

1941

## Book Notes

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## BOOK NOTES

THE STRANGEST CASES ON RECORD. By John A. Duncan. 1940. Chicago: The Reilly & Lee Co. pp. 272. \$3.00.

The Law, rational and exact though it is, has not escaped its share of oddities and quirks which are so foreign to the mathematical precision of a science. John A. Duncan has gathered together in this book a multitude of these fascinating legal oddities which serve, in no small measure, to entertain both lawyers and laymen. There are all kinds of legal curiosities—murder convictions where the defendant was the victim; trials of animals; posthumous trials; peculiar penalties levied in ancient and modern times; unusual wills; pleadings in verse; and any number of ludicrous legislative enactments.

All the cases are noteworthy and interesting. The author treats of the *Trailer Brothers* case in Illinois where two brothers were indicted for the murder of a man who subsequently appeared and with the aid of their able counsel, Abraham Lincoln, saved them from the gallows. Among the other cases recorded by Mr. Duncan are such well known trials as the *Willet-Sears* case, the *Dred Scott* case, the absurd posthumous trial of Saint Thomas à Becket, the famous *Tichborne* case in England and many others, all equally interesting. The chapter entitled "Freak Wills" is probably the most interesting and indeed, the one most likely to bring a twinkle to the eye of a lawyer who has wrestled with the peculiar whims of a "jolly testator."

A number of photostatic reproductions to illustrate the situations treated and original pen and ink sketches by the author go to complete this book which is absorbing, informative and interesting, both to lawyer and layman alike.

THE LAW OF PUBLIC HOUSING. By William Ebenstein. 1940. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. pp. ix, 150. \$1.75.

In the last decade there has come to the legal forefront a body of law known as "public law", which flows from the fountain of "emergency" created by the economic catastrophe of 1929. One of the most important branches of this public law was the public housing legislation, enacted during this period by both federal and state legislatures which recognized the serious ramifications of the problem of inadequate housing conditions and foresaw the need for active improvement.

It is with the development of this legislation and of the cases decided under it that Mr. Ebenstein treats in this book. He points out the elements—economic, social and legal, involved in the housing problem. Continuing, he traces the history of housing legislation in the United States from its birth as a New Amsterdam city ordinance, through its youthful stages as zoning ordinances, building codes, tenement commissions and building standards, to its present adult stage as an active slum clearance, home building law—The United States Housing Act of 1937.

The discussion of the strictly legal aspects of public housing deals, for the major part, with the constitutionality of the legislation and serves well as a legal history of the development of public housing in the state and federal governments.

The future is sure to present many legal questions concerning this new governmental activity. This book serves, therefore, a necessary and useful function. It provides the lawyer with a foundation and general background in the field of public housing law.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*A number of the books listed below will be reviewed in the May issue of  
the FORDHAM LAW REVIEW*

THE JUDICIAL OPINIONS OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES. By Harry C. Shriver. Buffalo: Denis and Co. 1940. pp. xvi, 360. \$3.50.

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC LIFE. By Leverett S. Lyons and Victor Abramson. Washington: Brookings Institution. 1940. pp. xi, 1301. \$3.50.

INSTITUTES OF THE ROMAN LAW OF CIVIL PROCEDURE. By Leopold Wenger. Translated by Otis H. Fisk. New York: Veritas Press, Inc. 1940. pp. xxix, 440. \$6.00.

CASES AND MATERIALS ON PROPERTY SECURITY. By George E. Osborne. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. lxiv, 1039. \$6.00.

TRUSTS IN THE CONFLICT OF LAWS. By Walter W. Land. New York: Baker, Voorhis and Co. 1940. pp. xxix, 440. \$6.00.

CASES ON EQUITY. By Walter W. Cook. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. xxvii, 1296. \$6.50.

ORGANIZATION OF COURTS. By Roscoe Pound. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1940. p. xiii, 322. \$5.00.

CASES ON TRUSTS. By Richard R. Powell. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. lxix, 1034. \$6.00.

OUTLINE OF NEW YORK PRACTICE. By Irving W. Berkman. Brooklyn: Harmon Publications. 1940. pp. xv, 331. \$4.50.

FORENSIC CHEMISTRY. By Henry Rhodes. New York: Chemical Publishing Co. 1940. pp. vii, 214. \$5.00.

CASES ON EVIDENCE. By Charles T. McCormick. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. xxii, 1035. \$6.50.

CASES ON CREDITORS RIGHTS. By Garrard Glenn. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. xxii, 1177. \$6.00.

ELECTIONS AGAINST WILLS IN NEW YORK. By Glenn C. Beechler. New York: Matthew Bender and Co. 1940. pp. xix, 751. \$10.00.

STURGES CASES ON DEBTOR'S ESTATES. By J. D. Poteat and E. V. Rostow. Third Edition. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. xxi, 886. \$6.50.

CONQUEST AND MODERN INTERNATIONAL LAW. By Matthew W. McMahon. Washington: Catholic University Press. 1940. pp. vi, 233. \$2.00.

CASES ON CRIMINAL LAW. By Hall and Glueck. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1940. pp. xxi, 556. \$5.00.

INJURIES OF THE SKULL, BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD. Edited by Samuel Brock, M.D. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co. 1940. pp. xii, 632. \$7.00.

STUDIES IN FEDERAL TAXATION. By Randolph E. Paul. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1940. pp. xvii, 539. \$6.00.

THE STRANGEST CASES ON RECORD. By John A. Duncan. 1940. Chicago: The Reilly & Lee Co. pp. 272. \$3.00.