

---

## SOURCES

Government class (high school or undergraduate level).

The entire second half is comprised of chapter 4 where the real “referency” section begins. It is here where the many issues and controversies surrounding the judicial branch are discussed. It is not a chronology of events or rulings, but rather a compendium of some of the more complex and often controversial aspects of the courts, giving examples for each. Topics here include: “Judicial Review” “Public Access to Courts,” “Judicial Campaigns and the First Amendment,” and “The Role of the American Bar Association.” The final section of the chapter gives a rundown of the most polarizing issues that the courts have dealt with over the years. Included here are all the “hot topics” one would expect, such as: “Same-Sex Marriage,” “Religious Freedom,” “Gun Ownership,” “Capital Punishment,” “Abortion Restrictions,” etc. The currency is evident throughout, with examples drawn from cases as recent as 2016, and by the inclusion of “The Affordable Care Act” as one of the topics discussed. The “Further Readings” also include some very recent articles and reports along with seminal work. Back matter includes a “Glossary of Concepts, Laws, and People” and an “Annotated Bibliography.”

While there are many other reference works dealing with some aspect of the US courts, most often the Supreme Court, none are quite like this in its organization and content. I guess you could say that it is without “precedent,” primarily for its treatment of the state courts. For broader coverage of “landmark cases” at the national level, I would suggest either *Supreme Court Drama: Cases That Changed America*, 2nd ed (Gale, 2011) or *Landmark decisions of the United States Supreme Court* (CQ Press, 2008), although both already suffer slightly from datedness. Other somewhat comparable reference works include *Guide to the U.S. Supreme Court* (CQ Press, 2010) and *Encyclopedia of the Supreme Court of the United States* (Gale, 2008), but again, these do not cover the state courts.

Overall, I would say that this book would make a nice addition to any high school or undergraduate library, especially if on a tight budget and in need of a concise single volume to fill a subject gap in the collection. Admittedly, one could achieve a pretty good grasp of the subject matter contained here in various places around the free web, but as a single stop location for introductory and supplemental material on everything “American courts,” this book does deliver the goods.—Todd J. Wiebe, *Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*

---

***We Did What?: Offensive and Inappropriate Behavior in American History***. Edited by Timothy B. Jay. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2016. 458 pages. Acid free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3772-2). E-book available (978-1-4408-3773-9), call for pricing.

*We Did What?: Offensive and Inappropriate Behavior in American History* is a work that thoroughly covers topics in American history and culture that have at some point been a source of frustration or contention. Although there are

only approximately 150 entries that are between 500 and 1,000 words, the entries are organized alphabetically, well researched, and provide balanced coverage of each topic. It is intended for use by a variety of researchers, but would be best suited as introduction for students in history or social sciences.

To use this volume, it is important to understand how the editors defined “offensive” and “inappropriate.” They essentially defined it using two standards. First it is anything that causes “anger, frustration, resentment, displeasure, or they affront us” (xiii), but for it to meet the criteria of this work, it must also defy the cultural standards of the period that it was considered offensive. Students from a variety of disciplines would consider this a valuable tool when beginning their research because Jay has done an excellent job of balancing the factual information with the more interesting analysis of how these behaviors and the response they elicited have shaped our modern behavior. An example of this treatment can be seen in the entry for Slavery. Jay begins the section by providing historical context of the beginnings of slavery in the United States and continues by outlining the path from the abolishment of slavery all the way to *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. He ends the section by discussing how we are still fighting to eliminate the symbols of slavery in the United States by discussing hate crimes and the decisions to remove confederate flags from state facilities.

Although this volume is interesting and provides objective and thoughtful entries, it is not the only volume that covers this type of topic. However, it is difficult to compare this volume to them because the tone of this volume is academic rather than comedic and the format is encyclopedic. Overall, this work is an easy to use reference resource that provides an interesting perspective on offensive incidents in history and provides discussion on how these events still influence the present. Because this volume is relatively inexpensive and the topic has not been heavily covered in recent publications, I would recommend this work for community colleges and smaller universities with relevant majors.—Marissa Ellermann, *Head of Circulation Services Librarian, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois*

---

***Women in American History: A Social, Political, and Cultural Encyclopedia and Document Collection***. Edited by Peg A. Lamphier and Rosanne Welch. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017. 4 vol., 1828 p. \$415 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-602-9). E-book (978-1-61069-603-6) available, call for pricing.

To this day, high school and college students rarely learn about the role of women in American history, cultures, or politics. Teachers and textbooks still focus predominantly on the white Christian heterosexual males that continue to take most of the credit for building the United States of America. While it is fact that, for most of American history, only white men could own land, vote, and serve in government, women of all races, religions, and sexual orientations have done a