2408	§ 1922	1681
§ 1096	2497	§ 1923	1677, 1680, 1681
§ 1308	797, 1185, 1304, 1310	§ 1925	1239
§ 1310	797, 1185	§ 1926	1639
§ 1315	1304, 1310, 1320	§ 1928	1664
§ 1316	1387, 1413	§ 1932	2455
§ 1323	1681	§ 1935	1292
§ 1339	7, 2052, 2106	§ 1936	1597, 1693
§ 1379	1674	§ 1937	1188, 1189, 1267
§ 1798	1674	§ 1938	1206, 1207, 1208
§ 1829	1175	§ 1939	2125
§ 1830	1175	§ 1940	1290
§ 1844	2034	§ 1941	1297, 1298, 1302
§ 1845	657	§ 1942	2132, 2137, 1300, 1301
§ 1846	1371	§ 1943	701
§ 1847	923	§ 1944	1693, 2016
§ 1849	1082	§ 1945	2017, 2132, 2137
§ 1850	1750, 1772	§ 1946	1455, 1519, 1639
§ 1851	1851	§ 1947	1519, 1521
§ 1852	1480	§ 1948	1676
§ 1853	1455	§ 1950	2373
§ 1854	2113	§ 1951	1186, 1225, 1651, 1676
§ 1855	1195, 1198, 1199, 1218, 1225, 1230, 1269, 1275	§ 1954	1163
§ 1855a	1225, 1705	§ 1958	2491
§ 1856	2425	§ 1959	2491
§§ 1857-1865	2458	§ 1961	2491
§ 1863	2025	§ 1962	2491, 2492
§ 1868	944	§ 1963	1587, 1684, 2491, 2499, 2526
§ 1869	2486	par. 1	2511
§ 1870	1587, 1938	par. 2	2511
par. 3	1073	par. 3	2511
par. 4	1430, 1455, 1480	par. 4	2510
par. 5	1078	par. 5	278
par. 6	1079	par. 6	285, 287
par. 8	1387, 1413	par. 9	2518
par. 9	2016	par. 10	2518
par. 10	689, 1938	par. 11	2515
par. 11	1480, 1597, 1605	par. 12	1587, 1626, 2515
par. 12	2458	par. 13	2518
par. 13	1480, 1597	par. 14	2535
§ 1875	2162, 2571	par. 15	2534
§ 1879	488, 1828	par. 23	2520
§ 1880	488	par. 24	95, 1213
§ 1881	488, 1856, 2292	par. 25	2529
par. 1	488	par. 26	2531
par. 2	2292	par. 30	2505
par. 3	2395	par. 31	2527
par. 4	2380	par. 32	2530
par. 5	2375, 2378	par. 34	2137
§ 1883	1909, 1910	par. 35	1684, 1703
§ 1884	811	par. 36	1684, 1703
		par. 40	2532



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724, Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1968	2039, 2042		
§ 1982	2525		
§§ 1985-1994	2199	1878, Apr. 1, p. 1050, No. 545	2221
§ 1987	2201	1883, Mar. 3, p. 27, No. 1828	2195
§ 1989	2207	p. 93	4c
§ 1990	2199	1885, Mar. 9, No. 43	1672, 1674
§ 1991	2195	1893, Feb. 23, § 32	2281
§ 1992	2195	1895, Mar. 26, p. 168	1669
§ 1994	2195	1903, Mar. 25, p. 482, No. 573	2195
§§ 1995-1997	2199	No. 225, § 11	1674
§ 1997	1411	No. 225	1382
§ 2006	767, 803	No. 364	2054
§ 2009	1710	No. 532	2042
§ 2010	1710	1905, No. 95	2281, 2282
§ 2011	1680	No. 107	1644, 1680
§ 2015	2162	No. 134	1411
§ 2020	1411	No. 139	488
§ 2021	1411, 1856a	No. 498	1644
§ 2022	912, 1387, 1389, 1411	No. 532	2044, 2061
§ 2024	1382, 1414	No. 540	1382, 1387, 1398, 1411
§ 2025	18	No. 570	1382
§ 2025½	1382	1906, Spec. Sess. c. 52	1705
§ 2028	1389	No. 55, § 1	1275
§ 2031	1382	§ 2	1660
§ 2032	18, 1387, 1411, 1856, 1856a	No. 60	1660
§ 2033	1382	1907, Mar. 11, p. 230, § 13	1674
§ 2034	1387, 1389	§ 15	4c
§§ 2035-2038	2195	Mar. 16, p. 310	1676
§ 2042	1866, 1867	Mar. 19, p. 671	2281
§ 2043	1837	Mar. 23, p. 984	1249, 1626, 2259a,
§ 2044	781, 1908		2281
§ 2045	1866, 1883	No. 68	488, 2292
§ 2046	770	No. 100	7
§ 2047	736, 745, 748, 753, 759, 761	No. 230	488
§ 2048	773, 914, 1890	No. 236	1644, 1680
§ 2049	900, 905, 907	No. 300, § 15	1646
§ 2050	1877, 1896, 1898	No. 392, § 2	912, 1387, 1389, 1411
§ 2051	923, 987, 1270, 1985	§ 5	1382
§ 2052	1028, 1263	No. 394	1837
§ 2053	64, 1104	No. 395	2210
§ 2054	1263, 1861	1909, Mar. 13, p. 353	4c
§ 2055	1856a	1911, Feb. 8, p. 9, No. 865	488
§ 2061	2056, 2094	p. 10, No. 866	488
par. 2	2034	Apr. 5, p. 607, No. 428	2195
par. 3	1008, 1013	May 1, p. 1248	1674
par. 4	2056	No. 14, § 55	2281
par. 6	285	1912, Jan. 2, p. 175	2195
par. 7	285	Jan. 10, p. 217, No. 2144a	2377
§ 2064	2200, 2210	No. 2144d	2380
§ 2065	987, 2210, 2223, 2252	1913, Apr. 23, p. 115, § 55, par. d	2259a,
§ 2066	781, 987, 2210		2281
§§ 2067-2070	2195	May 26, p. 279	4c
§ 2077	2477	p. 632, § 4	2195
§ 2078	1062	§ 5	4c
§ 2079	2067	June 2, p. 722	2195
§ 2084	1383	June 13, p. 1035, No. 606	4c, 2195,
§ 2088	1387, 1389, 1412		2281
§ 2094	1828	No. 20	1620
§ 2095	1828	1915, Apr. 23, p. 115, § 44	2377
§ 2096	1828	§ 55	2195
§ 2097	1828	§ 70	4c
§ 2101	2549	May 19, p. 575	1644
§ 2102	2567	May 21, p. 698, No. 922	2195
		June 3, p. 1102	4c



# CALIFORNIA—COLORADO

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
1915, June 7, p. 1272	2281	§ 496	2090
June 10, p. 1404	2195	§ 505	2090
Nov. 3, p. 1932	1225, 1651	§ 511	2090
1917, May 23, p. 831, § 16	4c, 2220, 2380	§ 606	196
§ 19	1163, 1862	§ 1033	1644, 1680
§§ 19a, 19b	4c	§ 1069	1674
§ 19, par. c	4c	§ 1124	2220
par. c	2221	§ 1125	2220
§ 48	2377	§ 1194	1239
§ 53	2377	§ 1401	1651
§ 54	2377	§ 1664	1680
§ 60	4c	§ 1746	1680
§§ 61, 62	2195	§ 1748	1710
§ 67	4c	§ 1754	1710
p. 880	2195	§ 1756	1387
June 1, p. 1669	2195	§ 1758	1859, 2219
1919, July 27, p. 1252	2195	§ 2164	1680
1921, June 3, c. 719, p. 1235	1074	§ 2165	1680
		§ 2187	1074
		§ 2239	1680
		§ 2360	488
		§ 2587	1680
		§ 2752	283, 1672
		§ 2798	4c, 2281
		§ 2861	4c
		§ 3015	1674
		§ 3057	1680
		§ 3059	150
		§ 3065	1680
		§ 3066	150, 1680
		§ 3259	1862
		§ 3262	1665, 1680
		§ 3277	1862
		§ 3281	438
		§ 3309	1859
		§ 3637	1708
		§ 3948	1680
		§ 3978	2281
		§ 4131	2377
		§ 4265	1680, 2162
		§ 4277	2377
		§ 4280	4c
		§ 4338	2377
		§ 4387	2220, 2380
		§ 4400	4c
		§ 4422	1669
		§ 4837	1676
		§ 4847	1225, 1651, 1676
		§ 4849	1225, 1651
		§ 4851	1651
		§ 4852	2143
		§ 4853	1225, 1651, 1676
		§ 4864	1275
		§ 4972	1275
		§ 4975	1705
		§ 4981	1705
		§ 4982	1705
		§ 4988	1665, 1680
		§ 4998	1225, 1651, 1674
		§ 5039	1225, 1651
		§ 5238	1644, 1680
		§ 5246	488
		§ 5273	2054
		§ 5290	1680
<b>Colorado</b>			
<i>Constitution 1876</i>			
Art. II, § 4	1828		
§ 9	2039		
§ 16	1397, 2191		
§ 17	1382, 1397, 1411		
§ 18	2252		
VII, § 9	2281		
<i>Compiled Laws 1921:</i>			
<i>Code of Civil Procedure</i>			
§ 67	2281		
§ 68	2596		
§ 170	1848		
§ 195	2595		
§ 205	1866, 1873		
§ 206	1163		
§ 207	1163		
§ 237	2354		
§ 313	1062		
§ 371	1828		
§ 376	1411		
§ 377	1382		
§ 378	1389, 1411		
§ 379	1387		
§ 384	1382		
§ 389	1382		
§ 390	1859, 2219		
§ 391	1195, 1199, 1225, 1230, 1680		
§ 392	2525		
§ 393	1681		
§ 394	1681		
§ 395	1681, 2158		
§ 396	1684		
§ 399	1862		
§ 401	1383		
§ 405	1387, 1389, 1412, 1681		
§ 460	1680		
§ 464	1835		
<i>General Statutes</i>			
§ 73	2572		
§ 391	1218		
§ 442	2377		
§ 478	2199		



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# CONNECTICUT—DELAWARE

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Connecticut		Section	
<i>Constitution 1818</i>			
Art. I, § 9	1397, 2191, 2252	§ 5706	488
IX, § 4	2039	§ 5707	1382, 1411, 1676
<i>General Statutes 1918</i>		§ 5708	1411
§ 49	987	§ 5709	803
§ 126	1680	§ 5712	1382, 1411
§ 233	1326	§ 5714	1382
§ 239	1837	§ 5715	2195
§ 311	1651	§ 5717	1383
§ 319	1225, 1651	§ 5719	1387
§ 775	2375, 2377	§ 5722	1387
§ 1270	2408	§ 5723	1387, 1413, 1669, 1710
§ 1306	1651, 1664	§ 5724	1669
§ 1658	2090	§ 5725	1680
§ 1856	1835	§ 5726	1684, 2572
§ 2101	1828	§ 5727	1703
§ 2198	1828	§ 5728	1680, 1683
§ 2199	1828	§ 5729	1680
§ 2200	2195	§ 5730	1674, 1680
§ 2201	1828	§ 5731	1680
§ 2348	2377	§ 5732	1675
§ 2352	1672	§ 5733	1680, 1683
§ 2465	1674	§ 5734	1273
§ 2707	1620	§ 5735	488, 1387, 1576
§ 2748	4c	§ 5736	1576
§ 2772	1681	§ 5737	1519, 1576
§ 2813	2281	§ 5738	1466
§ 2822	238	§ 5739	2509
§ 2826	1674, 1680	§ 5741	488, 916, 1856, 2218
§ 2866	4c	§ 5764	2218
§ 2872	4c	§ 5767	2211, 2281
§ 2902	4c	§§ 5764-5769	1856a, 1859, 2219
§ 2916	1680	§ 5776	2596
§ 2924	4c	§ 5778	19
§ 2973	4c	§ 5785	1880, 2549
§ 3001	2281	§ 5832	1141
§ 3510	1680	§ 5984	2281
§ 3618	2195, 2282	§ 6007	1141
§ 3991	1680	§ 6014	64
§ 4121	2281	§ 6315	2281
§ 4122	2281	§ 6446	2281
§ 4194	1680	§ 6475	987, 2281
§ 4805	2281	§ 6582	2195c
§ 4811	1680	§ 6633	2044
§ 4840	1681	§ 6634	488, 2272
§ 4857	1215, 1681	§ 6635	987, 2281
§ 4943	1510	§ 6636	1249
§ 4949	1710	§ 6637	1382, 1411
§ 5032	2281	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 5124	1680	1913, c. 138, § 25	4c
§ 5347	2220	1919, Apr. 15, c. 142, § 10	4c
§ 5358	4c	May 12, c. 215	2375
§ 5362	2220	1921, c. 222, § 55	1275, 2377
§ 5364	4c	c. 336, § 11	1835, 2376
§ 5431	1681	§§ 18, 19	196
§ 5433	1681	c. 400, § 45	150a
§ 5464	2195	<i>Delaware</i>	
§ 5467	64, 67	<i>Constitution 1897</i>	
§ 5522	2252, 2281	Art. I, § 5	2557
§ 5703	2195, 2199, 2201	§ 7	1397, 2191, 2252
§ 5704	2199	V, § 7	897, 2281
§ 5705	488, 966, 987, 1828	VI, § 3	2039
		§ 16	1397



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Revised Statutes 1915</i>		Section			Section
§ 100		1680	§ 4223		1680
§ 128		2531	§ 4224		1680
§ 174		2582	§ 4225		1684
§ 384		1680	§ 4226		1519
§ 427		1680	§ 4227	1625, 2533	
§ 579	1680, 2162		§ 4228	1859, 2219	
§ 703	1674		§ 4229	1680, 1681	
§ 805	1644		§ 4230	2016	
§ 904	4c		§§ 4239-4251	2195	
§ 956	4c		§ 4245	1828	
§ 966	4c		§ 4246	1828	
§ 984	4c		§ 4247	1828	
§ 1350	1326, 1374, 1413		§ 4248	1828	
§ 1369	1671, 1681		§ 4249	1828	
§ 1388	1225, 1651, 1680		§ 4279	1163	
§ 1920	1680		§ 4791	488	
§ 1988	1680		§ 4792	488	
§ 2171	1644		<i>Session Laws</i>		
§ 2171	1683		1917, Apr. 2, c. 233	2220, 2377, 2380	
§ 2215	2272		Apr. 25, c. 235	1651	
§ 2603	1671		1919, Apr. 21, c. 230	2195	
§ 2996	1644		1921, c. 182, § 5	1644	
§ 3021	1835		c. 184, § 5	488, 1141, 1411	
§ 3023	2067		c. 224	1681	
§ 3029	2527		<i>Florida</i>		
§ 3030	2527		<i>Constitution 1887</i>		
§ 3041	488, 2085		Declaration of Rights, § 5	1828	
§ 3076	488		§ 11	1397, 2191	
§ 3085	488, 1141, 1375, 1411		§ 12	2252	
§ 3093	1681		§ 23	2039	
§ 3096	1681		Art. XVI, § 2	1225	
§ 3193 <i>m</i> 106	2220, 2389		§ 21	1225, 1651, 1676a	
§ 3193 <i>x</i> 117	2377		<i>Revised General Statutes 1919</i>		
§ 3202	1225, 1651		§ 79	1710	
§ 3203	1225, 1651		§ 191	2195	
§ 3213	1225, 1651		§ 1036	1225, 1651, 1678, 1680	
§ 3214	1225, 1651		§ 1120	1640	
§ 3215	1225, 1651		§ 1897	1354	
§ 3217	1676		§ 1903	1671	
§ 3238	1225, 1651		§ 1955	1671	
§ 3245	2050		§ 2043	1674	
§ 3299	1681		§ 2062	1674	
§§ 3246-3281	1681		§ 2091	1644	
§ 3334	1310, 1320, 1681		§ 2209	4c	
§ 3409	1681		§ 2215	4c	
§ 3525	1674		§ 2241	4c	
§ 3528	1674		§ 2284	4c	
§ 3617	1383, 1387, 1412		§ 2309	2090	
§ 3887	1225, 1681		§ 2396	150	
§ 3971	1326, 1375		§ 2405	1674	
§ 3972	1413		§ 2433	2195	
§ 3975	1851		§ 2475	2195	
§ 3987	1681		§ 2513	4c	
§ 4170	2596		§ 2626	1059a, 2219	
§ 4212	488		§ 2628	1684	
§ 4213	488, 916, 2218		§ 2647	1848	
§ 4214	488		§ 2664	2596	
§ 4215	488, 987		§ 2686	2596	
§ 4216	488, 620, 2245		§ 2688	1862	
§ 4219	1684				
§ 4220	1684				
§ 4221	1684				
§ 4222	1271				



# FLORIDA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 2695	1163	§ 3608	488, 1290
§ 2696	2495	§ 3675	1680
§ 2702	488, 2245	§ 3714	2531
§ 2703	1828	§ 3730	1672
§ 2704	488, 523	§ 3798	2162
§ 2705	488	§ 3809	2090
§ 2706	488, 923, 987, 1270	§ 3832	2159
§§ 2707-2709	2199	§ 3834	1275
§ 2707	2207	§ 3855	1705
§ 2708	2195	§ 3903	2596
§ 2710	900, 905, 1028	§ 3936	1644
§ 2711	1037	§ 3937	1644, 1710
§ 2713	2201	§ 4053	1680
§ 2714	1684	§ 4108	1674
§ 2715	1684	§ 4415	2195
§ 2716	1271, 1703	§ 4416	4c
§ 2717	1271	§ 4448	1674
§ 2718	1681	§ 4455	1684
§ 2719	1681	§ 4500	1681
§ 2720	1225, 1651, 1680	§ 4520	1681
§ 2721	1664	§ 4596	2509
§ 2722	1681	§ 4618	4c
§ 2723	1330, 1387, 1413, 1668	§ 4641	2377
§ 2724	1239, 1651, 1674	§ 4652	4c
§ 2725	1674	§ 4655	2195
§ 2726	2162	§ 4656	2281
§ 2727	1674	§ 4859	488
§ 2728	1705	§ 4860	488
§ 2729	1859	§ 4964	2509
§§ 2730-2732	1705	§ 4968	2220
§ 2733	1859, 2219	§ 4990	2281
§ 2734	1856a, 2218	§ 4997	1680
§ 2735	1856, 2218	§ 5171	1074
§ 2736	1382	§ 5353	2281
§ 2737	1674	§ 5432	1620
§ 2738	1519	§ 5470	1674
§ 2739	2016	§ 5478	2281
§ 2740	1848	§ 5480	1678
§ 2741	1411	§ 5683	2281
§ 2743	1382	§ 5725	1249, 1626
§ 2751	803	§ 5729	2281
§ 2756	1411	§ 5738	2281
§ 2757	1382	§ 5741	2281
§ 2760	18	§ 5957	2360
§ 2761	1383	§ 5958	2360
§ 2763	1387, 1412, 1681	§§ 6013-6021	2199
§ 2765	1411	§ 6017	2281
§ 2769	1387	§ 6018	4, 488, 2245
§ 2812	21	§ 6032	2191
§ 2930	1466	§ 6076	488
§ 2945	2195	§ 6080	246, 488, 2252, 2272, 2276, 2277
§ 2946	1828	§ 6082	2039
§ 3093	1669	§ 6083	1339
§ 3136	1669	§ 6084	1710
§ 3250	2143	§ 6085	1411
§§ 3246-3267	1660	§ 6086ff	1382
§ 3363	1681	§ 6090	1411
§ 3372	1411	§ 6091	1862
§ 3399	1828	§ 6167	2201
§ 3576	1710	§ 6198	1326
§ 3598	2051		
§ 3599	2050		
§ 3600	2050		
§ 3605	1304, 1411		

## Session Laws

1909, c. 5897 1668  
1921, c. 8572, No. 177 1398, 1413, 1668, 1669



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-25. .]

Georgia			Section
<i>Constitution 1877</i>			
Art. I, § 1, par. 2		2039	§ 4544
par. 5	1397, 1851,	2191	§ 4547
par. 6		2252	§§ 4550-4553
			§ 4551
			§ 4554
			§ 4558
			§ 4560
			§ 4503
			§ 4572
			§§ 4573-4582
			§ 4608
			§ 4955
			§ 5041
			§ 5285
			§ 5287
			§§ 5312-5328
			§ 5716
			§ 5730
			§ 5731
			§ 5732
			§ 5734
			§ 5736
			§ 5741
			§ 5742
			§ 5745
			§ 5746
			§ 5749
			§ 5752
			§ 5753
			§ 5754
			§ 5755
			§ 5756
			§ 5757
			§ 5759
			§ 5760
			§ 5761
			§ 5763
			§ 5764
			§ 5765
			§ 5766
			§ 5767
			§ 5768
			§ 5769
			§ 5770
			§ 5771
			§ 5772
			§ 5773
			§ 5775
			§ 5776
			§ 5778
			§ 5779
			§ 5780
			§ 5781
			§ 5782
			§ 5783
			§ 5785
			§ 5786
			§ 5787
			§ 5788
			§ 5789
			§ 5790
			§ 5791
			§ 5792
			§ 5793
			2252, 2292, 2378
			2047, 2123
			1856a
			2218
			987, 2252
			1387, 1412
			1383, 1387
			1412
			2415
			2413
			2458
			2594
			488
			1951
			1951
			1660
			2595
			2498
			2497, 2498
			946, 966, 2034
			2162, 2571
			2137, 2499
			1073
			2039, 2042, 2056
			64
			2486
			285
			1174, 2425
			1681
			2535
			1698
			1639
			1214
			1192
			1233, 1269
			1188, 1189
			1789
			1480, 1483
			2529
			1750, 1756, 1772
			1082, 1455, 1778
			1455, 1467
			1519
			1564, 1597
			2137
			1597
			1330, 1387, 1404, 1413, 2098
			1064
			1076
			1070, 1455, 1810
			1078
			1080, 1085
			499, 815, 1062
			1072
			2113
			488, 2292, 2360, 2378
			2292
			2360
			2425
			2435
			2413
			2425
			2458
			2458



# GEORGIA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 5794	2425	§ 5880	907
§ 5795	2425	§ 5881	1021, 1028, 1035, 1108, 1263
§ 5796	2425	§ 5882	923, 987, 988, 1111, 1985
§ 5797	1684, 2577	§ 5884	1008, 1013
§ 5798	1225, 1651, 1680, 1681	§ 5885	1835
§ 5799	1225, 1680	§ 5886	1411, 2206
§ 5800	1681	§ 5887	1411
§ 5801	1681	§ 5888	1411
§ 5803	1680	§§ 5889-5902	1382
§ 5804	1269	§ 5893	803
§ 5806	1225, 1651	§ 5896	2206, 2207
§ 5807	1269	§ 5903	1382
§ 5810	1660	§ 5904	18
§ 5818	1684	§§ 5905-5917	1382
§ 5819	1680, 1681	§ 5908	803
§ 5822	1675	§ 5909	1411
§ 5823	1223, 1683	§ 5913	18
§ 5824	1680, 1681	§ 5920	2205, 2206
§ 5825	1681	§ 5932	1800
§ 5826	1681	§ 6299	1225
§ 5827	1680	§ 6300	1225, 1239
§ 5828	1183	§ 6314	1665, 1859
§ 5829	1192, 1194	§ 6317	1828
§ 5830	2113	§ 6318	783, 1866
§ 5831	2525	§ 6361	1396, 1851
§ 5832	1297	§ 6363	2252
§ 5833	1291, 1294, 1299, 1301, 1310	§ 6383	2039
§ 5834	1310, 1320		
§ 5835	693		
§ 5836	2016		
§§ 5837-5842	1859, 2219	§ 8	1397, 1851, 2191
§ 5843	1205	§ 9	2252
§§ 5844-5848	2199	§ 104	488
§ 5846	1212	§ 106	1828
§ 5847	2205	§ 116	488
§ 5848	2205	§ 120	2281
§§ 5849-5855	2199	§ 204	1356
§ 5850	2201	§ 379	488, 2239
§ 5852	2195	§ 404	2281
§ 5853	2199	§ 665	2281
§ 5854	2195	§ 676	2281
§ 5856	2549	§ 715	1354
§ 5857	488, 935, 1828	§ 830	2360
§ 5858	488, 2218	§ 831	2360
§ 5859	488	§ 889	1835
§ 5860	1911, 2292	§ 935	488, 1326
§ 5861	488, 2218, 2239	§ 936	1326
§ 5862	488	§ 970	1851
§ 5863	488	§ 989	2595
§ 5864	488, 811	§ 995	488
§ 5865	488	§ 1001	1404
§ 5866	18	§ 1010	2497
§ 5868	1828	§ 1012	2497
§ 5869	1837	§ 1013	2497
§ 5870	2210	§ 1015	285, 2511
§ 5871	1890	§ 1017	2056
§ 5872	770, 773	§ 1019	62, 64
§ 5873	736	§ 1020	2486
§ 5874	1978	§ 1022	1188
§ 5875	712, 1943	§ 1023	1789
§ 5876	1978	§ 1024	1750
§ 5877	987, 2252, 2292, 2375	§ 1026	1430
§ 5878	949	§ 1027	1330, 1387, 1404, 1413, 2098
§ 5879	905, 916	§ 1029	1072
		§ 1030	2113

## Penal Code 1910



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1031	2071	§ 2582	18
§ 1032	831	§ 2583	1387
§ 1033	831, 840, 841	§ 2585	1383
§ 1034	858	§ 2588	1387, 1389, 1412
§ 1036	488, 2276	§ 2590	1862
§ 1037	488, 2292, 2252	§ 2591	2218, 2219, 1859
§ 1041	1680	§ 2592	2218, 2219
§ 1042	693	§ 2593	1680, 1681, 2162
§ 1043	1837	§ 2594	1239
§ 1044	1890	§ 2595	1680
§ 1045	770, 773	§ 2596	1680
§ 1046	736	§ 2598	1684
§ 1047	1978	§ 2599	1684
§ 1048	1978	§ 2600	1681
§ 1049	949	§ 2601	1681
§ 1050	905	§ 2602	1681
§ 1052	1021, 1028, 1035, 1108	§ 2603	1270
§ 1053	923, 987, 988, 1111, 1263, 1985	§ 2605	2162, 2167
§ 1306	2199	§ 2606	1234, 1280
§ 1347	1326	§ 2607	1644
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 2608	1828
1910, No. 309	1519	§ 2609	488
1911, No. 207	488	§ 2610	488, 2276
1915, Aug. 14, No. 192	2090	§ 2611	488, 1828
Aug. 16, No. 210, § 11	1835	§ 2612	488, 2218
<i>Hawaii</i>		§ 2613	488, 2252, 2272
<i>Revised Laws 1915<sup>i</sup></i>		§ 2614	488
§ 120	1639	§ 2615	2380, 2395
§ 177	1644	§ 2616	987, 2271
§ 261	1680	§ 2617	987, 1270
§ 340	1239	§ 2618	900, 905, 907
§ 453	4c	§ 2619	1028
§ 1025	4c	§ 2620	1263
§ 1034	4c	§ 2621	2167
§ 1066	4c	§ 2622	1290
§ 1087	1326	§ 2623	2016
§ 1097	2220	§ 2624	831, 852
§ 1133	1644	§ 2912	1644
§ 1140	1644, 1680	§ 2925	2067
§ 1161	1680	§ 2931	1671, 2067
§ 1203	2281	§ 2941	2527
§ 1286	1640	§ 2949	488
§ 1945	1674	§ 2975	488, 2063, 2085
§ 2139	1639	§ 3010	488, 1141, 2281
§ 2228	2195, 2259a, 2281	§ 3100	1651
§ 2232	4c	§ 3102	1651
§ 2284	196	§ 3116	1676
§ 2286	1835	§ 3117	1225, 1651
§ 2308	1326	§ 3127	1675
§ 2319	1681	§ 3129	1675
§ 2341	1073	§ 3261	1510
§ 2403	1865, 1873	§ 3262	1510
§ 2435	2549	§ 3263	1510
§§ 2552-2562	2199	§ 3395	1710
§ 2555	2201	§ 3684	2066
§ 2563	2596	§ 3687	1397, 2191
§ 2566	1382	§ 3701	1326
§ 2569	1411	§ 3775	2191
§ 2572	18	§ 3818	196
§§ 2574-2577	1382	§ 3821	1387
§ 2579	803	§ 3886	2281
		§ 3903	2061
		§ 4182	2281
		§ 4184	2281



## HAWAII — IDAHO

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Session Laws		Section		Section
1915, Apr. 6, No. 48	1644	§ 2547		2281
Apr. 28, No. 192	1671	§ 2639		2281
No. 221, § 20	2220	§ 2887		4c
§ 29	4c	§ 3117		2195
1921, No. 132	1680	§ 3159		2195
		§ 3253		1640
		§ 3259		1710
		§ 3366		2377
		§ 3371		2408
		§ 3451		2195
		§ 3452		2195
		§ 3453		2201
		§ 3598		1664
		§ 3671		1665, 1680
		§ 3674		1665
		§ 3757		1680
		§ 3793		1680, 2575
		§ 3859		1680, 2575
		§ 4363		4c
		§ 4590		1671
		§ 4608		1644, 1680
		§ 4617		1644, 1680
		§ 4641		2067
		§ 4703		1680
		§ 4978		2195
		§ 4979		1672
		§ 5016		4c
		§ 5036		2281
		§ 5299		2195
		§ 5478		2195
		§ 6242		2220
		§ 6261		4c, 2195
		§ 6476		1835, 1837
		§ 6573		2594
		§ 6631		1466
		§ 6680		1710
		§ 6704		2596
		§ 6709		1848
		§ 6721		2507
		§ 6778		1382
		§ 6850		1163
		§ 6847		1866, 1873
		§ 6965		1862
		§ 6888		2354
		§ 7046		1620
		§ 7133		1681
		§ 7192		1062
		§ 7193		1859
		§ 7290		2214
		§ 7399		811
		§ 7450		1304
		§ 7455		1304, 1310, 1320
		§ 7456		1413
		§ 7470		2052
		§ 7473		2050
		§ 7539		1678
		§ 7799		2526
		§ 7813		1510
		§ 7815		2051
		§ 7827		2475
		§ 7910		1835
		§ 7933		2162, 2571
		§ 7934		2549, 2567
		§ 7935		488, 923, 946, 1828



## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# ILLINOIS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
c. 15, § 6	1639, 1680	c. 51, § 28	1382
c. 17, § 6	488	§ 30	1676
c. 19, § 10	1239	§ 33	803
§ 11	1239, 1680	§ 34	1411
c. 24, § 65	1680, 1684	§ 36	2195
c. 30, § 12	1664, 2110	§§ 39-44	1383
§ 20	1651, 1676	§ 46	1387, 1412, 1681
§ 21	1651	§ 48	1387
§ 29	1275	§ 51	1290
§ 31	1651	c. 63, § 6	2259c, 2281
§ 33	1681	c. 79, § 15	1639, 1680
§ 35	1225, 1651, 1676	c. 83, § 16	1466
§ 36	1225, 1651	c. 88, § 3	1647
§ 41	1239	§ 4	1710
c. 31, § 5	1680	c. 89, § 12	1644, 1680
c. 32, § 18	1326	c. 95, § 5	1225, 1651
§ 128	1680	c. 99, § 14	1675, 1680
c. 38, § 6	987	c. 100, § 1	1710
§ 29	2085	c. 101, § 3	1828
§ 35	488, 2272, 2281	§ 4	1828
§ 137	2281	§ 6	2162, 2165
§ 264	2039	c. 103, § 1	1676
§ 279	987	c. 109, § 2	1225, 1651
§ 320	1326	§ 11	1225, 1651
§ 348	1326	c. 110, § 20	1859a, 2219
§ 412	2360	§ 34	2596
§ 421	1851	§ 43	2595
§ 426	488, 968, 987, 1270, 2272	§ 44	2595
§ 428a	2595	§ 45	2595
§ 473	196	c. 114, § 118	1354
§ 474	1681	§ 123	2509
§ 486	2535	c. 116, §§ 1-5	1660
§ 491	488, 2085	§§ 6-8	1275
§ 525	2061	§ 11	1275
c. 40, § 8	2067	§ 13	1660, 1705
§ 9	2067	§ 14	1705
§ 10	2085	§ 22	1275
c. 47, § 9	1163	§ 28	1268, 1705
c. 48, § 137	2220	§ 29	1705, 1859
c. 51, § 1	488, 966, 987, 1270	c. 121, § 172	1680
§ 2	488	c. 122, § 265	1239
§ 3	1519	§ 266	1239
§ 4	488	c. 124, § 7	1680
§ 5	488, 2336, 2341	§ 8	1684
§ 6	488, 916, 1856, 2218, 2219	§ 11	1275
§ 7	488	c. 125, § 5	1680
§ 8	488	c. 126, § 3	406
§ 9	1859	c. 130, § 5	1680
§ 10	1684	c. 133, § 7	1665, 1680
§ 11	1680	§ 10	1665, 1680
§ 12	1684	c. 139, § 112	1680
§ 13	1681	e. 148, § 2	1304
§ 14	1680	§ 3	1304
§ 15	1223, 1683	§ 4	1382, 1411
§ 17	1681	§ 5	1304, 1909
§ 18	1273	§ 6	1310, 1320
§ 20	1239, 1678	§ 7	1349, 1387, 1413
§ 21	1239	§ 9	1681
§ 22	1239	§ 10	1681
§ 23	1239	§ 11	1681
§ 24	1382	§ 13	1304
§ 25	1382, 1411	§ 15	2050
§ 26	1382, 1411	c. 361	1837
§ 27	1382		



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Session Laws</i>	Section		Section
1861, p. 79	2165	§ 370	2596
1867, § 3, p. 184	1519	§ 377	2572
1869, Mar. 29	1356	§ 382	2498
1871, Apr. 25	1354	§ 407	21
1887, July 15	1273, 1705	§ 419	2595
1889, p. 112	196	§§ 435-437	1382
1891, June 11, p. 206	2281	§ 439	1411, 2206, 2371
1893, June 17	2085	§ 440	2207
June 20, § 7	2281	§ 441	1411
1897, May 1, § 37	1676	§ 445	803
§ 39	1225, 1651	§ 448	1411
§ 58	1225, 1651	§ 451	1382
May 21, §§ 7, 18	1705	§ 454	18
June 14, § 25	1163	§ 455	18
§ 49	1640	§ 456	1387
July 1, p. 298, § 7	2281	§ 457	1383
1899, April 24	488	§ 458	1383
1901, May 10	1072, 1354	§ 461	1681
May 11, § 3	488, 2085	§ 462	1387, 1412
1903, pp. 121, 122	1705	§ 465	1382
May 28, p. 118	1651	§ 466	2455
1905, May 18 (Municipal Court),		§ 470	1680, 1681
§ 32	1856, 2218	§ 471	1680
§ 33	916, 2218	§ 472	1684
§ 54	2572	§ 473	1680, 1684
§ 119	2572, 2577	§ 474	1681
1907, Feb. 11, p. 56	1375	§ 475	1681
May 17, p. 213	1326	§ 476	1675, 2165
May 28, p. 376	1651, 1676	§ 477	1674
June 3, p. 443	1859a	§ 478	1225, 1651, 1680
§ 64	2595	§ 479	1573
1909	1503	§ 480	2107
June 4, p. 145, § 2	1674	§ 481	2107
1915, June 22, p. 371, § 2	1620	§ 482	1239, 1680
§ 4	2281	§ 484	1239, 1680
p. 660, § 20	1644	§ 486	1239
June 23	2016	§ 487	1239
June 24, p. 470, § 6	2085	§ 489	1223, 1710
§ 7	488	§ 490	1680
July 23, p. 440	2016	§ 491	1239, 1680
1917, p. 661	1640	§ 492	1239
1919, p. 710	2195	§ 493	1239, 1680
June 28	1671	§ 494	1681
1921, June 29, § 12	2220	§ 495	1681
§ 23, par. j	1387	§ 496	1710
June 30	1651	§ 499	1703, 2558
July 13, § 5	1651	§ 500	1271, 2558
		§ 501	2596
		§ 502	1859, 2219
		§ 503	1859, 2219
		§ 504	1710
		§§ 507-510	2199
		§ 512	2201
		§ 513	2201
		§ 515	2201
		§ 517	1828
		§ 518	811
		§ 519	488
		§ 520	488, 2202, 2380, 2395
		§ 521	488
		§ 522	488
		§ 523	488
		§ 524	488
		§ 525	488

## Indiana

### Constitution 1851

Art. I, § 7	1828
§ 8	1828
§ 13	1397, 2191
§ 14	2252
§ 29	2039
§ 66	2192

### Burns' Annotated Statutes 1914

§ 303	1466
§ 362	2507
§ 365	1856a
§ 368	1848



# INDIANA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 526	488	§ 3000	488
§ 527	488	§ 3026	2475
§ 528	2203	§ 3043	2475
§ 528a	2016	§ 3132	1510
§ 529	923, 935, 1828	§ 3133	2050
§ 530	960, 987	§ 3137	2531
§ 531	900, 905, 907	§ 3141	1304, 1310, 1320
§ 532	1037	§ 3142	1382
§ 533	1856a, 2218	§ 3143	1310
§ 534	1856a	§ 3144	1510
§ 536	916	§ 3147	1681
§ 538	1062	§ 3167	2052
§ 539	1062	§ 3168	1387, 1413
§ 553	1866	§ 3331	1680
§ 564	1163	§ 3694	2090
§ 700	21	§ 3876	2281
§ 1015	488, 2061, 2063	§ 3907	1680
§ 1019	488, 1326, 1387, 1413, 2061, 2063	§ 3987	1651
§ 1023	488, 1387, 1413	§ 3988	1225, 1651, 2143
§ 1039	1681	§ 3993	1225, 1651
§ 1077	2046, 2067, 2281	§ 4054	1074
§ 1079	1411	§ 4162	1223
§§ 1290-1320	1275	§ 4174	1680
§ 1306	1383	§ 4365	1074
§ 1307	1412	§ 4469	1680
§ 1313	1383, 1412	§ 4485	1674
§ 1379	1275	§ 4545	1674
§ 1633	1835	§ 4591	1680
§ 1944	2079	§ 4629	1674
§ 1971	2360	§ 4980	1674
§ 1983	1851	§ 5177	1680
§ 1986	1681	§ 5535	2167
§ 1990	1851	§ 5536	4c
§ 2049	2572	§ 5542	2281
§ 2089	2595	§ 5549	1680
§ 2090	2595	§ 5553	2377
§ 2109	2201	§ 5633	1680
§ 2110	4	§ 5771	1074, 1223, 1683
§ 2111	488, 2272	§ 5794	1074, 1223, 1683
§ 2112	2281	§ 5817	1680
§ 2113	2281, 2282	§ 5830	1225, 1651
§ 2114	1339, 2026, 2044	§ 5836	1225, 1651
§ 2115	831, 2071	§ 5848	1225, 1651
§ 2116	923	§ 5983	1680
§ 2117	488	§ 6993	1674
§ 2118	1382, 1398, 1411	§ 7103	2281
§ 2120	2061	§ 7111n	2281
§ 2123	2039	§ 7441h	2281
§ 2125	1626	§ 7551	2281
§ 2126	2281	§ 7552	2281
§ 2129	2281	§ 7596	1644
§ 2130	1639	§ 8314	1680, 1710
§§ 2131-2133	2199	§ 8374	1644, 1680
§ 2136	1866, 1873	§ 8388	1225, 1651
§ 2137	2497	§ 8570	1665, 1680
§ 2138	1800	§ 8654	1680, 1684
§ 2140	1163	§ 8656	2281
§ 2351	2085	§ 8902	1680
§ 2356c	488, 2239	§ 9115	1680
§ 2556	2281	§ 9193	1680
§ 2646	2281	§ 9211	1674
§ 2748	2531	§ 9224	2167
§ 2758	1681	§ 9440	1326
§ 2816	1681	§ 9499	1225, 1651



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 9518	1665	§ 6622	2046
§ 9538	1675	§ 7072	1856c
§ 10052r2	1669	§ 7169	1710
§ 10347	1680	§ 7181	1710
§ 10443	1680	§ 7230	2281
§ 10455	1680	§ 7247	1856a, 2218
		§ 7279	2596
		§ 7308	488
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 7309	488, 966, 987
1907, c. 243, p. 490, Mar. 11, § 11	2282	§ 7310	488
1913, p. 820	4c	§ 7311	488
1915, p. 15, § 34	2281	§ 7312	488, 1413
p. 98	2531	§ 7313	488
p. 139, § 3	488	§ 7314	488
p. 253, § 9	2281	§ 7315	2292, 2380, 2395
1917, p. 82, § 3	1680	§ 7316	2378
1919, Mar. 11	2377	§ 7317	1909
c. 59, § 125	2377	§ 7318	2223
p. 165	1354	§ 7319	987, 2281
		§ 7320	987, 1270
		§ 7321	923
<i>Iowa</i>		§ 7322	2113
<i>Constitution 1857</i>		§ 7323	2458
Art. I, § 4	488, 1828, 2218	§ 7324	2458
§ 10	1397, 2191	§ 7325	1597, 1693
§ 16	2039	§ 7326	1302
		§ 7327	2016
<i>Compiled Code 1919</i>		§ 7328	1676
§ 107	1680	§ 7329	1455, 1519
§ 290	1671	§ 7330	1519
§ 292	1671	§ 7331	1675, 1680, 2165
§ 541	2281	§ 7336	1676
§ 591	2214, 2281	§ 7337	1225, 1651
§ 683	2281	§ 7340	1239
§ 710	2201	§ 7341	1665, 1710
§ 737	1862	§ 7342	1680
§ 818	2220	§ 7343	1651
§ 833	4c	§ 7346	1275, 1680
§ 839	2380	§ 7347	1678
§ 845	2377	§ 7348	1239, 1651, 1678
§ 934	2281	§ 7349	1239, 1678
§ 1030	1620	§ 7350	2167
§ 1201	2377	§§ 7351-7353	1681
§ 1297	2377	§ 7354	1681
§ 1373	1644	§ 7356	1684
§ 1853	2281	§ 7357	1680, 1684
§ 1903	2281	§ 7358	1684
§ 2059	2090	§ 7359	1271, 1680, 1703, 2558
§ 2101	1835	§ 7360	1680, 1684
§ 2120k	2377	§ 7361	1859, 2219
§ 3146	1644	§ 7362	1859, 2219
§ 3219	1326	§ 7363	1859
§ 3389	1665, 1680	§ 7364	2125
§ 4623	1558	§§ 7365-7376	2199
§ 4628	2093	§ 7367	2207
§ 4686	1680	§ 7368	2203
§ 4944	1620	§ 7369	2201
§ 5186	2281	§ 7371	2195
§ 5222	2281	§ 7377	2199
§ 5375	2281	§§ 7382-7390	1383
§ 6238	2281	§ 7384	1710
§ 6375	2162	§ 7385	1710
§ 6448	1680	§ 7386	2162
§ 6590	1644	§ 7387	1710



# IOWA — KANSAS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section	Kansas
§ 7388	1710	
§ 7391	1387, 1413, 1669, 2098	Constitution 1859
§ 7392	1411	Bill of Rights, § 7
§§ 7395-7397	1382	§ 10 1397, 2191, 2252
§ 7396	1379	§ 13 2039
§§ 7401-7407	1382	
§ 7408	803	General Statutes 1915
§ 7411	2162	§ 342 4c, 2195
§ 7417	1411, 1415	§ 488 4a
§§ 7426-7428	1383	§ 1300 4a
§ 7431	1387, 1389, 1412	§ 1347 4a
§ 7460	2595	§ 1414 1680, 1684
§ 7495	783, 1866, 1873	§ 1557 4c, 2195
§ 7506	1163	§ 1568 2195
§ 7515	1879	§ 1681 1680, 1684
§ 7759	2281	§ 1893 1680, 1684
§ 7796	1509	§ 2076 1652, 1676
§ 7807	1411	§ 2077 1225, 1651
§ 7808	1681	§§ 2078-2083 1225, 1651
§§ 8082-8086	1660	§ 2084 1225, 1651, 1676a
§ 8107	1573	§ 2109 1680
§ 8207	406	§ 2607 1326
§ 8375	1062	§ 2704 1665
§ 8376	1062	§ 2705 1680
§ 8542	2039	§ 2708 1665, 1680
§ 8609	2061	§ 3003 1413, 1669, 2098
§ 8771	1339, 1625	§ 3397 2061
§ 8795	1620	§ 3415 488, 2063, 2085
§ 8865	1620	§ 3652 2281
§ 8899	2557	§ 3686 2281
§ 8956	2281	§ 3772 2557
§ 9046	196	§ 4099 1674
§ 9176	1382	§ 4276 2214, 2281
§ 9179	1837	§ 4854 1674
§ 9180	1837	§ 4995 1206
§ 9181	1326	§ 5120 1326
§ 9195	1326	§ 5158 516
§ 9283	1851	§ 5159 488
§ 9334	2360	§ 5160 1671, 1680
§ 9335	2360	§ 5373 2281
§ 9336	2360	§ 5505 2281
§ 9339	1851	§ 5511 488, 2220, 2281, 2380
§ 9360	370	§ 5943 2377
§ 9434	1866, 1873	§ 5989 1684
§ 9435	1855	§ 6005 1680
§ 9436	1855	§ 6025 2281
§ 9438	1163	§ 6143 1644
§ 9439	1800	§ 6152 1644, 1680
§§ 9456-9460	2199	§ 6282 2195
§ 9460	2195	§ 6367 1835
§ 9462	1382, 1411	§ 6385 1835
§ 9463	1382, 1411	§ 6386 222
§ 9464	488, 2272	§ 6420 1856a, 1859
§ 9465	488, 2276	§ 6421 2281
§ 9466	2195	§ 6499 1651
§ 9470	4	§ 6744 2195
§ 9473	2061	§ 6745 1828
§ 9474	2056	§ 6746 1828
§ 9475	2071	§ 6791 1651
§ 9476	2265	§ 6792 1239, 1651
§ 9478	2501	§ 6793 1239
		§ 6913 1466
		§ 6972 1710
		§ 7002 2596
Session Laws		
1921, c. 222, § 21	1644	



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 7012	1859	§ 8079	2207
§ 7185	1866, 1873	§§ 8080-8082	2199
§ 7186	1163	§ 8082	2201
§ 7209	21	§ 8118	1800
§ 7217	2595	§ 8125	367, 369
§ 7219	488, 966, 968	§ 8126	367, 370
§ 7220	488, 2272	§ 8128	2072
§ 7221	488, 2218	§ 8129	1625
§ 7222	488	§ 8130	488, 966, 968, 2272
§ 7223	488, 2292, 2327, 2380, 2389, 2395	§ 8131	2272
§§ 7224-7234	2199	§ 8132	488
§ 7228	2201, 2207	§ 8133	2281
§ 7229	2201	§ 8134	488, 987
§ 7232	2195	§ 8135	2199
§ 7235	2199	§ 8136	2199
§ 7237	2195	§ 8137	1339, 2044
§ 7239	1387, 1411	§ 8138	488, 2281, 1866
§ 7241	1856a, 1859	§ 8149	2497
§ 7245	803	§ 8150	488
§ 7247	1382	§ 8155	1800
§ 7249	811, 1858	§ 8215	21
§ 7254	1382, 1710	§ 8336	4c
§ 7255	1382	§ 8342	2195
§ 7256	803	§ 8344	2281
§ 7259	1387	§ 8392	4c
§ 7260	1681	§ 8395	2281
§ 7262	1387	§ 8404	1680
§ 7266	18	§ 8407	2195
§ 7269	1859, 2219	§ 8447	4c
§ 7270	1859e, 1860	§ 8760	4c
§ 7271	1271, 1684, 1703	§ 8771	1570
§ 7272	1681	§ 9461	4c
§ 7273	1225, 1651, 1680, 1681, 2373	§ 9467	1672
§ 7274	1684	§ 9568	2195
§ 7275	1680, 1684	§ 9597	2090
§ 7276	1684	§ 9600	2090, 2220
§ 7277	1684	§ 9921	1674, 2195
§ 7278	1681	§ 9974	2195
§ 7279	1681	§ 10084	1835
§ 7280	1680, 1684	§ 10167	1644
§ 7281	1644	§ 10241	4c
§ 7282	1683, 1710	§ 10266	4c
§ 7283	1710	§ 10335	4c
§ 7284	1239	§ 10424	2207
§ 7285	1239	§ 10501	2195
§ 7286	1680	§ 10553	1680
§ 7287	2167	§ 10643	1239
§ 7288	1213, 1223, 1519	§ 10772	1680
§ 7289	1639	§ 10834	2195
§ 7292	1383	§ 10851	2195
§ 7295	1389, 1412	§ 11297	2195
§ 7485	21	§ 11649	1680
§ 7578	2067, 2085	§ 11763	1510
§ 7579	488, 2067	§ 11764	1304, 1326
§ 7614	2281	§ 11765	2503
§ 7894	1681	§ 11767	1310, 1510
§ 7959	1837	§ 11768	1411
§ 7960	1326	§ 11769	1320
§ 7976	1851	§ 11772	1681
§ 8005	2360	§ 11777	1413
§ 8006	2360	§ 11779	1681
§ 8007	2360	§ 11782	1681
§ 8013	1851	§ 11792	2475
§ 8027	2572	§ 11801	1267



# KANSAS — KENTUCKY

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 11803	1411	§ 1594	2044
§ 11825	2050	§ 1609	2531
§ 11837	1684	§ 1624	2572
§ 11840	1684	§ 1625	2167
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 1626	1684
1901, c. 232, § 8	1356	§ 1627	1680, 1681
c. 233	2360	§ 1629	1680, 1683
1905	1676a	§ 1630	1681
1915, c. 1, § 5	4c	§ 1631	1674
§ 6	2195	§§ 1632-1634	1275
c. 28, § 3	1684	§ 1635	1681
1919, Feb. 24, c. 316, § 4	2281	§ 1636	1680
1920, c. 29	2195	§ 1637	1680
§ 11	2195	§ 1638	1225, 1644, 1651, 1680, 1681
1921, c. 154	1665	§ 1639	2531
c. 207, § 3	1684	§ 1640	1271, 1703
<i>Kentucky</i>		§ 1642	1680, 1684
<i>Constitution 1891</i>		§ 1643	1681
§ 5	1828	§ 1644	1684
§ 11	1397, 2191, 2252	§ 1645	488, 2272
§ 229	2039	§ 1646	488, 1869
§ 232	1828	§ 1649	2016
<i>Kentucky Statutes 1915</i>		§ 1649a	1387, 1412
§ 14	1710	§ 1649b	831, 851
§ 165a, par. 11	1672	§ 1734	2201
§ 172	488	§ 1880	21
§ 181	811	§ 1973	488, 2281
§ 201c-6	2281	§ 2062a, par. 21	1644
§ 213	2281	§ 2062b, par. 24	2377, 2380
§ 217a, par. 17	2206, 2371	§ 2119	2046, 2066, 2067
§ 331c	196	§ 2157	2090
par. 1	987	§ 2255	1800
par. 20	2376	§ 2419	1684
§ 470	2433	§ 2572d	1639, 1706
§ 472	2433	§ 2579	2281
§ 479	1675	§ 2775	1680, 1684
§ 519	1225, 1651	§ 3723	1680
§ 519a	1651	§ 3725	1675
§ 530	1326	§ 3726	1675
§ 540	1680	§ 3760	1352, 1639, 1672, 1674
§ 554	2371	§ 3921a-12	2281
§ 556	2371	§ 4526c-6	1644
§ 579	1680	§ 4545	1680
§ 593	944	§ 4643	1387, 1398, 1413, 1669
§ 604	1680	§ 4836	1510
§ 619	1680	§ 4838	488
§ 727	1680	§ 4840	2475, 2526
§ 749	1680	§ 4842	2475
§ 762c	2281	§ 4847	2475
§ 766	1680	§ 4855	1382, 1411
§ 979	1835	§ 4863	1411
§ 1009	1382	§ 4918	2220
§ 1019a	1387, 1398, 1413, 1669	<i>Code of Civil Practice 1898</i>	
§ 1020	571, 811	§ 143	1856a, 2218
§ 1130	196	§ 149	2207
§ 1180	488	§ 151	1856a, 2218
§ 1219	2060	§ 315	2595
§ 1219a	488	§ 317	1866, 1873
§ 1241a	2281	§ 318	1163
§§ 1593-1594	2281	§ 422	2067
		§ 525	2486
		§ 526	2488
		§ 527	2596
		§ 528-539	2199



# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section	Louisiana	Section
§ 534	2207		
§ 536	2195, 2201	<i>Constitution 1921</i>	
§ 540	2199		
§ 542	2195	Art. I, § 9	1397, 2191
§ 547	1710	§ 11	831, 851, 2252
§ 554	1411, 1856d	Art. VIII, § 19	2281
§ 556	1411	Art. XIX, § 3	2039
§§ 557, 558	1856d	§ 13	2281
§§ 560-569	1382	§ 15	2281
§ 587	18		
§ 592	1866, 1873	<i>Revised Civil Code 1920</i>	
§ 593	781, 1908, 2210	§ 6	1639, 1674
§ 594	1866, 1890	§§ 184-192	2527
§ 595	770, 773, 1890	§§ 193-195	269, 1336, 1605
§ 596	905, 907, 917	§ 193	1606, 1644
§ 597	923, 987, 1270	§ 194	1606
§ 598	1028, 1263	§ 195	1492
§ 599	1104	§ 196	1336
§ 600	1866, 1877, 1896	§ 197	2527
§ 601	1837	§ 209	269
§ 602	2199	§ 210	2066
§ 603	1909, 1910	§§ 1646-1654	1310
§ 604	1263, 2016	§ 1646	1304
§ 605	488	§ 1647	1304
§ 606	488	§ 1648	1304
§ 606, par. 3	1869	§ 1649	1304, 1320
par. 4	1856, 2292, 2395	§ 1651	1304
par. 6	1519	§ 1652	1304
par. 8	2218	§ 1653	1304
§ 607	488	§ 1654	1304, 1320
§ 608	488	§ 1655	2008, 2051
§ 609	488	§§ 1712-1723	2458
§ 611	1383, 1387	§ 1788	2500
§ 613	1412	§§ 1945-1967	2458
§ 634	1062	§§ 2234-2279	2425
§ 635	1062	§ 2234	1651
§ 640	1062	§ 2235	1651
§ 680	1828	§ 2236	1651
		§ 2245	2016
<i>Code of Practice in Criminal Cases 1895</i>		§ 2248	1519, 1557, 2118
§ 62	1837	§ 2249	1055
§ 63	1835, 1837	§ 2250	1055
§ 64	852, 1326	§ 2251	1651
§ 107	4	§ 2253	1651
§ 113	2360	§ 2255	1651
§ 120	1851	§ 2257	1651
§§ 150-152	2199	§ 2260	1651
§ 151	2201, 2207	§ 2261	1651
§ 153	1382, 1411	§ 2267	1651
§ 189	2595	§ 2268	1225, 1651
§§ 220-224	1866	§ 2269	1651
§ 223	488	§ 2270	1651
§ 224	1873	§§ 2275-2278	2425
§ 236	1163, 1803	§ 2277	2054
§ 240	2071	§ 2278	1466
§ 241	2056	§ 2279	1197, 1225
§ 272	2354	§ 2280	1197, 1225
§ 340	21	§ 2281	488
		§ 2282	488, 600, 966
		§ 2283	1911, 2292
		§ 2285	2499
		§ 2288	2499
		§ 2290	1055
		§ 2291	2588
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1912, c. 103	488		
1916, Feb. 10, p. 1	2281		
Mar. 18, p. 162	1339, 1496, 1644		
Mar. 23, p. 354	4c, 2220		
1921, Mar. 23, c. 76	1644		



# LOUISIANA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Code of Practice 1900</i>				Section
§§ 134-145	Section	§ 1439	1375, 1413, 1672, 1681	
§ 134	2199	§ 1440		1684
§ 136	2201	§ 1445		1239
§ 137	2252	§ 1457		1680
§ 138	2195	§ 2141		2360
§ 139	1411	§ 2466		1665
§ 140	1154, 1163	§ 2171		1684
§ 142	1859, 2219	§ 3080		1651
§ 324	1651	§ 3192		1909
§ 325	2596	§ 3485	1382, 1411	
§§ 347-356	701, 2016	§ 3488		1683
§ 349	1856a, 2218	§ 3941	1411, 2207	
§ 351	2206	§ 3942		2206
§ 352	2207	§ 3943	2201, 2207	
§ 353	1411, 2207	§ 3945		1909
§ 356	2124	§ 3959		2207
§§ 425-430	2113, 2124	§ 3960		2207
§§ 425-439	1382			
§ 438	1411	<i>Session Laws</i>		
§ 439	1382	1870, No. 43		1681
§ 440	18	1877, Ex. Sess., No. 80, § 12		1644
§ 442	1383, 1412	No. 103		2207
§ 462	559	1884, No. 19		2203
§ 466	2203	1886, No. 57		1660
§§ 473-475	2595	No. 70	1356, 2509	
§ 473	2199	1888, No. 140		1681
§ 474	1859, 2219	1894, No. 67		1908
§ 475	2200	No. 84		2595
§ 477	2281	No. 117, § 3		1651
§ 478	1866	1896, No. 119		2008
§ 479	1828	No. 124	1382, 1411	
§ 480	1828	1898, No. 190		612
§ 481	18	1904, No. 41		580, 2239
§ 484	18	1906, No. 207		2065
§ 530	1866, 1878	1908, No. 40		1678
§ 531	2360	No. 105		1411
§ 586	2360	No. 109		851
§ 599	1413	No. 126	916, 1856a	
§ 698	1413	No. 247		1413
§ 752	1651	1910, No. 176	1382, 1411	
§ 753	1681	No. 234	1275, 1660	
§ 933	1304	No. 253, § 1		2090
§ 943	1413	No. 307, p. 524, § 8		488
§ 1042	1413	1912, No. 105		488
<i>Annotated Revised Statutes 1915</i>		No. 182		1665
§ 325	1675	No. 191, § 99		4d
§ 326	1675	No. 213, § 30		2281
§§ 615-617	1411	No. 242		2373
§ 615	1382	1914, No. 20, § 9		2220
§ 617	1389	No. 56		569
§ 621	1382	No. 60, § 4		1644
§ 662	1326	No. 68, p. 165		1651
§ 694	1223, 1683	No. 112	1383, 1412	
§ 938	1382, 1411	No. 254, § 2		1680
§ 992	1851, 2191	1915, No. 10 (Ex. Sess.)		1356
§ 1010	1326	No. 11		2160
§ 1036	2207	§ 17	1413, 1672	
§ 1191	600	No. 12, § 3		2281
§ 1369	1828	1916, No. 157	2241, 2252, 2272	
§ 1455	1651	p. 379		2339
§ 1436	2162	1918, June 27, No. 47, § 7		1620
§ 1437	1665	July 9, No. 166		2016
§ 1438	488	July 10, No. 131		1675a
		No. 192		1651
		July 11, No. 257, § 21		1644

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Maine			Section
<i>Constitution 1819</i>			
Art. I, § 6	1397, 2191, 2252		
<i>Revised Statutes 1916</i>			
c. 2, § 51	1674	c. 87, § 111	935, 1828
c. 4, § 134	1563	§ 112	488, 966, 2218
c. 11, § 15	1639	§ 113	488, 2252
c. 12, § 13	1651	§ 115	2218
§ 19	1225, 1651	§ 116	916
c. 14, § 38	1225, 1651	§ 117	488
c. 18, § 14	4c	§ 118	488
§ 34	4c	§ 120	2195
c. 20, § 5	2195	§ 122	1828
§ 6	4c	§ 123	1828
c. 24, § 92	1163	§ 124	488, 987
c. 30, § 43	1674	§ 125	2201
§ 53	2195	§ 126	1290
c. 33, § 67	4c	§ 127	1710
§ 90	2281	§ 128	1681
c. 36, § 20	1674	§ 129	1684
c. 40, § 28	1675	§ 130	1271, 1703
c. 42, § 11	4c	§ 131	1225, 1651
c. 44, § 19	1680	§ 132	1651
c. 49, § 11	2195, 2207	§ 133	1680
§ 15	2377	§ 134	1678
§ 39	1680	§ 135	1387, 1413, 1514
c. 50, § 21	2220	§ 136	2520
§ 29	4c, 2195	§ 171	1669
§ 34	4c	c. 88, § 26	1681
c. 51, § 22	1074, 1223	§ 28	1681
§ 24	1674	c. 92, § 12	488
c. 53, § 63	1680	c. 96, § 5	1651
c. 55, § 35	2220, 2377	c. 100, § 2	1163
§ 51	2195	c. 102, § 5	1141
§ 59	4c	§ 6	488
§ 60	2281	c. 104, § 37	2199
§ 61	1680	c. 109, § 41	1163
c. 58, § 5	1680	c. 112, § 4	1411
c. 64, § 12	1644, 1680	§§ 5-9	1382
§ 15	1644, 1680	c. 112, § 11	1411, 1416, 2207
§ 37	1644, 1680	§ 13	803
c. 65, § 2	488	§ 14	1379
c. 67, § 12	1669	§ 17	1411
c. 68, § 6	1411	§ 18	18
§ 7	1304	§ 19	1387
§ 9	1267, 1304	§ 22	1383
c. 76, § 24	1710	§ 25	1387
c. 79, § 2	1510	§ 27	1383
§ 19	2050	c. 119, § 2	2039
§ 20	2050	c. 120, § 8	316
c. 84, § 7	1681	c. 123, § 8	1339, 1710
c. 85, § 18	1680	c. 126, § 20	488, 1620
c. 86, § 103	1466	c. 131, § 6	2557
c. 87, § 23	2596	c. 134, § 10	2199, 2201
§ 24	1859, 2219	§ 12	2195
§ 28	1835	c. 135, § 12	1326, 1837
§ 40	1062	c. 136, § 6	1851
§ 47	406	§ 8	2360
§ 48	2507	§ 16	2201
§ 88	1672	§ 19	488, 2252, 2272, 2276
§ 101	1163	§ 20	1411
§ 110	2199	§ 24	1163
		c. 141, § 5	1326
		c. 144, § 3	1835
		§ 8	196
		c. 145, § 18	2090
		c. 147, § 3	2195
		c. 238, §§ 34, 37	4c



# MAINE—MARYLAND

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Session Laws</i>	<i>Section</i>		<i>Section</i>
1864, c. 280	579	Art. 35, § 21	1411
1881, Rules of Court, No. 42	1911	§ 27	1411
1919, c. 58	1835	§ 30	1378
c. 112	360, 1620	§ 33	1383
c. 238	2220	§ 36	2195
c. 238, §§ 34, 37	4c	§ 40	1681
		§ 42	1225, 1651, 1680
		§ 44	1676
		§ 45	1676
		§ 48	1710
		§ 49	1710
		§ 53	1684
		§ 54	1684
		§ 55	1680
		§ 56	1225, 1275, 1651, 2107, 2110
		§ 57	1239
		§ 58	1239
		§ 59	1680
		§ 60	1680
		§ 61	1680
		§ 62	1680
		§ 63	1681
		§ 64	1681, 2110
		§ 65	1680
		§ 66	1681
		§ 67	2110
		§ 350	1304
		42, § 20	4d
		43, § 18	1644
		54, § 66	1681
		62, § 9	1644
		68, § 3	2162
		73, § 8	1710
		75, § 14	1197
		§ 23	2596
		§ 66	2595
		§ 83	1856
		§ 84	1856e
		§ 91	2496
		§ 99	1859, 2219
		§ 152	1665
		§ 159	2199, 2207
		§ 160	2199
		79, §§ 1, 2	1681
		80, § 8	1684
		84, § 8	1710
		§ 9	1382, 1411
		89, § 1968	2377
		93, § 8	1710
		§ 38	1681
		§ 48	1678
		§ 54	1681
		§ 56	1681
		§ 112	1681
		§ 159	1672
		§ 350	1310
		§ 351	1681, 1710
		§ 352	1681
		§ 353	1310, 1320, 1710
		§ 354	1681
		§ 355	1681
		101, § 7	2281
		§ 10	4c
		§ 42	2220
<b>Maryland</b>			
<i>Constitution 1867</i>			
Decl. of R., Art. 15	2559		
Art. 21	1397, 2191		
Art. 22	2252		
Art. 36	1828		
Art. 39	1828		
<i>Annotated Code 1914</i>			
Art. 1, § 8	1828		
§ 9	1828		
§ 10	1828		
5, § 3	1127		
11, § 14	2377		
13, § 6	1675		
16, § 36	2067		
§ 41	2067		
17, § 56	1681		
18, § 6	1680		
19, § 5	1680		
§ 22	1674		
20, § 2	1681		
§ 16	1678		
21, § 28	1225, 1651		
23, § 5	1680		
§ 13	1683		
§ 25	1680		
§ 422	2281, 2282		
§ 434	2377		
§ 462	2281		
27, § 19	1620		
§ 228	2281		
§ 498	1851		
§ 662	196		
32, § 7	1674		
33, § 29	1680		
§ 43	1680		
§ 141	1680		
§ 142	1680		
§ 172	1680		
§ 176	2281		
§ 177	2281		
34, § 3	2766		
35, § 1	488, 2218		
§ 2	2286		
§ 3	1126		
§ 4	488, 2046, 2061, 2272		
§ 5	916		
§ 6	966, 987, 1270		
§ 7	1290, 2016		
§§ 8-15	2199		
§ 8	2195		
§ 16	1411		
§§ 16-31	1382		
§ 17	1411		
§ 19	1411		

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Session Laws</i>		<i>Section</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Section</i>
1910, c. 180, § 10		4c	c. 123, § 51	2090
§ 422		2259a	§ 62	2054
1912, c. 21		1684	§ 115	2054
1914, c. 16		1684	c. 138, § 43	1680
c. 800		4c	§ 54	1674
1918, Apr. 10, c. 130		2110	§ 56	1674
1920, Apr. 16, c. 563		1163	§ 60	238
			c. 140, § 9	4c
			§ 30	4c
			§ 51	4c
			§ 105	4c
			§ 125	4c
			c. 142, § 6	4c
			c. 148, § 4	1328, 1837, 2195
			c. 149, § 94	291
			§ 169	2195
			§ 172	2377
			c. 150, § 8	2195
			c. 152, § 5	4c, 2195
			§ 9	1672, 1859f
			§ 45	2220
			c. 155, § 22	1074, 1683
			c. 156, § 12	1680
			c. 158, § 9	1680
			c. 159, § 5	1680
			§ 10	2167
			§ 20	4c
			§ 42	2195
			c. 160, § 24	1680
			c. 161, § 11	1680
			c. 167, § 3	2195
			c. 168, § 10	1680
			c. 170, § 5	1680
			c. 172, § 10	1680
			c. 175, § 131	2452
			§ 151	1680
			c. 176, § 35	1683
			§ 42	1680
			c. 181, § 3	1680
			c. 183, § 5	2520
			c. 185, § 54	1225, 1651
			§ 111	1225, 1651
			c. 191, § 2	1510
			§ 3	1510
			§ 14	2281
			§ 20	2475
			c. 192, § 2	1296, 1304, 1710
			c. 201, § 6	2054, 2220
			c. 202, § 15	1710
			c. 207, § 45	1644
			§ 46	1644
			§ 47	2085
			c. 216, § 10	1681
			c. 220, § 13	1835
			c. 221, § 57	1672
			c. 231, § 7	1859a, 2219
			§ 29	2596
			§ 32	1859a, 2219
			§ 38	1856, 1859, 2219
			§§ 61-67	1856a, 2218, 2219
			§ 63	1856c
			§ 68	1859
			§ 69	2596
			§ 72	2594



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

669

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 2112	1680	§ 8019	1680
§ 2145	1680	§ 8065	1074
§ 2151	1680	§ 8068	1680
§ 2329	1665, 1680	§ 8131	1669
§ 2440	1680	§ 8135	4c, 2281
§ 2481	1665	§ 8243	1680
§ 2497	1675	§ 8566	1680
§ 2500	1680	§ 8977	1680, 1710
§ 2563	1680	§ 9090	1680
§ 2629	1674	§ 9200	1680
§ 2630	1680	§ 9284	1680
§ 2631	1684	§ 9304	2281
§ 2789	1710	§ 9427	1680
§ 2813	1680, 1681	§ 10052	1680
§ 2817	1244, 2105	§ 11232	1223, 1710
§ 2822	1710	§ 11367	488, 2380
§ 2879	1680	§ 11375	1644, 1680
§ 3003	1674	§ 11385	1680
§ 3004	1680, 1684	§ 11387	2286
§ 3158	1680, 1681	§ 11390	2286
§ 3160	1674	§ 11428	488, 2067
§ 3162	1244, 2105	§ 11696	1225, 1651
§ 3350	1665, 1680	§ 11697	1225, 1651
§ 3364	1665, 1680	§ 11717	1239
§ 3365	1665, 1680	§ 11727	1225, 1651
§ 3378	1680	§ 11728	1225, 1651
§ 3391	1674	§ 11729	1275
§ 3397	1244, 2105	§ 11731	1275
§ 3412	1680	§ 11732	1275
§ 3467	1674	§ 11738	1644, 1710
§ 3597	1674	§ 11739	1275
§ 3816	2214	§ 11741	1225, 1651
§ 3836	2281	§ 11766	1275
§ 3846	2377	§ 11775	1225, 1651
§ 4044	1674	§ 11776	1674
§ 4052	1680	§ 11777	1681
§ 4098	1640, 1674	§ 11778	1225, 1651
§ 4168	1239	§ 11783	1225, 1651
§ 4264	1674	§ 11821	1310, 1510
§ 4349	1680, 1710	§ 11822	2050
§ 4362	1680, 1674	§§ 11823, 11824	1510
§ 4364	1680, 1710	§ 11993	1651
§ 4760	1680	§§ 12022-12028	1856a, 2218
§ 4825	1354	§§ 12025-12027	1859, 2219
§ 5245	1680	§ 12078	2281
§ 5449	2220, 2380	§ 12253	1835
§ 5457	4c	§ 12331	1466
§ 5513	2374	§ 12493	18
§ 5607	1644, 1680	§ 12494	803, 1382, 1411
§ 5621	1644	§ 12497	18
§ 6351	1680	§ 12498	1383, 1412
§ 6717	1680	§ 12500	1387
§ 6763	1680	§ 12500	1411
§ 6980	1680, 1710	§ 12503	1681
§ 7049	2281	§ 12504	2158
§ 7050	1605	§ 12505	1681
§ 7092	1680	§ 12506	1681
§ 7095	1680	§ 12507	1680
§ 7386	1163	§ 12508	1225, 1651, 1676
§ 7756	488	§ 12509	1225, 1651
§ 7783	1620	§ 12510	1678
§ 7791	488	§ 12511	1681
§ 7794	488	§ 12512	1684
§ 8014	1074	§ 12513	1684, 2573



## MICHIGAN—MINNESOTA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 12514	1680, 1684	§ 14042	1680
§ 12515	1703, 2558, 2573	§ 14801	1710
§ 12517	1225, 1651, 1681	§ 14864	1651
§ 12518	1681	§ 14922	1681
§ 12520	1239	§ 14963	1710
§ 12521	1680	§ 14965	1710
§ 12522	1639, 1680	§ 15441	1339
§§ 12523-12526	1710	§ 15442	1710
§ 12525	1680	§ 15458	1680
§ 12527	1680	§ 15500	488
§ 12529	1676	§ 15623	1397, 2191
§ 12530	1644	§ 15628	1326
§ 12531	1644	§ 15650	1326
§ 12533	1706	§ 15679	1835, 1837
§ 12535	2535	§ 15680	1326
§ 12536	1710	§ 15700	1835
§ 12537	2169	§ 15710	1851
§ 12538	1290	§ 15761	1851
§ 12539	2016	§ 15796	1270
§ 12541	1519	§ 15825	1163
§§ 12543, 12544	1197	§ 15714	2360
§ 12545	1076	§ 15720	1851
§ 12546	2500	§ 15729	2201
§ 12547	2223, 2252		
§ 12548	2259a, 2281	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 12549	2395	1915, No. 302, § 29	1354
§ 12550	2380, 2385, 2390	1917, No. 208, May 10	4
§ 12551	488, 966, 987	1919, No. 53, Apr. 1, § 7	2281
§ 12552	488, 968, 1856, 2218, 2272	1921, No. 60, p. 91	4c
§ 12553	488	No. 170, p. 349	1644
§ 12554	916, 1890	No. 312, p. 577	1665
§ 12555	488		
§ 12556	488, 1328	<i>Minnesota</i>	
§ 12557	562, 563, 2203	<i>Constitution 1857</i>	
§ 12558	562, 563, 1908	Art. I, § 6	1397, 2191
§ 12559	562, 563	§ 7	2252
§ 12560	1856, 2218	§ 9	2039
§ 12561	2201	§ 17	1828
§ 12562	2195		
§§ 12562-12567	2199	<i>General Statutes 1913</i>	
§ 12568	1828	§ 689	1680
§ 12569	1828	§ 790	1665
§ 12570	1828	§ 900	1275
§ 12592	1062	§ 902	1275
§ 12622	1163	§ 999	1828
§ 12629	2496	§ 1000	1326
§ 12712	1680	§ 1265	2572
§ 12755	406	§ 2132	1664
§ 12910	1680	§ 2312	1651
§ 13368	1862	§ 2320	2377
§ 13387	1681	§ 2436	4d
§ 13645	2281	§ 2536	1680
§ 13782	1304	§ 2643	150
§ 13783	1310, 1320	§ 2714	1639, 1680
§ 13785	1681	§ 3199	2281
§ 13788	2052	§ 3215	1326
§ 13789	2051	§ 3616	2281
§ 13790	2475	§ 3710	1674
§ 13791	2475	§ 3742	1674
§ 13802	1681	§ 3767	1674
§ 13931	1680	§ 3838	1674
§ 13939	1681	§ 3895	2377
§ 13941	1658		
§ 14007	1710		

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 3898	2377	§ 7773	2572
§ 4020	2281	§ 7777	1848
§ 4060	4d, 2044	§ 7796	2596
§ 4086	2090	§ 7799	1866, 1873
§ 4114	2054	§ 7800	1163
§ 4177	4c	§ 7826	1062
§ 4197	2281	§ 7827	1062
§ 4458	1352	§ 7956	2281
§ 4591	1352	§ 8138	1680, 1710
§ 4594	1352	§ 8215	2220
§ 4661	1644	§§ 8370-8374	2199
§ 4769	2281	§ 8372	2195
§ 5457	1672, 1680	§ 8375	488, 2292, 2377, 2378, 2380, 2395
§ 5461	1680	§ 8376	488, 2272
§ 5468	1680	§ 8377	488, 916, 1890, 2218
§ 5470	1674, 1680	§ 8378	488
§ 5471	150	§ 8379	1828
§ 5574	1680	§ 8380	1828
§ 5670	1680	§ 8381	1411
§ 5718	1675, 1680	§§ 8382-8386	1382
§ 5719	1675	§ 8387	803
§ 5727	1676	§ 8392	18
§ 5735	1828	§ 8395	1411
§ 5736	1828	§ 8396	1387
§ 5741	1676	§ 8398	2195
§ 5761	1672	§ 8401	1383
§ 5774	2201	§ 8404	1387, 1412
§ 5777	2203	§ 8407	1383
§ 5786	2201	§ 8411	1412
§ 5808	2281	§ 8412	1681
§ 6110	1680	§ 8413	1271, 2558
§ 6177	1074	§ 8414	1684
§ 6183	1074	§ 8415	1684
§ 6194	1074	§ 8416	1684
§ 6203	1074	§ 8417	1271, 1703, 2558
§ 6206	1680	§ 8418	1665
§ 6289	1683	§ 8419	1680
§ 6845	1651	§ 8421	1680, 1710
§ 6846	1651	§ 8422	1710
§ 6847	1651	§ 8423	1639, 1680
§ 6848	1651	§ 8425	1676
§ 6903	1225, 1651	§ 8429	1678
§ 6907	1225, 1651, 2167	§ 8430	1680
§ 6951	1680	§ 8431	1644
§ 7162	196	§ 8432	1196
§ 7251	1510	§ 8433	1197
§ 7254	1510	§ 8435	1705
§ 7256	2051	§ 8436	1705
§ 7260	2475	§ 8437	1519
§ 7268	1304	§ 8438	1519
§ 7269	1310, 1320	§ 8439	1185, 1519
§ 7271	1304, 1310	§ 8440	1185
§ 7272	1681	§ 8441	1681
§ 7279	1267	§ 8442	1681
§ 7280	2052	§ 8443	1681
§ 7282	2050	§ 8444	1681, 2281
§ 7372	2144	§ 8445	1681
§ 7467	2054	§ 8446	1681
§ 7469	811, 1393	§ 8447	1859, 2219
§ 7529	1859	§ 8448	2516, 2596
§ 7675	1354	§ 8449	1446
§ 7693	2509	§ 8450	1239
§ 7712	1466	§ 8451	1239
§ 7740	1710	§ 8452	1678



# MINNESOTA — MISSISSIPPI

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 8453	1671, 1680	§ 586, Hem. § 346	2047
§ 8454	1239	§ 590, Hem. § 350	2132
§ 8455	1239, 1665, 1678	§ 734	1448
§ 8456	1225, 1651, 1676a, 1680	§ 735, Hem. § 518	1859
§ 8457	1060	§ 771, Hem. § 554	1062
§ 8458	1644, 1680	§ 792, Hem. § 576	811
§ 8459	2085	§ 888, Hem. § 4055	1326
§ 8460	1710	§ 1003, Hem. § 723	1859, 2219
§ 8461	1339	§ 1015, Hem. § 735	2573
§ 8462	831, 2071	§ 1318, Hem. § 1051	488
§ 8463	2056	§ 1320, Hem. § 1053	488
§ 8464	2557	§ 1372, Hem. § 1108	2061
§ 8465	2067	§ 1388	2039
§ 8502	2281	§ 1498, Hem. § 1256	2595
§ 8504	488, 987, 1270	§ 1503, Hem. § 1261	2281
§ 8508	2511	§ 1504, Hem. § 1262	2281
§ 8514	1382	§ 1505, Hem. § 1263	2281
§ 8537	2281	§ 1506, Hem. § 1264	2281
§ 8644	2281	§ 1507, Hem. § 1265	2281
§ 8654	2061	§ 1676, Hem. § 1418	2067
§ 8662	2061	§ 1679, Hem. § 1421	488, 1835
§ 8734	2281	§ 1792, Hem. § 2106	2281
§ 8741	2056, 2071	§ 1828, Hem. § 1461	1665
§ 8812	2281	§ 1914, Hem. § 1574	2531
§ 8863	2281	§ 1915, Hem. § 1575	488, 966, 2218
§ 9082	1326, 1837	§ 1916, Hem. § 1576	488
§ 9124	2360	§ 1917, Hem. § 1577	488
§ 9126	1851	§ 1918, Hem. § 1578	488, 2272
§ 9127	1851	§ 1919, Hem. § 1579	1828
§ 9132	1851	§ 1920, Hem. § 1580	488
§ 9145	2572	§ 1921, Hem. § 1581	1828
§ 9174	1851	§ 1923, Hem. § 1583	966, 987, 1270
§ 9203	1835		2210, 2252
§ 9204	1163, 1800	§ 1924, Hem. § 1584	1411
§ 9406	1684	§ 1925, Hem. § 1585	1411
§ 9423	1684	§§ 1927-1937, Hem. §§ 1587-1597	1382
		§ 1928, Hem. § 1588	1411
		§ 1931, Hem. § 1591	803
		§ 1933, Hem. § 1593	911, 1411
		§ 1936, Hem. § 1596	1411
		§ 1938, Hem. § 1598	1856a
		§ 1939, Hem. § 1599	916, 1856, 2218
		§ 1940, Hem. § 1600	1411
		§ 1941, Hem. § 1601	1411
		§§ 1943-1953, Hem. §§ 1603-1613	1383
		§ 1952, Hem. § 1612	1387, 1412, 1681
		§ 1954, Hem. § 1614	1225, 1644, 1651,
			1676, 1680, 1681
		§ 1955, Hem. § 1615	1225, 1651, 1676
		§ 1956, Hem. § 1616	1225, 1651, 1676a
		§ 1957, Hem. § 1617	1651, 1681
		§ 1958, Hem. § 1618	1681
		§ 1959, Hem. § 1619	1289
		§ 1960, Hem. § 1620	1680, 1681
		§ 1961, Hem. § 1621	1239
		§ 1962, Hem. § 1622	1665, 1680
		§ 1963, Hem. § 1623	1665
		§ 1964, Hem. § 1624	1681
		§ 1965, Hem. § 1625	1674
		§ 1966, Hem. § 1626	1644, 1680
		§ 1967, Hem. § 1627	1681
		§ 1968, Hem. § 1628	1680
		§ 1969, Hem. § 1629	1681
		§ 1970, Hem. § 1630	1680
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1915, c. 283, § 1	1705		
1917, c. 200, § 2	1651		
c. 210, § 1	2380		
c. 213, § 3	2085		
c. 344, § 6	2090		
c. 397, § 19	196		
§ 24	1835		
1919, Apr. 15, c. 266	1651		
Apr. 25, c. 513	7a, 2380, 2391		
1921, c. 82, § 23	2220, 2380		
§ 33	2377		
§ 53	4c		
§ 54	4c		
c. 455, § 2	1681		
<i>Mississippi</i>			
<i>Constitution 1890</i>			
Art. III, § 10	1397		
§ 26	1835, 2039, 2191, 2252		
<i>Code of 1906, Hemingway's edition, 1917</i>			
§ 229, Hem. § 206	1208		
§ 268, Hem. § 217	1835		
§ 272, Hem. § 221	1413		
§ 276, Hem. § 225	1141		

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2281; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1971, Hem. § 1631	1215, 1681		
§ 1972, Hem. § 1632	1678	§ 35	1681
§ 1973, Hem. § 1633	2162	§ 73	1672
§§ 1974-1977, Hem. §§ 1634-1638	2596	§ 77	1710
§ 1979, Hem. § 1639	1675, 1680	§ 192	1710
§ 1980, Hem. § 1640	1710	§ 197	1710
§ 1981, Hem. § 1641	1710	§ 264	2531
§ 1984, Hem. § 1644	1275	§ 265	488
§ 1985, Hem. § 1645	1356, 2509	§ 293	1680
§ 1986, Hem. § 1646	1684	§ 341	2527
§ 1991, Hem. § 1656	1304, 1310, 1320	§ 389	1681
§ 1992, Hem. § 1657	1310, 1710	§ 405	1651
§ 1994, Hem. § 1659	1185, 1411	§ 509	2475
§ 2001, Hem. § 1666	1510	§ 514	2475
§ 2002, Hem. § 1667	1510	§ 520	1185, 1411
§ 2200, Hem. § 1885	2201	§ 522	1304, 1320
§ 2464, Hem. § 2030	1411	§ 523	1304, 1310, 1320
§ 2675, Hem. § 5141	2452	§ 524	1326
§ 2710, Hem. § 2203	2360	§ 528	1411
§ 2711, Hem. § 2204	1851	§ 529	2050
§ 2720, Hem. § 2213	1163	§ 535	1681
§ 2813, Hem. § 2314	2373	§ 539	1681
§ 2909, Hem. § 5244	1672	§§ 542-547	1510
§ 3017, Hem. § 5405	987, 2281	§ 599	2195
§ 3118, Hem. § 2482	1466	§ 1135	196
§§ 3170-3186, Hem. §§ 2511-2527	1660	§ 1136	4d
§ 3171, Hem. § 2512	1705	§ 1151	4c
§ 3172, Hem. § 2513	1705	§ 1258	1848
§ 3246, Hem. § 2553	1644	§ 1260	2572
§§ 3948-3956, Hem. §§ 2955-2963	2199	§ 1270	1848
§ 4423, Hem. § 7103	1674	§ 1338	1466
§ 4429, Hem. § 7109	1674	§ 1374	1859, 2219
§ 4451, Hem. § 7131	1672	§ 1375	1859
§ 4869, Hem. § 7654	1672	§ 1377	1859
§ 5013, Hem. § 3295	2281	§ 1378	1859, 2219
§ 5014, Hem. § 3296	2281	§ 1379	2596
§ 5080, Hem. § 3368	2475	§ 1390	2595
§ 5082, Hem. § 3370	2050	§§ 1395-1396	1082
		§ 1413	1194
		§ 1415	2596
		§ 1439	2195
		§ 1513	21
		§ 1665	1651, 1676a
		§ 1979	1651, 1681
		§ 2204	1275
		§ 2206	2283
		§ 2207	1676
		§ 2208	1225, 1651
		§ 2210	1651, 1676
		§ 2216	1225, 1651
		§ 2343	811
		§ 2593	4d
		§ 2779	2433
		§ 2781	2596
		§ 3000	1710
		§ 3274	2085
		§ 3513	167, 1154
		§ 3580	2281
		§ 3616	2557
		§ 3669	1706
		§ 3823	1837
		§ 3825	1326
		§ 3848	1851
		§ 3878	2360
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1908, c. 118, Hem. § 1917	2281		
1910, c. 132, § 8	1674		
c. 135, Hem. § 503	2552		
1912, c. 138	1674		
c. 139	1674		
c. 149, Hem. § 4872	1644		
c. 251	2281		
1912, c. 251	2259a		
1913, c. 288	1519		
1914, c. 171	1354, 2061		
1914, c. 171	2062		
1916, c. 11, § 14	1835		
c. 133	1236, 2154		
1920, Mar. 27, c. 212, § 6	488		
Apr. 3, c. 210, § 18	2090		
<i>Missouri</i>			
<i>Constitution 1875</i>			
Art. II, § 5	1828		
§ 13	2039		
§ 14	2557		
§ 22	1397, 2191		
§ 23	2252		



# MISSOURI

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 3879	2360	§ 5375	1680
§ 3889	1851	§ 5376	1680
§ 3891	1828	§ 5377	1680
§ 3963	2201	§ 5378	1680
§ 3964	1411	§ 5379	1225, 1383
§ 3965	1411	§ 5380	1710
§ 3966	1411	§ 5381	1710
§ 3997	2595	§ 5384	1710, 1856e
§ 4013	1800, 1910	§ 5385	1675
§ 4025	1866, 1873	§ 5386	1676
§ 4028	2039	§ 5387	1681
§ 4029	2061	§ 5388	1703
§ 4030	370	§ 5389	1681
§ 4032	1625, 1684	§ 5390	1681
§ 4033	488	§ 5391	1681
§ 4034	1432, 2060, 2066, 2380	§ 5392	1644, 1680
§ 4035	488	§ 5393	1644, 1651, 1676a
§ 4036	488, 966, 1890, 2276	§ 5394	1225
§ 4037	488, 2272	§ 5395	1647, 1680
§§ 4177-4182	2199	§ 5396	2531
§ 4191	1681	§ 5397	1710
§ 4251	150	§ 5398	2143
§ 4400	1640	§ 5399	1225, 2143
§ 4621	1640	§ 5400	1684
§ 4715	4c	§ 5401	1032, 1668
§ 4720	1639, 1680, 1411	§ 5402	1664
§ 5040	987, 2281	§ 5404	1828
§ 5240	2066	§ 5405	1828
§ 5242	1890, 2277	§ 5406	1828
§ 5335	1684	§ 5407	4c
§ 5336	1684	§ 5410	488, 966, 1519
§ 5337	1680, 1684	§ 5411	1519, 1859, 2219
§ 5338	1684	§ 5412	488, 916, 2218
§ 5339	1680	§ 5413	488, 2252
§ 5340	1684	§ 5414	1890
§ 5341	1684	§ 5415	488, 2336
§ 5342	1684	§ 5416	2281
§ 5344	1680	§ 5417	2218
§ 5345	1680	§ 5418	488, 2292, 2380, 2394
§ 5346	1680	§ 5419	2223
§ 5347	1680	§§ 5420-5431	2199
§ 5348	1680	§ 5422	2201, 2207
§ 5349	1680	§ 5427	2195
§ 5350	1680, 1684	§ 5431	2195
§ 5351	1683	§ 5432	2199
§ 5352	1644	§ 5438	2016
§ 5353	1683, 1710	§ 5439	488, 987, 1270, 2276, 2277
§ 5354	1239	§§ 5440-5465	1382
§ 5355	1239	§ 5440	1411
§ 5356	1239, 1676a	§ 5446	2195
§ 5357	1225, 1239, 1651	§ 5460	2195
§ 5358	1651	§ 5467	1411
§ 5359	1225, 1651	§ 5469	18
§ 5360	1225, 1651	§ 5472	1705
§ 5361	1239, 1680	§ 5474	1705
§ 5363	2143	§ 5482	1383
§ 5364	2143	§ 5491	1387, 1389, 1412, 1681
§ 5365	1225, 2143	§ 5503	1383
§ 5366	1225, 1651	§ 5508	1387, 1412, 1665, 1680, 1681
§ 5369	1651, 2143	§ 5727	150
§ 5371	1239	§ 5747	2281
§ 5372	1239	§ 5802	1646
§ 5373	2143	§ 5803	1646
§ 5374	1573	§ 5816	1644

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 5929	1366	§ 10614	1644, 1710
§ 6414	1680	§ 10617	1644
§ 6670	1646	§ 11613	1680
§ 6671	1646	§ 11679	2377
§ 7024	1239	§ 11849	1683
§ 7080	1684	§ 11867	1674
§ 7094	1684	§ 11922	1680
§ 7307	1644	§ 11993	1674
§ 7336	4c	§ 12173	4c
§ 7542	4c	§ 12283	1639, 2090
§ 7672	1680	§ 12289	2054
§ 7751	1640	§ 12541	4c, 2195
§ 7797	1674	§ 12637	4c
§ 7807	1680	§ 12655	2195
§ 7855	1674	§ 12656	2195
§ 7866	4c	§ 12683	4c
§ 7907	2195	§ 12719	1665
§ 7909	2281	§ 12721	1680
§ 7957	1680, 1684	§ 12730	1275, 1665, 1680
§ 7984	1680, 1684	§ 12770	2195
§ 8139	1674	§ 12846	2195
§ 8148	1674	§ 12945	1674
§ 8301	1674	§ 12948	1664
§ 8305	1674	§ 12974	1640
§ 8323	1674	§ 13025	1684
§ 8333	1674	§ 13026	1678
§ 8369	1674	§ 13135	2377
§ 8483	1674	§ 13194	1680
§ 8501	1674	§ 13210	1680
§ 8507	1674	§ 13270	2281
§ 8705	1674	§ 13605	1223, 1707, 2380
§ 8708	1674	§ 13626	2377
§ 8758	1674	§ 13642	1374, 1671, 1681, 2220, 2380
§ 8761	1674	§ 13643	4c
§ 8868	2577	§ 13644	2195
§ 9209	4c	§ 13650	1680
§ 9285	1225, 1651, 1680	§ 13655	4c
§ 9668	2281		
§ 9683	2281		
§ 9693	2281		
§ 9734	1674		
§ 9773	1074, 1223, 1644, 1683		
§ 9817	2377		
§ 9846	2195		
§ 9847	2377		
§ 9853	1680		
§ 9878	1680		
§ 10128	1680		
§ 10146	1674		
§ 10265	1680		
§ 10322	150		
§ 10357	4c		
§ 10404	1710		
§ 10428	1684		
§ 10429	1680		
§ 10431	2195		
§ 10433	4c		
§ 10454	2377		
§ 10520	4c		
§ 10536	2259a, 2281		
§ 10578	1239		
§ 10581	1275		
§ 10609	1275		
§§ 10611-10616	1660		



# MONTANA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1433	2090	§ 10507	1371
§ 2061, par. 7	285	§ 10508	923
§ 2216	1640, 1680	§ 10510	1082
§ 2227	1640	§ 10511	1750
§ 2289	1352	§ 10513	1480
§ 2566	2220	§ 10514	1455
§ 2569	2216	§ 10515	2113
§ 2595	1674	§ 10516	1195, 1199, 1218, 1225, 1230, 1269
§ 2750	1837	§ 10517	2425
§ 2908	2220	§§ 10518-10527	2458
§ 2938	4c	§ 10524	2025
§ 3031	2377	§ 10531, par. 3	1072
§ 3800	2281	par. 4	1430, 1455, 1480
§ 3882	4c	par. 8	1387, 1413
§ 3894	4c	par. 9	2016
§ 3902	2281	par. 10	689, 1938
§ 3934	4c	par. 11	1480, 1597
§ 4779	1664	par. 13	1480
§ 4944	2201	§ 10532	2162, 2571
§ 4947	2203	§ 10533	488
§ 5697	2085	§ 10534	488
§ 5720	1644	§ 10535	488
§ 5909	1680	§ 10536	488, 2292, 2375, 2380, 2395
§ 5913	1680	§ 10537	1090, 1910
§ 6327	168	§ 10538	811
§ 6541	2509	§ 10543	1680
§ 6843	2408	§ 10550	1684
§ 6846	2408	§ 10551	1680
§ 6892	1239	§ 10552	1271, 1703
§ 6932	1651	§ 10553	1352
§ 6933	1676	§ 10555	1681
§ 6984	1510	§ 10556	1681
§ 6987	1510	§ 10557	2158
§ 6992	2050	§ 10568	1680, 1684
§ 6996	2051	§ 10569	1651
§ 7000	2475	§ 10570	1639
§ 7009	2475	§ 10571	1681
§§ 7016-7050	2458	§ 10572	1681
§ 7039	2474	§ 10573	1677
§ 7104	1651	§ 10575	1239, 1693
§§ 7526-7552	2458	§ 10576	1639
§ 8023	1680, 1710	§ 10584	1597
§ 8119	2432	§ 10585	1188, 1189
§ 8284	1225, 1651	§ 10586	1206, 1207, 1208
§ 8604	2504	§ 10587	2125
§ 8935	1669	§ 10588	1290
§ 9062	1466	§ 10589	1302
§ 9122	1710	§ 10590	1300
§ 9349	1866, 1873	§ 10591	701
§ 9350	1163	§ 10592	2016
§ 9379	2195	§ 10593	2017
§ 9397, subd. 2	2354	§ 10594, par. 1	1455
§§ 9422-9494	1862	§ 10594	1619, 1639
§ 9650	2596	§ 10595	1519
§ 9669, par. 4	2595	§ 10596	1676
§ 9770	1062	§ 10598	1225, 1651
§ 9771	1859, 2219	§ 10599	1163
§ 10030	1304	§ 10606	2499
§ 10035	1304, 1310, 1320	par. 5, 6	285
§ 10036	1413	par. 34	2137
§ 10050	2052	par. 35	1684
§ 10067	1681	par. 36	1703
§ 10505	2034	§ 10608	2039, 2042
§ 10506	657	§ 10617	2525

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

678



# NEBRASKA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1260	1310, 1320	§ 8847	1675
§ 1278	1681	§ 8848	987, 1270
§ 1504	1644, 1680	§ 8849	2113
§ 1521	488	§ 8852	1597, 1693
§ 1550	2067	§ 8853	1302, 1310
§ 1562	1644	§ 8854	2016
§ 2080	2214, 2281	§ 8855	1455, 1519
§ 3080, par. a	4c	§ 8856	1676
§ 3097	2220, 2221	§§ 8857-8873	2199
§ 3122	1684	§ 8861	2207
§ 3263	1620	§ 8862	2201
§ 3279	2281	§ 8865	2195
§ 3428	2281	§ 8867	2199
§ 3430	2281	§ 8869	2195
§ 3469	2281	§ 8870	2201
§ 3525	1680, 1684	§ 8871	1828
§ 3897	1680, 1684	§ 8878	1710
§ 4064	1680, 1684	§ 8880	1411
§ 4330	1680, 1684	§ 8881	1382
§ 4424	2281	§ 8884	803
§ 4818	1675	§ 8887	1382
§ 4860	1680	§ 8891	1387
§ 4882	1680	§ 8894	1411
§ 5017	1382	§ 8898	18
§ 5018	1665	§ 8900	2596
§ 5399	2377	§ 8901	1859, 2219
§ 5475	2281	§ 8902	1859, 2219
§ 5519	4c	§ 8903	1271, 1684, 1703
§ 5609	1225, 1651, 1676	§§ 8904-8906	1859
§ 5610	1573	§ 8907	2125
§ 5619	1681	§ 8908	1710
§ 5620	1681	§ 8909	1710
§ 5645	1239	§ 8912	1710
§ 5652	1710	§ 8913	1680
§ 5654	1651	§ 8916	1678
§ 5657	1651	§ 8917	1239
§ 5660	1651	§ 8918	2167
§ 5664	1676	§ 8919	1681
§ 5691	1705	§ 8920	1681
§ 6083	1639	§ 8921	1681
§ 6149	1639	§ 8922	1681
§ 6824	1683	§ 8923	1680, 1684
§ 6848	2281	§ 8924	1684
§ 6905	2090	§ 8925	1684
§ 7896	2281	§ 8926	1705, 1859g
§ 8586	1710	§ 8927	1271, 1680, 1703
§ 8642	2572	§ 8929	1383
§ 8657	21	§ 8930	1383
§ 8661	1062	§ 8933	1387, 1412
§ 8666	1062	§ 9051	2281
§ 8667	1062	§ 9707	2281
§ 8791	1163	§ 9765	488
§ 8835	488, 516, 2292, 2395	§ 9769	1620
§ 8636	488	§ 9877	2281
§ 8837	488	§ 9980	1837
§ 8838	488	§ 10069	2360
§ 8839	1909	§ 10087	1851
§ 8840	2292, 2380, 2395	§ 10126	2201
§ 8841	2380, 2395	§ 10127	1382
§ 8842	2375	§ 10139	488, 968, 987, 2272
§ 8843	2223	§ 10140	488
§ 8844	987, 2252	§ 10141	2061
§ 8845	966	§ 10142	370
§ 8846	1519	§ 10143	369, 2039

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 10144	1866, 1873	§§ 4615-4617	2154
§ 10145	1163	§ 4699	1680
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 4912	1669
1917, p. 219	4c	§ 4985	1466
1921, c. 116	2220	§ 5032	1710
c. 182, § 11	4c	§ 5062	2596
		§ 5063	2596
		§ 5066	21
<b>Nevada</b>		§ 5072	2572
<i>Constitution 1864</i>		§ 5202	2595
Art. I, § 4	1828	§ 5210	1866, 1873
§ 8	2252	§ 5211	1163
§ 19	2039	§ 5265	1062
<i>Revised Laws 1912</i>		§ 5408	1681
§ 40	1848	§ 5409	1680, 2158
§ 599	2061	§ 5410	1681
§ 728	196, 987	§ 5411	1681
§ 765	2061	§ 5412	2158
§ 793	1680, 1684	§ 5413	1684
§ 1016	1684	§ 5414	1225, 1651, 1676a
§ 1044	1225, 1239, 1651, 1676	§ 5415	1239
§ 1046	1651	§ 5416	1859, 2219
§ 1094	1651	§ 5417	1208, 1223, 1225, 1230, 1269, 1680
§ 1100	1225, 1651	§ 5418	2525
§ 1110	1680	§ 5419	488, 966, 968, 987
§ 1221	1680	§ 5420	488, 987, 1828, 1856a, 2218
§ 1346	1680	§ 5421	1856a, 2218
§ 1384	1680	§ 5422	488
§ 1437	1680		488
§ 1636	1225, 1275, 1651, 1680		488
§ 1667	1665		2292
§ 1825	2214		2395
§ 1921	2220	§ 5428	2380
§ 2000	2201	§ 5429	2378
§ 2012	2201	§ 5430	1909, 1910
§ 2204	2090	§ 5431	811
§ 2211	2054	§§ 5431-5441	2199
§ 2234	150, 1680	§ 5431	2201, 2207
§ 2237	150	§ 5435	2199
§ 2340	1644, 1680	§ 5436	2210
§ 2350	1644	§ 5437	987, 2210, 2223, 2252
§ 2424	1225, 1651	§ 5439	2195
§ 2429	1225, 1651	§ 5442	1411, 2199
§ 2432	1225, 1651	§ 5444	1411
§ 2467	1225, 1651	§ 5445	2195
§ 2473	1225, 1651	§ 5447	1828
§ 2475	1225, 1651	§ 5448	1828
§ 2739	1681	§ 5449	1837
§ 2754	1675, 1676a, 1680	§ 5454	1411, 1856a
§ 2755	1675, 1680	§ 5455	1382
§ 2816	1674	§ 5456	1389, 1411
§ 2914	1680, 1710	§ 5457	912, 1387, 1389
§ 2971	1644	§ 5458	1411
§ 3213	1680, 2162	§ 5459	1382
§ 3581	2281	§ 5463	1389
§ 3658	1640, 1680	§§ 5464-5468	1383
§ 3789	1651	§ 5469	1681
§ 3951	1639	§ 5470	1387, 1389, 1681
§ 4163	1674, 1680	§ 5472	1413, 1689
§ 4204	2374	§§ 5630-5646	1660
§ 4536	2281	§ 5670	1412
§ 4561	1669	§ 5873	1304, 1310, 1710
§ 4565	1680, 2281	§ 5875	1304, 1310
		§ 5877	1681



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

681

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
c. 224, § 26	488, 987	Cities, § 214	1684
c. 225, § 1	1411	§ 1844	1684
§ 4	1382	§ 1907	1684
§ 5	1382	§ 1932	1680, 1684
§ 7	803	§ 2065	1680, 1684
§ 11	1856	§ 2363	1684
§ 13	1411	§ 2459	1684
§ 14	1382	§ 2647	1680, 1684
c. 226, §§ 3-5	1383	Clerks of Courts, § 16	1680
§ 9	1215, 1387	Conveyances, § 6	1225, 1651
c. 227, § 8	1672	§ 20b	1676
§ 19	1163	§ 20d	1676
c. 245, § 43	2281	§ 22	1676
c. 252, § 7	1326	§ 23	1676
§ 8	1326	§ 45	2373
§ 9	1326	§ 49	1275
§ 11	1837	§ 55	1225, 1651
c. 260, § 10	2281	§ 56	1651
c. 262, § 12	1326	§ 57	1225, 1651, 2143
c. 272, § 4	2056	§ 57c	1225, 1651
c. 274, § 7	2535	§ 62	1659
		§ 64	1651, 1676, 2143
		§ 68	1651, 1676, 2143
		§ 69	1573
		§ 70	1651
		§ 117	1651, 1676
		§§ 123-133	1676
		§ 123	1651
		§ 124	1651
		§ 127	1651
		§ 129	1275
		§ 133	1651
		Coroners, § 12	1828
		§ 14	1326
		Corporations, § 12	1680
		Courts, § 83	1681
		Crimes, § 27f	987, 2281
		§ 27k	987, 2281
		§ 27n	987, 2281
		§ 49	2061
		Criminal Procedure, § 54	1851
		§ 57	369, 488
		§ 154	2281
		§ 207	196
		Death, § 1	2531
		Descent, § 8	2475
		Disorderly Persons, § 18	488
		§ 23	488
		District Court, § 65	1382
		Elections, § 171	2214, 2281
		§ 213	2281
		Evidence, § 1	488, 987
		§ 2	488, 916, 2252
		§ 3	488, 966
		§ 4	488
		§ 5	488
		§ 6	488, 2047
		§ 7	1270
		§ 8	2210, 2252
		§ 9	2218
		§ 10	488, 1387
		§ 11	1387, 1669
		§§ 12-14	2199
		§ 12	2195, 2201, 2207
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1794, Feb. 11	1141		
1857, c. 1952, § 1	7		
1895, c. 14	2054		
1899, c. 41	488		
c. 63, § 3	1680		
1901, c. 104, § 1	1851		
§ 5	1851		
1903, c. 37	1859		
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1895, c. 14	2090		
1903, c. 134	1326		
1905, c. 60	1326		
1907, c. 125, § 3	1835		
1911, c. 133, § 20	2264		
§ 24	1680		
c. 198, § 4	2377		
1913, c. 137, § 3	1275		
c. 186, § 1	2377		
1915, Apr. 7, c. 96	1835		
1917, c. 31	196		
c. 142	2377		
1919, Mar. 27, c. 87	1684		
Mar. 28, c. 95, § 5	1620		
1921, c. 147	2281		
<i>New Jersey</i>			
<i>Constitution 1844</i>			
Art. I, § 4	1828		
§ 8	1397		
§ 14	2039		
<i>Compiled Statutes 1910</i>			
Banking and Insurance Dept., § 6	1680		
Banks and Banking, § 3	1680		
Bastards, § 14	1413		
Benef. Soc., § 15	1680		
Birth D. & V. S., § 10	1644		
§ 18	1644		



# NEW JERSEY—NEW MEXICO

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
Evidence, § 14	2195	Practice, § 141	2596
§ 19	2220	§ 142	1859, 2219
§ 20	2016, 2018	§ 143	1859, 2219
§ 21	1675	§ 146	916
§ 22	1675	§ 158	1800
§ 24	1684	§ 183	1800
§ 25	1684	Railroads, etc., § 2	1680
§ 26	1703	Secretary of State, § 8	1680
§ 27	1225, 1639, 1651, 1680, 1681	§ 17	1680
§ 27a	1681	Statutes, § 14	1684
§ 28	1644, 1680	§ 25	1680, 1684
§ 29	1644	Usury, § 3	2281
§ 30	1163, 1862	Villages, § 38b	1680
§ 31	1382	Wills, §§ 4-8	1510
§ 33	803	§§ 13-17	2050
§ 35	1411	§ 16	2050
§ 38	1382		
§ 44	1382	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 45	803, 1382	1889, p. 421, § 5	1651
§ 46	1411	1894, May 9	21
§ 48	803	1897, § 19	1800
§ 51	1411	1898, c. 237, § 136	21
§ 56a	1382	1911, c. 188, p. 329	2281
§ 58	2195	c. 201	1674
§ 67	2281	c. 207, p. 433	1828
Fences, § 17	1651	c. 255	2531
Food, etc., § 42a	1684	c. 279, p. 491	1856a
Gaming, § 7	2281	1912, c. 199, p. 306	1644
Idiots, etc., § 3b	2090	c. 231	1859
§ 3i	2090	c. 309	1681, 2110
Judgments, § 19	1651	1913, Mar. 12, c. 69	488, 1382, 1411
Juries, § 77	1163	1914, Apr. 1, c. 96	1856
Justices' Courts, § 86	1856e	Apr. 14, c. 168	2596
§ 112	1681	1916, Mar. 18, c. 212	196
§ 117	1681	1917, Mar. 19, c. 61, § 5	2085
§ 137	1856e	Mar. 26, c. 121	1382
§ 160	1856e	c. 122	1382
Labor, § 19	1644	c. 156, § 3	2377
Leasehold Est., § 8	1651	Mar. 29, c. 232, § 3	2377
Limit. of Actions, § 11	1466	1918, Mar. 4, c. 253, §§ 1, 2	2220
Lunatic Asylums, § 117	2054	§ 15	1675a
§ 125	2054	1920, Mar. 26, c. 46	1275
Marriages, § 15	1644	Apr. 6, c. 99, § 29	1644
Mortgages, § 18	1651	1921, c. 226	1225
§ 33	1651		
Motor Vehicles, § 13	1620		
Munic. Corpor., § 52	1680		
Negotiable Instr., § 207	747, 1675, 1680		
Oaths and Affidavits, § 24	1828		
§ 26	1828		
§ 39	1828		
Orphans' Courts, § 5	1681		
§ 20	1681		
§ 21	1681		
§ 23	1681		
§ 24	1681		
§ 25	1681		
§ 158	1681		
§ 162	1681		
§ 163	1681		
Partition, § 9	1681		
Poor, § 27	1681		
Practice, § 51	1681		
§§ 140-148	1856a, 2218		
		<i>New Mexico</i>	
		<i>Constitution 1911</i>	
		Art. II, § 11	1828
		§ 14	811, 1393, 1397, 2191
		§ 15	2252
		§ 16	2039
		IV, § 41	2281
		§ 34	7
		<i>Annotated Statutes 1915</i>	
		§ 11	1676a
		§ 73	1639, 1680
		§ 118	150
		§ 122	150, 1680
		§ 520	1680
		§ 567	1225, 1651

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

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# NEW YORK

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

New York		Section	
<i>Constitution 1895</i>			
Art. I, § 3	1828	Penal, § 737	2281
§ 6	2252	§ 770	2281
XIII, § 3	2281	§ 817	222, 1154, 1496, 1644, 2220
§ 4	488	§ 996	2281
§ 5	2281	§ 1041	2081
		§ 1472	2281
		§ 1627	2043
		§ 1631	2281
		§ 1716	2281
		§ 1787	2281
		§ 1906	2281
		§ 2013	2061
		§ 2038	2281
		§ 2037	2281
		§ 2177	2061
		§ 2443	2281
		§ 2444	488, 987, 1270
		§ 2445	488
		§ 2460	2061
		Prison, § 244	1674
		Public Health, § 5	1680
		§ 22	1644
		§ 294	1680
		Public Lands, § 5	1239
		Public Serv. Com., § 17	1680
		§ 20	4c, 2259a, 2281
		§ 47	2377
		Railroad, § 16	1674
		Real Property, § 12	1784
		§ 306	1225, 2143
		§ 310	1676
		§ 311	1676
		§ 331	1651
		§ 528	1163
		§ 551	1710
		Sec. Class Cities, § 39	1680
		§ 243	2281
		Stock Corp., § 32	1074
		Tax, § 128	1674
		Town, § 94	1674
<i>Consolidated Laws 1909</i>		<i>Code of Criminal Procedure 1881</i>	
Agriculture, § 322	1706	§ 8	1375, 1411, 1413
Banking, § 26	1672	§ 10	488, 2252
§ 145	488	§ 10c	2199
Business and Trade, § 1442	1354	§ 87	1326
Canal, § 4	1665	§ 165	406
§ 5	1680	§ 202	1837
§ 20	2281	§ 204	1326
§ 80	1680	§ 219	1382, 1411
Civil Rights, § 12	1397, 2191	§ 221b	1387
§ 25	2195	§ 266	2360
County, § 119	1672	§ 271	1851
Debtor and Creditor, § 22	2281	§ 388	1873
§ 175	2281	§ 391	2558
Decedent Est., § 27	1510	§ 392	488, 1828, 2066
§ 34	2051	§ 392a	2281
§ 35	2475	§ 393	488, 2272
§ 42	1681	§ 393a	488
§ 44	1681	§ 395	831, 852, 2071
§ 45	1681	§ 398a	1432
§ 204	2052	§ 399	2056
Domestic Rel., § 23	1644	§ 411	1163
Drainage, § 13	1665	§ 413	1800
§ 40	1674		
Education, § 32	1680		
Elections, § 558	2281		
Executive, § 102	1674		
§ 108	1676, 1680		
Forest, Fish and Game, § 223	2281		
Gen. Bus., § 33	291		
§ 273	1674		
§ 345	2281		
Gen. Corp., § 9	1680		
§ 44	2281		
Indians, § 60	2281		
Insanity, § 80	2054		
§ 81	2090		
§ 93	1639		
Insurance, § 4	1674		
§ 39	1672		
Judiciary, § 4	1835		
Labor, § 154	2281		
Legislative, § 40	1350		
§ 41	1674		
Lien, § 237	1651		
Liquor Tax, § 33	2281		
Mental Deficiency, § 24	2090		
§ 35	1707		
Navigation, § 73	150		
Penal, § 71	2061		
§ 166	2281		
§ 381	2281		
§ 533	2061		
§ 584	2281		
§ 713	2281		

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

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# NEW YORK—NORTH CAROLINA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Justice Court Act 1920</i>		<b>North Carolina</b>	
	Section	<i>Constitution 1868</i>	Section
§§ 190-201	2199	Art. I, § 11	1397, 2252
§ 190	2207	II, § 14	1350
§ 191	2201		
§ 204	1382	<i>Consolidated Statutes 1919</i>	
§ 243	1828	§ 46	1710
§ 244	1828	§ 107	1456
§ 245	1828	§ 358	1077
§ 246	1828	§§ 365-384	1660
§ 247	1828	§ 365	2167
§ 248	1828	§ 368	1681
§ 471	1681	§ 370	1267, 1290, 1510
§ 486	2281	§ 380	1573
		§ 416	1466
<i>Surrogate Court Act 1920</i>		§ 533	2281
§ 24	1828	§ 541	2572
§ 61	1456	§ 567	2496
§ 74	1382	§ 609	1275
§ 75	1510	§ 716	2281
§ 141	1304, 2050	§ 896	1064
§ 142	1302, 1304, 1310, 1320	§ 897	1064
§ 143	2052	§§ 899-907	1856a
<i>Rules of Civil Practice 1920</i>		§ 900	916, 2218
§ 53	1456	§ 904	916
<i>N. Y. C. Municipal Court Code 1915</i>		§§ 905-907	488
§ 98	2201	§ 921	1664
§ 116	1411	§ 964	1674
§ 117	2220	§ 973	1680
<i>Greater New York Charter 1901</i>		§ 992	2477
§ 1556	1684, 2572	§ 1017	1680
<i>Session Laws</i>		§ 1023	4c
1893, c. 661, § 6	1663	§ 1093	4c
1910, c. 480, § 20	4c	§ 1115	1680, 1681
§ 47	2377	§ 1131	1680
1911, c. 647, § 25	2281	§ 1273	2201
1912, c. 312, p. 568	2282	§ 1456	2199
c. 390, p. 803	1387	§ 1496	2199
c. 420	488	§ 1497	2199
c. 444, § 4	2281	§ 1535	1828, 2199
1913, c. 208	1676	§ 1662	488, 2067
c. 209	1676	§ 1747	1680, 1684
c. 236	2281	§ 1748	1684
c. 542	439, 1413	§ 1749	1271, 1680, 1684, 1703
c. 559	1672	§ 1750	1680
c. 597	1684	§§ 1751-1762	1225, 1239
1914, c. 41, §§ 67, 68	4c	§ 1751	1680
c. 360, § 3	2281	§ 1763	1225, 1651
c. 518, § 31	2281	§ 1765	1225, 1651
1917, c. 382	2572	§ 1766	2105
1918, c. 64	1411	§§ 1768-1772	1275
c. 318	2531	§ 1773	1681
1919, c. 263	4c	§ 1774	1681
c. 293	2475	§ 1775	1681
c. 502	1620	§ 1776	2143
c. 633	1707, 2090	§ 1777	1225, 1651, 1681
1920, c. 27	2281	§ 1778	1275
c. 919	2052	§ 1779	1215, 1680, 1681
c. 920	2199, 2281	§ 1780	1680
c. 930	1163	§ 1781	1681
May 21, c. 926	1856a	§ 1782	1290
1921, c. 44	1706	§ 1783	2477
		§ 1784	2016
		§ 1785	2153
		§ 1786	1519

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



# NORTH DAKOTA

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V. §§ 2285-2597]

North Dakota		Section	
Constitution 1889		§ 3738	1680
		§ 3781	1680
Art. I, § 4	1828	§ 3931	1680, 1684
§ 13	2191, 2252	§ 3989	4c
§ 19	2039	§ 4299	4c
Compiled Laws 1913		§ 4305	4c
§ 90	1684	§ 4367	1644, 1680
§ 166	2195	§ 4380	2090
§ 205	2195	§ 4400	2067
§ 231	2195	§ 4514	1680
§ 245	987, 2195, 2281	§ 4644	1356
§ 299	2162	§ 4713	4c
§ 454	1644	§ 4730	4c
§ 460	2195	§ 4735	2281
§ 469	1633	§ 4738	2195
§ 480	2195	§ 4739	2281
§ 510	2195	§ 4741	1672
§ 513	1639, 1674, 1678, 1680	§ 4797	2281
§ 517	1639	§ 4839	1680
§ 690	4c	§ 4858	2281
§ 692	2195	§ 4921	2195
§ 833	2195	§ 4939	2195
§ 842	1675, 1680	§ 5065	1683
§ 843	1680	§ 5085	4c
§ 1046	4c	§ 5158	1680
§ 1059	4c	§ 5495	2408
§ 1070	4c	§ 5496	2520
§ 1073	1382	§ 5497	2408
§ 1074	1379	§ 5498	2408
§ 1078	2207	§ 5500	2408
§ 1079	2195	§ 5547	1705
§ 1081	2195	§ 5597	1225, 1651, 1676
§ 1084	2195	§ 5645	2050
§ 1132	4c	§ 5661	2051
§ 1921	4c	§ 5680	1510
§ 2088	4c, 2195	§ 5681	1510
§ 2089	2195	§ 5682	1510
§ 2107	2195	§§ 5685-5719	2458
§ 2208	1651	§ 5890	1290, 1320
§ 2464	4c	§ 5892	2408
§ 2504	4c	§§ 5895-5921	2458
§ 2552	4c	§ 6172	1674
§ 2596	150, 1680	§ 6432	1639, 1680
§ 2597	150	§ 6440	1710
§ 2605	150	§ 7337	1835
§ 2691	2195	§ 7394	1466
§ 2713	1639, 2195	§ 7430	1674
§ 2722	4c	§ 7436	1710
§ 2765	4c	§ 7462	2572
§ 2895	1674	§ 7619	1866, 1873
§ 2906	1674	§ 7622	1163
§ 2930	1674	§ 7650	2195
§ 2936	1674	§ 7651	2195
§ 2950	1674	§ 7660, par. 2	2354
§ 2976g	150	§§ 7856-7859	1062
§ 3373	1680	§ 7860	2596
§ 3392	1664	§ 7861	1859, 2219
§ 3416	1326	§§ 7862-7869	1856a
§ 3427	1665	§ 7862	488, 2218
§ 3437a	1665	§ 7863	488, 2218
§ 3596	1680	§ 7864	2207
§ 3598	1684	§ 7866	916
§ 3624	1680	§ 7868	488, 916
		§ 7369	488

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 7870	488, 916	§ 9381	488
§ 7871	488, 2218	§ 9447	2039
§ 7873	2200	§ 9459	2071, 2081
§ 7876	2207	§ 9600	488, 2088
§ 7877	2201	§ 9679	2281
§ 7878	2207	§ 9698	2281
§ 7880	2195	§ 9826	2281
§ 7881	2201	§ 9960	1859
§ 7882	1828	§ 10108	2195
§ 7887	1710	§ 10128	488, 1620, 2281
§ 7889	1411	§ 10201	1674
§§ 7891-7905	1382	§ 10279	2281
§ 7893	803	§ 10355	2281
§ 7899	803	§ 10393	1397
§ 7901	912, 1387	§ 10395	2252
§ 7902	2162	§ 10411	1326
§ 7904	1411	§ 10603	1837
§ 7906	18	§ 10604	1837
§ 7909	1548	§ 10605	1326
§ 7910	1271, 1684, 1703	§ 10631	1851
§ 7911	1681	§ 10659	4
§ 7912	1681	§ 10660	4c
§ 7913	1710	§ 10667	2360
§ 7914	1681	§ 10668	2360
§ 7915	1681	§ 10680	1851
§ 7916	1225, 1651, 1676	§ 10697	2572
§ 7917	1639	§ 10728	1851
§ 7918	1639	§ 10821	1866, 1873
§ 7919	1680, 1684	§§ 10827-10829	2549
§ 7920	1680, 1681	§ 10831	2497
§ 7921	2531	§ 10832	2497
§ 7922	1698	§ 10834	488
§ 7923	2292, 2378, 2380, 2395	§ 10835	488
§ 7924	2292, 2380, 2395	§ 10837	488
§ 7925	1910, 1909	§ 10838	4
§ 7926	1828	§ 10839	369, 2039
§§ 7927-7930	1383	§ 10840	370
§ 7931	18, 1387, 1389, 1412, 1681	§ 10841	2056
§ 7934	2491	§ 10842	2044
§ 7935	2499	§ 10843	2061
§ 7936	2499	§ 10855	1163
par. 12	1626	§ 10856	1800
par. 24	95	§ 10860	2512
par. 34	2137	§ 10861	2085
par. 35	1684	§ 10862	1339, 1625
par. 36	1684	§§ 11023-11031	2199
§ 7937	2571	§ 11034	2207
§ 7938	2571	§ 11036	2195
§ 8002	2259b, 2281	§ 11043	1382
§ 8093	1680	§ 11048	1389, 1411
§ 8245	1680	§ 11049	1411
§ 8308	4c	§ 11053	1382
§ 8331	2195	§ 11062	1389, 1411
§ 8541	3104	§ 11065	1866
§ 8577	1411	§ 11399	2199
§ 8578	1411		
§ 8640	1304		
§ 8641	1310, 1320, 1413	Session Laws	
§ 8642	1310	1915, Mar. 8, c. 121	2090
§ 8643	2052	1917, Mar. 8, c. 110	1383, 1389, 1412
§ 8644	1320	c. 117, § 5	2281
§ 9192	2377	c. 232	2195
§ 9286	2281	1919, Feb. 14, c. 209	2199
§ 9296	987, 2281	Feb. 25, c. 151, § 5	4c
		Mar. 5, c. 133	2281



# NORTH DAKOTA — OHIO

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
1919, Mar. 5, c. 162, § 4	4c	§ 2815	1665
§ 5	2377	§ 2816	1680
§ 16	2220	§ 2856	1326
Mar. 7, c. 190, § 3	367, 1620	§ 3306	1680
§ 5	2220	§ 3515-1	2281
1921, c. 38	2376	§ 3610	1660
c. 38, Mar. 10, § 6	1062, 2377	§ 3613	1665, 1680
c. 143, Mar. 9	2377	§ 4231	1674
		§ 4235	1680, 1684
		§ 5970	2281
		§ 6200	1620
		§ 6222	1680
		§ 6232	150
		§ 6240-3	1680
		§ 6243	2509
		§ 6274	2377
		§ 6399	1249, 1354, 1625
		§ 6401	2281
		§ 8033	2066
		§ 8524	1239, 1651
		§ 8533	1225, 1651
		§ 8540	1225, 1651
		§ 8557	1225, 1651
		§ 8558	1225, 1651
		§ 8571	1225, 1651
		§ 8598	1681
		§ 8629	1680
		§ 8822	1225, 1651
		§ 9032	1680
		§ 9162	1680
		§ 9496	1683
		§ 10044	1680
		§ 10068	1680
		§ 10215	1828
		§ 10516	1304
		§ 10517	1310
		§ 10518	1411
		§ 10519	1681
		§ 10545	1411
		§ 10546	2106
		§ 10547	2106
		§ 10558	2523
		§ 10569	2475
		§ 10601	2050
		§ 10677	1326
		§ 10713	1710
		§ 11045	1710
		§ 11054	1163
		§ 11223	1466
		§§ 11348-11350	1856a, 2218
		§ 11359	2047, 2281
		§ 11364	21
		§ 11395	1062
		§ 11447	1866, 2488
		§ 11448	1163
		§ 11477	1873
		§ 11493	488
		§ 11494	488, 2292, 2380, 2389, 2395
		§ 11495	488, 1519
		§ 11496	1330, 1413, 1668, 1669
		§ 11497	916, 1856a, 2218
		§ 11498	1684
		§ 11499	1271, 1703, 2558
		§ 11500	1680

## Ohio

### Constitution 1851

Art. I, § 7	1828
§ 10	1382, 1397, 1411, 2191, 2252, 2272

### General Code Annotated 1921

§ 1	1828
§ 4	1680
§ 60	2281
§ 64	1382
§ 99	1639, 1680
§ 125	1681
§ 128	1675
§ 145	1639, 1680
§ 231	1644
§ 499-17	1672
§ 534	1669
§ 552	4c
§ 553	1680, 2281
§ 580	1672
§ 614-39	2281
§ 624	1674, 1680
§ 677-6	1674, 1680
§ 710-16	1680
§ 871-9	7a
§ 969	1862
§ 970	1862
§ 999	283
§ 1151	1660
§ 1243-3	2377
§ 1465-16	2377
§ 1465-44	4c
§ 1465-71	1669
§ 1465-91	4c
§ 1465-95	2220
§ 1465-99a	2377
§ 1553	1669
§ 1652-1	2220
§ 1954	2090
§ 1956	2054
§ 2407	1639
§ 2479	1275
§ 2619	665
§ 2768	1710
§ 2770	1680
§ 2774	1275
§ 2775	1275
§ 2795	1383
§ 2797	1665
§ 2801	1665, 1680
§ 2808	1383
§ 2811	1412, 1665
§ 2813	1383

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§§ 11501-11516	2199	§ 13670	488
§ 11506	2201, 2207, 2373	§ 13671	2061
§ 11508	2201	§ 13673	2039
§ 11513	2195	§ 13674	1639
§ 11517	2199	§ 13675	1866, 1873
§ 11519	2195		
§ 11520	1828	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 11523	1710	1921, Apr. 20, p. 177	2377
§ 11525	1411		
§ 11532	803	<i>Oklahoma</i>	
§ 11534	1382	<i>Constitution 1907</i>	
§ 11535	1382		
§ 11536	1382	Art. II, § 16	2034
§ 11537	803	§ 20	1397, 1851, 2191
§ 11540-1	1387, 1388	§ 21	2252
§ 11540	1387		
§ 11541	1681	<i>Compiled Statutes 1921</i>	
§ 11546	18	§ 541	1860, 1866, 1873
§ 11550	2596	§ 543	1163
§§ 11551-11554	2219	§ 515	2067, 2085
§ 11551	1859	§ 585	488, 966
§ 11552	1859	§ 586	488
§ 11553	1859	§ 587	488, 2218, 2219
§ 11554	1859	§ 588	488
§ 11555	1856a	§ 589	488, 2292, 2380, 2395
§ 11774	2281	§§ 590-604	2199
§ 11988	488, 2067	§ 594	2207
§ 11989	2085	§ 595	2201
§ 12084	1413	§ 598	2195
§ 12112	1326	§ 601	2199
§ 12125	1413	§ 604	2201
§§ 12216-12219	1383	§ 605	1828, 2195
§ 12221	1387, 1412	§ 610	1710
§§ 12359-12365	1660	§ 612	1411
§§ 12362-12365	1705	§ 616	803
§ 12362	2109	§ 618	1382
§ 12412	1432	§ 619	1382
§ 12412-1	2281	§ 620	803
§ 12694	1678	§ 623	1387
§ 12824-1	2281	§ 626	1411
§ 12952	2281	§ 633	2596
§ 12953	2281	§ 634	1859, 2219
§ 13031-7	488	§ 635	1859, 2219
§ 13031-11	1620	§ 636	1271, 1684, 1703
§ 13031-14	1620	§ 637	1681
§ 13031-15	367	§ 638	1225, 1651, 1680
§ 13223	2281	§ 640	1680
§ 13223-2	2281	§ 643	1681
§ 13315	2281	§ 644	1681
§ 13340	2281	§ 645	1680
§ 13410	2286	§ 646	1644
§ 13512	1837	§ 647	1683
§ 13570	2360	§ 648	1710
§ 13658	1163	§ 649	1239
§ 13659	488, 966, 987	§ 650	1239
§ 13660	2281	§ 651	1680
§ 13661	488	§ 652	2167
§ 13662	1908	§ 653	1519
§ 13664	2199	§ 654	1225, 1639, 1651, 2373
§ 13665	2199	§ 657	1383
§ 13668	1382, 1411	§ 658	1383
§ 13668-1	1411	§ 659	1387, 1412, 1681
§ 13668-2	1411	§ 735	2281
§ 13668-3	1411	§ 739	1326



## OKLAHOMA — OREGON

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 849	1062	§ 7331	2281
§§ 971-978	2199	§ 7498	1644
§ 978	2195	§ 8024	2063
§ 1066	1681	§ 8145	1680
§ 1104	1304	§ 8146	1710
§ 1106	1326	§ 8346	1681
§ 1108	1304	§ 9539	1660
§ 1108	1310, 1320	§ 9554	1705
§ 1109	1413	§ 11052	2281
§ 1122	1326	§ 11226	2050
§ 1123	2052, 2106	§ 11242	2051
§ 1191	1681		
§ 1208	1681	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 1610	2056, 2281	1913, c. 26, § 6	1356
§ 1642	488	1915, c. 246, Mar. 22, Art. 2, § 9	2220
§ 1696	2281	Art. 4, § 7	4c
§ 1783	2281	Art. 5, § 4	2281
§ 1807,	2044	c. 269, Mar. 30	2497
§ 2028	2281	1917, c. 174, Mar. 26, §§ 11, 12	2090
§ 2311	2281	1919, c. 17, Mar. 19, § 2	2220
§ 2349	1397	§ 9	2220, 2377
§ 2351	2252	c. 24, Mar. 12	1651
§ 2365	1326	c. 238, Apr. 4, § 2	2281
§ 2491,	1382	1921, c. 125, Mar. 27	1684
§ 2492	1326	c. 125, § 2	1684
§ 2511	1851		
§ 2544	2360	<b>Oregon</b>	
§ 2545	2360	<i>Constitution 1859</i>	
§ 2550	1851	Art. I, § 6	1828
§ 2687	1866, 1873	§ 7	1828
§ 2696	488	§ 11	1397, 2191
§ 2697	488	§ 12	2252
§ 2698	488, 2272	§ 24	2039
§ 2699	488		
§ 2700	370	<i>Laws 1920</i>	
§ 2701	2056	§ 24	1466
§ 2702	2044	§ 89	2572
§ 2703	2061	§ 90	2572
§ 2714	1163, 1803	§ 132	1866, 1873
§ 2715	1800	§ 133	1163
§ 2720	2085	§ 135	2549
§ 2721	1339, 1625	§ 136	2549, 2567
§ 2771	196	§ 140	1800, 1910
§ 2772	1382, 1411	§ 254	1680
§ 2837	2207	§ 532	1062
§ 2843	1411	§ 533	1859, 2219
§ 2845	1382	§§ 593-596	1660
§ 2851	1389, 1411, 1681	§ 597	1239
§ 2852	1411	§ 598	1239
§ 2853	1411	§ 599-1	1664
§ 2856	1382	§ 702	2034, 2053
§ 2865	1389, 1411	§ 703	657
§ 2869	1873	§ 705	1080
§ 2951	1215, 1681	§ 706	1080, 1082
§ 3071	1669	§ 707	1750, 1772
§ 4028	150, 1680	§ 708	1080
§ 5267	1225, 1651, 1660, 1676, 1683	§ 709	1480
§ 5310	1680	§ 710	1455
§ 5765	1639, 1680	§ 711	2113
§ 5784	1680	§ 712	1269
§ 5876	1326	par. 1	1199
§ 5909	1665	par. 2	1195
§ 5910	1665	par. 3	1218
§ 6216	2281	par. 4	1218, 1225

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 712, par. 5	1230	§ 799, par. 10	2518
§ 713	2425	par. 11	2515
§ 715	2478	par. 12	2515
§§ 715-719	2458	par. 13	2518
§ 716	2478	par. 14	2535
§ 720	2025	par. 15	2534
§ 721	2458	par. 23	2520
§ 723	2478	par. 24	95
§ 725	39	par. 25	2529
§ 726	2486	par. 26	2531
§ 727	1080	par. 30	2505
par. 4	1413, 1455, 1480	par. 32	2527
par. 5	1078	par. 33	2530
par. 6	1079	par. 35	2137
par. 8	1387, 1413	par. 41	2532
par. 9	2016	§ 801	2039, 2042, 2053
par. 10	689, 1938	§ 802	1267
par. 11	1480, 1597	§ 803	2051
par. 12	2458	§ 811	2525
par. 13	1480, 1597	§ 812	2199
§ 728	2571	§ 815	2201
§ 729	2162, 2572	§ 818	2201, 2207
§ 731	488, 966, 987, 1828	§ 819	2199
§ 732	488, 1576	§ 821	2195
§ 733	488, 2380	§ 824	2199
par. 2	2292	§ 831	1710
par. 3	2394	§ 833	1710
par. 5	2378	§ 834	1680
§ 734	488, 2292, 2380, 2394	§ 837	1411, 1856a
§ 739	1680	§ 840	1382
§ 747	1684	§ 844	1382
§ 748	1680	§ 846	1382
§ 749	1271, 1703	§ 847	803
§ 750	1352, 1662	§ 850	1389
§ 752	1681	§ 851	1382, 1411, 1856a
§ 753	1680	§ 852	1387
§ 754	1681	§ 853	1867
§ 755	1681, 2158	§ 854	1837
§ 766	1680, 1684	§ 855	811
§ 767	1651, 1680	§ 856	781, 1908
§ 767-1	1680	§ 857	1866
§ 768	1639	§ 858	770, 775
§ 769	1681	§ 859	736
§ 770	1681	§ 860	773, 914, 1890
§ 771	1677, 1680, 1681	§ 861	900, 905, 907
§ 776	2455	§ 862	912, 1877, 1896, 1898
§ 781	1597, 1693	§ 863	923, 987, 1270, 1985
§ 782	1206, 1207, 1208	§ 864	1028, 1263
§ 783	2125	§ 865	64, 1104
§ 784	1290, 1304, 1310, 1320	§ 866	1861, 1883
§ 785	1302	§ 867	1909, 1910
§ 786	1300	§ 868	285, 2034
§ 787	701	par. 3	1008
§ 788	2016	par. 4	2056
§ 789	2017	§ 869	2201, 2210
§ 790	1455, 1519, 1639	§ 870	781, 987, 2210, 2223, 2252, 2270
§ 791	1519	§ 871	2210
§ 792	1163	§§ 872-874	2195
§ 796	41	§ 878	2458
§ 798, par. 6	2527	§ 879	1062
§ 799	1626, 1684	§ 880	2067
par. 5	285	§ 883	1383
par. 6	285	§ 885	1681
par. 9	2518	§ 886	1387, 1389, 1412, 1681



## OREGON — PENNSYLVANIA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 888	1383	§ 8670	1674
§§ 890-893	1828	§ 8776½	150a
§ 932	1413, 1669	§§ 9162-9168	150
§ 1083, par. 1	2594	§ 9858	1225, 1651
§ 1146	1681	§ 9870	1676
§ 1241	2065	§ 9876½	1651
§ 1309-5	2531	§ 9877	1225
§ 1309-7	2531	§ 9892	1651
§ 1309-8	488	§ 9894	1651
§ 1426	2360	§ 9896	1239
§ 1429	1851	§§ 9900-9907	1651
§§ 1514-1516	1382	§ 9909 ..	1651
§ 1526	2511	§ 9914	1651
§ 1527	2501	§ 9915	1651
§ 1530	488	§ 9918	1651
§ 1531	488	§ 9920	1651
§ 1533	4, 488	§ 9923	1651
§ 1534	488, 2272, 2276	§ 9926	1651, 1676
§ 1535	488	§ 9929	1651
§ 1537	831, 2071	§ 10109	1681
§ 1540	2056	§§ 10111-10118	1510
§ 1542	2061		
§ 1543	2567	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 1626	21	1893	488, 1576
§§ 1683-1695	2199	1911, Feb. 26, c. 354	2281
§ 1693	2207	1918, c. 11, Extra Sess.	1732
§ 1736	1326	1921, Feb. 16, c. 97	1310
§ 1785	1326	Feb. 21, c. 151	150
§ 1786	852	Feb. 23, c. 230	1676
§ 1788	1837	Feb. 26, c. 230	1651
§ 1789	1326		
§ 1810	1326		
§ 1840	1326	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	
§ 1968	150	<i>Constitution 1874</i>	
§ 2007	1339	Art. I, § 9	1397, 2191, 2252
§ 2008	1710	III, § 32	2281, 2283
§ 2090	1620	VIII, § 10	2281, 2283
§ 2091	488		
§ 2109	2281	<i>Session Laws</i>	
§ 2160	1620, 2066	1715, May 28, § 5	1225, 1651
§ 2171	488, 2085	1718, May 31	2191
§§ 2224-2260	2281	§ 3	1828
§§ 2224-2264	1620	§ 4	1828
§ 2384	2281	1772, Mar. 21	1828
§ 2752	1639, 1680	1786, Mar. 28, § 2	1660
§ 2838	2090	1798, Feb. 7	2219
§ 3180	1675	Feb. 27	1859
§ 3423	1665, 2054	Mar. 21, § 2	1275
§ 3431	1665	1804, Mar. 15	1665
§ 4163	2281	1814, Mar. 28	1387
§ 4391	1640	1815, Jan. 2, § 1	1675
§ 5561	1239	1823, Mar. 31, § 1	1680, 2373
§ 5589	1239	1828, Jan. 25, § 1	1225, 1239
§ 5854	1669	Apr. 15	1225
§ 5862	2259a, 2281	§ 1	1651, 1680
§ 6018	2596	1831, Feb. 26	2195, 2199
§ 6088	2259a, 2281	1833, Feb. 16, § 1	1239, 1275
§ 6633	2220	§ 2	1275
§ 6653	2377	Apr. 8	2195
§ 6857	1680	1834, Feb. 21, § 1	1225, 1651
§ 7407	1674	Apr. 14	1163
§ 7640	1651	§ 160	1800
§ 7651	150	1836, June 16, § 22	2207
§ 8507	1644		

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
1837, Mar. 31	1674	1887, May 23, § 9	1413, 1669
§ 20	1213, 1644, 1680, 1683	§ 10	488
1838, Mar. 17, § 5	1644	1889, Mar. 7, § 1	1680
1840, Apr. 3, § 1	1676, 2162	1891, June 11, § 1	488
Apr. 11, § 4	1651, 1680	1895, Apr. 3	1828
§ 5	1651, 1680	May 22	1651
1841, Mar. 26, § 2	2141	June 18	2380
1842, July 12, § 22	2281	25	1382
1843, Apr. 19, § 2	1680	26	1432, 2056
1844, Apr. 29, § 3	1275, 1651	1897, May 25	1683
1846, Mar. 14, § 1	1225, 1651	§ 1	1223, 1519
Apr. 22	1212	July 9, § 2	2281
1847, Mar. 9, § 1	1651, 1680	1899, Apr. 11, § 1	488
1849, Apr. 5, § 2	1225, 1651	§ 2	488
§ 5	1225	1901, May 21	2162
Apr. 9, § 14	1651	June 4, § 15	987, 2281
1851, Apr. 15, § 10	2141, 2143	1903, Mar. 13	488
1853, Apr. 5, § 4	1225, 1651	1905, Apr. 18	1090, 2498
§ 5	1225, 1651	Apr. 22, § 6	1225, 1651
1854, Dec. 14	1225, 1651	1907, May 1, § 5	1669
1856, Apr. 19, § 2	1681	May 8	488
1857, Apr. 21	1680	May 29, § 1	1680
1859, Jan. 25, § 2	1680	§ 3	488
1860, Mar. 29	1681	June 7	2380
Mar. 31, § 1	2039	1909, Apr. 23	935, 1828
§ 35	1851	Apr. 27	488, 2292
§ 37	1141	§ 2	1382
§ 41	2061	§ 4	1411
§ 49	2056, 2281	1911, Mar. 15, § 1	194a, 987
§ 55	1339	30, § 1	488, 2218
§ 58	2281	May 11	488, 1676a, 1681
1866, Mar. 21, § 1	1680, 1684	June 1	1681
1867, Apr. 11, § 1	1680	§ 4	1674
13, § 10	488	June 8	1382
1868, Feb. 21, § 1	1680	1913, Mar. 27	488, 2239
1869, Feb. 18	1674	May 9	2281
§ 3	571	May 28	2047
Mar. 12	2162	June 6, § 1	2016
Apr. 17, § 4	1326	§ 2	2016
1870, Jan. 26, § 1	1225, 1651	§ 3	2016
Apr. 14, § 1	1680	§ 4	2016
1872, Apr. 2	1651	June 12, § 13	2090
1874, May 9, § 1	1680	July 26, Art. VI, § 1	4c, 2259a, 2281
§ 4	1680	§ 46	1680
May 19, § 19	2281	1915, Apr. 21	1640, 1943
§ 34	2214, 2281	June 2, § 314	2220
1876, Apr. 27, § 1	1675, 1680	June 7, § 13	2281
May 13, § 2	1680	§ 21	1644
1883, May 17	2281	1917, June 7	1680, 2048, 2050
June 22	1710	§ 6	2048, 2531
§ 1	1223, 1519	§ 11	1681
§ 2	1519	§ 15	1681
§ 3	1519	§ 20	2051
1885, June 3, § 1	1225, 1651	1919, Apr. 4, § 1	1651
§ 6	1644	May 8	811
1887, Apr. 28, § 8	1225, 1651	May 21, § 11	1680
May 23	916, 1856a, 2272	§ 12	2377
§ 1	488	June 26, § 6	4c, 1707
§ 2	488, 2292	June 30, § 30	150a
§ 3	1263, 1330, 1387, 1669	July 1, § 4	2281
§ 4	488	21, § 15	4c
§ 5	488	1921, May 5, No. 174	1684
§ 6	488	May 25, No. 422, § 14	1680
§ 9	1263, 1330, 1387,		



# PENNSYLVANIA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Digest 1920	Section		Section
§ 54		1681	§ 10291	1856a
§ 57		1651	§ 10292	1382
§ 158		1163	§ 10295	1382
§ 159		1163	§ 10296	1859, 2219
§ 737		987, 2281	§ 10297	1212
§ 829		1680	§ 10300	2281
§ 995		150a	§§ 10302-10305	2199
§ 1181		1680	§ 10304	2195
§ 1253		1680	§ 10308	2195
§ 1254		2377	§ 10310	1225, 1651
§ 1473		2281	§ 10311	1651, 1680
§ 2186		1943	§ 10312	1225, 1651, 1680
§ 7608		1275	§ 10315	1275, 1651
§ 7613		1681	§ 10319	1681
§ 7619		1680	§§ 10321-10323	1680
§ 7721		2056, 2281	§ 10329	1676
§ 7865		1141	§ 10332	1680
§ 7900		2281	§ 10333	1680, 2373
§ 8042		2061	§ 10334	1225, 1239
§ 8051		2039	§ 10335	1680
§ 8097		1851	§ 10336	1239, 1275
§ 8163		2191	§ 10338	1275
§ 8172	1263, 1330, 1387, 1413,	1669	§ 10339	1680
§ 8173		1339	§ 10340	1680
§ 8174		987, 2276	§ 10341	1680, 1684
§ 8175		1382	§ 10342	1680
§ 8178		1411	§§ 10343-10345	1710
§ 8308		2048	§ 10343	1223, 1519
§ 8310		2050	§ 10344	1519
§ 8312		2048	§ 10345	1519
§ 8332		2051	§ 10346	1680
§ 8409		2531	§ 10347	1681
§ 8685		1676, 2162	§ 10348	1681
§ 8731		2162	§ 10349	1644
§§ 8738-8770		1651	§ 10350	1675
§ 8753		2141, 2143	§ 10351	1213, 1644, 1680, 1683
§ 8754		2141, 2143	§ 10352	1674
§ 8792		1225, 1651	§ 10353	1644
§ 8794		1225, 1651	§ 10354	1644
§ 8795		1225, 1651	§ 10355	1675, 1680
§ 8796		1225, 1651	§ 10356	2016
§ 8797		1225, 1651	§ 10357	2016
§§ 8797-8801		1225, 1651	§ 10358	2016
§ 8802		1651, 1680	§ 10359	2016
§ 8817		1651	§ 10361	1432, 2056
§ 8819		2141	§ 10653	2090
§ 8824		1225, 1651	§ 10948	1326
§§ 8826-8835		1660	§ 11236	1651
§ 8840		1225, 1651	§ 12499	811
§ 8841		1676a	§ 12502	1674
§ 8846		1651	§ 12503	571
§§ 8908-8909		1225	§ 12947	1163
§ 8908		1651	§ 12948	1163
§ 8909		1651	§ 12950	1800
§ 8923		1225, 1651	§ 12995	1680
§ 9005		1644	§ 13000	2162
§ 9063		488	§ 14560	1644
§ 9068		488	§ 14603	488
§ 9149		2090	§ 16251	1828
§ 9150		2498	§ 16253	1828
§ 10068		2215, 2281	§ 16254	1828, 2281
§ 10091		2281	§ 17233	2047
§ 10267		1387	§ 17825	1665
			§ 18162	4c, 2281

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

699

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 1403, par. 5	1078	§ 1520	1883
par. 6	1387, 1413	§ 1521	770
par. 7	2016	§ 1522	736, 745, 748, 753, 759, 761
par. 8	689	§ 1523	1890
par. 9	1480, 1597, 1605	§ 1524	900, 905, 907
par. 10	2458	§ 1525	1877, 1896, 1898
par. 11	1480, 1597	§ 1526	923, 987, 1270, 1985
§ 1404	2571	§ 1527	1028, 1263
§ 1406	488, 1828	§ 1528	64, 1104
§ 1407	488	§ 1529	1263, 1861
§ 1408	488, 2292, 2375, 2380, 2385, 2395	§ 1530	1008, 1013, 2034, 2056
§ 1409	488, 2292, 2375, 2380, 2395	§ 1531	2210
§ 1410	1909, 1910	§ 1532	987, 2210, 2223, 2252
§ 1411	811	§ 1533	781, 2210
§ 1416	1225, 1651, 1680	§§ 1534-1537	2195
§ 1421	1684	§§ 1540-1547	2050
§ 1422	1680	§§ 1548-1557	1297, 1304, 1320, 2051
§ 1424	1681	§ 1987	1225
§ 1425	1681	§ 2001	1225
§ 1437	1680, 1684	§ 2006	1225
§ 1438	1651, 1680		<i>Civil Code</i>
§ 1439	1639, 1677	§ 3177	2531
§ 1440	1681	§ 3190	2531
§ 1441	1681	§§ 3223-3225	1336
§ 1442	1680, 1681	§ 3223	2085
§ 1451	1597, 1693	§ 3224	2085
§ 1452	1234	§ 3225	2085
§ 1453	1206, 1207, 1208	§ 3251	2527
§ 1454	2125	§§ 3263-3267	1606, 2527
§ 1455	1290	§ 3389	1336
§ 1456	1297, 1298, 1302	§ 3390	1336
§ 1457	1300, 1301	§ 3769	1510
§ 1458	701, 702	§§ 3774-3780	2051
§ 1459	2016	§§ 3793-3802	2051
§ 1460	2017, 2137	§ 4288	1225
§ 1461	1455, 1519, 1639	§ 4289	1225
§ 1462	1225, 1651, 1676, 1680	§ 4290	1225
§ 1463	1163	§§ 4290-4298	1651, 1680
§ 1468	2491	§§ 4290-4304	1239
§ 1469	2491	§ 4291	1225
§ 1470	95, 278, 285, 287, 1587, 1684, 1703, 2137, 2499, 2505, 2510, 2515, 2518, 2520, 2527, 2529, 2530, 2532, 2534, 2535	§ 4292	1225
		§ 4293	1225
		§ 4294	1225
		§ 4295	1225, 1269, 2143
		§ 4296	1225
		§ 4297	1225
		§ 4298	1225
		§ 4299	1225
		§§ 4299-4304	1680
		§ 4300	1225
		§ 4301	1225
		§ 4302	1225, 2099
		§ 4303	1225, 1466
		§ 4304	1225
		§ 4305	1053
		§ 4307	2099
		§ 4314	1163
		§ 4315	1163
		§§ 4318-4320	488
		§§ 4335-4343	2404
		§§ 4351-4353	2425
		§§ 4354-4361	2458
		§§ 4373-4387	2404
		§ 4394	2425
§ 1477	2525		
§§ 1478-1490	2199		
§ 1480	2201		
§ 1482	2207		
§ 1483	2199		
§ 1485	2195		
§ 1488	2199		
§ 1495	803		
§ 1496	1710		
§ 1497	1710		
§ 1504	912, 1389, 1411		
§ 1506	1380		
§ 1511	1380		
§ 1512	1399, 1411		
§§ 1513-1516	2195		
§§ 1517-1529	1866		
§ 1517	1867		
§ 1518	1837		
§ 1519	781, 1908		



# PORTO RICO — RHODE ISLAND — SOUTH CAROLINA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<i>Code of Civil Procedure</i>		Section	
§ 5032	1466	c. 292, § 9	2201
§§ 5103-5105	2596	§ 10	2195
§ 5358	1859b	§ 16	2195
		§ 17	2195
		§ 18	563
		§ 19	563
		§ 20	1862, 2220
		§ 22	1411
		§ 23	1382
		§ 26	1382
		§ 27	1669
		§ 29	1389, 1411
		§ 30	1411
		§ 32	1382
		§ 33	1383
		§ 34	1412
		§ 35	1383
		§ 37	488
		§ 38	1411
		§ 39	488
		§ 40	1411
		§ 42	1669
		§ 43	488, 987
		§ 44	488, 2272
		§ 45	488
		§ 46	1290
		§ 47	2008, 2016
		§ 48	1223, 1683
		§ 49	1684, 1703
		§ 50	1859, 2219
		c. 300, § 44	1680
		c. 307, § 10	2281
		c. 310, § 15	797, 1185
		c. 312, § 22	1681
		c. 320, § 9	1215, 1681
		c. 341, § 3	2039
		c. 346, § 6	1339
		c. 347, § 5	2061
		c. 349, § 12	2281
		§ 26	2281
		c. 354, § 65	2191
		c. 356, § 17	1326
		c. 831, § 21	2220
<i>Code of Criminal Procedure</i>		Section	
§ 6022	1397, 1411, 2191		
§ 6265	1866, 1873		
§ 6271	488		
§ 6272	488		
§ 6275	900, 905, 907, 1380		
§ 6276	923, 987, 1270, 1985		
§ 6277	1028, 1263		
§ 6278	370		
§ 6279	2512		
§ 6280	2085		
§ 6281	1625		
§ 6282	2061		
§ 6284	2044		
§ 6285	2056		
§ 6290	1163		
§ 6291	1800		
§§ 6453-6459	2199		
§ 6457	2195		
§ 6462	1382		
§ 6469	1389, 1411		
§ 6484	1389, 1411		
<i>Session Laws</i>		Section	
1915, Mar. 11, No. 37, § 16	4d, 1835		
§ 24	196		
1916, Apr. 13, No. 19, § 9	2220		
§ 11	2377		
1921, May 6, No. 1, § 1	2377		
July 16, No. 66, § 176	2281		
<i>Rhode Island</i>		Section	
<i>Constitution 1842</i>		Section	
Art. I, § 3	1828		
§ 10	1397, 2191		
§ 13	2252		
<i>General Laws, Revision of 1909</i>		Section	
c. 32, § 10	1819		
c. 96, § 1	2090		
§§ 1, 17	2220		
c. 108, § 3	78, 1620		
c. 121, § 16	1644, 1680		
c. 173, § 10	1710		
c. 174, § 5	1710		
c. 178, § 4	1678		
c. 189, § 3	1680		
c. 213, § 15	1680		
c. 225, § 2	1680		
c. 247, § 18	2067		
c. 253, § 15	1710		
c. 254, § 22	2475		
§§ 32-35	2510		
c. 281, § 39	1681		
c. 292, § 1	1163		
§§ 7-13	2199		
§ 8	2201		
<i>South Carolina</i>		Section	
<i>Constitution 1805</i>		Section	
Art. I, § 17			2252
§ 18			1397, 2191
§ 22			2039
<i>Code of Civil Procedure 1922</i>		Section	
§ 15			1411
§ 271			2195
§ 274			1828
§ 328			1466
§ 343			1681
§ 372			1710
§ 395			2281

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

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# SOUTH DAKOTA

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 609	2050	§ 2779	1387, 1389, 1412, 1681
§ 624	2051	§ 2892	1650, 1710
§ 640	1510	§ 2947	1163
§ 644	2471	§ 2979	488
§ 650	2458	§ 2983	133
§ 666	2474	§ 3048	1660
§ 848	2520	§ 3095	1225
§ 860	2425	§ 3211	797, 1304, 1310
§ 861	2410	§ 3214	2106
§ 869	2458	§ 3226	1304
§ 874	2458	§ 3227	1310, 1320
§ 875	2461	§ 3228	1326, 1413
§ 883	2477	§ 3262	1710
§ 908	2455	§ 3623	2281
§ 1339	1639, 1680, 1710	§ 3654	2281
§ 1347	1710	§ 3759	488
§ 1577	2054	§ 3792	2281
§ 2196	1859	§ 3893	1620
§ 2197	2596	§ 3958	2281
§ 2275	1466	§ 4076	2281
§ 2367	2572	§ 4109	488
§ 2505	1866, 1873	§ 4361	2281
§ 2507	1163	§ 4410	1397, 2191
§§ 2596-2599	1062	§ 4412	2252
§ 2679	1651	§ 4476	1326
§ 2699	2281	§ 4504	1326
§ 2711	2596	§ 4575	1326
§ 2712	1859, 2219	§ 4619	1326
§§ 2713-2716	1856a, 2218	§ 4681	4
§ 2714	966	§ 4682	4
§ 2715	916, 2207	§§ 4689-4690	2360
§ 2717	488, 2218	§ 4702	1851
§ 2718	1271, 1672, 1684, 1702	§ 4712	1851
§ 2719	1681	§ 4868	1873
§ 2720	1681	§ 4872	2549
§ 2721	1710	§ 4874	2497
§§ 2722-2723	1681	§ 4877	488
§ 2724	1225, 1290, 1651, 1676a	§ 4878	488
§ 2725	1225, 1651, 1676a	§ 4879	488, 2271
§§ 2726-2727	1639	§ 4880	4
§ 2728	1680, 1681	§ 4882	2056
§ 2729	2531	§ 4883	2044
§ 2730	2292, 2378, 2380, 2395	§ 4884	2061
§ 2731	2292, 2380, 2395	§ 4895	1163
§ 2732	1909, 1910	§ 4896	1800
§ 2733	1828, 2194	§ 4900	2512
§§ 2734-2744	2199	§ 4901	2085
§ 2737	2207	§ 4902	1339, 1625
§ 2738	2201, 2207	§ 4960	1411
§ 2742	2195	§§ 4992-5005	2199
§ 2745	2199	§ 5003	2207
§ 2746	2199	§ 5005	2195
§ 2747	2195	§ 5010	1382
§ 2748	2201	§ 5015	1389, 1411
§ 2749	1828	§ 5016	2199
§ 2754	1710	§ 5022	1382
§ 2757	1411	§ 5029	1389
§ 2760	803	§ 5080	2195
§§ 2762-2763	1382	§ 5082	2195
§ 2764	803	§ 5124	1680
§ 2766	1387	§ 5125	1684
§ 2767	1681	§ 5158	1684
§ 2769	1411	§ 5241	1680
§ 2777	1383	§ 5242	1680

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]



## TENNESSEE — TEXAS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

		Section			Section
§ 1321		1678, 1680	§ 5861		4d
§ 1918		2595	§ 6655		4c
§ 1951		1866, 1873	§ 6668		2281
§ 1952		1866, 1878	§§ 6767-6777		1275
§ 3234		1382	§§ 6778-6785		1660
§ 3267	1304, 1310, 1320, 1411, 1710,	2051	§ 6855		1676a
§ 3268		2052	§ 6856	1225, 1651, 1676a	
§ 3270		2050	§ 7160		150
§ 3272		1278, 2052	§§ 7743-7746		1848
§ 3273		1326	§ 7747		1665
§ 3274		1326	§ 7749		1225
§ 3275		1413, 1681	§ 7810		2281
§ 3327		1678	§ 7814		2219
§§ 3640-3646		2199	§ 7817		2281
§ 3640		2207	§ 7861		2050
§ 3643		2201	§ 7870		1510
§ 3646		2195	§ 7871		1510
§ 3647		2218			
§ 3648		811			
§ 3649		1411			
§§ 3650-3652		1382			
§ 3653		1383, 1387	§ 11		2511
§ 3661		811	§ 34		1832
§ 3663	1856a,	2218	§ 40		2501
§ 3664		1382	§ 52		2512
§ 3671		803	§ 91		488
§ 3672		18	§ 485		2085
§ 3675		1389	§ 489		2085
§ 3677		18, 1411	§ 491	1644, 2085	
§§ 3679-3684		1856a	§ 506c	488, 2281	
§ 3679		2218	§ 547		2281
§ 3680		916, 2218	§ 574	2056, 2281	
§ 3684		916, 2218	§ 582	2056, 2281	
§ 3688		488, 516	§ 588½ ss		2281
§ 3689		488	§ 593c		2281
§ 3690		488	§ 607		1625
§ 3691		488, 1828	§ 640a		2239
§ 3692		1684	§ 640c	488, 2085, 2239	
§ 3693		1680	§ 663		2281
§ 3694		1680, 1681	§ 713	63, 246	
§ 3695		1665, 1680	§ 758e		2281
§ 3696		1678, 1680	§ 796		1828
§ 3697		1675, 1680	§ 940		1249
§ 3698		1639, 1680	§ 1084		2081
§ 3699		1225, 1651	§ 1143	63, 246, 247	
§ 3700	1225, 1651, 1676a,	2143	§ 1178		73
§ 3701		1651	§ 1184		2281
§ 3702		1651	§ 1199		2281
§ 3703		1275	§ 1292		1246
§ 3704		1275	§ 1449		488
§ 3705		1705	§ 1450		488
§ 3706	1215,	1681	§ 1468		2281
§ 3707		1680			
§ 3708		1674			
§ 3710		2596			
§ 3711		1678			
§ 3713	1074,	1683			
§ 4633	488,	2067			
§ 4901		2281			
§ 4951		2452			
§ 5246-23,-26,-42	4c,	2220			
§ 5517		2281			
§ 5705		1466			
§ 5707		2531			



TEXAS — UTAH

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

[illegible]

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 4822	2259a, 2281	§ 7142	781, 2210
§ 5058	1644, 1680	§ 7143	2195
§ 5402	2090	§ 7147	2195
§ 5719	1674, 1680	§§ 7148-7151	1828
§ 5978	4c	§ 7154	1710
§ 6048	1640	§ 7155	1710
§ 6119	2154	§ 7156	1680
§ 6120	2154	§ 7164	1382
§ 6319	1510	§ 7168	1389, 1411
§ 6322	1510	§ 7169	1382
§ 6327	2050	§ 7172	803
§ 6328	2050	§ 7176	18
§ 6330	2051	§ 7177	1411
§§ 6347-6381	2458	§ 7178	1411
§ 6381	2475	§ 7179	1382
§ 6489	1466	§ 7180	1411
§ 6598	1848	§ 7182	912, 1387, 1389
§§ 6786-6787	2595	§ 7183	1382
§ 6802	1866, 1873	§ 7184	1382
§ 6807	1163	§ 7185	2195
§ 6893	1062	§§ 7194-7199	1383
§ 6902	2195	§ 7198	1387, 1389, 1412
§ 6963	2281	§ 7203	2596
§ 6978	2354	§ 7204	1859
§ 7076	2162, 2571	§ 7205	1387, 1389, 1413, 1669
§ 7083	1684	§ 7207	1837
§ 7084	1680	§ 7208	2549
§ 7085	1271, 1703	§ 7209	2549, 2567
§ 7086	1662	§ 7251	1862
§§ 7088-7089	1681	§ 7479	2595
§ 7090	2158	§ 7572	1304, 1310, 1320
§ 7091	1680	§ 7573	1326, 1413
§ 7092	1651, 1680	§ 7590	2052
§ 7093	1639	§ 7866	1710
§ 7094	1681	§ 7900	2281
§ 7095	1681	§ 7950	987, 2281
§ 7096	1680	§ 8060	2281
§ 7097	1680	§ 8075	2557
§ 7098	1239	§§ 8095-8101	488
§ 7099	1639	§ 8101	488
§ 7107	1597, 1693	§§ 8112-8115	488
§ 7108	1206, 1207, 1208	§ 8113	488, 2063, 2085
§ 7109	2125	§ 8166	2281
§ 7110	1290	§ 8285	2513
§ 7111	1302	§ 8535	488
§ 7112	1300	§ 8553	1397, 1411, 1413, 2191
§ 7113	1455, 1519, 1639	§ 8555	488, 2252
§ 7114	1676	§ 8568	1326
§ 7115	1267	§ 8573	1326
§ 7117	1208, 1225, 1230, 1269, 1651, 1680	§§ 8748-8749	1837
§ 7118	2525	§ 8750	1326, 1669
§ 7122	488, 923, 1828	§ 8767	1382, 1387, 1411, 1413
§ 7123	488	§ 8782	1851
§ 7124	488, 2292, 2378, 2380, 2395	§ 8815	2360
§ 7125	1909, 1910	§ 8822	1851
§§ 7127-7139	2199	§ 8848	2042
§ 7128	2195	§ 8878	1851
§ 7129	2201	§ 8879	1851
§ 7131	2207	§ 8975	1866, 1873
§ 7134	2195	§ 8978	2497
§ 7137	2199	§§ 8982-8983	488
§ 7139	1411	§ 8984	2039
§ 7140	2210	§ 8986	2512
§ 7141	987, 1270, 2210, 2223, 2252	§ 8987	1339, 1625



# UTAH—VERMONT

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 8988	2061	§ 1628	1669
§ 8989	1625, 1684	§ 1671	1681
§ 8991	2044	§ 1868	1466
§ 8992	2056	§ 1887	1164
§ 8999	1800	§ 1888	1837
§ 9000	1163	§§ 1890-1893	488
§§ 9004-9006	2549	§§ 1894-1897	488
§ 9005	2557	§ 1900	582, 2252
§ 9053	1411	§ 1901	2281
§ 9275	4, 488	§ 1903	1680
§ 9276	4	§ 1906	2195
§ 9277	1387, 1389, 1413, 1669	§ 1909	1411
§ 9278	488	§ 1918	1382
§ 9279	488, 2272, 2276	§ 1920	2195
§ 9280	488	§ 1923	1383
§§ 9284-9289	2199	§ 1932	1387, 1681
§ 9289	2207	§ 1933	18
§ 9293	2199	§ 2044	1859
§ 9301	1382	§ 2045	1672
§ 9307	1389, 1411	§ 2082	1210
§ 9314	1382	§ 2485	1660
§ 9323	1411	§ 2496	2192
§ 9330	1866	§ 2505	2360
		§ 2556	2201
		§ 2564	1382
		§ 2571	1326
		§ 2620	563, 1152, 1862, 2484
		§ 2621	1152, 1862
		§ 2742	1225, 1651
		§ 2748	1225, 1651
		§ 2751	1290
		§ 2752	1290
		§ 2851	1675
		§ 3187	1681
		§ 3196	1411
		§ 3208	2050
		§ 3210	1510
		§ 3211	1510
		§ 3220	1304
		§ 3221	1310, 1320
		§ 3225	1681
		§ 3502	1681
		§ 3541	2063, 2085, 2239, 2252, 2338
		§ 3558	2067
		§ 3574	1835
		§ 3614	2281
		§ 3615	2281
		§ 3710	2066
		§ 3798	1644, 1680
		§ 3839	1680
		§ 3875	1225, 1680
		§ 3876	1680
		§ 3882	1680
		§ 3944	1680
		§ 3958	1680
		§ 3978	1680
		§ 3979	1275
		§ 4951	2259a
		§§ 4951-4953	1859
		§ 4952	2259a
		§ 4968	1680
		§ 5010	1680
		§ 5096	1680
		§ 5321	1680
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1919, Feb. 17, c. 24	2509		
Mar. 13, c. 36	1387, 1389, 1413, 1669		
c. 63	4c		
Mar. 20, c. 52	2220		
1921, c. 67, Mar. 21	2220		
<i>Vermont</i>			
<i>Constitution 1793</i>			
c. I, Art. 3	1828, 2252		
Art. 9	2192		
Art. 10	1397, 2191		
<i>General Laws 1917</i>			
§ 36	7		
§ 39	1350		
§ 88	1640		
§§ 251-256	4c		
§§ 252, 254	1382		
§ 364	1680		
§ 368	1680		
§ 375	1680		
§ 376	1680		
§ 492	4c		
§ 542	1680		
§ 557	1680		
§ 582	4c		
§ 588	1680		
§ 790	1674		
§ 813	2377		
§ 969	1680		
§ 1000	4c		
§ 1050	1678		
§ 1051	1678		
§ 1061	1678		
§ 1074	2377		
§ 1400	1086		
§ 1510	2281		
§ 1592	617		

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 5371	1074	§ 3711	4c
§ 5761	4c	§ 3714	2195
§ 5795	2220	§ 3723	4c
§ 5909	1674	§ 3845	1680
§ 5962	1680	§ 3868	1680
§ 6032	1672	§ 4178	2195
§ 6034	1672	§ 4389	2039
§ 6290	1672	§ 4413	2061
§ 6593	238	§ 4415	1411
§ 6613	1326	§ 4425	2281
§ 6617	1326	§ 4498	488, 2281
§ 6787	2039	§ 4579	488
§ 7010	2085	§ 4621	1674
§ 7059	2281	§ 4675	2281
§ 7240	2292, 2311	§ 4777	488
§ 7473, Form 9	1828	§ 4778	488, 2272, 2276
		§ 4779	488, 987
		§ 4780	488, 2281
		§ 4781	852
		§ 4810	1326
		§ 4843	1837
		§ 4844	1326
		§ 4860	1851
		§ 4906	1835
		§ 4969	2201
		§ 5098	1644
		§ 5106	2067
		§ 5244	1510
		§ 5245	1510
		§ 5251	1681
		§ 5252	1185, 1310, 1382, 1411
		§ 5261	1411
		§ 5680	1675, 2165
		§ 6013	1163
		§ 6014	1800
		§ 6082	1859a
		§ 6093	2596
		§ 6125	2596
		§ 6126	2596
		§ 6128	2123
		§§ 6189-6193	1684
		§ 6190	2572
		§ 6193	1680
		§ 6194	2167
		§ 6195	1225, 1651
		§ 6196	1664
		§ 6197	2167
		§§ 6197-6198	1674, 1680, 1681, 2162
		§ 6203	488, 1660
		§ 6205	1681
		§ 6206	1680
		§ 6207	1644, 1651, 1676, 1680, 1681
		§ 6208	488, 2218
		§ 6209	1576, 2065
		§ 6210	488
		§ 6211	488
		§ 6212	488
		§ 6213	488, 2218
		§ 6214	488, 916, 2218
		§ 6215	900, 905, 1028
		§ 6216	1263
		§ 6217	2195
		§§ 6217-6221	2199
		§ 6218	2207

## Session Laws

1919, Mar. 27, No. 72	1225, 1644, 1651, 1680, 1681, 1684
Apr. 3, No. 126	1859
Apr. 8, No. 158	4c

## Virginia

### Constitution 1902

Art. I, § 8	1397, 2191, 2252
V, § 14	1828
§ 155	4c
§ 156	4c, 2195

### Code 1919

§ 35	1828
§ 55	4c
§ 258	2281
§ 307	1680
§ 417	1239
§ 570	4c
§ 1017	2090, 2220
§ 1032	2054
§ 1119	1674
§ 1136	1674
§ 1150	1674
§ 1178	1674
§ 1260	4c
§ 1580	1644
§ 1610	2195
§ 1611	1680
§ 1612	1678
§ 1614	4c
§ 1645	1680
§ 1650	4c, 2195
§ 1678	4c
§ 1713	4c
§ 1791	4c, 2195
§ 1902	2195
§ 1910	2220
§ 2216	2195
§ 2227	2377
§ 2618	1411, 2371, 2373
§ 2680	1665
§ 2977	1665
§ 3339	1275
§ 3580	1674



# VIRGINIA — WASHINGTON

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 6220	2201	§ 1225	916, 2218
§ 6222	2195	§ 1229	916
§ 6223	811	§ 1231	1411
§ 6224	1710	§ 1233	1382
§ 6225	488, 1856a, 2218	§ 1234	1382
§§ 6225-6226	2167	§ 1235	2207
§ 6226	1856a	§§ 1236-1238	2195
§ 6228	1387	§ 1240	1382
§§ 6223-6229	1382	§ 1241	1382
§ 6231	1411	§ 1242	803
§ 6233	1389	§ 1244	18, 1389
§ 6235	1383	§ 1245	1411
§ 6236	1856a	§ 1246	1387
§ 6237	1859, 2219	§ 1247	1387, 1413
§ 6238	1856a, 1859	§ 1248	1387
§ 6239	2531	§ 1250	1383
§ 6241	1225, 1651, 1660	§ 1253	1387, 1412, 1681
§ 6231	21	§ 1254	1681
		§ 1257	1680
		§ 1259	1684
		§ 1260	1225, 1651
		§ 1260½	1684
		§ 1261	2110
		§ 1262	1859, 2219
		§ 1263	2596
		§ 1265	1828
		§ 1266	1828
		§ 1267	1828
		§ 1268	1828
		§§ 1270-1277	1660
		§ 1298	1411
		§ 1300	1310
		§ 1301	1310
		§ 1302	1326
		§ 1304	1681
		§ 1305	1681
		§ 1310	1413
		§ 1314	1326, 2052
		§ 1317	1681
		§ 1323	2475
		§ 1330	2050
		§ 1332	1510
		§ 1386	1681
		§§ 1898-1901	2199
		§ 1898	2207
		§ 1900	2201
		§ 1903	916, 1856a, 2218
		§ 1904	916
		§ 1906	1856a
		§ 1909	1411
		§ 1938	1326
		§ 1953	1326
		§ 1962	1326, 1382, 1411
		§ 2049	2360
		§ 2043	1851
		§ 2059	2051
		§ 2131	1411
		§ 2132	2191
		§ 2135	2595
		§ 2147	4, 488, 516, 2380, 2395
		§ 2148	488, 2201, 2207, 2272, 2276
		§ 2149	2281
		§ 2150	2281
		§ 2151	831, 2071

## Session Laws

1902, § 155	4c
1912, Mar. 13	7, 2143
1914, Mar. 14	7, 2143
1918, Mar. 19, c. 388, § 30½	1674
§ 73	2281
1920, Feb. 17, c. 63	1828
Mar. 15, c. 176	4c
1922, Mar. 24, c. 391	2143

## Washington

### Constitution 1889

Art. I, § 6	1828
§ 9	2252
§ 11	1828
§ 22	488, 1397, 1851, 2191, 2201
§ 27	2039

### Remington and Ballinger's Code 1909

§ 130	2594
§ 176	1466
§ 282	2281
§ 289	2572
§ 291	2572
§ 237	1710
§ 339	1866, 1873
§ 342	2549
§ 344	1163
§ 348	1800, 1910
§ 632½	2281
§ 946-3	1620
§ 985	2067
§ 1210	488
§ 1211	488, 966
§ 1212	488, 987
§ 1213	488
§ 1214	488, 2292, 2378, 2380, 2395
§§ 1215-1224	2199
§ 1215	2201, 2207
§ 1216	2373
§ 1219	2199
§ 1220	2195
§ 1223	1411, 2199
§§ 1225-1230	1856a

## LIST OF STATUTES CITED

IVol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

[illegible]



[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

713

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 2394-16	1055	§ 4134	1387, 1412, 1681
§ 2394-38	2377	§ 4135	1684
§ 2394-51	4c	§ 4136	1680, 1684
§ 2464b	1681	§ 4137	1684
§ 2549	1851	§ 4138	1271, 1703
§ 2642	1710	§ 4139	1271
§ 2676	2572, 2573	§ 4140	1681
§ 2852	1163	§ 4141	1669
§ 3033	2281	§ 4141a	1387, 1388, 1413
§ 3537	1710, 1828	§ 4142	1681
§ 3788	1304, 1310, 1320	§ 4143	1681
§ 3825	1862	§ 4144	1681
§ 3932	1519	§ 4145	1681
§ 4056	2207	§ 4146	1681
§ 4057	2201	§ 4147	1681
§ 4058	2201	§ 4148	1674, 1680
§ 4066-1, 2, 3, 4	563	§ 4149	1680, 1681, 2162
§ 4068	488, 916, 1856a, 2218	§ 4150	1681
§ 4069	488	§ 4151	1239
§ 4070	488	§ 4151a	1239, 1680
§ 4071	488, 2272	§ 4151b	1275
§ 4072	488, 2336	§ 4151c	1275
§ 4073	488, 987, 1270	§ 4151e	1275
§ 4074	2395	§ 4151i	1706
§ 4075	1380, 2385	§§ 4151j-4151o	1275, 1660
§ 4076	2292	§ 4151p	1706
§ 4077	2223, 2252	§ 4151q	1225
§ 4078	2281	§ 4152	1239, 1674
§ 4078a	2259a, 2281	§ 4152a	1674
§ 4078b	2281	§ 4153	1239
§ 4078d	2281	§ 4154	1664
§ 4078m	2286	§ 4155	1664
§ 4079	1076	§ 4156	1225, 1651, 1676a
§ 4079m	1054	§ 4160	1644, 2385a
§ 4079n	1909	§ 4161	1639
§ 4081	1828	§ 4162	1639, 1640
§ 4084	1828	§ 4163	1678
§ 4085	488	§ 4164	1674, 1710
§ 4086	1382, 1411	§ 4165	1239
§ 4089	803, 1411	§§ 4166-4168	1678
§§ 4090-4092	18	§ 4170	1678
§ 4093	1387	§ 4171	1678
§ 4095	1411	§ 4172	1644
§ 4095a	1862	§ 4173	1710
§ 4096	1859b	§ 4173a	1651, 1710
§§ 4096-4098	1856a, 2218	§ 4174	1710
§ 4096	916, 1382, 2207	§ 4175	1710
§ 4098	916	§ 4176	1680
§ 4100	2207	§ 4181	1680
§ 4101	1411	§ 4181a	1683, 1710
§ 4102	1382	§ 4182	1683
§ 4105	803	§ 4182a	1223, 1683, 1859, 2205
§ 4109	2195	§ 4183	1859, 2219
§ 4109a	2195	§ 4184	2596
§ 4110	1411	§ 4185	1676
§ 4113	1411	§ 4186	1519, 1558
§ 4114	1382	§ 4187	1519
§ 4115	1382	§ 4188	1519
§ 4118	1383	§ 4189	1519, 1530
§ 4121	1387, 1412, 1681	§ 4189a	2016
§ 4125	1383	§ 4189b	1223, 1519, 2205
§ 4128	1383	§ 4190	1197
§ 4129	1412	§ 4192	2596
§ 4131	1383	§ 4202	1680



# WISCONSIN — WYOMING

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 4205m	811	§ 3833	1674
§ 4247	1466	§ 4341	2380
§ 4474	1680	§ 4345	2220
§ 4475-2	2281	§ 4356	1680
§ 4534	2281	§ 4378	1651, 1680
§ 4552a	2281	§ 4508	1675
§ 4569	2066	§ 4569	1684
§ 4575n	2281	§ 4587	1676
§ 4581	2061	§ 4588	1225, 1239, 1651
§ 4581g	1620	§ 4603	1225, 1651
§ 4581h	2281	§ 4642	1680, 1710
§ 4581h-1	360, 2281	§ 4664	1651
§ 4587c	488, 2085	§ 4673	1681
§ 4626	1339	§ 4689	1225, 1651, 1676
§ 4627	1710	§ 4970	1644, 1680
§ 4642	1851	§ 4993	488
§ 4694	1163	§ 5013	2067
§ 4713a	1225	§ 5036	488, 2085
§ 4766	1674	§ 5048	1680
§ 4783	1837	§ 5060	1680
§ 4789	1835	§ 5075	1680
§ 4790	1326	§ 5249	1680
§ 4818	1326	§ 5345	1683
§ 4871	1828	§ 5451	1680
§ 4872	1326	§ 5501	2281
		§ 5502	4c
		§ 5534	1828
		§ 5689	1856a, 2218
		§ 5714	1320
		§ 5745	1062
		§ 5769	1866, 1873
		§ 5770	1163
		§ 5804	488
		§ 5805	488
		§ 5806	488, 1519, 2292, 2380, 2389, 2395
		§ 5807	488
		§ 5808	488, 1856a, 2218
		§ 5809	900, 905, 907
		§ 5810	1271, 1684, 1703
		§ 5811	1680
		§§ 5812-5822	2199
		§ 5816	2207
		§ 5817	2201
		§ 5820	2195
		§ 5823	2199
		§ 5825	2195
		§ 5826	1828
		§ 5829	1710
		§ 5831	1411
		§ 5837	803
		§ 5839	1382
		§ 5840	1382
		§ 5841	803
		§ 5844	1387
		§ 5847	1411
		§§ 5850-5853	18
		§ 5854	2596
		§§ 5855-5858	1859, 2219
		§ 5859	1856a
		§ 5865	20
		§ 6073	2281
		§ 6180	1710
		§§ 6308-6309	1383
<i>Session Laws</i>			
1905, c. 447, § 1	2259a		
1913, c. 246	1416		
1917, c. 433	2336		
1921, c. 122	2380		
c. 126	563		
c. 214	2573		
c. 390	2512		
c. 425	1710		
c. 571	2281		
<i>Wyoming</i>			
<i>Constitution 1889</i>			
Art. I, § 10	1397, 2191		
§ 11	2252		
§ 18	1828		
§ 26	2039		
<i>Compiled Statutes 1920</i>			
§ 109	1680		
§ 699	4c		
§ 1170	1669		
§ 1383	1680		
§ 1495	1651, 1680		
§ 1534	1326, 1828		
§ 1544	1665		
§ 1763	1680, 1684		
§ 1827	1680, 1684		
§ 2114	1563		
§ 2116	1651, 1665		
§ 2749	2281		
§ 2893	1639, 1680		
§ 3095	150		
§ 3097	1225, 1651		
§ 3430	2281		
§ 3484	150a		
§ 3765	1674		

# LIST OF STATUTES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section
§ 6311	1387, 1389, 1412, 1681	§ 7507	488, 2252, 2272
§ 6416	2595	§ 7511	4, 488, 2201, 2207
§ 6433	1828	§ 7512	1411
§ 6670	1510	§ 7514	1382
§ 6690	1304	§ 7516	1411
§ 6704	2052	§ 7518	1382, 1411
§§ 6704-6707	1660	§ 7520	488
§ 6708	2050	§ 7521	2061
§ 6714	1304, 1310	§ 7522	2056
§ 6715	1413	§ 7523	369
§ 6753	1681	§ 7524	370
§ 7009	2532	§ 7532	1566, 1873
§ 7294	1625	§ 7535	1163
§ 7295	1339		
§ 7357	1837		
§ 7426	1851		
§ 7427	1851		
§ 7453	2360		
§ 7474	150		

## Session Laws

1921, c. 117	2259a
§ 28	2251, 2281
c. 142, § 19	2281
c. 160, § 24	2220



**LIST OF CASES CITED**

## LIST OF CASES CITED

[In the following Table, all titles of criminal cases in England are entered under "R. v.," even though commonly known as "Anderson's Trial," "Anderson's Case," "The King v. Anderson" or the like; except in those earlier reports in which it does not plainly appear whether the case was a criminal one. In the United States, similarly, criminal trials, by whatever name known, are entered under "U. S. v.," "Com. v.," "State v.," etc., according to the local term of the jurisdiction. But wherever in a ruling made on appeal a case becomes officially otherwise designated, the entry is here made by that title, *e. g.*, "Anderson v. U. S.," "Smith's Case." Accordingly a criminal case not found in this Table under one of these titles may be discovered under the other.]

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

A		Section		Section	
—, Ex parte	497	Ables v. State	285	Adams v. American Agri-	
— v. Leadbetter	1161	Abney v. Kingsland	335, 1779, 1871	cultural C. Co.	1398, 1674
Aalholm v. People	1491	Abraham v. Miller	2498	v. Arnold	896, 907
Aaron v. State	832	v. R. Co.	2463	v. Bankart	1898
v. U. S.	2311	Abrahams v. Bunn	529	v. Betz	2555
Abat v. Rion	1202, 1206, 1339	v. Sanders	2467	v. Bleakley	2336
Abbey v. Lill	2152	v. Woolley	2340	v. Board	749, 1230
Abbey H. Ass'n v. Wil-		Abrams v. R. Co.	455	v. Brownson	1300
lard	1876	Abrath v. Northeastern		v. Buhler	1225, 1651
Abbot v. Heath	688, 1721	R. Co.	2494, 2539	v. Canon	727, 728, 1364, 2032
v. Plumb	1288, 1300, 1302, 1308	Abshire v. Mather	928	v. Carlisle	65
Abbott, Re	2218	v. State	1225	v. Clark	1350
v. Abbott,		Academy of M. Co. v.		v. Coulliard	736, 747, 754
40 Mich.	1302, 1304	Davidson	1729	v. Davidson	1086
4 Sw. & Tr.	1644	Acerro v. Petroni	777	v. Dick	377
v. Church	728, 2503	Acevedo v. Rafols' Heirs	2527	v. Dickson	2139
v. Coleman	2011, 2016	Achilles v. Achilles	1897	v. Eames	2119
v. Com.	107, 108, 569, 1938, 2276	Acker M. & C. Co. v.		v. Elseffer	64
v. Mitchell	529	McGaw	1062	v. Elwood	19
v. Muir	1084	Ackerman v. Crouter	2462	v. Ferguson	1873
v. People	246, 852, 1963	Ackers' Guardianship	928	v. Field	2016
v. Striblen	1911	Ackland v. Pearce	1206	v. First M. E.	
v. Terr.	2497	Acklen's Ex'r v. Hick-		Church	1958
v. Walker	1049, 1082, 1567	man	735, 745, 747, 754, 759, 762, 763	v. French	1082
Abeel v. Van Gelder	378, 1778	Ackley v. Sexton	1225	v. Gillig	2439
Abel v. Fitch	664	Acklin v. McCalmont		v. Harrold	772
v. Kennedy	2349, 2354	Oil Co.	1873	v. Herald Pub. Co.	1028
v. Light	1208, 1404	Acme Brewing Co. v.		v. Hickox	1640
v. Potts	1706	Central R. & B. Co.	581	v. Ins. Co.	376, 1985
Abeles, Re	1856	Acme C. P. Co. v. West-		v. Jackson	2535
Abend v. Mueller	34, 35, 451	man	1722, 2509	v. Jones	2409
Abendroth v. Fidelity &		Acme Mfg. Co. v. Mc-		v. Kelly	1237
D. Co.	1722	Phail	2409	v. Lawson	73, 76, 216
Abercrombie v. Allen	1072	v. Reed	2593	v. Lisher	1681
Abernathy v. State	1350	Ada Dairy Ass'n v.		v. Lloyd	1859d, 2219, 2271
Abernethy v. Com.	106, 1117	Mears	2410	v. Lumber Co.	2154
v. Yount	2013	Adae v. Zangs	736, 753, 754	v. McBeath	2503
Abban v. Grassie	2486	Adair v. Adair	1404, 1668	v. M'Millan	1065
Abigny v. Clifton	1674	v. Kansas City T. R.		v. Morrison	1624
Abington v. Duxbury	2063	Co.	1078	v. New York	1356, 2184, 2252, 2264
v. N. Bridgewater	1587	v. State	2501, 2511	v. Porter	2257
Ablard v. R. Co.	1078	Adam v. Kerr	1306, 1312, 1513	v. Raigner	1388
Able v. Shields	1031	Adams, Re	2268	v. Russell	1389



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Adams v. Seitzinger	1466	Ætna Ins. Co. v. East-		Alabama C. G. & A. R.	
v. Stanyan	1582, 1588, 1592, 1665, 2144	man	1129	Co. v. Kyle	1021
v. State,		v. Little	2509	Alabama F. Co. v. Rey-	
11 Ark.	1216	Ætna L. Ins. Co. v. Mil-		nolds	1966
78 Ark.	398	ward	1671	Alabama Fidelity & C.	
93 Ark.	133, 166, 987, 1007	v. Nexsen	1944	Co. v. Alabama P. S.	
28 Fla.	580, 792, 794, 1890	v. Ryan	1750	Bank	1230, 1244
93 Ga.	1157	Affalo v. Fourdrinier	1208	Alabama G. I. School v.	
129 Ga.	852	African Co. v. Parish	2250	Reynolds	1858
156 Ind.	905	Agassiz v. Tramway Co.	1754	Alabama G. S. R. Co. v.	
34 Tex. C'r.	821	Agent v. State	111	Clark	454, 754
v. Swansea	1586	Agnew v. Jobson	2265	v. Collier	457
v. Swift	278	v. U. S.	2495, 2511	v. Hall	1951, 1977
v. Thief River Falls	1158	Agricultural Bank v.		v. Hardy	17
v. Thornton	1966	Bark Jane	1062	v. Hawk	1750
v. Turner	2463	Aguayo v. Garcia	1646	v. Hill	2220
v. U. S.	620	Agulino v. R. Co.	418, 437, 461	v. Johnston	455, 949
v. Utley	1067	Ah Doon v. Smith	1890	v. Linn	1976
v. Wadleigh	18	Ah Hoy v. Raymond	2437	v. Norris	2432
v. Watkins	2442	Ah Sam, Re	1154	v. Taylor	2491
v. Way	1681, 2164	Ah Tong v. Fruit Co.	934a	Alabama Midland R.	
v. Weaver	1416	Ahern v. Julian	2526	Co. v. Guilford	1067
v. Wheeler	905	v. McCarthy	2437	Alabama Mineral R.	
v. Wordley	2444	Ahlberg v. State	2086, 2088	Co. v. Jones	1951
v. Wright	530, 1635, 1675	Ahmi v. Waller	1890	v. Marcus	2498
Adams Express Co. v.		Ahner v. Young	2477	Alabama Nat'l Bank v.	
Schlessinger	716, 1943	Aicardi v. Strang	1378	Chattanooga D. & S.	
Adams S. S. Co. v. Lon-		Aiken v. Gale	2336	Co.	2165
don Ass. Co.	3219	v. Kennison	377	Alabama State L. Co. v.	
Adamson v. Harper	1163	v. Kilburne	527, 2310	Kyle	1213, 2132
Adamthwaite v. Synge	2138	v. Martin	2200, 2211	Alam v. Jourdan	2047
Addams v. Seitzinger	1457, 1460, 1466	v. Oil Co.	112	Alameda M. Co. v. Wil-	
Addington v. State	1450	v. People	988	liams	1680
v. Wilson	229, 762	v. State	177	Alaska Juneau G. M.	
Addis v. Graham	1225	Ainsworth v. Barry	616	Co. v. Larson	716
v. Rushmore	1010	v. Lakin	660	Alaska Packers' Ass'n v.	
Addison v. People	290, 357	v. Wilding	2312, 2319	U. S.	367
Adger v. Ackerman	2505, 2527	Airey v. Stapleton	2144	Alban v. Pritchett	2232
Adkins v. Brett	7, 13, 1730	Aiscough, Ex parte	2220	Albany C. S. Bank v.	
v. Com.	2595	Aitken v. McMeckan	1933	McCarty	2534
v. Hastings	1549, 1555	v. Mendenhall	1890	Albany C. S. Inst. v.	
v. Hershy	2117	Aitkin, Re	2297	Burdick	2416
v. Williams	406	Ajax Rubber Co. v. Roth-		Albany Phosphate Co.	
Adkinson v. State	949	acker, Inc.	1873	v. Hugger	655
Adle v. Sherwood	2109	Akerley v. Haines	75	Albaugh v. James	613
Adler v. State	2582	Akers v. Kirke	1062	Albers v. U. S.	369
Adreveno v. Mutual		Akeson v. Doidge	21, 1141	Albers Commission Co.	
R. F. L. Ass'n	7a, 2388	Akin v. St. Croix L. Co.	1976	v. Sessel	18
Adriano v. DeJesus	1336, 1606, 1644	Akins v. R. & B. Co.	456, 736	Albert v. Ins. Co.	1078
Advocate-General v.		Akona v. Kaluai	1644	Albert v. McKay & Co.	1018
Hancock	1270	Alabama & F. R. Co. v.		v. Philadelphia R. T.	
Adwell v. Com.	580	Burkett	1943	Co.	682
Æolian Co. v. Standard		Alabama & V. R. Co. v.		v. R. Co.	456, 994
M. R. Co.	1890	Beardsley	2506	v. Twohig	1351
Ætna Indemnity Co. v.		v. Ins. Co.	455, 456	Alberti v. R. Co.	792, 2315, 2388
Waters	2556	v. Sol Fried Co.	754	Alberty v. U. S.	276
Ætna Ins. Co. v. Bank	1205	v. Thornhill	923, 2509	Albion v. Herrick	1951
v. Brannon	2418	Alabama C. C. & I. Co.		v. Maple Lake	581, 1605
		v. Turner	1943	Albrecht v. Hittle	1873
		Alabama Const. Co. v.		v. Rathai	321
		Meador	1195	Albright v. State	363
		Alabama C. G. & A. R.		Albright v. Corley	660
		Co. v. Heald	1750, 1951	v. Jones	2146

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Albrittin v. Huntsville	2572	Alexandria A. & F. S. R.		Allen v. McKean	2592
Albritton v. State	2089	Co. v. Johnson	2573	r. Maddock	2452
Albro v. Ins. Co.	2452	Alexis v. U. S.	968	r. Martin	1292, 1312
Alcock v. Ass. Co.	96, 748, 787	Alfonso v. U. S.	718, 719, 1943	r. Massey	1302
Alcorn v. Powell	406	Alford v. Bennett	2477	r. Merchants' Bank	1954
v. R. Co.	283	v. Kanawha & W. V. R.		r. Mill Co.	2432
Alcott v. Public Service		Co.	571	r. Murray	1012
Co.	458	r. State	18, 655, 600,	r. Northern P. R. Co.	2509
Aldeguer v. Hoskyn	7, 2448		928, 953, 1615, 1977	r. Parish	1189, 1256,
Alden v. Goddard	2313	Alfred v. Anthony	1326		1676, 2143
v. Grande R. L. Co.	1078	Alger v. Andrews	1083	r. Pink	2429
r. Supreme Tent	20	v. Castle	1021	r. Potter	2447
Alderman v. Finley	2572	r. Turner	2313	r. R. Co.	1951, 1976
r. French	74, 1064	Algeri v. Cleveland		r. Rand	803
r. People	2304, 2327	Plaindealer	798	r. Read	1678
Aldersey, Re	2531	Aline and Fanny, The	4d	r. Root	2312
Alderson v. Clay	1074	Alivon v. Furnival	1219, 1233,	r. Rostain	1624, 1800
Aldous v. Olverson	1086, 2235		1271	r. St. Louis T. Co.	2509
Aldrich v. Aldrich	112, 233,	Alkon v. U. S.	2276, 2283	r. Scruggs	1737, 2106
	1081, 1737, 2066	Allain v. Whitaker	1675	r. Seyfried	788
v. Chubb	1677	Allaire v. Allaire	1511	r. Smith	1664
v. Earle	1086	Allams v. State	2501	r. State,	
v. Griffith	2145	Allan v. McTavish	2143	60 Ala.	492, 932
r. Island E. T. & T.		r. Morrison	2523, 2533	72 Ala.	1781
Co.	1967	r. Tap	1858	73 Ala.	1781
r. Pelham	458	Allard v. R. Co.	456	111 Ala.	2497
r. R. Co.,		Allay v. Hutchings	905	146 Ala.	276, 293
67 N. H.	283	Allbright v. Governor	1672	162 Ala.	2062
39 Or.	2053	v. Hannah	1640, 2336	14 Ariz.	1350
r. Wetmore	1166	Allegheny v. Nelson	1458,	38 Fla.	246
Aldridge v. R. Co.	456		1466	21 Ga.	1195, 2535
Aldridge Will, Re	2472, 2475	Allegheny Co. v. Watt	2203	74 Ga.	2060
Aledo v. Honeyman	682	Alleman v. Stepp	934a	150 Ga.	62
Aledo Terminal R. Co. v.		Allen, Ex parte	1355, 1356,	3 Humph.	705, 709
Butler	463		1671	62 Miss.	1840
Alexander v. Alexander	1966	Allen v. Allen,		10 Oh. St.	580, 967,
v. Beadle	917	Prob.	916, 1076		2056
r. Blackburn	795	73 Conn.	235	Okl. Cr., 134	
r. Blackman	285, 2034	2 Overt	1304, 1317	Pac.	398, 2061
r. Byron	1877	v. Armstrong	1355	r. Thaxter	2164
r. Campbell	2132, 2159	v. Blunt	95	r. Travelers' Protec-	
r. Coulter	1205, 1209	v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	19, 1700	tive Ass'n	2510
r. Foreman	1216, 1267	v. Coit	1074	r. Trimble	736, 747, 1304
r. Gibson	897	r. Com.,		r. U. S.,	
v. Gould	1086	134 Ky.	1618	28 Ct. Cl.	1384
r. Grand Lodge	2103	Ky., 82 S. W.	19, 177	115 Fed.	987
r. Handby	1957	168 Ky.	1442	150 U. S.	21
r. Humber	2356	176 Ky.	354, 1079	164 U. S.	276, 278,
r. Kaiser	1021	122 Va.	987		2511
r. Mahon	1083	r. Duncan	1777	194 Fed.	2042
r. Mud Lake L. Co.	1984	r. Hall	1490, 2063	v. U. S. Fidelity &	
v. Queen	2297	r. Hancock	15	Guar. Co.	1065
v. Smoot	1556	r. Harrison	2317	v. Vincennes	1651, 1676a
r. State	581	r. Hill	1304, 2411	v. Voje	569
v. Steel Co.	2509	r. Holkins	529	r. Watson	1684
v. Thomas	2354	r. Hunter	569	Allen's Appeal	568
v. U. S.,		r. Ins. Co.	770, 2307	Allen's Estate	233
138 U. S.	140, 2294,	r. Kidd	1639	Allen-Wright Furniture	
	2298	r. Killinger	1070, 1362	Co. v. Hines	456
201 U. S.	2270	r. King, The	21, 105	Allend v. R. Co.	2124
r. Vye	278, 697, 1005,	r. Kingsbury	2463	Allensworth v. Coleman	406,
	1185, 2016	r. La Vaud	2503		1971
r. Wade	21	r. McDonald	18	Allerdale Estate Co. v.	
r. White	1302	r. McKay	2427	McGrory	2434



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Allesbrook v. Roach	1994, 2002	Althouse v. Jamestown	1280	American Lithographic Co. v. Werckmeister	2219, 2259a
Allgood v. Blake	2470	Alton Mfg. Co. v. Garrett B. Inst.	2451	American M. Co. v. Hill	2534
Allhusen v. Labouchere	916, 2268	Alton S. R. Co. v. Vandalia R. Co.	714	American Mfg. Co. v. Bigelow	1750, 1755
Alliance Ass. Co. v. Pearce	2463	Altoona v. Bowman	2534	American Mge. Co. v. Mouse River L. S. Co.	1225
Allin v. Hiscock	1216	Alvarez v. State	2079	American Oak Extr. Co. v. Ryan	715, 2498
v. Millison	321	Alverson v. Bell	18	American Potato Co. v. Jenette Bros. Co.	2465
v. Whittemore	1028	Alves v. Bunbury	1681	American S. F. Co. v. Gerrers Bakery	2465
Alling v. Weissman	1877	v. Hodgson	1271	American School of Magnetic Healing v. McAnnulty	4a
Allis v. Day	715, 1944	Alvord v. Alvord	1938, 2212	American Security & T. Co. v. Brooks	1856d
Allison v. Barrow	2336	v. Baker	2518	American Socialist Society v. U. S.	369
v. Com.	1450	v. Collin	736, 747	American States S. Co. v. Milwaukee N. R. Co.	463, 1168
v. Horning	392	Alward v. Oakes	958, 1042	American Steamship Co. v. Landreth	1951
v. Little	1225, 1311, 2143	Amar Lingh v. Mitchell	2435	American Straw B. Co. v. Smith	65
v. Matthieu	321	Amazon, The	1339	American Surety Co. v. Pauly	7a, 331, 1530, 2553
v. Parkinson	715	Amberson's Estate	2477	American Woolen Co. v. Boston & M. R. Co.	1021
v. People	2354	Ambler v. Whipple	2494	Ames v. Hoy	1267
v. Robinson	1681	America, The	2533	v. McCamber	1703
v. U. S.	111, 247	American Accident Co. v. Fidler	568, 1983	v. Phelps	1352
v. Wall	1960	American Agric. C. Co. v. McKinney	451	v. R. Co.	1350
Allison's Dev. v. Allison's Heirs	2106	American Bankers' Ins. Co. v. Hopkins	2389, 2390	Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski	2496
Allison's Estate	1312	American Benevolent Ass'n v. Stough	1073	Ames Evening Times v. Ames Weekly Tribune	2164
Allison's Ex'r v. Wood	1623, 2517	American Bible Society v. Pratt	2463	Ames Ironworks v. Pulley Co.	1078
Allman v. M'Cabe	2531	v. Price	1938	Ames M. Co. v. Kimball S. S. Co.	1954
v. Owen	1698	American Bonding & T. Co. v. Takahashi	2465	Ames' Succession	2237
Allmendinger v. McHie	1346	American Bonding Co. v. Ensey	2153	Ames' Will, Re	682, 1081
Allport v. Meek	1994	American Can Co. v. Agricultural Ins. Co.	95	Amey v. Long	2193, 2194, 2200, 2211
Allred v. Elliott	1312	American Car & F. Co. v. Alexandria W. Co.	2200	Amherst v. Hollis	2276
v. Kirkman	1131	American Exchange N. Bank v. First N. Bank	1381	Amherst Bank v. Root	1316, 1510
v. State	987	v. N. Y. B. & P. Co.	2495	Amick v. Young	1779
Allsup v. State	1433	American Express Co. v. Des Moines Nat'l Bank	20	Amidon v. Hosley	928, 1618
Allwright v. Skillings	747	v. Haggard	93	Amis v. Marks	1219, 1677, 1680
Almerigi v. State	1938	v. Lankford, 93 Fed.	616	Ammerman v. U. S.	524
Almon v. Law	907	1 Ind. T.	616	Ammons v. Dwyer	1677
Almy v. Church	2145	2 Ind. T.	1078	v. State	833
v. Reed	1199	American Fertilizing Co. v. Thomas	7a, 1674	Amor v. Stoeckele	749
Alner v. George	2432	American Fire Ins. Co. v. Hazen	64	Amory v. Fellowes	527, 787, 1185, 1810, 1824
Alpaugh's Will	1511	v. Landfare	255	v. Melrose	463, 561, 714, 718
Alpin v. Morton	406	American Graphophone Co. v. Leeds & C. Co.	1657	Amos v. Eickenberger	2450
Alpuerto v. Perez Pastor	1352	American Ice Co. v. Pennsylvania R. Co.	455		
Alsabrooks v. State	398	American Issue Pub. Co. v. Sloan	6, 916		
Alsager v. St. Katherine's Dock Co.	2477	American Life Ins. Co. v. Rosenagle	413, 564, 1195, 1213, 1644, 2109, 2167		
Alsever v. Minneapolis & S. L. R. Co.	1750				
Alsop v. Bowtrell	1645, 1674, 1917				
v. Com.	1442				
Alsterberg v. Bennett	2442				
Alston v. Alston	1487, 1492, 1605				
v. State,					
109 Ala.	2271				
41 Tex.	852, 1329				
v. Taylor	1456, 2164				
Alt v. Fig Syrup Co.	715, 1944				
Altham v. Anglesea	1174, 1401, 1406				
Altham's Case	2426				

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Amos v. Moseley	1350, 2577	Anderson v. Com.,		Anderson v. State,	
v. State,		100 Va.	276, 2575	83 Tex. Cr.	905
96 Ala.	246	v. Cuthbert	1651, 2520	88 Tex. Cr.	506, 507
123 Ala.	1786, 2120	v. Duckworth	282	133 Wis.	521
v. U. S.	2184	v. Dudley	1216	27 Wyo.	579, 1270,
Amos-Richia v. North-		v. English	748, 749		2272
western M. L. Ins.		v. Ferguson B. S.		v. Stewart	2498
Co.	2185, 2520	Co.	2201	v. Taft	458
Amoskeag Co. v. Head	443,	v. Fielding	461	v. Terr.	2512
	463, 1864	v. Fisk	1651	v. Tribble	2570
Amperse v. Fleckenstein	1807	v. Friend	614, 615	v. Union Pacific R.	
Amsby v. Dickhouse	2349,	v. Goodwin	2408	Co.	283
	2354	v. Grand V. I. D.	2592	v. U. S.	369
Amsden v. Rogers	2060	v. Great N. R. Co.	1750	v. Vohner	665
Amstein v. Gardner	1951	v. Green	2356	v. Walker	1225
Amstell v. Alexander	905	v. Hamilton	2378	v. Weston	2520
Amundson v. Wilson	2450,	v. Hilker	1639	v. Whalley	745, 748
	2568	v. Horlick M. M. Co.	664	v. White	1086
Amys v. Barton	4c, 1722	v. Hultberg	1388	Anderson's Estate	1738, 2503
Anaconda C. M. Co. v.		v. Irwin	291, 1267, 2106	Anderson Bridge Co. v.	
District Court	1862	v. Jarrett	2465, 2466	Applegate	1198
v. Henze	1873	v. Leverette	1651	Anderson T. Co. v.	
Anadarko v. Argo	1062	v. Life Ass'n	1074	Fuller	1898
Anchor Line v. Dater	2415	v. Long	64, 73, 75	Anderton v. Magawley	1670
Anchor Milling Co. v.		v. Maberry	1198, 1817	Andre v. State	205
Walsh	1555, 1560	v. McPike	1066, 1779	Andrew v. Fleming	1725
Ancient Order of United		v. May	1205, 1234	v. Keenan	1278
Workmen, Re	2531	v. Metropolitan Stock		v. Ledsam	2250
Andersen v. U. S.	246, 248,	Exchange	1967	Andrews, Ex parte	2271, 2281,
	1976	v. Middlebrook	908, 916		2282
Anderson v. Ackerman	1186,	v. Mining Co.	379	v. Andrews	2046, 2067
	1676, 2110	v. Mowatt	1164	v. Askey	166, 210,
v. Albertstamm	682	v. Oregon R. Co.	456,		1028, 1051
v. Ames	1550		2509	v. Black	1303
v. Anderson,		v. Pitt I. M. Co.	461	v. Com.	1750
37 N. Br.	1519	v. R. Co.,		v. Davison	1225, 1651
140 Ga.	618, 2239	107 Ga.	1109	v. Frye	2273
141 Ind.	2579	109 Ia.	1951	v. Hayden's Adm'r	2015
191 Ia.	2046	87 Wis.	283	v. Hoxie	2575
9 Kan.	2341	v. Reid	1668	v. Jones	794
23 Tex.	2573	v. Robson	1195	v. Marshall	2167
78 W. Va.	2498	v. Root	1256, 1861, 2125	v. Minnig Co.	1078
v. Aronsohn	1635	v. Sanderson	2232	v. Palmer	1402
v. Arpin H. L. Co.	392	v. Sandy Valley &		v. People,	
v. Augustana Col-		E. R. Co.	2498	33 Colo.	855, 1350
lege	2498, 2525	v. Searles	2314	117 Ill.	852, 2071
v. Aupperle	166	v. Seropian	1158	v. R. Co.,	
v. Bank,		v. Snyder,		99 Ala.	461
L. R. 2 Ch. D.	2291,	91 Conn.	1394	14 Ind.	2307
	2317, 2319,	21 W. Va.	613	96 Wis.	346, 461
	2380, 2394	v. State,		v. Simms	2303
6 N. D.	1392, 1943	79 Ala.	1450	v. Solomon	2300
v. Beeman	1548	89 Ala.	1364, 1389,	v. State,	
v. Cecil	2579		1398	134 Ala.	247
v. Chicago Brass Co.	1416,	104 Ala.	1966	159 Ala.	988
	1951, 2498	34 Ark.	987	17 Ala. App.	855
v. Chicago Burl. &		72 Ga.	2071	118 Ga.	18, 20,
Q. R. Co.	716	117 Ga.	1451		198, 987
v. Chicago R. I. &		122 Ga.	1442	v. Youmans	1164
P. R. Co.	2510	26 Ind.	852	Andricus' Adm'r v. Pine-	
v. Cole	1573	104 Ind.	82, 923	ville Coal Co.	1356, 1388,
v. Colwell	2437	147 Ind.	276, 1157		1672
v. Com.,		Tex. Cr., 95		Androvitch v. Fowler	1779
193 Ky.	2060	S. W.	1128	Andrus v. Blazzard	2444



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Andrus v. Foster	2414	Anon.,		Anthony v. Chapman	1651
Ancals v. State	953	1 Hill S. C.	73, 74,	v. Grand	64
Anfenson v. Banks	1626		518, 923, 957,	v. R. Co.	1640
Angell v. Angell	1832		987, 1112, 1840,	v. State,	
v. Duke	2425, 2442		1842, 1985	Fla., 32 So.	1877,
v. Reynolds	211	Jenkins	1193		2056, 2073
v. Rosenbury	224, 655,	T. Jones	2036	Ida., 55 Pac.	1899
	1254, 1623	1 Leach Cr. L.	1821	Meigs	1398
Angelo v. People	2272	1 Leon.	1165	v. Stephens	73, 74
Angeloff v. State	133, 2265	1 Lew. Cr. C. 101	760	v. Stinson	1554
Angerstein v. Milwaukee		1 Lew. Cr. C. 322	774	Antillon v. Barcelon	1290, 1676
Monument Co.	2386	Lib. Ass.	575	Anzine v. U. S.	1620
Angier v. Ash	321, 334	Lofft	1645	Apache Co. v. Barth	2167
Angle v. Musgrave	1681	1 Ld. Raym.	291,	Apel v. Kelsey	1651
Anglea v. Com.	523, 987		1177, 1256, 1658	Apgar's Case	2528
Anglesey v. Hatnerton	380,	M. & M.	1258	Apkins v. Com.	1644
	1595	McNally	1981	Apollon, The	2575
Angling v. State	821, 852	8 Mass.	2308	App v. App	2471, 2573
Anglo-American Fire Ins.		37 Miss.	133, 200,	Appel v. Chicago City R.	
Co. v. Hendry	1947		662, 987	Co.	1807
Angus v. Smith	1029	58 Miss.	2245	Apperson v. Ingram	2678
Anheuser-Busch B.		1 Mod.	1199	Applebee, Re	2475
Ass'n v. Hutmacher	1236,	2 Mod.	2067	Appleby v. Brock	689, 1938
	1890	3 Mod.	2529	v. Secord	1244
Anin's Petition	2210	6 Mod.	2143	v. State	364
Ankersmit v. Tuch	1873	9 Mod.	1681, 2163	Applegate v. Applegate	2086
Annapolis & E. R. Co.		11 Mod.	612	v. Lexington & C. C.	
v. Gantt	455, 456	12 Mod. 345	2165	M. Co.	2139, 2141
Annarina v. Boland	987	12 Mod. 607	1313	Appleton v. Boyd	2222
Annesley v. Anglesea (see		4 Mo. L. Mag.	1268	v. Braybrook	5, 1677,
also Craig v. Anglesea)	166,	Pa. Col. Cas. 53	2220		1681
	272, 278, 280, 1099, 1013,	Pl. Abr.	1837	v. People	2512
	1130, 1154, 1361, 1362,	Rolle's Abr.	1373	v. State	1755
	1364, 1431, 1487, 1605,	2 Salk. 566	1684	Applicants for License,	
	2213, 2290, 2291, 2294,	2 Salk. 665	1165	Re	1354
	2298, 2310	2 Salk. 691	1415	Apthorp v. Eyres	1417
Annis v. People	1111	3 Salk.	1845	Aragon Coffee Co. v.	
Anniston C. L. Co. v.		Skin. 174	1215, 1275	Rogers	289
Edmondson	2105	Skin. 404	2290,	Aranjo v. Celis	2106
Anniston National Bank			2297, 2308, 2394	Arbon v. Fussell	2011, 2016
v. Committee	2495	24 Sol. J.	2372	Arbuckle v. Matthews	2143
Anon.,		1 Stra.	2232	v. Templeton	288, 1466,
35 Ala.	2220	1 Vern. 60	2250,		2308
89 Ala.	2220		2257	Arcangelo v. Thompson	2152
1 Ambl.	735, 787	1 Vern. 263	1816	Archer, Re	2363
2 And.	818	3 Ves. & B.	986,	v. Equitable Life Ass.	
5 B. & Ald.	2043		1982	Soc.	2452
Brooke's Abr.	2036	12 Vin. Abr.	1670	v. Haithcock	2083, 2085
1 Brownl.	2227,	5 West. L. J.	1911	v. Hooper	1253
	2235, 2239	1 P. Wms.	1316	v. R. Co.	792, 794
2 Brownl.	2250	Y. B. 3 H. 4	1177	v. Sibley	18
1 Bulstr.	575	v. Anon.	2063	v. U. S.	2008, 2020
3 C. & P.	2230	v. Moor	73, 74	Arcia v. State	521
4 C. & P.	850	Ansley v. Meikle	1680, 1681	Arcola v. Wilkinson	18
5 C. & P.	848	Anson v. Dwight	1943	Ard v. Crittenden	1779
2 Chitty	1164	v. Evans	283	Arderry v. Com.	1388
Comb.	1658	v. People	309	Ardesco Oil Co. v. Gilson	561,
5 Cox Cr.	196	Ansonia v. Cooper	1389		571
Dyer, 132a	2036	Answer of the Judges,		Arents v. R. Co.	1605, 1960
288 a	2250	2 How. St. Tr. and		Argabright v. State	1874
29 b	1211	2 Co. Inst.	2032, 2250	Arguelles v. Rossy	1859, 2596
6 East	1431	22 How. St. Tr.	581, 661,	Arizona & N. M. R. Co.	
Gilbert	2122		1699, 1963, 2458,	v. Clark	65, 2382,
Godb.	575, 1364, 1405		2557, 2569		2389, 2390

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Arizona B. Copper Co.		Armstrong's Estate	1938	Ash v. Ash	2350
v. Dickson	18	Armstrong's Lessees v.		v. Childs D. H. Co.	2509
Arizona Eastern R. Co.		Timmons	496, 1195	v. Com.	2183
v. Bryan	811	Armstrong's Trial	994	v. Patton	1561
Arizona L. Ins. Co. v.		Arn v. Matthews	609	v. Prunier	1730
Lindell	2438	Arnd v. Amling	1820	v. Soo Sing Lung	1029
Ark Foo v. U. S.	2256	v. Aylesworth	2034, 2537	v. State	2060
Arkadelphia Lumber Co.		Arndstein v. McCarthy	2276,	Ashcraft v. Chapman	2165
v. Arkadelphia	1684		2283	v. Com.,	
Arkansas City v. Payne	1067	Arnegard v. Arnegard	1085	Ky., 60 S. W.	987
Arkansas C. R. Co. v.		Arnett v. Com.	2336	Ky., 68 S. W.	280, 987,
Craig	784	v. Griffin	747		1018
Arkansas M. R. Co. v.		Arnold v. Arnold	2433	v. De Armond	233, 1621,
Griffith	1698, 1944	v. Arnold's Estate	1817,		1958
Arkansas River P. Co.			1818	Ashe v. De Rosset,	
v. Hobbs	1158, 2220	v. Bell	1779	5 Jones	736
Arkansas State Fair		v. Caldwell	1065	8 Jones	93
Ass'n	1350	v. Chesebrough's		v. Pettiford	1605
Arkansas Tel. Co. v.		Ex'r	2083	Asher v. Terr.	1270, 2277
Ratteree	2509	v. Ft. Dodge C. M. &		Ashford v. Thornton	9
Arlington Oil & G. Co.		S. R. Co.	2389	Ashland v. Marlborough	568.
v. Swann	1674	v. Fruit Co.	461		1722
Armagost v. Rising	344	v. Gorr	2141	Ashley v. Ashley	2446
Armendaiz v. Stillman	681	v. Higgins	1271	v. Root	1684
Armil v. R. Co.	1750	v. Hussey	1523	v. State	1442
Armington v. Stelle	2436	v. McNeil	529	v. West	1083
Armitage v. State	1205	v. Maryville	2382, 2386	Ashley Wire Co. v. Ill.	
Armory v. Delamirie	285, 291	v. Norton	251	Steel Co.	95
Armour v. Ross	719	v. Nye	987	Ashmead v. Colby	1521
v. Skene	283	v. Pawtuxet V. W.		Ashmore v. Hardy	1256,
Armour & Co. v. Indus-		Co.	1859c		1301
trial Board	1671	v. Smith	1244	Ashton v. Ashton,	
Armour Packing Co. v.		v. State,		11 S. D.	1036
V. Y. Produce Co.	1884	53 Ga.	2085	1 Vern.	2210
Armsterdam v. Puente	2527	5 Wyo.	905	Ashworth v. Kittredge	1690,
Armstrong v. Ackley	252,	v. The Bishop	1639		1700
	1719	v. White	581	v. Roberts	2212
v. Advance T. Co.	2153	Arnold's Estate, 147 Cal.	396,	Aske v. R. Co.	2220
v. Armstrong	2067	1081, 1738, 2098		Askea v. State	2058, 2236
v. Burrows	787	240 Pa.	2467	Askew v. People	1021, 1852,
v. Canada A. R. Co.	1750	Arnot v. People	1938		1977
v. DeForest Radio		Arnwine v. State	246, 1033	v. Reynolds	1086, 1779
T. & T. Co.	2065a	Aronovitz v. Arky	683, 688	v. Steiner	1301
v. Granite Co.	2463, 2464	Arrington v. Fleming	461	Aspinwall, Re	2319
v. Hewitt	2139	Arrott v. Pratt	1859b	v. Chisholm	1244
v. Huffstutler	1029	Arrowood v. R. Co.	791	Aspy v. Botkins	2220, 2384,
v. Lewis	2123	Arrowsmith's Estate	1382,		2385
v. Modern Woodmen	1073,		1417	Assignees of S. v.	
	1646	Arruza v. Laugier	1877	Boucher	1474
v. Morrow	2503	Arthur v. Arthur,		Assise v. Curet	1336
v. People	2062	38 Kan.	701	Associated Employers'	
v. Portland R. Co.	1856c	143 Wis.	2475	Reciprocal v. State	
v. Ross	2465	v. Broadnax	2088	Ind. Com.	4c
v. R. Co.	571, 1951	v. Gayle	1083	Astley v. Astley	238
v. State,		v. Wells	2117	Astor v. Ins. Co.	1947
30 Fla. 1938, 2501, 2530		Artope v. Goodall	1985	Atcheson v. Everitt	1818
21 Oh. St.	1677	Artrip v. Rasnake	2500	Atchison v. Coltrane	2416
33 Tex. Cr.	1018	Artz v. R. Co.	15, 911, 914,	v. Geiser	2509
v. U. S.	564, 1684		1890, 1893	v. Holloway	571
v. Yakima H. Co.	252, 282,	Aryman v. Marshall-		v. Johns	1719
	458	town	1719	v. King	1969
Armstrong Paint & V.		Asbestos Products Co.		v. Melson	2220
Works v. Continental		v. Matson	2442	v. Palmore	2200
Can Co.	2465	Asbury v. Hicklin	19	v. Watson	1978



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Atchison & N. R. Co. v.		Atlanta & St. Andrews		Attorney-General v. Em-	
Harper	463	B. R. Co. v. Fowler	20	erson	1859c
Atchison R. Co. v. U. S.	658	v. Kelly	18	v. Gaskill	1856a
Atchison, T. & S. F. R.		Atlanta & W. P. R. Co.		v. Green	1163
Co. v. Baker	561, 1404	v. Atlanta B. &		v. Hitchcock	194, 497, 953,
v. Baumgartner	2510	A. R. Co.	2572	962, 979, 1002, 1005,	
v. Bayes	2354	v. Venable,		1020, 1022, 1864	
v. Blackshire	2572	45 Ga.	1387	v. Horner	1584
v. Campbell	456	67 Ga.	1388	v. Joy	1350
v. Cattle Co.	1078	Atlanta C. S. R. Co. v.		v. Kelly	2260, 2268
v. Feehan	1037, 1263	Bagwell	461, 568	v. Köhler	1501, 1502
v. Frazier	688, 1722	v. Bates	199, 283	v. Le Merchant	4, 1177,
v. Headland	2580	Atlanta Coca-Cola B.		1180, 1199, 1208, 1209	
v. Huitt	714	Co. v. Danneman	2509	v. Lucas	2256
v. Logan	1750	Atlanta Journal v. May-		v. McQuade	2214
v. Osborn,		son	2498	v. Mico	2250
58 Kan.	456, 747, 1078	Atlanta K. & N. R. Co.		v. Nethercote	787
64 Kan.	1404	v. Strickland	1129	v. Newcastle upon	
v. Phipps	1873	Atlanta R. & P. Co. v.		Tyne Co.	1859c
v. Potter	1053	Monk	1003	v. Nottingham	451
v. Retford	283	Atlanta St. R. Co. v.		v. Parnther	1933
v. Ryan	1698	Walker	568, 1719	v. Pearson	2467
v. Thul	2220	Atlantic & B. R. Co. v.		v. Pelletier	289, 987, 2257,
Athens v. Miller	2509	Johnson	1841	2286, 2363	
Atherfold v. Beard	2373	v. Reynolds	1616	v. Radloff	64, 2257, 2269,
Atherton v. Atlantic		Atlantic & D. R. Co. v.		2371	
C. L. R. Co.	2201	Rieger	1897	v. Rice	1350, 2592
v. Defreeze	2113	Atlantic & G. W. R. Co.		v. Shore	2462, 2467
v. Emerson	754, 1640	v. Campbell	1943	v. Theakstone	1684
v. Gaslin	112, 1736	Atlantic Ave. R. Co. v.		v. Tomkins	1219
v. Tacoma R. & P. Co.	199	Van Dyke	1951	v. Toronto J. R. Club	6, 6b,
Athlone Peerage	1644	Atlantic C. L. R. Co. v.		2256, 2281	
Atkeson v. Lay	2580	Crosby	1755	v. Tufts	2375
Atkins v. Anderson	1388	v. Dexter	2415, 2432	v. Warwick	1661
v. Best	87	v. Partridge	1871	Attwell v. Lynch	1225
v. Hatton	2139	v. Shouse	461, 682, 1354	Attwood v. Small	1856, 2047
v. Humphreys	1388	v. Williams	2319	Atwater v. Cardwell	2429
v. Lewis	2109	Atlantic C. R. Co. v.		v. Schenck	2575
v. Meredith	1208	Goodin	2505	Atwell, Re	2360
v. Nelson	2065	Atlas Shoe Co. v. Bloom	1077,	v. State	1029, 1781
v. Palmer	811	1555		v. U. S.	2363
v. Seeley	1547	Atterberry v. Knox	2268	Atwood v. Atwood	1387,
v. State,		Atterbury's (Bishop)		1408, 1919,	
60 Ala.	1910	Trial	2378	1958, 1974	
16 Ark.	109, 111, 247,	Attila, The	1951	v. Cornwall	570, 1969, 2012
	396, 761, 1021,	Attix v. Minnesota S. Co.	792	v. Fricot	1239
	1329, 1667	Attleboro Mfg. Co. v.		v. Impson	922, 923
69 Ga.	2098	Frankfort M. A. &		v. Marshall	1890
119 Tenn.	689, 1938	P. G.	1063, 1078	v. Scott	89
Atkins' Examination	1395	Attorney-General v. —	2250	v. Welton	1022, 1817, 1820
Atkinson v. Atkinson	916	v. Barstow	1351	Atwood's Estate	2475
v. Burt	1552	v. Bond	1040	Auberle v. McKeesport	1951
v. Kirkpatrick	2440	v. Bradlaugh	1817	Aubuchon v. Murphy	1651
v. Morris	1736	v. Briant	2374, 2394	Auburn Seminary v.	
v. Nash	1414	v. Brown	2268	Calhoun	1302, 1304,
v. R. Co.	463	v. Bulpit	1842	2049	
v. Smith	1890	v. Cast Plate Glass		Audibert v. Michaud	772,
v. State	2282	Co.	2566, 2569	2158	
v. United R. Co.	288, 2220	v. Chambers	1862	Auditor v. Haycraft	1350
Atkinson's Estate	2525	v. Coventry	1858	Auffmordt v. Hedden	4c
Atlanta & C. A. R. Co.		v. Davison	1373	Auge v. Variol	2124
v. Gravitt	1404	v. Dean & Canons	291	Augur, Re	2523
Atlanta & S. R. Co. v.		v. Drohan	1351	Augur S. A. & G. Co. v.	
Randall	1405	v. Drummond	2470	Whittier	1201

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Augusta v. Hafers	458	Avery v. Burrall	451	Bach v. R. Co.	451
Augusta & S. R. Co. v.		v. Clemons	1779	Bachant v. Boston & M.	
Dorsey	460, 1385a,	v. Howell	901	R. Co.	1078
	1951, 1978	v. R. Co.	1943	Bachelor v. Nutting	1188,
v. McDade	2509	v. State,			1196
v. Randall	199, 1750, 1807,	121 Md.	359, 987	Bachinski v. Bachinski	389
	1896, 2206	10 Tex. App.	1842	Bachmeyer v. M. R.	
Augusta Factory v.		v. Stewart	1194, 1195	F. L. Assoc.	2500
Barnes	1750	v. Woodruff	1406	Bachus v. Owe Sam Goon	4c
Augusta U. S. Co. v.		Avery's Ex'rs v. Avery	1530,	Backus v. Ames	561
Forlaw	2102		1536	v. Barber	1896
Auld v. Cathro	2391	Aveson v. Kinnaird	1714, 1718,	Bacon v. Charlton	1718, 1722
v. Walton	745		1747, 1754,	v. Conroy	738
Aulger v. Smith	1267, 2115		1795, 2233	v. Federal M. & S. Co.	1862
Aulls v. Young	1704	Awdley v. Awdley	2122	v. Frisbie	2321
Ault v. Zehering	1681	Axel v. Kraemer	1890	v. Harrington	1141
Aultman v. Ritter	2311	Axford v. Meeks	2465	v. State	2056
v. Timm	2529	Axson v. Belt	2016	v. Towne	75, 258, 259,
Aultman Co. v. Ferguson	681	Ayala de Roxas v. Case	2515		1416
v. Mosloski	571	Ayer v. Ahlborn	1352	v. U. S.	321, 2184
Aultman T. & E. Co. v.		v. Mfg. Co.	2442	v. Williams	2020
Knoll	1078	Ayers v. Harris	797	Bacot v. Lumber Co.	905
Aumick v. Mitchell	2008, 2016	v. Hewitt	1291, 1676a	Baddeley v. Watkins	1958
Aurora v. Brown	458	v. Ins. Co.	1066	Badder v. Keefer	282
v. Cobb	928, 1615, 1890	v. Ratschesky	2529	Badgeley v. Bender	1665
v. Hillman	660	v. Wabash R. Co.	1890,	Badger v. Badger	1602, 1603
Ausland v. Parker	987		1895, 2495, 2505	v. Mills	2054
Ausmus v. People	693, 2072	v. Watson,		Badische A. & S. F. v.	
Austin v. Austin	391, 397	132 U. S.	1031	Klipstein	1271
v. Bartlett	273, 1750	137 U. S.	1567	v. Levinstein	2484
v. Brown Bros. Co.	2596	Aylesbury v. Harvey	1177	Badover v. Guaranty T.	
v. Chambers	1856	Aylesford Peerage Case	2063	& S. Bank	2498
v. Com.,		Aylett v. Jewel	2352	Baeder v. Jennings	157, 2139,
Ky., 40 S. W.	1442	Ayres v. Ayres,			2143
124 Ky.	1330, 1398,	43 N. J. Eq.	1511	Bachr v. State	1476
	1669	69 N. J. Eq.	2517	Baer v. State	1873
v. Forbis	1078	v. Duprey	923, 928, 1028,	Bageard v. Consol. T.	
v. Hanchet	73		1985	Co.	1075
v. Hilliers	1152	v. Stewart	1678	Baggs v. Martin	1158
v. King	1640	Ayrey v. Davenport	2450	Bagley v. Eaton	1196,
v. Rumsey	1312				1198, 1709
v. Sawyer	1083			v. Kennedy	1651
v. State,				v. McMickle	1192, 1198
14 Ark.	38, 363, 394,			v. Mason	235, 1719, 1721,
	1890				1974, 2220
101 Tenn.	2580			Baglin v. Earl-Eagle	
v. Tennessee	2580			Mining Co.	1704
v. Terry	1672			Bagsa v. Nagramada	1651,
v. Thomson	2125				1667
v. Willes	528, 1302			Bagwell v. R. Co.	2216, 2220
Austin & N. W. R. Co.				Bahl v. Byal	1958
v. Cluck	2220			Bahlke v. Brown	2573
Austine v. People	836, 852,			Bahrey v. Poniatishin	1623
	1267			Baier v. Selke	1078
Austrian v. Springer	1263			Baikie v. Chandless	1650
Autry v. Floyd	581			Bailey v. Alabama	1356
Auwarter v. Kroll	1078			v. Bailey	2069
Avan v. Frey	1195			v. Barclay	1777
Avary v. Searcy	1960			v. Beall	1911, 1958
Avera L. & I. Co. v.				v. Bee	2421
Yopp	2437			v. Bidwell	1292, 2164
Averett v. Averett	395			v. Centreville,	
Avery v. Adams	1239			108 Ia.	437, 438, 1974
v. Avery	2046			115 Ia.	458



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bailey v. Chesley	1141	Baker v. Arnold	2317	Baker Co. v. Huntington	2450,
v. Danforth	1466, 2160	v. Baker,			2472
v. Hammond	2531	16 Abb.	1729	Balbec v. Donaldson	2529
v. Hyde	74	13 Cal.	2067, 2068,	Balbo v. People	823, 851
v. Ind. Com.	4c		2069, 2527	Balcetti v. Serain	309
v. Kansas City	283	202 Ill.	233, 1417,	Bald v. Nuernberger	1082
v. Kerr	2579		1958, 2500	Balding v. Andrews	1018,
v. Kreutzmann	1691, 1693	v. Berry Hill M. S.			1750, 1756, 1976
v. M'Dowell	1684	Co.	2439	Baldney v. Ritchie	1200
v. N. H. & N. Co.	461	v. Blount	1308, 1312,	Baldrige v. Penland	1549,
v. Palmer	1267		1316		1558
v. Robinson	1672	v. Borello	67	Baldwin v. Bricker	1700
v. Seattle & R. R. Co.	914	v. Com.,		v. Burt	1195
v. State,		Ky., 17 S. W.	276	v. Gaines	1700, 1976
107 Ala.	1966	106 Ky.	987, 1434,	v. Gregg	1066, 1067
168 Ala.	2511		1442, 2277	v. Hale	1216, 2555
76 Fla.	21	v. Cotney	1978	v. McDonald	2588
56 Ga.	2059	v. Dobyns	2051, 2052	v. McKay	1246
94 Miss.	293	v. Drake	1779	v. Parker	2337
36 Nebr.	2085	v. Fairfax	1409	v. R. Co.,	
40 Tex. Cr.	821	v. Gas Co.	2507	4 Gray	65, 1621, 1984
42 Tex. Cr.	2081	v. Gausin	1754	68 Ia.	1415, 1951
v. Trumbull	458	v. Hagey	451	v. Soule	406
v. Trustees	1684	v. Haines	2016	v. State,	
v. Waddy	609	v. Hancock	461	Fla., 35 So.	347
v. Woods	1373, 1386	v. Harrington	460	12 Mo.	1938
Bailey's Estate, Re	2503	v. Humphrey	1082	v. Wentworth	1003
Bailey Lumber Co. v.		v. Irish	97, 199	Bales v. State	1693
Boston & M. R. Co.	455	v. Jamison	1879	Balfour v. Chew	1678, 1681
Baillie v. Assur. Co.	714	v. Jones	1738	v. Fresno C. & I. Co.	2463
Bain v. Case	1706	v. Joseph	953, 1029	Balguy v. Broadhurst	2319
v. Cushman	1944	v. Kelly	1784	Balkum v. State	59
v. Hargrave	2223, 2254	v. Lemon	1938	Ball, Re	1736
v. Mason	1644	v. Lyman	1406	v. Boston	2498, 2502
v. U. S.	18, 2268	v. McMurry Contract-		v. Com.	987
v. Whitehaven & F. R.		ing Co.	2053	v. Evening Amer. Pub.	
Co.	5, 18, 1074,	v. Madison	568, 1951	Co.	406
	1845	v. Massengale	1299	v. Gates	1544
Bainbridge v. State	341	v. Miles	2355	v. Hardesty	1976
Baines v. Higgins	1195	v. Mygatt	2579	v. James	2314
Bair v. Struck	18, 457	v. Paine	1062, 2417	v. Loomis	1086
Baird v. Baird	2433, 2437	v. People	359	v. Loughridge	2143
v. Cochran	529, 2192,	v. Preston	531, 1225, 1651	v. Phelan	2462, 2463
	2222, 2223	v. Pritchard	2268	v. U. S.,	
v. Daly	283, 458, 1951	v. R. Co.	2319	147 Fed.	15, 987, 1850,
v. Denver & R. G. R.		v. Sherman	1976, 1978		1854
Co.	747	v. State,		163 U. S.	457
v. Gibberd	1010	122 Ala.	1969	Ball's Estate	2498, 2502
v. Gleckler	1896	4 Ark.	363	Ballard v. Ballard	745, 748
v. Reilly	1521	85 Ark.	1447	v. Bank	1225
v. Rice,		Fla., 40 So.	987, 1850	v. State,	
10 Call	1062	14 Ga. App.	2059	31 Fla.	580
63 Pa.	1598, 1665,	174 Ind.	1079	19 Nebr.	682, 1852,
	2159	Ind., 129 N. E.	228		1853
v. Shaffer	1301a, 1998	Miss., 33 So.	62, 278	Ballard's Estate	1511
v. Vines	2536	Tex. Cr., 83		Ballenger v. Barnes	2098
Baird's Estate	2382	S. W.	1956, 2575	Ballentine v. White	620, 2027
Baird Lumber Co. v.		120 Wis.	321, 2235,	Ballew v. U. S.	821
Devlin	754		2497	Balliet v. U. S.	6, 341, 1850,
Baiz, Re	2566	v. Thompson	1909		1854, 1890, 2273,
v. Malo	2372	v. Towles	1248		2276, 2762
Bakeman v. Rose	922, 923,	v. Trotter	1270, 1966	Ballinger v. Davis	1312
	924, 987, 1111, 1985	v. Washington I. Co.	1078	Balliot v. Bowman	529
Baker v. Adams	1189, 1320	v. Zimmerman	791	Ballmann v. Fagin	2258, 2264

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ballou v. Black	1350	Banatso v. Dabbay	2580	Bank of New Zealand v. Simpson	2465
Ballou's Case	4c	Banbury Peerage Case	68,	Bank of Nova Scotia v. Robinson	377
Ballow v. Collins	693, 1290, 1299		269, 1065, 1388, 1490, 1605, 1670, 2036, 2063, 2494, 2527	Bank of Ottawa v. Stamco Ltd.	1062
Ballowe v. Com.	194	Banco Commercial v. Rodriguez	2596	Bank of Phoenix City v. Taylor	15, 1777
Baltazar v. Alberto	1336	Banco de Sonora v. Bankers' M. C. Co.	1697, 2536	Bank of Rochester v. Gray	1675, 2165
Baltimore v. War	208, 2105	Bancroft v. Bancroft	2063, 2069	Bank of Salina v. Henry	2283
Baltimore & L. T. Co. v. Cassell	568, 571, 1951	v. Wentworth	2281	Bank of State of N. Y. v. Southern N. Bank	224
Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Camp	250	Bandy v. U. S.	6	Bank of the Metropolis v. Jones	529
v. Colvin	65	Bane v. Gwinn	2008, 2016	Bank of Union v. Stack	392
v. Fonts	1154	Banfill v. Byrd	209	Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge	2535
v. Glenn	1271, 1703, 2573	v. Leigh	1252	v. Dunn	529
v. Hellenthal	460, 1976	Bangess v. Partee	6a	v. Sill	1198
v. Henthorne	96, 249	Banghart v. Hyde	392	v. White	1678
v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Co.	2440	Banigan v. Banigan	2380	Bank of Utica v. Hillard	529, 1858, 2210
v. Kreager	1354	Bank v. Brown	658, 1202, 1207, 2094, 2105	v. Mersereau	2294, 2298, 2315, 2321, 2328
v. Morgan	2390, 1416	v. Clark	1777	Bank of Washington v. Kurtz	1206
v. Polly	1164	v. Cowan	736, 747	Bank of Wilmington and B. v. Wollaston	1684
v. Rambo	280, 568, 987, 1270, 1719	v. Dandridge	2451, 2535	Bankhead v. State	1750
v. State	18, 65, 104, 770, 913	v. Fordyce	1890	Banking House v. Darr	749, 1060, 1640, 1677, 1680
v. Thompson	571, 681, 728	v. Gifford	1404	Banks v. Braman	1698
v. Wilson	2509	v. Henry	2260, 2279	v. Burnam	2579
Baltimore & O. S. W. R. Co. v. Brubaker	1225	v. Hull	529	v. Com., 145 Ky.	233, 1938, 1958
v. Hollenbeck	2536	v. Jacobs	2005, 2008	190 Ky.	2183
v. Tripp	454, 1356	v. Johnson	2195	v. Connecticut R. & L. Co.	2219
Baltimore & P. R. Co. v. Landrigan	2510	v. Keeler	1985	v. Darden	2109
Baltimore & S. P. Co. v. Hackett	1951	v. Kennedy	581, 1777	v. Farquharson	1312
Baltimore & S. R. Co. v. Woodruff	15, 456	v. Leland	2124	v. Jacobs	2016
Baltimore & Y. T. R. v. Leonhardt	458	v. M'Williams	1210	v. State,	84 Ala. 838, 857
v. State	458	v. Mumford	2444	96 Ala.	2506
Baltimore B. R. Co. v. Sattler	451, 1943	v. Plannett	1539	Bannen v. State	398, 1136
Baltimore C. & A. R. Co. v. Moon	1867	v. Salina	2280, 2283	Banning v. Banning	2155
Baltimore City P. R. Co. v. Cooney	460, 1976	v. Slemmons	987	v. Marleau	1085, 1086
v. Knee	1129	v. Stryker	924	v. R. Co.	1164
v. Tanner	681, 1003, 1750, 1976	v. Zorn	735, 745, 749, 758, 759, 761	Bannon's Will	916
Baltimore Consol. R. Co. v. State	1387	Bank of British Columbia v. Trapp	1856a	Banta v. Banta	2066
Baltimore Elev. Co. v. Neal	199, 250, 571, 1951	Bank of British N. America v. Delafield	1073	Bantley v. Finney	2427
Baltimore P. & C. R. Co. v. Stoner	1943	v. McElroy	1911	Barabasz v. Kabat	2496
Baltimore R. Co. v. Johnson	1943	Bank of Columbia v. Magruder	585	Baran v. Reading Iron Co.	2509
Baltimore Refrigerating & H. Co. v. Kreiner	2508	Bank of Guntersville v. Webb	2416	Barataria & L. C. Co. v. Field	461
Baltimore Traction Co. v. Appel	2507	Bank of Irwin v. American Exp. Co.	347	Barbar v. Martin	321
Baltimore Turnpike v. State	1976	Bank of Jennings v. Jennings	1347	Barbat v. Allen	604, 619
Bamfield v. Massey	75, 76, 210, 1106	Bank of Meadville v. Hardy	2450	Barbe v. Terr.	580, 2059
		Bank of Middlebury v. Rutland	1623	Barbed Wire Patent, The	2065a
		Bank of Montreal v. Snyder	1205		
		Bank of N. Liberties v. Davis	905, 907		
		Bank of Newbury v. R. Co.	2572		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Barber v. Anderson	2117	Barker v. Kuhn	2327	Barnes v. State,	
v. Bennett	1548, 1777	v. McFerran	1511	88 Ala.	108, 398, 1841
v. City Drug Store	2155	v. Mackay	2232	111 Ala.	2497
v. Gingell	377, 1391	v. Mfg. Co.	437	24 Ga. App.	58
v. Goddard	619	v. Massachusetts M.		36 Tex.	826, 833, 855
v. Holmes	1641, 2529	L. Ins. Co.	1726	r. Trompowsky	702, 1288,
v. International Co.	690,	v. People	1354		1311, 1312,
	1676, 1677, 1680,	v. Perry	792, 795,		1313, 1320
	2104, 2165		1157, 1158	v. Trust Co.	2104
v. McKay	1681	v. Pope	689, 1621, 1938	v. U. S.	2016
v. Manchester	561, 1951	v. Publishers' Paper		Barnes' Case	2287
v. Merriam	688, 1719	Co.	1082	Barnet v. N. Y. C. & H.	
v. People	21, 2231, 2242	v. Ray	21, 291, 1471, 1476	R. R. Co.	2508
v. R. Co.	2463	v. Rhode Island Co.	905	v. Woodbury	1678, 1680
v. State	1012, 2336	v. State,		Barnet's Lessee v. Day	1490
Barber's Appeal	229, 681,	188 Ind.	133, 398	Barnett v. Barnett,	
	682, 1548, 1576,	73 Neb.	20	284 Ill.	1681
	2132, 2500	v. Sterne	2419	Ky., 64 S. W.	2046
Barber Co. v. Ullman	1415	v. Western U. T. Co.	104	v. Cohen	1374, 1671
Barbour v. Archer	1703	Barkley v. Bradford	1869	v. People	1398
v. Duncanson	1085	v. Screven	1664	v. Stanton	1966
v. Watts	1280, 1651	Barkly v. Copeland	958, 960,	v. State,	
Barbre v. Goodale	2438		1126, 1128, 1874	88 Ala.	2061
Barcello v. Hapgood	1677,	Barkman v. Hopkins	1271,	117 Ga.	2239
	1680		1684	50 Tex. Cr.	2100
Barcelo v. Manila Elec-		v. State	363, 389, 390, 987,	v. Wilson	1256
tric R. & L. Co.	2509		1157	Barnewall v. Murrell	1302,
Barclay v. Com.	2239	Barksdale v. Bullington	1290		1310, 2452
Barddell v. State	2582	Barley v. Byrd	1525, 1651	Barnewell v. Stephens	1966
Barden v. Hornthal	2520	Barley's Case	1193	Barney v. Barney	1304
Bardin v. State	1405	Barlow v. Barnes	1730	v. Quaker Oats Co.	664
v. Stevenson	1248, 2132	v. Salt Lake & U. R.		v. State	1853, 2497
Bardsley v. Sternberg	1672	Co.	458	Barney's Will,	
Barelli v. Lytle	382	v. State	2354	187 Mich.	1304
Barfield v. Britt	1432	v. Vowell	583	70 Vt.	1739, 2503
v. Hewlett	1312, 1320	v. Waters	1738	Barnhart v. Riddle	2465
Barford v. Barford &		Barlow B. Co. v. Parsons	784	Barnhill v. Hardee	1582, 1587
McLeod	564	Barmby v. Plummer	1203	Barnowski v. Helson	2509
Barg v. Bousefield	282	Barnard v. Crosby	1225	Barnstable, The	2465
Barham v. Bank of De-		v. Gantz	2503	Barnum v. Barnum,	
light	2153	v. Kellogg	2440	9 Conn.	2115
Barhight v. Tammany	2539	v. Schuler	1635	42 Md.	1492, 1603
Barhyte v. Summers	1908	v. State	905, 1037	Barnwell v. Hannegan	1112
Baring v. Reeder	530, 607,	v. U. S.	1784	v. Merion	2578
	2234, 2235	Barnes v. Barnes	2505	Baron v. Reading Iron	
v. Shippen	529	v. Brownlee	2523	Co.	283
Bark Havre, The	1841	v. Com.,		Barough v. White	1084
Bark Vivid. The	4d	101 Ky.	309, 1249	Barr v. Armstrong	1206, 1234
Barker v. Barker,		110 Ky.	1442	v. Gratz	2141
16 N. H.	2115, 2120	Ky., 70 S. W.	1111	v. Graybill	1511
14 Wis.	1204	v. Danville St. R. &		v. Hack	74, 988
v. Bell	911	L. Co.	2509	v. Moore	406
v. Bushnell	1062	v. District	2535	v. People	2270
v. Citizens' M. F. Ins.		v. Harris	2300, 2302	v. Post	93
Co.	2463	v. Ingalls	379, 571	v. State	1819
v. Coleman	568, 1722, 1974	v. Kelly	2117	v. Sumner	1938
v. Com.,		v. Lynch	1210	Barranger v. Baum	2569
Ky., 50 S. W.	1839	v. Martin	613	Barrara v. State	2060
90 Va.	1620	v. Mawson	378	Barras v. Barras	291
v. Comins	1938	v. Rumford	1750	Barrenberg v. Boston	437
v. Dixie	2228, 2242	v. Seaboard Airline		Barrett v. Cady	2526
v. Great Hive	4e	R. Co.	1951	v. Chicago M. & St. P.	
v. Haskell	750, 1550,	v. Simmons	1362, 1521	R. Co.	1684, 1750,
	1555, 1558	v. Squier	783		2510

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Barrett v. Featherstone	1067	Bartlett v. Clough	609	Bass v. State,	
v. Fish	2183	v. Decreet	253	136 Ind.	736, 2098
v. French	1080, 1082,	v. Delprat	21, 1085, 1795	v. U. S.	581
	1086	v. Emerson	1362, 1567	Bass Furnace Co. v.	
v. Hammond	458	v. Falk	581	Glasscock	728
v. Kelly	1565, 1956	v. Gale	2123	Bassell v. Elmore	406
v. Long	404, 406	v. Gillard	2122	Bassett v. Glass	944
v. Magner	2155	v. Hoyt	18, 772, 1062, 2550	v. Marshall	1352
v. Murphy	791	v. Lewis	2251, 2268, 2272	v. Shares	461
v. R. Co.	1042	v. Nova Scotia S. Co.	1564,	v. Spofford	1539, 1549
v. State	398		1587, 1651	v. State	782
Barrett's Adm'r v.		v. O'Donoghue	2132	v. U. S.	2239
Brand	682, 1750, 1951	v. Patton	2354	Bassham v. State	914, 1890
Barrickman v. Marion Oil		v. Remington	2472	Bassity's Estate	2065
Co.	451	v. Smith	1872, 2550	Basterach v. Atkinson	1195
Barrie v. Quinby	2440	v. Tarbox	1062	Bastrop State Bank v.	
v. Smith	2434	v. Wheeler	1230	Levy	289, 1531
Barringer v. Barringer	2239	v. Wilbur	1048	Basye v. State	59, 194, 247,
Barrington v. Missouri	1850	Bartley v. People	825, 862,	826, 934, 968, 988,	
Barron v. Anniston	2498		2071	1442, 1867, 2303, 2326	
v. Daniel	1681	v. State,		Batchelder v. Batchelder	1021,
v. Grillard	2232	53 Nebr.	1230, 2497,		1028, 1738
v. Mason	2539		2511	v. Manchester R. Co.	1808
v. People	276	55 Nebr.	784, 2511	v. Sanborn	1543
Barrow v. State	418	Barto v. Morris	1195	v. Taylor	1919
Barrows v. Downs	564, 1271,	Barton v. Bruley	62, 75, 212,	Batchelor v. Honeywood	702,
	1684		357, 1021		704
v. White	1456	v. Com.	925, 2277	v. State	852
Barrus v. Phaneuf	2203	v. Dundas	1525, 1556	Bate v. Hill	210, 986, 1106
Barry v. Alexander	1858	v. Kane	642, 770, 1204	v. Kinsey	1204, 1207,
v. Babbington	1472, 1476	v. Morphee	979, 987, 988		2307, 2308, 2309
v. Barry	2067	v. Murrain	1225, 1239	Bateman v. Bailey	1081, 1783
v. Bennett	1876	v. Osborn	2232	v. Bateman	1189, 1225
v. Butlin	2502, 2503	v. Shull	1029	v. Phillips	1858
v. Colville	2437	v. State,		v. Rutland	457
v. Crowley	2165	154 Ind.	276, 1003	Bates v. Ableman	1082, 1086
v. Hoffman	1302, 1651,	18 Oh.	347	v. Barber	691, 1111, 1985
	1676a	89 Tex. Cr.	1671, 1938	v. Bates	1738
v. McCollom	1729	v. Terr.	2512	v. Cain's Estate	2518
v. Mutual Life Ins.		v. Thompson	604	v. Cilley	616
Co.	2416	Barton P. M. Co. v.		v. Coe	1161, 1856c
v. People	1005	Taylor	2410	v. McCully	1681, 2573
v. Rhea	1678	Bartow v. Brands	496	v. Morris	288
v. Ryan	1299	Barwell v. Adkins	406	v. Preble	736, 745, 754
v. Smith	2535	Bas v. Steele	1859c	v. R. Co.	2456
v. Snowden	2573	Bascom v. Bascom	2067, 2069	v. Ryland	585
v. Sturdivant	620	Basham v. Com.	276	v. Sabin	616, 754, 1249,
Barry's Will	1303	Bashford v. Barstow	2373		1835
Barrymore v. Taylor	2104	Bashinski v. State	254	v. Sharon	1925, 1978
Barson v. Mulligan	2531	v. Swint	2433	v. State,	
Bartelott v. International		Basich v. U. S.	368	60 Ark.	987
Bank	2494	Basket v. Univ. of		78 Fla.	861
Bartels v. Brain	2465	Cambridge	1684	4 Ga. App.	969, 1042
Barth v. State	821, 851	Baskett v. Rudy	615	Bates & Rogers C. Co. v.	
Bartholomew v. Bank	2580	Baskin v. Vernon	1652	Fluharity's Guardian	570
v. Edwards	1189, 1195	Basnett v. Cherryvale		Bateson v. Hartsink	2307
v. Farwell	1521	G. L. & P. Co.	1062	Batesville v. Smythe	78,
v. People	987, 1270	Bass v. Gobert	1547		1620
v. Stephens	1214	v. Sevier	2138	Bath v. Bathersea	1388, 2121
v. Walsh	1275	v. State,		Bath and Mountague's	
Bartleman v. Moretti	2281	37 Ala.	2060	Case	1991, 1992, 2047
Bartlesville Zinc Co. v.		29 Ark.	1667	Bathrick v. Detroit Post	73,
Fisher	795	58 Fla.	2513		392, 692, 2097
Bartlett v. Boyd	1352	103 Ga.	398	Batre v. Simpson	1530



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Batt v. Batt	289	Baxter v. State,		Beard v. Guild	283
Batt & Co.'s Reg. Trade-		15 Lea.	1398	v. Kirk	717, 1943
marks	1666	91 Ohio	331	v. Royal Neighbors	1669
Batte v. Stone	1651	Baxter's Estate	1302	v. Ryan	1225, 2141
Batten v. State	276	Bay State Iron Co. v.		Beard's Lessee v. Talbot	1564
Battersbee v. Calkins	291, 2516	Goodall	2268	Bearden v. State	2349
Batthews v. Galindo	2230	Bayani v. Collector	4c	Beardslee v. Columbia Tp.	
Battie-Wrightson, Re	2472	Bayeux v. Beryhale	1347		437, 792, 1951
Battin v. Woods	1240	Bayha v. Munford	2529	Beardsley, Re	2195
Battis, In re	2475	Bayley v. Bates	1670	v. Bridgman	406
v. Chicago R. I. &		v. Wylie	1215, 2111	v. Foot	1820
P. R. Co.	1719, 2382,	Baylis v. Atty.-Gen'l	2473	v. Wildman	1022
	2383, 2384, 2389	Bayliss v. Cockcroft	581	Beardstown v. Clark	1951
Battle v. State	1033	Baylor v. Smithers	1668	v. Virginia,	
Battle Creek v. Haak	2354	Bayne v. Stone	1245	76 Ill.	1712, 2421
Battles v. Holley	2144	Bayonne K. Co. v. Um-		81 Ill.	1678, 1712
v. Landenslager	64	benhauer	2165	Bearman v. Hunt	2195
v. State	398	Bays v. Herring	1908	Bearse v. Mabie	2034
Batturs v. Sellers	1056	v. Hunt	1908	Bearss v. Copley	571, 1038
Baty v. Elrod	2232	Baysinger v. Terr.	1755	Beasley v. Beasley	2436
Baucum v. George	1215, 1651	Beach v. Brown	1730	v. Clarke	1239
Baudin v. Pollock	1186	v. Catlin	1080, 1082	Beason v. State,	
Bauer v. Indianapolis	458	v. Fulton Bank	1898	72 Ala.	1821
v. State,		v. Mills	1537, 1549	Okl. Cr., 195 Pac.	
144 Cal.	2131	v. O'Riley	2025		1873
99 Nebr.	1230	v. U. S.	2272	Beatson v. Skene	2378, 2379
Bauer's Estate	2312	v. Wise	1083	Beattie v. Boston Elev.	
Bauerman v. Radenius	1076	v. Workman	2166	R. Co.	2509
Baugh v. Read	2474	Beachcroft v. Beachcroft	2463	v. Browne	2445
Baughan v. Graham	1684	Beachinall v. Beachinall	2426	Beatty v. Gilmore	1951
Baughner v. Gesell	1958	Beacon L. v. F. Ass. Co.	2462	Beaty v. Com.	1448
Baughman v. Baughman,		Beadle v. Harrison	1963	v. Knowler	2572
29 Kan.	2088	Beadles v. Alexander	1511,	Beaubien v. Cicotte	689, 761,
32 Kan.	1938		1736, 1738		957, 1041, 1160,
Baulec v. R. Co.	199, 250	Beakes v. Da Cunha	95		1738, 1920, 1934, 1938
Baum v. Lynn	2433	Beal v. Nichols	915, 1888, 1890	Beauchamp v. Perry	1084
v. Palmer	2596	v. Robeson	64	v. State	1126
Baum Iron Co. v. Berg	770	Beal-Doyle D. G. Co.		Beaufort v. Smith	1591
Baumann v. Steingester	2311	r. Carr	1750, 1751	Beaumont v. Fell	2477
v. Trust Co.	2575	Beale v. Bird	1858	v. Field	2473
Baumer v. French	1352	v. Boston	463, 1943	v. Mountain	2572
Baumgartner v. Eigenbrot	19	v. Brown	607	v. Perkins	1993
v. State	2060	v. Posey	273, 660, 1977	Beauregard v. Gunnison	
Baumier v. Antiau	783	Beall v. Barclay	1212	City	93, 2214, 2281
Baumle v. Verde	2354	v. Bealls	1662	Beauvais v. Wall	1239
Baunen v. State	770	v. Cunningham	1081	Beauvoir Club v. State	2270
Bauskett v. Keith	905	v. Dearing	1213, 1225,	Beaven v. M'Donnell	233
Baustian v. Young	790, 792		2143	v. Stuart	2297
Bavington v. Robinson	66,	v. Dick	1225, 1651	Beaver v. Slear	2442
	581	v. Ledlow	1779	v. Taylor	1777
Baxendale v. Bennett	2420	v. Poole	1248	Beavers v. Bowen	1669
Baxter v. Abbott	232, 569,	v. Spear	811	v. State,	
	1511, 1938	Beam v. Link	2363	103 Ala.	1130
v. Baxter	2069	Beament v. Foster	2500	58 Ind.	792
v. Camp	1124, 2535	Beamer v. Clayton	1738, 2503	Beayne v. Beal	7a
v. Cedar Rapids	2390	v. Darling	2313	Beazley v. Meyers	282
v. Doe	442, 457	Beamish v. Beamish	2082,	Behee v. Tinker	1893
v. Gormley	1141, 1976		2421	Beberstein v. Terr.	347
v. Hamilton	2016	Beamon v. Ellice	1842	Beck v. Hood	960
v. Knowles	1133	Bean v. Evans	2115	v. Staats	1164
v. Knox	682	v. Green	2336	v. State	2512
v. McDonnell	2580	v. Quimby	803, 2300	v. Utah-Idaho	
v. Pritchard	2450	Beard v. Boylan	2435	Sugar Co.	1081
v. R. Co.	438, 571, 792	v. Com.	2354	v. Wilkins-Ricks Co.	2508

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Becker, Re	1859	Beer v. Ward	1645, 2323	Bell v. Milwaukee E. R.	
v. Becker	2455	Beers v. Aylsworth	1682	& L. Co.	21, 688
v. Cain	1040	v. Hawley	1082	v. Moloney	784
v. Interstate Business		Beery v. U. S.	822, 836, 855,	v. Parke	74
Men's Acc. Ass'n	7a		858, 865	v. Porter	1573
v. Koch	905, 907, 1006	Beeson v. Beeson	2303, 2313	v. Prewitt	1890
v. Quigg	1384, 1635, 1709	v. Green	2442	v. R. Co.,	
v. Philadelphia	1075	v. Moore	1817	64 Ia.	455, 1204
v. R. Co.,		Beets v. State	736, 749, 753,	86 Mo.	613
131 N. Y.	1943		1450	v. Radford	392
177 Pa.	463	Beever v. Hanson	283	v. Rinker	75, 210
Becket v. Crossfield	1976	Befay v. Wheeler	392	v. Rinner	934
Beckett v. Aid Ass'n	457, 561	Beggans' Will	1417, 1511	v. Smith	1304
Beckford v. Wildman	2200	Beggarly v. State	830, 834,	v. Spokane	437
Beckham v. State	824, 833		852, 855	v. Staacke	2465
Beckley v. Alexander	460	Beggs v. State	1644	v. State,	
Beckman v. Lincoln &		Beglin v. Brotherhood	2385a	44 Ala.	1842
N. W. R. Co.	2486	v. Ins. Co.	2385a, 2387	74 Ala.	390, 1036
v. Souther	258	Behn v. Young	2164	124 Ala.	1109, 2498
Becknell v. Hosier	2389	Behnke v. Kroening	21	140 Ala.	1966
Beckwith v. Benner	2313	Behrens v. Behrens	1736	Ark., 180 S. W.	682
v. Butler	2123	Behrman v. Terry	1842	91 Ga.	2582
v. R. Co.	2220	Beiderbecke v. Transp. Co.	93	93 Ga.	1072
v. Sydebotham	672, 1917	Beier v. St. Louis T. Co.	905	100 Ga.	1109, 1807
v. Talbot	1640	Beitman v. Hopkins	2336	57 Md.	317
Bedard v. Berkey	792, 796	Bekkedal Lumber Co. v.		Miss., 38 So.	1021,
v. Chase	581	Ind. Com.	2510		1038, 1349
v. Hall	1350, 2577	Belair v. R. Co.	1951	72 Miss.	1442
v. R. Co.	720	Belber v. Calvo	377	31 Tex. Cr.	2277
Bedenbaugh v. Southern		Belcher v. Carthage		33 Tex. Cr.	852
R. Co.	65	Machine Co.	4c	v. Stewart	1876
Bedford Case	1712	v. Fox	2143	v. Terr.	2063, 2527
Bedgood v. McLain	2525	v. Magnay	586	v. Toluca Coal Co.	1951
v. State	200, 398, 987,	Beld v. Darst	2455	v. W. C. S. Co.	283
	2283	Belden v. Allen	1874	v. Wetherill	1257
Bedtkey v. Bedtkey	1890	v. Carter	2408	v. Woodman	1021
Bee Pub. Co. v. Shields	406	Belford v. State	133, 987, 2061	v. Young	382, 1194, 1195,
v. World Pub. Co.	1230,	Belk v. Belk	1640, 2520		2105
	1978	v. Meagher	1269	Bell's Case,	
Beebe v. De Baum	1974	Belknap v. Stewart	778	1 Browne	987
v. Knapp	987	Belknap Hardware Co. v.		Bellamy v. Hawkins	2110
v. McNeill	1225	Sleeth	289	Bellamy's Case	1228, 1252
v. Redward	1456, 2596	Bell v. Ansley	1081	Belle of N. D. Co. v.	
v. Tanner	1681	v. Bank	95, 736, 747	Riggs	2220
Beebee v. Parker	380, 1592,	v. Bell,		Bellefontaine & I. R.	
	1670	34 N. Br.	1817, 2066	Co. v. Bailey	675, 1951
Beebees, Ex parte	2204, 2205	12 Pa. St.	1911	Beller v. Jones	687, 1938
Beech v. Haynes	2123	v. Bell	2046, 2067	Bellerophon, The	2378
v. Jones	735, 753	v. Bowdoin	1681	Bellet, Ex parte	2220
v. State	1079	v. Brewster	2008, 2145	Belleville v. Wells	1350
Beeche Dene, The	2508	v. Chambers	1891	Belleville Stone Co. v.	
Beecher v. Denniston	291, 677	v. Chandler	1203	Comben	461
Beeching v. Gower	586	v. Chaytor	1297	Bellinger v. People	1263,
Beccroft v. Great North-		v. Clarion	19		1667, 2260
ern R. Co.	571	v. Davidson	2118	Bellows v. Todd	1219
Beedle v. People	1013	v. Davis	2421	Belmont v. Morrill	2572
Beekman v. Hamlin	1640	v. Denson	1248	v. Vinalhaven	1784
Beeler v. Young	1339	v. Farwell	2165	Belote v. State	858
Beeler's Ex'x v. Cumber-		v. Gilbert Paper Co.	1856	Belskis v. Dering Coal	
land T. & T. Co.	2596	v. Hearne	1207	Co.	18, 1261, 1263, 1750
Beeman v. Supreme		v. Ingestre	2409	Belt v. Lawes	221, 991
Lodge	95, 2152	v. Kendrick	1225	v. State	1051, 1186
Beemer v. Kerr	1046	v. McCawley	1676a, 2141	Belt E. L. Co. v. Allen	2220
Beer, In re	2283	v. Milwaukee	1700, 2319	Belton v. Briggs	1195



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Beltran v. Gauthreaux	613	Bennett v. State,		Benton v. State,	
Beltzhoover v. Black-		62 Ark.	1399	30 Ark.	1164, 1803
stock	2294	66 Fla.	1329, 1442	78 Ark.	18, 987
Bemis v. Bishop	1976	68 Fla.	1416, 1668,	Benton's Estate	1669
v. Charles	1208		2276	Benzinger v. Hemler	2314
v. R. Co.	561, 1951	3 Ind.	2354	Berberich v. Bridge Co.	461
v. Temple	444, 458, 461	Mart. & Y.	2167, 2576	Bercher v. Gunter	1969
Ben v. Peete	1225, 1651, 2141	1 Swan	1817	Berckmans v. Berckmans	460
v. State	1434	32 Tex. Cr.	2098	Berd v. Lovelace	2290
Benaway v. Coyne	1839, 1840	80 Tex. Cr.	2233, 2336,	Berdel v. Egan	1195
Benckenstein v. Schott	2195		2340	Bereal v. State	231
Bender v. Montgomery	93	Tex. Cr., S1 S. W.	276	Berenson v. Conant	2445
v. Pitzer	1567, 1568,	57 Wis.	681	Beresford v. Attorney-	
	1584	v. Stout	1085	General	1412
v. State	1350	v. Susser	15, 278	Berg v. R. Co.	1698
Benedict v. Boulton	1911	v. Thomson	2434	v. Spink	717
v. Flanagan	2008, 2016	v. Tillmon	2444	Bergan v. Central Ver-	
v. Fond du Lac	1951	v. Walker	2105, 2192	mont R. Co.	2491
v. Heineberg	1677	v. Whitehouse	1862	Bergen v. Bergen	2067
v. Matthews	2016	Bennifield v. Hypres	613	v. People	1405, 2071
v. Nichols	1326, 1667, 2121	Benning v. Nelson	334	Bergen Co. T. Co. v.	
v. State	106, 2300	Bennison v. Walbank	791	Bliss	1978
v. Union Agricultural		Benoist v. Darby	253	Berger v. Booth	1897
Soc'y	461	Benoit v. R. Co.	2494	v. Clasel	2472
Benedicto v. DeLaRama	1606	Benrud v. Anderson	1081,	Bergere v. U. S.	1736, 2520
Benefiel v. Aughe	1651		2421	Berges v. Daverede	2054
Bener v. Edgington	1086	Bensberg v. Washington		Bergh v. Colmenson	20
Benglesdorf v. Hanaway	391	University	2500	Bergheimer v. Bergheimer	
Benham v. Cary	334	Benson v. Bellasis	2426		2245
v. Dunbar	463	v. Files	1960	Bergstrand v. Townsend	987
v. Richardson	133	v. Johnson	1890	Berkeley Peerage Case	1023,
Benjamin, Re	2531	v. Lundy	1086		1124, 1260, 1362, 1367,
v. Coventry	2328	v. McFadden	660		1377, 1481, 1482, 1483,
v. Hathaway	2223	v. Morgan	2242		1484, 1486, 1487, 1495,
v. R. Co.	1415, 1951	v. Olive,			1500, 1588, 1839, 2286
v. State	1182	Bunb.	2138, 2139	Berkey v. Judd	581
v. Wheeler	1021	2 Str.	1417	Berles v. Adsit	2240
Benje v. Creagh	1587	v. R. Co.,		Berlin, The	4d
Benner v. Bailey	2408	98 Cal.	2580	Berlin v. Berlin	2245
Bennet v. Paine	1679	23 R. I.	461	v. Cantrell	620
v. Robinson	1300, 1316	v. Raymond	1081, 1160	Bermon v. Woodbridge	2121
Bennett v. Adams	2098	v. Shotwell	1404	Bernard v. Lewis	2167
v. Bennett	2526	v. State,		v. Pittsburg Coal Co.	1067,
v. Com.	218, 1873	149 Ark.	1841, 2183		1133
v. Eddy	944	79 Miss.	1985	v. R. Co.	2509
v. Fail	568, 675	Tex. Cr., 69		Bernards Tp. v. Bedmin-	
v. Griffiths	1862	S. W.	2265	ster Tp.	1490
v. Hyde	73	v. Superior Mfg.		Bernasconi v. Atkinson	2474,
v. Ins. Co.,		Co.	1951		2477
43 Minn.	1040	v. U. S.	580, 586	v. Fairbrother	905
107 Tenn.	2047	Bent v. Allot	2227	Berneker v. State	1983
v. Jones	1387, 1666	v. Baker	529, 583	Bernett v. Taylor	1316
v. Lumber Co.	916	Bentler v. Com.	2252, 2281	Berney v. Dinsmore	291
v. McDonald	344	Bentley v. Bentley's		v. Mitchell	1404, 1406
v. Marion	2577	Estate	1893	Bernhard v. State	2060
v. Mathewes	709, 1991,	v. Cooke	2227, 2231, 2239	Bernhardt v. Brown	1298
	2008, 2016	v. Fleming	2355	v. City & Suburban	
v. Needham	1976, 1978	v. Jun	608	R. Co.	290, 2103, 2386
v. O'Byrne	1029	v. McCall	1651, 2143, 2146	Bernstein v. Humes	2141
v. People	1781	v. O'Bryan	1085	Berry v. Berry	2067
v. Runyon	2141	v. Ward	1558	v. Clark	1665
v. State,		Benton v. Craig	1245, 1248	v. Com.	2100
52 Ala.	664, 1976	v. Martin	2410	v. Dewey	1067
160 Ala.	1124	v. Starr	1141, 1476	v. Doolittle	770

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Berry v. Hull	1712	Bettys v. Denver Tp.	1976	Bilbo v. Ball	2437
v. Jourdan	759, 760, 1195	Betzer v. Coleman	2054	Biles v. Holmes	1714, 1718
v. R. Co.	1350	Beuchert v. State	326	Billin v. Henkel	1195
v. Raddin	2144, 2145	Bevan v. M'Mahon	1898	Billing v. Flight	2257
v. Safe D. & T. Co.	232, 1958	v. Waters	2309	v. Semmens	2510
v. State,		Bevelot v. Lestrade	608, 1738	Billings v. Billings	2067, 2069
63 Ark.	1447	Bever v. Bever	2437	v. Ins. Co.	1031, 1263
10 Ga.	1806, 1963	v. Spangler	229, 233, 1974	v. State	216, 396, 1037
9 Ga. App.	1821	Beveridge v. Minter	2237	v. U. S.	278
4 Okl. Cr.	861	Beverley v. Walden	1938	Billingslea v. Smith	748
Berryhill v. Kirchner	2008, 2016	Beverly v. Burke	1225, 1651, 2141	Billingsley v. State	2043
Berrymann v. Wise	2535	v. Williams	728, 1977	Bills v. Keesler	1651
Bersch v. State	309, 987, 1022	Beville, Ex parte	2245	v. Ottumwa	1951
Bertha Mineral Co. v. Morrill	1060	Bewicke v. Graham	1859c	v. State	928
Bertha Zinc Co. v. Martin's Adm'r	1877, 1951	Bey's Succession	2500	Bilodeau v. Fitchburg & L. St. R. Co.	282, 1873
Bertholf v. Quinlan	2354	Beyer v. Hermann	1873	Bilton v. Terr.	1442
Berthon v. Loughman	1947	Beyerline v. State	2337, 2338	Bindley v. Martin	291, 2504
Bertie v. Beaumont	2139, 2145	Bianchi v. Del Valle	613	Bines v. State	2071
Bertoli v. Smith	951	Bias v. R. Co.	460, 1163	Binewicz v. Haglin	282, 1053, 1055
Bertrand v. Heaman	1086, 1456	Bibb v. State	397	Binfield v. Lambert	1304
Beshiers v. Allen	406	v. Thomas	1737	v. State	1839
Bess v. Com.,		Bible v. Croasdale	2435	Binford v. Dement	586
116 Ky.	390	Biccard v. Shepherd	1641	v. Young	1062
118 Ky.	852	Bickenstaff v. Perrin	73, 74	Bingaman v. Hannah	905
Bessela v. Stern	1072, 2061	Bickley v. Bank	1204	Bingel v. Volz	2477
Bessemer L. & I. Co. v. Dubose	1003	v. Beckley	398	Bingham v. Bernard	1614
Bessette v. State	987	Bicknell v. Mellett	1081, 1230	v. Foster	2354
Bessierre v. Alabama C. G. & A. R. Co.	1750	Biddeford Nat'l Bank v. Hill	2416	v. Rogers	716, 1943
Best v. Berry	2471	Biddis v. James	1684	v. Walk	2317, 2328
v. Best,		Biddle v. Riley,		Bingham Mines Co. v. Bianco	283
L. R. 1920 Prob.		Ark., 176 Sw.	678, 688	Binney v. Russell	1213
Poynter (Eng.)	2046	v. Shippen	1665	Binns v. State,	
22 Wash.	521	v. Superior Court	1074	46 Ind.	1447
Bestor v. Roberts	2016	Bidinger v. Bishop	581	57 Ind.	390
Betancourt v. Rodriguez	2442	Bieber v. Gans	2408	66 Ind.	41, 1244
Bethany Hospital Co. v. Hale	2527	Bielich v. State	811	Binyon v. U. S.	367, 1852
Bethea v. Byrd	1564, 1566	Bielschofsky v. People	321	Binz v. Weber	1350
Bethel v. Moore	1306, 1312	Bierbach v. Rubber Co.	1976	Bioren v. Nesler	1511
Bethman v. U. S.	1557	Biesenthall v. Williams	2109	Birch v. Depeyster	2465
Bettis v. Logan	1275, 1677	Bigcraft v. People	357	v. Ridgway	2016
Betts v. Badger	1298	Bigelow v. Bear	1784	v. Rogers	2529
v. Betts,		v. Blake	1678	v. Somerville	1819
113 Ia.	1958	v. Hall	759, 761, 763	Birchall v. Bullough	754
132 Ia.	2498	v. Maynard	2358	Birchard v. Booth	815, 1066
1 John.	2067, 2069	v. Porto Rico Planters' Co.	2165	Bircher v. Modern Brotherhood	2510
v. Davenport	1778	v. Sickles	2237, 2336	Birchett v. Bank	2016
v. Grand T. R. Co.	2319	v. Young	1188, 1878, 1898	Birchfield v. Bonham	1225
v. Jackson	1196, 1737, 2523	Biggers v. Catawba P. Co.	1976	Bird v. Butler	1304
v. Menzies	2319	Biggins v. Brockman	614	v. Com.	2086, 2088, 2573
v. R. Co.	1951	Biggs v. Carter	2516	v. Davis	619
v. State	278	v. Com.	1440	v. Halsy	987, 1391
v. Stevens	1554	v. Langhammer	2053	v. Hardwicke	2250
v. Venning	2447, 2556	v. Stueler	1073	v. Hueston	619, 1471
		Bigham v. Coleman	1186	v. Keep	1646, 1671
		v. State	967, 1037	v. Miller	2008, 2016
		Bigler v. Reyher	2327	v. Smith	1225, 2105
		Bigliben v. State	1481	v. State,	
		Bihm v. Bihm	2050	36 Ala.	2060
		Bijur M. L. Co. v. Eclipse Machine Co.	2410	50 Ga.	1842, 1851, 2272



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bird v. State,		Birney v. Hann	1605	Black v. Crozier	2222
104 Ind.	222, 1168	Birt v. Barlow	1644, 2084,	v. Dale	2027
v. U. S.,		2085, 2088, 2529		v. Fizer	1540
180 U. S.	106	v. White	1404	v. Funk	2314
187 U. S.	1854	Birum v. Johnson	1623	v. Pate	222, 1712, 2214
v. Veith	1841	Bischof v. Mikels	1871	v. R. Co.	2415
Bird's Case	564	Bise v. U. S.	1270	v. R. M. B. Tel. Co.	1951.
Birdsall v. Carter	1202	Bish v. Ins. Co.	1248		2354
v. Dunn	616, 2232	Bish v. American Pre-		v. Spillman	2214
v. Patterson	605	servers' Co.	1213	v. State,	
Birdsell v. Johnson	2065	v. Averill	1890	119 Ga.	200, 987
Birdseye, Re	2503	v. Bishop	488, 2239, 2245	1 Tex. App.	1398
Birdsong v. Brooks	1352, 1353,	v. Brittain Inv. Co.	2505	59 Wis.	2056
	1662	v. Clay Ins. Co.	1954	v. Wichita	2416
v. State	293, 1732	v. Cone	2534	v. Woodrow	2098
Birdwell v. U. S.	620	v. Copp	233, 1367	Black's Estate	2383
Birely v. Dodson	2463	v. Hilliard, 227 Ill.	1911,	Black Diamond C. & M.	
Birkel v. Chandler	715		2505	Co. v. Price	451
Birkenfeld v. State	851	v. Morgan	2477	Blackburn v. Blackburn	1269
Birmingham v. McPoland	750,	v. People	347	v. Com.	905, 907, 2059
	770	v. Spining	681	v. Crawfords	18, 1213,
v. Pettit	1672	v. State,			1244, 1491,
v. Starr	458	30 Ala.	2016		1644, 1646, 2314
Birmingham & A. R. Co.		41 Fla.	580	v. Hargreaves	2201
v. Campbell	568, 1040	9 Ga.	2349, 2354	v. Ins. Co.	2498
Birmingham & M. M. O.		194 Ill.	347	v. Mann	928
Co. v. London & N.W.		55 Md.	309	v. State,	
R. Co.	2319	72 Tex. Cr.	59	71 Ala.	1816
Birmingham E. & B. R.		81 Tex. Cr.	1839	23 Oh. St.	143, 144,
Co. v. Williams	1976	v. Tucker	1387		394, 2071
Birmingham M. R. Co. v.		v. Williamson	2349	Tex. Cr., 180 S. W.	1128
Harris	2509	Bishop Atterbury's Trial	2378	Blacker v. State	2071
v. Smith	1640	Bishop of London v.		Blackett v. Ins. Co.	2440
v. Wilmer	223, 1698	Fytche	2257	v. Ziegler	1782, 2475
Birmingham Macaroni		Bishops, Case of the	2250	Blackford Case, The	18
Co. v. Tadrick	1750	Seven; see R. v. Seven		Blackhurst v. James	
Birmingham Nat'l Bank		Bishops.			1738, 2503
v. Bradley,		Bissell v. Beekwith	1576	Blackington v. Johnson	1890
108 Ala.	1808, 2012	v. Cornell	1908	v. Rockland	1256
116 Ala.	570	v. Starr	987	Blackman v. Collier	451, 1976
Ala., 30 So.	571, 1404	v. Wert	1943	v. Dowling	1273
Birmingham R. & E.		Bitner v. Boone	608	v. Johnson	568, 1974
Co. v. Ellard	1984	Bittick v. State	1874	v. Riley	1665
v. Franscomb	1974	Bivings v. Gosnell	1778	v. State,	
v. Jackson	1959	Bixby v. Bent	1239	36 Ala.	68
v. Mason	944, 1818, 2354	v. Bridge Co.	1693	78 Ga.	288
v. Wildman	2324	v. Carskaddon,		80 Ga.	1878
Birmingham R. L. & P.		55 Ia.	1225, 2168	v. Stogner	1290
Co. v. Barrett	17, 20	63 Ia.	1086	v. West Jersey & S. R.	
v. Bush	1263, 2124	v. Ins. Co.	1641, 1647	Co.	1078, 1807
v. Bynum	451	v. R. Co.	1951	Blackmore v. Ellis	2498
v. Martin	455, 1951	Bixler v. Wright	2416	Blacksburg v. Beam	2183
v. Moore	1693, 2354	Bixley v. Bruce	2464	Blackstad M. Co. v.	
v. Morris	461	Bizer v. Bizer	1974	Parker	2410
v. Rutledge	789, 1719	Bjork v. Glos	18	Blackwell v. Blackwell	2408
v. Seaborn	754	Blabon v. Gilchrist	2240, 2245	v. Bull	2463
v. Wise	507	Black v. Bachelder	2465	v. Faucett	2442
Birmingham Southern R.		v. Bank	1890, 2445	v. Glass	1271, 1681
Co. v. Cuzzart	223	v. Baylees	1028	v. State,	
v. Fox	252	v. Besse	1842	79 Fla.	1398, 1406,
Birmingham Union R. Co.		v. Black	787a, 1391		1668
v. Alexander	437, 458	v. Braybrook	5, 1677, 1681	67 Ga.	2265
v. Hale	923	v. Chicago B. & Q. R.		11 Ind.	1821
Birney v. Haim	2132	Co.	1239	Tex. Cr., 73 S. W.	2349

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Blackwell D. T. Co. v.		Blanchard v. De Graff	1267	Blodget v. Jordan	1681
McElwee	1072	v. Holyoke St. R. Co.	789,	Blodgett Paper Co. v.	
Blackwood v. Damer	2452		1164	Farmer	571, 581
Blacquierre v. Carr	2065	v. Lambert	2505, 2506	Bloede Co. v. Bancroft	
Blade v. Noland	1198	v. Moors	2240	Co.	1859b
Bladen v. Cockey	1564, 2349	v. Pratt	1012	Bloedel v. Cromwell	2421
Blagrove v. Blagrove	1415	v. Steamboat Co.	463	Blogg v. Kent	1858
Blague v. Gold	2477	v. Young	1225	Blois v. State	2059
Blaine Co. v. Heard	1350	Bland v. Armagh	787	Blomgren v. Anderson	392
Blair v. Bank	1379	v. Beasley	1582, 1584, 1587	Blomquist v. R. Co.	571
v. Brown	1195, 1779	v. R. Co.	1976	Blondeau v. Sheridan	1195
v. Caldwell	1681	v. State	1750	Blondel v. R. Co.	561
v. Charleston	1943	v. Warren	1466, 1561	Blood v. Light	571
v. Com.	177, 1270	Blanda v. People	2273	v. Morrin	1856a
v. Hopkins	1476	Blandy-Jenkins v. Dun-		v. Rideout	1777
v. Madison Co.	1719	raven	157, 2145	Blood's Estate	1958
v. Pelham	792	Blank Estate	2065	Bloom v. State	1013
v. R. Co.,		Blankenship v. Com.	2495	v. Wanner	95
89 Mo.	2388	v. Hall	2520	Bloom Equity Exchange	
20 Wis.	1976	Blanton v. Miller	1196	v. Stephans	2556
v. Sayre	1644, 1646, 2109	v. Ray	1226	Bloomer v. State	63, 1072,
v. Seaver	1817	Blasini v. Blasini	2083		1127
v. State,		Blatch v. Archer	285	Bloomfield v. Board	1350
69 Ark.	964, 968,	Blatz v. Rohrbach	2582	Bloomington v. Legg	252, 283,
	1750, 1873	Blazo v. Cochrane	2051		451, 458
72 Nebr.	278, 398,	Blease v. Garlington	2195	v. Osterle	913, 916
	1878	Bleckley v. White	1960	v. Schrock	1696, 1700
4 Okl. Cr.	1447	Bledsoe v. Jones	803	Bloor v. Delafield	461
v. U. S.	2210	Bleecker v. Johnson	289, 290	Blossi v. Chicago &	
Blais v. Clare	2465	Bleistine v. Chelsea	252	N. W. R. Co.	1969, 2415
Blaisdell v. Bickum	1605	Blessing v. Dodds	1072	Blossom v. Barrett	15
v. Davis	1213	v. Galveston	1350	v. Dodd	2415
Blake v. Assurance Co.	4, 10,	Blevins v. Pope	770, 774, 1212	Blough v. Parry	905, 987,
	216, 302, 304, 321	Blewett v. Bash	1676a, 2525		1021, 2500
v. Damon	394, 948, 950	v. Gaynor	1877	Blount v. Burrow	2122
v. Everett	1082, 1133	v. Tregonning	15, 1896	v. Kimpton	2311, 2327
v. Fash	1198	Blewitt v. Boorum	2410	v. Layard	1640
v. Graves	604, 1086,	Blickley v. Luce	1040	v. Riley	1084
	1779, 2242	Blight v. Ashley	1766, 2119	Bloustein v. Shindler	1038
v. Howard	334	v. Schenck	2408, 2420	Blow v. Maynard	1257
v. Ogden	2408	Blincoe v. Choctaw O. &		Blower v. Hollis	2110
v. Page	1364	W. R. Co.	1168	Bloxam v. Elsie	1256
v. People	728, 1890	Bliss v. Beck	1039	Bluck v. Gompertz	1859b
v. Pilfold	2378	v. Brainard	2201, 2202	Blue v. R. Co.	561
v. Powell	1867, 1889, 1890	v. Franklin	2336	v. State	2497
v. Rourke	689	v. Harris	2169	Blue Ridge L. & P. Co.	
v. Russ	2125	v. Johnson	89, 253, 1623	v. Price	1750
v. Stoddard	1028, 1044	v. Long	2098	Blum v. Jones	787, 803
v. White	1082, 1086	v. Nichols	1066	v. State	1230, 2264
Blake's Case	2455	v. Shuman	770	Bluman v. State	2236, 2242
Blakemore, Re	2220	v. State	1750	Blume v. State	228, 1938, 2272
Blakeslee v. Hughes	76	v. Stevens	1195	Blumenthal v. Craig	1951
Blakesley v. Wheildon	1862	v. Wareham	1951	v. Meat Co.	463, 2581
Blakey v. Porter	1858	v. Winston	1778	v. R. Co.	2552
Blakey's Heirs v.		Blitz v. U. S.	944	v. Ralls	1956
Blakey's Ex'r	664, 1007,	Blizzard v. Applegate	770	Blumer, Ex parte	1727
	1021, 1022	Block v. Arrowsmith Mfg.		Blundell v. Gladstone	2463
Blalock v. Clark	2440, 2496	Co.	1411	v. Howard	380
v. Miland	1085	v. Hicks	1072	Blunt v. Montpelier & W.	
v. Randall	309	v. Hirsh	1352	R. Co.	1078, 2120
v. State	826	v. Jacksonville	1684	v. Strong	1392
Blanchard v. Bank	1951	v. R. Co.	688	Blurton v. Toon	528, 1991
v. Blanchard	953, 1963,	Block's Succession	1352	Blystone v. Walla Walla	
	2503	Blocker v. Burness	1817	Valley R. Co.	905



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Blyth v. L'Estrange	2256	Bodwell v. Swan	73, 209, 406	Bolen v. State	923, 987
Blythe v. Ayres	1606	Body v. Jewson	382	Boling v. Boling	2411
v. Houston	1239	Boeck v. Boeck	916, 928, 2239	Bolland v. U. S.	2071
v. State	1803	Boecker v. Naperville	463	Bolles v. O'Brien	1404
Boak, Re	2065	Boehm v. U. S.	2513	Bolling v. Fannin	747, 1560
Boals v. Shields	1873	Boehm's Goods	2421	v. State	233, 238, 1142
Board v. Chambers	715	Boehme v. Sovereign		Bollinger v. Bollinger	1043,
v. Coler	1350	Camp	1671		1378
v. Dillard	463	Boehner v. Hirtle	1573	v. Gallagher	1953
v. Estrella	2573	v. U. S.	369	Bollo v. Navarro	1082
v. Harlev	1867	Boehtlinck v. Schneider	1271	Bolmer v. Edsall	2069, 2086,
v. Heenan	1350	Boelter v. Ross Lumber			2220
v. Hendricks	1943	Co.	2220	Bolton v. Cummings	1224,
v. Hernandez	1677, 1680	Boerlein v. Bank	16		1225
v. Lee	2203	Boermer Fry Co. v. Mucci	457	v. Liverpool	1857, 2294
v. May	1275, 1641	Boeshore, Re	2201	v. State	2016
v. Meagher	1195	Boetge v. Landa	2355	Bolton Case	2287
v. Merchant	1356	Boettger v. Iron Co.	1984	Boman v. Plunkett	2016
v. Misenheimer	701, 2008	Bogan v. McCutchen	1195	Bomar v. Rosser	15, 321
v. Moore,		Bogard v. Johnstone	2016	Bomford v. Wilme	1317
Ky., 66 S. W.	615,	Bogardus v. Trinity		Bongardner v. Andrews	682
	1802	Church	378, 382, 437,	Bonaparte v. Thayer	987,
17 Minn.	1202		1232, 1587, 1598		1616
v. Nelms	463, 714	Bogart v. Brown	1210	Bonazzi v. Fortney	1058, 1066
v. Nichols	1721	v. Green	1256	Bond v. Central Bank	1248
v. O'Conner	1108	v. New York	1963	v. Douglas	406
v. Pearson	283	v. Pitchless L. Co.	561	v. Fitzpatrick	1084
v. People	1350	Bogert v. Bateman	1511, 2411	v. Hurd	2036
v. Provident H. & T. S.		v. Bogert	913, 1890, 2317	v. Montague	1651
Ass'n	1442	v. Phelps	1082, 1086	v. State,	
v. Reinhart	1244	Boggs v. Ass'n	2451	21 Fla.	111, 246, 247
v. Smith	2159	v. Harper	2531	129 Tenn.	1671
v. State	2575	v. Thompson	1890	20 Tex. App.	1841
v. Tollman	1350	Boggus v. State	2016	v. Whitfield	2105
v. Travelers' Ins. Co.	1350	Bogie v. Nolan	1416	Bond Dept. Cases	1350
v. Verbarq	1062	Bogitch v. Potlatch Lum-		Bonderson v. Hovde	684
v. Vickers	1129	ber Co.	2558	Bonds v. Mobile & O. R.	
Boardman v. Ins. Co.	1164	Bogle v. Kreitzer	1985	Co.	2509
v. Jackson	2122	v. Sullivant	1511	Bondurant v. Bank	736
v. Reed	1388	Bogue v. Bigelow	2529	Bone v. Hayes	289
v. Spooner	2053	v. State	987	v. State	1842
v. Woodman	64, 680, 689,	Bohan v. Avoca	1890	Bonebrake v. Board	1951
1174, 1509, 1933, 1934, 1938		Bohanan v. Shelton	1225	Bonelli v. Burton	289
Boatman v. Curry	2083	Bohannon v. Com.	246, 247	Bonelli's Goods, Re	690
Boatner v. Scott	1680	Bohen v. North Amer-		Boner v. Com.	1668
Boatright v. Porter	64, 1664	ican Life Ins. Co.	1411,	Bones v. State	2497
Bob v. State	836, 1072		1497	Bonesteel v. Lynde	2219, 2220
Bobbink v. Erie R. Co.	458	Bohlman v. Coffin	1185	v. Sullivan	1677
Bobo v. Bryson	2294	Bohner v. Bohner	2239	Bonestel v. Gardiner	2432
Boche v. State	1022	Boice v. Palmer	966	Bonet v. Stowell	607
Bock v. International		Boies v. McAllister	568, 1620	Boney v. Boney	1072, 2103
Nav. Co.	1856a	Boileau v. Rutlin	1065, 1066,	Bonfield v. Smith	1971
v. Wall	393		1075	Bonnell v. Mawha	1558
Bodcaw L. Co. v. Ford	283	Boit v. McKenzie	1352	Bonnemort v. Gill	1040, 1042
Boddie v. Pardee	1239	Bolan v. Bolan	1664	Bonner v. Ins. Co.	1213
v. State	2061	Bold v. Rayner	2463	v. Phillips	1678
Boddington v. Donaldson		v. U. S.	369	v. State,	
Line	1647	Bolden v. R. Co.	2354	55 Ala.	825, 860, 861
Boddy v. Boddy	398	Boldon v. Thompson	951	107 Ala.	2497
Bodenheimer v. Boden-		Boldron v. Widdows	461	Bonnet v. Devebaugh	1082,
heimer's Ex'r	2065	Boldt v. State	368		1085, 1573, 1633
Bodine v. State	987	Bole v. State	855	v. Glattfeldt	736, 749, 760,
Bodman v. American		Bolen v. People	795, 1852,		1890, 1898
Tract Society	2472		1878, 2269, 2270	Bonsall v. State	347

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Booby v. State	1800, 2254	Bosnight v. Southern J. Co.	2435	Boucher v. Clark Publ. Co.	1890
Boody's Estate	2526	Bost v. Bost	1958	v. Robeson Mills	437
Booge v. Parsons	1225, 2105, 2159	Bostain v. Separator Co.	95	Boucicault v. Fox	1244
Boogher v. Neece	1225	Boston, The	4d	Boudereau v. Mont-gomery	1381, 1483
Booker v. Booker	614, 1417	v. Coon	1684	Boudinot v. Winter	2188
v. Bowles	1302, 1309	v. Hewitt	1996	Bough v. Cantiveros	2596
Boomer v. Lane	2450	v. Richardson,		Bouker v. People	2079
Boon v. Weathered	922, 923, 987, 1612, 1614, 1615, 1985	13 All.	1066	Boulanger v. McQuestin	1722
Boone v. Dyke	2447	105 Mass.	157	Boulden v. Hebel	1911
v. Oakland T. Co.	1750	v. State	293, 579, 1144, 1750	v. State	1195, 1441, 1450, 2512
v. People	2252	v. Weymouth	393, 2145	Boulder v. Stewardson	2103
v. Purnell	1603, 2083, 2085	Boston & M. C. C. & S. M. Co. (State ex rel.) v. District Court	1862	Boulder & W. R. D. Co. v. Leggett D. & R. Co.	581
v. State	2059, 2273	Boston & Maine R. Co.		Bouldin v. Massie's Heirs	93, 728, 1195
Boone Co. Bank v. Wal-lace	1083, 1779	v. Franklin	2349, 2354	v. State	934, 1079
Boonville Nat'l Bank v. Blakey	2450	v. State	4c, 1856d, 2195, 2210, 2212, 2223	Boulter v. Peplow	1255, 1256
Boop v. Laurelton L. Co.	459	Boston & W. R. Co. v. Dana	154, 991, 1072, 1230, 2349, 2354	Boulton v. Houlder	1858
Booren v. McWilliams	2181, 2383	v. O. C. & F. R. C.	463, 714, 1943	v. Robinson	2047
Boorman v. Express Co.	2537	Boston Elevated R. Co., In re	1117, 1807	Bound v. R. Co.	1350
v. Relief Ass'n	689	Boston Massacre Trial	1123	Bounds v. Bounds	1226, 1778
Boorn's Case	867, 2081	Boston Safe D. & T. Co.		Bourassa v. Grant T. R. Co.	93, 97
Boosey v. Davidson	1234	v. Buffum	2421	Bourda v. Jones	748, 2034
Booth v. Beckley	1890	Boston Water P. Co.		Bourne v. Boston	1225
v. Cook	1225	v. Hanlon	1567, 1573, 1586	v. Bourne	1730
v. Fire-Engine Co.	1074	Bostwick v. Ins. Co.	260, 2415	v. Gatliff	377
v. Hart	1141	v. Thompson	2425	Bousfield v. Godfrey	1858
v. Lenox	1065	Boswell v. Blackman	1615	Boutlier v. Malden	561
v. State	905, 1893	v. First National Bank	1290, 1312, 1320	Bouvier-Jaeger Coal Land Co. v. Sypher	1352
v. Swezey	1083	v. Hostetter	2442	Bovard v. Wallace	787
Booth-Kelly Lumber Co. v. Williams	17	v. State	687	Bovill v. Moore	1862
Boothby v. Lacasse	1978	Bosworth v. Bryan	1225	Bowden v. Achor	463, 784, 1085, 1213, 1269, 1938
Boothe v. Dorsey	1188	v. Clark	1212	Bowditch v. Boston	463
Bootle v. Blundell	1302, 1304	v. Union R. Co.	1663	v. Jordan	2531
Boots v. Canine	1066, 1067	Boteler v. Allington	2256	v. Soltyk	1271
Boozer v. Teague	1778	Botham v. Swingler	1258	Bowdle v. R. Co.	494, 495, 497
Borck v. State	959	Bothomly v. Usborne	2307, 2308, 2311	Bowe v. Gage	2498
Borden v. Keverberg	377	Bothwell v. Boston El. R. Co.	2495	Bowen v. Allen	2477
v. Lynch	1086, 1890	v. State	1938	v. Bowen	712
Boreing v. Boreing	2239	Botkin v. Cassady	934	v. Huntington	681, 682, 1976
Boren v. U. S.	2042	Botna V. S. Bank v. Sil-ver C. Bank	2530	v. Jones	2016
Borgess Inv. Co. v. Vette	1549, 1560	Botsford v. Chase	406	Bowen v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.	2442
Borgnis v. Falk Co.	4a	Bottomley v. Forbes	2440	v. R. Co.	455, 561
Boring v. Ott	2498	v. Goldsmith	1195	v. Rutherford	1624
Borland v. Mayo	1779	v. Hall	2169, 2185	v. State	141
v. Walrath	736, 747, 2016	v. U. S.	194, 302, 334, 341, 2439	Bowen's Ex'r v. Bowen	682
Born v. Rosenow	406	Bottoms v. Kent	52, 63, 64, 194, 1983	Bower v. Bower	229, 233, 1938, 2382
Borneman v. Chicago, St. P. & M. R. Co.	561, 571	Botts v. Wood	291, 1033	v. Cohen	1225, 1564, 1651, 1665, 2138
Borough v. Minneapolis	1040	Bouchaud v. Dias	2159	v. Earl	1778
Borrego v. Terr.	944, 987, 1079, 2512	Boucher v. Boston & M. R. Co.	2509	v. State	2100
Borst v. Enipie	1653			Bowerman v. Bowerman	64
Borstelman v. Brohan	2105				
Borum v. Fouts	2297				
Boske v. Comingore	2378				
Boskenna Bay, The	4d				
Bosley v. Ins. Co.	2349				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bowers v. Briggs	2312	Boyce v. R. Co.,		Boyle v. Smithman	2257,
v. Cottrell	2408	42 N. H.	455		2264, 2272
v. State,		43 N. H.	455	v. State,	
29 Oh. St.	205, 401,	v. Stage Co.	2354	97 Ind.	246, 248, 1445
	2311, 2321	v. Stambaugh	2167	105 Ind.	1445, 1447,
Tex. Cr., 71 S. W.	987,	Boyd v. Bank	1128, 1668		2276, 2277
	2216	v. Boyd	309	57 Wis.	1700
v. U. S.	2016	v. Com.	2158	61 Wis.	397, 1976
v. Van Winkle	1186, 1225	v. Gosser	1998	v. Wiseman	1213, 1223,
Bowersock v. Adams	1219	v. Grove	1943, 2115		1872, 2268, 2272
Bowes v. Broadhead	1350	v. Jones	1779	Boyle's and Merchant's	
Bowie v. Findley	1414	v. Ladson	1543	Case	352
v. Hume	1409	v. Larson	21	Boyles v. M'Ewen	2232
v. O'Neale	1387, 2098	v. Leatherwood	2008, 2106	Boyne C. G. & A. R. Co.	
v. State	246, 248	v. McConnell	1510	v. Anderson	795
Bowker v. Burdekin	2408	v. M'Lean	2054	Boynton v. Ashabranner	1239
v. Johnson	2437	v. Olcott	1350	v. Boynton	2200
Bowler v. Washington	1802	v. Petrie	1859c	v. Kellogg	52, 75
Bowles v. Bingham	2063	v. State,		v. Miller	1082
v. Com.	1750	2 Humph.	836	v. Modern Woodmen	7a
v. Eddy	1271	14 Lea	143, 144, 457	v. Pierce	2445
v. Johnson	2201	84 Miss.	1124, 1448,	v. Trumbull	2354
v. Langworthy	1298, 1300		1722, 2264, 2272	Boys v. Charles	2426
v. State	276	81 Ohio	398	Bozeman v. Browning	1213
Bowles' Succession	1681	94 Tenn.	1270	Bozicevich v. Kenilworth	
Bowlin v. Pollock	1678	33 Tex. Cr.	2239	Merc. Co.	1646, 2385a
Bowling v. Bowling	689,	v. U. S.,		Brabbits v. R. Co.	1976
	1304, 1938	116 U. S.	1859c, 2184,	Brabo v. Martin	1984
v. Com.	2059, 2183		2264	Bracegirdle v. Bailey	73, 209,
v. Hax	1299, 1301	142 U. S.	523		1891, 1893
v. Helm	1339	Boyden v. Moore	1779	Bracey v. Com.	1398, 1674
v. State	2089	Boydston v. Morris	1225, 1651	Bracken v. State	205, 1198
Bowling Green G. Co. v.		Boyens' Will	1505	v. Wells	1651
Dean's Ex'x	992	Boyer v. Chicago R. I. &		Brackett v. Edgerton	717
Bowlus v. State	111, 246,	P. R. Co.	1975	v. Hoitt	2450
	248, 1983	v. Norris	1320	v. Norton	2573
Bowman, Ex parte	2060	v. St. Louis S. F. & T.		v. People	1681
Bowman v. Bartlett	1273,	R. Co.	1058, 1640	v. Weeks	1021
	1312	v. Sweet	1538, 1539, 1552	Brackney v. Fogle	2386, 2391
v. Bowman	917, 1933	v. Teague	1712, 1757,	Bradburn v. U. S.	276, 907
v. Dewing	1640		2196, 2214	Bradbury v. Dwight	392
v. Little	29, 1602, 2086,	v. Weimer	1086	Braddee v. Brownfield	1106,
	2506, 2529	Boyers v. Lindhorst	75, 258		1108, 1109,
v. Montcalm Circuit		Boyett v. State	1665		1514, 1664
Judge	2377	Boykin v. Boykin	2063	Braden v. McCleary	969
v. Norton	2301, 2328	v. People	273, 274, 1852,	Bradford v. Barclay	1035
v. Owens	1778		2497	v. Blossom	2421
v. Patrick	2339	v. Smith	1651	v. Boston & M. R. Co.	140,
v. Sanborn	694, 702,	v. State,			1530
	1680, 2008, 2016	La. An., 24 So.	2153	v. Bush	1966
v. U. S.	363	86 Miss.	1014	v. Cooper	728
v. Wettig	378, 1207, 1225	Miss., 42 So.	276	v. Cunard S. S. Co.	2570
v. Woods	1693	v. Wright	1225, 2138, 2143	v. Ins. Co.	340, 451
Bowser v. Cravener	1573,	Boylan v. Meeker	271, 1033,	v. People	2012, 2016,
	2141		1505, 1514,		2018, 2276
v. Warren	1225, 1320,		1736, 1738	v. Russell	1681
	1321, 1651	Boyle v. Boston Elev. R.		v. S. S. Co.	1533
Boxendone v. Haliburne	2426	Co.	2125	Bradford's Case	1199
Boyce v. Bolster	616	v. Boyle	2523	Bradford Glycerine Co.	
v. Chapman	285	v. Columbian F. Co.	1576	v. Kizer	561, 2509
v. Foster	2219	v. Mahanoy City	2552	Bradford S. Co. v. Joost	2442
v. McKenna	1644	v. Relief Assoc.	2386	Bradley v. Arthur	1684
v. Mooney	1225	v. Rider	1967	v. Bank	675, 1684
v. People	2062	v. Saginaw	252	v. Basta	2415

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bradley v. Bradley,		Brailey v. Rhodesia		Braydon v. Goulman	1879
4 Dall.	2352	Consolidated	690	Brayley v. Kelly	2596
11 Me.	2067	Brailsford v. Williams	95	v. Ross	2104, 2120
v. Clark	2271, 2281	Brain v. Preece	1675	Brayton v. Chase	2300
v. Crackenthorp	1406	Brainard v. Brainard	1938,	Brazier v. Fortune	2312
v. Cramer	406		2067, 2069	Brazier's Case; see R. v.	
v. Davidson	916, 2123,	v. Buck	1072	Brazier	
	2203	v. R. Co.	714	Brazil v. State	56
v. Dinneen	1871	Braintree v. Battles	1195,	Breadalbane v. Chandos	1697
v. Gardner	2120		1225	Breadalbane Case	1602,
v. Geiselman	1415	v. Hingham	1383		2083, 2505
v. Gibson	73, 74	Brakefield v. State	1440	Breck v. Blanchard	2355
v. Goodyear	1549	Brakehill v. Leonard	1680	Bredlau v. York	1719
v. Gorham	1029, 2034	Braley v. Braley	1969, 2097	Bredon v. Gill	1364
v. Lightcap	2143	Braly v. Henry	1890	Breed v. Gove	2245
v. McDonald	1062, 1073	Bram v. U. S.	142, 821, 823,	v. Nagle	1233
v. McIntosh	2374, 2379		832, 865, 1976, 2266	Breeden v. Com.	2595
v. Morris	529	Bramlett v. Flick	1976	v. Feurt	1388
v. Myrick	1371	Bramwell v. Lucas	2296	Breedon v. Gill	2032
v. Obear	321	Branan v. Nashville C.		Breen v. Richardson	1198,
v. R. Co.	451	& St. L. R. Co.	1859		1278
v. Ricardo	897, 907, 908	Branch, Ex parte	2206, 2207	Breese v. U. S.	759
v. Silsbee	1239	Branch v. Branch	2525	Breidenstein v. Bertram	269,
v. Spofford	1779	v. Libbey	458		2527
v. State	232	v. State	1639	Breinig v. Metzler	1558
v. Steam Packet Co.	2462,	Branch Bank v. Black	2123	Breitenwischer v. Clough	1668
	2465, 2470	v. Kinsey	1871	Brembridge v. Osborne	2518
v. Veazie	2210	v. Parker	253, 1623	Bremer v. Freeman	1271,
v. West	1350	Brandao v. Barnett	2580		1697, 1953, 1984
Bradley's Est.	2523	Brandenburg v. Buda		Brennan v. Finn	2498
Bradley Gin Co. v.		Co.	1856a	v. Minnesota D. & W.	
Means Co.	2442	Brander v. Ferriday	253	R. Co.	987
Bradley T. Co. v.		Brandon v. Cabiness	1856	v. People	1013, 1079, 1450
White	1186	v. Mullenix	1389	v. St. Louis	283
Bradshaw v. Atkins	714	v. People	987, 2276	Brenneman v. Dillon	2477
v. Bennett	1297, 2434	Brandt v. Klein	1257, 2309	Brenner v. Luth	1271
v. Butler	2106	Branham v. State	402	Brent v. State	821
v. Combs	774	Brannan v. Henry	2132	Brenton v. Terr.	2061
v. Hedge	1675	Brannin v. Force's		Bresce v. Clark Eq. Co.	4a, 4c
v. Murphy	2259c	Adm'rs	1539	Bresler's Estate	1552, 2452
v. People	2528	Brannon v. Hursell	905	Bressan v. Herrick	18
v. State	1671, 2159	Brannum v. O'Connor	1067	Bressler v. People	2079, 2363
Bradston's Case	2250, 2256	Branson v. Wirth	1662	Breton v. Cope	1245, 1256,
Bradstreet v. Baldwin	1383	Branstrator v. Crow	2500,		1268, 1291
Bradt v. Rommel	2354		2530	Brett v. Beales	1592, 1662,
Bradway v. Thompson	2314	Brant v. Gallup	1963		2139
Brady v. Brady	716	v. Lyons	1951	v. Brett	2048
v. Cassidy	2465	Brantly v. State	457	v. Rigdon	2413, 2471
v. McArdle	461	Brard v. Ackerman	2309	v. State	792
v. Nally	18, 2592	Brashear v. Barton	1291, 1299	Bretto v. Levine	2430, 2454
v. Parker	1783	Brashears v. Orme	1938, 2500	Bretton v. Prettiman	575
v. Shirley	167, 1163,	Bratt v. Lee	1196	Brevaldo v. State	398
	1696, 1978	Braude v. Cohen Co.	2431	Brewer v. Bowersox	18
v. State	2304	Braun v. Campbell	1109	v. Ferguson	2336
v. U. S.	861	Brawdy v. Brawdy	2047, 2054	v. Huntingdon	1350
v. West	1350	Brawner v. Royal In-		v. Knapp	2518
Bragg v. Colwell	2008, 2021	demnity Co.	143	v. Palmer	2447
v. Massie	1777	Braxley v. State	2321	v. Porch	905
v. Metropolitan St. R.		Braxton v. Hilyard	2237	v. R. Co.	392
Co.	18	Braxton v. State	1072	v. Ring	1951
Bragge v. Dyer	2452	Bray v. Flickinger	1188	v. State	832, 2086
Braham v. State	18, 561, 656,	v. State	1138	Brewers' Co. v. Benson	1858
	689, 782, 851,	v. U. S.	205, 282, 2061	Brewster v. Sewall	1180,
	1842, 1938, 2115	v. Williams	1350		1194, 1228



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1330-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Brewster v. State	2056	Bright v. Com.	506, 1828,	Broadbent's Case	1646, 2463
v. Thompson	2354		2336	Broadnax v. R. Co.	2533
Brewton v. Glass	2442	v. Pennywit	1225	Broadrup v. Woodman	1065
Brice v. Bauer	282, 1063	v. Tel. Co.	581	Broadwell v. McClish	1313
v. Miller	1330	v. White	1681, 1684	v. Morgan	1564
v. Smith	1512	v. Woodward	1912	v. Stiles	1198
Briceland v. Com.	136	Bright's Ex'rs v. Swine-		Brobston v. Cahill	2008, 2016
Bricheno v. Thorp	2323	broad	618	Brocas v. Mayor	1186, 1219
Brick v. Brick	2437	Brighthope R. Co. v.		Brock, Re	1511
Brickell v. Hulse	1075	Rogers	456	v. Brock,	
Bricker v. Lightner's		Briglio v. Holt	2509	140 Ga.	1302
Ex'r	689, 1938	Brill v. Car Co.	290	116 Pa.	2336, 2341
Bride v. Clark	1684	v. Christy	150, 1678	92 Va.	1085
Bridge v. Eggleston	336, 1080,	v. Flagler	663, 1943	v. Cottingham	1195, 1196
1082, 1085, 1086, 2355		Brind v. Hampshire	2409	v. Ins. Co.	1208
v. M'Carthy	2447	Brindle v. M'Ilvaine	933,	v. Kent	1070
v. Oshkosh	568, 1719	1610, 1621		v. Metropolitan L. Ins.	
v. Wellington	585	Brindley v. State	669	Co.	2494
Bridger v. Exchange		Bringloe v. Goodson	1296,	v. Milligan	1817
Bank	1877		1297	v. Saxton	1290, 1651
v. R. Co.,		Brink v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. State,	
25 S. C.	1951	v. Stratton	894, 935,	26 Ala.	354, 1042
27 S. C.	252, 458,		951, 953	123 Ala.	288, 2273
	461	Brinsfield v. Howeth	1614,	101 Ark.	1003
Bridges v. Branan	2164	1971, 2354		Tex. Cr., 71 S. W.	2242
v. McClendon	794	Brinton v. Seevers	1635	Brockbank v. Anderson	585
v. R. Co.	2494, 2552,	Brinx's Express Co. v.		Brockett v. Bartholomew	1031,
	2570	Kinnare	1976	2442, 2465	
v. State,		Brisbane v. Pratt	1083	Brocklebank v. Barter	2065,
103 Ga.	392	Briscoe v. Baillie Ham-		2465	
110 Ga.	1672, 2118	ilton	2421	v. Thompson	1584, 2522
Bridgewater v. Plymouth	2349	v. Lomax	1593	Brocklebank's Will	2500
v. Roxbury	1521,	Brison v. McKellop	1730	Broder v. Saillard	451
	1523, 1531	Brister v. State	833, 857,	Broderick v. Broderick	987
v. State	1168	2097, 2354		v. Higginson	68a, 201,
Bridgewater Case	2287	Bristol v. Cox	2319		2232
Bridgewood v. Wynn	2355	v. Dann	1083	Brodhead v. Wiltse	1693, 1694
Brier v. Chicago R. I. &		v. Warner	2113, 2115	Brodnax v. Groom	1350
P. R. Co.	1976	Bristol Co. Bank v.		Brody v. Chittenden	2463
Brierly v. Brierly & Wil-		Keavy	714	Broeniman Co. v. Lib-	
liams	1646	Bristor v. Bristor	1124	erty E. & I. Co.	1672
v. Davol Mills	451	Bristow v. Cormican	157, 378	Brogan v. Savage	1226, 1651
Briesenmeister v. Su-		v. Sequeville	5, 687, 690	Brogly's Case	1135, 1136,
preme Lodge	2383, 2384	British Amer. Ins. Co.		1362	
Briggs, Re	2261, 2281, 2283	v. Wilson	1456	Brokeshoulder v. Broke-	
v. Ainsworth	1873	British Ass'n of Glass		shoulder	2506
v. Briggs,		Bottle Mfrs. v. Nettle-		Brolley v. Lapham	907
80 Cal.	1388	fold	1859d	Brom v. People	363, 1441
20 Mich.	2384	British Empire S. S. Co.		Bromage v. Price	1994
v. Campbell	1678	v. Somes	2212	Bromberger v. U. S.	1839
v. Henderson	1651, 2143	Britt v. State	352	Bromley v. Atwood	2475
v. McBride	285	Brittain v. Allen	406	v. Wallace	211
v. Morgan	2220	Britton v. Chamberlain	1681	Bronx Parkway Com-	
v. Murdock	1633	v. Com.	987	mission's appeal	4c
v. Partridge	2400, 2438	v. Davis	1302	Broddus v. Monroe	2503
v. People	780, 1329, 2512	v. Lorenz	2294, 2312	Brookbank v. State	1226
v. Rafferty	736	v. R. Co.	1807	Brookbard v. Woodley	1992,
v. Stafford	530	v. State,		1993, 2002	
v. Taylor	1042, 1219,	54 Ind.	1186	Brooke v. Berry	1938
	2535	115 Ind.	1890	v. Brooke	660
v. Whipple	2572	Broach v. Kelly	1407	v. Jordan	1195
Brigham v. Clark	1040	v. Sing	2050	v. Lowe	1876
v. Fayerweather	1042	Broad v. Pitt	2291, 2294,	v. People	150, 1877, 2513
v. Palmer	1299, 1301		2297	v. R. Co.	458

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Brooke v. Townshend	689, 1938	Brown v. Arnold	2593	Brown v. Harkins	1195, 1240
v. Winters	39, 437	v. Bellows	897, 907	v. Harriot	1896
Brookes v. Tichborne	2024	v. Benson	455	v. Hicks	1312, 1651, 2105
Brookfield v. Warren	1784	v. Booth	1206	v. Hooper	2260
Brooking v. Dearmond	1225	v. Brown,		v. Huey	1856d
Brooks v. Acton	438, 952,	Prob. 83	2276	v. Huffard	675
	1022	38 Ala.	2067	v. Ins. Co.	688, 792, 2384
v. Brooks	398	8 E. & B.	1267, 2523	v. Isbell	1204, 1254
v. Cannon	1387	77 Neb.	2315, 2329,	v. Jewett	1066, 2309
v. Clay	1225, 1501		2475	v. Jones	738
v. Com.	106	v. Burnham	2540	v. Kennedy	2525
v. Crosby	1873	v. Burrus	1867, 1890,	v. Kenyon	1777
v. Daniels	1186		1896	v. Kimball	1513, 2024,
v. Duggan	1777	v. Butler	1576, 2294		2529
v. Francis	2341	v. Byam	1389	v. King	2515
v. Garner	289	v. Byrne	2425, 2431,	v. Kingsley	987
v. Hall	1719		2440, 2462	v. Kittanning C. P. Co.	1078
v. Hazen	657	v. Cady	1225, 1226, 1651	v. Kohout	1164
v. Holden	1576, 2329	v. Castellan	2530	v. Leach	439
v. Jenkins	1225	v. Chenoweth	2015	v. Livingstone	2529
v. Lowenstein	1779	v. Chicago B. & Q. R.		v. Long Mfg. Co.	2063
v. McMeekin	1195	Co.	655	v. Luchrs	736, 749
v. Marbury	1225	v. Chicago M. & St.		v. Lutz	2577
v. R. Co.	1041	P. R. Co.	2220	v. Mailler	1083
v. Sioux City	1951	v. Cockerell	254	v. Manning	2220
v. Somerville	2494	v. Cole	2349	v. Markland	2465
v. State,		v. Collins	1676	v. Marshall,	
185 Ala.	1966	v. Com.,		120 Ind.	1873
96 Ga.	1142, 2513	14 Bush	1922, 1938	47 Mich.	1873
150 Ga.	63	Ky., 83 S. W.	1440	v. Matthews	2303
v. Weeks	905, 906	102 Ky.	200	v. Mendonca	1297
v. Wilcox	1873	187 Ky.	413, 1130	v. Metz	2529
Brooks, Estate of	1938	188 Ky.	1018	v. Milwaukee E. L. &	
Brooks Co. v. Wilson	2438	2 Leigh	2056	R. Co.	664
Broom v. Broom	2239	73 Pa.	1398, 1433,	v. Mitchell,	
Broquet v. Norton Inv.			2098	87 Tex.	1938
Co.	907	76 Pa.	416, 660	88 Tex.	667, 1738,
v. Tripp	569, 1975	v. Corey	1943		1958
Brosius & Co. v. First		v. Crandall	1624	v. Mooers	1108, 1109
Nat'l Bank	1005, 1556	v. Crown G. M. Co.	2433	v. Moosic M. C. Co.	2312
Brosseau v. Lowy	2433	v. Dean	1018	v. Mt. Holly	1719
Brosty v. Thompson	2442	v. Doubleday	1978	v. Nash	1350
Brotherhood of Painters		v. Doyle	2463	v. New Jersey S. L. R.	
v. Barton	1646, 2385a	v. Drake	2495	Co.	463
Brotherhood of Railroad		v. Driggers	1239	v. Norton	620, 2245
Trainmen v. Merideth	1081	v. Dulath S. C. & A. R.		v. Oattis	1213
Brotherline v. Ham-		Co.	2349	v. Oldham	2522
mond	2529	v. Eaton	2110	v. Orde	1856
Brotherton v. Livingston	1651	v. Edson	1651, 1680	v. Owen	1021
v. Mart	1269	v. Equitable L. Ins.		v. Patterson	610, 2336
v. People	1447	Co.	1242	v. Payson	2308, 2313
Brott v. State	177	v. Evans	2016	v. People,	
Brough v. Perkins	1698	v. Farley	1859e	3 Colo.	1061
Broughton v. Harpur	605	v. Feldwert	2410	17 Mich.	1126, 2079
Brouillette v. R. Co.	97	v. First Nat'l Bank	1074,	36 Mich.	1136
Brounker v. Atkins	1598,		1236	v. Perez	928
	2169	v. Foster,		v. Perkins	15
Broussard v. Mallet	1336	1 H. & N.	2306, 2308	v. Piper	2580
Brown, Ex parte,		113 Mass.	1160	v. Quinby Co.	2410
97 Cal.	2214	v. Frat. A. Assoc.	95	v. Quintard	2471
72 Mo.	2200, 2287	v. Giles	1876	v. R. Co.,	
Re	2220	v. Gillett	1028, 1031	5 Gray	1640
v. Aitken	714	v. Greenly	1409	94 Ia.	1977
v. Anderson	747	v. Griffith	1225, 1239	Ky., 53 S. W.	1750



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Brown v. R. Co.,		Brown v. Tucker	1195	Broyles v. Prisock	1164, 1719,
66 Mo.	1012, 2382	v. U. S.,			1840
32 N. Y.	1719	150 U. S.	21, 1079	v. State	1072, 1349
22 Q. B. D.	65, 461	164 U. S.	1616	Brubaker v. Taylor	916, 1028,
12 R. I.	714, 1943	142 Fed.	1079		1051
v. Reed	2419	233 Fed.	522	Bruce v. Beall	561, 795, 1951
v. Richmond	1267	257 Fed.	2578	v. Com.	2071
v. Road Co.	1951	v. Upton	2099	v. Crews	702
v. Schiappacasse	2463	v. Walker	2255, 2258,	v. Nicolopulo	1213, 2167
v. Schock	4, 38, 289		2281	v. State	1350
v. Scott	1677	v. Warner	1539, 1540	v. Wanzer	1651
v. Selwin	2475	v. Westinghouse E. &		Brucker v. State	246
v. Sheppard	1690, 1700	M. Co.	208	Bruckman v. Taussig	1684
v. Shields	1062	v. White	1387	Bruder v. State	763
v. Simpson	2143	v. Wightman	1560	Bruendl's Will	2382
v. Smith	399	v. Wiley	2444	Bruger v. Princeton &	
v. Stanton	1272	v. Wisner	2446	S. M. M. F. Ins. Co.	1213
v. State,		v. Wood,		Bruggeman v. Illinois C.	
46 Ala.	1618	17 Mass.	1304	R. Co.	1693, 1951
52 Ala.	2086	121 Mass.	2336	Bruington v. Wagner	2391
124 Ala.	861	19 Mo.	907, 1213	Bruker v. Kelsey	1086
142 Ala.	278, 600,	6 Rich. Eq.	1312,	Bruley v. Garvin	2303
	1007, 1013, 1108		2141	Brummel v. Glos	1705
143 Ark.	1807	v. Woodman	1268	Brundred v. Del Hoyo	1684
Fla., 27 So.	2056	v. Woodward	2015	v. McLaughlin	1956
Fla., 35 So.	18, 1029	v. Wren	382	v. Paterson M. Co.	1959
80 Fla.	987	v. Zachary	1388	Bruner v. Com.	2183
28 Ga.	761, 1893,	Brown's Case	2100	v. Wade	2015
	2354	Brown's Will	928	Brunet v. The King	359
76 Ga.	1330	Brown & Hackney Co.		v. State	248
119 Ga.	2115	v. Daubs	2477	Brunger v. Pioneer R. P.	
71 Ind.	1329	Brown Land Co. v. Leh-		Co.	284
72 Md.	62, 782, 923,	man	19, 2349	Bruni's Case	2372
	1028, 1897	Browne v. Crashaw	519	Brunnell v. H. S. M. Co.	377
32 Miss.	826, 1445,	v. Hickle	581	Bruno v. Hickman	987
	2071	v. Moore,		Bruns v. Clase	1195
72 Miss. 93	62	3 Bligh	1862	Brunson v. Lynde	73
72 Miss. 997	200	32 Mich.	716	v. State	118
78 Miss.	1072	v. Phila. Bank	2165	Brunswick v. Standard	
(Tom) 85 Miss.	396,	v. State	142	Acc. Ins. Co.	2500
	2072	v. Steck	1873	Brunswick & A. R. Co.	
(Tom) 88 Miss.	111,	Brownell v. Black	1700	v. McLaren	1943
	396, 1871	v. Briggs	334	Brunt v. Thompson	2575
(Leora) Miss., 40		v. Brownell	987	Brusberg v. R. Co.	454, 456
So. 1008	396	v. Curtis	2268	Brusch v. R. Co.	1719
Nebr., 185 N. W.	1819	v. McEwen	2351	Brush v. Cook	2168
62 N. J. L.	1270,	v. Moorehead	377	v. Gibbon	1858
	2512	v. People	111, 194, 246,	v. Smith	567
18 Oh. St.	580		247, 1974, 1976	v. Taggart	1269
26 Oh. St.	363	v. R. Co.	1432, 1747,	Brush E. L. & P. Co. v.	
16 Okla.	2272		1756	Wells	1018
1 Tex. App.	2081	Brownfield v. R. Co.	1976	Bruton v. State	2059
3 Tex. App.	1840	Browning v. Aylwin	1858	Bryan v. Com.	390, 2349
42 Tex. Cr.	905	v. Flanagan	1244, 1267,	v. Duff	2445
74 Tex. Cr.	390, 1730,		1347, 1521, 1639,	v. Farnsworth	1681
	1732		1664, 2107, 2450	v. Forsyth	1672, 1684
127 Wis.	581, 1076	v. Gosnell	2015	v. Malloy	1388
v. Swanton	1951	v. Hanford	1664	v. Moring	736, 754
v. Swineford	1159, 1806	v. Hoffman	759, 1404	v. O'Connor	1388
v. Thornton,		v. Huff	1238, 1876,	v. Smith	1256
6 A. & E.	5		1890, 2158	v. State,	
1 Myl. & Cr.	2121	v. State	2595	Ala. App., 89 So.	133
v. Tourtelotte	136, 907,	Brownsword v. Edwards	2250,	41 Fla.	961
	2498		2258	Fla., 34 So.	905, 1036

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bryan v. State,		Buck v. Appleton	529	Buffum v. Harris	571, 1923.
Tex. Cr., 234		v. Ashbrook	613		1951
S. W.	1038	v. Boston	463	v. York Mfg. Co.	2120
v. U. S.	309	v. Brady	751	v. R. Co.	1943
v. Wagstaff	1208	v. Buck	20	Buford v. Bostick	1678
v. Walton,		v. Gage	1225	v. M'Luny	70, 73, 209
14 Ga.	1035, 1195,	v. Grimes	1681	v. Tucker	2580
	2143, 2535	v. McKeesport	792	Buie v. Carver	2098
20 Ga.	167, 1605,	v. Maddock	1051	Builders' Co. v. Cox	1078, 1124
	1873, 1922	v. St. Louis Union		Bujac v. Wilson	2065, 2322
v. Wear	1680, 2167	Trust Co.	15, 1877	Bulger v. People	228, 1976
Bryan's Appeal	2452	Buck's Will, In re	20	v. Ross	2502
Bryant v. Foot	2522	Buckeye Cotton Oil Co.		Bulkeley v. Butler	18, 20, 2529
v. Ingraham	803	v. Sloan,		Bulkley v. Landon	1076
v. Kelton	1271, 1677,	250 Fed.	76	Bull v. Com.	2349
	1680	272 Fed.	2498	v. International Power	
v. McKinney	1496	Buckeye Powder Co. v.		Co.	4
v. Owen	1273, 2426	Hazard P. Co.	2258	v. Loveland	2193, 2211,
v. Pierce	1738	Buckhanon v. State	2073		2222, 2223
v. R. Co.	65, 461	Buckholts v. Buckholts	2067	Bullard v. Billings	1085, 1779
v. Ritterbush	529	Buckingham v. Angell	2214	v. Brewer	2434
v. Shinnabarger	21	v. Harris	1873	v. Bullard	1051
v. State	1781, 2497,	v. Roar	2235, 2341	v. Hascall	778
	2511, 2513	Buckinghamshire v.		v. Hollingsworth	791
v. Stilwell	1182	Drury	1625	v. Lambert	988, 1022,
v. U. S.	1209	Buckley v. Buckley	1890		1971, 1985
Bryant's Estate	413	v. Express Co.	201	v. Leach	2474
Bryant Electric Co. v.		v. Smith	1316	v. Pearsall	779, 900, 904,
Stein	2417	v. Thomas	1917		905, 907
Bryce v. Canadian Pac.		v. U. S.	1641, 1672	v. R. Co.	290, 1807
R. Co.	563	v. Wood	2250	v. Smith	1003
v. Chicago M. & St.		Bucklin v. State	923, 1608,	v. Thomas	1186, 1215,
P. R. Co.	660		1985		2158
v. R. Co.	458	Buckmaster v. Job	2167	v. Wilson	736, 745
Bryden v. Taylor	1624	Buckminster v. Perry	1938	Bullard's Estate	233, 1671
Bryne v. Van Tienhoven	2410	Buckner v. Armour	1339	Bullen v. Michel	21, 1195.
Brynjolfson v. Elev. Co.	1290	v. Finlay	1675		1304, 1464, 1472,
Bryson v. Hamilton	2098	v. State	247		1592, 2139, 2143
Buard v. Buard	1316	Buckstaff v. Russell	20	Bulley v. Bulley	1053
Bubster v. State	2089	Budd v. Ann Arbor R.		Bulliner v. People	1842, 1852
Buccleuch v. Metropoli-		Co.	456	Bullinger v. Marshall	1127,
tan Board	1909, 1912,	v. Morgan	1079		1131
	2349, 2358	v. Northern Pacific R.		Bullington v. Com.	368
Buce v. Eldon	1719	Co.	463	v. State	198
Bucham v. King	1706	v. R. Co.	561	Bullions v. Loring	1312
Buchanan v. Atkinson	2097	Buddy v. State	851	Bullis v. Easton	702, 1213
v. Clark	2408	Budro v. Burgess	2432	v. Montgomery	1082, 1083
v. Cook	1878	Buchner Chair Co. v.		v. R. Co.	1890
v. Grocery Co.	1302	Feulner	2552	Bullitt v. Overfield	1280
v. Minneapolis T. M.		Buel v. New York		Bullock v. Corry	2323
Co.	18	Steamer	1877	v. Hunter	760
v. Moore	1362	v. State	140, 983, 987,	v. Knox	2527
v. Rucker	1271, 1681,		2081, 2497	v. Lake Drummond C.	
	2163	Buell v. Cook	1256	& W. Co.	451
v. State,		v. Warner	2572	v. Richardson	2257
55 Ala.	2086	Buenaventura v. Urbano	1606	v. State	194, 822, 855,
109 Ala.	417, 692,	Buessel v. U. S.	20		861, 1005
	2277	Buffalo Co. v. Van		v. Wilson	2168
41 Tex. Cr.	276,	Sickle	1013	v. Yakima Valley	
	1841	Buffalo L. T. & S. D.		Transp. Co.	438
v. U. S.	581	Co. v. Knights T. &		Bulstrode v. Letchmere	2286,
Bucher v. Jarratt	1249, 1647	M. M. A. Ass'n	7a, 2390		2308
v. Wisconsin C. R. Co.	663	Buffington v. McNally	2438,	Bumgardner v. R. Co.	1750
Buchman v. State	2201, 2203		2465	Bumpas v. Moore	21, 1263



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Bunberry v. Brett	1083	Burgess v. Sims Drug		Burling v. Paterson	2520
Bunbury v. Bunbury	2317	Co.	2386, 2389	Burlingame v. Central	
v. Matthews	2168	v. State	1261	R. Co.	2355
Bunce v. McMahon	1015,	Burghardt v. Turner	1225	Burlingim v. State	309
	2354	Burghart v. Angerstein	1646	Burlington & M. R. Co.	
Bunch v. Hurst	1213	v. Brown	2115	v. Beebe	1943
Bunckley v. Jones	289	Burgin v. Chenault	2141	v. Schluntz	1943
v. State	2272	Burglacy v. Ellington	2426	Burlington C. R. & N.	
Buncle v. Sioux City		Burgos v. Baez	1188	R. Co. v. Dey	1356
Stockyards Co.	2066	Burgoyne v. Showler	1302,	v. Sherwood	2120
Bundrick v. State	1878		1512	Burlington G. Co. v.	
Bundy v. Hyde	16, 18, 785,	Burk v. Andis	1842	Greene	1248
	2406	v. Putnam	7	Burlington Lumber Co.	
v. Sierra L. Co.	1951	v. Reese	680, 685	v. W. C. & M. Co.	1203
Bunel v. O'Day	2527	v. State	968	Burlington Nat'l Bank	
Bunker v. Shed	736	v. Tregg	1216	v. Beard	1086
Bunker Hill Co. v.		v. Winters	1244	Burlton, Ex parte	2268
Schmelling	791	Burke v. Burke,		Burn v. Metropolitan	
Bunn v. Bunn	2260	142 Ia.	2450	Lumber Co.	716, 747
Bunnell v. Butler	1908	170 Mass.	1664	Burnaby v. Baillie	1213,
v. Studebaker	1779	24 Pa.	2498		1644, 2063
Bunz v. Cornelius	1066	v. Dulaney	2409	Burnaman v. State	280, 960
Bunzel v. Maas	996, 1003,	v. Elliott	2535	Burnand v. Nerot	2529
	2103	v. Ellis	507	Burnap v. Sharpsteen	1960
Burbank v. Dennis	736	v. Glos	1225	Burnell v. Weld	1631
Burbury v. Jackson	2061	v. Kellough	430	Burnet v. Brush	1225
Burch v. Americus G. Co.	95	v. Louisville & N. R. Co.	455	Burnett v. Bean	1943
v. Stovall	2050	v. Miller,		v. Lynch	1297, 1298
Burcher v. Vale	7a	6 Blackf.	73, 406	v. McCluey	1244
Burchfield v. State	664	7 Cush.	1890	v. People	68, 866
Burden v. State	696	v. Ryan	1664, 2138	v. R. Co.	682, 953, 1021,
v. Taylor	2450	v. Scribner	76		1028, 1124
Burdett v. State	580	v. Shaver	1898	v. Roman	1651
Burdette v. Burdette	2239,	v. Shelby	1208	v. Simpkins	75
	2245	v. South Boulder C. D.		v. State,	
v. Com.	987, 1270, 2277	Co.	461	76 Ark.	2062
Burdge v. State	861	v. State,		87 Ga.	2098
Burdick v. Hunt	694, 1021,	71 Ala.	1966	8 Okl. Cr.	2259b
	2008, 2363	Oh. 135 N. E.	21	32 Tex. Cr.	398
Burditt v. Howe	2429	v. T. M. W. Co.	1208	83 Tex. Cr.	521
Burdon v. Rickets	1186	v. Voyles	1195	v. Thompson	1225, 1308
Burfenning v. Chicago		Burke Co. v. Fowler	1003	v. Wilm. N. & N. R.	
St. P. M. & O. R. Co.	4a	Burkett v. Doty	2408	Co.	1131, 1132
Burford v. McCue	2529	v. Scarborough	1651	Burnette, Re	2327
Burg v. R. Co.	460, 1385a,	Burkhalter v. Edwards	907	v. Young	2456
	1693	Burkhardt v. Lough-		Burney v. Allen	1976
Burge v. Hamilton	1736, 2052,	ridge	1677, 1869	v. State,	
	2452	Burkhart v. Gladish	228	87 Ala.	2059
Burger v. R. Co.	716, 717, 720	v. North American Co.	76	100 Ga.	2497
v. State,		Burkholder v. Casad	1085	v. Torrey	1938
83 Ala.	950	Burks v. State,		Burnham v. Ayer	694, 702,
81 Ga.	2071	117 Ala.	2497		728
Burgert v. Borchert	1086,	120 Ala.	770	v. Brennan	1086
	1779	72 Ark.	1808	v. Cornwell	1770
Burgess v. Bennett	762	78 Ark.	1126	v. Hatfield	2363
v. Blake	1225	Tex. Cr., 49		v. Mitchell	233, 1938
v. Bosworth	1141	S. W.	759	v. Morrissey	2211
v. Burgess,		Burleigh v. Stibbs	1256	v. Roberts	2311, 2312
2 Hagg. Cons.	2167	v. Stott	1077	v. Webster	2572
47 N. H.	2067	Burleson v. Reading	1722	v. Wood	1213
v. Clark	2152	Burleson Mica Co. v.		Burns v. Barenfield	672
v. Fowler	2408	Southern Exp. Co.	2200	v. Burns,	
v. Langley	2352	Burley v. Bethune	1416	13 Fla.	2085
v. Quimby	1086	v. Old Colony R. Co.	463	68 N. H.	398

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Burns v. Burns,		Burrus v. Kyle	770	Bush v. Van Ness	1651
4 S. & R.	2051	Burson v. Edwards	406	Bush & H. Co. v. Mc-	
v. Campbell	1073, 1681,	v. Huntington	2098, 2420	Carty Co.	245
	1966	Burt v. Burt	1974	Bush & M. Co. v.	
v. Del. & A. T. & T.		v. Gwinn	1969	Helbing	1086
Co.	561	v. Palmer	1070	Bushell v. Barrett	520
v. Donoghue	1141	v. Place	1416	Bushnell v. Colony	1208
v. Fay	1539	v. R. Co.	1350, 2154, 2577	v. Simpson	1560
v. Kempshall	2260	v. State,		Buskett, Ex parte	2261, 2283
v. Kerr	1062	23 Oh. St.	1136,	Busse v. State	133
v. Paine	2354		1138, 1871	Bussey v. Whitaker	1513
v. Sennett	461	38 Tex. Cr.	821, 1873	Bustin v. Rogers	1549
v. State,		v. Walker	1313	Bustros v. White	2319
43 Ala.	111	Burton v. Anderson	1684	Buswell v. Davis	1777
49 Ala.	2100	v. B. S. C. Co.	1944, 1955	v. Fuller	2508
61 Ga.	1750	v. Burton	487	Buswell T. Co. v. Case	392
75 Ohio	1807	v. Com.	1441	Butcher v. Bank of	
v. Stuart	1124	v. Dangerfield	1680	Brownsville	2573
v. Superior Court	2195	v. Driggs	18, 1213, 1230,	v. Butcher	1511
v. Waterloo	2384, 2389		1244, 1404, 1532	v. Coats	2205
v. Welch	660, 1976	v. Griffiths	2553	v. R. Co.	455, 456
Burns' Will	229	v. March	66	Butcher's Company v.	
Burns & S. L. Co. v.		v. Mills	613	Jones	1258
Doyle	2409	v. Payne	1200	Butchers' S. & M. Ass'n	
Burns Int. Detective		v. Pettibone	1677, 2166	v. Boston	1530, 1633, 1635
Agency v. Holt	2361	v. Plummer	735, 745, 748	Butler, Re	2195
Burnside v. Everett	451, 681,	v. Railway	1411	v. Boyles	784
	1873	v. Scott	1938	v. Butler,	
v. Terry	2311	v. State,		3 Day	585
Burnwell Coal Co. v.		107 Ala.	104, 791, 841,	5 Harringt.	2106
Setzer	1951		851, 861, 1157,	169 N. C.	1346
Burpee v. Carvill	1219		1404, 1405, 1974	v. Carver	1221, 1258
Burr v. Com.	216	115 Ala.	106, 664, 791,	v. Dunagan	1225, 1651
v. Harper	1993, 1999,		1013, 1404, 1913	v. Durham	1677
	2002, 2007	118 Ala.	1750	v. Estrella R. V. Co.	1530
v. Kase	2105	141 Ala.	2153	v. Farmers' Nat'l	
v. Ross	1350	Tex. Cr., 101		Bank	1777
v. Sim	2531	S. W.	1644, 1651	v. Fayerweather	6, 2311,
v. Smith	1778	v. U. S.	2350		2314, 2326
v. Wilson	224, 1623	v. Wylde	1736	v. Ford	2535
Burr's Trial; see U. S. v.		v. Young	2257, 2260,	v. Good Enough Min-	
Burr			2268, 2272	ing Co.	2580
Burraston v. Bank	2296	Burwell v. Brodie	2580	v. Hines	1778
Burrell v. Bull	603	v. Corbin	2049	v. Ins. Co.	681, 1639, 1672,
v. Montana	852, 2283	v. Sneed	791, 1665, 1960		1938
v. North	1182	Bushy v. Self	2527	v. Iron Co.	1521
v. State	1108, 1398	v. State	987	v. King	1944
v. Uncapher	2232, 2235	Busch v. Robinson	2097	v. Moore	2192, 2394
Burridge v. Sussex	1670	Bush v. Barnett	1058, 2509	v. Mountgarret	1182, 1481,
Burrill v. Giles	2336	v. Bush	1738		1482, 1483
Burris v. State	276, 278	v. Com.	936, 1828, 2098	v. Owen	1681
v. Taylor	1681	v. Delano	1738, 2502,	v. R. Co.,	
Burrit v. Com'rs	1350		2503	87 Ia.	1984
Burrough v. Martin	735, 745,	v. Hicks	2417	85 Mich.	1651
	748	v. Jackson	457	130 N. C.	1700
v. New Jersey Gas Co.	714	v. Livingston	2123	143 N. Y.	1755
Burroughs v. U. S.	111	v. People	580, 1853	v. State,	
Burrow v. Idaho & W.		v. Prosser	406	17 Ala.	1385
N. R. Co.	916	v. Roberts	1086	162 Ala.	406
Burrowes v. Lock	1292, 1303,	v. Stanley	1267	34 Ark.	952, 1003,
	1304	v. State,			1963
Burrows v. Grand Trunk		168 Ala.	2595	97 Ind.	1908
R. Co.	1908	109 Ga.	1434, 1451	Miss., 24 So.	821
v. Lake Crystal	252, 458	189 Ind.	987, 1021	7 Tex. App.	2060



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Butler v. Toronto Mu-		Byrne v. Cambria & C. R.		Caldwell v. Drummond	1067
toscope Co.	2203	Co.	1943	v. Hoskins	2389
v. Tufts	586	v. Fagan	1239	v. McDermit	1551
v. Warren	1196	v. Harvey	208	v. McVicar,	
v. Watkins	321			9 Ark.	1378
Butrick, Re	2139			12 Ark.	529
Butschkowski v. Bracks	2573			v. Meltveldt	2311
Butt v. Mastin	1239			v. Modern Woodmen	2531
v. Smith	2433			v. Murphy	1718, 1719
v. State	1079			v. Perkins	2434
v. Tuthill	2349			v. Pollak	1312, 1651
Butte & B. C. M. Co. v.				v. Spears	2349
Montana O. P. Co.	2466			v. State,	
Butte Investment Co. v.				17 Conn.	78, 204,
Bell	2419				928, 1620
Butterfield v. Beaver				43 Fla.	2582
City	17			50 Fla.	20, 2056,
v. Gilchrist	1021				2336, 2528
v. Miller	2144			63 Ind.	1182
Butteris v. Mifflin & L.				v. Stuart	2237
M. Co.	2355			v. Ward	1350
Butterworth v. Bailey	2121			v. Williams	1086
Button, Ex parte	1856c,			Caldwell L. & L. Co. v.	
	2195, 2210			Triplett	1567
v. Knight	287			Caldwell's Trial	379
Butts v. Eaton Rapids	252,			Caledonian F. I. Co. v.	
	1721			Traub	1062
v. Newton	616			Calhoon v. Belden	1247
v. Richards	2520			v. Com.	925
v. State,				Calhoun v. Akeley	1944
66 Ga.	1842			v. Calhoun	1188, 1213
12 Okl. Cr.	2062			v. Hays	2103
v. Swartwood	1817			v. State	2184
Buxton v. Cornish	2447			v. Thompson	1195, 2271,
v. S. P. Works	1951				2279
Buzard v. McAnulty	797,			Calivada C. Co. v. Hays	6
	1065, 1066			Calkins v. Ann Arbor R.	
Buzzell v. Tobin	2420			Co.	923
Byars v. Mt. Vernon	1684			v. Calkins	2520
v. State	987			v. Hartford	458
Bybee's Estate	1292			v. Howard	1354
Byers v. Baltimore & O.				v. Lee	2286
R. Co.	456			v. State	1999, 2000, 2002,
v. Orensstein	2103				2008
v. R. Co.	460, 1385a,			Calkins' Estate	1738
	1700			v. Calkins	1738
v. State,				Call v. Dunning	1288, 1301
105 Ala.	390, 923			Callaghan v. Chipman	1350
87 Tex.	1362			v. Myers	372
v. Wallace	1484, 1502			v. S. P. C. A.	461
Byers' Adm'r v. Hines	2349			Callaghan's Estate	2475
Byerts v. Robinson	1519, 2065			Callahan v. Ingram	1971
Byington v. Oaks	1225			Callan v. Bull	1978
Byler v. Asher	7			v. Gaylord	2016
Bynes v. Butte Brewing				Callanan v. Hurley	1354
Co.	1063, 2594			v. Shaw	946, 1013, 1029,
Bynon v. State	2085				1263, 2034
Byram v. People	851			Callary v. Transit Co.	916
Byrd v. Hudson	1131			Callaway v. Fash	1635,
v. State	1938, 2245				1651, 1684
Byrket v. Monokon	66			v. McMillian	1548
Byrne v. Boadle	2509			Callen v. Rose	1062
v. Boston W. H. & R.				Callender, M. & T. Co.	
Co.	2509			v. Flint	2536

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Calleraud v. Piot	2408	Campbell v. Campbell,		Campbell v. Wilson	1481
Calligan v. Calligan	2520	3 Head (Tenn.)	18	v. Wood	2572
Callihan v. W. W. Power		138 Ill.	1081	v. Woodstock Iron Co.	702
Co.	1129	30 R. I.	1908	v. York	1698
Callison v. Smith	1890, 1893	54 Wis.	73	Campbell Co. v. Marder	1347
Calloway v. Cossart	1573	v. Carruth	2520	Campion v. Lattimer	778
v. Gibbins	1225	v. Chace	2336	Camsusa v. Coigdarripe	282
v. Henderson	2465	v. Com.	2060	Canaan v. Avery	2527
Callsen v. Hope	2573	v. Coon	1083, 1085	Canada C. R. Co. v.	
Calverley v. Williams	2463	v. Dearborn	2437	McLaren	456, 1524,
Calvert v. Carter	1907	v. Dick	1958		2319
v. Fitzgerald	736, 1778	v. Everhart	1671, 2494	Canada Cement Co. v.	
v. Flower	1199, 2125	v. Fidelity & C. Co.	1974	Hanchuk	1606
v. Springfield Elec. L.		v. Garven	1304	Canadian Bank of Com-	
& P. Co.	1698	v. Germania Fire Ins.		merce v. Bezy	664
Calvin's Case	516	Co.	749, 815	Canadian Credit Men's	
Camacho v. Balasquide	682,	v. Gilbert,		T. Ass. v. Anderson	2444
	770, 923,	57 Ala.	571, 1978	Canadian Northern R.	
	1336, 2527	5 All.	1263	Co. v. Horner	2509
Cambers v. Lowry	2464	v. Hackfeld	2220	Canadian Northern	
Camden v. Belgrade	268,	v. Hodgson	2436	Western R. Co. v.	
	1645, 2105	v. Holland	1086	Moore	1076, 1908
v. Cowley	1954	v. Kalamazoe	252, 438	Canadian Pacific R. Co.	
v. Doremus	18, 586	v. Mayor	1951	v. Jackson	665
Camden & A. R. Co.		v. Miller	2354	v. Quinn	1530
v. Williams	1081, 1698	v. Moore	2447	Canale v. People	1271
Camden & S. R. Co. v.		v. New Haven	1951	Canatsey v. Canatsey	1511
Stetson	6, 2220	v. People,		Candle v. U. S.	749
Camerlin v. Palmer Co.	668	16 Ill.	111	Cancemi v. People	21, 55
Cameron v. Blackman	759,	159 Ill.	2056, 2071,	Canfield v. Jackson	438
	760		2081	v. Thompson	1225
v. Cameron	583, 1378	v. Perth Amboy S. &		Cang Yui v. Gardner	1560
v. Estabrooks	2416	E. Co.	2433	Canham v. Rhode Island	
v. Forsyth	1911	v. R. Co.	455, 456	Co.	282
v. Kersey	1195	v. Railway Transfer		Caniff v. Myers	1911
v. Lightfoot	2158	Co.	1871	Cannady v. Lynch	492, 494,
v. Peck	1274, 1275	v. Rusch	1955		495, 496, 497
v. State,		v. Russell	561	Cannell v. Ins. Co.	1947
14 Ala.	2086	v. Skidmore	2349	Cannon v. Cannon	166
13 Okl. Cr.	1620	v. Skinner	7, 2143	v. Iowa City	1874, 1943
v. U. S.	7, 2282	v. State,		v. State	2254
Cameron Lumber Co. v.		23 Ala.	276, 293, 493,	Cannon v. Terr.	934, 987
Somerville	1521		791, 794, 905,	v. Yarbrough	1665
Canfield v. Bird	406		987, 994, 1044,	Canole v. Allen	2236
Caminetti v. U. S.	2056, 2060,		1977, 2529	Can Pon, In re	1355
	2273	55 Ala.	1072, 1163	Cant v. Johnstone	2474
Camp v. Hall	1951	133 Ala.	1750, 2236	Cantey v. Platt	704, 1991,
v. Randle	1672, 2566	38 Ark.	248		2017
v. Ristine	1944	11 Ga.	1397, 1398,	Cantin v. News Pub. Co.	1856a
v. State	62		1431, 1438,	Cantling v. R. Co.	1943
Camp's Estate	2052, 2106		1442	Canton v. Bentley	2063, 2235
Campau v. Dewey	1871, 1888,	100 Ga.	2497	Cantrell v. State	57
	1889, 1890, 1893	123 Ga.	397	Canty v. State	1442, 1451
v. Dubois	1062	150 Ind.	2513	v. Sumter	529
v. Moran	392	3 Kans.	1009, 1014	Canwell v. Curtis	2535
v. North	2383	Okl. Cr., 206 Pac.	1481	Capehart v. Huey	610
Campbell v. Ayres	2110	42 Tex. Cr.	857	Capell v. Fagan	2105, 2448
v. Bank	2535	62 Tex. Cr.	987	Capelle v. Trober	19
v. Bannister	73, 209, 406,	89 Tex. Cr.	987	Capello v. State	56
	987	v. Twemlow	2230	Capen v. Stoughton	2355
v. Bates	2008, 2139, 2142	v. U. S.	936	Capistrano v. Fabella	1606,
v. Brown	1750, 1873	v. Wallace	1681, 2529		2527
v. Burns	2498	v. Wells Bros. Co.	1951	Capital & Counties	
v. Butts	406	v. White	613	Bank v. Henty	2556, 2557



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Capital C. Co. v. Holtzman	282, 969	Carlton v. Litton	1212	Carpenter v. Willey	2354
Capital Nat'l Bank v. Williams	2016	v. People	140, 2081	v. Winn	1859b
Capital Traction Co. v. Contner	1021, 1951	Carlyle v. Plumer	770	Carpenter's Appeal	905, 1081
v. Heover	762	Carmack v. Drum	2446	Carpenter's Estate	689
v. King	1374	Carmalt v. Post	658, 728, 787	Carpmael v. Powis	2294, 2297, 2317
Capital Trust Co. v. Fowler	2065, 2124	Carman v. Dunham	1549	Carr v. American Locomotive Co.	252, 1403
Capodilupo v. Stock	763, 2125	v. Montana C. R. Co.	791	v. Burdiss	1297
Caples v. State	987	Carmel N. G. & I. Co. v. Small	2486	v. Carr	1232
Capron v. Douglass	2385, 2389, 2390	Carmical v. Carmical	1302	v. Coke	1350, 2592
Carbone v. Cotton	1992	Carmichael, Re v. Carmichael	689, 1938, 1890	v. Cornell	619
Carbould-Ellis v. Dales	2475	v. Reed	2144	v. Dighton	1576
Card v. Foot	1773	Carmody v. Capital Traction Co.	2382	v. Dooley	2442
v. State	309	v. Gaslight Co.	2509	v. First National Bank	2572
Carden v. McConnell	1253	Carnahan v. Wood	1085, 1086, 1778	v. Gale	586
Cardiff, The	917	Carnarvon v. Villebois	1584	v. Griffin	852
Cardigan Case	1842	Carnat v. Mathews	2509	v. Hilton	1072
Cardinal v. Heskett	7a	Carne v. Litchfield	2273	v. McColgan	2410
Cardoner's Estate, Bujac v. Wilson	2065	v. Nicoll	1458, 1778	v. Miner	1195
Cardwell v. Breckenridge	576	Carnell v. State	321	v. Moore	463, 901
Carey v. Adkins	2232	Carnes v. Crandall	1503, 1605	v. Sellers	1543, 1549
v. Hawaiian Lumber Mills	382	Carney v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	2509	v. Smith,	
v. Hubbardston	792, 794	v. Carney	1856b	58 Ga.	1203
v. Nissle	1051	v. Gleissner	2245	129 N. C.	1022
v. Pitt	702, 704, 1993, 2026	v. Hennessey	916	v. State,	
v. State	2081	v. Miller	2410	Ala. App.	851, 855, 860, 988
v. Williams	1074, 1188	v. Sheedy	286	43 Ark.	987, 1079, 1750
Cargile v. Wood	2083	v. State	1974	Fla., 34 So.	276
Cargill v. Atwood	1549, 1554	Carnie v. Murphy	613	96 Ga.	2354
v. Com.	200	Caroline, Trial of Queen; see Queen's Case.		135 Ind.	59
v. Thompson	1955	Carothers v. State	2277	v. Stern	65
Carhart v. Clark	2167	Carp v. Queen Ins. Co	1186	Carr Land & L. S. Co. v. U. S.	1239
Carico v. Com.	247	Carpenter v. Ambrosion	771	Carradine v. Hotchkiss	1877, 2125
Carkhuff v. Anderson	1225, 1318, 1651	v. Ashley	1416	Carrall v. State	2497
Carl v. State	2073	v. Calvert	1938, 1963	Carrara P. A. Co. v. Carrara P. Co.	1381, 1907
Carland v. Cunningham	1207	v. Carpenter	1163, 1168	Carre's Case	1991
Carle v. People	246, 918, 2079, 2484	v. Corinth	451, 561, 1976	Carren v. Breed	2201
Carlin v. Chicago & W. I. R. Co.	1639	v. Dame	610, 934, 1268	Carrens v. State	2062
v. Kennedy	1951	v. Dexter	1651	Carrick v. Armstrong	2110
Carlisle v. Eady	1258	v. Dressler	1239	Carrico v. Neal	728, 1304
v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2509	v. Groff	1404	v. R. Co.	1158, 1330, 1398
v. Hunley	1029	v. Hatch	561, 1081, 1938	Carrier v. Hampton	693
v. Norris	913	v. Hollister	1082, 1257	Carrington v. Brooks	2219
v. State	2079	v. Jones	2105	v. Cornock	1415
Carlos v. Brook	1003, 1982	v. Laswell	454	v. Eastman	1290
Carlson v. Benton	795	v. Leonard	253	v. Holabird	1911
v. Holm	778, 2115	v. Lingenfelter	21, 1003	v. Payne	1304, 1312
v. Winterson	691, 923, 1985	v. Markham	2432	v. St. Louis	2388
Carlton v. Carey	1530	v. Moore	607	v. Ward	728
v. Carlton	493, 689	v. Nixon	987	Carroll v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	561, 682, 1856c, 2509
v. Hescox	460	v. People	205	v. C. B. & N. R. Co.	2509
		v. Sawyer	530, 1275, 1352	v. Cave Hill Cemetery Co.	2472
		v. Smith	1239	v. East Tenn. V. & Ga. R. Co.	2319
		v. Snow	2475	v. Knickerbocker Ice Co.	4c
		v. State	1028		
		v. Transp. Co.	1951		
		v. Wait	571		
		v. Wall	75, 210, 953, 1028		
		v. Ward	1007		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Carroll v. Nodine	2445	Carter v. Jackson	2008, 2016, 2020	Casarotti v. Lyons	2383
v. Norwood	1651, 2141	v. McDowell	406	Casarotti's Estate	2383
v. Parry	2155	v. McGill	451, 1352	Casat v. State	105
v. Peake	1232, 1256	v. Montgomery	1501, 1605	Case v. Burrows	749, 1040
v. Sprague	2311	v. People	987, 1106	v. Case	2085
v. State,		v. Prairie Oil & Gas Co.	2429	v. Lyman	1695, 2105
23 Ala.	111, 247, 824, 839	v. Pryke	377	v. McGee	1681
45 Ark.	2060	v. Robinett	1651	v. Mobile	2572
3 Humph.	246, 1725	v. Saunders	1082	v. Perew	1698
74 Miss.	1620	v. Seattle,		v. Potter	1549
5 Nebr.	580, 1803	19 Wash.	65	Case Plough Works v.	
53 Nebr.	1853	21 Wash.	283	N. & S. Co.	2434
3 Tex. App.	2056	v. State,		Case Threshing M. Co.	
32 Tex. Cr.	921, 923, 987	63 Ala.	1821	v. Mattingly	2415
Carrollton R. Co. v.		191 Ala.	1446, 1890	v. Wiley	1195
Municipality	1665	68 Fla.	1339, 1447	Casement's Trial	2497
Carrothers v. Stewart &		106 Ga.	1079	Casey v. Chicago City R.	
Co.	2442	26 Ga. App.	221	Co.,	
Carruth v. Bayley	1021	2 Ind.	391, 687, 1700	237 Ill.	1721
Carskadden v. Poorman	401, 1503	172 Ind.	143, 238	v. Chicago Railways Co.,	
Carson v. Berthold & J.		6 Okl. Cr.	331	269 Ill.	65
Lumber Co.	2525	23 Tex. App.	821	v. Kennedy	1632, 1639
v. Canning	249	87 Tex. Cr.	507	v. Leggett	770, 1073
v. Hawley	2200	Tex. Cr., 76 S.W.	367, 987	v. O'Shaughnessy	1487
v. National Life Ins.		Tex. Cr., 234		v. State	580, 609, 2059
Co.	2437	S. W.	2060	Cash v. Cash	1070
v. Smith	2573	v. Tinicum Fishing Co.	2522	v. Kansas Oil Ref. Co.	2509
v. State	1842	v. Troy Lumber Co.	291	v. Taylor	377
v. Turrish	461, 2510	v. Wakeman	21, 1414	Cashin v. N. Y. N. H. &	
Carson's Appeal	693, 1290, 2048	v. West	2297	H. R. Co.	228, 1639, 1722
Carson's Est., Re	1738	v. Wilson	2555	Casley v. Mitchell	1644, 2088, 2506
Carsten v. Carsten	2067	v. Wood	2143	Casparis Stone Co. v.	
Carstens v. Hauselman	1158	Cartery's Estate	2008	Boncore	2509
v. Muggat	1519	Carthage Turnpike Co.		Cass v. R. Co.	461
v. Pillsbury	4c	v. Andrews	689, 1722, 1975	Cassady v. Old Colony	
Carte v. Dennis	417, 1388	Cartmell v. Walton	1300	St. R. Co.	2509
Carter, Ex parte	2283	Cartwright v. Cartwright	690	v. Trustees	1404
v. Bailey	2165	v. Green	2232, 2260	Cassatt v. Mitchell C. &	
v. Beals	286, 1856c, 2271	v. Toronto	1389	C. Co.	1859b, 2200, 2219, 2257, 2259a
v. Bennett	1058	v. Vandry	2463	Cassem v. Galvin	770
v. Boehm	1917, 1918, 1947	Caruthers v. Eldridge	2141	v. Heustis	614
v. Buchannon	1072, 1777	Carver v. Carver	1676a, 2489	v. Prindle	2106
v. Carter,		v. Huskey	107, 108	Cassidy v. Holland	2520
152 Ill.	660, 2113	v. Jackson	1080, 1082, 1257, 1318, 1573, 1651, 1662, 1676a	Cassilly v. Cassilly	2432
79 Ind.	1126, 1127	v. People	309	Casteel v. State	2059
44 Mo.	1466	v. Pinkney	1199	Castellano v. Peillon	521, 1270
v. Cavanaugh	62, 75, 922, 923, 987, 1985	v. Pinto Lette	2212	Castello v. Castello	2239
v. Chambers	287	v. Tracy	2115, 2117	v. Landwehr	283
v. Clark	1587, 1960	v. U. S.	21, 1032, 1033, 1439, 1442, 1443, 1446	Castillo v. Sebullina	1877
v. Com.	1618	Carvill, Re	2477	Castle v. Bullard	321, 338
v. Davidson	1651	Carville v. Stout	912, 1035	v. Fox	2467
v. Doe	2141	v. Westford	1028	Castleberry v. State	507, 987
v. Edwards	1195	Carwile v. House	1186	Castles v. McMath	1675
v. Graves	2200	v. State	93, 821, 1966	Castleton's Case	414
v. Gregory	1783	Carwille v. Franklin	785	Castner v. Chicago B.	
v. Hill	618	Cary v. Cary	2109	& O. R. Co.	451, 1048, 1062, 2094
v. Hornback	1219, 1346, 2427	v. Hotaling	321	v. Sliker	259, 571, 1754, 1755, 1974, 1976
		v. White	2326	Castor v. Bavington	1890



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Castor v. Bernstein	1290, 2016	Cayford's Case	1339, 2067,	Central R. Co. v. Rich-	
Castro v. Gill	2355		2086	ards	1698
v. Solis	2527	Caykendoll, Ex parte	2349	v. Skellie	712, 718, 719
Caswell v. Glos	1705	Cayugan v. Santos	2437	v. Whitehead	1246
v. R. Co.	461	Cazenove v. Vaughan	1371	v. Wolff	712
v. Ross	1195	Cazier v. Hinchey	1225	Central R. & B. Co.	
Catabian v. Tungcul	150	Cecil v. Henderson	963	v. Kelly	1944
Catchings v. State	2034	v. State	987	v. Murray	1408
Cates v. Hardacre	2260	v. Terr.	398, 1061	Central Railroad v.	
v. Kellogg	1062	Cecil Bank v. Snively	1245	Moore	1671
v. Loftus	2529	Cecil Paper Co. v. Nes-		Central Railway S. Co.	
v. McKinney	1770	bitt	1978	v. Jackson	2195
v. Winter	1177, 1208	Cedar Creek S. Co. v.		Central Stock & G. Ex-	
Cathcart v. Com.	59	Stedham	571	change v. Board of	
v. Gibson	1196	Cedar Rapids Nat'l		Trade	2273
v. Rogers	716, 1876	Bank v. Carlson	2410	Central Trust Co. v.	
Cather v. Damerell	1554, 1556	v. Lavery	2232	Culver	1058
Catherina Maria, The	1639	Cedartown v. Brooks	2220	Central Vt. R. Co.	
Catherwood v. Caslon	2085	Central B. Co. v. Lowell	2593	v. Ruggles	65, 199, 249
Cathey v. Shoemaker	1005	Central Bank v. Cope-		v. Soper	451
Catlett v. Ins. Co.,		land	530	Cerecedo v. Medina	1678
1 Paine	1240, 1681,	v. Stephens	1890, 2409	Cesale v. Cesale	2046
	2164	v. Veasey	1681	Cessna v. Meyers	1712
1 Wend.	1680	Central Branch U. P. R.		Chadbourn v. Franklin	2354
v. R. Co.	2494	Co. v. Andrews	1911	Chaddock v. Chaddock	2336
Catlin v. R. Co.	1018	v. Butman	1062	Chadister v. Baltimore	
Catlin Coal Co. v. Lloyd	2525	v. Nichols	715	& O. R. Co.	1168
Cato v. Hunt	1738	v. Shoup	2593	Chadron v. Glover	2220
Caton v. Carter	1871	v. Walters	1234	v. Harris	2032
v. Lenox	2098	Central City Ins. Co. v.		Chadsey v. Greene	1070
Catron v. Com.	1157	Oates	677	Chadwick v. Beneficial	
Catt v. Howard	735, 2118	Central Coal & Coke Co.		Life Assur. Co.	2382,
Cattell v. Dispatch Pub.		v. Burns	2507		2384
Co.	2356	v. Good	2446	v. Beneficial Life	
Cattison v. Cattison	1730	v. Henry Shoe Co.	657	Ins. Co.	1081
Caudrian v. Miller	73	Central El. Co. v. Sprague		v. Bowman,	2318, 2319
Caufman v. Cong. of C. S.	1195,	El. Co.	1213	v. Bunning	2169
	1564	Central Grain & S. Exch.		v. Chadwick	2260
Caujolle v. Ferrié	1436	v. Board of Trade	286	v. Fonner	1082, 1083
Caulfield v. Sanders	1195,	Central Illinois Public		v. U. S.	1060, 2364
	1558	Service Co. v. Ind.		Chaffe v. Cupp	1510, 1513
Caulkins v. Whisler	2419	Com.	1960	Chaffee v. Baptist M. C.	1512
Causey v. State	579	Central M. T. R. Co.		v. Hawkins	1352, 2498
v. Wiley	1911	v. Rockafellow	1817, 1820	v. Taylor	702
Cavan v. Stewart	1681	Central National Bank v.		v. U. S.	201, 1362, 1530
Cavanagh v. Iowa Beer		National Met. Bank	1876	Chaffin v. Fries M. & P.	
Co.	2410	Central of Ga. R. Co. v.		Co.	461, 2498
v. Riverside	287	Bagley	2509	Chahoon v. Cone	2327, 2328
Cavanah v. State	1263, 1807	v. Bond	771, 1680, 1977	Chahoon's Case	392
Cavanaugh v. Com.	21, 1477	v. Brinson	1750	Challis v. Lake	461, 987,
v. Noble	406	v. Duffey	1898		1951
Cavasos v. Gonzales	811,	v. Goodwin	1976, 2416	Chalmers v. Mfg. Co.	283,
	1839	v. Joseph	571		681, 683, 1003
Caven v. Bodwell G. Co.	782,	v. Keyton	451, 1943	Chalvet v. Huston	1278
	1896, 1978	v. Robertson	1976	Chamberlain, Ex parte	2201
Cavender v. Guild	2573	v. Stephenson	1975	Re	2115
v. State	392	v. Trammell	456, 1041	v. Chamberlain	2083, 2160
Cavendish v. Troy	1976	Central Pac. R. Co. v.		v. Enfield	68, 201
Cavin v. Smith	1086	Feldman	1640	v. Gorham	1196
Caviness v. State	1842	v. Pearson	463, 720	v. Iba	1058
Cawley v. Northern		Central R. Co. v. Hearn	1350	v. Lesley	2442
Waste Co.	1639	v. Ingram	438	v. Maitland	2109
v. State	246	v. Mitchell	665	v. People	2063, 2245,
Cawthon v. State	363	v. Phillips	1841		2336, 2341

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Chamberlain v. Pierson	142	Chandler v. Le Barron	2016,	Chappell's Goods	2474
v. Sands	736, 745, 748, 905		2018	Chaput v. Haverhill G.	
v. Torrance	1514, 2146	v. Mason	529	& D. St. R. Co.	1576
Chamberlaine v. Turner	2477	v. Moulton	529	Charbonnel v. Seabury	581
Chamberlin v. Ball	1681	v. Mutual L. & I.		Charles v. McClanahan	2417
v. Ossipee	745	Ass'n	1461	v. R. Co.	613
v. Vance	406	v. Roe	2437	v. State,	
Chambers v. Bernasconi	1075,	v. Spear	1352	36 Fla.	1042
	1524	v. State,		58 Fla.	1878
v. Chambers	2520	124 Ga.	527, 1012	Charles, Trial of King	1177,
v. Dickson	2083	89 Tex. Cr.	2060		2250
v. Handley	1309	v. Thompson	1951	Charles L. Jeffrey, The	2507
v. Haney	1225	Chanoine v. Fowler	564,	Charles Morgan, The	905,
v. Hill	664, 2097		1271, 1684		1263
v. Hunt	18, 770, 1244, 1245	Chant v. Brown	2312	Charleston v. Hunt	1416
v. Jaffray	6b, 2281	Chantango v. Abaroa	1347	Charlesworth v. Tinker	1387
v. Modern Woodmen	1671	Chanter v. Hopkins	2434	v. Williams	1684
v. Morris	667	Chany v. Hotchkiss	1031	Charley v. Potthof	1729
v. Murphy	2438	Chapelon v. Electric Co.	2509	v. State	1104, 1615
v. Oehler	2199	Chapin v. Dobson	2434	Charlotte v. Chouteau,	
v. People,		v. Lapham	764	21 Mo.	1651, 1654,
5 Ill.	2164	v. Marlborough	1722		1677
105 Ill.	2276, 2277	v. Mitchell	1554	25 Mo.	1271, 2558,
v. Prince	1784	v. Siger	1028		2573
v. Spruce Lighting Co.	291	Chaplain v. Briscoe,		33 Mo.	1671, 1699,
	462,	5 Sm. & M.	1212,		1703, 2558
v. State	2100		1225, 2200	Charlotte O. & F. Co.	
v. Thompson	2260	11 Sm. & M.	1292	v. Rippy	1076
v. Watson	2472	Chaplin v. Hartshorne	1141	Charlton v. Barret	406
Chamblee v. State	276	Chapline v. State	1079	v. Coombs	2298
v. Tarbox	1573	Chapman, Re	2195	v. Kelly	2591
Chambliss v. U. S.	290	v. Bennett	1664	v. St. Louis & S. F.	
Chamness v. Chamness	715	v. Callis	2443	R. Co.	458
Champ v. Com.	457, 681, 905,	v. Chapman,		v. Unis	1002, 1003,
	907, 1021	2 Conn.	1362, 1481,		1007, 1018
Champaign v. Patterson	461		1483, 1484,	Charnock v. Dewings.	1841
Champion v. Atkinson	380		1486, 1487	v. Lumley	1858
v. McCarthy	1492, 2314	74 Nebr.	1681	v. Merchant	986, 2276
Champlin v. Fawcattuck		v. Coffin	950	Charles v. Arroyo	1606, 2527
V. St. R. Co.	1750	v. Cooley	921, 1023,	Charter v. Charter	2474, 2477
Champneys v. Peck	1523,		1108, 1109, 1985	Chartered Bank v. Rich	2319
	1526	v. Dodd	1416	Chartiers & R. T. Co. v.	
Chan v. Slater	1779	v. Floyd	1651	McNamara	6a
Chan Sing v. Portland	1951	v. Holding	619, 2340	Chase v. Blodgett	522, 987,
Chance v. Graham	1576	v. James	1884		1117
v. Gravel R. Co.	928,	v. Java Pacific Line	2438	v. Blodgett Milling Co.	461
	2008, 2016	v. Kullman	2531	v. Caryl	1225, 1226, 1652
v. Hine	585	v. North American		v. Chase	1784
Chancellor v. Milly	167, 1154,	Life Ins. Co.	1347	v. Hoosac T. & W. R.	
	1605,	v. Ordway	73, 209	Co.	1023
v. State	2059	v. Peebles	2309	v. Lincoln	1933, 1938
Chancey v. State	21	v. Pendleton	1777	v. Lowell	252, 266
Chandler v. Sterns & C.		v. Pointon	2202	v. Maine Central R.	
Lumber Co.	2510	v. R. Co.,		Co.	2570
Chandler v. Allison	1888,	55 N. Y.	250	v. Pitman	618
	1889, 1890	26 Wis.	1053	v. R. Co.	1074
v. Aqueduct Co.	437, 463	v. State,		v. Smith	1483
v. Beal	1890	109 Ga.	1072, 2059	v. State	246
v. Brainard	803	v. Taylor	2530	v. Surry	95
v. Chandler	2475	v. Tiffany	715	v. Vandegrift	1669
v. Fisher	1303	v. Twitchell	1056, 1070,	v. Winans	1938
v. Freeman	916		1587	Chaslavka v. Mechalek	2245
v. Horne	1842	v. Walton	1946, 1947	Chastang v. Chastang	157,
v. J. P. Aqueduct	714, 1943	Chappell v. Smith	1911		2166



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Chastang v. State	2183, 2264	Cherry Point Fish Co. v. Nelson	1698	Chicago v. Jackson	463
Chastek v. Souba	2408	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal Co v. U. S.	1632, 1633, 1639, 1684, 2517	v. Jarvis	252, 458
Chateaugay O. & I. Co. v. Blake	561	Chesapeake & O. C. Co. v. B. & O. R. Co.	2573	v. Le Moyne	791
Chatfield v. Bunnell	2097	v. Western Md. R. Co.	2572	v. Lord	1168
v. Lathrop	585	Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Deepwater R. Co.	1074, 2465, 2478	v. McGiven	1951
Chatman v. Hodnett	2146	v. Howard	2415	v. McGraw	1244
Chatsworth v. Rowe	1976	v. Meek	455	v. McKechney	1073
Chattanooga N. B. & L. Ass'n v. Vaught	1347	v. Patton	2354	v. McNally	688, 2220
Chattanooga R. & C. R. Co. v. Owen	2570	v. Richardson	456	v. Mandel	1219
Chaudoir v. Witt	2408	v. Riddle	96	v. Mines	463, 1808
Chauffy v. DeVries	282	v. Smith	1078	v. Peck	1960
Chauncey v. Tahourden	2256	v. Stock	1062, 1234	v. Pennsylvania Co.	1663
Chauraud v. Angerstein	1271, 1947	v. Wiley	688	v. Powers	252
Chautauqua Institution v. Zimmerman	561	Chesapeake Club v. State	2271, 2276	v. Smith	1013
Chavez v. Times-Mirror Co.	2578	Chesapeake Ins. Co. v. Starke	2553	Chicago & Alton R. Co. v. Am. Strawboard Co.	749, 750
Chavier's Estate v. Adjuntos	1225	Chesapeake Stone Co. v. Fossett	1389	r. Buttolf	1012
Chavigny v. Hava	505	Cheseldine v. Brewer	2083	v. Clausen	1159
Cheatham v. Hatcher	1302, 1938, 2049	Cheshire, In re	1681	v. Corson	792
v. Riddle	1207, 2132	Chesley v. Chesley, 54 Mo.	2240	v. Davis	2415
Check v. James	1278	10 N. H.	66, 406	v. Eaton	282, 283
v. Lisle	2426	v. Murdock	2065	v. Glenny	681
v. Oak G. L. Co.	18, 454	v. Thompson	581	v. Howell	438
v. State	389	Chesmer v. Noyes	1675	v. Industrial Board	1722
v. Wheatly	1029, 1038	Chesney v. Newsholme	1760	v. Keegan,	152 Ill. 665, 1705, 2163
Cheatham v. Union R. Co.	451	Chesnut v. People	150	185 Ill. 2531	
Cheever v. Congdon	667	Chess v. Chess, 1 Pa. St.	233	v. Kelly	1012
Chelsea Water Works v. Cowper	1311, 2138, 2141	17 S. & R.	736, 1409, 2098	v. Lewondowski	667, 1976
Chenall v. Palmer B. Co.	2509	Chester v. Bowen	1841	v. Pearson	65
Chenault v. Walker	1959	v. Murtfeldt Co.	2510	v. R. Co.	1921, 1943, 1960
Chenery v. Goodrich	1954	v. Wilhelm	907	v. Scott	463
Cheney v. Goldy	1738	v. Wortley	2256, 2268	v. Shannon	252
v. Watkins	1225, 1651	Chesterfield v. Ratliff	2553	v. Shenk	811
Cheney's Estate	18, 1958	Chesterfield Mfg. Co. v. Leota Cotton Mills	377	v. Sullivan	96, 249
Chenie v. Watson	1168, 1181	Chetwind v. Marnell	1858	v. Walker	791, 1158
Chenoweth v. Burr	2498	Chetwynd v. Lindon	2257	v. Wilson	65, 1684, 2510
v. Southern Pacific Co.	2509	Chew v. O'Hara	581	Chicago & E. I. R. Co. v. Beaver	2570
Chenowith v. Chamberlin	1635	Cheyney's Case	2426, 2470, 2472	v. Bivans	715
Cheny v. State	347	Chiara v. Stewart Mining Co.	2510	v. Chancellor	1726
Cherokee v. Land Co.	463, 714, 720	Chicago v. Babcock	2435	v. Crose	460, 792, 1037, 2551
Cherokee Co. v. Dickson	249, 1078, 1984	v. Baker	1803	v. Donworth	1721
v. Meroney	2444	v. Chicago City R. Co.	714	v. Grimm	1951
Cherpeski v. Great Northern R. Co.	2382	v. Dermody	2354	v. Randolph	1974
Cherry v. Boyd	1362, 1585, 1587	v. Didier	1976	v. Schmitz	20, 969, 1587, 1626, 2515
v. Slade	1727, 1766, 2477	v. Di Salvo	2183	v. Wallace	18, 682
v. Sprague	2536	v. Drexel	1777	v. Zepp	749
v. State,		v. English	1674	Chicago & E. R. Co. v. Blake	714
68 Ala.	1481, 1493, 1503	v. Gilsdorff	18	v. Holland	2220
Miss., 20 So.	2497	v. Greer	720, 1951	v. Lawrence	1960

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Chicago & N. W. R. Co.		Chicago Indiana & L. R.		Chicago St. P. M. & O.	
v. Calumet Stock Farm	716	Co. v. Public Service		R. Co. v. Gilbert	455
v. De Clow	1041	Commission	17	v. Myers	1404, 2098
v. Hart	460	Chicago K. & N. R. Co.		Chicago Steel Foundry	
v. Ingersoll	1195, 1951	v. Ellis	2336	v. Ind. Com.	4c
v. Kendall	6, 2221	v. Stewart	463	Chicago Telephone Co.	
v. Moranda	1951	Chicago K. & W. R. Co.		v. Northwestern T. Co.	1350
v. Railroad Com.	4c	v. Anderson	613	Chicago Telephone S.	
v. Simon	2537	v. Farsons	1168, 2570	Co. v. Marne & E. T.	
Chicago & R. I. R. Co.		Chicago L. S. & S. B. R.		Co.	1160
v. N. Ill. C. & I. Co.	1890	Co. v. Walas	2382	Chicago Terminal T. R.	
Chicago & S. E. R. Co.		Chicago Lumbering Co.		Co. v. Bugbee	463, 720,
v. Grantham	2110	v. Hewitt	750, 751,		1908
Chicago & S. L. R. Co.			1530	Chicago Title & T. Co.	
v. Kline	463, 792, 1013	Chicago M. & St. P. R.		v. Sagola L. Co.	586
Chicago & W. C. Co. v.		Co. v. Artery	1028,	Chicago Union T. Co.	
Liddell	736		1040, 1263	v. Ertrachter	1700, 1976
Chicago & W. I. R. Co.		v. Chamberlain	1725	v. Giese	688, 2509
v. Heidenreich	679	v. McArthur	1653	v. Lawrence	233, 689,
v. Maroney	463	v. Minnesota	4a, 1355		1938
Chicago B. & Q. R. Co.		v. Newsome	19, 1413	v. O'Brien	1807, 2034
v. Babcock	2358	v. O'Sullivan	1976	v. Roberts	681, 1920, 1976
v. Dickson	2441	v. Staff	1671	Chicago W. & V. C. Co.	
v. Hyatt	2578	v. State Public U.		v. Moran	1223
v. Jones	1356, 1680	Com.	4c	Chicago W. D. R. Co.	
v. Kellogg	1839	Chicago P. & M. R. Co.		v. Becker	1750, 1754
v. Kravenbuhl	285, 1158,	v. Mitchell	1943	Chick v. Robinson	1074
	1414	Chicago Packing Co. v.		Chickasha v. White	252, 458
v. Lewis	1239, 2169	Ind. Board	4a	Chicot Co. v. Davies	1350
v. Martin	688	Chicago R. Co. v. Adler	736,	Chilberg v. Parsons	65
v. Roberts	1062		745, 749, 760	Child v. Grace	1072
v. Shafer	714	v. Provine	657	v. Kingsbury	1566
v. Todd	1704	Chicago R. I. & G. R.		Childers v. Com.	63
v. Weber	1223	Co. v. Jones	2509	v. Hubbell	2065
Chicago City R. Co. v.		Chicago R. I. & P. R.		v. Pickenpaugh	2477
Allen	1005, 1013	Co. v. Brandon	2509	v. State	2059
v. Bundy	15, 568, 682,	v. Brown	2354	Childress v. Allin	1267
	1013, 1719,	v. Buel	714, 791	v. Carley	2450
	1721, 1977, 2115	v. Clark	65, 461	v. Cutter	1644, 1672,
v. Carroll	17, 150, 949,	v. Collier	1910		1677
	1877, 2509	v. Cotton	616	v. R. Co.	1951
v. Creech	1890	v. Farwell	1168	v. State	1807, 2060
v. Gregory	905, 1808	v. Foltz	1750	Childs v. Merrill	2279
v. Handy	961	v. Hughes	2389, 2390	v. Muckler	1974
v. McCaughna	688	v. Hill	2220	v. O'Leary	571
v. McDonough	1977	v. Holmes	1951	v. State	1614
v. McMahon	278, 280	v. Jackson	283, 655, 688,	Chiles v. Drake	2083
v. Matthieson	1037,		1078, 1722, 1750	Chillicothe F. R. & B.	
	1126, 1977	v. Langston	2220	Co. v. Jameson	2304
v. Nelson	2552	v. Moffitt	1921	Chilton v. Smith	2437
v. Ryan	1013	v. Rathneau	18, 458	v. State	1124, 1977
v. Shaw	1014	v. Young	2509	Chin Ah Yoke v. White	4a, 4c
v. Smith	795	Chicago Railways Co. v.		Chin Bak Kau v. U. S.	1355
v. Taylor	461	Kramer	1721, 1976	Chin Yow v. U. S.	1355
v. Tuohy	1053	Chicago St. L. & N. O.		Ching Lum v. Lam Man	
v. Uhter	18, 987, 1626,	R. Co. v. Rottgering	463	Ben	1810
	1750	Chicago St. L. & P. R.		Chiniquy v. Begin	1644, 2162
v. Van Vleck	568	Co. v. Champion		Chipman v. Peabody	2573
Chicago D. D. Co. v. C.			442, 451	v. People	368
D. Co.	372	v. Spilker	688, 1719	v. R. Co.	571, 1076, 1977
Chicago Gt. Western R.		v. Wolcott	1230	v. Tucker	2409
Co. v. McDonough	18,	Chicago St. P. & K.		Chippendale v. Masson	783
	451, 461	C. R. Co. v. Cham-		Chippewa Bridge Co. v.	
v. Price	1976	bers	1976	Durand	2451



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Chiques v. Polo	2596	Christopherson v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.	2432	Cincinnati C. I. & St. L. R. Co. v. Lutes	1890
Chirac v. Reinicker	2313	Christy v. Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.	2594	Cincinnati H. & D. R. Co. v. De Onzo	792
Chisholm v. Ben	1267, 1511, 2091	v. Badger	2477	v. Frye	2507
v. Machine Co.	1530	v. Cavanagh	1194	v. Gross	1750, 2382
v. Sheldon	1297	v. Kavanagh	1225	Cincinnati I. St. L. & C. R. Co. v. Grames	2507
Chisolm v. State	905, 2016, 2131	v. Minor	1664	Cincinnati N. O. & T. R. Co. v. Cox	1878
Chiswell v. Nichols	21	v. New York C. & H. R. R. Co.	1063, 2377	v. Disbrow	1233
Chittenden v. Evans	1012, 1013	v. Wabash	2572	v. Martin	1750
Chitty v. Dendy	2578	Chua Chienco v. Vargas	2516	v. Sadieville M. Co.	455
Chitwood v. Philadelphia & R. R. Co.	1913	Chua Yeng v. Insular Collector	1154	v. South F. C. Co.	2509
v. U. S.	93, 346	Chubb v. Salomons	2378	Cincinnati Traction Co. v. Stevens	1126, 1944
Chiuccariello v. Campbell	2509	v. Westley	406	Cire v. Rightor	2355
Chiulla de Luce v. Park Com'rs	2580	Chumasero v. Gilbert	2573	Citizens' Bank v. Fromholz	783
Choctaw O. & G. R. Co. v. Deparade	716	Chung Kiat v. Lim Kio	21	v. Opperman	1777
v. McDade	18, 283	Chung Sing v. U. S.	59	v. Rhutasel	1389, 1890, 2103
Choice v. State	683, 689, 1621, 1873, 1922, 1938, 1974	Chunot v. Larson	616	Citizens' Gaslight Co. v. O'Brien	660
Cholmondeley v. Clinton, 2 Jac. & W.	2463	Church, Ex parte v. Burghardt	1778	Citizens' R. T. Co. v. Dew	68a, 1706
19 Ves. Jr.	2323	v. Case	2406	Citizens' S. R. Co. v. Burke	1800
Chooley Dee Ying, Ex parte	1154	v. Cherryfield	2509	v. Willooby	1158
Chopin v. Freeman	1254	v. Drummond	64	Citizens' Sav. Bank v. Globe B. Works	2596
Choteau v. Raitt	1201, 1204	v. Hubbard	1271, 1674, 1677, 1680, 1681	Citizens' State Bank v. Chambers	2464
Chouteau v. Chevalier	1219, 1651	v. Milwaukee	792, 1943	City Bank v. Bateman	2222, 2223
v. Searcy	657	v. Shelton	1065	v. Kent	1841, 1871
Chouteau L. & L. Co. v. Chrisman	987	v. Stoldt	969	v. Thorp	1201
Chowning v. State	150	Church of Jesus Christ v. Watson	1082	v. Young	1041
Choy v. Heredia	2596	Churches v. Western Union Tel. Co.	1779	City Deposit Bank v. Green	2444
Choy Guin v. Backus	1354	Churchill v. Corker	1225, 1658, 1911	City Electric R. Co. v. Smith	1841
Chrast v. O'Connor	1651	v. Fulliam	1532	City Fire Ins. Co. v. Carrugi	811, 2206
Christ v. Webster City	2349	v. Smith	2232	City National Bank v. Anderson	2408
Christ's College v. Widdrington	2047	v. Suter	529	v. Bridgers	1779
Christensen v. Harris	2416	v. Walling	1058	v. Slocum	2525
v. U. T. Line	199, 283	v. White	1051	City of St. Joseph, The	751
Christensen's Estate	1938	Churchill & Alden Co. v. Ramsey	2235	City of Washington, The	1951
Christian Moerlein Brewing Co. v. Rusch	736, 2431	Churchwell v. State	1013	Clafin v. Dodson	908
Christian Smith's Trial	2394	Chute v. State	738, 753, 1163, 1164	v. R. Co.	2522
Christianity v. State	1010, 1013	Chybowsky v. Bucyrus Co.	282, 2494	Clafin's Will	87, 1511
Christiansen v. Graver T. Works	2558	Chytraus v. Chicago	1873	Clafin Co. v. Rodenberg	2498
Chistianson v. Furniture Co.	1750	Cicely v. State	276	Clagett v. Duluth	1350, 1684
Christie, Re	497	Cicero v. State	852, 1329	v. Easterday	571
v. T. Junction	2358	Cicero & P. S. R. Co. v. Priest	1719	v. Phillips	2294
Christie's Case	1072, 1130, 1756, 1760	Cilley v. Bacon	2463	Clague v. Hodgson	571, 651
Christman v. Pearson	2012	v. Bartlett	1257, 1778	Claiborne v. R. Co.	258
Christopher v. Covington	1088	v. Cilley	689	Clampitt v. U. S.	347
Christopherson v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.	1750, 2510	v. Van Patten	1267	Clancy v. Barker	1078
		Cincinnati & F. M. Ins. Co. v. May	681, 1618, 1951	v. Clancy	2477
		Cincinnati & G. R. Co. v. Mims	1943	v. St. Louis T. Co.	905
		Cincinnati & Z. R. Co. v. Smith	1951	Clancy's Case	2372

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Clanton v. Jones	1684	Clark v. Irwin	689	Clarke v. Bank	1684
Clapp v. Fullerton	1938	v. Krause	2242, 2245	v. Bartlett	1290, 1312, 2051
v. Kenley	289	v. Locomotive Works	1951, 1955	v. Clarke	1890
v. Norton	791	v. Longworth	1212	v. Courtney	1308, 1320, 2141
v. Peck	907	v. Lowe	2465	v. Dunnavant	1302, 1511, 1512, 2049
v. State	2276	v. Lumber Co.	1672	v. Magruder	1518, 1521
v. Wilson	952, 1044, 1261, 1263	v. Manchester	2354	v. Mead	1356, 2534
Clapton, Re	2446	v. Mix	1225	v. N. Y. N. H. & H. R. Co.	21, 282
Clara, The	2572	v. Morrison	2578	v. Periam	194, 195, 202
Clardy v. Richardson	1312, 1320, 1652	v. North American Co.	76	v. Phila. & R. C. & I. Co.	1974
Claremont v. Carlton	1778	v. Owens	2141	v. Roberts' Estate	2065
Claridge v. Hoare	2257, 2260	v. Patterson	2526	v. Robinson	1181
Clark v. Arnold	1082	v. People,	178 Ill. 605	v. Saffery	770, 774
v. Bailey	923	224 Ill. 95, 359, 1726		v. Shee	526
v. Baird	1924, 1943	v. Perdue	1651	v. State,	78 Ala. 106, 276
v. Bank	748	v. Read	2355	87 Ala. 2273, 2276	
v. Beach	1082	v. Reese	987, 2277	117 Ala. 2239	
v. Bigelow	658, 728	v. Rhodes	2008, 2016	v. Stewart	1971
v. Board	2464	v. Sanderson	1312, 1513	v. Waite	1080, 1082, 1086
v. Bond	1108	v. Sawyer	1664	v. Warwick C. M. Co.	1256
v. Boyd	1312, 1320, 1505, 1513	v. Slidell	1256	Clarkson v. Bank of Hamilton	1856a
v. Bradstreet	166, 167, 1154	v. Smith,	10 Conn. 2115	v. Woodhouse	157, 2138, 2139
v. Brooklyn H. R. Co.	789	72 Vt. 376		Clarkson and Campbell-	
v. Brown	73, 406	v. Spence	716, 1943	ford L. O. & W. R. Co., Re	2358
v. Butts	1185	v. State,	105 Ala. 1442	Clary v. Clary	689, 1919, 1933, 1934, 1938
v. Carter	2349, 2354	117 Ga. 1108		v. Com.	331, 851, 2071
v. Clark,		4 Ind. 736		v. Grimes	1082
122 Ky. 1539		123 Miss. 247		v. Hardeeville Brick Co.	905, 1891
168 Mass. 1938		79 Nebr. 363		v. O'Shea	1203
1 Mo. & Rob. 2294		47 N. J. L. 367		Clason v. Morris	2123
44 Nev. 2506		12 Oh. 568, 1938		Claudet v. Golden G. M.	1532
65 N. C. 1021, 1022		56 Tex. Cr. 1726		Claunch v. State	238
v. Cochran	5	v. Stevenson	2356	Clauser v. Stone	18
v. Com.,		v. The King	2501	Clavey v. Lord	1881
111 Ky. 359, 1621, 1700, 1984		v. Townsend	2442	Clawson v. State,	96 Nebr. 1976
Ky., 32 S. W. 276		v. Trinity Church	1640, 1644, 1646	59 N. J. L. 2501	
90 Va. 910, 2079		v. Troy	1651	Clay v. Alderson's	
v. Ducheneau	2437	v. Turner	1738	Adm'r	2008, 2016
v. Ellsworth	715, 1944	v. Union Traction Co.	736	v. Holbert	1292
v. Eltinge	1953, 2555	v. U. S.	2119	v. Langslow	1076
v. Field	2363, 2378	v. Van Riemsdyk	2047	v. Robinson	2005, 2006, 2008, 2016, 2017
v. Finnegan	508, 1828	v. Van Vleck	1698, 1750, 2354	v. State,	40 Tex. Cr. 2276
v. Fisher	229	v. Vorce	736, 2098	15 Wyo. 861, 2056, 2059, 2100	
v. Fletcher	89, 2125	v. Water Power Co.	451, 1943	v. Tyson	2312
v. Freeman	702	v. Willett	451	v. Williams	2297
v. Fry	1676a	v. Wilmot	1464	Clayes v. Ferris	1873
v. G. T. R. Co.	1062	v. Wright	1267	Clayton v. Gilmer Co. Ct.	2477
v. Grand Trunk W. R. Co.	2509	v. Wyatt	702, 2007, 2017	v. Gregson	2464
v. Hall	1680	Clark, Estate of	1010, 1013		
v. Harmer	1391	Clark's Appeal	1510		
v. Hedden	2054	Clark's Lessee v. Hall	522		
v. Hills	1582, 1587, 1588	Clark's Petition	2203		
v. Holmes	749	Clark Co. v. Kerstan	2203		
v. Hornbeck	1195, 1196, 1198	v. Rice	1416		
v. Houghton	2105	Clark Thread Co. v.			
v. Huffaker	1133	Willimantic Linen Co.	2066		
v. Hull	1665	Clarke, Ex parte	2283		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Clayton v. Nugent	2467	Cleveland v. Spillman	2477	Clinton v. Howard	261, 1976,
v. Rhem	1240, 1273	v. State	2042		1978
v. State	2592	v. Worrell	1195	v. McKenzie	1873, 1874,
v. Wardell	2083, 2086,	Cleveland & P. R. Co.			1890
	2505	v. Ball	1943	v. State,	
Clayton Co. v. R. Co.	1955	Cleveland & T. R. Co.		53 Fla.	506, 925, 1029,
Claytor v. Anthony	1086	v. Perkins	719, 1232,		1828
Claxton's Adm'r v. R.			1704	33 Oh.	1816, 1817,
Co.	1951, 1978	Cleveland C. & C. R.			1828
Clealand v. Huie	1388, 2098	Co. v. Mara	1750	Cliquot's Champagne	719,
Cleary v. Cavanaugh	2509	Cleveland C. C. & I. R.			1704
Cleave v. Jones	2312, 2318,	Co. v. Newell	438, 1721,	Cliver v. Heil	2442
	2550		1722	Clogston's Estate	1890, 1938,
Cleavelands v. R. Co.	456	Cleveland C. C. & St. L.			1951
Cleavland v. Burton	2105	R. Co. v. Gossett	2465	Close v. Chicago	20
Clegg v. Fields	1956, 1963	v. Gray	568	v. Olney	2279
v. Levy	1271	v. Hadley	568, 2491	v. Samm	1154, 1168
Cleghorn v. R. Co.	80, 96	v. Hornsby	2539	Cloud v. Patterson	1247
Cleland v. Thornton	438	v. Jenkins	2580	Clough v. Bowman	1225
Clem v. State	1108	v. Loos	456	v. Little	751, 1555
Clemens v. Conrad	987, 1247,	v. Monaghan	792, 794	v. State	760, 852, 914, 1890
	1270, 2185	v. Patton	1157	Clouse v. Coleman	2220
v. Crane	2406	v. Prewitt	1719	v. Elliott	613
v. Royal Neighbors	1725	v. Smith	463	Clow v. Smith	1041
Clement v. Brooks	987	v. Walter	461	Cloy Gum v. Backus	1355
v. Cureton	1966	Cleveland P. & E. R.		Cloyes v. Thayer	2260, 2270
v. Graham	1218, 1680, 1858	Co. v. Pritschan	781	Cluck v. State	105, 1807
v. Kimball	68, 950, 1042	Cleveland Paper Co. v.		Cluett v. Rosenthal	2183
v. Packer	1567, 1587	Banks	1807	Cluff v. State	368
Clement, Re	2477	Cleveland R. Co. v. Wy-		Cluggage v. Swan	2353, 2354
Clement, The	681	nant	461	Clukey v. Electric Co.	1700
Clementi v. Golding	2582	Cleveland Ref. Co. v.		Clum v. Smith	2354
Clementine v. State	78, 987,	Dunning	2410	Clune v. U. S.	1079
	1028	Cleveland T. & V. R.		Clunnes v. Peggy	291
Clements v. Benjamin	1390	Co. v. Marsh	654	Clutch v. Clutch	2067
v. Kyles	378, 1568	Clevenger v. State	343	Clute v. Small	736, 747, 1198
v. McGinn	492, 493, 497	Cleverly v. McCullough	735	Cluverius v. Com.	1725, 1729
v. Marston	2336	Clevinger v. Hill	1256	Clyde v. Clyde	529
v. Moore	2123	Clewser v. Samuel	1777	Clymer v. Cameron	1186
v. Pearce	794	Clifford v. Brooke	2032	Co Puy v. Insular Col-	
v. Potomac E. P. Co.	461	v. Burton	2232	lector	1154
Clemmons v. Clemmons	1842	v. Denver & R. G. R.		Coad v. Pennsylvania R.	
v. State,		Co.	2390	Co.	1555
43 Fla.	1434	v. Drake	736, 749, 760	Coagler v. Rhodes	772
8 Okl. Cr.	363, 568,	v. Hunter	1893	Coal C. M. & M. Co. v.	
	2501	v. Huntly	2250, 2256	Ross	1664
Clemons v. State,		v. Pioneer Fireproof-		Coale v. Harrington	1082
48 Fla.	1976	ing Co.	987, 1270,	Coan v. Flagg	1674
4 Lea	858		2529	Coastwise Lumber &	
92 Tenn.	1869	v. Richardson	1918, 1923,	Supply Co. v. U. S.	2185
Clendennen v. Bain-			1976	Coates v. Chapman	1003
bridge	1730	v. Taylor	228, 1858, 2491	v. Early	2415
Clendennin v. Clancy	2250	Clifton v. Granger	2270	v. R. Co.	283, 1698
Clendenning v. Ross	1871	v. Lilley	1195, 1213	v. Semper	2315
Clennell v. Lewthwhite	2475	v. State	398, 2060	v. Sulan,	
Clergue v. McKay	2311	v. U. S.	285, 291, 2273	21 Kan.	923
Clergy Society, The	2477	Clinch Co. v. Willing	2444	46 Kan.	928, 1612
Clerk v. Wright	2063	Cline v. Broy	2354	v. Wilkes	916
Clermont v. Tullidge	1993,	v. Com.	398	Coats v. Chicago R. I. &	
	2026	v. Lindsey	1938	P. R. Co.	2415
Cleveland v. Burnham	1268	v. State	1398	v. Elliott	1067
v. Com.	1450	Clinton v. Estes	233, 1079	v. Gregory	1878, 2104
v. Martin	1984	v. Goodrich	987	v. Lynch	770
v. Rankin	2498	v. Hooper	2475	Cobb v. Boston	736, 747, 754

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Cobb v. Dunlevie	1651	Coff v. State	21	Colbert v. State	2026, 2395, 2529
v. Follansbee	578, 2065	Coffee v. Neely	1681, 2110	Colbert's Estate,	
v. Glenn B. & L. Co.	1236, 2154	Coffey v. Jenkins	1034	31 Mont.	1736, 2523
v. Haynes	2529	Coffin v. Anderson	1124, 1126	51 Mont.	1490, 1494, 1496
v. Makee	1641	v. Bradbury	1051	Colburn v. Groton	1061, 1062
v. Oklahoma Pub. Co.	987	v. Bucknam	1466	r. McDonald	1350
v. Simon	2375	v. Collins	1074	r. Marble	76, 77, 207, 213
v. State	2167	v. Jones,		r. Spitz	987
v. Tirrell	2211	13 Mich.	607	Colby v. Foxworthy	2525
v. United E. & C. Co.	678	14 Pick.	803	v. Kenniston	1188, 1267, 1269, 1314
Cobb, B. & Y. Co. v.		r. Laskan	561, 716	r. Reams	2121
Hills	916	r. Ogden	2065a	Colchester v. Culver	1651, 2141
Cobban v. Hecklen	1890	r. Plymouth	1062	Colchester Sav. Bank v.	
Cobbe v. Garston	2067	r. U. S.	2511	Brown	1651
Cobbett v. Hudson	1842, 1911	r. Vincent	748, 759, 760	Coleclough v. Rhodus	1878
Cobble v. Royal Neigh-		Coffman's Adm'r v. Coff-		Coldwater N. Bank v.	
bors	7a	man	2472	Buggie	1779
Cobden v. Bolton	1214	Coffrin v. Cole	2465, 2466	Coldwell v. Board of	
v. Kenrick	2310	Cogan v. Ebden	2355	Public Works	2319
Coble v. Coble	1807	v. Frisby	1651	r. U. S.	369
v. State	351, 987	Cogdell v. R. Co.,		Cole, Re	2207
Coburn, In re	1958	129 N. C.	2494	r. Andrews	2375
Re	1810	130 N. C.	1951	v. Cheovenda	1205, 2309
v. Hawkeye C. M.		132 N. C.	1976, 2490, 2510	r. Cheshire	1784
Ass'n	907, 2311	Coggswell v. Davis	770	r. Clarke	1943
v. Odell	2260, 2276	v. Dolliver	1548, 1551	r. Cole,	
v. Shilling	2503	Coghill v. Kennedy	1738, 2503	153 Ill.	2231
v. Storer	1079	Coghlan v. White	2550	33 Me.	1062
Cochran v. Cochran,		v. Williamson	1312, 1513	r. Com.	349
277 Ill.	2477	Coglan v. Beard	1351	r. Dial	1537, 1549
48 La. An.	1195	Cogswell v. Hall	1576	r. District Board	1605, 1974, 2536
196 N. Y.	1730	Cohankus Mfg. Co. v.		r. Drum	1270, 1958
v. Com.	1398	Rogers' Gdn.	1164	r. Ellwood Power Co.	1234
v. Gritman	969, 1700	Cohen, Ex parte	2281, 2283	v. Fall Brook C. Co.	682, 1976, 2220
v. Linville I. Co.	1651	v. Dubose	2355	v. Gibson	1177, 1252
v. Lloyd	2509	v. Goldberg	344	v. Gray	2227
v. State,		v. Hamblin & Russell		v. Hadley	1075
113 Ga.	579, 770, 949	Mfg. Co.	458	v. Hall	1379
7 Humph.	2349	v. Home Ins. Co.	2434	v. Jessup	736, 747
v. Stein	697, 2008	v. Philadelphia R. T.		v. Lee	2145
v. Street	2349	Co.	2220	v. Manning	2061
v. U. S.	1852, 1873	v. Templar	2307	r. R. Co.,	
Cochrane v. Com.	714	v. U. S.	6, 2239, 2242	81 Mich.	289
v. McEntee	2065	Cohen's Case	194a, 2059	95 Mich.	1012, 1963
v. National Elev. Co.	2016	Cohn v. Kingsley	1350	105 Mich.	655
v. W. D. Co.	392	v. Mulford	1086	19 Ont. Pr.	283
Cochrane's Estate	2491	v. Saidel	38, 1079, 2539	r. Ralph	1574, 2185
Cockerel v. Wynn	1678	r. U. S.	1219, 1235	r. Rawlinson	2470
Cockerham v. Nixon	251	Cohn & Goldberg L. Co.		r. State,	
Cockerill v. Harrison	6b, 2061	v. Robbins	1779	105 Ala.	1442
Cockrill v. Cox	1938'	v. State	2183	59 Ark.	1329
v. Hall	987	Coine v. Chicago & N.		6 Baxt.	398, 1028, 1029, 1037
Cocks v. Nash	1858, 2325	W. R. Co.	2432	16 Okl. Cr.	2273
v. Purday	1271	Coit v. Millikin	1681	Okl. Cr., 195 Pac.	1012
Coco-Cola Co v. Moore	715, 1890	Coke v. Fountain	1388	48 Tex. Cr.	2237, 2336
Coddington v. Jenner	1267, 2106	Cokeley v. State	1021	v. Varner	1083
Codman v. Caldwell	1542	Coker v. Ferguson	1299, 1651	Cole's Lessee v. Cole	522
Cody v. Conly	701	v. Guy	2470		
Coedish v. Bloom	458	v. Hayes	770, 1898, 2349		
Coey v. Darknell	392, 1890	v. Merritt	1164		
Cofer v. Scroggins	1186, 1219	v. State	111, 247		
		Colbert v. Patterson	1347a		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Cole Mfg. Co. v. Men-		Collins v. Bennett	2508	Colorado Electric Co. v.	
denhall	20, 2496	v. Blantern	2414	Lubbers	283
Colebank v. Standard		v. Capes	2477	Colorado F. & I. Co. v.	
Garage Co.	1951	v. Chicago M. & St. P.		R. Co.	1802
Colee v. State	689, 1922,	R. Co.	1951	Colorado M. & I. Co. v.	
	1938	v. Clough	1567	Rees	252, 437, 1976
Coleman v. Applegarth	2410	v. Com.	1404, 1447	Colorado Midland R.	
v. Breaud	1225	v. Dorchester	451, 458,	Co. v. McGary	2582
v. Coleman	2408, 2520		1672	Colorado Springs & I.	
v. Com.	499	v. Elliott	1304, 1513, 1736	R. Co. v. Reese	2509
v. Davis	1225	v. German-Amer. M.		Colored Knights of	
v. Dobbins	1350, 2577	L. Ass'n	1644	Pythias v. Tucker	2506
v. Frazier	1476	v. Godefroy	2203	Colpoys v. Colpoys	2470
v. Ins. Ass'n	1540	v. Grantham	1483, 1503	Colquit v. State	1671, 1732,
v. James	1770	v. Hoehle	905		2115
v. Jones & Pickett	1066	v. Joyce	581	Colquitt v. State,	
v. Lewis	1623	v. Kilroy	2503	61 Ala.	2081
v. People	15, 216, 278,	v. Lemasters	747	34 Tex.	1750
	301, 326	v. Loisel	4, 5, 1681	Colson v. Bonzey	1339
v. Perry	1951	v. Lynch	2518	Colt v. McConnell	2312, 2437
v. Slade	2349	v. Mack	619, 620, 1028	Colt's Trial	1157
v. Southwick	1174, 1362		1051, 2383	Colt & Co. v. Brown	344
v. State,		v. Mathew	2555	Colter v. Calloway	1064
79 Ala.	1296, 1300	v. Maule	1224, 1650	Colton's Estate	1244, 1272,
28 Ga.	2349	v. Nalleau	1225		1678
94 Ga.	987	v. People,		Columbia v. Harrison	735,
111 Ind.	288, 2272	98 Ill.	580, 2056		754, 866
55 N. Y.	194	194 Ill.	568, 1440	Columbia & P. S. R. Co.	
44 Tex.	2059	v. Plant	1398, 1674	v. Hawthorne	2496
Tex. Cr., 235		v. R. Co.	454, 456, 1978	Columbia, Dist. of; see	
S. W.	1128	v. Richart	1379	District of Columbia.	
v. Wise	529	v. Shaw	1541	Columbia Bank v. Rice	1028
Coleman's Case	492, 494, 495	v. State,		Columbia N. & L. R. Co.	
Coleman's Will	2315	137 Ala.	1079, 1750	v. Means	2496
Coleman & Burden Co.		143 Ark.	2272	Columbia R. Co. v.	
v. Rice	2530	94 Ga.	2570	Hawthorne	283
Coles v. Brown	905, 907	98 Ill.	580	Columbia Realty Invest-	
v. Perry	26	46 Nebr.	1442, 1750,	ment Co. v. Alameda	
Colesar v. Star Coal Co.	795		1896, 2497	Land Co.	17, 18
Coley v. State	2073	15 Okl. Cr.	1974	Columbian B. & L.	
Colf v. R. Co.	461	77 Tex. Cr.	416, 2155	Ass'n v. Rice	2536
Coll v. Transit Co.	1755	115 Wis.	1062	Columbian Ins. Co. v.	
Collagan v. Burns	271, 1737	v. Stephenson	1022, 1730	Lawrence	29
Colledge v. Horn	1063	v. Todd	2120	Columbian Nat'l Life	
Collett v. Lord Keith	850,	v. Valleau	1275	Ins. Co. v. Wirthle	2130
	2098	v. Voorhees	2505	Columbus v. Dahn	581
Collette v. Sarrasin	2297,	v. Waters	1722	v. Ogletree	1668, 2158
	2311	v. Wilson	607	v. Sims	1698
Colley v. Atlanta Brew-		Collis v. Bowen	1076	Columbus & R. R. Co.	
ing & Ice Co.	1960	Collison v. Illinois C. R.		v. Christian	250, 1984
Collier v. Alexander	2169	Co.	65, 2510	Columbus & W. R. Co.	
v. Collier	2250	Collister v. Ritzhaupt	64	v. Tillman	1205
v. Corbett	2105	Collwell v. Bedford S. &		Columbus Merchandise	
v. Dick	1072	C. Co.	1354	Co. v. Kline	2452
v. Hicks	1834	Colman v. Trueman	2319	Columbus R. Co. v. Pat-	
v. Jeffreys	1389	Colonial Jewelry Co. v.		tersen	18
v. Nokes	1061, 1861	Brown	2410	Colvill v. R. Co.	1943
v. Poe	1777	Colonial Park Estates v.		Colvin v. McCormick C.	
v. Simpson	690, 1690	Massart	2410	O. Co.	18
v. State	398, 609, 1450	Colorado & S. R. Co. v.		v. Wilson	64, 1108
Colling v. Treweek	1205,	Lauter	664	Coman v. State	1240, 1268
	1206, 1234	v. Webb	571	v. Wunderlich	377
Collins v. Bane	2120	Colorado C. C. M. Co.		Combe v. London,	
v. Bayntun	1298	v. Turck	2494	1 Y. & C.	2294

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Combe v. London		Commonwealth v. Bar-		Commonwealth v. Burke,	
4 Y. & C.	1848	nacle	246	12 All.	1157
Combs v. Breathitt Co.	1213	v. Barronian	2241, 2327,	16 Mass.	935, 2213
v. Com.,			2341	114 Mass.	762
97 Ky.	1615	v. Barry	2214	v. Burroughs	861
160 Ky.	106, 1618	v. Bavarian B. Co.	20, 905	v. Burton	759, 760
90 Va.	728	v. Bednorciki	140, 1076,	v. Buzzell	935, 1003,
v. Dodge	1066		1452		1004, 1007, 1818
v. Dowell	1650	v. Bell,		v. Byrnes	2183
v. State	111, 390, 1807	102 Mass.	2513	v. Byron	950
v. Winchester	1020, 1021,	145 Pa.	2271, 2281	v. Call	256, 1072
	1038	166 Pa.	398	v. Cameron	2252, 2283
Combs' Appeal	2048	v. Bentley	2130, 2529	v. Campbell,	
Comer v. Comer	1235	v. Berchine	2501	7 All.	363
v. Hart	1188	v. Berry	382	155 Mass.	225, 792,
v. Way	2553	v. Best	1244		2100
Comfort v. People	1781, 2100	v. Bezek	233	v. Cardoze	78
Comingore, Re	2378	v. Biddle	363, 1876	v. Carey,	
Comins v. Comins	1778	v. Bigelow	309, 1243	12 Cush.	1398
Commander v. State	106, 390,	v. Billings	437, 928, 1010	2 Pick.	705
	396, 1910	v. Birriolo	397, 1448	v. Carney	382
Commercial & F. Bank		v. Bishop	655, 1442, 1451,	v. Casey	1445
v. Patterson	1684		2056, 2100	v. Castles	261, 1291
Commercial Bank v.		v. Blair,		v. Cate	21, 56
Barksdale	1635	123 Mass.	239	v. Certain Intox.	
v. Ins. Co.	581, 1947	126 Mass.	1873	Liquors	2183
v. Sparrow	1350	v. Blanchette	2515	v. Certain Lottery	
v. Union Bank	787, 1185,	v. Blood,		Tickets	2183
	1392	11 Gray	1182	v. Chabbock	836, 1476
Commercial G. T. & S.		141 Mass.	216, 321	v. Chance	499, 1164,
Bank v. White	2446	v. Bolger	2252		1476, 1774,
Commerell v. Poynton	2211	v. Bolkom	2450		1775, 2100, 2363
Commissioners v. Clark	2495	v. Bond,		v. Chaney	770
v. De Rosset	1350, 2592	170 Mass.	851, 861	v. Chase,	
v. Higginbotham	1350	188 Mass.	291, 2581	6 Cush.	1680
v. Snuggs	1350	v. Bonner	890, 987, 2276	147 Mass.	106, 2059
v. State	1951	v. Borasky	570, 1335,	v. Chickerella	2272
v. Venables	1722, 2496		2100	v. Choate	88, 216, 238,
v. Warfield	1350	v. Borden	26, 1807		1978
Commissioners of Marion		v. Bosworth	2056, 2059	v. Churchill	923
Co. v. Clark	2494	v. Bowers	239	v. Clancy,	
Commons v. Walters	73, 74	v. Boynton	2060	154 Mass.	736
Commonwealth v. Aaron	660	v. Bradford	216, 354	187 Mass.	321
v. Abbott	141, 142, 397,	v. Brailey	1072	v. Clark,	
	1732	v. Braley	1160	14 Gray	285
v. Acton	276, 2183	v. Brayman	1938	130 Pa.	852, 865
v. Adams	2514	v. Brelsford	1159, 2183	v. Cleary,	
v. Alburger	1598, 1665,	v. Brennan	2277	152 Mass.	2336
	2159	v. Brewer	1442, 1451	172 Mass.	1135, 1136,
v. Allen,		v. Briggs	2232		1138
191 Ky.	2239	v. Brogy	1398, 1404	148 Pa.	1398
128 Mass.	951, 2018	v. Brooks,		v. Clemmer	524
v. Alley	1725, 2243	9 Gray	2056	v. Clifford	238
v. Andrews	198, 232,	109 Mass.	417	v. Clune	1010, 2056
	1621, 1862	v. Brothers	153	v. Coe	321, 2020
v. Anselvich	1356	v. Brown,		v. Colandro	988, 2512
v. Antaya	861	121 Mass.	221, 1072,	v. Cole	1141
v. Anthes	2557		1696	v. Coles	218
v. Armstrong	2115	150 Mass.	1067	v. Collier	150, 417
v. Arnold	1669	193 Pa.	689	v. Connors	792, 794
v. Aston	56, 851, 861, 1072	264 Pa.	1072	v. Cooley	664, 1976
v. Bachelder	1817, 1820,	90 Va.	1842	v. Cooper	934a, 1441
	2213	v. Brownell	2273	v. Corkery	108, 1275, 1680
v. Barker	2241	v. Buccieri	689	v. Corkin	216, 359



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Commonwealth v. Costello,		Commonwealth v. Emery,		Commonwealth v. Haley	762
119 Mass.	290	2 Gray	1224, 1225,	v. Hall,	
120 Mass.	413, 2591		1318	4 All.	278, 309
v. Costley	2497	107 Mass.	2252, 2283	164 Mass.	561, 696,
v. Cotton	104, 368	v. Ensign	2264		1385
v. County Com'rs	1351	v. Epps	861	v. Haney	1441, 1450
v. Crane	2572	v. Ervine	1066	v. Hanley	2272
v. Cressinger	841, 1938	v. Everson	2339	v. Hardy	56, 58, 194
v. Cronin	2340	v. Eyler	1974	v. Hargis	1079, 1442
v. Crossmire	1976	v. Fairbanks	1938	v. Harman	26, 832, 852,
v. Crowe	107, 108, 266	v. Fairfield	580, 1254,		2081
v. Crowley,			1514, 1672	v. Harris,	
165 Mass.	1732	v. Farrar	1022	131 Mass.	62, 200
167 Mass.	1977	v. Farrell	107, 569, 961,	231 Mass.	2363
168 Mass.	1842		1977	232 Mass.	2155
v. Cuffee	824, 851, 855	v. Feei	13, 118, 390	v. Harrold	1671
v. Cullen	855	v. Felch	143, 1503, 1726	v. Hart,	
v. Culver	860, 861	v. Fenno	1719	98 Ky.	2044
v. Curtis	398, 832, 835	v. Ferrigan	63, 216, 246,	21 Pa.	1036, 1899
v. Daily	278		390	v. Harvey	1072
v. Dale	232	v. Ferry	367	v. Haskell	290, 2079
v. Dam	1873	v. Fielding	792	v. Hawkins	1026, 1042,
v. Dame	520	v. Filer	2349		2511a
v. Damon,		v. Finnerty	153, 382, 2529	v. Hayden	1633, 1644,
128 Mass.	1335	v. Fitzgerald	933, 1003		1680, 2088, 2245
136 Mass.	406	v. Flaherty	2514	v. Hayes,	
v. Dana	2184	v. Flood	839, 841	140 Mass.	2059
v. Davidson	2125	v. Flynn	568, 1976	145 Mass.	2336
v. Davies	2042	v. Follansbee	1839	v. Heffron	1640
v. Dearborn	382	v. Ford,		v. Henderson	2183
v. Dedham	1346	14 Gray	1677	v. Hersey	238, 293, 1840
v. Deitrick	905, 918, 1018,	130 Mass.	748, 749,	v. Hershell	664
	2079, 2512		760, 763	v. Higgins	2203
v. Delfino	108, 905	v. Foster	987	v. Hill,	
v. De Masi	2056	v. Fox	762, 763	11 Cush.	2363
v. Densmore	1476	v. Funai	1072	14 Mass.	811
v. Desmond,		v. Furman	507, 1821, 1828	145 Mass.	2514
5 Gray	2060, 2588	v. Galavan	784	v. Hilliard	246
103 Mass.	2575	v. Gallagher	950, 1116	v. Hills	987, 1821
v. Devaney	154, 278,	v. Gannett	78, 204	v. Hobbs	2463
	851	v. Garanchoskie	104a, 2240	v. Hollis	222, 667, 1154
v. Dill	2088, 2245	v. Gearhardt	1038	v. Hollister	2060
v. Dillon	822, 835	v. Gillon	280	v. Holliston	791
v. Donahoe	905, 1022	v. Goodman	439	v. Holmes,	
v. Dorr	770, 1861	v. Goodwin,		127 Mass.	2059
v. Dorsey	568	14 Gray	108, 281, 1133	157 Mass.	108, 306, 397
v. Dow	329	122 Mass.	2447	v. Holt	2085, 2086
v. Dowdican	660, 1078	186 Pa.	841	v. Homer,	
v. Downey	280	v. Gorham	987, 1270, 2277	153 Mass.	1432
v. Downing	2060, 2164	v. Gorman	238	235 Mass.	967, 1042,
v. Drake,		v. Gray,			1270, 1808
15 Mass.	840, 2394	Ky., 30 S. W.	390,	v. Hopkins	203, 1620
124 Mass.	2059, 2060		396, 1726	v. Horner	2273
v. Dunn	1006	120 Mass.	68	v. Horton	396
v. Eagan	661	v. Green,		v. Hoskins	63, 247
v. Eastland	609	17 Mass.	622, 686,	v. Hourigan	1003, 1021,
v. Eastman	321, 1073,		1270		1616
	1670, 1690,	120 Pa.	2304	v. Hughes	464
	2010, 2010, 2020	233 Pa.	2272	v. Howard	246, 309,
v. Edda	308	2 Pa.	2644		1726, 1906
v. Edgerly	909, 1073	v. Greene	2614	v. Howe,	
v. Edgerton	1316	v. Griffin	2369	0 Gray	246, 409,
v. Elisha	1470, 1070	v. Hackett	1760		946, 2071
v. Elliot	2060, 2060, 2060	v. Hallen	604	10 Gray	2270

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Commonwealth v. Hud-		Commonwealth v. Lenou-		Commonwealth v. Mo-	
son	832, 905, 913, 1800	sky	21, 1393	nongahela Bridge	
v. Hunt	1005	v. Lenox	246, 247	Co.	1058, 1066
v. Hunton	852, 1079	v. Leventhal	354, 2252	v. Montgomery	152, 154
v. Hurley,		v. Lindsey	367	v. Mooney	1041
14 Gray	2085	v. Little	1750	v. Moore,	
158 Mass.	153, 2183	v. Littlejohn	1644, 2085,	2 Dana	203
v. Hutchinson	505, 506		2088	3 Pick.	987
v. Ieradi	1010	v. Locke,		v. Morey	822, 830, 832
v. Ingraham	1104, 1108,	145 Mass.	280	v. Morgan,	
	1109	14 Pick.	1850	107 Mass.	1890,
v. Jackson,		v. Long	851		2276
5 Bush	1350	v. Loomis	233, 492, 1003,	159 Mass.	225, 792
11 Bush	2086		1408, 1671	v. Morrell	861, 1385
132 Mass.	194, 216,	v. Loving	263	v. Morris	268, 1644
	301, 309, 321	v. Lubinsky	321	v. Morrison	363, 1873
v. James,		v. Lynes	1821	v. Morrissey	2071
99 Mass.	1124	v. McBean	1021	v. Mosler	851
1 Pick.	2089	v. McCabe	285, 287,	v. Moulton	1873
v. Jardine	2336		290, 1072	v. Mudgett	363
v. Jeffries	12, 38, 95, 302,	v. McCann	2071	v. Mullen	2276
	762, 763, 1073	v. McCarthy	354	v. Mullins	506, 507, 680,
v. Jenkins	1126, 1128, 1129	v. McCaul	2354		1821, 1825
v. Jennings	951, 952	v. McClanahan	833, 851	v. Mulrey	154
v. Johnson,		v. McCue	272	v. Murphy,	
123 Ky.	1635	v. McDermott	1072	4 All.	612
158 Ky.	1451	v. McDonald	200, 987	14 Mass.	923
188 Mass.	655, 681	v. McGarvey	326	v. Murtagh	2086
199 Mass.	792, 1871,	v. McGuire	524	v. Myers	822, 855
	2273	v. McHugh	280	v. Nefus	561, 2529
213 Pa.	858, 2233	v. McKenna	1406	v. Nichols	398, 2276
v. Jones	397	v. Mackenzie	852	v. Norcross	1644, 2088
v. Jongrass	1819	v. McMurray	2592	v. Nott	832, 838
v. Jordan	1700, 1859	v. McNamee	203	v. O'Brien,	
v. Julius	581	v. M'Pike	218, 1756	12 All.	2050
v. Kane	2535	v. Madan	105, 106, 390	110 Mass.	104, 988,
v. Kaplan	987	v. Maddocks	59		1983
v. Keenan	2183	v. Magee	2405	134 Mass.	1974
v. Keller	792, 2079	v. Major	363	179 Mass.	104, 1072
v. Kelley	950, 1263	v. Maloney	153	v. O'Bryan, U. & Co.	95,
v. Kelly	660, 1129	v. Manson	609		1678
v. Kendrick	417, 439	v. Marsh	580	v. O'Connor	133
v. Kennedy,		v. Martin	1350	v. Palma	1725
97 Mass.	153	v. Marzynski	1696, 2567	v. Palmer	2612
170 Mass.	363, 457,	v. Mason	987	v. Parker	2012
	655, 728,	v. Matthews	1442, 1447	v. Pava	811, 1610
	1873, 1077, 2166	v. Mead	246, 2360,	v. Payne	923
v. Kenney	1071, 1072, 2080		2362, 2363	v. Peane	660
v. Kent	1732	v. Menney	1873	v. Peckham	2570, 2582
v. Keyes	2084, 2113, 2116	v. Merriam	398	v. People's Es. Co.	2272,
v. Kimball,		v. Merrill	1680		2273
7 Gray	78	v. Meservy	2354	v. Phelps,	
21 Pick.	2260, 2270	v. Messenger	1177, 1202,	11 Gray	761, 1860
v. King,			1205	102 Mass.	2056, 2060
6 Gray	862	v. Mika	1112, 2612	210 Mass.	1700
160 Mass.	2660	v. Millard	163	v. Phillips,	
v. Kinsman	2079	v. Miller,		Ky., 82 N. W.	868
v. Knapp	624, 634, 661,	31 Cash.	309, 417, 2691	192 Mass.	667
	1103, 1660	130 Pa.	1164	170 Mass.	1630
v. Knudsen	2683	v. Minchup	260, 1000	10 Pick.	1061, 2103
v. Labus	896	v. Minot	624	v. Phoenix Hotel Co.	2266,
v. Landon	102, 654, 2270	v. Mitchell	843, 661		2270
v. Lattimore	2060, 2060	v. Moffat	2060, 2060	v. Piper	406, 2270
v. Leach	692, 1611, 1066	v. Mullen	2501	v. Piper	410, 461, 1970



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Commonwealth v. Pit-		Commonwealth v. Ryan,		Commonwealth v. Storti	396,
singer	2100	134 Mass.	85, 280, 376,		837, 1810
v. Place	406		1667, 1908	v. Straesser	246, 248
v. Pollard	2042	157 Mass.	2183, 2214	v. Stricker	2063, 2064
v. Pomeroy	233	v. Sacket	280, 962, 1618	v. Stuart	1079, 1576
v. Pope	1181, 1977	v. Salyards	1803	v. Stump	2083
v. Porter,		v. Sanders	1076	v. Sturtivant	413, 416, 559,
237 Mass.	1615	v. Sapp	2239, 2337, 2341		568, 1696,
10 Metc.	2559	v. Saulsbury	352		1924, 1977
v. Powers	437	v. Savory	987, 2056, 2059	v. Sullivan,	
v. Pratt	2276	v. Schaffner	216, 218,	123 Mass.	418
v. Preece	851, 861		439, 987	150 Mass.	2276
v. Price	309, 2056	v. Scott	216, 351, 1156,	156 Mass.	278
v. Principatti	247, 692,		1824, 2056,	161 Mass.	1270
	1399, 1732, 1840	v. Sego	839, 860	v. Switzer	791
v. Puntario	1442, 1750	v. Selfridge	1671	v. Szczepanek	851
v. Quin	987, 1270	v. Shaw	987, 2270	v. Talbot	153
v. Quinn	106, 108, 665,	v. Sheehan	826	v. Tarr	2071
	1640	v. Sheets	855	v. Tate	1978
v. Racco	987, 1005, 1270	v. Shepard	216, 331	v. Tatisos	507, 1821
v. Ramage	507, 1832	v. Shepherd	2063	v. Taylor,	
v. Randall	2513	v. Sherman,		5 Cush.	836
v. Regan	200, 963, 987	5 Pick.	1352	14 Gray	153
v. Reyburg	457	234 Mass.	861	132 Mass.	2183
v. Reynolds	852	v. Shew	851	v. Tenbroeck	56
v. Rich	569	v. Shooshanian	811, 2098	v. Teregno	507, 2100
v. Richards	1395, 1398,	v. Silcox	1442	v. Thomas	111
	2098	v. Sinclair	1722, 2511	v. Thompson,	
v. Richardson,		v. Smith,		3 Dana	1959
142 Mass.	1674, 1677,	11 Allen	2195	99 Mass.	1076
	2159	2 Gray	1820, 2213	150 Mass.	1432, 1839
229 Pa.	2282	119 Mass.	832, 851,	v. Thrasher	398, 770
v. Richmond	154, 2272,		2071	v. Thyng	1028
	2273	163 Mass.	1042, 2273,	v. Tibbetts	2183
v. Ricketson	1373		2276	v. Tircinski	246
v. Riley	2183	166 Mass.	1356, 2183	v. Tolliver	276, 821, 2276,
v. Rivet	93	12 Metc.	580		2529
v. Roark	1267, 2107	270 Pa.	1911, 2339	v. Tompkins	2512
v. Robbins	280	6 S. & R.	701, 1991,	v. Trefethen	13, 143, 266,
v. Roberts	1438, 1440,		1993		278, 1072,
	1441, 1442	v. Snell	303		1362, 1714, 1715,
v. Robertson	792	v. Snelling	66, 73		1725, 1726, 2100
v. Robinson,		v. Snow	2050	v. Trider	950, 2276
1 Gray	609	v. Snyder	232, 855	v. Tucker	16, 154, 392,
146 Mass.	216, 304,	v. Southern Express			457, 655, 682,
	363, 2550	Co.	2259a, 2271		702, 861, 1126, 1129,
165 Mass.	506, 507,	v. Sparks	2235		1871, 2020, 2183, 2550
	851, 1770,	v. Spencer,		v. Tuckerman	331, 824,
	1821, 1832	212 Mass.	286, 561,		826, 832, 838
Thacher Cr. Co.	106		1938, 2243, 2501	v. Turner	340, 967, 967
v. Roddy	218, 1436,	v. Spahr	1434	v. Twitchell	1862, 2221
	1445	v. Starkweather	905, 907,	v. Valeroso	2268
v. Rogers,			1017, 1018, 1362	v. Van Horn	1750, 1803
136 Mass.	601, 1013	v. Statina	309	v. Vaughan	396
181 Mass.	1070	v. Stoyens	2536	v. Vincent	368
7 Metc.	1018	v. Stoyenman	667, 1336	v. Vitale	21, 1070
v. Ronello	60	v. Stewart	1009, 1020, 1562	v. Voshlag	2113
v. Rows,		v. Stiles	2071	v. Voss	608, 1810
14 Gray	1366	v. Stone,		v. Walls	686
106 Mass.	1761	4 Metc.	921	v. Wakelin	16, 669, 1476,
v. Russ	507, 681,	Thacher Cr. Co.	1861,		1676, 2339
	763, 801		1863	v. Walker,	
v. Russell	2190	v. Stone	66	10 All.	1072
v. Russell	2611			104 Mass.	1396

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Commonwealth v. Wallace,		Commonwealth's Ins.		Conklin v. Consolidated	
7 Gray	1356	Co. v. Monningor	1205	R. Co.	75, 106
123 Mass.	278	Compagnie Maritime		v. John Howard In-	
v. Walsh	1270	Française v. Meyer	2533	dustrial Home	905,
v. Walton	1850	Comparet v. Jernegan	1271		1890
v. Weber	290, 1867, 2243	Compher v. Browning	1063,	v. Stamler	1554, 1560
v. Webster	26, 56, 57, 136,		1738, 1938,	Conkling v. Weatherwax	1083,
	138, 149, 266, 273,		2502, 2503		1085, 2517
	278, 413, 418, 460,	Comptograph Co. v.		Conley v. Finn	2520
	703, 993, 1163, 1983,	Burroughs Adding		v. Meeker	987, 1005, 1117
	2026, 2027, 2072,	Machine Co.	2465	v. Portland G. L. Co.	555,
	2081, 2273, 2497	Compton v. Arnold	1267		561, 571
v. Welch,		v. Fleming	1081	v. State	834, 836
134 Mass.	1181	v. Randolph	1705	v. United Drug Co.	2509
163 Mass.	278, 2183	v. State	2239	Conly v. Nailor	2047
v. Welsh,		Comstock v. Carnley	1213	Conn v. Penn	1587
4 Gray	905	v. Conn. R. & L. Co.	463	Connecticut v. Bradish	2153
110 Mass.	2183	v. Georgetown	461, 1062,	Connecticut M. L. Ins.	
v. Wendt	2591		1721, 1974	Co. v. Akens	2500
v. Wentz	2063	v. Hadlyme	1738	v. Ellis	1700
v. Wesley,		v. Kerwin	1681	v. Hillmon	1075, 1079,
140 Mass.	852	v. Smith,			1081, 1725
166 Mass.	1256	23 Me.	18	v. Lathrop	568, 1919, 1938
v. Wheeler	2575	20 Mich.	34, 344, 463,	v. Schaefer	6
v. White,			565, 719	v. Schwenk	1487, 1503,
145 Mass.	309	26 Mich.	2525		1530
147 Mass.	2354	Comstock's Adm'r		v. Union Trust Co.	6, 2380
162 Mass.	21	v. Jacobs,		Connecticut Power Co.	
v. Whitney	203	84 Vt.	664, 1003	v. Dickinson	19, 1808
v. Willard	2222, 2223	89 Vt.	18, 1031,	Connell v. Connell	2098
v. Williams,			1777	v. McLoughlin	291
2 Cush.	238, 351	Conant v. Bank	2434	v. McNett	280, 681
6 Gray	1356	v. Conant	2067	v. O'Neil	1669
105 Mass.	413, 561,	v. Evans	1058	v. Smith	15
	660	v. Jones	1872	v. State	248, 851
171 Mass.	382, 851,	v. Leslie	406	v. Traveling Men's	
	2081	Concepcion v. Untaran	2527	Ass'n	7a
209 Pa.	923, 987	Concha v. Murieta	1953	Connella v. Terr.	2339
v. Wilson,		Concord L. & W. P. Co.		Connelly v. Bowie	1651
2 Cush.	238	v. Clough	290, 1807	v. Brown	256
1 Gray	111, 228,	Concord R. Co. v.		v. Edgerton	571
	1120, 1131,	Greely	451, 463, 1943	v. Woolen Co.	1978
	1700, 1938	Conde v. Abaya	1606	Conner v. Carpenter	2406
100 Ky.	2230, 2240	Condit v. Blackwell	1633,	v. Groh	2408
Ky., 32 B. W.	923, 987		2573	v. Missouri P. R. Co.	966
152 Mass.	2050, 2059	Conely v. McDonald	657	v. R. Co.	1954
186 Pa.	363, 830, 1821	Cones v. Binford	1871	v. State,	
v. Wirebach	1938	Confederation L. Ass'n		25 Ga.	811
v. Woelfel	618	v. O'Donnell,		34 Tex.	2100
v. Wood,		10 Can. Sup.	2408	23 Tex. App.	1404
11 Gray	1010, 2060	13 Can. Sup.	1464	v. Winton	2356
111 Mass.	1044	2 Russ. & C.	2066	Connersville v. Wadleigh	1376
v. Worcester	66	Congar v. R. Co.	1890	Connolly v. Ind. Com.	4c
v. Wright	2535	Congdon v. Morgan	1194,	v. Murrell	2340
v. Wyman	1820		1314	Connor v. Hayward	2122
v. Yerkes	321, 392	v. Beale Co.	461	Connor v. Carson	1890
v. York,		Conger v. Converter	2450	Connor v. Morton	109, 208
7 La. Rep. Mass.	246	v. State	1136	v. People	987, 2276
0 Metr.	2511	Congregation v. Miles	1309	v. State	861, 862
v. Zorumb	1072	Congregational H. M.		Condy v. Gayle	1736
Commonwealth Cotton		Boe, v. Van Arsdale	2477	Conome v. Guzman	1062
Oil Co. v. Hudson	2496	Conkey v. Carpenter	1614	Conover v. Bell	2222
Commonwealth Trust		v. People	367	v. Fisher R. Co.	206, 747,
Co. v. Covey	2444	v. Post	1042, 1196		1666



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2281; Vol. V, §§ 2282-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Conover v. West Jersey Mortgage Co.	2195, 2252	Continental Ins. Co. v. Hargrove	95	Cook v. State, 111 La.	194, 988
Conrad v. Clarke	2444	v. Horton	716	81 Miss.	1205
v. Ellington	438	v. Ins. Co.	341	24 N. J. L.	1976
v. Griffey,		v. Pruitt	1195	v. Stimson Mill Co.	1078,
11 How.	1126, 1132	Continental Life Ins. Co.			1977
16 How.	1028, 1031	v. Searing	1073, 2531	v. Stout	1408, 1415
v. Kennedy	1681	Continental Nat'l Bank		v. Swan	1082
v. State	1802	v. First Nat'l Bank	64,	v. Sypher	2349, 2354
Conrades, Ex parte	2260		1074, 1530	v. Totton	2141
v. Heller	1511	Converse v. Allen	112	v. U. S.	2042
Conran v. Lowe	2083, 2084,	v. Meyer	1389, 2103	v. Wood	2450
	2086	v. Wead	1273, 1705	Cook's (John) Trial	465
Conroe v. Conroe	72, 73	Conway v. Clinton	581, 987	Cooke v. Booth	2465
Consaul v. Sheldon	940, 950,	v. Fitzgerald	571	v. Cain	2066
	1022, 1867	v. John	1269	v. Curtis	1127, 1131
Consequa v. Willings	1271	v. Rock	2520	v. Lalance G. M. Co.	1802
Considine v. Dubuque	792	v. State	580, 682, 905,	v. Lloyd	1644
v. Ins. Co.	2452		1018, 1072	v. Maxwell	521, 2378
v. U. S.	792, 2513	v. Vizzard	229	v. People	1530, 1539
Consolidated Coal Co.		Conyers v. P. F. C. Co.	1236	v. Tanswell	1295, 1298,
v. Peers	2169	Coogler v. Rhodes	769		1858
v. Seniger	208, 901, 1674	Cook v. Bank	1352	v. Weed	1079
Consolidated G. E. L. & P. Co. v. State	283, 461,	v. Barr	1066	v. Wilson	803, 2575
	794, 1976	v. Bartlett	2558	v. Woodrow	1312
Consolidated Grocery Co. v. Hammond	2153	v. Blair	1414	Cookes v. Hellier	291
Consolidated I. M. Co.		v. Brown	953, 996,	Cookson v. Hill	1195
v. Trenton H. I. Co.	2354		1026, 1028, 2408	v. R. Co.	1951
Consolidated Ins. Co. v.		v. Castner	1976, 2354	Cool v. Roche	1890
Cashow	690	v. Chicago R. I. & P.		Cooley v. Collins	1213, 1256,
Consolidated K. C. S. & R. Co. v. Gonzales	1521	R. Co.	1271		2509
Consolidated Rendering Co., Re	2200, 2201,	v. Coleman	568	v. Cooley,	
	2259a, 2268,	v. Com'rs	463	38 La. Ann.	2240
	2271	v. Corn	2222	189 N. Y. Sup.	2052,
v. Vermont	2105, 2200,	v. Denike	1393, 1415		2523
	2203, 2252	v. Doud Sons & Co.	1951	v. Foltz	2383, 2384, 2386
Consolidated S. & W. Co. v. Burnham	2593	v. Enterprise Transp. Co.	20	v. Norton	960, 1078
Consolidated Tank L. Co. v. Pien	1085	v. Fall River	561	Coolidge v. Ayers	1041, 1051
Consolidated Traction Co., v. Lamberton	688	v. Field	406	v. Ins. Co.	1647, 1680
Constance v. Brain	1841	v. Fuson	677	v. Taylor	1530
Constitutional Prohibi- tory Amendment	1360	v. Grange	2336, 2337, 2341	Coolman v. State	1839, 1841
Consul Corlifton, The	1859	v. Guirkin	2540	Coombs v. Coether	157, 1592
Consumers' Ice Co. v. Jennings	2525	v. Hearn	1204	v. Fessenden	2408
Continental Casualty v. Jasper	2433	v. Henry	2237, 2336, 2341	Coon, Ex parte	2450
v. Owen	2452	v. Hunt	923, 1195, 1985	v. McNelly	2463
Continental F. Ins. Co.		v. Hunter	1225	v. People	770, 778
v. Whitaker	2415	v. Ins. Co.	1074	v. State	2100
Continental Hose Co. v. Fargo	2446	v. Knowles	1082, 1257	v. Swan	2294, 2302,
Continental Ins. Co.		v. Korsluk	285, 439, 1062		2303
v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.	2467, 2700	v. Mannsquan	2451	Cooney v. Packing Co.	2145,
v. Hephworth	294, 301, 1976	v. Mason	253, 392		2166
v. Ford	1809	v. Moore	102, 334	Coonrod v. Madden	1245,
		v. Nethercote	1842		1254
		v. Newhall	2509	Coons v. Reulek	1218, 1219
		v. Northern Pac. R. Co.	2465	Cooper v. Bower	18, 1770
		v. Parkman	13, 249	v. Brackett	2525
		v. Perry	321	v. Central R. Co.	1051, 1070
		v. R. Co.	463	v. Cooper	2046
		v. State,		v. Dawson	1872, 2020
		110 Ala.	1099	v. Gibbons	291
		17 Ala. App.	821	v. Chapin	1109
		11 Cal.	21, 2066, 2068	v. Hayward	1030
		100 Ind.	1022, 1070	v. Hopkins	1002, 1003,
					1006

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Cooper v. Kennedy	2442	Corbett v. Gilbert	2312	Cornish v. Pugh	607
v. Marsden	1312, 1521	v. Joannes	2465	Cornneil v. Buckley	1320
v. Morrel	1558	v. Kilminster	2016, 2018	Cornog v. Wilson	2525
v. Nelson	2169	v. Kingan	578	Cornville v. Brighton	1784
v. O'Brien	1304	v. Nutt	1196, 1275	Cornwall v. Richardson	66
v. Ord	613	v. State	2100	v. State	822, 841, 2354, 2513
v. Payne	2434	Corbin v. Benton	2509	Cornwell v. Sleicher	2090
v. Phipps	76	v. Gleason	1738	v. State	1079
v. Potts	2054, 2465	v. Jackson	1257, 1300	Coronas v. American R. Co.	792
v. R. Co.	792, 1722	v. Staton	751	Corps v. Robinson	1073, 2286
v. Randall	451, 717, 1943	Corbishley's Trusts	2531	Corpus v. State	2115
v. Seaboard A. L. R. Co.	13, 688	Corbleys v. Ripley	1566	Corrigan v. Rockefeller	2358
v. Smith	1388	Corbus v. Leonhardt	6a	v. Trenton D. F. Co.	2456
v. Spring V. W. Co.	2498	Corcoran v. Albuquerque T. Co.	437	Corry v. Sylvia Y Cia	95
v. State,		v. Detroit	252, 458	Corse v. Patterson	607
63 Ala.	1774, 1781	v. Peakskill	283	v. Sanford	1188
86 Ala.	2265, 2272	Cordiner v. Los Angeles Traction Co.	663	Corse & Co. v. Minnesota Grain Co.	561
90 Ala.	2262	Cordish v. Bloom	252, 458	Corsellis, Re	2463
Ala., 89 So.	1966	Cordray v. Mordecai	2014	Corsen v. Dubois	2211, 2307
59 Miss.	736	Cordts v. Superior Court	106	Corser v. Paul	1056, 1058, 1072
89 Miss.	852, 1448	Corey v. Jones	2098	Corsick v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	1043
94 Miss.	1021	Corfield v. Parsons	2529	Cortland Co. v. Herkimer Co.	581
Tenn., 138 S. W.	1755	Corinna v. Exeter	581	Coruth v. Jones	64
23 Tex.	412, 1918, 1938, 1977	Coristine Ltd. v. Haddad	1404	Corvin v. Com.	2243
v. Territory	2059	Corkran v. Rutter	1555, 1558	Cory v. Bretton	1062
v. Upton	287	v. Taylor	1555, 1558	v. Silcox	1700
Cooper's Case	1354	Corkum v. Corkum	618	Cosgrove v. Pitman	96, 250, 1621
Cooper Grocery Co. v. Neblett	520	Corley v. Vizard	2437	Cosio v. Pili	1606
Cooper-King v. Cooper-King	1645	Cormier v. Richard	2313	Cosselmon v. Dunfee	282
Cope v. Cope	1646, 2063	Cornelieson v. Foushee	2578	Cossens, Ex parte	2260, 2276
v. Pearce	2083	Cornelison v. Browning	1304, 1678	Cossey v. R. Co.	2319
Copeland, Ex parte	2271, 2280	Cornelissen v. Ort	1666	Costello v. Costello	2218
v. Collins	1684	Cornelius v. Com., 15 B. Monr.	111, 247, 1022	v. Crowell,	
v. R. Co.	392	3 Mete. Ky.	609	133 Mass.	392, 736, 747, 754, 2020
v. State,		v. Cornelius	2067	139 Mass.	83, 221, 238, 1548, 2024
41 Fla.	63, 2277	v. Hambay	2235	v. State	1250
58 Fla.	569, 1442	v. Kessel	1678	Coster v. Merest	2354
7 Humph.	63, 111	v. State	952, 1362, 1420, 1714, 1728, 1732, 1963	v. Symons	1084
v. Watts	2211, 2307	Cornell v. Barnes	18	Costigan v. Lunt	2098
Copenhaver v. State, Ind., 67 N. E.	21	v. Dean	715	Costill v. Costill	2046
Copes v. Pearce	1492, 1495	v. Green	736, 1918, 1924, 2098	Costloy v. Stato	63
Copland v. Toulmin	1856	v. Morrison	2594	Coto v. Rufas	18
Copley v. Ball	1658	v. State,		Cotter v. Cotter	2046
Coplin v. People	1028, 1135	Tex. Cr., 75 S. W.	1093	Cotterill v. Hobby	1246, 2447
Coplon v. Stato	852	104 Wis.	681	Cottle v. Johnson	1730
Copp v. Henniker	1356	v. Vanartsdalen	610, 2237, 2336, 2341	Cotton v. Boston El. R. Co.	1041, 1162
v. Upham	1085, 2223	v. Woolley	1304	v. Jones	1678
Copper River Mining Co. v. McChellan,		Corbet v. Hertelsmann	1256, 2047, 2097	v. Juttrel	607
1 Alaska	2498	v. Corbet	2503	v. State,	
Copperman v. People	326	Corbett v. Williams	1268, 1276	87 Ala.	2273, 2276, 2326
Coppin v. Stato	18, 268, 2273	Corning v. Corning	75, 967	51 Miss.	246
Coppock v. Lampkin	2016	Cornish v. Aldington	2449	v. Willmar & H. V. R. Co.	604
Coppscham v. Parsons	2415	v. Ins. Co.	1947		
Corbett v. Clough	1067				
v. Corbett	1400, 2111				
v. Clough	1219, 2378				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Cottrell v. State,		Coward v. Clanton	1066,	Coyne v. Souther	2450
9 Nebr.	1350		1067	v. U. S.	987
Tex. Cr., 237		Cowart v. Strickland	1894,	v. Weaver	1086
S. W.	2060		2498	Cozzens v. Higgins	792
Cottrill v. Myrick,		Cowboy State Bank &		v. Holt	382
3 Fairf.	2168	T. Co. v. Roy	2008	Crabb v. Orth	1240
12 Me.	1976	Cowden v. Reynolds	905	v. Watts	2503
Couch v. Couch	1738	Cowdery v. McChesney	715,	Crabtree v. Dunn	613
v. Gentry	229		1558	v. Hagenbaugh	691, 1011,
v. R. Co.	1951	Cowdry's Will	2502, 2511		1013, 1014,
v. Steele	770	Cowen v. Truefitt	2477		1612, 1985
Coughlin v. Hanessler	1388	Cowles v. Lovin	1584, 1587,	v. Kile	691, 923, 1612,
v. People	664		1665		1985
Couillard v. Duncan	1021	v. Merchants	1938	Craddock v. Barnes	2408
Coulam v. Doull	2475	v. R. Co.	2349	v. Craddock	18
Coulson v. Disborough	784,	Cowley v. People	223, 225,	v. Merrill	1651
	910, 2484		682, 790, 792, 811	Craft v. Barron	928
Coulter v. Express Co.	905,	v. State	749	v. Com.,	
	907	Cox v. Aberdeen & A. R.		80 Ky.	2059
v. Line	2517	Co.	2509	81 Ky.	959, 1028, 1032
v. State	248	v. Allingham	1238	v. Davidson	1351
v. Stewart	2042	v. Beaufort C. L. Co.	1273	v. Norfolk & S. R. Co.	2494
Coulter Mfg. Co. v. Gro-		v. Brice	1502	v. State	923, 967, 2056
cery Co.	2463	v. Brower	2517	Crafts v. Clark	1271
Councill v. Mayhew	1958,	v. Com.	2056, 2059	Crafton v. Metropolitan	
	1966	v. Couveless	2447	R. Co.	2
Counselman, Re	2283	v. Davis	1316, 1320	Cragin v. Lamkin	1703
v. Hitchcock	2252, 2281,	v. Eayres	905	Crago v. Cedar Rapids	2382
	2283	v. Hill	2223	v. State	896, 903, 904,
v. Reichart	581	v. Jones	1681, 2185		905, 1043
Countryman v. Bunker	1548	v. Kee	1911	Craig v. Anglesea	2213
County Commissioners		v. McDonald	1225	See also Annesley v.	
v. Bel Air S. I. Ass'n	1951	v. Mignery	1350	Anglesea.	
v. Wise	791	v. Montague	2286	v. Brown	1684
County Court v. Graf-		v. Pearce	1373	v. Burris	1064
ton	1404, 1414	v. People	851	v. Craig	905, 1124,
County Ditch No. 33,		v. Prater	905		1126, 1129
Re	1040, 1041, 1640	v. Pruitt	64	v. Com.	2060
Courcamp v. Weber	2525	v. R. Co.,		v. Dimock	2185
Courser v. Kirkbride	1951	170 Mass.	250	v. Lamoureux	2503
Courteen v. Touse	777, 779	126 N. C.	460	v. Miller	608
Courtenay v. Courtenay	1736	v. Robinson	1684	v. National City Bank	2525
v. Hoskins	1391	v. Royal Tribe	1073, 1071	v. R. Co.	681
Courvoisier v. Raymond	682	v. Schnerr	2503	v. Rohrer	1017
Cousins v. Partridge	1873	v. State,		v. Sauce	1651
v. Perles	1850b, 2377	162 Ala.	406	v. Southard	233
Couts v. Winston	2498	64 Ga.	1745, 2115	v. Stato	923, 1077, 1085
Covanhoven v. Hart	392	124 Ga.	1040	Craig, dem. Annesley v.	
Coveney v. Tannahill	2298,	61 Okl.	1664	Anglesea; see Annes-	
	2306, 2307,	41 Tex.	1586	ley v. Anglesea.	
	2308, 2309, 2311	v. Strickland	66, 74	Crake v. Crake	1084
Coventry Case	2287	v. Territory	2513	Cram v. Cram	619
Cover's Estate	2503	v. Troy	2409	v. Ingalls	1300, 1320,
Coyart v. Hertzog	1481	v. Whalley	2218, 2222		1321, 1513, 1651
v. Nelson	2477	v. Williams	529, 1911	v. Spear	1537, 1549
Coyey v. Campbell	1044	Cox v. Derlinger	377	Cramer v. Burlington	283,
Coylington v. Berry	1239	v. England	1278, 2105		1871, 2346
v. Gaylor	616	v. Millbrath	736	v. Callhane	1860
v. O'Meara	496, 497	v. Singleton	966	v. Hart	612, 2385, 2389
v. State	821	Crawell v. State	247	v. Holard	619
Cowan v. Abraham	1249	Coyle v. Hann	1043	v. Shiner	1216
v. Dillon	1809	v. Com.	1451	v. Trull	1166, 2594
v. Murgrove	1677	v. Coyle	1666	Crandall v. Lynch	2629
v. State	321, 2277	v. Goaden	96	v. H. Co.	2673

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2577]

	Section		Section		Section
Crandall's Appeal	229	Crawford and Lindsay		Crist v. State	2016
Crandell v. White	581	Peerage Cases	570, 1279	Criswell v. Altemus	1257
Crane v. Ayre	1313	Crawfordsville Trust Co.		Critchlow v. Parry	1056
v. Barkdoll	2297	v. Ramsey	1890	Crittenden v. Com.	1021, 1963
v. Buchanan	613	Cray v. Underwood	785	v. Rogers	736, 747, 754
v. Crane,		Crayton v. Munger	1225	Croasdale v. Tatum	2354
81 Ill.	612	Creamer v. Melvain	2494	Crocker v. Agenbroad	905, 907, 916
33 Vt.	1938	v. State	2242, 2243	v. Chase's Estate	1738
v. Dameron	1267	Crease v. Barrett	21, 1458, 1591	v. Clements	2124
v. Ellis	1867, 1873			v. Lowenthal	1195
v. Fry	1951	Credille v. Credille	1738, 2500	v. McGregor	461
v. Horton	797			v. State	2363
v. Marshall	1082, 2138	Credit v. Brown	2117	v. Turnstall	2207
v. Morris	1257, 1511, 1573, 2494	Crediton v. Exeter	2325	Crocker-Wheeler Co. v.	
v. Northfield	1943, 1951	Creech v. Ossep	1856a	Bullock	2200, 2210, 2212
v. People	398, 2540	Creek v. State	2276	Crockett v. Crockett	1304, 1312, 1313
v. Reeder	1502	Creeping Bear v. State	950, 1022	v. Davis	689, 1922
v. Ross	1062, 1960			v. State	987
v. State	417	Creedy v. Carr	1893	Croff v. Ballinger	1777
v. Thayer	923, 987	Creighton v. Hoppis	1774, 1779	Croft v. Arthur	529
v. Waldron	1356	v. Johnson	1312	v. Chicago R. I. &	
Crane & Co. v. Hall	2340	Crenshaw v. Gardner	1842	P. R. Co.	1944, 2509
Crane Co. v. Columbus		v. Johnson	770	v. Pawlet	1511
C. Co.	658, 1951, 1984	v. State,		Croft v. R. Co.	458
v. Tierney	1275	205 Ala.	1732	Crofton v. Crofton	1380
Crank v. Frith	1316	48 Tex. Cr.	2059	Cromack v. Heathcote	2294
Crary v. Sprague	913, 1083, 1086, 1404, 1405	Crescent C. I. Co. v.		Cromeenes v. San Pedro	
Crauford v. Blackburn	1481	Ermann	291	L. A. & S. L. R.	
Crauford v. State	1651, 2450	Cressey v. International		Co.	1755
Craven v. Russell	1078	Harvester Co.	2442	v. Sovereign Camp	7a, 2386
v. State	1440	Cresswell v. Jackson,			
v. Walker	406	2 F. & F.	2016	Cromer v. Penston	2250
Cravens v. Carter-Crume		4 F. & F.	905, 2016, 2024	Crompton v. Butler	2045
Co.	377	v. State	1840	Cromwell v. Grunsden	2456
Craw v. Abrams	2158	Cressy v. Siward	2032	v. Tate's Ex'r	2555
Crawford v. Branch Bank	1223	Creswick's Case	575	Crone v. Gibson Co.	2065a
v. Christian	987, 1038	Crete v. Hendricks	1158	Cronin v. R. Co.	1720, 1722
v. Crawford	1778	Creveling v. Banta	2410	Cronk v. Frith	1316
v. Duckworth	2579	Crew v. Saunders	1858	v. Wabash R. Co.	283, 571, 1700
v. Hodge	1204, 1206	Crowe v. Crewe	2067		
v. McKissack	2308	Cribbs v. Walker	2408, 2520	Cronkite v. Trexler	1028
v. People	1079	Crick v. McClintic	1389	Crook v. Rindskopf	581
v. State,		Criddle v. Criddle	1133, 1779	Crooker v. Pacific L. &	
44 Ala.	1781	Crigler v. Ford	252	M. Co.	461
112 Ala.	4, 142, 288, 923, 987, 1002, 1033, 1157, 1598, 1985	Criner v. State	987	Crookham v. State	140, 142, 1432, 1750
113 Ala.	2497	Cripe v. Cripe	1730	Crooks v. Bunn	1124, 1126, 1131, 1133
70 Fla.	821, 852, 1163	Crippen, In re	1347		
12 Ga.	141	v. Des Moines	1719	Croom v. State	246, 248
155 Ind.	2576	v. People	950	v. Sugg	87, 2008
98 Wis.	2239	Crippen's Trial	847, 1693, 2497	Croomer v. State	1761
2 Yerg.	2349, 2353, 2354			Croomey v. Ayerill	1263
v. Thomas	2408	Crippin v. State	1587	v. Markham	2450
v. U. S.	561, 2120	Crisler v. Garland	2304	Crosbie v. Macdonald	2452
v. Verner	2473	Crisp v. State Bank	10	Crosby v. Berger	2317
v. Williams	1693, 1694	Crispen v. Hannay,		v. Moriarty	177
v. Wolf	1078	60 Mo.	1225, 1651, 2141	v. Porey	1813
v. Word	1367	72 Mo.	1225, 1226, 1275, 2143	v. Potts	2100, 2216
		Crispin v. Douglass	1492	v. Portland R. Co.	556, 561, 568, 682, 1697, 2509
		Crisp's Will	1786		
		Crisp v. State	2058		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Crosby v. State	507	Crowson v. Crowson	1738	Cummings v. Com.	2570
v. Wells	321, 556, 1890, 1944	Crowther v. Hopwood	520	v. Farnham	283
Croze v. Rutledge	64, 75	Crozier v. Gano	2083	v. Fullam	1538
Cross v. Bell	291, 1199	v. People	205	v. Furnace Co.	2509
v. Cross,		Crugley v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2507	v. Gourlay	1530, 1532
Ky., 41 S. W.	1379	Crum v. State	321	v. McCullough	334
55 Mich.	2085	v. Thornley	229	v. McKinney	1208
108 N. Y.	905	Crumley v. Adkins	2354	v. Nichols	85, 1541, 1556
3 Paige Ch.	2063	Crumm v. Allen	1404	v. State	1130
v. Garrett	1067	Crummen v. Cavenah	2124	v. Stone	2575
v. Haskins	1244	Crummey v. Bentley	1651	Cummins v. Ins. Co.	1770
v. Higgins	2304	Crumpton v. State	1022	v. People	276
v. Iler	1081	Crusen v. State	2042	v. R. Co.	463
v. Johnson	1273	Crusoe v. Butler	1304	Cunard S. S. Co. v. Kelley	41
v. Kaye	2535	v. Clark	463	Cundell v. Pratt	986
v. Martin	2529	Cruz v. Alberto	1955	Cuney v. Dupree	2054
v. Passumpsic F. L. Co.	905	Cryer v. McGuire	1463	Cunliffe v. Sefton	1313, 1316
v. People,		Cubbison v. M'Creary	1817, 1820	Cunneen v. State	1960
47 Ill.	2056	Cuddy v. Foreman	1779, 1890	Cunniff v. Cunniff	1081
192 Ill.	1197, 1852	Cudlip v. Journal Pub. Co.	18, 206	Cunning v. State	1349, 1667
v. Pinckneyville M. Co.	1678	Cudney v. Cudney	1738	Cunningham v. Bank	693, 699, 701, 702, 2529
v. R. Co.	1951	Cuesta v. Goldsmith	492	v. Chicago & A. R. Co.	1356
v. State,		Cuff v. Frazee S. & C. Co.	1312, 1405, 1725	v. Clay	458
68 Ala.	1806, 1807	Culbertson v. Coleman	1678	v. Com.	2071
118 Md.	1131	v. Hill	106	v. Cunningham,	
v. Syracuse	663	v. R. Co.	65	Conn., 52 Atl.	1225
v. Wilkins	463	Culbertson & B. P. Co.		2 Dow	1603, 2083
v. Williams	1189, 1205	v. Chicago	463, 1168	107 Kans.	1938, 2314
Cross L. L. Co. v. Joyce	1750	Cull v. Herwig	2240	121 N. C.	1404
Crossgrove v. Himmelrich	1391	Cullen v. Com.	2252, 2260, 2276, 2283	v. Davis	1311, 1466, 2141
Crosslin v. State	398	v. Hanisch	1270	v. Dody	2509
Crossman v. Crossman	2525	Culligan v. The Graphic	261	v. Fonblanque	1954
v. Keister	1198	Cully v. Northern Pac. R. Co.	2319	v. Freeborn	581
Crotty v. Chicago G. W. R. Co.	2103	Culmer v. Clift	18	v. Fuller	1082
Crouch v. Drury	1518	Culp v. Wilson	2526	v. People	1761
v. Eveleth	1481	Culpepper v. State	254	v. R. Co.,	
v. Hooper	1495, 2065	Culver v. Caldwell	1672	72 Conn.	437, 438, 492, 1807
Croughton v. Blake	2139	v. Carroll	2408	61 Mo.	2107
Crouse v. Duffield	1312	v. Lumber Co.	759, 1560	88 Tex.	199, 208, 250, 995, 1896
v. Holman	720, 1943	v. Marks	1521	v. Smithson	1710
v. Miller	1508, 1514, 1557	v. R. Co.	1525, 1951	v. State,	
v. R. Co.	1698	v. South H. & E. R. Co.	2115	73 Ala.	2062
Crow v. Jordan	166, 1154	v. State	1561	97 Ga.	1842
v. State	2380	v. Waters	1705	65 Ind.	987
Crowder v. Garber	618	Culverwell v. Birney	1841	v. Stein	462
v. State	2071	Cumberland G. M. Co.		v. Tracy	1225, 1651
Crowe v. Capwell	1105	v. Attiaux	754	v. Underwood	207, 1613
v. Peters	1394, 1938	Cumberland T. & T. Co.		Cunnion's Will	2314, 2523
Crowell v. Bank	18, 728, 1969	v. Dooley	1976	Cupps v. State	118
v. Kirk	917, 1302, 1312, 1316, 1505, 1511	v. Peacher Mill Co.	1976	Curby v. Terr.	2061
v. Panhandle G. & El. Co.	1530	v. St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co.	2579	Curlewis v. Corfield	291
v. State	1072, 1079	v. State	2259a, 2281	Curling v. Perring	2319
Crowley v. Crowley	1303, 2049	Cumming v. French	1062	Curme v. Rauh	1195
v. Page	1037	Cummings v. Armstrong	1660	Curran v. Holland	2438
Crowninshield v. Crowninshield	2500	v. Brown	1684	v. Stange Co.	1719, 2498
				v. Witter	1560
				Curren v. Connery	1896, 1898
				v. Crawford	1550
				Curry v. State	1215, 2576
				Currie v. Child	1316

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Currie v. Donald	528	Cussons v. Skinner	1292	Daines v. Hartley	1971
v. Southern P. Co.	1350	Custer v. Fidelity M. A.		Dainese v. Hale	2573
v. Stairs	1501, 2083	Ass'n	93, 2452	Daintrey, Re	1062
v. State	2501	Cutbush v. Gilbert	1456	Dakota v. O'Hare	697, 2016, 2132
Currier v. Bangor R. & E. Co.	1028	Cutcher v. Crawford	1350	Dale v. Johnson	2237
v. Gale,		Cuteliff v. State	2501	v. R. Co.	283
9 All.	2515	Cutler v. Carpenter	1969	v. State	1841
4 Gray	1456, 1458, 1469, 1778	v. Cutler	2593	Dale's Appeal	1081
v. R. Co.	2268, 2283	v. Skeels	21, 1807	Dalison v. Stark	2429
v. Silloway	1063, 1066	v. State,		Dalistan v. Armos	1606
Curry v. Charles Warner Co.	1230	15 Ariz.	2273	Dallas C. E. St. R. Co. v. McAllister	905
v. Colburn	2408	42 Ind.	2205	Dalrymple v. Dalrymple	1697, 2406
v. Raymond	1225	r. Thomas	1249	v. Williams	2355
v. State,		Cuts v. Pickering	2304	Dalrymple's Estate	233
120 Ala.	860, 1976	Cutter v. Cooper	125, 1856a	Dalston v. Coatsworth	291, 1267
117 Md.	368	v. Terr.	1398		
50 Tex. Cr.	667	v. Waddingham	1678	Dalton v. All Souls' College	1163
Curtice v. Dixon	261	Cutter-Tower Co. v. Clements	1200	v. Bethlehem	2083
Curtin v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	2509	Cutts v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	436	v. Dregge	13, 1730, 2232
v. R. Co.	463	Cuyler v. McCartney	1083, 1086	v. Driggs	2232
Curtis v. Aaronson	1567, 1587	v. Wallace	2516	v. People	2334, 2339, 2340
v. Beaney	2319	Cuyugan v. Santos	2437	v. Popular Bluff	2495
v. Belknap	1291	Cyr v. De Rosier	1210	v. R. Co.	199
v. Boston & M. R. Co.	1800	v. Sanfacon	2164	Dalton's Appeal	1195
v. Bradley	748, 754, 763	Czarecki v. R. & N. Co.	492, 561	Daly v. Byrne	404, 405, 406
v. Cochran	523, 980	Czezewzka v. R. Co.	1951	v. Dimock	1850, 1859g
v. Curtis	2503			v. Kimball Co.	717
v. Gano	1951			v. Maguire	797
v. Hunting	1239			v. Milwaukee	1951
v. Lehmann	1819			v. Multnomah Co.	2203
v. Miller	21, 1730			v. Simonson	2416
v. N. Y. N. H. & H. R. Co.	792			v. Webster	1633, 1639
v. North American Indian Co.	18			Dalzell v. Davenport	1943
r. Parker	1389			v. State	2081
v. R. Co.	1976, 1977			Damas v. People	867, 2081
v. State,				Dambmann v. Schuiting	2417
118 Ala.	2008			Dame v. Kenney	74, 76, 1611
36 Ark.	1164			Dameron v. Harris	1526, 1530
v. Wilcox	1335				
Curtis & G. Co. v. Pribyl	290, 451			Damm v. State	681, 1722
Curtiss v. Strong	1816, 1818, 1820			Damon's Case	1644, 2085
Curtsinger v. McGown	1073			Dampman v. R. Co.	1018
Curzon v. De la Zouch	2268			Damport v. Sympson	2040
Cushing v. Billings	1873, 1908			Dan v. Brown	1076, 1081, 1195, 1304, 1736, 1782
v. Cushing	1876				
v. Friendship	581			Dana v. Boyd	1204
v. Hederman	406			v. Fiedler	463
v. R. Co.	1634, 1684			v. Kemble	95, 1201, 1280
Cushman v. Coleman	2125			v. Tucker	2354
v. Loker	521			v. Underwood	1389
v. Wooster	803			Danahy v. Kellogg	1862, 2221
Cushman P. B. M. Co. v. Goddard	2580				
Cusick v. Whitecomb	2115			Danceel v. Goodyear S. M. Co.	2195, 2200, 2220
				Dandridge v. Corden	2276
				Dane Co. v. Reindahl	2577
				Danforth v. Reynolds	1684
				v. State	1271



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Daniel v. Braswell	1678	Darrier v. Darrier	2245, 2336	Davidson v. State,	
v. Com.	1442	Darrigan v. R. Co.	1721	135 Ind.	852, 1157,
v. Daniel	1958, 2306,	Darrow, In re	1618		1976
	2314	v. Darrow	1644, 2529	39 Tex.	1821
v. Guy	167, 1154	Darst v. Doom	2520	v. Wallingford	1651
v. Johnson	1245	Dartmouth v. Holds-		v. Watts	523, 987
v. New Era L. Co.	2477	worth	2319	Davidson L. Co. v. Jones	1195
v. Pitt	1070	v. Roberts	1065, 1080,	Davidson S. S. Co. v.	
v. Scadbury	154		1082, 1215,	U. S.	18, 95, 283, 916
v. State,			1216, 2529	Davie v. Briggs	2531
63 Ga.	2071	Dartnell v. Howard	1185,	v. Jones	291, 760
65 Ga.	1476		2158	v. Lloyd	1561
103 Ga.	246, 396, 950	Darwin v. State	2062	v. Terrill	736, 747
114 Ga.	1186	Dasher v. Ellis	1188	Davies, Re,	
v. Tolon	2503	Dashiell v. Griffith	569	68 Kans.	2286
v. Wilkin	1591, 1634,	Dashwood v. Magniac	2464	168 N. Y.	2195
	1665	Daspit v. Ehringer	2239	v. Bierce	2442
Daniels v. Conrad	1021, 1040	Daubney v. Cooper	1834	v. Davies	1261
v. Hamilton	382	Daugherty v. Advance-		v. Flewellen	2111
v. Ins. Co.	1947	Rumely T. Co.	716	v. Humphreys	1465
v. McGinnis	1086	v. Heckard	770	v. Lowndes	1439
v. Mosher	1951	Dauvillier v. Myers	1859c	v. Morgan	1468
v. Stone	1225	Dave v. State	692, 1614,	v. Pettit	1267
v. State,			1985	v. Pierce	1476, 1778
12 Ala. App.	2072,	Davenbagh v. M'Kinnie	1858	v. Ridge	1081
	2073	Davenport v. Cummings	2349	v. Salter	2581
57 Fla.	851, 852, 860	v. Davenport	1736	v. Sovereign Bank	1856a
v. Woonsocket	1062	v. Freeman	529	v. Waters	2308
Danielson v. Dyckman	1873	v. McKee	762, 1131	D'Avignon v. Jones	963
Danks v. Rodeheaver	20	v. Ogg	1842	Davin v. Isman	160
Danley v. Danley	2242	v. Russell	62, 75	Davis v. Adair	1727
v. State	1503	v. Ryan	614	v. Adrian	792
Dann v. Cudney	1890	v. Silvey	64	v. Allen	759
Dannenberg v. Berkner	63,	v. State,		v. Alston	291, 1290, 1301
	246	85 Ala.	248, 923	v. American T. & T.	
Danser v. Boyle	1541	Okla. Cr., 202		Co.	1164
Dantzler v. D. C. & I.		Pac.	1853	v. Arnold	657
Co.	1699	Davenport Co. v. Penn-		v. Babb	1081
Danville Bank v.		sylvania R. Co.	2319	v. Bank of Fulton	2572
Waddill	20, 2349	Davey v. Janesville	2572	v. Barr	586
Darby v. Huffman	1225	v. Prendergass	2455	v. Batty	1373
v. Ousley	935, 1048, 1244,	David Adler & S. C. Co.		v. Boggs	664
	1256, 1696, 1699,	v. Hellman	2312	v. Brown,	
	2213	Davidson v. Arsenean	905	98 Ky.	1807
Darcy's Infants	2063	v. Cornell	688, 1719	94 U. S.	529, 531
Dardanelle P. B. & T.		v. Davidson,		v. Buchanan	905, 1085
Co. v. Croom	1951	10 B. Monr.	1215	v. Byrd	1842
Darden v. State	2060	Nebr., 96 N. W.	1738	v. Cal. Powder Works	987,
Dare Valley R. Co., Re	1912,	v. Guarantee Life			995, 1003
	2358	Ins. Co.	2444	v. Calvert	40, 229, 233,
Darland v. Rosencrans	1878	v. Hurtz	2438		1871
Darling v. Banks	2498	v. Kahn	334	v. Campbell	1778
v. Bryant	1779	v. Kimpton	2528	v. Clements	1672
v. Thompson	907	v. King	1871	v. Coblens,	
v. Westmoreland	39, 57,	v. Murphy	1267	12 D. C. App.	944
	216, 444,	v. Peck	1245	174 U. S.	944, 1890
	445, 458, 461	v. People	111, 246	v. Collins	1876
Darneal v. State	507	v. Peticolas	2579	v. Com.,	
Darnell v. State	19	v. R. Co.	456, 571, 1976	95 Ky.	1476
Darrak v. Watson	1681	v. Shuler's Heirs	2477	Ky., 77 S. W.	2595
Darrell v. Com.,		v. Slocomb	1273, 2450	99 Va.	2239
Ky., 82 S. W.	282	v. State,		v. Cook	771
Ky., 88 S. W.	278	33 Ala.	2060	v. Cotey	463
Darrett v. Donnelly	1779	104 Ga.	2513	v. Council	1131

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Davis v. Curry	25, 2491	Davis v. Paducah R. &		Davis v. State,	
v. Dale	1894, 2200	L. Co.	2509	54 Nebr.	347, 2514
v. Davis,		v. Pennsylvania R.		58 Nebr.	309
2 Add. Eccl.	1267	Co.	463, 654	8 Okl. r.	1476
90 Fed.	2207, 2211	v. People,		Okl. Cr., 191	
58 Me.	1058	114 Ill.	63, 246	Pac.	2528
123 Mass.	233	v. Power Co.	791	196 Pac.	2059
v. Dinwoody	603, 2228	v. Printing Co.	2508	2 Tex. App.	2056,
v. Dunn	457, 795	v. Pursel	2498		2060
v. Emmons	2591	v. R. Co.,		6 Tex. App.	1840
v. Fidelity Fire Ins.		11 Cush.	463	45 Tex. Cr.	2242,
Co.	2442	75 Ga.	285, 288		2311
v. Field	735, 745, 747,	20 Mich.	249, 250	83 Tex. Cr.	1447
	748, 749, 753, 754	70 Minn.	2307	v. Stephenson	1073
v. First Nat'l Bank	1810	v. Randall	2444	v. Strohm	1267
v. Franke	953, 964, 988,	v. Reid	2279	v. Supreme Lodge	2385a
	1028, 1614	v. Reynolds	1247	v. Tarver	1530
v. Fredericks	2008	v. Rhodes	1225, 1226	v. Taylor	2355
v. Freeland	1680	v. Richardson	6a	v. Teachout	1198
v. Fuller	1456	v. Robinson	2153	v. Temple	2509
v. Gaines	1350	v. Roby	1021, 1022	v. U. S.,	
v. Gray	1678	v. Rogers	112	247 Fed.	1835
v. Hamilton	284, 1971	v. Ruggles	1651	160 U. S.	2501
v. Hardy	1018	v. Salisbury	1141	165 U. S.	1696
v. Hare	1245	v. Sanford	1549	v. Van Camp Packing	
v. Herndon	1651	v. Seaboard A. L.		Co.	439, 2509
v. Hopkins	18	R. R. Co.	792	v. Vories	321
v. Howard	1347, 2066	v. Seybold	2165	v. Walter	2155
v. Huber Mfg. Co.	2349	v. Sigourney	1267, 2106	v. Watkins	2166
v. Improvement Co.	1651,	v. Sim	1074, 2515	v. Weaver	2337
	2520	v. Simma	1890	v. Yorge	2066
v. Ins. Co.,		v. Smith	2099	Davis' Appeal	987
59 Kan.	685	v. South Side El. R.		Davis' Sons v. Sweeney	451
39 U. C. Q. B.	1911	Co.	2509	Davis' Trusts, Re	2165
v. Jenny	1168, 2525	v. Spooner	1082	Davis' Will	2530
v. Jones	2410	v. Spurling	2122	Davison v. Bloomer	1309,
v. Keyes	1021	v. State,			1316
v. Kimball	1031	17 Ala.	1387, 2098	v. Cruse	928
v. Kimberlain	1869	131 Ala.	1072, 2265	v. Guthrie	2252, 2283
v. Kneale	377	141 Ala.	2572	D'Avry v. World News-	
v. Kornman	252, 283,	145 Ala.	2276, 2378	paper Co.	2270
	458, 461, 1951	168 Ala.	1326	Dawbeny v. Davie	2250
v. Lees	1164	63 Ark.	1136	Dawby's Case	1364
v. Lloyd	1476, 1644	96 Ark.	688, 2061	Dawkins v. Rokeby	2378
v. Lyon	376	117 Ark.	351	v. Smithwick	2581
v. McClelland	1541	44 Fla.	561	Dawley v. State	2056
v. McEnaney	2578	46 Fla.	177	Dawson v. Barham	1219
v. Marvinne	581	47 Fla.	177, 749, 760	v. Callaway	728, 1390
v. Mason	1963	105 Ga.	56, 2071	v. Coulter	1032
v. Melson	1082	120 Ga.	1842, 2060	v. Dawson,	
v. Michigan Central		122 Ga.	852	18 Mich.	2067
R. Co.	733, 1976	24 Ga. App.	2497	Rice Eq.	1321, 1511
v. Mills	571	Ga. App., 107		v. Graves	1249
v. Monroe	530	S. E.	1841	v. Orange	1582
v. Morgan,		114 Ill.	246	v. Parham	1239
1 C. & J.	1584	35 Ind.	569, 682, 684	v. Peterson	1684
19 Mont.	2303	38 Md.	580, 662,	v. Pittsburgh	1040
v. Moyles	1257, 1483,		682, 1108, 1109,	v. Smith	1388
	1490, 1573,		1700, 1976	v. State	351
	1662, 1672	85 Miss.	1021	v. Waggaman	1777
v. Neligh	1890	31 Nebr.	496, 1821	Day v. Backus	1268
v. North Carolina		51 Nebr.	21, 86, 460,	v. Caton	2414
S. Co.	282		736, 944, 953, 969,	v. Com.	923
v. Oregon S. L. Co.	568		1013, 1873, 2497	v. Cooley	905



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Day v. Crawford	1009	Deason v. U. S.	369	Degraffenreid v. Thomas	1779
v. Day,		Deathridge v. State	824, 833,	De Graw v. Emory	1969
Eng.	166		858	De Gray v. N. Y. & N. J.	
56 N. H.	1821	Deaton v. Com.	851, 2059,	Tel. Co.	1168, 2570
v. Donohue	969		2060	De Guzman v. Balarag	2442
v. Henderson	2500	Deaver v. Rice	1213	De Haas v. Galbreath	1373
v. Lumber Co.	283	De Baker v. R. Co.	2575	De Haven v. De Haven	778,
v. Lusk	523, 524	De Bode's Case	609, 1271,		1483, 1605
v. Moore	1186		1458, 1697, 1953	Deiner v. Sutermeister	1976
v. Ross	64, 1614, 1983	De Bow v. People	1350	Deining v. McConnel	1225,
v. Sioux Falls Fruit Co.	4c	De Cair v. Manistee &			2105
v. State,		G. R. R. Co.	461	Deitchler v. Ball	791
54 Fla.	1732	De Cambra v. Rogers	1347a	De Kalb Co. v. Smith	923,
63 Ga.	2265	De Camp v. Archibald	2195,		1626
13 Mo.	923, 111, 1985		2210	De la Cruz v. Capinpin	2415
v. Stickney	950, 1022,	v. Vandagriff	1536	Delafield v. Hand	2164
	1026, 1714,	Décary v. Poirier	1028	v. Parish	1938, 2500, 2503
	1730, 2098	Decatur v. Barreau	1680	Delahoyde v. People	2497
v. U. S.	368, 1385a	v. Fisher	682	Delaney v. Errickson	1225,
Day Land & C. Co. v.		Decatur C. W. & M. Co.			1234
State	1350	v. Mehafeey	451	v. Framingham	1530
Daynes v. British Col.		v. Vaughan	1869	v. Little	661
El R. Co.	749	Deck v. Balt. & O. R.		v. Philadelphia	237
Dayrell v. Glascock	528, 1302,	Co.	1270	Delaney v. Berkshire St.	
	1512	v. Johnson	2232	R. Co.	288, 1856c
Daytona Bridge Co. v.		Decker, Re	2252, 2271	v. Framingham G.	
Bond	1073	v. Chicago, M. &		F. & P. Co.	1530,
Dazey v. Mills	1076	St. P. R. Co.	681		1639
Deacon v. Shreve	1166,	v. Decker	2474, 2477	v. Jackson	2439
	2354	v. Stansberry	2472	v. State,	
Deadman v. Ewen	2211	De Cordova v. Korte	2463	148 Ala.	1966
Deal v. State	38, 660	Dedeaux v. State	2056	204 Ala.	1072
Dean v. Blackwell	1010	Dederichs v. Salt Lake	792	Delannoy v. Blondet	2527
v. Border	1205	De Diego v. Rovira	792, 1416,	Delano v. Goodwin	581, 1971
v. Carnahan	1190		2433, 2504	Delaplaine v. Cook	1356
v. Chapin	1681	Dedrie v. Hopson	2213	Delaware, The	2432
v. Com.	273, 279, 413	Deeder v. State	1240	Delaware & C. Towboat	
v. Dean	1303, 1304, 1512	Deedes v. Giles	1486	Co. v. Starrs	561, 1951
v. Fuller	1938	Deems v. State	832	Delaware Co. Com'rs v.	
v. Kansas C. St. L.		Deep River Nat'l Bank,		Diebold S. & L. Co.	1006
& C. R. Co.	437	Re	2149	Delaware Indians v.	
v. McLean	1951	Deepwater Council v.		Cherokee Nation	2415
v. Seaman	1158	Remick	2169	Delaware L. & W. R. Co.	
v. Sharon	437, 1951	Deerfield Tp. v. Harper	1219	v. Ashley	1750
v. State,		Deering v. Cunningham	907	v. Burson	1943
89 Ala.	2591	v. Metcalf	527, 1010,	v. Converse	2495, 2552
105 Ala.	1072, 1966		1013	v. Roalefs	680, 688, 1721
139 Ark.	609	v. Sawtel	529	Delaware Surety Co. v.	
43 Ga.	1851	v. Shumpik	2155	Layton	2373
29 Ind.	2063	Deery v. Cray	1573	Delegall v. Highley	406
v. Swoop	1954	Dees v. State	1354	De Leon v. Terr.	1212, 2339
v. Wabash R. Co.	688,	Defarges v. Ryland	613	Delfosse v. Delfosse	1085
	795	De Ford v. Painter	784	Delger v. Jacobs	2297
v. U. S.	1073, 2020	De Forest v. State	247	Delinquent Real Estate	
Deane v. Packwood	1911	De Forge v. R. Co.	795	Taxes, Re	2155
Dear v. Knight	905	De Four v. U. S.	367	De Lisle Peerage Case	1670
Dearborn v. Newhall	2350	De France v. Stricker	1239	Delk v. State	1476
Dearden v. San Pedro		De Freese v. Lake	2471	Dell v. McGrath	461
A. & S. L. R. Co.	2509	v. State	321	v. Oppenheimer	1009
Dearing v. Dearing	1736	Defries v. Davis	406	v. Taylor	1862
De Arman v. State	246, 988	Degg v. State	1669, 1842	Delmare v. Robello	2474
Dearmond v. Dearmond	1890	Degnan v. U. S.	326, 2513	De Loach v. Newton	1350
De Armond v. Neasmith	417,	De Graff v. Manz	2408	Delogny v. Rentoul	1062
	1523	v. State	967	v. Smith	1676



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Delony v. Delony	1312, 1320	Denmead v. Maack	2165	Denver & R. G. R. Co.	
Delphi v. Lowery	252, 458	Denn v. Fulford	1681	v. Spencer	1725
De Lucenay v. State	987,	v. Pond	1665	Denver & S. L. R. Co. v.	
	1839, 2535	v. White	2232	Chicago B. & Q. R. Co.	4a, 4c
Deluglio v. Barney	2153	Dennehy v. O'Connell	952	Denver City T. Co. v.	
Delventhal v. Jones	18	Dennett v. Crocker	1245	Gawley	1696, 1700
De Manneville v. De		v. Dow	905, 917	v. Hills	15, 2509
Manneville	2239	v. Kneeland	1141	v. Lomovt	1041
Demara v. Rhode Island		Denney v. Stout	1013	v. Norton	966, 2220
Co.	19	Dennie v. Williams	1066,	v. Roberts	2220
Demarest v. Winchester			2494	Denver Omnibus & C.	
Repeating Arms Co.	2047	Denning v. Butcher	229, 232,	Co. v. Krebs	571, 1078
Demarets v. Demarets	1458		1938, 2315, 2391	Denver S. P. & P. R. Co.	
Demars v. Mfg. Co.	969	v. Roome	1661	v. Moynahan	1807
Demartini v. Anderson	78,	v. U. S.	2239	v. Wilson	1951
	1620	Dennis v. Barber	2105	Denver T. & F. W. R. Co.	
De May v. Roberts	461, 1263	v. Brewster	167	v. Ditch Co.	1168
De Medina v. Owen	2104	v. Codrington	2290	v. Smock	571
De Meli v. De Meli	905, 907,	v. Crittenden	605	Denver T. Co. v. Owens	2304,
	2239	v. Holsapple	2473		2326
Demelman v. Brazier	2536	v. Ivey and Boyce	2444	Depew v. Wheelan	1195
v. Burton	1067, 2124	v. Mfg. Co.	2451	De Phue v. State	1621
Dement, Ex parte	2203	v. Pawling	73, 209	Deppe v. Atlantic C. L.	
v. State	1841	v. Slyfield	2463	R. Co.	1976
Demeritt v. Milcs	89	v. State,		Depue, Re	2199, 2201
v. Randall	782, 2008	118 Ala.	2497	v. Place	2016, 2020
Deming v. Carrington	1082,	139 Ala.	1807	v. Steber	1777
	1257	v. Weeks	1738	De Pusey v. Du Pont	1248
Deming Inv. Co. v. Shaw-		Dennison, Ex parte	21	Derby v. Derby	2067
nee F. Ins. Co.	2434	v. Barney	2408	De Remer v. Anderson	2473
v. Wallace	2416	v. Page	2063	v. Parker	1873
Deming Ladies Hospital		v. People	987	De Renzes v. His Wife	1382
Ass'n v. Price	1078	v. State	347	Derham v. Derham	2340
Deminger v. McConnell	1189	Denny, Re	2577	Derinza, Re	18, 1382, 1644
Democrat P. Co. v.		v. Dana	253	De Rosaz' Goods	2473, 2474
Lewis	1384	v. Pinney	1312	Derosia v. Loree	2451
Demombreun v. Walker	1291	v. Sayward	1416	Derr v. Greenwalt	2048
De Montague v. Bacha-		v. State	987	Derrick v. Harwood Elec-	
rach	1066	Densler v. Edwards	584	tric Co.	2494
De Moss v. U. S.	290	Denslow v. Fowler	1858	v. Sams	2465
Dempsey v. Goldstein		Denson v. Denson	2098	v. Wallace	1106
B. A. Co.	282, 969	Dent v. Bellows Falls &		v. Whitman A. Co.	1657
De Mund v. State	133	S. R. St. R. Co.	792	Derring v. Winona Har-	
Den v. Allen	1304	v. Hertford	2352	vester Works	2498
v. Clark	1671	v. Portwood	334	Derry v. Great Hive	4c
v. Downam	98	v. R. Co.	1943	Derry Bank v. Webster	2408
v. M'Allister	1203, 1212,	v. State	1966, 2512	De Rutzen v. Farr	1472
	2354	Denton v. Com.	59	De Saily v. Morgan	1040
v. Mayfield	1312	v. Foute	1219, 1680	De Sandro v. Missoula	
v. Pickett	1779	v. Jackson	1898	L. & W. Co.	556
v. Vancleve	496, 505,	v. Mammoth S. E.		Desborough v. Rawlins	2312
	1738, 1820	L. & P. Co.	2509	Desbrack v. State	199
v. Vreelandt	2169	v. Perry	1086	Desha's Adm'rs v. Har-	
v. Wright	1943	v. Peters	2445	rison Co.	2450
Denbeigh v. Oregon-		v. Smith	463	Deshon v. Ins. Co.	1124
Washington Nav. Co.	65	v. State	1750	Desmarchier v. Frost	283, 2509
Denbo v. Wright	2336	Denunzio's Receiver v.		Des Moines v. Casady	1248
Dench v. Dench	112	Scholtz	2310, 2311	Des Moines S. Bank v.	
Denham v. Com.	177, 2350	Denver v. Spencer	2451, 2509	Colfax H. Co.	1877
Denins v. State	1404	Denver & R. G. R. Co.		Desnoyer v. McDonald	1201
Denison's Appeal	1738	v. Burchard	461	Desnoyers Shoe Co. v.	
Deniston v. Hoagland	610	v. Glasscott	379	First Nat'l Bank	2165
Denker v. State	1270, 2276	v. Roller	682, 792, 1976	De Sobry v. De Laistre	905,
Denman v. Brennamen	2438	v. Scott	1958		1018, 2164



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
De Sonora v. Bankers' M. C. Co.	690, 1697	De Yampert v. State	19	Dickson v. Bamberger	655
Despan v. Swindler	2578	Deybel's Case	2575	v. Lodge	1525
Destrehan v. Lumber Co.	2440	De Yoe v. Seattle Elec. Co.	2509	v. M'Farlane	1188
De Thoren v. Attorney-General	1602, 2505	De Yoe's Estate, Re	2065	v. Mfg. Co.	2442
Detroit v. Brennan	1960	Deyton's Will	1302	v. Pinch	1890
Detroit & M. R. Co. v. Van Steinburg	199, 571, 655, 1888, 1890	Diamant v. Colloty	1555	v. State	1842
Detroit C. R. Co. v. Mills	1908	Diamond v. Perry	1347	v. Waldron	500
Detroit Post Co. v. McArthur	406	v. State	1356	v. Wilton	2378
Detweiler v. Groff	571, 1976	Diamond B. C. Co. v. Cuthbertson	2507, 2552	v. Zizinia	2430
Detzur v. Brewing Co.	681, 1951	Diamond Distilleries Co. v. Gott	2418	Diebold S. & L. Co. v. Holt	716
Deupree v. Deupree	1512	Diamond Glue Co. v. Wietzychowski	747	Diehl v. Rogers	523
Devenbagh v. Devenbagh	1697, 1700, 2067, 2220	Diamond Rubber Co. v. Harryman	283, 458	v. State	1969, 2115
Devencenzi v. Cassinelli	2432, 2498	Diaz v. U. S.	18, 1398, 1399	Diener v. Diener	1810
Dever v. Silver	2520	Diaz' Estate v. Diaz' Estate	1606	v. Schley	1213
v. State	1070	Dibble v. Morris	1681	Dierkes v. U. S.	367c
Devereux's Estate	2517	v. Nash	341	Diers v. Mallon	2554
Devine v. Brunswick B. C. Co.	1671	Dick v. Albers	2503	Dieterle v. Bekin	2508
v. Delano	2509	v. Balch	1225	Dietrich v. Dietrich	64
v. Rand	364	v. Hyer	2337, 2340	v. Kettering	16
Devlin v. Crocker	1873	v. State,		Dietz v. State	363
Devling v. Williamson	661, 2158, 2373	107 Md.	18	Dietzel v. State	1124
Devoll v. Brownell	2222, 2223	30 Miss.	2056	Diffenderfer v. Scott	917
Devonshire v. Neill	1588, 1594	Okl. Cr., 205 Pac.	1442	Diffey v. State	2528
v. Peters	1874	v. Supreme Body	4e, 2380	Diffin v. Dow	681
Devoto v. Com.	326	v. Zimmermann	1890	Digby v. People	1362
Devries v. Phillips	289, 1779	Dickason v. State	1442	v. Stedman	735, 748, 1518
De Wald v. Ingle	1944	Dicken v. Johnson	1938	Diggins v. Hartshorne	2575
De Warren v. State	2595	Dickens v. Winter	1523	Diggins' Estate, Re	694, 695, 1548
Dewdney v. Palmer	586	Dickenson v. Fitchburg	655, 672	Diggs v. Downing	1082
Deweese v. Colorado Co.	2576	Dickerman v. Graves	610, 2237	v. Kurtz	2465
v. Ins. Co.	2434	Dickerson v. Burke	1807	v. U. S.	2056, 2276
De Weese v. People	64	v. State	278, 852	Dighton v. Holt	2250
Dewein v. State	689	v. Talbot	1195, 1212, 1225, 1226, 1651, 2141, 2196	Dike v. Polhill	1658
Dewey v. Algire	1671	Dickey v. Grice	2446	Dikes v. Miller	1219
v. Dewey	1302	v. Malechi	2052, 2106	Dill v. State,	
v. Hotchkiss	2118	v. State	278, 987, 2277	106 Ga.	1157, 1750
v. Williams	437, 463, 1021, 1168	Dickie v. Carter	1737, 1738	1 Tex. App.	2059, 2236
De Whelpdale v. Milburn	1082	Dickinson v. Barber	1938	Dillard v. Jones	2477
Dewit v. Greenfield	66, 73, 74, 209	v. Boston	1576	v. Samuels	1890
Dewitt v. Barley,		v. Breeden	1189, 1225	v. Scruggs	1777
13 Barb.	1934	v. Clarke	1212	v. State	457, 568, 1160, 1896, 1974, 1977
9 N. Y.	568, 689, 1934, 1938	v. Coward	1060	v. U. S.	309, 1021
v. Berry	2434	v. Dickinson,		Dilleber v. Ins. Co.	266
v. Skinner	1890	9 Metc.	529, 1061, 1062	Dillin v. People	280, 293
De Wolf v. Strader	2297	61 Pa.	1938	Dillman v. McDanel	229, 232, 664
De Woody v. State	63	P. 198	2220	Dillon, Re	2191, 2372
Dexter v. Booth	1554, 2237, 2336, 2341	v. Dustin	987, 1270	v. Anderson	581
v. Hall	681	v. Kansas C. E. R. Co.	2220	v. Bell	1020
		v. M'Craw	1215, 1681	v. Crawly	1300
		v. Shee	911, 915	v. Dillon	2239
		v. Smith	2143, 2144	v. Harris	2452
		v. State	56	v. Mattox	1678
				v. Pinch	905
				v. State	2079
				v. U. S.	2184
				Dillon's Case	2372
				Dilworth v. Dilworth	1056
				Diman v. R. Co.	2415, 2417

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Dimenstein v. Richardson	2220	Dixon v. People	2203	Deo v. Austin	1082
Dimmick v. Collins	392	v. Pluns	2354, 2509	v. Barnes	2535
v. Downs	62, 200, 571, 923, 987	v. R. Co.	1576	v. Barton	1492
v. U. S.	392	v. State,		v. Benjamin	2465
Dimmick P. Co. v. Wood	1966	139 Ala.	1976	v. Benson	2470
Dimond v. Henderson	291	13 Fla.	106, 1440	v. Benyon	2145
Dinan v. Supreme		86 Ga.	905	v. Beviss	17, 1465, 1472
Council	1487	113 Ga.	838, 2059	v. Biggers	1194, 1195, 1213, 1257, 1268
Dinges v. Branson	233	46 Nebr.	390	v. Biggs	1072
Dingle v. Bowman	1225, 1318	v. Thatcher	1651, 1684	v. Bird	2593
Dinquel v. Dacco	615	v. Union Ironworks	1081	v. Blanche	1256
Dinsmore v. State	770	v. Vale	2276	v. Bray	1633, 1646
Dionne v. American Ex-		Dixon-Woods Co. v.		v. Brown	1378
press Co.	93	Glass Co.	2442	v. Burdett	1292, 1311, 2145
Di Palma v. Weinman	1198	Dizon v. Ullman	1606	v. Burt	2465
Di Prisco v. Wilmington		Doak v. Johnson	1086	v. Burton	1471
C. R. Co.	1750	Doan v. State	2273, 2513	v. Calvert	1072
Director of Pub. Pros.		Doane v. Farrow	1257	v. Campbell	2144
v. Blady	2239	v. Glenn	18	v. Cartwright,	
Director-General of R.		v. Grew	406	3 B. & Ald.	2429
R. v. Johnston	455, 2509	v. Marquisee	715	Ry. & M.	1465, 1640
Dirilo v. Roperes	2012	Dobbin v. Cordiner	2419	v. Catomore	2525
Dishazer v. Maitland	2141	Dobbins v. Little Rock		v. Chichester	2463, 2470
Dismukes v. Musgrove,		R. & E. Co.	811	v. Clifford	1194, 1212, 1650, 2211
7 Mart.	1513	Dobbs v. Justices	1186, 2167	v. Cockell	1210
8 Mart.	1085, 1313, 2108	v. State	73	v. Cole	1082, 1214, 1268
v. State	1745, 1747	Dobson v. Crew	2190	v. Connolly	1878
v. Tolson	1554, 1560	v. Finley	1582	v. Cooke	2522
Di Sora v. Phillipps	1271, 1953	v. Graham	2212	v. Cox	1842
Disque v. State	1890	v. Laval	1675	v. Daniel	2525
D'Israeli v. Jowett	1641	v. Southern R. Co.	18	v. Date	2211, 2222
Distad v. Shanklin	1236, 2154	v. Whisenant	791, 1665	v. Davies	704, 1484, 2006, 2550
Distin v. Rose	406	Dock v. Com.	246	v. Deakin,	
District of Columbia		Doctor Jack v. Terr.	1913	4 B. & Ald.	2531
v. Armes	252, 458, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497	Dodd v. Kemnitz	2410	3 C. & P.	1297, 1311, 2138, 2145
v. Bakersmith	2219	v. Norris	75, 76, 210, 986, 1106, 2257	v. Derby	1388
v. Dietrich	1750	v. State,		v. Dring	2462
v. Duryee	1161	92 Ala.	367	v. Durnford	1248
v. Flagg	1842	88 Miss.	905	v. Edmondson	254, 1587
v. Haller	568, 1951	Dodder v. Aetna Life Ins.		v. Egremont	2196
v. White	688	Co.	2510	v. Eslava	157, 1219, 2139, 2141
v. Woodbury	18	Dodge v. Bache	728	v. Evans,	
Dittman v. Cornelius	2529	v. Carroll	2354	1 Blackf.	1458
Ditto v. Slaughter	261	v. Freedman's S. & T.		3 C. & P.	1062, 1406
Ditton v. Hart	681	Co.	1082, 1084, 1257	v. Fleming	2083
Dittrich v. Detroit	2384	v. Haskell	309	v. Ford,	
Divers v. Fulton	1208	v. Hollinshead	1347	3 A. & E.	2456
Dix v. Atkins	1201, 1203	v. The King	1908	3 U. C. Q. B.	667, 1493
v. State	1890	v. Rush	398	v. Forster	1072
Dixon v. Barclay	1248	v. State,		v. Foster	1387
v. Doe	1225, 1651	24 N. J. L.	2043	v. France	1632, 1646
v. Ins. Co.	2437	100 Wis.	667	v. Fraser	1082
v. Miller	2437	Dodson v. State	851, 2282	v. Galloway	2477
v. Monroe	1573	v. Watson	1073	v. Gatacre	1644
v. Niccolls	2581	Doe v. Adams	1415	v. Gilbert	21, 1958, 2500
v. Northern P. R. Co.	1750	v. Allen	2472	v. Green	1778
v. Orr	1214, 1351,	v. Andrews	2315	v. Grey	1204, 1208
v. Parmelee	2294	v. Arkwright,			
		2 A. & E.	1634, 1640		
		5 C. & P.	1778		
		v. Askew	157		
		v. Auldjo	1487		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Doe v. Griffin	1495, 1501, 2531	Doe v. Perkins	735, 749, 760	Doe v. Vowles	1464
v. Gwillim	2459	v. Pettett	1080, 1778	v. Wainwright,	
v. Harris,		v. Phelps	2141, 2144	1 Nev. & P.	1233,
5 C. & P.	2294,	v. Phillips	2139		1273, 1297
	2297, 2298	v. Pitt	2465	3 Nev. & P.	1076
7 C. & P.	1106, 1514	v. Pulman	157, 1232, 2139	v. Walker	1514
v. Harvey,		v. Randall	1484, 1486, 1489	v. Wallaston	1644
1 Moo. & Sc.	1246	v. Reagan	1028, 1938	v. Watkins	2296, 2308,
1 Ry. & Moo.	1489	v. Reynolds	1244		2312
v. Hemming	1297	v. Richards	1063	v. Webster	2465
v. Henry	2141	v. Rickarby	1456, 1458	v. Westlake	2472
v. Hertford	2311, 2329	v. Rideout	1651	v. Whitefoot	232
v. Hindson	582, 1304	v. Ridgeway	1033, 1362	v. Wilkins	1297
v. Hiscocks	2474	v. Ries	1207	v. Wilkinson	1031, 1035
v. Hodgson	1210	v. Roberts,		v. Williams	1778
v. Holmes	1225	2 Chitty	20	v. Wilson	1994, 2018
v. Holtom	2470	13 M. & W.	378, 1218,	v. Winn	1196, 1224, 1225,
v. Hubbard	2467, 2471		1223, 1224,		1239
v. Huthwaite	2477		1653, 1665	v. Wittcomb	1465
v. Jack	2105	v. Robson	1471, 1476	v. Wollaston	1646
v. Jersey	2463	v. Roe,		v. Wolley	1311, 2138
v. Jesson	2531	2 Camp	783	v. Wombwell	1072
v. Johnson,		1 E. & B.	1858, 1859a	v. Wood	1514
3 Ill.	1318	13 Fla.	1684	v. Young	2535
18 N. J. L.	2234, 2235	16 Ga.	2016	Doe d. Hollis v. Stevens	1676a
v. Joinville	2473	31 Ga.	2141	Doe d. Tatham v. Wright	228,
v. Jones	1080, 1458, 1476	1 John.	2067		1304
v. Keeling	2139	v. Ross,		Doggett v. Simms	987, 1270,
v. Kelly	2200	5 All.	1065		2110
v. Kemp	378	7 M. & W.	1180, 1268,	Doheny v. Lacy	2312, 2503
v. Kennedy	1225		2307	Doherty v. Gilmore	1738
v. Kilner	1224	v. Samples	2139	v. Hazelwood Co.	2510a
v. King	1677, 1678	v. Savoy	1681, 2500	v. Hill	2465
v. Knight	2408	v. Seaton	1082, 1640, 2211,	v. O'Callaghan	2314
v. Langdon	2211, 2307		2307	v. Thayer	1680
v. Langfield	21, 1458, 1471	v. Servos	1481, 1490	Dohmen Co. v. Ins. Co.	1012,
v. Lyford	2462	v. Sisson	380		1530, 2498
v. M'Caleb	1195, 1239	v. Spitty	1208	Doidge v. Mimms	2065
v. McLean	1651	v. Stacey	1472	Doker v. Hasle	2341
v. McWilliams	1645	v. Stevens	136, 287,	Dolan v. Boott Cotton	
v. Marr	166, 1605		1651, 1676	Mills	464
v. Martin	2470	v. Stiles	2105, 2143	v. Henry	1938, 1975
v. Mason	379	v. Strong	2531	v. M. R. F. L. Ass'n	792,
v. Mew	1238	v. Suckermore	694, 695,		2529
v. Minge	1354		702, 704, 709,	v. State,	
v. Moore	1085		1993, 1994, 1997,	81 Ala.	925
v. Morris,			1998, 1999, 2000,	40 Ark.	1404
3 A. & E.	1202, 1203		2002, 2006, 2007,	Dolbear v. Gulf Prod.	
12 East	1246, 1447		2012, 2017, 2026	Co.	1779
v. Murray,		v. Sybourn	1065	Dolbeer's Estate	21, 569, 676,
1 All.	1666	v. Tarver	704, 1993, 2006		689, 905, 1081,
3 Kerr	1567, 1802	v. Taylor	2463		1115, 1415, 1416
v. Needs	2472	v. Thomas,		Dolder v. Lord Hunting-	
v. Nepean	2531	9 B. & C.	2307	field	2574
v. Nevers	1301	14 East	1587	Dole v. Allen	1674
v. Newton	1994, 2001,	v. Thynne	1472, 2144	v. Johnson	561, 678, 1691,
	2015, 2017	v. Todd	1257		1696
v. Palmer	112, 1736, 2525	v. Turford	1518, 1523, 1526	v. Wooldredge	1896, 2115
v. Passingham	1311, 1388,	v. Turnbull	1311, 2143, 2145	Doll v. Equitable Life	
	2141, 2145	v. Twigg	1292, 1306, 1309,	Ass. Soc'y	5
v. Pearce	2139		1313, 1316	Dollarhide v. Parks	1225
v. Pearson	1246, 2447	v. Tyler,		Dollner v. Lintz	1618
v. Pembroke	1073	6 Bing.	21	Dolph v. L. S. & M. S.	
v. Perkes	1737	4 Moo. & P.	1465	R. Co.	1404, 2509

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Domenig, Re	2235	Donovan v. Connecticut		Dosch v. Diem	1867
Dominges v. State	1398	Co.	2494	Dossett v. Miller	1126, 1128
Dominici v. U. S.	2572	v. Driscoll	581	v. St. Paul & T. L. Co.	208,
Dominici's Estate	2314, 2474	v. R. Co.,			461, 969
Dominick v. Randolph	568,	65 Conn.	2509	Dost Aly Khan, Goods of	690
	689, 1938, 1958	158 Mass.	1530	Doster v. Brown	715
Dominion Fish Co. v.		v. Richmond	1807	Dotson v. Louisiana Cen-	
Isbester	2509	v. St. Joseph's Home	2500	tral L. Co.	2509
Domschke v. R. Co.	1339	v. Selinas	1072	v. Moss	1225, 2143
Domville v. Ferguson	1066,	v. Terr.	2578	v. State	988
	1388	Donovan's Estate	1738	Dotterer v. State	949, 987,
Don v. Lippman	5	Don Yook v Milling Co.	2433		1005, 1270
Donahue v. Coleman	382	Dooley v. Baynes	1460	Dotton v. Albion,	
v. Donahue	2526	v. Van Hohenstein	1351	50 Mich.	252
v. Johnston	2319	Doolittle v. McConnell	2432	57 Mich.	252, 2390
Donald v. Mitchell	2308	v. State	397, 2338	Doty v. Wilson	586
Donaldson v. Boston	252	v. Stone	1557, 2118	Doud v. Guthrie	1164
v. Com.	2079	Doon v. Donaher	1210	Dougan v. Champlain	
v. Donaldson	2046	v. Ravey	1062	Co.	283, 458
v. Great Northern R.		Door v. Geary	2477	Douge v. Pearce	2097
Co.	2377	Dorak v. State	2512	Dougherty v. Milliken	1951
v. Jude	2051	Doran v. McConlogue	1938	v. Posegate	2119
v. N. Y. N. H. & H. R.		v. Mullen	770, 778	v. Swett	1271
Co.	1018	v. Shaw	2349, 2354	v. White	392
v. R. Co.	1698, 1873, 1874	v. State	905	Doughton v. Tillay	2158,
Doncaster v. Day	735, 1330	Dore v. Babcock	987		2164
Donegan v. Wade	1195, 1219	Dorff v. Schmunk	1573	Douglas v. Bank	1350
v. Wood	1633, 2165	Dorian v. Dorian	2526	v. Bolinger	2477
Donehoo v. Johnson	2477	Dorin v. Dorin	2463	v. Douglas	1044
Donellan v. Donellan	2046	Dorlan v. Westervitch	1956,	v. Leighton	1672
v. Hardy	1273, 1684		1966, 2132	v. State	784
Donelson v. Taylor	586	Dormady v. State Bank	1195	v. Terr.	1013
Don Francisco, The	2212	Dorman v. Ames	451, 1678	Douglas L. Co. v. Thayer	1566
Donk Bros. C. & C. Co.		v. State	1405, 2579	Douglas Peerage Case	166,
v. Stroetter	616	Dormer v. Thurland	1302		1431
v. Stroff	1951	Dormoy's Goods	1674	Douglass v. Agne	1616, 1800,
Donkin v. The Chicago		Dorn & McGinty v.			2349, 2354
Maru	811	Cooper	1871	v. Eyre	1641
Donkle v. Kohn	1820	Dorough v. Equitable		v. Hart	1554, 1561
Donlan v. Clark	2508	M. Co.	2581	v. Insurance Co.	285
Donley v. Dougherty	949	Dorr v. Atlantic S. L. R.		v. K. & M. R. Co.	2566
v. E. D. & B. C. R. Co.	2496	Co.	1750	v. Mitchell	41
Donnan v. Donnan	2336,	v. Fenno	2349, 2354, 2356	v. Sanderson	1709
	2337	v. Mass. Title Co.	763	v. State	2513
Donnell v. Jones	770	v. Midelburg	2408	v. Tousey	73, 692
Donnellan's Estate	2474	v. School District	1257,	Douglass & Varnum v.	
Donnelley v. Terr.	1821		1676	Morrisville	2465, 2556
v. U. S.	1476, 1477	Dorr Cattle Co. v. Chi-		Douston v. State	1800, 1802
Donnelly v. Chicago City		cago & G. W. R. Co.	2153,	Douthitt v. Terr.	2513
R. Co.	663		2580	Dove v. State,	
v. Donnelley's Heirs	2083	Dorrance v. Dearborn		37 Ark.	347
v. Fitch	1951	Power Co.	747	3 Heisk.	1938, 2085
v. R. Co.	1976, 1921	Dorrity's Will, Re	2052	Dover v. Greenwood	1415, 1417
v. Smith	607	Dorset v. Girdler	1395, 1417	v. Harrell	2307
v. State	1072, 1431, 1435,	Dorsey v. Clapp	258	v. Maestaer	523, 1245
	1439, 1442, 1443,	v. Dorsey	1082	v. State	821
	1445, 1890	v. Habersack	792	v. Winchester	68a, 142, 201
Donner v. Palmer,		v. State,		Dovey v. Lam	609
23 Cal.	2354	107 Ala.	1157	Dovich v. Chief Consol.	
31 Cal.	1239	110 Ala.	293	Mining Co.	2383, 2416
v. State	657, 749	108 Ga.	59	Dow v. Beidelman	1350
Donoho v. Petit	803	34 Tex.	246, 247	v. Bulfinch	460
Donohoo v. Brannon	2168	v. U. S.	331	v. Julien	1951
Donohue v. McNulty	1664	v. Warfield	1938	v. Sawyer	523, 1525



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Dow v. Tuttle	2444	Doyle v. London Guarant-		Dreyspring v. Loeb	787
v. Weare	458	tee & A. Co.	2270	Driggers v. U. S.	1126, 1128,
Dow's Ex'r v. Spenny's		v. Mizner	1680		1129, 1405, 1605,
Ex'r	87	v. R. Co.,			1604, 2060, 2061
Dowagiac Mfg. Co. v.		42 Minn.	458, 461	Drinkwater v. Porter	1584,
Lochren	2195, 2200,	128 N. Y.	451, 462		1588, 1595
	2210	v. Singer S. M. Co.	795	Driscoll v. Fall River	249
v. Watson	95	v. Sleeper	1086	v. People	987, 1005, 1021,
Dowd v. Atlas T. & A.		v. State	969, 2061		1117, 1142, 1270
S. Co.	2509	v. U. S.	1079	Drish v. Davenport	75, 210,
Dowdell v. U. S.	1398	v. Wilcockson	1700,		1362
Dowden v. Wilson,			2257, 2281a	Driver v. Driver	1730, 2340
71 Ill.	1225	v. Wiley	1195, 1387	v. King	1960
108 Ill.	1195	Dozier v. Joyce	1007	v. Lanier	2529
Dowdy v. Watson	585, 587	v. McWhorter	1779	v. State	2073
Dowell v. State	18, 41	v. State	2183, 2264	Drohn v. Brewer	1890
Dowie v. Driscoll	21, 1738	Drabble v. Donner	1208	Droney v. Doherty	437, 2509
v. Priddle	73, 207	Drach v. Kamberg	1911	Droop v. Ridenhour	1681,
Dowie's Estate	2321	Draggoo v. Graham	1681		2433
Dowler, In re	1521	Dragovich v. Iroquois		Droppers v. Marshall	2473
Dowley v. Winfield	2531	Iron Co.	1350	Drosdowski v. Chosen	
Dowling v. Dowling,		Drake v. Drake,		Friends	1382, 2110
10 Ir. C. L.	89	4 Dev. L.	1662	Drown v. Oderkirk	15, 2416
116 Mich.	2240	8 H. L. C.	2474	Drowne v. Stimpson	1141
v. Feeley	2111	v. Henly	529	Druce v. Denison	2463
v. State	194, 363	v. Holbrook	1070	Druce's Case	2216
Down v. Ellis	2065	v. Kinsell	1267, 1273	Drucker v. P. Co.	462
v. Murphey	1985	v. Ramey	1195	Drughorn v. Rederiaktie-	
Downer v. Baxter	2354	v. State,		bolaget Transatlantic	2438
v. Button	1062	110 Ala.	106, 2115	Druhe H. L. Co. v. Fish-	
v. Dana	1026, 1027, 1028,	74 Ga.	2264	bein	2388
	1031	Drakeford v. Adams	2498	Druin v. Com.	1841
v. Morrison	1558	Draper v. Clemens	1269	Drum v. Harrison	1867
v. Rowell	736, 2098	v. Com.	2512	Drumm v. Cessnum	1275,
Downes v. Mooreman	1177,	v. Cotting	461		1681
	1223	v. Crofts	1073	Drummond v. Henderson	75
v. Society	581	v. Douglass	1778	v. Leslie	2354
Downey v. Dillon	66, 406	v. Draper	505, 1821	Drumright v. State	1071
v. Guilfoyle	2498, 2503	v. Hatfield	1062, 1225	Drury v. Hervey	1072
v. Murphy	987, 1985,	v. Horton	1062	v. Midland R. Co.	1573,
	2421	v. Vanhorn	2442		1587, 1592
v. Sawyer	283	Draughn v. State	936	v. Terr.	905, 1051
v. State	57	Dravo v. Fabel	6, 908, 916	Druse v. Wheeler	396, 2535
Downing v. Buck	1971	Draycott v. Talbot	2529	Dryden v. Barnes	747
v. Butcher	258	Drayton v. Wells	1362, 1408	Drysdale's Succession	2452
v. Farmers' M. F. Ins.		Drazen v. New Haven		Dubach v. Jolly	1302
Co.	2570	Taxicab Co.	19, 987	Du Barré v. Livette	2290,
v. Gallagher	1257	Drda v. Drda	2529		2294, 2317
v. Pickering	157, 1267	Drefahl v. Security Sav.		Dubé v. R.	2509
v. Plate	291	Bank	1461	Dublin Election Case	2287
Downing's Will	2314	Dreher v. Fitchburg	20	Dublin, etc. R. Co. v.	
Downs v. Belden	1083	Drennen v. Lindsey	916, 1028	Slattery	2495, 2552
v. Blount	7	Dresbrack v. State	221	Dubois, In re	1700
v. Downs	1312, 1320	Dresch v. State	2089	v. Baker	93, 570,
v. Horton	2520	Dresden v. Bridge	2427		2012, 2016,
v. Lyman	1082, 1778	Dresler v. Hard	2025		2024, 2027
v. R. Co.	736, 749, 750	Drew v. Drew	1644	v. Ferrand	2232
v. Swann	2265	v. New River Co.	1949	v. People	321
Dowzelot v. Rawlings	1066	v. Sutton	1722	Dubois' Case	1407, 2372
Doxon v. Haigh	2223	v. Tarbell	2336	Du Bose v. Conner	289
Doyal v. State	248	v. Wadleigh	1291	v. State	1977
Doyle v. Bradford	2572	v. Wood	950	Dubose v. State,	
v. Burns	1014	Drewson v. Hartje P. M.		120 Ala.	1442
v. Doyle	1356	Co.	1684	13 Tex. App.	1840

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Dubose v. State,		Dumangue v. Daniels	233,	Dunham v. Simmons	1943
10 Tex. Cr.	140		382	v. State	1836
Du Bost v. Beresford	266,	Dumas v. Clayton	907, 916	Dunham's Appeal	394, 679,
	1715	v. Hunter	1206		1938, 1951
Ducharne v. Holyoke St.		v. State,		Dunk v. State	905, 1043
R. Co.	1010	62 Ga.	1442, 1451	Dunkin v. Hoquiam	1674,
Duckham v. Wallis	1080,	63 Ga.	821		2180
	1083, 1084	Okl. Cr. 201 Pac.	391	Dunklee v. Prior	16, 2550
Duckworth v. Duck-		14 Tex. App.	2086,	Dunklee v. Goodnough	2441
worth	2065		2241	Dunlap v. Berry	1275
Ducoign v. Schreppel	1539,	Dumbach v. Bishop	2336	v. Griffith	1779
	1549	Dummer v. Chippenham	2257	v. Hearn	619, 1960
Ducommun v. Hysinger	1681	Dunafon v. Barber	1051	v. Hopkins	747, 754
Dudley v. Beck	2298	Dunahugh's Will	785, 1736,	v. Richardson	905
v. Bolles	1126, 1127		2500	v. State	1387, 1398, 2506
v. Chilton Co.	1640	Dunaway v. School Di-		v. Waldo	1674, 2164
v. Grayson	1680	rectors	1085	Dunlavey v. Watson	2354
v. McCluer	64	Dunbar v. Com.	2354	Dunlop v. Berry	758, 759,
v. Niswander	1058	v. De Groff	1382		760
v. State	2376	v. McGill	1777	v. Higgins	95
v. Sumner	1312, 1316	v. Madden	1308, 1312	v. Patterson	527, 1010, 1015
v. Wardner	1267, 2106	v. Meek	905, 916	v. Servas	1491
Dudleys v. Dudleys	2049	v. Parks	1910	v. U. S.	95, 2511
Dudly's Case	1644	v. U. S.	1203, 1236	Dunmore v. State	1807
Duer v. Allen	1951		1256, 2132	Dunn v. Adams	2165
Duff v. Duff	1066	Dunbarton v. Franklin	7	v. Amos	2303
Dufferin and Claney-		Duncan, Re	1350, 2577	v. Aslett	901, 905
boye Peerage	1644	v. Atchison T. & S. F.		v. Choate	1196
Duffey v. Presbyterian		R. Co.	1951	v. Com.	894
Congregation	1777	v. Beard	1311, 2141,	v. Dunn	1038, 1415
v. Scientific A. C.			2522	v. Dunnaker	905
Dept.	2437	v. Blair	1239, 1275	v. Eaton	1778, 2522
Duffield v. Brindley	1651	v. Carson	1893, 2200	v. Gibson	2061
v. Morris' Ex'r	228, 1738,	v. Duncan,		v. Hall	2354
	1938, 2500	23 Ill.	1303	v. People,	
v. Mutual Life Ins.		1 Watts	1676	40 Ill.	367
Co.	2531	v. Eagle Rock G. M.		172 Ill.	784, 1033, 1450
Duffin v. People	797, 1229	& R. Co.	2477	29 N. Y.	527, 1010,
v. Smith	2294, 2297	v. Gibbs	1297, 2121		1015, 2056, 2060
Duffy v. People	859	v. Grand Rapids	252	v. Pipes	1898
Dufresne v. Weise	692, 1046,	v. Landis	2232	v. Price	2446
	1983	v. McCullough	1878	v. Salt Lake & O. R.	
Dugan v. Arthurs	571	v. Scott	1677	Co.	252
v. Bay State St. R. Co.	1354,	v. Seeley	762	v. State,	
	1976, 2506	v. State,		143 Ala.	247, 396
v. Com.	569, 833, 861, 2071	97 Ga.	1011	2 Ark.	390, 1329, 1442
v. Mahoney	736, 747, 754	171 Ind.	111	99 Ga.	2269
v. Simas	4c	40 Tex. Cr.	398	162 Ind.	20, 987
v. State	1878	v. Vancouver	2296	166 Ind.	2497
Dugger v. Collins	1651	v. Watson	1481	58 Nebr.	2061
v. Oglesby	1195	Dunck v. Milwaukee Co.	1373	45 Oh. St.	1135, 1138
Duhme v. Hamburg-		Duncombe v. Daniell	15,	118 Wis.	2272
Amer. Packet Co.	2509		1807	v. Welsh	5
Duke v. Com.	111, 1021	v. Prindle	1350, 1662	v. Whitney	1537, 1538,
v. Taylor	2573	Dundas v. Lansing	252, 458,		1541
Duke of Portland's Case	2216		1722	v. Wolf	1879
Dukehart v. Caughman	2498	Dundovich v. State	1845	Dunn, Matter of	2572
Dukes v. Davis	905	Dungan v. State	987, 1808	Dunnaway v. State	2349
v. State,		Dunham v. Averill	2463	Dunne v. Park Com'rs	855
11 Ind.	63, 246	v. Chicago	2373	Dunning v. R. Co.	455, 2591
80 Miss.	1387, 1398	v. Cox	1725	v. Rankin	1229
Duling v. Johnson	1432	v. Holmes	2421	v. West	7, 612
Dulligan v. Barber A. P.		v. McMichael	2155	Dunraven v. Llewellyn	1587
Co.	451	v. Rackliff	65, 249	Dunscombe v. State	357



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-24; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-

	Section		Section		Section
Dunston Lithograph Co.		Durrence v. Northern		Dyson v. State	
v. Borgo	2416	Nat'l Bank	661, 1676	v. Wood	
Duntley v. Inman	571	Durst v. Masters	792		E
Dunwoody v. State	579	v. State	1144	Eacock v. State	280, 352,
Dupays v. Shepherd	1684	Dusenberry v. Abbott	1681	Eade v. Jacobs	1856a,
Dupree v. Chicago H. S.		Dusepec v. Torres	1777	v. Lingwood	1364,
Co.	1195	Dushane v. Benedict	568,		
Du Perow v. Groomes	754		1944	Eadie v. Chambers	
Dupey v. Ashby	1248	Dutch Flat W. Co. v.		Eads v. State	788, 987,
Dupilas v. Cabacungan	2439	Mooney	2580		
Duplessis v. Attorney-		Dutcher v. Howard	15	v. Woodbridge	
General	2256	Dutchess Co. Bank v.		Eady v. Shivey	1648,
v. Kennedy	1336	Ibbotson	2427	Eagan v. Connelly	
v. Miller	1651	Duthey v. State	1938, 2501,	Eagle & P. Mfg. Co. v.	
Duplex Printing Co. v.			2519	Browne	
Deering	2478	Dutillet v. Blanchard	1684	v. Welch	
Du Pont v. Davis	1502, 1503	Duttenhofer v. State	2327	Eagle Lake v. Ft. Kent	
Dupont v. Aybar	1606, 2527	Dutton v. Woodman	1073	Eagle-Picher Lead Co. v.	
v. Downing	1215	Duval v. Davey	2336	Mansfield Paint Co.	
Dupont de Nemours Co.		Du Vall v. Augusta	2582	Eagleton v. Coventry	
v. Kelly	2442	Duvall v. Ellis	1681	v. Kingston	694, 695
v. Smith	283	v. Griffith	406		1991,
Dupont de Nemours		Duval's Ex'r v. Darby	658,	Eagon v. Eagon	376,
Powder Co. v. Duboise	2509		728	Eakin v. Hawkins	
Dupré v. Desmaret	663	Du Vivier v. Phillips	1044	Eamer v. Merle	
v. Prescott	663	Dwelly v. Dwelly	2239	Eames v. Clark	
Dupree v. State,		Dwight v. Brown	1456, 1472	v. Eames	382
33 Ala.	194, 247, 692	v. Co. Com'rs	1943	v. Kaiser	
148 Ala.	1976	v. Macklam	2287	v. Whittaker	
10 Okl. Cr.	367	Dwight & Lloyd S. Co.		Earl v. Lefler	
Dupuis v. Saginaw V. T.		v. American O. R. Co.	2463	v. Lewis	
Co.	1164, 2498	Dwinell v. Larrabee	1207	v. State	
Durant, In re	278, 1388	Dwyer v. Collins	1202, 1204,	v. Tupper	1722,
Durant v. Whitcher	2314		2309	v. Vass	
Durden v. Cleveland	1065	v. Dunbar	1213	Earl of Strafford's Trial	
Duren v. Kee	1335	Dyal v. Norton	1225, 1352,	Earle v. Earle	
v. Sinclair	1186		2596	v. Grout	2294,
v. Thomasville	2183, 2264	Dyar v. U. S.	321	v. Picken	1256,
Durfee v. Abbott	1644, 1646,	Dyas v. Southern P. Co.	283,	v. Rice	
	2529		458, 1951	Earley v. Winn	73, 74,
v. State	2512	Dye v. Dyer	233, 1757, 1963		
Durgin v. Danville	290, 1194,	v. Flint	2165	Earll v. People	
	2220	v. Fredericks	1233	Earls' Trial	1700,
v. Somers	1062	v. Hudson	1275	Earls' Trust, Re	
Durham v. Beaumont	1033,	v. Labor	785, 1770	Early v. Early	
	1109	v. Lowell	1216	Early's Case	830
v. Shannon	1777, 1779	v. Maine C. R. Co.	2505	Earnest v. Sargent	
v. Smith	2500	v. Marriott	1573	Earnhardt v. Clement	1
v. State	290, 951	v. Morris	1842		
Duringer v. Moschino	1207,	v. Rosenthal	720	Earnshaw v. Tomlinson	
	1234	v. Smith	1249, 1271, 2573	v. U. S.	
Durkee v. Leland	2219, 2294,	v. State	1878, 1879	Earp v. Edgington	
	2307, 2308, 2309	v. Union R. Co.	21, 199	v. State	
v. R. Co.,		v. U. S.	21	Easler v. R. Co.,	
69 Cal.	1750	v. Young	1738	59 S. C.	675,
29 Vt.	1236	Dy Keng v. Insular Col-		60 S. C.	
v. Winquist	2066	lector	1154	Easley v. Com.	
Durkin v. Cobleigh	2442	Dykes v. State	363, 1476	v. R. Co.	
Durnell v. Sowden	2008, 2016	Dymokey's Case	575	Eason v. Chapman	1985,
Durnford v. Clark	1888, 1890	Dysart v. Furrow	1554	East v. Chapman	
Durning v. Hastings	2505	v. U. S.	367a, 368	v. Pace	
D'Urphy v. Nelson	1664	Dysart Peerage Case	268,	East Dubuque v. Burhyte	
Durrell v. Bederley	1917,		1362, 1424, 1483		
	1920, 1947	Dyson v. R. Co.	437, 792		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
East & W. I. R. Co. v.		Eaton v. N. Y. C. &		Edgeworth v. Wood	2510a
Miller	1168	H. R. R. Co.	2509	Edgington v. Fitzmaurice	661
East India Co. v. Atkins	2256,	v. Rice	2097	v. Nixon	1858
	2275	v. Tallmadge	1490	Edie v. East India Co.	1954,
v. Campbell	2257, 2258,	v. Tel. Co.	377		2580
	2260	Eaton Chemical Co. v.		Edinburgh A. L. M. Co.	
v. Kynaston	1862, 2221	Doherty	747	v. Peoples	1347
v. Neave	2257	Eaves v. Henderson	2436, 2441	Edinburgh Life Ass. Co.	
East Kingston v. Towle	68a,	Ebbs, In re	522	v. Y.	321
	201	Eberhart v. State,		Edington v. Aetna L.	
East Line & R. R. Co. v.		40 Ga.	860	Ins. Co.	2381, 2382,
Scott	250	47 Ga.	21, 1867, 1878		2383, 2384
East Pa. R. Co. v.		Eberle v. Board	1665	v. M. L. Ins. Co.	7a, 266,
Hiester	463, 1943	Eberson v. Continental Ins.			2380, 2383, 2384,
v. Hottenstine	1943	Co.	747		2386, 2387, 2388
East Tenn. & Tel. Co. v.		v. Investment Co.	759	Edison El. L. Co. v. U.S.	
Simms' Adm'r	1078	Ebert v. Metropolitan		El. L. Co.	2125, 2200, 2219,
East Tenn. & W. N. C. R.		St. R. Co.	1031, 1263		2307, 2319, 2377
Co. v. Lindamood	41, 2508	Eborn v. Zimpelmann	797,	Edisto Phos. Co. v.	
East Tenn. V. & G. R.			2016	Stanford	1278
Co. v. Culler	285	Ebos v. State	689	Edleman v. Edleman	2536
v. Daniel	1005	Eby v. Travelers' Ins.		Edmister v. Garrison	2354
v. Hall	2509	Co.	1722, 1750	Edmiston v. Schwartz	1677
v. Hesters	456, 2509	v. Winters	1225, 1415	Edmonds v. Edmonds	2067
v. Kane	97, 290	Eccles v. Shackelford	406	v. Monongahela V. T.	
v. Maloy	1432	Eckman v. Funderburg	18,	Co.	2509
v. Smith	1719		561, 1938	v. Rowe	1818
v. Watson	791	Eckman Chem. Co. v. Chi-		v. State	390
v. Wright	1951	cago & N. W. R. Co.	2508	v. Walter	779
Eastabrooks v. Prentiss	616	Echols v. State	111, 716	Edmondson v. Birch	1856b,
Eastern Advertising Co.		v. Staunton	1389		1859
v. Patch Co.	2434a	Eck v. Hatcher	2218	v. Lovell	1318, 1651
Eastern Dynamite Co. v.		Eckels & S. I. M. Co. v.		Edmonson v. R. Co.	1415
Keystone P. M. Co.	1225	Cornell E. Co.	1700, 1861,	v. State	833
Eastern Kansas Oil Co.			2125	Edmonston v. Hughes	1311,
v. Bentner	2195	Eckert v. Century F. Ins.			1511, 1513,
Eastern Texas R. Co. v.		Co.	2415		1676, 2141
Scurlock	1041	v. State	821	Edmunds v. State	1684
Eastham v. Riedell	461	v. Triplett	1081	Edrington v. Harper	2437
Eatis v. Montgomery	230	Eckford v. Berry	2437	Education, etc., of the	
Eastland v. Caldwell	73	v. Eckford	2477	Royal Family	1598
v. Jordan	1649, 1651	Eckhout v. Cole	784, 2304	Edwards v. Burke	969
Eastman v. Amoskeag		Eckles v. Bates	688, 1722	v. City National	
Mfg. Co.	1062	Eckstein's Petition	2268	Bank	2444
v. Bennert	1777	Economy L. & P. Co. v.		v. Currier	581, 661
v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	1985	Sheridan	682	v. Edwards	1382
v. Dunn	561, 1206	Ector v. State	2239	v. Evans	21
v. Martin	1496	Eddings v. Boner	1051	v. Foote	1750
v. Moulton	1544, 1549, 551	Eddy v. Gray	62, 133, 166,	v. Gimbel	749, 1667, 1668
v. R. Co.	1750		1141, 1977	v. Hanna	1651
v. Sherry	2199	v. Wilson	1176	v. Heuer	1669
Eastwood v. Ashton	2477	Ede v. Johnson	2164	v. James	1651
v. People	1163, 1166	Edelen v. Gough	694	v. Logan	1351, 1671, 1712
Eatman v. State	331, 581, 749	Edelhoff v. State	331	v. Manufacturer's B.	
Eaton v. Campbell	1224, 1225,	Edelstein v. Schuler	2580	Co.	2509
	1318, 1651	v. U. S.	2282, 2283	v. Mattingly	2111
v. Com.	1072	Eden v. Blake	2425, 2442	v. Noyes	1278, 2105
v. Farmer	1856c, 2271	v. Chalkill	1650	v. Pitts	2235
v. Freeman	1651	Edgar v. Brown	1290	v. Publishing Soc.	2582
v. Gladwell	2464	v. Richardson	1256	v. Rives	1267, 1957, 2105
v. Hall	1267, 2110	Edgell v. Bennett	1086, 2237	v. State,	
v. Knowles	2240	v. Francis	1730	39 Fla.	568
v. New England T.		Edger v. Board	1350	9 Okl. Cr.	1405
Co.	1072	Edgerly's Estate	1388	2 Wash.	580, 2056



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Edwards v. Sullivan	953,	El Paso & S. W. R. Co.		Ellen v. Ellen,	
1028, 1312, 2098		v. Foth	1350	16 S. C.	1778
v. Three Rivers,		El Reno Wholesale Gro-		18 S. C.	1133
96 Mich.	1158	cery Co. v. Stocking	2429,	Ellenberg v. Southern R.	
102 Mich.	252, 438,	2463		Co.	1876
	664	Ela v. Edwards	1312, 1512	Eller v. Church	2495
v. Tipton	1664	Elam v. Commercial		v. Eller	2210
v. Tracy	1257	Bank	2354	v. Roberts	2205
v. Vasey	1684	v. Phariss	2421	Ellershaw v. Robinson	73
v. Williams	1072	v. State	259, 692	Ellerson v. State	1290, 1291
v. Worcester	96, 1951, 1974	Elastic Tip Co. v. Gra-		Ellicott v. Pearl,	
Edwards' Case	2250	ham	2410.	1 McLean	126, 1138
Edwin I. Morrison, The	2533	Elberfeldt v. Waite	1666	10 Pet.	1124, 1126,
Eelbank v. Burt	1779	Elbert v. Mitchell	321		1129, 1363, 1481,
Eel River D. Ass'n v.		Elbin v. Wilson	728, 2368		1585, 1587, 1665
Topp	2572	Elcessor v. Elcessor	1931	Elliff v. Oregon R. & N.	
Eesley Light & P. Co. v.		Eld v. Gorham	1350	Co.	1067
Commonwealth P. Co.	1388,	Elden v. Keddel	1238	Ellingboe v. Brakken	1651
1944, 2591		Elder v. Coal Co.	1951	Ellington v. Harris	2536
Effenberger v. Durant	530	v. State,		Ellingwood v. Bragg	561, 1923
Effler v. State	347	123 Ala.	1605	Elliot v. Shultz	913
Egan v. Bowker	278	124 Ala.	1490	Elliott v. Boyles	406, 781
v. Egan	2503	69 Ark.	1750		983, 987
v. First Nat'l Bank	2354	Elderton's Case	2576, 2578	v. Chicago M. & St.	
v. Gordan	204, 1620	Eldorado Jewelry Co. v.		P. R. Co.	2509
v. Horrigan	1225, 1651,	Darnell	2416	v. Dycke	1521
	2520	Eldred v. Eldred	2083	v. Hayden	1065, 1066
Egbers v. Egbers	1081, 2500	Eldredge v. Barton	1081, 1576,	v. Kansas City	2329, 2389
Egbert v. Greenwalt	618, 2063		1951	v. McClelland	1681
Egelston v. New York C.		Eldridge v. Compton	18	v. Mills	2349
& St. L. R. Co.	461	v. Endicott & Co.	4c	v. Moreland	2445
Egg v. Barnett	156	v. Hargreaves	1062	v. Murray	2408
Eggart v. State	1700	v. Knott	2522	v. Peirsol	18, 1347, 1483
Eggers v. Eggers	680	v. State	1644	v. R. Co.	2494
v. Fox	1712, 2214, 2276	Eleanor, The	1641	v. Russell	681
Eggers V. S. Co. v. Ind.		Electric Light Co. v.		v. Sheppard	1523, 2498
Com.	4c, 1722, 2377	Grant	1021	v. State	248
Eggett v. Allen	1666	Electric Lighting Co. v.		v. Stocks	1213
Eggler v. People	248, 1976	Rust	1391	v. U. S.	2313
Eggleston v. Advance T.		Electric Park Amusement		v. Van Buren	656, 1268,
Co.	2416	Co. v. Psychos	2484, 2592		1286, 1339
v. Boardman	463	Electric R. Co. v. Car-		v. Western Coal & M.	
Eggspieller v. Nockles	1879	son	1750	Co.	1777
Ehrensperger v. Anderson	1258	Electric Welding Co. v.		Ellis v. Abell	2434
Ehrman v. Hoskins	2474	Prince	2558, 2573	v. Alford	620
Ehrmann v. Ehrmann	2210	Elfelt v. Smith	717	v. Baldwin	1248
Ehrsam v. Brown	2434	Elgin A. & S. Traction		v. Block	2556
Eichenlaub v. St. Joseph	1680	Co. v. Wilson	681, 2509	v. Buzzell	2498
Eichhorn v. Morat	2472	Elgin City Banking Co.		v. Ellis,	
Eicke v. Nokes	2301, 2311	v. Mawhinney	18	11 Mass.	1644, 2085,
Eidt v. Cutter	33, 451, 660,	Elgin J. & E. R. Co. v.			2088
	1160	Lawlor	2498	55 Minn.	1681
Eifert v. Lytle	2529	v. Thomas	1249	v. Houstoun	2463
Eighmie v. Taylor	2434	Elias v. Lancaster	283	v. Howard	1083, 1086
Eiland v. State	63, 246, 2100	v. Terr.	1803	v. Huff	1195
Einstein v. Holladay K.		Eliot v. Eliot	1512	v. Interstate B. M.	
L. & L. Co.	1530, 1705	v. Skyppe	2355	Acc. Ass'n	7a
Eisenhart v. Slaymaker	1186,	Elkhart H. Co. v. Turner	2169	v. Leonard	2570
1206, 1234, 2158		Elkins v. Hamilton	1777	v. Lindley	406
Eisenlord v. Clum	1481, 1482,	v. McKean	1750	v. Mills	1186
	1503	v. State	1244	v. Newell	1777
Eisfield v. Dill	2012	Elkinton v. Brick	1511	v. Reddin	2577
Eklund v. Supreme		Ellarson v. Ellarson	497, 932	v. Republic Oil Co.	2510
Council	7a, 2531	Elledge v. Todd	2354	v. Saltan	2372

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ellis v. Short	21, 84, 220	Elwood v. Saterlie	1779	Empire Mfg. Co. v. Stuart	702
v. Smith	1195, 1300, 1301	Ely v. Ely	2525	Empire Securities Co. v.	
v. State,		v. James	1684	Webb	1254
105 Ala.	1966	v. Mowry	2200	Employers' Liability Ass'n	
120 Ala.	364	v. R. Co.	283	Co. v. Ind. Acc. Com.	4c
144 Ark.	852	v. Stewart	1885, 2138	Emporia v. Schmidling	283
152 Ind.	111, 987,	Ely-Walker D. G. Co. v.		Emrich v. Union Stock-	
	1117	Mansur	1032	yard Co.	18
v. Thayer	1871	Elyea-Anstell Co. v.		Emrie v. Gilbert	1244
v. Thompson,		Jackson Garage	2441	Encyclopedia Brit. Co. v.	
3 M. & W.	2442	Elyton Land Co. v.		American N. Ass'n	372
37 N. Y. Supp.	1770	Denny	2105	Endaily v. State	216, 347
v. Watkin's Estate	1085	Elzig v. Bales	795	Enders v. Sternbergh,	
Ellis' Appeal	1681	Embry v. Millar	1188	2 Abb. App.	2141
Ellison v. Bennabia	770	Emeny Auto Co. v.		40 N. Y.	1198, 2141
v. Branstrator	1873, 2169	Neiderhauser	1558	Endick v. Endick	2067, 2069
v. Com.	2115	Emerson v. Bigler	716	Endowment Rank v.	
v. Cookson	2475	v. Blonder	2232	Allen	658
v. Glos	1225	v. Boynton	1062	Enfield v. Ellington	1640,
v. Gray	2435	v. Fisk	291, 1208		1678, 2145
Ellmaker v. Buckley	915,	v. Gaslight Co.	569	v. Woods	1640
	1885, 1890, 1893	v. Lebanon	438	Engel v. Conti	1777
Ellmore v. Mills	1680, 1681	v. Lowell Gaslight Co.	442,	v. United Traction Co.	199,
	2529		457		282
Ellsworth v. Fairbury	2220	v. Stevens	1041	Engelthaler v. Engel-	
v. Potter	951, 953,	v. Wark	916	thaler	2473
	1007, 1022	v. Western Automo-		England v. Hatch	1651, 2143
Elmer v. Fessenden	1714,	bile Ind. Ass'n	2298	Englebreton v. Ind.	
	1729	v. White	1481, 1484,	Acc. Com.	4c
v. State	21, 1136		1490	Engles v. Bruington	693, 1312
Elmhurst v. Rohmeyer	720	Emerson's Estate	2065	English v. Cropper	2237
Elmoe v. Com.	2513	Emerson Co. v. Nimocks	787	v. Oliver	1350
Elmendorff v. Car-		Emery v. Atlanta R. E.		v. Ricks	2300, 2337
michael	1188, 1304,	Exchange	1062	v. Sprague	1678
	1658, 1662	v. Berry	1271, 1684	v. State	2060
Elmore v. Overton	763, 2104	v. Fowler	2098	Engrer v. R. Co.	2507
v. State	605	v. Haven	2471	Engstrom v. Nelson	987, 1066
Elms v. Chevis	1521	v. State,		Enlayde v. Roberts	2440
Elmsley v. Miller	2319	92 Wis.	581, 2098	Enloe v. Hall	1242, 1249
Elmslie v. Thurman	1201,		2115, 2197	Enlow v. State	233, 247, 248
	2596	101 Wis.	460, 968, 987,	Enid & A. R. Co. v.	
Elrod v. Ashton	1013	2269, 2276, 2497, 2511		Wiley	18, 1225, 1239
v. Cochran	1194, 1254	v. Twombly	1312	Ennis v. Little	561, 1951
Elsam v. Faucett	211	Emery & Co. v. Ameri-		v. Smith	1271, 1684
Elsey v. Hudson Co.	2509	can Refrig. T. Co.	1376	Ennor v. Barwell	1862
Elsner v. Supreme Lodge	222,	Emig v. Diehl	1406, 1408	Eno v. Allen	1018
	1974	Emigh. Re	1835, 2196	Eno's Will	291, 1041, 1738,
Elster v. Seattle	252, 458	Eminent Household v.			1938, 2314
Elston v. Kennicott	736	Hewitt	7a	Enos v. Enos	406
v. McGlauffin	1166	v. Ramsey	7a	v. Tuttle	1774, 1775
v. Montgomery	1511, 1513	Emmans' Estate	2085	Enright v. R. Co.	1951
Elswick v. Com.	2337	Emmert v. Hayes	2477	Enriquez' and Reyes'	
Elting v. Scott	1066	Emmet v. Perry	1567, 1778	Estate	1606, 2527
Elton v. Larkins,		Emmett v. Penoyer	2442	Ensley v. R. Co.	1750
5 C. & P.	1041, 1946,	Emmons v. Barton	1086,	Enthoven v. Cobb	2325
	1947		2237, 2341	Entick v. Carrington	2264
1 Mo. & Rob.	2593	v. Emmons	2046, 2067	Entwistle v. Meikle	1417, 2500
Eltzroth v. Ryan	1239	v. Harding	2408	Enyart v. People	571, 1150,
Elvins v. Delaware & A.		v. R. Co.	1943		1159
T. & T. Co.	714	Emory v. Bailey	2146, 2169	Enyart's Estate	21
Elwell v. Mersick	1194, 1196	v. Eggan	75, 258	Ephraims v. Murdock	2098
v. Russell	321	v. Smith	289	Epperson v. State	1215, 1450
v. Walker	2105	Empire Life Ins. Co. v.		Eppinger v. Scott	95
Elwood v. Diefendorf	586	Einstein	2271	Eppison v. State	948, 952



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Epps v. State,		Eslow v. Mitchell	1268, 1293	Evans v. Lipscomb	946
19 Ga.	784	Esquimalt & N. R. Co. v.		v. Marvin	1677
102 Ind.	439, 457,	New Vancouver Coal		v. Merthyr Tydfil	1075,
	680, 1166, 1696	Co.	1862		1586, 1665
Epstein v. Pennsylvania		Essex v. Day	2416	v. Morgan	1603, 2083
R. Co. 7a, 2388, 2389, 2390		v. Ksensky	18	v. Murphy	748
Equi v. U. S.	369	Essex' Case	2220	v. O'Connor	2276
Equitable Acc. Ins. Co.		Essex Murder	1837, 1838	v. People	568, 656,
v. Stout	1230	Este v. Wilshire	2276		1918, 1924
Equitable L. A. Soc. v.		Estell v. State	1362, 1750	v. Reed	1409
Clark	1859	Estep v. State	1842	v. Rees	1594
v. Hardin	2200	Esterbrooks v. Towse	157	v. Rothschild	1379
Equitable Secur. Co. v.		Estes v. Babcock	1719	v. Smith	1062
Talbert	2432	v. Bridgforth	1909	v. Sprague	1651
Equitable Surety Co. v.		v. Chicago B. & Q. R.		v. Staalle	2235
Hartmann	2442	Co.	1976	v. State,	
Erb v. Popritz	65, 687, 1976	v. Farnham	1269	109 Ala.	457, 988
Erd v. R. Co.	728	v. Jackson	1549	120 Ala.	1974
Erdman v. State	760	v. Merrill	2506, 2573	58 Ark.	1442
Erhardt v. U. S.	369	v. Missouri P. R. Co.	1330	78 Ga.	2059
Erhart v. Dietrich	2518	Estey v. Birmbaur	1078	106 Ga.	2264
Erickson v. American S.		v. Fuller I. Co.	2242	165 Ind.	2061, 2063
& W. Co.	461, 1951,	Estill v. Estill	664, 1483, 1484	44 Miss.	247
	1976	Estofte v. Vaughan	1211	61 Miss.	580
v. R. Co.	1898	Etheridge v. Hobbs	1842	5 Okl. Cr.	2304
v. Rutledge Timber		Ethier v. Homier	2298	35 Tex.	521
Co.	1750	Etly v. Com.	142	12 Tex. App.	1405
v. Schmill	133, 2580	Etna v. Brewer	1784	Tex. Cr., 76 S. W.	281
v. Sophy	1960	Etting v. Bank	64	v. Taylor	1665
Erickson Co. v. Farnum	18	Etzkorn v. Cedar Rapids	1005	v. The Josephine	
Erie & Pac. Despatch v.		Eubanks v. Harris	2141,	Mills	1951
Stanley	1890		2145, 2447	v. Trenton	1807
Erie Preserving Co. v.		Eure v. Pittman	1192, 1202,	v. Turnpike Co.	1223
Miller	760		1207	v. Watt	2063
Erie R. Co. v. Decker	456	Eureka F. Co. v. Balti-		Evans' Estate	2341
v. Kane	288	more C. S. & R. Co.	2556	Evansich v. R. Co.	987, 1890
v. Linnekogel	1978	Eureka Ins. Co. v. Rob-		Evanston v. Gunn	1633,
v. Schomer	2509	inson	98		1634, 1639
Erisman v. Chicago B. &		Evans, Re	2498	Evansville & T. H. R.	
Q. R. Co.	2508	v. Arnold	1304	Co. v. Crist	1977
Erler v. Erler	2408	v. Birch	93	v. Tothill	250
Ernest v. Napier	1215	v. Blood	1933	Evansville R. Co. v. Fitz-	
Errissman v. Errissman	1839	v. Brenkle	2407	patrick	1943
Erskine v. Davis	382, 2505	v. Browne	1350	Evansville T. & C. G. R.	
v. State	2089	v. Chamberlain	2494	Co. v. Cochran	1168
Ertel v. Milwaukee El.		v. Eaton	585, 586, 1040	Evarts v. Middlebury	1951
R. & L. Co.	581	v. Erie R. Co.	252, 458	v. Young	1566
Erwin v. Bailey	269, 1605	v. Evans,		Eveland v. Lawson	1201
v. Bulla	1802	41 Cal.	2046	Eveleth's Will	1953, 1974,
v. English	1644, 2167,	1 Hagg. Cons.	2081		2503
	2506	93 Ky.	64	Evening Journal Ass'n	
v. Fillenwarth	1958	N. J. Eq., 59 Atl.	2047	v. McDermott	406
v. Porter	1212, 1233	155 Pa.	620, 2232	Everage v. State	1079
v. State	905	1 Rob. Eccl.	2046	Everett v. Cowles	368
Esch v. Grave	1154	10 Sm. & M.	1304	v. Deal	2451
Eschbach v. Hurtt	17, 18	v. Freeman	2444	v. Lowdham	1841
Escher v. Carroll Co.	1951	v. Gas Co.	451	v. People	2511
Escobar v. Escobar	2527	v. Gerry	1960	v. R. Co.	1908
Eshelman v. Rawalt	1911	v. Getting	1598	v. State,	
Eshenworld v. Suffolk		v. Gray	585	33 Fla.	2245
Brewing Co.	150a	v. Hettich	492, 493	62 Ga.	107, 1976
Eskridge v. State	499, 2100	v. Ins. Co.	565, 571	v. Tidball	1415
Esler v. Camden & S. R.		v. Junior Order	1081	Everett's Will	2503
Co.	2496	v. Lee	2166	Everidge v. Martin	2141

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Everingham v. Roundell	Section 1274, 1275	Fager v. State, 49 Nebr.	Section 1853	Fancher v. De Montegre	Section 2167, 2477
Evers v. Life Ass'n	633	Fagin v. Cooley	1409	Fane v. Fane	2426
v. State,		Fahey v. Crotty	64	Fannie v. State	1440, 2243
84 Nebr.	505	Fahnestock v. State	246, 1612	Fannin v. State	987, 1270
31 Tex. Cr.	246	Fahr v. Hayes	406	Fanning v. Green	581
Eversole v. Kentucky		Fain v. Edwards	57	v. State	276
River C. Co.	2525	v. Goodwin	2354	Fant v. McDaniel	1215
Everson v. Carpenter	1028	Fairbank v. Hughson	2550	v. Miller	5, 18, 763, 788, 1379, 1898, 2123
Ewbanks v. Ashley	1684	Fairbanks v. Kuhn	1257	Farbing v. Webster	2052
Ewell v. Ewell	1497, 2528	v. Snow	2423	Fargo Mercantile Co. v.	
v. State	1420, 1605, 2085	Fairchild v. Ada Co.	2203	Johnson	1548
Ewen v. Halston	2467, 2474	v. Bascomb	233, 569, 681, 905, 932, 1738, 1938, 1958, 1976	Faribault v. Ely	1206
v. Wilbor	18, 1675			Farkas v. State	852
Ewer v. Ambrose,		v. Dennison	1556	v. Stewart	770
3 B. & C.	897, 905, 906, 907	v. Stage Co.	1876	Farleigh v. Kelley	17, 1124, 1505, 1514
4 B. & C.	1215, 1216	Faircloth v. Jordan	1859b	Farley v. C. B. & V. Co.	283
Ewers Adm'r v. National		Faire v. State	396	v. Farley	1511
I. Co.	2349	Fairfax v. Fairfax	1245	v. Frost Johnson L. Co.	1066
Ewing v. Bailey	1828	Fairfield v. U. S.	2200	v. Graham	1212, 2447
v. Duncan	1350	Fairfield Co. Turnpike		v. Letterman	2416
v. Goode	2090, 2494	Co. v. Thorp	1076	v. Peebles	1079, 2304
v. Hatcher	2286	Fairfield P. v. Ins. Co.	963, 2520	v. Rodocanachi	2115
v. Keith	1128	Fairgrieve v. State	2056	v. State	923, 987, 1270
v. Lanark Fuel Co.	1157	Fairley v. Smith	718, 719, 1704	v. Tillar	613
v. Lunn	2354	Fairlie v. Denton	1073	Farlinger v. Thompson	1329
v. Moses	770	v. Hastings	1058, 1078	Farmer v. Brown	2250
v. Osbaldiston	2276	Fairly v. Fairly	901, 907, 2138, 2141	v. Quinn's Trust Es- tate	2467
v. Savary	1665	v. State	457	v. State	1066
Excelsior Co. v. Sweet	2509	v. Wappoo Mills	2440	v. Storer	2199
Excelsior M. A. Ass'n v.		Fairmont G. E. & R. M.		v. Towers	2085
Riddle	2384	C. Co. v. Crouch	716	v. Williams	89
Excelsior Mfg. Co. v.		Faith v. State	1356	Farmers' & Merchants'	
Owens	2518	Faivre v. Manderscheid	1158	Bank v. Boraef	736, 754
Exchange & B. Co. v.		Fajardo v. Costa	488	v. Bronson	1651
Boyce	1678	v. Tio	289, 1606	v. Donnelly	1085
Exon v. State	987	Falconer v. Hanson	1404	v. Haile	1938
Exton v. R. Co.	252, 461	Falero v. Falero	18	v. Israel	2125
Eyerman v. Sheehan	1918, 1978	Fales v. Musicians' Pro- tective Union	4c, 1382	v. Lonergan	1207
Eyler v. State	398	Falk v. State	2183, 2184	v. Wood	2103
Eyman v. People	2534	v. Witham	604	v. Woods	803
Eyre v. Palsgrave	1219	Falkland v. Bertie	2426	v. Young	1873
Eyster v. Gaff	1186	Falkner v. Beers	1206	Farmers' & T. N. Bank	
v. Young	2048	v. Earle	379	v. Woodell	561, 571
		Fall v. Fall	1257	Farmers' Bank v. Barbee	1778, 1779
		v. Overseers	68, 133, 202, 211, 987, 1003, 2180	v. Cole	2341
		Fall Brook C. Co. v.		v. Gilson	1267
		Hewson	1893	v. Saling	658, 1624
		Fallon v. Dougherty	1225	v. Whitehill,	
		v. Rapid City	1722, 1750	10 S. & R.	728, 2016
		Fallon's Estate	2048	16 S. & R.	1362
		Falls v. Building Co.	1684	Farmers' Elevator Co.	
		Falls City v. Sperry	1800, 2554	v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	4c
		Falls Land & C. Co. v.		Farmers' Grain & Sup- ply Co. v. Blanchard	2510
		Chisholm	1651	Farmers' Handy Wagon Co. v. Casualty Co.	1067
		Falmouth v. Moss	2380	Farmers' Loan & T. Co.	
		v. Roberts	1313	v. Southern Surety Co.	2498



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Farmers' Mut. F. Ins.		Faulkner v. Brine	905	Feldman v. Chicago Rys.	
Co. v. Bair	769, 779	v. Faulkner	1675	Co.	2509
Farmers' National Bank		v. Gilbert	928	Felice v. State	949, 1877
v. Hatcher	2438	v. Hendy	2203	Felix v. Caldwell	1269, 2110
v. Pratt	321, 1530	v. Terr.	851, 2501	v. Fidelity M. L. Ins.	
v. Venner	2536	Faunce v. Gray	842, 843, 852, 1540, 2183	Co.	1073
Farmers' Savings Bank	2185	Faust v. R. Co.	2509	Felkel v. O'Brien	2477
Farmington R. W. P. Co.		v. U. S.	1898	Felker v. Breece	1189, 1194
v. County Com'rs	4c	Faustre v. Com.	1644	Fell v. Pitts	1074
Farnham v. Colman	1858, 1859g	Fawcett v. Goods	5	v. R. Co.	2098
Farnsworth v. Briggs	1238, 1288, 1320	Faxon v. Hollis	1537, 1558	v. Young	1442
v. Sharp	1202	v. Jones	581	Fellers v. Howe	1975
Farnsworth Co. v. Rand	1352	Fay v. Davidson	1246	Fellowes v. Williamson	1729
Farnum v. Farnum	377	v. Guynon	2336	Fellows v. Fellows,	
v. R. Co.	2463	v. Harlan	1719	37 N. H.	1082, 1257
v. Whitman	1971	v. Walsh	759	69 N. H.	112
Farquhar v. Farquhar	2433	Fay's Estate	1738	v. Smith	1779
Farr, Re	2500	Fayerweather v. Ritch	2314	Fellows-Kimbrough v.	
v. Bell	616	Fayette v. Chesterville	561, 689, 1938	Chicago City R. Co.	663, 1976
v. Farr	2506	Faytre v. North	2465	Felsenthal Co. v. North-	
v. Rouillard	1066	Fazakerley v. Wiltshire	2575	ern Ass. Co.	916
v. Swan	1680, 1956, 2109	Fearing v. Clark	2420	Felsch v. Babb	1158
v. Thompson	1108, 1109	v. Kimball	1073	Felska v. R. Co.	1755, 1974
Farrand v. R. Co.	1678, 1943	Fearington v. Blackwell		Felstiner v. Wideltz	1004
Farrar v. Fessenden	1225, 1651, 1655	D. T. Co.	2509	Felt v. Amidon	1750
Farrell v. Boston	779	Fearn v. Postlethwaite	582	Feltner v. Com.	905
v. Dubuque	252	v. Taylor	1300	Felton v. Midland Con-	
v. Forest Inv. Co.	2047	Feary v. O'Neill	905	tinental R. Co.	1404
v. Haze	754, 1158	v. R. Co.	2594	v. Pitman	1314
v. Ledwell	613, 619	Featherstone v. People	784, 1821	Felts, In re	6
v. Leighton	1710	Feder Silberberg Co. v.		v. Murphy	1393
v. People	2272	McNeil	95	Feltz v. Walker	2433
v. Phillips	987	Federal Asbestos Co. v.		Fender v. Ramsey	1708
v. Universal Garage		Zimmerman	95	Fengar v. Brown	2034
Co.	283	Federal Betterment Co.		Fengl v. Fengl	2185
v. U. S.	1960	v. Reeves	21, 568, 676, 688, 1719	Fenn v. Georgia R. & E.	
v. Weitz	166, 792, 794, 1461, 1476	Federal Mining & Sm.		Co.	2210
Farrell's Adm'r v. Bren-		Co. v. Dalo	2389	v. Granger	2218
nan's Adm'r	689, 1913, 1938, 1953	v. Public Util. Com.	4c, 2195	Fenner v. Lewis	2117, 2232
Farrer v. State	313, 363, 2354	Federal Oil & Gas Co.		v. R. Co.	2319
Farrington v. McNeill	2444	v. Campbell	1951, 1984	Fennerstein's Cham-	
v. Sinclair	338	Federal U. Surety Co.		pagne	1521, 1522, 1528, 1704
Farris v. Com.	2511a	v. Indiana L. & M. Co.	759, 1073, 1077, 1234, 1557	Fenno v. Weston	1073
v. People	216	Fee v. Taylor	2008, 2016, 2027	Fonstermaker v. Pub.	
v. State	390	v. Wells	2065	Co.	949, 1005, 1021
Farrow v. Blomfield	1256, 1263	Feemster v. Ringo	2580	Fenton v. Hughes	901
v. R. Co.	1225	Feeney v. R. Co.	2383	v. Reed	2083
Farwell v. Cramer	2515	Feeter v. Heath	736	Fenton's Will	689
Fash v. Blake	728, 1320	Feibelman v. Assur. Co.	905, 987, 1062	Fentum v. Pocock	2444
Fasset v. Brown	1292	Feigleman v. Montreal		Fenwick v. Bell	1921, 1949
Fassin v. Hubbard	654	St. R. Co.	2319	v. Reed	2327
Fatherree v. Lawrence	1511	Feilder v. Studley	2426	v. State	581
Faucett v. Nichols	354	Feinberg v. New York		Ferance v. Forestdale	
v. Northern Clay Co.	2415	Life Ins. Co.	2415	Mfg. Co.	1754
v. State	2270, 2279	Fekjar v. Iowa S. L. S.		Ferbrache v. State	2061
Faulder v. Silk	1671	Ins. Co.	1073	Feree v. Com.	689
Faulk v. Iowa Co.	252, 438			Ferebee v. Norfolk	
v. State	2184			Southern R. Co.	966
				Ferguson v. Brown	1842
				v. Clifford	463, 1219, 1632, 1677, 2159, 2167
				v. Davis Co.	1719, 1975

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ferguson v. Hemingway	1203	Fidelity M. L. Ass'n		Finch, Re	2065
v. Hirsch	784	v. Mettler	1503, 2531	v. Barclay	760
v. Hubbell	1923, 1951	v. Miller	1133	v. Com.	1072
v. Miles	1204	v. Winn	1081	v. Finch	2250, 2260
v. Moore	2061	Fidelity Oil & Gas		v. Garrett	2475, 2526
v. Peden	2167	Co. v. Janse Drilling		v. Kent	2504
v. Rutherford	1890	Co.	2155	v. McClellan	1012
v. Stafford	714, 720, 1943, 1944	Fidelity Title Guaranty		v. State	238
v. State,		Co. v. Ruby	2409	v. Zenith Furnace Co.	17
49 Ind.	1807	Fidler v. McKinley	815	Finch's Case	2463, 2477
71 Miss.	581, 2062	Fiedler v. Darrin	581	Fincher v. Davis	1951
72 Nebr.	1003, 1021	v. Iowa State T. M.		v. People	862
31 Tex. App.	821	Ass'n	7a	v. State	93, 951, 1022
v. Winter	2510a	Field v. Cain	1677	Findlay v. Pruitt	63
Fernandez, Ex parte	2192, 2271, 2371	v. Clark	1350	Findlay Brewing Co. v.	
v. Calaf	1684, 1953	v. Harrison	2054	Bauer	451
v. Gonzalez	2437	v. Malster	2572	Findley v. Means	2410
v. State	496, 1820, 1828	v. R. Co.	455, 456	v. State	1451
Ferner v. State	376	v. Tenney	654	Fine v. State	988
Fernhaber v. Cream City		v. Thompson	754, 1540, 1560	Fink v. Denny	603
Cartage Co.	944	Field's Appeal	1304	Finlen v. Heinze	963
Fero v. Roscoe	406	Fielder v. Collier	1530	Finley v. Widner	66, 73, 2498
Ferrand v. Milligan	18	v. Pemberton	1573, 2143	v. Woodruff	1239
Ferrell v. Ellis	2577	v. Ray	2447, 2456	Finn v. Cassidy	1951
v. State	852, 1186, 1877, 2505	Fields v. Copeland	1969	v. Com.	309, 1398, 1404
Ferrers v. Bosel	2165	v. State,		v. New England T. &	
v. Shirley	699, 1065, 1991	47 Ala.	63	T. Co.	1003, 1062
Ferriek v. Eidlitz	2509	121 Ala.	2277	v. Winneskiek Dist.	
Ferriday v. Selser	1086	Fla., 35 So.	111, 950, 1732, 1890, 1974, 2115	Ct.	2210, 2212
Ferrill v. Simpson	2349	2 Ga. App.	2061	Finnegan v. Dugan	166, 1154
Ferris v. Bank	2573, 2578	134 Ind.	63, 246	v. Gas Works Co.	687
v. Boxell	1456	Nebr., 185		v. S. W. S. Mfg. Co.	451
v. Commercial Nat'l		N. W.	1725	Finnerty v. Tipper	209, 406
Bank	2165	39 Tex. Cr.	987	Finnes v. Selover B. Co.	1404, 1668
v. Jones	283	Fife v. Cate	2498	Finney v. College	1195
v. Saxton	529	v. Com.	824, 841, 861, 862	v. State	2231
v. Sterling	1129, 1133	Fifer v. Clearfield & C.		Finnick v. Peterson	2216
v. Thaw	728	C. Co.	1064, 1078, 2596	Fiott v. Com.	1651
Ferry v. Henderson	18, 1944	Fifth Mut. B. Soc. v.		Fire Ass'n v. Flemming	1911, 2917
v. Legras	2054	Holt	1549, 1978	Fire Ass'n of Phila. v.	
v. Taylor	1062	Figari v. Olcese	2406	Farmers' Gin Co.	714
Ferry-Halbeck Co. v.		Figg v. Wedderburne	1503	v. Mechlowitz	2034
Orange H. B. Co.	1890	Fightmaster v. Fight-		Firebaugh v. Seattle El.	
Fertig v. State	2097	master	2239	Co.	2509
Fertilizer Works v. Aiken	7a	Figueras v. Diaz	1606, 1646, 2527	Firebrass's Case	2250
Fetherly v. Waggoner	2141	Figuers v. Fly	1635	Fireman's Ins. Co. v.	
Fetkenhauer v. State	2089	Fike v. Atchison T. & S.		McGill	1382
Fetters v. U. S.	987	F. R. Co.	65	v. Mohlmann	1921, 1978
Feuerheerd v. London	2302, 2312, 2319	File v. Springel	1244	v. Seaboard A. L. Co.	1530
Fey v. I. O. O. F. Ins.		Filer v. McCornick	2195	Fireproof Doors Co., Re	2451
Soc'y	1073, 1671	v. R. Co.	663	Firkin v. Edwards	1208
Ffolliott v. Lord	392	v. Smith	2554	Firkins v. R. Co.	1719, 1750
Ficken v. Atlanta	1890	Filipowski v. Merry-		Firmeis v. State	2888
v. State	1018	weather	1349	First Congreg. Church	
Fidelity & C. Co. v. Cragg	7a	Filley v. Angell	666	v. Ins. Co.	1947
v. Eickhoff	7a	v. Register	344	First Meth. Ep. Church	
Fidelity & D. Co. v. Ault-		Filson v. Terr.	2089	v. Fadden	7
man	1187	Fimple v. State	2375	First Nat'l Bank v. Allen	2015
v. Champion I. M. &				v. Barker	2015
C. S. Co.	1530			v. Bews	2442
				v. Blakeman	1106, 1108, 1109



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
First Nat'l Bank v. Booth	1971	Fischer v. State	581	Fitch v. R. Co.	456
v. Briggs	1675	Fiscus v. Fiscus	2503	v. Smalbrook	521
v. Broadway Bank	2536	Fish, Re	2463	v. Traction Co.	1414, 2509
v. Burney	2444	v. Bloodworth	616	Fitchburg R. Co. v.	
v. Carson	2016	v. Dodge	663	Eastern R. Co.	1168
v. Chaffin	1558	v. Fish	2503	Fite v. Bennett	2375
v. Chandler	1984	v. Hubbard	2465	v. State	177
v. Cody	1651	v. Poorman	2391, 2498	Fidler v. Morris	1675
v. Com. Assur. Co.	953, 1107, 1108, 2498	v. Smith	1074, 1633	v. Shotwell	1651
v. Farrell	1073	v. U. S.	354	Fitter v. Iowa Tel. Co.	283
v. Fire Ass'n	1974	Fishburn v. Burlington & N. W. R. Co.	1719	v. U. S.	521, 620, 832, 2059, 2060, 2184
v. Foote	2444	Fishburne v. Ferguson's Heirs	1938	Fitts v. R. Co.	1951
v. Glenn	530	Fishel v. Ireland	1014	v. State	396
v. Harris	2518	Fisher v. Betts	1244, 1272	Fitz v. Rabbits	1195
v. Holland	618, 1458	v. Boston & M. R. Co.	458	Fitzcox v. State	527, 2056
v. Ind. Com.	4c	v. Chicago	2578	Fitzgerald v. Allen	1911
v. Kidd	1658, 1680	v. Clark	1938	v. Ayres	2532
v. Kruse	1404	v. Conway	616, 938, 1618, 1908	v. Benner	1777, 1963, 2155
v. Linn Co. Bank	1078	v. Fisher	2276	v. Clark	2349
v. Lippman	1678	v. Greene	1213	v. E. E. Illum. Co.	252
v. Lowrey	2504	v. Hall	2408	v. Elsee	1303
v. Marshall	1078	v. Hart	905	v. English	2596
v. Middleton	18	v. Hood	1003, 1021	v. Hayward	1944
v. Miller	367	v. Kaufman	2534	v. Langley Mfg. Co.	1976
v. Minneapolis & N.E. Co.	1014, 1389, 2103	v. Kyle	2098	v. Lozier Motor Co.	4c, 1053, 2377
v. Nordstrom	2536	v. Lane	2450	v. McCarty	1558
v. Priest	1243	v. Mayor	1521, 1523	v. R. Co.	2494
v. Robert	2016, 2018	v. Owen	2268	v. Southern R. Co.	2509
v. Smith	1890	v. Patterson	73, 74, 209, 406	v. State	2062
v. State	905	v. People	1010	v. Watson	1856
v. Tolert	2446	v. Porter	1890	v. Williams,	
v. Stroup	2444	v. Price	2257	24 Ga.	1268
v. Walker	1244	v. Ronalds	2271	148 Mass.	1003
v. Wirebach's Ex'r	233, 561, 682, 1392, 1938	v. Samuda	1268, 1281	Fitzgibbon's Adm'r v.	
v. Wisdom's Ex'rs	309, 2019	v. Skidmore Land Co.	1967	Kinney	736
v. Wolff	1874	v. State	63	Fitzherbert v. Fitzherbert	1304, 1312
v. Wright	2240	v. Terr.	2059	Fitzhugh v. Croghan	1306
v. Yeoman	747, 754	v. Travelers' Ins. Co.	289	v. Love	1213
First Nat'l Bank of B.		v. True	1082, 1086	Fitzjames v. Moys	1910
v. First Nat'l Bank of N.	1249, 2508	v. Weinholzer	1621	Fitzpatrick v. Brigman	1966
First Nat'l Bank of D.		v. Willard	586	v. Fitzpatrick	2477
v. First Nat'l Bank of W.	736, 762	Fisher & Ball v. Carter	1213	v. Hoffman	2433
First Nat'l Bank of Hoopeston v. R. Co.	456	Fishman v. Consumers' B. Co.	451	v. Penfield	2509
First Nat'l Bank of Nashville v. R. Co.	2463	Fishmongers' Mistery v. Robertson	1300	v. U. S.	2276
First Nat'l Bank of Omaha v. Goodman	2498	Fisk, Ex parte	6, 1381, 1856a	v. Williams	1681
First Nat'l Bank of Pennsboro v. Barker	309	v. Chester	581	Fitzsimmons v. State	1405
First Nat'l Bldg. Co. v. Vandenburg	1561	v. Hopping	2167	Fitzsimons & Connell Co. v. Brann	451
First State Bank v. Borchers	2415	v. Kissane	1189	Fitzwalter Peerage Case	704, 1993
v. Kelly	18, 2435	Fiske v. Gowing	1969	Fitzwater's Case	2352
Fischer v. Bergson	1779	v. Ins. Co.	1947	Flaccus Glass Co. v.	
v. Lukens	2169	Fitch v. Bogue	1189, 1192	Gavin	15, 1890, 2115
		v. Chapman	1082, 1456	Flack v. Brewster	2391
		v. Hill	2235	v. Green	95, 736, 747
		v. Hyde	1373	v. Neill	2296
		v. Martin	377	Fladong v. Winter	89
		v. Mason C. & C. L. T. Co.	1951	Flagg v. Mann	586
		v. Murray	258, 1416	v. Mason	1567

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2397]

	Section		Section		Section
Flagg v. People	838	Fletcher v. Peck	1350	Flowers v. State,	
v. U. S.	2184	v. Perry	1299	85 Miss.	1873, 2115
v. Willington	334	v. R. Co.	1021	Okl. Cr., 138 Pac.	398
Flaherty v. Powers	451, 458, 676	v. State,		Floyd v. Bovard	913, 915, 1887, 1890
Flam v. Lee	581	90 Ga.	821	v. Miller	2336
Flamer v. Johnson	1404	49 Ind.	59, 290, 890, 923, 2477	v. Mintsey	1195, 1664
Flamingham v. Boucher	406	v. U. S.	1614	v. Pugh	748
Flanagan v. Fahy	21, 1129	v. Wakefield	1779	v. R. Co.	1750
v. Mathieson	2522	Fieury v. Campbell	2218	v. Rice	803
v. People	153, 2512	Flick v. Gold Hill & S. M. M. Co.	1225	v. Ricks	2167
Flanary v. Com.	2281	Flight v. Robinson	2291, 2294	v. State,	
Flanders v. Davis	1511	Flindt v. Atkins	1256, 1681	82 Ala.	1263
v. State	1938	Flinn v. M'Gonigle	1188, 1194	7 Tex.	2260, 2281
Flandreau v. Ellsworth	1978	v. Prairie Co.	2203	v. Wallace	950
Flanigan v. Guggenheim S. Co.	283	v. R. Co.	456	Flush, The	2211
v. State	276, 506, 605, 1072, 1821, 2056	Flint v. Clark	406	Flynn v. B. E. L. Co.	1978
Flannagan v. State	675, 688	v. Eldon	4a, 4c	v. Butler	2446
Flannery v. Central B. Co.	1415	v. Flint,		v. Coolidge	1729
v. Com.	1391	6 All. Mass.	1640	v. Flynn,	
Flattery v. Flattery	2046	15 Haw.	1890	17 Ida.	2408
Fleet v. Murton	379, 2438	v. Stockdale's Estate	784	283 Ill.	1302, 1511, 1911
Fleischer v. Virginia	1398	Flint's Estate	754, 2391	v. Kelly	1236
v. Virginia-Carolina C. Co.	1398, 1674	Flint R. L. Co. v. Smith	1651	v. People	2511
Fleischman v. Toplitz	2115	Flohr v. Terr.	987, 2115	v. State	1750, 1755
Fleming v. Clark	2450	Flood v. Flood	2463	v. Sullivan	1651, 2520
v. Fleming	2083	v. McClure	2354	Flynt v. Bodenhamer	561
v. Merchants' Life Ins. Co.	7a	v. Mitchell	736, 738, 754, 2099	Flynt B. & C. Co. v. Brown	1951
v. Morrison	2406	v. Russell	1461, 1736	Fockler v. Simpson	1709
v. Northern T. P. Mill	252	Floore v. Green	618	Fodey v. Northern Pac. R. Co.	455, 2509
v. Parry	1352	Flora v. Anderson,		Fodor v. Fuchs	209
v. R. Co.	2509	67 Fed.	2463	Foerst v. Kelso	2509
v. Springfield	1719	75 Fed.	1487, 1492, 1605, 1671	Foerster v. U. S.	1614
v. St. John	2268	v. Mathwig	18	Foertsch v. Germuller	619
v. State,		Floral Creamery Co. v. Dillon	18	Fogarty v. Finley	1635
5 Humph.	235, 933	Florence L. M. & M. Co. v. Warren	1225, 1246	v. National Biscuit Co.	4a, 4c
11 Ind.	1163	Flores v. State	166	Fogel v. R. Co.	1951
v. Thomas	2131	Florey's Ex'rs v. Florey	689, 1938	Fogg v. Dennis	693, 2015
v. Toronto R. Co.	735	Florida C. & P. R. Co. v. Seymour	1680	v. Hill	463
Fleming's Estate	2494	Florida Finance Co. v. Sheffield	1225	v. State	1442, 1451
Flemister v. Central Ga. R. Co.	463	Florman v. Dodds & C. Ex. Co.	2415	Fogleman v. State	1021, 1022
v. State	1614, 1985	Florscheim v. Fry	1633, 1680	Fok Yung Yo v. U. S.	1355
Flemming v. Lawless	1859e, 1860	Floto v. Floto	1738, 1873	Folek v. Williams	2466
v. State	1476	Flournoy v. Newton	1256	Foldager v. Atwood-Stone Co.	18
Fletcher, Re	393	v. State	521	Folds v. State	851
v. Bradyll	2152	v. Warden	2135, 2529	Foley v. New York O. & W. R. Co.	451
v. Com.	1018, 1873	Flower v. Brumbach	1963	v. Northern Cal. P. Co.	1976
v. Crosbie	1891	v. MacGinniss	1856a	v. Pioneer M. & M. Co.	437, 1976
v. Dixon	1951, 1974	v. R. Co.	1168	v. Platt	715
v. Fletcher	1035	v. Young	1647	v. Pay	2572
v. Fuller	1640	Flowers v. Bush & Witherspoon Co.	1967	v. Royal Arcanum	7a, 2388
v. Henley	1031	v. Fletcher	702	v. State,	
v. Horne	1318	v. Flowers	1738	59 N. J. L.	205
v. Jackson	1195	v. Haralson	1605	11 Wyo.	1434, 1445, 2098
v. Los Angeles T. & S. Bank	2528				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Foley-Wadsworth Co. v. Solomon	2525	Force v. Martin	133, 905	Forrester v. Hurtt	1339
Folger v. Boyinton	1067	Forcheimer v. Stewart	1976	v. Pigon	583
Folk v. Schaeffer	1053	Ford v. Beech	2435	v. Southern Pac. R. Co.	1078
Folkes v. Chadd	442, 451, 728, 1917	v. Cunningham	1234, 1280	Forsaith v. Clark	1195, 1219, 1225, 1267, 1651
Follain v. Dupré	530	v. Ford,		Forshaw v. Lewis	2313
v. Lefevre	2168, 2578	4 Ala.	2086	Forshee v. Abrams	2354
Follansbee v. Walker	1911, 2351	27 D. C. App.	68, 1352	Forster v. Rogers	18
Follett v. Jefferyes	2298	7 Humph. Tenn.	1503, 1605, 1611, 1985	Forsyth v. Charlebois	2327
Folly v. Smith	1911	11 Humph. Tenn.	1415, 1893	v. Clark	1010
Folsom v. Brown	1022, 2349, 2356	v. Grey	1080, 1082, 1257, 1573	v. Cothran	1807
v. Cressey	2450	v. Hale	1321	v. Doolittle	672, 680, 685
v. Log-driving Co.	759, 760, 761	v. Haskell	1776	v. Kreakbaum	1082, 1083
v. Manchester	2354	v. Kansas City	235	v. Nostrand	987
v. R. Co.	461, 1976	v. Nesmith	2164	v. Vehmeyer	1273
v. Scott	1195	v. Providence C. Co.	1158	Forsyth Boulevard v. Forsyth	463
Foltz v. State	93, 667	v. R. Co.	1561	Forsythe v. Norcross	1558
Folwell v. Journal Co.	209	v. Savage	2433	Fort v. Clarke	1573
Fonda v. R. Co.,		v. State,		v. State	2059
71 Minn.	65, 287	71 Ala.	15, 106, 689, 1938	Fort Smith & W. R. Co. v. Winston	56
77 Minn.	1976	21 Ariz.	1644, 1681, 2086	Fort Smith Oil Co. v. Slover	1078, 1500
Fonder v. General Construction Co.	283	34 Ark.	351	Fort Wayne v. Coombs	561, 562
Fondi v. Boston Mutual Life Ins. Co.	1639	92 Ga.	987	Fort Wayne & W. V. T. Co. v. Rondebush	1550
Fong Yue Ting v. U. S.	4a, 516, 1355	73 Miss.	2501	Fort Worth & D. C. R. Co. v. Roberts	2450
Fong Yuk, Re	1620	75 Miss.	832, 852	v. Thompson	1976
Fonnereau v. Poyntz	2470	5 Okl. Cr.	2100	Fort Worth Belt R. Co. v. Cabell	1112
Fonseca v. Cunard S. Co.	2415	101 Tenn.	136, 279	Fortescue & Coake's Case	873, 1364
Fonsick v. Agar	1404	v. Teal	1347	Fortier v. Stone	2485, 2491
Fontaine v. Beers	1779	v. Tennant	2317, 2319	Fortis v. Fortis	1336
Fonte v. State	309	v. Tirrell	2464	Fortuño v. Ferrerras	2046
Fonts v. State	832	v. Whitaker	1249	Fosdahl v. State	154, 368
Fonville v. Atlanta & C. A. L. R. Co.	1476	v. Wiley	461	Fosha v. Prosser	2442
Foot v. Bentley	1234	Forde's Case	1020, 1037	Foskett & B. Co. v. Swayne	2496
v. Buchanan	2283	Fordham v. Gouverneur	458	Foss v. Haynes	2257
v. Hunkins	1021	v. Smith	1006	v. McRae	2575
v. Silliman	1225	Fordyce v. Godman	1350	v. Portsmouth N. H. & Y. R. Co.	461
v. Tracy	70, 73, 209	v. Lowman	1951	v. Smith	792
Foot v. Beecher	1083	Foreman v. Archer	2408	v. Van Wagoner	20
v. Cobb	1312, 1779	Foresman v. Marsh	1225, 1651	Foss' Est., Paddon v. Thatcher, Re	2470
v. Foote	2046	Forest Preserve Dist. v. Borchard	463	Fossett v. State	1618
v. Hayne	2313	v. Caraher	463	Fossler v. Schriber	2329
v. Richmond	1877	v. Wallace	463	Fosston Mfg. Co. v. Lemke	1387
v. Woodworth	437	Forester v. Guard	2354	Fossum v. R. Co.	714
Foot & D. Co. v. Malony	1944	Forgey v. Bank	2008, 2012	Foster v. Atlanta R. Co.	299
Forbes v. Caruthers	1917, 1956	Formby v. Wood	497	v. Beals	1083
v. Howard	716	Fornes v. Wright	2494	v. Bowman	1195
v. Morse	266	Fornette v. Carmichael	1335	v. Brooks	1621, 1938
v. Myers	406	Forney v. Ferrell	1081	v. Coffey	2498
v. Omaha	1168	v. Hallacher	2086	v. Collner	2009, 2016
v. Snyder	1389	v. Hallagher	1373, 1404	v. Crawford	240
v. U. S.	1164	Fornhill v. Murray	2083		
v. Wale	1309, 2138	Forrest v. Kissam	1390, 1438		
v. Wall	2141	v. Portland R. L. & P. Co.	2389		
v. Waller	581	v. State	1750		
		v. Trammell	2132		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Foster v. East Jordan L. Co.	1976	Fountain v. Brown	229, 568, 1938, 1974	Fox v. Spears	2297
v. F. & C. Co.	675, 1770	v. Connecticut F. Ins. Co.	451	v. State	1387, 2569
v. Foster,		v. Lynn	1652	v. Stevens	282
1 Add.	2106	v. State	198	v. Vanderbeck	2097
N. J. L., 114 Atl.	2046	v. Wabash R. Co.	719, 1704	v. Whitney	529
v. Globe Venture Synd.	2566, 2569	v. Young	2302	v. Wunderlich	2349
v. Gray	7	Fountain's Adm'r v. Ware	912, 2103	Fox's Will	2106
v. Hall,		Fountain, In re	1521	Foxley's Case	276
12 Pick.	334, 1082, 2291, 2294, 2295	v. Wampanoag Mills	451	Foxworth v. Brown	1254, 1318, 1651
7 S. & R.	2169	v. Washington R. & E. Co.	199	Foy v. Com.	1819
v. Hobson	1072	Fourth Nat'l Bank v. Albaugh	1076, 1083, 1890	Fraim v. Ins. Co.	571
v. Jolly	2444	v. Commonwealth	463	Frain v. State	1062
v. Krause	568, 950	v. McArthur	797, 2015	Fraley v. Fraley	228
v. McDonald	2205	v. Wilson	93	Fralick v. Presley	1083, 1884, 1890
v. Mackay	1195, 1196, 2550	Foute v. State	318	Framingham Mfg. Co.	
v. Mackinnon	2415, 2416, 2419	Fowke v. Berington	1584, 1591, 1592	v. Barnard	1469
v. Magill	1249	Fowkes v. Ins. Co.	1021	France v. Lucy	1208
v. Mansfield	2408	v. Pascoe	2065	Francis v. Edwards	1072
v. Montgomery	1674	Fowler, Re	2235	v. Francis	2531
v. Newbrough	1985	v. Delaplain	1960	v. Hazelrig	1065
v. Nowlin	1133, 1779	v. Fowler,		v. Ins. Co.	1195
v. People,		111 Mich.	770, 1944	v. Mayor	1678
18 Mich.	348, 2270, 2276	113 Mich.	73	v. Roades	615
63 N. Y.	1157	v. Hoffman	1275	v. Rosa	770, 1018
v. Pierce	2276	v. Ins. Co.	64	v. State,	
v. Pointer	1208	v. Iowa Land Co.	21	188 Ala.	1404
v. Shaw	1126, 1666, 1676	v. Lewis	1690	16 Okl. Cr.	1620
v. Shepherd	1671, 1726, 2115	v. Middlesex	714	v. Wilkinson	1085, 1738
v. Sinkler	1554, 1561	v. More	1267	Franco v. Bolton	986
v. State,		v. Pierce	1350	Franev v. Union Stock-yard & T. Co.	461
88 Ala.	1195	v. Sergeant	285	Frank v. Bank	795
45 Ark.	580	v. Simpson	1484	v. Berry	694, 2021
70 Miss.	1803	v. State	804, 1117, 1118	v. Gump	2536
63 N. Y.	416	v. Stebbins	2529	v. Hanly	252
39 Tex. Cr.	521	v. Strawberry Hill	1899	v. Lilienfeld	604
v. Trull	1269	Fowler's Will	1081, 1738	v. Longstreet	1206, 1213
v. U. S.	1557	Fowles v. Joslyn	2102	v. Morley's Estate	2317
v. Wallace	1250, 1293, 1779	Fowles' Will, Re	2532	v. Pennie	1543
v. Ward	716	Fowlie v. Cruse	76, 406	v. Reuter	1225
v. Woodfin	1779	Fowlkes v. Lea	2433	v. State,	
v. Worthing	1040, 1042	Fox v. B. & O. R. Co.	1168	141 Ga.	59, 363, 988, 1807
Foster's Appeal	1267, 1736	v. Barrett	1062	39 Miss.	824, 833
Foster's Will	797, 2016	v. Derrickson	1859	94 Wis.	2497
Foster-Milburn Co. v. Chinn	1944	v. Lambson	167, 1195, 1225, 1239, 1651, 2454	v. Wright	21, 1078, 2510a
Fothergill v. Fothergill	1081	v. Lead Works	949	Frank Waterhouse Co.	
Fouché v. Bank	2109	v. Manchester	266	v. Rock Island A. M. Co.	288
Fouke v. Douglass	1350	v. Mining Co.	439, 2524, 2580	Frankenthal v. Solomonson	2235
v. Ray	1215	v. Pedigo	1188	Frankford & B. T. Co.	
Foulk v. Colburn	1267	v. Peninsular Works	1700	v. R. Co.	461
v. Eckert	1985	v. People	309, 1249, 1256	Frankfort & K. R. R. Co. v. Windsor	1943
Foulke v. Bray	1190, 1226	v. R. Co.	2413	Frankfort Gen. Ins. Co.	
Foulke's Case	1339	v. Reil	1287, 1300	v. Pillsbury	4c
Foulkes v. Sellway	77, 206, 692	v. Shanley	581, 2495	Frankhouser v. Neally	1415
Fountain v. Boodle	1984			Frankland v. Johnson	2444
				Franklin v. Atlanta & C. A. L. R. Co.	747



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Franklin v. Com.	949, 1041, 1072, 1124, 1850, 1975	Frear v. Drinker	1911	Freind's (Sir John) Trial	2213
v. Creyon	1215, 1658	v. Evertson	1085	Freleigh v. State	1878
v. Engel	252, 458	Freasier v. State	507, 1821, 1828, 1832	Fremont B. & E. Co. v. Peters	1037, 1044
v. Franklin,		Fred v. Fred	2408	Fremont E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Marley	1225, 1943
L. R. Prob.	2276	Fred M. Laurence, The	285	v. Whalen	1943
90 Tenn.	85, 309, 934, 1021, 2016	Freda v. Tischbein	1779	Fremoult v. Dedire	2573
v. Killilea	2420	Freddy v. State	59, 1841	French v. Day	2498
v. Mayor	726	Frederick v. Brainard	657	v. Fitch	463
v. State,		v. Morse	1271	v. Hall	1911
28 Ala.	851	Fredericks v. Judah	1388	v. Merrill	1126, 1129
29 Ala.	194, 246	Frederickson v. Iowa C. R. Co.	93	v. Millard	923, 1612, 1985
145 Ala.	276, 1254	v. Johnson	406	v. Millville Mfg. Co.	1074
69 Ga.	792, 2264	Fredericton Boom Co. v. McPherson	1890	v. Piper	463
53 Tex. Cr.	2060	Fredin v. Richards	1770	v. Sale	691, 923, 1111, 1612, 1614, 1615, 1985
88 Tex. Cr.	2060	Fredrick v. State	857	v. Spinning	461
v. U. S.	18	Free v. Buckingham	932, 935, 944, 1817, 1820, 2213	v. State,	
v. Webber	283			47 Tex. Cr.	398
Franklin Bank v. Navig. Co.	905, 907, 1028, 1078	v. Hawkins	2444	93 Wis.	233
Franklin Fire Ins. Co.		v. Southern R. Co.	1271	v. Virginian R. Co.	1530
v. Gruver	1946, 1947	v. Western Union Tel. Co.	1856, 1859e	v. Ware	2237, 2337
v. Martin	2425, 2434	Freeburn v. Baltimore & O. R. Co.	20	v. Wilkinson	437, 1154
Franklin Syndicate, Re	2283	Freed v. U. S.	2060	Fretwell v. State	682
Franklin's Adm'r's Appeal	2514	Freehart v. Stanford	1548	Freud v. State	273, 354
Franks v. Gress Lumber Co.	771	Freel v. R. Co.	2382	Freund v. Becker	1738
Frary v. Gusha	1938	Freeland v. Heron	1073	Freyman v. Knecht	437
Fraser v. Berkeley	1766, 1789	Freels v. State	1021	Frick v. Barbour	291
v. Black	2098	Freeman v. Arkell	1194, 1195, 2363	v. Lewis	4c
v. Charleston	1661, 2451			v. Reynolds	1084
v. Drew	2349	v. Blount	2511	v. State	106, 108
v. Fraser	745	v. Brewster,		Fricker v. Moore	803
v. Hopkins	1647, 1650	93 Ga.	1076, 1464, 2148, 2296, 2317	Friday v. Pennsylvania R. Co.	654
v. James	1352	94 Ga.	830	Friedberg v. People	2056
v. Jennison	1304, 1502, 1503, 1908, 1938, 2384, 2391	v. Brittin	529	Friedlander v. Assur. Co.	907
v. Pigott	2463	v. Dalton	2510a	Friedman v. U. S.	461
v. Sutherland	2311	v. First National Bank	1503	Friedman's Estate	1491, 1495
v. Tupper	1951	v. Fogg	285	Friel v. Wood	2231
Fratini v. Caslani	1730, 2159, 2233	v. Freeman,		Friend v. Beach	2498
Frauenthal v. State	963	62 Ill.	612	v. Burleigh	1749, 1750
Frazee v. State,		Mass., 130 N. E.	944, 2336	v. Hanrill	259, 367, 1789
58 Ind.	1182, 2281	71 W. Va.	608, 1938	v. Ingersoll	1698
12 Okl. Cr.	916	v. Grashel	1976	v. R. Co.	2319
Frazer v. Linton	1124	v. Ins. Co.	1951	v. Yahr	2530
Frazier v. Basset	1651	v. Phillipps	1483, 1588	Friendly v. Lee	736, 738, 763
v. Com.	396	v. Price	74	Frierson v. Com.	1154, 2071
v. Drayton	1542	v. State,		v. Frazier	283
v. Laughlin	1680, 2218	150 Ark.	1442	Fries v. Brugler	987, 1021, 1026, 1028, 2268, 2270
v. McCloskey	406	50 Fla.	18	Frink v. Frink	2450
v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.	7a	112 Ga.	1445	v. Phelps	1777
v. Moore	1312	Okl. Cr., 203 Pac.	280, 1808	v. Potter	571, 1415
v. R. Co.	250, 1984	40 Tex. Cr.	1750	Frisbee v. Cole	1347
v. State,		Tex. Cr., 239 S. W.	1750	Fritcher v. Kelly	1938, 2384
42 Ark.	1029, 2100	v. Walker	1058	Frith v. Frith	792
135 Ind.	351, 2273	Freeny v. Freeny	507	v. Sprague	1271
48 Tex. Cr.	2239	Freeport v. Isbell	2220	Fritz v. Chicago G. & E. Co.	1960
				v. Tel. Co.	461, 1951, 1974
				Frizell v. Cole	664
				Frohs v. Dubuque	283

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Froman v. Com.	1877, 2016	Fuller v. State,		Furness-Withy & Co. v.	
Frome v. Dennis	1777	147 Ala.	987	Fahey	2463
Fronsdahl v. Civil Serv-		Ariz., 205 Pac.	133,	Furrow v. Chapin	2235
ice Commission	4c		949	Fursdon v. Clogg	1469
Frontier Steam Laundry		109 Ga.	821, 826, 2236	Furst v. R. Co.	1020, 1040
Co. v. Connolly	461	r. Stevens	715	Fussell v. State	284, 660,
Frontino v. Frost	2089	r. Sylvia	2421		1126
Frost v. Barber	1856a	r. Valiquette	15	Fyson v. Kemp	1279
r. Brown	1267, 1573	r. Weaver	2471		
r. Rosecrans	15, 581	Fuller Co. v. Darragh	969		
r. Shapleigh	2450	Fullerton v. Fordyce	682,		
r. Wolf	1213		1873, 2220, 2484		
Fruit Dispatch Co. v.		Fullerton Lumber Co. v.			
Murray	1976	Hosford	664		
Fry v. Bennett	406	Fullington v. Williams	1350		
v. State,		Fulmer v. Com.	392		
27 Ind.	1674	Fulmore v. R. Co.	199		
96 Tenn.	928	Fulsom-Morris C. & M.			
r. Stowers	1072, 1082, 1568	Co. v. Mitchell	288		
r. Wood	1404, 1406	Fulsome v. Concord	1977		
Fry's Will	1512	Fulton v. Andrew	2503		
Frye v. Bank	923, 1985	v. Bayne	1225		
v. Gullion	2498	v. Central Bank	1890		
Fryer v. Modern Wood-		r. Hood	2027		
men	7a	r. Hughes	1934		
Fudge v. Marquell	1064,	r. McCracken	728		
	1640, 2596	r. Northern Ill. Col-			
v. Payne	2465	lege	2538		
Fugate v. Pierce	613	r. State	105		
Fuhry v. Chicago City		r. U. S.	968, 1807		
R. Co.	1719	Fulton Bank v. Benedict	1985		
Fulbright v. Perry Co.	2500	v. Stafford	901, 913,		
Fulcher v. State	821, 2272		1885, 1890		
Fulham v. Howe	1671, 1684	Fulton Co. v. Phillips	2349		
Fulkerson v. Holmes	1481,	Fulton Works v. Kimball	283		
	1490, 1573	Fulton's Estate	1542, 1548		
Fullam v. Rose	728	Fulwood's Case	2239		
Fuller v. Dean	1072	Fund Com'rs v. Glass	2165		
v. Fair	1778	Funderberg v. State	59, 1109		
v. Fletcher	2349, 2354	Funderburk v. State	357,		
v. Fox	2016		949, 1034, 1072		
v. Fuller,		Funk v. Davis	2477		
17 Cal.	1828, 2086	v. Eggleston	614		
108 Ga.	280	v. Ely	1551, 1557		
177 Mass.	2336	v. Mohr	2312		
v. Hampton	1062	v. U. S.	276		
r. Hollander	1858	Funkhouser v. Pogue	2232		
r. Ins. Co.	1955	Funston v. R. Co.	1951		
r. Jackson	252, 437	Fuqua v. Bogard	1085		
r. Knights of Pythias	7a,	v. Com.	944, 1398, 1413,		
	2388		1435, 1445, 1669		
r. Maine Central R.		Furber v. Hilliard	705, 2024		
Co.	252, 1871	Furbush v. Maryland			
r. New York L. Ins.		C. Co.	1976		
Co.	2531	Furlong v. Carraher			
r. Prentice	2202	102 Ia.	1938		
r. Rapid Transit Co.	2220	108 Ia.	1938, 1958		
r. Rice	1390	Furlong & Meloy v.			
r. Robinson	19, 1730,	American C. F.			
	2242	Ins. Co.	1058		
r. Saxton	1605	v. North B. & M. Ins.			
v. State,		Co.	751		
117 Ala.	794, 851,	Furman v. Peay	1558		
	1442, 1974	Furneaux v. Hutchins	380		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Galbraith v. Galbraith	585	Gangi v. Fradus	1053, 1058	Gardner v. M. C. R.	
v. Green	1133	Gannon v. Gaslight Co.	2495	Co.	2552
v. McLain	612, 2334	v. Moles	2437	v. Meeker	377, 1066, 1404
v. Starks	1539	v. State	2339	v. Minea	2354
v. Zimmerman	1388, 1409	v. Stevens	770, 775, 2098	v. Moulton	1075
Galbreath v. Eichel-		Gano v. Gano	2477	v. Newbert	4c
berger	9, 987	Ganong v. Green	334	v. People	1750, 1852
v. Knoxville	1230	Ganow v. Ashton	772, 1681	v. Port Blakely M.	
v. U. S.	260, 290,	Gant v. Carmichael	1230	Co.	1676
	1194, 1230	Ganther v. Jenks	1074	v. Porter	2496
Gale v. Ins. Co.	581	Ganthier v. The King	2509	v. Preston	321
v. Lincoln	1072	Gantling v. State,		v. R. Co.	21, 987
v. People	987, 1808,	40 Fla.	568, 826,	v. State,	
	2268, 2276		1012, 2497	55 Fla.	1447, 1449
v. R. Co.	950	41 Fla.	2073, 2081	81 Ga.	950
v. Salas	50	Ganton v. Size	1464	90 Ga.	1963
v. Shillock	18	Gantt v. Cox	916	4 Ind.	1908
v. State	1390	Gantz v. State	1828	Tex. Cr., 34 S. W.	1072
Galena & C. U. R. Co.		Garber v. Blatchley	285	v. Vidal	2016
v. Fay	461, 1029, 1748,	v. State	1732	v. Way	341, 987
	1750, 1757	Garbutz L. Co. v. Gress		v. Welch	2437
Galena & S. W. R. Co.		L. Co.	1189, 1651	Gardner Peerage Case	688,
v. Haslam	1943	v. People	1700		760, 1230, 1490,
Gallagher v. Assur. Co.	1246,	Garcia v. Garzot	1336, 1606		1662, 1700, 1722, 2380
	1313	v. People	1442	Gardom, Re	2437
v. Delargy	1513	v. State,		v. Woodward	581
v. Land Co.	1247	34 Fla.	1802	Garev v. Nicholson	2113,
v. McBride	2593	88 Tex. Cr.	857		2115
v. People	571, 1116	Garcin v. Garcin	2046	Garfield v. Peerless M.	
v. R. Co.	1597, 1690, 1693,	Gardam & Son v. Batter-		C. Co.	2440
	1698, 1699	son	95	Garfield M. & M. Co.	
v. Williamson	2311	Garden City v. Heller	754	v. Hammer	1225
Gallaher v. State	851	Garden City S. Co. v.		Garfield Smelting Co.	
Gallatin Co. Farmers'		Miller	1681	v. Ind.	4c
Alliance v. Flannery	1530	Gardenhire v. Parks	1514,	Garland, Ex parte	7
Gallick v. Bordeaux	1779		1985	v. Clarkson	1856c
Gallion v. Winfree	1124	Gardere v. Fisk	1212	v. Foster Co. S. Bank	1188
Gallivan v. O'Donnell	2529	v. Ins. Co.	2164	v. Furst Store	1168, 2509
Galloway v. Perkins	571	Gardiner v. Gray	2434	v. Gaines	2185
Gallup v. Armstrong	2166	v. McDonough	2434, 2463	v. Scott	2294
Galveston v. Barbour	1749	v. People	1157	Garlick v. Dalbey	1777
Galveston H. & S. A. R.		Gardner v. Barney	1350	v. Northern P. R. Co.	1890
Co. v. Davis	208, 250,	v. Bartholomew	987, 1116	Garnan v. Fox	2426
	1984	v. Bonestell	4c	Garneau v. Mill Co.	1654
v. Matula	1908	v. Brookline	463	Garner v. Graves	1085
Galvin v. Beals	377	v. Commercial Ma-		v. Johns	2415
v. Palmer	1680, 2168	chine Co.	1951	v. Stamford	1750
v. R. Co.	2433	v. Connelly	907	v. State,	
v. State	2349	v. Eberhart	2575	97 Ark.	821, 1880
Gamble v. Mfg. Co.	2466	v. Frieze	1738	28 Fla.	111, 246,
v. Riley	2410	v. Gardner,			247, 248
Gambrill v. Schooley	406,	23 Nev.	397	31 Fla.	246, 247, 248
	460, 581, 1270, 2018	177 Pa.	112	5 Lea	18, 2110
Ganahl v. Shore	1539, 1547	104 Tenn.	2239	76 Miss.	1021
Ganaway v. Dramatic		v. Grannis	1311, 1651,	v. Taylor	1777
Ass'n	1755		2138, 2140, 2141	Garnet v. Ball	1070
Gandia v. Porto Rico		v. Heyer	2463	Garnett, Re	2065
Fert. Co.	2530	v. Hughes	2520	v. Ferrand	1834
Gandolfo v. Palmer	1614	v. Irvin	2311	Garnett's Goods	2452
v. State	63, 246,	v. Kellogg	1135	Garnett-Botfield v. Gar-	
	1983, 1986	v. Kiburz	2465	nett-Botfield	2421
Ganer v. Lady Lanes-		v. Ladue	1658	Garnier v. Berry	1651
borough	564, 1271	v. Lewis	1271, 1703	Garnier's Estate	2477
Gang Gong, In re	1355	v. Madeira	398	Garnsey v. Rhodes	950

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Garr v. Craney	561	Garwood v. Hastings	1225,	Geddes v. McElroy	1072
Garrabrandt v. Boston			1651	Gee v. Ward	1483, 1484
Molasses Co.	1869	v. R. Co.	1698	Gee Cue Beng v. U. S.	1354
Garran v. Michigan C.		Gary v. Terrill	1779	Geer v. Durham W. Co.	561
R. Co.	571	Gaskill v. King	2237, 2336	v. Goudy	2341
Garrard v. Frankel	2418	v. Skene	1073	v. M. L. & M. Co.	797, 2016
v. State	822, 836,	Gass v. Stinson	586, 986,	Geery v. Hopkins	1177, 1223,
	858, 861		1377, 1391, 1985		2211
Garrells v. Alexander	694,	Gassenheimer v. State	275,	Gehrke v. State	1938
	728, 1993, 2005		326, 770, 1974	Geiger v. Sanitary Farm	
Garrett v. Ferguson	2444	Gasser v. Great North-		Dairies Co.	2446
v. Garrett	2046	ern Ins. Co.	1213	v. State,	
v. Hanshue	1288, 1299,	Gassert v. Noyes	581	6 Nebr.	2339
	1300	Gassett v. Glazier	2556	70 Oh.	1072
v. Heflin	2503	Gaston v. Merriam	392, 1225,	Geisendorff v. Eagles	684
v. Mannheimer	581		1352	Geist v. Rapp	791
v. St. Louis Transit		v. State,		Gelott v. Goodspeed	1304,
Co.	2273	117 Ala.	364		1312, 1320
v. Southern R. Co.	2509	95 Ark.	1807, 2060	Gelpcke v. Dubuque	6
v. Sparks	905, 907,	Gate City Abstract Co.		Gelston v. Hoyt	2566
	916	v. Post	93	Gendelman v. Mongillo	2465
v. State	1028	Gater v. State	290	General Conference	
v. Tel. Co.	1969	Gates v. Bennett	1267	Ass'n v. Michigan S.	
v. Weinberg,		v. Fleischer	681, 683, 1951	& B. Ass'n	1678, 1681
54 S. C.	529, 1330	v. Gates	2239	General Film Co. v.	
59 S. C.	1623	v. People	154, 841, 1125,	Sampliner	1859b
Garretty v. Brazell	2355		1128, 1852	General Hospital Soc'y	
Garrido v. Asencio	1074, 1560	v. R. Co.	2552	v. New Haven R. Co.	2155
Garrigues v. Harris	1186,	v. Winslow	1678	Genest v. Odell Mfg. Co.	949,
	1205, 1871, 2105, 2158	Gathercole v. Miall	1194,		987
Garrison v. Blanton	689,		1195, 2150	Geneva v. Burnett	735
	1935, 1938, 1975	Gathings v. Howard	2500	Gentry v. Gulf & S. I. R.	
v. Case T. M. Co.	2435	Gattis v. Kilgo	1064	Co.	2220, 2484
v. Com.	905	Gatzmeyer v. Peterson	133,	v. McGinnis	167, 1151,
v. Glass	1254, 2124		282, 2060		1154, 1960, 1977
v. Modern Woodmen	7a	Gaudy v. R. Co.	456	Genz v. State	1938, 2501
v. Owens	1312, 2406	Gauerke v. Kiley	19, 75	Genzberger v. Adams	2169
v. People	2061	Gauldin v. Madison	2450	Geohegan v. Eckles	2164
v. State	905	Gaunt v. Harkness	2015	v. Union Elev. R. Co.	1908
Garrott v. Johnson	2098	v. State	166, 1150, 1154	George v. Pilcher	1106, 1108,
Garrus v. Davis	1958	Gauntlett v. Whitworth	1940		1109
Garske v. Ridgeville	458,	Gauss, Ex parte	2271	v. R. Co.	461
	2034	Gavan v. Ellsworth	1387	v. Radford	1877
Gartner v. Mohan	568	Gavisk v. R. Co.	1951	v. Shannon	675
Gartrell v. Stafford	2153	Gavit v. Snowhill	1681	v. State,	
Gartside v. Ins. Co.	2384	Gay v. Gay	2579	39 Miss.	2056
v. Outram	2212	v. Lloyd	1256, 1681	16 Nebr.	1021
Garvey v. Hibbert,		v. Rogers	1186	61 Nebr.	276, 851,
1 Jac. & W.	2166	v. Shadle	716		1896
19 Ves. Jr.	2477	v. State	2081	v. Stubbs	585
Garvik v. Burlington		Gayer v. Gayer	1380	v. Surrey	693
C. R. & N. R. Co.,		Gayle v. Bishop	1877	v. Thompson	1208
124 Ia.	1150	Gazelle, The	562, 563	v. Triplett	904, 905
131 Ia.	1135	Gazett, Re	1280	v. Williams	2444
Garvin v. Carroll	1215, 1216,	Gearhart v. Dixon	1661	George M. Keebler, Inc.	
	2529	Gearty v. City of N. Y.	1777	v. Land T. & T. Co.	18
v. State	1154, 2016	Geary v. People	1022	Georgia v. Bond	73, 2276,
v. Wells	2572	v. Stevenson	64, 258, 1078		2277
v. Western Cooperage		Gebhardt v. United R.		v. Kepford	2071
Co.	461, 1067,	Co.	280, 1053, 2298	Georgia & F. R. Co., Re	4c
	1481, 1483	Gebhart v. Burket	64, 66	Georgia F. & A. R. Co.	
Garwood v. Dennis	1133,	v. Shindie	499	v. Sasser	285, 1415
	1311, 1420,	Gebus v. Minneapolis St.		Georgia H. Ins. Co. v.	
	1573, 1680, 1778, 2141	Co. P. & S. S. M. R.	1750	Campbell	946



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Georgia H. Ins. Co. v. Warten	1078	Gerrish v. Pike	1003	Gibson v. Gibson,	
Georgia Iron & C. Co. v. Ocean Acc. & G. Co.	2465	v. Sweetser	1062	24 Mo.	1738
Georgia Med. Co. v. Hyman & Co.	2415	v. Whitfield	455	9 Yerg.	689, 1938, 1958
Georgia N. R. Co. v. Hutchins	20	Gertz v. Fitchburg R. Co.	987, 1000, 1017, 1106, 1109, 1116	v. Goldthwait	1391
Georgia P. R. Co. v. Strickland	1195	Gervais v. Baird	1290, 1320	v. Hatchett	461, 1951, 1976
Georgia R. & B. Co. v. Andrews	1013	Gervasi v. Societa Giuseppe Garibaldi	4e	v. Holmes	2450
v. Fitzgerald	1081, 1461	Gesell v. Baugher	233, 2500	v. Hunter	38, 309, 377, 2495
v. Hicks	1976	Getchell v. Hill,		v. Ins. Co.	2558
v. Lybrend	280, 959, 2276	19 Minn.	681	v. Maine C. R. Co.	2510
v. Smith	1035	21 Minn.	1951	v. Peebles	1466
Georgia R. & E. Co. v. Dougherty	2570	Gethin v. Walker	1206, 1225	v. Poor	2139, 2143
v. Gilleland	1974	Gettelman v. Assur. Co.	2437	v. Robinson	2110
v. Harris	2494	Getto v. Binkert	2444	v. Seney	321, 1029
v. Wallace	1062	Getty v. Getty	2067	v. Snow	2307
Georgia R. Co. v. Homer	987	v. Hamlin	283	v. State,	
v. Oaks	1126	v. Hutton	507	126 Ala.	1442
Georgia S. & F. R. Co. v. Cartledge	283	Getzlaff v. Seliger	613, 2297	53 Tex. Cr.	1079, 2100
Gerald v. State	1447	Geveke v. G. R. & I. R. Co.	1976	v. Sutton	1681
Geralopulo v. Weiler	1240, 1288, 1456	Geyman v. District Court	1862	v. Thornton	1189
Gerber v. Probey	1616	Gfeller, Ex parte	2210, 2261, 2268, 2309, 2329	v. Trowbridge	696, 2008
Gerdes v. Iron & F. Co.	2553	v. Lappe	2523	v. Von Glahn Hotel Co.	2569
Gere v. Ins. Co.	716	Gharst v. St. Louis T. Co.	2165	v. Winter	1076
Gerhardt v. Tucker	2434	Gholson v. Lefevre	1225	Gick v. Stumpf	1738
Gerhauser v. Ins. Co.	1415	Gianini v. Cerini	969	Giddings v. Smith	2145
Gerlinger v. Frank	213, 987	Giannone v. Fleetwood	1290, 1291	Gidney v. Logan	1779
Germain v. Lumber Co.	2437, 2440	Gibbard v. Evans	235	Giffen v. Lewiston	283
German v. German	2336, 2498	Gibbins v. Metcalfe	1856c	Giffin v. Martel	437
German Bank v. Citizens' Bank	669	Gibblehouse v. Stong	1049, 1080, 1082, 1257, 1457	Gifford v. Ford	2016
German Ins. Co. v. Bartlett	1460	Gibbon v. Featherstonhaugh	2518	v. People	1614, 1852, 1985
v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.	1951	Gibbons v. Gibbons C. M. & M. Co.	2433, 2437	Gihon v. Albert	2210
v. Gibe	2437	v. Powell	1208	Gila Valley G. N. R. Co. v. Hall	1072, 2549
German N. Bank v. Leonard	1073, 1330	v. Proprietors of Waterloo Bridge	2259b	v. Lyon	1951
German Sav. Bank v. Kerlin	1877	v. R. Co.	455, 456	Gilbert v. Boyd	1207, 2535
German Theol. School v. Dubuque	792	v. Terr.	451, 1005, 1071, 2115	v. Campbell,	
German-American Bank v. Stickler	393	v. Tuttle	2195	1 Hann. N. Br.	1073
German-American Ins. Co. v. Brown	15	Gibbs v. Cook	1312	13 N. Br.	1890
v. Paul	714, 2337, 2341	v. Linabury	1051	v. Com.,	
v. Steige	1947	v. Linsley	1125, 1126	111 Ky.	1842, 2071
Germania L. Ins. Co. v. Ross-Lewin	569, 1671	v. Pike	20	Ky., 51 S. W.	580
Germinder v. Machinery M. I. Ass'n	987	v. Potter	1198	v. Duncan	1244, 1254
Geron v. Felder	1680, 1684	v. State,		v. Gilbert	664, 1738
Gerrish v. Gerrish	770	144 Ga.	1750	v. Gooderham	1023, 1041
		186 Ind.	1157	v. Guild	1951
		Giberson v. Mills Co.,		v. Kennedy	463, 1246, 1976
		174 Pa.	1078	v. McGinnis	2425, 2440
		187 Pa.	1404	v. Nat'l C. R. Co.	2575, 2578
		Gibney v. Marchay	1257	v. Odum	657, 1960
		Gibson v. Anderson	1350	v. Palmer	1073
		v. Boston	1048, 1076	v. Porter	1058
		v. Buis	1133, 2065	v. R. Co.,	
		v. Com.	1215, 1681	160 Mass.	225, 792
				116 Mich.	905
				v. State,	
				90 Ga.	2511a
				27 Ga. App.	2059
				8 Okl. Cr.	56
				v. The King	1730, 1750

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Gilbert Mfg. Co. v.		Gillmore v. Fitzgerald	2105	Glasgow v. Metropolitan	
Bryan	2442	Gillooley v. State	2395	St. R. Co.	1040, 1976
Gilbraith v. State	347	Gillott v. State	1130	v. R. Co.	1976
Gilbraith's Est.	2498, 2517	Gillrie v. Lockport	458	v. Ridgeley	18, 1299
Gilbreath v. State	1398, 1404	Gilman v. Gross	2410	Glaspell v. R. Co.	2349
Gilchrist v. Ass'n	736, 747	v. Hoosac Tunnel &		Glass v. Beach	736
v. Bale	1714, 1730,	W. R. Co.	1382	v. Bennett	1126, 1127,
	2239	v. R. Co.	249		1128, 1129, 1730
v. M'Kee	923	v. Riopelle	380, 661, 1680	v. Gilbert	2529
v. Martin	1464	v. Sheets	2529	v. Hulbert	2417
v. Mystic Workers	7a, 1073,	v. Strafford	681, 683	v. State	276, 949
	1646	Gilman's Trial	580	v. State Board	4c
Gilcrease v. McCullough	1347	Gilman & Son Co. v.		Glass' Estate	233, 1738, 1958
Gildersleeve v. Atkinson	2065	Turner	2441	Glasscock v. Com'r	1651
v. Caraway	2098	Gilmanton v. Ham	166, 1154	v. Weare	2531
Giles v. Giles	1576, 1736,	Gilmer v. Atlanta	458	Glassell v. Mason	1192
	2495	v. Higley	1890	Glassington, Re	2463
v. Hodge	233	Gilmore v. Gilmore	1730	Glauber Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Powell	1876	v. Jenkins	2471	Voter	654, 785
v. Vandiver	1072	v. Lee	2503	Glaze v. Whitley	1108, 1109
Gilfillan v. Gilfillan's		v. Paper Co.	1078	Glazier v. Hebron	792
Estate	89	v. State,		Gleadow v. Atkins	1464,
Gill v. Caldwell	1818	99 Ala.	149		1466, 1471
v. Ferrin	2465	141 Ala.	247	Gleason v. Daly	1041
v. Newhouse	1777	v. Swisher	2008, 2504	v. Jones	2381
v. Ruggles	2433	Gilpins v. Consequa	1873	v. Kinney	1539, 1548
v. Shurtleff	2214	Gilruth v. Gilruth	1951	v. Knapp	618
v. Stayler,		Gilson v. Gilson	1456	v. San Pedro L. A. &	
93 Md.	1127	Gimbel v. Hufford	1200, 1212	S. L. R. Co.	456, 2509
Md., 55 Atl.	377	v. Salomon	1195	v. State	1128
v. Strozier	1651, 1676a,	Gindrat v. People	2183, 2264	Gleason's Estate	1738
	1779	Ginger v. Ginger	2066	Gleeson v. Virginia M.	
v. Watson	986	Gingrich v. Foltz	1257	R. Co.	2509
Gillam v. Sigman	2115	Ginn v. Com.	133, 2276	Glenister v. Harding	1645,
v. State	2056	v. Dolan	2489		1646
Gillard v. Bates	2310	v. Ginn	1081	Glenn v. Augusta R. &	
Gillebrand, Ex parte	1346,	v. Pennsylvania R. Co.	2509	E. Co.	1013
	1666, 2450	v. State	852	v. Carson	1029
Gilleland v. Martin	2531	Ginsberg, Re	b, 2281,	v. Gleason	1263, 1890
v. Schuyler	1712		2283	v. Hunt	1382, 1684
Gillespie v. Ashford	2355	Ginterman v. Steamship		v. Philadelphia &	
v. Burleson	1777, 1778	Co.	1951	W. C. T. Co.	1890
v. Gillespie	2341	Giordano v. Brandywine		v. Prattville	2572
v. People	609, 1398	Granite Co.	208, 1616,	v. Rogers	1194, 1208, 1243
v. State,			1908	v. State	351
49 Tex. Cr.	398	Gipe v. State	1442	v. Stewart	1873
Tex. Cr., 166		Gipson v. Owens	1267, 2105	Glickstein v. U. S.	2282
S. W.	2059, 2264,	Girard v. Kalamazoo	1722	Glidden v. U. S. Fidelity	
	2273	Girch v. State	19, 1613	& G. Co.	1576
Gillet v. Phelps	1082	Gird's Estate	133, 987	Glidewell v. Martin	1350
Gillett v. Abbott	1295	Girdner v. Walker	1195	Globe Accident Ins. Co.	
v. Chavez	2065	Gist v. McJunkin	1254	v. Gerisch	41, 1719, 1750
v. Michigan U. T. Co.	2510	Gitt v. Watson	1856c, 2529	Globe Printing Co. v.	
Gilliam v. Perkinson	1320	Gittings v. Hall	1225, 1226,	Stahl	2155
v. State	923, 1985		1382, 1651,	Globe Savings Bank v.	
Gillian v. State	270, 2059		1778, 2138, 2141	Nat'l Bank	1557
Gillies v. Smithers	1314	Givens v. Bradley	76	Glos v. Ault	2515
Gilliland v. Board	728, 1605	v. State	1179	v. Cary	1225, 1859
Gillis v. Gillis	1302, 1511	v. Zerbst	2572	v. Cessna	1705
Gillispie's Ex'r v. Gil-		Glackin v. Bennett	2434	v. Dyche	1678
lispie	1738	Glanton v. Griggs	803	v. Hallowell	1705
Gillman v. Media M. A.		Glantz v. Gardiner	1354	v. Holberg	1705
& C. E. R. Co.	682	Glanz v. Ziabek	1664, 1911	v. Holmes	1269
Gillmor's Will	1511	Glaser v. Glaser	20	v. Huey	2515



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Glos v. Patterson	1705	Golden v. Vyse	1777	Goodenough v. Alway	1388
v. Talcott	1705	Golden Reward M. Co.		Goodfellow's Ex'rs v.	
v. Wheeler	1705	v. Buxton M. Co.	439, 460,	Meegan	93
Glossop v. Pole	1670		1978	Goodhand v. Benton	17, 995,
Glover v. Hunnewell	736	Goldenberg v. Law	2354		1005
v. N. Y. Life Ins. Co.	2410	Golder v. Bressler	1195, 1678,	Goodhay v. Hendry	1258
v. Patten	2329		2535	Goodier v. Lake	1177, 1189
v. People	216, 352	v. Lund	246, 569, 1983	Gooding v. Morgan	2575
v. Scotten	461	Goldie v. McDonald	2534	Goodinge v. Goodinge	2462,
v. State,		Goldsberry v. State	326		2470
200 Ala.	246, 1614	Goldsboro v. R. Co.	792,	Goodlett v. Kelly	1388
129 Ga.	562		2552	Goodliff v. Fuller	1858
137 Ga.	1442	Goldsborough v. Pid-		Goodman, Re	334, 690,
Tex. Cr., 76 S. W.	851	duck	378, 791		1631, 1703
v. U. S.	987	v. Tinsley	2573	v. Goodman	2083
Gloystine v. Com.	1730	Goldsby v. U. S.	389, 1854,	v. James	1681
Glubb v. Edwards	1312		1873	v. Kennedy	1939
Gluckman's Will	2421	Goldschmidt v. Ins. Co.	1073	v. Saperstein	1234
Glyn v. Caulfield	2317, 2319	v. Marryat	1858, 2219	v. State,	
Glynn v. Bank of Eng-		v. Von Schutz	4c	122 Ga.	1750
land	1409, 1466, 1518	Goldsmith v. Friedlander	2054	141 Ind.	326
v. Houston	2257, 2260	v. Gates	2421	Meigs	2595
Goben v. State	1073, 1854	v. Marcus	2429	Goodpaster v. Voris	2199
Goblet v. Beechy	2467	v. Picard	76	Goodrich v. Conrad	1578
Godair v. Ham. Nat'l		v. Sawyer	2580	v. Hanson	1388
Bank	1013, 2155	v. State	246, 1819	v. Senate	2427
Godard v. Gray	1864	Goldstein v. Black	2012	v. Stone	406
Goddard v.ENZler	1921	v. People	2514	v. Tracy	2232
v. Gardner	2311	v. State,		v. Weston	1234, 1268,
v. Groninger	704	73 Tex. Cr.	522		1275
v. Parker	1275	75 Tex. Cr.	1410	Goodrich's Estate	1644, 1646
v. Pratt	1624	Goldstone v. Davidson	2110	Goodridge, Re	1511
Godding v. Orcutt	1543	Goldthorp v. Goldthorp	1938	Goodright v. Moss	1377,
Godfrey v. Dixon P. &		Goldthorp's Estate	1738		1386, 1484,
L. Co.	378	Golson v. Ebert	1704		1492, 1495, 2063
v. Faust	21	Goltra v. Pentland	1890, 2065	v. Saul	1492
v. Macauley	255	v. Wolcott	2303	Goodrum v. State	2337
v. Norris	1316	Gomes v. New Bedford		Goodsell v. Leonard	1681
v. Phillips	1349	Co.	1976	v. Taylor	1951
v. Rowland	1521, 1644,	Gompers v. Bucks Stove		Goodson v. Brothers	1247,
	2063, 2527	& Range Co.	2257		1587
v. Smith	2050	Gongaware v. Donehoo	2525	v. U. S.	2580
v. State	1438, 1445	Gonzales v. State	2061	Goodtitle v. Braham	84,
Godkin v. Monahan	2442	v. Williams	1355		1993, 2026
Godwin v. State	1063	Gonzalez v. Lopez	1606, 1646	v. Clark	1802
Goelz v. Goelz	2341	v. Palencia Tan-Guin-		v. Clayton	528
Goemann v. State	987	lay	1672	v. Milburn	2520
Goens v. State	1781	Gonzalus v. State	861	v. Southern	2477
Goersen v. Com.	363	Good v. Knox	905, 916	Goodwin v. Assur. Soc.	95,
Goeschel v. Fisher	770	v. Williams	2408		1684
Goesel v. Dairs	616	v. Zook	2503	v. Barre S. B. & T. Co.	1890
Goff v. Kelsey	1576	Good & Co. v. Central		v. Blanchard	4, 2354
Goforth v. State	276	C. & C. Co.	2446	v. Goodwin	2432
Goings v. Mitchell	2145	Goodall v. Goodall	1291	v. Harrison	1718
Goins v. Com.	2042	v. Little	2317, 2319	v. Nicklin	619
v. Moberly	987	v. State	1443	v. Scott	561
v. State	1842, 1898	Goodbar v. Lidikay	1738	v. Spray	1592, 1670
Gold v. Death	7a	Goode v. Riley	2417, 2418,	v. State,	
v. Eddy	1409		2462, 2463	102 Ala.	851
Goldborough v. Orem	1971	v. Southern R. Co.	2509	95 Ind.	682, 689,
Golden v. State,		v. State	987, 1126, 1132		1671, 1938
19 Ark.	1781, 1840,	Goodell v. Labadie	157	114 Wis.	770, 821,
	1842	Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gib-			987, 2216, 2239
25 Ga.	276	bons	2485, 2538	v. West	2199, 2201

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Goodwin G. S. & M.		Gorham v. Peyton	728	Gould v. Schermer	1978
Co.'s Appeal	2297, 2312	v. Settegast	1483, 1761	v. Seminary	1302
Goodwyn v. Goodwyn,		Gorham Mfg. Co. v.		v. Trowbridge	1195
20 Ga.	728, 934a, 1922	Emery R. T. D. Co.	2212	v. U. S.	1732
25 Ga.	1213, 1681	Gorkow's Estate	654, 2477	Gouled v. U. S.	2184
Goon Bow v. People	987,	Gorman v. Montgomery	1540	Goulson v. Wainwright	2250
	1142, 1842	v. Park	716	Gourdin v. Staggers	1215
Goon Gan v. Richardson	2437	v. R. Co.	1698, 1877	Gourley v. Hankins	2535
Gorden v. Gorden	1603, 2505	Gormley v. Uthe	1239	Gove v. Cather	1635
Gorder v. Canning Co.	2169	Gorton v. Dyson	1297	v. Tacoma	2451
Gordon v. Bucknell	1672	Gosa v. Southern R. Co.	1718,	Government v. Aloiau	987
v. Burris	112, 1738,		1750, 1951	v. Hering	1398, 1442
	2474, 2477, 2500	Goshen v. England	283	Governor v. Barkley	1196
v. Clapp	1777	v. Richmond	7, 1354	v. Jeffreys	1635, 1674
v. Com.	2361, 2363	Gosford v. Robb	1256, 1257,	Gowdy v. Gowdy	1085
v. Conley	2203		1300, 1311, 2141	Gowen v. Bush	1072, 1750
v. Funkhouser	905, 1029	Goslin v. Com.	1249, 2042	v. Glaser	456
v. Gordon,		Gosnell v. Webster	2120	Gower v. Emery	2313
Prob.	2527	Goss v. Ellison	2432	Goy v. Director-General	
1 Swanst.	803, 2111	v. Goss	18, 953, 1051	of Railroads	506, 507
v. Irvine	784	v. Lord Nugent	2441, 2455	Goyette v. Keenan	1567, 1777
v. Kitrell	2477	v. Turner	1867, 1873	Graber's Trial	465
v. Knott	2536	v. Watlington	1077, 1474	Grabill v. State	1270
v. Little	1389, 1416	Goss P. P. Co. v. Scott	2211	Grabowski v. State	398, 618
v. Miller	1312	Gossage v. Phila. B. &		Grabowsky v. Baumgart	392
v. Montgomery	2572	W. R. Co.	716, 1640	Grace v. Adams	2415
v. Munn	1033, 1133	Gosse v. Tracy	1409	v. Callahan	2503
v. Parmelee	1066	Gosselin v. Gosselin	578	v. Hanks	2054
v. Payne	1315	v. The King	488, 2245,	v. R. Co.	1951
v. People	279		2337	v. State	1157
v. Price	701	Gossett v. State	390, 1808	Gracie v. Morris	1267
v. R. Co.	461	v. Tolen	1651	Gracz v. Anderson	282, 969
v. Searing	1213, 1225,	Gossler v. Refinery	561	Graddy v. Tel. Co.	1078
	1867	r. Wood	2124	Graden v. Mais	2450
v. Secretan	1298	Gossman v. Rosenberg	2213	Grady v. Sharron	1296
v. State,		Gotlieb v. Danvers	1206,	Graff v. People	900, 1079,
140 Ala.	396, 987, 1618		1234		2236
147 Ala.	1821	Gotloff v. Henry	1029	Graffam v. Pierce	2442
68 Ga.	2265	Gottlieb v. Hartman	682, 1013	Graft v. Lord Bertie	309,
3 Ia.	59, 988	Gouge v. Roberts	463		1512
v. Tracy	2210, 2281	Gough v. McBride	2143	Grafton v. Cummings	2454
v. Trevarthan	2354	v. St. John	64, 2117	Grafton Bank v. Moore	1624
v. Tweedy,		Gould, Ex parte,		v. Woodward	15
71 Ala.	2336	99 Cal.	2257	Gragg v. Learned	1318, 1648,
74 Ala.	1213	Mo., 132 S. W.	2200,		1651
v. U. S.	2277		2287	Graham, Matter of	2260
v. Waterous	2434	v. Bebee	64	v. Anderson	2578
Gordon's (Lord) Trial	2213	v. Crawford	499, 2098	v. British C. L. & I.	
Gordon's Will	1736	v. Day	18	Co.	2058
Gordon Bros. v. Wage-		v. Excelsior Co.	2442	v. Campbell	1194, 1651
man	1681	v. Gould,		v. Chrystal	928, 2105
Gore v. Bowser	2312	2 Aik.	2076	v. Com.,	
v. Curtis	62, 75, 200, 212	194 N. Y. Suppl.	987,	16 B. Monr. Ky.	2501
v. Elwell	1267, 2450		2257, 2258	127 Va.	15, 93
v. People	1852, 2071, 2100	v. Gould Co.	2169	v. Courtright	2314, 2503
Goree v. Uvalde Nat'l		v. Hartley	1530	v. Deuterman	1938
Bank	321	v. Hurley	2408	v. Dillon	1549, 1560
v. Wadsworth	1675	v. Jones	702, 704	v. Dyster	1259, 1884
Gorgas v. Hertz	1194	v. Lakes	112, 1736, 2452	v. Gordon	1254
v. Philadelphia H. &		v. Leavitt	2446	v. Graham	2517
P. R. Co.	463	v. Magnolia Metal Co.	80	v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2570
Gorham v. Canton	1784	v. Norfolk Lead Co.	1018,	v. Henry	1225
v. Carroll	529, 2222, 2223		1026, 2098	v. Larimer	1890
v. Moor	1081, 1938	v. Safford	2034, 2045, 2050	v. Law	2083



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Graham v. Lockhart	747, 1250	Grant v. Grant,		Gray v. Davis	1186
v. McReynolds,		34 Beav.	2065	v. Fielder	1211
88 Tenn.	996, 1384	L. R. 5 C. P.	2463, 2467, 2472	v. Fox	2308
90 Tenn.	784, 1126	1 Sand. Ch.	1267, 1736, 2106	v. Grant	1461
v. Martin	1770	v. Jack	2024	v. Gray	2069
v. Middleby	2466, 2525	v. Jackson	1056	v. Haig	291
v. National Surety Co.	2465	v. Lewis	1086	v. Hardman	1862
v. Nowlin	251	v. Maddox	2463	v. Harrison	1779
v. O'Bryan	2538	v. Pendery	2103	v. James	2416
v. O'Fallon,		v. State,		v. Kaufman D. & I. C. Co.	1073
3 Mo.	1267, 1304	141 Ala.	406	v. Kelley	770, 1576
4 Mo.	1304, 2052, 2314	89 Ga.	1842	v. Macallum	1820
v. Oldis	1208	122 Ga.	276, 784	v. McLaughlin	1718, 1722
v. Pennsylvania Co.	1918, 1926, 1951	v. Thompson	233, 1938	v. Maine Central R. Co.	1960
v. Remmel	2408, 2409	v. U. S.	1750	v. Mossman	1984
v. State,		v. Varney	1951	v. Pentland	1207, 1212, 2211, 2371, 2374
118 Ga.	1072	Grant's Succession	1651, 2109, 2167	v. People	2056, 2059
125 Ga.	396	Grant's Will	1511	v. R. Co.	1896
Grahme's Trial	369	Grantham v. State	93	v. Rollinsford	1062
Gran v. Houston	1976, 2354	Grasty's Trial	2283	v. Rumrill	2500
Granby v. Ménard	2494	Grattan v. Life Ins. Co.		v. St. John	335, 1908
Grand Gulf R. & B. Co.		80 N. Y.	2382, 2384, 2387	v. Schneider	1859b
v. Barnes	1320	92 N. Y.	2116, 2384, 2389	v. State,	
Grand Island Banking Co. v. Shoemaker	2016	Gratz v. Land & R. I. Co.	2143, 2520	63 Ala.	396
Grand Isle v. Kinney	2406	v. Wilson	2535	42 Fla.	664
Grand Lodge v. Ban-ister	1671, 2510	Graul v. U. S.	78, 2270, 2276	4 Okl. Cr.	967
v. Bartes	1486, 1490	Gravel v. The King	836	55 Tex. Cr.	2221
v. Goodwin	1212	Gravely v. State	2512	77 Tex. Cr.	359, 2216
v. Randolph	457	Graves v. Alsap	1350	Grays v. Turnpike Co.	1074
v. Wieting	682, 689, 1671, 1938, 2500	v. Battle Creek	1158, 2220	Grayson v. Atkinson	1304, 1311, 1312
v. Wood	2510	v. Broughton	2465	v. Bannon	787
Grand Pass S. C. v. Crosby	1684	v. Bruen	1239, 1651	v. Com.	247
Grand Rapids v. Bennett	1960	v. Colwell	2491, 2529	v. Durant	1347a
v. Hastings	1651	v. Davenport	908	v. Lynch	568, 665
v. R. Co.	1943	v. Graves,		v. State	950
Grand Rapids & I. R. Co. v. Ellison	1951	70 Ark.	2237	Graystock v. Barnhart	2525
v. Huntley	438, 689, 1718, 1721, 1722	45 N. H.	581	Graziani v. Burton	1684
v. Martin	2388	v. Harris	2235	Greasons v. Davis	1271, 1681, 1684
Grand Trunk R. Co. v. Griffith	2510	v. Interstate Power Co.	1890	Great Northern R. Co.	
v. Richardson	455, 456, 461	v. Kennedy	1944	v. Ennis	1404
Grand Trunk Western R. Co. v. Poole	461	v. Key	2432	Great Western Colliery Co. v. Tucker	2212
v. Reynolds	664, 2510	v. People	390, 1440	Great Western R. Co. v. Hanks	664
Graney v. R. Co.	458	v. Rivers	488, 617, 618	Great Western Turnpike Co. v. Loomis	2210, 2268
Granger, Re	1350	v. Rose	2477	Greaves v. Hunter	701
v. George	2450	v. U. S.	274, 286, 2243	Grebbin v. Davis	2110
v. Warrington	2363, 2375	Graves' Trial	1385	Grebenstein v. Stone & Webster Eng. Co.	208, 1062, 1856b, 2115
Grangers' Ins. Co. v. Brown	2221	Gravett v. State	2275	Greeley v. Mansur	2349
Grannis v. Branden	67	Gravitt v. Com.	18, 200	v. Quimby	1346, 2454
Grant v. Coal Co.	2109	Gravlee v. Lamkin	2432	v. Stilson	718
v. Cole	1536	Gray v. Brooklyn H. R. Co.	568	Greeley Co. v. Gebhardt	714
v. Dreyfus	748	v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	377, 1976, 2510	Green, Re	2195, 2268
		v. Com.	2071, 2073, 2081	v. Barker	2534
				v. Brooks	285

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Green v. Brown	2531	Green v. Waller	2164	Greenwood v. Boston &	
v. Caulk 719, 738, 745, 747,		v. Water Co.	283, 675	M. R. R. Co.	65, 2510
748, 749, 753, 1362		v. Weaver	2260, 2275	v. Spiller	1678
v. Cauthorn	751	v. Weller	1350, 2577	v. State	851, 2071
v. Chelsea 1587, 2140,		v. Western Amer. Co.	208	Greer v. Com.	1841
2141		v. Wilkie	2415	v. Fergerson	1678
v. Chicago 714, 720, 1943,		v. Woodbury	278, 280	v. Higgins	1031
2570		Green's Adm'r v. Mays-		v. State	581, 968
v. Com. 363, 855, 2100		ville & B. S. R. Co.	1164	v. Union St. R. Co.	944
v. Compagnia	1383	Greenacre v. Filby	1726	v. U. S.	6, 299
v. Crapo 1576, 2328		Greenawalt v. Mc-		Gregg v. Forsyth	1225, 1684
v. Dodge 392, 1042		Enelley	2086, 2235	v. Grant & Horne	969
v. Fall River	463	Greenbaum, The	1856	v. Jamison	1003, 1037
v. Ford 1898		v. Bornhofen	2008, 2016	v. Mallett	1131, 1877
v. Freeman 20		Greene, In re	2195	v. State,	
v. Glove & R. Fire Ins.		v. Almand	1491	106 Ala.	836, 857
Co.	2533	v. Ballard	2201	3 W. Va.	1839, 1842
v. Gould 770, 1554		v. Chickering	1389	Gregory v. American	
v. Graves 1350		v. Durfee	1186, 1678	Thread Co.	451
v. Green 1225		v. Fish Furniture Co.	65	v. Baugh	167
v. Hart 2123		v. Greene	2245	v. Cheatham	1031, 1263
v. Heritage 2529		v. Harriman	1083	v. Detroit U. R. Co.	252,
v. Howard 2463		v. Hitchcock	1302, 1303,		458, 949
v. Indianapolis 1186			1304	v. Dodge	18
v. Lancaster Co.	2451	v. Ins. Co.	1908	v. Howard	1056, 1062
v. McLeod 2065		v. Messick G. Co.	1195	v. Loose	1078
v. Miller 1971		v. Murdock	21	v. McPherson	1239, 1275
v. Nebagamain 2389		v. U. S.	1530	v. Parker	2232
v. New Orleans S. &		Greene's Estate	2329	v. State,	
G. I. R. Co.	2088	Greene Co. v. Bledsoe	1378	140 Ala.	247, 1033,
v. New York Life Ins.		Greener v. General Elec.			1034, 1440,
Co.	2510	Co.	1750		1966, 2595
v. Pacific L. Co.	1719	Greenfield v. Kennett	1062,	Tex. Cr., 94 S. W.	63
v. Pratt 1540			1807	v. Taverner	762, 763
v. Proude 2143		v. People	273, 568	v. Thomas	258
v. R. Co.,		v. State	273, 1476	v. Wabash R. Co.	571
122 Cal.	1029	v. Unique Theatre Co.	1010,	v. Woodbery	1671
171 N. Y.	2381, 2383		1014	Gregson v. Taylor	2421
v. Skogvist 142		Greening v. Keel	787	Greig v. Franco-Can-	
v. State,		Greenlaw v. King	2286, 2303,	dian Mortgage Co.	2417
69 Ala.	111, 247		2329, 2380, 2394	Greinke v. Chicago City	
143 Ala.	246	Greenleaf v. Pacific Tel.		R. Co.	21, 688, 2509
168 Ala.	860	& Tel. Co.	907	Grellier v. Neale	1303, 2520
38 Ark.	1398	v. R. Co.	18, 1481, 1503	Gremley v. Stubbs	2508
59 Ark.	233	Greenlee v. McDowell	2594	Grenell v. R. Co.	655
64 Ark.	232, 233,	v. Mosnat	1409, 1669	Grenfell v. Girdlestone	89
	569, 1938	Greenley's Case	363	Gresham v. Manning	1753
21 Fla.	2085	Greenman v. O'Connor	1392	Gresham Hotel Co. v.	
40 Fla.	851, 852	Greenough v. Eccles	900,	Manning	1362
43 Fla.	1440, 1667		905, 907	Gress Lumber Co. v.	
88 Ga.	838	v. Gaskell	2290, 2291,	Georgia P. S. Co.	704
112 Ga.	1076		2294, 2295, 2306,	Greswold v. Kemp	1684
119 Ga.	1873		2311, 2315, 2319	Grever v. Taylor	581
124 Ga.	852, 1329	v. Greenough	1511	Greville v. Chapman	1984
125 Ga.	396, 568,	v. Sheldon	1208, 1212	Grey v. Callan	1624
	1329, 1842, 2085	Greenshields v. Craw-		v. Hesketh	2256
154 Ind.	142, 1033,	ford	1513, 2529	Gribble v. Pioneer Press	
	1442, 1749,	Greenslade v. Dare	253, 959	Co.,	
	1750, 1978	Greenville N. Bank v.		34 Minn.	404, 406
89 Miss.	1452	Evans S. B. Co.	2573	37 Minn.	1971
97 Tenn.	1072	Greenwald v. Ford	2018	Gridley v. Bingham	1086
49 Tex. Cr.	1128	Greenway, Ex parte	1177	v. Boggs	1890
Tex. Cr., 233 S.W.	106	v. Taylor Co.	1974	Griesa v. Mutual L. Ins.	
v. Terminal R. Ass'n	2383	Greenwell v. Crow	728, 1951	Co.	1856d, 1862



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Grieve v. Howard	2391	Grim v. Murphy	1778	Grotjan v. Rice	2094, 2498
v. R. Co.	1669	Grimes v. Cannell	1890	Groundwater v. Wash-	
Griffen v. Manice	2509	v. Fall	1256	ington	2221
Griffeth v. Griffeth	2337,	v. Hilliary	1192, 2498,	Grout v. Moulton	2465
	2341, 2505		2518	v. Stewart	581
Griffin v. Auburn	458, 2349	v. Keene	1062	Grout's Case	194a
v. Boston & M. R. Co.	1521,	v. Kimball	1212	Grove, In re	2212, 2378
	1530	v. Martin	1842	v. Elliot	2250
v. Brown	607	v. Simpson College	1195	v. Ware	1206
v. Griffin	2312	v. State,		Grove Lodge v. Fidelity	
v. Harriman	2354	105 Ala.	1821	P. Ins. Co.	1078
v. Henderson	20	68 Ind.	1732	Grover v. Grover,	
v. Ing	1938, 1958	v. Talbot	1247	30 Mo.	1681
v. Marquardt	581	Grimes D. G. Co. v.		63 N. J. Eq.	2046
v. Runnion	2434	Malcolm	1086	Groves v. Groves,	
v. Sheffield	1205	Grimm v. Omaha El. L.		9 L. T. R.	2528
v. Smith	2336, 2341	& P. Co.	2510	57 Miss.	803
v. Springfield St. R.		Grimshaw v. Kent	1938, 2297	65 Oh. St.	2433
Co.	2509	Grimsinger v. State	832, 852,	Groves & S. R. R. Co.	
v. State,			1327	v. Herman	1168, 2354
76 Ala.	1136, 1138,	Grimsley v. Singletary	2416	Grubb v. Milan	2434
	1761	Grimston v. Cunningham	2442	v. State	684, 689
129 Ala.	1254	Grindall v. Grindall	1861,	Grubbe v. Grubbe	1576
155 Ala.	200		2315	Grubbs v. Pickett	1339
142 Ga.	1356	Griner v. State	855, 861, 866	Gruder v. Bowles	1779
14 Oh. St.	309, 1615	Grinnell v. Phillips	2352,	Grueber Eng. Co. v.	
32 Tex.	2242, 2243		2355	Waldron	2442
v. U. S.	141	v. R. Co.	1951	Grunberg v. U. S.	285, 747,
v. Wall	1605	Grisler v. McKennon	1676		754, 1530, 2273
v. Willow	1951	Griswold v. Griswold	258,	Grundy v. Janesville	1872
v. Wise	1640, 1651		2408	Grusenmeyer v. Logans-	
v. Working Woman's		v. Nichols	1779	port	1956
H. Ass'n	2008,	v. Pitcairn	2161, 2163	Gual v. Bonafoux	1606, 2527
	2015, 2016	v. R. Co.	663	Guarantee Co. of N. A.	
Griffin's Divorce	1666	v. State	2100	v. Charles	7a
Griffith v. American		Gritten v. Dickerson	2066,	v. Pitts	7a
Coal Co.	795		2498	Guard v. Whitehouse	2435
v. Davies	2312	Groat v. Kinnaird	2065, 2526	Guardhouse v. Black-	
v. Diffenderffer	1738, 1890	Grob v. Cushman	2577	burn	2408, 2421, 2452
v. Huston	1225, 1256,	Groce v. Skelton	2195	Guardian F. & L. Ass.	
	1302	Groenvelt v. Burrell	1858	Co. v. Quebec	2509
v. Ketchum	2116	Groeschner v. John		Guardian Life Ins. Co.	
v. Midland Valley R.		Gund Brewing Co.	1671	v. Dixon	2510
Co.	1405	Groff v. Groff	797, 2004,	Gude v. Mankato	252
v. Richmond	1676a		2015, 2016	Gudgen v. Besset	2408, 2420
v. Rive	791	v. Ramsey	1189, 1677	Gudmundson v. Thing-	
v. State,		Grogan v. Dooley	283	vallaLutheranChurch	1955
37 Ark.	1028, 1029,	Groh's Sons v. Groh	18	Guelph C. Co. v. White-	
	1031, 1349	Groll v. Tower	2388, 2391	head	2319
140 Ind.	194, 195,	Gronvold v. Federal		Guelph Worsted Spin-	
	987, 988	U. S. Co.	1419	ning Co. v. Guelph	1951
v. Williams	1993, 1994	Grooms v. State	797	Guenther's Case	2372
Griffiths v. Johnson	1737,	Groot v. Oregon Short		Guepratte v. Young	1953
	2523	Line	18	Guerin v. Hunt,	
v. Montandon	2354	Groothart, Re	1856b	6 Minn.	1195
v. R. Co.	2381	Gross v. Brodrecht	62, 75,	S.C., 110 S. E.	2525
v. State	2071, 2273		200, 986	Guertin v. Hudson	85
Griffits v. Ivery	2015	v. Disney	2538	Guesdorf v. Gleason	1681
v. Payne	88	v. Feehan	770	Guetig v. State	682
Grigsby v. Water Co.	1976	v. Scheel	1557	Guggenheim v. R. Co.	571
Grill v. O'Dell	682, 689	v. Smith	1779	Gugins v. Van Gorder	1198
Grilley v. Atkins	2408	v. State	2339	Gugy v. Maguire	2378, 2379
Grillo v. Sherman-		Grosvenor v. Fidelity &		Guhl v. Whitcomb	1159
Stalter Co.	4c, 1644	C. Co.	2510	Guice v. Thornton	1312

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Guidery v. Green	2433, 2441	Gurney v. Langlands	2026	Haddock v. R. Co.	1492,
Guidry v. Guivot	1086	v. Morrison	2444		1605, 2063
Guild v. Hull	1738	Gurno v. Janis	1678	Haddock B. & Co. v.	
v. More	2120	Guse v. Power & M. &		Haddock	2445
v. Pringle	1750	M. Co.	451, 1890	Haddow v. Parry	1471
v. Sampson	2463	Gussner v. Hawks	1893, 2103	Haddock v. Wilmarth	529
Guillaume v. Flannery	608	Gutgesell v. State	2363	Hadfield v. Jameson	1269,
Guillemette v. The King	1380	Gutherless v. Ripley	1551		1598, 1681
Guilliams v. Hulie	1837	Guthrie v. Carey	944	Hadjo v. Gooden	692, 1108,
Guimond v. Fidelity P.		v. Field	2419		1612, 1614,
F. Ins. Co.	1062	v. Harkness	1858		1985
Guinan v. Readdy	1856	v. Shaffer	492	Hadley v. Bean	1225
Guinan's Appeal	1777	Gutmann v. Klimck	1404	v. Board	463
Guinasso v. Arata	1278, 2052	Gutridge v. R. Co.	1951	v. Carter	1714, 1729, 1749
Guinasso's Estate	1278, 2052	Gutsch v. McIlhargey	782	Hadnot v. State	56
Guinn v. State	68	Gutterson v. Morse	949, 987	Hadra v. Bank	1391
v. Warbuton	2450	Gutzeil v. Pennie	2169	v. Howe	1568
Guiou v. Thibeau	2442	Guy v. Hall	529, 1049,	Haerle v. Kreihn	613, 2240
Guiteau's Trial	685, 2213		1080, 1082	Haffner v. State	2273
Guiterman v. Steamship		v. Lanark Fuel Co.	250	Hafner Mfg. Co. v. St.	
Co.	681	v. Manuel	1072	Louis	18
Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co.		v. Mead	736, 747	Hagaman v. Gillis	1213
v. Brown	2220	v. State	238, 2276	v. Moore	1943
v. Compton	283, 461,	Guyer v. Snyder	2515	Hagan v. Carr	791
	682, 1951	Guyette v. Bolton	728, 2518	v. Ins. Co.	1248
v. Evansich	461	Gwaltney v. Provident		v. Merchants' Ins. Co.	2525
v. Harriett	461	S. L. Assur. Co.	2415	v. State	232
v. Johnson,		Gwin v. Gwin	1738	Hagar v. Norton	233, 1738
83 Tex.	987	Gwynn v. Frazier	1651	Hagedorn v. Reid	1518
92 Tex.	2509	Gyfford v. Woodgate,		Hagen v. Dwyer	2473
98 Tex.	1270	2 Camp.	1347, 1664	Hagenlocher v. R. Co.	1719
10 U. S. App.	455	11 East	1664	Hagenow v. People	1442
v. McGowan	283	Gyles v. Hill	1279	Hager v. Cleveland	1074
v. Matthews	261, 1005	Gynn v. Kirby	2313	v. Shindler	2311
v. Norfleet	2220	Gynther v. Brown &		Hagerman v. Wigent	2336
v. Rowland	250	McCabe Co.	199	Hagerstown & F. R. Co.	
v. Shieder	2507, 2509	Gzowski v. Forst	2155	v. State	252, 451
v. Smith	461			v. Wingert	458
Gulick v. Gulick	2312			Hagerty v. Webber	1523
Gulliford v. McQuillen	19			Haggenmacher's Patents,	
Gulliher v. People	1013			Re	1003
Gully v. Exeter	1194	Haag v. State	1974	Haggerty v. R. Co.	675, 1951
Gump v. Gowans	582, 1292	Haak v. Breidenbach	2351	Haggett v. —	1267
Gumz v. Giegling	2406	Haaren v. Mould	2579	Haggitt v. Iniff	2165
Gunderman's Estate	1958	Haas v. Choussard	1943	Hague v. Hague	2046
Gundlach v. Schott	1951	v. Chubb	1521	Hahn v. Bettingen	401, 1013
Gunn v. Peakes	1681	v. Kundtz	680	v. Penney	1623
v. R. Co.	1164	Haber's Will	1292	Haig v. Newton,	
v. State	657	Habershon v. Troby	2219,	1 McCord	529
v. Turner	1573		2358	1 Mills Const.	735, 754
v. Union R. Co.	2495	Hach v. Rollins	2239	Haigh v. Belcher	1871
v. Wades	1405	Hacker v. Young	1647	Haight v. Kimbark	716
Gunning v. People	2575	Hackett v. Bonnell	613, 1681	v. Turner	2349
Gunter v. Earnest	616	v. King	2450	Haile v. Hill	1684
v. State,		v. Martin	1085	v. Palmer	1213, 1658
83 Ala.	1263	Hackett's Appeal	2531	Haines, Re	2199, 2257
111 Ala.	111, 1966	Hackley v. Hastie	2354	v. Cadwell	760
79 Ark.	2513	Hackley Nat'l Bank v.		v. Christie	1554
v. Watson	770, 779	Barry	2446	v. Dennett	529
Guptill v. Verback	2385	Hackney v. Raymond		v. Gibson	2580
Gupton v. Hawkins	1466	B. C. Co.	581, 770	v. Guthrie	1503
Gurley v. MacLennan	738	v. State	579, 2276, 2277	v. Hayden	233, 1738
v. Park	2314, 2384	Haddan v. Mills	1084	v. Ins. Co.	463, 781, 1261,
Gurney v. Howe	1639	Hadden v. Merritt	4c		1263
		v. Powell	1779		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1259; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Haines v. Modern Wood-		Hall v. Benson	1954	Hall v. Warren	1671
men	7a	v. Bishop	1186, 1213,	v. Williams	2555
v. State	1329, 1667		1273, 1640, 2535	v. Woolen Co.	1541, 1544
v. Trust Co.	2494	v. Brown	93, 451, 748	v. Yellott	2421
Hainlin v. Budge	2507	v. Bynum	1316	v. Young	2200
Hainsworth v. State	238, 1974	v. Callingham	1281	Hall's Case	2070
Haish v. Payson	463	v. Cardell	1225, 1496	Hallahan v. R. Co.	461
Haithcock v. Sargent	1651	v. Cazenove	2410	Hallenbeck v. Chapman	2442
Halaska v. Cotzhausen	2569	v. Cedar R. & M. C.		v. Garst	2355
Halback v. Hill	2233, 2235,	R. Co.	1722	Halleran v. Moon	2065
	2341	v. Collins	1664	Hallett v. Bank of	
Halbadier v. State	2060	v. Com.,		Montreal	664
Halbert v. Pranke	2232	106 Ky.	196	v. Cousens	779
v. Rosenbalm	1839	189 Ky.	18	v. Walker	907, 1075
Halbrook v. State	2085	v. Costello	690, 1271	Halley v. Webster	957, 987
Halde v. Schultz	1938	v. Geissell	2446	Halliday M. Co. v. Louis-	
Halderman v. Terr.	968, 2079	v. Goodson	461, 1951	iana & N. W. R. Co.	571
Hale, Re	2252, 2281,	v. Hall,		Hallidy v. Hess	2472
	2281a	38 Ala.	1302	v. McDougall	255, 1624,
v. Com.	2059	149 Ark.	2498		1635, 1675
v. Cushing	1352	113 Ky.	1347	v. Martinet	736, 1523
v. Danforth	616	v. Harris	2408	v. Sweeting	1123
v. Darter	1196	v. Houghton	907	Hallock v. Ins. Co.	2410
v. Gibbs	1389	v. Huse	2016	v. Smith	1898
v. Glidden	1919	v. Ins. Co.	794	Halloway v. People	987, 2277
v. Hale	2416	v. Kary	2410	Hallowell v. Dickerson	1951
v. Henkel	2184, 2200, 2252,	v. Manchester	2159	v. U. S.	341
	2258, 2259a, 2259b,	v. Manson	905, 913, 2220	Hallum v. Dickinson	1267,
	2264, 2270, 2282	v. Mayo	1586, 1587		2110
v. Leighton	291	v. Murdock	1700	v. Omro	252, 1976
v. Life Ins. Co.	108, 143,	v. Naylor	321	Halsey v. Adams	2464
	1725	v. Obder	1347	v. Sinsebaugh	735, 736,
v. McGettigan	1350	v. Pegram	1898		745, 749, 754
v. N. J. S. N. Co.	2567,	v. People,		Halstead v. Mullen	1566
	2573	21 Mich.	2159	Halsted v. Colvin	2516
v. Philbrick	15	47 Mich.	398	v. Rice	1681
v. Rawallie	1009, 1013,	v. Perry	689, 1958	v. State	1967
	1014	v. Phelps	1288, 1300	Halston, In re	2467, 2474
v. Rich	794	v. R. Co.	905	Halverson v. Blossom	2510a
v. Ross	1684	v. Rankin	65	v. Seattle El. Co.	451, 1558
v. Silloway	1778	v. Ray	736, 753, 762	Halvorsen v. Halvorsen	2433
v. State,		v. Redson	1651	v. Moon & K. L. Co.	1461
122 Ala.	2513	v. Reinherz	7, 1576	Halwas v. American	
72 Miss.	2079	v. Renfro	1911	Granite Co.	907
v. Taylor	581	v. Rixey	2312	Halwerson v. Cole	2053
v. Wyatt	1909, 2372	v. Simmons	1040	Ham v. Ham	2575
Hale's Ex'rs v. Ard's		v. Sims	1304	v. Salem	463
Ex'rs	1542	v. State,		v. State	1842
Hales v. Kerr	457	40 Ala.	293	Ham's Case	2086, 2088
Haley v. Flaccus	571	51 Ala.	952, 1036	Hamann v. Milwaukee	
v. State	1005, 1432, 1611	130 Ala.	1750	B. Co.	461, 1951
Haliburton v. Fletcher	1256	134 Ala.	2071, 2364	Hambel v. Davis	2575
Halifax Automobile Co.		137 Ala.	1841, 1842	Hamberg v. Ins. Co.	1976
v. Redden	2455	64 Ark.	1908	Hamblett v. Hamblett	19,
Halifax Banking Co. v.		78 Fla.	1938		1062
Smith	258, 1185,	48 Ga.	1750	Hamblin v. State	2349
	1911, 2016, 2115	43 Tex. Cr.	923	Hambrook v. Smith	2256
Halifax Power Co. v.		v. Steele	1350	Hamburg v. Wood	581, 1086
Christie	1082	v. Taylor	775	Hamburg-American S. P.	
Halifax Union v. Wright	2419	v. The Emily Banning	1048	Co. v. U. S.	291
Hall v. Acc. Ass'n	1719	v. U. S.,		Hamburg-Bremen F. Ins.	
v. Acklen	1225	235 Fed.	357	Co. v. Pelzer Mfg. Co.	2355
v. Aitkin	1225	256 Fed.	290, 369	Hamburger v. Rinkel	232,
v. Austin	290, 437, 1974	v. Vanderpool	285		1021

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hamby v. State	1725	Hamlin v. Hamlin	2408	Hampton v. State,	
Hamelyn v. White	2294, 2311	v. State	861	45 Tex.	2242
Hamer v. Bank	1963	Hamlyn v. Nesbit	1085	5 Tex. App.	1781
v. McFarlin	73	Hamm v. Bashford	907	Hamrick v. Hamrick	1938,
Hamersly v. Lambert	1877	Hammack v. State	2059		1958
Hamill v. Schiltz Brewing		Hammargren v. St. Paul	283	Hamsher v. Kline	1511, 1513
Co.	2450	Hammatt v. Emerson	1677,	Hanawalt v. State	166, 1154,
v. Woods	2463		2124		1168
Hamilton v. Billingsley	93	Hammel v. St. Louis I. M.		Hanchett v. Haas	966, 2520
v. Cranford Mercantile		& So. R. Co.	18	Hancock v. Blackwell	987
Co.	561, 682	Hammer v. Janowitz	969,	v. Byrne	1293
v. Crowe	2523		1951	v. Cook	1466
v. Diefenderfer	1058	Hammett v. State	64, 2498	v. Empire Cotton Oil	
v. Fusco Constr. Co.	1558	Hammick v. Bronson	268,	Co.	2444
v. Galloway	1676		1645, 2083	v. Hintrager	1556, 1558
v. Gray	1073	Hammill v. Weeks	1302	v. Kelly	747, 1248,
v. Hastings	94	Hammock v. McBride	1415		1539, 1560
v. Holder	1021, 1082	v. State	2183, 2264	v. Parker	524, 2191
v. L. L. & G. Ins. Co.	2556	Hammon v. Sexton	1246	v. Supreme Council.	
v. Love	1316, 1511	Hammond, Ex parte	1856c,	N. J. Eq., 55 Atl.	667
v. Marsden	1316,		2195, 2210	67 N. J. L.	1644, 1683
	1510, 1513	v. Blue	1225, 1239	v. Tram Lumber Co.	1651
v. Mendota C. & M.		v. Bradstreet	1591	Hancock Co. v. Leggett	1719
Co.	15, 461	v. Dike	229, 1035	Hancock Nat'l Bank v.	
v. Menor	1564	v. Freeman	1254	Ellis	2558
v. Michigan C. R. Co.	223	v. Glos	1705	Hand v. Ballou	1356
v. Nickerson	660, 728, 1954	v. Inloes	2572	v. Brookline	682
v. People,		v. Jacksonville El. Co.	2509	v. Catawba Power Co.	1976
29 Mich.	56, 785, 923;	v. Johnston	1225	v. Elvira	1018
	928, 987, 988,	v. McCullough	2408	v. Howell	1073
	994, 1022, 1111,	v. New York P. & N.		v. Ryan Drug Co.	2442
	1390, 1890, 1985,	R. Co.	2498	v. Soodeletti	780
	1986, 2056, 2103	v. Noble	1501, 1503	Handleigh v. Leigh	2354
46 Mich.	987, 1005,	v. Plank	1206	Handley v. Fitzhugh	1215
	1021	v. State,		v. R. Co.	1974
v. Plunkett	2195, 2286	147 Ala.	218, 1037	Handlong v. Barnes	619
v. R. Co.	461, 1923, 1951	39 Nebr.	2061	Hands v. James	1512
v. Rice	736, 762, 1205	78 Oh.	1354, 1626	Handy v. Canning	1041
v. Shoaff	2108	v. Varian	694, 700	v. Ins. Co.	2349
v. Smith	704, 1033, 1082,	v. Wolf	2004	v. Smith	1415, 1519
	1873, 2143	v. Woodman	571	v. State	1620
v. State,		Hammond's Case	700	Hanes v. State	907, 914
147 Ala.	1013	Hammond Lumber Co.		Haney v. Clark	1938
36 Ind.	1732	v. Sailors' Union	2257, 2282	v. Collins	2464
77 Miss.	830, 832	Hammond Packing Co.		Hange v. U. S.	1908
34 Oh. St.	928, 987	v. Arkansas	1859c, 2218	Hanges v. Whitfield	1355
41 Tex. Cr. App.	564	Hammons v. State	2339	Hanish v. U. S.	1680, 2268
v. U. S.,		Hamner v. Eddins	1680	Hank v. State	860, 928, 1012,
26 D. C. App.	561, 569	Hampden's Trial	2494		1476, 2385
268 Fed.	2533	Hampshire v. Pierce	2470,	Hankinson v. Lombard	1379
v. Wright	2164		2472	v. R. Co.	2110
Hamilton B. S. Co.		Hampton v. Garland	1316	v. Vantine	2446
v. Milliken	1389, 2103	v. Hampton	2069	Hanks v. Phillips	1651
Hamilton Buggy Co. v.		v. M'Connel	1216	v. Rhoads	1890
Iowa B. Co.	1878	v. M'Ginnis	1269	v. Van Garder	2337
Hamilton Coal Co. v.		v. R. Co.	437, 790, 792	Hanks Dental Ass'n v.	
New York & P. C. &		v. Ray	1204, 1254	Tooth Crown Co.	6, 1381,
C. Co.	2465	v. Speckenagle	1664, 2110		1856a
Hamilton W. Co. v.		v. Spencer	2122	Hanley v. Banks	1406
Goodrich	1040	v. State,		v. Donoghue	2573
Hamit v. Lawrence	1195	50 Fla.	1042, 1890,	v. Gandy	2008, 2016
Hamlett v. McCreary	1350		1975	v. Huntington	2552
v. McMillin	2503	7 Okl. Cr.	2340	Hanlon v. Doherty	2297, 2312
Hamlin v. Grogan	2083	17 Tex. Cr.	1977, 2339	v. Ehrich	1261, 2115



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hanlon v. R. Co.	2464	Hansen v. Oregon-Wash.		Hardy v. Martin	2315
Hanlon's Will	1511	R. & N. Co.	2491, 2509	v. Merrill	1918, 1919,
Hann v. State	2042	v. Owens	2520, 2531, 2534		1933, 1934,
v. Wilson	76	v. Seattle L. Co.	252, 458		1938, 1977
Hanna v. Connecticut M.		Hansen's Will	689	v. Moore	334, 1779
L. Ins. Co.	1073	Hansley v. Hansley	2067, 2069	v. State,	
v. His Creditors	1681	Hansen v. Armstrong	1186,	86 Tex. Cr.	2591
v. Orient Ins. Co.	21, 1947		1225	150 Wis.	1072
v. Palmer	2473	v. Bean	2311	v. U. S.,	
Hanna Nielsen, The	2573	v. Chiatovich	382	3 D. C. App.	832, 861,
Hannaford v. Dowdle	2336	v. Crawley	2115		862
Hannah v. Anderson	68	v. Eustace	291	186 U. S.	852
Hannah v. State	2059	v. Lindstrom	1213, 1859e,	Harford v. Morris	1271
Hannan v. Greenfield	1290		1860	Hargett v. —	1267
Hannay v. New Orleans		v. Parker	1076	Hargis v. Com.	21
Cotton Exch.	291, 2054	v. Red Rock	966	Hargrove v. State	177, 2059,
Hanners v. McClelland	66, 73,	v. South Scituate	1641,		2060
	74, 406,		1663, 1674, 1678	Harju v. Allen	682
	928, 987,	Hanye v. State	2497	Harkins v. Forsyth	530, 1347
	988, 1067, 1615	Hapai v. Brown	2582	Harkless v. Smith	1185, 2303
v. State	950	Happel v. Brethauer	2592	Harkness v. State	247
Hannibal & St. J. R. Co.		Haralson v. Campbell	1943	Harkrader v. Carroll	2534
v. Clark	1779	Harbers v. Tribby	1674	Harlan v. Howard	2139, 2140,
Hannon v. Grand Lodge	7a	Harbison v. Shook	406		2141
v. Hannah	1257	Harbour v. State	19, 106, 1750	v. Moore	2337
v. State	1135, 1136, 1761	Hard v. Ashley	581	Harland v. Eastman	1481,
v. United Workmen	7a	v. Brown	1623, 1959		1486, 1490
Hannum v. Belcher-		v. Moring	5309	Harless v. Harless	2304
town	2349, 2354	Hardage v. Coffman	2535	Harloe v. Lambie	1200
v. Hill	437	Hardeman v. English	1669	Harlow v. Boswell	2444
v. McRae	2286	Harden v. Hays	905, 1033,	Harm v. Wilson	66
Hanoff v. State	987, 2276,		1505, 1514	Harman v. Fisher	2433
	2277	Hardesty v. People	1853	v. Harman,	
Hanover Fire Ins. Co.		Hardie v. Boland Co.	2509	70 Fed.	576, 2442
v. Dallavo	1270	Hardiman v. Brown	569, 687	16 Ill.	2085, 2086
v. Stoddard	1062	Hardin v. Blackshear	1186	v. Illinois & E. Coal	
Hanover R. Co. v. Coyle	1750	v. Cheek	1664	Co.	762
Hanover Water Co. v.		v. Cook	451	v. McLeland	2067
Iron Co.	714, 1640	v. Forsythe	1225	v. People	2473
Hanoverian Consul's		v. Hardin	2088	v. Stearns	1495, 2537
Case	2372	v. Ho-yo-po-nubby	1676,	v. Vanhattan	1062
Hanrahan v. Chicago	1976		1680, 2025	Harmening v. Howard	1186
Hanrahan's Estate	1138	v. Kretsinger	1205	Harmon v. Decker	1195, 1549
Hanrick v. Andrews	1684	v. State,		v. Harmon	406
Hans v. State	368	66 Ark.	832	v. James	1225, 1257
Hansard v. Robinson	1197	107 Ga.	1375	v. State	246
Hansberg v. People	2582	Harding v. American		v. Terr.	357, 1135, 1136,
Hansbrough v. Neal	2440	Glucose Co.	289, 2210		1168, 1330
v. Stinnett	406	v. Brooks	66, 76	Harms v. Proehl	1111, 1971
Hanscom v. Burmood	1023,	v. Com.	2062	Harness v. Harness	1085
"	1029, 1035	v. Craigie	1299	v. State	1871
Hansel v. Com.	852	v. Harding	1510	Harnett, Re	2065
v. Hansel	2046	v. Missouri Pacific R.		v. Garvey	682
Hansell-Elcock F. Co. v.		Co.	20	v. Holdrege	2445
Clark	461	v. R. Co.	987	Harney v. Wirz	2442
Hanselman v. Dovel	2239	v. State	309, 851	Harnsbarger v. Kinney	2349
v. Doyle	1204	Hardisty v. Glenn	1778	Harp v. Harp	1082
Hansen v. Boots	364	Hardtke v. State	1911	v. Parr	233, 1304, 1417,
v. Fitchburg & L. St.		Hardwick v. Hardwick	75,		1738, 2500
R. Co.	1404		1730, 2336	Harper v. Burrow	1384, 2223
v. Grand Trunk		Hardwick S. B. & T. Co.		v. Lamping	1890
R. Co.	1750, 1953, 2558	v. Drenan	451	v. R. Co.	1021
v. Ins. Co.	1195	Hardy v. Alexander	73	v. Rowe	1664
v. Miller	1890	v. Com.	106, 107	v. Scott	1195, 1196

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Harper v. State,		Harris v. Knight	1267, 1512,	Harrison v. Harrison,	
109 Ala.	1214		1736, 2106	4 Moore P. C.	2067
16 Ala. App.	1330	v. Leavitt	1389	v. Howe	2442
101 Ind.	1076	v. Lumber Co.	18, 581	v. Kiser	285
185 Ind.	133	v. McEwen	2509	v. Langston	1040
79 Miss.	1439, 1440	v. Miller	1391	v. Lincoln	2506
Miss., 35 So.	278	v. Missouri K. & T. R.		v. McCawley	2054
v. Tapley	1651	Co.	2552	v. McKim	2445
v. U. S.	59	v. Murphy	2441	v. Middleton	736, 748, 749,
v. Weikel	1700	v. Neal	62		753, 754, 760
v. Wilson	1304	v. Ogden S. L. Co.	252	v. Powers	2272
Harper F. Co. v. South-		v. Patten	1513	v. R. Co.,	
ern Exp. Co.	2508	v. People	861	116 Cal.	2382, 2391
Harraway v. Harraway	2503	v. Powell	1564	36 Ia.	1943
Harrel v. State	1820	v. Quincy	792	v. Remington P. Co.	1074
v. Ward	1304, 1312, 1313,	v. Quincy O. & K.		v. Rowan	773, 915, 1873,
	1513	C. R. Co.	720, 1893		1890, 1917, 1938, 2115
Harrell v. Enterprise Sav.		v. R. Co.	568	v. Simons	1676a, 2165
Bank	1195, 1268, 2105	v. Rickett	2425	v. Southern R. Co.	460
v. Harrell	1388	v. Smith	1944	v. Southcote	2251, 2256
Harriman v. Brown	1564,	v. State,		v. State,	
	1566, 1568,	34 Ala.	111	Ala., 40 So.	988
	1582, 1587	73 Ala.	1375, 1404	11 Okl. Cr.	784
v. Interstate Commerce		78 Ala.	2276	v. Tate	2463
Com.	2195	34 Ark.	247	v. Thackaberry	1969
v. Jones	2313	61 Ga.	784	v. Williams	1858
v. Pullman P. C. Co.	65	109 Ga.	106	Harrison's Will	2500
v. R. Co.	288, 1018	142 Ga.	1434	Harrison G. Co. v. Penn-	
v. State	1852	30 Ind.	1108	sylvania R. Co.	2155
v. Stowe	613, 1747, 2383	46 Miss.	246, 247	Harrold v. Smith	1539, 1551
Harrington v. Boston		24 Nebr.	2349, 2354	v. Terr.	821, 861, 1890,
Elev. R. Co.	289	80 Nebr.	2239		2277
v. Fry	2153	Okl. Cr., 137 Pac.	2497	Harrop v. Fisher	2409
v. Keenan	1730	64 Tex.	2071	Harshaw v. State	2071
v. Lincoln	957, 1022, 1061,	23 Wyo.	150, 276, 2529	Hart v. Alexander	95, 255
	1062, 1106	v. Tippet	1005, 1022	v. Atlas K. Co.	963
v. MacMorris	1064	v. Tisereau	1311	v. Bridge Co.	1029, 1951
v. Mining Co.	1890	v. Traction Co.	1669	v. Brierly	1086
v. R. Co.	1166, 2349	v. U. S.	368	v. Com.,	
v. Sedalia	613	v. Walsh	2378	85 Ky.	111
v. U. S.	2060	v. Wilson	587	Va., 109 S. E.	2581
Harris v. Aiken	4e	v. Zanone	406	v. Coram	1308, 1312
v. Aldrit	1858	Harris, George, Matter		v. Deamer	1671
v. Anderson	1678, 2110	of	2283	v. Gage	1651
v. Ansonia	792, 1661	Harris' Trial	1911	v. Godkin	747
v. Basden	20	Harris' (Mary) Trial	685	v. Hart	1511
v. Brooks	2444	Harrisburg Bank v.		v. Hicks	1079
v. Brown	20, 620, 2245	Forster	529	v. Livingston	1541
v. Clinton	1951	Harrison v. Ayrshire	252	v. McElroy	1350
v. Collins	1249	v. Bevington	2097	v. Murdock	2477
v. Com.,		v. Blades	1456	v. Newman	1072
110 Va.	2363	v. Burgess	610	v. Powell	1747, 1748
129 Va.	987	v. Charlton	2098	v. Pratt	1051
v. Consolidation Coal		v. Corn.	246	v. R. Co.	283
Co.	571	v. Courtault	586	v. Randolph	1082, 1085
v. Daugherty	2312	v. Davis	1066	v. Robinett	1205, 2535
v. Delaware L. & W. R.		v. Doyle	1558	v. Ross,	
Co.	341	v. Garrett	13, 1611	57 Ala.	1676a, 2165
v. Doe	1273, 2166	v. Glover	719, 1704	64 Ala.	1651
v. Harris,		v. Gordon	1022	v. State,	
136 Cal.	2312	v. Gordy	1350	40 Ala.	7
26 N. Y.	1267, 2052	v. Green	792	Ark., 124 S. W.	1821
v. Hart	667, 1347	v. Harrison,		38 Fla.	246
v. Hill	2211, 2307	124 Ia.	290	55 Ind.	2582



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hart v. State.		Harvard v. Stiles	770	Hatcher v. Bowen	1062
15 Tex. App.	1157,	Harvester Co. v. Miller	2015	v. Dunn,	
	1168	Harvey v. Chouteau	1219,	102 Ia.	656
v. Stickney	1493, 1503		1280	Ia., 66 N. W.	1698
v. Strode	1195	v. Clayton	2297	v. Hatcher	1197
v. Taylor	664	v. Cummings	1273, 1680	v. Rocheleau	1681, 2529
v. Ten Eyck	2122, 2123	v. Harvey	2426	Hatchett v. Connor	1651, 2167
v. U. S.	1877	v. Mitchell	1208	v. Gibson	461
v. Vinsant	1246	v. Morgan	1201	Hately v. Pike	2445
v. Walker	438, 1523	v. Osborn	392	Hatfield v. R. Co.	1158, 2220
v. W. S. R. Co.	2552	v. Phillips	2498	Hathaway v. Addison	1352,
v. West	1347	v. R. Co.	1873		2158
v. Wilson	736, 747	v. Smith	2419		
v. Yunt	2105	v. State,		v. Brown,	
Hart's Appeal	1066	40 Ind.	761, 1700	18 Minn.	581, 1967
Harten v. Loffler	2465	Miss., 20 So.	835	22 Minn.	1963, 1976
Harter v. Harter	2421	v. Terr.	1878, 2062, 2528	v. Clark	2534
Hartford v. Maslen	1586, 2442	v. Thomas	1186	v. Com.	851
v. Palmer	494, 495, 499	v. Thorpe	1268, 1352	v. Crocker	944, 987, 1021,
v. Power	2065	Harvy v. Board	2581		1037
Hartford Bank v. Barry	529	Harwich Case	2214, 2287	v. Goslant	958, 1566, 1567
v. Stedman	95	Harwood v. Lee	575	v. Hemingway	1873, 1874
Hartford Bridge Co. v.		v. Mulry	751, 1555	v. Power	2477
Granger	1061, 1062	v. People	204	v. Spooner	1314, 1318, 1651
Hartford-Conn. Trust Co.		v. Sims	1585, 1588	v. Tinkham	2113
v. Divine	2433	v. State	1405	Hathaway's Adm'r v.	
Hartford Deposit Co. v.		v. Wentworth	1350	Ins. Co.	569, 682, 1722,
Sollitt	461	Harwood's Adm'r v. R.			1938, 2500
Hartford Fire Ins. Co. v.		Co.	460	Hathaway's Will	613
Galveston H. & S.		Hasbrouck v. Baker	1257	Hatheway v. Smith	2452
A. R. Co.	718, 1391	v. Vandervoort	619	Hathorn v. King	1938
v. Reynolds	2311, 2550	Haseltine v. R. Co.	454	Hathorne v. Hodges	321
Hartford I. M. Co. v.		Haskell v. Becket	2354	Hatt v. Nay	199, 208
Cambria M. Co.	2458, 2463	v. Mitchell	1943	Hatter v. Dodge Bros.	150a,
Hartford L. Ins. Co. v.		Haskens v. Lumsden	74		1354
Gray	1313, 2415	Haskins v. Com.	1842	Hatton v. Robinson	2291,
Hartlerode's Will	2503	v. Ins. Co.	716		2294, 2297
Hartley v. Hartley	2237	v. Lumsden	73, 74	Haubrand's Bill	1177
Hartley S. Bank v. Mc-		v. People	2059	Hauenstein v. Gillespie	1230
Corkell	1877	v. Warren	321, 1954	Hauer v. Hauer	2421
Hartman v. Diller	1086	Haslam v. Campbell	1388	Haug v. Riley	1273
v. Evans	377	Hassam v. Safford	794, 1778,	Hauger v. U. S.	1072, 2130
v. Ins. Co.	1726, 1946, 1947		2132	Haughton v. Aetna L.	
v. Rogers	950, 1963	Hassard v. Municipality	2572	Ins. Co.	266, 1073,
Hartman Steel Co. v.		Hassler v. King	1651		2384, 2494
Hoag	2115	Hast v. Terr.	205, 1620	v. Ewbank	1249
Hartness v. Boyd	1891	Hastings v. B. H. T.		Hauk v. State	1726, 2497
v. Brown	2311, 2319	Co.	1352	Haulenbeck v. Cronk-	
Hartnett v. Boston Store	17	v. Devlin	1674	right	1943
v. McMahan	1755	v. Hopkinson	1249	Haun v. Wilson	2354
Hartney v. Ins. Co.	1062	v. Livermore	1043	Haupt v. Henninger	1387
Hartranft's Appeal	2369,	v. Palmer	1873	v. Michaelis	2463
	2371, 2378	v. Rider	569, 1938	Hausenfluck v. Com.	775, 2061
Hartrich v. Hawes	1873	v. Stetson	73, 280	Hauser v. Goodstein	1072
Harts v. Glos	1705	Hastings' (Warren) Trial		v. Leviness	1539
Hartsell v. Masterson	93	(see also R. v. Hastings)	4a,	v. People	460, 946, 1852,
Hartshorne v. Wilkins	2532		260, 1866, 1877		1876, 2034, 2118
Hartwell v. Parks	2534	Hatch v. Brown	914, 1416	Hausman v. Buchman	2556
Hartwig v. Schiefer	2477	v. Dennis	1083, 1084	Haussknecht v. Claypool	6
Harty v. Glos	1705	v. Fowler	1247	Hautz v. Rough	1312
v. Malloy	1141	v. Fuller	1718, 1721	Haven v. Foster	1271
Hartz v. Com.	1677	v. Hatch	2503, 2520	v. Mo. R. Co.	2495
Hartzell v. Hartzell	18	v. Lewis	2349	v. Wendell	736, 747, 754
Hartzog v. Hubbard	1564	v. Pryor	2447	Havenor v. State	1669, 1850,
					2363

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Havens v. R. I. Suburban R. Co.	1078	Haycock v. Greup	2008, 2016	Hays v. State,	
r. Sea Shore L. Co.	1573, 2141	Hayden v. Goodnow	2525	51 Tex. Cr.	2276
Haver v. Haver	1511	r. Mitchell	1189, 1225, 1651	Tex. Cr., 234	
r. R. Co.	949	r. New York R. Co.	288	S. W.	923, 987
r. Tenney	1955	r. Palmer	18	v. Tacoma R. & P. Co.	905
Haverhill L. & F. Ass'n		r. Rice	1245	v. Terr.	1802, 1803
r. Cronin	1984	r. Stone,		v. Weiland	1856b, 1856c
Hawes v. Dingley	321	112 Mass.	1042	Hayslep v. Gymer	1072
v. Georgia	1356	121 Mass.	1133	Hayt v. Brewster Gordon & Co.	2220
v. Ins. Co.	1946, 1947	r. Williams	1074	Hayward v. Barron	1406, 1409
v. State	1644, 1680, 1683, 1684, 2167, 2302	Haydon v. Moore	1225	r. Knapp,	
Hawhe v. R. Co.	2475	Haye's Will	2052	22 Minn.	1802
Hawken v. Daley	1558, 1560	Hayes v. Adams Exp. Co.	2415	23 Minn.	1951
Hawkesworth v. Showler	609	r. Banks	1292, 1299, 2165	Hayward Rubber Co.	
Hawkins v. Craig	1267	r. Berwick	2167	r. Duncklee	1083, 1086, 1213, 2104
r. Ermatinger	1354	r. Burkam	1081	Haywood v. Com.	950, 987
v. Grimes	2008, 2027	r. Candee	1958	r. Rogers	1947
r. Hanson	1564	r. Cheatham	1126, 1128, 1129	r. U. S.	21, 2184, 2264
v. Howard	2200, 2211, 2307	r. Frey	2165	Hazard v. Illinois C. R. Co.	1354
v. Publishing Co.	2354	r. Mut. Prot. Ass'n	613	r. Ins. Co.	2466
v. Rice	1212	r. Parmalee	616	r. R. Co.	1031, 1382
v. Ross	1296, 1300, 1318	r. People	2086	Hazard P. Co. v. Somerville M. Co.	461
v. State,		r. Pitts-Kimball Co.	266, 1576, 2097	Hazell v. Dyas	1195
25 Ga.	111, 247	r. R. Co.,		Hazen v. Pierson	1195
185 Ind.	347, 1079	54 Ill.	1943	Hazer v. Streich	616, 748, 1541
98 Md.	1440, 1442, 1460	17 Utah	460, 1951	Hazleton v. Union Bank	1389, 2016, 2017
7 Mo.	832, 861	v. Smith	1005, 1807, 1984	Hazzard v. Vickery	2008
6 Okl. Cr.	1853	v. State,		Heacock v. Lubuke,	
v. Sumter	2211	126 Ga.	390, 967	107 Ill.	1705
v. U. S.	520, 1398, 1404, 1407, 1410, 1442, 1750	Tenn.	1350	108 Ill.	2529
r. Warre	2185	112 Wis.	1385a	r. Stoddard	803
v. Windhorst	377	r. Wagner	1233, 2570	Head v. Bridges	2570
Hawkinson v. Otway	1511	r. Wells	728, 1623, 1831, 1959	v. Hargrave	1920, 2570
Hawks v. Baker	1819	r. West	1304, 1738	v. State	923, 987, 1126
r. Charlemont	451	Hayes' Estate	797	Heady v. Turnpike Co.	1168
r. Chester	1722	Haymaker v. Alford	2416	Heal v. Stoll	2570
v. Patton	1971	Haymond v. Saucer	64, 288	Heald v. R. Co.	1807
Hawksland v. Gatchel	2405	Haynes v. Brown	1074	r. Thing	688, 1362
Hawley v. Bond	1960	r. Burlington	451	r. W. U. Tel. Co.	2498
v. Hand	2065	r. Com.	343	Healey v. Bartlett	460
v. Robinson	1206	r. Gas Co.	2509	r. R. Co.	1040
v. Sumpter Valley R. Co.	455	v. Heller	1350	r. Thatcher	1062
v. Wallace	2256	r. Hillsdale	438	Healy v. Backus	4c
Hawley D.-D. F. Co. v.		r. Ledyard	1890	Heane v. Rogers	1058
Hooper	2442	v. McRae	287	Heap v. Parrish	581
Haws v. Hand	1409	r. State	10, 111, 1163, 1803	Heard v. McKee	1188, 1391
Hawthorne v. Delano	2374a	r. Trenton	2220	r. Russell	2123
v. Hoboken	1674, 1680	r. Waterville & O. St. R. Co.	223	r. State	18
v. Jenkins	2503	Hays v. Bouthalier	1681	r. Tappan	2525
Hawver v. Hawver	406, 614, 615	r. Briggs	463	r. U. S.	1079, 1890
Hay v. Coventry	2459	r. Christiansen	1456	Hearn v. Ins. Co.	2464
r. Hay	2237	r. Claypool	1605	v. Purnell	2408
r. Miller	1938	r. Harden	1033, 1505, 1511, 1513	v. Smith	1651
v. Peterson	1539, 1548, 2524	v. Hays	2245	Hearne v. De Young,	
v. State	1770, 2062	r. Millar	65, 1984	119 Cal.	406, 1078, 1971, 2498
Hay's Appeal	1379, 1390, 1409	v. State,		132 Cal.	74
		110 Ala.	1104	Heaston v. Krieg	1938, 2391
		40 Md.	391		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Heaston v. R. Co.	2572	Hege & Co. v. Tompkins	4a,	Heminway v. Miller	1603
Heath, Re	2260		2377	Hemmens v. Bentley	1896
v. Com.	363	Hegler v. Faulkner	1347a,	Hemmenway v. Towner	2063
v. Deane	1586		1671	Hemmi v. R. Co.	283, 2509
v. Glisan	1951	Hehir v. Rhode Island		Hemminger v. Assur. Co.	1890
v. Keyes	609	Co.	2494	Hemmings v. Gasson	406
v. Page	334	Hei v. Heller	2433	v. Smith	2085, 2529
v. State,		Height v. People	1028	Hemphill v. Hemphill	1564,
93 Ga.	993	Heike v. U. S.	1398, 1530,		1566, 1587
173 Ind.	133, 963, 987		2282	Hempstead v. Reed	2573
7 Tex. App.	2059	Heilman Milling Co. v.		Hempton v. State	233, 773,
v. Waters	1390	Hotaling	1234		1639, 2354
v. West	1621	Heim v. Roberts	2509	Hemstreet, Re	2207
Heaton v. Bank	1347	Heimer v. State	2184	Henard v. State	398
v. Dennis	1841	Hein v. Holdridge	64	Hendelman v. Kahan	1842
v. Findlay	2304, 2311	Heinbach v. Heinbach	1958	Hendersen, Ex parte	2195
Heaton's Estate,		Heineke v. Chicago R.		Hendershot v. Tel. Co.	2382
135 Cal.	1492, 1495,	Co.	1976	Henderson, In re	2195
	1605	Heinmiller v. Winston		v. Anderson	529
139 Cal.	1492	Bros.	458, 461	v. Cargill	2083
Heavy v. Odell	1873	Heintz v. Thayer	1651, 1677	v. Coleman	18, 1078
Hebb v. Welch	2465	Heinze v. District Court	1862	v. Com.,	
Hebbard v. Haughian	2312	Heisler v. State	770	122 Ky.	987, 2277
Hebbe v. Maple Creek	794	Heister v. Davis	2296	Ky., 72 S. W.	1447
Heberd v. Myers	1271	Heitmann v. Commercial		98 Va.	2513
Hebert v. Dewey	7a	Bank	2408, 2410,	v. Daniels	1681
Hebert's Succession	1644,		2413, 2435	v. Dimond	681
	2159	Helbig v. Citizens' Ins.		v. Dreyfus	406, 949
Heckert v. Haine	1291, 1293	Co.	966, 2596	v. Galloway	1664
Heckle v. R. Co.	1750	v. Grays' Harbor E.		v. Hackney	1678
Heckman v. Heckman	2240	Co.	2220	v. Hart	1086
Hecla P. Co. v. Sigua I.		Helbreg v. Schumann	2437	v. Haynes	987, 1615, 1985
Co.	1684	Held v. U. S.	1985	v. Henderson	89, 2473
Hecox v. State	826	Heldt v. State	841	v. Jones	1124, 1125, 1126,
Hector v. State	833	Helfenstein v. Medart	461,		1127, 1131
Hedden, Ex parte	2259b		561, 571	v. R. Co.	454, 455, 456
v. Overton	1275, 2105	Halfrich L. & M. Co. v.		v. State,	
Heddendorf v. State	861	Bland	1029	70 Ala.	580, 1781
Hedderich v. Hedderich	2475	Helland v. Allen	96	95 Ga.	852, 2281
Hedderly v. U. S.	581	Heller v. People	2354	85 Nebr.	1136, 2062
Hedding v. Schaeble	2419	Helling v. Schindler	283	12 Tex.	63, 246
Heddle v. R. Co.	1012, 1721	Helm v. Anchor F. Ins.		14 Tex.	2089
Heddles v. R. Co.	1018	Co.	581	v. Terry	2311
Hedge v. Clapp	1026, 1027,	v. Com.	851, 923	v. Wanamaker	1082
	1028	Hellman v. Hellman	1651	v. Williams	1382
v. Morrow	2506, 2525, 2531	v. Karp	1141, 1646	Henderson & C. G. R.	
Hedger v. Horton	1080,	Hellyer v. People	968, 1976	Co. v. Cosby	1164
	1084	Helm v. Cantrell	2097	Henderson Bridge Co. v.	
v. State	1671	v. Ducayet	2054	McGrath	2414
v. Ward	1651, 2141	v. Shackelford	1681	Henderson M. & M. Co.	
Hedlum v. Holy Terror		v. State	1476	v. Nicholson	1680
Min. Co.	949	Helms v. Green	916	Hendon v. Morris	2433
Hedlun v. Holy Terror M.		v. State	106	v. White	1225
Co.	969	v. U. S.	111, 968	Hendrey v. U. S.	1890
Hedrick v. Gobble	1778	Helser v. McGrath	1890	Hendrick v. R. Co.	461
v. Southern R. Co.	2122	Helton v. Asher	1188, 1195	Hendrick's Case	309
Hee Fat v. Wong Kwai	2012	Helwig v. Aulabaugh	2153	Hendricks v. St. Louis	
Heely v. Barnes	586	v. Lascowski	987, 1005,	Transit Co.	767
Heffebower v. Dietrick	289		1270	Hendricks v. State	2042
Heffner v. Gross	2442	Helzer v. Helzer	1209	Hendrickson v. Attick	1502
Heffron v. Brown	715	Hematite M. Co. v. R.		v. Com.,	
v. Gallupe	1802, 2349,	Co.	748	Ky., 64 S. W.	1263
	2354	Hemenway v. Smith	2324	Ky., 73 S. W.	1450
Heflin v. Eastern R. Co.	728	Hemingway v. Garth	905	v. Harry	2237

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hendrickson v. People	389,	Henry Investment Co.		Herries v. Waterloo	2382
390, 823, 845, 852, 2266		v. Semonian	1681	Herring v. Clobery	2294,
Hendrix v. State,		Hensan v. Cooksey	2503	2295, 2308	
24 Ga. App.	2497	Hensel v. Maas	2530	v. Hood	1750
8 Okl. Cr.	2060	Henshaw v. Davis	1549	v. Levy	1532
Hendron v. Robinson	1878,	Hensley v. Com.	987	v. Rogers	1297
	1899	v. Tarpey	1219	v. Skaggs,	
Hendry v. State	348	Hensoldt v. Petersburg	1350,	62 Ala.	1966
v. Willis	1678		1684	73 Ala.	777, 912, 1872
Heneky v. Smith	282, 1181	Henson v. Lehigh V. R.		v. State	363, 413,
Heningburg v. State	851	Co.	2509	413b, 988	
Henion v. R. Co.	461	v. State	111, 1037	v. Watson	2500
Henislaw v. Freedman	2287	v. Veatch	73, 74	Herrington v. State	1750
Henley v. Phillips	4, 1311,	Henson & S. C. Co. v.		Herron v. Brinton	2444
	1312	Strickland	1908	Hersey v. Barton	1072
Henly v. Hemming	1291, 1301	Henthorn v. Doe	1680,	v. Hutchins	285
Henman v. Dickinson	2235		2141, 2573	Hersom v. Henderson	1003,
v. Lester	986, 1256, 1270	Henwood v. People	1398, 1404	1612	
Hennell v. Lyon	1215, 1218,	Hepburn v. Cassel	529	Herster v. Herster	233, 1738
	2158, 2529	Hepler v. Bank	2098	Herstine v. R. Co.	2509
Hennen v. Hacker	2240	v. Hosack	1938	Hertfordshire Murder	9
v. Monro	1388	Herbert v. Berrier	1312	Hertig v. People	2165, 2167
Hennequin v. Naylor	321	v. R. Co.	2552	Herton v. U. S.	1854
Hennessy v. Ins. Co.,		v. State	398	Hertrich v. Hertrich	1081,
74 Conn.	1261, 2537	v. Tuckal	1503	1938, 2336, 2341	
8 Wash.	1414	Herblay v. Norris	1878	Herzig v. Sandberg	17, 933
v. Kennedy	2432	Herbst v. Asiatic Prince	1271	Herzog v. Gipson	2503
v. Wright	2378, 2379	Hercules, The	1641	Hesdra's Will	1033, 1129
Hennicutt v. Kirkpatrick	561	Herd v. State	1450	Hesk v. Ellis	1051
Henning v. Stevenson	609,	Hereford v. Combs	66, 2054	Hesler v. Degant	406
	615, 2500	v. People	2042	Heslop v. Heslop	280
Henrietta Coal Co. v.		Herendeen Mfg. Co. v.		Hess, Re	2271, 2283
Campbell	1808, 1951	Moore	2155	v. Griggs	1291
Henry v. Adey	1681, 2163,	Herlock's Adm'r v. Riser	1543	v. Lowrey	940, 1700, 2220
	2164	Herman, In re	291	v. Marinari	64
v. Bank of Salina	2222, 2283	v. Mason	1646	v. Oregon G. B. Co.	2554
v. Bishop	1290, 1292	v. Schlesinger	2319	v. R. Co.	2220
v. Brown,		v. State	363, 2497, 2511a,	v. State	703, 1339
143 Ala.	254, 1587,		2512	v. Vinton Colliery	
	1778	v. U. S.	369	Co.	916, 2067
2 Heisk. Tenn.	64	Hermann v. State	222, 261,	v. Wilcox	1873, 2115
v. Diviney	1195		1154, 1336	Hesse v. C. S. & H. R.	
v. Hall	1736	Hermes v. R. Co.	1750	Co.	2509
v. Henkel	2195	Hermida v. Gestera	1263	v. St. John R. Co.	285
v. Henry	2520	Hernaez v. Hernaez	2421	Hesser v. Rowley	1633
v. Ins. Co.	1858	Herndon v. Black	17	Hessick v. Hessick	2526
v. Lee	758, 759, 763	v. Casiano	1239, 1651	Hester v. Com.	390, 1124,
v. Leigh	1244, 1639	v. Givens	1195, 1258	1127, 1131	
v. Norwood	73, 209	v. State,		v. Hester	610, 2237, 2336
v. People	105, 216, 968,	72 Fla.	2277	v. Lumpkin	1035
	1157, 1807, 2497	111 Ga.	1938	Hetch v. Eherke	1640
v. Phillips	2408	50 Tex. Cr.	351	Heth v. Young	1387
v. R. Co.,		Herne v. Brown	2250	Hetherington v. Kemp	95
50 Cal.	454, 455, 456	Herold v. Herold China		Hethier v. Johns	2389, 2390
2 Ia.	1943	& Pottery Co.	2212	Hettick v. Searcy	1938
v. Salina Bank	2260	Herrell v. State	1852	Hettleman v. Frank	2572
v. Seattle Elec. Co.	1750	Herren v. People	925, 2277	Heugh v. Garrett	2212
v. Sneed	2338	v. Strong	1651	Heuston v. Simpson	2384
v. State,		Herreshoff v. Knietsch	2212	Hewatson v. Tookey	2218
107 Ala.	293	Herrick v. Ammerman	1681	Hewes v. Fruit Co.	1078
6 Okl. Cr.	949, 1010	v. Holland	437, 728	v. Glos	2515
14 Okl. Cr.	2071	v. Odell	2336	v. Wiswell	1314
v. Taylor	1960	v. Swomley	1669, 1890,	Hewett v. Chapman	2351
Henry Coxon, The	1641		2008	v. Hewett	2573



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hewett v. Hurley	1958	Hicks v. State,		Hightower v. Ogletree	702
Hewey v. State	1974	75 Fla.	1978	v. Williams	2132
Hewitt v. Bank	1684	165 Ind.	18, 1126, 1671	Higley v. Bidwell	1587
v. Clark	771, 1969, 2097	v. Stone	1021	Higlister v. French	216
v. Corey	1126, 1128,	v. Thomas	1062	Higman v. Camody	2508
	1129	v. Williams	1960	Hihn v. Peck	1664
v. Eisenbart	1719	Hicks' Estate v. Blan-		Hilbert v. Com.	2336
v. Pigott,		chard	2325	Hilborn v. Alford	1300, 2132
7 Bing	1858	Hieronymus v. Glass	2437	Hildebrand v. Carroll	2508
5 C. & P.	2104	Hiers v. Risher	1587	v. United Artisans	18
v. Praine	2383	Hiersche v. Scott	75, 770	Hildeburn v. Curran	1020,
v. State	1244	Hiester Case	463		1021
Hewlett v. Cock	2141	Higbee v. Dresser	2298	Hilders v. McCartney	461
v. Henderson	1233	v. McMillan	608, 2235	Hildreth v. Aldrich	1302
v. Wood	1390, 1958	Higbie v. Ins. Co.	658, 1947	v. Martin	1072
Hews v. Equitable L. A.		Higdon v. Heard	2260, 2275,	Hildyard v. Smith	1858
Soc'y	1081		2283	Hiler v. People	2085, 2086
Hewson v. Cleeve	207	v. Rice	2477	Hiles v. State	106
Hey's Case	1842	Higdon's Heirs v. Hig-		Hilker v. Hilker	64
Heylor v. Hall	2352	don's Devises	2235	Hill v. Adams Express Co.,	
Heyman v. Heyman	21, 2081,	Higginbotham v. State,		74 N. J. L.	759
	2498	Ala., 29 So.	1974	78 N. J. L.	2415
Heyn's Case	2239	Tex. Cr., 20 S. W.	166	v. Aland	1858
Heynbrock v. Hormann	1778	Higgins v. Andrews	89	v. Amer. Surety Co.	1947
Heyward, Re	1909	v. Cal. P. & A. Co.	2463	v. Atlanta	2572
v. Hazard	689, 1938	v. Carlton	1029, 1244,	v. Aultman	1195
Heywood v. Reed	64, 253,		1938	v. Bacon	1352, 2582
	1109	v. Com.	1029, 1079, 2071	v. Bahrns	1738
Hiatt v. McColley	582	v. Dewey	1951	v. Bellows	1678
v. State	2582	v. Higgins	561	v. Berger	2498
Hibbard v. Baker	1938	v. Nethery	1938, 2500	v. Bigge	2368
v. Russell	581, 1969	v. People,		v. Canfield	18
Hibberd v. Knight	2308	157 Ind.	736	v. Clifford	1671
Hibbs v. Ross	1647	58 N. Y.	1135	v. Com.,	
Hice v. Cox	905, 907	v. Reed	1267, 1269	191 Ky.	923
Hickey v. Champion	2061	v. Senior	2438	88 Va.	910, 2079, 2080
v. Fitzgerald	364, 986	v. Shepard	1062	v. Crook	2463
v. Morrissey	1646	v. Spahr	1086	v. Dalton	1564, 2477, 2540
v. R. Co.	461	v. State	343	v. Eldredge	667
Hickinbotham v. Leach	73	v. Watson	1195, 1196	v. Glenwood	1876
Hickman v. Gillum	1215	Higginson v. Clowes	2442	v. Goode	905, 1028
v. London Ass'n Co.	2275	Higgs v. Dixon	1290	v. Gust	1029
v. State	1938	v. Minneapolis St. P. &		v. Hall	2444, 2503
Hickory v. U. S.,		S. S. M. R. Co.	791	v. Hart	2465
151 U. S.	905, 907,	v. Shehee	1536	v. Helton	584
	1028, 2008,	High v. Pancake	1566, 1569,	v. Hill	1320
	2016, 2018		1778	v. Hill's Adm'r,	
160 U. S.	276	High's Ex'rs v. Pancake	1257	9 Ala.	728
Hicks v. Bradner	619	Higham v. Ridgway	1465,	32 Pa.	1603, 1645, 2086
v. Chouteau	2135		1476, 1584	v. Home Ins. Co.	561
v. Coleman	1225, 2132	v. Vanosdol	17, 1730	v. Kerr	665
v. Cram	1624	Highfield v. Peake	1215, 2158	v. Manchester & S. W.	
v. Davis	1951	v. Phelps	1651	Co.	1074
v. Hicks	18	Highland v. Hines	1389	v. Maxwell	987, 1270
v. Hinde	2444, 2445	Highland Avenue & B. R.		v. Miller,	
v. Ivey	2463	Co. v. Sampson	571	50 Kan.	1876, 2503
v. Jenkins	2416	Highland Turnpike Co.		7 La. An.	1878
v. Metropolitan Life		v. McKean	1074	v. Montgomery	1011
Ins. Co.	7a, 2390	Highlander v. Fluke	1086	v. Nall	1308
v. Naomi F. M. Co.	1063	Highley v. Bank	907	v. Nisbet	1651, 2140, 2146
v. Person	709, 2008	Highsmith v. State	1219, 1672	v. Norris	1676
v. R. Co.		Hight v. Klingensmith	2336	v. North	418
63 S. C.	1984	v. Wilson	1290	v. Packard	1271, 1279
S. C., 38 S. E.	763	Hightower v. Henry	2442	v. People	1850, 1852, 1853

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hill v. Pomelear	2088, 2235	Himes v. Cole Teaming Co.	2509	Hirdes v. Ottawa Circuit Judge	618
v. Pratt	1073	Himmelman v. Hoadley	1680,	Hirsch, Re	1219, 2378
v. Proctor	613, 1566, 1568		2167	v. Leatherbee L. Co.	1213
v. R. Co.,		Himrod v. Gilman	2008	v. State	2281
55 Me.	461, 1951	Hinchcliff v. Hinman	1318,	Hirsch & S. I. & R. Co.	
v. State,			1651	v. Coleman	1036, 1404
100 Ala.	461	Hinckley v. Somerset	252	Hirschberg v. Southern Pacific R. Co.	2390
137 Ala.	398	v. Thatcher	2467	Hirschfeld v. Williamson	1086
156 Ala.	1732	Hinde v. Vatlier,		Hirschman v. People	968,
194 Ala.	988	1 McLean	1311		1983
41 Ga.	605, 1438	5 Pet.	1684	Hirst's Case	1328
64 Ga.	2355	Hinde's Case	2250	Hisey v. Peters	2066
91 Ga.	2354	Hindley v. Manhattan R. Co.	21, 463, 1062	Hiskett v. Bozarth	608
4 Ind.	133, 987	Hindman v. Van Dyke	233	Hisler v. State	457, 791
5 Lea	784	Hinds v. Barton	454, 455	Hissrick v. McPherson	1536
64 Miss.	1443	v. Evans	1225	Hitch v. Wells	1511
42 Nebr.	987	v. Harbon	571	Hitchcock v. Board of Home Missions	2472
91 Tenn.	987, 1117,	v. Keith	253, 1966	v. Burgett	132, 675,
	2277	v. Kersey	1304		1021, 1755
22 Tex. App.	1842	v. State	391	v. Clendinen	1955
88 Tex. Cr.	1434	Hindson v. Kersey	2049	v. Grant	1141
17 Wis.	759	Hine, Re	771	v. Kennison	2498
v. Sturgeon	1951, 2103	v. Pomeroy,		v. Moore	949, 963, 1106,
v. Taylor	1225, 2143	24 Vt.	93		1807, 2341
v. Terr.	987, 2059	30 Vt.	379	v. Rooney	2526
v. Townsend	1209, 1298	v. R. Co.	451, 1729	Hitchcox v. Hitchcox	2069,
v. Whidden	2433	Hines v. Greenlee	1239		2085
v. Wiggett	2426	v. Johnston	1272, 1273	Hitchins v. Eardley	1492
v. Wilson	2065	v. Miller	2582	Hitchon v. Best	2152
v. Winston	1404, 1405,	v. Potts	2538	Hite v. Com.	852
	1725	v. Soule	1080, 1082,	v. Keene	2558
Hill's Case	1749		1083, 1085, 1257	v. Shrader	1573
Hill's Guardian v. Hill	1777	v. Thorn	1225	Hitner's Appeal	2336
Hill Estate Co. v. Whit- tlesey	2580	v. Warden,		Hitt v. Carr	1278
Hill Mfg. Co. v. P. & N. Y. S. Co.	461	Tex. Cr. App., 229		v. Sterling-Gould Mfg. Co.	2237
Hillel Lodge v. Rose	1072,	S. W.	1064	Hittner v. State	276
	1354	v. Wilcox	2442	Hittson v. Davenport	1267,
Hillen v. People	363	Hines, Dir. Gen. v. Beard	2509		1269
Hillers v. Taylor	1730	Hinkle v. R. Co.	987	Hitz v. Algreen	2531
Hillian v. State	2060	v. Smith	1538	Hix v. Drury	406, 1064, 2349,
Hilliard v. Beattie	220, 1908	v. State,			2354
v. Enders	1275	94 Ga.	857, 1841, 2264	v. Gulley	772, 1871
v. Wylie	923, 1985	157 Ind.	1003, 2062	Hoadley v. Hammond	1960
Hillier v. Farrell	20	Hinkley v. Davis	1474	v. Northern Transp. Co.	5
Hills v. Barnes	2525	Hinners v. Edgewater & W. F. L. R. Co.	1168	v. Seward & S. Co.	451,
v. Farmington	2434	Hinshaw v. State	41, 278, 285,		1896
v. Ins. Co.	1946, 1947		390, 1126, 1330,	Hoag v. Wright	991, 2015
v. Jacobs	1208		2363, 2497	Hoard v. State	290, 500, 1106
v. Ludwig	1085	Hinson v. State,		Hoare v. Allen	1795
v. State	2239, 2395	59 Fla.	1614	v. Graham	2444
v. Union L. & S. Co.	1862	152 Ga.	2501	v. Silverlock	2582
Hilt v. Heimberger	1347	Hinton v. Locke	2463	Hobart v. Hobart	1303, 1511,
Hilton v. Guyot	1697	v. State	1013		1513
v. Hayes	1042, 1053	Hinton's Will	1738	Hobbs v. Batory	2438
v. Hilton	2527	Hintz v. State	832, 851, 861,	v. Beard	1189, 1269, 1651
v. Mason	1960		862, 1157, 1977	v. Duff	1329
v. Roylance	1699, 2569	v. Wagner	688	v. Massasoit W. Co.	2413
v. State	166	Hipple v. State	507	v. Norton	2047
Hilts v. Colvin	1270	Hipsley v. R. Co.	283, 437,	v. Rowland	2437
v. R. Co.	96, 249		438, 458		
Hilyard v. Harrison	1185,				
	1861, 2200				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hobbs v. State,		Hoffman v. Cramer	2311	Holden v. Mfg. Co.	1976
75 Ala.	1878	v. Harrington	1871	v. Prudential Life Ins.	
133 Ind.	1126, 1132	v. Kemerer	75, 210	Co.	747, 754, 2452
53 Tex. Cr.	1398	v. North Milwaukee	438	v. State	507
Hobby v. Alford	1298	v. Pack	1230	Holder v. State,	
v. Dana	1947	v. R. Co.,		58 Ark.	987
v. Wisconsin Bank	616	40 Minn.	657, 736, 754	119 Tenn.	363, 1041
Hobdy v. Jones	2083	143 Pa.	451, 1168	v. U. S.	1842
Hobe v. Swift	1249	v. Smith	2121	Holdfast v. Dowling	1304
Hobhouse v. Hamilton	1650	v. State,		Holdrege v. Watson	1014
Hobson v. District Court	2210	93 Md.	923	Holdsworth v. Mayor	905
v. Moorman	1738	97 Wis.	2497	Holford v. James	2450
v. Ogden	1066	Hofnauer v. White Co.	2509	Holingren v. U. S.	2059
v. Porter	1188, 1195	Hogan v. Robinson	1086	Holladay v. Littlepage	1476
Hoch v. People	851, 2081,	v. Roche's Heirs	1938	Holland, Re	2454
2231, 2506, 2550		v. State,		v. Barnes	923
Hock v. Hock	2048	76 Ga.	1620	v. Carter	1651
Hockenbury v. Carlisle	1680,	Ind., 133 N. E.	1018	v. Holland	2067
2158, 2159		Hogans v. Carruth	2144	v. Huston	571
Hockett v. Alston	2573	Hoge v. Fisher	689	v. Kindregan	2494
Hocking, Re	2528	v. George	2094	v. McCarthy	2408
v. Windsor S. Co.	569	v. Turner	618	v. Reeves	1884
Hockman v. McClanahan	530	Hogen v. Klabo	949, 1890	v. Southern P. Co.	208
Hockmoth v. Des Grands		Hoggan v. Cahoon	1044	v. State,	
Champs	1956	Hoggson & P. Mfg. Co.		126 Ark.	1433
Hocks v. Sprangers	282, 1067	v. Sears	2120	39 Fla.	826, 861, 862,
Hodd v. Tacoma	1825	Hoghton v. Hoghton	1062		2071, 2073
Hodgdon v. Shannon	1778	Hogins v. Brashears	1676a	v. Williams	1808
v. Wright	2518	Hogsett v. Ellis	1195, 1778	v. Zollner	689
Hodge v. Palms	1240, 2141	Hoisting Machinery Co.		Holleman v. De Nyse	2164
v. Smith	2409	v. Goeller I. Works	702	Hollenback v. Fleming	1300
v. State,		Hoit v. Russell	463	v. Todd	2297
98 Ala.	177	Hoitt v. Moulton	694, 726,	Hollenbeck v. Marion	1978
199 Ala.	390		923, 933, 987,	v. Ristine	2517
Hodgens v. Sullivan	2465		1943, 1969, 1985	v. Rowley	792
Hodges v. Bales	1126, 1127	Hoke's Ex'rs v. Fleming	1126	v. Stanberry	1234, 1245
v. Bearse	458	Holbrook v. Debo	1587	Holler v. Holler	1737
v. Bennett	2061	v. Dow	987, 2277	v. State	111
v. Drakeford	2434	v. Gay	1561	Holleran v. Meisel	1956
v. Eastman	1300	v. Holbrook,		Holley v. Burgess	74
v. Hill	97	113 Mass.	1086	v. Coffee	1672
v. Hodges,		30 Vt.	1021	v. State,	
2 Cush.	1278	v. Jackson	18, 260	105 Ala.	609, 1108
106 N. C.	1483	v. Murray	1777	39 Tex. Cr.	106, 396,
v. Percival	283	v. Nichol	1651, 1677, 2105		2277
v. Wilson	18	v. Quinlan & Co.	1064	v. Young	2593, 2594
v. Windham	211	v. Seagrave	194, 689, 2503	Holliday v. Shepherd	1671
Hodgkins v. State	1614	v. Trustees	1195	v. State	2513
Hodgkinson v. Willis	1215,	Holcomb v. Alpena Power		Hollien v. State	2239
	2526	Co.	451	Holliman v. Cabanne	1984
Hodgson, Re	2065	v. Holcomb,		Hollingham v. Head	377
Hodnett v. Forman	1312	28 Conn.	493, 932,	Hollingsworth v. State,	
Hoe v. Nathorp	1215, 1218		1822	53 Ark.	923, 953, 969,
Hoefeld v. Ozelle	2414	95 N. Y.	1934, 1938		987, 1022, 1112
Hoefling v. Borsen	2477	v. Mosher	1195	79 Ga.	907
Hoener v. Koch	1951	v. State	689, 1938	111 Ind.	1230
Hoes v. Van Alstyne	1271	v. Tift	1681	78 Tex. Cr.	1073
Hofacre v. Monticello	1111,	Holcombe v. Hewson	462	v. Walker	2530
1951, 2450		v. State	1248	v. Warnock	111
Hoff v. Fisher	1417	Holcroft v. Smith	1409, 1650	Hollingsworth's Will	1738
Hoffbauer v. Morgan	2500	Holden v. Cantrell	1778	Hollingsworth v. Lucy	575
Hoffman v. Berwind-		v. Ins. Co.	7a, 2388	Hollins v. State	1354, 2062
White C. M. Co.	714	v. Jenkins	1295	Hollis v. Dashiell	2141
		v. McGillicuddy	2536	v. Sales	1458

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hollis v. State	1974	Holston v. R. Co.	1013	Hood v. Bloch	1161
Hollister v. Cordero	1671	Holt v. Collyer	2464	v. French	1777
v. McCord	1684	v. Great Eastern C.		v. Mathers	1225, 1651, 1658
v. Young	1593, 1778	Co.	1062	v. Maxwell	716
Holloway v. Kansas		v. Guergin	1415	v. R. Co.	340
City	688, 2389	v. Miers	1208	v. Reeve	1070
v. Rakes	1778	v. School Dist. No. 71	1951	Hoodless v. Jernigan	18, 20, 1660
v. State	21, 988, 2079	v. State,			
Holly v. Bass	1681	9 Tex. App.	1840	Hoogewerff v. Flack	747
v. Bennett	1684	39 Tex. Cr.	273, 347, 1079, 2279	Hoogle v. Cline	2433
v. Com.	949			Hook v. George	1040
v. State	111, 247, 2550	v. Ten Broeck	2509	v. Payee	167, 1151, 1154
Hollywood v. Reed	1807, 1908	v. U. S.	2184, 2252, 2265, 2511	Hooker v. R. Co.	1750
v. State	774, 1447			Hooks v. Houston	1131
Holman v. Austin	2210	v. Walker	1083	Hoon v. Hoon	2526
v. Bachus	2337	Holt's Estate	2471	Hooper v. Chism	1278, 2105
v. Bank	1031, 1035, 1388	Holtan v. Beck	2530	v. Gumm	2317
v. Boston & M. R. Co.	21	Holten v. Board	1623, 1943	v. Hall	1225
v. Clark	1779	Holton v. Janes	2220	v. Harcourt	2306
v. Edson	21	v. Lloyd	2145	v. Hooper	2239
v. Kimball	2300	Holtz v. Dick	2337, 2341	v. Moore,	
v. Orangebury	283	Holtzman v. Hoy	1621	3 Jones	953, 1028, 1985
v. R. Co.	461, 682	v. Wagner	619	5 Jones	2573
v. Riddle	2349	Holway v. Sanborn	2517	v. R. Co.	1387
v. Whitaker	2465	Holy Cross G. M. & M.		v. State	987
Holman's Heirs v. Bank		Co. v. O'Sullivan	1951	Hoopes v. De Vaughn	1404
of Norfolk	2593	Holyoke v. Holyoke's		Hoosier Stone Co. v.	
Holmberg v. Johnson	2016	Estate	1784, 2329, 2341	McCain	2509
Holmes v. Anderson	1651	Holzemer v. Metrop. St.		Hoover v. Bouffleur	2437, 2498
v. Baddeley	2294	R. Co.	460		
v. Boydston	1388	Holzauer v. Sheeny	2155	v. Gehr	1548, 1558, 1561
v. Brown	406	Holzmacher v. U. S.	369	v. M'Chesney	2264
v. Clisby	770	Homans v. Corning	581	v. Patton	20
v. Coryell	2141, 2143, 2146	Home v. Bentinck	2378	v. Shott	714, 720
v. Deppert	2105	Home Fire Ins. Co. v.		v. State,	
v. Fond du Lac	613	Berg	2304	Ind., 68 N. E.	15
v. Goldsmith	38, 377, 698, 2016, 2026	Home Ins. Co. v. Balti-		48 Nebr.	1938
		more W. Co.	1062	91 Oh.	1041, 1072
v. Hinkle	1873	v. Clark	1710	35 Tex. Cr.	2242
v. Holloman	1310, 1316, 1317, 2222	v. Continental Ins. Co.	2464	Hope v. First National	
		Home Nat'l Bank v. Hill	2416	Bank	1416, 1681, 2124
v. Holmes	2083	Home Protection of N.A.		v. Hurt	1681
v. Hunt	1356	v. Whidden	1202, 1206	v. People	4, 351, 416
v. Jones	1064	Homer v. Cilley	1225, 1651, 2138, 2141	v. Phila. & W. R. Co.	914, 720
v. Marsden	750, 1532				
v. Matthews	2437	v. Everett	281	v. R. Co.	2390
v. Pontin	1312	v. Inter-Mountain A.		v. Valente	2098
v. Roper	1085	Co.	2354	Hope's Appeal	112, 1203
v. Sawtelle	1779	v. Wallis	1312, 1320, 1994, 2016	Hopkins, In re	2025
v. State,				v. Albertson	1304, 1306
88 Ala.	692, 988, 1983	Hommel v. Badger State			
108 Ala.	1239	Inv. Co.	21	v. Buckport	4a
136 Ala.	1966	Homnyack v. Prudential		v. Chung Wa	2527
v. Stateler	928, 1117	Ins. Co.	2382	v. Com.	106
v. U. S.	1871	Hone's Trial	465	v. De Graffenreid	1304, 1306, 1321, 1513, 1664
v. W. R. E. Co.	1058	Honeycutt v. U. S.	2184		
Holmes Realty Co. v.		Honeywood v. Selwin	2256	v. Fachant	1355
Silcox	1206	Hong Quon v. Chea Sam	1190	v. Grimshaw	2334
Holmesly v. Hogue	344	Honor Co. v. Stevedores'		v. Hopkins	1154, 1807
Holmgren v. U. S.	2056	& L. B. Ass'n	1382	v. Megguire	728
Holsenbake v. State	2071	Honselman v. People	1135, 2056	v. Millard	1678
Holsman v. U. S.	2153			v. R. Co.	1951
Holstein v. Benedict	2494	Honyman v. Campbell	401, 2091		
Holsten v. Jumpson	2466				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hopkins v. Simmons	2005	Hornschuch v. Southern		House v. Metcalf	{461
v. Smith,		Pac. R. Co.	1755	v. Robertson	2525
11 John.	2117	Horres v. Chemical Co.	18	Household F. & C. A.	
1 Ont. L. R.	2260	Horsburg v. Baker	2256	Ins. Co. v. Grant	2410
v. State,		Horseman v. Todhunter	1195,	Houseman v. Roberts	1208
180 Ind.	1126		1269	Houser v. State,	
11 Okl. Cr.	286	Horsley v. Garth	1352	86 Ind.	133
Tex. Cr., 53 S. W.	1451	Horst v. Lewis	1698, 1976	93 Ind.	64
v. Stump	1387	Horstman v. Kaufman	2257	Houseton v. State	2276
v. Tate	928	Horton v. Chadbourn	1261	Housh v. People	347
Hopkins' Will	2026	v. Green	569, 662, 1975	Housley v. State	1079
Hopkinson v. Burghley	2286	v. Robert	21, 758, 2595	Houstman v. Thornton	2531
v. Knapp Co.	2570	v. State,		Houston v. Blythe	797, 1239,
v. Leeds	1890	18 Ala.	1398		1408
Hopkinson's Adm'r v.		110 Ga.	396	v. Brush	1951
Steel	770	123 Ga.	767	v. Gran	104
Hopkinton v. Waite	1876	84 Miss.	59	v. McCluney	1085
Hoppe v. Byers	112, 1736	120 Tenn.	2183	v. Perry,	
v. R. Co.	571, 1977	v. Stone	2408	3 Tex.	1239
Hopper v. Ashley	694	v. U. S.	682, 944, 1938	5 Tex.	1239, 2159
v. Beck	760	Hosack v. Rogers	603	v. Spruance	1684
v. Com.	660, 770, 1842	Hosch Lumber Co. v.		v. State,	
v. Dunsmuir	1856a	Weeks	1371	114 Ala.	1305
v. State	1117	Hosford v. Rowe	1461	13 Ark.	2570
Hopps v. People	59, 228	Hoshauer v. Hoshauer	1738	v. U. S.	341
Hopson v. Caswell	2485	Hoshaw v. Cosgriff	2415	Houston & T. C. R. Co.	
Hopt v. Utah	7, 824, 860,	Hosic v. R. Co.	461	v. Anglin	2220
	865, 866, 1977	Hoskins v. Com.	18	v. Burke	657, 760
Hoptowit v. Brown	1244	v. Miller	1238	v. Cowser	461
Horah v. Knox	1938, 1958	v. State	309, 2484	v. Patton	208, 1984
Horan v. Boston Elev.		Hoskinson v. Adkins	1651	v. Smith	1951
R. Co.	1576	Hoskison v. R. Co.	455	Houston & T. R. Co. v.	
v. Byrnes	1042	Hosmer v. Groat	1040	Odun	1350
Horbach v. State	246, 247	Hostetter v. Green	2336	Houston E. & W. T. R.	
Hord v. Colbert	18, 586	Hot Springs L. & M. Co.		Co. v. Campbell	1078
v. Dishman	1225, 1651	v. Revercomb	561, 1928,	v. De Walt	1067
Horford v. Wilson	21		1951	Houston Packing Co. v.	
Horkan v. Benning	1076	Hotard v. R. Co.	1225	Pagan, Lopez & Co.	701
Horlick's Malted Milk		Hotchkiss M. M. & R.		Houze v. Houze	1186, 1681
Co. v. Spiegel Co.	1856c,	Co. v. Bruner	252	Hoverson v. Noker	613
	1862, 2319	Hottle v. Weaver	1671	Hovey v. Chase	672, 680, 728
Horn v. Elgin Warehouse		Houck v. Wright	2435	v. Elliot	1859e
Co.	451	Houdeck v. Ins. Co.	1062	v. Grant	321
v. Noel	1249	Houghtaling v. Kilder-		v. Hovey	1075
v. Ross	1257	house	66	v. Long	1387
v. State,		v. R. Co.	716	v. Sawyer	1977
102 Ala.	364	Houghton v. Jones	1890	v. Tripp	2472
12 Wyo.	141, 363,	v. Koenig	1300	Hovill v. Stephenson	583,
	866, 905, 1021,	v. Page	529		1316
	1974, 2497	v. Paine	1249	How v. Hall	1202, 1205
Hornbeck v. State	1138	Houk v. Allen	2354	Howard v. Adkins	2465
Hornberger v. State	2512	Houlding v. Canadian		v. Beldenville L. Co.	969
Horne v. Mackenzie	745, 749	Credit Men's T. Ass'n	2124	v. Bell	575
v. Mehler	2572	Houlditch v. Donegall	1347	v. Braithwaite	528
v. Smith	2220	Houlton v. Houlton	2408	v. Brower	620
v. Williams,		v. Manteuffel	667, 1493,	v. Canfield	735, 753
12 Ind.	786, 1842		1503, 1646	v. Carter	1938
23 Ind.	2098	Haupt v. Haupt	2085	v. Com.,	
Horner, Re	2463	Hourigan v. Com.	1618	28 Ky.	861, 1850,
v. Com.	953	House v. Beak	1519, 1538,		1899, 2334
v. Spelman	1681		1552, 1555	Ky., 61 S. W.	987,
v. Yance	1730, 2338	v. Camp	913		1079, 2059
Horniah v. People	2501	v. Fort	571	Ky., 69 S. W.	2354
Hornsby v. State	667	v. House	2311	v. Coon	1681

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Howard v. Creech	2016	Howe v. Medaris	283	Hub Construction Co. v.	
v. Gt. Western Co.	665	v. Reed	334	New Eng. B. Club	1858
v. Howard	1072	v. State	111	Hubatka v. Maierhoffer	1491
v. Illinois Central R.		v. Taylor	1195	Hubbard v. Alexander	2421
Co.	1051, 1668	v. Thayer	376, 1908	v. Allyn	18, 1729
v. Illinois T. & S.		Howe M. Co. v. Stiles	1195	v. Briggs	1032
Bank	797, 1644, 1646	Howel's Case	987, 1896, 1898	v. Dewey	1352, 1676a
v. Ins. Co.		Howell v. Barden	1738	v. Equitable L. Ass.	
4 Den.	379, 987, 1021,	v. Cheatham	406	Soc.	19
	1023, 1770, 1943	v. House	1188, 1304,	v. Greeley	2420
109 Mass.	2464		2521, 2522	v. Hubbard	1842
v. Johnson	770	v. Howell	1779	v. Kelley	1244, 1678
v. Kelly	2505	v. Hurley	7, 2105	v. Lees	1496
v. McCall	2356	v. Huyck	1204, 1205	v. Moore	1640
v. McDonald	1012	v. Lock	586	v. R. Co.	458
v. McDonough	736, 745,	v. Mandelbaum	150	v. State	2071
	747, 748, 754, 763	v. Reynolds	1029, 1031	Hubbell v. Bissell	1938
v. Moot	1255, 1398	v. Smith	715	v. Des Moines	463
v. Newsom	2115	v. State,		v. Grant	2242
v. Osage City	461	141 Ark.	398, 1007	v. Osborn	1908
v. Patrick,		5 Ga.	247	v. Ream	1839, 1873
38 Mich.	1018, 1404,	Howell's Lessee v.		Hubbuck's Estate	2472, 2473
	1406, 1408	Tilden	1564, 1587	Hubenthal v. Spokane &	
43 Mich.	1029, 2015	Howenstine v. U. S.	369	I. R. Co.	2442
v. People,		Howes v. Colburn	233,	Hubert v. Bartlett	1239
27 Colo.	78, 204, 1620		685, 1021	Huck v. Canadian Pa-	
185 Ill.	682, 1726	Howland v. Crocker	1587	cific R. Co.	2099
193 Ill.	2515	v. Jacobs	2349	Huckabee v. Shepherd	1186,
v. Perrin	1680	v. R. Co.,			1225
v. Providence	561, 714,	110 Cal.	571, 1951	Huckins v. Ins. Co.	770, 777,
	1943	115 Cal.	199		2125
v. Quattlebaum	1275	v. Westport	714	v. State	2201
v. R. Co.	747	Howley v. Whipple	1236, 2154	Huddle v. Martin	1012, 1013
v. Russell,		Howser v. Com.	655, 1375,	Huddleston v. Coyle	701,
104 Ga.	1309		1395, 1639,		2008, 2016
75 Tex.	270, 797,		1710, 1910	Hudgins v. Bloodworth	1021
	1487, 2019	v. Pepper	1351	v. State	247, 2034
v. Sexton	406	v. R. Co.	2509	v. Wrights	167, 1154, 1605
v. Sheward	94	Howson v. State	2100	Hudkins v. Crim	1257, 2498
v. Shields	1351	Hoxie v. State	2230	Hudnutt v. Comstock	760
v. Smith	1256	v. Walker	293, 398	Hudson v. Appleton	1384
v. Snelling	1085, 1513	Hoxsie v. Lumber Co.	719	v. Daily	1681
v. State,		Hoy v. Kuhn	2530	v. Flood	582
108 Ala.	2494, 2499	v. Morris	2326	v. Green H. & S.	
72 Ark.	341	v. State	1038	Co.	1680, 1684
73 Ga.	2570	Hoyatt v. Phifer	1082	v. Hudson,	
109 Ga.	1079	Hoye v. State	111, 2354	287 Ill.	291, 2408
32 Ind.	905	Hoyle v. Mann	1213, 1779	144 N. C.	2500, 2503
139 Wis.	196	v. State	2059	v. Hulbert	529
v. Strode	1074, 1409, 2237	Hoyt v. Des Moines	438, 458	v. Puett	1291
v. Tenney	615	v. Hoyt	2382, 2388	v. R. Co.,	
v. Terr.	784	v. Independent Pav. Co.	282	59 Ia.	283, 458
v. Thompson	2374	v. Jeffers	454, 455, 461	92 Ia.	463, 719
v. Tremaine	1371	v. Lightbody	1490	v. Revett	2408, 2410, 2419
Howard Co., Division of	1350	v. People	2056, 2595	v. Solomon	1351
Howard H. i. Co., Ex		v. R. Co.,		v. State,	
parte	1350	57 N. Y.	571	61 Ala.	396, 714
Howatson v. Webb	2416	118 N. Y.	458	137 Ala.	2115
Howe v. Fleming	1195	v. Shipherd	1684	3 Coldw.	1432
v. Howe,		v. U. S.	368	101 Ga.	276
99 Mass.	1739	Hronek v. People	969, 1820,	9 Yerg.	2349, 2354
199 Mass.	289		1828	v. Williams	1062
v. McBride	1955	Huachuca W. Co. v.		Hudson's Case	528, 689,
v. McKernan	2212	Swain	1951		1302, 2049



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Hudspeth v. State	1985	Huguley v. Holstein	728	Hunt v. Gray	2525
Huebener v. Childs	1556, 1576	Huidekoper v. Cotton	1416, 2363	v. Hewitt	1857, 1859c
Huet v. Le Mesurier	1644	Huizega v. Lumber Co.	1951	v. Hill	1954
Huey v. Huey	1876	Hulet v. Barnett	2354	v. Hort	2473
v. State	1136, 2071	Hulett v. Carey	1073	v. Hunt	2046
Huff v. Bennett	736, 758, 759, 760, 2098	v. Hulett	581	v. Johnson	1304, 1651, 2141
v. Campbell	1680	v. Marine S. Bank	2416	v. Kile	1951
v. Gulick	2066	Hulin v. Powell	1388	v. Lowell Gaslight Co.	442, 457, 681, 1378
v. Hall	714, 1195, 1280	Huling v. Huling	1730	v. Massey	2520
v. Nims	2016, 2018	Hull v. Berkshire R. Co.	2509	v. Owings	1651
v. State,		v. Douglas	289	v. Phillips	2500
104 Ga.	1044, 1270, 1877	v. Horner	1193	v. Rousmanier	2417
106 Ga.	1040	v. Larson	2354	v. Roylance	1133, 1249
Huffman v. Cauble	784	v. Lyon	2312	v. Selleck	1225, 1651
v. Click	1690, 1700	v. Miller	1350	v. State,	
v. State	832, 861	v. State	904, 905	135 Ala.	833
Hufnagle v. Delaware & H. Co.	1639	Hull's Will	689, 1073, 1511	22 Tex. Cr.	1350
Huggard v. Glucose S. R. Co.	451, 581, 2509	Huls v. Buntin	1239	89 Tex. Cr.	347
Huggins v. Drury	2500	v. Kimball	1195, 1272	v. Van Alstyne	1350
Hughes, Re	1836	Humble v. Hunter	2438	v. Waterloo C. F. & N. R. Co.	923
v. Piddulph	2294	v. Shoemaker	905	v. Weiner	1347
v. Budd	1208	Hume v. Grant	1960	Hunt's Case	2250
v. Canal Co.	1081	v. Hopkins	1194	Hunt's Goods	2421
v. Chicago St. P. M. & O. R. Co.	1168, 1415, 1416, 1856, 2346	v. Scott	923, 987	Hunt's Heirs v. Hunt	689, 1938
v. Clark	1388	Humes v. Bernstein	791, 794	Hunt's Will	2391
v. Coal Co.	1890	v. O'Bryan	253, 255, 1415, 1457, 1463	Hunter v. Allen	2221
v. Com.	1750	Hummel v. Kistner	2311	v. Blount	2169
v. Easten	1201	Humphrey v. Archibald	2374	v. Burroughs	2090, 2509
v. Felton	1350	v. Humphrey	64	v. Cobb	2185
v. Garnons	2294	v. Pope	18, 1730	v. District Court	1388
v. General Electric L. & P. Co.	451	v. State	133, 1005, 1876, 1896	v. First National Bank	2409
v. Hays	1206	v. Timken C. Co.	2406	v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2319
v. Hughes	21	v. Wheeler	1681	v. Hunter	2384, 2506
v. Hughes' Ex'r	1738	Humphreys v. Blevins	2047	v. Ithaca	258
v. Listner	2349	v. Boyce	2232	v. Leathley	2211
v. Muscatine Co.	1976	v. Collier	1244	v. N. Y. O. & W. R. Co.	2568, 2580
v. Orphan Asylum	2477	v. N. N. & M. V. Co.	461	v. Randall	2363
v. People	2354	v. Pensam	1388	v. State,	
v. Pritchard	1273	v. Spear	1538	112 Ala.	1079
v. R. Co.,		Humphries v. Parker	728	133 Ga.	982
Ky., 48 S. W.	1750	v. Taylor D. Co.	1856c	74 Miss.	826
65 Mich.	505, 506, 508, 509, 1820	Hundley v. State	56	40 N. J. L.	1714, 1725, 1745, 2236
v. Rogers	1994, 2021	Hunley v. State	1877	10 Okl. Cr.	2239, 2242
v. State,		Hunneman v. Phelps	1985	59 Tex. Cr.	1450
70 Ark.	1908	Hunnicutt v. Higinbotham	1960	v. Trustees	1257
2 Ga. App.	2183, 2264	v. Kirkpatrick	714	v. Turnpike Co.	1355
Miss., 38 So.	366	v. Peyton	20, 1567, 1568	v. U. S.	1620
126 Tenn.	451, 791, 794, 987, 1841	v. State	2079	Hunter Case	2335
145 Tenn.	2183	Hunscorn v. Hunscorn	1817	Hunter, The	291
109 Wis.	1442	Hunsinger v. Hofer	1086, 1890	Hunter's Trial	2570
v. Ward	1028	Hunt v. Blackburn	2327	Hunter & Co. v. Sherron	2415
v. Wilson	2529	v. Boston	655, 1720	Huntingdon v. Mildmay	1211
Hughey v. State	247	v. Chosen Friends	1643, 1644	Huntington v. Attrill	463
Hugo v. Clark	2329	v. Coe	916	v. Cast	2577
Huguet, Ex parte	1404	v. Collins	2524	v. U. S.	1732
		v. Des Moines City R. Co.	2507	Huntington B. T. M. R. Co. v. Decker	96
		v. Dubuque	437, 458	Huntley v. Cage	2250
		v. Eaton	2240, 2336	v. Hutchinson	2516

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Huntley v. Terr.	2115	Hussey v. Roquemore	1225	Huyett v. R. Co.	456
v. Whittier	95	v. State,		Hyam v. Edwards	1644,
Huntly v. Compstock	1644	77 Ala.	619		1651, 1709
Hunton v. Hertz & H.		86 Ala.	205, 1620	Hyatt v. Leonard	
Co.	2200	87 Ala.	63, 195, 1614,	Storage Co.	1078, 1750
Huntress v. R. Co.	2570		1983	Hyde v. Buckner	905
Huntaman v. Nichols	377	Huston v. Council Bluffs	1639	v. Gannett	2334
Huntsville R. Co. v. Cor-		v. Johnson	18, 1073	v. Stone	1062
pening	1890	v. Plato	1872	v. Swanton	794, 952
Huntt v. McNamee	249, 250	v. Schindler	2008, 2016	v. Terr.	1270, 2277
Hunziker v. Supreme		v. Smith	1347	v. U. S.	2349
Lodge	2452	Hutchason v. State	619, 620,	v. Woolfolk	1923, 2020,
Huot v. Wise	2239		2245		2021
Hupfer v. Nat'l Distill-		Hutcheis v. Cedar R. &		Hyde Park v. Canton	2506
ing Co.,		M. C. R. Co.	1750	v. Dunham	1943
114 Wis.	792	Hutcheon v. Mannington	2165	Hydrox Chemical Co. v.	
119 Wis.	794, 1750	Hutcherson v. Amarillo		Industrial Com.	2081a
127 Wis.	792, 1045	St. R. Co.	2510	Hygeia D. W. Co. v.	
Hupp v. Boring	1908	Hutchings v. Castle	1086	Hygeia I. Co.	561
Hurd v. Haggerty	1777	v. Cavalier	923	Hygienic P. I. M. Co.	
v. People	390, 2079, 2080	v. Cobble	1960	v. R. Co.,	
v. R. Co.	458	v. Corgan	1330, 1388	122 N. C.	2509
v. West	1083	v. Van Bokkelen	2535	126 N. C.	456
Hurlburt v. Bellows	903, 905	Hutchins v. Denziloe	2045	Hyland v. Miller	1871
v. Dusenbery	2410	v. Hutchins.		v. Southern B. T. & T.	
v. Hurlburt,		48 D. C.	2384	Co.	1698
128 N. Y.	2312	41 D. C. App.	1382	Hylton v. Hylton	1296
63 Vt.	905	135 Md.	233, 1738	Hylton's Lessee v.	
v. Wheeler	1082, 1133, 1257	98 N. Y.	1082, 2437	Brown	1859c
Hurlburt's Estate	1481, 1605	v. Kimmell	1644, 2085	Hyman v. Eames	2354
Hurlbut v. Leper	1013	v. Van Vechten	1066	Hyndman v. Stephens	282
Hurlbutt v. Butenop	1225	Hutchinson v. Bambas	18	Hynes v. McDermott	700,
Hurley v. Caldwell	1738	v. Consumers' Coal			797, 1271, 1684,
v. Osler	1082, 1086	Co.	2349		2008, 2011
v. State,		v. Glover	2319	Hyvonen v. Hector I.	
29 Ark.	1404	v. Gordon	1189, 2125	Co.	1754
46 Oh. St.	761, 905,	v. Hutchinson	2538		
	907	v. Kelly	1653, 1664	I	
v. West St. Paul	1195	v. Peyton	1249	Iasigi v. Brown	1859b
v. Y. M. C. A.	2435	v. Plant	764	Iberia Cypress Co. v.	
Hurpurshad v. Sheo		v. R. Co.	1943	Thorgeson	2531
Dyal	1805	v. Richmond S. G. Co.	789	Ice v. State	398
Hurricane Tel. Co. v.		v. Sandt	2356	Ickes v. Ickes	1730
Mohler	1856d	v. Stone	1347	Ide v. Boston & M. R.	
Hursey v. Hursey	2437	v. Tatham	2431, 2438	Co.	455, 664
Hurst v. Beach	2475	v. Wheeler	1022	Iglehart v. Jernegan	760, 761,
v. Dippo	1196, 1672	Hutchinson Cooperage			763, 2098
v. Evans	68, 815	Co. v. Snider	1951	Igo v. Boston Elev. R.	
v. Larpin	803	Hutchinson L. Co. v.		Co.	250
v. Parker	2538	Dickerson	462	Ihniger v. State	222, 1168
v. R. Co.,		Hutchison v. Bowker	2556	Ii Estate v. Judd	1956
49 Ia.	682	v. Kelly	1302, 1303, 1511,	Iklahoma R. Co. v.	
163 Mo.	1951		2525	Thomas	2593
v. State,		v. Massie	2105	Ilderton v. Ilderton	1347
101 Miss.	1789	v. Partick	1681	Iles v. Weston	1186
Tex. Cr., 40 S. W.	821	Hutchison Mfg. Co. v.		Illinois Central Ins. Co.	
v. Terr.	150, 2089	Pinch	2442	v. Wolf	2433
Hurt v. Davis	1249	Hutmacher v. R. G. &		Illinois C. R. Co. v. Ash-	
v. Evans	1564	E. Co.	1034	line	65, 1668, 1977
v. R. Co.	1944	Hutson v. Hartley	2523	v. Bailey	19, 456
Husbands v. Paducah &		Huttman, Re	2378	v. Beeler	2220
I. R. Co.	283	Hutton v. Mansell	1770	v. Clark	2220
v. Polivick	1352, 1354, 1664	v. Warren	2440	v. Davidson	1951
Hussey v. Elrod	2232	Huxtable, Re	2465		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Illinois C. R. Co. v. Ely	1842	Indiana C. Co. v. Parker	1158	Inhabitants; see the	
v. Greaves	2570	Indiana R. Co. v.		name of town	
v. Griffin	2220	Maurer	1719	Inklebarger v. State	2497
v. Hicklin	455	Indiana U. T. Co. v.		Inland & S. C. Co. v.	
v. Houchins	1076, 1698	Jacobs	1722	Tolson	561
v. Houghton	1778	v. Maher	2509	Inlow v. Hughes	1736, 2052,
v. Hyatt	283	Indianapolis v. Huffer	1976		2315
v. LeBlanc	2472	v. Kingsbury	1967, 2413	Inman v. Dudley & D.	
v. McClelland	455, 456	v. McAvoy	1956	L. Co.	1127
v. McManus' Adm'r	524	v. Scott	571, 1168	v. Foster	406
v. Manion	1062	Indianapolis & C. R. Co.		v. State,	
v. Norris	1041, 1064	v. Caldwell	2572	65 Ark.	2237
v. Prickett	18, 65, 461,	v. Jewett	1203, 1268	72 Ga.	1851, 1852
	1974	Indianapolis & M. R. T.		Inman Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Smith	1976	Co. v. Hall	16, 2389	American Cereal Co.	2465,
v. Stanley	2509	Indianapolis & St. L. R.			2466
v. Sutton	688, 1721, 1722	Co. v. Stout	1388	Innerarity v. Byrne	1871
v. Swift	2509	Indianapolis D. & S. R.		v. Mims	1271
v. Taylor	612, 716	Co. v. Pugh	1943	Innes v. Milwaukee	1951
v. Treat	458, 1808	Indianapolis P. & C. R.		Inness v. R. Co.	104, 1725
v. Van Horn	1941	Co. v. Anthony	923, 928,	Innman v. Jackson	2144
v. Wade	18, 1036, 1037		1985	Inslee v. Prall's Ex'r	1539
v. Warriner	1684	Indianapolis St. R. Co.		Insley v. Shire	1951
v. Wren	1350, 2577	v. Johnson	2034	Inspiration Consol. Cop-	
v. Wyatt	252	v. Schmidt	2509	per Co. v. Mendez	2389
Illinois I. & M. R. Co.		v. Taylor	1755	Insurance Co. v. De	
v. Humiston	463, 1168	v. Whitaker	1750	Wolf	1010
Illinois Land & L. Co.		Industrial Com. v. Dell	2506	v. Eshelman	1947
v. Bonner	1201, 1273	v. Evans	4a	v. Forcheimer	2573
Illinois Masonic Or-		v. Johnson	4a	v. Gotthelf	770
phans' Home v. Gracy	1303	Industrial Coöp. Union		v. Higginbotham	1073
Illinois Match Co. v.		v. Lewis	321	v. Mosley	1714, 1747, 1775
Chicago R. I. & P. R.		Infante v. Figueras	2527	v. Newton	1073, 2120
Co.	2415	Inflexible Co. v. Megi-		v. Rodel	1938
Illinois Steel Bridge Co.		bow	2498	v. Schmidt	1073
v. Wayland	2537	Ingalls v. State	83, 85, 987,	v. Smith	1374
Illinois Steel Co. v. Jeka	1023		1270, 2056	v. Tobin	443, 458, 1951,
v. Muza	1388	Inge v. Murphy	1703		1976
v. Pacyocka	2415	Ingersoll v. McWillie	2270	v. Weide,	
Ilman v. Kruse	1082, 2498	v. Van Gilder	1680	9 Wall.	736, 749, 754
Imboden v. Mining Co.	1195	Ingersoll v. English	907	11 Wall.	38, 379, 461
Imboden's Estate	923	v. Hopkins	2475	v. Weides	735, 736,
Imhoff v. McArthur	916	Ingham v. Primrose	2419		747, 754
v. Richards	754	Ingilby v. Shafto	1856	International & G. N. R.	
Imlay v. Rogers	2363	Ingle v. Jones	1225	Co. v. Anderson	1750
Imperator Realty Co. v.		Inglebright v. Ham-		v. Dalwigh	770, 772
Tull	2455	mond	1624	v. Dyer	933, 1029
Imperial Bank v. Trusts		Ingles v. Stealey	1890	v. Gordon	2354
& Guarantee Co.	2065	Inglis v. Morton	2090	v. Klaus	1951
Imperial Gas Co. v.		v. Usherwood	1271	v. Underwood	2220
Clarke	1858	Ingoldsby v. Juan	2120	International Coal &	
Imperial Loan Co. v.		Ingraham v. Bockius	751,	Mining Co. v. Indus-	
Stone	2413		1555, 1558	trial Com.	1976
Ince v. State	682	v. Chapman	150	International Coal M.	
Independence v. Pomp-		Ingram v. Coleman	2416	Co. v. Pennsylvania	
ton	1501	v. Dailey	2442	R. Co.	1412, 1856d, 2250a
Independence, The	6	v. Music House	2434	International Harv. Co.	
Independence Boule-		v. State,		v. Campbell	4218,
vard, Re	2575	27 Ala.	2576		2153, 2426
Independent Five and		39 Ala.	203	v. Chicago M. & St. P.	
Ten Cent Stores v.		67 Ala.	988	R. Co.	18, 455
Heller	675	v. Watkins	2098	v. Elfstrom	1234
Independent School		v. Wish Rah Boom Co.	1943	International Mahogany	
Dist. v. Hewitt	1225	Ingwersen v. Carr	680, 1951	Co., Re	1953

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Interstate Commerce		Isabella v. Pecot	1271	Jackson v. Boneham	1501,
Commission v. Baird	4c,	Isbell v. Anderson C. Co.	581		1502, 1644
	2264, 2281	Isbister v. Dominion Fish		v. Boone	687
v. Brimson	2195	Co.	2509	v. Bowley	1295
v. Louisville & N. R.		Isenhour v. State	569, 687	v. Bradt	2141
Co.	4c	Isham v. Cooper	2406	v. Brooks	704
Interstate Finance Co.		v. Post	461	v. Browner	1487, 1490
v. Commercial Jew-		Isherwood v. Lumber		v. Burleigh	2158
elry Co.	1230, 1960	Co.	1974	v. Burnham	682
Interstate Inv. Co. v.		Isler, Re	2268	v. Burtis	2307
	1195, 1196,	v. Dewey,		v. Burton	1306, 1313
	2408	71 N. C.	1108, 1109	v. Cary	1257
Interurban C. Co. v.		75 N. C.	500, 934	v. Chamberlain	1313, 2141
Hayes	2432	Israel v. Brooks	2539	v. Christman	1302, 1309,
Ionides v. Pender	1946, 1947	v. Savoy Watch Co.	1073		1311, 2141, 2529
Iowa & M. R. Co. v. Per-		v. State	2192, 2201, 2203	v. Claw	2083
kins	2451	Itata, The	2566	v. Cody	1313, 2529
Iowa Cent. R. Co. v.		Iturrino v. Iturrino	1336,	v. Cole	1257, 1275, 1674
Hampton E. L. & P.			1606, 2527	v. Com.,	
Co.	2509	Ivat v. Finch	1080, 1083, 1476	19 Gratt. Va.	1448
Iowa L. & T. Co. v.		Ivelchester Case	1712	100 Ky.	238, 390
Schnose	2536	Iverslie v. Spaulding	1335	189 Ky.	1439, 1441
Iowa V. S. Bank v. Sig-		Iverson v. McDonnell	969	Ky., 37 S. W.	961, 1750
stad	2445	Ives v. Ellis	19	96 Va.	581, 1841
Iowa-Minn. Land Co.		v. Hamlin	1969	98 Va.	246
v. Conner	1943	v. Kimball	1651	116 Va.	830
Irby v. State	457	v. Leonard	561, 2027	v. Cooley	1487, 1605
Ireland v. Com.	149	v. Medcalfe	1065	v. Crilly	1374
v. R. Co.	456, 1890	Ivey v. Bessemer C. C.		v. Crissey	1388
v. Stiff	1263	Mills	1379, 2105, 2429	v. Cullum	1267
Irish v. Smith	233, 1738, 1938	v. Cowart	1640	v. Davis	2141
Irish Society v. Bishop		v. State,		v. Denison	1232, 1257, 2307
of Derry	29, 1632, 1633,	23 Ga.	1012, 1013	v. Dickenson	2355
	1634, 1639	24 Wyo.	1398, 1404	v. Dillon	1225
Irlbeck v. Bierl	1078	Ivy v. State	987, 2269	v. District	461
Irnham v. Child	2425	Ivy's (Lady) Trial	309, 417	v. Drake	2435
Iron Mountain Bank v.		Izer v. State	2362, 2363	v. Ely	2432
Murdock	377, 1003, 1013			v. Etz	1124, 1125, 1126,
Ironton Land Co. v.					1502, 1605
Butchart	1944			v. Evans	1538, 1552,
Iroquois F. Co. v. Mc-					1555, 1558
Crea	792			v. Feather R. W. Co.	1312,
Irvin v. State,					1890
19 Fla.	2354			v. Filteau	1898
11 Okla. Cr.	141			v. French	2326
1 Tex. App.	2060			v. Frier	1192, 1194, 1196
Irvine, Ex parte	2271, 2280,			v. Gager	1309, 1312
	2283			v. Goes	2465, 2529
v. Buckloe	377			v. Gridley	1817, 1820
v. Gibson	689			v. Hart	2463
Irving v. Brownell	1225			v. Heath	2235
v. Irving	1312, 1513			v. Hewlett	1736
v. Motly	321			v. Huey	2054
v. Shethar	1918, 1978			v. Irvin	382
Irwin v. Bear	1085			v. Jackson,	
v. Lever	1200			5 Cowen	586
v. Reed	1409			40 Ga.	2337, 2341
v. State	247			47 Ga.	1195
Isaac v. U. S.,				80 Md.	1492, 1603
7 Ind. Terr.	1891			82 Md.	564, 1612
159 U. S.	2497			4 Mo.	2106
Isaac's Estate	1938			67 Or.	2408
Isaack v. Clark	2549			v. Johnson	1677, 1680
Isaacs v. Wishnick	1073			v. Jones	1858



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Jackson v. King	1644, 2529	Jackson v. State,		Jacobs v. Jacobs	1730
v. Kniffen	1367, 1432, 1738	81 Wis.	1397, 1398, 2098	v. Laybourn	585, 586, 587
v. Kinglsey	1297, 1298, 1314	v. Stetson	406, 1064	v. Morgenthaler	1541
v. Lamar	2408	v. Tallmadge	1877	v. State,	
v. Lamb	1198, 2141	v. Thomason,		146 Ala.	21
v. Lambert	1956	1 B. & S.	905,	42 Tex. Cr.	811,
v. Laroway	2141, 2145	8 Jur. N. s.	917, 1040		1109, 1841
v. Lawson	1388	v. Thompson	744, 1311	v. U. S.	2276, 2283
v. Leek	900, 907	v. Timmerman	334	v. Van Sickle	916, 2047
v. Leggett	1219	v. Tollette	1949	v. Weissinger	1911
v. Legunge	1304, 1306, 1513	v. Tribble	783	v. Whitecomb	1714, 1730
v. Lewis	923, 987, 1292	v. U. S.,		Jacobsen v. Metzger	344, 1890
v. Litch	1890	42 C. C. A.	826, 841	v. Siddal	2088
v. Livingston	1257, 1267	48 D. C.	18, 2060	Jacobson v. Massachu-	
v. Lucett	1238, 1267, 1268	v. Vail	1257, 1314	setts	1700
v. Luquere	1304, 1306, 1513, 2141	v. Van Dusen	610, 693, 2008, 2016	Jacock v. Gilliams	1644
v. M'Call	1082	v. Van Slyck	1207	Jacques v. Horton	1267, 1268
v. M'Vey	291, 1257, 2105, 2309	v. Varick	901, 913, 1890	v. Sax	261
v. Miller	1257, 1587, 1633	v. Vaughn	93, 1984	Jadis v. Porte	2416
v. Moore	1554	v. Vickory	1304, 1306, 1513	Jaffray v. Dennis	1271
v. Myers	1257	v. Vosburgh	1257	v. Thompson	1225
v. Neely	1195, 1299	v. Vredenburg	1432, 1445, 1778	Jahnke v. State	363, 2312
v. Osborn	987	v. Waldron	1320, 1321, 1513	Jakway v. Jenison	1654
v. Packer	529	v. Ward	2531	Jamaica Pond Garage v.	
v. People	1644, 2088	v. Warford	1021, 1023	Woodside M. Livery	669
v. Perkins	2205	v. Weis & L. M. Co.	1350	James, Ex parte	2235
v. Phillips	2000, 2002, 2008, 2016	v. Williamson	2356	v. Biou	291
v. Rice	1225, 1290	v. Witler	1665	v. Com.	1154
v. Robinson	1238	v. Woolsey	1195, 1199	v. Crockett	2494
v. Root	1194, 1315	Jackson Coal Co. v. In-		v. Davis	2141
v. Rumsey	583	dustrial Commission	2220	v. Hodsden	571
v. Russell	1195, 1335, 1573	Jackson Co. v. Arnold	2577	v. Jackson	20
v. Shearman	1257	Jackson L. Co. v. Cun-		v. James	1680
v. Sill	2471	ningham	283	v. Kirk	1219, 1680
v. Smith	377	Jacksonville El. Co. v.		v. Letzler	1573
v. Son	914, 916, 1890	Sloan	1081, 1951	v. Mills	2309
v. State,		Jacksonville T. & K. W.		v. Oakland Traction	
53 Ala.	2245	R. Co. v. Lock-		Co.	7
77 Ala.	287, 1111	wood	950	v. Parnell	1313
78 Ala.	988, 1612, 1983	v. P. L. T. & M. Co.	456,	v. R. Co.	1778
106 Ala.	276, 2497	714, 1873		v. State,	
131 Ala.	1350	Jacob v. Bob	2067	115 Ala.	1124, 2512
147 Ala.	246	v. Lee	1208	193 Ala.	232, 1938
6 Bart.	246, 247	v. Lindsay	735, 748, 754, 1253	41 Ark.	2535
56 Ga.	1451	v. U. S.	2535	125 Ark.	1547
Ga., 45 S. E.	1878, 2183	Jacob's Case	1327	88 Tex. Cr.	1213
14 Ind.	1842	Jacob Tome Institute;		124 Wis.	2383
56 Miss.	852	see Tome Institute		v. Turnpike Co.	1186
59 Miss.	843	Jacobi v. Alabama	1404	James' Estate	987, 1481, 1495, 1719
75 Miss.	1270	v. State	1404, 1405, 1725	James R. & K. Co. v.	
39 Oh. St.	852, 855	Jacobs v. Boston El. R.		Littlejohn	2596
12 Okl. Cr.	276, 1124	Co.	1041, 2015	James Stewart & Co. v.	
7 Tex. App.	2089	v. Callaghan	1778	Newby	19, 282
8 Tex. App.	2085	v. Cater	406	Jameson v. Drinkald	1949
31 Tex. Cr.	2273	v. Davis	1154	v. Weld	795, 1158
50 Tex. Cr.	833	v. Disharoon	1960	Jamieson v. R. Co.	463
		v. Farrell	2117, 2122	Jamison v. Corn Ex-	
		v. Hesler	2336	change Bank	932
				v. People	13, 276, 1938, 2115, 2497
				v. R. Co.	1021
				v. U. S.	286
				Jammison v. R. Co.	1078

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Janes v. Williams	1304	Jenkins v. Biddulph	1650	Jespersen v. Mech	1063
Jangraw v. Perkins	1077	v. Bisbee	2083	v. State	1194, 1195
Janney v. Howard	1669	v. Blizzard	255	Jesse v. Parker	1304, 2049
Jansen v. People	357	v. Commercial Nat'l		v. Preston	1664
J'Anson v. Stuart	71, 73, 195, 207	Bank	1944	v. State	1896
Janssen's Case	2372	v. Irrigation Co.	283, 461	Jessie v. Com.	1129
Janvrin v. Fogg	15, 1058	v. Jenkins	2498	Jessup, Re	166, 792, 1154
v. Scammon	2269, 2271	v. Kitsen	1977	v. Cook,	
Japanese Immigrant		v. Lewis	613	1 Halst.	1373
Case	4a, 1355	v. N. C. O. Dressing		6 N. J. L.	2349
Jaques v. Horton	738, 2052, 2106	Co.	1807	v. Osceola Co.	437
Jaquith v. Davidson	610	v. Pacific M. L. Ins.		Jester v. Steiner	2008
v. Morrill	2098	Co.	7a	Jesus v. Perez Villamil's	
Jarboe's Appeal	1311, 2141, 2145	v. R. Co.	1164	Succession	2527
Jarchow v. Grosse	1481, 1491	v. State,		Jesus College v. Gibbs	1212
Jardine v. Sheridan	1062	82 Ala.	1974	Jeter v. Headley	1351
Jarecki Mfg. Co. v. Mer-		Ala., 17 So.	1669	Jett v. State	248
riam	1954	35 Fla.	852, 1669, 2363	Jevens v. Harridge	1858
Jarnagin v. Edwards	2433	58 Fla.	1873	Jewell v. Center	912
Jarrell v. Com.	1842	119 Ga.	860	v. Chamberlain	1312
Jarrett v. Jarrett	689, 1938	78 Ind.	2110	v. Excelsior P. M. Co.	1750
Jarvis v. Albro	2517	41 Miss.	2071	Jewell Filter Co. v. Kirk	451
v. Robinson	2573	45 Tex. Cr.	1850	Jewell's Lessee v. Jewell	1486, 1489
v. State	1450, 1852	60 Tex. Cr.	851		
v. Vanderford	704	22 Wyo.	748	Jewett v. Boston Ele-	
v. Willson	2419	r. Tobin	2164	vated R. Co.	1671
Jasper Co. v. Osborn	1951	r. Weston	233, 1938	v. Brooks	682
Jaspers v. Lano	1044	r. White	1302, 1511	v. Draper	2027
Jastrzemboki v. Marx-		Jenkins' Will	1302	v. Sundback	2446
hausen	406	Jenkinson v. Andrews	2320	Jewison v. Dyson	380
Jaynes v. People	367, 1028	Jenks, Ex parte	2206	Jin Fuey Moy v. U. S.	6, 620
Jeans v. Wheedon	1327, 1349	v. Thompson	461	Jinkins v. Noel	1871
Jeems v. State	2230	Jenkyns v. Bushby	2294, 2319	Jinwright v. Nelson	1651, 2168
Jefferds v. Alvard	1777				
v. People	499, 933	Jenne v. Piper	616	Joannes v. Bennett	1198
Jefferson, Re	2235	Jenner v. Joliffe	1257	Job v. Tebbetts	1318, 2109
v. Burhans	392	Jenner's Case	2250	Jodrell, Re	2462, 2463
v. Chapman	1769	Jenness v. Jones	1062	Joe v. State	833
v. Conaway	1206	v. State	2088	Johansen v. Pioneer	
v. Souter	1779	Jennett v. Patten	907	Min. Co.	208
v. State	995	Jenney Electric Co. v.		John v. Bridgman	7
Jefferson Ins. Co. v. Co-		Branham	561, 715, 1938, 2570	v. John	2308
theal	1947	Jennings, Ex parte	2210	John's Will	291, 785, 1958
Jeffersonville M. & I. R.		v. Albion	283	John A. Tollman Co. v.	
Co. v. Bowen	1168	v. Blocker	1083	Bowerman	7a
Jeffery, Re	2472	v. Machine Co.	946, 987	r. Butt	7a
v. Walton	2447	v. Moore	2444	r. Clements	7a
Jeffress v. Virginia R. &		v. People	988	v. Griffin	7a
P. Co.	20	v. Puffer	2465	John Hancock Ice Co.	
Jeffrey, Re	2472	v. R. Co.	456	v. Perkiomen R. Co.	456, 2491
Jeffries, Ex parte	26	v. Rooney	254, 944		
v. Harris	67	v. Sturdevant	2304	John Hancock M. L.	
v. State,		v. Webb	1491	Ins. Co. v. Dick	1073
89 Miss.	280	Jensen v. Deep Creek F.		Johnican v. State	1841
13 Okl. Cr.	1405	& L. S. Co.	2358	Johns v. Johns	2069
Jelks v. Barrett	2105	v. McCorkell	95	v. State,	
Jelser v. White	1467, 1483	v. Oregon S. L. R. Co.	664	46 Fla.	108
Jem Yuen, Re	4c	v. Palatine Ins. Co.	716	88 Nebr.	1270, 1839, 2089, 2276
Jenkin v. Ins. Co.	1726, 2516	Jericho v. Huntington	1784		
Jenkins v. Andover		Jermain v. Denniston	1083	Johnsen v. Oakland S. L.	
Theol. Sem.	2517	German v. Hudson	1313, 1320	& H. E. R. Co.	571
		Jernigan v. Carter	1273	Johnson v. Ables	2526
				v. Allen	2349
				v. Anderson	1960



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Johnson v. Armstrong	1890	Johnson v. Lawson	1487	Johnson v. State,	
v. Arnwine	1194, 1195	v. Leggett	905	73 Ala.	1684
v. Ashland L. Co.	1225, 1269	v. Levy	291	102 Ala.	1439, 1966
v. Atlantic C. L. R. Co.	38, 514	v. Lowell	1298	142 Ala.	2072
v. Baker	2408	v. Lowell	463, 714, 1640	203 Ala.	923, 928
v. Birket	1389	v. M'Call	1080	75 Ark.	321, 1111, 1117
v. Blackman	1076	v. McClure	2433	Ark., 238 S. W.	524, 2582
v. Boice	613	v. McDuffee	1416	55 Fla.	451, 1036, 1977
v. Bolton	1278, 1677	v. McGehee	1680	14 Ga.	10, 664, 1839, 1842
v. Boorman	1168	v. McGregor	618	46 Ga.	1270
v. Boyles	1778	v. McGuire	1676a, 2159	61 Ga.	506, 987, 1821, 1828, 1832, 2231
v. Brown	112, 692, 923, 928, 987, 1037, 1618, 1738, 1908, 1985	v. McKee	1718, 1938	65 Ga.	1750
v. Browning	1416	v. Marble Co.	1249	76 Ga.	1821
v. Burden	1352	v. Marlborough	2525	92 Ga.	2059
v. Burnham	2441	v. Mason	1299	120 Ga.	276
v. Carlin	1247	v. Mays	1678	125 Ga.	18
v. Caughren	1984	v. Melville	605	151 Ga.	1072
v. Chambers	2573	v. Moilanen	578	Ga., 109 S. E.	2183
v. Chapman	2063	v. Morgan	417, 1237	4 G. Greene	2059
v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	460, 571, 2552	v. Parrotte	2354	2 Ind.	705, 1841, 2024, 2056
v. Clinton	1876	v. Patterson,		21 Ind.	1109
v. Com.,		2 Hawks	1086, 1126	65 Ind.	2056
29 Gratt.	2081	13 Lea	2311	80 Ind.	1267
118 Ky.	1807	v. People,		54 Miss.	111, 247
Ky., 61 S. W.	987, 1750	33 Colo.	19, 1079	63 Miss.	2243
115 Pa.	2265	3 Hill	923, 1985	85 Miss.	105
102 Va.	797, 2016	197 Ill.	821, 866, 2071	89 Miss., 42 So.	835
111 Va.	507, 1976	202 Ill.	778	90 Miss.	1072
v. Culver	689, 736, 1938, 1943	v. Perry	1492	107 Miss.	838, 840
v. Davenport	2354, 2355	v. Portwood	2446	122 Miss.	2233
v. Daverne	701, 2317	v. Powell	1195	Miss., 27 So.	247
v. Detroit & M. R. R. Co.	1951	v. Powers,		Miss., 40 So.	1614
v. Donaldson	2257	65 Cal.	1067	53 Nebr.	2497
v. Drew	1186	40 Vt.	2098, 2100	59 N. J. L.	1157
v. Ebensen	1111	v. Price	1549	17 Oh.	1135, 1136, 1138
v. Fleming	2408	v. R. Co.,		15 Okl. Cr.	20
v. Fry	2048	111 Ill.	714	27 Tex.	2349
v. Gilson	2104	47 Minn.	688, 1722	1 Tex. App.	1375, 1398
v. Griswold	2454	56 Vt.	1976	10 Tex. App.	1841
v. Gulick	321	91 Wis.	2570	28 Tex. App.	2242
v. Gwinn	761	v. Rannels	1680	Tex. Cr., 62 S. W.	568
v. Haight	1206, 1234	v. Rhode Island Ins. Co.	1078	Tex. Cr., 71 S. W.	857
v. Harder	392	v. Rhodes	1873	129 Wis.	1750
v. Hocker	1674	v. Richardson	2415	8 Wyo.	1750, 2079
v. Holliday	1072	v. Russell	1063, 1066	v. Stevens	2500
v. Husband	2354	v. St. Paul & W. C. Co.	1416	v. Sullivan	2294, 2297
v. Johnson,		v. Samuels	1005, 2500	v. Sumner	2123
187 Ill.	2491, 2500	v. Sargent	1404, 1406, 1415	v. Tacoma	714, 1943
78 N. J. Eq.	1051	v. Schoch	1460	v. Terr.	2513
172 N. C.	2498	v. Seaboard A. L. R. Co.	949	v. Thompson	1944
44 S. C.	528	v. Seel	2354	v. Timmons	2141, 2144
14 Wend. N. Y.	168, 2386	v. Shaw	2144	v. Underwood	1072, 1076
v. Kerr	1779	v. Skipworth	1272, 1273	v. Union P. C. Co.	252, 1951
v. Kershaw	1230	v. Spaulding	736	v. U. S.,	
v. Kinsey	1028, 1031	v. State,		221 Fed.	2239
		17 Ala.	272, 276, 363, 389, 390, 397, 770	270 Fed.	784
		35 Ala.	705	228 U. S.	2264
		47 Ala.	619		
		50 Ala.	1432		
		59 Ala.	826, 2071		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Johnson v. Van Velsor	1347	Jones v. Arterburn	1290, 1302,	Jones v. Hunter	1603
v. Walker	1141, 1154		1304, 1306,	v. Hutchinson	1350
v. Ward	1075, 1674		1310, 1312,	v. Inge	1573
v. Watson	2235		1316, 1513, 2048	v. Ins. Co.	379, 461, 944
v. Wiley	950, 1022, 1890	v. Atlantic C. L. R.		v. Jones.	
v. Wilson	1062	Co.	1530	38 Cal.	1203
v. Winship M. Co.	1164	v. Bennett	2467, 2471	1 Cox	1406
Johnson's Estate,		v. Bland	2509	2 Hen. & M.	2118
249 Pa.	582	v. Blount	1320	102 Ky.	2516
39 P. I.	2573	v. Botsford	1073	9 M. & W.	1513, 2313,
170 Wis.	582, 1736	v. Boyce	1949		2529
Johnson's Trial	840	v. Bradford	1884	45 Md.	166, 1154, 1496
Johnson's Will,		v. Brewer	1300, 1315	48 Md.	1603
40 Conn.	1736, 2052,	v. Brine	1354	18 Me.	1644
	2106	v. Brinkley	1311, 1513	17 N. J. Eq.	2067
Wis., 183 N. W.	1510	v. Brooke	529	137 N. Y.	1085, 2500
Johnson Lumber Co. v.		v. Caldwell	2390	80 N. C.	1028, 1126,
Leonard	1347, 2498	v. Call	1254		1129, 1131
Johnson Steel Rail Co.		v. Campbell	2432	63 Okl.	2505
v. N. B. S. R. Co.	2212,	v. Carrington	1633	12 Pa.	1350
	2216	v. Casler	2052, 2106	12 Rich.	1510, 1513
Johnston v. Bay State		v. Central of Ga. R.		13 Tex.	923
St. R. Co.	571	Co.	1750	v. Kansas C. F. S. &	
v. Bee	704, 2012	v. Chiles	658	M. R. Co.	2508
v. Cedar Rapids & M.		v. Collins	233, 1938, 1958	v. Knauss	291
C. R. Co.	1721	v. Com.,		v. Lake View	2572
v. Cox	1225	186 Ky.	1445	v. Lanier	2223
v. Darrah	2450	Ky., 46 S. W.	1018,	v. Layman	1770
v. Ewing Female Uni-			1442, 1447	v. Lee	1862
versity	1677	86 Va.	1142	v. Levi	1186, 1273
v. Gastman	2477	v. Coopridner	1312	v. Loney	1013
v. Haines	1651	v. Degge	613	v. Long	751, 1550, 1555
v. Ins. Co.	463, 728, 761,	v. Duchow	987	v. Love	1378
	1839	v. Edwards	1208	v. Lovell	1174, 1312
v. Jones	944, 987, 1873,	v. Ellis	377	v. Lumber Co.	461
	1890	v. Failes	1267	v. McMullen	2144
v. Linder	2498	v. Finch	705, 2024	v. Maffet	1684
v. Marriage	913	v. First National Bank	2408	v. Manchester	2286
v. R. Co.	1696, 2507	v. Flint	1064	v. Marks	1651
v. St. Sure	2235	v. Fort	1390, 1872	v. Mason	1316
v. Slater	601	v. Foxall	1061, 1062	v. Melindy	1269
v. Southern P. Co.	2220	v. Fuller	1922, 1944	v. Morgan	1651, 2138,
v. Spencer	1021, 1041	v. Galbraith	1873, 1938		2141, 2143
v. Spoonheim	1777, 1779	v. Gale	2167	v. Morrell	1072
v. Todd	781, 804	v. Gallagher	2450	v. Morse	1086
Johnston Harvester Co.		v. Glidewell	1351, 1908	v. Murphy	2048
v. Bartley	1195	v. Grantham	2111	v. Murray	2557
v. Clark	720, 1943	v. Great Central R.		v. Nantahala M. & T.	
Joice v. Branson	613	Co.	2319	Co.	2325, 2327
Joiner v. State	2071, 2232	v. Griesler	582	v. Newman	2472
Joliet v. Blower	1698	v. Grogan	1738, 1958	v. N. Y. L. Ins. Co.	2520
Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v.		v. Guano Co.	1672	v. Orton	1556
Velie	2495, 2496	v. Hagler	1186, 1225	v. Overstreet	2582
Joliet S. R. Co. v. Caul	2220	v. Harrell	1078	v. Packet Co.	1621
Joliff v. State	1620	v. Harris	1817	v. Parker,	
Jollay v. State	1442, 1445	v. Hatchett	1951	97 N. C.	2349
Jolley v. Taylor,		v. Hebdo	1877	20 N. H.	2529
1 Camp. 143	1205	v. Henry	1296, 1300,	v. P. B. L. Assur. Co.	2384
Jolly v. State	63, 246		1456, 2132	v. Pemberton	1856c
Jonas v. South Coving-		v. Herrick	2053	v. People,	
ton & C. St. R. Co	1893,	v. Hoey	2053	23 Colo.	2501
	2103	v. Hollopeter	1678	33 Colo.	2089
Jones v. Abbott	2421	v. Howard	1066, 1250, 2116	69 Colo.	2061
v. Allen	2591	v. Howland	581	v. Perry	251, 282



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Jones v. Peterson	1871	Jones v. State,		Joplin Waterworks Co.	
v. Phelps	1316	54 Oh. St.	745	v. Joplin	1877
v. Pitcher	1647	Okl. Cr., 190		Jordaine v. Lashbrook	528,
v. Portland	1721	Pac.	988, 1157,		529, 1302
v. Pugh	2296		1164	Jordan v. Austin	288, 1203
v. R. Co.,		Okl. Cr., 201		v. Black	1681
107 Ala.	994	Pac.	1807	v. Bradshaw	1664
43 Minn.	683	Okl. Cr., 202		v. Cameron	2141, 2145
80 Minn.	5	Pac.	784	v. Carberry	1639
3 Sawyer	1417	13 Tex.	1133, 2056,	v. Com.	168
v. Randall	1218, 1219,		2071, 2100	v. Duke	794
	2426	3 Tex. App. 150	1840	v. Faircloth	1293
v. Reilly	2307	3 Tex. App. 575	2059	v. Foster	658
v. Reynolds T. Co.	461	Tex. App., 31		v. Holkham	2256
v. Risley	2442	S. W.	278	v. Jordan	803
v. Roberts	1312	32 Tex. Cr. 108	222	v. Jordan Co.	2489
v. Robinson	1206	32 Tex. Cr. 135	521	v. Lewis	2183
v. Ross	1674	50 Tex. Cr.	1878	v. Money	2042
v. Royster Guano Co.	1164	51 Tex. Cr.	263, 2242	v. Osgood	321, 334, 1978
v. Sanitary District	15	89 Tex. Cr.	661	v. Spokane P. & S. R.	
v. Shattuck	278	v. Stevens		Co.	2509
v. Simpson	1086	36 Nebr.	70, 782	v. State,	
v. Spencer	987	11 Price	66, 70, 73, 74,	81 Ala.	293
v. State,			207, 209	141 Ark.	987
76 Ala.	248, 951	v. Stroud	745, 749	50 Fla.	728, 1977
96 Ala.	925	v. Swayze	2408	120 Ga.	1410
107 Ala.	1126	v. Tarlton	1214	142 Ind.	2245, 2338
113 Ala.	1290, 1651	v. Tennessee Coal,		32 Miss.	825
115 Ala.	907, 911	Iron, & R. Co.	949	29 Tex. App.	2272
116 Ala.	247	v. The Phoenix	1641	v. Thomas	1681
120 Ala.	852, 988	v. Thomas	1738	v. Warner	1230
137 Ala.	852, 1750	v. Thompson	1730	v. Wilkins	2125
145 Ala.	1821	v. Tucker	561	Jordan's Case	1748
147 Ala.	747	v. Turberville	1081	Jordan School District	
174 Ala.	1669	v. U. S.,		v. Goetz	1077
Ala., 61 So.	689	179 Fed.	6, 341, 1079,	Jory v. Orchard	1234
52 Ark.	1445		1263, 1854	Joseph v. Com.	1840
59 Ark.	278	265 Fed.	338, 2054	v. Joseph	2046
61 Ark.	2497	137 U. S.	2566	v. Morrow	1898
Fla., 32 So.	1976	U. S., 42 Sup.	341, 463	v. National Bank	2016
1 Ga.	580	v. Walker	1225, 1239	Joseph Bros. Co. v.	
63 Ga.	413	v. Waller	2139	Schonthal	21
65 Ga.	1072	v. Ward	736, 2098	Joseph B. Thomas, The	285,
105 Ga.	2513	v. Warren	2416, 2496		2509
106 Ga.	222, 1154	v. White,		Joseph Hargreaves,	
130 Ga.	1398, 1451	11 Humph.	675	Limited, Re	2377, 2379
150 Ga.	1442	1 Stra.	1671	Joseph Taylor Coal Co.	
12 Ga. App.	579	v. Williams,		v. Dawes	208, 367
25 Ga. App.	276	2 M. & W.	378	Joseph v. Furnish	1051, 1072,
11 Ind.	2024	62 Miss.	2450		1085
60 Ind.	2008, 2016,	v. Wood	1387	Josephine v. State	852
	2021	Jones' Adm's v. Perkins	1938	Josephs v. Morton	2065
64 Ind.	1044, 1476	Jones' Case	194a	Josey v. R. Co.	2169
71 Ind.	460, 1441,	Jones' Estate,		Joske v. Irvine	2494
	1750, 1756	166 Cal.	1738	Joslin v. Giese	2432
89 Ind.	2354	130 Ia.	233, 1639	v. State	1442
118 Ind.	18	Jones' Will	1304	Joslyn v. People	2195, 2286
132 Md.	133	Jones Stacker Co. v.		Josselyn v. McAllister	396
65 Minn.	1029	Green	2416	Jove v. Palatine Ins. Co.	1371
65 Miss.	2327	Jonesboro L. C. & E. R.		Joy v. Hopkins	1943
67 Miss.	1021, 1022	Co. v. Gainer	905	v. Phillips Mills & Co.	97
79 Miss.	1445, 1451	Jonescu v. Orlich	1078	v. State	1029
97 Nebr.	821, 860	Joost v. Craig	1635	Joyal v. Pilotte	1081
51 Oh. St.	1164	Joplin v. Johnston	1298, 1456	Joyce v. Hamilton	1085

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Joyce v. Ins. Co.	1947	Kaenders v. Montague	1738	Kansas City F.S. & M.R.	
v. R. Co.	1976	Kaco v. Ozaki	1290	Co. v. Perry	2494
Joyner v. Roberts	2553	Kaeppler v. Red R. V.		v. Stoner	1721
Joynes v. Statham	2417	N. Bank	1890	Kansas City M. & B. R.	
Juby v. Craddock	17	Kah's Estate	1738	Co. v. Burton	461
Juckett v. Brenneman	1719	Kahai v. Kamai	2525	v. Butler	1719
Judd v. Brentwood	1126, 1128, 2120	Kahaley v. Frye	664	v. Matthews	1719
v. Fargo	461	Kahlenbeck v. State	1873	v. Smith	792
v. Gibbs	852, 1065	Kahn v. Home Tel. & Tel. Co.	2510a	v. Spencer	1951
v. N. Y. & T. S. S. Co.	1081	v. Kahn	2433	v. Weeks	1976
Judevine v. Weeks	290	v. State	354, 2016	Kansas City S. Co. v.	
Judge of Probate v.		v. Triest-Rosenberg		Standard W. Co.	2155
Briggs	2450	Co.	283, 1976, 2509	Kansas City S. R. Co.	
Judges, Answer of the; see Answer, etc.		Kaime v. Omro	613	v. Belknap	961
Resolutions of the,		Kain v. Larkin	1086	v. Clinton	688
7 C. & P.	1262, 1349	v. Old	2425, 2434	v. Henrie	1976
Judice v. Chretien	1678	Kairson v. Puckhaber	1890	v. Jones	18
Judson v. Blanchard	1141	Kaiser v. Alexander	1540	v. Miller	2389, 2391
v. Frentel	1655	Kalankoa v. Henry	1890	v. Morris	792, 1750
v. Giant Powder Co.	2509	Kalberg v. Bon Marche	507	v. Whitley	2509
Judy v. Gilbert	2477	Kaleikini v. Waterhouse	1460	Kansas City Star Co.	
v. Johnson	905, 1028	Kaler v. Ins. Co.	1021	v. Carlisle	406, 1781
v. Judy	1911	Kalk v. Fielding	1263	Kansas M. O. M. Ins.	
Julian v. Kansas City S. Co.	1971	Kalmes v. Gerrish	1291	Co. v. Rammelsberg	2498
v. Woolbert	1388	Kamahalo v. Coelho	561, 784, 2012, 2484	Kansas Pac. R. Co. v.	
Julius K. Optical Co. v.		Kambour v. Boston & Maine R. Co.	1807	Miller	283, 702, 784, 1182, 1492, 1496, 1644, 1873
Treat	1208	Kamm v. Bank	1066	v. Peavey	1951
Jumper v. Queen Mab Lumber Co.	2416	v. Rees	1540, 1550	v. Watson	1503
Jumpertz v. People	143, 144, 460, 1160, 2016	Kammann v. U. S.	369	Kansas S. Y. Co. v.	
Juneau Bank v. Mc-Spedon	1389	Kamp v. Cox Bros. & Co.	1078	Couch	437
Jungworth v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.	1750	Kanawell v. Miller	2520	Kanter, Re	2264
Juniata Bank v. Brown	736, 1539, 1540	Kane v. Ins. Co.	2047	Kaoru Yamataya v.	
Juniata Bldg. Ass'n v.		v. N. C. R. Co.	2552	Fisher	1355
Hertz	581, 2047	v. N. Y. El. R. Co.	462	Kapigian v. Der Minasian	581
Junior v. State	2158	v. Oehler	396	Kapiolani Estate v.	
Junkin v. Davis	2164	Kaneda v. U. S.	4a, 4c	Thurston	1644
Jupitz v. People	56, 439	Kankakee & S. R. Co.		Kapohaku v. Koa	2354
Jurelich v. People	2056	v. Horan	791	Karakutza v. State	1819
Just v. Idaho C. & I. Co.	2451	Kann v. Bennett	1263	Karel v. Conlan	2252, 2257
Justen v. Schaaf	794	Kannon v. Galloway	795, 2008, 2016	Kargman v. Carlo	20
Justice v. Clinard	77	Kannow & Sons v.		Karlen v. Hadinger	616
v. Com.	2277	Farmers' C. S. Ass'n	1230	Karnes v. Com.	1725
v. Elstob	1208	Kansas & T. Coal Co.		Karr v. Jackson	1680
v. Luther	794, 1196, 1213	v. Galloway	1416	v. State	246
v. State	1442	Kansas C. L. R. Co. v.		v. Stivers	1521, 1538, 1547
Justices, Opinion of the,		Gallagher	2510	Kasenberg v. Hartshorn	1558
208 Mass.	1356	Kansas Cent. R. Co. v.		Kassing v. Walter	1062, 1867, 2349
35 N. H.	1350	Allen	1943	Kasson's Est.	783, 987
52 N. H.	1350	Kansas City & S. W. R. Co. v. Baird	714, 720, 1168	Kastner v. State	969, 1853
Justus' Succession	1644, 1646	v. Ehret	714, 720	Kastor Advertising Co.	
Juznik v. Kansas C. So. R. Co.	283	Kansas City & T. R. Co.		v. Coleman	664
		v. Splitlog	463	Kath v. Wisconsin C. R. Co.	687, 1721
		v. Vickroy	463	Katzer v. Milwaukee	2580
		Kansas City F.S. & M.R. Co. v. Becker	2540	Kaufer v. Walsh	334
		v. Murray	2383	Kauffman v. Shellworth	1225
				v. Swar	86, 334
				Kaufman v. Barbour	5, 2444
				v. Boismier	1013



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Kaufman v. Caughman	568, 1414, 1738	Keenan v. Scott	682	Kelley v. Crawford	1525
v. State	326	Keene v. Acc. Ass'n	2510	v. Dillon	74
v. Tredway	334	v. Behan	2034	v. John R. Daily Co.	1976
Kaufman's Estate	1738	v. Meade	2432	v. Kelley	1082
Kaulbach's Estate	2065	Keener v. State	38, 111, 246, 247, 1616, 1852	v. Laconia L. Dist.	1678
Kaumagraph Co. v. Stampagraph Co.	2212	Keeney v. Fargo	720	v. Marron	1350
Kaut v. Kessler	2312	Keenholts v. Becker	406	v. People	1072, 1079
Kavanaugh v. Wausau	225	Keesier v. State	278, 949	v. People's Nat'l F. Ins. Co.	1640
Kawailani, The	2582	Keesling v. Powell	1460	v. Proctor	601, 619, 692, 1615, 1985
Kay v. Brookman	1312, 1513	Keffer v. State	20, 390, 1874	v. Richardson	556, 715, 1919
v. Elston	2421	Kehoe v. Com.	580, 1986, 2287	v. Riggs	1267
v. Fredrigal	1028	Keighley M. & Co. v. Bryan Durant & Co.	4c	v. Schupp	377
v. R. Co.	1943	Kein v. Ft. Dodge	461	v. State	68
Kean v. Com.	1668	Keist v. R. Co.	461, 1722	Kelliher v. Sutton	334
v. Davis	2444	Keister v. Myers	2416	Kellington v. Trinity College	1670
v. Landrum	463	Keith v. Kibbe	1540	Kellner v. Christiansen	282, 2219
v. M'Laughlin	406	v. Lothrop	697, 2014	Kello v. Maget	736, 1267, 1269, 2105, 2158
v. New York C. & H. R. R. Co.	2416	v. Marcus	1072	Kellogg, Re	285
v. Rice	1681, 1684	v. Modern Woodmen	7a	v. Clyne	334
Kearner v. Tanner Co.	672, 682	v. N. H. & N. Co.	208, 221, 1154	v. Finn	2576
Kearney v. Farrell	1730	v. State,		v. Krauser	1083, 1943
v. King	2575	157 Ind.	140, 1977	v. McCabe	987
v. London B. & S. C. R. Co.	2509	7 Okl. Cr.	2354	v. Northrup	2437
v. Mayor	1195, 1213	Tex. Cr., 56		v. Scheuerman	1330
v. State,		S. W.	2016	Kellogg Co. v. Holm	916
101 Ga.	784, 1243, 1447	v. Taylor	309	Kellum v. State	1671
58 Miss.	682	v. Tilford	417, 1943	Kellum's Will	1511
68 Miss.	194, 988	v. Wilson	1842	Kelly, Re,	
v. Thernanson	748	Keithler v. State	2056	28 Nev.	1138, 2071
Kearns v. Kearns	1267, 2052	Keithley v. Stafford	1958	200 Pa.	2283
Kearsley v. Philips	1859c	Keithley's Estate	689, 1938	v. Alderson	68a
Keash v. Santa Ysabel		Keithsburg & E. R. Co.		v. Brooks	1890
G. M. Co.	1698	v. Henry	1943	v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	2416
Keating v. Pacific S. W. Co.	2441	Kelch v. State	2501	v. Colhoun	2271
v. People	570, 1157, 2497, 2513, 2595	Keliher v. U. S.	520, 1079, 2056, 2059, 2511	v. Craig	1192, 1195, 1281
v. State	107	Kell v. Charmer	2467	v. Cummins	2327
Keaton v. Greenwood	2235	Kellan v. Kellan	1738	v. Cunningham	2425
v. Jones	2432	Kellar v. State	56	v. Drew	2231
v. Mayo	1062	Kellenberger v. Sturtevant	1256	v. Elevator Co.	1235
v. State	2062	Keller v. Donnelly	398	v. Fond du Lac	1951
Keator v. People	928, 1985	v. Gilman	1719, 1721, 1974	v. French	788
Kee v. State	56, 59	v. Goodrich Co.	2195	v. Goodbread	1878
Keeble v. Underwood	2503	v. Holderman	2414	v. Kelly	1660
Keefe v. Armour Co.	1951	v. Home Life Ins. Co.	7a	v. Moore	1292, 1512
v. Sullivan Co. R. Co.	1566, 1567, 1568, 1956	v. Ins. Co.	7a, 2388	v. Oliver	2410
Keefe v. Pacific M. L. Ins. Co.	1750	v. Moore	1651	v. People,	
v. Zimmerman	1320, 1513	v. North American Life Ins. Co.	2452	192 Ill.	2060
Keeling v. Ball	1314, 1321	v. State,		229 Ill.	63
Keely v. Moore	1292, 1671	112 Ga.	205, 770, 1841, 2060	v. Perrault	682, 689
Keen v. Keen	112, 1736	123 Ind.	2079	v. R. Co., 28 Minn.	283, 438, 458, 461
v. Priest	1073	v. Vernon	613	60 Wis.	1856b
Keena v. American Box Toe Co.	916	Keller & B. Co. v. Berry	2220	v. Sayle	2406
Keenan v. Hayden	251	Keller & Co. v. Ellerman	1346	v. Sharp S. Co.	1299, 1302
		Kelley v. Andrews	2340	v. Small	2232
		v. Combs	1062	v. Smith	1876

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Kelly v. State,		Kenneally, In re	1491	Kent v. Gray	7
60 Ala.	928	Kennedy, Re	905	v. Lincoln	458, 1751,
72 Ala.	852	v. Borah	1269		1873, 1874
75 Ala.	1506, 1821	v. Canadian Pacific R.		v. Lowen	1080, 1084
133 Ala.	133, 166,	Co.	1405	v. State,	
	1154	v. Com.,		64 Ark.	2059
160 Ala.	821	14 Bush	276, 995,	42 Oh.	950, 1018,
17 Ala. App.	988		1021, 1040		1021, 1022
39 Fla.	2354	78 Ky.	2578	v. Walton	1083
19 Ga.	784	30 Ky. L.	1442, 1755	v. Weld	1225, 1651
82 Ga.	1476	v. Dear	1244, 2168	Kent Co. v. Ransom	718
118 Ga.	1841	v. Dickie	1347a	Kentucky, The	1641
51 Nebr.	1853	v. Divine	1086	Kentucky C. R. Co. v.	
v. Supreme Council	7a	v. Dodson	1856c	Barrow	455
v. Thuey	2525	v. Doyle	1523, 1527,	v. Smith	1164
v. U. S.,			1643, 1644	Kentucky Cit. B. & L.	
27 Fed.	569	v. Gifford	74, 406	Ass'n v. Lawrence	2465
258 Fed.	19	v. Hensley	391, 397,	Kentucky Lumber Co.	
v. Waterbury	1072, 1984		1730	v. Abney	1839, 1841
v. West Bend	1951	v. Kennedy	2354	Kentucky Ref. Co. v.	
Kelly's Heirs v. McGuire	689,	v. Lubold	1567	Conner	1704
	1934, 1938	v. Lyell	2319	Kentucky Union Co. v.	
Kelly & Sons v. Mathers	2195	v. McCann	2503	Shepherd	2465
Kellyville Coal Co. v.		v. Modern Woodmen	887,	Kenway v. Kidd	1644
Strine	1951		928, 2531	Kenworthy v. Slooman	1196
Kelsea v. Fletcher	463, 754	v. People	118, 382, 390,	v. Williams	689,
Kelsey v. Bush	2115		1975, 1977		1938, 2500
v. Hanmer	1188, 1194,	v. R. Co.,		Kenyon v. Ashbridge	2086
	1195, 1225, 1651	67 Barb.	783	v. Mondovi	2383
v. Ins. Co.	944, 995, 1719	130 N. Y.	1719, 1750	v. People	2062
Kelton v. Hill	1554	v. Rountree	2185	v. State	204, 205, 1620
Kelty v. Fisher	457	v. Spring	208	Kenyon Co. v. Johnson	1199
Kelway v. Kelway	2290	v. State,		Keough v. Boston Elev.	
Kemble v. Lyons	1390	140 Ala.	246	R. Co.	1576, 1722
Kemerer v. Bournes	1878	117 Ark.	2063, 2527	Kerber, Re	2201
Kemp v. Central of Ga.		101 Ga.	293	Kerfoot v. Chicago	961
R. Co.	1750	71 Nebr.	276	Kerker v. Carter	1891
v. King	2211	19 Tex. App.	1840	Kerkow v. Bauer	2582
Kemper v. Pryor	1312, 1314	v. Supnick	1890	Kermott v. Ayer	565, 1271
v. State	1398	v. Towke	1202	Kern v. Bridwell	20, 2220
Kempf v. Koppa	228, 689	v. Upshaw,		v. Des Moines C. R.	
Kempsey v. McGinniss	672,	64 Tex.	1736, 1738,	Co.	1750
	681, 683,		2008, 2016	v. Ins. Co.	1947
	1938, 1958	66 Tex.	923	v. Kern	2315
Kendall v. Field	1548	Kennedy's Will	1081, 1736	Kernin v. Hill	2016
v. Limberg	1951	Kennett v. Chambers	2566	Kerns v. Perry	2580
v. May	492, 495,	v. Engle	1005	v. R. Co.	571
	496, 715	v. Fickel	715, 720	Kerr v. Com'rs	463
v. Powers	2450	Kenney v. State	1751, 1761	v. De Lancy	2477
Kendall's Ex'rs v. Col-		v. U. S.	462	v. Gibson	1388
lier	656, 696, 705	Kenniff v. Caulfield	1194, 2105	v. Lunsford	681, 682, 689,
Kendrick v. Com.	2255, 2271,	Kennington v. Catoe	68, 987,		1669, 1738, 1938
	2281		2527	v. McClure	2431
v. Dellinger	907, 2520	Kennon v. Gilmer	201	Kerrains v. People	364, 581
v. Kemp	73, 74, 406	Kenny v. Clarkson	564, 1271,	Kerrans v. Brown	1021
v. State,			2125	Kerrigan v. Conelly	2477
10 Humph	1330,	v. Walker	1891	v. R. Co.	1698
	1398, 2098	Kenosha Stove Co. v.		Kerry Co. C. v. Liver-	
55 Miss.	111, 247	Shedd	1225	pool S. Ass'n	2319
Kenerson v. Henry	1640	Kenrick v. Kenrick	238, 2046	Kersey v. State	143, 1803,
Keniston v. Rowe	166	Kensington v. Inglis	1195,		1926, 1977
Kennard v. Burton	1718		1198, 1268	Kershane v. Collins	1678
v. Carter	1186	Kent v. Garvin	751, 1530,	Kersher v. Kersher	680
v. Kennard	1703		1558	Kershner v. Henderson	2408



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Kersten v. Great Northern R. Co.	1700	Kiesel v. Ins. Office	1978	Kinchelow v. State	106, 2056
v. Hines	1028	Kieth v. Kerr	1085	Kindberg's Will	2502
Kesse v. R. Co.	1908	Kilbee v. Sneyd	1065, 1518, 2118	Kindel v. Le Bert	2578
Kesselring v. Hummer	133, 1129, 1974, 1976	Kilbourn v. Fury	1225	Kindrix v. State	1908
Kessler, Re	6, 2240	v. Marshall	2441	Kine v. Beaumont	1206, 1234
v. Best	2372	v. Thompson	2195	King, The. v. See R. v.	
v. M'Conachy	1550	Kilbourne v. Jennings,		King v. Ashley	2317
v. Von Bank	1725, 2408	38 Ia.	571	v. Atkins	1890
Ketchingman v. State	398, 779, 923, 987, 1028	40 Ia.	2103	v. Badeley	2473
Ketchum v. Brennan	1232	Kilbride v. Carbon D. & M. Co.	451	v. Barrett	2327
Ketland v. Bissett	64	Kilburn v. Bennett	1784, 2530	v. Bellamy	2516
Kettenbach v. U. S.	341	v. Mullen	923, 2088	v. Bolling	1206
Ketterer v. Armour & Co.	461	v. Ritchie	1082	v. Bynum	657, 1770
Kettering v. Jacksonville	1710	Kilcoin v. Ortell	2435	v. Carpenter	1195
Ketterman v. R. Co.	2494, 2495	Kilgore v. Bulkley	2440, 2567	v. Cole	1256
Kettles v. People	2486	v. Cross	1938	v. Com.	1620
Keyern v. People	41, 168, 1072	v. Hanley	608, 620	v. Cox	2110
Key v. Thomson	21, 221, 681, 1133, 1871	v. Jordan	2349	v. Dale	1680
Keyes v. Cedar Falls	1719, 1750	v. Magee	1350	v. Donahue	2018
v. Keyes	1675a	v. State	59, 279	v. Faber	736
v. Mooney	1681	Killam v. Wellesley & B. St. R. Co.	2509	v. Fowler	2531
v. New York O. & W. R. Co.	2509	Killen v. Side	664	v. Frost	1779
v. Tyson	1985	Killian v. R. Co.	664, 987, 1270	v. Gilson,	
v. Union Tp.	1951	Killins v. State	363	191 Mo.	1081, 1671
Keys v. U. S.	987	Kilmer v. Smith	2416	206 Mo.	2500
Keyser v. Hitz	1633	Kilpatrick v. Com.	1442, 2578	v. Green	18
v. Pickrell	2008, 2016	Kilpatrick Co. v. Box	1067	v. Hall	1225
Keystone Axle Co. v. Leyda	2054	Kilrow v. Com.	967, 2056, 2059	v. Hanson	1841, 2550
Keystone Mfg. Co. v. Adams	379	Kilvert's Trusts	2462	v. Hersey	928
v. Johnson	1086	Kimball v. Bellows	1064	v. Hopkins	575, 1356, 2494
Keystone Steel & Wire Co. v. Industrial Com.	4c, 2531	v. Borden	455, 456, 2509	v. Ins. Co.	1223, 1683
Kibbe v. Bancroft	1525	v. Carter	1699	v. Jordan	791, 1339
Kibby v. Rucker	2085, 2086	v. Davis	19, 1513, 2529	v. Kenny	1186
Kibler v. Com.	2513	v. Fernandez	73	v. Kent's Adm'r	2575
v. McIlwain	1890	v. Friend's Adm'r	1168	v. Kersey	1770
Kidd v. Alexander	1676	v. Kimball	1104, 2046	v. King,	
v. Henderson	321	v. Ladd	1778	28 Ala.	2067
v. Manly	1680	v. Morrill	1189	49 Ga.	2349
v. State	1896	v. New York Life Ins. Co.	2442	Ky., 42 S. W.	2502
Kidder v. Bacon	1719	v. Northern El. Co.	795	2 Rob. Eccl.	2260
v. Blaisdell	2579	v. People	2167	4 Taunt.	1858
v. Dunstable	458	v. Saguin	1877, 1878	90 Va.	2517
v. Smith	392	Kimberley's Appeal	1938	v. Little	2144
Kidwell v. Com.	580	Kimble v. Joslin	1208	v. Londerville	406
v. Ketler	1076	Kimbrough v. Mitchell	2336, 2341	v. McCarthy	1404, 1725
v. State	2079	Kime v. Owens	663	v. Maddux	2118
v. U. S.	133, 168, 2061	Kimic v. San Jose L. G. I. R. Co.	570, 2349, 2354	v. Mims	1225, 1651
Kiely v. Corbett	2416	Kimmarle v. R. Co.	1651	v. Mittalberger	770
Kier v. Parks	461	Kimmel v. Kimmel	52, 692, 979, 1985	v. Phoenix Ins. Co.	2185
Kierstead v. Brown	1062, 1073	Kimpton v. Glover	1382	v. R. Co.,	
		Kincaide v. Cavanaugh	2200, 2219	34 Ia.	463, 1164
				72 N. Y.	437, 1154, 1977, 1978
				v. Raines	1658
				v. Randlett	1195, 2447
				v. Root	73, 74, 209, 406, 1974
				v. Ruckman	923, 1985
				v. Scheuer	1225
				v. Sears	2141
				v. Shepard	2593
				v. State,	
				40 Ala.	832, 841

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
King v. State,		Kinney v. Berran	1404	Kissam v. Forrest	1390
100 Ala.	2190, 2216,	v. Brotherhood	1671	Kissel v. Lewis	1620
	2220	v. Cadillac M. C. Co.	4c	Kitchell v. Beach	1738
15 Ala. App.	2016	v. Farnsworth	1587	v. Hodgen	1082
17 Fla.	78	v. Flynn	693, 1300, 1316,	Kitchen v. Robbins	1053
65 Miss.	246, 248		2004, 2008, 2529	v. Smith	2066
74 Miss.	1873, 2512	v. Hosea	1013, 1684, 2098	v. Tyson	1985
121 Miss.	1141	Kinney-Rome Co. v.		v. Union Tp.	1951
Nebr., 187 N. W.	1157	Federal Trade Com-		Kitchens v. Kitchens	2052
91 Tenn.	1450, 2501	mission	461	Kitchings v. Brown	1955
13 Tex. App.	1157	Kinsey v. State	855, 1966	Kittanning Ins. Co. v.	
v. U. S.	2374	Kinsman v. Crooke	1408	O'Neill	1770
v. Westbrook	770	Kinzell v. Chicago M. &		Kitteringham v. R. Co.	1951
v. Westervelt	1302	St. P. R. Co.	1159, 2180	Kittle, In re	2282
v. Wicks	1025, 1028	Kipp v. Clinger	4	Kittoe v. Willey	2408
v. Wilkins	1083	v. Silverman	763, 1126,	Kittredge v. Elliott	251
v. Worthington,			1890	v. Russell	2097
73 Ill.	1234,	Kirby v. Com.	1750	Klanowski v. R. Co.	460
	1705, 2105	v. Gibs	1650	Klatt v. Lumber Co.,	
104 U. S.	6	v. Hulette	2408	92 Wis.	2525
King's Case	2060	v. Ins. Co.	1947	97 Wis.	949
King Charles' Trial	1177,	v. Kirby	2408	Kleeberg v. Schrader	1213
	2250	v. Masten	1779	Kleiman v. Geiselman	1194
King County v. Joyce	1943	v. State	18	Klein v. East River	
King of the Two Sicilies		v. Tallmadge	285, 289	E. L. Co.	1073
v. Wilcox	2258, 2259a	v. U. S.	1079	v. Prudential Ins. Co.	1073,
	2276	Kirby's Appeal	2503		2384
King's Lynn Case	1712	Kircher v. Imperial L. &		Kleinman v. Banner	
King's Proctor v. Daines	2452	I. Co.	1856a	Laundry Co.	2509
Kingery v. Berry	1351	v. Larchwood	252	Klenk v. Knoble	613
Kingfisher v. Altizer	252, 438,	Kirchner v. Collins	946	Klenke v. Noonan	2505, 2536
	458, 2220	v. U. S.	369	Klepper v. State	168
Kingfisher M. & E. Co.		Kirk v. Carr	1505, 1511	Klepsch v. Donald	1164
v. Westbrook	2463	v. Garrett	1051, 2363,	Kline v. Baker	1271, 2558,
Kinghorne v. Tel. Co.	1236		2554		2573
Kingman v. Cowles	1681,	v. Madareita	1943	v. Kline	2046
	2164	v. Mowry	1668	v. R. Co.	1976
v. Lynn & B. R. Co.	451	v. Nowell	1064	Kling v. Tunstall	747
Kingsbury v. Davidson	2515	v. State	1041, 1304	Klingaman v. Fish & H.	
v. Moses	463, 658,	v. Terr.	861	Co.	1719, 1976
	2097	Kirkendall v. Omaha	463	Klingemann's Goods	1674
Kingsford v. Hood	1777	Kirkham v. People	928, 968,	Klinkner v. Schmidt	1586
Kingsley v. Kingsley	1703		1442, 1852	Kloke v. Martin	2526
Kingston v. Horner	1267	Kirkland v. Nisbet	1955	Kloman v. Kloman	2067
v. Lesley	1196, 1219,	v. Smith	1681	Klotz v. James	1028
	1644, 1672, 1709	v. State	1182, 1404, 2152	v. Pan-American	
v. Phelps	1056	v. Trott	1799	Match Co.	1858
v. R. Co.	64, 96, 987	Kirkman v. Oxley	73	Klueter v. Schlitz Brew-	
v. Tappen	1898	Kirkpatrick v. Clark	1246	ing Co.	2465
Kingwood v. Bethlehem	1195,	v. Jenkins	1738	Klug v. State	1035
	1314, 1513, 2132	v. Love	2122	Knapp v. Fuller	406
Kinkade v. Howard	2165	v. Pope Mfg. Co.	1859c,	v. Haskall	1873
Kinkead v. U. S.	1662		2219	v. Minneapolis St. P.	
Kinley v. Largent	18, 578,	v. Snyder	1943	& O. R. Co.	2432
	1063, 2592	Kirksey v. Kirksey	2115,	v. St. Louis T. Co.	1465
Kinmear & G. Mfg. Co.			2016	v. Schneider	1086, 1890
v. Miner	2435	Kirkwood v. Perry T. L.		v. Smith	1960
Kinnaird v. Saltoun	2165	& I. Co.	714	v. State	263
Kinnane v. Conroy	1890	Kirschner v. State	987, 1270,	v. Stone	1807
Kinnard v. Willmore	2098		1681, 2271	v. Wing	1871
Kinne v. Kinne	233, 689	Kirsher v. Kirsher	2530	Knapp Case	219, 444
Kinnear v. Gallagher	1064	Kirwan v. Cockburn	1684,	Knard v. Hill	1624
Kinneberg v. Kinneberg	64		2535	Knauf v. Dover L. Co.	1951
Kinner v. Boyd	1963	Kiskimmins v. Shaver	2260	v. U. S.	4c



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Kneass' Case	2214	Knowles v. Scribner	2498	Kokes v. State	2577
Kneedler, Ex parte	2259d	v. State,		Kolb v. R. Co.	211, 987
Kneeland v. State	2283	80 Ala.	457	Kollock v. Parcher	1280
Knepper v. Knepper	2314	113 Ark.	2059, 2060	Kolodrianski v. Amer-	
Knickerbocker v. Wilcox	1213	Tex. Cr., 72		ican L. Co.	1404
Knickerbocker Ice Co.		S. W.	133	Koloff v. Chicago M. &	
v. Gardiner D. Co.	2155	Knowlton v. Central of		P. S. R. Co.	1676
v. Gray		Ga. R. Co.	1951	Kolsti v. R. Co.	461, 571,
165 Ind.	813	v. McMahon	2349,		1951
171 Ind.	461, 770,		2354	Koltermann v. Chilvers	1681
	1626		2580	Komp v. Raymond	2432
v. Pennsylvania R. Co.	455	v. R. Co.	1963	v. State	784, 1676b
Knickerbocker Steam-		Knox v. Clark	1858	Konold v. R. Co.	199, 451
boat Co., Re	2268	v. Coburn	1017	Koon v. Southern Ry.	770,
Kniffen v. McConnell	1623	v. Johnson	1738		794, 1951, 2496
Knight v. Barber	2425	v. Knox	1784	Koons v. R. Co.	461, 1951
v. Danler	1193	v. Montville	6a, 2185	v. State	994, 2088
v. Epsom	2354	v. Rossi	1225, 1314,	Koontz v. O. R. & N.	
v. Fisher	2349, 2354	v. Silloway	1651, 1676a	Co.	455, 456
v. Goodyear Mfg. Co.	461		286, 579,	Koop v. Smith	2503
v. House	1985	v. State	1073, 1079	Kopke v. People	1271
v. Knight,			1350	Koplan v. Gaslight Co.	451,
178 Ill.	254, 1778,	v. Vinsant	1351		949
	1960	Knox Co. v. Davis	1275	Kopp v. White	4e
12 La. An.	1225	Knoxville Nursery Co.		Kops v. Reg.	2272
v. Lawrence	1653, 1676	v. Com.	2434	Korah v. Chicago R. I.	
v. Martin	1200, 1203,	Knudson v. Grand Coun-	2421	& P. R. Co.	2510
	1205, 1297	cil	1081, 2421	Kornega v. Atlantic	
v. Nease	2123	Knutson's Estate	2442	C. L. R. Co.	2509
v. Overman W. Co.	1976	Koch v. Rhodes		v. Kornegay	2012
v. Packard	529, 531	v. State,		Kornig v. Western L.	
v. Peabody	581	115 Ala.	1913, 2497	Ind. Co.	2510
v. Rothschild	716, 905,	126 Wis.	987, 2356	Korte v. O'Neill	2465
	1075	v. Streuter	2144	Koski v. Haskins	1779
v. Rushwood	575	Kodra v. Middlesex &		Koskoff v. Goldman	283
v. Rushworth	7a	B. S. R. Co.	199	Koskovich v. Rodestock	2383
v. Smythe	568, 1974	Koeber v. Somers	2319	Kosakowski v. People	2497
v. State,		Koechl v. U. S.	1699	Kost v. Bender	719
114 Ga.	1126	Koehler v. Abey	747, 754	Kostamo v. Christman	
70 Ind.	290	v. Hill	1351, 1352	Co.	4c, 7a
16 Okl. Cr.	2183, 2264	v. Koehler	377	Kostelecky v. Scherhart	1938
64 Tex.	290, 1869,	v. Schilling	1194, 1195	Koster v. Merritt	5
	2528	v. State	18	v. Reed	1339, 2531
v. U. S.	2272	Koenig v. Arcadia	2509	Kosturska v. Bartkiewicz	1352
v. Waterford,		v. Bauer	1874	Kota v. People	1852
2 Y. & C.	2294	v. Union D. R. Co.	949,	Kotwitz v. Wright	1549
4 Y. & C.	1205, 1465		1756	Kotz v. Belz	1705, 1778
v. Whitmore	1187	Koenigstein v. State	1398,	Kotzke v. Kotzke's	
Knights v. Piella	2508		1405	Estate	1492, 1606, 2527
v. State	354	Koepeke v. Delfs	133, 987	Kovacs v. Mayoras	1106
Knights Templar & M.		v. Milwaukee	1164	Kowring v. Mar'y	2026
L. I. Co. v. Crayton	1053,	Koerner v. State	397	Kozler v. New York Tel.	
	1073, 1076, 1374, 1671	Koester v. Northwestern		Co.	196
Knittle v. Ernst	1960	P. H. Co.	2408	Kraeger v. Kraeger	1730,
Knobell v. Fuller	73, 209	Kohl v. Frederick	2463		2336
Knoell v. U. S.	2236	v. State	21, 905, 914	Krager v. Pierce	1890
Knoll v. State	1700, 1977	Kohler v. Lindenmeyr	1074	Kraimer v. State	618, 1106
Knopke v. Ins. Co.	392, 2498	v. R. Co.	770	Kramer v. Com.	354
Knott v. Cape Fear &		v. Wells Fargo & Co.	1873	v. Gardner	2433
N. R. Co.	456	Kohley's Estate	1303, 1304	v. Goodlander	1567
v. Peterson	1077, 1698	Kohlhagen v. Cardwell	451	v. Harsch	2442
Knowles v. Crampton	1159	Kohlsaat v. Parkersburg		v. Kister	2312
v. People	1010, 2228,	& M. S. Co.	2508	v. Messner	442, 451
	2243, 2273	Kohn v. Marsh	2590	v. State	1751
		Koiner v. Rankin	2349		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Kramer v. Weigand	1135	Kubns v. Gates	1779	Lacon v. Higgins	1271, 1684,
v. Weinert	233	v. R. Co.,			1697, 1953
Krapp v. Metrop. L. Ins.		65 Ia.	1706	Lacoss v. Lebanon	1859, 2319
Co.	568, 1073,	70 Ia.	1951	Lacosst's Succession	1606
	1644, 1646, 2385a	v. Wisconsin I. & N.		Lacy v. Kossuth Co.	208, 221,
Kreager v. Kreager	2336	R. Co.	283		657, 1674, 1984
Krebaum v. Cordell	615	Kuha v. Ligonier V. R.		v. Meador	1278
Krebs v. Lauser	2437	Co.	1951	v. State	1135, 1136, 1761
Kreckeberg v. Leslie	1082	Kuinlan v. Melendez	1856	v. Sugarman	1249
Kreens v. State	2265	Kultz v. Jaeger	1738	Ladd v. Blunt	1216
Kreider v. Wisconsin		Kumberger v. Congress		v. Garrod	7a
R. P. & P. Co.	283, 458,	S. Co.	1951	v. Ladd	463
	916	Kumler v. Ferguson	112, 392	v. Merrill	2579
Kreiling v. Northrup	21	Kunitz v. Ruske	392	v. Wilson	2349
Kreiter v. Bomberger	1051	Kunkel v. Johnson	2408	Ladnier v. Ladnier	2472
Kreitz v. Behrensmeyer	1493,	v. Minneapolis St. P.		Ladwig v. Heyer	1971
	1497, 1712, 1784	& S. S. M. R. Co.	2510	Lady Ivy's Trial	309, 417
Kremen v. Rubin	987	Kuntz v. Emerson Hard-		Lafayette v. Weaver	283
Kress & Co. v. Evans	2442	wood Co.	1674	Lafayette B. & M. R.	
Kretzschmar v. Meehan	2575	Kupfer v. Bank	1195	Co. v. Winslow	1943
Kreuger v. Walker	1225	Kurtz v. Brown	1856d	Laffan v. U. S.	1633
Kreuzberger v. Wingfield	1960	v. Hibner	2476, 2477	Lafferty v. Kansas City	
Kreuziger v. R. Co.	681, 1696	v. Kurtz	2067	Casualty Co.	2520
Krewson v. Purdom	1086	v. R. Co.	1085	Lafam v. Missisquoi	
Kribs v. People	331	Kurz v. Doerr	2498	Pulp Co.	1058
Krichman v. U. S.	2577	Kusch v. Kusch	613	Laffin v. R. Co.	1943
Krider v. Philadelphia	1041	Kusler v. Crofoot	2110	Lafone v. Falkland	
Krieger, Ex parte	2195, 2210	Kutcher v. Love	1062	Islands Co.	2319
Kring v. Missouri	7	Kux v. Bank	2025	La Fontaine v. Southern	
Krippner v. Biehl	1951, 1976	Kvale v. Keane	2153	Underwriters' Ass'n	2261,
Krise v. Neason	1188, 1195,	Kvammen v. Mill Co.	392		2271, 2283
	1279, 2052, 2132	Kvist's Estate	1777	Lafoon v. Shearin	2354
Kritzer v. Smith	1416	Kwack Jan Fat v. White	1355	Laidlaw v. Sage	2494
Kroell v. State	396, 1976	Kwiatkowski v. Putz-		Lail v. State	1750
Kroetch v. Empire M.		haven	2165, 2218	Laing v. Barclay	2307
Co.	1062, 1884	Kwong Lee Wai v.		v. Kaine	1296
Kroger v. Cumberland		Ching Sai	905	v. R. & C. Co.	463
F. P. Co.	2494	Kyburg v. Perkins	1633	Laird v. Ass'n Co.	106
Krogg v. R. Co.	1078	Kyle v. Calhoun City	2572	v. Boston & M. R.	
Krogh v. Modern Wood-		v. Craig	112, 581, 770,	Co.	1639
men	1073, 1671		804, 1725	v. Campbell	1556
Kroll v. Close	2553	v. Kavanagh	2466	v. Kilbourne	1225
Krom v. Vermilion	1651,	v. Kyle	1779	v. Laird	286
	1676a	v. State	851, 1072	Lake, Re	1354
Krouse v. Detroit U. R.		Kyles v. State	987	v. Brown	1651
Co.	1405	Kynaston v. East India		v. Com.	62, 1669
Krueger v. State	1157	Co.	1862, 2221	v. Gilchrist	2124
v. Sylvester	1388, 1698			v. People	672, 681
Kruse v. Koelzer	2415			Lake's Case	1518
v. S. & W. Lumber Co.	581,			Lake Drainage Com'rs	
	778			v. Spencer	1347
Krymski v. Kupidowski	2496	Labaree v. Wood	607	Lake Erie & W. R. Co.	
Kuehn v. Ritter	1738, 2503	Labarre v. Hopkins	1876	v. Craig	376
Kuehne v. Malach	1302	Labarthe v. Gerbeau	1299	v. Griswold	2220
Kuen v. Upmier	1963, 1984	La Beau v. People	987	v. Holland	2432
Kuenster v. Woodhouse	933,	Labouchere v. Wharn-		v. Huffman	1389
	1005	cliffe	4e	v. Middlecoff	456
Kugadt v. State	2081	La Bourgogne	2256	v. Mugg	442, 451, 461
Kuglar v. Garner	253	Lacas v. R. Co.	1722	v. Nooker	2594
Kuhl v. Chamberlain	1077	Lacey v. Davis	1186, 1239,	v. Wilson	792
v. Kuaner	2083		1676a	Lake Lighting Co. v.	
Kuhlman v. Brown	799, 811	v. Hill	278	Lewis	928
v. Medlinka	571, 811	v. Marnan	1244, 1678	Lake Merced W. Co. v.	
v. Wieben	1974	v. Newport	1225	Cowles	2579
		Laclede F. B. M. Co. v.			
		Hartford Co.	2494		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Lake Shore & M. S. R.		Lambert v. State	63, 1983	Lander v. State <sup>1</sup>	247
Co. v. Taylor	1671	v. Weir	1651, 2167	Landers v. Bolton	1225, 1312,
Lake Shore R. Co. v.		Lamberton, Re	2378		1320, 1321,
Herrick	1714, 1725	Lamberts v. Cooper	1302,		1648, 1651, 1676a
Lake Street Elev. R. Co.			1304	Landis v. Turner	1537, 1538,
v. Burgess	791	Lambeth v. Caldwell	2165		1550, 1552, 1554
v. Shaw	1719	v. State	1397, 1398,	v. Wichita R. & L. Co.	2220
Lakey v. State	987, 1966		1438, 1451	Landis & Schick v.	
Lalakea v. Hilo Sugar		Lambie's Estate	291, 1736,	Watts	392, 682
Co.	1635, 1679		2132	Landis Christmas S.	
Lalance & G. M. Co. v.		Lamble v. State	413a, 414,	Club v. Merchants'	
Haberman M. Co.	2319		1182, 1696	Nat'l Bank	2100
Laliberté v. R.	200, 986,	Lambrecht v. Schreyer	1750	Landon v. Morehead	21, 1201
	2196	Lambright v. State	1750,	Landreth v. State	2081
Lallande v. Brown	1072		2071, 2073	Landry v. Klopman	1681
Lally v. Cash	1188, 1201	L'Amie v. Wilson	1859f	v. Landry	1267
v. Central V. R. Co.	714	Lamkin v. Johnson	2491	Landsberger v. Gorham	1890,
v. Rossman	1680	Lammiman v. R. Co.	2384		2301, 2327
Lalone v. U. S.	2498	Lamoille Valley R. Co.		Landt v. McCullough	1201,
Lalor v. Lalor	1457, 1466	v. Bixby	561		1208, 2525
Lamalere v. Caze	1021	Lamonda v. Parizo	392	Landthrift v. State	1821
Lamance v. Byrnes	1873	Lamoreaux v. Att'y-		Landy v. Humphries	1750
Lamar v. Allen	1605	Gen'l	1503	Lane v. Agric. Soc.	1871, 1978
v. Pearre	657, 1065, 1066,	v. Weisman	2429	v. Bailey	2214
	1458, 1678	Lamoreux v. Huntley	1778	v. Bauserman	770
v. Raysor	1651	Lamos v. Snell	73, 209	v. Boicourt	2389
La Master v. Dickson	2232	Lamoure v. Caryl	1943	v. Bommelmann	1239
Lamb v. Lippincott	1304,	Lamoureux v. Craig	2503	v. Brainerd	1386
	1938	v. R. Co.	1116, 1117, 2570	v. Bryant	1021, 1756
v. Littman	1616	Lampe v. St. Louis		v. Cameron	1267
v. Lynch	1938	Brewing Co.	1387, 1388	v. Clark	1238
v. Micoux	2572	Lamping v. Lamping	1679	v. Com.	2059
v. Moberly	1204, 1242,	Lampley v. Scott	1142, 1362	v. Dighton	89
	1247	Lampton v. Lampton's		v. Harlan Co.	949
v. People	2079	Ex'rs	2123	v. Harris	1662
v. Philadelphia & R.		Lam Pui, Ex parte	1355	v. Hill	1736
R. Co.	438	Lamson v. Boyden	2264, 2279,	v. M. & T. Hardware	
v. State,			2281	Co.	1550
66 Md.	359	Lam Yee v. State	2273	v. Moore	233, 1737
40 Nebr.	2056	Lanahan v. Com.	118, 276	v. R. Co.,	
Nebr., 95 N. W.	792,	Lanark v. Dougherty	1158	132 Mo.	96
	1079, 2272	Lanasa v. State	1129, 2304	21 Wash.	2220, 2386
v. Stewart	1040	Lanauze v. Palmer	1206	v. Stanhope	2462
v. Ward	1890	Lancashire Ins. Co. v.		v. State,	
Lambe v. Manning	1777,	Stanley	966	Fla., 32 So.	247, 581
	2410	Lancaster v. Foster	2496	151 Ind.	1447, 1450
Lambe's Case	848, 1327,	v. Lancaster's Trustees	1698	v. Watts	2141
	1328, 1475	v. Lee	2143	Lang v. Lang,	
Lambeck v. Stiefel	1056	v. Smith	1352	157 Ia.	228, 679
Lamberson v. Lamber-		v. State	2081	284 Ill.	2503
son	916	Lancaster & J. E. L. Co.		v. Marshalltown L. P.	
Lambert v. Armentrout	914,	v. Jones	2459	& R. Co.	795
	916	Lancaster Co. Nat'l		v. Metzger	1081, 1085
v. Cooper	2049	Bank v. Moore	1621	v. Sanger	283
v. Eastern Massachu-		Lancey v. Brock	378	v. Terry	1951
setts St. R. Co.	2509	Lancetot v. State	2336, 2337,	v. U. S.	6
v. Hamlin	288, 1007		2505	v. Waters	619
v. Hemler	2498	Landecker v. Houghtal-		Langdeau v. John Han-	
v. La Conner T. & T.		ing	1082	cock M. L. Ins. Co.	2452
Co.	1756, 1951	Lander v. Goodenough	461	Langdon v. Ahrens	568, 1062,
v. Lambert	2239	v. People	1745, 1754, 1757		1719
v. People,		v. Propper	1676a	v. Hulls	1206
6 Abb. N. C.	1070	v. Seaver	64	v. Roane	1073
29 Mich.	1142	v. Sheehan	451	v. Wintersteen	716

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Lange, Ex parte	2450	Larner v. Massachu-		Latimer v. Sovereign	
v. Heckel	1416	setts B. & I. Co.	2155	Camp	770
v. Perley	2311	La Roche v. Armstrong	1062	Latkow v. Eamer	1670
v. Schoettler	950	Laros v. Com.	232, 857, 858,	Latour's Estate	2500, 2502
v. Wiegand	987		1984	Latourette v. Miller	681
Langford v. Jones	904, 905	Larrabee v. Tribune Co.	406	Latters v. Sussex	2250
v. Newsom	1347a, 1671,	Larrabee's Case	4c, 1722	Lattourett v. Cook	1271, 1681,
	2167	Larrance v. People	1042		2110
v. State	309	Larrison v. R. Co.	1350	Lau v. Fletcher	1951
v. U. S.	1819, 2349	Larry v. Sherburne	1072	Lauchheimer v. Jacobs	773
Langham v. Sanford	2475	Larson v. Boyd	21, 321	Lauer v. Banning	401
Langhammer v. Munter	1640	v. Eau Clair	1908	v. Estes	1712
Langhorne v. Com.	949, 987,	v. First Nat'l Bank	2572	Laufer v. Tractoin Co.	199,
	1003, 1005,	v. Glos	2034		2125
	1021, 1022, 1985	v. Hafer	1890	Lauff v. Kennard & S.	
Langley v. Fisher	2235	v. Russell	963, 1976	C. Co.	792
v. Mark	1154	v. Salt Lake City	2220	Laughlin v. Com.,	
v. Oxford	2593	v. State	689, 2389	13 Bush.	7
v. Wadsworth	944, 2014	v. Thoma	581	Ky., 37 S. W.	855, 2081
Langsdale v. Woollen	1195	Larson Jr. Co. v. Wrig-		v. Eaton	2086
Langsdorf v. Field	1779	ley Jr. Co.	2590	v. Harvey	1158
Langston v. R. Co.	1984	La Rue v. Kansas M. L.		v. R. Co.,	
v. State	496, 2071	Ins. Co.	2573, 2574	62 Mich.	1951
Langton v. Higgins	2425, 2440	v. St. Anthony & D.		80 Mich.	1721
Langtry v. State	2086	E. Co.	1067	v. State	1138, 1842
Langworthy v. Green	1158	Lasater v. State,		Laughran v. Kelly	2042
Lanham v. Lanham	2336	77 Ark.	2062	Laughter v. U. S.	2184, 2264
v. Louisville & N. R.		88 Tex. Cr.	987, 988	Launikitas v. Wilkes-	
Co.	2432	v. Van Hook	1275	barre & W. V. T. Co.	1003
Lanier v. Hebard	1490, 1573	Las Caygas v. Larionda's		Laupahoehoe Sugar Co.	
v. State	1781	Syndics	1272, 1676,	v. Wilder S. S. Co.	1951
Lanigan v. North	1684		2165, 2168	Laureano v. Kilayco	2437
Lanning v. Gay	582, 607	Lascelles v. State	309	Laurel Hill G. & M. Co.	
v. R. Co.	456	Lasher v. Colton	898	v. Yazoo & M. V. R.	
Lannum v. Brooks	1225	Lasker v. Lasker	2046	Co.	2509
Lanpher v. Clark	204, 207	La Société Les Affré-		Laurel Printing & P. Co.	
Lanphere v. State	398, 1013,	teurs Réunis, Re	1856	v. James	1416
	2061	Lassas v. McCarty	1938	Laurence v. Laurence	1730
Lanquist v. Chicago	463, 1168	Lassels v. Chatterton	529	Laurenson v. State	531
Lansburgh v. Winsatt	561	Lassing v. James	2477	Laurent v. Lanning	1676
Lansing v. Michigan C.		Lassiter v. Norfolk & C.		v. Vaughn	720, 1943
R. Co.	987	R. Co.	2536	Laurie Co. v. McCul-	
Lansky v. R. Co.	1873	v. State,		lough	458, 461, 2382, 2386
Lanter v. McEwen	406	77 Ark.	1821	Lauterbach v. Netzo	1890
Lanterman v. Anderson	4a	67 Ga.	1842	Lauterman v. Anderson	4a, 4c
Lanza v. Le Grand		Lassone v. R. Co.	1527	Lauth v. Chicago U. T.	
Quarry Co.	1415, 1669	Last Chance Co. v.		Co.	1719, 1721, 1974
La Page, Ex parte	2513	Ames	1013	Lavalle v. People	2572
Lapham v. Atlas Ins. Co.	1947	Laster v. Blackwell	1189,	Lavalleur v. Hahn	2406
v. Kelly	754		1195, 1278, 2105	Lavenburg v. Harper	1015
Laplante v. Mills	233, 437	Latham, Ex parte	2536	Lavenstein Bros. v. Hart-	
v. Warren Cotton		v. Andrews Mfg. Co.	1432	ford Fire Ins. Co.	1530, 1555
Mills	1938	v. Latham	238, 1379	Lavergne v. Elkins	1239
Lapleine v. R. Co.	613	v. Smith	6a, 2185	La Vie v. Tooze	2473
Lapointe v. Berlin Mills		v. State	280, 1963	Lavigne v. Lee	1126
Co.	1158, 1898	v. Tombs	2531	Lavin v. LeFevre	1354
Laporte v. Cook	461	v. U. S.	1807	v. Mutual Aid Soc'y	1646
Lappe v. Gfeller	1736	Lathrop v. Atkinson	1668	Lavretta v. Holcomb	1250,
Laprade v. Fitchburg &		v. Bramhall	19		1291, 1292
L. St. R. Co.	2410	v. Humble	2433	Law v. Fairfield	1018
Larkin v. Avery	1404	v. Mitchell	1208	v. Merrills	1879, 2094
v. Baty	1779	Latikos v. State	987, 1983,	v. Scott	2378
v. Nassau Elec. Co.	1261		2276	v. Woodruff	291
Larkins v. Tartar	2349	Latimer v. Elgin	1703	Lawder v. Henderson	1890



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Lawder v. Lawder	770	Lawton v. Chance	1263	Leather Mfrs. Bank v.	
Lawes v. Reed	758, 759, 761	v. Chase	563, 716	Morgan	1073
Lawhorn v. Carter	1556	v. Tarratt	20, 1086, 1235	Leatherman v. State	1978
Lawless v. Grogan	2466	Lawyer v. Smith	1511, 1737	Leathers v. Wrecking	
v. Guelbreth	1312, 1514	Laybourn v. Crisp	1594	Co.	797
v. Lawless	1081	Laycock v. People	168, 398,	Leavenworth T. & S. W.	
v. Queale	1255, 1256		784	R. Co. v. Paul	1943
v. Stamp	1664, 2579	v. United R. Co.	1951	Leavitt v. Bartholomew	20
Lawlor v. Loewe	1729	Layer v. Wagstaff	759	v. Cutler	1064, 1067
v. Wolff	1976	Layman v. Brown	1675	v. Fiberloid Co.	2434, 2509
Lawman's Estate	2048, 2052	Layman's Will	2329	v. Kennicott	2463
Lawn v. Prager	751	Layson v. Cooper	613	v. Maynes	1073
Lawrence, Ex parte	2286	Layton v. Chaylon	564	v. Shook	2132
v. Barker	736, 900, 905,	v. Hastings	1513	v. Simes	1206
	907, 1021	v. Kirkendall	1898	Leazure v. Hillegas	1194, 1651,
v. Boston	561, 677	Lazarus v. Lewis	1302, 1320		2159, 2169
v. Boswell	2355	Lazier v. Corn.	580	Le Baron v. Crombie	1410
v. Burris	1225	v. Westcott	1681	Le Barron v. Le Barron	2220
v. Campbell	2294, 2300	Lea, Re	1355	v. State	791
v. Clark	1208, 1244	v. Henderson	210, 987,	Lebens v. Nelson	1074
v. Dana	372, 1230		2260	Leber v. R. Co.	1943
v. Dodwell	2426	v. Medicine Hat	1856a	Le Blanc v. Nolan	1877
v. Doe	1966	v. State	1618	v. Sweet	2509
v. Dubois	613	v. Wheatley	2290	Le Brun v. Le Brun	2046
v. Fulton	1225	Lea's Case	1674	v. Romero	285
v. Grout	1680	Leach v. Burr	2495, 2500	Leckey v. Bloser	64, 1770,
v. Haynes	1563	v. Carlile	4a		1974
v. Hudson	1951	v. Com.	987	v. Cunningham	1511
v. Ins. Co.	1858, 2121	v. Hall	2506	Leckie v. Scott	2199
v. Kimball	1469	v. Hill	1067	Le Cointe v. U. S.	664
v. Lanning	1021	v. Money	2264	Lederer v. Saake	1674
v. Methuen	715	v. Oregon S. L. Co.	1750	Lederman v. R. Co.	283
v. Mt. Vernon	65	v. Prevster	1938	Ledingham v. Skinner	2065
v. Premier Ind. Ass.		v. Rex	2245	Ledington, Ex parte	2061
Co.	2451	v. Shelby	2245	Lee v. Angus	2200
v. State,		v. Simpson	4, 1326, 1329,	v. Birrell	2378
84 Ala.	363		1349, 1666	v. Blandy	1225, 1657
103 Md.	1079, 2183,	v. State,		v. Com.	2071
	2264, 2277	99 Tenn.	499	v. Fydge	7a
v. Tennant	1566	78 Tex. Cr.	987	v. Gansell	521
v. Van Horne	2125	v. Swallow	2221	v. Getty	1239
Lawrence & W. R. Co.		Leach's Goods	1302	v. Hamilton	2119
v. Hawk	714, 720	Leache v. State	1841	v. Heath	1064
v. Ross	720	Leadbetter v. Crow's		v. Henley	2426
Lawrence Co. v. Schmaul-		Nest	2319	v. Hill	1416
hausen	1351	Leader v. Barry	1644, 2083	v. Huson	406
Lawrenceburg R. M.		Leahy v. R. Co.	1749	v. Kansas C. S. R.	
Co. v. Jones & Co.	2572	v. State	1808	Co.	688
Lawson, Re	2525	Leake v. State	1195	v. Kilburn	253
v. Black Diamond		v. Westmeath	2110	v. Lee	2046
C. M. Co.	1859e,	Leaphart v. Leaphart	2235	v. Malleable Iron R.	
	2218	Leaptrot v. State	1938	Co.	462
v. Conaway	568	Learned v. Hall	290	v. Meacock	2450
v. Glass	745, 760	v. Texas & P. R. Co.	1356	v. Missouri P. R. Co.	1828,
v. Mobile Electric Co.	2509	v. Tillotson	1073		2495
v. Orear	253, 1186,	Learoyd v. Halifax J. S.		v. Murphy	2529
	1623, 1959	B. Co.	2319	v. Pain	2463, 2477
v. R. Co.	1951	Leary v. Fitchburg R.		v. R. Co.	1066
v. Rowley	2195	Co.	2570	v. Read	2260, 2275
v. State,		v. R. Co.	461	v. Salt Lake	1951
20 Ala.	1072	v. Webber Co.	208, 250,	v. State,	
32 Ark.	928		1938	66 Ark.	987, 1138
171 Ind.	390, 1938	Leath v. State	154	72 Ark.	111, 247, 1013
v. Swinney	398, 399	Leathe v. Thomas	2536	102 Ga.	821

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Lee v. State		Legore v. State	357, 1135,	Le More v. U. S.	56, 2273,
8 Ga. App.	368		1898		2276
51 Miss.	580	Le Grange v. Ward	1835	Lenahan v. Pittston C.	
21 Oh. St.	987	Lehan v. Chicago & N.		M. Co.	969
45 Tex. Cr.	987	W. R. Co.	1037, 2319	Lench v. Lench	89, 2054
Tex. Cr., 64		Lehigh V. C. Co. v.		Lendrum v. Deazley	380
S. W.	496	Chicago	463, 1943	Lenert v. State	2497
v. Tapscott	1239, 1651	Lehigh Valley R. Co. v.		Lenfest v. Robbins	396, 952
v. Tinges	39, 377, 770	Clark	2494	Le Niemen	1641
v. Water Co.	1943	McKeen	456	Lenihan v. Com.	64
v. Wheeler	392	Lehman v. Knapp	2486	Lenney v. Finley	747
v. Wisner	1318, 1677	v. Knott	1951	Lennig v. Ralston	2413
Lee's Adm'x v. Lee	2110	Lehman's Trial	2298	Lenning v. Lenning	2498
Lee's Case	1022	Lehmann v. Chapel	1779	Lenoir v. People's Bank	1385a
Lee's Will	1644, 2529	v. Minneapolis & St.		v. Lenoir	2046, 2067,
Lee Gon Yung v. U. S.	1355	L. R. Co.	451		2245
Lee Lung v. Patterson	4c	v. Rivers	1681	Lenoir Car Co. v. Smith	1841
Lee Sing Far v. U. S.	2034	Lehmicke v. R. Co.	463, 714,	Lenox v. Fuller	1612, 1614
Leech v. Karthaus	2168		720, 1943	Lent v. Shear	1086, 1362, 1364
Leedom v. E. F. & C.		Leibe v. Hebersmith	1676	Lentz v. Dallas	1951
Co.	344	Leiber v. Com.	1362, 1434	v. Martin	1186
v. State	63, 64, 398, 2061	Leicester v. Haydon	1662	Leo v. State	784, 1270
Leeds v. Cook	1207	v. Walter	73, 74	Leominster Case	1712
v. Debuys	2054	Leidlein v. Meyer	437, 792,	Leon v. Bouillet	2232
v. Ins. Co.	1076		1164	v. Kerrison	1246
v. Lancashire	2444	Leiferman v. White	2509	v. State	2060
Leek v. Chesley	716	Leifheit v. Neylon	2103	Leonard v. Bolton	1141
Lees v. U. S.	2257	Leigh v. Evans	2538	v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	1707
Leese v. Clark	291	v. Leigh	2467	v. Fleming	1085, 2520
Leeson v. Holt	255	Leigh's Case	2250	v. Huntington	1647
Leesville Mfg. Co. v.		Leighton v. Grant	7a	v. Kingsley	1028, 1263
Morgan W. & I.		v. Leighton	1670	v. Leonard,	
Works	1194, 2153	v. Manson	1561	174 Ia.	2046
Leete v. State Bank	166, 2240	v. People	1873	145 Mich.	2048
Lefebure v. Worden	1518,	v. Sargent	1984, 2349	1 W. & S. Pa.	2351
	1521	Leinkauf v. Brinker	64	v. Mixon	747
Lefever v. Johnson	784	Leiper v. Erwin	93	v. R. Co.	442, 451, 1707
Lefferts v. State	1339	Leistikow v. Zuelsdorf	1067,	v. Standard Aero Co.	561,
Lefforge v. State	398		1890		770
Lefkowitz v. Silver	2273, 2498	Leitch v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. State,	
Lefort's Succession	2016	Leland v. Cameron	1195, 1521,	115 Ala.	154
Le Franc v. Hewitt	1539		1523, 2107	17 Ariz.	276, 1614
Leftley v. Mills	1635	v. Leonard	797	60 N. J. L.	351
Leftridge v. U. S.	1852, 2071,	v. United Commercial		100 Oh.	1530, 2272
	2081	Travelers	2510	v. Young	1232
Leftwich v. Early	2408	v. Wilkinson	1678, 2572	Leonard's Succession	701,
Legard v. Foot	2290	Le Long v. Siebrecht	1076,		2008, 2016
Legare v. Ashe	1267		2317	Leonardo v. Santiago	1458
Legatt v. Tollervey	2183	Lem Moon Sing v.		Leopold v. Van Kirk	1956,
Legere v. State	1128, 2512	U. S.	1355		1976, 1977
Legg v. Annapolis	1350	Lemann v. Bonsall	2106	Le Page v. Attorney-	
v. Drake	915, 916,	Le Mere v. McHale	2203	General	2437
	1700, 1890	Lemieus v. Boston &		Lepley v. Anderson	2414, 2498
v. Legg	1271	Maine R. Co.	2536	Leport v. Todd	1778, 2515
Leggate v. Clark	1671	Lemke v. Hage	2498	Lepper v. U. S.	784, 1909
Legge v. Edmonds	68, 269,	Lemley v. Doak Gas En-		Leppla v. Tribune Co.	2336,
	2063	gine Co.	1976		2341
Leggett v. Boyd	607, 1481	Lemmert v. Lemmert	20	Le Prohon's Appeal	2329
v. Patterson	1660	Lemmon v. Hartsook	1779	Lerch v. Times Co.	2442
v. State,		Lemon v. Dean	1303	Leroux v. Brown	5, 2454
97 Ga.	1326	v. Johnson	1213	Leroy & W. R. Co. v.	
15 Oh.	1781	Lemons v. State,		Ross	1943
Leggo v. N. O. C. & B.		97 Tenn.	1442	Lerum v. Geoing	1032
Co.	1225	4 W. Va.	923, 1614	Lese v. Lamprecht	2430, 2442



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Leslie, Re	2283	Levy v. Doerhoefer's Ex'r	18	Lewis v. Sapio	696
v. Com.	987	v. Pope	2313	v. Smith	458
v. Hanson	1530	v. Rust	2024	v. Stammers	1658
v. Hervey	2287	v. State,		v. State,	
v. McMurty	1736	6 Ind.	2572	35 Ala.	1022, 1044,
v. R. Co.	655, 1951	84 Tex. Cr.	1620		1106, 1108
v. Sims	586	v. Superior Court	2257	62 Ark.	2497
v. State	266, 285, 290,	v. Vaughan	1671	91 Ga.	1040, 1911
	2513	Levy & Cohn M. Co. v.		148 Ind.	1350
Lessee v. Hoge	2530	Kauffman	2444	4 Kan.	293, 326,
Lesser v. New Hamp-		Lewin v. Dille	1195		347, 1037
shire F. Co.	987	v. Simpson	437	v. Sutliff	1681
v. New York Life Ins.		Lewinsohn v. U. S.	203, 571	v. Terr.	2276
Co.	2531	Lewis v. Adams	1133	v. Turnley	2442
Lesser Cotton Co. v. R.		v. Alexander	2538	Lewis, Hubbard & Co.	
Co.	455	v. Alkire	1879	v. Montgomei. S. Co.	2580
Lester, Re	2373	v. Barker	142, 340, 1021	Lewy v. Fischl	1129
v. Ins. Co.	2102	v. Beatty	1213, 1225	Lexington v. Fleharty	1750
v. Jenkins	2450	v. Bell	568	v. Long	463
v. People	1859a, b, c, 2219,	v. Bergess	1484, 1487	Lexington & E. R. Co.	
	2579	v. Brotherhood Acc. Co.	7a	v. Lyons	377
v. Pittsford	458, 1938, 1951	v. Brown	658, 2097	Lexington R. Co. v. Her-	
v. State,		v. Bullard	2110	ring	199
32 Ark.	499, 933	v. Burns	1774, 1777	Lexington St. R. Co. v.	
37 Fla.	111, 1440, 1441,	v. Com.	967	Strader	1750
	1442, 1446, 2277	v. Dunne	488	Ley v. Ballard	1302
106 Ga.	2513	v. Emery	1984	v. Barlow	1858, 2211
v. Thompson	1560	v. England	1539, 1555, 1558	v. Huber	1943
Le Targe v. De Tuyll	2437	v. Englewood Elev. R.		Ley's Case	1933
Letcher v. Morrison	2355	Co.	714, 1640	Leyfield's Case	1179, 1193,
Le Texier v. Auspach	2232	v. Fermor	461		1211, 1681
Lethulier's Case	2462	v. Freeman	728	Leyman v. Levy	610
L'Etoile	1641	v. Fullerton	372, 1230	Leyner v. Leyner	23, 28
Letourneau v. Carbon-		v. Gaslight Co.	199, 1040	Lezinsky v. Superior	
neau	2415	v. Gibson	2115	Court	2195
Lett v. State	1404	v. Glass	1300	Li Sing v. U. S.	516, 2066
Letton v. Young	406, 1010	v. Glenn	1074	Libby v. Brown	1455, 1466
Letts v. Letts	2056, 2060	v. Harris	2575	v. Clark	2437
Leucht v. Leucht	1730, 2336	v. Hartley	1181, 1210	v. Land Co.	2446
Levels v. St. Louis & H.		v. Havens	2154	v. Maine Central R.	
R. Co.	1639	v. Hodgdon	1010	Co.	455
Levendusky v. Empire		v. Hudmon	1254	v. Scherman	458
R. M. Co.	2509	v. Ins. Co.,		Liberty v. Haines	1063, 1067
Lever v. Lever	1316	10 Gray	719, 1390	Lichanco v. Limjuco	1062
Leverett v. Bullard	2477	71 Ia.	1943	Lichfield v. Bond	2257
v. Tift	1651, 2141, 2146	v. Kramer	736, 748, 751	Lichtenberg v. Mair	1890
Levers v. Van Buskirk	2313	v. Lambros	2590	Liddell v. State	1446
Levi v. Gardner	1082	v. Lewis	2276, 2452	Liddle v. Bank	1041
v. Levi	1539	v. Londesborough	1859c	v. Salter	1081
v. Mylne	2559	v. McClure	2580	Liddon v. Hodnett	1239
v. State	1404	v. McGrath	2503	Lide v. State	1807
Levin v. El. R. Co.	463	v. McMullin	2349	Liebenow v. Philippine	
Levine v. Barry	684	v. Maris	1290, 2048	Veg. Oil Co.	2200
v. Ins. Co.	1551, 1558	v. Marshall	1644	Lieberman v. Lexington	
v. Marcus	1890	v. Morris	1862	Motor Co.	2449
v. Mitchell & S. Co.	2446	v. Norton	1518	Liebman v. Pooley	1272, 1275
Levinstein v. Dupont de		v. Payn	1232	Liebrandt v. Sorg	1770
Nemours & Co.	1856a	v. Post	1028, 1029, 1037	Lien v. Savings Loan &	
Levison v. State	38, 142, 273,	v. R. Co.	2415	Trust Co.	1858
	276, 278, 826,	v. Ringo	1297	Life & Fire Ins. Co. v.	
	855, 1475	v. Rio Grande W. R.		Ins. Co.	291, 1199
Leviston v. French	1387	Co.	2510	Liggett, Ex parte	1835
Levy v. Burley	1674	v. San Antonio	1239, 1268,	v. Glenn	1074, 2310,
v. Chicago N. Bank	2540		1269		2325

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Light v. Reed	1681	Lindenbaum v. N. Y.		Linton v. Baker	1681
Lightfoot v. Com.	247	N. H. & H. R. Co.	2034	v. Com.	1911
v. People	351, 1263, 1329, 1667, 2103	Lindenthal v. Hatch	682	v. Cooper	1676
v. State	2081	Linderberg v. Mining		v. Moorhead	2536
Lightner v. State	1440	Co.	1078, 1750	v. Sutherland	1779
v. Wike	736, 2098	Lindgren v. Lindgren	2474	v. Wilson	1186
Ligon v. Ford	75, 923	Lindle v. Com.	290	Lipe v. Eisenlerd	987
Lihs v. Lihs	2241	Lindley v. Lindley	2498	Lipes v. State	660, 1385a, 2265
Liles v. Liles	1194	v. Smith	1635	Lipham v. State	398
v. May	1040	Lindner v. Ins. Co.	1066, 1067	Lipphard v. Humphrey	1740, 2421
v. State	278	Lindo v. Belisario	564	Lipscomb, Ex parte	2196, 2321
Liliuokalani's Estate	1490	Lindquist v. Dickson	905	v. Allen	2503
Lilley v. Parkinson	1693	Lindsay v. Allen	2281	v. Lyon	736, 754, 1669
Lillibridge v. McCann	2570	v. Bates	928	v. R. Co.	1951
Lillie v. Modern Wood-		v. Chicago	1680	v. State	18, 21, 1398, 1442, 1445, 1447, 2497, 2550
men	1347	v. M'Cormack	1304	Lipsey v. People	326, 2273
v. Shriver	2416	v. McCormick	607, 613	Lipshitz, Re	2066
v. State	457	v. Shaner	1304	Lisa, The	4, 4d
Lillstrom v. R. Co.	2507	v. State,	579, 1876	Lisbon v. Bath	20
Lilly v. Larkin	1525	Lindsay & P. Co. v.		Liscomb v. Eldredge	2529
Limburg v. Glenwood L.		Mullen	1672	v. R. Co.	2515
Co.	283, 1951	Lindsey v. Attorney-		Lisman v. Early	1873
Lime Rock Bank v.		General	2576	Lissak v. Crocker Est.	
Hewett	1098	v. People	2376	Co.	1750, 2390
Limerick v. Lee	1067	v. State		List's Ex'r v. List	1062, 2312
Limerick Nat'l Bank v.		66 Fla.	499	Lister v. Perryman	2554
Adams	377	38 Oh.	309	Litchfield v. Merritt	610
Linch v. Linch	1738	69 Oh.	2252	Litcot v. Blackwell	1674
Lincks v. Eric R. Co.	1066	v. Stephens	1738	Liter's Estate	4
Lincoln v. Barre	561	v. U. S.	2513	Littig v. Urbaner-	
v. Battelle	1271, 1275, 1832	Lindsley v. Natural Car-		Atwood H. Co.	763, 2103
v. Chrisman	73, 406	bonic Gas Co.	1356	Little v. Beazley	2016
v. Claffin	321	v. R. Co.	1951	v. Birdwell	2349
v. Com.	714	Line v. Grand Rapids &		v. Chauvin	1312
v. Detroit	2383	I. R. Co.	571	v. Com.	2363
v. Fitch	529	v. Line	2568	v. Downing	1229, 2144, 2159
v. Haugan	1350	v. Mack	1684, 1271	v. Gibson	1082
v. Mfg. Co.	451, 655	v. Taylor	1161	v. Head & D. Co.	451, 1978
v. Power	2566	Linebarger v. Linebarger	1081, 1738	v. Indianapolis	1195
v. R. Co.	663, 1920	Linchan v. State,		v. Johnston	1195
v. State	1079	113 Ala.	100, 789	v. Keon	1911
v. Wright	1647	120 Ala.	1966	v. Knox	2503
Lincoln & B. H. R. Co.		Lines v. Alaska C. Co.	716	v. Larrabee	2355
v. Sutherland	714	Linfield v. O. C. R. Co.	1389	v. Liggett	2435
Lincoln Ave. & N. C. G.		Lingenfelser v. Simon	1244	v. Marsh	291
R. Co. v. Madaus	608, 619, 2235	Lingenfelter v. St. Clair	1128	v. Massachusetts N.E.	
Lincoln Mill Co. v.		Lingle v. Chicago	1248	St. R. Co.	1576
Wissler	2155	Lingo v. State	111, 247, 2341	v. Maxwell	18
Lincoln R. Co. v. Cox	2509	Link v. R. Co.	437	v. Palister	1573
Lincoln V. P. & P. B.		v. Sheldon	681, 1719	v. R. Co.,	
Co. v. Buckner	93	Linkeman v. Knepper	614	72 N. H.	1072
Lind v. Lind	2530	Links v. State	347	88 Wis.	1010
v. State	2071	Linn v. Sigsbee	1944	v. Rogers	693, 2020
Lindahl v. Supreme		v. U. S.	56, 770, 2259b	v. State,	
Court I. O. F.	2510	Linnehan v. Sheeran	406	145 Ala.	177, 2012
Lindauer v. Ins. Co.	1960	Linnell v. Sutherland	1538, 1552	150 Ga.	258
v. Teeter	2356	Linsday v. People	273, 437, 451, 568, 580, 1975, 2056	v. Thomas	1530
Linde v. Gaffke	716	Linsee v. State	1203	v. U. S.	2551
Lindeman v. Desbor-		Linsley v. Lovely	1890, 1971		
ough	1947	Linthicum v. Remington	2297		
Linden v. Miller	2509				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Little v. Wyatt	1559	Livingston v. Wagner	2312	Lofts v. Hudson	1062
Little & H. I. Co. v. Pigg	1073	Livingston's Appeal	1081	Loftus v. Chicago Rail-	
Little Rock & F. S. R.		Livingstone v. Colpitts	1075	ways Co.	1951
Co. v. Alister	719	v. Gartshore	2307	v. Harris	2503
Little Rock & M. R. Co.		Livingstone Mfg. Co. v.		Logan v. Com.	821
v. Harrell	199	Rizzi	1078	v. Empire D. El. Co.	791
Little Rock & S. F. R.		Lizardi v. Registrar	2437	v. Freerks	763
Co. v. Payne	1354	Lizzie, The	2442	v. Lee	2573
Little Rock C. Co. v.		Llanover v. Homfray	1388	v. McGinnis	1938
Hodge	2110	Llewellyn v. Sunnyside		v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.	18
Little Rock Granite Co.		Coal Co.	463	v. R. Co. 2257, 2259a, 2264	
v. Dallas Co.	1521	v. Winkworth	377	v. State	851
Little Rock J. R. Co. v.		Llorente v. Rodriguez	7, 1606	v. Steele	142, 803
Woodruff	463	Lloyd v. Giddings	1246	v. U. S. 6, 522, 523, 1079,	
Little Rock M. R. & T.		v. Lloyd	2220		1854
R. Co. v. Haynes	1944	v. McClure	2349	v. Watt	1658
Little Rock R. Co. v.		v. McGarr	2427	Logan's Heirs v. Ward	2522
Leverett	1747, 1750, 1757	v. Mostyn	1204, 1208,	Logansport v. McMillen	1943
Little Rock R. & E. Co.			2325	Logansport & P. G. T.	
v. Green	2510	v. Passingham	1644, 2269,	Co. v. Heil	1126
Little Rock T. & E. Co.			2272	Logg v. People	1852
v. Nelson	1750, 1951	v. Powell Duffryn S.		Logia Suprema v.	
Little Rock V. & I. Co.		C. Co.	269	Aguirre	1081
v. Robinson	987	v. Simons	18	Logsden v. Stern	616
Littlefield v. Rice	612, 751,	v. Supreme Lodge	1268	Lohman v. People	950, 987
	1538	v. Willan	1070	Loid v. State	2582
Littlehale v. Dix	2569	Lo Hop v. U. S.	1674	Loker v. Haynes	529
Littlejohn v. Fowler	2447,	Loaiza v. Caballero	2046	Loloff v. Sterling	463
	2495	Lochlibo, The	905, 907	Loman v. Paullin	2593
v. Shaw	1921, 1951	Lock v. Chicago B. & Q.		Lomax v. Lomax	2477
Littler v. Franklin	1195	R. Co.	93	Lombar v. East Tawas	252,
Littleton v. Clayton	1203,	v. Mayne	1649, 1676		283, 458
	1204, 1208, 2484	Lockard v. Com.	925, 2277	Lombard v. Chaplin	2113,
v. State	1975, 1976	v. Van Alstyne	368		2115
Litton v. Com.	581, 1163	Locke v. Lyon M. Co.	2556	v. Johnson	1280
Liu Hop Fong v. U. S.	4c,	v. R. Co.	792, 794,	v. Mayberry	2276
	1356		1951, 2466	v. Oliver	581
Livermore F. & M. Co.		v. Woodman	95	Lombard R. Co. v.	
v. Union S. & C. Co.	792,	Lockett v. State,		Christian	568
	1005	63 Ala.	2059, 2276	Lombardo v. Ferguson	1206
Liverpool & G. W. S.		136 Ark.	1106	Londegan v. Hammer	2535
Co. v. Ins. Co.	2573	Lockhart v. Camfield	1208,	London v. Bay State R.	
Liverpool & L. & G. Ins.			1347, 1651	Co.	288
Co. v. Southern Pac.		v. Harrell	334	v. Lynn	1074, 1661
Co.	454	v. Luker	619	v. Perkins	1415
Liverpool Ins. Co. v.		v. State	1445, 1477	London Gaslight Co. v.	
McGuire	1947	v. U. S.	369	Chelsea	2319, 1859c
Livinghouse v. State	2061	Lockhead v. Berkeley		London G. O. Co. v.	
Livingston v. Arnoux	1460,	Springs W. & I. Co.	1679,	Lavell	1168
	1523		2573	London Guarantee v.	
v. Com.	1880	Locklayer v. Locklayer	269,	Henderson	2319
v. Cox	1666		1502, 1605	London Guarantee & A.	
v. Harris	2256, 2268	Lockridge v. Brown	18	Co. v. American Cereal	
v. Heck	987, 2446	Lockwood v. Crawford	2567	Co.	1388
v. Ins. Co.	1271	v. Lockwood	1730, 2235	London Tramways Co.	
v. Kettelle	1635, 2168	Lockyer v. Lockyer	398	v. Bailey	7a
v. Kiersted	492	Loder v. Whelpley	2314, 2391	Londonderry v. An-	
v. M'Donald	1225	Lodge v. Phipper	2008	dover	1503
v. Reid-Hart-Parr Co.	451	v. State	949	Londonderry Case	1646
v. Rogers	1177, 1198	Loeb v. Huddleston	1201	Londoner v. Stewart	1195,
v. State	364	Loennecker's Will	1738		1213
v. Stevens	377	Loewenberz v. Mer-		Lonergan v. Assur. Co.	2203
v. Tompkins	2256	chants' & M. Bank	2272	v. Buford	2465
v. Tyler	1521, 1530	Loftin v. Nally	1226	v. Whitehead	1541, 1544

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Long v. Athol	461	Loomis v. Bedel	1225, 1651	Lott v. Buck	1195
v. Bailie	583	v. Connecticut F. Ins.		v. Burrel	2222
v. Barrett	406	1 Co.	451	v. King	772
v. Booe	944, 949, 1730	v. Day	2416	Loucks v. R. Co.	680, 715
v. Brougher	74	v. Ins. Co.	1947	Loud v. Merrill	95
v. Colton	1567, 1587	v. Kellogg	1316	v. Solomon	1900
v. Davidson	1955	v. R. Co.	1063	Louden v. Blythe	233
v. Davis	1387, 1388, 1404	v. Wadhams	1256	Loudermilk v. Louder-	
v. Dollarhide	1086	Looney v. Saltonstall	1856b, c,	milk	2444
v. Dow	1141		1859c	Lougee v. Bray	1388
v. Drew	2125	Looper v. Bell	1722	Loughead v. Colling-	
v. Carey Inv. Co.	2391	Loos v. Wilkinson	1083, 1086	wood S. Co.	282
v. Hawken	2195	Loose v. Deerfield Tp.	1719,	Loughlin v. Brassil	283
v. Hitchcock	1037		1951	Louie You, Re	2066
v. Ins. Co.	1975	v. State	667, 762, 1839,	Louis v. Easton	578
v. John Brenner Co.	458		1842	Louis Cook M. Co. v.	
v. Lamkin	334, 950	Lopes v. De Tastet	2203	Randall	1195
v. McDow	2141, 2529	Lopez v. Bergel	2054	Louisiana & N. W. R.	
v. McKissick	1240	v. Lopez	1606, 2527	Co. v. Phelps	2573
v. Martin	616, 2336	v. Rubert Bros.	2312	Louisiana Elections	2287
v. Morrison	987	v. State,		Louisiana R. & N. Co.	
v. Perine	2442	34 Tex.	2059	v. Morere	714
v. Pierce Co.	1062	85 Tex. Cr.	111	Louisiana State Lottery	
v. Powell	1676	v. Valdez	19	Co. v. Richoux	1350
v. R. Co.	1951	Lopez' Estate	2500	Louisville v. Caron	1164
v. Regen	736	Lopez Liso v. Tambunt-		v. Muldoon	1415
v. State,		ing	2518	Louisville & C. P. Co. v.	
86 Ala.	391, 2237, 2341	Loranger v. Jardine	1206	Samuels	1750
72 Ark.	246, 988	Lorch v. Page	1234	Louisville & N. R. Co.	
11 Fla.	1985	Lorchitsky v. Gotham		v. Alumbaugh	1044
Fla., 32 So.	2511a	Folding Box Co.	2509	v. Banks	1951
22 Ga.	2100	Lord v. Beard	934	v. Barker	1899
56 Ind.	2272	v. Bigelow,		v. Berry	791
95 Ind.	2354	124 Mass.	1063	v. Binion	1978
52 Miss.	238	8 Vt.	1257	v. Bizzell	987
10 Tex. App.	1751	v. Colvin	762	v. Bowen	283, 1951
Tex. Cr., 47		v. Ins. Co.	1777	v. Brewer	455
S. W.	351	v. Mobile	987	v. Brinckerhoff	2566
v. Steiger	778	v. Moore	1527, 1530, 2100	v. Brown,	
v. Sweeten	913	v. State,		56 Ala.	18
Long-Bell Co. v.		17 Nebr.	2239	127 Ky.	792
Thomas	1770	18 N. H.	1854	v. Burns	17
Long Bell L. Co. v. Ny-		v. Wood	1063	v. Carothers	1755
man	95	Lord's Will, In re	2106	v. Carter	805
Long Dock Co. v. State		Lord Electric Co. v.		v. Cassibry	747
Board	2358	Morrill	2155	v. Com.	2259c
Longabaugh v. R. Co.	455,	Loree v. Abner	2573	v. Daniel	1530
	456	Loree's Estate	1738, 2314	v. Ellis' Adm'r	1078
Longan v. Weltmer	18	Lorenz v. U. S.	1079	v. Fort	455, 456
Longenecker v. Hyde	1362,	Lorimer v. Lorimer	2311	v. Fox	438
	1455	Loring v. Boston Elev.		v. Frazee	1706
Longer v. Beakley	1736	R. Co.	795	v. Guttman	455
Longhead v. Collingwood		v. R. Co.	454	v. Hall	1626
Shipbuilding Co.	969	v. Steineman	2531	v. Henry	438
Longman v. Winchester	372	Lorto v. Kingston	21, 1075	v. Hill,	
Longmire v. State	396	Lorts v. Wash	1304	114 Ala.	460
Longstreth v. Korb	1194	Losee v. Losee	928, 1033,	115 Ala.	367, 949, 1078,
Lonsdale v. Curwen	1862		1505, 1514		2327, 2498
Lonsdale Grain Co. v.		Loshbaugh v. Birdsell	1960	v. Horton	1750
Neil	2195	Lossing v. Cushman	2442	v. Hurt	905
Lonzer v. R. Co.	2495	Lothrop v. Blake	1681	v. Jacobs	1587
Loofbourow v. Utah L. &		v. Clapp	2283	v. Johnson's Adm'x	2494
R. Co.	19	v. Roberts	2270	v. Jones	382
Look v. Mays	1275	Lo Toon v. Terr.	1819, 1873	v. Kelly	1698



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Louisville & N. R. Co.		Louisville N. A. & C. R.		Lowe v. Lehrman	2464
v. Kice	1706	Co. v. Lucas	663	v. Lowe	770, 778
v. M'Clish	1109	v. Miller	1719	v. State,	
v. Malone	21, 283, 456,	v. Patchen	1684	86 Ala.	1404
	2509	v. Pedigo	461	88 Ala.	857
v. Marbury L. Co.	2509	v. Richardson	928	97 Ga.	1135, 2115
v. Mayes	935	v. Shires	571, 675, 681,	125 Ga.	1328
v. Miller	21, 456		689, 1219, 2535	118 Wis.	569, 784, 1041
v. Milliken	1951	v. Snyder	688	v. Vaughn	1404
v. Molloy's Adm'r	1750	v. Spain	1951	v. Waller	2414
v. Morton	283	v. Wallace	463	Lowe Co. v. Ind. Com.	4a
v. O'Brien & Co.	2153	v. Wood	222, 675, 678,	Lowell v. Com'rs	463, 561
v. Payne	1808		682, 688, 1158,	Lowell Hardware Co. v.	
v. Pearson	1158		1168, 1974	May	1625
v. Perkins	1966	v. Wright	458, 461, 1062	Lowenfeld v. Curtis	2435
v. Quinn	15, 1007	Louisville R. Co. v.		Lowenstein v. Lombard	377
v. R. Co.	1955	Hartlege	2220	Lower v. Winters	1111
v. Ray	789	Louisville Water Co. v.		Lowery v. Com.	18, 851
v. Reagan	1951	Upton	1404, 1668	v. People	605, 2086
v. Rhoda	2509	v. Weis	451	v. State,	
v. Samuels	455	Loury v. Cady	2450	98 Ala.	1404
v. Sandlin	561, 571	Louviere v. Louisiana R.		72 Ga.	2060
v. Scalf	923, 1719, 1722	& N. Co.	2509	Lowman v. State,	
v. Scott's Adm'r	283,	Lovat Peerage Case	413	161 Ala.	276, 987, 988
	1164, 1698	Love v. Bentley	1661	109 Ga.	1951
v. Shaw	1750	v. Harbin	1651	Lowrance v. State	2089
v. Shikle	2577	v. Masoner	205, 210, 987	Lowrie v. Taylor	762
v. Short	456	v. Mt. Oddie U. M.		Lowry v. Cady	1664
v. Simpson	1755	Co.	1168	v. Coster	2083
v. Sinclair	1755	v. People	580	v. Downey	2442
v. Smith	1719, 1722	v. Peyton	1312	v. Harris	1245, 1651
v. Stewart,		Loveden v. Loveden	2081	v. M'Durmott	2110
Ala., 29 So.	571	Lovejoy v. Howe	658, 1201	v. Moss	1456
56 Fed.	1078	Lovelace v. State	260	v. Pinson	334, 1254
v. Stidham's Adm'r	282	Loveland, Re	2463	v. Saginaw	95
v. Sullivan	287	Lovell v. Briggs	334, 338	v. State	1476
v. Summers	376	v. Hammond Co.	1963	Lowry Nat'l Bank v.	
v. Tegner	949, 1951	v. State	398	Fickett	1074, 2159
v. U. S.	1557	Loveman Joseph & Loeb		Lowsit v. Seattle L. Co.	969
v. Varner	284, 1133	v. McQueen	1530	Loxley v. Studebaker	2442
v. Webb	1021	Loveridge v. Botham	1058	Loy v. Kennedy	2110
v. Willbanks	2433	Loverin & B. Co. v.		Loyd v. Freshfield	735, 753,
v. Wilson	1164	Bumgarner	289, 2153		754, 2286
v. York	1838	Loving v. Com.	1021	v. R. Co.	2220
Louisville & N. T. Co.		v. Warren Co.	2167	v. State	62
v. Jacobs	1626	Low v. Atwater	1300	Lozano v. Tan Suico	2442
Louisville B. & I. Co. v.		v. Burrows	1681	Luby v. Com.	1445
Hart	461	v. Hanson	2572	Lucas v. Brooks,	
Louisville Banking Co.		v. Mitchell	64, 987, 2276	23 La. An.	291
v. Asher	1073	v. Railroad,		19 Wall.	619
Louisville Bridge Co. v.		45 N. H.	1943, 1977	v. Com.	1434
R. Co.	1230	46 N. H.	1974	v. Evans	2256
Louisville Ins. Co. v.		v. State	1072	v. Flinn	953
Monarch	80, 1373, 1898	Low's Case	2364	v. McDonald	1938
Louisville J. C. Co. v.		Low Chin Woon v. U. S.	2256	v. Nichols	406
Lischkoff	716, 1003	Low Foon Yin v. U. S.	2256	v. Novosilieski	93
Louisville N. A. & C. R.		Lowber v. State	2100	v. Parsons	1062
Co. v. Buck	1757	Lowden v. Blakey	2294, 2297	v. State,	
v. Falvey	18, 675, 678,	Lowdon v. U. S.	290	96 Ala.	1404
	682, 684, 688,	Lowe v. Bliss	2132	23 Conn.	619, 620
	991, 992, 1974	v. Dorsett	2004	146 Ga.	821
v. Frawley	1108, 1109	v. Firkins	2307	v. U. S.	1461
v. Howell	1700	v. Jolliffe	528, 907, 1302,	v. Williams	1175, 1181
v. Jones	1977		1303, 1933, 2084	Luce v. Carley	1082

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Luce v. Ins. Co.	1947	Lunsford v. Smith	1215	Lynch v. Larivee Lumber	
v. Parsons	1576	Lupton v. Lupton	2465	Co.	1951
v. Tompkins	1606	v. Southern Express		v. Lively	1640
Lucero v. Vila's Heirs	1606, 2527	Co.	795	v. M'Hugo	1549
Luck v. State,		Luria v. U. S.	7, 1356	v. Meyersdale E. L.	
96 Ind.	1166	Luria Bros. & Co. v.		H. & P. Co.	458
Tex. Cr., 98 S. W.	1842	Klaflf	2465	v. Moore	660
Luckenbach v. Sciple	18, 770	Lurton v. Gilliam	1663, 1684	v. Ninemire P. Co.	2509
Lucker v. Liske	736	Luscombe v. Peterson	2408	v. O'Hara	1256, 2308, 2309
v. Phoenix Assurance		Lush v. Druse	719	v. Peabody	289
Co.	1859	v. McDaniel	132, 1722	v. Postlethwaite	1312
Lucker's Will	2051	Lusk v. Britton	1976	v. State	1555
Luckett v. Anderson	1247	v. State	1109	v. Troxell	718
Luckey v. Western U.		Luther v. Clay	2593	Lynch's Adm'r v.	
Tel. Co.	1730	v. Skeen	74, 988	Murray	1387
Luco v. U. S.	797	v. State	1041	r. Petrie	1549
Ludden & Bates S. M.		Luthy & Co. v. Paradis	2504	Lynde v. Judd	1212, 1279, 2307
H. v. Sumter	1873	Luttenton v. Detroit J.		v. McGregor	334
Ludlam's Will	1233, 1268, 2143	& C. R. Co.	1951, 1977	Lynds v. Plymouth	458, 1021
Ludtke v. Hertzog	1005, 1230	Lutterell v. Reynell	1123, 1364, 1406	Lynes v. Northern Pac.	
Ludwig v. Blackshere	1067	Luttrell v. State	280, 1106	R. Co.	1698, 2556
Lueck v. Heisler	1890	v. Whitehead	1502	Lynn v. Cumberland	1230
Lueders v. U. S.	341	Lycoming Co. M. I. Co.		v. Hockaday	2336
Luft v. Langanie	2354	v. Schreffler	1770	v. Lyerle	2312
Luhrs v. Kelly	960	Lycoming F. I. Co. v.		Lyon v. Assur. Co.	2153
Luick v. Arends	1730, 1890, 2340, 2341	Wright	1240, 2558	v. Chicago M. & St. P.	
Lujan v. State	580	Lydiard v. Chute	1676	R. Co.	2509
Luke v. Calhoun Co.	792, 794	Lyell v. Kennedy	1524, 1856a, 2301, 2319, 2322	v. Grand Rapids	252, 770, 1976
Lum v. Kelso	1275	Lyen v. Lyen	1409, 2240	r. Hancock	389, 390, 949
Luman v. Golden A. C.		Lyford v. Thurston	664, 1225, 1651, 1871	v. Lyman	728, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2016, 2026
M. Co.	1078, 1951	Lygon v. Stuart	2139	v. Lyon	1730, 2067
Lumbert v. Woodard	1254	Lyke v. Lehigh V. R. Co.	1129	v. McCadden	1672
Lumley's Case	1364, 2038	Lyle v. Ellwood	1602, 1603, 2083	v. Marriott	2124
Lumm v. Howells	1086	v. Richards	2556	v. Perry	1225, 1651, 1676a
Lumpkin v. State,		Lyles v. Brannon C. Co.	1502	v. Prouty	2336
68 Ala.	2059	v. Lyles	1126	v. R. Co.	2220
125 Ga.	1072	v. State,		v. Rhode Island Co.	1388
Lunay v. Vantyne	616	130 Ga.	1732, 1750	v. Ricker	1458, 1473
Lund v. Rice	1275, 1651	Tenn., 239 S. W.	1128	v. State	1476, 1477
v. Tyngsborough	1362, 1363, 1774, 1951	48 Tex. Cr.	1435	v. United Moderns	2434, 2496
Lunday v. Thomas	1213	v. U. S.	1135	v. U. S.	2580
Lundberg v. Interstate		Lyman v. Boston	463, 714, 718	v. Washburn	1195
Acc. Ass'n	7a	v. Cain	1195	Lyons v. Chicago City	
Lunde v. Cudahy Pack-		v. City	1985	R. Co.	1976
ing Co.	2509	v. Hilo Tribune P. Co.	987	v. Holmes	1513
v. Detroit United R.		v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. Marcher	1388
Co.	987	v. Kaul	1081, 1417, 1738, 1958	v. Red Wing	438
Lundean v. Hamilton	2416	v. Philadelphia	1614, 2529	v. Van Gorder	1219
Lundstrom v. State	2071	v. State	2575	v. Ward	1064
Lundy v. Lundy,		Lynch v. Benton	1871	Lytle v. Bank	377
Ariz., 202 Pac.	2046	v. Clements	1738	v. Bond	15
118 Ia.	1081	v. Clerke	1193, 1199, 1224, 1275, 2121, 1237	Lytton Mfg. Co. v.	
v. State	1976	v. Coffin	278, 281	House Lumber Co.	2435
Lung v. U. S.	2056	v. Cronin	1543		
Luning v. State,		v. Doran	1938	Mc, Mac, M'	
1 Chand.	681, 1693, 1976	v. Johnson	95, 2408	McAdam v. Spice Co.	1207
2 Pinn.	1693	v. Larivee	792	v. Walker	232
Lunniss v. Row	1258			McAdams v. McAdams	2415, 2503



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McAdams v. Stilwell	1373	McCague v. Miller	2336	McCleery v. Lewis	2143
McAdory v. State	273, 288, 391, 825, 1807	McCall v. Toxaway T. Co.	2416	v. McCleery	291
Macafee v. Higgins	1958	McCalman v. State	166	McClellan v. Dunlap	1225
McAfferty v. Hale	2185	McCamant v. Roberts	1668	v. F. W. & B. I. R. Co.	1041
McAleer v. Horsey	1126, 1127, 1131	McCampbell v. Mc- Campbell	987, 2067	v. R. Co.	1021
v. McMurray	41	McCandless v. Com.	792, 1750	v. State	691, 1839
v. People's Bank	253	v. McWha	235, 1960	McClellan's Estate, 20 S. D.	797, 2008
McAlister v. Henkel	2200, 2259a, 2259b, 2270	v. State	2079	21 S. D.	1129
v. State	987	McCann v. Beach	1195, 1709	McClelland v. Bullis	21, 2498
McAllin v. McAllin	1873	v. Gould	1230	M'Clelland v. Lindsay	1066
McAllister v. McAllister	2016, 2017	v. People	2100	McClelland v. State	347, 1835
v. Mfg. Co.	1681	v. State,		McClenahan v. Keyes	18
v. People	1186	20 Ariz.	19, 952	McCleneghan v. Reid	1867
v. Rowland	233, 1671	13 Sm. & M.	2100	McClenkan v. McMillan	1072
v. State,		v. Ullman	569	McCleod v. Bishop	1778
17 Ala.	1938	McCants v. Thompson	1560	McCleskey v. Leadbetter	21, 1257, 1367, 1391
112 Wis.	357	McCarragher v. Rogers	451		2139, 2141
M'Almont v. M'Clelland	406	McCarriek v. Kealy	1750	McClintock v. Curd	1389
McAlpin v. Ryan	2218, 2520	McCarthy v. Boston		v. Frohlich	20
Macalpine v. Calder	1862	v. Curry	451	M'Clory v. Wright	2056, 2058, 2059
v. Fidelity & C. Co.	2510	v. Duck Co.	675, 1951	McClung v. McPherson	2132, 2520
v. State	860, 952, 969, 1985	v. Meany	748	McClure v. Hoopeston	
McAnally v. State	396	v. Peach	669	G. & E. Co.	2509
McAnany v. Henrici	1976	v. R. Co.	1951	v. Middletown Trust	
McArdle v. Bullock	2103	v. Security T. & S. Bank	2408	Co.	1576
v. McArdle	987	v. Whitcomb	1807	v. Redman	2048
McArthur v. Morrison	2146	McCarthy's Adm'r v. Northfield	1963	v. State Banking Co.	64
v. Sears	907	McCartney v. McCartney	2406	M'Clure v. Tennessee	1817
v. State	2216	v. State	309, 318	McClurg v. Brenton	177
McAteer v. McMullen	1028	Macarty v. Bond	2268	v. Terry	2414
McAulay v. Earnhart	1198	McCarty v. Kepreta	1075, 2590	McCoggle v. State	1899
Macaulay v. Shackell	1380, 1862, 2257	v. Leary	96, 1106	McCollister v. Yard	1225
McBean v. State	2349	v. People	194	McColloh v. State	851
McBee v. Bowman	64	v. Weatherly	1417	McCollum v. Bough- ton	2444
McBeth v. McBeth	271, 1736	McCarver v. Herzberg	2578	v. Seward	681, 683
McBlain v. Edgar	1051	McCaskill v. Elliot	251	v. Southern P. R. Co.	1213, 2432
McBrayer v. Walker	1297, 2116	McCauley v. Imperial Woolen Co.	4c	v. State	667
McBride v. Bryan	529	McCaull-Dinsmore Co. v. Stevens	2435	McComas v. Haas	1195
v. Com.	149, 1726	McCausland v. Ralston	736	v. Wiley	2532
v. Georgia R. & E. Co.	1062, 1133, 1750	M'Caw v. Blewit	2123	McComb v. Chandler	2355
v. McBride	1938	McCaw v. Turner	2384, 2391	v. Dillo	607
Macbride v. Macbride	986	McChesney v. Chicago	2463	v. Farrow	1938
McBride v. Macon T. P. Co.	1392	v. Cook Co. Collector	1248	v. Ins. Co.	1878, 1880
v. State	1108	McChesney's Will	291, 2523	v. State	62, 200, 398, 1138, 2020
v. Thompson	1778	McClain v. Com.	839	McConeghy v. Kirk	2529
v. U. S.	1890	v. Esham	702	McConnel v. Johnson	1651
v. Wallace	774	M'Clain v. Gregg	1299	v. Reed	1273
v. Watts	1073	McClain v. Marietta Torpedo Co.	451	McConnell v. Bowdry	1065
McCabe, Re	1807, 1938	v. R. Co.	663	v. Brown	1911
v. Com.	499	v. State	1977	v. Hannah	1779
v. Platter	66, 73, 76	McClary v. State	1181	v. Keir	1417, 2500
v. State	1384	McClaskey v. Burr	1388	v. Lewis	439
v. Williams	2416	McCleane v. Hertzog	1205	v. Martin	613
McCabe's Will	288	Maclean v. Scripps	797	v. Osage	1908, 2386, 2389
McCaffrey v. Burkhardt	2445	McCleary v. State	499, 851	v. State,	
				67 Ga.	646
				77 Nebr.	2062

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McConnell v. State,		McCrary v. Pritchard	1944,	McDanel v. Logi	1869
Okl. Cr., 197 Pac.	2282		2439	McDaniel v. Baca	1021
v. Wildes	1081, 1938	McCraven, Re	4, 1246, 1938	v. State,	
McConnell's Ex'r v. Mc-		M'Craw v. Gentry	1303	53 Ga.	905
Connell	1081	McCraw v. McCraw	2530	100 Ga.	108
McConnells v. Ins. Co.	2498	McCray v. R. Co.	93, 1951	8 Okl. Cr.	106
McCooe v. R. Co.	1896,	v. State	967, 1339, 2196	M'Daniel's Will	1938
	2321, 2322	v. Stewart	2354	McDaniels v. State	2059
McCook v. McAdams	21,	McCray R. & C. S. Co.		McDeed v. McDeed	1271,
	1943	v. Woods	2434		1497, 1703
McCool v. Grand Rapids	458	McCrea v. Parsons	1890	McDermont v. Bateman	2310
M'Cord v. Johnson	1312	M'Crea v. Purmort	2432,	McDermott v. Barnum	1681
McCori v. McCord	2340		2433	v. Jackson	95, 770
v. Masonic Casualty		McCready v. Crane	21	v. McCormick	1512
Co.	1056	v. Sexton	1354	v. McDermott	2408
v. State	1126, 1128	McCrear v. State	2079	v. Mahoney,	
McCord-Collins M. Co.		McCreary v. Coggeshall	2017,	119 Ia.	581
v. Dodson	1213		2145	139 Ia.	1063
McCorkle v. Binns	2002,	v. Com.,		v. Mitchell	1066
	2016, 2024	158 Ky.	988	v. State	62, 200, 398, 1111
McCormack v. McBride	1225	163 Ky.	2060	McDermott's Estate	995
McCormick v. Cleal	763	M'Creary v. Grundy	75, 986	McDevitt v. Deacon	1681
v. Detroit G. H. &		McCreary v. Hood	1203	McDevitt's Estate	1738
M. R. Co.	1721, 1974	v. Turk	18, 1951	McDill v. McDill	1676
v. Evans	1651	McCrohan v. Davison	1963	McDole v. Thurm	2463
v. Grundy Co.	1195	McCrary v. State	2059	McDonald v. Anderson	2573
v. Holbrook	1878	McCue v. Com.	905	v. Ashland	569
v. Huse	2465	v. State	1109	v. Bowman	1086
v. Irwin	1378	McCullars v. Jackson-		v. Brown	1389
v. Joseph	1966	ville O. M. Co.	1104	v. Carnes	1521, 1530
v. R. Co.	736, 749, 754,	McCullen v. C. & N. W.		M'Donald v. Carson	907
	759, 760	R. Co.	2509	McDonald v. City El. R.	
v. State,		McCulloch v. McCulloch	2067	Co.	1975
141 Ala.	153	v. Ins. Co.	1021	v. Com.	2277
135 Tenn.	2245, 2334,	v. Judd	1073	v. Conniff	1356
	2336	v. State,		v. Cutter	1388
McCormick Co. v.		11 Ind.	1350	v. Duluth	1951
Faulkner	2409	48 Ind.	2081	v. Erbes	1213
v. Seeman	1013	35 Tex. Cr.	2349	Macdonald v. Fitzgerald	2504
McCormick H. M. Co.		McCulloch v. Needham	2510	McDonald v. Franchere	1974
v. Davis	715	McCullough v. Davis	1267	v. Gilbert	2153
v. Gray,		v. Dobson	1032	v. Jacobs	658, 1898
100 Ind.	451	M'Cullough v. Munn	797	Macdonald v. Long-	
114 Ind.	1195	v. R. Co.,		bottom	2465
v. Hiatt	581	101 Mich.	1976	McDonald v. Louthen	68, 73
McCormicks v. Fuller	1085,	186 Fa.	1085	v. McDonald,	
	1086	McCullough Bros.		142 Ind.	675, 944,
M'Corquodale v. Bell	2319	v. Sawtell	1076		1736, 2008, 2015,
McCorquodale v. State	1033	Maccullum v. Turton	2260		2303, 2310, 2322
McCourry v. Suydam	2520	M'Cully v. Barr	1388	67 Mich.	1021
McCoy v. Curtice	2535	McCully v. McArthur	2408	M'Donald v. M'Donald	1313
v. Jordan	233, 1938, 2355	v. Malcom	1339, 1664, 2110	McDonald v. McDonald,	
v. Julien	20	v. State	1671	33 Can. Sup.	2065
v. People	18	McCune v. Goodwillie	586	38 N. Sc.	1651
v. Rhodes	2123	v. Reynolds	1081, 1738	Macdonald v. Mac-	
v. U. S.,		McCurdy v. Neall	1511	donald	1710
247 Fed.	6, 524	M'Curley v. National		McDonald v. McDougall	2143
6 Ind. Terr.	987, 2277,	Savings & Trust Co.	20	v. McKinnon	2065
	2350	McCurry v. Hooper	689, 1938	MacDonald v. Metro-	
v. Watson	1871	McCurtain v. Grady	1082	politan St. R. Co.	1700
v. World's Columbian		McCutchen v. Loggins	923	McDonald v. Moore	1878
Exposition	2575	McCutchen's Adm'rs v.		v. Murray	1213, 2593
McCracken v. West	1731	McCutchen	923,	v. N. Y. C. & H. R. R.	
McCraney v. Glos	1652, 1684		1404, 1985	Co.	664, 1018



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McDonald v. People	1807	McElroy v. State	140	McGarry v. State	414
v. Pless	6, 2353, 2354	McElven v. State	2354	McGary v. McDermott	2047, 2433
Macdonald v. Putman	2294	M'Elveney v. Connellan	2378	McGean v. R. Co.	463, 1943
McDonald v. R. Co.	1698	McElwain v. Com.	2273	McGeary v. Brown	1859
v. Rhode Island Co.	682	M'Elwee v. Sutton	334, 1033, 1511	v. R. Co.	1976
v. Savoy	65	McEntire v. Levi C. M. Co.	1078	McGee v. Allison	2525
v. Smith,		McEwan v. Bigelow	561	v. Baumgartner	207, 905
139 Mich.	289, 290, 1389, 1893	v. Milne	2503	v. State	351
2 Shepl.	1878	v. Springfield	1108	McGeehan v. Hughes	461
v. Stark	1195	McEwen v. New York Life Ins. Co.	745	McGehee v. Hansell	1911
v. State,		v. State	1442, 2512	v. State	142, 821
118 Ala.	770	McFadden v. Ellmaker	1082, 1257	v. Wilkins	1664
165 Ala.	141, 177	v. Fritz	1267	McGennis v. Allison	1311, 1313, 2138, 2141
56 Fla.	2513	v. McFadden	2450	McGhee v. Wells	581, 851
89 Tenn.	784	M'Fadden v. Murdock	379, 1923, 1976	McGibbons v. McGibbons	1958
80 Wis.	1350	McFadden v. Mitchell	1890	McGill v. Rowand	612
Macdonald v. U. S.	341	v. R. Co.	1890		716, 1943
McDonald v. Wood	571	McFaddin v. Preston	1651	McGillioray v. Great Northern R. Co.	2509
v. Yellow Taxicab Co.	1021, 2034	McFadin v. Catron,		McGilora v. Minneapolis St. P. S. S. M. R. Co.	693, 716
McDonel v. State	988, 1157, 2221	120 Mo.	2337	McGinn v. Platt	455
McDonnall v. People	246	138 Mo.	2502	McGuinness v. School District	1210
Macdonnell v. Evans	1179, 1244, 1258, 1259, 1260, 1270	McFadzen v. Liverpool	2268	McGinnis v. Com.	1671
McDonogh's Succession	2008, 2016	McFalls v. State	2060	v. Grant	959
McDonough, Ex parte	2313	McFarlan v. Rolt	2319	v. State,	
v. Boston El. R. Co.	1078, 2053	McFarland v. Accid. Ass'n	1415	31 Ga.	784
v. O'Neil	289	v. American Sugar Ref. Co.	1356	24 Ind.	1205
McDonough's Estate	1292	v. Bishop	1739	4 Wyo.	580
McDougal v. State,		v. Brown	2503	McGinniss v. Sawyer	1278
79 Tex. Cr.	1890	v. Dey	1709	v. U. S.	2056
81 Tex. Cr.	1041	v. Lewis	1777	McGinty v. Brotherhood	1082, 2382, 2385a
McDougald v. Lane	1911	v. People	2061	McGivern v. Steele	1387, 1576, 2098
v. McLean	689, 1938	v. Pico	1240, 1680	McGlasson v. State	2018
McDougall & Secord v. Merchants' Bank	1856a	v. Shaw	1432, 1436	M'Glemery v. Keller	406, 1010
McDowell v. Edward's Adm'r	2503	McFarlane v. Loudon	2520	McGlothlin v. State	855, 858
M'Dowell v. Hall	1205, 1312	v. Martin	1842	McGoldrick v. Traphagen	1538, 1552, 1558
v. Ins. Co.	95, 1208	v. R.	618	McGonigle v. Kane	1951
McDowell v. McDowell's Est.	610, 1466	MacFeat v. Phila. W. & B. R. Co.	18, 792	McGorray v. Sutter	2271
M'Dowell v. Preston	235, 934	MacFerson v. Thoytes	1994, 2002	McGough v. Wellington	1779
v. Rissell	1086	McGahan v. Crawford	815	McGovern v. Brotherhood	7a
McDuffee v. State	290, 2511, 2512	M'Gahey v. Alston	1195, 2535	v. Hope	2220
McDuffee's Adm'r v. Boston & M. R. Co.	290	McGar v. Adams	289	v. Smith,	
McDuffie v. Greenway	603	v. Bristol	792, 794, 1168	73 Vt.	283, 905
v. State	951	v. Worsted Mills	461	Vt., 53 Atl.	794, 987, 1270, 1404
McElhaney v. Jones	2503	M'Garahan v. Maguire	1260	McGowan v. Armour	1730, 2130
McElhannon v. State	141, 1391	McGarr v. Lloyd	2165	v. Davenport	1077
McElheny v. Bridge Co.	714	v. National & P. W. Mills	283	v. McDonald	748, 1074, 1078
McElmurray v. Turner	1072	McGarrah v. State	821	v. McLaughlin	1513
McElrath v. Haley	1062	McGarrahan v. R. Co.	2570	v. R. Co.	1873
McElree v. Darlington	2259b	McGarrity v. Byington	728, 1239	v. Supreme Court	266, 1081, 2384
McElroy v. Phink	68, 1736, 2523	v. R. Co.	18, 252		
		McGarry v. Healey	2026		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McGrath v. Cox	1234, 1237	M'Intyre v. Modern		MacKenzie v. Mackenzie	2298
M'Grath v. Isaacs	2120	Woodmen	681, 1978	McKenzie v. State,	
McGrath v. Peterson	2416	McIntyre v. People	2195	24 Ark.	580
v. Seagrave	2450	v. R. Co.	2098	32 Tex. Cr.	1079
McGregor v. Keiller	1524	v. White	15	Mackenzie v. Yeo	2048,
v. McArthur	74, 75	v. Young	406, 1021, 1028	2309, 2315, 2319, 2327	
v. Montgomery	1213	McIsaac v. Lighting Co.	1960	McKenzie's Case	2378
v. Wait	1204, 1297	Melver v. Clay	1651	McKeon v. R. Co.	681
McGrew v. Byrd	1239	M'Iver v. Humble	1647	v. Van Slyck	2065
v. State	2079	v. Robertson	1225, 1651	McKeone v. Barnes	2020
McGruder v. State	916	McKaig v. Appleton	1911	v. People	2277
McGuerty v. Hale	283, 1951, 1984	M'Kain v. Love	2346, 2354, 2570	McKeown v. Harvey	772, 1195
McGuff v. State	505, 506, 1159, 1821, 1841, 2194, 2216, 2220	McKane v. Howard	64, 77, 207	McKergow v. Comstock	1856b
McGuire v. Blount	2139, 2145	McKarren v. Boston & N. St. R. Co.	794	McKern v. Calvert	64, 75, 1021
v. Chicago & A. R. Co.	2382	Mackay v. Easton	1783	McKesson v. Sherman	987, 1270
v. Clark	2408	McKay v. Drysdale	2510a	McKevitt v. People	276, 987, 1270
v. Kenefick	928	v. Johnson	65, 1951	M'Kewan v. Thornton	1005
v. Kouns	2110	v. Lasher	706, 791, 797, 2020	McKie, Ex parte	1725, 2421
v. McGuire	2065	v. McKay	2526	v. Collinson	2473
v. Moloney	2237, 2336, 2341	v. Myers	95	McKillop v. R. Co.	1974
v. Norfolk & W. R. Co.	914	McKay's Will	64, 1076	McKim v. Foley	290
v. People	506, 1820	McKee, Ex parte	2210	McKinder v. Littlejohn	1321
v. Sayward	1678	v. Bidwell	283	McKinley v. Bank	2355
v. State	1168	M'Kee v. Gilchrist	1086	v. Irvine	1316
McHenry v. Parkersburg	1640	McKee v. Higbee	2097, 2498	McKinney v. Carmack	111, 1329
McHenry v. U. S.	390, 2591	v. Jones	1028, 1124, 1126, 1129	v. State,	
McHugh v. Brown	2130	M'Kee v. Nelson	1963	80 Tex.	1442
v. McHugh	278	v. People	2232	Okl. Cr., 201	
M'Hugh v. M'Hugh	2463, 2477	McKee v. State	1977	Pac.	2059
McHugh v. St. Louis T. Co.	1719	v. White	1511, 1512	McKinnon v. Bliss	1573, 1582, 1587, 1591, 1598, 1662
v. State	943, 948, 1022, 1441, 1445	McKeen v. Bank	1521	v. Collins	7, 1028, 1117, 1646, 2534
v. Terr.	248, 396	v. Delaney	1651	v. Lively	987
Mellvain v. State	282, 1029	McKeigue v. Janesville	1698, 1722	v. Norcross	1756
M'Ilvoy v. Kennedy	1249	McKellar v. Harkins	1606	McKinnon Carrie & Co.	
McInerney v. U. S.	1633a	McKemey v. Ketchum	2408	v. Caulk	1777
1641, 1672, 2529		M'Kenire v. Fraser	1311, 2138, 2145	McKinstry v. Clark	1225
McInerny v. Irvin	923	McKenna v. Chicago City R. Co.	19	v. Collins	286, 682, 1646
McInnis v. Watson	2455	v. Gas Co.	1698	v. Tuscaloosa	492
McIntarff v. Ins. Co.	2498	v. McMichael	1189, 2048	McKivitt v. Cone	736, 753, 762
McIntire v. Funk	1188, 1195, 1299, 1651	McKenna's Estate	689, 1738, 2500	McKnight v. Detroit & M. R. R. Co.	2216
McIntire v. Levering	258	McKenney v. Dingley	321	v. Newell	1549
McIntosh v. Lee	2581	v. Neil	1028, 1031	v. Oregon S. L. R. Co.	2536
v. State,		v. People	1852	v. Parsons	2420
151 Ind.	2497	v. R. Co.	2389	v. U. S.,	
Tex. Cr., 239		v. State	861	97 Fed.	290, 951, 953
S. W.	987	McKennon v. Cotner	1350	115 Fed.	2268, 2495
v. Wales	258	McKenzie v. Banks	1003, 2385	130 Fed.	1779, 2272
McInturff v. Insurance Co.	1387	v. Beaumont	1676	MacKnight v. U. S.	321, 907, 987, 1005, 2264
M'Intyre v. Layward	1389	Mackenzie v. Coulson	2416, 2417	M'Knight v. U. S.	1205, 1890
McIntyre v. McIntyre	2408	McKenzie v. Gordon	564	McKonkey v. Gaylord	707
M'Intyre v. Mancius	2268	v. Lautenschlager	1730, 2336	McKormick v. West Bay City	1721
McIntyre v. Meldrim	2337			McKown v. Hunter	581
v. Mining Co.	291				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McLain v. Allen	1490	McMahon v. Chicago		McMurrin v. Rigby	460,
v. Com.,		City R. Co.	949	1136, 1138, 1719, 1761	
171 Ky.	1983, 2336	v. Davidson	1246, 1391	McMurtry v. Frank	1288,
99 Pa.	662, 1374, 1406	v. Dubuque	1978	1299	
v. Healy	2408	v. Harrison	203	McNail v. Ziegler	614
v. Winchester	1209, 1681	v. McHale	461, 664	McNair v. Com.	694, 2007,
McLamb v. R. Co.	715	v. Matthews	18, 1062	2008	
McLanahan v. Black-		MacMahon v. Railway		v. Stewart	1951
well	1660, 1680	P. Ass. Co.	1859d	McNally, Inc. v. Chapin	805
M'Lanahan v. Ins. Co.	21,	v. Rowley	1705	McNamara v. Boston	
	1947	M'Mahon v. Spangler	1075,	Elev. R. Co.	2416, 2509
McLanathan v. Patten	1083		1389	v. Coughlin	1292
McLane v. State	1407	McMahon v. State	2089	v. People	2512
McLaren v. Birdsong	463	v. Waterworks Co.	782	v. State	1375, 1398, 1405
v. Gillespie	1911	McMakin v. Weston	1212	McNamara's Estate	1725,
McLaughlin v. Cowley	209	M'Managil v. Ross	1141	2063, 2527	
v. Joy	1417	M'Mannus v. State	2298,	M'Namee v. Hunt	2556
v. Los Angeles R. Co.	901,		2303	McNamee v. U. S.	2166
	1029	McManus v. Com.	390	McNaughton v. Smith	19
v. Mencke	987, 1270	v. Commow	1195, 1290	McNeal v. R. Co.	1890
v. Sovereign Camp	7a, 2531	v. Finan	1878	M'Neale v. Clarke	2168
McLean v. Canadian		v. Mason	1873	McNealley v. State	2056,
Pacific R. Co.	1856a	v. Nichols-Chisholm		2059	
v. Clark,		L. Co.	1048	McNeely v. Duff	758
31 Fed.	908	v. State	396	v. McNeely	2527
47 Ga.	1014, 2304	v. Wells	1086	v. Pearson	1267, 2106,
v. Lewiston	770	McMaster v. Ins. Co.	260	2110	
v. McDonell	1219	v. Morse	2575	v. Rucker	1195, 1347, 1651
v. Merchants' Bank	762	v. Scriven	2315	McNeil v. Cullen	2444
v. Paine	1898	v. State	833, 855	v. Holbrook	6
v. People	2349	v. Stewart	1257	v. Middlesex & B. St.	
v. State	233, 568, 1434,	McMaster's Trial	2298	R. Co.	1856c
	1442, 1445, 1448,	McMasters v. State,		M'Neil v. Perchard	1279
	1839, 2115	81 Miss.	987	McNeill v. Arnold,	
v. Webster	1225	Miss., 35 So.	852, 2098	17 Ark.	1225, 1271,
McLean Co. Coal Co. v.		McMath v. State	961, 1761,	1651, 1676a	
Bloomington	2465		1821	22 Ark.	1623
McLean Medicine Co.		McMechen v. Mc-		v. Elam	1530
v. U. S.	256, 1975	Mechen	681, 1738	v. Stitt	2498
McLear v. Hunsicker	2124	McMichael v. State	2243	v. State	1890
McLeary v. Normont	1938	McMicken v. Ontario		McNerney v. Reading	904,
McLellan v. Longfellow	2298	Bank	2437	1955	
v. Richardson	2363	McMillan v. Aiken	1074,	McNichols v. Wilson	1225,
McLellan's Estate	2502		1573, 2529	1873	
McLenon v. R. Co.	1206	v. Atlanta & C. Air		M'Night v. Biesecker	1770
McLeod v. Atlantic		Line R. Co.	283	McNish v. State	851, 852
C. L. R. Co.	2509	v. Baxley	1206, 1254	McNutt v. McNutt,	1195,
v. Bullard	1126, 1127,	v. Berthold	1195	1877	
	1133, 2008	v. Bissell	2437	v. State	499
v. Crosby	2158	v. Davis	1621	v. U. S.	203
v. Ginther's Adm'r	1747	v. Larned	1313	M'Nutt v. Young	71, 73
v. Lee	1873, 1876	v. Lovejoy	2110	McPeake v. Hutchinson	1133
v. Miller & Lux	18, 1943,	v. State	1841	McPeck v. Tel. Co.	1219
	1976	McMillen v. Andrews	1909	McPeters v. Ray	715
v. Rogers	1225, 1318	v. Ferrum M. Co.	1163	McPhail v. State	1781
v. State	398	v. State	111	McPhelemy v. McPhel-	
Macleod v. Wakley	406	McMinn v. O'Connor	1225,	emy	1244
McLeod's Estate	2106		1226, 1312, 1320,	McPherrin v. Jennings	142,
McLeroy v. State	1079		1321, 1651	461	
Maclin v. Wilson	2205	v. Whelan	1312, 1320,	v. Jones	1013
McLoughlin v. Bank	377		1321	McPherson v. R. Co.	571
M'Lughan v. Bovard	1066	M'Morine v. Storey	1387	v. Rathbone	1208, 2307
McMahan v. McGrady	1314	M'Mullen v. Brown	1225	M'Pherson v. Rathbone	1321,
M'Mahon v. Burchell	1856	McMunn v. State	1404	1513, 1624	

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
McPherson v. Rockwell	770	Macale v. Lynch	596	Madson v. Rutter	17
v. Ryan	1770	Macchi v. Portland R.		Madunkeunk D. & I.	
v. State	247	L. & P. Co.	1963, 1977	Co. v. Allen C. Co.	1530
M'Pherson v. State	1033	Macclesfield v. Davis	1862,	Mageau v. Great North-	
McQuade v. Hatch	2088		2221	ern R. Co.	2391
McQuagge v. State	21	Mace v. Cadell	2086	Magee v. Magee	2056
McQuaid v. Prudential		v. Reed	933	v. Maignel	1083
Trust Co.	1404	Macey v. Titcombe	2572	v. Mark	2058
MacQueen v. Anderson	2498	Mach v. Darley	2061	v. Paul	1573, 1960
McQueen v. Farrow	1681	Machan v. De La Trini-		v. R.	2329
v. Fletcher	1195	dad	1560, 2444	v. Sanderson	1684
v. State	1440	Machette v. Wanless	2297	v. Scott,	
v. Wilson	2503	Mack v. Handy	2067, 2069	9 Cush.	2515
McQuigan v. R. Co.	2220	v. Porter	1725	32 Pa.	1681
McQuiggan v. Ladd	198, 248	v. R. Co.	199	v. State	2265
McQuillan v. El. Light		v. Sharp	2303	Maggi v. Cutts	68a, 201
Co.	969	v. State,		Magill v. Kauffman	1404
McQuirk v. State	62, 200,	54 Fla.	660	Magnay v. Knight	2447
	398	48 Wis.	390, 527, 1010	Magness v. Modern	
McRae v. Erickson	2382,	Macke v. Wagener	15, 18, 21,	Woodmen	2531
	2383		1065	v. State	950
v. Lilly	64	Mackel v. Bartlett	2311	v. Walker	619, 2232
v. Malloy	1738, 1938	v. Rochester	2283	Magnolia M. Co. v. Gale	18
v. Morrison	728	Mackey v. Irwin	1061	Magon v. U. S.	1967
McReynolds v. McCord	291,	Mackin v. People	2042, 2252	Magouirk v. Tel. Co.	1974
	2132	Mackrall v. R. Co.	1807	Maguire, Ex parte	2271
v. Smith	228	Macobs v. Queen Ins. Co.	1085	v. People	1013
McRorie v. Monroe	1330,	Macomber v. Scott	709, 2008,	v. R. Co.	199
	1976		2016	v. Seaboard A. L. R.	
McSein v. State	2086	Macon v. Humphries	20, 2219	Co.	2509
McShane v. McShane	2046	Macon & W. R. Co. v.		Mahaffey v. Byers	2554
McSwane v. Foreman	2204	Johnson	658	Mahan v. Daggett	461
McSweeney v. Edison		Macon D. & S. R. Co. v.		Mahanke v. Cleland	987,
El. I. Co.	1576	Moore	1698		2271, 2279
McSwyny v. R. Co.	2220	Macon R. & L. Co. v.		Mahany v. Kansas C. R.	
McTaggart v. Thompson	233	Mason	290, 569, 2337	Co.	1976
McTague v. Finnegan	2442	Maculuso v. Humboldt		Mahar v. Montello G.	
McTavish v. R. Co.	2509	Fire Ins. Co.	1073	Co.	916
McTeers v. Perkins	391	Macy v. Goodwin	1225	Maharajah Nundoco-	
McTyier v. State	2354	Madalina, Ex parte	2527	mar's Trial	2378
Macubbin v. Lowell	2016	Madden v. Burris	1290	Mahaska Co. v. Ingalls	1456,
McVay v. State	1976	v. Farmer	1911		1464, 1467,
McVey v. R. Co.	571	v. Koester	987		1471, 1474
v. State,		v. State	907, 967	Maher v. People	390, 2079
55 Nebr.	276	Maddison v. Alderson	2065,	Mahlstedt v. Ideal	
57 Nebr.	1853, 2511		2454	Lighting Co.	1978, 2336,
McVicar v. Ind. Com.	4a	Maddox v. Maddox	229, 230,		2337
McVicker v. Conkle	1291,		2500	Mahomed Syedol Ariffin	
	1320, 1513,	v. State	1732, 2595	v. Yeob Ooi Gark	1504
	2016, 2020	Maden v. Catanach	1820,	Mahon v. Rankin	1058, 2115
McWhorter v. State	1842		1828, 2213	v. State	2016
v. Tyson	1548, 2441	v. Taylor	2528	Mahoney v. Hardware	
McWilliams v. Dickson		v. Veevers	2319	Co.	1067
Co.	1856a	Madison v. Guilford	1784	v. Hartford Inv. Co.	1555,
v. Reith	95	v. Nuttall	1082		1558
v. Robertson	1347	v. Zabriskie	1513	v. Macdonnell	1842
		Madison D. & P. R. Co.		v. Salsbury	2410
		v. Whitesel	1223	Mahurin v. Bickford	1681
		Madison I. & P. R. Co.		Maier v. Benefit Ass'n	1873
		v. Whitesel	1268	v. Brock	2506
		Madox v. Dawson	2355	Maillet v. People	1135, 1136
		Madre v. Gaskins	2503	Mailman's Case	4c
		Madsen v. Utah L. & R.		Main v. Aukam,	
		Co.	2383	4 D. C. App. 5	1200



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Main v. Aukam,		Maloney v. Winston		Mann v. Maxwell	1141
12 D. C. App.	1684	Bros. Co.	2536	Mann B. C. Co. v. Dupre	2432
v. McCarty	259	Maloy v. State	923, 1985	Manners v. Postan	1288,
v. Newson	585	Malton v. Nesbit	1949		1291
v. Radney	18, 2415	Malynak v. State	672, 681	Manney v. Crowell	1273
Maine v. Harper	1539	Man v. Ricketts	2138	Manning v. Carberry	1018
v. Maryland Casualty		r. Ward	529, 580	v. Chicago Gt. West-	
Co.	1722, 2380,	Manahan v. Aumiller	2437	ern R. Co.	2509
	2388, 2391	v. Halloran	1974	v. Fifth Parish	2451
Mair v. Culy	900, 916	Manatt v. Scott	228, 229,	v. Hogan	1681
Maisel v. Financial			682, 1938	v. Ins. Co.	41
Times	207	Manby v. Curtis	1311, 1456,	v. Lechmere	1476
Maitland v. Bank	1127, 1132,		1472, 1476	v. Lowell	714, 992,
	1362	Mance v. Hossington	377		1060, 1640
v. Goldney	2097	Manchester v. Man-		v. Mercantile S. Co.	2259b,
v. Paper Co.	1976	chester	619		2264, 2271
v. Zanga	1909	Manchester Assur. Co.		v. R. Co.,	
Majestic, The	2508	v. Oregon R. & N.		166 Mass.	2570
Major v. Barker	2214	Co.	749, 1530, 1532	173 Mass.	463
v. Collins	2218	Manchester F. A. Co. v.		v. School District	736, 754
v. State	2166, 2576	Feibelman	1966	v. State	1186
Majors v. State,		Manda v. Orange	463	v. Wheatland	529
29 Ark.	923, 1985	Manda, Inc. v. Delaware		Manning's Case	575
Miss., 35 So.	1960	L. & W. R. Co.	463, 561	Manogue v. Herrell	1738
Makainai v. Goo Wan		Mandel v. Swan	1223	Mansbach's Estate	2384,
Hoy	2184	Manderschid v. Dubuque	283		2391, 2500
Makekau v. Kane	1481, 1778	Mandery v. Mississippi		Mansell v. Clements	1921,
Maki v. State	852	& R. R. B. Co.	1943		1967
Makin v. Att'y-Gen'l of		Mandeville v. Reynolds	736,	Manser v. Dix	2294
N. S. Wales	363		747, 1257,	Mansfield v. Gushee	1356,
Malachi v. State	2059		1348, 2107, 2450		1540, 1544,
Malaney v. Cameron	2520	v. Stockett	2110		1549, 1555
Malcolm v. Scott	1856	Mandler v. Starks	2442	v. Johnson	1275, 1681
Malcom Sav. Bank v.		Mandosa v. State	1878	Mansfield's Case	2250
Cronin	5, 803	Mangold v. Oft	1842	Mansfield C. & C. Co.	
Malcomson v. O'Dea	157,	Manhattan L. Ins. Co.		v. McEnery	458
	1065	v. Albro	6, 2452	Manson v. Wilcox	2195
Maldaner v. Smith	2525	v. Beard	2341	Manss-Owens Co. v.	
Male v. Roberts	1271	Manhattan M. Co. v.		Owens & Son	2429
Maley v. Pennsylvania		Sweteland	1225	Mantel v. R. Co.	1951
R. Co.	2531	Manigault v. Hampton	1306,	Mantonya v. Reilly	1011
Mallery v. Young	1738		1313	Manufacturers' Furn.	
Malley Co. v. Button	321	Manila v. Cabangis	792	Co. v. Kremer	2410
Mallinger v. Sarbach	744	v. Del Rosario	1062, 1085,	Manufacturers' Life Ins.	
Mallonee v. Duff	1126, 1127		2515	Co. v. Brennan	2385
Mallory v. Aspinwall	2141	Manion's Succession	2054	Manufacturing A. I. Co.	
v. Walton	2498	Manistee N. Bank v.		v. Dorgan	681
Mallow v. Walker	2502	Seymour	1062	Manufacturing Co. v.	
Malone v. Adams	1491	Manix v. Malony	2354	Platt	762
v. Alderdice	1347, 1352	Mankato v. Meagher	1651	Many v. Jagger	1085
v. Bell	1641	v. Olger	2282	Manziano v. Public Ser-	
v. Dougherty	1890	Mankato Mills Co. v.		vice Gas Co.	2509
v. Hawley	252	Willard	21	Maples v. Haggard	1665
v. La Croix	2580	Manley v. Minneapolis		v. State	855
v. L'Estrange	1527, 1644	Paint Co.	282	Marable v. State	1128
v. R. Co.	1848	v. Patterson	2531	Marande v. R. Co.	285, 1750
v. State,		v. Shaw	1800, 1910	Marble v. Marble	68
72 Fla.	1434	Manly v. Greenwood	289	Marbury v. Madison	2371,
176 Ind.	247, 1079	Mann v. Balfour	582, 1736		2378
v. Stephenson	987	v. Bulgin	2220	March v. Com.	2578
Maloney v. Bartlett	2257	v. Cavanaugh	1491	v. Davidson	2257
v. King	1164, 1873	v. Com.	2059	v. Harrell	1109, 1125,
v. Purden	1256	v. Forein	2132		1126, 1127, 1131
v. United Railways Co.	1976	v. Mann	2463	v. Ludlum	2294

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
March v. P. & C. R. Co.	463	Marler v. State,		Marsh v. Riley	2279
Marchall's Estate,		67 Ala.	1408, 2059	v. Sheridan	1056
126 Cal.	696	68 Ala.	390, 2059	v. State,	
121 Wis.	2534	Marley v. State	150	49 Ala.	1974
Marely v. Shults	736, 738,	Marlow v. Marlow	1195	5 Tex. App.	1871
	749, 754, 760	v. State	398	78 Tex. Cr.	1807
Marcom v. Adams	64, 988,	Marmer v. State	2060	82 Tex. Cr.	1270
	2433	Marmet Co. v. Archibald	2463	v. Terr.	205
Marcott v. R. Co.	664, 1951	Marple v. Jackson	2235	v. U. S.,	
Marcus v. Gimbel Bros.	1078	Marquette v. Mar-		197 Fed.	341
Marcy v. Barnes	392, 561,	quette's Exr's	2463	45 D. C.	248
	797	Marquette Mfg. Co. v.		v. Wabash R. Co.	1974
v. Parker	2349	Oglesby Coal Co.	1856	v. Westrope	2416
v. Pierce	694	Marquez v. Jordi	19	Marshman v. Conklin	619
v. Stone	1469	Marr v. Gilliam	2110	Marske v. Willard	2473
Marden v. Hopkins	2498	v. Wetzel	1392	Marsland v. Du Pont de	
Marder v. Leary	283	Marr's Heirs v. Gilliam	2522	Nemours	2212
Mardis v. Shackelford	1320,	Marriage v. Lawrence	1074,	Marston v. Allen	2409,
	1871		1661		2420
Mare v. Winter	1519	Marriner v. Dennison	1225,	v. Dingley	437, 561, 1951
Marella v. Reyes	18		1254	v. Downes	2196, 2211,
Maresh's Will	1511	Marriot v. Pascal	2569		2308, 2312
Marguerite v. Chouteau	564,	Marriott v. Chamber-		Martin v. Anderson	1678,
	1598	lain	1856c		2313
Maria das Dorias, The	1639	Marron v. Great North-		v. Barnes	953, 961, 964
Marianski v. Cairns	288, 1066	ern R. Co.	747	v. Beatty	232, 689
Marine Investment Co.		Marsden v. Panshall	1862	v. Bonsack	1778
v. Havaside	2185	Marsee v. Middlesbor-		v. Boston & N. St. R.	
Mariner v. Saunders	1194,	ough T. L. Co.	2166	Co.	561, 2509
	1195, 1269, 1312	Marsh v. Case	1554, 1556	v. Bowie	1513, 2139
Marinette v. Goodrich		v. Collnett	1221, 1311,	v. Brand	2529
T. Co.	664		2138	v. Brown	1213, 1352
Marinoni v. State	18	v. Gold	1062	v. Cole	2445
Marion v. Coon Con-		v. Hammond	1021	v. Columbus	2485
struction Co.	795	v. Hand	18, 1234	v. Com.,	
v. Lambert	928	v. Jones	736, 2098	93 Ky.	390
v. State	660, 792	v. Keith	2317	Ky., 78 S. W.	1442
Mark, Re	2271, 2276	v. Marsh	2257	2 Leigh	309, 705
v. Buffalo	2203	v. Pugh	616	v. Cope	2098
v. Stuart-Howland		v. Sanders	1858	v. Corseaddon	258
Co.	1951	v. State	284, 773, 780	v. Courtney	1984
Markel v. Moudy	1037	Marshall v. Adams	2098	v. Derenbecker	612
Market & F. N. Bank v.		v. Brown	687, 1700	v. Des Moines E. L.	
Sargent	2494	v. Carr	987, 1073	Co.	1976
Markey v. Angell	64	v. Cliff	1063	v. Eagle D. Co.	2582
v. State	18, 1352, 1676	v. Fire Ins. Co.	1943	v. Ehrenfels	2354
Markham v. O'Connor	1072	v. Gougler	1302	v. Elden	944, 1871
v. Russell	406	v. Hancock	1388	v. Elliot	2221
v. State	2273	v. Hanby	2502	v. Farnham	1005, 1022,
Markley v. Swartzlander	1890	v. Ins. Co.	1947		1040
Marks v. Beyfus	2374	v. Interstate T. & T.		v. Fyffe	1538
v. Columbia Co. L.		Co.	1951	v. Good	735, 747
Co.	201	v. Irwin	2195	v. Hall	1219, 1275,
v. Hardy's Adm'r	21, 1624,	v. J. Gross C. Co.	2495		1677, 1680
	1706	v. Lynn	2455	v. Hardesty	258, 1779
v. Harriet Cotton		v. Marshall,		v. Hoffman	1263
Mills	1951	252 Ill.	1698	v. Hughes	1567
v. Lahee	1464, 1471	71 Kan.	17, 2334	v. Hurlburt	616
v. Madsen	614, 2340	v. May	1086	v. Ingham	2369
v. Marks	2463	v. Mitchell	64	v. Ins. Co.,	
v. Orth	1684	v. Morris	1225	1 F. & F.	905
v. Pell	1257	v. Olson	1062	42 N. J. L.	1947
v. Twohy Bros. Co.	2433	v. Peck	615	v. Jennings	16
Marler v. R. Co.	1750	v. R. Co.	1362, 1363, 1431	v. Knight	2016



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Martin v. Martin,		Marx v. Ontario B. H. & A.		Massee v. Williams	78, 406
22 Ala.	2086	Co.	1976	Massee-Felton L. Co. v.	
25 Ala.	928, 1985	Mary v. State	1876	Sirmans	1460, 1464
174 Ill.	1779	Mary, Trial of Queen;		Massey's Estate	2421
51 Me.	2575	see Queen Mary's Trial.		Massey, Re	2214
70 Neb.	1681	Mary or Alexandra, The	2271	v. Allen	1464, 1524
v. Mayer	1290	Maryland Casualty Co.		v. Farmers' Bank	1253,
v. Moore	792	v. McCallum	19, 21		1254, 1985, 2015
v. O'Keefe	4c	v. Malone	2389	v. Huntington	1738
v. Orndorff	1807	v. Maloney	2389	v. Pentecost	1614
v. Otis	1953	v. Seattle El. Co.	2354	v. State	106
v. Payne	1271, 1684	Maryland El. R. Co.		v. Walker	1917, 1959
v. People	1012, 1013	v. Beasley	253, 792	v. Young	344
v. Perkins	1302	Maryland Steel Co. v.		Massey-Harris Co. v.	
v. Ragsdale	1388	Engleman	1127	De Laval S. Co.	1856b
v. Reeves	1086	Marzulli v. Metropolitan		v. Horning	1058
v. Richmond F. & P.		L. Ins. Co.	2034	Massey-Harris Co. &	
R. Co.	1896	Mash v. Darley	1072, 1347,	Gray-Campbell Co. v.	
v. Root	1075		2061	Dell	1416
v. Rutt	2232	v. People	15, 18, 2243	Massuco v. Tomassi	690,
v. Sherwood	1719	Mask v. State,			2088
v. Simpson	1778	32 Miss.	1887, 1890	Massure v. Noble	1957
v. Smith	321	36 Miss.	1618	Mast v. Matthews	2596
v. State,		Mason, Re	343	Masters v. Marsh	21, 747,
28 Ala.	276, 280,	v. Bowen	233		2211
	354, 2059	v. Buckmaster	1859a	v. Masters	2024, 2025
125 Ala.	949, 2081	v. Bull	1267	v. Varner	1664
144 Ala.	247	v. Cattley	2312	Masterson v. St. Louis	
2 Ala. App.	203	v. District	1245	Transit Co.	2273
68 Fla.	451	v. Ditchbourne	783	Maston v. State	56, 59, 592
63 Miss.	1806	v. Dover S. & R. St.		Matchett v. R. Co.	2580
32 Tex. Cr.	1781	R. Co.	1530	Matchin v. Matchin	2067
33 Tex. Cr.	1476	v. Libbey	1198	Math v. Chicago City R.	
v. S. T. & T. Co.	1963	v. Mack	1352	Co.	782, 785
v. Terr.	524	v. Mason,		Mather v. Clark	1053
v. Towle	283	4 N. H.	74, 406	v. Goddard	1248
v. Williams,		Mo. 231 S. W.	2311,	v. Sewell	1082, 2408, 2520
18 Ala.	2200		2520	Matherly v. Com.	1440
42 Miss.	1267	v. Phelps	736, 754, 1984	Mathes v. Robinson	1544,
Martin's Estate	18, 799	v. Poulson	1018		1548, 1551, 1555
Martin's Will	233, 689, 1406	v. R. Co.	1893	Matheson v. Canadian	
Martin Brown Co. v.		v. Russell	2354	Pacific R. Co.	749
Perrill	291	v. State,		v. Caribo	1290, 1302
Martineau v. Hanson	2444	42 Ala.	351	v. Matheson	2408
Martinez v. Planel	458	171 Ind.	1781, 2081,	v. U. S.	561, 2501
v. Rodriguez	1163		2513	Mathews v. Boland	530
Martinstein v. Creditors	1536	v. U. S.	2261, 2271	v. Cedar Rapids	458
Martorana, In re	2066	v. Vestal	1125, 1126, 1128	v. Colburn	1388
Marts v. State	63, 246, 1984	Mason's Case,		v. Heyward	1890
Martyn v. Curtis	1564	U. S. For. Rel.	2372	v. Mathews	2067
v. Hind	77	10 Cr. App.	309	v. Mattrass Co.	2438
Maruzeczka v. Charles-		Mason F. J. Co. v. Paine	2529	v. R. Co.	2509, 2580
worth	907	Masonic M. B. Ass'n v.		v. State,	
Marvin v. New Bedford	458,	Beck	2361, 2384, 2391	19 Neb.	1136, 2061
	461	Masonic M. B. Soc'y v.		Okla. Cr., 198	
v. Richmond	1062	Lackland	1230	Pac.	321, 944
v. Sager	527	Masons v. Fuller	569, 1503,	v. Yerex	618
v. State	2042		1923	Mathewson v. Sergeant's	
Marx v. Bell	1777	Masons' F. A. A. v.		Est.	610
v. Hanthorn	1356	Riley	1476, 1663	v. Spencer	2146
v. Hart	1327	Masourides v. State	905	Mathias v. O'Neill	92, 736,
v. Hefner	2536	Massachusetts Biog.			747
v. Hilsendegen	987	Soc. v. Howard	2410	Mathie v. Hancock	1854
v. McGlynn	1738	Massé v. Robillard	2395	Mathieson v. Craven	1388

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Mathis v. Buford	772	Maugham v. Hubbard	735,	May v. Dorsett	570, 2012
v. State,			747	v. Gentry	1082
31 Fla.	1350	Mauk v. Brundage	19	v. Hill	1195
Fla., 34 So.	782	Maule's Trial	2150	v. Jameson	1684
Mathison v. State	934	Maulini v. Serrano	2444	v. Jones	1778
Matias v. Alvarez	2116	Maupin v. Mobridge		v. Little	2232
Matko v. Daley	1456, 1530	State Bank	754	v. Logie	1481
Matlock v. Glover	2016	v. Scottish U. & N. I.		v. May,	
Matoole v. Sullivan	715	Co.	2434	71 Kans.	488, 2067
Matossy v. Frosh	1187	v. Triplett	1312	i Port.	1245
Matson v. Buck	406	v. Whiting	2123	2 Stra.	1644, 1646
Matterhorn, The	2536	Mauran v. Lamb	2218, 2222,	v. Northern P. R. Co.	2220,
Matteson v. Hartmann	1085		2223		2389
v. Noyes	1236, 2154	Mauri v. Heffernan	1257,	v. People	2071
v. R. Co.	688, 1719, 1721		1676, 1680	v. State,	
Matthai v. Matthai	2046	Maurice v. Judd	1699	55 Ala.	1439
Matthews v. Castle-		Maurin v. Lyon	2464	90 Ga.	111, 1841
berry	2141, 2146	Maus v. Bome	1779	94 Ga.	1841
v. Coalter	1278	Mause v. Hossington	377	May Department Stores	
v. Dare	530, 1031	Mauvaisterre Drainage		v. Runge	541
v. Detroit J. Co.	398	& L. Dist. v. Wabash		Mayberry v. Beck	2465
v. Farrell	18, 1062	R. Co.	463, 714	v. Johnson	2426
v. Hoagland	2298, 2308	Mauzy v. State	2276	Mayer, Re	2235
v. Huntly	64, 66	Maverick v. R. Co.	613	v. Brensinger	1869
v. Lumber Co.	280, 960	Maves v. Grand Trunk		v. Building Co.	458
v. Port	1364, 1380, 1670	P. R. Co.	778	v. People	320, 321,
v. Poythress	664	Mawby v. Barber	73		1041, 1983
v. R. Co.,		Mawelo v. Hamm-		v. R. Co.	367
81 Minn.	1725	Young Co.	1750	v. Schrenkler	1303
142 Mo.	455, 1856a	Mawman v. Tegg	372, 1161,	Mayer v. Mayer	1938, 2500
v. State	1072, 2071		1230	v. State	2079
v. Supervisors	1335	Mawson v. Hartsink	692,	Mayeur v. Crowe C. &	
Matthews' Estate	2527		1982, 1985	M. Co.	1750
Matthews & Son v.		Maxey v. U. S.	6, 520, 524	Mayfield v. Turner	1195
Richards	1249	Maxfield v. State	2497	Mayfield Lumber Co. v.	
Matthewson v. Burr	1612,	Maxham v. Place	1664	Lewis' Adm'r	201, 1984
	1614	Maxson v. Case Thresh-		Mayhew v. Eugene	2572
Matthis v. Johnson	455	ing M. Co.	1951	v. Mining Co.	443, 461,
v. State	1029	v. R. Co.	1078		1951
Mattice v. Allen	914, 1890	Maxted v. Fowler	1263, 2098	v. Taylor	950
Mattingly v. Shortell	64	Maxwell v. Bolles	944, 1890	Maynard v. Bailey	278, 2149
Mattison v. Mattison	763	v. Chamberlin	2442	v. Buck	461
v. State	42	v. Durkin	15	v. Interstate B. & L.	
Mattocks v. Bellamy	1215,	v. Hardy	1141	Assoc.	1223
	1677	v. Hill	1311, 1739	v. Keough	507
v. Lyman,		v. Kennedy	73	v. Maynard	2408
16 Vt.	736, 1071,	v. Light	1225, 1651	v. Oregon R. & N. Co.	792
	1072	v. Maxwell	2083	v. People	133
18 Vt.	2118	v. R. Co.	1330	v. Render	2465
v. Stearns	1189, 1208	v. State,		v. State	1781
v. Wheaton	2195, 2199,	3 Heisk.	105	v. Vinton	2341, 2502
	2201	Miss., 40 So.	835	Mayne v. Hawkey	2211
Mattox v. U. S.,		v. Warner	2097	v. Kansas City R. Co.	1414
146 U. S.	1438, 1442,	v. Willingham	2434	Maynes v. Dolan	1665
	1445, 1448, 1452,	Maxwell's Ex'rs v. Wil-		Mayo v. Hughes	2123
	2349, 2354	kinson	736, 745, 761	v. Mayo	1043, 2269, 2276
156 U. S.	1028, 1032,	Maxwell Land-Grant		v. Mazeaux	1225, 1651
	1398	Co. v. Dawson	254	v. Wright	685, 1718
Mattson v. Minn. & N.		May v. Baskin	1665	Mayor v. American	
W. R. Co.	1182	v. Bradlee	233, 568, 1938,	Cable R. Co.	1657
Matuskevitz v. Hughes	1614		1958	v. Brown	1163
Matzenbaugh v. People	987,	v. Brown	42, 986, 1982	v. Caldwell	497
	1784	v. Charleston I. R. Co.	2509	v. Craven	2140
Mauch v. Hartford	795, 1385a	v. Com.	218	v. Harwood	1350



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Mayor v. Minor	1062	Mechanics' Bank v.		Mell v. State	932
v. Pentz	29, 1918, 1919,	Woodward	1387, 1405	Mellish v. Arnold	2352
	1943, 1976	Mechanic's Bank & T.		v. Rawdon	2553
v. Second Ave. R. Co.	736,	Co. v. Whilden	1387, 1565,	Mellor v. R. Co.	2390
	750, 751, 1530		1582, 1588	v. Union	1951
v. Wood	1951	Medford v. State	396, 2595	v. Walmesley	1524, 1563,
Mayor of Baltimore v.		Medical College Labora-			1665
Hurlock	463, 655	tory v. N. Y. Univer-		Meloin v. Marshall	1567
v. State	681, 794, 1669	sity	2433	Melton v. Com.	2356
Mayor of Hull v. Horner	89	Medicine Hat Wheat		v. State,	
Mayor of London v.		Co. v. Norris Com-		43 Ark.	216, 363,
Ainsley	2257	mission Co.	1856a		2060, 2071
v. Levy	2257	Medill v. Snyder	682	47 Tex. Cr.	63, 1157
Mayrand v. Dussault	2503	Medley v. German A.		Melvin v. Bullard	1458
Mays v. Deaver	2100	Ins. Co.	2416, 2434	v. Easley	1690, 1700
v. Johnson	1678	Medlicot v. Joyner	1193, 1280	v. Hodges	2015
v. Mays	1302	Medlin v. County Board	1018	v. Lyons	1681
v. New Amsterdam C.		Medway v. U. S.	1362, 2001,	v. Whiting,	
Co.	2390		2008, 2016	7 Pick.	1387, 2098
v. Pryce	1347	Mee v. Reid	1818	10 Pick.	2522
v. Shields	2420	Meehan v. Great North-		Lewis & C. P. Co. v.	
v. State,		ern R. Co.	197	Kner	1164
72 Neb.	1476	v. Holyoke St. R. Co.	1951	Laphis & C. R. Co. v.	
Okla. Cr., 197		v. State	987, 2497	Womack	1671
Pac.	832, 860,	Meek v. Meek	2046	Memphis & O. R. P. Co.	
	861	v. Pierce	616	v. McCool	928
Mayson v. Atlanta	1244	v. Spencer	1195	Menage v. Rosenthal	2440,
v. Beazley	2105	Meeker v. Fairfield	252, 1951		2463
Maytag v. Cummins	19	v. Lehigh Valley R.		Menard v. King	1669
Maywood Co. v. May-		Co.	1356	v. R. Co.	283, 1168
wood	1168	v. Meeker,		Menasha W. W. Co. v.	
Mayzone v. State	851	75 Ill.	232	Harmon	1212, 1234
Meacham v. Pell	738	74 Ia.	682, 1938	Mendel v. Boyd	1230
v. State	668	v. Post P. & P. Co.	74	Mendenhall v. Cassella	1587
Mead v. Daubigny	406	Meckins v. Norfolk & S.		v. District Court	1862
v. Degolyer	1062	R. Co.	18	v. Ulrich	2409
v. Harris	497	Mecks v. State,		Mendenhall's Will	1512, 2500
v. McGraw	736, 749	51 Ga.	1839	Mendez v. Martinez	1006,
v. Presbyterian		32 Tex. Cr.	2042		2527
Church	1302, 1512	v. Willard	2556	Mendoza v. Ibañez	1606
v. Randall	1644	Meers v. Stoughton	1825	Mendum v. Ccm.	569
v. Randolph	2054	Mees v. Steffey	2503	Menefee v. State	580
Meade v. Black	1778	Meguire v. Corwine	1073	Menk v. Steinfert	616
v. Gilfoyle	616	Mehlin v. Mutual R. F.		Meno v. State	133, 390, 2060
v. Smith	2354, 2355	L. Ass'n	2409	Menomenie R. S. & D.	
Meaderhouser v. State	2580	Meier v. Buchter	229, 1081	Co. v. R. Co.	456, 2487
Meadowcroft v. People	1356	v. Meier	1082, 1778, 1779	Menzies v. McLeod	1856
Meadows v. Frost	1530	v. Morgan	1908	Meracle v. Down	1350
v. Ins. Co.	1876, 1880,	v. Paulus	1416, 1856c	Mercantile Guaranty	
	2495	Meighen v. Bank	93	Co. v. Hilton	2558
v. State	821, 839	Meikle v. Hobson	1856a	Mercantile Trust Co. v.	
Meagoe v. Simmons	759, 1021	Meily v. St. Louis & S.		Henscy	7a
Mealer v. State	247	F. R. Co.	1951	v. Rode	761
Means v. Carolina C. R.		Meinaka v. State	832	Mercer v. Denne	1524, 1563,
Co.	2496	Meints v. Huntington	75		1584, 1588, 1591,
v. State	2056	Meisner v. Meisner	2442		1634, 1665, 2378
Mears v. R. Co.	65, 1639	Meixsell v. Williamson	1012	v. Kelso's Adm'r	1938
Mease v. United T. Co.	18	Melanowski v. Judy	258	v. Kirkpatrick	2473
Meath v. Winchester,		Melby v. Osborne	2153	v. Mackin	1736
3 Bing. N. C.	1053,	Melcher v. Flanders	1304	v. Patterson	2336, 2341
	2139	Melen v. Andrews	1072	v. Sayre	1877
10 Bligh	2294	Melendy v. Spaulding	1958	v. State,	
Mechanics' & F. Bank		Melhuish v. Collier	761, 903,	40 Fla.	923, 1079, 1108,
v. Smith	934a		904, 905, 907, 1005		2245, 2332, 2339

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Mercer v. State,		Merrill v. Perkins	987	Metropolitan Stock Ex-	
41 Fla.	905	v. R. Co.	736, 745, 748	change v. Lyndon-	
17 Ga.	2349	v. Syper	1352	ville N. Bank	2573
v. Vose	715	v. Tew	64	Metropolitan S. O. Co.	
v. Wright	1010, 2056	Merrills v. Swift	2408	v. Hawkins	1859c
Mercer's Adm'r v.		Merriman v. Schmitt	2437	Metropolitan St. R. Co.	
Mackin	1457	v. State	923, 987, 1985	v. Gumby	1387
Mercer Co. v. Wolff	1168	Merriman's Appeal	2354	v. Jacobi	2390
Merchant v. Com.	507	Merritt v. Bopden	2525	v. Johnson	461
Merchants' & F. State		v. Copper Crown Co.	1271,	Metropolitan W. S. & E.	
Bank v. Dawdy	18		1858, 2536	R. Co. v. Dickin-	
Merchants' Bank v.		v. Cravens	610	son	451, 463
Moffatt	2319	v. Dewey	2525	v. Fortin	208, 249
v. Rawls	907	v. Hepenstal	21	Mettall v. State	2081
Merchants' Exch. Bank		v. Hinton	1351, 1640	Mette & K. D. Co. v.	
v. McGraw	2573	v. Merritt,		Lowrey	1404
Merchants' Exch. Co. v.		20 Ill.	934, 1271	Metteer v. Smith	2572
Sanders	95	45 Ill.	1271	Metz v. Butte	1951
Merchants' Life Ass'n		v. R. Co.	284	v. Metz	1778
v. Yoakum	1890	v. Seaman	18, 1960	v. State	2272
Merchants' L. & T. Co.		v. State	1042	v. Willitts	18
v. Egan	2104, 2113	v. Stebbins	1082	Metzgar v. R. Co.	461
Merchants' National		v. U. S.	2155	Metzger v. Assur. Co.	720
B'k v. Brastrup	2419	Merriweather v. Com.	1072	v. Emmel	2433
v. Glendon Co.	2535	Mershon v. State	2277	v. Royal Neighbors	2341
Merchants' Nav. Co. v.		Mertz v. Detweiler	67, 1960	Metzradt v. Modern	
Amsden	1647	Merwin v. Ward	291	Brotherhood	1671
Merchants' S. & G. Co. v.		Meserve v. Folsom	1880	Meunier, Re	2056
Board of Trade	1398, 2257	Messel v. State	2071, 2072,	v. Couet	605
Mercier v. Harnan	2109		2081	Meurer's Will	1302
Merck v. Merck	529, 1302,	Messenger v. Bridge-		Mewes v. Pipe-Line Co.	714,
	2420	town	1111		720
Meredith v. Footner	2232	v. Messenger	1705	Mexborough, Earl of, v.	
v. Meredith	2408	Messer v. Reginniter	660	Whitwood U. D.	
Mergenthaler v. Scudder	2066	Messimer v. McCray	7, 1409	Council	2256, 2268, 2281
Mergentheim v. State	1908	Messler v. Williamsburg	1062	Mexican & S. A. Co.,	
Mericke v. King	575	Metcalf v. Munson	253	Re	2271
Merket v. State	1223	v. Van Benthuyzen	2105	Mexican C. R. Co. v.	
Merkle v. Beidleman	1083	Metcalf v. Carr	2165	Lauricella	2509
v. Bennington,		v. Deane	2352	Mexican N. R. Co. v.	
58 Mich.	1722, 1749	Methodist Ep. Church		Slater	1271, 2558
68 Mich.	1951	v. Jaques	2117	Meyer v. Barker	1195
v. State	1693, 1694	v. Wood	2123	v. Berlandi	1354
Merkle's (Sarah) Case	4c	Metler's Adm'r v.		v. Bohlring	406
Merle v. Moore,		Metler	613, 2245	v. Brown	1530
2 C. & P.	2321	Metropolitan Asylum		v. Everth	2434, 2439
Ry. & Mo.	2327	Dist. v. Hill	443, 451	v. Foster	1330
Merrell, Ex parte	2260	Metropolitan Life Ins.		v. Home Ins. Co.	2378
v. Dudley	1732	Co. v. Anderson	1646	v. Krauter	2580
Merriam v. Field	2434	v. Howle	2380	v. Mitchell	1898
v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. O'Grady	2336	v. Munro	1086
v. Leeper	2416	v. Wagner	1976	v. People's Railway	
v. R. Co.	619, 1104	Metropolitan Nat'l Bank		Co.	770
Merriam Co. v. Syndi-		v. Com. St. Bank	1078	v. Rothe	18, 811
cate Pub. Co.	1699	v. Jansen	529	v. Sefton	1230
Merrick v. Ditzler	2498	Metropolitan R. Co. v.		v. State	367
v. Wakley	1632, 1634, 1639	Blick	571	v. Supreme Lodge	7a, 2382,
Merricourt v. Norwalk		v. Collins	1755		2388
F. Ins. Co.	354, 944, 987	v. Jackson	2552	Meyers v. Com.	177, 2072
Merrifield v. Robbins	1684	v. Snashall	2580	v. Highland B. G. M.	
Merrill v. Berkshire	1890	v. White	463	Co.	437, 1951
v. I. & O. R. Co.	1560	v. Wright	2552	v. Menter	851, 2580
v. Leisenring	398, 1416,	Metropolitan Sav. Bank		v. State	1374, 1442
	1974	v. Manion	1960	v. U. S.	1778



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Meyers v. Western Union Tel. Co	561	Mighell v. Sultan of Johore	2566	Miller v. Gow	2122
Meyncke v. State	987, 1612	Mijares v. Nery	1606	v. Greenwald Petti-coat Co.	905
Miami & M. T. Co. v. Baily	2220	Mijares de Fariñas' Estate	1066	v. Hackley	95, 736, 747
Michael v. Foil	2312	Milam v. State	1750, 1873	v. Hale	1186, 2132, 2158
v. Gay	2257	Milbourne Port Case	1712	v. Hamilton B. S. Co.	1974
v. Marshall	2503	Milburn v. Phillips	1081	v. Harrington	1186
v. Matson	2375	Mildrone's Case	1818	v. Heck	1072
Michael & Co. v. Enriquez	1195	Milenovich's Estate	1195	v. Holt	1651
Michaels v. Michaels	2506	Miles v. Armour	1859e	v. John	1079
v. People	821	v. Carnes	1884	v. Johnston	2159
Michalek v. Modern Brotherhood	1073, 2510	v. Dawson	2211	v. Jones	2016
Michalowicz v. Michalowicz	2067, 2069	v. Loomis	1999, 2000, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016	v. Kelly	2155
Michaud v. Grace H. L. Co.	720	v. O'Hara, 4 Binn.	736, 1215, 1666	v. Kerr	406
Michel v. Smith	258	1 S. & R.	1911	v. Lamb	392
Michell v. Low	2048, 2106	v. U. S.	2086, 2231	v. Leib	682, 2155
Michener v. Lloyd	2450	v. Vanhorn	66, 76	v. Livingston	1677
Michigan B. & P. Co. v. Coll	2235	v. Wilson	2462, 2463	v. Luckey	1943
Michigan C. R. Co. v. Gilbert	96, 199, 250	v. Wingate	2116	v. McKinnon	1213
Michigan Pipe Co. v. Sullivan Co. Water Co.	2434	v. Woodward	1067	v. Mandel	2498
Mickey v. Ins. Co.	1972	Milford v. Worcester	1644	v. Mariner's Church	1258
Micklethwart's Case	2360	Milich v. Packing Co.	2442	v. Matthews	2572
Middeke v. Balder	2532	Millar v. Babcock	1267	v. Mayer	1960
Middleditch v. Williams	1738	v. Heinrich	1271	v. Meers	1085
Middlesborough W. Co. v. Neal	1651	v. Hilton	2514	v. Metzger	2550
Middlesex Case	1712	v. People	795	v. Miller,	
Middlesex B. Co. v. Smith	782	Millard v. Hall	1215	272 Ill.	2498
Middleton v. Bamed	1876	Millaudon v. McDonough	1680	96 Miss.	1736
v. Croft	2067	Mille v. Dupuy	2054	187 Pa.	928
v. Janverin	1271	Miller, Ex parte	2210	S. C., 21 S. E.	2168
v. Mass.	2141	v. Bingham	1084	v. Miller's Adm'r	1890
v. Melton	1466, 1471, 1474, 1476	v. Boykin	1269, 1635, 1639	v. Minturn	795
v. Middleton	1777	v. Brinton	2463	v. Moore	1568
v. Sandford	2529	v. Busick	1667	v. Morrow,	
v. State	2059	v. Carothers	1321, 1510, 2048, 2110, 2159	3 Coldw.	6a
Middletown Trust Co. v. Crowell	2315, 2329	v. Carr	2502	5 Heisk.	6a
Middleworth v. Ordway	2471	v. Childress	2054	v. Mullan	252, 438
Midkiff v. Carter	1976	v. Com., 13 Bush	367	v. Nicodemus	1067
Midland V. R. Co. v. Adkins	719	78 Ky.	2059, 2060	v. Northern P. R. Co.	1633
v. Conner	2509	v. Com'rs	2256	v. Pearce	655, 944
v. Hamilton	770	v. Continental Shipbuilding Co.	987	v. People,	
v. Le Moyne	908	v. Cook	905	Col. 201	669
v. Taylor	455	v. Crayon	987	39 Ill.	131, 833
Mier v. Phillips F. Co.	347, 1164, 1168	v. Curtis	75, 192, 200, 202, 209, 212, 340, 963	216 Ill.	235, 933, 1051, 1330, 2115, 2272
Miera v. Terr.	397, 1976, 1977	v. Denman	1053	229 Ill.	56, 2513
Mifflin Bridge Co. v. Juniata Co.	1640	v. Dill	273, 282, 393, 987	v. R. Co.,	
		v. Dumon	795	93 Ga.	1109
		v. Electric Co.	2434	128 Ind.	792
		v. Estabrook	1705	89 Ia.	461
		v. Feenane	1082, 1778	62 Minn.	688
		v. Foster	2139	71 N. Y.	1960
		v. Gillispie	1388	v. Reinhart	1678
		v. Gordon	21	v. Road Co.	1249
		v. Goodwin	1275, 1350	v. Russel	1406
				v. S. S. Co.	88
				v. Salomons	1817, 1818
				v. Shaw	1705
				v. Shay	751, 1555, 1556, 1558
				v. Shumway	254
				v. Smith,	
				112 Mass.	677, 720, 944, 1040, 1943

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Miller v. Smith,		Milling v. Hillenbrand	1086	Mims v. Swartz	2573
Wash., 205 Pac.	2408	Millman v. Tucker	986, 2272	Minch & Eisenbrey Co.	
v. Sovereign Camp	2531	Millner v. State	1404	v. Cram	2195
v. Spokane Interna-		Millner's Estate, Re	2528	Minden v. Vedene	1158
tional R. Co.	2415	Mills v. Biscoe L. Co.	1859	Mine & Smelter S. Co.	
v. Spring Garden Ins.		v. Catlin	1698	v. Parke & L. Co.	18, 1890
Co.	2465	v. Com.	2062	Miner v. Phillips	581, 758,
v. Springfield W. Co.	1890	v. Dunlap	18	759, 1029, 1086	
v. State,		v. Duryeo	1216, 2555	v. State	2236
40 Ala.	860	v. Flynn	74	Mineral Point R. Co. v.	
45 Ala.	619	v. Griswold	2286	Keep	736, 754
107 Ala.	1974, 1978	v. Hallock	1954	Mineral R. & M. Co. v.	
110 Ala.	1198, 2257	v. May	1300	Auten	1564
130 Ala.	363	v. Oddy	2211, 2307	Minet v. Gibson	2443
146 Ala.	2276	v. R. Co.	2220	v. Morgan	2290, 2294
40 Ark.	1267	v. Spencer,		Minich v. People	1852
94 Ark.	1976, 1978	104 Ga.	1821	Minihan v. Boston Elev.	
97 Ga.	1042, 1044	133 Ga.	2273, 2511a	R. Co.	278, 2509
109 Ga.	1821	Holt N. P.	73	Mink v. State	2063
165 Ind.	526, 1476	81 Va.	603, 610	Minkler v. Minkler	1267, 2106
174 Ind.	106, 1022	v. Twist	1313	Minkley v. Springwells	1896
183 Ind.	1029	v. U. S.	2088, 2228, 2239	Minneapolis Mill Co.	
78 Neb.	2239	v. Winter	20, 1978	v. R. Co.	1370, 1404
3 Oh. St.	1350	Mills' Estate	2063, 2527	Minneapolis S. & M. Co.	
9 Okl. Cr.	390	Milne v. Landers	1432	v. Yeggy	1967
13 Okl. Cr.	351, 833	v. Leisler	10, 1755, 1757,	Minneapolis Threshing	
37 Tex. Cr.	2239	1766, 2102, 2113		M. Co. v. McDonald	716
46 Tex. Cr.	523	Milner v. State,		Minneapolis Times Co.	
79 Tex. Cr.	19	124 Ga.	855	v. Nimocks	1268
Tex. Cr., 91 S. W.	852	7 Ga. App.	2071	Minnesota Deb. Co. v.	
25 Wis.	1398	Miltimore v. Miltimore	1267	Johnson	1246, 1256
106 Wis.	618, 1012,	Milton v. Burton	2442	Minnie, The, v. R.	1672
	1029	v. Edgworth	2441	Minor v. State	2272
139 Wis.	1012, 1079	v. Hunter	2235	v. Tillotson	1194, 1195,
v. Stebbins	616	v. Rowland	568, 784, 1378		1239
v. Steele	6	v. State,		v. Young	1606
v. Stem	1009, 1013	134 Ala.	1440	Minshall v. Berryhill	1347
v. Terr.,		40 Fla.	363, 1893	Minters v. People	2261
9 Ariz.	177	Milton's Case	2047	Minthon v. Lewis	1908
149 Fed.	987	Milward v. Hibbert	379	Minton v. State	507, 832
v. Thatcher	2054	v. Ingram	2455	Mintzner v. Hogg	1164
v. Thomas	2503	v. Temple	1511	Mise v. Com.	1164
v. Thompson	1347, 1671	Milwaukee v. Ind. Com.	4a	Misenheimer v. State	2071
v. Travers	2471, 2474	Milwaukee & M. R. Co.		Mish v. Wood	677, 716, 1943
v. U. S.	1066	v. Eble	1943	Mishler v. Baumgardner	1911
v. Webb	1248	Milwaukee & S. P. R.		Miskimmins v. Shaver	2271,
v. Weeks	2313	Co. v. Smith	1271	2276, 2283	
v. Wells	1195, 1651	Milwaukee B. Co. v.		Misner v. Darling	747, 1669
v. White,		Duncan	2434	v. Strong	1062
16 Can. Sup.	1040	Milwaukee Corrugating		Mississippi & T. R. Co.	
80 Ill.	2083	Co. v. Flagge	1856a	v. Ayres	1385a
v. Whittington	682, 689	Milwaukee G. E. Co. v.		Mississippi Co. v. Vowels	1778
Miller's Case	728, 735	Gordon	20	Mississippi Glass Co. v.	
Miller's Estate,		Milwaukee R. Co. v.		Franzen	907
3 Rawle	1302	Kellogg	1947	Mississippi L. & C. Co.	
31 Utah	1081	Milwaukee W. Fuel Co.		v. Kelly	1290, 2016
36 Utah	1974	v. Industrial Com-		Missouri & K. Tel. Co.	
Miller's Will,		mission	2510	v. Vandevort	1003, 1951
194 N. Y. S.	2051	Mima Queen v. Hep-		Missouri & N. A. R. Co.	
49 Or.	1736	burn	1363	v. Daniels	682, 2390
Millette v. Little	2235	Mims v. State	106, 1003	Missouri D. Tel. Co. v.	
Millikan v. Booth	1391	Mims v. Sturtevant,		Morris & Co.	2433
Milliken v. Barr	1245	23 Ala.	1777	Missouri K. & T. R. Co.	
v. Long	1614	36 Ala.	761, 1404	v. Colburn	2672



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Missouri K. & T. R. Co.		Mitchell v. Mitchell,		Mobile & M. R. Co. v.	
v. Davis	1530	80 Tex.	2336	Yeates	2313
v. Dilworth	1213	11 Vt.	2085	Mobile & O. R. Co. v.	
v. Elliott,		v. Phillips Mining Co.	2509	Postal T. C. Co.	2580
102 Fed.	291	v. R. Co.,		v. Steamer New South	991
2 Ind. T.	1207, 1404	87 Cal.	461	v. Stinson	1750
v. Johnson,		85 Ill.	1168	v. Vallowe	252, 458
92 Tex.	65, 199	68 N. H.	288	Mobile J. & K. C. R. Co.	
95 Tex.	1721	100 Tenn.	2509	v. Hawkins	1254, 1960
v. McGlamory	1350	v. Ryan	2408	v. Kea	2509
v. Merrill	1951	v. Savings Inst.	1263	v. Turnipseed	1356
v. Moore	792	v. Sawyer	908	Mobile Life Ins. Co. v.	
v. St. Clair	949	v. Sellman	15	Morris	1081
v. Simons	1350	v. Slye	18, 232, 1621	v. Walker	1415, 1976
v. Simonson	1354	v. State,		Mobley v. Baxter & Co.	1490
Missouri P. R. Co. v.		58 Ala.	569	v. Bilberry	1779
Baier	1749, 1750	94 Ala.	923, 925	v. Breed	1269, 1960
v. Castle	17, 2383, 2552	114 Ala.	1157, 1404,	v. Hamit	923, 1985
v. Collier	1755		1405, 1605, 2497	v. Kittlerberger	1750
v. Finley	569	140 Ala.	354	v. Lyon	1034
v. Fox,		148 Ala.	987, 1985	v. Pierce	1483, 1490
56 Nebr.	1976	82 Ark.	1450	v. State,	
60 Nebr.	561, 1890,	125 Ark.	2513	41 Fla.	238, 2085
	1951	43 Fla.	1807	89 Tex. Cr.	987
v. Hall	571, 677	Fla., 33 So.	2071	v. Watts	1267, 1275
v. Heidenheimer	2155	71 Ga.	285, 1668,	Mock v. Kelly	715
v. Hennessey	283		2098	Mockaber v. Com.	1445
v. Johnson,		Miss., 24 So.	838	Mockowick v. R. Co.	2491
59 Kan.	571	7 Okl. Cr.	21	Modawell v. Holmes	2580
72 Tex.	2220	9 Okl. Cr.	1620	Moddie v. Breiland	2525
v. Lovelace	2432	36 Tex. Cr.	2354	Mode v. Beasley	2529
v. Mackey	571, 1951	v. Terr.	1781	Modern Woodmen v.	
v. Moffatt,		v. Welch	1890	Angle	7a
56 Kan.	460	v. Work	75, 212	v. Gerdorn	2531
60 Kan.	93	Mitchell's Case	2307, 2200	v. Kozak	1073, 2500
v. Palmer	715, 1235	Mitchell & Brady v.		v. White	4c, 2531
v. White	1807	Mitchel's Adm'r	617	Modisett v. Governor	2158
Missouri S. L. Ins. Co.		Mitchinson v. Cross	619	Moeckel v. Heim	2338
v. Lovelace	1684	Mitchum v. State	1745, 1747,	Moehn v. Moehn	1461
Mist v. Kapiolani Estate	1573		1750, 1806	Moeller v. People	1899
v. Kawelo	1867	Mithen v. Jeffery	201, 282,	Moellering v. Evans	1899
Mistovski v. Mandle-			1911	Moering v. Falk Co.	1616
berg	2212	Mitsunaga v. People	840,	Moett v. People	1010, 1013
Mitau v. Roddan	2465		1021	Moffatt v. Hardin	2312
Mitchell v. Allison	1944	Mittelstadt v. Modern		v. Tenney	907
v. Altus State Bank	2409	Woodmen	2510	Moffit v. Canadian Pac.	
v. Brady	618	Mittlesteadt v. Johnson	2498	R. Co.	1456
v. Bridger	1225	Mix v. Woodward	406	v. Connecticut Co.	93, 792
v. Clem	2408	Mixer v. Bennett	2004	v. Hereford	716
v. Com.,		Mixon v. State	1450	v. State	609
78 Ky.	928	Moak v. Maok	2046	v. Witherspoon	1072, 1482
Ky., 14 S. W.	987	Moale v. Baltimore	463	Moffitt v. People	2582
Ky., 64 S. W.	1270	Moats v. Rymer	961, 1911,	Mogelberg v. Calhoun	1908
v. Henry	2462, 2463		2211, 2313	Mohawk Bank v. At-	
v. Ins. Co.	1947	Moberly v. Brooks	2047	water	586
v. Jacobs	1213	v. Preston	74	Mohawk Overall Co.,	
v. Justices	1909	Mobile & B. R. Co. v.		In re	2200
v. Leech	1700	Ladd	15	Mohler v. Com.	1618, 1725,
v. McDougall	615	Mobile & G. R. Co. v.			1850
v. Mitchell,		Williams	1109	Mohon v. Harkreader	1835
11 G. & J.	586	Mobile & M. R. Co. v.		Moises v. Thornton	1674,
1 Gill	1388, 1651	Ashcraft	458, 461,		1680, 2169
3 Stew. & P.	1195,		1729, 1748, 1755	Moldenhaur v. R. Co.	461
	1225, 1651	v. Blake'y	571	Molina v. U. S.	564

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Molineux v. Molineux	2454	Montford v. State	2059	Moore v. Adams	2498
Mollalia El. Co. v.		Montgomery v. Com.	2277	v. Andrews	1521
Wheeler	1168	v. Deeley	2273	v. Arm	1681
Moller v. Moller	2066	v. Dickey	1582	v. Bank,	
v. U. S.	805	v. Dorion	1312, 1314, 1651	6 Mo.	1675
Molly Maguires; see		v. Ins. Co.	1890	13 Pet.	18
Kehoe; Hester	1986	v. Koester	282	v. Beale	749
Molm v. Barton	1195	v. Lipscomb	1568	v. Beattie	1195
Molton v. Harris	1202, 1224	v. McLeod	1644	v. Bloomington D. &	
Molyneaux v. Collier	1035,	v. Page	2445	C. R. Co.	65, 458
1062, 1195		v. Pickering	2327	v. Bray	2296, 2310
Molyneux v. Willcock-		v. Routh	1213	v. Brown	1416
son	2239	v. Scott	568, 569, 1951,	v. Burlington	252
Momence Stone Co. v.			1976	v. Com.,	
Groves	291, 1263	v. Seaboard A. L. R.		2 Leigh	852
Monaghan v. Equitable		Co.	1680	9 Leigh	1644
Life Ins. Co.	2509	v. Snodgrass	1373	v. Craven	2212
v. Green	610	v. State,		v. Crittenden	2473
v. State	2511	40 Ala.	1842, 2059	v. Davis	392
Monahan v. Worcester	249	80 Ind.	1432	v. Dozier	657, 691, 1984
Monarch Mfg. Co. v.		13 Okl. Cr.	309	v. Fryman	1959
Omaha	1530, 1639	v. Taylor	1976	v. Gilliam	1248
Moncada v. Cajuigan	2034	Montgomery & W. P. R.		v. Gwyn	1777
Moncrief v. State	2513	Co. v. Varner	1943	v. Heineke	1770, 2085,
Monfort v. Indianapolis		v. Webb	382	2498, 2505	
& C. T. Co.	2495	Montgomery B. B. W.		v. Holmes	2596
Monk v. Farlinger	2144	v. Gaston	1350	v. Jones,	
v. Jenkins	1676a	Montgomery L. & T. Co.		13 Ala.	1021, 1029,
Monkton v. Attorney-		v. Harris	1856		1857
General	1483, 1484,	Montgomery St. R. Co.		108 Ill.	1021
	1486, 1491,	v. Shanks	1719, 1977	v. Jonesboro	2572
	1496, 1501	Montreal St. R. Co. v.		v. Kalamazoo	252
Monongahela Nav. Co.		Feigleman	2319	v. Moore,	
v. Fenlon	7a	Montreal Tramways		39 Ia.	736
Monongahela R. C. C.		Co. v. Sofio	2034	51 Mo.	2245
& C. Co. v. Schinnerer	2573	Montreuil v. Pierre	1239, 1680	67 Mo.	689, 1938
Monongahela V. T. Co.		Mons v. Stephens	1219, 1677	102 Tenn.	2506
v. Windom	714	Moody v. Pender	1416	v. Oastler	73, 209
Monongahela Water Co.		v. Rowell	770, 773, 774,	v. Palmer	89, 1409, 1416,
v. Stewartson	1890		777, 778, 915, 1888,		2008, 2016
Monroe v. Ins. Co.	2494		1890, 2002, 2008,	v Parks	1736, 1738, 2500,
v. Lattin	1951		2016, 2020, 2026		2502
v. State,		v. State,		v. Pearson	2098
5 Ga.	111, 246, 247,	48 Ala.	1350	v. People,	
	1732	13 Okl. Cr.	2272	26 Colo.	106
71 Miss.	2061	Mooers v. Bunker	1481, 2529	163 Ill.	1018
v. Twistleton	2237	Moog v. Randolph	1350	v. Phelan	2477
Monroe Cattle Co. v.		Moon v. Dye	2065	v. Pywell	2573
Becker	2047	v. Hawks	378, 1779	v. R. Co.,	
Monson v. Palmer	1784	v. Moon	2400	65 Ia.	1976
Montague v. Dougan	1552,	v. Pere Marquette R.		93 Ia.	1160, 1168
	1560	Co.	283	59 Miss.	905
v. Perkins	2419	v. State,		v. Ryan	2491
Montague's Case	2250	Ariz., 198 Pac.	414,	v. Shook	2450
Montaloo v. Montaloo	1336		797, 655, 2265	v. Smead	2410
Montana Co. v. St. Louis		68 Ga.	791	v. Smith	1071, 1072
M. & M. Co.	1862	Moon's Adm'r v. Crow-		v. Steele	1290, 2048
Montana R. Co. v. War-		der	2008, 2012, 2016	v. State,	
ren	660, 712, 1943	Mooney v. Cyriacks	2439	12 Ala.	1033, 1452
Montclair R. Co. v. Ben-		v. Davis	289	68 Ala.	987
son	463	v. Kennett	2572	51 Ark.	2164
Monteeth v. Caldwell	18	v. Olsen	1738	Ark., 236 S. W.	1063
Montefiore v. Montefiore	2106	Moor v. Adam	2203	79 Ga.	1821
Monterey v. Jacks	2535	Moor's Case	600	130 Ga.	770, 1207



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1263; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Moore v. State,		Morhouse v. Morehouse,		Moritz v. Brough	1362, 1738
151 Ga.	1835	70 Conn.	1896	Morley v. Green	2211
2 Oh. St.	266, 273	v. Potter	1225	Morly's Case	1374, 1405, 1406
17 Oh. St.	676	Moreland v. Lawrence	923	Morrell v. Lumber Co.	2155
96 Tenn.	457, 1270,	v. Mitchell Co.	1976	v. Preiskel	714
	1385a, 1441,	Morell v. Morell	1576, 2500	v. State	246
	1618, 1819	Morelock v. State	1933	Morrill v. Hershfield	682
Tex. Cr., 144		Morely v. Dunbar	1010	v. Jones	1890
S. W.	987	Moreno v. New Guada-		v. State	2239
31 Tex. Cr.	364	lupe M. Co.	2389	v. Tegarden	682
Tex. Cr., 75		Moret v. Vazquez	1371	v. Titcomb	1567, 1778
S. W.	2230, 2243	Moreton v. Horton	1199	v. Whitehead	1552
65 Tex. Cr.	987	Morewood v. Wood	1587,	Morris v. Baron & Co.	2455
87 Tex. Cr.	851, 2183,		1605, 2006, 2017	v. Bethell	377
	2265	Morey v. Hoyt	1256	v. Briggs	750, 1555
c. Stone	2498	v. Paladini	2406	v. Callanan	1573
v. Terrell	2294	v. State	2100	v. Creel	2374
v. Townsend	1951	Morey's Estate	2494, 2503	v. Davidson	2573
v. Triplett	1378	Morgan v. Barnhill	64	v. Davies,	
v. U. S.,		v. Bealle	1651	3 C. & P.	166, 2527
91 U. S.	2008, 2016	v. Brydges	1893, 1894	1 Moo. & R.	1646
150 U. S.	216, 389,	v. Burrow	2581	v. East Haven	65, 199
	390	v. Butte C. M. & M.		v. Guffey	93, 905, 913
v. Westervelt	1951	Co.	4a	v. Hammerle	1669, 2098
v. Wingate	2334	v. Com.	140, 395	v. Hanser	1208
v. Wright	289, 1195	v. Griffith	2442	v. Henderson	18, 1064,
Moore's Estate	736	v. Halberstadt	2270		1676
Moore's Trial	1699	v. Halverson	1415	v. Hurst	2118
Moore & Co. v. Atlantic		v. Jones	1195, 1225	v. Ind. Board	4c
Coast Line R. Co.	2509	v. Lehigh V. C. Co.	20	v. Ins. Co.	1951
Moore Lime Co. v. John-		v. Lexington H. Co.	74	v. Jamieson	2120
ston's Adm'r	2509	v. Livingston	406, 1971	v. Kramer Bros. Co.	784
Moorhead v. Arnold	1151,	v. Minor	1249	v. Lessees	1597, 1598
	1168, 1351	v. Morgan	2408	v. Miller	1174, 2084, 2085,
v. Kaulbach	2065	v. Nicholl	1388		2086, 2088
Moorehouse v. De Passon	586	v. People	1236	v. Minneapolis St. P.	
Moots v. State	736, 754	v. Purnell	1483	& S. S. M. R. Co.	2491
Mora v. People	821, 1433	v. Roberts	1911	v. Morris,	
Morales v. Rivera	2220	v. S. M. L. V. Co.	2442	20 Ala.	2083
v. Romen	1336	v. Seaward	1862	119 Ind.	2384, 2391
v. State	2277	v. State,		v. Patchin	1681
v. Vivaldi	2183	11 Ala.	2086	v. Pratt	2054
Moran v. McLarty	2416	88 Ala.,	15, 59, 194	v. Pugh	2450
v. O'Regan	1971	120 Ga.	2071	v. R. Co.,	
v. People	1013	124 Ga.	289	116 N. Y.	1005
v. State	1976	31 Ind.	1362, 1431,	148 N. Y.	2390
Moran B. Co. v. Pacific			1439, 1442	v. Sargent	736, 747, 2016
C. C. Co.	2430	117 Ind.	1356	v. State,	
Moran Bros. Co. v. Sno-		51 Nebr.	2497	124 Ala.	1977
qualmie F. P. Co.	791,	56 Nebr.	321	144 Ala.	933, 1005
	1161, 1385a	86 Tenn.	524	146 Ala.	396
Moray v. Ind. Com.	4c, 7a	v. Stevens	2050	145 Ark.	2512
Mordecai v. Bell	1213	v. Terr.	19	6 Okl. Cr.	1153, 1450
v. Canty	1302	v. Thompson	2444	9 Okl. Cr.	398
More v. More	1512	v. U. S.	1058	38 Tex.	78, 987
More's Estate	665	Morgan's Case	194a	v. Stokes	728, 1072
Morehead v. State	1442, 1451	Morgan Co. Bank v.		v. Swaney	1278, 1279, 2048
Morehead Bkg. Co. v.		People	1678	v. Terr.	247, 794
Walker	1208	Morgan Construction		v. U. S.	762
Morehead's Trustee v.		Co. v. Dulin	41	v. Vanderen	1056, 1080,
Anderson	1944, 2570	Morgenroth v. Spencer	2239		1082, 1196, 1200,
Morehouse v. Mathews	1943	Moriarty v. Moriarty	2500		1257, 1267, 1275,
v. Morehouse,		v. R. Co.	278		1573, 1658, 1672,
136 Cal.	2219	v. State	111, 246, 247, 248		1674, 2286

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Morris v. Wadsworth	1651	Morse v. State,		Mostyn v. Mostyn	2463
Morris and Clayton's		6 Conn.	1974	v. Spencer	803
Case	2297	10 Ga. App.	1150	Motes v. Bates	923
Morrish v. Morrish	2048,	Morss v. Morss	1909, 1910,	v. U. S.	21, 1405
	2240		1912	Moton v. State	987, 1966
Morrison v. Arnold	1406, 1417	v. Palmer	928, 983, 1105,	Mott v. Doughty	1513
v. Chapin	736, 745, 748,		1614	v. Hicks	585
	1082	v. Salisbury	1778	v. R. Co.	571, 1721
v. Coad	1219	Morstad v. Atchison T.		v. State	2062
v. Com.	247	& S. F. R. Co.	2416	Motton v. Smith	716
v. Grand T. R. Co.	1856a	Mortgage T. Co. v.		Moughon v. State	2354
v. Hazzard	2465	Elliott	1195	Moulin v. Dallison	380
v. Hinton	1680	Mortimer v. M'Callan	1214,	Moulton v. McOwen	571
v. Holder	1567		1215, 1218,	v. Mason	1210
v. Lennard	498, 811		1219, 1223	v. State	194, 988, 1614,
v. McLaughlin	682	v. Mortimer	2067		1983
v. Madison	2552	Mortimore v. State	248, 821,	Moultrie Repair Co. v.	
v. Moat	2212		851, 1974	Hill	907
v. Montgomery	1067	Mortlock v. Williams	1208	Mounce v. Kurtz	2432
v. Myers	1263	Morton v. Barrett	1674	Moundville Lumber Co.	
v. Noone	1388, 1566, 1568	v. Edwin	1352	v. Warren	751
v. People	2167	v. Fairbanks	2555	Mount v. Bogert	1062
v. Porter	1651, 1998, 2000,	v. Folger	1568, 1570, 1587	Mount Adams & E. P. I.	
	2008, 2016	v. Heidorn	1302, 2502	R. Co. v. Lowery	2494
v. R. Co.	1164, 1168	v. M'Glaughlin	1085, 1456	Mount Sterling Bank v.	
v. State,		Mose v. State,		Bowen	1185
42 Fla.	1450	35 Ala.	1434	Mt. Terry M. Co. v.	
40 Tex. Cr.	144, 1722	36 Ala.	836, 855, 1157,	White	754
v. Welty	1202		1616, 1985, 2071	Mount Vernon B. Co. v.	
v. Wilson	2462	Ala., 89 So.	862	Teschner	1704
Morrison's Case	194a	1 Lea	1800	Mountain v. Fisher	616
Morrison's (Steenie)		Moseley v. Davies	1584, 1588	Mountford v. Cunard S.	
Trial	772, 983,	v. Eakin	2063, 2336	S. Co.	457
	194a, 1005, 1263,	v. Hanford	2444	Mousler v. Harding	613
	2125, 2378, 2497	v. Johnson	1704	Mow v. People	794
Morrissey v. Connecti-		Moseley's Adm'r v.		Mower v. McCarthy	1036
cut Valley St. R.		Mastin	2582	Mower-Harwood C. &	
Co.	792, 1976	Mosely v. Carr	2052	D. S. Co. v. Hill	2415
v. Ferry Co.	2529	v. Goodman	2463, 2467	Mowry v. Smith	15
v. Ingham	688, 951, 952,	v. Mosely	803	v. Starbuck	1873
	1722	v. Wingo	2110	Moxie Nerve Food Co.	
v. People	609	Moser, Re	2259b, 2271	v. Beach	2212
v. Wiggins Ferry Co.	1644	Moses v. Cromwell	2354	Moy Suey v. U. S.	1355
Morrow v. Campbell	2498	v. Ill. Commercial		Moy Wing Sun v. Pren-	
v. Canadian P. R. Co.	2507	Men's Ass'n	7a	tis	1073
v. Com.	1206	v. Ins. Co.	1947	Moye v. Herndon	2027
v. Morrow	2061	v. State	2058	Moyer v. Com.	416
v. National Mas. Acc.		Moshier v. Knox Col-		v. Moyer	73
Ass'n	1922	lege	18	Moyers v. Fogarty	2311
v. Ostrander	738	Mosley v. Com.	905	Moyle v. Congreg. Soc.	1078,
v. Parkman	1911	v. Ins. Co.	1109		2442
v. R. Co.	208	Moss v. Anderson	1318, 1651,	Moyler v. Moyler	2047, 2069
v. Saunders	1858		2143	Moynahan v. Perkins	2593
v. State	2079	v. Atkinson	1651	Moynihan v. Drobaz	1647
v. Waterous	1951	v. Dearing	1083	v. Holyoke	461
Morse v. Blanchard	1152	v. Hunt	1351	Mudd v. Dillon	2472
v. Bruce's Est.	1978	v. Moss	2498	Mudgett v. Horrell	1074
v. Com.	331	v. State,		Mudsill M. Co. v. Wat-	
v. Crawford	1938	146 Ala.	716, 2265	rous	321
v. Hewett	1651	Ala., 67 So.	396	Mueller v. Batcheler	2297
v. Pineo	923	17 Ark.	580	v. Cook	2433
v. Potter	1556	Mostyn v. Fabrigas (see		v. Pew	1738
v. R. Co.	283, 438	Fabrigas v. Mostyn)	1271,	v. Rebhan	614, 615, 1081,
v. Royal	1076		1380, 2368		1873, 1908



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Mueller v. State	347, 1977	Mumma v. McKee	1378	Murphy v. Board	1750, 2381
Mueller Constr. Co. v.		Mumpower v. Castle	2408,	v. Brown & Co.	1750
Ind.	4c		2520	v. Cady	1680, 2143
Muetze v. Tuteur	209	v. State	2408	v. Carter	603, 607
Mugge v. Adams	1195	Muney, Ex parte	2280	v. Chicago M. & S. P.	
v. Jackson	2593	Muncey v. Pullman Taxi		R. Co.	1168
Muir v. Campbell	1606, 1681	S. Co.	1195	v. Chicago R. I. & P.	
v. Miller	1738	v. Sun Ins. Office	1086	R. Co.	1350
Mulatto Lucy v. Slade	1676	Mundy v. Foster	2498	v. Com.,	
Mulcahey v. R. Co.	1417	v. Jacques	2110	23 Gratt.	1003, 2235,
Mulcairns v. Janesville	1698,	v. Mundy	1511		2336
	1951	Munford v. Green's		187 Mass.	157, 1967
Muldowney v. R. Co.	1951	Adm'r	2437	v. Dafoe	1778
Mulford v. Mueller	2311	v. Wilson	1210	v. Ganey	604
v. Tennis	581	Munie v. Gruenewald	2463	v. Hagermann	1993
Mulhado v. R. Co.	1158	Munkers v. Ins. Co.	64, 2008,	v. Hanright	2408
Mulhall v. Fallon	1576, 1960		2016	v. Hendricks	2575
Mulholland v. Harman	2143	v. State	205	v. Jack	2155
Mulkey v. Long	2525	Munkwitz v. R. Co.	1168	v. Loyd	1573
v. State	1356	Munn, Ex parte	2252	v. Lyons	1195
Mullaney v. Duffy	1587	v. Baker	255	v. Manning	461
Mullanphy S. Bank v.		v. Baldwin	95	v. Mulgrew	1086
Schott	1195	v. Godbold	1233	v. Murphy,	
Mullen v. Ins. Co.	1042, 1807	v. Ind. Board	4c	144 Ark.	2051
v. M'Kelvy	2048	Munnah v. Gates	1671	74 Conn.	1890
v. McKim	1028	Munro v. Callahan	1415	146 Ia.	694, 695, 697,
v. Morris	1684	v. Henderson	2421		2004
v. Pryor	2530	v. Meech	2450	Ky., 65 S. W.	2341
v. Sackett	2580	v. Stowe	716, 783	1 S. D.	2355
v. Union C. L. Ins. Co.	1064	Munroe v. Godkin	64	v. Olderding	1198, 1960
v. U. S.	290, 1398	v. Hartford St. R. Co.	21,	v. Orr	2530
v. Washburn	2465		191, 1066	v. People,	
Mullenback v. Batz	1195	v. Phillips	2111	37 Ill.	1442
Muller v. Hospital Assoc.	987	v. U. S.	2200	213 Ill.	1644
v. Muller	1736	Munshower v. State	1040,	63 N. Y.	390, 851
Mullery v. Hamilton	2529		1041, 1476,	v. Pipkin	1779
Mulligan v. People	1079		1698, 1704	v. Prudential Ins. Co.	1947
v. R. Co.	1067	Munson v. Hastings	1125,	v. Skinner	2595
v. Thompson	2063		1126, 1127, 1129	v. Southern Pac. R.	
Mulliken v. Boyce	1195	Munster v. Ashworth	1371,	Co.	2220
v. Corunna	1164		1378	v. State,	
Mullin v. Boston Elev.		Munyon v. State	580, 2235,	63 Ala.	830, 857
R. Co.	461		2236, 2239	108 Ala.	194, 1270
Mullins v. Com.,		Munz v. R. Co.	2381	118 Ala.	1957
Ky., 67 S. W.	1918	Murchie v. Peck	2444	122 Ga.	2086, 2231
Ky., 79 S. W.	987	Murchison v. Green	2506	43 Nebr.	1839
113 Va.	389, 851,	Murdock v. Adamson	1053,	27 Oh. St.	1072
	1726, 2550		1461	41 Tex. Cr.	1130
v. Lyles	1081	v. Gould	2465	Tex. Cr., 143	
v. Shrewsbury	1058	v. Hunter	1513	S. W.	2062
Mullin's Estate	678, 2315,	v. Mfg. Co.	1244	108 Wis.	987
	2390	v. State	382, 413	124 Wis.	2056, 2281,
Mulliner v. Bronson	437	v. Sumner	1800, 2349,		2363
Mullis v. Cavins	1676a		2570	v. Waterhouse	2312, 2498
Mulroy v. Jacobson	2120	v. Taylor	1466, 2016, 2520	Murray v. Bethune	1971
Mulry v. Ins. Co.	1947	Murella v. Reyes	18	v. Board	1951
Multnomah L. & B. Co.		Murieta v. Wolfhagen	702	v. Bogue	371
v. Weston B. & B. Co.	2594	Murmutt v. State	1066	v. Buchanan	1188, 1195
Mulvay v. Hanes	568	Murphey v. State	1896	v. Cone	1779
Mulville v. Ins. Co.	97	Murphree v. Senn	233, 689	v. Coster	1062
Mumford v. Gething	2465	Murphy v. Atlanta & C.		v. Dickens	745, 751
v. Sewall	1350	A. L. R. Co.	261	v. Dublin	1876
v. Thomas	1202	v. Backer	21, 377, 1021	v. Duff	1681
v. Tolman	2444	v. Black	2432	v. Elston	2200, 2219

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Murray v. Fowler	1567	Mutual Life Ins. Co. v.		Nabors v. Goldforb	768
v. Gregory	1256	Hillmon	1714, 1725, 1726	Nabower v. State	2062, 2522
v. Hennessey	2500	v. Jonah	321	Nachibman, Re	2283
v. Hoboken L. & I.		v. Leubrie	568, 1938	Nachman, Re	2282
Co.	1356	v. Logan	1459	Nader v. State	280
v. Milner	1492, 1495, 2063	v. Mettler	2531	Nadin v. Bassett	1411
v. Moore	341	v. Owen	2381	Nadler v. Stearn	1062
v. R. Co.,		v. Painter	2221	Naftzger v. Buser	2444
N. H., 54 Atl.	1750	v. Selby	266, 1081, 2296	Nagel v. St. Louis T.	
64 S. C.	2465	v. Suiter	2018	Co.	1034
16 Utah	568	v. Thomson	1877	Nager v. Reid	283
v. State,		v. Wiswell	2540	Nagle v. Boston & N.	
Ark., 236 S. W.	1043	Myatt v. Walker	2540	St. R. Co.	1576
43 Ga.	2071	Myer's Will	232, 1081, 1938,	v. Schnadt	698
Ga., App., 110			2384, 2386	v. U. S.	2572
S. E.	2513	Myers v. Baker	2094	Nailey v. Carpet Co.	283
v. Supreme Hive	1644, 1671	v. Beals	1195	Najac v. R. Co.	718
v. Supreme Lodge	1644,	v. Bernstein	1779	Najour, In re	1699
	1646	v. Brownell	1352	Nall v. Conover	1705
v. Third National		v. Com.	2512	v. Kelly	1710
Bank	913	v. Currie	73	Nalle v. Fenwick	1312
v. Toland	1073	v. Eby	1347, 1635	Names v. Ins. Co.	786
v. U. S.	701	v. Independence	2509	Nance v. Callender	1554
Murrell v. Industrial		v. Kinzie	1086	Nancy v. Snell	1247
Commission	2463	v. Ladd	2476	Napa S. Hospital v.	
v. State	276	v. Litts	608	Dasso	2529
Murtey v. Allen	2573	v. Manlove	18	Napier v. Elliott	1777
Muser, Re	4c	v. Moore-Kile Co.	95	v. Greenzweig	682
Musgrave v. Anglin	1651,	v. Murphy	18	v. Little	791, 793
	1681	v. Myers	1081	Narcida v. Bowen	2195
Mushol v. Benjamin	2065	v. People	18	Nardinger v. Ladies of	
Mushrow v. Graham	1407	v. Sarl	2462, 2463	the Maccabees	2510
Music v. Com.	390, 1839,	v. State,		Narregang v. Brown Co.	1350
	2060	62 Ala.	247	Nash, Re	343
Musick v. Barney	1677	Fla., 31 So.	770, 1021,	v. Classen	1704,
v. Ray	912, 1389		1041		2556
Muskeget Island Club		97 Ga.	969, 2100, 2264	v. Gilkeson	64
v. Nantucket	561, 714	151 Ga.	2059	v. Harrington	2498
Muskegon v. Lumber		137 Md.	748, 1456	v. Hoxie	89, 1938
Co.	1248	51 Nebr.	987	v. Hunt	1938
Muskogee Electric T.		7 Tex. App.	2059, 2060	v. Layton	1856c
Co. v. McIntire	2509	33 Tex.	247	v. Minn. T. I. & T.	
Muskogee Gas & El. Co.		v. Taylor	2446	Co.	581
v. State	4c, 1230	v. Toscan	2016	v. State,	
Mussel v. Tama Co.	1352	v. Weger	736	73 Ark.	2364
Musselman G. Co. v.		Myers' Estate	987, 1244	2 Greene	1389
Casler	1062	Myerstown Bank v.		61 Tex. Cr.	2062
Musser v. Hyde	1352	Roessler	944, 2442	Nashua Savings Bank v.	
v. State	1079	Mygatt v. Tarbell	392	Anglo-American L. M.	
Mutter v. Lime Co.	1078	Myhra v. Chicago M. &		& A. Co.	1684
Mutual Benefit Co., Re	2531	P. S. R. Co.	688	Nashville & C. R. Co.	
Mutual Ben. Life Ins.		Myler v. Fidelity M. L.		v. Carroll	1955
Co. v. Brown	2008,	Ins. Co.	2416	v. Tyne	455
	2016	Mynatt v. Hudson	928, 1117	Nashville C. & St. L. R.	
v. Higginbotham	2120	Mynd v. Francis	2257	Co. v. Brundige	1958
v. Martin	2531	Myrberg v. Baltimore &		v. Lawson	1128
v. Robinson	1699, 2581	L. M. & R. Co.	2220	Nashville I. R. Co. v.	
v. Tisdale	1347	Myrick v. U. S.	2276	Barnum	987
Mutual Industrial I. Co.				Nason v. Jordan	1273
v. Perkins	288			Nass v. Vanswearingen	2222,
Mutual Life Ins. Co. v.					2223
Boyle	1725			Nathan v. Brand	463
v. Bratt	1698			v. Jacob	1234
v. Griesa	1862, 2216, 2221			v. Sands	908

## N



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Nation v. People	950	National Ulster Co.		Neely v. Strong	1869a
National Acc. Soc. v.		Bank v. Madden	736, 738,	v. Western Allegheny	
Ralstin	7a		754	R. Co.	463
v. Spiro,		National Union v. Saw-		Neff v. Neff	758, 759,
78 Fed.	2008,	yer	7a		761, 2498
	2016, 2153	National Zinc Co. v. In-		Negociacion Agricola v.	
94 Fed.	1633, 1681	dustrial Commission	2531	Love	1053
National B. & L. Co. v.		Nations v. State	493, 1128	Negus v. Reynal	1199
Dunn	451	Natoma W. & M. Co.		Nehring v. McMurrian	270,
National Bank v. Arm-		v. Clarkin	1239		1789, 2483
strong	2007	Naugher v. State	246, 1038	Nehrling v. Herold Co.	749
v. Delano	2310	Nauman v. Zoerhlaut	786	Neiberger v. McCul-	
v. Emmitt	2516	Naumberg v. Young	2431,	lough	1350
v. Galland	1674		2434	Neice v. Chicago & A.	
v. National Bank	2287	Navajo-Apache Bank &		R. Co.	2341
National Bank of C. v.		T. Co. v. Willis	1078	Neidy v. Littlejohn	2593
New Bedford	1704	Nave v. Baird	2312	Neil v. Childs	905, 913
National Bank of Mon-		v. Flack	458	v. Miller	2130
ticello v. Bryant	2579	v. Tucker	682, 1770	v. Thorn	1890
National Biscuit Co. v.		Nave's Adm'r v. Wil-		Neill v. Brackett	1081, 1938
Nolan	21	liams	167, 1605, 1974	v. Devonshire	378, 1593
v. Wilson	2509	Nawn v. Boston &		v. Kees	2054
National Building Ass'n		Maine R. Co.	16, 1750	Neilson v. Crawford	1074
v. Quinn	95, 1078	Naylor v. Semmes	2223	v. Ins. Co.	1668
National Cash-Register		Neal v. Com.	2511a	v. R. Co.,	
Co. v. Leland	6, 1960	v. Erving	1249	67 Conn.	1415
v. Navy C. R. Co.	1657	v. Missouri Pac. R.		58 Wis.	992, 1168,
National Cereal Co. v.		Co.	1976		1943
Alexander	1129	v. Neal	2015	Nekoosa-Edwards Paper	
National Citizens' Bank		v. Novelty Leather		Co. v. News Pub. Co.	2257,
v. Thro	17	Works	1406		2259a, 2281, 2282
National City Bank v.		v. R. Co.	2495	Nelius v. Brickell	1316, 1513
Zimmer V. R. Co.	2596	v. State,		Nelms v. State,	
National Council v.		178 Ind.	1117	123 Ga.	56
Owen	1034	104 Neb.	18, 2276,	13 Sm. & M.	1033,
v. Silver	2450		2272		1448, 2354
National Express & T.		v. Thornton	1062	v. Steiner	29, 288, 334,
Co. v. Morris	1074	Neale v. American E. V.			344, 944, 2498
National Fire Ins. Co.		Co.	2434	Nelson v. Bank	463, 1078,
v. Hanberg	1960	v. McKinstry	1185		1335, 1530, 1675
National Fuel Co. v.		Neall v. U. S.	2026	v. Becker	2312
McNulty	1951	Neally v. Greenough	1060,	v. Blakey	1275, 1680
National German A.			1196, 1205,	v. Branford L. & W.	
Bank v. Lawrence	2233,		1207, 1267	Co.	2566
	2240, 2242, 2243	Nealy v. Brown	2534	v. Bridport	690, 1271, 1697
National Granite Bank		Neathery v. People	111	v. Evans	74
v. Whicher	1576	Nebonne v. R. Co.,		v. Georgia C. & N. R.	
National Machine Co.		67 N. H.	1078	Co.	1750
v. Benthall Machine		68 N. H.	1158, 1921	v. Gough	1213
Co.	2498	Nebraska Bridge S. &		v. Grondahl	93
National Masonic A.		L. Co. v. Jeffrey	2509	v. Haywood Co.	1350
Ass'n v. Burr	95	Nebraska Expos. Ass'n		v. Imperial Water-	
v. Shryock	1750	v. Townley	2435	proof Co.	913
National Provincial		Nebraska Nat'l Bank		v. Ins. Co.,	
Bank v. Jackson	2456	v. Johnson	2498	110 Ia.	2384, 2390
National Rubber Co. v.		Neece v. Neece	291	71 N. Y.	561
Oleson	2065	Needham v. Halverson	716	v. Iverson,	
National Society for the		v. Ide	1938	17 Ala.	1779
Prevention of Cruelty		v. Smith	586	24 Ala.	64, 1029,
to Children v. Scottish		v. State	2375		1778, 2115
National Society for		Neel v. Potter	1738	v. Land Co.	1195
the Prevention, etc.	2463	Neeley v. State	1751	v. Nat'l Drill Mfg. Co.	1198
National Trust Co. v.		Neely v. Carter	2105	v. Oneida	2383
Gleason	522	v. Shepard	1958	v. Pauli	1064

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Nelson v. Pierce	2498	New Boston v. Dun-		New York C. & H. R.	
v. Potter	1658	barton	157, 1267, 2522	R. Co. v. U. S.	291
v. R. Co.,		New England Bank v.		New York Central Ins.	
38 Ia.	1029	Lewis	2123	Co. v. U. S. Radi-	
104 Mich.	1698	New England D. M. &		ator Co.	1951
v. Southern P. Co.	461	W. Co. v. Standard		v. Watson	1073
v. State,		Worsted Co.	2465	New York Central R.	
130 Ala., 32 So.	1750	New England Glass Co.		Co. v. Stoneman	2465
16 Ariz.	247	v. Lovell	1923, 1976	New York Dry Dock	
32 Ark.	1329	New England L. & T.		v. Hicks	1651, 1677
10 Humph.	2349	Co. v. Robinson	2516	New York El. Eq. Co.	
2 Swan	1035, 1124,	New England M. S. Co.		v. Blair	18, 675,
1750, 1839, 1840		v. Anderson	1213		1921, 1951
Tex. Cr., 58		New Era Ass'n v. Mac-		New York Evening Post	
S. W.	1732	tavish	1947	v. Chaloner	492, 497,
v. Terr.	1620	New Gloucester v.			2556
v. Union R. Co.	252	Bridgham	105, 1732	New York H. & N. R.	
v. U. S.,		New Hampshire F. I.		Co. v. Hunt	1187
201 U. S.	1859d, 2200,	Co. v. Healey	2363	New York Iron Mine v.	
	2210	New Hampshire T. Co.		Negaunee Bank	1888,
v. U. S. Pet. C. C.	1391	v. Korsmeyer P. & H.			1890
v. Welch	1807	Co.	2104	New York L. & W. R.	
v. Whitfield	1276	New Haven & H. Co.		Co.'s Petition	2592, 2593
v. Whittall	1513, 2529	v. Goodwin	1554, 1561	New York Life Ins. Co.,	
v. Wood	571	New Haven Co. Bank v.		v. Aitkin	2477
Nelson's Estate	2314, 2384	Mitchell	736, 747, 2152	v. Brame	2531
Nelson's Will	1739	New Jersey Case	1712	v. Holck	2531
Nelson & Sons v. Nelson		New Jersey Express Co.		v. Johnson	2341
Line	1859c	v. Nichols	786	v. Lahr	2486
Nelson & Wallace v.		New Jersey I. & I. R.		v. Long	2452
Gibson	759	Co. v. Tutt	1651	v. Neasham	1667
Nelson Theatre Co. v.		New Jersey R. & T. Co.		v. People	2270
Nelson	463, 1944	v. Suydam	1651, 1677,	v. Rankin	1062, 1808
Nelthrop v. Johnson	2109		2105	v. Slocum	1725, 2336
Neosho V. I. Co. v.		New Jersey Traction		New York N. H. & H.	
Hannum	1225	Co. v. Brabban	1976	R. R. Co. v. Bene-	
Nepean v. Knight	2531, 2538	New Jersey Zinc & I.		dict	2143
Nesbit v. Crosley	1977	Co. v. L. Z. & I. Co.	561,	v. Horgan	1275
v. People	1350, 2382		1254, 1530, 1696, 1700	v. Offield	2572
v. State	1443	New London Cred. Syn-		New York, Newf. & L.	
Nesbitt v. Turner	2525	dicate v. Neale	2444	Tel. Co., Re	2287
Ness v. Escanaba	792	New Mexico v. Denver &		New York P. & N. R.	
Nett v. Bonfig	73	R. G. R. Co.	2580	Co. v. Jones	665, 2496
Netter v. Brett	1658	New Milford v. Sherman	1640,	v. Thomas	456
Neubert v. Armstrong			1678	New York S. & W. R.	
W. Co.	95, 1203	New Orleans v. Locke	1878	Co. v. Moore	794
Neubrandt v. State	351	New Orleans & N. E. R.		Newark E. L. & P. R.	
Neuffer v. Moehn	1085	Co. v. Mobly	505, 507	Co. v. Ruddy	2509
Neuman v. R. Co.	2220	New Orleans J. & G.		Newbern v. Newbern	2415,
Neuval v. Cowell	2132	N. R. Co. v. Allbritton	569		2437
Nevan v. Roup	1378, 1414	New Portland v. King-		Newberry v. Carpenter	2183,
Nevil v. Johnson	1388	field	1022, 1026, 1028, 2535		2221, 2264
Neville v. Kretschmar	2431	New River Mineral Co.		v. State	1442
v. Northcutt	1554	v. Roanoke C. & C.		v. Watts	2592
v. State	821, 1958	Co.	2534	Newbold v. Lamb	1508, 1511
Nevins v. Nevins	1730	New York, The	2573	Newbolt v. Pryce	2477
Nevling v. Com.	111, 247	v. R. Co.	1225	Newburgh v. Newburgh	1670
New v. Smith	389, 1409	New York & B. F. Co.		Newburyport v. Booth-	
New Albany & S. R. Co.		v. Moore	154	bay	2083
v. Huff	1943	New York & L. I. B. Co.		Newby, In re	2498
New Albany & V. P. R.		v. Smith	1350	v. Security Co.	2447
Co. v. Stallcup	1064	New York C. & H. R. R.		Newcastle v. Broxtowe	1588,
New Bell J. C. Co. v.		Co. v. Difendaffer	2415,		1594
Oxendine	2410		2494	v. Haywood	2515



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Newcomb v. Burbank	1859	Newsom v. Luster	1225, 1320, 1321, 1513	Nichols v. Nichols,	
v. Drummond	1267			2 Phillim.	2411
v. Griswold	981, 987, 1005, 1263, 1270	Newstrom v. R. Co.	2336, 2341	v. Ore Co.	1971
v. Noble	1244			v. R. Co.	682
v. State,		Newton v. Bank	1664	v. Ridley	1664
37 Miss.	111, 247, 953, 1022, 1732	v. Belcher	1058	v. Rosenfeld	2410
49 Tex. Cr.	18, 792	v. Chaplin	2211, 2307	v. State	2062
Newcomb's Estate, Re	2383	v. Consolidated Gas Co.	1541	v. Stewart	1126
Newcomb's Ex'rs v.				v. Suncook Mfg. Co.	2355
Newcomb	1938	v. Fay	2437	v. Wentz	1890, 1938, 1974
Newell v. Boatman's Bank	2509	v. Foot	803		
v. Clapp	1212	v. Harland	2202	Nichols & S. Co. v.	
v. Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co.	65, 2510	v. Ins. Co.	1750	Charlebois	1205
v. Desmond	1416	v. Jackson	1109	v. Skedanuk	1290, 1856a
v. Homer	1028	v. Liddiard	1058	Nichols-Shepard Co. v.	
v. New Holstein C. Co.	2465	v. New York Life Ins. Co.	2536	Ringler	702
v. Newell	2220			Nicholson v. Burkholder	2529
v. Newton	2578	v. Newton	2016	v. Com.	616
v. Nichols	2532	v. Rowe	1416	v. Desobry	1391, 1890
v. Roberts	1459	v. State	1807	v. Eureka L. Co.	704, 2006, 2141, 2165
v. State	826, 1977, 2746	v. Tolles	2417		
v. White	1302	Newton Centre Trust Co. v. Stuart	2020	v. Horton	1239
Newgold v. A. E. N. & M. Co.	2257	Ney v. Mumme	1239	v. Patrick	616
Newhal v. Adams	957	Neylans v. Herndon	1195	v. Snyder	530, 1058, 1066, 1352
Newhall v. Holt	1256	Ng Choy Fong v. U. S.	1354		
v. Jenkins	815	Niagara F. Ins. Co. v.		v. State,	
Newham v. Raithby	1644	Greene	1951	117 Ala.	2497
Newhouse v. Miller	613	v. Whittaker	1205	38 Md.	826, 832
Newis v. Lark	1177, 2094	Nias v. R. Co.	2294	v. Tarpey	1205, 2448
Newkirk v. State	457, 561	Nibbo v. Ede	1856	v. Withers	735, 753
Newland v. Graham	1712	Niccolls v. Foster	2349	Nickell, Re	2257
v. Reeves	1894	Nicely v. Nicely	961, 2498	Nickerson v. Buck	1511
Newlin v. Lyon	1086	Nicewander v. Nicewander	1215	v. Gould	39, 377
Newman v. Bradley	1911, 2117	Nichamin v. U. S.	2496	v. Morin	1557
		Nichol v. Ridley	1186	v. Spindell	1236
v. Cobleigh	1225	Nicholas v. Austin	613	v. State	105, 390, 1966
v. Com.	923, 2273	v. Com.	88, 238, 363	Nickey v. Leader	2578
v. Dodson	1722	v. Kershner	689, 1938	Nickle v. Baldwin	1541, 1544
v. Doe	1633, 1639, 1671, 1674	v. Lansdale	2529		
		Nicholl v. Jones	2319	Nickles v. Seaboard A. L. R. Co.	1062, 1976
v. Mackin	923	Nicholls v. Dowding	770, 772, 778	v. State	1976
v. Newman	1818			Nickolay v. Orr	64
v. People	2060	v. Downes	1072	Nickolizack v. State	1808, 2277
v. Studley	1651	v. Parker	1585, 1588		
v. V. T. C. S. & I. Co.	2110	v. Roland	2508	Nicks v. Rector	1312, 2166
v. Willetts	1681	v. Webb	1362, 1518, 1521, 1523, 1524, 1675	Nickson v. Thomas	527
Newmark v. Ins. Co.	720	Nichols v. Alsop	2134	Nickson's Estate	2498
Newport N. P. Co. v.		v. Bardwell Lodge	2566, 2568	Nicolay v. Mallery	1079
Beaumeister	2510			v. Unger	1960
Newport News & M. V. R. Co. v. Carroll	1158	v. Boston	2522	Nicoll v. Pittsvein Coal Co.	2463, 2465
Newport R. M. Co. v.		v. Goldsmith	1523		
Mason	1951	v. Haynes	1560	Niebalski v. Pennsylv.	2509
Newport's Case	1238	v. Holgate	529	vania R. Co.	2509
Newsam v. Carr	73, 258	v. Hotchkiss	1082	Niebel v. Winslow	2509
Newsom v. Holesapple	1215	v. Howe	1236	Niedginski v. Corgell	987
v. Jackson	1246	v. Jones	1066	Nielson v. Cedar Co.	1013
		v. Kingdom Co.	1278	Nieman v. Schnitker	229, 233
		v. Meyer	18		
		v. New Britain	1072	Niernes v. Niernes	1958
		v. Nichols,		Nies v. Broadhead	792, 794
		147 Mo.	2340	Nightingale v. Scannell	18
				v. State	784
				Niland v. Kalish	2245

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Nile v. State	1800	Nolan v. Salas	1532	Norman v. Wells	663, 1943
Niles v. Brackett	586	Noland v. R. Co.	455	Norman's Will	689, 1938
v. Burke	1082	Nolen v. Harden	2235, 2336, 2341	Norman P. S. Co. v. Ford	654, 1074, 2463
v. Hancock	1347	v. State,		Normanshaw v. Nor-	
v. Patch	1778	14 Tex. App.	821	manshaw	2394
v. Sprague	1275, 1492, 1644, 2063	48 Tex. Cr.	200	Norris v. Billingsley	1233, 1651
Niller v. Johnson	2004	Nolin v. Parmer	660, 791	v. Cargill	1067, 1890
Nilson v. Chicago B. & Q. R. Co.	2510	Noll v. Carlin	1730	v. Clinkscales	16, 1194, 2495
Nims v. Johnson	2110	Nolley v. Holmes	1536	v. Crandall	714, 1029
Nininger v. Knox	1623	Nolte v. Chicago	1725	v. Cudahy P. Co.	461
Nino v. People	2501	v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	1158	v. Elmdale Elev. Co.	1975
Niosi v. Laundry	1164	Nonan v. Salas	2130	v. Hall	1573
Nishimura Ekiu v. U. S.	4c, 1355	Noonan v. Ilsley	716, 1943	v. Haverhill	1721
Nix v. Gilmer	620	v. Luther	64, 581	v. Le Neve	1670
v. Hedden	1699	v. Mining Co.	18	v. Monen	1388
v. Thackaberry	1911	v. State,		v. Reed & Co.	2429
Nixon v. Beard	1899	1 Sm. & M.	1776	v. Russell	1195, 1219
v. Brown	2088	55 Wis.	1976	v. St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co.	568
v. McKinney	581, 987	Noone v. Olehy	1738, 2498	v. Spofford	392
v. Mayoh	2307	Nophsker v. Supreme Council	225, 266	v. State,	
v. Omaha & C. B. St. R. Co.	1719	Norbeck v. Davis	2235	16 Ala.	689, 1934, 1938
v. Porter	1511, 1684, 2141	Norberg v. Plummer	1078	87 Ala.	968
v. Snellbaker	1736	Norcross Bros. Co. v. Gohier	2509	3 Humph.	2349, 2354
v. State,		Norcum v. Savage	1067, 1256	North v. Drayton	1195, 1256
31 Tex. Cr.	347	Nordan v. State	1387, 1725, 1750	v. Mallory	18
53 Tex. Cr.	1398	Nordgren v. People	951, 1438, 1446, 1726	North American Acc. Ass'n v. Woodson	682, 1750
Noah v. Angle	1943	Nordon v. Defries	2319	North Austr. T. Co. v. Goldsborough	1263
v. Bowery Savings Bank	1951	Norfleet v. Com.	1750	North Bank v. Abbot	1521, 1531
Noble v. Epperly	2442	Norflot v. Nelson	1225, 1651	North Brookfield v. Warren	1496, 1503
v. Fickes	2408	Norfolk v. Gaylord	2276, 2279	North Cheshire & M. B. Co. v. Manchester B. Co.	1921
v. Hunter	2503	v. Germaine	398	North Chicago R. M. Co. v. Monka	1696
v. Kennoway	379	Norfolk's Divorce Suit	932, 1982	North Chicago St. R. Co. v. Anderson	961
v. Martins	1407	Norfolk & C. R. Co. v. Lumber Co.	1078, 1951	v. Dudgeon	966
v. Mead-Morrison Mfg. Co.	2556	Norfolk & W. R. Co. v. Bell	461	v. Kaspers	461
v. People	1817	v. Birchett	2509	v. Louis	2507
v. R. Co.	283	v. Briggs	456	v. Zeiger	2203
Nobles v. State,		v. Denny's Adm'r	2536	North Durham Case	2214
98 Ga.	851	v. Henderson	460	North Jersey St. R. Co. v. Purdy	2509
127 Ga.	398	v. Hoover	249, 250	North Memphis S. Bank v. Union B. & C. Co.	2509
Noblesville & E. G. R. Co. v. Gause	569	v. Prindle	613	North Pacific L. Co. v. W. S. M. L. & M. Co.	1078
Noblitt v. Durbin	1779	v. Reeves	719	North Pennsylvania R. Co. v. Bank	2494
Nodin v. Murray	1234	Norfolk R. & L. Co. v. Corletto	1976	North River Ins. Co. v. Dyche	618
Nodle v. Hawthorne	1779	v. Spratley	1976, 2509	North Shore Improve-ment Co. v. New York P. & N. R. Co.	2440
Noel v. Dickey	922, 923	Norfolk Southern R. Co. v. Fentress	1003		
v. O'Neill	1577	Norma, The	750, 751, 1530		
Noel, Motion of	759	Norman v. Beaumont	2352		
Noel's Case	2281	v. Kentucky Board	1350, 2592		
Noelle v. Hoquiam L. & S. Co.	2389	v. McCarthy	2409		
Nokes v. Milward	1644	v. Morrell	2024, 2027		
Nolan v. Barnes	1491	v. Norman	2444		
v. Garrison	1411	v. State	2239		
v. Guggerty	2437				
v. Newton St. R. Co.	683				
v. Otney	2408				
v. Pelham	1195				
v. R. Co.	987				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
North Star Tp. v. Cowdry	2451	Northwestern M. F. Ass'n v. Northern P. R. Co.	2509	Noyes v. Meharry	462
North Stonington v. Stonington	1777	Northwestern Mut. L. Ins. Co. v. Johnson	1725	v. Merrill	1082
North Texas C. Co. v. Bostick	1821	v. Sun Ins. Office	1164, 1168	v. State	580
Northampton Co. v. Innes	2203	Northwestern R. Co. v. Hack	1029	v. Thorpe	1856c, 2260
Northeastern Nebr. R. Co. v. Frazier	714, 1943	Northwood v. Keating	2525	v. Tootle	1013
Northeastern R. Co. v. Hastings	2463	Norton v. Clark	1738, 2119, 2314, 2500	Noyes Estate v. Granite-Alaska Co.	2433
Northern Ala. R. Co. v. Mansell	461	v. Kramer	437	Nueva Anna, The	2566
v. Shea	1951	v. Moore	1938, 1975	Nugent v. Cudahy P. Co.	2390
Northern Ass. Co. v. Meyer	2415	v. Parsons	779, 1969, 2097	v. State	133, 923, 987
Northern Central Co. v. Hughes	1078	v. Pettibone	1082	Nundocomar's (Maharajah) Trial	2378
Northern C. R. Co. v. State	664	v. Smith	2465	Nunnally v. State	2059
Northern Line P. Co. v. Shearer	614	v. Warner	53, 75	Nurse v. Bunn	2122
Northern Mo. R. Co. v. Akers	1951	v. Willis	463	Nussbaum v. R. Co.	1018
Northern Pacific R. Co. v. Alderson	790	Norwalk v. Ireland	747	v. State	2582
v. Charles	767	Norway, The	803	Nusscar v. Arnold	64, 1081
v. Dixon	2509	Norwegian Plow Co. v. Hanthorn	1044	Nussey v. Jeffery	2472
v. Hayes	21, 660	v. Munger	2153	Nutall v. Brannin	1195, 1258
v. Keyes	1230, 1530, 2203	Norwell v. Oury	1389	Nute v. Hamilton Mut. Ins. Co.	7a
v. Mentzer	455	Norwich Ins. Co. v. Oregon R. Co.	2451	v. Nute	728, 1037, 1040, 1041, 1043
v. Peterson	2552	Norwood v. Green	1651	Nutt v. Fry	1873
v. Rogers	456	v. Kenfield	1712	Nuttallburg S. M. F. Co. v. First Nat'l Bank	1347
v. Urlin	770, 1719, 1951	v. Marrow	233, 1740, 1938	Nutter v. O'Donnell	1051, 1133, 1873, 1874
Northern Supply Co. v. Wangard	1951	v. State	2243, 2336	v. Railroad	571
Northern Trust Co. v. First Nat'l Bank	1530	Norwood & B. Co. v. Andrews	928	v. Ricketts	1163
v. Hiltgen	2444	Nossaman v. Nossaman	1244, 2505	Nutting v. Watson	2034
Northfield v. Plymouth	19, 2159	Nostrum v. Halliday	1280	Nutzmann v. Ins. Co.	1984
v. Vershire	2083	Nourie v. Theobald	1951	Nuzum v. Springer	905
Northington v. State	1807	Nourse v. Finch	2475	Nydes v. Royal Neighbors	2034
Northrop v. Hale	1492	v. Nourse	1777	Nye v. Daniels	2378
v. Hatch	987, 2223, 2256, 2279	v. State	2059	v. Dibley	461
v. Knowles	1603, 1644, 2083, 2159, 2167	Nova Scotia Steel Co. v. Bartlett	1225	v. Foreman	2478
v. Wright	1311, 1321, 1513, 2137, 2141	Noverre v. Noverre	2067	v. Gribble	1225
Northrup v. Columbian L. Co.	1082, 2143, 2470	Novitzky v. Knickerbocker Ice Co.	1671	v. Lowry	1648
v. Jackson	1257	Novotny v. Danforth	1890	v. Merriam	1042
Northumberland Coal Co. v. Clement	1956	Nowack v. R. Co.	280	v. Otis	2097
Northwest E. I. Co. v. Campbell	2047	Nowakowski v. New York & N. S. Fr. Co.	1821	v. Spencer	1064
Northwestern Elev. Co. v. Great Northern R. Co.	1557	Nowell v. Chipman	1078	v. Thompson	74
		v. Wright	1951	Nygard v. Minneapolis St. R. Co.	2417
		Nowlan's Case	1712		
		Nowlin v. Burwell	2141	O	
		Noyes v. Belding	1890	Oahu R. & L. Co. v. Kaili	1778
		v. Boston & Maine R. Co.	199	Oakes v. Finley	1351
		v. Brown	1623, 1959	v. Hill	1678
		v. Commercial Trav. E. A. Ass'n	7a	v. State	581, 2557
		v. Gardner	252	v. U. S.	1633
		v. Marston	2337	v. Weston	1951
				Oakey v. Bank	530
				Oakland P. Co. v. Hilton	1350
				Oakley v. State	1138
				Oaks v. Weller	95, 1258
				Oas v. Roa	1058
				Oates v. U. S.	19

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Oatis v. Brown	1086, 2354	O'Callaghan v. Murphy	1390	O'Donnell v. Pollock	1960
Oats v. U. S.	987	O'Carroll v. Hastings	2452	v. Segar	782, 1871, 1890
O'Bannon v. McArron	1352	Ocean Accident & G.		O'Driscoll v. R. Co.	1576
O'Barr v. Alexander	2354	Co. v. Industrial	4c, 1417	Oestreich v. Chicago	
v. U. S.	1807	Ocean S. S. Co. v. Ætna		St. P. M. & O. R. Co.	2416
Ober v. Carson	1871	Ins. Co.	2463	Oetjen v. Central	
Oberg v. Breen	1539	v. Wilder	2110	Leather Co.	2566
Obermann Brewing Co.		Och v. R. Co	2509	Offutt v. Doyle	2432
v. Adams	2155	Ochoa v. State	1955	v. Expos. Co.	2494
Obermeyer v. Lageman		Ochsenreiter v. Elev. Co.	571	Ofner, In re	2467, 2474
C. M. Co.	2382	Ochsner v. Com.	987	O'Gara v. Eisenlohr	2083
Obermier v. Core	1664	O'Connell v. Cease	2473	Ogden v. Dodge Co.	1085,
Obernalte v. Edgar	779	v. Cox	1565, 1777		1778
O'Berry v. State	1163, 1802	v. Dow	582, 987, 1304,	v. Gibbons	2201
O'Blenis v. State	62		1352, 1890, 2421	v. Illinois	660, 1977
O'Boyle v. Com.	397, 1442,	v. King	1067	v. Industrial Com.	4c
	1722	v. Walker	1675	v. Parsons	1955
v. State	2061	v. Ward	1041	v. State	1819
O'Brian v. Com.	1375	O'Conner v. Ins. Co.	616	Ogden L. & I. R. Co. v.	
O'Brien, Re	2245	O'Connor, Re	2475	Jones	2354
v. Bonfield	1303, 1510	v. Adekman	2509	Ogle v. Cook	1304
v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	2510	v. American I. M. Co.	1389	v. Pelaski	586
v. Cheney	2099	v. Dunn	1524, 1567,	O'Grady v. People	2060
v. Com.	363		1665	O'Hagan v. Dillon	655, 777
v. Flynn	2054	v. Lighthizer	2410	O'Hagan's Will	1512
v. Keefe	1270, 1871	v. Madison	689, 1081, 1938	O'Hara v. State	1350
v. Knotts	18, 1081	v. Malone	1644	v. Wells	682
v. La Crosse	2220	v. Marjoribanks	2228,	O'Hare v. Chicago M. &	
v. Look	1951		2232, 2237	N. R. Co.	463
v. New England M. L.		v. Mennie	2509	v. Dackworth	1082
Ins. Co.	1671, 2312	v. Slaker	1302	O'Hearn v. State	1072
v. O'Brien,		v. Traction Co.	2509	Ohio v. Hinchman	1681, 2573
285 Ill.	2408	O'Connor's Estate,		Ohio & I. T. Co. v. Fish-	
27 N. Br.	2118	118 Cal.	1067	burn	1951
19 N. D.	2408	101 Nebr.	695, 1302,	Ohio & M. R. Co. v.	
v. Paterson B. & M.			1404, 1873, 1997, 2014	Dunn	2494
Co.	2444	O'Connor Co. v. Gil-		v. Heaton	688
v. People	1938	laspy	1750	v. Stein	728
v. Rhembe's Estate	1302,	O'Connor M. & M. Co.		Ohio B. S. V. Co. v. Ind.	
	1513	v. Dickson	2498	Board	41, 1671,
v. St. Louis Transit		O'Day v. Crabb	961, 2203,		2082, 2090
Co.	1414		2503	Ohio Copper M. Co. v.	
v. South Omaha L. S.		v. Meyers	916, 1890	Hutchings	1383
Exchange	4e	v. Spencer	1523	Ohio Farmers' Ins. Co.	
v. Spalding	2303, 2314,	O'Dea v. Michigan C. R.		v. Dobbs	1667
	2315	Co.	1721	Ohio Ins. Co. v. Nune-	
v. Stambach	736	Odegard v. North Wis.		macher	1245
v. State,		L. Co.	283	Ohio Nat'l Bank v.	
125 Ind.	2265	Odell v. Culbert	1561	Berlin	1635
Nebr., 96 N. W.	1079	O'Dell v. Goff	228, 1738	Ohio Oil Co. v. Indus-	
v. Sullivan	2220	v. Koppee	935, 1817,	trial Com.	618
v. U. S.	749, 1207		1818, 1820	Ohio, etc. R. Co. v.	
v. Woburn	2572	v. State	770, 2272	Ridge	2572
O'Brien Lumber Co. v.		Oden v. State	247, 1807	Ohio Valley Mills v.	
Wilkinson	2464	v. Stubblefield	261, 1778,	Louisville R. Co.	1040
O'Brion v. Columbia			1779	Ohio Valley P. Works	
N. L. Ins. Co.	7a	Odiorne v. Bacon	782, 1186	v. Oneida S. P. Co.	2463
O'Bryan v. Allen,		v. Winkley	586, 991	Ohio Valley Water Co.	
95 Mo.	1842	Odom v. State	233, 569, 689	v. Ben Avon Borough	4a
108 Mo.	7	O'Donnell v. Johns	2144	Ohlsen v. Terrero	770, 774
Ocala F. & M. W. v.		v. O'Donnell	2437	Ohlson v. Central Kan-	
Lester	2123	v. People,		sas P. Co.	2349
O'Callaghan v. Dell-		Coio., 204 Pac.	862	v. Sac. Co. F. M. F.	
wood Park Co.	2509	224 Ill.	18, 1270	Ins. Ass'n	2511



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1865; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ohrmundt v. Spiegelhoff	1163	Ollert v. Ziebell	682, 1072	Oneale v. Com.	2066, 2088
O'Keefe v. State	2056	Olmstead v. Miller	2097	O'Neale v. Walton	745, 748, 759
v. U. S.	1684	v. Oregon S. L. R. Co.	2487	O'Neil v. Attorney-Gen-eral	6b
Oklahoma City v. Stewart	2354	v. Webb	1873, 2312, 2314	v. Hanscom	1974
Oklahoma R. Co. v. Thomas	199, 2220	v. Winsted Bank	900, 907	v. Mining Co.	382
Oklahoma State Bank v. Buzzard	2103	Olmsted v. Edson	1856a, 2195, 2232	v. Potts	461, 792
Okuu v. Kaiakawaha	2437	v. Gere	569, 681, 1951	v. R. Co.	1951
O'Laughlin v. Poll	2441	Olsen v. Andrews	199, 221	v. Vanderburg	1085
Old Ben Coal Co. v. Ind. Com.	4c	v. Lantulum	258, 2554	v. West Branch	252
Old Colony R. Co. v. Robinson Co.	463	v. N. P. Lumber Co.	1163	O'Neill v. Lauderdale	1487
Old Colony Trust Co. v. Di Cola	1081, 1938	v. R. Co.	1976	v. Lowell	950
Old Wayne N. L. Ass'n v. McDonough	2168	v. Rogers	378	v. Read	1053
Olden v. Field	1681	Olson v. Aubolee	1884	Ong v. Cole	2297
Oldenburg v. Oregon Sugar Co.	1003	v. Court of Honor	2391	Ong Chair Co. v. Cook	1389
Oldenburg's Goods	1674	v. Modern Woodmen	7a	Onondaga Co. Bank v. Bates	1635
Oldham v. Com.	1873	v. Peterson	1062, 2061	Onstott v. Edel	1911
Olds v. Congor	1195	v. Pike	2509	Ontario & W. C. F. Co. v. Hamilton	1856a
v. Powell	1777	v. R. Co.	1976	Opinion of the Justices	1350, 1356
Oldstadt v. Linehan	254	v. Swenson	1779	Opp v. Pryor	682
O'Leary v. Lawrence	1603, 2506	Olson Co. v. Brady	2579	Oppenheimer v. R. Co.	1195
v. Mankato	283	Olthoff v. Great Northern R. Co.	561	Orama v. Oyanguren	2527
Oleson v. Somogyi	2528	Olympia v. Nickert	2572	Orange v. State	63
v. State	1135, 1136, 1138, 2061	Omaha v. Jensen	1404	Orange Belt R. Co. v. Craver	714
v. Tolford	1951, 1976	v. Yancey	95	Orange Co. F. E. v. Hubbell	944
Oliphant v. Ferrant	1219, 1680	Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v. Krayenbuhl	1013	Orange R. M. Co. v. McIlhenny	1067
v. Liversedge	2066	v. Walker	1168	Orchard v. Collier	1225
v. Taggart	1312	Omaha Bridge Cases	1876	Orcutt v. Cook	616
Olitsky v. Estersohn	2503	Omaha L. & T. Co. v. Douglas Co.	561, 1263	Ord v. McKee	1225
Olive v. Adams	1203, 2218	Omaha Nat'l Bank v. Thompson	944	v. Nash	1387, 1404
v. Gwin	1681, 2164	Omaha South. R. Co. v. Beeson	792, 796	v. Ord	1085
v. Olive	1876	Omaha St. R. Co. v. Boesen	1032, 2509	Order of U. C. Travellers v. Barnes	1770
v. State	194, 195, 290, 783, 949, 988	v. Elkins	1404	Ordinary v. Thatcher	2420
Oliver v. Gray	2117	v. Emminger	1158	Ordway v. Conroe	1681
v. Haywood	2257	v. Larson	571	v. Haynes	791, 794, 1700
v. Henderson	2474, 2477	O'Malley v. Com.	665	O'Regan v. Canadian P. R. Co.	2556
v. Morawetz	377	v. Grady	2435	v. Trench	1041
v. Pate	258, 988, 2327, 2375	O'Mara v. Com.	1975	Oregon & Cal. R. Co. v. Grubissich	1066, 1074, 2130, 2522
v. Persons	1188, 1651, 1676a	v. Lamb	2199	Oregon Pottery Co. v. Kern	716, 994
v. R. Co., Ky., 32 S. W.	1388	Omberg v. U. S. Mut. Ass'n	1722	Oregon S. S. Co. v. Otis	95, 1236, 1281
170 Mass.	681, 682	O'Meara v. McDermott	1388, 1404	Orendorff v. Suit	1352
65 S. C.	1387, 1719	O'Mellia v. R. Co.	1698	Orient Ins. Co. v. Daggs	1354
v. Ross	2498	Omichund v. Barker	29, 1174, 1193, 1268, 1306, 1309, 1431, 1645, 1674, 1676b, 1817, 1818, 1832, 2138	v. Northern P. R. Co.	461
v. State,		Omlie v. O'Toole	578	O'Riley v. Clampet	1066, 1263
17 Ala.	293, 1442	Onbie's Case	2290	Orion K. Mills v. U. S. F. & G. Co.	2442
38 Fla.	363	Onderdonk's Trial	2032	Orland v. Farrell	2103
106 Ga.	93	O'Neal v. McKinna	1195	Orme v. Crockford	2281
v. U. S.	1821	v. Sovereign Woodman	2408	Ormerod v. St. George's Ironworks	1857, 1859
Oliverius v. Wicks	1700	v. State	967		
Olleman v. Kilgore	1225	v. Tennessee C. D. & R. Co.	1311, 2145		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2234; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ormond v. Hutchinson	2121, 2122	Osby v. Reynolds	2419, 2420	Ovenston v. Wilson	702, 1994, 2153
Ormsby v. Ihmsen	1956	Oscanyon v. Arms Co.	2590, 2594	Over v. Schiffing	17, 581
v. Webb	1081	Osgood v. Chicago	437, 1164	Overall v. Overall	1304
Oro W. L. & P. Co. v. Oroville	1859d	v. Coates	1257, 1778	Overend v. Superior Court	2271, 2276
O'Rourke v. Commissioner	2358	v. Dewey	2016, 2024	Overholt v. Matthews	2503
O'Rourke v. Darbishire	1858, 1859, 2298, 2312	v. Manhattan Co.	1081, 1086	Overpeck's Will	1958
v. O'Rourke	1010	v. Skinner	2442	Overseer, etc. of Montclair v. Eason	2061, 2498
Orpen, Re	1442	O'Shea v. People	784	Overstreet v. State	1620
Orr v. Cox	2336	v. R. Co.	2446	Overton v. State	2239
v. F. A. W. & C. Co.	747, 748	v. Wood	1859d, 2294, 2311	v. Tyler	2443
v. Hadley	1373, 1388	Oskamp v. Gadsden	669	v. White	1067
v. Lacey	529	Osmun v. Winters,		Overton's Heirs v. Davison	378
v. Morice	1297, 1298	25 Or.	1770	Overtoom v. R. Co.	736, 1013, 1327, 1329, 1977
v. R. Co.	728	30 Or.	401, 2008, 2016	Owe Sam Goon, Ex parte	4c
v. State,		Osram Lamp Works v. Gabriel Lamp Co.	1856b, 1856c	Owen v. Barksdale	1664
107 Ala.	1021	Ossenkep v. State	1853, 2382	v. Boyle	1271, 1678, 1684
117 Ala.	1951, 1974	Ostendorf v. State	2282	v. Brockschmidt	613
Orris v. Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.	1108, 2509	Ostenson v. Severson	2437	v. Com.	497
Orser v. Orser	1302	Osterhout v. Shoemaker	1671, 2341	v. Henderson	2463
v. Vernon	1311	Ostlund v. Ecklund	112	v. McDermott	1960
Ort v. Fowler	2012, 2016	O'Sullivan v. Overton	1304	v. Mining Co.	797, 2024
Orthwein v. Thomas	2527	Oswald v. Caldwell	2408	v. Owen	2037
Ortez v. Jewett	1021	v. King	1205	v. Palmour	1404, 1668, 2594
Ortiz v. Rodriguez	2046	v. Leigh	2517	v. State,	
v. State	852, 792, 794	Otero, Ex parte	1336	78 Ala.	2336, 2341
Orton v. McCord	2303	Otey v. Hoyt,		119 Ga.	2071
Orton's Trial; see R. v. Castro		2 Jones L.	451, 570	v. Thomas	1195, 2105
Orvig Dampskibselaskap	2259a	3 Jones L.	2008, 2016	v. Warburton	2352, 2353
Orvik v. Casselman	2581	v. Midland Valley R. Co.	455	Owen Guey v. State	364
Osborn v. Bell	1387	Otis v. Spencer	614, 615	Owens v. Com.	57
v. Black	603	Otis Elevator Co. v. Luck	451	v. Dawson	1065
v. Cary	1700	O'Toole v. Ohio G. F. Ins. Co.	2285, 2339	v. Frank	2286
v. Guy's Hospital	2414	Ott v. Cream City Sand Co.	1558	v. Gentry	1890
v. Herron	1911	v. Murphy	74, 1725	v. Lancaster	1960
v. London Dock Co.	2268, 2271	v. Press Pub. Co.	406	v. National Hatchet Co.	2450
v. Robbins	581	v. State	111, 2298	v. Owens,	
v. Simerson	451	Ottawa v. Gilliland	2220	81 Md.	2364
v. Vickers	2220	v. Green	792	14 W. Va.	578
Osborne, Re	2568	v. Perkins	1350	v. R. Co.	2220
v. Bell	451	Ottawa Gaslight Co. v. Graham	451, 1943	v. State,	
v. Detroit	283, 438, 457, 458, 1156, 1158, 1160, 1824	Ottawa O. C. & C. G. R. Co. v. Adolph	1943	120 Ga.	821
v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	1530	Ottawa Univ. v. Parkinson	715	67 Md.	747, 748
v. Hargreaves	986	Otto v. Trump	1213, 1269, 1273	63 Miss.	1398, 1404
v. O'Reilly	1896	Ougier v. Jennings	2440	Miss., 33 So.	967
v. Ramsay	1487, 2527	Ouidas v. State	390	32 Nebr.	2239
v. State	1339	Outcolt v. Ludlow	1778	Owings v. Hull	1225, 2573
v. Tunis	2141, 2144	Outlaw v. Hurdle	2016	v. Low	736, 747, 1536, 2222
Osbourne v. Hosier	2018	Outram v. Morewood	1585	v. Speed	1074, 1661
Osburn v. Oregon R. & N. Co.	455, 2509	Ouverson v. Grafton	1951, 2507	v. Ulery	1275
v. Staley	1350			v. Wyant	1244
v. State	63, 1157, 1807, 1890			Owner v. Bee Hive Spinning Co.	1200, 1219
				Owsley v. Greenwood	2185
				Oxford (Bishop of) v. Henly	1209



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Oxford Co. v. Spradley	1966	Pacz v. Berenguer	21	Palmer v. Ins. Co.	2416
Oxier v. U. S.	979, 987, 2513	Page, Re	1304, 1736, 2052, 2523	v. Logan	1195
Oxsheer v. Watt	1225	v. Beach	1958	v. Love	1674
Oyler v. Dantoff	748	v. Burnstine	6	v. Lowder	2441
Ozark v. State	1043	v. Camp Mfg. Co.	2489, 2509	v. McCafferty	1871
Ozark States Trust Co. v. Winkler	2416	v. Geiser Mfg. Co.	1067	v. McDonald	1141
<b>P</b>		v. Hazleton	284, 1549, 2116	v. McLearn	762
Pabst Brewing Co. v. Lueders	1073	v. Homans	1997, 2004, 2015, 2026	v. Owen	2452
Paca v. Dutton	1680	v. Kankey	1890, 1893	v. Palmer,	
Pace v. Com.	2277, 2595	v. Knights & Ladies	1223	22 N. J. Eq.	2046
v. Louisville & N. R. Co.	763	v. McClure	2577	162 N. Y.	2506
Pacey v. R. Co.	2319	v. Mann	1513	v. Pokorny	2574
Pacheco v. Mfg. Co.	199	v. Page,		v. R. Co.	987
Pacific Coast B. Co. v. Dugger	2446	51 Mich.	2220	v. Schurz	1974
Pacific Coast S. Co. v. Bancroft-Whitney Co.	748	15 Pick.	1192	v. State,	
Pacific Export L. Co. v. North P. L. Co.	1073	Va., 110 S. E.	2498	165 Ala.	1141
Pacific Express Co. v. Lothrop	1706	v. Parker	571, 769, 772	65 N. H.	2354
Pacific Gold Co. v. Skillicorn	1013, 1014	v. Payne	987	Okl. Cr., 187 Pac.	1442
Pacific L. S. Co. v. Murray	1943	v. State	681	v. Stevens	1652
Pacific Live Stock Co. v. Warm Springs I. D.	714	v. Stephens	291	v. Trower	1003
Pacific Mail S. S. Co. v. Lucas	2416	v. Wheeler	2349	v. White	784
Pacific Mill Co. v. Enterprise Mill Co.	716	Paget v. Birkbeck	1075	Palmer T. Co. v. Eaves	1064
Pacific Power Co. v. Sheaf	2509	Pagett v. Curtis	2579	Palmore v. State	63, 246, 247
Pacific R. Co. v. Governor	1350	Paige v. Cagwin	1080, 1083	Palon v. Great Northern R. Co.	1388
v. Seifert	1350	v. Carter	745, 748, 761	Panama El. R. Co. v. Moyers	2536
Pacific S. S. Co. v. Ind. Acc. Com.	4c	v. Kelley	1943	Panama R. Co. v. Castilla	1606
Pacific Surety Co. v. Toye	2473	v. Loring	1243	Pancoast v. Graham	1738
Pack v. Barton	1350	v. O'Neal	1086	Pangborn v. Ins. Co.	1199
Packard v. Dunsmore	1292	v. Willet	2590	v. Young	1350
v. Hill	1684, 2110, 2164	Pain v. Beeston	1037	Panhandle & S. F. R. Co. v. Haywood	460
v. Richardson	529, 1625	v. Farson	614	v. Laird	1750
Packard I. & M. Co. v. Pearl & Co.	2496	Paine v. Aldrich	1934, 1938	Panhandle Lumber Co. v. Rancour	2498
Packer v. Gonsalus	1085, 1126	v. Boston	463, 1971	Pannell v. Com.	678
v. U. S.	341, 1073	v. R. Co.	1684	v. State	2062
Packet Co. v. Clough	6, 20	v. Schenectady Ins. Co.	2573	Panton v. Williams	2554
Packham v. Glendmeyer	341	v. Tilden	1106, 1108	Pape v. Wright	928, 2165
Paddock v. Forrester	1062	v. Trask	1225, 1318, 1657	Pa Pelekane's Title	2573
v. Salisbury	73	v. Woods	791	Papendick v. Bridge-water	1456, 1473, 1476
Paddon v. Thatcher	2470	Painter v. Hall	1640, 1677	Papot v. R. Co.	1652
Paden v. State	1442	v. Ledyard	1188	Pappas v. U. S.	2239
Padgett v. Lawrence	1082	v. People	105, 216, 397, 460, 1157	Paquete Habana, The	1697
v. State,		Paisley v. Snipes	1290	Paquette v. Connecticut V. L. Co.	1923, 1951
125 Ark.	177, 612, 669	Palatine Ins. Co. v. Northern P. R. Co.	1350	v. Prudential Ins. Co.	1770, 2452
64 Fla.	1890	v. Santa Fé M. Co.	354	Paradise v. Ins. Co.	1985
Paducah v. Allen	463	Palermo, The	2319	Parcell v. McReynolds	2237
		Palethorp v. Furnish	2232	Pardee v. Lindley	1195, 1225
		Palkovitz v. American S. & T. P. Co.	2416	v. Schanzlin	2165
		Palmer v. Aylesbury	1406, 2111	Parent v. Nashua Mfg. Co.	1976
		v. Coyle	201, 251	v. Walmsly's Adm'rs	2572
		v. Crowle	2356	Parham v. Chicago M. & St. Paul R. Co.	2473
		v. Culbertson	2475	Paris v. U. S.	368
		v. Dann	2054	Parish v. Baird	1976
		v. Gilbert	2118	v. Fite	1878, 1880
		v. Goldberg	716	v. Gates	2312
		v. Hartford D. Co.	763, 1124		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Parish v. Pearsons	1681	Parker v. W. William	1842	Parsons v. Copeland	1066
v. State	18, 677, 961, 1621, 1839, 1938, 2501, 2550	Parker's Adm'r v. Cum- berland T. & T. Co.	1078	v. Huff,	
Park v. Cochran	1225	Parkerson v. Burke	2169	38 Me.	770, 774, 777
v. Grady	2515	Parkhurst v. Berdell	2336	41 Me.	1010
v. R. Co.	208, 249, 1616	v. Hosford	1938	v. Ins. Co.	736, 747, 1976
v. Schneider	1406	v. Ketchum	73, 209, 928	v. Parsons,	
v. State	1445, 1448	v. Lowten	2255, 2311	66 Ia.	1738, 1974
Park Bros. & Co. v.		v. Masteller	1978	45 Mo.	1388
Blodgett & C. Co.	2417	Parkin v. Moon	773, 774	1 Ves. Jr.	2463
Park Land Co. v. Mayor, etc. of Baltimore	714	Parkins v. Hawkshaw	1063, 1513, 2306	v. People,	
Parke v. Blackiston	66, 73, 76	Parkinson v. Atkinson	2203	218 Ill.	397
v. Smith	529	v. Francis	1644	21 Mich.	607, 618
v. State	2100	v. People	357	v. Phipps	529
v. Williams	1680	Parkison v. Parkison	2050	v. Purcell	1256
Parke & L. Co. v. S. F.		Parks v. Baker	2474	v. State,	
Bridge Co.	1770	v. Boston	1168, 1800, 2570	43 Ga.	2058
Parken v. Safford	18, 2047	v. Caudle	2098	Ind., 131 N. E.	2059, 2071
Parker, Ex parte	2195	v. Com.	1398, 1404	v. Vengke	4c
v. Bond	1078	v. Hazelrigg	2456	Parsons City v. Lindsay	1951
v. Brown	770	v. Johnson	2281	Parsons Water Co. v.	
v. Carter	2294, 2297, 2317	v. State,		Knapp	1943
v. Chambers	728	105 Ga.	1442	Partan v. U. S.	369
v. Cleaveland	1651, 1678	113 Md.	1042	Partee v. Silliman	529
v. Coburn	392	20 Nebr.	1853	Partin v. Com.	2042
v. Com.	987, 1842	59 N. J. L.	367	Parton v. Cole	2447
v. DeBernardi	2505	46 Tex. Cr.	821	Partridge v. Coates	1200
v. Donaldson	1556	v. United R. Co.	282	v. Forsyth	2053
v. Dudley	15	Parlett v. Dunn	461	v. Strange	1805, 2569
v. Enslow	2220	Parlin & Orendorff Co.		v. U. S.	321
v. Farmers' F. Ins. Co.	1073	v. Hutson	530, 1352	Parulo v. Philadelphia & R. R. Co.	1072
v. G. P. R. Co.	770	Parmelee v. Thompson	1662	Paschal v. Perez	1239, 1651, 2159, 2167
v. Goldsmith	1779	Parnell v. Wood	1223	Pasley v. Richardson	1640, 1778
v. Haworth	1225	Parnell Commission's Proceedings	654, 753, 780, 782, 787, 905, 991, 1079, 1214, 1260, 1368, 1390, 1757, 1807, 1871, 1884, 1917, 2024, 2094, 2099, 2119, 2125, 2286, 2374	Pass v. Stephens	2408
v. Hoskins	1313	Parr v. Gibbons	1195	v. U. S.	851
v. Lovejoy	529	v. Seames	2352	Passaic Co. v. Steven- son	1350, 2592
v. Marston	1084	Parret v. Craig	1777	Passavant v. U. S.	4a, 4c
v. Morrill	2433	Parrish v. High Point R. A. & S. R. Co.	683	Passmore v. Passmore's Estate	1978, 2327
v. Newman	64, 1618	v. Thurston	581	Pastor v. Gaspar	2442, 2465
v. Orr	1699	v. United Commercial Travelers	2510	Pastrel v. Amory	2426
v. Parker	2329, 2391	Parrocchini v. State	1807	Patch v. Boston	463
v. Publishing Co.	458	Parrot S. & C. Co. v. District Court	1862	v. White	2471, 2477
v. Ricks	1879	Parrott v. Atlantic & N. C. R. Co.	93, 376	Patch Mfg. Co. v. Pro- tection Lodge	291
v. State,		v. Chicago G. W. R. Co.	1943	Patchin v. Ins. Co.	1029, 1040, 1041
77 Ala.	2086	v. Com.	2130	Pate v. Joe	1511
165 Ala.	1442	v. State	1072, 2272	v. McConnell	1951
136 Ind.	106, 987, 1750	v. Thatcher	2053, 2349	v. People	702, 2008, 2016, 2027
67 Md.	1843	Parry v. Libbey	1779	v. State	246
61 N. J.	2272, 2512	v. May	1200	Patek v. Waples	2442
40 Tex. Cr.	857	v. Walser	1195, 1273	Patent Type Founding Co. v. Lloyd	1862
46 Tex. Cr.	177, 851, 1041, 1977			Paterson v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co.	561
Tex. Cr., 238				v. Tidewater Power Co.	1639
S. W.	822, 856, 1725, 2100			Paterson B. & M. Co. v. Mesh	451
v. Steamboat Co.	1974				
v. Thornton	2355				
v. U. S.	152, 1839				
v. Walden	1062				
v. Way	2063				
v. Waycross & F. R. Co.	2146				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Paterson Lumber Co. v.		Patterson's Adm'r v.		Payne v. McCormick Har-	
Putrick	1960	Modern Woodmen	1078	vesting M. Co.	2581
Patillo v. Alexander	2536	Patterson's Estate	7, 2052,	v. McKinney	1651
Patman v. State	951		2106	v. Ormond	2141
Paton v. Ormerod	2470	Patteson v. R. Co.	454, 2509	v. Roy	571, 961
Patrick v. Crowe	1062, 1073	Pattison v. Norris	1062	v. State,	
v. Gibbs	1681	Pattle v. Hornibrook	2410	60 Ala.	247, 1037
v. Graham	18	Patton v. Allison	1739	66 Ark.	1667
v. Ham Co.	4a, 4c	v. Bank	18, 2008	57 Miss.	1781
v. Jack	1552	v. Coates	1640, 1712	61 Miss.	1435, 1447
v. Nance	1680	v. Dyke	1779	v. Staunton	1858, 2375
v. Smith	1976	v. Fox	1207, 1225	v. Treadwell	2572
v. Spokane & E. R. &		v. Goldsborough	1085, 1133	v. Trezevant	529
P. Co.	2509	v. Hamilton	1890	v. Waterloo C. F. &	
v. State	62, 2061	v. Ryan	1558	N. R. Co.	571
v. Tetzlaff	1530	v. Sanborn	283, 1719	Paynes v. Coles	2123
Patriotic Bank v. Coote	1245	v. Sinclair Lumber		Payson v. Everett	1690, 1698,
Pattee v. Whitcomb	21, 1938,	Co.	2442		1706, 2012
	1958	v. Southern R. Co.	458,	v. Good	1049, 1058, 1082
Patten v. Cilley	2500		2552	Paytes v. State	2043
v. Ferguson	1362, 1773	v. State,		Payton v. Shipley	1938
v. Glover	2303	197 Ala.	967, 1966	Peabody v. Denton	1676
v. Ins. Ass'n	2384	117 Ga.	413, 660, 1157	v. Hewett	1082
v. Moor	2317	v. Wilson	2336	v. Norfolk	2212
v. People	1021	Patton's Adm'r's v. Ash	1521	Peabody & Co. v. Brom-	
v. Poulton	1736	Patty v. Salem F. Co.	1075	field	2410
v. Rambo	287	Paty v. Martin	663, 728	v. Industrial Com-	
v. U. S.	658	Patzwald v. U. S.	2497	mission	1960, 2526
Patten-W. D. Co. v.		Pauksztis v. Raeder B.		Peace v. Head	1225
Planters' M. Co.	2439	L. & P. Co.	461	Peaceable v. Watson	1458,
Patterson v. Causey	17, 2408	Paul v. Leavitt	2240		1778
v. Cole	2382	v. Meek	1256	Peacock v. Cooper	456
v. Colebrook	1976	v. Paul	987	v. Shearer's	4c
v. Collier	2143, 2534	v. State	1451, 2071	Peacock's Case	785
v. Com.,		Paulette v. Brown	1010	Peaden v. State	1890
86 Ky.	2071	Paulk v. State	166, 1154	Peak v. State	1440
114 Va.	1434, 1442	Paulsen v. Hall	616	v. Taubman	1971
v. Dallas	1186, 1225	Paulsen's Estate	1481, 1501,	Peake v. Stout	1966
v. Drake	1225, 1364, 1681,		1503	Peaks v. Cobb	1233
	2110	Paulson v. Boyd	2409	Peano v. Brennan	2573
v. Fagan	1383, 1384	v. State	194, 363, 792, 987,	Pearce, In re	2463
v. First N. Bank	377		1270, 2081, 2115	v. Fisher	1681
v. Gaines	2088	Paulson Mercantile		v. Foster	2319, 2323
v. Hansel	7, 1651	Co. v. Seaver	1072, 1086	v. Furr	1329
v. Hickey	1736, 1737	Pavey v. Pavey	2008	v. Hooper	1297, 1298
v. Hochster	1746	Pavier v. Snow	1225, 1651	v. Lansdowne	21
v. Howe	1158, 1951	Pawashick, The	1684, 1697,	v. Ornsby	406
v. Jones	1651		1703, 2573	v. Whale	2535
v. Linder	1205	Pawling v. U. S.	2408	Pearcy v. Dicker	693
v. McClenathan	2473	Paxton v. Douglas	2260,	Pearl v. Allen	1312, 2593
v. Mining Co.	2447		2268, 2269	v. Howard	1651
v. Ocean A. & G. Co.	1750	v. Dye	1108	v. R. Co.	1698
v. Patterson,		v. Price	1573	Pearre v. Folb	1828
251 Ill.	2498	v. State,		Pearrow v. State	347, 821,
6 S. & R.	229	Ark., 157 S. W.	925,		1026, 2513
v. St. Clair	1404		1405	Pearsall v. Com.	861
v. State,		59 Nebr.	1066	Pearse v. Pearse	2291, 2294
Ala., 41 So.	396	Paxton's Case	2264	Pearson v. Dancer	2442
41 Nebr.	194, 988	Paylor v. U. S.	2060	v. Fletcher	2307
Okl. Cr., 132		Payne v. Allen	1960	v. Hardin	309
Pac.	1620, 1966	v. Com.	246	v. Lemaitre	406
v. Uncle Sam Oil Co.	439	v. Hargrove	455	v. McDaniel	702
v. Wyoming Valley		v. Ibbotson	754, 763	v. Spartanburg Co.	458
District Council	2257	v. Long	1373	v. Wheeler	654

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Pearson v. Wightman	735,	Pefferling v. State	1135, 1136,	Penn Mut. L. I. Co. v.	
	747, 1302, 1306, 1511		1138	Wiler	1719, 2384, 2390, 2391
v. Yoder	2307, 2309	Pegg v. Warford	13, 18	Penn Tobacco Co. v.	
Peart v. Taylor	1256, 2105	Pegram v. Isabell	1605	Leman	2463
Pease v. Peck	1350	Peiffer v. Lytle	2336	Pennachio v. U. S.	568
v. Sanderson	2105	Peirce v. Kile	2509	Pennel v. Weyant	1512, 1680
v. Smith	290, 1010, 1013	Peirson-Lathrop Grain		Pennell v. Meyer	2111
Pease Piano Co. v. Cam-		Co. v. Barker	95	Penniman v. Hill	1840, 1841
eron	763	Pelamourges v. Clark	772,	v. Jones	1856, 1856c
Peaslee v. R. Co.	221		1389, 1938,	Pennington v. Com.	987
v. Robbins	233		1958, 1963	v. Schwartz	1226
Peasley, Re	2259b	Pelham & E. R. Co. v.		v. State	1842, 1963
Peavy v. State	579	Elliott	1011, 1807	Pennsylvania v. M'Kee,	
Peay v. Capps	2141	Pelham Sitz & Co. v.		Addis. 1, 5	2066
v. Picket	1194, 1196,	Herzberg-Loveman D.		Addis. 35	1994
	1224, 1225	G. Co.	1779	v. Robertson	246
Peazler v. State	2497	Pelican Ins. Co. v. Wil-		v. Stoops	2237, 2239
Peck v. Abbe	1544	kerson	1339	Pennsylvania & N. Y.	
v. Brewer	2354	Pelican Lumber Co. v.		R. Co. v. Bunnell	1943
v. Callaghan	2016	Johnson	1530	Pennsylvania Coal Co.	
v. Clark	1567	Pelkey v. Hodgdon	282, 581	v. Kelly	791
v. Farrington	1239	Pell v. Daubeny	2201, 2202	Pennsylvania Co.	437
v. Hutchinson	1693	Pelletier v. O'Connell	2478	v. Boylan	664
v. Lake	762	Pelletreau v. Jackson	1313,	v. Bridge Co.	1078
v. New England Tel.			1321	v. Conlan	1010
& T. Co.	1066	Pelton v. Schmidt	1062	v. Files	1721
v. Parchen	1263, 1532, 1558	v. Spider Lake S. & L.		v. McCaffrey	1530
v. Pierce	1539, 1556	Co.	2498	v. McCann	2509
v. R. Co.	1976	Peltz v. Clarke	1225, 1651	v. Marion	2383
v. Ritchey	1018, 1037	Pelzer v. Cranston	1542	v. Newmeyer	944, 2220
v. Ryan	1072, 1073	Pelzer Mfg. Co. v. Ham-		v. R. Co.	309
v. Small	1978	burg-Bremen F. I.		v. Watson	454, 458
v. State,		Co.	2355	Pennsylvania Ins. Co. v.	
147 Ala.	852	v. Sun Fire Office	1947	Murphy	2598
2 Humph.	309	Pember v. Mathers	2047	Pennsylvania R. Co. v.	
86 Tenn.	1476, 2277	Pemberton v. Kraper	2520	Books	96
v. Tingley	1960	v. Pemberton	21	v. Bruner	1943
v. Valentine	750, 753, 754	Pemberton's Case	1738	v. Connell	1955
Pecker v. Sawyer	529	Penarth Harbour D. &		v. Durkee	2386
Peckham v. People	2061,	R. Co. v. Cardiff W.		v. Henderson	283, 1943,
	2577, 2592	Co.	1859a		1976
v. Potter	1084	Pence v. California M.		v. Lyons	1750
Peddy v. State	1405	Co.	461	v. Naive	21
Peden v. Peden's Adm'r	2377	v. Com.	389	v. Page	456
Pedersen v. Moore	770	v. Dozier	987	v. Stranahan	455, 456
v. Mixon	1072	v. Waugh	1041, 2315	Penny v. Pindell	1195
Pedigo v. Com.	177	Pendleton v. Com.	918, 1434,	v. State	507
v. Grimes	2214		1443, 1447, 2484	Pennypacker v. Ins. Co.	95
Pedler v. Paige	1316	v. U. S.	2270, 2272	Penobscot & K. R. Co.	
Pedley v. Wellesley	2230, 2242	v. Weed	2118	v. Bartlett	1703
Peebles v. O'Gara Coal		Pendock v. Mackinder	520	Penobscot B. Co. v.	
Co.	770, 772	Pendrell v. Pendrell	68, 1026,	Lamson	2125
Peek v. Boone	2304		2063	Penrice v. Parker	2250
Peele v. Ins. Co.	1072	Peney v. Gilliland	2373	Penrose v. Griffith	1257
Peeples v. State	692	Penland v. Ingle	2053, 2498	Penruddock v. Ham-	
Peer v. Ryan	568	Penn v. Hartman	2159	mond	2294
Peerless, The	4d, 576, 1709	v. Phoenix Devel. Co.	1779	Pensacola Elec. Co. v.	
Peerless Mfg. Co. v.		v. State	398	Bissett	684
Gates	1969	Penn M. L. Ins. Co.		Pensacola R. Co. v.	
Peery v. Peery,		v. M. S. B. & T. Co.	302,	Schaffer	1213, 1236
27 Colo. App.	1603		321, 1946,	Pensacola St. A. & G. S.	
94 Tenn.	1738		1947, 2537	S. Co. v. Brooks	1684
Peet v. Dougherty	530	Penn Mut. L. I. Co. v.		Pentecost v. State	821, 1196,
v. Peet	5, 2475	Norcross	2596		2427



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Pentico v. Hays	2520	People v. Arnold,		People v. Biossat	861
Pentz v. Ins. Co.	1061, 1062	116 Cal.	2276, 2277	v. Bird,	
Penza, The	2566	248 Ill.	968, 1908	124 Cal.	309, 950
People ex rel. v. See		43 Mich.	278	132 Cal.	1398
People v.		v. Arrighini	959, 1938,	5 P. R.	21
People v. Abell	1808		2251, 2276	v. Bishop	1042, 1890
v. Abbot	62, 200, 398,	v. Ashmead	276, 821,	v. Bissett	987
	664, 923, 928,		2497	v. Bladdek	2254
	987, 1985, 2268	r. Atkinson	2311	v. Blair	2512
v. Abbott	62, 200, 359, 398	v. Atwood	1725	v. Blake,	
v. Adams,		v. Auerbach	389, 451, 1163,	60 Cal.	1082, 1257
137 Cal.	246, 1614		1164, 1802	157 Mich.	1878
162 Mich.	2086, 2148	v. Austin,		v. Blakeley	923, 987,
176 N. Y.	2183, 2264	199 N. Y.	2382		1432, 1461
v. Ah Choy	276	1 Park. Cr. C.	958,	v. Blazenwitz,	
v. Ah Fat	1106, 1108		1022, 1028, 1029	Mich., 180 N. W.	
v. Ah Fook	770, 1072	v. Azoff	2349, 2354	371	1853
v. Ah Fung	118	v. Badgley	2071	v. Blerding	2556
v. Ah Ki	858	v. Baker,		v. Board of Police	
v. Ah Lee	1750	1 Cal.	2354	Com'rs	1819
v. Ah Len	1806, 1807	290 Ill.	655, 2115	v. Bodine	290, 2260, 2270
v. Ah Wee	571, 2100	112 Mich.	1853, 2079	v. Boggs	1354
v. Ah Yute,		96 N. Y.	581	v. Bolik	2497
53 Cal.	1072	v. Baldwin	507, 1976	v. Bollinger	150
56 Cal.	751, 1810	v. Balkwell	2059	v. Bollman	2382
60 Cal.	779	v. Banks	2270	v. Bond,	
v. Ahrling	143, 390, 1726,	v. Barberi	390, 782, 1908	13 Cal. App.	1263
	2497, 2501, 2512	v. Barker,		291 Ill.	1213
v. Aiello	2059	114 Cal.	2059	v. Bonier	21, 56
v. Albers	18, 925, 1983	144 Cal.	1405, 1725	v. Bonney	1803
v. Alden	2183	56 Ill.	2304	v. Boo Doo Hong	2486
v. Aldorfer	1209	60 Mich.	1890, 1893,	v. Borello	833
v. Alexander	1434		2302	v. Borgetto	1938
v. Alivtre	111	153 N. Y.	2497	v. Boseovitch	1842
v. Allen	200	v. Barney	568	v. Bosquet	1029
v. Allender	2501	v. Barone	15	v. Bowen,	
v. Almestico	841, 860, 987,	v. Barrie	832, 2060	49 Cal.	357
	1049, 1851	v. Barrios	246, 247, 1435	165 Mich.	231, 2338,
v. Almodovar	2576	v. Barthleman	397, 689,		2341
v. Alsina	580		2501	170 Mich.	2100, 2339
v. Altmeyer	1890	v. Baskin	918, 2056, 2079	v. Bowers	784, 1807
v. Alton	367	v. Battistim	1397, 2079	v. Bransfield	2264
v. Alviso	2081, 2230	v. Bauer	1877	v. Braun	987
v. Amanacus	987, 1106	v. Bay Side Land Co.	1620	v. Bray	20, 1722
v. Amaya	1033, 1072	v. Beck	2277	v. Breen	2265
v. Ambach	2511	v. Becker	783, 2219, 2224	v. Brennan	1398
v. Ames	2059	v. Beckwith	2081	v. Brewer	205, 1618,
v. Ammerman	736, 821	v. Beech	507		2528
v. Anderson,		v. Bell	21, 1003	v. Brockett	851
26 Cal.	2083, 2230	v. Bemmerly	2501	v. Brooks	950, 953
39 Cal.	246	v. Benc	200	v. Brotherton	88, 451
105 Cal.	950	v. Benham	390, 397,	v. Broughton	1021, 1644,
v. Andrae	967, 987		569, 2073		2529
v. Anglada	1761	v. Bennett	2072, 2081	v. Brown,	
v. Angsbury	682	v. Benson	62, 200	53 Cal.	2272
114 Cal.	2059	v. Berger	204, 1072	130 Cal.	390
Ill.	994	v. Bernal	506, 1821	3 Cal. App.	748
v. Anthony	360, 2061	v. Bernor	1136	53 Mich.	1761
v. Aponte	782	v. Bertlini	1130	142 Mich.	168, 398
v. Argo	2282	v. Bertsche	321	53 N. Y.	987
v. Armstrong	351	v. Best	56	72 N. Y.	987, 2270,
v. Arnold,		v. Beverly	1440, 1912		2276
15 Cal.	10, 110, 111,	v. Bidleman	331	197 N. Y.	987
	247	v. Bill	580	203 N. Y.	821, 2276

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Buchanan	15, 390, 1896, 2311	People v. Carey	792	People v. Coffey	21, 2159, 2060
v. Buckley,		v. Carlton	111	v. Coffin	2572
143 Cal.	866, 1330, 1398, 1405, 1635, 1669, 1890, 2056, 2094	v. Carolan	987	v. Coffman	1267
v. Buckminster	821, 851, 2100	v. Carr	1669	v. Cohen	2059
v. Buddensieck	571, 792	v. Carrier	398	v. Colbath	667
v. Buffom	363, 841	v. Cascia	1072	v. Colburn	1073
v. Bullion	2513	v. Cascone	21, 987, 1072	v. Cole,	
v. Bundy	2265	v. Case,		113 Mich.	2383
v. Burch,		105 Mich.	821, 905, 1398	43 N. Y.	1390
Cal. App., 189		171 Mich.	2527	v. Coll	1819
Pac.	692, 949	v. Casey,		v. Collins	363
84 Mich.	1350	53 Cal.	59, 1983	v. Collum	1040
v. Burgess	21, 568, 905, 1938	231 Ill.	2501	v. Columbia Common	
v. Burke,		124 Mich.	1853, 1938	Pleas	2356
18 Cal. App.	988, 1154, 1908	72 N. Y.	987, 2276	v. Columbus	861
157 Mich.	351, 2497	v. Cassels	2195	v. Commissioners,	
v. Burns,		v. Cassesse	1441	7 Colo.	1712
121 Cal.	988	v. Cassidy	2276	54 N. Y.	1350
27 Cal. App.	862	v. Castro	860	v. Compton,	
67 Mich.	1839	v. Cerecedo	2060, 2183	123 Cal.	1079, 2059
v. Burt,		v. Chadwick	2042, 2233, 2242	132 Cal.	1032
43 Cal.	1350	v. Chapleau	852	v. Conklin	21, 1440, 1725
267 Ill.	2450	v. Chapman	832	v. Conkling	1802
v. Burwell	93, 357, 1853	v. Charon	2216	v. Connelly	1005
v. Bush,		v. Chaves	397	v. Conrow	56
65 Cal.	1108, 1168, 1803	v. Chee Kee	1698	v. Conroy,	
71 Cal.	1802	v. Chegaray	2239	97 N. Y.	1938
v. Bushton	905, 1040	v. Chin Hane	278, 660, 789, 923, 969, 987, 1028, 1398, 1977	153 N. Y.	21, 2277
v. Bussey	2276	v. Chin Mook Sow	1003, 1005, 2277	v. Considine	736, 1029, 1669, 1839, 2079
v. Butler	416	v. Chin Non	2349, 2354	v. Constantino	571, 1152
v. Butler St. F. & I.		v. Ching Hing Chang	1006, 1263, 1963	v. Cook,	
Co.	2258, 2259c, 2281	v. Chrfrikas	360	148 Cal.	216, 390, 905, 1043
v. Byrnes	1873	v. Chrisman	59, 852	8 N. Y.	2495
v. C. B. & Q. R. R.	1230, 1640	v. Christian	1269	v. Coombs	2259c
v. Caballero	1394	v. Christie	987	v. Copsey	935
v. Cabrancs	2061	v. Christman	2498	v. Corbin	309
v. Cady	1398	v. Christmas	1442	v. Cordova	205, 2061
v. Cahill,		v. Chung Ah Chue	1398	v. Corey,	
147 Mich.	2272	v. Cicott	1351, 1712, 2214, 2464	148 N. Y.	220, 694, 2016, 2132
193 N. Y.	2100, 2270	v. Cione	363	157 N. Y.	1398, 1666
v. Caldwell,		v. Clark,		v. Costello	2056
Cal. App., 203		151 Cal.	689, 1398	v. Coston	398
Pac.	667	301 Ill.	2016, 2513	v. Cotton	905, 1269
107 Mich.	276, 368, 774	33 Mich.	205, 398, 401, 1976	v. Coughlin,	
v. Calero	21	102 N. Y.	987	65 Mich.	1912
v. Callaghan	1445	v. Clarke,		13 Utah	363
v. Calpestri	2494	130 Cal.	987, 1977	v. Court,	
v. Campbell,		105 Mich.	839, 1219	83 N. Y.	915, 987
8 Ill.	1350	v. Clausen	278	101 N. Y.	1166
160 Mich.	2520	v. Cleminson	21, 2484	v. Covitz	2056
v. Cancel	21, 2061, 2062	v. Cleveland,		v. Cowan	949
v. Canfield	309	49 Cal.	2059	v. Craft	1438
v. Cannon	1356	107 Mich.	2529	v. Craig,	
v. Cardillo	1270	v. Cline	2273	111 Cal.	106, 216, 363, 507
v. Cardinelli	21, 784, 918, 1270, 2484	v. Clingan	1195, 2427	Ill. 110 N. E.	2056
		v. Cloonan	2059	116 Mich.	133
				v. Cramer	2497
				v. Crandall	792, 987
				v. Crapo	987



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2607]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Crecgan	309, 2059, 2060	People v. Diaz,	1079, 2059, 2183	People v. Eastwood	1974
v. Creeks	21, 905, 1043	22 P. R.		v. Ebanks,	
v. Crespi	905	v. Dice	1043, 2100	117 Cal.	216, 416, 688, 1144
v. Crespo	1750	v. Dickerson	563, 1907, 2484	120 Cal.	2578
v. Cronin	108	v. Dillwood	967, 1044, 1263, 1270	v. Ecarius	2276
v. Crowley	218	v. Dimick	321	v. Eckert	2056
v. Cummins	18, 118	v. Diodonet	17	v. Eckman	1675a
v. Cunningham,		v. Di Pietro	347	v. Edwards,	
66 Cal.	216, 347	v. District Court	2195	41 Cal.	246
300 Ill.	1873	v. Dixon	2059	Cal., 73 Pac.	398
v. Curiale	2239	v. Dobbins	1013, 1442, 2354	v. Egnor	851
v. Curlee	2060	v. Doggett	59	v. Elco	222, 398, 918
v. Curtis	1329, 1349	v. Dohring	1909, 1910	v. Elliott,	
v. Cutler	987	v. Dolan	318, 1201, 2550	119 Cal.	360
v. Daily	507	v. Dole,		106 N. Y.	2059
v. Daniels	2100	Cal., 51 Pac.	287, 2276	163 N. Y.	988
v. Davey	21, 1157, 1808	122 Cal.	1072	172 N. Y.	1398
v. Davidson,		v. Donahoe	988	v. Elyea	736, 754
2 Cal. App.	1351	v. Donald	330	v. Emmel	321
240 Ill.	222, 1974	v. Donaldson	2273	v. Emmons	142
v. Davis,		v. Dones	1049, 1908	v. Enright	492, 497, 932
97 Cal.	2089	v. Donnolly	1079, 1635	v. Eppinger	664, 1244, 1706
147 Cal.	290, 2513	v. Donovan	1041, 1263	v. Espanol	21, 200
269 Ill.	1456, 2034	v. Doody	342, 2043	v. Estrado	1072
175 Mich.	398	v. Dorthy	987	v. Etter	398
Mich., 187 N. W.	1044	v. Doty		v. Etting	2575
56 N. Y.	1432, 1750	v. Douglass,		v. Evans,	
15 Wend.	1010, 2204, 2205	100 Cal.	508	Cal., 41 Pac.	238
21 Wend.	1614, 1985, 2056	4 Cow.	410	72 Mich.	963, 1853
v. Deacons	568, 2071	v. Dowd	362	40 N. Y.	527, 1010, 2042, 2056, 2060
v. De Camp	987, 2277	v. Dowell		v. Everham	398, 1209
v. Decker	106	v. Dowling	254 326	v. Everhardt	309, 2059
v. Deegan	2354	v. Doyell	1126, 1158	v. Ezzo	1135
v. De France	1021, 2382	v. Doyle	13	v. Faber	664
v. De Garino	363, 987	v. Driscoll	1072	v. Fair	57, 59
v. Deitz	2079	v. Droste	1398	v. Falletto	1438
v. de Jesus	1336, 2061	v. Druse	63, 198, 770	v. Farley	1976
v. Delaney	506, 507, 1820, 1828	v. Dubois	351	v. Farmer	2298, 2327
v. Deluce	2513	v. Duffy	343	v. Farrell,	
v. Del Vermo	149, 791, 1442, 1746, 1750	v. Dunbar Contrac-		30 Cal.	309, 2060
v. De Martini	905	ing Co.	2148, 2155	31 Cal.	16, 233, 581
v. Dennis,		v. Duncan,		137 Mich.	98, 248
39 Cal.	1890, 2276	261 Ill.	277 276, 987	v. Farrington	273
4 Mich.	1267	104 Mich.	1126, 1761	v. Faust	2575
v. Dental Examiners	4c	v. Dunn	1350	v. Fehrenbach	347
v. Derbert	987	v. Dunnigan	841, 2339	v. Feinberg	2056
v. Detroit & S. P. R.		v. Dupounce	2174	v. Ferguson	581, 1351
Co.	1951	v. Durrant	118, 451, 692, 781, 789, 792, 905, 2286	v. Fernandez	21, 1890, 1384
v. Devine,		v. Duzan	21, 2349	v. Ferola	852, 2268
44 Cal.	1021, 1029, 1035, 1040, 1263, 1329, 1667	v. Dyckman,	799, 2200, 2219	v. Ferrara	1129
46 Cal.	1404	v. Dye	194, 1003	v. Ferrone	1880
v. Devlin	1350	v. Dyle	285, 2056, 2059	v. Fielding	1807
v. De Wolf	1350	v. E. L. & Y. Co.	2134	v. Figueroa	794, 1135
v. Diaz,		v. Easton	276	v. Findley	398
6 Cal.	2595			v. Fine	689
5 P. R.	1028			v. Finley	1938
19 P. R.	1336			v. Finnegan	1129
				v. Fiorentino	276, 1976
				v. Fire Ins. Co.	1482, 1483, 1484, 1489
				v. Fish	792, 1395, 1398, 1975

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Fisher,		People v. Gates,		People v. Gray,	
295 Ill.	56	46 Cal.	77	61 Cal.	1440, 1442,
223 N. Y.	1404, 1669,	13 Wend.	2395		2354
	1819	r. Gavrilovich	233	66 Cal.	331
r. Fitzgerald	354, 389,	r. Gay	987, 1106	148 Cal.	987, 1977
	2272	r. Geary,		251 Ill.	62, 398
r. Fitzpatrick	612, 2079	297 Ill.	682	135 Mich.	2276
r. Flaherty	398, 1135	298 Ill.	2501	25 Wend. N. Y.	2450
r. Flannelly	276	r. Geister	1521	r. Green,	
r. Fleming,		r. Gelabert	571, 2100	53 Cal.	1802
94 Cal.	2061	r. Genung	934, 958	1 Denio	2239
166 Cal.	21	r. Germaine	2079	292 Ill.	967, 987,
r. Flores	822, 969, 1326	r. Gibbons	852		2058
r. Flynn	2349	r. Gibbs	364	1 Park.	1073
r. Foglesong	682, 1722	r. Giblin	987	r. Greenwall	194, 1005,
r. Foley	682	r. Gibson,			1983
r. Fong Ah Sing	1434	106 Cal.	568	r. Gress	118, 390
r. Fong Chung	987	255 Ill.	398	r. Griffin	233
r. Foo	936	218 N. Y.	2268	r. Griffith	2385
r. Foote	987, 2276	r. Giddings	368	r. Grill	792, 1010
r. Forbes	2260, 2271,	r. Gillespie	774, 905	r. Griner	246
	2276, 2283	r. Gillette	21	r. Gross	106
r. Ford	2071	r. Giro	1349, 2097, 2100	r. Grossman	326
r. Foster,		r. Glass,		r. Grundell	2059
288 Ill.	1124	158 Cal.	343	r. Grutz	354
46 Mich.	1398, 1639	181 N. Y. Suppl.	2043	r. Haas	290, 368, 2273
211 Mich.	832, 1072	r. Glaze	1037, 2210	r. Haensel	1442, 2501
r. Fowler,		r. Gleason	290	r. Hagar	1219, 1225, 1352
178 Cal.	821	r. Glenn	1398, 1446, 1450	r. Hagenow	359, 1976
104 Mich.	1072, 2235	r. Glennon	204, 258, 969	r. Hall,	
229 N. Y.	1856a	r. Glover,		94 Cal.	1476
r. Fox	861	141 Cal.	1044	48 Mich.	682, 1690,
r. Frank	216, 304, 309	71 Mich.	1761, 2265,		1700, 1839, 1853
r. Frankenburg	2056		2382	r. Halpin	260
r. Freeland	1852	r. Goldberg,		r. Hamblin	987
r. Freeman	2061	Ill., 135 N. E.	2363	r. Hamilton,	
r. Freshour	2276	33 Mich.	2079	Cal. App., 192	
r. Frey	2071	r. Goldenson	681, 770, 951,	Pac.	2081
r. Fritch	1725, 2276		1693, 2265, 2349, 2354	269 Ill.	987, 1136
r. Fryer,		r. Gonzales,		r. Hammond	1852, 2154,
175 Cal.	2282	136 Cal.	832		2272
266 Ill.	987, 2535	6 Cal. App.	1135	r. Hare	1975, 1976
r. Fuhrig	1442, 1445	Cal. App., 204		r. Harlan	770, 987, 1350
r. Fultz	357, 952	Pac.	2196	r. Harper	1873
r. Furlong	841, 2265, 2382	39 N. Y.	559, 568,	r. Harrigan	1168
r. Gaffey	154		1157, 2130	r. Harris,	
r. Gage	1136, 1761	r. Goodrich	949	95 Mich.	248
r. Gaimari	198	r. Goodrode	1398	144 Mich.	1761
r. Galbo	278	r. Goodwin	2081	136 N. Y.	390, 2385
r. Gallagher,		r. Gordon,		209 N. Y.	263, 397
100 Cal.	2276	99 Cal.	1398	r. Harrison,	
75 Mich.	2327	103 Cal.	988	261 Ill.	218, 398, 496,
r. Gallart	2167	39 Mich.	1195		1072, 2071
r. Gallo	1802, 1803	40 Mich.	285, 950,	93 Mich.	987
b. Garbutt	56, 59, 63,		2079	r. Hart	2513
	111, 228, 232,	100 Mich.	2241	r. Hartenbower	2259b
	246, 247	r. Gotshall	460, 987,	r. Hassan	351
r. Garcia	770		1977	r. Hatch	1350
r. Gardner,		r. Gould	1067	r. Hawes	437, 1157
98 Cal.	1398	r. Governale	363	r. Hawkins,	
144 N. Y.	2263, 2265	r. Governor	2369	106 Mich.	331
r. Gardt	969	r. Graham	789, 1135,	109 N. Y.	233
r. Garfalo	231, 851		1136, 1138	r. Hawley	1416
r. Garnett	1841, 2059	r. Grant	2079	r. Hayes	2340



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Heide	832	People v. Howard,		People v. Johnson,	
v. Helm	1977	112 Cal.	246	185 N. Y.	7, 106, 1828
v. Henderson	248	73 Mich.	2276	v. Johr	2168
v. Hennessey	2071	v. Howes	1853	v. Jones,	
v. Henry,		v. Hoy Yen	836, 858	31 Cal.	516, 987, 2071
129 Mich.	351	v. Hubbart	2061	123 Cal.	2072
187 N. Y. Suppl.	2042	v. Hubert	2497	160 Cal.	276
v. Henshaw	2079	v. Huff	988, 1618	124 Mich.	1978
v. Henssler	216, 321	v. Hughes,		99 N. Y.	364
v. Henwood	2259c, 2264	29 Cal.	2349	191 N. Y.	194
v. Hernandez	1408	116 Mich.	2079	v. Jordan	2232
v. Herr	2538	11 Utah	581	v. Josephs	56, 59
v. Herrick	521, 987, 1270	v. Hughson	1913	v. Josselyn	2062
v. Herrin	2592	v. Hulbut	2363, 2364	v. Joy	2513
v. Hickman	821, 925, 2277	v. Hull	1802, 1803	v. Joyce	861, 934a, 987, 2071
v. Hicks,		v. Hulse	1106, 1108, 1109	v. Julia	21
79 Mich.	2276	v. Humphrey,		v. Julian	1876
98 Mich.	1135, 1136, 1138, 1142, 1761	7 Johns. N. Y.	2086	v. Kahler	987
v. Higgins	260, 987	194 Mich.	56, 368	v. Kaminsky	222
v. Hill,		v. Hurley	343	v. Kane	1445
116 Cal.	682, 689, 1873, 1976	v. Hurst	1223	v. Katz	347, 1128, 1129
123 Cal.	460, 794	v. Hurtado	263	v. Keep	276
194 N. Y.	688	v. Hust	1205	v. Kehoe	215
195 N. Y.	1938	v. Hutchings	1476	v. Keith,	
198 N. Y.	150, 218, 851	v. Hyde	1807	50 Cal.	1036, 1899, 2100
v. Hillhouse	1021	v. Illinois State Board	1350	136 Cal.	1890
v. Hill Top M. M. Co.	2594	v. Imes	1644, 2239	141 Cal.	2061
v. Hinchman	1329	v. Irving,		v. Kelley	852
v. Hinksman	58, 925	95 N. Y.	987	v. Kelly,	
v. Hoagland	2059	1 Wend.	2222	146 Cal.	821, 987
v. Hobbs	359, 1854	v. Isham	1644, 2086, 2239	17 Cal. App.	1824
v. Hoch	21, 233, 2272, 2382	v. Jackgo	2073	24 N. Y.	2252, 2283
v. Hodgdon	1440	v. Jacks	2089	113 N. Y.	779, 905
v. Hodge	359	v. Jackson,		v. Kemmis	290
v. Hoffman	278, 321, 1040, 1060, 1604, 1075	111 N. Y.	792, 794	v. Kemmler	2265, 2382
v. Hogan	18	182 N. Y.	153	v. Kennedy,	
v. Holbrook	1205	3 Park. Cr.	62, 200, 398, 979, 980, 987, 1028, 1041	105 Mich.	1040
v. Holden	1351	v. Jacobs,		32 N. Y.	106, 354
v. Holmes,		49 Cal.	905	159 N. Y.	832, 851
111 Mich.	105, 457, 1621, 1984	243 Ill.	901	164 N. Y.	1072
166 N. Y.	1257	v. Jaehne	2071	v. Kent	526, 835, 861, 2056
v. Holtz	609	v. Jamieson	398	v. Kenyon	2079
v. Hong Ah Duck	108, 568, 1263, 1841	v. Jan John	821, 1810	v. Kern	397
v. Hong Tong	2059	v. Jenness	398, 935, 1828, 2056	v. Kerrigan	1835
v. Hooghkerk	2059, 2060	v. Jennings,		v. Kersten	2199
v. Hope	153, 451, 1157, 1160	252 Ill.	414, 797, 1977	v. Kessler	1072, 1750
v. Hopson	364	298 Ill.	18	v. Kielczewski	1168
v. Horton	1887, 1888, 1890	v. Jocelyn	1852	v. Kimbrough	561, 987
v. Hospital	494, 497	v. John	1810	v. Kindra	1390, 2079
v. Hossler	1899, 2079, 2232	v. Johnson,		v. King	140, 363
v. Hotz	1451, 1452, 2100	41 Cal.	835	v. Kingcannon	167
v. Hovey	2243	57 Cal.	2277	v. Kinney	1159
		106 Cal.	62, 923, 952	v. Klise	363
		Cal. App., 197		v. Knapp,	
		Pac.	1405	26 Mich.	363, 1445
		298 Ill.	507	42 Mich.	205, 987, 2232
		215 Mich.	861	v. Knox	861
		110 N. Y.	1166, 1802	v. Koerner	21, 569, 1072, 1502, 1873, 1938, 2382, 2501
		140 N. Y.	791		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Kohn	326	People v. Lilly	111, 247	People v. McGungill	1890,
v. Koller	398	v. Limberry	689		2272
v. Krist	689	v. Lim Foon	782	v. McHenry	1511
v. Krittenbrink	1960	v. Lingley	290	v. McKane	2155
v. Kruger	905, 1263	v. Loeder	1890	v. McKeller	1022
v. Kubulis	2513	v. Loewenthal	1350	v. McKinney,	
v. Kuches	62, 200	v. Lombard	246, 247	267 Ill.	967
v. Kunz	2059	v. Long	2079	49 Mich.	1275, 2105
v. Labra	580	v. Lonsdale	1442	v. McLaughlin,	
v. Lagrille	1249	v. Lon Yeck	1013	44 Cal.	1452
v. Lake	681	v. Loomis	351, 2100	150 N. Y.	192, 216,
v. Lamar	111, 246,	v. Loper	689, 833, 2337	377, 738, 1963	
	247, 1616	v. Lopez,		v. McLean,	
v. Lamb	246	26 Cal.	1852	84 Cal.	2059
v. Lambert,		59 Cal.	347	71 Mich.	62, 200,
120 Cal.	352, 1044,	Cal. App., 197		398, 987	
1135, 1136, 1263		Pac.	507	v. McMahon,	
5 Mich.	564, 1271,	24 P. R.	2062	244 Ill.	390, 1671,
	1644, 2086	v. Lovejoy	618	1807, 2272, 2273	
v. Lander	2252	v. Lovren	1977	15 N. Y.	823, 852,
v. Lane,		v. Lowhone	228, 681	2266	
101 Cal.	216, 231,	v. Lowrey	2273	v. McNair	1821
	2385	v. Luce	398, 1135	v. McNamara	1896
300 Ill.	21, 364	v. Luchetti	1013, 2513	v. McQuaid	690, 1684
49 Mich.	2071	v. Luders	1853	v. Macard	216
v. Lang	2513	v. Luis	830, 1327,	v. Macgregor	363, 1976
v. Lange	1198		1332, 2100	v. Machen	347, 1839
v. Langtree	609, 2234,	v. Lukoszus	905, 1130	v. Maciejewski	968
	2236	v. Lurie	784	v. Madas	1445
v. Lansing	363	v. Lustig	782, 953	v. Mahaney	1350
v. Lapara	1073, 2497	v. Lutzow	1852	v. Mahon	2298
v. Lapidus	2071	v. Lynch,		v. Main	2059
v. Lapique	89	22 Cal.	194	v. Makatch	792, 794
v. Lardner	21, 2513	29 Mich.	1135, 1761	v. Malaspina	239, 279
v. Larned	413, 2130	v. Lyons	762	v. Mallon	1071
v. Larsen	2277	v. McAdoo	1819	v. Maloy	852
v. Larubia	363	v. McArron	983, 987,	v. Malsch	2239
v. Lauder	4, 852		1853	v. Manasse	218
v. Laudiero	988, 1013	v. McBride	1356	v. Manganaro	2131
v. Laureano	2513	v. McCarthy,		v. Manke	1978
v. Laures	397	115 Cal.	689	v. Manning	987, 1270
v. Lavelle	689	102 N. Y.	463	v. Manoogian	689, 1938
v. Lawrence	1033	v. McCarty	1839	v. Marble	216, 363,
v. Leddy	1350	v. McClintic	861, 2043	2237	
v. Le Doux	681, 1645,	v. McClure	218	v. Marendi	1072
	2085, 2264	v. McConneil	2578	v. Margelis	2183
v. Lee,	290	v. McCormick	987	v. Marion	664
119 Cal.	1135	v. McCoy	2265	v. Markham	923, 1616
128 Cal.	1664	v. McCrea	1072, 1142	v. Marrin	341
v. Lee Ah Chuck	950	v. McCullough,		v. Marrs	1136, 1761
v. Lee Dick Lung	194, 276	210 Ill.	1350	v. Marti	701
v. Lee Fat	751, 1669,	81 Mich.	841, 2079	v. Martin	1841
	1810	v. McCurdy	1157	v. Martinez	852, 860
v. Lee Nam Chin	276	v. McDonald	1270	v. Marx	1062
v. Lehr	1960	v. McElvaine	672, 673, 681	v. Marxhausen	2183
v. Lem Deo	1442	v. McFarlane	751, 761	v. Mason,	
v. Lem You	1387, 1669	v. McGarry	290, 1842	301 Ill.	357, 1135
v. Leonardo	1003	v. McGee	498, 811,	29 Mich.	278
v. Levison	327		1138, 1761, 1825	v. Mather	770, 772, 774,
v. Levy	689	v. McGilver	351	775, 987, 1111,	
v. Lewandowski	1330,	v. McGinnis	274	1112, 1898, 1983,	
	1405, 1669, 1810	v. McGlade	309	2255, 2260, 2271	
v. Lewis	507, 1135	v. McGloin	824, 839,	v. Mathews (Edwards)	1803
v. Life Ins. Co.	1698		851, 852, 853	v. Matteson	1817



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Maughs	791, 792	People v. Moran,		People v. O'Brien,	
v. Mausauau	987, 1270	144 Cal.	1669, 2056,	66 Cal.	2276
v. Maxfield	861		2094, 2511	96 Cal.	1890, 2276
v. May	2513	48 Mich.	1853	130 Cal.	62
v. Mayen	21, 2272, 2183	v. Morgan	389	277 Ill.	21
v. Mayes	988, 2277, 2567,	v. Morine	811	176 N. Y.	2282
	2569, 2581	v. Morrigan	460, 1142,	v. O'Bryan	21, 852
v. Mayhew	2059		1976	v. O'Farrell	2059
v. Mayne	736, 1481,	v. Morris,		v. O'Gara	905
	1503	3 Cal. App.	398	v. O'Hare	923
v. Mead	56, 418, 2265	254 Ill.	1157	v. Oiler	1398
v. Melvane	2059	v. Morrison	987	v. Oldham	1010, 1079,
v. Mercado	1079, 1250	v. Morton	1072, 2059		2515
v. Mercein	2239	v. Most	935	v. Oliver	2079, 2277
v. Methvin	1985	v. Muhly	2130	v. Oliveria	2265
v. Meyer,		v. Muller,		v. Olmstead	568, 689, 1445
75 Cal.	1890, 2276,	32 Hun	790, 796	v. O'Loughlin	1730, 1839,
	2277	96 N. Y.	1978		1841
N. Y., 56 N. E.	851,	v. Mullings	1808, 1890,	v. O'Neil	527, 2059
	861		2340, 2341	v. O'Neill	905, 2363
v. Michael	21, 2272	v. Munday	288, 2259b,	v. Ong Mon Foo	1072
v. Michalow	953		2591	v. Onondaga	1350
v. Michigan C. R. Co.	1672	v. Munziato	17, 861	v. Ortiz	580
v. Miles	228	v. Murphy,		v. Osmond	390
v. Millard	1690, 1700	45 Cal.	1398, 2098,	v. Ostrander	2511
v. Miller,			2232	v. O'Sullivan	357, 1135,
121 Cal.	363	276 Ill.	218, 811		1136
122 Cal.	821	145 Mich.	2272,	v. Overseers	2063
135 Cal.	851		2354	v. Owen	851, 852
177 Cal.	2512	101 N. Y.	688, 2385	v. Owens	987
195 Ill.	1681	135 N. Y.	354, 2015,	v. Packenham	1938
292 Ill.	987, 2056		2016	v. Page	1072, 2061
2 Park. Cr.	1909	v. Murray,		v. Paisley,	
v. Milner	1168, 1802,	10 Cal.	63, 246	288 Ill.	1959, 2183,
	1976, 2512	85 Cal.	2349		2264a
v. Mills	923, 987, 1853,	94 Cal.	2349, 2354	299 Ill.	2273
	2273	52 Mich.	21	v. Palmer,	
v. Miner	1018	89 Mich.	1835	96 Mich.	111
v. Mingey	1960	v. Myers	463	105 Mich.	111
v. Minkowitz	2268	v. Nairs	2100	109 N. Y.	2072, 2081
v. Minney	367	v. Nakis	218	v. Paquin	1335
v. Minsky	900	v. Nall	2364	v. Parent	1828, 2042
v. Mitchell,		v. Neetens	2441	v. Paris	248
94 Cal.	905	v. Nemer	1908	v. Parker	2016
100 Cal.	142	v. Nettens	2441	v. Parmelee	987, 2277
v. Mix	928	v. Neumann	21, 2495	v. Parsons	826
v. Molina	2062	v. Newberry	580	v. Parton	821, 949,
v. Molineux	363, 852, 1722,	v. Newman,			1899
	2016, 2018,	5 Hill N. Y.	1404	v. Patrick	2015, 2059,
	2020, 2265	261 N. Y.	15, 21, 967,		2081, 2327
v. Mondon	852		987	v. Patterson	398, 2060
v. Monteith	571	v. Newsome	238	v. Pattin	2056
v. Montgomery,		v. Nichols	1807	v. Payne	905
13 Abb. Pr.	2203	v. Niles,		v. Pease,	
53 Cal.	293	300 Ill.	326	3 Johns.	523
271 Ill.	21	44 Mich.	569, 987	27 N. Y.	1351, 1712,
N. Y., 68 N. E.	390	v. Nino	233, 770		1864, 2196,
v. Mooney	2019	v. Noelke	987, 1270		2214, 2421
v. Moore,		v. Northcott	792, 1725	v. Peck,	
276 Ill.	1761	v. Northey	2363	139 Mich.	309
15 Wend. N. Y.	805,	v. Novick	2535	147 Mich.	1032
	914, 953, 959,	v. Nunley	928	11 Wend. N. Y.	1339
	996, 1026, 1126, 1326	v. Oakland Water-		v. Peckens	216, 321,
v. Morales	784, 851, 2276	Front Co.	2566		1079

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Peete	821, 2072	People v. Randazzio	851,	People v. Robles,	
v. Pekarz	290, 991, 1938		861, 1810	13 P. R.	2059
v. Pelinski	2512	v. Rando	254, 326	v. Rodawald	63, 198, 246,
v. Perez	2079	v. Rangod	398		1116
v. Perriman	1853, 2088	v. Ranney	2071, 2072	v. Rodley	1079, 2042
v. Perry	988, 1808, 2497	v. Rardin	811, 918, 2079	v. Rodrigo	1270
v. Peters	581	v. Rathbun	276, 293	v. Rodriguez,	
v. Petrea	1350	v. Ratz	667, 1496	134 Cal.	1890
v. Petropoulapos	360	v. Razezicz	41	22 P. R.	2062
v. Pettanza	349	v. Reardon	2259c, 2264	28 P. R.	839
v. Pette	216	v. Rector	247, 923, 979,	v. Roemer	1007
v. Pezutto	141		987, 994, 1106,	v. Rogers	218, 831, 851,
v. Pfanschmidt	177, 363,		1108, 1109, 1112,		860, 861, 2100
	1022, 1072		1125, 1126, 1514,	71 Cal.	216
v. Phelan	460, 792		1985	18 N. Y.	851
v. Philbon	1072	v. Redola	59	v. Rojas	905
v. Phillips	2394	v. Reed,		v. Rolfe	728, 2059, 2529
v. Picard	2515	Cal., 52 Pac.	1960,	v. Rollins	1072
v. Pico	689, 1621		2277	v. Roman,	
v. Piggott	218	287 Ill.	987	5 P. R.	2079, 2216
v. Pike	2110	v. Reeder	2056	10 P. R.	1290, 1851
v. Pindar	2276	v. Reggel	2363	18 P. R.	1851, 1854,
v. Piner	830	v. Reilly	821, 834		2079, 2276
v. Pinkerton	2276	v. Reinhart,		v. Rosado,	
v. Piper	1842	39 Cal.	987, 1270,	16 P. R.	1138
v. Pitcher	273		2277	17 P. R.	2071
v. Place	363	26 Or.	821	25 P. R.	2061
v. Plath	2062	v. Remus	2495	v. Rose	1072, 1354
v. Plyer	1384, 1669	v. Resh	968, 2079	v. Rosenbaum	2018
v. Plyler,		v. Restell	1374	v. Rosenberg	2056
121 Cal.	580, 1014	v. Reyes	1375	v. Rosenheimer	2259d
126 Cal.	1405, 1669	v. Rice,		v. Ross	987
v. Podilla	1890	103 Mich.	969, 2582	v. Row	1021, 1022
v. Pope	1390, 2079	136 Mich.	950	v. Rozelle	1890, 2276
v. Porter	2071	206 Mich.	321	v. Ruef	343
v. Potter	238	159 N. Y.	569	v. Ruiz,	
v. Powell	111, 246, 248	v. Richardson,		144 Cal.	2056, 2094
v. Powers	1853	161 Cal.	166, 1154,	7 P. R.	1032, 1398
v. Prather	925, 959		2062, 2063	18 P. R.	1138
v. Pratt	2376	222 N. Y.	194, 987,	v. Rulla Singh	1451
v. Preciado	2498		2060	v. Rushworth	2195
v. Pretswell	2072	v. Riley	4c	v. Russell	1890, 2272
v. Price	1853	v. Rimieri	21, 1157	v. Ryan,	
v. Priori	2271	v. Risley	21, 2024	82 Cal.	1067
v. Prosser	1671	v. Ritchie	2354	152 Cal.	968
v. Provost	2272	v. Rivera,		N. Y., 133 N. E.	352
v. Purdy	1350	7 P. R.	860, 1049	v. Ryland	2059
v. Purman	1126	9 P. R.	569, 1049	v. Ryno	62
v. Pursley	1011	12 P. R.	21, 507, 1820	v. Safford	900, 905, 906,
v. Pustolka	792	v. Roach	414, 852, 2071,		907
v. Putnam	987, 1407		2286, 2375	v. St. Louis I. M. & S.	
v. Qualey	7, 1398	v. Roat	770	R. Co.	1880
v. Quanstrom	2239	v. Robbins	2059, 2060	v. Salas	811
v. Quick,		v. Roberts	2512	v. Salladay	933
51 Mich.	581, 2079	v. Robertson,		v. Sallow	414
58 Mich.	1853	284 Ill.	1890	v. Salsbury	280
v. Quider	2572	302 Ill.	2220	v. Sam Lung	1841
v. Quimby	363	v. Robinson,		v. Samonset	1983
v. Quinn	1852	19 Cal.	500	v. Sanchez	1438, 1445
v. Qurise	1398	125 Mich.	2259c, 2264	v. Sanders	216, 309, 664,
v. Rader	782	6 Utah	2079		2272, 2511
v. Radin	811	v. Robles,		v. Sanford	1443, 1963
v. Ramirez	499, 851,	29 Cal.	1329	v. Sansome	153, 196
	951, 1985	34 Cal.	347, 967	v. Santos	2061



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Sapp	2060	People v. Simmons	363, 987,	People v. Stout	194, 216,
v. Savant	1442, 2079		1117		304, 390
v. Sawhill	18, 561, 1230	v. Simonds	2232	v. Stouter	507
v. Saxton	581	v. Simonsen	2072	v. Strait,	
v. Scalamiero	18, 1136	v. Simpson	1142, 1442, 1450	148 N. Y.	231, 688,
v. Scattura	18, 1135	v. Sindici	309		1938
v. Schepps	753, 1405	v. Singh	1037	154 N. Y.	21, 1873
v. Schlessel	2113, 2120	v. Skutt	398	v. Stratton	200, 398, 2060
v. Schmidt	1976	v. Slater	1496	v. Strauch	406, 951
v. Schmitt	689, 1124, 2530	v. Sligh	1395, 1667	v. Strause	390, 2354
v. Schmitz	1890, 2576	v. Sliney	2382	v. Streuber	2273
v. Schoonmaker	2239	v. Slover	21, 287, 1808	v. Strollo	2155, 2265
v. Schultz	580, 784, 1976,	v. Smiler	682	v. Strong,	
	2272, 2273	v. Smith,		30 Cal.	821, 1013
v. Schultz-Knighten	359,	31 Cal.	232	46 Cal.	276
	987, 2595	106 Cal.	363	v. Strosnider	341, 1852
v. Schuyler	2381, 2383	143 Cal.	196	v. Stubenvoll	2497
v. Schwartz	2079	9 Cal. App.	2276	v. Sturman	2016, 2018, 2265
v. Schweitzer	347	254 Ill.	1876	v. Suesser	106, 689, 2501
v. Scoggins	111, 247	104 N. Y.	1451	v. Sullivan,	
v. Scott,		121 N. Y.	792	129 Cal.	1157
284 Ill.	106, 581	162 N. Y.	1124	218 Ill.	1983
153 N. Y.	238, 390	172 N. Y.	1072, 1073,	247 Ill.	2478
195 N. Y.	841		1434, 1974	v. Supervisors	1350
296 N. Y.	905	v. Snellie	987	v. Sutherland,	
v. Seaman	359	v. Soap	728	104 Mich.	987, 1158,
v. Searcy	791	v. Soeder	216, 987, 1890		2277
v. Sears	2277	v. Solani	19	154 N. Y.	106, 390
v. Sebring	2239	v. Solomon	2059	v. Sutton,	
v. See	2081	v. Sorrells	106, 1374	73 Cal.	684, 1890
v. Seff	2497	v. Soto	168, 398	17 P. R.	246
v. Sehorn	246, 1974	v. Southern	1452	v. Swafford	1835
v. Seppi	118, 1130	v. Spencer	1938	v. Swaile	2339
v. Session	359, 680,	v. Spiegel	2264	v. Swartz	2497
	682, 1976	v. Spira	2056, 2272	v. Swersky	21, 2060
v. Sexton,		v. Sprague	1010, 1013,	v. Swetland	1205, 1225,
132 Cal.	852		1841		2079
187 N. Y.	774, 898,	v. Squires	205	v. Swift	360
	1828, 2364	v. Stackhouse	1041	v. Swist	507, 1135
v. Seymour	2268	v. Stanley,		v. Symonds	1852
v. Sharac	852, 2376	47 Cal.	21, 276, 1350	v. Taing	247
v. Sharp,		33 Cal. App.	1835	v. Taleisnik	2062
53 Mich.	664, 1198	v. Stapleton	821	v. Taranto	861
107 N. Y.	57, 194, 286,	v. Steinhauer	1852	v. Taylor,	
	312, 329, 343,	v. Steinkraus	106	59 Cal.	852, 1434, 1440
	1969, 2282, 2283	v. Sternberg	2059, 2060,	136 Cal.	416
v. Shattuck,			2281a, 2282	Cal., 203 Pac.	2556
6 Abb. N. C.	2364	v. Stevens,		93 Mich.	826
109 Cal.	940, 1722	52 Cal.	1861	138 N. Y.	233, 1938
v. Shaver	1044	141 Cal.	1010	v. Teixeira	364
v. Shaw,		47 Mich.	784, 1466	v. Terrell	247
111 Cal.	293, 1036,	v. Steward	2220	v. Teshara	1890
	1447	v. Stewart,		v. Thacker	363, 569
300 Ill.	321	28 Cal.	56, 59	v. Thaw	263
v. Shea,		97 Cal.	1136	v. Thiede	412, 568, 811,
8 Cal.	247	v. Stison	168, 1141, 1432		944, 1850, 1852,
125 Cal.	62	v. Stock	246		1899, 1910
147 N. Y.	57, 216,	v. Stokes,		v. Thomas,	
	363, 367	71 Cal.	1644, 2085	110 Cal.	196
v. Shulman	320, 321	103 Cal.	2349, 2354	9 Mich.	579
v. Sickles	196	v. Stoneking	2512	v. Thompson,	
v. Siemsen	851, 2534	v. Storke	2016	50 Cal.	2059
v. Sierp	1398, 1810	v. Storrs	1079, 1083, 1458,	84 Cal.	832
v. Silva	925, 987		1998, 2024	295 Ill.	1640, 2464

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. II, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Thompson,		People v. Van Wormer	580,	People v. Weston	811, 1136,
122 Mich.	199, 451,		2265		1824
	457, 2263	v. Vasalo	1208	v. Wheatley	196
41 N. Y.	963	v. Vaughn	689	v. Wheaton	367
v. Thoms	309, 822	v. Vedder	2060	v. Wheeler	1690, 1693, 1700
v. Thomson,		v. Vermilyea	2595	v. Whipple	521, 580
92 Cal.	950	v. Vernon	1450, 1750	v. White,	
145 N. Y.	1438, 1451	v. Vertrees	951	116 Cal.	1164, 2497
v. Thorn	1803	v. Vidal	276	142 Cal.	987
v. Thrall	2071	v. Villegas	2081	251 Ill.	1451
v. Tibbs	168, 1154, 1770,	v. Vinci	833	53 Mich.	166, 960
	1983	v. Viskniskki	367	194 Mich.	1135
v. Tice	987, 2276	v. Vollero	2059	176 N. Y.	841, 861,
v. Tiley	987, 1003	v. Wade	205, 1028, 1983,		2071
v. Tillman	247		2061	14 Wend.	57, 194, 202,
v. Tobey	1680	v. Wakely	321		1326, 1327
v. Todd	969	v. Walczniak	18	24 Wend.	57, 290,
v. Todoro	1644	v. Walker,			1329, 1667
v. Tollefson	1867, 2016	140 Cal.	851, 2276	v. Whiteman	309
v. Tomalty	341, 961	15 Cal. App.	1530, 2277	v. Whitson	987
v. Tomlinson	216	113 Mich.	507	v. Wiemers	1225, 1877,
v. Tracy	1450	198 N. Y.	2495		2464
v. Travis	111, 247	v. Wallace,		v. Wilder	1010
v. Treadwell	1013	89 Cal.	905	v. Wilkins	821, 2073
v. Troutman	360, 2060,	303 Ill.	2072	v. Willard	2276
	2061	v. Walters	216, 363	v. Willett	278, 1072
v. Truck	1938, 2016,	v. Wansker	112	v. Williams,	
	2265, 2339	v. Ward,		18 Cal.	140, 1040
v. Trybus	2276	134 Cal.	987, 2073	64 Cal.	1219, 2577
v. Tucker	348	145 Cal.	2073	133 Cal.	1072
v. Tuckewitz	2498	15 Wend.	838	240 Ill.	1852
v. Tugwell	1835	v. Wardrip	2056, 2094	19 Wend. N. Y.	580
v. Turner,		v. Warfield	987	v. Willy	691
118 Cal.	1043	v. Warner,		v. Wilmot	62, 1136
260 Ill.	398	117 Cal.	2334	v. Wilson,	
265 Ill.	1398	104 Mich.	851	117 Cal.	216, 364
v. Turney	987, 1983	v. Warren,		135 Cal.	2513
v. Tyler	579, 1985, 2272	134 Cal.	987	298 Ill.	1072, 2513
v. Tyree	932	122 Mich.	2495	55 Mich.	1873
v. Tyren	1890	v. Washor	1822	136 Mich.	68, 923
v. Ullrich	321	v. Watson	2273	170 Mich.	963
v. Un Dong	987	v. Weaver,		3 Park. Cr.	2081
v. Upton	2235	61 Cal.	1440	v. Wilt	106
v. Utter	841, 1873	177 N. Y.	309	v. Wing	166
v. Vail	1858	v. Webb	1003	v. Wintermute	1351
v. Valcalda	228	v. Weber,		v. Winters,	
v. Valliere,		149 Cal.	21, 821, 988,	29 Cal.	153
123 Cal.	390, 1976		1072	125 Cal.	1079, 2512
127 Cal.	1807	181 N. Y. Suppl.	967	v. Winthrop	216, 276, 1157,
v. Van Aken	41	v. Webster,			2511
v. Van Dam	56	68 Hun.	792	v. Wirth	1042
v. Vanderhoof	682, 1696,	139 N. Y.	792, 934,	v. Witty	1035, 1405
	1700		987, 1005, 2276	v. Wolcott	273, 822, 830,
v. Vane	290, 1124, 1125,	v. Weiger	852		836, 1005, 2079
	1126, 1127,	v. Weil	321	v. Wolf,	
	1128, 1131	v. Wells,		95 Mich.	2511a
v. Van Eman	968	100 Cal.	987, 1808	183 N. Y.	1384, 1808
v. Van Gaasbeck	59, 928,	145 Cal.	968	v. Wong Ah Ngow	276
	1614, 1983, 1986	v. Wennerholm	1072	v. Wong Chuey	960, 1022,
v. Van Horn	131	v. Wentz	839		1434
v. Vann	762	v. West	2385	v. Wong Loung	1072, 1974
v. Van Slyck	1351	v. Westlake,		v. Wong Sang Lung	2529
v. Van Tassel	342, 1007,	124 Cal.	944	v. Wood,	
	1010	134 Cal.	1157	145 Cal.	1168



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Wood,		Percival v. Peterborough		Perry v. Archard	1202
126 N. Y.	231, 233,	Corp.	4c	v. Bailey	2349, 2353, 2354
	2340	Percy v. First Nat'l		v. Bank	95, 770
3 Park. Cr.	216, 363	Bank	2498	v. Block	1335
v. Woods	1614	v. Miller	1779	v. Branning Mfg. Co.	456
v. Woodson	2527	Perdew v. Nufer Cedar		v. Breed	1042
v. Woon Tuck Wo	460	Co.	2377	v. Burton	657, 2105
v. Worden	1976	Perdue v. C. C. C. Co.	1877	v. Buswell	2477
v. Woronoff	1354	v. State	949, 1018, 1476	v. Clift	2143
v. Wreden	657, 1938	Pereda's Succession v.		v. Com.	1820, 1828
v. Wright,		Rodriguez' Succession	21	v. Dicken	1911
144 Cal.	390, 1808	Perez v. Guanica Cen-		v. Gibson	1894
90 Mich.	2079	trale	282, 1062	v. Graham	1779
136 N. Y.	852	v. Yabucoa Sugar Co.	1163	v. Lawless	1294
v. Wyman	2349	Pergason v. Etcherson	1842	v. Lovejoy	1730, 2085
v. Yeager	1835	Perham v. Raynal	1077	v. Machine Co.	451
v. Yee Fook Din	413	Perigal v. Nicholson	586, 1460	v. Mays	2158
v. Yokum	1442	Perit v. Cohen	1890	v. People,	
v. Young,		Perkins v. Adams	944, 950,	14 Ill.	1852
31 Cal.	2363		2103	86 N. Y.	1270
108 Cal.	811, 1072	v. Augusta Co.	1523	v. Perry	1644
v. Youngs	675, 1938	v. Bank	2271	v. Porter	581
v. Yslas	923	v. Blood	1778	v. R. Co.	2572
v. Zigouras	861, 952	v. Brinkley	1778	v. Randall	2337, 2340, 2341
v. Zito	377	v. Concord R. Co.	1062	v. Roberts	1188
People's Bank v. Brown	2210,	v. Guy	1807	v. Rubber T. W. Co.	2210
	2322	v. Hayward	15	v. Ruby	613
v. Reid	321	v. Hersey	2414	v. Simpson W. M. Co.	2593
People's Gas Co. v.		v. Humes	89	v. Smith	1086
Fletcher	1352	v. Ins. Co.	736, 747	v. State,	
People's Nat'l Bank v.		v. Jeffery	360	87 Ala.	1404
Geisthardt	2153	v. Knisely	1013	102 Ga.	1434, 1445,
v. Hazard	912	v. Monongahela Valley			1446
v. Mulkey	1387	R. Co.	2220	110 Ga.	1976
v. Schopflin	2444	v. Perkins	2067	112 Ga.	2575
People's P. R. Co. v.		v. R. Co.	1718	Ida., 38 Pac.	2325,
Green	792	v. Railroad	682		2326
People's Savings Bank &		v. Rice	282, 283	44 Nebr.	2089
T. Co. v. Landstreet	2465	v. Roberge	1003	v. Weyman	1909
People's Trust Co. v.		v. Roswell	1587	Perry Bros. v. Diamond	
Smith	2420	v. Scott	1356	I. & S. Co.	439
Peoples v. Com.	1434, 1441,	v. Spaulding	258, 331, 1416	Person v. Bowe	1062
	2060	v. State,		Persons v. Smith	1388
v. Devault	150	4 Ind.	959, 1126, 2363	Perteel v. People	1852
Peoria & F. R. Co. v.		120 Tenn.	2183	Perth Peerage Case	1496,
Barnum	1168	v. Stevens	523		1633, 1644, 1697
Peoria A. & D. R. Co.		v. Stickney	561	Petapsco Co. v. South-	
v. Sawyer	1168	v. Sunset Tel. & T.		gate	1414, 1417
Peoria Cordage Co. v.		Co.	682, 1960, 1976	Petch v. Lyon	1063
Ind. Board	4c, 1671, 1722	v. Terr.	2273	v. State	833, 855
Peoria, D. & E. R. Co.		v. Towle	1458	v. Thickstun	994, 1704
v. Rice	2220	v. Trinity R. Co.	2433	Peterboro v. Jaffrey	1943
Peoria, G. & C. Co. v.		Perkins' Est.	1738	Peterborough v. Mor-	
R. Co.	463, 1168	Perley v. Perley	2520	daunt	1278
Pepoon v. Jenkins	1681	Perlman v. U. S.	2264	v. Norfolk	1388
Pepper v. Barnett	694	Perlstein v. Express Co.	93	Peterman v. Crowley	1777,
v. Martin	2500	Pernabebt Trustee Co.			2408
Peppercorn v. Black		v. Fels	1681, 2162	v. Peterman	2408
River Falls	1166, 2354	Perovich v. Perry	2576	Petermans v. Laws	1225, 1651
Peppinger v. Low	1770	Perret v. Perret	1738	Peters v. Berkemeier	2520
Perales v. State	360	Perrill v. Nichols	1873	v. Fogarty	2354, 2355
Percival v. Hickey	1392	Perrin v. U. S.	2120	v. Irish	2276
v. Nanson	1465, 1466,	v. Wells	1406	v. Lohr	797, 1185
	1471	Perrine v. Striker	2256, 2283	v. McPhadden	1704

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Peters v. Priest	1085	Pfaffenberger v. Pfaffen-	582	Philadelphia v. Gowan	1640
v. Reichenbach	2105	berger		v. Miller	2529
v. Tilghman	1566, 1587	Pfau v. State	2513	v. Reeder	950
v. U. S.	770, 907	Pfefferkorn v. Seefield	916	v. Rule	290
Petersburg School Dist.		Pfefferle v. State	616	Philadelphia & N. Y. R.	
v. Peterson	1873	Pfeifer v. Ins. Co.	2465	Co. v. Bunnell	714
Petersen, Re	2473	Pfeiffer v. Chicago & M.		Philadelphia & R. R. Co.	
Petersfield Case	1712	El. R. Co.	1388	v. Berg	1150, 1168
Peterson, Ex parte	2578	Pfeiffer Stone Co. v.		v. Hendrickson	454
Peterson, Re	1356	Shirley	568	v. Schultz	456
136 N. C.	1958	Pfial v. Vanbatenberg	156,	v. Spearen	2098
v. Albach	1382		2130	v. Yeager	2494
v. Ankrom	1481, 1487, 1651	Pfister v. Milwaukee F.		Philadelphia & T. R. Co.	
v. Beals	2450	P. Co.	406	v. Stimpson	15, 1007,
v. Bisbee	2408	v. Wade	1067		1770, 1856, 1867,
v. Brackey	680, 1697	Pfueger v. State	689, 1671,		1876, 1885, 1890
v. Chaix	2465		1938, 1958	Philadelphia B. & W. R.	
v. Gresham	1244	Pfotzer v. Mullaney	1665	Co. v. Gatta	664
v. Ind. Board	4a	Phares v. Barber	1669	Philadelphia C. P. R. Co.	
v. Johnson-Wentworth		Pharis v. Lambert	1195	v. Henrice	41
Co.	1951	Pharr v. Bachelor	1339	Philadelphia W. & B. R.	
v. Lott	1163	Phelan v. Bonham	1267	Co. v. Howard	1388
v. McManus	1665	v. Slattery	2473	v. Lehman	2581
v. Mineral K. F. Co.	747	v. State	1072	Philadelphia Wrecking	
v. Morgen	73, 74	v. U. S.	1644	Co. v. Nolen	18
v. Phillips Coal Co.	1750	Phelin v. Kenderdine	2270,	Philamalee v. State	968
v. Pittsburg S. P. G.			2272	Philbin v. Carr	1778
M. Co.	1056	Phelps v. Abbott	2444	v. Patrick	738
v. R. Co.	663, 682	v. Chicago R. I. & P.		Philip Carey Mfg. Co. v.	
v. State,		R. Co.	64	Watson	2525
47 Ga.	507, 1821, 1969	v. Com.	569, 1938, 2501	Philips v. Com.	247
50 Ga.	111	v. Conant	377	v. Fowler	2352
83 Md.	1028, 1029	v. Foot	1225	v. Stewart	2354
63 Nebr.	661, 2582	v. Hartwell	1081	v. Travelers' Ins. Co.	41
84 Nebr.	398	v. Hunt	15	Philipson v. Bates	1651, 2110
v. Taylor	1352	v. McGloan	1778	v. Chase	1206, 1232, 1234
Peterson's Estate	1271, 1496,	v. Mankato	283, 458	Philler v. Waukesha Co.	2203
	1680	v. Mayer	20	Phillips v. Byrd	1347
Peterson Co. v. Steiner	2504	v. Nazworthy	158	v. Chase	1576, 2272,
Petit v. Teal	1543	v. Pratt	2408		2314, 2322, 2329
Petite v. People	2272	v. Prew	1212, 2183, 2196,	v. Cole	1084, 1456
Petrick v. Ashcroft	2245		2211	v. Crawly	1311, 1312
Petrie v. Rose	261	v. R. Co.	458	v. Eamer	1893
Petro v. Hines	65	v. Riley	583	v. Gannon	2408
Pettibone v. Derringer	1405	v. Root	2047	v. Gregg	564, 1271
v. Phelps	1082	v. Tilton	1681, 2110	v. Hazen	2185
v. Smith	451	v. Town	565	v. Hoyle	17
Pettigru v. Sanders	1257	v. Utley	618, 1124	v. Hudson	1665
Pettis v. Green Riv. A.		Phelps Dodge Co. v.		v. Kelly	1718
Co.	2115	Guerrero	1698, 2382, 2389	v. Kingfield	923, 987, 1111,
Pettit v. State	390, 1730, 2581	Phené's Trusts	2531		1920, 1982,
Petty v. Anderson	2232	Phenix v. Baldwin	1415		1985, 1986
v. Benoit	751	Phenix Fire Ins. Co. v.		v. Laughlin	1257
v. Grisard	1347	Philip	1943	v. Lindsey	1194, 1207, 1208
v. State	1330, 1404, 2098	Phenix Ins. Co. v. Hart	747	v. Mahan	1466
Peugh v. Mitchell	2525	v. Sullivan	748	v. Marblehead	1021, 1040,
Pevery v. Boston	458	Phenneger v. Kendrick	2408		2346, 2358
Peycke v. Shinn	2153	Phettiplace v. Sayles	913,	v. Meagher	1346
Peyroux v. Howard	2575		1898	v. Meily	2047, 2431
Peyten v. Hallett	1206, 1248	Phibbs' Estate	2106	v. Ohio Valley E. R.	
v. Morgan Park	1261, 1263,	Phifer v. Erwin	581	Co.	1079
	2534	v. R. Co.	1951	v. Phillips	2526
v. Old Woolen M. Co.	1978	Phil Hollenbach Co. v.		v. Poindexter	1240, 1675,
v. State	136, 2512	Hollenbach	4c		1680



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Phillips v. Rhode Island		Pickering v. Reynolds	1133	Pierson-Lathrop Grain	
Co.	2354	v. Townsend	1384	Co. v. Barker	95
v. Robbins	1680	Pickert v. Hair	1063	Pietsch v. Pietsch	2594
v. Scott	95	Pickett v. Atlantic C. L.		Pigeon, Case of	1576
v. Smith	1064	R. Co.	792	Pigeon's Case	4c
v. Starr	1951	v. Boyd	1681	Pigg v. Carroll	615
v. State,		Pickford's Case	2060	v. State,	
62 Ark.	107	Pickrell v. State	2066	145 Ind.	1896
162 Ala.	149	Pickton v. Fargo	1350	43 Tex.	21, 675
29 Ga.	1072, 2081	Pickup v. Thames Ins.		Piggot v. R. Co.	455
33 Ga.	142	Co.	2533	Pigot's Case	2405
121 Ga.	1842	Pico v. Cuyas	1387	Pigott v. Holloway	736, 747
9 Humph.	1135, 1138, 1362	Pictorial League v.		Piipilani v. Houghtailing	1890
		Nelson	377, 2442	Pike v. Badmering	907
Okl. Cr., 203 Pac.	141, 1003, 1614	Pidcock v. Potter	233, 1938	v. Bradbury	1302
22 Tex. App.	2079	Pidgeon v. Williams	749	v. Chicago	714, 1164, 1943
50 Tex. Cr.	1450	Piedmont Bank v. Hatcher	334	v. Crehore	347, 1476, 1677
86 Tex. Cr.	851	Piedmont Sav. Bk. v.		v. Dyke	2116
v. Stewart	2240	Levy	1779	v. Hayes	1458, 2336
v. U. S. Benef. Soc'y	1062, 1213	Piepkke v. Philadelphia &		v. State	149, 153
		R. Co.	507	v. Street	2145
v. U. S. Benevo-		Pier v. Duff	1086	Pike's Will	1736
lent Soc'y	1213, 1268	v. Speer	207, 209	Pile v. State	1842
v. Willow	443, 458	Pierce, In re	2206	Pillow v. Impr. Co.	586
v. Wimburn	1327	v. Boston	463, 677, 1021	v. Roberts	1356, 2456
Philps v. Trueman	1085	v. Bradford	616	Pillsbury v. Locke	748, 1558
Phinazee v. Bunn	770	v. Brennan	1166, 2354	Pilson v. U. S.	1203
Phipps v. Martin	620	v. Carleton	1248	Pilstrand v. Swedish	
v. Parker	1303	v. Chase	585	Methodist Church	1738, 2503
Phoenix v. Dey	1086	v. Gilson	949, 950, 951, 953, 1028	Pim v. Curell	1593
Phoenix Assur. Co. v.		v. Goldsberry	1072	Pinch v. Willard	2437
Boyette	2418, 2465	v. Gray	1225	Pincus v. Reynolds	344
v. McArthur	907, 1195	v. Insdeth	1271	Pindell v. Rubenstein	1041, 1076
Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Amuse-		v. Kimball	2572		
ment Co.	754	v. Myrick	63, 1983	Pine Tree L. Co. v. Fargo	2534
v. Gray	1058	v. Newton	923	Pineland Club v. Robert	1275, 2110
v. Moog	779, 1263, 1898	v. Northey	2015, 2016		
v. Philip	379	v. R. Co.	749, 760	Pingery v. R. Co.	720, 1947
v. Shoemaker	2336	v. Rehfuas	1219	Pingree v. Johnson	616, 747
Phoenix Nat'l Bank v.		v. State,		Pingry v. Washburn	1873
Taylor	2018	53 Ga.	1009, 1012, 1013	Pinkard v. State	293
Piatt v. Piatt	2046, 2067			Pinkerton v. Slocumb	1087
Pichler v. Reese	1960	Tex. Cr., 234		Pinkham v. Benton	754, 1560
Pick v. Rubicon H. Co.	1164	S. W.	832	v. Cockell	702
Pickard v. Bailey	564, 1194, 1195, 1279, 1676, 2164, 2558	v. U. S.	851	Pinney v. Andrus	745, 761
		v. United Gas & E. Co.	969	v. Cahill	457, 1700
v. Bryant	907, 1037	v. Wallace	1195, 1225	v. Jones	1773
v. Clancy	2232	v. Woodward	2349	v. Pinney	2047
Pickens v. Davis	1737, 1782	Piercy v. Boston El. R.		Pinney's Will	233, 1671, 1938, 1958
v. Merriam	2408	Co.	1729		
v. State,		v. Fisher	2520	Pinschower v. Hanks	736
115 Ala.	2497, 2512	v. Piercy	1738, 2312	Pinson v. Jones	15
61 Miss.	52, 691, 1111, 1612, 1613, 1614	Pierriero v. U. S.	2513	Pinsonneault, Re	2531
56 Tex. Cr.	2100	Piers v. Piers	1645, 2505	Pioneer Cooperage Co.	
Pickens' Estate	1489	Pierson v. Doe	1225	v. Romanowicz	2416
Pickering, Re	1859	v. Hutchinson	1197	Pioso v. Bitzer	2054
v. Barkley	1364, 1947	v. Illinois C. R. Co.	2337, 2341	Piper, Re	2472
v. Cambridge	1784			v. Spokane	252
v. Dowson	2425, 2434	v. People	216, 390, 2385	Pipestone Co. Bank v.	
v. Meyers	1205	v. R. Co.	682	Ward	916
v. Noyes	1858	v. State	987	Pipher v. Lodge	1244, 1278, 1406
		v. Steortz	2376		
		v. Wallace	1944	Pipkin v. Bond	953, 1028

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Pippin v. Com.	1447	Pittsburg W. & K. R.		Plicque v. La Branche	1054,
In re	2132, 2520	Co. v. Applegate	1074		2008, 2016
v. Anderson	1647, 1650	Pittsfield & F. P. R. Co.		Plimpton v. Chamberlain	1459
v. Wyld	1062	v. Harrison	7, 1355	v. Somerset	1356
Pischel v. Marceline C.		Pittsford v. Chittenden	2527	Plumb v. Curtis	94, 392, 1560
& M. Co.	613	Pizarro, The	291	v. Richmond Light &	
Pitcairn v. Hiss Co.	2400	Pizzicati's Succession	1606	R. Co.	2509
v. Ogbourne	2423	Place v. Allcock	379	Plumer v. Board	2358
Pitcher v. King	1681	v. Baugher	1555	Plummer v. Com.	276
Pitman v. Maddox	1518	v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	283	v. Currier	1062
v. State	111, 247, 1036	v. Minster	1013	v. Mercantile Co.	1558, 1877
Pitt v. Emmons	1208	Plachy v. State	7, 2060	v. Newdigate	150
v. State	111, 1404	Plainfield F. N. Bank v.		v. Ossipee	199, 438, 785.
Pittman v. State	309, 1871,	Dunn	2446		963, 1718, 1908
	2201, 2276	Planing-Machine Co. v.		v. Ricker	1722
Pitton v. Walter	1670	Keith	1856c	v. State,	
Pitts v. State,		Plank v. Grimm	581, 661	Ga. App.,	108
140 Ala.	105, 106,	Plank-Road Co. v.		S. E.	2085
	396, 1440, 1750	Thomas	1910	Plunket v. Bowman	1513
43 Miss.	2071, 2073	Plano Mfg. Co. v.		Plunkett v. Clearwater	
v. Wilder	1257	Frawley	2304	B. & M. Co.	283
Pittsburg v. O'Neill	571	v. Kautenberger	1969, 1974	v. Cobbett	406, 2378
Pittsburg & C. R. Co.		v. McCoid	2330	v. Dillon	1248, 1256
v. Andrews	1029, 1040	Plant v. McEwen	1076	v. Hamilton	2195, 2286
Pittsburg & L. E. R. Co.		v. State	396	v. Hauschka	2185
v. Robinson	714	v. Taylor	1484, 1491	v. Levingston	289
Pittsburg & W. R. Co.		Planters' Bank v. Bass	2535	v. State	200, 789, 987
v. Patterson	463	v. George	2223	Plymouth M. C. & I.	
v. Thompson	18, 492, 497,	v. Massey	2098	Soc'y v. Traders' P.	
	2509	Planters' G. & W. Co. v.		Ass'n	1856b
Pittsburg Coal Co. v.		Pitts Banking Co.	1078	Plymouth Sav. & L.	
Withers	2354	Planters' Mut. I. Ass'n		Ass'n v. Kassing	2016, 2020
Pittsburg C. C. & St. L.		v. Green	95	Plympton v. Preston	1208
R. Co. v. Austin's		Planters' Mut. Ins. Co.		Poague v. Spriggs	2105
Adm'r	2513	v. Rowland	1947	Pocahontas C. Co. v.	
v. Banfill	2494	Planters' & M. Bank v.		Williams	1876
v. Brown	1233	Borland	1245, 1966	Pocahontas Mining Co.	
v. Chicago	1503	Plass v. Plass	1029	v. Ind. Com.	2220
v. Edwards	1951	Plaster v. Rigney	2143	Pocock v. Billing	1084
v. Gage	463	Platner v. Platner	2115	v. Hendricks	93, 736, 747
v. Haislup	1013, 1750	Plato v. Reynolds	1021	v. Lincoln	2462
v. Indiana H. Co.	456	Platt v. Buck	2319	v. Thornicroft	2239
v. Lewis	905	v. Haner	1269	Poconoket, The	2442
v. Lighthouse	1158, 1168,	Platte Valley C. Co. v.		Poe v. Southern R. Co.	2509
	1698	Bosserman-Gates L. S.		v. State	1404
v. McGrath	1374, 1671	Co.	17	Poff v. Poff	2526
v. Martin	20	Platter v. Minneapolis		v. N. E. Tel. & Teleg.	
v. Noel	1873	& St. Louis R. Co.	2510	Co.	2531
v. Noftger	1777	Plattsouth v. Mitchell	252	Poignand v. Smith	1225, 1233,
v. O'Conner	933, 1005, 2390	Platz v. McKean	1951		1269, 1709
v. Sheppard	1706, 1976	Plaxton v. Dare	1471, 1592	Poindexter's Case	363
v. State	2556	Pleasant v. State,		Poindexter & O. L. S.	
Pittsburg F. W. & C. R.		13 Ark.	964, 987	Co. v. Oregon S. L. R.	
Co. v. Callaghan	150	15 Ark.	62, 200, 398,	Co.	1078
v. Ruby	65, 199, 249,		923, 987, 1135,	Pointer v. U. S.	118
	250		1136, 1138, 1611,	Poler v. Poler	64
Pittsburg V. & C. R. Co.			1842, 1985, 2283	Polhemus v. Prudential	
v. Rose	463, 1943	Pleasanton v. Nutt	2235	R. Co.	2494
v. Vance	463, 720,	Pleasants v. Heard	2354	Polhill v. Brown	1665
	728, 1943	v. Meng	1355	Polin v. State	451
Pittsburgh R. Co. v.		v. Pemberton	529	Poling v. R. Co.	791
Thomas	250, 1616	Pledger v. R. Co.	1750	Polini v. Gray	1487, 1524,
Pittsburgh S. & N. R.		Plest v. Canadian N. Q.			1527, 1662, 1670
Co. v. Lamphere	461	R. Co.	2509	Polite v. Jefferson	1267



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Polk v. Butterfield	2573	Pooley v. Harradine	2444	Porto Rico Progress	
v. Coffin	716	Poor v. Robinson	1521	Pub. Co., Re	2573
v. State	278, 205, 1117, 1618, 2062	Poorman v. Miller	1256	Portsmouth St. R. Co.	
62 Ala.	247	Pope v. Allis	1066	v. Peed's Adm'r	761, 905
36 Ark.	681, 2060	v. Askew	693, 700, 2008	Portuguese Consul's Case	2372
40 Ark.	75, 205, 987, 2062	v. Dodson	1013	Portwood v. Com.	2501
Polk Co. v. Owen	18, 1960	v. Filley	571	Posell v. Herscovitz	20
Pollak v. Harmon	288	v. Hanke	581	Posey v. Buckner	1681
Pollard v. Lively,		v. Hogan	1081, 2232	v. Com.	987
2 Gratt.	1225, 1651, 2168	v. State,		v. Hanson	1058, 1487, 2341, 2531
4 Gratt.	132, 1225, 2529	174 Ala.	1755, 1929, 1977	v. State	1136
v. Meloin	1225, 1651	Ala., 63 So. 71	1405	Post v. Kenerson	1548
v. People	1010, 1013	22 Ark.	1398	v. Leland	19
v. State	198	Pope's Estate	2474	v. R. Co.	1856d
v. Wybourn	1922	Popkin v. Popkin	168	v. Rich	1677
Polleys v. Ins. Co.	1389	Porath v. State	398, 770, 949, 2056, 2060	v. School District	1195
Pollitz v. Wickersham	1067	Porch v. State	141, 1398, 1977	v. Schooner Lady Jane	1647
Pollock v. Glassell	1302, 1304, 1511, 2049, 2408, 2456	Porell v. Cavanaugh	2024	v. Supervisors	1350, 1684
v. McCarty	2408	Porges v. Jacobs	1960	v. U. S.	662
v. Morrison	581	Porter v. Allen	1085	Postal Tel. Cable Co. v.	
v. Pollock	898, 907	v. Buckingham	1651	Brantley	1078, 1651, 1778
v. State	235, 457	v. Charlesworth	320	v. Hulsey	949
v. Wilcox	1198, 1253	v. Chitson	2276	v. Le Noir	1078
Polsey v. Newton	2421, 2477	v. Com.	1072, 2059	v. Likes	1076
Polson v. Com.	2071, 2100	v. Ferguson	1189	Postel v. Palmer	1195
v. State	1136, 2337	v. Hale	1213	Postell v. Com.	1442
Pomeroy v. Baddeley	1841	v. Hawkins	716	Posten v. Rasette	2105
v. Benton	291, 1416	v. Home Friendly So-		Postlethwaite v. Rick-	
Pomfret v. Lancashire &		cietv	7a	man	2298
Y. R. Co.	2510	v. Ind. Com.	4c	Poston v. Jones	2518
Pomfrey v. Saratoga		v. Judson	1675	Poteete v. State	1433
Springs	458	v. Mfg. Co.	571, 1951	Potier v. Barclay	1225
Ponce v. Crawford	1248, 1362	v. People	944, 2060	Potlatch Lumber Co. v.	
Ponce v. McElvy	1067	v. Rich	682	Anderson	382, 437
Poncin v. Furth	686	v. Seiler	64	Potter v. Baldwin	233
Pond v. Lockwood	1196	v. State,		v. Bank	8
Pond Creek M. & E. Co.		55 Ala.	279, 836, 855	v. Barringer	2520
v. Clark	2464	135 Ala.	681	v. Browne	987
Ponder v. Shumans	2166	140 Ala.	1938	v. Cave	252
Pontius v. People	89, 224	76 Ga.	2058	v. Clapp	2506
Pool v. Bridges	1757	2 Ind.	276, 1839, 1842	v. Easton	2431
v. Devens	664, 1034	173 Ind.	106, 118, 390	v. Grand Trunk W. R.	
v. Warren Co.	1750	Okl. Cr., 202 Pac.	1012	Co.	1976
v. White	1669	1 Tex. App.	2079	v. Natural Gas Co.	252, 437, 461
Poole v. Boston & M. R.		86 Tex. Cr.	280, 1725	v. Ware	1911
Co.	2509	v. Throop	338, 1808	v. Washburn	1573
v. Dean	1921, 1938, 1958	v. Waring	2572	v. Webb	64
v. Dicas	1522, 1523, 1527	v. Warner	1566	Potts v. Buckley	1960
v. Fleeger	20	v. Wilson	697, 706, 707, 1188, 1192, 1195	v. Cogdell	1267
v. Gerrard	1250	Porter Screen Mfg. Co.		v. Coleman	1188, 2105
v. Mitchell	1890	v. Central Vermont R.		v. House	689, 1292, 1938
v. People	2505	Co.	261	v. State	2582
v. Perritt	2260, 2271	Portis v. Hill	2065	Poulet v. Johnson	1195, 1651
v. Richardson	1933, 1938	Portland v. Kamm	1943	Poulett Peerage	2063
v. State	1732	v. Tigard	1943	Poulson v. Stanley	2337
v. Warren	1298	v. Yick	1350, 2572, 2577	Poultney v. Fairhaven	2083
Pooler v. State	1375	Portland & Or. C. R. Co.		v. Rass	1540
Pooley v. Dutton	581	v. Sanders	714	Pound v. State	111, 246, 248, 396, 2098
		Portland F. M. Co. v.		v. Wilson	905
		British & F. M. Ins.			
		Co.	2440		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Povall, Ex parte	1658, 1681, 2163	Powers v. Russell	1318	Presbyterian Church v. Emerson	1519
Powel v. Cleaver	1304	v. Silsby	1566, 1567, 1568	Prescott v. Board	1350
Powell v. Biddle	2463	v. State,		v. Merrick	1958
v. Blackett	1300	80 Ind.	2595	v. Ward	987, 1021
v. Edmunds	2434	74 Miss.	1447, 2497	Prescott & N. W. R. Co.	
v. Ford	694, 696	75 Nebr.	2272, 2273	v. Franks	795
v. Fowler	2527	117 Tenn.	56, 923, 1618	Prescott Bank v. Caverly	2445
v. Harper	66, 73, 1476	Tex. Cr., 227 S. W.	389, 1732	Prescott Irrig. Co. v. Flathers	2580
v. Hayes	1350	v. U. S.	852, 2276	President, etc. of Mendota v. Thompson	2535
v. Hendrick	1313, 1651, 1674	Powers' Estate	2500	Preslar v. Stallworth	1195
v. Lea	2047	Powers' Executor v. Powers	1081, 1738	Presnell v. Garrison	18
v. Nevada C. & O. R. Co.	461	Poyner v. State,		Press Publishing Co. v. Lefferts	2322
v. Olds	112, 1777	Tex. Cr., 48 S. W.	59	Presser v. State	1109
v. Pearlstine	1210	40 Tex. Cr.	1141	Pressley v. State,	
v. Powell,		Prader v. Accident Ass'n	2384	106 Ala.	857
114 Ill.	616	Prairie du Rocher v. Schoening K. M. Co.	1680	Ala., 88 So.	1330, 2042
L. R., 1 P. D.	1782	Pralus v. Pacific G. & S. M. Co.	767	Prest-O-Lite v. Skeal	2509
v. R. Co.	2206	Prapuolenis v. Goebel		Preston v. Bowers	1730
v. State,		Const. Co.	2509	v. Carr	1845, 1856, 2290, 2294, 2318
19 Ala.	111, 247, 1029, 1035	Prater v. State	106, 928	v. Cedar Rapids	1908
25 Ala.	689, 1938	Prather v. Palmer	382	v. Dills	949
52 Ala.	247	v. Pritchard	736	v. Merceau	2442
58 Ala.	2236	v. Wilkins	1236	v. Robinson	1651, 1655
149 Ark.	2277	Pratt v. Andrews	64, 66, 75, 76	v. State,	
101 Ga.	248, 821, 1614, 1722	v. Barker	1388	Nebr., 185 N.W.	2061
122 Ga.	1013	v. Battles	786, 1225, 1651	41 Tex. Cr.	987
61 Miss.	1157	v. Carns	2408	Preston's Case	194a
Miss., 23 So.	852, 1349	v. Delavan	2237	Prestwood v. Carlton	2416
13 Tex. App.	1841	v. Ducey	1672	v. Watson	2588, 2590, 2593, 2594
50 Tex. Cr.	2265	v. Fowler	2115	Prettyman v. Watson	1225
v. Strickland	289, 2235	v. King	1681	Prevatt v. State	1614
v. Wark	2065	v. Patterson	1409	Prewett v. Coopwood	1081
v. Waters	529	v. Pratt	2517	Prewitt v. Martin	1263, 2115
v. Wathen	1458	v. Rawson	1874	v. State,	
v. Watts	1086	v. State	1398	150 Ark.	1010, 1974
v. Young	1681	v. Waddington	2508	Miss., 63 So.	232, 681
Powelson v. Proctor & Gamble Co.	2210	v. White	1537, 1549, 1551	Pribbeno v. Chicago B. & O. R. Co.	283
Power v. Ellis	2258, 2268	v. Wickham	1270	Fribble v. Hall	1347
v. Frick	702	Pratte v. Coffman	2354	Price v. Clapp	367
v. Kitching	1350	v. Voisard	2016	v. Garland	1521, 1560
Powers v. Armstrong	64	Prdjun v. U. S.	1861	v. Harrison	1858, 1859a
v. Charmsbury	1603	Preece v. Oregon Short Line R. Co.	2509	v. Hudson	2408
v. Com.,		Freeman v. U. S.	1557, 2439	v. Hunt	1249
Ky., 61 S. W.	1005, 1079	Preeper v. R.	561, 687	v. Jenkins	1877, 1890
Ky., 63 S. W.	1005	Preferred Acc. Ins. Co.		v. Littlewood	1661
Ky., 70 S. W.	2463	v. Barker	7a	v. Lord Torrington	1518
v. Harten	2214	v. Fielding	2510	v. Lyon	1219
v. Leach	52, 1002, 1013, 1985	v. Gray	949	v. M'Gee	1312
v. M'Ferran	1313, 1513	Prell v. McDonald	2572	v. M'Ilvain	2354
v. McKenzie	561, 1908, 2016	Prentice v. Crane	2486	v. Mazange	253, 1623
v. Mitchell	682, 1976	Prentice's Will	1671	v. Page	2473
v. Presgroves	73, 74, 691, 1612, 1615	Prentiss v. Bates,		v. Powell	1951
v. R. Co.	437	88 Mich.	2500	v. Price	2530
v. Rude	2408	93 Mich.	1938, 2500	v. R. Co.	1250
		Prentiss v. Roberts	1105	v. Shay	2415
		Presbrey v. R. Co.	463	v. Standard L. & A. Ins. Co.	1530, 2384



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Price v. State,		Procter v. Lamson	1289	Prudhomme v. Savant	2050
114 Ga.	851, 861	Proctor v. Appleby	1254	Pruett v. State	2235
18 Oh. St.	824, 841	v. Bigelow	2083	Pruitt v. Cox	1109
1 Okl. Cr.	987, 1750,	v. Cable Co.	2120	v. State	1404
	2963	v. De Camp	1807	Prussel v. Knowles	2354,
v. U. S.	290, 1163,	v. Houghtaling	73, 74,		2350, 2355
	1803, 2273, 2510		209, 406	Prussing v. Jackson	1195,
v. Wolfer	1247	v. Irvin	457		1237, 1256
Prickett v. Sulzberger &		v. Proctor's Adm'r	1539	Pruyn v. Young	285
S. Co.	1750	v. Ray	95	Pryor v. Portsmouth C.	
Priddy v. Boice	1671	Proctor & Gamble Co. v.		Co.	150
Pride v. State	1976	Blakeley O. & T. Co.	2131	v. State,	
Pridgen v. Green	2138, 2141	Produce Exchange T.		Miss., 39 So.	1442
Priest v. State	1828, 2071	Co. v. Bieberbach	1541,	40 Tex. Cr.	851
v. Union Canal Co.	1873		1779	Psyche v. Paradol	1878
v. Way	1416	Profile & F. H. Co. v.		Public Clearing House	
Prime v. Eastwood	406	Bickford	1416	v. Coyne	1355
Primm v. Stewart	1503, 1605	Proper v. State	357, 398, 770	Public Service R. Co. v.	
Primrose v. Browing	1247	Proprietor v. Keith	1364,	Wursthorn	1953
Prince v. Blackburn	1312		2032	Publishing Co. v. Keller	372
v. Edwards	2505	Proprietors v. Bullard	1082,	Puckett v. Guenther	2450
v. Prince	2143, 2520		1257	Puckley v. Bridges	1364
v. Samo	1045, 2113	Propsom v. Leatham	252	Puente v. Puente	2527
v. Smith	1540, 1548	Propst v. Mathis	1278, 1362,	Puett v. Beard	1072
v. Swett	1558		1633	Puffer v. Smith	2415
v. U. S.	2512	v. William Hanley Co.	2441	Pugh v. McRae	1456
Prince's Case, The	1350	Prosser v. Wapello Co.	1943	Pugsley v. Ring	2522
Princess of Wales v.		Protection Ins. Co. v.		v. Smyth	1730, 2336
Lord Liverpool	1858	Harner	1946, 1947	Puleston v. Warburton	1658
Prindle v. Glover	239	Protection L. I. Co. v.		Pulford's Appeal	2311, 2319
Prine v. State	111	Dill	1195	Pullen v. Hutchinson	1291,
Pringey v. Guss	1213	Protector, The, v. Lord			2134
Pringle v. Burroughs	232	Lumley	2250	v. People	609
v. Miller	1037, 1807	Prothro v. Minden Sem-		v. Pullen	1005
v. Pringle	607, 1085, 1086,	inary	1195	Pulley v. Hilton	2139
	1390, 2228	Prouskevitch v Chicago		v. State	18, 1136
v. State	821	& A. R. Co.	2220	Pulliam v. Cantrell	987, 988,
Printing Tel. & C. Co.		Prout v. Bernards L. &			1108
v. Drucker	1388	S. Co.	1890	v. Sells	2008
Printz v. Cheeney	2261, 2271	Prouty Lumber & B. Co.		Pullman Co. v. Finley	2354
v. People	716	v. Cogan	18	v. Meyer	682
Prior v. Davis	2498	Provencher v. Moore	377	Pullman P. C. Co. v.	
v. Powers	2352	Providence G. M. Co. v.		Harkins	1951
v. State	987	Burke	12, 17	Puls v. Grand Lodge	1374,
v. White	1082	Providence Jewelry Co.			1671, 1719, 1750
Priou v. Adams	1186	v. Fessler	2416	Pumorlo v. Merrill	252,
Prisel v. Coney	2432	Providence Tool Co. v.			1015
Pritchard v. Austin	233, 792,	Mfg. Co.	60, 1937	Pumphrey v. State	516, 767,
	794	Provident S. L. Assur.			1817, 1820, 1828
v. Bagshawe	1075, 1256,	Soc'y v. Whayne's		Purcell v. Armour Pack-	
	2105	Adm'r	1947	ing Co.	2409
v. Fowler	2500	Provincial Fox v. Ten-		v. M'Namara	896, 1103
v. Henderson	1908, 1911,	nant	2465	v. Purcell	2086
	1938	Provis v. Reed	1106, 1514,	v. R. Co.	2349
Pritchett v. Davis	2450		1771	Purdee v. State	949, 1005
v. Munroe	2124	Provost v. Brueck	1950	Purdy v. Hall	1215
v. Smart	1858	Pruden v. Alden	1267, 2450	v. People,	
v. State	246, 247	Prudential Assurance		4 Hill N. Y.	1350
Pritt v. Fairclough	1518,	Co. v. Edmonds	2531	40 Ill.	274, 946, 1018
	1561, 1616	Prudential F. Ins. Co. v.		v. State	2506
Prize Cases	2574	Alley	1947	Pure Oil Co. v. Chicago	
Probasco v. Cook	276	Prudential Ins. Co. v.		M. & St. P. R. Co.	2496
Probst v. Bravenlich	2349	Gratz	2531	Purinton v. Purinton	20
Proby v. Erratt Co.	1856a	v. Hummer	2434		1243, 1256

## LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
Purkey v. Southern C. & T. Co.	1984
Purnell v. R. Co.	664, 2496
Purpura v. U. S.	832
Purse v. Purcell	916
Purvis v. Robinson	1224, 1225, 1651
Puryear v. Reese	1938
v. State,	
63 Ga.	2098
28 Tex. App.	2081
50 Tex. Cr.	246, 580
Pusch v. Brady	1240
Pusey's Estate	2231, 2337
Pusic v. Salak	2498
Puterbaugh v. Smith	2195
Puth v. Zimbleman	1730
Putnam v. Goodall	1246, 1560
v. Grant	1558
v. Hamilton	2027
v. Harris	1576, 1871
v. State	1620
v. U. S.	774, 761, 905
v. Wadley	701, 2008, 2016
Putnam F. & M. Co. v.	
Canfield	2441, 2455
Putnam-Hooker Co. v.	
Hewins	2465
Putual v. State	18, 1405, 1871
Pye v. Butterfield	2252, 2256
Pyke v. Crouch	1364
v. Jamestown	682
Pyle v. Clark	2552
v. Oustatt	614
v. Piercy	987
v. Pyle	608, 681, 1671
v. State	1033
Pym v. Campbell	2410
v. Pym	1062
Pyne v. Canadian Pacific R. Co.	1059
Pyroleum Appliance Co.	
v. W. H. & S. Co.	2054
Pytt v. Griffith	1313

**Q**

Quackenbross v. Globe & R. T. Ins. Co.	2169
Quackenbush v. R. Co.	1693
Quaife v. R. Co.	688, 1719, 1721
Quaker Oats Co. v. Kid- man	2093
Qualey v. Terr.	309
Qualls v. Qualls	530
Quarles v. Waldron	1911
Quattlebaum v. State	1700
Que Quay v. Insular Col- lector	1145, 2505
Questham v. Modern Woodmen	1671
Queen v. State	905

	Section
Queen Mary's Trial	1364
Queen's (Caroline)	
Case, The	4, 280, 764, 782, 952, 953, 960, 962, 964, 995, 1025, 1028, 1038, 1043, 1045, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1816, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1850, 1861, 1884, 1917, 1963, 2094, 2113
Queen's Proctor v. Fry	1644
Queenan v. Oklahoma	689, 1938
v. Terr.	233, 1938
Queener v. Morrow	1072, 1126, 1128, 1129, 2232, 2336
Quellmals v. Atlantic	
Coast El. R. Co.	199
Quesenberry v. State	246
Quick v. Cotman	1777
v. Johnson	2099
v. Quick	1736, 1738
Quigley v. Phelps	1351
v. Thompson	1890
Quilichini v. Agostini	285
Quillin v. Com.	523
Quilter v. Jorss	1194, 1195
Quimby v. Ayers	657, 1460
v. Buzzell	1302
v. Morrill	581
v. N. A. C. & T. Co.	1195
Quin v. Assurance Co.	1946, 1947
v. Sexton	2444
Quinalty v. Temple	68
Quincy Horse R. & C.	
Co. v. Gunse	1750
Quinlan v. R. Co.	1951
v. Utica	458
Quinn v. Champagne	2575
v. Com.	106
v. Eagleston	1777, 2138
v. Flesher	795, 2220
v. Halbert	498, 934, 1393
v. Higgins	132, 681, 682, 1951
v. Moss	2434
v. Parke & L. N. Co.	2066
v. People,	
51 Colo.	1154
123 Ill.	2272
v. State	905
Quinsigamond Bank v.	
Hobbs	561, 923, 987, 1618
Quint v. Merrill	1684
Quintal v. Chalmers	1674
Quintana v. State	821, 2276
Quirk v. Quirk	1856b

	Section
Quock Ting v. U. S.	2498
Quong Sue v. U. S.	2066

**R. = Rex, Regina**

R. v. Abington	1364, 2036
v. Abraham	1781
v. Acaster & Leach	2245
v. Acklandby	2036
v. Acton	1981
v. Adamson	346
v. Adey	2270
v. Addis	2059
v. Ah Har	1393
v. Aho	1451, 2273
v. Aickles	1632, 1639
v. Akers	2374
v. Albutt & Screen	1683
v. Alexander	1136, 1760
v. All Saints	2234, 2235
v. Allen,	
4 Cr. App.	398, 2245
17 D. L. R.	2239
1 Moo. Cr. C.	2089
v. Allerton	2371
v. Almon	2349, 2491
v. Anderson,	
16 D. L. R.	829,
	1700, 2501
7 How. St. Tr.	1364,
	1805
v. Andrews	2056
v. Angelo	1404
v. Anglesea	1982
v. Annesley	278, 1329,
	1982
v. Anstruther	2036
v. Antrobus	1586
v. Appleby	1072
v. Apuna	1040
v. Aram	266
v. Armitage	2061
v. Armstrong	1821, 2061
v. Arnold,	
8 C. & P.	837, 848,
	1375
16 How. St. Tr.	1933
v. Arundel,	
4 Cox Cr.	580
Hob. 109	291, 1350
1 How. St. Tr.	1364
v. Ashton & Thorne-	
ley	1438, 1440
v. Atherton	1072
v. Atkin	1821
v. Atkinson	2529
v. Atterbury	560, 992,
	1364, 1825, 1981,
	1991, 1992, 2015,
	2026, 2183, 2281,
	2375
v. Attwood	837
v. Atwood & Robbins	2056
v. Audley	516, 1364, 2227



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Austen	1404	R. v. Bell,		R. v. Boyle,	
v. Avery	2298, 2312	McNally	855	10 Cr. App.	352
v. Aylmer	2059	v. Bellingham	1933	1 Lew. Cr. C.	1842
v. Azir	2239	v. Bellis	1645, 2529	1 Moo. & Rob.	905
v. Babington	819, 1364	v. Bembridge	1610, 1981,	v. Braddon	1111, 1364,
v. Backler	1244		2269		1821, 2201,
v. Bacon	2032	v. Benjamin,			2202
v. Bailey	303, 363	8 Cr. App.	1129	v. Bradshaw	1933
v. Baillie	744, 963, 2312,	41 D. L. R.	839	v. Braintree	1196
	2327	v. Bennet	848	v. Braithwaite	2042
v. Baines	2192, 2210, 2371	v. Benson	747, 1676b	v. Bramley	2063, 2230
v. Baker	1433	v. Bentley	1349	v. Brandreth	1079, 1836
v. Baldry	822, 824, 832,	v. Berger	1587	v. Brannan	664, 1244
	837, 843, 865,	v. Berigan	834, 855	v. Brasier,	
	866, 867	v. Bernadotti	1441	East Pl. Cr.	1760,
v. Ball,		v. Bernard	782, 1073		1821, 1825
1 Camp.	88, 309	v. Berriman	848, 858	Leach Cr. L.	505,
8 C. & P.	774, 905,	v. Berwick	818, 847		506, 508
	907	v. Best	847	v. Brazier	1761
5 Cr. App.	398	v. Betchel	2056, 2060	v. Brecknock	195
1 Moo. Cr. C.	318	v. Bickley,		v. Brett	327
R. & R.	21, 318	2 Cr. App.	2060	v. Brewer,	
v. Balls	330	3 Price	1670	6 C. & P.	2317
v. Baltimore	782	v. Biggin	194a, 986	9 Cox Cr.	1262
v. Barber	704, 2006	v. Bird	850	60 D. L. R.	2043
v. Barker	62, 986,	v. Birkett	2059	v. Brice	1911
	1022, 1209	v. Birkett & Brady	2059	v. Bridgeman	1858
v. Barley	2079	v. Birmingham	10, 1457,	v. Bridgwater	194a, 2276
v. Barnard,			1458, 1465,	v. Briggs	351
1 C. & P.	986		1469	v. Britton,	
19 How. St. Tr.	293,	v. Birtle	2529	17 Cox Cr.	1666
	352, 1981	v. Bispham	1982, 1985	1 F. & F.	2529
v. Barnes	2281	v. Bittle	6b	1 Moo. & R.	843, 850
v. Barnett	761, 1262	v. Blackburn	835, 1130	v. Bromwich	1364
v. Barrett	2059	v. Blais	580, 2273	v. Brooke	1894
v. Barron	367	v. Blandy	238, 950	v. Broughton	2040
v. Barrow	398	v. Blatherwick	2059	v. Brown,	
v. Bartlett,		v. Bleasdale	216, 347	10 Cox Cr.	1982
7 C. & P.	848, 1072	v. Bleiler	564	6 Cr. App.	2060, 2061
1 Cox Cr.	609	v. Bliss	1584, 1585	3 Haw.	949, 2056
v. Basingstoke,		v. Bloodworth	398, 2059,	McNally	56
19 L. J. M. C.	1257		2060	21 U. C. Q. B.	1002,
14 Q. B.	1256	v. Blunt	819		1005, 1006
v. Baskerville	2056, 2059	v. Bodkin	847	1 Ventr.	2239
v. Bastwick	1177	v. Bodle	918, 2079	v. Brunt	1836
v. Bate	832, 855	v. Bond,		v. Bryan	855
v. Bathwick	2145, 2234,	4 Cox Cr.	848, 855	v. Buckley	1528, 1725
	2235	Eng. 1906 K. B.	359	v. Buckworth,	
v. Baugh,		27 How. St. Tr.	285,	2 Keb.	1364, 2236
31 D. L. R.	1005		986, 1982	1 Sid.	1154
33 D. L. R.	1669	21 Man.	803	v. Budge	657
v. Bayard	2364	v. Bonner	1441	v. Bull,	
v. Baylis	1821	v. Boughton	836	9 C. & P.	2079
v. Baynton	2250	v. Boulter	2042	12 Cox Cr.	1406
v. Beard	1807	v. Bourdon	1674	v. Bullard	4
v. Bedel	2063	v. Bowes,		v. Bullivant	2298, 2319
v. Bedfordshire	1582, 1583,	20 Ont. L. R.	1760,	v. Burdell	2278, 2356
	1586, 1587		2061	v. Burdett	4, 41, 285, 437,
v. Bedingfield	1576, 1756	1 T. R.	2239		2081, 2491, 2494
v. Beecham	21, 194a	v. Bowler,		v. Burke,	
v. Beeston	1375, 1387	Annual Register	1933	2 Cox Cr.	1130
v. Beezley	2079	Phillipps' Ev.	1671	8 Cox Cr.	811, 1005
v. Bcll,		v. Boyes	2056, 2258,	v. Burley	834
5 C. & P.	848, 1328		2271, 2280	v. Burr	2061

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Burt	58	R. v. Charnock	526, 580, 657, 1177, 1364, 1837	R. v. Corder	579
v. Burton	152, 153, 2070, 2081, 2513	v. Chasson	1732	v. Cornelius	2259b, 2259c
v. Busby	1364	v. Cheverton	838, 847, 855, 2081	v. Cornish	1834, 1909, 2081, 2098
v. Bushel	657, 1168, 1364, 1800, 1864	v. Child	1666	v. Cornwallis	575
v. Bushnell	657, 922	v. Chitson	2276	v. Coroner	1165
v. Butcher	856	v. Choney	841, 2302	v. Cotton	363
v. Butler	1981	v. Christie	1072, 1760	v. Court	824, 832, 848
v. Butterfield	1006	v. Christopher	1326, 1349	v. Courtenay	860
v. Byrne,		v. Clancey	520	v. Coveney,	
27 How. St. Tr.	1981	v. Clapham	1646	7 C. & P.	1327, 1349
28 How. St. Tr.	1981	v. Clare	1128	8 C. & P.	1262, 1327, 1349
v. Byron,		v. Clarendon	2372	v. Covert	6b
6 How. St. Tr.	1430, 1440, 1450	v. Clark	850	v. Cowper	143, 144, 391, 457, 460, 1018, 1690, 1697, 1730, 1732, 1981
37 N. Br.	2529	v. Clarke,		v. Cox & Railton	2298
v. Cain	839, 858	38 N. Br.	1029, 1760	v. Cranburne	986
v. Calder	363	2 Stark.	62, 200, 986, 1106, 1117, 1760, 1982	v. Cratchley	2061
v. Caldwell	2015	v. Clay	62	v. Craven	1440
v. Callaghan	1430	v. Clement	1836	v. Creamer	2086
v. Campbell	1005	v. Clewes	390, 855, 2100	v. Crickmer	363
v. Champion	157, 260	v. Cliviger	607, 2228, 2234, 2235	v. Crippen (see Crip- pen's Trial)	847, 1693, 1873, 2081, 2497
v. Candy	2374	v. Cobbett,		v. Crockett	1440
v. Canning	25, 285, 527, 735, 991, 1044, 1123, 1259, 1364, 1718, 1837, 1864, 1981, 1982, 2098, 2152, 2349	29 How. St. Tr.	1981	v. Crook	2250
v. Canterbury	1177	2 St. Tr. n. s.	369, 1981	v. Crosby,	
v. Carew	1991, 2250	v. Cobden	218	12 How. St. Tr.	523, 980, 986
v. Cargill	15, 133, 987	v. Cockburn	1408	12 Mod.	1991
v. Carpenter	918, 2079	v. Cockcroft	200, 398	v. Crossfield	276, 821, 896
v. Carstairs	818	v. Cockin	2513	v. Crouch,	
v. Carter	326	v. Cohen,		1 Cox Cr.	1696, 1697, 1700
v. Carty	855, 1982	3 Cr. App.	2061	4 Cox Cr.	701
v. Casey	2056	10 Cr. App.	2059	v. Crowhurst	1781
v. Cass	825, 836	v. Cole	1364	v. Croydon	829, 838
v. Cassidy	918, 2079, 2080	v. Coleman,		v. Cuffey	1079
v. Castell Careinion	521, 1270	6 Cox Cr.	2026	v. Culpepper	1189, 1193, 1991
v. Castle Morton	1246	7 How. St. Tr.	575, 1042, 1991	v. Cummings	847
v. Castlemaine	523, 980, 1002, 1847, 2036, 2038, 2250	v. Coley	838	v. Curry	1818, 2042
v. Castleton,		v. Colledge	575, 896, 950, 1005, 1364, 1864, 2038	v. Dalmas	2529
3 Cr. App.	149	v. Colley	1842	v. Dammaree	1732
6 T. R.	1212, 1223	v. Collier	838, 855	v. Dane	2043
v. Castro	87, 158, 270, 278, 413, 660, 792, 982, 983, 986, 1154, 1387, 1736, 1977, 2298, 2394 (see also Tichborne v. Lushington)	v. Collins	1981	v. D'Aoust	2276
v. Cator	1993, 2026	v. Colpus & Boor- man	850, 2378	v. Daun	2044, 2061
v. Cellier	735	v. Colton	1588	v. Davidson	1982
v. Chadwick	952	v. Coningsmark	761, 774, 782, 811, 1326	v. Davis,	
v. Chambers	357	v. Cook	986, 1732, 1837, 1839	6 C. & P.	326, 850
v. Champney	2042	v. Cooke	1872, 2201	v. Davison	56, 195, 1981
v. Chapman	774, 918, 2079	v. Cooley	2243	5 Mod.	520
v. Chappel	1667	v. Cooper,		v. Davlin	1362
v. Chappell	1278	5 C. & P.	836, 855	v. Dawber	2056
v. Charlesworth,		3 Cox Cr.	301, 352	v. Day,	
4 Cr. App.	321	v. Coote	850	6 Cox Cr.	1394
2 F. & F.	2281	v. Cope	1523	20 Ont.	847
		v. Coppull	1244	v. Daye	2200
		v. Corby	2272	v. Deakin	1828
				v. Dean	1003



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Dean of St. Asaph's	1981, 2356, 2557	R. v. Drage	326	R. v. Exeter	1465
v. Debenham	1661, 1633	v. Drain	1072	v. Eyre	1138, 1760
v. De Berenger,		v. Drake	2529	v. Fagent	1445
Gurney	719, 1073	v. Draper	56, 1981	v. Fagg	848
4 M. & S.	2574	v. Dredge	2081, 2513	v. Fairie	382, 451
v. Deer	327	v. Drew	825, 837	v. Falkner	2070
v. Delamere	986, 1364, 1982	v. Drummond,		v. Fanshaw	2040
		Leach Cr.	1431, 1445	v. Farler	2057, 2059
v. De la Motte	694, 957, 1982, 1991, 1992	10 Ont. L. R.	1269	v. Farley	2298
v. De Mesquito	829, 836, 862	v. Duckworth	21, 1018	v. Farr,	
		v. Duffy	367, 465, 986, 1248, 1981, 1982	S C. & P.	905
v. Denew	1981			4 F. & F.	1182, 1196
v. Denio	1195, 1196	v. Dunn,		v. Farrell,	
v. Dennis,		4 C. & P.	829	3 Cox Cr.	2079
3 F. & F.	1005	1 Moo. Cr. C.	326	12 Cox Cr.	1406
2 Lew. Cr. C.	2104	v. Dunne	2056	21 Ont.	667
v. Denslow	609	v. Dunning	1760	v. Farrington	1311, 2138
v. Dent	564	v. Durham & Crowder	2056	v. Farrington	987
v. Derby	2250	v. Dyer,		v. Faulconer	194, 575, 986, 1177, 1274, 1275
v. Derrick	694	1 Cox Cr.	579		
v. Derrington	841, 2183	6 Mod.	1698	v. Fearshire	1329
v. Despard	1980, 2056, 2059, 2060	v. Dyke	2059	v. Feigenbaum	2056
v. Despatch, The	1672	v. Dyche	142, 907	v. Feilding	986, 1182, 1644, 1992
v. Devlin	847	v. East Farleigh	1195		
v. Dewhurst,		v. Eston	2102	v. Felton	2250
1 Lew. Cr. C.	1328	v. Eberts	2059	v. Fennell	826, 832
1 St. Tr. N. S.	658, 1182, 1243	v. Edgar	2070	v. Fenwick	1364, 1395, 1837, 1909, 1991, 2098, 2228, 2569
		v. Edge	1182, 1214		
v. Dexter	1530	v. Edgerton	352	v. Ferguson	1781
v. Dibble	1018	v. Edmonds	760, 2097	v. Fernley	523, 1177, 1330, 1703, 1981
v. Dickinson	4, 4c	v. Edmund	1387		
v. Dickman	786, 2243	v. Edwards,		v. Ferrers	105, 232, 672, 681, 1430, 1621, 1671, 1933, 2239
v. Dillon	1329	8 C. & P.	761, 1262		
v. Dilmore	1387	3 Cox Cr.	2079	v. Ferryfrystone	1364, 1375
v. Dimes	2059, 2060	12 Cox Cr.	1753	v. Fiennes	575, 1364
v. Dingler	1430	4 T. R.	986, 1270	v. Finnessey	949, 986
v. Dixon,		v. Eldridge	2070	v. Fisher,	
3 Burr.	2307	v. Ellicombe	1208	2 Camp.	1836
11 Cox Cr.	1732	v. Elliott	847	3 Cr. App.	321
v. Doaks	57	v. Ellis,			
v. Dogherty	832	6 B. & C.	347	v. Fitzgerald	1641
v. Doherty	2239	2 K. B.	194a, 321, 2273	v. Fitzharris	896
v. Donellan	26, 87			v. Fitzpatrick	1364, 2250
v. Donnelly	1981	1 M. & S.	380	v. Flaherty	2070
v. Doran	1981	Ry. & Moo.	848	v. Flannagan	263, 390
v. Dosset	216, 301, 354	v. Elwes	1364		
v. Doughty	347	v. Elworthy	1199, 1205, 1244	v. Fletcher,	
v. Douglas,				4 C. & P.	2100
11 Man.	6b, 850	v. Emden	1352	18 How. St. Tr.	1182
13 Q. B.	1824	v. Enoch	825, 832	1 Stra.	580
v. Dover	59	v. Entrehman	1818		
v. Dowlin	2098	v. Erdheim	850, 1349, 2260	v. Folson	792
v. Dowling,				v. Fontaine	2061
3 Cox Cr.	2060	v. Eriswell	1364, 1374, 1375, 1377, 1408, 1482, 1486	v. Forbes,	
7 St. Tr. N. S.	1981			7 C. & P.	309, 1256
v. Downer	1078, 2325	v. Erith	1501, 1503	Holt N. P.	1375, 1394
v. Downes	735	v. Errington	1375, 1440		
v. Doyle,		v. Essex,		v. Ford,	
1 Cr. & D.	847	1 How. St. Tr.	1364	5 Cox Cr.	761, 764, 1262
28 D. L. R.	21, 347	Jardine	1837		
12 Ont.	822, 858, 2183	v. Evans	1781	2 Salk.	520, 523
		v. Everest	2059		
		v. Exall	152, 1781, 2513	v. Forderingbridge	272
				v. Forester	1442
				v. Forster	309
				v. Forsyth	2151
				v. Forsythe	150, 1404

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Foster,		R. v. Gilbert	1750	R. v. Hagel & Westlake	2079
7 C. & P.	1667,	v. Giles	1821	v. Hailey	1676b
	1676b, 1747	v. Gilham	840, 847, 848,	v. Haines	1238
6 Cr. App.	1876		2394	v. Hains	194, 1215, 1218
1 Lew.	1328	v. Gillis	824, 834, 850	v. Hake	1394
v. Fowke	932, 1981	v. Girvin,		v. Hale,	
v. Fox	583, 2281	3 Alta.	2072	20 Cox Cr.	1411
v. Francia	818, 834, 986,	34 D. L. R.	2100	17 How. St. Tr.	2024
	1073, 1177, 1605,	v. Gisburn	1258	v. Hales	89, 1992
	1732, 2264	v. Gleed	2235	v. Hall,	
v. Francis,		v. Gloster	1440, 1441, 1722	1 Cox Cr.	2513
3 Esp.	76	v. Godinho	829, 2097	12 Cox Cr.	1195
L. R. 2 C. C. R.	302,	v. Golden	850	2 Leach Cr.	834, 848
	321, 1181	v. Goldshede	850	v. Halliday,	
v. Frank	2056	v. Goode	1160, 1933	Bell Cr. C.	2235
v. Frederick	609	v. Goodere	819, 848, 1839,	8 Cox Cr.	2236
v. Freund	735, 935, 1123,		1933, 1981	v. Hamilton,	
	1732, 1981, 2038,	v. Goodwin	309	4 How. St. Tr.	575,
	2214	v. Gordon,			1605
v. Frith	1933	11 How. St. Tr.	818	12 Man.	1387
v. Frost,		21 How. St. Tr.	1182,	v. Hamp	1208
22 How. St. Tr.	1963		1219, 1732,	v. Hampden,	
4 St. Tr. n. s.	369,		1851, 2214, 2535	3 How. St. Tr.	1350
	1079, 1854,	v. Gould	858	9 How. St. Tr.	194,
	1898, 1981, 2572	v. Graham,			1009, 1364
v. Fuidge	321	4 Cr. App.	1760, 2061	v. Hampton	2272
v. Fuller	153	21 D. L. R.	850	v. Hankins	1208, 2307
v. Furley,		v. Grahme	367, 1991	v. Hanson	1732
1 Cox Cr.	837	v. Granatelli	2183, 2259b	v. Harcourt	1005
3 St. Tr. n. s.	1842	v. Grant	392	v. Hardwick	829
v. Fursey	416, 786, 1182,	v. Graves	196, 1270, 2525	v. Hardwicke	1076, 1079
	1214, 1268, 1280	v. Gray,		v. Hardy	9, 59, 753, 762,
v. Fussell	1981	6 Cr. App.	2100		773, 780, 995,
v. Gahagan	2036	4 F. & F.	354		1048, 1079, 1610,
v. Gallagher,		v. Green,			1732, 1981, 2105,
12 Cox Cr.	580	5 C. & P.	848, 865		2374
63 D. L. R.	2272	6 C. & P.	835	v. Hargrave	2060
v. Gandfield	394, 1142	7 How. St. Tr.	293,	v. Harney	1406
v. Garbett	823, 850, 856,		1326	v. Harringworth	1288,
	2271, 2276	14 How. St. Tr.	517,		1299, 1302
v. Gardiner	2040		1326, 2032,	v. Harris,	
v. Gardner	1684		2072, 2081	5 B. & A.L.	2043
v. Garner,		v. Greenwich	1503	1 Cox Cr.	837
1 Den. Cr. C.	824,	v. Greepe	523	4 Cox Cr.	1406
	829, 832	v. Grey	785, 1177,	8 Cox Cr.	2513
2 F. & F.	363		1364, 2286	40 D. L. R.	196
v. Garnet	2250, 2394	v. Griffin	2394	4 F. & F.	246, 363
v. Gascoigne	1364	v. Griffiths	1375	Moo. Cr. C.	1349
v. Gaskell	2040	v. Griggs	2231, 2239	v. Harrison,	
v. Gavin,		v. Grimwood	1639	5 How. St. Tr.	1991
15 Cox Cr.	844, 847	v. Grinder	2276	12 How. St. Tr.	194,
7 How. St. Tr.	9	v. Grout	194		660, 986, 1364,
v. Gay,		v. Guerin	2273		1374, 1405, 2250
7 C. & P.	1450	v. Gunnell	266	v. Hart	6b
2 Cr. App.	2059	v. Guthrie	2143	v. Harvey	1666, 2372
v. Gaynor	786, 2043	v. Guttridge	1136, 1138	v. Harwood	326
v. Gazard	2372	v. Guttriges	1761	v. Hassall	2085
v. Geering	216, 363	v. Gwyn	1219	v. Hassett	847
v. George	580	v. Hadfield	1933	v. Hastings	8, 10, 28, 43,
v. Gibbons	829	v. Hadwen	916		784, 896, 905, 1043,
v. Gibney	825, 840, 847	v. Hagan,			1329, 1867, 1871,
v. Gibson,		8 C. & P.	1405		1873, 1880, 2032, 2056
Car. & M.	2363	12 Cox Cr.	106	v. Hathaway	9, 266, 321,
L. R. 18 Q. B. D.	21, 1755	1 Jebb Cr. C.	1390		1731, 1917



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Hawkes	231	R. v. Holy Trinity,		R. v. Jackson,	
v. Hawkins	194, 575, 1364	7 B. & C.	1246	25 How. St. Tr.	2036
v. Haworth	849, 850, 1205,	Settl. Cas.	1503	1 Lew. Cr. C.	1013,
	1208, 1278				2043
v. Hay	2394, 2395	v. Hone	463	Kidgeway	1117,
v. Hayes	1991, 1992	v. Hoo Sam	847		2105
v. Hayman	1327	v. Hood	609	v. Jacobs	854
v. Hayton	150a	v. Hooper	2081	v. James,	
v. Hayward	2298	v. Hope	1278	1 C. & P.	986
v. Hazy	276, 2089	v. Hopes	1667	4 Cox Cr.	2131
v. Hearn	832	v. Hopkins,		2 Cr. App.	847
v. Hearne	2100	8 C. & P.	2081	6 How. St. Tr.	575
v. Heath	278, 667, 994,	10 Cox Cr.	248	1 Show.	2158
	1018, 1605,	v. Hornbrook	824, 837, 855	v. Jankowski	1072
	1910, 1917	v. Horner	835, 855	v. Jarvis,	
v. Hedge	59, 763, 1981	v. Horton	782	7 Cox Cr.	238, 309
v. Hedges	1760, 2061	v. Hostmen	1858	10 Cox Cr.	832, 2266
v. Heesom	363, 1406	v. Hough	309	v. Jellyman	2060, 2239
v. Helelilili	1877	v. Howard	2168	v. Jenkes	2250
v. Hemp	1982	v. Howe	1667	v. Jenkin	986
v. Hensy	1991	v. Howell,		v. Jenkins,	
v. Heseltine	451	1 Denison Cr. C.	1440	1 Cox Cr.	2059
v. Heuser	2060	3 St. Tr. N. S.	354,	L. R. 1 Cr. C. R.	1362,
v. Hewett	832, 855		2073		1440, 1441
v. Hickey	1072	v. Howes	855	R. & R.	858
v. Higgins,		v. Hubbard	1439	v. Jerrett	580
3 C. & P.	2100	v. Hubert	867	v. John,	
35 N. Br.	284, 1042,	v. Hucks	1451	7 C. & P.	1075
	1781, 1873	v. Hudson,		East Cr. L.	1442
v. Higginson	1933	7 Cr. App.	194a	v. Johns	2239
v. Hilditch,		How. St. Tr.	1837	v. Johnson	21, 1182,
5 C. & P.	1873	v. Huggins	1981		1195, 1198, 1994,
12 Cox Cr.	2338	v. Hughes,			2148, 2152
v. Hill,		1 C. & K.	2043, 2363	v. Johnston	843, 844, 845,
2 Den. & P. C. C.	492,	14 Cox Cr.	2513		846, 847, 848
	495, 496, 1822	1 Cr. & D.	847, 1279	v. Jolliffe	2098
20 How. St. Tr.	2286	55 D. L. R.	821	v. Jones,	
36 N. Sc.	2243	1 Leach Cr. L.	1339	2 Camp.	2056, 2576
v. Hind	1432	v. Hulet	575, 660,	2 C. & P.	2100
v. Hindmarsh	2081		1476, 2070	6 C. & P.	196
v. Hinks	521, 580	v. Hulme	2281	3 Cr. App.	194
v. Hinley	326, 1182, 1196	v. Hunt,		62 D. L. R.	860
v. Histen	847	2 Cox Cr.	1442	1 Den. Cr.	2298
v. Hougkiss	988	1 St. Tr. N. S.	1369,	5 How. St. Tr.	1991
v. Hodgson,			986, 1040, 1079,	31 How. St. Tr.	195,
1 Lew. Cr. C.	309		1182, 1243, 1963,		1981, 1982
1 Moo. Cr. C.	840		2097	Peake N. P.	2098
R. & R.	62, 200, 986	v. Hunter,		R. & R.	836
v. Holden	1262, 2079	3 C. & P.	2211	v. Jordan	2514
v. Holland,		4 C. & P.	1200	v. Kahalewai	2346, 2349
4 T. R.	1850,	v. Hurd	821, 2276	v. Kalabeen	848
	1858, 1859	v. Hurly	1674, 2529	v. Kamakaua	830
v. Hollingberry	1850, 2079	v. Hutchins	1644, 1680	v. Kams	2059
v. Hollingshead	1072, 1327	v. Hutchinson,		v. Kay	847
v. Holmes,		2 B. & C.	1432	v. Kea	2063
9 Br. C.	1851	11 Br. C.	907, 1079	v. Kearney	1981
1 C. & K.	824, 937	v. Hyde	1390	v. Keenan	1981
12 Cox Cr.	62, 200,	v. Ings	781, 1157	v. Keirstead	2090
	398, 1006, 1023	v. Inman Din	2061	v. Kelly	2272
2 F. & F.	1821	v. Ireland	935, 1364, 1991	v. Kelsey	2059
L. R. 1 C. C. R.	1005	v. Ivy	318, 415, 735, 1224,	v. Kenilworth	1194, 1195,
v. Holt,			1598, 1650, 2227,		1196
8 Cox Cr.	321		2235, 2333	v. Kennaway	309, 2059
6 T. R.	1684	v. Jackson,		v. Kennedy	782, 983
		6 Cox Cr.	580		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
R. v. Kerne	1838
v. Kerr	847
v. Kidd	59, 351, 1364
v. Kiddle	1135, 1136, 1760
v. Kiddy	1819
v. Killen	1981
v. Kimber	848
v. King,	
5 C. & P.	664
6 N. W. Terr.	2081,
	2272
1 Q. B.	581
2 T. R.	1219, 2373
v. Kinglake	2270, 2280
v. Kingston,	
4 C. & P.	838
20 How. St. Tr.	759,
	760, 1487, 2286,
	2309, 2313, 2380
v. Kinloch	735, 745
v. Kirkham	2272
v. Kirkwood	309
v. Kitson	1205, 1208
v. Knight & Thayre	847
v. Knightley	575, 2250
v. Knill	2043
v. Knowles	2372
v. Knox	735, 1123,
	1329, 1364
v. Krafchenko	579
v. Kurasch	321
v. Kuzin	521, 2199
v. Labouchere	207, 285,
	1672
v. Labrie	321
v. Lafone	580
v. Lai Ping	499, 855, 1818
v. Lake	2250
v. Lambe,	
2 Leach Cr. L.	847,
	848, 866
Peake N. P.	88
v. Lambert	2119
v. Langhorn	935, 995, 1018,
	1349, 1667, 2250
v. Langmead	2513
v. Langton	748
v. Laud	575, 1177, 1364,
	2250
v. Laughner	832
v. Law	396, 2024
v. Layer	580, 979, 1177,
	1327, 1328, 1981,
	1982, 1991, 2018,
	2286
v. Leary	1614
v. Leatham	1212, 2283
v. Ledbetter	1387
v. Lee	1387
v. Lee Kun	1393
v. Lee Tuck	1818
v. Lenehan	1208
v. Levenson	2325
v. Levy	2529

	Section
R. v. Lewis,	
6 C. & P.	849, 850,
	1349
4 Esp.	986
7 How. St. Tr.	950
v. Lilburne	575, 1364,
	1684, 1834, 2038,
	2250, 2251
v. Lillyman	1135, 1136,
	1138, 1760
v. Lincoln	519, 788, 1141,
	1177, 1364, 2032
v. Lindsay,	
30 D. L. R.	2243
14 How. St. Tr.	1605
v. Lisle	1816
v. Little	905
v. Llanfaethly	1212
v. Lloyd,	
4 C. & P.	1432
6 C. & P.	839
7 C. & P.	357
v. Locker	609
v. Lockhart	859
v. Londonderry	1933
v. Long,	
6 C. & P.	847
Old Bailey	221, 1984
v. Long Buckby	160
v. Louie	1442, 1445, 1448
v. Lovat	25, 585, 986, 1882
v. Love	2036
v. Lovegrove	359
v. Lovett	1981, 2520
v. Lowick	195, 1981
v. Luce	2264
v. Luckhurst	829, 836
v. Lucy	2059
v. Luffe,	
8 East	2063
8 T. R.	612
v. Lundy	1142, 1750
v. Lydeard St. Law-	
rence	1486
v. Lyons	580
v. McBerny	347
v. McCafferty,	
10 Cox Cr.	2038
25 N. Br.	836, 858
v. McClain	580, 1854, 2056
v. Macclesfield	1350, 1364,
	1825, 1877, 1982,
	2260, 2261, 2269, 2281
v. Macdonald	1380
v. Macdonnell	580
v. McDonnell	352
v. M'Donough	1982
v. M'Douall	995
v. Macfarlane	1981
v. McGivney	1760, 2061
v. McGovern	1327
v. M'Guire,	
2 East Pl. Cr.	2024
1 Leach Cr. L.	1339

	Section
R. v. Macguire	575, 702,
	819, 1364, 1991
v. McHugh	850
v. McIntosh	1981
v. McNulty	2061
v. Mackay	1442
v. McKenna	952, 1005
v. Maclane	2574
v. McLean	850
v. M'Naghten	672
v. M'Naughton	1933
v. McNicholl	2081
v. McNulty	133
v. Magill	848
v. Maguire	993, 2273
v. Magyar	1442, 1448
v. Mah Hong Hing	2272,
	2273
v. Mahony	4c
v. Mailloux	367, 1029
v. Male & Cooper	847
v. Malings	579
v. Mallory	4, 1070
v. Maloney	1262
v. Mansfield,	
14 Cox Cr.	822, 836
1 Q. B.	2063
v. Marks Feigenbaum	2059
v. Marshall	1408
v. Marsham	4a
v. Martin,	
2 Camp.	1634, 1661
6 C. & P.	200, 986
12 Cox Cr.	1163, 1802
5 Cr. App.	2059
1 Lew. Cr. C.	309
2 M. & Rob.	986
9 Ont.	2100
6 St. Tr. N. S.	1327,
	2119
v. Maskall	664, 986, 1612,
	1732, 1981
v. Mason	1976, 2059
v. Matheson	196
v. Matthews,	
4 Cox Cr.	1262
15 How. St. Tr.	1991
v. Mawbey	1674
v. May,	
1 Cox Cr.	347
21 D. L. R.	21, 905
v. Mayhew	2042
v. Mead,	
2 B. & C.	1432
1 Burr.	2239
2 Ld. Raym.	2259c
v. Megson	1136, 1138, 1760
v. Melville	4, 377, 672, 735,
	1078, 1219, 1362,
	2223
v. Merceron	850, 2378
v. Merry	1760
v. Merthyr Tidvil	1246
v. Metheringham	1193



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Mick	847, 848	R. v. Murphy,		R. v. Oates	518, 527, 1364,
v. Middlesex	1350	A. M. & O.	2015		1405, 1838, 1909, 2250
v. Middlezoy	1298	8 C. & P.	4, 440, 770,	v. O'Brien	157, 369, 465,
v. Mill	825, 839		774, 786, 1249,		1841, 2374
v. Millard	309		1258, 1259,	v. O'Coigly	986
v. Millen	829		1280, 1839	v. O'Connell	370, 461, 789,
v. Miller	847, 1667	19 How. St. Tr.	195,		1079, 1182, 1368,
v. Millhouse	579		1106, 1981		1669, 2097, 2119,
v. Millis	2082, 2083	2 Ir. R.	4a, 4d, 2378,		2150, 2374, 2529
v. Mills	1666		2477	v. O'Connor,	
v. Milne	1911	v. Murray	2061	27 How. St. Tr.	195,
v. Milton	1582, 1592,	v. Murray & Mahoney	660		1980, 1982
	1684	v. Murtrie	1072	4 St. Tr. n. s.	157,
v. Minchin	154, 331	v. Muscot	2032, 2040		369, 1981
v. Minton	1430	v. Naguib	564	v. Oddy	194, 326
v. Mitchel	302, 367, 818	v. Nan-c-quis-a-ka	605	v. O'Doherty	367, 667,
v. Mitchell,		v. Naoum	564, 2086		1346, 2494
6 Cox Cr.	794	v. Nash	2042, 2081	v. O'Donnell	580, 1981
17 Cox Cr.	1072, 1390,	v. Nat. Bell Liquors		v. Offord	1933
	1445	Ltd.	969	v. Oldroyd	905
v. Mobbs	363	v. Natrass	354	v. Ollis	321
v. Mockford	2081	v. Nayler	2250	v. Onbie	986
v. Moders	575, 1364	v. Neal	2059	v. Osborne,	
v. Mogg	363	v. Neigel	1129, 1700	1 Car. & M.	1760
v. Mohum	811, 896, 1430	v. Netherthong	1894,	1 K. B.	1135, 1136,
v. Moir	1262		2145		1760
v. Mompesson	2250	v. Neville	382, 1056	v. Osman	1440, 1441
v. Moody	838	v. Newman	1271, 1839	v. Overton	1005
v. Mooney	1440, 1442	v. Newton,		v. Owen	850
v. Moore,		1 C. & K.	2168	v. Oxford	232, 681, 1933
2 C. & P.	216, 309	Dyer	2032	v. Paakaula	852, 860
17 Cox Cr.	1828	15 L. T.	1262	v. Padstow	2447
2 Den. Cr. C.	825,	2 Moo. & Rob.	2086	v. Page,	
	829, 832, 837	v. Nicholas,		4 B. & Ad.	309
v. Moores	2059	2 C. & K.	1760, 1761,	2 Cox Cr.	200
v. Mordant	1364		1821	v. Pah-Mah-Gay	1818
v. More	1911, 2250	6 Cox Cr.	1442	v. Pain	818
v. Morgan,		v. Nichols	1982	v. Paine	1364, 1375, 2100
14 Cox Cr.	1442	v. Nicholson	1873	v. Palmer,	
5 Cr. App.	194	v. Noakes,		Annual Register	457,
1 Leach Cr. L.	1818	5 C. & P.	2059		1159
1 Moo. & Rob.	1994,	1 K. B.	508, 1375,	6 C. & P.	1899
	1999		1406	v. Parker,	
v. Morley	1364, 1667	v. Noble	247	Car. & M.	2040, 2042
v. Morris,		v. Noel,		1 Cox Cr.	986
4 How. St. Tr.	1177	6 C. & P.	986, 1117	8 Cox Cr.	829
1 Leach	2529	3 K. B.	2281, 2282	3 Dougl.	1124
v. Morse	1349	6 Ont. L. R.	15, 1896	Leigh & C.	832
v. Morrison,		v. Norcott	1760	v. Parmenter	2339
6 Cr. App.	194, 1869	v. Norfolk,		v. Parratt	836
38 D. L. R.	2056	1 How. St. Tr.	516,	v. Parris	607
v. Morton,			575, 819,	v. Partridge	836
4 M. & S.	1194,		1364, 2250	v. Patch	26
	1195, 1196	Jardine's Cr. Tr.	1818,	v. Paul	398, 580
2 Moo. & Rob.	837		1837, 2032	v. Payne,	
v. Mosey	858, 859	v. Norton	1072	8 Cr. App.	2059, 2060
v. Motherwell	1346, 1661	v. Norwood	2084, 2085,	12 Cox Cr.	580
v. Mudge	2272		2086, 2088	v. Peacock	803
v. Mudie	2040	v. Nundocomar	960, 1223,	v. Pearce	367
v. Mullins	761, 969, 2056,		1837, 2193,	v. Pearcey	2061
	2060		2212, 2265, 2375	v. Pedley	728
v. Mulvihill	986, 1263	v. Nunez	2032, 2040	v. Peel,	
v. Muma	200	v. Nutley	1503	60 D. L. R.	850, 1750
v. Murlis	1894	v. Oakhampton	600	2 F. & F.	1440

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Pegler	2260	R. v. Rappolt	194	R. v. Robotham	1350
v. Peltier	1375, 1442	r. Rastrick	1195	v. Roden	363
v. Pembroke	1364, 1430, 1718	r. Raudnitz	1684	r. Rodley	357
v. Penfold & Edwards	196	r. Rawden,		v. Rodney	847
v. Penn & Mead	2250	2 A. & E.	1195, 1196	v. Roebuck	321
v. Perkins	508, 1440, 1443, 1821	8 B. & C.	2447	v. Rogan	988
v. Perry,		r. Ray	2086	v. Rogers	2039
2 Cox Cr.	359	r. Read,		v. Romano	2243, 2272
2 Cr. App.	1440	9 A. & E.	2061	r. Romp	832
14 How. St. Tr.	867, 2081	62 D. L. R.	847, 860	v. Rook	612, 2063
v. Petcherini	1732, 1850	v. Reading,		r. Rookwood	523, 979, 986, 1177, 1982
v. Peters	195, 811	7 C. & P.	1667	r. Rooney	216, 416
v. Peterson	1195, 2042, 2044	7 How. St. Tr.	523, 575, 986, 1910, 2250, 2280	v. Rorke	1021
v. Petherton	1646	Lee t. Hardw.	607, 612, 2063, 2239	v. Rosewell	367, 769, 1732, 1837, 1982, 2250
v. Petrie	1803, 1909, 1910	v. Reaney	1441	r. Rosser	2570
v. Pettit	848	v. Reardon	216, 331, 347, 357, 363, 1135	v. Rouse	194a
v. Philips	2514	v. Reason,		v. Row	829
v. Phillips	309, 1021	12 Cox Cr.	824, 839	v. Rowan	285, 986, 1982
v. Philpotts	745, 748	16 How. St. Tr.	1157, 1326, 1327, 1329, 1430, 1450	v. Rowland	580, 2276
v. Picton	660, 1157, 1271, 1674, 1697, 1981, 1982	v. Redman	1163	v. Rowley	2098
v. Picco	2061	v. Redmond	1981	v. Rowton	55, 57, 58, 59, 194, 195, 216, 1609, 1614, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986
v. Piercy	166	v. Reed	1352	v. Rudd,	
v. Pike,		v. Rees	848, 1667	1 Cowp.	2056
3 C. & P.	1439, 1443	v. Reeve	832	1 Leach Cr. C.	818, 819, 834, 2236
1 K. B.	850, 2281	v. Regan,		v. Rudge	1003, 1982
v. Pikesley	1349, 1667	4 Cox Cr.	354	v. Russell	4, 367, 1364, 1732, 2032, 2094, 2378
v. Pinney	2119	16 Cox Cr.	1236, 2154	v. Ruston	498, 811, 1818
v. Pitcher	986	v. Regicides: see Regicides' Trial.		r. Ryan,	
v. Pitts	2061	v. Renwick	818	2 Cox Cr.	62
v. Plumer	1073, 2152	v. Reynolds	2056	9 Ont. L. R.	825, 829
v. Plunket	896, 1177, 1364, 2250	v. Rhodes,		r. Ryle	4, 1709
v. Pollard & Tinsley	359	1 Leach Cr. L.	1641	v. Ryton	2138
v. Pook	1726	1 Q. B.	321, 2272	v. Sadler	2199
v. Poulin	1675a	v. Richards,		v. Saffron Hill	1195, 1196
v. Pountney	829	5 C. & P.	836, 847, 855	v. Sagar	1456
v. Povey	690	1 Moo. & R.	1278, 1667	v. Salisbury	218
v. Powell	326, 2380	v. Richardson,		v. Salmon	457
v. Prasiloski	1349	2 Cox Cr.	418	v. Sands	1620
v. Prentice	951, 1898, 2312	2 F. & F.	216, 331	v. Sandys	850
v. Pressley	1328	3 F. & F.	2374	v. Sansome	848, 855
v. Preston,		v. Richmond	1177	v. Saunders	321, 2153
2 Cr. App.	194	v. Rigg	1374	v. Savage,	
1 Salk.	1825	v. Riley	62, 200, 398	5 C. & P.	1406
v. Priddle	520, 1270	v. Rivers	848, 849	13 Cox Cr.	2086
v. Primelt	326	v. Roberts,		v. Scaife,	
v. Pritchard	1160	1 Camp.	203, 321	5 Cox Cr.	1405
v. Proud	331	2 C. & K.	2042	1 Moo. & Rob.	1452
v. Prunty	1406, 1828	v. Robins	200, 1022	v. Scammonden	2433
v. Purnell	2259b, 2264	v. Robinson,		v. Scheer	417
v. Quelch	1684	Annual Register	460	v. Scheller	2044
v. Quin	761	5 Cox Cr.	1205, 1208	v. Schiraba	1036, 1760, 2061
v. Rabinovitch	2044	2 K. B.	841	v. Schlesinger	728
v. Radford	840, 2394	L. R. 1 Cr. C. R.	850	v. Scot,	
v. Raleigh	575, 1364, 1430, 1837, 2036	v. Roblin	1404	5 How. St. Tr.	1991
v. Ramsden	762, 2125				
v. Rankin	369				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Scott,		R. v. Smith,		R. v. Stockland	2083
1 D. & B.	822, 842,	3 Burr.	291, 2273	v. Stoke-upon-Trent	2440
	843, 846, 849,	2 C. & K.	1781	v. Stokes	761
	850, 852, 2260,	2 C. & P.	309	v. Stone,	
	2266, 2270	4 C. & P.	309	6 Cr. App.	2061, 2100
v. Scroop	735, 1991, 2250	10 Cox Cr.	1442	1 East	2089
v. Searle	681	16 Cox Cr.	1442	25 How. St. Tr.	4,
v. Seigley	194	20 Cox Cr.	321		1079, 1174, 1339
v. Semple	818	2 Cr. App.	905	v. Stourbridge	1195, 1196
v. Serjeant	2239	Holt N. P.	1375	v. Strafford	575, 1177,
v. Serva	1817	2 K. B.	326		1364, 1880, 2032, 2375
v. Seven Bishops	773, 1364,	Moody Cr. C.	609	v. Stratton	194
	1991, 1992	Old Bailey	26	v. Streater	1350
v. Sewel	529	R. & R.	1387, 1394	v. Stripp	848
v. Sexton	804, 839	1 Stark.	850, 1349	v. Stroner	918, 2079
v. Shaftesbury	1840, 2360	23 U. C. C. P.	1442	v. Stroud,	
v. Sharman	4b	Williams	1130	7 Cr. App.	1072
v. Sharpe	867	v. Smith & Davis	2056	3 How. St. Tr.	2250
v. Shaw,		v. Snelgrove	1411	v. Stubbs	2056, 2059
6 C. & P.	829, 839,	v. Solomon	194	v. Sullivan	2070
	2286	v. Somerset	519, 819, 1364	v. Sunderland	309
10 Cox Cr.	2042	v. Souci	848	v. Sunfield	396, 1442
16 Cox Cr.	950, 1022	v. Sourton	2063	v. Sutton	1662, 1800,
1 Lew. Cr. C.	660	v. Southey	689		2570
v. Sheares	1981, 1991,	v. Southwood	347	v. Swatkins	847, 860
	2036	v. Spain	21, 847	v. Swendsen	1177, 1981,
v. Sheehan	2056, 2059	v. Sparkes	2394		2239, 2250
v. Shellaker	398	v. Spencer,		v. Sykes	2070
v. Shellard	1262	1 C. & P.	1676b	v. Sylvester	1393
v. Shepherd,		7 C. & P.	829	v. Tandy	1963, 1991,
7 C. & P.	838	v. Spilsbury	499, 1349,		1992
1 Cox Cr.	1993, 1994,		1439, 1442	v. Tansley	1270
	2007, 2026	v. Spollen	811, 1812, 2079	v. Tarbot	986
v. Sherfield	1177, 1364,	v. Spuzzum	1760	v. Tarrant	1328
	2032	v. Squires	1123	v. Tate	2056, 2060
v. Sheridan	1179	v. St. George	952	v. Taverner	309
v. Sheriff of Chester	1858	v. St. Giles	1314, 1321	v. Tawell	392
v. Sherman	580	v. St. Martin's	735, 747,	v. Taylor,	
v. Sherrington	855		749, 753, 754, 762	1 C. & P.	2079
v. Shimmin	579	v. St. Peter	2063	8 C. & P.	825, 829,
v. Shrewsbury	2190	v. Stafford	278, 894, 960,		1259, 1329
v. Shrimpton	55, 58, 193,		986, 1177, 1399, 1667,	5 Cox Cr.	354
	194a, 196		1909, 1982, 2036,	6 Cox Cr.	1994
v. Sidney	1807, 1837, 1991,		2038, 2250	13 Cox Cr.	1329, 1691,
	1992, 2033, 2094	v. Standsfield	9, 105, 818		1696, 1700
v. Sileski	21, 849	v. Stannard	55	McNally	1982
v. Silverlock	2012	v. Stanton	832, 836	Peake N. P.	1820
v. Simmonds	2079	v. Stapleton	960	Pelham	579
v. Simmonsto	2086	v. Stayley	575, 735	Skinner	1364, 1384
v. Simpson,		v. Steel,		v. Teal,	
1 Lew. Cr. C.	1440	13 Just. P.	848	2 Camp.	986
1 Moody Cr. C.	829,	1 Leach Cr. C.	1160	9 East	527
	836, 838	v. Steele	1439, 1445	11 East	21, 1010, 1015
v. Simons,		v. Stefanic	2062	v. Telicote	1328
6 C. & P.	2339	v. Steffoff	847	v. Thanet	1963
19 How. St. Tr.	2355	v. Stenson	321	v. Theadorns	2272
v. Skeen,		v. Stephens,		v. Thelwall	1986
Bell Cr. C.	850	16 Cox Cr.	331	v. Theriault	2513
8 Cox Cr.	2282	3 St. Tr. N. S.	1182	v. Thistlewood	526, 1836,
v. Slaney	703, 2261	v. Stephenson	1406		1982, 2059, 2427
v. Slaughter	829	v. Steptoe	2100	v. Thomas,	
v. Sleeman	829, 840, 847	v. Stewart	1406	6 C. & P.	838
v. Slingsby	1177	v. Stimpson	1873	7 C. & P.	824, 2286
v. Sloggett	823, 850, 2260	v. Stockdale	2094	Dyer	1364

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Thomas,		R. v. Ulmer	1406	R. v. Warwick	523
2 Leach Cr. L.	848, 1328	v. United Kingdom El. T. Co.	792	v. Wason	6b
v. Thompson,		v. Unkles	2070	v. Wasson	2239
12 Cox Cr.	609	v. Unsworth	847	v. Watkins	1667
13 Cox Cr.	1406, 2079	v. Upchurch	829, 836	v. Watkinson	2313
4 Cr. App.	1072	v. Upper Boddington	2211, 2308	v. Watson,	
2 K. B.	360	v. Upton	2086	1 Camp.	2152
1 Leach Cr. L.	836, 860	v. Upton St. Leonards	1380	3 C. & K.	761, 1328
7 N. W. Terr.	1382	v. Van Butchell	1441	8 Cr. App.	2059
2 Q. B.	825, 826, 832, 838, 847, 860	v. Vandercomb	351	32 How. St. Tr., and 2 Stark.	4, 260, 382, 786, 791, 979, 986, 1073, 1079, 1234, 1235, 1270, 1280, 1836, 1854, 1963, 1981, 1982, 2272, 2360, 2374, 2378
v. Thomson	359, 1726, 1750	v. Vane	735, 1219, 1991	2 T. R.	1199
v. Thornton	833, 847	v. Van Metre	850, 2281	v. Watt,	
v. Throckmorton	575, 1364, 2250	v. Vaughan,		20 Cox Cr.	278
v. Tidd	2059	13 How. St. Tr.	351, 499, 986, 1177, 1605, 1839, 2032, 2038, 2265	23 How. St. Tr.	2269
v. Tinkler	21	Salk.	369	v. Wealand	1828
v. Tippet	2070	v. Verelst	2168	v. Weaver	1219, 1646, 2529
v. Tissington	62, 200, 216, 1982, 2529	v. Vernon	829, 839	v. Webb,	
v. Todd	830, 841	v. Vice-Chancellor	1351, 2214	4 C. & P.	849
v. Tolson	790	v. Vickery	2222	6 C. & P.	2059
v. Tong	523, 526, 575, 580, 818, 1076, 1477, 2032, 2036	v. Vincent,		11 Cox Cr.	521
v. Tooke	59, 195, 728, 1073, 1732, 1795, 1871, 1963, 2130	119 C. & P.	1730	1 Moo. & Rob.	457, 2212
v. Toole	667, 825, 847	3 St. Tr. N. S.	2079	3 Stark.	1842
v. Tower	1263, 1641, 2016, 2056	v. Virrier	2040	v. Webster	2042
v. Towey	4, 2042	v. Voke	364	v. Weeks	216, 309
v. Townshend	1851	v. Wainwright	1726	v. Weightman	1981
v. Trant	1430	v. Wakefield	2082, 2239	v. Weller	1349
v. Trapnell	2056	v. Wakelyn	2496	v. Wellings	1406
v. Travers	1821	v. Wakeman	1018, 1329, 1667	v. Wells	2059
v. Treble	21	v. Walker,		v. Welton	1406
v. Trenholme	21, 829, 860	15 Br. C.	1442	v. Westbeer	1364
v. Triganzie	194, 196	6 C. & P.	850	v. Westfall	194
v. Troop	1327	18 D. L. R.	1079	v. Weston	575, 1364
v. Truman	2086	23 How. St. Tr.	499, 933, 1154, 1732, 2210	v. Whalley	1163, 1802
v. Tubby	848, 849, 850	1 Leach Cr. L.	1818	v. Wheeler	846, 849, 850
v. Tuberfield	258	2 Moo. & Rob.	1136, 1138, 1760	v. Wheatland	2043
v. Tucket	232	v. Walkley	838, 2100	v. Wheeler	579
v. Tuffs	2070	v. Walkling	579	v. Wheeley	848, 849, 850
v. Turner,		v. Wall,		v. Wheeling	2070
2 C. & K.	2158	28 How. St. Tr.	1933, 1981, 1982	v. Whelan	1046
3 Cr. App.	196, 702, 1206, 2167	Russell	1374	v. Whistnaut	2061
6 How. St. Tr.	575, 1023, 1616, 1982	v. Wallace	1684	v. Whitbread	2079
32 How. St. Tr.	59, 1836, 1981	v. Waller	2550	v. White,	
1 Lew. Cr. C.	1477	v. Walter	1349	2 Cox Cr.	1021
1 Moody Cr. C.	1079	v. Ward	1981	17 How. St. Tr.	819, 848, 1981
v. Tutchin	1177	v. Warden of the Fleet	980, 1270, 2298	Leach Cr. C.	492, 1816, 1817
v. Twelve Bishops	2250	v. Warickshall	819, 822, 823, 825, 834, 858, 859	18 Ont. L. R.	841
v. Twyn	575, 1991, 2250	v. Waring	73, 76	R. & R.	2070
v. Tyler	829, 855	v. Warner	2016	v. Whitebread	518, 935, 986, 1002, 1177, 1991, 2036, 2250
v. Tylney	2298	v. Warren	2059	v. Whitehead,	
v. Udall	575, 1364, 2217, 2250	v. Warringham	829, 838, 860	3 C. & K.	221, 1984
				1 C. & P.	254, 321



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Whitehead		R. v. Worth	1461, 1464, 1524	Railroad v. J. M.	1141
L. R. 1 C. C. R.	497,	v. Wo Sow	2056	Railroad Bank v. Evans	1681
	811, 1819, 1822	v. Wrangle	2429	Railroad Co. v. Ayres	1694,
v. Whyley	216, 305	v. Wright,			1698
v. Widdup	850	5 Cr. App.	194	v. Bixby	719
v. Wiggins	761	1 Lew. Cr. C.	839, 848	v. Burke	736
v. Wilbain	2004	17 N. Br.	1066, 1677	v. Foreman	1943
v. Wild	833, 840, 847	R. & R.	681, 1921	v. Kenney	2507
v. Wilkes,		v. Wyatt	321	v. Schultz	1922, 1926,
7 C. & P.	2056, 2059	v. Wylie	309		1951
19 How. St. Tr.	2264	v. Wyse	2061	v. Tax Case	1350
v. Wilkins	1789	v. Yates	2042	Railroad & Tel. Cos. v.	
v. Wilkinson	1327	v. Yewin	986	Board	2580
v. Willet	4, 4a	v. Yore	2239	Railway v. Pool	782
v. Williams,		v. Young,		Railway Co. v. Amos	613
7 C. & P.	1821	5 Cox Cr.	2230	v. Crowder	1750
8 C. & P.	2025, 2236	38 N. Sc.	855	v. Jones	455, 456
1 Cox Cr.	579	v. Zeigert	223	v. Richardson	455
8 Cox Cr.	760, 761,	v. Zulneta	260	Railway P. & F. C. Ass.	
	905			v. Robinson	1770
19 D. L. R.	1856,			Raines v. Perryman	1247
	2060, 2061			v. Philip	1320
1 Lew Cr. C.	2018			v. State	397
v. Williamson	221, 1984			Raines' Adm'r v.	
v. Willis,				Raines' Cred'rs	1463, 1464
15 How. St. Tr.	818,			Rainey v. Hines	2110
	986, 1981			v. Potter	770
1 K. B.	2059, 2060			v. Smith	2090
v. Willshire	2506			Rainnie v. St. John C. R.	
v. Wilson,				Co.	1750
4 Alta.	354			Rains v. State,	
Ber. N. Br.	2139			88 Ala.	2276
8 Cox Cr.	1408			152 Ind.	1976
8 Cr. App.	2059			7 Tex. App.	2089
2 F. & F.	152, 1781			Rainwater v. Elmore	1839
2 Green (Sc.)	773			Raisler v. Springer	1974
Holt N. P.	848, 849			Rakestraw v. Sabree D.	
1 Lew. Cr. C.	238			Bank	309, 1869
v. Wink	1142			Raleigh & G. R. Co. v.	
v. Winkworth	352			Bradshaw	1031
v. Winslow	363			v. Pullman Co.	2438
v. Winsor	580			Raleigh Hosiery Co. v.	
v. Wintoun	811, 1364			R. Co.	2509
v. Witches	445			Ralls v. Caylor Lumber	
v. Withers	2321			Co.	2416
v. Woburn	2218, 2223			v. Sharp's Adm'r	2450
v. Wong On	1873			Ralph v. Brown	1213, 2196,
v. Wood,					2222, 2223, 2269
14 Cox Cr.	1138, 1760			v. Cole	1573
Dears. & B.	2089			v. Hensler	1067
1 F. & F.	254			v. R. Co.	664
5 Jur.	988			v. State	1393
2 K. B.	194a			Ralston v. Lothain	7
Romilly	867			v. Miller	1586
v. Woodburne	818, 847			v. Philadelphia Rapid	
v. Woodcock	1364, 1438,			T. Co.	2416
	1442, 1451, 2239			Ralston's Case	818
v. Woodfall	2356			Ralton v. Sherwood L.	
v. Woodhead	918, 2079			Co.	2349
v. Woodley	2200			Ralya v. Atkins	2463
v. Woods,				Ramadge v. Ryan	1984, 2349
5 Br. C.	21, 1442			Rambert v. Cohen	735
1 Cr. & Dix	1044			Rambler v. Tryon	233, 1738,
v. Worsenham	1858, 2259c				1917, 1938

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §. 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Rambousek v. Supreme Council	2525	Raper v. R. Co.	458, 461	Rawlins v. State,	
Ramey v. State	398	Raphael v. Bank of England	2356	124 Ga.	106, 815, 949, 1079, 2059
Rampton v. Dobson	2446	Rapley v. Klugh	791	Rawls v. Ins. Co.	1081, 1947
Ramsay's Estate	1676	Rapp v. Central R. Co.	664	Rawson v. Curtiss	1249
Ramsbottom v. Buckhurst	2450	v. Le Blanc	905, 907	v. Haigh	1783
v. Phelps	1081, 1082, 1084	v. Sarpy	2507	v. Ins. Co.	266, 1081
v. Tunbridge	2429	Rappaport v. Capital Traction Co.	285	Rawstone v. Preston Co.	2319
Ramsdell v. Clark	2432, 2518	Rappolt's Case	194a	Ray, Re	2474
Ramsden & Co. v. Jacobs	4/	Rarden v. Cunningham	571	v. Baker	2415
Ramsey v. Flowers	1681	Raridan v. R. Co.	718, 1067	v. Bell	1037
v. Smith	1620	Rash v. Allen	1350	v. Camp	288
Ramseyer v. Dennis	233, 1081, 1738	v. Purnel	917, 1018, 1035, 1302, 1304, 1387, 1738	v. Castle	1526
Ranck v. Brackbill	1124	v. State	569	v. Coffin	1141
Rancliffe v. Parkyns	1311, 2141, 2145	Rash's Estate	2506	v. Com.	2236
Rand v. Dodge	1291, 1458	Rasmussen v. McComb	95	v. State,	
v. Huff	1778	Rass v. Sebastian	2027	50 Ala.	1144, 1966
Randall, Matter of	2200	Rastetter v. Reynolds	2464	1 Greene Ia.	1850, 2056, 2059
v. Atkinson	1390	Ratcliff v. Courier-Journal	73, 207	35 Tex. Cr.	2354
v. Chase	792, 1573	v. Ratcliffe	1644	88 Tex. Cr.	1117
v. Glover	2349	v. Trimble	1633	Rayborn v. Galena	2415
v. Holsenbake	73, 74, 209, 406	v. Wales	610, 2063, 2336, 2341	Rayburn v. Lumber Co.	1301
v. News Ass.	406	Ratcliffe v. Bleasey	1858	Rayl v. Golfinopulos	1938, 2503
v. Northwestern Tel. Co.	438, 1236	Rath v. Schoon	2442	Raymer v. Netherwood	2495
v. Peerless Motor C. Co.	1576, 2355	Rathbun v. Brancatella	751, 1750	Raymond v. Com.	354
v. State	923, 988	Rathmann v. Schwarz	2438	v. Cummings	1058
v. Van Rensselaer	5	Ratigan v. Judge	1938	v. Day	392
v. Venable	1381	Ratliff v. Ratliff	697, 1082, 1225, 2016, 2496	v. Flint	229, 1707, 1938
v. Wadsworth	1909	Ratteree v. Chapman	987	v. Lowell	1951
Randegger v. Ehrhardt	1083, 1085	v. Nelson	1225	v. R. Co.	2381, 2383
Randel, Re	2257	Rau v. State	133, 962	v. Rutland R. L. & P. Co.	949
v. Chesapeake & D. C. Co.	787, 2125	v. U. S.	987	v. State	1071, 1072
Randle v. Blackburn	2117	Raub v. Blairstown C. Ass'n	2169	Rayner v. Ritson	1858
Randolf v. Bloomfield	1876	v. Carpenter	1938	Raynes v. Bennett	2336
Randolph v. Adams	1956	v. Nisbett	1073	v. Towgood	2257
v. Doss	1247	v. Van Horn	1859b	Raynham v. Canton	1271, 1684
v. Easton	2527, 2540	Rauch v. Scholl	392	Raynor v. Lee	1651
v. Gordon	704, 2139	Rauh, Re	2210	v. Norton	736, 753, 1293, 1314
v. Loughlin	2016	Raulhac v. White	1718	v. R. Co.	235, 1951
v. McCain	1841	Rausch v. Michel	2408	Razee v. State	987
v. Woodstock	18, 20, 1263	Raven, Re	7a	Razor v. Razor	1073
Rands v. Thomas	527	Ravenscroft v. Giboney	1267	Rea v. Missouri	944, 1890
Rank v. Shewey	1250	v. Stull	1911	v. Pittsburg & C. R. Co.	463
Rankin v. Crow	2105	Rawleigh Med. Co. v. Burney	95	v. State	1012, 2575
v. Fidelity Ins. T. & S. D. Co.	2556	Rawles v. Ford	133, 923, 928, 1615	Rea's Assignment	1225
v. McKenzie	2065	r State	133, 923, 928, 1615	Read v. Bailey	2124
v. Maxwell	1065	Rawley v. Brown	2515	v. Barker	1976
Rankine v. Clarke	406	v. Doe	1239, 1273, 1651	v. Bertrand	1414
Ranne v. Hodges	682	Rawlings v. Berry	2498	v. Brookman	1177, 1193
Ranney v. Byers	2465	Rawlings' Will	1938	v. Com.	2349
v. Donovan	1248	Rawlins v. Rickards	1523	v. Gamble	1205
v. R. Co.	461, 1872	v. State,		v. Gould	2433
Ransbottom v. State	1873	40 Fla.	396, 791	v. Hide	1179, 1224, 1650, 2094
Ransome v. Christian	2042			v. Passer,	
				1 Esp.	1208, 1644
				Peake N. P.	2083
				v. Randel	2125



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Read v. Rice	1083	Redfern v. Smith	1163	Reed v. Smith	2303
v. Staton	1267	Redfield v. R. Co.	1951	v. Spaulding	1126, 1128, 1129, 2016
v. Sutton	2450	Redfield's Estate	2383		
v. Valley L. & C. Co.	1943	Redford v. Birley	259, 369, 658, 1079, 1729, 1730, 1978	v. State,	
Reading v. Fletcher	393			147 Ind.	1835
v. Metcalf	1299	v. R. Co.	1669	62 Miss.	569, 683, 689, 1938
v. Mullen	1225	Redford's Adm'r v.		75 Nebr.	1621, 1853, 1959
v. Weston	1778	Peggy	2007, 2048	Nebr., 92 N. W.	1116
Reading & C. R. Co. v.		Redgrave v. Redgrave	2083	15 Oh.	309, 1213, 1249, 1625
Latshaw	456	Redhouse v. Graham	1404	98 Oh.	68, 1106
Readman v. Conway	283	Redington v. Cable Co.	1007	14 Okl. Cr.	228
Reagan v. Manchester		Redlich v. Bauclee	1550, 1558	v. Stevens	1633, 1644, 1680, 2085
St. R. Co.	376	Redman v. Gould	1681		
v. People	832, 852	Redmon v. Metropolitan		v. Tacoma Ass'n	2463
v. U. S.	968	St. R. Co.	21, 1078, 1976, 2509	v. Taylor	1938
Reager's Adm'r v. Chap-		Redmond v. Com.	1434	v. Terr.	1157
pelear	2122	Redus v. Milner C. & R.		v. Thompson	2354
Real v. People	987, 1270	Co.	437	v. U. S.	524
v. State	784	Reece v. Trye	2294	v. Williams	75, 210, 987
Real Estate T. Co. v.		Reed v. Anderson	2125	v. Wilson	2581
Union T. Co.	1378	v. Brashers	1871	Reeder v. Holcomb	581, 1784
v. Wilmington & N. C.		v. Chicago B. & Q. R.		v. Huffman	1966
E. R. Co.	1911, 2312	Co.	20	v. U. S.	2056
Real Estate Taxes De-		v. Clark	987, 1770, 2494	v. Wilber	1225
linquent, Re	2155	v. Com.	1873, 1912	Reel v. Reel	1736, 1738
Ream v. State	1873	v. Deere	2447, 2456	Reem's Succession	2421
Reavely v. Harris	1126, 1911, 2496	v. Dick	451, 1747, 1978	Rees v. Bowen	1053, 1215, 2158
Reaves v. Reaves	2082	v. Dickey	1082		
Reavis v. State	1476	v. Dodson	1651	v. Lawless	1065, 1299, 1651
Reber v. Herring	682	v. Fleming	2438		
Reck v. Whittlesberger	4c, 1722	v. Gold	1387	v. Walters	2139
Reck's Ex'r v. Reck	2503	v. Haskins	1141	v. Williams	1316
Reclamation Dist. No.		v. Ins. Co.,		Reese v. Hershey	461
70 v. Sherman	2491	117 Ga.	2103	v. Mining Co.	661
Record v. Ellis	1606	95 U. S.	2465	v. Reese	697
v. Saratoga Springs	2390	v. Jackson	1593	v. State	363
Rector v. Bernaschina	2442	v. James	1894, 2211	v. Strickland	2433
v. Rector	291, 894, 933, 2105	v. King	905	Reeside, The	2440
		v. Lamb,		Reeve v. Dennett	442, 443, 457
v. Welch	1680	6 H. & N.	18		
Red v. State	987, 1038, 1126, 1732	6 Jur. N. S.	1219, 1640	v. Wood	2239
Redd v. State,		v. Loney	916	Reeves v. Brayton	529
68 Ala.	106, 107, 108, 851	v. McCord	1053	v. Chicago M. & St. P.	
69 Ala.	826, 832, 833, 855, 861	v. McCready	2516	R. Co.	1951
63 Ark.	568	v. Madison	1750, 1755	v. Herr	610, 2336
65 Ark.	700, 1269, 1410	v. Mattapan D. & T.		v. Martin	1232
99 Ga.	1446	Co.	916	v. Reeves	1267
Redden v. Spruce	736, 747	v. Moseley	2505	v. Southern R. Co.	65
Reddick v. State	2272	v. New	716	v. State,	
Reddin v. Gates	770, 792	v. Peck	616	7 Coldw.	1219, 1398
Redding v. Redding's		v. Pittsburg C. & W.		Miss., 64 So.	1443
Est.	309, 702, 2018	R. Co.	714	v. Terr.	2060, 2061
Redding's Lessee v.		v. R. Co.,		Reffell v. Reffell	2410
M'Cubbin	1564, 1587	45 N. Y.	283, 438, 1719	Reformed Church v. Ten	
Rederi Aktiebolaget		71 Wis.	1678	Eyck	1033
Transatlantic v. Drug-		v. Reed,		Reformed Presb. Church	
horn	2438	117 Me.	2408	v. McMillan	2467
Redfern v. Redfern	2218, 2257, 2276	70 Nebr.	2245	Regan v. McCormick	1681
		v. Rex Fuel Co.	2389	Regicides' Trial	369, 1909, 2036, 2038
		v. Rice	1456	Regier v. Shreck	1195

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Regnier v. Cabot	1028, 1612	Renaud v. Bay City	2180	Reusens v. Lawson	378,
v. Terr.	1750	v. Pageot	1738		1082, 1267,
Rehden v. Wesley	1377	Renfro v. State	1108, 1618		1566, 2105, 2427
Rehfeld v. State	2501	Reniger v. Fogossa	2032	Reuter v. Stuckart	2138,
Reibstein v. Abbott's		Reniham v. Dennin	2380,		2141, 2144
Alderney Dairies	1890		2381, 2384	Revel v. Fox	2083
Reichers v. Dammeier	1404	Renitz v. Williamson	2437	v. State	276
Reid, In re	2377	Renn v. State	914	Rexroth v. Schein	93
v. Automatic E. W.		Rennell v. Kimball	392	Reyburn v. Belotti	703
Co.	4c	Renner v. Bank	1198, 1273	v. Queen City S. B. &	
v. Batte	2447	v. Model Laundry C.		T. Co.	1530, 1549
v. Colcock	1911	& D. Co.	4c	Reyes v. State	770
v. Diamond P. G. Co.	2442	v. Thornburg	2020	Reynell v. Sprye	2298, 2312
v. Dodson	1269	Rennick v. Chloe	1680	Reynolds, Ex parte	2251, 2271
v. Eastern S. S. Co.	682	Reno M. & L. Co. v.		v. Adams,	
v. Ins. Co.	1975	Westerfield	1909	90 Ill.	233, 1738
v. Ladue	341	Rens v. Relief Ass'n	1725	125 Va.	2083
v. Langlois	2317	Rensch v. Cold Storage		v. Boston Rubber Co.	2463
v. Linck	252	Co.	1078	v. Burgess S. F. Co.	1862
v. Margison	1279	Renshaw v. Dignan	1777,	v. Collier	2577
v. Medley's Adm'r	1951		1960	v. Dechaums	1974
v. Reid,		v. First National Bank	695	v. Equitable Acc.	
17 N. J. Eq.	692, 1618	Repass v. Richmond	377,	Ass'n	7a
21 N. J. Eq.	2046		1124	v. Fitzpatrick	1404
v. Warner	1058, 2020	Reppard v. Warren	1677,	v. Greenbaum	1010
v. Wooster	2050		2163	v. Hinrichs	2154
Reid's Estate	1292	Republic v. Ah Wong	507	v. Ins. Co.	379, 1871
Reiff v. Interstate V. M.		v. Edwards	2056	v. Kingsbury	1635
Acc. Ass'n	2349	v. Hang Cheong	831	v. Manning	1062
Reifschneider v. Reif-		v. Kanakanila	2236	v. Maryland Casualty	
schneider	2505	v. Kuhia	2085	Co.	393, 2510
Reifsnider v. R. Co.	1951	v. Luning	987	v. Narragansett E. L.	
Reilly v. Fitzgerald	1483,	v. Parsons	222, 2060,	Co.	1698
	1484		2269	v. North Amer. Union	7a
v. Reilly's Succession	610	v. Tokuji	987, 2071	v. Powers	1404, 1668
v. State	1476	v. Toyotaro	754	v. Quattlebum	1187, 1196,
v. Steinhart	7	v. Tsunikichi	218, 1841		1204
Reily v. Loudon	2220	v. Waipa	398, 1644, 2085	v. R. Co.	1106
Reiner v. Crawford	2410	v. Yamane	218, 1393	v. Reynolds,	
Reinhard v. Keenbartz	325	Republic Iron & Steel		16 S. & R.	2048
Reinhardt v. Marks'		Co. v. Ind. Com.	4c,	224 N. Y.	2452
Adm'r	289		1081	v. Robinson	681
Reinhart v. Miller	1302	v. Passafume	1976	v. Rowley	2222
Reininghaus v. Mer-		Republic Iron & S.		v. Sevier	1316
chant's L. Ass'n	1974	Works v. Gregg	283	v. Shanks	1951
Reinke v. Sanitary Dis-		Republic of France v.		v. State,	
trict	791, 1230	Peugnet	2573	68 Ala.	1434, 1435
Reinoehl v. State	357, 851	Republican Publ. Co.		61 Ind.	1240
Reins v. People	2354	v. Miner	1971	147 Ind.	392, 1003,
Reitan v. Goebel	406	Republican Val. R. Co.			1126, 2336, 2497
Reitler v. Harris	1356	v. Arnold	1943	1 Kelly	111, 247
Reitz v. State	166, 1154	Requa v. Daly-Judge		58 Nebr.	1244, 2506
Rema v. State	2089	Mining Co.	1042	v. Stille	1651
Rembert v. Brown	1938, 1978	Requiejo v. Rabalo	1606	v. Tompkins	2349
Remick v. Rumery	1547	Resolutions of the		v. Wallace	1257
Remington v. Geiszler	1014	Judges	1262, 1349	v. Whelan	2463
v. Rhode Island Co.	2380	Respublica v. Gibbs	987,	Reyons v. State	2079
Remirez v. Orientalist			2255, 2256	Rhea v. Deaver	1028, 1034
Co.	2596	v. M'Carty	2038	v. State,	
Remsberg v. Iola P. C.		Resurrection G. M. Co.		100 Ala.	923
Co.	665	v. Fortune G. M. Co.	1800,	104 Ark.	660, 1447
Rensen v. Brinckerhoff	1511		2477	10 Yerg.	1476
Remy v. Olds	457	Retan v. R. Co.	458	v. Terr.	286, 2243
Renard v. Levinstein	2212	Reteuna v. Ind. Com.	4a	Rheinhart v. State	1873, 1877



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Rheney v. Anderson	2433	Rice v. State,		Richardson v. Interna-	
Rhind v. Wilkinson	1268	35 Fla.	62, 200	tional Pottery Co.	1052
Rhinehart v. Whitehead	1976	3 Heisk.	836, 858	v. Kelly	1029
Rhoades v. Fuller	233, 1671	7 Humph.	1644	v. Learned	607
v. N. Y. C. & H. R. R.		49 Tex. Cr.	569	v. McGoldrick	715
Co.	1530	50 Tex. Cr.	521, 1037	v. McLemore	2349
v. Selin	1204, 1297, 1298,	v. U. S.	2184	v. McMillan	1389
1392, 1417, 2105, 2307		v. Waddill	18, 2338	v. Mellish	1633, 1641
v. State,		v. Ward	787	v. Milburn	1339
102 Nebr.	1136, 1835	v. Withers	2113	v. Nelson	2220
16 Okl. Cr.	20	Rice's Succession	1680	v. Newcomb	2016
Rhoads v. Gaul	1538, 1556	Rich v. Eldredge	657, 1539	v. Nugent	1158
Rhoads' Estate	2048	v. Flanders	7	v. Richardson,	
Rhode v. Louthain	728	v. Jackson	2417	4 Port.	2069
v. McLean	1195, 2105	v. Johnston	987	50 Vt.	2067, 2069
Rhode Island H. T. Co.		v. Jones	660	v. Robbins	112
v. Thorndike	1644, 2088,	v. Minneapolis	1066	v. Roberts,	
2505		v. Naffziger	1778	23 Ga.	1012, 1605
Rhodes v. Bunch	64	v. Trimble	1312, 2016	195 Ill.	2185
v. Com.,		v. U. S.	21, 2059	v. Spokane	1698
Ky., 54 S. W.	1807	Rich Hardware Co's		v. State,	
48 Pa.	1781	Assignment	2594	114 Ala.	1066
v. Owens	2444	Richard v. Brehm	2083	145 Ala.	177, 1966
v. Riggs	1312	v. State	1442	204 Ala.	391
v. State,		Richards v. Bassett	1588	Ariz., 201 Pac.	368,
141 Ala.	18	v. Burden	2245		1159
122 Ga.	1819	v. Com.	451, 1666	90 Md.	460, 1005
v. U. S.	664	v. Foulke	1416	103 Md.	987, 2088,
Rhodes Furn. Co. v.		v. Gellatly	1062, 1073		2239, 2245
Weedon	944	v. Hicks	1680	123 Miss.	63, 1732
Rhodus v. Heffernan	1195	v. Hugh	1819	34 Tex.	398
Rhuberg v. U. S.	369	v. Jackson	2294	44 Tex. Cr.	2243
Ricard v. Williams	1778, 2522	v. Lewis	1195	v. Stewart	1877
Ricardo v. Central Coal		v. Morgan	1075	v. Stringfellow	693
& Coke Co.	461	v. Pearl	2110	v. Turnpike Co.	38
Ricards v. Safe Deposit		v. Richards	74	v. W. & R. T. Co.	283
& T. Co.	2528	v. Skiff	1312, 1513	v. Watson	2472, 2473
Riccio v. Montano	4c, 1062,	v. State,		v. Webster City	18
	1063	91 Tenn.	580, 1841	v. Whitworth	1186
Rice, Re	1290	53 Tex. Cr.	1079	Richardson Fueling Co.	
v. Com.,		82 Wis.	905, 911	v. Seymour	1530
100 Pa.	2061	v. Stewart	1212	Richelieu & O. N. Co.	
102 Pa.	285, 2079	v. U. S.	1263	v. Boston M. Ins. Co.	1073
v. Coolidge	2042	v. Vermilyea	414	Richerson v. Sternburg	1777
v. Cunningham	1028, 2109,	Richards Co. v. Hilde-		Richey v. Sovereign	
	2159	beitel	2440	Camp	7a, 2531
v. Gunn	1697	Richards Iron Works v.		Richley v. Farrell	1225, 1705
v. Howard	905	Glennon	1234	Richman v. State	2261, 2271
v. Jefferson	278	Richardson, Re	2065	Richmond v. Barry	2440
v. Keith	619	v. Allan	907, 917	v. Caruthers	2408
v. Lockett	1908	v. Anderson	564, 1271,	v. Jones	1956, 2515
v. Lonoke-Cabot R. I.			1684	v. Norwich	199, 561,
District	1350	v. Babcock	1014		1984, 1986
v. Mfg. Co.	2415	v. Bank	2465	v. Patterson	1188, 1644
v. Oatfield	896, 907, 1302	v. Bly	2500	v. Richmond	913,
v. People	363	v. Debuys	1876		1028, 1109
v. Rice,		v. Disborow	2032	v. State	1141
101 Kans.	2444	v. Dorman's Ex'x	1547	v. Sundburg	1028
50 Mich.	1938	v. Emery	1548, 1549	v. Thomaston	1784
104 Mich.	2239	v. Foster	2445	Richmond's Appeal	2503
47 N. J. Eq.	2220	v. Gage	951, 987	Richmond & D. R. Co.	
N. J. Eq., 25		v. Golden	787, 1391	v. Childress	2220
Atl.	1278, 1279	v. Green	2008	v. Garner	1698
v. Sheldon	17	v. Hitchcock	1959	v. Hammond	1750

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Richmond & D. R. Co.		Riggs v. Metropolitan St.		Rippey v. State	2183
v. Hisson	2464	R. Co.	792	Ripple v. Ripple	2110
v. Jones	1296, 1300, 1301, 1861	v. Myers	2477	Rippy v. State	247
v. Vance	1036	v. Powell	693, 797, 1725, 2008	Ripton v. Brandon	1640
Richmond & O. R. Co.		v. State	1750	Risdon v. Yates	2100, 2115
v. Powers	2552	v. Tayloe.		Riser v. Southern R. Co.	1976
Richmond & P. E. R.		2 Cr. C. C.	1195	Rishton v. Nesbitt	1501, 1502
Co. v. Rubin	20, 461	1 Pet.	2105	Risk v. State	166, 1154
Richmond Cedar Works		9 Wheat.	728, 1195, 1198, 1268	Risler v. Ins. Co.	1558
v. Foreman B. L. Co.	1778	v. Weise	748, 1560	Rissler v. Ins. Co.	1339
Richmond L. & M. W.		Rigney v. Plaster	2143	Ritchey v. People	498
v. Ford	461, 561	Rijos v. Folgueras	2527	Ritchie v. Holbrooke	2354
Richmond P. & P. Co.		Riley v. Bank	2437	v. Kinney	1230
v. Racks	460	v. Boehm	1548, 1556	v. Richards	1350
Richmond U. P. R. Co.		v. Camden T. R. Co.	714	v. Stenius	2276
v. R. Co.	1540	v. Carter	1658	v. Weyman	2555, 2580
Rickards v. Murdock	1947	v. Com.	246	Rither's Case	2250
v. State	681, 784	v. Fletcher	759, 763	Rittenborg v. Smith	987
Rickeman v. Williams-		v. Hall	2016	Rittenhofer v. Cutter	64
burg C. F. Ins. Co.	89	v. Iowa Falls	438	Rittenhouse v. R. Co.	1124
Rickerson v. Ins. Co.	2464, 2466	v. Johnston	1911	Ritter v. Daniels	715
v. State	1043	v. State,		v. People	1018
Rickerstricker v. State	605	88 Ala.	1841, 1898	v. State	1213, 1230
Ricketts v. Rogers	2556	132 Ala.	406	Ritter Lumber Co. v.	
Rickey v. Zeppenfeldt	1951	Ga., 111 S. E.	168	Montvale Lumber Co.	2477
Rickman v. Carstairs	2459	107 Miss.	1072	Ritzman v. Campbell	1350
Rico v. Lopez	133	v. Wallace	852	Rivard v. Continental	
Riddle v. Germanton	791	v. Yost	1859a	Casualty Co.	2419
v. Gibson	26	Rindskopf, Re	1893	v. Rivard	682
v. Hudgins	2432	v. Malone	2165	River Steamer Co., Re	1061, 1062
Ridenhour v. R. Co.	506, 507	Riney v. Vanlandingham	1127	Rivera v. Diaz	19, 133, 2527
Rideout v. Newton	1062	Ring v. Grout	2535	Rivereau v. St. Ament	2098
Rideout's Trusts	2063	v. Lawless	1958	Rivers v. State	2236
Rider v. Miller	1938	Ringgold v. Galloway	1195, 1346, 2427	Rivers' Case	2463
v. People	274, 968	v. Ringgold	2123	Riverside & D. R. C. M.	
Ridge v. State	2268	v. Tyson	529, 531	Co. v. Waugh	451
Ridgeway v. Darwin	2122	Ringhouse v. Keener	1605	Riverside P. C. Co. v.	
Ridgway v. Philip	783, 1058	Rinker v. U. S.	696, 2026	Maryland Casualty	
Ridler v. Ridler	1951	Rio Grande & E. P. R.		Co.	2419
Ridley v. Gyde,		Co. v. Bank	1215	Rives v. Lamar	1729
9 Bing.	1783	Rio Grande S. Co. v.		v. Parmley	1675
1 M. & Rob.	1262	Catlin	1350	Rivet v. The King	347
v. R. Co.	1640	Rio Grande So. R. Co.		Rix v. Smith	1257
Rie v. Ric	2067	v. Campbell	1407	Rixey v. Bayse	948, 987
Rieck v. Griffin	233, 1680	Rio Grande W. R. Co.		Rixford v. Miller	2530
Riegel v. Wilson	1407	v. Utah N. Co.	20, 770	Roach v. Cox	2517
Rieger's Succession	1391	Riordan v. Guggerty	93, 1236, 1890, 2008,	v. Great Northern R.	
Riehl v. Evansville			2016	Co.	1750
Foundry Ass'n	1086	Rios v. Amoros	2433	v. Martin	1651
Rietveld v. Wabash R.		v. State	2236	v. State,	
Co.	1976, 2510	Ripley v. Hebron	2530	41 Tex.	1840
Rigby v. Logan	1521, 1532	v. Sage L. & I. Co.	1073	4 Tex. App.	2060
Rigden v. Wolcott	406	v. Warren	2578	Roan v. Quinn	2525
Rigg v. Cook	1777, 1778	Ripon v. Bittel	18, 252, 1693, 1700	Roanoke v. Shull	1951
v. Curgenvin	2086	v. Davies	2312	Roark v. Greeno	682
v. Wilton	1304, 1417	Ripon College v. Brown	1674, 2465	Robards v. McLean	1213
Riggie v. Grand Trunk		Rippe v. R. Co.	794	v. Robards	398, 2067
R. Co.	1168, 2495	Rippetoe v. People	987	Robb v. Hackley	1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1131
Riggins v. Brown	1668, 2098			v. Hewitt	2061
v. State	21			v. Starkey	1200
Riggs v. Com.	390			v. Washington & J.	
				College	2536



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Robb's Appeal	2237, 2336	Roberts v. Miles	908	Robertson v. State,	
Robb's Estate	1491, 2463, 2527	v. Morgan	2438	42 Ala.	2230
Robbin v. Supreme Tent	7a	v. Morse	2516	130 Ala.	1350
Robbins v. Butler	1065	v. Pacific Tel. & Tel. Co.	1671	63 Tex. Cr.	1398
v. Fletcher	406	v. Philadelphia	1168	v. Thawick	1081
v. Herrin	2451	v. Phillips	1512	v. Washington R. & El. Co.	2509
v. R. Co.,		v. Port Blakeley Mill Co.	1750	Robertson's Estate	1511
165 Mass.	1898	v. Porter	620	Robertson's Ex'r v. Atlantic C. R. Co.	1576, 2065
180 Mass.	1856c, 2218	v. R. Co.,		Robichaux v. Bouillet	2232
v. Robbins	2046	29 Hun	2220	Robin v. King	2235, 2336
v. Smith	1141	128 N. Y.	463, 1943	Robinett v. Preston	1664
v. Spencer,		v. Rice	1523	Robinius v. State	222, 1168
121 Ind.	1111	v. Ringemann	2515	Robins v. Wolseley	1374, 1487
140 Ind.	1085	v. Roberts,		Robinson v. Adams	233, 1938
v. State,		176 Ia.	1352	v. B. & W. R. Co.	1391
Nebr., 184 N. W.	2062	82 N. C.	1131	v. Baltimore & O. R. Co.	2572
8 Oh.	1398	v. Simpson	2211	v. Blakely	1018, 1362, 1487
47 Tex. Cr.	1807	v. Spencer	1203	v. Blen	1072
v. Townsend	1678	v. Stanton	2141	v. Britton	2433
v. Willmar	1943	v. State,		v. Burton	75, 210, 987, 1985
v. Windover	2349, 2354	68 Ala.	63, 111, 245, 247, 1329	v. Cahalan	1651, 1680, 2169
Rober v. Cordray	2500	122 Ala.	1841	v. Clifford	1271
Roberson v. State,		25 Del.	41, 1022, 1051, 1491, 1873	v. Consol. Gas Co.	2509
183 Ala.	2501	72 Fla.	2272	v. Craig	2138, 2141, 2144
40 Fla.	216, 218, 278, 987, 1977, 2513	55 Ga.	2059	v. Cutter	2116
Tex. Cr., 49		94 Ga.	2201	v. Dana	497
S. W.	811, 1135, 1157	123 Ga.	397, 1157, 1878, 1974	v. Davis	1193
v. Stokes	13	188 Ind.	1079	v. Devone	1779
v. Woodfork	523	Nebr., 183 N. W.	2061	v. Dewhurst	1566, 1567, 1568, 1586
Robert Bell Engine v. Gagne	1911	44 Tex.	2059, 2060	v. Dibble's Adm'r	1551
Roberts, Re	1350	75 Tex. Cr.	2276	v. Doe	150
v. Allatt	2279	v. Stiltner	2433	v. Duvall	1081
v. Austin	2445	v. Tennell	1291, 1295, 1301, 2121	v. F. & W. R. Co.	65, 199
v. Bank	2169	v. Trawick,		v. Ferry	2119
v. Bidwell	1081, 1738, 1938	13 Ala.	1938	v. Fire Co.	568
v. Bodley	1729	17 Ala.	1738	v. Gillman	1677, 2109
v. Boston	1021	v. Unger	1225	v. Gilman,	
v. Bradshaw	1206	Roberts' Case	2032	43 N. H.	1408
v. Brown Co.	1943	Roberts' Will	1271	7 Shepl.	2163
v. Claremont Power Co.	1530	Robertson v. Allen	1258, 1316	v. Gregory	1680
v. Com.,		v. Archer	2118	v. Hoyt	1551
94 Ky.	1164	v. Baldwin	1398	v. Hutchinson,	
Ky., 20 S. W.	958, 987	v. Blair	1062	26 Vt.	233, 1738
v. Dixon	377, 1195	v. Brost	616	31 Vt.	1035, 1041
v. Dover	451, 1245	v. Campbell	1492, 1605, 1606	v. Johnson	1675
v. Doxon	1244	v. Com.	1021	v. Markis	1404
v. Eddington	1672	v. Flynn	2474	v. May	2378
v. Francis	1859e, 1860	v. Heath	1709	v. Morino	1976
v. Garen	2210	v. Knapp	714, 1943	v. N. B. R. Co.	456, 461
v. Haskell	1225	v. Lucas	1195	v. N. Y. El. R. Co.	19, 463
v. Hughes	2355	v. Lynch	1275	v. Neal	2222, 2223
v. Huntington D. & G. Co.	2498	v. People	1350, 1356	v. Old Colony St. R. Co.	20, 1021
v. Johnson,		v. Robertson's Adm'r	1388	v. Philadelphia & R. Co.	2212
Ky., 64 S. W.	987	v. Rowell	2409	v. Prescott	1681
58 N. Y.	687	v. Showler	2556	v. R. Co.	1867, 1976
v. Machine Co.	2442	v. Stark	1943, 2026		
v. Medberry	1086, 1779				

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Robinson v. Reynolds	907	Roche v. Coleman	321	Rodriguez' Succession v.	
v. Robinson,		v. Llewellyn I. Co.	18, 252,	Perez	1336
22 Ia.	1458		282	Rodwell v. Tuchfaber	2498
16 Mich.	2067	v. Nason	2388	Roe v. Bank	2444
203 Pa.	1081, 1738	v. R. Co.	1719	v. Davis	1256
22 R. I.	2340, 2341	v. Ware	1554, 1560	v. Day	2120
1 Sw. & Tr.	2045, 2067	Rochester v. Chester	1918,	v. Ferrars	1053
v. Scotney	2122		1941, 1943	v. Harvey	291, 1204,
v. Singerly P. & P. Co.	1194,	Rochester German Ins.			1210, 2219, 2264
	1268, 2105	Co. v. Peaslee G. Co.	2463	v. Jeffery	379
v. Smith	1560	Rock v. Carney	2265	v. Jerome	1084
v. Springfield St. R.		v. State	987	v. Jones	1404
Co.	1951	v. Travelers' Ins. Co.	2509	v. Philippi	1678
v. State,		Rock Island & E. I. R.		v. Rawlings	1476, 1994,
155 Ala.	396	Co. v. Gordon	2570		2006, 2017, 2137
16 Fla.	923, 1111,	Rock Island & P. R. Co.		v. Reade	2522
	1613, 1985	v. Brewing Co.	1168	v. Schweitzer	2438
50 Fla.	522, 1878	v. Potter	2155	v. Strong	1598
80 Fla.	987, 1841	Rock Island Plow Co. v.		v. Taylor	229, 1738
68 Ga.	1329, 1375	Schoening	1378	Roe & McDowell v. Doe	
114 Ga.	390, 1476	Rockcastle M. L. & O.		& Irwin	1195, 1267, 2105
128 Ga.	1405	Co. v. Baker	2505	Roeber's Estate	2500
6 Ga. App.	360	Rockefeller v. Ind. Com.	4c	Roebke v. Andrews	1777,
66 Ind.	309	Rockford v. Hildebrand	2159		1779
84 Ind.	7	v. Mower	1168, 2578	Roebuck v. Curry	1247
1 Lea	17	v. Russell	792	Roeh v. Business Men's	
53 Md.	391	Rockford C. R. Co. v.		Protective Ass'n	7a
57 Md.	1730	Blake	437	Roehl v. Haumesser	1195
12 Mo.	2071	Rockland v. Farnsworth	1066	Roelker, Re	2203
71 Nebr.	118	Rockland & R. L. Co. v.		Roesel v. State	837, 862
8 Okl. Cr.	276, 1142	Coe-Mortimer Co.	252	Roesner v. Darrah	1730, 2235
Tex. Cr., 57		Rockville & W. Turn-		Rogdai, The	2566
S. W.	2079	pike Co. v. Van Ness	1074	Rogero v. Zippel	1684
143 Wis.	398	Rockwell v. Capital T.		Rogers, Re	2210, 2271
v. Talmadge	610	Co.	2423	v. Allen	157
v. U. S.	2053	v. Taylor	1756	v. Barnett	1275, 1389
v. Vasey	2120	Rockwood v. Pound-		v. Bass & Harbour Co.	2451
v. Vaughton	1349	stone	664, 907	v. Brent	1871
v. Villafuerte	1350	Rocky's Estate	2008, 2016	v. Burton	736, 749, 753
v. Western States G.		Roddy v. Finnegan	581, 2276	v. Cady	2575
& E. Co.	1646	v. Gazette Co.	1963	v. Clark Iron Co.	93, 1267,
v. Western Union T.		Rode v. Phelps	1350		1347a, 2105
Co.	1963	Roden v. Brown	1244	v. Com.,	
v. Woodford	285, 288	v. State	2512	161 Ky.	1750
Robinson's (Henrietta)		Rodgers v. Crook <sup>7</sup>	1198, 1254	Va., 111 S. E.	505, 507
Trial	2265, 2272	v. Rodgers	1671, 2530	v. Crain	1722, 1751
Robison v. Robison	619	v. State,		v. Custance	1208
v. Troy Laundry	1164	50 Ala.	2578	v. Dare	2317
Robson v. Alexander	850	144 Ala.	246	v. De Bardeleben Co.	1481
v. Doyle	2257, 2281	Tex. Cr., 236		v. Diamond	1302
v. Hamilton	1082	S. W.	1890, 2363	v. Dibble	586
v. Kemp,		Rodimon v. Reding	1141	v. Hawken	847
4 Esp.	1783, 1795,	Rodriguez v. Porto Rico		v. Ins. Co.	1725
	2309	R. L. & P. Co.	18,	v. Krumrei	1073
5 Esp.	2306, 2309,		1032, 1374, 1375	v. Lamb	64
	2312, 2315	v. Rodriguez	1646	v. Lewis	928
v. Locke	1993	v. State,		v. Lippy	2473
v. Thorpe	1644, 2085	89 Tex. Cr.	987	v. Moore	1104, 1106,
v. Worswick	2319	Tex. Cr., 36			1108, 1109
Roby v. Title Co.	1215	S. W.	2276	v. Old	1540
Rocap v. Bell Telephone		Tex. Cr., 236		v. Pell	2534
Co.	2509	S. W.	398, 1821	v. People	284
Rocco v. Parczyk	1003	v. Tadmire	258	v. Portland Lumber	
v. State	2364	Rodriguez' Estate	1233	Co.	2509



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Rogers v. Raborg	1404, 1406	Roman v. Smith	1239	Rose v. Harlee	1168
v. Ritter	704, 2008, 2016	v. State	832, 851	v. Himely	2566
v. Rogers,		Roman Catholic Epis-		v. Indept. C. Kadisho	2451
46 Ind.	613	copal Co. v. Murphy	2145	v. Lewis	1205
89 N. J. Eq.	2046	Romans v. Hay	2337	v. Mitchell	398, 1730, 2340
Tex., 240 S. W.	1320	Romberg v. Hughes	2303	v. Otis	1051
v. Rosenfeld	1074	Romer v. Conter	1676	v. Rose	1062
v. Saginaw B. C. R.		Romero v. N. I. M. &		v. St. Louis	438
Co.	1750	D. Co.	1209	v. State	2056
v. State,		Romertze v. Bank	1261, 1263	v. Supreme Court	2384
Ala. 83 So.	418	Romes v. Com.	57, 343	v. U. S.	132
60 Ark.	1909	Rommell v. Happe	2408	v. Williams	2444
72 Ark.	1350	Ronan v. Dugan	133	Roseboom v. Billington	1466
136 Ark.	1405	Roney v. Moss	1651	Rosecrance v. Rosecrance	2046
99 Ind.	1230	Ronkendorff v. Taylor	1219, 1640, 2535	Rosekrans v. Antwerp	2569
89 Md.	851	Roof v. Pulley Co.	2446	Rosen v. U. S.	6, 521, 522, 524, 580, 2513
88 Miss.	2286, 2374	Rook v. Wilson	2477	Rosenbaum v. Shoffner	437
8 Okl. Cr.	235, 247, 248	Rooks v. State	1842	v. State	1003, 1769, 2594
Okl. Cr., 197		Rooney v. Com.	1447	Rosenberg v. Jett	2525
Pac.	278	v. S. & D. C. Co.	461	v. Nelson	2416
40 Tex. Cr.	398	v. Southern B. & L.		v. Sheahan	18
44 Tex. Cr.	2273	Ass'n	2536	v. State,	
Tex. Cr., 159		Roop v. Clark	1681	Ind., 134 N. E.	2513
S. W.	2349	v. State	367, 987	129 Md.	19
v. Stevenson	1352, 1677	Roosa v. Loan Co.	1719, 1722	Rosendale v. McNulty	2271
v. Stokes	64	Roosevelt Hospital v. R.		Rosendorf v. Hirschberg	1192
v. Superior Court	2210	Co.	792, 794	Rosenstiel v. Pittsburg	
v. Tillman	1186	Root v. Boston El. R.		R. Co.	208, 249, 250
v. Troop	1404	Co.	1010	Rosenthal v. Bilger	774
v. Tyley	2008, 2016	v. Cudahy P. Co.	1951, 2509	v. Bishop	89
v. Venis	2579	v. Hamilton	2277	v. Ehrlicher	1669
v. Walker	1671	v. Kansas C. S. R. Co.	1871	v. McGraw	747
v. Wilson	2513	v. King	209, 406, 987, 1684	v. U. S.	905
v. Wood	1594	v. Lowndes	405, 406	v. Walker	95, 1201
Rogers' Case	398, 2529	v. Wood	1029	Rosenwald v. Middle-	
Rogers' Trial	520	v. Wright	2294, 2297, 2312	brook	2094
Rohloff v. Aid Ass'n	1680	Roots v. Merriwether	1684	Rosenwasser v. Rosen-	
Rohr v. Alexander	2520	Roper v. Memphis St.		wasser	2239
Rohrer v. Morningstar	529	R. Co.	568	Rosevelt v. Gardner	529
Roland v. District	2451	v. State	2312	Rosewel's Trial	369
Roles v. Mintzer	377	v. Terr.	21, 363	Rosholt v. Woulph	2433
Rolf v. Dart	1279	Ropes v. Kemps	1680	Rosine v. Bonnabel	1271, 1272, 1680
Rolfe v. Hampden	657, 1292, 1364	Roquemoire v. Vulcan I.		Roskee v. Pulp Co.	451
v. Rolfe	1072, 2115	W. Co.	2441	Ross, Re	1934, 1938
v. Rumford	1806	Rosa v. State	987	v. Allmond	1350
Roller v. Bachman	2349	Rosa's Estate,		v. Anstill	2578
v. Kling	1029, 1081, 2500	Newnham v. Newell	682	v. Bank	1750
Rollings v. State,		Rosado v. Ponce R. &		v. Boswell	2581
136 Ala.	1977	L. Co.	1750, 2034, 2509	v. Bruce	1205
169 Ala.	390, 1157	Rosamond v. M'llwain	1225	v. Brussie	1770
Rollins v. Atlantic C. R.		Rosco v. Jefferson	1960	v. Buhler	1909
Co.	1573	Roscoe v. McConnell	2437	v. Campbell	1876a
v. Board	1230, 1674	Reese v. Allen	1302	v. Clare	1651, 2141
v. Business M. A.		v. Blakemore	2272	v. Com.	1041
Ass'n	7a	v. Bouck	1738	v. Cooper	1432, 1436
v. Henry	1267, 1651, 1664	v. Brown	613	v. Demoss	1911
v. Humphrey	2525	v. Bryant	1466	v. Double S. C. Mills	2509
v. Wicker	1483	v. First Nat'l Bank	2008, 2015	v. Espy	2445
Rollofson v. Nash	1779			v. Gibbs	2312, 2319
Roma v. Ind. Com.	4c			v. Goodwin	1239, 1587
Roman v. Agosto	1606			v. Hayne	911, 1779, 1899

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ross v. Innis	258	Rouse v. Whited	2115	Roy v. King's Estate	2065
v. Knight	1084	Roush v. Roush	1878	Royal v. Chandler,	
v. Kornrumpf	1225	Rouss, Re	2257, 2281	79 Me.	1133
v. Lapham	73	v. King	657	81 Me.	1567
v. Loomis	1481, 2105	Roussin v. Parks	1651	83 Me.	1567
v. McQuiston	228, 232,	Routh v. Bank	1219, 1676,	Royal Bank v. Wallis	1859d
	233, 1461, 1740		1680	Royal Ins. Co. v. Duffus	17
v. Miner	321	v. Helen	529	v. Taylor	1476
v. R. Co.,		Rovena, The	1641	Royal Neighbors v.	
6 All.	454, 455	Rowan v. Chenoweth	1549,	Hayes	1644
53 Ga.	1974		2118	Royal Soc'y of Good Fel-	
v. Reddick	2575	v. U. S.	276	lows v. McDonald	1644,
v. Ross,		Rowe, Ex parte	987, 2255,		1646
Can. Sup.	607		2283	Royalton v. R. & W. T.	
140 Ia.	1911, 2421,	v. Barnes	1681	Co.	1195, 1651
	2500	v. Brenton,		Royce v. Com.	2183
v. Stamford	437	8 B. & C.	380, 1224,	v. Gazan	1339
v. State,			1670, 1674,	Rozek v. Redzinski	2201
62 Ala.	364		2111, 2139	Ruan v. Gardner	1954
74 Ala.	276, 2060	3 M. & Ry.	1464, 1873	v. Perry	64
139 Ala.	20, 923, 987	v. Canney	2354	Rubenstein's Trial	414
116 Ind.	581	v. Emerson-Branting-		Rubert & Guamis v.	
169 Ind.	1871	ham Implement		Smith	2518
Tex. Cr., 45 S. W.	905	Co.	2434	Rubino v. Scott	392
8 Wyo.	1976, 2079	v. Freeman	2503	Rubio v. Garage Maya-	
v. White	1777	v. Hasland	158, 2531	guez	2509
v. Williamson	2105	v. Henderson	2573	Ruble v. McDonald	2354
Ross' Estate,		v. Hibernia S. & L. Soc.	2498	Ruby v. Van Valkenburg	1195
140 Cal.	2475	v. Howden	1858	Ruch v. Rock Island	736, 754,
187 Cal.	1490	v. Myers	66		2098
Ross' Ex'r v. Kiger	2477	v. Northport St. R. Co.	451	v. Ruch	2433
Rousseau v. Bleau	2311	v. Polkinghorne	89	Ruckdeschell v. Seibel	2498
Rossenback v. Supreme		v. Smith	1388	Rucker, Ex parte	2195
Court	1040	v. Such	1671	v. Beaty	928, 1041
Rosser, Re	2283	v. U. S.	56	v. Bolles	661
Rossignol v. Tricke	2054	Rowell v. Fuller's Estate	797,	v. Eddings	1867, 1877
Rostad v. Portland R. L.			2016, 2020	v. M'Neely	1212, 1225,
& P. Co.	2570	v. Lowell	688		1651
Rosted v. R. Co.	2580	Rowland v. Ashby	1349	v. Reid	1389
Roszczyńska v. State	823,	v. Blaksley	2118	v. State,	
	851, 861, 862,	v. M'Gee	2166	77 Ark.	2528
	1157, 1977	v. Miller	2580	Miss., 18 So.	966
Roten v. State	246	v. Plummer	619, 2245, 2327	Ruckman v. Lumber Co.	561
Roth v. Smith	1330, 1668	v. R. Co.	1576, 1722	Rucks v. Renfrow	1712
Roth's Succession	2008	v. State	2239	Rudd v. Dewey	1062
Rothrock v. Cedar		v. Walker	1718, 1722	v. Frank	2303
Rapids	1750, 1977	Rowletts v. Daniel	1225, 1651	v. Robinson	1074
v. Gallagher	1028, 1408	Rowley v. Ball	1300	v. Rounds	1730
v. Perkinson	1684	v. Berrian	2165, 2168	Ruddock, Ex parte	1676b
Rothwell v. Jamison	1486	v. Bigelow	321	Ruddock Co. v. Johnson	1067
v. King	2298	v. Bowyer	2408	Rude v. Whitechurch	2122
Rottner v. Buchner	1351	v. Horne	255	Rudolph v. Brown	1960, 2531
Rouch v. R. Co.	1783	v. Hughes	1777	v. Lane	1198
v. Zehring	228, 688, 1938	v. McHugh	2235	v. R. Co.	1164
Rounds v. State	736, 754,	v. R. Co.	1694, 1698, 1923	v. State	2260, 2282
	770, 779, 786,	Rowt's Adm'r v. Kile's		Rudsdill v. Slingerland	923,
	1330, 1669, 2098	Adm'r,			1985
Roundtree v. Charleston		Gilmer	68, 142	Rue v. Schweitzer	18
& W. C. R. Co.	1944	1 Leigh	238, 699, 702,	Rueb v. Rehder	2451
Roup v. Roup	2408		2002, 2008,	Rufer v. State	826, 860, 861
Roupell v. Haws	309		2016, 2017	Rufus v. State	246
Rourke v. Holmes St. R.		Roxbury v. Bridgewater	2506	Ruggles v. Bucknor	2168
Co.	463	Roy v. Duff	2518	v. Coffin	1878
Rouse v. State	111	v. Goings	2354	v. Gatton	1538, 1539, 1552



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ruggles v. Nevada	252	Russell v. Coffin	736, 1106,	Rutland v. Com.	905, 2237
Ruiz v. Dow	2311		1108, 1109,	v. Hathorn	2349
v. Terr.	1398		1302, 1304	Rutland's Case	2426
Rule v. State	2110	v. Cowles	1770	Rutland & B. R. Co. v.	
Ruloff v. People,		v. Cowley	1862	Lincoln	607
18 N. Y.	2081	v. Cruttenden	963	v. Thrall	1195, 1206, 1248
45 N. Y.	413, 792,	v. Edwards	1681	Rutland R. L. & P. Co.	
	2272	v. Farrell	406	v. Williams	1076, 1078,
Rulofson v. Billings	21, 1133,	v. Fraser	1194		2491
	1461, 1491, 1777	v. Frisbie	1777	Rutledge v. Evans	1867
Rumble v. U. S.	1073	v. Hayden	717, 720	Rutter v. Baldwin	2232
Rumford v. Upton	1269, 1639	v. Jackson	2285, 2298,	v. Chapman	2596
Rumpel v. R. Co.	199		2314, 2317,	v. Collins,	
Rumrill v. Ash	290		2329, 2380, 2394	96 Mich.	1806
Rumsey v. R. Co.	1350	v. Mandell	1705	103 Mich.	1807
v. Telephone Co.	1550,	v. R.	6b	v. Hebden	1364
	1558, 1560	v. R. Co.,		Rutzen v. Farr	21
Rundle v. Beaumont	1858	4 Gray	714, 720	Ryall v. Hannum	2463
v. Foster	2309	17 N. Y.	736, 738,	Ryan v. Bindley	6
Runkle v. Burnham	291		745, 747, 754	v. Bristol	1951
v. Gates	1738	v. Rider	1801	v. Cooke	2435
Runnells v. State	862	v. Russell	986	v. Couch	1840, 1841
Runnels v. State	1108	v. Sharp	2498	v. Lynch	1350
Runo v. Williams	581	v. Southard	2437	v. Miller	2063
Runyan v. Price	1031, 1033,	v. Spaulding	2509	v. People,	
	1958	v. State,		21 Colo.	1031, 1378,
Ruos, In re	2317	Ala., 38 So.	792		1398
Rupert v. Penner	1225, 2529	97 Ark.	1269, 1273	79 N. Y.	276, 967, 987
Rupp v. Howard	1719	Ark., 166 S. W.	2071	v. State,	
v. Jones	1302, 1511, 1513	53 Miss.	689	100 Ala.	2071, 2073,
Ruppe v. Steinbach	285	62 Nebr.	1977, 2595		2081
Ruschenberg v. So. Elec-		77 Nebr.	205, 2062,	60 N. J. L.	309
tric Co.	1750		2273	97 Tenn.	987, 1800
Ruse v. State	177	Nebr., 92 N. W.	1977,	v. U. S.	347
Rush v. French	18, 20, 773,		2264	Ryberg v. Smith	905
	915, 1195, 1884,	Okl., 186 Pac.	988,	Ryder v. Alton	1352
	1885, 1889, 1890		2272	v. Bateman	1859b, 1859c
v. Landers	2047, 2573	89 Tex. Cr.	1398	v. Fash	1651, 2141
v. Magee	681, 1938	19 Wyo.	1873	v. Fletcher	2202
v. R. Co.	1166, 2354	v. Stocking	1588	v. Jacobs	1957
v. Smith	1894	v. Tunno	1513	v. Ryder	2498
Rusher v. State	2183, 2264	v. Walker	1299, 1300	v. State	1921, 2501
Rushing v. Rushing	620	v. Washington S. Bank	1078	v. Wombwell	2494, 2553
Rushton v. Hallett	2477	Russell's (Lord) Trial	369	Rye v. Tumby	2426
Rushworth v. Pembroke	1388	Russian Socialist Feder-		Ryerson v. Abington	905,
Rusk v. Hill	770	ated Soviet Govern-			1021, 1028,
v. Sowerwine	1195	ment v. Cibrario	2506		1060, 1951
Ruskin v. Armn	406	Russian Steam-Nav. T.		v. Grover	736, 749
Rusling v. Rusling	1738	Co. v. Silva	2464	Rylander v. Laursen	461
v. R. Co.	682	Rust v. B. M. Co.	2145	Ryle v. Manchester B. &	
v. Steamboat War		v. Mansfield	1086	L. Ass'n	1078
Eagle	604, 2241, 2242	v. Oltmer	2240	Ryman v. Crawford	1938
Russ v. Good	64, 247, 1066	v. Reid	1873		
Russel v. Close's Estate	2408	v. Washington T. &		S	
Russell, Re	1160	H. Co.	689, 969	S. v. S.	2276
v. Baptist Theol.		Rustell v. Macquister	406	Saad v. New York Life	
Union	2066	Rutan v. Johnson	1530	Ins. Co.	2391
v. Borden's C. Milk Co.	795	Ruth v. Ford	607	Sabin v. Sabin	2046
v. Broadus C. Mills	2438	v. State	1230	Sabine v. Strong	1409
v. Brosseau	570, 1278	Rutherford v. Com.	21, 1803	Sabins v. Jones	133
v. Buckley	95	v. Foster	2512	Saccharin Co. v. Chemi-	
v. Burlington	1943	v. Morris	1738, 1938	cals & D. Co.	2212
v. Bush	291, 1859	v. Rutherford	1676	Sachra v. Manilla	1976
v. Carman	18	Ruthven v. Clarke	1212		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Sachs v. Owings	2455	Salt's Textile Mfg. Co.		San Rafael, The	104
Sackman v. Thomas	2336	v. Tingué Mfg. Co.	2498	Sanborn v. Gerald	2498
Sackrider v. Supervisors	1350	Salte v. Thomas	1240, 1639	v. Ins. Co.	1531
Sacks v. U. S.	133	Salter v. Ely	2502	v. Neilson	1061, 1062
Sacrider v. Brown	1635	v. Turner	1215, 2529	v. School District	2159
Saenger Amusement Co.		Saltern v. Melhuish	1193,	Sanchar's Case	2250
v. Murray	2150		1199	Sanchez, Ex parte	714
Safe Deposit & T. Co. v.		Saltmarsh v. Bower	2124	v. Gestera	1234
Berry	682, 1938	v. Tuthill	529	v. People	390, 681, 728, 900
v. Turner	289, 1074, 1203	Salvo v. Duncan	1976	v. Pottlitzer B. F. Co.	2425
Saffold v. Horne	620, 2245,	Sam v. State,		v. Reister	1714
	2336	1 Swan	1800	Sand Springs Park v.	
Safford v. Grant	581	33 Miss.	2071, 2072	Schrader	2509
v. People	205	Samaha v. Mason	1779	Sandage v. Mfg. Co.	2433
Safer v. U. S.	367, 1003	Samberg v. Modern		Sandberg v. State	7, 1644, 2529
Sagar v. Hogmire	1938	Maccabees	7a	Sandell v. Sherman	944
Sage v. Ins. Co.	1858	Sammis v. Wightman	2573	Sanders v. Burnham	64
v. State,		Samonset v. Mesnager	1195	v. Davis	18
Ariz., 195 Pac.	17, 133,	Sample v. Chicago B. &		v. Johnson	18, 73, 74
	987	Q. R. Co.	283	v. Karnell	1256
91 Ind.	689, 1938	v. Consol. L. & R.		v. Keller	1077
127 Ind.	928, 1616,	Co.	1750	v. Leigh	1013
	1807	v. Frost	2300, 2302	v. Munson	2465
Sagers v. International		v. Wynn	66, 73	v. O'Callaghan	282
Smelting Co.	760, 761	Sampson v. Grimes	1299	v. Palmer	2554
Sailor v. Hertzogg	1062, 1778,	v. Hughes	1960	v. Pepoon	1676a
	2529	v. Marr	1225, 1664	v. Sanders	1738
Sain v. Com.	1079	v. Noble	1647	v. State,	
Saint v. Taylor	2110	v. Northwestern Nat'l		105 Ala.	1124, 1263,
Saladino v. Gurdy	406	L. Ins. Co.	1678		1330, 1842
Salas v. People	1033, 1750	v. Overton	1633	131 Ala.	276
Salazar v. Taylor	570, 696	v. Sampson,		148 Ala.	279, 1062
Sale v. Eichberg	1700	223 Mass.	2337	113 Ga.	841, 2183
Salem v. Lynn	1784	4 S. & R.	1779	v. Wakefield	761
v. Webster	65, 1719	v. State	826, 851, 852	Sanders Engineering Co.	
Salem Bank v. Gloucester Bank	2616	v. White	1306, 2048	v. Small	1057, 1063
Salem I. R. Co. v. Adams	460	Sams A. C. Co. v. League	2498	Sanderson v. Nashua	1037,
Salem L. & T. Co. v.		Samson v. Salvilla	291		1041, 1802
Anson	1230	v. Yardly	1364	v. Osgood	2018
Salem News P. Co. v.		Samuel v. Borrowscale	1225,	v. State	21, 1079
Caliga	266		1226, 1318, 1651	Sanderson Co. v. Carroll	393
Salem S. & L. Co. v.		v. Ofner	2467, 2474	Sandford, Ex parte	2195
Griffin	458	v. People	2270, 2276	v. Remington	2309, 2315
Salisbury v. Com.	1839, 1841	v. Withers	1856e	v. State	396, 1329
v. Wellman	1164	Samuel & Jessie Kenney	-	Sandilands, Re	2456
Salladay v. Dodgeville	2552	P. Home v. Kenney	7	Sandon v. Sandon	2475
Sallee v. St. Louis	1943	Samuels v. Griffith	1029,	Sandringham, The	1639, 1641
Salley v. R. Co.	1415		1035, 1873, 1879	Sands v. Hammel	1521
Sallisaw v. Priest	714	v. State	522	v. R. Co.	1890
Sally v. Capps	1256	v. U. S.	341, 1908	v. Robinson	2360, 2363
v. Gunter	1215	San Antonio & A. P. R.		Sands' Case	392
Salmer v. Lathrop	1388, 2465	Co. v. Gray	1750	Sandwich v. State	2281, 2282
Salmon v. Claggett	2268	v. Stuart	2220	Sandwich Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Rance	1665	San Diego Land Co. v.		Nicholson	571
v. Rathjens	655	Neale	714	Sanford v. Rowley	66, 1612
Salmon's Estate	2475	San Fernando C. M. &		Sanger v. Bacon	18, 1003,
Salo v. Duluth & I. R.		R. Co. v. Humphrey	1859		1041, 1081
Co.	738, 747, 1066, 1067	San Joaquin Co. v. Budd	2578	v. Merritt	2141
Salt Lake & U. R. Co. v.		San Juan Fruit Co. v.		Sanitary District v.	
Schramm	714	Carillo	1290	Baumbach	463
Salt Lake City v. Smith	18,	San Juan Light & T. Co.		v. Boening	463
	1413	v. Requena	2059	v. Cullerton	2354
v. Wright	2183	San Pedro L. Co. v. Reynolds	1074, 1230	v. P. F. W. & C. R.	
				Co.	1640



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Sankey v. Cook	2004, 2020	Saunders v. Ferrill	1316	Saye v. State	59, 73
Sansom v. Covington		v. Fuller	2349	Sayer v. Glossop	693, 1212,
Co. Bank	2867	v. Gallagher	392		1214, 1219, 1248,
Sanson v. Rumsey	291	v. Harris	1225, 1651, 1652		2186, 2529
Santiago v. Santiago	1082	v. McCarthy	1063	v. Kitchen	2125
Santikos v. State	1640	v. People	987	v. Wagstaff	788, 803
Santissima Trinidad,		v. R. Co.,		Sayles v. Bradley & M.	
The	1001, 1009,	6 S. D.	2509	Co.	1213
	1013, 1346	99 Tenn.	1021, 1041,	v. Briggs	1267, 1348, 2450
Saph v. Atkinson	709, 1993		1389	v. Fitzgerald	1117
Sapir v. Y. S.	326	v. State	111, 1157	Saylor v. Com.,	
Sapp v. State,		v. Tusculum R. & P.		Ky., 30 S. W.	363, 987,
80 Tex. Cr.	987	Co.	1195		1435, 1441,
87 Tex. Cr.	105, 2100	Saunderson v. Judge	95		1450, 2277
Tex. Cr., 77 S. W.	15	v. Piper	2473, 2477	Ky., 33 S. W.	1043
Sappenfield v. R. Co.	283	Sauntry v. U. S.	285, 1890	Ky., 57 S. W.	276
Sappingfield v. King	2408	Saures v. Stevens Mfg.		Sayre v. Durwood	18, 770
Sappington v. Fairfax	258,	Co.	2509	v. Mohney	1067
	691	Saurin v. Starr	1368	v. Pollard	1350
Sapulpa R. Co. v. Cedar		Saussy v. R. Co.	65, 1109	v. Sayre	209
Rapids Oil Co.	1967	Sauter v. R. Co.	1698	v. Woodward	1409
Sarasohn v. Kamaiky	2410	Sauvé v. Dawson	701, 1991,	Sayres v. Allen	1890
Sarbach v. Jones	493		1993, 2008, 2016	v. Com.	397
Sardis & D. R. Co. v.		Savage v. Blanchard	1391	Sbarbero v. Miller	1671
McCoy	1013	v. Bowen	570, 1036	Seagel v. R. Co.	1698
Sargeant v. Sargeant	1076	v. Bulger	582, 1869	Seaggs v. R. Co.	1951
Sargent v. —	2349, 2354	v. Canadian Pac. R.		v. State	1749
v. Adams	2472	Co.	2319	Scaife v. Land Co.	1566, 2593
v. Burton	1938	v. Donovan	2510a	Scales v. Desha	657
v. Hampden	2304	v. D'Wolf	1300	v. Kelley	2300, 2317
v. Johns	2303	v. State	1890	v. Key	2530
v. Lord	1073, 2120	Savannah F. & W. R.		v. Shackleford	1062
v. Sargent	1079, 2066	Co. v. Evans	2536	v. State	2070
Sarle v. Arnold	561	v. Gray	285	Scalf v. Collin Co.	1921, 1938
Sarraille v. Calmon	2518	v. Holland	1750	Scammon v. Scammon	1379
Sartell v. Scott	1567	v. McConnell	2509	Scandinavian Amer.	
Sartin v. State	152	v. Quo	1910	Bank v. Long	1031
Sartorious v. State	1842	v. Wainwright	1719, 2220	Scanlan v. Childs	1625
Sass v. Thomas	2573	v. Wideman	1985	v. Hodges	1195
Sasscer v. Farmers'		Savary v. State	20, 1157	v. R. Co.	2580
Bank	1523, 2581	Saveland v. Green	1236	v. Wright	1225
Sasse v. State	1168, 1802,	Savery v. Spaulding	1086	Scanlon v. Walshe	2527
	1803	Savie v. New York	2566	Scannell v. R. Co.	987
Sasseen v. Farmer	2520	Saville v. Farnham	2355	Scarborough v. Baskin	1938
Sassenberg v. Huseman	2066	Savory v. World of Golf	2465	v. Scarborough	2067
Sasser v. Herring	1564, 1566,	Sawrey v. Murrell	905, 911,	v. Smith	1263
	1592		1888, 1890	Scarf v. Patterson	1225
v. Sasser	1062	Sawyer v. Birchmore	2317	Scarlet's Case	2360
v. State	389, 1871	v. Boston	463	Scarlotta v. Ash	1951
Sater v. R. Co.	1943	v. Cox	2169	Scarpelli v. Washington	
Sather v. Rogers	1675	v. Eifert	73, 209	W. P. Co.	2491
Satterlee v. Bliss	2313	v. French	76, 1573	Scates v. Henderson	2477
Satterwhite v. Hicks	1082	v. Garcelon	1186, 1913	Scattergood v. Wood	1951
Saucier v. N. H. Spin-		v. Miller	1548	Schaab v. Schaab	2239
ning Mills	451, 461	v. R. Co.	2354	Schaefer v. Gildea	1896
Sauls, Ex parte	2268	v. Sawyer	1028, 2067	v. Kienzel	2165
Saults v. Eaket	2434	v. Shoe Co.	282, 1951	v. R. Co.	1213, 1391, 1530
Saunders v. Atchison T.		v. State	231, 232	v. State	2059, 2071
& S. F. R. Co.	65, 80,	v. Steele	2535	v. U. S.	2570
	1984	v. Stephenson	2354	Schafer v. Schafer	1666
v. Bates	2516	v. U. S.	2276	Schafer, Jr. & Co. v. Ely	1951
v. Baxter	406, 1807	Sax v. Davis	1414	Schaffer v. Krestov-	
v. Blythe	2410	Saxton v. Krumm	2503	nikow	1605, 1644, 2506
v. Duval	2125	Say & Seal's Case	2309	v. Richardson's Estate	2506



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Schaidler v. R. Co.	682	Schlotter v. State	1807	Scholl v. Bell	2251
Schall v. Northland M. C. Co.	1212, 2378	Schlotterbeck v. Schwinn	2536	v. Killorin	2434
Schangenbach v. Stoller	1777	Schlottman v. Hoffman	2472	Scholten v. Barber	2133
Scharff v. Keener	1481, 1573	Schmertz v. Hammond	961	Schoneman v. Fegley	93
Schaser v. State	21, 347, 1896	Schmick v. Noel	1416, 1963	Schonhardt v. Pennsylv- ania R. Co.	826
Schattgen v. Holnback	2554	Schmidbauer v. Omaha & C. B. St. R. Co.	571	Schoolcraft v. People	106, 140
Schatz, In re	2066	Schmidt, Ex parte	2363	Schoonmaker v. Wil- braham	458
Schaub v. Griffin	2531, 2532	v. Barclay	2498	Schoonover v. Myers	1667
Schauler v. Porter	2354	v. Bavermeister	2525	v. Rowe	406
Schaumloeffel v. State	1852, 1854	v. Beiseker	714	Schorer, Ex parte	309, 346
Schearer v. Harber	751, 1810	v. Chicago City R. Co.	1719, 1890	Schott's Goods	2421
Scheerer v. Agee	2501, 2512	v. Clark	2066	Schouweiler v. McCaull	20, 1302, 1531
Scheff v. Lewis	1856b	v. Cooper	1856a, 2195	Schrader v. State	396
Scheidegger v. Terrell	1491	v. Dubuque Co.	461	Schradsky v. Stimson	463
Schell v. Plumb	1041, 1698	v. Dunham	907, 908	Schreffler v. Chase	2334, 2337
v. Stephens	1431	v. Ins. Co., 1 Gray	1800, 2570	Schreiner v. Hutter	75, 395
v. Weaver	2538	41 Ill.	1947	Schreyer v. Mills Co.	291
Schenck v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. Packard	377	Schrimer v. Heilman	406
v. Schenck	406	v. Powell	2477, 2575	v. R. Co.	2433
v. Stevenson	2356	v. Schmidt's Estate	2444	Schriner v. Dickinson	2438
v. U. S.	2184	v. Supreme Council	1646	Schroeder v. Blum	105
Schenck & McDonald v. Worthen L. Mills	7a	v. Wambacker	748	v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.	1951
Schenley v. Com.	1003	Schmied v. Frank	2336	v. R. Co.	2220
Schermer v. McMahon	283, 2382	Schmisseur v. Beatrice	1065, 2506	v. Smith	2520
Schermerhorn v. General Electric Co.	4c	Schmitt v. Betha	2432	Schubert Lodge v. Schu- bert Verein	1278, 2159
Schettler v. Fort How- ard	2358	v. R. Co.	1010	Schubkagel v. Dierstein	2300
v. Jones	1551, 1560	v. Stoss	2466	Schuchardt v. Allens	94
Schick v. U. S.	1398	Schmitz v. R. Co.	1415	Schuenke v. Pine River	437
Schieffelin v. Schief- felin	905, 1738	Schmoe v. Cotton	1943	Schuler v. Board	1943
Schierbaum v. Schemme	1081, 1738	Schmuck v. Hill	561	v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co.	2452
Schillenger v. McCann	586	Schnable v. Doughty	1890	Schuling v. Ervin	2438
Schilling v. Curran	16, 1876	Schnase v. Goetz	1005	Schulmeyer v. State	2494
Schillinger v. Bawek	2452	Schnee v. Schnee	1736	Schultes v. Hodgson	2250, 2268
v. Verona	1750	Schneider v. Bray	2214	Schultz v. Bower	1168
Schillinger Bros. Co. v. Smith	1951	v. Cochrane	1675	v. Catlin	2349
Schintz v. People	216	v. Manning	681, 1958	v. Culbertson	619, 1067, 2337, 2341
Schissler v. State	682, 688, 1873	v. Sulzer	608, 2442	v. Lindell	1956
Schlaff v. R. Co.	458	v. Tapfer	1730	v. People	326, 968
Schlater v. Winpenny	1021, 1040	Schneider Br. Co. v. A. I. M. Co.	677	v. R. Co.	950, 960, 1022
Schlauder v. Chicago & S. T. Co.	1976	Schnek v. Hagar	64	v. Schultz,	113 Mich. 1726 19 N. D. 2475
Schlei v. Struck	1665	Schnell v. Tooner	286	v. State	59, 68
Schlenker v. State	1890, 1896, 1938	Schnier v. People	1393	v. Strauss	2374
Schlesinger v. Ellinger	1859d	Schnitz Bros. v. Bolles & Rogers Co.	719, 1704	v. Terr.	1013, 2512
Schley v. Lyon	1248, 1273, 1275	Schoberg v. U. S.	369, 669, 754, 2099	Schultz' Estate	1710
v. State	561, 570	Schoeffler v. State	609, 852	Schulz v. Modisett	682
Schlicher v. Keeler	2408	Schoening v. Miner	2578	Schulze v. U. S.	968, 2551
v. White	1074, 1555	Schoep v. Ins. Co.	928, 1078	Schumaker v. Murray Hospital	1700
Schlicht v. State	2582	Schoepf, Ex parte	1856c, 1856d, 2195, 2319	Schurmann v. U. S.	369
Schloss v. Inman	1664	Schoepflin v. Coffey	2494	Schurz v. Schurz	2498
		Schoeppel v. Daly	613	Schuster v. North Amer- ican Hotel Co.	2442
		Schoetta v. Drake	258, 1067	v. State	2056
		Schofield, Ex parte	2260, 2271	Schutz v. State	56, 968, 1079
		v. Anderson	1890		
		v. Schiffer	321		
		v. Thomas	1302		
		Scholbe v. Schuchardt	2419		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Schutz v. Union R. Co.	18, 1976	Scott v. Herrell	1486, 1681	Scribner v. State	2252, 2270, 2282
Schuyler v. Stephens	2503	v. Homesteaders	457	Scripps v. Foster	2388
Schuykill R. Co. v. Pub. Service Com.	4c	v. Hooper	1817	v. Reilly	406, 1808
Schwalbe, The	1750	v. Hyde	2529	Scruggs v. State	2349
Schwanenfeldt v. Chicago B. & Q. R. Co.	993	v. Jones	1249	Scudder v. Union Nat'l Bank	2451
Schwartz v. Baird	1219	v. Lloyd	529	Scullin v. Harper	1243
v. Com.	2043	v. London & St. K. Docks Co.	2509	Scumacher v. Pima Co.	1230
v. Osthmer	1267	v. Loomis	1267	Scurr v. Burrell	2250
v. State	2060	v. Lord Oxford	406	Scurry v. Seattle	2105
v. Wilmer	1955	v. McCann	1390	Seaboard Air Line R. Co. v. Moore	2507
v. Winnipeg E. R. Co.	907, 2509	v. McKee	1938	v. Scarborough	2220
v. Yearly	782, 1898	v. McKinnish	73, 406	Seaborn v. Com.	852, 987
Schwarzbach v. Protective Union	1081, 1947	v. Maddox	2052, 2523	v. State	852
Schweinfurth v. R. Co.	460, 1163	v. Mortsinger	406	Seacoast Packing Co. v. Long	2410
Schwent v. Roetter	2065	v. New Orleans	458, 792	Seal, Re	2477
Schwerdtle v. Placer Co.	2575	v. O'Connor-Couch	1510	Seale v. Chambliss	944, 1738
Schwerin v. De Graff	377, 392	v. O'Neil	1640	Sealey v. Smith	2103
Schwoebel v. Fugina	1890	v. People,		Seals v. Edmondson	1976
Sciple v. Northcutt	2111	63 Ill.	1852	v. State	62
Sclar v. Resnick	73	141 Ill.	359	Sealy v. State	460, 1026, 1028, 1037
Scotfield v. Parlin & O. Co.	2153	v. Quimby	1347	Seaman v. Husband	2016, 2520
Scoggin v. Dalrymple	1564, 1565	v. R. Co.	665, 1230, 1639, 1700	Searcy v. Miller	935, 1817, 1820, 2213
Scotia, The	2573	v. Ratliffe	1605	Searle v. Lord Barrington	1466
Scotland Co. v. Hill	17	v. Rivers	1213	v. Price	2067
Scott, Re	2283	v. Sampson	70, 73, 74, 207, 209	v. R. Co.	463, 1943
v. Albemarle Horse Show Ass'n	2442	v. Scott,		v. Richardson	1856e
v. American Express Co.	18, 1066, 1072	191 Ill.	1777	Searles v. Insurance Co.	1958
v. Aultman Co.	2312	17 Ind.	1244, 2067	Sears v. Dillingham	1304, 1316
v. Baber	803	17 Md.	2578	v. Duling	289
v. Bailey	93, 1203, 1556	v. Smith	2391	v. Howe	2120
v. Bank	1777	v. State,		v. Hoyt	1778
v. Bassett,		48 Ala.	1136, 1138	v. U. S.	341, 1819
174 Ill.	1225	113 Ala.	950, 2183	v. Vaughan	2503
186 Ill.	1225, 1676b	141 Ala.	2073	Searway v. U. S.	56, 1037
194 Ill.	1225	49 Ark.	1270	Seaton v. Kendall	603
v. Blanchard	1681	63 Ark.	2059	Seattle v. Doran	1335
v. Brakel	1347, 1354	64 Ind.	1022	v. Hewetson	368
v. Chicago C. R. I. & P. R. Co.	1698	Miss., 39 So.	1021	v. Northern Pacific R. Co.	2450
v. Clare	1256	Tex. Cr., 47		Seattle & M. R. Co.	
v. Com.	2339	S. W.	1131	v. Gilchrist	463, 1943
v. Couch	1938	v. Thrall	2525	v. Roeder	714, 1168
v. Crerar	87, 2024	v. Times-Mirror Co.	406	Seaver v. Dingley	321
v. Crouch	1257	v. Townsend	1081, 1738	v. R. Co.	1976
v. D. Y. M. Society	2535	v. U. S.	1003	Seaverns v. Lischinski	1168
v. Delany	2135	v. Waithman	260, 1294	Seavy v. Dearborn	736, 745, 747, 907, 944, 1019, 1023
v. Donovan	1141, 1154	v. Wilson	1416	Seawell v. R. Co.	1755
v. Fletcher	64	Scott's Adm'r v. Scott	2506	v. Young	1778
v. Harris	2311, 2329	Scott's Ex'r v. Chesterman	2465	Sebesta v. Supreme Court	1352
v. Hartley	2440	Scotti v. District Court	2594	Sebree v. Dorr	1187
v. Hawk,		Scottish U. & N. I. Co.		v. Smith	1062, 1911
105 Ia.	1513, 1736	v. Stubbs	437	Sechrist v. Atkinson	754, 763
107 Ia.	1511	Scovel v. Detroit	2433		
v. Hay	1938	Scovill v. Baldwin	288		
		Scovill Mfg. Co. v. Cassidy	759, 1077		
		Scoville v. R. Co.	2098		
		Scranton v. Danenbaum	2572		
		v. Stewart	2312		
		Scribner v. Crane	1511		
		v. M'Laughlin	586, 1878		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Seckerson v. Sinclair	18	Selby v. Clarke	1312	Sessions v. Trevitt	2336
Seckinger v. Mfg. Co.	569	v. Com.	1750	Setchel v. Keigwin	1561
Second Nat'l Bank v.		v. Crew	2257	Seton v. Ins. Co.	1271
Herman	5	v. Harris	1681	Settle v. Allison	1311, 1312,
v. Hulst	1067	v. Smith	2408	1513, 1681	
v. Smith	5	Selden v. State	2307, 2339	Seurer v. Horst	463, 720
Secor v. Siver	18	Self v. State	837	Seven Bishops' Trial	773,
Secretary of State for		Selge v. Isaacson	1841	1364, 1991, 1992	
Foreign Affairs v.		Seliger v. Bastian	1951	Seventh D. A. P. A. v.	
Charlesworth	2573	Sellar v. Clelland	1198, 1877	Fisher	1552
Secrist v. Green	1651	Sellards v. Kirby	2523	Sever v. Lyon	2575
Securities Co. v. Rich-		Sellers v. Sellers	1041, 1511	v. Minneapolis & St.	
ardson	1061	v. Southern P. R. Co.	458	L. R. Co.	1976
Security Co. v. Graybeal	1549	Selleck v. Janesville,		Severance v. Carr	581, 770,
Security M. L. Ins. Co.		100 Wis.	678, 789,	777	
v. Aetna Indemnity Co.	7a	104 Wis.	792	v. Hilton	66, 73, 76, 1898
v. Klentsch	93	Selleck's Will	1738	v. Severance	2502
Security Nat'l Bank v.		Sellen v. Norman	93, 2517	Severin v. Zack	1938
Pulver	2444	Seller v. Jenkins	1014, 1019,	Severn v. Olive	2203
Security Trust Co. v.		1020, 1021,		Severtson v. Peoples	1653
Robb	392, 1212, 1256	1038, 1040		Sewall v. Evans	2529
Sedgwick v. Tucker	581, 613,	Sellers v. Farmer	1213	v. Robbins	995
2336		v. Page	1186, 1681, 2088	Sewanee C. C. & L. Co.	
v. Waterman	1199	v. Rike	2520	v. Williams	2195
v. Watkins	2239	v. State,		Seward v. Wilmington	1164
See v. Wabash R. Co.	15, 283	91 Ark.	794, 1021	Sewell v. Cohoes	283
Seebach v. U. S.	369, 2567	Miss., 90 So.	2199	v. Detroit U. Ry.	2509
Seebold v. State	2513	Sellman v. Bowen	2083	v. Gardner	905
Seefeld v. R. Co.	1168	v. Cobb	1207	v. Johnson	2579
Seekel v. Norman	1879	v. Wheeler	1721, 1963	v. Moore	1674
Seeley v. K. C. Star Co.	1387	Sells v. Haggard	1414	v. R. Co.	714
Seely v. Blair	1985, 1986	Selma R. & D. R. Co.		v. Stubbs	1256
v. Cole	406, 1208, 2594	v. Keith	657	v. Vincent	276
v. Manhattan L. Ins.		Selover v. Bryant	905	Sexsmith v. Jones	1269
Co.	1807	v. Rexford's Ex'r	736, 754	Sexton v. Appleyard	1248
v. Wells	1239, 1680	Selph v. State	910, 952, 2079,	v. Brock	1389, 1416
SeEVERS v. Cleveland		2080, 2484		v. Hollis	1564, 1587
Coal Co.	1073	Selvidge v. State	857	v. Lamb	379, 571
Segond v. Roach	1054, 1185	Selwood v. Mildmay	2474	v. McGill	1225, 1313
Segura's Succession	803	Selwyn's Case	803	v. Perrigo	1525, 1675
Seibel-Suessdorf C. & I.		Selz v. Belden	581	v. Pickering	1676, 2168
M. Co. v. Manufac-		Semet-Solway Co. v.		v. Sexton	2336, 2338
turers' R. Co.	17, 1873	Wilcox	568	v. State	953
Seibert v. Hatcher	1081	Semidey v. Izguierdo	4	Seymour v. Alkire	2498
v. Householder	392	Semmons v. National		v. Beach	1674
v. McManus	451	Travelers' Ben. Ass'n	2090	v. Bruske	21, 347, 951
v. Ragsdale	1234	Semple v. Callery	2550	v. Fellows	681
Seibles v. Blackhead	1917,	Senior, Ex parte	2252, 2271,	v. Merrills	73, 209
1922, 1975		2276		v. Osborn	1161, 1856c
Seidenspinner v. Metrop.		v. State	1391	v. Wilson	581
L. Ins. Co.	1072	Senn v. Greundling	1303	Seymour's Case	1193, 1199,
Seifert v. State	1432, 1434,	Senterfeit v. Shealy	1226, 2256	1267	
1725, 2385		Sentney v. Overton	1312	Seymour's Trial	2270
Seifred v. Pa. R. Co.	1951	Serdan v. Falk Co.	249, 1164,	Shaak's Estate	2231
Seigley's Case	194a	2591		Shackelford v. R. Co.	1954
Seiler v. Bank	2437	Sergeant v. Biddle	1417	v. State	1329, 1405
Seip v. Deshler	406	v. George	1664	Shackleford v. Hooper	1664
Seisel v. Register	1195	Sergeson v. Sealey	233, 1671	Shacklette v. Goodall	2503
Seiter's Estate	2452	Serles v. Serles	2494	Shad v. Livingston	2437
Seitz v. Refrig. Co.	2434	Servera v. Otero	1606	Shaddock v. Clifton	1053,
v. Seitz	1405, 2336,	Sessions v. Little	1777	2232	
2339		v. Reynolds	1239, 1676,	Shade's Adm'r v. Cov-	
Seitz Brewing Co. v.		2167		ington C. E. R. & T.	
Ayres	2498			& B. Co.	1722



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section		Section		Section
Shadwell v. Shadwell	1859c	Sharp v. Blanton	1523	Shaw v. State,	
Shaeffer v. State	689, 1938	v. Carter	2256	79 Miss.	1840
Shafer v. Eau Claire	252, 1270	v. Emmet	1028	32 Tex. Cr.	782
	2384, 2569	v. Erie Co.	916	89 Tex. Cr.	2059
v. Hausman	1969	v. Hall	1976	v. Sun Prairie	252
v. Lacock	1078, 2509	v. Hicks	1032	v. Van Rensselaer	2220
Shaffer v. Clark	2027	v. Ins. Co.	1647	Shawnee G. & E. Co. v.	
v. Gaynor	1587	v. Losee	2527	Motesenbocker	283, 1662
v. McCrackin	1245, 1549,	v. McIntire	1712	Shawnee L. & P. Co. v.	
	1556	v. Petit	1658	Sears	2509
v. State	78, 1620	v. Scoging	979, 986, 1982	Shawneetown v. Mason	568
v. U. S.	233, 701, 792, 861,	v. Sharp	2271	Shawyer v. Chamberlain	2155
	1854, 2265	v. State,		Shea v. Biddle Improve-	
Shaffner v. Com.	192, 363	51 Ark.	784	ment Co.	1558
Shafter v. Evans	1951	111 Ga.	579	v. Cloquet L. Co.	258
Shaftesbury Case	526, 1712	v. Treece	784	v. Glendale E. F. Co.	457
Shahan v. Swan	1867	v. Wickliffe	1651	v. Hudson	716
Shailer v. Bullock	166, 987,	Sharpe v. Hall	1966	v. Leisy	2435
	1141	v. Lamb	2132	v. Muncie	1956
v. Bumstead	228, 232, 233,	v. Orme	1651, 1653	v. Murphy	1085
	1076, 1081, 1738,	v. State	2513	v. Parker	1858
	1790	Sharpless v. Knowles	1651	v. R. Co.	2508
Shajoo Ram v. Rex	1819	Sharpton v. Augusta &		v. Sewerage & Water	
Shakespeare v. Baugh-		A. R. Co.	933, 1842	Board	1230
man	392	Shattuck v. Myers	75, 210,	v. U. S.,	
Shaller v. Brand	2117, 2138,		987	236 Fed.	321
	2141, 2145	v. People	2168	251 Fed.	18, 987, 2272
Shamblin v. State	987, 1842	v. State	2364	Sheafer v. Woodside	2517
Shamburgh v. Comma-		v. Stoneham R. Co.	463,	Sheaffer v. Eakman	1778
gere	529		1943	Sheahan v. Barry	206, 213
Shamlan v. Equitable		Shauer v. Alorton	2286	v. Collins	73, 74, 209,
Acc. Co.	1671	Shaufelter v. Baltimore	25, 2		987
Shamp v. White	1124	Shaughnessey v. Fogg	2313	Shean v. Philips	2317
Shandrew v. Chicago St.		Shaughnessy v. Holt	688,	Shear v. Van Dyke	751
P. M. & O. R. Co.	18,		1721, 1976	Shearer v. Buckley	252,
	2509	Shaul v. Brown	1388, 1856c		1718
Shands v. State	905	v. Mana	21	Shearm v. Burnand	1205
Shane v. Charlestown	1943	Shaver v. Ehle	1300	Shearman v. Atkins	1456
Shaner v. Alorton	20	v. McCarthy	1938	Shears v. State	347, 987, 988
Shank v. Groff	2437	Shaw, In re	2199	Shedden v. Heard	1268, 1269
v. Wilson	2505	v. Boom Co.	571	v. Patrick	1483
Shanklin v. McCracken	2337	v. Broom	1084	Sheehan v. Allen	2303, 2306
Shanks v. Hayes	1013	v. Charlestown	720	v. Davis	1186, 2169
v. Lancaster	2141	v. Emery	923	v. Hammond	458
Shanley's Appeal	1938	v. Fisk	2354	v. Hennessey	1554
Shannon v. The Com-		v. Hutton	2435	v. Kearney	1738, 1938,
monwealth	585	v. Lindsey	787		2500, 2502
v. Swanson	507, 508	v. Markham	1206	v. Manchester	1351
Shano v. Bridge Co.	1168	v. Mason	1213	Sheeler v. Speer	18
Shantz v. Stoll	613	v. Moore	1817	Sheer v. Sheer	2421
Shapleigh v. Hull	530	v. N. Y. Elev. R. Co.	463,	Sheets v. Dufour	1676
Shapter v. Pillar	1958		1387, 1493	v. Ins. Co.	20
Shapter's Estate	1302, 2314,	v. Pershing	1195, 1311,	Sheffield v. Beckwith	168
	2391		2141, 2143	v. Sheffield	1960, 2067, 2069
Sharkey v. Bankston	1225	v. R. Co.	250	Sheffield Iron Co. v.	
v. Portland G. & C.		v. Roberts	15, 2592	Dennis	1481
Co.	2509	v. Samly Realty Co.	2081	Shehy v. Cunningham	2433
Sharland v. Ins. Co.	1073,	v. Schoonover	608, 1778	Sheibley v. Fales	1347
	1725	v. State,		Shelburne v. Inchiquin	2462,
Sharlps Separator Co.		60 Ga.	106, 363, 397		2470
v. Skinner	457	83 Ga.	792	Shelburne and Queen's	
Sharman v. Morton	1911	102 Ga.	106, 390, 821,	Election Case	343
Sharon v. Davidson	1318		967, 987, 1839, 1841	Shelbyville W. & L. Co.	
v. Sharon	987, 2311	56 Ind.	2582	v. McDade	1078

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Shelden v. Merrill	1651	Sherer v. Piper	1062	Shifflet v. Morelle	1651, 2105,
Sheldon v. Benham	1521,	Sheridan Coal Co. v.			2143
	1635, 2025	Hull Co.	779	Shifflet's Case	824, 830, 838,
v. Bigelow	1037, 1971	Sheridan Co. v. McKin-			840, 854, 855, 865,
v. Booth	571	ney	2165, 2498		2100
v. Coates	1219	Sherin, In re	2336	Shilling v. Ins. Co.	1766
v. Frink	1269	Sherlock v. Minneapolis		v. Varner	18
v. Perkins	2349, 2354	St. P. & S. S. M.		Shillinger v. Shillinger	2067
v. R. Co.	455	R. Co.	792	Shimer v. R. Co.	720
v. Warner	417	v. R. Co.	463	Shinglemeyer v. Wright	2374
v. Wright	795, 2491	Sherman, Re	2065	Shinkle v. Crock	693, 2048
Shell v. Mulligan	2503	v. Barrett	2200	v. McCullough	1041
v. State	2116	v. Blodgett	1959	Shinn v. State	1803
Shellabarger v. Nafus	1009	v. Goble	1654	Shinn Glove Co. v. San-	
Shellabarger Elev. Co.		v. Needham	1352	ders	2509
v. Illinois Cent. R.		v. R. Co.	720, 1943	Shinners v. Merrimack	
Co.	1354	v. Sherman	2380	Locks	283
Shellenberger v. State	867	v. Southern Pac. Co.	571,	Ship Money Case	1766, 1795
Shelling v. Farmer	2212		1719	Shipley v. Mercantile T.	
Shelly v. Philadelphia &		v. Stafford Mfg. Co.	2115	& D. Co.	2467
R. R. Co.	456	v. State,		v. Reasoner	1064, 1067
Shelp v. U. S.	936, 1854	2 Ga. App.	2183, 2264	v. Shipley	2105
Shelton v. Ellis	2416	Okl. Cr., 292		v. Todhunter	95, 2152
v. Hampton	907	Pac.	1732	Shipman v. Seymour	321
v. Reynolds	1249	v. Story	1350	Shipp v. Com.,	
v. State,		v. Transp. Co.	1312, 1320	101 Ky.	331
149 Ala.	21	v. Wilder	368	124 Ky.	263
34 Tex.	1976	Sherrard v. Cudney	1665	Shipply v. People	321
Shelton's Will	1736, 1738,	Sherrill v. Louisville &		Shires v. State	2071
	2016	N. R. Co.	454	Shirley v. Fearn	1304, 2110
Shenandoah L. & A. Co.		v. State	281, 460	v. Southern R. Co.	1530
v. Clarke	2465	v. Tel. Co.	1974	v. Todd	1084
Shenkenberger v. State	1447	Sherrin v. Coffman	1352	Shirwin v. People	62, 200,
Shepard v. Ashley	39	Sherrod v. Ewell	2531		398
v. Giddings	1213	v. Farmers' M. F. I.		Shisser v. Burlington	1404
v. Parker	987	Ass'n	95	Shitler v. Bremer	702, 728
v. Potter	1876	v. Hughes	1415, 1893	Shiver v. Johnson	1290, 1513
v. Pratt	1969	Sherwin v. Bugbee	1244	v. Tift	1978
v. R. Co.,		Sherwood v. Adderley	1257	Shiverick v. Gunning	
85 Mo.	2220	v. Houston	657, 1681	Co.	2580
117 N. Y.	463	v. Sherwood	2477	Shmargon v. Rosenstein	1530
v. State	821	v. Sioux Falls	1158	Shobe v. Bell	2349
Shephard, Re		v. State	1842	Shock v. M'Chesney	406
1 Ch.	2082, 2505	v. Titman	15, 398	Shockey v. Mills	581, 770
3 Fed.	2216	Shetla v. Stewart	2520	Shockley v. Morgan	1909
Shepherd v. Brenton	2354	Shields, In re	2475	v. Tucker	221
v. Camden	1168, 2354	v. Baucher	1484, 1501	Shoecraft v. State	1142
v. Carriel	1635	v. Buchanan	1665	Shoemaker v. Bryant	
v. Com.	363, 2336	v. Conway	1106	L. & S. M. Co.	969
v. Currie	2518	v. Cunningham	1021	v. Elmer	681
v. Denver & R. G. R.		v. Johnson	2496	Shoenberger v. Hack-	
Co.	747	v. Landreth	2435	man	1248
v. Goss	1304, 1312	v. Lees	2066	Shoninger Bros. v. Dor-	
v. Hamilton Co.	1200	v. Lewis	1198, 1201	mer Bros. Co.	2463
v. Schomaker	616	v. McGrath	1911	Shook v. Pate	790, 1587
v. Snodgrass	805	v. Millet	1890	Shorb v. Kinzie,	
v. Thompson	1566, 1587	v. Mongolian Explor.		80 Ind.	2008, 2021
v. Turner	1586	Co.	2418	100 Ind.	2016, 2018
Sheppard v. Austin	1770	v. State,		Shore v. Bedford	2312
v. State	326	104 Ala.	2183, 2264	v. Wilson	2467
v. Yocum	1029, 1108, 1109	16 Ga. App.	497	Shores Lumber Co. v.	
Shera, Re	2283	149 Ind.	992, 1076,	Stitt	2464
Sherborne v. Naper	2083		2497	Shores-Mueller Co. v.	
Sherburne v. Rodman	581	32 Tex. Cr.	62	Lonning	2416



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Shorey v. Hussey	917	Shuman v. Shuman	2063	Sills v. Brown	681, 1374, 1949
Short v. Currie	1677	v. Supreme Lodge	2341,	Silva v. Low	1009
v. Frink	18		2391	v. Pickard	1129
v. Hinkle	1352	Shumway v. Mason	2408	v. Rankin	1195
v. Kingsmill	1271	Shurtleff v. Parker	1003	Silver Lake Bank v.	
v. Lee	1464, 1466, 1471,	v. Willard	586	Harding	1681
	1472, 2168	Shuster v. State	928	Silverman v. Blake	1312
v. Mercier	2260, 2271	Shute v. Bills	2440	Silvers v. Howard	2437
v. State,		v. Mfg. Co.	451	Silverstein v. O'Brien	464,
4 Harr.	2268	Shutesbury v. Hadley	1219,		1041, 1456
63 Ind.	153, 1152		1644, 1677	Silverthorn v. Fowle	1955
v. Tinsley	2341	Shutte v. Thompson	18,	Silverthorne Lumber	
v. U. S.	2016		1582	Co. v. U. S.	2184, 2259a
v. Yelverton	392	Shwab v. Doyle	2408	Sim v. Russell	229, 232
Short Mountain Coal		Sias v. Consol. Lighting		Simmons v. Carrier	716
Co. v. Hardy	1960	Co.	283, 795	v. Havens	1896
Shorten v. Judd	166, 792,	Siberry v. State,		v. Holster	73, 74, 259, 2260
	1977	133 Ind.	2079	v. Leonard	1302
v. The King	1760, 2061	149 Ind.	2115	v. Norwood	2232
Shorter v. Sheppard	1188,	Sible v. State	1476	v. Parsons	529
	1225, 1267, 2105	Sibley v. Maxwell	2471	v. People	368
Shortz v. Quigley	4	v. Smith	2220	v. R. Co.	1943
v. Unangst	1198	v. Waffle	2301	v. Rudall	2525
Shotter v. Friend	2032	Sichel v. Lambert	1645	v. Simmons	2045, 2046,
Shotwell v. Harrison	1651,	Sickles v. Dallas C. Bank	1879		2056
	1681, 2088, 2573	v. Mather	1538, 1544, 1547,	v. Spratt	1665
Shouler v. Bonander	1195,		1554, 1558	v. State,	
	2105	Sidebottom v. Atkins	2271	129 Ala.	1388
Shoults v. Williams	2523	Sidekum v. R. Co.	438, 2220	158 Ala.	1820
Shove v. Martine	2312	Sideling v. Bucklin	923,	Ala. 61 So.	1072
v. Wiley	735, 736, 747, 749,		1124, 1125, 1141	32 Fla.	1263
	753, 1560	Sideways v. Dyson	1259, 1884	115 Ga.	1072
Showalter v. Chambers	1236	Sidgreaves v. Wyatt	1842	v. Steamboat Co.	1951
v. Spangle	2408	Siebenaler v. State	21, 1620	v. Threshour	2450
Showman v. Lee,		Sieber v. R. Co.	1951	v. Trumbo	2580
79 Mich.	463	Siebert v. People	111, 143,	v. U. S.	2551
86 Mich.	1247		274, 569, 946,	v. Wood	1678
Shreve v. Cicero	1384		1726, 2183, 2264	Simms v. Express Co.	2573
v. Crosby	2446	Siefert v. Siefert	1406	v. Forbes	1018, 2507
Shrewsbury's Case	2250,	Siegbert v. Stiles	463, 2581	Simon v. Brown	1664
	2286, 2371	Siegel, Cooper & Co. v.		v. Hamilton L. Co.	250
Shrewsbury Peerage		Treka	461, 1951	v. Home Ins. Co.	782
Case	1489, 1644,	Siegfried v. Levan	728, 2135	v. State,	
	1662, 1670	Siegler v. Mellinger	1951	108 Ala.	1976
Shriedley v. State	326	Sielbeck v. Grothman	2523	Ark., 233 S. W.	[2060
Shrimpton v. Brice	728	Siemens v. Electric R.		31 Tex. Cr.	2063
v. Netzorg	1198	Co.	2354	Simond v. State	987
Shrimpton Co. v. Brice	1978	Sievers v. P. B. & L. Co.	283,	Simonds v. Cash	1235
Shriver v. R. Co.	1951		437, 1951	v. Clapp	1777
Shrouder v. State	759	Sievers-Carson H. Co.		Simons v. Cook	1681
Shrowders v. Harper	1189	v. Curd	1669	v. Inyo Cerro Gordo	
Shroyer v. Miller	73, 76	Sigafus v. Porter	18, 2498	M. & P. Co.	1626
Shuck v. Vanderventer	1774	Sigfried v. Levan	728, 2135	v. Mason City & F. D.	
Shufeldt v. Shufeldt	398	Sights v. State	987	R. Co.	463
Shuffield v. State	354	Sigiong v. Sigiong	1606	v. People	390, 1442
Shular v. State	1168, 1803	Siglin v. R. Co.	283	v. Philadelphia & R.	
Shuldhams Divorce	2067	Sigsworth v. Coulter	1028	R. Co.	664
Shull v. Boyd	2200	v. McIntyre	1955, 2463	v. Simons	2046, 2067, 2086
Shulsky v. Shulsky	2452	Sigua Iron Co. v. Brown	1074	v. Vulcan Co.	321
Shulte v. Hennessey	571	v. Greene	1074	Simonson v. R. Co.	728
Shults v. State	689, 1938,	Sikes v. Marshall	1518	Simpkins v. Rogers	1085
	1958	v. Paine	571, 1951	Simpson, Ex parte	2065
Shum's Adm'x v. Rut-		Sill v. Reese	704, 1239	v. Central Vermont	
land R. Co.	2510, 2570	Silliman v. Whitmer	2477	R. Co.	2540

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Simpson v. Com.	580, 2059	Singleton v. State,		Skipper v. Holloway	2520
v. Dall	1193	39 Fla.	1037	v. State,	
v. Dinsmore	2529	87 Tex. Cr.	857	144 Ala.	247
v. First Nat'l Bank	2118	Sinking Fund Com'rs		59 Ga.	907, 1011, 1013
v. Foundation Co.	969	v. Bank	2109	Skuy v. U. S.	936
v. Norton	1194	Sinkler v. Siljan	1029	Slack v. Buchanan	1062
v. Robinson	406, 1072	Sinks v. Reese	1240	v. Harris	1951
v. Smith,		Sinnott v. Colombet	1700,	v. Moss	529
1 Stark. Evid.	1894		2582	Sladden v. Sergeant	1263
27 Kan.	2268	v. Mullin	1951, 1963	Slade v. Tucker	2300
v. State,		Sinton v. Butler	458	Slane Peerage Case	1279
111 Ala.	177, 391	Sioux City & P. R. Co.		Slaney v. Wade	1483, 1573
6 Baxt.	2054	v. Finlayson	571, 1693,	Slater v. D. S. & H. Co.	1971
78 Ga.	949		2220	v. Hodgson	2139
31 Ind.	506	Sioux Falls v. Walser	2183	v. Mexican Nat'l R.	
v. Stewart	2529	Sirk v. Emery	463	Co.	1953
v. Thornton	1280	Sirrine v. Briggs	719, 1247	v. Sorge	2389, 2390
v. Union Stockyards		Sisler v. Shaffer	15	v. U. S.	987, 2513
Co.	1350	Sison v. Ambalada	2088, 2505	Slatterie v. Pooley	1180, 1255,
v. Waldby	1249	Sisson v. R. Co.	571, 719,		1256, 1257, 1260
v. Weise	2105		1704	Slattery v. New York	
v. Wells	1646	Sisters of Charity v.		N. H. & H. R. Co.	664
v. Westenberger	64	Emery	2477	v. Slattery	586
Simpson's Trial	2079	Sitler v. Gehr	1490, 1491,	Slaughter v. Birdwell	2205
Simrell's Estate	2048		1493, 1644, 1646,	v. Heath	1671
Sims, Re	2195		2529	v. State,	
v. Burden	2527, 2528	Sitterlee v. State	1781	76 Tex. Cr.	2059
v. De Graffenrcid	1306,	Sivell v. Hogan	770	86 Tex. Cr.	2062
	1513, 2141	Sivewright v. Sivewright	1841	Slaughter Co. v. King	
v. Gray	1225	Sixby v. Chicago C. R.		Lumber Co.	805
v. Hundley	6	Co.	2578	Slauter v. Whitelock	1819
v. Jones	1890	Sixth Av. R. Co. v. El.		Slavens v. R. Co.	266
v. Kitchen	1208	R. Co.	1908, 1943	Slayback v. Witt	2503
v. Meacham	1573	Sizemore v. Com.	2354	Sledge v. Scott	1966
v. Roy	2508	Sizer v. Burt	1908, 2105	v. Singley	1300
v. Sims,		Skaggs v. State,		Sleep v. Heymann	2165
2 Mill	1195	108 Ind.	571, 811, 1399	Sleeper v. Van Middles-	
75 N. Y.	522, 987,	31 Tex. Cr.	246, 248	worth	928
	1116	Skajewski v. Zantarski	1352	Slinghoff v. Bruner	1304, 2102,
v. State,		Skeen v. State	905		2500
139 Ala.	246, 1404,	Skeggs v. Horton	1267, 2052,	Sloan v. Ault	1549
	1439, 1442, 1450,		2106	v. Coburn	1086
	1974, 1976	Skellie v. James	1911, 2303	v. Courtenay	1896
54 Fla.	18	Skellinger v. Howell	900, 907	v. Pelzer	760
59 Fla.	851	Skelton v. R. Co.	678	v. Petrie	406
Sinclair v. Baggaley	2520	Skidder v. U. S.	369, 1663	v. R. Co.	1018, 1021, 1028,
v. Roush	1943, 2356	Skidler v. U. S.	367, 1663		1029, 2384
v. Ruddell	258	Skidmore v. Johnson	1070	v. Somers	2098
v. State	105, 1614	v. State	398	v. Warrenburg	283
v. Stevenson	762, 1200,	Skilding v. Warren	529	v. Wolfsfeld	1681
	1861, 2447	Skinker v. Flohr	1225	Sloan S. M. & L. Co. v.	
v. Wood	1188, 1624	Skinner v. Brigham	1293,	Gutthsall	1896
Sing Tuck v. U. S.	1355		2132	Sloat-Darragh Co. v.	
Singer v. Bennett	1240	v. Conant	1540	General Coal Co.	1871
v. Metz Co.	1750	v. Denning	1350	Slocovich v. Ins. Co.	561, 665,
Singer & T. S. Co. v.		v. Henderson	1198		677, 720, 1706
Hutchinson	782	v. Judson	2215, 2256,	Slocum v. Bracy	1195
Singer Mfg. Co. v.			2260, 2279	v. Knosby	2276
Christian	1078	v. Lewis	1511	v. New York L. Ins.	
v. Cramer	1013	v. R. Co.	2319	Co.	2495
v. McFarland	2018	v. Shew	1729	v. Newby	1911
Singleton v. Barrett	2432	v. Skinner	2245, 2515	Sloman v. Herne	1077, 2294
v. Bremer	2149	Skinner's Will	2595	v. Kelly	2256
v. Roebuck	1564	Skipp v. Hooke	2578	Slone v. Thomas	1188



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Sloss-Sheffield S. & I.		Smith v. Blagge	1681	Smith v. First Nat'l	
Co. v. Mobley	1951	v. Blakey	1362, 1457, 1458,	Bank	1244
Slossen v. R. Co.	456		1461, 1465, 1524	v. Forrest	1566, 1567,
Slotofski v. Boston Elev.		v. Bloom	2440		1568, 1570
R. Co.	2550	v. Bonsall	1658	v. Fuge	1647, 2529
Sluby v. Champlin	156, 1513	v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	782	v. Fuller	2083, 2088, 2505,
Sluder v. Wolf Mountain		v. Bradford	610, 2237		2506
L. Co.	1304	v. Braley	1223	v. Gammino	461, 792
Sly v. Sly	1461	v. Brannan	1314	v. Garber	2463
Small v. Belyea	1750	v. Britton	1873	v. Garden	1651
v. Champney	233, 1671	v. Brockett	1681, 2464	v. Gardner	2518
v. Prentice	95	v. Brown,		v. Garris	1195
v. R. Co.	2098	151 Mass.	1194, 1234,	v. Gerow	18
v. Reeves	1371		1275	v. Gibbon	1513
v. Rose	1466	2 Mich.	521	v. Gifford	1058
v. Slocumb	2185	v. Brownlow	1592	v. Gillett	20
v. Virginia	2495	v. Burnham	1367, 1856	v. Glenn	1567
v. Williams	1072	v. Bush	2509	v. Goethe	1084
Smallcombe v. Bruges	1081	v. Bye	1867	v. Griffith	1391, 1624
Smalley v. Appleton	568	v. Caldwell	2297	v. Hall	77, 401
v. Hale	344	v. Capital Bank	1389	v. Hanson	1461
v. Morris	2354, 2356	v. Carolin	1300	v. Hawley,	
Smalls v. State,		v. Castles	987	8 S. D.	1388
99 Ga.	238	v. Chapman	1566, 1569	14 S. D.	758
102 Ga.	195	v. Cheetham	2352, 2353	v. Heini S. B. Co.	1644,
Smart v. Kansas City	1976,	v. Clark	93		2085
	2382, 2389, 2390	v. Cleveland	1354	v. Henderson	2529
v. Prujean	2452	v. Coffin	1828	v. Hendrix	357, 1135
v. Williams	1224, 1275,	v. Coker	1225	v. Henry	335, 1021
	1306, 1518, 1650	v. Com.,		v. Hewitt-Lea L. Co.	461
Smartle v. Williams; see		21 Gratt.	2072, 2081	v. Hickenbottom	568, 681,
Smart.		140 Ky.	2277		1938
Smartt v. State	1841, 2060	148 Ky.	2060	v. Hine	928, 1618, 1669
Smethurst v. Barton Sq.		154 Ky.	1873	v. Hockenberry	211
Church	20	Ky., 60 S. W.	398	v. Holbrook	1202
Smets v. Plunket	64	Ky., 67 S. W.	1439	v. Holden	1782
Smick v. Beswick	2312	90 Va.	580	v. Holebrook	1212
Smiley v. Cockrell	1186	v. Cook	2341	v. Hollings	1800
v. Dewey	1244, 1558	v. Cox	1253	v. Holyoke St. R. Co.	1041
v. Gambill	1736	v. Cramer	1783	v. Hubbell	406
v. Padgett	1779	v. Crane	852, 2269, 2271,	v. Hughes	2413
Smillie v. De Mendoza	1623		2283	v. Hunt	2117
Smith, Ex parte	1160	v. Culbertson	2349, 2354	v. Hutchings	770
Re.		v. Cushman	1225, 1651	v. Inland Empire R.	
7 Ch. D.	2287	v. Dall	2105	Co.	664
2 D. & Ch.	2260	v. Davis & Sons	2220	v. Ins. Co.	1878
112 Fed.	2283	v. Dawley	905, 1750	v. International & G.	
v. Andrews	1640	v. De Wruitz	1084	N. R. Co.	1461
v. Ashell	1033, 2491	v. Doe	2462, 2465, 2470	v. International M.	
v. Assur. Co.	911	v. Doherty	615	Co.	6, 1856a
v. Au Gres	6	v. Dotterweich	2409	v. Jackson	763
v. Axtell	1195, 1268, 1280	v. Dow	1951	v. Jeffries	2465, 2466
v. Bachus	783, 1565, 1956	v. Dreer	15	v. Johns	738, 747
v. Bank,		v. Dudley	1267	v. Johnson	2451
171 Mass.	1254	v. Duncan	1072	v. Jones,	
45 Nebr.	716	v. Eames	2349	15 John. Ch.	2117
32 Vt.	2408, 2420	v. Earl Ferrers	270, 986,	6 Rand.	1312, 2049
v. Barger	2201		1807	v. Keller	1738
v. Battens	2520	v. East India Co.	2378	v. Keyser	1306, 1312,
v. Beadnall	850	v. Easton	1236, 2154		1388, 1513
v. Beattie	736	v. Ehanert	907	v. Kimball	2463, 2477
v. Benef. Soc.	143, 1081	v. Fell	2319	v. King	2018, 2220
v. Betty	1085	v. Feltz	1384	v. Lane	736
v. Biggs	1893	v. Fenner	1738, 2005, 2016	v. Large	1250

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Smith v. Law	1555	Smith v. Price	905	Smith v. Smith,	
v. Lawrence	1665	v. Proctor	2235, 2236, 2237	Rice	1195, 1664
v. Lehigh Valley R.		v. Prosser	2419	1 Tex.	1644
Co.	792, 1005	v. Putnam	1778	v. Sovereign Camp	2556
v. Lindsey	2105	v. R. Co.,		v. Sparrow	586
v. Long	615, 2297	137 Mass.	1040	v. Stanley	1568
v. Lowe	2098	44 N. H.	619	v. State,	
v. Lyon	1076	63 N. H.	455	9 Ala.	142, 273, 1476
v. McClain	2442	70 N. H.	93	13 Ala.	133, 2245
v. McDonald	2219	68 N. C.	719	55 Ala.	203, 257, 1921,
v. McWaters	1226	10 R. I.	252, 455		1978
v. Madison	2143	6 Sm. & M.	1195	59 Ala.	2059
v. Martin,		v. Rankin	1311, 2141	79 Ala.	2276
17 Conn.	1080, 1082,	v. Read	2256	88 Ala.	246, 363, 1985
	1459	v. Redden	1680	103 Ala.	1781
2 Overt.	1225	v. Reed	1202	118 Ala.	205
v. Mayer	1873	v. Rentz	1537, 1539	129 Ala.	987
v. Mayfield	1058	v. Reynolds	1074	133 Ala.	2073, 2513
v. Merrill	2336	v. Rice	15, 401, 1730	136 Ala.	1442
v. Merwin	2195	v. Rich	1674	137 Ala.	821, 1974,
v. Meyers	620	v. Richardson	19		2276
v. Millidge	1318, 1651	v. Robertson	1778	142 Ala.	21, 59, 235
v. Milwaukee E. R. &		v. Royaltan	1003	145 Ala.	1966
L. Co.	2115	v. Ruckecker	73, 74	161 Ala.	987
v. Mine & S. S. Co.	716	v. Russell	270	197 Ala.	198, 1618
v. Minneapolis St. R.		v. Ryan	229, 1736	Ala. 62 So.	396
Co.	681	v. Sainsbury	701	Ariz., 196 Pac.	988,
v. Missouri K. & T.		v. St Louis & S. F. R.			2513
R. Co.	1890	Co.	688	59 Ark.	2354
v. Montgomery	1725	v. Sanford	750, 1555, 1558	74 Ark.	987, 2277
v. Moore,		v. Sanitary District	463	Ark., 233 S. W.	62
142 N. C.	1458, 1465	v. Scudder	2232	25 Fla.	247
149 N. C.	1406, 2503	v. Scully	749	48 Fla.	949
v. Morgan,		v. Seattle	458, 461, 2591	23 Ga.	1012, 1700
2 Moo. & R.	761	v. Shakopee	2572	28 Ga.	1668
38 Me.	1124	v. Sheffield	2239	63 Ga.	276
v. Morrill	1062	v. Sherwood	252, 461	72 Ga.	1375
v. Morrow	1778	v. Shinn	1502	77 Ga.	2008, 2131
v. Mosbarger	2415	v. Shumway	73	81 Ga.	1819
v. Mosier	1239	v. Singles	406	106 Ga.	2511, 2511a
v. Mounts	1300	v. Sleaf	1192	109 Ga.	1013
v. Nat'l Ben. Soc'y	340	v. Smith,		110 Ga.	1451
v. Neilson	2110	3 Bing. N. C.	1081	118 Ga.	1451
v. New Orleans C. &		119 Cal.	2046	125 Ga.	835
B. Co.	2016, 2145	173 Cal.	1777, 2408	148 Ga.	1079
v. Nowells	1587	106 Ga.	1189	3 Ga. App.	2183, 2264
v. Ogden & N. W. R.		151 Ga.	1304	4 Ga. App.	2512
Co.	1951	2 Greenl.	803	4 G. Greene	1852
v. Olsen	2594	32 Ida.	2498, 2506	9 Humph.	1440, 1442
v. Palmer	1256	77 Ind.	2245, 2336	10 Ind.	836
v. Paul	2355	10 Ir. R. Eq.	1196	143 Ind.	949
v. Paul Boyton Co.	1066,	157 Mass.	1938, 1958	165 Ind.	413, 944,
	1677	167 Mass.	770		1807
v. People,		222 Mass.	2503	4 Lea	1842
64 Colo.	2085	125 Mich.	916	64 Mo.	987
74 Ill.	1852	43 N. H.	1270	64 Md.	1270
2 Mich.	1028, 1029,	50 N. H.	2351	58 Miss.	923
	1037	163 N. Y.	1538, 1552,	75 Miss.	246
v. Phila. Traction Co.	283,		1555	102 Miss.	1117
	1890	116 N. C.	2260	17 Nebr.	2071
v. Philpott	439	117 N. C.	1958	42 Nebr.	1669
v. Potter	1271, 1684	22 Ont.	2477	2 Oh. St.	460
v. Powers	1082, 1564	65 Or.	1719	14 Okla. Cr.	987
v. Prewit	1587	2 Pen.	2374	41 Tex.	1761, 1825



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Smith v. State,		Smith & Co. v. Hurlburt		Snider v. Burks	1309, 1310,
42 Tex.	273, 1167,	Co.	2442		1320, 1513, 2016
	1168	Smith & Ogden's Trial	38	v. Robinett	2472
48 Tex. Cr. 65	1398,	Smith & Sargent v.		v. State	826, 1938, 2501
	1404, 1405,	American Car Sprink-		Snoddy v. State	2059
	1413	ler Co.	1225	Snodgrass v. Branch	
48 Tex. Cr. 233	1079	Smith Charities v. Con-		Bank	1248
60 Tex. Cr. 293	1669	nolly	1320	v. Chicago	714
Tex. Cr., 50		Smith-Lohr Coal Co. v.		Snow, Ex parte	2307
S. W.	987, 1106	Ind. Com.	2081a	v. Batchelder	1062
Tex. Cr., 73		Smitha v. Flournoy's		v. Benton	232, 233
S. W.	398	Adm'r	2575	v. Carr	1213
Tex. Cr., 74		Smithee v. Campbell	1350	v. Gould	2310, 2314
S. W.	398	v. Garth	1350	v. Grace	928, 1985
Tex. Cr., 232		Smithers v. Lawrence	1273,	v. Moore	1040
S. W.	2243		1678, 1680, 2158	v. N. Y. N. H. & H. R.	
Tex. Cr., 237		Smithies v. Harrison	209	Co.	1062
S. W.	832, 857,	Smiths v. Shoemaker	1257,	v. Paine	581
	2060		2520	v. Phillips	1065
10 Wyo.	2056	Smithson v. State	2272	v. R. Co.	1921, 1942, 1943
v. Stevens	1705	Smithwick v. Anderson	529	v. State,	
v. Strong	791	v. Evans	923, 1985	58 Ala.	1476
v. Sullivan	1530	Smitley v. Pinch	207, 1614	140 Ark.	1852
v. Taggart	1769	Smitson v. S. P. Co.	662	Snow Hardware Co. v.	
v. Tebbitt	1495	Smock v. Pierson	923, 928,	Loveman	751, 1541
v. Terr.,			1615	Snowball v. Goodricke	1078
11 Okl.	792, 1750	Smoot v. Fitzhugh	1651, 1684	Snowball's Estate	1072, 1081,
14 Okl.	1781	v. Kansas City	2382, 2384		1738
v. Thomas	1712	v. Russell	1678	Snowden v. Coal Co.	18, 458
v. Thompson	2437	v. State	57	v. State	1873
v. Townsend	1239	Smucker v. Penns. R.		v. U. S.	1761
v. U. S.,		Co.	2145	Snowdon v. Smith	73
Ariz., 45 Pac.	1680	Smuggler U. M. Co. v.		Snowman v. Mason	2058,
267 Fed.	21, 38	Broderick	1951		2059
161 U. S.	246, 987,	Smyth v. Caswell	2008, 2016	Snyder v. Albion	438
	1616	v. Chamberlayne	2063	v. Bonbright	1355
v. Utesch	907	v. New Orleans C. &		v. Bowman	2159
v. Valentine	1339	B. Co.	2576, 2580	v. Com.	363, 1042, 1616
v. Veysey	1186	v. Reed	2498	v. Electr. Co.	2509
v. Vose & S. P. Co.	2465	v. Sandeman	1208	v. Holt Mfg. Co.	1951
v. Walton	694, 696, 704,	v. Smyth	1834	v. Iowa City	2203
	2004, 2006, 2007	Smythe v. New Provi-		v. Nations	811, 1828
v. Whittier	208, 252, 1766,	dence	1311, 1413, 2016,	v. R. Co.	1943
	1789, 2594		2144	v. Snyder,	
v. Wilkins	377	Smythe's Estate v.		6 Binn.	607, 770
v. Wilson,		Evans	1244	50 Ind.	803
3 B. & Ad.	2463	Snapp v. Pierce	1247	v. Wise	1681
1 Dev. & B.	1225	Sneed v. Ewing	2083	Sociedade Feliz, The	1641
v. Wilton	2132	v. Marysville G. & E.		Sodusky v. McGee	987
v. Winter	1858	Co.	661	Sofferstein v. Bertels	1013
v. Wyman	73, 209, 406	v. State	364, 1405	Sokel v. People	507, 1398,
v. Yaryan	210, 987	v. Terr.	248, 293		1644, 1960, 2536
v. Yellow Cab Co.	282	v. Woodward	1778	Solander v. People	1079, 1750,
v. York	1820	Socierson v. U. S.	21, 1669		2056, 2273
v. Young	1243, 1248	Snell v. Bray	278, 613	Solari v. Snow	1066
Smith's Case,		v. Eckerson	1549	Solary v. Webster	2465
12 Co.	575	v. Gregory	907	Solberg v. Robbins	
10 Gratt.	824, 830,	v. U. S.	232, 1621, 1639	Lumber Co.	2570
	861, 865	v. Weldon	260	Solice v. State	1750
Smith's Ex'r v. Smith	96	v. Wilson	228, 1073, 1938	Solita v. Yarrow	1994
Smith's (Christian) Trial	2394	Snellgrove v. Baily	1193	Solly v. Hind	917
Smith's (Geo. J.) Trial	363,	Snelling State Bank v.		Soloman v. American	
	1160, 1671, 2272	Clason	916, 2409	Merc. Exch.	1971
Smith's Will	20	Snelling's Will	681	v. R. Co.	1943

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Soloman v. Solomon	1058	South Bend v. Turner,		Southern Kansas R. Co.	
v. State	2060	156 Ind.	2220	v. Michaels	688, 2220
Solomon N. Bank v.		163 Ind.	692	v. Painter	1040, 1051
Continental Trust Co.	2438	South Branch R. Co. v.		v. Robbins	65, 199, 461
Solomon R. Co. v. Jones,		Long's Adm'r	1074	Southern L. & S. Co. v.	
30 Kan.	1066	South Chicago B. Co. v.		Verdier	2123
34 Kan.	736, 748, 754,	Taylor	2105	Southern L. & T. Co. v.	
	1668, 2098	South Covington & C. S.		Benbow	18, 747,
Solomon's Case	194a	R. Co. v. Beatty	1117		2098, 2099, 2496
Solosky v. State	364	v. Finan's Adm'x	1043,	Southern Life Ins. Co.	
Solum v. R. Co.	2509		1163	v. Wilkinson	657, 1503,
Solyer v. Romanet	2575	v. Stroh	2220		1975
Somers v. Somers	1085	South Omaha v. Fennell	784	Southern M. I. Co. v.	
v. State	1350	v. Sutcliffe	20	Hudson	1947
v. Wright	1540	v. Wrzensinski	1078, 1456	Southern Mo. & A. R.	
Somerset v. France	380	South Penn Oil Co. v.		Co. v. Woodard	1943
Somerville v. Richards	1873	Blue Creek D. Co.	1352	Southern Pacific Co. v.	
Somerville & E. R. Co.		South School District v.		Arnett	1951
v. Doughty	952, 2115	Blakeslee	1587	v. Cavin	2509
Somes v. Brewer	2413	South Sea Co. v. Bump-		v. Hall	283, 791, 1976
v. Skinner	233, 338,	stead	2275	v. Hetzer	249, 250, 1616,
	1738	v. Dolliffe	2297		1984
Sommerville v. Stephen-		South Staff T. Co. v.		v. Huntsman	792
son	1225, 1254	Ebbsmith	1859c	v. Wilson	803
Son v. Terr.	118, 389, 390	Southall v. —	2256	Southern P. R. Co. v.	
Songster v. Payzant	2142	Southampton v. Graves	1858	Lipman	2579
Sonneborn v. Bernstein	406,	Southampton Case	526,	v. Tomlinson	2507
	1111, 1125, 1126		1712	Southern R. Co. v.	
Sonnemann v. Mertz	2498	Southard v. Arkansas		Adams	2509
Sonnesyn v. Hawbaker	1073	V. & W. R. Co.	2433	v. Blanford's Adm'x	18,
Sonoma Co. v. Stofen	460	v. Curley	2498		199, 461, 987, 995
Son-se-gra's Will	2167, 2500	v. Rexford	987, 2268,	v. Bonner	1404, 1976
Sontag, Ex parte	2361		2270	v. Brantley	944
Soper v. Cisco	2503	Southard's Trial	516, 1154	v. Brown	1750, 2088
v. McClout	463	Southerin v. Mendum	1225,	v. Bunnell	969
v. Tyler	2464		1651	v. Bush	2257
Sopwith v. Sopwith	2066	Southern Bank v.		v. Covenia	2566
Soquet v. State	687, 1691	Nichols	1051, 1416	v. Crowder	961
Sorensen v. Sorensen	2496	Southern Bell Teleph.		v. Cunningham	1951
Sorenson v. Sorenson	93, 2214	Co. v. Jordan	676	v. Dickens	2509
v. U. S.,		Southern Bell T. & T.		v. Ellis	1819
143 Fed.	835	Co. v. Mayo	900	v. Fricks	1750
168 Fed.	149, 1073, 2513	v. Watts	199	v. Gray	1018
Sorg v. Congregation	561,	Southern Car & F. Co.		v. Hagan	2580
	1976	v. Jennings	1404	v. Hayes	2124
Sornberger v. R. Co.	1158	Southern Coal & C. Co.		v. Hubbard	2124
Sorrelle v. Craig	692, 923,	v. Swinney	1951	v. Kinchen	1078
	987, 1612, 1871, 1985	Southern Coal & Iron		v. Lefan	458
Soto v. Kroder	1239	Co. v. Schwoon	1057	v. McLellan	461
v. Terr.	1135, 1750, 1751	Southern Express Co.		v. Mauzy	461, 1951
Soucek v. Karr	568	v. Owens	2536	v. Mooresville C.	
Soucie v. Payne	65	v. Thornton	702	Mills	1530
Soulard v. Allen	1677, 1678	v. Womack	1192	v. Morris	21, 716, 961
Soule v. Bruce	64	Southern Georgia & F.		v. Posey	458
Soule's Case	2239	R. Co. v. Ayres	1195	v. Rice's Adm'x	65
Sound Timber Co. v.		Southern I. C. Line v.		v. Simpson	283
Danaher Lumber Co.	141	R. Co.	665	v. Slade	2509
South v. Deaton	378	Southern Ins. Co. v.		v. State	736
v. State	1404	Estes	6a	v. Thompson	2509
South & N. Ala. R. Co.		v. White	1270	v. White	2325
v. McLendon	1974	Southern Iron & E. Co.		v. Williams	1029, 1037
South Bend v. Hardy	62, 75,	v. Smith	675	v. Wilson	1873
	200, 210,	Southern Iron Works v.		Southern R. N. Co. v.	
	987, 2270, 2277	Central of G. R. Co.	1567	Russell	2279



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Southern States M. L.		Sparke v. Middleton	2290,	Spence v. Repass	586
Ins. Co. v. Herlihy	2452		2304	v. Sanders	1547, 1554, 1561
Southern St. R. Adv.		Sparks v. Com.,		v. Smith	1778
Co. v. Mfg. Co.	2406	89 Ky.	111	v. State	833
Southey v. Nash	1840	193 Ky.	949, 987	Spence's Estate	2503
Southington B. & T. Co.		v. Galena Nat'l B'k	1960	Spenceley v. Schulen-	
v. American Baptist		v. Rawls	1339	burgh	2312, 2317
H. M. Soc.	2463	v. Ross	1644, 2506	v. Wilmot	377, 1003, 1006
Southwark v. Ins. Co.	2103	v. Sparks	2297, 2312	Spencer, The J. F.	4d
Southwark & V. W. Co.		v. State,		Spencer v. Billing	1249
v. Quick	2318, 2319	59 Ala.	784, 2484	v. Boardman	1205
Southwark Bank v.		19 Ariz.	106, 1445	v. Com.,	
Com.	1350	111 Ga.	2513	194 Ky.	1442
Southwest Cotton Co.		v. Taylor	1392	Ky., 107 S. W.	1810
v. Ryan	2496	v. Terr.	18, 21	2 Leigh	309
Southwest School Dis-		v. U. S.	581	v. Curtis	2579
trict v. Williams	1420,	Sparks Milling Co. v.		v. Kinnard	1911
	1583, 1586	Industrial Com.	2509	v. Langdon	1681
Southwest Va. M. L.		Sparr v. Wellman	1053	v. Looney	792
Co. v. Chase	2034, 2053	Sparrow v. Hovey	254	v. National Ass'n for	
Southwestern R. Co. v.		Sparta v. Lewis	2498	Prevention of	
Papot	1234	Spaulding v. Lithograph		Consumption	7a
Southwestern Surety		M. Co.	458	v. Peterson	661
Ins. Co. v. Hico Oil		v. Merrimuck	1003	v. Razor	2520
Mill	2452	v. Mutual Life Ins.		v. Robbins	987
Southwick v. South-		Co.	1081, 2494	v. State,	
wick	2245, 2341	v. R. Co.	15, 905, 1405,	20 Ala.	1072
v. Stevens	417, 1254		1407	69 Md.	233
Southworth v. Bennett	987	v. Sherman	252	187 N. Y.	2496
Sovereign Camp		v. Vincent	1681, 1684	132 Wis.	1398, 1406,
v. Farmer	7a, 2452	Spaunhorst v. Link	1029		1614
v. Grandon	1672, 2384,	Spear v. Abbott	4c	v. White	907
	2385a, 2390	v. Coate	1564, 1566	Spencer's Appeal	18, 112,
v. Robinson	7a, 2531	v. Coon	1387, 1415		1736, 1974
v. Welch	63, 64	v. Drainage Com'rs	1943	Spencer O. M. Co. v.	
Sovereign Camp W. O.		v. Richardson,		Johnson	770
W. v. Burrell	2169	34 N. H.	1974	Spendlow v. Smith	2250
v. Pritchett	18, 2311	37 N. H.	681, 682,	Sperl's Estate	2495, 2503
Sowden v. Quartz Min-			770, 772	Sperry v. Moore's Es-	
ing Co.	561	v. State	1841	tate	1390
Sowell v. Bank	1304	v. Sweeney	995	Spevack v. Budish	2442
Sowers v. Dukes	1943, 1951	v. Tilson	1267	Speyerer v. Bennett	1388
v. Terr.	2061	Spearbracker v. Larrabee	252	Spiars v. State	2089
Sowiczki v. Modern		Spearman v. Sanders	1044	Spicer v. State,	
Woodmen	2415	v. State	2338, 2340	69 Ala.	851, 2265
Spacy v. Ritter	2408	Spears v. C. B. & Q. R.		188 Ala.	140, 390
Spaeth v. Kouns	1230, 1271,	Co.	2552	198 Ala.	1476
	1960	v. Forrest	923	Spick v. State	26, 389, 390
Spahr v. Mutual L. Ins.		v. Ins. Co.	64	Spiegel & Son v. Alpirn	2442
Co.	2531	v. R. Co.	2509	Spiegel v. Hays	987, 1270
Spain v. Oregon & W. R.		Speck v. Gray	618	Spiegel's H. F. Co. v.	
& N. Co.	1066	Speer v. Athens	1350	Industrial Com.	1671
v. Rakestraw	1981, 1983	v. Josenhans	1303	Spiers v. Brown	371
Spalding v. Hedges	1694	v. P. R. Co.	1350	v. Hendershott	1938
v. Lowe	581	v. Speer	233, 1033, 1198	Spies v. Illinois	2276
v. People	2497	Spegail v. Perkins	1681, 2165	v. People	105, 238, 691,
Spanagel v. Dallinger	1086,	Speidel Co. v. Barstow			923, 1079, 1157,
	2102	Co.	2257		1985, 2276, 2354
Spangler v. Jacoby	1350	Speiser v. Phoenix M. L.		Spigener v. State	2364
v. State	905, 2363	Ins. Co.	1213	Spilene v. Salmon Falls	
Sparf v. U. S.	851, 2559	Spellings v. Parks	75	"Mfg. Co.	2486
Spargo v. Brown	1456	Spence v. Central Acci-		Spiller v. Atchison	4c
Sparhawk v. Bullard	1573	dent Ins. Co.	2433	Spink v. N. Y. N. H. &	
v. Sparhawk	582, 1510	v. Mitchell	18, 1391	H. R. Co.	1640, 2515

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Spinney v. Boston Elev. R. Co.	1856c	Springfield C. R. Co. v. Puntenney	1750, 1951	St. Louis & I. M. R. Co. v. Silver	770, 1890, 1893
Spinney's Adm'x v. Hooker	969, 1078, 2509	v. Welsch	770, 1750, 1951	St. Louis & O. R. Co. v. Union T. & S. Bank	2034
Spires v. The King	1330	Springfield F. & M. Ins. Co. v. Griffin	714	St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Brown	571
v. State	460, 1160	Springs v. R. Co.	736	v. Bruner	2498
Spiro v. Nitkin	987	Sprinkle v. U. S.	1079, 2149, 2572	v. Burrows	1722, 2509
Spittle v. Walton	497	Sproule v. Murray	2503	v. Chaney	1719
Spitz's Appeal	2239, 2336	Sprouse v. Com.	177, 2265	v. Cundieff	1890
Spiva v. Stapleton	720	v. Story	1966	v. Fick	1750
Spivey v. Platon	2336	Sprowl v. Lawrence	2581	v. Gosnell	2509
v. Rose	1347	Spruil v. Cooper	2042, 2054	v. Hodge	97
v. State,		Spurck v. Crook	2354, 2358	v. Johnson	2536
26 Ala.	254, 1781	Spurlock v. State	1966	v. Kilpatrick	1254
58 Miss.	246	Spurr v. Trimble	1275	v. McLelland	1078
Spohr v. Chicago	18, 463, 719, 782, 1168, 1890	v. U. S.	321, 1109, 1618	v. Mathews	1354
Spokane v. Costello	1387	Squier v. Evans	2433	v. Ritz	1951
Spokane Canal Co. v. Coffman	2433	Squire v. Campbell	2465	v. Shannon	455
Spokes v. Hotel Co.	2268	v. State	2086, 2506	v. Stacey	2509
Spoonemore v. Cables	1263	Squires v. Abbott	736, 738	v. Sutton	1530
Sporrer v. Eifler	6a	v. O'Connell	19, 1530, 1558	v. Walker	1404
Spottiswood v. Weir	1234, 2019	v. State	1270, 2277	v. Weaver	283, 905
Spradling v. Conway	610	St. Andrews v. St. Brides	2063	St. Louis & S. W. R. Co. v. Elgin C. M. Co.	571
Spraggins v. State	396	St. Bernard Coal Co. v. Southard	1389	St. Louis & Tenn. R. P. Co. v. McPeters	1624
Spragins v. White	2556	St. Charles S. Bank v. Denker	1077, 1390	St. Louis A. & T. H. R. Co. v. Bauer	1951, 2447
Sprague v. Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.	455, 456	St. Clair v. U. S.	770, 794, 905, 1647	St. Louis Bridge Co. v. Miller	2220
v. Craig	64	St. Croix Co. v. Sea Coast C. Co.	1188	St. Louis Iron M. & S. R. Co. v. Ayres	1943
v. Kneeland	1086	St. Cross v. Walden	2462	v. Cady	2575
v. Sea	1944	St. Denis v. Grenier	1898	v. Cantrell	2349
Spratt v. Spratt	229	St. Devereux v. Much Dew Church	2088	v. Carter	2416
Sprigg v. Beaman	1911	St. George v. Biddeford	232, 233	v. Edwards	1941, 1943
Sprigge v. Sprigge	2523	St. John v. Andrews Institute	2532	v. Faisst	1261
Spring v. Ins. Co.	1513	v. Kidd	1239	v. Flinn	18
Spring Canyon Coal Co. v. Ind. Com.	4c	v. Lofland	578	v. Greenthal	233, 1750
Spring City G. Co. v. R. Co.	714	v. McConnell	529	v. Hall	1943
Spring Garden Mut. Ins. Co. v. Riley	745	v. Redmond	1676	v. Harper	1410
Spring Valley v. Gavin	1023	St. John Gaslight Co. v. Clerke	1706	v. Henderson	1521
Spring Valley Coal Co. v. Chiaventone	20	St. John Nat'l Bank v. Leslie	1779	v. Inman	65
v. Industrial Com.	2509	St. Joseph v. Levin	2259c, 2264	v. Jacobs	1943
Springbok, The	367	St. Joseph & D. C. R. Co. v. Chase	283, 456	v. Lawrence	455
Springer v. Borden	463	St. Katherine's Hospital	1598	v. Magness	1640, 2575
v. Byram	1072, 2381	St. Legar v. Adams	1658	v. Murphy	1550, 1552
v. Chicago	1158, 1162, 1164, 1168	St. Louis v. Bay State St. R. Co.	2509	v. Raines	1890
v. Ford	2509	v. Foster	1877	v. Steed	283
v. Hall	2008, 2016, 2018	v. R.	291	v. Stroud	199
v. State	2060, 2183	v. Ranken	1943	v. Sweet	1668
Springfield v. Coe	1951	v. State	390	v. Waren	507
v. Dalby	1896	St. Louis & C. R. R. Co. v. Eakins	1248	v. Webster	1352, 2594
v. Schmook	463			v. Williams	1722
Springfield & N. E. Traction Co. v. Warrick	1943			St. Louis K. & A. R. Co. v. Chapman	1943
Springfield & S. R. Co. v. Calkins	720, 1943			St. Louis K. & N. W. R. Co. v. Clark	463
Springfield C. R. Co. v. Hoeffner	1719, 2570			St. Louis M. & M. Co. v. Montana Co.	1862
				St. Louis M. & S. E. R. Co. v. Aubuchon	1907
				v. Continental B. Co.	714



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
St. Louis M. Life Ins.		Stambro, Re	703, 839	Stanley v. Stanley,	
Co. v. Graves	1978	Stammers v. Dixon	2556	112 Ind.	761, 2336
St. Louis O. H. & C. R.		Stamper v. Com.	1244, 2042	27 Wash.	1730
Co. v. Fowler	463, 1081, 1640	v. Griffin,		v. State,	
St. Louis P. Ins. Co.		12 Ga.	1035, 1108,	26 Ala.	257
v. Cohen	1213, 1244		1263, 1983	88 Ala.	1219
v. Homer	2436	20 Ga.	1293, 2130	9 Ga. App.	368
St. Louis S. W. R. Co.		Stamphill v. Bullen	1290,	Okl. Cr., 205	
v. Dobbins	2220		1651	Pac.	2582
v. Kennedy	2155	Stampofski v. Steffens	1166	39 Tex. Cr.	521
v. Plumlee	283	Stanciliff v. U. S.	1029	v. Sutherland	1249, 2354
v. White S. M. Co.	747	Standage v. Creighton	1063	v. White,	
St. Louis V. & T. H. R.		Standard v. Aurora E. &		14 East	378, 1080,
Co. v. Haller	463	C. R. Co.	2433		1476, 1778
St. Martin v. Desnoyer	2354	Standard Bank v. Mc-		160 Ill.	2408, 2410
St. Mary's Home v.		Crossan	2410	r. Wilkerson	1530
Dodge	2523	v. Wettlaufer	2444	Stanley P. Co. v. Thom-	
St. Paul & M. Trust Co.		Standard Cooperage Co.		son	907
v. Harrison	2464	v. Dearborn	1976	Stanoszek v. Canadian	
St. Paul & S. C. R. Co.		Standard C. Mills v.		Collieries	2102
v. Murphy	1943	Cheatham	451	Stansbury v. Marks	2213
St. Paul F. & M. Ins. Co.		Standard Elevator Co.		Stanton v. Embery	463
v. Brunswick G. Co.	1066	v. Crane El. Co.	1657	v. Parker	987, 1985
v. Gotthelf	1560	Standard Fire Ins. Co.		v. State	2354
St. Peter's Church v.		v. Smithhart	2298	v. Willson	610
Beach	1267	Standard L. & A. Ins.		Stanwood v. McLellan	749
St. Regis Lumber Co.		Co. v. Tinney	1404	Staples-Howe Printing	
v. Hotchkiss	1576	Standard Mfg. Co. v.		Co. v. Building & L.	
Staats v. Bergen	619	Slot	321, 2415	Ass'n	290
Stace v. Griffith	2378	Standard Oil Co. v.		Stapleton v. Chicago B.	
Stacey v. Com.	13	Bretz	1240	& Q. R. Co.	2384
Stack v. General Baking		v. Reagan	451	v. Crofts	601, 619,
Co.	1270, 2529	v. Tierney	283		2333
v. R. Co.	2220	Standard Scale & Supply		v. Monroe	15
Stackhouse v. Horton	1938	Co. v. Reiter	2465	v. Stapleton	604
Stackus v. R. Co.	2552	Standard Talking M.		Stapley v. Canadian P.	
Stacy v. Graham	953, 959,	Co. v. Matthews	18	R. Co.	1859d
1031, 1106, 1108, 1985		Standard Trusts Co. v.		Star Kidney P. Co. v.	
v. Publishing Co.	1974	King	2477	Greenwood	2212
Stadacona Ins. Co. v.		Standard Underground		Star Mining & M. Co.	
Rainsford	1074	C. Co. v. Att'y-Gen'l	1350	v. White Co.	1862
Stafford v. Fargo	913, 1887,	Standard Water Systems		Starace v. Rossi	2582
	1890	Co. v. Griseom-Rus-		Starchman v. State	1157,
v. Journal Ass.	76	sell Co.	916		2183, 2264
v. Rice	529	Standback v. Thornton	1320	Starin v. Kelly	581
v. Sheppard	1351	Standen v. Bains	1587	Stark v. Boswell	1083
v. State	106	v. Edwards	290	v. Burke	1203, 2021
v. Sutcliffe	1938	v. Standen	1476, 1603	Starke v. State	20, 233, 290,
v. Tarter	1938	Standifer v. State	852		1023
Stafford's Trial	278	Standish v. Washburn	35,	v. Stewart	1530
Stagg v. Pomeray	1392		442, 451	v. Wolf	1913
Stahl v. Duluth	738	Stanfield v. Arnwine	2465	Starkey v. People	1362, 1438
Stahle v. Spohn	1040	Stanford v. Bates	1062	Starks v. People	894, 950,
Stainer v. Droitwich	1364,	v. Murphy	2337		1108, 1109
	1644, 1670, 1703	v. Pruet	1684, 1703	v. Sikes	950
Staines v. Stewart	1736	Stanger v. Searle	1993, 2018	Starksboro v. Hines-	
Stalker v. Breze	2381, 2390	Stanglein v. State	1644, 2086,	burgh	1415
v. State	309		2166	Starkweather v. Con-	
Stall v. State	949	Stanhilber v. Graves	1677,	verse	1066, 1073
Stallings v. Hullum	2297		1873, 2309	v. Maginnis	2432
v. State	257	Stanley v. Addison	2054	v. Martin	2105
Stallworth v. State	396	v. Anderson	1195	Starling v. State	987
Stambaugh v. Smith	438, 1978	v. Green	1082	Starr v. Aetna L. Ins. Co.	1750,
		v. Ins. Co.	987		2510

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Starr v. Los Angeles R. Co.	97	State v. Allen,	59	State v. Arthur,	276
v. People	460	23 Ida.	59	23 Ia.	276
v. State,		57 Ia.	2059	129 Ia.	2265
160 Ind.	106	100 Ia.	1111	135 Ia.	1003
7 Okl. Cr.	218, 1803	113 La.	1681, 2536	70 N. J. L.	561
r. Tracy	2222	37 La. An.	957, 1407	v. Asbell	143, 457, 1975
v. U. S.	21, 276	Mo., 234 S. W.	852	v. Asbury	580
Starr B. G. Ass'n v.		34 Mont.	347, 1051	v. Ascarate	852
North L. C. Ass'n	1076	107 N. C.	1890, 2276	v. Ashworth	1441, 1445, 1447, 1448
Staser v. Hogan	233, 1021, 1041	56 S. C.	309, 1232	r. Askew	963
State v. Aaron	2071	v. Allison	832, 861	v. Aspara	279, 761, 821, 2130, 2264
v. Abatto	390, 826	r. Aloe	2592	v. Atchley	1732
v. Abbey	1684, 1703, 2535	v. Alpert	1213	v. Atkins,	
v. Abbott,		v. Ames	343, 581, 968, 1079	1 Overt.	1398
65 Kan.	987	v. Ancheta	278, 1977	77 Vt.	105, 111
59 Nebr.	1350	v. Anderson,		v. Atkinson,	
8 W. Va.	111, 247, 1732	82 Conn.	78	33 S. C.	784
v. Able	2098	Ida., 59 Pac.	2061	40 S. C.	2183, 2264, 2265
v. Abley	987	96 Mo.	824, 832	v. Atwood	2277
v. Abrahams	1852	252 Mo.	507, 2239	v. Aughtry	2349, 2497
v. Abrams	2277	270 Mo.	1862	v. Auguste	832
v. Accola	2354	24 N. M.	923, 2183	v. Austin,	
v. Adams,		162 N. C.	2513	104 La.	1951
78 Ia.	1669	10 Or.	682, 1048, 1726, 1852, 1976	113 Mo.	1674
20 Kan.	216, 238, 1803, 2056	v. Andre	2062	71 Ohio	2501, 2531
44 Kan.	457, 1853	r. Andrews,		v. Averill	108, 2100
85 Kan.	177	29 Conn.	1802	v. Avery,	
14 La. An.	1963	130 Ia.	1136, 1761	113 Mo.	994, 1890
76 Mo.	107, 108	64 Kan.	1350	R. I.	363, 1026, 2008
138 N. C.	363	35 Or.	852	v. Ayer	2354
49 S. C.	916, 1003	73 S. C.	198, 248	v. Ayles	2363
68 S. C.	396	v. Andrus	1136, 2061	v. Azoff	2354
v. Adamson	987	v. Angel	580	v. B. & M. Railroad	97, 376
v. Adkins	2072	v. Angelo	1028	v. Baans	204
v. Adler	2511a	v. Annice	526, 2085	r. Babcock	987, 2276
v. Affronti	988	v. Anslinger	59	v. Bable	728
v. Agnesi	1443, 1810	v. Anthony,		v. Bach Liquor Co.	2283
v. Ah Chuey	2265	6 Ida.	987	v. Bacheller	2496
v. Ah Lee	1443, 1803	1 McC.	609	v. Bacon,	
v. Ah Loi	1749	v. Antonio	309	13 Or.	987
v. Aiken	1079	v. Apley	62, 133, 1760	14 S. D.	1350
v. Aker	2061, 2349	v. Apple	949	r. Baden	2060
r. Albanes	928, 1434	v. Araah	2062	v. Badger	1750
t. Albert,		v. Archer,		v. Bailey,	
50 Ia. An.	833	73 Ia.	1108, 1109	79 Conn.	2044
73 Mo.	2130	54 N. H.	1938	54 Ia.	2272
r. Albright	247	v. Ardoin	2512	146 La.	824, 851, 1349
r. Alcorn	1461	v. Armijo	507, 2061	190 Mo.	20, 263, 1852
r. Alderman	56	v. Armington	2085	N. Mex., 198	
v. Alderson	581, 1586	v. Armour Packing Co.	1350, 2592	Pac.	106, 2276
v. Alexander,		v. Armstrong,		179 N. C.	987, 2056
89 Kans.	913	4 Minn.	2086, 2239	Wash., 71 Pac.	507
109 La.	838	Mo., 66 S. W.	832	v. Bailly	987
66 Mo.	111, 247, 2354	37 Wash.	396	v. Bailor	2062
r. Alford	396, 1875	v. Arnold,		v. Baird	923, 951, 1680
v. Algood	1350	12 Ia.	988	v. Baker,	
r. Allen,		13 Ired.	222, 1154	106 Ia.	2062
47 Conn.	266	55 Mo.	2232	Ia., 135 N. W.	794
1 Hawks	656, 658, 702, 704, 705, 2006	206 Mo.	987, 1871	110 Mo.	2514
		47 S. C.	1442, 1750		
		v. Arrington	63, 111, 581		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Baker,		State v. Barris	2018	State v. Beeskove	2349
136 Mo.	1018	v. Barron	142, 278	v. Behan	203, 367
209 Mo.	923	v. Barrow	1226, 1681	v. Behrman	1398, 1645,
58 S. C.	826	v. Barrows,			2167
43 Wash.	2270, 2364	52 Conn.	2298, 2321,	v. Beird	198, 248
33 W. Va.	2264		2327	v. Belcher	1362, 1442,
v. Baldoser	2062, 2272	76 Me.	580		1750, 2245
v. Baldwin,		v. Barry	1938	v. Belding	1852
36 Kan.	273, 394, 687,	v. Bartlett,		v. Belknap,	
	736, 738, 1041,	47 Me.	2450	Mo., 221 S. W.	398,
	1690, 1700, 1730,	55 Me.	416, 2272		507, 1890
	1963, 1974, 1977	50 Or.	968	44 Wash.	987
155 N. C.	111	v. Bartmess	247, 905, 1029,	v. Bell,	
178 N. C.	2551		1669, 2276, 2277	49 Ia.	2062
15 Wash.	1398, 1445,	v. Baruth	1072	109 Kan.	2513
	1446	v. Barwick	852	136 Mo.	2501
v. Ball	398	v. Bass	451	v. Bellard,	
v. Ballou	1873	v. Bassett,		132 La.	1873, 1890
v. Baniff	1129	33 N. J. L.	1378	50 La. An.	1755
v. Banks,		26 N. Mex.	216, 359	v. Belton	1821
106 La.	1404, 1669	v. Bateham	507, 988	v. Benjamin	944
111 La.	1398, 1404	v. Bateman	1138	v. Benner	10, 273, 770,
40 La. An.	2056	v. Bates,			773, 774, 1021, 2363
78 Me.	2272	10 Conn.	194	v. Bennett,	
73 Mo.	581	38 La. An.	2349	31 Ia.	2239
v. Banoch	142	46 La. An.	347	137 Ia.	1855, 1963
v. Banusik	852, 1810, 2272,	22 Utah	2579	143 Ia.	861, 1958
	2496	25 Utah	825	75 N. C.	133
v. Baptiste,		v. Batson	2016	40 S. C.	2349
26 La. An.	681, 1841	v. Battle	391	21 S. D.	2272
105 La. An.	276	v. Baudoin	923	v. Benoit	246
v. Barber	105	v. Bauerkemper	770, 2062,	v. Benson	1873, 1890
13 Ida.	63, 1852		2528	v. Berberick	492, 495, 841,
Wis., 179 N. W.	21,	v. Baxter	142, 2079		862, 2100
	105, 238, 2336	v. Bayonne	2056	v. Berger	351
v. Bardelli	953	v. Bazile	2497	v. Berkley	2595
v. Barela	2265	v. Beabout	1908	v. Berlin	2239
v. Barfield	63	v. Beach	1356	v. Bernard	949
v. Barker,		v. Beal	923, 2277	v. Berning	1890
46 La. An.	246	v. Beam	368	v. Bernstein	660
68 N. J. L.	987	v. Bean,		v. Berry,	
28 Oh. St.	1432	104 Mo. App.	2239	Ia., 182 N. W.	1336
43 Wash.	786, 2270	175 N. C.	2512	50 La. An.	499, 851
56 Wash.	861	74 Vt.	944	v. Bersch	354
v. Barkley	1136	77 Vt.	952, 969, 1128,	v. Bertin	1803
v. Barnes,			2059, 2115	v. Bertoch	2232
34 La.	1909	v. Beard	398	v. Bess	655, 1700
136 Minn.	2451	v. Beatty	276, 2354	v. Bessa	59
274 Mo.	1330, 1398	v. Beaty	57	v. Best,	
75 N. J. L.	1451	v. Beauleigh	1890, 2277	108 N. C.	1498
47 Or.	2081	v. Beaudet	21, 140, 1476	111 N. C.	363, 2349
v. Barnett	2277	v. Bebb,		v. Beste	2349
v. Barr	2264	125 Ia.	133, 1135	v. Beswick	1356, 2582
v. Barrett,		Ia., 96 N. W.	1135	v. Betsall	2056, 2057
117 La.	987, 2349	v. Beck,		v. Beuerman	689, 1938
240 Mo.	63	46 La. An.	246	v. Biango	1451
138 N. C.	1356	25 Nev.	1350	v. Bickle	293
33 Or.	1976, 2079,	v. Beckner	18, 923, 2277	v. Biedler	2195
	2080	v. Bedard	1136	v. Bien	2272
v. Barretta	967, 1614	v. Beebe,		v. Biggerstaff	1755
v. Barrick	789, 1618	115 Ia.	78	v. Biggs	987, 1853, 1890
v. Barringer	2512	17 Minn.	2364	v. Bilansky	949, 987
v. Barrington	21, 141, 851,	66 Wash.	1079, 2100	v. Billings	2079
	1268, 1852, 1890, 2081	v. Beeson	143, 1725	v. Birchard	1135

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Bird	2349	State v. Bordeleau	1442, 1451	State v. Brette	2355
v. Birdwell	105, 246, 247, 396	v. Bordelon	1440, 1442	v. Brewer,	
v. Bischoff	1644, 2241, 2486	v. Borden	607	Del., 114 Atl.	357, 1825
v. Biscoe	1618	v. Bostwick	836	98 N. C.	1131
v. Bishop	142, 1476	v. Boswell	691, 922, 923, 1985	v. Brewster	2195
v. Black,		v. Bosworth	56	v. Brick	825, 857
143 Mo.	580, 2056	v. Boudreaux	247	v. Bridges	851
15 Mont.	987, 1270, 1853	v. Boughner	1852	v. Bridgman	216, 398, 399, 402, 2235
121 N. C.	969	v. Bovino	1442, 2363	v. Brien	246, 580
v. Blackburn,		v. Bowe	852, 1066	v. Brierly	836
Ia., 110 N. W.	62, 200, 1700, 1985, 2062	v. Bowen	347, 2579	v. Briggs,	
136 Ia.	168, 1618, 1700	v. Bower	2272	68 Ia.	398, 852
80 N. C.	1127, 1446	v. Bowers	987	74 Kan.	321
v. Blackwell	63	v. Bowman,		9 R. I.	2234, 2235
v. Blake	2260	90 Ark.	1350	v. Brin	2059
v. Blakesley	1003	272 Mo.	1523	v. Bringgold	1067, 1909
v. Blancet	276	278 Mo.	1481	v. Brink	2081
v. Blanchard	1750	78 N. C.	683	v. Brinkley,	
v. Blay	851, 852, 2071, 2497	v. Bowser	398, 667	N. C., 110 S. E.	1148
v. Blee	111, 198	v. Boyd,		55 Or.	821, 2071
v. Bliss	2513	38 La. An.	905, 1106, 1108	v. Brinte	2097, 2100
v. Blitz	987, 2277	Mo., 76 S. W.	987, 988, 1985	v. Brinyea	1938
v. Blize	205, 2042	v. Boyland and Mc-		v. Briscoe	1983
v. Blodgett	1182, 1807	Curty	357	v. Britt	133, 166
v. Bloom,		v. Brabham	1128	v. Brittain,	
68 Ind.	59, 923, 2277	v. Brache	41	89 N. C.	2354
89 N. J. L.	357, 692	v. Bradford	830, 2061	117 N. C.	833, 2336
v. Bloor	905	v. Bradley,		v. Britton	2086
v. Blount	363, 523, 2034	6 La. An.	111, 143	v. Broadbent	821
v. Blue,		9 Rich.	609, 2236	v. Broadbush	1856c
136 Mo.	2497	64 Vt.	107, 108	v. Brockman	826, 830, 838
17 Utah	56	67 Vt.	107, 728, 851, 1978	v. Brodie	1350
v. Blydenburg	1719, 1722, 2498	v. Bradneck	1750	v. Bronstine	1938
v. Blythe	507	v. Brady,		v. Brooks,	
v. Boatright	321, 1079	95 Ia.	754	13 Amer. St. Tr.	2224
v. Bobbitt	987, 2056	100 Ia.	321, 1230	181 Ia.	133, 987
v. Bodie	111, 247, 1021	129 Ia.	2511, 2513	192 Ia.	1434, 1442, 1732
v. Bodly	1312	Ia., 91 N. W.	2513	74 Kan.	257, 1620, 2272
v. Bogris	2008	87 Mo.	1890	39 La. An.	247
v. Bogue	580	71 N. J. L.	59, 1076, 1619	92 Mo.	841, 1385a, 1834, 1862, 1890, 2277
v. Bohan	1433	v. Brake	2059, 2219	202 Mo.	987
v. Boice,		v. Bramlett	2116, 2233	220 Mo.	851
140 Ind.	1350	v. Branch	907	23 Mont.	195
114 La.	780, 1873	v. Brandenburg	1614	v. Brookshire	1841, 1842
v. Boise	1350	v. Brandenburger	2277	v. Broughton	821, 852, 2360, 2363
v. Bokien	321, 1807, 1853	v. Branham	852, 1326, 1328, 1329	v. Browman	363
v. Bolden	1079	v. Brannum	1890	v. Brown,	
v. Bolton	2273	v. Branstetter	2354	Ala. App., 89 So.	2199
v. Bonar	1442	v. Brant	894	Del., 85 Atl.	359
v. Bond,		v. Brantley	42, 1010	20 Fla.	1350
12 Ida.	694, 2059, 2183, 2276	v. Branton	2021	48 Ia.	934
191 Mo.	2497	v. Braskamp	2577	86 Ia.	1969, 1974, 2062
v. Bonning	276	v. Brassfield	205, 2062	95 Ia.	2395
v. Bonsor	357	v. Brauneis	56, 2512	128 Ia.	2363
v. Boomer	1209, 1855, 1959	v. Breaux	580, 1976	130 Ia.	21, 1079
v. Booth	20, 2387	v. Breckenridge	309, 1249	152 Ia.	1398, 1404
v. Borchert	398	v. Breeden	923, 950		
		v. Brent	1270		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II. §§ 725-1359; Vol. III. §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV. §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V. §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Brown,		State v. Bunker	1890	State v. Callahan,	
Ia., 121 N. W.	398,	v. Buralli	1976	47 La.	21, 1128,
	2060	v. Burch	1157		2059, 2060
22 Kan.	111, 247	v. Burgess	2276	100 Minn.	1835
55 Kan.	200, 1615	v. Burke,		76 N. J. L.	290, 2272
85 Kan.	2061	88 Ia.	1878	18 S. D.	905
111 La.	390, 1036,	Ohio, 135 N. E.	21,	v. Callaway	390, 397,
	1442, 2276		2252		1730
118 La.	2243	v. Burks	905, 2349	v. Callegari	1263
64 Mo.	111, 1750	v. Burley	2060	v. Callian	987
73 Mo.	836	v. Burlingame	2232	v. Cambron	770, 1615,
168 Mo.	273	v. Burlingham	2236, 2239		1620, 1770, 1852
171 Mo.	2556	v. Burnett	1447	v. Cameron	579, 2272
181 Mo.	682, 988, 1958	v. Burnham	1157	v. Campbell,	
188 Mo.	363, 1442	v. Burns,		129 Ia.	1062
209 Mo.	507	110 Ia.	2062	73 Kan.	821, 2363
N. J. L., 45 Atl.	2061	119 Ia.	770, 1807	20 Nev.	1138
76 N. C.	278	145 Ia.	1620	7 N. D.	149, 1013
125 N. C.	1138	Ia., 78 N. W.	778, 811	1 Rich. L.	1362, 1367,
28 Or.	953, 1028,	30 La. An.	63, 246		1374
	1732, 1974, 2363	286 Mo.	1808	v. Candier	16, 570, 705
1 Pen. (Del.)	1051	Mo., 237 S. W.	1807	v. Cannon,	
103 S. C.	177, 2072	27 Nev.	2012	49 S. C.	862
108 S. C.	1033, 1442	19 Wash.	154	52 S. C.	499
3 Strobh.	2056, 2059	v. Burrell	2276, 2283	v. Caperton	2270
36 Utah	2501	v. Burt	2239	v. Cardelli	150
39 Utah	56	v. Burton,		v. Cardinas	1239, 1273,
48 Utah	1013	63 Kan.	246, 247, 248		1651
v. Browning,		2 Marv. (Del.)	987	v. Cardoza	758, 759, 761,
153 Ia.	1818	v. Burwell	2349		762, 1007
96 Kan.	1154	v. Busse	1349	v. Cardwell	2071
v. Brownlee	2060	v. Butler,		v. Carey,	
v. Bruce	278, 923	247 Mo.	1404, 1411	76 Conn.	2056, 2057,
v. Bruin	157	96 Or.	1725		2060
v. Brundige	1960, 2513	47 S. C.	2268, 2270,	Ia., 177 N. W.	2511
v. Brunell	78		2271	v. Carlisle,	
v. Bruner	580	v. Butts	1730	57 Mo.	851, 2100
v. Brunet	1018	v. Byers	1398	28 S. D.	2272
v. Brunette	64, 1700	v. Byrd,		v. Carmean	331
v. Brunetto	1362, 1398,	41 Mont.	1442, 1445	v. Carnagy	2272
	1438	121 N. C.	63, 111,	v. Caron	957
v. Brunson	2016		246, 247, 2512	v. Carpenter,	
v. Bryan	205	v. Byrne,		124 Ia.	357, 2062
v. Bryant,		47 Conn.	1138	32 Wash.	398, 852,
97 Minn.	928, 987	Mont., 199 Pac.	792,		1003
55 Mo.	246, 783		1157	v. Carr,	
93 Mo.	1938	v. Caddy	1129	4 Del.	2513
178 N. C.	2512	v. Cadotte	821, 2130	25 La. An.	2273
v. Buchanan	1451	v. Cadwell	1230	5 N. H.	705, 1680,
v. Buchler	1974	v. Cady	1126, 1128		2163
v. Buck,		v. Cahill	1350	28 Or.	2060
88 Kan.	457, 1719,	v. Cain,		37 Vt.	832, 834,
	1976	106 La.	1263		855
120 Mo.	1356	9 W. Va.	667	v. Carraway	1755
74 Vt.	20	20 W. Va.	2079	v. Carrick	824, 830
v. Buckley,		v. Cake	1677, 1680	v. Carrington	661, 1129,
54 Ala.	1350	v. Calder	1853, 2059		1144, 1445,
40 Conn.	78	v. Caldwell,			1447, 1450
18 Or.	2043	3 La. An.	2355	v. Carroll,	
v. Buckman	286	50 La. An.	830	85 Ia.	852
v. Buffington	2241, 2339	v. Calhoun	309	Wash., 206 Pac.	1021
v. Buie	2042	v. Calkins	2016	v. Carron	205
v. Bulla	1890, 2277, 2513	v. Call	321	v. Carson	987, 2277
v. Bullard	194, 987, 988	v. Callaghan	1445	v. Carta	1067

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Carter,		State v. Chicago M. &		State v. Coats	905, 2071
1 Houst. Cr. C.	4, 25	S. P. R. Co.	1355	v. Cobbs	2349
144 Ia.	2513	v. Chiles	688	v. Cobley	580, 2270
Ia., 96 N. W.	987	v. Chingren	987, 2567	v. Cochran,	
74 Kan.	1684	v. Chisnell	2272	2 Dev.	1623
45 La. An.	246	v. Chittenden	928	147 Mo.	106
51 La. An.	1124, 1893	v. Chretien	2354	v. Coella,	
106 La.	1072, 1448	v. Christ	728, 2079	3 Wash.	1041
107 La.	1448	v. Christian	246, 1985	8 Wash.	1164
8 Wash.	1034	v. Christianson	2059	v. Coffee	2363, 2364
15 Wash.	1014	v. Christie	2059	v. Coffman	168
v. Cartwright	2354	v. Christmas	232, 1621	v. Coggins	1159
v. Case,		v. Church,		v. Cohen,	
96 Ia.	1614	199 Mo.	499, 841, 851,	108 Ia.	1275, 2497
61 Or.	580, 2060		2265	254 Mo.	326
v. Casey	925, 987	6 S. D.	1852, 2582	v. Cohn	1243, 2277
v. Cass	2439	v. Chynoweth	1018	v. Colbert	1877
v. Cassidy	2062	v. Chyo, Chiagk	580, 2056,	v. Colby	398, 526, 1644,
v. Castelli	851		2059		2060, 2109, 2167
v. Castigno	18	v. Cincinnati T. & J.		v. Cole,	
v. Castle	933	Co.	7, 1665	9 Humph.	2576
v. Cater	457	v. Cities Service Co.	1858	63 Ia.	569
v. Cather	58, 1974	v. Clancy	2497	38 La. An.	1842
v. Caudle	1006	v. Clare	1350	145 La.	1761
v. Cavanaugh,		v. Clarissa	833	Mo., 213 S. W.	949,
98 Ia.	1910	v. Clark,			2276
52 La. An.	364	27 Ida.	2060	94 N. C.	561, 683
v. Caveness	1985	69 Ia.	1136, 1138	19 Wis.	1249
v. Cazeau	1028	100 Ia.	1037	v. Coleman,	
v. Center	2339	189 Ia.	2486	27 La.	1876, 1938
v. Cerciello	414, 1157,	Ia., 140 N. W.	2513	186 Mo.	108, 1671
	2265	12 Ired.	662, 1976	199 Mo.	1415, 1669
v. Cerfoglio	342, 2042	34 Kan.	2349, 2354	17 S. D.	363, 2016
v. Chadwell	1405	60 Kan.	520, 521	v. Coley	691, 1621
v. Chaffin	111	Mo., 232 S. W.	4c	v. Coll	1908, 1974
v. Chamber of Com-		54 N. H.	2088	v. Collett	2059
merce	2410	99 Or.	792	v. Collins,	
v. Chamberlain	291, 1890,	15 S. C.	678	3 Dev.	290
	2273	34 Wash.	2501	20 Ia.	949
v. Chambers,		98 Wash.	364	32 Ia.	246, 247, 1029,
87 Ia.	2239	64 W. Va.	1254, 1445,		1035, 1263, 1398
45 La. An.	851		1450	68 N. H.	1219, 1273,
37 S. D.	133, 1041,	v. Claude	246		2257, 2498
	1960	v. Claymonst	437, 507,	121 N. C.	2100
v. Champion	1878		1072, 1130	15 S. C.	759, 762
v. Champoux	987	v. Clayton	246	v. Colston	382
v. Chandler,		v. Cleaves	2272	v. Colvin	246, 1442
3 Hawks	522	v. Cleavland	2535	v. Colwell	736
5 La. An.	246	v. Clemens	2059	v. Comer	2364
v. Chaney	1186	v. Clements	1230, 2059	v. Compagnet	111, 246,
v. Chanute	68	v. Clifford,			247
v. Chapman,		86 Ia.	852	v. Comstock	2062
88 Ia.	2082	78 Wash.	2216, 2221	v. Concannon	2056
6 Nev.	2059	v. Clifton	1616	v. Condotte	276
v. Charles	16, 1033, 1750	v. Clinton	923, 987, 2005,	v. Conerly	1021
v. Chase	390		2006, 2008, 2016, 2277	v. Conkle	949, 987
v. Chauvet	2059	v. Cloninger	925	v. Conley	988, 2513
v. Chavis	63, 246	v. Cloud	2354	v. Connelly	2061
v. Chee Gong	728, 770,	v. Clough	2168	v. Conness	1712
	1803	v. Cluff	21	v. Connor,	
v. Cheek	570, 705, 762	v. Clyburn	1873	142 La.	2273
v. Cherry	62, 200, 894,	v. Coates	195, 1021, 1126,	142 N. C.	1620, 2061
	987, 1104, 1871		1985, 2056	v. Connors	414, 2272
v. Chesher	1750	v. Coatney	923	v. Conroy	218, 1781



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Conway	1407	State v. Craemer	218	State v. Cushing,	
v. Cook,		v. Craft,		14 Wash.	111, 247,
75 Conn.	792	117 La.	1005		1157, 1615
92 Ia.	2062	118 La.	247	17 Wash.	84, 111, 220,
188 Ia.	2071	v. Craig	1442		247, 1157, 1398,
17 Kan.	569	v. Craine	1441, 1446		1977, 2497
30 Kan.	1853	v. Cram	2100	v. Dachtler	2061
Mo., 207 S. W.	1620	v. Crawford,		v. Dacke	205
15 Rich. L.	851	35 Ark.	1350	v. D'Adame	905, 1043, 1072
69 W. Va.	852, 2501	96 Minn.	18, 21	v. Dahl	2060
81 W. Va.	1729	99 Mo.	106, 140	v. Dahlquist	18
v. Cooke	2062	201 Pac.	276, 2497	v. Dale,	
v. Cooley	1974	206 Pac.	153, 987	109 Ia.	1855
v. Coolidge	1696	39 S. C.	326	141 Mo.	728
v. Cooper,		Wash., 71 Pac.	246	Wash., 206 Pac.	987
32 La. An.	247, 396	v. Crea	1041, 1853	v. Daley	1781, 2559
71 Mo.	1108, 2277	v. Crean	1434, 1442, 1447	v. Dalton,	
83 Mo.	1037	v. Credle	1254	27 Mo.	59, 1013, 1028
85 Mo.	2354	v. Cremeans	1614	20 R. I.	1441
103 Mo.	2085, 2086	v. Creson	57	43 Wash.	1839, 2100
101 N. C.	2572	v. Cristani	2072	65 Wash.	2056
Tenn. Ch., 53		v. Crocker	1186, 1566, 1651	v. Danelly	832, 857, 861
S. W.	1239, 1680,	v. Crofford	359, 1079	v. Danforth	166, 1154, 2062
	2105, 2167	v. Crone	1451	v. D'Angelo	141, 246, 396
v. Coover	987	v. Cronin	1442	v. Daniel,	
v. Corcoran,		v. Crook	1029	31 La. An.	1441
7 Ida.	905	v. Cross,		49 La. An.	2100
38 La. An.	1755	72 Conn.	862, 1938	v. Daniels	1442
v. Cornhauser	330	68 Ia.	1271, 1976,	v. Darling	1079
v. Corpening	2105		1983	v. Darnell	830, 841
v. Corrivan	2514	44 W. Va.	2183	v. Dart	1362, 1722
v. Cosgrove	246, 247	v. Crosswhite	257	v. Daugherty	2498
v. Coss	825	v. Crotts	784	v. David	852, 1842, 1974,
v. Costa,		v. Crouch	357, 498,		2012, 2079, 2534
95 Conn.	391		2062	v. Davidson,	
78 Vt.	368, 1249	v. Crouse	368, 1021	77 N. C.	2239
v. Costello	499, 933	v. Crow	988, 1275	9 S. D.	1021, 1041
v. Costner	2273	v. Crowder,		30 Vt.	1718, 2073,
v. Cottrell	987	41 Kans.	2535		2081
v. Coudier	1405	Wash., 205 Pac.	398,	v. Davis,	
v. Coudotte	273, 2059		2276	3 Brev.	2239
v. Cougot	1493	v. Crowe	233, 682, 987	6 Ida.	106, 851
v. County Board	4c	v. Crowley,		110 Ia.	1839
v. County Commis-		13 Ala.	398	Ia., 187 N. W.	205
sioners	1671	33 La. An.	390	117 Ind.	1225
v. Coupenhaver	2354	v. Cruise	1129	77 Ired.	140
v. Couper	2494	v. Crump	18	34 La. An.	860
v. Couplin	2513	v. Cuellar	564, 1678	29 Mo.	1028
v. Court	2513	v. Culpeper	1890	141 Mo.	2061
v. Courtright	2042	v. Cummings	2580	186 Mo.	1818
v. Cousins	287, 288	v. Cummins,		Mont., 199 Pac.	689,
v. Covington	2100	76 Ia.	905, 2259c		2129
v. Cowan	826, 832, 852,	279 Mo.	351, 2056	69 N. H.	106, 108,
	867, 1475,	v. Cunningham,			216, 564
	2071, 2100	25 Conn.	1356	63 N. C.	862
v. Cowell	351	31 Me.	2056	77 N. C.	142
v. Cowing	681	72 N. C.	232	87 N. C.	1021
v. Cox,		v. Curran	2062	109 N. C.	1644
67 Mo.	2277	v. Curtis,		125 N. C.	838
264 Mo.	2072	108 Kan.	1007	177 N. C.	1079, 1750
87 Ohio	2252, 2268,	39 Minn.	1270, 2277	90 Ohio	343
	2270, 2282	v. Cushenberry	728, 1615	55 S. C.	1974, 1977
v. Crab	2056	v. Cushing,		104 Tenn.	1732
v. Cracker	507, 1821	29 Me.	1010	74 W. Va.	1182

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Davison	2446	State v. Dilts	2061	State v. Drake,	
v. Dawson	2058	v. Dipley	62, 1106	128 Ia.	770
v. Day,		v. Diskin	1072	82 N. C.	833, 855, 857
108 Minn.	98	v. District Court	1862,	113 N. C.	835, 855
188 Mo.	1618		2183, 2580	11 Or.	580, 2273
v. Dayton	4	v. Divine	1354	v. Draughon	1730
v. Deal,		v. Dix	1079	v. Drawdy	609
24 Fla.	1350	v. Dixon,		v. Dreany	1205
41 Ore.	1037, 1051,	47 La. An.	687	v. Drew,	
	1076, 1890	Mo., 190 S. W.	988,	110 Minn.	2283
52 Ore.	2276		2276	179 Mo.	2513
v. Dean	198, 248, 1732	131 N. C.	1447, 2150	v. Driscoll	1142, 1750
v. Deatherage	276, 2272	v. Dockstader	290	v. Driver	398, 934, 2216
v. Debolt	2497	v. Dodson,		v. Drummins	1042, 2272
v. Dee	949	23 N. D.	2059, 2273	v. Dubois,	
v. Deering	1974	4 Or.	247	54 Ia.	2071
v. Degonia	285	16 S. C.	609, 2100,	49 Mo.	153
v. De Graff	852, 2008,		2245	v. Ducolon	2497
	2012	v. Doherty	682	v. Dudley	290, 778, 1136,
v. De Hart	200, 398, 2056	v. Dolan,			2235
v. Delaneuville	1028	132 Ia.	168	v. Dudoussat	987, 1128,
v. Delaney	136, 160, 451	86 N. J. L.	861		1129
v. De Maio	1909	17 Wash.	1974	v. Duestrow	233, 390, 770
v. Demarest	247	v. Dollar	2203	v. Duffey	62, 923, 1010,
v. Demas	987	v. Dolliver	56, 1618, 1675a		1014, 1839
v. Denis	505, 1896	v. Dominique	1750	v. Duffy,	
v. Dennin	1126	v. Donaluzzi	367, 368	57 Conn.	944, 1909
v. Dennis	273, 1442	v. Donavan	351	15 Ia.	2261, 2271
v. Depass	111	v. Donehey	1350	124 Mo.	1157
v. De Pretto	1404	v. Donelon	194, 988, 2100	v. Dufour	276, 1144
v. De Priest	905, 2273	v. Donnelly	987, 1443,	v. Dumphey	63, 111, 246,
v. Deputy	953		2056		247, 580
v. Derriek	862, 1876	v. Donovan,		v. Duncan,	
v. Desforges	1109	61 Ia.	2097	6 Ired.	109, 140, 142,
v. Deslovers	762, 1393,	128 Ia.	220, 460, 687		1476
	1977, 2073,	10 N. D.	2259c	64 Mo.	861
	2081, 2339	v. Dooms	118	116 Mo.	1476, 1755
v. Desmond	276, 357	v. Doon	2354, 2355	142 Mo.	2497
v. Desroches	351, 1755,	v. Dooris	2167	8 Rob. (La.)	1896
	2097	v. Doris	248, 988, 1434,	86 S. C.	1807
v. Detwiler	62, 923		1451	78 Vt.	2252, 2268
v. De Weese	390	v. Dotson	2513	7 Wash.	2276
v. Dewey	2512	v. Douette	736	v. Dunn,	
v. DeWitt	2272	v. Dougherty	18, 19, 669,	13 Ida.	7, 150
v. De Wolf	811, 1104, 1124,		749, 1079, 1136,	109 Ia.	1418
	1135, 1136,		1750, 1853	116 Ia.	1855
	1138, 1195	v. Douglas,		140 Minn.	1079
v. Dexter	195, 321, 1072,	53 Kan.	506	80 Mo.	2354
	2530	116 La.	1873	179 Mo.	681
v. Dickerson	177, 363, 988,	26 Nev.	2060	v. Dunwell	2575
	1983	v. Douglass,		v. Dunwoody	416
v. Dickey	1072	34 La. An.	1404	v. Duplechain	1116
v. Dickinson	1398, 1432,	81 Mo.	1890	v. Durham	321, 1212, 2233
	1725	20 W. Va.	2183, 2306	v. Durnam	343, 2060
v. Dickson,		v. Douthitt	18, 1614,	v. Durr	2582
6 Kan.	1853		1871	v. Dusenberry	2061
78 Mo.	106, 278, 2071	v. Dove	923, 1125, 1126	v. Dushman	1963
v. Dietz	2059	v. Dowd	1853	v. Dwire	1010
v. Dildy	833	v. Dowdy	1398, 1680	v. Dyer,	
v. Dill	248, 988	v. Downer	331	59 Me.	2239
v. Dilley,		v. Downs,		139 Mo.	923, 987, 2277
15 Or.	1874	148 Ind.	2577	v. Earnest	1969
44 Wash.	1079, 2131	50 La. An.	585	v. Easter	747
v. Dillon	581	v. Doyle	851	v. Easterlin	2044



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Eastwood	363, 2265	State v. Erving	1195	State v. Field,	
v. Eaton,		v. Estoup	1072, 1750	14 Me.	246
3 Harringt.	1349	v. Ethridge	1072	119 Mo.	1350
75 Mo.	111, 2079, 2080	v. Ettenburg	2059	v. Fields	1079
v. Eau	2060	v. Evans,		v. Fiester	2450
v. Eddon	63, 1442	8 Humph.	2576	v. Finch,	
v. Edelen	2276	55 Mo.	1476	70 Ia.	716
v. Eder	987	124 Mo.	1439, 1440,	71 Kan.	852
v. Edmundson	923		1442	54 Or.	390, 792, 1909
v. Edwards,		138 Mo.	276, 2239	v. Findley	1230, 2535
34 La. An.	105	158 Mo.	923	v. Findling	1750
106 La.	851, 862	166 Mo.	1671	v. Finkelstein	968
19 Mo.	1270, 2569	267 Mo.	1974	v. Finley	761, 1382,
79 N. C.	1821	98 Or.	1130		1442
112 N. C.	1974	33 W. Va.	111, 246,	v. Finnegan	2591
2 Nott & McC.	2260,		247, 581, 1626	v. Fiore	42, 1079
	2271	W. Va., 109 S. E.	950	v. Fish	2363
51 W. Va.	2183, 2264	v. Everitt	1852	v. Fisher,	
v. Effler	347	v. Exum	63, 108, 934,	33 La. An.	111, 247
v. Effer	2277		1041, 1131, 1819	162 Mo.	949, 2276
v. Egan	923, 1985	v. Fahey	2042	94 N. J. L.	1890
v. Egbert	1130, 2062	v. Faile	111	N. J. L., 114 Atl.	331
v. Eggleston	19, 398, 2085,	v. Fairfax	2595	v. Fisk	2514
	2505	v. Fairlamb	2273	v. Fitchette	343
v. Ehinger	1960	v. Falkenheimer	2200	v. Fitzgerald,	
v. Eisenhour	1877	v. Falkner	2486	63 Ia.	1398, 2062,
v. Ekanger	987, 2270	v. Falsetta	2326		2098
v. Elkins	111, 246, 247,	v. Fanning	78, 867	130 Mo.	106, 143,
	1013	v. Fannon	1842		1697, 1896
v. Ellington	949	v. Farmer,		68 Vt.	286, 2306
v. Elliott,		Ida., 201 Pac.	133	v. Fitzhugh	1072, 1433
15 Ia.	2100, 2115	84 Me.	13, 987, 2277	v. Fitzsimmons	1625, 1839,
45 Ia.	111, 247, 804,	v. Farnam	1725		1842
	935, 1442, 1443	v. Farrier	2451	v. Fitzsimon	200, 1761
94 N. J. L.	2570	v. Farrington	728, 1855,	v. Flanagan	2081
68 N. C.	1021		1890, 2016	v. Flanders,	
68 Wash.	728, 987	v. Fasset	2354, 2363	118 Mo.	1205
v. Ellis,		v. Faulk	2089	38 N. H.	658, 726,
Del., 112 Atl.	2062	v. Faulkner	21, 2042, 2270,		1969
30 Wash.	246		2298, 2364	v. Flanigan	561
v. Ellison,		v. Favre	2276, 2354	v. Fleeman	1350, 1620
266 Mo.	1072	v. Fay	2276	v. Fleetwood	1033, 1433
268 Mo.	2498, 2511	v. Feeley	21, 63, 106, 1890	v. Flemming	851, 2497
19 N. M.	1135, 2061	v. Feister	689	v. Fletcher	140, 457, 1021,
v. Ellsworth	950, 953, 1029	v. Felch	782, 1974		1442, 1476
v. Ellwood	194, 789, 792,	v. Felker	111, 248	v. Flint	261, 460, 1126,
	995, 1270	v. Felter,			1128, 1129
v. Elmer	2273, 2276	25 Ia.	232, 233, 675,	v. Floyd	63
v. Emerson	111, 1051		681	v. Flynn,	
v. Emery	363	32 Ia.	1384	124 Mo.	226
v. Emory,		v. Feltes	495, 499, 821,	36 N. H.	2183, 2264
6 Jones L.	1778		933, 2071	v. Fogleman	1899
151 La.	398, 1614	v. Ferguson,		v. Folden	1037
v. En	278	71 Conn.	195, 987	v. Foley,	
v. England	131	2 Hill S. C.	1431	113 La.	1750
v. Engle	1652	114 La.	2349	130 Mo.	258
v. English	239	Mo., 183 S. W.	1853	144 Mo.	118, 1072
v. Engsberg	15	Mo., 212 S. W.	1853,	247 Mo.	321, 1890
v. Engstrom	2056		2079	15 Nev.	522, 523
v. Enke	2062	9 Nev.	923	45 N. H.	1620
v. Enochs	2281, 2283	v. Ferrone	19, 1702	v. Follis	1230
v. Epstein	1072, 1750, 1810	v. Fetterly	168, 399,	v. Folwell	216, 416, 1977
v. Erb	1938		1330, 2061	v. Fong Loon	934, 987,
v. Erickson	1350	v. Feuerhaken	2059		1442, 1810

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Fontenot,		State v. Freeman,		State v. Gay,	
48 La. An.	363, 390,	5 Conn.	2354	18 Mont.	2354
	692, 770	4 Jones L.	354	82 Wash.	19, 133, 1135
50 La. An.	248, 1976	100 N. C.	1131	v. Gaylord	111, 141,
v. Fooks	1398, 2595	146 N. C.	177		1890, 2276
v. Foot You	1447	43 S. C.	1051	v. Gebbia	2072, 2073
v. Foote	675	v. French	2062	v. Geddes	390, 815, 2059
v. Forbes	247, 794, 1839,	v. Freshwater	149, 694,	v. Geddis	689
	1841, 2493		2024, 2149	v. Gedicke	1722
v. Force	830, 836, 855	v. Frew	1836	v. Geer	2241
v. Ford,		v. Frey	2239	v. Gemmill	1195
76 Kan.	150, 260	v. Friedman	321	v. Gentry	1398, 1404, 1669
37 La. An.	21, 246,	v. Friend	402	v. George,	
	247, 1841	v. Frierson	247	8 Ired.	1126, 1131, 1132
286 Mo.	995	v. Fritz	2016	60 Minn.	1375, 1398
175 N. C.	2513	v. Froiseth	2252	58 Wash.	1974
3 Strobbh.	21, 216, 290,	v. Frugé,		v. Gerike	133, 168
	349, 1985	28 La. An.	2349	v. German	2071
v. Forrester	2344	44 La. An.	1106	v. Gesell	987, 1842
v. Forschner	62, 200, 398,	v. Fujita	770, 2061	v. Gianfala	278, 821, 833,
	923, 928, 1618	v. Fulcher	2062		1440, 1450, 2100
v. Forsha	18, 1270, 1876	v. Fuller,		v. Gibbons	1352, 2184
v. Forshee	1079	34 Mont.	21, 1012,	v. Gibbs	987
v. Forsythe	1051		2183, 2264, 2265	v. Gibson,	
v. Fortner	836, 851, 854	52 Or.	1033, 1432, 1434	Ia., 174 N. W.	369
v. Foster,		v. Furbeck	1164	64 Wash.	2062
136 Ia.	855, 861	v. Furgerson	278	115 Wash.	1079
30 Kan.	2044	v. Gabriel	1755	v. Gigher	580
23 N. H.	2276	v. Gaetano	1398, 1405	v. Gilbert	1072, 1075
N. Mex., 183		v. Gailor	238	v. Gilcrease	2100
Pac.	830	v. Galla	1890	v. Gile,	
14 N. D.	26, 944	v. Gallagher,		93 Vt.	18, 1951
v. Foulk	2513	Mo., 222 S. W.	1890	8 Wash.	1447
v. Fountain	2062	20 R. I.	2086	v. Gillick	1855
v. Fournier	143, 923, 987,	v. Gallehugh	1750	v. Gilligan	363
	1722, 2100	v. Gallman	1442	v. Gilliland	987
v. Fowler,		v. Gallo	900, 918	v. Gilman	821, 843, 852
13 Ida.	1138	v. Gancarelli	851	v. Gilmore	1079
52 Ia.	276	v. Gannon	1807, 2559	v. Gin Pon	1818
172 N. C.	351, 2183	v. Gardiner	1938	v. Giroux	1955
v. Fox,		v. Gardner,		v. Giudice	1976
122 Ky.	4	174 Ia.	950, 1620	v. Givens	2008, 2016
79 Md.	2580	88 Minn.	2252	v. Glass,	
79 Mo.	2349	1 Root	2235	5 Or.	1976
25 N. J. L.	655, 793	v. Garic	63, 246	50 Wis.	852, 2276
70 N. J. L.	1270	v. Garland	987, 1044	v. Glave	2273
v. Foxton	987	v. Garner	905, 1891	v. Glaze	331, 1073
v. Francis	1350	v. Garrand	396, 1434, 1442	v. Gleim	934, 987, 2497
v. Frank,		v. Garrett,		v. Glenn	1350
109 La.	952	Busbee	987, 2272	v. Glynden	821
60 Nebr.	1350	71 N. C.	2265	v. Glynn	948, 953, 1029
61 Nebr.	1350	v. Garrington	149, 2272	v. Goddard,	
v. Franklin,		v. Garrison	276, 1442,	146 Mo.	1154, 2016
69 Kan.	216		2497	69 Or.	1481
80 S. C.	1442	v. Garth	1439	v. Godwin	2350
v. Franks	153, 238, 580	v. Garvey,		v. Goetz	347
v. Frasier	2282	25 La. An.	852, 860	v. Goff,	
v. Fraunburg	1445	28 La. An.	858, 860	117 N. C.	105, 237, 916
v. Frazier,		11 Minn.	661	71 Or.	19
6 Baxt.	855	v. Gates,		v. Goforth	2236, 2497
109 La.	508	130 Mo.	1976	v. Goin	2514
N. D., 182 N. W.	2195	28 Wash.	106, 2081	v. Golden,	
v. Freddy	2099	v. Gaubert	1877	113 La.	246
v. Frederic	276	v. Gaunt	290	W. Va., 111 S. E.	62



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Goldstein	702	State v. Green,		State v. Hagood	1350
v. Goldstrohm	1179, 1781, 1842	35 Conn.	390, 397	v. Hahn	1706
v. Gomez	811, 1615	Kirby	238	v. Haines	692
v. Gonce	2085, 2086	46 La. An.	246, 24	v. Hairston	59, 62, 1496
v. Gonsoulin	1874	115 La.	1871	v. Hale	987, 1072
v. Good	457	127 La.	988	v. Halford	1136
v. Goodager	20, 1263	229 Mo.	248, 851	v. Hall,	
v. Goodbier	953, 1036, 1037, 1046	92 N. C.	118, 238	45 Mont.	331
v. Goode	1807	48 S. C.	520, 770.	9 Nev.	247
v. Goodrich,			2056, 2100	N. C., 44 S. E.	581
24 N. M.	1254	v. Greenburg	982, 987	14 S. D.	702
19 Vt.	111, 247, 953	v. Greene,		S. D., 91 N. W.	696,
v. Goodsell	2060	152 N. C.	231		1633
v. Goodson	786, 1005, 1840, 1876, 2079, 2191	33 Utah	13	v. Hallock	354
v. Goodwin,		38 Utah	1073, 1911	v. Halstead	1234, 1235
37 La. An.	394, 694, 728	v. Greenleaf	1807, 1854, 1976	v. Halverson	2034
Wash., 204 Pac.	1750	v. Greenwade	351	v. Hamilton,	
v. Gordon,		v. Gregor	111	55 Mo.	923
115 La.	2130	v. Gregory,		263 Mo.	1644
105 Minn.	1270	5 Jones L.	855	Wis., 176 N. W.	1130
v. Gore,		33 La. An.	952, 1963	v. Hammond	133, 762
15 La. An.	1842	v. Griffin,		v. Hammons	331, 2513
Mo., 237 S. W.	1442	48 La. An.	830	v. Hammontree	2061
v. Gorham,		87 Mo.	1852	v. Hancock,	
60 Me.	2183	154 N. C.	1356	148 Mo.	1163
67 Vt.	851, 862	43 Wash.	1135, 1136	28 Nev.	2230, 2550
v. Gosey	2079, 2296	v. Griggsby	59, 987	v. Hand	1620
v. Gossett	832, 861, 2100	v. Grimes	1858	v. Handy	326
v. Gottfreedson	347	v. Grimmell	2385	v. Haney	2056
v. Goyette	2582	v. Grimmitt	150, 1356	v. Hanley	682
v. Grady	2354	v. Griswold,		v. Hanlon	106, 248
v. Graff	2059	67 Conn.	2183, 2264, 2277	v. Hanna	150, 218, 2081
v. Graham,		73 Conn.	2273	v. Hannett	391
116 La.	1977, 2265	v. Grover	860, 862, 867	v. Hansen	398
46 Mo.	254	v. Groves	1350, 2496	v. Hardin	2056
74 N. C.	859, 2265	v. Grubb	1974	v. Harding	347
121 N. C.	354	v. Gruber	290, 2272	v. Hare	56, 2056
23 Utah	360	v. Gruch	759	v. Hargrave	1362
v. Grant,		v. Gruff	861	v. Hargroves	784
22 Me.	830	v. Gruick	1722	v. Harkins	2056, 2059
79 Mo.	106, 108, 391, 923, 1124, 1131, 1263	v. Guagliardo	1807, 2375	v. Harlan,	
144 Mo.	987	v. Guffey	1072	130 Mo.	105, 2079
v. Granville	1406	v. Guie	821, 824	Mo., 240 S. W.	1750
v. Grate	1614	v. Guild,		v. Harley	2183
v. Graton	2555	149 Mo.	728, 2513	v. Harman	832, 1349
v. Graves,		10 N. J. L.	275, 836, 855, 2071	v. Harmon	1330, 1398, 1404, 2098
95 Mo.	1890, 2273, 2276	v. Gunagy	2062	v. Harness	949, 987, 1136
21 N. M.	2272	v. Guy,		v. Harp	1828
v. Gray,		106 La.	923	v. Harper,	
180 N. C.	561	107 La.	1034	101 N. C.	2355
43 Or.	1029, 1442	69 Mo.	106, 111, 247	35 Oh. St.	1432
98 Wash.	2072	v. Guyer	987, 1620	v. Harr	791
v. Grear,		v. Haab	987	v. Harras	2056, 2059
28 Minn.	499, 933	v. Hack	142, 960, 987, 1476	v. Harrington	581
29 Minn.	2071, 2073	v. Haddonfield & C.		v. Harris,	
v. Grebe	154, 285	Turnpike Co.	2572	Del., 5 Pen.	2239
		v. Hagan,		100 Ia.	235
		45 La. An.	1839, 1842	5 Ired.	570, 705
		54 Mo.	836	45 La. An.	111, 247
		164 Mo.	832, 852	48 La. An.	276
				51 La. An.	280
				112 La.	1440
				131 La.	247

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Harris,		State v. Hayward,		State v. Hessenius	1976
150 La.	1007, 1020	62 Minn.	105, 232,	v. Hetland	2062
59 Mo.	246, 247		233, 932, 961,	v. Hetrick	581
76 Mo.	247		1725, 1726	v. Heusack	987, 1270
150 Mo.	1079	1 Nott & McC.	2042	v. Hice	56
209 Mo.	988, 1157	v. Hazen	2088, 2239	v. Hicks,	
Mo., 222 S. W.	398,	v. Hazlett,		27 Mo.	246
	2230	14 N. D.	770, 784,	6 S. D.	2059
63 N. C.	1975		1489, 1496	v. Higdon	205
181 N. C.	1390, 2243	16 N. D.	363, 2512	v. Higgins	1356
14 N. D.	21, 1620	v. Hazzard	363, 1041, 1750	v. High,	
Utah, 199 Pac.	56	v. Heacock	59, 1022	116 La.	276, 987
74 Wash.	1328	v. Head	1198	122 La.	1841, 1842
v. Harrison,		v. Headley	507	v. Hikes	111
111 La.	111	v. Healey	258	v. Hilberg	62, 398,
66 Vt.	918, 2079	v. Heatherton	2062		1616, 2060
36 W. Va.	2349, 2354	v. Hector	2327	v. Hildreth	1732
v. Harrold	153, 194,	v. Heed	2042	v. Hill,	
	216, 326	v. Heffernan	1362, 1375,	2 Hill S. C.	1375, 1402
v. Hart	833		1397, 1398	46 La. An.	2514
v. Hartley	1803	v. Heft	398, 2060	91 Mo.	2061
v. Harvey,		v. Heidelberg	1873	134 Mo.	1072
112 Ia.	166, 1154	v. Height	2252, 2264,	65 N. J. L.	851, 2130
130 Ia.	2514		2265, 2382	2 Speer	1225
28 La. An.	1398, 1405	v. Heldenbrand	7	48 W. Va.	2056
131 Mo.	693, 728,	v. Helm	106	52 W. Va.	983, 987,
	994, 2512	v. Hembree	41, 390		1270, 2196
v. Hascall	2349, 2354	v. Hencken	1779	v. Hillebrand	987
v. Haskins	2535	v. Henderson,		v. Hilmantel	1712, 2214
v. Hassing	689	19 Ida.	168, 200, 398	v. Hilton	2086
v. Hastings,		84 Ia.	2060	v. Hinkle,	
24 Minn.	1350	186 Mo.	1852, 2081	6 Ia.	39, 238, 390,
53 N. H.	701, 2008,	72 Or.	150		569, 2273
	2016, 2020	52 S. C.	1028	33 Or.	1079
v. Hasty	1855, 2273	74 S. C.	851	116 Wash.	1352
v. Hatcher	852, 1667, 2243	29 W. Va.	89, 949,	v. Hinkley	1859g
v. Hatfield,			2016	v. Hobbs	852
3 Head	2281	v. Hendrick	18, 68, 133,	v. Hoben	2375
72 Mo.	2205		987	v. Hocker,	
65 Wash.	238, 2513	v. Hendricks,		36 Fla.	1350, 2577
48 W. Va.	905, 1890	32 Kan.	1126	87 N. J. L.	247
v. Hathaway	716	172 Mo.	1126, 1750	v. Hockett	1976
v. Hathorn	1890	15 Mont.	78, 1620	v. Hodgdon	987
v. Haupt	923	v. Hennessy	2059	v. Hodge	2559
v. Hauser	2056	v. Henry,		v. Hodges	309, 2513
v. Hawkins	988, 2116	107 Ala.	1044	v. Hodgskins	2085, 2086
v. Haworth	499, 861,	5 Jones L.	56, 200	v. Hoffman,	
	1037	51 W. Va.	568, 1168	134 Ia.	1108, 1667, 1669
v. Hayden,		v. Hensley	1835	53 Kan.	2513
45 Ia.	1667, 1669,	v. Henson	987, 1066	120 La.	1074
	2060	v. Herbert,		v. Hogan,	
131 Ia.	1938	63 Kan.	660, 1911,	67 Conn.	278
51 Vt.	681, 1938		2304, 2319	115 Ia.	987
v. Hayes,		92 N. J. L.	2235	120 Ind.	1738
105 Ia.	2062	v. Herlihy	1398, 2098	117 La.	499, 851, 1842
138 N. C.	1263	v. Hernia	851	v. Hogard	2081
14 Utah	218	v. Herring,		v. Hogg	276
v. Haynes,		268 Mo.	492	v. Hogue	63
71 N. C.	142, 1476,	S. C., 110 S. E.	231,	v. Hoke	492, 496, 1841
	1873		1719	v. Holbrook	63, 460, 988,
7 N. D.	1002, 1003	v. Herron	2513		2497
v. Hays,		v. Hersom	792	v. Holcomb,	
22 La. An.	228, 233	v. Herwitz	21	86 Mo.	1450, 2535
23 Mo.	4, 247, 276	v. Hess	309	73 Wash.	200



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Holden	792, 794	State v. Howard,		State v. Hunt,	
v. Holland	368, 2056	9 N. H.	923, 1111,	26 N. M.	1873
v. Hollenbeck	200, 398		1618, 1985	128 N. C.	105
v. Hollingsworth	247	17 N. H.	2354	v. Hunter,	
v. Holloway	1938	82 N. C.	266, 1732	173 Ia.	1620
v. Holmes,		Or., 72 Pac.	1044	131 Minn.	1725
65 Minn.	331, 2272	Or., 203 Pac.	821, 851,	181 Mo.	836, 2042,
12 Wash.	1853		2072		2043
v. Holter	168, 398,	35 S. C.	1884, 1890	143 N. C.	177
	1963, 2062	32 Vt.	1714, 1725,	18 Wash.	791, 1136,
v. Hood	1003		2059		1164
v. Hooker,		v. Howat	2195, 2268	v. Huntly	1732
17 Vt.	1375, 2098	v. Howe,		v. Hurd	398, 2239
99 Wash.	691, 1985	Mo., 22 S. W.		v. Hurst	689
v. Hooks	2088		278, 1456, 2277	v. Hussey,	
v. Hooper	706, 709, 1349	v. Howell	95, 2520	Busbee	2239
v. Hope	1819	v. Howerton	1853, 2056	7 Ia.	1141
v. Hopkins,		v. Howland	1853, 1863	v. Hutchings	2094
115 La.	2364	v. Hoyle	78, 2183	v. Hutchison	394, 1718,
118 La.	1671, 2167	v. Hoyt,			2062
50 Vt.	915, 1236,	46 Conn.	1700	v. Huxford	1974
	1841, 1871,	47 Conn.	106, 232,	v. Hyde,	
	1890, 2154		238, 1621, 2339	234 Mo.	363, 1976
56 Vt.	760, 1876	13 Minn.	1029	22 Wash.	580
13 Wash.	831, 852	123 Mo.	2534	v. Hyer	2056, 2057, 2060
v. Hopkirk	660, 728	v. Huckins	1853	v. Hymer	106
v. Hopper	111, 276, 1974,	v. Hudson,		v. Ice	1858, 2272
	1977, 2059	50 Ia.	278, 580	v. Icenbice	851, 860, 1135
v. Hoppiss	1897	110 Ia.	2079	v. Ilgenfritz	143, 437
v. Horn	1271, 2016, 2167,	v. Hr . . . Elec-		v. Ilomaki	1842
	2569		2579	v. Imlay	1135, 1138
v. Hornaday	2060	v. I . . .		v. Indianapolis Gas	
v. Horne.			396, 1890,	Co.	2580
9 Kan.	85, 106, 1014,		2273	v. Ingram	78
	1028, 2276	159 Mo.	692, 1750	v. Inich	811, 1853
171 N. C.	563, 2484	v. Huebsch	2059, 2060	v. Inlow	905, 1398,
v. Horner	851	v. Huff,			1404
v. Horowich	439	161 Mo.	280	v. Inman	851
v. Horton,		11 Nev.	987, 2277	v. Irwin,	
33 La.	1755	v. Huffman	988	1 Hayw.	1327
247 Mo.	950, 2265	v. Hughes,		Ida., 71 Pac.	987
100 N. C.	166	58 Ia.	2239	v. Isaacson	103, 457, 1852
v. Hosey	1983	106 Ia.	398, 2062	v. Isenhardt	1644, 1768,
v. Hoskinson	1135	29 La. An.	2097		1769, 1876
v. Hosmer	1754	71 Mo.	1018, 1021,	v. Isham	1273, 2555
v. Hossack	792, 968,		1841	v. Ivy	2277
	2130	258 Mo.	2061	v. Jack	2258, 2281
v. Houghton	1130, 1909	8 S. D.	1029	v. Jackson,	
v. Houser	1374, 1397,	v. Hulbert	1614	128 Ia.	969
	1398, 1404	v. Hull,		12 La. An.	246, 396
v. Houston,		26 Ia.	1349, 2059	33 La. An.	246, 247
78 Ala.	1974	18 R. I.	78, 2272, 2273	37 La. An.	246
1 Bail.	309, 313	45 W. Va.	1951	44 La. An.	247, 923,
v. Houx	987	v. Humason	326, 1404		987, 2268
v. Howard,		v. Hummer,		106 La.	1046
191 Ia.	1863	128 Ia.	205, 1620	111 La.	1382
19 Kan.	521	72 N. J. L.	216, 357,	142 La.	2497
120 La.	570, 1755		1076	17 Mo.	63, 246, 247
4 McC.	2042	73 N. J. L.	18	95 Mo.	2273, 2276
91 Me.	1219, 2109,	v. Humphrey	832, 852, 862	106 Mo.	580, 2056,
	2464	v. Hunsaker	1029, 1873		2059
118 Mo.	498, 811	v. Hunt,		112 Mo.	321
Mo., 231 S. W.	1853	112 Ia.	1802	9 Mont.	2115
30 Mont.	218, 987, 1890	144 Ia.	168, 1154	65 N. J. L.	398

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Jackson,		State v. Johnson,		State v. Juneau	507, 2056
150 N. C.	1072	12 Minn.	7, 905, 1018,	v. Justus	442, 457
9 Or.	506, 507		2085, 2086, 2231	v. K.	2276
79 Vt.	2530	26 Minn.	2582	v. Kabrich	56, 57, 290
v. Jacob	326	76 Mo.	107	v. Kaemmerling	2201
v. Jacobs,		118 Mo.	1442, 1448	v. Kahn	369, 1732
5 Jones	2265	Mont., 205 Pac.	1842	v. Kaiser	1755
6 Jones	571, 1978	12 Nev.	1398	v. Kammel	569
107 N. C.	1131	33 N. H.	334	v. Kampert	2243
21 R. I.	2071	73 N. J. L.	905, 1072	v. Kane	1725, 1963
28 S. C.	1044, 1873	24 N. M.	68	v. Kankos	367
26 S. D.	1157	67 N. C.	2265	v. Kapelino	2079, 2119
v. Jaeger	1061	176 N. C.	1960	v. Kappen	2591
v. Jagers	118, 276,	14 N. D.	1013, 2497	v. Kartz	1354
	1440	43 S. C.	770, 905	v. Katon	987
v. James,		66 S. C.	1976	v. Katz	360
45 Ia.	276	28 Vt.	62, 133,	v. Kean	2088
216 Mo.	2273, 2276		200, 987	v. Keefe	905
N. J. L., 114 Atl.	232,	Winston	1618	v. Keehn	784, 2349
	2072, 2073	r. Johnston	2501	v. Keelen	2513
31 S. C.	1974	r. Jones,		v. Keeler	2081
v. James Co.	1840	Cal., 139 Pac.	63, 794,	v. Keenan	1614, 2201
v. Jamison,			988	v. Keene,	
74 Ia.	321	3 Dev. & B.	1781	50 Mo.	246, 247
110 Ia.	341	33 Ia.	821	100 N. C.	683
v. Janvier	246, 247	64 Ia.	104, 233	v. Keener	2276
v. Jaroslowski	2245	89 Ia.	1157	v. Kehoe	1853
v. Jarvis	2060	115 Ia.	2059	v. Kehr	149
v. Jay	835	41 Kan.	1976, 1978	v. Kelch	861
v. Jeandell	406, 777	38 La. An.	1442	v. Kellar	2060
v. Jefferson,		47 La. An.	851, 1842,	v. Kelleher,	
6 Ired.	62, 200,		2119	201 Mo.	111, 1072,
	398, 1062	51 La. An.	1877		1442, 2272
125 N. C.	21, 1434	127 La.	1476	224 Mo.	1434
v. Jeffries	334, 2264	51 Me.	580	v. Keller	830, 832, 2066
v. Jenkins,		54 Mo.	826, 841, 855	v. Kellerman	2056
139 Mo.	2086	61 Mo.	1135, 1136,	v. Kelley,	
5 Vt.	833, 857		1138	50 La. An.	2513
v. Jennings	278, 905, 1349	64 Mo.	911, 1867,	57 N. H.	233
v. Jensen,			2056	46 S. C.	792, 1037
Minn., 186 N. W.	905	153 Mo.	1807, 2265	65 Vt.	347
70 Or.	357, 507, 2276	171 Mo.	354, 851,	v. Kelliher	309, 2056
v. Jerome	78, 1983		852, 861	v. Kelly,	
v. Jersey City	2144	Mo., 177 S. W.	1898	77 Conn.	41, 144,
v. Jessup	581	51 Mont.	360		166, 1725, 2044
v. Jeswell	1398	50 N. H.	228, 233,	71 Kan.	2478, 2580
v. Jim	1009, 1013, 1015		1938	22 N. D.	2513
v. John	84, 1761, 2062	68 N. C.	1977	14 Wash.	1853
v. Johnny	832, 856	145 N. C.	851	v. Kelsie	1890, 1958
v. Johnson,		29 S. C.	736, 1040,	v. Kemp	398, 1072
133 Ia.	1855, 2062		1108, 1109, 1329,	v. Kenilworth	2044
40 Kan.	987, 1985		1374, 1667, 2098	v. Kennade	63, 246, 2276
Kan., 140 Pac.	2501	6 Wash.	1350	v. Kennedy,	
29 La. An.	772	53 Wash.	2056, 2059	154 Mo.	2511
30 La. An.	63, 141,	80 Wash.	205, 207,	177 Mo.	1079, 2383
	834, 860		398, 2528	85 S. C.	580
41 La. An.	1615	27 Wyo.	347	v. Kenny	218
47 La. An.	851, 905,	v. Jordan,		v. Kenstler	950
	1028, 1037, 1131	87 Ia.	835	v. Kent,	
48 La. An.	949	34 La. An.	1404	4 N. D.	967, 1070
50 La. An.	2272	v. Joseph	1350, 2501	5 N. D.	216, 276,
111 La.	357	r. Josey	279		390, 1807, 1853,
116 La.	1873	v. Jouppis	1876		1890, 2270, 2276
141 La.	1877	v. Judd	398, 2511a	83 Vt.	694, 2016, 2024



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Kenyon	1618	State v. Kissock	1842, 2062	State v. Landers	851, 861
v. Kervin	246	v. Kittle	200	v. Landry	117, 1154, 1163,
v. Kesner,		v. Klene	2195		1168, 1802, 1803, 2272
72 Kan.	276, 2071,	v. Kline,		v. Lang	1116
	2073, 2081	54 Ia.	390	v. Langford,	
v. Kessler	1447	109 La.	1398, 1404	Busbee	397
v. Kester	285	v. Klinger	689, 1938	45 La. An.	1138
v. Ketchey	1938	v. Klitzke	2276	v. Langhans	1800
v. Kidd,		v. Klute	1447	v. Langston	1135, 1136
89 Ia.	2298, 2311	v. Knapp,		v. Lanier	928
24 N. M.	953	45 N. H.	59, 200, 220,	v. Lapage	12, 57, 193, 216,
v. Kieffer	2183		398, 1005, 1135,		302, 357
v. Kiesewetter	1350		1136, 1164	v. Larkin	390, 923, 987,
v. Kight	952, 2276	70 Oh.	2072, 2100		2273
v. Kilburn	661, 1079	S. D., 144 N. W.	2273	v. Larkins	106, 689,
v. Kilduff	851	v. Kniffen	1680, 2239		1890, 2276
v. Kilgore	1018, 2079	v. Knight,		v. La Rose	363, 1066
v. Killeen	561, 1923, 2012	43 Me.	662, 790, 791,	v. Larson,	
v. Killian	2496		795, 900, 901, 907,	41 S. D.	2513
v. Killion	987, 988		1976, 2363	Wash., 204 Pac.	341
v. Kilmer	1680, 1853,	Wis., 95 N. W.	928	v. Lasecki	1750, 1755
	2166, 2529	v. Knighten	2061	v. Lasson	987
v. Kimball	2059, 2081	v. Knock	1076	v. Lastor	1157, 1750
v. Kimes	278, 988, 1330,	v. Knoll	1442	v. Lattin	664
	1398, 2273, 2276, 2513	v. Knotts	290	v. Lauderbeck	2349
v. Kincaid	282	v. Knowles,		v. Laughlin	851, 860
v. Kinchen	1732	48 Ia.	821, 2071	v. Laundry	20, 2183
v. Kindle	1398	98 Me.	1270	v. Lautenschlager	681
v. King,		185 Mo.	1025, 2071,	v. La Vigne	2008,
117 Ia.	398, 505,		2100		2016, 2020
	506, 507, 508, 1828	v. Knox	2277	v. Lavin	1062
Ia., 96 N. W.	2513	v. Knudtson	580, 2059	v. Law	569, 1445, 2385
102 Kan.	852	v. Knutson	2062	v. Lawhorn	1138, 2099,
Kans., 206 Pac.	363	v. Kodat	2237, 2341		2276, 2277
47 La. An.	111, 247	v. Koettgen	78, 204, 222	v. Lawlor	390, 1022,
144 La.	177	v. Kolafa	347		2059, 2060
88 Minn.	934, 987,	v. Koller	278, 391	v. Lawrence,	
	2354	v. Koontz	2008, 2016	57 Me.	2272
78 Mo.	56, 276	v. Koplan	2056	28 Nev.	987, 2276,
79 Mo.	987	v. Kornstett	832		2277
83 Mo.	59, 1985	v. Kouhns	2060, 2061	74 Oh.	398
84 N. C.	1873	v. Kowalchuck	1079	70 Vt.	1873
86 N. C.	581	v. Kraft	2196, 2214	v. Lawson,	
9 S. D.	1618, 1853,	v. Krause	1672	44 Mont.	1852, 1853,
	2062	v. Kremling	761		2059
24 Utah	1398, 1405	v. Krinski	2264	40 Wash.	1356
v. Kingsbury,		v. Kritchman	2056	v. Lax	2513
191 Ia.	2129	v. Kubaszewski	1332	v. Laxton	56, 194, 357,
58 Me.	149, 1021, 1041	v. Kuhlman	2060		1131, 1611, 1618
v. Kingsley,		v. Kurtz	1154, 2060	v. Laycock	1877
39 Ia.	2062	v. Kwiatkowski	762, 839,	v. Leabo,	
108 Mo.	1354		861, 2071	84 Mo.	1730, 2511
v. Kinley	56, 59, 1029	v. Kysilka	905, 1043, 1072	89 Mo.	1385a
v. Kinney,		v. Labore	2273	v. Leakey	227, 689, 2512
44 Conn.	1138, 1761	v. Labriola	1821	v. Leasia	1195, 1242
Mo., 190 S. W.	2276	v. Labuzan	247, 780	v. Le Blanc	988
v. Kirby,		v. La Grange	2513	v. Leblanc	507
62 Kan.	194, 231, 581	v. Laliyer	2071, 2073	v. Leblen	580, 987, 1781
1 Strohh.	824, 832,	v. Lamb,		v. Ledford	18
	1475	28 Mo.	852, 867, 2071	v. Lee,	
v. Kirkman	953, 1021, 1028	141 Mo.	1908	65 Conn.	132
v. Kirkpatrick,		v. Lambert	276, 1614, 1616	69 Conn.	272, 2501,
32 Ark.	1331	v. La Mont	2276		2512
63 Ia.	923, 2277	v. Lancaster	398	95 Ia.	988

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Lee,		State v. Locke	1680, 2239	State v. Lytle	105, 658, 660
127 La.	839, 2550	v. Lockerby	1620	v. McAfee	1181
22 Minn.	52, 55, 1614, 1983, 1986	v. Lockett	784, 1750	v. McAllister	290, 309, 360, 1871
228 Mo.	2060	v. Lockridge	1909	v. McAnarney	149
Mo., 231 S. W.	1852	v. Lockwood,		v. McAuley	2332, 2336, 2341
13 Mont.	1398	5 Blackf.	1208	r. McBride	701, 1350, 2016, 2020
80 N. C.	784, 1898	58 Vt.	1841	v. McCall	354
121 N. C.	949	v. Lodge	1033	v. McCann,	
17 Or.	276	v. Loehr	987	Or., 72 Pac.	950, 1750
58 S. C.	1447	v. Loesch	988	16 Wash.	1079
v. Lee Doon	1803, 1842, 1853	v. Logan	4	v. McCartey	987
v. Legg	390, 735, 763	v. Long,		r. McCauley	1207, 1235
v. Lehman	2270	1 Hayw.	825, 2071	v. McCausland	63, 1168, 1803
v. Lem Woon	41, 936, 2277	201 Mo.	987	v. McClain,	
r. Lenihan	1620, 2062	238 Mo.	2062	49 Kan.	667
r. Lennick	2513	Mo., 165 S. W.	2061, 2390	137 Mo.	851
v. Lentz	2354	21 Mont.	1350	v. McClellan	1117, 1614
r. Leo	1451, 2497	Vt., 115 Atl.	141, 851, 961, 987, 1005	v. McClintic	2062
r. Letourneau	321	88 W. Va.	1451	v. McClure	205
v. Leuhrman	18, 2119, 2595	W. Va., 108 S. E.	682	v. McConkey	2349
v. Levers	2059	v. Longstreth	1387, 1669	v. McConnell	1350
r. Levich	326	v. Lopez	1802	v. McCool	169, 2062
v. Levitt	1072	v. Lord	2534	v. McCoomer	1442
r. Levy	21, 390, 506, 507, 2272	v. Loser	2529	v. McCord	2081, 2241
v. Lewark	1182	v. Louie Hing	1109	v. McCormick	1531, 2354
v. Lewenthall	1230	v. Louie Moon	248, 1129	v. McCourry	1755
v. Lewis,		v. Lovell	1072, 2115	v. McCoy,	
45 Ia.	233, 2072	v. Lovitt	1106	109 La.	1136, 1270
96 Ia.	352	v. Lowell	1141	2 Specr	1189
139 Ia.	2591	v. Lowhorne	836, 855	15 Utah	792, 1951
56 Kan.	2276	v. Lowry	851, 859, 1842	v. McCradit	2567, 2575
112 La.	20, 357, 851	v. Lucas,		v. McCullum	833, 1072
80 Mo.	1270	57 Ia.	660, 728	v. McCune	62
136 Mo.	2501	124 N. C.	1893	r. McCurtain	359, 2060
181 Mo.	390	v. Lucey	118, 276, 1974	v. McDaniel,	
20 Nev.	233, 689, 1935, 1938	r. Lucken	309, 2016	39 Or.	665, 851, 905, 2183
N. C., 45 S. E.	963	v. Ludwig	143	68 S. C.	1126, 1750, 2512
31 Wash.	1853	v. Lull,		v. McDaniels	861, 2100
v. Libby	2086	37 Me.	759, 770, 786	v. McDonald,	
v. Lieberman	2056	48 Vt.	246	57 Kan.	988, 2056
v. Liedtke	1350	v. Lundhigh	2512	55 Me.	1330
v. Lien	4c	v. Luper	2237	25 Mo.	2086
v. Lightfoot	106, 363	v. Lurch	1890	51 Mont.	1842, 1853
v. Lindoen	457	v. Lu Sing	2100	8 Or.	1029
v. Lindsay	1921	v. Luy	1351	55 Or.	1481, 1487, 1490, 1492, 1605, 1633, 1646, 1680, 1684
v. Lindsey	821, 1750	v. Lynde	754, 1273	v. McDonald & Arm-	
v. Lingle	1807, 2570	v. Lyon,		strong	4
v. Linhoff	2511	176 Ia.	342	v. McDonough,	
v. Linney	1873	Coxe, N. J.	4	104 Ia.	200, 1938
v. Lipscomb	832	89 N. C.	736, 748, 749	232 Mo.	1890, 2115
v. Litchfield	2056, 2057, 2287	v. Lyons,		v. McDowell,	
v. Little	2512	Ida., 64 Pac.	276	Dudley	78, 1620
v. Littleton	1880	106 Kan.	2555	129 N. C.	821, 1976
v. Littman	204	Kans., 191 Pac.	923	61 Wash.	218
v. Livingston	1442	44 La. An.	1874	v. McFarlain	950
v. Lloyd	2195, 2269, 2252	113 La.	233, 568, 689, 851, 1938, 2382, 2501, 2511	v. MacFarland	1073
		Minn., 175 N. W.	1079, 2060		
		70 N. J. L.	2056		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. McFarlin	331	State v. McNeill	1620	State v. Markins	398, 399
v. McGahey	1807, 2079	v. McNinch	1391, 1884	v. Marks	923, 1612, 1618, 1985
v. McGee,		v. McO'Brien	1395, 1397, 1398	v. Marler	1029, 1036
81 Ia.	194, 988	v. McPadden	133, 398	v. Marren	27, 905
55 S. C.	1890	v. McPherson	1398, 1669, 2363	v. Marriner	2239
v. McGilvery	2088	v. McRae	1398	v. Marselle	398, 2071
v. McGinn	2062	v. MacRorie	905, 1700	v. Marsh,	
v. McGlothlen	2061	v. M. & L. Railroad	65, 97, 249, 876	1 Jones	2258
v. McGonigle	246, 247, 1853	v. Mace	105, 363, 907, 949, 1442, 1447	70 Vt.	143, 144, 1207, 1974, 2570
v. McGrath	2242	v. Mack	524	v. Marshall,	
v. McGraw	1890	v. Mackey	1135	8 Ala.	2294, 2297
v. M'Gregor	78, 204	v. Maddox	1750	105 Ia.	2497
v. McGrew	609	v. Madison,		95 Kan.	7, 521, 987
v. McGruder,		47 La. An.	2097	36 Mo.	2276
125 Ia.	754, 1958	50 La. An.	1404	137 Mo.	667, 1493, 1503, 2061
v. McGuff	2020	23 S. D.	1908, 2183	Phillips	1135, 1138
v. McCuire,		49 W. Va.	246	v. Martin,	
87 Mo.	2529	v. Ma Foo	2514	2 Ired.	2079
15 R. I.	2277	v. Magers,		89 Me.	1878
v. McIntosh,		35 Or.	2568	74 Mo.	363
136 La.	2501	36 Or.	762	124 Mo.	987, 1270, 1750
94 S. C.	1072, 2275	v. Maggard	1126, 1128	229 Mo.	19
v. McIver	63, 198	v. Magill	246	94 N. J. L.	736
v. McKay	2239	v. Magone	18, 580, 1079	47 Or.	390, 396, 1330
v. McKean	2060	v. Magoon,		47 S. C.	2081
v. McKenzie,		50 Vt.	918, 1873, 2079	v. Marvin	398, 2088, 2235
18 La.	2060	68 Vt.	1072	v. Marx	2044
144 Mo.	861	v. Maguire	368, 1708	v. Mason,	
v. McKinstry	1005	v. Magyar	499, 524	38 La. An.	580, 2056
v. McKinney,		v. Mahon	2100	155 Mo.	2576
31 Kan.	1853	v. Maier	677, 1938	v. Massey	2056
111 N. C.	1131	v. Main	561, 571, 1699, 2451, 2567, 2580	v. Matarazza	1639
175 N. C.	59, 2339	v. Mairs	923	v. Matejousky	1853
88 W. Va.	1750	v. Major	1072	v. Mathers	2183
v. Mackinnon	1254	v. Mallahan	2056	v. Matheson	276, 795, 1041
v. McKinzie	1890	v. Mallett	2264	v. Mathews,	
v. McKnight,		v. Mallon	276	133 Ia.	1856, 2237
119 Ia.	1434, 1974	v. Mallonee	1620	119 La.	246, 247
21 N. M.	56, 59, 1248	v. Malmberg	951, 1005	98 Mo.	2273
v. McKowen	390, 460, 2265	v. Maloy	111, 247, 749	202 Mo.	278
v. McLain	140, 2059	v. Mandeville	561	v. Mathis	1230
v. McLarne	2072	v. Mandich	2497, 2513	v. Matlock	1398, 1644, 2214
v. McLaughlin,		v. Manley	2168, 2535	v. Matsinger	2265
44 Ia.	1020, 2062	v. Mann	987, 1079, 2100, 2232	v. Matthews,	
138 La.	1747, 1750	v. Manning	1079	44 Kan.	2419
76 Mo.	1890	v. Mannion	1399	88 Mo.	1263
149 Mo.	293, 692, 988, 1615, 1976	v. Manuel	987	69 N. C.	934
126 N. C.	2098	v. Maranda	2072	v. Mattivi	398, 2273
v. McLelland	1350	v. Marceaux	347, 1974, 2272	v. Maulsby	1131
v. McLemore	1136	v. March	987	v. Mausert	2183
v. McLennan	1062	v. Marchbanks	770	v. Maxey	1750
v. McLeod	1415, 2354	v. Marcks	1135, 2056, 2061	v. Maxwell	1963
v. McMahan	1239	v. Mariano	821, 1157	v. May,	
v. McManus	524	v. Marion	852	4 Dev.	139, 142, 1362, 1476
v. McMillan,		v. Marion Co. Court	1671, 2577	142 Mo.	923, 1079
49 Fla.	1858			62 W. Va.	852
180 N. C.	59			v. Mayberry	1202, 1205
46 Utah	507			v. Mayewski	360
v. McNally	106, 108, 111				
v. McNamara	397, 2355				
v. McNeely	246, 396				
v. McNeil	1374, 1398				

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Maynes	1984	State v. Miller,		State v. Montgomery,	
v. Mayo	1033, 2511	100 Mo.	987, 1270	28 Mo.	949
v. Mayor	1680	144 Mo.	149	26 S. D.	861
v. Mead	1350	156 Mo.	928, 1890	56 Wash.	905
v. Meares	2061	71 N. J. L.	413, 1918,	v. Montifore	2056, 2060
v. Medbury	2086		1977, 2252, 2265	v. Moody	1434, 1913
v. Medley	2268	43 Or.	792, 1157, 2277	v. Moon,	
v. Medlicott	672, 1362,	68 Wash.	815, 855	167 Ia.	359
	1440, 1853	80 Wash.	2529	71 Kan.	901, 905
v. Megorden	568	105 Wash.	2380, 2386,	41 Wis.	2089
v. Meister	1620		2389	v. Mooney	177
v. Mello	18, 905	24 W. Va.	2042	v. Moore,	
v. Mellor	1356	85 W. Va.	21	25 Ia.	894, 2059
v. Melton,		47 Wis.	354	81 Ia.	2061
37 La. An.	1750, 1963	v. Millican	142, 2349	77 Kan.	397
37 La.	276	v. Millmeier	105, 1977,	80 Kan.	1157
120 N. C.	852, 1644,		2081	38 La. An.	1755
	2086, 2231	v. Mills,		52 La. An.	2026
v. Melvern	2276	88 Mo.	1890	61 Mo.	2529
v. Melville	1671	91 N. C.	1028	117 Mo.	851, 2513
v. Menard	738, 1336	79 S. C.	987	156 Mo.	1397, 1732
v. Menilla	111, 581, 2115	v. Mims,		160 Mo.	833
v. Merchants' Bank	1079	26 Minn.	821, 2354	37 Nebr.	1350
v. Merkel	2100	36 Or.	248, 664, 907,	104 N. C.	1808
v. Merkley	364		1951	129 N. C.	177
v. Merlo	106, 905	v. Minard	276	32 Or.	194, 1079,
v. Merrick	108, 508	v. Miner	2513		1807, 2276
v. Merrill	57, 2072, 2081	v. Minneapolis Cold		36 Utah	821
v. Merriman	852, 2277	Storage Co.	1859c,	Utah, 126 Pac.	2086
v. Metcalf	2079		2377	v. Meothart	359
v. Mewherter	2310	v. Minneapolis Milk		v. Moran,	
v. Meyer,		Co.	669	34 Ia.	2059
135 Ia.	507, 1821	v. Minnick	1051, 2513,	131 Ia.	19, 858
Mo., 238 S. W.	851,		2577	15 Or.	1803, 2363
	1896	v. Minor	580, 2056	v. Mordecai	1157
64 N. J. L.	1432	v. Minot	1157	v. Morden	1207, 2061, 2268
65 N. J. L.	1432	v. Minton	309, 693,	v. More	398
v. Meyers,			2016	v. Morea	1820
99 Mo.	682, 1067	v. Misenheimer	2086	v. Morey,	
46 Nebr.	496, 1138	v. Missio	1672, 2535	25 Or.	246
59 Or.	1013, 1398	v. Mitchell,		2 Wis.	2089
v. Meysenburg	463	68 Ia.	1136, 2062	v. Morgan,	
v. Michael	506, 508,	130 Ia.	247	40 Conn.	78
	1821	229 Mo.	2276	142 La.	2243
v. Middleham	2079, 2336	119 N. C.	1398, 2540	147 La.	2339
v. Middleton,		Phillips	824, 839	146 Minn.	1808, 2513
104 La.	276	49 S. C.	2100	196 Mo.	2395
69 S. C.	834, 855,	56 S. C.	2277	95 N. C.	1976
	858	v. Mix	309, 1010,	133 N. C.	2270, 2281
v. Mikesell	2059		1013	S. D., 176 N. W.	1853,
v. Milam	1388	v. Mobley	133, 398, 2061		2558, 2591
v. Miles,		v. Moelchen	57, 396, 968,	22 Utah	276, 390
199 Mo.	1873, 2273,		1977, 2100	35 W. Va.	500
	2350	v. Moffitt	1350	v. Morin	581, 1058
15 Wash.	1985	v. Molier	2042	v. Morphy	1976
v. Miller,		v. Moliase	1750	v. Morris,	
Del., 3 Penn.	2083,	v. Momberg	2493	47 Conn.	153, 1698,
	2086, 2239	v. Monahan	2273		2581
65 Ia.	2061	v. Monich	16, 561, 861,	128 Ia.	2512
71 Kan.	21, 168, 667,		862, 1442, 1451, 2550	41 La. An.	2349
	770, 1481, 1644	v. Monroe	347	149 Minn.	1614, 2059
Minn., 186 N. W.	106	v. Montgomery,		94 N. J. L.	204, 1072
67 Mo.	1034, 2595	8 Kan.	1750	84 N. C.	390, 571,
71 Mo.	923, 1963	35 Miss.	530		1367, 1385a



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Morris,		State v. Myers,		State v. New Orleans	
83 Or.	21, 851, 1975	198 Mo.	580, 1852, 2100, 2115	Waterworks Co.	1388, 1408
v. Morrison,		221 Mo.	2276	v. Newton	1346, 2427
64 Kan.	1442, 1750	v. Myrberg	507	v. Nichols	2058, 2061, 2276
49 W. Va.	246	v. Nagle	457, 655, 832, 851, 1385a	v. Nieburg	68, 2088, 2245
v. Morrow	2272	v. Napoleon	246	v. Nieuwenhuis	112, 1736
v. Morse,		v. Nash,		v. Niles	1135, 1136
67 Me.	62, 923, 987	7 Ia.	1398	v. Nippert	1219, 1273, 2378, 2582
35 Or.	150	10 Ia.	580, 949	v. Noakes	20, 784, 1976
v. Mortensen,		S Ired.	949	v. Nocton	1442
26 Utah	1072, 1725, 1803, 2595	45 La. An.	63, 246, 851	v. Noe	2008
27 Utah	1802, 1803	115 La.	276	v. Nolan	860, 933, 1853
v. Mortimer	858	v. Nat	949	v. Nordstrom	2264, 2265
v. Morton,		v. Nathoo	166, 168, 1154	v. Norris,	
107 N. C.	1028, 1042, 1131	v. Naughton	2252	1 Hayw.	905
8 Wis.	309	v. Nave	1041	127 Ia.	2062
v. Mosca	1476	v. Neal	1671	27 Wash.	351
v. Moses	2551	v. Neasby	1496	v. North	1028
v. Mosher	1382, 1398	v. Neel,		v. Northrup	56, 290
v. Moss	150, 278, 2059, 2513	21 Utah	1135, 1136	v. Norton	105, 111
v. Motley	824, 858	23 Utah	166, 398	v. Nossaman	1356
v. Mount	987, 1270	v. Neill	612	v. Novak,	
v. Mowry	238, 458, 1048	v. Nell	21	109 Ia.	821, 822, 839, 2100, 2497
v. Moxley	1157	v. Nelson,		151 Ia.	1136, 1761
v. Moy Looke	1703	58 Ia.	1614	v. Nowell	2281, 2283
v. Moyer	59, 392	59 Kan.	967	v. Nowells	457, 568
v. Mulch	961	65 Kan.	1126	v. Noyes	1810
v. Mulholland,		68 Kan.	1398, 1404	v. Nugent,	
115 Ia.	2062	3 La. An.	838, 851	134 Ia.	168
16 La. An.	390, 1018	32 La. An.	2354	116 La.	783
v. Mulkern	1136	91 Minn.	21, 2327	71 Mo.	216, 397, 1852
v. Mullen	247	148 Minn.	194, 987, 1808	v. Nussenholtz	987
v. Mullins	852, 1072	132 Mo.	505, 507	v. Nye	1350
v. Munco	218	17 N. D.	2512	v. Nyhus	987, 1835, 2276
v. Mundy	21	19 R. I.	2155	v. Ober	2273, 2276
v. Mungeon	1072, 2060, 2269, 2270	91 Vt.	580, 2272	v. O'Brien,	
v. Munson	821, 851	13 Wash.	1109	81 Ia.	987, 2098, 2277
v. Murphy,		39 Wash.	18, 168, 398, 2088, 2235, 2237, 2239, 2339	18 Mont.	852, 1263
45 La. An.	890, 987, 2277	v. Nergaard	987, 1143	35 Mont.	2555
118 Mo.	1157	v. Nestaval	969	7 R. I.	1690
9 Nev.	1876	v. Nethken	238	v. O'Day	1852
87 N. J. L.	837, 1374	v. Nett	246	v. Odell	2056, 2059, 2060
84 N. C.	326	v. Nettlebush	1447, 1448	v. Oden	368, 1269, 1890, 2276
17 N. D.	309	v. Nettleton	2016	v. O'Donnell	416, 363
16 R. I.	1398, 1750	v. Neubauer	398, 851	v. Oertel	507
48 S. C.	1985	v. Nevada C. R. Co.	1230, 1960	v. Ogden	200, 770, 949, 988
128 Wis.	2282	v. Neville	2265	v. O'Hara	2276
v. Murray,		v. Newberry	2239	v. O'Higgins	2061
139 La.	1618	v. Newcomb	2265	v. Oien	987
126 Mo.	851, 1072	v. Newell	359	v. Olds	1398
Mo., 193 S. W.	2273	v. Newlin	987, 1938	v. Olin	1712, 2196, 2214, 2270
139 N. C.	664	v. Newman,		v. Oliphant	923
v. Musgrave	21, 1010, 1164, 1974	57 Kan.	233	v. Oliver,	
v. Mushrow	1873	93 Minn.	2497	2 Houst.	1398
v. Musick	293	34 Mont.	309	55 Kan.	1416
v. Myers,		73 N. J. L.	331	39 La. An.	1755
54 Kan.	1959	95 N. J. L.	2100	78 Miss.	1680
				v. Olson	1159, 1978

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. O'Meara	276, 2062	State v. Parker,		State v. Perretta	1445, 1448,
v. O'Neal	57, 290, 1807	132 N. C.	852		1789
v. O'Neale	691, 923,	134 N. C.	21, 1138	v. Perry,	
	1612, 1985	60 Or.	246	Busbee	2079
v. O'Neil,		v. Parks,		Minn., 186 N. W.	133
24 Ida.	341, 1230	3 Ired.	691, 1612, 1985	136 Mo.	218
51 Kan.	1700, 1807	N. J. L., 115 Atl.	2512	121 N. C.	1163, 1802
v. Oppenheimer	321	v. Parrotty	2235	106 S. C.	852
v. O'Reilly	792	v. Patchen,		r. Pesce	1557
v. O'Rourke	1010	36 Nev.	2089	r. Petersen	770, 851, 1135,
v. Orth	224	37 Wash.	2061		1136, 1157,
v. Osborn	1182	v. Paterno	246		1693, 1976
v. Osborne,		v. Patrick	2061	v. Peterson,	
28 Ia.	2089	v. Patterson,		102 Kan.	21, 2243
96 Ia.	987	2 Ired.	204, 605, 953,	38 Minn.	1350
54 Or.	276, 1111, 1835		987, 1022,	98 Minn.	987
v. O'Shea	1434, 1446, 1447		1028, 1362	129 N. C.	2105
v. Ostrander	1035, 1669	52 Kan.	2056	r. Petsch	1434
v. Oswald	398, 1135	105 Kan.	1725	r. Pettaway	2063
v. O'Toole	368	73 Mo.	824, 832,	v. Pettilla	1079
v. Overland	987, 1270		1852, 2071	r. Pettis	1781
v. Overson	2497	88 Mo.	205, 1890, 2062	r. Pettit	246, 928, 1615
v. Overton	397	271 Mo.	351	r. Petty	1126, 2265
v. Owen,		Mo. App., 222		r. Pfefferle	457, 987, 1270,
73 Mo.	2027	S. W.	368		2277
78 Mo.	2277	68 N. C.	852	v. Pfeifer	1890
v. Owens,		74 N. C.	1021	v. Phair	664, 1523
109 Ia.	1106, 1108	45 Vt.	1448, 2511a	v. Phelps,	
130 La.	1036	v. Patton	759, 905	Kirby (Conn).	2374,
22 Minn.	2060	v. Patza	364		2375
v. Owsley	2513	v. Paxton	1058	74 Mo.	824, 841
v. Oxford	2364	v. Payne,		5 S. D.	2059
v. Pack	1750, 2497, 2575	6 Wash.	987, 1270	2 Tyler	2237
v. Page	20, 397, 862	10 Wash.	2079	11 Vt.	826, 836
v. Pagels	232, 1219,	Wash., 200 Pac.	1213	22 Wash.	1853
	1674, 1852	v. Peace	1013, 1014	r. Phillips,	
v. Pain	105, 620, 988	v. Peach	2513	118 Ia.	1442, 1451,
v. Painter	2062	v. Peacock	1439		1669
v. Pairs	247	v. Pearce,		24 Mo.	276, 2115
v. Palmberg	168, 398, 1154,	56 Minn.	1432, 2272	185 Mo.	2062
	2582	15 Nev.	59, 246,	178 N. C.	507
v. Palmer,			1614, 1983	18 S. D.	2060
88 Mo.	2277	v. Pearson	527, 925, 2056	v. Phyler	363
161 Mo.	1958	v. Peck	2513	v. Pienick	2072
v. Pamela	851	v. Peebles	1750	v. Pierce,	
v. Pancoast	987	v. Peel	682, 688, 689	90 Ia.	106
v. Panetta	581, 1007	v. Peeples	2276	85 Minn.	661
v. Papa	276, 788	v. Peffers	2276	91 N. C.	736
v. Pappas	1750	v. Peirce	773, 1807	87 Vt.	1974
v. Parham	1445	v. Pell	1841	v. Pike,	
v. Parish,		v. Pelser	398, 2060	65 Me.	363, 676, 2354
Busbee	561, 1327	v. Pemberton	963	20 N. H.	2349
22 Ia.	1855	v. Pence	2259c	49 N. H.	571, 656,
79 N. C.	1124, 1129,	v. Penna	689, 1012, 1013		1927, 1934, 1938, 1941
	1131	v. Penney	851	v. Pino	347
83 N. C.	133, 1021	v. Pennington	1877, 2575	v. Pinson	1853, 2231
v. Park	987	v. Penny	1225	v. Pippi	360, 1356, 2061
v. Parker,		v. Pepper	2059	v. Pippin	398
33 Ind.	1873	v. Perello	2486	v. Pirkey	1807
7 La. An.	59, 195, 923,	v. Peres	398, 1135, 2060	v. Pitt	507, 1817, 1828
	987, 1374, 1671, 1985	v. Perkins,		v. Place	360
89 Mo.	1974	3 Hawks	1071	v. Plant	1620
96 Mo.	1029, 1974	21 N. M.	923, 928, 987	v. Platt	1350, 2492
172 Mo.	988, 1434	66 N. C.	923, 1111	v. Plotner	309



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Plum	2349	State v. Price,		State v. Rash,	
v. Plunkett	368	37 La.	2355	12 Ired.	397, 1878
v. Plym	2506	135 Minn.	987, 2060	27 S. D.	133, 398, 2061
v. Poe	276, 2511a	175 N. C.	1356, 1620	v. Rathburn	118
v. Polhemus	1985	v. Priest	832, 923	v. Rathie	2059, 2276, 2277,
v. Pollard	923, 1750	v. Prins,			2363
v. Polson	1398	113 Ia.	309	v. Rawls	4, 735, 1072
v. Pomeroy,		117 Ia.	318, 928	v. Ray	2056
25 Kan.	1750	v. Privitt	681	v. Raymo	1732
130 Mo.	2183, 2264	v. Probasco	987, 1270, 2277	v. Raymond,	
30 Or.	2513	v. Prouty	20	20 Ia.	342, 2042
v. Poole	851	v. Prudhomme	580, 2056,	53 N. J. L.	354
v. Poor	2081		2265	69 Wash.	2062
v. Popa	59	v. Pruett	111, 247, 1873	v. Rea	216
v. Pope	2595	v. Pruitt	393	v. Reader	2059
v. Porter,		v. Prunty	2273, 2518	v. Ready	112
34 Ia.	728, 1750,	v. Pryor	356	v. Reasby	2265
	1938, 1976	v. Psycher	2513	v. Reavis	347, 967, 2056
105 Ia.	1669	v. Pucca	2216	v. Red	821, 2277
76 Kan.	2569	v. Pugh,		v. Reddick	568, 675
75 Mo.	1890	75 Kan.	987	v. Reddington	506, 1828,
32 Or.	56, 218, 247,	16 Mont.	1750		1852
	821	N. C., 111 S. E.	1104	v. Reed,	
v. Potello	2513	v. Pugsley	987	3 Ida.	1803
v. Potter,		v. Pulley	2115	53 Kan.	390, 987,
18 Conn.	826, 830,	v. Punshon,			1439, 1450
	832, 855	124 Mo.	143, 144,	49 La. An.	1018
Ida., 57 Pac.	1398,		1726, 1730	50 La. An.	390, 580
	1404	133 Mo.	571, 852,	60 Me.	1018, 1043
13 Kan.	63, 246		950, 2115	62 Me.	278, 1044,
42 Vt.	2056, 2059	v. Quarles	2252, 2281,		1126
52 Vt.	4, 398, 1644,		2283	89 Mo.	1029, 1036
	2072, 2073, 2081,	v. Quen	105	137 Mo.	247, 1445
	2109, 2167, 2168	v. Quigley	233, 2501, 2511	250 Mo.	63
v. Potts,		v. Quinlan	928, 2060	53 Mont.	2183
78 Ia.	928	v. Quinn	905, 2183	39 Vt.	62, 200
100 N. C.	1938	v. Quirk	987	v. Rees	19
v. Powell,		v. R. Co.	1350	v. Reese	987
61 Kan.	2513	v. Raby	398, 2237	v. Regan	1853
Mo., 180 S. W.	851	v. Rachman	2056	v. Register	2056
Mo., 217 S. W.	2129	v. Rader	960	v. Reich	860
7 N. J. L.	672, 2346	v. Raice	63, 248	v. Reick	1003
5 Pen. (Del.)	111, 792,	v. Railroad	92	v. Reid	2233
	987, 1157,	v. Rainsbarger	660, 1976,	v. Reidel	1398, 1675
	2591		2236	v. Reilly,	
45 Utah	2059	v. Ralston	2062	22 N. D.	2059
v. Power	1442, 1725	v. Rambo	2272, 2354	25 N. D.	18, 681
v. Powers,		v. Ramirez	759, 1975	40 Wash.	2257
25 Conn.	2575	v. Ramsey,		v. Reinhart	278, 331, 1230
181 Ia.	749, 1393,	48 La. An.	1750, 1755	v. Reinheimer	1620, 1667,
	1761, 2062	82 Mo.	1974		1669, 1974, 2062
92 Kan.	1750	v. Rand	276	v. Reitz	571, 660, 1977
130 Mo.	1977	v. Randall,		v. Remington	793, 1978
72 Vt.	2118	170 A. C.	2339	v. Renard	2183
v. Prater	987, 1079,	95 N. J. L.	2551	v. Rennick	2060
	2196	N. J. L., 113 Atl.	56	v. Reno	1853
v. Prather	507	v. Randolph,		v. Renswick	987, 2042
v. Pratt,		24 Conn.	922, 987,	v. Renton	194, 367
98 Mo.	1896		1985	v. Reppley	580
121 Mo.	987, 1270	85 Or.	7, 150	v. Rester	691
21 S. D.	2042	v. Rankin	949	v. Revells	833, 1841
v. Pray	1842	v. Raper	364	v. Reynolds	2245
v. Prendible	781, 987	v. Raphael	2513	v. Rhoades	1230
v. Presta	988	v. Rasco	177	v. Rhoads	1850, 2224

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Rhodes,		State v. Roberts,		State v. Rollins	246, 932,
111 N. C.	105	201 Mo.	321		1005
44 S. C.	933	28 Nev.	216, 792, 987,	v. Romain	987
v. Rhonds,			1442	v. Rombolo	1270
81 Oh.	2219	52 N. H.	2535	v. Romeo	21, 2100
v. Rhys	1808	91 Wash.	784	v. Romero	62, 200, 923,
v. Rice,		95 Wash.	1073		1336
7 Ida.	568, 2079	v. Robertson,		v. Ronk	198, 451
49 S. C.	1079, 1108,	41 Kan.	1350	v. Rooke	1853
	2450	30 La. An.	246, 247	v. Rosa,	
83 W. Va.	2363	111 La.	851, 1877	71 N. J. L.	967, 1042
v. Richard	2595	133 La.	905	72 N. J. L.	1072
v. Richards,		121 N. C.	398, 2097,	v. Rosasco	2486
28 Ia.	1135, 1136		2100	v. Roscum	367
72 Ia.	2062	26 S. C.	1807, 2277	v. Rose,	
126 Ia.	276, 728, 988,	v. Robinson,		33 La. An.	1876
	1983	126 Ia.	770	271 Mo.	232
97 Wash.	2298	170 Ia.	357	Mo., 76 S. W.	1808
v. Richardson,		51 La. An.	1072	v. Rosclair	1958
194 Mo.	923, 1072,	52 La. An.	63, 852,	v. Roselli	2276
	2233	905, 1270, 1750, 2100		v. Rosencrans	2513
248 Mo.	2042	112 La.	218, 2272	v. Rosenthal	158, 664, 961,
v. Richey	398	117 Mo.	568, 832,		1244, 1272,
v. Richie	1821		2272		1678, 1712
v. Richman	2273	263 Mo.	851	v. Rosier	288
v. Richmond,		20 Nebr.	1350	v. Ross,	
138 Ia.	1062	16 N. J. L.	216, 309,	18 La.	505
42 La. An.	2354		406	Mo., 178 S. W.	63, 1938
186 Mo.	2513	181 N. C.	177	N. D., 179 N. W.	2513
v. Ricker	1878	32 Or.	398, 852, 1899,	v. Roswell	2085, 2086
v. Ricks	246		1974	v. Rothrock	1356, 1852,
v. Ricksecker	2575	20 W. Va.	2354		2154
v. Riddell	1819, 2056, 2066	12 Wash.	934	v. Rothschild	280
v. Riddle,		v. Robison	1850	v. Routzahn	352
20 Kan.	246	v. Roby	1157, 2243	v. Rowe	1131
179 Mo.	1405	v. Rocker	1645, 2085,	v. Rowell,	
23 N. M.	278		2230, 2231, 2506	172 Ia.	988, 1618, 1983
v. Rider,		v. Rockett	1270	75 S. C.	21
90 Mo.	63, 111, 923,	v. Roderick	198, 247, 248	v. Rowen	1205, 1225
	2277	v. Rodgers	1131	v. Rowley	359, 2183
95 Mo.	238, 2277	v. Rodman	276, 285	v. Roy	1852
v. Ridgely	522	v. Rodriguez,		v. Royal	2349
v. Riggs,		115 La.	20, 246, 247,	v. Royce	821, 2183, 2264
39 Conn.	396, 406		1876, 1906	v. Rozell	1442
110 La.	2354	23 N. W.	1037, 1157	v. Rozum	278, 987, 2277
v. Riley,		v. Roe	1108, 2276	v. Ruck	1079, 2265
42 La. An.	1755	v. Rogers,		v. Rudolph	351
98 S. C.	1438, 1441	30 Ida.	106, 2512	v. Rugan	987, 1270, 2277
v. Riney	580	54 Kan.	1079	v. Rugero	21, 855
v. Rini	833	115 La.	1021, 1040,	v. Ruhl	1021, 1029, 1036,
v. Ripley	987, 1750		1861		1896, 1899
v. Ritter	15, 967, 1106	138 La.	1036, 1104	v. Rule	321, 751
v. Rivers,		145 Minn.	1616, 1803	v. Rumble	689, 1935, 1938
82 Conn.	133, 987	31 Mont.	987, 1810,	v. Rush	2354
58 Ia.	321, 969		2276	v. Russell,	
v. Roach	1079	112 N. C.	852, 1700	90 Ia.	2059
v. Robbins,		119 N. C.	1398, 2497,	33 La. An.	2056
109 Ia.	232, 1938		2540	13 Mont.	1442, 2079
6 Ired.	2088	22 Or.	1350	64 Or.	156
v. Roberts,		101 S. C.	1398, 1409	83 Wis.	2302
1 Dev.	826, 837	v. Rogne	2264	v. Rutherford	1895
95 Kan.	1079, 1853,	v. Rogoway	862, 2071	v. Rutledge,	
	2236, 2237	v. Rolla	2079	135 Ia.	63, 1732
15 Mo.	580	v. Roller	2060	37 Wash.	1977, 2042



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Rutberg	398	State v. Schilling	2551	State v. Seymour	1911, 2016
v. Rutten	994	v. Schlagel	2059, 2060	v. Shackelford	851
v. Ryan,		v. Schmidt,		v. Shadwell,	
70 Ia.	2272	73 Ga.	1750	22 Mont.	246, 248,
30 La. An.	111, 247,	71 Kan.	1159, 2183,		987, 1983
	610		2264	26 Mont.	111, 248
47 Or.	276, 1079	v. Schmulbach	276	v. Shafer,	
v. Ryder	1729, 2020	v. Schneider	1779	22 Mont.	246, 1614
v. Ryno	791, 797, 2016	v. Schnepel	1853, 2277	26 Mont.	363
v. Sadler	1072, 1439, 1442,	v. Schnettler	21, 343	v. Shaffer	1033, 1439, 2550
	1750	v. Scholl	4d	v. Shaft	2060
v. Saidell	166, 1154,	v. Schonberg	2513	v. Shannehan	1034, 1035
	1614, 2115	v. Schooley	1267	v. Shannon	1442, 1853
v. Sale	248, 1447, 1476	v. Schreiber	2497	v. Sharp	1126, 1131, 1976
v. Saleeby	59	v. Schroyer	923	v. Shaw,	
v. Salge	1842	v. Schueller	398	58 N. H.	93, 368, 376
v. Salverson	1230	v. Schultz	1350	73 Vt.	276, 897, 1913
v. Samuel	2230	v. Schulz	4c	89 Vt.	2245, 2527
v. Samuels	1013	v. Schuman	59, 352, 934	75 Wash.	18, 987,
v. Sanborn	901	v. Schweitzer	2088, 2167		1675a
v. Sanders,		v. Schyhart	580, 2072	v. Shca	2512
68 Mo.	1166, 1802	v. Scott,		v. Shean	205, 1620,
76 Mo.	363	1 Hawks	233		1878, 2062
84 N. C.	290	136 Ia.	19	v. Sheets	398, 569
52 S. C.	1003	4 Ired.	247	v. Shelton,	
75 S. C.	2265	24 Kan.	111, 246, 247	64 Ia.	389, 1974
v. Sandiford	246, 247	12 La. An.	1442	2 Jones L.	1362, 1442
v. Sanford	2513	24 La. An.	1897	223 Mo.	580, 2056
v. Sannerud	2529	48 La. An.	1021	16 Wash.	995, 2512
v. Santino	118	49 La. An.	2501	v. Sheltrey	2079
v. Sappienza	2512	39 Mo.	2071	v. Shepherd	105
v. Sargent,		45 Mo.	2008, 2016	v. Sheppard,	
32 Me.	15, 1020	172 Mo.	225, 357	64 Kan.	1356
32 Or.	1135, 1138	37 Nev.	1451	49 W. Va.	266, 390,
v. Sargood	363, 609	89 N. J. L.	2195		396, 1003
v. Sater	923, 987	81 N. C.	1021	v. Sheridan	2264
v. Satterfield	2494	28 Or.	2059	v. Sherman	1890, 2572
v. Sattley	2494	55 Utah	905	v. Sherwood	2085, 2505
v. Sauer,		86 Wash.	2073	v. Shettleworth	1135, 1136
38 Minn.	2497	v. Seals	2086	v. Shields,	
42 Minn.	987, 2277	v. Seawell	1605	45 Conn.	62, 200,
v. Sauls	944	v. Seay	988		923, 987
v. Saunders,		v. Sebastian	398, 1135,	112 Ia.	2185
68 Ia.	309, 1249		1141	13 Mo.	923
37 La. An.	246	v. Secrest	560, 561	13 S. D.	1157
14 Or.	194, 987,	v. Sederstrom	905	v. Shinborn	413, 750,
	1398, 1435, 1447,	v. Sedillo	1983		1977, 2011, 2016
	1452, 1890, 2277	v. Seery	2130, 2272	v. Shive	157
v. Savage,		v. Seevera	133, 280, 923	v. Shockley	21, 987, 2270,
36 Or.	347, 580,	v. Segar	15, 288, 887, 1033		2276
	987, 1684, 2059	v. Seiler	2061	v. Shoemaker	397
86 W. Va.	196	v. Seitz	2059	v. Shonhausen	901
v. Savings Bank	1350	v. Sejours	499, 1404	v. Shores	1912
v. Sawtelle	16, 507, 2183	v. Seligman	321, 1873	v. Shouse,	
v. Sayers	1890	v. Sella	248, 988	188 Mo.	928, 2243
v. Scaduto	111	v. Senn	852, 2349	166 N. C.	105
v. Scampini	2577	v. Severson	811, 1821	v. Showen	969
v. Scates	855	v. Sexton,		v. Shreve	1852
v. Schaefer	2349	91 Kan.	987	v. Shtemme	398
v. Schaeffer,		147 Mo.	1451, 1750	v. Shuff	689, 2501
74 Kan.	1219, 1273,	10 S. D.	1012, 1696	v. Shuford	363
	2158, 2378	37 Wash.	1877	v. Shultz	2239
87 N. J. L.	1136	v. Seymore	276, 390,	v. Shumaker	369
v. Schaffer	391		394, 728, 1976	v. Shuster	923

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
State v. Sibley,	
131 Mo.	923, 924
Mo., 31 S. W.	987,
	1135
v. Sieber	2257
v. Sigler	398
v. Sills	905, 918
v. Silverio	2497
v. Simas	858
v. Simes	492, 497, 498,
	770, 778
v. Simmons,	
74 Kan.	18, 928, 1983
78 Kan.	1404, 2276
143 N. C.	1967
N. C., 110 S. E.	1159,
	2183
v. Simms	232
v. Simon,	
37 La.	905
131 La.	397
70 N. J. L.	254, 1781
71 N. J. L.	21, 2056
v. Simonds	2276
v. Simonis	569, 675
v. Simons	291, 368
v. Simpson,	
91 Me.	2575
N. C., 45 S. E.	852
v. Sims	580, 1876, 2100
v. Sinigal	2272
v. Sioux Falls Brewing	
Co.	2582
v. Skeen	1974
v. Skidmore	105, 111
v. Skillman	797, 2016, 2272
v. Slack	15, 905, 918,
	987, 1270, 2079
v. Slamon	288, 2183, 2264
v. Slattery	205
v. Sleeper	987
v. Sloan,	
55 Ia.	2239
47 Mo.	111, 247, 1750
Mo., 186 S. W.	1839,
	1842
22 Mont.	56, 107
v. Slorah	1168, 1803
v. Slutz	580
v. Smalley	106, 354
v. Smalis,	
11 S. C.	1350
73 S. C.	363
63 Wash.	2027
v. Smallwood,	
75 N. C.	285, 2079
78 N. C.	2349
v. Smarr	142
v. Smith,	
49 Conn.	104, 451,
	1725, 1890, 2044
5 Day	301, 309
54 Ia.	166, 1154, 2062
74 Ia.	1398, 2259c

	Section
State v. Smith,	
84 Ia.	2062
99 Ia.	736, 2060, 2385
102 Ia.	363, 1388, 2060
106 Ia.	104, 2059
124 Ia.	819
129 Ia.	2529
Ia., 128 N. W.	1841
103 Kan.	194, 368,
	369, 934, 1442
48 La. An.	1442
106 La.	1938
135 La.	968
32 Me.	1976
56 Minn.	1157
78 Minn.	460, 2079
72 Miss.	830, 835
80 Mo.	1877
114 Mo.	293
125 Mo.	923, 987, 2277
137 Mo.	1852
164 Mo.	111, 247, 1908
203 Mo.	496, 811
Mo., 222 S. W.	664,
	852, 2129
Mo., 228 S. W.	2276
57 Mont.	1270
Mont., 190 Pac.	749
33 Nev.	18, 2060
68 N. J. L.	794
21 N. M.	2512
75 N. C.	1807
86 N. C.	580
138 N. C.	851, 2300
44 Oh. St.	1350
Phillips	1974
12 Rich.	246, 247
8 S. D.	580, 949
18 S. D.	200, 987
S. D., 183 N. W.	964
7 Vt.	923
26 Wash.	1142
95 Wash.	507, 1821,
	2061
v. Smithmeyer	2183, 2200
v. Smokalem	2273
v. Snider	1135
v. Snook	2321
v. Snover,	
63 N. J. L.	59, 1646
64 N. J. L.	398, 399
65 N. J. L.	398
v. Snow	2575
v. Snowden	2304
v. Snyder,	
67 Kan.	991
86 Vt.	68
84 Wash.	2237, 2341
v. Sogge	2081
v. Soper,	
Ia., 91 N. W.	321
16 Me.	2374
148 Mo.	232, 688, 1700,
1890, 1898, 1899, 1938, 2511	

	Section
State v. Sorter	852, 905,
	1853, 2098
v. Sortor	396
v. South Kingston	2580
v. Southall	321
v. Southern	944, 987, 2277
v. Southern R. Co.	1684,
	2572
v. Sovern	111
v. Spangler	246
v. Spanos	862
v. Sparks	2513
v. Sparrow	1839, 1842
v. Spaugh	276, 390, 851
v. Spaulding	238, 1219, 1639
v. Speaks	569
v. Spears	2062
v. Speight	691, 1614
v. Spell	247
v. Spence	700
v. Spencer,	
45 La. An.	1874
73 Minn.	1141
21 N. J. L.	232, 233
176 N. C.	791, 1977
15 Utah	2059
v. Spendlove	63, 111
v. Spengler	1078
v. Speyer	228, 1938
v. Spiers	784
v. Spillers	821, 2100
v. Spisak	1129
v. Spivey	987, 1270, 2277
v. Spotted Hawk; see	
State v. Yellow Hair.	
v. Sprague,	
149 Mo.	2056
64 N. J. L.	1003, 1618
v. Spray	351
v. Springer	1644, 2529
v. Squires	2264, 2307
v. Staber	21
v. Stackhouse	2061
v. Stade	1684
v. Stair,	
85 Mo.	696, 1157, 1168
87 Mo.	260
v. Staley,	
14 Minn.	824, 832,
	834, 1021, 1028,
	1042
45 W. Va.	1108, 1874
v. Stalker	2060
v. Stallings	860, 923, 1750
v. Stancill	18, 347
v. Standard Oil Co.,	
218 Mo.	2259a, 2259b
Mo., 91 S. W.	94, 2195
61 Nebr.	2257
v. Standley	2062
v. Stanford	2100
v. Stanley	2059
v. Staples	280, 987, 1408
v. Stapp	2056, 2384



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Stark	309, 2061	State v. Storms	851, 861, 862	State v. Taylor,	
v. Starnes	287, 1117	v. Storrs	2191	Ida., 61 Pac.	363
v. Starr	1028	v. Stout	142, 398, 1873	36 Kan.	852, 1853
v. Start	194, 360	v. Stowell	2062	45 La. An.	628, 923, 987, 2277
v. Staton	761, 1131	v. Strait	2183, 2264	144 Minn.	987
v. Stearns	2577	v. Strodemeier	1029, 1051, 2349	64 Mo.	111
v. Stebbins	851, 861, 2056	v. Strong	293, 792, 841, 1157	98 Mo.	923, 987, 2277
v. Steele,		v. Stroope	2535	118 Mo.	987, 1270
117 Minn.	1850	v. Strum	716, 2591	134 Mo.	276, 968, 1003, 1126, 1128, 1131
280 Mo.	988, 2273	v. Stuckey	1033, 1446	136 Mo.	140
v. Steen	254, 1621	v. Stukes	987	202 Mo.	1867, 2276
v. Steeves	905, 1263, 1349	v. Stutches	2513	267 Mo.	1620
v. Stegman	2016	v. Sublett	2062	Mo., 238 S. W.	1675a
v. Stegner	655	v. Sudduth	1071, 1072, 1135	93 N. J. L.	391
v. Steifel	580, 1852	v. Suitor	2183	26 N. M.	1890
v. Stein,		v. Sullivan,		88 N. C.	905
79 Mo.	960, 1263	34 Ida.	2513	3 Or.	1263
Mont., 199 Pac.	987	51 Ia.	1450	54 S. C.	821
v. Steinborn	2421	43 S. C.	1977	56 S. C.	787a, 1033, 1442, 1840
v. Stemmons	2061	v. Summar	923, 928, 968, 1620	57 S. C.	62, 1618, 1974, 1976
v. Stephens	905	v. Summer	1874	70 Vt.	278, 2535
v. Stephenson	1530, 1558	v. Summers	1700	57 W. Va.	772, 1819, 2243
v. Stepp	987	v. Sumpter	1842	v. Teachey	759, 1442
v. Sterrett,		v. Superior Court,		v. Teasdale	1234
68 Ia.	1983, 2326	Nev., 189 Pac.	2195	v. Teeter	242, 2277
71 Ia.	194, 968, 988	44 Wash.	1074	v. Teipner	2203
v. Sterrin	2259d	113 Wash.	7	v. Teissedre	1853
v. Stetson	1079	v. Surry	59	v. Tennebom	720
v. Stevens,		v. Swafford	2303	v. Terline	1810
67 Ia.	2272	v. Swartz	1022, 1434	v. Terre Haute & I. R.	
133 Ia.	1159, 2062	v. Swayze	1890, 1896	Co.	1350
56 Kan.	357	v. Swearingen	2276	v. Terrell	569, 687, 1433, 1438
Mont., 199 Pac.	821	v. Sweeney	1021	v. Terry,	
19 N. D.	1378	v. Sweet	177, 1839	98 Kan.	905
S. D., 92 N. W.	952, 1959	v. Swenson	682, 1072, 1442	172 Mo.	1076
v. Stevenson,		v. Swett	208	91 N. J. L.	1807
26 Mont.	2059	v. Swift,		v. Testerman	363, 2277
98 Or.	851	57 Conn.	1208	v. Tetrault	133, 496, 667
v. Stewart,		120 Ia.	2513	v. Tettaton	363, 2265
51 Ia.	580	10 Nev.	1350	v. Thaden	2271
9 Ired.	2079	v. Swindall	133	v. Thawley	246, 1446
65 Kan.	276	v. Swink	2577	v. Thibau	1003
85 Kan.	1079, 1398, 1409, 2241	v. Swisher	1072	v. Thibodeaux	2100
45 La. An.	246	v. Symmes	1157	v. Thomas,	
117 La.	2079, 2191, 2595, 2241	v. Sysinger	398, 987, 2025, 2339	47 Conn.	78, 1354
142 Mo.	580	v. Tackett	63	111 Ind.	1842, 1908
274 Mo.	2276	v. Talbert	1750	58 Kan.	276
Utah, 193 Pac.	2059, 2085	v. Talbott	987, 1041, 2115, 2260	28 La. An.	905
v. Stice	360	v. Tall	905, 2327	30 La. An.	1781
v. Stickley	689	v. Tapp	852	111 La. An.	247
v. Stiegler	341	v. Tarter	111	135 La.	821, 1873
v. Stimpson	200, 923, 987	v. Tarwater	233, 1639	68 Mo.	2595
v. Stoffels	2264, 2272	v. Tasby	247	99 Mo.	1669, 2363
v. Stokely	2349	v. Tate,		138 Mo.	111
v. Stokes	1878, 1890, 2277	50 La. An.	1671	250 Mo.	851, 860, 861
v. Stone,		156 Mo.	1852	Mo., 180 S. W.	1442, 1451
74 Kan.	398	v. Tatman	363	98 N. C.	2258, 2276
66 Wash.	21, 1003, 1270, 1620	v. Tatro	835		
v. Storey	2041, 2042	v. Tawney	1983		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Thomas,		State v. Tough	581	State v. Vaigneur	293, 821,
103 S. C.	1442	v. Townley	370		822, 843, 850, 852,
3 Strobh.	1126	v. Townsend,			856, 857, 861, 2071
v. Thomason	1125, 1126,	191 Ia.	832, 2081	v. Vale Mills	1586
	1131, 1514	19 Or.	2059	v. Valentine	1375, 1410,
v. Thompson,		7 Wash.	1852		1667
69 Conn.	1079	v. Tozier	57, 290	v. Vallery	246, 2100
79 Ia.	1195	v. Tracey	1012, 1835	v. Van Buskirk	2363, 2375
87 Ia.	2059	v. Trail	111	v. Vance,	
127 Ia.	105, 194, 1700	v. Traveler's Ins. Co.	2578	17 Ia.	2119
106 La.	1807	v. Traylor	925, 2277	119 Ia.	2591
116 La.	1329, 2119	v. Trimble,		32 La. An.	246, 247
80 Me.	561, 2008,	104 Md.	747	38 Utah	21, 1398,
	2016, 2020	Mo., 163 S. W.	1859d		1404, 1450, 1669, 2276
132 Mo.	1750, 2016	v. Troup	2220	v. Vandergraff	1144
141 Mo.	7, 1750, 1819	v. Truax	4c	v. Vandervoort	2079
97 N. C.	105, 354	v. Trueman	1974	v. Vandiver	987
161 N. C.	2265	v. Truskett	63, 2511a	v. Van Duyn	1350
49 Or.	63, 111	v. Trusty,		v. Vanella	660, 728, 1398,
S. C., 110 S. E.	1003	122 Ia.	357, 1481, 1855		1974, 2592
31 Utah	168, 2059,	1 Pen. (Del.)	851	v. Van Hoozer	988
	2086, 2529	v. Tuffy	1350	v. Van Houten	309
Utah, 199 Pac.	59	v. Tulley	2059, 2062	v. Vann	233, 862, 1732
14 Wash.	357, 811	v. Turley,		v. Van Tassel	232, 852, 960,
v. Thomson	222, 1154	153 Ind.	2276, 2282		2183, 2497
v. Thorne	21, 987, 2268,	142 Mo.	321	v. Van Winkle,	
	2276	87 Vt.	1124, 1126,	Del., 86 Atl.	1442
v. Thornhill,			1128	1 Dutch.	1661
174 Mo.	59, 987, 2277	v. Turnbow	2059	18 Ia.	2270
Mo., 76 S. W.	960	v. Turner,		80 Ia.	276, 347, 2059
v. Thornton,		19 Ia.	2071	v. Van Zant	1732
26 Ia.	2059	82 Kan.	821, 855, 2183	v. Vaughan,	
245 Mo.	2270	76 Mo.	194, 1890	152 Mo.	1335
10 S. D.	2485, 2512	110 Mo.	1890	200 Mo.	218
v. Thrailkill	248, 396	119 N. C.	1079	22 Nev.	246, 363
v. Thurtell	347	29 S. C.	246	v. Vaughn,	
v. Tice	693, 1079, 2008	36 S. C.	692, 935,	187 Ia.	1975
v. Tighe	861, 1750, 1974,		1612, 1807, 1985,	145 La.	63
	2079		2277	v. Vey	851, 2264
v. Tilden	398, 933	82 S. C.	205, 2061	v. Vickers,	
v. Tilghman	1398	Wright	1671	47 La. An.	247, 905
v. Till	367	v. Turpin	63, 111, 246, 247	209 Mo.	2155
v. Tillinghast	267, 2085,	v. Tuten	1807	v. Vicknair	826, 2056
	2088	v. Tweedy	1450	v. Vincent,	
v. Tilly	63, 1750	v. Twining	2272	24 Ia.	923, 1125, 1126,
v. Timberlake	1405	v. Twitty	194, 309, 1126,		1127, 1128, 1129,
v. Timmens	205, 2062		1131, 1684		1157, 1975, 1976
v. Tindall	2354	v. U. S. Railways & El.		S. D., 91 N. W.	861
v. Tippet	194	Co.	2509	v. Vines,	
v. Tipton	1141	v. Uhler	2595	34 La. An.	218
v. Tisdale	2582	v. Ulrich	2231, 2339	93 N. C.	1963
v. Tobie	2056	v. Ulsemer	465	v. Vinn	667, 1644, 1671
v. Toby	1144	v. Umble	1442, 2060	v. Virgens	2243
v. Todd	1821	v. Underwood	682, 2354	v. Viscome	1618
v. Toland	2579	v. Unger	367, 1873	v. Vittum	2529
v. Tolla	247, 507	v. Upham	290	v. Vochoski	1136
v. Tomblin	1398, 1404	v. Upton	2059	v. Von Klein	18, 1387, 2240
v. Tompkins	2008, 2016,	v. Urie	2276	v. Von Kutzleben	861
	2027	v. Usher,		v. Von Sachs	836
v. Toohey	351, 416	126 Ia.	1349	v. Voorhies	1977
v. Toombs	1807	136 Ia.	2155	v. Wackernagel	347
v. Torbet	2276	v. Ussery	988	v. Wade	992
v. Tosney	961	v. Uzzo	1033, 1907	v. Wagner,	
v. Totten	142, 1476	v. Vacos	63, 106	61 Me.	1436, 1747, 1748



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Wagner,		State v. Watkins,		State v. West,	
130 Minn.	1350	9 Conn.	10, 40, 390	45 La. An.	1476
v. Wakefield	2044	81 Ia.	778, 2062	46 La. An.	78
v. Waldron	198, 1398	102 Ia.	987	95 Mo.	1890, 2277
v. Waldrop	2132	36 La. An.	246, 1842	24 S. D.	2115
v. Walke	168	65 Me.	987, 1116,	118 Wis.	2235, 2236
v. Walker,		1951, 1978, 2277		v. Westcott	832, 861, 2071
124 Ia.	1079	31 Mo.	2056	v. Westfall	396
133 Ia.	774	159 N. C.	1442, 1447	v. Westmoreland	1157
Ia., 185 N. W.	1890,	v. Watt	833	v. Weston	821, 2071, 2072,
	2130	v. Way,			2073
50 La. An.	1898	5 Nebr.	398	v. Wetherell	2025
77 Me.	1732	76 S. C.	1750	v. Wetter	232
78 Mo.	1750, 1755	6 Vt.	2081, 2088	v. Whalen,	
98 Mo.	580, 2056, 2059	v. Wayman	1195	98 Ia.	2349, 2354
34 Vt.	824, 832	v. Wayne	238	148 Mo.	770
v. Wallace,		v. Weaver,		r. Wheat	1124, 1398, 1406
78 Conn.	1152	182 Ia.	360	v. Wheeler,	
Me., 115 Atl.	2282	165 Mo.	105, 580, 2273	172 Ind.	1350, 1684
9 N. H.	398, 1644,	v. Webb,		116 Ia.	1136
	2529	6 Ida.	968	129 Ia.	21
162 N. C.	2183, 2339	18 Utah	561, 1873,	89 Kan.	351
44 S. C.	142		2026	94 Mo.	205
v. Wallis	2410	r. Weber,		108 Mo.	2061
v. Wallman	2349	156 Mo.	728, 1873	141 N. C.	2192
v. Waln	1012, 1873	272 Mo.	2272	v. Whelehon	1131, 1666,
v. Walsh,		v. Webster	238		1669
44 La. An.	111, 2276	v. Weeden	923	v. Whit	1807
5 Nev.	106	v. Weeks	2203	v. Whitacre	1385a
25 S. D.	1645, 2059	v. Weil	1384	v. Whitbeck	1977
v. Walters,		v. Weir	309	r. White,	
45 Ia.	357	v. Weiss	2513	19 Kan.	2324, 2327
145 La.	905	v. Weissengoff	278, 1890	46 La. An.	1405
7 Wash.	2513	v. Welch,		68 N. C.	142, 1476
v. Walton	321, 1398, 1404	26 Me.	2234, 2235	48 Or.	561, 580, 1079,
v. Waltz	254	191 Mo.	2061		1976
v. Wappenstein	343, 1079,	22 Mont.	390, 1198	15 S. C.	1029, 1051
	2056, 2060	33 Or.	949, 1029	70 Vt.	368, 1219,
v. Ward,		r. Weldon	492, 498, 571		2464
49 Conn.	155, 987,	v. Wellman	923	77 Vt.	1781
	1104, 1106	v. Wells,		10 Wash.	500
107 Kan.	2497	46 Ia.	1013	v. Whiteacre	791, 794, 1385
119 Me.	118, 278	48 Ia.	2062	v. Whitener	398, 667
103 N. C.	1131	54 Kan.	987	r. Whitesell	62, 200
39 Vt.	560	33 Mont.	959	r. Whitfield,	
61 Vt.	177, 354, 451,	1 N. J. L.	56, 63, 1349	70 N. C.	826, 832
	728, 1841, 1974	11 Oh.	1672, 1674,	92 N. C.	1131, 1132
			1677	r. Whiton	1908
v. Warner,		35 Utah	861	r. Whitsett	397, 497
13 Lea	2281, 2282	r. Welsh	1275, 2109	r. Whitson	1450, 2511a
74 Mo.	1135	v. Welsor	678, 1441	r. Whitt	1442
91 Or.	150	v. Wentworth,		r. Whittier	506
v. Warren,		65 Me.	2251, 2270,	v. Whitworth	1841, 2062
124 N. C.	133, 987		2276	r. Wichers	398
41 Or.	952, 1851	37 N. H.	131, 158, 220,	v. Wicker	988, 1890
v. Wart	2059		835, 1766, 1789	v. Wickliff	133, 772
v. Washelesky	2044, 2072,			v. Wideman	1062
	2073	v. Wenzel	7, 368	v. Wievers	1157
v. Washing	852, 861	v. Werner	507, 1138, 1761,	v. Wigger	1807
v. Washington,			1867, 2382	v. Wiggin	1219
49 La. An.	1817, 1828	v. Werra A. F. Co.	1858	v. Wiggins	247, 968, 987,
104 La.	1135	v. Wertz	1051, 1890, 1969		1003, 1031
v. Waterbury	2513	v. West,		v. Wilcox,	
v. Waterman	2061	1 Houst. Cr.	1160	90 Kan.	2298
v. Waters	1781, 1853	11 Ida.	2354		

# LIST OF CASES CITED

Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1853; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Wilcox,		State v. Wilson,		State v. Woodruff	166, 660,
132 N. C.	293, 561,	Ia., 141 N. W.	1807,		693, 1154, 2016
	791, 1976, 2497		1976	v. Woods	1874, 1898
21 S. D.	2595	10 Ired.	2063	v. Woodside	1911
v. Wilhite	1693	24 Kan.	1375, 1387	v. Woodson	111, 247
v. Wilkerson,		23 La. An.	1433	v. Woodward,	
98 N. C.	1205, 1254	43 La. An.	247	1 Houst. Cr. C.	248
164 N. C.	2494	109 La.	507	182 Mo.	852
v. Wilkins,		141 La.	1354, 1398,	191 Mo.	923, 987,
221 Mo.	2056		1678		1270, 2277
158 N. C.	397	72 Minn.	321	v. Woodworth	1111
72 Or.	63, 2339	137 Mo.	2513	v. Woolard	2056
66 Vt.	1135	143 Mo.	321	v. Wooley	2232
v. Wilks	1445	31 N. J. L.	2235	v. Woolridge	1330, 1331,
v. Willard	987, 988, 2277	158 N. C.	59, 988		1349
v. Willet	398, 1135	5 Pen. (Del.)	605	v. Wooten	111, 2529
v. Williams,		15 R. I.	1356, 1608	v. Workman,	
60 Conn.	1873	68 Wash.	861	15 S. C.	609, 619, 2100
20 Ia.	2088	v. Wiltsey	2191	66 Wash.	205, 1620
120 Ia.	2513	v. Windahl	105, 792	v. Worley	1037, 1261
2 Jones L.	1010, 1015	v. Winder	987	v. Wormack	2265
7 Jones L.	2081	v. Windsor	1041	v. Worthen	1835, 1839,
30 La. An.	2079	v. Wines	2272		2512
40 La. An.	111, 246	v. Wing	1398, 1405	v. Worthing	609
46 La. An.	246	v. Wingo	2056	v. Worthingham	2083
111 La.	505, 524, 780,	v. Winkley	1044, 2084,	v. Worthington	1144,
	905, 1828, 1978		2085, 2088, 2115		1781, 2100
120 La.	851	v. Winner	2081	v. Wrand	216
96 Minn.	21, 1750	v. Winslow	1135	v. Wright,	
54 Mo.	276	v. Winston	838, 857	112 Ia.	228, 1447,
136 Mo.	343	v. Winter,			1878, 1938
152 Mo.	2520	72 Ia.	1694, 1938	40 La. An.	581
28 Nev.	21, 1810, 2272	83 S. C.	326, 1326,	48 La. An.	1062
31 Nev.	861		2513	134 Mo.	678, 2501
35 Nev.	2059	v. Wintzingerode	216, 416	141 Mo.	108
65 N. C.	1807	v. Wisdom,		199 Mo.	2513
67 N. C.	1362, 1438,	119 Mo.	9, 275, 852	41 N. J. L.	2522
	1447	8 Port.	347, 1781	75 N. C.	953, 1028,
97 N. C.	1451	v. Wise	1625		1042
129 N. C.	1128	v. Wiseman	118, 2235	20 N. D.	2495
46 Or.	2081	v. Witham	15, 133, 142,	14 Or.	1350
36 Utah	357, 987, 1135		216, 398, 2277	2 Pen. (Del.)	905
49 Utah	2277	v. Wolcott	2056	v. Wylde	2086
27 Vt.	278	v. Wolf,		v. Wylie	2071
Vt., 111 Atl.	341, 745,	112 Ia.	56	v. Wyman	1732
	1684	188 Ia.	1136	v. Wyse	247, 987,
49 W. Va.	1819, 1873	v. Wolff	309, 326		1003, 2277
v. Williamson,		v. Wolfley	150, 2511	v. Yandle	2513
42 Conn.	2056, 2059	v. Won Wen Teung	821,	v. Yanz	1750
57 Mo.	1684		1130, 2277	v. Yates,	
106 Mo.	689, 1938	v. Wong Gee	218	181 Ia.	1821, 1828,
65 S. C.	987, 1270, 2276	v. Wong Quong	2089		2060
v. Willing	861, 866	v. Wong Si Sam	2059, 2060	99 Minn.	21, 106
v. Willingham	949, 1891,	v. Wood,		v. Ybarra	1828
	1963	49 Conn.	326	v. Yeager	398
v. Willis,		17 Ia.	2042	v. Yearwood	177
71 Conn.	815, 822, 823,	124 Mo.	2354	v. Yee Gueng	1043, 1446
	855, 862, 1048	53 N. H.	687, 1700,	v. Yee Guck	1079, 2219
9 Ia.	2059		1726, 2363	v. Yellow Hair	778, 987,
119 Mo.	2245	53 Vt.	1362, 1431		1675a, 2059, 2512
v. Wilmbusse	1852, 1853	33 Wash.	398	v. Yerger	153
v. Wilson,		v. Woodard	1669	v. Yokum,	
22 Ia.	2088	v. Woodly	1015	11 S. D.	246, 2512
157 Ia.	1976	v. Woodrow	1750, 2239	14 S. D.	246



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
State v. York	825, 832	Steamboat Albatross v. Wayne	1960	Steeple v. Downing	1651
v. Young,		Steamboat Co. v. Brockett	1078	Steeple v. Newton	987
104 Ia.	1442	Steamboat Clipper v. Logan	1977	Steer v. Little	769, 770, 771, 772
52 La. An.	833	Steamboat Neptune, The	6	Steffen v. Bauer	613
107 La.	1476	Steamboat Thames v. Erskine	2164	Stegall v. Stegall's Adm'r	1492, 1605, 2063
99 Mo.	1051, 1263	Steamboat Wisconsin v. Young	1195	v. Thurman	2378
119 Mo.	852	Steamship Ville du Havre	285	v. Wright	2432
153 Mo.	580	Stearman v. R. Co.	905	Steidtman v. Lay Co.	2464
39 N. H.	580	Stearns v. Bank	905, 907	Stein v. Ashby	1665
67 N. J. L.	851, 861	v. Cox	406	v. Bowman	1483, 1487, 2235, 2336
93 N. J. L.	18, 952	v. Doe	150, 1214, 1335, 1674	v. Fogarty	2444
N. J. L., 103 Atl.	18	v. Field	682	v. Leeper	1350
9 N. D.	2497	v. Gosselin	581	v. Stein	1336, 1674
67 Vt.	418	v. Hendersass	1469	Steinbach v. Ins. Co.	758, 907, 912
v. Zarlenga	1411	v. Kennedy	1067	Steinbrunner v. R. Co.	1698, 1699
v. Zdanowicz	488, 2252, 2276	v. Long	66, 76	Steinburg v. Meany	1890
v. Zeigler	2512	v. Vincent	1890	Steiner v. Snow	1653
v. Zeller	862	Stearns Lumber Co. v. Howlett	1408	v. Trainum	1291, 1960
v. Zellers	111, 247, 1329, 1838, 1839, 1890	Stebbing v. Spicer	2529	Steinham v. U. S.	2056
v. Zorn	246, 1446, 1451	Stebbins v. Anthony	2239	Steinhofel v. R. Co.	1750
State Bank v. Brewer	736, 1913	v. Duncan	1268, 1306, 1320, 1404, 1513	Steininger v. Hoch's Ex'r	285
v. Brown	1521	v. Miller	89	Steinke v. Graves	1633
v. Carr	770	v. Sackett	585, 1258	Steinke's Will	1736
v. Dutton	1062	Steber v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.	1012	Steinkeller v. Newton	761, 1213
v. Ensminger	1280	Stecher Lith. Co. v. Inman	1072	Steinkuehler v. Wempner	2500
v. Hutchinson	1766, 2337, 2339	Steel v. Pope	1677	Steinman v. McWilliams	72, 73
v. McCabe	1073	v. Williams	1195	Steinmetz v. Versailles & O. Turnpike Co.	2575
v. Rhoads	529	Steele v. Com.	363, 928	Steinway, Re	1858
v. Young	2433	v. Dart	803	Steketee v. Kimm	1244, 1729
State Bank & T. Co. v. Evans	1213	v. Helm	1938	v. Newkirk	2383
State Historical Ass'n v. Silverman	2465	v. Logan	2354	Stell v. Prickett	1587
State Industrial Com. v. Stiles Co.	4c	v. Lord	1198	Stembridge v. Southern R. Co.	1976
State Life Ins. Co. v. Johnson	340	v. People	56, 309	Stemmler v. New York	2593
State National Bank v. Butler	2415	v. Price	271, 1736, 2163	Stengel v. Stengel	1411
State Tax Commission v. Tennessee C. I. & R. Co.	2264	v. Queen	1681	Stennett v. Ins. Co.	1947
Statham v. Ferguson	613, 2123	v. R. Co.	2509	Stennil v. Brown	1681, 2164
v. State	770	v. Schriker	1335	Stephan v. Metzger	750, 1198, 1539
v. Statham and Gaekwar of Baroda	2566	v. State,		Stephen v. Gwenap	1456
Stauffer v. Young	38, 89, 233, 344, 392	83 Ala.	194	v. State	832, 1135, 1136
Staunton Coal Co. v. Bub	208	33 Fla.	111, 246, 247	Stephens, Re	797
Stayner v. Droitwich	1364, 1644, 1670, 1703	76 Miss.	852	v. Anderson	2572
Stead v. Heaton	1465, 1476	87 Tex. Cr.	2232	v. Bernays	6
Steadman v. Arden	1858	v. Stewart	2317	v. Collison	2336, 2337
v. Steadman	1304	Steele-Smith G. Co. v. Potthast	2363	v. Com.	949, 1003
Steagald v. State	1398, 1404	Steeley v. State	2338	v. Cotterell	2237
Stealey v. Kansas City	2575	Steen, Ex parte	2159	v. Elliott	1158, 1160, 1164, 1698
Steam Stone Cutter Co. v. Scott	714	v. Modern Woodmen	7a	v. Foster	1884
		v. Santa Clara V. M. & L. Co.	987	v. Hoffman	1387, 1388, 1404, 2520
		v. State	1853	v. McCloy	1778
		Steene v. Aylesworth	944	v. Mattox	2313
		Steenerson v. R. Co.	1700, 2566	v. People	363, 398, 747, 987, 1005, 1028, 1873, 1874

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Stephens v. State	609	Stevens v. State,		Stewart v. Nashville	2507
v. Vroman	1053	3 Ark.	2570	v. N. C. R. Co.	2122
v. Westwood	1680	143 Ark.	2062	v. People	38, 1126,
v. Williams	1779	76 Ga.	2239		1194, 1195
Stephenson v. Baumister	1681	50 Kan.	1188	v. R. Co.,	
v. Cook	2245	19 Nebr.	1853	11 Ia.	2354
v. Doe	1239, 1651	84 Nebr.	246	141 Ind.	2433
v. Kilpatrick	254	v. Stevens,		78 Minn.	792
v. Raleigh	19	150 Mass.	581	v. Ramsay	2195
v. State	1168	72 N. H.	1736, 2523	v. Redditt	689, 1938
v. Stephenson	1738	56 N. J. Eq.	2505	v. Rossiter	1388
Stepp v. State	2155	v. Tampa El. Co.	2509	v. Sherman	2119
Steptoe v. Flood	2349	v. United G. & E. Co.	2510	v. Sloss-Sheffield S. &	
Sterling v. Detroit	792	v. Vancleve	233, 1735,	I. Co.	561, 1339
v. Park	2456		1738	v. Spedden	1871
v. Potts	1195	v. Webb	1807	v. State,	
v. Union Carbine Co.	223	v. West	1956, 1963	42 Fla.	1003
Sterling L. Co. v. Stinson	1073	v. Whitcomb	2222	58 Fla.	950, 1263
Stern v. Loewenthal	406	v. Worcester	2203	58 Ga.	2236
v. People	1668	Stevenson v. Com.	1043	184 Ind.	57
v. Stanton	782	v. Dunlap	1298, 1300	19 Oh.	111, 778,
Stern & Sons, Inc. v.		v. Ebervale Coal Co.	561		1951, 1976
Chagnon	1382, 2116	v. Gunning's Estate	1106,	Tex. Cr., 67 S. W.	1117
Sternan v. Marx	1966		1108, 1109, 2027	v. Stewart,	
Sternberg v. Callanan	1275	v. Haynes	1154	177 Mass.	1737
Sternheim v. Bureky	1705	v. Hoy	377, 1268	N. J. Eq., 114	
Sterrett v. Bull	1518, 1521,	v. McReary	2083	Atl.	1066, 2067
	1537	v. Moody	1186, 1677,	41 Wis.	609
Stetson v. Gulliver	1275, 1651		1681, 2373	v. Swanzy	1271, 1677,
Stetson's Will	2591	v. Morris	2336		1681, 1684
Stettauer v. White	751	v. Stevenson	2477	v. Todd	2312
Stevellie v. Lowry	2158	v. Stewart	38, 39, 392	v. Trenier	2167
Stevens v. Beach	944, 1003,	v. U. S.	106	v. U. S.	276, 1684
	1007	Steverson v. McLeod		v. Valley R. Co.	1074
v. Beardsley	392	Lumber Co.	2450	v. Van D. C. Co.	2509
v. Boston Elev. R.		Stevison v. Earnest	1186,	v. Walker	1267, 1736,
Co.	282, 283		2183		2329, 2503
v. Com.	2059, 2497	Steward v. Scott	1239	Steyner v. Droitwich	1179,
v. Continental C. Co.	1073,	v. State	1873		1598
	1076, 2510	Stewart v. Allison	530, 1352,	Stice, Ex parte	580, 2268,
v. Dudley	1873		1632, 1635		2279
v. Ellsworth	718	v. Anderson,		Stickles v. Townsend	1911
v. Friedman	1719	111 Ia.	418, 1974	Stickney v. Hughes	18, 2433
v. Hatch	2408	59 Ind.	2409	v. Stickney	2340, 2341
v. Irwin	1312, 1985	v. Bank	1871	Stickney's Estate	1350
v. Leonard	1041, 1511	v. Barre & M. T. &		Stiebel v. Grosberg	2410,
v. Miles	1777	P. Co.	2509		2432
v. Miller	1072	v. Biease	2132	Stieglitz v. Stieglitz	2046
v. Montgomery	2356	v. Butler	1257	Stier v. Oskaloosa	2572
v. Moulton	1554	v. Cheatham	1777	Stiles v. Beed	2520
v. Myers	1212	v. Com.	200	v. Eastman	1141
v. Northern Cent. R.		v. Conrad's Adm'r	18	v. Homer	1521
Co.	1558	v. Doak Bros.	1049, 1082	Still v. Hoste	2474
v. Oliver	1681	v. Equit. M. L. Ass'n	1693	v. Hutto	2531
v. Olson	1681	v. Everts	1721	v. State	1434
v. People	688, 976	v. Fleming	2416	Stille v. Lynch	529
v. Pinney,		v. Hood	901, 913, 1389	Stilling v. Thorp	1696
3 B. & Ald.	2447	v. Hunter	150	Stillingfleet v. Parker	1273
2 J. B. Moore	2447	v. Iowa C. R. Co.	2509	Stillman v. Stillman	2236,
8 Taunt.	2447, 2456	v. L. B. Land Co.	1680		2239
v. R. Co.	1621	v. Lispenard	229	Stillwater Turnpike Co.	
v. Reed	2083	v. Massengale	1254, 2222	v. Coover	1951
v. State,		v. Morris	6, 747, 754	Stillwell Mfg. Co. v.	
Ala., 35 So.	851, 1974	v. Muirhead	1062	Phelps	561, 660



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Stinehouse v. State	1890	Stodder v. Hoffman	608	Stone v. State,	
Stinson v. R. Co.	463	Stoddert v. Manning	2222,	Ga., 45 S. E.	342, 527,
v. Russell	2168		2223		1871, 2042,
Stipp v. Claman	1878	Stoeber v. Minneapolis			2059, 2060
Stirling v. Sterling	1618	St. P. & S. S. M. R.		4 Humph.	363, 390
v. Wagner	1174	Co.	1356	v. Stone	1053, 1076
Stith v. Peckham	2437	Stoeber v. Whitman	1223,	v. Tupper	715
Stitt v. Rat Portage L.		1257, 1644, 1683		v. Vance	529
Co.	19, 2497, 2498	Stoffer v. State	1009	v. Varney	66, 73, 74
Stittgen v. Rundle	2572	Stoher v. St. L. I. M. &		v. Victor E. Co.	1417
Stitzel v. Miller	2016, 2026	S. R. Co.	437	v. Watson	568, 1722
Stobart v. Dryden	1033, 1431,	Stokes v. Carne	1647	Stone & Webster E. Co.	
	1432, 1505	v. Dawes	1573, 1605,	v. Melovich	461
Stober v. McCarter	610, 2237,		1670, 2143	Stoner v. Ellis	1084, 1678
	2336, 2337	v. Hardy	1382	v. Zachary	2415, 2464
Stock v. General Baking		v. People	21, 105, 106, 110,	Stones v. Byron	1911
Co.	2491		111, 247, 389,	v. Menhem	1163
Stock's Will	689		987, 1005	Stoops v. Smith	2465
Stockbridge v. Quicke	1644,	v. State,		Stoppert v. Nierle	64, 133,
	1645	5 Bart.	2265		1010, 1013, 1141
v. W. Stockbridge	1267,	18 Ga.	923, 1985	Storer v. Gowen	2113, 2115
	2139, 2141	Stolae v. R. Co.	2307, 2309	v. Markley	20
Stockbridge Iron Co. v.		Stou v. Daly Min. Co.	199,	Storer's Will	681
Cone Iron Works	1862		249, 250, 1984	Storey v. Bank	2008
v. Hudson Iron Co.	2417,	Stolp v. Blair	377, 1125, 1126,	v. Flanagan	1651, 2144
	2498		1127, 1128, 1131	v. Lord Lennox	1856c,
Stockdale v. Bushby	2474	Stolz v. Scott	1521		2218, 2319
v. Escant	1212	Stolze v. Term. Co.	463, 714	v. State	246
v. Hansard	2378	Stomne v. Hanford P.		v. U. S. Fidelity & G.	
v. Young	1188, 1189,	Co.	571	Co.	2594
	1195, 2522	Stone v. Blackburn	586	Storm v. Green	1246
Stocken v. Collin	2152	v. Boscawen Mills	1876	v. U. S.	944, 1856c
Stocker v. Foster	1576	v. Carter	1876	Storms v. Storms	2237
Stockett v. Watkins	1083	v. Case	2508	Storr v. Scott	1060
Stockfleth v. De Tastet	815,	v. Com.	1066, 1576	Storrie v. Grand Trunk	
	850, 2183	v. Covell	714, 718	El. Co.	1951
Stockham v. Malcolm	246, 950	v. Daily	2408	Storrs v. Wetmore	2222
Stocking v. Fairchild	2160	v. Delaware L. & W.		Story v. De Armond	2358
v. State	2056, 2081	R. Co.	463	v. Gammell	2416
Stockley v. Cissna	1573	v. Fitts	1651	v. R. Co.	288, 1807
Stockman v. Hampton	1211,	v. Goss	2212	v. Saunders	905, 912,
	1252	v. Hubbard	2025		913, 1028, 1126,
Stocks v. Ellis	983	v. Huffine	950		1502, 1873
Stockslager v. M. L. &		v. Ins. Co.,		v. State,	
S. Institution	2526	68 Ia.	64	99 Ind.	413, 1157
Stockton v. Demuth	905,	71 Mich.	460, 779	68 Miss.	329, 1263
	907, 1043	v. Jarbalo State Bank	1859e	Stotler v. Chicago & A.	
v. State	1853	v. L. B. & B. St. R. Co.	792	R. Co.	571
v. Williams	1586	v. Langworthy	68a, 201,	Stoudenmire v. Brown	1354
Stockton C. H. & A. W.			1244	v. Williamson	1691, 1693,
v. Ins. Co.	451	v. Montgomery	530		1694, 1697
Stockwell v. Blamey	1082	v. Moody	2416	v. Wilson	944, 1770
v. R. Co.	1151, 1160, 1802	v. Moore	1719	Stough v. Ogden	2525
v. Silloway	1225	v. Nash	1663	Stouse v. State	235
v. Stockwell's Estate	1539	v. Pendleton	201, 461	Stout v. Rassel	987
Stockyards Loan Co. v.		v. People	1835, 1853	v. Rigney	1225
Nichols	738, 747	v. R. Co.,		v. Sands	291, 907
Stoddard v. Grand Trunk		N. H., 55 Atl.	93, 199	v. Slattery	2165
W. R. Co.	456	88 Wis.	1721	v. State	177, 968
v. Ham	2413	v. Sanborn	1198, 2104	v. Wood	586
v. Mix	1195	v. Seattle	1700	Stovel v. Coles	1859c
v. Winchester	681	v. Spencer	2442	Stover v. Boswell	2083
Stoddard Mfg. Co. v.		v. State,		v. People	2273
Miller	2466	105 Ala.	841, 861	Stow v. Betts	2200



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Stow v. Converse	55, 64, 66, 73, 1983	Streeter v. Bartlett	1290	Strunk v. Ochiltree	1029
v. Grand Rapids	1350	v. Gamble	2498	Struth v. Decker	1938, 1958
v. People	1195	v. Marshalltown	1808	Struthers v. R. Co.	714
Stowe v. Bishop	1951	v. Sawyer	785	Strutton v. Com.	1807
v. Grand Trunk Pacific	1053	Streeter's Dependents v. Hunter	1378	Stuart v. Allen	2195
v. Querner	1189	Streton's Estate	2523	v. Burlington Co. Farmer's Exchange	291
Stowell v. Flagg	529	Streppone v. Lennon	2465	v. Doyle	285
v. Hazelett	1083	Stretch v. Stretch	1466	v. Fitzgerald	1267
Strachan, Re	1856c, 2319	Stribling v. State	2235	v. Havens	2220
v. Jones	1842	v. Stewart	2054	v. Lovell	406
Strader v. Snyder	74	Strickland v. Babcock Lumber Co.	1320, 1513	v. Pederson	1684
Strafford's (Earl of) Trial	2378	v. Capital C. Mills	2313, 2315	v. People	136
Strahan, Re	2282	v. Hudson	1388	v. Swanzy	1681
Strahl v. Western G. Co.	2441	v. Johnson	2465	Stuart's Estate	2474
Strain v. Fitzgerald	2105	v. State	1938, 2071	Stubblings v. Curtis	1890
v. Murphy	1225	Strickler v. Todd	18	Stubbs v. Houston	229, 1938
Strait v. State	857	Strimpfler v. Roberts	89, 1219, 1246, 1680	Stubly v. Beachboard	321
Straker v. Graham	2352, 2353, 2354	Stringer v. Com.	1521	Stuckey v. Bellah	689, 1958
Stranahan v. East Had-		v. Marshall	15	Stuckslager v. Neel	1549, 1560
dam	1062	Stringfellow v. State	770, 778, 2071	Studdy v. Sanders	2313, 2529
Strand v. Grinnell A. G. Co.	2354	Stroberg v. Merrill	23	Studebaker v. Faylor	1330
Strang v. People	200, 246, 391, 933, 950, 987, 1005, 1135, 2079	Stroble v. New Albany	2552	Studebaker B. M. Co. v. Endom	1960
v. State	309	Strode v. Beall	1777	Studebaker Mfg. Co. v. Dickson	1195
v. Wilson	529	v. Churchill	1681	Studwell v. Bush Co.	2442
Strange v. Crowley	2105	v. Russell	2426, 2470	Stukas v. Warfield P. H. Co.	1750
v. Donohue	1777	v. Washer	7	Stuke v. Glaser	1303
Stranham v. Cullington	1364	Strohauer v. Voltz	2433	Stukeley v. Butler	2094
Strasser v. Goldberg	581	Strohm v. R. Co.	663	Stull v. Stull, Nebr., 96 N. W. 197 Pa.	1081, 2354
v. Stabeck	791	Strom v. R. Co.	2218	Stumm v. Hummel	166
Strata Mercella's Case, Abbot of	1152, 1154, 1160, 1211, 1347	Strong v. Brewer	693, 1779	Stumore v. Shaw	1951
Stratford v. Ames	1244, 1391	v. Carver C. G. Co.	2465	Stump v. Hughes	1312, 1513
v. Sanford	744	v. Dodds	2304	v. Napier	529
Straton v. Rastall	2432	v. Runnels	1681	Stumpf v. Board of Supervisors	4c
Stratton v. Athol Savings Bank	2408	v. State,		Sturbridge v. Franklin	2505
v. Dole	206, 213, 1623	85 Ark.	280, 952	Sturdevant's Appeal	225, 2491
v. Hawks	1225	114 Ark.	851	Sturdy v. Arnand	2455
v. Henderson	1911	86 Ind.	321	Sturge v. Buchanan	1208, 2119, 2153
v. Nichols L. Co.	282, 969	v. Stevens Point	613	Sturges v. Hart	1195
v. Oregon City	2577	v. Stewart	1062	Sturgis v. Baker	2120
v. State	928	Strosser v. Ft. Wayne	1956	v. McElroy	2498
Stratton's Case	194a	Strother v. Barr	4, 1174, 1246, 2091	v. Robbins	15, 944
Strauss v. Heiss	1350	v. Christy	1651	v. State	904, 905, 1079, 2272
v. Hutson	2235	v. Lucas	2005, 2008, 2016, 2573	v. Work	2477
Straw v. Greene	2115	v. State	2512	Sturla v. Freccia	1495, 1632, 1633, 1634, 1661, 1670, 1672, 1674
Strawbridge v. Clamond Tel. Co.	1199	v. Willan	1647	Sturm v. Ins. Co.	18, 1390
Strayer v. Gimbel Bros.	2465	Stroud v. Com.	1755	v. Jeffree	1208
Streator I. Tel. Co. v. Continental T. C. Co.	2496	v. Springfield	1564, 1570, 1587, 2141	Sturtevant v. Robinson	1267, 2107
Strebin v. Lavengood	966, 1044, 1351	Stroud Election Case	2287	v. Wallack	1073
Strecker v. Railson	1681	Stroupe v. Hewitt	2410	Stutsman v. Sharpless	680, 689, 1938
Street v. Broadbus	2349	Strubinger v. Ownby	1351	Styles v. Decatur	438
v. Brown	1858	Struckmeyer v. Lamb	2323		
v. Farmers' Elev. Co.	1354	Strudgeon v. Sand Beach	252, 1721, 2220		
v. Nelson	1246	Strudwick v. Brodnax	907, 912, 916, 1389		



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Styles v. Gray	1225	Sullivan Timber Co. v.		Supreme Lodge v. Wilson	7a
Subiaco Coal Co. v.		Louisville & N. R. Co.	2124	Supreme Lodge K. of P.	
Krallman	688	Sulphur Mines Co. v.		v. Bradley	1073
Subpœnas Duces Tecum,		Thompson	1778, 1956	Supreme Ruling v. Hos-	
Re	2200	Suman v. Harvey	2463, 2472	kings	7a
Suckow v. State	1012	Summer v. Crawford	1021	Supreme Tent v. Stens-	
Suddeth v. State	821	Summerbell v. Summer-		land	1073, 2537
Suddith v. Boone	568	bell	2067	Surbaugh v. Butterfield	1078
Sudlow v. Warshing	1651,	Summerhill v. Darrow	1503	Surber v. State	1072
	2026	Summerlin v. R. Co.	586,	Surface v. Bentz	2306
Suffolk v. Green	2257		1976	Surtees v. Hubbard	1202,
v. Greenville	1179, 1199	v. State	293		1206, 1234
Suffolk & C. R. Co. v.		Summerour v. Felker	1291	Susewind v. Lever	738
West End L. & I. Co.	1640	Summers v. Ins. Co.	1947	Sussex v. Temple	1082, 1257
Sugar C. C. M. Co. v.		v. M'Kim	787, 803	Sussex Peerage Case	564,
Peterson	451	v. Moseley	1894, 2193, 2200		1271, 1476, 1528,
Sugar Pine D. & L. Co.		v. State	2203		1576, 1697, 1953
v. Garrett	1201	Summersett v. Adamson	1256	Sutch's Estate	1890, 2054,
Sugden v. St. Leonards	112,	Summerville v. Summer-			2431
	271, 1129, 1267,	ville	2083, 2085	Suteliffe v. Iowa S. F.	
	1362, 1420, 1576,	Summitt v. U. S. Life		M. Ass'n	1081, 1750
	1714, 1735, 1736,	Ins. Co.	1684	Suter v. Page	916
	2052, 2106	Summons v. State	4, 1362,	Suther v. State	205, 2062
Suggett v. Kitchell	1290, 2048		1386, 1395, 1397,	Sutherland v. Hankins	2245
Suick v. Krom	664		1398, 2098	v. Ins. Co.	2510
Sullivan, Re	2065	Sumner v. Blair	38, 1890	v. Williams	689
v. Blount	1564, 1582	v. Cooke	619, 2336	v. Young	1644
v. Boston Elevated R.		v. Jones	1938	Sutor v. McLean	1404
Co.	2509	v. Sebec	1644, 2159	v. Wood	1003
v. Collins,		v. State,		Sutro & Co. v. Heilbut	
20 Colo.	2464	11 Fla.	2056	Symons & Co.	2440
107 Wis.	1390	Fla., 33 So.	1012	Sutter v. Rose	1058
v. Com.	457	Sun Fire Office; see Sun		v. State	1725
v. D. & H. Canal Co.	458	Ins. Office.		Sutton v. Com.	1852
v. Foley	1938	Sun Ins. Co. v. Earle	1201	v. Devonport	291
v. Fugazzi	916	Sun Ins. Office v. Western		v. Gregory	1518
v. Girson	285, 382, 716, 720	W. M. Co.	662, 1921,	v. Griebel	2410
v. Godkin	1555		1976, 2580	v. Johnson	194
v. Goldman	2515	Sun Mut. Ins. Co. v.		v. Lumber Co.	2442
v. Hense	379, 1225,	Barrel Co.	377	v. McLoud	1195, 1196,
	1651, 2580	Sun Printing & P. Ass'n			1225
v. Hill	2195, 2375	v. Edwards	2442, 2465	v. People	2514
v. Kuykendall	95, 668, 669	v. Schenck	74	v. R. Co.	905, 2578
v. Lear	1943	Sunberg v. Babcock	1244	v. Sadler	2500
v. Manston M. Co.	377	Sunbury & E. R. Co. v.		v. Snohomish	1835
v. Nicoulin	1862, 2183	Cooper	1350	v. State	68
v. Norris	913, 1124, 1389	Sundvall v. Interstate		v. Walters	1877
v. O'Leary	406, 987	Iron Co.	2415	v. Weber	2442
v. Oshkosh	252	Superior Drill Co. v.		Suttrell v. Dry	2355
v. R. Co.	2510	Carpenter	1078	Svendsen's Estate	1503, 1603
v. Richardson	1239, 2145	Supolski v. Ferguson &		Swain v. Cheney	392, 463,
v. Salt Lake	199	L. Foundry Co.	571		1541, 1548, 1560
v. State,		Supple v. Suffolk S. Bank	1676	v. Comstock	2572
66 Ala.	1512, 1807	Supplee v. Hall	2298	v. Lewis	1206
102 Ala.	1447	Supples v. Lewis	1244	v. State	1270
66 Ark.	830	Supreme Council v.		Swaine v. Marriott	2520
101 Ga.	1750	Brashears	1671	Swaisland v. Grand	
121 Ga.	359	v. Champe	1201	Trunk R. Co.	2319
92 Me.	96	v. Conklin	1496	Swamscot M. Co. v.	
188 Mass.	291	Supreme Lodge v.		Walker	377
144 Mich.	1310	Fletcher	1671	Swan v. Com.	351
58 Nebr.	1750, 2071	v. Gustin	457, 1976	v. Gilbert	1959
6 Tex. App.	1398,	v. Jagers	1384	v. Middlesex	561, 714,
	1404, 1405	v. Meyer	5, 7a, 2388		1040, 1942, 1943

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2254; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Swan v. People	1013, 1014	Swift v. M'Tiernan	1640	<b>T</b>	
v. Polk	2027	v. Madden	1037, 1263	T. F. Oakes, The	457
v. State	150	v. Perry	1911	Tabb v. Cabell	1066
v. Thompson	207	v. Rutkowski	1158	Taber v. New York P.	
v. Thurman	1530	v. Short	905, 907	& B. R. Co.	907, 2008
Swan's Estate	689	v. Stevens	1196	Tabor v. Judd	1018, 1913
Swancey v. Parrish	1290,	v. Swift,		v. Tabor	1198
	1312	4 Hagg. Eccl.	2252	v. Van Tassel	1086
Swank v. Phillips	15	9 La. An.	382	v. Ward	7
Swann v. Buck	1350	v. Tyson	6	Tacey v. Noyes	1141
v. State	1856	v. Wiley	1304	Tacket v. May	2233
Swanson v. Hood	569,	v. Withers	1040	Tackman v. Brother-	
	2090a	Swigart v. State	222, 1168	hood	460, 1073
v. Mellen	681	Swiger v. Swiger	1352, 2498	Tacoma R. & P. Co. v.	
v. Pacific Shipping		Swindell v. Ford	1299, 1320,	Hays	905
Co.	1750		2529	Tadlock v. Lloyd	2090
Swanson Automobile Co.		v. Harper	406	Taft v. Com.	1043
v. Stone	1195	v. Warden	1779	v. Fiske	1064, 1067
Swanzy v. Kolb	582	Swing v. Cloquet Lum-		v. Little	759, 760, 1250,
Swartz v. Chickering	745,	ber Co.	1256		1387, 2115
	1898	v. Sparks	1543	v. Simpson	2185
Swartz's Will	2381	Swink v. French	1503	v. Taft	969
Swearengen v. Gulick	1195	Swinerton v. Stafford	2139	Tagert v. State	1195, 1974
v. Wabash R. Co.	41	Swinney v. Booth	728	Taggart v. Bosch	1890
Sweat v. Rogers	1893	v. Patterson	321	v. U. S.	2511
Swedish-Amer. Tel. Co.		Swire v. Bell	1510	Tagiasco v. Molinari	1513
v. Fidelity & C. Co.	1859b,	Swisher's Case	1441	Tague v. Caplice Co.	1066
	2264, 2275	Switzer v. Baker	688	Tahbel, Ex parte	4d, 2252
Sweeney v. Erving	2509	v. Boulton	1407	Tainter v. Wentworth	2442
v. Hjul	1877	v. Knapp	2105	Tait v. Hall	658, 1777
v. Sweeney,		Swope v. Donnelly	112	v. Locke	2416
119 Ga.	1078, 1195,	v. Seattle	1907	Takamori v. Kanai	2327
	1664	v. Ward	21, 1778, 1779	Talbert v. State	2501
121 Ga.	1129	Sword v. Fields	2503	Talbot v. Bradford	1378, 2164
Sweenie v. State	1853	Swygart v. Willard	229, 1021,	v. Clark	18, 586
Sweet v. Gilmore	957, 987,		1938, 1975	v. Cusack	735, 745, 747,
	1985	Swygert v. Taylor	2141		748, 749, 750
v. Modern Woodmen	7a	Sybray v. White	1070	v. Jansen	1678, 1680
v. Sherman	1108	Sydleman v. Beckwith	1913,	v. Marshfield	2312
v. Spencer	1779		1984	v. Peoples	1271
v. Sweet	2046	Syers v. Jonas	2440	v. Seeman	1684, 2573
v. Tuttle	1960	Sykes v. Beck	1218, 1244,	v. Wilkins	1329
v. Wright	1963		1272, 1678	Talcott v. Goodwin	1225, 1651
Sweetland v. Porter	2529	v. Beckwith	1244	v. Harris	1073
Sweetman's Est.,		v. Portland	283, 1003,	Taliaferro v. Ives	1539
Griffiths v. Johnson	1737,		1700	v. U. S.	368
	2523	v. State	398, 951	Tall v. Baltimore S. P.	
Sweetser v. Bates	253, 392	Sykes' Goods	1736	Co.	1951
v. Lowell	2012	Sylvester v. Ammons	717	Tallassee F. M. Co. v.	
Sweigart v. Richards	704	v. Casey	283	R. Co.	2432
Sweikhart v. Hanrahan	2340	v. Crapo	1084	Talley v. Moore	1302
Swensen v. Bender	682	v. Paper Co.	2442	Tallman v. Dutcher	586
Sweepston v. U. S.	1352	v. State,		Tally v. Butterworth	2050
Swerderger v. Hopkins	1458,	71 Ala.	276, 1374	v. Cross	2027
	1968	Fla., 35 So.	396, 770,	Talmadge v. Baker	207
Swetland v. Miles	2329		905, 961, 1807,	v. Northrop	2352, 2354
Swett v. Shumway	451, 660,		2099	Tampa El. Co. v. Barber	2509
	1022	42 Tex.	78	Tan Beko v. Insular	
Swicard v. Hooks	2529	Sylvius v. Kosek	2047	Collector	1154, 2186
Swift v. Dean	586	Symes, Ex parte	2257	Tan Chiong Sian v.	
v. Dickerman	404, 406	v. Goodfellow	4e	Inchausti & Co.	2580
v. Fitzhugh	1195, 1213,	Symmons v. Blake	406	Taney v. Kemp	2223
	1225, 1651, 2109	Symonds v. Carter	406	Tang Tun, In re	1355
v. Ins. Co.	266, 1715	v. Lloyd	2465		



10

0

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Taylor v. Witham	1464	Tennant v. Dudley	1062	Territory v. McKern	658
v. Wood	2269, 2270	v. Hamilton	451, 464, 1061	v. McNab	1938
v. Youngs	1651	Tennessee & C. R. Co.		v. Maldonado	1138
Taylor's Trustees	2528	v. Danforth	1521	v. Meredith	784
Taylor's Will	797	Tennessee C. I. & R.		v. Meyer	288, 660
Taylor, B. & H. R. Co.		Co. v. Haley	949, 1117	v. Neatherlin	1079
v. Warner	225, 792	v. Hansford	664	v. Nishi	2061
Taylor Jr. & Sons v.		v. Linn	254	v. O'Connor	1350
Thornton	2195	v. State	463	v. O'Hare	987, 2277
Taylorville v. Stafford	283, 458	Tenney v. Evans	2222, 2354	v. Padilla	1938, 2497
Taylor-Woolfenden Co.		v. Rapids City	1124, 1944	v. Pierce	59
v. Atkinson	1555	v. Tuttle	65	v. Pino	200
Tays v. Carr	2325	Tenney's Case	1836	v. Pratt	247
Teachout v. People	845, 846, 852, 1719	Tennis v. R. Co.	1750	v. Rehberg	1890
Teagle v. Deboy	406	Terpening v. Holton	1189	v. Roberts	108, 689, 1938
Teague v. Williams	406, 2097	Terre Haute v. Hudnut	571	v. Schilling	1761
Teasley v. Bradley	1062	Terre H. & I. R. Co.		v. Sing Kee	969, 2183
Teass v. St. Albans	2515	v. Brunker	2220	v. Trapp	111
Tebbetts v. Haskins	1943	v. Clem	283	v. Valles	150
Tebbs v. White	1225, 1651	v. Stockwell	1236	v. Watanabe	363, 1163
Tebo v. Augusta	678, 682, 1721	v. Voelker	2552	v. West	347
Teckenbroeck v. Mc-		Terrell, Ex parte	2199	v. Williams	2042
Laughlin	1738	v. Allen	218	Territt v. Woodruff	1684, 1703
Tedens v. Schumers	59, 923, 1109	v. State	2239	Terry v. Belcher	603
Tedrowe v. Esher	1086	Terrill v. Beecher	1537, 1541	v. Birmingham N.	
Teed v. Martin	1275, 1647	Territory v. Alohihea	2120	Bank	1074, 1521
Teegarden v. Lewis	2503	v. Boyd	967, 1260	v. Broadhurst	1312
Teele v. Boston	463, 714	v. Caldwell	218	v. Brown	1491
Teem v. State	1350	v. Capitan	2061, 2062	v. Clark	1779
Teese v. Huntington	691, 923, 928, 1985	v. Castro	1076, 2086	v. Rodahan	1049, 1314
Tefft v. Wilcox	681, 1944, 1951	v. Chavez,		v. Sickles	1073
Teil v. Roberts	1203, 1219	6 N. M.	150	v. State,	
Telegraph Co. v. Cooper	1951	8 N. M.	967, 983, 987	118 Ala.	988, 1977
Telfair v. State	950	v. Cheong Kwai	584	120 Ala.	1974
Telford v. Ruskin	2212	v. Chung Ning	851, 2265	203 Ala.	1157
Telluride Power Co. v.		v. Cotton	1951	13 Ala. App.	142
Bruncan	463	v. Curran	1398, 1404	15 Ala. App.	923
Telluride P. T. Co. v.		v. De Gutman	505, 506, 508, 923, 987, 2277	13 Ind.	1010
Crane Co.	2434	v. Eagle	1442	46 Tex. Cr.	1273
Telschow v. Quiggle	2419	v. Egan	1977	Terryberry v. Woods	2518
Telts v. Foster	2083	v. Emilio	851	Terwit v. Gresham	1388
Temperance Hall Ass'n		v. Evans	1398, 1404	Tesney v. State	396, 664, 988
v. Giles	458	v. Fong Yee	168	Tessman v. United	
Temperley v. Scott	2103	v. Godfrey	1852	Friends	1644, 1678
Temple v. Com.	2271, 2276, 2280, 2283	v. Goo Wan Hoy	987, 2277	Teston v. State	969
v. Phelps	2311, 2537	v. Hall	247	Teter v. Moore	914
v. State	2264, 2282	v. Hanna	2079	v. Spooner	1681, 1958
Temples v. Central of		v. Hart,		Tetley v. Easton	2212
Georgia R. Co.	2220	24 Haw.	2073	Tetlow v. Savournin	2212
Templeton v. Charleston		7 Mont.	689	Tetrault v. O'Connor	1960
& W. C. R. Co.	19	v. Harwood	747, 754	Tetreault v. Connecticut	
v. Lockett	1977, 2139	v. Kawano	1393, 1810	Co.	286
v. People	390	v. Kekipi	784	Tetterton v. Com.	1873
Tenant v. Rumfield	1651	v. Lermo	2497	Fewes v. North German	
Tenbroke v. Johnson	1540	v. Livingston	218, 905, 2513	L. S. S. Co.	2415
Ten Eyck v. Runk	1257	v. Lucero,		Tewksbury v. Howard	2472
v. Whitbeck	2503	8 N. M.	2511a	v. Schulenberg	1210
Tengco v. Sanz	2527	16 N. M.	276	v. Tewksbury,	
		v. McClin	833, 2071	2 Dane's Abr.	2069
		v. McGinnis	216	4 How. Miss.	2067
		v. McGregor	784	222 Mass.	2408
				Texas & P. R. Co.	
				v. Donovan	718, 719
				v. Goggin	21, 1067



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Texas & P. R. Co.		Theakston v. Marson	2048	Thomas v. Kinsey	1391
v. Johnson,		Theisen v. Dayton	2304	v. Lawson	1651
89 Tex.	249	v. Detroit T. & T.		v. Lockwood Oil Co.	1416,
90 Tex.	1018	Co.	150a, 2155		2124
v. Phillips	1003	Theodore Körner, The	2319	v. Loose	1890, 2054, 2431
v. Raney	1109	Theriot's Succession	528	v. McCormack	2437
v. Reed	379, 657	Thetford's Case	1661	v. McDanel	916
v. Reid	1822	Thibault v. Sessions	73, 406	v. McDonald	1083, 1086
v. Robertson	1750	Thibodeaux v. Thibo-		v. Mallinckrodt	714, 1943
v. Volk	2507	deaux	1382, 1411, 2047	v. Miller,	
v. Watson,		Thiede v. Utah	84, 397, 987,	202 Mich.	2498
112 Fed.	1415	1850, 1852, 1854, 1910		151 Pa.	994, 2103
U. S., 23 Sup.	455,	Thiel v. Kennedy	451	v. Morgan	1062
456, 664, 1951		Thiele v. Newman	905	v. Newton	2270
v. Wilder	1417	Thielmann v. Burg	2576	v. Northwestern M. L.	
Texas & St. L. R. Co.		Third G. W. Turnpike		Ins. Co.	2537
v. Eddy	1640	Co. v. Loomis	983, 987	v. People,	
v. Kirby	1943	Third Nat. Bank v.		59 Ill.	367
Texas Employers' Ins.		Cosby	565	39 Mich.	2079
Ass'n v. Downing	2220	v. Owen	747	67 N. Y.	63, 246, 248,
Texas Land Co. v. Wil-		v. Robinson	1126	1616, 2511a	
liams	1299, 1651	Thistlewait v. Thistle-		v. Porter	751
Thacher v. Phinney	581,	waite	1777	v. Price	749
	1225, 1651	Thoen v. Roch	1587	v. R. Co.	456
Thaden v. Bagan	610, 1072,	Thom v. Wilso	1213	v. Ribble	2106
	2377	Thomas, Ex	1, 1680	v. Scutt	2437
Thaler v. U. S.	78	v. Ansley	1249	v. Sellman	613
Thalheim v. State	331, 1890,	v. Bank	1, 226, 1651	v. Shea	406
2100, 2115, 2148		v. Byron T	1808, 2382	v. Springville	252, 461
Thalheimer v. Crow	1681	v. Carey	1062	v. State,	
Thallheimer v. Brincker-		v. Carteret Co.	2435	100 Ala.	1899, 2276
hoff	95	v. Clarkson	2536	106 Ala.	2497
Thams v. Sharp	1651	v. Com.,		107 Ala.	88
Thanet v. Foster	1670	188 Ky.	2216	117 Ala.	905
Thaniel v. Com.	852, 2276	90 Va.	2577, 2578,	139 Ala.	2272
Tharpe v. Pearce	1186, 1681		2582	Ala., 90 So.	905, 1018
v. State	309, 2098	106 Va.	20	47 Fla.	293, 782
Thatcher v. Darr	2203	v. Connell	1783	73 Fla.	496, 1828
v. Kautcher	719	v. Crosswell	406	27 Ga.	1841, 1874
v. Olmstead	1385, 1705,	v. Daman	1350	59 Ga.	2016
	2132, 2596	v. Davis	949, 1005, 1842	150 Ga.	861, 1451
v. R. Co.	455	v. Degraffenreid	664, 1779	103 Ind.	309, 367, 702,
v. Stickney	1879	v. Denning	1085	2007, 2015, 2276	
v. Waller	1364, 1404	v. Dunn	1858	13 Okl. Cr.	1018
Thaw, In re	2199	v. Dyott	1547	Okl. Cr., 201	
Thayer v. Barney	1195, 1201	v. Equitable Life Ass'n		Pac.	1853
v. Boyle	64, 923, 933	Loc.	291	40 Tex.	689, 1938
v. Crossman	529		916	43 Tex.	2059
v. Davis	398	v. Crossman	1676	v. Stevens	2463
v. Deen	1547, 1549	v. Gage	1073	v. Steward	2477
v. Gallup	1040, 1415	v. Glendinning	2538	v. Tanner	1677, 1681
v. Glynn	18, 458, 1062	v. Grand Lodge	1081	v. Thomas,	
v. Ins. Co.,		v. Graves	2053	2 Camp.	1072
70 Me.	1947	v. Hamilton	1944	129 Ia.	2525
10 Pick.	291, 1199	v. Harding	1256	2 La.	1188, 1192
v. Lombard	1432	v. Hargrave	2232	Mo., 186 S. W.	1738
v. Street	1075	v. Herrall	1718	6 T. R.	2474
v. Thayer,		v. Herrin	2047, 2054, 2123,	v. Turnley	1195
101 Mass.	216, 398,		2323	v. U. S.	2511
	399, 437	v. Isett	1978	v. Wallace	1304, 1306
188 Mich.	228, 1614,	v. Jenkins	1587	v. Weintraub	1840
	2336	v. Johnston	2442	v. Wheeler	1779
v. Usher	1072	v. Jones	282, 1073, 2061	v. Williamson	1658, 1681
Theaker's Case	2220	v. Kean	1878	v. Young	2115

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Thomas' Estate	1739	Thompson v. Karme	1302	Thompson v. Trevanion	612,
Thomas' Goods	1512	v. Kilborne	2303		1364, 1714,
Thomas' Succession	2088,	v. King	1313		1747, 1749
	2505	v. Lambe	2122	v. U. S.,	
Thomas Canning Co. v.		v. Libby	2434	144 Fed.	216, 270, 390
Pere Marquette R. Co.	2508	v. Los Angeles & S. D.		202 Fed.	523
Thomas Fruit Co. v.		B. R. Co.	664	256 Fed.	1960
Start	1160	v. McCready	406	258 Fed.	368, 1951
Thomas Iron Co. v. Al-		v. Mapp	1247	v. Updegraff	1738, 1782
lentown M. Co.	1862	v. Mawhinney	1779	v. Utah	2220
Thomason v. Insurance		v. Mecosta	1042	v. Watson	2054
Co.	716	v. Miles	2132	v. Williams	2504
Thomasson v. Driskell	2166	v. Missouri	7	v. Wilson	1313
v. State	1896	v. Morin Co.	1028, 1263	v. Woolf	1490
Thommon v. Kalbach	1074,	v. Mosely	87, 341, 2211	Thompson's Appeal	2211
	2118	v. Nye	210, 211	Thompson's Case,	
Thompkins v. Com.	1852	v. Owen	917, 1303, 1511	20 Gratt.	S33, 855, 860
Thompson, Re,		v. Patton	2437	9 Op. Att'y-Gen'l	1350
N. J. D., 205 Fed.	1081,	v. Porter	1554, 1555, 1561	Thompson's Est., Re	2052
	1458	v. Purdy	2094	Thompson Co. v. Gunder-	
127 N. Y.	463	v. R. Co.,		son	2354
v. Anderson	1654	110 Ky.	2141	Thompson-Starrett Co.	
v. Bankers' M. C. Ins.		91 Mich.	283	v. Warren	1003
Co.	987	22 N. J. Eq.	2371, 2378	Thomson v. Allen	2498
v. Bennett,		v. Richards	1247, 1890	v. Austen	1061, 1062, 2094
194 Ill.	2500	v. Ruiz	1548	v. Gaillard	1273, 1662
22 U. C. C. P.	697,	v. Schoch	2054	v. Hines	1651
	2017, 2139	v. Schuyler	2168	v. Issaquah S. Co.	283
v. Bertrand	568	v. Smith	2465	v. Maryland Gas Co.	2319
v. Blackwell	2098	v. State,		Thomson-Houston El.	
v. Blanchard	905, 907	99 Ala.	748, 905	Co. v. Palmer	1213, 2567
v. Boston	463, 464	100 Ala.	988, 1270,	Thorgrimsen v. Northern	
v. Bowie	96		1899, 2276	Pac. R. Co.	2509
v. Boyle	712, 720	106 Ala.	1404, 1405,	Thorington v. Smith	2463
v. Brannon	2141		1408, 2098	Thorman's Estate	987, 2052
v. Bryant	2433	66 Fla.	2529	Thorn v. Kemp	1195, 1842
v. Bullock	2141	Ga., 111 S. E.	1442	v. Knapp	406
v. Calhoun	2185, 2520	25 Ga. App.	2059	v. Moore	907
v. Cashman	2312	15 Ind.	1040	Thorn's Estate	2525
v. Church	64	38 Ind.	1136, 1138	Thornburgh v. Hand	1890
v. Clendening	75, 210	189 Ind.	368	v. R. Co.	1185, 1230
v. Clubley	2444	84 Miss.	396	v. Savage M. Co.	1862, 2221
v. Cody	2433	6 Okl. Cr.	1079	Thorndell v. Morrison	2083,
v. Com.,		16 Okl. Cr.	248, 1442		2086
8 Gratt.	2354	37 Tex.	1819	Thorndike v. Boston	1784
Ky., 26 S. W.	580	30 Tex. App.	2079	Thorne v. Mason	1249
1 Metc. Ky.	609	33 Tex. Cr.	1138, 2061	v. Rolff	2032
v. Coulter	2065	77 Tex. Cr.	2232	Thornell v. Missouri State	
v. Davis	2526	79 Tex. Cr.	1445	L. Ins. Co.	1073
v. Davitte	289	88 Tex. Cr.	1042	Thornhill v. Carpenter-	
v. Didion	1072	Tex. Cr., 74 S. W.	821,	Morton Co.	451
v. Ewing	2214		823	Thornton v. Adkins	2268
v. Exum	377	Tex. Cr., 89 S. W.	2079	v. Britton	1406
v. F. W. & R. G. R.		v. Stewart,		v. Germania Fire Ins.	
Co.	2592	3 Conn.	2164	Co.	7a
v. Fry	1257	5 Litt.	1777	v. Hook	1890
v. Gaffey	463	v. The Philadelphia	1641	v. Lane	1662
v. Great Western Acc.		v. Thompson,		v. Smith	1239
Ass'n	2450	9 Ind.	291, 1198, 2105,	v. State,	
v. Gregor	1035		2524, 2593	113 Ala.	149, 728, 1974
v. Halstead	1511	162 N. D.	2046	Ala. App., 90 So.	396
v. Hughes	1951	13 Oh. St.	1081	107 Ga.	198, 1750
v. Ish	1984, 2391	4 Ont. L. R.	2016	117 Wis.	2265
v. Ives	1225	9 Pa. St.	1658	v. Stephen	2104



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Thornton v. Thornton	1304, 1738, 1897	Tibbetts v. Sumner	377	Tingley v. Times M. Co.	692
Thornton's Ex'rs v. Thornton's Heirs	917	Tibbs v. Com.	1442	Tinker v. State	2512
Thornton-Thomas M. Co. v. Bretherton	18	Tiborsky v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co.	1750, 2509	Tinkle v. Wallace	1871, 1873
Thoroughgood's Case	2405	Tice v. Bay City	252	Tinklepaugh v. Rounds	1040
Thorp v. Craig	1675	Tichborne v. Lushington	270, 1005, 1023, 2220, 2298	Tinkler v. Walpole	1647, 1650
v. Goewey	2304	Tichborne Case; see also R. v. Castro.		Tinnan v. Fitzpatrick	2106
v. Leibrecht	907	Tickel v. Short	1073	Tinnin v. Price	1316
v. Metropolitan St. R. Co.	1976	Tickner v. Roberts	5, 2165	Tinsley v. Carey	772
Thorp's Will	1072, 1651	Ticknor v. Calhoun	1225	Tioga v. South Creek	2063, 2064
Thorpe v. Gisburne	702	Tiffany v. Delaware L. & W. R. Co.	714	Tipper v. Com.	1781
v. Macauley	2260	v. McCumber	1194	Tipton, Ex parte	1350
Thrall v. Todd	1194, 1195	Tift v. Green	1680	v. State	2100
Thrash v. State	1270	Tift v. Jones	1841	Tischler v. Apple	1890
Thrasher v. Ballard	1681	Tiget v. State	579	Tisdale v. Ins. Co., 28 Ia.	1877
v. Ingram	1681	Tigner v. McGehee	1678	116 N. Y.	1064, 1067
v. State	2385, 2389	Tile Co. v. Snyder	282	v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.	2531
Thrawley v. State	63, 451, 1157, 1618	Tiley v. Cowling	607	Tishomingo El. L. & P. Co. v. Gullett	2120
Threet v. State	279	Tilgham v. Seaboard Air Line R. Co.	1700	Tisman v. District	1018
Threlfall v. Webster	1858	Tilghman v. Fisher	1196	Titanic, The	6
Threlfall's Case	2059	Tilk v. Parsons	1729	Titford v. Knott	703, 2016
Thresher v. Bank	767, 1911	Tillard v. Shebbeare	1275	Title v. Grevett	529, 2222
Threshers' Trials, The	660, 1982	Tiiler v. State	1005	Title Guarantee & Trust Co. v. Pam	2409
Thrift v. Towers	1350	Tillett v. R. Co.	1951, 2552	Title Ins. & Trust Co. v. Ingersoll	1109
Throckmerton v. Tracy	1252, 2462	Tilley's Case	1409	Titley v. Foxall	1211
Throckmorton v. Chapman	285, 289	Tillinghast v. Walton	803	Titlow v. Titlow	1738, 1938
v. Com.	104	Tillman v. State	1476	Titterington v. State	1012
v. Holt	19, 87, 112, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1873	Tillotson v. Warner	1267	Tittle v. State	150
Throgmorton v. Davis	406, 1867	Tillson v. Bowley	987, 1141, 2276	Titus v. Ash	953, 1022, 1026, 1028, 1111
Thrush v. Fullhart	1073	Tilly v. Fisher	1205	v. Gage	228, 232, 1899
Thruston v. Clark	2257	Tilson v. Terwilliger	1086	v. Gunn	747
Thum Co. v. Tloczynski	2212	Tilton v. American Bible Society	2462, 2472	v. Kimbro	1239
Thunder v. Warren	2447	v. Beecher	15, 783, 949, 1073, 1243, 1260, 1368, 1699, 1775, 1807, 1871, 1897, 1911, 2094, 2102, 2113, 2115, 2228, 2242	v. State, 117 Ala.	967, 1441, 2497
Thurkettle v. Frost	258	v. Daniels	1292	7 Baxt.	62, 200, 987, 1035, 1263, 1329
Thurland's Case	2250	v. Miller	451	v. Sumner	406
Thurman v. Bertram	1161	v. State	1835	Tla-koo-yel-lee v. U. S.	987
v. Cameron	2167	Timberlake v. Thayer	1842	Tobakin v. Dublin S. D. T. Co.	2319
v. Leach	1587	Timbol v. Manalo	1268, 2106	Tobin, Re	1303
v. State	834, 860, 862	Times v. Com.	852, 2273	v. Brimfield	437
v. Virgin	923, 987, 1985, 2201	Timmings v. Timmings	2067, 2069	v. McArthur	2442
Thurmond v. Trammell	2098	Timmons v. Timmons	1725	v. Portland F. M. Co.	1389
Thursby v. Myers	1658, 2141	Timothy v. State	392, 451, 1693	v. Seay	1215, 1664
Thurston v. Cavenor	1770	Tims v. Mack	1352	v. Shaw	261, 291, 1198, 1963, 2105
v. Cornell	581	Tindell v. State	1620	v. Shea	406
v. Fritz	1436	Tindle v. Nichols	2363	Todd, Ex parte	1658, 2110
v. Masterson	2141	Tiner v. State	1157	In re	1955
v. Murray	1770	Tingle v. U. S.	987	v. Crail	1880
v. Slatford	1352	Tingley v. Cowgill	613, 682	v. Fenton	1738
v. Tubbs	2408	v. Land Co.	1530	v. Keene	379
Thurston's Adm'r v. Prather	87	v. Providence	1943	v. Munson	2311
Tibbet v. Sue	1072	v. State	1873, 2338	v. Neal	1633
Tibbetts v. Flanders	658, 2098			v. Ockerman	1267, 1674
v. Sterberg	753, 762			v. Rowley	201
				v. Stafford	529

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Todd v. State	1398, 1669	Tooker v. Beaufort	1670	Town Council v. Owens	2268
v. Todd	2421, 2500	Toole v. Crafts	581	Towne v. Towne	266
v. Weed	1778	v. Nichol	1890, 1893	Towner v. Lucas	2435, 2439
Toland v. Paine F. Co.	437, 561, 2218	v. State	1356	v. Lucas Ex'r	2431
Tolbert v. Burke	1777	v. Toole	2067, 2336	v. Towner	2500
Toledo & A. A. R. Co. v. Johnson	1651	Tooley v. Bacon	18	Townsh v. Alford	770, 774
Toledo Computing S. Co. v. Computing S. Co.	1657	Toomer v. Gadsden	1548	v. Riddle	1877
v. Garrison	2415	v. State	861	v. State	1108, 2512
Toledo St. L. & K. C. R. Co. v. Bailey	65	Toomes v. Etherington	1671	Townsend v. Atwater	1213
Toledo St. L. & W. R. Co. v. Burr & Jeakle	1062	Toomes' Estate	569, 1938, 2395	v. Briggs,	
Toledo Traction Co. v. Cameron	6, 792, 1404, 1411, 1413	Toomey v. Casey	1201	Cal., 32 Pac.	1890
Toledo W. & W. R. Co. v. Chew	1275	v. Kay	777, 1956	99 Cal.	223, 1698
Toler v. State	279	v. R. Co.	2494	v. Bush	529, 531
Toliver v. State	68	Tootle v. Kent	1943	v. Covington	1290
Toll v. Lee	1256	v. Payne	1376	v. Downer,	
v. State	367	Topeka v. Cook	2575	27 Vt.	1651
Tolleson v. Posey	1640	v. Martineau	1168	32 Vt.	1651, 1664, 2141, 2143, 2522
Tollifson v. People	967, 987	v. Sherwood	458, 1951	v. Graves	64, 194, 341
Tolman v. Emerson	2139, 2141, 2144	Topeka Water Co. v. Whiting	461	v. Hargreaves	2454
v. Johnstone	1003, 1116	Topfer v. Topfer	2046	v. Ives	1304
Tolsma v. Tolsma's Estate	715	Topham v. McGregor	735, 748, 749, 750	v. Johnson	1082
Tolson v. Coasting Co.	1951	Toplitz v. Hedden	18, 1263	v. Lawrence	1858, 1859c
Tom Hong v. U. S.	1355	Torbert v. Wilson	1681	v. Pepperell	1621, 1928
Tomarchio, Re	2421	Toribio v. Foz	2518	v. Phillips	1670
Tomb v. Sherwood	1062	Toronto G. R. Co. v. Taylor	2319	v. Radcliffe	1385a
Tombler v. Reitz	2406	Toronto G. T. Co. v. Municipal C. Co.	1856a	v. State,	
Tome v. R. Co.	797, 2008, 2016	Torphy v. State	2595	13 Ind.	133, 987
Tome Institute v. Davis	794, 1960	Torque v. Carrillo	2355	Tex. Cr., 236	
Tomer v. Densmore	1878	Torre v. Sumners	211, 987	S. W.	2059
Tomkies v. Reynolds	1777	Torrey v. Burney	748, 1254, 1958	Townsend's Estate	229, 1738
Tomlin v. Woods	1681	v. Nixon	112	Townsend's Succession	773, 1391, 1872
Tomlinson v. Croke	1364	Torris v. People	852	Townsend Mfg. Co. v. Foster	738
v. Derby	458, 461, 655, 1028	Totman v. Forsaith	1141	Townshend v. Stangroom	2417
v. Earnshaw	451	Totten v. James	1225	Townsley v. Simrell	1675
v. Greenfield	2581	v. Totten		Towson v. Moore	1738
v. Sovereign Camp	1671	294 Ill.	2437	Traber v. Hicks	1234
Tompkins v. Com.	2110, 2237	172 Mich.	1135	Trabing v. N. & I. Co.	1021
v. Crane	1085	v. U. S.	2378	Trabue v. Com.	987
v. Fonda G. L. Co.	1458	Touchard v. Keyes	1651	v. Sayre	95
v. Saltmarsh	1142	Toulmin v. Austin	1676a	Traction Co. v. Lamberton	688, 1721
v. Thompkins,		Toun v. Michigan C. R. Co.	1976, 2509	Tracy v. Eggleston	1566
257 Ill.	1676b, 2165	Tousey v. Hastings	2498	v. Jenks	1352
N. J. Eq., 111 Atl.	2528	Tousley v. Barry	1083	v. Juanto	1779
v. Wiley	1405	Towaliga Falls P. Co. v. Sims	569	v. McManus	1971
Toms v. Beebe	2311	Towdy v. Ellis	1247	v. O'Reilly	2474
v. Whitmore	1086	Tower v. Whip	2008	v. People	396, 1438, 1443
Tong Kai v. Terr.	2056	v. Wilson	1206, 1268	Tracy & Co., In re	2264
Tonopah & G. R. Co. v. Fellanbaum	382	Tower Co. v. Southern Pac. Co.	2464	Tracy Peerage Case	285, 2024
Tonopah Lumber Co. v. Riley	1044	Towers v. Moor	2426	Trader v. McKee	1681
Tood v. State	1397	Towle v. Blake	1721, 1722	Traders' Ins. Co. v. Catlin	1947
Toohy v. Plummer	1263, 1669	v. Pacific Imp. Co.	65	Trafton v. Osgood	527
		v. Sherer	715	Trailer v. State	728
		v. Stimson M. Co.	2509	Trailor's Case	867
		Towles v. McCurdy	2384, 2391	Trainor v. German Am. S. L. & B. Ass'n	751, 1074
		Town v. Needham	586	Traiser v. Commercial Trav. E. A. Ass'n	7a
				Trambly v. Ricard	2415
				Trammell v. Hemphill	2098



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Trammell v. Hudmon	1456	Trenton & M. Co. Trac-		Trowbridge v. Addoms	1676,
v. McDade	770	tion Co. v. Trenton	2410		2185
v. Roberts	1290, 1513	Trenton B. Co. v.		v. Sickler	1391
v. Swift F. Wks.	2444	Woodruff	603	v. Spinning	2573
v. Thurmond	1225, 1651,	Trenton Pass. R. Co. v.		v. State	609
	2143	Cooper	770, 1750, 2509	Trowel v. Castle	2110
Transportation Line v.		Trenton Potteries Co. v.		Troxdale v. State	1011
Hope	1951	Title G. & T. Co.	1947, 1951	Troy L. & C. Co. v.	
Transue v. Brown	1513	Treon v. Brown	529	Boswell	1944
Tranum v. Wilkinson	1651	Trepp v. Barker	616	Troyer v. State	1807
Trapp v. Druecker	1951	Treusch v. Ottenburg	2504	Truax v. Slater	1083
v. Terr.	111	Trevor v. Colgate	2165	Truby v. Byers	1313
Trask v. Boston & Maine		Trewitt v. Lambert	1243	v. Seybert	1048, 1063, 1066
R. Co.	460	Trezevietowski v. Jereski	2498	True v. Bullard	2445
v. People	1852, 2183, 2264	Triangle Lumber Co. v.		v. Plumley	406
Travelers' Ins. Co. v.		Acree	2220	v. Sanborn	377
Davies	1700	Tribette v. R. Co.	456	v. True	2067
v. Harris	2510	Trim v. Fore River S. B.		Trueman v. Loder	2413
v. Henderson C. Mills	1490,	Co.	2509	Trull v. Modern Wood-	
	1493, 1503	v. State	507	men	7a, 2388
v. McConkey	7a	Trimble v. Am. Sugar		v. True	38, 377
v. Sheppard	7a, 64, 728,	Ref. Co.	1858	Trulock v. State	
	770, 771, 792,	v. Carlisle	253	Ark., 69 S. W.	657, 660
	1481, 1747, 1750,	v. Shaffer	1247	1 Ia.	2595
	1770, 1840	v. State	1853, 2089	Truman, Re	2531
v. Whitman	1755	v. Tautlinger	664	v. Lore	530, 1347
Travelers' Protective		v. Terr.	1012, 1135, 2060	Truslove v. Burton	2148
Ass'n v. West	1750	v. Trimble	2085	Trustees v. Hogg	2116
Traver v. Smolik	1750	Trimby v. Vignier	1271	v. Jessup	2465
Travers v. Casey	2467	Trimbletown v. Kemmis	18,	Trustees Canandarqua	
v. McMurray	911		1053, 1085,	Academy v. McKechnie	2169
v. Reinhardt	2082, 2083		1256, 2105	Trusty v. Com.	2277
v. U. S.	862	Trimmer v. Trimmer	2098	Tsuruda v. Farm	1405
Travis v. Barkhurst	1779	Trinity Co. Lumber Co.		Tubbs v. Garrison	716, 1943
v. Brown	1040, 2005,	v. Denham	966	v. Mechanics' Ins. Co.	716,
	2007, 2008, 2016,	Trinity House v. Burge	2279		1955, 2464
	2020, 2026, 2027	Triplett v. Gill	1633	Tuberson v. State	2056
v. Ins. Co.	6	Tripp v. Garey	1352	Tucker v. B. & M. R. Co.	93
v. January	2307, 2309	v. Macomber	1576	v. Barrow	850
v. Stevens	987, 2239	Trischet v. Ins. Co.	2120	v. Colonial F. Ins. Co.	21,
Treadwell v. Wells	736	Trist v. Johnson	1208		716
Treager v. Mining Co.	1078	Tri-State Coal & Coke		v. Constable	261
Treasurer v. Moore	2373	Co., Re	2184	v. Finch,	
Treasurers v. Witsall	1221,	Tri-State Milling Co. v.		106 Kan.	2336
	1677	Breisch	1704	66 Wis.	2304
Treat v. Browning	73, 74,	Trogdon v. Trogdon	2437	v. Glew	2520
	1040, 1620, 2196	Trogdon's Case	4, 321	v. Helgren	1676, 2520
v. Merchants' Life		Trombley v. Seligman	1971	v. Henniker	1807
Ass'n	1960	v. Stevens-Duryea Co.	150	v. Hood	1142
Trees v. Eakin	1878	Trometer v. District	1907	v. Hyatt	697, 2008,
Tregany v. Fletcher	2578	Troop v. Union Ins.			2015, 2016
Treiber v. McCormack	2338,	Co.	2463	v. Jones	1960
	2340	Tross v. Bills' Ex.	2444	v. Kellogg	704, 2016
Trelease v. U. S.	2097	Trott v. R. Co.	1976	v. McDonald	1690
Treleaven v. Dixon	608	v. Skidmore	1512	v. McMahon	2065
Tremain v. Barrett	2203	Trotter v. Maclean	95, 1524	v. People,	
v. Edwards	1544	v. State	63, 1983	117 Ill.	1644, 2086
Tremblay v. Harnden	393,	v. Trotter	1271	122 Ill.	1398, 1644,
	451	v. Watson	1086		1877, 1878, 2086
v. M. R. C. Co.	1976	Trough v. Trough	2067, 2069	v. R. Co.	561, 1943
Trennt v. Chicago B. &		Troughton v. Getley	2218	v. Roberts	1563
Q. R. Co.	1704	Troup v. Hunter	2408	v. Seaman's Aid Soc'y	2462,
Trentham v. Bluthenthal	1261	v. Sherwood	923, 986, 1985		2463, 2476
v. Waldrop	1674	Trout v. R. Co.	2495	v. Smith	1564, 1566, 1568

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Tucker v. South Kings-		Turner v. Child	2118	Turner F. L. Co. v.	
ton	2349	v. Cocheco Mfg. Co.	792	Burns	1566, 1567
v. State,		v. Coe	2232	Turney v. Barr	2355
71 Ala.	612	v. Com. 216, 279, 390,	1144	v. Turney	2066
89 Md.	1963, 2512	185 Ky.	988	v. State	770, 771
Miss. 90 So.	2183	191 Ky.	2183	Turnipseed v. Goodwin	1536
v. Tucker,		Ky., 89 S. W.	789	v. Hawkins	1225
11 Jur.	2067	v. Crisp	1466	Turnley v. Hanna	1388
74 Miss.	923, 987	v. Fish	2580	Turnpike Co. v. Hearn	68a
72 S. C.	1194	v. Grand Rapids	1890	v. McNamara	2185
v. U. S.	278, 2264	v. Hall	2556	Turnure v. Breitung	2020
v. Welsh 1026, 1032,	1247	v. Hardin	1086	v. Turnure	1511
v. Whitehead	1737	v. Hearst	283	Turpin v. Brannon	1778
v. Wilamonicz	529	v. Jenkins	2115	v. Com.	1806
Tucker's Trial	1878	v. Johnson	1300	v. State	111, 247
Tuckwood v. Hanthorn	1640	v. Keller	581	Turquand v. Guardians	1862
Tudor v. Com.	111, 1166	v. King	928, 1489	v. Knight	2296
v. Tudor	1299	v. McFee	728	Turrell v. Morgan	2160, 2596
Tudor Iron Works v.		v. Mfrs. & Consumers'		Turrentine v. Grigsby	1060
Weber	789, 944, 1158	Coal Co.	2416	Turton v. Benson	1062
Tufts v. Du Bignon	1062	v. Moore 1225, 1306,	1513	Tuschinski v. R. Co.	1352
v. Hatheway	289	v. Newburgh	663	Tustin v. Faught	1651
Tug R. C. & S. Co. v.		v. Osgood A. C. Co.	2556	Tuthill v. Davis	529
Brigel	2410	v. Overall	612	Tutt v. Hawkins	2421
Tugwell v. Hooper	2312	v. Pearte	586	Tuttle v. Boston	1350
Tulley v. Alexander	2237	v. Poston	2132	v. Burgett's Adm'r	2442
Tullgren v. Karger	1062, 2569	v. R. Co.,		v. Com.	396
Tullidge v. Wade	19	158 Mass.	438, 792	v. Dodge	1807, 2510
Tullis v. Kidd 569, 687,	1984	15 Wash.	1944	v. Missouri Pac. R.	
v. Rankin	675, 1976	v. Reynolds	1890	Co.	2509
v. State	280	v. Sealock	1484, 1487	v. Pacific Mut. Life	
Tulloch v. Hartley	5	v. Southeastern G. &		Ins. Co.	2510
Tulloch v. Cunningham	1911	L. S. Co.	2593	v. People	821, 852
Tullos v. Lane	2214	v. State,		v. Rainey	704, 2016
Tully v. Canfield 1225,	1226	124 Ala.	154, 1109	v. Russell	235, 932, 933
v. R. Co.	1168	100 Ark.	524, 1270	v. Tuttle	398
v. State	200	Ark., 239 S. W.	987	Tutton v. Darke	1698
Tunks v. Vincent	93, 2214	114 Ga.	2513	Tutwiler C. C. & I. Co.	
Tunstall v. Cobb	2008, 2016	102 Ind.	218	v. Nichols	18
Tupling v. Ward	2268	4 Lea	1807	Twaites v. Smith	2048
Tupper v. International		60 Miss.	2241	Tway v. State	2061
B. & T. Co.	751	95 Miss.	1008, 1013	Tweeddale v. Barnett	2520
Turbaville v. State	1841	89 Tenn.	1157	Tweedie v. The King	2522
Turberville v. Savage	986	39 Tex. Cr.	150	Twemlow v. Oswin	2531
Turgeon v. Woodward	1566	61 Tex. Cr.	1938	Twentyman v. Barnes	1862,
Turkel v. American		v. Strip	1290, 1651		2221
Express Co.	657	v. Turner,		Twiggs v. State	852
Turley v. Logan	1350	90 Conn.	758	Twining v. New Jersey	2250,
v. State	1977	123 Ga.	1078, 1465,		2252, 2272
Turlock F. J. Co. v.			2296	Twohig v. Leamer	1371, 2098
Pacific & P. S. B. Co.	2463	1 Litt.	1304, 1312	Twombly v. Leach	681, 1951
Turman v. State	1130, 2265	v. Tyson	1458, 2141	Twomey v. Swift	1951
Turnbow v. Kansas City		v. U. S.	794	Twonley v. R. Co.	461
P. Co.	1158	v. Wade	4c	Twyman v. Com.	1079
Turnbull v. Com.	2239	v. Warren	2306	v. Twyman	2067
v. North British R. Co.	2203	v. Water Co.	2354	Tylden v. Bullen	1313
v. O'Hara	1126	v. Williams	2506	Tyler v. Beversham	2426
v. Payson	1074, 1681	v. Yates	1072, 1213	v. Flanders	1501
v. Richardson	682, 715	Turner's Appeal	1042, 1958,	v. Hamilton	1062
Turner v. American Secur-			2296	v. Mather	1082
ity & T. Co.	19, 689,	Turner's Estate	2304	v. Mutual D. M. Co.	703
	1938	Turner's Trial	56	v. Nelson	396
v. Belden	1133, 1779	Turner's Trustees v.		v. Pomeroy	1022
v. Cates	1314	Washburn	610	v. R. Co.	754



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Tyler v. Stephens	1299	Union Bank v. Commis-		Union S. N. Bank v.	
v. Stevens	2349, 2354	sioners	1350	Simmons	1029
v. Todd	2011, 2015, 2016	v. Knapp	1521, 1539	Union Stock Y. Co. v.	
v. Trabue	1271	v. Murdock	2066	Conoyer	2507
v. Tyler	2312	v. Stone	95, 289	Union Tanning Co. v.	
v. Ulmer	1078	Union Central L. I. Co.		Com.	2524
Tyler's Estate	1512	v. Cheever	266, 1081,	Union Traction Co. v.	
Tynan v. Paschal	1736		1807	Berry	2509
Tyner v. State	276, 2081	v. Prigge	1555	Union Water Co. v.	
Tyree v. Magness	1192, 1194,	v. Smith	748	Crary	1873
	1195	Union Colliery Co. v.		Unis v. Charlton's Adm'r	1026,
v. Tudor	1770	Fishback	530		1028, 1031
Tyrrel v. State	507, 2115	Union Coll. Co. v. Su-	1856d	United Amer. F. Ins. Co.	
Tyrrell v. Goslant	382	perior Court		v. American Bonding	
v. Painton	2503	Union Construction Co.		Co.	1077, 1078
Tyrwhite v. Kynaston	1644	v. Western U. Tel. Co.	2155	United B. Mut. Aid Soc.	
Tyrwhitt v. Wynne	21	Union C. Ins. Co. v.		v. O'Hara	568
Tyson v. Chestnut	1704	Pollard	2573	United Breweries Co. v.	
v. Joyner	2516	Union Electric Co. v.		O'Donnell	1012
v. Shueey	1587	Theater Co.	1555	United Paperboard Co.	
v. State	17	Union Elev. Co. v. R.		v. Lewis	4c
		Co.	714, 1943	United R. & E. Co. v.	
		Union Guaranty & T.		Corbin	18, 569, 687
		Co. v. Robinson	1078	U. S. v. Abanzado	580
U		Union Hosiery Co. v.		r. Addatte	609
Udderzook v. Com.	792, 1977,	Hodgson	437, 1969	r. Adolfo	2529
	2566	Union I. & F. Co. v.		r. Agadas	1154
Ueland v. Dealy	18	Sonnefield	1371	r. Agatea	852
Uggen v. Bazille	1040	Union Ins. Co. v. Pollard	1496	r. Alabot	580, 2575
Ugglä v. R. Co.	2509	v. Smith	1951	r. Alameda	836
Uhde v. Walters	2464	Union Land & G. Co. v.		r. Alegado	276
Uhl v. Com.	923, 1985	Arce	2065, 2143	r. Alonso	1067
Uhler v. Adams	334	Union Mutual Aid Ass'n		r. Amedy	2163, 2525
Uihlein v. Matthews	2463	v. Carroway	1073	r. American Bell Tel.	
Ullendorff v. Graham	2408	Union Nat'l Bank v.		Co.	2498
Ullman v. Babcock	702	Milling Co.	1675	r. American Tobacco	
v. Farm S. & H. Co.	20	Union Pacific R. Co. v.		Co.	2200
Ullrich v. Chicago City		Botsford	1159, 2220	r. Anastasio	1398
R. Co.	1700	v. Carr	1350	r. Angell	1404
Ulmer v. State	2056	v. Day	2303	r. Antipolo	2336
Ulrich v. Chicago B. &		v. Elliott	1750	r. Arcea	1644
Q. R. Co.	928	v. Field	21, 961, 1807	r. Armour	2281a, 2282
v. Com.	1442	v. Jones	1244	r. Armour & Co.	2282
v. Litchfield	2470	v. Lucas	716	r. Armstrong	2573
v. McConaughy	1389, 1847	v. McDonald	2495	r. Atkins	1347
v. People	437, 460, 782,	v. M'Mican	688	r. Babcock	95, 1073, 1182,
	830, 1393	v. Novak	561, 688, 1719,		2056, 2200
v. Ulrich	2526		1951	r. Bagsie	2056
Ulrick v. Dakota L. & T.		v. O'Brien	779	r. Balayut	833, 2056
Co.	2354	v. Porter	2509	r. Balisacan	2056
Umney v. Co.	2451	v. Reed	1651, 1652	v. Ball	2160
Underhill v. Durham	1193,	v. Reese	1007	v. Baluyot	1028, 2224
	1633	v. Stanwood	463	v. Bank of U. S.	1681
v. Hernandez	2566, 2569	v. Thomas	2382, 2389	v. Base	1879, 2484
v. State	364	v. Yates	6, 1693, 1696	v. Bassett	2086, 2239
v. Van Cortlandt	787	Union R. Co. v. Hunton	20,	v. Bateman	2184
Underwood v. Com.	1802, 1852		463, 714, 1873	v. Battiste	2559
v. Cray	785	Union R. & T. Co. v.		v. Baua	2056
v. Huddleston	1206	Shacklet	1273	v. Beavers	2195, 2207
v. State	2183, 2264	Union R. T. & S. T. Co.		v. Bell	2282, 2283
v. Thurman	1511, 1738	v. Moore	1908	v. Benner	1674
v. Waldron	1976	Union Selling Co. v. Jones	2463	v. Bergantino	667
Ung King, Ex parte	1354	Union Sheet M. W. v.		v. Bernalles	2056
Ungles v. Graves	1312, 1513	Dodge	1960	v. Biena	2349
Union v. Plainfield	1503				

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
U. S. v. Binayoh	2276	U. S. v. Davis	949	U. S. v. Greene	260, 1373,
v. Blanco	2572	v. Dayatal	1525		1398
v. Boston C. C. & N.		v. De Graff	824, 851, 852,	v. Griego,	
Y. Canal Co.	19, 1976		1182	11 N. M.	398, 2081
v. Bragat	2079	v. De la Cruz,		12 N. M.	2511
v. Breedmeyer	923	2 P. I.	2071, 2081	v. Groesbeck	398
v. Briones	284	5 P. I.	860	v. Grundy	2222
v. Britton	1268, 2105	v. DeLeon	860	v. Guiteau	106, 232, 682,
v. Brod	2282	v. De los Rajes	1073		987, 1041, 1160,
v. Brooks	309	v. De los Reyes	2038		1976, 1984, 2214,
v. Brown	2283, 2364	v. De los Santos	860, 2071		2337, 2372
v. Buncad	507	v. Densmore	198	v. Gulliksen	2066
v. Burleson	4c	v. Des Moines N. &		v. Gumm	2572
v. Burns	238, 309, 2582	R. Co.	1350	v. Halstead	2264
v. Burr	369, 2038, 2200,	v. Dickinson	769, 772, 773,	v. Hanway	1854
	2260, 2271, 2371,		774, 923, 1021,	v. Harris,	
	2374, 2375, 2376,		1022, 1028	D. C.	682
	2378, 2379	v. Doebler	14, 309, 977,	164 Fed.	2264
v. Butler	1854		1198, 1200,	5 Utah	2086
v. Caballeros	836		1205, 2104	v. Hart	2264
v. Cabe	2034	v. Dow	1854	v. Hernandez	2572
v. Caligagan	1076, 1415	v. Dula	770	v. Holmes,	
v. Callapag	2056	v. Dumas	1674	1 Cliff	58, 228, 232,
v. Camarota	2184	v. Dunbar	1236		233, 568, 1028,
v. Cameron	1381	v. Edwards	2286		1040, 1041,
v. Castellon	1442	v. Eighteen Barrels	952		1124, 1845
v. Caster	1239	v. Elder	1633a	1 Wall. Jr.	1836
v. Castillo	1415	v. Empeinado	1079	v. Holtsclaw	570, 705
v. Castro	1239	v. Enriquez	580	v. Horn	2059
v. Catimbang	2513	v. Escondo	1384	v. Howe	2203
v. Charles	2363	v. Espia	2513	v. Hudieres	784
v. Chaves	2573	v. Estabillo	1076, 1349	v. Hung Chang,	
v. Chin Sing Quong	2066	v. Estrada	949	126 Fed.	571, 1355,
v. Ching Po	852	v. Evangelista,			2256
v. Chu Chio	1810	24 P. I.	354, 832	134 Fed.	167, 1154,
v. Chu Hang	1355	29 P. I.	2085		2246
v. Chua Mo	2575	v. Fairbanks	2195	v. Hunter	2200, 2287
v. Chun Hoy	2540	v. Falloco	2184	v. Hutchings	2566
v. Cinco	1879, 2484	v. Farrington	2364	v. Hutton	1859b
v. Claro	2034	v. Faulkner	688	v. Ibañez	1644
v. Clearin	2579	v. Ferguson	1347a	v. Insurgents	1854
v. Cobban	2364	v. Fischer	2056	v. Jaca	2195
v. Cohen	1404	v. Flemming	291, 2273	v. Jakan Tucko	1442
v. Collins,		v. Ford	1042	v. James	2255, 2281
1 Cr. C. C.	133, 166	v. Foster	2551	v. Javellana	1398
145 Fed.	2200, 2271,	v. French	1371	v. Johns	1677, 1680, 1684
	2272	v. Friedberg	2183	v. Jones,	
v. Conception	1388, 2233	v. Fries	367, 852, 1909,	10 Fed.	2016
v. Constantino Tan			2038, 2354	2 Wheeler	523
Quingco Chua	2406	v. Gavarlan	2100	v. Jordan	1662
v. Coolidge	2364	v. German	2495	v. José	2071
v. Cooper	2371, 2378	v. Gibert	580, 867, 1286,	v. Jourdine	1620
v. Craig	317, 987, 1732,		1641, 2079, 2081	v. Ju Toy	1355
	1781	v. Gil	1398, 1442	v. Kelly	2184
v. Crandell	406	v. Gin Hing	1354	v. Kershaw	2059, 2060
v. Cross	276, 761, 987,	v. Glassware	1684	v. Kessler	2056
	1040, 1144, 1530,	v. Goldstein,		v. Kimball	852, 2268,
	1635, 1639, 1969,	132 Fed.	2283		2270, 2281, 2282
	1974, 2265	271 Fed.	1378	v. King	1747
v. Curtis	1854	v. Gonzalez	2079	v. Kirkwood	842, 852, 2363
v. Dacir	2056	v. Graff	824, 843, 845,	v. Klein	1355
v. Dacotan	2034		849, 851, 852, 1182	v. Kong Fong	1154
v. Dadacay	2056	v. Grant	2280	v. Kosel	95
v. Darnand	2008	v. Gray	1620	v. Krafft	1732



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
U. S. v. Lambell	1195, 1267	U. S. v. Mullaney	2018,	U. S. v. Riera	1859g
v. Larned	2005		2194, 2276	v. Rio Grande D. & I.	
v. Lasador	966	v. Mulvaney	2071	Co.	2580
v. Lead Co.	2264	v. Musser	398	v. Rispoli	2239
v. Lee	2313	v. Muyot	1072	v. Rivera	851
v. Lee Huen	936, 2273,	v. National Lead Co.	1859b	v. Robeson	7a
	2498	v. Navarro	2250, 2252, 2273	v. Robinson	2038
v. Lee Seick	2066	v. Nebriada	2085	v. Rohrer	2512
v. Leffler	529	v. Neverson	108, 987, 1127	v. Ross	41
v. Leonhardt	291, 1079	v. North	2016	v. Rota	2268
v. Levente	2497	v. Nott	826, 859, 865	v. Roudenbush	301, 309
v. Lew Poy Dew	1674, 1678	v. Nuñez	1073	v. Sacramento	2595
v. Lim Sip	2497	v. Ocampo	526, 2056	v. Saline Bank	2258
v. Lim Tico	2056	4 P. I.	2056	v. Sanborn	2199
v. Lim Tiu	1835	5 P. I.	526, 2056	v. Santiago	2034
v. Lio Team	821	18 P. I.	1971	v. Sarikala	2273
v. Lodge	1195	v. Ola's	2034, 2512	v. Schindler	285, 953, 1022
v. Long	1212	v. Old Settlers	1350	v. Schneider	1441
v. Lopez Quin Quinco	2034	v. Olsen	2066	v. Schow	2086
v. Lorenzana	1671	v. One Case of Hair		v. Schulze	367b, 369
v. Louie Juen	2066	Pencils	18, 586	v. Schurg	1239
v. Louisville & N. R.		v. Ong Sin Hong	2265	v. Seufert B. Co.	1168
Co.	2319	v. Oppenheim	852	v. Shipp	1815
v. Lozada	833	v. Orosa	1644	v. Shriver	2286
v. Lozano	2042	v. Ortiz	704, 797,	v. Silverthorne	4, 2184
v. Lumpkin	1352		2016, 2017	v. Simbahan	2513
v. Luzon	2273	v. Padlan	2056	v. Simon	2282, 2283
v. Lynn	1212	v. Paete	1076	v. Simpson	2086
v. Lyon	1909	v. Pagliano	790	v. Sims	520
v. McCann	1944	v. Palmer	2163, 2566	v. Sing Tuck	1355
v. McCarthy	2271, 2283	v. Pascual	860	v. Six Lots of Ground	2378
v. McGlue	672	v. Peay	398	v. Skinner	2282
v. McMasters	18	v. Percheman	1239, 1677,	v. Smith,	
v. McMillan	2008		1680	4 Day	787, 2275, 2279
v. McRae	2256, 2258	v. Perez	7819	5 Utah	398
v. Macomb	1362, 1375,	v. Perkins	1693	v. Smith & Ogden	2201,
	1398, 2098, 2105	v. Phelan	1263		2371
v. Magtibay	2038	v. Pierce	1854	v. Snyder,	
v. Maharaja Alim	2056	v. Pierson	1680	278 Fed.	2184
v. Mallari	1441	v. Pineda	367	4 McC.	321
v. Manalo	1073, 1076	v. Porter	1212	v. So Fo	2071
v. Maqui	1062	v. Praeger	2270	v. Solinap	2513
v. Maresca	2184	v. Price	2268	v. Sonico	1671
v. Marks	1674	v. Quiamson	2066	v. Soriano	2056
v. Masters	2185	v. Ramos,		v. Sotelo	2071
v. Mathias	2008	4 P. I.	860	v. Stevens	78
v. Memoracion	2088, 2505	23 P. I.	1442	v. Stewart	1854
v. Mercado	860, 987	35 P. I.	2016	v. Stigall	1671
v. Meyers	2245	v. Randall	278	v. Stone	824, 830, 861, 865
v. Miles	2086	v. Raymundo	1079, 1398	v. Sutter	1239
v. Miller,		v. Razon	821, 1230	v. Swift	2282
236 Fed.	1817	v. Redy	4, 4c	v. Sy Quingco	2034
249 Fed.	2572	v. Reed	457	v. Tallmadge	2364
v. Mills	2183	v. Regan	2498	v. Tanjuanco	1398
v. Mitchell,		v. Reid	6, 580, 2354	v. Tan Teng	168, 507, 2265
2 Dall.	194	v. Remigio,		v. Terminal R. Ass'n	2200
2 Wash. C. C.	1641,	35 P. I.	1388	v. Thompson	527, 2042,
	1674, 2125	37 P. I.	2056		2056, 2060
3 Wash. C. C.	1641,	v. Reyburn	1212, 1269	v. Tilden	2200, 2211
	1674	v. Reyes	2497	v. Tolosa	2071
Wharton's St. Tr.	2038	v. Reynes	2573	v. Tom Wah	2256
v. Mondejar	2034	v. Reynolds	1395, 1398,	v. Torres	1062
v. Montes	1442		1405	v. Tria	285, 2273
v. Moses	309, 2374	v. Rhodes	2282	v. Troax	2056

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
U. S. v. Trumbull	2372, 2566	United States Lumber & C. Co. v. Cole	987	Vail v. Nickerson	1818
v. Turner	2512	United States Mail Line Co. v. Mfg. Co.	571	v. Rice	2053
v. Twenty-Eight Packages	2257	United States Mutual Acc. Ass'n v. Kittenring	2442	v. Rinehart	2110
v. Uhl,		United States Nat'l Bank v. Venner	2529	v. Smith	1216
215 Fed.	4c	United States Printing & L. Co. v. Powers	2472	v. Strong	1071, 1072
266 Fed.	4c	United States Slicing Machine Co. v. Wolf Sayer & Heller Co.	1678	Vaillancourt v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2416
v. Valdez	2056	United States Smelting Co. v. Parry	1951	Vaillant v. Dodemead	1885, 2297
v. Vansickle	923, 987, 1985	United States Sugar Refin. v. Allis Co.	290	Vairin v. Ins. Co.	1339
v. Vaquilar	2501	United States Wringer Co. v. Cooney	1036	Vaise v. Delaval	2352
v. Venable C. Co.	1530	United Surety Co. v. Meenan	2169	Valdez v. U. S.	1803
v. Villos	2497	United Verde Ext. M. Co. v. Koso	1698	Vale v. Oppert	1859c
v. Wallace	2273	Universal Oil & F. Co. v. Burney	702, 1268	Valencia v. Milliken	1154
v. Warner	1620	Universities v. Richardson	1684	Valente v. Sierra R. Co.	2509
v. Wary	1195	University of Illinois v. Spalding	2000, 2016, 2018	Valentine v. Piper	1290, 1312, 1320, 2522
v. Watkins	747	University College of N. W. v. Taylor	2452	v. Pollak	2354
v. Wayne Shoup	2056	Unsell v. State	347, 851	v. Second Baptist Church	2500
v. Wetmore	2270	Unthank v. Turnpike Co.	1248	v. Shepherd	2466
v. Whitaker	988	Updike v. State	1445	v. State,	
v. White	923, 1985, 2098	Upson v. Raiford	1779	77 Ga.	832
v. Wiggins	1239, 1677, 1680	Upstone v. People	232, 235, 1938	Okl. Cr., 194	
v. Wildeat	1347	Upton v. Hume	406	Pac.	1406
v. Williams	2071, 2072, 2081	v. Tribilcock	2415	v. Weaver,	
v. Wilson	2184, 2264	v. Winchester	392	191 Ky.	4c, 1750
v. Winchester	4, 1202	Urdangen v. Doner	1086	Valentine's Will	608, 1736
v. Wood,		Ury v. Houston	1225	Valiquette v. Clark B. C. M. Co.	377
14 Pet.	342, 2043	Usener v. State	1350	Vallance v. Dewar	2440
3 Wash. C. C.	2098	Usher v. Daniels	2438	Vallandigham v. Campbell	1712
v. Woods	1270	v. Severance	2498	Vallen v. Cullin	1873
v. Wrenn	847	Ushers v. Pride	1674, 2167	Valley v. R. Co.	461
v. Yu Toy	4a	Utah Fuel Co. v. Industrial Com.	4a	Valley L. Co. v. Smith	392
v. Zapanta	1680	Utermehle v. Norment	1738	Valley R. Co. v. Keegan	252
v. Zucker	1398	Uthermohlen v. Boggs R. M. & M. Co.	507	Valley T. & G. R. Co. v. Lyons	1164
United States, for use of E. L. C. Cu. v. U. S. Fidelity & G. Co.	1063, 2592	Utter v. Sidman	2462	Vallier v. Drakke	2214
United States Bank v. Burson	1549	v. Travelers' Ins. Co.	7a	Van Alstine v. Kaniecki	1081
United States Brewing Co. v. Ruddy	278, 907	Uuku v. Kaio	1495	Van Alstine's Estate	2336, 2337
United States Express Co. v. Donohoe	2056, 2058	Uxbridge v. Staveland	2256	Van Alstyne, In re	2408
v. Henderson	2259b	Uy Chico v. Union Life Ass. Soc.	2312	v. Erwine	1355
v. Hutchins	1013, 1014	Uzzell v. Horn	1225, 1651, 2495	Van Amringe v. Morton	2419
United States Fidelity & G. Co. v. Dampskibaktieselskabet Håbil	1263			Vanauken, Matter of	1938
v. Des Moines Nat'l B'k	38			v. Hornbeck	1198
v. Hood	7a, 2390			Van Bokkelen v. Berdell	987
v. Martin	2432, 2536			Van Buren v. State	833
v. Millonas	1729			Van Buskirk v. Mulock	1684
United States Fire Ins. Co. v. Dickerson	18			Vance v. Campbell	6
United States Ins. Co. v. Wright	321			v. Com.	2512
United States Life Ins. Co. v. Kielgast	1073, 1671			v. Heath	2442
v. Ross	1381, 1387			v. Kohlberg	1219, 1225, 1275
v. Vocke	1073, 1671			v. Reardon	1664, 2108
				v. Schuyler	2168
				v. Smith	1086
				v. State,	
				56 Ark.	1841
				70 Ark.	519, 1270
				v. Terr.	1853



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Vance v. Vance,		Van Meter v. People	2595	Vaughan v. Phebe	1605
8 Greenl.	2069	Vann v. Edwards	2518	v. R. Co.,	
2 Metc.	1108, 1109	v. State	1037	3 H. & N.	456
Vancleave v. State	987, 2277	Van Ness v. Bank of		63 N. C.	93
Van Cleef v. Fleet	1670	U. S.	1679	v. State,	
Van Cort v. Van Cort	2235	v. Hadsell	1199	201 Ala.	988
Van Cortlandt v. Tozer	1225,	v. New York & N. J.		58 Ark. 16, 1398, 1404,	
	1651	T. Co.	714	1405, 2059, 2098	
Van Cott v. North J. St.		Vannest v. Murphy	1738,	3 Sm. & M.	457
R. Co.	2495		2503	v. Worrall	586
Van der Aa v. Van Dru-		Van Norman v. Modern		Vaughan's Case	838
nen	2408	Brotherhood	1414,	Vaughan-Robertson	
Vanderberg v. Detroit &			2510	Drug Co. v. Grimes-	
C. Nav. Co.	1680	v. Young	2408	Mills Drug Co.	2442
Vanderberg's Petition	1350	Van Nostrand v. Board	2474	Vaughn v. Clarkson	928
Vandercook v. O'Connor	716	Vano v. Canadian C. C.		v. Griffith	1681, 1684
Vander Donckt v. The-		Mills	1856a	v. Perrine	987
lusson	564	Van Omeron v. Dowick	1684	v. State,	
Vandergriff v. Picrey	1195,	Van Sandan v. Turner	2578	130 Ala.	293, 2155
	1225	Vasant v. McPherson	2214	17 Ala. App.	1669
Vanderhoven v. Ro-		Van Sickle v. Brown	581	Ala. App., 84 So.	2200,
maine	2437	v. Gibson	1486		2259c
Vanderslice v. Philadel-		v. People	2016	52 Fla.	950
phia	463	Vansickle v. Shenk	64, 1086	88 Ga.	111
Van Derveer v. Sutphin	74,	Van Skike v. Potter	1693	Vaughton v. R. Co.	4, 285
	406	Van Straaten v. People	2513	Vaulx v. Merriwether	1195
Vander Velde v. Leroy	458	Van Syckel v. Dalrym-		Vausant v. Runyon	2442
Vandevort v. Fouse	285	ple	2425, 2435	Vaux Peerage Case	1670.
Van Dervort v. North-		Van Syoc v. State	2089		1674
western F. Co.	1651	Vantine v. Butler	1491	Vawter v. Hultz	64, 581
Vandervoort v. Thomp-		Vanvalkenberg v. Van-		Veader v. Veader	1777
son	1681	valkenberg	1738	Veazey's Will	2314
Vanderwerken v. Glenn	1074	Van Velsor v. Hughson	2143	Veck v. Holt	1213
Van Deusen v. New-		Van Volkenburg v. Bank		Vedder v. Wilkins	1196
comer	675	of B. N. A.	2319	Veeder v. Gilmer	1347
v. Turner	1567	Van Winkle v. Crowell	2434	Veerhusen v. R. Co.	1951
Vandeventer v. State	2497	v. R. Co.	688	Vega S. S. Co. v. Consol.	
Vandewall v. Tyrrell	1635	Van Worden v. Winslow	1951	Elev. Co.	1355
Van Diemen's Land Co.		Van Wyck v. McIntosh	1005,	Veit v. Class & N. B.	
v. Marine Board	2465		2015, 2016	Co.	199
Vandine v. Burpee	571, 1943	Van Wycklen v. Brook-		Veiths v. Hagge	1549, 2118
Vandiveer, Ex parte	1010,	lyn	1918, 1921, 1978	Velott v. Lewis	1408
	1620	Van Zandt v. Ins. Co.	1976	Velten v. Carmack	2433
Van Duyne v. Thayre	1257	Vardon v. Vardon	1061	Venable v. R. Co.	1625
Vandyke v. R. Co.	1531	Varicas v. French	1404	Venafra v. Johnson	1349
v. Thompson	1514	Varick v. Briggs	1082, 1257	Venbuve v. Lafayette W.	
Van Dyne v. Thayre	1313	v. Jackson	901	Mills	2509
Vane v. Evanston	1164, 1168	Varnedoe v. State	784	Venillette v. The King	21,
Vane's Case	2239	Varner v. Interstate Ex-			2272
Van Etten v. Howell	2444	change	2536	Venner v. Chicago City	
Van Eyck v. People	1079	v. Johnston	1273	R. Co.	1858
Van Fleet v. O'Neil	992	Vaselenak v. Vaselenak	2437	Vent v. Pacey	2294
Vangant v. Coates	2503	Vass' Case	1442, 1445, 1448	Venuto v. Carter Lake	
Van Gunden v. V. C. &		Vassar v. Swift & Co.	1432,	Club	4c
I. Co.	2143		1441	Venzke v. Venzke	2046
Van Hall v. Rea	1651	Vasse v. Mifflin	1201,	Verdi v. Donahue	290, 396,
Van Horn v. Smith	2124		1208		988
v. Van Horn	64, 68	Vassilakis v. Fairfax		Verdier v. Verdier	747
Van Houten's Will	1671	Hotel Co.	4c	Verdin v. Wray	398
Van Huss v. Rainbolt	1880,	Vastbinder v. Metcalf	736	Verdon's Appeal	2498
	1938	Vates v. Cornelius	569	Vergin v. Saginaw	290
Vankoughnet v. Deni-		Vaughan v. McCarthy	2429	Verholf v. Van Houwen-	
son	1584, 1665	v. Martin	735, 759	lengen	1644
Van Lehn v. Morse	2433	v. Parker	2410	Vermillion v. Parsons	1779

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Vermillion Co. v. Vermillion	18, 571, 682	Vinal v. Gilman	736, 754	Volker v. Bank	1521
Vermont Fruit Co. v. Wilson	1388	v. Green	1521, 1561	Vollmer v. Stregge	2085, 2088
Vermont Marble Co. v. Eastman	2410	Vincent v. Cole	1179, 2447	Volusia Co. Bank v. Bigelow	745, 749, 753, 944, 1556, 1779, 1856c
Vernon v. Kirk	1511	v. Dixon	406	Von Ferber v. Enright	1859c
v. Tucker	1106, 1109, 1612	v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n	1873, 2491, 2537	Von Mumm v. Vittemann	2580
Vernon Irrig. Co. v. Los Angeles	1587	v. State	1821	Von Pollnitz v. State	1750
Vernon S. R. Co. v. Savannah	1640	Vincent's Appeal	2086	Von Sachs v. Kretz	1083, 1230
Verran v. Baird	451, 792	Vineberg v. Jones	2444	Von Storch v. Griffen	77
Verry v. Watkins	210	Vines, Estate of	797, 2463	Von Tobel v. Stetson & P. M. Co.	912
Verzan v. McGregor	2135	Viney v. Barss	309	Voorhies v. Hennessy	2437
Vest v. Kresge Co.	761	Vining v. Baker	2515	Vorhees v. State	2056
Vezey v. Rushleigh	2455	Vinson v. Knight	2515	Vosburg v. Putney, 78 Wis.	688
Viberg v. State	987	Vinton v. Peck	2005, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2024, 2027	86 Wis.	1976
Vicaro v. Com.	1878	Violet v. Rose	702	Vosburgh v. Thayer	1538, 1552
Vicary v. Farthing	1644, 2352	Violette v. Rice	2463	Vose v. Mandy	2158
Vick v. State	987	Viriden v. Dwyer	2235	Voss v. Bender	1911
v. Whitfield	73, 209	Virginia & T. R. Co. v. Henry	1640	Voulgaris v. Gianaris	2272
Vickers v. People	1612, 1842	Virginia & W. V. Coal Co. v. Charles	7, 157, 1196, 1275, 1388, 1587, 1660, 2110, 2143	Vowles v. Young	278, 1481, 1486, 1489, 1495, 2235
v. State	398	Virginia C. C. Co. v. Kirven	1072	Voyer v. Le Page	2065
v. U. S.	416	Virginia-Carolina C. Co. v. Knight	393, 1063, 1951, 2319	Vreeland v. Vreeland	2506
v. Vickers	2498	Virginia Coal & I. Co. v. Keystone C. & I. Co.	2105	Vrooman v. King	1082, 1085
Vickery v. Benson	1655	Virginia I. C. & C. Co. v. Tomlinson	561, 1951	Vulcan Detinning Co. v. Ind. Com.	4c, 291
v. State	586	Virginian Power Co. v. Brotherton	714	Vye v. Alexander	278, 697, 1185, 2016
Vickroy v. McKnight	1225, 1226, 1651	Virginian R. Co. v. Bell	795, 1976	Vyn v. Keppel	1085
v. Skelley	701, 1678, 1991	Vischer v. R. Co.	2109		
Vicksburg & M. R. Co. v. O'Brien	736, 738, 747, 1078, 1749, 1750	Viser v. Bertrand	2067, 2069		
v. Putnam	1698, 2551	Visher v. Webster, S Cal.	1082		
Victor Chemical Works v. Ind. Board	4c	13 Cal.	1086		
Vidal v. Duplantier	1239	Vivian's Appeal	1710, 1715, 1738		
Vidger Co. v. Great Northern R. Co.	463	Vivian Collieries Co. v. Cahall	2034, 2498		
Viellesse v. Green Bay	438, 1158	Vizard v. Moody	1244, 1299, 2016		
Viemeister v. White	2580	Voelkel v. Supreme Tent	1073		
Vietti v. Nesbitt	439	Vogel v. Delaware L. & W. R. Co.	1674		
Vigel v. Hopp	2047	v. Gruaz	2375		
Vigus v. O'Bannon	1174	v. Osborne	1066, 1067		
Vilas v. Downas	463	v. State	2061		
v. Reynolds	791	Vogeler v. Devries	2494		
Viles v. Moulton, 11 Vt.	1195	Vogely v. Bloom	1460		
13 Vt.	1709	Voght v. State	1355, 1356		
v. Waltham	1714, 1727	Vogt v. Baldwin	1051		
Villa v. Santiago	2437	v. Shienebeck	2463		
Villaflor v. Summers	2265	Voight v. Industrial Com.	569		
Villamil v. Romano	1606, 2527	Volant v. Soyer	2307, 2322		
Ville de Varsovie, The	520				
Villere v. Armstrong	1312				
Villiers v. Villiers	1193, 1233, 1268				
Villeneuve v. Manchester St. R. Co.	1028, 1263				
Vinal v. Burrill	1235				



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section		Section		Section
Wade v. De Witt	1700	Wakelin v. Walthal	2047	Walker v. O'Connell	1750
v. Foss	2185	Wakeman v. Marquand	1913,	v. Ontario	1154
v. Galveston H. & S.			2118	v. R. Co.,	
A. R. Co.	2016	v. Smith	2250	104 Mich.	1969, 1977
v. King	1388	Walbridge v. Kennison	1062	71 N. H.	1807
v. McDougle	1062, 1257,	v. Knipper	1409	v. Rogers	681
	1778	Walburn v. Terr.	196	v. Russell	1963
v. Ordway	1800, 2349,	Walcott v. Gibbs	2167	v. Sanborn	2237, 2336, 2341
	2354	v. Heath	1560	v. Sawyer	587
v. R. Co.	93, 376	v. Keith	1779	v. Shepard	1352
v. Ridley	2291, 2303	v. Kimball	1064	v. Southern R. Co.	1232
v. Southern R. Co.	1062	Waldele v. R. Co.	1362, 1431,	v. State,	
v. State,			1749	49 Ala.	278
50 Ala.	506, 1821	Walden v. Bankers' Life		52 Ala.	1362, 1439
7 Baxt.	1329, 2098	Ass'n	1671	58 Ala.	1977
16 Ga. App.	2072	v. Canfield	2576	97 Ala.	492, 495
v. Thayer	1873	v. Finch	1026, 1028, 1031	107 Ala.	1509
Wadeer v. East India		v. Grant	1651, 1676	117 Ala.	759, 2446,
Co.	2378	v. Sherburne	1078, 2118		2497
Wadleigh v. Phelps	2437	Waldheim v. Miller	2465	134 Ala.	507
Wadley v. Com.	719, 950	Waldner v. Bowdoin S.		139 Ala.	141, 293, 1442
Wadsworth v. Dunnam	907,	Bank	377	205 Ala.	2276
	1159	Waldo v. Russell	1239, 1312	39 Ark.	1445
v. Hamshaw	2294	v. Spencer	1664	138 Ark.	20, 1750, 1938
v. R. Co.	2509	Waldron v. Priest	1539, 1556	6 Blackf.	64, 133, 923,
Wagener v. Mars	907	v. Turpin	2165		927, 987, 1417
Wager L. Co. v. Sullivan		v. Tuttle,		34 Fla.	620
L. Co.	748, 1978	3 N. H.	2534	116 Ga.	2276
Wagers v. Dickey	2098	4 N. H.	1481, 1484,	137 Ga.	1750
Waggeman v. Peters	1538		1778, 2138, 2141	102 Ind.	1621
Waggoner v. Clark	2016,	v. Waldron	21	136 Ind.	851
	2525	v. Ward	1911, 2290, 2327	165 Ind.	133, 398, 905,
v. Gray	2118	Waldrop v. State,			987
v. State	660	98 Miss.	1008	Miss..89 So.	2073
Wagle v. Iowa State		41 Tex. Cr.	2086	12 Okla. Cr.	1821,
Bank	1198	Wales v. Wales	398		2216
Wagman v. U. S.	2056	Walker v. Baldwin	772	85 Tex. Cr.	1960
Wagner v. Aiton	2141	v. Bank	1675	88 Tex. Cr.	1441, 1451
v. Chicago R. I. & P.		v. Barron	92, 379	7 Tex. App.	2183, 2265
R. Co.	1158	v. Bayers	2139	v. Steele	2008
v. County Com'rs	1681	v. Beauchamp	1483	v. Stilson	719
v. Haak	1079	v. Boston	714, 720, 1943	v. Struthers	1938
v. Jacoby	2027	v. Brantner	1461	v. Walker,	
v. Supreme Lodge	1244	v. Broadstock	1456, 1458	34 Ala.	18, 1958
v. Wagner	398	v. Carson	1738	6 Coldw.	1225, 1226
Wagoner v. Ruply	2008, 2016	v. Com.	1839	14 Ga.	1874, 1898,
v. Terr.	1442, 1445	v. Copley	2207		1938
Wagstaff v. Wilson	1063	v. Curtis	1230, 1525	3 Ill.	1303
Wailing v. Toll	2117	v. Dunspaugh	770, 1257	117 Ia.	1669
Wain v. Warlters	2454	v. Ebert	2408, 2415	151 N. C.	2086
Wait v. Krewson	1541	v. Fields	716, 2050	67 Pa.	2141
v. Pomeroy	2419	v. Fletcher	1862	254 Pa.	2498
Waite v. High	1078, 1195,	v. Forbes	1271	16 S. & R.	1388
	1213	v. Green	2408	v. Warner	2520
v. Teeters	1415	v. Griffith	1350	v. Westfield	458
Waithman v. Weaver	73, 74	v. Harold	1086	v. Wildman	2294, 2296,
Wake v. Lock	586	v. Hunter	1304, 2049		2317
Wakefield v. Day	1188, 1267,	v. Kendall	2110	v. Williamson	458
	2105	v. Kennison	2349	v. Wilsher	1061, 1062
v. Llanelly R. & D. Co.	4a	v. Lee	18	v. Wingfield	1219, 1487,
v. Ross	1817	v. McMillan	783		1642
Wakefield's Case	2199, 2202	v. Meetze	1362, 1729	v. Witter	2555
Wakelin v. London &		v. Moors	1609, 1614	Walker's Assignees v.	
S. W. R. Co.	2507, 2510	v. Newhouse	1225	Walker	615

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Walker's Case	216, 347	Wallis v. Delancey	1309,	Walton v. Hale	1257, 1664
Walker's Estate	2527		1312, 1513	v. Shelly	529
Walkerton v. Erdman	1388	v. Littell	2410	v. State,	
Walkley v. Clarke	1779, 2103	v. Mease	406	Ark., 75 S. W.	205,
Walkup v. Com.	1408	v. Murray	1858		2511
v. Pratt	1081, 1502	v. Portland	2257	87 Miss.	1447, 1890
Wall v. Beedy	1779	v. Southern Pacific Co.	97	41 Tex. Cr.	150, 2277
v. Dimitt	1738	v. White	692	Waltring v. James	571
v. Dovey	1540	Wallop, Ex parte	2220	Wambaugh v. Schenck	2032
v. Foeke	1078	Walls v. Atcheson	1878	Wambold v. Vick	1267
v. Williams	18	v. Bailey	2464	Wan Shing v. U. S.	1354
Wallace v. Collins	1267	Walls' Will	18	Wanamaker v. Megraw	18
v. Cook	1641	Walmer-Roberts v. Hen-		Wandless v. Cawthorne	1258
v. Finch	714	nessey	2382, 2389	Wanek v. Winona	2220
v. Goodall	571	Walmesley v. Read	1658,	Wagner v. Grimm	1085
v. Grizzard	1126, 1127,		2048	Wangness v. Stephen-	
	1131	Walmsley v. Robinson	1770	son	2455
v. Harris	285	Walnut Ridge M. Co.		Wanner v. Landis	2416
v. Hughes Electric		v. Cohn	1456	Wantlan v. White	1355
Co.	2195	Walpole v. Cholmonde-		Waples v. Burton	73, 209
v. North Ala. T. Co.	1950	ley	2474	Ward v. Apprice	285, 291,
v. Oil Co.	663, 681	v. Ewer	1271		1858
v. R. Co.	949, 1040, 1896	Walrod v. Webster Co.	68a	v. Beals	1234
v. Schaub	720	Walrond v. Van Moses	1676,	v. Blackwood	2354
v. Seaboard A. L. R.			2165	v. Brown	68, 528
Co.	461	Walser v. Wear	1067, 1560	v. Cheney	2525
v. Small	1062	Walsh v. Agnew	18, 774	v. Colyhan	613
v. Souther	1051	v. Board	718	v. Conklin	2408
v. State,		v. Chicago R. Co.	759, 1976	v. Dick	406
41 Fla.	352, 987,	v. Ins. Co.	1951, 1976	v. Dickson	1960, 2241,
	2271, 2276, 2277	v. Kattenburgh	1680		2245
48 Tex. Cr.	2061	v. People	232, 238, 1157	v. Edge	1778
v. Tumlin	1194	v. R. Co.	664	v. Fuller,	
v. U. S.,		v. Rend Collieries Co.	1951	7 Gray	2020
243 Fed.	368, 2056	v. Rogers	1384	15 Pick.	1225, 1651
162 U. S.	247, 581	v. Sayre	2220	v. Garnons	1705
v. Wallace,		v. Walsh	1271	v. Gay	2466
137 Ia.	2063	Walsh's Estate	1938	v. Henry	2576
216 N. Y.	2312, 2498	Walsham v. Stainton	2319	v. Herndon	64, 256, 1623
v. Whitman	1938	Walsingham v. Good-		v. Kilpatrick	571, 1951
v. Wren	457	ricke	2294	v. Leitch	1548, 1557
Wallace M. & Co. v.		Walson v. Moore	2104	v. Liverpool Salt &	
Leber	1389	v. Wheelwright	1458	Coal Co.	568
Wallbridge v. Jones	2529	Walston v. Allen	18, 21	v. Merriam	2083
Wallen v. Wallen	1738	v. Com.	1362, 1398, 1431	v. Moorey	1239
Waller v. Cralle	1213, 1681	Walt v. Walsh	6a	v. New York Life Ins.	
v. People	968, 1128, 1129	Walter v. Bollman	1547, 1550	Co.	2065
v. Ross	2509	v. Brown	1257	v. Odell Mfg. Co.	2552
v. School District	1194,	v. Calhoun	1280	v. People	2270
	1195	v. Sperry	2103	v. Pomfret	1476
v. State,		Walter Cabinet Co. v.		v. R. Co.,	
102 Ga.	2103	Russell	1859e, 1860	19 S. C.	1951
Okla. Cr., 199		Walterhouse v. Walter-		53 S. C.	1944
Pac.	1873	house	1388	v. Reynolds	664, 716,
v. U. S.	274, 278, 1938	Walters v. People	363		720
Walling v. Com.	1725	v. Rock	681, 688	v. Salisbury	1951
v. Morgan Co.	1530	v. State	2501	v. Saunders	1085, 2450
v. Portland G. & C.		Walthall v. Walthall	7	v. Sharp	2222, 2223
Co.	949, 969	Walther v. Ins. Co.	1073	v. Shirley	1960
v. State	1842	Walthol v. Johnson	1082	v. State,	
Wallingford v. Tel. Co.	1382	Walton v. Burchel	2532	28 Ala.	923, 1985
Wallingford & Oxford v.		v. Coulson	1320, 1513	50 Ala.	836
Abbott Walkelin	1837	v. Draper	2471	Ala., 39 So.	2570
Wallis v. Beauchamp	1186	v. Green	1730	70 Ark.	2339



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Ward v. State,		Warner v. R. Co.,		Washington v. State,	
8 Blackf.	1448, 2098,	31 Oh. St.	1290, 1390,	124 Ga.	1263, 2060
	2349		1651	17 Tex. App.	2242
Fla., 91 So.	2042	v. State	1821	Washington & G. R. Co.	
112 Ga.	1877	v. Warner	64, 1104	v. Harmon's Adm'r	2507,
2 Mo.	2261, 2271	v. Willey	1141		2552
v. Stout	2444	Warren v. Anderson	694, 2529	v. McLane	1750
v. Sykes	1404	v. Com.	987	Washington A. & M. V.	
v. Thompson	2349	v. Flagg	1681	R. Co. v. Lukens	678
v. Ward,		v. Gabriel	916	Washington B. & A. El.	
25 Colo.	1013	v. Greenville	1476	R. Co. v. Moss	715
124 Miss.	1938	v. Lucas	2271	Washington Bank v.	
v. Wells	1312	v. Lynch	2456	Prescott	1521
v. Wilcox	1304, 2525	v. McDonald	1240	Washington C. & A. T.	
v. Young	905	v. Mayer Mfg. Co.	2441	v. Case	283, 437
Ward's Estate	1541	v. Merry	529	Washington Co. v. R.	
Ward's Trial	461, 580	v. Nichols	1362, 1388,	Co.	1678
Ward Pump Co. v. Ind.			2098	Washington Fire Ins.	
Com.	1391	v. Porter	251	Co. v. Davison	1126, 1127
Warde v. Warde	2317	v. Spencer Water Co.	2349	Washington G. Co. v.	
Wardell v. Fermour	1290,	v. State,		State District	1387
	1313	197 Ala.	290, 2511	Washington Ice Co. v.	
Warden v. R. Co.	461	103 Ark.	1130	Bradley	1873
Warder v. Fisher	1018, 1048	6 Okl. Cr.	20, 1398,	v. Webster	1704, 1943
Wardlaw v. Hammond	1215		1405	Washington Nat'l Bank	
Ware v. Allen	2410	29 Tex.	833, 857	v. Daily	1859f, 2192,
v. Brookhouse	1567, 1779	v. U. S.	56		2200, 2259
v. Morgan	1213, 1245	v. Warren	95, 2152	Washington Post Co. v.	
v. State,		v. Water Co.	561	Chaloner	76
91 Ark.	390	v. Wheeler	463	Washington R. & E. Co.	
96 Ga.	1072	v. Wright	283, 1722	v. Clark	561
35 N. J. L.	2235	v. Younger	1381	v. Dittman	1890
v. Ware	689, 1021, 1026,	Warren Construction		v. Wright	1750
	1028, 1041, 1124,	Co. v. Powell	2498	Washington-Virginia R.	
	1690, 1938	Warren Hastings' Trial	4a,	Co. v. Bouknight	2509
Ware Case	2335		260, 1866, 1877	v. Deahl	1750
Ware Cattle Co. v. An-		Warren L. S. Co. v. Farr	15	Washoe Copper Co. v.	
derson	457	Warrick v. Reinhardt	1706	Junila	261, 1082
Warener v. Kingsmill	1681	v. State	111, 246, 248,	Wason v. Burnham	1062
Warfield v. R. Co.	1106		664, 1750	v. Walter	2378
Warfield's Will	1267	Warriner v. Giles	1661, 1858	Wass v. Stephens	2554
Waring v. Bowles	1313	Warten v. Black	1548	Wassels v. State	2595
v. Tel. Co.	1073	Warth v. Loewenstein	290,	Wastl v. R. Co.	949
v. Warren	1083, 1133,		1263, 2496	Watcham v. Attorney-	
	1779	Warwick v. Foulkes	406	General of East Africa	
Wark v. Willard	1676a	v. Hitchings	2433	Protectorate	2477
Warlick v. Peterson	1615	v. Warwick	607	Watchorn, Ex parte	4c
v. White	167, 1151, 1154	Warwickshire Case	2081	Waterbury v. Sturtevant	1086
Warmbein v. Ulrich	2268	Wasey v. Ins. Co.	1052, 1073,	v. Waterbury T. Co.	283,
Warner v. Barret	2032		1671		900
v. Beers	1350	Wash v. Cary	1078	Waterbury Nat'l Bank	
v. Campbell	1208	Washburn v. Cuddihy	1700	v. Reed	2579
v. Com.	4, 1680, 2084,	v. People	506	Waterford v. Hensley	2054
	2086, 2088,	v. R. Co.	463, 1168, 1800,	Waterhouse v. Schlitz	
	2505, 2573		2570	B. Co.	252
v. Dyett	603	v. Washburn	64, 2067	Waterman v. Davis	1206
v. Hardy	15, 1651, 1676a,	Washburn L. Co. v.		v. Moddy	1082, 1083, 2522
	1871	Swanby	2165	v. Raymond	1680
v. Hopkins	581	Washington v. Bank	1503	v. Whitney	228, 233, 1738,
v. Maine C. R. Co.	1078	v. Bedford	2336		1782, 1790
v. Marshall	2465, 2466,	v. Cole	938	Waters v. Bellamy	2061
	2477	v. State,		v. Jones	73
v. R. Co.,		63 Ala.	1021, 1045	v. Lawler	1725
44 N. Y.	65, 96	143 Ala.	1339, 2016	v. Merritt P. Co.	2066

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Waters v. Phelps	2432	Watson v. Gilday	1388, 2098	Waycaster v. State	1037
v. State	2575	v. Hinson	2452	Wayland v. State	2529
v. Waters,		v. Ins. Co.	913	v. Ware	1335, 1641, 1678
222 Ill.	229, 1738,	v. King,		Wayman v. Hilliard	1062
	2500	3 C. B.	1063	Waymire v. State	1219
35 Md.	689, 754, 758,	4 Camp.	1641, 1672	Wayne v. Venable	18
	1669, 1935,	1 Stark.	158, 2531	Weadlock v. Kennedy	1890
	1951, 2098	v. Lamb	2465	Weakley v. Wolf	1351
Waters' Heirs v. Harri-		v. Little	1666	Wear v. Wear	1958
son	1379	v. Lyons	613	Weatherall v. Weatherall	2083
Waters-Pierce Oil Co.		v. Miller	760	Weatherby v. Brown	1387
v. Deselms	2509, 2580	v. Mining Co.	1963	Weatherford v. Union P.	
Waterson v. Seat	1377	v. Moore	74, 406	R. Co.	18
Watertown v. Cady	1350	v. R. Co.,		Weatherford M. W. &	
Waterville v. Hughan	1212	53 Minn.	1976	N. R. Co. v. Duncan	290,
Watford v. Alabama &		76 Minn.	1387, 2103		379
F. L. Co.	2536	57 Wis.	463, 1943	Weatherhead v. Sewell	1040,
Watkins v. Cope	1856c	v. Richardson	95, 1492,		1215, 1658
v. Havighorst	1665		1605, 1606	Weathers v. Barkdale	923,
v. Holman	1672, 1684	v. Roode	1202		987
v. Nash	2408	v. St. P. C. R. Co.	2103	v. U. S.	351
v. Paine	1234	v. Simpson	1727	Weaver v. B. & O. R.	
v. R. Co.	463	v. State,		Co.	905
v. Reliance Life Ins.		63 Ala.	1195, 1206	v. Bromley	738
Co.	2510	Ala., 61 So.	1612, 2236	v. Cone	581
v. Rist	1873	7 Okl. Cr.	987	v. Cryer	2083
v. Sims	1067	Tex. Cr., 225		v. Leiman	1496, 1644
v. Smith	1573	S. W.	367	v. Meath	2260
v. State,		v. Tindal	1651	v. Pratt	1640
82 Ga.	928	v. Twombly	963, 1005	v. R. Co.	461
18 Ga. App.	2497	v. Walker	745, 749, 1271,	v. Robinett	1339
v. U. S.	1387, 1398, 1893		2163	v. State,	
v. Wallace	581	v. Watson	1347	77 Ala.	1072
Watkins L. M. Co. v.		Watson's Case	194a	139 Ala.	18
Campbell	21, 714	Watt v. Jones	2572	142 Ala.	2061
Watkins Salt Co. v.		v. Kilburn	1320, 1513	83 Ark.	2276
Mulkey	2433	v. People	1977	43 Tex. Cr.	273, 1072
Watlington v. U. S.	1203	v. State	111, 1732	v. Traylor	953
Watmore v. Dickinson	1982	Watt's Estate	2471	v. Whilden	2005, 2008
Watriss v. Trendall	561, 1944	Wattles v. Conner	1513	Weaver Mercantile Co.	
Watrous v. Cunningham,		Watts v. Crable	2047	v. Thurmond	2509
65 Cal.	1521	v. Fraser	376, 1234, 2150	Webb v. Atkinson	253, 1072
71 Cal.	1538, 1552	v. Howard	1523	v. Danforth	529
v. McGrew	1573, 2144	v. Lawson	1062	v. Den	1354
Watry v. Ferber	62, 75, 200,	v. Owens	1573, 2063	v. Drake	1729
	212	v. People	2513	v. Dyc	1302, 1511
Watson v. Adams	19, 969,	v. Sawyer	754, 763	v. East	2268
	2531	v. Smith	529, 2222	v. Feathers' Estate	770
v. Anderson,		v. State,		v. Gray	258, 406
11 Ala.	770	Ala. App., 63		v. Holt	1676a
13 Ala.	1938	So.	166, 988, 1154	v. Kelsey	2578
v. Barnes	1880	99 Md.	860, 1938	v. Page	2203
v. Bigelow Co.	451, 1072	Waugh v. Dibbens	2195	v. Petts	1364
v. Billings	1676	v. Fielding	1971	v. Plummer	2430
v. Bissell	1779	Wau-kon-chaw-neek-kaw		v. Powers	372
v. Brewster	1493, 1503	v. U. S.	1021	v. R. Co.	456
v. Cheshire	581	Wax's Estate	689, 1938,	v. Reynolds	1960
v. Colusa P. M. & S.			2315	v. Richardson	1502, 1778
Co.	1943	Way v. Butterworth	2363	v. Ritter	411, 1378, 1573,
v. Com.	2276	v. Cross	1558		2520
v. Coulson.	2141	v. Greer	2433	v. St. Lawrence	1312
v. Cowles	969	v. Harriman	608	v. Shea	2441
v. Cresap	570	v. State	988	v. Smith,	
v. England	2531	Waybright v. State	276	4 Bing. N. C.	343, 406



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2281; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Webb v. Smith,		Weeks v. Hutchinson	18	Welch v. Creech	2512
1 C. & P.	2286	v. Lyndon	418, 457, 1951	v. Greene	760
v. State,		v. McBeth	1737	v. Ins. Co.	1913, 1978
100 Ala.	1841, 2100	v. McNulty	289, 2098	v. Jenkins	20
Ala., 34 So.	1254	v. Maillardet	2410	v. R. Co.,	
150 Ark.	20	v. Smith	1350	176 Mass.	1976
11 Ga. App.	2511	v. Sparke	1584, 1587, 1591,	182 Mass.	1605
73 Miss.	390, 2497		1623	v. Ricker	377, 393, 1058
29 Oh. St.	987, 1106,	v. State	492	v. Sackett	2408
	1108, 1873	v. U. S.	2183, 2184, 2264	v. State,	
v. Webb	2520	Weems v. Weems	1938	104 Ind.	276, 1021,
v. White Engin. Co.	2572	Weems' Lessee v. Disney	1564		1041
v. Wilcher	1306, 2141	Weguelin v. Weguelin	1414,	50 Tex. Cr.	1128
Webb G. & C. Co. v.			1415	Tex. Cr., 46	
Boston & M. R. Co.	1129	Wehrkamp v. Willet	987, 1985	S. W.	1038
Webber v. Davis	2529, 2535	Weibert v. Hanan	676	Tex. Cr., 60	
v. Eastern R. Co.	1947	Weidenhoft v. Primm	1603	S. W.	150
v. Hanke	923, 928, 1612,	Weidler v. Farmers'		Tex. Cr., 227	
	1985	Bank	38, 40, 1871	S. W.	580
v. Jackson	908	Weidman v. Kohr	1082	v. Stipe	770, 1938
Weber v. Chicago R. I.		v. Symes	2018	v. Welch,	
& P. R. Co.	1456,	Weidner v. Phillips	392	16 Ala.	2067
	1461, 1476, 1974	v. Standard L. & A.		9 Rich.	1302
v. Com.	2281	Ins. Co.	290	Welcome v. Batchelder	736
v. Gardner	1606	Weigand v. Refining Co.	2494	Weld v. Boston	1784
v. Kansas City C. R.		v. Rutschke	2336, 2408	v. Brooks	1592
Co.	2496	Weigel v. Weigel	2067	Welden v. Buck	585
v. Lape	615	Weigel's Succession	2067	Welder v. Carroll	1570
v. St. P. C. R. Co.	1722	Weightnovel v. State	278,	Weldon v. Burch	2279
v. Strobel	2008		1072, 1722, 1725	v. State,	
Weber's Estate	1195, 1196,	Weil v. Quidnick Mfg.		32 Ind.	1135, 1136,
	2523	Co.	2416		1138, 1761, 1821
Weber Wagon Co. v.		v. Silverstone	913, 1389	Welland v. Middleton	1640
Keil	283	Weiler v. Monroe Co.	1188	Welland Canal Co. v.	
Webster v. Burke	2054	Weilgosz v. McGregor	2509	Hathaway	1257
v. Calden	1666	Weill v. Kenfield	1350	Wellar v. People	918, 2079,
v. Clark	736, 745, 747, 748	Weinburg v. Soms	2354		2080
v. Harris	1651, 2143	Weinkle v. R. Co.	1750	Wellcome, Re	1398, 2498
v. Hastings	1350	Weinrich v. Porter	1779	Weller v. Collier	1779
v. Lee	1890, 2222	Weir v. Hale	1195	Wellford v. Eakin	1312, 1320
v. Little Rock	1350	v. Hann	2408	Wellington v. R. Co.	1672
v. Lumber Co.	1552	v. Kansas City R. Co.	664	Wellmaker v. Wheatley	2465
v. Mann	1410	v. Long	2442	Wellman v. Jones	748
v. Paul	1456	v. McGee	1031, 1037	Wells, Re	1302
v. Rees	1684	Weis v. Tiernan	1278	v. Adams	1195
v. Smith	1779	Weisbrod v. R. Co.	1186	v. Burbank	382
v. Vickers	529	Weischam v. Hocker	2437	v. Chase	1330, 1669
v. Yorty	229, 230, 1302,	Weisenberg v. Appleton	252	v. Com.	987
	1303	Weiser v. Heintzman	66	v. Compton	1066
Webster Coal & C. Co.		Weiss v. Kohlhausen	1062,	v. Davis	675
v. Cassatt	1859b		1951	v. Eastman	1951
Webster Mfg. Co. v.		v. Weiss	1623	v. Fisher	2341
Mulvanny	571	Weitman v. Thiot	2141	v. Fletcher	2230
Wechsler v. U. S.	2282	Weitzel v. Brown	1633	v. Gress	2569
Weckerly v. Taylor	2235	Welborn v. Faulconer	1855	v. Hatch	1541, 1542, 1548
Wedgwood's Case	1644, 2529	Welch v. Abbot	1028	v. Hays	1539, 1540
Weed v. Clark	2518a	v. Barnett	338	v. Ins. Co.	1402, 1409
v. People	106, 216	v. Com.,		v. Iron Co.	770
v. Weed	2450	111 Ky.	987	v. Jackson I. M. Co.	1269,
Weeks, Re	2378	189 Ky.	1079		2168, 2576
v. Argent	2312, 2321	Ky., 60 S. W.	987	v. McMaster	1225
v. Boston El. R. Co.	1576,	Ky., 63 S. W.	987	v. Martin	1194
	1722	Ky., 108 S. W.	216,	v. Mfg. Co.	1388
v. Hull	1111		2276	v. Miller	1195

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wells v. State,		Wesley v. State,		West Virginia Architects	
131 Ala.	987	37 Miss.	56, 63, 246,	& Builders v. Stewart	1530,
Ark., 235 S. W.	1873		247		1549
22 Ind.	1219	r. Wesley	2061, 2066	Westall v. Osborn	1750
v. Stevens	2450	Wesneski v. Vanek	1058,	Westbrooks v. State	59
v. Terr.,			1066	Westcott v. Waterloo C.	
14 Okl.	396, 1079	West v. Bank	1623	F. & N. R. Co.	1750
15 Okl.	524, 580	v. Beek	2526	Westendorf v. Westen-	
v. Toogood	209, 2374	v. Druff	205	dorf	2416
v. Tryon	1651	r. Houston Oil Co.	68, 1085	Wester v. State	7, 2239
v. Tucker	2237	r. Kern	2510a	Westerfield v. Scripps	406
v. Utah C. Co.	2509	r. Louisiana	1398, 1404	Westerfield's Estate	1890
v. U. S.	369, 1732	r. Lynch	987	Westerland v. First	
v. Walker	1293	r. Price	1778	Nat'l Bank	233
v. Wells	1736	r. R. Co.	463	Westerman v. Foster	1651
v. Wilson	1225, 1651	r. Redmond	2063	r. Westerman	7, 2245
Wells & M. Council v.		r. Smith	1062, 2556	Western & A. R. Co.	
Littleton	2593	r. State,		r. Beason	1750
Wells Whip Co. v. Tar-		76 Ala.	1476	r. Bussey	1407, 1415
ners' M. F. Ins. Co.	1530	Ark., 234 S. W.	177	r. Calhoun	463
Welman, Re	1350	42 Fla.	363	r. Cox	1698, 1807
Welsbach I. G. L. Co. v.		22 N. J. L.	4, 1244,	r. Denmead	2206
New Sunlight I. Co.	1856a,		2006, 2008,	r. Hyer	2566
	2218		2016, 2529	r. Morrison	288
Welsh v. Argyle	2507	13 Okl. Cr.	2239	r. Roberson	2573
v. Barrett	1518, 1521,	Okl. Cr., 198		r. Stafford	688, 791
	1522, 1675	Pac.	1021	Western Assur. Co. v.	
v. State,		1 Wis.	2084, 2085,	Mohlman Co.	1693,
96 Ala.	1476		2086, 2191, 2192,		1698
Nebr., 82 N. W.	770,		2201, 2205	r. Ray	763
	1135	v. U. S.,		Western Carolina Bank	
Welty v. State	2511a	20 D. C. App.	832	v. Moore	2444
Wemyss Furn. Co. v.		258 Fed.	364	Western Coal & M. Co.	
Strober	1062	West Chester & P. R.		r. Berberich	1921,
Wendell v. Abbott	1225, 1651,	Co. v. McElwee	283		1951
	1710	West Chester & W. P.		Western Gas C. Co. v.	
v. Safford	2083	R. Co. r. Chester Co.	1640	Danner	791
Wendling v. Bowden	987	West Chicago St. R. Co.		Western Glass Mfg. Co.	
Wendt v. R. Co.	1890	r. Carr	1719, 1722	r. Schoeninger	2220
Wenegar v. Bollenbach	1067	r. Dougherty	966	Western Home Ins. Co.	
Wenkowski v. Crivitz P.		r. Fishman	684, 1974	r. Richardson	1943
& P. Co.	282	r. Kennedy-Cahill	437, 438	Western Indemnity Co.	
Wenner v. Thornton	1350	r. Kennelly	458, 1719	r. Ind. Acc. Com.	4c
Wenning v. Teeple	2506	r. Lieserowitz	1011, 2498	Western Loan & S. Co.	
Wenske v. Salley	1186	West Feliciana R. Co.		r. Waisman	1347, 2066
Wentworth v. Butler	969	r. Thornton	1275	Western Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Crawford	1890	West India & P. Tel.		Cotton	2416
v. Lloyd	2322	Co. v. The Legazpi	2509	r. Rogers	2435
v. Read	2475	West Jersey T. Co., Re	2169	Western Maryland R.	
Werbiskie v. McManus	1269,	r. Board	1677, 1680	Co. v. Mauro	1462
	1552	West Kentucky Coal		Western N. L. Ins. Co.	
Werely v. Persons	1719	Co. v. Dyer	463	r. Williamson H. F.	
Werk v. Parker	2569	r. Key	2509	Co.	616, 2550
Werlich's Will	1275, 1681	West Newbury v. Chase	714	Western R. of Alabama	
Werner v. Marx	1676	West Pub. Co. v. Ed-		r. Arnett	1951
v. R. Co.	682, 1974	ward Thompson		Western Stone Co. v.	
Wertenberger v. State	2062	Co.	1079	Whalen	249
Wertheim v. Contin. R.		r. Lawyers' Co-op P.		Western Travelers' Acc.	
& T. Co.	2200	Co.	372, 460, 1230	Ass'n v. Munson	7a, 1719,
Wertz v. May	803, 1108,	West Seattle v. W. S. L.			2388
	1387	& I. Co.	2575	Western Twine Co. v.	
Wescott v. Wescott	1133	West Skokie Drainage		Wright	95, 1236, 2154
Wesley v. State,		District v. Dawson	463,	Western Union O. Co.	
52 Ala.	782, 1750, 1757		961, 1908	r. Newlove	1021



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Western Union T. Co.		Wetmore & M. G. Co.		Wheeler & W. M. Co.	
v. Atl. & Pac. S. T. Co.	1674	v. Ryle	1248	v. Tinsley	616
v. Bates	1236	Wetzel v. Firebaugh	1911, 1958	Wheeling v. Trowbridge	613
v. Blanc	1236	Weyand v. Stover	1350	Wheeling M. & F. Co. v.	
v. Dodge Co.	4c	v. Tipton	1664	Wheeling S. & I. Co.	1951
v. Fatman	1236	Weygandt v. Bartle	571, 905, 1750, 2496	Wheelis v. State	2079
v. Favish	18	Weyman v. People	321	Wheelock v. Godfrey	689, 2390
v. Hanley	1389	Weymouth Case	1712	Wheelock's Will	582, 1671, 1739
v. Hopkins	1236	Whalen v. Gleeson	2149	Wheelton v. Hardisty	2494
v. Kilgore	1730	Whaley v. State	276	Wheelwright v. Dyal	2464
v. Long	1966	Whann v. Hall	1320	Whelan v. Lynch	1704
v. Merrill	1951	Wharam v. Routledge	2125	Wheless v. Rhodes	1966
v. Morris	676	Wharram v. Wharram	1267	Whereatt v. Ellis	1856b
v. Northcutt	2134	Wharton v. State	2570	Whetston v. State	149
v. Rasche	714, 1943	v. Tacoma F. D. Co.	1003	Whetstone v. Bank	1966
v. Ring	1943	Wharton's Will	233	Whicher v. Whicher	803
v. Taggart	1350	Wharton Peerage Case	1662	Whidby v. State	2060
Western W. S. Co. v.		Whately v. State	860	Whigby v. Burnham	2086
McMillen	2438	Wheadon v. Turregano	2525	Whigenant v. State	1966, 1977
Westfall v. Wait	1738, 1890, 2494	Wheat v. Ragsdale	1240	Whilden v. Bank	1213, 1236
v. Westfall	2063	v. Smith	1351	Whipp v. State	2239
Westfall's Case	194a	Wheatley v. State	2260	Whipple v. Preece	1890
Westfelt v. Adams	1568, 1588	v. Williams	2308	v. Rich	1041
Westfield v. Warren	1362, 1420, 1503	Wheaton v. Liverpool & L. & G. Ins. Co.	2408	v. Stevens	18
Westfield Cigar Co. v.		v. Pope	2474	v. Walpole	463, 716
Ins. Co.	665, 1246	Wheelden v. Wilson	581	v. Whipple	1943
Westheimer v. Habinek	2536	Wheeler v. Ahlers	93, 309	Whiskey Cases	2280
Westinghouse Co. v.		v. Buck	392	Whisler v. Whisler	1557
Tilden	1234	v. Campbell	618, 1777, 1971, 2336, 2433	Whisner v. Whisner	1076, 1263, 1938
Westinghouse Machine Co. v. Electric S. B. Co.	1412	v. Com.	111	Whistelo's Trial	781
Westlake v. Westlake	1730	v. Hatch	736, 747	Whitacre v. M'Ilhanev	1275
Westmacott v. Westmacott	1645	v. Hill	2311, 2313	Whitaker v. Arnold	1387
Westmore v. Sheffield	1938	v. Jenison	1013, 1404	v. Brown	1083
Westmoreland v. State	2100	v. Le Marchant	2286, 2319, 2380, 2394	v. Campbell	1951
v. Westmoreland	2525	v. McCorristen	1086	v. Hamilton	1938
Weston v. Ball	2465	v. McFerron	1404	v. Lane	2408
v. Barnicoat	1729	v. McKeon	229	v. Marsh	1408
v. Foster	1951	v. Metrop. Stock Exchange	2406	v. Salisbury	898, 800, 907, 1302
v. Penniman	1647	v. Moody	1239	v. State,	
v. Royal Typewriter Co.	2116	v. Oregon R. & N. Co.	1461, 1750	106 Ala.	142, 276
v. Teufel	1012, 1658, 2503	v. Packer	392	11 Ga. App.	2183
Westover v. Ins. Co.	2329, 2387, 2391	v. R. Co.	1722	v. Thayer	704
Westphal v. Heckman	2503	v. Rockett	2500	v. Wheeler	1086, 1779
v. R. Co.	905	v. Smith	1389, 1878	v. Whitaker	1778
v. Westphal	2046	v. Standley	2141	Whitbread v. Gurney	2294, 2319
Wetherbee v. Dunn	1890, 2167, 2168	v. State,		Whitcher v. Davis	2218
v. Ezekiel	2313	112 Ga.	1442	v. McLaughlin	1644
v. Norris	654, 691	158 Ind.	106, 2381	v. Morey	2098
Wetherbee's Ex'rs v.		34 Oh. St.	233, 1671	v. R. Co.	458
Wetherbee's Heirs	672, 678, 688	v. Styles	1066	v. Shattuck	253
Wetherell v. Hollister	792	v. Thomas	905	Whitecomb v. Whiting	1077
Wetherston v. Edgington	1298	v. U. S.	505, 506, 507	Whitecomb's Case	2195
Wetmore v. Mell	1750, 1770	v. West	1067	White, Re	2528
		v. Wheeler's Estate	607	v. Allen	762
		Wheeler & W. M. Co.		v. Bailey	1890, 1958
		v. Barrett	1890	v. Ballou	1951
		v. Buckhout	2012	v. Beal & F. G. Co.	321, 1640

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
White v. Berkson B. C.		White v. Smith,		White's Adm'r v. Ken-	
& S. Co.	283	A. M. & O.	1898	tucky P. Elev. Co.	461
v. Bird	2306	46 N. Y.	1064	White's Goods	2452
v. Bisbing	1373	v. Southern R. Co.	18,	White's Succession	2008
v. Boston	1907		1750	Whiteacres v. Thurland	2250
v. Brown	1195	v. State,		Whiteford v. Burek-	
v. Burney	1195	103 Ala.	1974	myer	1005, 1028, 1272,
v. Chan Wy Sheung	4c	111 Ala.	276, 293,		1675
v. Chouteau	1461		988, 1618	Whitehall v. Smith	1195
v. Clay	2110	114 Ala.	923	Whitehead v. Scott	1249,
v. Clements	1213	133 Ala.	561, 851		1770
v. Collector	167	Ala., 34 So.	568, 1821	v. State	2216
v. Collins	1051	70 Ark.	836	Whitehouse v. Bickford	1633.
v. Com.,		59 Fla.	21, 1732		2109, 2139
80 Ky.	142, 194, 195,	56 Ga.	784	v. Whitehouse	2477
	460, 1618	100 Ga.	93, 1447, 1873	Whitehurst v. Atlantic	
96 Ky.	506, 1828	3 Heisk.	858	C. L. R. Co.	456
120 Ky.	19	31 Ind.	279	v. Com.	1671
v. Concord R.	463	53 Ind.	581	Whitelaw's Adm'r v.	
v. Corlies	2410	52 Miss.	497, 1840,	Whitelaw's Adm'r	1081
v. Creamer	1066		2056, 2270	Whitelaws v. Sims	1938
v. Credit Reform		Miss., 91 So.	833, 855	Whiteley v. China	201, 1943
Ass'n	1856b	50 Okl.	20	v. King	1736
v. Dowling	1075	4 Okl. Cr.	247	Whitelocke v. Baker	1482,
v. Dwinel	1651	32 Tex. Cr.	499		1486
v. Englehard	1675	83 Tex. Cr.	1157	v. Musgrove	1513, 2529
v. Everest	2222	v. Strother	1481	Whiteman v. Whiteman	2477
v. Farris	2141	v. Suffolk & C. R. Co.	2552	Whitesell v. Crane	716, 1943
v. Flemming	95	v. Terr.	105, 111, 247	Whiteside v. Hoskins	1245
v. Fox	2089	v. Tolliver	704, 2153	v. Lowney	2591
v. Fussell	986	v. Tripp	93	v. Watkins	1195
v. Graves	233	v. Tucker	581	Whitfield v. Aland	761
v. Harlow	2211	v. U. S.,		v. Fausset	1177, 1189
v. Helmes	2048	263 Fed.	369	v. Whitfield,	
v. Hermann	463	164 U. S.	1633, 1639	40 Miss.	1943
v. Herrman	1233	v. Utah Condensed		34 Miss.	2336
v. Hines	1938, 2124	Milk Co.	1078	Whitford v. Tutin	1201, 1212
v. Hinton	1350	v. Wansey	6	Whiting, In re	569, 2328
v. Holladay	1229, 1301	v. Wheaton	1086	v. Barney	2295, 2312
v. Hutchings	1225, 2143	v. White,		v. Hoglund	2408
v. Kearney,		82 Cal.	770	v. Nicholl	2531
2 La. An.	1680	45 N. H.	2067	Whiting-Middleton C.	
9 Rob.	1219	5 Rawle	2354	Co. v. Preston	437
v. Lisle	1592	140 Wis.	1730, 2336,	Whitley v. State,	
v. McLean	1010		2340	114 Ark.	1164
v. McPherson	561	v. Whitney	1560	38 Ga.	1438, 1445,
v. McQueen	2554	v. Wilkinson	750, 751,		1447
v. Manter	1858		1530	78 Miss.	855
v. Merrill	1060	v. Willard	2408	Whitley Grocery Co. v.	
v. Middlesex R. Co.	7a	v. Wilson	2454	Roach	1530
v. Murtland	75, 133, 210	v. Wood	1304	Whitman v. Freese	1969
v. Old Dominion S. S.		v. Woodruff	1086	v. Heneberry	2138
Co.	1062	v. Woods	2446	v. Morey	905, 917, 918,
v. Pease	2553	White Deer Creek Impr.			2115
v. Perry	610, 2235, 2336	Co. v. Sassaman	1943	v. R. Co.	1951
v. Poole	608	White Memorial Home		v. Shaw	1573, 2139
v. R. Co.,		v. Haeg	585	v. State,	
142 Ind.	1012, 1013	White Mountain Freezer		69 Ind.	133
61 Wis.	2220	Co. v. Murphy	2372, 2376	80 Md.	2577
v. Reading	2452	White S. M. Co. v. Gor-		Whitmire v. Napier	1257
v. Rosenthal	321	don	2008, 2015	Whitmore v. Ainsworth	1969
v. Ross	1730	v. Smith	2416	v. Ball	1800
v. Sayward	406	White Star Mining Co.		v. Bowman	1943
v. Smita	1778	v. Hultberg	2358	v. Johnson	2110



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1353; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2254; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Whitnash v. George	1077	Wichita v. Stallings	2354	Wilburn v. Wagner	2498
Whitner v. Belknap	2575	Wichita & W. R. Co. v.		Wilcocks v. Phillips'	
Whitney v. Bacon	1567	Kuhn	616, 1943	Ex'rs	728, 1271
v. Bailey	285	Wichita F. & N. W. R.		Wilcox v. Axtmayer	578
v. Boston	714, 1005	Co. v. Holloman	1060	v. Bergman	1652, 1680
v. Bunnell	2008	Wick v. Baldwin	1106	v. Cate	2434
v. Com.	855, 857	v. Roop	2518	v. Downing	1525
v. Dewey	2408	Wickenkamp v. Wick-		v. Forbes	792
v. Fox	6	enkamp	15, 1195, 1896	v. Hunt	5
v. Gross	97, 199	Wicker v. Jones	2525	v. International Har-	
v. Hanington	2452	Wickes v. Walden	2341	vester Co.	1700
v. Houghton,		Wickham v. Torley	1876	v. Jackson	1239, 2166
125 Mass.	418	Wickliffe v. Hill	2167	v. Leake	1944
127 Mass.	1072	Wicks v. Dean	2306	v. Lucas	2418
v. Pierce	2201	v. Smalbroke	521	v. Ray	1678
v. R. Co.	1976	v. Walden	2341	v. Smith	2535
v. Spratt	2572	Wicktorwitz v. Ins. Co.	1078	v. State	2061
v. State,		Widdifield v. Widdifield	1249,	v. Wilcox,	
10 Ind.	1182		1257	171 Cal.	2531
154 Ind.	950, 987, 1005	Widdows' Trust, Re	2528	16 D. L. R.	2531
53 Nebr.	2073, 2497	Wiedemann v. Walpole	1071,	46 Hun.	792, 794
v. Sterling	1624		1073, 2061	Wild's Case	2462
v. Thatcher	719	Wiehl v. Robertson	1079	Wildberger v. Check's	
v. U. S.	2566	Wiers v. Treese	2438	Ex'rs	2477
v. Wagener	1779	Wiess v. Hall	1605	Wilde v. Armsby	2525
v. Wheeler	1737	Wiggin v. Day	321	Wildeboer v. Petersen	398,
v. Whitman	2349	v. Plumer	89, 224		1329
Whitney Co. v. Church	4c, 4e	v. State	2183	Wilder v. A. D. & R. E.	
Whiton v. Ins. Cos.	1597,	Wiggins v. Fleishel	1299,	Traction Co.	1662
	1663, 1684		1301, 1651	v. De Cou	1955
Whitrong v. Blaney	1664	v. Guier	1678	v. Franklin's Ex'r	2065
Whitsett v. R. Co.	1976	v. Henson	1977	v. Gr. Western C. Co.	461
Whitt v. Com.	21, 1018	v. Holley	2105	v. St. Paul	1651, 1665
Whittaker v. Com.	2060	v. McLean	2159	v. State	2354
Whittelsey v. Kellogg	1956	v. Pryor	1245	Wilds v. R. Co.	461
Whittemore v. Brooks	1313,	v. State	398, 1761	Wilensou v. Handlon	2408
	1316	v. Utah	111	Wiles v. Great Northern	
v. Farrington	2417	Wigginton v. Com.	2071	R. Co.	2509
Whitten v. Western U.		v. State	18, 1405, 1414	Wiley v. Bean	1312
Tel. Co.	2219	Wigglesworth v. Dalli-		v. Givens	1257
Whittier v. Franklin	68a,	son	1440	v. McBride	2235, 2337
	201, 1621, 1977	Wight v. Rindskopf	580	v. State,	
v. Varney	334	Wightman v. Providence	1807	92 Ark.	2513
Whittingham v. Blox-		Wigley v. Solicitor	1644	Okl. Cr., 191	
ham	1873	Wihe v. Law	1646	Pac.	2060
v. Burgoyne	2257	Wike v. Lightner	1985	Wilfong v. Johnson	2442
Whittit v. Miller	1644	Wikel v. Board	2566	Wilhelm v. Uttenweiler	716
Whittle v. State,		Wikman's Estate	2148	Wilhelmi v. Leonard	1890,
79 Miss.	2042	Wilber v. Eicholtz	2016		2115
43 Tex. Cr.	2018	v. Goodrich	1681	Wilhite v. Barr	1678
Whittlesey v. Hurbrand		Wilberding v. Dubuque	252	Wilkerson v. Allen	2105
Co.	2465	Wilbor, Re	2532	v. Eilers	2115
Whitton v. Whitton	1644	Wilbur v. Calais	1725, 1784	v. State,	
Whittuck v. Waters	1644	v. Flood	987, 1270	140 Ala.	967, 987
Whitwell v. Johnson	2153	v. Grover	2420	91 Ga.	1434, 2339
v. Winslow	1737	v. R. Co.	1674	Wilkes v. Clark C. & G.	
v. Wyer	2115	v. Rhode Island Co.	2509	Co.	1234
Whizenant v. State	1966,	v. Selden	1404, 1521, 2098	v. Heaton	1877
	1977	v. Strickland	1086	v. Market Co.	1949
Whorley v. Tennessee		v. Wilbur	1190	v. State	1620
C. Expos. Co.	463	Wilburn v. Hall	1681	Wilkie v. Chadwick,	2195,
Whyman v. Garth	1288, 1299,	v. State,			2199
	1301	60 Ark.	1194	v. Chehalis Co. L. &	
Wiborg v. U. S.	1079	141 Ga.	851	T. Co.	41, 461

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wilkin-Hale State Bank		Williams v. Ashton	2525	Williams v. Hart	1086
v. Tucker	1389	v. Averitt	1878	v. Harter	1082
Wilkins v. Babbershall	1026,	v. Bailey	2503	v. Hathaway	714
	1028	v. Baldwin	2235, 2237,	v. Hayes	1877
v. Bent	2349		2336	v. Heath	1225
v. Brock	1722	v. Bass	1225, 1651,	v. Herrick	1603
v. Earle	382, 1013		2105, 2141	v. Hill	1225
v. Flint	290	v. Belmont C. & C.		v. Hillegas	2141
v. Jones	2473	Co.	20, 1750	v. Holbrook	458
v. Malone	2252, 2283	v. Benton	1202	v. Hollingsworth	75
v. Metcalf	418, 1730, 1974	v. Betts	620, 2334,	v. Innes	1070
v. Missouri Valley	1722		2336	v. Ins. Co.	1206
v. Moore	2327	v. Blumenthal	2313	v. Jarrot	1269, 2158
v. Somerville	2408	v. Brickell	1236, 1256	v. Johnson,	
v. State	1404	v. Broadhead	1388	112 Ind.	2384, 2389
v. Stidger	1075, 2593	v. Brooklyn El. R. Co.	1807	1 Stra.	2235
v. Wilmington	1719	v. Brown	682, 720, 1944	v. Judy	1084
Wilkinson v. Adam	2463	v. Brummel	1267	v. Kelsey	736, 745, 747,
v. Aetna L. Ins. Co.	2510	v. Callender	73		2103
v. Clark	439	v. Camp Mfg. Co.	2509	v. Kerr	1273
v. Jett	1674	v. Cannon	1966	v. Kidd	2408
v. Moseley	461, 568, 681,	v. Cantwell	905	v. Lansing	437, 438
	1722	v. Carpenter	1674	v. McKee	1908
v. Pearson	233, 1738,	v. Case	1195	v. Metropolitan Life	
	1938, 1958	v. Casebeer	258	Ins. Co.	1646
v. People	1911	v. Chapman	1028, 1031,	v. Miles	2106, 2523
v. Service	1738, 2329		1035	v. Miller	529
v. State	791, 1874	v. Chattanooga Iron		v. Miner	406
v. Wilkinson	1392	Works	2220	v. Montgomery	2354
Wilkinson's Estate	2518	v. Cheney	1065, 1387	v. Morehead	1302
Will v. Mendon	438, 1722,	v. Chicago R. I. & P.		v. Mudie	2294
	1974	R. Co.	2433	v. Nally	1158, 1700
v. Tornabells & Co.	2298	v. Chicago S. F. & C.		v. National Cash R.	
Willamette F. C. & L.		R. Co.	7a	Co.	2446
Co. v. Gordon	1275	v. Com.,		v. People,	
Willard v. Darrah	2474	90 Ky.	1873	54 Ill.	111
v. Fralick	2097	Ky., 50 S. W.	987	101 Ill.	2071
v. Goodenough	928, 1111,	Ky., 68 S. W.	580,	166 Ill.	216, 347, 2497
	1985		2042	196 Ill.	2513
v. Harvey	1216, 2450	29 Pa.	153, 852	v. Philadelphia Rapid	
v. Mellor	1704	91 Pa.	2042	Transit Co.	2509
v. Pettitt	1874	128 Va.	390	v. Phillips	2337
v. State	821	Va., 107 S. E.	2072	v. Poppleton	261, 1951
v. Sullivan	995	v. Conger	2006, 2016	v. Price	1062
Willaume v. Gorges	89	v. Culver	1003, 1076	v. Putnam	1675
Willeox v. Gottfrey	2061	v. Dewitt	1969, 2442	v. Quebroda R. L. &	
v. Priester	2433	v. Donaldson	2119	C. Co.	2298
Willeford v. Bailey	18, 1406	v. Duston	2495	v. R. Co.,	
Willet v. Goetz	68a	v. East India Co.	1339,	103 Ky.	571
Willett v. Andrews	1195, 1267		2079, 2089, 2534	68 Minn.	1719, 1722
v. Morse	18, 1873	v. Eikenberry	1086	155 N. Y.	2495
v. St. Albans	457, 714	v. Eldridge	770	v. Randolph & C. R.	
Willey v. Howell	1729	v. Ensign	1778	Co.	7, 1432
v. Portsmouth	252, 657,	v. Fambro	63	v. Rawlins	803
	771, 1219	v. Farrington	2268, 2279	v. Reid	1292
William v. Gwyn	1167	v. Fitch	2294	v. Riley	2245
v. State	2100	v. Floyd	1300	v. Robbins	334
William & Mary Col-		v. Fourth Nat'l B'k	1356	v. Seiglitz	1067
lege v. Powell	603, 610,	v. Fulkes	682	v. Sills	1295
	2237	v. Gilman	15	v. Sleepy H. M. Co.	1669,
William Jarvis, The	6	v. Goodall	2450		2509
William Schuette & Co.		v. Gray	1779	v. Smith	1675
v. Swauk	1959	v. Greaves	1464	v. Southern P. Co.	1750
Williams v. Allen	1876	v. Greenwade	76	v. Southern R. Co.	1750



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Williams v. Soutter	657	Williams v. U. S.,		Willis v. Jernegan	1073
v. Spencer	689	3 D. C. App.	507,	v. Louderback	2110
v. Spokane P. & N. R.			1821	v. Peckam	2203
Co.	2388, 2509	254 Fed.	2277	v. Quimby	270, 785
v. State,		265 Fed.	21	v. Singer	704
44 Ala.	2086, 2231	1 Ind. Terr.	1270	v. State,	
52 Ala.	1076	6 Ind. Terr.	934, 2272	134 Ala.	1230
54 Ala.	2086	Ind. T., 69 S. W.	987	67 Ark.	1079
61 Ala.	2016, 2018	.68 U. S.	154, 1616	93 Ga.	838
74 Ala.	246	v. Wabash R. Co.	2390	43 Nebr.	933
81 Ala.	1072	v. Wager	754	13 Okl. Cr.	1003
98 Ala.	2265, 2276	v. Walbridge	529	v. U. S.	1349
109 Ala.	506, 1821	v. Walker	917	v. Ward	613
123 Ala.	1966	v. Ward	1212, 2098	v. West	1911
144 Ala.	987, 988, 2511	v. Waters	1268	v. W. U. Tel. Co.	1978
149 Ala.	2239	v. Wetherbee	1225, 1318,	v. Zorger	2498
151 Ala.	2086		1651, 1676a	Willitts v. Chicago B.	
63 Ark.	824, 862	v. Wilcox	18	& Q. R. Co.	763, 2386
69 Ark.	855, 2100	v. Wilkes	1681, 2164	Willman v. Worrall	694
32 Fla.	1890	v. Williams,		Willock v. Wilson	1681
40 Fla.	2513	3 Beav.	1955	Willoughby v. Dewey	1186
42 Fla.	580	20 Colo.	1730	v. Queneby	2426
48 Fla.	851	1 Hagg. Cons.	238,	v. R. Co.	1890
Fla., 34 So.	682		866, 2067, 2081	v. State	821
19 Ga.	1398	221 Ill.	2165	v. Terr.	1450
57 Ga.	2071	108 Ia.	1195	Willoughby's Case	2220
69 Ga.	1329, 2071,	Ky., 71 S. W.	618	Wills v. Lance	2570
	2236	L. R., 1 P. & D.	2067	v. M'Dole	1201, 1281
100 Ga.	2183, 2264	142 Mass.	2051	v. Russell	1890
123 Ga.	2073	47 Md.	1938	v. State,	
Ga., 110 S. E.	118,	67 Mo.	616	73 Ala.	2595
	363, 2059	102 Wis.	89	74 Ala.	1263
3 Heisk.	63, 111, 246,	v. Winthrop	252, 458	Wills Point Bank v.	
	247	v. Young	2319	Bates	2349
8 Humph.	357	Williams' Case	905	Willson v. Betts	704, 1311,
16 Ind.	1205	Williams' Estate	229		1320, 1321, 2130,
168 Ind.	18, 1442, 1451	Williamson v. Fischer	791,		2137, 2141
175 Ind.	2016		794	Wilmer v. Israel	1543
6 Lea	1350	v. Mosley	2141	v. Placide	1414
12 Lea	499	v. Musick	1351	Wilmington v. Burling-	
64 Md.	437, 1976	v. Nebers	1738	ton	1501
72 Miss.	833	v. People	1034	Wilmington S. Bank v.	
73 Miss.	1020, 1021,	v. R. Co.	1756	Waste	238, 2015
	1038	v. State,		Wilmot v. Bartlett	988
79 Miss.	1124	13 Tex. Cr.	2089	v. Maccabe	1862
87 Miss.	2277	74 Tex. Cr.	196, 347	v. Vanwart	1921
4 Okl. Cr.	363	v. U. S.	38, 342	Wilmoth v. Hamilton	1873
13 Okl. Cr.	1442, 1476	Williamson & B. L. &		v. Wheaton	1669
35 Tex.	1840	L. Co. v. Mullins L.		Wilson, Ex parte	2264
42 Tex.	2060	Co.	2522	v. Alexander	461
52 Tex. Cr.	497	Williamson I. Co. v.		v. Barnett	66
86 Tex. Cr.	2016	McQueen	1950	v. Bauman	565
88 Tex. Cr.	772, 851,	Willies v. Farley	1779	v. Beauchamp	2008, 2016
	855, 1821, 1832	Williford v. State	2079	v. Berryman	2354
89 Tex. Cr.	2119	Willingham v. Smith	2408	v. Boerem	1362, 1432
v. Stoughton	1234	v. State,		v. Bowie	2125
v. Suffolk Ins. Co.	2566	104 Ala.	1219	v. Braden	1573, 2105
v. Taunton	655, 660	130 Ala.	247	v. Brownlee	1487, 1503
v. Taylor	1350	Willink v. Miles	2168	v. Calvert	2100
v. Tel. Co.	1078	Willis v. Bailey	1858	v. Carson	726, 1271
v. Thomas	1061, 1062	Willis v. Bank of Har-		v. Cody	2195
v. Thorp	1062	dinsburg	1856d	v. Coleman	669
v. Turner	1028, 1029,	v. Bernard	13, 1730	v. Com.,	
	1391, 2210	v. Gammill	2334	Ky., 54 S. W.	763

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wilson v. Com.,		Wilson v. State,		Wilson-Ward Co. v.	
Ky., 60 S. W.	1439	73 Ala.	205, 1966,	Farmers' U. G. Co.	2498
Ky., 64 S. W.	1270		2062	Wilt v. Bird	1062
Ky., 130 S. W.	1032	110 Ala.	105, 852	v. Cutler	1651, 1681, 1684,
Va., 111 S. E.	1620	140 Ala.	1404		2159
v. Conine	2110	195 Ala.	684	v. Vickers	1976
v. Derr	907	Ala., 39 So.	2446	Wilton v. Humphreys	112,
v. Elkins	1719	Ala., 84 So.	1960		917
v. Esquimalt & Na-		125 Ark.	2239	v. Manitoba Independ-	
naino R. Co.	4b	30 Fla.	110, 111	ent Oil	2444
v. Glos	2520	19 Ga.	822, 832	v. Railroads	1856c
v. Gordon	2312	138 Ga.	1356	v. Webster	1730
v. Granby	458, 1719	Ga., 110 S. E.	396	Wiltse v. Fifield	2410
v. Harnette	1802, 1951	16 Ind.	62, 200, 987	Wiltsey's Will	21, 1369, 1388,
v. Harris Sax Co.	1078	175 Ind.	1398, 1405,		1738
v. Hays' Ex'r	1873		1807	Wimber v. R. Co.	283, 1951
v. Hodges	2531	87 Nebr.	987, 1853	Wimberly v. State,	
v. Hoffman	1680	Okl. Cr., 183		90 Ark.	1404
v. Irish	2016	Pac.	21, 821	105 Ga.	2071
v. Jernigan	2494	41 Tex.	568, 2081	Wimmer v. U. S.	369
v. Johnson	2494	43 Tex.	2081	Wims v. State	394
v. Kirkland	2008	45 Tex.	2089	Winans v. Dunham	1215,
v. McClure	2427	12 Tex. App.	2089		2110
v. M'Veagh	1664	39 Tex. Cr.	2272	v. R. Co.	1908
v. Markley	1350	41 Tex. Cr.	2252	Winch v. Norman	1012, 2020
v. Mitchell	2086	49 Tex. Cr.	1447, 1751	Winchell v. Edwards	280
v. Mulloney	2446	3 Wis.	1985	v. Latham	1896, 2115
v. Noonan	72, 73, 209,	v. Stevens	2477	v. Winchell	1873
	581, 1668	v. Sun Pub. Co.	76	Winchelsea v. Wauchope	1304
v. Ohio F. Ins. Co.	2271,	v. Terry,		Winchester v. Charter	89, 334,
	2327	11 All.	1784		1082, 1086
v. Owens	2573	70 N. J. Eq.	2054	v. Fournier	2290
v. Patrick	1133, 1779	v. Thornbury	1859c	Winchester & P. M. Co.	
v. People	1852	v. Thorpe	2529	v. Creary	1086
v. Potter	2537	v. Troup	2296	Winchester F. Ins. Co.	
v. Powers	2410	v. U. S.,		v. Foster	2334
v. Pritchett	18	149 U. S.	1977, 2272	Winder v. Penniman	2195
v. R. Co.,		162 U. S.	278, 792,	Windham v. Hydrick	2433
31 Minn.	1236		821, 826, 851, 852,	v. Newton	1680
18 R. I.	1951		861, 2513	Winding Gulf C. Co. v.	
52 S. C.	784	221 U. S.	2259a, 2259b	Campbell	1956
v. Rastall	2286, 2290, 2294,	232 U. S.	934, 2497	Windom v. Brown	1195
	2303, 2317, 2321,	v. Union Tool Co.	2257	Windsor v. St. Paul M.	
	2380, 2394	v. Van Leer	694, 695,	& M. R. Co.	2433
v. Robinson	406		1698	Windsor Case	1712
v. Rowe	1567	v. Wagar	1890	Wineland v. Coonce	1681
v. Royston	1312, 1320, 1676	v. Waltersville S.		Winemiller v. Thrash	2110
v. Runyon	923, 1985	Dist.	1661	Winfield v. State,	
v. St. Joe Boom Co.	969,	v. Wilson,		Okl. Cr., 191 Pa.	987,
	1750	1 Halst.	1539, 1546,		1877, 2059
v. San Francisco-Oak-			1549	Tex. Cr., 54	
land T. R. Co.	2416	85 Nebr.	2520	S. W.	857
v. School District	1674,	26 Or.	2444	Wing v. Abbott	1195, 1267
	1680	Prob.	564	v. Angrave	2532
v. Seattle	1335	v. Wood	1244	v. Bradstreet & Sons	
v. Smelser	1770	v. Woodruff	1779	Co.	208
v. Smith	1651, 2167	v. Woodside	1141	v. Earle	2462
v. Snow	1573, 2144	v. Wright	1225	Wingo v. Caldwell	1778
v. Southern Pac. Co.	1750	v. Young	1246	Winkleman v. White	382
v. Southern R. Co.	720	Wilson's Estate	1938	Winklemans v. R. Co.	782
v. Spring	1676, 2110	Wilson, Close & Co. v.		Winkles v. Guenther	2525
v. State,		Pritchett	18, 2415, 2439	Winkley v. Kaime	2477
52 Ala.	1839, 1840,	Wilson W. & L. Co. v.		Winn v. Cleveland C. C.	
	1842	Hinton	1566	& St. L. R. Co.	1698



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Winn v. Coggins	2579	Wisconsin Steel Co. v.		Woburn Nat'l Bank v.	
v. Itzel	530, 1890, 2502	Maryland Steel Co.	1530	Woods	2466
v. Patterson	1195, 1274, 1275, 1311, 1651, 2143	Wisconsin Trust Co. v.		Woelckner v. Motor Co.	199, 1951
v. Swayne	2250	Wisconsin M. & F. Co. Bank	2531	Woey Ho v. U. S.	1107, 2066
Winne v. Lloyd	1281	Wisdom v. People	2056	Wogan, Re	5, 1382, 2218
v. Nickerson	1557, 1558	v. Reeves	1382, 2140, 2146	v. Small	770, 1958
Winnepesaukee C. M.		v. State,		Wohlford v. People	581
Ass'n v. Gordon	2451	193 Miss.	987	Wolcott v. Heath	736
Winner v. Bauman	1543, 1557, 1560	Okl. Cr.	987	v. Hall	73, 74
Winnipiseogee Lake Co.		42 Tex. Cr.	852, 2089, 2363	v. National Electric S. Co.	1859c
v. Young	2572, 2575	Wise v. Ackerman	458	Woldenberg v. Riphan	2417
Winona v. Burke	2572	v. Bigger	1350	Wolf v. Carothers	1085
v. Huff	1198, 1208, 1225, 1267	v. Foote	615, 770, 1938	v. Chicago S. P. Co.	2496
Winona & S. P. R. Co.		v. Kerr Thread Co.	1681	v. Frank	211
v. Denman	1943	v. Schloesser	276	v. Goddard	1665
Winsett v. State	2079	v. State	246	v. Mapson	987
Winship v. Clendenning	1225	v. Wakefield	18, 900, 1985	v. Perryman	75, 209
v. Neale	963	v. Wynn	1490, 1491, 1501	v. U. S.	369
Winsky v. State	2081, 2513	Wishart v. Applegate	582	v. Williams	1960
Winslow v. Morrill	1166	Wiseman v. Green	2477	v. Wolf	2268
v. Newlan	1029	v. Risinger	1186	v. Wyeth	2098
v. Norfolk H. Co.	2509	Wisener v. Maupin	1838, 1841	Wolf's Case	851
v. Smith	2349, 2350	Wishart v. Downey	291, 1293	Wolfe v. Hauver	907
v. State	1254, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2081	Wishcaless v. Hammond	2510	v. N. B. Cordage Co.	1974
Winslow's Will	1554	Wisner v. Wirth	1681	v. R. Co.	2155
Winsmore v. Greenback	2239	Wissinger v. Valley		v. Underwood	1246
Winsor v. Dilloway	1549	Smokeless Coal Co.	463, 681	v. Washburn	2450
v. Regina	580	Wistrand v. People,		Wolferman v. Bell	2525
Winston v. Gwathmey	2141, 2164	213 Ill.	222, 1168, 2072	Wolff v. Smith	74
v. Moseley	901, 905, 907	218 Ill.	59, 2100	v. Wolff	2046
v. Prevost	1225	Wiswall v. Ross	1871	Wolfe v. Minnis	1807
v. State	331	Witcher v. Richmond	406	Wolford v. Farnham,	
v. Winston	2060	Witham v. State	618	44 Minn.	604, 2240
Winter v. Baudel	1640	Withaup v. U. S.	6, 309, 2008, 2016	47 Minn.	1230
v. Burt	716	Withers v. Fiscus	2349	v. Geisel M. & S. Co.	4c
v. Butt	905	v. Gillespy	1391, 2118, 2125	Wolfson v. Allen B. Co.	1623
v. Judkins	1301	v. Moore	2440	v. U. S.	216, 331, 580
v. Mixer	1842	Withey v. Pere Mar-		Wolgrave v. Coe	2250
v. Montgomery	716	quette R. Co.	716, 1943	Wollaston v. Hakewill	1256, 1300
v. R. Co.	1719	Withington v. Warren	2358	Wolters, Ex parte	2195
Winters v. Earl	2437	Withneel v. Gartman	2461	v. King	2442
v. Laird	1225	Withnell v. Gartham	1586	v. Redward	1195
v. State	2501	Witlow v. State	2236	v. Rossi	1388
v. Winters	18, 2329, 2391	Witmark v. R. Co.	463, 1978	Wolverhampton N. W.	
Winterton v. R. Co.	1873	Witmer v. District Court	2195	Co. v. Hawksford	1256
Winthrop v. Grimes	1186	Witt v. Voigt	17	Wolverine L. Co. v.	
v. Ins. Co.	1955, 2463	Wittenberg v. Moly-		Phoenix Ins. Co.	2465
Wintle, In re	1646	neaux	1404	Wolverton v. Com.	18, 1267
Winton v. Saidler	529, 531	v. Onsgard	682, 2220	v. State	2086
Wipfler v. Wipfler	2408	Witter v. Cazaletts	1858	Wolverton Mortgaged	
Wipperman Merc. Co.		v. Latham	1194, 1195	Estates, Re	2472
v. Robbins	1779	Witty v. State	2501	Womack v. Dearman	2164
Wirsching v. Grand		Witz v. Fite	2442, 2540	v. Hughes	1649, 1650, 1651
Lodge	2416	Wixom v. Bixby	2354	v. White	1275
Wisconsin Central R.		v. Goodcell	1890	Womble v. Merchants'	
Co. v. Cornell Univ.	2569	Wnuk's Application	2221	G. Co.	2509
Wisconsin River L. Co.		Woburn v. Henshaw	2327	Wong Din v. U. S.	580, 2056
v. Walker	907, 1213			Wood v. Allen	2464
				v. Brewer	658, 1951
				v. Broadley	613

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wood v. Carpenter	1081	Woodbeck v. Keller	2042	Woods v. State,	
v. Chetwood	2336	Woodbridge v. Austin	1271	26 Tex. App.	521
v. Cole	803	v. Spooner	2444	v. U. S.	1037, 2184
v. Cullen	1213	Woodburn v. Sterling	1777	v. Woods,	
v. Custer	73	Woodbury v. Anoka	1166	2 Curt. Eccl.	1336,
v. Dominion L. Co.	1856c	v. District	1890	1832, 2086, 2088	
v. Drury	1316	v. Obear	672, 681, 683	4 Hare	2294
v. Etiwanda W. Co.	2327	v. Woodbury's Estate	1558	Woodside v. State	1397, 1398
v. Finson	377	Woodcock v. Bennet	2123	Woodson v. Beck	2436
v. Fitz	2158	v. Houldsworth	95, 2152	Woodstock College v.	
v. Graves	1066	v. Johnson	112, 229, 1938	Hankey	1511
v. Hammerton	986, 1933	v. Worthington	1858	Woodstock Iron Co. v.	
v. Harrell	1275	Woodcraft v. Kinaston	1216	Roberts	1239, 1587, 1680
v. Hickok	2053	Woodford v. McClena-		Woodstock Iron Works	
v. Holah	748	han	694, 702	v. Kline	1405
v. Knapp	1678	Woodford's Case	959	Woodvine v. Dean	7
v. Le Blanc	1385a	Woodhead v. Foulds	1347	Woodward, Ex parte	1354,
v. Lentz	2239	Woodhull v. Holmes	529		1966
v. McGuire	1897	Woodin v. People	1976	In re	1644
v. Mackinson	1893	Woodman v. Coolbroth	18,	v. Blue	269, 1492
v. Maguire	2183		770, 1225	v. Buchanan	377
v. Mann	1985	v. Dana	700, 709, 2004,	v. Chicago M. & St.	
v. Matthews	928		2005, 2008, 2016	P. R. Co.	2487, 2494
v. Metropolitan St. R.		v. Segar	1309, 1313, 1320	v. Goulstone	1576, 1736
Co.	1976	Woodmen of the World		v. Heist	1669
v. R. Co.	1978	v. Maynor	1675a	v. Leavitt	89, 224, 2349,
v. Sawyer	228, 657	Woodnorth v. Lord			2354
v. State,		Cobham	1518	v. Republic	205
48 Ga.	923	Woodruff v. Benesch	2155	v. State	657, 728, 1977
92 Ind.	247, 1871	v. Garner	1389	v. Sullivan	233
58 Miss.	568, 689,	v. Hundley	1512, 2131	Woodward Iron Co. v.	
	1922, 1935, 1938	v. Ins. Co.	714	Collins	1254
32 Tex. Cr.	398	v. State,		v. Spencer	458, 689, 1938
78 Tex. Cr.	2062	61 Ark.	736, 1219,	Woodworth v. Barker	1196
v. Strickland	4, 1205		1230, 1387,	v. Detroit U. R. Co.	252,
v. Swift	1388		1398, 1662		458
v. Trust Co.	530, 991, 1352	72 Nebr.	168, 205, 276,	v. Fuller	1067
v. U. S.	216, 341		398, 770, 1620	v. Gorsline	1387
v. Vroman	1984	v. Whittlesey	64, 1086	v. Mills	258
v. Wageman	1154	Woodrum H. O. Co. v.		v. Thompson	1064, 1067,
v. Weld	842, 843, 852	Adams Exp. Co.	1382,		1969
v. Welder	1651		1530, 2130	v. Woodworth	2046
v. Willard,		Woods v. Allen	571	Woody v. State	2081
36 Vt.	794	v. Banks	1219, 1680, 2109	Woodyard v. Sayre	2123
37 Vt.	1565, 1566,	v. Burke	1213	Wool v. State	326
	1567, 1568	v. Dailey	933, 2498	Wooldridge v. State	276, 309,
v. Wilmington C. R.		v. De Figanieri	2219		704, 1254,
Co.	2509	v. Faurot	1086, 1890		2015, 2016
v. Wood,		v. Gevecke	2098	v. Wilkins	1239
140 Ark.	2046	v. Gummert	89, 224	Woolery v. Woolery	1085,
2 Brewst.	2067	v. Keyes	2098		1777
N. J. Eq., 62		v. Lisbon	2389	Wooley v. Hays	2471
Atl.	2046	v. M'Pheran	1842	Woolfolk v. Albrecht	1350
25 Wyo.	2500	v. Miller	2287	v. State,	
v. Zibble	1081	v. Monroe	1672	81 Ga.	852, 2264
Wood's Will, Re	689, 1029	v. People	62, 200, 398	85 Ga.	2100
Wood River Bank v.		v. Pindall	1198	v. Woolfolk	2067
Kelley	1028, 1029	v. Polhemus	1347	Woolley v. R. Co.	2319
Woodall v. State	1254	v. R. Co.	571	v. State,	
Woodard v. Bellamy	77, 206	v. State,		Tex. Cr., 56 S. W.	2277
v. Cutler	18	76 Ala.	2059, 2236	Tex. Cr., 64 S. W.	2273,
v. Eastman	1021	186 Ala.	689		2363
v. Spiller	2016	101 Ga.	1225	Woolner v. Devereux	1858
v. State,	988, 2062	63 Ind.	1329	v. Spalding	682



# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wools v. Walley	2256	Wray v. Knoxville L. F. &		Wright v. State,	
Woolsey v. Bohn	1549, 1558	J. R. Co.	1943, 2581	Ala., 34 So.	309
v. Williams	1502, 2529	v. State	1390	17 Ala. App.	747, 2513
Woolverton v. Van		Wrede v. Richardson	1350	88 Md.	1182,
Syckel	2235	Wren, Ex parte	1350		1198, 1750
Woolway v. Rowe	1049,	v. R. Co.	905	50 Miss.	1326, 1327,
	1080, 1082	Wrenn, In re	2421, 2463		1349
Wooster v. Butler	1587, 1665	Wright v. Abbott	2354	43 Tex.	2059
v. State	78, 1620	v. Anderson	2429	47 Tex. Cr.	2059
Wooten v. Nall	2125	v. Bales	6	63 Tex. Cr.	987
v. State,		v. Barnard,		9 Yerg.	246, 1476
19 Ga.	2350	2 Esp.	1672	v. Tatham	10, 21, 28, 29,
Tex. Cr., 237 S.W.	2042	248 Fed.	6		260, 267, 1304,
v. Wilkins	1432, 1436	v. Beckett	899, 900, 903,		1305, 1362, 1370,
Wootton v. Sevier	1856c		905, 907		1388, 1511, 1583,
Worcester v. North-		v. Boston	1784		1714, 1730, 1773,
borough	665, 1635,	v. Bragg	2102		1774, 1917, 1933
	1641	v. Bundy	530, 1678	v. Telegraph Co.	2349,
v. Ocampo	1972, 2498	v. Bunyard	1200		2353, 2354
Worcester Case	1712, 1842	v. Carillo	2132	v. Terr.	2512
Worcester National Bank		v. Carpenter	1168	v. Upson	229
v. Cheney	2577	v. Chicago B. & Q. R.		v. Vernon	2319
Word v. McKinney	1239,	Co.	1555	v. Williams' Estate	561
	2159	v. Collier	1674	v. Wilkin	770
Worden v. Cole	2575	v. Com.,		v. Woodgate	406
v. R. Co.	1693, 1698	Ky., 72 S. W.	1502	v. Wright,	
v. U. S.	1557	109 Va.	196	58 Kan.	736, 754, 1960
Worden L. & S. Co. v.		v. Crane	660	6 Tex.	2085
Minneapolis St. P. &		v. Crawfordsville	75, 85,	v. Young	2498
S. S. M. R. Co.	1639		203, 1608	Wrights' Case	194a
Worez v. Des Moines		v. Cumpsty	1003, 1006,	Wright Lumber Co. v.	
City R. Co.	1213		1388	Ripley Co.	2592
Workin v. U. S.	368	v. Davis	93, 286	Wrigley v. Cornelius	272
World v. State	203, 1620	v. Deklyne	1126, 1127	Wrisley Co. v. Burke	961
Worman v. Seybert	1312,	v. Express Co.	492, 493,	Wroe v. State	987, 1033,
	1513		2494		1270, 1447, 1618
Wormeley's Case	748, 1028	v. Fort Howard	770	Wrye v. State	2231
Wormley v. Hamburg	7	v. Gaff	1890	Wrynn v. Downey	1770, 2061
Wormsdorf v. R. Co.	251	v. Hardy	681, 1951	Wunderlich v. Ins. Co.	2124
Worrall v. Jones	2218	v. Hawkins	2572, 2575	Wuta v. Interstate Iron	
Worrell, Re	2235	v. Hessey	2016	Co.	252
v. Kinnear	944, 2212	v. Hicks	166, 1029,	Wyatt v. Gore	1243, 2378
Worsham v. Worsham	2048		1031, 2063	v. Pacific Elec. R. Co.	2509
Worth v. Gilling	201, 251	v. Holdgate	2063	v. State,	
v. McConnell	2005	v. Howard	568	25 Ala.	833, 855
v. Norton	1205, 1208	v. Hull	2139, 2517	55 Tex. Cr.	416
v. R. Co.	105, 140	v. Kansas City	987	Wyckoff v. Chicago City	
Worthen v. Badgett	1350	v. Kelly	1350	R. Co.	2354
Worthington v. Elmer	2510	v. Kerrigan	1722	v. Wyckoff	1198, 1267,
v. Mencer	492, 493,	v. Littler	1018, 1026,		2052, 2106
	494, 495		1033, 1431	Wyland v. Griffith	2312
v. Scribner	2374	v. McKee	64	Wylde v. Patterson	792,
v. State	1432, 1440,	v. Mayer	2290, 2294		2509
	1445, 2097	v. Michigan C. R. Co.	1235	Wyles v. Berry	1067
Worthy v. Jonesville Oil		v. Morse	1062	Wylie v. Bushnell	1456, 1548
Mill	283	v. People	2203	v. Marinofsky	2489
Wottrich v. Freeman	564,	v. Sharp,		v. Wausau	1976
	610	1 Browne	1544	Wylly v. Gazan	1955
Wrabek v. Suchomel	75, 1890	1 Salk.	20	Wyman v. Gould	1938
Wragg v. Griffin	2220	v. Sherrard	2137	v. Lynde	75
Wrassman v. State	2497	v. Southern Pac. Co.	561,	v. R. Co.	463, 1948
Wratislaw v. State	1434		1951	v. Wilcox	1554
Wray v. Carpenter	2349	v. State,		Wymark's Case	1185, 1215,
v. Doe	1680	136 Ala.	1960		1224

# LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Wyndham v. Chetwynd	582	Yates v. Shaw	1058	Yeiser v. Cathers	1236, 2154
v. Wycombe	211	v. State,		Yellow P. L. Co. v. Ford	2536
Wynehamer v. People	1356	47 Ark.	857, 858	Yellow River R. Co. v.	
Wynn v. Harman	1664, 2168	Fla., 29 So.	521	Harris	1674, 2167
Wynne v. Auburn	1249	v. Thomson	5	Yellowstone P. R. Co. v.	
v. Glidewell	1085	v. Yates,		Bridger C. Co.	463
v. Middleton	1223	N. Y., 105 N. E.	2060	Yerkes v. Northern Pacific	
v. State	457, 1157, 1978	76 N. C.	570, 2008,	R. Co.	581
v. Tyrwhitt	1472, 2145		2012, 2016	Yeska v. Swendrzynski	1058
v. U. S.	2166	Yazoo & M. V. R. Co.		Yess v. Yess	2503
Wyse v. Wyse	1938	v. Bent	1354	Yetman v. Dey	619
Wysocki v. Wisconsin L.		v. Hughes	2508	Yewin's Case	1022
I. & C. Co.	1029	v. Humphrey	2508	Yoch v. Ins. Co.	770, 2415
Wytheville B. & I. Co.		v. McCaskell	2509	Yocum v. Barnes	1320
v. Teeger	1379	v. Robinson	2220	Yoder v. Reynolds	18
		Yeager v. Spirit Lake	252	Yoe v. People	1700, 1807
X		v. Weaver	619, 620	Yoes v. State	1013
Xenos v. Wickham	2408	v. Wright	1677	Yokell v. Elder	2450
		Year Book,		Yoki v. First State Bank	1066
Y		23 Ass. 11	657	Yolo Co. v. Colgan	1350
Ya Chengco v. Tiaoqui	1681	44 " 30	2405	Yonda v. Royal Neigh-	
Yacapin v. Jibero	1239	20 Edw. I, 258	2426	bors	2451
Yaeger v. R. Co.	18	20 " 68	2426	Yordan v. Hess	2304
Yager v. Bruce	406	20 & 21 Edw. I, 20	1177	Yore v. Newton	458, 1164
Yahn v. Ottumwa	1976	33 & 35 " 331,		York v. Everton	923
Yakima Nat'l Bank v.		547	2426	v. Gregg	1651
Knipe	2525, 2535	13 & 14 Edw. III, 80		v. Pease	391, 770, 1873
Yakima V. Bank v. Mc-		14 Edw. III, 25	1177	v. U. S.	309, 2272
Allister	341	41 " 10, 6	2426	York & M. R. Co. v.	
Yale v. Comstock	1388	47 " 3, 5	2405	Winans	2576
Yam Ka Lim v. Insular		4 Edw. IV, 8, 9	2405	York Co. v. Central R.	
Collector	2568, 2573	28 " 28, 1	2190	Co.	18
Yancy v. Waddell	1350	7 H. IV, 41, 5	2569	v. Toronto G. R. & C.	
Yanelli v. Littlejohn	987	8 " 6, 8	2190	Co.	1062
Yanke v. State	1621, 1938,	9 " 24	2190	Yorke v. Yorkshire Ins.	
	2277	7 H. V, 5, 3	1177	Co.	1947
Yankee v. Thompson	1188,	9 " 15, 3	2405	Yorks v. Mooberg	561
	1651	1 H. VI, 7, 31	2426	Yost v. Conroy	1921, 1942,
Yant v. Charles	582, 1738	8 " 26, 15	2426		1943, 1960
Yarber v. Chicago & A.		9 " 16, 8	1917	Yoter v. Sanno	2374
R. Co.	20, 1951	9 " 59, 8	2405	Youlden v. London G. &	
Yarborough v. Hood	1392	10 " 25	2405	A. Co.	1722
v. Moss	1058	11 " 43, 46	575, 2190	Youman v. Com.	2183
v. State	416	18 " 17, 8	2426	Youmans v. Carney	1890
Yarbrough v. Arnold	1684,	19 " 11	1650	Young v. Bank	1684
	1779	20 " 20, 16	657	v. Bennett	73, 1877, 2115
v. Carlson	795, 1721, 1975	28 " 6, 1	1364, 2190	v. Brady	1028, 1041, 1873
v. State,		39 " 34, 36	2426	v. California State	
105 Ala.	923, 928,	14 H. VII, 29, 4	1364	Board	2575
	1128, 1132, 1938	20 " 11, 21	1364	v. Chandler,	
115 Ala.	2497	14 H. VIII, 17, 6, 7	2405,	13 B. Monr.	1681a
79 Fla.	2042		2426	102 Me.	2495
70 Miss.	2272	14 " 25, 7	2405	v. Clapp	95
Yardley v. Arnold	586	27 " 2, 6	575, 2190	v. Clark	460
v. State	2311	Yearsley's Appeal	1550	v. Com.,	
Yates v. Carnsew	2104	Yearwood's Trusts	2063	4 Binn.	1680
v. Covington	252, 458	Yeates v. Reed	1621	6 Bush	247, 923, 928,
v. Olmsted	2294	v. Waugh	2027		987, 1985
v. People,		Yeatman v. Armistead	1722	8 Bush	826, 830
207 Ill.	1064	v. Dempsey	2195	Ky., 42 S. W.	111
32 N. Y.	437	v. Hart	1751	v. Corrigan	21, 75, 692
v. Pym	2440	Yeaton v. Fry	1389, 1681	v. Dearborn	2098
		Yeats v. Pim	2430	v. Doherty	340, 2517
		Yee Chung v. U. S.	936	v. Foster	2083, 2505



## LIST OF CASES CITED

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section		Section		Section
Young v. Gilman	607	Young Women's Chris-		Ziehn v. United El. L. &	
v. Gregorie	1269	tian Home v. French	2532	P. Co.	283
v. Grote	2419	Youngblood v. U. S.	2184	Zierenberg v. Labouchere	73
v. Hayes	2409	Younge v. Guilbeau	1226,	Zimm v. Rice	568
v. Holloway	2319		2408, 2520	Zimmer v. Fox River V.	
v. Holmes	291, 1199	v. U. S.	2575	E. R. Co.	460
v. Honner	2015	Younger v. Hehn	1350	v. Zimmer	618
v. Hurst	2336	v. State,		Zimmerle v. Childers	282
v. Johnson	133, 1106, 1976	80 Nebr.	1136, 2183	Zimmerman v. Bank	1018,
v. Jones	1549	12 Wyo.	1006, 2513		1041
v. Kinney	457	Youngs v. R. Co.	208, 249,	v. Brannon	581
v. McWilliams	2408		1616	v. Helser	1271
v. Makepeace	166,	Younie v. Walrod	2434	v. Holmes	2506
	569, 1154	Yount v. Howell	2163	v. Kearney Co. Bank	1021
v. Mandis	1975	Yow v. Hamilton	1564	v. Marchland	581
v. Miller	2500	Yrisarri v. Clement	2163, 2566	v. State,	
v. Montgomery	913	Yu Tek & Co. v. Gon-		Ala., 30 So.	1254
v. People	1182, 1200,	zalez	2442	Ind., 130 N. E.	347,
	1236	Yuill v. White	1461		1404
v. Perkins	1466	Yundt v. Hartrumft	1012	Zimmerman Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Power	1777	Yung's Estate	1644	Dolph	2434
v. R. Co.	2552			Zimmermann v. Brooks	2477
v. Richards	607			v. Freshour	2503
v. Ringo	1651			Zinsmeister v. Rock	
v. Shulenberg	1490, 1573,			Island C. Co.	1770
	2531			Zipp v. Colchester R. Co.	1205
v. Slaughterford	1821			Zipperian v. People	390,
v. State,					1438, 1442, 2512
68 Ala.	824, 826,			Zipperlen v. Southern	
	833, 861			Pac. Co.	905
144 Ark.	792			Zirkle v. Leonard	1938, 2477
114 Ga.	1442			Zitske v. Goldberg	1666, 1668
122 Ga.	1820			Zitzer v. Merkel	68, 210,
125 Ga.	1821				1983
30 Md.	851			Ziulkoski v. Barker	2459
36 Or.	1494, 1502			Zobel v. Fanny Rawlings	
82 Tex. Cr.	1398, 1404			M. Co.	2595
v. Stockdale	1306			Zoccolillo v. Oregon	
v. Thayer	1682			Short Line R. Co.	2509
v. U. S. Bank & Trust				Zoldoske v. State	263, 2081
Co.	1540			Zollicoffer v. Turney	2222,
v. Valentine	21, 1392, 1416				2223
v. Webb City	252			Zouch v. Parsons	2413
v. Welch Mfg. Co.	2195			Zube v. Webber	1951
v. Wood	907, 913, 1389			Zucker v. Karpeles	782
v. Woodman	2486			v. Whitridge	97
v. Wright	1063			Zuckerman v. People	861
v. Young	1842			Zumwalt v. State	2243
Young's Estate	1738, 2314			Zurawski v. Reichmann	406
Young Men's Ch. Ass'n				Zwicker v. Zwicker	2408
v. Rawlings	987			Zych v. American Car &	
Young Ti v. U. S.	1644			F. Co.	1381, 1411

## INDEX OF TOPICS



# INDEX OF TOPICS

By HARVEY C. VOORHEES, Esq., of the Boston Bar and revised  
by the Author for the Second Edition

**Refer also** to complete table of contents, volume one, or part thereof at beginning of each volume, or at head of each chapter.

**SCOPE NOTE.** — The fact that in the older works on Evidence, such as those of Starkie and Greenleaf, extra volumes were added to cover numerous points of substantive law and procedure arising at trials in the shape of offers of evidence, should not lead the practitioner to consult this work for such **extraneous subjects**. The bulk of the modern law of Evidence, in the strict sense, makes their inclusion nowadays impossible. In § 2 of this work will be found a further explanation of its scope. For example, the question whether in burglary there must be "evidence" of an entering of a dwelling house at night time is a question of the substantive criminal law.

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## A

<b>Abbreviations;</b> see INITIALS.	Section
<b>Abduction</b> , what is corroborative evidence in . . . . .	2062
<b>Ability</b> , to do an act . . . . .	83-89, 221
opinion evidence of . . . . .	1975, 1976
<b>Abnormal Mental Traits</b> , as impeaching evidence . . . . .	934, 935
<b>Abortion</b> , procuring of, as evidence of paternity . . . . .	282
other offences, as evidence of intent . . . . .	359
motive for . . . . .	391
reputation of place of procuring . . . . .	391
dying declarations of woman in . . . . .	1432
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
what is corroborative evidence in . . . . .	2061, 2062
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
request to commit, not privileged . . . . .	2385
<b>Absence</b> , of entry or record, how proved . . . . .	1230, 1244, 1678, 1957, 1978
of maker of regular entries . . . . .	1521, 1561
of deponent . . . . .	1404
of declarant of facts against interest . . . . .	1456
of pedigree declarant . . . . .	1481
presumption of death from . . . . .	2531
<b>Absent Witness</b> , testimony of, based on personal observation . . . . .	670
expected testimony of, received to avoid postponement . . . . .	807, 1398
rule for confrontation not applicable to testimony received by consent . . . . .	1398
impeached like others . . . . .	888, 1034
testimony at a former trial; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
effect of admission of affidavit of . . . . .	2595
see also WITNESS, XII.	
<b>Abstract</b> , of burnt records . . . . .	1227, 1267, 1705, 2105, 2107
not preferred to extract . . . . .	1273
of copy, in general . . . . .	1282
<b>Abstract of Title-deeds</b> , production of original . . . . .	1223
as hearsay . . . . .	1705
as giving substance of deed . . . . .	2105
whether preferred to oral testimony . . . . .	1273
<b>Acceptance;</b> see BILL OF EXCHANGE.	
<b>Accessory;</b> see ACCOMPLICE.	

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724, Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Accident</b> , cause of, as evidenced by its effects . . . . .	437-461
insurance against, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	282, 393, 949, 969
burden of proof in policy of insurance against . . . . .	2510
railway employee's report of discovery of . . . . .	2318
spontaneous exclamations after . . . . .	1750
see also INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT BOARD; NEGLIGENCE; INTENT; HIGHWAY; MACHINE; PREMISES; CORPORAL INJURY; RES GESTÆ.	
<b>Accomplice</b> , as disqualified by his guilt . . . . .	526
as disqualified by interest . . . . .	580
as disqualified by promise of pardon . . . . .	580
as impeached . . . . .	967
moral character of, admissible against principal . . . . .	68
confession of principal used in trial of . . . . .	1079
confession of crime by, as hearsay . . . . .	1476, 1477
corroboration required . . . . .	2056
policy of the rule . . . . .	2057
kind of crime affected by the rule . . . . .	2058
nature of corroborative evidence required . . . . .	2059
who is an accomplice . . . . .	2060
in sexual crimes . . . . .	2060
in abortion . . . . .	2060
woman not, in rape . . . . .	2060
pretended confederate as . . . . .	2060
other participator in bribery or subornation not an . . . . .	2060
thief not, in receipt of stolen goods . . . . .	2060
burden of proving an . . . . .	2060
restoring credit by consistent statements . . . . .	1128
as affected by judgment of conviction of principal . . . . .	1389
see also CO-INDICTEE.	
<b>Account</b> , voluminous, proved by summary . . . . .	1230, 1244
provable by copy . . . . .	1223
stated, original document in . . . . .	1235
stated, as embodying an agreement . . . . .	1071
assented to, as an admission . . . . .	1070
rendered, as an admission . . . . .	1073
<b>Account-books</b> ; see BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.	
<b>Accused</b> ; see DEFENDANT; CRIMINAL TRIAL.	
<b>Acknowledgment</b> of deed of married woman; see WIFE.	
of deeds in general, whether certificate is conclusive . . . . .	1347, 1352
whether admissible . . . . .	1676, 1676a
see also CERTIFICATE.	
<b>Aconite</b> ; see POISON.	
<b>Acquittal</b> of third person, as evidence of defendant's guilt . . . . .	142
<b>Act</b> , character affecting the doing of an . . . . .	55
ability to do an . . . . .	83-89, 221
done, evidenced by course of business . . . . .	92
one criminal, not evidence of another . . . . .	192
evidential facts arising before an . . . . .	51-119
concurrent with an . . . . .	130-144
after an . . . . .	148-177
reason for an . . . . .	1729
scope of term . . . . .	1772
made voidable by duress . . . . .	2423
of the Legislature; see STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL; RECITAL.	
see also PARTICULAR ACTS; SIMILAR ACTS; PAROL EVIDENCE RULE (CON- STITUTION OF JURAL ACTS).	
<b>Acting</b> , expressing testimony by . . . . .	789
<b>Adjournment of Court</b> , for a view . . . . .	1803
as affecting publicity of trial . . . . .	1835
<b>Administrative board or officer</b> , conclusiveness of certificate of . . . . .	1354, 1355
rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4a, 4c
regulations of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2572
power of, to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
privilege against self-crimination removed by immunity given by . . . . .	2282



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Administrator, admissions of</b> . . . . .	1076, 1081
see also <b>WILL; EXECUTOR.</b>	
<b>Admiralty, rules of evidence applicable in</b> . . . . .	4d, 6
seal of foreign court of, presumed genuine . . . . .	1681, 2164
nautical expert witnesses not allowed in . . . . .	562
<b>Admiralty Courts, rules of evidence in</b> . . . . .	4d
<b>Admissibility, general theory of</b> . . . . .	9, 10
distinguished from materiality . . . . .	2
relevancy . . . . .	12
proof or weight . . . . .	12
multiple, of the same fact for several purposes, although inadmissible for another . . . . .	13, 215, 216
conditional, of a fact not yet appearing relevant . . . . .	14, 40, 304, 1871
curative . . . . .	15
judicial discretion as applied to . . . . .	> 16
procedure on questions of . . . . .	17
objection to, time and form of . . . . .	18
judge to determine . . . . .	2550
external conditions as affecting . . . . .	442
retirement of jury during argument on . . . . .	1808
procedure, as to order of putting in evidence . . . . .	1866
<b>Admissions of a Party</b>	
1. <i>Whether admissible</i>	
2. <i>Whether sufficient</i>	
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
1. <i>Whether admissible</i>	
general theory . . . . .	1048-1059
not necessarily against interest . . . . .	1048, 1049
distinguished from hearsay exception . . . . .	816, 1049
confessions . . . . .	816, 1050
testimonial contradiction . . . . .	1051
conduct indicating guilt . . . . .	1052
estoppel . . . . .	1056, 1058, 2589
death not necessary . . . . .	1049
distinction between arbitration and . . . . .	1057
quasi and solemn . . . . .	1058
under duress . . . . .	1050
receipt as . . . . .	156
prior question not necessary . . . . .	1051
cannot be by conduct . . . . .	267, 1052
personal knowledge; infants . . . . .	1053
as insufficient proof . . . . .	1055
made to third persons . . . . .	1057
not conclusive . . . . .	1058, 2588, 2590
putting in the whole . . . . .	1058, 2097, 2099
implied admissions . . . . .	267, 1060
offer of compromise . . . . .	1061
in pleadings . . . . .	1063, 1067
limitations on admissions by attorney . . . . .	1063
bills and answers in equity . . . . .	1065, 1076
by reference to a third person . . . . .	1070
by assenting to an account . . . . .	1070
by flight, concealment, etc. . . . .	273-284
by making repairs, taking insurance, etc. . . . .	282, 283
by suicide . . . . .	276
by silence in general . . . . .	292, 1052, 1071
in specific situations . . . . .	1072
collateral facts involved in party's silence . . . . .	1072
by failure to produce evidence . . . . .	285-292
to reply to a letter . . . . .	1073
of sending or receiving letters . . . . .	2153
by rendering an account . . . . .	1073
in a third person's document . . . . .	1073
corporation books . . . . .	1074, 1076
affidavits and depositions used . . . . .	1075

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Admissions of a Party *(continued)*

	Section
by adopting statement of third person . . . . .	1075
husband or wife . . . . .	1078, 1086, 2232
other parties to the cause . . . . .	1076
administrator . . . . .	1076, 1081
injured person . . . . .	1076
co-defendant, etc. . . . .	1076
guardian . . . . .	1076
guardian 'ad litem' . . . . .	1063
privies in obligation . . . . .	1077, 1079
joint promisor . . . . .	1077
agent . . . . .	1078, 1797
partner . . . . .	1078
attorney . . . . .	1078
deputy-sheriff . . . . .	1078
interpreter . . . . .	1078
spouse . . . . .	1078
co-conspirator . . . . .	1079, 1797
joint tortfeasor . . . . .	1079
privies in title . . . . .	1080-1087
decedent . . . . .	1081
insurer as real plaintiff . . . . .	1081
insured . . . . .	1081
bankrupt . . . . .	1081
co-legatee . . . . .	1081
co-executor . . . . .	1081
debtor . . . . .	1082-1087
grantor . . . . .	1082-1087
assignor . . . . .	1082-1087
indorser . . . . .	1082-1087
transfers in fraud of creditors . . . . .	1082-1087
after transfer . . . . .	1085
as assignor of chose in action . . . . .	1082
to bill of exchange . . . . .	1084
vendor of personalty, under New York rule . . . . .	1083
Massachusetts rule . . . . .	1083
as applied to negotiable instruments . . . . .	1084
producing the original of a document admitted correct . . . . .	1235, 1255
books of bank as . . . . .	1235
assessor's books as . . . . .	1640
after delivery, in advancement to a child . . . . .	1777
made during possession of land . . . . .	1778, 1779
on cross-examination as to "understanding" . . . . .	1969
2. <i>Whether sufficient</i>	
loss of a document . . . . .	1054, 1196
contents of a document . . . . .	1054, 1255
by failure to object to document . . . . .	18
dispensing with the attesting witness . . . . .	1300
specimens of handwriting . . . . .	2013, 2021
divorce charge . . . . .	2067
accused in general . . . . .	816, 2070
bigamy, adultery, etc. . . . .	2086
of marriage, in civil cases . . . . .	2086
execution of a document . . . . .	2132, 2596
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
distinguished from estoppel, etc. . . . .	1057, 1059, 2589
hypothetical . . . . .	1061
independent, of a fact . . . . .	1062
by another not a party . . . . .	1069 <i>et seq.</i>
before grand jury, not privileged . . . . .	2363
interpreter as agent to make . . . . .	668, 1077
of genuineness of a writing, as qualifying a witness . . . . .	700
by plea of guilty, admissible in a civil case . . . . .	815
distinguished from confessions . . . . .	816



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597;

<b>Admissions of a Party</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
distinguished from judicial admissions . . . . .	2588
of agent, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1797
by predecessor in title . . . . .	336
of a third person, as to facts against interest . . . . .	1458
in a party's books of account . . . . .	1557
marriage certificate as . . . . .	1645
of execution of recorded deed . . . . .	1653
of a trust in Texas, two witnesses . . . . .	2054
decendent's oral, not sufficient to establish claim against his estate . . . . .	2054
meaning of, may be explained . . . . .	1972
whole must be proved . . . . .	2097, 2098, 2099
may be proved . . . . .	2115, 2119
must be taken together . . . . .	2100
answer in equity used as . . . . .	1065, 1076, 2121, 2122
separate utterances excluded . . . . .	2119
by declarations; see HEARSAY RULE, EXCEPTIONS.	
by express stipulation; see JUDICIAL ADMISSION.	
[Examine analysis of "Admissions," Vol. II, p. 503.]	
<b>Adoption of child</b> ; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
of statement, as an admission . . . . .	1075
evidence of age of child . . . . .	667
<b>Adoptive Child</b> , evidence of age of . . . . .	667
<b>Adulteration</b> ; see FOOD; DRUG.	
<b>Adultery</b> , character of third person as evidence . . . . .	68
intercourse with third persons, as evidencing paternity . . . . .	133, 134
on charge of, previous acts with others immaterial . . . . .	205
venereal disease, as evidence of . . . . .	168
plan, as evidence of . . . . .	238, 239
sexual desire as evidencing . . . . .	400
other offences, as evidence of intent or motive . . . . .	360, 398
complainant's testimony insufficient . . . . .	2046
privilege, husband or wife . . . . .	2235, 2239
against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
proof beyond a reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
confession of respondent in . . . . .	2067, 2074
eye-witness of marriage in . . . . .	2085, 2086
admissions in . . . . .	2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness . . . . .	2088
during period of gestation, inadmissible . . . . .	2527
<b>Advancement to Child</b> , shown by words accompanying transfer . . . . .	1777
declarations after delivery, as admission . . . . .	1777
parol evidence to rebut presumed intent . . . . .	2475
presumption of . . . . .	2526
<b>Adverse Possession</b> ; see POSSESSION.	
<b>Advertisement</b> , in newspaper, as evidencing knowledge . . . . .	255
publication of proof by affidavit . . . . .	1710
see also NOTICE.	
<b>Affection</b> ; see CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; ALIENATION OF AFFECTIONS; MENTAL CONDITION, STATEMENTS OF; BREACH OF PROMISE.	
<b>Affidavit</b> , in interlocutory proceedings . . . . .	4
whether 'lex fori' is applicable to the taking of . . . . .	5
satisfies witness-rule as to number . . . . .	1305
excluded at common law . . . . .	1384, 1708
exceptions . . . . .	1709
admissible by statute . . . . .	1710
of a third person, as an admission . . . . .	1075
of common source of title . . . . .	1385
of attesting witness to will . . . . .	1312
of party, to loss of document . . . . .	1196
filed original, required . . . . .	1216
jurat as evidence of . . . . .	1676b
of juror impeaching verdict . . . . .	2348

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Affidavit</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
of absent witness' testimony admitted . . . . .	2595
of denial of document's genuineness . . . . .	2596
presumed genuine, in official files . . . . .	2158
from identity of name . . . . .	2529
<b>Affirmation</b> ; see OATH.	
<b>Against Interest, Statements of facts</b> , admissions not necessarily . . . . .	1048, 1049
exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1455
witness unavailable from death, absence, insanity . . . . .	1456
receipt for money . . . . .	1456, 1460
admissions of third persons . . . . .	1458
proprietary interest . . . . .	1458
landlord and tenant . . . . .	1473
pecuniary interest . . . . .	1460
indorsements, receipts . . . . .	1460, 1466
sundry interests . . . . .	1461-1463
the fact, not statement, to be . . . . .	1462
penal interest; confession of crime . . . . .	1476
no motive to misrepresent . . . . .	1464
debit and credit entries . . . . .	1464
subsequent and separate entries excluded . . . . .	1465
statement, admissible for <i>all</i> facts stated . . . . .	1465
time of statement . . . . .	1466, 1467
mode of proof . . . . .	1468, 1469
statement, may be oral or written . . . . .	1469
death or absence of declarant . . . . .	1456
testimonial qualifications of declarant . . . . .	1471
authentication of statement . . . . .	1472
distinction between statements, admissions, and confessions . . . . .	1475
[Examine analysis of "Statements of Facts against Interest," Vol. III, p. 188.]	
<b>Age</b> , as affecting an infant's disqualification . . . . .	506
as evidenced by appearance . . . . .	222, 257, 660, 1154, 1168
of a witness, as impeaching him . . . . .	934, 1005
of defendant may be part of <i>corpus delicti</i> . . . . .	2072
of a person incapable of child-bearing . . . . .	2528
of a document; see EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS.	
as excusing absence of attesting witness . . . . .	1315
of deponent . . . . .	1406
statement of age, as hearsay; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
testimony to one's own . . . . .	667
adoptive child's . . . . .	667
evidence of adoptive child's . . . . .	667
<b>Age of Consent</b> in rape, consent immaterial . . . . .	402
appearance, to evidence . . . . .	1154
woman not accomplice, in rape under . . . . .	2060
<b>Aged Witness</b> , deposition may be taken . . . . .	1406
<b>Agency</b> , course of business in, as evidence of a transaction . . . . .	94, 373, 377, 379
admission of, by silence . . . . .	1072
proof of, without producing instrument . . . . .	1249
words accompanying acts to determine . . . . .	1777
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1960
no presumption of authority upon proof of signature . . . . .	2134
proof of authority to execute ancient deed . . . . .	2144
presumption as to driver of vehicle . . . . .	2510a
presumption of continuance of . . . . .	2530
see also AGENT.	
<b>Agent</b> , fraud by, as evidence of party's guilt . . . . .	280
disqualification of opponent as witness to a transaction with a deceased . . . . .	578, 1576, 2065
wife or husband testifying to acts as . . . . .	616
offer of compromise by . . . . .	1061
admissions by, in general . . . . .	1078
as ' <i>res gestæ</i> ' . . . . .	1797
notice to produce to . . . . .	1208



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Agent</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
—words accompanying acts as . . . . .	1777
privileged communications of . . . . .	2301, 2317
parol agreement to hold only as . . . . .	2438
personal liability of one who signs as . . . . .	2444
authority to execute not presumed . . . . .	2520
see also AGENCY.	
<b>Agreement</b> , collateral, shown by parol . . . . .	2435, 2441, 2442
novation, alteration, waiver . . . . .	2441
subsequent agreements . . . . .	2441
affecting express terms of document . . . . .	2444
affecting implied terms of document . . . . .	2445
see also CONTRACT; ASSENT; DOCUMENT; PAROL EVIDENCE RULE; COL- LATERAL AGREEMENTS.	
<b>Alabama</b> , rule in, for testimony to state of mind . . . . .	1966
<b>Alcohol</b> ; see LIQUOR.	
<b>Alibi</b> , mode of evidencing . . . . .	136
in civil cases . . . . .	136
perjury or subornation in proving . . . . .	279
failure to prove, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	279
burden of proof of . . . . .	2512
<b>Alien</b> , disqualification as witness . . . . .	516
necessity of interpreter . . . . .	811
qualifications of interpreter . . . . .	571
credibility impeached by his acquaintance with language of forum . . . . .	1005
by his race . . . . .	937
conclusiveness of immigration-inspector's certificate . . . . .	1355
adequacy of cross-examination in foreign language . . . . .	1393
privilege against self-crimination in deportation of . . . . .	2256
see also RACE; INTERPRETER; OATH.	
<b>Alienation of Affections</b> , expressions of husband or wife showing feelings . . . . .	1730
character of wife, as cause for cessation of affection in . . . . .	391
damages in action for, evidence of character . . . . .	75, 76, 211
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
see also CRIMINAL CONVERSATION.	
<b>Allegans suam turpitudinem</b> , as excluding testimony . . . . .	525-531
<b>Almanac</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1698
judicially noticed . . . . .	2566
<b>Alteration</b> , of entries, fraudulent intent in; see FRAUD.	
expert witness to . . . . .	570, 2027
shown by parol . . . . .	2441, 2455
of will, testimony required for . . . . .	2051
as avoiding an instrument . . . . .	1198
liability on altered document . . . . .	2419
affecting liability of signer . . . . .	2134
time of, presumed . . . . .	2525
<b>Ambassador</b> , deposition of . . . . .	1384, 1407
privilege of . . . . .	2372
<b>Ambiguity</b> in a document, parol evidence to explain . . . . .	2465, 2472
latent, in a will . . . . .	2471, 2472
<b>Ambiguous Question</b> ; see QUESTION TO A WITNESS.	
<b>Amendment</b> (Constitutional); see FOURTH AMENDMENT; PRIVILEGE AGAINST SELF-CRIMINATION.	
<b>Amendment of Pleading</b> , as an admission . . . . .	1067
<b>Analysis</b> , conclusive evidence by certificate of chemical . . . . .	1352
see also CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.	
<b>Analytic Rules</b> defined . . . . .	1172
<b>Ancestors</b> , insanity of, as evidence . . . . .	232
expectation of life evidenced by long life of . . . . .	165, 223
identity, evidenced by physiological trait of . . . . .	165
declarations of, as evidence; see FAMILY HISTORY; ADMISSIONS.	
<b>Ancient Boundary</b> ; see BOUNDARIES.	
<b>Ancient Document</b> , as evidence of possession of land . . . . .	157
calling the attesting witness to . . . . .	1311

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Ancient Document</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
lost original . . . . .	2143
proof of genuineness; see EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS.	
<b>Ancient Writings</b> ; see WRITING.	
<b>Animal</b> , character of, as evidence . . . . .	68a, 201, 1621
trespass of another, as evidence . . . . .	142
brands on, as evidence . . . . .	150, 1647, 2152
conduct of, as evidence of ownership or crime . . . . .	177, 1154
as evidence of the animal's disposition . . . . .	201
bloodhound in tracking accused . . . . .	177
precautions taken with, to show knowledge of viciousness . . . . .	282
symptoms of injury, etc., as evidence of cause . . . . .	457
fright of, as evidence of dangerous object . . . . .	461
cruelty of treatment, as affected by other like methods . . . . .	461
proof of owner's knowledge of viciousness . . . . .	251, 282
injuries to, as evidencing a highway defect . . . . .	458
condition at other times, as evidence . . . . .	437
produced before the jury . . . . .	1154, 1161
disposition or pedigree of, evidenced by reputation . . . . .	1621
corporal traits of, to evidence pedigree . . . . .	167
state of mind of, Alabama doctrine . . . . .	1966
printed stock-book, to prove pedigree . . . . .	1706
personal knowledge, to evidence disposition . . . . .	1984
value of; see VALUE.	
<b>Anonymous crimes</b> , as evidence of intent . . . . .	303
<b>Answer in Chancery</b> , as a party's admission . . . . .	1065, 1076, 2121, 2122
original's production not required . . . . .	1215, 1216
giving discovery, scope of; see DISCOVERY.	
proof of bill and answer together . . . . .	2111
responsive parts are evidence . . . . .	2121
New York rule . . . . .	2123
presumed genuine, in official files . . . . .	2158
from identity of name . . . . .	2529
<b>Answer of Witness</b> , to a leading question . . . . .	772
non-responsive, as improper . . . . .	785, 1392
motion to strike out . . . . .	18
prepared beforehand, in a deposition . . . . .	787
by reference to other testimony . . . . .	787a
see also QUESTION; EXAMINATION; OBJECTION.	
<b>Ante Litem Motam</b> , statements against interest made . . . . .	1467
statements about family history made . . . . .	1483
statements about boundaries . . . . .	1566
reputation as to land-right . . . . .	1588
<b>Apparatus</b> , possession of, as evidence of a crime . . . . .	88, 238
defects of, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	441-461
as presumptive of negligence . . . . .	2509
<b>Appeal</b> , evidence excluded because not transmissible on . . . . .	1168
on interlocutory judicial order . . . . .	2270
record of preliminary probate, not evidence on . . . . .	1658
<b>Appearance</b>	
as evidence of age . . . . .	222, 257, 660, 1154, 1168
intoxication . . . . .	235, 660, 1154
competence as workman . . . . .	1154
health . . . . .	223
identity . . . . .	660, 1154
lunacy . . . . .	1154, 1160
paternity . . . . .	1168
of wound, to indicate distance of assailant . . . . .	457
as affected by opinion rule . . . . .	1974
<b>Appliances</b> ; see MACHINE.	
<b>Appointment</b> , to office, production of original . . . . .	1228
of officer, presumed . . . . .	2535
<b>Appraiser</b> , report of an . . . . .	1672
<b>Approval</b> of bill by governor, whether journals of legislature can be used to prove . . . . .	1350



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Arbitration</b> , distinguished from an admission . . . . .	1056
contract to make certificate conclusive . . . . .	7a
<b>Arbitrator</b> , former testimony before, whether admissible . . . . .	1373
award in another cause, as reputation . . . . .	1594
as a witness . . . . .	1912
not to impeach award . . . . .	2358
misconduct of, to invalidate award . . . . .	2358
privilege for communications to . . . . .	2376
distinction between general and special submissions . . . . .	2358
rules of evidence before . . . . .	4e
<b>Architect</b> , contract making certificate conclusive . . . . .	7a
<b>Argument</b> , distinguished from evidence . . . . .	1, 1806
form of, is inductive . . . . .	30
practical requirements of the . . . . .	31
case stated for . . . . .	1066
improper statements by counsel in . . . . .	1806
offering evidence after argument begun . . . . .	1878
withdrawing jury during . . . . .	1808
<b>Army</b> , certificate of service in . . . . .	1675a
<b>Arrest</b> , belief of officer as to probable cause . . . . .	258
conduct under, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	273, 1072
resistance to, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
submission to, as evidence of innocence . . . . .	293
confession made under . . . . .	851
impeachment of a witness by . . . . .	980, 982
silence under, as an admission . . . . .	1072
immunity of witness from . . . . .	2195
character as evidence, in action for malicious . . . . .	75, 258
<b>Arsenic</b> ; see POISON.	
<b>Arson</b> , threats as evidence of . . . . .	105-109
materials and tools, as evidence of . . . . .	149, 238
other offences, as evidence of intent . . . . .	354
motive for, as shown by circumstances . . . . .	391, 392
as shown by conduct . . . . .	396
proof beyond reasonable doubt, in insurance . . . . .	2498
see also INSURANCE.	
<b>Assault</b> , similar acts to show intent in . . . . .	364, 396
see also RAPE; INDECENT ASSAULT; HOMICIDE; BATTERY.	
<b>Assent</b> , shown by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
see also CONTRACT.	
<b>Assessment</b> , privilege against disclosure of . . . . .	2377
<b>Assessor's Books</b> , production of original . . . . .	1240
admissible as official records or as admissions . . . . .	1640
to prove occupancy . . . . .	1640
ownership . . . . .	1640
property value . . . . .	1640
lack of property . . . . .	1640
by statute . . . . .	1640
certificate of no entry in . . . . .	1678
copy of whole required . . . . .	2109
<b>Assignee</b> in bankruptcy; see BANKRUPT.	
<b>Assignment</b> , of patent of invention . . . . .	1226
record of . . . . .	1657
<b>Assignor</b> , admissions of, against assignee . . . . .	1082
see also VENDOR.	
<b>Assumpsit</b> ; see CONTRACT; BILL OF EXCHANGE; LOAN; NOTE.	
<b>Asylum</b> ; see SANITY.	
<b>Atheism</b> ; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF; WITNESS.	
<b>Attachment</b> , debtor's admissions made after attachment; see ADMISSIONS.	
<b>Attendance</b> as witness; see WITNESS, IX.	
<b>Attested Copy</b> ; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
<b>Attesting Witness</b>	
1. Rule requiring attesting witness to be called	
2. Rule permitting attestation to be evidence	
3. Sundries	

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

### Attesting Witness *(continued)*

Section

#### 1. *Rule requiring attesting witness to be called*

history of the rule . . . . .	1287
kind of document . . . . .	1290
no preference under Pennsylvania statute merely requiring proof by witnesses	1290
document collaterally in issue . . . . .	1291
who is an attesting witness . . . . .	1292
official signature is not of . . . . .	1292
signing subsequent to execution . . . . .	1292
document used for others . . . . .	1293
execution not disputable because of estoppel, admission, etc. . . . .	1294-1298
attester preferred to maker . . . . .	1299
to admissions . . . . .	1300
to opponent's testimony . . . . .	1301
attester denying or not recollecting . . . . .	1302, 1303
other witnesses not excluded . . . . .	1302, 1303
Illinois rule admitting only, in probate . . . . .	1303
number of attestors required to be called . . . . .	1304, 2049
affidavit or deposition satisfies witness-rule . . . . .	1305
number of signatures to be proved	
of attestors . . . . .	1306
of maker . . . . .	1320
proof of signature dispensed with . . . . .	1321
excuses for not calling the attester . . . . .	1308, 1319
death . . . . .	1311
ancient document . . . . .	1311, 2138
absence from jurisdiction . . . . .	1312
proponent's knowledge of intended absence of . . . . .	1312
effort to secure deposition of absent . . . . .	1312
inability to find . . . . .	1313
name unknown . . . . .	1314
age . . . . .	1315
illness . . . . .	1315
imprisonment . . . . .	1315
loss of memory . . . . .	1315
incompetence by interest, etc. . . . .	1316
production of, excused for blindness . . . . .	1316
refusal to testify . . . . .	1317
privilege from testifying . . . . .	1317
copy of recorded document . . . . .	1318

#### 2. *Rule permitting attestation to be evidence*

exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1505
attester must be deceased, etc. . . . .	1506
who is an attester . . . . .	1509, 1510
must be competent at time of attestation . . . . .	582, 1510
implied purport of attestation . . . . .	1511, 1512
proof of maker's signature also . . . . .	1513
attester may be impeached or supported . . . . .	1514
using the depositions given at preliminary probate . . . . .	1417
'prima facie' effect of . . . . .	2500

#### 3. *Sundries*

disqualified by confession of falsehood . . . . .	528
by interest . . . . .	583
testifying without recollection . . . . .	747
may be impeached by proponent . . . . .	917
by self-contradiction . . . . .	1033
illiterate person as, by his mark . . . . .	1292
opinion to sanity . . . . .	1936
privilege of attorney, as attester . . . . .	2315, 2329
of physician . . . . .	2390
parol evidence to explain signature of . . . . .	2406
attestation as a required formality . . . . .	2456

[Examine analysis of "Preference for an Attesting Witness," Vol. II, pp. 935, 936.]



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Attorney, testimony to value of services of</b>	715, 1944
improper consultation with witness before trial	788
offer of compromise by	1061
pleading drafted by, as an admission	1063, 1067
admissions by, in general	1063, 1078
judicial admissions	2594
books of regular entry admissible	1523
competency as a witness	1911
notes of testimony taken by	1669
consultation with sequestered witness	1840
exclusion from court while a witness	1841
going over to service of opponent, restrained	2323
statement of, that matter is privileged	2322
office of, judicially noticed	2578
power of; see AGENCY.	
privilege of, as attesting witness	2315, 2329
privileged communications of; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
authority to make judicial admissions	2594
see also COUNSEL.	
<b>Attorney and Client, Communications between, history, and policy of</b>	
the privilege	2290, 2291
statutes	2292
irrespective of litigation	2294
non-legal purposes	2296
prosecuting attorneys	2296, 2375
conveyancing	2297
wills	2297
criminal transaction	2298
protects past but not future wrongdoing	2298
persons not attorneys	2300
attorneys' clerks and agents	2301
client's belief	2302
attorney as a friend	2303
casual consultation	2303
time of consultation	2304
communications made during negotiation of relation	2304
communications, not conduct	2306
documents	2307-2309, 2318
distinction between pre-existing and subsequently drawn documents	2307
production of documents	2307
contents of pre-existing document	2308
signing of note or receipt, not privileged	2309
relevancy of communication	2310
separation of privileged from unprivileged	2310
confidential nature	2311
third person present	2311
joint attorney; opponent's presence	2312
identity of client	2313
purpose of suit	2313
execution and contents of will or deed	2314
temporary confidentiality	2314
attorney as attesting witness	2315
question of fact, who is the client	2317
if through interpreter is privileged	2317
communications by third persons	2317
client's agents	2317
client's documents	2318
reports by medical agent	2319
reports of accidents	2319
depositions for purpose of litigation	2319
short-hand notes	2319
attorney's communications	2320
privilege is the client's	2321
who may claim	2321
inference from claim	2321

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Attorney and Client, Communications between</b> <i>(continued)</i>	
attorney's statement that matter is privileged . . . . .	2322
termination of client's relation . . . . .	2323
indirect disclosure by attorney . . . . .	2325
third person overhearing . . . . .	2326
waiver by testifying . . . . .	2327
by agent or assignee . . . . .	2328
by deceased client's representative . . . . .	2329
[Examine analysis of "Communications between Attorney and Client," Vol. V, p. 10.]	
<b>Auctioneer</b> , statement of, varying printed catalogue . . . . .	2442
<b>Auditor</b> , findings of an . . . . .	1672, 1674, 2484
statute declaring findings to be 'prima facie' evidence . . . . .	1356
<b>Authentic Acts</b> , in Louisiana, Philippine, and Porto Rico law, evidence of . . . . .	1225, 1336, 1352, 1651, 1676, 1680, 2425
<b>Authentication</b> of a document; see EXECUTION; CERTIFIED COPY.	
<b>Author</b> , shown to be an authority . . . . .	1694
<b>Authority</b> as agent; see AGENCY.	
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1960
person in, obtaining a confession; see CONFESSION.	
to certify copy . . . . .	1677
of officer, presumed . . . . .	2535
judicially noticed . . . . .	2576
<b>Authorship</b> , of letter, evidenced by faulty impression of typewriter . . . . .	149
receipt of letter, as evidence of . . . . .	2519
individuality of expression, to show, in anonymous letter . . . . .	87
traits of spelling, as evidence of . . . . .	99
see also EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS.	
<b>Automobile</b> , by statute, tag 'prima facie' evidence of ownership and operation . . . . .	150a
chauffeur's statement of own responsibility admitted . . . . .	1041
self-elimination by report of accident to . . . . .	2259d
presumption as to ownership . . . . .	2510a
number plates, as evidence . . . . .	150a
compulsory report of accidents . . . . .	2377
conclusive presumption of owner's consent to driving of . . . . .	1354
driver of, compellable to disclose name, etc. . . . .	2259d
ownership or agency presumed . . . . .	2510a
<b>Autopsy</b> , of corpse, to obtain evidence . . . . .	1862, 2194, 2220
privilege for medical testimony to . . . . .	2382
see also EXHUMATION.	
<b>Autoptic Preference</b> ; see REAL EVIDENCE.	
<b>Average</b> , impeaching a verdict determined by . . . . .	2354
<b>Award</b> ; see ARBITRATOR.	

### B

<b>Bailee</b> , loss by, presumed negligent . . . . .	2508
speedy complaint by, of robbery . . . . .	1142
document deposited with, as original . . . . .	1231, 1235
<b>Ballot</b> , production of original . . . . .	1240
disclosure of, privileged . . . . .	2214
destruction of, unopened . . . . .	2214
mistake shown by parol . . . . .	2421
must be in writing . . . . .	2452
<b>Bank</b> , books of, original required . . . . .	1223
books of, as an admission . . . . .	1074, 1235
admissible as regular entries in course of business . . . . .	1521, 1523, 1542
incorporation of, proved by repute . . . . .	1625
attested copy admitted . . . . .	1683, 1710
see also BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.	
<b>Bank-note</b> , forgery of, as evidence of intent . . . . .	318
expert witness to, qualifications of . . . . .	570, 705
person whose name is forged, not a preferred witness . . . . .	1339



## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Bank-officer</b> , as an expert witness to genuineness of notes . . . . .	570
not a preferred witness . . . . .	1339
'prima facie' evidence of knowledge of insolvency . . . . .	1354
communications to, not privileged . . . . .	2286
reports by, privileged . . . . .	2377
<b>Bankrupt</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1081, 1082, 1086
answer "not in," at residence, as act of bankruptcy . . . . .	1770
declarations of intent by . . . . .	1728, 1783
privilege of husband or wife of . . . . .	2235
against self-crimination by . . . . .	2257, 2260, 2283
<b>Bankruptcy Commissioner</b> , former testimony before . . . . .	1373
<b>Bar</b> , certificate conclusive for admission to . . . . .	1354
see also <b>DISBARMENT</b> .	
<b>Barrator</b> , other acts, to evidence a common . . . . .	203
<b>Bastardy</b> , third person's character, as evidence . . . . .	68
third person's intercourse, as evidence . . . . .	133
resemblance of child, as evidence of paternity . . . . .	166, 1154, 1168
notorious reputation of putative father's recognition . . . . .	70, 1606
procurement of abortion, as evidence of paternity . . . . .	282
sexual desire as evidencing . . . . .	401
prior intercourse, as evidence of motive . . . . .	398
mother's complaint in travail . . . . .	1141, 1763
uncorroborated complainant in . . . . .	2061
using the mother's examination . . . . .	1417
family hearsay as evidence . . . . .	1492
parent's testimony to . . . . .	2063
proof beyond a reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
presumption of legitimacy in . . . . .	2527
see also <b>FATHER</b> ; <b>LEGITIMACY</b> ; <b>MOTHER</b> .	
<b>Battery</b> , plaintiff's character in . . . . .	76, 212
see also <b>HOMICIDE</b> ; <b>SCHOOLMASTER</b> .	
<b>Beer</b> , meaning of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2582
see also <b>LIQUOR</b> .	
<b>Belief</b> , testifying to one's own belief or intent . . . . .	581
belief as distinguished from knowledge . . . . .	658
testifying to another person's belief or intent . . . . .	661
belief in genuineness of handwriting . . . . .	698
belief or impression, as showing sufficient memory . . . . .	726
conduct and circumstances as evidence of; see <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> .	
<b>Belladonna</b> ; see <b>POISON</b> .	
<b>Beneficiary</b> of insurance; see <b>INSURANCE</b> .	
<b>Bequest</b> , contract for, corroboration required . . . . .	2065
degree of proof necessary for oral promise of . . . . .	2498
see also <b>CORROBORATION</b> ; <b>WILL</b> .	
<b>Best Evidence</b> , history and meaning . . . . .	1173-1175, 1286
rule for producing originals; see <b>ORIGINAL DOCUMENT</b> .	
rule for attesting witness; see <b>ATTESTING WITNESS</b> .	
rule against hearsay; see <b>HEARSAY RULE</b> .	
official documents as best evidence . . . . .	1325-1355
<b>Bias</b> , securing experts without . . . . .	563
former hostility to show . . . . .	396
impeaching one's own witness by proof of . . . . .	901
instruction to jury on witness' . . . . .	940
mode of evidencing, in general . . . . .	943-948
witness may state whether he has . . . . .	940, 948, 1963
effect of witness admitting . . . . .	948
relationship, employment, etc. . . . .	949, 969
evidenced by pecuniary relations . . . . .	949
detective impeached for . . . . .	949, 969
expressions and conduct . . . . .	950, 1730
details of a quarrel . . . . .	951
preliminary inquiry . . . . .	953
contradiction by other witnesses . . . . .	1005, 1022
restoring credit by consistent statements . . . . .	1128

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Bias</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
excluding evidence for possible . . . . .	1484
see also INTEREST; CORRUPTION.	
<b>Bible</b> , as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
<b>Bigamy</b> , other offences, as evidence of intent or motive . . . . .	360, 398
disqualifying the wife as witness . . . . .	605
reputation evidence insufficient to prove . . . . .	1604
eye-witness of marriage required . . . . .	1604, 2085
admissions of defendant sufficient . . . . .	2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness . . . . .	2088
proof by husband or wife, privileged . . . . .	2231, 2239
communications by party to, not privileged . . . . .	2314
valid marriage presumed . . . . .	2506
<b>Bilateral Acts</b> ; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, B.	
<b>Bill in Chancery</b> , as a party's admission . . . . .	1065
must be read with the answer . . . . .	2111
see also CHANCERY.	
<b>Bill of Discovery</b> ; see DISCOVERY.	
<b>Bill of Exceptions</b> , must exhibit grounds of objection . . . . .	17, 18
as evidence of former testimony . . . . .	1668
<b>Bill of Exchange</b> , evidence of forgery of; see FORGERY.	
authority to accept, other transactions as evidence of . . . . .	377
impeaching one's own instrument . . . . .	529
admission of parties to . . . . .	1084
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
indorsement on, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
delivery in escrow, shown by parol . . . . .	2409, 2420
collateral agreement, shown by parol . . . . .	2443-2445
signed by mistake . . . . .	2415-2419
parol acceptance . . . . .	2451
presumption of title from possession of . . . . .	2516
of payment . . . . .	2517, 2518
protest of, as evidence; see NOTARY.	
<b>Bill of Lading</b> , provable by copy . . . . .	1223
counterpart as original . . . . .	1233
conclusiveness of . . . . .	1354
assent presumed . . . . .	2537
shown by parol . . . . .	2415
terms varied by parol . . . . .	2432
presumption of excepted loss in . . . . .	2509, 2537
see also CONTRACT; CARRIER.	
<b>Bill of Legislature</b> ; see STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL.	
<b>Bill of Particulars</b> , to avoid unfair surprise . . . . .	1848
<b>Birth</b> , register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	
date of; see AGE.	
declaration of, by deceased person; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
reputation of . . . . .	1605, 1606
see also RACE.	
<b>Birthmark</b> , as evidence of events in pregnancy . . . . .	168
<b>Black</b> ; see RACE.	
<b>Blackmail</b> , impeaching a witness by evidence of . . . . .	963
other offences as evidence of intent . . . . .	352
<b>Blank</b> , delivery of document having a . . . . .	2410, 2419
interpretation of a . . . . .	2473
indorsement in . . . . .	2445
<b>Blindness</b> , as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	500
as excusing production of attesting witness . . . . .	1316
as needing an interpreter . . . . .	811, 1393
<b>Blockade</b> by belligerent, evidence of intent to evade . . . . .	367
<b>Blood</b> , witness' experience with, as qualifying him . . . . .	568
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1975, 1977
explaining away traces of . . . . .	34, 149
absence of, stains . . . . .	149



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Bloodhound</b> , use of, in tracking an accused . . . . .	177
character or conduct of; see DOG; ANIMAL.	
<b>Blotter-press</b> copies, as originals . . . . .	1234
<b>Board</b> ; see ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OR OFFICER.	
<b>Board of General Appraisors</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4b, 4c
<b>Board of Pardons</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Bodily Injury</b> ; see CORPORAL INJURY.	
<b>Body</b> , inspection of . . . . .	1155, 1158, 2194, 2216, 2220, 2265
exhumation of dead . . . . .	1862, 2216, 2221
<b>Bona Fides</b> ; see KNOWLEDGE; MOTIVE; INTENT.	
<b>Bond</b> , proof of execution of; see EXECUTION OF DOCUMENT.	
as impeaching the obligor-witness . . . . .	969
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
as part of the court files . . . . .	1215
indorsement on, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
<b>Bookkeeper</b> , entries of; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
aiding recollection by entries; see RECOLLECTION.	
<b>Books</b> of science, used in evidence . . . . .	1690-1700
of election as evidence . . . . .	1640
of history, used in evidence . . . . .	1597, 1690, 1699
of partnership presumed correct . . . . .	2537
required to be kept, as privileged . . . . .	2259c
see also DOCUMENT; BOOKS OF ACCOUNT; PRINTED MATTER; LEARNED TREATISES; BANK.	
<b>Books of Account</b> , wife of party as witness to . . . . .	612
used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
of a bank, original required . . . . .	1223
of parties or deceased persons, as hearsay; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
distinguished from records of corporation . . . . .	1661
of a corporation or partnership, as admissions . . . . .	1074, 1557
production of original . . . . .	1223
offered by surviving party against deceased opponent . . . . .	1554
use of, by representative of deceased party, not a waiver to opponent's testi- mony . . . . .	1554
admissions in, to impeach evidence . . . . .	1557
parol evidence rule not applicable to . . . . .	1558
inspection of, before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
putting in the whole . . . . .	2118
entries made in, after suit begun, excluded . . . . .	2118
making evidence by inspection . . . . .	2125
privileged from production . . . . .	2193, 2205, 2286
see also ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
<b>Borrowing</b> ; see LOAN; DEBTOR.	
<b>Boundaries</b> , evidenced by possession . . . . .	378
surveyor's testimony not required . . . . .	1339
evidenced by perambulations . . . . .	1563
deceased persons' declarations	
exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1563, 1564
Massachusetts doctrine . . . . .	1563, 1567
death of declarant . . . . .	1565
insanity, etc., not sufficient . . . . .	1565
no interest to misrepresent . . . . .	1566
owner's declarations . . . . .	1566
declarations on the land . . . . .	1567, 1764
declarant's knowledge . . . . .	1568
maps, surveys . . . . .	1570
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1956, 1963
ancient deed-recital of . . . . .	1573
party's admissions as to . . . . .	1082, 1778
reputation about	
must be question of past generation . . . . .	1582
kind of reputation . . . . .	1583-1591
must be more than individual assertion . . . . .	1584
must be of right itself and not of specific instance . . . . .	1585

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2234; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Boundaries</b> , reputation about ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
must relate to matter of general interest . . . . .	1586
application of reputation rule to private . . . . .	1587
form of reputation . . . . .	1592-1595
official surveys, to prove . . . . .	1665
of county or town, judicially noticed . . . . .	2575
<b>Boycott</b> , statements concerning . . . . .	1729
<b>Brands</b> on animals, or timber, as evidence of ownership . . . . .	150, 2152
proving genuineness of . . . . .	2152
register of . . . . .	150, 1647
unrecorded, to evidence ownership . . . . .	150
<b>Breach of Promise</b> of marriage,	
character of plaintiff as in issue or mitigating damages . . . . .	75, 77
acts of unchastity, as excusing or mitigating . . . . .	206, 213
prior relations, as evidence . . . . .	398
state of affection inferable in . . . . .	401
defendant's wealth, provable by repute . . . . .	1623
plaintiff's conduct, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770
seduction not evidence of prior promise of marriage . . . . .	1770
opinion testimony to damages by . . . . .	1944
uncorroborated complainant in . . . . .	2061
circumstantial evidence sufficient . . . . .	2091
<b>Bribery</b> , by a party, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	278
other offences, as evidencing intent . . . . .	343
offer of money to injured party in criminal prosecution not . . . . .	279, 1062
used to impeach one's own witness . . . . .	901
attempt to, as impeaching a witness . . . . .	960, 962
contradiction as to, not collateral . . . . .	1005, 1022
who is an accomplice in . . . . .	2060
<b>Bridge</b> , defective; see HIGHWAY.	
refuting evidence of injury caused by vibration of . . . . .	34, 35
standard of conduct of employee on . . . . .	461
<b>Brief of Evidence</b> , to prove former testimony . . . . .	1668
<b>Broker</b> , action for commission of, opinion as to purchaser's persuasion . . . . .	1967
see also AGENT.	
<b>Building</b> , other injuries to . . . . .	451
see also PREMISES.	
<b>Bullet</b> , shown to fit gun of accused . . . . .	149
experiments to show calibre of . . . . .	457
<b>Burden of Proof, and Presumptions</b>	
1. <i>General Principles</i>	
(a) <i>burden of proof</i>	
(b) <i>presumptions</i>	
(c) <i>prima facie evidence</i>	
(d) <i>measure of persuasion</i>	
2. <i>Burdens and Presumptions in Specific Issues</i>	
(a) <i>sanity</i>	
(b) <i>undue influence and fraud</i>	
(c) <i>marriage</i>	
(d) <i>negligence and accident</i>	
(e) <i>crimes</i>	
(f) <i>ownership</i>	
(g) <i>payment</i>	
(h) <i>execution and contents of document</i>	
(i) <i>gifts</i>	
(j) <i>miscellaneous</i>	
• 1. <i>General Principles</i>	
production of evidence by the parties . . . . .	2483
evidence sought by the judge 'ex mero motu'; questions to witnesses by the judge . . . . .	2484
(a) <i>burden of proof</i> ; first meaning: risk of non-persuasion . . . . .	2485
• test for this burden; negative and affirmative allegations; facts peculiarly within a party's knowledge . . . . .	2486
second meaning: duty of producing evidence . . . . .	2487



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Burden of Proof, and Presumptions</b> ( <i>continued</i> )		Section
test for this burden . . . . .		2488
shifting the burden of proof . . . . .		2489
effect on, inference from failure to call witness . . . . .		291
(b) <i>presumptions</i> ; legal effect of a presumption . . . . .		2490
presumptions of law and presumptions of fact . . . . .		2491
conclusive presumptions; rebuttable presumptions . . . . .		2492
conflicting presumptions; counter presumptions . . . . .		2493
(c) <i>prima facie evidence</i> ; sufficient evidence for the jury; scintilla of evidence . . . . .		2494
direction of a verdict, motion for a nonsuit, and demurrer to evidence, distinguished . . . . .		2495
waiver of motion by subsequent introduction of evidence . . . . .		2496
(d) <i>measure of persuasion</i> : proof beyond a reasonable doubt; rule for criminal cases . . . . .		2497
proof by preponderance of evidence; rule for civil cases . . . . .		2498
2. <i>Burdens and Presumptions in Specific Issues</i>		
(a) <i>sanity</i> : testamentary and other civil causes; suicide . . . . .		2500
criminal causes . . . . .		2501
(b) <i>undue influence and fraud</i> : testamentary causes . . . . .		2502
confidential relations of grantee or beneficiary . . . . .		2503
fraudulent conveyances against creditors . . . . .		2504
(c) <i>marriage</i> : consent, from cohabitation or ceremony . . . . .		2505
capacity, as affected by intervening death, divorce, or marriage . . . . .		2506
(d) <i>negligence and accident</i> : contributory negligence . . . . .		2507
loss by bailee . . . . .		2508
defective machines, vehicles, and apparatus . . . . .		2509
death by violence . . . . .		2510
ownership or agency of vehicle . . . . .		2510a
(e) <i>crimes</i> : innocence . . . . .		2511
malice . . . . .		2511a
self-defence . . . . .		2512
alibi . . . . .		2512
possession of stolen goods . . . . .		2513
capacity (infancy, intoxication, coverture) . . . . .		2514
(f) <i>ownership</i> : possession of land and personalty . . . . .	1779,	2515
possession of negotiable instrument . . . . .		2516
(g) <i>payment</i> : lapse of time . . . . .		2517
possession of instrument . . . . .		2518
(h) <i>execution and contents of document</i> : letters and telegrams . . . . .		2519
execution of deeds (delivery, date, seal) . . . . .		2520
ancient documents . . . . .		2521
lost grant or other document . . . . .		2522
lost will (contents and revocation) . . . . .		2523
spoliation of documents . . . . .		2524
alteration of documents . . . . .		2525
(i) <i>gifts</i> (wife's separate estate, child's advancement) . . . . .		2526
(j) <i>miscellaneous</i>		
legitimacy . . . . .		2527
chastity . . . . .		2528
child-bearing . . . . .		2528
identity of person (from name, etc.) . . . . .		2529
continuity; in general . . . . .		2530
life and death . . . . .		2531
survivorship . . . . .		2532
seaworthiness . . . . .		2533
regularity; performance of official duty and regularity of proceedings . . . . .		2534
appointment and authority of officers . . . . .		2535
similarity of foreign law . . . . .		2536
contracts, bill of lading . . . . .		2537
of showing performance of a condition precedent . . . . .		2537
in insurance policy . . . . .		2537
statute of limitations . . . . .		2538
malicious prosecution . . . . .		2539
reduction of agreement to writing . . . . .		2447
confessions . . . . .		860

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Burden of Proof, and Presumptions</b> ( <i>continued</i> )		Section
accomplice . . . . .		2060
qualifications of witness . . . . .	484, 497, 508, 560, 584, 654	
: [Examine analyses of "Burden of Proof and Presumptions," Vol. V, pp. 434, 477.]		
<b>Burglary</b> , tools, etc., as evidence of . . . . .	149, 153, 238	
possession of stolen goods, as evidence of . . . . .	153, 2513	
other crimes as evidence of intent . . . . .	351	
motive for . . . . .	391	
evidence of identity . . . . .	413	
<b>Burnt Records</b> , abstract of . . . . .	1227, 1267, 1705, 2105, 2107	
statutes respecting . . . . .	2107	
<b>Business</b> , course of, as evidence of a transaction . . . . .	94, 373, 382	
amount of, as evidence of nuisance, value, etc. . . . .	462	
prudence in matters of, as evidenced by acts of others . . . . .	461	
stock of goods in, as evidence of amount of . . . . .	461	
loss of patronage of, as evidence of injury . . . . .	462	
entries in the course of; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		
<b>By-law</b> ; see BEST EVIDENCE.		
<b>Bystander</b> , exclamations of, during 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1755	

## C

<b>Calendar</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1698
<b>Calling a Witness</b> , what constitutes, on direct examination . . . . .	1892
out of the usual order; see EXAMINATION, III.	
as preventing impeachment; see IMPEACHMENT.	
<b>Canada</b> , conflict of laws of Empire, Dominion, and Provinces . . . . .	6
<b>Cancellation</b> , marks on will in testator's custody presumed genuine . . . . .	2148
<b>Capacity</b> , physical, as evidence of an act done . . . . .	83-85
distinguished from tendency, possibility, cause . . . . .	446
instances of human conduct, to evidence . . . . .	220
of a weapon, machine, etc., as shown by its effects . . . . .	441-461
of testator or grantor . . . . .	1958, 2500
of accused . . . . .	1958
of infant, opinion to . . . . .	1958
presumption of, in marriage . . . . .	2506
in testamentary cases . . . . .	2500
in criminal cases . . . . .	2514
mental, of a party; see SANITY; UNDUE INFLUENCE; TESTATOR.	
testimonial, of a witness; see WITNESS, I, <i>Qualifications</i> ; CHILD.	
<b>Capital</b> of a State or county, noticed . . . . .	2575
<b>Car</b> ; see VEHICLE.	
<b>Carbon Copy</b> ; see TYPEWRITING; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
<b>Carefulness</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2507, 2510
jury may use general knowledge to determine . . . . .	2570
opinion as to . . . . .	1949-1951
see also NEGLIGENCE; SKILL; CONDUCT.	
<b>Carriage</b> ; see VEHICLE.	
<b>Carrier</b> , wife of plaintiff, as witness against . . . . .	612
loss by, presumed negligent . . . . .	2508
see also BILL OF LADING; COMMON CARRIER.	
<b>Carriers' Books</b> , as exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1521, 1708
<b>Case Closed</b> , calling a witness after; see EXAMINATION.	
<b>Case Stated</b> for argument . . . . .	1066
<b>Cash</b> , regular entry to prove payment of . . . . .	1539, 1549
<b>Cattle</b> , brands as evidence . . . . .	150
see also ANIMALS.	
<b>Cattleguard</b> ; see HEIGHT; SUFFICIENCY.	
<b>Cause</b> of an illness, injury, accident, etc., as evidenced by its effects . . . . .	437-461
distinguished from tendency, capacity, possibility . . . . .	446
expert opinion as to . . . . .	1976
<b>Census</b> , as evidence of population . . . . .	1671
judicially noticed . . . . .	2577



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Ceremony</b> of marriage, presumed valid . . . . .	2506
see also MARRIAGE.	
<b>Certificate</b>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>of land-grant</i>	
(c) <i>of entry</i>	
(d) <i>of location</i>	
(e) <i>of marriage</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
contradicting one's own official . . . . .	530
admissible when made by authority	
sundry officers . . . . .	1674
distinguished from return . . . . .	1674
private persons . . . . .	1674
of <i>effect</i> of the record . . . . .	1674, 1675
notary's protest . . . . .	1675
deed-acknowledgment; oath . . . . .	1352, 1676
of deposition . . . . .	1676
certified copy . . . . .	1677-1683
printed copy . . . . .	1684
authenticated by seal or signature . . . . .	2162
presumed correct . . . . .	2534
whether conclusive for	
married woman's acknowledgment . . . . .	1347
election . . . . .	1351
oath . . . . .	1352
acknowledgment . . . . .	1352
of immigration inspector . . . . .	1354
of architect, engineer, etc., made conclusive by contract . . . . .	7a
of service or death in Army or Navy . . . . .	1675a
(b) <i>of land-grant</i> ; see DEED.	
(c) <i>of entry</i> of land-title; see DEED.	
(d) <i>of location</i> of land-patent; see DEED.	
(e) <i>of marriage</i>	
constitutionality of, as evidence . . . . .	1398
in criminal case . . . . .	1398, 2082
made evidence by party's possession . . . . .	268
preferred evidence . . . . .	1336
admissible as a public document . . . . .	1606, 1645
not required in bigamy, etc. . . . .	2088
presumed genuine, from custody . . . . .	2159
conclusive, under parol evidence rule . . . . .	2453
[Examine analysis of "Certificates," Vol. III, p. 384.]	
<b>Certified Copy.</b>	
1. <i>Public Documents</i>	
2. <i>Private Documents</i>	
1. <i>Public Documents</i>	
scope of authority to certify . . . . .	1677
time and manner of certifying . . . . .	1677
certificate of effect, or non-existence . . . . .	1678
authentication of certified copy . . . . .	1679
kinds of documents thus provable	
sundry public records . . . . .	1680
judicial records . . . . .	1681
probate of wills . . . . .	1681
lost deeds . . . . .	1682
copy of whole required . . . . .	2107-2111
attested by seal . . . . .	2162
whether preferred to sworn copy . . . . .	1273
distinction between, and sworn copy . . . . .	1273, 1655
excusing from production of attesting witness . . . . .	1318
2. <i>Private Documents</i>	
bank-books . . . . .	1683
corporation records . . . . .	1683

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Certified Copy</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
parish registers, etc. . . . .	1683
see also COPY.	
[Examine analysis of "Certificates," Vol. III, p. 384.]	
<b>Chain of Title</b> , dispensing with proof of prior deeds forming . . . . .	2132
affidavit of common source in . . . . .	1385
<b>Chancery</b> , rules in, distinguished from rules at law . . . . .	4
rules in, as affected by Federal statutes . . . . .	6
trials in Federal courts of . . . . .	6
special rule for depositions . . . . .	1417
for cross-examining to character . . . . .	986
for one witness to a bill . . . . .	2047
bill or answer in, as an admission . . . . .	1065, 2121, 2122
proving the whole of decree . . . . .	2110
a bill . . . . .	2111
an answer . . . . .	2111
a deposition . . . . .	2111
responsive parts of answer as evidence . . . . .	2121
history of subpœna in . . . . .	2190
discovery from opponent in . . . . .	1856, 1857, 2218, 2219
privilege of witness against self-crimination in . . . . .	2271
see also DISCOVERY.	
<b>Character</b>	
<i>In general</i>	
1. <i>As Evidence or In Issue</i>	
(a) <i>Accused's character</i>	
(b) <i>Animals</i>	
(c) <i>Complainant in rape</i>	
(d) <i>Deceased in homicide</i>	
(e) <i>Parties in civil cases</i>	
(f) <i>Plaintiff in mitigation</i>	
(g) <i>Third persons</i>	
(h) <i>Witness impeached</i>	
(i) <i>Witness supported</i>	
2. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Conduct</i>	
(a) <i>In general</i>	
(b) <i>Of a party</i>	
(c) <i>Of a witness in impeachment</i>	
(d) <i>Of a witness in support</i>	
3. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Reputation</i>	
4. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Personal Opinion</i>	
<i>In general</i> , distinguished from reputation . . . . .	52, 920, 1608
conduct to evidence, as distinguished from relevancy of character itself . . . . .	53
special chancery rules for cross-examination to . . . . .	986
1. <i>As Evidence or In Issue</i> . . . . .	52
(a) <i>Accused's character</i> as relevant to show an act done or not done . . . . .	55
distinction between evidential, and in issue . . . . .	54
general, distinguished from particular acts in rape . . . . .	62, 200
distinguished from habit . . . . .	92
course of conduct distinguished from . . . . .	203
good character always admissible for him . . . . .	56
presumed . . . . .	290
bad character not admissible against him . . . . .	57
erroneously admitted, rebuttal is not a waiver . . . . .	18
prosecution may rebut . . . . .	58
kind of character . . . . .	59
evidence of, must be in reference to specific trait in issue . . . . .	59
time of character . . . . .	60
place of character . . . . .	60
accused as witness . . . . .	61, 890
failure to prove, as evidence of bad character . . . . .	290
of arrested person to show reasonable ground for suspicion in arrest by officer . . . . .	258
to justify breach of promise . . . . .	77



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Character (continued)	Section
houses of ill-fame and inmates . . . . .	78
in seduction . . . . .	79, 210
of employee as affecting liability of employer . . . . .	80
(b) <i>Animals</i> . . . . .	68, 201
(c) <i>Complainant in rape</i> and similar crimes . . . . .	62
for chastity, presumption of . . . . .	2528
(d) <i>Deceased in homicide</i> , to evidence aggression . . . . .	63, 246
to evidence defendant's apprehension of aggression from deceased . . . . .	246
(e) <i>Parties in civil cases</i> in general . . . . .	64
in negligence . . . . .	65
in defamation . . . . .	66
in malpractice . . . . .	67
of opponent from his own interrogatories . . . . .	1856
of both father and daughter in issue in father's action for seduction . . . . .	210
of both husband and wife in issue in action for criminal conversation . . . . .	211
of plaintiff in issue in action for indecent assault . . . . .	212
(f) <i>Plaintiff, in mitigation</i> of damages . . . . .	70-76, 209-213
in issue for sundry purposes . . . . .	77-80
(g) <i>Third persons</i> in general . . . . .	68
(h) <i>Witness impeached</i>	
one's own witness . . . . .	900
actual character . . . . .	920
kind of character . . . . .	922
other traits than veracity . . . . .	924
distinction between unchastity in sexes, as affecting truthfulness . . . . .	924
time of character . . . . .	927
place of character . . . . .	930
mode of evidencing by conduct; see <i>infra</i> , 2.	
mode of evidencing by reputation; see <i>infra</i> , 2.	
character as to sanity, skill, etc.; see IMPEACHMENT.	
attesting witness . . . . .	1514
(i) <i>Witness supported</i>	
good character, in general . . . . .	1104
attesting witness . . . . .	1514
2. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Conduct</i>	
(a) <i>In general</i>	
of an accused in a criminal case . . . . .	192-197, 215-218
unfair surprise in showing . . . . .	194, 202, 1849
rumors of misconduct as affecting credibility of witness' testimony concerning . . . . .	197
privilege not to disclose crimes . . . . .	2268-2277
see also SELF-CRIMINATION.	
of a deceased in homicide . . . . .	198
of a negligent party in a civil case . . . . .	199
of a complainant in rape . . . . .	200
of an animal . . . . .	687, 201
(b) <i>Of a party</i> , to show character in issue . . . . .	202-208
to mitigate damages . . . . .	209-213
(c) <i>Of a witness in impeachment</i>	
by other witnesses . . . . .	979
by conviction of crime . . . . .	980
by cross-examination to misconduct . . . . .	981
privilege for disgracing answers . . . . .	985
privilege for crimes . . . . .	2268-2277
rumors of misconduct . . . . .	988
contradiction by other witnesses . . . . .	1005
form of question in impeaching veracity . . . . .	1985
unfair surprise in showing; see UNFAIR SURPRISE.	
(d) <i>Of a witness in support</i>	
good character . . . . .	1104
impeaching the impeaching witness . . . . .	1111
explaining away bad repute . . . . .	1112
denial of crime . . . . .	1116

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Character ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
consistent statements . . . . .	1124
rebuttal of testimony to unchaste, in seduction . . . . .	1620
3. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Reputation</i>	
general principle of reputation . . . . .	1608-1610
reputation distinguished from rumors . . . . .	1611
distinction between conduct to evidence, and relevancy of character itself . . . . .	53
extent and place of reputation . . . . .	1612-1616
number of utterances necessary . . . . .	1613
absence of utterances to evidence good . . . . .	1614
reputation outside of place of residence . . . . .	1616
time of reputation . . . . .	1617, 1618
kind of character that may be thus proved	
chastity . . . . .	1620
house of ill-fame . . . . .	1620
common offender . . . . .	1620
sanity . . . . .	1621
temperance . . . . .	1621
expert qualifications . . . . .	1621
negligence . . . . .	1621
animals . . . . .	1621
solvency . . . . .	1623
partnership . . . . .	1624
legal tradition . . . . .	1625
incorporation . . . . .	1625
sundry facts . . . . .	1626
limitation of number of witnesses . . . . .	1908
qualifications of a witness to repute . . . . .	691
4. <i>Mode of Evidencing by Personal Opinion</i>	
defendant's moral character . . . . .	1981, 1983
witness' moral character; belief on oath . . . . .	1982, 1985
skill, care, competence . . . . .	1984
see also UNFAIR SURPRISE; IMPEACHMENT OF A WITNESS; CHASTITY.	
[Examine analyses of "Character," Vol. I, p. 264; Vol. II, p. 355.]	
Charge to Jury, right to judge to give . . . . .	2495, 2557, 2559
party offering evidence after . . . . .	1879
Charge and Discharge statements taken together . . . . .	2117
Charter of city, judicially noticed . . . . .	2572
of corporation proved by copy . . . . .	1680
Chastity, character of complainant in rape, etc., to show consent . . . . .	62
character of the woman in seduction, etc., as mitigating damages or in issue . . . . .	75-80
conduct, to evidence rape-complainant's character for . . . . .	200
unfair surprise in showing acts disproving . . . . .	200
mitigation of damages, as affected by lack of . . . . .	210-213
character in issue, as involving acts of unchastity . . . . .	204-206
of male and female, distinguished . . . . .	924
provable by reputation . . . . .	1620
presumption of . . . . .	2528
of a witness, in impeachment; see IMPEACHMENT.	
Chattel, possession of stolen; see STOLEN GOODS.	
failure to produce, as evidence . . . . .	291
value, as evidence of price agreed . . . . .	392
marks, as evidence of identity . . . . .	150, 413
identified from appearance . . . . .	660
sales of other goods, as evidence of value . . . . .	463
condition or quality of, as shown by effects, etc. . . . .	437-461
qualifications of a witness to value; see VALUE.	
whether production in court is necessary . . . . .	1181, 1182
words accompanying delivery of . . . . .	1777
inspection of, before trial . . . . .	1862, 1863
obtained by illegal search . . . . .	2183
inspection or production of, compellable . . . . .	2194, 2221, 2264
authentication of . . . . .	2128, 2129
Chauffeur; see AUTOMOBILE.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Cheat</b> , other acts, to evidence a common cheat . . . . .	203
to evidence intent . . . . .	321
see also FALSE REPRESENTATIONS.	
<b>Check</b> , evidence of forgery of; see FORGERY.	
parol transaction collateral to instrument . . . . .	1235, 1245, 2443
see also BILL OF EXCHANGE; PAYMENT; DOCUMENT.	
<b>Chemical Analysis</b> , certificate of, as conclusive . . . . .	1352, 1355
as admissible . . . . .	1674, 1710
as adopted by contract . . . . .	7a
<b>Chemical Matters</b> , witness' experience as qualifying him . . . . .	568
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1975
<b>Chief</b> , case in; see EXAMINATION, III.	
examination in; see DIRECT EXAMINATION.	
<b>Child</b> , resemblance of, to show paternity . . . . .	166, 1154, 1168
appearance of, to evidence age . . . . .	222, 257, 660, 1154, 1168
capacity to testify . . . . .	505-509
to take the oath . . . . .	1820, 1821, 1825
to testify, though not capable of perjury . . . . .	1832
intentionally omitted from will, parol evidence to show . . . . .	2475
corroboration required as witness . . . . .	2066
evidence of age of adoptive . . . . .	667
presumption of advancement to . . . . .	2526
of gratuitous services by . . . . .	2526
see also ADVANCEMENT; AGE; INFANT; LEGITIMACY; MARITAL RELATIONSHIP; DESERTION.	
<b>Childbearing</b> , presumption against . . . . .	2528
<b>Chinese</b> as witness; corroboration required . . . . .	2066
exclusion of . . . . .	516
witnesses sufficient to prove presence before 1892 . . . . .	2066
conclusiveness of certificate of occupation of immigrant . . . . .	1347
of findings of officials as to . . . . .	1355
privilege against self-crimination in deportation proceedings . . . . .	2256
conclusiveness of immigration officer's finding against . . . . .	1347, 1354
see also RACE.	
<b>Chose in Action</b> , admissions of assignor . . . . .	1082
<b>Church</b> , register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	
law of; see ECCLESIASTICAL LAW.	
<b>Cinematograph</b> , as evidence . . . . .	798
<b>Cipher-Code</b> , admissible to interpret words . . . . .	2463
see also HANDWRITING.	
<b>Circumstantial</b> evidence, defined . . . . .	25
distinguished from testimonial evidence . . . . .	25
relative value of . . . . .	26
general theory of . . . . .	38
classification of . . . . .	43
may be proved by the same kind . . . . .	41
criminal's identity as evidenced by traces . . . . .	148
distinguished from 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1715
confusion of issues in . . . . .	1904
unfair prejudice in . . . . .	1904
sufficiency for 'corpus delicti' . . . . .	2081
for breach of promise . . . . .	2090
to authenticate a document . . . . .	2131
proof beyond reasonable doubt . . . . .	2497
<b>Citizenship</b> of immigrant or deported person, administrative officer's conclusive certificate as to . . . . .	1354
<b>City</b> charter, ordinance, boundary, etc., judicially noticed . . . . .	2572, 2575
ordinance proved by printed copy . . . . .	1684
<b>Civil Cases</b> , parties in, character of . . . . .	64
eye-witness to marriage not required in . . . . .	2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness in . . . . .	2088
similar acts, to evidence Knowledge, Design, or Intent in . . . . .	370
to evidence Habit in . . . . .	376
<b>Civil Law</b> , system of 'authentic acts'; see AUTHENTIC ACTS.	

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
Civil Service Boards, rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
Claim of Title, as part of 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1778
Claims, prior false, as evidence to impeach a witness . . . . .	963
of party's intent to defraud . . . . .	340, 352
Classification of the rules of evidence . . . . .	3
of the rules of admissibility . . . . .	11
of circumstantial evidence . . . . .	43
of the rules of relevancy . . . . .	24
of prospectant evidence . . . . .	51
Clergyman, confession to, not excluded . . . . .	840
privileged communications to . . . . .	2394
entries of; see REGULAR ENTRIES; REGISTER.	
Clerk using an entry to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
entries of a deceased; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
of public officer or court; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
of an attorney, admissions of . . . . .	1063
signature presumed genuine . . . . .	2164
communications to, not privileged . . . . .	2236, 2301, 2317
Client, who is a . . . . .	2317
privileged communications of; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
see also ATTORNEY; ATTORNEY AND CLIENT; PARTIES.	
Close of Case, evidence offered after; see EXAMINATION, III.	
Clothing, as evidence of identity . . . . .	413, 660
testimony to value of; see VALUE.	
exhibition to jury . . . . .	1157
Clubs, rules of evidence in hearings to expel from . . . . .	4c
Cocaine, use of, to discredit witness . . . . .	934
Co-conspirator, admissions of, in general . . . . .	1079
as part of 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1797
see also ACCOMPLICE.	
Co-defendant, impeached . . . . .	967, 968
admissions of . . . . .	1076
husband or wife of, privileged . . . . .	2236
accused's failure to call . . . . .	2273
see also DEFENDANT; CO-INDICTEE.	
Co-indictee, disqualification as witness . . . . .	580
wife of, disqualification as witness . . . . .	609
impeachable when called by co-party . . . . .	916
impeached by his situation . . . . .	967
admissions of . . . . .	1079
see also ACCOMPLICE.	
Co-obligee, admissions of . . . . .	1081
Co-obligor, admissions of . . . . .	1077
Co-party, admissions of . . . . .	1076
see also CO-DEFENDANT; CO-INDICTEE; PARTY.	
Co-promisee, admissions of . . . . .	1081
Co-promisor, admissions of . . . . .	1077
Co-tortfeasor, admissions of . . . . .	1079
Cohabitation, as evidence of marriage . . . . .	268, 2083
as evidence of adultery, etc.; see ADULTERY; INCEST; MARRIAGE.	
presumption of marriage from . . . . .	2505
Coin, evidence of counterfeiting; see COUNTERFEITING.	
expert witness to genuineness of . . . . .	570
Collateral Agreements, to written contracts . . . . .	2429, 2435, 2442
shown by parol . . . . .	1235, 1245, 2443-2445
Collateral Evidence, admitted to rebut other collateral evidence . . . . .	15
inadmissible when irrelevant . . . . .	39
of crimes, to show intent, etc. . . . .	216, 360
facts, misuse of doctrine . . . . .	1248
facts, doctrine of, in producing originals . . . . .	1252
contradictions of witness by; see CONTRADICTION; SELF-CONTRADICTION.	
privilege of a witness against disgrace by . . . . .	986
unfair surprise in impeachment of witness by, facts . . . . .	1002, 1007
test of collateralness . . . . .	1003



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Collateral Evidence</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
contradiction as to bribery not . . . . .	1005, 1022
contents of a document collaterally in issue . . . . .	1252
attesting witness to a document collaterally in issue . . . . .	1291
see also PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, B.	
<b>Collision</b> , other instances, as evidencing a defect . . . . .	458
spontaneous exclamations of one in a . . . . .	1750, 1756
see also NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Color</b> , as impeaching a witness or evidencing race; see RACE.	
<b>Color of Title</b> , deed admitted as . . . . .	1653, 1655, 1778, 2132
<b>Coloring</b> , as used in 'res gestæ' doctrine . . . . .	365, 1778
<b>Commerce</b> , facts of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2580
<b>Commercial Agency</b> , communications to, not privileged . . . . .	2286
<b>Commercial Courts</b> , rules of evidence in . . . . .	4d
<b>Commercial Lists</b> used in evidence . . . . .	1702
<b>Commission</b> , mode of taking testimony on; see DEPOSITION.	
former testimony before, whether admissible . . . . .	1373
certificate of; see CERTIFICATE.	
<b>Commissioner</b> , power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
<b>Commitment</b> to an insane asylum; see SANITY.	
<b>Common Carrier</b> , loss by, presumed negligent . . . . .	2508
bill of lading by, burden of proof for . . . . .	2537
records as exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1521, 1708
<b>Common Law</b> , trials at, in Federal Courts . . . . .	6
see also CHANCERY.	
<b>Common Offender</b> , other acts to evidence character . . . . .	203
prior conviction, to increase sentence . . . . .	196
provable by reputation . . . . .	1620
<b>Common Source of Title</b> , dispensing with proof of prior deeds . . . . .	2132
affidavit denying, in ejectment . . . . .	1385
<b>Communications</b> , privilege for; see PRIVILEGE, II.	
exciting insane belief, disproof of . . . . .	262, 263
<b>Comparison of Hands</b> ; see HANDWRITING.	
<b>Competence</b> , of evidence; see ADMISSIBILITY.	
of employee; see EMPLOYEE.	
of physician; see PHYSICIAN.	
of persons in general; see SKILL; NEGLIGENCE.	
of witnesses in general; see WITNESS, I, <i>Qualifications</i> .	
<b>Complainant</b> , uncorroborated in rape, bastardy, breach of promise, etc. . . . .	2061
in rape, too young to be a witness . . . . .	1139, 1761
<b>Complaint</b> , of rape; see RAPE.	
admissions in pleading . . . . .	1063
failure to make, as an admission . . . . .	284
in sodomy . . . . .	1135
of bailee, after robbery . . . . .	1142
of owner, after robbery . . . . .	1762
after larceny . . . . .	1142
mother's, in travail . . . . .	1141, 1763
amended, as evidence . . . . .	1067
<b>Completeness</b> , verbal . . . . .	2094
of dying declarations . . . . .	1448, 2099
of oral utterances . . . . .	2097
of documents . . . . .	2102
see also WHOLE OF AN UTTERANCE; DOCUMENT.	
<b>Compromise</b> , offer to, as an admission . . . . .	1061
offers of, by agent . . . . .	1061
<b>Compulsory Process</b>	
to obtain witnesses	
history . . . . .	2190
constitutional guaranty . . . . .	2191
does not include right to consult witness before trial . . . . .	2191
use against Executive . . . . .	2369
exemptions from; see PRIVILEGE.	
to compel answers; see PRIVILEGE.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Compulsory Process</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
<i>to compel bodily exposure</i> . . . . .	2194, 2216, 2220, 2265
<i>confession</i> obtained by; see <b>CONFESSION</b> .	
<b>Compulsory Reports</b> , as affected by privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2259c
as admissions . . . . .	1054
<b>Compurgation</b> ; see <b>WAGER OF LAW</b> .	
<b>Concealment</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
of a document . . . . .	291, 1198, 1199
<b>Conciliation Courts</b> , rules of evidence in . . . . .	4d
<b>Conciliator</b> , privilege for communications to . . . . .	2376
<b>Conclusiveness</b> , of official certificates or records . . . . .	1345-1352
of magistrate's report of testimony . . . . .	1349
of architect's etc. certificate . . . . .	7a
of enrolled statute . . . . .	1350
of certificate of election . . . . .	1351
constitutionality of statutes declaring . . . . .	1353
of presumption . . . . .	2492
of judicial notice . . . . .	2567
of judicial admission . . . . .	1058, 2588, 2590
of ordinary admission . . . . .	1058, 2588
distinguished from parol evidence rule . . . . .	2453
<b>Condition</b> , of a human being as to health, etc.; see <b>HEALTH</b> ; <b>SANITY</b> .	
prior dangerous, to evidence notice . . . . .	252
subsequent repaired, to evidence negligence . . . . .	283
of a highway, machine, place, weapon, etc., as evidenced by effects, etc. . . . .	437-462
in one place as evidence of, in another . . . . .	438
<b>Condition Precedent</b> , shown by parol evidence . . . . .	2408, 2410, 2420
burden of proof of performance of . . . . .	2537
<b>Conditional</b> , admissibility . . . . .	14, 40, 304, 1871
<b>Conduct</b> , as evidence . . . . .	190, 191
to show character in issue . . . . .	70-80, 202
unfair surprise in showing . . . . .	194, 202, 1849
to evidence capacity . . . . .	220
as evidence of insanity . . . . .	228
cannot amount to an admission . . . . .	287, 1052
when under arrest, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	273, 1072
as evidence of innocence . . . . .	293
to prove arson . . . . .	396
as measure of time, space, light, sound, etc. . . . .	460
of others, as measure of negligence . . . . .	461
care . . . . .	461, 459
cruelty . . . . .	461
danger . . . . .	461
insufficiency . . . . .	461
unreasonableness . . . . .	461
unskillfulness . . . . .	461
horses' fright . . . . .	461
passengers' behavior . . . . .	461
safeguards for railroads . . . . .	461
highways . . . . .	461
machines . . . . .	461
malpractice . . . . .	461
customs . . . . .	461
libel, etc. . . . .	461
reasonableness of, for jury . . . . .	2553
see also <b>CHARACTER</b> ; <b>CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT</b> , <b>OF INNOCENCE</b> ; <b>INTENT</b> ;	
<b>DESIGN</b> ; <b>IDENTITY</b> ; <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> ; <b>SANITY</b> ; <b>MARRIAGE</b> ; <b>DEMEANOR</b> ;	
<b>FLIGHT</b> ; <b>DEFENDANT</b> ; <b>CAREFULNESS</b> .	
<b>Confession</b> of falsehood disqualifying attester . . . . .	528
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	959
of judgment, as an admission . . . . .	1061
<b>Confession of Crime</b> , rules of, applicable to accused persons only . . . . .	815
not applicable to witness or civil party . . . . .	815
distinguished from admissions . . . . .	816, 1050



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Confession of Crime</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
distinguished from hearsay . . . . .	916, 1049
history of the rules . . . . .	817-820
what is a confession . . . . .	821
distinguished from denials, guilty conduct, and self-contradictions . . . . .	821
principles of exclusion . . . . .	822-826
intoxication does not necessarily exclude . . . . .	499, 841
not excluded for breach of confidence . . . . .	823
for illegality in obtaining . . . . .	823
under privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	823
inducement in obtaining . . . . .	824-826, 833, 853
voluntariness of . . . . .	826, 843
person in authority . . . . .	827-830
English and American authorities distinguished . . . . .	829-830
nature of the inducement . . . . .	831-841
to clergymen, not excluded . . . . .	840
statutory definition of "inducement" in . . . . .	831
obtained on advice to "tell the truth" . . . . .	832
in "sweat box" of police . . . . .	833, 851
under "third degree" . . . . .	833, 851
by threat of corporal violence . . . . .	833
by promise of pardon . . . . .	834
of reward of money . . . . .	835
of better treatment . . . . .	835
of withholding legal action . . . . .	836
by assurances . . . . .	837-839
by religious or moral influence . . . . .	840
by trick or fraud . . . . .	841
in sleep, or drug influence . . . . .	500
under arrest, or on examination by magistrate . . . . .	842-852
before coroner . . . . .	852
time of beginning and ending of the inducement . . . . .	853-855
confirmation by subsequent facts . . . . .	856-859
corroborated by finding stolen goods . . . . .	856-858
facts disclosed by, inadmissible . . . . .	858, 859
burden of proof . . . . .	860
judge and jury . . . . .	861, 862
right to cross-examine to admissibility of . . . . .	861
admissibility of, determined by evidence . . . . .	861
voluntariness of, a question for court . . . . .	861
sundry rules . . . . .	863
sentimentality in receiving . . . . .	865
value of confessions . . . . .	866
future of the doctrine . . . . .	867
of perjury, as impeaching a witness . . . . .	959
distinguished from admissions . . . . .	1050
of principal or co-conspirator . . . . .	1079
report of prior testimony used as . . . . .	1328
of crime by a third person, as hearsay . . . . .	1476
whether alone sufficient to convict . . . . .	
respondent in divorce . . . . .	2067, 2074
accused in general . . . . .	2070
bigamy, etc. . . . .	2086
mentioning another crime . . . . .	2100
whole must be proved . . . . .	2097, 2100
may be proved . . . . .	2115, 2119
must be taken together . . . . .	2100
distinguished from self-crimination . . . . .	2266
to a priest, privilege for . . . . .	2394
[Examine analysis of "Confessions of an Accused Person," Vol. II, pp. 124, 125.]	
<b>Confidential Communication</b> , confession not privileged as . . . . .	823, 841
privileged kinds; see PRIVILEGE.	
<b>Confidential Relations</b> of grantee, presuming fraud from . . . . .	2503

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1350; Vol. III, §§ 1300-1803; Vol. IV, §§ 1804-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section
<b>Conflict of Laws</b> , rule of evidence applicable, in general . . . . .	5
between Federal and State laws of evidence . . . . .	6a
stamped documents and certified copies . . . . .	1680, 1681, 2185
Dominion and Provincial laws of evidence in Canada . . . . .	6b
Imperial and Canadian laws of evidence . . . . .	6b
<b>Conflict of Presumptions</b> . . . . .	2493
<b>Confrontation</b> , right of; see HEARSAY RULE, I.	
<b>Confusion of Issues</b> , by showing particular acts of bad character . . . . .	194
general theory of . . . . .	1864, 1904
as applied to conduct to show character in issue . . . . .	202
in evidencing tendency, capacity or quality . . . . .	443
in admitting collateral facts to impeach witness . . . . .	1002, 1007
in showing self-contradiction . . . . .	1019
may exclude experiment as real evidence . . . . .	1154
as affecting order of evidence . . . . .	1864
in circumstantial evidence . . . . .	1904
<b>Congress</b> , privilege of member of . . . . .	2378
see also LEGISLATURE.	
<b>Consciousness of Guilt</b> , as evidence, general theory . . . . .	173
conduct, as evidence of . . . . .	265-293
see also KNOWLEDGE.	
<b>Consciousness of Innocence</b> , as evidence . . . . .	174, 293
<b>Consent</b> , presumption of, to marriage . . . . .	2505
see also CONTRACT; BILL OF LADING; AGE OF CONSENT.	
<b>Consideration</b> , words as 'res gestæ,' to show . . . . .	1777
recital of, varied by parol . . . . .	2433
presumption of . . . . .	2520
<b>Consistent statements</b> by a witness; see WITNESS, III.	
<b>Conspiracy</b> , evidence of offences other than overt act . . . . .	370
privilege against self-elimination in . . . . .	2257
<b>Conspirator</b> ; see Co-CONSPIRATOR.	
<b>Constitutional Rules</b> , in general . . . . .	7
affecting legislative power to alter the law of evidence . . . . .	7
forbidding 'ex post facto' laws . . . . .	7
requiring formalities for enacting a bill . . . . .	1350, 2592
whether testimony may be declared conclusive . . . . .	1353
sanctioning right of confrontation . . . . .	1397
use of certificate of marriage . . . . .	1398
right of confrontation consistent with use of depositions . . . . .	1398
of dying declarations . . . . .	1398
of former testimony . . . . .	1398
of official statements . . . . .	1398
of reputation . . . . .	1398
respecting right of confrontation may be waived . . . . .	1398
requiring full faith and credit to State records . . . . .	1681
dispensing with religious belief as necessary for taking oath . . . . .	1828
for compulsory process . . . . .	2191
does not include right to consult witness before trial . . . . .	2191
validity of admission of absent witness' testimony . . . . .	2595
effect of waiver by judicial admission . . . . .	2592
<b>Construction</b> , of other machines, buildings, etc., as evidence of danger, etc. . . . .	437, 451, 461
of a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
<b>Consul</b> , privilege of . . . . .	2372
certificate of . . . . .	1674
<b>Contagious Disease</b> , privilege for report of . . . . .	2377
see also DISEASE.	
<b>Contempt</b> , for not obeying compulsory process . . . . .	
proceedings for, whether the rule for confrontation of witnesses applies in . . . . .	1398
privilege against self-elimination in proceedings for . . . . .	2257
power of officer to commit for . . . . .	2195
excuse of witness . . . . .	2214
refusal to disclose irrelevant matter . . . . .	2210
exemption of Executive from process . . . . .	2399



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

<b>Contempt</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
proof beyond a reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
whether the 6th Amendment applies to proceedings for . . . . .	1398
<b>Contents</b> , of a document; see WILL; DOCUMENT.	
<b>Continuance</b> , absent witness' testimony admitted to avoid . . . . .	2595
granted for unfair surprise . . . . .	1848
<b>Continuity</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2530
presumption of, is founded on inference . . . . .	437
of ownership . . . . .	2530
of possession . . . . .	2530
of authority . . . . .	2530
of insanity . . . . .	2530
of residence . . . . .	2530
of physical or external condition . . . . .	225, 437
<b>Contract</b> , course of business as evidence of . . . . .	94, 372, 382
intention as evidence of . . . . .	112
belief as evidence of . . . . .	272
other transactions, as evidence of terms of . . . . .	377, 379
value of goods or services, as evidence of price agreed in . . . . .	392
of service, statutes declaring 'prima facie' evidence of breach of . . . . .	1356
utterances of, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770
opinion of damages by breach of . . . . .	1944
meaning of, by opinion evidence . . . . .	1969, 1971
understanding of the parties . . . . .	1971
for personalty or money-payment, Louisiana rule requiring corroboration for . . . . .	2054
for advancement or request, corroboration required . . . . .	2065
corroboration required for oral rescission of . . . . .	2066
putting in the whole . . . . .	2099, 2105, 2115
discharge by parol . . . . .	2441, 2455
alteration by parol . . . . .	2441
bogus or sham . . . . .	2406
subsequent agreement not to sue . . . . .	2435, 2444
condition precedent, shown by parol . . . . .	2408, 2410, 2420
reformation of, in equity . . . . .	2417
completeness of, in ticket . . . . .	2432
of warranty, shown by parol . . . . .	2434
agreement in, not to be used as binding . . . . .	2435
transactions of friendship in . . . . .	2435
degree of proof necessary for specific performance of oral . . . . .	2498
burden of proof in . . . . .	2537
to alter or waive rules of evidence . . . . .	7a
jury or judge to interpret . . . . .	2556
making certain evidence conclusive . . . . .	7a
calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
with deceased party; see DECEASED PERSON.	
<b>Contradiction</b> of a witness, to impeach him	
one's own witness . . . . .	907
general theory . . . . .	1000
collateral facts excluded . . . . .	1001
test of collateralness . . . . .	1003
material facts . . . . .	1004
facts of bias . . . . .	1005
of corruption . . . . .	1005
of intoxication . . . . .	1005
of moral character . . . . .	1005
of skill . . . . .	1005
of illness . . . . .	1005
of opportunity to observe . . . . .	1005
of recollection . . . . .	1005
of narration . . . . .	1005
of prior inconsistent statements . . . . .	1005
particular acts of misconduct . . . . .	1005

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Contradiction</b> , particular acts of misconduct ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
cross-examination . . . . .	1006
supporting the witness . . . . .	1007
answers in, on direct examination . . . . .	1007
of an explanatory statement . . . . .	952, 1046
'falsus in uno,' as a rule for rejecting testimony . . . . .	1008
falsity must be wilful and material . . . . .	1013, 1014
may be explained . . . . .	1972
<b>Contribution</b> , sued for by joint tortfeasor; testimony at first trial received . . . . .	1387
<b>Contributory Negligence</b> , not presumed . . . . .	2507, 2510
see also NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Conversation</b> , by an interpreter, testimony to . . . . .	668
by telephone, testimony to . . . . .	669
authentication of, by telephone . . . . .	2155
meaning of, proved by opinion evidence . . . . .	1969
whole must be proved . . . . .	2097, 2099
may be proved . . . . .	2115, 2119
separate utterances excluded . . . . .	2119
<b>Conversion</b> ; see TROVER.	
words accompanying the taking, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777
<b>Conveyance</b> , of property, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	282
relationship as bearing on good faith in . . . . .	391
privilege for advice in drafting . . . . .	2297
record of; see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	
<b>Conviction of Crime</b>	
1. <i>Disqualification by</i>	
2. <i>Impeachment by</i>	
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
1. <i>Disqualification by</i> . . . . .	519
general principles . . . . .	519
kind of crime . . . . .	520
judgment controls . . . . .	521
conviction in another jurisdiction . . . . .	522
removal of disqualification, by pardon, etc. . . . .	523
statutory changes . . . . .	524
proving by cross-examination without copy . . . . .	1270
whole of the record . . . . .	2110
2. <i>Impeachment by</i>	
general principle . . . . .	980, 986, 987
asking on cross-examination . . . . .	980, 1270
producing a record-copy . . . . .	1270
restoring credit after . . . . .	1106, 1116, 1117
identifying by name . . . . .	2529
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
imprisonment of attesting witness . . . . .	1315
infamy of an attesting witness . . . . .	1316
of witness, excusing absence of a deponent . . . . .	1410
of principal, used against accessory . . . . .	1079
of third person, to exonerate accused . . . . .	142
of accused, to increase sentence . . . . .	196
<b>Copy of a Document</b>	
1. <i>When must the original be produced</i>	
2. <i>Rules for proof of copy, when original's non-production is excused</i>	
3. <i>Official or certified copy</i>	
4. <i>Sundries</i>	
1. <i>When must the original be produced</i> ; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
2. <i>Rules for proof of copy, when original's non-production is excused</i>	
nature of copy-testimony . . . . .	1264
as distinguished from recollection . . . . .	1266
copy preferred to recollection of contents . . . . .	1268-1271
party's admission . . . . .	1255
witness' admission . . . . .	1259
public record . . . . .	1269



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Copy of a Document</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
copy preferred to record of conviction . . . . .	1270
foreign statute . . . . .	1271
duplicate, distinguished from copy . . . . .	1231
carbon, as original . . . . .	1234
kinds of recollection-witnesses . . . . .	1272
examined and sworn copies . . . . .	1273
certified copies . . . . .	1273
copy preferred to abstract . . . . .	1273
newspaper files . . . . .	1273
copy of a copy . . . . .	1274, 1275
personal knowledge of correctness . . . . .	1278, 1279
cross-reading . . . . .	1279
press-copies, etc. . . . .	1280, 2019
photographic copies . . . . .	797, 2019
calling the copyist . . . . .	1281
3. <i>Official or certified copy</i>	
when admissible; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
not preferred to sworn copy . . . . .	1273
4. <i>Sundries</i>	
copy in general . . . . .	801
which party may make . . . . .	1859
distinction between different kinds of copies . . . . .	1655
copy of printed matter, as a sample to identify . . . . .	440
of paper, used to aid collection . . . . .	749, 760
preference for maker of copy to recollection-witness . . . . .	1338
of lost document judicially established . . . . .	1347
erasure in, not fatal . . . . .	1677
of lost ancient deed . . . . .	2143
of printed decisions and statutes . . . . .	1684
proving the whole of the original	
of lost documents . . . . .	2105-2107
of public records . . . . .	2108, 2109
of judicial records . . . . .	2110
furnished on demand before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
authentication by seal or signature . . . . .	2162
[Examine analyses of "Production of Documentary Originals," Vol. II, pp. 718, 719, 720; and "Verbal Completeness," Vol. IV, p. 461.]	
<b>Copyright</b> , infringement of, other acts showing intent . . . . .	371
master's report of evidence on infringement . . . . .	1161
summary of contents, to prove infringement . . . . .	1230
<b>Coroner</b> , confession made on examination before . . . . .	852
report of former examination of witness before,	
whether preferred . . . . .	1326, 1329, 1349
whether admissible . . . . .	1667
former testimony before, without cross-examination . . . . .	1374
inquest of death, as evidence . . . . .	1671
verdict of, to show cause of death . . . . .	1671
inquest of, is not a trial . . . . .	1834
testifying before, as a waiver of privilege . . . . .	2276
<b>Corporal Injury</b> , repairs of premises after, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	283
appearance of a wound, as indicating distance of assailant . . . . .	457
speculative testimony to . . . . .	663
physician's testimony as to possible developments in . . . . .	663
qualifications of witness to . . . . .	688
insurance as discrediting defendant-witness in . . . . .	969
exhibition to the jury, whether allowable . . . . .	1157, 1158
whether compellable . . . . .	2194, 2220, 2265
expressions of pain caused by . . . . .	1718
'res gestæ' statements after . . . . .	1747
inspection of, before trial . . . . .	1862
privilege against inspection of . . . . .	2194, 2220, 2265
eye-witness of . . . . .	2081a
insurance contract requiring eye-witness of . . . . .	7a

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2537]

<b>Corporal Injury</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
opinion of damages by . . . . .	1944
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1975
inspection of, compellable . . . . .	2194, 2220, 2265
privilege for communications to physician . . . . .	2380
presumption of negligence from . . . . .	2507-2510
release of, parol evidence to avoid . . . . .	2416, 2432
see also NEGLIGENCE; ILLNESS; DAMAGES.	
<b>Corporation</b> , disqualification of opponent as witness to a transaction with a	
deceased officer of . . . . .	578
producing original of charter . . . . .	1249
books and records of, as admissions . . . . .	1074, 1076
as official records . . . . .	1661
distinction between . . . . .	1661
as regular entries . . . . .	1521, 1542, 1547
original books not produced . . . . .	1223
conclusive proof of proceedings . . . . .	1346, 2451
inspection before trial . . . . .	1858
copy of whole required . . . . .	2109, 2116
proved by certified copy or by affidavit-copy . . . . .	1683, 1710
certificate or charter of incorporation, proved by certified copy . . . . .	1680
records of, proved by certified copy . . . . .	1683
existence of, proved by reputation . . . . .	1625
seal, presumed genuine . . . . .	2169
privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2259
distinguished from official's personal privilege . . . . .	2259a
officer liable to subpoena 'duces tecum' . . . . .	2200
special form of process to secure books of . . . . .	2200
discovery from . . . . .	2218
immunity from disclosure; see IMMUNITY.	
incriminated by facts obtained from third person . . . . .	2259b, 2281
negotiable instrument signed by officer of . . . . .	2444
acts of, under parol evidence rule . . . . .	2451
officer or employee of, examined as adverse party impeachable by the examiner . . . . .	916
<b>Corpse</b> , exhumation of, to obtain evidence . . . . .	1862, 1863, 2194, 2216, 2220
<b>Corpse-touching</b> as evidence . . . . .	9
see also CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.	
<b>Corpus Delicti</b> , as negatived by survival of the alleged deceased . . . . .	138
proof required, to corroborate confession . . . . .	2070
definition of . . . . .	2072
identification of deceased not part of . . . . .	2072
age of defendant may be part of . . . . .	2072
order and sufficiency of evidence of . . . . .	2073
proved by circumstantial evidence . . . . .	2081
direct testimony required by statute . . . . .	2081
<b>Correspondence</b> , acquaintance with, as qualifying a witness to handwriting . . . . .	702
putting in the whole . . . . .	2104, 2120
reply-letter presumed genuine . . . . .	2153
<b>Corroboration</b> , what is . . . . .	2062
<b>Corroboration of a Witness</b>	
1. <i>Modes of supporting an Impeached Witness; see WITNESS, IV, Restoring Credit.</i>	
2. <i>Kinds of witnesses required to be Corroborated though unimpeached</i>	
treason . . . . .	2036
perjury . . . . .	2040
sundry crimes . . . . .	2044
forgery . . . . .	2044
false pretences . . . . .	2044
contract for personalty, etc. . . . .	2054
surety's notice to creditor . . . . .	2054
plea of truth in defamation . . . . .	2054
declaration of trust . . . . .	2054, 2065
survey . . . . .	2054
relinquishment of dower . . . . .	2054
contract for bequest . . . . .	2065



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Corroboration of a Witness (continued)

	Section
divorce . . . . .	2046
chancery . . . . .	2047
wills . . . . .	2048-2052
usage or custom . . . . .	2053
malpractice . . . . .	2090
sundry civil cases . . . . .	2054
accomplice . . . . .	2056
complainant in rape . . . . .	2061
bastardy . . . . .	2061
seduction . . . . .	2061
enticement, abortion, indecent liberties, etc. . . . .	2061
breach of marriage-promise . . . . .	2061
parent bastardizing issue . . . . .	2063
surviving claimant . . . . .	2065
children . . . . .	2066
Chinese . . . . .	2066
detectives . . . . .	2066
prostitutes, etc. . . . .	2066
alien in naturalization . . . . .	2066
denial of notary's certificate . . . . .	2066
oral rescission of contract . . . . .	2066
slander of chastity . . . . .	2066
guardian's accounts . . . . .	2066
dying declaration in abortion . . . . .	2066
instigation to crime . . . . .	2066
title to animals impounded . . . . .	2066
mother of illegitimate child . . . . .	2066
frequenting opium den . . . . .	2066
personal injury . . . . .	2066
confessions . . . . .	
of divorce respondent . . . . .	2067
of accused . . . . .	2070
<b>3. Sundries</b> . . . . .	
confession, corroborated by subsequent facts . . . . .	856
utterances identifying a time or place . . . . .	416
[Examine analysis of "Number of Witnesses Required," Vol. IV, p. 288.]	
<b>Corruption of a witness, as impeaching him</b> . . . . .	956-964
of one's own witness . . . . .	901
willingness or offer to testify falsely . . . . .	957, 958
confession of false testimony . . . . .	959
attempt at subornation . . . . .	960, 962
receipt of money . . . . .	961
sundry corrupt conduct . . . . .	963
preliminary inquiry to witness . . . . .	964
contradiction by other witnesses . . . . .	1005, 1022
<b>Counsel, comment of, on failure to produce evidence</b> . . . . .	285-291
cross-examination by more than one . . . . .	783
statements by, as admissions . . . . .	1063, 1066
notes of testimony taken by . . . . .	1669
reading scientific books to jury . . . . .	1700
stating facts in argument . . . . .	1806
improper statements by, in argument . . . . .	1806, 1807
in offering evidence or questioning witness . . . . .	1808
using emotional language to excite prejudices of jury . . . . .	1807
illustrating argument by referring to literature . . . . .	1807
taking the stand as witness . . . . .	1911
witness' right to have . . . . .	2196, 2210
claiming privilege for witness . . . . .	2270
authority to make judicial admissions . . . . .	2594
see also ATTORNEY AND CLIENT; ATTORNEY.	
<b>Counter-claim, agreement of, shown by parol</b> . . . . .	2436
<b>Counterfeiting, possession of materials, as evidence of</b> . . . . .	153, 238
other crimes, as evidence of intent . . . . .	309

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Counterfeiting</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
forms of offence connected with . . . . .	309
bank-officer as preferred witness to counterfeit bank-notes . . . . .	1339
<b>Counterpart</b> , as equivalent to original . . . . .	1233
<b>County-board</b> , former testimony given before . . . . .	1373
rules of evidence in hearings by . . . . .	4a
certified copy of records of . . . . .	1680
certificate by . . . . .	1672, 1674
<b>County ordinance</b> , boundary, etc., judicial notice of . . . . .	2575
<b>Course of business</b> , as evidence of an act done . . . . .	92
<b>Court</b> , record of; see JUDICIAL RECORD.	
adjournment of, as affecting publicity . . . . .	1835
exclusion of witnesses from . . . . .	1837
seal of, presumed genuine . . . . .	2164
officers and rules of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2578
see also VIEW; TRIAL; JUDGE.	
<b>Court of Customs Appeals</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4b, 4c
<b>Court of Inquiry</b> , privilege for proceedings before . . . . .	2378
<b>Court Martial</b> , rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4b, 4d
privilege for proceedings before . . . . .	2378
<b>Coverture</b> , presumption of coercion during . . . . .	2514
as evidence of prior or subsequent condition . . . . .	382
see also MARRIAGE.	
<b>Credibility</b> of a witness; see IMPEACHMENT; WEIGHT; WITNESS, IV, <i>Restoring Credit</i> .	
<b>Credit</b> , knowledge of falsity of representations as to, evidenced by repute . . . . .	256
of witness affected by his demeanor . . . . .	946
restoring credit of accomplice . . . . .	1128
of biased witness . . . . .	1128
of impeached witness . . . . .	1106, 1116, 1117, 1131
utterances showing to whom, was given . . . . .	1777
<b>Creditor</b> , of partnership, repute as evidence of knowledge of . . . . .	255
of an insolvent; transfers as evidence of intent to defraud . . . . .	333
debtor's admissions used against . . . . .	1081, 1082, 1086
indorsement of payment by, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
utterances showing to whom credit was given . . . . .	1777
possessor's utterances, used against . . . . .	1779
presumptions applicable to sale in fraud of . . . . .	2504
presumption of intent to defraud, in transfer to wife . . . . .	2526
<b>Creek Indians</b> ; see INDIANS.	
<b>Crime</b> , by a third person, as exonerating an accused . . . . .	68, 139-142, 1726
evidence admissible, though it involves . . . . .	215
threats to commit a . . . . .	105
other crimes, as evidence of intent, knowledge, or design . . . . .	300-367
constitutionality of statute defining . . . . .	1354
privilege not to disclose; see SELF-CRIMINATION.	
confession of, by a third person . . . . .	1476
by foreign law not privileged . . . . .	2258
request to commit, not privileged . . . . .	2385
presumption of capacity to commit . . . . .	2514
marriage disqualifying spouse as witness; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
see also CONVICTION OF CRIME; CRIMINAL TRIAL; INTENT; DEFENDANT.	
<b>Criminal Conversation</b> , character of plaintiff as mitigating damages . . . . .	75, 76
conduct of plaintiff as mitigating damages . . . . .	210
character of both husband and wife in issue in . . . . .	211
conduct of defendant at other times, to show motive . . . . .	398
expressions of husband or wife showing feelings . . . . .	1730
reputation evidence of marriage insufficient to prove . . . . .	1604
eye-witness of marriage required . . . . .	2085
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness . . . . .	2088
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239, 2338
<b>Criminal Intent</b> ; see INTENT.	
<b>Criminal Trial</b> , rules of evidence in, the same as in civil trial . . . . .	4
in Federal courts, rules applicable in . . . . .	6
injured person's admissions in . . . . .	1076



## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Criminal Trial</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
exhibition of weapons or wounds to jury . . . . .	1157, 1158
history of rule for original documents in . . . . .	1177
notice to produce original in . . . . .	1205
right of confrontation in . . . . .	1397
list of witnesses to the accused in . . . . .	1850
of grand jury witnesses . . . . .	1852
known to prosecuting attorney . . . . .	1853
of all prospective witnesses . . . . .	1854
unlisted witnesses excluded by statute . . . . .	1855
inspection of prosecution's testimony, etc., before trial . . . . .	1855a, 1859g, 1863
eye-witnesses of crime required . . . . .	2078
eye-witness to marriage in . . . . .	2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness . . . . .	2088
proof of 'corpus delicti' . . . . .	2070, 2081
tender of witness' expenses in . . . . .	2201
prosecution required to produce documents or chattels in . . . . .	2224
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
patient's privilege in . . . . .	2385
proof beyond a reasonable doubt in . . . . .	2497
inference from failure to produce evidence in . . . . .	2273
burden of proof in general . . . . .	2511-2514

see also DEFENDANT; CHARACTER; CRIME.

### Cross-examination

- I. *Right to a Cross-examination*
- II. *Mode of Interrogation*
- III. *Order of Topics and Witnesses (Cross and Direct)*
- IV. *Methods of Using for Impeachment*
- V. *Sundries*

I. <i>Right to a Cross-examination</i>	
theory and art of . . . . .	1362, 1365, 1367, 1368
adding to cross-examiner's own case . . . . .	1368
bringing out undesirable facts on . . . . .	1368
opportunity for, equivalent to actual . . . . .	1371
tribunal not employing, bars admissibility elsewhere . . . . .	1373
constitutional guarantee of . . . . .	1397
issues and parties affecting opportunity of . . . . .	1386-1389
exclusion of testimony or deposition not subjected to cross-examination;	
see HEARSAY RULE, I.	
admission of testimony or deposition of absent person already cross-examined;	
see HEARSAY RULE, I.	
exceptional admission of hearsay statements made out of court;	
see HEARSAY RULE, II, III.	
testimony excluded for insufficiency of . . . . .	1390-1393
adequacy of, in foreign language . . . . .	1393
failure of, through witness' death or illness . . . . .	1390
through refusal to answer . . . . .	1391
refusal to answer on, as to privileged subject . . . . .	1391
hampered by organic defect of senses . . . . .	1393
testimony excluded for non-responsive answers . . . . .	1392
right to cross-examine to admissibility of a confession . . . . .	861
showing document to opponent before . . . . .	1861
what witnesses may be subjected to	
witness sworn by mistake . . . . .	1893
called but not sworn . . . . .	1893
sworn but not questioned . . . . .	1893
producing or proving a document . . . . .	1893, 1894
one's own witness . . . . .	914
party opponent treated as if on . . . . .	1384
'voir dire' . . . . .	1384
of a deposition, excluded	
if direct answers are excluded . . . . .	1893
or not offered . . . . .	1893
of non-taker using the whole . . . . .	1893

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Cross-examination (continued)

	Section
II. <i>Mode of Interrogation</i>	
theory and art of . . . . .	1367, 1368
putting hypothetical questions on . . . . .	684
specifying grounds of recollection on . . . . .	730
use of a memorandum of recollection on . . . . .	753, 762, 764
use of a deposition to refresh recollection . . . . .	761
leading questions on . . . . .	773, 915
misleading questions on . . . . .	780
derogatory and untrue insinuations in questions on . . . . .	780
intimidation by cross-examiner . . . . .	781, 786
intimidating and annoying questions on . . . . .	781
repetition of questions on . . . . .	782
multiple cross-examiners . . . . .	783
length of . . . . .	783
non-responsive answers on . . . . .	785
improper offer of evidence on . . . . .	1808
see also QUESTION TO A WITNESS.	
III. <i>Order of Topics and Witnesses (Cross and Direct)</i>	
order and time of examination . . . . .	1867
postponement and waiver . . . . .	1884
offering documents . . . . .	1884
putting in one's own case . . . . .	1885-1891
who may be cross-examined; see <i>supra</i> , I.	
stating the purpose of a question on . . . . .	1871
re-cross-examination . . . . .	1897
recall for re-cross-examination . . . . .	1899
see also EXAMINATION.	
IV. <i>Methods of Using for Impeachment</i>	
to impeach rape-complainant as to chastity . . . . .	200
to impeach a witness	
general theory . . . . .	878
one's own witness . . . . .	914
broadness of scope . . . . .	944
bias or quarrels . . . . .	951
conviction of crime . . . . .	980, 1270
may ask about previous convictions, but not prosecutions . . . . .	987
other misconduct . . . . .	981-983
rumors of misconduct . . . . .	988
testing a witness' grounds of knowledge . . . . .	994
testing a witness' recollection . . . . .	995
manner of questioning . . . . .	780, 781
leading questions . . . . .	773
repetition of questions . . . . .	782
collateral facts . . . . .	1006
self-contradictions . . . . .	1023
by preliminary warning . . . . .	1025
expert witness, in general . . . . .	991
to value . . . . .	463
to handwriting . . . . .	2015
to scientific books . . . . .	1700
restoring credit after . . . . .	1106, 1117, 1131
see also WITNESS IV, <i>Restoring Credit</i> .	
privilege not to criminate . . . . .	2268, 2277
to impeach a party as witness	
accused . . . . .	889, 2277
civil opponent . . . . .	916
by account-books . . . . .	1554
V. <i>Sundries</i>	
distinction between, and extrinsic testimony . . . . .	878
to contents of a document . . . . .	1255, 1259
prior deposition . . . . .	1262
showing document to opponent before . . . . .	1861
witness on . . . . .	1185



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Cross-examination</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
to testimony before a committing magistrate . . . . .	1375
preliminary warning to guard against unfair surprise . . . . .	1025
[Examine analyses of "By Cross-examination," Vol. III, p. 26; "Testimonial Narration or Communication," Vol. II, p. 46.]	
<b>Crossing of Railway</b> ; see HIGHWAY; NEGLIGENCE; REPAIRS.	
<b>Cross-reading</b> of a document copied . . . . .	1279
<b>Cruelty</b> , other persons' conduct, as a standard of . . . . .	461
other like methods to show, to animals . . . . .	461
by husband to wife; see HOMICIDE.	
<b>Cumulative</b> witnesses excluded . . . . .	1907
<b>Curative</b> admissibility . . . . .	15
<b>Custodian's</b> certified copy; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
<b>Custody of Children</b> ; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP; DESERTION.	
<b>Custom</b> , as evidence of doing an act . . . . .	92
other instances, as evidence of tenor . . . . .	376, 379
evidence of land rights founded on . . . . .	380
in other factories, etc., as evidence of safety, etc. . . . .	461
witness' experience in . . . . .	565
concerning land-rights; see REPUTATION.	
proved by opinion . . . . .	1954
by one witness . . . . .	2053
of a trade or locality to vary terms of written contract . . . . .	2440
judicially noticed . . . . .	2580
see also HABIT; USAGE.	
<b>Customers</b> , names of, as privileged . . . . .	2212
<b>Customs Dues</b> ; see IMPORTATION.	

## D

<b>Dactyloscopy</b> , as affording evidence of identity . . . . .	149, 414
<b>Damages</b> , character of plaintiff in mitigation of . . . . .	75-80
conduct, to prove character in mitigation of . . . . .	209-213
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1942, 1944
impeaching a verdict determined by average . . . . .	2354
amount of, as evidenced by other transactions; see CONTRACTS; VALUE.	
other defamatory utterances, to increase; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Danger</b> , of machine or place, evidence of owner's knowledge of . . . . .	252
construction of other machines, buildings, etc., as evidence of . . . . .	437, 451, 461
other instances of injury, etc., as evidence of . . . . .	451-461
opinion as to . . . . .	1949
risk of fire; see INSURANCE.	
<b>Date</b> ; see TIME.	
<b>Daughter</b> ; see SEDUCTION.	
<b>Daybook</b> of regular entries . . . . .	1548, 1558
<b>Deadly Weapon</b> , knowledge principle as applied to use of . . . . .	363
malice presumed from use of . . . . .	2511a
<b>Deaf-mute</b> may be a witness . . . . .	498
interpreter's qualifications . . . . .	571
necessity of interpreter . . . . .	811, 1393
impeachment of . . . . .	934
<b>Death</b> , as evidenced by failure of search . . . . .	158, 667
by lack of news . . . . .	158
insurance contract requiring eye-witness of . . . . .	7a
presumption of, insurance contract waiving . . . . .	7a
explaining away lack of news of . . . . .	158
of opponent, not necessary for using admissions . . . . .	1049
of attesting witness . . . . .	1311
of declarant of facts against interest . . . . .	1456
of pedigree-declarant . . . . .	1481
of maker of regular entries . . . . .	1521, 1561
statement of time or place of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
reputation of . . . . .	1605
register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Death</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
as excusing lack of cross-examination . . . . .	1390
as allowing use of deposition . . . . .	1403
provable by coroner's inquisition . . . . .	1671
in military service, certificate of . . . . .	1675a
certificate of, privilege for . . . . .	2385a
as affecting marital privilege . . . . .	2237, 2341
patient's privilege . . . . .	2387, 2391
client's privilege . . . . .	2323, 2329
presumed, to validate a later marriage . . . . .	2506
negligence presumed from . . . . .	2510
absence raises presumption of . . . . .	2531
<b>De bene esse</b> ; see DEPOSITION.	
<b>Debt</b> , prior indebtedness, as evidence . . . . .	382
pecuniary relations to show bias of a witness . . . . .	949
as evidence of motive . . . . .	392
see also PAYMENT; CONTRACT; CREDITOR.	
<b>Debtor</b> , indorsement of payment by, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
admissions of, used against creditor . . . . .	1081, 1082, 1086
declarations of, to show motive in conveyance . . . . .	1083, 1086
utterances in possession, used against creditor . . . . .	1779
see also CREDITOR.	
<b>Deceased Declarant</b> ; see DYING DECLARATION.	
<b>Deceased by Homicide</b> , character of, to evidence self-defence . . . . .	63, 246
threats of, to evidence self-defence . . . . .	110, 247
survival of, to negative 'corpus delicti' . . . . .	138
suicidal plans of, to evidence an accused's innocence . . . . .	143, 1725, 1726
acts of violence by, to evidence self-defence . . . . .	198, 248
details of prior quarrels to show hostility by . . . . .	396
<b>Deceased Person, in general</b> , testimony of, based on personal observation . . . . .	670
disqualification of surviving opponent as witness . . . . .	578, 1576, 2065
of wife of . . . . .	610
proof of contract with . . . . .	2065
admissions of . . . . .	1081
oral, not sufficient to establish claim against estate of . . . . .	2054
character of, to prove negligence . . . . .	65
use of account-books for or against . . . . .	1554
hearsay statements of, admissible	
dying declaration; see DYING DECLARATION.	
facts against interest; see AGAINST INTEREST.	
pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
regular entries; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
private boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.	
ancient deed-recitals; see RECITALS.	
deceased persons in general . . . . .	1576
statutory exception for all statements of . . . . .	578, 1576
see also DEATH; SURVIVOR.	
<b>Deceased Witness</b> , former testimony of; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
<b>Decision</b> ; see JUDICIAL DECISION.	
<b>Declarant</b> , of facts against interest, absence of . . . . .	1456
absence of pedigree . . . . .	1481
disqualification of, under exceptions to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
<b>Declaration</b> , of intent, used to interpret a document . . . . .	2471
after possession ended, as admission . . . . .	1778
during possession, as verbal act . . . . .	1777, 1778
of deceased person; see DECEASED PERSON.	
chauffeur's, of own responsibility for collision . . . . .	1041
see also HEARSAY RULE, EXCEPTIONS TO; ADMISSIONS.	
<b>Dedication</b> , words accompanying, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777
opinion evidence of intent of . . . . .	1967
<b>Dedimus Potestatem</b> ; see DEPOSITION.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Deed, execution or delivery of, as evidenced by possession of it</b> . . . . .	157
mode of proving forgery of; see FORGERY.	
impeaching one's own . . . . .	529
possession under, as evidence of boundaries . . . . .	378
original must be produced; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
recitals in, as admissible; see RECITALS.	
'testimonio' proved by copy . . . . .	1225, 1651
land-grant of government . . . . .	1225, 1239
certificate of acknowledgment of, whether conclusive . . . . .	1347, 1352
registration of, whether conclusive . . . . .	1352
contents of lost deed, recited in another . . . . .	1573
discrimination between uses of recitals in . . . . .	1574
as showing reputation of boundary . . . . .	1592
admission of execution of recorded . . . . .	1653
execution of, proved by certificate of acknowledgment . . . . .	1676
abstract of title, as hearsay . . . . .	1705
words accompanying gift by . . . . .	1777
location of description in, by opinion . . . . .	1956
substance of contents of lost . . . . .	1957, 2105
existence of seal on recorded . . . . .	2105
whole of record of administrator's or sheriff's or tax-collector's deed required . . . . .	2110
dispensing with proofs of prior . . . . .	2132
'testimonio' in records, presumed genuine . . . . .	2159
absolute in form, degree of proof necessary to show to be a mortgage . . . . .	2498
see also COMMON SOURCE OF TITLE.	
thirty years old, presumed genuine . . . . .	2137-2146
proof of agent's authority to execute ancient . . . . .	2144
filed in official records, presumed genuine . . . . .	2159
privilege for title-deeds . . . . .	2211
recital of consideration in, varied by parol . . . . .	2433
condition precedent, shown by parol . . . . .	2408, 2420
distinction between, and will . . . . .	2408
recording not necessarily final act of . . . . .	2408
absolute in form, shown by parol to be security only . . . . .	2437
collateral agreements to a . . . . .	2442
see also COLLATERAL AGREEMENTS.	
interpretation of . . . . .	2458
erroneous description in a . . . . .	2477 ✓
burden of proof of capacity of grantor . . . . .	2500
presumption from confidential relations . . . . .	2503
presumption of delivery, date, seal, etc. . . . .	2520
of lost grant . . . . .	2522
of alteration before execution . . . . .	2525
of identity of grantor or grantee . . . . .	2529
reservation in, burden of proof . . . . .	2537
see also DOCUMENT; EXECUTION; HANDWRITING; RECORDED CONVEYANCE;	
ABSTRACT OF TITLE-DEED; COLOR OF TITLE.	
<b>De facto officer, document made by</b> . . . . .	1633
celebrant of marriage . . . . .	2505
appointment presumed . . . . .	2535
<b>Defamation, character of plaintiff, to evidence innocence</b> . . . . .	66
to mitigate damages . . . . .	70-74
mitigation of damages in, as affected by the pleadings . . . . .	71, 73
general character or particular traits in mitigation of damages in . . . . .	72, 73
reputation founded on rumor as mitigating damages in . . . . .	74
conduct of plaintiff as affecting defendant's ground for suspecting in . . . . .	74
defendant not originator of charges in . . . . .	74
good character as affecting damages in . . . . .	76
acts of plaintiff, to justify or to mitigate damages . . . . .	207, 209
unfair surprise in justifying acts in . . . . .	207
other acts, to evidence intent . . . . .	367
other utterances, to evidence malice . . . . .	403-406

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Defamation</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
other persons' libels, as a standard of criticism . . . . .	465
discovery of witnesses' names in . . . . .	1856 <i>b</i>
meaning of, by opinion evidence . . . . .	1971
Alabama rule requiring two witnesses for plea of truth in . . . . .	2054
slander of chastity, corroboration required in action for . . . . .	2066
whole of an utterance to be proved . . . . .	2097, 2115, 2119
proof of charge beyond reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
slander of chastity, inspection of plaintiff's person in . . . . .	2220
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
testimony before grand jury, not privileged . . . . .	2363
official reports, privileged . . . . .	2375
proving publication of the original document containing . . . . .	1232-1257
<b>Default</b> , in another suit, as an admission . . . . .	1066
as penalty for failure to give discovery . . . . .	1859 <i>d</i>
<b>Defect</b> , presumption of, from accident . . . . .	2059
see also NEGLIGENCE.	
special rule in England and Canada for discovery in . . . . .	1856 <i>b</i>
<b>Defendant</b> , character of accused, as evidence . . . . .	55-57
time of character . . . . .	60
kind of character . . . . .	57-59
accused as witness . . . . .	61, 196
character of a civil defendant . . . . .	64-67
threats of accused, to prove crime . . . . .	105
mode of evidencing character by conduct . . . . .	
of accused . . . . .	192-196
of civil party negligent . . . . .	199
of deceased in homicide . . . . .	198
of character in issue . . . . .	202
of character to mitigate damages . . . . .	209
mode of evidencing skill or strength . . . . .	220, 221
sanity . . . . .	228, 231
mental capacity . . . . .	228
knowledge or belief; see KNOWLEDGE.	
consciousness of guilt; see CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.	
history of accused's disqualification as witness . . . . .	575
statutory abolition of the same . . . . .	579
co-defendants as witnesses . . . . .	580
wife of, as witness . . . . .	609
testifying to his own intent . . . . .	581, 1965
confessions of; see CONFESSIONS.	
admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
impeachable like other witnesses, when called for himself . . . . .	890
when called for the opponent . . . . .	916
may impeach a co-defendant . . . . .	916
admissions of a co-defendant . . . . .	1076
incompetency of evidence cannot be waived by infant . . . . .	1063
statements when found with stolen goods . . . . .	1777, 1781
silence of, as an admission . . . . .	292, 1652, 1071, 1072
prejudice to, by exhibition of wounds, etc. . . . .	1157
consistent statements of, in vindication . . . . .	1144
magistrate's report of examination of . . . . .	1326, 1349
bystander's testimony on report of examination of illiterate . . . . .	1278
expressions of intent or motive . . . . .	1732
expressions negating intent . . . . .	1732
right to be present at a view . . . . .	1803
right to inspect documents or chattels of prosecution . . . . .	1863, 2224
opinion testimony to capacity of . . . . .	1958
confession of accused, sufficiency of . . . . .	2070
examination of accused before magistrate; see DEPOSITION; FORMER TESTIMONY.	
privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2276
see also CO-INDICTEE.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Definition, of evidence</b> . . . . .	1
of Preferential rules . . . . .	1172
of Analytic rules . . . . .	1172
of Prophylactic rules . . . . .	1172
of Simplificative rules . . . . .	1172
of Quantitative, or Synthetic, rules . . . . .	1172
<b>Degree of probative value required for relevancy</b> . . . . .	38
of evidence; see <b>BEST EVIDENCE; COPY.</b>	
<b>Delay, in complaining or suing, as evidence</b> . . . . .	284
<b>Delivery by mail, express, or telegraph</b> . . . . .	95
of a deed, as evidenced by possession of it . . . . .	157
words accompanying, of a chattel . . . . .	1777
of a document, proved without production . . . . .	1248
of negotiable instrument in escrow . . . . .	2409, 2420
of a deed, shown conditional by parol evidence . . . . .	2408, 2420
grantee's possession as evidence of . . . . .	2520
date of, presumed from date of document . . . . .	2520
registration as evidence of . . . . .	2520
see also <b>PAROL EVIDENCE RULE; DEED.</b>	
<b>Delusion, as affecting competency</b> . . . . .	32
see also <b>INSANITY.</b>	
<b>Demand for a document; see NOTICE TO PRODUCE.</b>	
<b>Demeanor, of accused, as evidence of guilt</b> . . . . .	273, 274
under the right of confrontation . . . . .	1395, 1399
of a witness, as affecting credibility . . . . .	946
<b>Demurrer to evidence</b> . . . . .	2495, 2589
to claim barred by statute of limitations . . . . .	2538
<b>Dentist, privileged communication to</b> . . . . .	2382
<b>Departmental Regulations, judicially noticed</b> . . . . .	2572
<b>Deponent; see DEPOSITION.</b>	
<b>Deposition</b>	
I. <i>Right of Cross-examination of Deponent</i>	
II. <i>Right of Confrontation of Deponent</i>	
III. <i>Sundries</i>	
(a) <i>taking</i>	
(b) <i>transcribing</i>	
(c) <i>use by proponent</i>	
(d) <i>use by opponent</i>	
(e) <i>miscellaneous</i>	
I. <i>Right of Cross-examination of Deponent</i>	
personal attendance must be shown impracticable . . . . .	1376
notice required . . . . .	1377-1383
plural depositions . . . . .	1379
'in perpetuam memoriam,' is notice required . . . . .	1378, 1383
interval of time after notice . . . . .	1378
attendance cures defective notice . . . . .	1378
'in perpetuam,' recording may be necessary . . . . .	1383
issues and parties the same . . . . .	1386-1388
either party may use . . . . .	1389
opponent using suppressed deposition . . . . .	1389
non-responsive answers . . . . .	1392
sweeping interrogatories . . . . .	1392
II. <i>Right of Confrontation of Deponent</i>	
constitutional guarantee . . . . .	1397
witness-rule of number, satisfied by . . . . .	1305
spurious distinctions between 'de bene esse' and 'in perpetuam memoriam' . . . . .	1401
between civil and criminal cases . . . . .	1401
excuses for non-attendance (death, illness, non-residence, imprisonment, etc.) . . . . .	1402-1413
proof of the excuse . . . . .	1414
witness present in court . . . . .	1415
not usable if witness available . . . . .	1415
except to impeach . . . . .	1416
opponent's deposition . . . . .	1416

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Deposition</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
deposition used to impeach deponent . . . . .	1416
malicious prosecution . . . . .	1416
chancery depositions . . . . .	1417
probate and bastardy examinations . . . . .	1417
chancery and 'dedimus potestatem' . . . . .	1381, 1417
'perpetuam memoriam' . . . . .	1378, 1412, 1417
statutes affecting, 'in perpetuam memoriam' . . . . .	1412
'de bene esse' . . . . .	1411
<b>III. Sundries</b>	
(a) <i>taking</i>	
mode of taking . . . . .	1376, 1380, 1401
objection to, time of making . . . . .	18, 486
must be taken by one authorized . . . . .	1376
mode of interrogation in; see QUESTION TO A WITNESS.	
taken in writing under Federal Equity Rules . . . . .	799
prepared beforehand to suggest answers . . . . .	787
officer taking, not to be party's agent or kinsman . . . . .	803
taking an attesting witness' deposition . . . . .	1312
power of officer to compel answer . . . . .	2195
persons privileged to testify by . . . . .	2205, 2206
attendance from a distance not required . . . . .	2207
(b) <i>transcribing</i>	
transcription of answers to be literal and immediate . . . . .	804
reading over and signing . . . . .	805
(c) <i>use by proponent</i>	
used to refresh the recollection of one's own witness . . . . .	904
used to aid recollection . . . . .	761, 764
'prima facie' effect of, by attesting witness . . . . .	2500
(d) <i>use by opponent</i>	
used by opponent, as preventing impeachment . . . . .	912, 913
discrediting its mode of preparation . . . . .	996
impeachment by self-contradiction . . . . .	1031
in another trial, used or referred to . . . . .	1075
cross-examination on a prior deposition . . . . .	1262
(e) <i>miscellaneous</i>	
in general . . . . .	802
magistrate's report of examination preferred . . . . .	1326, 1349
taken for use in trial in another state . . . . .	2195
perjury in, inadmissible . . . . .	1349
written deposition required to be used . . . . .	1331
of ambassador . . . . .	1384, 1407
statement in, to evidence pedigree . . . . .	1495
certificate of taking of . . . . .	1676b
certified copy of; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
liability of deponent for perjury . . . . .	1832
cross-answers excluded	
when direct answers are . . . . .	1893
when taker does not offer . . . . .	1893
non-taker using may not impeach . . . . .	1893
putting in the whole . . . . .	2103, 2111, 2115
documents referred to in . . . . .	2104
is no part of record . . . . .	2111
annexing copy of a document to . . . . .	1185
producing original . . . . .	1215
under Federal statute; conflicting laws . . . . .	6
see also DISCOVERY; EXAMINATION.	
[Examine analyses of "By Cross-examination," Vol. III, p. 26; and	
"By Confrontation," Vol. III, p. 93.]	
<b>Deputy Officer</b> , document made by . . . . .	1633
<b>Description</b> , in deed, interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
location of, in deeds, maps, etc. . . . .	1956



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Desertion</b> , testimony of wife on charge of . . . . .	617
eye-witness proof of marriage on charge of . . . . .	2085
marital privilege on charge of . . . . .	2239
<b>Design</b> , as evidence of an act done . . . . .	102-113
definition of . . . . .	300
distinguished from intent or motive . . . . .	103, 237
distinguished from intention . . . . .	103
relevancy of, distinguished from hearsay expressions of . . . . .	103
conduct, preparation, etc., as evidence of . . . . .	237-240
other crimes, as evidence of . . . . .	300-367
statements of . . . . .	1725, 1735
<b>Destruction</b> of evidence, as indicating guilt . . . . .	278
of document, as evidence of contents . . . . .	291
as excusing production . . . . .	1193
of other property, as evidence of a nuisance . . . . .	451
<b>Detective</b> , impeached by his interest or bias . . . . .	949, 969
testimony of, to be corroborated . . . . .	2066
confession made to; see <b>CONFESSION</b> .	
<b>De ventre inspiciendo</b> , writ of . . . . .	2220
<b>Devisee</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1081
see also <b>WILL</b> ; <b>EXECUTOR</b> .	
<b>Diagram</b> , as a mode of testifying . . . . .	790
verification of . . . . .	793
<b>Dictagraph</b> as a basis for testimony to a conversation overheard . . . . .	669
<b>Dictionaries</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1699
judicially noticed . . . . .	2582
<b>Difficulty</b> , of work, etc., as shown by instances . . . . .	460
<b>Diligence</b> in search for last document . . . . .	1194
in search for attesting witness . . . . .	1313
opinion evidence of . . . . .	1951
see also <b>SEARCH</b> .	
<b>Diplomatic Officer</b> ; see <b>AMBASSADOR</b> ; <b>CONSUL</b> .	
<b>Direct Evidence</b> , defined . . . . .	25
<b>Direct Examination</b> , specifying grounds of knowledge on . . . . .	655
specifying grounds of recollection on . . . . .	730
leading questions on; see <b>QUESTION TO WITNESS</b> .	
contradicting answers made on . . . . .	1007
struck out, if cross-examination is not had . . . . .	1390
order of topics on . . . . .	1883
putting in documents on . . . . .	1883
party opponent on, treated as if on cross-examination . . . . .	1884
irrelevant matters, conditionally received on . . . . .	1871
what constitutes calling a witness on . . . . .	1892
cross-examination to facts asked for on . . . . .	1885-1891
see also <b>EXAMINATION</b> ; <b>CROSS-EXAMINATION</b> .	
<b>Directing</b> a verdict . . . . .	2495
<b>Disbarment</b> , proof beyond reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
former testimony in . . . . .	1398
see also <b>BAR</b> .	
<b>Discharge</b> of contract, shown by parol . . . . .	2441, 2455
charge and discharge entries . . . . .	2117
<b>Discovery</b> , general principle as to . . . . .	
common law . . . . .	1845, 1858
unfair surprise as grounds for . . . . .	1845
chancery . . . . .	1846
policy of the rule . . . . .	1847
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	
list of witnesses in criminal cases . . . . .	1874, 1850-1855
discovery in chancery . . . . .	1856, 1857
from officer of corporation . . . . .	1856
in Federal courts under State statute . . . . .	1856

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Discovery, exceptions to the rule</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
in Federal courts under Federal statutes . . . . .	1381, 1856
statutory interrogatories to opponent . . . . .	1847, 1856
discrediting opponent's character by his own interrogatories . . . . .	1856
names of witnesses in civil cases . . . . .	1856c
documents inspected before trial . . . . .	1847, 1857-1860
corporate and manorial records . . . . .	1858
documents subject to common interest or trusteeship . . . . .	1858
stockholder's remedy mandamus or discovery . . . . .	1858
of insurance documents . . . . .	1858
which party may make copy of document . . . . .	1859
against third person not a party . . . . .	1856d, 1859f
of sundry documents . . . . .	1859
failure by affidavit to deny execution of document . . . . .	1860
shown on cross-examination . . . . .	1861
inspection makes evidence . . . . .	1861
exclusion for failure to allow inspection . . . . .	1210
premises, chattels, and body, inspected before trial . . . . .	1847, 1862, 1863
from opponent in chancery at the trial . . . . .	2218
under statutes . . . . .	2218
under client's privilege . . . . .	2318
see also CHANCERY; DEPOSITIONS.	
[Examine analysis of "Preliminary Notice, or Discovery, to the Op- ponent," Vol. III, p. 920.]	
<b>Discretion</b> of the trial court; see JUDICIAL DISCRETION.	
<b>Disease</b> , specific tendency of, shown by symptoms . . . . .	457
subsequent, to evidence prior . . . . .	168
privilege for report of contagious . . . . .	2377
venereal, inspection of person having . . . . .	2220
see also ILLNESS.	
<b>Disgracing Answers</b> , privilege against . . . . .	984-987, 2216, 2255
<b>Disinheritance</b> , as evidence of testator's insanity . . . . .	229
parol evidence of intent . . . . .	2475
<b>Disorderly house</b> ; see HOUSE OF ILL-FAME.	
<b>Disqualification</b> , by reason of interest . . . . .	576
mode of ascertaining . . . . .	583
time of interest to cause . . . . .	583
burden of proving . . . . .	584
mode of proving . . . . .	585
time of objecting to . . . . .	586
judge determines . . . . .	587
of party charged in same indictment . . . . .	580
of survivor against deceased . . . . .	578
of declarant, under exceptions to Hearsay rule . . . . .	1751
of wife by marriage subsequent to crime . . . . .	605
by conviction of crime; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
<b>Distance</b> , of a weapon, as shown by effects . . . . .	457
of a person, sound, sight, etc., as shown by instances . . . . .	460
as excusing absence of an attesting witness . . . . .	1312
of a deponent . . . . .	1407
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1977
of witness' residence exempting from attendance . . . . .	2207
judicially noticed . . . . .	2581
<b>District Attorney</b> ; see PROSECUTION; CRIMINAL TRIALS; ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
<b>Divorce</b> , as qualifying wife as witness . . . . .	610
evidence of adultery of co-respondent in . . . . .	68
connivance with co-respondent in . . . . .	391
husband's or wife's statements showing sentiments . . . . .	1730
as affecting marital privilege . . . . .	2237, 2341
one witness to a charge . . . . .	2046
corroboration required of detective's and prostitute's testimony in . . . . .	2066
confession of respondent . . . . .	2067
eye-witness of marriage . . . . .	2085, 2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to eye-witness . . . . .	2088



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Divorce</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
inspection of party, on charge of impotency . . . . .	2220
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
presumed, to validate a later marriage . . . . .	2506
<b>Docket</b> , original's production required . . . . .	1215, 1217
certified copy allowed . . . . .	1681
conclusive . . . . .	2450
is not a record . . . . .	2450
<b>Document</b> , misuse of motion to "strike out" . . . . .	18
possession of, as evidence of payment . . . . .	156
execution or delivery, as evidenced by possession of it . . . . .	157
possession of, as evidence of knowledge . . . . .	260
failure to object to admission of, admits genuineness and authority to execute . . . . .	18
failure to produce, as evidence of contents . . . . .	291
as inference of non-existence . . . . .	291
notice to produce; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
sending original out of jurisdiction for deposition-witness to execution . . . . .	1185
hearsay testimony to show search and loss of . . . . .	1196
concealment of . . . . .	291, 1198, 1199
destruction of, as evidence of contents . . . . .	291
alteration of, as avoiding . . . . .	1198
marks on, as evidence of identity . . . . .	417
impeaching one's own . . . . .	529
requirement of two impeaching witnesses in Pennsylvania . . . . .	2054
execution of, witness' personal observation of . . . . .	666
proof of genuineness by handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
of predecessor, as qualifying a witness to handwriting . . . . .	704
third person, as party's admission . . . . .	1073
used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
showing to opponent before cross-examination . . . . .	1861
to witness on cross-examination . . . . .	1185
right to require proponent to show, to opponent . . . . .	1861
original must be produced; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
dying declaration reduced to writing . . . . .	1445, 1450
kinds of copy allowed or preferred; see COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
execution proved by attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
by other methods; see EXECUTION.	
putting in on direct or cross-examination . . . . .	1883, 1884
impeachment of witness who proves . . . . .	1893
discovery of, before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
taken to jury-room . . . . .	1802, 1913
expert testimony to	
alterations . . . . .	2027
date . . . . .	2027
decipherment . . . . .	2025
erasures . . . . .	2027
forges . . . . .	2026
imitations . . . . .	2026
ink . . . . .	2024
paper . . . . .	2024
spelling . . . . .	2024
putting in the whole	
sundry instances . . . . .	2102, 2116
depositions . . . . .	2103, 2111, 2115
separate documents . . . . .	2104, 2120
lost deeds, etc.; abstracts . . . . .	2105
lost wills . . . . .	2106
public records . . . . .	2107
judicial records . . . . .	2110
bill and answer in chancery . . . . .	2111
account-books . . . . .	2118
chancery answer, responsive parts . . . . .	2121
presumed genuine in official files . . . . .	2158
answers to interrogatories . . . . .	2124
document inspected by opponent . . . . .	2125

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Document (continued)

	Section
authentication of . . . . .	2129
authenticated by circumstantial evidence . . . . .	2131
authentication unnecessary . . . . .	2132
put in by cross-examiner . . . . .	2125
discrimination between principles affecting execution of . . . . .	2133
signature to, not always necessary to charge execution . . . . .	2134
self-criminating, illegally seized . . . . .	2183
obtained by illegal search . . . . .	2183
lacking revenue-stamp . . . . .	2185
privilege for title-deeds . . . . .	2211
documents held under a lien . . . . .	2211
trade secrets . . . . .	2212
production by opponent at trial . . . . .	2219
by witness . . . . .	2193, 2200
by one who has control of . . . . .	2200
by corporation . . . . .	2200
impounding after . . . . .	2200
under self-criminating privilege . . . . .	2264
inference from withholding . . . . .	2264
under client's privilege . . . . .	2307-2309, 2318
opponent not entitled to see, until admitted . . . . .	2200
ambiguity in . . . . .	2472
parol evidence rule binds parties only . . . . .	2446
burden of producing, under parol evidence rule . . . . .	2447
parol evidence to vary terms; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
delivery of, having a blank . . . . .	2410, 2419
possession of, as presuming payment . . . . .	2518
spoliation of, as creating a presumption . . . . .	2624
admission of execution of . . . . .	2132, 2596
presumption of alteration . . . . .	2525
consideration . . . . .	2520
date . . . . .	2520
delivery . . . . .	2520
execution . . . . .	2519
loss . . . . .	2522
signature . . . . .	2520
liability on alteration of . . . . .	2419
interpretation of . . . . .	
by expert testimony to technical words . . . . .	1955, 1956
for the court . . . . .	2556
by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
affidavit denying genuineness of . . . . .	2596
see also CONTRACT; DEED; EXECUTION OF DOCUMENT; JUDICIAL RECORD; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT; PUBLIC DOCUMENT; RECORDED CONVEYANCE; WILL.	
[Examine analyses of "Verbal Completeness," Vol. IV, p. 461; and "Parol Evidence Rule," Vol. V, pp. 234, 235.]	
Dog, character of, as evidence . . . . .	6Sa
recognition by . . . . .	177
conduct of, in tracing an accused . . . . .	177
as evidencing disposition . . . . .	201
see also ANIMAL; BLOODHOUND.	
Domain, inquisition of . . . . .	1670
Domicil, declarations of, by a voter . . . . .	1712
by other persons . . . . .	1727, 1784
presumed to continue . . . . .	2530
Doubt, proof beyond a reasonable . . . . .	2497
Dower, relinquishment of, rule requiring two witnesses to value . . . . .	2054
Dramatic expression by a witness . . . . .	789
modes of testifying . . . . .	1157
see also EXHIBITION.	
Drawee, parol agreement collateral to instrument . . . . .	2443
see also BILL OF EXCHANGE.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Drawing</b> , used to illustrate testimony . . . . .	790
<b>Drinking</b> ; see INTOXICATION; INTEMPERANCE; LIQUOR; LIQUOR-SELLING.	
<b>Driving</b> a vehicle; see VEHICLE; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Drug</b> , specific tendency of a . . . . .	457
see also POISON; PHARMACIST; OPIUM.	
former offences, to evidence dealing in . . . . .	368
reputation, to evidence dealing in . . . . .	1620
use of, as affecting witness' competency . . . . .	500
as affecting witness' credit . . . . .	934
official certificate of analysis of; see CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.	
<b>Druggist</b> ; see PHARMACIST.	
<b>Drunkennes</b> ; see INTOXICATION; INTEMPERANCE; LIQUOR; LIQUOR-SELLING.	
<b>Duces tecum</b> ; see SUBPENA.	
<b>Dumb</b> person; see DEAF-MUTE.	
<b>Duplicate</b> original document, production of . . . . .	1233
distinguished from copy . . . . .	1231
<b>Duress</b> making acts voidable . . . . .	2423
admissions under . . . . .	1050
see also CONFESSION.	
<b>Dying Declaration</b> , constitutionality of admitting . . . . .	1398
history and principle . . . . .	1430, 1431
restricted to certain criminal cases . . . . .	1432
of woman in abortion . . . . .	1432
death must be declarant's . . . . .	1433
subject of declaration . . . . .	1434-1435
necessity principle does not limit use of, to absence of other evidence . . . . .	1436
consciousness of speedy and certain death . . . . .	1438-1442
subsequent confirmation of incompetent . . . . .	1439
certainty of death, not possible or probable death . . . . .	1440
actual period of survival immaterial . . . . .	1441
theological belief . . . . .	1443
manifested revengeful feelings in . . . . .	1443
recollection, leading questions, etc. . . . .	1445
declarant must be competent as witness . . . . .	1445
may be communicated in any manner . . . . .	1445
impeachment . . . . .	1033, 1446
opinion rule . . . . .	1447
cut short by death or intruder . . . . .	1448
producing the whole . . . . .	1448, 2099
the original . . . . .	1449
written statement not preferred . . . . .	1332, 1450
written report of magistrate . . . . .	1450
reducing to writing . . . . .	1445, 1450
judge and jury . . . . .	1451
accused may use . . . . .	1452
[Examine analysis of "Dying Declarations," Vol. III, p. 160.]	

## E

<b>Ecclesiastical Courts</b> , rules of evidence in . . . . .	2032, 2045, 2067, 2250
<b>Effect</b> of a machine, place, weapon, experiment, etc., as evidencing the cause or origin . . . . .	437-461
<b>Ejectment</b> ; see DEED; TITLE; POSSESSION; COMMON SOURCE OF TITLE.	
<b>Election</b> , offences against, other acts evidencing intent . . . . .	367
certificate of, conclusive . . . . .	1351
books of, as evidence . . . . .	1640
results of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2577
see also VOTE; BALLOT.	
<b>Election Contests</b> , rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4a, 4c
notice of evidence of illegal votes in . . . . .	1848
<b>Electric Wires</b> ; see NEGLIGENCE; MACHINE; HIGHWAY.	
<b>Elevator</b> , former instances of injury or negligence . . . . .	252
defective; see NEGLIGENCE; OWNER; MACHINE.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Embezzlement</b> , possession of money, as evidence of . . . . .	154
other embezzlements, as evidence of intent . . . . .	329
motive for . . . . .	392
<b>Embracery</b> ; see BRIBERY.	
<b>Eminent Domain</b> , view by jury in . . . . .	118
<b>Employee</b> , character of, to evidence negligence . . . . .	65
character of, as affecting employer's liability . . . . .	80, 249
intemperance of, as constituting incompetence . . . . .	96, 203
acts of negligence, to evidence character . . . . .	199, 208
to evidence employer's knowledge . . . . .	250
unfair surprise in showing negligent acts of . . . . .	208
on vehicles, bridges, etc., standard of conduct of . . . . .	461
as a biased witness . . . . .	949, 969
appearance of, as indicating competence . . . . .	1154
presumption of negligent injury to . . . . .	2509
inspection of injured . . . . .	2220
<b>Employer's Liability</b> , character of employee as affecting . . . . .	80, 249
see also INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Engine</b> ; see SPARKS; MACHINE; SPEED.	
<b>Engineer</b> , contract making certificate conclusive . . . . .	7a
<b>Enlistment</b> , register of, as evidence . . . . .	1641
shown by parol . . . . .	2427
see also MILITARY RECORDS.	
<b>Enrolment</b> , of a statute, whether conclusive . . . . .	1350
of a deed; see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	
of a judicial proceeding; see JUDICIAL RECORD.	
<b>Enticement</b> for prostitution, character of complainant to show consent . . . . .	62
other offences as evidence of intent . . . . .	349, 360
corroboration required . . . . .	2061
<b>Entry</b> , in a book, to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
made by a public officer; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
in docket or minutes; see JUDICIAL RECORD.	
as a statement of facts against interest; see AGAINST INTEREST.	
made in the course of business; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
written, in general; see DOCUMENT.	
<b>Equivocation</b> in a document . . . . .	2472
<b>Equity</b> , rebutted by declarations of intent . . . . .	2475
procedure in; see CHANCERY.	
rules in, distinguished from rules at law . . . . .	4
<b>Erasure</b> , expert testimony to . . . . .	2027
<b>Error</b> , impeaching a witness; see CONTRADICTION.	
of ruling, as ground for new trial . . . . .	21
<b>Escape</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
refusal to, as evidence of innocence . . . . .	293
<b>Escheat</b> , inquisition of . . . . .	1670
<b>Escrow</b> , shown by parol evidence . . . . .	2408, 2420
<b>Espionage Act</b> , former offences, as evidence . . . . .	369
<b>Estoppel</b> , distinguished from an ordinary admission . . . . .	1056, 1059
from a judicial admission . . . . .	2589
<b>Evidence</b> , defined . . . . .	1
distinguished from argument . . . . .	1
from substantive law, and pleading . . . . .	2
rules of, whether alterable by the Legislature . . . . .	7
admissible for one purpose but not for another . . . . .	13
conditionally on other facts being shown . . . . .	14
even after jury has retired . . . . .	1880
explaining away . . . . .	32-35, 239
inadmissible, when received, is not to justify other inadmissible evidence . . . . .	15
offer of and objection to, mode of making . . . . .	17, 18
misuse of motion to "strike out" . . . . .	18
ruling upon an objection to . . . . .	19
erroneous exclusion cured by subsequent admission . . . . .	19
circumstantial and testimonial, distinguished . . . . .	25
circumstantial, may be proved by circumstantial . . . . .	41



## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Evidence</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	<b>Section</b>
presence of articles as corroborating . . . . .	149
what is "corroborative" . . . . .	2062
fabrication of, as indicating guilt . . . . .	278
to be weighed by probability, not possibility . . . . .	235
failure to produce, as indicating a weak case . . . . .	285-291
as indicating unfavorable tenor . . . . .	285
distinction between impeaching and rehabilitating . . . . .	880
length no ground for exclusion . . . . .	1864
incompetency of, cannot be waived for infant defendant . . . . .	1063
order of presentation changed by court . . . . .	1867
in rebuttal, advanced by anticipation . . . . .	1869
manufacturing . . . . .	1732
"best evidence" rule . . . . .	1173
primary and secondary . . . . .	1175
secondary, are there degrees of . . . . .	1268
'prima facie' . . . . .	2494
sufficient for jury . . . . .	2494
motion to exclude all . . . . .	2495
preponderance of . . . . .	2498
procured by illegal search or seizure . . . . .	2264
demurrer to . . . . .	2495
judge's right to determine sufficiency and admissibility . . . . .	2550
order of, in general . . . . .	1866
between co-defendants . . . . .	1872
illegally obtained . . . . .	2183
justifiable trespass in securing . . . . .	2221
order of topics of, in trials; see EXAMINATION.	
primary; see BEST EVIDENCE; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
conclusive; see CONCLUSIVENESS.	
weight of; see WEIGHT.	
circumstantial; see CIRCUMSTANTIAL.	

see also OFFER.

**Examination of Premises, chattels, etc.,** see **DISCOVERY; PARTY'S PRIVILEGE; REAL EVIDENCE.**

### Examination of Witness

### I. Before a Magistrate

## II. Right of Cross-examination

### III. Order of Examination at Trial

- (a) in general
- (b) putting in the case at large
- (c) after case closed
- (d) examination of a witness on the original call
- (e) recall

#### IV. Sundries

### I. Before a Magistrate

magistrate's report of former testimony, whether required . . .	. . .	1326,
whether admissible . . .	. . .	1349
former testimony before, without cross-examination . . .	. . .	1667
dying declaration under oath . . .	. . .	1375
testimony proved . . .	.	1450
by magistrate's report . . .	. . .	1667
by stenographer's notes . . .	. . .	1669
see also DEPOSITION.		

see also DEPOSITION.

II. *Right of Cross-examination*; see CROSS-EXAMINATION, I.

### III. Order of Examination at Trial

- |     |                                   |      |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------|
| (a) | in general                        |      |
|     | trial court's discretion controls | 1867 |
|     | length of time immaterial         | 1864 |
| (b) | putting in the case at large      |      |
|     | case of proponent in chief        |      |
|     | order of topics                   | 1870 |
|     | party testifying first            | 1870 |
|     | facts conditionally relevant      | 1871 |

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Examination of Witness, case of proponent in chief</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
matter without 'prima facie' relevancy . . . . .	1871
rejected matter later relevant . . . . .	1871
irrelevant questions on cross-examination . . . . .	1871
reading documents . . . . .	1883
case of opponent in reply . . . . .	1872
calling witness during proponent's case . . . . .	1872
case in rebuttal, in general . . . . .	1873
before opponent closes . . . . .	1872
limitations on evidence in rebuttal . . . . .	1873
anticipation of case in rebuttal . . . . .	1873
case in surrebuttal . . . . .	1874
later stages . . . . .	1875
(c) <i>after case closed</i>	
one case closed . . . . .	1876
evidence admitted after case closed . . . . .	1876
both cases closed . . . . .	1877
argument begun . . . . .	1878
charge given . . . . .	1879
jury retired . . . . .	1880
verdict rendered . . . . .	1881
(d) <i>examination of a witness on the original trial</i>	
direct examination . . . . .	1883
putting in documents . . . . .	1883
cross-examination . . . . .	1884
postponement . . . . .	1884
two or more opponents . . . . .	1884
offering documents . . . . .	1884
putting in one's own case . . . . .	1885-1891
see also CROSS-EXAMINATION.	
whose is the witness . . . . .	1892
re-direct examination . . . . .	1896
re-cross-examination . . . . .	1897
later stages . . . . .	1897
(e) <i>recall</i>	
for re-direct examination . . . . .	1898
for re-cross-examination . . . . .	1899
IV. <i>Sundries</i>	
effect of death or illness preventing cross-examination . . . . .	1390
refusal to answer on cross-examination . . . . .	1391
non-responsive answer . . . . .	1392
of opponent or witness before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
at a former trial, used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
mode of putting questions on . . . . .	see QUESTION TO A WITNESS; CROSS-EXAMINATION.
see also DIRECT EXAMINATION.	
specific topics on direct examination; see DIRECT EXAMINATION.	
specific topics on cross-examination; see CROSS-EXAMINATION.	
confession made under oath on . . . . .	see CONFESSION.
of a party as witness; see WITNESS.	
admissibility of prior examination; see DEPOSITION; FORMER TESTIMONY.	
[Examine analysis of "Order of Evidence," Vol. IV, p. 1.]	
<b>Examined Copy; see COPY.</b>	
<b>Examiner, power to compel testimony . . . . .</b>	2195
<b>Exception to a ruling upon evidence, mode of taking . . . . .</b>	20
bill of, must exhibit grounds of objection . . . . .	17, 18
purpose of an . . . . .	20
distinction between objection and . . . . .	20
must be in writing . . . . .	20
must be immediately after ruling . . . . .	20
what formal statement of, must contain . . . . .	20
bill of, as evidence of testimony . . . . .	1668
<b>Excitement; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF; SPONTANEOUS EX-CLAMATIONS.</b>	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Exclamations of pain or suffering</b> . . . . .	1719
as 'res gestæ' of violent injury . . . . .	1745
<b>Execution of a Document</b>	
<i>In general</i>	
I. <i>Modes of proving Execution</i>	
(a) <i>by age</i>	
(b) <i>by contents</i>	
(c) <i>by official custody</i>	
(d) <i>by seal</i>	
(e) <i>by other modes</i>	
II. <i>Sundry Rules</i>	
<i>In general</i>	
general principle . . . . .	2128-2139
proof not needed when execution admitted . . . . .	2131
whether signature or contents is involved . . . . .	2134
rule of presumption . . . . .	2135
I. <i>Modes of proving Execution</i>	
(a) <i>by age</i>	
general principle . . . . .	2137
thirty years old . . . . .	2138
periods between which age is reckoned . . . . .	2138
natural custody . . . . .	2139
unsuspicious appearance . . . . .	2140
possession of the land . . . . .	2141, 2142
recorded deeds and old copies . . . . .	2143
authority to execute . . . . .	2144
kinds of documents . . . . .	2145
presumption; statutory denial . . . . .	2146
attesting witness dispensed with . . . . .	1311
(b) <i>by contents</i>	
in general . . . . .	2148
illiterate's letter; typewriting . . . . .	2149
printed matter . . . . .	2150, 2151
postmark; brand . . . . .	2152
reply-letter by mail . . . . .	2153
reply-telegram . . . . .	2154
reply-telephone . . . . .	2155
identity of name . . . . .	2156, 2529
(c) <i>by official custody</i>	
judicial records and files . . . . .	2158
sundry official records . . . . .	2150
(d) <i>by seal</i>	
general principle . . . . .	2161
statutory regulation . . . . .	2162
seal of State . . . . .	2163
seal of court or clerk . . . . .	2164
seal of notary . . . . .	2165
sundry official seals . . . . .	2166
official signatures . . . . .	2167
official title . . . . .	2168
corporate seal . . . . .	2169
(e) <i>by other modes</i>	
by handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
by possession . . . . .	157
by parties' belief . . . . .	271, 272
by opponent's admission . . . . .	2132, 2596
by spoliation . . . . .	2132
by sundry circumstantial evidence . . . . .	2131
by presumption . . . . .	2135
by attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
by certificate of acknowledgment; see CERTIFICATE.	
by certified record-copy; see CERTIFIED COPY; RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	
of a will, by testator's belief . . . . .	271
by testator's expressions . . . . .	1734
by record of probate . . . . .	1658, 1681

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Execution of a Document (continued)

Section

### II. Sundry rules

production required, even though execution is presumed . . . . .	1187
execution must be proved, though original is lost . . . . .	1188
execution provable, without producing original . . . . .	1248
order of proof as between execution and loss . . . . .	1189
calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
writer not a preferred witness . . . . .	1339
written statements against interest . . . . .	1472
pedigree entries . . . . .	1496
showing document to opponent before cross-examination . . . . .	1861

[Examine analysis of "Authentication of Documents," Vol. IV, p. 541.]

## Execution of Judgment; see JUDICIAL RECORD; SHERIFF.

<b>Executive</b> , acts of, proved by certified copy . . . . .	1680
by printed copy . . . . .	1684
proclamations of, admissibility of . . . . .	1663
noticed . . . . .	2577
recognition of foreign State by, judicial notice of . . . . .	2566, 2574
certificate of . . . . .	1674
regulations, judicially noticed . . . . .	2572
privilege of, in substantive law . . . . .	2368
as witness . . . . .	2370
not to attend court . . . . .	2371
<b>Executive officer</b> , conclusiveness of certificate of . . . . .	1354
rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4a, 4c
<b>Executor</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1076, 1081
rebutting intention of gift to . . . . .	2475
waiver of client's privilege by . . . . .	2329
of patient's privilege by . . . . .	2391
<b>Exhibition</b> of weapons, bloody clothes, etc., to jury . . . . .	1157
of corporal injuries in civil cases . . . . .	1158
of indecencies . . . . .	1159
<b>Exhumation</b> of corpse, to obtain evidence . . . . .	1862, 2194, 2216, 2220
<b>Existence</b> of whole inferred from part . . . . .	348
concurrent . . . . .	438
<b>Ex parte</b> proceedings, rules in, distinguished . . . . .	4
report by expert . . . . .	787
reports, maps, etc., admissibility of . . . . .	1385
see also AFFIDAVIT; DEPOSITION.	

## Expectancy of life; see LIFE.

## Expediente; see DEED.

<b>Expenses</b> of witness, tender of . . . . .	2201
amount of . . . . .	2202
expert witness . . . . .	2203
<b>Experience</b> , capacity of . . . . .	555-571
opinion rule distinguished . . . . .	557
observation and knowledge distinguished . . . . .	558, 650, 651
grade of, necessary . . . . .	559-561
determined by judge . . . . .	561
how established . . . . .	562
expert testifying to another's competency . . . . .	562
method of securing unbiased experts . . . . .	563
qualification of, on value . . . . .	711-721
special training or occupation unnecessary to estimate value . . . . .	712
impeaching of witness for lack of . . . . .	938

[Examine analysis of "Experiential Capacity," Vol. I, p. 955.]

<b>Experiment</b> , as evidence of planning crime . . . . .	238
distinguished from observation . . . . .	445
of the quality or condition of a thing . . . . .	445, 660
to test a witness' knowledge or skill . . . . .	993
as allowable in court . . . . .	1154, 1160
<b>Expert Capacity</b> , distinguished from opinion rule . . . . .	557



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Expert Witness

1. *Qualifications*
2. *Impeachment*
3. *Sundries*

	Section
1. <i>Qualifications</i>	
general requirements . . . . .	555-561, 1923
stating the grounds of opinion . . . . .	562, 655
foreign law . . . . .	564, 566, 690
custom and usage . . . . .	565
value . . . . .	567, 711
medical matters (sanity, blood, etc.) . . . . .	568, 687
psychology . . . . .	934, 935
handwriting and paper money . . . . .	570, 693, 705, 1991-2027
to alteration . . . . .	570, 2027
sundry topics of testimony . . . . .	571
mode of securing unbiased experts . . . . .	562
reputation to prove qualifications . . . . .	1621
see also KNOWLEDGE; PHYSICIAN.	
2. <i>Impeachment</i>	
by another expert . . . . .	562, 1984
by cross-examination to instances of unskillfulness . . . . .	991
by contradiction on particular facts . . . . .	1005, 1022
by reputation . . . . .	1621
see also IMPEACHMENT; CROSS-EXAMINATION, IV.	
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
failure to call, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	290
reading a prepared report . . . . .	740, 787, 1385
cross-examination to other sales as evidence of value ✓ . . . . .	463
improbabilities in scientific testimony . . . . .	662
intrusion of the court on . . . . .	662
comparison of handwriting by . . . . .	709
proving voluminous records by summary . . . . .	1230
testimony to forgery of bank-note . . . . .	1339
'ex parte' investigations out of court . . . . .	787, 1385
may testify from both observation and hypothetical questions . . . . .	678
hypothetical questions to; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.	
testimony by quotation of scientific books . . . . .	1700
tested on cross-examination . . . . .	1700
opinion of, as to cause or condition . . . . .	1976
on alterations . . . . .	2027
date . . . . .	2027
decipherment . . . . .	2025
erasures . . . . .	2027
forgeries . . . . .	2026
imitation . . . . .	2026
ink . . . . .	2024
paper . . . . .	2024
spelling . . . . .	2024
inspection of injured person by . . . . .	2220
limitation of number of . . . . .	1908
proposed reforms in the mode of using expert testimony . . . . .	562
amount of fee demandable by . . . . .	2203
see also OPINION RULE; FEES.	

[Examine analyses of "Experiential Capacity," Vol. I, p. 955; and  
"Opinion Rule, as Applied to Handwriting," Vol. IV, p. 234.]

<b>Explanation</b> , logical principle of . . . . .	32
of traces of blood . . . . .	34, 149
of presence of incriminating articles . . . . .	149
of flight as evidence of guilt . . . . .	277, 281
of suspicious conduct . . . . .	281
of possession of stolen goods . . . . .	1143
<b>Explosion</b> , cause of, as evidenced by its effects . . . . .	437-461
<b>Ex post facto</b> law, prohibition of, as affecting rules of evidence . . . . .	7
<b>Exposure</b> , other offences of indecent, to prove intent . . . . .	360

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Express</b> package, delivery of, as evidenced by course of business . . . . .	95
see also CARRIERS.	
<b>Extortion</b> , other offences as evidence of intent . . . . .	352
<b>Extradition</b> , rules of evidence in proceedings for . . . . .	4
<b>Extra-territoriality</b> , judicial notice of foreign law in region of . . . . .	2572
<b>Extrinsic Testimony</b> , rule for, as distinguished from cross-examination . . . . .	878
to prove bias of a witness . . . . .	943
to prove crimes or other misconduct of a witness . . . . .	979
to impeach witness . . . . .	977, 987
to prove errors . . . . .	1001
to prove self-contradiction . . . . .	1020
<b>Eye-witness</b> , called by the State, may be impeached . . . . .	918
of a crime, required to be called . . . . .	2078
preferred in various instances . . . . .	1339
required in bigamy . . . . .	1604, 2085
in criminal conversation . . . . .	2085
not required when proof is by admissions of marriage . . . . .	2086
not required in civil cases . . . . .	2086
marriage celebrant's certificate not preferred to . . . . .	2088
insurance contract requiring proof of death, etc., by . . . . .	7a
not required for personal injury . . . . .	2081a

## F

<b>Fabrication</b> of evidence, as indicating guilt . . . . .	278
<b>Fact</b> , law distinguished from . . . . .	1
not in issue, distinguished from facts not admissible . . . . .	2
certain questions of, determined by judge . . . . .	21
meaning of "collateral" . . . . .	39
external, as evidence . . . . .	191
a feeling is a . . . . .	1715
presumption of . . . . .	2491
jury or judge to determine . . . . .	2549
<b>Factory</b> ; see EMPLOYEE; NEGLIGENCE; PREMISES; MACHINE.	
<b>Factum probandum</b> , distinguished from 'factum probans' . . . . .	2
<b>Failure</b> to prosecute or complain . . . . .	284
to produce evidence . . . . .	285-291
to object to evidence . . . . .	18
to speak or claim, as a self-contradiction . . . . .	1042
as an admission . . . . .	1071
to reply to a letter, as an admission . . . . .	1073
<b>Falsa demonstratio non nocet</b> . . . . .	2476
<b>False Arrest</b> ; see ARREST.	
<b>False Claim</b> , of cause of action, mode of evidencing intent . . . . .	340
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	963
<b>False Pretences</b> ; see FALSE REPRESENTATIONS.	
<b>False Representations</b> , repute as evidence of knowledge . . . . .	256
other false representations as evidence of intent . . . . .	320
number of witnesses required . . . . .	2044
<b>Falsehood</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	278
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	963, 1008
<b>Falsity</b> , by party in course of litigation . . . . .	278
knowledge of, in similar acts. . . . .	317, 320
in value of importations . . . . .	341
of statement not admissible to show statement not made . . . . .	391
of representations as to credit . . . . .	256
as impeaching a witness; see CONTRADICTION; FALSUS IN UNO; PERJURY;	
SELF-CONTRADICTION.	
<b>Falsus in uno</b> , general principle . . . . .	1008
falsity must be wilful and material . . . . .	1013, 1014
<b>Family</b> , insanity of, as evidence . . . . .	232
<b>Family Desertion</b> , testimony of wife on charge of . . . . .	617
see also DESERTION.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Family History</b> , statements about, exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1480
death of declarant . . . . .	1481
'ante litem motam' . . . . .	1483
personal knowledge of the facts by declarant not necessary . . . . .	1486
exactness in detail not necessary . . . . .	1486
declarations by non-relatives . . . . .	1487
by neighborhood-reputation . . . . .	1488
by different sorts of relatives . . . . .	1489
proof of relationship . . . . .	1490, 1491
illegitimate child . . . . .	1492
own age . . . . .	1481, 1493
identification by . . . . .	270, 413, 1494
form of declaration (Bible, will, etc.) . . . . .	1495
proving the writing . . . . .	1496, 1497
place of birth, death, etc. . . . .	1500
issue of pedigree . . . . .	1503
age, other modes of proving; see AGE.	
ancient deed's recital of pedigree . . . . .	1573
proved by official registers . . . . .	1336, 1644
recognition of illegitimate . . . . .	1606
see also MARRIAGE; LEGITIMACY.	
<b>Family Relationship</b> , as biasing a witness . . . . .	949
as raising presumption of gratuity . . . . .	2526
<b>Father</b> , reputation of, as mitigating damages in seduction . . . . .	75, 210
presumed instead of son, from identity of name . . . . .	2529
statements of, to evidence pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
testimony to bastardy . . . . .	2063
recognition of illegitimate . . . . .	1606
see also BASTARDY; LEGITIMACY; MOTHER.	
<b>Federal Law</b> , conflict between State law and . . . . .	6
rule for discovery before trial . . . . .	1856
judicially noticed . . . . .	2573
requiring full faith and credit . . . . .	1681
<b>Federal Record-copy</b> , sufficiency of . . . . .	1681a
<b>Federal Trade Commission</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Feelings</b> , expressions of . . . . .	1718, 1730
are facts . . . . .	1715
see also BIAS.	
<b>Fees of witness</b> , tender in advance . . . . .	2201
amount of . . . . .	2202
expert witness . . . . .	2203
under Scotch law . . . . .	2203
<b>Fellow-servant</b> ; see EMPLOYEE.	
<b>Felony</b> , as disqualifying or impeaching a witness; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
<b>Fence</b> , erection or removal of, intent shown by utterances . . . . .	1777
<b>Fence Viewers</b> , findings of a jury of . . . . .	1672
<b>Fertilizer</b> , official certificate of analysis of . . . . .	
as conclusive . . . . .	1352, 1355
as admissible . . . . .	1674, 1710
as adopted by contract . . . . .	7a
failure of crops as evidence of defective . . . . .	451
contract for conclusive evidence in sale of . . . . .	7a
<b>Fictitious Person</b> , evidenced by failure of search . . . . .	158, 667
<b>Fifth Amendment</b> ; see PRIVILEGE AGAINST SELF-CRIMINATION.	
<b>Files</b> ; see JUDICIAL RECORDS; PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.	
<b>Filiation</b> , by parent's recognition . . . . .	1606
see also LEGITIMACY.	
<b>Film</b> , of moving picture, as evidence . . . . .	798
<b>Finger-marks</b> , as evidence . . . . .	151a, 414
privilege of accused not to make . . . . .	2265
<b>Fire</b> ; see ARSON; SPARKS; PREMISES.	
<b>Fire Insurance</b> ; see INSURANCE.	
<b>Five Civilized Tribes</b> ; see INDIANS.	
<b>Fleet Marriage Register</b> , history of . . . . .	1644

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Flight</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	32, 276, 281, 2511
<b>Flowage</b> of water, other instances as evidence . . . . .	451
<b>Food</b> , effect of, as indicating nature or quantity . . . . .	457, 460
official certificate of analysis of; see <b>CHEMICAL ANALYSIS</b> .	
<b>Footprint</b> , as evidence of identity . . . . .	151a, 413, 660
compelling defendant to make . . . . .	2265
<b>Foreign Language</b> ; see <b>INTERPRETER</b> ; <b>ALIEN</b> .	
<b>Foreign Law</b> , when applicable in its rules of evidence . . . . .	5
distinguished from 'lex fori' . . . . .	5
proved by expert witness . . . . .	564, 566, 690, 1953
provable by certificate . . . . .	1674
knowledge of, as based on study alone . . . . .	690
proved by treatises . . . . .	1697
production of statute by expert witness . . . . .	1697
experience necessary to testify to . . . . .	1697
statute proved without copy . . . . .	1271
copy preferred to recollection . . . . .	1271
proved by official printed copy . . . . .	1684
crime by, not privileged . . . . .	2258
similarity of, presumed . . . . .	2536
judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2558
not judicially noticed . . . . .	2573
<b>Foreign Officer</b> , document made by . . . . .	1633
<b>Foreman</b> , entries of, to aid recollection; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
character and conduct of, as employee; see <b>EMPLOYEE</b> .	
<b>Forfeiture</b> , privilege not to disclose . . . . .	2256
<b>Forgery</b> , of a will, character of a third person as evidence of . . . . .	68
skill in handwriting, as evidence of . . . . .	87
possession of materials, as evidence of . . . . .	153, 238
of evidence, as indicating guilt . . . . .	278
other forgeries, as evidence of intent . . . . .	309
forms of offence connected with . . . . .	309
evidence of a motive for . . . . .	392
of identity . . . . .	413
proof of, without producing document . . . . .	1249
notice to produce original document . . . . .	1205
testimony of person whose name is forged, not required . . . . .	1339
proved by expert . . . . .	1339
of bank-notes, evidence of intent . . . . .	318
incorporation proved by repute . . . . .	1625
affidavit of bank-officer . . . . .	1710
proved by bank-officer as witness to notes . . . . .	1339
expert testimony to handwriting in . . . . .	2026
number of witnesses required . . . . .	2044
presumed from uttering . . . . .	2520
<b>Former Injuries</b> ; see <b>NEGLIGENCE</b> ; <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> .	
<b>Former Testimony</b> offered in impeachment, as a self-contradiction . . . . .	1030, 1032
failure to mention facts in, as contradiction of present testimony . . . . .	1072
death, absence, etc., as allowing the use of . . . . .	1403-1418
used as an admission . . . . .	1075
magistrate's report preferred . . . . .	1330, 1349
issues and parties the same . . . . .	1386
mode of proving . . . . .	
judge's notes . . . . .	1666
magistrate's report . . . . .	1330, 1349, 1667
bill of exceptions . . . . .	1668
stenographer's notes . . . . .	1669
juror's notes . . . . .	1669
attorney's notes . . . . .	1669
printed report . . . . .	1703
answering by referring to, of another . . . . .	787
memorandum to aid recollection; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
whole must be proved . . . . .	2098, 2099, 2103
may be proved . . . . .	2115
statutes affecting . . . . .	1413



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Fornication</b> , under age of consent . . . . .	357, 402
prior and subsequent conduct in . . . . .	398
see also ADULTERY; CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; PROSTITUTION.	
<b>Foundation</b> , laying a, for impeaching by self-contradiction; see IMPEACHMENT.	
for using a copy of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
in general . . . . .	654
waiver of laying . . . . .	654
must show knowledge founded on personal observation by the senses . . . . .	657
<b>Fourth Amendment</b> , does not prevent use of documents and chattels obtained	
by search warrant . . . . .	2183, 2264
as affected by Fifth Amendment, on admission of documents . . . . .	2264
<b>Fraud</b> , by a party or agent, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	280
transfers as evidence of . . . . .	333
as evidence of intent . . . . .	341-344
similar acts of . . . . .	340
confession obtained by . . . . .	841
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	963
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
not all civil fraud is criminal . . . . .	2257
making acts voidable . . . . .	2423
under the parol evidence rule . . . . .	2432, 2439
Pennsylvania rule in varying terms of document . . . . .	2431, 2442
degree of proof of . . . . .	2498
presumed from grantee's confidential relations . . . . .	2503
in concealment by husband in an ante-nuptial agreement . . . . .	2526
in insurance; see INSURANCE.	
<b>Frauds</b> , statute of; see STATUTE OF FRAUDS.	
<b>Fraudulent Transfers</b> , other transactions as evidence of intent . . . . .	333
indicated by various circumstances . . . . .	335
admissions of debtor or creditor . . . . .	1082-1087
opinion evidence of intent . . . . .	1967
presumptions applicable to . . . . .	2504
<b>Fright of horses</b> , as evidence of dangerous object . . . . .	461

## G

<b>Gaming</b> , other acts as evidence of intent . . . . .	367
advertisement, or possession of apparatus or license as evidence of plan . . . . .	238
premises leased for, proved by repute of house . . . . .	254
conclusive evidence of, under statute . . . . .	1355
privilege against disclosure, removed by statute . . . . .	2281
<b>Gas</b> ; see NUISANCE; EXPERT WITNESS.	
<b>Genealogy</b> proved by family hearsay; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
proved by reputation of community; see REPUTATION.	
<b>General Character</b> ; see CHARACTER.	
<b>General Interest</b> , matters of; see REPUTATION.	
<b>Genuineness</b> , of a document; see DOCUMENT.	
<b>Gestation</b> , intercourse within the time of, in bastardy . . . . .	133
in adultery . . . . .	2527
<b>Gesture</b> , as a mode of expression for a witness . . . . .	789
<b>Gift</b> , plans, as evidence of . . . . .	112
declarations of intent to evidence a . . . . .	1725
words accompanying . . . . .	1777
presumption of . . . . .	2526
see also DEED.	
<b>Girl</b> ; see CHILD; RAPE; SEDUCTION.	
<b>Good Faith</b> ; see KNOWLEDGE; MOTIVE; INTENT.	
<b>Goods</b> ; see CHATTELS; BUSINESS; VALUE.	
<b>Government</b> , land-grant of; see DEED.	
records of; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
privilege for communications to . . . . .	2376
<b>Grain</b> , official certificate of grade of . . . . .	
as conclusive . . . . .	1352, 1354, 1355
as admissible . . . . .	1674, 1710
as adopted by contract . . . . .	7a

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Grand Jury</b> , witnesses before, indorsed on indictment . . . . .	1850
right to compel answers . . . . .	2195
privilege against self-crimination before . . . . .	2252
testifying before, as a waiver of privilege . . . . .	2276
privilege for vote and opinion . . . . .	2360
for witness' testimony . . . . .	2362
cessation of privilege . . . . .	2362
admissions before, not privileged . . . . .	2363
not to impeach indictment . . . . .	2364
rules of evidence in hearing, before . . . . .	4
inspection of testimony before . . . . .	1850, 1855a, 1859g
list of witnesses before . . . . .	1852
<b>Grant</b> , presumption of lost . . . . .	2522
of land, from government . . . . .	1225, 1239
see also DEED; GRANTOR; GRANTEE.	
<b>Grantee</b> , from an insolvent, lunatic, thief, etc., repute as evidencing knowledge of . . . . .	253-255
grantor's admissions, used against . . . . .	1082
producing original deed of . . . . .	1224
utterances in possession, used against creditor . . . . .	1779
assent of, as necessary to pass title . . . . .	2408
deed delivered in escrow to . . . . .	2408, 2420
presuming fraud from confidential relations of . . . . .	2500
presuming identity from name . . . . .	2529
<b>Grantor</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1082
declarations of, to show intent . . . . .	1725
opinion testimony to capacity of . . . . .	1958
burden of proof of sanity of . . . . .	2500
see also GRANTEE.	
<b>Guardian</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1076
personal liability of one who signs as . . . . .	2444
corroboration required for accounts of . . . . .	2066
<b>Guardian ad litem</b> , authority of counsel for . . . . .	1063
<b>Guilt</b> , failure to prove an alibi as evidence of . . . . .	279
conduct when under arrest to show . . . . .	273, 276, 1072
evidenced by concealment . . . . .	276
by bribery . . . . .	278
by fabrication of evidence . . . . .	278
by destruction of evidence . . . . .	278
by flight . . . . .	277, 281
by escape . . . . .	276
negated by refusal to escape . . . . .	293
see also DEFENDANT; CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.	
<b>Guilty</b> , plea of, as admission in civil case . . . . .	815, 1066, 1067
<b>Gun</b> ; see WEAPON.	

## H

<b>Habeas Corpus</b> 'ad testificandum' . . . . .	2199
<b>Habit</b> , as evidence of doing an act . . . . .	92
distinguished from character . . . . .	92
of private person . . . . .	95
of commercial house . . . . .	95
of express carrier . . . . .	95
of telegraph company . . . . .	95
as evidence of <i>not</i> doing an act . . . . .	97
of recording . . . . .	97
carefulness of . . . . .	93
particular instances to evidence careful or careless . . . . .	199, 376
as evidence of marriage . . . . .	268
of other persons, as evidence of care . . . . .	461
as a source of aiding recollection of a witness . . . . .	747
see also CUSTOM.	
<b>Habitual Criminal</b> , prior convictions as increasing sentence . . . . .	196



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Handwriting

I. <i>Style of</i>	
II. <i>Qualifications of Witness to</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>by seeing the person write</i>	
(c) <i>by seeing known genuine documents</i>	
(d) <i>by expert comparison of hands</i>	
(e) <i>expert testimony</i>	
III. <i>Sundry Topics</i>	
I. <i>Style of, to evidence authorship of a document</i>	Section
general theory . . . . .	99, 383
traits of, as evidencing authorship . . . . .	99
jury's perusal of specimens	
kinds of documents . . . . .	2016-2018
press-copies . . . . .	2019
photographic reproductions . . . . .	797, 2010, 2019
mode of proving genuine . . . . .	2020, 2021
see also TYPEWRITING.	
II. <i>Qualifications of witness to</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
by experience . . . . .	570
identifying an illiterate's mark . . . . .	693
(b) <i>by seeing the person write</i> . . . . .	694-697
number of times . . . . .	694
how long beforehand . . . . .	695
quantity of writing . . . . .	696, 707
specimens written after suit begun . . . . .	697, 707
after-acquired knowledge . . . . .	697
impression or belief . . . . .	698
opinion must be based solely on the writing . . . . .	698
(c) <i>by seeing known genuine documents</i> . . . . .	699-708
express or implied admissions . . . . .	700, 701
acting on the document . . . . .	270
correspondence seen . . . . .	702
clerks seeing accounts, etc. . . . .	703
custodian seeing records, etc. . . . .	704
signatures used to frank letters . . . . .	704
bank-notes and paper money . . . . .	705
number and time of specimens seen . . . . .	707
(d) <i>by expert comparison of hands</i>	
general principle . . . . .	709
evidencing genuineness of specimens . . . . .	709
history . . . . .	1991-1994
lay witness excluded . . . . .	1997, 2004
exception for act of writing seen . . . . .	2005
for ancient documents . . . . .	2006
refreshing the memory . . . . .	2007
(e) <i>expert testimony, whether admissible</i> . . . . .	2008
selection of specimens . . . . .	2009, 2018
specimen conceded genuine . . . . .	1999, 2000
genuineness left to court . . . . .	2000
specimens limited to documents in case . . . . .	1999, 2000
photographic copies . . . . .	797, 2010
studying the specimens . . . . .	2011
kind of skill required . . . . .	2012
mode of proving specimens . . . . .	2013
giving the grounds of belief . . . . .	2014
testing on cross-examination . . . . .	2015
bank-officer as witness to counterfeit bank-notes . . . . .	1339
III. <i>Sundry Topics</i>	
proof of, by admissions . . . . .	2013, 2021
ink, paper, spelling, etc. . . . .	2024
deciphering illegible writing . . . . .	2025
imitations, forgeries . . . . .	2026

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Handwriting</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
normal or disguised . . . . .	2026
erasures . . . . .	2027
alterations . . . . .	2027
time of writing . . . . .	2027
instrument used . . . . .	2027
defendant's skill in imitating, as evidence of forgery . . . . .	87
reference to, in aid of recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
effect of proving attesting witness' or maker's hand; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
[Examine analyses of "Testimonial Knowledge, 4," Vol. I, p. 1050; and "Opinion Rule, as Applied to Handwriting," Vol. IV, p. 234.]	
<b>Health</b> , as evidenced by appearance . . . . .	223
prior condition of . . . . .	225
witness' experience as qualifying him . . . . .	568
see also PHYSICIAN; DISEASE.	
<b>Hearing</b> a sound, instances of . . . . .	460
<b>Hearsay</b> , as the basis of a witness' knowledge . . . . .	567, 688
knowledge founded on, exceptionally admitted . . . . .	665-670
official records . . . . .	665
scientific instruments and tables . . . . .	665
execution and contents of documents not personally observed . . . . .	666
testifying to own age, or another's name . . . . .	667
conversation through interpreter . . . . .	668
information over telephone . . . . .	669
testimony of deceased or absent persons . . . . .	670
nature of . . . . .	1361
<b>Hearsay Rule</b>	
I. <i>General Principle</i>	
(a) <i>cross-examination</i>	
(b) <i>confrontation</i>	
II. <i>Exceptions to the Rule</i>	
III. <i>Rule not applicable (Res Gestæ)</i>	
(a) <i>words a part of the issue</i>	
(b) <i>words a verbal part of an act</i>	
(c) <i>words used as circumstantial evidence</i>	
(d) <i>res gestæ</i>	
IV. <i>Rule applied to Court Officers</i>	
I. <i>General Principle</i> . . . . .	1361-1363
history . . . . .	1364
(a) <i>cross-examination</i> , right of	
theory and art . . . . .	1367, 1368
opportunity, equivalent to actual cross-examination . . . . .	1371
sundry tribunals . . . . .	1373
coroner . . . . .	1374
committing magistrate . . . . .	1375
deposition . . . . .	1376-1383
notice . . . . .	1378
plural taking . . . . .	1379
statutes . . . . .	1380-1383
affidavit . . . . .	1384
'ex parte' investigations, etc. . . . .	1385
issues and parties the same . . . . .	1386-1388
either party may use deposition . . . . .	1389
insufficiency of cross-examination . . . . .	1390-1393
witness' death or illness . . . . .	1390
witness' refusal or party's default . . . . .	1391
non-responsive answer . . . . .	1392
sundries . . . . .	1393
(b) <i>confrontation</i> , right of	
absent witness' testimony, in general . . . . .	1395
constitutional requirement . . . . .	1397
witness unavailable in court . . . . .	1401-1418
deceased . . . . .	1403
out of jurisdiction . . . . .	1404



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Hearsay Rule, witness unavailable in court ( <i>continued</i> )		Section
	not found . . . . .	1405
	ill . . . . .	1406
	imprisoned . . . . .	1407
	privileged . . . . .	1407
	beyond statutory distance . . . . .	1407
	insane . . . . .	1408
	disqualified . . . . .	1409
	statutes . . . . .	1410-1413
	proving the excuse . . . . .	1414
	witness present in court . . . . .	1415
	rule not applicable . . . . .	1416
	exceptions to the rule of confrontation . . . . .	1417
II.	<i>Exceptions to the Rule</i> , general principle of . . . . .	1420-1426
	declarant must have usual testimonial qualifications . . . . .	1751
	disqualification of declarant; see DECLARANT.	
	of spouse; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
	of oath capacity; see OATH.	
	dying declarations; see DYING DECLARATIONS.	
	facts against interest; see AGAINST INTEREST.	
	pedigree statements; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
	attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
	entries in the course of business; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
	private boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.	
	ancient deed-recitals; see RECITALS.	
	deceased persons in general; see DECEASED PERSONS.	
	reputation; see REPUTATION.	
	public documents, official statements; see PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.	
	scientific books; see LEARNED TREATISES.	
	price-lists, directories, etc.; see COMMERCIAL LISTS.	
	affidavits; see AFFIDAVIT.	
	voter's statements; see VOTER.	
	mental condition, physical pain; see MENTAL CONDITION.	
	'res gestæ'; see RES GESTÆ.	
III.	<i>Rule not applicable (Res Gestæ)</i> . . . . .	1786-1797
	fact of utterance in issue, rule not applicable . . . . .	1766
	truth of utterance in issue, rule applicable . . . . .	1766
(a)	<i>words a part of the issue</i>	
	contract, libel, etc. . . . .	1770
(b)	<i>words a verbal part of an act</i> . . . . .	1772-1786
	general principle . . . . .	1772-1776
	acceptance . . . . .	1777
	advancement . . . . .	1777
	agency . . . . .	1777
	consideration . . . . .	1777
	conversion . . . . .	1777
	dedication . . . . .	1777
	delivery . . . . .	1777
	entry . . . . .	1777
	gift . . . . .	1777
	larceny . . . . .	1777
	loan . . . . .	1777
	payment . . . . .	1777
	sale . . . . .	1777
	sundries . . . . .	1777
	possession, in prescriptive title . . . . .	1777
	in presumption of ownership . . . . .	1086, 1779
	accused found with stolen goods . . . . .	1781
	testator revoking a will . . . . .	1738
	bankrupt evading creditors . . . . .	1782
	domicil . . . . .	1784
	accused's intent . . . . .	1785
(c)	<i>words used as circumstantial evidence</i> . . . . .	1788-1792
	in proving search for witness absent or deceased . . . . .	261, 664, 1312, 1313, 1405, 1414, 1789

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Hearsay Rule</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
in proving search for lost document . . . . .	1196
third person's knowledge . . . . .	1789
belief . . . . .	1789
diligence . . . . .	1789
good faith . . . . .	1789
insolvency . . . . .	1789
motive . . . . .	1789
reasonableness . . . . .	1789
sanity . . . . .	1789
viciousness, etc. . . . .	1789
• speaker's state of mind . . . . .	1790
identifying a time, place, or person . . . . .	1791
impeaching a witness by self-contradiction . . . . .	1018, 1792
(d) <i>res gestæ</i> . . . . .	1767-1769
history and meaning of the term . . . . .	1767
agent's and conspirator's admissions . . . . .	1769
IV. <i>Rule applied to Court Officers: see JUROR; JUDGE; COUNSEL; INTERPRETER.</i> [Examine analyses of "By Cross-examination," Vol. III, p. 26, "By Con- frontation," Vol. III, p. 93; and "Hearsay Rule not Applicable," Vol. III, p. 770.]	
<b>Height</b> , as evidenced by other conditions or effects . . . . .	438, 451, 461
<b>Heir</b> , admissions used against . . . . .	1081
<b>Heredity</b> of illness, as evidence . . . . .	223
of insanity . . . . .	232
inference from . . . . .	84, 165
<b>Highway</b> , evidencing owner's knowledge of danger of . . . . .	252
injury on cross-walk . . . . .	252
injury on bridge, to show notice of condition . . . . .	252
on sidewalk, to show notice . . . . .	252
repairs, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	283
condition at another time or place, as evidence of defect . . . . .	437
injuries of other persons, as evidence of defect . . . . .	458
similar precautions, as evidence of safety . . . . .	461
see also DEDICATION.	
<b>History</b> of the rules of evidence in general . . . . .	8
of interest as a disqualification . . . . .	575
of rule for confessions . . . . .	817, 865
of rule for producing documentary originals . . . . .	1177
of attesting-witness rule . . . . .	1287
of hearsay rule . . . . .	1364
of dying declarations . . . . .	1430
of statements against interest . . . . .	1476
of statement of pedigree . . . . .	1480
of regular entries . . . . .	1518
of statements about boundaries . . . . .	1563
of use of record-copy of deed . . . . .	1650
books of, used in evidence . . . . .	1597, 1690, 1699
of 'res gestæ' phrase . . . . .	1795
of the oath . . . . .	1815
of separation of witnesses . . . . .	1837
of opinion rule . . . . .	1917
of handwriting testimony . . . . .	1991-1994
of rules of number . . . . .	2032
of compulsory process . . . . .	2190
of party opponent's privilege . . . . .	2217
of marital privilege . . . . .	2227, 2333
of privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2250
of confidential communications . . . . .	2285
of client's privilege . . . . .	2290
of patient's privilege . . . . .	2380
of penitent's privilege . . . . .	2394
of parol evidence rule . . . . .	
intent and mistake . . . . .	2405



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>History of parol evidence rule</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
varying the terms . . . . .	2426
interpretation . . . . .	2462, 2470
<b>History, Books of, used in evidence</b>	
as representing reputation . . . . .	1597
as scientific treatises . . . . .	1693, 1699
judicially noticed . . . . .	2580
<b>Holographic Will, testimony required for</b> . . . . .	2051
<b>Homicide, character of deceased in, to evidence self-defence</b> . . . . .	63, 246
moral character of deceased in . . . . .	1983
accused's threats, as evidence of . . . . .	102-105
deceased's threats, as evidence of aggression . . . . .	110, 247
refuting conclusion from finding knife near body in . . . . .	34
survival of alleged deceased, as negating 'corpus delicti' . . . . .	138
threats of a third person, as evidencing innocence of the accused . . . . .	140
suicidal plans of deceased, as evidencing innocence of the accused . . . . .	143
possession of booty or tools, as evidence of . . . . .	153, 154, 238
traces of blood, etc., as evidence of . . . . .	149
acts of violence, on an issue of self-defence . . . . .	198, 248
conduct as evidence of accused's sanity . . . . .	228
other acts of violence, to show defendant's intent . . . . .	363
intrigue of wife-murderer with paramour as showing motive for . . . . .	118
circumstances showing a motive . . . . .	390
conduct as evidence of malice . . . . .	396, 397
weapon, clothing, etc., as evidence of identity . . . . .	413
dying declarations in . . . . .	1432
spontaneous exclamations of deceased or accused . . . . .	1750
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
burden of proof of self-defence in . . . . .	2512
<b>Horse, character of, as evidence of behavior</b> . . . . .	68
fright of, as evidence of dangerous object . . . . .	252, 461
pedigree of . . . . .	1706
cribbing of, as unsoundness . . . . .	1700
see also ANIMAL.	
<b>Hospital records, as memoranda</b> . . . . .	751
as regular entries . . . . .	1530
as exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1521, 1707
privilege for patient's communications in . . . . .	2382
<b>Hostility of deceased shown by details of prior quarrels</b> . . . . .	396
former, of witness; see IMPEACHMENT (g).	
see also DECEASED BY HOMICIDE.	
<b>House; see PREMISES; PROPERTY.</b>	
<b>House of Ill-fame, character of</b> . . . . .	78
character of inmates of . . . . .	78
other acts, as evidencing character . . . . .	204
as evidencing intent . . . . .	367
provable by reputation . . . . .	1620
<b>Husband, testimony of, as disqualified or privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.</b>	
notice to, as evidence of wife's knowledge . . . . .	261
admissions of, against wife . . . . .	1078, 1086, 2232
statements of, to evidence pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
expressions of affection or dislike . . . . .	1730
motive or desire of, to get rid of wife . . . . .	191
communications by or to, as privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
presumption of coercion by . . . . .	2514
see also CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; HOMICIDE.	
<b>Hypnotism, showing influence of, on witness</b> . . . . .	934
<b>Hypothetical Question, general theory</b> . . . . .	672, 1927
as "usurping province of jury" . . . . .	673
Observation and Hypothetical Presentation discriminated . . . . .	674-678
when allowed or required . . . . .	674-680
may be put only to expert . . . . .	679
answer to, fails if premises are not sustained . . . . .	680

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Hypothetical Question</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
form and scope . . . . .	681-683
abuse of . . . . .	682
all undisputed facts need not be included in . . . . .	682
on cross-examination . . . . .	684
to physician involving privileged facts, is not privileged . . . . .	2382
mode of objection to inadequate offer of . . . . .	18
<b>Hysteric person as claimant</b> . . . . .	963

## I

<b>Ice</b> , as a highway defect; see <b>HIGHWAY</b> ; <b>NEGLIGENCE</b> .	
<b>Identity</b> , mistaken, as evidence . . . . .	142
as evidenced by traces, of accused or other party . . . . .	148, 149
by other crimes . . . . .	218, 414
by family history or hearsay . . . . .	270, 1494
by voice . . . . .	660
over telephone . . . . .	2155
by statute . . . . .	660
by appearance . . . . .	660, 1154
by witness' former recognition . . . . .	744, 1130
by photograph . . . . .	660, 790, 1156
by finger-prints . . . . .	151a, 414
by footprints . . . . .	151a, 415, 660, 1977, 2265
by placing hat on accused's head . . . . .	2265
condition of light as affecting . . . . .	460
mode of securing reliable testimony to . . . . .	786
of person's features, ascertained by compulsory inspection . . . . .	2220
of voice, as shown by utterance . . . . .	222
of person, place, chattel, etc., in general . . . . .	410-416
by clothing . . . . .	413, 660
of brand or mark on stock or timber . . . . .	150
of maker of attested document . . . . .	1513
of a time or place, as shown by utterances . . . . .	1791
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1977
of document, shown by ink, paper, etc. . . . .	2024
original required . . . . .	1244
presumption of, from identity of name . . . . .	2529
from traces, tools, etc. . . . .	148, 2529
of grantor or grantee . . . . .	2529
of signer of affidavit in chancery . . . . .	2529
of one convicted of crime . . . . .	2529
of party to marriage . . . . .	2529
of names in tracing title . . . . .	2529
<b>Idiot</b> ; see <b>SANITY</b> ; <b>INTERPRETER</b> ; <b>WITNESS</b> ; <b>OATH</b> .	
<b>Illegal Business</b> , knowledge of keeper of premises for . . . . .	254
<b>Illegal Transactions</b> , shown by parol evidence . . . . .	2406, 2414
<b>Illegality</b> in obtaining evidence, not to exclude it . . . . .	2183
<b>Illegible Document</b> , production of original . . . . .	1229
expert testimony to . . . . .	2025
verbal precision in . . . . .	2105
<b>Illegitimacy</b> , character of third person as evidence . . . . .	68
adultery, as evidence of . . . . .	134, 165
non-access, as evidence of . . . . .	137
as evidenced by family hearsay; see <b>FAMILY HISTORY</b> .	
by neighborhood-reputation . . . . .	1605
corroboration of claim of inheritance based on . . . . .	2066
see also <b>LEGITIMACY</b> ; <b>BASTARDY</b> .	
<b>Ill-fame</b> , house of; see <b>HOUSE OF ILL-FAME</b> .	
<b>Illinois</b> , local rules of evidence in; see <b>ATTESTING WITNESS</b> ; <b>PAROL EVIDENCE, D.</b> ; <b>WILL</b> .	
<b>Illiterate</b> , signature by mark, whether identifiable . . . . .	693
as attesting witness . . . . .	1512, 1292



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Illness</b> , test when evidence is offered of, as result of eating certain food . . . . .	33
explaining away evidence that arsenical wall paper caused . . . . .	35
as evidenced by appearance . . . . .	223, 437, 441
prior and subsequent condition of . . . . .	225, 437, 441
insured's knowledge of, as evidenced by declarations . . . . .	266
symptoms, as indicating cause of . . . . .	441, 457
witness' experience in, as qualifying him . . . . .	568, 687
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	934, 1005
as excusing absence of attesting witness . . . . .	1315
of deponent . . . . .	1406
of declarant of facts against interest . . . . .	1456
of maker of regular entries . . . . .	1521
of witness summoned . . . . .	2205
as excusing lack of cross-examination . . . . .	1390
expressions of suffering in . . . . .	1718
privilege for compulsory reports of . . . . .	2377
privilege for communications to physician . . . . .	2380
see also PHYSICIAN; POISON; HEALTH; DISEASE.	
<b>Imbecile</b> ; see IMIOT.	
<b>Immaterial</b> , distinguished from incompetent and irrelevant . . . . .	18
<b>Immateriality</b> of evidence, cured by other immaterial evidence . . . . .	15
see also IRRELEVANCY.	
<b>Immigrant</b> , conclusiveness of certificate of occupation of Chinese . . . . .	1347
conclusiveness of official findings as to Chinese . . . . .	1354, 1355
privilege against self-crimination in deportation proceedings . . . . .	2256
<b>Immunity</b> , of corporation from disclosure . . . . .	2259a
to witness, destroys privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2281
what disclosures entitle a witness to, under statute . . . . .	2281
mode of obtaining, under statute . . . . .	2282
before judicial officer . . . . .	2282
before administrative officer . . . . .	2282
testimony before grand jury . . . . .	2363
of witness, from arrest . . . . .	2195
<b>Impeaching</b> one's own instrument, forbidden . . . . .	529
<b>Impeachment of Official</b> , privilege against self-crimination in proceedings for . . . . .	2257
<b>Impeachment of a Witness</b>	
(a) <i>general principles</i> . . . . .	875-881
(b) <i>persons impeachable</i> . . . . .	884-918
discriminations in proving defective qualifications . . . . .	876
(c) <i>moral character</i> . . . . .	
hearsay witnesses (dying declarant, attesting-witness, etc.) . . . . .	884-888, 1446, 1514
attesting witness . . . . .	886, 917, 1033, 1514
accused as witness . . . . .	889-892
impeaching an impeaching witness . . . . .	894, 1111
one's own witness . . . . .	896-918
general principles . . . . .	896-899
by immoral character . . . . .	900
by bias, interest, or corruption . . . . .	901

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Impeachment of a Witness, one's own witness (<i>continued</i>)</b>		Section
	by bribery . . . . .	901
	by prior self-contradiction . . . . .	902-906
	by contradiction with other witnesses . . . . .	907, 908
	who is one's own witness . . . . .	909-918
	distinguished from discrediting opponent on discovery . . . . .	1856
	relevant answer necessary to create protection . . . . .	910
	unused deposition . . . . .	910, 912, 913
	witness called by judge . . . . .	910, 918
	opposing party as witness . . . . .	916
	co-party witness against co-party . . . . .	916
	necessary witness . . . . .	917, 918
	using opponent's deposition . . . . .	913
	book of regular entries by clerk or party . . . . .	1531, 1557
	expert witness and scientific books . . . . .	1700
(c)	<i>moral character</i> in general . . . . .	920-930
	general principles . . . . .	920
	kind of character . . . . .	922-926
	specific traits . . . . .	924
	witness and party distinguished . . . . .	925
	prior conviction . . . . .	926
	time of character . . . . .	927-929
	after suit begun . . . . .	929
	place of character . . . . .	930
(d)	<i>insanity, etc.</i> . . . . .	931-936
	insanity . . . . .	932
	intoxication . . . . .	933
	use of cocaine . . . . .	934
	disease . . . . .	934
	age . . . . .	938
	morphine habit . . . . .	934
	defect of speech . . . . .	934
	religious belief . . . . .	936
	race . . . . .	937
	abnormal mental grades . . . . .	935
(e)	<i>experience</i> . . . . .	939
(f)	<i>bias, interest, and corruption, modes of evidencing</i> . . . . .	943-969
	general principles . . . . .	943
	cross-examination . . . . .	944
	demeanor as evidence . . . . .	946
(g)	<i>bias</i> from circumstances and conduct . . . . .	948-950
	from former hostility . . . . .	950
	relationship as evidencing bias . . . . .	949
	relationship invoked by counsel, disregarded by jury . . . . .	949
	pecuniary relations to show bias . . . . .	949
	details of a quarrel . . . . .	951, 952
	preliminary inquiry to witness . . . . .	953
	opinion as to another's bias . . . . .	1963
	see also BIAS.	
(h)	<i>corruption</i> . . . . .	956-964
	willingness or offer to swear falsely . . . . .	957, 958
	confession of false testimony . . . . .	959
	attempt at subornation or bribery . . . . .	960, 962
	receipt of money . . . . .	961
	sundry corrupt conduct . . . . .	963
	preliminary inquiry to witness . . . . .	964
	see also CORRUPTION.	
(i)	<i>interest</i> in civil cases . . . . .	966
	in criminal cases . . . . .	967, 968
	bonds, rewards, detective-employment, insurance, etc. . . . .	969
	see also INTEREST.	
(j)	<i>moral character, evidenced by misconduct</i> . . . . .	977-988
	general principles . . . . .	977, 978
	relevancy and auxiliary policy distinguished . . . . .	978



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Impeachment of a Witness</b> ( <i>continued</i> )		Section
	extrinsic testimony . . . . .	979, 987
	particular acts of misconduct . . . . .	979
	record of conviction . . . . .	980, 1270
	arrest or indictment as affecting credibility . . . . .	980, 982
	pardon as affecting credibility . . . . .	980
	cross-examination . . . . .	981-983, 987
	relevant questions excluded for policy . . . . .	983
	privilege against disgracing answers . . . . .	984
	rumors, on cross-examination . . . . .	981
	by reputation . . . . .	1608-1628
	by personal opinion . . . . .	1980
	belief on oath . . . . .	1985
	see also CHARACTER.	
(k)	<i>skill, memory, knowledge</i> , as tested on cross-examination . . . . .	730, 990-991
	incapacity evidenced by particular errors . . . . .	996
	grounds of expert opinion . . . . .	992
	testing capacity to observe . . . . .	993
	opportunity to observe . . . . .	994
	by testing capacity of memory . . . . .	995
	expert to handwriting . . . . .	2015
(l)	<i>contradiction by other witnesses</i> . . . . .	1000-1015
	collateral matters . . . . .	1000-1007
	unfair surprise in . . . . .	1002, 1007
	test of collateralness . . . . .	1003
	collateral questions on cross-examination . . . . .	1006
	supporting contradicted witness on direct examination . . . . .	1007
	bias, corruption, skill, knowledge, memory . . . . .	1005
(m)	<i>falsus in uno</i> . . . . .	1008-1015
	of an explanatory statement . . . . .	1046
(n)	<i>self-contradiction</i> . . . . .	1017-1046
	general principles . . . . .	1017
	rules for avoiding Unfair Surprise and Confusion of Issues . . . . .	1019
	collateral matters . . . . .	1020-1023
	test of collateralness . . . . .	1020
	facts not collateral . . . . .	1021, 1022
	bias, corruption, skill, knowledge . . . . .	1022
	preliminary warning necessary . . . . .	1025-1039
	reason of the rule . . . . .	1025
	history of the rule . . . . .	1026
	objections to the rule . . . . .	1027
	specifications necessary in warning question . . . . .	1029
	absent or deceased witness . . . . .	1030, 1033
	depositions . . . . .	1032
	testimony at a former trial . . . . .	1033
	dying declarations . . . . .	1033
	attesting witness . . . . .	1033
	testimony admitted by stipulation . . . . .	1034
	contained in other sworn testimony . . . . .	1035
	recall to put the question . . . . .	1036
	recall made impossible by act of party first producing witness . . . . .	1036
	recall of accused taking stand voluntarily . . . . .	1036, 2276
	contradiction admissible . . . . .	1037
	contradiction must be independent of present answer . . . . .	1038
	preliminary question unnecessary in certain cases . . . . .	1039
	what is a self-contradiction . . . . .	1040-1043
	admissions as contradictory utterances . . . . .	1040
	joint statement . . . . .	1040
	conduct . . . . .	1040
	opinion . . . . .	1041
	silence, omission to claim or speak . . . . .	1042, 1043
	explaining the contradiction . . . . .	1044
	putting in the whole . . . . .	1045, 2098
	joining issue . . . . .	1046

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Impeachment of a Witness</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
showing the writing to the witness . . . . .	1259-1263
distinguished from admissions . . . . .	1051
party's admissions; see <b>ADMISSIONS</b> .	
testimony before grand jury, not privileged . . . . .	2363
(o) <i>sundry modes</i>	
of witness who proves document . . . . .	1093
of attesting witness . . . . .	1514
by annoying questions . . . . .	781
by repetition of questions . . . . .	782
by conviction of crime; see <b>CONVICTION OF CRIME</b> .	
for restoring credit; see <b>WITNESS, IV</b> .	
(p) <i>absent witness</i> , impeached like others . . . . .	SSS, 1034
see also <b>CONTRADICTION</b> ; <b>CROSS-EXAMINATION, IV</b> ; <b>DEMEANOR</b> ; <b>DYING</b> <b>DECLARATIONS</b> ; <b>EXPERT WITNESS, II</b> ; <b>QUESTIONS TO A WITNESS</b> .	
<b>Implied admissions</b> . . . . .	1060
self-contradictions . . . . .	1042
<b>Importation</b> , other transactions as evidence of fraud in . . . . .	341
<b>Impotency</b> , inspection in divorce . . . . .	2220
presumption of . . . . .	2528
<b>Impression</b> , as distinguished from knowledge . . . . .	658
from type, as evidence of another . . . . .	440
as sufficient for a handwriting-witness . . . . .	698
as sufficient in point of memory . . . . .	726
as opinion testimony . . . . .	1969
excluded if founded on guess or rumor . . . . .	1970
<b>Imprisonment</b> , as excusing absence of an attesting witness . . . . .	1315
of a deponent . . . . .	1407
see also <b>CONVICTION OF CRIME</b> .	
<b>Inadmissible evidence</b> , as justifying other inadmissible evidence . . . . .	15
<b>Incest</b> , other offences, as evidence of intent or motive . . . . .	360, 398
sexual desire as evidencing . . . . .	400
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
eye-witness of marriage . . . . .	2085, 2086
<b>Incompetent evidence</b> ; see <b>ADMISSIBILITY</b> ; <b>IRRELEVANCY</b> .	
employee; see <b>EMPLOYEE</b> .	
physician; see <b>PHYSICIAN</b> .	
persons in general; see <b>SKILL</b> ; <b>NEGLIGENCE</b> .	
<b>Inconsistency</b> , as impeaching a witness; see <b>SELF-CONTRADICTION</b> .	
<b>Incorporation</b> , reputation to prove . . . . .	1625
presumed . . . . .	2535
producing original of charter . . . . .	1249
<b>Indecency</b> , of exhibition to jury . . . . .	1159
as ground for exclusion . . . . .	2180
in presence of spouse is confidential . . . . .	2337
<b>Indecent Assault</b> , plaintiff's character, as mitigating damages . . . . .	75, 212
woman's character as evidence in . . . . .	62
woman's prior unchaste acts in . . . . .	200
see also <b>RAPE</b> .	
<b>Indecent Exposure</b> , other offences, as evidence of intent . . . . .	360
<b>Indecent Liberties</b> , other acts as evidence of . . . . .	360, 398
corroboration required . . . . .	2061
<b>Indemnity</b> against self-crimination . . . . .	2281
<b>Indians</b> , as witnesses; see <b>RACE</b> .	
conclusiveness of rulings as to race of . . . . .	1347
tribal census as evidence of race, age, etc. . . . .	1671
proof of marriage in Five Civilized Tribes . . . . .	2085
<b>Indictment</b> , as disqualifying a co-indictee . . . . .	580
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	949, 980, 982, 987
list of witnesses indorsed on . . . . .	1850
quashing, for improper compulsion to give evidence . . . . .	2270, 2281
privilege for grounds of . . . . .	2364
for assent of grand jurors to . . . . .	2364



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Indorsement</b> , of witnesses on the indictment . . . . .	1850
genuineness must be evidenced . . . . .	2130
presumption of payment from, on note . . . . .	2134
on bond, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
"without recourse" as waiver of genuineness . . . . .	2445
in blank, when invalid . . . . .	2445
of bill of exchange; see BILL OF EXCHANGE.	
<b>Indorser</b> , parol agreement collateral to instrument . . . . .	2443
see also BILL OF EXCHANGE.	
<b>Inducement</b> to a confession; see CONFESSIOX.	
<b>Inductive</b> form of inference . . . . .	30
<b>Industrial Accident Board</b> , rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4a, 4c
power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
inspection of injured person's body . . . . .	2220
findings admissible . . . . .	1672
privilege for reports to . . . . .	2377
<b>Industrial Accidents</b> , privilege for reports of . . . . .	2377
burden of proof of cause of . . . . .	2510
see also NEGLIGENCE; EMPLOYER.	
<b>Industry</b> , facts of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2580
<b>Infamy</b> , disqualifying a witness . . . . .	519
under exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
excusing absence of attesting witness . . . . .	1316
privileged from disclosure . . . . .	984, 2216, 2255
see also CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
<b>Infant</b> , disqualification as a witness . . . . .	505
under exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
admissions of . . . . .	1053
dying declarations of . . . . .	1445
opinion to capacity of . . . . .	1958
presumption of incapacity for crime . . . . .	2514
waiver by counsel for . . . . .	1063
see also AGE; CHILD; DESERTION; LEGITIMACY; MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
<b>Inference</b> , modes of . . . . .	30, 476
upon inference, not allowed . . . . .	41
from failure to produce evidence . . . . .	285-291, 2273
of witness must be based on adequate data . . . . .	659
of non-occurrence by reason of failure to see or hear . . . . .	664
<b>Infidel</b> ; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.	
<b>Information</b> , list of witnesses indorsed on . . . . .	1850
received by a person; see KNOWLEDGE.	
<b>Informor</b> , privilege for communications by . . . . .	2374
<b>Infringement</b> ; see COPYRIGHT; PATENT.	
<b>Inheritance</b> , proof of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
character of third persons, to prove illegitimacy in . . . . .	68
<b>Initials</b> , document signed with . . . . .	2168
interpretation of, by usage . . . . .	2464
certified copy of document with initials . . . . .	1677
<b>Injunction</b> , degree of proof in proceedings for . . . . .	2498
<b>Injury</b> , repairs after, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	283
cause of, as evidenced by its effects . . . . .	437-461
refuting evidence of, to house by sewer gas . . . . .	33
caused by vibration of bridge . . . . .	34, 35
similar injury to other persons from same cause . . . . .	458
cause or consequence of, opinion as to . . . . .	1975, 1976
see also CORPORAL INJURY; ILLNESS; NEGLIGENCE; HIGHWAY; MACHINE; PREMISES.	
<b>Ink</b> , expert witness to nature of . . . . .	570
identification of document by . . . . .	415, 2024
<b>Innocence</b> , consciousness of, as evidence . . . . .	174, 293
failure to protest one's . . . . .	273, 284, 1144
presumption of . . . . .	2511
not evidence in favor of accused . . . . .	2511
applied to bigamy . . . . .	2506
see also DEFENDANT.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Inquiries</b> , as evidence of design to commit crime . . . . .	238
<b>Inquisition</b> of domain, by the homage . . . . .	1670
of escheat, by the crown . . . . .	1670
of title, by the sheriff . . . . .	1670
of pedigree, by the heralds . . . . .	1670
of lunacy, by commission . . . . .	233, 1671
of death, by the coroner . . . . .	1671
of population, by the census . . . . .	1671
of heresy in Europe, history of . . . . .	2250
<b>Insane Belief</b> , as shown by facts told to the party . . . . .	262
disproof of communications exciting . . . . .	263
<b>Insanity</b> , mode of evidencing . . . . .	227-233, 993
prior or subsequent condition to prove . . . . .	190, 233
disinheritance as evidence of . . . . .	229
as evidenced by environment . . . . .	231
collateral or ancestral . . . . .	232
hereditary . . . . .	232
discrimination between various principles to prove . . . . .	234
of transferor to show notice by transferee . . . . .	253
qualifications of witness to prove . . . . .	568, 689
as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	492, 932
under exceptions to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
evidenced by inspection in court . . . . .	1160
excusing absence of attesting witness . . . . .	1316
allowing use of statements against interest . . . . .	1456
of statements of family history . . . . .	1481
of regular entries in course of business . . . . .	1521, 1561
privilege against self-crimination as applied to medical examination for . . . . .	2265
inquisition or adjudication upon . . . . .	1671
utterances of person to prove . . . . .	1734
opinion rule to testimony to . . . . .	1933
observation of, by prescribing physician . . . . .	2384
medical expert required to prove . . . . .	2090
see also SANITY; LUNACY; LUNATIC; MENTAL CONDITION; INSANE BELIEF.	
<b>Insolvency</b> , as evidence of non-payment . . . . .	89, 224
purchaser's knowledge of, evidenced by repute . . . . .	253
Arkansas rule requiring corroboration of wife's testimony of consideration in . . . . .	2054
transfer in . . . . .	382
evidenced by prior condition of . . . . .	392
as a motive for crime or fraud . . . . .	1081, 1082, 1086
debtor's admissions . . . . .	1959
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1354
'prima facie' evidence of banker's knowledge of . . . . .	1621
as evidenced by reputation . . . . .	753, 762
see also FRAUDULENT TRANSFERS; BANKRUPTCY.	
<b>Inspection</b> , of memorandum used to aid recollection . . . . .	1862, 2194, 2220, 2265
of corporal injury, by jury or witness . . . . .	1152
of real evidence, mode and place of . . . . .	1858
of corporation books before trial . . . . .	1858
right of citizen to, of public record . . . . .	2125
of document of opponent, as making it evidence . . . . .	2193, 2219, 2264
at trial, not privileged . . . . .	2194, 2221, 2264
of chattels or premises, not privileged . . . . .	2555
trial by . . . . .	
of document, premises, chattels, as permissible; see REAL EVIDENCE.	
of documents, premises, chattels of opponent before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
see also PREMISES.	
<b>Instruction</b> , to the jury, where a fact is in part inadmissible . . . . .	13
to disregard evidence; see STRIKE OUT.	
on witness' bias . . . . .	940
on considering whole of an utterance . . . . .	2094
directing a verdict . . . . .	2495
<b>Instrument</b> ; see DOCUMENT.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Insurance</b> , lack of money to negative large stock of goods in loss by fire . . . . .	89
clause waiving or altering evidence rules, in contract of . . . . .	7a
fraudulent, of life during illness . . . . .	225, 266
insured's declarations, to show knowledge of illness . . . . .	266
as evidence of motive for negligence . . . . .	282, 392
of bias or interest . . . . .	949, 969
taking of policy, as evidence of ownership . . . . .	282
against accident, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	282, 393, 949, 969
other fraudulent acts as evidence of intent . . . . .	340
proofs of loss in, as an admission . . . . .	1073
as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770
as coroner's official statement . . . . .	1671
admissions of insured against beneficiary . . . . .	1081
inspection of policy before trial . . . . .	1858
contract clause requiring eye-witness of personal injury . . . . .	2081a
conclusiveness of valued policy of . . . . .	1354
fraternal or mutual, record's provable by copy . . . . .	1683
materiality of risk or representations . . . . .	1946, 1947
privilege for communications to physician . . . . .	2389, 2390
waiver of privilege in policy . . . . .	2388
application signed by mistake . . . . .	2415
collateral parol agreement to provide . . . . .	2442
burden of proof of conditions in policy of . . . . .	2537
policy in a single document . . . . .	2452
warranty of . . . . .	2434
proof of arson beyond reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
presumption of accident, from death . . . . .	2510
see also ARSON; INSURER.	
<b>Insurer</b> , waiver by, in sending blank form for proof of claim to insured . . . . .	1056
admissions of, as real plaintiff . . . . .	1810
<b>Intemperance</b> , as evidence of misconduct . . . . .	96, 203
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	934
proved by reputation . . . . .	1621
see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR-SELLING; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Intent</b> , criminal, general theory of . . . . .	242, 302
definition of . . . . .	300
to evidence anonymous crimes . . . . .	303
distinguished from design, etc. . . . .	103, 300
knowledge or design . . . . .	300
motive, design, character, etc. . . . .	386
other crimes, as evidence of . . . . .	309-367
abortion . . . . .	359
adultery . . . . .	360
arson . . . . .	354
bigamy . . . . .	360
burglary . . . . .	351
embezzlement . . . . .	329
enticement . . . . .	360
extortion . . . . .	351
false pretences . . . . .	320
forgery and counterfeiting . . . . .	309
fraudulent transfers . . . . .	333
homicide and assault . . . . .	363
incest . . . . .	360
indecent exposure . . . . .	360
larceny and kidnapping . . . . .	346
possession of stolen goods . . . . .	324
rape . . . . .	357, 358
robbery . . . . .	351
seduction . . . . .	360
sodomy . . . . .	360
sundry frauds . . . . .	340
miscellaneous offences . . . . .	367
civil cases . . . . .	371

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Intent</b> , other crimes, as evidence of ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
declarations, as hearsay evidence of; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.	
testifying to one's own intent . . . . .	581, 1965
testifying to another person's intent . . . . .	581, 661, 1964
expressions of, or motive by defendant . . . . .	1732
opinion evidence of, in dedication . . . . .	1967
controlled by substantive law . . . . .	1967
declarations of; Hearsay Rule and Verbal Acts distinguished . . . . .	1968
in slander and libel . . . . .	1971
declarations of, used to interpret a document . . . . .	2471
parol evidence of, to disinherit . . . . .	2475
presumption of, in criminal cases . . . . .	2511
jury to determine, in libel . . . . .	2557
of party to a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
proof of, by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
information or notice, as evidence of, see KNOWLEDGE.	
see also MOTIVE; INTENTION.	
[Examine analysis of "Other Offences or Similar Acts, as Evidence of Knowledge, Design, or Intent," Vol. I, pp. 607, 608.]	
<b>Intention</b> , testamentary or contractual . . . . .	112
opinion of another's intention . . . . .	1964
one's own intention . . . . .	1965
distinguished from "meaning" . . . . .	2459
to go to certain place, to evidence going . . . . .	1725
to commit suicide . . . . .	1725
see also DESIGN; INTENT; MOTIVE.	
<b>Intercourse</b> ; see BASTARDY; RAPE; SEDUCTION; INCEST; PREGNANCY.	
<b>Interest</b>	
(a) <i>as disqualifying a witness</i>	
(b) <i>as impeaching a witness</i>	
(c) <i>as excusing absence of a witness</i>	
(d) <i>as money profit</i>	
(a) <i>as disqualifying a witness</i>	
history . . . . .	575
general principle . . . . .	32, 576
civil parties . . . . .	577
survivors . . . . .	578
accused . . . . .	579
co-indictees . . . . .	580
testimony to one's own intent . . . . .	581
attesting witness of a will . . . . .	582
'voir dire' . . . . .	583
mode of proving interest . . . . .	584-587
burden of proving . . . . .	584
time of making objection to . . . . .	586
judge determines . . . . .	587
time of interest . . . . .	583
husband and wife; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
husband or wife of co-defendant . . . . .	609
dying declarant . . . . .	1445
(b) <i>as impeaching a witness</i>	
one's own witness . . . . .	901
parties and others in civil cases . . . . .	966
accomplices and co-indictees . . . . .	967
accused . . . . .	968
bonds . . . . .	969
detective-employment . . . . .	969
insurance . . . . .	969
rewards . . . . .	969
real party injured . . . . .	969
restoring credit by consistent statements . . . . .	1128
knowledge of equitable, or other, by purchaser . . . . .	254



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Interest (continued)	Section
(c) <i>as excusing absence of a witness</i>	
of an attesting witness . . . . .	1316
of a deponent . . . . .	1409
of a deceased declarant . . . . .	1456
(d) <i>as money profit</i>	
reduced by subsequent oral agreement . . . . .	2441
<b>Interest, Statements against</b> , party's admissions; see <b>ADMISSIONS</b> .	
hearsay exception; see <b>AGAINST INTEREST</b> .	
<b>Interlocutory</b> proceedings, rules in, distinguished . . . . .	4
<b>International</b> affairs, privileged against disclosure . . . . .	2375
not judicially noticed . . . . .	2574
<b>Interpretation</b> , judge's function . . . . .	2556
opinion rule	
expert interpretation of technical words . . . . .	1955
location of deed-descriptions . . . . .	1956
by parol evidence; see <b>PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D</b> .	
<b>Interpreter</b> , qualifications of . . . . .	571
testimony to conversation with . . . . .	668
not necessarily called to contradict interpreted testimony . . . . .	1810
proof of former testimony given through . . . . .	751
necessity for . . . . .	811
adequacy of cross-examination without . . . . .	1393
admissions of, as agent . . . . .	668, 1077
sworn translation of deposition . . . . .	1710
translation as hearsay . . . . .	1810
must be sworn . . . . .	1810, 1824
form of oath for . . . . .	1818
juror as . . . . .	1910
communication between attorney and client, through, is privileged . . . . .	2317
lack of, as affecting right of cross-examination . . . . .	1393
<b>Interrogation</b> , mode of; see <b>QUESTION TO A WITNESS; EXAMINATION</b> .	
<b>Interrogation under Arrest</b> , confessions obtained by. . . . .	851
<b>Interrogatory</b> , mode of framing; see <b>QUESTION TO A WITNESS</b> .	
to opponent before trial; see <b>DISCOVERY</b> .	
notice of deposition; see <b>DEPOSITION</b> .	
order of topics; see <b>ORDER OF EXAMINATION</b> .	
time of objection to, in deposition . . . . .	18
non-responsive answer to . . . . .	785, 1392
sweeping interrogatory . . . . .	1392
discrediting opponent by his own answer to . . . . .	1856
answers to statutory . . . . .	2124
statutes allowing judgment to be taken for refusal to answer . . . . .	2218
<b>Interstate Commerce Commission</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
<b>Intimation</b> of crime about to occur, as showing guilt . . . . .	238
<b>Intimidation</b> of witness, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	278
on cross-examination, forbidden . . . . .	781
<b>Intoxication</b> , as evidence of an act done . . . . .	85, 96
as affecting ability to do an act . . . . .	85
modes of evidencing . . . . .	235
evidenced by conduct . . . . .	235
by predisposing circumstances . . . . .	235
by prior or subsequent condition . . . . .	235
by appearance . . . . .	235, 660, 1154
uses of condition of, as evidence, distinguished . . . . .	235
other instances, as evidencing a common drunkard . . . . .	203
as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	499
qualifications of witness testifying to . . . . .	571, 660
opinion as to appearance of . . . . .	1974
spouse testifying to, as confidential fact . . . . .	2336, 2337
confession made during . . . . .	841
of a witness, in impeachment . . . . .	933, 993, 1005

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section
<b>Intoxication</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
presumption of incapacity for crime during . . . . .	2514
see also <b>INTEMPERANCE</b> ; <b>LIQUOR-SELLING</b> ; <b>NEGLIGENCE</b> .	
<b>Invalidating</b> one's own instrument, forbidden . . . . .	529
<b>Invention</b> , privilege against disclosure of . . . . .	2374
see also <b>PATENT</b> ; <b>TRADE SECRET</b> .	
<b>Inventory</b> of executor, etc., as evidence . . . . .	1672
<b>Irrelevancy</b> of evidence, cured by offering other irrelevant evidence . . . . .	15
distinguished from multifariousness . . . . .	42
not the subject of privilege . . . . .	2210
<b>Irrelevant</b> matters conditionally received . . . . .	1871
<b>Issue</b> , facts not in, distinguished from facts not admissible . . . . .	2
parent's bastardizing of . . . . .	2063, 2064
<b>Issues</b> , offering former testimony on the same . . . . .	1386
of pedigree, to admit family hearsay . . . . .	1503
proving character in; see <b>CHARACTER</b> ; <b>CONFUSION OF ISSUES</b> .	

### J

<b>Jail</b> ; see <b>CONVICTION OF CRIME</b> ; <b>IMPRISONMENT</b> ; <b>CONFESSION</b> .	
<b>Joint-defendant</b> , etc.; see <b>CO-DEFENDANT</b> , ETC.	
<b>Journal</b> ; see <b>BOOKS OF ACCOUNT</b> ; <b>LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL</b> ; <b>NEWSPAPER</b> .	
<b>Journalist</b> , privilege for confidences made to . . . . .	2286
see also <b>NEWSPAPER</b> ; <b>PRINTED MATTER</b> .	
<b>Judge</b> to determine qualifications of witness . . . . .	487, 497, 587
has no duty to examine on 'voir dire' . . . . .	497
not a mere umpire . . . . .	21, 983
to determine admissibility of a confession . . . . .	861
questions to a witness by a judge . . . . .	784
witness called by, may be impeached . . . . .	910, 918
decree in another cause, as reputation . . . . .	1594
testimony by a . . . . .	1805, 1909
privilege for . . . . .	2372, 2376
privilege for communications to . . . . .	2376
notes of testimony taken by . . . . .	1666
evidence offered after charge given by . . . . .	1879
power to determine privilege-claim . . . . .	2271, 2322, 2376
admissibility of evidence . . . . .	2550
negligence . . . . .	2552
reasonableness . . . . .	2553
malicious prosecution . . . . .	2554
construction of documents . . . . .	2556
criminal intent . . . . .	2557
foreign law . . . . .	2558
'nul tiel record' . . . . .	2555
may seek evidence . . . . .	2484, 2569
may not use private knowledge . . . . .	2569
may take judicial notice; see <b>JUDICIAL NOTICE</b> .	
see also <b>JUDICIAL DISCRETION</b> ; <b>MAGISTRATE</b> .	
<b>Judgment</b> of conviction of crime, as affecting a witness; see <b>CONVICTION OF CRIME</b> .	
offer to confess, as an admission . . . . .	1061
theory of conclusiveness . . . . .	1347
of conviction of crime, used against accessory . . . . .	1389
sheriff's recital of contents . . . . .	1664
full faith and credit to be given to . . . . .	1681
proving the whole . . . . .	2110
statutes allowing, for refusal to answer interrogatories . . . . .	2218
see also <b>JUDICIAL RECORD</b> .	
<b>Judicial Admission</b> , as affecting inference from failure to produce evidence . . . . .	291
distinguished from other admissions . . . . .	1057, 2588, 2589
of contents of a document . . . . .	1257
of execution of a document . . . . .	2132, 2595
effect as conclusive upon the party making . . . . .	2590
exclusive of evidence by the party benefiting . . . . .	2591



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Judicial Admission</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
validity as a waiver of unconstitutionality or other illegality . . . . .	2592
effect on subsequent trials . . . . .	2593
form and tenor of the admission; who is authorized . . . . .	2594
by attorney . . . . .	2594
testimony of an absent witness, admitted to avoid a continuance . . . . .	2595
of genuineness of document . . . . .	2596
<b>Judicial Decision</b>	
report of, proved by official printed copy . . . . .	1684
by private printed copy . . . . .	1703
judicially noticed . . . . .	2579
<b>Judicial Discretion</b> , scope of . . . . .	16
abuse of . . . . .	16
distinguished from unappealable rulings . . . . .	16
ruling upon objections . . . . .	18
admitting experiments, etc. . . . .	444
determining a witness' qualifications . . . . .	496, 507, 561, 660
allowing leading questions . . . . .	770, 776
admitting a confession . . . . .	862
controlling the scope of cross-examination . . . . .	944, 983
search for a lost document . . . . .	1194
admitting testimony after the proper time . . . . .	1867
limiting the number of witnesses . . . . .	1908
relieving from stipulation . . . . .	2593
<b>Judicial Estoppel</b> , distinguished from pleading . . . . .	1066
<b>Judicial Notice</b> , general theory . . . . .	2565
anomalous meanings . . . . .	2566
mode of proceeding . . . . .	2567-2569
taken by jury . . . . .	1801, 2570
is not conclusive . . . . .	2567
must be requested . . . . .	2568
judge's private knowledge . . . . .	2569
judge may inform himself . . . . .	2569
specific facts noticed	
domestic and foreign law . . . . .	2572, 2573
charter of city . . . . .	2572
State law, by Federal courts . . . . .	2573
affected by sub-division or amalgamation . . . . .	2573
international affairs; seal of State . . . . .	2574
official and judicial seals . . . . .	2161-2169
almanac . . . . .	2566
foreign judgments . . . . .	2574
public divisions of land; boundaries, capitals, counties, etc. . . . .	2575
official authority and identity . . . . .	2576
elections . . . . .	2577
census, etc. . . . .	2577
proceedings of legislature, Executive proclamation . . . . .	2577
officers and rules of court . . . . .	2578
jurisdiction and terms of court . . . . .	2578
judicial proceedings . . . . .	2579
commerce, industry, history, science, etc. . . . .	2580
times, distances . . . . .	2581
meaning of words . . . . .	2582
intoxicating liquors . . . . .	2582
dictionaries . . . . .	2582
[Examine analysis of "Judicial Notice," Vol. V, p. 567.]	
<b>Judicial Record</b> , what constitutes . . . . .	2450
original admissible instead of a copy . . . . .	1186
custody presumes genuineness . . . . .	2158
original need not be produced . . . . .	1215, 1249
'nul tiel record,' perjury . . . . .	1216, 2555
dockets . . . . .	1217
copy of, preferred to recollection . . . . .	1267, 1268, 1269
certified copy . . . . .	1273

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Judicial Record</b> , copy of ( <i>continued</i> )	
copy of a copy . . . . .	1274
sealed attestation of copy . . . . .	2162
conclusive proof of the facts adjudged . . . . .	1346, 1347, 2450
of contents of lost document re-established . . . . .	1275, 1347, 1660, 1681
of preliminary probate not evidence on appeal . . . . .	1658
full faith and credit required of . . . . .	1681
answer in chancery; see ANSWER.	
provable by certified copy . . . . .	1681
by inspection . . . . .	2555
whole must be proved . . . . .	2110, 2116
see also CERTIFIED COPY.	
<b>Jurat</b> , as evidence of oath taken . . . . .	1676b
see also CERTIFICATE OF OATH; PUBLIC DOCUMENT; NOTARY.	
<b>Jurisdiction</b> , conviction of crime in another; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
absence from, as presuming death . . . . .	2531
document out of . . . . .	1213
attesting witness out of . . . . .	1312
subpoena to witness out of . . . . .	2207
<b>Juror</b> , having knowledge must testify . . . . .	1800
incompetency of . . . . .	1801
not to receive evidence out of court . . . . .	1802
disclosing at subsequent trial, knowledge obtained at view on former . . . . .	1910, 2346
objections to, as witness . . . . .	1910
as interpreter . . . . .	1910
personal knowledge of . . . . .	2354
<b>Jurors</b> , communications by and to . . . . .	2345
motives, beliefs, misunderstandings, etc. . . . .	2349
impeaching a verdict . . . . .	2349
testimony supporting a verdict . . . . .	2349
'voir dire' of, as to interest in employer's-liability insurance . . . . .	282, 969
<b>Jury</b> , fraud in packing, evidence of intent . . . . .	367
determination of witness' qualifications . . . . .	497, 587, 1187
memorandum of recollection shown to . . . . .	754, 763
determination of admissibility of confession . . . . .	861
determination of admissibility of dying declaration . . . . .	1451
withdrawal during arguments of admissibility . . . . .	861, 1808
corporal injury exhibited to . . . . .	1157, 1158, 2220
clothing exhibited to . . . . .	1157
animal produced before . . . . .	1154, 1161
improper sampling of liquor by . . . . .	1159
reading scientific books to . . . . .	1700
verdict admitted as reputation, in another cause . . . . .	1593
as "verbal act," to prove boundary . . . . .	1593, 1778
not to be impeached by juror . . . . .	2348
deliberations of . . . . .	2348
failure to observe formalities of conduct . . . . .	2348
correction of mistake in verdict . . . . .	2348
notes of former testimony taken by . . . . .	1669
judicial notice by jury . . . . .	1801
view by, evidence not to be received at . . . . .	1802
defendant's presence at . . . . .	1803
general rules for . . . . .	1162-1168
in eminent domain . . . . .	1168
information acquired at view by, is not evidence . . . . .	1802
evidence not ordinarily to be offered to, after retirement . . . . .	1880
to be offered to, after verdict . . . . .	1881
documents taken to jury-room . . . . .	1802, 1913
experiment with gun in jury room . . . . .	460, 1160
juror may be witness . . . . .	1910
must be sworn . . . . .	1800
charge given . . . . .	1879
retirement of . . . . .	1880
showing specimens of writing to . . . . .	2001, 2016



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Jury</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
privilege for communications between . . . . .	2346
examining the jury before discharge . . . . .	2350
misconduct of party or court-officer toward . . . . .	2354
verdict of, given to unintended party . . . . .	2355
manner of, and right in polling . . . . .	2355
sufficient evidence for . . . . .	2494
right to determine law . . . . .	2558, 2559
to construe documents . . . . .	2556
to determine intent . . . . .	2557
negligence . . . . .	2552
reasonableness . . . . .	2553
admissibility of evidence . . . . .	831, 1451, 2550
right to use general knowledge . . . . .	2570
see also JUROR; JURORS; BRIBERY; GRAND JURY; JUDGE; VERDICT.	
<b>Justice of the Peace</b> , docket of, original required . . . . .	1215, 1217
certified copy allowed . . . . .	1681
seal not presumed genuine . . . . .	2164
examination of accused or witness; see EXAMINATION.	
record conclusive . . . . .	2450
office judicially noticed . . . . .	2578
see also PUBLIC OFFICER; JUDGE.	
<b>Juvenile Courts</b> , rules of evidence in . . . . .	4d
publicity of proceedings in . . . . .	1835
privilege for proceedings in . . . . .	196
inspection of child's person in . . . . .	2220
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2252
privilege for communication to judge of . . . . .	2376
<b>Juvenile Delinquents</b> , proceedings against, as evidence . . . . .	196

## K

<b>Kidnapping</b> , other offences as evidence of intent . . . . .	349
<b>King</b> , testimony of, admitted without calling . . . . .	1384, 1674
without being sworn . . . . .	1825
privilege of . . . . .	2368-2372
<b>Knife</b> ; see WEAPON.	
<b>Knowledge</b> , technical, as showing ability to do an act . . . . .	87
of poisons . . . . .	87
of skill in imitating handwriting . . . . .	87
and experience in drafting wills . . . . .	87
evidenced by newspaper advertisement . . . . .	255
relative weight of negative . . . . .	664
<b>Knowledge, or Belief</b>	
(a) <i>In general</i>	
(b) <i>Circumstances or Reputation, as evidence of</i>	
(c) <i>Conduct, as evidence of</i>	
(d) <i>Declarations, as evidence of</i>	
(e) <i>Other crimes, as evidence of</i>	
(f) <i>Testimony to a third person's</i>	
(g) <i>Qualifications of a witness as to</i>	
(h) <i>Impeachment of a witness as to</i>	
(a) <i>In general</i>	
distinction between knowledge and belief . . . . .	658
distinguished from Design and Intent . . . . .	300
distinguished from experience, observation . . . . .	558, 650, 651
(b) <i>Circumstances or Reputation, as evidence of</i>	
of accused, as to deceased's aggression . . . . .	245
as to deceased's character . . . . .	246-258
of employer, as to employee's incompetence . . . . .	249
of owner, as to animal's vice . . . . .	251
precautions taken with animals to show, of vice . . . . .	282
personal, to evidence disposition of animal . . . . .	1984

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Knowledge, or Belief</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
of owner, as to defect of place or machine . . . . .	252
of purchaser, as to seller's insolvency . . . . .	253
of possessor, as to stolen goods . . . . .	254, 259
of creditor or debtor, as to partnership . . . . .	255
of maker of representations, as to falsity . . . . .	256
of liquor-seller, as to buyer's condition . . . . .	257
of prosecutor or arrester, as to probable cause . . . . .	258
of utterer, as to forged paper . . . . .	259
of possessor, as to contents . . . . .	260
about a document, production unnecessary . . . . .	1243
of sundry persons . . . . .	261
specifying grounds of, on direct examination . . . . .	655
information or reputation, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1789
(c) <i>Conduct, as evidence of</i>	
of sundry facts known or believed . . . . .	266, 267
of consciousness of guilt . . . . .	273-291
of innocence . . . . .	293
'prima facie' evidence defined by statute . . . . .	1354
(d) <i>Declarations, as evidence of; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.</i>	
(e) <i>Other crimes, as evidence of</i>	
general theory . . . . .	301
sundry crimes (forgery, embezzlement, etc.) . . . . .	309-367
see also INTENT.	
definition of . . . . .	300
observation, opportunity to observe and knowledge distinguished . . . . .	650
distinction between experience and . . . . .	651
may rest on a hypothetical basis . . . . .	652
often both general and specific . . . . .	653
burden of proof of, qualification . . . . .	654
questioning witness as to ground of . . . . .	655
degree, quality and source of . . . . .	656-664
judicial phrasing of principles of . . . . .	656
must not be founded on hearsay . . . . .	657
need not be positive or absolute . . . . .	658
inference of identity from appearance . . . . .	660
testimony to another's state of mind . . . . .	661
improbabilities in scientific testimony . . . . .	662
speculative testimony to values or personal injuries . . . . .	663
testimony of non-occurrence from absence of sensual knowledge . . . . .	664
(f) <i>Testimony to a third person's</i> . . . . .	661
(g) <i>Qualifications of a witness as to; see WITNESS, I, Qualifications.</i>	
(h) <i>Impeachment of a witness as to; see IMPEACHMENT.</i>	
[Examine analyses of "Evidence to prove Knowledge, Belief, or Consciousness," Vol. I, p. 501; "Other Offences or Similar Acts, as Evidence of Knowledge, Design, or Intent," Vol. I, p. 607; and "Testimonial Knowledge," Vol. I, pp. 1050, 1051.]	

## L

<b>Land</b> , words during possession or entry, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777, 1778
public divisions of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2575
explaining away evidence that flowage damaged . . . . .	35
possession of, as evidenced in various ways; see POSSESSION.	
contracts or customs concerning; see CONTRACTS; CUSTOM.	
declarations or reputation about boundaries of or title to; see BOUNDARIES.	
parties' admissions of title to; see ADMISSIONS.	
testimony to value of; see VALUE.	
see also PROPERTY; PREMISES.	
<b>Land-grant</b> of government	
other frauds to evidence fraudulent acquisition of . . . . .	341
see also DEED; LAND-OFFICE.	
<b>Landlord</b> , tenant disputing title of . . . . .	1473
<b>Landmark</b> ; see BOUNDARIES.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Land-office</b> , producing original of documents in . . . . .	1239
conclusiveness of rulings of . . . . .	1348
records of, in general . . . . .	1656
register of, to prove a deed's execution . . . . .	165i
rules of evidence in . . . . .	4b, 4c
certificates of . . . . .	1674, 1678
reports of title . . . . .	1672
surveys of . . . . .	1665
copy of whole required . . . . .	2109
<b>Land-title registration</b> ; see REGISTRATION OF TITLE.	
<b>Language</b> ; see INTERPRETER; INTERPRETATION.	
<b>Lapse of Time</b> , as presuming loss of document . . . . .	1196
as presuming payment . . . . .	159, 2517
<b>Larceny</b> , possession of stolen goods as evidence of . . . . .	152, 2513
possession of money, as evidence of . . . . .	32, 154
other crimes as evidence of intent . . . . .	346
motive for . . . . .	391, 392
evidence of identity of goods . . . . .	413
owner's complaint after . . . . .	1142
accused's explanations after . . . . .	1143
notice to produce original document in . . . . .	1205
proof of, without producing document stolen . . . . .	1249
words accompanying the taking, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777, 1781
testimony of owner to non-consent . . . . .	2089
presumption from possession of goods . . . . .	2513
judgment of conviction of principal in, used against accessory . . . . .	1388
<b>Latent Ambiguity</b> in a document . . . . .	2472
<b>Law</b> , distinguished from fact . . . . .	1, 2549
rules of, distinguished from rules of pleading and evidence . . . . .	2
laymen testifying as experts on . . . . .	564
foreign statute proved without copy . . . . .	1271
by expert . . . . .	564, 690, 1953
'prima facie' evidence of, under statute . . . . .	1354
proved by official printed copy . . . . .	1684
by private printed copy . . . . .	1703
by treatises . . . . .	1697
presumption of . . . . .	2491
judicially noticed . . . . .	2572, 2573
judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2549, 2558, 2559
<b>Laws</b> , conflict of; see CONFLICT OF LAWS.	
<b>Lawsuit</b> , disqualifying as witness former party to a . . . . .	32
see also LITIGATION.	
<b>Leading Questions</b> , what are . . . . .	769
admissibility of answers to . . . . .	32
allowable only in discretion . . . . .	770, 776
kinds of questions that are leading . . . . .	771
assuming a disputed fact as true . . . . .	771
admitting of "yes" or "no" answer . . . . .	772
answer of witness to . . . . .	772
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	776
on cross-examination . . . . .	773, 915
for bias shown, may be forbidden in cross-examination . . . . .	773
own witness hostile, biassed, or unwilling . . . . .	774
facts preliminary to matters in issue . . . . .	775
an extraordinary occasion . . . . .	776
when witness' recollection is exhausted . . . . .	777
when witness has immature or weak mind . . . . .	778
misleading on cross-examination . . . . .	780
judge may ask . . . . .	784
impeaching one's own witness . . . . .	915
in dying declarations . . . . .	1445
see also QUESTION TO A WITNESS.	
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Narration or Communication," Vol. II, p. 46.]	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Learned Treatises</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1690-1700
author's standing as authority . . . . .	1694
counsel reading from . . . . .	1694, 1697, 1700
<b>Lease</b> , course of business as evidencing terms of . . . . .	94, 372, 377
ancient, to show seisin . . . . .	157
counterpart as original . . . . .	1233
production required, in proving tenancy . . . . .	1246
collateral parol agreement qualifying . . . . .	2442
see also DEED; POSSESSION.	
<b>Ledger</b> , as a book of regular entries . . . . .	1548, 1558
as original of writing . . . . .	1235
<b>Left-handed</b> , evidence of accused being . . . . .	413
<b>Legatee</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1081
<b>Legislative Journal</b> , whether original's production is required . . . . .	1219
whether receivable to overthrow enrolment of statute . . . . .	1350
recital in statute, whether conclusive . . . . .	1352
admissible to prove facts recorded . . . . .	1662
provable by printed copy . . . . .	1684
judicially noticed . . . . .	2577
<b>Legislature</b> , power of, to alter rules of evidence . . . . .	7, 1353
power to compel answer from witness . . . . .	2195, 2252
privilege of member of . . . . .	2378
see also STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL; CONSTITUTIONAL RULES.	
<b>Legitimacy</b> , birth during marriage, as evidence of . . . . .	164
resemblance of child, as evidence of . . . . .	166
as evidenced by parents' conduct . . . . .	269
by parents' statements; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
by reputation . . . . .	1605
by register . . . . .	1336
valid marriage presumed, to assist . . . . .	25
presumption of . . . . .	2527
see also BASTARDY; ILLEGITIMACY; MARRIAGE.	
<b>Length</b> of a witness' examination . . . . .	783
of a hypothetical question . . . . .	683
of life . . . . .	223
of a trial . . . . .	1864
<b>Leprosy</b> , inspection of person having . . . . .	2220
<b>Lessee</b> , declarations of, made during possession . . . . .	1778
see also LEASE; VERBAL ACTS.	
<b>Letter</b> , delivery of, as evidenced by mailing . . . . .	95
anonymous typewritten, individuality of style shown . . . . .	87
habit of using government envelopes, to evidence stamp used on . . . . .	95
third person's, as evidence of sanity . . . . .	228
similar act of sending lewd . . . . .	367
receipt of, as qualifying a witness to handwriting . . . . .	702
failure to reply to, as an admission . . . . .	1073
found on accused is admissible . . . . .	1073
of husband or wife, showing feelings . . . . .	1730
putting in other letters in answer . . . . .	2104, 2120
received by mail in reply, as genuine . . . . .	2153
admissions of sending or receiving . . . . .	2153
receipt of, as evidence of authorship . . . . .	2519
see also DOCUMENT.	
<b>Letter-press</b> copies, as originals . . . . .	1234
<b>Lex fori</b> , rule of evidence in, applicable . . . . .	5
statutes making, uniform . . . . .	6
<b>Liability</b> , facts of civil liability as privileged . . . . .	2223
of criminal liability . . . . .	2250
<b>Libel</b> ; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>License</b> to sell liquor, as evidence of sale . . . . .	238
refusal to produce, as evidence of non-possession . . . . .	291
to practice medicine, as qualifying a witness . . . . .	569
to marry; see MARRIAGE.	
<b>Licensing Boards</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4b, 4c



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Lie</b> ; see FALSEHOOD; PERJURY.	Section
<b>Lien</b> , privilege for documents held under . . . . .	2211
<b>Life</b> , presumption of continuance of . . . . .	2531
of survivorship . . . . .	2532
expectation of, evidenced from long life of ancestors, occupation, etc. . . . .	223
<b>Life Insurance</b> ; see INSURANCE.	
<b>Life Table</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1698
judicially noticed . . . . .	2566
<b>Light</b> , distance or quality of, as shown by instances . . . . .	460
<b>Limitations</b> ; see STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.	
<b>Line of survey</b> ; see BOUNDARIES; SURVEY.	
<b>Liquor</b> , effect of, as indicating nature . . . . .	457
sample of, as indicating nature . . . . .	439
improperly used as sample by jurors . . . . .	1159
selling to a minor; see AGE.	
going in sober and coming out drunk as evidence of obtaining . . . . .	153
seized in illegal search, admissible . . . . .	2183, 2264
druggist required by statute to file report of sales of . . . . .	2259c, 2377
burden to show license in illegal sale of . . . . .	2512
meaning of terms, judicially noticed . . . . .	2582
intemperate use of, not provable by reputation . . . . .	1621
former offences to evidence illegal dealings in . . . . .	368
carrier's records as evidence of transportation of . . . . .	1708
consignor's reputation as evidence of knowing transportation of . . . . .	257
unlawful prescription of, evidenced by other acts . . . . .	368
internal revenue stamp or license for, provable by parol . . . . .	1205
shipping order for, provable by parol . . . . .	1213
see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR-SELLING.	
<b>Liquor-selling</b> , possession of liquor, as evidence of . . . . .	153
other sales as evidence of common selling . . . . .	203
as evidenced by license or tax-payment . . . . .	238
to minor or intemperate, evidence of knowledge of . . . . .	257
other sales, as evidence of intent . . . . .	368
other keeping, as evidence of continuous keeping . . . . .	382
burden of proof of license for . . . . .	2512
privilege not to produce license for. . . . .	2375
inference from refusal to produce . . . . .	291
presumption from possession of liquor . . . . .	2513
reputation to evidence . . . . .	1620
conclusiveness of reputation to prove . . . . .	1355
'prima facie' evidence of statutes declaring . . . . .	1356
reputation to evidence keeping of place for . . . . .	1620
see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR.	
<b>Liquor-tax</b> receipts, disclosure of . . . . .	6, 2378
<b>List of witnesses</b> , before trial . . . . .	1850
before grand jury . . . . .	1852
<b>Literature</b> , counsel's argument referring to, for illustration . . . . .	1807
other persons' utterances as evidencing standard of propriety in . . . . .	465
see also HISTORY, BOOKS OF.	
<b>Litigation</b> , fact of, as biassing a witness . . . . .	949
pleadings in other, as admissions . . . . .	1065-1067
kind of, in pedigree hearsay . . . . .	1503
<b>Loan</b> , words accompanying, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777
fact of, shown by possession of money . . . . .	89, 224
lack of money, as evidence of motive for . . . . .	392
see also CONTRACT; CREDITOR; PAYMENT.	
<b>Locomotive</b> ; see MACHINE; SPARKS; SPEED.	
<b>Log</b> , marks on, as evidence of ownership . . . . .	150, 2152
register of . . . . .	1647
contract for, conclusive evidence in sale of . . . . .	7a
<b>Log-book</b> of ship, as a book of regular entries . . . . .	1523
as an official register . . . . .	1641
production of original compellable . . . . .	1205
as preferred evidence . . . . .	1339

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Logical theory of relevancy</b> . . . . .	30
<b>Log-scaler</b> , official record of, as preferred testimony . . . . .	1339
as admissible . . . . .	1672
<b>Longevity</b> , evidenced by long life of ancestors . . . . .	223
<b>Loss of a document</b> ; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
of a ship, as evidenced by lack of news . . . . .	158, 2531
<b>Lost Document</b> , substance of . . . . .	2105-2107
contents of . . . . .	1957
provable by recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
copy of lost ancient deed . . . . .	2143
copy of, judicially established . . . . .	1347
proved by certified copy; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
of lost deed recited in another . . . . .	1573
substance of contents of lost deed . . . . .	1957, 2105
presumption of . . . . .	2522
from lapse of time . . . . .	1196
see also ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
<b>Lost Grant</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2522
not to excuse from proof of loss of specific deed . . . . .	1196
<b>Lottery</b> , other acts as evidence of intent . . . . .	367
<b>Lunacy</b> , inquisition of . . . . .	1671
appearance as evidence of . . . . .	1154, 1160
see also LUNATIC; SANITY; INSANITY.	
<b>Lunatic</b> , knowledge of purchaser from, as evidenced by repute . . . . .	253
disqualification of opponent as witness . . . . .	578
admissions of . . . . .	1053
capacity to take the oath . . . . .	1822
to be a witness . . . . .	492
see also SANITY; INSANITY.	

## M

<b>Machine</b> , evidencing owner's knowledge of danger of . . . . .	252
reputation of defect in a . . . . .	252
former injuries caused by defective . . . . .	252
repairs of, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	283
capacity of, as shown by its effects . . . . .	441-461
condition at another time or place, as evidence . . . . .	437
other instances of operation, as evidence of condition of . . . . .	451
similar injuries, as evidence of defect in . . . . .	458
similar precautions, as evidence of safety of . . . . .	461
negligence presumed from accident at . . . . .	2509
see also EMPLOYEE; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Machinery</b> , injury from vibration of . . . . .	441, 442
<b>Magistrate</b> , confession made to . . . . .	842-852
report of, on statement of accused . . . . .	1326-1329, 1349
report not taken, or lost . . . . .	1327, 1349
usable as memorandum . . . . .	1328
as confession . . . . .	1328
report of witness' testimony . . . . .	1329
report of, showing incompleteness . . . . .	1349
examination of accused or witness; see EXAMINATION.	
see also PUBLIC OFFICER.	
<b>Magnifying-lens</b> , used by witness or jury . . . . .	795, 1152
<b>Mail</b> , course of, as evidence of an addressed letter's delivery . . . . .	95
of a reply-letter's genuineness . . . . .	2153, 2519
fraud in, other acts as evidencing intent . . . . .	341
proof of loss of letter sent by . . . . .	1201, 1203
conclusiveness of fraud order as to . . . . .	1355
other lewd conduct to evidence sending of lewd letter in . . . . .	368
privilege for messages by . . . . .	2287
see also LETTER; POSTMARK.	
<b>Maker</b> , parol agreement collateral to instrument . . . . .	2443
proving signature of, or attesting witness . . . . .	1320, 1513
see also BILL OF EXCHANGE; NOTE.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Malice</b> , as evidenced by an accused's threats . . . . .	105
by other assaults, etc. . . . .	363
by hostile expressions or conduct . . . . .	396
by other utterances in defamation . . . . .	403
unproved plea of justification as evidencing . . . . .	404
as impeaching a witness; see BIAS.	
presumption of, in criminal cases . . . . .	2511a
see also MALICIOUS MISCHIEF; MALICIOUS PROSECUTION; INTENT; MOTIVE.	
<b>Malicious Mischief</b> , evidence of intent in . . . . .	367
<b>Malicious Prosecution</b>	
character of plaintiff, as mitigating damages . . . . .	75, 76, 209
evidence of prosecutor's belief . . . . .	258
conduct as showing malice . . . . .	396
former testimony in . . . . .	1416
testimony before grand jury, not privileged . . . . .	2363
burden of proof in . . . . .	2539
judge or jury to determine probable cause . . . . .	2554
<b>Malpractice</b> , character of defendant in . . . . .	67
other persons' conduct, as standard of care, etc. . . . .	461
party's skill proved by reputation . . . . .	1621
by particular instances of its exercise . . . . .	208
by opinion . . . . .	1984
by physician, medical testimony required in . . . . .	2090
privilege for communications to physician . . . . .	2385, 2389
inspection of plaintiff's person in . . . . .	2220
expert testimony required to prove . . . . .	2220
see also NEGLIGENCE; ABORTION; HOMICIDE.	
<b>Map</b> , used to illustrate testimony . . . . .	790
verification of . . . . .	793
as an official survey . . . . .	1665
as a declaration of boundary . . . . .	1570
as reputation of boundary . . . . .	1592
opinion evidence of meaning of . . . . .	1956
see also BOUNDARIES; SURVEY.	
<b>Marital Relationship</b>	
I. <i>Disqualification of husband or wife as witness for the other</i>	
II. <i>Privilege not to be witness against the other</i>	
III. <i>Privilege for communications</i>	
IV. <i>Sundries</i>	
I. <i>Disqualification of husband or wife as witness for the other</i>	
history and general principle . . . . .	600-604
policy of rule . . . . .	601
statutory alterations . . . . .	602
common law rule . . . . .	603
waiver . . . . .	604
distinction between disqualification and privilege . . . . .	2334
who is excluded . . . . .	605
marriage subsequent to crime . . . . .	605
in bigamy . . . . .	605
on whose behalf excluded . . . . .	606-610
interest in cause . . . . .	607
nominal party . . . . .	607
spouse of nominal party . . . . .	607
co-defendants . . . . .	609
spouse of co-defendant . . . . .	609
effect of death or divorce . . . . .	610
effect of enabling-statutes . . . . .	608
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	612-617
injuries, bailments, account books . . . . .	612
statutory exceptions, provisions, and abolitions . . . . .	613, 618, 619, 620
separate estate . . . . .	614
wife "as if unmarried," cessation of disqualification . . . . .	615
agent, other spouse as . . . . .	616
statutory abolition . . . . .	619, 620
desertion . . . . .	618

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Marital Relationship</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
impeachment of witness by . . . . .	949
under exceptions to the Hearsay rule . . . . .	1751
bastardizing the issue . . . . .	2063
<b>II. Privilege not to be witness against the other</b>	
history and policy . . . . .	2227, 2228
marriage after process begun . . . . .	605, 2230
paramour . . . . .	2230
bigamist . . . . .	2231
disputed marriage . . . . .	2231
agent's admissions . . . . .	2232
production of documents . . . . .	2233
testimony obtained by information gained from the wife . . . . .	2233
what testimony is prohibited	
husband or wife not a party . . . . .	2234, 2235
bankruptcy . . . . .	2235
pauper-settlement . . . . .	2235
adultery, etc. . . . .	2235
co-indictee, co-defendant . . . . .	2236
person deceased or divorced . . . . .	2237
exceptions by necessity . . . . .	2239
abduction . . . . .	2239
abortion . . . . .	2239
adultery . . . . .	2239
assault and battery . . . . .	2239
divorce . . . . .	2239
incest . . . . .	2239
injury to property . . . . .	2239
poisoning . . . . .	2239
rape . . . . .	2239
desertion . . . . .	2239
by statute . . . . .	2240
exceptions by statute; separate estate . . . . .	2240
agency . . . . .	2240
whose is the privilege . . . . .	2241
waiver . . . . .	2242
inference from claiming it . . . . .	2243
privilege inoperative unless claimed . . . . .	2243
statutory abolition . . . . .	2245
<b>III. Privilege for communications</b>	
history and policy . . . . .	2332, 2333
distinction between privilege and disqualification . . . . .	2334
statutes . . . . .	2334
scope of the privilege . . . . .	2336-2338
confidence to be judged from circumstances . . . . .	2336
communications but not acts privileged . . . . .	2337
third persons overhearing . . . . .	2339
communicative documents in possession of third person . . . . .	2339
who may claim; waiver . . . . .	2340
death and divorce . . . . .	2341
desertion . . . . .	2338
separation or unlawful cohabitation . . . . .	2341
<b>IV. Sundries</b>	
presumptions as to community-property, ante-nuptial agreement, etc. . . . .	2526
as to capacity, consent, etc. . . . .	2505, 2506, 2529
see also HUSBAND; WIFE; MARRIAGE; DIVORCE; LEGITIMACY.	
[Examine analyses on "Marital Relationship as a Disqualification,"	
Vol. I, p. 1031; "Privilege for Anti-Marital Facts," Vol. IV, p. 750; and	
"Communications between Husband and Wife," Vol. V, p. 83.]	
<b>Mark, illiterate's signature by; see ILLITERATE.</b>	
on logs, as evidence . . . . .	150
register of . . . . .	1647
<b>Market Reports, admissible in evidence . . . . .</b>	1704
<b>Market Value; see VALUE.</b>	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Marksman</b> ; see <b>ILLITERATE</b> .	Section
<b>Marriage</b> , breach of promise of; see <b>BREACH OF PROMISE</b> .	
birth during, as evidence of legitimacy . . . . .	164
prior coverture, as evidence . . . . .	382
certificate of, as evidence . . . . .	268, 1645
habit and repute, as evidence . . . . .	268, 2083
reputation, as evidence . . . . .	1602, 2083
utterances of the parties as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770
certificate or register not preferred to oral eye-witness . . . . .	2088
proof of marriage in fact . . . . .	2082
meaning of "marriage in fact" . . . . .	2082
conduct as evidencing prior consent . . . . .	2083
authentication of certificate of . . . . .	2159
admissions . . . . .	2086
register of, as evidence; see <b>REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH</b> .	
contracted in jest . . . . .	2414
statement concerning, as hearsay; see <b>FAMILY HISTORY</b> .	
presumption of consent . . . . .	2505
of capacity . . . . .	2506
of legitimacy . . . . .	2527
of coercion . . . . .	2514
of identity . . . . .	2529
of community ownership . . . . .	2526
valid, presumed in bigamy . . . . .	2506
husband or wife privileged by; see <b>MARITAL RELATIONSHIP</b> .	
privileged communications in; see <b>MARITAL RELATIONSHIP</b> .	
see also <b>FOREIGN LAW</b> ; <b>LEGITIMACY</b> ; <b>HUSBAND</b> ; <b>WIFE</b> ; <b>CERTIFICATE</b> .	
<b>Married Woman</b> ; see <b>MARITAL RELATIONSHIP</b> ; <b>WIFE</b> ; <b>BASTARDY</b> ; <b>MARRIAGE</b> .	
<b>Master</b> , power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
see also <b>EMPLOYER</b> ; <b>SCHOOLMASTER</b> .	
<b>Materiality</b> , distinguished from admissibility . . . . .	2
<b>Mayhem</b> , ascertained by inspection . . . . .	1152
<b>Meaning</b> ; see <b>INTERPRETATION</b> .	
<b>Means</b> of action, as evidence of an act done . . . . .	83
<b>Measures</b> , false, other acts evidencing intent . . . . .	341
<b>Medical Books</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1690-1700
<b>Medical Examination</b> ; see <b>PHYSICIAN</b> ; <b>PRIVILEGE</b> ; <b>DISEASE</b> ; <b>CORPORAL INJURY</b> .	
<b>Medical Matters</b> , witness' experience or knowledge as qualifying him . . . . .	568, 687
knowledge based on study of books . . . . .	687
see also <b>DISEASE</b> ; <b>INSANITY</b> ; <b>PHYSICIAN</b> ; <b>EXPERT WITNESS</b> ; <b>OPINION RULE</b> .	
<b>Medical Treatment</b> , whether, is proper, as evidenced by acts of others . . . . .	461
see also <b>MALPRACTICE</b> ; <b>PHYSICIAN</b> ; <b>SKILL</b> .	
<b>Medicine</b> , similar acts of unlawful prescription . . . . .	367, 368
license to practise, as qualifying a witness . . . . .	569
<b>Member of Congress</b> ; see <b>CONGRESS</b> .	
<b>Memorandum</b> to aid recollection; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
<b>Memory</b> , belief or impression as showing sufficient . . . . .	726
modes of refreshing or aiding; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
discrediting a witness by his lack of; see <b>IMPEACHMENT</b> .	
<b>Mental Capacity</b> , to do an act . . . . .	86
see also <b>SANITY</b> ; <b>WILL</b> .	
<b>Mental Condition</b> , disproving objective facts causing insanity or excitement . . . . .	263
see also <b>SANITY</b> ; <b>INTENT</b> ; <b>MALICE</b> ; <b>MOTIVE</b> ; <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> ; <b>INSANE</b>	
<b>BELIEF</b> ; <b>INSANITY</b> .	
<b>Mental Condition, Declarations of</b>	
(a) <i>Pain and Suffering</i>	
(b) <i>Design, Intent, Motive, etc.</i>	
(c) <i>Testator</i>	
(d) <i>Sundries</i>	
(a) <i>Pain and Suffering</i>	
to a physician or layman . . . . .	1719
to a physician, discriminated . . . . .	1720, 1722
after litigation begun . . . . .	1721
past events . . . . .	1722
failure to complain, as evidence . . . . .	1722, 1723

# INDEX OF TOPICS

Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2231; Vol. V, §§ 2232-2597]

<b>Mental Conditions, Declarations of</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
(b) <i>Design, Intent, Motive, etc.</i>	
design or plan to act . . . . .	1725
intent in domicile . . . . .	1727
in bankruptcy . . . . .	1728
motive or reason . . . . .	1729
alarm . . . . .	1730
affection . . . . .	1730
bias . . . . .	1730
disgust . . . . .	1730
emotion . . . . .	1730
fear . . . . .	1730
malice . . . . .	1730
opinion and belief . . . . .	1731
accused person's statements . . . . .	1732
(c) <i>Testator</i>	
ante-testamentary statements of intent . . . . .	1735
post-testamentary statements of contents, etc. . . . .	1736
intent to revoke . . . . .	1737
undue influence or fraud . . . . .	1738
intelligence or sanity . . . . .	1739, 1740
(d) <i>Sundries</i>	1790
exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1714
see also KNOWLEDGE; INTENT; MALICE; MOTIVE; SANITY.	
[Examine analysis on "Declarations of a Mental Condition," Vol. III,	
p. 678.	
<b>Mental Defects</b> , as impeaching evidence . . . . .	934, 935
<b>Mental Traits</b> , evidenced by heredity . . . . .	165
<b>Microscope</b> , used by witness or jury . . . . .	795, 1152
<b>Midwife</b> as a witness; see EXPERT WITNESS; OPINION RULE.	
<b>Military Court</b> , rules of evidence in . . . . .	4d
privilege for proceedings before . . . . .	2378
<b>Military records</b> , as evidence . . . . .	56, 1641, 1675a
privilege against disclosure of secrets . . . . .	2378
<b>Mill</b> ; see MACHINE; SPARKS.	
<b>Mind</b> , testimony to state of another's . . . . .	661
<b>Mine</b> , inspection of . . . . .	1862
see also PREMISES.	
<b>Mining-claims</b> , recital of discovery of lode in . . . . .	1573
<b>Mining-rights</b> , record of transfer, as original . . . . .	1239
<b>Minister Plenipotentiary</b> ; see AMBASSADOR.	
<b>Minister of Religion</b> ; see PRIEST.	
<b>Minor</b> ; see CHILD; LIQUOR-SELLING; AGE.	
<b>Minutes</b> of clerk of court; see JUDICIAL RECORD.	
<b>Miscarriage</b> ; see ABORTION; PERSONAL INJURY.	
<b>Misconduct</b> of a juror . . . . .	2354
<b>Mistake</b> , proof of, by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
names inserted or omitted by . . . . .	2421
in signing bill of exchange . . . . .	2415-2419
by circumstantial evidence; see INTENT.	
<b>Mistress</b> ; see PARAMOUR.	
<b>Mitigation of Damages</b> ; see DAMAGES.	
<b>Mob</b> , violence by, other acts as evidencing intent . . . . .	367, 1790
statements by . . . . .	1079
<b>Model</b> , used to illustrate testimony . . . . .	790
verification of . . . . .	793
<b>Money</b> , possession of, as evidence of loan or payment . . . . .	89, 224
as evidence of larceny . . . . .	32, 154
offer of, to injured party in criminal case may be inadmissible . . . . .	279
lack of, as evidence of motive . . . . .	392
to negative large stock of goods in fire loss . . . . .	89
experience of expert to quality of . . . . .	570
evidence of counterfeiting; see COUNTERFEITING.	
testimony to genuineness of; see PAPER MONEY; HANDWRITING.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Money</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
receipt of, as impeaching a witness; see CORRUPTION.	
payment of, mode of proving; see PAYMENT.	
presumption as to delivery of . . . . .	2518a
see also VALUE.	
<b>Morphine</b> , use of, as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	499, 500
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	934
<b>Mortality Table</b> , used in evidence . . . . .	1698
judicially noticed . . . . .	2566
<b>Mortgage</b> , other transactions as evidence of debtor's intent; see FRAUD; FRAUD- ULENT TRANSFERS; FALSE REPRESENTATION.	
agreement to hold deed as, shown by parol . . . . .	2437
admissions of mortgagor or mortgagee . . . . .	1082, 1779
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
see also DEED; SALE.	
<b>Mother</b> , statements of, to evidence pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
insanity of, as evidence . . . . .	232
testimony to bastardy . . . . .	2063
see also LEGITIMACY; BASTARDY; MARRIAGE.	
<b>Motion</b> , for new trial, confirming an exception by . . . . .	20
for a nonsuit or verdict . . . . .	2495
to exclude all evidence . . . . .	2495
to produce documents, on trial; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
to strike out	
where objection is tardily made . . . . .	18
where evidence was conditionally admitted . . . . .	14, 18, 1871
where corroborating evidence fails . . . . .	18, 2030-2091
where the plaintiff's evidence as a whole is not sufficient to go to the jury	18, 2494
where an answer is non-responsive . . . . .	18, 785
see also OBJECTION.	
<b>Motive</b>	
<i>In general</i>	
1. <i>Circumstances creating a motive</i>	
2. <i>Conduct exhibiting a motive</i>	
3. <i>Prior and subsequent motive</i>	
4. <i>Sundries</i>	
<i>In general</i>	
as evidence of an act . . . . .	117-119
an ambiguous term . . . . .	117
general theory of . . . . .	385
1. <i>Circumstances creating a motive</i>	
general principle . . . . .	389
motive for murder . . . . .	390
motive for other acts and crimes . . . . .	391
pecuniary circumstances as a motive . . . . .	155, 392
legal liability as a motive . . . . .	393
2. <i>Conduct exhibiting a motive</i>	
in general . . . . .	394
3. <i>Prior and subsequent motive</i>	
hostility . . . . .	359-397
sexual passion . . . . .	398-402
malice in defamation . . . . .	403-406
4. <i>Sundries</i>	
necessity of showing, to establish crime . . . . .	118
existence of affection as negative, in homicide . . . . .	118
as a fact in issue . . . . .	119
third person's motive, to evidence accused's innocence . . . . .	141
testifying to another person's motive . . . . .	661
to one's own motive . . . . .	581
proof by opinion testimony . . . . .	1962
by declarations; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.	
by reputation or information; see KNOWLEDGE.	
[Examine analysis on "Evidence to prove Emotion," Vol. I, p. 709.]	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Moving Picture</b> , as evidence . . . . .	798
<b>Multiple</b> admissibility . . . . .	13
<b>Municipal Corporation</b> ; see CORPORATION; PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
ordinance or charter of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2572
ordinance provable by printed copy . . . . .	1684
<b>Murder</b> ; see HOMICIDE.	
<b>Mutual Mistake</b> , under parol evidence rule . . . . .	2417
clear proof of . . . . .	2498

## N

<b>Name</b> , as evidence of identity . . . . .	270, 413
as evidence of ownership . . . . .	150
falsity or non-existence of person evidenced by failure to find . . . . .	158
fictitious nature of, evidenced by failure of search . . . . .	158, 667
use of false, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
testimony to knowledge of . . . . .	667
identity of, as raising presumption . . . . .	2529
<b>Narcotic Drugs</b> , former offences to evidence dealings in . . . . .	368
see also DRUGS.	
<b>Narrative</b> , as unsound, in 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1756
as used for statements of pain . . . . .	1722
<b>National War Labor Board</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Nationality</b> , as evidenced by corporal traits . . . . .	167
as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	516
see also ALIEN.	
<b>Naturalization</b> , statutes requiring citizens' testimony in . . . . .	516
proved by certificate . . . . .	1346
number of witnesses required in . . . . .	2066
statute declaring 'prima facie' evidence of intent to abandon . . . . .	1356
<b>Naval register</b> , as evidence . . . . .	1641
<b>Navy</b> , certificate of service in . . . . .	1675a
<b>Necessary Witness</b> , may be impeached . . . . .	916
see also WITNESS, VII, VIII.	
<b>Necessity</b> , opinion testimony to . . . . .	1960
<b>Negative</b> instances, as evidencing cause or condition . . . . .	448
observation, as showing that a thing did not occur . . . . .	664
<b>Negligence</b> , character for, to evidence an act . . . . .	65
character for, as in issue . . . . .	80
habit of, as evidence . . . . .	93, 97
particular acts, as evidence of character . . . . .	199, 208
unfair surprise in showing acts of . . . . .	199
employee's acts and repute, as evidencing employer's knowledge . . . . .	249, 250
evidenced by insurance against accident . . . . .	282, 393, 949, 969
subsequent repairs to evidence . . . . .	283
other instances as evidence of habit of . . . . .	376
defects of apparatus as evidence of . . . . .	441-461
regulations of railroad as measure of . . . . .	461
other spark-emissions, as evidence of a defective locomotive . . . . .	452
other persons' conduct, as evidencing a standard . . . . .	461
affected by statute or ordinance . . . . .	461
constitutionality of statute making liable without negligence . . . . .	1354
making 'prima facie' evidence of negligence . . . . .	1354
evidenced by declaration against interest . . . . .	1461
by dying declaration . . . . .	1432
spontaneous exclamations of injured person or bystander . . . . .	1750, 1755
report of accident involving, discovery of . . . . .	2318
privilege for . . . . .	2377
proved by reputation . . . . .	1621
by opinion evidence, of conduct . . . . .	1949
of character . . . . .	1984
presumption of . . . . .	2507-2510
contributory . . . . .	2507
loss by bailee, carrier . . . . .	2508



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Negligence, presumption of</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
defective apparatus . . . . .	2509
in injury to employee . . . . .	2509
death by violence . . . . .	2510
to ownership of vehicle . . . . .	2510a
judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2552
jury may use general knowledge to determine . . . . .	2570
in medical treatment; see <b>PHYSICIAN</b> .	
see also <b>REPAIRS</b> .	
<b>Negotiable Instrument</b> , admissions as applied to . . . . .	1084
action upon a lost . . . . .	1197
creditor's indorsement of part payment as removing bar of statute of limitations on . . . . .	1466
genuineness of indorsement must be evidence . . . . .	2130
signed by officer of corporation . . . . .	2444
raising presumption of consideration . . . . .	2520
parol evidence rule applied to . . . . .	2409, 2420, 2443
see also <b>BILL OF EXCHANGE</b> ; <b>NOTE</b> ; <b>PAYMENT</b> ; <b>PAROL EVIDENCE RULE</b> .	
<b>Negro</b> ; see <b>RACE</b> .	
<b>News</b> , lack of, as evidence . . . . .	158, 2531
see also <b>SEARCH</b> ; <b>ABSENT WITNESS</b> .	
<b>Newspaper</b> , notice in, as evidencing knowledge . . . . .	255
quotations of prices, as evidence of value . . . . .	719, 1704
affidavit of publication of notice in . . . . .	1710
communications to, not privileged . . . . .	2286
see also <b>PRINTED MATTER</b> .	
<b>New Trial</b> , motion for, as confirming an exception . . . . .	20
error of ruling as ground for . . . . .	21
the orthodox English Rule and the Exchequer Rule concerning . . . . .	21
whether required for omission of oath . . . . .	1819
granted for withholding evidence . . . . .	290
validity on, of former judicial admission . . . . .	2593
<b>Night</b> , evidence of power of vision at . . . . .	460
<b>Noise</b> ; see <b>SOUND</b> .	
<b>Nolo Contendere</b> as an admission . . . . .	1066
<b>Non-access</b> , as evidence of illegitimacy . . . . .	134, 135, 137
parent's testimony to . . . . .	2063
rule not abolished by abolition of disqualification by interest . . . . .	2063
see also <b>BASTARDY</b> .	
<b>Non-occurrence</b> of an event as shown by failure to see or hear . . . . .	160
<b>Non-residence</b> , evidenced by failure of search . . . . .	158, 667
<b>Non-resident</b> , deposition taken for use within the State . . . . .	2195
<b>Non-responsive Answer</b> ; see <b>RESPONSIVE ANSWER</b> .	
<b>Non-suit</b> , motion for a . . . . .	2495
<b>Notary</b> , using an entry to aid recollection; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
habit of, mailing notice of protest . . . . .	98
record of protest, producing the original of . . . . .	1240
whether conclusive . . . . .	1352
as attesting witness . . . . .	1292
denial of recitals of, requires corroboration . . . . .	2066
certificate of, degree of proof to impeach . . . . .	2498
regular entries of transactions by; see <b>REGULAR ENTRIES</b> .	
personal knowledge required . . . . .	1635
certificate of protest . . . . .	1675
of deed-acknowledgment . . . . .	1676
conclusive in Louisiana law . . . . .	1352
seal presumed genuine . . . . .	2165
power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
see also <b>PUBLIC OFFICER</b> .	
<b>Note</b> or memorandum, of testimony; see <b>FORMER TESTIMONY</b> .	
of stenographer, attorney, jurymen as official statements . . . . .	1669
of a transaction, used to aid recollection; see <b>RECOLLECTION</b> .	
<b>Note, Promissory</b> , forgery of; see <b>FORGERY</b> .	
payment of; see <b>PAYMENT</b> .	
agent's authority to make; see <b>AGENCY</b> .	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>NOTE, Promissory</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
impeaching one's own . . . . .	529
presumption of title from possession of . . . . .	2516
of payment . . . . .	2517, 2518
admissions of assignor, indorser, etc. . . . .	1084
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
indorsement on, as statement against interest . . . . .	1460, 1466
protest of, as evidence . . . . .	1675
signed by mistake . . . . .	2415
delivery in escrow, shown by parol . . . . .	2409, 2420
collateral agreement, shown by parol . . . . .	2443-2445
see also NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS.	
<b>Notice</b> (a state of mind); see KNOWLEDGE.	
<b>Notice</b> (a communication)	
(a) <i>to produce a document</i>	
(b) <i>to fix liability for dishonor of bill</i>	
(c) <i>to quit</i>	
(d) <i>to take deposition</i>	
(e) <i>sundries</i>	
(a) <i>to produce a document</i>	
as permitting use of copy	
notice to opponent . . . . .	1202
when not necessary . . . . .	1203
when sufficient . . . . .	1204-1209
stolen original document . . . . .	1205
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	1207
procedure of giving notice . . . . .	1208
to agent . . . . .	1208
notice to third person . . . . .	1212
as compelling opponent's production of original . . . . .	2219
as obtaining discovery before trial . . . . .	1858
(b) <i>to fix liability for dishonor of bill</i>	
evidenced by mailing . . . . .	95
(c) <i>to quit, as an admission of tenancy</i> . . . . .	1072
notice to produce a . . . . .	1206
(d) <i>to take deposition</i> . . . . .	1378
(e) <i>sundries</i>	
publication of, proved by affidavit . . . . .	1710
giving of, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770, 1789
see also ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
[Examine analysis of "Production of Documentary Originals," Vol. II, pp. 718-720.]	
<b>Notorious Recognition</b> , of child by parent . . . . .	1606
<b>Novation</b> , shown by parol . . . . .	2441
<b>Nuisance</b> , provable by other instances . . . . .	203, 451
railroad as . . . . .	451
amount of business to evidence . . . . .	462
provable by reputation . . . . .	1620
by noise, reproduced with phonograph . . . . .	795
<b>'Nul Tiel Record,'</b> original required in . . . . .	1216
tried by inspection . . . . .	2555
<b>Number of witnesses</b> ; see WITNESSES, VII.	
<b>Number Plates</b> , as evidence . . . . .	150a
<b>Nuncupative Will</b> , proved by two witnesses . . . . .	2050
<b>Nurse</b> , as a witness; see EXPERT WITNESS; OPINION RULE.	

## O

<b>Oath</b> , 1. <i>At Common Law</i>	
2. <i>Under Statutes</i>	
3. <i>Sundries</i>	
1. <i>At Common Law</i>	
history . . . . .	1815
theory . . . . .	1816



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Oath (continued)	Section
kind of belief . . . . .	1817
form of oath . . . . .	1818
time of administration and of objection . . . . .	1819
if omitted, whether new trial required . . . . .	1819
capacity	
disqualification under exceptions to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
mode of ascertaining . . . . .	1820
infants . . . . .	1821
lunatics, idiots . . . . .	1822
distinguished from testimonial capacity . . . . .	1823
persons subjected to	
interpreters, showers to jury . . . . .	1824
peers, accused person . . . . .	1825
whether a witness merely sworn is impeachable . . . . .	1893
2. Under Statutes	
abolition or dispensation . . . . .	1827, 1828
form, capacity, proof, etc. . . . .	1829
3. Sundries	
history of, in parties' disqualification . . . . .	575
confession made on examination under . . . . .	842
statement out of court under oath, excluded . . . . .	1362, 1364
belief on, by witness to character . . . . .	1985
[Examine analysis of "Oath," Vol. III, p. 855.]	
Objection to evidence, time and form of . . . . .	18
as immaterial, incompetent, and irrelevant . . . . .	18
general, if overruled may not avail . . . . .	18
specific, if overruled will be effective to an extent . . . . .	18
how waived . . . . .	18
see also WAIVER.	
ruling upon an . . . . .	18, 19
distinguished from exception . . . . .	20
to witness' qualifications . . . . .	18, 486, 586
by party, claiming privilege for witness . . . . .	2196, 2270
renewal of, at close of case . . . . .	2496
ruling on an, must be immediate and final . . . . .	19
to deposition; see DEPOSITION.	
Obligor, impeaching his own obligation . . . . .	529
admissions of co-obligor . . . . .	1077
Obscenity of pictures, standard of . . . . .	161
proof of . . . . .	793
Observation, capacity of . . . . .	493
discredited by defective sight . . . . .	934
Occupancy, evidenced by assessor's books . . . . .	1640
Offence; see CRIME.	
Offender, habitual; see HABITUAL CRIMINAL; COMMON OFFENDER.	
Offer of evidence, form and tenor . . . . .	17
cannot result from exchange of words between court and attorney . . . . .	17
time to make . . . . .	1866
improper statements of counsel in . . . . .	1896
after argument begun . . . . .	1878
to compromise, as an admission . . . . .	1061
Offer, to remedy harm, as an admission . . . . .	283
Office, production of original appointment to . . . . .	1228
presumption of title to . . . . .	272, 2168, 2534, 2535
holding, evidenced from prior incumbency . . . . .	382
of duty performed in . . . . .	2534
certificate of service in . . . . .	1675a
removal from, privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2256, 2257
Office Copy; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
Officer, public; see PUBLIC OFFICER.	
of a corporation, testifying on the faith of records . . . . .	665
see also CORPORATION.	
Official; see PUBLIC OFFICER.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Official Certificate</b> , contradicting one's own . . . . .	530
<b>Official Communications</b> , privilege for . . . . .	2375
see also STATE.	
<b>Official Gazette</b> , as evidence of a law . . . . .	1684
<b>Official Record</b> ; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Official Signature</b> to document, not of attesting witness . . . . .	1292
<b>Official Statements</b> ; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Olographic Will</b> , testimony required for . . . . .	2051
<b>Omission</b> , to speak or claim, as a self-contradiction . . . . .	1042
as an admission . . . . .	1072
of child by testator intentionally . . . . .	2475
<b>Opening Statement</b> , not evidenced afterwards . . . . .	1808
<b>Opinion</b> of value, as based on other sales . . . . .	463
stating the grounds of, by an expert . . . . .	561
knowledge, as distinguished from . . . . .	658
as sufficient in point of memory . . . . .	726
hypothetical question; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.	
as evidence of handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
impeachment by inconsistent . . . . .	1041
statements of political views . . . . .	1732
by ordinary witness . . . . .	1917, 1924, 1926
distinction between fact and . . . . .	1919
admissible when preceded by facts . . . . .	1922
of a dying declarant . . . . .	1447
as to value of services . . . . .	1944
of personal injuries . . . . .	1944
of breach of contract . . . . .	1944
of cost of living . . . . .	1944
of business, etc. . . . .	1944
as to care . . . . .	1950
moral character . . . . .	1950
professional skill . . . . .	1950
reasonableness . . . . .	1950
safety, etc. . . . .	1950
religious, privilege for . . . . .	2213
political, privilege for . . . . .	2214
judicial; see JUDICIAL DECISION.	
also EXPERT WITNESS; OPINION RULE.	
<b>Opinion Rule</b>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>rule applied to specific topics</i>	
(c) <i>law</i>	
(d) <i>state of mind</i>	
(e) <i>sundry topics</i>	
(f) <i>character</i>	
(g) <i>handwriting</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
distinguished from rule for expert qualifications . . . . .	557
history . . . . .	1917
competency of ordinary witness to give opinion . . . . .	1917, 1924
theory . . . . .	1918-1922
distinction between fact and opinion . . . . .	1919
usurping functions of the jury . . . . .	1920
practical tests . . . . .	1923-1927
form of rule negative or affirmative . . . . .	1928
hypothetical questions . . . . .	572-684
(b) <i>rule applied to specific topics</i>	
insanity . . . . .	1933-1938
value and damages . . . . .	1940-1944
insurance risk . . . . .	1946, 1947
care, safety, prudence, duty, skill, or propriety of human conduct or a place, machine, or apparatus . . . . .	1949-1951
(c) <i>law</i>	
foreign law . . . . .	1953



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Opinion Rule</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
trade usage . . . . .	1954
technical words in documents . . . . .	1955
location of deed-descriptions . . . . .	1956
contents of a lost document . . . . .	1957
testator's or grantor's capacity . . . . .	1958
accused's capacity . . . . .	1958
infant's capacity . . . . .	1958
solvency . . . . .	1959
possession . . . . .	1960
ownership . . . . .	1960
necessity . . . . .	1960
authority, etc. . . . .	1960
miscellaneous applications of . . . . .	1960
(d) <i>state of mind</i>	
intent, motive, purpose, in general . . . . .	1963
another person's intention . . . . .	1964
one's own intention . . . . .	1965, 1966
intent in dedication, voting, etc. . . . .	1967
meaning of a conversation, etc. . . . .	1969
impression or understanding . . . . .	1970, 1971
(e) <i>sundry topics</i>	
corporal appearances . . . . .	1974
medical and surgical matters . . . . .	1975
probability and possibility . . . . .	1976
capacity and tendency . . . . .	1976
cause and effect . . . . .	1976
distance . . . . .	1977
time . . . . .	1977
speed . . . . .	1977
size . . . . .	1977
weight . . . . .	1977
direction . . . . .	1977
form . . . . .	1977
identity . . . . .	1977
miscellaneous topics . . . . .	1960, 1978
rule enforced for dying declarations . . . . .	1447
for books of regular entry . . . . .	1533
for declarations about boundaries . . . . .	1569
(f) <i>character</i>	
moral, of a defendant . . . . .	1981, 1983
of a witness . . . . .	1982-1985
care, competence, or skill . . . . .	1984
(g) <i>handwriting</i> ; see HANDWRITING.	
[Examine analysis on "Opinion Rule," Vol. IV, p. 100.]	
<b>Opium</b> , use of, as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	500
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	934, 1005
corroboration of defendant on charge of frequenting den for . . . . .	2066
see also DRUG.	
<b>Opponent</b> , called as witness, whether he may be impeached . . . . .	916
treated as if on cross-examination . . . . .	1884
destruction of a document by . . . . .	1198, 1199, 1207
deposition of, when absent . . . . .	1416
taking, but not using a witness' deposition . . . . .	1389
see also ADMISSION; DEFENDANT; PARTIES.	
<b>Opportunity</b> in general, as evidence of a crime or other act . . . . .	131-134
must be shown in advance that witness had, to observe . . . . .	34
exclusive, to do an act . . . . .	131
explaining away . . . . .	132
equal, for others . . . . .	132, 133
<b>Oral</b> admission of a party; see ADMISSIONS.	
distinction between "oral" and "verbal" . . . . .	266, 2094
<b>Oral Report</b> , required by law, as privileged . . . . .	2259d
<b>Order</b> of topics of testimony; see EXAMINATION, III.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Ordinance, judicial notice of</b> . . . . .	2572
certified copy of . . . . .	1680
printed copy of . . . . .	1864
affecting negligence . . . . .	461
<b>Original Document</b>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>scope of the rule, as to writings</i>	
(c) <i>production required</i>	
(d) <i>excuses for not producing</i>	
(e) <i>what is the original</i>	
(f) <i>not applicable where contents are not in issue</i>	
(g) <i>exceptions to the rule</i>	
(h) <i>rules for proof of copy</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
history of the rule requiring production . . . . .	1177
general principle . . . . .	1179
(b) <i>scope of the rule, as to writings</i>	
uninscribed chattels . . . . .	1181
inscribed chattels . . . . .	1182
all kinds of writings . . . . .	1183
books of account or regular entry . . . . .	1532, 1558
(c) <i>production required</i>	
what is production . . . . .	1185
for whose benefit . . . . .	1185
opponent's refusal to produce, as evidence of genuineness . . . . .	1298
original always usable . . . . .	1186
proving execution also . . . . .	1187, 1188
order of proof between execution, loss, and contents . . . . .	1189
copy also offered . . . . .	1190
in larceny of . . . . .	1205
(d) <i>excuses for not producing</i>	
loss or destruction . . . . .	1193-1198
proof of loss by hearsay statements . . . . .	1196
expert testimony to genuineness of lost document . . . . .	1393
affidavit of party, to loss of . . . . .	1196
sufficiency of search for . . . . .	1194
loss, by opponent's admission . . . . .	1196
loss established by record of judgment . . . . .	1196
suppression by opponent . . . . .	1197, 1207, 1209
of . . . . .	1196, 1197, 1200, 1207
plied by affidavit . . . . .	1197
nal destruction by proponent, presumed contents . . . . .	291, 1198
on by opponent; notice to produce . . . . .	1199-1210
control of, is possession . . . . .	1200
out of jurisdiction may still be in possession . . . . .	1200, 1207
transfer of possession . . . . .	1200
mode of proving possession . . . . .	1201
possession of document sent by mail . . . . .	1201, 1203
notice in general . . . . .	1202
notice to third person . . . . .	1200, 1208
both notice and possession must be shown . . . . .	1203
rule of notice not applicable . . . . .	1203
rule of notice satisfied . . . . .	1204
document in court, instant demand . . . . .	1204
notice by implication . . . . .	1205
"collateral" documents . . . . .	1205
notice unnecessary at subsequent trial . . . . .	1205
subject to privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	1207, 2268
recorded deed provable by copy . . . . .	1207
waiver of notice to produce . . . . .	1207
notice to agent . . . . .	1208
who should give notice . . . . .	1208
time of giving notice . . . . .	1208
attorney's possession as privileged . . . . .	1201, 2309



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Original Document (continued)	Section
party notified, out of jurisdiction . . . . .	1208
tenor and form of notice . . . . .	1208
what is non-production . . . . .	1209
consequences of non-production . . . . .	1210
inference from non-production . . . . .	1210
possession by third person . . . . .	1211-1213
person not compellable to produce . . . . .	1212
fraudulent retention by third person . . . . .	1212
subpœna 'duces tecum' . . . . .	1212
possession by proponent's co-party . . . . .	1212
foreign public document . . . . .	1213
irremovable documents . . . . .	1214
judicial records (pleadings, wills, etc.) . . . . .	1215-1217
part of record in trial at bar . . . . .	1215
lost judicial record restored by decree . . . . .	1215, 1347, 1660
exception for 'nul tiel record' and perjury . . . . .	1216
other official documents . . . . .	1218-1222
office working documents . . . . .	1218
made by private person and filed in public office . . . . .	1218
producing legislative journals . . . . .	1219
election records . . . . .	1219, 1223
corporation books . . . . .	1219, 1223
marriage records, etc. . . . .	1219, 1223
specific instances under statutes . . . . .	1220
books of banks, abstracts, etc. . . . .	1223
of regular entry . . . . .	1532, 1558
recorded conveyances . . . . .	1224-1227
appointments to office . . . . .	1228
illegible documents . . . . .	1229
voluminous records, accounts, etc. . . . .	1230
absence of entries . . . . .	1320
(e) <i>what is the original</i> . . . . .	1231
may mean a copy . . . . .	1233-1234
duplicates and counterparts . . . . .	1234, 1237
printed matter . . . . .	1235
copy acted on as original . . . . .	1235
account stated . . . . .	1236
telegraphic dispatches . . . . .	1238
wills, etc. . . . .	1239
land-grants . . . . .	1239
mining rights, etc. . . . .	1240
tax-lists . . . . .	1240
ballots, etc. . . . .	1241
records . . . . .	1241
accounts, etc. . . . .	749, 760
memorandum to aid recollection . . . . .	797
handwriting shown by photograph . . . . .	1558
ledger and day book . . . . .	
(f) <i>not applicable where contents are not in issue</i> . . . . .	1243
document read aloud, etc. . . . .	1243
knowledge or belief about . . . . .	1244
identity or effect of a document . . . . .	1245
payment, receipts . . . . .	1246, 1247
ownership . . . . .	1246, 1247
tenancy . . . . .	1246, 1247
sale . . . . .	1246, 1247
gift . . . . .	1248
execution . . . . .	1248
delivery . . . . .	1248
publication . . . . .	1249
conversion . . . . .	1249
forgery . . . . .	1249
larceny . . . . .	1249

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Original Document (continued)

	Section
agency, etc. . . . .	1249
incorporation . . . . .	1249
miscellaneous instances . . . . .	1250
dying declarations . . . . .	1449
pedigree statements . . . . .	1497
(g) <i>exceptions to the rule</i>	
stolen document . . . . .	1249
collateral facts . . . . .	1252-1254
opponent's admission of contents . . . . .	1082, 1255, 1256
deed-recitals, disclaimer of title . . . . .	1257
New York rule on deed-recitals . . . . .	1257
proving partnership irrespective of articles . . . . .	1257
witness' admission on <i>voir dire</i> . . . . .	1258
on cross-examination . . . . .	1259
self-contradictory document . . . . .	1259
prior statements in depositions . . . . .	1262
record of conviction . . . . .	1270
foreign statute . . . . .	1271
secondary evidence of contents . . . . .	1264
(h) <i>rules for proof of copy</i>	
copy preferred to recollection . . . . .	1268
preferable kinds of recollection . . . . .	1272
preference for examined or sworn copy . . . . .	1273, 1337
copy of a copy . . . . .	1274
personal knowledge of correctness . . . . .	1278
loss proved by affidavit . . . . .	1709
whole must be copied . . . . .	2105
proof of lost will . . . . .	2052
of lost ancient deed . . . . .	2143
see also COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
[Examine analysis on "Production of Documentary Originals" Vol. II, p. 718.]	
<b>Other Offences; see SIMILAR ACTS.</b>	
<b>Overruling an objection . . . . .</b>	18
<b>Overt Act; see HOMICIDE; TREASON.</b>	
<b>Owner of an animal, mode of evidencing knowledge . . . . .</b>	251
of a dangerous place or machine, mode of evidencing knowledge . . . . .	252
admissions by; see ADMISSIONS.	
proof by, after robbery or larceny . . . . .	1142
proof as of, about boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.	
proof in larceny required . . . . .	2089
proof by adverse possession; see POSSESSION.	
proof of automobile as evidence of . . . . .	150a
proof of brand as evidence of . . . . .	150
proof of animals as evidence of . . . . .	177, 1154
proof of policy, as evidence of . . . . .	282
proof as evidenced by prior ownership . . . . .	382
admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
production of deed, in proof of fact of . . . . .	1246
reputation to show, of premises or vehicles, by railroad . . . . .	1587
evidenced by assessor's books . . . . .	1640
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1960
presumption of, from possession . . . . .	2515
continuity of . . . . .	2530
possessor's declarations to confirm . . . . .	1779
in common, presumption of . . . . .	2526
see also TITLE.	
<b>Oyer and Profert, when excused . . . . .</b>	1192
as a means of inspection before trial . . . . .	1858, 1859

## P

<b>Pain, expressions of, as evidence . . . . .</b>	1718
explaining away evidence of qualities of dental invention to allay . . . . .	35
failure to complain of . . . . .	1722
see also MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I. §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV. §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Paper</b> to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	Section
see also DOCUMENT; NEWSPAPER; WRITINGS.	
<b>Paper Money</b> , expert qualifications of witness to . . . . .	570, 705
<b>Paramour</b> , as furnishing a motive; see MOTIVE.	
as qualified to testify . . . . .	605, 2230
<b>Pardon</b> , promise of, as excluding a confession . . . . .	834
as restoring a witness' credit . . . . .	1116, 2280
a witness' competency . . . . .	523
as removing privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2280
as disqualifying an accomplice . . . . .	580
<b>Parent</b> , admissions of, as evidence of advancement to child . . . . .	1777
<b>Parentage</b> ; see LEGITIMACY; PATERNITY; FAMILY HISTORY.	
<b>Parish Register</b> ; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	
<b>Parol Evidence Rule</b>	
<i>Introduction</i>	
A. <i>Creation of Legal Acts</i>	
1. <i>Subject, tenor, delivery, in general</i>	
2. <i>Intent and mistake</i>	
3. <i>Voidable acts</i>	
B. <i>Integration of Legal Acts (varying the terms of an instrument)</i>	
1. <i>Unilateral Acts</i>	
2. <i>Bilateral Acts</i>	
3. <i>Writing required by Law</i>	
C. <i>Solemnization of Legal Acts</i>	
D. <i>Interpretation of Legal Acts</i>	
1. <i>Standard of Interpretation</i>	
2. <i>Sources of Interpretation</i>	
<i>Introduction</i>	
not a rule of evidence . . . . .	2400
'lex fori' not applicable to . . . . .	5
rules defining the constitution of legal acts . . . . .	2401
A. <i>Creation of Legal Acts</i>	
general principle; intent and expression; subject, tenor, and delivery . . . . .	2404
history of the principle . . . . .	2405
1. <i>Subject, tenor, delivery, in general</i>	
transactions of jest, friendship, charity, and pretence . . . . .	2406
explaining signature of attesting witness . . . . .	2406
terms must be definite; document void for uncertainty . . . . .	2407
act must be final; delivery, as applied to deeds; conditions precedent; escrows . . . . .	2408
delivery as applied to negotiable instruments . . . . .	2409
delivery, as applied to contracts in general; conditions precedent and subsequent; assent of third persons; blanks; dates . . . . .	2410
publication as applied to wills . . . . .	2411
2. <i>Intent and mistake</i>	
intention and mistake in general; test of reasonable consequences . . . . .	2413
intent not to be bound at all . . . . .	2414
terms of an act; (a) signing a completed document; individual mistake, not known to or induced by the second party . . . . .	2415
individual mistake known to or induced by the second party . . . . .	2416
mutual mistake; general principle . . . . .	2417
mutual mistake as affecting 'bona fide' holders for value . . . . .	2418
(b) signing a document having blanks or capable of alteration; writing one's name not as a signature . . . . .	2419
delivery of a document; escrow; deeds or negotiable instruments delivered to 'bona fide' holders, contrary to intent of maker . . . . .	2420
unilateral acts; foregoing principles applied to wills and ballots . . . . .	2421
3. <i>Voidable acts</i>	
motive as making an act voidable; mistake, fraud, duress, infancy, and insanity . . . . .	2423
B. <i>Integration of Legal Acts (varying the terms of an instrument)</i>	
general theory of the rule against varying the terms of an instrument . . . . .	2425
history of the rule . . . . .	2426

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Parol Evidence Rule (continued)	Section
1. <i>Unilateral Acts</i>	
official documents (surveys, appointments, assessments, etc.) . . . . .	2427
2. <i>Bilateral Acts</i>	
no integration at all; casual memoranda . . . . .	2429
partial integration; general test for applying the rules; "collateral agree- ments" . . . . .	2430
incorrect tests; fraud, in Pennsylvania . . . . .	2431
receipts and releases; bill of lading . . . . .	2432
recital of consideration in a deed . . . . .	2433
warranty in a sale; insurance warranties . . . . .	2434
agreements not to sue, or not to enforce, or to hold conditional only . . . . .	2435
agreements of counterclaim, set-off, renewal, or mode of payment . . . . .	2435
agreement to hold a deed absolute as conditional only; agreement to hold in trust . . . . .	2437
agreement to hold as agent or surety only . . . . .	2438
fraud . . . . .	2439
trade usage and custom . . . . .	2440
novation, alteration, and waiver; subsequent agreements . . . . .	2441
miscellaneous applications of the rule to admit or exclude "collateral agree- ments" . . . . .	2442
rule applied to negotiable instruments; general principle . . . . .	2443
agreements affecting the express terms of the document . . . . .	2444
the implied terms . . . . .	2445
rule binding upon the parties to the document only . . . . .	2446
burden of proof; who must produce the document . . . . .	2447
loss of instrument, oral transaction immaterial . . . . .	2448
agreement to treat copy as original . . . . .	2449
agent's authority to alter contract . . . . .	2334a
3. <i>Writing required by Law</i>	
at common law	
judicial records . . . . .	2450
corporate acts and records; negotiable instruments . . . . .	2451
under statutes	
wills; ballots; insurance policies . . . . .	2452
conclusive certificates, distinguished . . . . .	2543
C. <i>Solemnization of Legal Acts</i>	
writing as a formality; statute of frauds . . . . .	2454
discharge and alteration of specialties, etc. . . . .	2455
other formalities than writing; signature, seal, attestation, registration, stamp . . . . .	2456
D. <i>Interpretation of Legal Acts</i>	
general nature of interpretation; standard and sources of interpretation . . . . .	2458
"Intention" and "Meaning" distinguished . . . . .	2459
1. <i>Standard of Interpretation</i>	
general principle: four standards, — popular, local, mutual, individual . . . . .	2466
rule against "disturbing a plain meaning," or forbidding explanation except of ambiguities; history and general principle . . . . .	2461, 2462
application of the rule to wills, deeds, etc. . . . .	1956, 2463
usage of trade or locality, when to apply . . . . .	2464
parties' mutual understanding; identifying a description . . . . .	2465
individual party's meaning; deeds and contracts . . . . .	2466
wills . . . . .	2467
2. <i>Sources of Interpretation</i>	
general principle; all extrinsic circumstances may be considered . . . . .	2470
exception for declarations of intention . . . . .	2471
for equivocation or latent ambiguity . . . . .	2472
blanks and patent ambiguities . . . . .	2473
for erroneous description . . . . .	2474
for rebutting an equity (legacies and advancements) . . . . .	2475
to show revocation by marriage . . . . .	2475
to show intentional omission of child . . . . .	2475
rule of Kurtz v. Hibner in Illinois . . . . .	2477
'falsa demonstratio non nocet'; general principle . . . . .	2476



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Parol Evidence Rule</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
application to deeds and wills . . . . .	2477
not applicable to books of account . . . . .	1558
sundry rules; interpretation of statutes . . . . .	2478
[Examine analysis of "Parol Evidence Rule," Vol. V, pp. 234, 235.]	
<b>Particular Acts</b> , to evidence character, in general . . . . .	192-201
to evidence character for negligence . . . . .	199, 208
bad character of defendant . . . . .	193, 194
good character of defendant . . . . .	195
of misconduct of defendant to impeach credit or increase sentence . . . . .	196
to evidence character in homicide . . . . .	198
to show negligence in civil cases . . . . .	199
of unchastity, to attack character of woman as witness . . . . .	200
to show character of complainant in rape . . . . .	200
of animal to show disposition . . . . .	201
to evidence character of common offenders . . . . .	203
of prostitutes to show occupation . . . . .	204
of prostitution to show character of house . . . . .	204
to show unchastity, in action for breach of promise . . . . .	206
to show incompetency of employee or physician . . . . .	208
admissible to prove character, but not reputation . . . . .	209
inadmissible to mitigate damages in defamation . . . . .	209
to show father's or daughter's character, in action for seduction . . . . .	210
shown to mitigate damages, in seduction . . . . .	210
to show system in crime . . . . .	215
to impeach witness . . . . .	979
to impeach expert . . . . .	99, 1005, 1022
see also SIMILAR ACTS; ACT; PARTICULAR INSTANCES.	
<b>Particular Instances</b> , of conduct as evidencing human character, etc.; see	
CHARACTER; STRENGTH; HEALTH; NEGLIGENCE; PARTICULAR ACTS; SIMILAR	
ACTS; ACT.	
of injury, work, speed, etc., as evidencing cause or condition of a thing . . . .	447-461
<b>Parties</b>	
character of	
to prove an act	
in criminal cases . . . . .	55-61
in civil cases . . . . .	64-67
in issue . . . . .	70-80
to mitigate damages . . . . .	70-76
conduct of, to evidence character . . . . .	192-213
to evidence consciousness of weak case . . . . .	277-291
failure to testify or produce evidence . . . . .	285-289
common law disqualification as witnesses . . . . .	577
testifying to their own intent . . . . .	581
admissions by; see ADMISSIONS.	
books of account of; see BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.	
agent or kinsman of, not to take deposition . . . . .	803
impeachment of their own witness; see IMPEACHMENT.	
whether impeachable, when testifying for themselves . . . . .	890
when called by the opponent . . . . .	916
opponent as witness, treated as if on cross-examination . . . . .	1884
exhibiting injuries to jury . . . . .	1158
affidavit of, to lost document . . . . .	1196, 1225, 1709
former testimony of same . . . . .	1388
books of account kept by; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
exclusion from court during testimony . . . . .	1841
disclosure of documents or testimony before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
testifying first on their own side . . . . .	1869
answer to interrogatories, as evidence . . . . .	2124
claiming privilege for witness . . . . .	2196, 2270
privileged not to testify . . . . .	2217
discovery; statutes . . . . .	2218
production of documents . . . . .	2219
premises, chattels, bodily exposure . . . . .	2220, 2221

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Parties</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
parol evidence rule, restricted to . . . . .	2446
understanding of, to affect a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
burden of proof upon; see BURDEN OF PROOF.	
<b>Partner</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1077
<b>Partnership</b> , knowledge of, as evidenced by repute . . . . .	255
books of, as evidence . . . . .	1074
admissions made after dissolution . . . . .	1078
evidence of subsequent, by prior . . . . .	382
proof of, without producing instrument . . . . .	1249, 1257
provable by reputation . . . . .	1624
books of, presumed correct . . . . .	2537
<b>Passengers</b> , behavior of, as evidence of danger . . . . .	461
<b>Past Fact</b> as "narrative" . . . . .	1756
<b>Pastor</b> ; see CLERGYMAN.	
<b>Patent Ambiguity</b> in a document . . . . .	2472
<b>Patent of Invention</b> , producing original of assignment . . . . .	1226
execution of assignment of, proved by record . . . . .	1657
inspection of machine before trial . . . . .	1161, 1862
infringement of, privilege for trade secret . . . . .	2212, 2374
corroboration required for prior discovery . . . . .	2065a
privilege for application for . . . . .	2377
against self-crimination in infringement of . . . . .	2257
degree of proof necessary to show anticipation of . . . . .	2498
<b>Patent Office</b> , rules of evidence applicable to . . . . .	4a, 4c
<b>Patent of Land</b> ; see DEED; LAND-OFFICE.	
<b>Paternity</b> , other intercourse as evidence of . . . . .	133, 134
improper familiarities with others to disprove . . . . .	133
procuring of abortion as evidence of . . . . .	282
child's resemblance, as evidence of . . . . .	166, 1154, 1168
see also BASTARDY; NON-ACCESS.	
<b>Patient</b> , physician's testimony to illness of . . . . .	688
expressions of pain by . . . . .	1718
privilege for communications to physician . . . . .	2380
<b>Pavement</b> , test when showing other injuries on, to evidence a particular injury . . . . .	33
<b>Payee</b> , parol agreement of, collateral to instrument . . . . .	2443
see also BILL OF EXCHANGE; NOTE.	
<b>Payment</b> , possession of money, as evidence of . . . . .	89, 224
possession of instrument, as evidence of . . . . .	156
offer of, as an admission . . . . .	1061
production of receipt for . . . . .	1245, 1254
indorsements of, as statements against interest . . . . .	1461, 1466
books of account as evidence of . . . . .	1539, 1549
words accompanying, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1777
agreement as to mode of, shown by parol . . . . .	2436, 2444
presumption of . . . . .	2517, 2518
from indorsement on note . . . . .	2134
lapse of time as presumption of . . . . .	159, 2517
see also CONTRACT; MONEY.	
<b>Pecuniary Condition</b> as evidence of ability to make loan . . . . .	224
as evidence of motive . . . . .	392
<b>Pedigree</b> , hearsay statements of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
statement in deposition to evidence . . . . .	1495
of an animal, proved by reputation . . . . .	1621
by registry . . . . .	1706
inquisition of, by the heralds . . . . .	1670
see also ANIMAL.	
<b>Peer</b> , whether required to be sworn . . . . .	1825
<b>Penalty</b> , privilege not to disclose . . . . .	2257
<b>Penitent</b> , privilege for communications to priest . . . . .	2394
<b>Pennsylvania</b> , local rules of evidence in; see WILLS; PAROL EVIDENCE RULE; ATTESTING WITNESS.	
<b>Pension Bureau</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Peonage</b> ; see CONTRACT OF SERVICE.	
<b>Perambulations</b> as evidence of boundary . . . . .	1563



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Performance</b> of official duty, presumed . . . . .	2534
of contract, burden of proof of . . . . .	2537
<b>Perjury</b> , other falsities, as evidencing intent in . . . . .	342
in proving alibi . . . . .	279
confession of, as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	527
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	959
attempt at subornation of . . . . .	960, 962
producing original of chancery answer in . . . . .	1216
in inadmissible deposition . . . . .	1349
penalty for, as a requirement . . . . .	1831
in deposition . . . . .	1832
in answer erroneously compelled and falsely given . . . . .	2270
two-witness rule . . . . .	2040
committed in disclosure for amnesty . . . . .	2281
does not apply to act of swearing or words . . . . .	2042
to every detail of fact . . . . .	2042
rule in civil cases . . . . .	2042
subornation of, one witness rule not applied . . . . .	2042
action for damage caused by . . . . .	2195
testimony before grand jury, not privileged . . . . .	2363
who is an accomplice in subornation of . . . . .	2060
see also FALSEHOOD.	
<b>Perpetuam memoriam</b> ; see DEPOSITION.	
<b>Person</b> ; see NAME.	
<b>Person in Authority</b> ; see CONFESSION OF CRIME.	
<b>Personal Injury</b> ; see CORPORAL INJURY.	
<b>Pharmacist</b> , privileged communications to . . . . .	2382
required by statute to file reports of sales of liquor . . . . .	2264
<b>Phonograph</b> used to reproduce nuisance created by noise . . . . .	795
<b>Photograph</b> of a person, as used to identify him . . . . .	660, 790
used by a witness to illustrate testimony . . . . .	790-797, 2019
witness using, need not be maker of . . . . .	794
verification of . . . . .	793
objection to use of . . . . .	792
X-ray . . . . .	795
enlarged . . . . .	797
of handwriting . . . . .	797, 2010, 2019
process judicially noticed . . . . .	2566
of artificial settings (moving picture) . . . . .	798
<b>Physical traits</b> to show race or nationality . . . . .	165, 167
inconvenience of production of evidence . . . . .	1161
traits, to evidence strength; see POWER.	
<b>Physician</b> , character of, as defendant in malpractice . . . . .	67
conduct, as evidencing negligence or incompetence of . . . . .	199, 200, 208
unfair surprise in showing acts of incompetence by . . . . .	208
mode of treatment by another, as a standard of care . . . . .	461
qualified to be an expert witness . . . . .	569, 687
license to practice, as qualifying an expert . . . . .	569
testimony of, to possible developments in corporal injury . . . . .	663
acquaintance with person insane or diseased . . . . .	689
hypothetical question to; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.	
witness to value of services of . . . . .	715
patient's expressions of pain to . . . . .	1718
character for skill . . . . .	1984
amount of fee demandable as expert . . . . .	2203
privileged not to attend court . . . . .	2206
inspection of injured person by . . . . .	2220
new methods of securing unbiassed experts . . . . .	563
judge's power to summon, as witness . . . . .	2484
malpractice by, medical testimony required in action for . . . . .	2090
privilege for patient's communications to . . . . .	2380
patient's communications to, privilege waived by contract . . . . .	7a
privilege of, as attesting witness . . . . .	2390
see also MALPRACTICE; OPINION RULE; POISON; PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT; MEDICINE (PRACTICE OF).	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Physician and Patient, privileged communications</b> . . . . .	2380
burden of proof of confidence . . . . .	2381
third person hearing . . . . .	2381
must be in professional character . . . . .	2382
not privileged on hypothetical question involving privileged facts . . . . .	2382
consultation of physicians . . . . .	2382
patient's belief of matters necessary to treatment . . . . .	2383
communication may be by exhibition . . . . .	2384
insanity observed . . . . .	2384
privilege limited to tenor of communication . . . . .	2384
no application to partake in crime . . . . .	2385
request to commit crime . . . . .	2385
certificate of death . . . . .	2385a
privilege is patient's . . . . .	2386
patient need not be party to cause to claim privilege . . . . .	2386
inference from claim . . . . .	2386
claimed by representative of deceased . . . . .	2386
"shall not be compelled" means "shall not be allowed" . . . . .	2386
death does not terminate privilege . . . . .	2387
may be waived . . . . .	2388
waiver in insurance policy . . . . .	2388
by conduct . . . . .	2389
by bringing suit for malpractice . . . . .	2389
by testifying . . . . .	2389
at former trial . . . . .	2389
by asking physician to attest will . . . . .	2390
by calling physician as witness . . . . .	2390
by certificate in "proofs of death" . . . . .	2390
by personal representative . . . . .	2391
see also PHYSICIAN.	
[Examine analysis of "Communications between Physician and Patient," Vol. V, p. 201.]	
<b>Physiological Traits, as evidenced by heredity</b> . . . . .	165, 167
as evidence of strength . . . . .	220
real evidence of . . . . .	1161
<b>Picture, of a person or place, to illustrate testimony</b> . . . . .	790
moving, as evidence . . . . .	798
see also PHOTOGRAPH; X-RAY.	
<b>Pier; see PREMISES.</b>	
<b>Pilot, as a necessary witness and therefore cross-examinable</b> . . . . .	917
<b>Pimping; see ENTICEMENT FOR PROSTITUTION.</b>	
<b>Piracy; see ROBBERY; COPYRIGHT.</b>	
<b>Pistol; see WEAPON.</b>	
<b>Place, condition in one, evidencing that in another</b> . . . . .	437, 438
value at another, as evidence of value . . . . .	463
character of a witness at another . . . . .	929, 1615
of birth, death, etc., as evidenced by family hearsay . . . . .	1501
judicially noticed . . . . .	2575, 2581
see also PREMISES.	
<b>Plaintiff, character of, as evidence</b> . . . . .	64-67
character of, as in issue or as mitigating damages . . . . .	70-80
mode of evidencing character by conduct . . . . .	192-213
see also PARTIES.	
<b>Plan, used to illustrate testimony</b> . . . . .	790
see also DESIGN; SURVEY.	
<b>Plat, used to illustrate a witness' testimony</b> . . . . .	790
see also SURVEY.	
<b>Platform; see PREMISES.</b>	
<b>Plea of truth as evidence of malice; see DEFAMATION.</b>	
of 'nolo contendere' as admission . . . . .	1066
of "guilty," as admission . . . . .	815, 1066, 1077
<b>Pleading, distinguished from evidence</b> . . . . .	2
from judicial admission . . . . .	2589
as a party's admission . . . . .	1064



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Pleading</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
original in court records not produced . . . . .	1215
statement in, to evidence pedigree . . . . .	1495
struck out for failure to give discovery . . . . .	1859e
see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
<b>Pledge</b> ; see MORTGAGE.	
<b>Poison</b> , evidence to show knowledge of . . . . .	87
possession of, as indicating criminal design . . . . .	238
similar acts to show intent in administration of . . . . .	111, 363
nature of, as shown by samples . . . . .	439
symptoms, as indicating nature of . . . . .	457
witness' experience as qualifying him . . . . .	568
statements while eating poisoned lunch . . . . .	1750
see also HOMICIDE.	
<b>Poles</b> , telegraph or telephone; see NEGLIGENCE; HIGHWAY.	
<b>Police-officer</b> obtaining a confession; see CONFESSION.	
<b>Policy</b> of insurance; see INSURANCE.	
<b>Political Opinion</b> , expressions of . . . . .	195, 369, 465, 1732
<b>Political Party</b> , membership as evidence of tenor of vote . . . . .	93
<b>Poll-book</b> ; see ELECTION.	
<b>Population</b> , as evidenced by census . . . . .	1671
judicially noticed . . . . .	2577
<b>Possession</b> of tools, as evidence of a crime . . . . .	88, 238
of chattels to evidence crime . . . . .	152, 238, 153
of money, as evidence of loan or payment . . . . .	89, 224
of larceny . . . . .	154, 2513
of motive for crime, etc. . . . .	392
of a document, as evidence of knowledge . . . . .	260
as an admission . . . . .	1073
by opponent, as excusing non-production . . . . .	1199
of receipts, etc., as evidence of payment . . . . .	156
of deed, to evidence delivery and execution of it . . . . .	157
of land, continued after mortgage or sale as showing intent to defraud creditors . . . . .	160
under ancient document as evidencing genuineness . . . . .	2141
as creating inference of deed . . . . .	157
as evidenced by a lease or deed . . . . .	157
by payment of taxes . . . . .	157
by ancient document . . . . .	157
by declaration against interest . . . . .	1458
of forged documents, as evidence of intent . . . . .	309
of stolen goods, as evidence of larceny . . . . .	152, 153
other possession as evidence of intent . . . . .	324
accused's explanations . . . . .	1143
presumption from . . . . .	2513
possessor's declarations of facts against interest . . . . .	1458
assessment-books as evidence of . . . . .	1640
statements about boundary, by a possessor; see BOUNDARIES.	
reputation about . . . . .	1587
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1960
by grantor, raising presumption of fraud in sale . . . . .	2504
presumption of ownership from . . . . .	2515
of payment from, of receipt . . . . .	2518
of continuance of . . . . .	382, 2530
of original document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
<b>Adverse Possession</b>	
ancient documents, as evidence of . . . . .	157
knowledge of claim, as evidenced by repute . . . . .	254, 255
possession of part, as evidencing possession of whole . . . . .	378
under deed as evidence of boundaries . . . . .	378
oral admissions of title . . . . .	1257
statements made during, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1778
as affecting presumptions of ownership . . . . .	1779
see also DOCUMENT; DEED.	
<b>Possibility</b> of doing or happening, as evidenced by instances . . . . .	446-461

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Fosting</b> in the mail; see MAIL; POSTMARK.	Section
on a wall or fence, original not required . . . . .	1214
<b>Postmark</b> , as evidence . . . . .	151
presuming genuineness of . . . . .	2152
as an official statement . . . . .	1674
<b>Postmaster General</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
see also MAIL.	
<b>Poverty</b> , as evidence of non-payment . . . . .	89
as negating probability of loan . . . . .	89, 224
as evidence of motive for a crime or transaction . . . . .	32, 392
evidenced by assessor's books . . . . .	1640
<b>Power</b> , physical, as evidence of an act . . . . .	85
instances of physical, as evidence . . . . .	220
<b>Power of Attorney</b> ; see AGENCY.	
<b>Power of Legislature</b> , to make rules of evidence . . . . .	7
<b>Preamble</b> of statute; see RECITAL.	
<b>Precautions</b> to remedy or prevent injury . . . . .	282, 461
<b>Preferential Rules</b> defined . . . . .	1172
<b>Pregnancy</b> , events in, as evidenced by birthmark . . . . .	168
admissible to show intercourse in rape, seduction, etc. . . . .	168
see also BASTARDY.	
<b>Prejudice</b> , undue,	
by showing particular criminal acts . . . . .	194
acts of negligence in civil cases . . . . .	199
of unchastity . . . . .	200
of employee or physician in negligence . . . . .	208
not applicable to conduct to show character in issue . . . . .	202
as affecting order of evidence . . . . .	1864
in circumstantial evidence . . . . .	1904
<b>Premises</b> , owner's knowledge of defect, evidenced by prior condition or injury . . . . .	252
leased for gaming, proved by repute . . . . .	254
repairs, as evidence of negligence . . . . .	32, 283
condition at another time or place, as evidence . . . . .	437, 438
instances of condition or quality, as evidence . . . . .	451
marks on, as evidence of identity . . . . .	416
similar injuries, as evidence of defect . . . . .	458
similar precautions, as evidence of safety . . . . .	461
photograph of, to illustrate testimony . . . . .	790
opinion evidence of location of . . . . .	1956
inspection of, compellable at trial . . . . .	1162, 2194, 2221
before trial . . . . .	1162, 1862
presumption of defect, from accident . . . . .	2509
<b>Preparation</b> , as evidence of crime . . . . .	238
<b>Prepared Report</b> , expert reading a . . . . .	740, 787
<b>Preponderance</b> of evidence . . . . .	2498
<b>Prescription</b> of title, by possession; see POSSESSION.	
of physician, as privileged . . . . .	2383
<b>Presence</b> as evidence of design to commit crime . . . . .	238
shown in burglary to be for another purpose . . . . .	391
<b>President</b> , privilege of . . . . .	2368-2372
personal liability of one who signs as . . . . .	2444
see also EXECUTIVE.	
<b>Press Copies</b> , as originals . . . . .	1234
<b>Presumption</b> of good character . . . . .	290
of continuity, founded on inference . . . . .	437
of innocence . . . . .	1732, 2511
not evidence in favor of accused . . . . .	2511
legal effect of . . . . .	2490
distinction between, and inference . . . . .	2490
of law and fact . . . . .	2491
conclusive . . . . .	2492
conflicting, counter . . . . .	2493
of felonious intent from taking of goods . . . . .	2511
possession of stolen goods as a . . . . .	2513



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Presumption</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
of title, from possession or payment . . . . .	2516-2518
of consideration . . . . .	2520
of legitimacy in bastardy . . . . .	2527
of life, or death . . . . .	2531
see also BURDEN OF PROOF.	
conclusive; see CONCLUSIVENESS.	
[Examine analysis of "Burdens and Presumptions," Vol. V, p. 477.]	
<b>Presumptive</b> evidence, as meaning circumstantial evidence . . . . .	25
<b>Pretences</b> , false; see REPRESENTATIONS.	
<b>Price</b> ; see SALES; VALUE.	
<b>Price-current</b> , as qualifying a witness to value . . . . .	719
as admissible in evidence . . . . .	1704
<b>Priest</b> , confession to . . . . .	840
privilege for communications to . . . . .	2394
see also MARRIAGE; REGISTER.	
<b>Priest and Penitent</b> , privileged communications created by statute . . . . .	2395
' <b>Prima Facie</b> ' Evidence, statutes making . . . . .	7, 1355
sufficient to go to jury . . . . .	2494
<b>Primary Evidence</b> ; see BEST EVIDENCE; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT; COPY.	
<b>Principal</b> , admissions of, against surety . . . . .	1077
agent's admissions against . . . . .	1078
undisclosed, shown by parol . . . . .	2438
joint, is accomplice . . . . .	2060
see also AGENT.	
<b>Printed Copy</b> of public document	
sundry documents . . . . .	1684
reports of decisions . . . . .	1684, 1703
statutes . . . . .	1684
see also COPY.	
<b>Printed Matter</b> , as a duplicate original . . . . .	1234, 1237
sample copies as evidence . . . . .	440
proving genuineness of	
newspapers . . . . .	2150
official statutes and reports . . . . .	2151
see also BOOK; MAIL; NEWSPAPER.	
<b>Printer</b> , official, authentication of copies of . . . . .	1684
<b>Prior and Subsequent</b> ; see TIME; CONDITION.	
<b>Prison</b> , escape from, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
<b>Private</b> statute, judicial notice of . . . . .	2572
<b>Privies</b> in interest, admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
<b>Privilege</b>	
I. <i>From Attending</i>	
II. <i>From Testifying</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>privileged topics</i>	
(c) <i>privileged communications</i>	
III. <i>Sundry Rules</i>	
I. <i>From Attending</i>	
no privilege in general . . . . .	2192
illness . . . . .	2205
sex and occupation . . . . .	2206
officers of government . . . . .	2206, 2371
distance from place of trial . . . . .	2207
subpœna . . . . .	2199
expenses . . . . .	2200
II. <i>From Testifying</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
no privilege in general . . . . .	2192-2194
of ambassador . . . . .	2372
officers having compulsory power . . . . .	2195
privilege personal to witness . . . . .	2196
party may not object . . . . .	2196
party excepting to improper ruling on privilege . . . . .	2196

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Privilege (continued)</b>	Section
(b) <i>privileged topics</i>	
irrelevant matters . . . . .	2210
documents of title, etc. . . . .	2211
witness required to describe deed for identification . . . . .	2211
trade secrets . . . . .	2212
customers' names . . . . .	2212
official secrets . . . . .	2375-2379
theological opinions . . . . .	2213
political votes . . . . .	2214
waiver of voter's privilege . . . . .	2214
disgracing facts . . . . .	984-987, 2216, 2255
bodily exposure . . . . .	2216
partly interested . . . . .	2217
opponent compellable . . . . .	2218
production of documents . . . . .	2219
bodily exposure . . . . .	2220
premises and chattels . . . . .	2221
witness interested . . . . .	2222
civil liability in general . . . . .	2223
for incriminating matters in report made by requirement of law . . . . .	2264
husband and wife; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
self-crimination; see SELF-CRIMINATION.	
(c) <i>privileged communications</i>	
in general . . . . .	2285
mere pledges of privacy and oaths of secrecy . . . . .	2286
clerks . . . . .	2286
commercial agency . . . . .	2286
bankers . . . . .	2286
trustees . . . . .	2286
journalists, etc. . . . .	2286
telegrams . . . . .	2287
of agent . . . . .	2301, 2317
attorney and client; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
husband and wife; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
physician and patient; see PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT.	
petit jurors	
communications . . . . .	2346
impeaching a verdict . . . . .	2348-2356
arbitrators . . . . .	2358, 2376
grand jurors	
vote and opinion . . . . .	2361
witness' testimony . . . . .	2362
grounds for indictment . . . . .	2364
number of votes . . . . .	2364
official communications . . . . .	2368-2379
government and informer . . . . .	2374
state prosecutor . . . . .	2375
judge, conciliator . . . . .	2376
reports of taxes, accidents, disease, etc. . . . .	2377
physician and patient . . . . .	2380-2391
priest and penitent . . . . .	2394-2396
offer of compromise . . . . .	1061
III. <i>Sundry Rules</i>	
as permitting proof by copy, for privileged document . . . . .	1212
as excusing production of attesting witness . . . . .	1317
as allowing use of deposition . . . . .	1407
claim of, on cross-examination, as excluding the direct testimony . . . . .	1391
books of account, from production . . . . .	2193, 2205, 2286
<b>Probable Cause</b> for prosecution or arrest, evidence of belief of . . . . .	258
in malicious prosecution, burden of proof of . . . . .	2539
judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2554
<b>Probate</b> ; see WILL; JUDICIAL RECORD; CERTIFIED COPY; ATTESTING WITNESS; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Proceedings</b> , presumption of regularity of . . . . .	2534
<b>Process</b> , special form to secure corporation books . . . . .	2200
statute may create new forms of . . . . .	2193
see also <b>COMPULSORY PROCESS</b> ; <b>JUDICIAL RECORDS</b> ; <b>CONSTITUTIONAL RULES</b> ; <b>PRIVILEGE</b> .	
<b>Processioning</b> , as evidence of boundary . . . . .	1563
<b>Proclamations</b> , Executive, to evidence certain propositions . . . . .	1662
<b>Production of evidence</b> in general, failure to make, as showing a weak case . . . . .	277, 285-291
of document or chattel . . . . .	
which party is bound to produce . . . . .	2447
by opponent at trial . . . . .	2219
by witness . . . . .	2193
subpœna 'duces tecum' . . . . .	2200
privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2246
of attorney and client . . . . .	2307, 2318
of government officials . . . . .	2373
before trial, on discovery . . . . .	1858, 1859
proof by copy; see <b>ORIGINAL DOCUMENT</b> .	
before trial; see <b>DISCOVERY</b> .	
<b>Profert</b> , required in proving a document . . . . .	1177, 1858
see also <b>PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS</b> .	
<b>Professional Persons</b> , evidence of incompetence of . . . . .	208a
<b>Profits</b> , amount of receipt of; other persons' experience, to evidence amount of . . . . .	379, 461, 462
see also <b>CONTRACTS</b> ; <b>SALES</b> ; <b>VALUE</b> .	
<b>Promise</b> as excluding a confession; see <b>CONFESSION</b> .	
of pardon, as disqualifying an accomplice . . . . .	580
new, as removing bar of statute of limitations . . . . .	1466
see also <b>BREACH OF PROMISE</b> .	
<b>Proof</b> , distinguished from admissibility . . . . .	12
from relevancy . . . . .	29
beyond reasonable doubt . . . . .	2497
<b>Proofs of Loss</b> , in insurance, as an admission . . . . .	1073
coroner's verdict to show cause of death in . . . . .	1671
as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1770
privilege waived by sending physician's certificate . . . . .	2390
<b>Property</b> , conveyance of, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	282
sales of other, as evidence of value . . . . .	462
qualifications of a witness to value . . . . .	567, 711
value of, proved by assessor's books . . . . .	1640
lack of, proved by assessor's books . . . . .	1640
presumption of ownership from possession of . . . . .	2515
see also <b>POSSESSION</b> ; <b>CUSTOM</b> ; <b>CONTRACT</b> ; <b>PREMISES</b> ; <b>OWNERSHIP</b> ; <b>DEED</b> ; <b>REGISTRATION OF TITLE</b> .	
<b>Prophylactic Rules</b> defined . . . . .	1172
<b>Prosecution</b> , may show accused's bad character in rebuttal only . . . . .	57, 58
malicious; see <b>MALICIOUS PROSECUTION</b> .	
delay or failure to institute, as evidence . . . . .	284
may impeach eye-witnesses called by it . . . . .	918
list of witnesses of, before trial . . . . .	1850
privilege for communications to official of . . . . .	2316, 2375
promise of immunity as removing privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2280
see also <b>CRIMINAL TRIAL</b> ; <b>DISCOVERY</b> .	
<b>Prospectant Evidence</b> , classification of . . . . .	51
<b>Prostitution</b> , enticement for, character of complainant as evidence . . . . .	62
marital privilege applied to; see <b>MARITAL PRIVILEGE</b> .	
house of; see <b>HOUSE OF ILL-FAME</b> .	
other offences as evidence of intent to entice for . . . . .	349, 360
character of prostitute admissible in rape, etc. . . . .	62
<b>Protest</b> ; see <b>NOTARY</b> .	
<b>Prudence</b> , opinion as to . . . . .	1949
in matters of business, evidenced by acts of others . . . . .	461
<b>Psychology</b> , of impeaching testimony . . . . .	875, 934, 935
<b>Public Corporation</b> ; see <b>CORPORATION</b> .	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

## Public Document

Section

1. <i>Admissible to prove the Facts stated therein</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>registers and records</i>	
(c) <i>returns and reports</i>	
(d) <i>certificates</i>	
2. <i>Proving Contents and Execution of Public Documents</i>	
1. <i>Admissible to prove the Facts stated therein</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
general principle . . . . .	1631
as best evidence . . . . .	1335
whether conclusive, or preferred to other testimony . . . . .	1335, 2427, 2453
official duty of maker . . . . .	1632
deputies, 'de facto' officers, etc. . . . .	1633
absence of record to negative occurrence . . . . .	1633
publicity of document . . . . .	1634
officer's personal knowledge . . . . .	1635
constitutionality of using as evidence . . . . .	1398
(b) <i>registers and records</i>	
sundry kinds . . . . .	1639
statutory regulation of admissibility . . . . .	1639
assessment and electoral registers . . . . .	1640
tax-records admissible by statute . . . . .	1640
military and naval registers . . . . .	1641
registers of marriage, birth, death . . . . .	1642-1646
certificates of marriage . . . . .	1645
registers of title (ships, stock-brands, timber-marks) . . . . .	1647
as admission of ownership . . . . .	1647
registers of conveyances	
deeds and mortgages . . . . .	1648-1656
admissible only to prove deeds lawfully recorded . . . . .	1649
in foreign state . . . . .	1652
proof when registration is unauthorized or faulty . . . . .	1653
registration as admission of execution . . . . .	1653
as showing claim of title . . . . .	1654, 1777
certified and sworn copies . . . . .	1655
certified copy of deed itself . . . . .	1655
discrimination between principles of evidence involved . . . . .	1656
assignments of invention-patent . . . . .	1657
wills . . . . .	1658
government land-grants . . . . .	1659
judicial records . . . . .	1660
corporation records . . . . .	1661
legislative records . . . . .	1662
executive proclamations . . . . .	1662
(c) <i>returns and reports</i>	
sundry kinds . . . . .	1664
sheriff's returns and recitals . . . . .	1664
surveyor's returns . . . . .	1665
former testimony reported	
judges' notes . . . . .	1666
magistrate's reports . . . . .	1667
bills of exceptions . . . . .	1668
stenographers' notes, etc. . . . .	1669
inquisitions and reports	
domain, escheat, and title . . . . .	1670
pedigree in heralds' books . . . . .	1670
lunacy . . . . .	1671
coroner's inquest of death . . . . .	1671
census of population . . . . .	1671
miscellaneous kinds . . . . .	1672
(d) <i>certificates</i>	
miscellaneous kinds . . . . .	1674
notary's protest . . . . .	1675



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Public Document</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
military service . . . . .	1675a
death in service . . . . .	1675a
deed-acknowledgments; oaths . . . . .	1676
certified copies . . . . .	1677-1683
printed copies . . . . .	1684
court decisions . . . . .	1684
statutes . . . . .	1684
2. <i>Proving Contents and Execution of Public Documents</i>	
whether removable for use in evidence . . . . .	1186, 2182, 2183, 2373
production of original not required . . . . .	1218-1222
provable by examined or sworn copy . . . . .	1273
by certified or office copy . . . . .	1677-1683
certified copy preferred to others . . . . .	1273
by printed copy . . . . .	1684
any copy preferred to recollection . . . . .	1267, 1268
attesting witness dispensed with . . . . .	1318
see also COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
whether the whole must be proved	
lost or destroyed record . . . . .	2107
record accessible . . . . .	2108
sundry public records . . . . .	2109
judicial record . . . . .	2110
genuineness, how proved	
by seal . . . . .	2161-2169
by official custody . . . . .	665, 2158, 2159
by certificate of attestation . . . . .	1677, 2162
as privileged . . . . .	2183, 2373
privileged as State secrets . . . . .	2368-2372
irremovability of . . . . .	2373
right of citizen to inspect . . . . .	1858
see also CERTIFICATE; EXECUTION; JUDICIAL RECORD; RECORDED CON-	
VEYANCE; NOTARY; PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
[Examine analyses of "Official Statements," Vol. III, pp. 383-385; and	
"Verbal Completeness," Vol. IV, p. 461.]	
<b>Public Interest</b> , matters of; see REPUTATION.	
<b>Public Officer</b> , impeaching his own certificate . . . . .	529
having power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
privileged from testifying . . . . .	2368-2372
regularity of proceedings presumed . . . . .	2534
appointment and authority presumed . . . . .	2535
judicially noticed . . . . .	2577
see also JUDICIAL RECORD; PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Public Record</b> ; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Public Utilities Commissions</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
privilege for reports to . . . . .	2377
statutes declaring commission's findings to be 'prima facie' evidence . . . . .	1356
commission's findings admissible . . . . .	1672
power to compel testimony . . . . .	2195
<b>Publication</b> , in newspaper, as evidencing knowledge . . . . .	255
of libel or slander; see DEFAMATION.	
proving the fact of, without producing document . . . . .	1249
affidavit of . . . . .	1710
of testimony in newspaper, forbidden . . . . .	1836
see also PRINTED MATTER; NOTICE; BOOK.	
<b>Publicity</b> of trial, as a security for truth . . . . .	1834
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	1835
exclusion of mere spectators . . . . .	1835
adjournment of court to another place affecting . . . . .	1835
<b>Publisher</b> ; see PUBLICATION; PRINTED MATTER; COPYRIGHT.	
<b>Punishment</b> , as evidenced by practice of others . . . . .	461
<b>Pupil</b> ; see SCHOOLMASTER.	
<b>Purchaser</b> , knowledge of equitable or other interest by . . . . .	254
see also GRANTEE; CREDITOR; SALES.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

**Putting in the Case**; see EXAMINATION, III. Section  
**Putting under the Rule**; see SEPARATION OF WITNESSES.

## Q

<b>Qualifications</b> of a witness; see WITNESS, I, <i>Qualifications</i> .	
distinctions in proving defective . . . . .	876
<b>Quality</b> of a chattel, place, weapon, etc., as evidenced by its effects, etc. . . . .	437-461
as evidenced by sales or rentals . . . . .	462
<b>Quantitative Rules</b> defined . . . . .	1172
<b>Quarrels</b> , refuting evidence of animosity resultant from old . . . . .	34
details of prior, to show hostility of deceased . . . . .	396
see also MOTIVE; INTENT; BIAS; DECEASED BY HOMICIDE.	
<b>Question to a Witness</b> , in hypothetical form . . . . .	672-684
in leading form . . . . .	769-779
allowable only in discretion . . . . .	770, 776
judge may put leading . . . . .	784
kinds of leading questions . . . . .	771
exceptions to the rule . . . . .	776
put to one's own witness . . . . .	915
in misleading form . . . . .	780
cross-examiner need not state purpose of . . . . .	780
with intimidating or annoying manner . . . . .	781
repetition of . . . . .	782
multiple examiners . . . . .	783
as limited to one counsel . . . . .	783
by the judge . . . . .	784, 2484
topics of, for impeachment or other purposes; see DIRECT EXAMINATION; CROSS-EXAMINATION.	
witness' prior knowledge of . . . . .	788
continuous narration by witness without . . . . .	767
stating the purpose of . . . . .	1871
as a foundation for impeachment . . . . .	
by expressions of bias or corruption . . . . .	953, 964
by self-contradiction . . . . .	1025
by a writing . . . . .	1259
by admissions of a party . . . . .	1051
impeaching a witness sworn but not questioned . . . . .	1893
relevancy of, no concern of witness . . . . .	2210
self-incriminating, not forbidden . . . . .	2266
warning witness of right to refuse a self-criminating answer . . . . .	2269
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Narration or Communication," Vol. II, p. 46.]	

## R

<b>Race</b> , evidenced by corporal traits . . . . .	165, 167, 1154
disqualifying a witness . . . . .	516
impeaching a witness . . . . .	937
evidenced . . . . .	
by reputation . . . . .	1605
by family hearsay . . . . .	1502
corroboration required for Chinese . . . . .	2066
for aliens in naturalization . . . . .	2066
see also ALIENS.	
<b>Radiograph</b> , as a basis for testimony to bodily condition . . . . .	795
privilege for telegram by . . . . .	2287
see also X-RAY.	
<b>Railroad</b> , nuisance, nature of . . . . .	451
custom as to switch-lights on cars . . . . .	18
regulations of, as measure of negligence . . . . .	461
reputation to show ownership of premises or vehicles by . . . . .	1587
see also NEGLIGENCE; EMPLOYEE; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; SPARKS; MACHINE; CARRIER; RATES.	
<b>Railroad Accidents</b> , discovery of reports of . . . . .	2318
privilege for reports of . . . . .	2377



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Railroad Cars</b> , signs on, as evidence . . . . .	150a
<b>Railroad Commissions</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4b, 4c
see also PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION.	
<b>Rape</b> , character of complainant as evidence . . . . .	62, 200
of plaintiff in indecent assault . . . . .	75
civil action for rape . . . . .	62
opinion rule applicable to moral character of complainant . . . . .	1983
other persons' intercourse as evidence of paternity . . . . .	133
acts of unchastity, to show complainant's consent . . . . .	199
under age of consent, other acts . . . . .	398
other intercourse, as evidencing defendant's intent or motive . . . . .	357, 398
other attempts on same woman in . . . . .	402
pregnancy as evidence of . . . . .	168
improper familiarities as evidencing consent in . . . . .	402
discriminations in regard to . . . . .	402
infant or imbecile witness in . . . . .	498, 508
failure to complain speedily of . . . . .	284
total failure to make complaint in . . . . .	1135
conduct of complainant, to impeach credibility . . . . .	987
restoring credit of complainant . . . . .	1106
complainant's outcry or information, received . . . . .	1134
complainant in, too young to be a witness . . . . .	1139, 1761
details of complaint, admissible . . . . .	1760
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
uncorroborated complainant in . . . . .	2061
what is corroborative evidence in . . . . .	2062
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
see also AGE OF CONSENT.	
<b>Rates</b> of charge by railroad, conclusiveness of official schedule . . . . .	1354
<b>Ratification</b> ; see AGENCY.	
<b>Rationality</b> of the rules of evidence . . . . .	9
<b>Reading</b> a prepared paper, by witness . . . . .	787, 1385
a deposition to deponent before signing . . . . .	805
impeachment of skill of a witness in . . . . .	991
scientific books to jury . . . . .	1700
<b>Real Evidence</b> (or Autoptic Proference)	
defined . . . . .	24
general principle and instances . . . . .	1150-1152
mode of inspecting . . . . .	1152
place of inspecting . . . . .	1152
color, resemblance, appearance, etc., to show age, paternity, etc. . . . .	1154
exhibition of body as privileged . . . . .	1155
weapons, clothes, etc., in criminal cases . . . . .	1157
corporal injuries, in civil cases . . . . .	1158
indecent exhibition . . . . .	1159
liquor sampled by jurors . . . . .	1159
experiments, insanity, etc. . . . .	1160
physical inconvenience of production . . . . .	1161
view by jury . . . . .	1162-1167
jury's view as evidence . . . . .	1168
specimens of handwriting . . . . .	2020
whether an inscribed chattel must be produced . . . . .	1182
of premises, chattels, etc., discovery before trial . . . . .	1862
not privileged . . . . .	2220, 2221, 2264
<b>Reason</b> for an act, hearsay statement of . . . . .	1729
<b>Reasonable Doubt</b> , proof beyond . . . . .	2497
<b>Reasonableness</b> , other persons' conduct, as evidence of . . . . .	461
information received, as evidence of . . . . .	1789
opinion as to . . . . .	1950
judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2553
see also KNOWLEDGE; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Rebuttal</b> , of irrelevant evidence, by other irrelevant evidence . . . . .	(15
accused's bad character in . . . . .	58
scope of testimony in . . . . .	1869, 1873

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

	Section
<b>Re-call</b> of a witness by opponent, whether it prevents impeachment . . . . .	911-913
to ask as to a self-contradiction . . . . .	1036
see also EXAMINATION.	
<b>Receipt</b> received as an admission . . . . .	156
of land-office receiver, original required . . . . .	1239
production of original, in proving payment . . . . .	1245
admissible as statement against interest . . . . .	1456, 1460
varied by parol . . . . .	2432
presumption of payment . . . . .	2518
<b>Receiver</b> of stolen goods, knowledge as evidenced by repute . . . . .	254
as evidenced by other possession . . . . .	324
thief not an accomplice of . . . . .	2060
<b>Recital</b> in a deed, of another deed's contents . . . . .	1257
in a statute, whether conclusive . . . . .	1352
whether admissible . . . . .	1662
in a sheriff's deed, whether conclusive . . . . .	1354
whether admissible . . . . .	1664
in an ancient deed, of boundary or lost deed . . . . .	1573
of pedigree . . . . .	1573
in a will, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
of consideration, varied by parol . . . . .	2433
<b>Recollection</b>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>record of past recollection</i>	
(c) <i>present recollection refreshed</i>	
(d) <i>sundry rules</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
general principles . . . . .	725-730
cross-examination to impeach . . . . .	730
"impression," "belief," etc. . . . .	727-729
examining to grounds of recollection . . . . .	730
distinction between past and present . . . . .	735
(b) <i>record of past recollection</i> . . . . .	734-754, 800
[ <i>distinguish from present recollection, infra (c)</i> ]	
history and general principles . . . . .	734, 739
from stenographer's notes . . . . .	737, 751
signature by attesting witness . . . . .	737
regular entries in course of business . . . . .	737, 747
notary's certificate . . . . .	737
New York doctrine . . . . .	738
written copies preferred to oral . . . . .	739
must be written . . . . .	744
contemporaneous . . . . .	745
accuracy sworn to . . . . .	746, 747
attesting witness testifying without . . . . .	747
Massachusetts rule for regular entries . . . . .	747
witness not the writer . . . . .	748
original . . . . .	749, 750
verification of copy . . . . .	750
stenographer's report from interpreter . . . . .	751
transactions by several persons (book-keeper and salesman, etc.) . . . . .	751, 752
salesman deceased or unavailable . . . . .	752
copier of statement as witness to . . . . .	752
showing to opponent . . . . .	753
handing to jury . . . . .	754
(c) <i>present recollection refreshed</i> . . . . .	758-764
[ <i>distinguished from past recollection, supra (b)</i> ]	
general principle . . . . .	758
any writing may be used . . . . .	758
witness not the writer . . . . .	765
original . . . . .	760
contemporaneous . . . . .	761
depositions used . . . . .	761, 904
to refresh, of hostile witness . . . . .	761



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Recollection (continued)</b>		Section
showing to opponent . . . . .		762
handing to jury . . . . .		763
use by cross-examiner . . . . .		764
(d) <i>sundry rules</i>		
refreshing the memory of one's own witness by his prior self-contradiction . . . . .		905
cross-examination to test . . . . .		995
contradicting by showing failure of . . . . .		1005, 1022
self-contradiction by failure of . . . . .		1037, 1043
lost negotiable instrument provable by . . . . .		1267
lost will provable by . . . . .		1267
preference of copy of a document, to recollection of contents; see COPY OF A DOCUMENT, 2.		
failure of recollection of attesting witness . . . . .		1302, 1315
refreshing recollection by report of prior testimony . . . . .		737, 1328
by seeing specimens of writings . . . . .		2007
stenographer's notes, as preferred to . . . . .		1330
report used by magistrate or clerk to aid . . . . .		1667
books of account used as memoranda of . . . . .		1560
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Recollection," Vol. II, pp. 1, 2.]		
<b>Record, of stock-brand, as evidence . . . . .</b>		150
of business, used by witness not having personal knowledge . . . . .		666
of public office in hands of successive officials . . . . .		665
of a predecessor, as qualifying a witness to handwriting . . . . .		704
production of, under original document rule . . . . .		1186
of recollection of a witness; see RECOLLECTION.		
of conviction of crime, to impeach a witness; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.		
judicial; see JUDICIAL RECORD.		
official, in general; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.		
of conveyance; see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.		
voluminous, proved by summary . . . . .		1230, 1244
of assignment . . . . .		1657
absence of an entry in, how proved . . . . .	1230, 1244, 1678, 1957, 1978	
abstract of burnt . . . . .		1705, 2105, 2107
copy received of torn or illegible . . . . .		1275
certificate of effect of . . . . .		1674, 1678
certificate of search for original . . . . .		1678
docket is not a . . . . .		2450
<b>Recorded Conveyance</b>		
record-book admissible, instead of copy of it . . . . .	1186, 1655, 2373	
conveyance on file in public office . . . . .		1219
production of original deed not required . . . . .		1224-1227
preference for certified copy. . . . .		1273
copy of a copy . . . . .		1274
mode of proving copy . . . . .		1277
production of attesting witness excused . . . . .		1290, 1318
record admissible to prove contents and execution		
deeds, etc., lawfully recorded . . . . .		1648-1651
record in another jurisdiction . . . . .		1652
unauthorized record . . . . .		1653
proof of other matters recorded . . . . .		1654
certified and sworn copies . . . . .		1655
whole of record must be copied . . . . .		2109
kinds of certified copies admissible . . . . .		1677-1683
certificate of acknowledgment, as evidence . . . . .		1676
assignment of invention-patent . . . . .		1657
will . . . . .		1658
government land-grant . . . . .		1659
copy of ancient deed recorded . . . . .		2143
presumption of consideration . . . . .		2520
date . . . . .		2520
presumption of delivery . . . . .		2520
notice . . . . .		2520
seal . . . . .		2520

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Section

<b>Re-cross-examination;</b> see CROSS-EXAMINATION; EXAMINATION, III.	
<b>Re-direct Examination;</b> see EXAMINATION, III; DIRECT EXAMINATION.	
<b>Referee</b> , statute declaring findings of, to be 'prima facie' evidence . . . . .	1356
as witness . . . . .	1912, 2484
<b>Reformation</b> of contract, in equity . . . . .	2417
degree of proof necessary for . . . . .	2498
<b>Refreshment of Memory;</b> see RECOLLECTION.	
<b>Refusal</b> , to submit to a test, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	275
to escape, as evidence of innocence . . . . .	276, 293
to produce witness or document, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	285-291
to testify, prosecution for . . . . .	2270
to produce document, default as penalty for . . . . .	1859c
<b>Register</b> of enlistment, as evidence . . . . .	1641
official, in general; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Register of Deeds;</b> see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	
<b>Register of Land-office;</b> see LAND-OFFICE.	
<b>Register of Marriage, Birth, or Death</b> , production of original required . . . . .	1219, 1223
not preferred to eye-witness of marriage . . . . .	1336
preferred as proof of birth . . . . .	1335
admissible as a deceased person's regular entry . . . . .	1523
as an official record . . . . .	1642, 1646
certified copy of, by custodian . . . . .	1682, 1683
sworn copy of, by custodian . . . . .	1710
not required in bigamy . . . . .	2088
copy of whole required . . . . .	2109
presumed genuine, from official custody . . . . .	2159
identity shown by name . . . . .	2529
kept in a family, as evidence; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
<b>Register of Ship</b> , whether conclusive . . . . .	1352
whether admissible . . . . .	1641, 1647
whether preferred evidence to title . . . . .	1339
<b>Registration of Title or Deed</b> , proved by copy . . . . .	1225, 1239
whether conclusive . . . . .	1347, 1352
whether admissible . . . . .	1647
as a required formality . . . . .	2456
as presuming delivery of deed . . . . .	2520
no notice of prior deed . . . . .	2520
see also RECORDED CONVEYANCE	
<b>Regular Entries</b> , exception to the Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1517
history and statutes . . . . .	1518, 1519
as an aid to recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
I. <i>Regular Entries in general</i> . . . . .	1521-1533
death, absence, etc., of entrant . . . . .	1521, 1561
admissible to avoid mercantile inconvenience . . . . .	1521, 1530
kind of business . . . . .	1523
duty to superior . . . . .	1524
regularity . . . . .	1525
may be evidenced by inspection of book . . . . .	1525
contemporaneousness . . . . .	1526
no motive to misrepresent . . . . .	1527, 1644
oral reports . . . . .	1528
personal knowledge . . . . .	1530
salesman and bookkeeper acting jointly . . . . .	1530
form of entry . . . . .	1531
any interpretable mark sufficient . . . . .	1531
absence of entry to negative transaction . . . . .	1531
impeaching credit . . . . .	1531
production of original . . . . .	1532
II. <i>Parties' Account-Books</i> . . . . .	
no clerk . . . . .	1538
cash payments . . . . .	1539, 1549
goods delivered to third person . . . . .	1540



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Regular Entries</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
special contracts . . . . .	1541
special contract proved, may use to show delivery . . . . .	1541
kind of business . . . . .	1542, 1547
of book . . . . .	1548, 1558
of item . . . . .	1543, 1549
each entry must be separate transaction . . . . .	1549
contemporaneousness . . . . .	1550
regularity . . . . .	1547
honest appearance . . . . .	1551
reputation for correctness . . . . .	1552
suppletory oath; cross-examination . . . . .	1554
used by or against surviving party . . . . .	1554
personal knowledge . . . . .	1555
party and salesman jointly acting . . . . .	1555
form of entry . . . . .	1556
must show delivery as well as order . . . . .	1559
impeaching the book . . . . .	1557
using the entries as admissions . . . . .	1557
production of original; ledger and day-book . . . . .	1558
effect of statutes . . . . .	1560
using inadmissible, as memorandum to refresh . . . . .	1560
books of deceased clerk . . . . .	1561
[Examine analysis of "Regular Entries," Vol. III, p. 257.]	
<b>Regularity</b> of official proceedings presumed . . . . .	2534
<b>Regulations</b> , of department, judicial notice of . . . . .	2572
<b>Relationship</b> , hearsay statements, as evidence of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
bearing on good faith in conveyance . . . . .	391
invoked by counsel, disregarded by jury . . . . .	949
in financial matters, to show bias of witness . . . . .	949
<b>Release</b> , varied by parol . . . . .	2432
see also DOCUMENT.	
<b>Relevancy</b> , distinguished from admissibility . . . . .	12
with reference to real evidence . . . . .	24
general considerations affecting the rules of . . . . .	27, 28
distinguished from minimum probative value . . . . .	288
from weight or proof . . . . .	29
logical theory of . . . . .	30-36
of character, distinguished from conduct to evidence character . . . . .	53
of facts admitted conditionally on further evidence . . . . .	14, 40, 1871
distinction between definite and indefinite . . . . .	879
no privilege for irrelevant matters . . . . .	2210
of question, no concern of witness . . . . .	2210
<b>Religious Belief</b> , as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	516, 518
as influencing a confession . . . . .	840
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	935
of a dying declarant . . . . .	1442
as requisite for an oath . . . . .	1817
disclosure of, privileged . . . . .	2213
<b>Renewal</b> , agreement for, shown by parol . . . . .	2436, 2445
<b>Rental Value</b> , as evidenced by other persons' experience . . . . .	462
<b>Repairs</b> , of a machine or place, to evidence negligence . . . . .	32, 283
to evidence control . . . . .	283
<b>Repetition</b> , of questions to a witness . . . . .	782
of defamatory utterances; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Reply</b> to letter by mail, as genuine . . . . .	2152
to telegram . . . . .	2153
opponent's case in . . . . .	1872
see also LETTER.	
<b>Report</b> of an official . . . . .	1664-1672
of injury, made by agent to principal, as privileged . . . . .	2319
of a magistrate; see MAGISTRATE.	
of domain, pedigree, title, etc. . . . .	1670

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III §§ 1360-1803; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Report</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
of a judicial decision	
by officially printed copy . . . . .	1684
by private printed copy . . . . .	1703
of a magistrate; see MAGISTRATE.	
proving genuineness of . . . . .	2151
of particular business required by law, privilege for incriminating matters in . . . . .	2264
of testimony, kinds of; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
prohibition of publication of . . . . .	1836
of a clerk or bookkeeper; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
expert reading a prepared . . . . .	740, 787
<b>Reporter</b> , privilege for confidences made to newspaper . . . . .	2286
see also NEWSPAPER; PRINTED MATTER.	
see also PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Reports</b> , sundry . . . . .	1672
<b>Representation</b> , knowledge of falsity of, as evidenced by repute . . . . .	256
as evidenced by other false representations . . . . .	320
<b>Reputation</b>	
1. <i>Land-boundaries and Land-customs</i>	
2. <i>Events of General History</i>	
3. <i>Marriage and other Facts of Family History</i>	
4. <i>Moral Character of Party or Witness</i>	
5. <i>Sundry Facts provable by Reputation</i>	
1. <i>Land-boundaries and Land-customs</i>	
by perambulations . . . . .	1563
matter must be ancient . . . . .	1582
kind of reputation . . . . .	1583-1591
private boundaries proved by . . . . .	1587
possession proved by . . . . .	1587
title proved by . . . . .	1587
in proving title by adverse possession . . . . .	1587
qualifications of, evidence . . . . .	1588
source of . . . . .	1591
form of reputation . . . . .	1592-1595
from old deeds, leases, maps, surveys, etc. . . . .	1592
from jury's verdict . . . . .	1593
evidenced by judicial decree . . . . .	1594
absence of, as evidence . . . . .	1595
2. <i>Events of General History</i>	
ancient matters of general interest . . . . .	1597-1599
historical works to evidence . . . . .	1597, 1598
judicial notice of . . . . .	1599
proved by scientific treatises . . . . .	1599
3. <i>Marriage and other Facts of Family History</i>	
marriage . . . . .	1602-1604
sufficiency of, evidence . . . . .	1604
absence . . . . .	1605
ancestry . . . . .	1605
birth . . . . .	1605
death . . . . .	1605
legitimacy . . . . .	1605
race . . . . .	1605
relationship . . . . .	1605
residence . . . . .	1605
4. <i>Moral Character of Party or Witness</i>	
reputation distinguished from character . . . . .	52, 920, 1608
see also CHARACTER.	
as mitigating damages in defamation . . . . .	209
of deceased in homicide, to evidence accused's belief . . . . .	246
of employee, to evidence employer's knowledge . . . . .	249
of lunatic, insolvent, or partner, to evidence purchaser's knowledge . . . . .	253-255
of arrested person, as evidencing probable cause . . . . .	258
qualifications of a witness to . . . . .	691, 692
witness to, cross-examined as to rumors . . . . .	988, 1111



# INDEX OF TOPICS

Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Reputation</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
‘prima facie’ evidence of crime, under statute . . . . .	1354
constitutionality of using, as evidence . . . . .	1398
of honesty, required for a party’s account-book . . . . .	1552
place and extent of reputation . . . . .	1615-1616
time of reputation . . . . .	1618-1619
kind of character reputed (chastity, sanity, temperance, etc.) . . . . .	1620, 1621
to prove common offender . . . . .	1620
of animal to evidence disposition or pedigree . . . . .	1621
witness’ or party’s character; see also CHARACTER.	
5. <i>Sundry Facts provable by Reputation</i>	
of place of procuring abortion . . . . .	391
solvency, wealth . . . . .	1623
partnership . . . . .	1624
knowledge of partnership . . . . .	255
incorporation . . . . .	1625
miscellaneous facts . . . . .	1626
party’s knowledge of a fact reputed . . . . .	1789
see also KNOWLEDGE.	
[Examine analysis of “Reputation,” Vol. III, p. 328.]	
<b>Required Witness</b> ; see WITNESS, V, VII, VIII.	
<b>Resemblance</b> of child, as evidence of paternity . . . . .	166, 1154
see also IDENTITY.	
<b>Reservation</b> of judge’s ruling . . . . .	19
<b>Res Gestæ</b> , other crimes admitted when a part of . . . . .	218
“coloring” as used in, doctrine . . . . .	365
complaint in rape, as part of . . . . .	1134, 1760
in robbery or larceny . . . . .	1142, 1762
declarations about private boundary . . . . .	1563, 1571
distinguished from circumstantial evidence . . . . .	1715
confusion of, with declarations of intent . . . . .	1726
statements of mental or physical condition . . . . .	1715-1740
of the circumstances of an injury or affray . . . . .	1745-1756
after corporal injury . . . . .	1747
of intent or motive . . . . .	1714-1740
exclamation of bystander as . . . . .	1755
loose usage of term . . . . .	1757
charge made in travail by bastard’s mother . . . . .	1764
statements about boundary . . . . .	1764
declarations by an accused . . . . .	1732, 1765
plaintiff’s conduct as . . . . .	1770
utterances in contract as . . . . .	1770
proofs of loss as . . . . .	1770
words accompanying the taking as, in conversion . . . . .	1777
showing words as, in consideration . . . . .	1777
accompanying statements in dedication as . . . . .	1777
claim of title as part of . . . . .	1778
exclamations in a mob or riot . . . . .	1790
exclamations on violent injury . . . . .	1745
sundry applications . . . . .	1757, 1796
admission of agent or co-conspirator as . . . . .	1079, 1797
distinguished from circumstantial evidence . . . . .	1715
utterances a part of the issue, or verbal acts; see HEARSAY RULE, III.	
general theory of doctrine . . . . .	1745, 1768
history of phrase . . . . .	1767
see also SPONTANEOUS EXCLAMATIONS; VERBAL ACTS; MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.	
[Examine analyses of “Declarations of a Mental Condition,” “Spontaneous Exclamations,” and “Verbal Acts,” Vol. III, pp. 678, 735, 770.]	
<b>Residence</b> , evidenced by prior residence . . . . .	382
search as evidence of non-residence . . . . .	667
evidence by family repute . . . . .	1605
presumed to continue . . . . .	2530
see also DOMICIL.	
<b>Res ipsa loquitur</b> . . . . .	24, 2509

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Resistance</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
<b>Responsive Answer</b> required to interrogations . . . . .	785
motion to strike out non-responsive answer . . . . .	18
in equity, whole may be used . . . . .	2123
<b>Return</b> , of sheriff . . . . .	1664, 1670
of surveyor . . . . .	1665
of sundry officers . . . . .	1672
distinguished from certificate . . . . .	1674
<b>Revocation</b> , testator's utterances as evidence . . . . .	1734, 1782
testimony required for . . . . .	2051
<b>Reward</b> , as impeaching a witness . . . . .	969
as excluding a confession . . . . .	835
<b>Riot</b> , other acts, as evidencing . . . . .	367
see also MOB.	
<b>Road</b> ; see HIGHWAY.	
<b>Robbery</b> , possession of goods or money, as evidence of . . . . .	153, 154, 2513
other crimes, as evidencing intent . . . . .	351
by threatening demands . . . . .	352
motive for . . . . .	392
owner's complaint after, as 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1142, 1762
proof of identity in; see IDENTITY.	
<b>Roentgen-ray</b> photograph . . . . .	795
see also X-RAY.	
<b>Roman Catholic</b> as a witness; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.	
<b>Rule</b> , "Putting under the rule"; see SEPARATION OF WITNESSES.	
<b>Rules of Court</b> , judicially noticed . . . . .	2578
limiting right of cross-examination to one counsel . . . . .	783
<b>Ruling</b> upon objections . . . . .	19
error of, as ground for new trial . . . . .	21
<b>Rumors</b> , on cross-examination of a witness to reputation . . . . .	197, 988, 1111
distinguished from reputation, to prove character . . . . .	1611
see also DEFAMATION.	

## S

<b>Safety</b> of machine, premises, etc., as evidenced by other instances . . . . .	451, 461
opinion as to . . . . .	1949
<b>Sailor</b> ; see MILITARY RECORDS.	
<b>Sales</b> , course of business in, as evidence of a transaction . . . . .	94, 372, 377, 379
of liquor; see LIQUOR-SELLING.	
of other property, as evidence of value . . . . .	463
as qualifying a witness to value . . . . .	714
as evidence of intent; see FRAUD; FALSE REPRESENTATIONS; FRAUDULENT TRANSFERS.	
price, etc., as evidence of a motive . . . . .	392
decrease of, as evidence of nuisance, etc. . . . .	462
production of instrument, in proof of fact of . . . . .	1247
buyer's utterances, used against seller's creditor . . . . .	1779
intent of debtor in . . . . .	1967
presumption of fraud applicable to . . . . .	2504
books of account, as evidence of; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
warranty in, shown by parol . . . . .	2434
statute of frauds applied to . . . . .	2454
see also GRANTOR.	
<b>Salesman</b> , using entry to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION; REGULAR ENTRIES.	
<b>Sample</b> , as evidence of an entire lot . . . . .	439
<b>Sanity</b> (or Insanity), conduct as evidence of . . . . .	228-235
hereditary, as evidence of . . . . .	232
capacity of insane person to testify . . . . .	492-497
of testator, qualification of witness to will as to . . . . .	689
witness' experience in, or knowledge of . . . . .	568, 688, 689
witness' insanity, in impeachment . . . . .	932



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Sanity</b> (or Insanity) ( <i>continued</i> )	
inspection of insane person by tribunal . . . . .	1160
insanity excusing absence of an attesting witness . . . . .	1316
of a deponent . . . . .	1408
of a declarant of facts against interest . . . . .	1456
of a maker of regular entries . . . . .	1521, 1561
insanity disqualifying dying declarant . . . . .	1445
provable by reputation . . . . .	1621
by inquisition of lunacy . . . . .	1671
by declarations of testator . . . . .	1738-1740
by opinion testimony . . . . .	1933-1938
of attesting witness . . . . .	1936
of lay witness . . . . .	1933
by inspection . . . . .	2220
burden of proof of . . . . .	2500, 2501
in criminal trials . . . . .	2501
presumed to continue . . . . .	2530
hypothetical question as to; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.	
see also LUNATIC; INSANITY.	
<b>Scandal</b> , in pleading . . . . .	2216
<b>Schoolmaster</b> , evidence of standard of discipline of . . . . .	461
<b>Science</b> , men of, as witnesses; see EXPERT WITNESS.	
instruments and tabulated data of, used by a witness . . . . .	665, 795
books of, physician's testimony based on . . . . .	688
used in evidence . . . . .	1690-1700
judicially noticed . . . . .	2566
<b>Scienter</b> ; see KNOWLEDGE; OWNER; ANIMAL.	
<b>Scientific Books</b> ; see LEARNED TREATISES; SCIENCE.	
<b>Sciutilla</b> of evidence . . . . .	2494
<b>Scrip</b> , of land grant; see DEED.	
<b>Seal</b> , official, as authenticating a document	
general principle . . . . .	2161, 2162
seal of State . . . . .	2163
of court or clerk . . . . .	2164
of notary . . . . .	2165
of sundry officers . . . . .	2166
official signatures . . . . .	2167
title to office . . . . .	2168
attested copy under seal . . . . .	1679, 1680, 1681
corporate seals . . . . .	2169
history of, as making documents . . . . .	2426
form of . . . . .	2456
presumption of consideration from . . . . .	2520
existence of, indicated in copy of recorded deed . . . . .	2105
judicial notice of foreign . . . . .	2166, 2566
of foreign court of admiralty presumed genuine . . . . .	1681, 2164
<b>Search</b> , evidence obtained by illegal . . . . .	2183
for lost document . . . . .	1194
for entry not found in record . . . . .	1230
for entry or document in official record, custodian's certificate of . . . . .	1678
for attesting witness . . . . .	1313
<b>Seaworthiness</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2433
<b>Secondary Evidence</b> , are there degrees of . . . . .	1268
<b>Secret</b> of trade, as privileged . . . . .	2212, 2376
of State . . . . .	2378
of friendship . . . . .	2285
promise to keep, not privileged . . . . .	2286
see also PRIVILEGE.	
<b>Security</b> , agreement to hold deed as, shown by parol . . . . .	2437
higher, for same debt, merger presumed . . . . .	2540
<b>Sedition</b> , other acts as evidencing intent . . . . .	367
other persons' utterances, as a standard of loyalty . . . . .	465
putting in the whole of an utterance . . . . .	2097, 2115, 2119
see also DEFAMATION; TREASON.	

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Seduction</b>	
character of the woman as in issue or mitigating damages . . . . .	75, 76, 77, 79
poverty as bearing on probability of . . . . .	392
evidenced by pregnancy . . . . .	168
sexual desire as evidencing . . . . .	401
as negating promise of marriage in . . . . .	401
not evidence of prior promise of marriage . . . . .	1770
statutory action or criminal prosecution for . . . . .	79
father's action for, of daughter . . . . .	210
intercourse of third person, as evidence of paternity . . . . .	133
acts of unchastity, as defeating prosecution or mitigating damages . . . . .	205, 210
meaning of "chaste character" in action for . . . . .	205
acts of unchastity after, not relevant . . . . .	205
rebuttal of testimony to unchaste character in . . . . .	1620
unfair surprise in showing conduct . . . . .	205
privilege against self-crimination in . . . . .	2257
other intercourse, as evidencing intent or motive . . . . .	360, 398
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
uncorroborated complainant . . . . .	2061
what is corroborative evidence in . . . . .	2062
marital privilege in . . . . .	2239
proof beyond a reasonable doubt . . . . .	2498
<b>Seizure</b> , evidence obtained by illegal . . . . .	2183, 2264
<b>Selective Service Act</b> , other offences to evidence intent to violate . . . . .	360
<b>Self-contradiction</b> , as impeaching a witness	
one's own witness . . . . .	902-906
general theory . . . . .	1017
unfair surprise in . . . . .	1019
collateral facts excluded . . . . .	1020
material facts . . . . .	1021
bias, knowledge, skill, etc. . . . .	1022
preliminary question to witness . . . . .	1025-1039
time and place of inconsistent statement, asked . . . . .	1027, 1029
what is a self-contradiction . . . . .	1040-1043
opinion . . . . .	1041
silence, omission to claim or speak . . . . .	1042
explaining away the inconsistency . . . . .	1044
joining issue on the explanation . . . . .	1046
putting in the whole . . . . .	1045
distinguished from a party's admissions or confessions . . . . .	821, 1051
[Examine analysis of "Self-contradiction," Vol. II, p. 457.]	
<b>Self-crimination, Privilege against</b>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
(b) <i>kinds of facts protected</i>	
(c) <i>form of disclosure protected</i>	
(d) <i>mode and effect of making claim</i>	
(e) <i>waiver of privilege</i>	
(f) <i>criminality removed</i>	
— (a) <i>in general</i>	
history . . . . .	2250
policy . . . . .	2251
application to grand jury . . . . .	2252
to legislature, etc. . . . .	2252
in bankruptcy. . . . .	2257, 2260, 2282
constitutional sanction . . . . .	2252
common law not changed . . . . .	2252
applies to witness as well as accused . . . . .	2252
applies in all proceedings . . . . .	2252
of corporation, by facts obtained from third person . . . . .	2281
distinguished from confession-rule . . . . .	823, 850, 2266
(b) <i>kinds of facts protected</i>	
civil liability . . . . .	2254
infamy . . . . .	2255
forfeiture . . . . .	2256



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Self-crimination, Privilege against</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Section
penalty . . . . .	2257
seduction . . . . .	2257
adultery . . . . .	2257
foreign crime . . . . .	2258
crime of third person . . . . .	2259
of corporation . . . . .	2259a, 2259b
of corporation distinguished from official's personal privilege . . . . .	2259c
report required by law . . . . .	2259d
public records . . . . .	2259
facts tending to criminate . . . . .	2260
facts furnishing a clue . . . . .	2261
books required by law to be kept . . . . .	2259e
oral report required by law . . . . .	2259f
(c) <i>form of disclosure protected</i>	
testimony . . . . .	2263
documents and chattels . . . . .	2264
bodily exposure . . . . .	2265
confessions . . . . .	823, 850, 2266
confessions distinguished from . . . . .	2266
opponent's proof of document by copy . . . . .	1207, 1209
evidence obtained by illegal seizure . . . . .	2183
(d) <i>mode and effect of making claim</i>	
notice to produce document privileged . . . . .	2268
cross-examination to character . . . . .	2268, 2277
judge's warning . . . . .	2269
claim by party or counsel . . . . .	2270
effect of erroneous compulsion . . . . .	2270
counsel cannot claim for witness . . . . .	2270
judge determines claim . . . . .	2271
what constitutes compulsion . . . . .	2270
inferences from claim . . . . .	2272, 2273
comment by counsel on accused's failure to testify . . . . .	2272
(e) <i>waiver of privilege</i>	
by contract . . . . .	2275
by voluntary testimony . . . . .	2276-2278
must be claimed at outset if at all . . . . .	2276
distinction between ordinary witness and an accused . . . . .	2276
waiver at one trial is not, for later trial . . . . .	2276
impeaching accused's character on stand . . . . .	2277
cross-examining to one's own case . . . . .	2278
weight of credit to be given accused's testimony . . . . .	2278
(f) <i>criminality removed</i>	
by acquittal . . . . .	2279
by lapse of time . . . . .	2279
by pardon . . . . .	2280
by promise of immunity by prosecutor . . . . .	2280
disgracing facts . . . . .	2280
by statutory amnesty or immunity . . . . .	2281, 2282
testimony not to be used . . . . .	2283
[Examine analysis of "Privilege for Self-criminating Facts," Vol. IV, p. 794.]	
<b>Self-defence, burden of proof of</b> . . . . .	2512
character of deceased by homicide, to evidence . . . . .	63, 246
threats of deceased by homicide, to evidence . . . . .	110, 247
acts of violence, to evidence . . . . .	198, 248
see also HOMICIDE.	
<b>Self-infliction of harm by injured person, as exonerating defendant</b> . . . . .	132, 143
<b>Self-serving Statements, admissibility of</b> . . . . .	1732, 1765
<b>Seminole Indians; see INDIANS.</b>	
<b>Sentence, increase of, by prior convictions</b> . . . . .	196
of conviction of crime, as affecting a witness; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
<b>Separate Estate, wife as witness to</b> . . . . .	614
presumption of gift to or from . . . . .	2526

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Separation of Witnesses</b> , history, statutes . . . . .	1837
probative effect . . . . .	1838
demandable as of right . . . . .	1839
mode of procedure . . . . .	1840
time for requesting . . . . .	1840
by whom request is made . . . . .	1840
persons to be included . . . . .	1841
disqualification for disobedience . . . . .	1842
party testifying first on his own side . . . . .	1869
<b>Servant</b> ; see EMPLOYEE; SERVICES.	
<b>Service of writ</b> , proof of, without production . . . . .	1249
<b>Service</b> , contract for personal; see CONTRACT OF SERVICE.	
<b>Services Rendered</b> , value as evidence of price agreed . . . . .	392
opinion as to value of . . . . .	1944
capacity or quality, as shown by effects . . . . .	460
price of other, as evidence of value . . . . .	463
value of, by attorney . . . . .	715, 1944
by physician . . . . .	715
qualifications of a witness to value . . . . .	567, 711
gratuitous, of a child . . . . .	2526
<b>Servitude</b> , as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	516
<b>Set-off</b> , agreement for, shown by parol . . . . .	2436, 2445
<b>Settlement</b> , offer of, as an admission . . . . .	1061
<b>Sewer</b> , as highway defect; see HIGHWAY.	
<b>Sex</b> , as disqualifying a witness . . . . .	517
as affecting credit of witness . . . . .	938
<b>Sheriff</b> , debtor's admissions used against . . . . .	1077
deed of, conclusiveness . . . . .	1354
recital in deed by, to prove authority to sell . . . . .	1664
return of process . . . . .	
conclusiveness . . . . .	1347
admissibility . . . . .	1664, 1670
as witness . . . . .	1912
<b>Ship</b> , log-book of; see LOG-BOOK.	
name on, as evidence . . . . .	150a
see also VESSEL.	
<b>Shipping-articles</b> , provable by parol . . . . .	1207
<b>Shipping-register</b> ; see REGISTER.	
<b>Shooting</b> , as a crime; see HOMICIDE.	
<b>Shopbooks</b> , parties'; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
<b>Shorthand</b> ; see STENOGRAPHER.	
<b>Showers</b> , at a view by a jury . . . . .	1167, 1802
<b>Sidewalk</b> ; see HIGHWAY.	
<b>Sight</b> , evidence of capacity of . . . . .	222
witness' defective, as affecting credit of observation . . . . .	934
<b>Sign</b> , dying declaration by making . . . . .	1445
testimony by making; see DEAF-MUTE.	
<b>Signature</b> , modes of evidencing genuineness; see HANDWRITING.	
forgery of; see FORGERY.	
of deponent to deposition . . . . .	805
official, is not of attesting witness . . . . .	1292
number of attesting signatures to be proved . . . . .	1306
of attesting witness or maker of document . . . . .	1320, 1511, 1513
proof of unobtainable attesting, dispensed with . . . . .	1320, 1321
proof of, not always necessary . . . . .	2134
typewritten or stamped . . . . .	2149
as a formality required . . . . .	2456
by illiterate's mark; see ILLITERATE.	
certificate authenticated by . . . . .	2162
of official, as presuming genuineness . . . . .	2164, 2167
as agent, creating a personal liability . . . . .	2444
time of . . . . .	2520
alteration of; see ALTERATION.	
<b>Signs</b> (painted), as evidence . . . . .	150a



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Silence</b> , as an inconsistency impeaching a witness . . . . .	1041
as an admission by a party . . . . .	292, 1052, 1071, 1072
as impeaching complainant in rape . . . . .	1134
in robbery . . . . .	1142
<b>Similar Acts</b> , to evidence a common barrator . . . . .	203
of adultery, immaterial in criminal prosecution . . . . .	205
to show Knowledge, Design, or Intent . . . . .	300-367
for other purposes than to show Knowledge, Design, or Intent . . . . .	306
subsequent . . . . .	316
to show intent in arson . . . . .	354
assault . . . . .	364, 396
blackmail . . . . .	352
bribery . . . . .	343
burglary . . . . .	351
counterfeiting . . . . .	309
forgery . . . . .	309
infringement of copyright . . . . .	371
rape; see RAPE.	
of adultery or bigamy, material to show motive or intent . . . . .	360, 398
to evidence Knowledge, Design, or Intent in civil cases . . . . .	370
Habit in civil cases . . . . .	376
as evidence of authority to accept bill of exchange . . . . .	377
as evidencing Habit, Plan, or System in contracts . . . . .	377
as evidence of danger . . . . .	451-461
see also DESIGN; INTENT; KNOWLEDGE.	
[Examine analysis of "Other Offences, or Similar Acts, as Evidence of Knowledge, Design, or Intent," Vol. I, pp. 607, 608.]	
<b>Similar Instances</b> , of human conduct; see NEGLIGENCE; CHARACTER; SIMILAR ACTS.	
of effects of a machine, weapon, place, etc., to evidence cause, condition, or quality . . . . .	441-461
<b>Similar Statements</b> , by a witness; see WITNESS, III.	
<b>Simplificative Rules</b> defined . . . . .	1172
<b>Skill</b> , as evidence of an act done . . . . .	83, 87
instances of, as evidence . . . . .	199, 221, 461
mode of evidencing . . . . .	220, 221
of a witness; see EXPERT WITNESS.	
opinion as to another person's . . . . .	1949
<b>Skiograph</b> as a basis for testimony to bodily condition . . . . .	795
<b>Slander</b> ; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Slander of Chastity</b> ; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Slave</b> , as a witness . . . . .	516
ancestry of, as evidenced by color . . . . .	167
see also RACE.	
<b>Sleep</b> , confession in . . . . .	500
<b>Smoke</b> ; see NUISANCE.	
<b>Snow</b> , as a highway defect; see HIGHWAY.	
as a kind of weather; see WEATHER.	
<b>Social Case-work</b> , rules of evidence applied in . . . . .	4f
<b>Societies</b> , rules of evidence in hearings to expel from . . . . .	4e
<b>Sodomy</b> , other offences, as evidencing intent . . . . .	360
failure to make complaint of . . . . .	1135
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
corroboration required . . . . .	2061
<b>Soldier</b> ; see MILITARY RECORDS.	
<b>Solvency</b> , as evidence of payment . . . . .	89
false statements as to; see FALSE REPRESENTATIONS.	
as evidenced by prior condition . . . . .	382
by reputation . . . . .	253, 1623
by opinion . . . . .	1959
see also DEBTOR; BANKRUPT; INSOLVENCY; PAYMENT.	
<b>Sound</b> , distance or quality of, as shown by instances . . . . .	460
<b>Sovereign</b> ; see KING; EXECUTIVE.	
<b>Space</b> ; see DISTANCE.	
<b>Sparks</b> from a locomotive, as evidence of negligence or cause . . . . .	452-456
presumption of negligence from . . . . .	2509

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Specialty</b> , discharged by parol . . . . .	2426, 2455
<b>Specific Performance</b> , degree of proof of contract necessary for . . . . .	2498
<b>Specimen</b> of handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
articles proved genuine; in Massachusetts jury may reject in criminal trials . . . . .	2020
<b>Speculative</b> testimony to injury . . . . .	663
<b>Speed</b> , expert qualifications of witness to . . . . .	571
rate of, at one place evidenced by, at another . . . . .	382
opinion testimony to . . . . .	1977
<b>Spelling</b> , traits of, as evidence of authorship . . . . .	99
<b>Spiritism</b> ; see TELEPATHY.	
<b>Spoliation</b> of evidence in general, as indicating guilt . . . . .	278
of documents, as evidence of contents . . . . .	291
of execution . . . . .	2132
as creating a presumption . . . . .	2524
<b>Spontaneous Exclamations</b> , distinction between, and Verbal Acts . . . . .	1745, 1752
general theory . . . . .	1747
death, absence, etc., need not be shown . . . . .	1748
requirements of the exclamation . . . . .	1750
need not be contemporaneous . . . . .	1750
time not essence of doctrine . . . . .	1750, 1756
bystander's declaration admissible . . . . .	1751, 1755
relevancy of "main act" is immaterial . . . . .	1753
"main act" need not be equivocal . . . . .	1754
must be in reference to the startling occurrence . . . . .	1754
of one in a collision . . . . .	1750, 1755
in connection with assault or homicide . . . . .	1750, 1755
[Examine analysis of "Spontaneous Exclamations," Vol. III, p. 735.]	
<b>Spouse</b> ; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP; HUSBAND; WIFE.	
<b>Spy</b> , as impeached by his interest . . . . .	969
whether corroboration is needed . . . . .	2060
<b>Stains</b> ; see BLOOD.	
<b>Stamp</b> , law requiring, whether 'lex fori' is applicable . . . . .	5, 6
exclusion of documents lacking . . . . .	6, 2185
tax laws enforced in the Territories . . . . .	2185
required formality of . . . . .	2456
on letter, evidenced from habit of using government envelopes . . . . .	95
<b>Standard</b> of handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
<b>State</b> , statute of, when applicable . . . . .	6
seal of, presumed genuine . . . . .	2163
secrets of, privileged . . . . .	2213, 2375
who determines necessity for secrecy . . . . .	2376
judicial notice of foreign . . . . .	2566
conducting a prosecution; see PROSECUTION; DEFENDANT.	
see also FOREIGN LAW.	
<b>State's Attorney</b> ; see PROSECUTION; CRIMINAL TRIALS; ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
<b>State Chemist</b> ; see CHEMICAL ANALYSIS; FERTILIZER.	
<b>Statement</b> , balance of, may be used to rebut evidence produced by part of . . . . .	34
adoption of, as an admission . . . . .	1075
of pain or suffering . . . . .	1718
to a physician . . . . .	1719, 1720
after suit brought . . . . .	1721
of past events . . . . .	1722
about health . . . . .	1723
of design or plan . . . . .	1725
of intent in domicil cases . . . . .	1727
of intent in bankruptcy cases . . . . .	1728
of motive, reason, or intent . . . . .	1729
of emotion, bias, malice, or affection . . . . .	1730
of opinion or belief . . . . .	1731
by accused person . . . . .	1732
self-serving . . . . .	1732
improper, in argument by counsel . . . . .	1806
see also AGAINST INTEREST; HEARSAY RULE, EXCEPTIONS TO.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Section

<b>State of Mind</b> ; see BELIEF; INTENT; MOTIVE; KNOWLEDGE; MENTAL CONDITION.	
<b>Statute</b> , Federal or State, applicable in Federal trials . . . . .	6
limiting judicial powers in invalid . . . . .	7
or ordinance affecting negligence . . . . .	461
mode of proof	
of foreign, domestic, public, private . . . . .	1684
by official printed copy . . . . .	1684
by private printed copy . . . . .	1703
by expert, without copy . . . . .	1271
copy of whole required . . . . .	2109
enrolment, conclusiveness of . . . . .	1350
conclusiveness of recital in . . . . .	1352, 1662
interpretation of . . . . .	2478
judicial notice of . . . . .	2572
constitutionality of; see CONSTITUTIONAL RULES.	
recital in; see RECITAL.	
see also LAW; FOREIGN LAW.	
<b>Statute Book</b> , in evidence . . . . .	1084, 2151
<b>Statute of Frauds</b> , whether 'lex fori' is applicable . . . . .	5
provisions requiring numbers of witnesses . . . . .	2049, 2050
general policy of . . . . .	2091
requiring formality of writing . . . . .	2454
<b>Statute of Limitations</b> , other defamatory utterances barred by . . . . .	403-406
indorsement of payment, as removing the bar . . . . .	1460, 1466
annuls privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2279
burden of proof of . . . . .	2538
see also TIME.	
<b>Statutes</b>	
Federal, respecting "trials at common law," do not include criminal trials . . . . .	6
Canadian, in general . . . . .	6b
constitutionality of, defining crime . . . . .	1354
may create new forms of process . . . . .	2193
pertaining to wills, ballots, insurance policies, under parol evidence rule . . . . .	2452
granting immunity from criminal prosecution; see IMMUNITY.	
collected in this book	
on witness' qualifications . . . . .	488, 524, 576, 577, 579, 602, 619
on view by jury . . . . .	1163
on a witness' examination in writing . . . . .	1326
on attesting witnesses . . . . .	1290, 1310, 1320
on dying declarations . . . . .	1430
on statements of facts against interest . . . . .	1455
on statements of pedigree . . . . .	1480
on regular entries . . . . .	1519
on oaths . . . . .	1828
on subpœna, etc. . . . .	2195, 2201, 2207
on separation of witnesses . . . . .	1837
on marital privilege . . . . .	2240, 2245, 2334
on privilege against self-crimination . . . . .	2252, 2281
on privilege for communications to attorney . . . . .	2292
to physician . . . . .	2380
to priest . . . . .	2395
on rules of evidence before administrative boards . . . . .	4c
on presumptions. . . . .	2499
specific statutes; see the LIST OF STATUTES CITED, Vol. V, p. 621.	
<b>Stenographer</b> , notes of testimony taken by . . . . .	1669
testifying from notes of former testimony . . . . .	737
notes, as preferred to recollection . . . . .	1330
see also RECOLLECTION.	
<b>Sterility</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2528
<b>Stipulation</b> ; see JUDICIAL ADMISSION.	
<b>Stock</b> ; see ANIMALS; BUSINESS; CORPORATION; VALUE.	
<b>Stock Car</b> , custom, as waiver of agreement not to ride in . . . . .	2441
<b>Stock of Goods</b> , other persons' stocks to evidence amount of . . . . .	379, 437, 461, 462

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Stockholder</b> , books of corporation used against . . . . .	1074
admissions of . . . . .	1076
desiring information, procedure for . . . . .	1858
<b>Stolen Goods</b> , possession of, as evidence of larceny, etc. . . . .	152, 153, 2513
other, found on search, to show motive . . . . .	391
knowledge of receiver or possessor of, as evidenced by repute . . . . .	254
as evidenced by possession of other goods . . . . .	324
accused's explanation of possession . . . . .	1143, 1777, 1781
presumption from possession of . . . . .	2513
thief not an accomplice in receiving . . . . .	2060
receiver of, judgment of stealer's conviction used against . . . . .	1388
see also LARCENY.	
<b>Street</b> , defective; see HIGHWAY.	
<b>Street Car</b> , negligence in injury by . . . . .	199
see also NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Strength</b> , as evidence of an act done . . . . .	83, 84, 225
instances of conduct, to prove . . . . .	220
mode of evidencing . . . . .	220, 221
of deceased, to evidence self-defence . . . . .	246
expert qualifications of witness to . . . . .	571
<b>Strike Out</b> , misuse of motion to, a document, or evidence . . . . .	18
motion to, distinguished from "instruction to disregard" . . . . .	19
motion to, testimony in gross . . . . .	18, 2495
<b>Strychnia</b> ; see POISON.	
<b>Subornation</b> , as evidence of guilt . . . . .	278
in proving alibi . . . . .	279
other crimes as evidencing intent in . . . . .	343
as impeaching a witness . . . . .	960-962
who is accomplice in . . . . .	2060
see also PERJURY.	
<b>Subpoena</b> , history of . . . . .	2190
officers having power to issue . . . . .	2195
general practice . . . . .	2199
'duces tecum' . . . . .	2200
necessary for proving third person's detention of document . . . . .	1212
cross-examination of witness under . . . . .	1894
document is for inspection of court only, pending admissibility . . . . .	2200
opponent not to see irrelevant parts . . . . .	2200
witness required to read document aloud . . . . .	2200
expenses . . . . .	2201
<b>Subscribing Witness</b> ; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
<b>Sue</b> , agreement not to, shown by parol . . . . .	2406, 2435, 2444
<b>Suffering</b> , expressions of . . . . .	1718
<b>Sufficiency</b> of highway, cat-e-guard, machine, etc., as shown by effects . . . . .	461
opinion evidence of . . . . .	1951
of a search; see SEARCH.	
of evidence, judge to determine . . . . .	2551
<b>Suggestion</b> to a witness, by leading questions . . . . .	769-779
by other improper modes . . . . .	786-788
<b>Suicide</b> , deceased's intention of, as evidencing innocence of an accused . . . . .	143, 1725, 1726
plans of, to negative homicide . . . . .	113
motive for . . . . .	144, 391, 394
disproving by emotions averse to . . . . .	144
presumption of insanity from . . . . .	2500
presumed instead of accident . . . . .	2510
not presumed from taking morphine . . . . .	2540
attempted, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
<b>Summary</b> of voluminous records or accounts . . . . .	1230, 1244
<b>Superstition</b> of the accused . . . . .	86
<b>Superstitious</b> tests of guilt . . . . .	9
refusal to undergo . . . . .	275, 276
<b>Suppletory Oath</b> for books of account . . . . .	1554
<b>Support</b> , collateral agreement to, as consideration for deed . . . . .	2442
<b>Supporting</b> a witness' credit; see WITNESS, III.	



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Suppression of evidence, as indicating guilt</b> . . . . .	278
<b>Surety, contract to make evidence conclusive in action against</b> . . . . .	7a
notice to creditor, Tennessee rule requiring two witnesses for . . . . .	2054
principal's admissions used against . . . . .	1077
using principal debtor's statement against . . . . .	1474
parol agreement to hold only as . . . . .	2438, 2443, 2444
<b>Surgeon; see PHYSICIAN.</b>	
<b>Surprise; see UNFAIR SURPRISE.</b>	
<b>Surrebuttal, scope of testimony in</b> . . . . .	1874
<b>Surrender to arrest, as evidence of innocence</b> . . . . .	293
<b>Survey, as evidence of adverse possession of a whole tract</b> . . . . .	378
as illustrating testimony . . . . .	791
not to be impeached . . . . .	1316
whether conclusive . . . . .	2427
as containing declaration or reputation of boundary; see BOUNDARIES.	
as an official document . . . . .	1665
opinion evidence of location of . . . . .	1956
Oregon rule requiring two witnesses to . . . . .	2054
found in records, genuineness presumed . . . . .	2159
judicially noticed . . . . .	2575
<b>Surveyor, testifying by standard instruments or marks</b> . . . . .	665
records of a predecessor, as qualifying a witness to handwriting . . . . .	704
official, not required in proving boundaries . . . . .	794
testimony not required . . . . .	1339
opinion testimony to boundary; see BOUNDARIES.	
declarations about boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.	
official return of . . . . .	1665
as regular entry; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
<b>Survivor disqualified as a witness</b> . . . . .	578
use of account-books by or against . . . . .	1554
testimony must be corroborated . . . . .	2065
<b>Survivorship, presumption of</b> . . . . .	2532
<b>Sustaining an objection</b> . . . . .	18
a witness' credit; see WITNESS, III.	
<b>Swearing; see OATH.</b>	
<b>"Sweat-box," confessions in, as evidence</b> . . . . .	833, 851
<b>Switch; see PREMISES.</b>	
<b>Switch-lights; see RAILROAD.</b>	
<b>Sworn Copy; see COPY.</b>	
<b>System, of evidence, analyzed</b> . . . . .	3
of conduct, as evidencing a crime . . . . .	304
similar acts to show, in crime . . . . .	215, 216
see also SIMILAR ACTS.	

## T

<b>Table of weights, etc., used in evidence</b> . . . . .	1698, 1704, 1706
of mortality, statistics, etc., used in evidence . . . . .	1698, 2566
of interest, used in evidence . . . . .	1672
use of calculating . . . . .	665
<b>Tags, as evidence of ownership</b> . . . . .	150a
required to be produced . . . . .	1181
<b>Tally-book of voters; see ELECTION.</b>	
<b>Tax, payment of, as evidence of liquor-selling</b> . . . . .	238
of possession of land . . . . .	157
fraud in, other acts as evidencing intent . . . . .	341
books of assessment or collection of; see ASSESSOR'S BOOKS.	
stamp on documents required for admission . . . . .	2185, 2456
records admissible by statute . . . . .	1640
privilege against disclosure of . . . . .	2377
authentication of receipt . . . . .	2166
<b>Tax-collector, conclusiveness of deed of</b> . . . . .	1254, 1354
admissibility of recitals of . . . . .	1664

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Tax-list, production of original</b> . . . . .	1240
<b>Tax proceedings, rules of evidence applicable to</b> . . . . .	4a, 4c
<b>Tax-title, regularity of</b> . . . . .	2534
<b>Teacher; see SCHOOLMASTER.</b>	
<b>Telegram, delivery of, as evidenced by dispatch of original</b> . . . . .	95
provable by copy . . . . .	1223
production of original . . . . .	1223, 1236
received in reply, as genuine . . . . .	2154
not privileged . . . . .	2287
receipt of, as evidence of authorship . . . . .	2519
<b>Telepathy, testimony based on</b> . . . . .	795
<b>Telephone, testimony to conversations by</b> . . . . .	669
authenticating a conversation by . . . . .	2155
<b>Tenancy, production of lease, in proof of</b> . . . . .	1246
disputing landlord's title . . . . .	1472
declarations made during possession . . . . .	1778, 1779
<b>Tendency, of a machine, weapon, place, etc., as evidenced by its effects, etc.</b> . . . . .	437-461
to criminate, facts having . . . . .	2260
<b>Tender of witness' expenses</b> . . . . .	2201
utterances qualifying a . . . . .	1777
<b>Terms, varying the, of a document</b> . . . . .	2425
<b>Test; see EXPERIMENT.</b>	
<b>Testator, conduct as evidence of sanity</b> . . . . .	229
utterances evidencing insanity . . . . .	1790
family relationship of . . . . .	230
conduct and utterances of . . . . .	230
assertions of undue influence by . . . . .	230
belief, as evidence of will's execution . . . . .	271
statements of execution, contents, revocation, undue influence, etc. . . . .	1734-1740
ante-testamentary statements by . . . . .	1735
post-testamentary statements by . . . . .	1736
statements as to intention to revoke . . . . .	1737
as to undue influence or fraud . . . . .	1738
incapacity of, to resist influence . . . . .	1738
opinion testimony to legal capacity of . . . . .	1958
intention of . . . . .	112
intent or mistake of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
burden of proof of insanity . . . . .	2500
of undue influence . . . . .	2502
presumption of advancement by . . . . .	2526
prior testamentary plans of . . . . .	229, 230
undue influence of . . . . .	229, 230
see also WILL; SANITY.	
<b>Testimonial evidence, defined</b> . . . . .	25
relative value of . . . . .	26
general theory of . . . . .	475
rules for admissibility of; see WITNESS.	
<b>Testimonio; see DEED.</b>	
<b>Testimony, failure to offer, civil and criminal cases distinguished</b> . . . . .	4
motion to "strike out in gross" . . . . .	18
based on telepathy . . . . .	795
prosecution for refusal to give . . . . .	2270
rules of testimonial preference . . . . .	1345-1354
rules of conclusive preference . . . . .	1348
at criminal trial admitted in civil . . . . .	1388
expressed by acting . . . . .	789
comment by counsel on accused's failure to give . . . . .	2272
voluntary, as a waiver . . . . .	2327
see also WITNESS; EVIDENCE; EXPERT WITNESS; FORMER TESTIMONY; EXAMINATION; QUESTION TO A WITNESS; DEPOSITION.	
<b>Theological belief; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.</b>	
<b>Thing; see CHATTEL; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; ANIMALS; WEAPON; MACHINE.</b>	
<b>Think; see BELIEF.</b>	
<b>"Third Degree" confessions</b> . . . . .	833, 851



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Third Person</b> , crime of, as evidencing accused's innocence . . . . .	139
conduct to prove, guilty . . . . .	273
threats of, to negative guilt of accused . . . . .	139, 140, 1726
conviction of, for same crime, to negative guilt of accused . . . . .	142
character of, as evidence of his act . . . . .	68
motive of . . . . .	141
letter of, as evidencing testator's sanity . . . . .	228
flight of, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	276
confession of guilt . . . . .	142, 1476
fraud of, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .	280
admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
possession of document by, as excusing from production . . . . .	1211
<b>Threatening Letters</b> ; see EXTORTION.	
<b>Threats</b> of an accused, as evidence of doing the act . . . . .	105, 1732
in general . . . . .	106
conditional . . . . .	107
time of . . . . .	108
explaining away . . . . .	109
distinction between communicated and uncommunicated . . . . .	111
limitations on admissibility of . . . . .	111
rebutted by showing peaceful plans . . . . .	111
of a deceased, as evidence of self-defence . . . . .	110, 247
as excluding a confession; see CONFESSION.	
of a third person, as evidencing innocence of the accused . . . . .	139, 140, 1726
<b>Ticket</b> , completeness of contract in . . . . .	2432
<b>Timber</b> , marks on, as evidence of ownership . . . . .	150, 2152
register of, as evidence . . . . .	1647
<b>Time</b> of possession of money, as evidence of payment . . . . .	89
of threats of an accused . . . . .	108
of intercourse in bastardy . . . . .	133
of possession of stolen goods . . . . .	152
of health, strength, etc. . . . .	225
of sanity . . . . .	233
of intoxication . . . . .	235
of defect in highway . . . . .	252
of possession, coverture, debt, etc. . . . .	382
of intercourse in sexual offences . . . . .	398
of other defamatory utterances . . . . .	403-406
of utterances, as evidencing identity . . . . .	418
of other injuries or effects, as evidencing cause . . . . .	437-461
limitation of, for performance of act . . . . .	460
prior or subsequent existence, to prove present existence . . . . .	438
of other weather-conditions . . . . .	438
of other spark-emissions . . . . .	456
of work done, or things seen or heard, as shown by other instances . . . . .	460
of values . . . . .	463
of qualifications of witness . . . . .	483, 493, 583
of objection to a witness' qualification . . . . .	486, 586
of seeing specimens of handwriting . . . . .	697, 707
of memorandum in aid of recollection . . . . .	745, 761
length of, for a witness' examination . . . . .	783
of character of a witness . . . . .	928
length of time illustrated to jury by a watch . . . . .	1152
of condition of an object . . . . .	1154
as presuming loss of document . . . . .	1196
of notice to produce an original . . . . .	1208
of plural depositions . . . . .	1379
of birth, death, etc., proved by family hearsay . . . . .	1501
of certifying a copy . . . . .	1677
of recording a deed . . . . .	1649
of hearsay expressions of pain . . . . .	1718
of 'res gestæ' utterances . . . . .	1750, 1776
identified by a person's utterances . . . . .	1791
opinion evidence to . . . . .	1951, 1977

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Time</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
of putting in testimony . . . . .	1867-1900
of execution of ancient document . . . . .	2137
of deed, proved by parol . . . . .	2410
lapse of, presuming payment . . . . .	2517
of execution of document . . . . .	2520
of alteration of document, presumed . . . . .	2525
of death, not presumed . . . . .	2531
of survival, not presumed . . . . .	2532
things done same day, presumed same time . . . . .	2540
what is a reasonable, judge or jury to determine . . . . .	2553
judicially noticed . . . . .	2581
see also Act.	
<b>Time-book</b> used as a memorandum . . . . .	751
as regular entry . . . . .	1530, 1558
<b>Title</b> , by adverse possession; see POSSESSION.	
documents of; see DOCUMENT; RECORDED CONVEYANCE; DEED.	
registration of; see REGISTRATION OF TITLE.	
to Indian lands, conclusiveness of commissioners' findings as to race, etc. . . . .	1347
in ejectment, affidavit denying common source of . . . . .	1385
disclaimer of, evidenced by parol . . . . .	1257
as a fact against interest . . . . .	1458
of landlord disputed by tenant . . . . .	1473
proved by reputation . . . . .	1587
assessment-books as evidence of . . . . .	1641
official register of . . . . .	1647
registration as showing claim of . . . . .	1654, 1777
inquisition of, by the sheriff . . . . .	1670
abstract of; see ABSTRACT.	
deeds of, privilege for . . . . .	2211
presumption of, from possession . . . . .	2515
from lost grant . . . . .	2522
to bill of exchange . . . . .	2516
to office, presumption of . . . . .	2553
admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
see also OWNERSHIP; LAND OFFICE.	
<b>Tombstone</b> , as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
<b>Tools</b> , possession of, as evidence of a crime . . . . .	88, 238, 318
of burglary . . . . .	149, 153, 238
see also MACHINE.	
<b>Torrens title-deeds</b> ; see REGISTRATION OF TITLE.	
<b>Tortfeasor</b> , admission by . . . . .	1079
see also CONTRIBUTION.	
<b>Traces</b> as evidence of criminal's identity . . . . .	148, 149
<b>Tracks</b> ; see FOOTPRINTS.	
<b>Trade</b> , secret of, as privileged . . . . .	2212, 2374
see also CUSTOM; USAGE.	
<b>Trade Journal</b> ; see NEWSPAPER.	
<b>Train-sheet</b> , used as memorandum . . . . .	751
as regular entry . . . . .	1530
<b>Transcript</b> of stenographic notes of testimony; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
<b>Transfers</b> , in fraud of creditors, mode of evidencing intent . . . . .	333
admissions of debtor or creditor . . . . .	1082
<b>Translation</b> , required for alien's testimony . . . . .	811, 1393
see also INTERPRETER.	
<b>Transportation of Liquor</b> , carrier's records to evidence . . . . .	1708
<b>Travail</b> , complaint in, by bastard's mother . . . . .	1141
<b>Traveller</b> ; see HIGHWAY.	
<b>Treason</b> , other acts of, as evidencing intent . . . . .	367
confession of, as dispensing with two witnesses . . . . .	818, 2038
accused's expressions of loyalty . . . . .	1732
list of witnesses before trial . . . . .	1850
two witnesses to overt act . . . . .	2036
must be to <i>same</i> overt act . . . . .	2038



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Treason</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
both witnesses must be believed . . . . .	2038
overt act need not be first proved . . . . .	2038
other overt acts to evidence intent . . . . .	2038
<b>Treasury Department</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Treatise</b> , scientific, used in evidence . . . . .	1690-1700
<b>Treaty</b> , judicial notice of . . . . .	2573
proof by copy; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
<b>Tree</b> , family, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
<b>Trespass</b> , by battery, evidence of intent in . . . . .	364
of another animal . . . . .	142
to property, evidence of intent in . . . . .	367
evidence of malice in . . . . .	367
<b>Trial</b> , at common law in Federal court, rules for . . . . .	6
new trial, motion for, to confirm an exception . . . . .	20
material error of ruling, as ground for . . . . .	21
demeanor during, as evidence of guilt . . . . .	274
severance of, of persons jointly charged as a removal of interest . . . . .	580
adjournment of, to exterior place, distinguished from view by jury . . . . .	1802
coroner's inquest is not a . . . . .	1834
publicity of, as a security for truth . . . . .	1834
exclusion of spectators . . . . .	1835
prohibition of printed reports . . . . .	1836
separation of witnesses during . . . . .	1837
by inspection . . . . .	2555
see also INSPECTION; WITNESS; PLEADING; JURY.	
<b>Trover</b> , notice to produce document converted . . . . .	1205
proof of conversion, without producing original . . . . .	1249
<b>Trust</b> , agreement to hold property in, shown by parol . . . . .	2437
admission of, Texas rule requiring two witnesses for . . . . .	2054
parol declaration of, corroboration required . . . . .	2065
parol, degree of proof for . . . . .	2498
<b>Trust-combination</b> , proved by repute . . . . .	1626
<b>Trustee</b> , admissions of . . . . .	1076
accounts of, provable by vouchers . . . . .	1456
communications to, not privileged . . . . .	2286
<b>Truth</b> of defamatory words; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Turntable</b> ; see PREMISES.	
<b>Typewriting</b> , manifold copies by, as originals . . . . .	1234
proving genuineness of . . . . .	2149
authorship of letter in, evidenced from expression . . . . .	87
imperfect impression to show authorship . . . . .	149, 2024

## U

<b>Unchastity</b> ; see CHASTITY.	
<b>Understanding</b> , testimony to a witness'; see BELIEF; OPINION.	
as varying a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
<b>Under-valuation</b> ; see IMPORTATION.	
<b>Undisclosed Principal</b> , shown by parol . . . . .	2438
<b>Undue Influence</b> , testator's statements of . . . . .	1738
burden of proof of . . . . .	2502
see also WILL.	
<b>Unfair Prejudice</b> ; see PREJUDICE.	
<b>Unfair Surprise</b> , as applied to conduct to show character in issue . . . . .	194, 202, 1849
in showing particular acts of negligence in civil cases . . . . .	199
of unchastity . . . . .	200
two aspects of, distinguished . . . . .	202
in showing conduct to evidence character in seduction . . . . .	205
justifying acts in defamation of character . . . . .	207
showing acts of incompetence by employee or physician . . . . .	208
evidencing tendency, capacity, quality . . . . .	443
showing collateral facts to impeach witness . . . . .	1002, 1007
self-contradiction . . . . .	1019

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Unfair Surprise</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
preliminary warning to guard witness against . . . . .	1025
as grounds for discovery . . . . .	1845
continuance granted for . . . . .	1848
bill of particulars to avoid . . . . .	1848
<b>Unfair Trade</b> , other persons' conduct as evidencing standard of . . . . .	461
<b>Unilateral Acts</b> ; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, B.	
<b>United States</b> , conflict between State law and Federal law . . . . .	6
<b>Unseaworthiness</b> , presumption of . . . . .	2533
<b>Unskilfulness</b> ; see SKILL; NEGLIGENCE.	
<b>Usage</b> , among conveyancers, proved by repute . . . . .	1625
as proved by opinion . . . . .	1954
by one witness . . . . .	2053
varying the terms of an agreement . . . . .	2440
interpreting a document . . . . .	2462, 2464
see also CUSTOM; HABIT.	
<b>Use of machinery</b> , premises, etc., as evidence of safety, etc. . . . .	461
<b>Usury</b> , impeachment an instrument for . . . . .	529
shown by parol evidence . . . . .	2414
terms of a contract of; see CONTRACT.	
<b>Utterance of other forged documents or money</b> ; see FORGERY; COUNTERFEITING.	
of libel or slander; see DEFAMATION.	
as identifying a time or place . . . . .	418
separate, excluded . . . . .	2119
incorporated by reference . . . . .	2120
under rule of completeness; see WHOLE OF AN UTTERANCE.	
see also HEARSAY RULE, III.	
V	
<b>Vacuum-ray photograph</b> . . . . .	795
machine, use of . . . . .	665
see also X-RAY.	
<b>Validity</b> , under substantive law . . . . .	2167
<b>Value</b> , of an article sold, as evidence of price agreed . . . . .	392
witness to, tested by adjacent values . . . . .	464
property taken, as evidenced by other sales . . . . .	463
experience or knowledge as qualifying witness to . . . . .	558, 567, 653, 711-721
impeached by inconsistencies . . . . .	1040
special training or occupation unnecessary to estimate . . . . .	712
proper tests to show value standard . . . . .	713
proving land . . . . .	714
of services . . . . .	715
of attorney's services . . . . .	715, 1944
of physician's services . . . . .	715
of chattels . . . . .	716
witness to, must know market . . . . .	717
knowledge of, must be of vicinity . . . . .	718
must not be by hearsay . . . . .	719
estimating, from price-list trade journals . . . . .	719, 1704
provable by jury's view . . . . .	1168
by books of assessors . . . . .	1640
by opinion testimony . . . . .	1940-1943
jury may use general knowledge of . . . . .	2570
of evidence; see WEIGHT.	
see also SALES; DAMAGES.	
<b>Valued Policy</b> , conclusiveness of . . . . .	1354
<b>Varying the terms of a document</b> ; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
<b>Vehicle</b> , injuries to, as evidence of a highway defect . . . . .	458
character of driver of; see NEGLIGENCE.	
standard of conduct as passengers, employees, etc. . . . .	461
tag or number-plate, as evidence of ownership of . . . . .	150a
presumption as to ownership of . . . . .	2510a
privilege for compulsory report by owner of . . . . .	2259d, 2377



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>Vendor</b> ; see GRANTOR.	
<b>Vendee</b> ; see GRANTEE.	
<b>Venereal disease</b> , as evidence of adultery . . . . .	168
inspection of person having . . . . .	2220
see also DISEASE.	
<b>Veracity</b> , character for; see CHARACTER.	
<b>Verbal Acts</b> , general principles . . . . .	1772
distinction between, and declaration of mental condition . . . . .	1715
and 'res gestæ' . . . . .	1715
distinguished from statements of intent . . . . .	1726
applicable to statements of intent in domicil cases . . . . .	1727
conduct must be equivocal . . . . .	1774
words must aid in completing act . . . . .	1775
act must be material to issue . . . . .	1773
words must accompany conduct in time . . . . .	1776
rule applied to receiving money . . . . .	1777
acceptance . . . . .	1777
advancement . . . . .	1777
agency . . . . .	1777
consideration . . . . .	1777
conversion . . . . .	1777
dedication . . . . .	1777
delivery . . . . .	1777
entry . . . . .	1777
gift . . . . .	1777
larceny . . . . .	1777
loan . . . . .	1777
payment . . . . .	1777
sale . . . . .	1777
sundries . . . . .	1777
possessor's declarations on issue of prescription . . . . .	1778
declarations of claimant of title . . . . .	1779
various rules concerning declarations of land-title . . . . .	1780
declarations by accused found with stolen goods . . . . .	1781
affecting revocation of will . . . . .	1782
of a bankrupt . . . . .	1783
as to domicil . . . . .	1784
of intent or motive by an accused . . . . .	1785
fragmentary utterance, rule of completeness . . . . .	1786
see also HEARSAY RULE, III.; RES GESTÆ.	
[Examine analysis of "Verbal Acts," Vol. III, p. 770.]	
<b>Verdict</b> , in another cause, as reputation . . . . .	1593
not to be impeached by jurors . . . . .	2348
except in six jurisdictions . . . . .	2354
determination of, by lot . . . . .	2354
acceptance of, by court . . . . .	2356
direction of a . . . . .	2495, 2496
mistake in rendering . . . . .	2355, 2356
in directed, juror's unwillingness to assent . . . . .	2355
see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
<b>Verification</b> , by cross reading of document . . . . .	1279
<b>Vessel</b> , loss of, as evidenced by lack of news . . . . .	158, 2531
safety of, custom of other owners, as evidence . . . . .	461
presumption of unseaworthiness of . . . . .	2533
log-book of; see LOG-BOOK.	
<b>Veto</b> of governor, whether journals of legislature can be used to prove . . . . .	1350
<b>Viciousness</b> , of an animal, evidence of owner's knowledge of . . . . .	251
see also ANIMAL.	
<b>View by Judge</b> . . . . .	1169
<b>View by Jury</b> , general principle . . . . .	1162
allowable on any issue . . . . .	1163
trial court's discretion . . . . .	1164
by part of jury . . . . .	1165
unauthorized view . . . . .	1166

## INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

	Section
<b>View by Jury</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
showers . . . . .	1167, 1802
fence or road viewers . . . . .	1167
view as evidence . . . . .	1168
evidence not to be taken at . . . . .	1802
juror disclosing at later trial, knowledge obtained at, on former . . . . .	1910, 2346
adjournment of trial to exterior place, distinguished from . . . . .	1802
adjournment of court for a view . . . . .	1803
defendant's presence at . . . . .	1803
<b>Violence of deceased; see HOMICIDE</b> . . . . .	248
<b>Voice</b> , as identified by utterance . . . . .	222
as identifying a person . . . . .	660
by opinion testimony . . . . .	1977
<b>Void</b> , parol evidence to show a transaction . . . . .	2406, 2423
<b>Voidable Acts</b> , affected by parol evidence rule . . . . .	2423
<b>Voir Dire</b> , for ascertaining a witness' qualifications . . . . .	485, 497, 508, 560, 583
no duty of judge to examine on . . . . .	497
admissions of a document's contents on . . . . .	1258
right of cross-examination on . . . . .	1384, 2550
examining into religious belief on . . . . .	1820
<b>Vote</b> , refusing to receive, evidence of intent in . . . . .	367
fraudulently casting, evidence of intent in . . . . .	367
declarations concerning, by a voter . . . . .	1712
disclosure of, privileged	
elector . . . . .	2214
juror . . . . .	2346, 2361
member of legislature . . . . .	2378
party affiliations to prove tenor of . . . . .	93
see also <b>BALLOT</b> .	
<b>Voter</b> , declarations of domicile by . . . . .	1712
waiver of privilege by . . . . .	2215

## W

<b>Wager of law</b> , in the history of rules of evidence . . . . .	575
<b>Wagon; see VEHICLE</b> .	
<b>Waiver</b> , of rules of evidence . . . . .	7a, 17, 18
of inadmissibility, by offering other inadmissible evidence . . . . .	15
accused's bad character erroneously admitted, rebutted by good character,	
is not a . . . . .	18
of objection in general . . . . .	18
by failure to object to admission of document, extends to authority of agent . . . . .	2132
of right of confronting accusers . . . . .	1398, 1415, 2592
of privilege, not to testify against husband or wife . . . . .	2242, 2340
against self-crimination . . . . .	2275
of attorney and client . . . . .	2327-2329
of physician and patient . . . . .	2388
of voter . . . . .	2214
at one trial is not, for later trial . . . . .	2276
custom as, of agreement not to ride in stock car . . . . .	2441
of motion to direct verdict . . . . .	2496
of proof; see <b>JUDICIAL ADMISSION</b> .	
of right to absent witness' testimony . . . . .	2595
<b>War</b> , judicially noticed . . . . .	2566, 2574
see also <b>MILITARY RECORDS</b> .	
<b>War Contract Adjustment Board</b> , Rules of Evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Warrant of land-entry</b> , original required . . . . .	1239
see also <b>JUDICIAL RECORD; LAND OFFICE</b> .	
<b>Warranty</b> , distinguished from an admission . . . . .	1056
shown by parol . . . . .	2434
<b>Water</b> , other instances of effect of, as evidence . . . . .	451
<b>Weakness of case</b> , evidenced by fraudulent acts . . . . .	280
by conveyance of property . . . . .	282



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2254; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Section

<b>Weakness of case</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	
failure to produce evidence, indicating . . . . .	285-291
failure to call expert, indicating . . . . .	290
<b>Wealth</b> , provable by reputation . . . . .	1623
by assessors' books . . . . .	1640
<b>Weapon</b> , deceased's carrying of a, as evidencing self-defence . . . . .	246
as evidence of identity . . . . .	413
capacity of, as shown by its effects . . . . .	441-461
condition of, as evidenced by effects . . . . .	437
other acts to evidence carrying concealed . . . . .	367
other instances of its effects, as evidence . . . . .	451
to show capacity or tendency of a . . . . .	457
see also UNFAIR SURPRISE.	
exhibition to the jury . . . . .	1157
experiment with gun in jury room . . . . .	460, 1160
<b>Weather</b> , as shown by conditions at other times or places . . . . .	438
record of conditions of . . . . .	1523, 1639
<b>Weight</b> , of evidence, distinguished from relevancy . . . . .	12, 29
of circumstantial evidence . . . . .	26
of negative knowledge . . . . .	664
of confessions . . . . .	861, 866
of testimony willfully false . . . . .	1008
no rules of law for . . . . .	26, 2034
preponderance of evidence . . . . .	2498
<b>Weights</b> , fraudulent, other acts evidencing intent . . . . .	341
<b>Whisky</b> , judicially noticed . . . . .	2582
<b>"White Slave" Traffic</b> ; see ENTICEMENT FOR PROSTITUTION; MARITAL RE- LATIONSHIP.	
<b>Whole</b> , existence of, inferred from part . . . . .	438
<b>Whole of an Utterance</b> , put in evidence	
general principle . . . . .	2094
instruction on . . . . .	2094
I. <i>Compulsory Completeness</i>	
precise words required	
conversations, etc. . . . .	2097
former testimony . . . . .	2098
all parts required	
conversations, etc. . . . .	2099
confessions . . . . .	2100
whole of a writing required	
depositions, etc. . . . .	2103
separate writings . . . . .	2104
lost deed or contract . . . . .	2105
abstract of title . . . . .	2106
lost will . . . . .	2106
public records . . . . .	2107-2109
judicial records . . . . .	2110
bill and answer in chancery . . . . .	2111
II. <i>Optional Completeness</i>	
remainder may be put in . . . . .	2113
conversations, admissions, confessions, etc. . . . .	2115
sundry writings . . . . .	2116
charge and discharge statements . . . . .	2117
account-books . . . . .	2118
separate utterances . . . . .	2119
letters of a correspondence . . . . .	2120
answer in chancery made evidence . . . . .	2121-2124
opponent's inspection making the whole admissible . . . . .	2125
self-contradiction . . . . .	1045, 2098
dying declaration . . . . .	1448
[Examine analysis of "Verbal Completeness," Vol. IV, p. 461.]	
<b>Widow</b> , as a witness; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
<b>Wife</b> , notice to, as evidencing husband's knowledge . . . . .	261
husband's desire or motive to get rid of . . . . .	191

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Wife (continued)	Section
character of, in alienation of affection . . . . .	391
of defendant as witness . . . . .	609
of party as witness to books of account . . . . .	612
testimony of, as disqualified or privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
communications by or to, as privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
of plaintiff as witness against carrier . . . . .	612
admissions of, against husband . . . . .	1078, 1086, 2232
acknowledgment of execution of deed, conclusive . . . . .	1347
statements of, to evidence pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
expressions of feelings towards husband . . . . .	1730
presumption of gift by or to . . . . .	2526
of accomplice, to corroborate him . . . . .	2059
presumption of coercion by husband . . . . .	2514
see also CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; HUSBAND; MARRIAGE.	
Will, attestation of, whether 'lex fori' is applicable to . . . . .	5
forgery of, character of third person as evidence . . . . .	68
skill in drafting, as evidence of authorship . . . . .	87
testamentary plans, as evidence of execution or contents . . . . .	112
execution of, as evidenced by testator's belief . . . . .	271
spoliation of, as evidence of contents . . . . .	291
proving testator's signature in absence of attesting witness . . . . .	1320
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
kinds of copy admissible; see COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
undue influence evidenced by other instances . . . . .	338
sending out of the jurisdiction for attesting witness' identification of signatures . . . . .	1185
using testimony given at preliminary probate, in Illinois . . . . .	1417
record of probate, to prove execution . . . . .	1658
certified copy of . . . . .	1681
testator's statements	
of contents, execution, revocation, undue influence, etc. . . . .	1734-1740, 1782
normality of disposition in . . . . .	1738
intelligent execution of . . . . .	1739
utterances by maker of, as to sanity . . . . .	1740
recital in, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
proof of, by two witnesses	
personalty . . . . .	2048
rule in Pennsylvania . . . . .	2048
realty . . . . .	2049
nuncupative wills . . . . .	2050
holographic wills . . . . .	2051
revocations . . . . .	2051
alterations, etc. . . . .	2051
contents of lost will . . . . .	2052, 2090, 2106
testimonial evidence required . . . . .	2091
whole of record of probate required . . . . .	2110
made in a single document . . . . .	2452
proof of, by age of document . . . . .	2137-2146
in testator's custody, marks of cancellation on, presumed genuine . . . . .	2148
publication of . . . . .	2411
reading over to testator . . . . .	2421
intent or mistake of testator; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
lost will, clear proof of . . . . .	2498
non-discovery of, as inference of revocatory destruction . . . . .	160
burden of proof of . . . . .	2500, 2502
presumptions of execution and revocation of . . . . .	2523
incorporation of other document by reference . . . . .	2452
degree of proof of oral promise to bequeath by . . . . .	2498
see also TESTATOR; DOCUMENT; EXECUTION; SANITY; INSANITY.	
Wireless, privilege for telegram by . . . . .	2287
see also TELEGRAM; X-RAY.	
Wires; see NEGLIGENCE; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; MACHINE.	



INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Witness	Section
I. Qualifications and Disqualifications	
(a) in general	
(b) insanity	
(c) infancy	
(d) alienage, race, color	
(e) sex	
(f) religion	
(g) infamy	
(h) turpitude self-confessed	
(i) experience	
(j) interest	
(k) marital relationship	
(l) knowledge	
(m) recollection	
II. Examination	
(a) in general	
(b) direct examination	
(c) cross-examination	
III. Impeachment and Discredit	
IV. Restoring Credit	
V. Witnesses required to be called before others	
(a) attesting witnesses	
(b) magistrates' report	
(c) sundry witnesses	
VI. Separation of Witnesses	
VII. Number of Witnesses	
(a) excessive number	
(b) required number	
VIII. Kinds of Qualified Witnesses excluded or required to be corroborated for special reasons	
IX. Securing Attendance and Testimony	
X. Privileged Testimony	
XI. Sundry Topics	
XII. Absent Witnesses	
For matters of Attestation; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
Attested Copy; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
I. Qualifications and Disqualifications	
(a) in general	
general theory . . . . .	475
time . . . . .	483
attesting, must be competent at time of attestation . . . . .	1510
burden of proof . . . . .	484
capacity is presumed . . . . .	484, 497
mode of proof . . . . .	485
time of objection . . . . .	486
judge determines . . . . .	487, 497, 2550
statutory enactments . . . . .	488
Federal rules . . . . .	6
to corporal injury . . . . .	688
(b) insanity, etc. . . . .	492-501
deaf-mutes . . . . .	498
intoxication . . . . .	499
disease, etc. . . . .	500
blindness . . . . .	500
under exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
(c) infancy . . . . .	505-509
under exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751
(d) alienage, race, color . . . . .	516
(e) sex . . . . .	517
(f) religion . . . . .	518
theological belief; see OATH.	
(g) infamy (conviction of crime) as a disqualification . . . . .	519-524
under exception to Hearsay Rule . . . . .	1751

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Witness ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
kind of crime . . . . .	520
judgment of crime . . . . .	521, 522
conviction in another jurisdiction . . . . .	522
pardon, reversal, etc. . . . .	523
statutory changes . . . . .	524
[Examine analysis of "Moral Depravity," Vol. I, p. 927.]	
(h) <i>turpitude self-confessed</i> , as a disqualification . . . . .	525-531
accomplice . . . . .	526
perjurer . . . . .	527
attesting-witness . . . . .	528
repudiating one's own instrument . . . . .	530
(i) <i>experience</i> as a qualification (except capacity) . . . . .	555-571
general principles . . . . .	555-563
foreign law . . . . .	564-566
value . . . . .	567
laymen in expert capacity . . . . .	568-571
medical and chemical topics . . . . .	568, 569
sanity . . . . .	568, 569
handwriting and paper money . . . . .	570
sundry topics of expert testimony . . . . .	571
opinion in general; see OPINION.	
see also EXPERT WITNESS.	
[Examine analysis of "Experiential Capacity," Vol. I, p. 955.]	
(j) <i>interest</i> as a disqualification . . . . .	575-587
see also WITNESS, VIII.	
history . . . . .	575
interest in general . . . . .	576
civil parties . . . . .	577
survivor against deceased, lunatic, etc. . . . .	578
survivor using account-books . . . . .	1554
accused . . . . .	579
co-indictees and co-defendants . . . . .	580
testimony to one's own intent . . . . .	581
attesting witness of a will . . . . .	582
time of interest; voir dire . . . . .	583
burden of proof . . . . .	584
mode of proof . . . . .	585
time of objection . . . . .	586
judge determines . . . . .	587
see also ACCOMPLICE.	
[Examine analysis of "Interest as a Testimonial Disqualification," Vol. I, p. 985.]	
(k) <i>marital relationship</i> as a disqualification . . . . .	600-620
history . . . . .	600
policy; statutes . . . . .	601-602
general principles . . . . .	603, 604
mistress, bigamous marriage . . . . .	605
for whom is the spouse disqualified . . . . .	606-610
exceptions based on necessity . . . . .	612
on statutes . . . . .	613-618
statutory abolition . . . . .	619, 620
[Examine analysis of "Marital Relationship as a Testimonial Disqualification," Vol. I, p. 1031.]	
(l) <i>knowledge</i> as a qualification . . . . .	650-721
knowledge as requiring observation . . . . .	650
distinction between experience and knowledge . . . . .	558, 651
knowledge of a class of things . . . . .	653
burden of proof of knowledge . . . . .	654
witness specifying grounds of knowledge . . . . .	655
personal observation required . . . . .	656
knowledge amounting to a belief or impression . . . . .	658
knowledge based on insufficient data . . . . .	659
identity . . . . .	660



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Witness ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
age, etc. . . . .	660
state of mind . . . . .	661
scientific improbabilities . . . . .	662
speculative injuries . . . . .	663
that a thing would have been observed . . . . .	664
scientific instruments or tables . . . . .	665
subordinates' records or scientific books . . . . .	665
one's own age . . . . .	667
another person's name . . . . .	667
interpreted conversations . . . . .	668
telephone conversations . . . . .	669
hypothetical questions . . . . .	672-684
party's admissions . . . . .	1053
medical matters (sanity, disease, etc.) . . . . .	687-690
foreign law . . . . .	690
reputation . . . . .	691, 692
handwriting . . . . .	693-709
by seeing the act of writing . . . . .	694-698
by seeing genuine documents . . . . .	699-708
by admission of genuineness of writing . . . . .	700
by expert comparison . . . . .	709
value . . . . .	711-721
general principles . . . . .	711-731
land . . . . .	714
services . . . . .	715
personalty . . . . .	716
sundry rules . . . . .	717-721
dying declarant . . . . .	1445
keeper of books of account . . . . .	1530, 1555
officer making public document . . . . .	163
notary . . . . .	1635
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Knowledge," Vol. I, pp. 1050, 1051.]	
(m) <i>recollection</i> ; see RECOLLECTION.	
II. <i>Examination</i>	
(a) <i>in general</i>	
mode of interrogation in general . . . . .	768-788
leading questions . . . . .	769-779
discretion of court in allowing . . . . .	770, 776
assuming truth of controverted fact . . . . .	771
calling for answer "Yes" or "No" . . . . .	772
to opponent's witness on cross-examination . . . . .	773
to hostile, biassed, or unwilling witness . . . . .	774
to preliminary undisputed matters . . . . .	775
when witness' recollection is exhausted . . . . .	777
when witness has immature or feeble intellect . . . . .	778
to prove a contradiction . . . . .	779
misleading questions . . . . .	764, 780
annoying questions . . . . .	781
repetition of questions . . . . .	782
multiple examiners . . . . .	783
rights of other counsel, under court rule limiting cross-examination to one counsel . . . . .	783
length of examination . . . . .	783
judge's questions . . . . .	784
narration without questions . . . . .	785
non-responsive answers . . . . .	785
improper suggestions . . . . .	786
prepared deposition . . . . .	787
answering by reference . . . . .	787a
prior conference with attorney . . . . .	788
attorney's consultation with sequestered witness . . . . .	1840

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

Witness (continued)	Section
non-verbal testimony . . . . .	789-797
gesture, etc. . . . .	789
infirmity of witness exciting prejudice . . . . .	789
models, maps, diagrams . . . . .	791
photographs or maps. . . . .	792-797
verification of . . . . .	793
maker of . . . . .	794
production of original . . . . .	796
of handwriting . . . . .	797
written testimony	
sundry modes . . . . .	799-801
records of past recollection . . . . .	800
depositions . . . . .	802-806
see also DEPOSITIONS.	
absent witness' testimony . . . . .	807
see also JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS; QUESTION TO A WITNESS.	
interpreted testimony . . . . .	811, 812
aliens, deaf-mutes, persons ill or inaudible, interpreters, translations . . . . .	811
confessions; see CONFESSIONS.	
testimony under duress. . . . .	815
(b) <i>direct examination</i> ; see EXAMINATION, III.	
(c) <i>cross-examination</i> in general; see CROSS-EXAMINATION.	
of one's own witness; see IMPEACHMENT.	
to show bias or corruption; see IMPEACHMENT.	
to contents of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
to one's own case; see EXAMINATION, III.	
refusal to answer on; see PRIVILEGE.	
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Narration or Communication,"	
Vol. II, p. 46.]	
III. <i>Impeachment and Discredit</i> ; see IMPEACHMENT.	
IV. <i>Restoring Credit</i>	
general principles . . . . .	1100
good character in support . . . . .	1104-1110
after evidence of general character . . . . .	1105
particular instances . . . . .	1106, 1116
bias, interest or corruption shown . . . . .	1107, 1119, 1128
self-contradiction . . . . .	1007, 1044, 1108, 1119, 2115
contradiction by others . . . . .	1109, 1127
discrediting the impeaching witness . . . . .	1111
explaining away a self-contradiction . . . . .	1044, 2115
a contradiction . . . . .	1007
the bad reputation . . . . .	1112
the misconduct . . . . .	1116
the bias, etc. . . . .	1119
corroboration by similar consistent statements . . . . .	1122-1144
of statements of an accomplice . . . . .	1128
after impeachment by cross-examination . . . . .	1131
of witnesses in general . . . . .	1122-1132
contradiction of . . . . .	1005
of party's admissions . . . . .	1133
rape complainant . . . . .	1134-1140
bastard's mother in travail . . . . .	1141
owner of goods robbed . . . . .	1142
possessor of stolen goods . . . . .	1143
accused in general . . . . .	1144
utterances identifying a time or place . . . . .	416
supporting a contradicted witness . . . . .	1007
an attesting witness . . . . .	1514
[Examine analysis of "Testimonial Rehabilitation," Vol. II, pp. 621, 622.]	
V. <i>Witnesses required to be called before others</i>	
(a) <i>attesting witness</i> ; see ATTESTING WITNESSES.	
(b) <i>magistrate's report</i> of testimony . . . . .	1326, 1349



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2507]

Witness (continued)	Section
(c) <i>sundry witnesses</i>	
maker of document, surveyor, etc. . . . .	1339
official certificates . . . . .	1345-1353
VI. <i>Separation of Witnesses; see SEPARATION OF WITNESSES.</i>	
VII. <i>Number of Witnesses</i>	
(a) <i>excessive number may be rejected</i>	
experts . . . . .	1908
character witnesses . . . . .	1908
other witnesses . . . . .	1908
(b) <i>required number</i>	
treason . . . . .	2036
perjury . . . . .	2040
sundry crimes . . . . .	2044
divorce . . . . .	2046
chancery bill . . . . .	2047
will of personalty . . . . .	2048
of realty . . . . .	2049
nuncupative will . . . . .	2050
holographic will . . . . .	2051
revocation, alteration, etc. . . . .	2051
contents of lost will . . . . .	2052
usage or custom . . . . .	2053
miscellaneous civil cases . . . . .	2054
impeaching or reforming a written instrument, in Pennsylvania, two witness rule . . . . .	2054
verbal declaration or admission of a trust, in Texas, corroboration of witness . . . . .	2054
single witness need not be believed . . . . .	2034
eye-witnesses of a crime . . . . .	2079
of 'corpus delicti' . . . . .	2081
[Examine analysis of "Number of Witnesses Required," Vol. IV, pp. 288, 289.]	
VIII. <i>Kinds of Qualified Witnesses excluded or required to be corroborated for special reasons</i>	
judge . . . . .	1909
juror . . . . .	1910
counsel or attorney . . . . .	1911
referee, arbitrator, sheriff . . . . .	1912
opinion witness; see OPINION RULE.	
accomplice . . . . .	2056
prosecutrix in rape, bastardy, etc. . . . .	2061
parents bastardizing issue . . . . .	2063
surviving claimant against deceased . . . . .	2065
children . . . . .	2066
Chinese . . . . .	2066
confessions	
respondent in divorce . . . . .	2067
accused . . . . .	2070
'corpus delicti' . . . . .	2073, 2081
marriage in fact . . . . .	2082
bigamy . . . . .	2085
admissions . . . . .	2086
owner, in larceny . . . . .	2089
malpractice, expert witness . . . . .	2090
wills, contracts, etc. . . . .	2091
statute of frauds . . . . .	2093
IX. <i>Securing Attendance and Testimony</i>	
compulsory process	
history . . . . .	2190
constitutional guarantee . . . . .	2191
duty to give testimony . . . . .	2192
production of documents . . . . .	2193
inspection of premises, chattels, body . . . . .	2194
officers having power to compel . . . . .	2195

# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Witness (continued)</b>		Section
persons exempt from process . . . . .		2368-2372
liability to suit or arrest . . . . .		2195
notice and summons . . . . .		2199
subpoena 'duces tecum' . . . . .		2200
tender of expenses . . . . .		2201, 2202
expert's fees . . . . .		2203
ability to attend . . . . .		2204
entitled to be examined at home . . . . .		2204
illness . . . . .		1406, 2205
merchants' books . . . . .		2205
sex and occupation . . . . .		2206
officials. . . . .		2206, 2371
official records . . . . .		2373
distance from trial . . . . .		1407, 2204
process upon the Executive . . . . .		2368-2372
X. <i>Privileged Testimony</i> ; see PRIVILEGE.		
XI. <i>Sundry Topics</i>		
rules for witnesses in Federal courts . . . . .		6
testimonial evidence, defined . . . . .		25, 26, 475
accused as witness . . . . .		61
intimidation of, by examiner . . . . .		781
as evidence of guilt of party . . . . .		278
failure to produce, as evidence of a weak case . . . . .		285-292
inference from failure of party to testify . . . . .		289
subornation of, other attempts as evidence of intent . . . . .		342
action to recover expenses . . . . .		2202
testimony of another, as a basis; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.		
attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.		
absent witness' testimony admitted to avoid postponement . . . . .		807, 815, 1398
duress of, as not excluding testimony . . . . .		815
preferred witnesses . . . . .		1339
eye-witness preferred in some instances . . . . .		1339
to contents of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		
to a copy of a document; see COPY.		
discovery of names of witnesses; see DISCOVERY.		
list of witnesses before trial . . . . .		1850
indorsement of witnesses' names on indictment . . . . .		1850-1855, 2079
known to prosecutor, but not indorsed . . . . .		1853
to execution, showing document to opponent . . . . .		1861
XII. <i>Absent Witnesses</i>		
unavailable or privileged . . . . .		285
prejudiced or inferior, not called . . . . .		287
equally available, not called . . . . .		288
testimony under hearsay exception . . . . .		670
excuses for not calling attesting . . . . .		1308, 1319
- death of attesting . . . . .		1311
absence of attesting, from jurisdiction . . . . .		1312
inability to find attesting . . . . .		1313
refusal of attesting, to testify . . . . .		1317
attestor of recorded document need not be called . . . . .		1318
unobtainable, may be dispensed with . . . . .		1396, 1401
- unavailable by reason of death . . . . .		1403
absence from jurisdiction . . . . .		1404
disappearance, inability to find . . . . .		1405
imprisonment, official duty . . . . .		1407
insanity or other mental incompetency . . . . .		1408
disqualified by interest . . . . .		1409
by infamy . . . . .		1410
proof of unavailability . . . . .		1414
hearsay statements to evidence inability to find witness . . . . .		261, 664, 1312, 1313, 1405, 1414, 1789
declarations not to return . . . . .		1725



# INDEX OF TOPICS

[Vol. I, §§ 1-724; Vol. II, §§ 725-1359; Vol. III, §§ 1360-1863; Vol. IV, §§ 1864-2284; Vol. V, §§ 2285-2597]

<b>Witness</b> ( <i>continued</i> )	Section
liability for non-attendance . . . . .	2195
taking deposition for use in another State . . . . .	2195
unable to attend court, entitled to be examined at home . . . . .	2204
affidavit of testimony of, to secure continuance . . . . .	2595
falsity of, to impeach the accused . . . . .	278
see also ATTESTING WITNESS; ABSENT WITNESS; CROSS-EXAMINATION; EXAMINATION OF A WITNESS; DISTANCE; PRIVILEGE; WIFE; HUSBAND; CHINESE.	
<b>Women</b> , as witnesses . . . . .	517, 938
exempt from attendance . . . . .	2206
<b>Words</b> , interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
expert interpretation of technical . . . . .	1955
meaning of, judicially noticed . . . . .	2582
as verbal acts; see HEARSAY RULE, III.	
defamatory; see DEFAMATION.	
<b>Work</b> , capacity of, as evidenced by instances . . . . .	460
see also SERVICES.	
<b>Workman</b> ; see EMPLOYEE.	
<b>Workmen's Compensation Board</b> , rules of evidence before . . . . .	4c
<b>Wound</b> ; see CORPORAL INJURY; WEAPON.	
<b>Writ</b> , proof of service of, without production . . . . .	1249
see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
<b>Writing</b> , as the act itself . . . . .	1346
see also HANDWRITING; DOCUMENT; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT; PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
required by law; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, B.	
<b>Written Testimony</b> , by deposition, inferiority of . . . . .	799
<b>X</b>	
<b>X-ray</b> photograph, testimony based on . . . . .	795
use of, machine . . . . .	665
negligent use of . . . . .	221